

RUNNING ROUGHSHOD

Written by

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I've included content warnings on the final page of this script (page 120 numbered in the doc, page 122 total) since some may consider them to be a spoiler. Running Roughshod contains adult content some may find objectionable or uncomfortable, so if you would like to know the content warnings beforehand, please scroll to the end of this document.

Thank you for reading. - Devin Raposo

FADE IN:

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

TRISH DIHIDAR (27, Bangladeshi, dirty blonde) wears a LANYARD with a HOSPITAL ID CARD strapped to it.

ON THE ID CARD, WHICH READS:

ORLANDO HEALTH | MEMBER ID: 34659824 | MEMBER: PATRICIA
DIHIDAR | RESIDENT | PEDIATRICS

TRISH (O.S.)
So, like a pyramid scheme.

A MAN (20s) from a multi-level marketing (MLM) company hounds Trish.

MLM GUY (O.S.)
Pyramid? No, no—
(stressing)
—*Trish*. It's a multi-level
marketing scheme—uh, company!

TRISH (O.S.)
Mhm. And I suppose you're gonna
tell me to find two people who'll
find two people, and then *they'll*
all find two people, until, what do
you know, there's no more people to
be found! You sell knives, too?

MLM GUY (O.S.)
(furiously)
Hey, fuck you, bitch!

TRISH (O.S.)
Get the fuck away from me!

Trish RUNS AWAY into a NEARBY BUS to escape MLM guy, who's now visible from behind.

ON THE SUN FOR A BEAT

INT. BUS - DAY

The tall, imposing BUS DRIVER (40s) LEAPS OUT of his seat and PUSHES the MLM guy away before he can enter after Trish.

The passengers CHEER. The driver sits back down and quickly shuts the door. Trish puts three dollar bills into a slot, and passes the driver a fiver.

BRENT PETERSON (25, white, unassuming) STANDS UP and FLAILS HIS ARMS like his kid's the star quarterback of the high school football team.

BRENT
Yeah! Go get 'em! Yeah!!!

The passengers ALL LOOK at him and QUIET DOWN for a beat. Brent sits back down. His facial expression dampens.

Too bad for Trish: the seat next to Brent is the only one free. She hesitates walking toward it, like she's approaching an ominous scene in a horror film.

TRISH
(unsure)
Is-is this seat taken?

BRENT
(lively)
Oh, not at all! Feel free! Name's Brent.

Trish just nods. Brent rushes to move his stuff to accommodate Trish. She smiles meekly and gently lowers herself into the seat.

Brent gives her this look that says: "I'm looking for something; maybe you're it."

BRENT (CONT'D)
Seat belt!

Brent TAPS his seat belt twice.

TRISH
Right.

Trish slowly straps herself in.

INT. BUS - DAY - TRAVELING (LATER)

The bus is getting a move on.

BRENT
So...what do you do?

TRISH
(reticent)
I...work in a hospital.

BRENT
 (exasperatedly)
 Yeah, but, what do you do, uh...?

TRISH
 ...I'm Trish. And I write.

BRENT
 Oh, a writer. Wow.

Pause a beat.

TRISH
 You?

BRENT
 Oh, me? Just graduated. UCF.

TRISH
 You graduated from UCF?

BRENT
 Oh yeah. But these days, I'm
 lookin' for somethin' new. Trying
 to find my *inspo'*. Other than
 that...
 (blows air)
 Retail. It's a living!

The driver TURNS LEFT. Trish's eyes widen.

TRISH
 (exasperated, under her
 breath)
 Oh, shit! Wrong fucking bus.

Trish stands up and pulls the BELL CORD. DING.

TRISH (CONT'D)
 I can't be late again! Fuck!

BRENT
 Oh, getting off already? Formosa
 Bridge for me.

Trish's face says: "good for you, don't care".

TRISH
 Um. K.

BRENT
 (perky)
 Yep!
 (beat, then deadpan)
 (MORE)

BRENT (CONT'D)
Seemed like the best place to kill
myself.

Trish STARES at him in disbelief. Brent looks back plainly.

She starts to LAUGH, a lot, and hard. The smile on Brent's
face can't hide his deep, deep pain.

ON TRISH LAUGHING FROM INSIDE THE BUS

A TRUCK opposite Brent and Trish's side T-BONES the bus.

BLACK SCREEN:

SUPER: "RUNNING ROUGHSHOD"

BEAT

SUPER: "TWO YEARS LATER"

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Animated Brent wears business casual, opposite an INTERVIEWER
out of frame. A pair of aviators hangs from his collar.

BRENT
We just had this bond, you know?

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
...Hmm.

BRENT
Shared experiences like that are
so...pivotal for teambuilding,
which is why I'm thrilled about
this position at your company-

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
...We'll actually be pursuing other
candidates at this time, Mr.
Peterson.

Brent leans back in his seat, mouth slightly agape.

INT. PETE'S DINER - NIGHT

Brent and Trish sit opposite each other. Quiet, except for
the barflies. Brent has a salad in front of him (no dressing)
and picks at Trish's fry basket.

Trish talks, but her voice is muffled. Brent's not listening.
The interviewer ECHOES in his head.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
 (reverby)
 ...Pursuing...other...candidates...
 at this time...

Trish SNAPS her fingers in Brent's face. Brent comes to.

TRISH
 Yo, you here?

BRENT
 (annoyed)
 No, yeah. Kid vomited all over you.

Brent mixes his salad around with a fork, not eating.

TRISH
 So, how'd the interview go?

BRENT
 Oh, um...they told me they'll be
 reaching out soon for next steps.

TRISH
 That's good! That's—that's great!

BRENT
 Yeah, I mean, you know, whatever...

TRISH
 Well, let me know how it goes.

Brent smiles and nods. Trish clears her throat and wipes her hands.

TRISH (CONT'D)
 So, I'm at this part in my book
 where, this character, she's like
obsessed with social media, but
 since I don't *have* social media,
 I'm kinda lost on how to write her,
 you know? And that makes me think,
 am I actively writing a bad
 character? Should I rethink her
 from the ground up, and, in doing
 so, rewrite *the whole thing*? I
 should have outlined more. If I
 had—

Brent watches Trish as she talks, lightly nodding and smiling. But it's the same sad smile we saw on the bus.

INT. BRENT'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

A ceiling fan WHIRLS, BUZZING and busted.

ON BRENT'S HANDS ABOVE A TRASHCAN

Brent's hands shuffle through envelopes, tossing each in the trash, until he finds a NOTICE from his landlord which reads:

"NOTICE OF INCREASE ON YOUR MONTHLY RENT"

Brent walks to the window (no blinds) by his bed and looks out it.

ON THE FULL MOON FOR A BEAT

ON BRENT

A dissatisfied look on his face, illuminated by moonlight.

ON BRENT'S COMPUTER

Brent look up the balance of his bank account: it's low.

ON A PIECE OF PAPER

Doing the math, Brent realizes within the next couple months he won't be able to make rent on his current salary.

ON BRENT'S COMPUTER

Brent scrolls through a social media site, and stumbles upon a thirst trap photo uploaded by MOLLY MCKNIGHT (25).

He WRITES: "come here often??"

INT. LOWE'S/FRONT REGISTER - DAY

Brent wears a red vest over a t-shirt. He rings up a CUSTOMER as efficiently as a robot on auto-pilot.

BEEP NOISES from machinery as Brent works.

BRENT

That'll be \$37.93, miss.

CUSTOMER

Oh, where do you keep the three inch lumber screws?

Brent points in a direction and puts on jovial airs.

BRENT

Halfway down aisle 27 on your left.
Get 'em before they're gone!

The customer pays and heads in the direction Brent indicated. Another CUSTOMER approaches his register, and Brent begins the process anew.

INT. LOWE'S/BREAK ROOM - DAY

Brent sits at a table, checking his phone.

ON BRENT'S PHONE

Brent checks to see if Molly replied to his comment. Nope.

A coworker, STEVEN EMERSON (19), walks up to Brent, excited.

STEVEN

Brent, my dude, got somethin' big.

Brent looks up at him, aloof.

BRENT

What is it this time?

STEVEN

Listen, I'm gonna get you in on the
ground floor of something
transformative. This can lock in
your spot as a financial
independent working around *your*
schedule, with no bosses, no-

BRENT

Lose the sales pitch, Steve.

STEVEN

Not Steve, anymore, that's "*Mr. Emerson*" to you. Now, by purchasing one of my company's—we're called Slit, for the, hang on, the—
(thinks it through)
—"slit' in the spacetime continuum we open for you"—with this hand-crafted, artisinal tool, you can cut through self-imposed barriers of the mind—

Steven pulls out a GLEAMING SHARP KNIFE.

BRENT

What are you—

Brent GRABS Steven by the collar and DRAGS HIM around a corner, leaning back as he steps to avoid the knife.

STEVEN
(exasperated)
You gotta get outta this dump, man!

Brent shrugs him off. Brent's mad, but looks like he agrees.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
(whispering, desperate)
Look, I need this, just buy, like two, yeah, two, that'll be good.

BRENT
No.

STEVEN
Remember that time I bailed you out when you *pooed up* on janitor duty?

BRENT
Let's not—

STEVEN
(sternly)
Remember?

Brent COVERS STEVEN'S MOUTH with his hand.

BRENT
I gotta go back—

STEVEN
Yeah? Back to what?

BRENT
(sighs)
How is this gonna—?

STEVEN
(sternly)
Back to *what*, Brent?

Brent looks around. He considers it for a beat.

BRENT
Alright, fine, just two.

STEVEN
(ecstatic)
You won't regret this! Now, if I could just get you to sign here—

Steven opens his locker nearby and pulls out a CONTRACT.

BRENT

What, no, just take the money, take my key, put the knives in my trunk, and bring the key back. *No pyramid schemes.*

STEVEN

But that's where the money is—you know what, fine. Just the knives.

BRENT

(firmly)
Just the knives.

Steven composes himself.

STEVEN

And I'll have you know, it's not a—
(with air quotes)
—"Pyramid scheme," it's an MLM.

Steven RUSHES out of the break room.

BRENT

(under his breath)
An MLM?

INT. LOWE'S/FRONT REGISTER - DAY

Brent rings up a CUSTOMER.

Suddenly, Steven RUNS UP to Brent, WAVING his car key.

STEVEN

Here's your key! And your knives are...you know where!

The customer raises an eyebrow to Brent. Brent nods and continues scanning.

INT. LOWE'S PARKING LOT/BRENT'S CAR - NIGHT

Brent sits in the driver's seat, rotating one of the new KNIVES in his hand. He pulls his PHONE from his pocket.

ON BRENT'S PHONE

Brent checks to see whether Molly replied to his comment; nothing. Then, he searches for JOB LISTINGS FOR MLMs.

Brent finds an OPEN HOUSE CALL for an MLM called "TedShed".

The ad copy reads: "TEDSHED: GET IN ON THE GROUND FLOOR OF SOMETHING DEADLY GOOD"

"MAKE: your own schedule"

"EARN: company equity"

"FEEL: sweet, sweet freedom ;)"

"Open house ONE DAY ONLY: August 18th"

ON THE DATE ON BRENT'S PHONE

It's August 18th.

Brent quickly STARTS THE CAR.

EXT. TEDSHED OFFICE - NIGHT

ON A PAPER TAPED TO A GLASS DOOR

The sign reads 'TEDSHED OPEN HOUSE' in marker.

INT. TEDSHED OFFICE/LOBBY - NIGHT

Teenage girls and women in their 20s sit in fold-up chairs. No decor. The room is lit by a single fluorescent panel.

Everyone's dressed better than Brent.

Opposite the entry door is the only occupied OFFICE; the door leading in hangs open.

At the reception desk sits SELENE RIGGS (16), glued to her phone. There's a fold-up cover behind her not fully drawn, making a passageway. Back there: empty rooms, and darkness.

SELENE

(dully)

Take a seat, please.

BRENT

(goofily)

Didn't know they were free!

Brent takes a seat. He nods at RITA ZHANG (21) next to him. She meekly smiles back.

Suddenly, a male VOICE YELLS from the open room.

VOICE (O.S.)
 (shrilly)
 Z-zong!?! Zuh-hang!?!

The man CLEARS HIS THROAT. Rita looks down, embarrassed.

VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 (menacingly)
 ZHANG!?!?! ZHANG!?!?!?!?!?

Rita gets up and heads toward the open door, awkwardly smiling.

RITA
 (meekly)
 Present, sir.

Rita closes the door behind her.

INT. TEDSHED OFFICE/LOBBY - NIGHT (LATER)

Rita exits the room looking dejected.

BRENT
 (in a 'goodbye' tone)
 Nice to meetcha!

Rita nods and quickly makes for the exit.

MONTAGE: INTERVIEWEES

-A TEENAGE GIRL (17) goes inside.

-The teenager exits, then a WOMAN (19) enters.

-The brunette woman exits, mouthing "What the fuck?", then ANOTHER WOMAN (40s) enters.

END MONTAGE

INT. TEDSHED OFFICE/LOBBY - NIGHT (LATER)

The last INTERVIEWEE (34) SLAMS the door behind her, fuming.

VOICE (O.S.)
 God fucking damnit!

We hear a loud crashing. Brent looks over to Selene, who doesn't budge an inch.

Brent creeps over to the door, knocks on it timidly, and opens it.

INT. TEDSHED OFFICE/WILLIE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

WILLIE J. PITZ (29, definitely white) sits in an office chair before a folding table with his back to Brent, face in hands. His suit jacket sits on the floor; he wears a chain t-shirt (think: Abercrombie), khakis, and flipflops.

Papers and books are strewn about the floor, and on a table behind Willie sits adorable TEDDY BEARS HOLDING KNIVES.

BRENT
(meekly)
Yell-o?

Willie doesn't turn around.

WILLIE
(dejected)
They say the future is 'girlboss'.
But they don't want to work! Ask
me, they're only good for three
things: cooking, cleaning, and-

Willie STANDS, throws a foot on the desk, and PELVIC THRUSTS the desk, biting his lower lip and furrowing his brow.

BRENT
Well, uh...

Brent catches sight of one of the teddy bears pointing a knife in his direction. He smiles and POINTS at it.

BRENT (CONT'D)
Cute teddy bear.

WILLIE
Man of good taste. Take a seat.

Brent takes a seat in the chair opposite Willie. He folds his hands professionally.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
You've got one minute to convince
me. Go.

Willie taps his phone and a timer starts TICKING.

BRENT
Well, I...

Willie folds his arms. Brent grabs himself all over like he's searching for his wallet.

BRENT (CONT'D)
I...you know, I gotta ask. Is this a pyramid scheme?

Willie swivels around in his chair.

BRENT (CONT'D)
Or, like, a multi-level marketing company?

Willie stands up and walks to the window, looking out it.

WILLIE
I prefer to think of us as a-
(beat)
-direct sales company.

Willie gets on his desk and crouches so he's level with Brent.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
Do you know what people today resonate with?

BRENT
Um...good jokes?

WILLIE
Good, so you know nothing. Business lesson #1: people today are *always* texting on their phones and on social media. Sure, it's all fun and games. But isn't that sort of...killing us?
(beat)

You're hunched over on your computer, bad posture's killing your back, checking again and again to see, oh, maybe the box has something new to tell me. But it's all fake, it's all man-made, *they're listening*. You know what I mean, Mr...?

BRENT
Peterson. Brent Peterson, sir.

WILLIE
But we like it. We *enjoy* the hunt for ourselves.

(MORE)

WILLIE (CONT'D)
Which is why I'm—we're cutting
right to the chase.

He awkwardly reaches behind him to grab a teddy bear holding
a knife.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
My name is Willie J. Pitz, and
welcome to TedShed.

Willie makes hand gestures to each word here:

WILLIE (CONT'D)
Cute, cuddly, kill.

BRENT
(snappy)
Ridiculous. Maybe if it had a
lollipop, or something.

Brent gets up and heads toward the door.

BRENT (CONT'D)
Nice meeting you, Mr...Ditz. Ha!
But I'll be going now.

WILLIE
(snidely)
Oh, yeah? Going back to what?

Beat. The JOB INTERVIEWER'S VOICE in Brent's head again.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
Other...at...this time...

BRENT
What do I have to do?

WILLIE
Thought you'd never ask.

BIG BAND JAZZ MUSIC

MONTAGE: ONBOARDING

—Willie draws up charts and graphs on a whiteboard, gesturing
toward teddy bears. DOLLAR SIGNS and drawings of DOLLAR BILLS
litter the whiteboard.

—Willie writes "CORE DEMO: ORLANDO" on the whiteboard, then
underlines it multiple times.

-Brent looks a mixture of confused and concerned. He asks Willie something, who WAVES AWAY the question, then points to a PIECE OF PAPER duct-taped to the wall.

ON THE PIECE OF PAPER

It's a fake-looking business license.

-A folded-up piece of paper makes a nameplate that says, "CUSTOMERS". Behind this is a TEDDY BEAR. Another nameplate reads, "TEDSHED AKA BIG PAPA", and behind it is a KNIFE.

Willie grabs the knife and SLITS the throat of the teddy bear, SMILING maniacally. Brent CLAPS his hands and laughs.

-Willie places a CHEAP DOCUMENT and a green pen before Brent.

ON BRENT'S FACE

Brent looks at the whiteboard with awe on his face.

ON THE WHITEBOARD

ZOOM IN toward the dollar signs and dollar bills.

ON BRENT'S FACE

A smile begins to emerge.

-Flash Brent's rent bill.

-ON BRENT'S FACE

He looks worried.

-Brent pictures himself with a group at PETE'S DINER, everyone laughing at everything he says. Reverby audio. Trish KISSES Brent while Molly GOES DOWN on him.

-ON THE CHEAP DOCUMENT

Brent writes his name and PHONE NUMBER on lines.

ON BRENT'S FACE, who's smiling.

END MONTAGE

WILLIE (CONT'D)

Simple as that! Peterson, you are at the bottom level of floor one of ground zero of something *big*, and it's going up, up, up-no 9/11! Here, take this.

Willie reaches into his pocket and pulls out a WAD OF CASH rubber banded together. He takes ten \$100 bills from the wad and hands them to Brent.

WILLIE (CONT'D)

An advance.

Brent holds the bills in both hands, eyeing them like they're his first paycheck.

Willie shoves a teddy bear holding a knife into a stuffed GARBAGE BAG, then drops the bag at Brent's feet.

WILLIE (CONT'D)

(confidently)

I'll start you at fifty bears,
fifty knives, they all need to be
gone by tomorrow, so that'll be...

Willie runs some numbers on his phone calculator and holds out his hand.

WILLIE (CONT'D)

950 dollars. With the newbie
discount applied.

BRENT

I don't understand.

WILLIE

Business lesson #2: *never* turn down
a sweet discount. Come on, now.

Brent hands the \$1000 back, and gets \$50 in return. Willie walks around the desk, grabs Brent by the shoulders, and escorts him out of the office.

WILLIE (CONT'D)

Just sell a bear and knife together
at...shit, I don't know, 50 bucks a
pop, so that's...\$1500 profit for
you. Now get going!

Willie gives Brent a light push out the door.

BRENT

Wait!

Brent pulls a TEDDY BEAR from the garbage bag and offers it to Willie.

BRENT (CONT'D)

You should keep one. Sort of...the
first, you know?

BRENT
(like a carnival barker)
Teddy bears! Knives! Teddy bears!

Molly nervously walks toward Brent.

BRENT (CONT'D)
Oh! Hey Molly!

MOLLY
Hi...Brent.

Brent awkwardly hugs her. Molly doesn't hug him back.

BRENT
Amazing party. Really sick party.
Great job! Oh, and I liked that
picture of you!

MOLLY
Thanks...

BRENT
Here, take this.

Brent reaches into the garbage bag and pulls out a teddy bear holding a knife. He *SHOVES* it in Molly's direction.

BRENT (CONT'D)
(confidently)
This one's on me.

Molly grabs Brent's arm and slightly pushes it back.

MOLLY
(timidly)
Yeah, um, could you, like, *not*,
here...?

BRENT
But see, the thing is, I've got to
sell like, at least 50-

MOLLY
(exasperatedly)
And that's *great* that you've found
something, but just, somewhere
else, maybe?

Brent stares at her, confused but entranced.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
(suggestively)
Can you please do that for me?

BRENT
Okay. Yeah. Of course.

Molly smiles meekly at him.

MOLLY
Okay. Trish is inside.

Molly nods to Brent and walks away. Brent heads back toward his car.

BERNADETTE SHANDLING (26, gothy) cranes her neck back to watch Brent retreat.

INT. MOLLY'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Brent stands before a clothed table holding party food. He has a red Solo cup in one hand, a paper plate in the other. TWO STRANGERS in line in front of him grab food. Everyone shouts to speak over the music.

BRENT
(awkwardly)
Some weather, right?

STRANGER #1
...Yeah.

STRANGER #2
That's for sure.

BRENT
I mean, one storm is one thing. But two's a crowd! Florida, am I right?

STRANGER #2
It's not so bad.

The two strangers depart, passing by Bernadette who is approaching Brent. She smirks at the sight of Brent.

BERNADETTE
(slyly)
No good at talking, are you?

BRENT
(confused)
Who are you?

BERNADETTE
Name's Bernadette. And I'm the best thing that'll ever happen to you.

Bernadette hands Brent a BUSINESS CARD with her name and phone number on it.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)
 Freelancer. Consulting. Marketing,
 business strategy, and—
 (leaning in)
 —sales.

ON BRENT AND BERNADETTE'S FACES, CLOSE TO ONE ANOTHER

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)
 Call me when you decide to get *MLM-*
serious.

Bernadette struts away toward the party. Brent grabs some junk food for his plate.

INT. MOLLY'S HOUSE/PATIO - NIGHT

Trish leans against a counter with a couple: KATHY (23, mohawk, Russian accent) and EUFRASIA (26, head shaved on one side, a crucifix beneath her leather jacket); all hued by a purple neon sign.

KATHY
 Me: Kathy. She: Eufrasia. Eufrasia,
 she likes your...what do you
 say...whole entire vibe. Wants know
 if you...*snack* with us?

Eufrasia raises both eyebrows and smirks.

TRISH
 (confused)
 Down to smash!?

KATHY
 Is like that!

TRISH
 Thanks, but I'm taken!

Brent arrives, holding food and looking out of sorts. Eufrasia frowns, shakes her head 'no', and walks off.

KATHY
 She's, how you say it, no like
 brown people, on second thought.

Kathy bows and accompanies Eufrasia away. Trish scowls.

INT. MOLLY'S HOUSE/HALLWAY - NIGHT

It's Lover's Lane here. A couple make out in front of a door with a sock on the knob. Trish has her arms wrapped around Brent's neck confidently. One of Brent's hands gently caresses her waist.

TRISH
(flirtatiously)
How was your day, big man?

BRENT
Well, I...kind of, sort of got a
new job, I guess?

TRISH
Holy shit, what!? Brent, that's
amazing!

Trish KISSES Brent on the lips and hugs him.

Brent looks over to see Molly MAKING OUT with someone we can't see behind a wall.

ON BRENT'S FACE

He's grimacing.

Trish pulls herself away while holding his shoulders.

TRISH (CONT'D)
How? When did this happen? Tell me
all about it!

BRENT
Well, I heard about the position,
this led to that, and then...

TRISH
Amazing, Shakespeare. So what's the
job?

BRENT
It's...in sales. I sell...things.

TRISH
Oh.

Trish grimaces a bit and folds her arms.

TRISH (CONT'D)
What kinds of things?

BRENT

You know...

Brent steps aside and makes hand motions and gestating his facial features like he's guest-starring on "The Sopranos".

BRENT (CONT'D)

Luxury items. Knives, teddy bears...to start!

TRISH

So that was you.

BRENT

You heard!?

Trish GRABS Brent's hand and leads him out of the hallway.

INT. MOLLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT - TRACKING

Trish leads the way as she and Brent walk through the house.

TRISH

Lots of people talking about the crazy teddy knife garbage guy.

BRENT

And are they interested!?

TRISH

That's one way to put it!

INT. MOLLY'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CLUB MUSIC BANGS. LASER LIGHTS FLASH.

Trish and Brent arrive at the living room which has been converted to a dance floor.

TRISH

I guess if it's temporary, maybe you can save up while looking for something...steadier?

BRENT

Well, one thing at a time.

TRISH

Yeah, yeah, 'course.

Trish turns around and leads Brent's hands to her waist.

TRISH (CONT'D)
Just...one thing at a time.

Brent and Trish dance. Trish is more into it than Brent; as he awkwardly dances, he searches the room for someone he can't find.

INT. BRENT'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

In bed, Brent wakes to his phone buzzing. He answers it.

BRENT
Hello?

WILLIE (V.O.)
Business lesson #3: *never* be late
to a shift.

Brent gets up out of bed.

BRENT
Mr. Pitz!? What troubles you this
fine Saturday?

WILLIE (V.O.)
Cut the crap, Peterson. If you've
got time to *dream*, you've got time
to *clean-up* these sales goals.

Brent leaps out of bed and starts getting dressed.

BRENT
(exasperatedly)
You are so right, Mr. Pitz.

WILLIE (V.O.)
Orlando's a big city, and--what do
you know--it's still here on
weekends! So get here, will ya?

Brent makes for the door, but stops before opening. He turns around and pulls Bernadette's card out of the pocket of the pants he wore the night before.

INT. TEDSHED OFFICE/WILLIE'S OFFICE - DAY

ON A STAIN ON WILLIE'S SHIRT

WILLIE
So you were at a party full of
drunk, sad, horny young people...

ON A LIPSTICK'D HICKEY ON WILLIE'S NECK

WILLIE (CONT'D)
(tensely)
...And you didn't make a single
sale.

Willie is seated at his folding table desk, Brent seated opposite him. Willie wears the same thing as the day before. The blinds are drawn, leaving a moody atmosphere to the room.

Willie rises, TOSSES the folding table aside, and GETS IN BRENT'S FACE.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
(screaming)
You know money still works at
night, right!?

Willie walks around the desk.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
Look, if you can't make sales, you
sure as hell can't pull distros!

BRENT
Distros?

WILLIE
Yes, distros! Your downline! That's
where the magic happens!

Brent looks confused. Willie walks up to the table behind his "desk" and grabs the teddy bear Brent gave him.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
Okay. Business lesson #4: This is
me.

Willie places the teddy bear on a self-help book that's as thick as a brick and faces it toward Brent, then reaches behind and grabs another bear.

Brent pulls out a NOTEBOOK and pencil from his bookbag and starts writing.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
And this is you.

Willie places the next bear on his desk which is lower than the bear on the book.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
I'm sure you can see where this is going.

BRENT
Absolutely.

ON BRENT'S NOTEBOOK, which reads: "BEAR - OTHER BEAR - ???"

WILLIE
Let's say I drew a line from me—
Willie points at the bear on the book.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
—to you.

Willie points at the bear positioned lower on his desk.

BRENT
I couldn't *bear* to watch you do it!
Crickets.

BRENT (CONT'D)
Guess I'm doing the *bare* minimum to—

WILLIE
Now, if I look *down* at this line toward you, Peterson, that would make you *my* downline, or distro. I get a cut of every distribution, or sale, of your-*my* product. And I could put more bears at this level that kick up to me. But you...

Willie grabs a few bears from the table behind him and dumps them on the floor.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
You can have distros beneath you. And they chuck up some money your way for all of *their* sales. That would make them *your* downline, and so on and so forth. And I promise, *you're gonna need them*, because...

INT./EXT. WILLIE'S GARAGE - DAY

Willie's garage door SLOWLY OPENS.

Inside is a mountain of teddy bears and knives—they practically spill out onto Willie's driveway.

WILLIE

Took out a loan. Thanks, Dad.

Willie grabs one of the teddy bears holding a knife, then eyes the knife.

WILLIE (CONT'D)

They're actually Slit knives, you know.

Brent's ears perk up at the mention of Slit. Willie takes a step back. Brent follows suit.

WILLIE (CONT'D)

I sure miss being able to walk into my garage. But I gotta move all this product. And if I can't...

Willie grabs another teddy bear, then makes the first bear STAB the second one with its knife.

Willie makes CHOKING and GASPING sounds to pantomime the second bear.

WILLIE (CONT'D)

But if you just sell some bears and bring on distros to your downline, we won't have to go that route.

Brent stares at the teddy bear mountain with panic on his face. The interviewer's voice in his head returns:

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

(reverby)

...Pursuing...other...candidates...
at this time...

INT. BRENT'S CAR - DAY

Brent's holds Bernadette's card in one hand, his phone to his ear with the other, SHAKING and HYPERVENTILATING.

INT. MALL/FOOD COURT - DAY

Brent sits at a table, Chinese food before him, Bernadette opposite him. Beneath the table is his stuffed garbage bag. Not many people around—it's a mall in 2021, after all.

BRENT

(nervously)

Thanks for coming on short notice.

BERNADETTE

(snappy)

First, lose the serial killer valise.

BRENT

What, you mean this?

He holds the garbage bag up. Bernadette yanks it back beneath the table.

BERNADETTE

Yeah, no good. Watch.

Brent watches from the table as Bernadette gets up and heads for a nearby BOUTIQUE SHOP. Brent watches intently.

Bernadette flirts with the cashier while secretly taking a handful of expensive-looking plastic bags.

From Brent's view, nervously stuffing his face, we can't hear what she says. No need; her demeanor is peak salesmanship.

Bernadette gets the cashier's number. She tosses it in a garbage can IN THE BOUTIQUE SHOP, returns to the table, then grabs Brent by the arm to YANK him out of his seat.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)

Come.

INT. MALL/MEN'S BATHROOM - DAY

Bernadette STUFFS Brent into a stall.

BRENT

(whispering)

I...kinda have a girlfriend.

BERNADETTE

(normal speaking volume)

As unbelievable as that sounds, not my intention.

Bernadette GRABS teddy bears with knives (henceforth: "teddy knives") from the garbage bag, reverses the boutique bags she just stole, and SHOVES one teddy knife into each bag.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)

Come on then!

Bernadette gestures at Brent to get to work placing teddy knives in bags.

INT. MALL/HALLWAY - DAY

Brent and Bernadette each push a SHOPPING CART containing the teddy knife bags. Brent does his carnival barker routine.

BRENT
Got somethin' good for ya right
here!

Bernadette PUNCHES Brent on the shoulder.

BERNADETTE
The fuck are you doing?

BRENT
Selling.

BERNADETTE
What? Here.

Bernadette grabs a bag from her cart and approaches JOEY RIGATONI (31, bald cap, fake gray beard, overalls over red shirt, straw hat, a blade of grass out his mouth), a watch salesman working a stall.

JOEY
(doing an obnoxious old
man impression)
Can you guess what time it is,
young lady?

BERNADETTE
(sarcastically)
Time to...buy a watch?

JOEY
Dial back that attitude, missy!

BRENT
(pointing)
That's good.

Bernadette sets the bag on Joey's counter.

JOEY
Oh, what is this, *wee lass*?

BERNADETTE
(confidently)
Reach in and find out.

JOEY
Let me *clock out* of work and see...

Joey reaches into the bag and pulls out a KNIFE.

JOEY (CONT'D)
 (normal jock wiseguy tone)
 The fuck!?

With a SMILE that can cut through steel, Bernadette points to a SECURITY CAMERA on a nearby wall.

BERNADETTE
 (sly)
 Would be a shame if the authorities
 got eyes on a...watch salesman
 threatening a young lady at
 knifepoint. Could lose your job,
 spend a couple years in the can...

Joey looks panicked.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)
 Oh, already got a record?

JOEY
 The hell do you want?

BERNADETTE
 Buy a knife, and a bear, ditch the
 job...and work for me.

JOEY
 Yeah? Who's to say you're not full
 of it?

BRENT
 He's got a point—

BERNADETTE
 Do you really want to find out,
 asshole?

Joey STAMMERS around in his stall. After a few seconds, he yanks off his geezer getup.

JOEY
 How much?

Joey looks over at shellshocked Brent.

JOEY (CONT'D)
 And who's this mouthbreather?

BERNADETTE
 (demandingly)
 No more questions.
 (MORE)

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)
 A hundred for both. Cash only. You
 become our downline, ground floor,
 meaning—

JOEY
 Save the spiel. I've seen the
 documentaries.

Joey strolls out of the watch stall to join Brent and
 Bernadette, all headed nowhere in particular.

JOEY (CONT'D)
 So what are we called?

BERNADETTE
 Brent?

BRENT
 The company's called TedShed. The
 teddy bear part, I get. The rest?
 (shrugs)

JOEY
 Not your name, huh? Mine's Joseph
 B. Ripamonti, by the way, but in
 the office: Joey Rigatoni. Reckon
 capo's not here, then?

BERNADETTE
 What'd I say about questions?
 ...You'll meet him in due time.

Bernadette looks to Brent.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)
 (intently)
 We will.

BRENT
 (unsure)
 Right...

INT. TEDSHED OFFICE/WILLIE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Bernadette dumps a list of DISTRO NAMES and the garbage bag
 onto Willie's desk. Bernadette unties the garbage bag, and
 BANDS OF CASH stream out onto the table. Joey hangs back.

WILLIE
 What the—? All in one day?

Brent nods and gives a light smile.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
Gotta say, kid, I had you pegged
wrong. But uh, who's the broad?

BRENT
Uh, Mr. Pitz...

BERNADETTE
Excuse me!? Where the fuck do you
get off, jagoff? I pulled up my
sleeves for you, prick!

WILLIE
Negative. I don't sign goth chicks.

BERNADETTE
You piece of—

Bernadette DIVES ACROSS the desk to TACKLE Willie, but Brent
holds her back.

BRENT
Bernadette! No! Stop! Stop it!

WILLIE
Fresh whore—

JOEY
Alright, break it up!

Bernadette relents, grabs her purse, and makes for the door.

JOEY (CONT'D)
You know, we made this money 'cause
of her.

WILLIE
Yeah, whatever. Just keep it
comin'.

Brent exits the room.

Willie COUNTS the cash, and makes a satisfied face.

EXT. TEDSHED OFFICE/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Bernadette PACES back and forth, HUFFING a Marlboro.

Brent stares at her, looking worried.

BRENT
What are you doing?

BERNADETTE
Trying to get the fuck out of here.
Fuck!

BRENT
I'll drive you home.

BERNADETTE
No! This was a major mistake.
Major!

Bernadette looks at her phone.

VOICEMAIL: "We're sorry, the number you dialed is not—"

Bernadette HANGS UP.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)
Damn it. Fuck!

Bernadette tries another number.

BRENT
Just, just calm down, will ya?

BERNADETTE
(exasperatedly)
Don't fucking tell me to calm down!
I hate fucking men like THAT who
treat women like shit, almost as
much as I hate fucking men who *tell*
me to calm FUCKING down!

Brent puts his hands in his pockets and looks down.

BRENT
I'm sorry. Mean it.

Voicemail again on Bernadette's phone. She tenses down, puts her phone in her purse, and takes another hit of the cig.

BERNADETTE
Fuck.

Brent pulls his hands out of his pockets, one gripping a wad of cash. He takes most of it and hands it to Bernadette.

BRENT
Here. Your share.

BERNADETTE
I won't accept money from him.

BRENT

Then accept it from me.

Bernadette looks at Brent, wearing a conflicted face. She relents, takes the money, and puts it in her purse.

BERNADETTE

I don't want to hear from Mr. Shitz ever again.

BRENT

Let me worry about him.

Bernadette starts walking away, almost unthinkingly.

BERNADETTE

(without looking back)
Thanks!

Brent makes a call, grinning.

TRISH (V.O.)

Hello?

BRENT

Hey! Couple things: one, I was hoping you would maybe, like, buy one of my teddy bears...and two, I was hoping we could do somethin' tonight.

TRISH (V.O.)

Oh...I'm actually at Pete's with Molly. But of course I'd love to buy one! I'll Venmo you, I guess, and you can just drop it off whenever?

Brent looks surprised.

BRENT

Yeah, right, that makes sense. Okay, um, gotta go!

INT. BRENT'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Brent lays in bed in the dark.

ON BRENT'S PHONE

Brent checks his messages for replies.

We hear Trish and Molly's conversation at the diner.

MOLLY (V.O.)
What's he up to?

TRISH (V.O.)
Oh, nothing. You were hammered last night!

One reply for Brent: "Hey thanks, sorry but not interested!"

MOLLY (V.O.)
How would you know? You were futzing around with Brent.

TRISH (V.O.)
He's my boyfriend.

INT. BRENT'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

ON BRENT'S TV

The scene from "Full Metal Jacket" where the Vietnamese woman says, "Me so horny, me so horny, me love you long time," is playing. Brent LAUGHS HYSTERICALLY.

MOLLY (V.O.)
That he is.

INT. BRENT'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

ON BRENT'S PHONE

Brent plays this WORD GAME where you're given some letters and need to figure out all the words you can make with them.

The LETTERS: T, Y, N, A, H, C, O

TRISH (V.O.)
What?

MOLLY (V.O.)
I just think...you know...

Brent guesses twice on the last word he needs, both wrong.

ON BRENT'S COMPUTER

Brent looks up the name of the word game and the level # he's on to get the answers.

He fixates on one particular answer: 'tachyon'.

TRISH (V.O.)
 You don't know him. And I'll have
 you know, he just got a new job.

MOLLY (V.O.)
 In what?

TRISH (V.O.)
 Uh, sales.

ON A NOTEBOOK

Scribblings, drawings, random words, and thoughts. Not necessarily stupid ones, though clearly the work of someone lacking clarity in life.

Brent writes the word 'TACHYON', then CIRCLES IT a few times.

Brent finds the picture of Molly. Still no reply.

MOLLY (V.O.)
 Christ, is that what the teddy bear
 thing was about?

Brent walks over to his desk and finds a PHONE NUMBER written on a piece of paper with a label reading: "Parents, apparently". He tries calling.

TRISH (V.O.)
 Yeah...Anyway, I haven't told him
 about the transfer. Whether he
 comes with or not, I've made up my
 mind.

Brent's call goes to an automated voicemail. He hangs up.

ON BRENT'S PHONE

"Save number to contacts?" Brent taps the X.

TRISH (V.O.)
 I can work on the book, get away
 from the parents...mostly those.

MOLLY (V.O.)
 It's not a good look to transfer
 only two years into your residency.
 You should hang around one more.

TRISH (V.O.)
 Fuck that. That's capitalism
 talking.

INT. BERNADETTE'S APARTMENT - DAY

CARIBBEAN MUSIC

Bernadette lays out a MAP OF ORLANDO on her kitchen counter.

Bernadette CIRCLES locations and CROSSES OUT others while Brent watches.

TRISH (V.O.)

They can hand out the pink slip at will, yet expect you to jump when they say jump?

Every circled area on the map is assigned a NAME from Brent's downline.

TRISH (V.O.)

Nah. And why's it all about money? That's all my mom cares about—money.

INT. BRENT'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

ON BRENT'S COMPUTER

Brent types in three times the amount due for rent, then hits 'Submit'.

INT. BERNADETTE'S APARTMENT - DAY

ON THE MAP

An assortment of names and photos of people's faces from Brent's downline brought on at the mall are laid out. Each corresponds to a part of Orlando that person is assigned to:

"Olivette Brizzi" - UCF

"Marty Gibson" - ENGELWOOD PARK

"Dimitri Lopez" - LAKE WELDONA

Et al.

MOLLY (V.O.)

Good to know, Groucho.

TRISH (V.O.)

That's Karl. Karl Marx. Completely different!

MOLLY (V.O.)
I must have missed that lecture.

Brent and Bernadette give each other this look, like: "This is gonna work".

TRISH (V.O.)
You missed most of them. So how's that guy you met?

Brent and Bernadette CLINK DRINKS.

MOLLY (V.O.)
From the party? I don't know. Gives me kinda...weird vibes.

INT. TEDSHED OFFICE/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Willie is PACING the entire office space frantically, which this time is fully lit. Brent and Joey stroll behind him.

WILLIE
This is...this is massive!
We'll—we'll need all this space!
And now it's all mine—ours!

INT. TEDSHED OFFICE/STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

Willie, Brent, and Joey enter the storage room. Empty.

WILLIE
I can get those stupid things out of my garage! Rate we're goin', I'ma have to put more orders in!

BRENT
Glad to hear it, Mr. Pitz.

WILLIE
Glad? You should be ecstatic, Peterson! You're made for this! That makes you, that makes us, made salesmen! No more need for broads!

BRENT
Uh...

JOEY
Hey now, what's wrong with a little tail?

Willie snaps around to look at Joey. He's ferocious.

WILLIE
Who are you, again?

JOEY
Name's Joseph B. Ripamonti...but
when it comes to biz, Joey
Rigatoni. How ya doin'?

WILLIE
Listen here, Johnny Pastrami,
business lesson #13: I don't care
if you're the lead of "The
Godfather Pt. IV", you never, and I
mean *never*, backtalk me, you
understand?

JOEY
I...

BRENT
Hey, Mr. Pitz-

WILLIE
(unflinchingly)
I said, are you hearing this!?

A silent pause of shock.

JOEY
(hesitatingly)
Yes, sir.

BRENT
You got any coffee?

Willie stops and looks at Brent. His indignant face has not shifted.

WILLIE
Ask Selene.

ON SELENE, typing away. She hasn't flinched a beat.

INT. BERNADETTE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bernadette is sitting at a stool at her kitchen holding some paper stapled together, while Brent paces around the room clutching a RUFFLED stack of pages.

BRENT
So...what do you work? Shit!

Brent stammers.

BERNADETTE

Again.

BRENT

Okay, okay...

Brent clears his throat.

BRENT (CONT'D)

Excuse me for the sudden interruption, but I couldn't help but notice you've got a couple vehicles in the driveway.

BERNADETTE

That's right. What's this about?

BRENT

Well, see, one vehicle, probably a bachelor, or bachelorette. But two?

Brent covers his eyes.

BRENT (CONT'D)

Don't tell me, you're...married? Two kids? Three?

BERNADETTE

Just one.

BRENT

Ah, so close!

BERNADETTE

Now, what do you say when they do have three? Or even more?

BRENT

I'd say, "Then believe me, just a minute of your time is gonna save you thousands in the long run, and completely alter your mindset."

BERNADETTE

Good. And if they weren't married?

BRENT

Weren't married, weren't married...

Hands akimbo, Brent tilts his head down, and tries earnestly to think.

BRENT (CONT'D)

Shit!

Brent TOSSES his script papers up in the air with both arms like he's doing the milk jug challenge.

BERNADETTE

It's less convincing when I have to be there to help.

BRENT

I know, I know...I'm sorry.

BERNADETTE

(matter-of-factly)

Don't be sorry. Be good.

Bernadette and Brent start picking up his pages. Just then, Brent's phone BUZZES.

BRENT

Sorry, I mean-gotta take this.

Bernadette looks at him with a slight look of disapproval.

BRENT (CONT'D)

Hello?

INT. TRISH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Trish is typing up her novel on her computer. The last sentence written reads: "Where was it, and where did it go?"

TRISH

What are you doing?

BRENT (V.O.)

Work stuff.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

Bernadette shoots Brent a glare.

TRISH

This late?

BRENT

Uh huh. Why, what's up?

TRISH

Well I'm doing some...homework right now that I was hoping you might...distract me from. If you know what I mean.

BRENT

Oh...Yeah...maybe not tonight. Just got a lot of stuff to do. You know how it is.

TRISH

Oh. Well then. I'm...glad you're applying yourself. But I still am keen to hear just what your new job is. It's weird that you haven't told me. And you still haven't brought the bear I paid for!

BRENT

(slightly happily)
Yeah...thanks. And you'll know, soon. And I will bring it, I promise!

TRISH

Uh...huh.

BRENT

(clears throat)
Well...have a good night. Love you.

TRISH

Yeah, I love you too.

Brent hangs up the phone first.

Trish looks down at her phone, slightly confused.

INT. BERNADETTE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Brent looks mournfully down to the floor. Bernadette SNAPS her fingers at him twice.

BERNADETTE

Hey, lover boy, you gonna help or what?

INT. TEDSHED OFFICE/STORAGE ROOM - DAY

The blinds are drawn; the morning light blinds. Empty boxes and junk line the walls. School desks; no meeting table. It's cramped.

Willie paces erratically. The NEW RECRUITS sit, bored or nervous. Joey makes a TRAP BEAT tapping his pencil on the desk. Brent stands upfront, his hands folded behind.

WILLIE
 Welcome to the first inaugural
 TedShed all-hands meeting!

Nobody says anything, maybe a couple nod.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
 (demandingly)
 Clap!

The room snaps into applause, which quickly recedes.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
 (threateningly)
 Peterson, will you do the honors?

Brent takes an uncertain step forward, hands in his pockets.

BRENT
 So, my name is Brent Peterson.

Willie gestates his hands toward the recruits, conductorly.

ENTIRE ROOM
 (droll, like an AA
 meeting)
 Hi, Mr. Peterson.

BRENT
 So, about me...well, I like selling
 teddy bears, selling knives,
 and-and-and eating pizza!

Recruits eye each other to figure out whether to clap, then
 light awkward clapping.

WILLIE
 Peterson-
 (clears throat)
 -*Mr. Peterson's* willingness to open
 our synergy sesh speaks to his
 innate sense of leadership.

Brent, nodding and slackjawed, turns to Willie.

BRENT
 That's very kind of you, Mr. Pitz.

Willie darts to the back of the room and reaches into a
 cardboard box that reads 'TEDSHED STUFF' in marker.

WILLIE
 And that's why...

Willie yanks out a cheap-looking GOLD MEDAL strapped to a navy blue lanyard, runs back up, and festively places it around Brent's neck.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
I'm happy to announce that I'm
officially making B—Brian—uh, Mr.
Peterson Head Capo of the TedShed
Cartel! Like "Breaking Bad"!

Pause an awkward beat. Willie SHOOTS THEM A GLARE, then the room snaps to a STANDING OVATION.

Willie massages Brent's shoulders from behind.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
(cheerful, and British-
sounding)
Apologies, love, do continue!

Brent clears his throat.

BRENT
Gosh, what an honor...So, uh, you
know, business lesson #20: we're
really, uh...we're getting it done.
And I gotta be frank, I couldn't
have done it without y'all.

The room starts cheering. Willie only glibly smiles.

BRENT (CONT'D)
So, you know, I was thinking, it'd
be good if you all told us
something interesting about
yourselves.

A MAN IN THE BACK (50's, coarse) pipes up.

MAN IN THE BACK
What are we, in preschool again?

WILLIE
(snappy)
Who said that shit!?

Joey turns around in his seat.

JOEY
You wanna repeat that, buddy pal?

The whole room turns to look at the man.

MAN IN THE BACK
Man, whatever, fuck this.

The man gets up, slings his coat over his shoulder, and makes for the door. Willie yanks the medal from Brent's neck and chucks it at the man, HITTING SOMEONE ELSE instead.

JOEY
Anyone else?

OLIVETTE BRIZZI (22, peppy) raises her hand and stands.

Joey hits her with the BEDROOM EYES.

OLIVETTE
(goofy)
Guilty as charged, you guys!

BRENT
That's what I'm talkin' about!

WILLIE
(whispering to Brent)
Thought I said no broads...

Olivette clears her throat.

OLIVETTE
Well, I used to live in Brooklyn...but now I live in Florida. And I came here wanting to do YouTube stuff. You know, I always wanted to be famous. But, just never knew what to be famous for. So I figure, if I join a place like this, I'll meet all kinds of people. Bound to get famous that way, right?

BRENT
This is the stuff right here. You all could stand to learn a thing or two from, uh, what was it again?

OLIVETTE
Olivette, Mr. Peterson.

JOEY
(under his breath)
Fuck kinda name is that...

BRENT
Thank you for sharing. Anyone else?

INT. ORLANDO HEALTH/EXAM ROOM - DAY

RONNY (12) lays in a treatment chair playing a phone game. Trish reads RONNY's (12) charts from a computer. MRS. REEVES (40's, short, white) stands, arms folded and feet tapping. Fluorescent lights buzz.

TRISH

We need to cut back on sugar, or
type 2 is in the cards for Ronny.

MRS. REEVES

(flippantly)
And what would *your kind* know about
healthy eating?

TRISH

Mrs. Reeves, I assure you—

MRS. REEVES

*I assure you I'll be taking my
business somewhere more
appropriate!*

Mrs. Reeves yanks Ronny from the chair by the hand and leads him away. He's embarrassed. Trish is nonplussed.

INT. ORLANDO HEALTH/DR. JEFFERSON'S OFFICE - DAY

DR. JEFFERSON (50s, white, a Peter Bogdanovich type) is typing on his computer. Trish KNOCKS TWICE on his open door.

DR. JEFFERSON

Come in, Ms. Dihidar.

Trish takes a seat. Dr. Jefferson is silent for a beat, then speaks while typing.

DR. JEFFERSON (CONT'D)

Mrs. Reeves tells me she didn't
appreciate your prognosis.

TRISH

No, no she did not.

DR. JEFFERSON

Or the way you said it.

TRISH

I...guess?

DR. JEFFERSON

It's not an easy thing to hear.
Shining a light on someone's
parenting habits like that...

He does a little 'What are you gonna do?' hand gesture.

TRISH

I think if someone else had given
it, then maybe...

Dr. Jefferson stops typing and looks at her.

DR. JEFFERSON

What did she say, exactly?

TRISH

She asked what 'my kind' would know
about healthy eating. You know.

Trish HOLDS UP HER ARM AND POINTS TO HER SKIN. Dr. Jefferson
looks down at his desk and exhales, then makes the same 'What
are you gonna do?' gesture. He resumes typing.

DR. JEFFERSON

I assume that's not what you're
here to discuss.

TRISH

Actually...well, there's no easy
way to say this. I'm transferring.

Dr. Jefferson doesn't stop typing. His face shows no amount
of shock or surprise.

DR. JEFFERSON

Chicago Hospital?

Trish tilts her head in surprise.

DR. JEFFERSON (CONT'D)

Ms. McKnight didn't think it was
such a good idea.

TRISH

(annoyed)

Jesus, Molly...So, what do you
think?

DR. JEFFERSON

What's to think about? It's done.

Trish wears this sort of uncertain expression on her face.

INT. TEDSHED OFFICE/STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Recruits stand, their arms out and doing SQUATS. JAUNTY ORCHESTRAL MUSIC eggs them on.

ENTIRE ROOM

(singing atonally)

I made my bed, now I lie in it;
TedShed. Clients use their heads,
they're buyin' it, TedShed-

BRENT

Come on, break a sweat!

WILLIE

Get off that swingset, and get on
that grindset!

THE ROOM

And I eat up competition like a
bear; when I see the wares they're
hawking, I don't care. 'Cause I
swipe at them with sharp knives
till they give; make 'em wish
Orlando isn't where they live.

MARTY GIBSON (32, Yorkshire accent, fit as a fiddle) does his squats but interrupts the tune.

MARTY

'Scuse me, Mr. Pitz. Mr. Peterson.
Don't mean to interrupt, it's just
that I caught this film on the
telly what mentioned how a business
such as this fine organization,
well, it's only proper successful-
like if you keep bringing on new
people.

WILLIE

What's your point?

MARTY

Well, we only contract with those
based in or around sunny Orlando,
Florida, yeah? Of course, you can
only fit so much toothpaste in that
tube, so it got me thinking-

Willie grabs the speaker blaring their music and PUNTS IT out an open window. Joey looks at Marty like he has a point.

WILLIE

Miami Dolphins! Miami Dolphins!

Willie returns to the front of the room.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
This city's in our DNA. It's what
separates us *wolves* from the sheep
herd.

Some "hell yeah"s and "damn right!"s, one "amen, brother."

ON MARTY'S FACE LEFT, WILLIE'S RIGHT

WILLIE (CONT'D)
You don't wanna be a follower, hmm?

Pause for a beat.

MARTY
S'pose I'm to join BearGlare, then.
They're sensational, you know!

WILLIE
(confused)
Join what?

Marty grabs his bag and heads for the door.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
Fuck's a BearGlare?

Willie stammers around a bit.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
Competition? Shit.

The group stare him down.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
Get the fuck out and sell!

EXT. TEDSHED PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Brent silhouettes the evening sun, at the head of a line of recruits. Each gives Brent his commission.

BRENT
(rehearsed)
Thank you, thank you very much,
great job, appreciate your hard
work.

Olivette is on her phone when Joey slides up to her.

JOEY
 (fliratiously)
 Don't tell me you're ridesharing.

OLIVETTE
 I sold my car to move.

Joey gives Olivette the BEDROOM EYES again.

JOEY
 I gotchu.

Olivette blushes. Joey smiles back and pulls Brent aside.

JOEY (CONT'D)
 Hey Brent, I'm not lookin' to sour
 your grapes, but I think that Marty
 guy was onto somethin'. I mean, we
 gotta expand sometime, right? And
 what is this, this, BearStare?

BRENT
 (dourly)
 BearGlare. Whatever they are,
 they're priority #1.

JOEY
 Call up mission control. Tell her
 we got a problem.

Brent stares off into the distance, worried.

INT. RITZY GENTRIFIED CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Brent and Bernadette sit on one side of a table, Joey the
 other. Bernadette STRUGGLES picking up food with her
 CHOPSTICKS.

JOEY
 (dourly)
 We've got a problem.

BERNADETTE
 What's that mean?

She tosses the sticks behind her and WAVES DOWN a WAITER.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)
 Fork!

JOEY
 It means some stuff's screwed up,
 capeesh?

BRENT

He's not pretending, Bern. There's a new kid in town. BearGlare.

BERNADETTE

What, like, ripping us off? Bears are *our* thing, people will see right through it.

MONTAGE: INTERNET FOOTAGE

—Smartphone camera perspective. A WOMAN (20s) with a tank top and yoga pants points a phone at a bathroom mirror with her right hand. Her LEFT HAND is concealed below the sink counter. A TEDDY BEAR WEARING DARK AVIATORS sits in a basket on a cabinet. TikTok icons are overlaid on the footage.

WOMAN

I have been having **such** a tough time lately balancing school and work, but—

She starts raising her left hand to reveal another TEDDY BEAR WEARING AVIATORS.

She PULLS A TAB on its side, HIP HOP MUSIC plays from it, and she starts to twirl it around.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Look at him! Just three to go!

—We hear the HIP HOP MUSIC continue throughout the montage.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Kids run around, one sits in the lap of a man in a bear suit wearing aviators, and they're playing peekaboo. A dude has a bear pretend to suck him off for the camera.

—EXT. BOAT OUT ON THE WATER - DAY

Footage of jock dudes and bikini babes TOSSING aviator teddy bears back and forth.

—INT. BEARGLARE FILMING WAREHOUSE - DAY

A MAN IN A BEAR SUIT WEARING AVIATORS stands in a film stage, lively in a cartoonish sort of way.

MAN IN A BEAR SUIT WEARING AVIATORS

Hi Sonia! Sorry I couldn't make it to your birthday party. I've just been so busy making videos for my best friends all around the world! Speaking of, if you could help me make even more friends, that'd be swell! Just tell your friends to tell five of their friends in class and on social media to purchase five official BearGlare teddy bears. Then, have them scan the QR code on the tag located on the bottom of the teddy bear with their phone, just like you did! Once they scan five unique codes, I'll film them their very own video! And remember Sonia, every 50 bears you buy, I'll visit you at your house and give you a big hug and a kiss, from me to you! It's *glaringly* simple, and *bear-y* fun!

Sped-up audio from a NARRATOR:

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Some restrictions apply.

END MONTAGE

INT. TRISH'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Trish watches a similar BearGlare video of a man in a bear suit wearing aviators, somewhat amused.

DOORBELL RINGS

INT./EXT. TRISH'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Trish opens her front door, and it's Brent outside. He's holding SOMETHING BEHIND HIS BACK.

TRISH

Hey, mister.

Trish and Brent kiss.

BRENT

Brought you something.

Brent steps inside, and reveals a TEDDY BEAR. Trish takes it.

TRISH
 (ostentatiously)
For me!? You should have! Several
 days ago, in fact!

The two sit at Trish's couch. Brent stretches his arms out atop the couch, and Trish settles in.

BRENT
 Well, I got tied up! I'm a busy guy
 nowadays!

TRISH
 Mmm, and it looks like you're about
 to be even more busy...

Trish starts FONDLING Brent's genitals.

TRISH (CONT'D)
 So...busy...

Trish pulls out her phone and plays for Brent the video of the BearGlare man she was just watching.

We hear the BEAR MAN SPEAKING nonsense over BearGlare's signature HIP HOP BEAT. Brent THROWS the bear out of frame.

BRENT
 You saw that, huh?

TRISH
 Looks like you got your work cut
 out for you, big man...

Brent's MOANING.

TRISH (CONT'D)
 (whispering)
 Think you oughta take care of
 them...

She UNZIPS and REMOVES HER CLOTHES.

TRISH (CONT'D)
 ...From the inside.

Trish goes down on Brent.

ON BRENT'S FACE

He looks like he's just had some sort of revelation.

ON THE BEAR

It's landed perfectly upright.

INT. TRISH'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Sounds of SOMEONE GETTING DRESSED. We're still on that bear—it saw the whole thing.

BRENT (O.S.)
I need you to buy another one, by
the way.

TRISH (O.S.)
Uh...

BRENT (O.S.)
Please.

TRISH (O.S.)
...K.

INT. TEDSHED OFFICE/STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Willie paces back and forth in front of a whiteboard full of mad scribblings, ideas about how to take down BearGlare, some crossed-out, some half-written.

Everyone—even Bernadette—is in a classroom desk, but Brent's missing. The recruits look tense.

WILLIE
Where the fuck is he!? Downline, I
swear, I oughta shove my foot right
down *his line*, that shitbag!

JOEY
Relax, he'll be here.

WILLIE
Don't tell me to relax you fucking
wop!

JOEY
(real Italian-like)
Oh!!!!

Joey stands up, PUFFING HIS CHEST like he's about to throw down. Bernadette darts in-between the two lugs.

BERNADETTE
Gentlemen! Let's be reasonable, hm?

They tense down, and Bernadette sits back down.

Joey remains standing at the head of the room. Willie sits on the floor and buries his head in his knees.

JOEY

Look, does anyone have any ideas of what we're gonna do about these guys, hm?

Crickets for a beat. DIMITRI LOPEZ (20s, freckles, bifocals) stands up in the back of the room.

Sound of a DOOR OPENING.

DIMITRI

Well, maybe we could try doing what they do. You know, steal their thunder a bit. Turn the tables. I've got a few extra pairs of sunglasses lying around.

In walks Brent.

BRENT

That'll never work. We gotta get 'em from *the inside*.

WILLIE

(sneeringly)

Well, look what the cat dragged in.

BERNADETTE

(unbelievably)

You of all people have a plan?

BRENT

Just hear me out.

MONTAGE: THE PLAN

-INT. BRENT'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

BRENT (V.O.)

I did some research this morning.

ON BRENT'S COMPUTER

Brent Googles, "Where is BearGlare located?" and pulls a result reading: "Orlando, FL".

BRENT (V.O.)

Turns out BearGlare's in Orlando, just like us.

ON BRENT'S PHONE SCREEN

Brent's checking his social media posts for engagement. Nada. He gets a text from Steven, his old co-worker.

The text message reads (spelled exactly this way): "Heyyyyyyy heard you're doin well? Not goin so great here lol. Some company took all our knives!

So...maybe you could get me a job?"

BRENT (V.O.)

And I happen to know this guy who
really needs a job.

Brent pauses, staring at his phone. He replies: "Nothin' here, but I can get you in somewhere else. Will send info."

—INT. BRENT'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

ON BRENT'S COMPUTER

Brent makes a BURNER EMAIL ADDRESS: eyeneedajawb42@gmail.com

BRENT (V.O.)

Lucky for us, he's not so bright.

Brent TURNS THE LIGHT ON in his room and rustles through the pages of his NOTEBOOK.

He briefly STOPS on 'TACHYON' again, then keeps going.

BRENT (V.O.)

I've spent a lot of time on
LinkedIn. You know anyone can just
say they work at a place?

On one page he finds the name 'Max Schlepzig' from "Gravity's Rainbow", then makes a FAKE LINKEDIN ACCOUNT with that name and the burner email address, and sets it to say he works at BearGlare.

BRENT (V.O.)

I'll make a fake job listing, and
send it to my friend...

Brent makes the fake BearGlare job listing, and sends it to Steven.

BRENT (V.O.)

These startup recruiters don't know
any better, you know?

EXT. BEARGLARE FILMING WAREHOUSE - DAY

A GUARD stands at the door. Steven walks up, and shows the guard his phone.

ON STEVEN'S PHONE

A fake email congratulating Steven on landing the BearGlare video acting role.

The guard shrugs and lets him in.

-INT. BEARGLARE FILMING WAREHOUSE - DAY

Steven is wearing a BEAR COSTUME, holding the COSTUME HEAD in his hand. Many others wear identical bear costumes.

Steven walks up to a FILM SET with a green screen.

BRENT (V.O.)

Mr. Pitz, you'll need to use your connections and figure out one of their truck routes.

WILLIE (V.O.)

Whatever you need, I'm into this.

A DIRECTOR gives Steven a FINGER POINT, and he starts EXPRESSING WITH HIS HANDS and DOING TRENDY DANCES.

-INT. BRENT'S CAR - DAY

Brent and Bernadette—both wearing sunglasses—sit. Bernadette watches something in the distance with BINOCULARS.

BRENT (V.O.)

Bernie, you and I are gonna follow them.

FROM BINOCULARS' POINT OF VIEW

Bernadette watches a BOX TRUCK get loaded up with cargo and begin to exit BearGlare's parking lot.

BERNADETTE

Baby bird is leaving its nest.

-EXT. ROAD IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE - DAY - TRAVELING

Brent and Bernadette follow the truck.

BRENT (V.O.)
 Joey, here's where you come in. Can
 you drive stick?

JOEY (V.O.)
 Sure can, B. What'd ya have in
 mind?

The truck passes a CAR parked on the side of the road.
 Olivette RUNS in front of the truck to stop it, her midriff
 and breasts exposed.

The male DRIVER exits the truck.

OLIVETTE
 (effeminately, like a
 Southern belle)
 Oh gee, I sure am glad to run into
 a strong man like you! You wouldn't
 be able to give me a jump, would
 you sweetheart?
 (suggestively, grabbing
 his shoulders)
 I've got cables...

The driver smiles, nods, and walks with Olivette over to the
 car.

BRENT (V.O.)
 We just need to leverage
 your...talents.

Joey is LYING IN WAIT on the side of the car opposite to the
 road, and TACKLES the driver down into the grass. He PUNCHES
 THE DRIVER IN THE FACE until he's knocked out.

Brent and Bernadette exit Brent's car, and Joey TOSSES
 Bernadette the keys to his car. Bernadette gets in the
 driver's seat of Joey's car.

Brent and Joey STRIP the DRIVER'S CLOTHES off.

Brent and Joey toss the driver in the trunk of Joey's car.

BRENT (V.O.)
 Like I said, we get 'em from the
 inside.

Brent gets back in his car. Bernadette drives away in Joey's
 car. Joey THROWS ON THE DRIVER'S CLOTHES, then he puts
 Olivette in the cargo box of the box truck.

Another car passes them by, none the wiser.

—EXT. BEARGLARE LOADING DOCK - DAY

Joey pulls up to BearGlare in the box truck wearing the driver's clothes.

Joey strolls into the factory pushing a HAND TRUCK carrying a LARGE WOODEN CRATE, "Raiders of the Lost Ark"-style.

BRENT (V.O.)
Now, Olivette, you're the closer.

—INT. BEARGLARE HALLWAY - DAY

Joey stops pushing in front of an open door. He OPENS the door slowly, PEEKS HIS HEAD IN, then enters with the hand truck.

OLIVETTE (V.O.)
Will it make me famous?

Pause a beat. SLOW ZOOM on the door. Sound of a BOX SPLITTING OPEN.

Olivette walks out the room first, and runs into a MALE EMPLOYEE trying to get in. He gives her the one-over. She smiles.

OLIVETTE
Oh, this room's taken, sweet pea.

The male employee nods and keeps walking. When the coast is clear, she knocks on the door and Joey exits.

—INT. BEARGLARE FILMING WAREHOUSE - DAY

BRENT (V.O.)
Oh, you'll be very famous...as *Head*
of Compromising.

Olivette enters Steven's filming cubicle and shuts the blinds behind her. She flirts with him, but clearly isn't into it—not that Steven notices.

OLIVETTE (V.O.)
(disgustingly)
Wait, I have to do *that*?

—Smartphone camera perspective. Steven's wearing the headpiece now. He's getting oral sex from Olivette, and his genitals are blurred out.

BRENT (V.O.)

You get him to *take a video* in the suit, then send it to directly to all of BearGlare's customers.

JOEY (V.O.)

You'd really be takin' one for the team.

STEVEN

(cartoon bear voice)

Ah geez, this one's suckin' me for all mah honey, ah hyuck!

-INT. HOUSE - DAY

A MOTHER WATCHES IN HORROR as her TWO CHILDREN watch the video of Steven and Olivette they received on their phone.

OLIVETTE (V.O.)

(unsure)

...If you say so.

-INT. ANOTHER HOUSE - DAY

A concerned FATHER glares at his phone, YELLING at it.

FATHER

(angrily)

My children were watching
PORNOGRAPHY from YOUR company!

-INT. BEARGLARE CORPORATE OFFICE - DAY

Employees apologize profusely into phones. It's utter cacophony.

BERNADETTE (V.O.)

Sounds crazy. But you're the boss.

END MONTAGE

BLACK SCREEN:

SUPER: "ONE WEEK LATER"

INT. TEDSHED OFFICE/STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Willie has his feet KICKED UP on the desk at the front of the room. He's bobbing his head this way and that, HICCUPING.

Brent stands in the corner, while Joey wears a COLLARED SHIRT and PACES around the room reading something from his phone. Bernadette sits cross-legged on the floor.

The rest of the company sit in desks, some leaning forward in anticipation. The WHITEBOARD ON WHEELS is still there from when they were coming up with ideas to destroy BearGlare.

JOEY

(excitedly)

"Shares of BearGlate Ltd. dropped over a staggering 400%, spurred on by what the Internet is calling the 'NuttleKerfuffle.' Analysts predict the company's next best step may be to file for bankruptcy."

Joey RIPS OFF his collared shirt to reveal a tank top, then throws the shirt on the floor.

JOEY (CONT'D)

HELL FUCKIN YEAH!

The room ERUPTS IN APPLAUSE. Hugs and hi-fives. Wine bottles POP OPEN, glasses CLINK. Everyone's muttering.

BRENT

(sternly)

Not to harsh your mellow, but we're here to figure out how to prevent something like this from happening again.

BERNADETTE

Better now than later.

Bernadette rises from the ground and commands the front of the room.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)

So the way I see it, as primitive and short-lived as they were, BearGlare saw success for three reasons: they employed MLM sale techniques but *didn't* look like one, they had a solid bonus plan, and they were unafraid to expand beyond Orlando. And right now, we do none of that.

Willie interjects without moving a muscle.

WILLIE
 (tripping over his words)
 And we're certainly *not* doin' that
 last one.

BERNADETTE
 Willie, all due respect, we're
 gonna run out of—

Willie LEAPS out of his seat, and GETS UP in Bernadette's
 face.

WILLIE
 ORLANDO IS OUR BRAND! GET IT
 THROUGH YOUR HEAD, YOU STUPID
 BITCH!

William pauses to cool off.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
 Our customers are savvy, they'll
 see right through it. So why don't
 you go find some other brand to
 destroy, broad?

Bernadette looks at him, amazed and slightly confused.

BERNADETTE
 Fuck you, dumbass.

Willie just rolls his eyes. Bernadette grabs her stuff and
 storms out. Brent heads for the door after her.

BRENT
 Hey, come on.

WILLIE
 Business lesson #69, baby: *never*
 hire broads—uh, sorry—
 (with air-quotes)
 "women," for leadership roles.

A WOMAN STANDS UP defiantly.

WOMAN
 That is so sexist!

ANOTHER WOMAN RISES.

ANOTHER WOMAN
 Yeah, who do you think you are!?

Willie looks unfazed.

WILLIE

Don't like it, there's the door.
 Though remember, I *do* know where
 you live and I *will* repossess your
 product, and no, you *won't* get your
 money back, as per your contract.

The first woman exits, the second sits back down. Willie
 pours himself a glass of wine and drinks it in ONE BIG SWIG.

A MAN stands up.

MAN

(sternly)

You know somethin', ever since that
 BearGlare thing went down, I
 haven't gotten paid. What gives?

A lot of "yeah"s, "what the hell"s, "fuck you"s.

WILLIE

Oooh, story time!

Willie walks up to an empty desk and FLIPS IT OVER.

WILLIE (CONT'D)

My old man found out that YOU—
 (he looks over to Brent)
 —were responsible for the BearGlare
 finagle, and since he's an
 executive at the company that it
just so happens supplies teddy
 bears to both them *and* us, now he's
 mighty pissed off, so he won't give
me any more bears, so soon we'll
 run out of product, so we're
 COMPLETELY FUCKED.

Willie PUNCHES the whiteboard; it spins. The downline pause a
 couple beats, in shock. Brent looks at Willie, distraught.

INT. CIGAR BAR - NIGHT

Brent and Bernadette are seated. Cigar smoke volumines the
 air. There's gentle piano music. Bernadette lights a parejo
 and chomps on it. The BARTENDER nods to them.

BERNADETTE

(off-handedly)

Black Velvet, neat.

BRENT

Do you have a drink menu?

The bartender shakes his head no.

BERNADETTE

He'll have a Sex on the Beach.

The bartender nods and goes to prepare their drinks.

BRENT

I've never had sex on a beach
before...

BERNADETTE

I'd worry 'bout having sex at all,
first.

Brent guffaws. Suddenly, his phone rings. It's Trish. He answers it.

BRENT

(timidly)

Hi.

TRISH (V.O.)

Hey, can you come through?

BRENT

No sorry, I'm with a client.

TRISH (V.O.)

Another late night? Do they give
you days off? Don't let them take
advantage of you!

(sigh)

K, bye.

Trish hangs up. Brent pockets his phone.

BRENT

(confidently)

By the way, *I've had sex before.*

The bartender arrives with the drinks, SIDE-EYEING Brent for what he just said. Bernadette takes another cigar hit.

BERNADETTE

With who? Your girlfriend you're
blowing off to work an MLM you
don't even own?

Brent quiets, looking down at his drink. After a beat, he takes a sip.

BRENT

Sex on the beach...it's good.

BERNADETTE
 (smugly)
 I know.

Cigar hit.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)
 So, what are we gonna do about
 supply?

BRENT
 No clue. I'm just here to thank
 you. You've done a lot.

BERNADETTE
 You're paying me.

BRENT
 Well yeah, but...
 (trails off)

Bernadette takes a last whiff and TOSSES THE PAREJO into a
 bin. She RAISES HER ARMS in celebration.

BERNADETTE
 Ten points! And you're welcome.

Bernadette collects herself. Couple beats pass.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)
 Setbacks notwithstanding...Your
 plan amazingly worked pretty good.
 We're doin' alright.

BRENT
 Think so?

BERNADETTE
 Compared to some places I've
 worked, that's for damn sure.
 (beat)
 Fuck Mr. Shitz, though.

BRENT
 He's...not so bad...

Bernadette LAUGHS.

BRENT (CONT'D)
 What's so funny?

BERNADETTE
 (wheezing)
 How do you not see how shit he is?

Bernadette LAUGHS HYSTERICALLY now. Boozehounds stop and stare.

BRENT
(ostentatiously)
Nothin' to see here folks!

Bernadette finishes her drink and waves for another.

BERNADETTE
And what's with your whole...on-
again, off-again fake-stupid
routine? You know what you're
talkin' about most of the time, but
it's like you pretend not to. I
don't get it.

Brent stares back at her like he's just been found out.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)
Alright, alright pinched a nerve.
Then next question: why MLM work?

Brent looks away for a beat, then responds:

BRENT
I graduated in communications.
After that, I kept working this
retail job that put me through
school, meanwhile I was looking for
new work. But the way things are
out there...

Brent finishes his drink and waves the bartender down.

BRENT (CONT'D)
Bud Light.

The bartender smirks and Bernadette rolls her eyes at him.

BRENT (CONT'D)
Nobody really understands. They all
say, 'Well why don't you just get a
new job?' And it's like, where?
How? What do I have to offer?

The bartender appears.

THE BARTENDER
(humorously)
We're out of Bud Light.

BRENT
Just close me up.

Brent looks sad. Pause a beat.

BRENT (CONT'D)
And I didn't have, like, a family
to go back home to, so...

He trails off for a second before coming to.

BRENT (CONT'D)
What'd you do before this?

BERNADETTE
I just sort of...was? Mom died when
I was two, dad left me at a Denny's
when I was 15. Not the ideal age
for that!

BRENT
Geez. I guess never meeting
mine...it's not so bad by
comparison.

Bernadette grabs Brent's hand and looks in his eyes.

BERNADETTE
Shut up about it.

CUT TO:

INT. BRENT'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bernadette is giving Brent oral sex. His right hand is on the
back of her head. She looks up at him.

BRENT
Don't look-sorry. That's my thing.

She closes her eyes and looks back ahead. Brent grabs his
phone. He's got a text from Trish: "Love you, night! <3"

He swipes it away.

ON BRENT'S PHONE, THE PHOTO OF MOLLY

Brent scrolls down to see if Molly's responded yet. Nothin'.
He scrolls back up to look at the thirst trap picture.

EYES BULGING at the sight of Molly, Brent CLIMAXES. He
quickly tosses the phone onto a blanket on his bed to mute
the sound of the impact.

INT. BRENT'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

Bernadette cleans herself up in Brent's bathroom. Brent awkwardly walks up behind her and watches her wash her face.

BERNADETTE

Hmm?

BRENT

Next time...maybe at your place.
Just in case...you know.

Bernadette nods, wearing this face that says, 'there probably won't be a next time.'

BERNADETTE

(hedgingly)

Next time.

Pause a beat.

BRENT

Sorry it wasn't as good as on a
beach.

She makes for his front door, and looks back at Brent.

BERNADETTE

(tentatively)

See you tomorrow.

Brent nods and waves an awkward goodbye.

Brent walks back to his bed and picks up his phone. He scrolls around a bit before dropping his phone to the floor like his hand lost life; it lands face-up, screen on.

ON BRENT'S PHONE SCREEN

Another message from Trish: "He's SO excited to meet his new friend <3"

Attached is a PHOTO of the TEDDY BEAR Brent sold Trish.

BLACK SCREEN

Sound of Brent CRYING IN HYSTERICIS.

INT. TRISH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The sound of Brent's cries continues.

Trish smiles contently as she types up her novel manuscript, occasionally scribbling into a Moleskine notebook. She tabs over to a site for checking out apartments in Chicago.

INT. TEDSHED OFFICE/LOBBY - DAY

Brent's heading for the door when he's stopped by uncharacteristically agitated Selene by the reception desk.

SELENE
We have to talk.

BRENT
Walk with me.

INT. TEDSHED OFFICE/HALLWAY - DAY - TRACKING

SELENE
Look, I'm not here to say your plan wasn't effective. But Willie shouldn't have approved it.

BRENT
And why's that?

SELENE
Brent, he knew TedShed and BearGlare wore the same clothes, but let it go on anyway, because he has *no foresight!*
(scoffs)
He shows up drunk all the time, he doesn't do anything, and frankly, all the women hate him. Put two and two together, man!

BRENT
(snappy)
Mr. Pitz took a chance on a schlub like me with no experience, no talent, nothing. Meanwhile you sit there and watch cat videos. I'm sick of people's comments.

Brent turns around and storms out the front door.

EXT. TEDSHED BUILDING - DAY

Brent heads for his car, when he hears INDISCRIMINATE CRIES from behind the office building.

EXT. BEHIND THE TEDSHED BUILDING - DAY

Willie is standing there, legs spread, left fist holding Joey by the collar, right fist bloodied from BEATING HIM to a pulp.

Willie notices Brent and relents. Joey COLLAPSES.

WILLIE

Oh, Peterson, good, you're here.

BRENT

(incredulous)

What the hell are you doing!?

WILLIE

(panting)

It's sad. This one just won't pay up. And that after *my plan* to take down BearGlare went off without a hitch. Disappointing, really. Which brings us to business lesson #503: sometimes, you gotta make your employees understand.

Willie STOMPS Joey's stomach. Brent SHOVES Willie away.

WILLIE (CONT'D)

My office. First thing tomorrow.

Willie pulls a FLASK from his shirt pocket. He GULPS down the entire container, LIGHTS A CIGARETTE, HITS IT, then walks off.

Brent crouches down to help Joey up, who's out of it.

BRENT

(under his breath)

His fucking plan...

JOEY

(confused)

Huh?

INT. ORLANDO HEALTH/NON-ICU - NIGHT

Joey lays in bed asleep, hooked up to some machinery. Brent stands nearby, talking to Trish.

TRISH

So what the hell happened to him?

BRENT
Oh, uh, the doctor said he must
have taken a pretty bad fall. Yeah.

TRISH
Uh...some fall. So, are you okay?

BRENT
Yeah, I'm good. You?

Trish smiles.

TRISH
Work's super crazy, and I rarely
get to see my boyfriend
anymore...but other than that,
can't complain.

BRENT
We'll do something soon. I promise.

TRISH
Mhm.

Trish turns around and walks off. Brent pulls out his PHONE.

BRENT
Selene, hi, it's me.
(beat)
Yeah, no, just...you're right.

INT. TEDSHED OFFICE/LOBBY - DAY

Brent enters through the front door. The entire company is
there. SALLY FRENCH steps forward.

SALLY
Is he gonna be okay?

BRENT
Yeah. Sorry, what was your name
again?

SALLY
Oh, Sally's fine.

Brent smiles.

BRENT
He's gonna be fine, Sally.

Willie FLINGS OPEN the door behind Brent and practically
TRIPS OVER HIMSELF trying to get inside.

WILLIE
 (slurring his words)
 What's everyone standin' round for?

Brent looks at him, then averts his eyes to the ground.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
 What, you wanna fire me, or
 somethin'?

Crickets from the peanut gallery. Willie SMIRKS.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
 Well, in that case, I hope you're
 hungry, 'cause I brought y'all
 somethin to chew on...

He staggers back a couple steps, SHUFFLES HIS CROTCH, then
 staggers away.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
 Oh, and uh...lesson business,
 business, liaison...7307: FUCK.
 YOU.

Willie throws up DOUBLE MIDDLE FINGERS, and staggers off.

BRENT
 (jokingly)
 Well, that coulda gone worse, huh!?

INT. TRISH'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Trish does some MEDICAL WORK while on the phone with her MOM.

TRISH
 (quotidian)
 Yes, I'm eating okay. I'm doing my
 take-home work. Mhm. No—I mean,
 yes. I'm not sure?

A KNOCK at the door.

INT. TRISH'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

TRISH
 I wasn't there Mom, I don't know.
 Yes, I just said, I eat vegetables—
 yes, every day.

Trish opens the door. It's Brent. He's brought roses and a
 heart-shaped container of chocolates.

TRISH (CONT'D)
I'll call you back. Yes, later.

Trish hangs up. She grabs the roses and chocolates.

TRISH (CONT'D)
What are you doing here?

BRENT
Well, I did say we'd do something
fun soon, didn't I?

CUT TO:

INT. TRISH'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Trish and Brent HAVE SEX in the dark. Brent is TACITURN.

INT. TRISH'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Trish and Brent lay in bed together.

TRISH
So how's work?

BRENT
I think I'm gonna get a promotion.

ON TRISH'S FACE

A sad look.

TRISH
(reserved)
Really, already? That's great.

BRENT
It's okay. It'll be a lot more
work, I think.

TRISH
That's...how it works, yes. Unless
you're like a CEO, then you just
sort of sit in meetings while
people convince you their work is
worth funding, and you collect
checks and...that's it.

Brent looks at Trish and sighs.

TRISH (CONT'D)
So like, what do you exactly?

BRENT
I'm in sales. You know that.

TRISH
Yeah, but, like, what do you do?

Brent turns to look out the window.

ON THE HALF MOON

BRENT
I'm up early tomorrow.

TRISH
You can stay the night.

BRENT
I'm closer to the office.

TRISH
Then I'll come with you.

BRENT
Don't you have stuff to do?

Brent leaves. Trish gets up and walks over to her computer.

BLACK SCREEN:

ON SCREEN: TWO MONTHS LATER

INT. TACKY-YAWN OFFICE/MEETING ROOM - DAY

A bunch of male distros we've seen in previous scenes wearing tucked-in button-up shirts sit around a meeting table.

Brent sits at the head of the table.

Next to Brent, Joey THROWS and RETRACTS a YO-YO with a YAWNING MAN on its face; every time he does, it makes an OLD SCHOOL LASER NOISE (think "Star Wars" guns).

Bernadette stands next to a screen, giving a presentation.

ON THE PRESENTATION SLIDE

It reads: "Slogan Candidates:"

"Tacky-Yawn: Spinning Faster Than the Speed of Laser Light!"

ON THE NEXT ONE: "Tacky-Yawn: Don't Sleep on These Amazing Yo-Yos!"

ON THE LAST ONE: "Tacky-Yawn: Yo-Yo, That's What's Up!"

Two distros WHISPER to each other. Brent SLAMS the table.

BRENT

(sternly)

I'd appreciate it if you gave your
Director of Strategy the time of
day.

The two guys stop.

BRENT (CONT'D)

Please continue, Ms. Shandling.

Bernadette hesitates.

BERNADETTE

Motion to...table this discussion.

The WHOLE ROOM, in an exhausted/relieved sort of way: "Aye."

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)

Moving on...

Bernadette PRESSES A BUTTON on a remote to CHANGE SLIDES.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)

We're seeing traction on sales of
yo-yos in Orlando. Up 170%,
meanwhile distros...roughly 110.

JOEY

So, what's the bad news?

BERNADETTE

Based on surveys and
testimonials...people miss the
comfort teddy bears provided. And
they always need knives.

BRENT

That ship's sailed.

BERNADETTE

Well, there's also the issue
of...guys, we've sowed all the
arable Orlando land there is. We
need to start making inroads in at
least other Florida cities.

Brent inhales, folds his hands, and exhales.

BRENT
Draft a plan and have it in my
inbox by EOD.

BERNADETTE
It's done.

INT. BRENT'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Brent sits at his computer in the dark, the screen
illuminating his morose expression.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN

Brent checks his posts from different social media sites; all
low engagement.

Brent goes to PUNCH his screen, but pulls it.

Brent grabs his cell phone.

ON THE PHONE SCREEN

Brent finds Trish in his contacts, but doesn't call/text her.

Brent opens Bernadette's expansion plan in his email inbox.

INT. BRENT'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

Brent looks frustrated. He rustles through the pages of his
notebook before stopping on the word "Pete's" and "Food!".

INT. TACKY-YAWN OFFICE/CUBICLES - DAY

Packed seats. TYPING NOISES, PHONES RINGING, CHATTING.

Brent walks in the room. He THROWS HIS ARMS OUT like he's
making a sales pitch.

BRENT
Dinner! Pete's! On my card! 8 PM,
sharp! And don't be late!

The room all STARE at Brent. Some lightly CHEER, others are
too busy to care.

Bernadette approaches Brent from her office.

BERNADETTE
(timidly)
Hey.

BRENT
(sternly)
Hey.

BERNADETTE
So...did you take a look?

BRENT
At what?

BERNADETTE
You told me to draft up strategy.
It's in your inbox.

BRENT
Haven't had the chance.

BERNADETTE
(accusatory)
You know, you have email privileges
from, like, anywhere in the world?

BRENT
(retaliatory)
I was busy, I-I have things outside
of work. Unlike *certain others*.

Brent skulks away. Bernadette GUFFAWS.

INT. BRENT'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Brent and Trish sit in silence.

TRISH
You okay?

BRENT
Yeah, yeah I'm good.

TRISH
Can't believe I *finally* get to meet
your employees!

BRENT
Yeah, they're, you know. They all
like me, I think.

TRISH
Good!...You never gave me that
second teddy bear.

BRENT

Shit!...I've got one at the house,
just take my key.

Brent pulls out a SET OF KEYS and hands it to her.

BRENT (CONT'D)

It's the one that says 'AK'. For
'apartment key'. Clever, right?

TRISH

Next level stuff, really.

Trish removes the APARTMENT KEY from the set of keys.

INT. PETE'S DINER - NIGHT

Joey sits, arms folded at a collection of midroom tables
which have been brought together. Opposite him is
Selene—filing her nails—and Dimitri who taps on the table.

DIMITRI

He thinks of us like fish. There's
always more in the sea.

JOEY

You don't know anything.

SELENE

It's getting better. We've got
product again.

DIMITRI

Yeah, and what would you know about
that? I push product, you push
pencils. It's completely different.

SELENE

(snappy)

I push buttons that bring product
in. Tacky-Yawn's cup runneth over
with these stupid fucking yo-yos
because of me, you prick!

JOEY

How about you show her a little
respect, huh?

DIMITRI

And here's you puffin' your chest
'cause Olive saw right through your
BS and left your ass, so now you
gotta act cool for the girls who
stayed. Respect this!

Joey ASCENDS from his seat and GRABS Dimitri by the collar.

JOEY

(whispering, threatening)
You don't know *squat* about how
things are, or where they're goin'.
But keep up the lip, you'll be
learning that information from a
poorhouse on your neighbor's stolen
Wi-Fi when you're not flippin'
burgers in a *neck brace*.

Brent enters with Trish, his arm around her.

BRENT

Ah, my understudies!

Barely a peep from his 'understudies' at Brent's arrival.

Joey EXHALES and RELEASES Dimitri, who LEANS OVER to Selene.

DIMITRI

(whispering)
What'd I say?

INT. PETE'S DINER - NIGHT (LATER)

Everyone's eating. Brent sits off in his own corner with some
of his downline.

Trish and Bernadette eat together. Trish wears a GOLD WATCH.

TRISH

So, why yo-yos?

BERNADETTE

(reserved)
Eh, you take what you can get.

Trish nods her head in understanding. Pause a beat.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)

Recognize you from Molly's party.

TRISH

You know Molly? She's coming, you know.

BERNADETTE

Went to elementary together. Last time I cared much for education. Some good times, her and I.

TRISH

What was she like back then?

BERNADETTE

Ya know...Rich.

Trish laughs.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)

Maybe that was why I liked her back then. She *had stuff*. But I tell ya, that one could shoplift like she didn't have a *cent* to her name.

TRISH

No shit? Knowing her, I guess that makes sense.

BERNADETTE

What do you mean?

TRISH

She's a *material girl*, you know?

Bernadette's gaze catches something on Trish's person.

ON TRISH'S GOLD WATCH

BERNADETTE

That so?

TRISH

Like, a couple months ago, she yapped to my boss about somethin'. Money people act that way.

Bernadette has stopped eating. She gives Trish a DEATH GLARE.

TRISH (CONT'D)

But you know how it is. You're in sales.

SOUND OF A BELL

Trish TURNS AROUND.

TRISH (CONT'D)
Speak of the devil.

Molly arrives. She looks FRIGHTENED, a bruise on her face.

Trish turns back around and continues eating.

Bernadette LOOKS OVER to Brent's side of the table.

ON BRENT AND FRIENDS

They're eating and FAKE LAUGHING at Brent's wise cracks.

Molly approaches Brent. Brent FIXATES ON MOLLY.

BERNADETTE (O.S.)
You know, Brent and I...I guess you
could say we've become *pretty*
close! If you know what I mean!

Bernadette LAUGHS HYSTERICALLY.

Molly TEARS UP, WHISPERS into Brent's ear, then hands him a
SLIP OF PAPER.

Brent's expression becomes GRIM, and he NODS his head in.

Bernadette's STILL LAUGHING.

Brent GETS UP and exits the restaurant.

ON TRISH

Confused disbelief.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

Crickets chirping. Gas lights buzz.

ON A TRAILER WITH THE LIGHTS ON

Brent DRIVES UP in the grass near the trailer.

Out front: two LAWN CHAIRS, and an umbrella on a table.

INT. TRAILER PARK/BRENT'S CAR - NIGHT

Brent pulls the SLIP OF PAPER from his pocket and looks at
it. He looks up through the windshield.

ON THE QUARTER MOON OBFUSCATED BY CLOUDS

Off-screen, Brent exhales deeply.

Brent reaches into his GLOVE BOX and pulls out a TEDSHED KNIFE.

ON THE KNIFE

It gleams in the moonlight as Brent rotates it in his hand.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

Brent EXITS the car. He tries shoving the knife into the back of his pants, but it makes a RIP.

BRENT
(under his breath)
Shit!

He opens the back door of his car, reaches in, pulls out a PLASTIC BAG from the mall, and places the knife inside.

EXT. TRAILER - NIGHT

Brent stands on the trailer's stoop, the plastic bag in hand. He READIES HIMSELF, then KNOCKS on the door FOUR TIMES.

Someone answers.

ON BRENT

Brent looks shellshocked.

BRENT
(exasperated)
I-uh-I-Mr. Pitz! I didn't expect to
find you here, of all places!

Willie is unshaven, hair messy, wearing a robe, tank top, boxer shorts, flip flops, and a strong drink in hand.

EXT. TRAILER - NIGHT (LATER)

Brent and Willie sit in the lawn chairs. Cigarette in mouth, Willie pours the two a drink from a BOTTLE in a blue cooler next to the umbrella table.

CRICKET NOISES

WILLIE
(slurring his words)
How'd ya find me?

BRENT

Ah, well, you know, position I'm in these days...it's not so hard.

WILLIE

I've been watching you, you know. Orlando's knight in shining armor.

Willie TAPS Brent on the shoulder.

WILLIE (CONT'D)

(goadng)

Hey, you sellin' swords next?

Willie LAUGHS MANIACALLY.

WILLIE (CONT'D)

'Cause the guys out here aren't too sharp, you know!

Willie continues LAUGHING, then pours himself another drink.

BRENT

You always had the best jokes, Mr. Pitz. I always said that.

Willie stops laughing, and exhales.

WILLIE

Sure you did, kid.

Brent's face SOURS. Willie stares blankly back.

WILLIE (CONT'D)

What's in the bag?

BRENT

Oh, this? I brought ya somethin'.

Brent reaches into the bag. Willie taps Brent's shoulder.

WILLIE

'Fore you show and tell, there's something I want you to see.

INT. WILLIE'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Willie steps in first, holding the bottle, then Brent, bag in hand.

Bottles, food wrappers, and cigarette ashes line the floor.

ON AN OLD CRT WITH ANTENNAS

The TV airs a Hitchcock-style thriller, the killer about to slay his quarry.

Willie opens the sink cabinet and pulls out a TEDSHED TEDDY BEAR.

WILLIE
Do you know what this is?

Brent eyes it, silent, then looks grimly back to Willie.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
This is *the* very teddy bear you told me to hold onto the day we met. The day *I hired you*. I've kept it all this time.

Willie hiccups, then takes a swig from his bottle.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
That's the kinda guy I am, kid.

ON BRENT'S PLASTIC BAG

Brent's FIST TIGHTENS.

BAG CRUMPLING NOISE

WILLIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
And now, no cash, no running water.
Just this guy, and me.

ON THE TV

The killer SLICES AND DICES the victim with ferocity.
SHRIEKING, STATICKY VIOLINS

WILLIE (CONT'D)
I sold you the world at a discount—

ON WILLIE'S BOTTLE

Willie CLENCHES THE BOTTLE'S NECK.

LIQUID SPLOSHING SOUNDS

WILLIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
—and THIS is how you repay me.

Brent REACHES into the bag, and STEPS FORWARD.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
Business lesson #100000: NEVER stab
your day ones in the back, you
fucking cunt!

BRENT
Good to know...

OUT COMES THE KNIFE

Brent SWIPES at Willie, but misses. Willie grabs the teddy bear and tries using it as a shield.

Brent swipes again, CUTTING Willie's face and the teddy bear's HEAD clean off.

WILLIE
Fuckin'!

The bloodied teddy bear head LANDS ON THE TRAILER FLOOR.

Willie goes for Brent's head with the bottle. Brent GRABS Willie's left arm with his right hand.

Willie BITES Brent's right hand. Brent CRIES OUT, DROPS the knife, then clutches the bitten hand.

Willie DARTS past Brent and out the trailer, but his flip-flops TRIP him on the decline. He LANDS FACE-FIRST.

Brent GRABS THE KNIFE, looks to the door, RUNS toward it, then BELLY FLOPS onto Willie with the knife out like a video game jump attack.

EXT. WILLIE'S TRAILER - NIGHT

The knife misses Willie, and PLANTS into the dirt, sticking up. Willie has the WIND KNOCKED OUT OF HIM and groans.

Brent and Willie struggle. Willie goes for the knife. With one hand Brent prevents Willie from grabbing the knife, with the other he covers Willie's mouth.

Finally, Brent PUNCHES Willie in the throat. Willie chokes, writhing, then rolls onto his back.

Brent unsheathes the knife from the sediment, and PLUNGES it into the back of Willie's head.

ON THE QUARTER MOON, NOW UNOBFUSCATED BY CLOUDS

INT. WILLIE'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Brent breathes heavy, BLOOD ON HIS SHIRT, HANDS, AND FACE. Glass shards and more blood on the floor. He looks around.

We're behind Brent; he's noticed something. He briskly walks in the direction of what's caught his attention.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. TACKY-YAWN OFFICE/LOBBY - DAY - TRACKING

Brent walks briskly into the office. We're behind him.

He looks around. Desks are all empty.

Selene is at the reception desk. She sees Brent and STANDS.

SELENE

Coffee?

BRENT

(despondent)

No.

INT. TACKY-YAWN OFFICE/HALLWAY - DAY - TRACKING

Brent's gait is brisk. SOUND OF HIS BREATHING QUICKENS

INT. TACKY-YAWN OFFICE/MEETING ROOM - DAY

Bernadette gives a PRESENTATION on her expansion plan. The entire company is present and watching.

BERNADETTE

So if we start by establishing further operations in Atlanta, I-

Brent BARGES THROUGH THE DOOR.

BRENT

(angrily)

What is this?

BERNADETTE

(sarcastically)

Glad you could make it. I was just explaining to *your* company how it's gonna be around here from now on.

Brent GETS UP IN BERNADETTE'S face and POINTS his finger.

BRENT

Did I—
 (exhales)
 Show's over, back to work
 everybody!

Nobody moves a muscle.

BRENT (CONT'D)

What, am I speakin' Swahili over
 here? Go! Or no pension!

The room begrudgingly rises. Brent turns to Bernadette.

BRENT (CONT'D)

Pack this shit up, then my office.

INT. TACKY-YAWN OFFICE/BRENT'S OFFICE - DAY

Brent sits at his desk, scrolling through his phone.

ON BRENT'S PHONE

New posts, but no new engagement. Brent TOSSES his phone at
 the wall.

Bernadette slowly enters the room.

BRENT

(sternly)
 Close the door, and have a seat.

Bernadette sits, but doesn't close the door behind her.

Brent GETS UP, walks to the door, and SHUTS AND LOCKS it.

BERNADETTE

What do you want me to say, dude?
 We need more distributors.

BRENT

You were supposed to come to *ME*,
 with the plan, not the whole
 fuckin' city!

BERNADETTE

I sent it! You just don't listen to
 me anymore! Look, morale's tanking,
 downline are running out of people
 to hawk this bullshit onto, so
 people are gonna start leaving.
 What did you expect?

BRENT
The company is doing *just fine*.

BERNADETTE
You keep tellin' yourself that.

Pause a beat. Brent rises from his eat, puffing his chest.

BRENT
(threateningly)
Do not. Do this. Again.

Bernadette makes for the door, and SLAMS THE DOOR SHUT.

EXT. BRENT'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Trish knocks on Brent's door.

TRISH
Brent, are you in there? I'm here
for the bear...among other things.

She puts her ear to the door to listen. Nothing. She takes out the KEY Brent gave her and opens the door with it.

INT. BRENT'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Trish pokes her head in, then closes the door quietly.

Papers adorn Brent's desk. Trish rustles them around for a bit. She flips through his weird notebook, then closes it.

Trish walks over to the bed. The TEDDY BEAR Brent promised her is on the floor, so she CROUCHES down to pick it up, which prompts her to LOOK BENEATH THE BED.

ON TRISH, FROM UNDER THE BED

TRISH
What the fuck!?

INT. TACKY-YAWN OFFICE/BRENT'S OFFICE - DAY

Brent is sitting at his desk eating a SLICE OF PIE cut from a larger pie on his desk, a content smile on his face.

INT. TACKY-YAWN OFFICE/CUBICLES - DAY

Brent enters. People pretend not to notice him.

BRENT
So, uh...who made the pie?

The room looks at him, but nobody says anything.

BRENT (CONT'D)
(faux goofy)
Well, whoever made it, it's *really*
good.

We close up on MICHAEL WYATT's (young 20s) conflicted face.

INT. TACKY-YAWN OFFICE/BRENT'S OFFICE - DAY

Brent stares down at his desk.

TWO KNOCKS at the door.

BRENT
It's open!

Michael enters Brent's office.

BRENT (CONT'D)
Ah, Mr. Widget! I forgot we'd
scheduled time together. Please,
take a seat.

Michael timidly takes a seat opposite Brent.

BRENT (CONT'D)
(smiling)
What can I do ya for, Mr. Wombat?

MICHAEL
Oh, well, first of all, thanks so
much for taking the time to speak
with me, Mr. Peterson. It's—ya
know, you didn't have to, is all.

Brent smiles back, but it's less wide this time.

BRENT
Have a slice of pie, Mr. Winslet.

MICHAEL
Well, thing is, Mr. Peterson...I
actually made that pie.

BRENT
You did?

MICHAEL

Well, you know, thought I'd bring one in to show you how much I appreciate you giving me a job here, Mr. Peterson. 'Cause, I mean, you know, it's hard out there.

BRENT

It sure is, Mr. Whipit. It sure is.

MICHAEL

Yup. Well, Selene, she's real nice, she actually answered my question, so, uh, that's it, really!

Michael stands from the chair.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Back to work, ya know?

BRENT

Back to it.

Michael makes for the door. As he goes to turn it, Brent TAPS HIM ON THE SHOULDER. Michael turns to face Brent.

MICHAEL

(timidly)

Something wrong, Mr. Peterson?

BRENT

Well, it's just that earlier, I asked the whole room who made the pie. You were there.

Michael looks blankly at him.

BRENT (CONT'D)

You were there, but you didn't say anything when I asked.

MICHAEL

Oh well, I was just, you know, working on, you know—

BRENT

You were looking right at me, Mr. Winston. You know, I remember every single thing about every single person I employ, and I *especially* remember every single thing that every single person I employ *does*.

(MORE)

BRENT (CONT'D)
 That being said, you *could have*
 stepped up in front of *all your*
colleagues and admitted that you
 made the pie—but you didn't.

MICHAEL
 Well, I—

BRENT
 (accusatory)
 I'm just trying to understand. Is
 it that you're...embarrassed that
 you made the pie, *for me?*

Michael stutters over his words.

BRENT (CONT'D)
 Or even...ashamed?

Michael struggles trying to open the door.

MICHAEL
 I—I have to—

BRENT
 Get out. And *fuck you.*

Michael shambles out of the office into the hallway.

INT. TACKY-YAWN OFFICE/HALLWAY - DAY

Michael paces away in tears, hyperventilating.

Brent steps out of his office.

BRENT
 (shrieking like a demon)
 GET OUT! FUCK YOU!

INT. TACKY-YAWN OFFICE/BRENT'S OFFICE - DAY

Brent sits back down at his desk.

INT. TACKY-YAWN OFFICE/BRENT'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Brent is passed out at his desk.

TEXT MESSAGE BUZZ

Brent wakes up and checks his phone.

ON THE PHONE SCREEN

Brent has a text from Trish that reads: "Dinner at my place tonight. We need to talk."

EXT. TRISH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Brent rings her doorbell and puts his hands behind himself.

TRISH (O.S.)
(distant)
Come in!

Brent opens the door.

INT. TRISH'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Brent enters Trish's apartment. Candles and dim mood lighting. There are COOKING NOISES coming from the kitchen.

BRENT
(encouragingly)
Trish, it's me! Something smells good!

TRISH (O.S.)
(slightly distant, morose)
Thanks!

Brent walks over to Trish's dining table. Plates are set up.

INT. TRISH'S APARTMENT/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Brent takes a seat, where he can see Trish standing in front of the kitchen counter.

BRENT
Whatcha got for me tonight?

TRISH
(ominously)
You'll see.

INT. TRISH'S APARTMENT/DINING ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Brent sits and twiddles his thumbs. He WHISTLES a tune.

He looks over at Trish, who's cutting vegetables. Suddenly, she shoves her TEDSHED SLIT KNIFE into the cutting board and tends to a pot. Brent's EYES WIDEN at the sight of the knife.

INT. TRISH'S APARTMENT/DINING ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Brent and Trish are eating dinner. Brent stares intently at his stew.

TRISH
So...are you gonna eat?

BRENT
Sorry. Just thinking.

Brent looks at her, then begins eating.

TRISH
I'm transferring to Chicago Hospital.

Brent nearly CHOKES on his stew.

BRENT
What? How long have you known? And when?

TRISH
Um. For a few months now. And...in the new year. So, like, three months from now.

Brent puts his silverware down.

BRENT
Why did you wait so long to tell me?

TRISH
Why *have* you been avoiding me these last few months?

BRENT
Avoiding you? Wh—I haven't been avoiding you!

TRISH
We've barely spoken, like, four sentences to each other since you got...whatever your new job is.

Brent shoots Trish a look that says, "Yeah, I guess you're right." He resumes eating.

TRISH (CONT'D)
What *is* your job? And don't just say, "sales". You always say, "sales," what does that *mean*?

Brent finishes swallowing his current bite, then takes another before replying.

BRENT

We're a direct sales company that sells yo-yos. And I kind of need you to buy a few.

TRISH

Direct sales. And...what does *that* mean, exactly?

BRENT

You wouldn't understand.

TRISH

Oh, really, Brent? You know I work in a hospital? Which has to be, like, bare minimum 84 times as complicated as selling yo-yos?

BRENT

Hey, fuck off maybe, a little?

TRISH

Excuse me?

The both of them PUT DOWN their silverware harshly. CLANKS and CLATTERS.

BRENT

If you must know, direct sales constitutes onboarding a *sophisticated network* of distributors who all support each other toward a united cause of *financial wellness*, independent from big business motivated exclusively by unsustainable, profit-driven growth. We grow organically, by bringing on people who are the best of the best at what they do. Oh, and I'm already president of the company, meanwhile you've spent the last 36 years as a resident to *maybe* become a physician worth a shit. Does that suitably answer your question or should I explain further?

Trish just stares back at Brent, mouth agape.

Trish LAUGHS HYSTERICALLY.

BRENT (CONT'D)
Go on, laugh it up.

TRISH
I just...you're the president of a
fucking *multi-level marketing*
company?
(phonetically)
EL OH EL!

BRENT
Fuck you.

TRISH
Fuck me!? How about fuck you for
cheating on me, and *don't fucking*
lie to me, she pretty much told me.

Brent's BROW FURROWS.

BRENT
I didn't cheat on you!

TRISH
Really? So who is Bernadette to
you, exactly?

BRENT
She's—she's—Head of Strategy at
Tacky-Yawn, nothing more.

TRISH
Tacky-Yawn?

BRENT
(sternly)
This discussion is over. Eat.

Trish GETS UP from her chair and heads to the kitchen.

While Brent's eating, Trish returns with BRENT'S PLASTIC BAG
and DUMPS the contents of it into Brent's bowl.

Out comes Willie's BLOODY TEDDY BEAR HEAD.

BRENT (CONT'D)
What—what is this?

TRISH
This was under *your bed!*

BRENT
Now you're going through my stuff!?

TRISH

You gave me the fucking key!

BRENT

Because I trusted you, you stupid wench! Last time I make that mistake.

Trish's mouth is AGAPE. Pause a beat.

TRISH

(exasperated)

Who are you?

Brent says nothing.

TRISH (CONT'D)

You—you joined that—that cult, and I don't even recognize, I—

Brent RISES from his chair.

BRENT

You wouldn't fucking understand, because you're a little goodie two-shoes who everyone likes, and everyone always has nice things to say about, because you followed every single rule to the 't' to get where you are today. The schooling, your residency, your stupid book that's just like *everything else* out there—

TRISH

When do you read, ever?

BRENT

Your—your whole vibe is just, like, conformity! You just followed the steps along the path *someone else* laid out for you.

Trish grips her head, LAUGHING in disbelief as she PACES.

BRENT (CONT'D)

And that's why you're jealous of me for making something of myself through *crisp innovation*—

TRISH

You haven't had an original thought, ever!

(MORE)

TRISH (CONT'D)

Every single turn of phrase, or joke, that you've ever said to me, over these last two miserable fucking years, it all came from *elsewhere*. So for you to sit here, and tell me, of all people, a woman of color, who's had it fucking hard from assholes like you every single day judging me for every single thing that has nothing to do with me, that I've had it easy, that's fucking rich Brent, or do you go by some new stage name to accompany your fake shit-eating persona?

BRENT

Fuck you.

TRISH

No, fuck you.

Brent STORMS out of Trish's apartment.

Trish GRABS the BEAR HEAD from the stew, then grabs a LIGHTER from a drawer in the kitchen.

EXT. TRISH'S APARTMENT/BALCONY - NIGHT

Trish LIGHTS the bear head on fire and throws it into the APARTMENT POOL. The crescent moon reflects in the pool's waters.

BLACK SCREEN:

SUPER: "THREE MONTHS LATER"

MONTAGE: Moving

-INT. TRISH'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

Trish drops an EMPTY SUITCASE and THREE BOXES on her bed.

-ON THE SUITCASE: It has some clothes in it.

-The boxes overflow with knick-knacks and medical books.

-Some of the books are now on her bed.

-Trish takes a sip of an energy drink.

-Trish sits at her desk writing her book, looking somewhat optimistic.

-INT. ORLANDO HEALTH/EXAM ROOM - DAY

Trish types away, looking bored.

-INT. TRISH'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

The suitcase is now full of clothes.

-Her apartment is packed, save for her computer and a TV. It feels empty.

-Trish is looking through some mail, and finds an ADVERTISEMENT for a "Very Christmasy Tacky-Yawn Seminar, featuring a SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT from Sir Gusto!" at the Amway Center the following day.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Trish has a table with some friends BARTIE (24, to her left), MEL (26, across), and JUICE (29, diagonal). They're all holding MINI SHOT GLASSES.

JUICE/MEL/BARTIE

To Chicago!

The group CLINK their glasses together and DRINK.

TRISH

Thanks, y'all.

JUICE

You made your mark in a short time, that's for sure.

MEL

We're all gonna miss you, Trish.

TRISH

Stop...

Trish looks away, distant.

Bartie calls for a WAITER.

BARTIE

(yelling)

Excuse me, another round-

(cupping his hands to his mouth)

-another round, on me!

TRISH

Bartie, stop! I can pay!

Bartie LEANS OVER to Trish's ear.

BARTIE
(whispering)
You can make it up to me, later.

Trish looks perturbed. She pulls out a \$10 and lays it on the table.

TRISH
I'll keep in touch.

Trish weakly smiles, nods, then walks off. Mel LEANS ACROSS the table and SLAPS Bartie.

MEL
The fuck did you say?

BARTIE
What? She's single now!

EXT. AMWAY CENTER - DAY

Lines to get into the venue are packed. People play with TACKY-YAWN YOYOS and wear teddy bear headpieces. Christmas paraphernalia and food stalls abound, where all the vendors must use TedShed Slit knives.

Trish waits in line, the only one not stoked to be there.

INT. AMWAY CENTER - DAY

MAJESTIC BRASS MUSIC THROUGH THE SPEAKERS

People are filing in. A STAGE PLATFORM juts out from the main stage like a promontory, the kind you'd see at a big concert.

On main stage: a CHRISTMAS TREE, a PODIUM, and some SEATS.

Trish walks the floor, finding her seat to the left of the stage, two rows back from the front.

A MAN in front of Trish gabs with a WOMAN next to him.

MAN
Did you see—?

WOMAN
Oh my god, YES, we're totally gonna meet Sir Gumbo!

MAN
And it'll be:

MAN/WOMAN
Delicious!

Trish rotates her head and mouths the word, "What?"

INT. AMWAY CENTER - DAY (LATER)

Trish is still waiting. The seats are packed now.

KILL THE ROOM LIGHTS

BEAT

JAUNTY ELEVATOR MUSIC over the speakers.

ROARING APPLAUSE

STAGE LIGHTING FADES IN

From backstage, a handful of notable Tacky-Yawn luminaries walk on: Joey (three-piece suit), Bernadette (business casual, ditched the goth getup), Olivette (white dress), and Dimitri (manbun, thick-rim glasses, flannel shirt, and jeans). Selene's backstage, wearing a headset.

Joey walks up to the podium first. The music DIES DOWN.

JOEY
WHAT IS UP, ORLANDOOOOOOOOO!?!?!?

The crowd ERUPTS IN APPLAUSE.

From the speakers: RAP AIR HORNS. GUNSHOT SOUNDS. RECORD SCRATCH. V.O. of a WOMAN saying: "TACKY-YAWN", then a man: "A TEDSHED CLASSIC"

JOEY (CONT'D)
My name is Joseph B. Ripamonti, and I'm VP of Product Development here at Tacky-Yawn...but my friends call me Joey Rigatoni.

The crowd LAUGHS.

Joey POINTS TO THE CROWD along with the pauses here:

JOEY (CONT'D)
And today-I-am in a room-with all of my friends!

The crowd ERUPTS IN APPLAUSE.

MONTAGE: STAGE ANTICS

PATRIOTIC MUSIC

—Joey GRIPS the PODIUM like it's a political debate.

JOEY (CONT'D)
I started with nothing but the
clothes on my back, and a dream in
my head...

Lot of "AMEN"s and "YES SIR"s from the crowd.

—Joey skulks the stage holding the MICROPHONE in one hand.

JOEY (CONT'D)
And you know, it's really all about
centering you, yourself,
and...anyone got a thesaurus?

The crowd LAUGHS.

—Joey back at the podium.

JOEY (CONT'D)
And now, ladies and gentlemen, Ms.
Bernadette Shandling...

—Bernadette at the podium now.

BERNADETTE
Got kids? Couldn't be me.
(pauses for laughter)
But really, it's true what they
say...

—BERNADETTE HOLDING OUT THE PALM OF HER HAND

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)
Realign your mindset, redefine your
sanctum...

—Bernadette and Joey are DOING PUSH-UPS. Dimitri shoutcasts.

DIMITRI
Mr. Rigatoni's got the chest, but
he lacks Ms. Shandling's feisty
fortitude—apologies, folks, not
very modern of me...

—A SANTA CLAUS sits in a chair, wearing a headset microphone. A LITTLE GIRL sits in Santa's lap. MRS. STAPLETON stands nearby with a microphone in hand, smiling wide.

SANTA CLAUS
And what do you want for Christmas,
little girl?

LITTLE GIRL
I want a brand new TedShed teddy
bear to replace my one that broked!

The crowd AWWs.

SANTA CLAUS
Well, has she been a good girl this
year, Mrs. Stapleton?

MRS. STAPLETON
Straight As!

The crowd APPLAUSES and CHEERS.

SANTA CLAUS
Then you know what that means...

Santa POINTS at the crowd with both hands in rhythm with their CHANTING: "Give, her, a present!"

CARTOON FALLING NOISE from the speakers

A WRAPPED PRESENT falls from the rafters and lands on-stage in time with a THUD NOISE from the speakers. The little girl FREAKS and runs toward it.

—Olivette is BLINDFOLDED, ARMS FORWARD. Bernadette, Joey, and Dimitri are onstage, dashing to avoid Olivette.

Lots of "LEFT"s, "RIGHT"s, and "STRAIGHT"s from the crowd. Olivette marches to the beat of the crowd's drum.

Suddenly, Olivette yanks off her BLINDFOLD. Her stagemates aren't expecting it.

Olivette struts over and YANKS the microphone out of Joey's hand.

OLIVETTE
Give me that, you asshole.

MURMURS from the crowd. Music quiets down.

OLIVETTE (CONT'D)
 (into the mic)
 Tacky-Yawn is a rotting fucking
 carcass of a company run by sexist
 pigs who *don't give a shit* about
 you!

More murmurs from the crowd. Uncomfortable looks from the others on-stage.

OLIVETTE (CONT'D)
 They fucking forced me to suck a
 stranger in a bear costume's dick!
 You are being deceived, all of you!
 This is a sham business! No one on
 this stage *wants to be here!*

Murmurs turn to BOOs. The crowd is mostly against her, some light cheering in support.

ON TRISH, tears welling up, looking horrified.

Three SECURITY STAFFERS run offstage and escort Olivette away, while she continues YELLING, terrified.

Suddenly, the stage lighting CUTS OUT.

After about ten seconds in darkness, a HANGING VIDEO SCREEN TURNS ON, which covers the width of the stage.

ON THE VIDEO SCREEN

OUTER SPACE. It looks like a cartoon.

BRENT (V.O.)
 (attempting an ominous low
 register)
 Once, there was a man. But today,
 there is only...a visionary.

A SCROLLING CARTOON ROAD appears on-screen, covering the bottom half of the screen. CLASSICAL MUSIC WITH LOTS OF HORNS

BRENT (V.O.)
 He dices the demons of doubt...and
 wounds the witches of
 wicked...ness.

In the distance, a MAN ON HORSEBACK rides the on-screen road.

BRENT (V.O.)
 And now...the incredible next step
 of his journey...will begin.

CLASSICAL MUSIC COMES TO A CRESCENDO

Some kind of HORSE-LOOKING FLOAT wrapped in a ghostly white robe with HORSE FEATURES painted on PILED RIVES THROUGH the screen, TEARING IT, then RIDES ONTO THE STAGE PLATFORM.

FIRE MACHINES BLAST. STAGE SPARKLERS GOING NUTS. CONFETTI.

CLASSIC ROCK MUSIC, STRONG BEAT (think: "For Those About to Rock (We Salute You)" by AC/DC, or something similar)

A BLACK-ROBED FIGURE climbs out a hole atop the float.

The figure approaches the end of the stage platform, then RIPS OFF its robe.

ROCK MUSIC JARRINGLY STOPS

NOW CHRISTMAS MUSIC, LOTS OF BELLS (something like "All I Want for Christmas Is You" by Mariah Carey)

Now, a man wearing a cheap-looking GOLD SUIT OF ARMOR wrapped in CHRISTMAS LIGHTS stands where the robed figure was.

He RAISES HIS ARMS. THE CROWD GOES WILD.

As the horse float moved by people hidden beneath it departs, Joey walks back onstage and hands the knight a microphone. "Woo"s and "yeah"s from the crowd.

The knight puts the microphone to his mouth to speak, then puts his hand to his ear as if to say "I can't hear you!"

THE CROWD EXPLODES

The knight puts the mic to his face again. His voice is MUFFLED by the headpiece.

BRENT

WHAT IS UP, ORLANDOOOOOOOOO!?!?!?

CROWD GOES WILD

BRENT (CONT'D)

(confidently)

Apologies about the, heh, 'technical difficulties', my loyal subjects.

LAUGHTER from the crowd. Recognizing Brent's voice, Trish shoves her face in her hands.

TRISH
 (under her breath)
 Oh my *fucking god*.

BRENT
 Ladies and gentlemen, my name is
 Sir Gusto, and just over two years
 ago, something happened to me that
 changed my life *forever*.

Lifting her face to look at him, Trish furrows her brow and
 twists her head in confusion.

BRENT (CONT'D)
 I was riding the bus, in Orlando!-
 (pause for applause)
 -all by myself, when all of a
 sudden, BOOM-
 (makes a big arm gesture)
 -we just get completely t-boned out
 of nowhere!

The crowd GASPS.

BRENT (CONT'D)
 Me, I was the only survivor. And
 folks, I *do not* take that for
 granted.

TRISH
 (under her breath)
 Bro, are you *fucking*...

BRENT
 You know, back then, I was working
 a dead-end job, not doing anything,
 just biding my time, waiting for
something to happen to me. And when
 it finally did, folks, I realized-I
 needed to make a change. The day
 after, I started what became
 TedShed, and, well, the rest-was
 history! BOOM!

STANDING OVATION from the crowd. Trish looks around like,
 "Fuckin', really?"

BRENT (CONT'D)
 I was on a mission, neigh, an
adventure, to take back my life,
 and help others do the same. After
 that, we decided to do what all
 great businesses do-go vegan.
 (pauses for laughter)

(MORE)

BRENT (CONT'D)

I'm kiddin', I'm kiddin'. No, but soon after, we grew, and reinvented ourselves as: Tacky-Yawn.

(pause for applause)

This scary yet necessary shift represented our *passion for innovation that's faster than the speed of light*—and you can say we were a *sleeper hit!*

(pause for laughter)

And folks, I couldn't be prouder to say that as of today, our *next-generation* distributor network spread throughout the Orlando area has just eclipsed ~~ten-thousand-members!~~

Another STANDING OVATION. Chants of "TACKY-YAWN, TACKY-YAWN, TACKY-YAWN!" Trish remains seated, staring around in disbelief.

BRENT (CONT'D)

But we're not resting on our laurels! You see, as forward-thinking as I am—as WE are, I could never quite shake the feeling that there's been something...missing. Something wrong. One day, it hit me: it was my mindset. I realized, that in *some way*, I've still been that timid, young man sitting alone on that bus, waiting and wondering. But today, no longer!

"YEAH"s and "LET'S GO"s from the crowd. A MAN begins walking up to Brent from behind him, holding a STOOL upon which he precariously balances a long, slender BOX and a TEDDY BEAR.

BRENT (CONT'D)

For today, I'm *chopping*—
(does a vertical chop
motion with the mic)

The man places the stool in front of Brent.

BRENT (CONT'D)

—through self-imposed barriers of the mind, *SLICING*—
(does a horizontal sweep
with the mic)

The man places the teddy bear on the stool, facing the crowd.

BRENT (CONT'D)
 -through time and space itself,
 and-

The man hands Brent the box, who opens it, revealing a LONGSWORD. The man takes a few steps back. Brent LUNGES back with the longsword, then STABS the teddy bear through the back of its head.

BRENT (CONT'D)
 -killing the past!

Brent KICKS the stool over awkwardly, sending the teddy bear and sword to the stage floor.

BRENT (CONT'D)
 For my friends, neigh, my family,
 todayeth Tacky-Yawn be no moreth!
 Todayeth, we be-eth:

An Asian WOMAN comes on over the PA, and speaks in a manner similar to the Vietnamese woman from "Full Metal Jacket".

WOMAN
 Me Love You Longsword!

MEDIEVAL MUSIC WITH AN ASIAN FLARE

Brent PULLS THE SWORD from the teddy bear, then THRUST IT INTO THE SKY. THE CROWD GOES WILD.

Women in scantily-clad suits of armor, see-through princess dresses, negligees, and kimonos enter the arena and stage from all directions. They precariously carry longswords, daggers, katanas, and tantōs, wooing the audience.

BRENT
 Goeth foreth, my brothers and
 sistereths! Buyeth! Selleth!
 Distributeth! Because: *ME LOVE YOU*
LONGSWORD!

Trish GETS OUT of her chair, DODGING prying saleswomen and rabid fans unsafely waving blades around as she makes her way for the exit. In the distance, we see Brent thrusting his pelvis into the sky.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Lights are off. Brent lays on the left side of a bed, a WOMAN on the end of the right side. She's PUTTING ON a see-through princess dress.

BRENT
Just stay the night, c'mon.

WOMAN
Sorry, I gotta go.

Brent looks displeased. The woman finishes getting dressed, grabs a wad of cash from atop a dresser, and leaves.

Laying in bed, Brent cranes his neck to the left.

ON THE BALCONY GLASS DOOR

The sliding glass door is cracked open. CRICKETS CHIRP.

ON THE BARELY VISIBLE CRESCENT MOON FOR A BEAT

Brent looks up.

ON THE CEILING FAN

The ceiling fan WHIRLS, BUZZING and busted.

Brent grimaces, and TURNS OVER.

ON THE FLOOR

Brent's PANTS and underwear are on the floor. Brent reaches into his pant pocket and pulls out his PHONE.

He powers it up. The light ILLUMINATES Brent's face.

ON BRENT'S PHONE

Brent scrolls through Tacky-Yawn and Sir Gusto's social media accounts. Plenty of likes and comments.

Brent goes to his own social media feed, which he's recently updated. No engagement.

He goes to the comment he made on Molly's photo. No response.

He finds Molly in his address book, but doesn't act on it.

Brent sits up, and crawls over to the side of the bed facing the balcony.

MONTAGE: QUICK FLASHES OF THE PAST (CRICKETS CHIRP LOUDER)

-Brent sits on the bus from the beginning.

-Brent cashiers at work.

-Trish smiles at the diner.

-Olivette performs oral sex for the bear, a look of utter disgust and contempt on her face.

-Bernadette performs oral sex for Brent.

-Willie's face, bloodied and lifeless.

END MONTAGE

INT./EXT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

ON BRENT'S FACE

Tears stream down. He STANDS UP.

FROM INSIDE, THE BALCONY IS CENTERED AND DISTANT

Brent OPENS the balcony door, and trudges onto the balcony.

Brent BACKWARDS CLIMBS UP the RAILING.

Balancing himself, tears flow down his face like rivers.
Brent CLOSES HIS EYES, LEANS BACK, and falls.

BLACK SCREEN:

SUPER: "RAN"

SUPER: "FOUR MONTHS LATER"

INT. CHICAGO HOSPITAL - DAY

ON AN INTERIOR EXAM ROOM WINDOW

HOSPITAL SOUNDS

Trish does some blood work on a child.

INT. GYM - NIGHT

GYM SOUNDS

Trish does some squats in front of a SPOTTER.

INT./EXT. CAFE - DAY

ON A WINDOW FROM THE OUTSIDE

Trish sits at a table, sipping from a PAPER COFFEE CUP and typing at her LAPTOP.

INT. CENTERED THERAPY CHICAGO/WAITING ROOM - DAY

Trish sits on a futon, reading a magazine.

DOOR OPENING SOUND

WOMAN (O.S.)

Ms. Dihidar.

Trish gets up and walks through a door being held open by a WOMAN. The woman shuts the door, and on it we see a sign reading: "Centered Therapy Chicago".

INT. TRISH'S CHICAGO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Trish is on the phone with her MOM (50s) at her desk in her new apartment, head in hand and staring blankly at the screen. Novels and books on writing, literary theory, and pediatrics litter her desk, bed, and floor.

TRISH (V.O.)

Well, I'm stuck on this part. I've got these two characters, and they go to a beach for...reasons. Anyway, I just kinda don't know what they do there. I've never been to a beach.

MOM (V.O.)

When you were three, your father and I took you to the beach. You remember that, don't you, Trish?

TRISH

Well, no, mom, I was three.

MOM (V.O.)

Oh, it was so beautiful that day. You had your floaties, and you went into the water with your father...

TRISH

Hmm.

MOM

Why don't you just go to the beach yourself, sweetheart? Figure it out that way. Isn't that what Hemingway would do?

TRISH

...Sure.

EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN BEACH - DAY

The sun's out. Kids yell and play in the water.

Trish wears sunglasses and walks up to an empty picnic table in front of some shrubbery. She LOOKS AROUND, then sits timidly on the edge of the seat.

Trisk looks to the sun, shielding her eyes with her arm.

ON THE SUN FOR A BEAT

ON THE WATER

Waves are calm, maybe a bit choppy. Sounds of water flowing.

ON TRISH

Trish looks despondently at the water. After about ten seconds, her PHONE BUZZES.

TRISH

Hello?

(beat)

I'll be in.

INT. CHICAGO HOSPITAL/LOBBY - DAY

Trish stands over a counter which three friends STELLA, JEANETTE, and ERZSI sit behind, each at a computer.

ERSZI

You should come with, T!

JEANETTE

We go out all the time, but you never come!

TRISH

Alright, alright...

STELLA

I'll pick you up at 8.

INT. NIGHTCLUB/LOUNGE - NIGHT

The club is lively, BASS BOOMING, LIGHTS FLASHING.

Trish, Jeanette, Erszi, and Stella walk up to the edge of the dance floor, each holding drinks.

JEANETTE

On three!

JEANETTE/TRISH/ERSZI/STELLA

One, two, three!

The four DRINK at once.

JEANETTE/TRISH/ERSZI/STELLA (CONT'D)

Ay!

ERSZI

I'm goin' in!

INT. NIGHTCLUB/DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT

Trish, Jeanette, Erszi, and Stella dance in SLOW-MOTION. The music stays at natural pace. Similar shots as when Trish and Brent danced at the party scene.

INT. NIGHTCLUB/TABLE - NIGHT

Trish, Jeanette, Erszi, and Stella sit and have more drinks.

JEANETTE

He sucks.

TRISH

Okay, thank you, I thought I was the only one!

JEANETTE

He always stares at me when I'm around patients, or when I'm writing reports, or, like, anything!

ERSZI

A patient groped me the other day. I'll take stares any day over *that*.

STELLA

What the hell?

TRISH

Jesus, did you report him?

ERSZI

What can I do? They win 99 times out of 100.

TRISH

Amen.

JEANETTE

Salud.

TRISH/ERSZI/STELLA

Salud.

The four CLINK GLASSES, and drink up.

Erszi POINTS and SNAPS HER FINGERS to an off-screen waiter.

ERSZI

Another round!

(beat)

(holding up her hand)

Thank you!

STELLA

So, get this...

Stella reaches into her bag and pulls out a TINY BOTTLE OF FACIAL MOISTURIZER.

ERSZI

What is it?

STELLA

Moisturizer. But it works for a whole, entire, week!

JEANETTE

Bullshit.

STELLA

It's true! And not only that, but it's your ticket to some serious money...like, on the side.

JEANETTE

What do you mean? How?

Trish has a look of consternation on her face.

STELLA

Look, it's selling product, which is good, but like, these days, that's only half the battle.

Stella pulls out more bottles of moisturizer.

STELLA (CONT'D)
 But if you have people *selling for*
you? That's where the real action
 is. And y'all can get your sellers
 of your own!

Stella grabs more MOISTURIZER BOTTLES from her bag.

STELLA (CONT'D)
 Look, I know this company that can
 get us a steady supply. One thing
 leads to another, then...

Stella has this RICTUS GRIN, and starts laughing. Erszi
 starts laughing too.

JEANETTE
 If the stuff's really that good,
 that's not a bad value prop...

STELLA
 Fuckin' A! This is serious cash
 flow!

Trish briskly STANDS UP and heads away.

STELLA (CONT'D)
 (Italian-like)
 Oh!

ERSZI
 Where are those fuckin' drinks!?

INT. NIGHTCLUB/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Trish VOMITS into a toilet in a stall. She RETCHES for a bit.

INT. NIGHTCLUB/TABLE - NIGHT

Trish PACES back to the table. She grabs her bag and turns.

TRISH
 Sorry, I gotta go.

ERSZI
 You good?

JEANETTE
 Yeah, everything alright?

TRISH
 See you tomorrow.

Trish leaves, pacing quickly.

INT. TRISH'S CHICAGO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Trish is at her desk, frantically typing on the computer.

ON TRISH'S COMPUTER

Trish types: "meloveyoulongsword.com" into an internet browser's search bar.

It redirects to a site for a company called "Bernadettica". Scrolling down: self-help books, skincare products, weight loss supplements, hair loss prevention fluids.

Trish clicks the 'About' page. It reads: "Bernadettica empowers women. Revitalize your financial wellness with products that make you go: wow!

Ready to be a #girlbossbitch? Get #downlined today!"

"A Bernadette Shandling company"

EXT. TRISH'S CHICAGO APARTMENT/BALCONY - NIGHT

Trish smokes a cigarette, arms on the railing.

A couple sits at a bench and chats, laughing and kissing.

Trish pulls out her PHONE, taps something we can't see on it, and then holds it to her ear.

TRISH

Yes, hi, um-mhm-no, no, I'm good, I just-did everyone get home okay?-okay, cool. Listen, I-Stella, I've seen how these things go, and...I just really think you should, you know, cut your losses.

Pause a beat.

TRISH (CONT'D)

Just think about it. Yeah. I'll see you tomorrow. Bye.

Trish hangs up the phone.

ON AN ASH TRAY

Trish goes to put out her cigarette.

EXT. TRISH'S CHICAGO APARTMENT/BALCONY - NIGHT (LATER)
ON THE ASH TRAY

The ash tray is now littered with cigarette butts.

Trish puts out her cigarette, then makes a call. She CLOSES HER EYES in hope.

INT. MOLLY'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Molly looks at her phone, a LOOK OF SLIGHT HORROR on her face. She hesitates, but answers.

MOLLY
(hesitant)
Hello?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

TRISH
(looking relieved)
Hey, hi, Molly, it's me, Trish!

MOLLY
It's uh, it's kinda late, Trish...

TRISH
No, no, you're right, yeah.
(beat)
Look, I just...How are you?

Pause a beat.

MOLLY
I've...You know. How's Chicago?

TRISH
Oh, it's...you know.

MOLLY
Yeah.

Pause another beat. Trish hits a cigarette.

TRISH
Hey, um, sorry, I know this is awkward, but did you and Brent ever...you know...

Molly's EYES WIDEN and she COVERS HER MOUTH WITH HER HAND.

TRISH (CONT'D)
I just, because, at that
restaurant, I saw you—

MOLLY
No, Trish, never!

TRISH
No, right, of course...Sorry...

Pause a beat or two.

MOLLY
I just...I told him something—

Molly quietly SOBS.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
—that I really, really shouldn't
have.

Trish puts her arm to her side, then kind of looks around.

Molly SNIFFLES. Trish takes a hit of her cigarette.

TRISH
...I see. Well, that's old news,
right? Listen, there's an opening
at work I think you'd be great
for...I'll send the details. Think
it over, if you want.

MOLLY
(exhales)
Okay, I'll—I'll do that.

TRISH
Okay. Goodnight, Molly.

Trish hangs up, hits her cigarette, then puts it out.

INT. CHICAGO HOSPITAL - DAY

Trish walks through a hallway, and passes an AJAR DOOR.

LOOKING THROUGH THE CRACK IN THE DOOR

Stella is sitting at a table, talking to someone we can't
see. Before her are the FACIAL MOISTURIZER bottles from the
previous night.

STELLA

(muffled, salespersony)

And you know, everyone's gonna be buying these and making, like, a ton of money selling them, so it's like you're losing money if you don't onboard ASAP, you know?

COWORKER (O.S.)

Oh yeah, for sure.

We see a hand slide Stella some money, and Stella passes them a PIECE OF PAPER.

ON TRISH'S CONCERNED FACE FOR A BEAT

The hand slides the now-signed paper back to Stella.

STELLA

Great! Your product will arrive in three to five business days!

Stella gets up. Trish paces away.

INT. TRISH'S CHICAGO APARTMENT/ROOM - DAY

Trish is TYPING into her computer.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN

"Thank you for considering this manuscript for publication."

"Have a wonderful day, and a great rest of your weekend!"

"Best,"

"Patricia Dihidar"

Trish CLICKS "Send", LEANS BACK in her chair, and exhales.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Trish sits at a park bench, TOSSING pieces of bread to DUCKS.

She looks upward, to her right.

ON THE SKY

White clouds block out the sun.

FLASH TRISH LAUGHING ON THE BUS A BEAT, AUDIO LOUD

Trish's phone BUZZES, snapping her out of it.

TRISH

Hello?

MOM (V.O.)

Hey, sweetie, it's me.

TRISH

Oh, hey mom. What's up?

MOM (V.O.)

Just...checking in again.

TRISH

It's all good, mom.

Sounds of Mom WEEPING. The ducks all SCATTER.

TRISH (CONT'D)

...Are you okay?

MOM (V.O.)

Yes, it's, it's just...

(beat)

...They say it'll probably be fine,
but...I was tested for ovarian
cancer last week.

Trish leans forward, mouth agape, shellshocked.

MOM (V.O.)

Oh sweetheart, it'll be alright,
it'll be fine, I promise!

TRISH

Why-why didn't you tell me before?

MOM (V.O.)

I just...with everything you've had
going on, I just didn't want you
stressing out over me.

TRISH

I'm getting on the next plane-

MOM (V.O.)

No, don't! You need to stay! You
can't miss a day! For us, it's, if
you miss a day, just please, don't
get on that plane, and I'll tell
you, I'll tell you how it goes,
okay Patricia? Okay, sweetheart?

Trish has a look of utter MORTIFICATION upon her face.

TRISH

I—alright.

MOM (V.O.)

Goodbye, honey. Have a nice day.

TRISH

You too, Mom. Bye.

Trish hangs up the phone. Someone else feeds the ducks now.

EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN BEACH - NIGHT

Trish wears a grey hoodie (hood up) and black sweatpants. She's sitting on that same picnic table's dining board.

It's an overcast evening. Sounds of calm waves and winds.

Facing the water, Trish WHITTLES a STICK with a KNIFE.

ON THE OCEAN

Waves cascade on one another.

Trish TOSSES THE STICK forward, and TOSSES THE KNIFE to her left. The knife blade STICKS IN THE DIRT, standing upright.

Trish looks to her right, upward.

ON THE OVERCAST CLOUDS BLOCKING OUT THE SUN FOR A BEAT

Trish looks back forward, her head hanging.

After a few seconds, Trish's PHONE BUZZES. She SCRAMBLES to unlock it, then stares at the screen, its glow illuminating her face. Her mouth is slightly agape.

Trish pockets her phone, then folds her hands. They go slack a bit. No expression on her face.

ON THE CLOUDS, the SUN shining through in fits and starts.

Then, on Trish's face: a BEAMING SMILE, followed by RELIEVED LAUGHTER.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END.

(content warnings: suicide, suicidal ideation, misogyny,
racism, violence, sexual coercion, blood)