

# THE LIFE AND DEATH OF ALBERT MEEKS

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By Larry Mitchell

FADE IN:

1 EXT. MILE HIGH JUMP PLANE - DAY - 2002 1

The plane, a crushed beer can, fights through an almost cloudless sky. Below is Hawaii, both land and sea. Volcanoes, trees, shanties, surfers.

Through the window, AL, a crushed dream of a man, stares out, awkward fitting goggles and all, into the blue.

AL (V.O.)  
I think I can. I think I can. I  
think I can. I think I can. I think  
I can. I think I can. I think I  
can...

CUT TO:

2 INT. MILE HIGH JUMP PLANE - CONTINUOUS 2

AL turns to face inside. He does not belong here. PAOLO, an experienced jumper, and a beast of a man, a native of the island, notices AL's sudden movement. His words...

PAOLO  
Hey, buddy! You alright?!

... Go unheard as AL continues mouthing his inner mantra...

AL (V.O.)  
I think I can. I think I can. I  
think I can..

...AL gets up with an incongruous sense of determination and heads for the jump door, which is always open. The others watch as PAOLO follows AL to the door...

AL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
I think I can. I think I can.

...PAOLO puts a helpful hand on AL's shoulder, to get his attention, stopping the unbroken mantra.

AL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
I think I--

AL's face initially conveys confusion but quickly turns to calm as he turns and gives PAOLO an encouraging pat on the chest, (can't reach the shoulder), and a "thumbs up." Both men smile.

AL turns back to look out the door as PAOLO turns and repeats the "thumbs up," to the rest of the plane.

The pensive faces of the others relax, if for only a second, before lurching into wonder, fear, and concern.

When PAOLO turns to the focus of their gaze, he sees that AL is no longer there.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. MILE HIGH JUMP PLANE - CONTINUOUS 3

AL is just under the plane. A flash of his Dalai Llama face before he disappears. PAOLO jumps as soon as his brain can register what just happened.

Did a coffin just fly by?

As PAOLO disappears, the faces of the others fill the windows and the open door of the plane.

FADE TO:

4 INT. RAY'S ART HOUSE - NIGHT - 1985 4

A dingy yet inviting art house, San Louis Obispo, CA: Nicotine stains, soda trails, a few torn seats. The way movie houses used to look when tickets were still affordable.

SHEILA, a goofy looking yet still attractive young woman, 19, shovels popcorn into her mouth and stares intently at a somewhat audible screening of "HAROLD AND MAUDE," while the couple to her left make out like the end is nigh.

There is only one other person, MOVIE GUY, in the place.

MARCY, SHEILA's roommate, the female portion of the bait ball, bumps SHEILA's popcorn, knocks it to the floor.

SHEILA

Marcy ! What the hell?

MOVIE GUY

Shhhhhhh!

SHEILA (WHISPER)  
That's my last dollar.

MARK, the male half, a dude with Greek letters on his sweatshirt and Emilio Estevez hair stares straight ahead, rigid, and pretends to watch the film as MARCY turns.

MARCY (WHISPER)  
Sorry.

SHEILA (WHISPER)  
Don't say, "sorry."

MOVIE GUY  
Shhhhhh!

MARCY (WHISPER)  
What then?

SHEILA (WHISPER)  
Go get some more.

MARCY (WHISPER)  
I don't have any money.

SHEILA (WHISPER)  
Ask him.

MARCY (WHISPER)  
I'm not gonna ask--

MARK tosses a dollar into the fray.

SHEILA slaps the dollar into MARCY's hand and turns back to the screen.

MARCY (WHISPER) (CONT'D)  
Fine.

SHEILA whispers something into MARK's ear. He whispers back as they both giggle and SHEILA tries to ignore them. Both MARK and MARCY get up and leave together.

SHEILA  
Where are you going?

MOVIE GUY  
Shhhhhh!

SHEILA  
Bite me!

MARCY (WHISPER)  
We'll be right back.

The MOVIE GUY, a shaggy but harmless man, 22, Orioles cap, and somewhat familiar looking, stares ahead as if he wasn't the one doing all the shh-ing. But, he and SHEILA are the only two left in the theater.

SHEILA

Sorry.

Both return their gazes to the screen.

CUT TO:

5 INT. - RAY'S ART HOUSE LOBBY - NIGHT 5

MARCY and MARK have made their way out into the lobby, pawing and gnawing each other the entire way.

They reach the snack counter to discover that it has been shut down for the night. No popcorn, no candy, no lights, no people. Undaunted, they return to making out.

MARCY

What about the popcorn?

MARK

What about the butter?

MARCY

What?

CUT TO:

6 INT. - RAY'S ART HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER 6

SHEILA and MOVIE GUY stare at the screen.

MARCY runs into the theater, tosses a few dollars to SHEILA, and runs back out, on a mission to avoid discussion of the matter.

SHEILA jumps up--

SHEILA

Hey!

But MARCY is gone. Torn between missing the movie and finding out what's up, she catches the wandering eye of MOVIE GUY and chooses to sit back down.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. RAY'S ART HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 7

MARCY runs out the double doors of the lobby to instantly reattach to a waiting MARK.

They paw and gnaw their way down the street and into MARK'S PONTIAC FIERO before disappearing into the night.

As the car disappears, the NIGHT MAN walks through the front double doors.

CUT TO:

8 INT - RAY'S ART HOUSE LOBBY - CONTINUOUS 8

The NIGHT MAN enters, puts on some fuzzy yellow headphones, goes behind the counter, gets an industrial beast of a vacuum cleaner, plugs it in, and gets to work on the floors.

FADE TO:

9 INT. RAY'S ART HOUSE - END OF THE FILM 9

SHEILA and MOVIE GUY remain trasfixed as the credits roll, until SHEILA remembers that she is the third wheel. She jumps up to find the other two as MOVIE GUY watches her exit, judges her, then returns to watching the credits.

CUT TO:

10 INT. RAY'S ART HOUSE LOBBY - CONTINUOUS 10

SHEILA makes it out to the almost abandoned lobby. A NIGHT MAN runs the vacuum.

SHEILA

You've got to be kidding me.

She walks out the front doors.

She comes back in and approaches the NIGHT MAN.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Uhm. Excuse me... Excuse me!

He stops the vacuum and pulls off the headphones.

NIGHT MAN

Hello.

SHEILA

Did you see a couple come through here?

NIGHT MAN

Sorry. No habla.

SHEILA

Oh.

NIGHT MAN

Sorry miss.

He turns the vacuum and music back on, then returns to the task at hand, as does SHEILA, who runs back out to the street.

CUT TO:

11 INT - RAY'S ART HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 11

MOVIE GUY gathers his jacket, soda, and what's left of his popcorn as the credits finish and the lights come up. He takes a moment, as if he's contemplating the notion of staying there, before exiting the theater.

CUT TO:

12 INT. - RAY'S ART HOUSE LOBBY - CONTINUOUS 12

MOVIE GUY tosses the soda in the trash can and waves to the NIGHT MAN, who is still vacuuming and doesn't notice the gesture, before exiting to the street.

CUT TO:

13 EXT. RAY'S ART HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 13

MOVIE GUY fishes for his keys as he exits and tries not to make eye contact with a visibly upset SHEILA, who is a few feet away, on the pay phone, not having much luck.

MOVIE GUY drops his popcorn.

SHEILA

Pick up! Pick up!... You better be home.

He bends down to pick it up, but his keys fall. He drops the popcorn back down. Puts his jacket on, then picks up the keys and the popcorn.

SHEILA slams the receiver down!

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Bitch!

MOVIE GUY attempts to walk invisibly by SHEILA to his car, but she grabs his popcorn, which makes him drop his keys.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

You mind.

MOVIE GUY

Pardon?

SHEILA

Were you gonna' eat that?

MOVIE GUY

Umm...

SHEILA

Of course you were. You wouldn't have kept it if you...

MOVIE GUY

I guess--

SHEILA

It's just, my friends, my roommate and her friend, kind of left me here.

MOVIE GUY (OVERLAP)

I kind of gathered that.

SHEILA

... And I don't have a ride anymore... Yeah, sorry about all that... so I guess I was hoping to-

MOVIE GUY

Do you need a ride somewhere?

SHEILA

Actually, yes, but I was really just after the popcorn. They gave me three bucks, so I guess I can get a cab. But nobody has popcorn but you... the theatre's closed... and I'm starving.

MOVIE GUY

Would you like a ride? Maybe to a restaurant or something?

SHEILA

No, I don't have any money.

MOVIE GUY

You have three dollars.

SHEILA

I need that for the cab.

MOVIE GUY

What if I give you a ride?

SHEILA

You're not some kind of creep or something are you?

MOVIE GUY

No.

SHEILA

You were at a late night screening of Harold and Maude. I don't know if I can trust you.

MOVIE GUY

So were you.

SHEILA

Duly noted. Are you asking me out on a date?

MOVIE GUY

No. I'm just offering you a ride.

SHEILA

To a restaurant?

MOVIE GUY

Yes. I mean, I guess--

SHEILA

How will I get home if I spend all my money on food?

MOVIE GUY

I guess I could eat with you and give you a ride home.

SHEILA

Well, if you're going to eat, then I think that's a date.

MOVIE GUY

Maybe you're right.

SHEILA  
If it's a date, you should pay.

MOVIE GUY  
What would Gloria Steinem say?

SHEILA  
I don't know. What kind of a question is that?

MOVIE GUY  
Nevermind.

SHEILA  
So...

MOVIE GUY  
Yeah. You still want the popcorn?

SHEILA  
Of course I do.

FADE TO:

14 INT. - MOVIE GUY'S BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING 14

An alarm clock, the kind with the back-lit rolling numbers, sounds a warbling buzz as a hand moves to turn it off before accidentally knocking it to the floor. MOVIE GUY rolls over and picks the clock back up.

He lumbers out of bed to discover his naked body in the mirror, which is not a part of the normal routine.

SHEILA (O.C.)  
Good morning.

MOVIE GUY, startled, moves back to the bed and covers his parts with the sheet. Sheila pokes through the door.

SHEILA (CONT'D)  
You want coffee?

MOVIE GUY  
I don't really drink it.

SHEILA  
Why do you have a pot?

MOVIE GUY  
Doesn't everybody?

SHEILA enters the room. She is dressed, albeit, in last night's clothes, and has clearly been up for at least an hour.

SHEILA  
Well, coffee's ready.

MOVIE GUY  
I thought that was a dream.

SHEILA  
The coffee?

MOVIE GUY  
Last night.

SHEILA  
Oh my God. More like a nightmare.

He sits on the bed, grabs a pillow and covers his shame.

MOVIE GUY  
I'm sorry?

SHEILA  
No! Not you. My roommate. Marcy.  
And the boy.

MOVIE GUY  
Oh.

A second. He smiles.

SHEILA  
You were adequate, nothing at all  
to worry about, Movie Guy.

MOVIE GUY  
Al.

SHEILA  
What?

MOVIE GUY  
My name is Al.

SHEILA  
I know. I'm Sheila.

AL  
How?

SHEILA  
That's just what they named me, I  
guess. Parents.

AL  
No. I mean--

SHEILA  
I read your mail.

AL  
Pardon?

SHEILA  
Just the envelope. It's nice to  
meet you, Albert Meeks.

AL  
Likewise...

And your name is?

SHEILA  
Oh! Sheila.

AL  
Sheila?

SHEILA  
Sheila Robinson. How did we skip  
that part?

AL  
I don't know.

SHEILA  
You should probably get dressed.

AL  
Right.

Awkward...

SHEILA  
You still got that popcorn?

AL  
I thought I gave it to you.

SHEILA  
Maybe it's still in the car.

A moment.

AL  
Do you mind?

SHEILA  
Oh. Sure.

SHEILA goes into the hall as AL works on getting dressed, putting pants on under the sheet, as if she is still in the room.

SHEILA (CONT'D)  
Unless you want to have sex again.

Al stops short of buttoning his pants. Sheila pokes her head in. They share a smile.

CUT TO:

15 EXT. AL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - A BIT LATER 15

A fully clothed SHEILA and AL exit the complex onto the sidewalk. There is still a light amount of traffic, both on the sidewalk and in the street, though not as much as there might have been an hour ago.

AL  
You need a ride to school?

SHEILA  
No, I called a cab when you were in the shower. I need to get to class.

AL  
Oh. OK. Me, too, actually.

SHEILA  
Well?

AL  
Well...

SHEILA  
What now? Right?

AL  
Would you like to--

SHEILA  
Yes. But, and I should have mentioned this, I'm not into relationships.

AL  
OK.

SHEILA  
I mean, not right now. I just got  
out of one.

AL  
Me too.

SHEILA  
Isn't that how it always goes?

AL  
I guess.

SHEILA  
Which one of us is the rebound lay?

No answer from Al, just an awkward stare.

SHEILA (CONT'D)  
Alright, lets say tomorrow, then.  
Friday is more of a date night, and  
I've got work to do tonight.  
Besides, it makes you seem less  
eager.

A moment.

AL  
OK.

SHEILA  
Would you like my phone number?

AL  
Oh. Yes.

SHEILA grabs a pen from her purse, and writes the number on  
the inside rim of AL's hat.

SHEILA  
What's with the bird?

MOVIE GUY  
It's an Oriole.

SHEILA  
I'm aware. You a bird watcher?

MOVIE GUY  
It's a baseball team.

SHEILA

I am also aware of that, but you don't seem like a baseball fan.

MOVIE GUY

Hometown. Baltimore.

SHEILA

And you came all the way out here to go to school?

The YELLOW TAXI pulls up.

AL

I guess so.

SHEILA

Give me a call tomorrow.

AL

OK.

SHEILA

Do we kiss now?

AL

I don't know.

SHEILA

I think we should. The cabbie's watching, and I'll take fake romance over awkward good-byes any day.

AL

OK.

AL and SHEILA kiss. She hops into a yellow cab, rolls down the window.

SHEILA

You better call.

AL

I will.

SHEILA

I know where you live, Albert Meeks.

AL watches as the taxi disappears down the street.

CUT TO:

16 INT. COMPUTER LAB - NEXT DAY 16

A mostly bare room with a couple desks, a drafting table, giant printer, and two COMMODORE 64's.

AL is on a Commodore 64, drafting and crunching numbers, whatever it is they do, when the phone rings.

The LAB-OP answers, then cautiously approaches AL who is still diligently working and unaware of the impending intrusion.

LAB OP  
Al?

AL  
Oh. Yes?

LAB OP  
Phone call for you.

AL  
Oh.

LAB OP  
It's a girl.

AL allows this news to fully compute, and makes his way to the phone swiftly but with hesitation.

AL  
Hello?

CUT TO:

17 INT. SHEILA AND MARCY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS 17

The apartment is homey, clean, but more shabby than chic. Still cute, though. Lots of plants.

MARCY is watching TV and eating as SHEILA chats next to her on the couch.

SHEILA  
Hi Al. It's Sheila.

AL (V.O.)  
Hi.

SHEILA  
You'll never believe how hard it was to track you down.

AL (V.O.)  
How *did* you find me?

SHEILA  
Student directory, but you weren't home. Then I called around for a while until somebody knew who you were, and they said something about you being in the computer lab, so I called the computer lab, and here you are.

AL (V.O.)  
Yes. I was going to call you.

SHEILA  
Yeah, I know, but I couldn't wait, and I wanted to call you, but I don't know if I'd do it over again.

AL (V.O.)  
Oh?

SHEILA  
Yeah. Now, I probably seem desperate. Right?

Dead air.

SHEILA (CONT'D)  
So, were we going out tonight? I'd be happy to pay.

AL (V.O.)  
Really?

SHEILA  
It's what Gloria Steinem would do, right?

AL (V.O.)  
I don't know. I guess so.

SHEILA  
Sounds fun. Right?

AL (V.O.)  
Sure.

SHEILA  
You like bowling?

AL (V.O.)  
Bowling? Sure.

SHEILA

Great. I'll pick you up at eight.  
Be outside, though. I hate looking  
for a spot.

SHEILA hangs up the phone.

CUT TO:

18 INT. COMPUTER LAB - CONTINUOUS 18

AL

Eight o' clock then?... Hello?  
Hello?

AL hangs up the phone.

CUT TO:

19 INT. SHEILA AND MARCY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS 19

SHEILA puts the phone down onto the floor and relaxes into  
the television.

MARCY

Got a date, then?

SHEILA

Looks like it.

MARCY

Where you going?

SHEILA

Bowling.

MARCY

With the guy from the movie?

SHEILA

Yeah. His name is Al.

MARCY

Yeah, well Al looks like a creep.

SHEILA knocks MARCY's chips to the floor.

MARCY (CONT'D)

What the hell?!

SHEILA

At least he doesn't leave me  
stranded for some frat-rat. And  
those are my chips.

SHEILA grabs what's left of the chips and leaves the room.

MARCY

Bitch.

MARCY picks up the chips from the floor, goes back to eating  
and staring at the TV.

CUT TO:

20

INT. FAST-LANES BOWLING ALLEY - THAT NIGHT

20

AL and SHEILA share a lane in the moderately busy bowling  
alley. SHEILA has just finished picking up a 10 - pin spare.

SHEILA

Strike!

AL

Spare.

SHEILA

That's a strike. I got all 10.

AL

On the second try.

SHEILA

So?

AL

So, you have to get all 10 on the  
first try for a strike.

SHEILA

Oh. Well, what was that, then?

AL

A spare.

SHEILA

Well, that's still good, though.

AL

Good enough.

SHEILA

It's your throw.

AL  
Right.

SHEILA  
Get a spare.

AL  
How about I get a strike?

SHEILA  
Can you?

AL  
I've done it before.

AL makes his approach and goes into full - swing strike - mode, ready to prove his worthiness as an amateur bowler at mid swing, SHEILA says--

SHEILA  
So, how would you like a roommate?

AL's ball goes flying backwards into the racks of house balls, scaring a couple of kids.

FADE TO:

21 EXT. OVERLOOK - LATER THAT NIGHT

21

AL and SHEILA sit on the hood of her Toyota Camry, looking out onto the valley, a desert, scarred with swaths of light, surrounded by a vacuum of black.

AL  
I mean, don't you have to give notice or something?

SHEILA  
I'm not even on the lease. Marcy's mom owns the apartment, and I just pay her.

AL  
Not a bad setup.

SHEILA  
It sucks. So, what's it gonna' be?

AL  
I don't know. This seems a little...

SHEILA

Fast?

AL

Maybe. I mean, what if this doesn't work out?

SHEILA

If what doesn't work out? We're not in a relationship.

AL

Aren't we?

SHEILA

Absolutely not. I just got out of one.

AL

Me too.

SHEILA

I know.

AL

Then, what?

SHEILA

We'd just be roommates.

AL

But there's only one room.

SHEILA

That's OK. We can share a bed.

AL

Can we?

SHEILA

We can do whatever we want, AL. We're adults. Right?

AL

But, doesn't that mean we're in a relationship?

SHEILA

Nothing means anything unless we say it does.

AL

Sex?

SHEILA

We better.

AL

OK.

SHEILA

I mean, what's the point in sharing a bed if we don't have sex.

AL

But we're not in a relationship?

SHEILA

No. Not if we say we aren't.

AL

And we see other people?

SHEILA

If we say we do, we do.

AL

That could get a little weird.

SHEILA

Anything can get weird, if you let it.

AL

With one room, I don't see how that-

SHEILA

We don't have to see other people in the same bed. Or at all. I'm not seeing anyone at the moment.

AL

Me neither.

SHEILA

So, there's no problem.

AL

Yes, but in the future.

SHEILA

In the future we can deal with the future.

AL

How?

SHEILA  
We can make rules.

AL  
Rules?

SHEILA  
Yeah. Like a contract.

SHEILA pulls a pen and a receipt out of her purse.

AL  
Are you writing this down?

SHEILA  
I'm going to. Yes. That way we'll remember.

AL  
Right.

SHEILA  
Rule number one: we are not in a relationship.

AL  
OK, good rule. Number two: The toilet seat stays up.

SHEILA  
That's not really what we're going for here, but I can live with that.

AL  
What are we going for, here?

SHEILA  
A relationship-- an *anti*-relationship contract. We're covering bases. And, we can deal with house rules later.

AL  
OK.

SHEILA  
Rule number three...

FADE TO:

22 INT. MARCY AND SHEILA'S APT. - DAY - A FEW DAYS LATER 22

A nonplused MARCY is sunk into the sofa, watching, as AL and SHEILA move clothes and boxes out of the apartment.

23 INT. AL'S APARTMENT - A FEW DAYS LATER - MONTAGE 23

AL and SHEILA are loading in a bunch of Sheila's plants.

CUT TO:

24 INT. FAST-LANES BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT - LATER 24

Sheila scores a strike. Al marks it on the score sheet and the two share a kiss.

CUT TO:

25 INT. GREENHOUSE, UC SAN LUIS - DAY - LATER 25

SHEILA dons a lab-coat, along with several other students, who follow what must be a professor along the rows of greenery, inspecting the plants and listening to the lecturer.

CUT TO:

26 INT. COMPUTER LAB - DAY - LATER 26

AL is drafting, opens his book to find a note from SHEILA that reads, "Just wanted to say Hi... Hi. -Sheila" No hearts or affectations necessary.

CUT TO:

27 INT. AL AND SHEILA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - LATER 27

AL is working on making spaghetti. Nothing fancy. Cans of sauce and noodles. But, he's having a hell of a go at it. The phone rings, and he runs to answer it, knocking over one of the plants.

As he attempts to re-pot the plant, the timer goes off and the pasta boils over. As AL fails to fight the two-front battle, SHEILA comes home and surveys the damage...

No biggie. She scoops the soil into the pasta bowl, throws the spaghetti into the trash and pulls out a pan of JIFFY POP.

As the corn starts to cook, AL comes behind SHEILA, kissing her on the nape of the neck. Sheila reciprocates, and the two of them disappear.

The JIFFY POP continues to cook, overflows, and burns. Eventually, the smoke alarm goes off, and a naked AL runs in to the kitchen, throws the pan in the sink, turns the stove off, and returns to bed.

FADE TO:

28 INT. AL AND SHEILA'S APARTMENT - DAY - ONE YEAR LATER 28

AL walks in, tosses his keys on the counter, and takes off his coat.

The apartment looks somewhat different, a bit more of a lady's hand to it, definitely more plants, but it was always somewhat organized.

The TV is on, but nobody is watching it.

AL  
I've got some good news.

There is no answer.

AL (CONT'D)  
Sheila?

SHEILA (O.C.)  
In the bathroom!

AL  
Oh.

AL picks the mail up off of the counter, shuffles through it, picks one to open, inspects, files it back into the pile.

SHEILA (O.C.)  
Did you say something?

AL  
I said, "I've got news."

SHEILA (O.C.)  
Oh?

AL  
Yeah. Good news.

SHEILA (O.C.)  
Really? I've got news too.

AL  
Good news?

SHEILA (O.C.)  
Maybe. You go first.

AL  
You still on track to graduate in May?

SHEILA (O.C.)  
Um, probably not, now that I changed majors.

AL  
You switched?

SHEILA (O.C.)  
Yeah, I'm better with plants than I am with frogs.

AL  
So, you won't be done in May?

SHEILA (O.S.)  
Depends on the year. If you mean May of '87, then Yes. What's up?

AL  
I think I got a job.

SHEILA (O.C.)  
With NASA?

AL  
No, that's just an internship, but that's how I met the guy. Greg Bond. He works in D.C.. Department of Defense. Some government contractor or another and he needs an entry-level engineer.

SHEILA (O.C.)  
D.C.?

AL  
Yeah.

SHEILA (O.C.)  
Like Washington D.C.

AL  
Exactly like that. Starts next year.

SHEILA (O.C.)

Oh.

AL

And, I mean, I know there's nothing in the contract about this, but I thought you might like, or at least, I might offer you the option of going with me.

SHEILA (O.C.)

To Washington?

AL

Yeah, I know. Crazy, right? But I thought that I might offer, since we've kinda' been living together, though contractually *not* in a relationship.

An indecipherable noise from SHEILA...

AL (CONT'D)

Of course, if you didn't want to go, you're more than welcome to hang on to this place. This feels weird.

SHEILA

How so?

AL

Are you about finished in there?

SHEILA (O.C.)

Two more minutes.

AL

That's very specific of you.

SHEILA (O.C.)

Thanks.

AL walks over to the TV, turns it off.

AL

So, what do you think?

SHEILA (O.C.)

About Washington?

AL

Yeah. I mean, we could make a new contract and everything, or maybe even discuss the idea of being in an actual relationship.

Silence

AL (CONT'D)

No pressure, though. It's really up to you, but I'm pretty sure I'm going to take the job. I mean I already said, "yes." I mean, with the market like it is, and-

SHEILA comes out of the bathroom to finish the discussion.

SHEILA

You said, "yes?"

AL

Yes. I mean, nobody's ever offered me a job before like that, just on the spot. When he heard I was from Baltimore, he said he had to offer it up, and I, well, I had to take it.

SHEILA

Yeah. You're right.

AL

Didn't you have news? What's your news.

SHEILA

Yes. I do. I have news, Albert.

AL

You never call me Albert. Good or bad news? This doesn't sound good at all.

SHEILA

That depends.

AL

On what?

SHEILA

Your outlook.

AL

Outlook? What does--

SHEILA pulls a preggo-test indicator from behind her back.

SHEILA  
I'm pregnant.

CUT TO:

29 EXT. THE SKY ABOVE HAWAII - DAY - 2002 29

AL flies through the air, calm as anything, then is tackled by PAOLO, who pulls AL's ripcord, releasing what appears to be about half a load of laundry.

PAOLO's face registers the anomaly as AL pulls the ripcord to PAOLO's chute, shooting him upward. AL continues to fall.

AL returns to a state of calm, as a FLOATING COFFIN comes into view. Al turns to look at the COFFIN, as the lid opens to reveal ERIC.

AL  
Eric?

ERIC  
Hey.

AL  
How'd you get up here?

ERIC  
I was just about to ask you the same thing.

CUT TO:

30 INT. HOSPITAL - 1986 30

AL takes photos as SHEILA gives birth to ERIC.

CUT TO:

31 EXT. A BEACH WEDDING - 1986 31

AL and SHEILA kiss as the wedding guests stand and clap. Pieces of ODE TO JOY are somewhat decipherable, as is the faint hint of CANNON IN D.

CUT TO:

32 INT. AL AND SHEILA'S APARTMENT - 1986 32

It is about an hour after SHEILA told AL she was pregnant.

The two of them sit on the couch. AL holds the pregnancy test in his hand. He stares. Smiles.

AL  
I think it's the best thing for the  
both of us.

SHEILA  
I can finish up with school in a  
couple of years. Right?

Do either of them believe this?

AL  
Of course.

SHEILA  
I guess that means we're in a  
relationship.

AL  
I guess so.

SHEILA  
Who knew?

AL  
So, do you think you wanna get  
married, then?

A Pause. If the pregnancy was a shock, this might be an electrocution, as it registers on SHEILA's face.

CUT TO:

33 EXT. A SUBURB CUL-DE-SAC, WALDORF, MD - DAY - 1987 33

A modest two story single family home. Aluminum siding, painted brick, and a For-Sale sign marked, "SOLD."

A rented moving van pulls up, followed by a SHEILA's TOYOTA CORROLA. AL gets out of the moving van to meet SHEILA, who pulls an infant ERIC out of his car seat.

CUT TO:

34 EXT. CAMDEN YARDS - DAY - 2001 34

Orioles versus Red Sox. Red Sox at bat.

AL and ERIC take their seats at Camden Yards.

A COFFIN flies across the field.

AL waves the HOT DOG VENDOR over.

Glimpses of the BIRTH and the WEDDING as the following breaks through as well.

ERIC (V.O.)

Dad? Dad?

CUT TO:

35 EXT. THE SKY ABOVE HAWAII - DAY - 2002 35

AL is in a blank stare,

Falling.

Taking in the ocean,

The horizon,

Feeling the wind.

ERIC

Dad?

AL is brought sharply back to "reality," as his gaze is reconnected to the COFFIN floating next to him.

AL

Why are you here?

ERIC

You tell me.

AL

You're not supposed to be here.

ERIC

Neither are you.

CUT TO:

36 INT. AL'S OFFICE IN D.C. - DAY - 2001 36

AL sits behind a mountain of paper and in-boxes. On the front of the desk is a placard reading: "ALBERT MEEKS." Next to that, a PICTURE of the family.

The screen says, "2002, Washington DC"

In the picture: ERIC looks somewhat like he has in previous scenes, but his hair is not as neatly combed, and there is a sneer that indicates he would rather be elsewhere. AL and SHEILA have perfect smiles.

AL takes a sip of coffee and begins crunching numbers, making his way through the sea of paper at an alarming rate.

37 INT. THE HOUSE - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS 37

SHEILA prepares a watering can and several syringes of nutrients before doling it out to the several plants that now claim every spare inch of shelf, counter and table space.

38 INT. CAR ON THE STREET, WALDORF - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS 38

ERIC and two others of similar age, attitude and attire sneak up to a car, which still has the keys in the ignition.

The other two, BOYLE and TREVOR, though similarly dressed, do seem somewhat more menacing than ERIC.

BOYLE  
This it?

ERIC  
Yeah.

TREVOR  
The keys are in it?

ERIC  
Yeah.

BOYLE  
What an idiot. You leave the keys in the car, you deserve to lose it.

TREVOR  
Yeah, let's teach this asshole a lesson about responsibility.

TREVOR opens a passenger door and gets in. BOYLE gets in the back.

BOYLE  
Your find. You drive.

ERIC  
Sweet.

ERIC gets in, turns the ignition, and pulls out.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Sweet.

TREVOR  
Hell yeah! You can't stop the  
Carrington Crew.

BOYLE  
Carrington Crew? We in a gang now?

TREVOR  
No, we're just representin'  
Carrington.

BOYLE  
Fuck Carrington.

ERIC  
Fuck Waldorf.

BOYLE  
Fuck em' all.

TREVOR  
We can get tattoos or something. I  
was thinking we could get two C's  
or something.

BOYLE  
I ain't gettin' no tattoo.

ERIC  
Me neither.

The engine cuts off.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
What the...

TREVOR  
What?

ERIC  
The engine cut off.

BOYLE  
Get out! Now! Stop the car!

TREVOR  
The door's locked!

ERIC  
Shit!

BOYLE  
Cops! Cops! Cops!

The car is surrounded. Two OFFICERS approach the vehicle from either side.

COP 1  
Get your hands up where I can see them!

COP 2  
Hands up! Now!

COP 1  
Don't move! Hands high! Hands High!

COP 1 and COP 2 each open a door.

COP 1 (CONT'D)  
Get on the ground!

COP 2  
On the ground! Now!

ERIC is frozen in the driver's seat, hands-up, watching, until a third OFFICER pulls HIM out of the car and pins him to the ground.

CUT TO:

39 INT. THE HOUSE - DAY - LATER 39

Beethoven plays as SHEILA finishes up with the plants, washing out the watering can, the syringes, and lighting up a joint. The phone rings. SHEILA goes to answer it.

CUT TO:

40 INT. AL'S OFFICE IN D.C. - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS 40

AL breaks from his mountain of paper, which is markedly smaller than it was earlier in the day, to pick up the phone that is ringing.

AL  
Albert Meeks.

CUT TO:

41 INT. AL'S FORD TAURUS - NIGHT 41

AL and SHEILA sit in the front as ERIC rests in the back,  
waiting for the show to drop.

ERIC  
Are you guys going to say anything?

AL  
Well, Eric, we're a little-

SHEILA  
No.

AL  
No. We're not.

SHEILA  
Thank you.

AL  
You're welcome, dear.

SHEILA  
I love you.

AL  
I love you too, honey.

The car pulls up to the HOUSE, but AL does not turn off the  
engine.

They sit.

ERIC  
Are you going to stop the car?

AL  
No.

ERIC  
What are we doing?

SHEILA  
Waiting.

They wait.

ERIC  
I'm sorry.

AL  
Thank you.

They wait.

ERIC  
I know I really let you down  
tonight, but I-

SHEILA turns to face ERIC for the first time as ERIC and AL both flinch at the unexpected movement in the car, however slight.

Before speaking, SHEILA turns her gaze back to the front of the car, she makes eye contact with ERIC through the rear-view.

She is cool.

SHEILA  
You should really get out of the  
car.

AL  
Door's unlocked. To the house.

SHEILA  
He has a key.

AL  
Sorry. I was just trying to sound  
cool like you.

AL and SHEILA share a smile, then a laugh.

Back to business.

SHEILA  
Sorry dear.

She turns to look ERIC in the eyes.

SHEILA (CONT'D)  
Door's unlocked.

ERIC  
Are you guys going somewhere?

AL turns to SHEILA.

AL  
You see, he's smart. He just makes  
poor decisions.

SHEILA  
Your father and I have dinner  
reservations.

AL  
Which we have missed.

SHEILA  
But, we're going to o our best to  
find someplace where we might be  
able to share a meal. Maybe IHOP.

ERIC  
I'm hungry.

AL  
Maybe he's not so smart, after all.  
I'm sorry dear.

AL turns, throws an arm over the seat and pulls his head into  
the backseat area, smiles.

AL (CONT'D)  
Get out of the car son.

AL stares directly at ERIC, smiling.

SHEILA continues to stare at the windshield, as AL pins his  
smile into ERIC.

SHEILA  
Your father and I are celebrating  
our 15th wedding anniversary  
tonight.

Without breaking the gaze-

AL  
Happy anniversary, dear.

SHEILA  
Happy anniversary- As I was saying,  
it is our 15th, and we had hopes of  
breaking bread in Georgetown or  
Arlington, but it looks like we're  
staying in Charles County, since  
it's already...

AL  
Nine O' clock, dear.

SHEILA

Nine O' clock, and we wouldn't make it into DC or Arlington until after 10 at this point. So-o-o-o, doing our best to salvage the evening, despite the damage that your irresponsible, dangerous, and selfish choices have done to it, not to mention your future, we are... going...

AL

Out.

SHEILA

Somewhere.

They wait.

ERIC eventually picks up on his silent cue to exit the vehicle, and does so, hesitantly at first, then with a sense of purpose, after looking back at AL and SHEILA, and getting nothing in return, he walks into the house.

AL leans over and kisses SHEILA.

AL

I love you.

SHEILA

I love you too.

THEY circle the cul-de-sac, and drive off into the sporadically street-lit darkness, as ERIC peeks through the blinds.

FADE TO:

42 INT. DENNY'S OFF THE 301, WALDORF, MD - NIGHT

42

The restaurant is about half-full.

A YOUNG COUPLE, 20's, tries to get a REDSKINS TEDDY BEAR out of the CLAW MACHINE, loading in dollar bills every other try.

A MANAGER, (the tag says "TIM"), rings up a group of HIGH SCHOOL KIDS.

A somewhat large waitress with silver hair makes a salad for the upteenth time, and carries it behind the Plexiglas to the SMOKING SECTION, passing AL and SHEILA along the way.

SHEILA finishes off a bowl of soup and sets it into the empty plastic-that-looks-like-fake-frosted-glass salad dish, along with her napkin and silverware, as AL gnaws what's left of his overcooked steak off of the bone.

SHEILA

You're taking him to a ball game?

AL

Yeah.

SHEILA

Don't you think that might send him the wrong message? You don't even like baseball.

AL

He does. And, it's growing on me. As an experience. Besides, I already paid for the tickets. Before...

AL mumbles something indecipherable before scooping up the last of his corn and mashed potatoes.

SHEILA

Well, make sure he doesn't think he's not getting punished. He's 15 for god's sake. Not even old enough to drive.

AL

We grounding him?

SHEILA

Of course.

AL

How long?

SHEILA

I don't know. Until he does something.

AL

Does what?

SHEILA

I don't know. Paints the house.

AL

We have siding.

SHEILA

I know. Something like that.  
Something big.

AL

He could definitely clean some  
gutters or something.

SHEILA

At least that.

AL

Maybe prune some of the trees in  
the backyard. You think he's pretty  
freaked out right now? Us leaving  
like that.

SHEILA

He better be.

CUT TO:

43 INT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

43

ERIC is zonked-out on the couch in a pair of boxers.

The faux-Asian coffee table is covered with chips and a  
spilled soda from ERIC's foot, which slumbers on the table as  
well. The soda has pooled onto the light blue Berber carpet,  
next to ERIC's shoes.

The TV is blaring. An infomercial with an OVEREAGER PITCHMAN  
is not enough to wake or even move ERIC.

Neither is the sound of the car pulling up.

Nor the flash of headlights through the living room window.

The front door opens. AL enters first, stopping and staring  
in disappointment.

SHEILA enters, plowing into the unexpectedly immobile AL,  
whose gaze never breaks from the soda pool at the corner of  
the table.

SHEILA

What the-

SHEILA sees the mess.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

What the hell? Eric!

ERIC wakes up, puts a foot down in the pool of soda.

ERIC  
Aww, man.

ERIC takes off the sock, as SHEILA prepares to lay into the boy.

AL  
I got this one. Get up, son.

ERIC stands, waiting for... what, exactly?

AL (CONT'D)  
Don't just stand there. Go get a towel.

ERIC leaves to get a towel.

AL (CONT'D)  
Come on, hurry up.

ERIC starts to hustle a bit.

AL (CONT'D)  
Get the towel, boy.

ERIC returns with the towel.

AL (CONT'D)  
Throw it on the puddle. Sop it up.  
Now clean the friggin' table off,  
please. The bag is where you're  
supposed to keep the chips when  
you're not putting them in your  
mouth. Another option is a plate.

ERIC begins scooping the chips back into the bag.

AL (CONT'D)  
Don't put the chips back in the  
bag. I don't want the foot chips.  
You can have them if you want.  
Otherwise, throw them away.

ERIC does all of the above waiting for more orders the entire time, which never come. So, he stands, as far as he comfortably can, from AL, who splits the difference between Sheila, at the door, and ERIC, in front of the TV.

The OVEREAGER PITCHMAN blares on.

AL (CONT'D)  
Turn that off.

ERIC moves swiftly to press the power button.

SHEILA

Thank you.

AL

You're welcome. Now, grab your shoes, leave the towel, and go to bed.

ERIC heads for the stairs to his room.

AL (CONT'D)

Gonna' be some big changes tomorrow. Going to do some remodeling. Different stuff. Your mom and I have some ideas.

Eric stops, turns.

AL (CONT'D)

Of course, you're grounded until we figure out what those renovations will consist of.

A look from SHEILA.

AL (CONT'D)

And, then, you're still grounded until you're finished. Do all this without screwing up again, and we might let you get a license when you turn 16, if the state of Maryland chooses to allow it.

A move from ERIC, as if he wants to say something, before he thinks better of it.

AL (CONT'D)

But, first, we're going to a ball game. So, go to bed, and we'll have plenty of time to talk at the game that neither of us is allowed to enjoy.

SHEILA

Good night.

AL

Good night. We both love you very much, and we're both also very pissed.

ERIC sheepishly makes his way up the rest of the stairs, a polar opposite from the ERIC that first broke in to the bait car several hours ago. For the moment, he is broken.

SHEILA turns to AL, draws close to him like a magnet finding the North Pole.

SHEILA  
What you just did was hot.

AL  
Thank you.

SHEILA  
I guess you're allowed to enjoy the ball game, but he still can't.

AL  
Shh... Anniversary sex.

SHEILA  
We've earned it.

FADE TO:

44 EXT: CAMDEN YARDS - DAY - NEXT DAY 44

Orioles versus Red Sox. Orioles at Bat.

The park is different from before. More people? Less?

AL and ERIC sit. AL with an arch, and ERIC with a slump. Neither knowing what to say to the other. The seats are excellent. First base line. The conversations between players almost seem audible.

Man on second, Gorilla at bat.

A swing and a miss.

ERIC  
You think we're ever gonna' talk about yesterday?

UMPIRE  
Ball!

ERIC  
I mean, I know it was stupid, and-

A hit! Line drive to left, makes the gap for a well earned double from the hustling runner.

The man from second has made it home and just beats the throw with a malicious looking foot-slide.

The once docile crowd, AL and ERIC among them, is up and cheering.

As things settle down. AL gets the attention of the HOT DOG VENDOR.

AL  
You want a dog?

ERIC  
Yeah.

AL  
How many?

ERIC holds up two fingers.

CUT TO:

45 INT. THE HOUSE - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS 45

SHEILA is listening to the same ball game over the radio, as she starts to work on the windows, careful, as she reaches over a row of rescued office plants.

She sprays half of the panes down and commences to wiping them, when she notices a patch of yellow on the back side of a plant. She puts the towel and the spray bottle down to take a closer look.

Upon further inspection, the discoloration is not an isolated event. The backs of the entire row are affected, rotted.

SHEILA hurriedly shuffles each plant into the kitchen sink to see if anything is salvageable. She cannot save this batch. Though it was not her fault, and there was nothing she could have done to prevent or reverse it, she feels responsible.

CUT TO:

46 EXT: CAMDEN YARDS - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS 46

The HOT DOG VENDOR swaps out three dogs for the cash in AL's hand. Al hands two of them over to ERIC, who opens one up and begins squirting the packet of mustard on it.

AL does the same with his, lining the side so that the mustard is between the dog and the bun, not on top, where it might get on his face.

AL  
We get that you're sorry. You got caught.

A bite.

AL (CONT'D)  
(Mouth full)  
Of course you're sorry.

ERIC cracks a knowing smile.

ERIC  
Right.

AL  
But we're in a place now, where trust is an issue.

A hit! But he's out at first on a grounder that is scooped up by the short-stop and darted straight to first.

The disappointment settles through the crowd.

AL and ERIC take a couple bites each of their dogs.

AL (CONT'D)  
So, you'll work it off.

ERIC  
Right.

AL  
And we'll see.

ERIC  
I'm not grounded?

A bite.

AL  
Oh yeah. You're grounded.

ERIC  
But I thought I was going-

AL  
The work is part of it, but the work isn't all of it. The work is to keep you busy with something constructive.

ERIC  
That sucks.

Each of them takes a final bite. Of course, ERIC has another dog to spare, which he opens, and squirts the remaining mustard onto.

AL  
It's supposed to suck. You get that. Right?

ERIC  
Yeah. I get it.

ERIC takes a bite.

A hit, uneventful looking. Another grounder to short. But the throw to first gets botched. He rounds to second and slides in as the runner on second advances to third. The crowd goes crazy at the prospect of the go-ahead run.

AL turns to share the moment with ERIC, but there is nobody standing next to him.

AL looks down to see ERIC, hunched over on the cement ground.

AL  
Eric?

AL gets down to inspect his son.

AL (CONT'D)  
Eric? Eric!

CUT TO:

47 EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS 47

SHEILA is dumping the plants into a large trash can. One by one. Methodically. Ceremoniously.

Something stops her.

She drops the plant and runs into the house, turns up the radio, then turns on the TV, searching for the game.

Instead, she finds a newscast of the story she was dreading.

The headline reads: TEEN POISONED AT ORIOLE'S GAME.

Behind her, through the window, red lights begin to flash.

A COUNTY SHERIFF approaches the door.

CUT TO:

48 EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT 48

SHEILA waits on the curb as a police car pulls in and drops AL off. The NEIGHBORS watch as AL scoops SHEILA up, and they help each other into the house.

FADE TO:

49 INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY 49

Organ music. Hard to tell whether it's funeral or ballpark music. Maybe it's both.

ERIC lies in the already familiar COFFIN, wearing the same clothes and hair style that he has in the Hawaii scenes. AL is in a chair next to ERIC, hunched over the COFFIN.

SHEILA is tending to the GUESTS, though not really making eye-contact with any of them.

Through the crowd, SHEILA sees AL, starts to walk toward him, but is caught up in another conversation that she doesn't hear a word of. She politely stands and pretends to listen.

CUT TO:

50 EXT. THE SKY ABOVE HAWAII - DAY 50

AL floats next to the COFFIN, trying to reach ERIC, who stares blankly at him. The more AL tries to work his way toward ERIC, the more distant he becomes, physically and psychologically.

AL

Eric!

More distance between them.

AL (CONT'D)

Eric!

CUT TO:

51 INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY 51

The funeral home is empty, save for AL and ERIC. ERIC sits up looks AL dead in the eye. AL begins to speak, but is cut off by ERIC.

ERIC  
You need to be with mom right now.

CUT TO:

52 EXT. THE SKY ABOVE HAWAII - DAY 52

ERIC is almost a speck in the sky as AL floats alone above Hawaii, though he can hear ERIC's voice.

ERIC  
Be with mom.

CUT TO:

53 INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY 53

AL is still hunched over the COFFIN, but the CROWD is back, and SHEILA is still pinned into a one-sided conversation.

AL lifts his head and makes eye contact with SHEILA.

ERIC (V.O.)  
Just be with mom...

CUT TO:

54 INT. THE HOUSE - DAY - A WEEK OR SO AFTER THE FUNERAL 54

SHEILA fills the watering can while checking the nutrients and measuring them into syringes.

The house looks pretty much the same. The soda stain from the night of jail is still quite visible, though the coffee table is now covered in cards and flowers.

Though she goes through the same mechanical motions as always, there is no heart to the work. It is hesitant as opposed to her usual, meticulous style.

CUT TO:

55 INT. AL'S OFFICE IN D.C. - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS 55

AL is surrounded by the usual mound of paperwork, but he is unable to do anything. He just stares at the piles and drinks his coffee, which he spills onto the closest stack.

A moment of inaction from AL, as he watches the coffee run down the pages to the edge of his desk and drip to the floor in a puddle. He pays special attention to the stream as it begins breaking up and splatters into the pool below.

Once the action of the spill is over, AL moves his gaze back to the desk, then to his door, which is always open but never occupied, before scooping up the soiled paperwork.

He stands with the papers, walks over to the trash can, and tosses them.

CUT TO:

56 INT. THE HOUSE - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS 56

SHEILA has finished filling the cans and syringes, and makes her way over to the row of plants she was nursing the day before ERIC died. On the way, she glances towards the window sill where the "rotten," plants once were, now bare.

She turns to face the still live plants and begins watering, staring down at the soil as she does, watching the water as it fills the pot, then overflows, dripping down to the carpet.

Surely there is a part of her that wants to stop the water, tilt the can back up, but she just can't muster the strength to do it.

So, she watches, as the entire can of water pours out over the plant, into the pool above the soil, and over the rim of the pot, like a fountain, to the carpet below.

As the can empties, it falls out of SHEILA's limp hand. SHEILA's knees give way, and she follows the can to the ground, as her tears mingle into the pool of water and soil.

CUT TO:

57 INT. AL'S OFFICE IN D.C. - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS 57

AL is back at his desk, all papers undisturbed, save for the now clear spot from the spill that was directly in front of him.

AL looks down at the pool of coffee that he has no intention of cleaning up, then back up at the door that is always open but never occupied, where he fixes his gaze.

He tries for a moment to fight, then allows the tears within him to well up and spill out, though his body remains rigid, and his gaze immovable.

CUT TO:

58 INT. THE HOUSE - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS 58

SHEILA finds a burst of strength, most likely via anger, and springs out of her fetal ball to grab the overflowing plant, which she flings across the room, through the front window, where the row of rotted plants once stood.

CUT TO:

59 INT. AL'S OFFICE IN D.C. - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS 59

AL continues to stare and not so much cry as let the tears flow down his face, like a statuesque but pathetic water feature.

BILL (V.O.)  
You feeling alright, Al?

AL snaps back to it, dries his eyes with his sleeve, and looks back down at the pool of coffee below.

AL  
Yeah, sure Bill. Just having a moment.

BILL looks down at the trash can, at the stack of soiled papers.

BILL  
You have a spill?

Back to business.

AL  
Oh. Yeah. I was going to send a memo out after lunch. Looks like I need new copies of the Richmond file.

A look from BILL. He gets it.

BILL  
Alright, buddy. I'm just down the hall. If you need anything.

AL

Thanks.

BILL

You, uh, you want me to send maintenance up here to clean up that puddle?

Both AL and BILL look down at the puddle.

FADE TO:

60 EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS 60

SHEILA stands above the broken pot that has gone through the window. The few NEIGHBORS who might have noticed the crash make their way back into their houses.

SHEILA picks up the pieces of the pot, walks them over to the large trash can, and dumps them in.

A glance to the broken window, then the pile of muddy plant mass, the pattern it makes across the front walk and the grass.

SHEILA walks into the house, grabs her keys and gets into her HONDA ACCORD.

As she drives away, a NEIGHBOR comes out of her house and watches as she disappears around a corner and into the mid-day suburban haze.

CUT TO:

61 EXT. MAGIC MAX'S WINDOW SHOP - DAY 61

A strip mall; a giant square, half-empty parking lot with stores lined like a giant, washed-up "L." A salon, maybe an Asian grocery, a video store, tobacco shop, and, of course, MAGIC MAX'S WINDOW SALE AND REPAIR.

SHEILA exits the shop with a yellow receipt carbon and a business card, which she drops.

As she bends to pick up the card, a gust of wind steals her yellow carbon, which she follows blindly...

Past the window shop, tobacco shop, video store, salon, and maybe even the Asian grocery...

Until it STOPS right in front of a store she had never even noticed before: LIZARD QUEEN BOOKS.

The sign reads, "OPEN, COME ON IN."

So, she does, after remembering to pick up the carbon which she has trapped under her foot.

A bell rings as the door opens.

CUT TO:

62 INT. LIZARD QUEEN BOOKS - DAY - CONTINUOUS 62

SHEILA enters the quaint, if dusty, store, as an obligatory CAT makes his way across her ankles to greet her.

SHEILA  
Hello, sir.

SHEILA bends down to scratch the cat's neck, as JOAN, the 40 something owner of both the store and the cat, maybe the sister on Roseanne mixed with a touch of Phyllis Diller, looks on, unnoticed.

JOAN  
He seems to like you quite a bit.

SHEILA  
Oh, I hope you don't mind.

JOAN  
Not at all. He never makes friends.

JOAN scoops up the CAT and kisses him on top of the head.

SHEILA  
Maybe he knows something we don't.

JOAN takes a moment to size up her unexpected customer.

JOAN  
Would you like some tea?

SHEILA  
Well, I was actually just... I would love some. That would be very nice, actually. Thank you.

JOAN hands the cat off to SHEILA who hesitates for a nanosecond before welcoming him.

JOAN  
I'm Joan. The cat's name is Kurt.

JOAN makes her way behind the counter to the electric teapot as KURT and SHEILA acquaint themselves.

SHEILA  
I'm Sheila.

A moment. JOAN with the tea, and SHEILA with the cat.

SHEILA  
This is a very nice store.

JOAN  
Thanks, Sheila, but it's really just shit. Aunt left it to me twelve years ago. I like books, but... You want grey, green, pekoe? Nothing fancy. Got Lipton, too.

SHEILA  
Whichever is fine. Whatever you're having.

JOAN tosses two bags of the pekoe into separate coffee mugs, then pours the water over them, soaking the bags, and filling the cups.

SHEILA puts KURT back down, and he does figure-eights around her ankles as she accepts the mug from JOAN.

FADE TO:

63 INT. AL'S FORD TAURUS - LATE AFTERNOON 63

First there is the sound of talk radio. AL turns the dial, searching for something, anything recognizable, which he doesn't find.

So, AL cuts the radio off, and waits with the others as traffic creeps along the beltway, heading south to the 301.

The exit is in sight, but it never seems to get any closer.

AL looks over to see a TODDLER with his faced pressed against the window. AL begins doing the same, but stops short, when he catches the PARENT'S eye.

AL turns the radio back on and fishes. He hits the scan and lets the dial go through it all: Indian, Go-go, Smooth Jazz, Modern Rock, Top 40, Oldies, Cumbia, college radio, talk radio, a preacher, several ads.

As AL stares on, waiting for the exit, flicking his turn signal, the dial continues, perhaps back around to songs we've already heard, but AL does nothing to stop it, as if the constant change is somewhat comforting to him.

As AL finally makes the exit, there is a left turn which reveals an entirely new set of traffic woe-dom, which is no surprise to AL, who settles in for another 15 miles of stop-and-go traffic, a spec among cars as far as the eye can see.

CUT TO:

64 EXT. THE HOUSE - DUSK - SIMULTANEOUS 64

A YELLOW TRUCK from MAGIC MAX'S is parked on the cul-de-sac.

A WINDOW MAN works on the installation of the new panes.

SHEILA makes her way out onto the porch. She is wearing an apron, and the haze wafting through the door, proves she's been using it, as do the light stains on the apron itself.

SHEILA

Everything coming along alright?

WINDOW MAN

Doing just fine, ma'am. Ought have her finished up by dark.

SHEILA

Thank you so much for coming out tonight.

WINDOW MAN

It's what we do.

The WINDOW MAN's thought trails off as he watches the SHERIFF'S CAR pull up the street and in to the driveway.

WINDOW MAN (CONT'D)

Ma'am, you expecting company?

SHEILA tries her best to hide the look of concern.

FADE TO:

65 INT. AL'S FORD TAURUS - NIGHT 65

The radio still cycles the dial with new sounds every five seconds or so, as AL pulls off the 301 and onto the entrance to Carrington, his neck of the nap-town.

AL drives down what must be the main drag, with its tree-lined medians, and turns right after a while, into the edges of the sprawl, before turning left three more times, until he reaches his cul-de-sac, in the heart of the labyrinth.

AL sees the YELLOW TRUCK and the SHERIFF'S CAR, and does his best to find a place to park the TAURUS, choosing to leave it out on the cul-de-sac.

AL pops out of he car, and runs to the WINDOW MAN who has just finished packing and is getting in his truck.

AL  
What's going on, here?

WINDOW MAN  
Pardon me, sir.

AL  
What the hell's going on?

WINDOW MAN  
Do you live here, sir?

AL  
Of course I live here. Now are you going to tell me what the hell is going on, here?

SHEILA  
Al?

AL  
Sheila? You alright?

SHEILA  
I'm fine, dear.

AL  
What's going on, here?

SHEILA  
Everything's fine. Just had a window repaired. That's all.

AL  
How'd it break?

SHEILA  
There's nothing to worry about.

AL  
Are you-

SHEILA

Come inside. We have news.

AL moves swiftly into the house as the WINDOW MAN gets in his truck and takes off.

CUT TO:

66 INT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

66

AL enters to see the DEPUTY sitting on the sofa. The DEPUTY stands to greet him.

DEPUTY

Evening Mr. Meeks. I'm sorry to bother y'all, but we thought you might like to know that we've found the... We, the man that, uhm, poisoned.

SHEILA

They think they found the man who killed Eric, AL.

AL

Yeah?

DEPUTY

We think so. Got a call in from Baltimore this morning. Found him in Philly.

AL

Who was it?

DEPUTY

An employee. At the ballpark Disgruntled. He injected one of the hot dogs with drain cleaner.

SHEILA

Well, we knew it was drain cleaner. From the...

AL

Right.

SHEILA heads into the kitchen to finish up with dinner as AL and the DEPUTY share the couch.

DEPUTY

Don't have a whole lot to go on as far as a motive. Seems like this boy and your boy never met.

AL

How old is he?

DEPUTY

Not even 18 yet. Says he was just trying to pull some kind of a prank. Don't have the details, but right now, it just looks like he didn't even think about what might have happened to someone who ate the hot dog. No matter. We're still charging him with murder far as I know.

There is no response from AL.

DEPUTY (CONT'D)

I just thought you might like to know, so I stopped by.

AL has no idea what the hell he's supposed to say right now.

DEPUTY (CONT'D)

I guess I'll let you two get on with your dinner.

AL

Thank you, deputy.

DEPUTY

Wish I could have had some better news.

AL

Too late for that.

DEPUTY

Yeah. Yeah, I think you're right about that. You feel free to give a ring if there's anything... Anything.

AL

We will.

SHEILA watches as AL shows the DEPUTY out the door.

AL (CONT'D)

Good night Deputy.

SHEILA (O.C.)  
Good night.

FADE TO:

67 INT. THE HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT 67

AL and SHEILA finish up the rest of meal that SHEILA has made for him. There are remnants of chicken, peas, garlic bread, and an empty bottle of wine.

SHEILA stands to blow out the candles.

AL  
That was beautiful.

SHEILA  
Thank you.

AL  
Thank you.

SHEILA begins cleaning up plates, reaching for AL's, but he grabs her hand.

They share a look.

AL (CONT'D)  
Not now, let's wait. Tell me about your day.

SHEILA backs away from AL, then sits back down.

SHEILA  
It was eventful. I got you a present.

AL  
Really?

SHEILA  
Yes. Well, actually, Joan got you a present.

SHEILA runs into the kitchen and returns with a hardcover book.

SHEILA (CONT'D)  
It's about Abraham Lincoln. Joan says he lost all of his children. So did Mark Twain. And Aaron Burr. Did you know that?

Al inspects the book.

AL

No.

SHEILA

I don't know. I kind of found my way into this book shop today, and I found a lot of great stuff that deals with loss and grieving. It's all in the den, if you're interested. But that one's for you.

AL

Thank you. Or Joan, I guess.

SHEILA

She owns the store. We had tea and talked for, god, I don't even know how long. Must have been a couple of hours. And, I was her only customer in all that time. I don't know how she stays open.

AL

You should ask her.

SHEILA

I will.

A lull. Silence. AL moves to scoop up the plates, but SHEILA moves to stop him.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

How was your day?

AL

Same old, same old. Filed papers, checked wiring diagrams, debugged some code, but mostly filing papers.

SHEILA

Oh. Uneventful, then?

AL

Spilled some coffee this morning.

SHEILA

Well, I broke a window.

AL

That's right, you did. Did you?

SHEILA

Yes.

AL

On accident?

SHEILA

No.

AL

Really?

SHEILA

Well, I guess I didn't want the window to break, but I did want to throw a potted plant through it.

AL

So, you *had* to break it, then?

SHEILA

Exactly. But, just to be safe, I told the insurance adjuster that I tripped.

AL

Good call.

SHEILA

I thought so. Do you think we're going to last?

AL

What do you mean?

SHEILA

As a couple. Do you think we'll make it?

AL

I sure want to.

SHEILA

I do, too, but I just don't know what the hell to do with myself.

AL

You could go back to school.

SHEILA

Yeah, I know, but... Well, maybe that is what I was talking about.

(MORE)

SHEILA (CONT'D)

I'll have to bring that up in the group. Thank you. Now I have something to say.

AL

You join a gang?

SHEILA

No, but Joan says she meets with this group on Saturdays, in the mornings, and it's just a great way to kind of, get things out there, in the open. You know?

AL

Sure.

SHEILA

Would you like to go with me?

Silence. Like a train has come to a stop.

AL

I would, but-

SHEILA

Oh, no. Don't worry about it. I just thought I'd ask.

AL

It just doesn't seem like-

SHEILA

You know, I didn't think you'd be into it. It's not really your thing. I know.

AL

Maybe-

SHEILA

Maybe some other time. Yeah. I'll get to know the people, and if it's kosher, maybe you'll come on the retreat?

AL

What's the retreat?

SHEILA

It's just this thing that Joan organizes where everybody goes out and, well I guess I don't really know what they do. I'll have to ask.

SHEILA gets up to take the plates, again. This time, AL makes no move to stop her, and watches as she goes into the kitchen with them.

AL starts flipping through the pages of the book. He stops on the section of pictures in the middle of the book, then flips through those, stopping on a picture of Samuel Mudd.

Across from that panel is a picture of John Wilkes Booth.

FADE TO:

68 INT. THE HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

68

The digital alarm clock reads 11:04

AL is already in bed with the LINCOLN BOOK. As SHEILA finishes brushing her teeth. After she spits...

SHEILA

So, that was a good gift, then.

No answer. AL is engrossed.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Honey?

AL

Yes?

SHEILA

The book?

SHEILA rinses.

AL

Oh. Yes. Very... yeah. You know a lot of that happened right around here. Samuel Mudd. I went to school with his relatives.

Spits.

SHEILA  
You've mentioned that.

FADE OUT.

69 EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY - THE NEXT MORNING

69

SHEILA and AL are loading up their cars.

AL  
You all set, then?

SHEILA  
Yeah. I should be there until  
sometime this afternoon.

AL  
OK.

SHEILA  
You have plans?

AL  
Think I might follow the Booth  
trail. Just tracing the different  
landmarks or whatever.

SHEILA  
Seems like quite a task.

AL  
Maybe just the Maryland parts,  
then.

SHEILA  
Perhaps Chinatown?

AL  
Chinatown?

SHEILA  
You remember that time we ate lunch  
in Chinatown? Like over ten years  
ago?

AL  
I remember eating lunch in  
Chinatown a lot.

SHEILA

There was this placque you found one time, and it said something about Booth or the assassination I think Eric was with us.

AL

I'll check it out then.

SHEILA

You want to meet up for lunch? Georgetown?

AL

I'll probably start out in DC, probably end up out by Captain Billy's, though.

SHEILA

I could do crabs.

AL

Alright. Dinner then?

SHEILA

Give me a call when you get out there.

AL

OK.

SHEILA

I love you.

AL has already gotten into his car, and drives off without noticing SHEILA'S wave.

FADE TO:

70 INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY

70

AL finishes the last bite of his spring roll as his check is delivered.

He nods to the WAITER and tosses a 20 on the table, then rises with purpose and makes his way down the narrow passage to the door.

CUT TO:

71 EXT. CHINATOWN - DAY - CONTINUOUS 71

AL exits the restaurant, which is down the street from the GIANT ARCHWAY in DC's Chinatown. Directly next to the restaurant he just exited is a plaque, the one SHEILA mentioned.

It reads, "Two days before Abraham Lincoln's death, a meeting took place in this spot between John Wilkes Booth and his coconspirators."

Albert pulls out a disposable 35mm camera and snaps a quick picture of the plaque.

CUT TO:

72 INT. LIZARD QUEEN BOOKS - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS 72

A GROUP OF WOMEN and a HAPPY HIPPIE, the only man, sit in a clearing on the floor. SHEILA is the last to arrive, and is severely overdressed.

The others turn to welcome her with their stares.

JOAN walks into the room with KURT in her arms, looking first to the CIRCLE, then following their eyes to SHEILA.

JOAN

Sheila! You came! Namadae!

EVERYBODY ELSE BUT SHEILA AND JOAN

Namadae.

JOAN

Everybody, this is Sheila. Sheila, this is everybody.

SHEILA looks around the circle, making eye contact with each of them, individually, some for longer periods of time than others.

Definitely coasting by the HAPPY HIPPIE who may mean well, but has a wicked lazy eye matched with a piercing stare from the eye that works.

Farthest from her in the circle, is DENISE, the most normal looking of the ladies in the bunch, though normal is relative in these four walls.

SHEILA walks, to the circle, keeping eye contact with DENISE, and sits directly across from her.

KURT leaps from JOAN's arms and saunters into SHEILA's lap.

DENISE smiles.

FADE TO:

73 EXT. SAMUEL MUDD HOUSE - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS 73

AL pulls up AT the end of a dirt driveway by the sign that reads: SAMUEL MUDD HOUSE AND MUSEUM.

He doesn't get out of the car, but rolls down his passenger window and snaps a pic, then drives off, into the rolling southern Maryland countryside of hills and bushy green trees, ancients.

CUT TO:

74 INT. LIZARD QUEEN BOOKS - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS 74

SHEILA and DENISE stare at each other as JOAN, HAPPY HIPPIE and the others laugh loudly and constantly. It is the roar of laugh therapy, and everyone is so involved that perhaps they don't notice that SHEILA and DENISE are not.

They smile at each other.

SHEILA tries to laugh along with the explosion, but it's as if all their laughter is keeping hers out.

This makes DENISE laugh.

SHEILA sees this and begins a genuine laughing fit.

Now, they, too are a part of the group.

FADE TO:

75 EXT. BACK ROAD OFF 301, MD - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS 75

Off a fork from Highway 301 is a billboard that says, TURN RIGHT FOR CAPTAIN BILLY'S"

And that's just what AL does. Then he pulls the car over, just past a grove of trees and off to the side of a field that looks like it's been there, producing, for centuries.

Somewhere between the road and the field is a sign, somewhat slanted as it sticks out of the often soggy soil.

It reads: JOHN WILKES BOOTH RODE THROUGH THIS FIELD ON THE DAY AFTER THE ASSASSINATION OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

AL takes out the camera and snaps a shot of the sign.

CUT TO:

76 EXT. LIZARD QUEEN BOOKS - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS 76

SHEILA, DENISE and JOAN stand outside the store, as JOAN finishes up a cigarette and the OTHERS, including HAPPY HIPPIE, make ways to their cars.

JOAN  
I'm really glad you came out.

DENISE  
Me too.

JOAN  
Have you met Denise?

SHEILA  
Not formally, no.

DENISE  
Hi. I'm Denise.

JOAN  
Denise is a marriage counselor.

DENISE  
Guilty.

JOAN  
Who's twice divorced.

DENISE  
Also guilty. But, it was to the same man, and I learned a lot.

SHEILA  
Like what?

DENISE  
Never to get married again. I'm kidding, and doing a shitty PR job, too.

SHEILA  
It's OK, I'm not really in the market for a marriage counselor.

JOAN  
Grief's more her thing.

DENISE  
Oh. I'm sorry.

SHEILA  
Everyone is.

DENISE  
You probably get sick of hearing  
that.

SHEILA  
No, it got pretty bad for a while  
there, though. You know?

DENISE  
Yeah. What do you say back to, "I'm  
sorry?"

SHEILA  
Nothing.

A knowing chuckle marks a shared cynicism among the ladies.

A phone ring. It is SHEILA'S purse. She opens it and pulls  
out her cellphone, a NOKIA, circa 2001.

SHEILA (CONT'D)  
Hello?... Sorry.

JOAN  
Oh, don't worry about it at all.

DENISE  
Not at all.

SHEILA  
Hey honey. You there, now?...  
Alright. It'll take me about thirty  
minutes... Is that OK?... Alright.  
I'm on my way... Love you, too.

DENISE  
That your husband?

JOAN  
I hope so.

SHEILA  
Yes. We're meeting up for dinner.  
Would either of you--

JOAN  
No, not for me, thank you.

SHEILA

Denise?

DENISE

No, I better not. A marriage counselor spoiling a date? Haven't I ruined my business enough for the day?

SHEILA

I'm sure he won't mind.

DENISE

Go to dinner. Will we be seeing you at the retreat this weekend?

SHEILA

Uhm, sure. Yeah.

JOAN

I'll put you down. Plus one?

SHEILA

Just me.

JOAN

Okeydokey.

SHEILA waits, for something... Not sure what...

Whatever it was didn't happen.

SHEILA

Bye.

JOAN

We'll meet up here on Monday at the store, then drive down.

SHEILA

OK.

DENISE

Bye. Enjoy your dinner.

SHEILA

Thanks.

JOAN

8 am.

SHEILA

OK.

DENISE  
See you then.

Another shared smile. SHEILA has found a friend.

FADE TO:

77 INT. CAPTAIN BILLY'S CRAB SHACK - DUSK 77

The sun sets opposite the Chesapeake Bay, as AL stares through the glass wall of the bar, onto the water.

Next to him, is an old, sea-worn, but well-to-do chap, DR. JULIUS TIMBERLAKE. He palms a high ball of DEWARS, and pours one for AL.

TIMBERLAKE  
Here you go, son. Have a man's drink.

AL  
This Weller's?

TIMBERLAKE  
Dewars.

AL  
Fair enough. I'm a doer. You're a Dewar, hooray!

It is quite possible that AL has never been this drunk before. At least, not since Reagan was in the White House.

TIMBERLAKE  
You're not drunk are you?

AL  
Of course not. I don't drink.

Bursts of laughter from TIMBERLAKE and the BARTENDER. AL takes the drink in one gulp.

TIMBERLAKE  
That's the funniest thing I've heard all day.

TIMBERLAKE pours another round as SHEILA enters the bar, unbeknownst to AL.

AL  
Another?

TIMBERLAKE

Affirmative! Now, here's to you,  
and here's to me, and if we should  
ever disagree...

AL AND TIMBERLAKE

Fuck You! Here's to me!

AL and TIMBERLAKE clink glasses and take drinks. AL's is a shot that, again, takes the whole finger down, while TIMBERLAKE continues his genteel sip.

Out of the corner of his eye, AL notices SHEILA.

AL

Sheila!

SHEILA

I've been looking all over for you.

AL

I've been right here.

SHEILA

Well, I paged you twice.

AL

Sorry. I guess I didn't hear it.

SHEILA

I guess I better drive you home.

AL

What about dinner?

SHEILA

We're not on the list.

AL

There's a list?

SHEILA

Are you kidding me?

AL

Sorry.

CUT TO:

78 EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT 78

SHEILA helps a half-awake AL up to the front porch, and opens the door, which AL falls through as he enters the house.

CUT TO:

79 INT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 79

AL falls to the floor as SHEILA flips on the light, steps over him, and makes her way into the kitchen.

SHEILA throws a bag of popcorn into the microwave, and starts it, before returning to the entrance where AL lies.

SHEILA

Are you going to eat something? Can I get you some water?

AL

What are you having?

SHEILA

Popcorn.

AL

That all?

SHEILA

Yeah.

AL lays his head back down on the floor.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

I can't carry you to bed, you know.

SHEILA moves AL's legs so she can close the front door.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Too big for me. You sure you don't want some water?

AL

Yeah. I'll be there in a minute.

AL watches as SHEILA returns to the kitchen, but can keep his eyes open no longer.

FADE TO:

80 INT. THE HOUSE - DAY - THE NEXT MORNING 80

A knock at the door wakes AL, who is still asleep on the floor, right where SHEILA left him.

AL opens the door to discover the DEPUTY.

DEPUTY  
Morning, Mr. Meeks.

AL  
Good morning, Deputy.

DEPUTY  
Sorry to bother you on a Sunday and all, but it looks like they're gonna' have to close that case up in Baltimore.

CUT TO:

81 INT. THE HOUSE - DINING ROOM - A BIT LATER 81

AL and the DEPUTY sit at the table as SHEILA brings in two mugs of coffee to them.

DEPUTY  
And, like I told your husband, with the main suspect committing suicide in such a cowardly fashion, there's really nothing else for the folks in Baltimore to do.

AL  
But this is definitely the guy.

DEPUTY  
They seem pretty sure. Say they have a signed confession. Boy hung himself with his own pants, I won't go into the details.

SHEILA  
Thank you, deputy.

DEPUTY  
Yes, ma'am.

SHEILA  
So, I guess this is it, then.

DEPUTY  
Well, yes, ma'am. I'm sorry to say.

SHEILA

Really makes no difference to me  
what happened to him, but thanks  
for letting us know.

SHEILA turns and goes upstairs, to ERIC'S room.

The DEPUTY waits until it's safe to speak.

DEPUTY

I'm real sorry if I upset your wife  
in some way, Mr. Meeks.

AL

No, it wasn't you, it's just the  
whole thing. You know.

DEPUTY

Just doesn't make any damn sense if  
you ask me.

AL

I don't know that it's supposed to.

DEPUTY

I know, but sometimes I wish it  
did.

AL

Me too.

DEPUTY

I guess I'll let you get back to  
your Sunday. Just wanted to let you  
know, I guess.

FADE TO:

82 INT. ERIC'S ROOM

82

SHEILA watches through ERIC'S window as the DEPUTY drives  
away.

The room is still ERIC'S. All of his things remain. Posters  
for Jay-Z, Bob Marley, and Hendrix. A train set with a  
diorama that is covered in dust. There's also a pretty  
healthy amount of CD's, in jewel boxes, stacked neatly on the  
floor against the wall.

AL comes up the stairs and into the room behind SHEILA.

AL

You're right, you know.

SHEILA  
About what?

AL  
It doesn't matter.

SHEILA  
I'm sorry.

AL  
Don't be. You were right. Who cares  
what happens to the guy? Would have  
been nice to look him in the eye  
though.

SHEILA  
Really.

AL  
No. Probably not.

SHEILA  
I'm going on that retreat this  
week.

AL  
Oh?

SHEILA  
Yeah, we leave Monday. I think it's  
up near Richmond somewhere.

AL  
Watch out for those speed traps.

SHEILA  
OK.

FADE TO:

83 INT. THE HOUSE - DAY

83

It is the day of the retreat. AL finishes his tie and takes a  
slug of his coffee, running into SHEILA on the way out the  
door.

AL  
Oh. Hi.

SHEILA  
Good morning.

AL  
All loaded up?

SHEILA  
Think so.

AL  
Alright.

SHEILA  
Yeah.

AL  
Need anything?

SHEILA  
I don't think so. You?

AL  
No, I figure I'll make do. Order  
in.

SHEILA  
Off to work?

AL  
Running late, actually.

SHEILA  
Well, I guess I'll let you get to  
it, then.

AL  
Kiss?

SHEILA  
Sure.

AL  
Love you.

SHEILA  
I love you, too.

AL goes out to his TAURUS, gets in and takes off for work, as SHEILA watches through the window.

FADE TO:

SHEILA pulls up in her ACCORD, gets out with a duffle bag and a large, floppy hat.

JOAN, DENISE, and HAPPY HIPPIE stand outside the store, as JOAN finishes a cigarette. All of them wave to SHEILA.

CUT TO:

85 EXT. HIGHWAY 301 S. - DAY 85

SHEILA and the OTHERS cross into Virginia.

The sign reads: WELCOME TO VIRGINIA and VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS.

CUT TO:

86 INT. AL'S OFFICE IN D.C. - DAY 86

AL sits behind the usual mound of paper, though it has grown noticeably larger.

He stares down at his mug of coffee, then at the mounds of paper.

CUT TO:

87 INT. CAPTAIN BILLY'S CRAB SHACK - DUSK 87

AL is back at the bar with TIMBERLAKE.

TIMBERLAKE

So then, I go into this bar, right down the road from here, just looking for a drink, you know, and this girl is down in the basement singin' her heart out.

AL

Oh, yeah?

TIMBERLAKE

Just singin' her fuckin' brains out man! And I waited around until the set was over so I could meet this lady, who wasn't too much to look at, but man she could sing.

AL

Yeah.

TIMBERLAKE

And, I walks up to her and I says,  
"I'm J.T.," this is before they  
called me, "Doc," mind you, "and  
I'm damn glad to meet you." And you  
know what this bitch says her name  
is?

AL

No.

TIMBERLAKE

You'll never guess.

AL

Queen Elizabeth?

TIMBERLAKE

Janice Fuckin' Joplin, man. Janice  
Joplin!

AL

Nah.

TIMBERLAKE

I swear to go. Must have been 1972.

AL

You sure?

TIMBERLAKE

Sure as I'm sittin' here.

AL

I think she died in 1970.

TIMBERLAKE

You sure about that?

AL

Pretty sure.

TIMBERLAKE

Well, maybe it was sixty-two.

AL

Cheers to that.

TIMBERLAKE

To Janice!

AL

To Janice!

The glasses clink and the gentlemen drink.

FADE TO:

88 INT. THE HOUSE - DAWN 88

The sun rises through the living room window, as AL stumbles up to the front porch and opens the door.

FADE TO:

89 EXT. LAKE OBECHOBE CAMPGROUND - DAWN 89

A BUGLE plays REVEILLE.

90 INT. CAMP CABIN - CONTINUOUS 90

The blaring bugle wakes SHEILA, who is bunked next to DENISE, who grabs her pillow, and throws it over her head to shield the sound assault.

91 INT. THE HOUSE - SHOWER - SIMULTANEOUS 91

AL suds it on up, though standing in the shower proves difficult.

CUT TO:

92 INT. THE HOUSE - KITCHEN 92

AL, now dressed and shaven, but looking like a shit sandwich that got dropped out of a school bus, pours his coffee from the pot into a thermos.

Then, he reaches into the cabinet and pulls out a brand new bottle of DEWAR'S, cracks the seal, and pours a generous slug into the thermos to top it off.

He walks from the kitchen, grabs his keys, and heads to work, closing the door behind him.

FADE TO:

93 INT. AL'S OFFICE IN D.C. - DAY 93

AL sits behind the mounds and pours his cup of coffee.

As he takes the first sip, he cracks a smile.

For the first time, in what must have been a while, AL starts to find a flow for his work and churns through the paper. He is not nearly as fast or effective as he used to be, but he is moving.

He stops only to take sips of the coffee or to refill the mug, splattering the occasional document as he goes.

The occasional OFFICE WORKER swings by the doorway and peeks in, seeing AL at work, again, even BILL, but AL doesn't notice. He just plows through the piles.

CUT TO:

94 INT. AL'S OFFICE IN D.C. - NIGHT 94

The clock on the wall say's 11:30.

AL is shit-faced, but the pile of work is gone, all filed, foldered, and/or shredded.

As AL peels himself out of the office chair, he glances down to discover that he has pissed himself. Hours ago, most likely, as the stain is dry. No matter. He grabs his jacket and heads for the door, feeling accomplished.

In fact, he is so proud of himself, he doesn't notice BILL, who can't help but notice the stain on AL's crotch, as he walks past BILL'S office and into the elevator.

CUT TO:

95 EXT. LAKE OBECHOBE CAMPGROUND - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 95

A BUGLE plays TAPS.

The moon bounces off of the lake, illuminating the trees around it, and the cabins atop the hill.

There is a dock on the edge of the lake, where all the canoes are turned upside-down on the shore. DENISE and SHEILA sit at the end of the dock, toes in the water.

DENISE takes a drag off a joint, hands it to SHEILA, who takes a drag.

The smoke dances in the moonlight, across the lake, and into the trees, as DENISE coughs, SHEILA Shhh's her, and the both of them giggle, then Shhh each other.

SHEILA reaches across to put a finger on DENISE's lips.

They make eye contact, and kiss, as the crickets chirp. The kiss is long, but as soon as it is over, the women part and stare, neither knowing what to do next.

SHEILA AND DENISE  
I'm not a lesbian.

SHEILA  
I'm married.

DENISE  
I'm a marriage counselor.

SHEILA  
Oh, my God.

DENISE  
I know. Right?

They kiss again.

FADE TO:

96 INT. THE HOUSE - DAWN 96

AL wakes up on the sofa, still wearing the same clothes, same pants with the piss-stain.

He rolls out of the couch, onto the floor, and pulls himself up. Time to go to work.

He walks into the kitchen, starts the coffee, and heads for the bathroom, stripping along the way.

CUT TO:

97 INT. CAMP CABIN - DAWN 97

The Bugle plays REVEILLE.

SHEILA and DENISE share the same bed, as do JOAN and the HAPPY HIPPIE. Each notices the other couple and pretends not to, hoping for the same consideration.

Nonetheless, SHEILA appears a bit tense, getting out of the bed, despite DENISE reaching for her. JOAN and the HAPPY HIPPIE can't help but watch as SHEILA grabs her things and goes into the bathroom.

FADE TO:

98 INT. AL'S OFFICE IN D.C. - DAY 98

AL is crunching numbers on his computer, which is normally buried under paper. In fact, AL's NAME PLACARD and several IN-BOXES are visible once again.

AL pours another cup of coffee from the thermos, and gets back to the numbers.

BILL (O.C.)  
Finally got your desk back, eh?

AL  
Yeah.

AL looks up, sees BILL, sets the thermos down on the ground.

BILL  
Havin' a little cup o' joe, eh?

AL  
I guess so.

BILL  
You mind if I steal a cup? Gettin' pretty dry here.

AL  
Sorry. No, that was my last cup, boss.

BILL  
Could you step on into my office real quick, AL?

A Pause. AL sips his coffee, and contemplates his answer, checking to make sure he hasn't pissed himself again, before he stands up, but before he can.

BILL (CONT'D)  
I tell you what, I'll just step on into yours, how about that?

BILL closes AL's door, for what might be the first time ever during business hours.

CUT TO:

99 EXT. LIZARD QUEEN BOOKS - DAY - CONTINUOUS 99

SHEILA and DENISE are alone in the parking lot, cars connected by jumper cables, as DENISE tries to start SHEILA's car to no avail.

DENISE

Must have left the dome light on or something. Can't even get her to jump.

SHEILA

Think I can get a ride?

CUT TO:

100 INT. AL'S OFFICE IN D.C. - DAY

100

AL sits, sipping his coffee, BILL across from him.

AL

You know, you might be the first person to sit in that chair since Reagan was in office.

BILL

Ain't that something?

AL

Depends on how you look at it, I guess.

BILL

Yes, I guess so. Let's cut the shit Al.

AL

OK?

BILL

You are clearly drunk and have been for over a week now.

AL

Are you questioning my productivity? You can see my desk now.

BILL

It's not about productivity. You know that. This is a government job. You just can't come in to work drunk, and you certainly can't leave with piss stains all over you.

AL

That was a one-time occurrence, and I worked through that.

(MORE)

AL (CONT'D)

Also, I must assure you, I don't  
come into work drunk.

BILL

Do you think getting drunk at work  
is any better?

AL

A little. Not much, but a little.  
Yes.

BILL

Well, shit, Al. I know you've got  
the thing with your son, and I'm  
trying to take that into  
consideration.

AL

And, I appreciate that, Bill.

AL pours another cup of coffee from his thermos.

BILL

I thought you said you were out.

AL

I thought you knew I was lying.

BILL

You sure aren't giving me that many  
options.

AL

Admittedly, Bill, I can't say that  
I'm trying to.

BILL

Well, alright then. I guess you're  
fired, Al.

AL

Alright. I

101 EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

101

DENISE pulls up around the cul-de-sac and stops at the end of  
the driveway. SHEILA gets out with her bag and walks around  
to the driver's side of the car.

DENISE  
So, you need help getting the car  
home or anything?

SHEILA  
Thanks. I'll just call a tow-truck  
in the morning.

A pause, as the ladies stare blankly but expectant at one another.

SHEILA moves in for the kiss that DENISE was waiting for. They meet half-way, each reaching around to grab the back of the other's head.

Through the blinds, AL sees everything.

CUT TO:

102 INT. THE HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAWN 102

The alarm goes off. AL rolls out of bed and into the shower, ignoring SHEILA, who is asleep next to him.

FADE TO:

103 INT: BEDROOM - MORNING 103

AL gets out of the shower to discover SHEILA, who is now awake.

SHEILA  
Hi.

AL  
Hi. Welcome back.

SHEILA  
Where'd you go last night. Your car  
was here, and all the lights were  
on.

AL  
Just went for a walk.

SHEILA  
I waited for you.

AL  
Sorry.

SHEILA  
I missed you.

AL  
I missed you, too.

CUT TO:

104 EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY 104

AL drives off as SHEILA waves. Her smile turns to a frown as AL's TAURUS disappears.

Sheila walks back into the house.

105 INT. THE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 105

SHEILA enters the house and notices that the last bunch of plants that were alive are now brown and yellow.

She approaches them, like the corpses they are, with reverence, and a sense of responsibility.

She picks one up and heads for the door, the big trash can, but she can't make it past the threshold, dropping the plant on the ground. Again, her knees follow the plant to the floor.

She pulls out her cellphone.

CUT TO:

106 EXT. CAPTAIN BILLY'S CRAB SHACK - DAY 106

AL pulls up and parks his TAURUS in the massive but empty parking lot.

He gets out of the car and heads for the back entrance.

CUT TO:

107 INT. CAPTAIN BILLY'S CRAB SHACK - CONTINUOUS 107

AL walks in the door, as TIMBERLAKE pulls a sawed-off pool-cue out from behind the bar, ready to swing...

TIMBERLAKE  
Al? That you.

AL  
Yeah, Doc.

TIMBERLAKE  
Shit. I was about to put a splinter  
in your eye, boy.

AL  
How about you put some Dewar's in  
my belly?

TIMBERLAKE  
Is it noon yet?

AL  
Close enough.

TIMBERLAKE  
I like your style, AL.

CUT TO:

108 INT. THE HOUSE - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS

108

SHEILA and DENISE sit on the couch. SHEILA stares at ERIC'S  
soda stain, while DENISE glances first at the potted plant on  
the floor, then at the other dead plants on the sill, then at  
SHEILA, then the soda stain.

SHEILA looks at DENISE and smiles.

SHEILA  
This isn't going to work. Is it?

DENISE  
I don't know. Probably not.

SHEILA  
I'm married.

DENISE  
I know, and neither of us-

SHEILA  
I know.

DENISE  
I mean, are we?

SHEILA  
I don't know. This can't work.

The phone rings.

DENISE  
You want me to grab that?

SHEILA  
Let the machine get it.

DENISE  
Might be AL.

SHEILA  
He has my cell number.

DENISE  
OK.

The machine picks up. It's AL.

AL (V.O.)  
Hey, babe. I'm out at Captain  
Billy's...

SHEILA gets up and stands next to the machine, but doesn't answer the phone.

AL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
And I was thinkin' I might like to  
get home, but I can't really drive  
right now, so...

SHEILA picks up the phone.

SHEILA  
Hey. It's me. My car's in White  
Plains. My battery died... Well,  
can't the Doc give you a ride?

DENISE  
I could give you a ride out there.

SHEILA mouths a "No," waving the favor off.

DENISE (CONT'D)  
No, really. I'm serious. That way  
you can drive his car back.

SHEILA  
Alright, AL. We'll be there in  
thirty... Denise... A friend...  
Don't worry about it. She's helping  
us out.

SHEILA hangs up the phone.

CUT TO:

109 INT. CAPTAIN BILLY'S CRAB SHACK 109

AL and TIMBERLAKE sit at the bar, bottle-side, ready for another round.

AL AND TIMBERLAKE

She offered her honor, he honored her offer, and all night long she was on her and off her!

Clink and drink.

SHEILA and DENISE walk hesitantly into the bar, allowing the dreaded light of day to peek through the place.

TIMBERLAKE

Who have we got here.

SHEILA

We're here to pick up the drunk.

TIMBERLAKE

Which one?

SHEILA

That one.

TIMBERLAKE

Well, you can't have him.

SHEILA

Fine by me.

AL

Doc, have you met my wife?

TIMBERLAKE

I don't think so.

AL

Sheila, this is Doctor Julius Timberlake.

TIMBERLAKE

Hello, charmed, I'm sure.

SHEILA

I think we've met before.

TIMBERLAKE

I don't believe a word of it. And you are.

SHEILA  
This is Denise.

TIMBERLAKE  
That the one she's been kissing in  
the driveway.

A moment of panic. DENISE runs out of the bar as SHEILA follows her.

SHEILA  
Denise! Wait!

TIMBERLAKE  
I guess I wasn't supposed to  
mention that.

AL  
I guess not.

AL gets up and heads for the door.

TIMBERLAKE  
We'll see you later, then.

AL gives TIMBERLAKE a drunken wave as he disappears into the blinding day.

CUT TO:

110 EXT. CAPTAIN BILLY'S CRAB SHACK - CONTINUOUS 110

SHEILA watches as DENISE drives away.

AL stands a good deal away from her, waiting for her to notice him.

SHEILA  
You saw us?

AL  
I guess so. Last night. If that's  
what you mean.

SHEILA  
Why didn't you say something?

AL  
Why didn't you?

SHEILA  
I'm sorry.

AL  
Me too. So, you think you're a...

SHEILA  
I don't know. Maybe.

AL  
I mean, it kinda looked pretty convincing to me.

SHEILA  
I don't know, Al. All I know is that this isn't going to work, and that you don't seem to care whether it works or not.

AL  
Maybe you're right.

SHEILA  
Why are you here getting drunk right now? Why aren't you at work, AL?

AL  
I got fired.

SHEILA  
Were you ever going to mention that?

AL  
Eventually.

SHEILA  
Give me your keys.

AL  
You ready to go?

SHEILA  
Give me your keys.

AL  
OK. Jesus.

AL tosses his keys to SHEILA.

SHEILA  
Stay there. You're not coming with me.

AL  
I'm not?

SHEILA

No. I'm going home. You give me an hour's head start, and I'll have everything I need for now. You give me an hour and I'll be gone. OK?

AL

You don't have to do that.

SHEILA

Yeah, Al. I'm sorry, but I think I do.

AL

Well, that makes me sad.

SHEILA

I know it does. Good-bye Al.

AL gives a pathetic wave, as SHEILA gets in his TAURUS and pulls away.

FADE TO:

111 EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT 111

TIMBERLAKE drops AL off in front of the house. SHEILA'S ACCORD is in the driveway, but AL'S TAURUS is gone. AL goes into the house.

CUT TO:

112 INT. THE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 112

AL heads straight for the couch and passes out.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

113 EXT. THE SKY ABOVE HAWAII - DAY 113

AL floats above Hawaii, eyes clinched shut.

ERIC (V.O.)

Can you see all of this?

AL opens his eyes, taking in the view once again, expecting to see ERIC, but he is nowhere in sight.

AL  
What?

ERIC (V.O.)  
Everything.

AL  
How can you watch?

ERIC (V.O.)  
How can you not?

AL  
Aren't you scared?

ERIC (V.O.)  
No. I'm already dead.

AL  
You're not much help.

ERIC (V.O.)  
Am I supposed to be?

AL  
I thought you might be some kind of  
comfort.

ERIC (V.O.)  
Well, number one, I'm 15, and  
number two, I'm not even me. I'm  
your vision. Of what I look like.

AL  
Guess that explains the funeral  
suit.

ERIC (V.O.)  
No shit. Not to mention the coffin.

CUT TO:

114 INT. THE HOUSE - DAY - AT LEAST A MONTH LATER

114

AL is asleep on the floor where the couch used to be. There are stacks of boxes where the rest of the furniture used to be.

AL has a beard, or something kind of like a beard, and is wearing the pants and shirt for a suit, but it looks like he hasn't changed clothes, nor taken a shower, in several days.

There is a knock on the door that wakes him.

AL wakes, and lumbers slowly over to the door, and opens it to reveal his old pal, the DEPUTY.

DEPUTY  
Afternoon Mr. Meeks.

AL  
Afternoon.

DEPUTY  
Suppose you know why I'm here.

AL  
Closing down my meth-lab?

DEPUTY  
No, sir. Got those divorce papers.

AL  
I kind of figured that.

DEPUTY  
Maybe one day we'll cross paths in some sort of positive fashion.

AL  
I highly doubt that.

AL closes the door in the DEPUTY'S face, then goes over to where he was and falls back asleep.

FADE TO:

115 EXT. LIZARD QUEEN BOOKS - DAY - A FEW DAYS LATER 115

SHEILA waits for DENISE in the parking lot, as she exits the store.

DENISE  
How'd you know I was here?

SHEILA  
Joan called me.

DENISE  
Thought she might. You still at the Howard Johnson off the 301?

SHEILA  
Yeah.

DENISE  
Not anymore.

They share a smile.

FADE TO:

116 INT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT 116

AL wakes up to the sound of the phone ringing, as the machine picks up.

SHEILA (V.O.)

Hey Al. Please don't pick up. It's me. I just wanted to let you know I sent those papers out today. If you didn't receive them already. And, I appreciate you offering me the house, but... Look. I have everything I need. I'm sorry. I love you.

Beep!

AL marches over to the machine and rips it out of the wall, throwing it to the floor, where it shatters and bounces.

He sees the dead plants on the sill. He grabs them one by one, smashing them to the floor.

There is a surprising satisfaction in all of this, as AL moves to the boxes, plowing over entire stacks and rows of them with his body.

He notices the wedding album as it spills out of one of the unsealed boxes, and picks it up, ready to fling it, but his eye is drawn to the picture on the front which is of AL and SHEILA on their honeymoon, in front of the ALOHA INN.

As he fixates on the picture, it starts to move. First the clouds, then the trees, and eventually, AL and SHEILA, who stare back at the older, pathetic AL with a look of sympathy and pity.

AL walks over to the phone and plugs it back in, pulls a phone book out of one of the new "piles," and dials the phone.

CUT TO:

117 INT. TRAVEL NETWORK - DAY 117

AL sits across the desk from a TRAVEL AGENT. The carpets are blue. The walls are white and bare, but clean.

There is an inflatable cruise ship under a four-foot fake palm tree in the corner.

TRAVEL AGENT  
So, you're looking for a little trip to Hawaii.

AL  
That's right.

TRAVEL AGENT  
Honeymoon.

AL  
Yeah, kind of like that. More like a honeymoon for one.

TRAVEL AGENT  
OK. We looking for round trip airfare? Hotel? Any tours?

AL  
No tours. I have the hotel covered, and I'll only need a one-way ticket.

TRAVEL AGENT  
Sure.

AL  
Taking a permanent honeymoon.

TRAVEL AGENT  
You're making me jealous.

AL cracks a smile.

CUT TO:

118 INT. DENISE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

118

SHEILA is on her cellphone. Waiting.

She clasps her phone shut with an angry but worried snap.

DENISE  
Everything OK?

SHEILA  
I don't know. Al's not picking up the phone, and he hasn't signed the papers, yet.

DENISE  
He will.

SHEILA  
How do you know.

DENISE  
He seems like a reasonable guy.

SHEILA  
A reasonable guy would answer the phone.

DENISE  
Surely you can understand why he might not pick up.

SHEILA  
Yeah.

CUT TO:

119 INT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

119

AL sits at the dining room table with a legal pad, a bottle of Dewar's, a glass, and a pen. Next to the pad lies the stack of divorce papers.

AL pushes the pad aside to review the divorce papers. He signs them after a quick glance-through, and moves back to the legal pad.

ERIC (O.C.)  
What are you doing?

AL looks up from the pad to see ERIC in the coffin on the table in front of him.

AL  
Writing.

ERIC  
What?

AL  
Nothing.

ERIC  
Suicide note?

AL  
Maybe.

ERIC  
Quitter.

AL  
Maybe.

ERIC  
Here. Give me that.

ERIC grabs the pad and pen and sets to writing, filling the two pages with ink much faster than any human ever could.

ERIC finishes and tosses the pad to AL.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
There. You're done.

AL reads the note.

AL  
That's pretty good. Thanks.

ERIC  
Don't blame me. You wrote it.  
Pussy. Those the divorce papers.

AL  
You know they are.

ERIC  
You sign them?

AL  
You know I did.

ERIC  
Sending the note along with the papers.

AL  
I guess so.

ERIC rolls his eyes and disappears, coffin and all.

AL takes the glass down in one slug, pours another for himself, then passes out on the table, on top of the note.

FADE TO:

AL has a flowery Hawaiian shirt on, but no luggage, as he grabs the sealed envelope off of the table.

The phone begins to ring. AL ignores it.

On his way out the door, he locks it, and throws the keys inside the house before shutting it.

On the way to the cab, he tosses the envelope in the mailbox and pops the flag up.

As the cab pulls away, the machine clicks on.

SHEILA (V.O.)

Hi. Just wanted to make sure you were getting along alright. Probably don't want to see or hear me right now, but I wanted you to know that I don't blame you. For anything. Not that you think I did, but if you did... Just, give me a call, alright?

Beep!

CUT TO:

121 INT. DENISE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS 121  
SHEILA hangs up her cellphone, and joins DENISE on the couch.

FADE TO:

122 EXT. ALOHA HOTEL, HAWAII - DAY 122  
AL gets out of a cab wearing the same Hawaiian shirt he left Maryland in.

He holds the picture of the hotel from so many years ago, and they look nothing alike.

The ALOHA, once possibly a bastion of the islands, is now the third or fourth tier, reserved mostly for prostitutes, drug users, and unaware tourists, but AL seems to be on a mission and walks, undaunted, straight to the office to check in.

CUT TO:

123 EXT. AL'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY 123  
AL opens the door to his room, and hesitantly steps in.

CUT TO:

124 INT. AL'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS 124

A no-tell hotel, AL's room has obviously been the site of just about anything one could think of that they might wish they wouldn't have.

AL sits on the bed and grabs the remote control, turning on the TV. He pulls a phone book out of the dresser, and turns to the yellow pages.

CUT TO:

125 EXT. KIKI'S GUN AND PAWN - DAY 125

AL gets out of a cab in the parking lot of the gun shop, walks toward the door of the shop.

ERIC (O.C.)  
So, you're gonna' buy a gun?

AL looks up to see ERIC, in his coffin, blocking the door.

AL  
Yes. And don't you try and stop me.

ERIC  
I don't have to.

AL  
Good.

AL continues walking toward the door, but the coffin and ERIC are in the way.

AL (CONT'D)  
Well?

ERIC  
Surely, you're familiar with the Brady Bill.

AL  
Yeah.

ERIC  
Well, then, you're aware that you'll have to wait seven days to purchase a gun.

AL  
Shit.

ERIC  
I know. Right?

AL  
Shit.

ERIC  
So much for the plan.

AL  
Damn it!

AL kicks some of the gravel into a cloud of dust.

ERIC  
Nice. What're you going to do now?

CUT TO:

126 INT. AL'S HOTEL ROOM - DUSK

126

The television blares. The same infomercial from ERIC's night in jail.

AL vomits into the toilet as ERIC sits in his coffin on the bed, holding a bottle of pills.

ERIC  
Pills? Really? What is this shit,  
anyway?

A lunge from AL, as he empties another payload into the commode..

ERIC (CONT'D)  
You didn't even get sleeping pills.  
You know that. Right?

A look from AL to ERIC.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Don't look at me. You bought this  
shit.

A dry heave.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
You know there's a laxative in  
here?

FADE TO:

127 INT. AL'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT - LATER 127

ERIC remains in the same spot on the bed, holding the remote, flipping through the channels.

ERIC  
I'm telling you. You don't have the  
stomach for blades, pop.

AL  
Shut up!

ERIC  
Fine with me.

ERIC disappears as AL peeks around the doorway from the bathroom, x-acto knife in hand.

AL  
Eric?

AL sits on the floor and stares at the blade, unable to do anything else with it.

FADE TO:

128 EXT. A CLIFF IN HAWAII - DAY 128

AL stands, looking over the edge of a cliff. He is on a nature trail, watching for a lull in tourist traffic so that he might jump.

At the edge of the cliff is a tree sapling that AL keeps a tight grip on as he peers over the edge to the bottom.

ERIC (O.C.)  
This was definitely a better idea  
than the blades and the guns. Not  
to mention the pills.

AL  
You're back.

ERIC floats above the edge of the cliff in his coffin.

ERIC  
I never leave. You sure that's a  
lethal drop? I'm thinking you might  
break a couple legs at best.

AL  
You sure?

ERIC  
No. But, if I were you, I'd want to  
make sure that if I jumped off a  
cliff, I really jumped off a cliff.

AL  
It's high enough.

ERIC  
If you say so.

AL  
I do.

ERIC is now standing behind AL.

ERIC  
Alright.

ERIC'S sudden change in proximity catches AL off guard.

AL  
Jesus ERIC, you scared the hell out  
of-

ERIC nonchalantly pushes AL over the edge of the cliff.

AL (CONT'D)  
Meee...

AL tumbles down the grade of the cliff which wasn't quite  
steep or tall enough to dish out the damage that AL had been  
hoping for.

ERIC  
I told you!

AL continues rolling down the cliff, sliding to a stop at the  
bottom, sitting up for a second to check his limbs, then  
lying back down in the dirt, staring up.

ERIC floats above him in the coffin.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Didn't even break a leg. Did you?

AL  
No.

ERIC  
Did you even sprain an ankle?

AL  
I don't know. Maybe.

The harsh hum of a prop plane breaks the melancholy silence as both AL and ERIC look up to spot the source. It is the MILE HIGH JUMP PLANE.

As it passes overhead, three bodies in brightly colored jumpsuits make an appearance and begin a descent.

AL and ERIC watch as the chutes open, and they coast, one by one, out of sight at the tree-lines, and one assumes, safely to the ground.

AL and ERIC share a look and a smile.

FADE TO:

129 INT. AL'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 129

ERIC sits in his coffin on the floor.

Across the bed lies a parachute kit, as ERIC flips through the channels.

AL enters, carrying a bundle of someone else's laundry.

ERIC  
Somebody's going to miss that. You know.

AL  
I didn't bring any clothes.

ERIC  
Whose fault is that?

AL grabs the x-acto knife and cuts the cords to his chute, begins stuffing the pack with the laundry.

FADE TO:

130 INT. AL'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT - A FEW HOURS LATER 130

ERIC sits in his COFFIN, eating a McDonald's cheeseburger, sipping on the bucket of soda that comes with the value meals.

HAROLD AND MAUDE plays on the TV. AL is transfixed, as he munches on his fries.

ERIC  
Hell of a last meal.

AL

Shhh!

ERIC

Really? Don't you find this all a bit macabre?

AL

I guess.

ERIC

I guess...

FADE TO:

131 INT. AL'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT - 1 HOUR LATER 131

The movie has ended, and as the credits roll and Cat Stevens sings, AL turns to see that ERIC has fallen asleep. AL pulls his blanket off of the bed and covers ERIC, then gets into bed himself, turning off the TV.

As AL cuts off the light, he notices that ERIC is gone, and his blanket simply lies draped across the floor by the bed.

AL does not move the blanket.

FADE TO:

132 EXT. MILE HIGH JUMP PLANE - DAY - THE NEXT DAY 132

The plane, a crushed beer can, fights through an almost cloudless sky. Below is Hawaii, both land and sea. Volcanoes, trees, shanties, surfers.

Through the window, AL, now clean shaven, but as pathetic as ever, stares out, awkward fitting goggles and all, into the blue.

AL (V.O.)

I think I can. I think I can...

CUT TO:

133 INT. MILE HIGH JUMP PLANE - CONTINUOUS 133

AL turns to face inside. He does not belong here. PAOLO, an experienced jumper, the guide, and a beast of a man, a native of the island, notices AL's sudden movement. His words...

PAOLO  
Hey, buddy! You alright?!

...Go unheard as AL continues mouthing his inner mantra...

AL (V.O.)  
I think I can. I think I can. I  
think I can..

...AL gets up with an incongruous sense of determination and heads for the jump door, which is always open. The others watch as PAOLO follows AL to the door...

AL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
I think I can. I think I can.

...PAOLO puts a helpful hand on AL's shoulder, to get his attention, stopping the unbroken mantra.

AL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
I think I--

AL's face initially conveys confusion but quickly turns to calm as he turns and gives PAOLO an encouraging pat on the chest, (can't reach the shoulder), and a "thumbs up." Both men smile.

AL turns back to look out the door as PAOLO turns and repeats the "thumbs up," to the rest of the plane.

The pensive faces of the others relax, if for only a second, before lurching into wonder, fear, and concern.

When PAOLO turns to the focus of their gaze, he sees that AL is no longer there.

CUT TO:

134 EXT. MILE HIGH JUMP PLANE - CONTINUOUS 134

AL is just under the plane. A flash of his Dalai Llama face before he disappears. PAOLO jumps as soon as his brain can register what just happened.

As PAOLO disappears, the faces of the others fill the windows and the open door of the plane.

CUT TO:

135 THE SKY ABOVE HAWAII - CONTINUOUS 135

AL is a tumbling ball of laundry, unable to control himself as he descends.

A FLOATING COFFIN comes into view. Al turns to look at the COFFIN, as the lid opens to reveal ERIC.

AL  
Eric?

ERIC  
Can you see all of this?

AL  
What?

AL looks around, frantically, too much to take in any of it.

ERIC  
Everything. It's beautiful.

AL  
How can you watch?

ERIC  
How can you not?

AL  
Aren't you scared?

ERIC  
No. I'm already dead.

AL  
You're not much help.

ERIC  
Am I supposed to be?

AL  
I thought you might be some kind of comfort.

ERIC  
You should have known better.

ERIC begins building distance between himself and AL.

AL floats next to the COFFIN, trying to reach ERIC, who stares blankly at him. The more AL tries to work his way toward ERIC, the more distant he becomes, physically and psychologically.

AL

Eric!

More distance between them.

AL (CONT'D)

Eric!

ERIC is almost a speck in the sky as AL floats alone above Hawaii.

Flashes of his life dance across the clouds.

RAY'S ART HOUSE.

THE STREET where he and SHEILA met over stolen popcorn.

THE OLD APARTMENT IN SAN LUIS OBISPO.

SPAGHETTI NIGHT.

"I'M PREGNANT."

ERIC'S BIRTH.

THE WEDDING.

HONEYMOON IN HAWAII.

AL FILING PAPERS IN HIS OFFICE.

AL, ERIC, AND SHEILA at the PLAQUE in CHINATOWN.

THE FUNERAL.

TIMBERLAKE laughing and filling a glass for AL.

THE PISS STAIN.

AL stands alone in CAPTAIN BILLY'S PARKING LOT--

Suddenly, AL is tackled by PAOLO.

A struggle, as PAOLO pulls AL's ripcord, releasing about half a load of laundry.

PAOLO's face registers the anomaly as AL pulls the ripcord to PAOLO's chute, shooting him upward. AL continues to fall.

AL returns to a state of calm, a blank stare,

Falling.

Taking in the ocean,

The horizon,

Feeling the wind.

ERIC (V.O.)

If you ask me. I say a man who tries to kill himself three or four different ways and fails, probably doesn't want to die.

AL

This is worth it! It's beautiful!

ERIC (V.O.)

So, now what?

AL

I don't know. I guess I'll be dead in a minute!

ERIC (V.O.)

That what you want?

AL

No!

ERIC (V.O.)

Didn't think so.

AL

Well, this sucks!

ERIC (V.O.)

Maybe it's supposed to.

A moment, as AL contemplates ERIC's last statement. Then-

AL is tackled again by PAOLO, who must have released his chute.

PAOLO grabs AL's harness with one hand and lands a solid knock-out punch in the middle of AL's face.

As AL goes limp. PAOLO's reserve chute opens.

After the catch, PAOLO fastens AL's harness to his, and begins guiding them safely to the earth.

PAOLO smiles as blood begins to trickle from AL's nose.

CUT TO:

136 EXT. LANDING FIELD IN HAWAII - DAY - CONTINUOUS 136

PAOLO cruises into the site for as smooth of a landing as one could hope for in such a situation, as a CROWD gathers.

As PAOLO frees himself from the chute and AL's harness, AL comes to. PAOLO takes a step back.

PAOLO  
You alright?

AL takes a second to focus, then tries several times before successfully standing on his own.

AL and PAOLO stand, eyeing each other, wondering what to do. The CROWD had drawn close, but all are silent as they watch to see what will happen between these two incongruous looking men.

AL darts over to PAOLO and wraps him in a bear hug, though he can't exactly get his arms around PAOLO.

PAOLO reluctantly acquiesces, embracing AL.

AL  
Thank you. Thank you, thank you,  
thank you, thank you.

There are cheers and clapping from the CROWD.

As they break apart, the two of them return to staring at each other, unsure of what to do amongst the cheers of the CROWD.

SO, PAOLO swings another hard left into AL's face, catching him in the eye this time, which knocks him out cold. The crowd grows silent, again.

ONLOOKER (O.C.)  
*Paolo...* You probably didn't need  
to do that.

PAOLO  
Sorry.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

137 EXT. A HAWAIIAN BEACH - SHEILA AND DENISE'S WEDDING - DAY 137

As the music plays, SHEILA and DENISE give their vows and kiss, as HAPPY HIPPIE pronounces them wife and wife.

SHEILA and AL, who sits in the front row, still sporting a nose brace and a black eye, share a smile, as PAOLO, who is seated next to AL, gives him a pat on the back.

FADE TO:

138 EXT. LANDING FIELD IN HAWAII - DAY 138

The music continues.

AL and SHEILA plant a tree and release a couple of balloons, as PAOLO, DENISE, and JOAN look on.

The music fades.

FADE TO:

139 EXT. MILE HIGH JUMP PLANE - DAY 139

As the newly painted and refurbished plane makes its way through the clouds, the DEPUTY'S face peers through the window.

CUT TO:

140 INT. MILE HIGH JUMP PLANE - DAY - CONTINUOUS. 140

A hand reaches over to the DEPUTY'S shoulder. He turns to see AL.

AL (UNHEARD)  
You alright?

The DEPUTY gives a thumbs-up, as AL turns to PAOLO, who sits across from him in a matching yellow jump-suit. AL relays the thumbs-up to PAOLO, who smiles.

The music returns.

CUT TO:

141 EXT. MILE HIGH JUMP PLANE - DAY 141

AL, PAOLO, the DEPUTY, JOAN, SHEILA, DENISE, and the HAPPY HIPPIE all pour out of the plane and make a jubilant descent.

ERIC flies by in his COFFIN, unnoticed.

THE END