VERVE

THE CASTLE

by

Ian Grody

"Dig deep and pile high."

-Lucinda 'Sandy Feet' Wierenga, Sandcastles Made Simple

ON THE STORM

A beast of a hurricane. Thunder roars. Rain hammers the:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Tree limbs seizure in the merciless wind. Boards nailed over store windows are no match for the elements.

A SQUAD CAR blitzes past us. All burnt rubber and exhaust. Whoever the driver is, he's flooring it. Behind him...

...a FLEET OF POLICE CARS. Their blazing lights- like tongues of fire- cut the grayer-than-gray mist.

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

Poncho-clad onlookers grip railings. Crane to catch a glimpse of...what we can't say. But they SCATTER as the SQUAD CAR screeches to a halt. Rolling down his window...BURT SIRILLO (30s). Clean cut good looks. A Capital-C Cop.

BURT (THROUGH HIS SPEAKER)
Evacuate the beach! This is a class five hurricane! I repeat-

The wind swallows his words. Behind an explosion of sea spray, Burt locks on the vision transfixing the crowd...

A LIFE-SIZED SAND CASTLE

Six stories high. Sky-scraping turrets. The most awe-inspiring dream-building we've ever laid eyes on.

Only the highest of the towers is unfinished.

HIPSTER ONLOOKER
YO, THERE HE IS -- !

Looping around the foot of the castle...ROY OLSON (30s). Unruly rocker hair. Lumberjack beard. He wields a lime green kiddie pail and a matching shovel.

BURT (THROUGH HIS SPEAKER)
Sir, for your own safety, you are to cease and desist -- !

Roy takes a knee. Fills the pail with sand.

BURT (THROUGH HIS SPEAKER) (CONT'D)
This is your final warning!

As police cars brake and officers charge the beach, Roy puts the pail between his teeth. Starts to SCALE the castle.

HIPSTER ONLOOKER
Whoa.

Roy grunts, twists in the wind- a man on a mission so personal, so deeply felt that a thousand hurricanes could not stop him.

LOCALS- mesmerized by the surreal image of a man mounting a seventy foot sand castle- simply stare.

ROY climbs. And climbs. Slips. Then grapples on.

But just as he nears the top. Just as he raises that last bucket of sand...a MASSIVE WAVE rolls over the shore.

Roy looks down- on the verge of a deathly plunge.

We FREEZE. And hear the voice of a Merlin-esque sage. The type of voice that speaks of knights, of dragons, of kings.

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
At this point, you may be wondering what possessed a person to try to build the biggest sand castle in human history. Or to risk his life by scaling this- an inarguably mammoth structure. Perhaps you are even pondering the wisdom of wearing a tee shirt in what's been called the greatest storm to ever rock the shores of California. Well, in our case, answers cannot be summed up in a mere handful of words. For answers, we must begin- as most legends do...once upon a time.

PAGES FLIP BACKWARDS IN A MEDIEVAL-STYLE TEXT UNTIL WE REACH A PAGE THAT READS -- VENICE, CALIFORNIA. THREE MONTHS AGO.

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
This is the story of Roy Olson.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
A very ordinary man.

Businessmen in IDENTICAL GRAY SUITS wait at a crosswalk. When the light changes, the crowd moves on. Except for ROY- clean shave, side part. His mind, we can tell, is elsewhere.

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
Like most ordinary men, Roy began life as an ordinary boy.

WE CONTINUE TURNING PAGES TO:

AN AUDITORIUM --

5 YEAR OLD ROY is positioned for a class picture. Height-wise he falls squarely in the middle.

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
At school, teachers found him average. Both physically and as a student.

CLASSROOM --

A Teacher returns a paper to 10 YEAR OLD ROY: a C+. He smiles.

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
Even Roy's last name, starting with the letter O, placed him at the alphabetical median of his class. Though there was- admittedly- a dearth of M's, N's and P's, his year.

HOUSE --

13 YEAR OLD ROY stares out of the window at the street.

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
It was only as he grew older that Roy realized ordinariness had a strange way of affecting one's thinking. For instance, while others lusted after Ferraris, he developed an unnatural affinity for the Toyota Corolla, which he secretly considered the "Roy Of Cars."

Pulling out, we realize Roy is at a WAKE. His DAD'S CASKET is perched by the mantle.

LIBRARY --

Between the bookshelves, JOCKS make out with CHEERLEADERS. Meanwhile, 17 YEAR OLD ROY types a college essay.

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
He experienced similar feelings for the font, Times New Roman. The most generic of Type Faces.

Roy looks longingly at the cool kids. Then gets back to work.

DORM ROOM --

Stoned, 20 YEAR OLD ROY watches Carl Sagan's Cosmos. The Milky Way swirls on his TV.

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
But most of all, most of all, Roy grappled with the fear. The fear he was so ordinary, so unimportant, that if, one day, he disappeared- his molecules absorbed by the atmosphere- it would be as if he simply...never...was.

20 YEAR OLD ROY
Holy crap.

He sits upright- a man having an epiphany. His WEIRD ROOMMATE pries his mouth from a bong.

WEIRD ROOMATE
What, are we out of Cheese-Its?

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
So petrifying was this notion, Roy immediately and forever thereafter sought out distractions, activities to keep him from lingering on this very unpleasant truth. There was- it should be noted- no dearth there.

On Roy's desk, we see the OLSON FAMILY PHOTO. Roy grabs it.

BEACH --

LAWRENCE (35) runs down the shore, hair flowing like a Greek God.

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
His older brother, Lawrence, an architect by trade, recently took home his second gold medal at the Iron Man competition.

Waiting with a water bottle, Roy clicks a stop watch.

RESTAURANT KITCHEN --

MARY ANN (29), tatts, piercings, looks across the counter.

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
His younger sister, Mary Ann, was an exceedingly accomplished gourmet.

Roy taste tests soups, IDs the best one. She makes a note.

TOP CHEF KITCHEN --

The Judges sit with Mary Ann's SOUP in front of them.

PADMA LAKSHMI
Congratulations, Mary Ann, you are America's Next Top Chef.

Pulling out, we see Roy watching it on TV in his apartment, beaming with pride, as if he had no hand in it. He high fives GLORIA (30). Slightly out of Roy's league.

FUND RAISER --

Gloria confidently gives a speech under a banner: "GLOBAL WOMEN'S RELIEF INITIATIVE."

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
Gloria, Roy's fiance, worked tirelessly to help women in developing nations start small businesses. When asked what she saw in her soon-to-be husband, Gloria pointed to the "generosity of his soul."

Gloria glances backstage at Roy. He feeds her lines.

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
And yet.

OUTSIDE FUND RAISER --

Roy stares up at the Cosmos. Much like the Carl Sagan special.

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
Despite it all, Roy could not shake the feeling.

A SHOOTING STAR whizzes by. Roy squeezes his eyes closed.

BATHROOM --

Roy parts his hair. Slows down. Looks in the mirror.

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
The sense of his own overbearing ordinariness.

COFFEE SHOP --

Roy waits in line. Gray suit after gray suit.

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
The suspicion he was destined to remain a man for whom the extraordinary would become with each passing day an ever more distant mirage.

Roy takes out a couple of index cards. SAVANNAH (20), the barrista, chunky, headphones, eyes him.

HALLWAY (EXECUTIVE SEARCH FIRM) --

Roy makes his way to large double doors. Index cards in hand.

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
And still, somehow, he held out hope. The hope he was wrong about his fate. The hope that, one day, hard work and devotion might offer Roy Olson a chance at being...more.

Roy pauses. Reads the first card to himself.

ROY
“After twelve years with the company, it means so much to finally be recognized.”

Roy turns the corner to a roar of applause. ALAN (50s) shakes hands with DUSTY (20s)- dashing good looks. A natural.

ALAN
Congratulations, Mr. Assistant Manager! You earned it!

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
Today was not that day.

Roy watches, heartbroken. He tosses his speech in the garbage.

INT. BATHROOM (POLICE STATION) - CONTINUOUS

Puking his guts up...BURT. Two week beard. Bloodshot eyes. A shell of the officer we met earlier. From outside...

LANGHORNE (O.S.)
Sirillo -- I know you’re in there!

Burt pulls his head outta the toilet. Motions to a ROOKIE COP.

ROOKIE COP
How much longer do you expect me to cover? It's been forty minutes.

BURT
You have the runs. Food poisoning.

Banging on the door. The chain goes taught.

LANGHORNE (O.S.)
Hey! I'm not dicking around!

Nothing from the Rookie. Just a blank, doe-eyed stare.

BURT
You gotta be fucking kidding me.
(beat)
Rookies. What the hell happened to respecting your superiors?

Burt reaches into his pocket. Flings a crumpled ten at the Rookie's forehead.

ROOKIE COP
Ugh, God! Think it might've been that Indian Buffet from lunch!

Burt locks on the emblem of the LAPD over the can: "TO PROTECT AND TO SERVE." He upchucks all over the seat.

INT. POLICE STATION - MOMENTS LATER

CAPTAIN LANGHORNE (50s), somehow both burly and bookish, sorts through papers. Spots Burt sneaking by his office --

LANGHORNE
Sirillo. The Hannity Case. I want an update.

BURT
All over it. As we speak.

Langhorne gets up, gives chase.

LANGHORNE
You were supposed to file the report, two weeks ago.

BURT
Investigations into drug running take time.

He grabs Burt's arm, stops him.

LANGHORNE
I asked you to stake out a crack house in Compton. Instead, you busted a kid selling muscle relaxers at his high school. The least you can do is finish the paperwork.
(beat)
Burt, I know things haven't been ideal at home. And I'm sorry Lori- well, I'm sorry. But blowing off investigations because you have to throw up last night's Jaeger Bombs? You're better than that.

Burt shoots a look of death at The Rookie Cop, who flees.

LANGHORNE (CONT'D)
It's time to make a change.

BURT
Bruce.

LANGHORNE
Your father was a friend. Which is why I've offered you this much leeway. But first names? Really?

BURT
Gimme a few days to turn it around.

LANGHORNE
I am. I'm not firing you. But I have to take you off narcotics.
(beat)
Hand in your detective's badge at the front desk. Welcome to Beach Patrol.

Langhorne takes off. Now, Burt chases him --

BURT
Beach Patrol? Bruce.

LANGHORNE
Captain. Consider it an act of mercy.

BURT
I get it. Point taken.

Burt passes other cops. Posts up in Langhorne's doorway, blocks his path.

BURT (CONT'D)
You realize the shit these guys are gonna give me? Remember Griffin- the last beach patrol guy? "Sergeant Sunscreen?" "White Knight of the Boardwalk?"

LANGHORNE
You see humiliation. I see a benevolent opportunity for reinvention. You're welcome.

BURT
For the record. I find this whole thing totally fucked. Captain.

Burt's in a bad place. Langhorne can tell. He softens.

LANGHORNE
It's just until you show me you're ready to be a real policeman again. I believe you will.

Langhorne tosses Burt a set of sand-crusted keys --

LANGHORNE (CONT'D)
In the meantime: your chariot awaits.

Burt spies the bird crap-flecked BEACH PATROL BRONCO parked outside. Other cops clap, whistle.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM (EXECUTIVE SEARCH FIRM) - LATER

A party in progress. Donuts. Six packs. The Love Fest for Dusty rolls on. Roy polishes off a beer.

ALAN (O.S.)
Catch last night's Lakers game? Kobe...at...the...<u>buzzer</u>.

Alan appears behind Roy, hands him a fresh one.

ALAN (CONT'D)
I get that you're disappointed, Roy. Your numbers are way up- I for one am jazzed. The thing is... Dusty- he galvanizes the troops, people rally around him- y'know?

ROY
I do. No hard feelings.

ALAN
Good. Because it's crunch time around here. Need your focus.

Across the room, Dusty commands a crowd of admirers.

ROY
Gonna go wrap up some paperwork.

ALAN
Have an awesome weekend. And hey, keep your head up, bud.

Leaving, Roy almost collides with an INDIAN COWORKER.

INDIAN COWORKER
Sorry, Troy. Didn't see you there.

ROY
Actually it's --

Briefly Roy considers correcting him but..."what's the point?"

ROY (CONT'D)
No worries. See you on Monday, Sabarinathan.

INT. OFFICE (EXECUTIVE SEARCH FIRM) - MOMENTS LATER

A sea of indiscernible cubicles. Box after uniform box. Roy takes his briefcase, switches off his desk lamp.

EXT. STREET - LATER (SAME SCENE AS EARLIER)

Businessmen in IDENTICAL GRAY SUITS wait at a crosswalk.

When the light changes, the crowd moves on. Except for Roy, whose mind- we can tell- is elsewhere.

We tilt up to -- THE SKY. And time lapse until the screen practically spills over with stars.

SUPER: THE CASTLE

The time lapse continues until -- we're on a cloudless sky. Bleeding blue. And tilt down on the...

EXT. BEACH - MORNING

Burt sleeps in his beach patrol Bronco, open bottle in hand.

A LITTLE BOY rifles through a beach bag. Takes out a LIME GREEN KIDDIE PAIL and MATCHING SHOVEL.

A CROWD files into a HIP HOTEL just off the boardwalk. A Global Women's Relief banner hangs over the entrance.

PATRICK (V.O.)
Ladies and gentlemen, generous donors...there's something to be said for first impressions.

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

PATRICK (40s), dashing, British, gives a speech --

PATRICK
The first time I met Gloria Shephard, I thought...if Mother Theresa had grown up as a punky teen in the Bay Area, reared on a healthy diet of the Lilith Fair's Greatest Hits, she'd probably turn out a little something like this.

Laughter. Waiting in the WINGS...

INT. WINGS (HOTEL RESTAURANT) - CONTINUOUS

...Roy rubs Gloria's shoulders. Nervously she kneads the hem of her dress.

ROY
Remember what we practiced?

GLORIA
Deep breathes. Picture everyone in their underwear.

PATRICK (O.S.)
That was seven years ago. Since then, she's personally helped organize more fund raisers than any employee in our not for profit's history! She's the dynamo behind all this! She's the powerhouse!

Applause. Gloria grips Roy's wrist- she's not ready.

GLORIA
Jesus, why doesn't public speaking ever get any easier?

ROY
Hey. Mellow thoughts. That trip in June to Napa. The Farmer's Market in Santa Monica. You listen to the Indigo Girls mix I made you?

GLORIA
I meant to. But I left my iPod at home, again. Roy? Can you?

Roy looks around. Hotel staff everywhere.

ROY
Really? Here?

Gloria closes her eyes. She's falling apart.

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

PATRICK
And now without further ado, the woman of the hour...

INT. WINGS (HOTEL RESTAURANT) - CONTINUOUS

Roy sucks it up.

ROY
(singing)
"I went to the doctor, I went to the mountains/ I looked to the children, I drank from the fountain."

BUS BOYS stare. The HOTEL MANAGER snickers.

ROY (CONT'D)
"There's more than one answer to these questions pointing me in crooked line/ The less I seek my source for some definitive -- "

GLORIA
"The closer I am to fine."

Now calm, Gloria stares at Roy. Love in her eyes.

PATRICK (O.S.)
Come forth, Gloria! Be lauded!

ROY
Okay. Hit a home run up there.

Gloria kisses him. Then struts confidently to the podium. It's only then we see Roy's hands, shaking in his pockets.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Roy flips on the faucet. Roy douses his face with cold water. He takes a deep breath. To himself:

ROY
You're fine. You're FINE.

Behind him, the BATHROOM ATTENDANT snores. Roy takes a paper towel from his limp hands.

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

Loosening his collar, Roy marches toward the exit. When Lawrence grabs him.

LAWRENCE
Hey, man, been searching for you everywhere.

ROY
Hey, Lar. How's it going?

LAWRENCE
All is well. Have a few secs to talk about the work out regimen? Was thinking about making some changes.

ROY
Actually, I was just stepping out for some fresh air.

MARY ANN (O.S.)
Big bros! Sup, kids?

Mary Ann wraps arms around Roy and Lawrence.

LAWRENCE
Yo, M.A. Great spread. Way to cater the event in style.

MARY ANN
Tell it to My Taste Tester In Chief. Dude tried, like, every dish.
(feeling Lawrence's abs)
Ooph, Larry, still doing P90X?

LAWRENCE
That's courtesy of Coach Roy. Like Mick from Rocky, this guy.

From across the room, Gloria smiles.

MARY ANN
Gloria, get those buns over here! That speech? Made my eyes rain!

She excuses herself, heads over. Roy eyes the door- trapped.

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - LATER

As the fund raiser continues, we FLASH ON a series of conversations. In each, Roy's there. But ignored.

Gloria talks to a TECHY-ISH DONOR --

TECHY-ISH DONOR
Wait. You actually collaborated with the government to have Wi-Fi installed in that Rwandan village?

GLORIA
They were very open to building the infrastructure.

Mary Ann talks to an OLDER FOODIE --

MARY ANN
Well, what really impressed Tom and Padma were the flavor combinations.

Lawrence talks to a HOT COLLEGE GIRL --

LAWRENCE
Did I believe I was gonna go on to design hotels in London, New York, Dubai? Yes. Belief was the key.

Mary Ann talks to the OLDER FOODIE --

MARY ANN
The key? Find something you love. And don't let it go.

Gloria talks to the TECHY-ISH DONOR --

GLORIA
'Go for it,' I told myself. Don't settle for anything less than success.

Something SNAPS in Roy. He turns sharply to GLORIA.

ROY
I'M GONNA STRETCH MY LEGS.

GLORIA
Sure, hon. See you in a few.

Gloria gives Roy an affectionate shoulder squeeze. Returns to her conversation. With a blank stare, Roy marches outside.

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

Roy b-lines to the shore, collapses on his knees. He digs down deep. Ready to unleash a frustrated scream.

But instead just deflates.

Roy stares out at the horizon. Into the vast endlessness of the Pacific. Closes his eyes. Makes the same wish he always makes.

ROY
Please, God, let me be...more.

LITTLE BOY (O.S.)
Oh no.

Roy opens his eyes. A few feet away, the LITTLE BOY struggles to build a SAND CASTLE. His lopsided mound tips to the right, implodes. The LITTLE BOY's lip quivers.

ROY
Hey, man, mom or dad around?

Roy glances behind him. No sign of the kid's parents. The Boy's on the verge of tears.

ROY (CONT'D)
No, no. Don't cry. Don't -- hey, look. <u>Look</u>.

Roy takes the boy's pail, fills it with water. Dumps in sand. Watching Roy, the Boy sniffles. Roy drains the water, flips the pail over. Creating an eight-inch high sand cylinder.

ROY (CONT'D)
How's this? Hang on...

Roy takes the shovel, carves down the sides of the cylinder to create two smaller towers, flanking the main building.

ROY (CONT'D)
How about now?

The Boy stops crying.

LITTLE BOY
You're good at that.

ROY
Nah.

Standing back, Roy smirks.

BOY'S FATHER (O.S.)
Hey, sport, closing time! Let's get a move on!

The Little Boy runs up the beach. Staring at his amateurish creation, Roy doesn't realize he's been left alone. Then:

ROY
Wait! Yo! You forgot your --

Roy holds up the lime green bucket and matching shovel. But the Little Boy just keeps running.

Roy glances back at the castle.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Roy works on his castle.

No plan. He's just enjoying himself.

Roy fills his pail. Soaks his sand. Grows his pile. The process takes on a rhythm. Splash-scoop-thump, Splash-scoop-thump. Behind Roy, the outside world seems to FADE AWAY.

It's simply a MAN and a SAND CASTLE.

Splash-scoop-thump.

A SAND CASTLE and a MAN.

If every person has his or her Zen, THIS is Roy's. He's in the moment, "just being" and totally blissed out.

Arches sweep across the base. Patterns snake through the brickwork. There's even a detailed door.

The Boy was right. Roy IS good at this.

Maybe <u>better</u> than good.

With the back of the shovel, Roy scoops out a MOAT. Packs down its sides. Tipping his full bucket, Roy fills the moat.

Sea foam snakes under an arch, around two towers, rushing in Byzantine swirls. To Roy, the trickling stream crashes with the force of pure, unbridled white water.

EXT. BACK YARD - EVENING

A family BBQ in full swing. Langhorne carries trays of food to the buffet table. His phone rings.

LANGHORNE
Hello? Sirillo?
(plugging an ear)
One second. I'm gonna find cover.

LANGHORNE'S NIECE
Look, Uncle Bruce!

Langhorne's Niece runs over, flips her eyelids inside out.

LANGHORNE
Wow, Sadie. Go show your Aunt.

EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Burt stands by the open trunk of his Bronco. Air Supply on the stereo. And all of the ingredients for a makeshift Old Fashioned laid out.

BURT
Captain? You there?

Burt pours Sweet N'Low into a thermos, licks his fingers.

INT. LANGHORNE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Langhorne locks the door.

LANGHORNE
Hey. Here. Can you hear me?

BURT (ON THE PHONE)
Yeah. Can now. So, I'm calling because...I wanted to tell you...I'm ready.

LANGHORNE
Ready for...?

Langhorne picks at a crudite.

BURT (ON THE PHONE)
Y'know, the whole shebang. Turning over a new leaf. Changing for the better. And whatever.

LANGHORNE
Burt, it hasn't even been forty eight hours.

EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Burt pours Bourbon in the thermos.

BURT
What can I say? I'm a fast reformer. I even scooped up a self-help book.

LANGHORNE (ON THE PHONE)
You did? What did you think of it?

Burt drops an orange peel into his Old Fashioned.

BURT
Took me all night to read. It was, uh...
(sipping his drink)
...strong. But...sweet. And what I liked most was...the twist.

LANGHORNE (ON THE PHONE)
What are you talking about? That sounds absolutely nothing like a self help book.

Burt squints down the beach. For the first time, he sees Roy. Roy diligently molds his Castle. Which is now chest-high.

LANGHORNE (ON THE PHONE) (CONT'D)
Sirillo, have you been drinking?

The TIDE rolls in.

BURT
...the fuck.

Roy tries to protect the castle. But the Ocean destroys it. Burt accidentally knocks over his fifth of Bourbon.

INT. LANGHORNE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Langhorne hears the bottle smash.

BURT (ON THE PHONE)
God damnit!

LANGHORNE
You have to be shitting me.

BURT (ON THE PHONE)
Captain. It's not what you-

LANGHORNE
You mean that wasn't a bottle of, oh, Makers Mark?
(off his guilty silence)
I think I'm starting to get it. You never took your work seriously.

BURT (ON THE PHONE)
No. Bruce.

LANGHORNE
You don't take The Force seriously. The only thing you DO take seriously is getting sloshed.

BURT (ON THE PHONE)
Captain. Don't-

LANGHORNE
Hope you bought a lotta sunscreen.

Langhorne hangs up.

I/E. WALTER'S APARTMENT (ACROSS FROM ROY'S) - LATER

Homemade furniture. WALTER (70s) sands a new wooden table. Decades of expertise on display with every movement.

Behind him, an AUDIO BOOK: HOW TO START A CONVERSATION -- MAKING FRIENDS AT ANY AGE.

Walter looks out of the open door where: Roy takes off his shoes. Pours out sand. The wind catches it, swirling golden grains into the night. Walter sands on.

INT. ROY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gloria in bed, fast asleep. Roy tiptoes in. His wet socks squish on the carpet. Gloria rolls over.

GLORIA
Roy?

ROY
Go back to bed, sweetie.

GLORIA
You disappeared. We were so worried. I kept calling but...hon, you're soaking wet.

For a moment, Roy considers explaining. But how does a grown man explain spending six hours working on a sand castle?

ROY
Got dragged into the office. Water main burst. Alan and Dusty were unavailable.

GLORIA
Eek. Sounds like a nightmare.

Gloria notices a trail of sandy footprints.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
Is that...is that sand?

ROY
Sawdust. Plumber used it to plug the leaks. Like high school wood shop in there. I'll tell you the whole story in the morning. Hey, you rocked the house, today.

GLORIA
Thanks, babe.

ROY
Night, sweetie. Love you.

GLORIA
Kay. Love you too.

Roy heads into the bathroom. Slightly suspicious, Gloria looks back at the sandy carpet.

INT. ROY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The alarm blares. Roy stares at the stark white ceiling. Looking forward to another day of insignificance.

INT. ROY'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Roy brushes his hair into his classic side part. Slows down. Stares at his reflection.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - LATER

Roy waits in line. Gray suit after gray suit.

I/E. ROY'S CAR - LATER

Parked in the lot of Roy's office. Roy looks straight ahead- a deadness in his eyes.

I/E. ROY'S OFFICE - LATER

Roy at his desk.

INDIAN COWORKER (ON THE PHONE, OS)
Well, Mr. Mills, I'm calling to talk about Greatness. At Excelsior Executive Search, we're in the business of enabling the best and the brightest, helping them help you build empires.

Roy looks around. His drone-like coworkers punch keyboards.

INDIAN COWORKER (CONT'D)
After all, new corporations are born, every day. They breathe, they struggle, and they die. To leave a mark, you must be special, you must do something no one else is capable of. You must dare to make history.

Roy's gaze falls on Dusty, settling into his swanky corner office. It stays there. Suddenly Roy stands up. Leaves.

INT. EXECUTIVE SEARCH FIRM (DUSTY'S OFFICE) - LATER

Dusty hangs an inspirational poster. On his bluetooth --

DUSTY
The flu? Sorry to hear that, Roy. Came on just like that?

ROY (ON THE PHONE)
Should've known better than to spend all that time in wet clothes.

DUSTY
Well, next time you take your nephew to the beach, bring a bathing suit. Any chance you can work from home?

The Admin hands Dusty a stack of files.

EXT. ROY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Roy on his Blackberry. He lugs a HOME DEPOT BAG, a BARNES AND NOBLE BAG, and PACIFIC SUNWEAR BAG.

ROY
To be honest with you, I think what I need is a handful of aspirin, a giant bucket of soup, and some R&R.

Roy heads inside.

INT. ROY'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Roy takes off his tie, unbuttons his shirt. Still on his cell.

DUSTY (ON THE PHONE)
Right. Read you loud and clear. It's only -- we're kinda snowed under? Y'know how it gets in Q4, New York wants results. Anything less and it's my feet in the fire.

Riffling through the PAC-SUN bag, Roy coughs. Hacks.

ROY
Uh, okay. Maybe -- maybe I can pull it -- together.

DUSTY (ON THE PHONE)
Yeah?

ROY
I'll -- swing by -- pick up my laptop. I can -- totally -- drive on all this -- Nyquil.

DUSTY (ON THE PHONE)
On second thought, R&R might be the best thing. Don't want the office turning into a scene from Contagion. Rest up and we'll see you when you're well, okay, champ?

Roy puts on a NEON TANK TOP.

ROY
Thanks, Dusty. See you then.

He hangs up. Drops the Blackberry in a drawer.

INT. BOARD ROOM - LATER

Gloria and Patrick shake hands with the Techy-ish Donor from the fund raiser. Patrick smiles. Gloria's mind is elsewhere.

I/E. CAR - LATER

Patrick drives. Distracted, Gloria organizes papers.

PATRICK
B-A-N-G O-N! Bang on! Gloria, how are you not celebrating?

GLORIA
I guess I don't want to jinks it?

Outside Gloria's window: the beach whizzes by.

PATRICK
To hell with that. If I gave a speech that inspired an angel investor to pledge three hundred thousand dollars to our little not-for-profit- I'd be friggin' partying. Double fisting champagne bottles, more like.

GLORIA
Well, I wasn't the only one there, working the room.

PATRICK
Right. You sure there's nothing else bothering you?

The light turns red. Gloria looks up from the folders.

GLORIA
Patrick, what do you know about water mains?

PATRICK
Water mains.

GLORIA
If a water main were to, I dunno, burst...would a plumber use sawdust to plug the leak?

PATRICK
You're serious.
(what's she talking about?)
(MORE)

PATRICK (CONT'D)
Well, at the height of the industrial revolution I imagine sawdust wouldn't be outside the realm of possibility. Maybe putty.

Patrick stops. By the beach: a CROWD gathers- hipsters, stoners, even boardwalk performers.

GLORIA
What the...?

As they part, Gloria catches a glimpse of Roy. Patrick scans through the radio.

PATRICK
Hmmm...? Say something?

GLORIA
Patrick, I'll meet you back at the office, okay?

PATRICK
What? Gloria, where are you...? Gloria.

Gloria gets out of the car.

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

Roy grips a BOOK: HOW TO BUILD A SAND CASTLE. Open to Chapter One: BUILDING YOUR FOUNDATION. On his hands and knees, Roy works alongside Savannah.

ROY
What we're doing now is compacting- piling wet sand on top of wet sand. This is how we craft our foundation. Let's focus on that area above the watermark left by the highest recent wave, where the wet sand meets the dry. Make sure it's level on top for optimal drainage. How's it hanging, Walter?

Walter trudges down the beach. Hammer. Nails. He lays out a wooden base- much like the walls of a SUPER-SIZED SAND BOX.

ROY (CONT'D)
Not a talker. That's okay. We're still in the Getting To Know You phase.

Roy tries to help. Walter's look says: back the fuck up.

ROY (CONT'D)
Phenomenal start on the frame. The Mona Lisa of wooden base things.

SAVANNAH
(on her cell)
Hey, it's ten bucks an hour, not ten bucks a day, right?

ROY
Sure, why?

SAVANNAH
My boyfriend's a paralegal. He says your email's vague.

Gloria marches down the beach. Roy's confidence is suddenly shaken. He sticks his shovel in sand.

ROY
Hang tight, guys. Gloria! Hi hon! What, um, are you doing here?

He heads over. She peers over his shoulder.

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

GLORIA
A SAND CASTLE? You're building a sand castle?

Walter lifts a few boards- winces.

ROY
Lift with the legs, Walter. Don't want that sciatica flaring up.

GLORIA
I'm sorry, hon, I'm confused. Where did this come from exactly?

SAVANNAH
I'm taking a smoke break. Bernie says I'm legally entitled.

GLORIA
Who's this?

ROY
That's Walter, our neighbor- the carpenter? And Savannah from our coffee place. The barrista.

SAVANNAH
Part time. Actually I'm a DJ.

GLORIA
Hi. To you. Roy?

EXT. UNDER THE BOARDWALK - MOMENTS LATER

Throwing up last night's Old Fashioneds, Burt glimpses the commotion. Roy being questioned- "that guy again."

EXT. BEACH (BY THE CASTLE) - CONTINUOUS

Roy takes Gloria by the hand, sits her down in the sand.

ROY
You're totally weirded out. Is there something you wanna say?

GLORIA
What do you say when your fiance tells you he's building the biggest sand castle in human history? Is this where you were yesterday, during the fund raiser?

EXT. DOWN THE BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Savannah sparks an electric cigarette, posts up by Walter.

SAVANNAH
Walter, right?

WALTER
Mmm.

SAVANNAH
Be honest, Walter, does this one piece make me look hippy?

EXT. BEACH (BY THE CASTLE) - CONTINUOUS

ROY
Look, I get it. Gigantor sand castle. Sounds kinda out there. But last night I had the most amazing experience. For the first time, I felt a -- a click. Like I found out what I was born to do.
(MORE)

ROY (CONT'D)
And this- this could be a major accomplishment. Think about it.

GLORIA
This isn't -- some weird mid life-y thing? You're 30.

CRACK- Savannah slaps Walter. Storms off. Roy springs up.

ROY
Hey, we're in a no-hate zone. We're promoting a culture of harmony and cooperation.

SAVANNAH
Fucking creep!

WALTER
You said be honest!

ROY
Eeek- this could get ugly. I'll wrangle HIM. Can you grab HER?

But Gloria doesn't move. Roy gets it- she's not on board with this. Burt worms through the crowd, takes it all in.

GLORIA
I don't mean to be unsupportive, sweetie, but what about tonight?
(beat)
When your day-off from work is over. And you leave the beach. You expect this thing to what, just stay as is? Untouched?

Roy hadn't thought of that. But in a Take Charge Moment, he looks around, points at Burt...

ROY
He'll keep an eye on it.

GLORIA
Who?

ROY
(reading his badge)
Officer Sirillo.

GLORIA
Roy, I think this man has better things to do than guard a sand castle. Don't you?

Burt doesn't. Nevertheless...

BURT
It's a zoning violation. Besides, the beach closes at ten. Sorry. Gotta have it clear, sir.

DOUCHEY SKATER (O.S.)
Yo, check out this faggotry. Let's fuck it up, dude.

A crew of the DOUCHEY SKATERS start kicking the modest foundation of Roy's castle.

ROY
Guys, not necessary. We're breaking ground here.

Not that the skaters give a crap. Roy tries it another way:

ROY (CONT'D)
C'mon, we're all bros, aren't we? This is bro on bro violence.

Burt looks on- someone in need. He hesitates. Finally--

BURT
Hey! Wise guys! You wanna see what juvey looks like from the inside?

DOUCHEY SKATER TWO
Eat a dick, Rent-A-Cop.

BURT
Yeah?! How 'bout I start with both of yours?!

DOUCHEY SKATER TWO
<u>Ew</u>.

DOUCHEY SKATER
Totally. Let's peace, man. Sergeant Douche-Tool gives me the willies.

Burt smiles. He <u>did</u> something. He did something <u>useful</u>.

BURT
How long you say you need me to keep an eye on this?

GLORIA
Wait. One more time?

BURT
I am here, I guess.

ROY
You mean that?

WALTER
We still working, Roy?

BURT
Why not.

Walter gets back to hammering. Even Savannah starts shoveling.

ROY
Thank you, Officer. Appreciate it.

And then Roy does it. Almost without thinking. Almost involuntarily...he touches his shovel to Burt's shoulders-knights him. Burt dusts the sand off. Gloria absorbs this-not quite sure what to make of the situation.

LAWRENCE (V.O.)
To build the biggest sand castle in history and break the record in the Guinness Book. That's what he said?

INT. LAWRENCE'S SWANKY OFFICE (ARCHITECTURE FIRM) - LATER

Mary Ann on the couch. Gloria types away on her phone.

MARY ANN
The Guinness Book? What's the record in the Guinness Book?

GLORIA
I'm Googling.

A flush. Lawrence leaves his personal bathroom...

LAWRENCE
Harlyn Lee of Duck, North Carolina. Seventy feet high with a base of more than a hundred and twenty feet! This iPad2 is fast!

MARY ANN
Holy crap. Can you imagine?

LAWRENCE
Thanks, John Lennon. You imagine. I'll politely turn a blind eye.

Lawrence gives Mary Ann his iPad. Grossed out, she takes it with two fingers.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
I washed my hands. I'm not nine anymore.

INT. HALLWAY (LAWRENCE'S SWANKY OFFICE) - MOMENTS LATER

Lawrence makes his way to the kitchen. Gloria and MA follow.

LAWRENCE
Gloria, you're worried. I'm gonna stop you. Do you really think Roy- our Roy- is gonna build the biggest sand castle in California?

MARY ANN
All time. Nuts but kinda rad?

Lawrence dodges a crew of interns, turns the corner.

INT. KITCHEN (SWANKY ARCHITECTURE OFFICE) - MOMENTS LATER

Lawrence pulls out a blender, ice, milk, and a tub of Protein Powder. He makes a shake.

GLORIA
But he seemed so committed. I mean, this is the second time he skipped out on something to hit the beach. He even stayed when I left.

Lawrence hits BLEND. Over the whir of blades...

LAWRENCE
Whatever! And I say this with love and affection but...<u>it's Roy</u>. And a sand castle?! When he's gonna build it, between lunch breaks and wedding planning meetings?!

GLORIA
I know! It's just that I've never seen him act this un-Roy-like! Has he ever tweeked like this before?!

Lawrence hits OFF. Mary Ann puts down the iPad.

LAWRENCE
Gimme a break. He was a kid.

MARY ANN
When dad died. A little.

LAWRENCE
It was decades ago. This has nothing to do with dad.

MARY ANN
She's worried about him, assface.
(to Gloria)
Dad was always kinda tough on Roy. Think it shook Roy up that he never got to prove dad wrong.

Lawrence pours the shake in a glass.

LAWRENCE
Now, I'm an architect. Not a shrink. But my diagnosis is: Roy's having a Weird Day.

GLORIA
A Weird Day?

MARY ANN
One time, last year, I slept with a dude. No idea why. Weird Day.

LAWRENCE
Weird day: once I was tanked and texted nanna a dick joke. She's ninety. Everyone has Weird Days.

Gloria's not sold. Lawrence kicks back, sips his shake.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Bottom line, Gloria: <u>ignore this</u>. When he brings it up, change the subject. If it doesn't pass, lemme know. But I'm telling you...

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

In the brights of Burt's Bronco, Roy digs, fills the giant sand box.

LAWRENCE (V.O.)
...if Roy's not already home waiting with dinner I'd be shocked. This isn't Roy. It's just <u>not</u>.

Roy stands back, assesses the foundation he's created. Not much. But it's something. His. He digs on.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Roy pays out Walter and Savannah --

SAVANNAH
Ahem.

-- has to delve into his pockets for the rest.

ROY
Night, guys.

They leave. Roy grabs his shoes, saunters to the Bronco.

ROY (CONT'D)
Yo. Just want to thank you for sticking around.

BURT
Forget it.

ROY
No, very cool of you to keep an eye out. Not your job, I know.

BURT
Not exactly South Central out here.

ROY
Right. Well- Roy.

They shake.

BURT
Burt. Night cap, Roy?

Burt offers Roy his Old Fashioned.

ROY
This like a test? You gonna bust me for drinking on the beach?
(off Burt's look)
I'll take a rain check.

Roy's about to leave. When --

BURT
Y'know, I saw you, last night. Building your castle by the shore. This a regular thing for you?

ROY
Not many things come naturally to me. But for some reason, the sand just...makes sense.

Burt doesn't laugh. He takes it in. Roy notices. Roy starts walking off the beach. Burt watches him go. Then, halfway to the boardwalk, Roy turns back. Calls out to Burt.

ROY (CONT'D)
Hey, Burt. Same time tomorrow?

Burt thinks a sec -- "what else is he doing?" And salutes. Roy nods. And marches off.

DISSOLVE TO:

ROY'S HAND TURNING A PAGE from CHAPTER ONE: BUILDING YOUR FOUNDATION...to CHAPTER TWO: RECRUITING YOUR HELPERS

INT. ROY'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

Gloria stumbles out of the bedroom, bleary-eyed. Roy grabs a breakfast bar. About to go.

GLORIA
Wow. Someone's up early.

ROY
A lot on the agenda. Figured I'd get a jump start on my AM.

As Gloria focuses she sees Roy's shirt open a button. No tie. His hair just slightly mussed.

GLORIA
Is that...a new shirt?

ROY
Just lost the tie. Who needs the old noose, right?

GLORIA
Right. Well, see you at six. We've got that meeting with the caterer. Commence wedding planning...now.

Roy smiles.

ROY
Planning commenced. ALMOST FORGOT.

He grabs the HOW TO BUILD A SAND CASTLE BOOK. Leaves. Gloria watches Roy go- “what’s up with him?”

EXT. ROY’S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Roy scribbles a note on a napkin, paperclips a TWENTY to it. Slides it under Walter’s door.

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

Burt sits on the roof of his Bronco. As Roy drives by, he honks. Burt rubs his aching head.

INT. EXCELSIOR EXECUTIVE SEARCH - MOMENTS LATER

Roy looks around, makes sure the coast is clear. He heads for the supply closet.

INT. SUPPLY CLOSET (EXCELSIOR) - MOMENTS LATER

Roy slips in, puts a chair against the door. He reaches into the back of his pants, pulls out a folded GYM BAG. And loads up on Sharpies, paper, masking tape, sticky tack.

INT. KITCHEN (EXCELSIOR) - MOMENTS LATER

Dusty and Alan sip coffee.

DUSTY
Let me ask you something. Past few days: Olson seem a little off?

ALAN
Off how?

DUSTY
Besides calling in with the flu and showing up the next day in perfect health? Can’t put my finger on it.

ALAN
Well, maybe he needed an afternoon off. Seems understandable.

They watch Roy sneak out of the supply room, bag in hand. He tiptoes around the corner...weird.

ALAN (CONT'D)
Hmm. Well, you're the sales manager...keep a bead on 'em.

DUSTY
Yeah. I'll do that.

Alan and Dusty sip their coffees in perfect unison.

EXT. ABBOT KINNEY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Savannah and Walter wait at the corner. Savannah wears headphones, compulsively checks her Droid. Then notices Walter staring at her.

WALTER
...lovely weather we're having.

SAVANNAH
The shit did you just say to me?

Walter leans back, steals a glance at his book on STARTING CONVERSATIONS: MAKING FRIENDS AT ANY AGE.

WALTER
I said, have you got...any brothers and sisters- and if so, how many?

SAVANNAH
You're weird.

Roy hustles over, gym bag over his shoulder.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
Thank God. This them?

ROY
I have to be back at the office in an hour. That gives us sixty minutes to plaster the neighborhood. Think we can do it?

SAVANNAH
Bro, if you're getting getting me pi-z-aid, we can do anything.

Roy opens the bag, revealing a stack of shoddily drawn FLYERS- **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR SAND CASTLE PROJECT -- CONTACT ROY.**

EXT. VENICE - MOMENTS LATER

Roy, Walter, and Savannah plaster flyers on lampposts, storefronts. Canvas the neighborhood. Savannah's Droid buzzes. She reads an email, drops to her knees.

ROY
Savannah, what's wrong? I've only got another ten minutes.

SAVANNAH
The club I auditioned to DJ at- they rejected me.

ROY
One club? Doesn't sound too bad.

SAVANNAH
It's the third one in two weeks. It's all good when they hear my music. Then as soon as they see me-- I mean, I felt like an Orca BEFORE I quit smoking. All these girls look like Samantha Ronson. And look at me. I'll be working at that bunghole of a coffee shop til I'm eighty!

Roy thinks.

ROY
Well. How'd you like to DJ at the beach?

SAVANNAH
The what now?

ROY
I know it's not like a super hot night club or whatever. But we could use some music while we're building and I'd be...honored to have you front and center. At the castle. Even though I have no idea what type of music you play please don't let it be techno.

Savannah looks up at Roy. Not a bad idea. She gets back to work. Watching from afar, flyer in hand is...Patrick.

INT. NOT-FOR-PROFIT OFFICE - LATER

Gloria is hard at work, wrapping up a phone call...

GLORIA
Thank you, Mr. Takahachi. Having someone like you on our board of directors is going to mean big things for this not-for-profit.

Patrick struts through the office, encouraging employees.

PATRICK
Making an impact, Charles. Keep it up, Ricardo.

GLORIA
Yes. Thank you. Domo arigato gozaimasu. Bye-bye.

Patrick hops up on the corner of Gloria's desk.

PATRICK
What's all the hullabullo, Ms. Shephard? Do mine ears deceive me?

GLORIA
They do not, Patrick. Takahachi is way stoked. Loves the work we're doing. And is talking to a slew of other potential Japanese investors.

Patrick hits Gloria's Staple's 'THAT WAS EASY' button.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
I really should get rid of that thing, shouldn't I?

PATRICK
Nah.

GLORIA
Doesn't exactly scream uber-serious relief effort being attempted.

She reaches for the button. Patrick reaches for it at the same time. Rests his hand on hers. Totally intentional. Gloria takes her hand back.

PATRICK
Anyway, top notch, Gloria. Both of you.

GLORIA
Both of us? Me and Ricardo?

PATRICK
Such a scatterbrain I am. Didn't I mention who I ran into on my way back from lunch?

Patrick slides one of Roy's flyers- face down- over Gloria's desk. Gloria unfolds the flyer- quickly folds it again.

EXT. NOT-FOR-PROFIT OFFICE / STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Gloria heads outside, sees Roy's flyers absolutely EVERYWHERE. This is getting outta hand. She whips out her cell.

INT. KITCHEN (MARY ANN'S RESTAURANT) - LATER

Mary Ann marches through the kitchen, on her phone...

MARY ANN
Hey Gloria. Yep. I know, hon. I already got an eye-full.

On Mary Ann's prep table is one of Roy's flyers. She tastes a pastry, spits it out.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)
Arden, these quinoa biscuits taste like my butt hole! Francois, did you use green pepper instead of Jalapeno? Francois. God, I keep forgetting you don't speak English.

I/E. CATERER'S OFFICE - LATER

Gloria in a corner, Roy also on the phone --

GLORIA
(on her cell)
I didn't think it would -- I mean, I wrote it off as a weird day. But my boss even said something.

INT. ARCHITECTURE OFFICE - LATER

LAWRENCE
(on phone)
Relax, it's not like anyone's actually responding to this ad of his. Whatever he's working through, I'm sensing this is the tail end.

ROY (OVER GLORIA, ON THE PHONE)
No, I don't think I need to see a resume. Though you're welcome to send one along to my Earthlink. And thank YOU for your honesty regarding the criminal record.

LAWRENCE
Okay, so we'll give him a little wake up call. A loving nudge.

Lawrence signs off on an artful blueprint for a mansion.

INT. ROY'S APARTMENT - LATER

Roy sits across from Gloria and Lawrence.

LAWRENCE
This is an intervention.

MARY ANN
It's not an intervention. Would someone bring cupcakes to an intervention?

Mary Ann comes from the kitchen. Tower of cupcakes- amazing it doesn't tip over.

GLORIA
What I think Larry and Mary Ann are trying to say is --
(tasting a cupcake)
-- oh my gosh that's good.

LAWRENCE
We love you and we're concerned.

MARY ANN
Diet-Concerned. The Coke Zero of concern.

ROY
Because of...the castle.

LAWRENCE
Because of the sand castle our thirty year old brother is building, yes, that's correct, Roy.

ROY
Did you call them? Gloria.

LAWRENCE
What's the difference?

ROY
Why wouldn't you just take this up with me?

LAWRENCE
Because you're freaking her shit out, man. How don't you-

Mary Ann shoves a cupcake in Lawrence's mouth.

MARY ANN
Have a cupcake, Lar.

GLORIA
Maybe you're right. Maybe we could've done this in private. But I dunno, I've never seen you like this before. This, um-

ROY
Dedicated?

Roy looks at the three of them- against him.

ROY (CONT'D)
What is it about the castle that concerns you exactly?

MARY ANN
Isn't that kinda obvious?

ROY
Is it that it's childish? It is, I get that. Is it that it's gonna be a drain on time- I'll manage my schedule. But I'll say it again: this could be truly friggin' amazing.
(to Gloria)
I thought we did this already.

MARY ANN
It's not easy for me and Larry to explain to clients or customers about stuff like --

Mary Ann takes Roy's flyer out of her purse.

LAWRENCE
What's up, dude? Let's just open-kimono, this bitch.
(MORE)

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Is it about dad? Now, you're getting married. Gonna dad it up, yourself, soon. And you're remembering how he always made you feel crappy. You tweaking?

ROY
I don't believe this.

MARY ANN
Roy. C'mon, man, don't.

Roy gets up, walks out --

EXT. ROY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Roy heads to his car. Lawrence gives chase.

LAWRENCE
Roy, I know he was hard on you. Dad. Maybe you didn't click as dudes. Maybe you reminded him of himself or something weird and Freudian like that. Frankly I don't think we'll ever know. But if you figure you're somehow proving him wrong by building this, this-

ROY
You don't think I can do it, do you?

Roy turns to Lawrence. Stares him in the face. Gloria and Mary Ann head outside.

ROY (CONT'D)
None of you think I can break the record. Tell me you think I can.

LAWRENCE
Don't make this bigger than it is.

ROY
Tell me, if you waited your whole life to find something you were good at, the best at, and you finally discovered what it was...wouldn't it feel big to you?

MARY ANN
We love you, man. We just don't wanna see you make an ass out of yourself. That's all this is.

Roy gets in his Corolla, peels out.

INT. ROY'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Gloria washes up. Gazes out of the open door at...

...Roy. Beer in hand. He flips through old photos. A family album. In one of the pics...

...ROY'S DAD holds Lawrence and Mary Ann on his shoulders. From the ground, a SIX YEAR OLD ROY looks up at them. In awe.

In Roy's hand, the photo comes to life. His dad parading his siblings around the house.

He turns the pages, fixes on a SECOND PIC- we CAN'T see it. After a moment, Roy closes the ALBUM. Leans over the sink.

EXT. BEACH - MORNING

A MASSIVE HOARD of VOLUNTEERS swarm the modest castle. Mostly stoners. Hipsters. A few bikers. Boardwalk performers.

Burt's having trouble containing them. Walter looks like he's flirting with a panic attack. Savannah jogs over.

BURT
Any sign of him?

SAVANNAH
Nada.

BURT
I may have to shut this down.

Burt shields his eyes from the merciless sun, takes one last look around. And then, he <u>sees</u> it...Roy. Marching down the beach. Bathing suit. Zinc on his nose.

BURT (CONT'D)
Not cool, Roy. You should've warned me you were recruiting.

ROY
How many are they?

BURT
I dunno. Twenty? Twenty-five?

The stoners goof off. Sword fight with shovels.

WALTER
Son. Away from the woodwork.

ROY
I'll need your megaphone.

BURT
Roy. This isn't a joke. We can't deal with this kind of chaos.

But Roy walks on. Ducks into Burt's Bronco.

BURT (CONT'D)
Roy.

SAVANNAH
What's he doing?

WAAAHH -- the PA system on the police car shrieks.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
Ears drums. Bleeding. Send help.

ROY
Sorry. My bad. My bad, everyone.

The volunteers stop screwing around. Roy adjusts the frequency...

ROY (CONT'D)
Hello -- hi? Hi, I'm Roy. Olson. I want to thank you all for coming out this morning. Nice of you to make the time.

FROM THE PARKING LOT...

The Rookie Cop notices the commotion.

MEANWHILE...

ROY (CONT'D)
As I said, I appreciate the support. And the commute. Which I am happy to reimburse you for. But you can all, um -- go home now.

A smattering of puzzled 'what the fucks', 'bullshit, man'.

STONER VOLUNTEER
Bro, you gotta be -- I skipped <u>Shark Week</u> for this?

ROY
My ad was an open call for volunteers. <u>Workers</u>.
(MORE)

ROY (CONT'D)
And I don't know if you guys have ever attempted anything remotely like this is in the past or you're so used to doing amazing crap that you're totally whatever about it. But from where I'm standing: you aren't taking the prospect of touching greatness very seriously.

Now he has their attention. Savannah ducks over to a SMALL DJ BOOTH she's hooked up. Switches on a remix of a battle-hymn.

ROY (CONT'D)
If you're anything like me, you run into your fair share of nay-sayers. People telling you: you can't hack it. Or "go get 'em, boss" then coughing 'bullshit' into their sleeves as they turn the corner.

Roy takes a shovel, climbs up on the step of Burt's Bronco.

ROY (CONT'D)
Well, we've listened to the cynics The doubters have had their moment to be heard. But now. Now, this castle is --

Burt listens in. Walter and Savannah too.

ROY (CONT'D)
-- a Fuck You to all of them. It's a Fuck You to everyone who said we couldn't cut it. That we weren't made of the right stuff. To the guys in the winner's circle looking down their noses. In the corner offices, playing Words With Friends while we plead for our raises. This is a monument to our collective potential, a declaration of our capability: "I do not believe God put us on this earth to be ordinary." But if you want in, I need to know you mean it. Do you mean it, Team Roy?

Nothing. The Ocean gently rolls. Then --

WALTER
HUZAAHHH!!!

ROY
How about the rest of you? Are you hear to screw around, laugh at the a-hole building the sand castle...or are you here to do something real?

I/E. POLICE CAR - MOMENTS LATER

The Rookie Cop and his partner try to listen to the police radio but can't. The ROAR from the beach is too loud.

EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS

A BLAST of applause, impassioned cheers. Roy raises his shovel skyward. It only gets louder.

ROY
One more time! Lemme hear ya!

CROWD
HUZZAAHH!!!!!!!

ROY
For all the people down the beach!

CROWD
HUZZAAHH!!!!!!!

ROY
Okay! Time to, uh, get to work!

They disband. Roy hops off of the Bronco.

BURT
Pretty impressive.

ROY
I think I stole half of that from an episode of Friday Night Lights.

BURT
It worked.

ROY
It's a really good show.

The Rookie Cop watches -- totally shell-shocked. Burt gives him the finger. Mouths: "Fuck You." Savannah drops a beat.

INT. ROY'S APARTMENT - DAY

The TV on. Gloria sorts through Wedding Magazines.

WEATHER MAN ON TV
This is Hurricane Drako. Commander of 90 mile per hour winds. Master of lightening and thunder. Right now it's laying low over the Pacific. But when it's gathered enough strength, it's headed our way to wreak havoc on Southern California.

-- while Roy just highlights his HOW TO BOOK. He turns to CHAPTER THREE: DOING A POUND-UP. Gloria looks over his shoulder.

INT. EXCELSIOR EXECUTIVE SEARCH - LATER

Castle doodles are tacked to Roy's cubicle. Along with post-its of the record in the Guinness Book: 70 FEET X 121 SQ FEET! Alan watches Roy leave early. HOW TO book under arm. He checks the clock: 3:30

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Roy holds his book, addresses his CREW.

ROY
Today, we're starting our Pound Up. We're focusing on SIZE instead of detail. I'm looking for a synchronized depositing of sand pancakes on the foundation. It says here we'll need to master the PLOP AND JIGGLE. Like so.

Roy demonstrates, artfully circulating his wrist to create a magnificent sand disk.

ROY (CONT'D)
Jiggle. And PLOP.

He adds to the foundation.

ROY (CONT'D)
Now, ALL OF YOU.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

For the first time, the mountain of sand looks like an actual castle: fifteen feet high, thirty feet wide.

ROY oversees construction. His army of weirdos hard at work. Jiggling and plopping with varied success;

WALTER teaches the Stoner Volunteer how to build the wooden frame. The stoner's eyes glaze over;

SAVANNAH sorts through records with BOARDWALK PERFORMERS- including a dude dressed as an ANCIENT ROMAN;

BURT walks the perimeter, a noble sentry. Flanked by a few Hells Angels.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Walter hustles up to Roy. Who is mid-jiggle.

WALTER
Roy. We have a problem. The sand needs to be hydrated in order to stick. But the higher we pile, the hard it is to keep it wet. I don't know how we can sustain the build.

ROY
Hang on, Walter. There's gotta be a solve for this.

As Roy thinks, his gaze falls on the ANCIENT ROMAN boardwalk performer. Roy gives Walter his credit card.

ROY (CONT'D)
Wood. We're gonna need more of it.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Roy overseas the construction of Ancient Roman-type AQUEDUCTS. He walks the construction site.

ROY
Easy does it. We want a steady flow from the water source through the aqueducts. Be mindful of your angling. Let's see it on its feet.

Burt climbs a ladder, pours a bucket of water into the first AQUEDUCT, it turns a corner, irrigates the Castle. Perfect.

INT. ROY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gloria, Felix, and coworkers stuff envelopes at the kitchen table. Roy passes through on his way home. Trailing sand. Gloria watches him go. A distance between them.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Roy holds his BOOK, open to CHAPTER FOUR: DETAILING YOUR CASTLE. Roy's team is lined up, rank and file.

ROY
We are about to embark on the process of detailing. Where are my artists? My craftsmen?

Boardwalk Performers (a SILVER DUDE and GUY DRESSED AS AN ANCIENT ROMAN) step forward. Roy presents them with baking utensils to be used for carving. When --

A FOOTBALL comes SOARING into the castle, damaging a FLIGHT OF SAND STEPS.

FOOTBALL THROWER
LITTLE HELP!

Roy picks up the football.

ROY
Well, that's not gonna work.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Roy and Walter address another group. Wind blows their hair.

ROY
My carpenters. My woodworkers. To protect the detailing we're so diligently doing: we've got to erect an effective fortress.

A CATERING TRUCK pulls into the lot.

ROY (CONT'D)
We need this fort up. And we need it up fast. The sand castle has many natural enemies: footballs, frisbees, out-of-control beach umbrellas. None of these predators can breach our walls.

TRUCKERS remove a TENT. It says ‘MAZEL TOV ON YOUR BAR MITZVAH’. They lug it towards Roy.

ROY (CONT’D)
It’s gonna be a windy day. And I do not want a rogue hacky sack compromising our success out here.

INT. FLORIST - DAY

Gloria the waiting room. She texts Roy: “WHERE ARE YOU?”

FLORIST
Ms. Shephard? Would you like to reschedule? Some time when your fiance’s available?

GLORIA
I’m sure he’ll be here any minute.

Scrolling up we see other texts, all sent in the last half hour...”HEY. I’M HERE”...”ON YOUR WAY?”...”ROY?”

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Walter and company erect the MASSIVE BAR MITZVAH TENT. Hammer in stakes. It shields the castle from a wind-blown beach chair;

Roy’s platoon is now a well-oiled machine. They pass buckets- assembly line style. Feed the aqueducts.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

News vans. A Reporter interviews Roy.

REPORTER
Roy Olson, some people are calling this a pipe dream. An Executive Search Consultant with limited- if any- sand sculpture experience seeking to shatter the Guinness record for World’s Largest Sand Castle. What do you say to your detractors?

Roy has a beard now, his hair has grown out a bit, he wears an Excelsior windbreaker. He looks from lens to lens- his hand subconsciously moving in a ‘plop and jiggle’ circle.

I/E. BAR MITZVAH TENT (BEACH) - DAY

A Boardwalk Performer carves a SAND GARGOYLE. Roy stands on a ladder, plopping and jiggling, growing the castle.

BURT
Roy. There's something we need you to look at.

Roy climbs down. Burt leads Roy to Walter, who crouches by the wooden base. Sand seeps out of the cracks.

ROY
Leaks. Looks like trouble. Let's find some way to blanket the base and stop this. Walter, suggestions?

WALTER
What about swimming pool siding?

ROY
I wonder if it's strong enough.

STONER VOLUNTEER
My cousin used to smuggle drugs in Southeast Asia. They'd seal in freight loads of powder with Bamboo Rhizome. It's a root.

BURT
I shouldn't be listening to this.

ROY
Bamboo Rhizome it is.

SAVANNAH
I know a nursery on Santa Monica Blvd. It's next to a Wendy's.

Walter pats Savannah on the shoulder.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Roy's whole army wrap sheets of Bamboo Rhizome around the wooden frame of the castle. More cameras. Vendors.

EXT. BEACH - EVENING

The end of a hard day's work. Walter and Savannah pack it in. Trudge down the beach.

WALTER
Chunky Monkey, gimme a lift?

SAVANNAH
For serious? I'm like this close to hobbling you- Misery style. When's the last time you talked to another human? Do you know how we work?
(off Walter's sad nod)
Old Man Face? You're doing Sad Old Man Face? Fucking Walter.

She waves- come on. They walk to her car. Roy and Burt lean against the Bronco. Admiring the castle- thirty feet high.

INT. ALAN'S HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - NIGHT

Alan drinks a beer. Watches TV. When he spots ROY AT THE BEACH. Looking slightly unhinged. Company logo on his shirt.

ROY ON TV
Well, to those who doubt me, I guess I'd say what I've been saying from the very beginning --

Savannah and a bunch of HIPSTERS rush ROY, give the camera the finger, their merry, supportive FUCK YOUs bleeped out.

Alan downs his beer. Turns off the TV.

INT. EXCELSIOR EXECUTIVE SEARCH - MORNING

Roy's Indian Coworker at his desk. Roy walks in, waves.

ROY
Morning, Sabarinathan.

INDIAN COWORKER
Hi, Roy. Roy. Before I forget.

ROY
Yep?

INDIAN COWORKER
Alan's looking for you. And, um --
(waving him closer)
-- this may not be totally office-appropriate but I've seen the castle. And I want you to know I am huge fucking fan, man. This is like an artistic fucking statement. A statement of rebellion.
(MORE)

INDIAN COWORKER (CONT'D)
We are all capable of greatness. Bro, you're fucking crushing it. Scoopin' it up, taking it out back, and crushing...that...shit.

Roy's Indian Coworker extends his fist. From Alan's office, Alan waves Roy over. Roy touches his Coworker's fist. His Coworker makes it explode. Winks at Roy.

ROY
Thank you. Thank you very much.

Roy heads into Alan's office.

INT. ALAN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Roy sits across from Alan.

ALAN
Roy. Roy Roy Roy.

ROY
Alan. Alan Alan?

ALAN
Can't help but notice what a busy little bee you've been of late. Got your Tower of Babble down by the beach. How's that going for you?

But before Roy can answer...

ALAN (CONT'D)
Look, Roy. You know me. I give it to you straight with no chaser. Whatever you're doing: abort. Your numbers these last few weeks?

ROY
Couldn't be that bad, could they?

DUSTY
It's more than the placement reports. Though you're not exactly Lebron-ing it, man.

Dusty walks in.

ALAN
Roy, I'm gonna bottom line you-

Dusty snorts.

ALAN (CONT'D)
Dusty, in what way was that even vaguely homoerotic?

Dusty sinks back into the corner.

ALAN (CONT'D)
Listen, Roy, I get it. Before I got married, I went goose-shit too. And rightly so- my wife is monstrous, just -- monstrous.

The Indian Coworker at the door. He lifts his sweater up- he's wearing a BUILD, ROY, BUILD tee shirt.

ALAN (CONT'D)
But we can't have a representative of this company behaving like a five year old. It's bad for business. Plus, it's just plain silly. So I'm giving you two weeks to clean up your act-

ROY
Two weeks? Wait.

ALAN
Two weeks. Or it's unpaid leave, best case scenario. And you don't wanna get hitched without a nine-to-five.

DUSTY
You do not want that weight on your shoulders. This is a yellow card.

ALAN
For the love of God, Dusty. Roy, two weeks. Pull it together. Now, both of you, out of my office.

But they just stare at him.

ALAN (CONT'D)
He repeats: kindly move your asses! Go get people hired or something!

INT. EXCELSIOR EXECUTIVE SEARCH - MOMENTS LATER

Roy sits down at his desk. Takes out his call list.

ROY
Okay.

When his cell rings. He picks up.

ROY (CONT'D)
Burt?

Roy listens. A look of dread washing over his face.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKING LOT (BEACH) - CONTINUOUS

Roy's Corolla fishtails into the lot. Wheels up on the curb.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Burt and Walter kneel around the barrier. Surrounded by volunteers. Roy sprints their way. Seized by panic.

Which quickly gives way to utter SHOCK. As he sees...under the tent, between the aqueducts...the SAND CASTLE: tipped over, sunken in. Ruined. Roy staggers. Claws for purchase.

SAVANNAH
Hey. I think he needs help. Burt.

Burt and Walter race to Roy's side. But Roy can't hear a word they're saying. The world goes dim. Then dark.

Roy collapses.

INT. DINER - LATER

Roy sits across from Burt, Walter, and Savannah. Who wears her barrista apron.

WALTER
It was like that when we got there.

ROY
...the skaters?

BURT
I saw it happen. Just sort of cave in on its own. Thanks, Eddy.

The WAITER brings over a couple of SAUSAGE EGG AND CHEESES.

WALTER
It's nobody's fault. Just poor construction.

ROY
But what did we --

Savannah puts an arm around Roy.

WALTER
We did the best we could. With the materials we had. But we aren't master builders. We never did the calculations. The physics.

SAVANNAH
Physics? It's a sand castle.

WALTER
Yes. And we treated it like one.

BURT
What's that supposed to mean?

Roy looks at the TV on the wall. The weather man tracks a hurricane -- HURRICANE DRAKO.

ROY
It means we needed to approach this as something bigger. An actual castle. It takes know how, artistry.

WALTER
I was a carpenter for forty-five years. But this, it's just above my pay grade- puh, this sausage tastes like a shoe.

Walter shoves his plate away. Waves down the waiter.

BURT
Sorry, Roy.

SAVANNAH
Yeah. Hang in there, man.

WALTER
Look. Here's what I think. I think we've done something pretty goddamned cool. I mean, it started as a job but Savannah and I- we waived our fees, right? That says something.

BURT
So we've come as far as we can. Given the tools at our disposal.

WALTER
Exactly. No shame in that.

The Waiter comes over.

WALTER (CONT'D)
One scoop of every flavor ice cream you have. Bring it in a trough if you have to.

SAVANNAH
But-

WALTER
Shut up. You'll eat the goddamned ice cream. We're in mourning.

INT. LIVING ROOM (ROY'S APARTMENT) - NIGHT

Roy sits on the edge of the couch. Deep in thought. Gloria rubs his shoulders.

GLORIA
Maybe Walter's right. Maybe it was a valiant effort but this is it.

ROY
It can't be -- it.

GLORIA
I know I've been pretty anti-Castle. And I haven't said it before but what you did out there? It WAS friggin' amazing.

Gloria sits down next to Roy.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
Jeez, all over You Tube. Local news even did a piece on it. I'm super proud of you, Roy.
(beat)
Also, I don't feel guilty saying: I can't plan this wedding all by myself. Kinda want my fiance back.

ROY
Right. Of course.

GLORIA
Wouldn't hurt to have you around again. Roy-ing up the joint.

ROY
I -- I just gotta think.

GLORIA
Okay. You think. Then come to bed.

She kisses him. Then goes into the bedroom.

INT. ROY'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Dark. Except for the light of Roy's laptop. His HOW TO BOOK peeks from the garbage can.

Roy drinks a beer. A sea of empty bottles on the table.

He GOOGLES: SAND CASTLE BIGGEST EVER

Roy clicks through on link after link. Reviews pictures of the present record holder's work: 70 X 121 SQ FT. The title held by HARLYN LEE of Duck, North Carolina.

ROY
How'd you do it, Harlyn? What's the secret? What is it?

Roy notices BULLDOZERS, DUMP TRUCKS- heavy duty construction equipment. Then in the background of one picture...Roy spots something. He leans closer. ZOOMS in. Over and over. And hones in on barrels marked...<u>RIVER SAND</u>.

ROY (CONT'D)
River sand?

INT. OFFICE (SANDS OF TIME / SAND SUPPLIER) - DAY

Outside, dump trucks claw out sand. The OWNER on the phone...

SANDS OF TIME OWNER
River sand? Sure is stickier. And chocked fulla silt! Mud too! How many tons you thinking? Uh-huh. Commercial or residential?

The dump trucks are too loud. She plugs an ear.

SANDS OF TIME OWNER (CONT'D)
A <u>what</u>? You need permits for that?

INT. ROY'S CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

Roy ducks down at his cubicle. From across the office, Alan watches him.

ROY
I'm sorry. But, uh, what kinda quote am I looking at, here?

Roy scribbles down a number- breaks his pencil.

ROY (CONT'D)
For <u>each</u> metric ton? And what about the shipping from San Joaquin?

Alan locks on Roy, gets up.

ROY (CONT'D)
Twelve thousand dollars just seems like a crazy amount of money. Yes, I've already done the price compare- I know you're the best.

Alan gets close. CLOSER. Roy eyes his JOINT SAVINGS balance on the computer screen. Then a BILL from the WEDDING CATERER.

ROY (CONT'D)
Are you <u>sure</u> you can't do any better? I'm kinda strapped at the-

Alan approaches Roy as...

ROY (CONT'D)
YOU HAVE YOURSELF A DEAL, MA'AM! A PLEASURE DOING BUSINESS WITH YOU TOO! LET'S RECONNECT SOON! BYE!

Roy hangs up. Alan walks by. Not sold on Roy's act.

INT. WAREHOUSE (SUNSHINE CONSTRUCTION) - LATER

Tractors. Bulldozers. All on the move. Roy and Burt follow TERRY (40s). Prosthetic arm.

TERRY
Olson. Olson. I've rented to an Olson.

ROY
My brother's an architect. Sometimes his firm contracts with builders. <u>Lawrence</u>.

TERRY
Larry. Marathon Man. Kind of a pretty boy? Don’t mind my saying.

BURT
Let’s talk numbers, okay, Terry?

TERRY
Right this way, gentlemen.

Terry opens the door to his office.

INT. TERRY’S OFFICE (SUNSHINE CONSTRUCTION) - MOMENTS LATER

TERRY
This whole castle thing is fascinating. Tell me more.

BURT
We’re kinda on the clock, Ter.

TERRY
Burty. This is the informal banter required before any transaction.

BURT
Well, I’m gonna “informally” pinch a loaf in your bathroom. Wrap it up before I wipe.

Burt leaves. Terry motions to Roy...

TERRY
Shut the door.

Roy does.

TERRY (CONT’D)
How is he?

ROY
Who? Burt?

TERRY
No. The other guy who lost his fiance six months ago.

ROY
Lost as in...misplaced?

INT. BATHROOM (CONSTRUCTION COMPANY) - CONTINUOUS

Burt wastes time, reads the back of an air freshener.

INT. TERRY'S OFFICE (CONSTRUCTION COMPANY) - CONTINUOUS

TERRY
I can't tell if you're an idiot or a genius negotiator or just a poorly informed man of average to moderate intelligence. But the situation's this...I'll give you half off everything. Whatever. So long as you promise to keep an eye on that one. I know he's not right.

ROY
I don't -- ?

TERRY
This can't be news? He said you guys were close.

Burt comes back in.

BURT
Wouldn't you know it? All plugged up. How we doing?

ROY
I'd say we reached an agreement. How about you, Terry?

TERRY
Where are we sending the vehicles?

Roy reaches over the desk, offers his right hand to Terry's prosthetic. Awkwardly Roy shakes it. Terry stares at him.

I/E. BEACH PATROL BRONCO - LATER

Burt drives. Roy notices a PIC of a WOMAN behind his mirror- a more complex idea of Burt taking shape in Roy's mind.

INT. ROY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Roy, Burt, Walter, Savannah & Co at the table. Neatly organized piles of documents. Semi-professional.

ROY
Okay, so we're looking at three days on delivery of the river sand and construction equipment. Which gives us a limited window to re-organize. First order of business-

WALTER
The base.

ROY
The scaffolding. We're supporting the project top to bottom.

WALTER
That's a big ask. A lot of labor. Six stories of framework?

SAVANNAH
He's way ahead of you. Norman.

ROY
I've taken the liberty of mocking up a new blueprint. With the help of an artistically inclined team member.

The Stoner Volunteer lays out a massive scroll- a blueprint.

ROY (CONT'D)
We're going for scale plus wow-factor. Magnus is distributing Xerox's with a daily to-do list.

HELLS ANGEL
Actually in my commitment to a paperless lifestyle, I've put together a PDF. Which I'll blast out following this meeting.

The door opens: Gloria, Patrick and coworkers. They carry boxes of envelopes.

GLORIA
Oh. Hi.

ROY
Hey.

PATRICK
Getting the castle back on its feet?

BURT
You must be Patrick.

Burt stands up. The Hells Angel folds his arms.

GLORIA
Thought I said we'd be stuffing envelopes, tonight.

ROY
Not sure you did.

GLORIA
Last night at dinner. Left a note on the fridge?

WALTER
We could take it to my place.

GLORIA
No. You guys hang out. We'll make camp by the couch.

ROY
Actually we're going to be breaking out in groups. So.

GLORIA
Roy? Can I see you a second?

As Roy drifts over to Gloria in the corner...

PATRICK
Just putting this out there. Team Roy track suits. Something kinda sporty. What do you think?

The Hells Angel takes a step forward. Patrick backs up.

GLORIA
Seriously? Kicking me out of my own house?

ROY
We need the space. I'm sorry.

GLORIA
But in front of my coworkers?

ROY
C'mon. How many times have I gone to the movies while you guys stuffed envelopes or -- or brainstormed about fund raisers?

GLORIA
They’re already here. I’m not asking them to leave.

ROY
THEN I WILL.

Heads turn. Awkward silence. Gloria locks on Roy.

ROY (CONT’D)
I’ll call you when we’re done. But we’re all set up and stuff. Just back off a little.

GLORIA
This is not the Roy I know. Call me when HE makes an appearance.

She leaves. Patrick follows. Roy sits back down.

ROY
Forget it. Everyone take a good look at the blueprint.

The team heads back to work.

EXT. PATRICK’S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Gloria leans against it. Patrick jogs over.

PATRICK
Gloria. You’re an amazing woman. You deserve better than that.

GLORIA
Let’s just go to your place. Get it done there. Okay?

PATRICK
That is most definitely...okay.

Patrick unlocks the car.

INT. ROY’S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

As his team meticulously plans, Roy catches Patrick’s car pull away. Gloria in the passenger seat.

EXT. BEACH - MORNING

Roy stands in front of the ruined castle- a new intensity in his eyes. The look of a man who will NOT be stopped.

Roy nods. Raises both arms. A CARAVAN of CONSTRUCTION VEHICLES rolls over the sand. Bulldozers. Dump trucks.

They charge his way- exhaust filling the screen.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Bulldozers demolish remnants of the old castle.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Strictly business. Gone is the BAR MITZVAH tent. In its place is something much larger. Even the aqueducts have grown.

Savannah's DJ booth has been converted into a FOREMAN'S STATION. ROY presides over it. Blueprint spread on his desk.

BURT cordons off the area with police tape.

WALTER, joined by Savannah, leads scaffolding construction.

INT. NOT-FOR-PROFIT OFFICE - DAY

Gloria sits by Patrick, laughing about some unheard joke.

PATRICK
I can't believe you got that- the humor's totally Senegalese!

GLORIA
Wedgies are funny in any language. They're the great cultural leveler.

PATRICK
Ah. Joseph Campbell said that I believe.

Patrick puts his hand on Gloria's. This time she let's it stay.

INT. WEDDING BAND BOOKER'S OFFICE - DAY

Gloria hands the BOOKER a check.

INT. EXCELSIOR EXECUTIVE SEARCH - LATER

Alan strolls by Roy's desk. Bulletin board chaotically overflowing with Castle notes. But no sign of Roy.

INT. HOME DEPOT - LATER

Roy and Walter march through the LUMBER section. Direct employees to load up their carts.

EXT. HOME DEPOT - MOMENTS LATER

Employees strap a mountain of 2X4's onto the hood of Roy's compact. As Roy signs for the bill.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The scaffolding is getting big. Borderline massive. Roy walks the construction site. More determined that ever. Though way less friendly. A man "obsessed".

ROY
Norman, pick up the pace. Magnus, you're supposed to be supervising.

On the sidelines, Savannah pulls on her electric cigarette.

SAVANNAH
What? I'm recharging my batts.

Roy grabs the electric cigarette. Tosses it.

EXT. BOARDWALK - DAY

Lawrence goes for a run, is held up by a pedestrian traffic jam. He tries to worm through, then realizes they're staring at the castle, which has become an absolute --

LAWRENCE
What in the.

DREAM BUILDING

More than sixty-feet high, eighty wide. A marvel.

ROY
On three! One...two...

Roy's team carries a humongous wooden post. A marker indicating their goal: 71 FEET.

ROY (CONT'D)
...THREE!!!

They heave it into the ground. A CRANE pulls it vertical. The castle- now less than ten feet from breaking the record.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

On the mammoth sand castle. Spiring into the night sky. All quiet except for AIR SUPPLY blasting from the Bronco. Inside:

I/E. BRONCO - NIGHT

Burt and Roy. Wasted. Singing along --

ROY AND BURT
I'M ALL OUT OF LOVE, WHAT AM I WITHOUT YOU / I CAN'T BE TOO LATE TO SAY THAT I WAS SO WRONG!!!

Burt turns down the radio, pulls from a bottle of Makers.

BURT
Ugh. Classic. Cause it comes from the heart. Cause there's an inherent truth to the lyrics of Russell Hitchcock.

ROY
Burt, I can honestly say: you are the biggest fan of Air Supply I've ever met in my life.

Roy drinks.

ROY (CONT'D)
Wow, that burns like crazy. Should a police officer be drinking this?

BURT
Dunno. Should a grown man be building a sand castle?
(taking back the bottle)
You're under arrest by the way.

ROY
Tousche, sir. Tousche.

Again, Roy fixes on the woman's picture.

ROY (CONT'D)
Your, um, girlfriend or something?

BURT
Ask a lot of questions?

ROY
A-B-E. Always be engaging. Part of the phone strategy they teach us at “Excelsior Executive Search”.

BURT
Enjoy that?

ROY
It’s not all bad.
(off Burt’s look)
It sucks dick. I friggin’ hate it.

Burt takes a good swig.

ROY (CONT’D)
God, I dunno how I ended up where I did. Come to think of it, this castle’s the first thing I’ve ever done that’s made me feel remotely...good. Like I’m not a cog in a machine...or -- or an extra in someone else’s TV show.

BURT
I heard that.

ROY
I mean, there were days when I literally felt like I might as well be a -- a couch or a refrigerator, a piece of furniture in most people’s lives. I’d have this reoccuring dream where I’d be standing there at work and I’d actually start disintegrating. Just turning to grains of-

Burt starts the engine.

ROY (CONT’D)
Wait, what are you doing?

BURT
Wanna meet her?

Motioning to the pic...

ROY
Who? Not -- ?

BURT
She'll love you. You can tell her about Excelsior Executive Whatever.

ROY
(confused)
Burt. Dude. We were just -- I mean, you cool to drive?

He isn't. But Burt peels off the beach anyway.

EXT. BOARDWALK - CONTINUOUS

Watching from the boardwalk: THE SKATERS. They grip crowbars. Spray paint. Wear black hoodies. The First Skater smiles.

EXT. CEMETARY - LATER

Eerily still. Burt stumbles through the graveyard.

BURT
This way.

ROY
Burt, I don't know about this.

BURT
C'mon, man. She's over here.

Roy inches up the walk, slightly freaked out.

BURT (CONT'D)
Lori, sweetheart. There's someone I want you to meet.

ROY
I think we should go.

BURT
Don't be a jag, Roy. Introduce yourself.

ROY
I mean it.

BURT
Speak up. We came this far.

ROY
Dude, I really don't feel--

BURT
FOR CHRIST'S SAKE THE WOMAN'S DEAD!
THE LEAST YOU CAN DO IS BE POLITE!

Burt's eyes well over. He stumbles.

ROY
Easy, man. I got ya.

BURT
Shit. I think I'm gonna yack.

As Roy steadies Burt. Over his heaving, Roy glances at a HEADSTONE, not too far off: **GARRETT OLSON (1949-2002).**

I/E. BEACH PATROL BRONCO - LATER

Parked. Roy sits shotgun. Burt at the wheel. On Burt...

BURT
We met at The Shaghoian in Fresno. Concert hall. I was up there visiting some fam. It was where she lived at the time. I guess I knew she was always kind of a goer-outer. Partier. Nothing major. Weed. Xanex. And talk about a girl who could handle her stuff. She never looked wobbly or glassy-eyed. She'd just smile that Lori smile. And it -- could power a house it was so big and beautiful.

ROY
Yeah.

BURT
About that time, I got promoted. We were still doing the long distance thing. But I was convinced she'd find someone else- she was a 10. Like super out of my league. So, I made the case for cohabitation. Y'know: "take it for test drive. See if WE work." And next thing you know we're engaged.

ROY
Great.

BURT
Kidding? Dream come true. Wedding's coming, I start working later.
(MORE)

BURT (CONT'D)
Longer. Trying to scrape together overtime. Not thinking, my girl's all alone. Doesn't know a soul in this town. How's she keeping busy? Then I come home one night, two, three AM and there's my answer. On the bathroom floor. Couple lines of god-knows-what on the dresser.

For the first time, Burt turns to Roy.

BURT (CONT'D)
I was a narcotics officer. How I could I not have seen?

ROY
Like you said. She really, I dunno, handled her stuff.
(beat)
The concert. Who was playing? The night you two met?

Burt glances at the AIR SUPPLY CD on his dash.

BURT
I should get back to the castle.

ROY
Right. Must be late.

Burt keys up the Bronco, pulls out.

EXT. ROY'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Burt drops Roy off. Roy waves. Burt motors down the street.

INT. ROY'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Gloria, fast sleep on the couch. Roy sits down next to her. Looks at her. She snores. String of drool. And yet...

...she's never looked more beautiful. One bare foot sticks out from the blanket. Roy covers it.

INT. EXCELSIOR EXECUTIVE SEARCH - MORNING

Roy walks in. Waves to his Indian Coworker. He lowers his head.

INT. CUBICLES - CONTINUOUS

On Roy's desk: completely empty. All of the castle stuff: boxed. From his office, Alan nods ominously at Roy.

INT. ALAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Roy races in.

ROY
No.

ALAN
Roy.

ROY
Not now. I have expenses- a wedding. Don't do this.

ALAN
Do what? All I've "done" is give you shot after shot. Only to be ignored, shut down, unappreciated.

From outside, Dusty eavesdrops on the convo.

ALAN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry you've made the choices you did. I always considered you a valued member of our-

ROY
C'mon, Alan. I got crapped on around here. And you know it. The least you can do is cut me some slack.

ALAN
Slack? What do you think these last two weeks were?

Dusty pops his head in...

DUSTY
Everything copacetic in here?

ALAN
Get the fuck out of here, will you, Dusty? Thanks, pal.

Dusty leaves.

ALAN (CONT'D)
Roy, this is an office. Like it or not, you're a number. I'm a number. Dusty, God love him, is a number. I can only inject so much human emotion into this equation before the numbers stop adding up.

ROY
I deserved that promotion. Over Dusty. Over everyone.

ALAN
Maybe. And maybe I was starting to realize the error of my ways. Unfortunately I won't have the opportunity to right that wrong, now. But that's not on me.

ROY
Alan.

ALAN
I'll see you on the beach, Roy.

Before Roy can speak another word...

ALAN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. Contact payroll about your severance.

EXT. EXCELSIOR EXECUTIVE SEARCH - CONTINUOUS

Roy drifts out of the office, box of personal belongings. He dumps them in the back of his Corolla.

INT. WEDDING BAND BOOKER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The BOOKER opens an envelope from the bank. Inside: a returned check from GLORIA SHEPHERD -- INSUFFICIENT FUNDS.

EXT. ROY'S APARTMENT - LATER

Roy parks in front of his apartment. Heads up the steps. Where Gloria is waiting.

GLORIA
Should I guess why you're not at the office right now?

Roy puts down the box.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
Got a call from the caterer, this morning. And the florist. And band.

ROY
Gloria.

GLORIA
No biggie. Only took me a few months to plan. But hey, it's just a wedding, right?

Gloria heads inside. Roy gives chase into the --

INT. ROY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

ROY
Wait. Give me a sec. A chance to explain.

GLORIA
Explain? Actually, on second thought, I would <u>love</u> to hear this.

Nothing from Roy.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
I'll get you going: "Don't worry, Gloria. The checks we wrote for the music and the flowers and the food for our ceremony bounced cause...I spent all of our savings on a stupid fucking shit-fucker of a sand castle -- <u>ARE YOU SERIOUS</u>?!
(calming)
I am a compassionate person, Roy. It's sort of like my thing. And if I didn't know you were a perfectly sane individual I might- despite all reason- bring myself to <u>discuss</u> this. But you're not having a psychotic episode, this is pure unbridled-

ROY
Can't you see this isn't about you?

GLORIA
<u>Selfishness</u>.

Roy scans the sand bags, shovels lining the wall by his bedroom. Obscuring pics of him and Gloria.

ROY
...how could you?

GLORIA
What?

ROY
Understand. You're important. You DO things.

GLORIA
Please.

ROY
People don't look through you. At the end of the day, you'll have <u>existed</u>.

GLORIA
What's that supposed to mean?

ROY
That's supposed to mean I'm thirty. Not fifty. Or seventy. But the window for achieving greatness in my life is still getting slimmer every day. Marriage. Children. These things require all of you. And I want them. With you. But this once, before I cross that threshold-

GLORIA
You wanted to do something special. It's a sand castle.

ROY
It is the <u>best</u> of me.
(beat)
I have no illusions about leaving a footprint on this earth. Even a fingerprint. I'm not that guy. But in the name of all that's good, gimme a chance to scratch the surface, do once what you and Larry and Mary Ann do every day.

GLORIA
They let you go at work.

ROY
I'll find something else.

GLORIA
You threw them away. All of our plans.

ROY
They were YOUR plans. Always were. I just helped you realize them. That's what I do.

For a moment, Gloria's silenced. Then --

GLORIA
The old Roy never would've done this. Not in a million years.

ROY
Which Roy do you want to marry? The Roy who rolls over and plays dead or the Roy who breaks his ass to achieve something?

Roy's cell rings. On the caller ID: Savannah. Roy glances from Gloria to the phone.

GLORIA
Which Roy gives a shit about me?

The phone rings again. Roy picks up.

ROY
One sec. I promise.
(turning, picking up)
Yeah?

Behind him, all Roy hears is the door slam. When he looks up, he is...<u>alone</u>.

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

Roy- zombified- trudges down to the shore. Mumbling. A man running on fumes. Sees...the scaffolding: massacred. Half the castle: destroyed. Spray painted on 2X4's: SUCK IT, FAGATRON

SAVANNAH
What's he doing? Why is he making those noises?

Roy stops in front of the new ruins. Totally quiet. Then --

ROY
AAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHAAAAA!!!

Burt heads over. Tries to put an arm around Roy.

ROY (CONT'D)
NO! LET DOWNS!!! MORONS!!!

BURT
Don't worry, bud. We're gonna nail those skaters. I-

But Roy bats it away. Whips around.

ROY
No. You morons. You let downs.

BURT
Whoa, man.

ROY
I will not 'whoa man'! I am through whoa man-ing! GOD -- !

Roy stumbles back over a plank. Gets up. Dusts himself off.

ROY (CONT'D)
How many of you are there? Twenty? Thirty? Thirty of you and you can't ward off three teenage skaters.

SAVANNAH
That's not our job.

BURT
She's right.

ROY
Of course she is. Her job is to push to play on her iPod and sit on her ass while I do the heavy lifting.

Walter steps in front of Savannah.

WALTER
Don't talk to her that way.

ROY
What's your job, Walter? To actually build scaffolding that doesn't collapse like a house of cards when THIS -- happens?!

Roy picks up a plank, charges the scaffolding. Falls down.

EXT. BOARDWALK - CONTINUOUS

Walking her dog, Mary Ann notices Roy futilely ramming another plank against the Castle.

MARY ANN
Well, that can't be good.

EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS

BURT
I'll get 'em.

WALTER
You better. Before I do.

Burt tries to still him. Roy squirms away.

ROY
And you, Officer Sirillo- your sole purpose on earth, was to stay sober long enough to guard this one thing. But you couldn't even manage that. You had to take a booze cruise down memory lane. Wrong or right?

BURT
You don't know what you're saying. I -- I'm a good cop.

SAVANNAH
Roy. We all worked our balls off to build this thing. For you. And for ourselves. You don't-

ROY
I don't WHAT? Do you people realize what I've sacrificed -- what I've given up only to -- be back here? I have nothing left. Nothing.

Roy whirls around. His former team looking at him with a mixture of terror and disgust.

ROY (CONT'D)
You're all dismissed. Don't come back.
(no response)
Does this look like my joking around face? You're done. GO!

Slowly the team marches up the beach. Lastly: Burt, Savannah, and Walter. Roy sits on the sand. Gazing at the Ocean --

SAVANNAH (O.S.)
I'm fine. Really.

WALTER (O.S.)
Suck it, Fagatron.

Burt pauses by the boardwalk. Looks back at Roy: Exhausted. Depleted. A picture of defeat. Burt takes a deep breath. And--

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER

Marches through the entrance. Passed the front desk. Where The Rookie Cop drinks a cup of coffee.

ROOKIE COP
Lookie here. If it isn't the white knight of the boardwalk-

BOOM- Burt matter-of-factly shoves him over a chair.

INT. LANGHORNE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Langhorne on the phone. Case file open on his desk.

LANGHORNE
Well, run 'em again. I don't care if you think it's inconclusive.

Langhorne holds up a finger- one minute. But Burt grabs the phone. Hangs up.

BURT
I'm ready. Put me back on the beat.

Langhorne looks long and hard at Burt.

BURT (CONT'D)
I SAID...I'M READY.

Langhorne reaches out a hand. In it Burt drops...the KEYS to the BRONCO.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Gloria wipes tears. Patrick heads over with two cups of coffee.

GLORIA
Thanks. I'm suddenly insanely embarrassed I called you.

PATRICK
Really? Because I couldn't be more pleased. Not about your situation. That you thought of me.

GLORIA
I can't believe you dropped the Takahachi meeting to be here.

PATRICK
Person first. Professional second.

Savannah stamps out an ACTUAL CIGARETTE, comes in from outside. Notices Patrick and Gloria holding hands.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
Look, your trust has been betrayed. You've got a long road ahead. A lot of rebuilding on the emotional docket. Some friendly advice...take a little time.

GLORIA
You're not -- letting me go?

PATRICK
No. Lord no. Verbal diarrhea. Backspace. Delete. What I meant was there's a spare room at my place --

GLORIA
A spare room.

PATRICK
Maybe take the rest of the week off. Carve out some space. In the interest of, oh, mental health?
(beat)
C'mon. What do you say you give yourself the break you deserve?

Patrick smiles an irresistible smile, wipes his cappuccino-foam moustache. On Gloria: pondering the proposal.

EXT. BEACH - EVENING

Roy sits by the shore. Same spot. Getting windy. Someone clears her throat. Sitting on the beach, ten feet back, shoes off: Mary Ann. She gets up, carries her dog over.

MARY ANN
If you're gonna ask how long I've been here...the answer is long enough to know my bro's a surprisingly womanly crier.

ROY
M.A.-

MARY ANN
Relax, man. Everyone needs a little cry-cry time. When I was a teenager I used to bawl into my pillow on the reg. Of course I was watching an unhealthy amount of the movie Beaches during that period but...hey, catharsis. Right, Gerty?
(petting her dog)
Now, I deliberately took a step back from this whole castle whatever. I figured if you really wanted to do this, good on you- but I'm gonna break protocol, cause I like you. Now, tell Little Sis how she can fix things --

CUT TO:

BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

MARY ANN (CONT'D)
Well, shit, Roy. That is a mess.

ROY
What do I think I should do? Did I blow it for good with Gloria?

MARY ANN
Honestly I have no idea. I'm an excellent listener. But when comes to doling out the advice, that was always dad's area of expertise.

ROY
Yeah. I wouldn't really know.

MARY ANN
When's the last time you visited him, by the way?

ROY
Dad? I don't think he'd care much.

MARY ANN
Now, what kind of crap is that? He'd be proud as hell of you, Roy. If you want my opinion: the only reason he never said it while he was alive was he didn't think you'd care.

ROY
What?

MARY ANN
He thought you never liked him. Me and Larry would always go to him with questions and problems. But you'd just stand there with Larry's water bottle or a bag of flour for me. Like you didn't need him and neither did we. Would you cheer that guy on?
(beat)
Christ, you remind me so much of each other. And in the worst ways.

Roy struggles to process this --

ROY
You don't mean -- ?

Mary Ann stands up. Puts down her dog. Helps Roy to his feet.

MARY ANN
Roy, my man, I'm always here to listen. But this problem is just outside my wheelhouse. Maybe you should consider taking it to an expert. C'mon, bro, I think that hurricane's starting to blow in.

EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

Light rain. More wind. Roy's compact pulls into the lot.

I/E. CEMETERY - MOMENTS LATER

Roy holds a bag of Mexican. On his cell...

ROY
Hey, me again. Trying you. For the- probably- eighteenth time. Look, I just wanna talk.
(MORE)

ROY (CONT'D)
Just to -- I dunno -- tell you where I am and find out if there's some way I can make this right. So -- call me. Please.

Roy hangs up. Reaches Wendell's grave. Deep breath. He's tempted to turn around -- but doesn't.

ROY (CONT'D)
I brought you Nachos Supreme. Because I remember you eating Nachos Supreme a lot. And cause you were allergic to flowers. Well, either you or mom were.

Roy puts the take-out on the grave. Rain claps on the plastic.

ROY (CONT'D)
Guess you could say I screwed a lot up. My job. Fiance. MA told me I should come here to ask your advice. I think she thought your spirit would guide me in a positive direction or whatever. But --
(beat)
I'm really pissed off at you, Dad. You were a kind of a dick. I don't care if you thought I didn't like you. That's no excuse. It shouldn't have stood in the way of you being a more supportive father. And I deserved better from you --

Roy opens the bag of Nachos. Starts eating them. Compulsively.

ROY (CONT'D)
That's disrespectful. Crossing the line. I didn't have breakfast.

Roy pulls it together. The rain picks up. Storm's getting pretty intense.

ROY (CONT'D)
I know the mature thing to do is to forgive you. Let go and stuff. I don't think I'm ready to do that. But I'm ready to at least think about doing it. So. Look, I've got another stop to make before I cut out. But I'll be back. And we can talk again. Here.

Roy pulls out a photo. The SECOND PIC we couldn't see from the ALBUM- **5 YEAR OLD ROY and his DAD BUILDING A SAND CASTLE.**

He stuffs it in the bag of nachos.

EXT. CEMETERY - MOMENTS LATER

As Roy pulls out he just misses -- Burt pull in. Squad car.

I/E. CEMETERY - MOMENTS LATER

Burt makes his way to his fiance's grave. Flowers in hand. Then sees something. Bends down. It's...an AIR SUPPLY CD.

I/E. ROY'S APARTMENT - LATER

Roy pushes the door open. Unlocked. Odd.

ROY
...Gloria? Hon?

But it's not.

LAWRENCE (O.S.)
(in a girly voice)
Come in. Me so horny for you.

MARY ANN (O.S.)
You're a dumbass, Larry. She's not even Asian.

At the table, hunched over, concentrated, are --

Lawrence. Who grips a polished, detailed blueprint. And Mary Ann- covered in paper-mache. A model castle on the table.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)
Hey. We took the liberty. Borrowed a key.

LAWRENCE
Neighbor of yours. Salty SOB. And he is not a fan of you- <u>yikes</u>.

Roy looks across the way at Walter. Who shuts the blinds. Roy heads over to the table. Notices all the work his siblings have done on castle-planning.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Feast your eyes. This is balls-to-the-wall, Word to I.M. Pei good.

MARY ANN
Obviously we needed a 3-D visual to make it all gel.

ROY
If you're here, then who's running the restaurant?

MARY ANN
We closed for the day. On account of renovations.

ROY
Aren't you supposed to be working out or something? It's Tuesday. Quads.

LAWRENCE
Gym's not going anywhere. Besides, been slacking on the cross-training. Need my coach to keep me motivated.

Roy picks up the model.

MARY ANN
You're always bending over backwards for us. We should've thrown our full weight behind this from GO.

ROY
Thank you. But I can't --

LAWRENCE
Can't what?

ROY
The castle. It's over.

LAWRENCE
Broseph. Cowboy up. This hurricane's a comin'. We need to finish the job before it wipes out your foundation.

MARY ANN
He's right. You've still got half a castle. The storm's gonna eat up your river sand. By <u>tonight</u>. And you're never shelling out 12K for that stuff again.

ROY
Not without Gloria.

LAWRENCE
She'll come around.

MARY ANN
You've called?

ROY
And texted.

MARY ANN
Try her again. You don't have any clue where she is?

SAVANNAH
I do.

Standing in the doorway, sopping wet barista apron...

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)
Just so we're clear. I'm doing this for me. Cause it's my castle too. And my fly ass has lost fourteen pounds since I started building it.

LAWRENCE
You two know each other?

ROY
We worked together.

Savannah calls out over her shoulder.

SAVANNAH
C'mon, man. We had a deal.
(nothing)
Don't make me drag your boney butt.

Walter appears in a poncho. Scowls at Savannah.

WALTER
So. We standing here all day with our dicks in our hands or we can we shake a goddamned leg?

Mary Ann tosses Roy his kiddie pail and lime green shovel.

INT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Officers are lined up. At attention. Burt included. Langhorne paces in front of them --

LANGHORNE
Gentlemen, there's a hurricane alert effective immediately. What that means is we need all civilians at home, indoors, off the street. No exceptions. Zero tolerance. We're shuttin' this mother down.

Burt's phone buzzes...Langhorne stops in front of Burt.

LANGHORNE (CONT'D)
Is that understood, Officer Sirillo?

BURT
Absolutely.

Langhorne moves on. Burt checks the caller ID: Roy. Silences the call.

I/E. ROY'S COROLLA - MOMENTS LATER

Roy races through the rain. Lawrence, Mary Ann, Walter, and Savannah also squeezed in.

LAWRENCE
Jesus -- remind me why we couldn't take my Escalade?

ROY
It's a gas guzzler. Gloria would never get in that thing.

LAWRENCE
Is now really the time to be thinking about carbon footprints?

MARY ANN
Really, Larry. Do you have any idea what kind of human rights crimes these transnational oil companies are responsible for?

WALTER
Take me, Lord. Take me now.

SAVANNAH
LOOK OUT!

Roy slams on the brakes. Sees the SKATERS cross the street, searching for cover. He looks down by Mary Ann's feet where --

There's A TUB of PAPER MASCHE. Walter nods at Roy.

The SKATERS dart under an awning. Super relieved. When --

ROY
INCOMING!

WHAP! Roy leans out of the car, douses them in paper mache.

DOUCHEY SKATER
No way! You gotta be -- ?

ROY
Suck it, Fagatrons!!!
(to Mary Ann)
I didn't mean that in an offensive-to-gay-people way, I promise.

MARY ANN
I absolve you.

They charge after the Corolla but it speeds off. Walter pressing his bare butt cheeks against the back window.

INT. PATRICK'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Gloria in a bathrobe. She dries her hair. Patrick cranks up some Enya.

PATRICK
...sail away, sail away, sail away.

Patrick crosses the mantle, lined with charity-related accolades, awards. Starts making matte, a tea from Uruguay.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
Y'know you're welcome to use my bathroom, Gloria. You're not solely relegated to the guest shower.

GLORIA
Patrick, I should go.

PATRICK
What? What happened to emotional decompression?

GLORIA
Still in effect. But I feel like I'm sending the wrong message.

EXT. PATRICK'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Roy pulls up to the corner, leaves the door open. Races down up the walkway.

INT. PATRICK'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Patrick puts down his bag of leaves. Boils water.

PATRICK
Seriously, Gloria? Did you assume- because I offered up my home in this time of personal turmoil- I was somehow sexually or romantically interested in you?

GLORIA
It was more the sleeping at my feet thing. After I politely refused to share your bed.

PATRICK
AGAIN: I'd taken an Ambian. It kicked in at an unexpected- BOLLOCKS!

Patrick spills hot water all over himself.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
WOW, THAT IS SURPRISINGLY PAINFUL!

GLORIA
Oh my god! Are you okay?

PATRICK
IT'S ALMOST AS IF THE CHEMICALS IN THE LEAVES INTENSIFIES THE BURN!

Patrick shakes his burnt hands. Gloria races over, helps him peel his steaming shirt off. As Roy stops by the window.

GLORIA
No. ROY.

Roy reverses. Then runs. The rain beating down on him.

I/E. ROY'S COMPACT - CONTINUOUS

Roy hops back in. Alone. The others await an answer.

ROY
She wasn't there. I saw her stuff but she wasn't there.

LAWRENCE
She'll come back, man. But until then, we have a job to do, right?

Roy takes a deep breath.

EXT. POLICE STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Burt and company get in squad cars, prepare to clear the streets. On his passenger seat is the AIR SUPPLY CD.

EXT. STREET (VENICE) - MOMENTS LATER

The fleet of Squad Cars roll out ahead of him- sirens on.

EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Construction equipment rusts in the rain. The tent and aqueducts have been blown over.

Wind punishes the already damaged castle. Still...

...the MARKER stands firm. And taking it all in from afar: Lawrence, Mary Ann, Savannah, Walter and -- ROY.

The Ocean crashes on the shore.

Roy surveys the scene as if to say 'How the hell are we going to do this?' But...he takes the first steps forward. The others follow and in no time they're --

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

-- IN IT. Roy kneels in the sand. The others help him lay out Lawrence's blue print. Weigh down the corners with stones.

Roy yells through the rain --

ROY
If any of you want -- to turn around, now's -- the time! You -- don't need to -- be here!

MARY ANN
We're here -- cause we wanna be -- Roy. We -- love you, dude.

Savannah shields her face from the rain. Roy nods at Lawrence. Who leans over the blueprint.

LAWRENCE
Okay. We don't have time -- to rebuild the scaffolding. So we're -- just gonna have -- to move fast! And hope we don't get -- eaten alive by the storm -- ! Everyone, listen closely -- !

EXT. BOARDWALK - CONTINUOUS

A PASSER-BY spots the group out by the beach. Takes out his cell, dials 911.

POLICE OPERATOR
Hello, this is the Los Angeles County Police Department.

INT. ROY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Gloria bolts in, rain-bedraggled, frantically looking for Roy. But he's not in the kitchen --

GLORIA
...ROY?!

-- or the bedroom. Or bathroom. It's only when Gloria stops in the living room that she sees --

GLORIA (CONT'D)
Shit.

The MODEL CASTLE on the living room table. Outside, lightening pierces the sky. Thunder rumbles.

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

Mary Ann fastens a HUGE ROPE around a TEE PEE of WOODEN PLANKS -- it looks like an INVERTED FUNNEL. Both protecting the castle and creating a mouth through which to feed it.

The RUSTY shovel of the bulldozer digs into the wet sand, dumps it into the FUNNEL. Driving the machine --

MARY ANN
...you okay up there?

-- ROY. He grips the lever, rocked with a powerful gust.

ROY
Yeah -- the sand is sticking! The rain -- helps! Larry?

Lawrence drives a SECOND BULLDOZER. Also holds on tight. He gives a slightly nervous thumbs up.

Savannah tries to turn on a digital video camera -- but it won't work.

SAVANNAH
Larry -- where's the battery for the camcorder -- ?

LAWRENCE
Shit -- I left it -- in the trunk!

Walter has built a FENCE of discarded 2X4's between the SHORE and the CASTLE. Packed it with wet sand. A BARRIER.

WALTER
I can -- go get it!

ROY
No. You stay. Mary Ann -- ?

MARY ANN
-- ON IT!

But as soon as Mary Ann lets go of the rope, she's BLOWN back. Falls <u>hard</u> on her side.

Roy jumps down from the Bulldozer. Heads over to her. Her arm's scraped.

Roy rips off a piece of his shirt, ties it around the cut.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)
Thanks, Roy! Not sure -- that's necessary!

ROY
I know. It's just -- I've always wanted -- to do that!

MARY ANN
Well, it looked -- really badass!

He hands her his cell phone. When --

ROY
Just use the camera on this.

Roy spots Gloria, charging down the beach, fighting the storm. And losing. He runs to her.

I/E. BURT'S SQUAD CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Burt ups the speed on the windshield wipers when a call comes over the radio --

POLICE OPERATOR
Calling all cars, calling all cars. We have a report of five civilians on the beach. Please stand by for an address -- thank you.

BURT
Balls.

Burt flips on his siren, steps on the gas.

EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS

In the background, Lawrence and company build on. The Castle grows exponentially. While --

ROY
Gloria! Stop -- !

Roy runs to Gloria, puts an arm around her, shielding her from the rain. Also keeping her still.

ROY (CONT'D)
What are you doing -- it's a friggin hurricane!

GLORIA
What you saw back there with Patrick--

ROY
Whatever it was -- we can talk about it -- inside somewhere. I can't risk you getting hurt.

The Ocean lashes against the shore. Walter is pushed back.

SAVANNAH
I got ya, Walter -- I got ya!

Lawrence hops off the bulldozer to help them. Still, Gloria's not moving. Roy knows she wants to do this here and now.

GLORIA
I need to know. Did you mean what you said? About our plans -- being my plans? Do you not want to get -- married to me, Roy?

LAWRENCE
M.A.!

The Ocean batters against the barrier. Now Mary Ann runs over to help the others. Keep the sea from washing away the castle.

ROY
Gloria, I -- I made a shit ton of mistakes. I built the castle for all the wrong reasons. All I wanted to do was feel like I -- was capable of something.

GLORIA
CAPABLE? ROY -- Mary Ann and her -- cooking, Larry and -- Iron Man, me and the fund raising -- none of that happens -- without YOU!

ROY
But -- I messed everything up.

GLORIA
Well maybe -- maybe this is a good thing. You hated your job. And the way I asked so much of you -- maybe how I was in general.

ROY
Not you. Never you. I love you so much it's stupid, Gloria. Please tell me you know that.

The Ocean's getting stronger. Smashing harder against the shore. Mary Ann, Walter, Lawrence, and Savannah struggling.

WALTER
Hey, help! We need -- help!

Gloria looks from Roy to the barrier. Then -- as a wave nears it -- she SPRINTS over leans in along side Roy's siblings.

THWACK! The wave hits the barrier BUT --

Recedes. With Gloria's help they're holding the water back.

Roy stares at her- smiling. She's finally on board.

GLORIA
Jesus, Roy! Finish it for shit's sake!

Roy snaps into action. Races over to the bulldozer. Climbs into the drivers seat WHEN --

WHUP! WHUP!

Burt's SQUAD CAR screeches to a halt. He rolls down his window.

BURT (THROUGH HIS SPEAKER)
Evacuate the beach! This is a class five hurricane! I repeat-

The wind swallows his words. Behind an explosion of sea spray, Burt locks on the vision transfixing the crowd --

OUR LIFE-SIZED SAND CASTLE

Six stories high. Sky-scraping turrets. Only the highest of the towers is unfinished.

HIPSTER ONLOOKER
YO, THERE HE IS __ !

Roy hops off the bulldozer, loops around the foot of the castle --

He holds his kiddie pail and matching shovel.

BURT (THROUGH HIS SPEAKER)
Sir, for your own safety, you are to cease and desist -- !

Roy takes a knee. Fills the pail with sand.

BURT (THROUG HIS SPEAKER) (CONT'D)
This is your final warning!

As police cars brake and officers charge the beach, Roy puts the pail between his teeth.

The Rookie Cop and Langhorne get out of their cars.

LANGHORNE
Grab 'em. Cuff 'em if you have to. But they're coming with us.

ROOKIE COP
Gotcha.

By the barricade, Mary Ann sees the police officers marching Roy's way. She thinks a moment, then --

MARY ANN
Screw it.

She whips off her shirt. Starts running topless, down the beach.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)
Come and get me, pigs!

ROOKIE COP
Miss! Please! Come back here!

LANGHORNE
Just grab her!

MARY ANN
Mmmm...I've never smelled wet bacon before!

The Rookie takes off after her. Langhorne too. But Mary Ann is running circles around them. Other cops exit cars as --

WALTER
Fine, goddamn it, if that's what it takes!

Walter yanks off his pants. Runs bottomless through the storm, distracting/repulsing the reinforcements.

WALTER (CONT'D)
Oink, oink, bitches!

SAVANNAH
Uh-uh. Think I just threw up in my mouth. No, I definitely just did.

INT. BURT'S SQUAD CAR - CONTINUOUS

Burt watches the insanity. But locks on the others- sans Walter and Mary Ann- struggling to hold back the ocean.

The Castle itself is just INCHES from breaking the record.

EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Burt hurls himself against the barrier, now alongside Lawrence, Gloria and Savannah.

BURT
Time the waves! On three! One, two--

Burt and company lean into an oncoming wave, hold it back. But just barely. Meanwhile --

With the wind slicing his face and the rain hammering his body, Roy starts to climb this sand goliath.

GLORIA
Roy!

Lawrence puts his back to the barrier, wields his phone, filming Roy.

LANGHORNE
Sir, you're to stop what you're doing immediately!

But Roy doesn't give a shit. He's gonna finish this- come hell or high water. And as he braves the elements, we hear once more that familiar voice, our Merlin-esque Sage...

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
This is the story of Roy Olson.

EXT. STREET - EVENING (FLASHBACK - MOS)

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
A very ordinary man.

Businessmen in IDENTICAL GRAY SUITS wait at a crosswalk. When the light changes, the crowd moves on. Except for ROY- clean shave, side part. His mind, we can tell, is elsewhere.

EXT. BEACH - PRESENT - CONTINUOUS

Roy climbs. And climbs.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM (EXCELSIOR) -- (FLACKBACK - MOS)

The Love Fest for Dusty rolls on. Roy polishes off a beer.

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
At work, his bosses found him average.
In performance and character.

EXT. BEACH - PRESENT - CONTINUOUS

Roy grunts. Twists in the wind.

INT. FUND RAISER (HOTEL) -- (FLASHBACK - MOS)

Guests speak to GLORIA, MARY ANN, LAWRENCE. Ignore Roy.

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
He was like so many a face in the crowd.

EXT. BEACH - PRESENT - CONTINUOUS

Burt races Roy's way, pushes his foot up.

EXT. ROY'S APARTMENT -- (FLASHBACK - MOS)

Roy takes off his shoes. Pouring sand into the wind.

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR
Little did he know, that despite fears of seeming 'Less Than'...

EXT. BEACH - PRESENT - CONTINUOUS - MOS

Lawrence, Mary Ann, Gloria, Burt, Savannah, Walter watch Roy with love. With respect. With appreciation.

EXT. BEACH (FLASHBACK - MOS)

Roy escaping the fund raiser. Staring out Pacific. Making the same wish he always makes.

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (V.O.)
He had always BEEN...

EXT. BEACH - PRESENT - CONTINUOUS - MOS

But just as Roy nears the top, just as he raises this last bucket of sand --

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR
Yes. He had ALWAYS been...

A MASSIVE WAVE rolls over the shore. Bowls over Burt, Lawrence, Savannah. Pummels Roy -- sends him airborne.

Roy falls, tumbles through the air and drops out of the frame with a THUD/CRACK we --

CUT TO BLACK.

For a moment we stay there. In darkness. Then --

SAGE-LIKE NARRATOR (CONT'D)
...more.

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

GASP -- Roy opens his eyes. Looks down at his ankle- bone peeking from his pant leg.

He bleeds from multiple gashes. But gazes up at:

THE CASTLE, still intact. Inching over the marker.

HE DID IT.

Family, friends, police swarm. Gloria takes Roy's hand. An ambulance swerves into the parking lot. AS we --

DISSOLVE TO:

The last page of our DUSTY MEDIEVAL TEXT. It reads:

THE END

As the book closes, we see its title: THE CASTLE.

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