

"SINGLE BULLET THEORY"

by

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EXT. THE UNIVERSE - NIGHT

In the vast star-studded blanket of blackness, a small sphere spins into view. Over this, the voice of BEN DENBO is heard.

BEN (V.O.)
The planet: Earth.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

The skyline of lower Manhattan.

BEN (V.O.)
The city: New York. More
specifically: The East village.

EXT. EAST THIRD STREET - NIGHT

A pre-war apartment building on a charming street.

BEN (V.O.)
The building: The Eggelhoff Towers.

An upper floor window is ablaze with light.

BEN (V.O.)
The floor: Three.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Behind a kitchen counter in the cozy, one bedroom apartment is KATIE MCDERMOTT; a perpetually collected 27 year old real estate broker who is intently peeling avocados.

BEN (V.O.)
The time: Friday night.
(the clock clicks forward)
More specifically: 8:34.

BEN DENBO, a perpetually frazzled 28 year old public defender, stands in the middle of the room. Stunned, he's holding a tray covered with pigs in blankets.

BEN (V.O.)
Even more specifically: The moment
I got dumped.

Ben gathers himself together enough to speak.

BEN
You're leaving me?!

KATIE
I didn't say that.

BEN

Don't say you didn't say it. You just said it.

KATIE

I asked you a question.

BEN

You asked me what I would do if you left me. That's not a question. That's a knife through the heart. That's a bullet in the head!

KATIE

(chopping onions)

I didn't say I was absolutely sure I was leaving. I was just floating a hypothetical.

BEN

There's someone else isn't there?

KATIE

No. There isn't.

BEN

There's someone else! Why else would you be 'floating a hypothetical' if there wasn't someone else. Who is it?

KATIE

There's no one.

BEN

There's no one else?

Just then the downstairs door BUZZES.

KATIE

There is someone.

(pointing)

At the door.

EXT. EAST THIRD STREET - NIGHT

Outside the entrance is a scruffy, dark figure. He's Ben's brother, RICK DENBO (38). From inside a stretch limo by the curb, his driver, CARLOS (25), calls out to him.

CARLOS

You want me to wait?

RICK

Yup.

Rick aggressively RINGS the bell again. He's a man who enjoys being the ant in the picnic of life.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The intercom BUZZES as Katie fills pretzel bowls and Ben tails after her around the room.

BEN
You didn't answer me.

KATIE
Ben, there's someone downstairs.
Let them in.

BEN
Not until you answer my question.

KATIE
There's no one else.

BEN
You swear? Swear.

KATIE
I swear.

BEN
Swear on your mother's underwear.

KATIE
What are you, five? I'm not going
to swear on my mother's underwear.

BEN
Then I don't believe you.

Exasperated, Katie goes into the bathroom and shuts the door. Ben follows her.

INT. STEVE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

STEVE ULLENDORFF (28), a handsome talent agent, steps in front of his bedroom mirror. He holds two different ties up to the pale blue shirt he's wearing. Neither tie works.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ben is outside the bathroom door.

BEN
Why don't you just tell me who it
is?

From behind the bathroom door comes Katie's voice.

KATIE (O.S.)

I told you. There's no one. I know it's hard for you to wrap your conspiracy ridden brain around that but it's true. There's no one else.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Katie's on the toilet, talking to Ben through the door.

KATIE

I'm in love with you. I loved you from the moment I met you. But you just liked me. And I went on loving you and you went on just liking me.

BEN (O.S.)

It's the guy in the spinning class isn't it?

KATIE

What?

She jumps up, flushes and pulls the door open.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Stepping out, she comes face to face with Ben.

BEN

The guy you and Carmen always talk about with the ass like a pumpkin.

KATIE

Oh my God. You haven't heard a word I've said.

She moves into the living room and starts laying out napkins.

BEN

Admit it. It's him isn't it? Mr. Pumpkin butt!

KATIE

That's it. That's why this has got to end. I'm ending it.

The door BUZZES again.

BEN

Wait a minute. Now it's a done deal? I thought it was just in the planning stages.

KATIE

It was. But I just made up my mind.
 (placing napkins)
 I thought maybe if I told you I was
 leaving that you'd cry. Or beg me
 to stay. But no. You start right in
 with the paranoid bullshit. Look at
 you. You're not even upset!

BEN

I'm in shock! Give me a few minutes
 and I'll downgrade it to upset.

EXT. HOUSTON STREET - NIGHT

HENRY BARTOWSKI (28), an immaculately dressed lug who sports
 a Bluetooth device in his ear, exits the subway station. He
 talks to someone while checking his E-mail on his smartphone.

HENRY

(into phone)
 Try to set up a meeting so I can
 feel her out. Not 'feel her up.'
 Feel her out! Putz.

As he talks Henry crosses the street against the light,
 oblivious to the CARS swerving to miss hitting him.

HENRY

(into phone)
 Hold on Frank. I got another call.
 (he clicks over)
 Hello? Yeah baby. I'm almost there.
 Where are you? Queens? How the hell
 did you end up in Queens?

Henry walks by an apartment building where TWO GUYS are
 trying to put an air conditioner in a window. It slips out of
 their hands.

The metal box crashes to the sidewalk near Henry who is too
 busy talking and reading messages to notice.

HENRY

(into phone)
 I told you to use wayze! W-A-Y-Z-E!
 Never mind. Here's what you do. Get
 in the first cab you see. Give him
 the address. See you there, baby.

INT. STEVE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Steve is back in front of the mirror wearing a bright yellow
 shirt and holding up the same two ties as before. It's an
 even worse match. Desperate, he holds up four other ties.

EXT. EAST THIRD STREET - NIGHT

Rick is still standing out front, looking up at their window.

CARLOS

You sure you want me to wait?

Ignoring him, Rick repeatedly hits the buzzer.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Katie moves quickly to the intercom and BUZZES the door open.

BEN

What are you doing? We have to finish this.

KATIE

I am finished. I laid awake for the past six months trying to figure out how to end it.

BEN

And throwing a party was the best you could come up with?

KATIE

This is for Steve. You know how he has trouble meeting people.

INT. STEVE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Steve's now wearing yet another shirt and tie combo. He's not thrilled with it but he's out of time. He hurriedly exits leaving every shirt and tie he owns strewn on the bed.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Back at the apartment the front doorbell RINGS. Katie makes a move to answer it but this time Ben successfully blocks her.

BEN

Katie stop. We've got to talk.

KATIE

No. No more talking. Let's just get through tonight and then I'll go.
(the doorbell RINGS again)
Now would you get that?

BEN

No. I'm not going to 'get that'. I can't believe you expect me to put on a happy face and throw a party like there's nothing wrong.

The doorbell RINGS three more times accompanied by a voice coming from the other side of the door.

RICK (O.S.)
Hellooooooo!

KATIE
Shit! Is that your brother? Why the hell did you invite him?

INT. HALLWAY OF EGGELHOFF TOWERS - NIGHT

Rick stands outside, at the end of his patience. He fishes a ring of keys out of his overcoat pocket as they keep arguing.

BEN (O.S.)
I didn't invite him. He invited himself.

KATIE (O.S.)
I can't deal with him. Not now.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door swings open as Rick steps inside.

RICK
Hey there kids. How are y'all doing on this lovely evenin'?

KATIE
I'll tell you how I'm doing. I'm sick of you letting yourself in whenever you want. Give me those keys.

RICK
I give you the keys I triple the rent.

BEN
(to Katie)
Can he do that?

RICK
It's an illegal sublet. I can do anything I want.

He takes one of the pigs in blankets off of the tray Ben has been carrying and pops it in his mouth

BEN
Those aren't cooked.

RICK
 (spitting it out)
 When you cook'em I'll have one.

Horrified Katie rushes over and cleans up the spat out food.

EXT. COURT STREET IN BROOKLYN - NIGHT

CARMEN RUEZ (27), a sassy Latina holding a Junior's cheese cake, flags a cab. With her is a wide-eyed newbie from Ohio named REBECCA SWIFT (23). Becca's overwhelmed by New York.

CARMEN
 (to the cabbie)
 We're going to the corner of 3rd
 Street and Avenue A.

CABBIE
 (in a thick Greek accent)
 Eight Avenue?

CARMEN
 Not eight! 'A'! The American letter
 'A'! Jesus Christ. Next time I'm
 booking an Uber. Come on, Beccs.

Carmen gets into the cab and Becca follows her in.

INT. CAB - NIGHT

Tucked in the back seat, Carmen leans forward and shouts through the partition to the driver.

CARMEN
 We need to go over the Williamsburg
 Bridge. Do you know where that is?

The Cabbie makes a less than clear gesture in response.

CARMEN
 (to Becca)
 We're going to have to watch this
 guy. That's the way you've gotta be
 in this city. You've gotta take
 charge.
 (Becca nods)
 But you also gotta learn to relax
 and go with the flow. Y'know? Not
 let every little thing--
 (reacting to his driving)
 What the fuck are you doing? Where
 are you going? I didn't tell you to
 turn! Jesus Fucking Christ!

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

After a brief conference by the stove with Katie, Ben approaches his brother who is moving toward the fridge.

BEN

Rick. It'd be best if you go. Some people are coming over any minute.

RICK

(grabbing a beer)
I'll just stay for a little while.

KATIE

(making guacamole)
No. You're going now. We've got a lot to do. Ben, shouldn't you be getting ready?

BEN

I am ready.

KATIE

You're not going to wear that sweater.

BEN

What's wrong with this sweater?

KATIE

You've been wearing it for a week. I can smell it from here.

BEN

(he sniffs his sleeve)
Okay. Yeah. I'll be right back.

Ben goes to the bedroom to change. As soon as he's gone, Rick takes Katie in his arms and kisses her full on the mouth. She can't fend him off because her hands are full of guacamole.

KATIE

Stop that.

RICK

Did you tell him?

KATIE

Mostly.

RICK

Mostly? How do you 'mostly' tell somebody something?

KATIE

I told him about me. I didn't tell him about this.

RICK

About us.

KATIE

Rick. There is no 'us.' There's just a stupid flirtation I let get out of hand.

(he kisses her neck)

Stop it. You're not making this any easier.

RICK

You want me to make it easier? Fine. As soon as he comes back in I'll tell him.

KATIE

No!

Ben reenters buttoning a clean, pressed shirt.

RICK

So Benjy. I hear you two kids are busting up.

BEN

What? Where'd you hear that?

RICK

Katie told me while you were in changing your shirt.

BEN

God! Really? I was only gone ten seconds. It took her six months of plotting it before she told me. You don't seem surprised.

RICK

(moving to the couch)

I'm not surprised. I'm relieved. You two have been miserable for way too long.

BEN

Yeah well...we may have been miserable. But lots of people are miserable. And they're perfectly happy staying miserable forever.

(quietly to him)

I think she's seeing somebody.

RICK
You suspect anyone in particular?

BEN
Yeah. A guy with an ass like a
pumpkin.

Rick glances back at his own ass before sitting down.

EXT. EAST THIRD STREET - NIGHT

Steve approaches the building. He checks his appearance in the reflected metal of the intercom as he buzzes it. Deciding against the tie, he takes it off and stuffs it in his pocket.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Katie moves to the intercom and BUZZES him in.

KATIE
All right. You've got the whole
story now. So why don't you do us
both a favor and go?

RICK
Seems to me I'd be helpin' Benjy
out by staying. He looks like he's
gonna need an ally tonight.

BEN
Thanks Rick.

KATIE
Fine. Do whatever you want. But I
don't want you talking to my guests
about this. Or anything else.
(brandishing her knife)
You got that?

RICK
Okay okay.
(the doorbell RINGS)
Goodness. If guests are coming I
should freshen up.

Rick heads to the bathroom and discreetly swats Katie on the butt as he passes by. Ben goes to the door and lets Steve in.

BEN
Oh. Hey Steve.

STEVE
Hi Benjy!

He embraces Ben in a big, warm bear hug. Ben stays stiff.

STEVE
What's the matter?

BEN
Is that a show biz thing? 'Cause
you didn't used to do that when you
were a lawyer.

Steve hands Ben a bottle of wine and moves to Katie in the kitchen. They air kiss while she chops tomatoes.

KATIE
Hi Steve.

STEVE
Hey Rachel Ray. You making your
super, special guacamole?

KATIE
Uh huh. Are you excited about
meeting Rebecca?

STEVE
(eating a chip)
I guess.

Rick exits the bathroom and retrieves his beer.

BEN
Steve. You remember my brother
Rick?

STEVE
Oh sure. Hi.

He extends his hand to Rick who just looks at him.

RICK
Who are you?

STEVE
Steve Ullendorf. We met at a party.
(Rick eyeballs him)
About six years ago. Up in the west
nineties. Near Columbia.

RICK
Oh yeah. I used to sell you hash.
I never liked you.

KATIE
Rick!

The intercom BUZZES. Ben moves to it and buzzes them in.

RICK

You used to make me wait out in the hall. That's totally uncool, Steve. It's customary to let your dealer in. Maybe offer him a drink.

STEVE

Well that was a long time ago. I don't use drugs anymore.

RICK

Good for you. So what are you now? Gay?

KATIE

Look, I told you--

STEVE

That's okay. Actually I get asked that a lot. I guess people assume if you work in the entertainment field and you have a decent sense of style then you must be gay. So I'm not offended.

RICK

Why should you be offended? If you're straight you should be worried. Not offended.

KATIE

Oh God.

INT. HALLWAY OF EGGELHOFF TOWERS - NIGHT

Henry walks up the stairs toward Ben and Katie's place. He's still talking on the Bluetooth in his ear.

HENRY

(into the phone)

Honey no. There's a deli on third and second.

(he rings the doorbell)

No. Third street and second avenue.

BEN

(opening the door)

Hey Henry. Where's Lucy?

HENRY

East fourth street. You need anything?

BEN

No. I think we're all set.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Henry steps into the room, still talking on the phone.

HENRY
 (into phone)
 They're fine baby. Just get some
 beer. Anything but Coors. Because
 it tastes like moose piss. Call me
 if you have any problems. And don't
 talk to anybody.

Henry clicks off his phone and moves into the living room.

HENRY
 Sorry about that. Hey Katie. Steve.

STEVE
 Hi Henry.

KATIE
 Why did you tell Lucy not to talk
 to anybody?

HENRY
 Because she talks to everybody.
 She still thinks she's in the
 Siberia. The other day I caught her
 looking a pitbull in the eye. She
 said it looked sweet.

STEVE
 Some of those pit bull puppies are
 cute.

HENRY
 Cute? Have you ever seen one
 frolic? Or play? They're not dogs.
 They're guns with legs.

EXT. EAST THIRD STREET - NIGHT

A cab turns the corner and passes Ben and Katie's place when
 a VOICE inside shouts.

CARMEN
 STOP!

The Cabbie jams on the brakes and the car SCREECHES to a
 halt. The passenger door flies open and Becca jumps out
 followed by Carmen who's still hollering at the driver.

CARMEN
 Jesus fucking Christ! You've gotta
 be the worst fucking cab driver in
 New York. You know that?

CABBIE
 (checking the meter)
 Twenty eight fifty.

Carmen hands the cheese cake to Becca and looks in her purse.

CARMEN
 I shouldn't even pay you. I think I
 got fucking whiplash from that last
 stop. You know, I'm a lawyer for
 the city. I could report you. In
 fact, you know what? I will!

BECCA
 Carmen don't.

CARMEN
 No. This maniac needs to be stopped
 before he fucking kills somebody.
 (to the Cabbie)
 All right you. What's your name?

The Cabbie points to his license. Pen poised Carmen leans in
 and looks at it. The driver's name is HYRCK YNZYKCSZ.

CARMEN
 Jesus Christ. That's not a name.
 It's a God damned eye chart.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Henry has gotten a beer and notices Rick on the couch.

HENRY
 Well well. Rick the dick. What
 brings you here?

RICK
 Limousine. Like always. How's your
 mail order bride?

The downstairs door BUZZES. Ben buzzes them in.

HENRY
 Please stop calling her that. I
 told you a hundred times I met her
 through a service. A legitimate
 government run program set up to
 bring Russian women and American
 men together.

RICK
 Sweet. Do they guarantee parts and
 labor?

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

Carmen leads the way up the steps. She looks back at Becca who is bouncing up the steps carrying the cake box.

CARMEN
Don't shake the cake.

BECCA
Sorry. How do I look?

CARMEN
You look like you're shaking the cake. So stop it.

Arriving at the door Carmen RINGS the bell.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ben moves to answer the door while Steve hovers near Katie.

KATIE
That must be them.

STEVE
Great. How do I look?

KATIE
Very nice. Too bad you didn't wear a tie.

Ben opens the door and Carmen pushes in.

CARMEN
Oh my God! I'm so sorry we're late.
Our cabdriver came by way of lower
fucking Mongolia.
(moving inside)
Hey everybody. What are we
drinking?

Ben and Becca remain standing by the door. He looks into her eyes and something happens. That indescribable something that people write songs about.

BECCA
Hi. Are you Steve?

BEN
Uh no. I'm Ben.

BECCA
I'm Becca.

BEN
Short for Rebecca?

BECCA
Do I look it?

BEN
What?

BECCA
Short for someone named Rebecca.

BEN
No. I mean. You're fine.

BECCA
I'm sorry. That's my dry Midwestern humor. It's just my way of making the whole big city thing seem a little less terrifying.

BEN
How's it going?

BECCA
Pretty terrifying. I could use a drink.

BEN
(teasing)
So could I. Let's get out of here.

BECCA
Okay.

BEN
Really?

BECCA
Yeah. Let's go.

Startled, Ben stares at her. Just then Carmen rejoins them.

CARMEN
Beccs, let me introduce you around.
That's Ben. Stay away from him.
He's taken.
(escorting her inside)
This is Henry Bartowski. Henry,
Becca.

HENRY
Hiyah.

BECCA
Hello.

CARMEN

You met Katie at the gym. She's the
one that never sweats.
(feigning surprise)
Oh! And there's Steve.

While Carmen makes the introductions Ben moves over to Rick on the couch. He talks to him in hushed tones.

BEN

Did you see that? What just
happened with that girl?
(Rick nods)
What do you think of that?

RICK

I think you should've made a run
for it while you had the chance.

Ben huddles with Rick all the while keeping an eye on Becca.

KATIE

Steve's a talent agent. With Keller
and Associates.

BECCA

Oh. I've worked for them.

STEVE

That's right. You're an actress.
Do you work much?

BECCA

Just enough to subsidize my
struggling career as a waitress.
(Steve doesn't react)
I'm joking.

STEVE

Oh!
(he forces a laugh)
Good one.

A cell phone RINGS. Steve, Henry, Carmen and Katie all pull out their phones to see if its theirs. It's Henry's

HENRY

(into the phone)
Yeah baby. No I said Third Street
and Second Avenue. There is no
Second Street on Third Avenue.
Trust me. And hurry up, sweetie.
Katie made guacamole. You want to
get here before it turns brown.
(he clicks the phone off)
Ben. You got any scotch?

BEN
Coming right up.

As Ben moves to get the drink Rick notices three large framed pictures sitting by Ben's desk waiting to be hung up.

RICK
Holy shit! Where did you get these?

BEN
I had them made up special for the presentation. Aren't they great?

RICK
(examining them)
You are so tragically twisted. When are you gonna let this shit go?

Becca, Carmen and Steve move over toward them. Katie keeps an eye on things from the counter.

BECCA
What are they?

BEN
They're the missing frames from the Zapruder film. That's the film taken the day JFK was assassinated.

Becca takes a closer look at the pictures. Ben moves next to her. They show blurry but bloody images of the assassination.

BEN
Life magazine got a hold of the film before the FBI. So they printed these before the feds 'accidentally' cut the film.
(pointing at a photo)
Check it out. This is what the government didn't want us to see. There's the head shot. Clearly a bullet from the front.

BECCA
Wow. They're so...graphic.

BEN
That's nothing. A lot of people don't know it but there's a tape recording of the assassination. The lead motorcycle cop had his intercom button turned on. You can hear the shots. Everything.
(rummaging)
Hold on. I've got a copy of it.

BECCA

Are you one of those conspiracy guys?

RICK

'Nuts.' They're called conspiracy nuts.

BEN

Yeah. I'm doing a lecture at the conspiracy expo next Saturday at the Javits Center. If it goes well they might invite me to the big JFK expo in Dallas in November.

STEVE

(to Becca)

I saw the movie. Did you see "JFK"?

BECCA

No. I was a kid when it came out.

STEVE

It was good. Really long. But good.

RICK

Steve. Are you telling me that all you can say about "JFK", the epic movie of the most famous political assassination in history is that it was 'really long but good'.

STEVE

I also remember how Kevin Costner's accent went in and out a lot.

RICK

Oh well thank God. For a minute I thought you missed the point. Shit!

He storms over to the fridge and grabs a fresh beer.

BEN

(quietly, to Becca)

You have to forgive Rick. We grew up in Dallas. And this stuff reminds him of our Dad.

(turning to the pictures)

Our Daddy was there. He went with his family to see the president that day. He actually witnessed the assassination.

They both look at the frame blow-ups by Ben's desk.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. DALLAS MOTORCADE ROUTE (1963) - DAY

In grainy, faded 8mm color film we see JFK's car drive into Dealey Plaza. The President smiles and waves to the CROWD.

Among the people gathered there is BEN'S DAD (5) perched on the shoulders of his FATHER (30). Next to them is a GUY with a movie camera recording the event.

BEN (V.O.)

Can you imagine? He was right there. Standing next to Zapruder. He saw the whole thing.

Ben's Dad is waving at the shiny car when SEVERAL SHOTS ring out. Everyone around him starts screaming and running away. As they all run, Ben's Dad stares at the scene in horror.

BEN (V.O.)

Rick tells me it messed him up pretty bad. I never got to know him. He died before I was born.

END FLASHBACK

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ben and Becca stand looking at the pictures.

BECCA

You never knew him? That's terrible.

During this Rick returns to them with a beer.

RICK

He didn't miss much. The son of a bitch drank himself to death. He was a real...

(stopping himself)

Benjy, put that crap away. This is a party, for Christ's sake.

BEN

Yeah. You're right. Sorry.

(packing up the photos)

I guess I'm obsessed with it. You grow up in Dallas, it's all folks talk about. That and the Cowboys. Anyway hearing about it so much is what got me interested in the law.

BECCA

You're a lawyer too?

BEN
I'm a public defender.

RICK
He's with the humane society. He goes to the pound and pleads to keep all the mangy mutts out of the gas chamber.

KATIE
(calling from the kitchen)
Ben?

BEN
Excuse me. Duty calls.

He joins Katie at the opposite end of the apartment.

INT. BEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Katie pulls Ben inside to talk to him.

KATIE
I want him out of here.

BEN
He's not bothering anybody.

KATIE
He's bothering me!

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Becca finds herself next to Rick.

BECCA
Are you a lawyer?

RICK
No. But I'm a liar. That's pretty close.

CARMEN
He drives a limousine.

RICK
'Scuse me darlin'. But I own a limo company.
(handing Becca his card)
Fleet of ten to be exact.

INT. BEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Back in the bedroom, Ben and Katie are still squabbling.

BEN
All right. I'll get him to go if
you promise to stay.

KATIE
You get him to go or I'm leaving
right now!

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rick is standing with an arm around Carmen and Becca.

RICK
I got one with a rotating queen
size bed and a moon roof. Very
popular with Filipino newlyweds. I
don't know why.

During this Ben and Katie exit the bedroom.

BEN
Rick. Come on. Let's go for a walk.

RICK
No thanks.

BEN
We really should go for a walk.

RICK
I don't walk. I'm the limo guy.
Walking is bad advertising.

BEN
No really. Come on.

BECCA
(to Ben)
What's the matter?

BEN
It's nothing. It's just that Rick
has to go.

BECCA
Why?

RICK
(To Ben)
Mind if I take this one, counselor?

BEN
I wish you wouldn't.

Rick walks toward Katie at the counter while continuing to
address Carmen and Becca.

RICK

Rick has to go because Rick has a big mouth. And somebody's worried that if Rick hangs around much longer then Rick might tell their little secret.

He dips a chip in Katie's guacamole and eats it.

STEVE

(to Katie)

What little secret? You and Ben have a secret?

KATIE

It's not a secret. It's just something we're not ready to share.

STEVE

You're engaged! You two are getting married!

KATIE

No. We're not getting married.

STEVE

You're pregnant!

BEN

Look we shouldn't be talking about--

HENRY

Hey congratulations. That's great. I've gotta call Lucy.

(speed dialing)

She'll be sorry she missed this.

Becca, Steve and Henry chime in with their good wishes.

BEN

(to Henry)

Please. Stop. Don't call. We are not having a baby.

STEVE

You're not. Then what's going on?

HENRY

(into his phone)

Lucy? Hold on.

He covers the phone and looks anxiously at Ben. All eyes are on him. After an awkward pause, Ben speaks.

BEN

We're splitting up.

STEVE

What? Why?

HENRY

(into phone)

He says they're splitting up. I don't know why?

STEVE

You two have been together forever. What happened?

BEN

I don't know.

STEVE

You don't know?

HENRY

(into phone)

He says he doesn't know.

STEVE

How can you not know why you're breaking up?

BEN

Ask Katie. It's her idea. Not mine.

CARMEN

Oh yeah. Blame the woman. That's so fucking typical!

BEN

Hey. She won't tell me what I did.

CARMEN

Asshole! It's not what you did. It's what you never did that fucked things up.

KATIE

(growing upset)

Carmen. Please--

CARMEN

(to Ben)

You've been together for what? Five years? And in all that time did you ever once tell her that you love her?

Everyone turns their eyes to Ben. He looks across the crowded room to Katie.

BEN

No.

Becca and Steve gasp. Katie's embarrassment and anger boil over. She SMASHES the bowl of guac on the kitchen floor.

HENRY

(into phone)

Cancel the beer, babe. We're outta here.

EXT. THIRD STREET - LATER THAT NIGHT

Katie exits the Eggelhoff Towers wearing a coat and carrying a packed overnight bag. Surrounding her are Carmen, Steve, Becca, Henry and Rick. Henry flags a cab for her.

Ben watches all this from the upstairs window.

BEN'S POV

He sees Katie get into the cab. As she closes the door she looks up at him in the window. After a second she pulls away.

Henry walks up the street, talking on his Bluetooth. Carmen hops into the limo with Rick. Becca and Steve stroll off together. Ben watches them all vanish into the night.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Ben walks to the door and sadly throws each of the five locks shut. Alone, he sighs.

He's about to move off when he notices Katie's jacket hanging on the hook. He searches her pockets and finds a cab receipt. Encouraged, he rushes to the closet to search more pockets.

Ben scrapes the bottom of one of Katie's shoes and deposits the scrapings into a zip lock bag for analysis.

Later, at his desk, Ben assembles the evidence. The cab receipt is with all of the junk he's found. Laying on the desk is a freshly made file folder labeled 'Pumpkin Butt.'

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Still seated at the computer, Ben tallies up the evidence he collected on a spread sheet. He's dressed in the same clothes from the night before. Clearly he hasn't slept.

Behind him Henry is sorting CD's and putting them in a box.

HENRY

Who gets "Run DMC"?

Ben moves from his desk. In the kitchen Steve's packing up housewares and Rick's on the couch, watching a Knicks game.

BEN

That's hers. Most of her CDs have a little sticker with a K on it. See?

HENRY

How delightfully anal. Was that your idea?

BEN

No. She's the anal one. I'm lucky if I remember to wear pants. Hey!
(pulling a CD out)
What're you doing? This is mine.

HENRY

(noticing the label)
You listen to "SOUTH PACIFIC?"
Don't tell me. Let me guess. When you play it backwards Mary Martin says 'Oswald acted alone.'

The guys all chuckle. Ben stows the CD safely by his desk.

HENRY

Very funny. So Steve. What happened last night with you and that girl?

STEVE

Ugh. Nothing. A total washout. She just wasn't my type.

RICK

Of course not. She's a woman.

BEN

What do you mean 'not your type'? She seemed great.

STEVE

Yeah but she's a listener. And I'm just not much of a talker. When I talk...I just...I--

HENRY

You have nothing to say.

STEVE

Exactly.

(to Ben)

The only thing we wanted about was the break-up. I kept trying to come to your defense. But Becca didn't want to hear that at all.

EXT. BROOKLYN CONCOURSE - DAY

Katie is jogging along the concourse. Carmen talks on her cell phone headset as she rides her bike next her friend.

CARMEN
 (into phone)
 Boring? How can you say that? How
 can you say that? Steve's such a
 fantastic guy.

INT. UPPER EAST SIDE APARTMENT - DAY

Becca runs on a tiny indoor trampoline in her tiny apartment while she talks on her tiny phone.

BECCA
 (into phone)
 I'm sure he is. But there just
 wasn't anything there. Sorry.

EXT. BROOKLYN CONCOURSE - DAY

Carmen continues to talk as she pedals beside Katie.

CARMEN
 (into phone)
 Hey. Don't be sorry. When it's
 right, it's right. And when it's
 not, it's shit.

BECCA
 (into phone)
 How's Katie doing?

Carmen looks at Katie jogging next to her.

CARMEN
 (into phone)
 She's a wreck. But she looks great.
 It's incredible. It takes me two
 hours in front of the mirror to
 look lousy and she falls out of bed
 after a fucking car crash of a
 night looking like she's ready for
 the God damned prom!

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Rick gets up off the couch and moves to the fridge for a beer. Steve is still talking to Ben.

STEVE
 I didn't do half as well as your
 brother did with Carmen. I hear
 they had quite the evening.

HENRY
 (to Rick)
 Something happened with you and
 Carmen?

RICK
 (groaning)
 I gave her a ride home and we sort
 of got involved. Anyway it sucked.
 Sucked mucho grande.

EXT. BROOKLYN CONCOURSE - DAY

Carmen continues on the phone as she rides next to Katie.

CARMEN
 (into phone)
 He offered me a ride home. And
 right away he starts putting the
 big time moves on me.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. CARMEN'S LOBBY - NIGHT

Carmen and Rick enter her building and pass the DOORMAN (50).
 He's seated by a bank of security monitors. On them is the
 BLURRY, BLACK AND WHITE IMAGE of Carmen talking to Rick.

RICK (V.O.)
 The whole way there she's going on
 and on. Telling me her life story.
 That's when she isn't doing her
 comedy act. Which is nothing but a
 bunch of lame-ass PMS jokes.

Entering the elevator, Rick leans forward and kisses her.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. BROOKLYN CONCOURSE - DAY

Carmen continues to tell her version to Becca while Katie
 jogs next to her, listening with interest.

CARMEN
 We had a nice chat and he asks if
 he can come up. And I say 'sure'.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Rick continues his version.

RICK

So I finally get her inside her place and, all the while we're trying to get down to business, she keeps yakking and yakking. Saying shit like "Oh Poppy. Come to Mommy. Fuck me Poppy. Fuck me now. That's it. Fuck me. Fuck me. Fuck me!"

HENRY

That woman says 'fuck' more than I say 'the.'

EXT. BROOKLYN CONCOURSE - DAY

As Carmen continues, Katie strains to jog and listen in.

CARMEN

(into phone)

Then he starts kissing me. And I'm really getting worked up. I haven't been with anybody since Rodney. And that was two God damned years ago. So I was low hangin' fruit, ready to be plucked.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Rick moves to the kitchen table to steady himself.

RICK

No sooner do I slip it to her when she starts doing the Mexican Hat Dance on the ceiling.

EXT. BROOKLYN CONCOURSE - DAY

Carmen continues.

CARMEN

It was unbelievable. I mean, I was screaming like a fucking Navajo war chief. Ahhh-yiiiiiiiiiiii!

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Rick is drinking his beer as Steve moves closer.

RICK

It was over for her in like two minutes. So I pretended like I came and we went to sleep.

STEVE

You faked an orgasm?

RICK

Yeah.

STEVE

How?

RICK

You serious? Close your eyes.
 (Steve just stares at him)
 I can't do it if you're looking at
 me. Close your eyes.

They close their eyes.

Rick grips the table and starts simulating the sounds of sex, building to a LOUD, groaning orgasm. Grossed out, the guys wave him off to stop.

EXT. BROOKLYN CONCOURSE - DAY

Carmen is still talking on the phone to Becca.

BECCA

(into phone)

Are you going to see him again?

CARMEN

(into phone)

I don't know. Jesus Christ I hope
 so! He was fucking amazing.

KATIE

(feigning disinterest)

I thought he told Ben he was seeing
 someone.

CARMEN

(to Katie)

He mentioned some woman he was hung
 up on. But they couldn't get it
 together. Ugh. My ass is killing
 me. I gotta stop and have lunch.

(into phone)

Hey Beccs, you wanna join us?

EXT. EAST THIRD STREET - DAY

Ben exits his building and moves purposefully up the street with Steve, Rick and Henry one step behind.

HENRY

Where're we going, Benjy?

BEN

I don't know. The Jones I guess.

Henry pulls out his phone and starts dialing. Rick whistles loudly to the limo waiting for him on the corner.

RICK
Carlos! Vas ma nos!

Carlos puts away his wrestling magazine and throws the car into gear. He cruises up the street next to the trio.

BEN
Steve. What did she say about me when you tried to defend me?

STEVE
Who Becca? She said it was wrong of you to stay with Katie if you didn't love her. That only a cruel, sick person would do such a thing.

Ben groans and notices the limo trailing after them.

BEN
(to Rick)
Does he have to follow us?

RICK
Relax, Chicken Little. It's his job.

HENRY
(into phone)
Hey baby, it's me. We finished up so we're going down the street for a drink. I'll have my phone on in case anybody needs me. What? Yeah.
(looking at Rick)
He's here. Okay. I'll tell him.
(Henry hangs up)
Rick. Lucy says 'Hello'.

RICK
Hey Lucy.

HENRY
Since when do you and Lucy have a 'hello' relationship?

RICK
We had a long talk the other day. We were waiting for the bus.

STEVE
The 'limousine king' was waiting for a bus?

RICK

Not me. She was. I saw Lucy waiting and I kept her company. She's a good girl, Henry. You'd better stop treating her like she's an idiot or she's gonna take a hike on you. Just like Katie did with this one.

EXT. BAR IN PARK SLOPE - DAY

Two Margaritas arrive and are placed in front of Katie and Carmen who are seated at a sidewalk table.

KATIE

I can't believe you slept with Rick. What were you thinking?

CARMEN

I wasn't thinking. I just went with what happened. You know how it is.

KATIE

No. I don't. I really don't.

CARMEN

That's right. You're the girl that thinks about breaking up with a guy for six months.

KATIE

I wish you hadn't asked Becca to join us.

CARMEN

Why? What's wrong with her?

KATIE

I didn't like how chummy she was getting with Ben last night.

CARMEN

She's not interested in Ben.

KATIE

No. Really. I saw the way she was looking at him.

CARMEN

Christ. I didn't know paranoia was contagious.

INT. GREAT JONES CAFE - DAY

Steve, Ben and Rick are seated at the bar in the tiny Cajun joint. A round of beers arrives for them. Rick stares up at the Knicks game on TV while Henry stands lecturing him.

HENRY

For your information, Lucy loves me. And she knows I love her. Because I tell her. Every day.

(turning to Ben)

That's where you fucked up, Benjy. How the hell could you be with Katie all this time and never tell her you love her? You're lucky she didn't murder you in your sleep.

BEN

That'd never happen. She wouldn't want to mess up the sheets.

RICK

Unless it was time to play 'Name That Food.'

Ben shoots Rick an 'I'm warning you' look.

HENRY

What's 'Name That Food?'

(Ben avoids his eye)

C'mon Benjy. What is it?

BEN

It's something we used to do.

HENRY

In bed?

BEN

Yes.

RICK

Or tied to a chair. Blindfolded.

The guys all 'ooohh' and 'ahhhh.'

BEN

(to Rick)

Jesus Christ! Will you shut the fuck up?!

RICK

Shhh! I'm trying to watch the game.

BEN

Then why don't you go home and watch it?

RICK

I can't. My cable's out.

EXT. BAR IN PARK SLOPE - DAY

Katie's struggling with sharing something with her friend.

KATIE

You know Carmen, there's something you need to know about Rick.

CARMEN

I know, I know. He's a low-life piece of shit who'll fuck anything that moves. But deep down I think he's very sensitive. Really. He told me how his Daddy used to beat him. And how he had to protect his Mother from him when he was drunk. Deep down I think he's just a scared, wounded little boy.

KATIE

That may be true. But--

CARMEN

(seeing Becca)
Hey baby. Wassup!

They hug hello. Giving up, Katie slugs back her drink.

INT. GREAT JONES CAFE - DAY

Ben is glumly staring into space while Henry stays on him.

HENRY

Come on. You two are history. So spill it. What's 'Name That Food?'

BEN

I'm really not in the mood.

RICK

Okay. I'll tell them. He used to tie her up and--

BEN

Will you shut up?! All of you. Please? Just leave me alone.

HENRY

We're just kidding around. Man! For a guy who wasn't in love you're taking this awfully hard.

BEN

I never said I wasn't in love. I just never told her I was.

STEVE
Why didn't you?

BEN
Everything got all messed up.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. KATIE'S APARTMENT BEDROOM (A YEAR AGO) - DAY

Since this is Ben's flashback it's in the washed out, 8mm color reminiscent of the Zapruder film.

Ben and a blindfolded Katie are naked, making love in bed.

BEN (V.O.)
We were at Katie's place when it happened. We were making love and she just blurted it out.

KATIE
(crying out)
Ugh! I-- I love you!

She climaxes and pulls him close. Ben holds her but he has stopped moving. The words have stopped him in his tracks.

BEN (V.O.)
It took me by surprise. We'd only been going out two months. I felt it was kind of soon. So I didn't say anything.

END FLASHBACK

INT. GREAT JONES CAFE - DAY

Ben is still disturbed by the moment.

BEN
I didn't take it seriously. I mean, we were in the middle of sex for Christ's sake. People yell out all kinds of stuff during sex.

STEVE
Like "Faster! Faster"

HENRY
Or "Fuck me Poppy"

RICK
Or "Pass the Miracle Whip."

Ben glares angrily at Rick.

EXT. BAR IN PARK SLOPE - DAY

Katie is drinking deeply from a fresh Margarita while Carmen and Becca dish.

CARMEN

You know what? I think Becca might like Karen's brother. What's his name?

KATIE

I don't know.

CARMEN

You don't know his name or you don't know if Becca would like him?

KATIE

I don't know how I could've spent all those years living with an insensitive, paranoid lunatic.

INT. GREAT JONES CAFE - DAY

Ben is continuing his sad tale at the bar.

BEN

Because I didn't say 'I love you' back...it became a thing.

STEVE

A thing?

BEN

Yeah. A thing. A thing that hangs in the air between you. A thing that won't go away.

HENRY

Like a fart in an elevator.

BEN

Much worse. I knew she wanted me to say it. And I wanted to say it. But not then. I wanted to say it when I wanted to say it. So while I was waiting to find the right time, I changed the subject. Instead of talking about it I went on and on about all my conspiracy stuff.

EXT. BAR IN PARK SLOPE - DAY

Katie is getting a little sloppy after her second Margarita.

KATIE

Bush stole the election, Trump stole the election, 911 was an inside job. And the moon landing! Did you know he doesn't believe we ever landed on the moon?

CARMEN

He's history. Forget about him.

KATIE

Nevada. That's where he says they landed. He believes they staged the whole thing for TV. Ugh.

(Getting up)

I gotta pee. 'Scuse me.

Katie wobbles into the restaurant as Becca and Carmen watch.

BECCA

Poor thing.

CARMEN

'Poor' my ass. She's lucky to be rid of him. In one night she achieved every woman's fantasy. She lost a hundred eighty pounds of useless fat without exercising.

INT. GREAT JONES CAFE - DAY

Steve leans in to console Ben.

STEVE

So now that you and Katie are finished what are you going to do about that other thing that happened?

BEN

What other thing?

STEVE

Last night. At the party.
(Ben just stares at him)
You don't have to pretend. We all saw it.

HENRY

(to Rick)

Is Steve saying he's in love with Ben?

RICK

Yes. But I think it's too soon.

STEVE

I'm talking about Ben and Rebecca.

(to Ben)

Look. She and I didn't hit off. It wasn't meant to be. But you two had something. So you should go for it.

BEN

Oh sure. She's nuts about me. Except for the fact that she thinks I'm a callous, unfeeling asshole!

STEVE

I don't think so. I could tell she enjoyed talking to you. And she liked the Kennedy pictures.

EXT. PARK SLOPE - DAY

The three ladies walk through the hood. Carmen puts an arm around Katie.

CARMEN

You gotta forget about him. Go out. Have some fun. Get laid.

KATIE

I don't need to get laid.

CARMEN

Yes you do. Believe me. I had no idea how much I needed to get laid. But now that I've gotten laid I know what I was missing.

BECCA

(musing)

I don't like the term 'get laid'. Maybe because I had an uncle who laid pipe.

CARMEN

Well whatever you call it...it's good for what ails you.

(to Becca)

Did I tell you he has a fucking tattoo on his cock?

BECCA

Who? Rick?

KATIE

I don't want to hear this.

BECCA

I do. What kind of tattoo?

CARMEN

Three words. 'Do not over-inflate.'

Carmen and Becca both laugh while Katie secretly stews.

EXT. GREAT JONES CAFE - DAY

Henry, Ben, Rick and Steve exit the bar. The ever present limo is waiting for Rick at the curb.

HENRY

(moving off)

I gotta run. See ya Benjy. Gimme a call if you need anything.

STEVE

Unless you have more busy work I'm gonna go too.

Steve moves to hug Ben but he fends him off.

BEN

Thanks. You can owe me one.

RICK

Hold on Steve. I'll give you a lift.

(to Ben)

Hey Romeo. What time is Katie coming by for her stuff tomorrow?

BEN

Around noon. Why?

RICK

I would recommend you not be home. Go to a movie. I'll come by and make sure she gets in and out fast.

BEN

You don't have to do that.

RICK

Sure I do. The Masters is on ESPN and I want to watch it. See you at ten.

Rick hops in and slams the door. Ben watches the limo drive away. He stands stock still for a moment. Then he suddenly whips around to see if someone's behind him. There's no one.

INT. APARTMENT IN BROOKLYN - NIGHT

Katie is standing at the sink furiously scrubbing the dinner dishes. Her sweet AUNT TESSIE (60) watches her with concern.

KATIE

(scrubbing)

I'd be amazed if he even noticed I was gone. He's probably wrapped up in his big presentation, up to his neck in conspiracy junk, having a gay old time.

AUNT TESSIE

Honey please--

KATIE

(scraping the dish)

That's okay Aunt Tessie. I don't mind cleaning up. That's what I do when I get upset. I clean.

AUNT TESSIE

That's fine honey. But you're scrubbing off the pattern.

Katie looks at the dish. Half of the ornate design is gone.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ben is indeed at his cluttered desk, but he's ignoring the JFK stuff in favor of the 'Pumpkin Butt' evidence. On a big board he's plotted out Katie's whereabouts for six months.

Rubbing his bleary eyes, Ben picks up his coffee mug and is about to take a sip when he notices the writing on it. It reads 'World Class Paranoid.' He looks lovingly at it.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. KATIE'S APARTMENT (YEARS AGO) - DAY

A video recording shows Ben and Katie unwrapping Christmas presents. Ben opens the 'Paranoid' mug. He laughs and gives Katie a kiss. From behind the camera we hear a VOICE.

RICK (O.S.)

Hey you two. Get a room.

Annoyed, Ben reaches over and blacks out the lens.

END FLASHBACK

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ben stares at the cup a moment, his smile fading.

Moments later, in the kitchen, he rinses the cup out and is about to put it away. Instead he moves with it to the trash can and mournfully drops it in.

EXT. EAST THIRD STREET - DAY

Katie moves quickly up the street and into the Eggelhoff. Carlos is napping in the limo parked outside.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Rick is planted in his familiar spot on the couch, watching a golf tournament on TV. He's drinking champagne from an open bottle as Katie opens the door and enters.

RICK
Hey there darlin'.

KATIE
What are you doing here? And why the hell did you sleep with Carmen?

RICK
Don't you ever say 'hello'?

KATIE
You know she's my best friend. How could you do that?

RICK
Hey, you got me all worked up. My balls were ready to pop. I had to do something.
(taking a slug of bubbly)
Anyway if she's such a good friend how come she told you about it?

KATIE
Because she doesn't know about this.

RICK
By 'this' you must be referring to the thing that you refuse to let happen. You want some champagne?

KATIE
No. Where's Ben?

She opens some drawers in the kitchen.

RICK
He's not in there. He went to the movies. What are you looking for?

KATIE
(opening cabinets)
My stuff.

RICK
It's all packed up. Ben and his
merry band of co-conspirators did
it all. So relax.

Katie goes into the bedroom to look for her stuff.

RICK (CONT'D)
Hey! I picked up some fresh
strawberries at the Union Square
market. Very yummy.

KATIE (O.S.)
(from the bedroom)
No. Thank you.

RICK
They go good with champagne.

KATIE (O.S.)
(from the bedroom)
I said 'no.'

RICK
Of course for you to really enjoy
them I could tie you to the bed and
blindfold you. But maybe you're not
in the mood.

Katie walks back into the room and glares angrily at Rick.

KATIE
He told you about--?

RICK
'Name That Food.' Yup. Every sticky
detail.

KATIE
I'm going to kill him.

He hands her the champagne. She takes a big slug.

RICK
Couple of beers and that boy'll
tell me anything. So how does it
work? First he ties you up--

KATIE
I'm not discussing this.

RICK
I want you to know that if it makes
you more comfortable you can wear a
blindfold with me.

KATIE
This isn't funny. Stop it.

RICK
Why? You know you want me.

KATIE
No I don't.

RICK
Yes you do. You want me. Right here. With you. Naked in your bed.

KATIE
You are such an arrogant pig.

RICK
Maybe so. But I'm an honest arrogant pig. You so want me. And you know it.

KATIE
You're sick. You know that? I mean, seriously delusional. You really think that every woman on earth is dying to get a hold of you and your big, tattooed cock.

RICK
(smiling)
My what?

KATIE
Nothing.

RICK
You said my 'big, tattooed cock.'

KATIE
Forget I said it.

RICK
Your 'best friend' tell you that? Because Benjy hasn't seen it. And you sure as hell haven't seen it. So it must've been Carmen.
(getting very close)
That's what she said? That I have a 'big, tattooed cock?'

KATIE
No. She didn't.

RICK
Yes. She did.

KATIE

No. She didn't. She said big,
fucking, tattooed cock.

They both smile. She turns her back on him. Rick grabs a dish towel from the counter.

RICK

Do want to know what Ben told me
about you?

KATIE

No. What?

From behind, he seductively wraps the towel over her eyes.

RICK

He told me he came up with this
game to help you shut out the
world. Because once you do, once
you let yourself forget who you are
and where you are...you're wild.
(kissing her neck)
Like a jungle cat.

Rick growls as he continues to kiss her from the back while he unbuttons her blouse. Blindfolded she swoons in his arms.

KATIE

We're both going straight to hell.

EXT. SUBWAY TUNNEL - DAY

An uptown R train roars into a tunnel.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - DAY

Standing among the jovial Sunday riders is Ben. A bit tipsy, he sadly sways with the moving train. He glances up and sees Becca. She's sitting a ways away from him, reading a book.

Delighted, Ben composes himself and begins to move down the car toward her. He pretends to read the map as he moves her way. Her nose is buried in the book so she doesn't notice.

Ben screws up his courage and moves closer. And closer still.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Chocolate syrup is dripped onto a naked breast. Tied to the bed and blindfolded, Katie tingles with delight.

Rick, dressed only in his undershorts, leans down and kisses it off of her nipple. During this, Katie's mind drifts off.

KATIE
What else?

RICK
(between licks)
What else what?

KATIE
Ben. What else did he say about our
relationship? Was he bored?
Frustrated? Happy?

RICK
Why do I always get the ones that
want to talk?

In the other room a rattle of keys can be heard.

KATIE
What the hell is-- ?

Rick covers her mouth. Now she can't see or speak.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ben opens the front door and wobbles in. Closing the door he notices that the boxes are still there.

BEN
God damn it.
(moving to the kitchen)
Fuck me man. Fuck me!

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

His hand still over her mouth, Rick whispers to Katie.

RICK
It's Ben. Hold still.

KATIE
(in a loud whisper)
Hold still? Where the hell am I
gonna go?

Rick shushes her and pulls on a robe before heading out.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ben is drinking a beer in the kitchen as Rick emerges from the bedroom, doing his best to appear nonchalant.

RICK
Hey there, Bro. I thought you were
going to a movie?

BEN

Fuck the movie. This whole day has been a disaster.

(looking at him)

Why are you in your shorts?

RICK

The...uh...hot water's out at my place. So I was about to take a shower when I heard you come in.

BEN

Oh. Yeah well, sorry about that but-- God Damn it!

RICK

What's going on? You seem real mad.

BEN

I am mad. I'm mad at myself.

(looking at the boxes)

So Katie never came by?

RICK

No. But she might come by any minute.

(moving him to the door)

So why don't you go out and take a walk? I'll wait for her here.

BEN

That's okay. You go take your shower. I'm just gonna go in and lay down until she comes.

Ben heads for the bedroom. Panicking, Rick intercepts him.

RICK

No. No. No! Not until you tell me why you're so upset.

BEN

You don't want to hear this?

RICK

Yes! I do. I want to hear the whole thing. Right now.

Rick moves him to a kitchen stool and sits him down.

BEN

Okay. Well. I had a few drinks at The Jones with Bernie and Frank. Then I went uptown to see the new Tarrantino thing. And who do you think I see on the train?

RICK

Who?

BEN

That girl from the party. Becca. She's sitting at the other end of the car, reading. And I keep looking at her. Sending her that 'hey look up' vibe. But she's got her nose buried in her book.

INT. BEN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Katie is trying to bite at the neckties on her wrists to open them. During this Ben's voice drifts in from the kitchen.

BEN (O.S.)

And I'm thinking I've gotta talk to her. So I get up and start to move down the car toward her.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Back in the kitchen, Ben continues the story.

BEN

I'm now like five feet away. And I'm trying to screw up my courage to just say hi. But I know she thinks I'm a jerk so I hesitate.

RICK

That's not good.

BEN

No it's not. It's not good. In this case it was fatal.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. SUBWAY CAR - DAY

In another of Ben's 8mm flashbacks we see him standing over Becca in the train car. She's still reading her book.

BEN (V.O.)

No sooner do I do nothing when--

A man, ROY MAZZOLA (30), dressed in a loud sports jacket stands up across from Becca and walks toward her.

BEN (V.O.)

This guy in a sports jacket walks over to her. And he says--

ROY
 How do you do? I couldn't help
 noticing you from across the car.
 You're a very beautiful woman.

END FLASHBACK

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Back in the apartment, Rick is incredulous.

RICK
 Just like that?!

BEN
 Just like that. The guy cock-blocks
 me. And the whole car, Rick. The
 whole car falls silent. Nobody can
 believe the balls on this guy.

RICK
 Sure. Those are some balls.

BEN
 I gotta eat something. I'm weak.

He goes to the refrigerator and sticks his head inside.

RICK
 What are you looking for?

BEN
 (head in the fridge)
 Peanut butter.

While Ben searches Rick runs into the bedroom.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rick bolts in and grabs an open jar of peanut butter sitting
 on the bedstead. Katie is writhing with anger on the bed.

KATIE
 (in a loud whisper)
 Get him out of here!

RICK
 (in a loud whisper)
 I'm trying!

He runs out of the bedroom with the peanut butter.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Rick dashes back to the kitchen and arrives there just as Ben
 pops his head out of the fridge. He hands him the jar.

RICK
(out of breath)
Here you go.

BEN
Thanks.
(making a sandwich)
So the next thing I know the guy in
the jacket has talked her into
going for a walk. I mean, Jesus
Christ! I was that close to talking
to her. And this, this--

RICK
Sport.

BEN
Sport in a jacket stands up and
cuts me off.

Ben takes a hefty bite out of the sandwich and angrily chews.

RICK
I'm sorry, Bro.

BEN
(muffled)
That's not the worst part.

RICK
Chew. Chew. Then tell me the worst
part.

BEN
Hold on.

Chewing, Ben starts looking through the cabinets.

RICK
What do you need?

BEN
(head in a cabinet)
Jelly.

Rick runs to the bedroom again.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rick dashes in and searches for the jelly among the many open
jars on the bedstead. Katie is coming unglued.

KATIE
(in a loud whisper)
What the hell is going on?

RICK
(in a loud whisper)
He needs jelly.
(pulling off her blindfold)
Help me look.

She spots it and points with her head.

KATIE
There.

Rick grabs it and runs out.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Rick runs back in the kitchen with the jar of jelly and pretends to find it in a cabinet. He hands it to Ben.

RICK
(out of breath)
So. The worst part?

BEN
(adding the jelly)
The worst part is that when she gets off the train, she looks back, sees me and smiles. One of those 'oh well' smiles.
(taking a bite)
As a result I missed my stop, I missed the movie and I missed my chance with her.

RICK
Oh well.

BEN
Yeah. Oh fucking well.

RICK
Clearly it wasn't meant to be.

BEN
Stop with the 'meant to be.' You and Steve are driving me nuts with that stuff.

RICK
Hey. You can't argue with fate.

BEN
So what are you saying? I wasn't meant to be with Becca but I was meant to see this guy make out like a bandit with a girl I'd walk through fire for?

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Hearing this Katie lets out a outraged yelp.

KATIE

Ooooooh!

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Rick does his best to cover the sound in the other room.

RICK

Ooooooh...maybe.

BEN

Maybe? That's the extent of your wisdom? Maybe?

RICK

The extent of my wisdom is that I'd never find myself in that situation.

BEN

No. You'd be the guy in the sports coat.

RICK

Pretty much. Only without the sports coat.

BEN

(tossing the sandwich)
I need to go lay down.

He makes a move toward the bedroom but Rick heads him off.

RICK

No. You know what you need?

BEN

Rest. I need rest.

RICK

Chinese food.

BEN

Chinese food?

RICK

Chinese food. Sounds good doesn't it?

BEN

Say it one more time.

RICK
Chinese food.

BEN
That does sound good. Yeah. Okay.
(grabbing the phone)
Let's order in.

RICK
No. Go out.

BEN
Out?

RICK
Out. Get some fresh air. Fresh air
and Chinese food. That's the extent
of my wisdom on the subject.

BEN
I am still hungry.

RICK
See?

Rick starts moving Ben toward the door.

BEN
All right. What do you want?

RICK
Nothing. I...ate. You get
something.
(opening the door)
Take your time. Stroll over there.
Look over the whole menu. Slowly.

BEN
(sniffing the air)
Do you smell something?

RICK
Like what?

BEN
Like chocolate. Like hot chocolate.

RICK
No. Nothing like chocolate.
Nothing at all. See? You're so
hungry you're starting to smell
things. You'd better go.

BEN
Right. Okay. I'll be right back.

Ben leaves. Rick makes a mad dash for the bedroom.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rick comes in and finds Katie pulling at her restraints with the fury of the Frankenstein monster.

KATIE

Christ! I'm gonna wring his God damned neck!

RICK

Hold still. Let me untie you.

KATIE

Did you hear that little weasel? 'Oohing' and 'aahing' over her?

RICK

(untying her)

What do you expect? He's an idiot.

KATIE

(untying herself)

He said he'd walk through fire for her. I lived with him four years and I couldn't even get him to pick up the God damned dry cleaning!

In a rage she storms out of the bedroom. Rick follows her.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Katie walks toward the kitchen dressed only in her briefs and still dripping with chocolate. Seeing the peanut butter and bread out she starts to compulsively tidy up.

KATIE

Ugh. Look at this mess.

She grabs the half eaten sandwich and dumps it in the trash.

RICK

I'll straighten up. You have to--

KATIE

Aahh!

RICK

What? What is it?

She lifts the cup out of the trash.

KATIE

He threw out his cup. I gave him this cup.

RICK
(taking it from her)
Forget about the cup. Ben'll be
back any minute.

KATIE
You're right. You're right. I'd
better hop in the shower.

She moves toward the bathroom and Rick stops her.

RICK
No. The Chinese place is just down
the block. You've gotta get out of
here.

KATIE
Where am I supposed to go?

RICK
Go home.

KATIE
Rick, I'm staying with my Aunt!
What do you suggest I tell her?
That I accidentally fell nude into
a hot fudge sundae?

RICK
All right. I'll help you clean up.
Then you can take a car over to my
place and get a shower there.

He grabs a dish towel and wipes the chocolate off of her.

KATIE
God. What a nightmare this is!

RICK
How can you say that? I thought we
were having fun.

KATIE
I'm talking about me and Ben. He
just tossed me aside. I mean-- I
gave him that cup for Christmas.

RICK
I know. That was the day I met you.
And right then I felt something. I
knew that you shouldn't be with
him. You should be with me.

KATIE
What are you talking about?

RICK
I'm trying to say that...I love
you. I think.

Katie looks at him. The door opens and Ben enters.

BEN
The Chinese place is closed and--

KATIE
(startled)
Ben.

Seeing them together, Ben freezes. He raises his arm and points an angry, trembling finger at them.

BEN
I KNEW I smelled chocolate!

EXT. EAST THIRD STREET - DAY

Rick exits the Egelhoff Towers with Katie, who is dressed in his overcoat. He signals for the limo which pulls up.

Ben stands watching this from his perch up in the window.

BEN'S POV

As Katie gets into the car, Rick looks up and meets Ben's eye. Ashamed, Rick climbs in and the car pulls away.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ben sits at his desk, ritualistically shredding all the documents in the 'Pumpkin Butt' folder. When that's done he erases the timeline on his erase-o board until it's clean.

INT. RICK'S LOFT BATHROOM - DAY

Katie is showering and crying. As the chocolate washes off of her she lets the upset and humiliation flow as well.

Outside the shower, Rick is holding a towel for her. The crying makes his skin crawl. Katie tearfully steps out of the shower and shoots him a look of pure hatred.

KATIE
You stay away from me.

She storms off, naked, into the loft. Thinking better of it, she returns and grabs the towel.

EXT. LEGAL AID SOCIETY - DAY

Ben urgently moves up the street toward a drab, downtown office building. We hear Ben on the phone with someone.

BEN (V.O.)
 I don't want to talk about it. Of course I'm upset. Forgive him? No Not happening.

INT. LEGAL AID SOCIETY OFFICES - DAY

Ben's at his desk in a drab, lime green office. He's talking on the phone while a large hulking gang member, BBQ (22), sits opposite him.

BEN
 (into phone)
 I know we're all God's creatures, Momma. But all God's creatures have to earn a living and I'm at work now. I'll call you later. Bye bye.
 (hanging up)
 Sorry about that. Okay, Quentin.

BBQ
 BBQ.

BEN
 Sorry. BBQ. Look we can try to deny that you stabbed your cousin but there's a whole lot of witnesses who saw you do it. So why don't you just tell me why you did it so I can understand?

BBQ
 Understand what?

BEN
 Understand why you stabbed him.
 (the phone RINGS)
 Excuse me.
 (into phone)
 Hello. Ben Denbo.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Rick is calling from his limo. Behind the wheel, Carlos drives and listens in.

RICK
 (into phone)
 Benjy. Listen to me. I can explain what happened.

INT. LEGAL AID SOCIETY OFFICES - DAY

Hearing his Brother's voice really sets Ben off.

BEN

(into phone)

I don't want to hear about it.
Goodbye.

(hanging up, to BBQ)

Look. People don't just do things
for no reason. There's gotta be a
reason you stabbed your brother.

BBQ

It wasn't my brother. It was my
cousin.

BEN

Brother, cousin. Same difference.
You must've had a reason to do it.

(the phone RINGS again)

Excuse me again.

(into phone)

Hello. Ben Denbo.

RICK (O.S.)

(on the phone)

Benjy. You gotta listen to me.

BEN

(into the phone)

Would you please stop calling me?

(hanging up, to BBQ)

There must've been a reason. He's
your family, for Christ's sake. So
why did you do it?

BBQ

I was whacked.

BEN

He hit you? Well, see. Then it was
self defense. That's perfectly
understandable.

BBQ

Nah. The motherfucker never hit me.

BEN

You said you were whacked.

BBQ

Yeah. Whacked. You know, high?
Freddy runs into me and made me
spill my beer.

The phone RINGS again. Ben tries to ignore it.

BEN

You stabbed him because he made you
spill your beer? You're kidding,
right?

(the phone RINGS again)

Look I really want to help you but--
(it RINGS again)

That's just-- You really don't--

On the next RING he grabs the receiver and yells into it.

BEN

(into the phone)

WILL YOU LEAVE ME THE FUCK ALONE?!

He slams the phone down hard. As he looks up he sees his
client heading for the door.

BEN

Quentin! Uh, BBQ. Wait!

BBQ

Nah. You got your own shit to deal
with. Later man.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Rick is seated in the back of the limo, staring in
frustration at the phone. Seeing this Carlos speaks up.

CARLOS

Maybe you could send him a plant.
Or one of those bears.

The phone RINGS and Rick instantly snatches it up.

RICK

(into phone)

Yeah?

Out of the receiver comes the most God-awful wailing you've
ever heard.

RICK

(into phone)

What? Who is this?

(recognizing the voice)

Rebecca?

EXT. POLICE PRECINCT ON THE UPPER EAST SIDE - DAY

Exiting the police station, Rick has his arm wrapped around a
sobbing Becca. She's wearing a wrinkled dress that she slept
in. Rick bustles her into the limo and it drives off.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

In the car Becca still loudly bawls while Rick struggles to comfort her.

RICK

Okay. Okay. Everything's going to be all right. Do you want a beer?

She shakes her head 'no'. Rick rummages through his pockets and finds a plastic bag full of pills.

RICK

Uh...Valium? Xanax? Darvon?

(she shakes 'no')

Water?

(she nods 'yes'.)

Water? Good idea. You wouldn't want to run out of water.

(opening a bottle)

You run out of water you might stop crying. And you wouldn't want to do that. Heh heh heh.

After a sip of water, Becca collapses into his arms. In the front seat Carlos disapprovingly sighs.

EXT. EAST THIRD STREET - AFTERNOON

Finished for the day, Ben drags his sad carcass up the block toward his building. He pauses by the door to fetch his house keys from his briefcase.

Above him on the fire escape, Becca is drinking a cup of tea in his 'World Class Paranoid' mug. Seeing him, she calls out.

BECCA

Ben! Hey Ben. Up here!

Waving to get his attention, she accidentally knocks the mug over the edge of the fire escape. Ben looks up just in time to see the word 'Paranoid' hurtling toward him.

BONK! It hits him on the head and knocks him out cold.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Flat on his back on the couch, Ben slowly opens his eyes. Becca comes into focus. She's sitting next to him holding an ice bag against his head.

BEN

What the--? Where am I?

BECCA

You're in your apartment. Are you okay?

BEN

I think so.

He touches her face to see if she's for real.

BEN

What are you doing here?

BECCA

Rick brought me.

BEN

(annoyed)

As what? A peace offering?

Ben takes hold of the ice bag and sits up.

BECCA

I needed a lawyer. I tried to get Carmen but she's out of town on a comedy gig. I called Rick to get your number but he told me you don't have a cell phone.

BEN

(holding his head)

That's right. They can use them to track you. And they give you brain cancer. Why do you need a lawyer?

BECCA

I can't go home. My apartment is all sealed up with yellow tape.

BEN

Police tape? Your apartment is a crime scene?

BECCA

(bursting into tears)

Yes!

BEN

Look. Please. Try to calm down and tell me what happened.

BECCA

(crying)

I can't. It's so horrible. And so awful.

BEN

Well maybe it just seems horrible and awful by Ohio standards. I'm sure it's not as horrible and awful as you think.

(he gets up slowly)

Try to pull yourself together. You want some water? I'll get you some water.

Ben moves to the sink to fill a glass.

BECCA

What is it with you guys and water? First Rick. Now you.

BEN

It's how we handle women. You go into labor, we boil water. You cry, we make you drink water. It's probably our subliminal attempt to drown you.

(Becca laughs)

So...water?

BECCA

Yes. Please.

He hands her the glass of water and she takes a sip.

BEN

Now why don't you tell me what happened? From the beginning.

BECCA

(sipping the water)

Well. It all started totally innocently. On a train last Sunday.

BEN

Sunday? This past Sunday?

BECCA

Yes. I was sitting in the train, reading a book, when a man got up and talked to me. His name was Roy.

INT. APARTMENT IN BROOKLYN - AFTERNOON

Katie is unpacking her stuff. She's wearing a pair of yellow rubber gloves as she gives each item a quick dusting.

She takes a photo album from a box, some pictures fall out of it. They show Ben and Katie at Dealy Plaza in Dallas.

Seeing the two of them smiling and happy gives Katie pause. She tenderly wipes the dust off the photo as she studies it.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Back at the apartment Ben continues the questioning.

BEN
So you made a date with him?

BECCA
For Tuesday night.

BEN
Last night?

BECCA
Yes. Roy came by to pick me up. He was early so I let him come in while I finished getting ready.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. BECCA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Becca greets Roy at her place. As befitting her situation and state of mind, her flashback is told with a series of blurry, black and white surveillance photos.

BECCA (V.O.)
He had a briefcase with him and he seemed nervous. So we sat together talking and had some wine.

A still of Roy seated with his briefcase in his lap. And some shots of them chatting, sitting and toasting.

BECCA (V.O.)
Then he leaned over and kissed me.

A shot of them kissing.

END FLASHBACK

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Ben is surprised and disappointed to hear this.

BEN
He kissed you?

BECCA
Yes.

BEN
On the mouth?

BECCA

Yes.

BEN

Did you enjoy it?

(she looks startled)

If I'm going to represent you I
need to know everything.

BECCA

Okay. Well. Yes. I guess I was
feeling lonely. So, yes, I enjoyed
it. He was a good kisser.

(quivering with tears)

And so he took me in his arms and
kissed me. And then...well...we...

BEN

He forced himself on you?!

BECCA

No!

BEN

He tied you up and robbed you?

BECCA

No!

BEN

He made you clean the apartment in
the nude.

BECCA

NO!

(reacting)

What?

BEN

You'd be surprised. That happens a
lot.

BECCA

Well, we didn't do anything like
that. We just finished our wine and
headed down to dinner.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. BECCA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Surveillance photos of Becca and Roy leaving her building.

BECCA (V.O.)
 When we walked out of my apartment
 four guys jumped out of a van,
 parked across the street.

Photos of FOUR GUYS in plain clothes exiting a van.

BECCA (V.O.)
 I found out later they were cops.
 Anyway one of them calls out, "Roy
 Mazzola!" And Roy ran.

In the blurry stills, Roy runs and TWO COPS draw their guns.

BECCA (V.O.)
 Then two of the cops pulled out
 their guns and shot him.

Stills of the cops shooting.

BEN (V.O.)
 They shot him?

BECCA (V.O.)
 Like forty or fifty times. Even
 after he fell they kept shooting
 and shooting. It was horrible!

Stills of the two cops emptying their guns into Roy. This is
 accompanied by the sound of a THUNDER OF SHOTS.

BECCA (V.O.)
 Then they opened Roy's briefcase.
 And inside it was like a dozen
 handguns.

Pictures of the inside of Roy's briefcase. It's full of guns.

END FLASHBACK

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Back in the apartment Ben is hanging on her every word.

BEN
 No shit?

BECCA
 Yes! Like an arsenal. Then they
 took me to the police station and
 started questioning me.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Grainy video of Becca being interrogated by TWO DETECTIVES.
It's shot through a two-way mirror.

BECCA (V.O.)

They asked me how long I knew Roy.
I told them that we just met. And
one guy says, "Well, if you just
met him then how come you were
kissing him?"

END FLASHBACK

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Becca continues the story.

BECCA

That's when I realized they'd been
watching us!

BEN

What happened then?

BECCA

I threw up. The thought of these
guys spying on me made me sick. And
the thought of me kissing a dead
guy made me even sicker!

BEN

Well technically he wasn't dead
when you kissed him.

BECCA

Close enough.
(looking at Ben)
I'm in big trouble right?

BEN

No no. Not at all. It's all
circumstantial. They think you're
involved in the gun business. All
we've got to do is prove that you
barely knew the guy and they'll
throw the charges out.

BECCA

How are we going to do that? They
saw me kissing him.

BEN

Luckily you've got a witness that
can prove you two just met. I was
on the train that day. Remember?

BECCA
That's right. You were there!

BEN
I can swear out a statement with
the court that I saw you two meet
and the whole thing'll be over.

BECCA
Really?

BEN
Really. You've got nothing to worry
about.

BECCA
Oh thank God!
(hugging him)
Thank you, thank you, thank you!

She starts to cry. Ben holds her close and smiles.

EXT. WEST SIDE HIGHWAY GAS STATION - EVENING

While Carlos gasses up the limo, Rick talks on the phone.

RICK
(into phone)
I tried calling him, Momma. But he
won't talk to me. I know I promised
I'd watch after him. Yes. I want to
go to heaven someday. Look Momma, I
gotta go. A meeting's about to
start. I promise I'll make things
right with Benjy. I will. Oops.
Coffee's boiling over. Gotta run.

Rick hangs up and meets Carlos' disgusted gaze.

RICK (CONT'D)
What the hell are you looking at?

Carlos goes back to filling the tank. The phone in the limo
RINGS and Rick picks it up.

RICK (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Yeah?

On the other end he once again hears someone loudly crying.

RICK
(into phone)
Who is this?
(recognizing the voice)
Lucy?

EXT. DESOLATE STREET IN THE BRONX - EVENING

Trembling, LUCY (28) struggles to keep it together. She's a Russian beauty so fresh from the old country that she even cries with an accent. The limo pulls up and Rick hops out.

RICK

Lucy. How the hell did you get all the way up here?

LUCY

I don't know.

(sobbing)

I got lost and was calling on Henry. But he hang up on me.

She breaks down crying. Rick takes her in his arms.

RICK

I know how annoying that can be.

INT. CUP'O JOE COFFEE SHOP - EVENING

In the local coffee emporium Becca is seated at a table while Ben carries two big frappachinos from the counter.

BEN

You know you'll probably need a place to stay until the cops stop searching your sock drawer for machine guns.

(he sits down)

You're welcome to stay with me if you'd like?

BECCA

Thanks. I just might. I'd stay with Carmen but I can't stand her cats.

BEN

Are you allergic?

BECCA

No. I just can't stand them.

They both laugh. Becca gives him a long look.

BECCA

Do you mind if I ask you something?

BEN

Never ask a paranoid if you mind if you can ask him something. It sets off a chain reaction in my head that can't be stopped. Just ask.

BECCA

Okay. Do you believe in love at first sight?

BEN

(almost choking)

Why do you want to know that?

BECCA

Just curious. So? Do you?

BEN

I don't know. It's possible I guess. My Mom was a big believer in it. She had a miserable time with my Dad. But her mother and father were a whole other story.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. DENBO HOME IN DALLAS (1998) - DAY

Washed-out, 8mm film shows BELLE DENBO (38) dancing with 15 year old RICK. An old record of "SOME ENCHANTED EVENING" plays on the victrola.

BEN (V.O.)

To hear her tell it, her folks took one look at each other and that was it. Just like in that song from "SOUTH PACIFIC". Where you look across a crowded room and you know.

Laying on the floor, watching them dance, is 5 year old BEN. He can't take his eyes off his mother.

BEN (V.O.)

She wanted that for us. All the while we were growing up, she'd tell me and Rick, "Promise me, boys. Promise me you'll hold out for true love."

END FLASHBACK

INT. CUP'O JOE COFFEE SHOP - EVENING

Ben stirs his coffee as he ponders the memory.

BECCA

So you do believe it can happen?

BEN

I don't know. It's pretty far fetched. It's like the 'Single Bullet Theory' of romance.

BECCA

The what?

BEN

The 'Single Bullet Theory.' It's this theory the Warren Commission came up with to explain the Kennedy shooting. You never heard of it?

BECCA

No. What is it?

Excited to explain it, he grabs two salt and pepper shakers and creates a mock up of the presidential limousine on the table. He uses a coffee straw to show the bullet's path.

BEN

Okay. The Warren Commission wanted people to believe that a single bullet fired by Oswald--

(pointing at the salt)

Could pass through the President's neck--

(pointing to the pepper)

Into Governor Connally's back, come out his chest, hit him in the wrist and then lodge in his leg.

(following the absurd path)

They expected people to believe all that damage could be done by one bullet. One magic bullet.

(he looks up at her)

That's as improbable as believing you can glance at someone and, in that split second, know they're your soulmate. The odds of that are like a hundred trillion to one.

BECCA

Well, I believe in it.

BEN

You do?

BECCA

Yeah. I do. It happened to me. Just recently. At your party.

Ben tries to conceal his delight.

BEN

It did?

BECCA

It's something I've been meaning to talk to you about.

He takes her hands in his and looks into her eyes.

BEN

You know, I used to laugh at my Mom for believing in having that kind of instant chemistry with somebody. I never thought it was possible. Until the other night. And, just like you, I definitely felt something like that happen.

BECCA

Really? So you do think there's a chance for me and Rick?

Ben sits stunned, his mouth and heart agape.

EXT. MIDTOWN OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

From inside the tower of glass and steel comes a voice.

STEVE (O.S.)

My God, Ben. If I were you I'd be furious.

INT. STEVE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Steve is standing behind the wet bar in his office mixing a pitcher of martinis. Ben paces back and forth like a madman.

BEN

I'm too stunned to be furious. I don't know what to say.

STEVE

What can you say?

BEN

Nothing. I'm speechless.

STEVE

So you keep saying.

(the phone RINGS)

Hello? Yeah. Send him up.

(he hangs up)

It's Henry. Personally I'm shocked at Becca. I really thought she had eyes for you.

BEN

So did I. But even if I have the eyes Rick's gonna get the rest. The really fun parts. He always gets the women. He always has.

Steve holds out a martini for Ben, hoping that he'll grab it.

STEVE

Why?

BEN

Because they all think he's mysterious and dangerous. Then they find out that he really is mysterious and dangerous and they run for the hills. It's a great system. I should try it.

STEVE

What? Being mysterious and dangerous?

BEN

Yeah. Instead of being useful and dull which has gotten me nowhere.

STEVE

(handing him the martini)
Maybe you could try being mysterious and useful. It worked for Spiderman.

BEN

My whole life I wanted to be like my brother. Never more than now.

STEVE

You're not mad at him?

BEN

(sits in a chair)
What's the point? He can't help himself. He's a vortex. Women take one look at him and they fall. Never to be heard from again.

Henry walks in, talking frantically into his cell phone.

HENRY

(into phone)
If you want to call, please call. I'm over at Steve's office. All right, sweetie? Bye bye.
(hanging up he eyes Ben's drink)
Can I get one of those?

BEN

Sure.

Henry takes Ben's martini and downs it in one gulp.

STEVE
Trouble in paradise?

HENRY
Lucy left me!

BEN
What?!

STEVE
Oh my God! When did this happen?

HENRY
Last night. I came home and she was gone. No note. Nothing. I keep calling but she's not returning my messages. I've run my Bluetooth down three times. Do you mind if I recharge?

STEVE
Go ahead.
(taking his martini glass)
You want me to recharge this too?

HENRY
Please!
(digging out his charger)
I called the cops. They won't look for her until 24 hours pass.

He plugs his ear piece into a socket near the wet bar.

STEVE
My God Henry. You must be frantic.

HENRY
So fucking frantic. I can't think about anything else. Forget about work. I just wander the streets. Checking my messages over and over.

Steve refills the martini glass and gives it to Ben.

BEN
I can't believe she'd just leave. Maybe she's lost.

STEVE
She does get lost a lot.

Henry takes the martini from Ben.

HENRY

Oh no. She's gone. And you know whose fault it is? Your brother Rick. That's whose fault it is!

Ben takes a fresh martini from Steve. Steve now has the pitcher and no glass. Annoyed, he gets one from the cabinet.

BEN

Don't mention my brother to me. He's a vortex.

HENRY

What's a 'vortex'?

BEN

It's a whirlpool of violent activity that has irresistible attraction.

HENRY

Well all I know is the vortex had lunch with Lucy and told her I was an asshole. And she believed him!

BEN

(pacing)
Bastard. God I hate him!

HENRY

(also pacing)
Since when do you hate him? I thought you two were close.

BEN

Yeah. Close. So close he stole my girl!

HENRY

Who? Katie?

BEN

First Katie. Now Becca!

HENRY

And Lucy. He's after Lucy too! That fucking bastard!

The two men stop and drink. Steve moves toward them.

STEVE

Look guys. If we're going to go uptown and see Carmen's show we should leave now.

HENRY

I can't go to a comedy show. Not with Lucy missing.

STEVE

Well I can't face it alone. Ben, are you coming?

BEN

I don't think I'd be a very good audience. I'm just going to go back to my place and wait for Becca to come home.

STEVE

What do you mean 'come home'? She's staying with you?

BEN

Uh huh.

STEVE

Then what in God's name are you complaining about? You've still got a shot. She's right there!

BEN

You're forgetting about the vortex.

STEVE

Does the vortex know how Becca feels?

BEN

I don't think so.

STEVE

Well then you're all set. All you have to do is go home and turn on the charm. You can make it happen.

BEN

Look. Nothing's going to happen. Nothing ever happens. I sleep out on the couch while she lays in my bed dreaming about Rick. It sucks!

EXT. EAST THIRD STREET - NIGHT

The limo's parked across from the Egelhoff Towers. Rick leans against it, on his cell phone looking up at Ben's window. Carlos sits, ever present, behind the wheel.

BEN (V.O.)
 (the machine picks up)
 This is Ben. If you want to talk to
 Katie, you're too late. She's gone.

The machine BEEPS and Rick begins talking.

RICK
 (into phone)
 Benjy. Pick up. Come on. I know
 you're there. I can see the light
 on in your window.

INT. BEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tucked into Ben's bed is Becca. She's reading his copy of The
 Warren Commission Report but stops to listen to the message.

RICK (V.O.)
 (on the machine)
 We gotta talk. I'm really sorry,
 Bro. I know I fucked up. Real bad.

Becca sits still, taking it all in.

EXT. MIDTOWN OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

Henry, Ben and Steve exit Steve's building. They're all
 wobbly under the weight of the martinis.

STEVE
 (to Ben)
 I can't believe you're going to
 just step aside and let your
 brother have Becca. I always knew
 Henry was a coward but I thought
 you had some guts.

HENRY
 What did you say?

STEVE
 (to Ben)
 You have to stand up and fight.

HENRY
 Did you just call me a coward?

BEN
 Fight for what? It's over. In one
 night I lost Katie and fucked up
 any chance I had with Becca.

During this, Henry moves angrily to Steve.

HENRY

Never mind that crap. Where do you get off calling me a coward?

STEVE

Oh please, Henry. You're totally spineless.

HENRY

Spineless?

STEVE

That's why you boss your wife around. No wonder she left you.

HENRY

You piece of shit. If you weren't so drunk I'd belt you.

STEVE

If I wasn't so drunk I couldn't sit through Carmen's show. Which is just what I'm going to do now. I'd ask you to join me but it's hard to sit without a spine.

Steve flags a cab as Henry closes in on him.

HENRY

You call me spineless. Look at you. You know as well as I do that Carmen's act sucks. And yet you go see her do it over and over and tell her she's great.

STEVE

For your information Henry, I don't do that because I'm spineless. I do that because I love her.

(an afterthought)

I drink because I'm spineless.

(a cab pulls up)

Ben, good luck with Becca. And Henry, good luck with your wife.

Steve gets in and the cab pulls away.

INT. MIDTOWN BAR - NIGHT

Ben and Steve are seated at the bar of a seedy, Irish joint. They miserably slurp down drinks as Henry dials his phone.

HENRY

So fucking gay. Am I right?

BEN

Who?

HENRY

Steve! The nerve of that asshole calling me spineless.

(cooing, into the phone)

Lucy honey? If you're there pick up. I'm not at Steve's anymore. I'm with Ben. But I'm thinking about you. I love you, baby. I really do.

BEN

Henry. Give me that phone.

HENRY

But I need to--

Ben pulls the phone out of Henry's hand and hangs it up.

BEN

Shut up Henry.

(dialing a number)

Steve's right. We give Rick too much power. That's got to stop.

(into the phone)

Hello? Oh. Hi. Is Rick there? It's Ben. Look. Do me a favor. When you see him tell him to stop calling me. And stay away from me. And stay away from Becca too. You got that?

INT. RICK'S LOFT - NIGHT

Lucy is seated on Rick's couch, talking on the phone and smoking a cigarette.

LUCY

(into phone)

I tell him when I see him.

BEN (V.O.)

(on the phone)

Good. Thanks. Uh, listen. Henry's here. Do you want to talk to him?

LUCY

(into phone)

No. I do not.

INT. MIDTOWN BAR - NIGHT

Flustered, Ben answers as Henry listens in.

BEN
 (into phone)
 Oh. Okay. Thanks. Good night, Lucy.

HENRY
 Lucy? LUCY! She's with Rick?!

Henry flies into a rage. He jumps off of his stool and swings it at the jukebox, smashing the glass.

HENRY
 Bastard! Dirty, fucking bastard!

Seeing this, the crusty old BARTENDER (60) flips out.

BARTENDER
 Hey! Get out of there!

He charges around the bar. Henry drops the stool and runs out the door. Ben sits there, dumbfounded by it all.

INT. STANDUP NEW YORK COMEDY CLUB - NIGHT

A small, lethargic CROWD is listening to Carmen do her act.

CARMEN
 I swear to God the trains in this town are fucked. They run on the same schedule as my period. They show up once a month and when they do they're disgusting.

No response. Seated in back, Steve chuckles loudly to encourage her. A WOMAN (21) looks at him as if he's crazy.

INT. ROSA MEXICANO RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Later that evening Carmen and Steve are huddled in the back booth of a nearby Mexican restaurant. Carmen is choking back tears as she slugs down another in a series of Margaritas.

CARMEN
 Why do I put myself through this?
 It's so God damned humiliating.
 That audience fucking sucked. I mean, I'm funny. Right? You think I'm funny, right?

Rather than answer, Steve picks up a Margarita and downs it to give himself courage.

STEVE
 I think...you're beautiful.

She looks at him. He looks at her. They are both breathing hard. Steve grabs her and kisses her full on the mouth.

INT. RICK'S LOFT - NIGHT

Lucy is asleep on the couch in the living area when a noise wakes her up. Hearing whimpers, she walks toward the sound.

She goes to Rick's bedroom door and looks in. Deep asleep, he's twitching and grunting with tears running down his face. She moves to his bed and gently shakes him.

LUCY

Rick?

RICK

(Still asleep)

I'll be good, Daddy. I swear. I'll be good.

Lucy sits on the bed and holds him, stroking his head.

LUCY

Is okay, Rick. Everything is okay.

Rick shivers in her arms, haunted by his guilt. He wraps his arms around her as she rocks him to comfort him.

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN - MORNING

It's a beautiful day. The sun shines on the courthouse steps.

INT. SMALL COURTROOM IN LOWER MANHATTAN - MORNING

A JUDGE (40) finishes reading and addresses the court.

JUDGE

Based on evidence provided to the court by council I have determined that all charges against Miss Swift should be dropped.

(he bangs his gavel)

Next case.

Relieved, Becca turns and embraces Ben who is seated in the first row behind her. While Carmen, her lawyer, is nodding off next to her. Seeing this the Judge bangs his gavel again.

JUDGE

Counselor. Counselor! Go home and get some sleep. Next case.

EXT. JACOB JAVITS CENTER - DAY

A cab pulls up outside the convention center. An electronic zipper sign streams the message: WELCOME - CONSPIRACY EXPO. NO REALLY. THIS IS IT.

Ben gets out of the cab and, from inside, Becca passes him the huge JFK photos and diagrams.

BECCA
You want me to help with those?

BEN
No thanks. I'll see you later.

BECCA
Okay. Good luck.

She blows him a kiss as the cab carries her away. Ben stands watching it go. He is suddenly in no hurry to go inside.

INT. RICK'S LOFT - DAY

Rick is standing by the windows of his enormous loft. He is talking to someone on the phone. Lucy sits on the couch nearby, pretending to read a magazine while she listens in.

RICK
(into phone)
That's great darlin'. Is my brother with you? I've gotta talk to him.

INT. CAB - DAY

Becca is talking on the phone in the moving cab.

BECCA
(into phone)
No. I just dropped him off to do his presentation. But he'll be home tonight. He's cooking dinner to celebrate me winning my case.

INT. LECTURE AREA - DAY

On stage, surrounded by the diagrams and JFK photos, is Ben. He moves to the podium and looks out at the 15 people in the audience. They are all MEN of varying ages, all dressed in the same stained and disheveled manner as he is.

BEN
I was invited here today to share with you all of the evidence I've amassed over the years that proves that the well known 'single bullet theory' can't be true. But after everything that's happened to me this week...I don't see the point.

INT. RICK'S LOFT - DAY

Rick dials a number and urgently talks into the phone.

RICK
(into phone)
Hello Katie?

INT. LECTURE AREA - DAY

Ben continues his lecture.

BEN
Whether there was one gunman or two
or twenty two...that isn't what's
important. The important thing is
I've fucked up my life.

INT. RICK'S LOFT - DAY

Watching and listening to Rick on the phone, Lucy stands at
the other end of the loft and dials a number on her cell.

LUCY
(into phone)
Hello Henry?

INT. LECTURE AREA - DAY

Ben is at the podium getting very worked up.

BEN
I was so distracted by all this
crap that I let a woman who loved
me walk out the door. And I'm not
going to let that happen again.

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Henry, dressed in the clothes he slept in, dials a phone.

HENRY
(into phone)
Hello Carmen?

INT. LECTURE AREA - DAY

Ben wraps it up.

BEN
So I may never get an answer as to
who killed JFK. But I am going to
get a life. And I suggest you all
do the same.

He gathers his things and walks off the stage. Watching him
go, TWO CONSPIRACY FANS (25) in MAGA hats look at each other.

CONSPIRACY FAN

Let's go. If we hurry we can still catch Steve Bannon.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A champagne cork POPS. Ben fills two glasses with bubbly while Becca sits at the counter, grilling him.

BECCA

What I don't understand is how the Warren Commission could dismiss the shots on the audio tape.

BEN

(Shrugging)

Some people think it's a truck back firing.

BECCA

How could it be a truck?

(moving to the diagram)

According to your diagram, there were no trucks at the scene. This is accurate, right?

BEN

Oh yeah. Katie and I went down to Dallas one summer and measured every inch of the site. It was fun.

Ben slices tomatoes for the guacamole he's making. Becca moves back to him.

BECCA

You really miss her don't you?

BEN

Miss who?

BECCA

Katie. You keep mentioning her. And you're making guacamole. Isn't that her recipe?

BEN

It's our recipe. She used to make it with lemon juice. I showed her how to make it with lime juice.

BECCA

So the answer is yes. You miss her.

BEN

Sure. Yeah. I miss her. Sometimes.
But this is not one of those times.
Tonight we're celebrating.

He hands her a champagne glass and raises his in a toast.

BEN

Here's to...new beginnings. Yours
and mine. And in the spirit of new
beginnings there's something I've
been wanting to tell you. Becca.

(the intercom BUZZES)

From the first night I saw you at
the party--

BECCA

Isn't that the door?

BEN

No. It isn't. I mean yes. It is.

(it BUZZES again)

Stay right there. Don't move.

(into the intercom)

Who's there?

EXT. EAST THIRD STREET - NIGHT

Henry stands at the intercom. He looks ruffled and crazed.

HENRY

(into the speaker)

It's Henry. Let me in. Quick!

BEN'S VOICE

(from the speaker)

Could you come back later Henry?

This is a bad time.

HENRY

(into the speaker)

Bad time? Bad time? You want me to
give you the definition of a bad
time?

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Hearing his frantic pal, Ben surrenders.

BEN

(into the speaker)

Sure. Come on up.

(buzzing him in)

It's Henry. He wants to come up and
give us the definition of a bad
time. This'll only take a minute.

INT. HALLWAY OF EGGELHOFF TOWERS - NIGHT

Panting like an animal, Henry rushes to Ben's door and starts pushing the bell like crazy.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ben opens the door and his wild-eyed friend bursts in.

HENRY
Where is he?

BEN
Where is who?

HENRY
Rick!

BEN
He's not here.

HENRY
(searching for him)
Lucy left me a message. She said
Rick was coming over here to start
trouble.

BEN
Coming over here?

HENRY
To start fucking trouble. That's
what she said.
(seeing Becca)
How're ya doin'?

BECCA
Okay. I guess. Champagne?

HENRY
Thanks.

He takes the glass from her and gulps it down.

EXT. HOUSTON STREET - NIGHT

Rick's limo drives off the Williamsburg Bridge.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Rick and Katie ride in back, squabbling.

KATIE
Why can't you tell me what this is
about?

RICK
Trust me. It's important.
(leaning forward)
Step on it, Carlos.

Carlos floors the gas in response.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Henry is pacing and glancing out the window.

BEN
I wish you'd go. We were just about
to have dinner.

HENRY
Well, Lucy tells me you're about to
be interrupted.

BEN
We've already been interrupted.

The intercom BUZZES.

HENRY
There he is! Pretend I'm not here.

BEN
I don't have to pretend. Get out!

Henry darts around looking for a place to hide.

HENRY
Not before I kick his ass!

BEN
You are not going to have a fight
in my living room. You hear me?
(into the intercom)
Rick. Go away. Nobody's home.

EXT. EAST THIRD STREET - NIGHT

Carmen is at the intercom with Steve leaning nearby.

CARMEN
(into the speaker)
It's Carmen and Steve.

BEN (V.O.)
(from the intercom)
What? What are you doing here?

CARMEN
 (into the speaker)
 Henry told us he was going to kick
 Rick's ass. Did we miss it?

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Growing exasperated Ben answers at the speaker box.

BEN
 (into the intercom)
 No. I'm trying to have dinner with
 Becca. Leave us alone.

CARMEN (V.O.)
 (from the speaker)
 She's there? Great. Let us come up.

Becca shoots him a 'pretty please' look.

BEN
 (into the intercom)
 All right. For a minute. Then
 you're leaving. And you're taking
 Henry with you.

Ben BUZZES them in. He sees Henry signing onto his computer.

BEN
 What are you doing?

HENRY
 I'm checking my messages.

BEN
 Why don't you use your phone?

HENRY
 Because I lost it. I don't know
 what I did with it. My Bluetooth is
 gone too. Benjy I'm falling apart.
 I can't eat. I can't sleep. Lucy is
 my whole world. She's part of who I
 am. Henry and Lucy. Lucy and Henry.
 Who am I if I'm not part of Lucy
 and Henry?

BEN
 You're Henry.

HENRY
 (going to pieces)
 I'm nothing. I'm a guy who's been
 wearing the same suit for three
 days and who doesn't know what he
 did with his phones!

Henry breaks down sobbing. Ben grabs him and shakes him.

BEN

Henry. Henry!

(Henry looks at him)

Your Bluetooth is in Steve's office. And I have your phone.

(handing it to him)

Here. Why don't you take it with you into the bathroom? You can check your messages while you clean yourself up.

HENRY

(sniveling)

Yes. I will. Thank you. So much.

Henry moves with the phone into the bathroom. Just then, the front door bell RINGS. Ben moves quickly to Becca.

BEN

Now look. Before I let the rest of Lower Manhattan in here I want to say something.

BECCA

Before you say anything there's something I want to say.

BEN

But what I want to say has to be said.

(the DOORBELL rings again)

Look. We're wasting time. Why don't we just shut up and do this?

BECCA

Do what?

BEN

This.

He takes her in his arms and kisses her. They stand together for a moment and look into each other's eyes.

BEN (CONT'D)

Did you feel that?

BECCA

What?

BEN

Nothing.

BECCA

Yeah. Do you want to try again?

Ben leans forward and kisses her again. They both give it all they've got. Breathlessly finishing, they look at each other.

BECCA (CONT'D)
So much nothing. I'm sorry.

The doorbell RINGS again.

BEN
That's okay. I thought there might be something. But-- DAMN!

Ben yanks the door open, letting Carmen and Steve in.

CARMEN
Hey! How's it going?

BEN
It's not. Hi Steve.

Steve groans and hobbles into the apartment and collapses in a chair. He looks like reheated death.

BEN (CONT'D)
What's the matter with him?

CARMEN
(answering for him)
Poor baby. We both had a little too much to drink last night.

STEVE
A word to the wise. Gin and tequila definitely do not mix.

CARMEN
(greeting Becca)
Hey baby. Where's Henry?

BEN
He's in the bathroom crying. I may join him any minute.
(moving into the kitchen)
And I'm sorry to tell you but there isn't going to be any ass whoopin'.

CARMEN
(following him)
Too bad. I was looking forward to seeing that flaccid fuck get what he deserves.

BECCA
You mean Rick?

CARMEN

Yeah. Last night Steve told me what he said. How he claims he faked an orgasm with me. That fucking redneck and his call waiting cock. He's not a man. He's a fucking vibrator with an asshole attached.

BEN

(raising his glass)
I'll drink to that.

CARMEN

Oooh! Champagne. Can I have some?

She moves to the counter to pour herself a glass. Ben can't stop her. Steve watches in horror.

STEVE

I can't believe you're going to drink more.
(blinking slowly)
Jesus Christ. It actually hurts to blink my eyes.

Steve rests his head on the table. The door suddenly opens and Rick and Katie walk in.

BEN

Katie!

KATIE

(angrily, to Rick)
You son of a bitch! What the hell is this?

RICK

I didn't know there'd be a party.

STEVE

Could you all please lower your voices? I'm not feeling very--

The bathroom door flies open and Henry storms out.

HENRY

A-HA!

STEVE

(holding his head)
Oh no.

HENRY

You bastard! You keep your hands off my wife!

RICK
Calm down asshole. I never touched
your damned wife.

HENRY
(pointing at him)
The hell you didn't! You are a dead
man!

Rick grabs hold of his extended finger and twists it.

HENRY
Ow ow ow! Let go of me!

Henry folds like a cheap umbrella. Rick twists his finger and
flips him face down on the couch.

RICK
I never went near her. If you don't
believe me, call her.

HENRY
No!

RICK
She's at my place. Call her.

HENRY
No.

RICK
You won't call her?

HENRY
I can't!

RICK
Why not?

HENRY
Because I don't have your number.

RICK
Ah Jesus.
(he releases him)
Here. I'll dial it for you.

Rick grabs Henry's phone from him and starts to dial it.

HENRY
(rubbing his finger)
Thank you. I appreciate that.

CARMEN
Henry. Don't back down. You kick
that motherfucker's ass!

RICK
 (dialing)
 Stay out of this Juanita.

CARMEN
 Juanita! Don't you fucking call me
 Juanita.

RICK
 (to Henry)
 Here tough guy. It's ringing.

Rick tosses the phone to Henry. He catches it.

HENRY
 (into phone)
 Hello? Lucy? Honey! Oh. I've missed
 you so much baby. Whatever I did
 I'm sorry. So very sorry.
 (walking into the bedroom)
 What? Did I kick his ass? No. But I
 will if you want me to.

He goes into the bedroom. Meanwhile Katie moves for the door.

RICK
 Where are you going?

KATIE
 I'm leaving. I didn't come here to--

RICK
 Sit down and shut up.

STEVE
 (suffering)
 Would you please stop yelling?

RICK
 Stay out of this Nancy-pants.

CARMEN
 Don't you call him that. You know
 I'm getting pretty sick and tired
 of you. It's time somebody
 straightened you the fuck out.
 (moving toward him)
 First of all, nobody has to fake no
 God damned orgasm with me. And
 second of all Steve is not gay!

RICK
 Who told you that? The Tooth Fairy?

CARMEN
No, smart ass. For your information
Steve and I made love last night.

STEVE
(in agony)
Carmen. Please.

CARMEN
(to Rick)
And not only is he not fucking gay.
He's twice the man you were in bed.
Now I want to hear you apologize to
him. And stop calling him gay!

Steve rises slowly from the table and softly speaks.

STEVE
Uh. Carmen. Actually...I am gay.

CARMEN
What?

STEVE
I said actually I am--

CARMEN
What the fuck did you say?

STEVE
I said I was--

She rushes at him, chasing him around the dining room table.

CARMEN
Did you just fucking say what I
think you fucking said?

STEVE
(running away)
Don't hit me. Please. I thought I
was straight. Really. But I found
out I'm not. Okay?

CARMEN
When the fuck did you find this
out?

STEVE
Last night.

CARMEN
Aaaaaaah!

She rushes at him. Steve runs into the hall closet and closes
the door behind him. Carmen pounds on the door as she rages.

CARMEN

How can you fucking say that? You fucked me and found out you were fucking gay?! That's fucked up! So fucking fucked up.

As she kicks and pounds the door, inside stuff falls from the upper shelf onto Steve's throbbing head.

CARMEN

And you were fucking amazing! How could you be so fucking good and be fucking gay? Unless! While you were fucking me you were thinking of somebody else. Tell me you weren't thinking of someone else!

STEVE (O.S.)

(inside the closet)

I was.

CARMEN

Who?

STEVE (O.S.)

(after a pause)

John Stamos.

CARMEN

Oh my God!

RICK

Well that explains why he was twice the man I was in bed.

The downstairs buzzer BUZZES. Ben moves to the intercom.

BEN

Who the hell is this now?

(into intercom)

Yes?

EXT. EAST THIRD STREET - NIGHT

Carlos is at the intercom. He is standing by the limo parked out front.

CARLOS

(into intercom)

I got a call down here for Mr. Rick. Is his Mother.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ben talks back into the intercom.

BEN
 (into intercom)
 He'll get it on his way out!
 (opening the front door)
 Hit the bricks, Rick.

RICK
 (closing the door)
 Oh no. I'm not going anywhere 'til
 I say what I came here to say.

BEN
 Well I don't want to hear what you
 have to say.

Ben goes back to the kitchen and Rick follows him there.
 During this Steve eases out of the hall closet.

RICK
 Benjy. Listen to me. I feel really
 bad about all that's happened.
 Daddy told me in a dream I should
 confess so I'm gonna confess. I'm
 sorry I busted you and Katie up.

BEN/KATIE
 What?

RICK
 I'm the reason you and Katie broke
 up. And I'm sorry.

KATIE
 You didn't break us up.

RICK
 Yes. I did.

BEN
 No. You didn't.

RICK
 Yes. I did. I came between you two.

BEN
 You can't help it if you're a
 vortex.

RICK
 A what-tex?

BEN
 A vortex. Anyway it wasn't your
 fault. It just happened.

The downstairs buzzer BUZZES again.

RICK

It didn't just happen. I sabotaged your relationship so I could take her away from you.

BEN

And now you've got her. So if you came by to get my blessing, you've got it.

RICK

I didn't come by for your fucking blessing! I came here to try to undo what I did.

BEN

But you didn't do anything.

EXT. EAST THIRD STREET - NIGHT

Carlos is sick of buzzing the door. He moves back to the limo and grabs the phone.

CARLOS

(into the phone)

Hold on, Mrs. Denbo. I'm trying to get him.

He puts the phone down and starts honking the horn.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The HONKING can be heard inside. Rick moves to the window as he continues to talk to Ben.

RICK

What the hell kind of a paranoid are you? I'm telling you I stole her from you. Don't you get it? Do I have to spell it out for you?

(yelling to Carlos)

Will you stop that?

Carlos stops honking. During this, Becca steps up to Rick.

BECCA

Do you mind if I take a crack at this?

RICK

Take a crack at what?

BECCA

I think I can explain this to Ben in a way he'll understand.

RICK
Knock yourself out.

BECCA
Ben, I think what Rick is trying to
tell you is this.
(pointing to Katie)
She's JFK.
(pointing to Ben)
You're Oswald.
(pointing to Rick)
And he's the guy on the grassy
knoll. You thought you killed the
relationship. But he's the one who
pulled the trigger. Do you get it?

BEN
No.

RICK
She's right. She's right. Listen to
what she's saying. Look.

Rick gestures at the diagram on the easel.

EXT. DEALY PLAZA IN DALLAS - DAY

In faded 8mm film, a black convertible limousine (circa 1963)
carrying Katie drive through the plaza.

RICK (V.O.)
Me, grassy knoll guy, always wanted
JFK Katie. I kept hoping you two
would break up.

As the limo passes Rick lurks by the grassy knoll.

Up in the window of the Texas Book Depository Ben struggles
to assemble a high powered rifle.

RICK (V.O.)
But you, Oswald, hung in there a
long time. So I had to help things
along.

As the limo approaches Rick pulls out a gun and takes aim at
Katie in the back seat.

RICK (V.O.)
See? You think you killed JFK. But
the second gunman did it. Me!

Rick pulls the trigger. BANG!

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Listening to this, Ben isn't buying it.

BEN

No. No way. I've had it with all these theories. There was only one gunman. Me!

INT. TEXAS BOOK DEPOSITORY - DAY

In the faded 8mm film, Ben expertly assembles the rifle and aims out the window at the car passing through the plaza.

BEN (V.O.)

Oswald wanted to kill JFK. He wanted him dead!

Ben takes aim at Katie and squeezes off a shot. BANG!

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Outraged, Katie jumps to her feet.

KATIE

Can everybody please stop talking about shooting and killing me? It's creeping me out.

BEN

Sorry.

(to Rick)

The point is I'm the one who killed this relationship. Not you.

BECCA

Ben. You told me yourself that Oswald was a patsy. That he was brainwashed.

(pointing to Rick)

By people in the government who wanted the President dead.

CARMEN

Is anybody following this?

BEN

You're telling me that Rick brainwashed me?

RICK

I talked you down to yourself.

BEN

Why?

RICK

Because I wanted Katie. I thought we'd be good together. But she doesn't want me. Hell. She doesn't even like me. She wants you.

Carlos honks the horn downstairs.

BEN

(putting it together)
So you came between us. By dropping in all the time and telling me we weren't right for each other.

RICK

Right.

Ben glares at Rick. He is trembling with anger.

BEN

You are such a lousy brother!

CARMEN

Will somebody please kick his fucking ass? NOW?!

Carlos honks the horn again. Rick moves to the window.

RICK

Stop blowing that horn!

EXT. EAST THIRD STREET - NIGHT

Carlos hollers back up at him.

CARLOS

Come down here and talk to your Mommy.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Supremely annoyed, Rick heads for the door.

RICK

Everybody stay put. I'll be right back.

As Rick heads out Becca moves to Ben.

BEN

(putting it together)
He broke us up. My own brother. And I let him do it.

BECCA

More important, I think you're still in love with Katie. That's what I was trying to tell you earlier. Before we kissed.

KATIE

You kissed her?

BEN

I had to be sure there wasn't something there. Hey! You should talk. You played 'Name That Food' with my big brother.

CARMEN

What's 'Name That Food?'

STEVE

I'll tell you later.

CARMEN

I'm not talking to you.

Carmen walks over toward the window.

EXT. EAST THIRD STREET - NIGHT

Rick comes out of the building and confronts Carlos.

RICK

Stop blowing the horn. And hang up that phone.

CARLOS

(holding out the phone)
Here. Talk to her.

Rick takes the phone from him and hangs up.

RICK

Do like you're told or you're fired.

CARLOS

The way you treat people. You disgust me.

Enraged Carlos shoves Rick and they begin fighting.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

From up in Ben's window Carmen watches them tussle.

CARMEN

Oh yeah! Here we go.
 (yelling to the others)
 Hey everybody. The driver's beating
 the shit out of Rick!

Becca moves to the window. Steve hobbles over as well. Katie is left standing with Ben.

KATIE

Nothing happened with me and your
 brother. We just-- it was a
 mistake.

BEN

It's okay. I think after we broke
 up we both went a little nuts. I
 thought I was in love with Becca
 and you fell into the clutches of
 my brother, the vortex. And neither
 one of us felt anything. Do you
 know what that means?

KATIE

I don't know. That I'm Ted Kennedy
 and this is Chappaquidick?

BEN

No. It means we belong together.

KATIE

Except for one thing. You never
 loved me.

BEN

I always did. I just never told
 you.

EXT. THIRD STREET - NIGHT

Back outside the driver is pounding Rick pretty badly. He punches him hard and knocks him to the pavement.

CARLOS

I can't work for a man who hangs up
 on his Mommy.

Carlos throws the car keys down at him and walks off.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Carmen, Steve and Becca are watching from above.

CARMEN

You tell him, driver man!

Henry steps out of the bedroom, still talking on the phone, only now he's cooing like a dove.

HENRY
(into phone)
I don't know sweetie. It sounds like they're fighting.

BEN
Honestly Katie, if I knew that telling you how I felt would be the difference between being with you and not being with you then I'd tell you every hour of every day.

HENRY
(into the phone)
Hold on. I think Ben's trying to tell Katie he loves her.

BEN
But I never said it because I let the moment get away.

During this Carmen, Steve and Becca see what's happening.

BEN (CONT'D)
(to Katie)
I should've told you I loved you when I had the chance. I just wish I could take that moment back and tell you now. If I thought it would make a difference I would.

CARMEN
For God sake Ben, say it!

BEN
Say what?

BECCA
Tell her you love her.

BEN
What? You mean now?

CARMEN/STEVE/BECCA
YES!

BEN
Katie. I love you. I always have and I always will.

HENRY
(into phone)
He said he loves her.

KATIE

I love you too, Ben.

HENRY

(into phone)

She said she loves him too.

(Katie steps toward him)

She's walking toward him.

(Ben holds open his arms)

He's opening his arms. I think they're going to kiss.

(Katie stops)

Now she stopped. She's looking at me. She looks like she's going to say something.

KATIE

Henry. Will you please shut up?

HENRY

(into phone)

She told me to shut up. Oh. You heard?

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ben opens the front door and addresses the crowd inside.

BEN

All right. All of you. Out. Now.

BECCA

(exiting)

Good night. Thanks again for all your help.

Henry walks out, still talking on the phone.

HENRY

(into phone)

We're all being thrown out. I'll meet you near Rick's place. On the corner of White and Sixth Avenue. By the subway. All right, baby.

(he hangs up)

She'll never find it.

Carmen follows Henry out. Steve is walking with her.

STEVE

Carmen, I'm so sorry about what happened. Can you ever find it in your warm, generous, talented heart to forgive me?

CARMEN
 I'll think about it.
 (to Katie and Ben)
 Good night you two.

Before she goes she turns back and addresses Steve.

CARMEN (CONT'D)
 Come on stud. I need a drink.

Smiling, Steve joins her and they leave together.

INT. BEN AND KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ben closes the door and locks it. He then moves to Katie and kisses her. After a moment keys rattle in the lock and the front door opens. It's a badly battered and bruised Rick.

RICK
 Oh. Hey you two. Becca told me what happened. I'm so glad that you're back together. And I promise I'll do whatever I can to--

BEN
 Rick?

RICK
 Yeah?

BEN
 Keys?

Rick hands the keys to Ben. As he backs out of the room Ben kicks the door shut with a SLAM! He looks at Katie.

Nostrils flaring, she sweeps the counter full of food onto the floor with a CRASH. Ben rushes to her, and passionately kisses her. SOME ENCHANTED EVENING begins to play.

INT. GREAT JONES CAFE - NIGHT

Steve and Carmen enter and find Carlos having a drink at the bar. They both congratulate him on his superior ass whoopin' skills. SOME ENCHANTED EVENING continues playing over this.

EXT. CORNER OF WHITE AND SIXTH AVENUE - NIGHT

Henry emerges from the subway and is amazed to find Lucy there waiting for him.

HENRY
 You did it! You found it! Oh baby--

LUCY
(firmly)
Henry. Please to knock off with the
'baby'. Okay?

HENRY
Okay.

He takes her in his arms and kisses her. The love song continues to play under.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Rick is behind the wheel driving. Becca sits in back musing aloud about a variety of subjects.

BECCA
You know what I think? I think you probably use sex as a way to fill the void left in you after you lost your Dad.

RICK
(sighing to himself)
Another talker.

The song continues to play.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - NIGHT

A TV show starring John Stamos is playing on cable. Seated watching it is Carmen, dressed in her sweats and eating a pint of ice cream. She chuckles, cynically, to herself.

CARMEN
Christ. The two best fucks I ever had. One of them was faking it and the other one is gay. What a God damned week.

The song continues to play.

INT. SOHO BEDROOM - NIGHT

Carlos is lying naked in bed. Curled up, spooning him from behind is Steve. Both men are smiling as they peacefully snooze. SOME ENCHANTED EVENING plays under.

INT. BEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In bed, Ben and Katie lay in each other's arms.

KATIE
You weren't just saying it because all our friends were there?

BEN
No. Really. I love you.

KATIE
You mean it? You swear?

BEN
I swear.

KATIE
Swear on your mother's underwear.

BEN
I swear on my mother's underwear.
I love you.

Ben holds Katie close. He closes his eyes, at peace. Katie's remain open.

KATIE
So how do you feel about marriage?

Startled, Ben's eyes reopen. The song concludes.

THE END