Untitled Sean Jablonski Pilot

Written by

Sean Jablonski

Revisions for Extended Version

September 18, 2013

Krasnoff/Foster Entertainment

OVER BLACK:

NEIL (V.O.)
My name is Neil Truman and I have what every man in America wants...

INT. LIVING ROOM/TRUMAN HOME - MORNING

NEIL TRUMAN, 40, eating a bowl of Cheerios in his boxers, slips on some glasses as he points a remote toward --

NEIL (V.O.)
...an 80-inch 3D TV. I watch Sports Center on it. That fishing show on the Discovery Channel. But sometimes, when my wife is upstairs, I'll find one of those sexy movies you can get on cable 24-hours a day.

As Neil checks to make sure the coast is clear, changes the channel, finds some skin, CUT TO:

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - MORNING

GRACE TRUMAN, late 30s, stands at the bathroom sink in a sports bra and workout pants, brushing her teeth.

NEIL (V.O.)
Not that my wife doesn't satisfy me. She still gets mistaken for 25, even though that's when we first met -- eighteen years ago.

Grace steps back to consider her cleavage.

NEIL (V.O.) (cont'd) (CONT'D)
She's a knockout.

As Grace cups her breasts, gives them a lift, CUT TO:

INT. ANIKA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

ANIKA TRUMAN, 16, hums along with the guitar she's strumming.

NEIL (V.O.)
My daughter doesn't do drugs or have sex yet. And for sixteen, that's not just a blessing these days, it's an anomaly.
(MORE)

NEIL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Especially when you consider she wants to be a musician.

As inspiration hits and Anika scribbles some lyrics, CUT TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM CLOSET - MORNING

Neil stands at a tie rack thumbing through a selection that could be Macy's entire fall collection.

NEIL (V.O.)
I'm current on my mortgage, my cholesterol just dipped below 170 and most nights I get eight hours of sleep.

He selects a dark blue one, holds it up to his dress shirt.

NEIL (V.O.) (cont'd) (CONT'D)
...everything a reasonable man could ask for.

Grace exits the bathroom as --

GRACE
The yellow one, honey. Brings out your eyes more.

Neil dutifully switches ties, begins to thread the yellow one through his collar -- then stops, stares directly at us.

NEIL (V.O.)
So what the hell is wrong with me?

INT. HEALTH CLUB - DAY

Drenched in sweat, Neil sprints at full speed on a treadmill. Another man, LAWRENCE, his gym buddy, also 40s, does some half-ass stretching nearby.

LAWRENCE
Mid-life crisis.

NEIL
This feels bigger. More universal.

LAWRENCE
Now you're losing me.

Neil ups his pace on the treadmill.

NEIL
You realize seventy five percent of the world is covered in water and we're running out of fish? *Fish*. Not like it's safe to eat them anymore any way. And the bees? Where are they going? Millions of 'em, just disappearing. Then you got the rain forests burning, the ice caps melting -- even the polar bears are drowning.

LAWRENCE
Poor bastards.

NEIL
I'm serious. What's the point of busting your ass everyday and paying a mortgage if it feels like the world is coming to an end.

Lawrence grabs a couple dumbbells, starts doing curls.

LAWRENCE (cont'd)
You gotta chill out, man. 2012's over. Nostradamus was wrong.

NEIL
I know, but...what's it all *mean*?

LAWRENCE
Why you asking me? Go to church if you want some perspective.

NEIL
I tried.

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

Spirituality section. Neil appears, moves down the aisle.

NEIL (V.O.)
I wasn't raised with a religion...

He turns his head sideways to scan the spines.

NEIL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...So I had to experiment with a few.

We see titles like, "Christianity and You!" "The Tora Explained" and "A Baptist's Guide to Life."

NEIL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Nothing felt right.

He pauses -- something's caught his eye.

NEIL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I figured I had to go outside the box.

He selects "Zen In The Modern World," flips through.

CLOSE ON THE PAGES -- Various images flip by: a handsome Chinese Man dressed in flowing robes. A beautiful woman. A palace lined with gold.

NEIL (V.O.) (cont'd) (CONT'D)
You know that the Buddha was actually a prince before he became his enlightened self? Had a wife, a kid, three palaces...

LAWRENCE (V.O.)
The American Dream.

INT. NEIL'S CAR - DRIVING

Neil alternates between reading the book and driving as he creeps along in rush hour traffic.

NEIL (V.O.)
Then one day, he just gave it all up. Left his family to travel the world in search of meaning. Personal fulfillment.

Neil leans forward to look out his windshield and sees:

THE EXIT FOR THE AIRPORT --

He swerves for the off ramp.

LAWRENCE (V.O.)
Who *hasn't* felt that way?

NEIL (V.O.)
But I love my wife. I have a daughter to put through college. A nest egg I've been working on...

He swerves back at the last second, keeps driving.

INT. HEALTH CLUB - DAY

LAWRENCE
So maybe it's your job.

NEIL
Eighty hours a week and all I do is make the rich richer.

INT. UPSCALE BROKERAGE FIRM - DAY

Neil sits in a bullpen full of BROKERS, studying monitors full of charts and ever-changing stock quotes, bored.

NEIL (V.O.)
I mean, I generate more money in one day than most people will see in their lifetime. And for what?

BROKER behind Neil hangs up his phone, jumps up like a half back who just broke through for a touchdown, high-fiving the other men around him. As Neil holds out his hand for a slap, doesn't turn around or change expression, we CUT TO:

INT. HEALTH CLUB - DAY

LAWRENCE
Oh, I don't know...nice house? Two cars? *Private* school?

NEIL
Last month we helped refinance the Romanian debt. And you know what they did? Three guys in the government kept all the money, unemployment went up three percent and they raised taxes on the poor. Am I supposed to feel good about that?

Lawrence finishes his curls, re-racks his weights.

LAWRENCE
You need a change my friend.

NEIL
I was thinking of going to carpentry school, working with my hands. Like my dad.

LAWRENCE
Are you crazy?

NEIL
He made thirty grand a year his whole life, but at least he was happy.

LAWRENCE
He also died at fifty-eight.
(then)
I was gonna suggest Lexapro.

Neil stops the treadmill.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
You wanna see my doctor? He'll fix you right up. Better than drinking three martinis a night. Now I don't worry about any of that crap.

Neil grabs a towel, troubled.

NEIL
I think the problem is I need to feel more right now, not less.

He exits. As Lawrence shrugs, turns back to the mirror, admiring his arms, we CUT TO:

INT. BULLPEN/NEIL'S DESK - DAY

Neil thumbs through a book on his desk, ignoring the stock alarms on the monitors in front of him.

CLOSE ON THE BOOK -- a chapter on meditation. Words flash by: "beginner's mind...quiet place...twenty minutes a day..."

RESUME Neil as he leans back, contemplating the practice. He clicks off the stock quotes on his monitor, opens up a new screen.

CLOSE ON THE SCREEN: Neil types in a search: "Zen Study, Los Angeles," clicks on the first website, leans in.

VOICE
Knuckle ball --

Neil turns just in time to snatch a baseball out of the air before it hits him in the head. DARRYL PECK, 30s, slight paunch, enters, the would-be pitcher.

DARRYL
Whaddya think? Had some good movement on it, right?

Neil looks ready to beat him with it.

DARRYL (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Take it easy, man. I'm just trying to have fun. You're always lookin' so agro these days.

Darryl grabs his ball back, motions for Neil to follow him.

DARRYL (cont'd) (CONT'D)
C'mon. Big guy's called a meeting, we're all waiting on you.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Neil and Darryl sit in the back of a packed room with about two dozen MEN in suits who chatter and rough-house like frat boys at a keg party.

DARRYL
Check it out -- we're all wearing the same tie again.

As Neil looks down at his own tie, door opens and VICTOR O'CONNELL, 50s, head of the firm, enters like Patton addressing his troops.

VICTOR
Alright, ladies, settle down. We got a lot to cover this morning.
(scanning)
Truman, where are you?

Neil shoots a hand up from the back of the room.

VICTOR (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Stand up.

Neil rises, a little uneasy.

VICTOR (cont'd) (CONT'D)
I just saw your quarterlies...
(beat)
Out-standing. Again. And this time, I'm not the only one who noticed.
(to the room)
We're all familiar with Updike Pharmaceuticals?

DARRYL
(the kiss-ass)
They're trying to get FDA approved on that new diet pill, right?

NEIL
After two people died in clinical studies. Their stock just tanked --

VICTOR
Which is good for us. They left their current brokerage house and are shopping right now, trying to find someone to plug the holes in their sinking ship. I told 'em we had just the man for the job.

He looks directly at Neil.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Tomorrow. You're going to New York, you're gonna wine and dine these guys, get 'em to come join the family. You got kind of a gift with the gab so this should be easy. Gonna mean a lot of money for us. Whaddya think? You ready for the big time?

The room turns to Neil, waiting for a response.

VICTOR (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Well don't just stand there with your dick in your hand, say something.

Neil hesitates, considers the eager faces of everyone here.

NEIL
I don't know what to say... because I hate this job. None of what I do really matters. I don't even get to see what I'm actually trading on a daily basis. It's just numbers on a screen, it's not real.
(to the room)
We're not contributing anything to the world in any meaningful way. Just hoarding money.
(then, to Victor)
And I always thought you were an asshole for making that a virtue.

A long, awkward silence -- until Victor gives him a big shit-eating grin

VICTOR
Goddamn -- I *love* you.
(to the room)
You see that? *That's* what I want more of. You guys could learn a thing or two from this man. Could sell ice to an Eskimo.
(back to Neil)
Had me fooled for a minute there, you bastard.
(to the room)
Alright...next order of business...

Neil sits back down, Darryl leans over.

DARRYL
Dude, that? Was awesome.

As he holds out his hand for a fist bump, CUT TO:

INT. TRUMAN HOME - NIGHT

Neil enters, drops his briefcase. He listens for a beat, hears some guitar playing coming from:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Neil enters, sees Anika strumming her guitar, working on the same melody we heard earlier, trying out some lyrics. Neil watches, full of pride.

NEIL
That's beautiful.

Anika looks up, wasn't aware he was standing there.

ANIKA
It's still a little rough.

NEIL
What's it about?

ANIKA
You'll see tomorrow night.
(off his guilty look)
You forgot about the talent show, didn't you?

NEIL
...Sweetie, I have this thing I have to do for work that --

ANIKA
You don't need to explain it to me if it's not a new excuse.

She stands, marches out. Neil exhales, heads into:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Neil enters, finds Grace on her cell phone, pacing back and forth, trying to put out a fire on the other end.

GRACE
(into phone)
...no way, Frank. I can't get it done by then...

She turns to Neil rolls her eyes.

GRACE (cont'd) (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Alright, fine. I'll make some calls, see what I can do. But only because I love you.

She hangs up, exhales.

GRACE (cont'd) (CONT'D)
How was *your* day?

NEIL
I tried to quit my job.

GRACE
Tell me about it. Frank's got a new house to show this weekend? He wants me to have it staged by to-morrow. Can you believe that? I shoulda told him to go to hell.

Neil gives her a thin smile. Grace gives him a kiss.

GRACE (cont'd) (CONT'D)
You're home early.

NEIL
I have to go to New York in the morning.

GRACE
What's in New York?

NEIL
A new client Victor wants me to sign.

GRACE
Victor wants *you* to sign?

Neil nods.

GRACE (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Oh, my god, that's great, honey. That's really good news...
(off his expression)
What's wrong?

NEIL
...nothing.
(off her look, sells it this time)
I was hoping to spend time with the family this weekend, that's all. And Anika's got her talent show...

She studies him.

GRACE
Stay here, I got you something.

Grace moves quickly out of the room and comes back with a box, hands it to Neil. He opens it, pulls out --

NEIL
A tie...

GRACE
I just loved the color you had on this morning. Made you look sexy. You can wear it to New York now.

Neil gives her a slight smile -- she's not reading him at all. He drops the tie back in the box.

NEIL
Thanks, babe...
(then)
Think I'm gonna go take a swim.

He exits. Grace watches him go, hurt.

EXT. YARD - NIGHT

Neil, wearing swim trunks now, walks out to the pool. He stops at the edge, ready to dive in -- but something's not right.

CLOSE ON THE WATER --

Full of leaves, sticks, gunk -- like a dirty pond.

Neil picks up a long net to scoop out some of the trash. He takes one pass over the water then stops, drops the net and walks off.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Neil lies in bed next to Grace, stares up at the ceiling.

NEIL
We need a vacation. On a beach somewhere. Far away.

Grace doesn't answer. Neil turns to her... slides a hand under her night gown. She gently moves it away.

GRACE
I'm tired now, honey.

He rolls back over, stares up at the ceiling again.

NEIL
I think we need to fire the pool guy.

No response. When Neil finally closes his eyes, they immediately shoot open in:

INT. AIRPORT - THE NEXT MORNING

Having dozed off, Neil awakens in a sea of other MEN in suits at the gate area for his flight. A VOICE is crackling over the P.A.

VOICE
Ladies and gentlemen, we can now begin general boarding for our flight to JFK...

Still groggy, Neil looks over at a balding BUSINESSMAN across from him who's putting on his jacket.

BUSINESSMAN
Three hours late and not even a "sorry for the delay...."

Neil blends into the sea of other PASSENGERS, everyone showing signs of stress already.

INT. AIRPLANE - MOMENTS LATER

Neil wedges into an aisle seat, sees the Businessman two rows up, trying to get his air to work. A FLIGHT ATTENDANT hustles by.

NEIL
'Scuse me, is there any way to get some water before --

She keeps going.

BUSINESSMAN
Does your air work?

Neil reaches up, gives it a twist -- nothing.

BUSINESSMAN (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Coulda taken a greyhound, got better service.

Captain comes over the P.A.

CAPTIAN (V.O.)
Ladies and gentlemen, looks like that initial delay has held us here at the gate. Might be another hour before we can push back...

As groans drown out the rest of the announcement, we CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE - LATER

Still at the gate. Flight Attendant hustles by once more. Neil stops her.

NEIL
Scuse me, it's really hot in here --

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
(mock sympathy)
I know, sir. And I am *so* sorry you're uncomfortable.

NEIL
If we would just get some water --

She moves off. Neil looks at the Businessman who simply mouths the word “bitch.”

30 MINUTES LATER --

Neil flips through the SkyMall mag for the fifth time when the captain comes on the P.A.

CAPTIAN (V.O.)
Folks, hate to say this but we’re over our limit here in the cockpit...Gonna have to power down now, keep ya here while we call for another flight crew...

Passengers start screaming. Neil tries once more to snag the Flight Attendant.

NEIL
I’m sorry, I hate to keep asking, but --

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Now you’re harassing me.

NEIL
It’s been nearly five hours, we’re all thirsty --

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Touch me again, I’ll have you removed from this flight.
(moving away)
Asshole...

Neil watches as Flight Attendant moves to the back of the plane and grabs the mic.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (cont’d) (CONT’D)
Ladies and gentlemen, we need you to stay seated. I promise we’re doing all we can to make you comfortable while we’re experiencing this delay...

Neil turns back, makes serious eye contact with the Flight Attendant -- just as she takes a sip from a bottle of water.

Whoosshhh...All SOUND FADES OUT. FILM SPEED SLOWS.

Neil is overcome with a sudden sense of calm.

He undoes his seat belt. Rises.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT --

Sees him leave his seat, calls out.

NEIL --

Walks calmly to the front of the plane.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT --

Charges down the aisle after him.

PASSENGERS --

Take notice, start taping the scene on their cell phones.

NEIL --

Reaches for the mic at the front the cabin. He picks it up, turns back and starts to deliver a sermon (though we do not hear the words, just his voice over)

NEIL (V.O.)
I don't remember what I said or where the courage came from in that moment.

Flight Attendant is closing in.

NEIL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I just know something snapped inside me. Something that had been wound so tight for so long.

Neil drops the mic, turns to the cabin door.

NEIL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And in that one brief moment, all the stress, the uncertainty in my life -- it disappeared. I felt this sudden...clarity.

With the strength of Hercules, Neil rips open the cabin door.

THE EMERGENCY SLIDE --

Unfolds like a ribbon to the ground.

NEIL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It was amazing...

Inhaling deeply, Neil closes his eyes and jumps. In SLOW MOTION he hits the slide, glides for what seems like eternity, a huge smile on his face.

Other Passengers appear behind him. One by one they jump down the slide like kids on a playground. As Neil turns back to take in their smiling faces...then sees SIRENS approaching, we CUT TO:

INT. TSA OFFICE - DAY

Neil sits on a folding chair in small office, water bottle in hand, talking to his LAWYER as a TSA OFFICER hovers just outside.

NEIL
Have you ever had that experience?

LAWYER
No. And, as your lawyer, I want you to forget your ever said that.
(off Neil)
Look, four years ago, you'd be grabbing your ankles at county right now, probably not even get a hearing 'til Christmas. But since they passed that "Passenger's Bill of Rights" last year, you wedged your way into this little loophole that's gonna save your ass. Not to mention everyone on board is coming to your defense.

NEIL
Really?

LAWYER
They're saying the Flight Attendant attacked you.

NEIL
What? No, she didn't "attack" me.

LAWYER
You let me handle that. Right now you got 200 people backing you up so I'd keep my mouth shut.

He motions for Neil to stand.

LAWYER (cont'd) (CONT'D)
C'mon. Let's get out of here before anyone changes their mind.

EXT. HALLWAY/TSA OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Neil and his Lawyer exit the room. Just before they reach freedom, Neil sees the Flight Attendant in another office being grilled by a TSA OFFICER. She makes eye contact with Neil just as he absently takes a sip from *his* water bottle. As Lawyer pulls Neil away, hustles him off, CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN - DAY

Establish the impressive high-rise that is Neil's firm.

INT. VICTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Victor stands behind his desk, veins popping as he lays into Neil at full volume. Darryl is off to the side, fingering his baseball, enjoying this.

VICTOR
...a no fly list? Well I'm not surprised.
(to Darryl)
Show him that thing you showed me.

Darryl moves to Victor's computer, does a few keystrokes.

ON SCREEN: A cell phone video of Neil rallying the Passengers on the plane, ripping open the door and pulling the slide.

VICTOR (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Lemme ask you: what do you think the guys at Updike are gonna say when they see this now? Huh? Hell, any of our clients.

DARRYL
It's embarrassing.

NEIL
They kept us waiting almost five hours.

Victor snatches a paper off his desk.

VICTOR
Our lawyers advised us to put out a statement. You were off your medication -- diabetic dementia, some shit like that.

He thrusts the paper at Neil.

VICTOR (cont'd) (CONT'D)
You're gonna sign this and offer a public apology on behalf of the firm. You're also gonna take a leave of absence and agree not to talk to the press. Then you're gonna thank me for not firing you right now.

Neil looks at the paper, back to Victor.

NEIL
I'm not signing that.

VICTOR
Yes, you are.

NEIL
They treated us like animals. Why should I apologize?

Victor looks to Darryl -- is he serious?

VICTOR
(back to Neil)
Do you realize what kind of trouble you're in right now? I'm giving you a gift here. And I'm not gonna offer it twice.

NEIL
Well, in that case --

He takes the paper from Victor -- tears it in half.

NEIL (CONT'D)
But just so I'm being clear --

Neil grabs the baseball out of Darryl's hand, hurls it at a mirror on the wall -- a BIG SMASH.

NEIL (cont'd) (CONT'D)
I'm not interested.

He pats Darryl on the back.

NEIL (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Now that had some movement on it.

As Neil exits, exhilarated, we CUT TO:

INT. PARKING GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

WHOOSH -- Neil explodes out of the elevator like a man shot from a cannon. He rips off his tie, drops it on the ground.

He whips out his car keys, a smile spreading across his face.

He jumps in his car.

REVS the engine.

SQUEALS out of his parking space and fishtails for the exit.

INT. NEIL'S CAR - DRIVING

Neil weaves in and out of traffic as he dials a number on his cell. There's a lightness in him we haven't seen before, a glow. As the call connects, he talks through his bluetooth.

NEIL
Frank... is my wife there? I can't get her cell... yes, she mentioned that house last night...what's the address?

Neil pulls over, inputs the address into his Navigation.

NEIL (cont'd) (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Got it, thanks.

He hangs up, turns on the radio. Upbeat SONG TBD plays. Neil cranks it up, rocking like a teenager going to a house party. As he punches the gas, never more alive, CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

SONG CONTINUES. Neil's car squeals around the corner on a wide street, drives past some multi-million dollar homes.

INT. NEIL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

NAVIGATION VOICE
...you have reached your destination...

Neil sees Grace's car. He swerves over and bumps up the driveway, SONG still blasting.

INT. MEDITERRANEAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

Neil enters like a linebacker on his way to picking off a pass, calls out:

NEIL
Grace...? Babe...? I got some great news...

He turns, sees her purse and cell phone on a entry table, practically prances into:

INT. KITCHEN/MEDITERRANEAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

Neil enters, walks past the sliding door to the backyard and glances out at the pool -- a huge one with a rock waterfall. He turns back...listens. There's some KNOCKING coming from upstairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY/MEDITERRANEAN HOME - DAY

Neil bounds up the stairs, his mood rising with every step.

NEIL
Babe...?

He heads toward the Master Bedroom -- then freezes.

NEIL'S POV --

Grace is holding onto the headboard as an unseen MAN is taking her hard from behind.

GRACE
Oh, my god...yes...*yes!*

They're both so engaged, they don't realize Neil is watching them from the open door, dizzy from shock.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

OVER BLACK: “Six Months Earlier”

GRACE (V.O.) (CONT’D)
I suppose I should tell you a little bit about myself...

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Grace stares back at us, face bright and eager.

GRACE
Ever since I can remember I’ve had this connection to spaces. How they looked, how they felt, were arranged. My mom said from the time I learned to walk I would move around the house, rearranging furniture, finger painting the walls. She would say, “you were born to be a designer, Gracie.”
(thinks)
I believe our environments are what create our life. Who you are, how you live, it’s completely dependent on your surroundings. I guess I like to help people become more of who they are in that sense. Change your space, change your life.

She seems almost breathless at the revelation before we REVEAL for the first time that she is sitting across a desk from a young man (LEON), mid-twenties, hipster-cool.

LEON
Nancy said you had a lot of passion for the art form...

He turns to a computer, pulls out a keyboard.

LEON (CONT’D)
What’s your website? So I can see some of your work.

She reaches down for a large portfolio.

GRACE
I brought this instead if that’s okay...

She lays it on the desk.

LEON
Wow...old-school.

She opens it for him, highlighting some of her work.

CLOSE ON THE PAGES --

Hand-drawn sketches of room layouts and color palettes.

GRACE
Some of these are a little older, but the concepts are classic.

Leon turns the pages, considering the body of work.

LEON
Have you never created on Micropoint before?

GRACE
They didn't have any of those programs when I was going to school.

LEON
Of course, that was probably what? Twenty years ago?

Ouch -- that stung a little. She turns to another section.

GRACE
This layout was part of a project I did that got me a Fullbright scholarship to study in Italy.

Now Leon seems impressed.

LEON
A Fullbright in design? Really? Tell me about that. You lived in Italy?

GRACE
Funny story. I never actually went.
(off Leon)
I'd just met my future husband and gotten pregnant. We decided to get married and, you know, things kinda got put on hold. I did learn Italian though...

She chuckles, self-deprecating.

LEON
So you just... stopped.
(off Grace)
So you don't have any real experience.

GRACE
Well, I stage open houses right now. It's only part time. And not exactly the most creative job, but my daughter's staring to apply to college so I've got time to finally...
(off Leon)
Nancy did explain my situation when she recommended me for the job?

Leon gives her a thin smile, looking for a delicate way to say this.

LEON
Mrs. Truman. Interior design is a different business from when you first started...

He gestures to the wide-open work space just outside his office. If Google and Apple had a baby, this would be its nursery. Young, hip PROFESSIONALS work at computer stations designing room layouts and custom furniture concepts. Grace is the oldest person here.

LEON (CONT'D)
Talent is not the only thing we consider when we're looking to hire --

GRACE
If it's just about experience, I'm a really fast learner. I could start as an intern, you wouldn't even have to pay me at first --

LEON
I don't just mean work experience. I meant life experience.
(off Grace)
Honestly, I think you have the concept backwards. Who we *are* is what creates our environment -- not the other way around. And frankly, it sounds like you've had a pretty... normal life. That's just not what we're looking for.

As that lands on Grace like a cold shower we HEAR:

WOMAN'S VOICE
Did you just want to punch him in the face?

INT. SPINNING CLASS - MORNING

Grace grabs a towel and a bottle of water from her gym bag as she sets up on a bike next to her sister, STEPHANIE, late 30s, more hippie than hipster.

GRACE
Yes. But mostly because he was right.

STEPHANIE
Twenty-five years old. What does he know about life? You've had an amazing life.

GRACE
No, you know what I realized? I've had mom's life.
(off Stephanie)
She gave up her dreams to be a stay at home mom, too.

STEPHANIE
But look at what you do have.

GRACE
Great house, wonderful husband, amazing daughter, I know. And I sound like a whiny bitch to even complain. But I also know why mom had a screwdriver every day at two o'clock.
(off Stephanie)
I had this whole other life I was planning on living. I considered myself an artist once. And then I turned into...Neil's wife.

STEPHANIE
(it's a good thing)
And a mom.

GRACE
That's starting to change.

INT. GRACE'S CAR - DAY

Grace drives, Anika finishes last night's homework in the seat next to her.

GRACE (V.O.)
Far as Anika's concerned, I'm the enemy now. For sixteen years, my life revolved around her...

Grace pulls up to the curb to drop her off for school, leans over to kiss her.

GRACE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Raising her *was* my job...

Anika pulls away from Grace, not interested, hops out and races to join her friends.

GRACE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Now it's like she's firing me.

As Grace watches her for a beat, then drives off, we CUT TO:

INT. SPINNING CLASS - DAY

Grace furiously wipes down her bike seat with OCD-like focus.

STEPHANIE
That's normal though. For her age?

GRACE
She turned sixteen three months ago and thinks I hate her because I won't let her drive on her own. You realize teenagers are statistically the age group most prone to accidents on the road?

STEPHANIE
Um, excuse me?

Stephanie had been preparing to set up on the bike next to Grace when another WOMAN swoops in to lay her claim.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
A towel on the bike means it's spoken for?

Woman shoots her a "fuck you" glance, moves off. Stephanie rolls her eyes, turns back to Grace.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
You need to relax, Grace. You stress yourself out when you try to control things so much.

GRACE
How responsible would I be if I just handed over a set of keys and said, "go, drive away." I do it out of love.

A beat.

STEPHANIE
What about things with Neil? Everything there okay?

GRACE
Fine. We're barely ever in the same house at the same time these days.

EXT. TRUMAN HOME - NIGHT

Grace pulls up the driveway just as Neil hustles out the front door on his cell phone, late for something.

GRACE (V.O.)
Our schedules are so different it's like having a roommate instead of a husband...

Grace gets out of her car just as Neil gets into his. She tries to approach, but he's already backing out.

GRACE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
If it wasn't for texting, I'm not sure we'd even talk sometimes.

Grace hears a DING, pulls out her cell.

CLOSE ON HER PHONE --

"Sorry had 2 run"

She texts him back, "home for dinner?" As she watches him drive off, waiting for a reply, CUT TO:

INT. SPINNING CLASS - CONTINUOUS

SPINNING INSTRUCTOR has taken his spot at the front of the class, counting heads.

STEPHANIE
I know some women who prefer it that way.

GRACE
But I love Neil. And we're like best friends.

STEPHANIE
Friends...but you still have the "benefits," right?
(off Grace)
Like what? Three times a week?
(off Grace)
Once a week?
(off Grace)
Once a *month*?

Grace hops on her bike, clicks in her shoes.

GRACE
You're not married and married people don't really talk about this, but sex just doesn't become that important after a certain point.

STEPHANIE
Jesus, Grace. No wonder you've been in a funk. You need to be getting laid.

GRACE
Really? I just turned forty, am facing an empty nest and realized I may never have the career I wanted and your solution to it all is get laid?

STEPHANIE
How many unhappy people do you know that are getting some on a regular basis?

SPINNING INSTRUCTOR calls out:

SPINNING INSTRUCTOR
Alllll riiiggggtttt! Who's ready to hit the road?

The class SCREAMS. Spinning Instructor kills the lights and a disco ball drops -- it's like a nightclub in here now.

GRACE
How many miles would you say we've peddled in this class?

STEPHANIE
20 miles a session? Four days a week for five years? What is that?

MUSIC BLARES. Stephanie puts her game face on, ready to roll. As class begins but Grace remains frozen, we CUT TO:

A CELL PHONE SCREEN --

A FINGER taps some numbers into a calculator.

"20 x 4 = 80" A few more taps.

80 x 52 = 4160 A few more taps.

4160 x 6 = 24,960

ANIKA (O.S.)
Mom...what are you doing?

INT. BEDROOM/TRUMAN HOME - NIGHT

Grace stands in her closet, mid-way through getting dressed, staring at her cell phone screen in mild shock. Anika has wandered in.

ANIKA
I'm totally running late, let's go.

Grace looks up from her phone.

GRACE
Do you know how many miles it is around earth?

Anika looks at her -- what?

GRACE (CONT'D)
A little over twenty thousand. I may have actually peddled all the way around the planet and never left the same room. Is that crazy?

ANIKA
You know what's crazy? It's only six miles to Jenny's and if you don't drop me off, we're never gonna finish our history project and I'm flunking the class.

Grace checks back in, puts her phone away, grabs a pair of shoes.

GRACE
Your father's driving you. I have book club tonight.

ANIKA
Dad's in his force field right now. He said you have to.

INT. HOME OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Grace enters, finds Neil on his computer reviewing stacks of papers like a man trying to decipher the Rosetta Stone. Anika trails in behind to watch this unfold.

GRACE
Neil?

He doesn't look up.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Neil.

He holds up a hand -- not now.

GRACE (CONT'D)
You have to drive Anika to Jenny's.

NEIL
I have a huge audit due in the morning. You have to.

GRACE
The girls are coming over, I have my book club tonight.

He looks up at her.

NEIL
And I'm working.

GRACE
I put this in your calender weeks ago.

He doesn't remember.

GRACE (CONT'D)
I told you three times this morning.

It's vaguely coming back to him now.

GRACE (CONT'D)
You confirmed my text.

She pulls out her phone, reads from the screen.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Neil, don't forget I have book club tonight. Grace, okay, no problem.

NEIL
...I have to get this done by the morning or we lose an account.

GRACE
This is my one night a month, Neil. You can take a break for half an hour --?

NEIL
What's more important right now? Me trying to provide for the family or your book club?

The DOORBELL rings. Grace holds on Neil for a beat then moves off. Anika looks to her dad, then walks out as --

ANIKA
...that was harsh.

INT. ENTRY WAY/TRUMAN HOME - SAME TIME

Grace opens the door as a group of THREE WOMEN enter: MONICA, NANCY and BETH, all around the same age, all close friends. They ad-lib greetings.

MONICA
I have to use your bathroom like right now --

She darts off as Beth holds up a bottle of wine.

BETH
Corkscrew?

GRACE
Top drawer, left of the fridge.

She moves off as Neil comes marching out of his office, laptop under his arm, lugging an overstuffed briefcase.

NEIL
I'll drop Anika off then I'm going to work at the office. And I'll probably sleep there. You can pick her up.

He turns to Anika.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Let's go.

Before Grace can say a word, the two of them exit. Nancy looks to Grace -- what was that about?

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

The women sip Chardonnay as they talk about the hardcover book on the coffee table in front of them.

NANCY
...I thought the author was trying to say we should move past our fears and let go of our childhood.

BETH
Personally, I was just bored.

MONICA
Uh-oh...

She holds up the bottle of wine they had all been sharing.

MONICA (CONT'D)
No mas vino. Grace? You have any more?
(off her silence)
Gracie?

She finally turns -- she'd been a million miles way.

MONICA (CONT'D)
Wine? We're gonna need a little more before we talk about those last few chapters.

NANCY
So dense.

Grace seems completely uninterested.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Did you not read the book?

Grace considers her friends for a moment.

GRACE
This is our one night a month to actually get together and have fun and all we do is sit and discuss what fake people are doing with their lives. What adventures they're having. That's pathetic, isn't it?

She stands.

GRACE (CONT'D)
I say we go out and create some of own stories. Talk about those. Get some...life experience.

A silent beat. Then:

MONICA
I think if we just opened another bottle --

Grace marches out of the room, re-enters a beat later with her coat on and her car keys.

GRACE
I'm driving. Let's go.

Off the group, trying to catch up, we PRE-LAP the sound of CLUB MUSIC and smash cut to:

INT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT

Packed, sweaty and full of young, uninhibited PEOPLE who are dancing with abandon.

ON THE DANCE FLOOR --

Grace is letting loose under the pulsating lights, blending into the crowd, but clearly in her own world.

ON THE EDGE OF THE FLOOR --

Watching Grace with a mix of fascination and concern, Monica, Nancy and Beth try to make sense of how they even got here, shouting to be heard despite the fact they're standing next to each other.

NANCY
How much did she tip the bouncer to get us in?

BETH
I don't know, I think he just took pity on us.

Nancy is scanning the faces in the crowd.

MONICA
I swear some of these kids have baby sat for Evan and I.

Nancy takes a sip of wine, studying Grace.

NANCY
You didn't catch it, but she and Neil had this thing and Neil said he was gonna sleep at the office. You think everything's alright at home? She has been acting a little crazy lately.

MONICA
He lives at the office, I wouldn't read into it.

NANCY
Look at her...

GRACE --

Is dancing up a storm, lost in her experience.

MONICA
We are so not dressed for this right now.

BETH
...She does look like she's having fun.

The girls look at each other, suddenly self-conscious. Monica downs the last of her wine.

MONICA
That book did suck.

She sets her wine glass down and marches onto the dance floor. Nancy and Beth look to each other then follow Monica.

THE DANCE FLOOR --

The women join up with Grace. Suddenly they're dancing like sorority girls at a frat party.

BETH
You can really feel that bass in your chest.

GRACE
I wish I smoked a joint.

Her spirit is contagious -- this is so much better than book club. And as the moment just seems to keep expanding, Grace looks across the dance floor and makes eye-contact with

A YOUNG, SEXY MAN --

The kind you hire to work at Abercrombie and Fitch. He locks eyes with Grace. Monica sees it.

MONICA
Hell-lo...

Grace can't turn away from him. And he won't look away from her. She finally does, refocuses on her friends.

MONICA (CONT'D)
Grace, you go, girl.

NANCY
Oh, my god...he's coming over.

Grace turns. Sure enough he's weaving towards them. When he gets to Grace, he holds out a hand. And she takes it.

MAN
You're beautiful. What's your name?

GRACE
(it's so loud)
...What?

MAN
Your name?

Whether she hears him or not, she doesn't answer. He finally takes her hand and leads her toward.

THE BAR --

A little quieter here. And he can get closer.

MAN (CONT'D)
Let me buy you a drink.

GRACE
...I think I've had enough.

He holds out his hand.

SIMON
Simon. Nice to meet you.

GRACE
Grace.

She shakes his hand -- and he holds it. Puts his other hand on top.

ON THE DANCE FLOOR --

Nancy, Beth and Monica are watching this exchange -- whoa.

BACK AT THE BAR --

Simon moves a little closer to Grace.

SIMON
What are you doing here tonight, Grace? What's your story?

She's lost in his eyes, not sure what to say when suddenly she is bumped hard from behind. Another WOMAN pushes her aside.

GRACE
Hey --

Woman turns to Simon and starts berating him in Italian.

WOMAN
(subtitled)
I go to the bathroom and you start picking up other women?

He tries to calm her down.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
(in Italian re: Grace)
And with some old whore? Don't insult me.

Grace stiffens -- she clearly understood what she just said.

GRACE
(subtitled, in Italian)
You're not exactly a teenager yourself, bitch.

Woman turns to Grace -- did she really just say that?

ACROSS THE FLOOR --

Nancy, Grace and Beth catch what's going on, start to head over just as

THE WOMAN --

Shoves Grace once more. This time, Grace isn't having it. She turns to the bar, grabs a drink -- and dumps it on her. The Man tries to step in between them. Nancy, Beth and Monica rush up just as the Woman lunges at Grace. As a scuffle breaks out, we CUT TO:

EXT. CLUB - LATER

As the Club PATRONS file out to find an after party, they slow to gawk at a couple of COP CARS at the curb. Looking closer, we see Grace in the back seat of one, the Italian Woman in the other.

NANCY, BETH and MONICA --

Huddle off to the side, waiting for the final outcome.

A COP --

Finishes talking to his PARTNER who's keeping an eye on the Italian Woman, then approaches the car with Grace inside, opens the door.

COP
If you're not willing to press charges, neither is she.

Grace turns to look at her foe, then back to the Cop.

GRACE
I've never been in a bar fight before.

COP
Congratulations, now you can scratch that off the bucket list.

GRACE
How does she look? Did I leave a mark?

Cop simply stares at her.

COP
That's a no, you're not pressing charges, right?

Grace considers it, then shakes her head. Cop looks over to his partner, indicates he can let her go.

GRACE
You know, in college? I used to study so much, I never went out to clubs. I was kind of a geek.

Cop pulls out a cell phone, hands it to Grace.

COP
Evidently you dropped this during your “bar fight.” Gentlemen over there wanted me to make sure you got it back.

Grace takes the phone, looks over to where the Cop indicates and sees the Man from the club looking back at her. He smiles, motions for her to check her phone. Grace looks down, sees something she wasn’t expecting just before --

NEIL (O.S.)
Grace...?

She looks up as Neil approaches.

NEIL (CONT’D)
What the hell...are you okay?

COP
(to Neil)
You’re the husband?

NEIL
Yes, what happened?

COP
I’ll let her tell you.

Cop gestures for Grace to get out of the car. Neil nods his thanks to the cop, turns to wave to Monica, Nancy and Beth.

NEIL
Can you drive her car back? I’ll have her ride with me.

They hesitate a beat before moving off. Neil turns back to Grace, his face tight.

NEIL (CONT’D)
Is this what you do at your book club when I’m not around?

GRACE
We just wanted to try something a little different.
(off Neil)
You're mad. I'd be mad, too.

NEIL
You're damn right I'm mad. You completely forgot about Anika, I'm gonna miss the deadline -- you almost got arrested for Christ's sake --

GRACE
Okay, that woman shoved me first --

NEIL
What the hell is going on with you?

GRACE
I just wanted to have some fun. Am I not allowed to fun anymore?

Neil studies her.

NEIL
How much have you had to drink?

GRACE
I could have another...

She leans on his shoulder.

GRACE (CONT'D)
We could fool around when we get home --

He pulls pulls away.

NEIL
What is wrong with you?

GRACE
Nothing...I feel like myself for the first time in so long.

NEIL
What does that mean? I don't even know who you are right now.

GRACE
I don't know who I've been, Neil. And you don't even notice. Don't you even notice?

A beat. Finally:

NEIL
Just...let's get in the car.

He motions for her to follow. Grace holds her ground, head spinning now. As she closes her eyes, they shoot back open in:

INT. BEDROOM/TRUMAN HOME - MORNING

Grace stares up at us from the bed...winces from a screaming headache. She looks at the clock.

GRACE
Shit...

INT. KITCHEN/TRUMAN HOME - MORNING

Grace enters, moving slow.

GRACE
Neil...? Anika...?

No answer. She sees some breakfast dishes left on the kitchen table. She looks up, sees Neil and Anika getting into Neil's car outside and drive off.

Then she turns back to the empty kitchen.

The quiet house.

She sees her cell phone on the counter. She moves to it, picks it up and searches for something (which we don't see). The phone rings. She recognizes the number, answers.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Hey, Steph... spinning? Um...no.
I think I'm done riding in place.

Off Grace we CUT TO:

A GARAGE DOOR --

Whirring upwards, letting light into:

INT. GARAGE - SAME TIME

Grace enters moves to the back of the space and we REVEAL

A BIKE --

A little worse for wear, tires a little flat, but ridable. As she clears away some boxes to pull it out, we CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Grace glides by on her bike, serpentines down the open road like a kid who just got their training wheels off.

But she's not just going where ever the road takes her. She has a destination in mind. As she looks up at a street sign, makes a tight turn, we CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Grace turns a corner, peddles past a row of houses. She's slowing down, reading the addresses, finally stops at one near the middle of the block.

She pulls out her phone and this time we go

CLOSE ON THE SCREEN --

There's a text. And it's in Italian. Translated it reads, "I want to know your story" Below that is an address. It matches the building in front of her.

Grace considers the front door -- then suddenly snaps back to reality -- this is crazy. She peddles a half-turn forward, stops again. Looks back. Visibly torn. Then she gets really nervous -- could someone be watching her? She turns back down the driveway to peddle off when --

A PORSCHE --

Pulls up the driveway. She stops. Simon gets out. They simply stare at each other. As he approaches, smiling...

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. BACK YARD/MEDITERRANEAN HOME - PRESENT DAY

Neil staggers out the sliding door from the kitchen, runs to the edge of the pool, pukes into the water. As he looks back toward the house, hears the door open out front...VOICES...a car starts. Neil stiffens, his anger coming into focus now.

EXT. DRIVEWAY/MEDITERRANEAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

Neil sees the man who was fucking his wife -- SIMON -- just as he starts backing down the driveway in a Porsche.

Neil looks at the house, debates going for Grace first, but doesn't want to miss this opportunity. He jumps in his car.

INT. NEIL'S CAR - DRIVING

Neil drives fast, trying to catch up. As he pulls close, the Porsche merges into a left turn lane. Soon as the light turns green, Simon guns it, cutting off crosstown traffic.

Neil stews as he waits for his opening, then floors it.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - DRIVING

As Neil closes the gap, Simon steers toward the entrance to:

EXT. PARK - CONTINUOUS

Simon darts into a parking spot. Neil tries to shoot in behind, but has to slam on his brakes to avoid another car.

INT. NEIL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

As Neil finds a place to park, he sees Simon get out of his car (wearing a track suit), starts warming up for a run.

EXT. PARK - CONTINUOUS

Neil jumps out of his car, runs at Simon who has started to jog away. When Neil catches up --

NEIL

Hey --

He spins Simon around, takes a wild swing. Simon ducks it like a professional, counters with a leg sweep that takes Neil down. Neil scrambles to his feet, tries to tackle him now. Simon steps aside, tosses Neil into a fountain.

SIMON
I don't know what your problem is, buddy, but I am fully trained in martial --

Neil leaps from the fountain and Simon puts him in a triangle choke that starts cutting off his air.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Relax, okay?

NEIL
...I saw you with my wife.

Simon cocks his head -- what?

NEIL (CONT'D)
I just saw you and Grace at the house...I can't breathe...

Simon lets him go, turns Neil around to get a look at him.

SIMON
You're *Grace's* husband?
(off Neil)
Shit. Does she know you were there?

Neil shakes his head, still trying to catch his breath.

SIMON (CONT'D)
I'm really sorry you had to see that. Are you okay?
(off Neil)
You're not gonna wanna hear it, but I'm gonna give you a piece of advice. Because when you go home, you're gonna say some really nasty things. You're gonna wanna kill your wife. But you gotta trust me on this, okay? You gotta wait. 24 hours. Especially if you have kids. You don't want to do anything you'll regret.

NEIL
Little late for that today.

Neil takes in Simon for the first time.

NEIL (CONT'D)
What's your name?

He doesn't answer.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Where'd she meet you?

SIMON
It was a professional introduction.
(off Neil)
Your wife pays me.

NEIL
Pays you...? For what?

Simon raises an eyebrow.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Sex?

SIMON
Lotta times it's more than that. There's an emotional component --

NEIL
How long? You and her, how long?

SIMON
I'd have to check the books...six months?

Neil is dizzy, has to sit.

SIMON (CONT'D)
If it helps, she did say she was happily married -- and I know the ones that aren't.

NEIL
...my wife has been sleeping with a hooker...

SIMON
Escort is more the industry term.

NEIL
I can't believe this.

SIMON
You wouldn't believe how common it is, actually. Especially with the economy these days.
(MORE)

SIMON (CONT'D)
You got husbands working longer hours, wives at home with no companionship. Then there's the women who've had to return to the workforce. They're older, well-paid, hitting their sexual peak --

NEIL
So you actually do this for a living?

SIMON
I started doing it for fun. It just happens to be a very good living.
(off Neil)
A little "strange" from time to time can be good for a marriage. Fact I've probably saved more than I've wrecked.

NEIL
Not this one.

Simon studies Neil with real empathy.

SIMON
You have every right to be pissed. But if you love her, I wouldn't throw it all away just yet.

Simon impulsively peels off his track suit jacket, puts it over Neil's shoulders.

SIMON (CONT'D)
You probably won't believe this, but I really think sex and marriage have nothing to do with each other.

NEIL
You married? How would you know?

SIMON
Because I've slept with a lot more married women than you ever will. And believe me, when all is said and done, you don't want to throw it all away over a few orgasms.
(squeezes Neil's shoudler)
24 hours. Trust me.

He turns and jogs off. As Neil watches him go, we CUT TO:

INT. MEDITERRANEAN HOME - SAME TIME

Grace puts the final touches on the kitchen table, arranges some fresh cut flowers. She sees the back door open. That's odd. She walks over and closes it, looks out at the pool.

INT. BACK STAGE/HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

A handful of TEACHERS try to impose order on the dozens of STUDENTS who are warming up for their high school talent show. As the CAMERA TRACKS through the activity, we pass some KIDS JUGGLING, a small DANCE TROUPE, a MAGICIAN etc.

We finally pick up Anika, dressed all in black, strolling through the chaos with her guitar. A couple of SNOTTY GIRLS check her out, talk loud enough for her to hear.

SNOTTY GIRL #1
Check out goth-girl's outfit.

SNOTTY GIRL #2
She's so creepy.

Anika pretends not to notice, but we can tell she's used to such comments. Her cell rings.

ANIKA
(answers, into phone)
Hello...

NEIL (V.O.)
Hey, sweetie.

ANIKA
I'm about to go on. You'll have to call me back --

NEIL (V.O.)
Wait -- I'm outside. In the parking lot.

Anika is thrown, but heads for an exit and out to:

EXT. PARKING LOT/HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

Anika opens the stage door, sees Neil waiting for her.

ANIKA
What are you doing here? You're supposed to be in New York --

He comes to her, gives her a hug.

NEIL
It's your big debut. I couldn't miss that.

ANIKA
Where's mom?

NEIL
...probably inside already. I was hoping I could watch from backstage if --

GRACE (O.S.)
Neil...?

They both turn as Grace approaches.

GRACE (CONT'D)
...I thought you had a flight.

She gives Neil a kiss; he pulls back.

NEIL
Canceled.

GRACE
Why didn't you call?
(then)
What are you wearing?

Neil looks down, realizes he's still wearing Simon's track suit jacket from earlier. A TEACHER pokes her head out of the stage door.

TEACHER
Anika -- you're almost on.

ANIKA
Oh, my God -- coming.

GRACE
Go. Dad and I'll grab our seats. Good luck.

Anika races off. Grace turns back to Neil.

GRACE (CONT'D)
I don't understand why you wouldn't call.

He can barely look at her.

GRACE (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Well, I know it means a lot to Anika that you're here.
(then)
Me, too.

She slips her arm in his.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Let's go, I want a good seat.

As she leads him off, CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Neil and Grace find a couple seats off the aisle near the front as the lights go down.

VOICE comes over the P.A.

VOICE
How we doing out there tonight?

Some tepid shouts and applause.

VOICE (cont'd) (CONT'D)
I said how we doing?

Rowdy APPLAUSE now.

VOICE (cont'd) (CONT'D)
That's more like it. Kicking things off for us tonight, with an original composition -- Anika Truman. Give it up for Anika!

Mild APPLAUSE as Anika approaches the mike with her guitar. The spotlight hits her. She gestures to the front row.

ANIKA
I'd like to dedicate this song to my biology teacher, Mrs. Tigh --

MRS. TIGH, 30s, smiles back from her seat, taken by surprise.

ANIKA (cont'd) (CONT'D)
And to Mr. McKernan from gym class.

McKERNON, also 30s, has curious look on his face as he's singled out. Neil leans forward as Anika starts to sing:

ANIKA (cont'd) (CONT'D)
What was it like, to kiss her that night, you hid your love under the bleachers...You didn't see me, but I saw you be, a handsome stud riding my teacher...

Neil and Grace react along with the AUDIENCE.

ANIKA (cont'd) (CONT'D)
How long did it last, that affair after class, I heard that she got an abortion...It must've been tough, when she said enough, and you threatened her with extortion...

A collective gasp. A panicked TEACHER rushes on stage as --

ANIKA (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Oh, did you ever really love her? Did Mr. Tigh ever find out --

Anika's mike goes dead. Mrs. Tigh races from the auditorium and McKernon runs after her. Crickets. The Audience is in shock.

Then Neil stands.

Starts to applaud.

As he keeps applauding, a one man standing ovation, CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Anika sits between Neil and Grace. In the hallway behind them, we see the School Director, LIONEL ELKORT, 40s, chatting with an emotional Mrs. Tigh. He turns and enters the office, takes a seat behind his desk as he pulls out an inhaler, takes a hit.

ELKORT
Anne's been with us for ten years, I've never seen her so upset.

GRACE
It's understandable.

ELKORT
So is school policy. Effective immediately, Anika is expelled.

GRACE
I thought we were here to discuss this.

She reads it on Elkort's face -- there's nothing to discuss.

NEIL
What about these teachers having an affair on school grounds? What are you doing about that?

ELKORT
That was a vicious rumor.

ANIKA
(under her breath)
Cover-up.

GRACE
Wait outside, please?

Anika exits.

GRACE (cont'd) (CONT'D)
First of all, we are very sorry for what happened. We really had no idea what she was working on --

ELKORT
Maybe that was the problem right there.

GRACE
(changing tracks)
We pay a lot of money in tuition to this school. I think that entitles us to an opportunity to resolve this without an expulsion. What happens now can really effect her future -- especially with the colleges we're considering. Now she's never demonstrated any behavior like this before --

ELKORT
If I may, Mrs. Truman, tuition money is just the beginning of what we expect from our parents. Perhaps if you had shown a greater commitment to the financial well-being of this school we'd have more incentive to discuss a resolution...

EXT. PARKING LOT/HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

Neil marches for his car, Grace and Anika trailing behind.

NEIL
No, absolutely not.

GRACE
Neil, wait --

NEIL
I'm not giving this school another penny if that's how they're going to treat her or us.

ANIKA
I agree.

Grace looks at her -- stay quiet -- turns back to Neil.

GRACE
You want her to have this on her record? What college is going to admit her now?

NEIL
It wouldn't matter because we couldn't afford it after paying these assholes a *bribe*.

ANIKA
I can take the GED, it's no big deal.

Grace turns to Anika.

GRACE
You hate it here that much you had to sabotage your chances at an education with that stunt?

ANIKA
I've told you, I don't belong here.

Grace exhales, clearly there's bigger issues going on. She turns to Neil.

GRACE
I'll drive her home. Then you and I'll talk.

She ushers Anika off. As Neil watches them go, CUT TO:

EXT. BACK YARD/TRUMAN HOME - NIGHT

Neil walks to the edge of the pool, looks across the water -- it's still littered with leaves and gunk. He kicks off his shoes, unzips his pants, starts to peel off his jacket --

GRACE
Neil?

He sees Grace at the sliding door.

GRACE (cont'd) (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

NEIL
I was going to take a swim.

GRACE
Now?

NEIL
I can't remember the last time any of us used this thing. We used to love it. What happened?

Grace studies him for a long beat then goes.

As Neil readies his dive, his cell phone RINGS. He looks down at the jacket he was wearing, realizes -- it's Simon's.

He grabs the phone inside...hesitates...takes the call.

NEIL (cont'd) (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Hello...?

WOMAN'S VOICE
Hi...I know we said nine, but I was so nervous I got here almost two hours ago. Any chance you can come early before I lose my nerve?

As Neil stumbles, not sure what to say, we MOVE INTO:

INT. KITCHEN/TRUMAN HOME - SAME TIME

Grace's cell rings. She enters, digs through her bag, pulls it out and answers.

GRACE
Hello...?

SIMON (V.O.)
Grace...It's Simon.

She goes stiff, looks outside, sees Neil on his phone call.

GRACE
What are you doing? I said never call this number --

SIMON
I wanted to check up on you.

Off that, we INTERCUT between Grace and Neil on their respective calls.

NEIL
...I'm sorry, I must've forgot. Where are you right now?

WOMAN'S VOICE
The Royal Hotel...? That was your suggestion, right?

A long pause.

WOMAN'S VOICE (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Are you there?

NEIL
Yes. That's right. The Royal Hotel.

Back to GRACE --

SIMON (V.O.)
Have you seen your husband yet?

GRACE
He's right outside. Why would you ask me that?

Back to NEIL --

NEIL
Can you tell me your name again?

WOMAN'S VOICE
Mallory.

NEIL
Mallory... I'm so sorry I forgot that.

WOMAN'S VOICE
Maybe this was a mistake.

NEIL
No, wait -- can I make a suggestion?

Back to GRACE --

SIMON (V.O.)
Did I leave my phone at the house earlier? I can't find it.

GRACE
That's why you're calling me?

SIMON (V.O.)
...yeah.

GRACE
No, I haven't seen it and don't call me on this line again. I have to go --

She hangs up, turns back and sees Neil standing behind her. How much did he hear? A beat as they consider each other.

NEIL
I need to go into the office.

GRACE
Now?

NEIL
Yes.

He turns and heads upstairs. A beat later, he comes down holding a suit and some dress shirts.

GRACE
Neil...?

And he's gone. Grace walks to the front door to watch as Neil hops in his car and goes. As she stares at his tail lights disappearing down the street, we CUT TO:

EXT. ROYAL HOTEL - NIGHT

A high-end boutique hotel. Neil's car stops the Valet. He gets out, takes his ticket and looks to the entrance, frozen.

A DOORMAN opens the door.

NEIL
...Thank you.

He pushes forward into:

INT. BAR/ROYAL HOTEL - NIGHT

Neil enters, moving slowly as he scans the faces throughout.

He stops when he catches sight of a short-haired brunette (MALLORY, 30s) sitting at the bar, nursing a cosmopolitan. She gives him a small nod as if to say, “I’m the one you’re looking for.” Neil approaches.

MALLORY
Simon?

Neil holds out his hand to shake, second guesses himself, then awkwardly leans in for a kiss.

NEIL
Nice to meet you.

He takes a seat, motions to the BARTENDER.

NEIL (CONT’D)
What she’s having?

He nods, moves off and Neil turns back to Mallory -- he’s sweating.

NEIL (CONT’D)
(wipes his brow)
Little hot in here, huh?

She gives him a polite smile. Neil’s on the verge of bolting.

MALLORY
Sorry I called in such a panic.

NEIL
No, no -- I’m sorry I’m late.

A beat. Mallory is drawn to Neil’s left hand.

MALLORY
You’re not really married are you?

Neil looks down at his wedding ring.

NEIL
Oh, this...yeah...I wear this sometimes to...give the appearance of -- yours is pretty.

She shows him her wedding band; platinum, lots of diamonds.

MALLORY
Thank you.

She takes another heavy sip of her drink. There's a long awkward silence. Finally:

MALLORY (CONT'D)
You came highly recommended, by the way.

NEIL
Really? By who?

She hesitates.

NEIL (CONT'D)
That's okay, it's not important.
(then)
Is she married though?

Now Mallory's uncomfortable.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Silly question. Why would you be here if you weren't married? Especially a beautiful woman like you.
(then)
Why are you here?

MALLORY
You mean...what do I want?

NEIL
Clearly we both know what you want.

She's mortified, reaches for her purse, stands.

MALLORY
This was a mistake --

She turns to go. Neil realizes what an ass he just sounded like, reaches out.

NEIL
No, wait, that was my mistake. I shouldn't have said that. I'm sorry.

He motions for her to sit back down. She's doesn't want to.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Let's start over. Please. I just want to get to know you.

She still isn't sure.

MALLORY
...this was really hard for me. I've never done anything like this before.

NEIL
Me either.

She laughs -- that played as a joke. Neil smiles.

MALLORY
You seem so...normal.

NEIL
I'm trying very hard right now.

Bartender brings over Neil's drink and he drops his Amex on the bar.

NEIL (CONT'D)
(to Mallory)
Would you like another?

Mallory considers that, then nods... sits back down. Bartender takes her glass and moves off. Neil and she share some serious eye contact.

MALLORY
To answer your question, I love my husband. He's just never around.

NEIL
Works a lot?

MALLORY
And even when he is home, he sits up in bed with his laptop and completely ignores me when I try to talk to him.

That resonates for Neil -- he's done that with Grace.

NEIL
I'm sure he still cares about you. Men just -- we feel so much pressure to perform...at the office.

Mallory's a little tipsier now, opening up.

MALLORY
I've felt so...lonely. I wake up next to him, see his face and I have no idea where we are or how we got here. It's like I'm lost and don't know how to get home.

NEIL
...I know how you feel.

MALLORY
Do you?

She takes Neil's hand, slowly but deliberately slides it up her dress, between her legs.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
Then help me find my way back.

EXT. TRUMAN HOME - MORNING

Sprinklers pop on the front lawn, shooting water everywhere.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Grace rolls over, opens her eyes, realizes she's alone.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Grace enters.

GRACE
Neil?

She looks at the flat screen in the living room, moves to:

EXT. TRUMAN HOME - MORNING

Grace looks out at the driveway -- his car isn't there.

INT. SUITE/BEL AIR HOTEL - MORNING

Clothes litter the floor; there's an empty champagne bottle on the night stand. Neil pops from under the covers when his CELL PHONE RINGS. He grabs it quickly, moves into:

INT. LIVING ROOM/BEL AIR HOTEL SUITE - MORNING

NEIL
(whispering into phone)
Hello?

INT. KITCHEN/TRUMAN HOME - MORNING

Grace paces on her cell phone. INTERCUT as needed.

GRACE
Where the hell are you? You didn't return any of my texts.

NEIL
I was busy.

GRACE
Are you at the office still?

NEIL
...I've got a lot of work left to do here. And I might have to go out of town for awhile. I didn't want to say anything last night.

Another long pause.

GRACE
Who's this new client, Neil?

Neil looks in the bedroom, sees Mallory roll out of bed, naked, start to get dressed.

NEIL
No one special.
(then)
I have to go, I'll call you later.

He hangs up, reeling from his own behavior. He takes a moment to collect himself, then re-enters the bedroom. Mallory nods to an envelope on a pillow.

MALLORY
I put it all there -- plus tip.

Neil looks inside, sees what must be a thousand dollars.

MALLORY(CONT'D)
Something wrong?

NEIL
No I... Thank you.

Mallory gives him a quick hug. When she pulls back --

MALLORY (cont'd)
I hate to just run, but I want to get back home to Daniel, see if anything's changed.

She exits. As Neil watches her go his smile fades -- he sees he's still wearing his wedding ring.

INT. RECEPTION AREA/NEIL'S OFFICE - DAY

Grace steps off the elevator, marches to the reception desk. A SECRETARY, 30s, looks up, chipper.

GRACE
Hi...can you let Neil Truman know his wife is here.

SECRETARY
(confused)
You're *Neil's* wife?

GRACE
Yes, we probably spoke a hundred times on the phone. I'm Grace.

SECRETARY
Sure...have a seat?

INT. NEIL'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Darryl, juggling his baseball, stands with Grace; she's in shock.

GRACE
...then he *quit*?

DARRYL
He didn't tell you any of what happened?
(off Grace)
(MORE)

DARRYL (CONT'D)
Damn, he must've really gone off the deep end. I'd be worried if I were you.

Reeling, Grace simply turns and heads out. Darryl calls after her:

DARRYL (CONT'D)
You can tell him we're sending a bill for the mirror --

EXT. BUDDHIST TEMPLE - DAY

Just outside the city. Neil approaches a gated entrance, stepping lightly past a flowering garden.

INT. BUDDHIST TEMPLE - CONTINUOUS

Neil enters, takes in the sparse, quiet surroundings.

Ahead of him, a bevy of bald-headed monks kneel in prayer as incense wafts throughout the air. A young APPRENTICE MONK approaches.

NEIL
Hi...I'm not sure if you can help me, but...

As Neil begins to tell the Apprentice Monk his story, the words fade out and we PRE-LAP:

NEIL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Anyway, despite everything that's happened, I still thought there might be hope for me...and my marriage.

EXT. ZEN GARDEN - DAY

Flowers in full bloom, next to a lake. Neil sits across from the wise, old Zen Master.

NEIL
Is there anything you can tell me to help make sense of all this?

The Zen Master picks a flower, places it between them.

ZEN MASTER
All your answers are here.

Neil looks down.

NEIL (cont'd)
Seriously? My entire life just went Enron and that's your answer? A tulip?

Neil chuckles to himself, starting to crack.

NEIL (CONT'D)
You know what I think? You're the one that's crazy. I read your story about how the Buddha left his family? It's insane. If people like me give up everything, I'm a deadbeat dad. I'm a divorcee. Unemployed. Course I could take anti-depressants, become just another zombie trying to pay his mortgage, put all my passions into building a home theater system -- but what's the point? Who wants to live like that?

A long beat...his cell starts to RING. Neil empties his pockets to search for his phone. First he tosses some condoms on ground... a thick stack of hundred dollar bills... finally he pulls out Simon's phone.

NEIL (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Yeah...uh-huh...where...?
I can work with that, sure.
Alright...text me the address.

Neil hangs up, looks to the Zen Master.

NEIL (CONT'D)
That was a woman who wants to pay me five thousand dollars to have sex with her for the weekend.

Zen Master raises an eyebrow.

NEIL (cont'd) (CONT'D)
I think I'm gonna go.

ZEN MASTER
And when you are ready, you will come back.

As he quickly re-pockets the condoms, money and phone --

NEIL (cont'd)
You ask me, anyone can be Zen if you meditate all day. Try having a family. Sit in rush hour traffic half your life and work eighty hours a week. You do that with a smile on your face, then I'll think you're really enlightened.

Neil Exits. Off the Zen Master, we PRE-LAP the sound of WIND CHIMES and SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. BACKYARD/STEPHANIE'S HOME - DAY

A small, sunny deck overflowing with succulents, potted plants and mismatched candles.

Grace paces, biting her nails, mind racing. Then she sees those annoying wind chimes and rips them down just as Stephanie exits the house with a cup of tea.

GRACE
Sorry. They're driving me crazy right now.

STEPHANIE
You gave me those for Christmas.

Grace isn't sure what to say, hands Stephanie the chimes. Stephanie hands her back the tea.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Valerian root.
(off Grace)
Calms the nerves.

Grace sips it -- yuck. She hands it back, keeps pacing.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
It's all I had, sorry.

GRACE
You need to start drinking again.

Stephanie watches her pace, really worried.

STEPHANIE
It sounds like he just snapped.

GRACE
What am I going to tell Anika?

STEPHANIE
I think you sit her down, you say, “dad and I are having problems and we’re trying to work them out.”

GRACE
You think I had something to do with this?
(then)
You know what his office said? That when he went to New York the other day, he freaked out on the plane and pulled the emergency slide.

STEPHANIE
Oh, my god.

GRACE
Does that sound like Neil?
(then)
I guess you can see the video online.

Stephanie races into the house, comes back out with an IPad.

STEPHANIE
What do I search for?

GRACE
I don’t know? Plane? Slide? Crazy man?

Stephanie taps a few keys. After a beat --

STEPHANIE
I think this is it...

CLOSE ON THE SCREEN --

The same video we saw earlier in Victor’s office of Neil talking to the plane and then pulling the emergency slide.

STEPHANIE (CONT’D)
Oh, boy...

Stephanie looks concerned. Grace sees something else.

CLOSER ON THE SCREEN --

Neil is in the middle of his speech. And there’s something oddly noble about him. Revolutionary.

NEIL
...How long is too long to wait to take your life back? That you will not follow the rules, that you will not just remain seated? It's time to stand up --

Grace is drawn in. There's something about his words that are connecting for her, too. On a deep level.

GRACE
I think he's...happy.

As Stephanie turns to Grace -- you can't be serious, CUT TO:

EXT. MALIBU - DAY

PICK UP Neil's car as it turns off the PCH onto a small beachfront road. It slows as he scans for an address, then parks outside an all-white designer home.

There's a row of TULIPS planted all along the front. That means something to him right now. He steels himself, marches to the entrance, rings the buzzer. After a beat:

WOMAN'S VOICE
Are you Simon?

NEIL
I am.

WOMAN'S VOICE
Step back from the camera...

Neil obliges.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Turn around.

He does. Waits. BUZZER rings and the gate pops open.

EXT. COURTYARD/MALIBU BEACH HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Neil walks toward the front door; it's been left open.

INT. MALIBU BEACH HOME - CONTINUOUS

Neil enters what must be the cover of Architectural Digest this month, all of it furnished with custom-made pieces and striking art work.

He moves farther in before catching sight of a beautiful red-head pacing with a cell phone on a balcony off the kitchen. Toned, tanned and oozing confidence, it's hard to tell where the beauty of this house ends and she begins. This is ADRIANA.

Neil smiles at her just as Adriana hangs up. She approaches, taking her time drinking him in... offers a hand. She has a slight accent, hard to place.

ADRIANA
Adriana.

Neil takes her hand, gives it an awkward kiss.

NEIL
Nice to meet you. Simon.

ADRIANA
Are those the only clothes you have, Simon?

NEIL
I have a business suit in the car.
(off her look)
I didn't know what we were doing.

ADRIANA
Hmm, strike one. A man should always be prepared for any occasion when a woman makes the date.
(off Neil)
What size are you?

NEIL
Do you mean like...?

ADRIANA
Jacket, shirt and shoes.

NEIL
Oh, um, 42 regular, 17 and 11.

ADRIANA
11 huh? Lemme see your hands.

He obliges.

ADRIANA (CONT'D)
We can work with that.
(off Neil)
Come.

She beckons him to follow her out to:

EXT. POOL - MOMENTS LATER

Neil and Adriana approach two beautiful GIRLS, a brunette and a blonde, lounging on some chaises.

ADRIANA
Simon...this is Betty and Veronica. They're going to take you to the guest house and help you get dressed while I prepare for the party tonight.

Adriana turns to the girls, says something in French and moves off. Neil turns back to the girls, smiles.

INT. GUEST HOME - LATER

Neil trails in after the girls who lead him toward a closet with a small selection of designer shirts, shoes and jackets.

BETTY
Get undressed.

Neil hesitates.

NEIL
Are we...the three of us?

Girls share a look -- like he'd ever be their type.

BETTY
We're going to style you.

NEIL
Right. I knew that.

As Neil takes off his shirt, sucks in his gut, CUT TO:

EXT. MALIBU BEACH - DUSK

The magic hour, nowhere else you'd want to be.

INT. MALIBU BEACH HOME - NIGHT

Neil re-enters dressed sharply in a fitted jacket and tie.

ADRIANA
That looks great on you...

Neil sees Adriana dressed in a designer dress -- stunning.

ADRIANA (cont'd) (CONT'D)
I think you should keep it.

NEIL
Oh, no, I really can't.

ADRIANA
Hmmm. Strike two. A woman's generosity should never be taken for granted.

That lands hard with Neil. He nods, embarrassed.

NEIL
You're right. Thank you. I was just confused...
(approaches)
Because you stole the view right out of the room. You look gorgeous.

Adriana cracks a slight smile, nods with approval.

ADRIANA
I was beginning to get a little worried about you.

Neil smiles, holds out his arm.

NEIL (cont'd)
I think I just needed a little time to warm up.

Adriana takes it as Neil leads her toward the door. As he opens it for her, we MATCH CUT TO

ANOTHER DOOR OPENING --

As Grace enters:

INT. TRUMAN HOME - NIGHT

She looks exhausted. A Nanny (ESTER) approaches.

GRACE
Ester...thanks so much for coming last minute like this. It was a bit of an emergency.

Ester smiles -- no problem.

GRACE (CONT'D)
She upstairs?

Ester nods. Grace heads up to:

THE SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY --

Grace walks to Anika's room, stands in the doorway. Anika's in bed, sleeping, earbuds in with music playing.

Grace goes to her, shuts off the music and pulls out the earbuds. She brushes the hair from her face, watches her sleep...then starts to cry. She stifles it, keeps herself together, pulls up the covers and walks out.

INT. ART GALLERY - NIGHT

A large high-walled space filled with the upper crust who've come for a charity auction. Neil and Adriana enter, weave their way through the crowd ogling the art on the walls.

ADRIANA
...so we're here tonight as friends of the gallery owner. All proceeds from this auction will go to buy drugs for AIDS in Africa. Are you familiar with those politics?
(off Neil)
Good. Now look at this.

They make their way through the crowd and over to:

ADRIANA (cont'd) (CONT'D)
I absolutely have to have it.

CLOSE ON THE PAINTING: It's a ying-yang symbol that is formed by two intertwined bodies floating in water.

NEIL
Beautiful...

As he drinks in the painting, an attractive Older Woman (the GALLERY OWNER) approaches with a younger, HANDSOME MAN.

GALLERY OWNER
Adriana --
(introducing)
You know Dane...

ADRIANA
Of course. Nice to see you. And this is Simon.

A brief beat of introductions as everyone shakes hands.

GALLERY OWNER
Can you come with me? There's some friends I'd love you to meet.

As Adriana and Neil move off we BEGIN MONTAGE:

Neil and Adriana are introduced to various men and women, all of whom appear to carry some weight in the world. Neil seems at ease in conversation, laughing and holding his own. Adriana is clearly impressed with his social skills. As the montage comes to an end, we HEAR A VOICE over a loudspeaker.

VOICE
Ladies and gentlemen, five minutes until we close bids. Thank you.

Adriana turns to Neil, rattled.

ADRIANA
The painting. We never bid.

NEIL
I'll take care of it.
(off Adriana's concern)
I know how to close a deal.

Neil hustles back to the auction, finds an AUCTIONEER pacing the rows of merchandise with an IPad (you give your assigned number, he enters the bid). Neil pulls out the wad of hundreds he got earlier from Mallory, palms a bunch.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Hi...

AUCTIONEER
Would you like to bid, sir?
(off Neil)
If you just tell me your assigned number tonight, I can go ahead and do it for you. Which item?

Neil motions to the painting.

NEIL
And my number is Five-zero-zero.

Auctioneer types...frowns.

AUCTIONEER
I'm sorry, that's not coming up.

NEIL
Sure it is.

Neil slips the Auctioneer five hundred dollar bills.

NEIL (CONT'D)
You know who's bid on that and how much. I need to go home with it tonight. Is that a problem?

Auctioneer casually slips the money in his pocket.

AUCTIONEER
Not at all, sir.

NEIL
Then I think I got it wrong just now. Try number 275.

Auctioneer puts it in -- voila.

AUCTIONEER
I think you're all set.

Neil nods and Auctioneer moves off just as --

CHARLES
Is that Neil Truman?

Neil turns, comes face-to-face with CHARLES LIPTON, 60s. You'd only need to look at him from afar to guess he's very rich and very powerful. And you'd be right.

CHARLES (cont'd) (CONT'D)
I recognized your face from the internet. The man from the plane?

NEIL
...I think you have me confused with someone else --

Neil turns to escape, Charles stops him; He's a little drunk.

CHARLES
That was a helluva speech you gave. And pulling that chute? Can't tell you how many times I've wanted to do the same thing myself.

Neil tries to pull away, Charles won't let him.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
You're with O'Connel at Bedrock Financial, right?
(off Neil)
How are they treating you over there?
(MORE)

CHARLES (CONT'D)
(off Neil)
You don't have to answer that. That O'Connel's a prick, treats everyone like shit. But he does have an eye for talent, though. I've heard a lot about you. To get the returns you do in this market?

Adriana walks up.

ADRIANA
Hope I'm not interrupting.
(to Neil)
They're about to announce the winning bids.

NEIL
Great.
(to Charles)
Will you excuse us?

Neil takes her arm as Charles calls out:

CHARLES
Quite a husband you have there, Mrs. Truman...

Adriana turns to Neil, raises an eyebrow -- what'd he say?

NEIL (cont'd)
Wow... he was really drunk, did you catch that?

Adriana studies him for a beat, but is distracted when another GUEST comes up to say hello. As Neil takes a healthy sip of his drink, WE CUT TO:

INT. MALIBU BEACH HOME - LATER

SOUNDS of lovemaking. CAMERA tracks through the home toward:

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

CAMERA enters, finds Adriana, riding Neil and arching her back just as they surrender together then fall apart.

ADRIANA
Whew, I needed that. Thank you.

Adriana stands, puts on a robe and walks to a dresser where the painting from earlier is propped up. She considers it for a beat, then grabs an envelope and tosses it to Neil.

NEIL (cont'd)
What's this?
(off Adriana)
You want me to go now?

ADRIANA
You wanted to cuddle or something?

Neil's thrown, but isn't sure what else to do. He hops up to get dressed, casually looking at the cash in the envelope.

NEIL
Hey, um, this isn't what you said on the phone.

ADRIANA
Sixty percent less. My cut.

NEIL
Cut of what?

ADRIANA
My services.

NEIL
Your services?

ADRIANA
Since you didn't figure it out from the party, I suppose I have to spell it out for you. I run a business that caters to very rich, very busy and very picky women who are looking for a man and not a husband. And usually only for an evening.

NEIL
You're a *madam*?

ADRIANA
Please. I make introductions. I plan evenings. And only with high quality clientele. In fact, unless you can afford it, you probably don't know I exist.
(off Neil)
I'd been hearing about you for awhile. Word does travel in certain circles. And since I'm always on the look out for new talent, I figured I had to try for myself. Little test drive before I make the offer.

NEIL
So this whole evening has been some sort of job interview.

ADRIANA
You're smart. Charming. And you know how to work a room -- all the things my clients demand.
(off Neil)
I want you to work with me. I think you'd be surprised how much your business will improve. Unless you like banging all those lonely housewives you've been filling your phonebook with.
(then)
What were you before?

NEIL
...before what?

ADRIANA
You're not the typical personal trainer or model I usually come across. You have...a soul.

NEIL
I managed other people's money. I was pretty sure I didn't have a soul anymore.

ADRIANA
Well thankfully it's not a requirement for the job. Though it is a plus.

She heads for the bathroom.

ADRIANA (CONT'D)
So when you're ready to make a real change, I'll be here to welcome you... in the meantime you can show yourself out.

She shuts the door. Off Neil...

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. TRUMAN HOME - EARLY MORNING

Establish.

INT. BEDROOM/TRUMAN HOME - SAME TIME

Grace stirs awake after a horrible night's sleep.

She goes to the window and looks outside -- Neil's car isn't in the driveway. She considers that for a long beat.

INT. ANIKA'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Grace comes to the doorway, finds Anika strumming her guitar, working on another song. Soon as she sees Grace she stops.

ANIKA
Can I not play guitar either? Is that part of being grounded now?

Grace comes in, sits across from her. Takes her hand. And places something inside it. Anika's opens her palm and we see a set of CAR KEYS.

GRACE
Three hours. You have to tell me where you're going and no texting while you drive.

Anika looks at her mom, shocked, confused...excited.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Freedom is the best thing you can have at your age. Long as you're careful, drive safely, I think it's time you had that responsibility.

Anika hugs her mom tight.

ANIKA
When you see my real mom, tell her I love her so much...
(pulls back)
I have to call Jenny --

She races out. As Grace watches her go, that felt good, CUT TO:

EXT. TRUMAN HOME - DAY

Neil's car pulls up the driveway, parks.

INT. NEIL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Neil sits behind the wheel, staring at his front door -- KNOCK-KNOCK.

Neil's startled, turns and sees his neighbor and gym-buddy Lawrence tapping on the passenger-side window, motioning for him to roll it down. As he does:

LAWRENCE
Check out what Best Buy just delivered --

Lawrence points to two WORKMEN across the street moving a giant flat-screen TV box out of a Van.

LAWRENCE (cont'd) (CONT'D)
104 inches of high-def, 3D, LCD clarity, baby. Biggest on the market. What do you think?

NEIL
Congratulations.

LAWRENCE
Superbowl at my house this year, okay? Got the speakers hooked up, gonna feel like you're taking the snap yourself.

NEIL
...look forward to it.

Lawrence squeals with delight as he practically skips back to his house. Neil gets out of the car.

INT. TRUMAN HOME - DAY

Neil enters, gently closes the door behind him. He takes a beat to steel himself before:

NEIL
Grace?

GRACE (O.S.)
In here.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Neil enters and stops short. Grace is sitting at the kitchen table with Victor.

VICTOR
You wanna hear something funny? Your wife actually staged the house I bought two years ago.
(to Grace, realizes)
Y'know, I think we kept half that furniture, too.

GRACE
Really?

Neil half-smiles, trying to act casual.

Victor rises, looks to Grace.

VICTOR
Mind if I steal him for a bit?

EXT. BACK YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Neil walks with Victor along the pool, mid-conversation.

VICTOR
...you took me by surprise, Truman. Twice in one week. That's not something I'm used to. But the reality is it's that kind of aggressive, outside-the-box thinking that's made this firm great. And I don't want to lose it.

NEIL
You can stop right there. I don't want my job back.

VICTOR
Good. Because I'm offering you something better. A partnership.
(off Neil)
I got a call from Charles Lipton this morning. Said he ran in to you at a party the other night. He thinks you should take over his hedge fund. I told him you couldn't wait to get started.
(off Neil)
(MORE)

VICTOR (CONT'D)
You know why I've always liked you Truman. Because you remind me of me. You got balls. But if you wanna have longevity in this business you're gonna need a partner.

Neil looks back to the house, sees Grace watching them from the kitchen. He turns back to Victor.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Don't make me beg. You know how much money a partner makes, Neil?

NEIL
I don't care about the money.

VICTOR
What do you care about?

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Grace watches intently at the window as Neil calmly and methodically talks to Victor, tries to read his body language. Finally, Neil holds out his hand and Victor moves it away -- grabs Neil and hugs him tight, all smiles. Victor peels off, walks out of the yard and disappears.

EXT. BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS

Grace comes out of the house, approaches Neil, stands alongside him. There's a long beat.

GRACE
I fired the pool guy.

Neil turns to her for the first time.

GRACE (cont'd) (CONT'D)
You were right, he was lazy. I don't know why I never saw that before.

Neil looks at the pool. It's spotless now, shimmering.

GRACE (cont'd) (CONT'D)
How come you never told me?

NEIL
About the job?

GRACE
Everything.

NEIL
I wanted to. Then one thing led to another...guess it all worked out.

She turns to face him.

GRACE
What about us? Are we going to work out?

There's so much hidden in that question and they know it. But neither one looks ready to tackle those issues right now.

NEIL
You didn't take that tie back, did you?
(off Grace)
I want you to know I appreciate when you give me things and...I should never take that for granted.

Grace is taken by the comment, oddly moved.

NEIL (CONT'D)
How's Anika?

GRACE
...She's okay.
(off Neil)
We're gonna need to figure out what to do about school.

NEIL
I think I know.

INT. ELKORT'S OFFICE - DAY

Elkort reads from a file folder, looks up at Neil and Grace who sit across his desk.

ELKORT
How exactly did you --?

NEIL
This school's accounting firm happens to work closely with my office. I had them send over your returns for the last five years so I could crunch the numbers on the endowment.
(MORE)

NEIL (CONT'D)
Frankly it was criminal the returns you were getting with your present advisors. By allowing me to roll those monies into some of the bigger hedge funds I manage, you'll begin to see consistent double digit gains in the next ten years.

Elkort is trying to do the math in his head.

GRACE
My husband is very good at what he does, so if he says he can do it, then he can do it.

Neil looks to Grace -- that's the first time he ever heard her take pride in his work.

ELKORT
This is very generous of you.
(then)
What's the catch?

GRACE
Anika will only serve a one week suspension. After she writes a letter of apology to the school and the teachers, she will be readmitted and there will be no mark on her record. This all goes away.

Elkort studies them both, not quite sold.

ELKORT
I'm not sure it's as simple a fix as you're making it sound.

NEIL
I'm not sure the school's board of directors would appreciate a lengthy investigation into allegations of faculty affairs either.

Grace pulls out a business card, lays it on the desk.

GRACE
We've already contacted an attorney. That's his number right there. If you'd like to have him explain it to you in more detail, feel free to give him a call.

As Elkort considers the card, then the file folder, CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY/HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Neil and Grace exit the office, the encounter still settling.

GRACE
That went well.

NEIL
Yeah. You were really good in there.

GRACE
...you, too.

They consider each other for a beat until --

ANIKA (O.S.)
Oh, my god -- what happened?

Anika comes running up from down the hall.

NEIL
I think your vacation is over.

ANIKA
They're letting me back in?

Neil nods. She hugs him.

ANIKA (CONT'D)
Thank you, thank you --

GRACE
We still have to discuss how we're going to deal with this at home.

ANIKA
Oh, yes, I totally get it.

Neil's still a bit confused though.

NEIL
Can I ask you something? I always thought you hated it here.

ANIKA
I did hate it here. But after what happened, I'm finally popular.

As Anika gives her parents a hopeful smile, we CUT TO:

EXT. STARBUCKS - DAY

PICK UP Neil's BMW as it pulls into a parking space and he gets out, heads inside.

INT. STARBUCKS - MOMENTS LATER

Neil waits behind a Woman holding a Chihauhua as she orders a Latte. When she leaves, he steps to the counter.

NEIL
Hi...Julie?

We suddenly recognize the employee is the Flight Attendant (her name tag says JULIE). She's shocked to see Neil.

NEIL (cont'd) (CONT'D)
I called the airline to find you and they said you'd been let go. My lawyer helped track you down. I'm Neil by the way --

He holds out his hand. She's doesn't move.

NEIL (cont'd) (CONT'D)
I wanted to apologize first of all. I know that whatever happened on that plane wasn't your fault. And I wanted to make it up to you.
(off Julie)
I just made partner at the firm where I work. And I need an assistant. It's a great opportunity, pays well and offers good job security. But I need someone with balls who isn't afraid to tell men with big egos to stay in their seats, so to speak. It also comes with a signing bonus.

He drops the envelope he got from Adriana on the counter, takes a pen and writes his phone number on it.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Call me.

He exits. As Julie looks down at the envelope, sees the stack of hundreds inside, we move back to Neil and follow him out to:

EXT. STARBUCKS - CONTINUOUS

Neil exits, a little bounce in his step. He's about to get into his car when --

VOICE
Hey --

Neil turns, Simon is approaching from across the lot.

SIMON
You think I wouldn't find out?

Simon backs Neil into his car, gets in his face.

SIMON (CONT'D)
I know you had my phone, I know you slept with one of my clients. That bartender at the hotel is a friend of mine.

Neil eases him back.

SIMON (CONT'D)
What'd you do with all my contacts? I can't access them online anymore.

NEIL
That's right.

SIMON
That's my livelihood, man. What are you trying to do to me?

NEIL
Same thing you did to my wife, I think.

Simon half-laughs -- touché. The smile fades quickly.

SIMON
Listen closely, okay? Because I'm serious about this. You don't undo what you did, I'm coming after you. You got me?

NEIL
That's not a threat, you know what a real threat is? The IRS looking into your finances for the last ten years and discovering exactly what you do for a living. And as personal friends of mine, all it would take is one phone call.
(MORE)

NEIL (CONT'D)
(off Simon)
You got me?

A tense beat.

SIMON
I'd watch my back if I were you.

He turns and goes. As Neil smiles to himself, we CUT TO:

INT. TRUMAN HOME - DAY

Grace sits at the kitchen table on her laptop.

NEIL (V.O.)
I've been thinking a lot about that story again lately. About the Buddha leaving his family to search for meaning...?

She hits a few keys, leans in close and we go:

CLOSE ON THE SCREEN:

It's a travel site. Italy. Options abound.

INT. CELL PHONE STORE - DAY

Neil browses a row of smart phones as a SALES ASSOCIATE approaches.

NEIL
...It didn't really make much sense when I first read it. I mean, what kind of man would you have to be to leave everything you've ever loved to search for the meaning of it all? It's not always "out" there.

As Neil picks up a RED PHONE, hands it to Associate, CUT TO:

INT. MEDITATION ROOM - DAY

Neil sits across from the Zen Master, pulls out a RED CELL PHONE.

NEIL
I got this the other day. Has all the names and numbers of the all the clients that Simon had in his phone.
(MORE)

NEIL (CONT'D)
After I deleted them in Simon's account, I sent them all an e-mail, said this is where they can reach me now.

Zen Master raises an eye brow.

NEIL (CONT'D)
I know. It's crazy. But I don't ever have to answer it if I don't want to.

ZEN MASTER
But you will.

NEIL
You never know where enlightenment is going to come from.

Zen Master smiles for the first time. Then Neil. He looks truly happy right now. As his grin keeps growing and growing, we CUT TO:

EXT. BACK YARD/TRUMAN HOME - DAY

"I Can See Clearly Now" by Jimmy Cliff plays on source radio. Neil stands on the diving board, looking into the crystal clear water beneath him.

He takes a deep breath, dives in.

UNDERWATER -- Neil swims to the bottom, rests there for a long time as if floating in space. All SOUND DROPS OUT.

Lungs ready to burst, Neil shoots to the surface, gasping.

ANIKA
God, Dad. I thought you were dead.

NEIL
Me, too.

Graces approaches, sets down a tray of lemonade.

GRACE
See? We didn't need a vacation, honey. Just a little family time around the pool.

NEIL
Now that we can actually swim in it.

GRACE
I was gonna make lunch. Who's hungry?

Anika and Neil raise their hands.

GRACE (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Tuna fish. Coming up.

She turns to go.

NEIL
Grace...
(she turns back)
You're coming in, right?

She lifts up her coverall, shows off a new bikini.

GRACE
Got it just for the occasion.

Neil grins.

ANIKA
Wow, mom, you look hot.

GRACE
I know.

She turns and dances into the house as Neil swims to the edge of the pool and hops out, starts to towel off. His cell phone RINGS.

ANIKA
I knew it was too good to be true. You're gonna have to go into the office now, aren't you?

NEIL
Let's just see who it is first.

Neil moves over and reaches in his robe -- there are two cell phones inside -- the Red Phone is ringing. He's about to decline when he notices the number.

ANIKA
Well? Who is it?

Neil looks back toward the house, sees Grace inside on her cell -- clearly she's calling Simon's number right now but doesn't know it's Neil. As Neil studies the phone, we...

END EPISODE