

Play Bill

Written for the Screen by:

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2019

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1 **PLAY BILL.**

1

OVER BLACK:

We're in a car. It's silent in the car, except--

The sounds of traffic, the car whooshing past trees,
buildings.

OPEN ON:

2 INT. CAR - DAY.

2

BILL (40s) is laser focused on the road. He has an inner hope
for things to come. He's also dead inside. That hope is
somehow holding on...

JAN (40s) stares deadpan ahead. She has also thrown her
aspirations aside for...what exactly? Oh yeah, a family.

Both are dressed for something depressing. A funeral, maybe?
Probably.

JAN

I just want us to be honest with each
other.

BILL

Honest? What do you mean, I haven't
been honest?

JAN

Of course honesty isn't in your
vocabulary...You're the genius, Bill.
Figure it out.

BILL

Now? You want me to be honest with
you...right now?

JAN

Yes, now. Starting now. From this
point forward, I'd like for us to be
completely honest. All out there on
the table.

They both stare ahead blankly a beat.

BILL

(pointing to a hotel)
I got a hand-job from an escort in

that hotel over there.

JAN
You hired a hooker??

BILL
I said, she was an **escort**.

JAN
I'm not seeing the difference here.

BILL
So you wanna talk about vocabularies,
huh? We own a dictionary, don't we?

JAN
Fuck off, Bill. There's no talking
your way out of this one, Casanova.

BILL
She was an escort. I told you. I
thought we were being honest here!

JAN
From my point of view, they're the
same thing.

BILL
I am being honest with you, like you
asked. It's why I told you in the
first place. Now I truly regret it,
believe me.

JAN
Yeah, I said be honest. But that was
not an honest thing you did. When was
the last time you ever did anything
honest?

BILL
What do ya want from me, Jan? Huh? I'm
not fuckin' Ghandi. You're no Mother
Theresa, either. So, step off that
high horse.

JAN
Jesus, Bill. You're fuckin' disgusting
you fuckin' perv. Good God.

BILL
Never again.

JAN
You're damn right, never again. That's
just sick.

BILL
No, I'm never being honest with you
again.

JAN
Find another woman to lie to, then.

CALEB (15) peeks out from the backseat, who seemed to be in
hiding the whole time. He's emerging from puberty too,
hopefully coming into his own. But not yet...

CALEB
Um...mom-- dad? I think we missed it.

3 EXT. CAR - TRAFFIC - CONTINUOUS.

3

Bill realizes they completely missed the turn, he peels
around in a totally illegal U-turn.

BILL (O.C.)
Oh, for fuck's sake--

Bill swerves the car, cuts off other oncoming cars..

JAN (O.C.)
God dammit, Bill. What is your
problem?

He straightens the car out, other drivers pissed off,
honking, cursing his name...

BILL (O.C.)
Honesty is the best policy, Caleb.

JAN (O.C.)
Shut the fuck up, Bill.

SNAP TO TITLE SCREEN:

OPENING TITLE: **PLAY BILL**

FADE IN:

4 EXT. CHURCH - LATER.

4

The MOURNING CROWD gathers, approaches the Church.

Bill, Caleb, and Jan all exit the car and glide through the Parking Lot.

BILL
You're not entirely innocent in all
this, you know. I mean--

Bill, hand on Caleb's shoulder, away from Jan, begin their slow march up the steps to the Church doors.

BILL (CONT'D)
When are you going to start being
honest with me, Jan?

JAN
Caleb, forgive me if I murder your
father.

CALEB
Mom, we're walking into a Church.

BILL
Yeah, take it easy, Jan.

JAN
Honey, I'm sorry, I'm gonna kill him.

Other FUNERAL GOERS and assorted FAMILY MEMBERS stare, scoff, gasp.

BILL
Your mother finds the best times to be
homicidal, son.

Caleb has no idea how to deal with the embarrassment.

They enter the double doors...

5 INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS.

5

Bill, Caleb, and Jan file in, take in their surroundings.

A CASKET lays ahead on the altar, flowers spewing from it.

JAN
Late for your own father's funeral,
eh, Bill? Great start.

BILL
Your mother's fixin' to be in a casket
too, son.

They arrive at a pew in the front row, reserved for them.

The Priest looks on with judgment. Bill smiles. He looks away.

The family all park themselves on the pew. Caleb places his face in his hands. He's already done with this.

Jan causally folds her leg over her other knee.

Bill slouches in his seat, puts his arm around Caleb.

His hand touches Jan by accident. She shrugs him off.

Bill scornfully looks down at Jan who ignores him.

The Priest (50s) who is holy, but kind of a dick, tries to hide his discontent with a poker face. It's not a particularly good one.

PRIEST

...and praise be unto Jeegus. As he was really cool, he did some stuff and everyone loved Him. Kind of like your pops-- am I right, Bill?

Bill is taken aback. He gathers himself.

BILL

(clearing throat)
Uh...yeah, um-- ahem. Yeah, sure.
Yeah.

PRIEST

Would you like to say a few words?

BILL

Actually, you know what-- yeah. Yeah I would.

Jan buries her face in her hands.

Bill bounds up the stairs to the pulpit. He shoves the Priest out of the way.

BILL

My father, he--

The microphone screeches from feedback. The crowd winces.

BILL

Heh. You know, it's actually egregious that you would compare my father to Jesus. Because he wasn't cool. He didn't do anything. And nobody loved him.

Gasps from the crowd.

OLD WOMAN'S VOICE FROM CROWD (O.S.)

Oh, my...

BILL

In fact, he was just a selfish asshole who took his own life without telling his wife or his son goodbye. Thanks a lot, dad. Ya sheepish prick!

Bill pushes away from the pulpit, swings the microphone towards the Priest, who stands aghast.

Murmurs from the crowd as Bill returns to his seat.

Jan's eyes beam at Bill as he plops back down next to her.

BILL

(sharp whisper)

What?

Jan shakes her head and turns away in disbelief.

Bill shrugs and turns to Caleb who shys away. He'll get no help.

The Priest apprehensively approaches the pulpit once again.

He grabs the mic and clears his throat.

PRIEST

Uh, ahem. Um...as I was saying...

The Priest trails off as Bill stares at the casket. He is unsure of his emotions at this point, his eyes could well up or he could knock his father from the casket at any moment...

6 INT. CAR - LATER.

6

Bill, Caleb, and Jan all slide into the car and slam their doors.

Absolute silence. It's a bit biting, and awkward...

BILL

I--

JAN

Not a fucking word from you.

Bill lowers his head in shame.

Caleb is afraid to talk, or move...

Bill turns the key and pulls off, gently. Delicately.

7 INT. BILL & JAN'S HOME - LATER. 7

Caleb mopes in and lunges straight towards his bedroom.

BILL

Caleb-- Agh.

Bill deflates as he ignores and paces away. Jan barges in and confronts him, arms folded.

JAN

You're struggling with this. I get it.
But that doesn't give you free reign
to be a jackass.

BILL

I know, Jan...I--

JAN

No. Zip it. You listen. We cannot
argue like this in front of our son.
And you can't just go around making a
mockery of our family. In front of
everyone we know!

BILL

I got it!

JAN

No, I don't think you do--

BILL

You are not blameless in this! You--

JAN

I'm not the one prancing about fucking
hookers in random hotel beds!

BILL

Oh, don't bring that shit up now--

JAN

Oh but I am bringing it up now. Bill
it is perfectly relevant.

BILL

I has nothing to do with--

JAN

It has everything to do with this!

Bill and Jan freeze a moment in a tense beat.

BILL

What are we gonna do? Huh?

JAN

Do whatever you want, Bill. I don't
really give a shit. We've got guests
coming. I could use a drink and I need
to get our place ready.

FROM ABOVE:

Caleb retreats from the top of the stairs into his room.

Bill processes the argument as Jan struts away with purpose.

8 INT. BILL AND JAN'S HOME - LATER. 8

Hushed commotion fills Bill and Jan's house. FUNERAL PATRONS
flood the house all decked out in BLACK FORMAL GARB.

Jan's friend LISA (50s) approaches her. She's timid and
vanilla.

LISA

That speech Bill gave was really
concerning. Is he going to be okay?

Jan guides Lisa over to where Bill is standing in a semi-
circle with Lisa's husband JACK (50s) and other FRIENDS.

JAN

(somewhat hushed)
Oh, he's just in a bad place right
now. He'll dig himself out of it.

Lisa and Jan seamlessly join the semi-circle mid-

conversation.

JACK
(tongue-in-cheek)
That was quite the eulogy, Bill.

BILL
I just said what was on my mind.

Bill rocks back and forth, softly clapping his hands together, swings them behind his back and forth.

BILL
Needed to be said.

An uncomfortable beat...

JAN
(gesturing to Bill)
I don't know him.

No one in the group knows what to say...not a word is spoken.

Jack looks away uncomfortably. Lisa looks to her drink.

Jan glares daggers at Bill who barely gives her a shrug.

9 INT. OFFICE - DAY.

9

Bill slaves away at his desk. He's approached by-- STEVE (50s) he's drab, boring, and terse. Your average Office type.

STEVE
I'm gonna need those expense reports by the end of the day, Bill.

BILL
I don't work in accounts receivable, Steve.

STEVE
Oh, right. Wait, you don't?

BILL
No...

STEVE
I'm sorry, who are you again?

Bill shakes his head and returns to his work. Steve shrugs and paces away.

BILL
(under his breath)
Jesus H. Fucking Christ.

Bill types away at his computer.

10 INT. BAR - LATER.

10

Bill and DALE (40s) sit at a bar nursing their beers, shooting the shit together.

DALE
Damn Cubs lost again today. That bullpen is absolute ass.

BILL
Answer me something, Dale.

DALE
Shoot, shooter.

BILL
How'd you ever make it in your line of work?

DALE
Me? Heh. I know I had a woman I had to come home to who would give me the ass whoopin' of a lifetime if I didn't stick out my job.

BILL
But, **why** did you do it?

DALE
I got a family to take care of, fuck you mean, Bill?

BILL
Ugh, nevermind, man. Shit.

DALE
What's on your mind, Bill? C'mon. Tell me.

BILL
I just don't think I can do this anymore. This corporate life is sucking the life from my soul. I can feel it, deteriorating. Day in, and day out. Slipping from me...I don't

know. Sounds dumb, I'm sure.

DALE
Yeah. I hear ya.

BILL
Am I crazy?

DALE
Yeah. Functional crazy, though, Bill.

Bill chuckles at that as he takes a sip.

DALE
Bill, you gotta understand somethin'. You made a lifelong commitment to this woman. You started a family. Ya gotta see this through! Otherwise, what are ya doin'? What was the point of all that?

BILL
Yeah, I suppose you're right.

DALE
You can't let the big sad take ya down. You got too happy a life for that.

BILL
Huh. Yeah, sure, Dale.

DALE
What? What's goin' on with you?

BILL
Nothing.

DALE
All right, Bill. You sure are actin' funny.

BILL
Not any more than usual.

DALE
Huh. Got that right.

Dale takes a sip of his beer. Bill has a million mile stare...

11 EXT. BAR - LATER. 11

Bill slightly stumbles outside the bar, he drunkenly fishes out his PHONE from his pocket.

PHONE FACE: CASSANDRA (late 30s, early 40s) was recently DIVORCED on 'The Book of Faces'

Bill reacts with shock, awe, and interest. He swipes on...

BILL

Hmm.

He then shoves his phone in his pocket and wobbles on over to his car.

12 INT. BILL & JAN'S HOME - LATER. 12

Bill barges in the front door and meanders to his--

13 INT. LIVING ROOM - CONT. 13

He plops right on his couch and flips on the TV. He doesn't miss a beat.

Jan looks on from the Kitchen with intrigue--

JAN

Where have you been?

BILL

What do you care, huh?

She throws her arms up in disgust. She realizes he's right, she doesn't care.

Jan extricates herself from the situation.

Bill looks back, finds she's gone and directs his attention back to the TV. Expressionless.

14 INT. OFFICE - MORNING. 14

Bill wanders to his desk like a zombie. Mindless.

He plops down in his seat, lets out a sigh. Somber.

Co-workers JOSH and CECIL (40s) both converse in the background, Bill barely pays it any mind.

JOSH (O.S.)
So, yeah. We put the kitchen sink in
the bathtub, because-- you
know...there was just no room.

CECIL (O.S.)
Oh, right. Of course.

Bill goes to town on his computer.

JOSH (O.S.)
Yeah, it was just the right move.

CECIL (O.S.)
Seems logical.

Bill is noticeably irritated, but furiously types away.

Cecil and Josh, just barely visible above the cubicle wall
behind Bill continue on...

CECIL
Did you try the shower curtain in the
headboard?

JOSH
I didn't think of that. That's a great
idea, thank you.

Bill shakes his head, but tries to ignore them and carries
on...

CECIL
Yeah, the wife and I tried that and it
was life-changing.

JOSH
Oh, yeah. I bet. The husband and I
gotta try that.

CECIL
Absolutely, you really do.

Bill does his level best not to lose it, he massages his head
a moment, goes back to typing away.

CECIL
Definitely opens up the floor plan,
you know. Open concept.

JOSH
Oh yeah, that's what it's all about.

CECIL
No doubt.

Bill's pressure level is rising...

JOSH
Yeah, we were thinking the tile floors
just have to go, you know.

CECIL
Oh yeah, you know-- the baseline and
the running ceilings.

JOSH
Oh, yes. The wood boards with the tile
linings with that caulking it just
wasn't gonna work.

Bill rubs his temples, as if it will calm him down...

CECIL
Oh, yes. I understand. With the back
splash and the ceiling floor striping
it wouldn't go together.

JOSH
Oh I totally agree. One hundred
percent.

Bill suddenly **rises** from his seat and spins around to face
them--

BILL
Do you two ever **stop**?!

Josh and Cecil snap to him, horrified.

JOSH
I beg your pardon?

BILL
Do either of you work around here??

CECIL
Well, yes. Of course!

BILL
Well, then-- how about ya do it? Other

people are trying to while you two are just-- blabbering about!

Cecil and Josh stare in **shock**.

JOSH

Why, okay, then. Fine, Bill! We will.

BILL

Good! We might just be able to get some work done, then. Shan't we?

CECIL

Sure, Bill. Yeah.

BILL

(egging them on)

Yeah, let's do that. Yeah!

Bill claps for them sarcastically as they apprehensively march back to their desks, embarrassed.

Onlookers watch from afar, amused.

Bill lowers himself back in his seat, impressed with himself.

He returns to his work when--

BILL'S BOSS (50s) domineers over the cubicles, arms folded. He's a total hard-ass with no regard for others' well-being.

BOSS

William. Can I see you for a minute, please?

Bill situates himself, stares, then rises from his seat--

BILL

Uh, yeah. Sure. Yes.

He nearly trips over his seat making his way over...

15 INT. BOSS' OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER.

15

The Boss swings in his seat, offers Bill the seat across from him.

BOSS

Blake, I gotta level with ya. I appreciate what you're doing, or trying to do. But, your numbers aren't

good enough for you to be barkin'
orders at everyone. Ya got me?

BILL

It's, uh-- Bill, sir...

BOSS

Right. Will. I like the thought. It's
there, really. But...I've been getting
complaints. And frankly...it's
concerning.

BILL

Won't happen again, boss.

BOSS

I need assurances, Phil. Your
performance speaks volumes--

BILL

...it's...Bill...

BOSS

--and as I stated, your words just
aren't cutting it. So. Either your
numbers speak for you, or my foot in
your rear out the door will. Ya got
me?

BILL

Yeah, I think I get it.

BOSS

Good. Now go out there and pump up
your numbers. Otherwise, I'll get any
one of these people you've been
chirpin' at to swing up and take your
spot. Ya hearin' me?

BILL

Yes sir, you got it. No problem.

BOSS

As if it would be?

BILL

No, sir. It won't be.

BOSS

That's the spirit, Gill. Go get 'em. I
believe in ya. Always have.

BILL
Thanks, boss. Appreciate it.

The Boss gestures to him in an encouraging fashion.

Bill rises from his seat and swings out the office.

The Boss briefly looks up as he leaves and shakes his head.

16 INT. BILL'S CUBICLE - MOMENTS LATER. 16

Bill slides back into his seat, most of his team looking on from a good, safe distance.

He settles in and looks directly at--

JOSH and CECIL staring right at him. Their eyes shooting lasers at him.

Bill quickly glances away. He shuffles papers, acts busy...

17 EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY. 17

Bill lackadaisically peruses the streets after his shift.

He comes upon a-- THEATRE. Bill studies it up and down. In admiration. In longing...

Bill then trudges on, apprehensive to continue on...

18 INT. BILL & JAN'S HOME - LATER. 18

Bill pulls up in his car, flings himself from it, and thrusts through the front door.

He makes a bee-line right for the fridge. Bill pops open a beer and takes a healthy swig as he plants himself on the couch.

Jan emerges from behind him.

JAN
How was work?

BILL
Oh, it was--

JAN
No, wait. I don't care.

Jan disappears from whence she came...

Bill shakes his head as he gulps down more beer...

Caleb looks on from a distance, undetected by either of them...

19 INT. OFFICE CUBICLES - MORNING. 19

Bill stares mindless at his computer. Barely a thing going on up in his head.

OTHER CO-WORKERS slave away at their desks in their beige cubicles behind him, all around him.

20 INT. OFFICE - WATER COOLER - LATER. 20

Bill mosies on up to the Water Cooler where OTHER CO-WORKERS, JASON, JOHN, and JOE (40s) talk about God knows what.

JASON

You catch the game last night?

JOHN

Yeah, that was some sports-ball last night.

JOE

Yup.

Bill grabs a paper cup. Fills it up.

JASON

Helluva game.

JOHN

Oh, yeah.

JOE

Yeah.

Bill takes a sip. Stands with them like he belongs.

They just stare at him a moment and carry on ignoring him.

JOHN

Can't believe Miller gave up the no-hitter.

JASON

Yeah, crazy, right?

JOE

Yah.

An awkward beat as they all deal with Bill's presence.
Bill hasn't a clue what to say. So he opts for nothing.

BILL

Well, this has really been something.

Jason, John, and Joe all just stare at him. Not a word.

Bill just nods his head.

Awkward beat.

JASON

You gonna make us do work, or something?

Bill finally shakes his head, crumples his cup, tosses it in the trash, and leaves.

All just stare as he goes.

JASON

So, anyway--

21 INT. BILL'S CUBICLE - MOMENTS LATER. 21

Bill slides in his seat and places his face in his hands.

He can't take this shit anymore. But, he knows deep down. He has to. It's all he knows. And he has to support...

22 INT. BILL'S CAR - LATER. 22

Bill rolls up in the driveway. Turns the key. Sits.

He stares at nothing for a moment.

Bill then fishes out his phone, he pulls up--

THE BOOK OF FACES.

PHONE FACE: Cassandra. Divorced. He swipes through photos of her. He reminisces.

He ponders this.

Bill thinks about calling her. Does he?

23 INT. BILL & JAN'S HOME - MOMENTS LATER.

23

Bill pushes through the door and plops down.

He ponders his existence. It's pathetic. But can he change it?

Bill thinks hard about calling--

JAN

What are you doing home?

BILL

It's my home still, isn't it?

JAN

I don't know, Bill. Is it?

BILL

It's at least still half mine.

JAN

Guess you're half right.

Bill, annoyed, rises from his seat and storms off.

Jan stares as he does. She rolls her eyes, slightly amused.

24 EXT. BILL'S HALF HOME - MOMENTS LATER.

24

Bill storms outside. Considers lighting up a cigarette a moment. Decides against it. Now's not the time, he decides.

He fishes out his phone again. Stares at it. Breathes heavily out his nose...

Bill pulls up the dialing buttons as if to say 'fuck it.'

He raises the phone up to his ear, waits....

BILL

Hey.

25 INT. CASSANDRA'S APARTMENT - CONT.

25

We join Cassandra in her apt.

CASSANDRA

Hey. Bill. What a nice surprise. How are you?

INTERCUT:

26 EXT. BILL'S HOUSE - CONT.

26

Bill hesitates briefly, but continues...

BILL

I'm great. I'm good. Thanks. How are you?

CASSANDRA

I'm-- you know. I'm doin'. I'm hangin' in there. It's been a whirlwind. But it's for the better.

BILL

Yeah, I heard.

CASSANDRA

Yeah. It's a thing.

BILL

Yeah, I can imagine.

CASSANDRA

Oh, God, Bill. It's been a mess. I'm a mess. Ugh, fuck. What have you been up to?

BILL

Oh, ya know...same old.

CASSANDRA

Yeah, sure. I get that. Well, hey-- why don't you...come over sometime. Yeah?

BILL

Yeah, yeah. Definitely. Let's do that.

CASSANDRA

All right. I'll give you the new address. I moved out, obviously.

BILL

Yeah, no. Totally. For sure. Understandable.

CASSANDRA

Yeah, fuckin' dick got the old place. Agh, fuck! Whatever, I'm over it.

BILL

(laughs)

I get it. I do. I really do. But-- at least you enjoy the new digs?

CASSANDRA

Oh yeah, no. I really do. Yeah, I do. It's great. It's for the best. You know?

BILL

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Well, hey--

CASSANDRA

Yeah. Let's catch up.

BILL

Yeah, what I was gonna say. Yeah, let's please do.

CASSANDRA

Okay, great!

BILL

Yeah, awesome!

CASSANDRA

Okay! See ya soon.

BILL

Yup. Be seein' ya.

CASSANDRA

Yeah, definitely.

BILL

Perfect.

They mutually end the call.

Cassandra can't help but smile. Neither can Bill...

Bill shoves his phone back in his pocket and heads back for the house.

Cassandra paces about her apartment, on the search for wine...

END INTERCUTTING:

27 INT. OFFICE - MORNING.

27

Bill goes back to his favorite place. He settles in.

Others look on from behind, around him.

Bill turns around, EVERYONE goes back to what they were doing, or act like it...

He returns to his business...

28 EXT. CASSANDRA'S APARTMENT - LATER.

28

Bill swings into a parking spot and kills his car. He emerges from the driver's seat and timidly approaches her door.

Is it her's? He's about to find out...

Bill gives the door an unsure knock...

The door swings open and it's--

29 INT. CASSANDRA'S APARTMENT - CONT.

29

Bill stands dumbfounded at the door when it's revealed--

Yeah, it's her. Cassandra warmly greets him and invites him in.

Bill steps in and takes in the vaulted ceilings in her super nice apartment.

He doesn't say a word.

CASSANDRA

Bill, it's so good to see you.

BILL

Yeah, uh-- yeah it's, uh...been years.
Right?

CASSANDRA

Yeah. Too long.

Bill still revels in the nice-ness of the apartment.

CASSANDRA

Please, have a seat.

BILL

Thanks.

He immediately obeys. Cassandra pops open the wine.

CASSANDRA

Wine?

BILL

Always.

Bill semi-nervously looks about him.

Cassandra shoves the glass in his hand. He fastidiously accepts it.

CASSANDRA

How are things?

BILL

Things are...you know. Things are goin'...

CASSANDRA

Yeah, good. Great, I'm glad.

Beat.

BILL

And you?

CASSANDRA

Good, yeah. Me too!

BILL

I'm so glad to hear that.

CASSANDRA

You and me both.

They share in a chuckle.

Another awkward beat passes.

CASSANDRA

Ugh, you have to forgive me. Things have been so crazy lately. I'm in sweatpants. I haven't showered in days. I feel like a hobo.

BILL

Ha! No, you're fine. Really.

CASSANDRA

Oh, good. That's what I liked about you, Bill. You never judged me. Ugh, you're so great. Thanks.

BILL

God, Cassandra. It's no problem. You can do whatever. I don't care.

CASSANDRA

Good. This divorce has been hell. I know I've put on a good face, but-- Jesus. It's been an ordeal.

BILL

No, I get it. I really do.

CASSANDRA

You do?

BILL

No, yeah. Well-- kinda. I don't know.

CASSANDRA

Bill...what's going on?

BILL

It's actually why I came to see you.

CASSANDRA

Go on...

BILL

I'm thinking about getting a divorce.

Cassandra sits up in her seat, interested...

CASSANDRA

What? No way.

BILL

Yeah, I wanted to get your advice.

CASSANDRA

Really?

BILL

Yeah, I need your help. I don't know what I'm doing.

CASSANDRA
Ha! Well, I'm so glad you came to
visit me...about that....

BILL
I'm serious.

CASSANDRA
No, I know. I know you are.

BILL
You have any advice?

CASSANDRA
Oh, god. I don't know. I'm just now
going through this. You're really
thinkin' about it?

Bill nods.

CASSANDRA
God, that's so awful. I'm sorry.

BILL
No, really. It's fine. I think it's
for the better. We really need to. I
think.

Cassandra raises an eyebrow at that.

BILL
We just aren't...in a good place. I
don't know.

CASSANDRA
Well, it's good you're seeing the
signs early on, at least....

BILL
I know. I just-- I don't know. It's
not the best situation.

CASSANDRA
I know. Caleb. Ugh.

BILL
Yeah, that's the main thing...

CASSANDRA
Well, what has changed?

BILL
Well...I cheated. For one.

CASSANDRA
What? No...really?

Bill shrugs.

BILL
I may or may not have gotten a handjob
from an escort.

Cassandra takes a healthy sip of her wine.

CASSANDRA
Oh, that's not bad...

BILL
I'm serious, Cassandra.

CASSANDRA
No, no! I know. I'm with you. It's not
the greatest, but...really not the
worst you could do.

Bill gives her an, "oh, come on" look...

CASSANDRA
What? Really! It's not bad. I mean.
It's bad, but...it's not-- horrible.

BILL
So comforting.

CASSANDRA
What do you want me to say?

BILL
It's not just that.

CASSANDRA
Okay. Go on...

BILL
My dad just died.

CASSANDRA
I know. I just saw on the Book of
Faces. I'm sorry...

BILL

It's okay. He was a dick. Really had it coming.

CASSANDRA

Oh, wow. Okay. Well...I feel that.

Beat.

BILL

So, anyway. We--

CASSANDRA

What else?

BILL

We, uh...we haven't had--

CASSANDRA

I figured.

BILL

How?

CASSANDRA

Well...what with the...lack of...you know--

BILL

Yeah. Obviously.

CASSANDRA

Obviously.

Beat.

BILL

So, there's been that. Or not that, you know...

CASSANDRA

Oh, yeah. I know.

Bill chuckles at that. Cassandra looks about her.

CASSANDRA

So. Anything else I should know about?

BILL

Umm...

CASSANDRA
Any other hookers I should know about?

BILL
She was just an escort, but...

CASSANDRA
Right, same thing.

BILL
That's what I said! Wait...no it wasn't.

CASSANDRA
She said that, probably.

BILL
Yeah, she totally did.

CASSANDRA
Anyway...

Cassandra downs her wine.

CASSANDRA
More wine?

Bill does the same.

BILL
Absolutely.

CASSANDRA
I always knew you were my kinda guy.

Bill lets a chuckle slip through. She smirks as she swipes up his wine glass and scours the kitchen for more.

She returns with fresh, refilled glasses for both.

Cassandra returns to her seat, Bill nurses his wine glass.

They stare a brief moment. Where were they? Oh, yeah--

CASSANDRA
So, anyway. You were saying?

BILL
Right, uh...what was I saying?

CASSANDRA
Something about Jan being a stuck-up,
self-righteous bitch probably.

Bill bursts out in laughter at that one.

She can't help but share in it. She doesn't care about
laughing at her own joke.

They revel in it as they sip their wine...

Bill suddenly feels a sharp sting of pang in his gut.

BILL
I don't know, I think I should go...

CASSANDRA
What? We were just digging into the
root of the problem, don't you think?

BILL
Yeah, maybe so. But I gotta go.

CASSANDRA
Oh, okay. All right. Well, if you ever
wanna talk. You know where I'll be.

BILL
Yeah, I just think I should--

CASSANDRA
Yeah, no. I got it. No problem.

Cassandra guides him to the door.

CASSANDRA
Anytime, really.

BILL
Thank you, Cassandra. Seriously. I
think this helped a lot.

CASSANDRA
Yeah, you bet. It was so good to see
you!

BILL
Yeah, you too! We'll have to do this
again.

CASSANDRA
No question.

Cassandra pulls the door open for him. Bill slips through.

BILL
I really appreciate it.

CASSANDRA
By all means. Come back.

BILL
I will.

Cassandra smiles big for him. Bill returns a half smile.

She seals the door shut.

30 EXT. CASSANDRA'S APARTMENT - CONT. 30

Bill's smile fades as he walks to his car. Did he just fuck up? He'll find out when he gets home.

31 EXT. BILL'S HALF HOME - LATER. 31

Bill pulls up to the house. He ponders his decision.

Maybe he did fuck up?

32 INT. BILL AND JAN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER. 32

Bill slips into bed. Jan doesn't move a bit. He knows she knows that he's there, though. He can feel it...

JAN
Do I wanna know?

A deliberate beat.

BILL
No.

They share in a tense, but mutual silence.

33 INT. OFFICE - MORNING. 33

Bill mopes in, fully unprepared for the day. He sits at his desk. The hangover setting in...

His Boss waltzes on over behind him--

BOSS

Talk about this weather today, huh? I think it's gonna rain again today. It's good though, our plants need it. Crops for the farmers, you know.

Bill pinches the bridge of his nose, doing his best not to lose it...

BOSS (CONT'D)

Anyway, I know where it's not gonna rain, and that's on our parade! Heh. Oh...anyway, back to work!

The Boss retreats to his office. Bill shakes his head.

A moment passes before Steve approaches from behind--

STEVE

Bill, these expense reports are a disgrace to anyone who's ever held a workable expense report in their hand.

Bill rises from his seat and gets in Steve's face--

BILL

Steve! I don't. Work. In. Your. Fucking! Department!!!

Steve is taken aback, staggers backward, aghast.

BILL

Step off, Steve!

Bill is seething as he does not let up on Steve.

Steve slowly backs away until he paces off.

Bill breathes heavily, regathers himself. He looks over to his Boss' office.

His Boss looks up briefly, but continues poking away at paperwork.

Bill sees the opportunity, he marches toward his office--

34 INT. BOSS' OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER.

34

Bill bursts through the door and confronts the Boss.

BILL
I'd like to file a formal complaint
with HR about Steve.

BOSS
Actually, you know what, Jill? I'm
gonna go ahead and have you close that
door.

BILL
It's...Bill...

BOSS
I think this is the perfect time for
your performance review.

BILL
Seriously? Right now?

BOSS
Now's as good a time as any. No time
like the present, eh, Phil?

BILL
Ugh.

Bill turns on his heel, shuts the door, and grabs the seat
across from the Boss.

BOSS
I gotta tell ya. Your performance has
been...subpar. To say the least. You
just aren't like any of the other
trailblazers in this company. They all
go above and beyond the call of duty,
you know that? And even a step above
that, I would say. You're just-- on
par...with what's expected of you. And
frankly, I gotta say-- that just isn't
quite cutting it.

BILL
I thought you said I was subpar...

BOSS
C'mon, Gill. Don't play smart with me.

BILL
If I'm smart, I should get that
promotion.

BOSS
Your snark is not appreciated, Bill.

BILL
Oh, thanks. Finally got it right.

BOSS
Snarky remarks are not performance,
Jill. Make it about your work, then
we'll talk.

BILL
I've had it with your shit! I refuse
to work for anyone who doesn't care to
learn my name or doesn't know a thing
about me! You have disrespected me for
the last time and you don't even
deserve another two weeks from me!

He stands there, panting, as the Boss has barely raised his
head from his work...

BOSS
I'm sorry, who are you again?

Bill clenches his fists, shakes where he stands, turns on his
heel--

BILL
Ugh!!!

-- and marches out of his office. He blasts through the door
and it **slams** with a **WHAM!!!**

The Boss, confused, stares as Bill storms away. He picks up
the phone and dials HR.

BOSS
How many Bill Johnson's do we have
here again?

DISSOLVE TO:

35 EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY.

35

Bill marches through the streets and makes a bee-line for--

THE THEATRE.

He stares at the poster.

POSTER FACE--

NOW SHOWING: *WHAT WE TALK ABOUT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT LOVE.*

FOR SIX WEEKS ONLY!

Bill studies it and smiles. He marches inside.

36 INT. THEATRE - CONT.

36

Bill barges in the front door and approaches what appears to be--

THE MANAGER (30s) an eccentric but totally approachable and personable...person.

BILL

I'm here to see the manager.

MANAGER

You're seein' em.

BILL

Hi, I'm Bill.

MANAGER

Good ta meet ya, Bill. What can I do ya for?

BILL

How do I get a play up there?

Manager's eyes narrow in on Bill.

MANAGER

What are you drivin' at?

BILL

I want a play. I wanna have a play, play here.

MANAGER

Heh. You're not kiddin' are ya?

BILL

Far from it.

MANAGER

Well, what have ya got?

BILL
What do you mean?

MANAGER
You got any plays I can read?

BILL
Well, no. Not yet. But I--

MANAGER
Come back when ya do, all right?

BILL
Really?

MANAGER
No, that's not how it works.

BILL
What do I have to do?

MANAGER
Ya gotta prove yourself, Bill. That's
what ya gotta do.

The Manager goes back to her business. Bill heads for the door, deflated.

She pays him no mind, until she glances up at him.

The Manager scoffs and shakes her head.

37 EXT. THEATRE - CONT.

37

Bill barges out the front door and shakes his head, defeated.

He marches on down the block. Tears in his eyes. He wipes them away and soldiers on...

38 EXT. BILL AND JAN'S HOME - LATER.

38

Bill approaches the home. He can't go in. He stops.

Sinking to the front step of the porch, he breaks down.

Nearly full-on sobbing, Bill buries his eyes in his hand.

He sniffles, looks up, scans the neighborhood. No witnesses.

Bill gathers himself, lifts himself up, and presses through the front door.

39 INT. BILL & JAN'S HOME - CONT. 39

Bill regains his composure, climbs the stairs, reaches the--

40 INT. BEDROOM - CONT. 40

Bill stands at the threshold of Caleb's bedroom door.

He stares as Caleb sleeps. He ponders, in deep thought.

What should he do?

41 INT. BILL AND JAN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER. 41

Bill meanders into bed. He softly creeps in so as not to stir Jan. To no avail.

JAN

Where were you gallivanting this time?

BILL

You wouldn't care. Nor would you believe it.

JAN

Try me.

BILL

The theatre.

Beat.

JAN

Yeah, I don't believe you...or care.

BILL

Hmm. Told ya.

JAN

You know me so well.

BILL

Not as well as you know me.

JAN

No, I don't know you anymore.

That silences them...

42 INT. BEDROOM - MORNING. 42

Bill wakes and looks over to see--

Jan's empty spot. He frowns, waltzes out of bed.

43 INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER. 43

Bill meanders to the couch. Plops down, flips up the remote, turns on the TV. He flips through the channels--

TV VIEW: Burlesque dancing in Vegas, *Miss March*, *The Girls Next Door* until--

Jan marches over by the couch. She's internally furious.

JAN

What are you doing?

BILL

Watching some quality TV.

JAN

Why aren't you at work?

BILL

I don't want to go.

JAN

Uh, why?

BILL

I just don't want it anymore.

JAN

Excuse me? What?

BILL

You heard me. I'm just not going to work anymore because I don't--

JAN

Yeah, yeah. I heard ya. But, what...in the fuck...are you doing?

BILL

Watching TV.

JAN

Did you pick today to die?

BILL

Not the worst idea you've ever had.

Jan scoffs.

JAN

Well, can you get off your ass and go find another job?

BILL

You know, I think I will. But only since you asked so nicely.

Jan glares him down as he rises from the couch and makes for the door.

44 EXT. BILL AND JAN'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER. 44

Bill backs out and skids off in his car. Jan watches from the window.

He peels off down the street, Jan shakes her head...

45 EXT. CASSANDRA'S APARTMENT - LATER. 45

Bill sharply pulls up. He swings the door open and stomps to Cassandra's front door step. He bangs on the door.

46 INT. CASSANDRA'S APARTMENT - CONT. 46

Cassandra's head flies up to the door. She curiously approaches the door and creaks it open to find--

BILL. He almost sneaks in, but remembers his manners--

BILL

Hey. Can I come in?

Cassandra hesitates...

47 INT. CASSANDRA'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER. 47

Cassandra prepares wine for them again. She offers him a glass...

BILL

A bit early in the day I think.

She eggs him on, not backing down.

BILL
Eh, fuck it.

He accepts the glass. She sits down across from him. They both sip..

CASSANDRA
What's going on?

BILL
I've had it with this shit.

CASSANDRA
You're gonna have to be specific with the type of shit we're dealing with here.

BILL
Jan. The job. Everything. It's too much. I can't handle it.

CASSANDRA
Okay, well...one conundrum at a time. What's wrong with your job?

BILL
That there isn't one.

CASSANDRA
What?

BILL
It doesn't exist anymore.

CASSANDRA
You quit?

BILL
Yeah. Quit. Just-- up and left.

CASSANDRA
Wow. That was...drastic.
(beat)
Oh, I'm not judging.

BILL
Thanks.
(beat)
It was really just toxic for me. I think I might have been depressed. I don't know.

CASSANDRA

Really?

BILL

Yeah. I don't know if I am, but...it sure has the feeling of it. It's like-- every day I come home from work. I've got this...thunderstorm in my head. It drains me of all my energy. Kills my motivation. My drive. To do...anything. I'm sorry, I'm saying too much. I've never told anyone this before.

CASSANDRA

No, it's okay. I understand. I've been there. I know that...feeling. It's hard. I know. I really appreciate that you feel you can tell me.

BILL

I don't know, it just-- came out.

CASSANDRA

Well, what have you wanted to do? What motivation or drive has your job been taking from you?

Bill thinks hard on this a moment...

BILL

I really want to write plays.

CASSANDRA

Say what? Like...stage plays?

BILL

Yeah. For the local theatre. Or-- at least...I'm gonna try. Heh.

CASSANDRA

I didn't know we had a natural Shakespeare in our midst!

BILL

I wouldn't say that.

CASSANDRA

I guess I just never knew you were interested in that.

BILL

It just kinda came to me.

Beat.

CASSANDRA

Is that what made you quit your job?

BILL

I saw the writing on the wall.

CASSANDRA

Aha, I see. That's clever.

BILL

I just know that I'm not destined for
vanilla ass water cooler talk, the
beige cubicles, and the stupid fuckin'
weather every day!

CASSANDRA

I think that's one thing you can't
hide from anywhere, Bill...

BILL

Fuck you, Cassandra.

CASSANDRA

No, I get it. I knew what you meant.
I'm just messing with you, Bill.

BILL

I know, but, still-- fuck you.

CASSANDRA

(scoffs)

You're fed up with the ordinary, Bill.
I can understand that.

(takes a gulp of wine)

So what's with Jan, then?

BILL

She's reached my last nerve.

CASSANDRA

Maybe you've reached hers, as well.

BILL

We push each other's buttons.

CASSANDRA
I understand completely.

BILL
From experience?

CASSANDRA
Oh, yeah. Oh yeah.

BILL
When did you know it was...time?

CASSANDRA
I think there's a point when you both know. Ours was...kind of a mutual thing.

BILL
I think we might be reaching that point.

CASSANDRA
You and Jan need to have a conversation about it.

BILL
I know. I'm planning on it.

CASSANDRA
Don't shy away from the conflict.

BILL
That's what I really hate.

CASSANDRA
You have to face it. You'll both be better off for it.

BILL
Mm-hmm. Thanks.

CASSANDRA
I know it must be hard for you.
(beat)
You love her, don't you?

BILL
Of course. I think part of me always will, but...we've both just been detrimental to each other.

CASSANDRA
I totally get that.

BILL
I just don't know what's to come of
Caleb. I feel bad for putting him in
the middle of it all.

CASSANDRA
That's the hardest part. 'Do we stay
together for the kids?' Right?

BILL
Yeah, I don't know what the hell to
do. Visitation and custody just sounds
like a fuckin' nightmare.

CASSANDRA
Yeah, I can't imagine.

BILL
You're lucky you don't have kids.

CASSANDRA
Gawd, tell me about it.

Beat.

BILL
Can you tell me exactly what happened
with you and...

CASSANDRA
--shithead.

BILL
(chuckles)
Right. If you don't mind my asking.

CASSANDRA
I can't believe I didn't tell you
about it.

BILL
Just saw on the...you know.

CASSANDRA
Right. Well...

BILL
It seemed like all was going so well.

I was-- surprised...to say the least.

CASSANDRA

The honeymoon phase isn't something that's supposed to go away. It faded pretty fast. Quicker than I thought. Neither of us expected to drift that far...we ended it when we realized how far that really was. And boy, we drifted with the best of 'em...

BILL

Or the worst. Depending on how you look at it.

CASSANDRA

Hmm. Yeah.

Bill lets the uncomfortable silence get to him--

BILL

So what did you hope to find after?

CASSANDRA

I don't know, Bill. He took half my life, I took half his worth. Does that not sound like a fair trade?

BILL

Sure, I mean--

CASSANDRA

Time and money-- they're the same, are they not?

BILL

No they're not, but I see your point.

CASSANDRA

They can be depending on your point of view. Or what your occupation is.

Bill takes a healthy sip of wine. Cassandra does too.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

So, what are you gonna do?

BILL

I don't know, I was hoping you might be able to help.

CASSANDRA

Me? Oh, god. Not me. I'm the worst person to ask about this.

BILL

But you've been through it. You know how it goes.

CASSANDRA

I do, but...you should really see a therapist or something.

BILL

A therapist?

CASSANDRA

Yeah, I don't know. You seem like...you're not-- yourself.

Bill turns to his wine for help.

CASSANDRA

I'm not saying it's a bad thing. It's nothing to be ashamed of. So many people suffer from it. It's really not all that out of the ordinary.

BILL

Come on, stop it.

CASSANDRA

You'd be surprised. Everyone struggles. I'm glad you came to me about it, though. I'm honored, really. You just-- need to go to someone who can actually help. I'm not the best. Trust me.

BILL

I'll think about it.

CASSANDRA

Please do.

They both take a moment to drink, share in the silence.

CASSANDRA

So, what's your play?

BILL

I don't know. I don't know what to do

from here.

CASSANDRA

No, I mean-- your stage play? What's it about?

BILL

Oh, shit. Uh...I hadn't really thought about it at all.

CASSANDRA

You haven't? I thought you said you quit your job for that exact purpose.

BILL

Yeah, I did. But I haven't even started yet. I have no idea what I'm doing.

CASSANDRA

Really? Well-- I gotta say what you're doing...it's bold. I respect it.

BILL

I appreciate you, Cassandra.

They smile at each other and then enjoy their wine.

48 INT. CASSANDRA'S APARTMENT - MANY WINES LATER.

48

Bill is morphing into the couch, slurring his words.

BILL

You know-- Hugh Hefner was just... misunderstood.

CASSANDRA

Oh, yeah? How's that?

Cassandra sees this and grabs a blanket.

BILL

Everyone just sees him as the sex man, but-- really, he was just a child at heart.

CASSANDRA

Where did that come from?

BILL

I don't know, just something I've been

thinking about.

CASSANDRA

So that's who you've decided to fill your thoughts with -- Hugh Hefner.

BILL

Who better than Hugh?

CASSANDRA

I could think of a great many people, actually.

BILL

I don't know, I've had a lot of time to think. And lately I've just been thinking that they really did my main man dirty towards the end of his life.

CASSANDRA

I'm sure a lot of twenty-somethings did him **real dirty** in his lifetime.

BILL

You know what I meant.

CASSANDRA

I do. I'm just-- not the biggest fan of his.

BILL

Well-- allow me to change your mind on the subject...

She takes the wine glass away from him, puts his legs up on the couch, and tucks him in.

CASSANDRA

You're too much, Bill.

BILL

(drunkenly)

You're a funny gal.

CASSANDRA

Get some sleep, Bill.

BILL

(tired)

Yeah, you sleep. We all sleep.

Cassandra smiles at him, pats him on the head, and heads up the stairs of her loft.

BILL
 (mumbling, falling asleep)
 Hugh's asleep. The big sleep. Poor
 guy.

She chuckles and shakes her head as she climbs the stairs...

Bill passes out. Cold.

49 INT. CASSANDRA'S APARTMENT - MORNING.

49

BILL POV: From blurry to clear, Cassandra wakes Bill.

BILL
 Ugh.

CASSANDRA
 How ya feelin', Bill?

BILL
 That was too much wine. Were you
 tryin' to get me drunk, Cassandra?

CASSANDRA
 I didn't lift the glass to your mouth.

BILL
 Yeah, that's fair.

CASSANDRA
 We've all been there.

Beat.

BILL
 Fuck, I gotta get goin'.

Cassandra leads Bill to the door.

CASSANDRA
 Well, when that play is finished, you
 let me know. I'd love to see it.

BILL
 I'd love for you to be there.

Beat.

CASSANDRA
Well, I hope it all works out for you.

BILL
You too.

She gives a curt nod, smiles are exchanged and he leaves.

Cassandra hesitates a brief moment before easing the door shut.

Bill looks to her shut door from his car. He solemnly opens his car door...

50 INT. BILL & JAN'S HOME - LATER.

50

Bill struts through the door and goes right to Caleb, who's surprised to see him.

BILL
Caleb, I gotta tell ya somethin', son.

CALEB
What, dad?

JAN (O.C.)
Don't listen to your dad's filth,
Caleb!

BILL
You gotta look at history. One hundred
percent of marriages begin from
lunacy. You don't want this, son. Half
of them end in divorce.

CALEB
And the other half?

BILL
Death.

CALEB
If it's so bad, why'd you do it?

BILL
It was all her, I had no hand in it.

JAN (O.C.)
Shut your fuckin' mouth, Bill!

BILL

I haven't had any control over anything in my life. I aim to fix that.

Caleb blankly stares at Bill.

BILL (CONT'D)

Just don't do it the way I did, and you should turn out all right.

CALEB

What do you mean, dad? I thought you said to listen to you.

BILL

Yes, exactly. Do the opposite of what I've done. That's the way to live and truly succeed. Believe that.

CALEB

I don't get it. Why did you live this way, dad?

BILL

I don't know, Caleb. I haven't exactly had control over much of my life.

CALEB

I don't know what you want me to do, dad.

BILL

Whatever you want, Caleb. Just, use me as an example of what not to do. You got me?

Caleb nods his head.

Bill nods, smiles, pats him on the shoulder, and glides away. Caleb watches him go.

Jan focuses her attention away from what she was doing and looks directly at Caleb--

JAN

Just-- erase the shit that dad filled your brain with. You don't need that corrupting your mind.

Caleb ponders that, then shuffles away. Jan watches as he

goes...

51 INT. STORE - LATER.

51

Bill waltzes into an ANTIQUE STORE. He scans the room.

He walks about the room, passing by shelves of old, rustic antiques, waiting for a new home.

Bill finally comes upon what he needs--

BINGO. A TYPEWRITER.

He picks it right up--

--deposits it at the register.

With a big shit-eating grin, he fishes out money...

that he doesn't have.

The CASHIER (20s) frowns. A boring 20-something wearing no expression.

Bill swipes his CREDIT CARD. He gleefully transports the Typewriter towards the door.

52 INT. BILL'S HOUSE - LATER.

52

Bill runs up the stairs to his room, carrying the bulky typewriter carefully, but with spring in his step.

He carefully places the typewriter at an empty desk, sits down, pulls himself up. Ready to write. Or is he?

Bill ponders the blank page. He stares at it. His newfound enemy...

He thinks hard on it, but ultimately, has nothing.

What to do now?

53 INT. BAR - LATER.

53

Bill pulls a seat right next to DALE who nurses a beer.

The BARTENDER (50s) old and gruff man, slides a beer to Bill who catches it in stride.

Dale barely acknowledges him.

DALE
What's the verdict?

BILL
For what?

DALE
Well? Divorce? Stick it out?

BILL
How'd you know?

DALE
Grapevine. C'mon, ladies talk.

BILL
Don't I know it?

Bill turns to his beer for help.

DALE
I can tell you what Jan thinks.

BILL
I already know what Jan thinks.

DALE
Well...what do you think?

BILL
I don't know anymore.

Beat.

DALE
Says you got a new gig now, too.

BILL
Oh, so they know these things before I even know?

DALE
Wasn't aware you were out of the loop of your own life.

BILL
Apparently I am.

DALE
What are ya doin', man? I mean-- you know I love ya, but...c'mon, Bill!

BILL

I'm finally going to be doing what I want.

DALE

At the detriment of your family, mind you.

BILL

I get that, but-- I just couldn't deal with the crock of shit that life has brought to my table.

DALE

Bill, do you really think you're the first person to rebel against something they've thought they were supposed to be doing all your life?

BILL

Of course not, but--

DALE

You act like you've got this...I dunno-- chip on your shoulder. Like life is out to get ya. Well, get this-- it ain't. And us normal people are out here struggling every day too, ya know.

BILL

I know, but I'm doing something about it.

DALE

You're not thinking about Caleb.

BILL

You really think I wasn't considering him in all this?

DALE

It don't seem that way, Bill.

Bill thinks hard on this.

BILL

Why can't you just be on my side, for just once, Dale? Huh?

DALE

You know I'm always on your side,
buddy. But this time-- I just don't
know.

BILL

I know what I'm doing, Dale.

DALE

Everybody's gotta have a job. You
might be in over your head here, Bill.

BILL

I have one.

DALE

And what's that?

BILL

I'm gonna be a play writer. I'll write
stage plays.

DALE

There good money in that?

BILL

I don't know.

Bill and Dale direct their attention to the Bartender who
wipes down a glass, shaking his head emphatically.

Dale and Bill glance at one another, and shrug.

54 INT. THEATRE - LATER.

54

Bill apprehensively creaks open the door and slides in. He
spies the Manager once again who is busy with a PRODUCER
(30s) a hipster guy with a lisp and unwavering determination.

He creeps up, so as not to interrupt them, waits his turn.

MANAGER

(to Producer)

Okay, let me know when they're on
again.

PRODUCER

You've got it.

The Producer gives Bill and The Manager some space.

MANAGER

Back again, huh?

BILL

Yeah. I was hoping for
some...guidance. If you could.

MANAGER

Really? Guidance? Next thing I know,
you're gonna ask me for inspiration.
You writers are insufferable.

BILL

See, I just don't know where to start.

MANAGER

Seems like more of a **you** problem.

Bill takes a step back. He collects himself.

BILL

I'm sorry, we're off on the wrong
foot.

MANAGER

More like, we're off on two left feet.

BILL

What's your name again?

MANAGER

(non-chalant)

Annie Baker.

BILL

Nice meeting you. Should I have heard
of you?

MANAGER

(sarcastic)

No, of course not, ass-cock. Only
anyone who's ever had their brain
twisted on right in this business.

BILL

Oh, are you famous or something?

MANAGER

Infamous, if anything. And, that's not
my name, by the way. You're as
gullible as they come.

BILL

Oh, heh-heh. That's funny, you're funny. What's your name, then?

MANAGER

Shelley. Shelley Caputo.
(mocking)
And you are, again?

BILL

I'm Bill. Bill Johnson. Heh. We're both introducing ourselves like Bond. You notice that?

Shelley is not enthused...

BILL (O.C.)

Bond, James Bond. Heh-heh.
Okay...anyway--

SHELLEY

So you want help with your play, do ya?

BILL

Yeah, if you could. You know, I just need something...to start.

Shelley places her hands on her hips, shifts her weight to one foot.

SHELLEY

Well-- get in line, buddy. So many people in this business think they can just up and write a play. And all of a sudden-- boom, you're in it! You're in the game. All these fuckin' screenwriters running rampant. It's nonsensical.

BILL

Well, see-- I'm not writing for the screen. It would be for the... you know-- for the stage.

SHELLEY

You're no better for it, honey.

BILL

Okay, how about this--

SHELLEY

No, no. How about this? An olive branch. I'll grab you a play to read. Or-- better yet...you come to one of our shows. Get an idea of the game. Then, you come to me with something, I'll give it a glance. Happy?

BILL

Yeah, uh...that'd be great! It's a start. That's all I needed.

Shelley directs her attention away from him, to other more...important things...

SHELLEY

Uh-huh.

BILL

Okay, great. Thanks, uh...

SHELLEY

Shelley. Caputo.

BILL

Right. Duh, of course.
(points to his head)
Committed to memory now.

Shelley flashes a fake smile and turns away from him, to the other more important things again. So as to say, 'you can fuck off now'

SHELLEY

(under her breath)
Ass-hat...

Bill's got it. Message received. He makes a break for the door when--

He almost forgot! Bill rushes back to her.

Shelley slides her glasses down upon his approach....

BILL

Um, could I possibly get that--

She nods and grabs a copy of a SCRIPT from a table nearby. Shelley hands it over.

BILL
Awesome. And the...?

Shelley motions with her head towards--

A POSTER: **NEXT SHOWING FRIDAY 7PM**

BILL
Perfect! Thank you so much.

SHELLEY
Don't mention it.

Bill makes for the door.

SHELLEY
(under her breath)
Seriously, don't. Ever. For the love
of god, please.

He's out the door before he can even hear her.

Shelley glances out the door as he leaves, curious...

Her ASSISTANT (20s) softly approaches from behind. She's aggressive but also somehow a pushover.

ASSISTANT
I don't understand it, Shelley. Why
him? I have a stack of scripts from
accredited playwrights. Award-winning
playwrights. Festival darlings. This
guy hasn't proven himself. He doesn't
even know his ass from his elbow.

SHELLEY
I like his persistence. His can-do
attitude, even if he can't. This
Bill's got balls on him. Besides, **you**
don't even know your ass from your
elbow. Now, you fetch me a coffee.

The Assistant rolls her eyes but obeys. Shelley wears a shit-eating grin on her face...

55 INT. BILL'S BEDROOM - LATER.

55

Bill glances up and down the STAGEPLAY. His eyes widen.

BILL
 (mumbling)
 Wow, this is good shit. Fuck me.

His eyes dart about the page. Maybe he is in over his head?

BILL
 Okay...here goes nothing. Probably.

Bill puts his fingers to the Typewriter. He pensively pushes down on a key.

BILL
 Most likely nothing...nothing at all.

Bill is careful with his button pushing, cautious not to fuck up, lest he desire to start over, or fix his constant fuck-ups...

BILL
 (whispering to self)
 Worthless sack of shit, Bill...

He is more and more calculated with each pressing of the key.

Bill's head moves side to side as he follows along the page...

BILL
 (silently, sharply)
 All right. Let's do this, fucker!

His typing becomes more rapidly paced...

56 INT. THEATRE - LATER.

56

A PLAY is being performed on the STAGE.

Bill sits towards the back row. He focuses intently on the production...

Shelley patrols the rows, spots him and drifts over to him.

She plants herself next to him, he takes notice but redirects his attention to the show.

They share in the silence, apart from the ACTORS projecting their lines...

SHELLEY
 See, this right here's the good shit,

Bill. This magic doesn't happen overnight.

BILL
I know, it's-- it's great.

SHELLEY
Bill, you can't just rely on them to be great. You have to **be** great. And they'll bring it to life on the stage.

BILL
I'm working on that part.

SHELLEY
I know you are.

A beat.

SHELLEY
Why did you want to do this? And don't tell me it's because you hate your shitty job.

He thinks on it hard after she took his answer.

SHELLEY
It's because you hate your shitty job, isn't it?

BILL
Yeah...

SHELLEY
You gotta find something else. Another reason. You have to **love** this. You have to live and breathe it. It's not something you can just-- fly at half mast. I'm talkin' balls on walls. I can't have you in this if your **all** isn't in it.

BILL
I'll keep that in mind.

SHELLEY
You're gonna hafta do a lot more than that.

Bill doesn't know how to respond. Shelley leaves him to it. He watches her go then resumes viewing the play...

57 INT. BILL & JAN'S HOME - LATER.

57

Bill is watching *The House Bunny* on TV when-- it's muted. He looks around him--

Caleb is holding the remote. He puts it down.

BILL

What's up, Cale?

CALEB

Mom told me about what you did.

BILL

Okay, you heard mom's side. That's not the most reliable source, you know. The least reliable, really.

CALEB

Why did you do it?

Bill takes a deep breath. He might as well tell him.

BILL

The life was being drained from me in that god damned beige cubicle, Caleb. You have to understand. I have thunderstorms in my head of negativity. Every day. I couldn't take it anymore.

CALEB

Well, these better be some kick-ass plays, dad.

Bill smiles.

BILL

Those are the only ones I know how to write.

CALEB

Will you let me see them one day?

BILL

You'd have to ask your mom. They're full of gratuitous sex, nudity, profanity, and the like. You know, the works.

CALEB
I exclusively seek that sort of stuff
out, dad.

BILL
That's my boy.

Bill goes in for a hug, Caleb accepts. He holds him close...
He holds him at arm's length, looks him straight in the eye.

BILL (CONT'D)
And you gotta promise me one thing--
don't give in to something that
destroys the fuel for your passion, or
your dreams. Can you do that for me?

Caleb nods. They embrace.

58 INT. BILL'S WRITING ROOM - LATER. 58

Bill types a few words on his TYPEWRITER when--

SHING!

The Typewriter slides across. Bill lifts the finished paper
to his eyes...

He admires it. This is it. He's done it.

Bill folds the paper behind his STACK.

A finished draft!

He smiles, rises from his seat and rushes out the door--

59 INT. THEATRE - LATER. 59

Bill searches for Shelley, he doesn't find her in the lobby.

He directs his attention to the auditorium--

60 INT. THEATRE - STAGE - MOMENTS LATER. 60

Bill paces down the aisles, head on a swivel for--

SHELLEY.

He trots on down to her. She dreads in the incoming
encounter...

BILL
Just the woman I wanted to see!

SHELLEY
Wish I could say the same. What have
ya got for me, Mamet?

BILL
Okay. It's called *Play Bill*.

SHELLEY
(mocking)
Clever.

BILL
It's about Hugh Hefner. It's an ode to
his life, really. It's a musical and a
biopic. And, see-- it's called *Play
Bill*, because I'm Bill... It's a play
on, well...you know-- Playboy and...
(short beat)
I'll see myself out.

SHELLEY
It's wonderful. Magnificent. I love
it.

BILL
Wow, you do? Really?

SHELLEY
Yeah, I'd like to start casting
immediately!

BILL
Seriously?!

SHELLEY
No, Bill. Let me read the damned thing
first.

BILL
Oh, right. Of course.

SHELLEY
Well-- is it done, or what?

Bill shuffles his papers.

BILL
Oh, yeah. Here's the-- draft. Right

here.

He hands the DRAFT over to her. She gracefully accepts.

SHELLEY

Great. Oh, and by the way--

BILL

Yeah?

SHELLEY

Make sure the first ten pages are killer. If not, I'm just gonna wipe my ass with it, okay?

BILL

Yes, ma'am.

SHELLEY

I need to feel like I'm having a heart attack, straddling a dolphin on acid. It's gotta be like that.

BILL

Oh, wow. Okay. Good to know. Thanks for the pointers.

SHELLEY

You bet.

Bill turns to leave when--

SHELLEY

Oh, and Bill?

He stops dead in his tracks.

BILL

Yah?

SHELLEY

I don't do this for everyone, you know. Keep that in mind.

BILL

Right. Got it. Thank you, so much. Really. It means a lot.

SHELLEY

Don't do me dirty, Bill.

BILL
Wouldn't dream of it.

Bill and Shelley smile at each other, Bill marches on up towards the exit--

SHELLEY
Talk about a total letdown.

He puts on the brakes once again. He might've heard that...

BILL
What?

SHELLEY
Nothing. See ya when I see ya,
Billiam.

Bill gives Shelley a thumbs up. She fake smiles.

Shelley gives the first page a once-over and tosses it aside.

One of her ASSISTANTS picks it up and glances it over...

61 INT. BILL & JAN'S HOME - LATER.

61

Bill is on cloud nine, marching proudly into the house when--
Jan confronts him. She's furious...

JAN
What have you been doing all day?

BILL
Something important. But nothing that
concerns you.

JAN
Everything you do since you left your
job concerns me now.

BILL
What do you want me to do, huh? Slave
away some more at some corporation?
Sell my soul again?

JAN
Yeah, actually. A little *income* would
be nice!

BILL

Why don't you go back to work? Isn't that what all the cool feminist ladies are doing these days?

JAN

Don't be a prick. You need to bring in money to this house. Support your son. Keep this roof over our heads. Enjoy it while it lasts, because it'll be gone in a fuckin' instant if you keep running around out there with your dick out. No purpose. No routine.

BILL

Jan. I'm doing something for myself that is actually going to matter. I created something. Can you say the same for yourself in the last-- say...fifteen years?

JAN

That's low, Bill. Even for you.

BILL

Yeah, go moan about it to someone who will listen.

JAN

What is your deal? Bill? What is your fuckin' problem?

BILL

I don't know. Might have to deal with the babbling bitch who stands before me!

Jan recoils.

JAN

I want you out of this house. Right **fuckin**g now!!

BILL

Done. Easy.

Bill throws his arms in the air and storms out from whence he came. The door slams with the force of a thousand tigers...

Jan feels it as she shudders from the house shaking...

62 INT. CASSANDRA'S APARTMENT - LATER.

62

Bill mosies on into Cassandra's place.

Cassandra takes note of his entrance. Oh, shit! She didn't have the wine ready...

She scurries about, preparing the wine.

CASSANDRA
Another rough one?

BILL
The end is nigh.

Cassandra pours the glasses.

CASSANDRA
Yeah, you guys just need to end it already.

BILL
You're tellin' me...

She waitresses on over, hands him the glass.

CASSANDRA
So what's new?

He guzzles a bit of wine.

CASSANDRA
Easy there, champ.

Bill takes in a deep breath. He prepares himself.

BILL
I think I'm in love with you.

Cassandra nearly spits out her wine...

CASSANDRA
You're what?

BILL
I-- I'm pretty sure I love you.

CASSANDRA
A poor decision, really.

BILL

I'm serious.

CASSANDRA

No, I know you are! I'm just...taking it in.

BILL

I know it's a bit to process.

CASSANDRA

No, just-- Bill. Ugh. I don't know. This is just all so sudden. I'm not sure.

BILL

Well, I am. My marriage is crumbling. And I know who I want to spend all my time with. And it sure isn't Jan!

CASSANDRA

Bill. I'm flattered that you want to leave your wife for me. It's touching, really. But I'm not gonna be your fuckin' fairytale, Bill! I just divorced my husband, and...I just-- I need to figure my shit out. And I need time to grieve the death of my marriage. I can't just jump right back into it, you know? And the sad truth is-- I really don't think I love you. I'm sorry. I just...don't.

Bill, whose heart hurts, does another chug of wine.

CASSANDRA

What did you think we were gonna sneak off together and be secret lovers or something?

BILL

You can't act like you didn't toy with the idea.

CASSANDRA

Pfft. Come on, Bill. I know that we're good friends, but-- jeez, man.

BILL

I guess I thought I could just wait out your marriage and swoop in. Silly

me.

CASSANDRA

You're not--

(sighs)

--it's not all that absurd to believe that. I've had the same thoughts about others. I get it. I'm sorry, Bill. I just don't feel that way about you.

BILL

It's fine, Cassandra. I just drink and dwell on life's impermanence and the futility of everything now, but everything's okay. It's gonna be fine. I'm fine. We're all fine.

Cassandra can't help but chuckle at that. She gets up from her seat and mosies on over to him. She gives him a nice kiss on the cheek.

CASSANDRA

Thanks for being so open with me, though, Bill.

BILL

Don't mention it. Please. Ever.

She lets out another laugh and fills their wines back up.

CASSANDRA

Don't be so embarrassed, Bill. Shoot your shot, man. I respect the move.

BILL

Well, thanks, Cass. Coulda been worse.

CASSANDRA

Yeah. Still friends, right?

BILL

Of course, always.

She smiles, they cheers their glasses and drink.

63 INT. THEATRE - STAGE - NIGHT.

63

Bill barges in and struts down the row to confront--

SHELLEY. She glances to him, then back to her work. She's surrounded by ACTORS.

SHELLEY
Take ten, everybody.

EVERYBODY
Thank you, ten.

They all scatter. Make way for Bill.

Shelley finally gives him the time of day.

SHELLEY
Whaddya want?

BILL
Well, did you read it?

SHELLEY
Yeah, I read it.

BILL
And?

SHELLEY
(sighs)
Bill, I have serious reservations
about glorifying someone like that.

BILL
Okay...

SHELLEY
But, I gotta hand it to ya. Your
shit's original. More than I can say
for most these days. So that's
something.

BILL
Well, thanks, Shelley-- I...

SHELLEY
I tell ya, the next person who hands
me their rendition of *Hamilton* or
Wicked I'm gonna rip their fuckin' arm
off.

Bill can't help but let out a chuckle at that.

SHELLEY (CONT'D)
Listen to me, hot stuff. I'll let ya
do it. But I support it in almost no
way. Except to allow it to show here.

You get my venue, but I'm not producing the fuckin' thing. If you wanna pay my actors outta your own pocket, along with everything else. And I reap your profits. I got no problem showing your perverse, exploitative, sexist shit. You sell enough tickets for me, I might let ya write me some more of your stuff.

BILL

Wow, thanks Shelley. I mean it. I cannot thank you enough. For everything.

SHELLEY

Yeah, don't be thankin' me yet. This thing can still go tits up. You gotta get my crew on board with this.

BILL

Thank you so so much. You won't regret it.

SHELLEY

Eh, I think I already do.

BILL

Can I hand out the script to them?

SHELLEY

Easy, tiger. Not in the middle of *my* shit. Wait your turn, Prince.

BILL

Okay. I'll be by with copies for everyone. When there's a free moment.

SHELLEY

Never a free moment around here, pal. You'll learn that pretty quick.

BILL

Well, thanks again. I really cannot thank you enough. It's much appreciated.

Shelley nods to him and turns her back. Bill paces up the aisle when--

SHELLEY

Oh, and Bill--

BILL

Yeah?

SHELLEY

You can write. You've got a natural talent for it. But-- don't let that get to your head. You could still use some work. There's nothing more I hate than a writer with a big fuckin' ego the size of Godzilla's cock. Stay humble.

BILL

Of course, thanks. Means a lot coming from you.

SHELLEY

Don't blow smoke up my ass, Bill. It's not a good look for you.

BILL

Duly noted.

SHELLEY

You can learn a lot from me. Use it.

Bill smirks. She nods.

BILL

Be seeing you around.

SHELLEY

Yeah, possibly against my better judgment.

Bill huffs and shakes his head as he climbs up the ramp out the door.

Shelley doesn't want to smile, and does everything she can not to...

64 INT. BILL, BUT PROBABLY NOW JAN'S HOUSE - LATER. 64

Bill eases his way into the house, careful not to alert anyone...

Too late. Jan catches him--

JAN
What are you doing?

BILL
It's my house, too, Jan.

JAN
Pretty soon-- I'll make damn sure that
it's not.

BILL
What do you want from me, Jan?

JAN
If nothing else, I just want you to
provide. For our son. For us to be
able to just-- live...in this house.

BILL
Don't you see that we're not happy? We
can't continue on this way.

JAN
We're not happy? Huh. Funny of you to
notice, Bill.

BILL
Don't play smart with me, Jan.

JAN
Isn't that always the way, Bill? We
throw away our happiness so that one
day Caleb might be happy. That's
marriage.

BILL
That's a miserable life, Jan. Is that
what you really want?

JAN
It's not the life I wanted, Bill. I
had ambitions too, you know. I threw
them out the window the day I had
Caleb. And now-- you're just now
figuring out that you want to pursue
those passions. And you don't care
what you leave by the wayside! It's
pathetic, Bill!

BILL
I just-- need to be single...for

awhile. Get my shit sorted out.

JAN

(scoffs)

You can't just divorce me and ask for me back. This isn't a fuckin' movie, Bill.

BILL

You are so conceited.

JAN

You expect to pawn your son off on me and call me conceited? You're a real piece of work, Bill.

BILL

I was carefully crafted with love in a Dunkin Doughnuts parking lot. So, yeah-- I'm a piece of work.

JAN

Fuck off, Bill. Haven't you ever heard of staying together for the kids?

BILL

I'm not going to willingly be miserable just because society tells me it's the thing to do.

JAN

You're just gonna abandon your duties as a parent to pursue your own wants. That's real selfless of you, Bill.

BILL

I wouldn't be abandoning Caleb. I'm going to do my part.

JAN

Oh yeah? And when's that gonna be?

BILL

As soon as this play goes live.

JAN

That play is not going to be your salvation.

BILL

Watch me.

Bill motions to leave.

JAN

You are making the dumbest decision of your life, Bill. And you're not just wrecking yours, others are affected by this, mind you!

He stops in the doorway.

BILL

You are making a bigger deal than this really is.

JAN

You're tearing a family apart, I don't think I am!!

Bill holds his hand on the door.

BILL

Be seeing you, Jan.

Bill opens the door, makes his way to his car. Jan swings the door open and stands in the threshold--

JAN

I fucking hope not!!

He half smiles as he flips out the keys and opens the door.

65 INT. THEATRE - THE NEXT DAY.

65

Bill stands next to the Stage, watching as the CREW sets up.

He directs them with how and where to put up the set pieces.

They're extravagant and Playboy Mansion-esque...

Shelley softly approaches Bill and stands at his side.

She revels in the setup with him...

SHELLEY

Didn't think you'd see your play come to life, eh?

BILL

I wouldn't say that.

SHELLEY

You're too cocky for your own good.

BILL

You said yourself that confidence is key.

SHELLEY

Yeah, but-- yours is a bit concerning.

Bill softly chuckles at that.

They stare at the frantic, but calculated crew setting up for a beat.

BILL

You really think this is gonna work?

SHELLEY

No, but-- I did hedge my bets with you. So-- it has to. For your sake. But mostly mine.

BILL

Why can't you just support me for once?

SHELLEY

I can't inflate your ego too much, that shit's dangerous. Volatile, really.

BILL

I'm just-- not totally sure about it now.

SHELLEY

Oh, you can't go and have doubts on me now!

BILL

I just can't help but think...ugh--

SHELLEY

Hey. Self-doubt is always gonna be a part of it. It's powering through that separates the greats from the amateurs.

BILL

You think I'm great?

SHELLEY

No, I never said that. You're still a fuckin' amateur. But-- you can get there.

Bill is noticeably nervous, but tries to hide it. He turns away from her, semi-focused on the setting up on stage...

SHELLEY

Hey. Look at me.

He obeys.

SHELLEY

I wouldn't be giving you shit right now if I didn't care. And I sure as fuck wouldn't have given you my venue if I didn't believe in you. Now...you have to believe in you. Otherwise-- this shit isn't gonna work. So, get to blowing up your self-infatuation again. I need that shit. And so does this fuckin' play, Bill.

That might have cheered him up a bit.

BILL

Thanks, Shelley.

Shelley pats him hard on the back and scoots away.

SHELLEY

Don't go all soft on me. Hop to it, tuts.

Bill huffs and shakes his head. He redirects his attention back to the stage--

BILL

Okay, guys. We're back on in five.

CREW MEMBER (O.C.)

Shut your fuckin' hole, Bill!

BILL

Love ya, too!

Bill turns around, gathers his copy of the script, and prepares...

66 INT. THEATRE - LATER. 66

Bill meanders through the lobby. He takes in the beauty of it. He's finally doing what he wants, where he wants it.

He looks at the stage from the lobby. It's a sight to behold for him...

Bill lunges to the front door, he pushes through.

67 EXT. THEATRE - CONT. 67

He takes a deep breath of fresh air. A new start?

Bill takes a turn and puts his key to the door just next to the theatre...an apartment building?

68 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONT. 68

Bill climbs the stairs and reaches a door to an apartment, just above the Theatre.

He unlocks it and the door *jams*. He gives it a little shove, it finally gives.

69 INT. BILL'S APARTMENT - CONT. 69

Bill locks the door behind him. He looks around his barren apartment. Only equipped with the bare essentials.

He looks out the window to see-- the street and shoppes below.

Bill can also see the theatre entrance just off to the right. And a little bit of the MARQUEE.

He feels a little melancholy. Is he thinking about his family? Probably.

Bill's got a lot on his mind. But it's a fresh beginning for him...

70 EXT. JAN'S HOUSE NOW, PROBABLY - THE NEXT DAY. 70

Bill timidly exits his car. He shuts the door as Caleb steps out. He softly approaches. Jan stands on the porch, arms folded.

CALEB

Dad...

BILL
Hey, Cale. How you doin', bud?

CALEB
I don't know, dad. It's weird without you around.

BILL
I'll be around, Caleb. Don't worry.

CALEB
When am I ever gonna see you?

BILL
It's probably gonna be alternating weekends. But...you can visit me anytime.

CALEB
Where are you at?

BILL
I'm in an apartment downtown.

CALEB
By the Theatre?

BILL
Yeah. Just above it, actually.

CALEB
That's pretty cool, dad.
(beat)
I'm gonna miss you, though.

BILL
It's not gonna be like that.

Caleb cracks a half smile. Bill returns it.

CALEB
I'll come see your plays. Even if mom disallows it.

BILL
Just--

Bill looks up to Jan who eyes him, cross.

BILL (CONT'D)
--keep that on the down-low.

Caleb crosses his fingers. Bill gives him a wink.

BILL
I'm gonna go say bye to your mother.

CALEB
Think she'll allow that?

Bill lets a smile slip through.

BILL
She'll have no choice.

He nods and so does Caleb. Bill pats his shoulder and creeps up to Jan.

BILL
Give us some space, will ya, champ?

CALEB
Sure, guys.

Caleb slips in the door.

CALEB (CONT.)
Couple of weirdos...

He makes his way up the stairs. Bill huffs at that. Jan isn't impressed...

JAN
So, this is how it's gonna be, huh?

BILL
I made the choice. You're blameless in it.

JAN
Of course.

Awkward beat passes...

BILL
We can be civil.

JAN
I plan on it.

BILL
Can you at least let Caleb come to the plays?

JAN
It's a constant reminder.

BILL
I don't think he'll see it that way.

JAN
How much do you really know about your own son, anyway?

BILL
Enough to know. I raised him too, ya know.

Beat.

BILL
Hey. I'm sorry. Okay? About it all. I really am. I'm not just saying it.

JAN
Hard to believe what you say these days.

BILL
You can know that I'm being honest. It's different now.

JAN
I know.

BILL
There doesn't have to be bad blood.

JAN
I can't help but be bitter, Bill. After everything, it just feels...empty.

BILL
I'm sorry.

JAN
That's not gonna help things heal.

BILL
I know.

Beat.

JAN
Well...see ya next week?

BILL
Alternating.

JAN
I won't mind if you steal him away.

BILL
Really?

JAN
I won't put up a fight...not a *huge*
fight, anyway.

Bill chuckles at that. Jan can't help but chuckle at her own
joke either...

BILL
Guess we won't be the worst divorced
couple, after all...

JAN
No. We won't.

They actually go in for a hug. It surprises them both...

71 INT. THEATRE - DUSK.

71

Shelley approaches Bill backstage. Bill is practically biting
his nails. Shelley takes note of this.

SHELLEY
Got something on your mind, Bill?

BILL
Yeah, I don't know, Shelley.

SHELLEY
It's almost showtime, get it together.

BILL
No, I know. It's just--

SHELLEY
C'mon...you can do it. Spit it out.

BILL
I'm just...It's been a helluva year,
Shelley.

SHELLEY

Yeah, you're about to turn in your first production. It's the big time. Don't shit out on me now.

BILL

I'm going through a divorce. I left my job...for this, mind you.

Shelley gives an amused nod at that one.

BILL (CONT'D)

And, well...my dad died recently.

SHELLEY

Sorry to hear.

BILL

Well, he was a piece of shit, but--

SHELLEY

Oh, yeah. I get that...

BILL

I don't know, I guess I never really dealt with it properly. I mean-- he just died. We had the funeral, just a week ago. If that. It's all blending together.

SHELLEY

A fart in a whirlwind, I gotcha.

BILL

Pretty much. Anyway, I guess my point is. We had the funeral, and then...I just-- moved on! You know? I never mourned him. Had no reason to. I don't know what I'm saying. It's hard to explain. Maybe I'm heartless for it, I don't know...

SHELLEY

I'm not good at this sort of thing. My advice? Try not to be a bitch about it. That's always been my mantra.

BILL

Hmm. I'll give that my best shot.

SHELLEY

Right-o.

Shelley slaps him on the back and moves on. Bill can't help but scoff, and kinda chuckle. He smiles, shakes his head, and digs deeper backstage...

72 INT. THEATRE - LATER.

72

Bill takes the stage, curtains concealing what's behind him.

He gets in front of the microphone, nervous, but powers through--

BILL

Ahem. Thank you all for coming. What you're about to see is an ode, a tribute to a man who was grossly misunderstood.

That garners laughs from the shockingly full audience.

BILL (CONT'D)

I present to you... Bunnies. Dancing. Sex. And the man himself. I give you--
Play Bill.

Generous applause from the audience as Bill exits stage right.

The curtains open to reveal--

PLAYBOY BUNNIES (20s), A SET OF THE MANSION ITSELF, AND A ROBED, GERIATRIC MOTHERFUCKER (prosthetic 80s) IN THE MIDDLE.

HUGH HEFNER

My fellow Americans. You have come to witness... Spectacle. Homage to the female physique. And Gratuitous Dance Numbers.

Scattered chuckles about the crowd.

FROM SIDE STAGE:

Bill looks on, smiling.

Hugh trails off, inaudible.

Shelley approaches silently from behind Bill. She places her hand on his shoulder.

He turns around, smiles to her. She smiles back.

Music explodes through the general silence.

BACK TO THE STAGE:

Playboy Bunnies line dance around Hugh who swings his cane around, pops a cigar in his mouth, and goes to town.

73 INT. THEATRE - STAGE - CONSIDERABLE TIME HAS PASSED. 73

The music dies down. The lights shine on Hugh who stands alone, center stage.

HUGH HEFNER

I'm just a pervert. A horny old man.
Geriatric mother-lover. Purveyor of
women's nude bodies. All I wanted was
to be seen. To be recognized as
something more. I am more than what
you say about me, society! I am Hugh
Hefner. I am...a man...misunderstood.

Hugh, somber, takes a bow.

Uproarious applause erupts from the audience.

FROM SIDE STAGE:

Bill's head shoots up, mouth agape. Pure joy. Ecstatic.

Shelley sees this. She pats his back, clapping, smiling.

She shoves him out on stage.

FROM CENTER STAGE:

The whole CAST joins Hugh Hefner at his side.

Bill stumbles a bit from being shoved, but regains balance and takes his place by the CAST who all--

--takes a bow.

The crowd has not stopped cheering and clapping.

Bill looks about the crowd. Searching...

BILL POV FROM STAGE: Scanning the crowd for...

BINGO. There she is. CASSANDRA. Smiling. Clapping. She is

looking directly at him.

They lock eyes.

Bill smiles to her. An unspoken understanding. She made it.
And so did he...

DISSOLVE TO:

74 INT. BAR - NIGHT.

74

Dale shares a celebratory beer with Bill.

DALE

I'm happy for you, Bill. I really am.
Cheers.

BILL

Thank you, Dale. I appreciate it.

They cheers their drinks.

DALE

Help me understand, though. How did
you get the money for this play?

BILL

Oh, I'm flat out broke.

DALE

Well...but-- how?

BILL

I took out a sizable loan. I'm not
proud of the amount.

DALE

And you thought this was a smart idea?

BILL

I never said it was smart, Dale.

DALE

Fair enough.

Bill twirls his drink in place. Dale studies him closely.

DALE

Are you...okay?

BILL

Yeah, I'm fine. Great, actually. It was a roaring success!

DALE

No, I know that. But-- how are **you** doing?

BILL

Well. I'm in a fair amount of debt. But...I've never been better.

DALE

As long as you're happy, Bill.

Bill smiles and nods to him. They clink their glasses together.

DALE

How did you do it?

BILL

I don't know...I just-- got behind the typewriter and surprised myself.

DALE

I think you surprised more than just yourself.

BILL

You know, Dale. I'm in a much better place now than I was then. I've got no money, but...I'm happier.

DALE

And Jan...she's-- okay with this?

BILL

Oh, no. Couldn't be more against it. But it wasn't up to her. She was probably the most "anti-play" but-- who can blame her?

DALE

And Caleb?

BILL

Caleb's gonna be just fine. He actually loved the play, by the way.

Dale cracks a big smile.

DALE
I'm sure he did.

BILL
I think he's proud of his
dad...despite everything.

DALE
That's a curious thing.

Bill chuckles at that. He offers his glass, Dale clinks it.

They share in a drink as we pull away...

FADE INTO:

75 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY.

75

Bill approaches a GRAVESTONE from afar. He becomes larger as he comes into view.

He crouches down at his father's gravestone. He's fully unprepared for this, but he gives it his best go--

BILL
Uh, hey dad. Sorry, I'm not good at
these things-- um...where to begin...

He looks around, sees a COUPLE strolling about on the walkway--

BILL (CONT'D)
Hey. How ya doin? Nice day we're
having, right?

The couple picks up their pace as Bill's wave becomes awkward...

He redirects his attention back to the gravestone--

BILL (CONT'D)
Uh, okay...just prolonging the
inevitable. Um...Hey, dad. It's me.
Home boy here. Hope you've had fun
being dead. Sorry, that was morbid. I
couldn't help myself.
(takes a deep breath)
You remember...oh, I'm sure you
remember that day. We played hooky and
went to that Cubs game. You probably
just wanted an excuse to day drink and

get away from mom. I'd do anything to get out of school. Man, that was fun. You lost me, but I was just getting ice cream. Good times. Never did you appreciate my being there in your entire life, except in that moment. You thought you had lost me. Forever. You know, I feel that even now. Even if I ever got lost from you. Like I did that day. I always found my way back to you. I wish I had done it sooner. And that it meant more. I think it was indicative of our relationship. We never really quite got there. I'm realizing now that in my formative years, I was lost. I never told you, didn't think I needed permission to go out on my own, or to lose myself. I think we all need that. But I feel like I am where I'm supposed to be. I think the adventurous part of you would be proud. The cynical part of you would tell me how I'm fucking up and why I should change it all. I know why you do it. And I get it, but...anyway. We all need the time away. And when I came back, you weren't really there. Not this time. Not in the way I hoped. And I didn't realize it would be the last time. It's funny that cliché rings true. You don't appreciate someone or something until there's the threat of it leaving. Or being gone for good.

(beat)

I didn't much care for drunk you towards the end. But...in all fairness, none of us handled it particularly well. Just some worse than others, I guess.

(chuckles to himself)

It's funny, I think...of course I got divorced. Just following suit. I do wonder at times if I'm failing Caleb. Am I raising him right? Am I just dooming him to fail like you and mom did to me? I thought I could give him something different. But, I don't know-- maybe I can...

(beat)

You know, I do wonder if you would even want me to find mom at this point. You'd probably tell me some bullshit that it was because of me that she left, or that she caused you to drink all those years. I don't know, just some excuse to get me to not go. Well, what would ya do dad? Huh? Yeah, that's what I thought...

(sighs)

What am I doing? I'm talking to a fucking rectangle made of stone. Heh. Well...

(beat)

Anyway, I've bored you enough for one day, dad. I'll be by again soon. Get some rest, huh, dad? Heh. I'm so funny.

Bill pats the tombstone and shuffles away. He looks back at it, he slightly smirks. The smile fades, he disappears into the other gravestones...

76 EXT. BILL'S MOM'S HOUSE - LATER.

76

Bill shuts the car door and studies the house. Maybe this is it?

He softly approaches and apprehensively knocks on the door.

A moment passes, no one answers.

Just as Bill considers leaving--

--the door opens to reveal--

BILL'S MOTHER (70s). She's old, decrepit. Kind of abrasive.

MOTHER

Yes, can I help you?

BILL

Hey. It's me, Bill.

She studies him, lowering her reading glasses to get a good look at him.

BILL (CONT'D)

Your son.

He shrugs as if to say, 'Ta-da!' Will she let him in?

FADE TO BLACK:

PLAY BILL.