

**KLIEG LIGHT**

Written by  
Jeffrey Gold

Jeffrey Gold  
213.787.6077  
jeffreyfgold@gmail.com

**EXT. MALIBU, CALIFORNIA (PRESENT) - DAY**

Morning fog drools over Malibu in a way we've never seen it: ghostly tendrils glide silently past beachside palaces and slowly pour themselves into the Pacific.

The serenity is interrupted by the garish electronica of "Hello Again" (The Cars) and...

A speeding white Mercedes coupe threading its way in and out of traffic like a drug-addled tailor working to deadline...

Driving in the turning lane, passing backed-up traffic...

Merging back into traffic at the last minute and...

Slamming on the brakes and barely skidding to a stop—almost hitting an old woman perambulating with a cane.

A few pedestrians on the crosswalk witness the spectacle, outraged.

Fact is, it's way over the line.

The old woman continues to sloth her way across the road.

Inside the coupe: MARTIN KLIEG, a washed-up former Hollywood star. Full of himself. Stuck in the 80s. Oblivious. Bachelor.

He's seen better days. If he shaved, it would cut only a month off whatever age he is pretending to be.

In the lane next to him, the labored whir of a car window lowering...

**INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS**

...until the window is fully absorbed into the door.

The DRIVER casually rests his arm in the open window.

Relaxed, he looks over...

DRIVER

Can I ask you a question?

Martin looks over. Knows the question. Turns down the music.

MARTIN

Yes I am.

Prepared to ask one thing, but having to change it...

DRIVER

What?

MARTIN

Yes, I'm Martin Klieg.

DRIVER

That wasn't my question.

MARTIN

It wasn't?

DRIVER

(nodding at the  
Mercedes)

What made you choose white?

MARTIN

Why?

DRIVER

All the pricks who think they own  
the road usually drive black.

Martin attempts to ignore him.

The old woman has finally finished struggling across the  
zebras.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

I think you can go now.

Still engaging him, but hating himself for it...

MARTIN

(incredulous)

Sure.

DRIVER

Yeah. Know how I know?

Can't help himself...

MARTIN

(incredulous)

How?

DRIVER

'Cause the light hasn't changed yet,  
asshole.

When the light does change, he speeds away, leaving Martin  
in the dust.

**INT. CAA (CONFERENCE ROOM) - DAY**

Young agent types pour into the room and settle into Herman-Miller chairs around the long table. The HEAD AGENT is already been seated.

HEAD AGENT

Where's Voss?

AGENT 1

That dinosaur? Probably soaking in formaldehyde.

AGENT 2

(off Agent 1)

Why are we keeping him around, again?

The HEAD AGENT gives him a look.

AGENT 1

(turns to Agent 2,  
whispers)

I don't remember, do museums pay you  
or do you pay them?

AGENT 2

(whispers)

I think it depends.

Twelve agents are seated around the table when CARLETON VOSS enters.

AGENT 1

Talking about Depends...

Carleton is a grandfatherly type in his 70s still trying to swim with the sharks.

HEAD AGENT

Go ahead and take a seat, Carleton.

CARLETON

That's what I was planning on doing.

AGENT 1

What? I can't hear you. You're gonna  
have to boost your hearing aid.

CARELTON

What?

Carleton reaches for his ear, slowly realizes he's being fucked with.

CARELTON (CONT'D)

One doesn't have anything...to do  
with the other.

The young agents all laugh, having gotten the better of him.

HEAD AGENT

Walpole is working with Cruise on  
the new Jack Reacher, Carleton. What  
are you working on?

CARLETON

I'm meeting with Heidelberg for his  
Johnny Fanfare.

AGENT 3

How did you score that?

HEAD AGENT

Too small of a budget for my taste.  
Besides, scuttlebutt is that Beaulieu  
already set that up at Endeavor.

AGENT 2

That's...like an indie, right?

AGENT 1

Who were you trying to get?

**INT. MALIBU BEACH HOUSE - LATER**

Hot twenty-something clones everywhere—some in bathing suits,  
others in summer business attire consisting of blinding white  
tieless shirts and ass-crease short leather skirts.

Martin, wearing swim trunks, relaxes on a chaise longue  
dragged into the house. Girls are hovering all around,  
touching him as they walk by.

MARTIN

Flash them to me again.

VALERIE, a stunning redhead—a Pippi Longstocking in a school  
girl outfit—is standing in front of him, loose blouse.

VALERIE

Here's the original, black on white  
and...Pull!... White on black. Pull!

MARTIN

Pull! So aggressive. I love it.

On a projection screen, we see the letters: Martin Klieg.  
The font choice is impeccable.

Another girl changes the slides.

Now we see the letters: Martyn Klieg.

Using a red laser pointer...

VALERIE

Next slide!

MARTIN

(obnoxious)

Pull!

The projector flashes: Mäertin Klieg.

Martin sits up.

VALERIE

Let's go to the Bembo!

MARTIN

Yeah. Let's.

VALERIE

Bembo is a font, Martin.

The projector flashes: Martein Klieg.

MARTIN

Oh.

VALERIE

Next slide!

Now displaying: Martyn da Klieg

MARTIN

Which one would make you go out with me?

VALERIE

I think a combination of Martein and da Klieg?

MARTIN

I don't know. The "da" sounds like a "the" from the hood.

VALERIE

But it's hip with the young demographic.

MARTIN

Young is good.

**EXT. CAA, CENTURY CITY - LATER**

Martin's coupe squeals into the front of CAA headquarters like an idiot on fire, inserting between two parked SUVs, using the momentum to swing the coupe's ass into place.

Quite the spectacle—halting everyone in whatever they are doing.

He gets out, looks up at the glass cathedral of intimidation, and throws a scrunched energy drink can at some recent GRAD with a clipboard and heads toward the main entrance.

GRAD

You can't park there, sir.

MARTIN

Tell me, when's the last time it was used?

GRAD

I wouldn't know, sir.

MARTIN

It's only for show.  
(confiding)  
Think CAA would ever hire someone who needs that space?

GRAD

(teachable moment)  
It's for clients who are handicapped, sir.

MARTIN

Who? Golfers?

The doors swing open for him.

**INT. RECEPTION DESK, CAA - SAME**

Martin passes the main reception desk, expecting to be waved through.

Noticing that security is not going to let that happen, he doubles back.

The receptionist, JUSTINE (mid 30s), is total marriage material. She's cool, not cold, but Martin will tax this.

JUSTINE

Hello. Do you have an appointment?

Laying it on thick...

MARTIN

Listen, honey, I don't need an appointment.

JUSTINE

Sorry. I can't let you in without one.

MARTIN

No exceptions?

JUSTINE

None at all.

MARTIN

Why not?

JUSTINE

(confiding)

I would get fired, sir.

MARTIN

If they find out you kept me out, they'll fire you for sure.

JUSTINE

I can get fired your way or I can get fired my way.

MARTIN

If you do it my way, you can still put this place on your resume and talk about me at cocktail parties.

Martin winks and smiles like he just gave her genuine career advice.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

You're single, aren't you?

JUSTINE

That's an odd non sequitur.

MARTIN

I love how you use big words.

JUSTINE

I love how you use tiny ones.

MARTIN

Aren't you a little old to be a receptionist at CAA?



JUSTINE

They warned me you would be incredibly charming.

MARTIN

Glad it's working.

JUSTINE

Is it in stealth mode? Perceptible only to people wearing night vision goggles or those who can hear dog whistles?

Martin has no comeback.

JUSTINE (CONT'D)

Let me guess, you probably thought you had me at "honey."

CARLETON (O.S.)

Martin!

Saved!

Martin turns around and walks away from the desk. He sees CARLETON.

Carleton is a bit surprised at Martin's "new" look.

CARLETON (CONT'D)

Preparing for a role you didn't tell me about?

MARTIN

Apparently that's your job. You're not returning my calls?

CARLETON

Is that a question or a statement?

MARTIN

You're redirecting. Who's that girl?

CARLETON

Why? Which question do you want me to answer first? I have some really hot clients right now.

(looks)

Vanessa.

(looks; correcting)

Justine.

MARTIN

Should I let you go?

CARLETON

You know the old saying...the minute you get an agent, start looking for a new one.

MARTIN

Talking about a new one, I'm thinking about changing my name.

CARLETON

Whatever you do, don't choose a symbol. It's been tried.

MARTIN

I'm thinking about changing the "i" to a "y."

CARLETON

In Klieg?

MARTIN

Don't be daft.

CARLETON

And what's that gonna do?

MARTIN

Rejuvenate my career.

CARLETON

You're gonna need to change a lot more than your name, much less a single vowel.

MARTIN

"Y" is not a vowel.

CARLETON

Yeah, but the "i" is. You see?

Martin takes him aside...

MARTIN

Can we go up to your office? I don't wanna negotiate here.

CARLETON

What are we negotiating?

Seeing Martin reduced, he glances at his watch...

CARLETON (CONT'D)

Let me buy you lunch.

Martin brightens at the idea...

MARTIN

Okay.

This is not lost on Carleton.

**EXT. RESTAURANT - LATER**

The first hint of vulnerability...

MARTIN

Three years.

CARLETON

I know.

MARTIN

You're my agent, tell me what you can do for me.

CARLETON

I'm also your manager.

Thinking he might win some points...

MARTIN

Then tell it to me twice.

CARLETON

I keep on telling you: get a new manager. I'll still be your agent.

Seeing Martin being genuine...

CARLETON (CONT'D)

Nobody wants to work with you. You've burned so many bridges they've stopped using the ones that are still standing...out of fear you've presoaked them in gasoline.

MARTIN

I wanna come back.

CARLETON

I couldn't even get you a commercial with GoDaddy because Danica Patrick was afraid you would try to hit on her.

MARTIN

What about Axe?

CARLETON

You mean the deodorant?

(MORE)

CARLETON (CONT'D)  
The Creative Director thought you  
would be too controversial.

MARTIN  
What?

CARLETON  
You've become a liability instead of  
a likability.

MARTIN  
Is that the new buzzword?

CARLETON  
No, head trauma is. Try to be nice.

MARTIN  
And how long would I have to do that?

Carleton's friendly demeanor erodes.

**EXT. MALIBU BEACH HOUSE - LATER**

Martin waits for a gate to swing open, and zips onto the  
cobblestone driveway.

CARLETON (V.O.)  
The fact that you had to ask does  
not instill a lot of confidence.

MARTIN (V.O.)  
I wanna work.

CARLETON (V.O.)  
I know.

MARTIN (V.O.)  
I'm bored.

CARLETON (V.O.)  
I know.

MARTIN (V.O.)  
I feel like I have nothing.

A long pause.

MARTIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Hello?

A beat.

CARLETON (V.O.)  
What you need is a special kind of  
chiropractor.

MARTIN (V.O.)  
I'd rather have a masseuse?

CARLETON (V.O.)  
To stroke your ego? No, I think you  
need a major adjustment.

**INT. CARLETON'S OFFICE, CAA - NEW DAY**

Carleton listens to a SCREENWRITER pitch...

SCREENWRITER  
How about A Room With a View meets  
Jurassic Park?

CARLETON  
Wouldn't work. There would be an  
awkward genre change after the  
dinosaurs finish dining on the Ivory  
heroine and her Merchant lover.

CUT TO:

**INT. ELEVATOR, CAA - NEW DAY**

Walking into an elevator...

CAA INTERN  
How about a Dune remake?... This  
time from the Worm's perspective.

CARLETON  
The only interesting thing about  
worms is they have ten hearts. And  
given the rejections they get from  
Hollywood, they'll use up every single  
one of them.

The doors close.

CUT TO:

**INT. SPAGO'S - NEW DAY**

Over lunch...

BRIT PRODUCER  
How about we get Richard Curtis to  
write a follow-up to that Hugh Grant-  
(MORE)

BRIT PRODUCER (CONT'D)  
 Andy McDowell vehicle. It's decades  
 later.

CARLETON  
 You mean Four Funerals and a Wedding?

BRIT PRODUCER  
 Right! Some of his friends push on,  
 but we finally get to see that bloody  
 wedding!

**INT. CARLETON'S OFFICE, CAA - NEW DAY**

HEIDELBERG (40s) is a lanky, insecure German director  
 type—someone who as a kid got beaten up by other kids in  
 full sight of the adults. He hides behind his pretentious,  
 black, square-frame "designer" glasses—trying to look like  
 a young Nichols or Scorsese.

CARLETON  
 Tell me about the project.

HEIDELBERG  
 You want me to pitch?

Going with it...

HEIDELBERG (CONT'D)  
 Picture this: The stock market  
 collapses.

CARLETON  
 Again?

HEIDELBERG  
 It's 1929. Think Dust Bowl. Think  
Grapes of Wrath.

CARLETON  
 Comedy is good.

Ignoring his comment...

HEIDELBERG  
 It's the story about a poor family  
 who maintain their dignity amidst  
 the worst of conditions.

CARLETON  
 So, The Plow that Broke the Plains  
 kind of thing. Dorothea Lange  
 territory. Threadbare existence.

HEIDELBERG

The father is a worn-out guy in his early forties going on his late fifties. Principled. A majestic everyman. The kind of guy who would serve in a bread line rather than stand in one.

CARLETON

What's the title?

HEIDELBERG

The working title is The Forgotten Man.

CARLETON

That'll need a new vision. Budget?

HEIDELBERG

5 mil.

Waiting for his reaction...

HEIDELBERG (CONT'D)

Who can we afford?

CARLETON

Nobody.

HEIDELBERG

That's what they always say, but everyone always needs work.

CARLETON

With the volume of work being thrown our way...

HEIDELBERG

Alright, who can you throw at me?

An idea.

CARLETON

I've got an actor perfect for the role.

HEIDELBERG

Who?

CARLETON

The biggest star you can afford right now.

HEIDELBERG

Who?

CARLETON

Martin.

HEIDELBERG

Sheen? Sheen would be great.

Carleton lets him linger in that moment for a second...

CARLETON

No, Klieg. Martin Klieg.

As if he just tasted sour milk...

HEIDELBERG

Klieg? Are you fucking kidding me?

CARLETON

What's the problem?

HEIDELBERG

He's an asshole. And he's not bankable.

CARLETON

Half this town would have to shut down if we stopped working with assholes. Which of the two is more important to you?

HEIDELBERG

Both. You're joking, right?

CARLETON

No. Martin can do this role.

HEIDELBERG

This is a significant, sensitive role with Oscar written all over it.

CARLETON

Klieg is still your best choice, at any budget.

HEIDELBERG

Klieg is about as subtle as someone who takes a dump in a public fountain.

CARLETON

You can afford him right now. Give him a chance.

HEIDELBERG

But he hasn't done anything for years. What was the last thing he did?



CARLETON  
 He's hungry for good work.  
 (beat)  
 Consider it.

Heidelberg reluctantly agrees, against his better judgement.

CARLETON (CONT'D)  
 (not convinced, but a  
 good actor)  
 You won't regret it.

Carleton closes his day planner, and turns his back to Heidelberg.

HEIDELBERG  
 But we would want to meet with him  
 first.

CARLETON  
 (taken by surprise,  
 but recovering)  
 Done and done.

HEIDELBERG  
 I only asked for one thing.

CARLETON  
 What?

HEIDELBERG  
 You said "done and done."

CARLETON  
 It's an expression.

Heidelberg doesn't know how to react to that.

CARLETON (CONT'D)  
 (waves it off)  
 Inflation.

Heidelberg is left hanging.

**INT. SWIMMING POOL, BEAULIEU MANSION - LATER**

BEAULIEU (late 50s) is your moneyed executive producer type who has the presence and heft of a J.T. Walsh. When he enters a room, the temperature changes—sometimes for the worse.

HEIDELBERG (V.O.)  
 Klieg.

BEAULIEU

Martin Klieg? That washed-up schmuck?  
I'll call Carleton.

HEIDELBERG (V.O.)

I already agreed to meet with him.

BEAULIEU

Damn...lemme think. We'll give him  
such an obstacle course, he'll back  
out quietly.

HEIDELBERG (V.O.)

Who gives a fuck? Can't we just say  
we're going another direction?

BEAULIEU

And get your name crossed of his  
Christmas list? No way. We'd lose  
our access...and credibility. Look,  
we already put up with that three-  
legged Siberian sheepshit  
screenwriter, let's just say that  
he's the one requiring people to go  
through all kinds of hoops to be  
considered for the role.

HEIDELBERG (V.O.)

Torture the hell out of him?

BEAULIEU

You got it. Let's think of something  
that *has-been* would never agree to  
do, and after he self-eliminates,  
then we'll go back fishing with  
Carleton again. It will look really  
loyal when we come back, and then  
you can insist that you never thought  
of approaching any other agent...blah,  
blah, blah...He'll eat that up with  
a big soup spoon.

HEIDELBERG (V.O.)

He offered Klieg and then closed his  
day planner, just like you said he  
would.

BEAULIEU

Day planner, huh?

**INT. BOUTIQUE, BEVERLY HILLS - DAY**

Martin hovers inside a boutique entrance. In short order, a  
sales GIRL is looking him over--a high-maintenance doll.

He's about to walk away...

GIRL  
Aren't you Martin Klieg?

MARTIN  
Yeah. Have we...you know...before?

GIRL  
From the movies. Can I show you something?

MARTIN  
Go ahead.

GIRL  
Naw, I mean is there something you would like to see?

MARTIN  
(spontaneously)  
Do you have shawls?

He has to prompt her to proceed. He follows.

She stops in front of the display...

GIRL  
Cashmere and Alpaca.

Hands him one.

Looking as if she's expecting him to propose...

MARTIN  
Would you like to go out sometime?

GIRL  
Sure.

MARTIN  
How about tonight?

GIRL  
Sure.

MARTIN  
How about seven thirty?

GIRL  
Sure.

**INT. CAA (CONFERENCE ROOM) - NIGHT**

The meeting is already in progress.

HEAD AGENT

I want to get out of here. What projects need packaging?

AGENT 1

Carleton?

HEAD AGENT

Matthew McConaughey is available, isn't that right?

AGENT 3

Yeah. Matt's schedule is opening up.

CARLETON

I was thinking someone more...

AGENT 2

Who?

CARELTON

I'm trying to get...

HEAD AGENT

You're not going to try to push...

CARELTON

Marti...

HEAD AGENT

Don't say it!

CARLETON

Martin Klieg.

AGENT 1

WTF, Carleton? Are you trying to red light this picture?

AGENT 2

Redlight, or redline?

The Head Agent tries to calm Agent 2.

HEAD AGENT

Exactly how confident are you about that choice, Carleton?

CARLETON  
 (sensing this is about  
 his job)  
 I feel very comfortable...

HEAD AGENT  
 I wasn't asking how comfortable you  
 feel, Carleton. I was asking how  
 confident you are in your choice.

AGENT 1  
 Matthew McConaughey is available.

CARLETON  
 I'm very confident that Martin has  
 the sensitivity to play this role.

AGENT 2  
 A stoic individual.

HEAD AGENT  
 So, he's ready to play in the sandbox  
 again?

CARLETON  
 Absolutely.

HEAD AGENT  
 No more shenanigans.

CARLETON  
 There's nothing to indicate otherwise.

HEAD AGENT  
Full confidence, then.

CARLETON  
 (convincingly, but  
 acting)  
 Full confidence.

**INT. DAN TANA'S RESTAURANT, MELROSE - NIGHT**

Martin, wearing a shawl, and his date, GIRL, are sitting at  
 a corner table, finishing what must have been a grueling  
 meal...

GIRL  
 Have you met other famous people?

MARTIN  
 I met Kevin Kline once when he was  
 president of the United States.

GIRL  
 (oblivious)  
 Love his dresses. How about Brad  
 Pitt?

MARTIN  
 The one who launched World War Z?

GIRL  
 I thought he was trying to stop World  
 War Z.

MARTIN  
 It depends on the side of the screen.  
 Looking at her phone.

GIRL  
 Wow.  
 Trying to keep the conversation going...

MARTIN  
 I met an interesting girl this morning  
 at CAA.

GIRL  
 (texting, not paying  
 attention)  
 Is she a spy?

MARTIN  
 Not CIA.

GIRL  
 Are you into threesomes?

MARTIN  
 I don't think she's the kind of girl  
 who would be into that. I kind of...

GIRL  
 Is she a dyke?

MARTIN  
 ...respect that. The problem with  
 threesomes is that one of the girls  
 always feels left out. It's a real  
 juggling act.

GIRL  
 I didn't know you juggled. My cousin  
 knows how to juggle.

He motions for the waiter.

MARTIN

What do you say we blow this joint?

GIRL

Sure. Your place or mine?

MARTIN

How about both? I'll drop you off.

**INT. CIRRUS SR20 SINGLE ENGINE AIRCRAFT - NEW DAY**

By appearances it looks like Martin is in his car. On his cell...

CARLETON (V.O.)

I had a meeting with a director. He would like to meet you first.

MARTIN

Why?

CARLETON (V.O.)

What do you mean, why?

Now we realize Martin is inside an aircraft, manning the yoke.

MARTIN

Who is the director?

CARLETON (V.O.)

Jürgen von Heidelberg.

MARTIN

Who?

CARLETON (V.O.)

The hottest director out of Germany right now.

MARTIN

Did he ask for me?

CARLETON (V.O.)

Does it matter?

(beat)

He hadn't heard of you.

MARTIN

How young is this guy?

CARLETON (V.O.)

Probably just out of film school.

MARTIN

You mean to tell me that all of this happened because I dropped by your office last month?

CARLETON

It's just a lucky coincidence.

MARTIN

Maybe I should stop by more often.

**INT. CARLETON'S OFFICE, CAA - CONTINUOUS**

CARLETON

What did you say, Martin? You're breaking up.

MARTIN (V.O.)

I doubt it. I'm right above you in the same coverage area.

CARLETON

What?

MARTIN (V.O.)

I can see your office from here.

(beat)

Wave!

Carleton walks over to the window.

CARLETON

What? Where are you?

MARTIN (V.O.)

About fifteen hundred feet above you.

CARLETON

I need you back on Earth.

**INT. CARLETON'S OFFICE, CAA - NEW DAY**

CARLETON

Now, when we go in there, let me do the talking. Just answer questions they ask you directly.

MARTIN

Who's in there?

CARLETON

Tell them you are intensely interested in the role.

(MORE)



CARLETON (CONT'D)  
Von Heidelberg and Beaulieu, the  
executive producer. Stay on script.  
Okay, let's go.

They enter.

CARLETON (CONT'D)  
Jürgen, I'd like you to meet Martin.  
(shakes Jürgen's hand)  
Martin: Jürgen Heidelberg and Robert  
Beaulieu.

MARTIN  
(shakes, lingers)  
Robert?

Carleton closes his eyes, bracing himself.

BEAULIEU  
That's right.

MARTIN  
Isn't Bob short for Robert?

BEAULIEU  
Yes, it is.

MARTIN  
So that doesn't really make any sense.  
What do people call you?

BEAULIEU  
They call me Robert.

MARTIN  
Not Bob?

BEAULIEU  
Not Bob.

MARTIN  
And not Rob?

BEAULIEU  
And not Rob.

An awkward pause calling for intervention...

CARLETON  
Now that we have the introductions  
out of the way, let's get down to  
brass tacks.

HEIDELBERG

Brass tacks?

CARLETON

Another American expression, Jergan.

HEIDELBERG

Jürgen. At Carleton's insistence, we're considering you for the role of Johnny Fanfare.

BEAULIEU

If you were given the sides, you've seen the writing. Tedious as hell. The writer, Fitzgerald de Havilland, he's a...

HEIDELBERG

(off Beaulieu)

...A method writer.

BEAULIEU

When we agreed to do the project, the writer, who has considerable power...like all writers do... had a number of stipulations before he would relinquish control of the project to us—to which we agreed.

CARLETON

One of those writers itching to direct.

BEAULIEU

You can see it in the script. Camera directions everywhere: angle ons, rack focuses, tilts and pans—you name it. Anyway, he wants the actors to go through some experiential shit...consider it a formality.

CARLETON

What are you suggesting?

HEIDELBERG

He would want Martin...or whoever is chosen for the role...to do some field research.

BEAULIEU

Now, this may be beneath you, so we understand if you would like to withdraw...

CARLETON

You want him to live with poor people?

BEAULIEU

Remember, this is coming from the writer who has some kind of idée fixe about...

HEIDELBERG

(off Beaulieu)

...authenticity.

MARTIN

Destitute people? People in the streets?

BEAULIEU

God no, just poor people. What we're looking for here is a kind of noble savage...

HEIDELBERG

(off Beaulieu)

...who shops at Walmart...

BEAULIEU

(off Heidelberg)

...except there was no Walmart in 1931.

HEIDELBERG

(off Beaulieu)

Right.

CARLETON

What do you suggest?

BEAULIEU

We'll leave it up to you, Carleton. Whatever you decide.

**INT. CARLETON'S OFFICE, CAA - NEW DAY**

Martin plops on the seat. Pouting.

MARTIN

Since when does the screenwriter have influence? Have I been away that long?

CARLETON

That's better fiction than the book.

MARTIN

I checked. No other actor is being made to go through this bullshit.

CARLETON

That's because they've already been cast.

MARTIN

I've got to do this and then what? Audition?

An ASSISTANT walks over to Carleton.

CARLETON

It's a possibility.

(to Assistant)

I want you to place an ad in a few local community rags and get Matt to help you set up the video interviews with the families...just don't put "poor family" in the copy...we'll need to be a little more sagacious...put average...no...put "normal family," and then we'll choose from those who respond.

ASSISTANT

Yes, sir.

The Assistant hightails it out of there.

CARLETON

(to Martin)

You're the one who wants to be back in the game.

(after Assistant)

Run the copy by me before it goes out.

ASSISTANT (O.S.)

Yes, sir.

CARLETON

(to Martin)

This new generation can't write or spell.

MARTIN

They're doing this to get me to drop out.

CARLETON

Certainly.

MARTIN

Man.

CARLETON

Fact is, Beaulieu doesn't want you...but you can show them you own this. Depends on how badly you want it.

MARTIN

I could go through this whole thing and end up with nothing.

CARLETON

Also a possibility. Just let me know what you decide before I pull the trigger.

**EXT/INT. CARLETON'S HOME - NEW DAY**

Martin walks up to the door, rings. PHOEBE VOSS, a well-preserved matron opens the door, wielding a butcher's knife. She looks surprised to see him, then almost feeling sorry for him...

PHOEBE

Martin.

MARTIN

What are you doing, Phoebe?

Realizing the knife in her hand...

PHOEBE

Preparing dinner.

She hugs him.

PHOEBE (CONT'D)

Come on in.

Martin enters while Phoebe dashes into the kitchen. The home is modest, but gemütlich.

PHOEBE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Go on. Carleton's in the backyard. Want to stay for dinner?

Assessing the silence...

PHOEBE (CONT'D)

Stay for dinner.

Martin shuffles into the kitchen, unconfident. While preparing dinner...

MARTIN

How are you?

Through the windows, Martin watches Carleton feeding koi fish in a pond.

PHOEBE

Oh, you know how it is: I could complain but nobody listens.

(beat)

This new project sounds amazing, Martin. Perfect for you. What are they calling it now?

MARTIN

The Arid Hunger of Silence.

PHOEBE

Poetic. I think you will do a great job.

MARTIN

I won't be doing it.

She stops what she is doing, turns around.

PHOEBE

What?

MARTIN

I don't think it's right for me.

PHOEBE

Of course it is. What are you talking about?

MARTIN

I just came by to tell Carleton in person.

PHOEBE

Carleton is not doing this because he needs the money. You know that, right? He believes in you, Martin. Is it confidence?

MARTIN

(feigned incredulity)

No.

PHOEBE

This is his swan song, Martin. He's been threatening to retire. I haven't seen him this excited in a long time.

MARTIN

To retire?

PHOEBE

No. This project. With you, dummy!

Martin looks back up, now looking guilt-tripped.

PHOEBE (CONT'D)

I know you won't let him down.

Returns to her cooking...

PHOEBE (CONT'D)

(genuine)

But, what I am I saying? It's your decision. You gotta do what's right for you.

...leaving him alone with that thought.

**INT. CAA - NEW DAY**

A pair of hands is handed a newspaper clipping.

CARLETON

"Live with a major Hollywood star! Seeking a normal family to host a major Hollywood actor in Los Angeles. Now is your opportunity to pamper your favorite star in your own home. Apply now for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Call 1-800-4-HACTOR."

Carleton looks up from his desk.

CARLETON (CONT'D)

Hactor?

INTERN 1

Hollywood actor.

INTERN 2

It was the only thing available.

CARLETON

Makes him sound like a slasher or a hack. Where's the mention of Martin?

INTERN 1

Did you catch the asterisk below?

CARLETON

"Name of star revealed upon selection."

INTERN 3

The success of this program depends on withholding the fact that it is Martin until the family has already signed.

CARLETON

We're withholding his name?

INTERN 2

Only because of his reputation...

INTERN 3

(reluctant)

It's something that came out of the focus group.

**INT. VIDEO INTERVIEW - FAMILY 1**

A redneck family of four sitting on a white leather couch.

The white gradient backdrop hints this is taking place in a small photography studio.

The unmistakable clicks of photographs being taken are heard throughout the interviews.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

A lucky family will be chosen to have a major Hollywood star living with them for three months.

FATHER 1

That's so friggin' cool!

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Any questions?

MOTHER 1

Who is it? Is it Clooney?

FATHER 1

Let it be Jessica Alba.

SON 1

Yeah!

They high-five.

DAUGHTER 1

Gross!

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

It's not George Clooney, and it's not Jessica Alba.



FATHER 1  
 Fuck! It isn't? Then, who is it?

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)  
 We can't reveal that yet.

FATHER 1  
 It's probably that boring limey...you  
 know, the one who wins all the Oscars.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)  
 You mean Michael Caine?

FATHER 1  
 Nah, I'm talkin' about the one who  
 stutters.

**INT. VIDEO INTERVIEW - FAMILY 2**

Video interview with a family of four sitting on a couch.  
 They look a little emaciated.

A little too eager...and kind of secretive...

FATHER 2  
 Is it Lindsay Lohan?

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)  
 No. Why?

Squirming in her seat, covering up withdrawal symptoms with  
 some ghetto bitch gestures...

DAUGHTER 2  
 She could probably, like, hook us  
 up, y'know.

**INT. VIDEO INTERVIEW - FAMILY 3**

Interview with a working-class family of five sitting on the  
 same couch.

MOTHER 3  
 Whoever it is, they're not going to  
 be jumping on the furniture, are  
 they?

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)  
 I hope not.

**INT. VIDEO INTERVIEW - FAMILY 4**

Another family. Same couch.

SMASH CUT TO:

FATHER 4

A star living with a poor family?

(beat)

You know, if it's Nicholas Cage,  
maybe we should be living with him.

Agreement from the family.

**INT. VIDEO INTERVIEW - FAMILY 5**

A family of four is sitting on the couch. They sport piercings, multi-colored hair, full-body tattoos, or a combination of all three.

Everyone is awkwardly waiting for the interviewer to say something.

Nothing coming.

An awkward moment, then...

CUT TO:

**INT. VIDEO INTERVIEW - NEW DAY**

FERNANDA SOTO (40s) scoots onto the interview couch. She is a slightly overweight Mexican woman with one of those friendly, motherly faces...we love her immediately.

FERNANDA

Sorry I'm late.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Is the rest of your family coming?

FERNANDA

My husband is at work and my children are at school...and my madre is at home resting. Sorry they couldn't be here. Does that disqualify us?

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Not sure. What does your husband do?

FERNANDA

He is a cook at a taco stand.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Do you work?

FERNANDA

I'm a nurse's assistant. I took the day off to be here.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Why do you want to have a major Hollywood star living with your family for three months?

FERNANDA

I don't, but we need the money to pay off some medical bills for my husband. He's a cancer survivor.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Congratulations on that.

FERNANDA

Thank you.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

How do you imagine a Hollywood star should be treated in this kind of arrangement?

FERNANDA

I don't know. Like family?

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Don't you think a Hollywood star should be given special treatment...you know, treated the way they are used to being treated?

FERNANDA

I wouldn't know about that.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

I'm surprised you haven't yet asked me once who it is. Don't you even want to know who?

FERNANDA

You can tell me if you want to.

**INT. MAIN LOBBY, CAA - DAY**

Martin finds himself back in the spacious granite lobby of CAA...a little more likable this time.

MARTIN

You again. Did you miss me?

JUSTINE

I don't think you ever entered my long-term memory.

MARTIN

Ouch. That really hurts.

JUSTINE

Oh how I doubt that. You have to have feelings first.

Pulling away from the desk.

Pinching his fingers...

MARTIN

You know, I was this close to asking you out.

He steps into the elevator.

**INT. ELEVATOR, CAA - CONTINUOUS**

As the doors start shutting...

MARTIN

I bet you were just waiting to give me your number.

Stuck at her desk, she looks so insignificant.

JUSTINE

Thirteen.

MARTIN

Funny. I would have pegged you as an eight.

JUSTINE

Floor thirteen.

MARTIN

Got it.

Justine grins.

The elevator door shuts.

Martin looks at the panel of floor numbers: there's no 13.

He hesitates, confidently presses 12, and then unsure, hedges his bet by also tapping 14.

**INT. CARLETON'S OFFICE, CAA - LATER**

CARLETON

We finally found you a home.

MARTIN

Are we at the animal shelter?

CARLETON

Sometimes I wonder. We found a real family for you to stay with.

MARTIN

Just as bad.

CARLETON

I don't want to hear any bellyaching from you. It was a major undertaking to set this up. We saw over 50 families. Look, these are normal people...

MARTIN

I thought it was supposed to be poor people.

Carleton hands him a photo of Fernanda.

CARLETON

Yes! This is a poor family.  
 (points at photo)  
 That's the mother. Solid folk.  
 (beat)  
 Not dirt poor, but poor enough to put up with you for a few shilling.

MARTIN

Shilling?

CARLETON

We're heading there on Sunday, so pack your bare essentials. We'll have one of the assistants go shopping with you.

MARTIN

Shopping? For what?

CARLETON

Clothes. You can't go there wearing what you normally wear.

MARTIN

How safe is the neighborhood?

CARLETON

I don't know, Martin. I don't live there.

MARTIN

Christ. Any other surprises?

CARLETON

You'll be staying with them for three months.

MARTIN

Three months?

(beat)

Anything else I should be aware of?

CARLETON

Don't fuck it up.

Leaving...

MARTIN

You made me come all the way down here to tell me this?

When Martin reaches the door, Carleton looks up from his desk...

CARLETON

See you Sunday. Don't forget.

**INT. CAA - NEW DAY**

Carleton strolls through the lobby and notices Justine.

CARLETON

I've seen you and Martin interacting. You look like you have a way of dealing with him.

JUSTINE

I wouldn't categorize it as interacting. It's more like he talks and I clench my teeth and press my heel into a tack.

CARLETON

Kind of like surviving a lie detector test?

JUSTINE

Only if you're talking about one that straps you down and shocks you for no reason.

CARLETON

I need someone to watch him.  
 (clarifying)  
 Operation Narcissus.

JUSTINE

I'm sure there's some bimbo in close proximity who would just love this assignment.

CARLETON

Who?  
 (confiding)  
 The thing you don't know about Martin is he can be a solipsistic, arrogant, pain-in-the-ass jerk, but he wasn't always like this. He has one weakness.

JUSTINE

Women?

CARLETON

His parents died when he was young, but he's loyal to a fault. I've tried to fire him as my client for years. It may be the only redeeming quality he has left.  
 (beat)  
 I think it counts as community service.

JUSTINE

You need me to babysit.

CARLETON

We're going to bring him back.

JUSTINE

Make him a star again?

CARLETON

No. Human.  
 (winks)

About to leave...

CARLETON (CONT'D)

You know, I started my second career at the ground level when I was in my forties. I respect what you are doing.

She smiles: found someone real in Tinseltown.

**EXT. POOR NEIGHBORHOOD - NEW DAY**

A sleek limousine tepidly rolls through a poor neighborhood like a shiny black beetle having accidentally ventured into some desiccated wasteland.

The limo unconfidently pulls up to a curb.

**INT. LIVING ROOM, SOTO HOME - CONTINUOUS**

An older woman, FLORA (70s), brushes the curtains aside to take a peek at the new arrival.

Her face flashes a smorgasbord of emotions: starting with resignation and settling on silent doom.

**EXT. SOTO HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

The limo door opens: Carleton gets out, followed by Martin.

Martin surveys the new digs: Pathetic.

So are his clothes, so he fits right into this dilapidated neighborhood.

CARLETON

Remember, no cutting corners: No credit cards, no cell phone, no more limousine.

MARTIN

Yeah, yeah. Don't worry about it. I got this.

CARLETON

Okay then. Here's your hundred dollars.

Carleton peels off five crumply Jacksions.

Martin looks at the bills as if he had never seen paper money before.

MARTIN

For tonight?

CARLETON

For the week.

Carleton steps back into the limousine.

CARLETON (CONT'D)

Good luck!

MARTIN

Don't you want to meet them?



CARLETON  
Ever hear of imprinting?

MARTIN  
No.

CARLETON  
What if they like me more than they  
like you?

Martin doesn't know how to process that.

The limousine drives away.

Martin looks longingly after the departing limousine with a  
tinge of regret: what the fuck have I gotten myself into?

He turns around and tries to digest what's next. Swallowing,  
he knocks on the door. The door swings open...

FERNANDA  
Welcome, Mister Klieg. Welcome to  
our home.

CARLETON  
Are you Mrs. Soto?

FERNANDA  
Yes. Please come in, Mr. Klieg.

CARLETON  
You can call me Martin.

FERNANDA  
Yes, Mister Klieg.

The rest of the family ambles in unenthusiastically: husband  
TOMÁS (early 50s), daughter AMERICA (16), son ALEX (10)  
followed by Flora (70).

FERNANDA (CONT'D)  
This is my husband, Tomás.

If the sturdiness of this man could be characterized by name  
brand farm equipment, Tomás would be International Harvester.

TOMÁS  
Gusta? Are you hungry, Mr. Klieg?

MARTIN  
Nah, I'm safe right now.

FERNANDA  
This is my son, Alex.

Alex is too shy to say anything and gives a miserly wave.

FERNANDA (CONT'D)  
And this is my daughter, America.

America, sixteen going on twenty-two, just stares at him: this is the son-of-a-bitch I had to give up my room to?

FERNANDA (CONT'D)  
(proudly)  
And this is my madre, Flora.

Flora courteously makes a restrained gesture of greeting.

It's clear that Flora was a beauty in her youth; now she looks like a regal matriarch.

MARTIN  
(to Flora)  
Hello.

FERNANDA  
She doesn't speak English.

Martin looks around: Where the hell is the big screen?

This home—though Martin isn't sure he could call it that—is of extreme economy.

FERNANDA (CONT'D)  
Please come in more.

Martin takes another small step forward.

FERNANDA (CONT'D)  
You probably want to see your room?

Grinning and bearing it...

MARTIN  
That would be nice.

FERNANDA  
We saved you the biggest room in the house. Please follow me.

The Sotos make way for Martin and quickly return to what they were doing.

Martin follows a smiling Fernanda. She exudes a friendliness that could make anyone yearn for their own mother on her most gracious day--something totally wasted on Martin.

She opens the door, proudly beckoning him to enter.

FERNANDA (CONT'D)

If you need anything, please...

He cuts her off in his clumsy attempt to enter. It's a tight fit: It's him or the suitcase.

He tries to get his suitcase into the room, banging on the door frame, then the door. The geometry of the situation makes him feel clumsy and tense.

**INT. MARTIN'S ROOM, SOTO HOME - SAME**

Seeing that Martin is safely inside, Fernanda smiles and leaves him to his own devices.

Martin puts his things down, closes the door, looks around.

A nightmare come true: Tiny room. Tiny bed. Drab existence.

On one wall--clearly the girl's side—he notices an old poster of a young, smiling Robert Pattinson.

He flips off Pattinson.

Backing up, his head bumps into the bare bulb hanging from the ceiling.

On the opposite side, a bashed-up model airplane hangs from the ceiling.

A couple of raggedy paperbacks are strewn on a plastic milk bottle crate moonlighting as a nightstand.

Muffled voices can be heard through the paper-thin walls.

A sheet of paper with the words "Welcome, Mr. Kleeg" written in purple crayon is pinned to the wall next to the bed.

Something friendly.

A short-lived smile.

He rips the sheet off the wall, leaving the pin.

**INT. DINING ROOM, SOTO HOME - LATER**

The family and Martin are seated around the dinner table.

Martin starts loading his plate.

They let him finish. Then...

The Sotos all bow their heads for prayer. Martin follows reluctantly.

TOMÁS

(in Spanish)

God, we thank you for this food. For  
rest and home and all things good...

Martin looks around. Everyone is reverential for this solemn moment, except America, who has her eyes open—staring at him curiously.

He motions for her to close her eyes and bow her head.

She shakes her head: No.

He tries again.

She shakes her head again: Not a believer. Martin smirks.

TOMÁS (CONT'D)

(in Spanish)

For wind and rain and sun above. But  
most of all for those we love. Amen.

The family reawakens from its religious anesthesia.

FERNANDA

Would you like anything else?

AMERICA

(in Spanish)

Maybe he already wants seconds.

Fernanda gives her a stern look.

MARTIN

I'm good, Mrs. Soto.

FERNANDA

Please call me Fernanda.

He digs in and hides his surprise of how tasty the food is.

Out of nervousness, Tomás also offers him more food. Martin declines with his mouth full.

An awkward silence permeates the rest of the meal, punctured by the sounds of chewing and utensils hitting porcelain, and occasional furtive glances.

**INT. MARTIN'S ROOM, SOTO HOME - LATER**

Lights off.

The light from outside the window glints off his eyes.

Muffled voices beyond the walls.

Sounds of someone trying to find a comfortable position on a weak box spring.

A small light by the bed turns on.

Martin is lying uncomfortably on the bed, his feet extending over the edge.

The airplane hangs over him.

He makes binoculars out of his hands, looking at the plane, and moves his head right to left.

Gives up.

He grabs the welcome note off the milk crate, looks at it for a while, then puts it back dismissively.

He turns off the light.

**INT. MASTER BEDROOM, SOTO HOME - LATER**

Fernanda and Tomás are lying in bed looking solemn, as if contemplating the meaning of the world.

TOMÁS

(in Spanish)

It's like having a big child in the house. I don't know if I can get used to it.

FERNANDA

(in Spanish)

For me it's just like adding one more.

She turns to go to sleep.

TOMÁS

(in Spanish)

Honey!

She secretly smiles.

**INT. HALLWAY, SOTO HOME - LATER**

Martin's door creeps open.

He traipses into the kitchen, looks around, opens the refrigerator.

The bright light flashes revealing the slim pickings.

He stands there discouraged as the refrigerator door slowly closes by itself.

**INT. KITCHEN, SOTO HOME - NEW DAY**

Bleary-eyed, Fernanda enters the kitchen to find the refrigerator door open.

She casually closes it, but something alarming eventually registers...

She re-opens it to find the fridge mostly empty.

She prepares coffee. She throws the old filter away and in the trash discovers an unopened carton of milk. She fishes it out.

The rest of the family slowly draggles in.

FERNANDA  
Tomás, did you sleepwalk again?

TOMÁS  
No.

Pursing her lips, she looks away. Disappointed.

TOMÁS (CONT'D)  
No, Fernanda.

FERNANDA  
So, where does this come from, I wonder?

She strokes his pot belly.

TOMÁS  
One time!

FERNANDA  
One time.  
(beat)  
Well, there's nothing left? What about you niños?

AMERICA  
No, mama.

Singling out Alex...

FERNANDA  
You're awfully quiet this morning.

ALEX  
I didn't do nothing, mama.

FERNANDA  
You gonna blame it on Grandma?

Nobody has an answer for that.

AMERICA  
It's probably the gringo.

FERNANDA  
Basta! We don't use that kind of  
language in this house.

ALEX  
Yeah, it was probably him.

FERNANDA  
Well, there's nothing for breakfast.  
Or lunch. You better go get some  
with papa before school starts. Tomás?

She hands Tomás some money.

Tomás and the children trundle off.

**INT. KITCHEN, SOTO HOME - LATER**

Fernanda is sitting by herself at the kitchen table.

Flora enters.

The exchange of looks says everything. Flora seats herself  
in a corner.

Martin drags into the kitchen.

FERNANDA  
Did you sleep good?

MARTIN  
I slept as well as I could.

FERNANDA  
Can I ask you a question?

MARTIN  
Another one? Shoot.

FERNANDA  
Did you throw out this unopen carton  
of milk?

MARTIN  
It expired yesterday.

FERNANDA  
It's still good.

MARTIN

No, it isn't.

FERNANDA

It's the "sell by" date.

A mental "okay."

FERNANDA (CONT'D)

It means it is still good. I just bought it yesterday.

MARTIN

Why?

FERNANDA

It's cheaper. I saved fifty cents.

Martin doesn't know how to process this.

FERNANDA (CONT'D)

It's not a use-by or expiration date.

MARTIN

Noted.

FERNANDA

One more question?

MARTIN

Ah-hmmm.

FERNANDA

Did you clean out the refrigerator last night?

MARTIN

In what sense are you using "clean out"?

FERNANDA

Since you threw out the milk, I wondered if...

MARTIN

Are you asking if I ate things from the refrigerator?

FERNANDA

You did?

MARTIN

I was still hungry. There wasn't much there, though.



FERNANDA

Now we don't have anything left for dinner tonight.

Martin leaves.

MARTIN (O.S.)

Don't worry. I'll cover it.

FERNANDA

You're a guest. We'll just have to adjust.

MARTIN (O.S.)

(stern)

Mrs. Soto, dinner is on me.

**INT. DINING ROOM, SOTO HOME - LATER**

Piled on the table are bags of potato chips, Tostidos, jars of salsa, and a few frozen burritos—not the kind of meal to which the Sotos are accustomed.

Everyone is standing around the table looking at the enormous pile of junk food.

FERNANDA

This is dinner?

ALEX

Awesome!

Alex looks like a dog salivating while its dish is being filled.

America looks at the pile, puts her loose headphone bud back into her ear, and exits.

Tomás reaches for a frozen burrito, inspects the packaging, and drops it back down with a loud thump.

TOMÁS

We'll have to heat these up in the oven.

MARTIN

Just nuke it.

FLORA

(in Spanish)

What did he say?

FERNANDA

(in Spanish)

He said to heat it in a microwave.

FLORA  
 (in Spanish)  
 In a what?

FERNANDA  
 We don't have a microwave.

**EXT. BACKYARD, SOTO HOUSE - NEW DAY**

Martin is sitting outside absentmindedly watching Flora (on her knees) and Alex weed the unlandscaped yard.

Martin's cellphone rings. He struggles to find it. Gets up...

MARTIN  
 Hello?

CARLETON (V.O.)  
 (filtered)  
 Tell me this isn't Martin.

MARTIN  
 You called star six seven?

CARLETON (V.O.)  
 (somewhat garbled)  
 Martin, you're supposed to be on a phone diet.

MARTIN  
 Hold on.

He moves to another spot...

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
 Then, why did you call?

CARLETON (V.O.)  
 Testing to see if you are breaking terms.

MARTIN  
 I've only got three bars in this neighborhood.

FLORA  
 (in Spanish)  
 What's he complaining about now?

ALEX  
 (in Spanish)  
 He says our neighborhood only has three bars.

FLORA  
 (in Spanish)  
 Must be a heavy drinker.

Flora pretends to throw back a brew. Alex giggles.

CARLETON (V.O.)  
 Sleep on the floor if you have to. B  
 T W, I'm having my new assistant  
 drop off your money. And stop using  
 your cell!

**INT. MARTIN'S ROOM, SOTO HOME - NIGHT**

Martin is alone in his room, sitting next to the open window, holding his arm out and pulling it back in to take a drag on his cigarette, almost burned down to the filter.

Alex can be heard having a convulsive coughing fit in the next room.

There's a knock at the door.

FERNANDA (O.S.)  
 Mr. Klieg?

He hurriedly puts out the cigarette.

MARTIN  
 Yes?

FERNANDA (O.S.)  
 Mr. Klieg?

He gets up and opens the door.

FERNANDA (CONT'D)  
 You can't smoke in the house, Mr.  
 Klieg. Alex has asthma.

Martin: more annoyed than apologetic.

FERNANDA (CONT'D)  
 Thank you.

He closes the door: Now deprived of his last fun activity on earth.

Martin sits down on the bed, catches sight of Alex's discarded crayon welcome paper on the makeshift nightstand.

**INT. SOTO HOME - NEW DAY**

Martin walks up to Flora's room, finds Alex and America inside.

MARTIN

Do you guys ever do anything that's fun?

Alex and America look up as if they have never heard of the word "fun" before.

**INT. UPSCALE SHOPPING MALL - NEW DAY**

Alex and America are walking slightly ahead of Martin.

MARTIN

Ever been on a shopping spree before?

ALEX

No.

Looking at the two Mexican kids and their "dad"....

VENDOR

Would you like to sign up for a VISA?

MARTIN

Won't be necessary. They're citizens.

The dumbstruck Vendor swivels in place as they walk by.

**INT. MALL DEPARTMENT STORE - LATER**

Looking like they are about to rob the place, the trio find themselves inside the entrance of a department store.

To America and Alex this is such a contrast to their drab existence.

AMERICA

What are we doing here?

Now in a huddle, like a coach letting them in on the secret game plan...

MARTIN

You probably want to go to the beauty section. I recommend Revlon. I use it myself, except I go for unscented.

AMERICA

That sounds so gay.

MARTIN

Or maybe you want to grab a Gucci handbag or...Michael Kohrs.

Turns to Alex...

MARTIN (CONT'D)

You probably want to go to the toy section. You might want to grab some Revell models, something fixed wing...maybe an F-15 Eagle with a General Electric F100 turbofan engine with afterburners.

ALEX

Awesome.

MARTIN

Alright, you've got 15 minutes to grab whatever you want...Okay?...  
Go!

They run off in separate directions.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

America!

She stops. Turns.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

I am not gay.

Other patrons are caught in the crossfire. Even America is frozen, but he shoos her back into action...

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Go!

Other store patrons shoot him strange looks.

**INT. MALL DEPARTMENT STORE - LATER**

Martin, Alex, and America are in the checkout line.

MARTIN

Let's see what you've got. That's  
it?

Alex holds up one big box—a Revell model airplane.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

A C-17A Globemaster?

Alex nods in the affirmative.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

You realize this is a military cargo  
plane?

ALEX

Yeah!

MARTIN  
Is that all they had? Didn't they  
have any cool jets?

ALEX  
This is cool.

MARTIN  
Whatever, man.  
(to America)  
What about you? Whatya get?

America holds up a GianniCarlo faux leather cross body bag.

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
You planning on becoming a letter  
carrier?

AMERICA  
I like it.

MARTIN  
It's not even Gucci.  
(beat)  
Suit yourself.

The TELLER grabs the first item...

TELLER  
Were you able to find everything you  
wanted?

...As she swipes the first item. BEEP! Alex nods.

ALEX  
Thank you.

MARTIN  
Apparently they did. I didn't, but  
then I wasn't looking.

AMERICA  
I don't need it. It's too expensive.

MARTIN  
That's why we put it on plastic.

He flashes his anthracite-black AMEX Centurion Card.

The Teller grabs the GianniCarlo bag and swipes the tag across  
the laser. BEEP!

TELLER  
That's \$28.95 for the bag. Do you  
still want it?

The card at the ready...

MARTIN

Easy.

TELLER

The total is \$54.63.

Martin hands her the carbon AMEX card.

TELLER (CONT'D)

Nice. You don't see these very often.

She swipes the card.

TELLER (CONT'D)

It's been declined.

MARTIN

What? Can't be. Try it again.

Another swipe.

TELLER

Still declined, sir.

He fumbles around for an alternative but comes up empty.

**EXT. UPSCALE SHOPPING MALL - LATER**

Martin, Alex, and America are loitering outside: In a funk.

MARTIN

I'm sorry, guys.

Alex is his spritely self...

ALEX

It's cool.

AMERICA

I didn't really need it anyway.

MARTIN

I can't believe Carleton shut off my credit.

**INT. CITY BUS - NEW DAY**

Martin and Alex are sitting next to each other, while America sits off by herself.

When the bus comes to a stop, Alex puts out his fist-bump. Martin reluctantly fist-bumps.

America gets off the bus holding Alex's hand.

Out the window:

Waiting for America is her boyfriend, MIGUEL, who looks like a reasonably decent kid, except he is also checking out the other chicks hatching from the bus.

Miguel pushes Alex to run along.

BUS PATRON (O.S.)  
I see you adopted some ethnic kids.

MARTIN  
Huh?

BUS PATRON  
Doing an Angelina Jolie?

MARTIN  
I've never done Angie.

BUS PATRON  
You're Martin Klieg, aren't you? I didn't like your last movie. What was it called...

MARTIN  
(wincing, almost imperceptibly)  
It's not me...

BUS PATRON  
You sure?

MARTIN  
Yeah, I'd say I'm pretty sure. If I were Martin Klieg, do you think I'd be riding the bus?

**INT. SOTO HOME - NEW DAY**

Martin wakes up, walks around. No one appears to be home.

He catches Flora in the kitchen, sitting in silence as if she's been waiting for him.

She immediately becomes animated.

She greets him, but Martin is still waking up.

FLORA  
¡Buenos días! ¿Dormiste bien? [Good morning, did you sleep well?]



Waving her off...

MARTIN

No buenos this morning, please.

She gently guides him to sit down.

FLORA

El desayuno es la comida más importante del día. [Breakfast is the most important meal of the day.]

MARTIN

I prefer omelets.

She prepares eggs on the stove.

FLORA

Espero que te guste tortillas. [I hope you like omelets.]

MARTIN

Tortillas for breakfast? That's more of a lunch item, really...Do we have anything to drink?

He motions, lifting a glass to his lips and starts getting up.

She gently pushes him back down...

FLORA

Debes dejar de quejarse. No hay ninguna razón para llegar a una copa la primera hora de la mañana. [You must stop your complaining. There's no reason to reach for a drink first thing in the morning.]

He watches her hide a six pack of Mexican beer.

MARTIN

I agree. No need to lecture me.

FLORA

Leche? [Milk?]

She immediately charges to the refrigerator.

MARTIN

Yes, lecture.

FLORA

Tenemos leche. [We have milk.]

Pours him a glass of milk.

MARTIN  
I think we completely understand  
each other. Thank you.

FLORA  
De nada. [You're welcome.]

MARTIN  
Nada. I agree. Let's hold off on  
those tortillas.

FLORA  
Tortillas enseguida. [Omelets coming  
right up.]

Sliding the omelet on a plate, she serves him a grand  
breakfast.

MARTIN  
Is everybody a cook in this family?

FLORA  
Aumentar de peso en seta familia.  
[You'll gain weight in this family.]

She smiles and gently tousles his hair as if he were a small  
boy—conjuring a motherly moment in her past.

**EXT. SOTO HOUSE - NEW DAY**

The distinctive beeps of a truck backing up.

Martin is in the street directing a driver to continue backing  
up.

America watches the spectacle from the sidewalk.

A gleaming trailer is maneuvered into position. It looks out  
of place in this neighborhood.

Skeptical...

AMERICA  
Did they allow you to do this?

MARTIN  
Think of it this way: you'll get  
your old room back.

**INT. MASTER BEDROOM, SOTO HOUSE - NIGHT**

Fernanda and Tomás are sleeping peacefully.

Out of nowhere: muffled but loud, shrill synth chords followed by thumb-popping bass guitar followed by ear-shredding power chords of Loverboy's *Turn Me Loose*.

Tomás wakes before Fernanda.

Realizing the noise isn't going away, Tomás bolts out of bed and into the hallway.

Flora's door opens...

TOMÁS  
(in Spanish)  
Go back to bed.

AMERICA  
We can't sleep.

TOMÁS  
(in Spanish)  
No need to tell me.

**EXT. SOTO HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

The loud music reverberating the neighborhood is coming from Martin's tiny trailer across the street—the only structure with its interior lights on.

Tomás knocks on the door.

Nothing.

He pounds on the side of the trailer with his fist.

The door swings wide open—as does the volume.

Inside, Martin has his headphones on.

A nod to Tomás: Come on in.

Tomás motions for him to take off his headphones.

MARTIN  
What?

TOMÁS  
Take off headphones.

Martin takes them off...(yikes)...turns the music down.

A cigarette dangling from his mouth...

MARTIN  
Come on in.

Tomás enters...

**INT. MARTIN'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS**

Astonished by this luxurious sardine can...

TOMÁS  
Is that your stereo?

MARTIN  
Yeah, that's Bang & Olufsen. You  
should see the Martens I have at  
home...

He spreads his arms wide—like sizing a fish he caught...

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
...Refrigerator size speakers.

TOMÁS  
Wow.

MARTIN  
You like music?

TOMÁS  
Si.

Martin offers him a cigarette. Tomás shakes off a momentary  
hesitation, takes it. (It's been a long time.)

MARTIN  
What do you like?

TOMÁS  
All kinds.

MARTIN  
I'm taking requests.

TOMÁS  
(with a smile)  
Ah...Perdóname.

Martin clicks around on his iPad.

MARTIN  
Never heard of them.

TOMÁS  
Del Castillo. Band.

A soulful *Perdóname* starts playing.

Tomás shakes his head: Affirmative.

They sit there—absorbing the profundity of the sound.

We get a sense this is the hidden essence of Tomás.

MUSIC

"Lagrimas cayeron// Como caí la  
lluvia// Sober un día triste//  
Todos mis pecados// Te los traigo a  
tus pies//En la luz// De tus  
misericordia// Perdóname//"

MARTIN

I have no idea what he's saying, but  
I like it.

TOMÁS

Hmmm.

MARTIN

Yeah, this is fuckin' great. I imagine  
he is talking about speedboating  
around some Caribbean islands.

Tomás nods, slowly swaying to the music.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

The sun is shimmering off the white-  
capped waters. Am I close?

TOMÁS

(clumsily translating)  
Everything you wanted  
A heaven on Earth  
I'm defeated  
Broken by the winds  
Of time and space  
And eternity  
Forgive me.

MARTIN

Nah, you were doing great.

TOMÁS

No, that the line: Forgive me.

MARTIN

Oh.

They listen a little while longer, then...

TOMÁS

Gracias, amigo, for...what you  
say?...memory street...I go back to  
bed now.

A tinge of regret to see him go...

MARTIN

Okay.

Tomás steps out of this sonic world...back into the night.

*Perdón* smoothly transitions from diegetic music to soundtrack as Tomás makes his way back to the house...gets a glass of water in the kitchen, looks back out the window at Martin's lit trailer...then slips back into bed.

**EXT. SOTO HOUSE - NEW DAY**

Martin steps out of his trailer with a cup of coffee, locks the door, and saunters toward the Soto home.

He watches a black VW Jetta pull up to the curb.

Justine gets out.

MARTIN

Trying to get back at me or get me back?

Ignores him, walking briskly toward him.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

(beat)

I don't want anyone to see me in this state.

JUSTINE

Don't worry, this isn't your low point. Hold out your hand.

He complies.

She slaps some money into his hand, as if paying back a debt in full—then walks away.

MARTIN

Look, can't we do this at CAA?

Justine stops before getting in her car.

JUSTINE

Payback is a bitch, isn't it?

Martin tried to be clever...

MARTIN

You shouldn't be so hard on yourself.

She shrugs off the urge to reply, gets in her car and drives off.

He watches her car disappear into the distance.

**EXT. MARTIN'S TRAILER - NEW DAY**

Tomás and Martin move a large flat screen TV from his trailer into the Soto home.

TOMÁS  
I think will double electricity bill.

**INT. LIVING ROOM, SOTO HOME - NIGHT**

Martin and the Sotos are watching TV.

On the screen flashes some garish, loud action movie starring none other than Martin Klieg.

Unexplained noises are heard outside.

Tomás gets up to take a look, then zeroes in on Martin.

TOMÁS  
Amigo, you better take look.

**EXT. SOTO HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

Martin and the Sotos assemble outside as a tow truck pulls away...

...with Martin's trailer.

Martin's phone buzzes. He pulls it out.

UNLISTED: Don't test me on this. - God

**INT. HALLWAY SOTO HOME - NEW DAY**

Tomás, sleepy-eyed, traipses through the hallway and knocks on Martin's door.

No answer.

He knocks again.

MARTIN (O.S.)  
What?

Tomás opens the door—Martin in bed looking like he didn't get a wink of sleep.

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
What's going on?

TOMAS  
Time to get up.

MARTIN  
For what?

TOMAS  
Work, amigo.

A look of horror flashes across Martin's face.

MARTIN  
(as if pronouncing  
the word for the  
first time)  
Work?

TOMAS  
(laughing)  
Si.

**INT. HALLWAY, SOTO HOME - LATER**

Martin knocks on the bathroom door.

AMERICA  
Go away.

MARTIN  
I know it was you.

AMERICA  
What are you talking about?

MARTIN  
You've been waiting for this moment,  
huh?

No answer.

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
I know you don't like me.

The toilet flushes. Water runs before the door opens.

AMERICA  
Can I have some privacy?

MARTIN  
Not if you are interfering, you little  
*rigorista*.



Following her to the threshold of Flora's room.

AMERICA

I don't know what you are talking about, crazy man.

MARTIN

Who else would tell them about the trailer?

AMERICA

Who's gonna tell them about the pervert hovering outside my bathroom door?

She slam-shuts the door in his face.

**INT. BATHROOM, SOTO HOME - NEW DAY**

Martin brushes his teeth.

FERNANDA

Mr. Klieg, are you ready to go? We need to use the bathroom.

Catching himself in the mirror...almost making the sign of the cross with his brushing...

MARTIN

Brush my teeth. Hope to die.

Spits.

**EXT. TACO STAND - LATER**

Martin looks very uncomfortable and very much out of place in his white chef apron and getup.

Every time Tomás needs something, Martin gets up off the single plastic chair, does what he is asked and sits back down, only to be *disturbed* again. Tomás can't help but laugh at him. Martin reciprocates with hurt puppy dog eyes—a pitiful sight.

**INT. GROCERY STORE - NEW DAY**

Martin grabs things in the meat section and loads the cart up.

Fernanda surreptitiously puts things back.

Finally, Martin notices.

MARTIN  
What are you doing?

FERNANDA  
We can't afford all this, Mr. Klieg.  
You're not getting a good price on  
these.

MARTIN  
Chicken. Two dollars and fifty-nine  
cents a pound?

FERNANDA  
Too much. Look for ninety-nine cents  
a pound... no more than a dollar  
nineteen a pound.

MARTIN  
I don't think you'll find steak at  
that price.

FERNANDA  
That's right. Pollo.

MARTIN  
Poyo?

FERNANDA  
Chicken.

MARTIN  
Hmm, chicken, \$0.99 a pound. Okay.

**INT. GROCERY STORE - LATER**

Fernanda and Martin are loading the groceries onto the  
checklane belt as the CHECKER scans the items.

Martin's items consist mostly of processed food items.

CHECKER  
That will be seventy-nine dollars  
and twenty-three cents.

Fernanda looks through her purse, obviously short.

She looks at Martin—he doesn't have anything.

Fernanda removes an item of hers: Still not enough.

Every time she touches one of Martin's items, he shakes his  
head.

MARTIN  
I need that.

One by one, more items of Fernanda's are removed to bring down the total.

After Fernanda pays, a few of her items—and all of Martin's items—survive.

**INT. SOTO HOME - NEW DAY**

In the hallway, Martin is talking unintelligibly to himself...

He charges into the kitchen where everyone is assembled. Whatever they were doing has ceased. As if he's had the most profound epiphany...

MARTIN

We don't have to stay here!

They all look at him as if he was speaking a foreign language.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

I hope you like sand.

**INT. SOTO HOME - LATER**

All are packing their own small suitcases.

Martin walks around like an inspector, delighted by what he sees.

**EXT./INT. MALIBU BEACH HOUSE - NEW DAY**

The Sotos arrive at Martin's impressive Malibu beach house.

MARTIN

Welcome!

America and Alex are particularly taken with the possibilities—as the young would be—while the adults look at the place and imagine rents and upkeep.

The Soto entourage enters, taking off their shoes. Martin notices this.

MONTAGE:

A) Martin showing Tomás his monster audio system—including the refrigerator-sized speakers. He plays the Gipsy Kings' "Habla Me." (Music plays over rest of the montage.)

B) Martin showing off the beach house.

C) Martin showing Fernanda the amazing kitchen and his \$40,000 Meneghini La Cambusa refrigerator.

- D) Martin in swim gear deftly manning his cadillac grill.
- E) America at the edge of the infinity pool talking to some boys on the beach.
- F) Alex playing the flight simulator on the big-screen HDTV.
- G) Fernanda and Tomás strolling on the beach, the sunset casting long shadows.
- H) Martin excitedly talks about some film production, dropping names of famous actors. Fernanda is enraptured, translating everything for Flora.

FERNANDA

Flora asks if you ever worked with  
Benicio Del Toro?

When Martin nods yes, Flora shyly cups her mouth, blushing.

I) Everyone peeling off at some point to pursue their own thing.

J) Martin re-emerging, now in dry clothes.

END OF MONTAGE

The family has gathered in the foyer. Alex and America are still in their swim gear: Towels draped over them, sandy feet.

MARTIN (O.S.)

I was wondering where you all went.

Martin walks in, surprised.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

FERNANDA

We're going home.

MARTIN

What?

FERNANDA

Thank you, Mr. Klieg, for a very fun weekend.

Flora reaches out to warmly shake his hand; Martin shakes limply—simply stunned.

It feels like goodbye forever.

MARTIN

No, I said we can all live here.

FERNANDA

We get in trouble. Mister Carleton find out. Mister Carleton is like God. Everywhere.

MARTIN

Nobody has to know. Alex, you agree with this?

Alex shakes his head.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

America?

AMERICA

Sorry.

MARTIN

Didn't you have fun?

(beat)

Tell me you didn't have fun.

FERNANDA

It was like a short vacation.

MARTIN

Well, let's extend it.

FERNANDA

We can't.

Tomás motions for them to get a move on.

FERNANDA (CONT'D)

Please get your things, Mr. Klieg.

They all walk through the front door.

MARTIN

We were having so much fun.

He is left by himself—abandoned in his own house.

**INT./EXT. MALIBU BEACH HOUSE - NEW DAY**

Martin walks around aimlessly in the empty house. The thoroughbass of the breaking waves is heard outside.

He steps onto the balcony: A funeral sky threatening rain.

He turns around, sipping wine, looking at the beach house: now lifeless, without joy.

He makes phone calls—no one picks up.

He gets on the Internet looking up escort services, defunct credit cards lying nearby. Gives up.

He makes another call, finds some cash, and grabs his coat.

**EXT. MALIBU BEACH HOUSE - LATER**

Martin dives into a taxi—refuge from the coastal rain.

**EXT. SOMEWHERE - LATER**

Pelting rain makes it difficult to see where Martin gets out of the taxi.

Martin, drenched, knocks on a door.

The door opens, and he is welcomed in by Fernanda.

He takes his shoes off.

**INT. HALLWAY, SOTO HOME - NEW DAY**

Martin looks into Flora's room: Two beds are jammed together, leaving little space between them.

MARTIN

Gotta be a little weird sleeping  
with your sister, isn't it?

ALEX

Yeah, she snores.

**INT. HALLWAY, SOTO HOME - LATER**

The hallway has become a congested conduit for an unwieldy mattress. Martin and Alex stop...

MARTIN

I thought you were going to be a  
little more helpful.

ALEX

I thought you were going to be a  
little stronger.

They maneuver the mattress into the room, and plop it down on the floor—Alex topples with it.

**INT. HALLWAY, SOTO HOME - LATER**

America, wearing a backpack, is staring at the new configuration in Flora's room.

AMERICA

What's going on?

Alex comes running out of his room: the little ambassador.

ALEX

Martin said I could move back into our room.

AMERICA

And where am I supposed to sleep?

Oblivious, as if offering an upgrade...

ALEX

Now you can sleep with Grandma on the bigger bed.

America pivots...

AMERICA

Mama!

**INT. MARTIN'S ROOM, SOTO HOME - NIGHT**

Martin and Alex, each lying on their beds, are like two kids at summer camp, talking into the late night.

ALEX

What's it like to be rich?

MARTIN

It's kinda cool, but it's not all that it's cracked up to be.

ALEX

What do you mean?

MARTIN

Well...you can escape all kinds of things, but you can't escape yourself.

Martin rolls over, facing Alex.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

What about you? What do you want to be when you grow up?

ALEX

I wanna be a pilot.

MARTIN

How are you doing in school?

ALEX

I'm doing okay. I have to, or my mom gets really mad.

MARTIN

Mama Soto is the best. You're lucky to have parents.

Alex: Not so convinced.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Why do you think your sister hates me so much? Is she still angry about that hand bag?

ALEX

She gets teased a lot at school because we can't afford a car.

MARTIN

They tease you too?

ALEX

Nobody talks to me. I'm just her little brother.

**EXT. BUS STOP - NEW DAY**

Martin at a bus stop, waiting. On the phone.

MARTIN

Now they're making me audition?

CARLETON (V.O.)

You gotta audition like every actor who just arrived on a bus in an abandoned Sears parking lot.

MARTIN

What???

CARLETON (V.O.)

It's a long story.

MARTIN

Yours?

CARLETON (V.O.)

Knock it out of the park, Martin!

**INT. RESTAURANT - NEW DAY**

MARTIN

You know what they say about you?



JUSTINE

Isn't thirty-five too old for a woman to start a new career in show business? Know what they say about you?

MARTIN

Tell me.

JUSTINE

They say you make a mean Martini.

MARTIN

I do.

JUSTINE

I don't think they're talking about your bartending skills.

A waiter serves their plates.

JUSTINE (CONT'D)

So, how is it going? How are the Sotos?

MARTIN

And here I thought we were on a dinner date. Carleton's picking up the tab?

She pulls a straw out the dispenser.

JUSTINE

Let's just say the straw I picked was shorter than this one.

(puts the straw in  
her drink, sips)

If it makes you feel any better, I'll put it on my own card.

MARTIN

The Sotos are fine.

JUSTINE

And you?

MARTIN

Checking to see if I'm good or being good?

JUSTINE

You caught me.

MARTIN

Six more weeks and I'm outta here.

JUSTINE

You're gonna miss me.

MARTIN

I doubt it. I might miss them.

JUSTINE

I'm hurt.

MARTIN

Nah, I don't think anybody could hurt you. Some girls are like ice. You're more like the ice pick.

The remark stings.

**INT. MARTIN'S ROOM, SOTO HOME - NEW DAY**

Martin is lying on his bed, reading his sides by holding them up.

There are noises outside his door—perhaps in the kitchen.

He looks away from his reading.

Something falls in the kitchen...

...something metallic spinning that accelerates before it finally stops.

This also registers, but he continues reading...

A loud THUMP!

He thinks nothing of it.

All noises outside his door have stopped.

It's eerie quiet now.

He slowly gets up, talks sideways to the door...

MARTIN

Flora?

...opens it.

He walks into the kitchen: Nobody there.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Flora?

**EXT. AMBULANCE, SOTO HOME - LATER**

MARTIN

I had to use the cellphone. I hope you don't mind.

CARLETON (V.O.)

Don't be ridiculous, Martin. You did a good thing. Glad you had it with you.

EMERGENCY TECH

Do you want to go with her?

MARTIN

I gotta go.

CARLETON (V.O.)

Don't worry about the audition.

MARTIN

What?

EMERGENCY TECH

Would you like to go in the ambulance?

CARLETON (V.O.)

I'll try to get it rescheduled.

MARTIN

Bye.

Martin's a bit disoriented.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

I gotta lock the house.

EMERGENCY TECH

Quickly, sir.

Martin runs and locks the house, runs back to the passenger side.

EMERGENCY TECH (CONT'D)

Over here, sir.

Martin runs to the back and jumps into the ambulance.

**INT. AMBULANCE (MOVING) - LATER**

While the tech is setting things up, Martin holds Flora's hand.

Flora looks up.

MARTIN  
Where are you taking her?

EMERGENCY TECH  
Shadow Oak Medical.

MARTIN  
Cedars-Sinai. Please.

**INT. NURSE'S STATION, CEDARS-SINAI HOSPITAL - LATER**

A bevy of cute Asian nurses are flirting with Martin.

MARTIN  
Where you from? Viet Nam?

NURSE 1  
No, Philippines.

MARTIN  
Subic Bay?

NURSE 2  
How you know?

MARTIN  
I was a soldier once. On the big  
screen.

NURSE 3  
Ever play doctor?

MARTIN  
I'd love to.

Giggles.

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
Seriously now...I never thought I'd  
get to use this, however: "I'm not a  
doctor, but I've played one on TV."

The nurses are inhaling him with their eyes.

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
You ladies are so cute, I could just  
eat you up.

More flirtation.

The HEAD NURSE interrupts...

She gives the other nurses the stink eye.

HEAD NURSE

Your mother is doing fine. She's resting right now. If you need to leave, we'll continue to monitor her.

MARTIN

I'm okay. I can wait.

She gives the other nurses the stink eye again.

**INT. ICU, CEDARS-SINAI HOSPITAL - LATER**

Fernanda in her nurse's assistant uniform rushes to the nurse's station.

FERNANDA

I'm Fernanda Soto. My mother was brought in a short while ago.

The station nurse looks up.

FERNANDA (CONT'D)

I heard she had a stroke.

The Nurse starts making her way around to console her.

NURSE

Thank God Mr. Martinez was there when it happened.

FERNANDA

Mr. Martinez?

NURSE

Her son, Mr. Martinez.

FERNANDA

Oh, Martin.

NURSE

Yes, if Mr. Martinez hadn't brought her in during the golden hour, it might have been fatal. She is doing fine. She's resting now. You can go in if you'd like.

Fernanda nods and approaches Flora's room, enters.

FERNANDA

Mama!

She pulls back the curtain.

Flora smiles.

Fernanda opens the door and tepidly enters Flora's room.

FERNANDA (CONT'D)  
 (in Spanish)  
 How are you feeling?

FLORA  
 (with effort; in Spanish)  
 Happy I can still feel pain.

FERNANDA  
 (in Spanish)  
 What a blessing that Martin was home with you.

FLORA  
 (with effort; in Spanish)  
 I knew we could get him to eventually pull his weight—mine.

Flora sees Martin at the door. Fernanda immediately gets up and gives him a bone-crushing hug—a significant moment in Martin's life.

**EXT. AUDITION LOCATION - LATER**

Martin gets off a bus and walks to the audition location. The lights are off. He presses his face against the glass to peer inside. The interior looks abandoned.

**INT. FRONT DOOR, SOTO HOME - LATER**

Martin strolls in lethargically and receives an exuberant welcome from everybody. He presents a brave face to their ebullience. Fernanda knows something is wrong.

**INT. KITCHEN, HEIDELBERG'S HOUSE - NEW DAY**

Heidelberg is walking around his kitchen with a phone in his hand. He observes someone outside loitering near the trash bins.

BEAULIEU (V.O.)  
 Think we have our lead?

HEIDELBERG  
 I liked his vibe. Good energy, but not exuberant.

BEAULIEU (V.O.)  
 That's your job as the director. Mold him into the shape you need.

HEIDELBERG

(craning his neck to  
see through the  
windows)

I think he's a bit stiff. I just  
don't think he has all six degrees  
of freedom. Can you hold on for a  
second?

He opens his back door.

A TRANSIENT in a tattered suit is rummaging through the trash.

HEIDELBERG (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

(beat)

Don't make me call the police.

Heidelberg quickly shuts and locks the door.

Through the window, he watches the Transient leave.

BEAULIEU

What was that?

HEIDELBERG

A human raccoon going through my  
trash.

PHONE

Welcome to Venice.

(beat)

Did you get a chance to speak with  
Toll about the look we decided on?

HEIDELBERG

Did not. Can you hold? I've got  
another call coming in.

(checks phone)

Oh, it's Carleton. I'll call you  
back.

(beat)

Von Heidelberg.

CARLETON (V.O.)

How did you like Martin's audition?

HEIDELBERG

Carleton. So good to hear from you.

CARLETON (V.O.)

How did you like it?

HEIDELBERG

Like what? The basket with the summer sausage?

CARLETON

Martin's audition.

HEIDELBERG

What audition? He didn't come in.

CARLETON (V.O.)

He said he was going to audition.

HEIDELBERG

So, not only is he obnoxious, but now I guess we found out he's a liar too. I don't think Robert would approve.

CARLETON

Don't be so goddamn German.

HEIDELBERG

We...I already selected someone.

CARLETON

Who?

HEIDELBERG

You know I can't tell you.

CARLETON

It sounds like you just made that up.

HEIDELBERG

I wish I was as practiced as you.

CARLETON

Either way, you don't sound very excited.

HEIDELBERG

Maybe it's because I'm German. Goodbye, Carleton.

**INT. KITCHEN, JUSTINE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Justine is preparing dinner.

PHONE (V.O.)

You have one new message. Message number one.



MARTIN (V.O.)

I'm using a pay phone I'll have you know—the way poor people use a phone.  
(beat)

Listen, I want to make up for my shitty comment last time. Let me take you on a proper dinner date. I promise I won't try to get into your pants. But I gotta warn you, it'll have to be some place cheap, because I can't afford much right now. What do you say?

PHONE (V.O.)

Message deleted. No new messages.

**INT. SOTO HOME - NEW DAY**

America comes running into the house, crying, runs into the hallway, sees Flora in her room, runs into Martin's room and slams the door.

MARTIN

What's the problem?

FERNANDA

Miguel broke up with her at school yesterday.

MARTIN

Big deal. So she breaks up with a loser.

Fernanda gives him a perturbed look.

**INT. MARTIN'S ROOM, SOTO HOME - LATER**

MARTIN

How important could a prom be?

ALEX

You don't know? Like, dude, it's the most important day in a girl's life.

MARTIN

Holy cola! Then I guess we should do something to cheer her up.

ALEX

Like what? Find her a new boyfriend?

Looking at the untanned outline of his missing Rolex...

MARTIN

How much time do we have?

ALEX  
A couple of hours. What are you  
thinking?

Pulls out his mobile...

MARTIN  
Know how to operate one of these?

ALEX  
Dude, you're not supposed to use it.

MARTIN  
Exactly!

**INT. MARTIN'S ROOM, SOTO HOME - LATER**

Someone knocking.

AMERICA  
Go away!

More knocking...lighter this time.

AMERICA (CONT'D)  
(primal)  
I said, go away!

The door creaks open.

MARTIN  
Sorry, but my stuff is in here.

Martin peeks inside. America is face down on the bed.

AMERICA  
Please get out.

MARTIN  
That's so polite. You used please.  
(beat)  
I wouldn't have.  
(beat)  
See, that's one of the things that  
makes you unique.  
(beat)  
This guy made a big mistake. He may  
not realize it today, but he will  
next week, next year, or a long time  
from now...or he might never.

He sits down on the bed. Puts his hand on her back, comforting her.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Can I ask you a question?

AMERICA

No.

MARTIN

Would you be my date to the prom?

AMERICA

What?

MARTIN

Would you be my date?

AMERICA

Are you crazy?

MARTIN

Yes. Yes, I am.

AMERICA

You sure are.

MARTIN

You always say I'm selfish.

AMERICA

Because you are!

**EXT. RODEO DRIVE, BEVERLY HILLS - LATER**

Martin, America, and Alex step off a bus, looking like poor tourists among the silicone glitz and botox glamour of the fashionable district of Beverly Hills.

**INT. BOUTIQUE, RODEO DRIVE, BEVERLY HILLS - LATER**

Martin walks in with Alex and America. He approaches a CASHIER, confiding...

MARTIN

(looks at her name  
tag)

I have an odd situation...Melissa.  
If I don't have access to my credit  
card, can I put everything on my  
tab?

CASHIER

Certainly, Mr. Klieg.

MARTIN  
(to the kids)  
Ha! God is not so powerful after  
all.

CASHIER  
Sir?

**EXT/INT. RODEO DRIVE, BEVERLY HILLS - LATER**

MONTAGE:

- A) Hair is primped.
- B) Martin and Alex sit nearby, waiting patiently.
- C) Nails are painted.
- D) Martin and Alex still waiting...in a food court.
- E) Lashes are curled.
- F) Martin and Alex outside the limousine. Alex wearing a tux.
- G) A foot is inserted into an elegant peep-toe stiletto.
- H) Martin and Alex now wait inside the limousine, bored.
- I) Feet are seen under a dressing room curtain.

END OF MONTAGE

**EXT. RODEO DRIVE BOUTIQUE - LATER**

The door finally opens.

America billows out of the store.

Can you say: OH MY GOD?

She looks jaw-droppingly stunning, decked out in a curve-loving red satin dress.

Alex can't believe his eyes.

He looks over at Martin, who is also speechless.

Martin cups his mouth with his hand. Like a proud father.

She's graceful.

Other people are now noticing too.

They also notice Martin.

People snap photos with their smartphones. Tweeting.

America's slightly unsteady in the new high heels, regains her bearing.

Martin walks up to the boutique door, takes her hand, and guides her gently to the limousine.

The limousine pulls away.

**EXT. LOS ANGELES - NIGHT**

A Silent Film's "Love Takes a Wrecking Ball" is playing while the limousine carves its way through the streets and freeways.

It's on a mission. Searching. Feral.

Maybe Batman is driving. One thing is for certain: You wouldn't want to fuck with it.

Intercut with scenes from:

**INT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS**

America is a jewel transported through the night by her tuxedoed lieges, Alex and Martin.

Radiant, she exudes a new confidence.

She owns this night.

**EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - LATER**

The limousine slides up like a polished, black bullet.

**INT. PROM DANCE HALL, HIGH SCHOOL - LATER**

One of the fast numbers finishes up.

DJ

We had a strange request. Sorry.

Foreigner's "I Want to Know What Love Is" starts playing.

Martin leads America, this red-rose goddess, to the dance floor.

He's a gentleman.

She's happy, proud to be with him.

Her ex in the crowd is clearly not in the moment—nor in the same spirit—with his new crumpet.

America rests her head on Martin's shoulder—a tender moment.  
Every girl in the room: jealous.

**INT. CENTER STAGE, DANCE FLOOR, PROM DANCE HALL - LATER**

The slow songs ends. Couples dissolve.

Patrick Hernandez's "Born to Be Alive" starts up.

Martin is the only person dancing.

Everybody is standing around watching this fool dance disco.  
Hate to admit it, but he's a pretty damn good dancer too. At least fun.

Martin teases America into joining him. She slowly gets the groove.

Bystanders watch until Martin enlists them all—still in disco mode.

The whole dance floor is writhing energetically.

**EXT. BUS STOP - NEW DAY**

PERSON IN LINE

Aren't you...?

MARTIN

Yes I am.

Looking him up and down...

PERSON IN LINE

So, what happened?

MARTIN

I became poor.

PERSON IN LINE

That's a shame.

MARTIN

There's no shame in being poor.

PERSON IN LINE

No, you're right.

(pause)

Did you piss it away on drugs?

MARTIN

No, I didn't piss it away on drugs.

PERSON IN LINE 2  
Divorce? That usually does it.

MARTIN  
Never married.

PERSON IN LINE  
So, what happened?

Realizing it for the first time, surprising even himself...

MARTIN  
Pushed everyone away without me  
noticing.

PERSON IN LINE  
And I guess you also pushed away  
God.

MARTIN  
How did you guess?

He hands Martin a Christian pamphlet.

PERSON IN LINE  
And so he punished you.

MARTIN  
And he keeps on punishing.

PERSON IN LINE  
You pray for it to be over.

MARTIN  
Amen to that.

**INT. CARLETON'S OFFICE - NEW DAY**

Carleton is at his desk.

CARLETON  
Sorry it didn't happen for you this  
time. Let's just chalk this one up  
to experience, and...

MARTIN (V.O.)  
I'm going to go over to Beaulieu's  
place and talk to him.

CARLETON  
That's not advisable. Beaulieu is  
not your ally in this.  
(pause)  
Did you hear me?

MARTIN (V.O.)  
I'm in the canyons...you're breaking  
up. What did you say?

CARLETON  
That plane has already landed.

The call drops.

CARLETON (CONT'D)  
Martin?

**EXT. BEAULIEU'S MANSION - NEW DAY**

Gates open, Martin drives onto the property, parks his car,  
and confidently walks up to an impressive mansion.

Martin knocks. After a short wait, the door swings opens.

Holy shit! It's Justine.

Martin takes a minute to digest this...words on his lips  
that just won't discharge.

Finally...

MARTIN  
Wow, you move up fast.

JUSTINE  
I do?

MARTIN  
One minute you're a receptionist at  
CAA, the next you're sleeping with a  
major Hollywood producer. Frankly,  
I'm jealous.

JUSTINE  
Look, if you want to sleep with the  
producer, don't let me stand in your  
way.

MARTIN  
I didn't mean it that way: I'm  
impressed.

JUSTINE  
That's funny, because to someone who  
cared, it would actually sound  
offensive.

MARTIN  
I meant it as a compliment.



JUSTINE

You're a riot.

MARTIN

I'm getting the sense that no matter what I say, things between us continue to devolve. I think I'll shut up now.

JUSTINE

Good idea.

MARTIN

Thank you.

An awkward moment before he walks away.

JUSTINE

Hey! You wanted to talk to Bobert?

MARTIN

That's alright.

JUSTINE

Do you always give up this easily?

MARTIN

I'm acquainted with the law of diminishing returns.

JUSTINE

Martin!

He continues walking.

JUSTINE (CONT'D)

Martin!

MARTIN

What?

JUSTINE

He's out back by the pool.

**EXT. POOLSIDE, BEAULIEU'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

Martin walks through the French doors toward the pool.

MARTIN

Mr. Beaulieu?

Startled...

BEAULIEU

Oh. Martin. What brings you over?

MARTIN

I understand you don't want me in your picture, but...

BEAULIEU

Actually, it's not just limited to to the picture.

MARTIN

I know, Bob, but I'd like you to reconsider.

BEAULIEU

You can't even say my name right.

MARTIN

Nah, you're right.

BEAULIEU

I want you to say it.

Martin has a dog-whistle response.

MARTIN

What?

BEAULIEU

Let me give you a hint: Not Bob. Not Rob.

MARTIN

(with difficulty)

Bobert.

BEAULIEU

There. You see. How difficult was that? Sweetie.

Can you say double awkward?

Luckily, Justine walks over to Beaulieu, who puts his arm around her and plants a big kiss on her cheek.

Martin is relieved he isn't being seduced by The Colonel in a gay remake of *Boogie Nights*.

She smiles at Martin...not victoriously. Still, not a great moment for Martin.

BEAULIEU (CONT'D)

Have you met my daughter, Justine?

MARTIN

I haven't. I mean, I have, but I didn't know she was your daughter.

JUSTINE

At CAA. That's where I first met him. He was very charming.

MARTIN

That's not true.

BEAULIEU

What's not true?

MARTIN

I was anything but charming.

BEAULIEU

Really?

MARTIN

I shouldn't be saying this, but I was a complete jerk to her.

JUSTINE

Were you?

MARTIN

But she held her own.

BEAULIEU

I'm not surprised. So you came here to apologize?

MARTIN

No. I mean yes, of course.

JUSTINE

What would you say?

MARTIN

For starters: Hello.

BEAULIEU

I should leave the two of you. Alone.

JUSTINE

You can stay, dad.

Beaulieu trots off.

BEAULIEU

(muttering)

Too melodramatic. Feels like one of those moments when someone hands me bad poetry they wrote and then expect me to read it out loud.

JUSTINE

Dad.

BEAULIEU

What?

JUSTINE

Martin came here to speak with you.

MARTIN

That's alright.

BEAULIEU

Already heard it.

Martin, prompted by Justine...

MARTIN

Mr. Beaulieu. Robert. I was meant for this role...I was meant to play Johnny Fanfare.

BEAULIEU

We already have a serious actor in mind. And one, I might add, who doesn't cause head trauma.

MARTIN

I did everything you asked. You forced me to live with poor people. I lived with poor people. You asked me to audition. And I did.

BEAULIEU

That was Carleton's idea. The decision's already been made. Sorry I can't be of more help.

Martin deflates as Beaulieu ambles away.

He looks up at Justine...who looks genuinely sorry.

**INT. KITCHEN, HEIDELBERG'S HOUSE - NEW DAY**

Heidelberg and Beaulieu are going through a pile of headshots scattered on the table.

Holding up a photo...

HEIDELBERG

What about this one?

BEAULIEU

He didn't have the range. We need someone with six degrees of freedom.

Heidelberg holds up another 8 by 10 glossy...

HEIDELBERG

Now there's a face only a mother  
could love.

BEAULIEU

Someone else's mother maybe.

Another photo...

HEIDELBERG

This one looks like...  
(sees something through  
the window)  
...someone going through my trash  
again.  
(to the window)  
Hey!

BEAULIEU

What?

Outside, Heidelberg observes the same Transient in a tattered  
suit rummaging through the trash.

While Heidelberg heads to the kitchen door, Beaulieu walks  
to the window, observing...

HEIDELBERG (O.S.)

Excuse me, what are you doing?

Outside, the startled Transient assumes the ramrod bearing  
of a royal fallen on hard times...kind of like Bolt's Captain  
Bligh mustering his military formality after reaching Kupang.

TRANSIENT

Sir, I am looking for any food which  
may have been discarded.

HEIDELBERG

You won't find a meal in there.

TRANSIENT

I implore you, kind sir, these scraps  
may not be anything to you, but to  
an individual such as myself it could  
be the difference between this and a  
hundred searches...the difference  
between a full stomach and five  
Brownian miles.

HEIDELBERG

Do you want me to call the police?

TRANSIENT

No, sir. There is absolutely no need to inconvenience the boys in blue.

HEIDELBERG

Please go.

TRANSIENT

I will take my leave of your premises immediately, sir.

HEIDELBERG

Thank you.

Heidelberg reenters the kitchen, shaking his head.

BEAULIEU

Since when has your side yard become skid row?

HEIDELBERG

The second time I've seen that guy going through my trash.

BEAULIEU

I'm surprised you still haven't called the police.

HEIDELBERG

There was something kind of regal about him. Sounded Brit.

BEAULIEU

Probably one of those Century City lawyers who lost their jobs in the recession.

HEIDELBERG

He looked period...kind of like Johnny.

They look at each other.

HEIDELBERG (CONT'D)

What?

Beaulieu storms to the back door, Heidelberg on his heels: No Transient.

HEIDELBERG (CONT'D)

Fuck!

**EXT. HEIDELBERG'S HOUSE - SAME**

Heidelberg tears into the front yard like a man on fire.

He looks around: Still no sight of the Transient.

On closer inspection, he witnesses the Transient on a cross street about to board a bus.

He hightails it over to the bus, only for it to pull away as soon as he arrives.

Yelling after it, and catching up to it again at a stop sign, he smacks the side of the bus, but it drives on.

HEIDELBERG

Hey!

He runs alongside the bus...

...all the way to the next bus stop.

Panting heavily, he manages to board. Getting ready to sit down next to the Transient...

BUS DRIVER

You forgot your fare.

Heidelberg searches through his pockets and comes up empty.

The bus driver starts driving.

BUS DRIVER (CONT'D)

You're jumping off at the next stop.

A number of passengers are watching the spectacle of this hapless, bourgeois clown.

HEIDELBERG

Can I give you an I.O.U.?

The Driver gives him that unmistakable look: Which planet have you been living on?

The Transient gets up, pays the fare, and sits back down.

HEIDELBERG (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Like a newborn colt, Heidelberg staggers to find a seat on the moving bus.

He plops down across the aisle from the Transient.

HEIDELBERG (CONT'D)

(matter-of-factly)

How would you like to be in pictures?

The Transient shakes his head.

HEIDELBERG (CONT'D)

I sincerely apologize for my conduct earlier.

(pause)

How would you like to be in a movie?

The Transient gives him a look.

HEIDELBERG (CONT'D)

I think there's a role that's been written with you in mind.

(pause; trying to  
convince himself)

You know, I don't mind using non-actors.

(pause)

Do people ever come up to you and say that you could play a character in...

TRANSIENT

...*The Forgotten Man*.

HEIDELBERG

Oh my god, yes.

TRANSIENT

You mean the same way people kept comparing Henri Fortin to Jean Valjean in LeLouch's *Les Miserables*?

HEIDELBERG

Unbelievable! That is one of my favorites! You certainly know your cinema.

(beat)

What are you doing running around penniless? This is a travesty. You have a gift. What happened to you? We've got to reverse this corrosion. You can use what you know. You can help change the world. I can help you.

TRANSIENT

You will help me?

HEIDELBERG

Absolutely!

TRANSIENT

How?

HEIDELBERG

By being in my movie.



TRANSIENT

If you want me in your movie, I will  
be in your movie.

HEIDELBERG

You have no idea how excited I am to  
work with you. I never got your  
name...

TRANSIENT

It's Martin.

HEIDELBERG

That's funny. We were considering  
another Martin for the role...but  
he's thespian plutonium.

TRANSIENT

Martin Klieg?

The Transient pulls off his beard, revealing it's Martin.

Heidelberg slumps back into his seat: Thunderstruck.

HEIDELBERG

Oh my god.

MARTIN

Don't worry, Jürgen. I won't hold  
you to your word. If you don't want  
me in your film...

HEIDELBERG

Are you crazy?

A considerably long pause. Finally:

HEIDELBERG (CONT'D)

That is the best performance I have  
seen in my life, Martin. I did not  
know.

MARTIN

This is where I stop.

HEIDELBERG

(still in thought)  
What?

MARTIN

This is where I get off.

HEIDELBERG

I see. Can I give you a ride?

MARTIN

Jürgen, we're riding the bus. Do you want to get off to catch the bus back?

Still in shock...

HEIDELBERG

No, I think I will ride for a while.

MARTIN

Okay then.

Martin heads down the aisle as the bus slows.

HEIDELBERG

I want you at rehearsals on Monday.

Martin steps off the bus.

Heidelberg continues watching him as the bus pulls away.

Heidelberg's cell phone rings. He holds it up to his ear.

BEAULIEU (V.O.)

Where are you? Did you find the transient?

HEIDELBERG

I did.

BEAULIEU (V.O.)

So, is he our Johnny Fanfare?

HEIDELBERG

He is.

**INT. KITCHEN, SOTO HOME - NEW DAY**

Martin is slumped in a chair when America walks in with her implanted earbuds.

AMERICA

You look down.

She pulls them out.

MARTIN

Let me ask you something. You're a girl. Let's say a guy wanted to get back with you, what would he have to do?

AMERICA

There's nothing he could do.

MARTIN

Just as a hypothetical, okay? Let's say it's some other guy, and he hasn't broken your heart entirely...at least I hope not...but he hurt you...and let's say you thought it was salvageable somehow. What would this guy have to do?

AMERICA

I don't know.

MARTIN

I need you to think. It's important.

AMERICA

That's why she's not coming back. You don't even know what to do.

MARTIN

That's why I need your help.

AMERICA

You've got to think of something yourself. It would have to be something *big*.

MARTIN

How big?

AMERICA

I don't know. Bigger than a card.

**INT. MARTIN'S ROOM, SOTO HOME - LATER**

Martin pokes his head into the room where Alex is doing his homework on the bed.

Alex looks up, hoping for any excuse to jettison the homework.

MARTIN

Alejandro, I need your help.

Alex catapults off the bed and is ready go, when he is halted by...

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Bring your log book.

**EXT. AIRPORT TARMAC**

Martin and Alex are preflighting Martin's Cirrus SR20.

Alex sits inside the cockpit, doors open, while Martin walks around the aircraft.

MARTIN  
Ailerons!

Alex moves the controls to activate the ailerons.

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
Horizontal stabilizer!

ALEX (O.S.)  
How do I do that?

MARTIN  
Use the pedals.

**INT. CIRRUS SR20 - CONTINUOUS**

ALEX  
I can't.

Alex's feet dangle above the pedals.

MARTIN (O.S.)  
Let's switch places.

**INT. CIRRUS SR20 - LATER**

They sit at the end of the runway.

MARTIN  
Ready?

ALEX  
Yeah.

Martin takes them into the air.

**INT. CIRRUS SR20 (FLYING) - LATER**

MARTIN  
(pointing)  
Get ready to push that button.

Alex is poised for the next command. Now wearing Martin's World War I aviator glasses, he flashes his pearly whites.

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
Now!

Alex pushes the button. Nothing happens.

He looks up at Martin: Nothing happened.

Martin gives him a "look in the back" motion.

Alex looks back.

**EXT. SKY (PLANE LEVEL) - SAME**

White smoke billows from the plane.

RING RING RING

JUSTINE (V.O.)

Hello?

MARTIN (V.O.)

Don't hang up. It's Martin.

JUSTINE (V.O.)

Not you again. How did you get my personal number?

MARTIN (V.O.)

It's on your LinkedIn profile. I guess you were expecting calls.

JUSTINE (V.O.)

What do you want? By the way, the line isn't very good. There's a lot of background noise.

Inside cockpit:

MARTIN

We don't use the word line anymore. I think the word you're looking for is connection.

Inside Justine's apartment:

JUSTINE

What?

MARTIN (V.O.)

That's just an FYI.

JUSTINE

Okay.

MARTIN (V.O.)

I want to apologize to you.

JUSTINE

For correcting me on my word choice?

MARTIN KLIEG (V.O.)

No. For my bad behavior.

JUSTINE

Don't worry about it. I'm already  
out of your hair.

MARTIN KLIEG (V.O.)

What if I want you in my hair.

JUSTINE

That's weird.

MARTIN KLIEG (V.O.)

Go outside your apartment and look  
up! Gotta go.

**INT. CIRRUS SR20 - CONTINUOUS**

Some kind of horizontal smoke pattern can be seen from cockpit  
level.

**EXT. JUSTINE'S APARTMENT - MORNING**

Justine walks outside her apartment, looks around: Nothing.

She walks farther out and finally sees something...

In the sky, giant letters: "S O"

JUSTINE

So?

A while later: "S O I"

JUSTINE (CONT'D)

S O I? Soil?

The "I" is slowly transformed into a "P."

Squinting to see...

JUSTINE (CONT'D)

SOP? What???

The "P" is slowly transformed into an "R."

Slowly an "I" appears to spell "SORI."

JUSTINE (CONT'D)

(sotto voce)

Correcting me on my word choice, and  
he's the one who can't spell?

The "I" again transforms in a "P" and then an "R", spelling  
"SORR."

The base of the "Y" starts forming.

Justine looks up, squints, shading her eyes with her hand—other letters of the skywriting already dissipating.

**INT. LIVING ROOM, SOTO HOME - NIGHT**

The Sotos are watching TV: an *Entertainment Tonight* profile on Martin Klieg.

**EXT. MOVIE SET - DAY**

America gets to meet Matt Damon on set. Can you say *megalicious*?

**EXT. MOVIE SET - LATER**

Alex gets to talk with the production's helicopter pilot, Robert "Bobby Z" Zajonc, and sits inside a Bell 206L Long Ranger.

**EXT. MOVIE SET - NEW DAY**

An Edgar Allen Poe-like gray-blue mist permeates an empty farm field framed by barren trees in the distance.

Martin, Heidelberg, Writer, and Cinematographer are grouped near some freshly plowed soil.

A few extras playing farm hands wait nearby.

MARTIN

I can do this without dialogue.

HEIDELBERG

(incredulous at first)

What do you suggest we cut?

MARTIN

You know why actors love Shakespeare?

HEIDELBERG

They feel safe behind the costumes?

WRITER

The words.

MARTIN

The number of words. They love Shakespeare because the number of words gives them a lot of screen time.

(beat)

We can cut this whole page. And here I can show disbelief. I won't need this *sotto voce* line.

HEIDELBERG

You keep this up, you'll go from  
lead to supporting.

MARTIN

We've got to be true to the material.  
Johnny Fanfare is a man of minimal  
words. Excess is more.

HEIDELBERG

You mean, "less is more?"

MARTIN

No, Jürgen, that's what excess is:  
excess is just *more*.

A Boom Operator approaches, carrying a boom and mic.

HEIDELBERG

I don't get these weird American  
expressions. Excess is more. Less is  
more. Let's get down to brass tacks.  
(beat; to Writer)  
What do you think? Willing to scrap  
your dialogue?

After an excruciating long consideration...

WRITER

Let's try it.

HEIDELBERG

This way you can have your cake and  
eat it too.  
(to Boom Operator)  
We won't need you. Thanks.

MARTIN

Talking about cake, I'm hungry.  
Anybody else hungry?

HEIDELBERG

Let's break.

SECOND AD

(off Heidelberg)

We're taking a break. Call time in  
one hour.

HEIDELBERG

Tell me, where can one get a good  
schnitzel around here?



MARTIN  
Love a good schnitzel, but I've got  
something better.

**EXT. TOMMY SOTO'S LUNCH TRUCK - LATER**

Tomás exits his lunch truck holding plates, and he and Martin serve the people gathered at his tables: Heidelberg, Writer, and other crew. Heidelberg takes a juicy bite from a taco.

HEIDELBERG  
Tomás, these Asada tacos are  
fantastic.

Martin winks at Tomás: Inside joke.

MARTIN  
Not only is Tomás a great cook but  
he used to pluck a mean vihuela.

TOMÁS  
That long time ago, sir.

HEIDELBERG  
(mouth full)  
There must be a connection between  
music and the culinary arts...  
(standing up with  
excitement)  
...because the succulent flavors in  
these Asada tacos are a delicate  
five-part harmony.

He kisses his fingers in a display of supreme satisfaction.  
Everyone laughs.

HEIDELBERG (CONT'D)  
What? What? What did I say?

**SEQUENCE OF TYPICAL PRESS JUNKET & MARKETING**

Posters and One-Sheets for *The Arid Hunger of Silence*

"Martin Klieg is phenomenal." — Peter Travers, *Rolling Stone*

"Who knew Martin Klieg could be—and would be—an Oscar  
contender?" — Richard Corliss, *TIME*

BOB MONDELLO, NPR  
Klieg is a tour-de-force. You simply  
cannot imagine anyone else in the  
role of Johnny Fanfare.

"I could not take my eyes off him. Klieg delivers a subtle,  
nuanced performance.

Best performance of the decade, hands down." – Manohla Dargis,  
*New York Times*

On-set interviews

*The Charlie Rose Show*

Clips from Epix Actor's Roundtable, *Thompson on Hollywood*  
Roundtable, *THR Actor's Roundtable*

Sundance, Toronto, Tribeca, Berlin, Cannes

Grauman's Chinese Red Carpet Premiere

#### **INT. CARLETON'S OFFICE, CAA - NEW DAY**

Justine enters carrying a short stack of trade magazines and drops them on Carleton's desk.

Martin's face splashed alongside *Hollywood Reporter*,  
*Entertainment Weekly*, and *Variety* headlines: "Martin Klieg:  
Standard & Poor" and "Comeback Kid" and "Where was Martin?"  
and "Klieg, light."

On the wall behind Carleton—a big poster of *The Arid Hunger*  
*of Silence*.

Justine is about to leave. Carleton considers the magazines...

CARLETON

Know why I never fired him?  
(doesn't wait for a  
response)

He was the first actor to take me on  
as an agent. At that time I was just  
starting out at some kleindienst  
agency that sounded like Chew Hemlock  
& Lovett, and he was already a big  
star. Others were telling him to let  
me go for years, but he just  
stayed...stayed like a dog.

Justine leaves Carleton with his thoughts.

His eyes well up.

Head Agent appears in the doorway.

HEAD AGENT

Great job! You know I was rooting  
for you the whole way. I just couldn't  
let the others know...too young to  
understand, if you know what I mean.

CARLETON

(unfazed)

Thanks.

HEAD AGENT

(fishing)

So, I guess we'll be seeing more of you.

CARLETON

As long as you're not leaving.

Head Agent presents a sloppy salute as he walks away.

**EXT, JUSTINE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Martin lingers in front of Justine's door.

Before he rings the doorbell, the door whips opens.

JUSTINE

Did you know the difference between stalking and a house call involves knocking or ringing a door bell?

MARTIN

I didn't get a chance. You ripped the door open before I could...

JUSTINE

Okay, then.

A beat.

MARTIN

Did you see it?

JUSTINE

How do I know you didn't call up every girlfriend you ever had?

MARTIN

I did. You're the only one who answered.

JUSTINE

I believe that.

MARTIN

I'm starved. Wanna grab some food?

JUSTINE

I hope I don't regret this...Want to come in? I was just about to prepare something.

MARTIN

No. Let's go out.

JUSTINE

Don't trust my cooking?

MARTIN

I feel like I haven't earned my way into your apartment yet.

JUSTINE

It's just dinner.

MARTIN

Home-cooked dinner, are you kidding? That's a big deal.

JUSTINE

Nobody ever cook you dinner before?

MARTIN

Sure. My foster parents did.

JUSTINE

You mean to tell me none of the talent ever fired up a burner for you?

Martin shakes his head. Pathetic.

**EXT. TACO STAND - LATER**

JUSTINE

I still can't get over the fact that you called me an eight.

MARTIN

Nines require a lot of makeup, and tens need Photoshop.

JUSTINE

I always thought of myself as a six or seven.

MARTIN

(sotto voce)

What do they say...boldness favors the lucky?

He cranes across the table and kisses her. It is a prolonged kiss—prolonged by her.

JUSTINE

They didn't say that.

MARTIN

They didn't?

JUSTINE

No, they said that luck favors the bold.

MARTIN

Glad I didn't make that mistake.

**EXT. DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION - NIGHT**

The Red Carpet.

Somewhere in the train of talent: Martin Klieg and Justine holding hands.

**SEQUENCE OF OSCAR AWARDS ON TV**

Building up to...

**INT. DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION - LATER**

ANNOUNCER

The nominees in the category of Best Actor in a Supporting Role are:

The film looks like a sci-fi.

Chyron: Paul David Cantor, *Vertical Horizon*

Cantor coming out of cryosleep...

FEMALE CAPTAIN

Welcome back.

Agonized, Cantor cradles his head in his hands, as if trying to keep it from splitting open...

CANTOR

Jesus Christ, man, I had a fuck'n apocalyptic dream last night, woke up to it this morning, just a few minutes ago. Fold-up helicopters and...Jesus, some girl was just... still had some grenades on her and rolled em on the ground. It's like, God, I fuck'n walked away. I didn't want to die there. Someone was packing up their shit to go back home...they'd been done...made their money. What a horrible dream.

FEMALE CAPTAIN

That was no dream.

He looks up...

CANTOR

It wasn't?

Laughter and applause, bleeding right into the next clip where Wallace Shawn is talking to an idiot...

Chyron: Wallace Shawn, *Blue Lapis Lazuli*

WALLACE SHAWN

(agitated; foaming at  
the mouth)

Blue lapis lazuli? Blue lapis lazuli?  
Are you kidding me? It's already as  
blue as jazz. Your insipid utterance  
makes aquamarine want to join the  
army. It makes cobalt want to get a  
name change. It makes periwinkle  
want to get its hair straightened.  
Don't talk to me about blue lapis  
lazuli, you dingleberry. What are  
you going to talk to me about next,  
moron? Green malachite?

Laughter and applause.

Aaron Reznick's character is stranded on the edge of an icy mountain talking on a satellite phone.

Chyron: Aaron Reznick, *Basecamp*

AARON REZNICK

(fearful)

I don't know how long the oxygen  
will hold out...

(sucks on oxygen)

but I want to let you know that I  
love you...

(sucks on oxygen)

Give Rachel a big hug for me. Tell  
her I love her...

(sucks on oxygen)

Tell her I'm sorry I won't be there  
to see her...

(sucks on oxygen)

...to see her grow up. I'm sorry.

Applause...

Next clip: Out of focus, people assembled around a funeral plot.

Chyron: Bill Pullman, *Bygone Days of Swimmers*

BILL PULLMAN

(histrionic)

The organism must live. Must survive.  
Its drive to survive is stronger  
than the natural course of death. It  
cuts every corner, meets it at every  
pass, trips it at every bend. When  
death has caught up, two stand in  
its place. The ever-losing battle of  
death. Life takes death on a journey  
of hurried exploitations, feeds it  
with the desire of eventual triumph  
but mocks it all the way along the  
path to the final resting place.  
Death has only one place to go. The  
organism has many. The organism must  
live.

He holds up a bright neon-green rose to those assembled—now  
in better focus: A congregation of Bill Pullman clones all  
in the same attire.

BILL PULLMAN (CONT'D)

(holding up a bright  
green rose)

To the death of Death.

He tosses the rose onto a shiny neon-green coffin in the  
ground.

Applause...

Final clip: Clearly the end of a film. It has the barren but  
epic grandeur of Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia*.

Chyron: Martin Klieg, *The Arid Hunger of Silence*

Martin is looking into the camera as if defiantly staring  
into the future, while simultaneously in a multi-level  
dissolve, his silhouette walks across a barren farm field  
stretching to infinity.

MARTIN KLIEG (V.O.)

(British accent; adagio  
tempo)

All our lives we were hunted. We  
scurried like scared, small creatures  
from a foe unseen. And as I look  
upon this tired, fateful orb clinging  
to the dark waters, it begs this  
question...this question of man:  
What if we did this?...

(MORE)

MARTIN KLIEG (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 What if we did this all?...What if  
 we did this all...in the absence...of  
 God?

The score fades out slowly after the clip ends.

Profound silence followed by a burst of strong applause.

ANNOUNCER  
 The nominees for Best Actor in a  
 Supporting Role are:  
 (pause)  
 Paul David Cantor, *Vertical Horizon*.

Applause. A shot of a self-satisfied Cantor.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)  
 Wallace Shawn, *Blue Lapis Lazuli*.

Applause. A shot of a jovial Wallace giving a thumbs up sign.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)  
 Aaron Reznick, *Basecamp*.

Applause. A shot of a shy Aaron Reznick.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)  
 Bill Pullman, *Bygone Days of Swimmers*.

Applause. A shot of Pullman waving off the camera.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)  
 ...and Martin Klieg, *The Arid Hunger  
 of Silence*.

Applause. A shot of Martin, resigned.

**INT. DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION - CONTINUOUS**

ANNOUNCER  
 And the Oscar goes to...  
 (almost a question,  
 but signaling genuine  
 surprise)  
 Aar...M...Martin Klieg. *The Arid  
 Hunger of Silence*.

**INT. LIVING ROOM, SOTO HOME - SIMULTANEOUS**

Flora is at home watching the Oscars on TV.



## ANNOUNCER

This is Martin Klieg's first nomination and first win in this category.

On screen: Martin turns to kiss...

**INT. DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION - CONTINUOUS**

...Fernanda—beaming like a proud mother.

Still holding her hand, Martin stands up slowly...starched collar, ramrod straight...looks like the most dignified recipient of the Nobel Prize for film ever. God, he cleans up well—makes Clooney look like Buscemi.

As he walks up the proscenium stairs, the audience rises to its feet.

On stage, he gets a warm hug and kiss from the actress announcer. He is handed the Oscar. In front of the microphone...

## MARTIN

(overwhelmed)

Wow.

Basking in the applause.

It goes on for some unnaturally prolonged time...finally attenuating into paper-rustling silence.

## MARTIN (CONT'D)

This would be the perfect time to have a genuine English accent.

Laughter.

## MARTIN (CONT'D)

They never tell us how slim the margins are, but let's keep in mind it could be just one vote that singled me out from the other nominees. Maybe I got lucky.

People in the audience are looking at each other: Is this the Martin Klieg we know?

## MARTIN (CONT'D)

I know it is customary to first thank members of the Academy, but I want to thank someone else: the Soto family, who brought me back into the orbit of humanity. Without their love...I wouldn't be here today.

(MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)

(beat)

Like Johnny Fanfare, we are all characters in our own lives. In life, we choose who we are in the same way actors choose to play a character in a film. Some aspects of those characters are set in stone by the story...and others are based on the choices we make.

(pause)

Sometimes we don't know why we make the choices we do, but I have come to know one thing: you can't grow without exposing yourself to the valiant choices others make within the stories they were handed.

(beat)

The Sotos taught me that.

(pause)

I want to thank Fernanda, Tomás, America, Alex, and Flora, for opening their home and their hearts to an undeserving stranger.

(beat)

And while Jürgen von Heidelberg directed me in this part of his incredible film, it is the Soto family who directed me in this part of my incredible life.

He winks at Justine, sitting with the rest of the Sotos in the balcony.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

I will be forever grateful. Thank you.

He kisses his fingers and disperses the kiss toward the Sotos.

Formidable applause.

Carleton in the audience looking on...

MARTIN (CONT'D)

I also want to thank Carleton Voss, my friend and agent. When you bifurcate *agent*, you get "agent"...and that is exactly what he is. Thank you, Carleton.

Applause and music as Martin is escorted off the stage by two beautiful women.

**INT. BACKSTAGE, DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION - LATER**

Pictures taken of Martin with the Sotos.

Hugs all around.

**INT. OSCAR PARTY - LATER**

A long line of congratulators. Carleton approaches with Phoebe, who gives Martin a big hug.

CARLETON

It was worth it, wasn't it?

MARTIN

For one thing, I discovered you aren't all powerful.

CARLETON

What? Really?

(leans in; whispers)

You think I didn't know about the barbecue in Malibu or the Alexander McQueen flame red dress from Neiman Marcus?

The look on Martin's face: Precious.

CARLETON (CONT'D)

Got something else already lined up for you. It'll require research.

MARTIN

Hope it's not something outside my comfort zone.

CARLETON

You'll love it. It's a monster flick.

A look of terror briefly flashes across Martin's face.

CARLETON (CONT'D)

Call me.

MARTIN

I thought you were retiring?

CARLETON

What? Who told you such nonsense?

Phoebe winks. Carleton turns to Phoebe as they both dissolve into the crowd.

An ACTOR approaches a stunned Martin.

ACTOR

It was fun working with you—contrary to expectations. Congratulations, Martin.

MARTIN

(still looking after Phoebe)

Thanks, bro. You too.

ACTOR

Next time I'm gonna ask to have my lines cut down too.

Heidelberg wedges in...

HEIDELBERG

(off Actor)

Excess is more.

MARTIN

Excess is more, indeed.

Heidelberg hands him a dollar.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

What's this?

HEIDELBERG

Bus fare.

(sincere; with a knowing look)

Thank you.

Martin spies Justine across the room, her back to him. He watches her talking with other people.

As if sensing someone watching her, she turns around and holds up her champagne glass to him and smiles: Almost shy. Amazingly gorgeous. Future wife—if she'll have him.

**(CODA) EXT. SOTO HOUSE - NEW DAY**

A stretch limousine pulls up to the Soto's house.

Martin and Justine get out, holding hands.

Martin knocks on the door. The door opens, revealing ALEC BALDWIN.

ALEC BALDWIN

Looking for the Sotos? They're on vacation.

(MORE)

ALEC BALDWIN (CONT'D)  
(finally noticing the  
beautiful Justine)  
Oh, hi!

MARTIN  
What are you doing here?

In his typical breathy, peripatetic spaceyness...

ALEC BALDWIN  
(looking around)  
Trying to win an Oscar.  
(beat; explaining)  
Look, don't tell anybody.

Alec closes the door abruptly, leaving them hanging.

**(END CREDITS) EXT. SAIL BOAT, DANA POINT - NEW DAY**

Martin and Justine sail into the sunset.

Cutting Crew's "I've Been in Love Before" plays over the end credits, followed by Billy Joel's "Just the Way You Are."

FADE OUT: