FLOWER

Written by

Alexander McAulay

Ash Christian
Ironclad Pictures, Inc.
(310) 985-5459 phone
ash@ironcladpictures.com

Alexander McAulay
Info@alexmcaulay.com
(310) 694-1398

INT. WHITE CHEVY ASTRO VAN, PARKED - DAY

CLOSE UP on a guy in the driver's seat of a van (DALE COTTER, mid-40's). He's sporting a mustache and a baseball cap.

His eyes are shut. His mouth is half-open, with a cigarette sticking out of one corner. He's in a total stupor.

Suddenly, there are signs of life.

He twitches. Gasps.

His face scrunches up, like he's in pain. His muscles quiver. His jaw tightens.

Then he relaxes with a satisfied sigh.

DALE
Oh hell yes...

He reaches up a hand and takes a drag on his cigarette, as we slowly MOVE OUT.

DALE (CONT'D)
That was definitely worth twenty bucks.

A girl's head suddenly pops up next to him in the passenger seat.

This is ERICA VANDROSS, age 16. She's a cute brunette wearing a blue lacrosse T-shirt and shorts.

She wipes her lips with the back of her hand.

ERICA
(thoughtfully)
Your cum tastes like enchiladas.

DALE
That's what I had for lunch!

Dale zips up his pants, still in a reverie.

DALE (CONT'D)
Damn, I think my cock boxed your tonsils.

ERICA
Just pay me what you owe.

Dale digs in his pocket. He comes up with a wad of crumpled dollar bills and some stray pennies.

DALE
Aw, man. I only got eighteen and change--

ERICA
Fine.

Erica snatches the bills. Sudden movement outside catches Dale's attention.

TWO ATTRACTIVE HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS emerge from some trees twenty feet ahead. They start approaching the van.

Dale looks nervous to see other people heading his way.

DALE
(squinting at the girls through the windshield)
So you got your dough. Now get the hell outta here...

ERICA
If only life were that simple.

EXT. DESOLATE SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

The two girls keep walking towards the parked van. Both of them are wearing lacrosse uniforms, just like Erica.

One of them (CLAUDINE DUPONT, 17) is tall, with blue eyes and long blonde hair. She's holding up a cell phone camera with trembling hands.

The other girl is equally pretty, but with shorter black hair and dark skin (KALA MANJU, 17).

They both look excited, but incredibly nervous as well, like they're on the verge of just running away.

But they keep approaching the van.

KALA
(softly)
We shouldn't be doing this.

CLAUDINE
Too late to back out now.

KALA
You think she really blew him?

CLAUDINE
I think she's all talk. I mean, there's just no way...

KALA
She could have picked a better mark. His van looks like crap.
(slowing down, getting fearful)
Fuck, why are we even here?

CLAUDINE
'Cause you want those new Prada pumps, bitch! Man up and follow the plan.

INT. THE WHITE VAN - DAY

Erica suddenly RIPS the keys out of the ignition. FLINGS them out the window.

DALE
What the hell...

Erica slithers out of the passenger door as the girls approach.

DALE (CONT'D)
(yelling out the window)
What is this bullshit? I need my keys back!

He opens the door and lumbers outside, standing in front of his van.

Kala dashes forward. Picks his key-chain up from the road. Then she runs back and hides behind Claudine and her camera.

Dale stares down the girls. He takes a step towards them. Then another.

Erica walks over to Claudine and Kala. Claudine hands her the camera.

DALE (CONT'D)
Gimme my keys right now. Are you crazy?

Claudine and Kala stare back at him, huddled together in giddy excitement and fear.

ERICA
Sir, are you aware you just solicited, and had sexual relations, with an underage girl?

DALE
You said you were twenty-one!

ERICA
Try sixteen.

Dale stops walking.

KALA
(piping up from behind Claudine)
We got your licence plate number, too.

DALE
This is an ambush!
(pointing angrily at the girls)
You set me up!!

Claudine and Kala both recoil in fear. But Erica's eyes just burn with precocious intensity.

ERICA
A good blow-job costs more than eighteen and change.

DALE
How much more?

Erica smiles.

ERICA
C'mon. Let's go for a drive.

EXT. BANK OF AMERICA ATM - DAY, TEN MINUTES LATER

In the background, Dale's white van PEELS OUT of the parking lot, as he drives away as fast as he can.

Erica and the girls stand there dividing up their loot.

CLAUDINE
One hundred bucks each. That's worth skipping practice for.

KALA
Barely.

ERICA
(stuffing cash into her pocket)
One hundred and eighteen for me. We should start doing this more than once a month.

KALA
I still can't believe you actually blew that creep, assuming you're telling the truth. It's so degrading.

CLAUDINE
I guess Erica's a freak like that.

ERICA
It takes one to catch one.

KALA
That guy was such a scummy perv. Maybe we shouldn't have given him his van back...

ERICA
Who else would want it? It was full of cigarette butts, cans of Tecate, and sticky porno mags.

The girls all giggle.

CLAUDINE
Let's hit the road.

ERICA
Shotgun!

INT. A RED HYUNDAI CONVERTIBLE - MINUTES LATER

Kala is at the wheel. Erica is in the passenger seat, fiddling with the stereo. Claudine is bouncing up and down in the back.

The stereo starts blasting old-school gangsta rap.

CLAUDINE
Hey, wanna go party tonight? Meet some cute boys?

ERICA
Can't. Gonna finally meet my step-brother Luke.

KALA
You haven't met him yet? Your mom's been remarried three months now.

ERICA
Luke's been in rehab for a year. He gets out today, and he's coming home to live with us.

KALA
Call us if he gives you any trouble.

CLAUDINE
Oh, she'll be the one giving him trouble.

The girls all giggle wildly again.

EXT. DRIVEWAY, ERICA'S SUBURBAN TRACT HOUSE - MINUTES LATER

The convertible stops moving. Erica opens the door and gets out.

ERICA
See ya later, alligators!

CLAUDINE
(calling out)
Someone should warn your step-brother about you, hussy!

Kala just stabs at the car stereo with her fingers.

Gentle indie-rock music starts wafting out of the speakers as Claudine clambers up front, into the passenger seat.

Erica waves goodbye as the car drives away.

Then she walks jauntily up the driveway to the front door of her house.

A HANDSOME MAN with tousled brown hair (mid-40's) waves at her from the yard across the street, a few houses down. She waves back.

The man is taking down a "For Sale" sign.

Erica reaches the front door. Unlocks it. Goes inside.

INT. ERICA'S HOUSE - DAY

Erica walks into the kitchen. Opens the fridge. Takes out a carton of milk.

She sniffs it and recoils.

ERICA
(calling out)
Ma, the milk smells like cat pee!

LAURIE (V.O.)
Honey, get up here.

Erica puts the milk back in the fridge. Heads for the stairs.

INT. HOME OFFICE - DAY

Erica appears at the door of her mom's home office.

Her mom (LAURIE, mid-40's) is sitting at a cluttered desk surrounded by real-estate books. She looks overwhelmed. Wears glasses, staring at a laptop screen.

She peers at Erica.

LAURIE
Why's your hair so messy?

ERICA
Hot animal sex with my nonexistent boyfriend.

Erica strolls into the room and slumps down on a comfy-looking leather chair, across from her mom.

LAURIE
You've been hanging out with Claudine and Kala again. I can tell.
(teasing)
I don't understand what straight-A students like them are doing with you.

ERICA
Relax, ma. Bob's rich. What do I need school for?

LAURIE
(rolls her eyes)
Yes, rich from the staggering fortune one gets from managing an auto-parts store. Please. He's almost as broke as your Dad was.

ERICA
(sighing)
At least Daddy wasn't some boring bald dude who collects toy trains.

LAURIE
Don't say mean things about Bob. Your step-dad loves you...

Laurie holds up a spiral notebook.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
Although I don't know what he'd say about this. I found it in the bathroom last night.

Erica lunges forward and grabs the notebook.

ERICA
Cool, I thought I'd lost it!

She sits back down, flicking through the pages, wide-eyed with delight.

On every page are drawings of DICKS. Big ones. Small ones. Circumcised. Uncircumcised. Drooping. Tumescent. Every possible kind. One is spraying out a crayola-colored rainbow.

LAURIE
Care to explain?

ERICA
I drew it for biology class.

LAURIE
Look, I've been thinking about sending you to see Dr. DiMarcio again--

Erica slams the notebook shut.

ERICA
Dr. DiMarcio's a douche! He hypnotized me so he could feel my tits, and then he called it "therapy".

LAURIE
Erica, stop it! Enough. We'll talk about it later. Just don't scare your step-brother tonight... And keep your drawings of penises to yourself.

INT. ERICA'S BATHROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Erica quickly goes through what appears to be a well-practiced ritual:

She layers a toothbrush with Aquafresh and furiously brushes. Sticks out her tongue and brushes that too.

Then Erica extracts a water-pik, humming "Here Comes the Bride" as she sprays down her teeth.

Finally, she swigs from a family-size bottle of Scope, GARGLING noisily, leaning her head back as far as she can. Then swallows.

Wipes her mouth, smiles, checks her teeth.

ERICA
Hell yes.

She pops a piece of gum into her mouth.

INT. ERICA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Erica's bedroom is a world of fascinating contrasts.

Garish posters of old school gangsta rappers--including a bunch for some guy named "MC Pimp Hand"--hang all over her bedroom walls.

But below the posters are a bunch of colorful teddy bears and other cute stuffed animals. One of them is a giant pink panda bear.

As Erica puts on lipstick, she starts talking to the panda.

ERICA
Wanna jam out to some MC Pimp Hand?
<u>Of course you do!</u>

She turns to the stereo and fiddles with her iPod.

The stereo starts pumping out profane hip hop music.

She dances back over to the giant pink panda and gently kisses him on the head. Then she gives him a big hug, shutting her eyes as she sinks her face into his comforting fur.

ERICA (CONT'D)
I love you, Panda Fluff.

Over the music we hear LOUD BANGING on the door.

LAURIE (OFF SCREEN)
Hurry up, honey! We're gonna be late!

EXT. RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTER - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

BOB WORAM (late-40's) is leading his son, a hugely fat teenager (LUKE WORAM), towards a waiting car.

Bob is mostly bald, wearing a bad suit and scuffed shoes.

Luke is so grossly obese, he makes Jorge Garcia look like Keira Knightley. He's a fat, sloppy mess of a human being.

INT. BOB'S TOYOTA CAMRY - LATE AFTERNOON

Laurie is in the passenger seat. Erica is in the back. Erica leans forward, staring out the window.

ERICA
Shit, ma. That him?

LAURIE
Yes. Don't say anything rude.

ERICA
You didn't tell me he was so fat!

LAURIE
You didn't ask.

ERICA
No wonder Bob only showed us pictures from when Luke was a little kid. I thought junkies were s'posed to be skinny.

LAURIE
Shhh, they're almost here. Smiley faces.

Bob and Luke reach the car. Bob opens one of the back doors.

BOB
Make room for your new brother, Erica.

Erica scoots over an inch.

BOB (CONT'D)
More room.

Erica sighs, moving over one inch more.

BOB (CONT'D)
I think we're gonna need even more room than that...

ERICA
Fuck, just put me on the roof rack, why doncha, Bob??

LAURIE
Erica--

ERICA
Kidding!

She scoots over.

Luke squeezes himself inside next to her. The entire car sags under his weight.

Erica gets pressed against the window by his girth. She stares at him hard.

ERICA (CONT'D)
My name's Erica. You probably know that.

He nods, head down. Insecure and nervous. Like a turtle in his shell.

LUKE
(softly)
I'm Luke.

Bob gets behind the wheel. The engine starts up. Everyone looks awkward and uncomfortable.

LAURIE
Well, isn't this exciting! Here we are, the whole family together at last.

ERICA
I think we should turn the radio on. Find some Biggie Smalls. Maybe some Fat Joe.

No one laughs. Luke cringes.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Tough crowd.

BOB
(ignoring her)
Lucas is excited to meet his new mom and his new sister. Aren't you, Luke?

LAURIE
Step-mom. I'm not trying to take anyone's place here.

BOB
Well, Erica. I bet you're excited to have an older brother, eh?

ERICA
It's a little weird he's coming home to live with us, and I've never met him before today.
(looks over at Luke)
No offense, big guy.

LAURIE
It's not weird. Where else would Luke go? Bob lives with us. Now Luke will too. We're a family.

ERICA
Whatever. I still think we should play some Heavy D.

LAURIE
(hissing)
Knock it off! You're embarrassing me!

ERICA
Sorry, ma. Just fuckin' around.

Luke stares straight ahead, looking depressed and scared.

LAURIE
Let's just all go have a nice dinner and celebrate Luke's recovery.

INT. PINE CLUB STEAKHOUSE - NIGHT, HALF HOUR LATER

We move in close to the booth where Erica and her family are sitting. This shabby steakhouse has seen better days.

Luke takes up one whole side of their booth. Erica, her mom, and Bob are all crammed opposite him.

A bored-looking WAITRESS ambles over.

WAITRESS.
Ya'll celebrating?

LAURIE
(excited)
Yes-- Yes, we are! How did you know?

WAITRESS.
'Cause people only come here when they be celebrating sumthin'.
Ya'll know what you want?

Inexplicably, Luke's hands start SHAKING, like he's about to have an epic freak-out. He holds up his menu. Tries to give it to the waitress.

LUKE
Take it...

WAITRESS
You don't want no food or nuthin' to drink?

Luke starts full on TWITCHING AND SPASMING. Like he's going to have a seizure.

LUKE
Please... Take it...

He shoves the menu into the waitress's hands.

BOB
He just doesn't like eating in front of people. He's got--

LUKE
Excuse me!

Luke BURSTS UP, shaking the table like an earthquake. He starts walking away.

Erica stands up too.

LAURIE
(to Bob)
What's going on? Did I do something wrong?

ERICA
Hey, Luke! Wait up!

She follows Luke. He hurries right out the front door of the Pine Club.

EXT. THE PINE CLUB PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Luke keeps walking, all the way around the side of the restaurant. To the dumpsters in the back of the parking lot.

He finally stops and collapses on a curb. Erica catches up.

ERICA
Dude, you running away from your new fam already? What the fuck?

LUKE
(wheezing, gasping)
Need... some... air...

Erica sits down next to him.

ERICA
Why'd you run like that?

LUKE
I just-- I...

ERICA
You look like you're having a panic attack.

LUKE
I... am...

ERICA
Just try to think about peaceful, calming things. Like dolphins and unicorns fucking on top of a rainbow, or some happy shit like that.

Luke shuts his eyes.

LUKE
You're... not helping...

ERICA
Focus on the unicorns. There's nothing unicorn love can't solve.

They sit there for a moment. Luke's breathing starts returning to normal.

ERICA (CONT'D)
So what were you in rehab for?

LUKE
Pills... Oxys, mostly.

ERICA
Never tried 'em. I don't do drugs. Some people say that's pretty lame-o, but fuck 'em... Hey, you want a blow job?

LUKE
(completely and utterly confused, like maybe he heard her wrong)
What?

ERICA
A. Blow. Job. Would you like one?

LUKE
Right now? From you?

ERICA
No, from our waitress, you moron. Of course from me. I don't mind blowing strangers. I love sucking dick.

LUKE
Uh, no...

ERICA
Is it 'cause we're 'sposed to be brother and sister? Who cares about that shit. I'll do it for free.

LUKE
Hey, quit fucking with--
(his eyes meet hers)
Oh my god, you're not fucking with me, are you? You're actually serious...

ERICA
Dude, I'm the only offer you're ever gonna get in your entire life for a free blow job. So just unzip.

LUKE
No, I--

She grapples with his fly, trying to tear it down. He pushes her hands away.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Are you crazy??

She comes back, clawing at his crotch with renewed vigor.

He finally SHOVES her away as hard as he can. She stumbles, yelps, and almost falls.

ERICA
Fuck you, then! I probably couldn't find your dick in all that blubber! Jeez, how do you even have sex? Were you that fucking fat before rehab?

LUKE
(winded)
I've been... fat like this since I was ten... It's really hard.

Erica's face softens.

ERICA
Seriously? So you're probably a virgin. And you're sixteen. That's pretty tragic.

LUKE
(pause)
I'm eighteen.

ERICA
Wow. And you just refused a blow job. Are you shy, or don't you like girls?

LUKE
I like Oxys.

Luke hangs his head, like a praying Buddha.

LUKE (CONT'D)
I can't believe you offered me a blow job... You're more messed-up than I am.

ERICA (V.O.)
(gently)
Have you ever even had a blow job?

Her fingers starts reaching towards his crotch again, like an eager spider.

He leaps up, swaying.

LUKE
Jesus! What's wrong with you? I don't want a blow job! Leave me alone!

He stomps off.

ERICA
What a fag.

INT. ERICA'S SUBURBAN HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Erica sprawls on a couch, wearing a tank-top and shorts. She's chatting with Claudine on her cell.

CLAUDINE
(over the phone)
The footage is awesome! That dude looked like he was gonna piss his pants when he realized he was busted.

ERICA
Sweet.

Luke wanders past the couch.

CLAUDINE
Kala thought you were just gonna pretend to blow him.

ERICA
You know me better than that.

CLAUDINE
So what's your new bro like?

ERICA
(sighs)
Fat, weird and GAY. He didn't want a blow job. And he weighs like eight hundred pounds.

LUKE
Three-sixty. I can hear you.

CLAUDINE
(on phone)
That's awesome he's gay. You don't have to worry he's gonna rape your sorry ass when you're sleeping.

ERICA
Not unless he eats all my Ben and Jerry's... Really, you gotta see this dude. It's like if Jabba the Hut and Ralphie May had a baby and fed it pudding and lard, plus a couple hundred ice cream sundaes--

LUKE
Jesus! I can hear you! What the fuck?!

He stomps out of the room, SLAMMING the door behind him.

Erica and Claudine both GIGGLE.

INT. ERICA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Erica is sitting on her bed, listening to rap music.

She's putting the money she got from Dale into a glass jar. It's already stuffed with bills.

The door opens. It's Laurie.

ERICA
(startled)
Ever heard of knocking, ma? Jesus.

She swiftly hides the jar behind her pink panda bear.

LAURIE
Honey, Luke said you were teasing him about his weight? Can you knock it off?

ERICA
Fuck, he's not twelve.

LAURIE
I know. But he just got out of rehab. He's tender... And honestly, Bob and I don't like the teasing either. At least not this soon.

ERICA
You and Bob. You and Luke. I should start gobbling Oxys and french fries just to get some attention.

LAURIE
(worried)
You know it's not like that--

ERICA
I know.
(grins)
Just fuckin' with you.

Laurie smiles in relief.

LAURIE
Give me a goodnight kiss, sweetie. But watch your language and go easy on Luke, okay? Try to say something nice to him tomorrow.

ERICA
Fuck yeah sure, ma. No problem.

LAURIE
(leaning against the doorframe, skeptical)
Then practice with me right now. What's one nice thing you could say about him to his face? Run it by me first.

ERICA
So you're a shrink now?

LAURIE
Humor me.

ERICA
I dunno. How about, "Don't eat so much fast food, ya fat fuck?"

LAURIE
(frustrated)
Erica...

ERICA
Sorry.

LAURIE
We need to help his self esteem.

ERICA
Okay. Fine. I'll tell him that if his plane crashes in the Andes, he'll be able to keep a whole lot of starving passengers happy.

LAURIE
You're not taking this seriously. I'm really disappointed.

ERICA
Fine, fine.
(mind racing)
Okay, I got it! I'll tell him he has nice eyebrows. A lot of guys have uni-brows, for some reason. He's lucky he dodged that bullet... And he doesn't smell! That's a plus, too.

Laurie sighs.

LAURIE
I'm glad Bob isn't hearing this.

ERICA
He's not my dad, so who cares what he hears?

Laurie walks over to the bed and kisses Erica on the lips.

LAURIE
Sleep well, honey.

Laurie heads for the door.

ERICA
(calling out)
More tongue, ma! Or I feel gypped!

Her mom just shuts the door.

EXT. BACKYARD OF ERICA'S HOUSE - DAY, THE NEXT AFTERNOON

Bob is grilling up a weekend BBQ. Laurie is sitting near him under a sun umbrella, reading a romance novel with a tawdry cover.

Luke is slumped in the shade of a tree near the house, dressed in a black T-shirt and saggy black shorts.

Erica walks over.

Luke looks up.

ERICA
Sorry if I was a rude bitch yesterday. I mean, I've never had a step-brother before. Especially one who's eighteen and still a virgin. I dunno how to act.

LUKE
It's okay. I've never had a sister.

ERICA
I just want you to know that my offer still stands... My offer to blow you, that is.

LUKE
I was pretending that never happened.

Erica sits down next to him.

ERICA
I think a blowie might loosen you up. I'm pretty experienced in these matters.

LUKE
(softly)
You honestly like giving blow jobs to guys you barely know?

ERICA
Yup.

LUKE
It doesn't matter who?

ERICA
Nope.

LUKE
You're not... worried about getting diseases?

ERICA
You're safe as long as you don't each nachos or floss right before. I looked it up on Wikipedia once.

LUKE
Well, at least you did your research.

Erica frowns. Then she LAUGHS and playfully PUNCHES him in the shoulder.

ERICA
You're fuckin' with me! Right? I get it. That's cool. But hey, it's probably healthier to give free BJ's than eat BK and pop Oxys all day.

LUKE
I'm done with the Oxys.

ERICA
So are they gonna send you to fat camp next?

LUKE
My dad tried a bunch of times when I was younger. I just came back even fatter, and then he'd yell at me... He's a prick.

ERICA
My dad's awesome, but he got busted in Kentucky robbing a casino last year. He hasn't hit his trial date yet, so I'm trying to save money to bail him out. I need eight grand. My mom refuses to put up the cash.

She digs in her pocket and holds out a photo. Luke glances at it. The photo shows an attractive, smiling middle-aged man in a nice gray suit.

ERICA (CONT'D)
That's him.

LUKE
He looks like you. The eyes.

ERICA
Really?

BOB
(calling out)
Burgers are ready! Come get ‘em while they’re hot, kids...

Luke instantly staggers up.

ERICA
(putting her photo away)
So you’re actually gonna eat with us today?

LUKE
I, uh... Probably not. I just like eating by myself, y’know...

He lumbers away, towards the grill. Erica stares after his gargantuan figure.

INT. ERICA’S BEDROOM - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Erica is on the phone to Claudine, as she looks at photos of shirtless Robert Pattinson-types online.

ERICA
(on phone)
I just think we could get away with twice a month. No one’s said anything to the police. We’re never gonna get in trouble.

CLAUDINE
Kala doesn’t want to take the risk. And we need her, ‘cause neither of us owns a car.

ERICA
Well I’ve only saved two grand so far. I need another six!

CLAUDINE
Then we need to pick the right mark, instead of some random greaser in a windowless van. Someone rich.

Right then, we hear a strange moaning sound coming from outside the room.

Erica stops talking for a moment.

ERICA (V.O.)
Wait--I just heard something weird. Call you right back.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Erica walks down the hall. We hear the moaning noise again. It's coming from the bathroom.

ERICA
Mom?

INT. ERICA'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Erica opens the bathroom door and flicks on the light. She instantly stumbles back, startled.

Luke is curled up in the half-filled bathtub with his clothes on, sobbing. His mouth is open in a look of tortured agony.

ERICA
Damn, you look like Shamu. What's wrong?

Luke gazes up at her. He can't talk, like he's having a total mental breakdown. Tears stream down his cheeks.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Seriously, what's the deal? I can help.

LUKE
No one-- can help... me... I just want to die!

ERICA
In my bathtub? Couldn't you have picked a better place?

Luke keeps crying incoherently.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Unicorns and rainbows?

Luke just cries harder.

Erica sighs. Walks out of the bathroom and into the hall.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Mom! Luke's totally flipping out. Come fix him.

We hear the sound of Laurie hustling upstairs towards the bathroom.

INT. LIVING ROOM, ERICA'S HOUSE - HALF HOUR LATER

Erica slumps on the couch with a tank top on, watching BET.

Bob walks into the room. He snaps off the TV.

ERICA
So, you talk to him?

BOB
(grim-faced)
I did. Your mother's up there with him now.

ERICA
He was fine at lunch. Fuck, he barely made it twenty-four hours... Is he gonna go back to rehab?

BOB
My son didn't relapse.

Bob takes a seat across from Erica.

ERICA
Then what's the deal? Is he still in the bathroom. I gotta pinch a loaf something awful.

BOB
There are things in Luke's past you don't know about.

ERICA
Other than Burger King and Oxys? I didn't think there was room for much more.

BOB
(leaning forward)
When Luke was ten, he accused someone of sexually molesting him... A camp counselor at Woodland Pines named Paul Jordan.

ERICA
That really sucks.

BOB
It gets worse. A man moved into the Carlsson's old house last week.

ERICA
Yeah. I waved at him today. He's hot.

BOB
That's Paul Jordan.

Erica sits up.

ERICA
You're shitting me! Luke's molester just moved in next door to us? What the fuck is Luke gonna do?

BOB
You mean what are we going to do? We're a family. This is going to impact Luke's sobriety in a really negative way.

ERICA
Yeah, no shit.

BOB
Luke caught a glimpse of him from his window after lunch. He thinks Paul saw him too...
(sighs)
Erica, I don't know what Luke is telling your mom right now, but I need you to keep your lips shut about all this.

ERICA
What do you mean? Why?

BOB
I don't want trouble with the neighbors... And to be honest, Luke's allegations were never proven...

ERICA
You're saying that he lied? Wow.

BOB
I'm saying that no one knows for sure.

EXT. FRONT LAWN - TWILIGHT, MINUTES LATER

Erica sits barefoot outside her house, painting her toenails pink in the grass. She stares at Paul's house contemplatively.

A curtain moves inside the house, like Paul is inside. Hiding.

Erica narrows her eyes.

INT. LUKE'S BEDROOM DOOR, HALLWAY - TWILIGHT

Laurie stands outside Luke's door.

She raises her hand to knock on it, then hesitates.

LAURIE
Luke?

There's no answer.

She gently KNOCKS on the door twice.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
Are you okay in there?

INT. INSIDE LUKE'S BEDROOM - SECONDS LATER

Luke is at the window, secretly watching Erica. She's still standing in the front lawn, looking across the street at Paul's house.

Luke isn't crying anymore. He's just staring at her unblinkingly. Completely silent and still.

We hear Laurie knocking at his door again in the background, but he just ignores her. His expression is oddly inscrutable.

Then Luke's hand suddenly rises to his mouth. His fingers are clutching a large potato chip. He brings it up to his lips and chomps down on it with a loud CRUNCH.

EXT. THE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Erica is walking across the street, trying to look casual as she scopes out Paul's house.

She reaches the other side of the road, and walks towards the house.

She pauses when she reaches it, not wanting to be seen.

But she cranes her head to peer down his driveway. Takes note of a brand new, shiny green Lexus parked there...

INT. KITCHEN, ERICA'S HOUSE - NIGHT, AN HOUR LATER

Laurie, Bob, and Erica sit around the kitchen table across from each other. Laurie and Bob look too upset to eat, but Erica is happily munching on a slice of pizza.

LAURIE
So Luke wouldn't tell me what was wrong... He wouldn't even let me in his room.

Erica and Bob exchange furtive glances.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
(to Erica)
Are you responsible for this? Did you tease him about his weight again? I told you not to be so cruel.

ERICA
Hey, don't pin this on me. I've been super nice to him...

Luke suddenly appears in the doorway.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Look. Shamu's found dry land!

Laurie rushes over to Luke's side, scowling at Erica.

LAURIE
Luke, honey, how are you feeling now?

BOB
(with a note of warning in his voice)
Much better. Right?

Luke ignores both of them. He looks at Erica.

LUKE
Can I talk to you? Alone?

ERICA
Sssssure.

Laurie and Bob both look worried. Erica follows Luke into the hall.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Luke and Erica stand there facing each other.

LUKE
(whispering)
Listen... Can you... help me... get out of here?

ERICA
Depends on where you want to go.
(teasing)
Burger King is out of the question.

LUKE
I wanna... go back to rehab.

ERICA
Rehab?! Why the fuck would you want to go back there? That's like Charles Manson refusing parole. You're finally free. Are you retarded?!

LUKE
(hisses)
Keep your voice down!

But it's too late. Bob has overheard.

He stomps out of the kitchen and into the living room.

BOB
I don't want to hear any more nonsense from you, Luke! Rehab cost thirty grand-- And insurance only paid for half of it!

Laurie follows after him, pulling on his arm.

LAURIE
Bob, calm down.

ERICA
(to Laurie, pointedly)
Mom, where are your car keys?

LAURIE
Be quiet, Erica. Nobody is going anywhere!

BOB
(disgusted)
I thought you'd outgrown this behavior, Luke.

LUKE
(getting agitated)
You've never believed in me!

ERICA
(thoughtfully, to Bob)
We could always superglue Luke's asshole shut. Maybe he'd feel safer that way.

Laurie suddenly lunges past Bob, and SLAPS Erica right across the face.

The noise is loud and sharp, echoing off the walls.

ERICA (CONT'D)
(startled)
Ow! I was just fuckin' around, ma!

She looks at her mom, hurt.

Then, in the silence, we suddenly hear a weird snuffling noise. It's takes everyone a moment to realize who it's coming from.

Inexplicably, Luke is stifling a small laugh.

Bob and Laurie look confused and surprised.

Erica stares at Luke, and he stares back. For a brief moment, a little smile plays across her lips, like they're sharing some weird moment of understanding.

A tiny drop of blood beads on her lip.

BOB
(to Luke)
Why are you laughing? What the hell's wrong with you?

Luke suddenly runs out of the room, and back upstairs. We hear his footsteps pound up the stairs.

BOB (CONT'D)
(to Laurie)
I am <u>so</u> sorry about this.

LAURIE
It's fine.

BOB
No, it's not. Luke is an embarrassment. I'm not going to let him get away with these childish antics anymore--

Erica abruptly turns and marches toward the front door.

LAURIE
Erica, wait! Where do you think you're going?

ERICA
To steal a car!

EXT. ERICA'S NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NIGHT

Erica stomps across the street towards Paul's house. She walks across the road and straight up his driveway

She stops when she reaches the Lexus, and checks to see if the keys are in the ignition. They're not.

She sighs in frustration.

The she brushes past the car, right up to the front door.

EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

She POUNDS on Paul's door.

ERICA
Open up!

She keeps pounding.

We hear the sound of the door being unlocked. It swings open...

Erica barges right into the house.

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Paul stands there at the door, wearing a gray UVA sweatshirt and a pair of faded jeans, with a beer bottle in one hand.

He's attractive for a dad, but in a subtle, low-key way. His tousled hair is receding a bit, and he's beginning to get the first signs of a beer belly.

PAUL
(surprised)
Uh, can I help you?

ERICA
You better.

Erica strides into the center of the living room, casting her eyes around Paul's house. The house looks totally normal and suburban, except for a few boxes that still need to be unpacked.

PAUL
You're that girl who lives down the street, aren't you?

A little boy suddenly BURSTS out of a hallway and runs past them, giggling. He's naked except for a pair of underwear.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(yelling)
Hey! No running indoors! It's past your bedtime!

Erica looks shocked.

ERICA
Wait, you have kids?!

PAUL
Three boys. So what is this all about? Listen, if you're trying to sell me Girl Scout cookies, you should probably work on your attitude.

ERICA
I'm no Girl Scout.
(suspicious)
Where's your wife?

PAUL
On a business trip to Chicago--
(stopping himself)
Look, this is just too weird. What are you doing here?

ERICA
I'm here to talk about Lucas Woram. Name ring any bells?

Paul just sighs. He gestures towards a black leather couch.

Erica sits down.

Paul sits across from her in a plush chair.

Another half-naked boy runs past again, firing a toy gun, but this time Paul doesn't even bother yelling.

PAUL
(tiredly)
I'm dropping them off at my sister's tomorrow. They're driving me nuts.

ERICA
Good parenting.

PAUL
Yeah, wait until you have kids... So, you want something to drink?

ERICA
Sure. I'll take a beer. So, Luke says you molested him at Woodland Pines, back when he was ten.

Paul eyes her long and hard.

PAUL
I thought I recognized that kid. Jesus.

ERICA
He's my new step-brother.
(running her finger over her swollen lip)
Hey, bring me some ice along with that beer.

Paul stands up slowly and heads into the kitchen.

ERICA (CONT'D)
(calling out)
So, you see we have a little problem here.

A porcelain tchotchke on the cluttered coffee table suddenly catches her attention. It's a naked little boy holding a fishing pole.

She picks it up just as Paul re-enters the room. He's holding a beer in one hand, and a bag of frozen peas in the other.

PAUL
(noticing)
That belongs to my wife.

Erica puts it back down. Paul holds out the beer, then pauses.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Wait, how old are you?

ERICA
Twenty-one.
(she grabs the beer bottle out of his hands)
Thanks.
(admiring the Pabst Blue Ribbon label)
Nice.

She takes a long swig.

Paul hands her the bag of frozen peas.

PAUL
(watching her closely)
Those'll work better than ice. I know. I used to wrestle at UVA.

She takes the peas and presses them against her face.

Paul sits back down across from her.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Luke was always a troubled kid. Even as a ten year old. No one knew how to get through to him. It's like he lived in his own little fantasy world.

ERICA
Well, he's pretty believable now.

PAUL
He's completely full of crap. You know that, right?

His eyes fall on Erica's legs, then he catches himself and looks away.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You're not twenty-one.

ERICA
(swigging her beer)
And you're not convincing me that you're innocent.

PAUL
(sighs)
Look, I never touched Luke. Ever. It was just all a big lie to get attention. I mean, the head of Woodland Pines looked into it and everything. I was totally cleared. Luke's own parents didn't believe him.
(pause)
How long have you even known Luke?

ERICA
Less than twenty-four hours.

PAUL
Then let's talk about what you're really doing here.

ERICA
What do you mean?

PAUL
Something tells me you didn't come over here to talk about your overweight stepbrother...

Paul stands up and approaches the couch. She tenses. He leans in, getting close to her.

It's clear that Erica doesn't know where this is headed. She sips her beer, suddenly nervous and confused.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(softly, but a little menacingly)
What you're doing isn't safe. You can't walk into a stranger's house and accuse them of crimes. Seriously. You're gonna get hurt.

He suddenly snatches her beer right out of her hands.

ERICA
Hey! I wasn't done yet!

Paul moves back and stares down at her. His voice grows louder.

PAUL
What if I'd actually molested Luke?? What if I actually <u>was</u> some crazy child molester?
(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)
Do you think I'd respond well to your allegations? Don't listen to the garbage that comes out of Luke's mouth. It's all an act.

ERICA
(oddly intrigued)
Really? I already know about his stint in rehab if that's what you're talking about.

PAUL
Yeah, well, there's something wrong with that kid... and if you keep going down this path, you're gonna get in trouble yourself. Big trouble.

ERICA
Is that a threat?

PAUL
Only if you want it to be.

Erica stands up, imperiously tossing the frozen peas onto the beige carpet.

One of Paul's kids instantly rushes past, grabs the bag, and runs away giggling.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Look. I got enough brats already. I don't need another one trying to ruin my life...
(beat)
You think I don't know about you?

ERICA
What do you mean?

PAUL
I know <u>all</u> about you. What you get up to with guys around this neighborhood... And I'm not gonna fall for it.

ERICA
(surprised, but trying to act normal)
Fine. Jeez. Chill out, dude. I'm sorry...

Erica heads for the front door. Paul watches her closely.

PAUL
You know I stopped volunteering at Woodland Pines because of Luke.
(pointedly to her)
Some kids are beyond help.

Erica swings the door shut behind her.

INT. LUKE'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Luke is lying in bed, trying to sleep, his face covered with a pillow. We hear a knock at the door.

LUKE
Only come in if your name isn't Erica.

The door opens. It's Erica.

ERICA
Hiya.

Luke throws his pillow at her, and curls to the side.

LUKE
Great.

ERICA
So I just talked to Paul--

Luke sits up like he's been struck with lightning. Furious.

LUKE
You talked to him?! You're insane! God, you probably offered to blow him.

ERICA
(hurt)
No, I went over there trying to help you--

LUKE
I don't want your help! You're just gonna make things worse.

Luke collapses and curls up, facing the wall.

ERICA
No, listen-- He said he didn't do it. That he never touched you.

LUKE
What else is he gonna say??
(pissed-off)
You're just like my dad.

ERICA
No, I'm not!

LUKE
How's that?

ERICA
'Cause I believe you...

LUKE
(sounding surprised)
Why?

He eyes her.

ERICA
Let's just say I have my reasons.
So let me help you.

LUKE
You're just fucking with me again,
aren't you? I can tell.

Erica awkwardly sits down on the bed next to him.

ERICA
Jesus, move over. This is a queen-
sized bed and you fill the whole
thing.

Luke shifts sideways a little.

ERICA (CONT'D)
More, more. C'mon, lardy.

She pushes against him, making herself comfortable.

LUKE
If you really want to help me, just
go buy a packet of razor blades and
some extra-strength Tylenol...

ERICA
(ignoring him)
Listen, I saw a new Lexus in Paul's
driveway. That means he has money--

LUKE
So who cares? Now you want to rob him or something?

ERICA
I don't just want to rob him, I want to make him pay. Let him know that we know the truth... Don't you want revenge, or did he rape all the manhood out of you?

LUKE
Leave me alone.

He turns away again. Erica reclines against him, shoving against his girth to make room for herself.

ERICA
Well, if you don't have the balls for revenge... I know some girls who do.

EXT. BURGER KING PARKING LOT - THE NEXT DAY, NOON

Kala's red convertible is parked outside a Burger King.

INT. THE RED CONVERTIBLE - DAY

Luke is sitting in the back, with five Whoppers and five large french fries in his lap, munching away.

The girls are introducing themselves to him.

CLAUDINE
I'm Claudine...

KALA
I'm Kala Manju.

CLAUDINE
(awkward, but curious)
So, Erica said that some guy, like sexually molested you as a kid?

Luke doesn't reply. Just keeps eating.

CLAUDINE (CONT'D)
Did the guy go all the way? I mean, are we talking first base or a home run?

KALA
Ew!

CLAUDINE
(quickly)
Of course, it's okay if you don't want to talk about it.

ERICA
No, it's not okay. Paul needs to pay for what he did. He comes off like a Mr. Mom type, but deep down, he's a total douche. I can tell these things.

Luke desperately tears into another burger.

LUKE
I don't want to think about Paul while I'm eating.

ERICA
I'm just impressed you're eating in front of us.

LUKE
Don't jinx me! It's only because you're so crazy, I don't feel like you're in any position to judge me.

CLAUDINE
(genuinely curious, to Luke)
You think he molested any other kids, or were you like, "the chosen one?"

KALA
Claudine, cut it out!

CLAUDINE
(sheepishly)
Sorry...

Luke stuffs a massive fist-full of fries into his mouth.

ERICA
It's natural to be curious, right Luke? I mean, Paul probably rammed his dick up lots of kids' asses. But, c'mon! Luke was special.

KALA
Gross! Shut up!

EXT. THE EDGE OF THE ROAD - DAY, MOMENTS LATER

Luke is gagging and hurling up half-digested burgers and fries at the side of the road. Erica stands next to him, fascinated, continually leaning in for a better look.

The other girls wait in the car, repulsed.

ERICA
For a fat dude, you sure got a weak stomach.

LUKE
Stop watching me! What's wrong with you?

ERICA
What's wrong with you?? I thought only chicks got bulimia.

He throws up loudly again.

LUKE
Quit watching!

ERICA
(chuckling)
Dude, how can you be so grossed out by normal bodily functions? Half the time I blow a dude, I end up barfing.

LUKE
(wiping his mouth)
You're totally crazy. You know that, right?

ERICA
So? It's not like you're a paragon of normalcy.

LUKE
(sounding dazed)
All this Paul stuff, and sex stuff and dick-sucking stuff is just too much for me.

ERICA
A dick is just like a big thumb without a fingernail, what's the big deal?

Claudine starts HONKING her horn.

Luke looks at Erica.

LUKE
(softly)
Why are you doing this for me, anyway?

ERICA
'Cause you give my life meaning.

She grabs Luke's arm.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Now get back in the fucking car.

EXT. THE ROAD - DAY

The convertible flies down the road, the stereo blasting old school hip hop.

INT. THE CONVERTIBLE - MOMENTS LATER

The car parks in front of a large office building with huge glass windows.

LUKE
So why are we stopping here?

Erica exchanges glances with Kala and Claudine.

ERICA
I found out where Paul works...

LUKE
(shocked)
Wait- What? Here?? Take me home!

ERICA
(ignoring him)
Claudine and Kala wanted to see him for themselves--

KALA
Yeah, to make sure he wasn't another dud like the last guy.

CLAUDINE
This place looks pretty white collar...

ERICA
Yeah, see, he's a video game designer, like I said. Probably designs games for little kids, the sick bastard.

Luke looks shell-shocked.

ERICA (CONT'D)
(pointing)
Hey, there he is!

We see Paul in a suit and tie, talking on the phone in one of the large offices.

Luke tries to hide his face, while Claudine and Kala check Paul out.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Look rich enough for you?

CLAUDINE
He's cuter than I thought he'd be.

KALA
And that matters?

CLAUDINE
Yeah, it'd be way worse if he was ugly and gross.

ERICA
I totally agree with you on that.

LUKE
(horrified)
Shut up!

KALA
(sighing)
So, what's the plan, Erica? This one of our suck and tape extortion deals?

ERICA
No. Luke doesn't want me to do that. Do you Luke?

LUKE
I don't want any of you to do <u>anything</u>.

ERICA
(ignoring him)
Besides, Paul seemed to know a little too much about me for comfort. A simple BJ won't work.

CLAUDINE
What if we tie him up or something?

ERICA
Kinky, but too much hard work.

KALA
I only want to do this if it's not super risky--

ERICA
Look. Shaking down a child molester for dough is our moral obligation... The things we did before, we just did for money. And for kicks. But now things are different. We have a purpose. A reason to do what we do best.
(like she's rallying the troops)
So I need you both to rise to the challenge! Paul has given us a reason to keep going. We're the only ones who stand between him and a whole town of innocent little boys. We're the only ones who can dispense any justice. And if we don't act now, then other little kids are gonna get hurt. Do you want that to happen? I think not.

Claudine nods. Kala still looks skeptical.

CLAUDINE
(nudging Kala)
Prada, baby.

LUKE
(softly)
So what's your insane plan. How are you going to pull this off?

ERICA
(thinking)
Okay, how about this? Paul likes to drink. So I put something in his beer to knock him out.
(MORE)

ERICA (CONT'D)
Then we all strip down to our panties and take photos, to make it look like he's banging minors. And then we extort him for cash...

Claudine starts nodding in agreement.

CLAUDINE
That could work...

ERICA
And we keep the police out of it-- we just threaten to send the photos to his wife. He's already been accused of child abuse once. Some part of her probably knows it's true... We can do it tomorrow night. His kids will be gone by then. We can go over there and get him all alone.

KALA
But what do we put in his drink, exactly?

ERICA
I know how to get some Klonopin.

LUKE
I think I'm gonna puke again.

ERICA
Save it. Me and the girls gotta get back to school before lunch break is over.

INT. SCHOOL - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Erica is on the lacrosse field at practice, in her uniform.

She gazes around, and her eyes find a freaky long-haired stoner kid (KEITH, 18) drifting past the edge of the field toward the parking lot.

The lacrosse ball suddenly flies past Erica's face. Girls yell at her, and she ignores them.

Claudine jogs up to her.

CLAUDINE
(bemused)
Erica! You didn't even try!

ERICA
A girl can't be good at everything.

Her eyes are still tracking Keith...

EXT. GIRL'S BATHROOM, SCHOOL - HALF HOUR LATER

Keith is slipping out of the girl's bathroom and into the hallway, looking sheepish.

INT. GIRL'S BATHROOM, SCHOOL - SECONDS LATER

Erica is at the sink, rinsing her mouth out with a very tiny travel-size bottle of Scope.

Claudine opens the door and sees her.

CLAUDINE
Omigod... You didn't!

ERICA
(gargling)
I got us the Klonopin. Six pills.

CLAUDINE
For blowing Keith? That is so not worth it!

Erica spits in the sink and grins at her.

ERICA
It was for me.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - LATER THAT DAY

Erica is riding her bike home from school, listening to her iPod. Her earbuds blast her skull with deafening rap music.

INT. ERICA'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Erica is sitting at her desk, doodling a picture of a dick in her notebook.

Then under the dick she writes the name "KEITH," making it clear that this book is basically her blow job journal.

She rifles back a few pages.

We catch a glimpse of a blank page, with the name "LUKE" written at the bottom of it...

Laurie suddenly opens the bedroom door.

ERICA
(startled)
What did I say about knocking, ma??
I'm hard at work! Come back later.

Laurie walks into the room anyway.

LAURIE
Honey, has Luke said or done anything that... you would consider strange.

ERICA
(closing her notebook)
If he doesn't have a heart attack by nineteen, that'll be strange.

LAURIE
Bob wanted me to ask you if he's said anything we should know about.

ERICA
Like what?

LAURIE
It's just that sometimes, Bob thinks, well...
(beat)
I can't figure Luke out.

ERICA
(yelling)
Hey, Luke! My mom hates you!

LAURIE
(shocked)
Shhh! That's not what I said!

ERICA
(yelling even louder)
Hey, Luke! She doesn't hate you! She just says you creep her out, and she wishes Bob didn't have any kids!

LAURIE
(slowly backing away and closing the door)
You're right. I should have knocked...

Erica cackles.

INT. BACK YARD - LATER THAT NIGHT

Erica is standing outside on a crate. She's peering through a pair of binoculars, over a low fence, trying to spy on Paul's house.

She's got her earbuds in, listening to hip hop music on her iPod.

Luke is sitting on the grass nearby, eating Doritos.

LUKE
I told you no one believes me.

ERICA
Most grownups are lame. Except for my dad...
(lowering the binoculars)
I didn't think a stake-out would be this boring. And I can't see anything through these things, anyway... Hey, how about we flip a quarter? If it's heads, I give you a blow job. And if it's tails, I give you one too...

LUKE
(glumly)
Your mouth probably has like, ten thousand venereal diseases.

ERICA
So? Your dick probably has its own McDonald's franchise.

Luke chuckles slightly.

LUKE
That doesn't even make any sense.

ERICA
Like I care about making sense.

She hops down from the crate and tosses the binoculars onto the grass.

ERICA (CONT'D)
(sighs)
Why couldn't your molester have been cooler? Paul's so uptight. I hope tomorrow goes well.

LUKE
There's nothing I can say to stop this, right?

She fiddles with her iPod, turning the volume way up, gyrating to the music.

ERICA
I love this song.

Luke watches her.

LUKE
You're a good dancer.

ERICA
What??

LUKE
I SAID, YOU'RE A GOOD DANCER.

ERICA
Shhh!
(turns the volume down a bit)
Have you ever danced with a girl? Like at school or something. Or maybe some rehab shindig?

LUKE
You already know the answer.

ERICA
C'mon, Chubb Rock. Let's dance.

Erica walks over to him, exaggerating her dance moves.

She puts one of her earbuds into his ear. Cranks up the volume.

LUKE
(talking loudly over the music)
You actually like this song?

ERICA
Yeah, it's called "Gotta Air My Nutsack," by MC Pimp Hand 'N' Da Compton Juice Kru! They were huge in the eighties.

LUKE
Girls have horrible taste in music.

ERICA
That's such bullshit! You're too fat to be sexist. What kind of stuff do you like?

LUKE
I dunno. Belle & Sebastian... Radiohead... Vampire Weekend...

ERICA
Gay, gay, and <u>GAY!</u> MC Pimp Hand 'N' Da Compton Juice Kru would make those bands their prison bitches. Vampire Weekend would be sucking more than blood.

Erica places his hands on her hips. He holds them there limply.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Harder. I'm not gonna break.

Her shirt rises a little as she raises her arms and gyrates, exposing her bare skin. Luke's fingers brush against her flesh.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Come on, dip me. I'm gonna dip...

She pushes his hands in place, readying herself to bend backwards.

ERICA (CONT'D)
You better not drop me.

Then Luke catches a glimpse of himself reflected in the window of the house.

He yanks the earbud out of his ear, and lurches away.

ERICA (CONT'D)
(confused, taking the earbud out of her own ear)
Why'd you kill my jam?

LUKE
Because it's like Beauty and the Beast out here. I look like a human chicken nugget.

Erica steps over to him, with a look of understanding and empathy in her eyes.

She carefully places both earbuds in his ears. Shuffles quickly through her music. We suddenly hear the opening bars of a Radiohead song. She smiles at him...

Then she slowly sinks to her knees.

Luke quickly covers his crotch with both hands and backs away from her.

LUKE (CONT'D)
No!

Erica stands up.

ERICA
Dude, what gives? I thought you were feeling me.

LUKE
Why do you want to blow me so badly? Is it just because I won't let you? You don't have to act this way.

ERICA
This is what I do.

LUKE
Have you ever thought maybe giving blow jobs is like, an addiction or something?

ERICA
(irritated)
Naw, I love it too much.

LUKE
That's pretty much what an addict would say.

ERICA
(feeling rejected, starting to get mad)
You don't have to be such a big fat buzzkill about everything... You're probably just going to fuck things up for us tomorrow.

She snatches up the binoculars from the grass.

LUKE
I think tomorrow is a mistake.

ERICA
(getting madder)
Of course you do! 'Cause you're totally lame. You don't even realize how much stuff I've done to help you. I'm risking everything! It's like you don't even care.

LUKE
No-- I care.

ERICA
(angry)
Yeah, you care about stuffing your face with fast food. That's pretty much it!

LUKE
Erica--

ERICA
Whatever. Go fuck yourself. See you tomorrow.

She stomps off angrily, leaving Luke alone, standing outside looking dazed.

EXT. ERICA'S HOUSE - MINUTES LATER, NIGHT

Erica rides off down the street on her bike, still looking pissed-off.

EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE

Paul is standing in the front lawn, smoking a cigarette in the darkness. He watches Erica ride past, staring for a long beat as she rides off. Like he's checking her out...

EXT. ERICA'S BACKYARD - SECONDS LATER

Luke is standing on the crate, watching Paul through the binoculars.

LUKE
(softly)
Asshole.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS - NIGHT

Erica rides her bike faster and faster. Heading nowhere in particular. Pumping her legs almost to the breaking point...

AND WE FADE OUT.

EXT. THE BACK OF PAUL'S HOUSE - THE NEXT NIGHT

Erica, Claudine and Kala are hiding in a clump of trees behind Paul's house.

Kala looks nervous. She's clutching a six pack of Pabst Blue Ribbon. Claudine is fiddling with her cellphone.

Through the windows, we see Paul walking around inside.

KALA
(to Erica)
You sure he drinks PBR?

Erica nods.

KALA (CONT'D)
So where's Luke?

ERICA
Fuck it. We don't need him.

KALA
But I thought this was <u>about</u> him?

ERICA
It's up to us now.
(squinting into the house)
Good. Paul's definitely alone.

CLAUDINE
You got the pills?

Erica pulls out a sandwich bag full of yellow-white powder.

ERICA
Yeah, they're supposed to act super fast when they're powdered. I looked it up online.

She hands the sandwich bag to Kala.

KALA
(nervous)
Remember, I'm gonna run if there's any trouble.

Erica nods. Takes a deep breath.

She looks back around for Luke one last time, but then pretends like she doesn't care.

ERICA
Wish me luck.

She heads around the side of the house, past the Lexus, and up to the front door.

INT. LUKE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Luke stands with the lights off, face pressed against his window. Watching...

EXT. FRONT OF PAUL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Erica knocks lightly a few times.

The door opens.

Paul is standing there.

PAUL
I asked you to stay away from me, and stop making false allegations, but yet here you are. You're harassing me. I should call the police.

ERICA
You sure you want to do that?

PAUL
Is there any reason I shouldn't?

ERICA
Well, actually, I just came over to apologize for earlier... You can probably tell I have, like, major Daddy issues. I mean, since my real dad got sent away.

PAUL
(curious despite himself)
You mean Bob's not a good father figure?

ERICA
Look at how Luke turned out.

Paul sighs.

ERICA (CONT'D)
So can we maybe start over?

Paul shrugs.

ERICA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Great. I'll get us a couple beers.

Erica walks past him into the house, without waiting for an answer. Paul just stands there looking annoyed.

INT. KITCHEN, PAUL'S HOUSE - SECONDS LATER

Through the window, we see Claudine and Kala huddled outside, pressed against the side of the house.

Covering the noise with a COUGH, Erica unlocks the back door and opens it.

Kala hands her two bottles of Paul's brand of beer, freshly opened.

ERICA
(whispering)
Shit. They're getting warm.

Kala taps one to indicate that it's been spiked.

KALA
(mouths)
For Paul.

Erica nods.

INT. LIVING ROOM, PAUL'S HOUSE - SECONDS LATER

Erica returns, holding out the spiked beer.

Paul takes it, almost as a reflex.

ERICA
Cheers.

She takes an encouraging swig.

PAUL
(watching her)
My parents got divorced when I was nine. It's rough. I know.

ERICA
I'll drink to that.

She takes another swig, silently willing him to drink.

PAUL
Seems like no one sticks together these days...

Paul still doesn't drink.

ERICA
Hey, I propose a toast.

She holds out her beer.

ERICA (CONT'D)
To my new mentor.

Paul doesn't hold out his beer.

ERICA (CONT'D)
(getting a little desperate)
I'd really appreciate it if you helped me out, Paul.

PAUL
(reluctantly)
Yeah. Okay...

They clink beer bottles.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You know, I was voted favorite camp counselor three years in a row. Before Luke ruined it.

Paul finally takes a long swig of beer. Swallows. Then holds up the bottle and looks at it curiously.

PAUL (CONT'D)
It's kind of warm.

ERICA
Really? Mine's fine.
(to distract him)
I've been feeling pretty depressed recently. I came over here hoping you could give me some advice. Drink up, will ya?

PAUL
Look. Right now, you're going to have to leave. You can't be hanging out here at my house, drinking beer and trying to act like a grownup. That's my first piece of advice.

He takes another sip. Erica watches with eager anticipation.

PAUL (CONT'D)
My second piece of advice is that you need to talk to your mother and Bob more. Open up to them about your problems. Not me.

ERICA
But they never listen.

PAUL
Just give them a chance.

He takes another sip. Then studies his bottle again, thinking.

PAUL (CONT'D)
God, I just fixed the 'fridge, too. Something's really wrong with this beer.

He holds the bottle up to the light.

ERICA
I'm sure it's fine.

That's when Paul notices something curious: little specks of powder, floating around like sea monkeys. And some sediment at the bottom of the bottle.

PAUL
What the hell?

He swishes the liquid around and takes a closer look.

Then he starts to realize what's going on...

He stares at Erica, eyes narrowing.

ERICA
Wikipedia, don't fail me now.

PAUL
(already sounding a bit woozy)
You crazy little bitch...

Suddenly we hear a LOUD CLATTER from the kitchen. Erica and Paul both startle.

PAUL (CONT'D)
What the hell?

He takes a step towards the kitchen.

With a SAVAGE YELL, Luke unexpectedly barges out of the kitchen and runs straight at Paul.

Paul is too stunned to act fast.

Luke TACKLES Paul as hard as he can, like a freight train. Erica GASPS and leaps out of the way.

Paul goes flying backwards, with Luke on top of him.

Paul lands right on the cluttered coffee-table. It collapses beneath him, spraying rubble everywhere.

Luke staggers up, backing away from Paul.

ERICA
Holy shit! Where did you come from??

Claudine and Kala run out from the kitchen too. Claudine is holding the cell cam.

KALA
Oh my God!

LUKE
Sorry.

Luke is checking himself for injuries. Other than being winded, he seems fine.

ERICA
(turning to him)
Dude, what the fuck?!

LUKE
I've been waiting... to do that...
For eight years...

ERICA
(impressed, but annoyed)
That's awesome you kicked your molester's ass! But you've also totally fucked up our plan to help you...

Paul is lying on the crushed table, moaning incoherently and trying to get up.

KALA
(eyes wide)
I'm not touching him.

ERICA
(to Luke)
What were you thinking?? I mean, he definitely deserved it, but still...

LUKE
I did it for you.

Erica stares at Luke for a beat.

Claudine inches over to Paul and careful nudges his body with her foot. Paul's movements have slowed, and his moaning is quieter.

Then Claudine SCREAMS.

Everyone spins in her direction.

Kala SCREAMS next.

ERICA
Jesus, what??

Claudine and Kala huddle together tightly, making faces. WE PAN DOWN TO PAUL to see a <u>tent at his crotch</u>.

CLAUDINE
Luke, you turned him on! It's true!

KALA
Just the sight of you made him hard... Oh my God.

ERICA
That, and I added a bunch of Bob's Viagra to the mix.

The girls groan.

KALA
Erica!

ERICA
What? I just wanted the photos to look authentic.

INT. PAUL'S LIVING ROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Luke and the girls are hoisting Paul's unconscious body onto the couch. It's difficult with his full erection.

ERICA
Careful. Don't break it.

LUKE
Please stop talking.

ERICA
You shut up, Rambo.

With a lot of effort, they finally get Paul's body onto the couch. Then they step back and look at him sprawled there. He doesn't move.

ERICA (CONT'D)
See? That wasn't so bad.

KALA
Let's do this fast.

ERICA
Yeah. Luke, go take five.

Claudine and Kala start undressing, down to their bras and panties.

Luke watches, swallowing nervously. Erica unbuckles Paul's belt and pulls down his pants, exposing his boxers.

ERICA (CONT'D)
(to Luke, teasing)
This bring back any memories?

Luke turns and walks towards the kitchen.

ERICA (CONT'D)
(calling out)
Don't go barfing again!

Once Luke is out of view, Erica strips to her underwear. Claudine holds the cell cam.

CLAUDINE
Okay, now what?

ERICA
Time to look sexy.

The girls start posing around Paul, positioning his hands on their bodies. Claudine snaps photos as Erica poses near his crotch.

ERICA (CONT'D)
I wish I knew cool names for all these poses.

Claudine keeps pausing and fiddling with her cell.

KALA
(nervous)
C'mon, hurry up.

ERICA
Yeah, what're you doing?

CLAUDINE
I'm instagramming them.

ERICA
Why?

CLAUDINE
So they look cooler.

KALA
Just make sure they look real.

Claudine snaps more photos, illuminating everything with a series of flashes.

Every now and then, she shares a good shot with the girls. They nod their approval.

CLAUDINE
Yeah. These are awesome...

Erica suddenly notices Luke in the entryway, watching her. He's munching on a cookie.

ERICA
Okay. I think we're done. Let's get dressed and split.

KALA
Finally.

Erica grabs her clothes and starts dressing. The other girls follow her lead.

LUKE
(talking with his mouth full)
Do we just leave him on the couch like that?

ERICA
Yeah, he looks comfy. And he's gonna have one hell of a hangover. We'll email him the photos right away, so when he wakes up, he'll have a nice surprise waiting for him.

Luke walks towards Paul and leans over him.

LUKE
He's breathing kind of shallow.

Claudine and Kala look worried.

KALA
Really?

ERICA
(sensing their nerves)
Look, if you want, why don't you guys split right now and start uploading the photos. Luke and I can clean up everything here.

KALA
(quickly)
Great idea.

Kala and Claudine head for the back door as fast as they can.

Erica and Luke are left standing there alone, with Paul's prone body.

LUKE
How many pills did you give him?

ERICA
Not too many. Just a few.
(sighs)
Six Klonopin, plus three Viagra.

LUKE
Where'd you read that?

ERICA
I looked it up online.

LUKE
Doesn't sound too safe to me.

ERICA
Relax. He only drank half his beer.

Erica starts picking up stuff from the carpet, trying to fix the scene of destruction. Replacing tchotchkes.

She pauses at the porcelain one of the naked boy fishing. It's laying on the carpet--broken, jagged and splintered. She puts it back on the remains of the table, with a shrug.

Luke studies Paul closer.

LUKE
Hey, Erica?

ERICA
Yeah?

LUKE
I think maybe he's not breathing at all...

Erica steps over to Luke. Gazes down at Paul for a few moments. Holds a hand out over his mouth and nose, to test for air.

ERICA
I feel some breath... I mean, I think I do...
(trying to hide her concern)
Aw, he's just gotta sleep it off, right?

LUKE
(starting to sound a bit panicked)
But what if we like accidentally overdosed him or something? Or what if he had an allergic reaction?

ERICA
(trying to convince herself)
He'll be fine.

LUKE
But what if--

ERICA
C'mon, dude! He's a child molester! He raped you! And got away with it.
(sighing)
He'll be fine by the morning. I looked it up online. Lots of people take Klonopin to chill out. It's very recreational, okay?

She drags Luke towards the back door.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Paul will probably thank us for the first good sleep he's had in years.

EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Luke and Erica creep out front, away from the house.

ERICA
Besides, there's nothing to link any of us to this whole escapade...

Erica stops, turns. Looks back.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Shit.

Spray-painted in HUGE letters across the garage door are the words "PEDOPHILE!"

ERICA (CONT'D)
Forgot about that.

EXT. ERICA'S HOUSE - THE NEXT MORNING

A police cruiser is pulling up into the driveway of Erica's house.

INT. ERICA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Erica is sitting on her bed, staring out the window at Paul's house. She looks worried. There's no indication that Paul is up and about yet.

We hear a loud KNOCK at the door.

Erica instantly flops back on the bed, pulling the covers up, pretending she's asleep.

Laurie enters the room.

LAURIE
Erica, get up.

ERICA
Fuck off, ma. I'm sleeping.

LAURIE
(sternly)
I said, get up! The police are here to see you and Luke.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Erica and Luke sit across from a plainclothes detective (OFFICER CARLOS MARTINEZ, 39). He's holding a notepad and a pen.

OFFICER MARTINEZ
And neither of you saw anything at all?

ERICA
I was with my friends, like I said.

OFFICER MARTINEZ
Doing what?

ERICA
Buying makeup and Justin Bieber posters. Do I need a lawyer and shit?

OFFICER MARTINEZ
No, no. Nothing like that. I'm just trying to figure out what happened. One of your neighbors said she saw you and your friends outside Paul's house last night.

ERICA
Well, I didn't see a thing. What does Paul say about it?

OFFICER MARTINEZ
We've been unable to contact him yet about the vandalism. The neighbors say he's out of town with his kids.

Erica and Luke exchange a furtive glance.

OFFICER MARTINEZ (CONT'D)
(to Luke)
How about you? See anything?

LUKE
(stuttering nervously)
No, I didn't-- I didn't see anything... Honest...

OFFICER MARTINEZ
Well, are there any other teenagers in the area who would do something like that? Usually it's teenagers who do this kind of thing...

LUKE
I-- No, I mean-- I--
(getting more scared)
I don't-- What--

OFFICER MARTINEZ
It's fine. Really.
(closes his notebook)
Vandalism is a serious crime. I'll be in touch. Probably have a few more questions for you...
(eyeing them)
And off the record, if you kids did this, a can of white paint could do wonders before Paul Jordan gets back home.

Officer Martinez stands up.

ERICA
(blurting out)
It could be Mexicans. They can be pretty destructive... I've been hearing about cholos on the news a lot.

OFFICER MARTINEZ
(looking at her funny)
I'll be sure to write that down.

He walks out of the living room. Goes to talk to Laurie and Bob.

LUKE
(whispers)
I've got a bad feeling about this.

ERICA
I wish my dad were here. He'd know what to do... Maybe we should go over there and peek? Make sure Paul's okay?

LUKE
(puts his head in his hands)
Yeah, 'cause most criminals don't return to the scene of their crimes or anything like that.
(softly)
Seriously, what if... What if he's-

ERICA
(scared)
Don't even say it!!
(gazing out the window)
But we should have heard something by now.

EXT. THE STREET - LATER THAT DAY

Erica and Luke are walking quickly across the street towards Paul's house.

EXT. THE BACK OF PAUL'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Erica and Luke stare through the back windows. Both of them look subdued and scared.

ERICA
I don't see anything.

LUKE
Me neither. Let's go home.

Erica reaches out and tries the doorknob. It turns.

ERICA
It's still unlocked from last night. I'm going in.

LUKE
Erica--

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Erica walks slowly through the kitchen and into the living room.

Luke follows.

ERICA
Paul? You in here?
(beat)
That advice you gave me about talking to Bob about my problems was real helpful...

She stops walking when she suddenly sees something disturbing: Paul's body still lying on the couch.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Paul??

Then she notices a pool of blood at the base of the couch.

ERICA (CONT'D)
(shocked)
Oh God!

She walks closer. Tentatively. Blood has oozed out from underneath Paul's body, all over the couch. His skin is white.

Luke silently follows behind.

LUKE
(softly, terrified)
Holy shit, holy shit--

Erica moves closer still.

ERICA
Paul. Wake up.

She leans in.

ERICA (CONT'D)
C'mon. Please. Please be alive...

But it's clear that Paul is DEAD.

LUKE
Oh fuck! I knew he was having trouble breathing last night. Why didn't you listen to me??

ERICA
(turning to Luke)
It wasn't the pills!

She tugs on Paul's shoulder, rolling him slightly to one side.

ERICA (CONT'D)
(softly)
Look.

Luke walks closer.

LUKE
Oh my God...

ERICA
It broke.

We see the missing arm and fishing pole of the porcelain tchotchke, imbedded in Paul's back.

Erica now picks up the splintered other half and shows Luke.

LUKE
(sounding dazed)
Is that a naked boy fishing?

ERICA
You did this when you tackled him. It must have nicked a vein. He probably bled out slowly, over the night.

Erica stumbles over to Paul's easy chair. She sits down heavily, looking like she's about to cry.

ERICA (CONT'D)
What the fuck are we going to do now?

A long moment passes between them.

Luke turns to her.

LUKE
(finally)
Meet me outside in fifteen minutes.

EXT. STREET CORNER - FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER

Erica stands on the corner, still looking completely shell-shocked.

A car pulls up. It's Paul's Lexus.

LUKE
(through the open window)
Get in.

ERICA
Are you crazy?! What are you doing? Stealing his car??

LUKE
I'm taking you to bail out your dad before I turn myself in.

Erica pauses, startled.

LUKE (CONT'D)
You're not gonna be able to bail him out if you're locked up in juvie!

ERICA
But how?? I only have two grand. It's not enough.

Luke pulls out a huge wad of cash from his pocket.

LUKE
I got the other six. Bob's been embezzling cash from the auto-parts store. I think he's been saving up to send me back to rehab.

ERICA
You'd really do this for me?

LUKE
Just get in the car.

EXT. ERICA'S STREET - A FEW HOURS LATER

As Laurie pulls up to her driveway in her car, she glances at Paul's house.

We see that poorly spelled Spanish words and weird quasi-gang symbols have been added to the graffiti on his garage door.

INT. ERICA'S HOUSE, HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie steps into the house.

LAURIE
Erica?

Silence.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
Erica? Luke? Are you guys home? I need to talk to you...

INT. ERICA'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie walks into the kitchen.

She sees a letter propped up on the table. The words "To Laurie, from Luke" are scribbled on the front.

Curious, Laurie walks over and picks it up. Opens it, and starts reading...

She suddenly gets a horrified expression.

LAURIE
OH MY GOD!!

The letter falls out of her hand...

EXT. ERICA'S STREET - HALF HOUR LATER

The entire street is swarming with cops.

INT. ERICA'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie is yelling at Bob, as cops dust for evidence in the house.

LAURIE
How could you lie to me like this?

BOB
I wanted to tell you!

LAURIE
Then you could have found a way!

BOB
Calm down.

LAURIE
Was he ever in rehab at all?

BOB
He was in a facility for borderline personality disorder.

Laurie looks furious.

BOB (CONT'D)
I was afraid you wouldn't give Luke a chance if you knew the whole truth about his past. He has mental health issues. I was going to tell you bit by bit--

Laurie holds up Luke's letter.

LAURIE
Luke says he's kidnapped my daughter and he's taking her to Mexico?

She flings the letter at him.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
Who knows what a boy like that is capable of??

BOB
Luke would <u>never</u> hurt anyone...

Just then, a cop enters the house.

COP
(loudly, to the other cops)
Heads up, guys. We got a 10-54 down the street.

LAURIE
A 10-54? What does that mean?

ANOTHER COP
Dead body.

Laurie looks like she's going to collapse...

EXT. THE OPEN ROAD - DAY

Erica is at the wheel of Paul's Lexus. Luke is sitting in the passenger seat sipping a Big Gulp. They ZOOM down the road with the windows down.

Both of them look completely stunned by what they've done, but are trying to act normal.

ERICA
I still-- I still can't believe what happened. It feels kind of like a dream.

Luke sips on his Big Gulp. He passes it over and offers her some. Erica takes a sip.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Should we call 911 and let them know about Paul's body?

LUKE
(looking straight ahead)
Probably not until we've bailed out your dad.

ERICA
Right.

Luke takes another sip, then offers it to Erica again. She takes a sip. Both of them keep their eyes on the road.

ERICA (CONT'D)
This is not how I thought my day was going to turn out.

LUKE
Nice call on the Lexus though, don't you think? It's better to be on the run in a fancy car than in a crappy one.

Erica just looks at him.

ERICA
Paul deserved it, right? Tell me he deserved it.

LUKE
Sure, I guess.

Luke offers her the Big Gulp again, but she shakes her head No.

INT. DINGY MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT, HOURS LATER

Luke slumps back on the lumpy, queen-sized bed, making it sag.

LUKE
I thought you said the drive would only take half a day.

ERICA
Yeah, like half a day is twelve hours. We were only on the road for eight.

Erica plops face down and covers her head with a pillow.

ERICA (CONT'D)
(muffled)
You can suffocate me if you want.
I won't struggle.

Luke grabs the pillow off her head and hugs it, sitting at the foot of her bed.

LUKE
It sucks that only crummy motels take cash.

He flicks on the TV.

LUKE (CONT'D)
That old man at the front desk thought we were a couple.

ERICA
Yeah, no doubt. Did you see they have hourly rates here? I'm surprised we don't hear moaning through the walls.

Erica crawls over and joins Luke on the edge of the bed. They watch TV in silence for a moment.

LUKE
(finally)
I can't even imagine having sex. Or having a girlfriend.

ERICA
I'm a girl.

LUKE
Yeah, but you're...

ERICA
What?

LUKE
Kind of messed-up?

Erica snaps off the TV.

ERICA
So are you. And honestly, this is a really weird conversation to be having right now...
(softly)
(MORE)

ERICA (CONT'D)
You realize that we murdered someone, Luke? Like, our lives are pretty much over.

LUKE
I'm taking the blame. I'll say you and your friends had nothing to do with it. That I made you girls do it.

ERICA
Really?

LUKE
Sure. Why not?

Luke lies back down on the bed.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Nobody's ever done anything that nice for me before. Not like you did.

In one rapid movement, Erica straddles Luke's torso.

He's startled. Doesn't move. Just gazes up at her.

ERICA
If you lost some weight, you probably wouldn't have as much trouble finding a girlfriend.

LUKE
(sighs)
It's not like I'm gonna have to worry about girlfriends where I'm headed. They'll sentence me as an adult.

Erica bounces up and down on his belly a couple times, playfully.

Luke just stares up at her, not sure what's going on.

ERICA
Are you holding your breath?

LUKE
No.

Erica leans in closer, a few strands of her hair falling across his face.

ERICA
A murder conviction might help your sex appeal, actually.

LUKE
Really?

ERICA
Yeah, some girls like that kind of stuff.
(softly)
What would you do if I kissed you right now?

LUKE
(incredibly nervous, like he can't believe this is actually happening)
You don't have to do this... Like, if you're just doing it 'cause you feel sorry for me or obligated, you don't need to...

She leans back a little, frowning.

ERICA
Why would I feel sorry for you?

Luke shrugs. She leans forward again.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Just relax.

LUKE
(barely able to talk)
Okay.

Their lips are about to touch...

ERICA
(murmuring softly)
I'll do anything you want.

Their lips get even closer. A hair apart. Erica tilts her head, angling in.

LUKE
(inexplicably blurts out)
Give me a blow job.

Erica looks like she's been slapped.

ERICA
<u>What did you just say?!</u>

LUKE
Nothing-- I, uh--

She sits back, eyes tearing up.

ERICA
A blow job? After everything we've been through? Just like every other guy??

LUKE
No, wait-- I thought that was what you wanted--

ERICA
Fuck you!

Erica jumps off the bed. Gives Luke the finger.

LUKE
But--

ERICA
You deserve to go to jail! I never want to see you again!

She grabs her purse, flings open the hotel room's door.

LUKE
Wait, please--

Erica SLAMS the door shut behind her.

Luke sits up, completely stunned.

LUKE (CONT'D)
YOUR'RE MAKING ME CRAZY!
(beat)
Shit. I didn't mean that. Erica, wait--

EXT. THE DINGY MOTEL - NIGHT

Luke runs out after her barefoot. Looks around. Doesn't see Erica anywhere.

INT. MOTEL FRONT DESK - SECONDS LATER

Luke accosts the grizzled DESK CLERK (mid-60's).

LUKE
Did you see a girl go past here?

DESK CLERK
(slowly)
I sure did. A durn cute one at that.

LUKE
Which way did she go?

DESK CLERK
You her boyfriend?

LUKE
(looking around wildly)
No. Maybe.

DESK CLERK
She was crying.

LUKE
(startled)
Really?

DESK CLERK
Yessir. Big boo-hoo girl tears. You break her heart or somethin'?

LUKE
Fuck, dude, just tell me which way she went!

EXT. EDGE OF THE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Luke catches up to Erica. She's walking along the grass at the edge of the highway, dangerously close to cars and trucks whizzing by.

LUKE
(struggling to breathe)
Erica! I'm... so... sorry! For everything that's happened!

ERICA
Who cares.

LUKE
I thought that's what you wanted. I mean, that's all you ever seem to want from guys... I just wanted to say the right thing. I'm an idiot!

He digs in his pocket and pulls out a candy bar.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Here, take this. I stole it from Paul's house and was stockpiling it for later. It'll make you feel better.

She swats it away.

ERICA
I don't want that dead child molester's candy!

Erica glares at him. Cars and trucks fly past them at various intervals.

LUKE
It's dangerous out here...

ERICA
I don't care!

She climbs over the barrier and onto the edge of the highway.

LUKE
Wait! Are you crazy? Stop!

Before he can say anything else, she runs straight across the highway, barely avoiding getting hit by the cars.

LUKE (CONT'D)
(yelling)
Fuck!!

He barges after her.

EXT. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HIGHWAY - MOMENTS LATER

They both stand there, breathing hard.

LUKE
You could have got us killed!

ERICA
You didn't have to follow me!

LUKE
I wanted to!

Erica starts running away from him again, heading towards a 24-hour truckstop and diner up ahead, lit with garish neon signs.

Luke struggles after her, completely out of breath, lagging behind.

EXT. SEEDY TRUCKSTOP - MINUTES LATER

Luke reaches the truckstop a few minutes after Erica, his chest heaving.

He looks around, but doesn't see her.

Starts walking forward through the rows of trucks.

Finally, he catches a glimpse of her through the window of the diner.

She's sitting up at the bar next to a scummy-looking TRUCKER with a bushy beard (mid-40's).

INT. 24-HOUR DINER - SECONDS LATER

Erica is flirting with the Trucker. Leaning against him. Laughing. It's clear where this is headed.

Luke stands in the doorway of the diner, staring at her and the Trucker.

She glances back, notices him, and then turns her attention back to the Trucker. Luke keeps staring at them.

WAITRESS
(appearing out of nowhere)
Can I help you?
(glancing down at Luke's feet)
No shoes, no service.

LUKE
(pissed-off, dejected)
Great.

He turns and leaves.

INT. DINGY MOTEL ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Luke is lying on the bed with the TV on.

We hear the sound of a key at the door. It's Erica. The door opens and she walks inside.

Neither Erica nor Luke say anything, like they're giving each other the cold shoulder.

Luke just watches her as she walks across the room. She digs into her purse, and then heads straight for the bathroom. She leaves the door open.

Luke watches her standing at the sink. She glances back at him, like she can't help herself. She's holding her little travel-size bottle of Scope. Clearly a little ashamed.

Luke's face registers real pain when he sees the Scope bottle.

Then she slams the bathroom door shut.

Luke stares up at the ceiling. We begin to hear all the sounds of Erica's post-blow job routine.

Then SILENCE.

Erica opens the bathroom door again.

She puts the Scope back in her purse. Then she slowly approaches the bed.

She looks down at Luke for a long beat.

ERICA
(finally)
I'm taking the bed. You get the bathtub.

INT. THE LEXUS - THE NEXT MORNING

Luke is at the wheel. Erica is in the passenger seat, with her sunglasses on.

LUKE
Look, about last night--

ERICA
I don't want to talk about it. Just shut up and drive like you eat.

EXT. THE ROAD - DAY, A FEW HOURS LATER

Erica is staring out the window.

She points at large institutional-looking building.

ERICA
That's it. Up ahead.

LUKE
Finally.

INT. THE LEXUS - MINUTES LATER

The car is parked in front of the prison. Erica gets the brown bag of cash out of her purse.

ERICA
I gotta go find the booking officer...

She opens the door. Gets out of the car and heads towards the prison gates.

Luke watches her until she disappears from view.

He turns on the radio. Rap music blares out. He shuts it off instantly.

INT. THE LEXUS - HALF HOUR LATER

Luke watches as Erica reappears and heads back towards the car.

She open the passenger door and gets inside.

LUKE
(tentatively)
How'd it go?

ERICA
They said it might take a while. So we're stuck here. They'll send him out as soon as he's processed.

LUKE
You should be happy.

She turns and gives him a big fake smile.

ERICA
That good enough for you?

LUKE
You're still mad at me.

ERICA
(gazing out the windshield)
Wow, you're sharp.

LUKE
This is bullshit. You blew that trucker last night to piss me off. I should be mad at you... In fact, I <u>am</u> mad at you.

ERICA
Hey, you had your chance and you screwed it up.

Erica is silent, still staring out the windshield. She finally turns to face him.

ERICA (CONT'D)
You're an asshole. Look at all the stuff I did for you.

LUKE
Hey, I'm the one paying to bail out your dad.

ERICA
Fine.

LUKE
(after a long pause)
What's up with this fixation on blow jobs? I don't understand it.

ERICA
You really want an honest answer?

LUKE
Yeah. I do.

ERICA
Because I'm good at it. Good at something the whole, entire male population on the planet likes. There isn't a single dude who doesn't. Plus, if you blow a guy good enough, then...

Her words trail off.

LUKE
Then what?

A look suddenly comes over his eyes. Like he's having a revelation.

LUKE (CONT'D)
<u>Oh my God!!</u>

ERICA
What?

LUKE
I figured it out! I should have known!

ERICA
Yeah, whatever.

LUKE
It's a form of controlled intimacy, isn't it? A way to preserve your chastity! You never have to fuck a guy if you blow him first... You're a virgin!!

ERICA
Fuck off.

LUKE
You are!

ERICA
(sulking)
You are too.

LUKE
But look at me! Anyone with eyes can see that! But you-- This is all a cover. A front. You must be really scared of getting hurt... You're just an innocent little virgin princess.

Erica turns on the radio, spinning the dial, trying to drown him out. But all the stations are now playing gentle indie-rock music.

She snaps off the radio.

ERICA
I am not innocent!

LUKE
Sure you are. You're innocent like Snow White.

She looks away, trying to stay pissed-off.

ERICA
I've blown over a hundred dudes.

LUKE
That doesn't count, virgin.

ERICA
(sighing)
Dude, don't you get it? It's like we're both the same.

LUKE
How's that?

ERICA
I've been thinking about it... I think the reason you eat so much food, and I suck so many dicks, is because something bigger is missing from our daily lives...

LUKE
(surprised)
Where'd you pick that insight up from?

ERICA
It's actually a line from "Gotta Air My Nutsack."

LUKE
(beat)
To be honest, I haven't been all that hungry since I met you, for what it's worth...

Erica faces him.

ERICA
And I didn't really blow that dude last night. I was just trying to piss you off.

LUKE
See? You're an innocent.

Luke suddenly notices a man emerge from the prison gates.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Hey, is that your dad?

ERICA
<u>YES!!</u>

She bolts from the car.

Luke keeps watching through the window.

He sees a very skinny, grizzled-looking dude (MARK, mid-40's) standing there, with a scruffy beard and a slightly dazed expression.

Erica approaches. Hugs him. The man tentatively hugs her back.

Luke smiles.

INT. THE LEXUS - AFTERNOON

Luke is driving. Erica is in the passenger seat. Mark sits in the back.

MARK
(still a bit dazed)
I can't thank you enough for bailing me out. Man, prison ain't no pony ride.

ERICA
That's what I always figured. I'm so glad to have you back.

She gestures to Luke.

ERICA (CONT'D)
It's all because of him. He put up most of the money.

MARK
Aw, thanks.
(clapping Luke on the shoulder)
So are you and her, like, a couple?

Erica and Luke look at each other.

ERICA
(quasi-teasing)
Naw, he's too fat.

LUKE
And she's a skank.

Mark looks at them knowingly.

MARK
You guys in a little lover's spat? Let me give you some advice about relationships. I mean, I should know... I've been in a few.

LUKE
Yeah, I think at this point, we could probably use some advice other than lyrics from an MC Pimp Hand song.

ERICA
(to Mark)
Yeah, can you fix us?

MARK
It's up to you to fix yourselves. You need to look inwards. What you're looking for in another person is generally what you're looking for in yourself... Take me, for example. The first girlfriend I had was a black chick who sang in a church choir. She was real religious. But by the time we broke up, she was drunk and in the gutter 'cause of me, and I was a born-again Christian... It didn't last long.

ERICA
(nodding)
Wow, that's deep.

Luke looks completely perplexed.

LUKE
I'm not sure that really helps us.

MARK
(ignoring him)
My advice to you guys is to drink a couple beers, smoke a bowl, and kick back and listen to some records before something terrible happens... Like the end of the world, or nuclear war, or the return of the black plague.

ERICA
That's pretty good advice--

MARK
(interrupting)
So, can you guys drop me off in the city? Right near the corner of Sierra and Fifth Street? It's just up ahead. I gotta meet a friend.

LUKE
(startled)
What?

ERICA
But-- We just got here. Stay awhile. I think you'd be good for us.

MARK
That's sweet of you, hon. But my friend's got something I need real bad... It ain't something you can buy in a store. And it's a sonofabitch to cook myself.

LUKE
(confused)
Cook? We can get you whatever food you want. I mean, you're Erica's dad.

MARK
Uh, yeah, er what?

ERICA
(to Mark)
Just ignore him.

LUKE
(insisting)
You're her dad, right?

Mark looks at Erica again. She shrugs.

MARK
(to Luke)
Whatever you say, my man. So just drop me off at Sierra and Fifth and I'll be okay. And oh yeah, if you got a little scratch, I'd be happy if you could put some in my pocket.

LUKE
Wait, I don't understand this at all-- Erica came all the way here, and did all kinds of things to get the money to bail you out. You should treat her with more respect.

MARK
(to Erica)
What's this fat kid talking about? No offense.

LUKE
Wait...
(suddenly starting to realize)
Oh no... OH NO!!
(screaming at Erica)
<u>This isn't your dad is it??</u>

He SLAMS on the brakes and pulls the car over to the side of the road.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Fuck, fuck, fuck!!

MARK
Hell, I'm whoever you want me to be, son. Never seen you two before in my life. But you just picked me up from jail and saved me some bus fare.

LUKE
(to Erica)
You're crazy!! We just picked up some random guy instead of your dad! What's wrong with you??

ERICA
My dad's not in prison anywhere.

LUKE
(puts his head in his hands)
Noooooo.....

ERICA
I just made that up to sound cool, and then I used it so we'd have a reason to take a road trip. I didn't know things would end up like this... When you suggested leaving town, I didn't know what else to say but Yes... My dad walked out on me and my mom a couple years ago. I haven't seen him since then... My mom got the divorce papers in the mail. He's a worse dad than Bob.

MARK
(matter-of-factly)
That sucks.

He opens the car door. Luke just sits there.

MARK (CONT'D)
Thanks for the ride! Good luck, kids.

He starts walking away.

LUKE
(turning back to Erica, sounding oddly calm)
He's right. That does suck.

ERICA
Wait... You're not mad at me for lying?

LUKE
Naw.

ERICA
(squinting at him)
Why the fuck not? You should be.

LUKE
I'm just not.
(beat)
Why were you saving all that money, though?

ERICA
Oh, just to buy a car. I'm sick of relying on Kala for everything, and I know my mom will never buy me one... I still can't believe you're not mad.

LUKE
(slowly)
Well, maybe it's 'cause I got something to confess to you...

ERICA
Go for it.

LUKE
You're gonna hate me...

ERICA
Fire away.

LUKE
I mean, like <u>really</u> hate me.

ERICA
It can't be worse than what you said to me last night.

LUKE
I think it's pretty much the worst thing in the world.

Luke takes a deep breath.

LUKE (CONT'D)
You know all that stuff I told you about Paul? About how he molested me and everything? At Woodland Pines when I was ten?
(long pause)
I made it all up. The whole thing. Paul never touched me.

Erica looks at him.

Her expression is completely blank and inscrutable. She holds his gaze.

Luke looks away, totally ashamed of himself.

LUKE (CONT'D)
I just... did it to get attention. Because no one cared about me... Because I'm a total loser, I guess... And a big liar, like my dad says... I wasn't even in rehab. I was in a mental hospital for acting crazy...
(voice breaking)
And now, Paul's dead... And for no reason, other than I'm all screwed up... He actually totally ignored me at Woodland Pines...
(looks at Erica)
But he wasn't innocent. I saw him with another kid at camp. A ten-year-old girl. He had his hand down her pants... This is fucked-up to admit, but at the time, I felt... jealous of that girl.

He looks away, super embarrassed, hiding his face.

Erica just shrugs.

ERICA
Yeah, I figured you were lying about him molesting you.
(MORE)

ERICA (CONT'D)
I could tell he was straight because he kept checking out my tits.

LUKE
(shocked)
YOU KNEW?!

ERICA
Well, I mean, I suspected. I didn't know for sure.

LUKE
I can't believe you knew! And you still drugged him and everything!

ERICA
Hey, I told you. You gave my life meaning... And Paul was a real douchebag. It sounds like he did some pretty bad things in his life-- even if he just never did them to you.

Luke smiles at her. Erica hesitates for a moment, then leans over and hugs him tight.

ERICA (CONT'D)
(softly)
I don't want them to send you away.

Luke hugs her back, hard.

LUKE
Me neither.

ERICA
You're probably gonna get raped by some big, tatted-up lifer... It's all come full-circle in a weird way.

She pulls away, gazing at him.

LUKE
(softly)
I better take you back.

INT. SELF-SERVE CAR WASH - DAY

Erica and Luke are washing the car. Erica is holding the hose, spraying out water.

She sprays some in Luke's direction. He dodges it.

ERICA
We gotta vacuum the inside of this beast, too.

LUKE
You really think cleaning Paul's car will help our case when we go back?

ERICA
(shrugs)
No. But at least I won't be sitting in cookie crumbs for the drive home.

INT. THE LEXUS - DAY

They drive down the highway, headed back home, with Erica at the wheel.

ERICA
Should we try to think up some story to explain why we did what we did?

LUKE
I was thinking we should just try telling the truth this time.

ERICA
Me too... But mostly 'cause I can't think of a good lie.

Suddenly, a police car appears behind them. Sirens wailing, lights flashing.

LUKE
Oh God. I hope that's not for us. We're screwed if they catch us before we can turn ourselves in.

ERICA
It's for us.

LUKE
(glancing in the rearview mirror)
Shit!

ERICA
What do I do??

LUKE
Pull over.

Instead, Erica floors it, ZOOMING even faster down the empty road.

LUKE (CONT'D)
I knew you'd do that.

The police cruiser gets nearer.

Erica drives faster.

ERICA
How fast can a Lexus go??

The cruiser is still gaining on them.

LUKE
Not fast enough!

ERICA
That sucks!

LUKE
(over the noise of the engine and the sirens)
I don't want it to end this way! Honestly, this has been the best couple days of my life!

ERICA
Mine too!

The siren BLARES even louder. The Lexus is juddering.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Bob better spring for a lawyer, 'cause prison isn't for guys who look like you!

The car is going faster and faster, like it's about to careen out of control.

LUKE
(shutting his eyes and yelling)
Erica?!

ERICA
YEAH?

LUKE
I think I've fallen in love with you!!

EXT. THE SIDE OF THE ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

The Lexus has come to a stop at the side of the road. The police cruiser is parked behind it.

Erica and Luke hold hands tightly across the gearshift.

A police officer appears at the window, a hand on the holster of his gun.

Another officer gets out of the cruiser behind them, already on the radio requesting backup.

THE OFFICER
Hands where I can see 'em!! Get out of the vehicle!!

Erica and Luke tighten their grip on each other.

The officer leans over and peers into the car.

Sees Erica.

And then he suddenly recoils, speechless.

<u>The policeman is Dale Cotter.</u>

Erica smiles sweetly at him.

ERICA
Hello again, officer.

She turns towards Luke, who looks completely baffled.

Dale starts backing away from the car.

ERICA (CONT'D)
(to Luke)
Start driving...

LUKE
Huh?

ERICA
Just start driving. I think we still have a little more time...

She leans over and kisses Luke.

EXT. A GRASSY FIELD - DAY

Erica and Luke are lying in an empty grassy field on a blanket, next to the Lexus. The warm sun is shining happily down on them.

Erica is snuggled against Luke. Her shirt is on, but we see her bra laying next to them in the tall grass. Luke is just wearing his boxers. And a big grin.

LUKE
That was... Wow...

ERICA
No need for Scope. It feels weird.

LUKE
Wow...

ERICA
Seriously, say something else
'cause you're freaking me out...

LUKE
Wowzer.

They both giggle.

LUKE (CONT'D)
That was amazing...

ERICA
See, now aren't you bummed out you were a virgin for all those years? You could have been getting laid for at least a decade.

LUKE
Same goes for you!

ERICA
True, but I'm not going to prison for the rest of my life.

She leans over and kisses him on the lips.

LUKE
I wish we could stay right here forever.

ERICA
I think we should pull a Bonnie and Clyde.

(MORE)

ERICA (CONT'D)
Just drive across the country and keep going until we die in a hail of bullets.
(thoughtfully)
Or maybe a Thelma and Louise.

LUKE
Cool, so both those plans suck. What if we just went home?

ERICA
You think Bob will pay for a good lawyer for us?

TITLE CARD:

"SIX MONTHS LATER"

EXT. MAXIMUM SECURITY PSYCH WARD - DAY

Erica is stepping out of the passenger side of her mom's car.

LAURIE
You sure you don't want me to come in with you?

ERICA
I'll be okay, ma. But thanks.

Erica grins at her mom. Her mom smiles back.

Then Erica starts heading towards the large, monolithic hospital gates.

INT. MAXIMUM SECURITY PSYCH WARD LOBBY - DAY

Erica walks through a metal detector inside the noisy ward.

GUARD
This way, ma'am.

Erica follows him.

INT. MAXIMUM SECURITY PSYCH WARD, CUBICLES - DAY

Erica is sitting in front of glass partition. Luke is seated on the other side behind the glass, handcuffed. An armed guard stands behind him.

Erica and Luke are talking over the telephone intercom.

ERICA
That sucks Bob wouldn't pay for a lawyer.

LUKE
Yeah. It was kind of a surprise. At least I got declared insane.

ERICA
(optimistically)
Yeah, you could be out soon!
(softly)
Hey, thanks for taking all the blame and saving my ass. I owe you my whole life. You're doing my time for me.

LUKE
(grinning shyly)
My pleasure... It's actually not too bad. I've already lost thirty-three pounds because they don't serve any fast food in here.

ERICA
Sweet.
(leaning forward)
Luke, you know I won't wait for you forever, so you better get sane pretty fast.

LUKE
I know.
(leaning forward, pressing his hand against the glass)
You give my life meaning.

Erica presses her hand against the glass too, and holds it there.

GUARD
Two minutes left. Two minutes.

ERICA
(to Luke)
Except for being declared clinically insane, I think you're on the right track...

LUKE
I hope so. What about you?

ERICA
Just hand jobs these days.
(beat)
I'm trying.

They both giggle.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Oh, look. I brought you something.

She rummages in her purse.

Then she takes out a piece of paper, and holds it up against the glass.

It's the page from her blow job book with Luke's name on it--and a really colorful drawing of his dick.

It's not just a quick sketch. It's beautifully drawn in pastels, with artistic flourishes. Clearly, Erica has spent some serious time working on it.

LUKE
Thanks, Erica.
(tilts his head)
Sure it's mine?

ERICA
I'm thinking about having an art exhibition. A show of all my dick drawings... Maybe I'll use yours as the poster for it.

LUKE
Cool...

As they keep talking and giggling, we start slowly moving out, and "Gotta Air My Nutsack" begins playing, getting LOUDER AND LOUDER AND LOUDER...

FADE OUT.