

MR. CHRISTMAS

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. FILM STUDIO - AFTERNOON

The afternoon sunlight pours into a quaint ski chalet. The fire crackles. Mistletoe dangles between two lovers. It is a scene from a made for TV holiday movie. Literally.

HUDSON REN, 30, boyishly handsome, attainable to the average Christian female, leans into ELEANOR SAINT JAMES, late 20s, an insufferable Anne Hathaway type.

HUDSON

I don't need all my Christmases to be white...but I need them to be with you.

They share a PG kiss.

SLATER (O.S.)

And...CUT!

REVEAL our director SLATER SLOAN, 40s, spiky hair with a leather jacket, amidst a bustling film set.

HUDSON

Can I take this fucking sweater off? It's itchy.

SLATER

Hold off with the sweater for one second. We're on with the network. They're real fussed about this final kiss. They wanna make sure it's wholesome enough.

Eleanor and Hudson refuse to look at each other.

ELEANOR

(hushed)

You know, when you break character like this, it really halts my artistic flow. Leonardo DiCaprio sat in a bear carcass for 12 hours and you can't handle an itchy sweater?

HUDSON

Fuck off Eleanor.

SLATER

Kids, kids. I'm so sorry to do this to ya but we do need to go again.

(MORE)

SLATER (CONT'D)
The note is: We need it to feel
like Jesus is in the room.

Slater motions between Hudson and Eleanor's groins.

SLATER (CONT'D)
Like right here.

Slater grabs their hands. They breathe deeply.

SLATER (CONT'D)
Jesus in. Satan out.
(then)
Ok that's it. He's here. I feel
Jesus. GOING AGAIN EVERYONE!

On Hudson, plastered smile. He leans in...

INT. FILM STUDIO, CRAFT TABLE - LATER

Slater shoves a danish in his mouth. A peaceful 4 seconds to himself until...

ELEANOR
Mr. Sloan. Sir.

SLATER
Eleanor I told you, Slater is fine.

ELEANOR
No, no. I respect the hierarchy
that exists on this film set. You
are the conductor and we are mere
instruments.

Slater is too tired for this.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
As you know, this was my first
holiday performance for the screen.
I'm sure you saw on my resume that
I played the role of Giva in "The
Chanukkah Guest" off-off-Broadway
but Judaism has a far different
spirit than Christianity. And I'm
just wondering if you feel like I
struck the appropriate chord
between "merry" and "romance" in
our film. A balance of "joy" and
"realism". "Heightened in the
reality of this universe" but
"grounded", if you will--

Hudson approaches.

HUDSON

My god, Eleanor. The day's been long enough.

ELEANOR

Excuse me for caring about my craft.

HUDSON

It's a Christmas movie for the Wholesome Family Network. They pump this shit out like it's reality TV. No one cares.

Eleanor puts her hand in front of Hudson's face.

ELEANOR

Hudson, you are assaulting my aura. My therapist warned me of your type. I'm leaving now.

(then)

Slater, it was a pleasure and a joy.

Eleanor leaves. Hudson calls out:

HUDSON

Such a pleasure and a joy!
(to Slater)

Thanks for suffering through that with me man.

SLATER

Oh c'mon these are kinda fun.

HUDSON

Not when you've done 13 of them in a row. What's next for you?

SLATER

Vermont for Christmas. Then I've got a string of holiday themed long-form pornos coming up. Mrs. Clause has this elicited affair with an elf and Santa finds out. It's gonna be *dirty*. I'm pumped.

(then)

What about you? Any holiday plans?

HUDSON

Oh no. I don't do Christmas. I'm heading to Cabo with this Svetlana girl and a bunch of her influencer friends.

SLATER

Feliz Navi-Daddy.

HUDSON

I'm also in the mix for that new Marvel Show. Still waiting to hear back...

SLATER

Well, if there's one thing my years in this industry have taught me - You either live to be the Marvel superhero or die the scared, virginal, stereotypically chubby sidekick. Either way, just make sure your family and friends don't hate you.

What weird, unhelpful advice. Hudson's phone rings.

HUDSON

Uh, thanks man. Gotta take this. Good luck with the pornos!

Hudson makes his way to his TRAILER.

INT. JESSE'S OFFICE, LOS ANGELES - MOMENTS LATER

Hudson's agent and childhood best friend JESSE, 30, on the phone. He looks like Eminem circa 2003. The bromance between Hudson and Jesse is the closest thing our lead knows to true love.

JESSE

My guy. My beautiful cherub. My shining star client. Happy wrap day! How'd it go?

INTERCUT with Hudson on the phone in his TRAILER.

HUDSON

Remind me to sooner throw myself down a never-ending staircase than take a project with Eleanor Saint James again.

JESSE

I will remind you of that. Fat
check comin' your way though, don't
forget it. Excited for Cabo? When
ya headin' down?

HUDSON

First thing tomorrow. I'm catching
my flight back to LA in 3 hours.

Hudson puts on a raincoat.

JESSE

(in Matthew McConaughey
voice)

Alright, alright, alright.

HUDSON

Do all these things have to shoot
in some shitty suburb in Canada?

JESSE

I think Canada's charming. Nice
people, eh?

He's avoiding something...

HUDSON

Just say it. Rip off the band aid.
What's the Marvel update?

JESSE

You know-- I uh-- Fuck. I'm so
sorry. They gave it to Henry Wong.

This is no surprise, they *always* give it to Henry Wong. He
is the Serena to Hudson's Venus (younger and better).
Silence.

JESSE (CONT'D)

But, hey. I do have some good news.
We've got a spicy little offer in.

HUDSON

The recurring rookie detective for
Hulu?

JESSE

CLOSE. WFN wants you to do another
string of Christmas movies--

HUDSON

That is not CLOSE. Jess, I'm being suffocated by this PG Christmas bullshit 12 months a year. I can't-

JESSE

--I hear you. But I also hear the money twerking in our bank accounts. They're offering a wack amount of money to lock you in for a multi-picture deal.

(then)

What can I say, you're the network's "Mr. Christmas", they love you!

EXT. FILM STUDIO LOT - LATER

Hudson exits to the back lot. It is DUMPING rain.

Title card reads: "**Langley, BC, Canada. December 21st**". Hudson gets in his cab.

INT. CAB - MOMENTS LATER

CAB DRIVER

Hi, where to?

HUDSON

Airport, thanks.

INT. CAB - LATER

Hudson checks Instagram.

CLOSE ON Henry Wong's story. He is popping a bottle of champagne with a caption that reads "#blessed". What a *literal* narcissist.

Phone away. The cab driver keeps eyeing him...

Through the rear view mirror:

CAB DRIVER

Hey...aren't you that guy in all those movies? You are. You're Mr.Christmas! My wife loves you.

HUDSON

Nope. Not me. Sorry. Wrong guy.

(then)

You know not all Asian people look the same. It's actually kinda racist.

The cab pulls up to Departures.

CAB DRIVER
Oh sorry...uh...Merry Christmas!

INT. AIRPORT GATE - LATER

Christmas music croons as Hudson waits for the boarding call. To his left, a MAN hums.

To his right, a TWEEN GIRL, 14, decked out in Gen Z micro-trends. She wears airpods. Hudson catches a glimpse of her iPad. His movie "Coming Home for Christmas" is on. He can't help himself...

HUDSON
(mocking the scene)
"And the best part of Christmas, has always been you". They end up together?! What! Fucking groundbreaking.

The tween girl hears. AirPods out. A C-list celeb! She quickly presses her cheek against his and snaps a selfie. It's invasive.

HUDSON (CONT'D)
Oh. Wow. Could you not like post--

His efforts are futile, tween girl has returned to AirPods world. Hudson's phone PINGS.

From Mom: "Thinking of your dad this week and always. Luv you sweetie. Talk soon <3 <3 *eggplant emoji*".

HUDSON (CONT'D)
(under his breath)
Jesus mom.

CHECK IN ATTENDANT (O.S.)
Attention all passengers flying AC163 to Los Angeles - we are now open for priority boarding.

HUDSON
Thank fuck.

INT. AIRPLANE - LATER

Hudson has his neck pillow on and noise canceling headphones in. He slides his phone into the seat cover in front. A moment of solace...

ELEANOR
Ugh. You again.

HUDSON
Eleanor. What a treat. Course
production booked our seats
together.

ELEANOR
(deep breath)
Let's just agree to get through
these next 4 hours with civility,
then we never have to see each
other again. Deal?

HUDSON
Whatever you say boss.

Eleanor motions for Hudson to move.

ELEANOR
Do you mind?

HUDSON
Ya I'm actually really cozy.

Eleanor steps over Hudson's lap and ducks under his
headphone cord - it's almost sexual until her purse swings
into his face and she fumbles into the window.

ELEANOR
YOU ARE SUCH A CHILD. Grow up.

HUDSON
Wow that was such a turn on
Eleanor. How do you do it?

ELEANOR
I'll have you know that I wouldn't
willingly touch your body with a
10-foot pole.

HUDSON
I'm devastated.

ELEANOR
I once had a showmance with
the guy who played "Melchior" in
"Spring Awakening."

HUDSON
How will I ever compete?

ELEANOR
So I do not need external
validation from the likes of
you.

HUDSON
Someone call Oprah. She NEEDS to
hear about this new angle on
women's empowerment.

A tense beat. They stare at each other.

ELEANOR
I hope you die alone.

INT. AIRPLANE - LATER

Hudson and Eleanor sit in silence, staring ahead. The
turbulence is bad. Hudson reaches into his bag and pulls out
a Nature Valley bar. As he CHEWS...

ELEANOR
Can you not? I have misophonia.

HUDSON
Wha--

ELEANOR
It's a neurophysiological disorder
that makes you emotionally affected
by the sounds of chewing.

HUDSON
That's not a thing.

ELEANOR
My misophonia was literally the
reason my last relationship failed.

HUDSON
Can't imagine that's the only
reason.

ELEANOR
I'm part of a Facebook group called
'the chewing condition' and we are
petitioning to get misophonia on
the DSM-5.

HUDSON
What! I cannot believe it's not
already on there!

ANOTHER WAVE OF TURBULENCE. Hudson slowly leans over to
Eleanor and begins crunching in her ear, waving the Nature
Valley bar in her face.

ELEANOR
 HUDSON! WHAT IS WRONG WITH
 YOU. Wait... Oh my god... Oh
 my god... Does that have
 peanuts?

HUDSON
 This is exposure therapy
 Eleanor... Look it up on the
 DSM-5.

A FLIGHT ATTENDANT stumbles into Hudson sending his hand
 (and the Nature Valley bar) flying into Eleanor's face.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
 I'm so sorry sir.

As the flight attendant walks away...

HUDSON
 (to Eleanor)
 Alright enough with the dramatics
 miss misophonia.

Eleanor starts spitting frantically as the seat belt sign
 turns on.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
 (V.O.)
 Ladies and gentlemen, the
 Captain has turned on the
 fasten seat belt sign. We are
 now crossing a zone of
 turbulence. Please return to
 your seats and keep your seat
 belts fastened. Thank you.

ELEANOR
 (through coughing/spitting)
 I'm. Allergic. To. PEANUTS.

Eleanor paws at her throat. She grabs her purse and dumps
 out all the contents.

HUDSON (CONT'D)
 Oh. You're not joking. Shit. SHIT.
 Where's your EpiPen?!

Hudson and Eleanor desperately sift through her tampons,
 makeup, old sides, other girl-purse things. No EpiPen.
 Eleanor bangs on the overhead compartment. Her face turning
 a bit blue. Hudson scrambles to the aisle.

HUDSON
 SOMEBODY HELP!

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
 Sir, you need to sit down.

HUDSON (CONT'D)
 She's having an allergic reaction.
 She needs her EpiPen NOW.

Hudson opens the overhead compartment and grabs the wrong
 suitcase. Eleanor is playing frenzied charades. She signals
 a different bag.

HUDSON (CONT'D)
 The silver, is it the silver one?!
 Fuck. SOMEBODY HELP ME!!!

Hudson grabs another case with a small lock on it. Eleanor nods - unable to speak.

HUDSON (CONT'D)
 What is the code?! Eleanor!
 (he holds the lock in
 front of her)
 Who locks a carry-on suitcase?! WHO
 DOES THAT? WHY WOULD ANYONE IN
 THEIR RIGHT MIND--

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPORT GATE, WENATCHEE VALLEY, WASHINGTON - NIGHT

Distant SIRENS. Eleanor is rolled off the plane in a body bag. She is dead.

Hudson trails behind the paramedics on the jet bridge, visibly shocked. He is greeted by NICK, 28, and NEIL, 33, both cops.

They seem a little too excited about this evening's events.

NICK
 Oh. My. God. An emergency landing.
 Right here in the Wenatchee Valley.

HUDSON
 Where?!

NEIL
 We haven't had anything this
 exciting happen since Pearl had to
 get airlifted out for her hip
 surgery.

NICK
 Poor Pearl.

HUDSON
 Who's Pearl?

The cops are talking too fast to notice Hudson's questions.

NEIL
 Or remember when she got busted for
 bringing that weed back from Canada
 before it was legal?

NICK
It was *literally* to help with the
hip pain. So unfair.

NEIL
She gave me some of that weed. It
was pretty dank.

NICK
Nice.

Hudson motions to finally get their attention.

HUDSON
HELLO!!

The cops pause and suddenly get very serious. They remember
they're here to solve a crime. Murder, perhaps?

NEIL
Hudson Ren? Are you the passenger
who was seated in 4A next to the
deceased, Eleanor Saint James?

HUDSON
Yes.

NICK
You're going to have to come with
us and answer some questions.

Nick reaches for his handcuffs but Neil stops him.

NEIL
(To Nick, hushed)
No, no not yet.

We clearly have a trainee on our hands. Then...

INT. AIRPORT INTERROGATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A dingy light hangs over what looks to be a picnic table
that was put out for the occasion. The cops are far more
serious than when we first met them.

NEIL
...So you're minding your own
business and you whip out a Nature
Valley bar. All of a sudden, Ms.
Saint James is spitting frantically
and you realize she is deathly
allergic to peanuts. She looks into
her purse for her EpiPen but it's
not there...

NICK

...And by the time you find her suitcase in the overhead compartment and realize it has a useless miniature lock on it, it's too late. She is already dead. Am I getting that right?

HUDSON

Mostly.

NEIL

Was it a sweet and salty or crunchy Nature Valley bar?

HUDSON

Uhhh...I don't remember.

NEIL

That's convenient.

(then)

Now, you'd been working on a movie with Ms. Saint James for the past month. We called the production to get a statement. Is it true you called Ms. Saint James a "detestable twat"?

HUDSON

Well...

NICK

A key grip also overheard you telling the director, "I hate her so much I'd rather eat my own shit than do another movie with her. I'd rather jump off a fucking cruise ship and die, Titanic style, than do another movie with her. I'd rather throw myself down a never-ending staircase than do a movie with her. Actually, no, I hope she dies first."

HUDSON

I mean, it was a *joke*.

NICK

Funny.

NEIL

Incriminating.

NICK

Wouldn't you have known Ms. Saint James was deathly allergic to peanuts after having spent an entire month working so intimately with her?

Hudson starts sweating. This is serious.

NEIL

Furthermore! Weren't you nervous that this film, amidst many similar films in the holiday rom com sphere, would get a sequel? Therefore putting you in the position to work with Ms. Saint James as your love interest yet again?

Neil leans over the table and gets intimidatingly close to Hudson's face.

NEIL (CONT'D)

And we know it was a crunchy Nature Valley bar Hudson. The kind that gets all over the place no matter how hard you try to contain it. The kind that could take out your enemy with a single crumb.

(then)

I'm going to ask you one time and one time only...DID YOU KILL ELEANOR SAINT JAMES?

Silence. Hudson is breathing heavily, genuinely unsure of how to answer. Finally...

HUDSON

No.

(then)

I'll admit that I hated her but I really didn't know she was deathly allergic. I sit and eat lunch in my trailer by myself because, I dunno, I'm an asshole and making small talk with the locals and pretending to care about a day-player's life makes me sick because again, asshole. But I DID NOT KILL HER. On purpose.

The cops look at each other, checking in telepathically to see if they believe him. Then...

NICK

PHEW! Thank little baby Jesus himself, that would have been a mountain of paperwork to deal with before Christmas.

NEIL

We never doubted you man. We'll file this one under "Headlines you only see in Florida!"

They burst out laughing. Hudson is still very shaken up.

NICK

Well let's get outta here!

Nick turns on the light and reveals that we have been in a supply closet this whole time. The cops go to leave but...

HUDSON

WAIT! What's going on with my flight? Are we taking off again soon?

The cops share an "oh shit" look.

INT. AIRPORT GATE, WENATCHEE VALLEY, WASHINGTON - MOMENTS LATER

A tiny deserted airport in the middle of rural Washington.

HUDSON

THEY LEFT WITHOUT ME??

NEIL

Alright calm down Kevin McCallister.

NICK

Kevin Mc--

NEIL

Home Alone kid.

NICK

Ingenious.

HUDSON

UM?

NICK

Well, in their defense, they thought you were being charged for murder.

NEIL

And we're also getting a really bad storm tonight so if they didn't leave when they did, they wouldn't have made it out. The tarmac's already carpeted in snow.

NICK

Neil. Do you know what this means?

NEIL

Nick. I know what it means.

NEIL

It's gonna be a white
Chistmas!!

NICK

It's gonna be a white
Chistmas!!

They jump up and down like school girls.

HUDSON

HELLO. Very happy for you both but is there another flight I can catch?

NEIL

Not really. This airport's mainly for cargo and emergency medical transport. And it's pretty late. Best bet is we take you to the inn in Walnut Grove and you can figure out a ride into the city tomorrow.

HUDSON

It's that or I'm homeless?

The cops nod.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

There's no other way out of here tonight?

More nodding.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

Walnut Grove?

INT. COP CAR - LATER

It is BLIZZARDING outside. The cops are belting the lyrics to Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas is You". They have a synchronized car dance routine to go with the tune.

NICK

Oh oh oh here's my part!

We're coming up to *the* high note.

NICK (CONT'D)
 All I want for
 Christmas...iiiiissss...YOOOOUUUUUU!

Nick holds the note for an unhealthy length of time.

NEIL
 Nailed it! I knew you could do it
 brother.

NICK
 Barb and Dawn aren't gonna know
 what hit them next choir practice.
 Let's goooooo!

Hudson sits silently in the back, mildly horrified. Perhaps a 2004 version of Ashton Kutcher from MTV's "**Punk'd**" is hiding in the trunk.

He reaches into his pockets and starts panic patting around for his phone. Fuck. He left it on the plane.

HUDSON
 Uuum, can I borrow one of your
 phones? I left mine on the plane.

NICK
 Sure thing chicken wing.

Nick hands him his cell phone. Hudson goes to dial and freezes up...

HUDSON
 I...I...I don't know his phone
 number. I don't know anyone's phone
 number.

NEIL
 I know Nick's number. Learned it by
 heart the first day of police
 academy.

NICK
 Same to yours.

NEIL
 509-889-9091!

NICK
 509-836-7355!

NEIL

Nick, my mother, and Timmy Leghorn.
No matter how many concussions I
suffer, I couldn't forget those
numbers if I tried.

NICK

Timmy Leghorn! 509-471-2222

NEIL

...509-471-2222

HUDSON

This has been great. So helpful.
Thank you. Um, how do I get back to
a fully functioning airport
tomorrow? I've got a hot blonde
who's gonna be waiting for me in
Mexico.

NEIL

Don't we all?

NICK

If the roads are clear, you'll find
Lenny at the corner of Main and 1st
in town. He's our cab driver.

NEIL

He's *always* parked there.

NICK

He can take you into Cashmere. From
there, you can catch a bus to
Seattle. It's about 2 and a half
hours away.

We drive by the entrance to the town. A large sign reads
"WALNUT GROVE IS OUR NAME AND CHRISTMAS SPIRIT IS OUR GAME!"
This makes Hudson uneasy.

HUDSON

Got it.

The cop car pulls up to the Walnut Grove Inn. It is
overwhelmingly festive. Twinkle lights, dangling icicles,
elf figurines; all things that are abrasive to the non-
holiday eye. Hudson cautiously opens the car door.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

Oh. This is. Wow. Thanks for the
ride guys.

NICK

Anytime! Thanks for not being a
murderer! What a nightmare that
would have been.

NEIL
 Innocent until proven guilty am I
 right?

They start cackling once again. These two really crack each other up.

Hudson grabs his bag and gets out of the car, a Christmas Behemoth in front of him. The cops drive away.

INT. WALNUT GROVE INN - MOMENTS LATER

Hudson walks to the check in area and DINGS the little bell on the desk. SADIE SWANSON, 24, peppy with an overly focused quality to her, comes running down the stairs holding a mountain of towels.

SADIE (O.S.)
 Hi! Sorry for the wait!

She sets the towels down that were blocking her view. Then..

SADIE (CONT'D)
 You've got to be kidding me.

HUDSON
 What?

SADIE
 You're Hudson Ren. You're Mr.
 Christmas! I'm like, a HUGE fan.

Sadie casually takes A CAMCORDER out from under the desk and inconspicuously places it facing Hudson.

HUDSON
 Oh, thanks. Can I please get a room
 for tonight?

SADIE
 Oh no. I can't believe I'm saying
 this to you but we're all booked up
 for the week.

HUDSON
 Seriously? Aren't we in the middle
 of nowhere?

SADIE
 Well, ya, but we get a lot of
 tourists this time of year.
 (MORE)

SADIE (CONT'D)

We go pretty hard for Christmas so we get people from all over who want to go to the reindeer farm, ornament museum, gingerbread doghouse making competition, Christmas cabaret--

HUDSON

Are you telling me there is not a single room left at the inn?

Sadie repositions a Mary and Joseph figurine on the desk.

SADIE

Like Mary and Joseph.

HUDSON

Jesus.

Hudson finally notices the camcorder on the desk.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

What is that? Can you turn that off? I've had a really long day--

SADIE

Oh don't worry about that. It's just a fun little prop.

Strange. They stare at each other. Finally...

HUDSON

Ok. What's your name?

SADIE

Sadie. Cowboy for Christmas is my favorite Christmas movie.

HUDSON

Great. Sadie - is there another hotel in this town?

SADIE

Unfortunately not.

Hudson has been trying to maintain a polite composure for hours but it's getting to be too much. He snaps a little.

HUDSON

So what the hell am I supposed to do then?!

Hudson is clearly fragile right now. Sadie assumes host mode.

SADIE

You know what! I live just a few blocks away from here. My sister is getting in from Seattle tonight and my family would love to have you.

(off his hesitation)

Seriously! This is what we do in Walnut Grove. We take care of each other. My shift is over in 10 minutes.

HUDSON

You're not going to murder me? Skin me alive and sell my organs to crazy Mr.Christmas fans on marketplace?

SADIE

Oh please. I wouldn't share!

(off his terror)

Lighten up, that was a joke.

INT. SWANSON RESIDENCE - LATER

Sadie and Hudson enter her family's home. If the Walnut Grove Inn was your tastefully festive mother, this house would be your trashy aunt. It's like a Michaels store threw up in the living room.

SADIE

Mom! I have a present for you!

Enter BARB SWANSON, late 50s, sweet as pie.

BARB

Be still my beating heart! Is that a Christmas celebrity right here in my foyer?

She pronounces it with a hard "er."

HUDSON

In the biz, we just say C-list.

BARB

Oh you're funny, you're gonna be breaking hearts around these parts.

(then)

Come in! Don't be shy! We heard you were stranded but don't worry - our north pole is your north pole.

SADIE

Where's dad? He feeling ok?

BARB

Oh he's just fine honey. We had a big day of decorating so it tired him out.

SADIE

Good. Hey the mantle ornaments are a nice touch this year.

BARB

Aren't they?! That was your dad's--

Hudson takes in the specifics - reindeer cuckoo clock, dollar store Christmas napkins, poinsettias everywhere etc. It is too much...

HUDSON

Is there a bar around here?

EXT. WALNUT GROVE - NIGHT

A blizzard obscures everything in sight. Flashes of colored twinkle lights PULSE through the snowfall. Broken Christmas music begins to PLAY. It's really creepy - like grandma's vintage music box turning on in the middle of the night kind of creepy.

Hudson tensely speed-walks, as if to outrun the sounds of Christmas. His surroundings begin to THROB visibly and clearer images start to emerge--

-FAMILIES singing in their living room
-CHILDREN throwing snowballs
-A COUPLE kissing

Hudson freezes on the vignette of the couple. He stares at them until they suddenly turn their heads and SMILE at him. There's something false, unnerving about it.

CUT TO:

INT. FILM STUDIO - AFTERNOON (FLASHBACK)

This is the scene that opened the movie, CLOSE ON Eleanor's face.

HUDSON

I don't need all my Christmases to be white...but I need them to be with you.

He leans in to kiss Eleanor Saint James.

BACK TO:

EXT. WALNUT GROVE - NIGHT

Hudson SQUEEZES HIS EYES SHUT, trying to will the vision away.

HUDSON
(under his breath)
The fuck...

He turns and stumbles into a terrifying inflatable Frosty the Snowman. The snowman appears to be breathing - swelling and deflating with psychedelic life. The snowman LOOMS IMPOSINGLY over Hudson and seems to whisper...

HUDSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
"You can listen to your mind, but
you have to follow your heart"

Another line from another one of his Christmas movies. The inflatable Frosty GROANS in the wind. The music SWELLS.

Hudson staggers through the snow and collides into a gigantic Christmas tree. He looks at his warped reflection in a jumbo-sized red ornament. His reflection smiles back and says...

HUDSON (CONT'D)
Tune into WFN tonight for some more
Christmas magic! 'A Cowboy for
Christmas' is coming to you at 7 PM
EST. You won't want to miss it.
Yeehaw!

Hudson is reaching war-like levels of trauma. He starts running, panting, until finally, a haven emerges. The "Blitzen Bar" glows with promise.

**Please note, this is all subject to the artistic license of our (obviously brilliant) cinematographer and director - we just generally want to give the vibe of an acid trip, Christmas edition, gone very wrong.*

INT. BLITZEN BAR - MOMENTS LATER

A smattering of people are sitting around a dingy bar. It may be the only place in town not playing Christmas music. Hudson shakily sits at the bar, getting his bearings. Enter BAR KID, 13, deadpan, and clearly not old enough to be the bartender here.

BAR KID

Hey.

This startles Hudson.

BAR KID (CONT'D)

No cap you look like a depressed panda right now. It's not a vibe.

HUDSON

That felt racist.

BAR KID

You feel sus.

HUDSON

Sus?

BAR KID

Fam this sad, 30-year-old E-boy thing isn't working for you.

HUDSON

What are you saying?

BAR KID

Mans just doesn't get it...

HUDSON

Am I mans?

BAR KID

You gonna order something or what?

HUDSON

Uh...Ok. What do you have on tap?

BAR KID

Beer.

HUDSON

Specific. I'll have one of those.

Bar kid pours his beer. Hudson takes in how young he is.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

Yo "fam", uh, do you have a phone I could use?

BAR KID

Take several seats. Like do I have a phone? I'm not poor.

HUDSON

Ok. I'm already seated? Can I just, can I borrow it for a minute?

BAR KID

Mom says we live in a society of information theft. Access to our phones is the number one cause of identity fraud. So no. Take the L.

HUDSON

Do you even have a bank account? What are you? Like 12?

BAR KID

13 actually. Dad said my balls already dropped.

HUDSON

Right. I can tell. Your squeaky voice sounds very post-puberty to me.

He hands Hudson his beer.

BAR KID

Bet. I'm finna go on break.

HUDSON

Wait! I'll tip you 100 bucks.

A beat. Bar kid then reaches into his backpack filled with textbooks and pulls out his iPhone. He hands it to Hudson.

BAR KID

Password's 420420. If Crishell texts me don't open it. I have my read receipts on.

Bar kid exits. Hudson takes a sip of his beer. Something tastes funky but he can't quite put his finger on it.

HUDSON

Bleh. Fuck.

Almost instantly, we hear a faint, scattered melody from the PATRONS in the bar.

PATRONS (O.S.)

(poorly singing)

Fa la la la la, la la la laaaa.

Strange.

Hudson opens Instagram and looks up "Jesse Fletcher". CLOSE ON the first post: a too cool black and white photo of Jesse giving a peace sign. Caption reads: "She's on a hiatus *peace sign emoji* I'll be off all social media until next year (hehe). If you know what's up, you know where to reach me. Happy Holidays!"

HUDSON
(under his breath)
Are you shitting me? A social media
cleanse?

Hudson drops his head in defeat on the bar.

His head pops back up. He logs in to his Gmail and opens his last email from Jesse. The agency's office number is at the bottom. He dials.

VOICE MESSAGE SYSTEM (O.S)
Thank you for calling Integral
Artists Management. Our offices are
now closed for the holidays until
January 4th--

Hudson hangs up. He takes another sip of gross beer.

Enter SARA SWANSON, 29, beautiful with a quirky quality to her. She has that "can crush a couple beers with the boys" kind of energy (though we hate the 'cool girl' cliché, you get the vibe). She is wearing a trendy pantsuit. She rolls her suitcase to the bar.

With no bartender in sight, Sara hops over the counter and pours herself a shot. Downs it. One more.

She then pours a beer, jumps back over the counter and sits in solitude. Hudson watches in awe.

VERONICA LIVINGSTON, 29, a small town hot girl with a psychotic twinkle in her eye, cruises in from behind the bar.

VERONICA
(to Sara)
Well...look who made it in from the
big smoke!

This is the last person Sara wants to see.

SARA
Hi Veronica. You look well.

VERONICA
Oh I am. Notice anything different?

She does a twirl. Silence. Veronica taps on her name tag that reads "Manager".

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Bet you thought I'd never get here huh? You and my mother. But some of us are just born to be leaders.

SARA

Congratulations.

Bar kid comes back and starts cleaning up.

SARA (CONT'D)

Is that Simon and Amy's kid? He's like 12 years old.

BAR KID (O.S.)

I'm 13!

SARA

Veronica, that's illegal.

VERONICA

Alright miss fancy lawyer. It's called business strategy. A lot of companies are cutting costs. And Spencer here accepts a unique form of payment that is mutually beneficial to all parties.

SARA

Ew.

VERONICA

No not like that! God..the big city's made you a pervert.

(then)

Anyway how are you? Nervous to see everyone since *the big dumping*?

SARA

Your sensitivity never fails to amaze me. I'm great actually...just got promoted to junior partner at my firm.

VERONICA

But still. What's success if you don't have anyone to share it with?

SARA

Feminism looks good on you.

VERONICA

Speaking for myself, I actually
have a new love in my life and it
feels soooo good.

(then)

Guess who it is.

SARA

I dunno, who?

VERONICA

No I want you to guess.

Veronica zeroes in on Sara. A psychotic smile emerges, it
compliments the twinkle in her eye.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

GUESS.

SARA

Uuum Blake Gooding? You always
gave him road head during your
spare in senior year.

Veronica takes a very dramatic pause. She's been *dying* to
throw this news in Sara's face. Finally...

VERONICA

Kevin. Singh.

Sara's stomach drops. Her mouth is agape. She can't move.
Kevin Singh is her ex-boyfriend of 5 years who broke up with
her over the holidays last year (brutally, may we add).
Veronica loves this.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I hope it won't be weird for you.
The two of us prancing around town
like little love struck elves.

Tears well in Sara's eyes.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I'll let you process this
information. Drink's on the house!

Veronica exits, leaving behind a shell-shocked Sara. Hudson
chimes in.

HUDSON

Wowww. That was--rough. You know I
didn't think anyone was having a
worse day than me.

A single tear escapes her. She grabs her suitcase and charges out of the bar.

HUDSON (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Too soon.

He finishes his drink and leaves \$100 at the bar.

EXT. WALNUT GROVE - MOMENTS LATER

The blizzard has turned into a LIGHT SNOWFALL. Sara lugs her suitcase through the snow. Hudson awkwardly trails behind. She senses someone behind her.

SARA
Are you following me?

HUDSON
What? No! I barely know where I'm going. We're just apparently going the same way.

Hudson remains several feet behind her. It's weird.

SARA
Ok this is unbearable. Just at least walk across from me so I don't feel like I'm gonna get attacked.

He jogs to the other side of the road across from Sara. They walk by the same inflatable snowman from earlier.

HUDSON
If anyone's gonna murder you it's this guy.

Sara almost laughs.

SARA
You're not from here. In town for all the Christmas stuff?

HUDSON
No. Long story but I'm getting out of this hellhole in the morning.

SARA
That's rude. Walnut Grove is actually a really nice place to live.

HUDSON

I will die on the hill that it is not a really nice place to live-- this is weird. Is it better if I just walk next to you?

A beat.

SARA

You can walk in front.

He jogs in front of Sara.

HUDSON

(turning and walking backwards)

For one, the name is ridiculous. *Walnut Grove*? It's so quaint it's creepy.

SARA

Creepy like you following me on an empty road at night?

HUDSON

(ignoring Sara's remark)

Two. I hate Christmas.

SARA

You're full of pep, aren't you.

HUDSON

Anyone delusional enough to think Christmas is more than a capitalist holiday that encourages materialism is, well, someone who belongs in *Walnut Grove*.

SARA

You know, I have been *looking* for a live reading of bitter Facebook wall posts from middle-aged men so this is, this is really wonderful.

Hudson is now walking beside Sara.

HUDSON

All I'm saying is Christmas could be triggering for the average person who has any, you know, toxicity in their family. And we're all forced to smile and pretend we're happier than ever.

SARA

I'm not a therapist but I think they charge for this sort of thing. Are you trying to tell me you have a toxic family environment?

HUDSON

Me? No. I'm just a spokesperson for the people at large. The general public.

(then)

Men actually don't even have feelings.

Sara almost smiles.

They arrive outside Sara's house, confused why they're both here.

SARA

Um, this is my house.

HUDSON

This, unfortunately for you, is also my house.

SARA

What?

HUDSON

I'm your guest. So you have to be nice to me.

He shoots her a flirtatious smirk and heads inside.

INT. SWANSON RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Hudson and Sara enter and begin taking off their coats.

HUDSON

Found your sister!

Sadie runs in from the kitchen and gives Sara a hug.

SADIE

Sar! I thought we were going to lose you to the snowstorm! Find your hot little bod on the edge of town.

SARA

If only I was so lucky. Lenny grabbed me from the bus station.

(MORE)

SARA (CONT'D)
Um, Sade, who is this man staying
in our house?

SADIE
(hushed to Sara)
Oh my god he is our guest don't be
rude.

(then)
Sara meet Hudson Ren, Hudson Ren
meet my classically-beautiful-but-
doesn't-know-it sister, Sara.

Strange intro. Sadie is casually holding her camcorder.

SARA
Nice to officially meet you, I
guess.

HUDSON
Ya you too.

They wave at each other awkwardly.

SARA
Where's mom and dad?

SADIE
They're sleeping. Did you get
highlights?

SARA
I did! I wanted my money pieces
done a little more--

SADIE
--more caramel-y almost? I love it
- it's not--

SARA
--not trying too hard right? I
wanted it to look like I was just--

SADIE
--in the sun for a few days. Your
boobs also look so--

HUDSON
Well I gotta be up bright and early
so I'm gonna call it.
(to Sadie)
Thanks again for your strangely
kind hospitality.

SADIE

Oh it's literally the greatest pleasure of my life. Guest room is the first on the right. And I made you some fresh gingerbread cookies.

Hudson heads upstairs. He doesn't know what to do with that level of generosity.

SARA

Sadie. Who is that?

SADIE

(gasps)

He is only one of my favorite actors on the planet. You don't recognize him?! He's like a national treasure.

SARA

Oh god is he the guy in all those Christmas movies on that religious channel? I thought he looked familiar.

They move to the kitchen. Sara grabs a gingerbread cookie.

SARA (CONT'D)

But why is he --

(bites cookie)

Ooh this is a good batch.

SADIE

Long story. There was no room at the inn. I added extra cinnamon.

SARA

Huh.

(then)

How's dad been this week?

SADIE

In an unfortunate turn of events he's taken up the ukulele. And he's really bad at it.

SARA

That can't be good for the arthritis. But that must mean--

SADIE

Ya he's had lots of energy lately. But you know--

SARA

I know. John Denver must be rolling
in his grave.

SADIE

I have PTSD as soon as I hear the
first chord of "Take Me Home--

SARA

--Country Roads" I *knew* that was
going to be his go-to track. Such a
predictable man.

(then, looking around the
house)

I wish I was here more. Do you ever
feel like you're just sitting
around a ticking time bomb?

SADIE

Sometimes. Me too.

(making light)

I think I'm just really emotionally
mature so I can handle these--

SARA

--Oh yes! That's it. The same
maturity you had when I got a
cellphone before you--

SADIE

We don't talk about 2009. 2009 and
2021 are off the table.

SARA

Why 2021? Oh right.

(the breakup)

OH. Hold the fuck up. Did you know
Veronica Livingston and Kevin are
dating?!

SADIE

I thought maybe you wouldn't
notice.

SARA

You thought I wouldn't notice that
my very loud enemy from high school
is dating my ex in a town of 2000
odd people?

SADIE

Yes. When you put it that way I am
quite the optimist.

SARA
What am I going to do?

SADIE
Murder is an option.

SARA
Poison?

SADIE
Too peaceful. I say take them out
with Jim's Plow.

SARA
Chop their heads off with the axe
at the Christmas tree farm.

SADIE
Run their car off the road with a
snowmobile.

SARA
She can't have the same death as
Princess Diana.

SADIE
So true. Cross that off the list.

SARA
I hate my life.

SADIE
I know.

Sadie pets her hair in support.

INT. GUEST ROOM - MORNING

QUICK CUTS: Pants zip, coat on, duffel bag closed,
determined gaze. Escaping Christmas is not for the faint of
heart.

Hudson spots the BAGGIE OF GINGERBREAD COOKIES Sadie made
for him. Though trying not to smile, it does kind of warm
his heart. He shoves them in his bag. Go time.

EXT. WALNUT GROVE TOWN SQUARE - MOMENTS LATER

Hudson plows through town. We see Walnut Grove in its full
idyllic, holiday glory. Bleh.

Hudson spots the cab at the corner of Main and 1st, right
where the cops said he would be.

LENNY, a jolly man with a woodsman thing about him, is asleep at the driver's seat. Hudson taps at the window.

HUDSON
S'cuse me! Lenny?

Lenny snaps awake and rolls down the window.

LENNY
Oh fiddlesticks! I musta fallen asleep.

HUDSON
Can I get a ride to...uh...Cashmere I think its called? Wherever there's a bus that can get me to Seattle.

LENNY
Oh no. I don't think that's gonna happen today. Too much snow.

HUDSON
Well doesn't this all get plowed?

LENNY
Ya but Jim the plow guy's sick. Even then, the plow's really only big enough for the streets in town, not the main road. Poor Jim. I think it's mono.

HUDSON
How bad can it really be?

LENNY
Well the disease--

HUDSON
The streets, Lenny.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. WENATCHEE VALLEY REGION - LAST NIGHT

STOCK FOOTAGE: Snow furiously envelops a mountainous region. We see a sliver of road that is clear. A hunk of snow then drops down, covering it.

BACK TO:

EXT. WALNUT GROVE TOWN SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

HUDSON

Ok so pretty bad. Look, there's gotta be another way. Help me out here.

LENNY

Ya know, I'm sorry to be the one to break the bad news, but there's only one road in and one road out. Doesn't look like yer gettin' out of Walnut Grove today.

That's not going work for Hudson.

HUDSON

We'll see about that.

EXT. EDGE OF WALNUT GROVE - LATER

Hudson trudges through deep snow. He makes it to the town sign and collapses, panting.

PAN OUT TO REVEAL: The middle of actual *nowhere*.

Hudson glares at the entrance sign. "*Walnut Grove is our name and Christmas Spirit is our game!*"

Holy shit.

Hudson lets out A SCREAM THAT ECHOES through the vast nothingness. A tad dramatic, but we must reiterate - Hudson doesn't *do* Christmas.

END OF ACT 1

INT. SWANSON RESIDENCE - LATER THAT MORNING

The Swansons buzz about in all their small-town family glory. Sara, Sadie, Barb and DALE, late 50s, the quintessential white dad, sip coffee, watch WALT THE WEATHERMAN on TV, and behave in a generally adorable fashion.

Hudson opens the door. The Swansons swivel their heads to stare.

SADIE

(startled)

I thought you were still upstairs!

BARB

How did Mr. Christmas sleep?

HUDSON
Please call me Hudson.

DALE
Lovely to meet you Hudson. I'm Dale Swanson.

HUDSON
Nice to meet you Da--

SADIE
Where were you?

SARA
(under her breath)
Busy filming "The Revenant"

Hudson looks disheveled, to put it kindly.

BARB
Come in sweetheart take off your coat!

DALE
I'll grab you some coffee. Just put on a fresh pot.

A TV INFOMERCIAL cuts through...

SHAMWOW GUY (O.S.)
...be saying "Wow" every time you use this towel. And look at this! We'll give you a second set absolutely free! Call 818-232-1111 now.

HUDSON
(remembering...)
818. 818. 818 733 2121. Oh my God. Can I use your phone?

BARB
Of course hon, it's just in the office there.

INT. SWANSON OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Hudson dials Jesse's childhood home phone number. It gets sent to voice mail.

HUDSON
Nancy! It's Hudson calling. Hope you and Bruce are doing well. I'm actually calling for Jesse.
(MORE)

HUDSON (CONT'D)

Long story but I lost my phone and your landline is the only number I can remember. So I'm just going to pause here for a moment because you don't have to listen to my rambling on and maybe just pass this message to Jess when he gets back home. Have a great Christmas Mrs. Fletcher. Bye now...

Hudson takes a beat before continuing in a manic, hushed tone.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

Jesse. Holy fuck. I am stuck inside my own worst nightmare. I am in a place called Walnut Grove because Eleanor Saint James died and we had to make an emergency landing but I probably shouldn't talk about that here in case the FBI or CIA or whatever authority taps phones taps this phone. The people here are like outrageous Christmas puppets and I'm stuck in a house with a bug-eyed fan girl and her sister who is kind of hot but that's really besides the point. The address is 4073 Evergreen Lane. I repeat 4073 Evergreen Lane. I don't have a phone. The roads are covered in snow and I can't drive out. I'm trapped. HELP ME.

Hudson hangs up.

INT. SWANSON RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Hudson returns to the family room.

WALT THE WEATHERMAN (O.S.)

...And guys I gotta tell ya this is the worst storm the Wenatchee Valley has seen since 2005...

CUT TO:

EXT. WALNUT GROVE - SAME TIME

WALT THE WEATHERMAN

...when that icicle fell on poor Pearl's head.

(MORE)

WALT THE WEATHERMAN (CONT'D)
 (whispering to camera)
 That was before she got busted for
 bringing weed back from Canada.

Walt the Weatherman is standing knees deep in snow. The production of this news report includes a tripod, old iPhone, and Walt.

The camera begins to tilt slowly then plummets into snow.

In complete darkness:

WALT THE WEATHERMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Ah fuck! Oh - fa la la la la, la la
 la laaa...

Strange.

INT. SWANSON RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

HUDSON
 Is this, the news?

BARB
 Walt is the best in the biz.

CLOSE ON the TV Screen. Walt has now picked up the camera and looks like a grandpa on FaceTime.

WALT THE WEATHERMAN
 (laughing)
 Sorry about that folks! It's safe
 to say nobody is gettin' in or out
 of Walnut Grove today.
 (serious)
 This is Walt signing off.

The TV screen goes black. Dale hands Hudson a reindeer mug of coffee.

HUDSON
 Thank you so much. Um, I actually
 really have to get out of here. Do
 you guys know if there's any other
 way to get to LAX?

SARA/SADIE/BARB/DALE
 (in unison, various
 degrees of enthusiasm)
 There's only one road.

HUDSON
 Only one road? In this whole tow--

SARA/SADIE/BARB/DALE
 (nodding, various degrees
 of sympathy)
 Only the one.

Hudson's Christmas anxiety peaks.

HUDSON
 Ok well I really need to leave
 before Christmas. Like I CANNOT be
 here on Christmas Day. It'll be a
 real problem if I'm not out of here
 by December 25th. Do you think I'll
 be able to--

BARB
 Oh you must be missing your family
 so darn much! Don't you worry your
 pretty little head about a thing.
 We'll getcha out of here first
 thing tomorrow. The state plows
 should have the snow cleared by
 then.

This marginally calms Hudson. Something about Barb is very
 nurturing to him.

HUDSON
 First thing tomorrow?

It is of note that Hudson takes a sip of coffee and spits it
 back into the mug. Sadie changes the subject.

SADIE
 Sar! You *must* show Hudson around
 today.

SARA
 You know I'm really busy--

SADIE
 With what? Moping around about
 Kevin?

Bit harsh.

DALE
 Bit harsh Sade.

SADIE
 Sorry. But seriously I'm sure Mr.
 Christmas would love to see some of
 our shops...

HUDSON
Please call me Huds--

SADIE
(giving Sara *the eyes*)
Do a little bit of last minute
holiday shopping?

BARB
Deb does have some lovely new
pieces in store this year!

DALE
(to Barb)
Does she now?

BARB
(giggling)
Oh, behave!

Dale winks at Barb. We will understand this later.

Sadie begins ushering Sara and Hudson out the door.

SARA
I'd love to I just have some work
stuff--

SADIE
Absolute nonsense! I have a quick
shift at the inn but I'll meet you
at the Christmas tree farm at 1.

SARA
Will *he* be there?

SADIE
Nope! Kevin's volunteering with the
puppies today. Confirmed it with
Dawn last week.

SARA
Ok well Sadie--

Sadie SHUTS THE DOOR on Hudson and Sara.

EXT. SWANSON'S FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Sara and Hudson stand on the Swanson's front steps. Sara has
no shoes, no jacket.

A beat.

The door opens and a jacket, boots, and ONE CHRISTMAS SWEATER is tossed at their feet.

EXT. WALNUT GROVE TOWN SQUARE - LATER THAT DAY

SARA
You have to put this on.

Sara passes Hudson the ugly Christmas sweater.

HUDSON
I really don't think I do, thanks
for the offer though.

SARA
Your funeral.

Townspeople stare at Hudson, judging.

Strange.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

HUDSON
Americano, black please.

A BARISTA, 20s, with an emo-Christmas vibe, is busily preparing drinks.

BARISTA
One ginger Americano coming right
up.

HUDSON
No not ginger, just a plain
Americano.

BARISTA
Straight up Walnut Grove style
comin' right at ya.

HUDSON
Is there a normal, maybe like Los
Angeles style?

Sara and the Barista share a look, *he doesn't get it.*

The Barista passes Hudson his drink.

BARISTA
Welcome to Walnut Grove, Hollywood.

EXT. WALNUT GROVE TOWN SQUARE - DAY

More people stare at Hudson. It's unnerving.

HUDSON

What is going on here am I missing something?

Hudson takes a sip of his coffee. Spits it out.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

What the hell is that?

SARA

Gingerbread.

HUDSON

Does this town not have just normal-person coffee?

SARA

Not for the month of December. It's one of the 7 Commandments.

HUDSON

The 7 Commandments?

SARA

Ya. They're town bylaws. They have to be followed.

HUDSON

It's the law? Like, a legal document?

SARA

Yes. *The law*. Need me to use that in a sentence?

MUSIC: Some great rap song like HOW WE DO by THE GAME ft. 50 CENT.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

GRAPHIC: COMMANDMENT #1 BY BARISTA

Our Barista holds an oversized shaker labeled "GINGER" over an espresso shot. She explains to camera:

BARISTA

All beverages must be spiced with gingerbread.

(MORE)

BARISTA (CONT'D)

Here at the shop we add a splash of
nutmeg and cinnamon to our mix.

(realizing)

Shit, don't tell my boss I told you
that. It's like, his great-great-
grandpa's mistress's secret recipe
or something.

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - CONTINUOUS

GRAPHIC: COMMANDMENT #2 BY LUMBERJACK LENNY

LENNY, the cab driver who is apparently also the town's
lumberjack, is holding an axe, chopping wood. To camera:

LUMBERJACK LENNY

All fires must be wood-burning. If
yer hearth doesn't assault yer
senses with the intoxicating smell
of earth, campfire, and pine
needles, yer doin' it wrong.

(a teaching moment)

And if yer doin' it wrong, yer not
doin' it right.

FREEZE FRAME on Lenny:

SARA (O.S.)

That's the truth.

HUDSON (O.S.)

Wha--

INT. DEB'S CLOTHING STORE - CONTINUOUS

GRAPHIC: COMMANDMENT #3 BY DEB

DEB MITCHELL, 50s, a wholesome looking sex enthusiast stands
amidst Christmas sweaters. To camera:

DEB

From the 22nd to the 26th, every
Walnut Grove resident and visitor
must wear an ugly Christmas
sweater. And for those of you
looking for a little something to
wear under your sweater...

(Pulling out an x-rated
lingerie set)

This just came in.

EXT. MONICA'S BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

GRAPHIC: COMMANDMENT #4 BY MITCH AND MONICA

MONICA MITCHELL, 20s, Sara and Sadie's cousin, is going to be an E! News Host if it kills her. To camera:

MONICA

Hey MTV welcome to my crib!
 (loves the camera)
 I'm totally kidding. Walnut Grove
 Christmas Commandment #4--

MITCH MITCHELL, 20s, the yin to Monica's yang. They are siblings but there is an uncomfortable sexual energy here despite Mitch being overtly gay.

MITCH

All buildings must be decorated
 with Christmas lights.

Mitch and Monica string lights over a small shed.

MONICA

(smiling to camera)
 That was my line Mitch we rehearsed
 that.

MITCH

(also smiling to camera)
 You're right, I totally fudging
 flipping dipsticked it up.

MONICA

You really did. Can we just run
 that back again?

INT. AIRPORT INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

GRAPHIC: COMMANDMENT #5 BY NICK AND NEIL

To camera:

NICK

Section 5A of Walnut Grove town
 bylaws state that if you hear
 anybody say the word "fuck" you
 must, no matter your circumstance,
 respond with the jingle "fa la la
 la la, la la la laaa". That is 7
 "la's" with an additional and
 prolonged 8th "laaa" at the end
 there.

GRAPHIC: COMMANDMENT #6 BY NICK AND NEIL

Neil turns on a flashlight under his chin. To camera, menacing:

NEIL

Section 6A of our town bylaws state that *all crimes in Walnut Grove are legal on December 25th.*

FREEZE FRAME:

HUDSON (O.S.)

WHAT?

UNFREEZE:

NICK

He's kidding.

NEIL

(flashlight still on)
I'm not.

INT. SWANSON RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

GRAPHIC: THE REAL COMMANDMENT #6 BY BARB

Barb holds a dish of red & green candies. To camera:

BARB

All display sweets must be red and green for the full month of December. Some argued that policing the interior decor of our homes reminded them of Nazi Germany. But if you ask me, I think it's just dang adorable.

EXT. SWANSON RESIDENCE, SIDE OF HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

GRAPHIC: COMMANDMENT #7 BY DALE

Dale stands by the house's gas meter. He is wearing a utility worker uniform. To camera:

DALE

For the entire month of December, the utility bill for all Walnut Grove residents is \$12.25! Crank that heat WG!

EXT. WALNUT GROVE TOWN SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

HUDSON

But that's the most expensive month of the year! Like who pays for that?

SARA

I don't write the rules. Now put this on.

Sara hands Hudson the Christmas sweater.

HUDSON

Fuck.

PAN OUT to an entire town square full of people. Heads pop out windows, looking to the sky.

ALL OF WALNUT GROVE

Fa la la la la, la la la laaa!

We realize everyone has been wearing an ugly Christmas sweater thus far.

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - DAY

Hudson and Sara walk towards the entrance.

HUDSON

This is one of those places that if I told people about it...If I explained the last 24 hours to my friends they'd say I was insane. They'd be like, Hudson needs to be institutionalized. It was only a matter of time with those holiday movies he was churning out--

Sara is frozen in front of the entrance to the farm. Hudson turns back and notices.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

You good?

Sara shakes her head on a diagonal.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

That is unclear.

Sara starts doing alternate nostril breathing.

HUDSON (CONT'D)
Ok what's this? We shouldn't be
doing this in public.

SARA
Subtle energy breathing technique
my therapist recommended to reduce
anxiety...I'm just experiencing
PTSD it's no big deal.

HUDSON
Does this have anything to do with
murder Barbie from the bar?

Sara nods.

HUDSON (CONT'D)
And this guy she's dating?

Sara nods.

HUDSON (CONT'D)
Who's clearly your ex-boyfriend?

Sara nods.

HUDSON (CONT'D)
Are we about to see him in here?

SARA
No, he's supposed to be
volunteering today.

HUDSON
Ah. He's a good person too?

Sara nods. Crumbling.

HUDSON (CONT'D)
Alright. Tits up. Walk in there
like you own the place and nobody
will think otherwise.

SARA
I don't think we're saying "tits
up" to women anymore.

HUDSON
Shoulders back. Has the same
effect.

SARA
That's not the--

Hudson is swarmed by Mitch and Monica, who have been waiting for him to arrive.

MONICA

The rumors are true! There's a celebrity in town.

MITCH

A real celebrity is in town!

MONICA

Mitch I literally just said that.

MITCH

(to Sara)

Sah-ra! Where have you been hiding this hunk?

MONICA

Ya Sah-ra, family is supposed to share!

MITCH

(to Hudson)

Do you need a bunk buddy? I'm a top-notch little spoon.

MONICA

Don't harass the talent!

(then, to Hudson)

Wow. I have so many questions. So Mitch and I are up-and-coming entertainment hosts and we've been thinking about making the move to LA...

Mitch and Monica usher Hudson into the sea of trees, leaving Sara alone.

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - CONTINUOUS

Sara weaves through the dense greenness. It feels nostalgic (and low-key depressing). Through the trees she spots her parents.

INSERT: Barb and Dale share a sweet, private moment.

Sara smiles like girls do in movies when they're feeling wistful. She turns and runs SMACK INTO: KEVIN SINGH, 29, Sara's ex who looks like a prince.

KEVIN

Sara!

Fuck. She stares dumbly.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
I was wondering when I'd run into
you! Wow you look--

Sara looks very average, for her.

SARA
The same!

KEVIN
Ya. How's work? The big fancy firm.

SARA
I thought you'd be with the puppies
today.

KEVIN
Mom wanted to do some last-minute
wrapping so I'm on duty here.

SARA
That's, so convenient.

Silence. This is the last place they saw each other. It is
also the exact location of their breakup a year ago today.
Sara's EARS BEGIN TO RING.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

SARA
Will you look at me? Kevin, look at
me for one second.

KEVIN
Let's not make a scene.

Sara is making a scene.

SARA
Oh I'm sorry are *feelings*
uncomfortable for you?

KEVIN
I just--

SARA
A lot of people do distance. We can
do it. I know we can. After 5 years
we deserve to try. Please--

KEVIN

Sara, stop.

SARA

Please. Please just give it a--

KEVIN

I don't love you anymore.

(on Sara's hurt)

I'm sorry. You're just-- you're not
it. Ok? For me, you're just, not.
Let it go.

BACK TO:

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - CONTINUOUS

The RINGING reaches a climax until Kevin's voice cuts through:

KEVIN

Are your mom and dad around here
somewhere? I'd love to say hi.

Veronica approaches with Hudson in tow. She places her arm on Kevin's shoulder.

VERONICA

(to Sara)

Look who I found being practically
suffocated by your weird cousins.

SARA

You seem to forget you lost your
virginity to my weird cousin.

VERONICA

That is so unfair. He was a lot
more fluid with his sexuality in
high school.

SARA

You were *fluid* with a lot of stuff
in high school.

VERONICA

Slut-shaming is so 2007 Sara. I
suggest you take up a more worthy
endeavor - perhaps becoming a more
appealing person?

SARA

Ok I am VERY appealing.

VERONICA

From what I know, you're a workaholic with codependency issues who won't try butt stuff.

Sara looks to Kevin. What the fuck. Hudson chimes in.

HUDSON

I'll have you know that she did lots of stuff with my butt.

He puts his arm around her.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

I don't know what Sara you're talking about but *this* Sara, is freakaaaaay.

VERONICA

Nice try. I've seen this movie before.

HUDSON

Huh?

VERONICA

The whole pretending you're dating to make it less embarrassing for Sara thing? Ya. I saw you two at my Blitzen Bar last night. I know you just met.

Shit. Sara turns and speed walks away.

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - MOMENTS LATER

Hudson trails behind Sara like they did the night before.

HUDSON

Sara! Sara! Will you slow the fuck down?

She turns. Spitefully in his face:

SARA

Fa la la la la, la la la laaaa.

HUDSON

Ok that's enough of that.

(then)

I'm sorry. You were drowning out there and it was embarrassing. I was just trying to get murder Barbie to shut up. I know her type.

(MORE)

HUDSON (CONT'D)
She's the budget version of every
girl I meet in LA.

SARA
How could Kevin date me and also
date *that*?

HUDSON
Maybe he just wanted something
easier?

SARA
What do you mean?

HUDSON
I mean someone simple. Who isn't so
obviously in your face more
impressive than him. I would know.
Those are the only girls I date.

SARA
The ones so obviously in your face
more impressive than you?

HUDSON
No. The simple ones. My ego
couldn't take that. Tits up. You're
a 10 and don't forget it.

Flirty? Maybe.

We hear a light giggle off camera. Strange.

HUDSON (CONT'D)
And if it makes you feel any
better, not every guy is into butt
stuff. Some of us prefer a more
modest sexual experience.

SARA
Thank you! Like god forbid we stick
to one hole and a few
straightforward positions.

HUDSON
Once, I took a BDSM quiz online and
it told me I was 69% vanilla.

SARA
Ironic.

HUDSON
Ya. And not just cause I'm Asian.

Mitch and Monica pass by holding a Christmas tree.

MONICA

See you at family dinner tonight
babes! Hudson, we'll continue our
special chat.

MITCH

Step 1 - E! News

MONICA

Step 2 - Sleep our way to the top!

INT. SWANSON RESIDENCE - LATER

The door swings open. Sadie, Barb, and Dale enter with a huge Christmas tree.

DALE

This might be our best one yet!

SADIE

Dad, we got this. Go relax.

DALE

Hey I might be dying, but I'm gonna
get this Christmas tree up with my
girls if it kills me.

SADIE

Could we not say things like that?

BARB

Oh honey, no need for the
dramatics.

Hudson and Sara walk in. Sadie turns on the TV to the Wholesome Family Network.

SARA

Sadie. He-who-shall-not-be-named
was very much present at the
Christmas tree farm. Don't worry
though, it's not like I had a
really not at all uncomfortable
conversation with him.

SADIE

Shit. Wait, that's a lot of double
negatives I'm not following.

HUDSON

Do you mind if we change the
channel?

SADIE

Sorry. My house, my rules.

Sara plops on the couch, wrapping a blanket around her head - it's dramatic. Hudson sits next to her.

Sadie puts her camcorder on the fireplace mantle.

HUDSON

Oh no. Not this one.

Hudson's least favorite of his movies is on. They watch.

SARA

How is it that every single person's hair in this doesn't move? Like your bodies are moving but your hair stays in the same place.

HUDSON

They call that movie magic.

SARA

You all look like you're wearing helmets.

HUDSON

And you thought your interaction with Kevin was embarrassing.

SARA

Why do you do these if you hate them so much?

HUDSON

Something only a non-actor would say...

SARA

No no I'm putting myself in your shoes here. I can see it. You're this young, hot guy trying to break into the industry. You get offered to lead these cringe but sort of cute movies, so you take it, at the start. But you're what? Now a dozen of them down with all these Instagram bitties following you and you're, no offense, miserable. Sounds to me like it's time to start saying no. Go for what you really want.

HUDSON
You think I'm hot?

SARA
That was your takeaway?

HUDSON
If you figure out a way to make sure my agent gets his 10%, my publicist gets paid, and I can still afford to go to Nobu if I find out I suck at this and never book anything again, let me know.

SARA
We both need a drink tonight.

HUDSON
Right. Dinner. Who's coming?

I/E. SWANSON'S FRONT PORCH - EVENING

The front door swings open. QUICK CUTS to entrances.

MONICA
The Mitchells are here!

Mitch and Monica funnel in with their parents, Deb and UNCLE TODD, early 60s.

DEB
We brought pie!

THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN.

NICK
Ho ho ho!

NEIL
Ho ho ho!

This startles Hudson.

HUDSON
Why are the cops here?!

SARA
Relax. They're our neighbors.
They're roommates.

INT. SWANSON RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Everyone sits at an overflowing dining room table.

All but Hudson are singing a local Christmas dinner tune that is reminiscent of something you would sing at summer camp. A saying Grace, of sorts.

EVERYONE BUT HUDSON
 Walnut Grove it's that time of
 year. Time to spread your Christmas
 cheer.
 In the holy spirit of Richard Gere,
 dig in like you're Monica here.

We PAN to every single person listed in the song as they get
 their shout out. Each guest celebrates their moment in their
 own unique way. Hudson sits in silence.

EVERYONE BUT HUDSON (CONT'D)
 And dig in like you're Mitch here.
 And dig in like you're Nick here.
 And dig in like you're Neil here.
 And dig in like you're Barb here.
 And dig in like you're Deb here.
 And dig in like you're Todd here.
 And dig in like you're Sadie here.
 And dig in like you're Hudson here.
 And dig in like you're Sara here.
 And dig in like you're Dale here.
 EAT!

The whole room digs in. Hudson is stunned, this has dragged
 on for an uncomfortable amount of time. Silence. Then...

MONICA
 Hudson. As I was saying earlier, I
 really think Mitch and I have a
 Donny and Marie thing going.

MITCH
 We're like the young, blonde Donny
 and Marie.

MONICA
 And we're seriously considering the
 move to LA.

MITCH
 The city of Angels!

MONICA
 Mitch I'm talking business right
 now. Do you think you could set up
 a meeting with your agent?

MITCH
 The Pitch: We're your new hosts of
 American Idol!

NEIL
 I thought that show was canceled?

NICK
 (singing Black Eyed Peas)
 No, no, no, no, don't funk with my
 heart.

DALE
 Sar, honey! Remember when you
 auditioned for American Idol?

SARA
 We took an oath never to speak--

DEB
 What was that song you sang again?

BARB
 Oh, oh! It was the cupcake boobs!

DALE
 Was it those pussy ladies?

SADIE
 DAD, my god. It's the Pussycat
 Dolls.

DEB
 OH I GOT IT..
 (begins singing "I Kissed
 a Girl")
 Na na na na and I liked it...

<p>NICK (joining her, singing) The taste of her cherry chapstick.</p>	<p>DEB The taste of her cherry chapstick.</p>
--	---

MITCH
 (Picks it up, loudly)
 I kissed a girl just to try it.
 Hope my boyfriend don't mind it.

NICK
 Wow Mitch, that felt--

MITCH
 Personal. It was. That line always
 gets me.

Hudson gives Sara a look. Amused.

SADIE
 Hudson do you sing?

HUDSON

Nope. Not a triple threat. Not even a double threat. I'm just an ac--

DEB

So is that why you only do Christmas movies?

BARB

Well he's Mr.Christmas! Middle America knows no other leading man.

MITCH

(sexual)

Do you just looove Christmas?

MONICA

Have you ever wanted to do something that, like, wins awards?

Sara chimes in to save Hudson.

SARA

Ok well who needs awards, anyway, I mean really.

NEIL

Speaking of awards did you hear Veronica and Kevin are going for the Mr. and Mrs.Christmas title this year?

MITCH

I've seen them rehearsing and let me tell you there is a fire in their crotch.

DEB

Kevin has been looking juicy lately hasn't he? I mean--

MITCH

Did you hear he's been volunteering for Petlandia by Dawn?

HUDSON

Petlandia by Dawn?

MONICA

It's *the* pet store in town. Every year, Dawn sponsors the Gingerbread Doghouse Making Competition. It's the pre-game to Mr.Christmas. Mitch and I are hosting.

MITCH
Kevin Singh looks sooo good next to
a puppy.

NICK
Soo good.

SADIE
Guys?!

MITCH
Oh shit. Sorry--

NEIL
Right, sorry Sara.

Silence.

SARA
It's fine. I'm fine! Totally
unbothered. Happy for them.
Actually so happy.

Bit manic. More silence.

SADIE
Wait! Ok crazy idea. Hudson you
should enter the Mr.Christmas
Cabaret with Sara!

HUDSON
Oh I don't think--

DALE
That could be good fun!

NEIL
Nick and I are also competing.

NICK
Screw the hetero-normative Mr. and
Mrs. norms.

NEIL
We are Mr.Christmas--

NICK
Squared!

MITCH
That's so hot.

All 10 heads and 20 eyes turn to Hudson.

SADIE
So. Are you gonna do it?

BARB
Oh you should!

NEIL
Do it.

NICK
You must.

MONICA
Say yes. SAY IT.

MITCH
SAY IT. YES. YES. YES.

Everyone aside from Sara chants "yes". Fists bang on the table.

HUDSON
Ahhh...I'm leaving tomorrow though.
First thing. Shoot!

Silence. On Sara - a flicker of sadness.

Uncle Todd finally speaks.

UNCLE TODD
Sara. How are you doing after the
big dumping?

SADIE
Uncle Todd. What the fu--

DEB
Babe we just talked about that.

UNCLE TODD
I wasn't listening. He was a sexy
man though, wasn't he?

Hudson chimes in to save Sara.

HUDSON
I met him today. He's not *that* good
looking.

BARB
Oh honey, we don't tell lies in
this family.

SARA
Does anyone want to ask me what
it's like working at the top law
firm in Seattle? Big promotion to
junior partner? Anyone?

Silence. Sara shoves food in her face.

SARA (CONT'D)
Would you look at that! I'm done.

Sara picks up her plate. Leaves to the kitchen. Hudson follows.

INT. SWANSON KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

HUDSON
That was...uh...

SARA
Fucking brutal.

HUDSON
(try to cheer up)
Fa la la la--

SARA
Don't.

HUDSON
Fair.

Sara grabs 3 LARGE BOTTLES OF LIQUOR from the cabinet.

SARA
Bet I can drink you under the
table.

HUDSON
Bet I have more reason to drink.

SARA
You want to play that game? My life
is more miserable than yours?

HUDSON
My life is more miserable than
yours.

SARA
You're on.

INT. SWANSON RESIDENCE - LATER

A dinner party in full drunken swing.

Nick playing the piano. Neil singing off key. Barb and Dale slow dancing. Deb and Uncle Todd grinding. Mitch and Monica interpretive dancing? That is up to the actor's discretion.

Hudson and Sara sit huddled in a nook. Empty bottle beside them, shot glasses in hand.

SARA

It was the 2002 talent show. I emerge from the red curtains with black makeup on. I start singing Queen's "We Will Rock You". Out of key.

HUDSON

Bold to sing Queen.

SARA

I was a bold bitch at age 10. I have two backup dancers, Stacey and Bobby. I get to the second verse - "buddy you're a young man, hard man". Out of nowhere I just started peeing. All over the stage.

HUDSON

What did you do?

SARA

The show must go on.

HUDSON

No. You didn't.

SARA

Executed the whole thing. Stacey and Bobby had to maneuver around the accident.

HUDSON

That is--

SARA

I win. Fair and square.

HUDSON

Hands down. That's yours.

Sara downs a shot.

QUICK CUTS: The game, dinner guests, drinking.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

My mom re-married a golf douche named Steve and now they live in Seattle with her step kids that I'm convinced are white collar criminals in the making.

SARA

I cheat when I play Wordle because my vocabulary isn't great but people think it should be because I'm a lawyer.

HUDSON

Mine.

SARA

I think that I'm a bad feminist because I like missionary sex.

HUDSON

I suck on my own teeth to get the food out because I don't floss.

SARA

After the breakup, I forgot I was alone and I punch bugged myself so hard that I dislocated my shoulder.

HUDSON

My high school girlfriend dumped me with a post-it note on my locker.

SARA

I have hit multiple cars while parallel parking and just say it's a love tap and run away.

HUDSON

I tell everyone my favorite genre of music is rap but really I listen to the Hamilton soundtrack on repeat.

SARA

I fantasize about running Veronica Livingston over with a plow.

HUDSON

I killed my co-star Eleanor Saint James.

SARA

What?

HUDSON

I didn't know she had a peanut allergy and I waved a Nature Valley bar in her face and she died.

SARA

Are you serious?

HUDSON

And if I'm being honest...I don't think I feel that bad about it?

NICK WALKS BY, staring at Hudson. Fuck. Did he hear that?

NICK

Well, well, well. This is the moment I've been waiting for all night.

HUDSON

I didn't--

NICK

Time to take a leak!

Nick laughs hysterically.

SARA

I'm going to pretend I didn't hear you say any of that.

INT. SWANSON RESIDENCE - LATER, LATER

Sara and Hudson on the brink of tears. Obliterated.

SARA

My breakup with Kevin just sort of solidified this deep-seated feeling that I will always be the "and then" girl. Like I am the girl that people date before they find their "and then I met my forever" person. Like a good makeup primer. Or the warm-up portion of a spin class.

HUDSON

I date these vapid girls that I hate so I never have to let anyone in because I think...

(MORE)

INT. SWANSON KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Sadie makes pancakes and listens to the weather forecast.

WALT THE WEATHERMAN (O.S.)
Well it was a snowy 24 hours but
the state plows have confirmed the
the highway is all clear!

Sadie hears someone coming downstairs. She scrambles for the remote.

WALT THE WEATHERMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
But who would want to be anywhere
else but Walnut Grove this time of
year, am I right?

She turns off the TV as Hudson, hella disheveled, walks in.

SADIE
Morning Mr. Christ---I mean Hudson.
How you feeling?

HUDSON
Been better.
(then)
Was that the weather on? What did
they say about the roads?

SADIE
Such a nightmare. If you can
believe it, the state plow that
goes between the towns is broken.
BROKEN!

HUDSON
What? That can't be right...can we
Google that?

Sara enters the kitchen, hungover. Sadie ducks out.

SARA
I don't know who drank who under
the table but...
(clocks his appearance)
I think we both lost.

INT. SWANSON RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Sadie dashes to the office, mission impossible style. She finds the wifi modem, unplugs it.

INT. SWANSON KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Hudson holds Sara's hair back as she pukes in the sink. Sadie returns.

SADIE

Ew, Sar!

SARA

I couldn't make it to the bathroom.

Hudson grabs Sara's phone to Google snow info. Nothing loads.

HUDSON

The wifi doesn't work here?

SARA

What? No our wifi is really good. The 3G sucks but it's good in the house.

Sara grabs the phone and tries. No luck.

SARA (CONT'D)

What is going on?

SADIE

That's so annoying!

(then)

But Hudson, don't panic. They said on the news it'll be fixed by tomorrow. Guess you're stuck with us for one more day!

Hudson looks at Sara, hobbled over the sink. To his surprise, he's not *that* upset about it.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - MORNING

MUSIC: Some psychotic circus tune.

Foldout tables and chairs are arranged across a high school gymnasium. THE MAKINGS OF A GINGERBREAD HOUSE are displayed. The gingerbread pieces are massive - it's bizarre.

Mitch and Monica glide across a makeshift stage with microphones.

MONICA

Alright Walnut Grove! As you funnel in, make sure to sign in at the front desk.

MITCH

It's not really a desk more of a
fold-out chair that Pearl is
sitting on but you get the point!
No Lenny just to the left there...

Walt the Weatherman stands in front of his tripod, speaking into a microphone.

WALT THE WEATHERMAN

As you well know, the Gingerbread
Doghouse Making Competition
sponsored by Petlandia by Dawn is
one of the biggest events of the
year. I have many suspicions as to
who may take home the prize but
let's head over to last year's
winner, Kevin Singh, for an update.

Walt grabs his tripod and walks over to Kevin and Veronica.
They are wearing sweatbands.

WALT THE WEATHERMAN (CONT'D)

Kevin. You won this competition
last year with ex-girlfriend Sara
Swanson. You made what I can only
describe as an upscale crack shack.
The grafitti art was an innovative
touch.

KEVIN

(to Walt's camera)

Thank you so much Walt. We really--

Veronica snatches the mic.

VERONICA

Nevermind the past Walt. We are
looking towards the future. I can
promise you that Kevin and I are
bringing a bigger, better, sexier
energy this year. We will bring the
heat.

WALT THE WEATHERMAN

You heard it here first! Stay tuned
for more. This is Walt signing off.

Monica taps the microphone on stage. Everyone is now in
place at their table. Familiar faces: Barb and Dale, Nick
and Neil, Sara and Hudson, Deb and Todd, Lenny.

MONICA

Mitch! I think it's time.

MITCH
 Mon, I think it is.

MONICA
 It is my absolute pleasure to
 introduce you all to Dawn. Without
 whom--

MITCH
 --none of this could happen. Give
 it up for the woman I want to be
 when I grow up...Dawn!

DAWN, a Jennifer Coolidge type (i.e. ageless) floats onto
 the stage in furs. She is holding two dogs. She speaks in a
 low, monotone voice.

DAWN
 Thank you. Thank you all for
 coming. I am Dawn of Petlandia by
 Dawn. And you may now begin
 building your doghouses.

Dawn walks away. Everyone pauses.

MONICA
 Get building! One hour on the clock
 starts now! Let's go, go, go!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - LATER

Hudson grabs a bin of Ju Jubes and snacks on the red ones.

SARA
 Hey. Get your head in the game.

HUDSON
 "U gotta get'cha get'cha head in
 the game"

Hudson pretends to dribble a Ju Jube. It's dumb. Sara
 laughs, despite herself.

SARA
 Can you take something seriously,
 for once?

HUDSON
 Yes ma'am.

SARA
 We need to do something that stands
 out, something that...

REVEAL Kevin and Veronica furiously building.

HUDSON
Beats them?

They have half a dog mansion already built.

SARA
Exactly.

HUDSON
Oh. I have it! I have a brilliant idea. This is going to bring down the house. Not actually. We'll make it real sturdy. We should make--

SARA
A loft.

HUDSON
How did you know I was going to say that?

SARA
(British accent)
Hudson don't steal people's artistic property it's unbecoming.

HUDSON
(British accent)
Unbecoming! Well let me--

SARA
Jokes over. Pass the red icing.

Walt walks by with his tripod. We follow him over to...

LENNY
Oh hey Walt! How are ya doin?

WALT THE WEATHERMAN
Lenny this, uh, work you're creating. What's the inspiration?

REVEAL Lenny's "gingerbread house". It looks like shit.

LENNY
This year Walt I'm taking inspiration from my childhood, specifically my relationship with my mother. The vision sort of flows through me. And my vision is yer vision, because we are all one.

WALT THE WEATHERMAN
Lenny, I must say, this is not my
vision. Best of luck. This is Walt
signing--

Deb scurries in front of Walt's frame.

WALT THE WEATHERMAN (CONT'D)
Deb could ya--

DEB
Sorry Walt! Icing emergency!

We follow Deb over to Veronica and Kevin.

DEB (CONT'D)
Kevin, sweetheart. Todd and I ran
out of our green icing would you be
so kind as to--

KEVIN
Absolutely Deb, it's all yours.

DEB
I'll bring it right back!

Deb runs off. We stay on:

VERONICA
(seething)
Babe. Fraternizing with the enemy?
When we're this close to the end?

KEVIN
It's just--

VERONICA
(mimicking Kevin)
"It's just...it's just..."
It's just loser mentality.

A gumdrop falls off the side of their house.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Motherf--

Mitch approaches.

MITCH
Hey V!
(whispers)
Don't blow a gasket over a
gingerbread house. It's giving you
wrinkles.
(MORE)

MITCH (CONT'D)

(to Kevin)

Kevin how do you feel about the audience vote? Especially now that you've hitched your wagon to an unlikeable Reese Witherspoon?

VERONICA

I am much more of a Margot Robbie.

KEVIN

I am feeling confident. Thanks Mitch.

A LOUD CRASH. We turn to see Barb and Dale's gingerbread house on the floor. They are heaved over laughing.

DALE

Nothing to see here! Barb hit the Bailey's too hard this morning.

BARB

Dale!

Over to Monica on stage.

MONICA

Five more minutes people! Time to put your finishing touches on your doghouses!

We follow Monica off the stage to:

MONICA (CONT'D)

Wow Sar! For being hungover as shit this is pretty good.

SARA

How do you know I'm hungover as shit?

MONICA

We all saw you two annihilate schnapps and scotch and mulled wine and those little--

SARA

Ok yup let's not talk about it.

Monica scrunches her nose watching Sara and Hudson. Like a proud mom.

SARA (CONT'D)

Mon? Anything else.

Monica points between the two of them and winks.

HUDSON
What is she--

SARA
She takes a lot of drugs. Uppers
mostly.

HUDSON
You don't say.

Over to Mitch on stage.

MITCH
You have 10...9, 8, 7,...

Competitors put on their finishing touches. Monica joins
Mitch.

MITCH (CONT'D)
6, 5, 4...

MONICA
3, 2, 1. Time is up!

Over to Sara and Hudson. A little side fist bump.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - LATER

Suspense. The moment is here.

MONICA
For the past hour, the public have
been voting for their favorite
gingerbread doghouse like their
lives depend on it.

MITCH
Because they do Monica. Our panel
of judges has also been scoring
each team on the 3 pillars of a
successful gingerbread doghouse.

MONICA
Foundational Strength, Design, and
of course, Style. Mitch, bring me
the envelope.

MITCH
(whispering)
I thought you said I could read it
this time.

MONICA
(hushed, forcing a smile)
Be a good boy, and you can do the
next one.

Mitch hands her an envelope with a photo of a chihuahua.

MONICA (CONT'D)
Winning the judge's vote...Kevin
Singh and Veronica Livingston!

Veronica and Kevin run to the stage. They start aggressively
making out.

VERONICA
I knew we could do it baby!

MITCH
And in a humbling turn of events,
winning the public vote...Sara
Swanson and Hudson Ren!

Hudson and Sara walk to square off with Veronica and Kevin.

SARA
Take that bitch.

VERONICA
That means it's a tie, dumbass!

SARA
All I heard was *the people* like us
more.

VERONICA
This is unacceptable. WHAT'S THE
TIE BREAKER?

MITCH
There is one, and one person only,
who can put an end to this
blasphemous tie.

MONICA
Everyone, let's welcome Dawn back
to the stage.

Dawn floats back to the stage with her dogs.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON Dawn's eyes darting back and forth between the two
houses. One looks like your picture perfect gingerbread
house.

The other has a loft, testing the boundaries of traditional gingerbread house making.

Dawn is genuinely torn.

DAWN

They're just...so different.

VERONICA

Oh c'mon! A loft? What kind of overly modern bullshit is that?

SARA

It's called contemporary. And your colonial farmhouse isn't giving me HGTV level inspiration either.

Dawn motions for silence.

DAWN

I have the answer. There is only one way to break this incestuous tie.

MONICA

Not sure if that's the right word
Dawn--

DAWN

For all the marbles, the tiebreaker will be...The Mr. and Mrs.Christmas Cabaret.

Dawn dramatically exits.

Sara looks to Hudson. He definitely won't be into this...
Veronica evil laughs.

VERONICA

Say less Dawn! Kevin and I have been practicing for weeks. You guys don't stand a chance!

Hudson squares up.

HUDSON

Do you even know who you're talking to? I am *the* Mr.Christmas! This shit is my birthright.

KEVIN

Cute Hollywood. But I was born in Walnut Grove. Christmas spirit runs in my veins.

HUDSON
I'm gonna be the merriest
motherfucker you've ever met.

VERONICA
I'd like to see you try mopey-dick!

SARA
As if you've ever read a book in
your life, much less one published
in 1851.

HUDSON
Did you make that up or did you
just have that tidbit ready--

VERONICA
Sara you're so boring. I'm not
engaging in this petty shit.

SARA
You *just* said--

VERONICA
--May the BEST Mr. and
Mrs.Christmas win.

Stare down. The pairs break off.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Sara and Hudson pace by the lockers.

HUDSON
How are we gonna win this thing?

SARA
Really? You wanna do this? I get if
it's like, triggering for you. You
don't have to. It's a lot to ask--

HUDSON
Oh no, I'm in.

SARA
Good - I didn't really mean any of
that.

HUDSON
I know. What's this cabaret?

SARA
It's a glorified talent show. Most
people do a song and dance routine.

Deb gestures to A MAJESTIC WALL OF DILDOS.

DEB (CONT'D)

I'll let you have a browse. Behave you two!! I'm kidding. Get some filthy shit. Don't tell your mom I said that.

Deb exits. Hudson lifts a confusing sex contraption into frame...

HUDSON

How does this...

SARA

...I think that's the bottom and it hooks kind of around...

HUDSON

...and then up?

SARA

Hmm...

HUDSON

Hmm...

MUSIC: Ideally Rihanna's "S&M". (Doubtful we will have the budget for this, so something similar).

MONTAGE OF OUTFITS

Hudson stands outside a tiny change room. Sara emerges in a short red nightie. She poses.

QUICK CUTS:

- Hudson helps fasten a red wig on Sara.
- Sara finds assless chaps. *Gasp. Yes to these.*
- Hudson wears nipple tassels, a leather vest, a blindfold.
- Sara hands him funny-shaped dildos while he's blindfolded.
- They circle whips around their heads.
- Hudson chases Sara with a massive vibrator.
- Sexual dancing. Executed very badly.
- Hudson snacks on a candy bra.

Sara emerges in a tiny, fluffy Christmas dress. She pulls on a pair of stockings and steps into heels. He drops the candy bra.

END OUTFIT MONTAGE.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

You...

SARA

What do you think?

HUDSON

I mean...

A wholesome moment? No.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

You look hot! Are you kidding me with this?! WOW. Kevin who?! It really is Christmas. Give me a spin. Again! Again! Again! One more for good measure...

Sara cackles. Spinning around again and again.

CUT TO:

INT. JESSE'S CHILDHOOD HOME, THE VALLEY - SAME TIME

Jesse's mom, NANCY FLETCHER, late 50s, is in the kitchen. Jesse walks in.

JESSE

Hey ma! I'm home!

He hugs his mom.

NANCY

Hi sweetie. How was the silent retreat?

JESSE

Liberating. 48 hours of meditating in a locked room and I feel brand new.

NANCY

Good. You work too hard. People contact you too much.

JESSE

Retweet. Hey what do we have going on tomorrow night? Seth Rogen's having this *thing*.

NANCY

Oh that reminds me! Hudson left a message for you on the landline -- I thought maybe it was some odd inside joke but he sounded a bit unhinged.

Jesse pulls out his cell.

JESSE

What? That's so weird. He didn't text me.

Jesse goes to his email app for the first time in 2 days. A DOZEN EMAILS from Hudson load with the subject line "SOS".

Jesse dashes to the landline and we hear Hudson's voicemail from 2 nights ago start to play.

BACK TO:

EXT. DANCE STUDIO - EVENING

Hudson and Sara approach the studio.

HUDSON

Don't worry I got this. Watch my back.

Hudson goes to pick the lock.

SARA

Hate to break up this spy kids moment, but uh, key's under the mat...

HUDSON

...they just leave keys out in public?

SARA

Who's gonna break in?

Sara unlocks the door.

INT. DANCE STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Sara puts her laptop on the ground. Pulls up a YouTube video of Mean Girls Jingle Bell Rock.

SARA
Ok so--I'll match Regina you match
Cady.

HUDSON
No. I'm Regina.

SARA
If I had to cast you--you'd be
Gretchen. You're for sure a
Gretchen.

HUDSON
That's the rudest thing you've ever
said to me.

QUICK CUTS: Rehearsing, Hudson stumbling, laughing.
Sara shows him how to do the drop down thigh slap...

SARA
Circle the hips and slap.

HUDSON
Hips and slap.

SARA
But sexy.

HUDSON
Hips and slap!

SARA
Better. That was almost watchable.

INT. DANCE STUDIO - LATER

Sara and Hudson drink water, out of breath.

HUDSON
Kevin and Veronica--

SARA
Eat your fuckin' hearts out.

HUDSON
Fa la la la la, la la la laaa.

They cheers with their water bottles.

EXT. WALNUT GROVE - NIGHT

Hudson and Sara walk home bundled up. A WINTER WONDERLAND.
It's late, they're the only ones around.

SARA
So, I think you're dead on the
hill.

HUDSON
What?

SARA
You said, "I will die on the hill
that Walnut Grove is *not* a really
nice place to live"

HUDSON
Did I say that? Doesn't sound like
me.

SARA
You did. Verbatim.

HUDSON
I plead the fifth.
(then)
As much as it pains me to admit,
this whole *detour* has been less
shitty than I thought it would be.

SARA
Must have nothing to do with the
company.

HUDSON
Company's been brutal. It's the
mutilated coffee and incredible
nightlife that sold me on this
place.

SARA
That's what everyone says!

Comfortable quiet. Then...

HUDSON
Thank you. For just, I don't know.
Existing.

SARA
And?

HUDSON
What?

SARA
I'm waiting for the other shoe to
drop.

(MORE)

SARA (CONT'D)

Thank you for existing, you make me realize someone's life is more embarrassing than mine. Thank you for existing, at least my ex is more tolerable than yours. Thank you for existing, and?

HUDSON

That was it. That was the end of my sentence.

An unusually honest moment. Hudson stops.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

Ok. We're going skating.

REVEAL an adorable outdoor skating rink surrounded by twinkle lights. Hudson grabs Sara's hand.

SARA

We have no skates.

HUDSON

We'll raw dog it.

SARA

You want to skate barefoot?

HUDSON

No. We'll go in our shoes. You know, I was actually an elite hockey player back in elementary school.

EXT. SKATING RINK, WALNUT GROVE - CONTINUOUS

Hudson waddles, penguin-like, on the ice.

SARA

You do look like an elite athlete right now.

HUDSON

It's harder without blades strapped to your feet. I just need to find my groove.

SARA

Peaking at age 10 isn't a good look.

We hear a very faint giggle. A BUSH AROUND THE RINK RUSTLES. Hudson and Sara pause. This will make sense later.

HUDSON

What was...Did you hear that?

SARA

I'm not concerned. I've got an elite athlete on my hands!

Sara slides around easily.

HUDSON

I think I'm dealing with a body weight issue. I have so much more muscle mass than you so--

SARA

Ugh! Yes! It's those giant, bulging muscles of yours throwing you off balance!

HUDSON

OK. There's no need for that--

Hudson falls, graceless. Sara glides over to him.

SARA

And he sticks the landing! Ladies and gentleman the triple axel is a gutsy move this early on in the competition--

Hudson pulls Sara down next to him. Laughing.

SARA (CONT'D)

I knew you were a dirty player.

HUDSON

Don't hate the player...

SARA

Mhmm.

Hudson lies down.

HUDSON

Aside from the coffee and nightlife... this is a real Walnut Grove selling point.

Sara lies next to Hudson. They look at the stars.

SARA

Ya. It's not too bad.

HUDSON
There's so many of them.

SARA
Stars?

HUDSON
Ya. There's so many.

SARA
An astute observation.

HUDSON
I am an astute person.

They turn and look at each other for a long beat.

SARA
Then tell me what I'm thinking
right now.

Hudson moves closer to Sara, analyzing her face. Slowly, with every awkward giggle and breath, he places his forehead against hers. His nose...

HUDSON
Am I close?

Finally, they kiss.

It's passionate. It's hot. It's everything we want from a make-out. If the audience is not *giddy* at this point, something has gone wrong.

END OF ACT 2

INT. GUEST ROOM - MORNING

Hudson wakes up early to find himself smiling stupidly. (It's always so embarrassing to catch yourself smiling to yourself). He stops.

EXT. WALNUT GROVE TOWN SQUARE - LATER THAT MORNING

Hudson walks to pick up muffins for the Swanson's. A little skip to his step. Outside the coffee shop he spots a big COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS clock. He watches the seconds tick down, slightly unnerved.

Shaking it off he continues into...

INT. COFFEE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Hudson approaches the counter.

BARISTA

What.

HUDSON

I was just hoping to get 5 of your
apple cinnamon muffins?

BARISTA

Fan-tastic.

HUDSON

Sorry, did I say--

The Barista stares at him.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

--are you ok? It's just, this is
the least cheery I've ever seen
anyone in this place. Don't get me
wrong it's cool. You just seem like
you belong in New York or
something.

BARISTA

I don't know how to put this
gracefully, but I caught my
boyfriend humping our dog-walker
last night. They had the dog in the
room and everything. It was like
this sick fantasy. Worst part is I
thought he was going to propose.
Ha! Imagine being so wrong about a
person? Like, shit man.

She hands him a box of muffins.

BARISTA (CONT'D)

Don't fall in love. Unless you're
in the mood to feel like your heart
is being stabbed with an ice pick
one hundred times over and then
rolled over and flattened by a semi
truck. It's not worth it.

HUDSON

Oh. Thank you.

BARISTA

You're welcome. Merry flipping
Christmas Eve.

EXT. WALNUT GROVE TOWN SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

Hudson walks out of the shop and looks at the COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS clock again. As the seconds tick down we overhear a FATHER, 40s, teaching his SON, 6, how to tie his skates. They are at a bench near the skating rink from last night.

FATHER

That's it criss cross.

SON

Criss cross.

FATHER

Black under white, pull tight.
There you go. Now remember what's next?

SON

Bunny ears.

FATHER

Bunny ears, ya, that's it. Push through and...and pull tight. There! You did it! Look at you go! I've never seen such expert shoe tying in my life!

The father picks up his son and spins him around.

FATHER (CONT'D)

I'm so proud of you buddy.

Hudson feels emotion catching in his throat. One last look at the COUNTDOWN clock...

INT. SWANSON'S FRONT PORCH - SAME TIME

From behind, we see a man at the front door dressed in head-to-toe metallic puffy winter gear. He knocks. Sara answers.

REVEAL: It's Jesse!

SARA

Hi. Can I help you?

JESSE

Hello. Oh wow. Female. White. 20s. The girl-next-door that doesn't take herself too seriously. That's good energy. Marketable for sure. What's your name?

SARA

Do I know you?

JESSE

Shit, how inconsiderate of me. So sexy to meet you, my name's Jesse. I'm Hudson Ren's agent. And best friend. More like best friend first who happens to be agent, it's a really special thing we have going. I got an SOS message saying he was at 4073 Evergreen Lane in Walnut Grove.

SARA

This is that. What do you mean SOS?

JESSE

He left me a voicemail saying he's trapped inside his own worst nightmare. Said the people here are, uh, what was it, "outrageous Christmas puppets"? You probably don't know this but my boy hates Christmas. It's a childhood--

SARA

--trauma thing. Ya I got that.

JESSE

And he's stuck in a house with a "bug-eyed fan girl" and her "kind of hot sister"? Feel like you must be the kind of hot--

SARA

I'm certainly not a fan.

JESSE

Fair enough, I'm more of a true crime guy myself. You can't blame Huds for being eager to leave though, I mean, look at what he's missing right now.

Jesse shows Sara a bikini pic of Svetlana and other influencers on his phone.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Svetlana and Co. Sometimes I wish I didn't have such a healthy relationship with my mother because damn what a way to spend Christmas, am I right--

Hudson walks up to the door, surprised to see Jesse.

HUDSON

Jess?

JESSE

Huds! Holy shit!

Jesse pulls Hudson into a passionate hug.

JESSE (CONT'D)

When I say I'd move heaven and earth for you brother... This has been a *journey*.

HUDSON

What are you--

JESSE

I got your voicemail at my mom's house. I'm straight up confused bro. You said it was snowmagedon out here. I almost rented a snowmobile but the roads are totally clear. Like freshly salted and everything.

HUDSON

Well...they told me the roads were covered in snow.

Hudson, confused and now a bit pissed, shoots Sara a look.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

You told me there was no way out. Your sister said the plow was broken and--

SARA

I have no idea what you're talking about--

JESSE

I'm not usually a man of haste but uh, we gotta GTFO. Flight leaves in 4 hours. If we catch it, I can still make it to Seth Rogen's Hanukkah party. It's the first year non Jewish people are invited. I have to go.

(to Sara)

Pleasure to meet you, um...

SARA

Sara.

JESSE

Jessica Parker.

Jesse winks. An awkward beat.

SARA

Wait. You're just gonna leave?

HUDSON

I, uh, I just can't be here anymore. It's too much.

SARA

What about the cabaret tonight? And Kevin and Veronica? Mean Girls Jingle Bell rock isn't really a solo routine...

JESSE

It is not a one man show.

Sara leans in to Hudson.

SARA

Look, I know Christmas is really hard for you, but I don't think perpetually running away from everything is the answer. No offence, but, it clearly hasn't worked so far.

Hudson doesn't want to hear this.

HUDSON

Thank you for that advice. But all your sad, small-town drama was...you were just a way to pass the time. I had to do something to distract myself while I was in this--

JESSE

"Shithole town". Your words.

HUDSON

Shithole town.

SARA

You know what, fine. Pretend you hate it here.

(MORE)

SARA (CONT'D)

Pretend I'm some pathetic story who helped the days go by. But I think your dad would be really disappointed to see what a giant asshole you turned into.

The last trigger for Hudson.

HUDSON

You nailed it Sara. That's exactly what you are. A pathetic story.

JESSE

I'm behind on context here but that felt a little harsh.

SARA

You know what Hudson, fuck--

Sadie comes down the stairs, blissfully unaware of this morning's drama.

SADIE

Oh my god. Is that *vulgar* language I hear at 9:00 AM?

(then, singing)

"Fa la la la la la--

SARA

Sadie. Go get Hudson's bag.

SADIE

But wh--

SARA

NOW.

Sadie runs back upstairs.

SARA (CONT'D)

(to Hudson)

Have a *fabulous* Christmas with bimbos 1 through 5.

HUDSON

As long as I'm as far away from here as possible, I will.

JESSE

It feels like we're up here...and maybe we want to bring it down here. A suggestion.

A long silence. Sadie comes back, hands Hudson his bag.

SADIE
Hudson! Where are you goin--

Sara SLAMS the door in Hudson and Jesse's faces.

A beat.

JESSE
Dude. I think Sara Jessica Parker
is mad at you.

HUDSON
Let's just go.

INT. RENTAL CAR - MOMENTS LATER

JESSE
Huds that was...

HUDSON
I don't want to talk about it.

JESSE
Ok but you were really...

HUDSON
Don't want to talk about it.

JESSE
Did something happen between you
and--

HUDSON
JESS. Drop it.

JESSE
(in Matthew McConaughey
voice)
Alright, alright, alright.

A beat.

JESSE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Do we need to hire a lawyer about
this Eleanor Saint James thing?

A beat.

JESSE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
We can get Depp's people on it.

INT. SWANSON KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Sadie follows Sara into the kitchen.

SADIE
Sar, what happened?

SARA
Nothing it's stupid. I don't want
to talk about it.

SADIE
It doesn't look like nothing.

SARA
Don't want to talk about it.

SADIE
Where's Hudson going?

SARA
Mexico.

SADIE
What do you mean Mexico?

SARA
I mean exactly what it sounds like.
He's gone. To Mexico. With Svetlana
and Co. Because I'm, apparently,
just the kind of hot sis--

SADIE
He's GONE? He's not allowed to be
gone. No. No. No. How could he do
this to me?!

Sadie runs out of the room. Far too dramatic given her
circumstances.

INT. SEATTLE AIRPORT GATE - LATER

Jesse and Hudson wait to board their plane to LAX.

CLOSE ON Hudson's face, zoned out:

JESSE (O.S.)
Dude there's something more
beautiful about it. It feels
feminine. When I see it I go into
this trance...

PAN OUT to Jesse, babbling.

JESSE (CONT'D)
 Seth brings the weed in from BC and
 it's just more spiritual than the
 shit we have in LA.

Hudson looks ahead. In his own world.

JESSE (CONT'D)
 (noticing)
 Hey, what's wrong?

Slowly PANNING IN on Hudson:

HUDSON
 I just realized it's 18 years
 tomorrow. He died 18 years ago and
 I don't know what's wrong with me
 man, but it feels like it was
 yesterday. Everyone told me that
 time was supposed to help. Like,
 this sort of dull ache in my chest
 would lessen after a while. But it
 hasn't. It's just like waves -
 settling then crashing then
 settling then crashing.

(then)
 The last time I really talked to my
 dad we were driving to play hockey
 at that shitty rink on Waterloo...I
 think he'd hate the person I've
 become. I think I hate the person
 I've become.

PAN OUT to Jesse, crying. He hugs Hudson.

JESSE
 I don't hate you.
 (then)
 You know who I hate? Henry Wong.

HUDSON
 I also hate Henry Wong.

A tender moment interrupted by...

CHECK IN ATTENDANT (O.S.)
 Attention all passengers flying
 Delta 522 to Los Angeles - we are
 now boarding Zone 1.

Jesse squeezes Hudson's shoulders and gathers his things.
 Hudson follows at a snail's pace and starts looking around
 wistfully.

Embarrassingly enough, Hudson seems to think he will be the first ever real life person to be chased to the airport.

JESSE
You coming?

HUDSON
(in McConaughey voice)
Alright, alright, alright.

JESSE
Huds, do you want to stay? Go talk to that girl--

HUDSON
No. No I don't think she...and I would be like bleh...and she'd be like, uh huh...nuh uh...so, um, no.

JESSE
True.

The two stand in line at the check-in counter.

Then, a voice that sounds a lot like...

SARA (O.S.)
Hudson!

Hudson turns. A quintessential movie moment. Slow motion is an option. His expression shifts from elation to alarm as he recognizes the woman charging towards him...

MONICA
Hudson! I'm sure you didn't mean to leave without making a career-changing introduction on purpose!
(to Jesse)
You must be Hudson's agent!

Monica extends her hand to Jesse. She hands him her and Mitch's MAKESHIFT HEADSHOTS.

MONICA (CONT'D)
Monica Mitchell. It's a pleasure. I heard you were in town from Sadie who told Barb who told Deb who told me. So this meeting really feels like some insane instance of fate. My brother and I are going to change your life. I always say that we have this blonde Donny and Marie--

Monica's voice fades into the background. We follow a defeated Hudson as he scans his boarding pass and walks onto...

INT. AIRPLANE - MOMENTS LATER

Hudson unzips his bag to find Sadie's beautifully wrapped GINGERBREAD COOKIES. He breaks off a chunk to try one.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (O.S.)
Ladies and gentlemen, welcome onboard Delta Flight 522 with service from Seattle to Los Angeles. We are currently second in line for take-off and are expected to be in the air in approximately seven minutes. We ask that you please fasten your seat belts at this time.

Jesse plops down on the seat next to him.

JESSE
That woman was--
(noticing food)
Where'd you get that?

Hudson passes the bag to him.

JESSE (CONT'D)
She was insane, for sure, but there was something really inspiring about her shameless self promotion. Like--
(takes a bite)
Mmm! This is so good.

HUDSON
I know.

Jesse's phone DINGS.

JESSE
Aw, it's your mom! She says "Hello Jesse, exclamation point, squinty smiley face. I know these are Hudson's blackout dates but I just haven't heard anything from him for a couple days now and want to make sure he's ok, dot, dot, dot. This time of year is so hard for him so I want to make sure he's smiling somewhere. Send my love to your mom and dad, exclamation point.

(MORE)

JESSE (CONT'D)
Michelle, period. Red heart,
eggplant emoji."

Hudson's eyes glass over.

HUDSON
I need to...I need to go. What am I
doing? I need to go. Fuck Mexico.

JESSE
Ya fuck Mexico! I hate the sun. And
girls on boats. In bikinis. Ew.

Hudson unbuckles his seat belt. A FLIGHT ATTENDANT, 30s,
over it, approaches.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Sir I need you to keep your seat
belt fastened. We are preparing for
takeoff.

HUDSON
I need to get off this plane.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
I'm sorry all cabin doors have been
closed at this time.

JESSE
This man has a condition! Are you
seriously not going to help the
disabled?!

Jesse PULLS OUT HIS PHONE TO FILM.

JESSE (CONT'D)
This is a Delta Airlines employee
not letting a passenger off the
plane. This man here is being held
hostage. Against his will.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
That's what being held hostage
means.

(to Hudson)
Sir, you do not look disabled.

HUDSON
I have MISOPHONIA. Okay? I'm
triggered by the sounds of chewing
and I need to get the fuck off this
plane, now. It's a serious
condition.

JESSE
Have you seriously never heard of
Mispiya?

HUDSON
Misophonia.

JESSE
Yup. That.

The flight attendant sighs and signals for Hudson to step into the aisle. She is not paid enough for this.

JESSE (CONT'D)
Love you man. Go get your Mrs.
Christmas.

HUDSON
There's somewhere I need to go
first.

They fist bump. Hudson jogs off the plane.

EXT. SEATTLE SUBURB - LATER

Hudson pulls up to a white picket fence house.

Through the window, we see a FAMILY setting the table for Christmas Eve.

He runs to the front porch. DING DONG. MICHELLE REN, Hudson's mom, late 50s, a sweetness reminiscent of Barb, opens the door.

MICHELLE
Hudson! What are you doing here?
This is one of your blackout dates.
Aren't you supposed to be in Cabo?

Hudson hugs his mom. He doesn't let go.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
You know, as much as it breaks my
heart that you have this stubborn
rule about not talking over the
holidays, I always try to respect
your decision. And I know I sent
those texts to you and then Jesse
which technically violates your
rules but I--

Hudson pulls away.

HUDSON

No. I was wrong. Like, blaringly wrong. I've just been avoiding everything for so long because... I really miss him.

MICHELLE

I really miss him too.

They share a moment of silence for his dad. Then...

HUDSON

I'm sorry I bailed on so many Christmases. I know this has been hard for you too.

MICHELLE

Oh hon, it's ok. We always had a rowdy Easter didn't we?

They laugh.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Why don't you come inside? Steve and the boys are just setting the table. We have a huge turkey and--

HUDSON

--Mom, I love you. But I can't handle Steve and the frat brothers right now.

MICHELLE

Hudson, we don't shame people's life choices in this household. But I recognize the problematic culture they are a part of.

HUDSON

And as much as I would love to hear Steve yell about his golf swing...I have somewhere I need to be.

MICHELLE

Where?

A dramatic beat, pumping himself up...

HUDSON

I gotta go see about a girl.

Hudson kisses her cheek, runs to the car. Michelle calls out...

MICHELLE (O.S)
Honey we really need to stop
speaking in movie quotes. The boys
say it's "cheugy"!

INT. COMMUNITY THEATER, BACKSTAGE - EVENING

Sara is all dressed up backstage. She and Sadie nervously
watch as people funnel in.

SADIE
Sure you want to do this by
yourself? I don't think anyone will
blame you if you back out now.

SARA
No, I'm gonna do it. I can't let
Kevin and Veronica think I'm a weak
bitch. I AM NOT A WEAK BITCH.

SADIE
It could totally be a hot
independent woman moment. Who needs
a Mr.Christmas anyway?

INT. RENTAL CAR - SAME TIME

Hudson driving manically, shoving a sandwich in his mouth.

INT. COMMUNITY THEATER - SAME TIME

It's showtime. Mitch and Monica strut onstage in full black-
tie garb.

MONICA
Welcome to the 54th annual Walnut
Grove Mr. and Mrs.Christmas
Cabaret!

MITCH
Our town's best and brightest have
been waiting and rehearsing for
this climax.

MONICA
He didn't mean that in a sexual
way.

MITCH
Or did I?

MONICA

Mitch let me tell ya, I have been to Seattle and back today but there's nowhere more exciting than the Walnut Grove Community Theater on Christmas Eve.

MITCH

Not even the North Pole!

They fake laugh the way hosts do. No one else finds it funny.

MONICA

The winners will receive a \$1000 gift card to Petlandia by Dawn, a romantic weekend getaway at the Walnut Grove Inn, and of course, endless bragging rights.

MITCH

Which go a long way in this town!

MONICA

But first, we must properly introduce the show...via song.

MITCH

Hit it Lenny!

The instrumental to "**Santa Baby**" STARTS PLAYING. Monica whips off the bottom half of her dress, revealing a showgirl outfit.

They begin a deeply cringey, slightly incestuous, serious performance. Monica uses a baby voice.

QUICK CUTS to audience reactions - intrigue, awkwardness, Deb does a mini version of their routine in her seat.

INT. RENTAL CAR - SAME TIME

Hudson rehearses to himself.

HUDSON

So I went to get muffins and I wanted to do a sort of cute "good morning I got you a fresh steaming muffin" kind of thing for when you woke up. But then there was the countdown clock and the emo barista and her dog and the dad with his son with the shoes..ugh no.

(MORE)

HUDSON (CONT'D)

(then)

Gurl, you look better than an angel
on Christmas morning--oh my god.

INT. COMMUNITY THEATER, BACKSTAGE - SAME TIME

Veronica and Kevin approach Sara backstage. They are wearing "Nutcracker" inspired outfits. Veronica whispers in Sara's ear.

VERONICA

Are you ready to get visibly F-U-C-
K-E-D'd on?

KEVIN

Veronica babe, a bit less.

Sara remains un-bothered.

SARA

What will be will be. Best of luck
to you both.

VERONICA

You're so weird.

SARA

You look really beautiful tonight
Veronica. Like an angry crow.

On stage, Mitch and Monica end their routine in a pose too sexual for brother and sister.

INT. RENTAL CAR - SAME TIME

HUDSON

C'mon Hudson get it together...I
don't know what it is about you but
I feel like you're already one of
my best friends and I see you as an
old woman. Like not now, you're
very tight and youthful but more
just us, old together. Even though
I've known you for 72 HOURS WHAT
THE. No. Wrong. That's not it.

INT. COMMUNITY THEATER - SAME TIME

Mitch and Monica grab their mics.

MONICA

Wow, Mitch. What a start. Guess you
can all go home now!

They cackle.

MITCH
Everyone stop, drop, and roll
because this stage is on FIRE!

Silence from the audience.

MONICA
Well without further ado, it's time
to welcome our first contestants to
the stage.

MITCH
Give it up for Veronica Livingston
and Kevin Singh!

Veronica and Kevin take their positions. An INTENSE
CLASSICAL SONG BOOMS.

A too-serious contemporary-ballet piece unfolds.

INT. RENTAL CAR - SAME TIME

HUDSON
YOU ARE LIKE LITERAL SUNSHINE ON A
CLOUDY DAY. No. No. No.
(then, looking around)
The roads are so fucking clear!

INT. COMMUNITY THEATER - LATER

Nick and Neil exit the stage in elf costumes. Nick grabs
Monica's mic.

NICK
Hey Walnut Grove...if you're
single, give me a jingle!

MONICA
Wow, Nick and Neil that was...

MITCH
Progressive.

MONICA
That's one way to put it.
(then)
Ladies and gentlemen, it's time to
give a warm Walnut Grove welcome to
...

MITCH

Sara Swanson, who is slaying as
both Mr. and Mrs.Christmas tonight!

Veronica smirks backstage. The audience applauds. Sara steps into the spotlight.

EXT. PARKING LOT - SAME TIME

Hudson screeches up.

QUICK CUTS: Pants off. Coat off. Costume on.

INT. COMMUNITY THEATER - SAME TIME

Sara starts the "**Mean Girls**" Jingle Bell Rock routine.

There is a part where she is supposed to have her arm on Hudson's shoulder. She mimes this. The audience is politely smiling as she fails her way through this routine solo. So. Embarrassing.

The only encouraging face in the audience is Sadie, filming and dancing along with her camcorder, Amy Poehler style.

EXT. PARKING LOT - SAME TIME

Hudson checks his reflection in the car window. It will have to do. He runs inside.

INT. COMMUNITY THEATER - MOMENTS LATER

Hudson stumbles onto the stage only to find BAR KID rapping. In an ideal world, he is rapping Gucci Mane's "12 Days of Christmas".

BAR KID

*...On the first day of Christmas,
my true love sent to me
A half of a brick, told me feed my
family
I took it to the hood
Then I dropped it in the sink
(Skrrt, skrrt, skrrt)*

Hudson begins clapping.

HUDSON

Give it up for the small bartender
everyone!

BAR KID

Fam, you finna let me finish or
what?

HUDSON

Cutting that short was an act of
community service.

(hushed)

Look, I'll give you another \$100 if
you get off the stage right now.

Bar Kid takes a moment to consider, then complies.

BAR KID

Yo everyone. I'm doing beat poetry
next Wednesday at the Blitzzen. Roll
through.

Bar Kid exits. Sara steps into the light backstage, hovering
in the wings. Mitch slides Hudson a mic. Silence.

HUDSON

Hey. Has anyone seen Sara Swanson?
Is a Ms. Swanson in the audience?
That is not Barb.

Sara takes a baby step onto the stage.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

Sara. Hi.

A tense beat.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

Guess I'm a little too late, huh?

SARA

(sarcastically)

Do you think? I barely noticed.

HUDSON

I'm sorry I left. You shouldn't
have had to do that alone. That
must've been, so so embarrassing.
Like truly scarring-

SARA

I get it. Yup. Thanks.

HUDSON

Right. Ok. Here goes. Um, I hate
Christmas. So much.
It's this deep-seated,
miserable...well, you know all
that. Shit.

(MORE)

HUDSON (CONT'D)

(deep breath)

But I like you. And I am willing to relive my childhood trauma that I've never worked through to be with you. On Christmas. Or in general. But that's moving really fast so let's just start with *on Christmas* and see where it goes from there. What I'm trying to say here... Sara Swanson, I like you more than I hate Christmas.

Sara is silent. A long beat.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

And you look really hot in that outfit. I've told you that already but there's something about this community theater lighting that's just doing it--

Monica passes Sara her mic. She cuts him off.

SARA

There was no crowd pleasing.
There was no nostalgia.
There was no sex appeal.
There was me, humiliating myself, traumatizing every child under the age of 15 and every parent who knew me as a child. Let me tell you, Mean Girls Jingle Bell Rock is not a solo performance. No single person, no matter their talent, can carry that kind of production on their back.

Hudson mouths "I know".

SARA (CONT'D)

This isn't one of your Christmas movies Hudson. You don't get to just waltz in here with a mildly cute speech and pretend like you weren't a ruthless nightmare earlier.

Hudson is speechless. He did not think this would go this way.

SARA (CONT'D)

And frankly, you don't deserve the honor of being Mr.Christmas.

She hands the mic back to Monica and runs off stage.

Hudson goes after her. We now reveal that HE IS WEARING ASSLESS CHAPS - assless part is audience-facing. A mother covers her daughter's eyes.

Mitch and Monica glide back to center stage.

MONICA

Wow Sara and Hudson. Thank you for that dramatic sketch!

(to Mitch)

Play along.

MITCH

Oh yes. Really showing off their singing, dancing, *and* acting chops! Let's give them a round of applause!

A smattering of applause and confused looks.

INT. COMMUNITY THEATER, LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The door from the theater swings open. Sara is annoyed, pacing in front of the RESTROOM ENTRANCE.

Hudson enters. Just as the door is about to close, SADIE QUIETLY SNEAKS IN behind him with her camcorder.

Hudson goes up to Sara and they just look at each other for a beat. Finally...

HUDSON

You said my speech was mildly cute.

SARA

What?

HUDSON

I know you're really mad and you should be. I was a dick. But you also said it was mildly cute which leads me to believe that you like me too and I still have a chance.

SARA

Over my dead body.

HUDSON

Spicy.

(MORE)

HUDSON (CONT'D)

(then)

This one time on vacation, I was really bored because going on vacation alone is actually really depressing and I can't believe I convinced myself otherwise. Anyway, I read this book about attachment styles in relationships.

SARA

How woke of you.

HUDSON

I was thinking on the drive over that you're probably an anxious attachment style person. So me leaving was likely very triggering for you and I'm sorry for that. I'm anxious avoidant so I'm no walk in the park either.

SARA

I've read the book. We've *all* read the book.

A beat.

HUDSON

What I'm trying to say is...I'm willing to work on this. I want to learn everything about you. I just, I like the way my world feels when you're in it.

Sara softens. This is the first time she's had someone truly fight for her. A smile creeps up on her face.

Suddenly, A MISTLETOE CREEPS OUT OF NOWHERE.

SADIE (O.S.)

Sara you psycho! Kiss him!

REVEAL Sadie around the corner, holding the extension pole with mistletoe on the end.

This startles Hudson and Sara.

SARA

SADIE!

HUDSON

HOLY SHIT!

SADIE (CONT'D)

I'll be leaving.

Sadie doesn't leave. Sara looks at Hudson for a beat.

SARA
You really want to do this?
Christmas and everything?

HUDSON
I swear on Santa's life.

SARA
One condition.
(beat)
You have to let me call you
Mr.Christmas. Both ironically and
un-ironically. As much as I want.

Hudson beams.

SARA (CONT'D)
And no butt stuff.

HUDSON
Girl of my dreams.

They passionately kiss. The restroom signs glow behind them.

Sadie is giddy, getting all of this on camera.

Through the theater doors, we faintly hear...

MONICA (O.S.)
And the winners of the Mr. and Mrs.
Christmas cabaret are...

MITCH (O.S.)
Nick and Neil!

MUDDLED APPLAUSE from the theater.

The theater door swings open and a furious Veronica stomps out.

Hudson and Sara giggle. Back to making out.

INT. SARA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The morning sunlight pours into Sara's bedroom. She is a mouth open sleeper.

PAN OUT to see Hudson in bed, staring at her. She opens her eyes.

SARA
(startled)
Shit. How long have you been up?

HUDSON
Long enough to know that you drool
and are an open mouth sleeper. But
not a snorer, so no deal breakers
yet.

SARA
That's so hot.

HUDSON
I'm into it.

HUDSON (CONT'D)
Guess what?

SARA
What?

HUDSON
It's Christmas.

SARA
Merry Christmas Mr. Christmas.

A sweet kiss.

INT. SWANSON RESIDENCE - LATER

MUSIC: A Christmas song plays as the Swansons and Millers
sit in the living room around the tree.

They all wear matching pyjamas as they open presents and
clink coffee mugs. Dale puts on a Santa hat and gets
everyone's attention.

DALE
Hey everyone. I know I'm not a man
of many words but I just wanted to
say how lucky I am to spend
Christmas with all of you.

Sadie gives Dale a side hug.

HUDSON
I really can't thank you all
enough--

MONICA
And I can't thank you enough!

MITCH

Guys, Mon and I have news.

SARA

Way to steal dad's thunder.

MONICA

Jesse, Hudson's agent said at the airport, and I quote, he will "review our materials after the holidays!"

DEB

I knew you'd both end up on the world stage the second you popped out of my womb.

Deb hugs her children.

Sadie taps her coffee mug with a spoon to get everyone's attention.

SADIE

I also have an announcement to make. This may come as a surprise but...similarly to Martin Luther, I have a dream. I've had this dream for a really long time, but I never knew how to execute it. And then Mr. Christmas walked into my life and it all kinda, clicked. In more ways than one.

(then)

I want to be a director. I've wanted to be a director ever since I saw Hudson's first film, "Christmas in Tallahassee". This past week, I've been gathering footage for my first short film, which I'm sure no one noticed since I was like super subtle about it. I stayed up all night editing, and it's ready. Just in time for Christmas.

She beams, bags under her eyes.

INT. SWANSON RESIDENCE - LATER

Everyone is huddled on the couch while Sadie prepares the TV.

SADIE

Without further ado, I'd like to present my first film, "Trapping Mr.Christmas".

The film begins with Hudson at the Inn. It's like film noir and the Blair Witch Project had a baby. Everything is shot from below or up high. It chronicles Hudson and Sara's entire relationship from very strange angles - his entrance at the inn, chats on the couch, the almost-kiss under the planted mistletoe, the Gingerbread Doghouse Competition, and the skating rink scene. It ends on Hudson and Sara kissing in front of the restrooms. The end title card reads "A film by Sadie Swanson."

Violently mixed reactions from the audience - Barb politely smiles, Uncle Todd gives a neutral thumbs up, Dale shakes his head concerned, Mitch and Monica are enthralled, Sadie beams. Finally, we end on Sara and Hudson, mildly horrified.

FADE OUT.

THE END.