HELLO LADIES

"Pilot"

written by

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INT. NEIGHBORHOOD BAR - NIGHT

Two WOMEN sit talking. STEPHEN MERCHANT, 30s, half as charming as he thinks he is and twice as desperate, pops into frame.

STEPHEN
Hello, ladies. I'm Stephen, this is my best mate, Wade.

He motions to WADE, 30s, sweet if a bit lost, wearing an ill-fitting suit, with a cheap canvas messenger bag hanging from his shoulder. He gives them two thumbs up.

WOMAN #1
Wayne?

WADE
Wade. As in Roe versus Wade.
(off their looks)
It's the landmark case about a woman's right to terminate her fetus.

STEPHEN
Let's not talk about abortion until we need to.

WADE
Sorry. My wife just asked for a separation after eleven years, so...

STEPHEN
O-kay, let's keep it light. Why don't you get us all another round?

WOMAN #2
Oh, that's not necessary.

STEPHEN
Please. My pleasure.

Stephen gestures and Wade heads off to the bar.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Pardon my friend, he's forgotten how to talk to beautiful women. I, however, have not. So where are you two from?

WOMAN #1
From here.

STEPHEN
Can't do much with that.
(then, to Woman #2)
What about you?

WOMAN #2
Seattle.

STEPHEN
Oh, I love Seattle!

WOMAN #2
You've spent time there?

STEPHEN
No, I mean from movies. "Sleepless in Seattle," I feel like something with Denzel Washington...?

WOMAN #2
Yeah, I don't know.

STEPHEN
You know, it's ironic because Seattle looks like a beautiful city in films, but it's actually the number one suicide capital of America.

WOMAN #2
I don't think it is.

STEPHEN
Mm, I think it is.

WOMAN #2
No, I think you're wrong.

STEPHEN
Mm, not sure I am.
(flirtatiously)
Let's find out who's right.

Stephen takes a seat on a stool beside them and starts typing into his phone. The Women glance at one another.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Can't get a bloody signal.

Stephen holds up his phone for better reception.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
I'm on AT&T. Supposed to be good coverage. What plan are you --

WOMAN #1
(to friend, standing)
Ready?

STEPHEN
Well, let me get your number. I'll text you the answer.

WOMAN #2
Don't worry.

The Women walk off as Wade returns with the drinks.

WADE
They're leaving?

STEPHEN
Yes. Because you brought up abortion. Totally killed the mood.

WADE
Sorry. I'm just not really feeling it. I think I'm gonna go.

STEPHEN
No, come on, it's still early.

WADE
I'll call you tomorrow.

Wade leaves. Stephen is left on his own, unsure of what to do with himself. Two women walk by.

STEPHEN
(softly, awkward)
Hello ladies...

They don't respond and continue walking. Stephen takes a self-conscious sip of his drink.

INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

The music from the bar is replaced by the buzzy droning of fluorescent lights. The supermarket is nearly empty. Stephen examines the frozen foods section.

-- Beep, beep, beep. Stephen waits at the register as his items are scanned. He smiles politely at the middle-aged Hispanic Woman as she rings him up.

-- Stephen pulls into his driveway. His house is dark.

-- Stephen's kitchen. The fan of the microwave WHIRS. We hear a beep beep beep and Stephen opens the microwave and takes out his chicken wings.

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Stephen sits on his sofa, eating. The house is decorated in budget bachelor chic. A SAXOPHONE sits on a stand in the corner. Stephen flips through the channels, bored.

Through FRENCH DOORS leading to the backyard and a converted garage, a sensor light goes off, REVEALING GLENN, mid 20s, good-looking and about 5'5". Stephen calls to him.

STEPHEN
Glenn!
(nothing)
GLENN!

Glenn notices Stephen and enters the living room.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Hey, here he is. What have you been up to? Scrondelling my roommate, you absolute dog? Put it there, playa.

Stephen high-fives Glenn. He's clearly impressed by him.

GLENN
(motioning to chicken wings)
Can I grab one?

STEPHEN
By all means, you must be bloody famished.

Glenn grabs a chicken wing and dips it in the sauce.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
I can honestly say I've never had sex and not been hungry afterwards. Even after I masturbate, I'm a bit peckish.

GLENN
Cool.
(motioning out back)
So Jessica said I could shower in here. Her water pressure's still messed up.

STEPHEN
Absolutely! Run a bath if you want.

GLENN
Cool.

Glenn exits as JESSICA, 30s, occasional actress, would-be intellectual, enters, wearing boxer shorts and a t-shirt.

She slumps down next to Stephen and yawns.

JESSICA
Busy day... very busy day.

Stephen doesn't take the bait.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
Was I too loud today?

STEPHEN
With Glenn?

JESSICA
No, earlier. You didn't hear my typewriter?
(Stephen shakes his head)
I woke up this morning with an idea for this one-act play and I had to get it down.

STEPHEN
I thought you were working on those black and white photographs about -- what was it?

JESSICA
Finding the beauty in urban blight.

STEPHEN
Yes! That was it.

Jessica puts her feet up. Stephen notices her outfit.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
What are you wearing?

JESSICA
What?

STEPHEN
This insults me.

JESSICA
How does this insult you?

STEPHEN
Do you want to have sexual relations with me?

JESSICA
What do you think?

STEPHEN
Exactly! So why are you teasing me with these provocative clothes?

JESSICA
Should I be scared? Are you going to jump me?

STEPHEN
No, obviously not. I'm not a rapist.

JESSICA
Even if you were, I'd kick your ass.

STEPHEN
Pardon me?

JESSICA
I said I could kick your ass.

STEPHEN
Sorry, do you not think I could rape you?

JESSICA
No, I don't.

STEPHEN
Oh, I could rape you, sweetheart.

JESSICA
Course you could.

STEPHEN
Look at the size of me and the size of you! I could destroy you!

JESSICA
I did a movie once where I had to learn Jujitsu and the teacher said I was one of the best students he'd ever had.

STEPHEN
I don't care if you're a black belt. I'm six foot seven!

JESSICA
You weigh ninety three pounds.

STEPHEN
You are delusional!

JESSICA
Then try it.

STEPHEN
No. Just know I could.

JESSICA
Then try and rape me.

STEPHEN
No, I'm not gonna --
(then)
What's the scenario?

JESSICA
I'm sitting here watching a film and you climb in through a window --

STEPHEN
Let me stop you right there cause that's not how I'd do it. I'd rent a room across the street. I'm scoping you out for weeks, studying your comings and goings. I've got photos of you on my wall -- long lens stuff. I've memorized your schedule -- and then I pounce.

JESSICA
I'd scream. It's a residential area. People would hear.

STEPHEN
No. Duct-tape over the mouth.

JESSICA
Good luck getting in. I'd double lock the doors.

STEPHEN
This is my house, I've got a key.

JESSICA
Then why did you rent the room across the street?

STEPHEN
It's my fucking scenario, I'll do what I want!

JESSICA
You are a terrible rapist.

Stephen starts walking away.

STEPHEN
Okay, this is a sick conversation --

Stephen suddenly throws himself at Jessica. She grabs his arm, twists it behind his back and forces him to the ground. She digs her knees into his back. Stephen winces, his face pressed into the carpet.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Aah, ahh!

JESSICA
Wow. You're way stronger than I thought.

Glenn re-enters, towelling his hair. He watches the scene for a moment, unmoved.

GLENN
So... I'm gonna take off.

JESSICA
Oh. Okay.

She lets go of Stephen and crosses over to Glenn.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
So... We should get dinner this week...

GLENN
This week's kinda crazy. I'll text you when I come up for air.

JESSICA
...Cool.

Glenn gives her a quick peck and leaves.

STEPHEN
See ya, man.

Jessica watches Glenn go, then turns to Stephen, expecting a smart remark.

JESSICA
What?

STEPHEN
(sensitive)
I didn't say anything.

EXT. RUNYON CANYON - DAY

Stephen and Wade hike up a trail. Wade carries two waters.

WADE
I keep waking up in the middle of the night and expect her to be there. On the way to work the other day, I actually started crying.

STEPHEN
(sympathetic)
Yeah, yeah... Did you give me money for the waters?

WADE
(hands him a few dollars)
Oh, sorry.

STEPHEN
It's one more, because they're Fijis... What were you saying?

WADE
I had to pull over and sob my eyes out. God, I miss her so much.

STEPHEN
Well, you're single now. There's a world of opportunity out there. You're in Los Angeles. You could be having sex with movie stars.

WADE
Yeah, right. Like I can just hop into bed with Sigourney Weaver.

STEPHEN
Well, alright, maybe not movie stars, but you could be having sex with a different girl every night.

WADE
Is that what it's like being single? Is it non-stop sex?

STEPHEN
Yeah! For some people, yeah!

WADE
I don’t know. The idea of making love to a stranger just seems so empty to me.

STEPHEN
Mm.

Wade’s daughter, CASSIDY, 5, runs up with some leaves. She hands one to Wade.

CASSIDY
Look, Daddy, I got you a leaf!

WADE
Oh thank you, honey, that's beautiful.

CASSIDY
(handing leaf to Stephen)
And one for you, Stephen.

STEPHEN
Right. Cheers.

Stephen accepts the leaf, then as Cassidy turns her back to him he immediately drops it.

WADE
I'm just not sure I can survive on my own. It just seems so lonely.

STEPHEN
(defensive)
I'm not lonely.

WADE
Really? I always think about you eating alone at that Chinese buffet on Christmas Day.

STEPHEN
It was great value. There was no one else there so the service was top notch.

WADE
What did you do? Did you read a book?

STEPHEN
No, I watched two episodes of ‘24’ on my i-phone. What did you do that was so great?

WADE
We had a lovely Christmas didn’t we, sweetie?

CASSIDY
Yeah, mommy cooked the biggest turkey ever and then we opened presents and played games.

STEPHEN
Right, your mother had to cook a giant turkey. I didn’t lift a finger!

CASSIDY
I got a jigsaw puzzle of a princess!

STEPHEN
Great. Can you watch ‘24’ on it?

WADE
(to Stephen)
O-kay.
(to Cassidy)
Cass, pick me some of those flowers.

Cassidy runs off.

WADE (CONT’D)
You know this Friday is our anniversary? And I’m gonna be sitting in my shitty hotel room eating pizza on my bed.

STEPHEN
No, you’re not -- because Friday is the first day of your exciting new life and I’m taking you out: steak dinner, fine wines, bowling. My treat.
(clarifying)
The bowling.

WADE
(cheering up)
Well, if there’s bowling, I’m in. We should go to Super Lanes!

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - OFFICE - DAY

Stephen, still in his hiking outfit, sits in front of two monitors, typing complicated code and wearing big headphones.

He drains the last of his 2 liter of soda. He takes off his headphones and walks out into the hallway. Before he reaches the living room, he stops.

STEPHEN POV

Jessica, now wearing glasses, and a cute girl, COURTNEY, late 20s, sit on the couch, rehearsing a scene.

Before either spots him, Stephen does an immediate about face and goes into his bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jessica and Courtney sit on the couch, holding their scripts.

JESSICA
When I was doing “White Venom” with Willem Dafoe there was a scene where I had to seduce him to get the launch codes and it just wasn’t working. So the night before we shoot, Willem asks me come to his room so we can rewrite our dialogue. And I said, “Oh no, I’m an actor, not a writer.” And he said “Every actor is a writer”. And I said “No I’ve never written anything in my life”. And he said, “Yes you have: emails...”

She lets ‘emails’ hang in the air like it’s the most profound thing ever. Courtney looks confused.

Jessica’s phone RINGS. She looks at the caller ID and answers.

JESSICA (CONT’D)
(into phone)
I’m busy.

STEPHEN (O.S.)
Please come to my office.

JESSICA
No. I’m busy.

She hangs up. After a beat:

STEPHEN (O.S.)
(yelling from his room)
It's an emergency!

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Jessica enters, concerned.

JESSICA
What's wrong?

STEPHEN
Has Courtney said anything about me?

JESSICA
Oh, come on! I'm in the middle of a rehearsal.

STEPHEN
For a web-series. Has she asked any questions about me?

JESSICA
No. Why would she?

STEPHEN
When she was here last time, we chatted and she laughed, we had a rapport. There was a good vibe.

JESSICA
There was no vibe.

STEPHEN
She probably hasn't said anything because she thinks there's something going on between you and me.

JESSICA
No one thinks that.

STEPHEN
You'd be surprised.

JESSICA
I'd be surprised and ashamed.

STEPHEN
Okay, look, I'm going to walk in in about five minutes and --

JESSICA
No, don't come out there.

STEPHEN
It’s my living room, you’re lucky to be in here, now do as you’re told. I’m going to walk out and when I do, just casually slip in something like, "Oh, did you know Stephen’s working on a new coding syntax that will make HTML look like fucking MS-DOS..."

JESSICA
I’m not gonna say that.

STEPHEN
You can put it in your own words.

JESSICA
(heading for the door)
We’re working. It’s an emotionally complex scene --

STEPHEN
-- I doubt it.

JESSICA
It is, so please don’t interrupt.

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Courtney reads from a script. Jessica listens intently.

JESSICA
I want you to try that line again, but I want you to keep a word in your mind as you say it. And the word is -- betrayal. Remember, you’ve betrayed your principles, you’ve betrayed the environment, and most importantly, you’ve betrayed Eddie. I know it’s a lot of layers, but see what comes of it. And... action.

COURTNEY
“Carol, you may not be my best friend anymore, but you’re still my goddamn Vice President!”

STEPHEN (O.S.)
Well, I’m hooked.

The girls look up to see Stephen, now wearing a COMPLETELY DIFFERENT AND MUCH DRESSIER OUTFIT, complete with hipster FEDORA, standing in the doorway.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Hi, Courtney. Nice to see you again.

Stephen offers a limp hand. Courtney shakes it politely.

COURTNEY
Oh, hey, how's it going? Thanks for letting us use your place.

STEPHEN
My pleasure. I love to support the arts. And Jessica.

JESSICA
We're in the middle of a scene.

Stephen holds up his hands and heads for the kitchen.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
Okay, let's keep going.
(then, reading from script)
"I've been running the numbers and something's not adding up. I think we might be on the brink of a total economic collapse."

Stephen backs up into frame, pointing to Courtney.

STEPHEN
Courtney, do you have a website?

COURTNEY
Me? No.

STEPHEN
Oh, it's just cause that's what I do.

Stephen mimes shooting webs from his wrists a la Spiderman. He makes "psshh psshh" noises as he "shoots."

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
<u>Web</u> design. If you ever need a website, I'm your Spiderman.

Jessica watches, unamused.

COURTNEY
That would be great, actually. My manager's been on me to get one.

STEPHEN
Great. We should meet up sometime to discuss it.

COURTNEY
Yeah, cool! Maybe Thursday morning?

STEPHEN
Mornings aren't good for me, I'm usually at the gym. How about Saturday night?

COURTNEY
I'm going out of town Saturday.

STEPHEN
Friday night?

COURTNEY
I have to go to Saboteur for a friend's birthday.

STEPHEN
Oh, okay.

COURTNEY
But if you're free, you should come down.

JESSICA
He can't get into clubs.

STEPHEN
You have no evidence of that. Don't worry about me.

EXT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Stephen is on his phone, pacing around his very small POOL.

STEPHEN
Glenn! It's Stephen. How's it going?

GLENN (O.S.)
Who?

INTERCUT WITH:

Glenn, on a headset, in his office. He's holding a nerf football. A Hollywood player in the making.

STEPHEN
Stephen Merchant.
(off Glenn's pause)
Tall guy, glasses?

GLENN
Um... I'm sorry, I meet a lot of people. Where do I know you from?

STEPHEN
Jessica's landlord.

GLENN
Hey, Chicken Wings! What's going on, buddy?

STEPHEN
Any chance you could get me on the list for Saboteur on Friday night?

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. WADE'S OFFICE - DAY

Drab. Windowless. Wade stares at a picture of him and Marion in front of the Hoover Dam. His phone RINGS.

WADE
Wade Bailey.

INTERCUT WITH: Stephen, who is now speaking in a sensitive and quiet voice.

STEPHEN
Hey, mate... I don't think I can make Friday anymore...

WADE
Oh, no. Really?

STEPHEN
Yeah, my Aunt Barbara's really sick. It's touch and go. I think I should stay by the phone.

WADE
Yeah, of course. Do you want me to come over?

STEPHEN
(sensitive, but firm)
Definitely not.

CUT TO :

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jessica and Courtney are back to rehearsing. Stephen returns, having added a fashionable scarf to his ensemble.

STEPHEN
Hey, just to let you know. I will be seeing you Friday, have a little --

Stephen wiggles his hips in a little dance move. Courtney laughs. Stephen laughs.

JESSICA
I thought you said you were taking Wade out on Friday.

STEPHEN
It was a loose arrangement.

JESSICA
You said he was depressed.

Jessica gives Stephen a mischievous smile.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
His friend's wife just left him after eleven years. Anniversary's on Friday.

COURTNEY
Oh my God, that's horrible.

JESSICA
Don't you think he should hang out with his friend?
(to Courtney, explaining)
His closest friend.

COURTNEY
You should be with him. We can hang out when I get back into town.

STEPHEN
When's that?

COURTNEY
April.

STEPHEN
I'll be right back.

<u>EXT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY</u>

INTERCUT : CALL BETWEEN WADE AND STEPHEN

STEPHEN
(soft, caring)
Hey, buddy... So I thought about it and I'm not doing my aunt any good sitting here by the phone.
(MORE)

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
And it’s your anniversary and I want to be there for you.

WADE
Wow. Thanks. That means a lot.

STEPHEN
Absolutely. And forget bowling. We’re gonna hit a club, get you back on the horse.

WADE
I kinda had my heart set on bowling.

STEPHEN
(curt)
Do you want to hang out or not?

JUMP CUT TO:

INTERCUT : CALL BETWEEN STEPHEN AND GLENN

GLENN
This is Glenn.

STEPHEN
Hey, Glenn, if possible, can I get a plus one on that guest list?

GLENN
Who is this?

STEPHEN
Stephen.

GLENN
Who?

STEPHEN
Tall, British guy. We spoke two minutes ago.
(pause)
Jessica’s landlord?

GLENN
Chicken Wings! What’s going on, buddy?

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Stephen opens the french doors, playing AIR GUITAR.

STEPHEN
Good news! Wade's going to join us at the club...

JESSICA
She left.

STEPHEN
Oh.

JESSICA
She told me to tell you goodbye and maybe she'd see you at the club...

STEPHEN
Yessss! See, I told you there was a vibe. Why were you cock-blocking me?

JESSICA
Because I'm trying to create art and you're being annoying.

STEPHEN
I think it's because maybe, deep down, you have some feelings towards me.

JESSICA
No.

STEPHEN
Come on, the sexual tension between us is off the scale.

JESSICA
No, it's not.

STEPHEN
This is like one of those classic "will they / won't they" situations.

JESSICA
They won't.

STEPHEN
Or will they?

JESSICA
They won't.

STEPHEN
Won't they?

JESSICA
They definitely won't.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP ON Stephen in his car.

CLOSE UP ON an i-POD playlist as Stephen's finger scrolls: WORK-OUT (CARDIO), WORKOUT (CHEST/ABS), SEDUCTION, INTERCOURSE, INTERCOURSE (ETHNIC), MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH, MORNING SEX, GRANDFATHER HOSPICE MIX (2008), COOL DRIVING TUNES, FRIDAY NIGHT JAMS, SUNDAY CHILL-OUT.

He selects "Friday Night Jams" and hits PLAY.

A HIP-HOP TUNE kicks in.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

CARS whir by on the Sunset Strip. A PORSCHE slowly pulls into frame. "Is this Stephen?" Nope. Stephen's CONVERTIBLE pulls into frame. Stephen bops to the beat.

I/E. STEPHEN'S CAR - NIGHT

Stephen is parked outside a non-descript office. Wade emerges and jogs towards Stephen, looking sweaty and unkept. He clutches his messenger bag at his side. He opens the car door to REVEAL Stephen, wearing his cool CLUB CLOTHES.

STEPHEN
There he is, looking good! Ready for a big night?

WADE
My sister saw Marion having coffee with some guy.

STEPHEN
Let's try and have a night where we don't talk about your failed marriage.
(then, correcting himself)
Failing marriage.

WADE
You're right. I could use a night off from thinking about her.

STEPHEN
Exactly. And maybe just lose the tie.

Wade starts to undo his tie. Stephen hands Wade a condom.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
For later.

Wade reluctantly takes the condom. Stephen puts another condom in his own breast pocket.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
And remember, you look fantastic, this is your special night... Just give me a couple of bucks for gas.

Stephen fires up his car.

WADE
Oh, hang on. We need to wait for Kives.

STEPHEN
You invited Kives?! You know I hate him.

WADE
He was excited to come to the club.

STEPHEN
This was supposed to be our night.

They wait.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Where is he? It's getting late.

WADE
Here he is.

STEPHEN
He's so slow.

KIVES, 30s, rolls out in his WHEELCHAIR. He's obnoxious, fearless, and strangely charming.

KIVES
Hey, Merch. Dating, mating or masturbating?

Wade giggles.

KIVES (CONT'D)
No need to answer.
(then, to Wade)
Look how thick his glasses are.

Wade laughs again.

STEPHEN
Don't laugh at that. It's not funny. And it's rude.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

Stephen, Wade and Kives (who is now sitting in the back) cruise to the club.

I/E. STEPHEN'S CAR - NIGHT

Kives pulls out a hip flask and takes a swig.

STEPHEN
Kives, this club is very hip, very exclusive. I managed to get us in there, so don't embarrass me. Everything you do reflects on me.

KIVES
Thanks, dad, I've been to a club before.

STEPHEN
And it's twenty bucks for gas.

KIVES
Why don't you lick my asshole clean?

STEPHEN
That's the sort of thing I mean. Filth.

Kives hands the flask to Wade, who takes a big pull.

Through the windshield, we SEE the line snaking around the club: young, beautiful people. The convertible top is down and Stephen nods suavely at the cool, young crowd as he pulls up to the valet line.

WADE
Wow, they're all so young.

KIVES
Fresh meat, heh heh.

STEPHEN
Kives, please. Can the both of you just play it cool?

Wade opens the front door, but catches it on the high curb with a LOUD SCRAPE.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Whoa whoa whoa!

Wade tries closing the door, scraping it across the sidewalk, wedging it further.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Stop stop stop! I'm going to pull forward.

Stephen drives the car forward, but the door remains wedged, SCREECHING along the sidewalk. SPARKS fly. The young people in line watch, amused.

CROWD
Oh! / Bru-tal! / That old guy's door is fucked!

KIVES
You're fucking your car up, Merch.

STEPHEN
Yes, thank you, I am aware!

After ten painful feet, the door dislodges. Stephen puts the car in park and then nonchalantly steps out of the car.

WADE
People were laughing.

STEPHEN
Were they, Wade? Were they?!

Stephen collects himself, then tries to regain his coolness by tossing the keys to the valet (using that toss where he brings up his right arm under his left, so that when the right hits the left it sends the keys into the air.)

Wade pops the trunk and grabs Kives' wheelchair. Wade starts to assemble it. Stephen is extremely self-conscious about how uncool they look.

KIVES
Merch, get me out of here!

Stephen reluctantly goes back to the car and lifts Kives out with great difficulty.

KIVES (CONT'D)
(playing to crowd)
Stop grabbing my balls!

STEPHEN
(to crowd)
I am not grabbing his balls!

INT. SABOTEUR - NIGHT

Loud music. Darkly lit. A young, well-dressed, attractive crowd dance, drink, and mingle. Stephen, Wade, and Kives enter, surveying the scene. Kives inhales deeply.

KIVES
Mmm, I love the smell of poontang in the morning.

WADE
Is that from “Apocalypse Now?”

STEPHEN
Wonderful film. Now ruined.

Kives pulls on the skirt of a CUTE GIRL passing them. She and her friend turn around.

KIVES
Hey, ladies, quick question --

STEPHEN
Don’t say --

KIVES
Dating, mating, or masturbating?

The girls laugh.

CUTE GIRL
A little of everything.

Stephen shakes his head. He can’t believe that charmed them. Stephen spots Courtney talking with a FRIEND.

STEPHEN
Okay, there’s a girl over there, we have a bit of a vibe, so just give me some room, yeah?

He dances his way over to Courtney and taps her on the shoulder.

STEPHEN (CONT’D)
Hey, you.

COURTNEY
Oh, hi! Spiderman!

STEPHEN
(pantomimes shooting webs)
Yeah! You guys look great! Who are you wearing?

COURTNEY
My friend's a designer. She owns a boutique.

STEPHEN
She owns it?! Wow, you so have to give me the address!

ANGLE ON Kives wheeling his way into the seating area between two GIRLS.

KIVES
(pointing to his lap)
This seat taken? Heh heh.
(then)
This is my friend, Wade. He's an animal.

WADE
(gives two thumbs up)
Hi, everybody.

BACK TO STEPHEN

Courtney and her friend are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Stephen listens intently.

COURTNEY
So you actually saw Lindsay with Shawn?

COURTNEY'S FRIEND
And Chelsea was there, making everything about herself, as usual.

Stephen shakes his head, as if he's as shocked as they are.

STEPHEN
Classic Chelsea.

Another GIRLFRIEND walks up.

COURTNEY'S FRIEND 2
You guys want another drink?

STEPHEN
Ladies, please. Allow me. What are you drinking?

COURTNEY
Thanks! I'll take a vodka soda.

COURTNEY'S FRIEND 2
Me, too.
(then, turns to lounge area)
More drinks?

Twelve of COURTNEY'S FRIENDS, seated in the lounge area, with Wade and Kives among them, raise their empty glasses.

RANDOM GUY
Do they have food?

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. SABOTEUR - MOMENTS LATER

Stephen leans down to a group of GUYS and GIRLS, typing orders into his phone.

STEPHEN
Okay, got it. Whiskey rocks.

RANDOM GIRL
I'll take a glass of Champagne.

Stephen moves down the row of Partiers.

DUDE'S GIRLFRIEND
If they have Absolut limon, I'll take that with soda. If not, I'll do a Grey Goose with soda and a lemon.

WADE
Yeah, I'll take one of those, but could I have lime instead of lemon?

STEPHEN
...Yup.

RANDOM GUY
Ummmm, what beers do you have on tap here?

STEPHEN
I don't work here.

RANDOM GUY
Can you find out?

COURTNEY
You know what? I think I'll have a Champagne, too.

COURTNEY'S FRIEND
If we're doing Champagne, let's just order a bottle.

COURTNEY
Good idea!

STEPHEN
...Yeah! Definitely!

KIVES
Merch, get me a vodka cranberry.
(to girl beside him)
What would you like?

RED-HEADED GIRL
(to Kives, not Stephen)
I'll have the same, thank you!

KIVES
Two vodka cranberries.

STEPHEN
I'll buy hers. You get your own.

COURTNEY
He's in a wheelchair.

STEPHEN
I'm just kidding.

KIVES
We should do shots, too!

EVERYONE
Yayyy!!

Stephen looks exasperated and heads to the bar.

ANGLE ON LOUNGE AREA.

Wade takes a nip from Kives' flask and hands it to the Random Girl next to him.

WADE
We get back from the cruise, I thought we had this amazing time, and she tells me she wants a separation.

RANDOM GIRL
Oh my god.

WADE
And tonight's our anniversary. God, I miss her so much. Do you want to see a picture?

RANDOM GIRL
Uh... sure.

Wade reaches into his bag and pulls out his large, cumbersome laptop. He opens it and powers it up.

ANGLE ON KIVES.

He motions to a STATUESQUE GIRL.

KIVES
Come on, sit on my lap.
(off her hesitation)
Don't worry. I can't feel anything.

Kives WINKS at her RED-HEADED friend. The Statuesque Girl takes a seat in his lap.

KIVES (CONT'D)
It's a miracle! I can feel again! Just kidding. I'm harmless.

ANGLE ON BAR.

Stephen struggles to get the attention of the BARTENDERS.

STEPHEN
Excuse me, over here. Rather large drink order...

ANGLE ON LOUNGE AREA.

Wade, a little buzzed, is now showing the Random Girl photos of Marion and Wade from a costume party.

WADE
And this is us dressed as Fred and Wilma.

RANDOM GIRL
"Flintstones," yeah.

He stares at the picture mournfully. The Random Girl doesn't know what to do. A few Partiers walk up.

COURTNEY'S FRIEND
(to Random Girl)
Come on, let's dance!

WADE
I'm not much of a dancer, but okay.

Wade stands and joins the Random Girl and her friends.

ANGLE ON BAR.

Stephen reads the drink orders off of his phone.

STEPHEN
Yes, so that's another vodka cranberry -- six total. Two vodka tonics... And a bottle of your cheapest Champagne, and an empty bottle of your most expensive champagne.

ANGLE ON Stephen returning to the table with a large TRAY OF DRINKS and CHAMPAGNE.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Drinks here! On me!

He places the tray on the table. One of the Partygoers starts pouring Champagne around.

COURTNEY'S FRIEND 2
Did you get any waters?

STEPHEN
No, I was too busy spending over six hundred dollars on alcohol.

Stephen surveys the scene. Courtney is seated on the far side of a large coffee table, boxed-in by friends on both sides. She is inaccessible to Stephen.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Hey, Courtney! I got your drink. It's there on the table with all the others I purchased.

COURTNEY
Thanks!

Courtney goes back to her conversation.

ANGLE ON THE DANCE FLOOR.

Wade, with his messenger bag slung across his shoulder, dances with drunken enthusiasm with the Random Girl and her friends.

ANGLE ON LOUNGE AREA.

STEPHEN
(calling, to Courtney)
Should I come and squeeze in over there or...?

Everyone at the table is deep in their own conversation and doesn't seem to hear him.

Frustrated, Stephen exits out of FRAME. After a beat, he re-enters FRAME with a tall bar stool.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Excuse me, coming through.

He wedges himself between two people on the outer rim of the circle and takes a seat (with the height of the barstool, Stephen's height, and the low-slung couches, Stephen looms at least five feet above everyone else). He crosses his legs and we see that he's wearing loafers with no socks.

Stephen leans forward, struggling to hear Courtney's conversation.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
What's that?

Courtney and her friend are laughing about something.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
(laughing)
What are we laughing about?

COURTNEY
Just a stupid joke!

They go back to their conversation. Stephen presses on.

STEPHEN
Courtney! Courtney!
(She looks up)
Dating, mating, or masturbating?

COURTNEY
What?

STEPHEN
(louder)
Dating, mating, or masturbating?

COURTNEY
Dating, mating, or what?

Stephen leans forward on the stool so that he can be heard.

STEPHEN
(louder)
Masturbating! Mastur --

Like a Jenga tower, Stephen and the barstool TOPPLE forward and CRASH onto the coffee table. Glasses SMASH, drinks SPILL everywhere. It's a complete mess.

Stephen leaps back up, trying to play it off, like nothing happened. Through his now-soaked white shirt, we see a CONDOM prominently displayed in his breast pocket.

He casually tries to right glasses and mop up spills.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
My bad. Totally my bad. Let me replace the drinks. Anyone want to change their order?

I/E. STEPHEN'S CAR - NIGHT

Stephen drives. Kives and the Red-head make out in the backseat. Wade, very drunk, SWIGS from Kives' flask. He yells to a passing car, joyfully.

WADE
Where's the party?! Saboteur! Friday nights!

Kives leans forward, talks quietly to Stephen.

KIVES
Merch, Amber doesn't have an elevator in her building.

STEPHEN
Not my problem.

KIVES
Come on. Help me out. She's Courtney's best friend. She'll put in a good word.

INT. APARTMENT STAIRWELL - NIGHT

The Red-Head heads up the stairs, followed by Stephen, who's carrying Kives. He's sweating. Kives pantomimes grabbing the Red-Head's ass. Stephen rolls his eyes. Kives reaches into Stephen's breast pocket and takes out the condom.

KIVES
Can I have this, Merch?

STEPHEN
Sure. Do you want me to put it on for you, too?

KIVES
No need. She will. With her mouth, heh heh.

They reach the top. It says: 4TH FLOOR. Stephen eases Kives into his wheelchair.

RED-HEADED GIRL
Thanks.

STEPHEN
No problem. So you'll mention my good deed to Courtney?

RED-HEADED GIRL
Who's Courtney?

I/E. STEPHEN'S CAR - NIGHT

Stephen drives. He looks annoyed. Wade wakes up and turns to Stephen.

WADE
Pull over. I think I'm going to be sick.

STEPHEN
Okay, okay.

Stephen quickly pulls the car over. Wade leans forward and VOMITS into his lap and onto the car floor.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Oh, for fuck's sake.

INT. WADE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Stephen helps Wade in, careful to avoid his vomit-soaked clothing.

WADE
What a great night. Thanks.

STEPHEN
Glad you enjoyed it.

Stephen eases Wade onto the bed and removes his shoes. Wade stares at a framed FAMILY PHOTO on the nightstand. He points a finger "in Marion's face."

WADE
Guess what? I just danced near some beautiful girls!

Stephen grabs a waste-basket and places it near the bed. He pulls Wade's wallet out of his jacket pocket and takes out a bunch of bills.

STEPHEN
I'm just taking some money for gas and drinks and the vomiting. And for my car door.

Wade gives Stephen a thumbs up and then passes out.

EXT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Stephen pulls into his driveway. He gets out of the car and sees Glenn walking back from the guesthouse.

STEPHEN
Glenn! What's up, dude?

GLENN
Jessica texted me to come by, but she's not answering the door and her phone's off.

STEPHEN
Maybe she popped out. Do you wanna come in and wait? Watch some TV... I was gonna heat up some chicken wings. You love them!

GLENN
Thanks, but I'm gonna head to this party in Silverlake.

STEPHEN
Oh, cool, I love parties in Silverlake.

GLENN
Yeah, they're cool. See ya.

Glenn walks off. Stephen unlocks the door --

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stephen enters and turns on the lights and then JUMPS out of his skin. Jessica is hiding behind the couch.

STEPHEN
Jesus! What you doing?!

JESSICA
(caught)
Nothing.

STEPHEN
Are you hiding from Glenn?

JESSICA
No.

STEPHEN
Well he's outside looking for you.

JESSICA
I don't care. He can't just invite himself over for sex whenever he wants.

STEPHEN
He said you invited him.

JESSICA
I did. But then I changed my mind. Because I have self-respect and dignity.

STEPHEN
(motions to window)
Oh, he's still here!

Jessica immediately squats out of sight. Stephen smiles.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
He's not there.

Jessica gets back up.

JESSICA
How'd it go with Courtney?

STEPHEN
Have you talked to her?

JESSICA
No.

STEPHEN
It went really well.

JESSICA
Even after you fell off the barstool and smashed everyone's drinks?

STEPHEN
Oh, fuck off!

She smiles and heads for the french doors.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Want to watch TV?

JESSICA
(considers)
I would... but I want to get up early and work on the play.

STEPHEN
I'll heat up some chicken.

JESSICA
Another time. Goodnight.

STEPHEN
See ya.

They high five and then Jessica exits through the french doors.

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Stephen stands in front of the microwave, watching the chicken wings defrost.

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Stephen sits on the couch, eating and watching TV. The light in Jessica's guesthouse goes out. Stephen looks over, then goes back to the TV. We hold on him, sitting alone.

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW