

Mr. Nightly

A Film By Branson Stowell

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SCENE 1: INT. CAR - AFTERNOON.

We open on a man in tears sitting passenger seat with his sister, driving in the car. Neither look very emotional, but both of them look quite sad. There is a long period of silence and she puts her hand on his to comfort him.

JOHNNY

Nothing ever seems to go right for me.

JODI

If this is about having to move, I-

JOHNNY

It's not just about that.

JODI

(Nods in acknowledgement)
What happened with Cara is horrible, but you can't dwell on that.

JOHNNY

(Looking somber)
I gave her my heart and she tore it to pieces right in front of me. *(There's a brief pause)* You know what she told me when she left? She told me that it was just a relationship and I shouldn't take it so seriously. That's right before she ran off with that guy.

JODI

Hey, you're a very special kid. I know that as your sister.

They pull out front of the Hotel St. Thomas, an elegant, ornate establishment.

I'm sorry we didn't make it to New York. We inherited a lot of debt from mom and dad, which really complicated things. Anyway, this is just a stepping stone on our way to the Big Apple. I wish I could come with you, but I've got to go back to the city and figure this whole mess out. Anyway, Mr. Morano, the guy who owns the restaurant here is a really great guy. I was lucky to get you a job here. And this is a really great town! Only the

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JODI (cont'd)
ridiculously wealthy come through here. Ski vacations, celebrities, and some of the most beautiful scenery offered.

JOHNNY looks at her, unsure and downtrodden, forcing a smirk.

You're a charming guy. You'll bounce back.

JOHNNY exits the vehicle and makes his way towards the restaurant.

Oh and Johnny? You can be anyone you want here. Now is the chance to reinvent yourself to be the man you want to be. Make me proud.

JOHNNY smiles and waves goodbye. CUT TO INT. RESTAURANT.

The owner, a weathered, tough-looking man in his early sixties, greets him. He shakes JOHNNY'S hand with confidence.

MR. MORANO
Your sister is a great woman. Phenomenal waitress. I hope you've got some of her skill. She says you're good with people, so we'll see.

CUT TO INT. APARTMENT - DAY.

JOHNNY brings his belongings to his new apartment, a living arrangement which was also organized by his sister. His new roommate, STEVEN, is there.

STEVEN
I'm Steven. I'm your roommate, at least for the time being. I hear you're a waiter at St. Thomas Hotel.

JOHNNY is unpacking his bags. He attempts to participate

JOHNNY
Yep. What do you do for work?

STEVEN
I'm a junior law associate at the firm off main street here. Hey, do you have any idea what you'll be making there? Not to be rude, I'm

(MORE)

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STEVEN (cont'd)
sure it's significant considering
tips and all - I just wanted to
make sure you could make rent and
utilities. You know?

JOHNNY
I'll certainly try my best.

STEVEN looks unsure.

CUT TO EXT. TOWN STREETS - DAY

JOHNNY strolls through the town looking at all of the people drift in and out from luxury boutique to luxury boutique. He seems surrounded by power and so turned off by the lot of it. He passes by a building that has accumulated quite the line out front. It's a special gallery exhibition of rare european art. He stands curiously outside the line of people, but is drawn to push himself towards the front. He tries to get in, but notices the futility of the task. Guards stand to guard the exclusivity of the event. An older, but very beautiful woman catches his eye. Once. Twice. Three times. She cocks her head curiously and her torso follows after. He grins and waves at her. With one eyebrow raised, she speaks.

MRS. PRISSIMON
I know you. You're that... what's
your name? It will come to me...
Nadgy? Nacrony? Nightlty! Mr.
Nightly?

JOHNNY pauses and thinks about correcting her harmless mistake.

MRS. PRISSIMON
Mr. Nightly? You are Mr. Nightly,
the Art Collector I bumped into in
Monaco last year?

He hesitates for a moment and then moves hastily on the opportunity.

JOHNNY
Yes, indeed I am. Pleasure to see
you again.

MRS. PRISSIMON
What are you doing over there? This
gallery is full of pieces that
would fit your aesthetic!

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

I seem to have lost my invitation,
unfortunately.

MRS. PRISSIMON

Oh! Well that's no bother. (*to
security*) He's with me.

She ushers him in and he greets her with a comforting smile. Inside, they share drinks and laugh. They seem to be enamored with one another. They both get buzzed pretty quickly and find themselves leaning against a corner bar behind an erotic sculpture.

MRS. PRISSIMON

It must be an exciting life getting
to see all these masterpieces from
around the world.

JOHNNY

It's certainly a job that brings me
in the presence of a lot of beauty.

JOHNNY looks at her with wide eyes, brimming with confidence. She catches on quickly.

MRS. PRISSIMON

You're too sweet.

JOHNNY

How is it that a woman as lovely
and fascinating as you finds
herself unaccompanied to such an
event?

MRS. PRISSIMON

Well, I'm no longer really
unaccompanied, am I?

JOHNNY

(*smiling*)

As it should be.

CUT TO INT. MRS. PRISSIMON'S CHALET - NIGHT.

JOHNNY and MRS. PRISSIMON make their way back to her house, which turns out to be as decadent as the woman who lives there. They immediately begin kissing. They lose themselves in the moment and begin to peel one another's clothes off. In the midst of kissing her neck, she pulls him back, caught up in the passion.

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MRS. PRISSIMON

Oh, Mr. Nightly! You make me feel things I haven't felt *in a long time*.

JOHNNY pulls back and looks at her endearingly. She drunkenly giggles.

JOHNNY

Do you mean that?

MRS. PRISSIMON

With all my heart you charming boy. I feel a connection with you.

JOHNNY

(genuinely)

I feel connected to you too.

MRS. PRISSIMON

Then let's...connect...

They resume kissing and begin to engage in sex. They both get lost in the passion of the moment. A moment later, while MRS. PRISSIMON is clearly visible, her HUSBAND walks in with a FRIEND. Shocked, he stands motionless in the doorway. She takes a moment and then scrambles for her clothes. JOHNNY, looking disappointed and stunned, gathers his belongings.

MRS. PRISSIMON

Preston! I didn't think- I thought you were still in Lisbon.

MR. PRISSIMON

Shut the hell up Evelyn. I can't believe what I had to just see.

MRS. PRISSIMON puts on her robe and goes to address her husband.

MRS. PRISSIMON

No, Preston! It's not- it's not what it looks like! I don't care about him.

MR. PRISSIMON

Who the fuck is he?

MRS. PRISSIMON

Mr. Nightly is nobody! He's honestly just a-

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MR. PRISSIMON

You know we're done, right? And you can kiss your sweet ass life goodbye. I've got proof you fucked me over.

Mr. Prissimon's friend, JIM, raises an eyebrow when he says this and looks at JOHNNY.

MRS. PRISSIMON

No! Preston, you aren't hearing me. I don't care about him! He's a nobody. He means nothing to me!

JOHNNY looks visibly hurt by this. He gives her a long, angry stare. MR. PRISSIMON appears to be unfazed by her appeals as he exits.

MR. PRISSIMON

You're fucking done. You can forget about getting any money out of this. I've got proof! No alimony for you. Good luck maintaining your lifestyle. I'm going to keep everything you heartless bitch.

MR. PRISSIMON exits. MRS. PRISSIMON contemplates going after him, but she quickly runs over to JOHNNY.

MRS. PRISSIMON

I'm sorry Mr. Nightly, but I can't see you again. I know the man I met tonight would make any woman very lucky.

JOHNNY

But, I- I thought...

MRS. PRISSIMON

Stay charming.

MRS. PRISSIMON gives him a kiss and runs down the hall after her husband. Johnny sits on the bed motionless. JIM makes his way over to JOHNNY, who looks up at him with a guilt-ridden face.

JOHNNY

I- I didn't know that-

JIM

Oh, don't worry about it. That was a long time coming. (*puts a comforting arm on Johnny*) You

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JIM (cont'd)
know, if anything, he owes you a
big thank you!

JOHNNY
Thank you?

JIM
(begins pacing around the room
slowly)
Yeah. You saved my friend Preston a
considerable amount of money
tonight. In fact, I'm wondering if
you can do it again.

JOHNNY looks up at him very disturbed. Audible arguing
continues in the background.

JIM
You see, the way things have been
going between me and my wife... I
could use your unique skillset.
(*sits on an ottoman across from
JOHNNY*) Frankly, I know of a
considerable number of men that
would also be interested.

JOHNNY
I'm not a homewrecker.

JIM
No, you're merely an.... "asset
strategist". And let me tell you
pal, your services are in very high
demand.

JOHNNY takes a moment to examine his surroundings. He looks
over towards MRS. PRISSIMON, who is pleading with her
husband, and he looks back at JIM. He thinks about the
situation. JIM stands up and reaches for his checkbook.

JIM
How does \$25,000 sound Mr...?

JOHNNY looks up at him, closes his lips and stares intensely
at JIM.

CUT TO BLACK

END SCENE

TITLE:

(CONTINUED)

MR. NIGHTLY

Over the next several months, JOHNNY changes his lifestyle completely. He chooses a path which provides for him to an almost luxurious extent. He follows a pattern: he is scouted by a man looking to be divorced and make a strong monetary claim during the divorce, saving their funds and preventing alimony, he seduces the man's wife, they set up a trap in order to "get caught" and he walks away with his standard, flat rate fee of \$25,000. In addition to changing up his wardrobe, appearance and lifestyle, he has cut back on time at the restaurant. We see a montage of these events as the months go on, with beautiful women, luxurious clothes and an entire look alteration from an innocent young man to a confident "asset strategist". He's a full blown player and walks around with the confidence of one.

2 SCENE 2: EXT. ELEGANT PARTY - AFTERNOON

When we reconnect with JOHNNY, he is attending an afternoon outdoor soiree with a focus on wines. He sees his latest target: JESSICA O'CASEA - a wealthy, status-obsessed housewife whose relationship is already on the brink. He approaches her as she sips her wine.

JOHNNY

Excuse me miss, how did such a tragedy come to be?

JESSICA

I'm sorry?

JOHNNY

A woman as elegant and lovely as yourself, who has taken a considerable amount of time to steal all eyes in the room and yet not one compliment. I'm stunned.

JESSICA

Bold.

JOHNNY

It is a Malbec. It's supposed to be.

JESSICA

(smiling)

Well I'm glad you noticed. Some people must think this is how I look when I roll out of bed in the morning. But it did take three

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JESSICA (cont'd)
hours with my personal stylist.
What's your name? Mr...?

JOHNNY
Nightly. Pleasure to meet you,
miss?

JESSICA
Mrs...O'Casea. Jessica O'Casea.
Pleasure to meet you Mr. Nightly.

JOHNNY
Jessica O'Casea... where have I
heard that name before?

JESSICA
You probably recognize the last
name from my husban-

JOHNNY
Wait! You wouldn't happen to be the
same Mrs. O'Casea who had her own
handbag line last fall?

JESSICA
(*sighing*)
Yes, a failed experiment in the
world of design...

JOHNNY
Really? That's surprising. I
thought they were glamorous, a
perfect accessory to accent a
woman's poise.

JESSICA
Really? That's sweet of you to say.

JOHNNY
No, no. I pride myself on having a
strong aesthetic palette. It is
after all apart of my job.

JESSICA
And what line of work are you in
exactly?

JOHNNY
I'm an art collector. Sounds
boring, I know-

(CONTINUED)

JESSICA

No! It doesn't at all. I absolutely love art. I could die in peace if I could stare at a Degas piece for the rest of my life.

JOHNNY

Really? It's not Degas, but I'm in the process of acquiring a Cezanne right now.

JESSICA

That's exciting! You know, I actually have a small collection back at my house. It's nothing to boast about, but it might actually be of interest to someone like you.

JOHNNY

I have to say, it's refreshing to meet a woman who actually invests herself in cultural pursuits.

JESSICA

Well, it is also quite refreshing to meet a man who's in tune with such things. (*she sighs*) My husband, he couldn't tell Monet from Manet if a home cooked steak dinner was up for grabs.

JOHNNY

That's a shame. I expect the highest caliber company for a woman like you. I feel quite lucky.

JESSICA

You're actually a welcome change of pace Mr. Nightly.

JESSICA then reaches across and runs her hand down his shirt. They draw closer.

And quite...dashing. I hope I'm not being too forward.

JOHNNY

Bold.

They both laugh. They sneak away from the party as he walks her out. She appears to be more tipsy.

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JESSICA

Thank you for being my chaperone for the evening. My driver should be by any minute.

JOHNNY

Anytime Mrs. O'Caesea.

JESSICA

What you said to me tonight about my bags meant more to me than you could've known.

JOHNNY

Like I said, you were long overdue for a compliment.

JESSICA reaches over, grabs his face and kisses him. He grabs her back and they engage in a passionate exchange. The driver turns around the corner and they slowly back away from each other. Speaking somewhat discreetly, Jessica hands him a card with her number.

JESSICA

I know it's strange, hardly knowing you Mr. Nightly, but I think you should come by to (whispering) see *my personal collection sometime.*

JOHNNY

I wouldn't dream of missing it.

JESSICA waltzes off to the car, obviously enamored with their exchange. She blows him a kiss through the window he smiles and winks at her as she drives on.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN. INT. APARTMENT - DAY.

JOHNNY returns to his apartment where his roommate, STEVEN, is playing video games on the couch. He walks right by him as he heads to his room to change into more casual clothing. He places a check next to STEVEN.

STEVEN

What's this?

JOHNNY

Rent.

(CONTINUED)

STEVEN

Oh, you're good dude. You already paid me for that like three weeks ago, remember? (*looks at check again*) It's also *too much*. You're off by about two hundred. Shit dude, I should've become a waiter...

JOHNNY

Ah. Well, I'm actually off tonight if you're interested in doing something.

STEVEN

Yeah, I've got plans for us already!

JOHNNY

Oh?

STEVEN

Well, Sarah is-

JOHNNY

No man! Not Sarah. You need to take some time away from your girlfriend just once. I am sick of third-wheeling you guys. I'm thinking more like you and I playing pool and having a beer.

STEVEN is zoned back into his video games.

STEVEN

Yeah, she's got this whole plan to hook you up with one of her friends. We won't be third wheeling you in this case.

JOHNNY

Steven, she's tried this before and it doesn't work. Your girlfriend feels the need to put her hands everywhere they don't belong. It's really frustrating. She's very invasive.

Just then, the door to STEVEN'S room opens and out comes STEVEN'S girlfriend, SARAH, who is extremely upset by the conversation.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

(*very peeved*)

I'm glad to know that's how you really feel about me, Johnny.

JOHNNY

(*to Steven*)

Hey asshole! You couldn't have mentioned that she was here the whole time?

STEVEN, seemingly unfazed, continues playing games and looks over to respond before Sarah jumps in.

SARAH

I feel like me "surprising" you by being here has revealed a bit of your true colors Johnny.

JOHNNY

It also validated my point.

SARAH

Steven doesn't even like pool. You're coming out with us for a drink and you're going to meet my friend Olivia. She's a sweet girl and I've already tried to play you up, so be good.

JOHNNY

Why are you so invested in *my* dating life?

SARAH

I think it's weird that you've been here for several months and haven't gone on a date or really been close with anyone else once. I mean, you'll flirt with woman while we're out, but never once do anything. I don't think it's healthy. I think it's shady and reflects poorly on your value as a partner. I really don't like Steven being subjected to it as often as he is.

JOHNNY

Sarah, not everyone wants the weirdly attached relationship you two have.

(CONTINUED)

STEVEN

Bro, this could be good for you. You haven't really had the time to make friends while you were here. I like Olivia. She's very accomplished, very put together. And I think you two would vibe.

SARAH

Johnny, I'm trying to do you a favor. Steven, get your coat on. We're meeting Olivia in like twenty-five minutes.

STEVEN gets up and prepares to leave. JOHNNY gives him an annoyed look as he passes.

JOHNNY

I actually remembered that I have to go see Mr. Morano tonight at the restaurant.

SARAH

Nice try Johnny.

JOHNNY begrudgingly grabs his coat and joins them both in the walk to the car.

STEVEN

Oh and Johnny, do me a favor and don't mention that you're a waiter.

JOHNNY

What? Why?

STEVEN

I don't know, I just don't want you two to get off on the wrong foot.

JOHNNY

(*annoyed*)

Wow, that's really cool of you guys. What did you tell her I did?

STEVEN

That you work in the dining slash hospitality industry and you're at the Hotel Fidelio. You don't even have to really lie.

JOHNNY

You owe me a drink.

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SCENE 3: INT. BAR - NIGHT.

Out at the bar, the foursome engage in casual conversation. As expected, Steven and Sarah have disappeared into their own little world across the table leaving a very uninterested Johnny stuck talking to a very boring Olivia

OLIVIA

-a lot of it is just dealing with really particular wealthy people. Wealthy people are much more careful about their money. For some of them, it's like their child. So, being attentive to their sensitivities is really important. I mean, let's face it: we live in a town where most people come to vacation and spend their money. My clients only come to see me when they're in town and other than that, they'll call me from all corners of the earth. Anyway, accounting isn't all that riveting, but it's pretty cool to see all the money flowing around here.

JOHNNY

Yeah. Pretty neat.

OLIVIA

What is it that you do again? Steven said that you worked in some kind of hospitality position at the Hotel St. Thomas?

JOHNNY

Yeah, well I work closely with the customers. I don't want to bore you with the details, but essentially, I meet directly with the customers to assess their culinary desires, gather that data and report back to the higher ups who then work to provide them with whatever they want. I usually have to follow up with them to do a little quality control.

OLIVIA

That sounds complicated. But, I love the Hotel St. Thomas! Such a cool hotel.

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STEVEN and SARAH turn to OLIVIA and JOHNNY hopeful of their romantic connection.

SARAH
(*insinuating a romantic connection*)
Hey you two! How's it going?

JOHNNY forces an annoyed smile.

OLIVIA
Really good!

JOHNNY
Oh, I'd almost forgotten you two were still here.

A man with a real "rock n'roll" look walks past the table and JOHNNY catches him out of the corner of his eye.

JOHNNY
Sam?

SAM
Hey people!

STEVEN
Hey Sam! That time of year already, huh?

SAM
Lucky for me it is!

STEVEN
Honey, you've met Sam, right?

SAM
Yeah, I remember you Sierra.

SARAH
(unfazed)
And this is my friend Olivia.

SAM
Nice to meet you.

JOHNNY
Sam is our Paparazzi friend-

SAM
-event photographer-

JOHNNY

-who comes into town seasonally to follow the great migration of celebrities on vacation.

SAM

I'd like to think of myself as a budding photojournalist. But the extra cash I can pick up here during ski season is fantastic. Plus, I get to see these dicks. Either of you want to grab a beer?

JOHNNY

I thought you'd never ask.

STEVEN

I'll come too. You ladies good here?

OLIVIA and SARAH nod. The boys head over to the bar, grab a beer and start a game of pool.

STEVEN

What brings you to town Sam? Which socialites are you tracking?

SAM

There's a whole hoard of new names that have been buying up holiday properties here. Chantal Astler, David Barcois, Nicola and Tommy Martola, Elise Chevalier and her husband, Misty Parker and a whole bunch of others.

JOHNNY

You're gonna get me an autograph this time, right?

SAM

I've been friends with Steven for years and he's still waiting.

STEVEN glances over to check in on the girls who look a bit bored.

Hope I'm not ruining your double date.

JOHNNY

You're not, trust me. She's a little dull - (to Steven) no offense. Steven forced me into this last minute.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

Stoven, why you gotta be forcing
dull ladies on my man Johnny here?

STEVEN

Johnny, come on, you're not even
giving her a chance. We should
really get back there.

JOHNNY

Actually boys, I gotta call it
quits for the night. I have an
early morning meeting with Mr.
Morano and I need some solid rest.
I'll see you around Sam.

JOHNNY grabs his jacket and makes his way out. He
acknowledges SARAH and OLIVIA and hollers a "nice to meet
you!" across the bar as he exits.

STEVEN

Johnny! Bro! You suck!

STEVEN walks over to the girls, who look mildly upset and
confused.

Sorry Olivia, he said he just found
out about some emergency in the
morning... Something about his
testicles.

JOHNNY walks home alone.

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SCENE 4. EXT. TOWN STREETS - DAWN

In the early hours of the next morning, JOHNNY strolls
through town. He makes his way to Mr. Nightly's meeting
place: a small cafe on the outskirts of town. The cafe is
situated almost entirely in an alleyway. In his buttoned up
peacoat and Raybans, JOHNNY comfortably sips coffee
underneath gray skies awaiting a meeting from his latest
prospective client. He plays with the appointment card which
states the meeting time: 8:00 am. After waiting a moment, a
limo pulls up and man in a suit and tie approaches him.
Completely calculated in his moves, the man hands JOHNNY his
accompanying appointment card with a cold smile and takes a
seat.

MAN IN SUIT

Good morning. Mr. Nightly, I
presume?

They shake hands.

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JOHNNY

And you are?

MAN IN SUIT

Here on behalf of my employer, who prefers to remain anonymous at the moment.

JOHNNY

Ah, I see... Well unfortunately, I only work directly with my clients. For security reasons, I'll need to speak with your employer directly if he's interested in my services.

MAN IN SUIT

And you will. For my employer's security, I have to verify the situation.

JOHNNY seems unimpressed with this pre-meeting situation and begins to gather his things.

JOHNNY

Well, I'm working with a client right now, so if he's interested, he can schedule a meeting with me in the next month.

MAN IN SUIT

Oh that will never do. My employer is very particular about his time - it is precious to him.

JOHNNY

(now visibly terse)

Well, he'll have to wait. I'm already working on one client right now and I have a pretty strict one-client-at-a-time rule.

MAN IN SUIT

My employer has a very generous offer which may convince you otherwise.

JOHNNY

I have a pretty pricey flat-rate. Non-negotiable.

MAN IN SUIT

I am confident that he will be able improve upon that.

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JOHNNY packs up his belongings and stands up.

JOHNNY

Like I said, I can't wait to meet him.

MAN IN SUIT

(snaps fingers)

Excellent!

A man behind JOHNNY places a bag over his head and forces him into a limousine. He is driven through winding roads and over hills where he arrives at a chateau that is just short of being called a castle. When JOHNNY is finally brought inside and the mask removed, he looks panicked. He examines the luxury of his surroundings and finds himself strangely calmed.

MAN IN SUIT

My employer waits for you on the grand balcony overlook. It's all the way down the hall on the left.

JOHNNY looks suspicious, but continues forward nonetheless. He slowly walks down this massive and grandiose hallway. Ornate art and priceless artifacts line the hallways. Movie posters from every era are present throughout his journey. As he gets further down the hallway he hears a voice. The voice echoes ubiquitously and ominously throughout the hallway.

GRANT

Ah! You've arrived. I'm out here. You know, monogamy is quite unusual in the animal kingdom. Roughly three percent of mammals are monogamous and within that very small minority, there is one prominent commonality: oxytocin, the love hormone. Whenever two creatures cuddle with one another or feel "closeness", there is a chemical released in the brain that gives us a warm fuzzy feeling inside. Us humans feel love for one another during these circumstances. Interesting, isn't it though that true love - those intense feelings of attachment you have for one person - can be broken down into a mere chemical reaction. Our bodies are responding to an animalistic need to feel close to one person

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GRANT (cont'd)
and produce these feelings, or this chemical rather - oxytocin. All these fairytales and films centered around these sweeping romances were nothing more than a mere ode to this one chemical. It may seem callous to break it down like that, but I have to. I don't have the ability to manipulate nature, I can only try and understand it. By doing so, I have better understood myself. That chemical has been responsible for so many decisions I have made in my life, so many people I have shared apart of myself with. It is a truly powerful thing - it can alter someone's entire perspective.

JOHNNY finally makes it to the end of the hallway where he sees a man standing on a balcony overlooking the most beautiful snowy mountains. He doesn't turn to face JOHNNY, even as he approaches him.

But at the end of the day, it is nothing more than a mere bodily function and, knowing that, I have become immune to it's simplistic nature. And you my friend, have learned how to partially manipulate it. Come join me.

JOHNNY leans over the balcony and looks out at the beautiful landscape in front of him.

Fascinating, isn't it?

JOHNNY catches a glimpse of GRANT'S face with a slight smile. He sips on scotch and continues gazing forward. JOHNNY is awestruck by the scenery.

JOHNNY
Wow. This is simply astonishing.

GRANT
I told my realtor that I wanted a view that was timeless. I've wasted hours a day trying to capture its beauty to no avail. We might get stuck here, let's head inside.

Inside, JOHNNY sits in a chair fit for a king as a fire roars alongside him. GRANT sits in an identical chair opposite him. It's the first time JOHNNY is really seeing his face.

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JOHNNY

You're...you're... Grant Patrick.

GRANT

I see my introduction isn't necessary.

JOHNNY

Are you kidding me? You're the multi-billion dollar movie producer, the richest man in town by a long shot. You're responsible for every successful box office hit for the last twenty years and one of the biggest names in the history of entertainment.

GRANT

Indeed. But I'm more interested in you Mr. Nightly. You're a hard man to track down, you know that? All I can gather is that you're an art collector and high-class savant who makes the majority of his earnings in another way. Interesting life, assuming - that is, it's true.

JOHNNY seems unfazed.

JOHNNY

What can I help you with?

GRANT

I'm in need of your services.

JOHNNY

You? Aren't you married to-

GRANT

Elise Chevalier? Yes. Do you know her?

JOHNNY

Know her? She's only like one of the hottest stars in Hollywood. Who doesn't know her? She is what, like the "most beautiful woman in the world" for the fourth time in a row?

GRANT

Sixth.

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

Sixth. She's literally the most sought after woman on the planet. (He pauses)...Is everything okay between you two? You guys seem very happy in every magazine I've seen you.

GRANT

Undoubtedly. She and I are happier than ever. She loves me more than any man could ever hope. But as nature's way goes, I've found another woman.

JOHNNY

What? How? Who could compare to Elise Chevalier?

GRANT stands and walks by posters which chronologically travels through Elise's career.

GRANT

Ah and you see, that is every man's perspective from the outside. I myself felt the same way when I first met her. She was the most interesting being I'd ever laid eyes on. I instantly fell in love. When we first met, she was a budding actress with big dreams. I, a major studio producer, wanted nothing more than to help her achieve her dreams. She had experienced so little when I got her her first film role. But just like myself, the world quickly took a liking to her. They fell for her instantly. She was a hit and she was eternally grateful to me for the opportunity. I was happy for her and we celebrated by experiencing all of the world's luxuries together. Every man that approached her wanted her and it was this universal desire that causing me to take the plunge. We were happily married and her career began to flourish. And thus, we've reached a problem. You see, Mr. Nightly, I like you. You and I are a lot alike. We both know what women want, we know women are

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GRANT (cont'd)

attracted to power. They enjoy power as a mechanism for what it can provide them. As little girls, power is vested in the men who most people enjoy, the popular crowd. As they become older, power becomes vested in looks and musculature, a source of status. And eventually, they focus on money, a basic necessity and means for existence. They just want to live out their dreams and often money is the easiest solution. Once you enter the world of entertainment, how much money becomes a less important characteristic and your ability to manipulate careers becomes tantamount to playing God. That is what drew Elise to me when we first met. I created her. But now she has risen herself to a level of respect and dominance within the industry. She stands firmly on her own two feet and has an unmatched level of clout. Some might say we're a power couple, but that just does not work for me. I've met another woman, who's much younger. She reminds me of Elise before the rise. But this woman needs me. She knows so little about this world and I find her curiosity enchanting. This young woman has captured my heart and made me feel unlike I've ever felt. And the best part is that she has no desire to be elevated to the level to which Elise has risen.

JOHNNY sits there in silence soaking everything in. He seems stunned. GRANT sits back down and refills his scotch glass.

JOHNNY

Mr. Patrick, your wife is also notoriously difficult to get close to. You've built up a highly public relationship with her over the course of years. What are you asking of me?

GRANT

Mr. Nightly, I would like for you to seduce my wife in order to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GRANT (cont'd)
compromise our marriage, allowing me to retain my wealth, stature and most importantly, image. Then, I'll be free to pursue this new girl without a single negative headline. If anything, it will be praised.

JOHNNY
Your wife really loves you. I've never dealt with a relationship this serious before. She would be very difficult to even talk to.

GRANT
That's why I came to you. Your skills are legendary and I can see why: you're a striking young man.

JOHNNY
Even if I could pique her interest, I would have no way of getting close to her.

GRANT
I will discreetly provide you with access to events where you two can encounter each other.

JOHNNY
What is this worth to you, Mr. Patrick? I have a flat rate of 25,000 dollars and you'd have to wait a month, I'm working with a client right now. I only work one at a time as it can complicate things.

GRANT
Ah yes, money is no issue, but time is of the essence. I cannot wait a month for you. I understand you have a flat rate, but might you consider a slightly better one-time offer.

JOHNNY
Mr. Patrick, I really don't do-

GRANT
I'll give you 25,000,000 dollars.

JOHNNY looks stunned.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GRANT (cont'd)

Take me on as your client right now, agree to my terms and if you can finish your task by the end of the season, then I'll pay you 25,000,000 dollars - non-negotiable.

JOHNNY

Mr. Patrick, that's a considerable amount of money.

GRANT

Even for me, it's significant. But I desire this young woman strongly and I need everything to go perfectly, no room for mistakes. Does that pique your interest?

JOHNNY stands up and walks around. He's almost dizzy thinking about that kind of money. He stares at a poster of Elise Chevalier.

JOHNNY

Fascinating.

GRANT

Do we have a deal Mr. Nightly?

GRANT extends his hand. JOHNNY turns around with a big grin on his face and shakes his hand.

JOHNNY

Deal.

5 SCENE 5: INT. CHARITY GALA - EVENING.

JOHNNY heads straight to meet the elusive ELISE. Fully dressed up, he attends a charity gala that GRANT has signed him up for. He enters the high-class event and wades through a bougie looking group of people to get to the main gathering area. It is here where he sees ELISE across the room mingling with a large group of individuals. For a moment he's starstruck. The event is put on by her and her associates and thus, she is relentlessly mobbed by everyone who walks by her.

MOUSTCAHED MAN

Pretty fantastic, right?

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

Pretty.....fantastic, yes.

MOUSTCAHED MAN

I bet they wait all day to talk to her.

JOHNNY looks a little frightened at the prospect.
Lucky bastards.

After a while, ELISE begins dancing with some of the suited men at the gala as the main reception area has turned into some kind of waltz floor.

JOHNNY

I need to dance with her.

MOUSTCAHED MAN

Yeah, sure. If you get a dance with her, I'll give you ten bucks.

JOHNNY smiles at the prospect and makes his way through a crowd of people. Various wealthy men have been dancing with her for the past twenty minutes. She looks happy to have a break. Nervous, JOHNNY approaches her and catches her off guard.

JOHNNY

Can I put my name down somewhere?

ELISE

Thank you, but I'm all danced out
I'm afraid.

She starts to turn away.

JOHNNY

Aw, really? You'd help me win a bet.

ELISE

Is that so?

JOHNNY

See my friend over there(*referencing mustached man*)?He bet me ten dollars I couldn't get a dance with you.

ELISE

Well if it's for the sake of petty change, I suppose I could make an exception. *Everyone here is in dire need of money.*

(CONTINUED)

He takes her to the dance floor and they slow dance with one another.

JOHNNY

I have great respect for what you do Ms. Chevalier. I'm a big fan of yours.

ELISE

Thanks! I figured you were, since you came to my charity gala.

JOHNNY looks a little flustered.

But I really do appreciate you being here.

JOHNNY

So, just moved to town?

ELISE

Just a few weeks ago. I'll be here for the season, so I'm trying to get settled in. I love it here though - I think it's simply charming, don't you?

JOHNNY

Yes, it's a very attractive town, you'll fit right in.

They dance quietly with one another for a moment while JOHNNY contemplates a strategy in his head.

I would say tell me about yourself, but I feel like I know so much about you already.

ELISE

Is that so? Tell me something about me.

JOHNNY

Well, you're an acclaimed actress, married to Grant Patrick, you have had a successful clothing line and you're quite the philanthropist.

ELISE

Hm. Tell me about you? What's your story Mr.? I'm sorry I didn't catch your name?

JOHNNY

Mr. Nightly. My story? Oh, it's not that interesting. I travel all the time for work in and out of the country. I'm an art collector, you see, so I find and acquire rare pieces from all over the world.

ELISE

Oooh. That sounds really fun!

JOHNNY

Yes, do you have a favorite artist or piece that you're really interested in?

ELISE

You know, I couldn't tell you the first thing about art. It's not really something I've ever cared about. But, I know that whole industry is really popular amongst the elite crowd here and, in that regard, it's pretty cool! My husband would love to talk about this stuff.

JOHNNY

Alright. What are you interested in?

ELISE

Nature, my charities, basketball. Oh and anything new! Which means lots of stuff! That's why I like being here. There's going to be a lot to explore.

The song comes to a close.

JOHNNY

Yeah, well I've been to this town many times and hired many guides to help me explore the area and-

Just then a man from afar calls for her.

ELISE

I'm so sorry Mr.....Nightly! I remembered it. I had an amazing time dancing with you, but I've got a dinner to attend. Best of luck with your art stuff. Maybe I'll catch you at another event!

(CONTINUED)

At this point, JOHNNY realizes how in-demand she is and decides to let her leave.

JOHNNY
Good evening Ms. Chevalier.

She walks off with her friends leaving him staring. Over her shoulder, she calls at him.

ELISE
Hey! Half of that ten dollars you just won better go in the donations bucket.

The MOUSTACHED MAN comes over with his ten dollars.

MOUSTACHED MAN
She came and went just like that.

JOHNNY
She had a dinner to get to....dinner!

JOHNNY remembers that he's overdue at the Fidelio restaurant. He dashes out of the event.

6 SCENE 6: INT. FIDELIO RESTAURANT - EVENING.

Quickly changing into his work clothes, Johnny heads out into the crowded restaurant eyeing all the tables to see if there's anyone he might recognize. One of the other, younger waiters, Michael is also in the room.

JOHNNY addresses his table.

JOHNNY
We also have a chicken cacciatore ragu with roasted aioli asparagus and oatmeal crusted peppercorn yukon gold potato cuts. My name is John if you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask.

He leaves the table and gets to a better vantage point in the room. Michael, a younger server, approaches him.

MICHAEL
Hey Johnny. It's been a while.

JOHNNY
Hey Michael. I'm going to need you to take tables 13, 9 and...4.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

Okay, but Johnny I've got-

JOHNNY

Don't worry I'll take whatever tables you have.

MICHAEL

I've only got to clean up the back!

JOHNNY

Got it!

JOHNNY finishes up and leaves the floor. He heads to the back where he begins to take off his uniform and do a little cleaning. MR.MORANO approaches.

MR. MORANO

Johnny!

JOHNNY

Hey Mr. Morano!

MR. MORANO

Johnny, where ya been? I feel like I never see you anymore.

JOHNNY

(chuckling)

What are you talking about Mr. Morano? I'm here five nights a week.

MR. MORANO

I used to see you six nights a week! What's the deal? Is this other job really taking off for you?

JOHNNY

It's going pretty well.

MR. MORANO

What are you doing? You helping another restaurant?

JOHNNY

You know I'm not. And you don't really want to know, it's uninteresting. Speaking of Mr. Morano, I'm probably going to have to cut down on my hours. I'm only going to be able to come in four days a week from here on out.

(CONTINUED)

MR. MORANO

What? I lose you another day?
You're my best waiter! Are you
making enough money at this other
job? I promised your sister that I
would take care of you!

JOHNNY

I know. I know. I'm doing just
fine.

MR. MORANO

Alright kid. I've just been with
you for a while now and I kinda
feel responsible for ya, you know?
Anyways. I guess I can make four
nights a week work for you. Now I
just need to figure out who will
pick up the extra hours?

JOHNNY

What about Michael?

They both peer over at MICHAEL who is stumbling over himself
clumsily trying to multitask between tables.

MR. MORANO

Sartini?!

MICHAEL drops his tray after he hears his name, looking
panicked.

MR. MORANO

Lord help me.

7

SCENE 7: EXT. OUTER-TOWN CHALET. NIGHT.

JOHNNY leaves and heads to JESSICA O'CASEA'S home. She
resides on the far end of town in a large luxurious lodge
surrounded by trees almost completely. Donning a new outfit
which showcases his pseudo-success, he waits outside her
front door. She answers and looks around to see if anyone is
looking.

JESSICA

Mr. Nightly, how pleasant to see
you.

JOHNNY

Thank you Ms. O'Casea. May I say
that you look like a bright star in
a dim galaxy - absolutely stellar.

(CONTINUED)

JESSICA

Aw, you're too sweet. I did just pick this out yesterday. You can call me Jessica...if you wish. Please come in.

JOHNNY FOLLOWS HER INTO AN ORNATE ENTRYWAY.

JESSICA leads him down the hallway to the gathering room taking every opportunity to show off her backless dress she wears so proudly.

JESSICA

I'm so happy that you were able to make it.

JOHNNY

I wouldn't have missed it for the world.

JESSICA

I knew, with your heavy involvement in the art world, you would appreciate the opportunity to see my rather meager collection.

They walk through a hallway with a collection of rare paintings that they take a moment to examine. JOHNNY acts very impressed with everything he sees to the delight of JESSICA.

JESSICA

This is an original Manet, which we acquired through an auction three years ago....This is an original Monet, which we acquired through a family friend's estate sale..... And this is a rare, original Bosch drawing, which my husband acquired for me through a black market trade. No one knows it exists.

JOHNNY

Wow. Fascinating. The blend of the surreal and heavy moral symbolism has Bosch's fingerprints all over it. Lucky you are to have such a piece.

JESSICA looks happy. After strolling a bit longer, they make their way to a massive sitting room, where they sip champagne and listen to 'My Funny Valentine'. They sit very close to each other.

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

I have to say Jessica that you've got some hidden treasures in that hallway over there. It's an impressive collection.

JESSICA

You don't know how happy I am to have someone who truly appreciates it. My husband has spent his hard-earned cash supplying the house with these masterpieces and he couldn't care less - he couldn't even tell you which artist did which piece! It's obnoxious. I feel like you speak my language.

JOHNNY

Where is the lucky man of the hour? I was hoping to meet your husband and congratulate him on his great achievement.

JESSICA

His deal with Osternos?

JOHNNY

(*chuckling*)

You!

JESSICA

Well, he doesn't spend much time around the house much these days. It's a shame really. He told me he was leaving for a few days to check on some investment opportunity in Chicago. But that's my husband. It feels like whenever we're here, he's never around. Trust me, it's frustrating.

JOHNNY

Feeling a bit under appreciated?

JESSICA

Well, I understand. He's the one who keeps the cogs turning in our lives. He's got a lot on his plate...

JOHNNY

And what about you, Jessica? What's your story?

(CONTINUED)

JESSICA

Me? Oh, I'm afraid it's terribly uninteresting. I mean I grew up in Rhode Island, I met my husband in college, we got married...

JOHNNY

Fifteen years ago, did you think you would be here?

JESSICA

No. I studied fashion in college. I actually hoped to one day take my designs somewhere. I was really good you know. I was considered the talent of my "Modern Accessories" class.

JOHNNY

And then what happened?

JESSICA

Well, then I met my husband. And that was that. I left college shortly after. I never picked up my sketchbook after that. I didn't try anything until my purses and, well, we know how that turned out.

JOHNNY

That's a shame. I really liked those purses. I thought you had some talent.

JESSICA

That's sweet of you.

JOHNNY leans closer to her.

JOHNNY

I'm not trying to be sweet. I see a lot of potential in you Jessica, you're a special woman. You've got an eye for design that could put you in league with Bauhaus. I can tell you're discouraged. No one here can see what you've got and that's their loss. (*staring into her eyes*) Stunning.

JESSICA

Tell me, Mr. Nightly. What about you? How did you come to be here?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JESSICA (cont'd)

I'm embarrassed to admit that I am so fascinated with a man that I know so little about.

JOHNNY

Oh, I'm afraid it's meant to be that way Jessica. You see, I too am fascinated with you, but your circumstances are a bit different.

JESSICA

From my perspective, we're two very attractive, like-minded individuals who appreciate each other in a way others haven't.

JOHNNY

And from my perspective, you're the most interesting thing I've seen in the last few weeks.

JESSICA then immediately jumps on him and they begin to kiss passionately. They slowly remove each others clothes and admire each others bodies. They have slipped into carnal instincts.

FADE OUT

8

SCENE 8: INT. JOHNNY'S APARTMENT - MORNING.

The next morning, JOHNNY walks around his apartment in his loungewear and serious bedhead. He looks around for his roommate and calls out for him, "Stoven!!!". There is a sticky note on the fridge saying, "Can't hang out today. Sarah and I left to go skiing with friends." JOHNNY looks bummed out. He goes to open the fridge and notices the food there is scarce. Another note: "Pick up some bread for us?" JOHNNY puts on his casual shoes and makes his way off to the local grocery store. On his way out he notices an old pair of snowshoes, so he packs up his jacket and snowshoeing gear.

At the grocery store, JOHNNY stocks up on bread and also seems to be getting a few other supplies for his hike. He reaches up for some of his favorite trail mix and falls over - knocking a few down in the process. A woman behind him comes to check on him - it's ELISE. She looks very different - and he doesn't immediately recognize her. But she recognizes him.

(CONTINUED)

ELISE

Woah there! Are you alright?

JOHNNY

Yeah, sorry I didn't--

ELISE

Wait, I remember you. You're that guy.

JOHNNY

(looks around nervously)

That guy? I don't remember-

ELISE

Where's your ten bucks? I want half.

JOHNNY

Ms. Chevalier? It's you! I didn't recognize you.

ELISE

You can call me Elise and it turns out that wearing a custom designer dress to the supermarket is considered a bit ostentatious. Who would've guessed?

JOHNNY

Yeah, I'm one to talk. I didn't even have the decency to comb my hair when I left this morning.

ELISE

I'll try not to be offended Mr. Nightly.

JOHNNY

What are you doing here anyway? I didn't imagine I would ever run into you down at the town market.

ELISE

Really? It's a small town.

JOHNNY

I guess I just expected that you had a personal shopper or maybe that you had your groceries flown in fresh from farms.

ELISE begins to look annoyed at his grandiose comment.

(CONTINUED)

ELISE

Sounds expensive. Plus, then I miss out on the guilty-haggfest I have with myself at the checkout when I can't decide what candy to get (*holds up candy bar*). What are you doing here?

JOHNNY

Just picking up a few things to prepare for later.

She notices his meager supplies and becomes suspicious. She takes note of his clothes, which seem to be outfitted for cold weather.

ELISE

Yum. Where are you off to?
(*references backpack*)

JOHNNY

Oh I'm just, uh-

JOHNNY can't conjure a convincing lie in time to sway her. Reluctantly, he tells the truth.

JOHNNY

I'm going snowshoeing actually. Haven't been in a while, so I'm heading out in just a sec.

ELISE

Snowshoeing? Really? That sounds like fun.

JOHNNY

Well, I could definitely recommend some excellent guides for you if you ever wanted to go. There's a high-end trekking company that I'm fond of on the other end of town. Perfect for your crowd - very private.

ELISE

(*looking uninterested*)
Hm.....

JOHNNY

Well, it was nice to see you Elise.

JOHNNY tries to escape the situation as quickly as possible, he realizes he has offended her. ELISE immediately feels like she's being cold and attempts to remedy the situation.

(CONTINUED)

ELISE

Listen, I'm sorry. I don't mean to come off bitchy. You're just being yourself and it's nice to run into a friendly face here at the grocery store. Honestly it's refreshing to see someone from one of those events looking so real.

JOHNNY

Don't worry about it. I shouldn't have assumed all that stuff.

ELISE

What's your name by the way Mr. Nightly? Your first name?

JOHNNY

(takes a minute to consider the truth)

Johnny. You can call me Johnny.

ELISE

Good! I like that. *Johnny*. You don't know how many 'Jonathan's' I know. Plus it's nice to know someone's actual *name* around here.

JOHNNY warms up to her again.

JOHNNY

First time in town right?

ELISE

Yeah and I'm going to be here for a while.

JOHNNY

Yeah, well if you need advice or anything, I've definitely been around, feel free to contact me.

JOHNNY writes down his number on a notepad and hands it to her.

ELISE

Thank you. I know this sounds silly, but I don't really have any friends here, so I really appreciate it. I mean we're pretty much here because of my husband, which is fine - I love him and am very glad he's happy, but it can

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ELISE (cont'd)
get a little lonely here,
especially since he's out so much.

JOHNNY
Yeah, well if you ever want to hang
out, I can definitely make myself
available.

ELISE
Thanks Johnny. (*begins to push cart
away*) Maybe next time you can take
me snowshoeing!

JOHNNY
I'd like that.

They part ways having made a genuine connection between the
two. A rarity that each will cherish in a town full of
vapid, ephemeral connections.

CUT TO BLACK

9 SCENE 9: INT. PATRICK CHATEAU - DAY.

Back at her house, ELISE is greeted by her staff who welcome
her back. GRANT is in his study reading through a few
promising new scripts. ELISE knocks on his office window.

ELISE
Knock knock!

GRANT
Ah, darling. Come on in. What have
you got there?

ELISE
I just stopped by the store and
thought I would make you a nice
Apres-Ski snack, but I see now that
it looks like you missed out on
skiing.

GRANT
Yes, well I received a few
screenplays this morning that I had
to look over. I actually thought
you would be perfect for the first
one, written by my old friend
McAllister, which starts filming
next June.

(CONTINUED)

ELISE

That's thoughtful of you honey!
But, you know I've got a jam-packed
schedule. Besides, I'm really
trying to focus on the quality of
my career right now. I've got an
offer to work with Theodore Lewis,
who only works like once a decade!
But, I appreciate you thinking of
me.

Disappointed, GRANT resumes his readings.

ELISE

Well, should we head to the dining
room for that Apres-Ski?

GRANT

You go on ahead. I've got a lot of
work to do. I'll catch up with you
later darling.

ELISE leaves hiding her look of complete disappointment.

END SCENE

10

SCENE 10: INT. OUTER-TOWN CHALET - EVENING.

That evening, Ms. O'CASEA sits bored at home with a glass of wine in her hand and a classic romance on TV. Finally her husband returns. She turns to say hi to him, but he's on the phone. He smiles and waves to her, putting together a plate for himself that he will eat alone in his room. She watches him as he walks right past her without so much as a nod of acknowledgement. He closes the door to their room, still on the phone. After letting out a brief sigh, she looks around to see if there's any chance he'll return. When it's evident that he won't, she pulls out her phone and texts Mr. Nightly. We see her text: 'Hey you ;) What are you doing tomorrow? Fancy keeping me company?'. She gets giddy at the thought of her "scandalous" actions. From the other room, her husband calls out.

MR. O'CASEA

Honey, are you coming skiing with
me tomorrow?

She takes a moment to reply, allowing her excitement to swell over the idea of spending the day with Mr. Nightly.

JESSICA

I don't know that I'll be free.

(CONTINUED)

MR. O'CASEA

Alright.

He goes back to talking on the phone - indifferent to her ambiguity. She sits there eagerly anticipating the possibility of a reunion with her paramour.

11 SCENE 11: EXT. SKI RESORT - MORNING.

JOHNNY and STEVEN carry skis up a billowy white hill, brushing through knee-deep fresh powder on their way up. JOHNNY lets out a big yawn. SARAH skis down to them.

SARAH

Morning boys! Hope you're feeling lively. Johnny, it doesn't look like you had time to brush your hair.

JOHNNY

Funny enough, I'm not too worried about it, considering I'm going to be wearing a helmet and all.

STEVEN

You don't wear helmets...

JOHNNY reaches over and yanks the helmet out of STEVEN'S trunk.

SARAH

(to STEVEN)

Hmmm. Well hurry up babe. Everyone - including Olivia - is waiting for you two down at the Fletcher lift.

She skis away and STEVEN and JOHNNY put their skis and snowboard on.

STEVEN

Thanks for coming with me man. I need someone else who can appreciate silence here.

JOHNNY

While I normally wouldn't jump onto a ski day with a crew like this, I'm all about free skiing - especially if Sarah is paying for it.

They ski down to see a group of people waiting in line. SARAH and OLIVIA are with each other talking and a man next to them seems to be listening intently.

(CONTINUED)

STEVEN
Hey Cameron!

CAMERON
Hey Stevey!

STEVEN
Johnny, this is Cameron. He's a junior partner at the firm, really cool guy.

JOHNNY
Oh nice to meet you man.

SARAH
Nice nice.... And Johnny, you remember Olivia from last time?

JOHNNY gives SARAH an annoyed look as she has just made the situation more awkward than it had to be.

JOHNNY
Hey Olivia. Good to see you.

OLIVIA
You too!

They awkwardly look at one another and ski up to the lift with each other in the line.

STEVEN
Where's our other?

SARAH
I don't know. She was talking to a coworker or something.

JOHNNY and OLIVIA feel forced into conversation with one another.

OLIVIA
So, how's the Fidelio?

JOHNNY
Oh, you know, with ski season hitting it's stride, we've definitely been getting busy.

OLIVIA
That's cool I've been really meaning to come by soon. I know what you mean by "hitting it's stride"! I've had so many

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

OLIVIA (cont'd)
 appointments this week, it's
 insane! I'm racking my brain trying
 to figure out how I'm going to be
 able to see all my clients and like
 where to eat and it's all very
 stressful to me. There's only so
 many sushi places-

JOHNNY sees CAMERON trying to keep up with the group and he begins to purposely slip backwards in line. Eventually, he makes it so that CAMERON, himself and OLIVIA are all on the same level and then begins to slip back even further.

OLIVIA
 -in town. I mean there's a wine
 festival and the 'thought academy'
 is having an appreciation night
 that would absolutely be wonderful-

Eventually, he has slipped himself to the row behind and forced CAMERON in front with OLIVIA. The chairlift seats two people at a time. SARAH and STEVEN get on first. OLIVIA realizes that JOHNNY has fallen back.

OLIVIA
 -but, I don't really know the right
 - oh, Johnny!

JOHNNY
 I'm so sorry. I guess I just
 couldn't keep up. I'll be okay
 though. I can just meet you at the
 top.

OLIVIA
 Are you sure? (looks at Cameron)
 I'm sure this guy won't mind.

CAMERON
 Yeah, I don't mind.

JOHNNY
 Honestly, it's just a nine minute
 ride. No big deal.

OLIVIA
 Okay.

CAMERON
 Hi, I'm Cameron by the way.

OLIVIA
(extending her hand)
Olivia!

They get picked up together and whisked away into the white. JOHNNY notices he's paired with a new woman. She skis down with style and jumps seemingly out of nowhere.

NADINE
Can I join you?

JOHNNY
Sure.

They are soon swept off together as well. They sit quietly together trying to provide each other space. JOHNNY notices that she has the insignia of the resort on her jacket.

JOHNNY
So... are you an instructor?

NADINE
Yep. Intermediate kids 8-12.

JOHNNY
Did you lose them?

NADINE
No, it's my day off. I'm just here with some friends.

JOHNNY
Oh, cool cool.

NADINE
You on vacation here, or?

JOHNNY
No, I've been living here for a little while, I actually work in town.

NADINE
Oh, no way! Where at?

JOHNNY
The Fidelio? I'm a waiter there.

NADINE
Wow. That place is nice! You couldn't hook me up with a discount could you?

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

You could always not tip me. But,
fair warning: It might be the last
time I hook you up.

NADINE laughs. As they head up the mountain, the falling snow thickens, causing a opaque blanket to obscure anything further than the chair in front of them. STEVEN and SARAH sit in the front chair and Sarah looks back anxiously.

SARAH

Why is Olivia sitting with your law
buddy? Did Johnny ditch her?

STEVEN

No. (*under his breath*) I hope
not...

JOHNNY and NADINE seem to be hitting it off splendidly a few chairs back.

NADINE

I grew up in state and my dad was
an instructor. I never really
wanted anything complicated, you
know? So, I stuck around. I moved
out here, which is a few towns over
from my own hometown and got this
job. I need a roof over my head,
plenty of good food, maybe a brandy
every once in a while - happiness.

JOHNNY

And what do you need to achieve
that? Happiness, that is?

NADINE

I'm happy right now. Those are the
things I need. Oh, and a beautiful
day like this, but as you can
see... (*she references their
surroundings*)

JOHNNY

That's it? That's all you want? You
don't have any lofty life goals of
starting a clothing company or
anything?

NADINE

(*she laughs*)

Nope. I'm fine. Well, there is one
thing: I want to open up a ski

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NADINE (cont'd)

school that focuses on education for disabled skiers. I mean, I also want it to be well-respected for its educational quality. I want future Paralympian athletes and even Olympic athletes to come from my school.

JOHNNY

That sounds really, really cool. Very sweet of you.

NADINE

Yeah, it would be awesome. It's just expensive. I mean, I still haven't gone to college. I would have to get my undergraduate degree first and I have zero idea what I would even study, then I would have to go to grad school so I could get more experiences working with people with disabilities and then there's the money needed to start the business. It's a lot.

JOHNNY

Damn. That sucks.

NADINE

Yeah. You're telling me. I hate worrying about money. It's one thing I would change about myself if I could. Anyway, what about you? Do you have a dream you're trying to make come true?

JOHNNY

Well, when I graduated from college, my sister and I had this big plan to pack up our things and move together to New York and start a life out there.

NADINE

New York, huh? That would be pretty cool.

JOHNNY

Yeah, it would. But, when it rains it pours and money became a heavy burden on us and our family. It just wasn't in the cards yet.

(CONTINUED)

NADINE

And so here you are.

JOHNNY

Here I am.

NADINE

A waiter at the Fidelio - that's not too shabby.

JOHNNY

You know, you're the first person to tell me that who I actually believe.

NADINE

I know what you mean. It is refreshing to meet someone who you can just be really genuine with.

JOHNNY

I know. Even my friends - and don't get me wrong, they're great people - but even my friends hold me up to this standard. I don't know, it makes me feel like I always have to put up this facade.

NADINE

I know. Even my friends - and don't get me wrong, they're great people - but even my friends hold me up to this standard. I don't know, it makes me feel like I always have to put up this facade.

JOHNNY

I know, but it's almost a necessary means to get by here. I mean this is vacationland for the elite. The rest of us are just living in it.

NADINE

My friends can kind of be that way too. But, it's up to me to say, "*Yo assholes! I'm happy.*" My grandmother always said, '*at the end of they day, we're all buried in the same dirt*'.

At the top of the lift, STEVEN and SARAH ski off. SARAH turns around anxiously monitoring the exiting traffic.

(CONTINUED)

STEVEN

So, I'm honestly thinking we hit up Tieback and then The Knot and go down-

SARAH

Steven, I need you to give me a moment. I'm taking inventory of our group.

STEVEN

(oblivious)

-and then, let's go down to Blue's Ball and across Chainneck Ridge. Then-

CAMERON and OLIVIA exit the chairlift, having seemingly made quite the impression on each other as she playfully rubs his back and they chuckle as they exit the lift.

SARAH

There's Olivia and your friend. *(she sees one more lift go by - empty)* He ditched us. Now, we're just waiting on one more.

NADINE and JOHNNY are reaching the top.

NADINE

Well it was lovely to meet you. Best of luck with your friends!

JOHNNY

Thanks. I'll have to come ski with you sometime!

They exit the lift and start to ski away from each other.

NADINE

And I'll swing by the restaurant! And tip!

They ski in an oval formation and arrive at the same group, looking confused at why each other are there.

JOHNNY

Did you-

SARAH

Oh good. You didn't ditch us.

(CONTINUED)

NADINE

(*thinking Sarah is talking to her*)

No, I was just a little behind because-

SARAH

Not you Nadine. Johnny.

JOHNNY and NADINE look at each other for a moment and laugh

NADINE

Nice to meet you Johnny, I'm Nadine.

Somewhere on a chairlift above, JESSICA O'CASEA looks at her eyes in a tiny hand mirror. Her husband is on his phone writing an e-mail. She shuts her case and rests her chin in her palm as her glove-covered fingers curl up to tap her lips out of boredom. Her HUSBAND chimes in.

MR. O'CASEA

Great day to be out, isn't it?

JESSICA

Yes, well you'd be able to say that with confidence if you looked up every once in a while...

MR. O'CASEA puts his phone away. He points at a man who is tumbling down the mountain.

MR. O'CASEA

That guy's balls just got crushed! Did you see that?

JESSICA

That's weird.

MR. O'CASEA

What's that? You recognize someone?

JESSICA

No. Well, I thought I recognized that young man down there (*catching herself*) from a few gatherings at the Ashford's. I must be mistaken.

MR. O'CASEA looks over and recognizes JOHNNY. He hides a bit of internal frustration for the interference this will cause for his own plan. He sits and stewes for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

MR. O'CASEA

Yeah, it's hard to tell from up here....

ENE SCENE. DISSOLVE.

12 INT. LODGE - NIGHT.

Back at SARAH'S lodge, CAMERON, NADINE, STEVEN, SARAH, OLIVIA and JOHNNY gather. They all sit out on the back deck roasting s'mores around a fireplace and drinking beers. STEVEN is drunk and in the middle of a story.

STEVEN

So, it was three years ago and I was housesitting for this loaded guy at his nice-ass mansion and I'm all by myself ordering this pizza on a cold winter night. Anyway, I hear a knock on the door and I'm like, 'I really hope that's a pizza guy or better yet, a *pizza girl!*'

SARAH smacks him

And I head over to the door so *freaking paranoid*. I open the door and there's this older dude with a sweater, like a nice collared shirt, blonde hair and he seems like, well, a nice enough guy. He came in and was like, '*So good to finally meet you*'. I'm thinking, I have no idea who this *freaking* guy is! He tells me that he's determined to get me to help him out on this project. Then, with the *freaking* snap of his fingers, all these people come in with hors d'oeuvres. I feel like I am at a royal court and all those big name lawyers I met all those years ago seemed like common rubes! Anyway, we sit down to feast and this guy started trying to convince me to '*just invest the money*' because it would pay back fifty million dollars in only fifty years time! I didn't want to miss out on the opportunity of a lifetime, so I said, tell me the details of this venture.

While STEVEN tells his story, JOHNNY and NADINE are having their own conversation through whispered voices.

(CONTINUED)

NADINE

I've taught Katie Harlow, of the Harlow department store fortune, how to hockey stop. Took her a few tries, but she picked it up really quickly! I also had a call once from a woman who thought she was in an avalanche, only to find out that snow from the tree above her kept falling on her (*they're both beginning to laugh*) and it was Elsie Koch!

JOHNNY

I've run into her a couple times! She's the *worst* tipper, let me tell you! She would be the type to freak out unnecessarily.

NADINE

Yeah, it's hard to deal with the big-name culture here. I don't know if I'll ever get used to it. That's why I can't wait to move away.

JOHNNY

Or just wait until summer!

NADINE and JOHNNY laugh. STEVEN notices their lack of attention and calls them out.

STEVEN

Guys! (*they stop and turn towards him*) Anyways, I thought that it sounded amazing. I mean who else was going to be able to process credit cards in space? I mean, I thought he sounded reasonable enough, But before I gave him the money, I needed to know I could trust him. He then asks me, "*But my friend, I thought I proved that to you when you flew on one of my jets!*". I said, '*Which one?*'. He said, "*The Virgin Jet? From Corsica? You did make that flight right?*" Right then and there, I leaped for a pen, wrote that man a check. I bid the man goodnight before he ever had any idea that I wasn't who he came to talk to because *that's how I met the one and only Richard Branson, CEO of Virgin.*

(CONTINUED)

The crowd looks blankly at STEVEN, with the exception of SARAH who plants her face in her palms and shakes her head.

OLIVIA

So, Richard Branson, the CEO of Virgin came to a house you were housesitting at and you invested in a project with him?

STEVEN

Hell yes I did.

NADINE

And this project helps credit cards in space?

STEVEN

Nadine, if you had just payed attention, you'd-

CAMERON

What did he sound like?

STEVEN

What?

CAMERON

What did he sound like? Richard Branson?

STEVEN

I don't know. Like Robert De Niro, kind of. He had like a mild New York-y sound to him. Why?

CAMERON

Weird, cause Richard Branson-

Sarah looks at Cameron and shakes her head.

JOHNNY

Oh, you're talking about classic, New Yorky, slightly mafia-sounding Richard Branson, right? The Richard Branson.

STEVEN

Yes, yes! Are you people deaf?

After a while, the crowd begins to dissipate. NADINE leaves first, prompting the rest of the gang to follow their lead. STEVEN is passed out on the couch. OLIVIA and CAMERON make their way out, passing SARAH.

(CONTINUED)

CAMERON

Thanks for having me Sarah! Tell
Steven thanks too...

CAMERON exits.

OLIVIA

He is so cute Sarah and I got his
number! Thanks for bringing us
together.

SARAH

No problem Olivia! I'll see you
later. Stay safe.

JOHNNY grabs his coat and begins to make his way out. SARAH
stops him.

SARAH

What the hell happened to Olivia?

JOHNNY

Sarah, we had absolutely no
chemistry. She seems happy with
Mr.Suit-himself.

JOHNNY starts walking away.

SARAH

What was going on with you and *our*
other guest who you won't be
corrupting?

JOHNNY

We had a good conversation. That's
it. Goodnight Sarah!

SARAH

Steven is staying here tonight! I'm
stealing your roommate!

JOHNNY smiles, unfazed. He has walked far away at this point
and disappeared into the dark night.

FADE INTO DARK BACKGROUND. END SCENE.

13 SCENE 13: EXT. OUTSIDE JOHNNY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

JOHNNY returns to his apartment later that night, still
buzzing from his meeting with NADINE. As he turns his key to
open his door, a man walks out from under the street lamp.
JOHNNY turns to face him.

(CONTINUED)

MR. O'CASEA
Hello Mr. Nightly.

JOHNNY
Mr. O'Casea? What are you doing here?

MR. O'CASEA
My wife and I saw you skiing today.

JOHNNY
Occasionally I run into clients in town, I'm trained to handle it.

MR. O'CASEA
I am paying you a lot of money and I don't think it looks like a very good investment when my wife sees you being flirty with a young ski instructor.

MR. O'CASEA approaches him threateningly. His slow steps are hidden underneath his trench coat. But JOHNNY is not intimidated.

JOHNNY
Mr. O'Casea, allow me to explain something to you. You are paying me the amount of money that you are because I am good at what I do. I understand women in a way that most people can't. And I am so good in fact, that I have multiple contracts going with multiple individuals going at any given moment. Because of this, there are times where I am seen in town with one client's woman by another client's woman. This instance almost always plays in my favor because my goal is to get inside the heads of these women. You know one thing that always seems to get to them? Jealousy. Seeing me with another woman strikes their impulse for curiosity. They want to know who that woman is, what we're doing together, and whether or not I am interested in her. It *would* be problematic if they see me kiss another woman or hold hands with "some girl" - they could lose interest immediately. But if they

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY (cont'd)
see me walking with and enjoying
conversation with some beautiful
stranger, then they get jealous. It
makes my job a lot easier.

MR. O'CASEA remains silent. JOHNNY gets in his face now. His
stance changes to a much more defensive one. There is a
thick, tense feeling between the two. Aggression swells.

I have done so many times. I know
what I'm doing. And you know what?
That *ski patrolwoman*? We were
simply enjoying light conversation.
It was a brief, platonic
connection. So if your paranoid
wife, who seems to so desperately
crave attention, sees me with
someone else who I am giving
attention to, she will fall right
into the trap that you've invested
in.

MR. O'CASEA
(*nervous*)
You'd better finish this soon.

JOHNNY
Tomorrow night, I'll be at your
house. Come by at midnight and
you'll get what you want.

JOHNNY turns around and heads inside.
Goodnight Mr. O'Casea.

He slams the door. Disgruntled, MR.O'CASEA heads back to his
car.

CROSSFADE OUT

14 SCENE 14: INT. SALON CAFE - MORNING.

The next morning, ELISE Chevalier is wrapping up an
interview with a magazine.

ELISE
I am just hoping to pursue roles
that reflect a more modern woman. A
woman with agency. I want to make
sure that Hollywood doesn't force
women into roles written straight
out of the 1950's. I want real
characters. I want real goals. I
just want to surround myself with
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ELISE (cont'd)
what's real. That's why I'm taking
my career in this new direction
with the Theodore Lewis film.

The reporter and her writer look at her uninterested but
polite.

REPORTER
Yes. Well don't you acknowledge
that, while noble, your pursuit
only comes from a place of
privilege? I mean plenty of
actresses would love to be able to
take stronger, more empowering
roles, but few have the soapbox to
do so.

ELISE
Well... I think that I am very
fortunate to have the opportunities
that I do. And-

The REPORTER and her writer whisper amongst themselves.
ELISE stops to listen.

WRITER
(*whispers*)
Don't forget to ask about her
shoes! I think they're custom
designed.

REPORTER
(*whispers back*)
I will! We're about to wrap this
up.

The REPORTER turns her attention back to ELISE.
Sorry about that. Go ahead and
finish.

ELISE
Um... I-

REPORTER
My, Ms. Chevalier, those are some
shoes! Are they Jimmy Choo by
chance?

ELISE
...well yes--

WRITER

We're they custom designed?

REPORTER

Shhh! I am asking the questions.
Were they designed exclusively for
you?

ELISE, disappointed, looks down at her watch and thinks of
an excuse to escape this embarrassing situation.

ELISE

I've actually got some place to
be....

REPORTER

That's okay! We have to head out as
well. Thank you for your time Ms.
Chevalier.

ELISE

Thank you.

The REPORTER and the WRITER begin to gather their things.
They turn from their more professional attitude to a much
more casual one.

REPORTER

So do you want to grab a drink at
the Nutty Creek Tavern?

WRITER

Oh, I've been dying for a cosmo all
day today.

ELISE feels left out. She notices their camaraderie and sees
herself as left out. They notice her.

REPORTER

What about you? Have any big plans
for the rest of the day? Meeting
with any big names? (she nudges her
writer)

ELISE

I'm having drinks with friends as
well, actually. I'm just not at
liberty to say who.

The reporter and the writer leave ELISE alone with her
thoughts. She looks at her phone, disappointed that no one
has reached out to her.

(CONTINUED)

ELISE goes through her day surrounded by her crowd, who seems very "fake" in her eyes. She escapes from her friends for a moment and reaches out to JOHNNY via text.

CUT TO BLACK. END SCENE.

15 SCENE 15: INT. FIDELIO RESTAURANT - DAY.

Back at MR.MORANO'S, JOHNNY is in the kitchen in the back when gets her text. He takes a moment to think. MICHAEL comes over, exhausted, and notices JOHNNY trying to think. He peers over his shoulder to look at the text.

MICHAEL

Well, well, well! Who are you talking to? A laaaady?

JOHNNY

None of your business, that's who. Hey Michael, do you think you could cover for me for the afternoon?

MICHAEL

What? I'm almost off. C'mon Johnny!

JOHNNY

Michael, please, I'll be back for the night shift, but I need you to tell me you're going to do this for me.

At this point, MR. MORANO sneaks in through to the back to catch the last part of this conversation.

MICHAEL

I can't tell you that I'm going to do this for you!

MR. MORANO

Do what? For who?

JOHNNY quickly starts taking off his uniform.

JOHNNY

Thanks Michael! You heard him Mr. Morano. He's covering for me for a few hours while I run an important errand.

MICHAEL

That's not- I didn't--

He rushes out the door before MICHAEL can explain.

(CONTINUED)

MR. MORANO

Johnny! Johnny! Where are you going? I need to talk to you when you get back!

But by now, JOHNNY is long gone. MICHAEL and MR. MORANO sit in silence for a minute until MICHAEL breaks it with a sigh.

MR. MORANO

What? What's that? You should be excited Sartini. You get to spend the rest of the afternoon with me!

CUT TO BLACK. END SCENE.

16 SCENE 16: EXT. FOREST - DAY.

JOHNNY and ELISE are snowshoeing through a beautiful forested area as the two get to know each other. JOHNNY leads the way.

JOHNNY

Hey, I wanted to say that I'm really glad that you reached out today,

ELISE

Of course! I had a free day and I remember seeing you with those snowshoes. Figured you'd make a good teacher.

JOHNNY

Free day. That must be a luxury in your world. To wake up and have no set agenda.

ELISE

Well, I had an interview earlier... It was really uncomfortable and I hate that I have to do so many wherever I go. I didn't pursue this career path to become a professional interviewee. I really wanted to do Broadway, you know. I thought I would go to a respected acting conservatory, live in a tiny apartment on fifth avenue and make a healthy living acting in the Samuel J. Friedman theater, marrying one of the playwrights one day.

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

I'm pretty sure most kids can't see past tomorrow...

ELISE

Well, naturally, my life was quickly thrust in a different direction. I was strolling along the Santa Monica pier one day while I was on vacation with my family, when an older woman pulled me aside to ask if I had any acting experience and before I knew it, I was auditioning for Paul Thomas Anderson. The rest is basically history.

JOHNNY

Wow. You know, a lot of people would consider that lucky. Thousands -no millions- have tried to get where you are and failed.

ELISE

Yeah, well, I'm not saying I'm miserable! But it's a lot less *acting* than I ever hoped for. It's all about maintaining a brand. Five years ago, I was really struggling to do anything that interested me. I was getting decent work, but I still felt trapped. At that time, my now-husband, then just a strange film producer, found me at a party and offered me a role in one of his latest films, "*The Glass Slipper*" and from there on out, I really got the pick of the litter film-wise.

JOHNNY

Sounds a long way from Broadway.

ELISE

I certainly have relinquished any piece of anonymity that I ever could hope for and that's a pain I live with everyday. But it's not all bad. I mean, I have a powerful voice now and can use it to do great good. I mean, without my current position, I wouldn't be able to run my charity and help all the girls we do every year. I mean,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ELISE (cont'd)
knowing that I get to make a
difference, even if it's really
small, makes it all worth it.

JOHNNY
Makes me wanna go walking on Santa
Monica pier and see where it gets
me....

ELISE
What about you Johnny? What did you
want to be when you were younger?
Surely not an art collector.

JOHNNY
Why not? We all can't be *actresses*.
(*she rolls her eyes*) When I was a
kid I wanted to be a superhero.

ELISE
Oh, I've been one of those before.
Not as fun as it seems.

JOHNNY
Yeah I wanted to have a mask, some
special ability - the whole deal!
Turns out that it's a lot more
difficult of an industry to get
into than it looks.

ELISE
That's good though. It's shows
you're a dreamer. Don't give up.

JOHNNY
(*He laughs*) You don't give up! Your
mission is a lot more attainable.
Honestly, I'd just like to go to
New York, with my sister. We're one
day going to open up a cafe there.

ELISE
Art not engaging enough for you?

JOHNNY looks flustered.
I'm kidding. Go for it.

ELISE begins to notice that they seem to be moving in the
same direction and she starts to assess her surroundings.

ELISE

Are we going around in circles?

JOHNNY

That's what we're supposed to do.
That's what snowshoeing really is.
And to be honest, I've never really
gone off path anywhere.

ELISE

Well maybe today is the day.

She begins to take the lead and send them into the forest.
He cautiously follows her. She's smiling brightly.

I love this! I love being out here
where the air is fresh and you can
hear the birds chirping in the
distance. It's refreshing. So thank
you.

JOHNNY

It's been nice for me too! You're
really easy to talk to Elise. I am
surprised you don't have more
friends here.

ELISE

I think it's tough for a lot of
people to be real with me. Everyone
wants something from me and its
nice to meet someone who is just
willing to give me their time. So
thank you for being a friend.

JOHNNY looks down for a moment, collecting himself to
continue the façade. He knows that he is deceiving her.

JOHNNY

Anytime.

CROSSFADE. END SCENE.

17

SCENE 17: O'CASEA HOUSEHOLD - EVENING.

Back at her home, JESSICA O'CASEA pampers herself. She tries
on different sets of lingerie, spends a lot of time applying
make-up, she prepares some snacks and pours herself a glass
of wine. She eagerly awaits the return of JOHNNY later that
night. She hears her husband call down the hall.

MR. O'CASEA

Jessica, I'm heading out for the
evening. I'm going to head to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MR. O'CASEA (cont'd)
Malibu for the night, so I'll check
in with you tomorrow morning.

JESSICA
Okay darling! Sounds good to me.

MR. O'CASEA
(*hesitant*)
You're welcome to join me...if you
want.

JESSICA
Thanks darling, but I'm absolutely
exhausted from today. I couldn't
possibly handle the travel.

Noticing her outfit, MR. O'CASEA is impressed.

MR. O'CASEA
You look nice....

JESSICA
Hmm? Oh this? Darling this is very
old. I wore this earlier when I was
getting tea with the ladies and I
haven't bothered to take it off.

MR. O'CASEA
I could take it off-

JESSICA
(*offended*)
Excuse me! Are you serious?
(*pushing him out*) Have a good
trip.(*offended*)*Excuse me!* Are you
serious? (*pushing him out*) Have a
good trip.

MR. O'CASEA loses interest and begins to gather his things.

MR. O'CASEA
I'll let you know when I'm back.

MR. O'CASEA exits.

CUT TO BLACK. END SCENE.

18

SCENE 18: INT. FIDELIO RESTAURANT - NIGHT.

JOHNNY returns to the Fidelio. Exhausted and angry, MICHAEL throws his apron at him. JOHNNY looks like he deserves it. He starts to put it on.

MICHAEL

Mr. Morano says you're doing the bar tonight.

JOHNNY puts on his bowtie and starts bartending at the quiet restaurant bar. After a short while, a group of girls come in. He heads over to help them and notices that he knows one of them: NADINE. She smiles at him.

NADINE

Hey stranger. I was wondering if we would run into you here.

JOHNNY

I was wondering if you we're ever going to come by.

NADINE

Well you mentioned you have some bartending skills, so I was coming to see if that was true.

JOHNNY

Well I do make a *mean* Gin and Tonic.

NADINE

You mean with the two ingredients it requires? I'll have a Singapore Sling.

The two other girls motion for the same.

JOHNNY

(flustered)

I can do that as well. *(quickly changing the subject while he starts making the drinks)* So what brings you guys here tonight?

NADINE

We all just got off work and thought we'd stop for a drink. I said I knew a guy here, but I thought you'd be waiting.

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

Yeah, I'm in trouble right now. If you guys are sticking around, I can make sure I'm on your table.

NADINE

Sorry. I've got to head back. I've got dinner plans.

JOHNNY looks bummed, but keeps his smile. He pours them their drinks.

Say are you going to that thing with Sarah and Steven this weekend?

JOHNNY

Uh, which thing?

NADINE

They're having that movie night thing? Sarah said since you were Steven's roommate that you were probably going.

JOHNNY

Oh yeah! I heard about that. I should make it. Where is it?

NADINE

(being coy)

Your house.

19 INT. FIDELIO KITCHEN - NIGHT.

Back in the kitchen, JOHNNY is hanging up his work uniform. He seems to be in a rush. MR. MORANO pops his head out of his office to check on him.

MR. MORANO

Johnny! You out of here so soon?

JOHNNY

My shift's done Mr. Morano.

MR. MORANO

I know, but did you wipe the tables?

JOHNNY

Yes.

MR. MORANO

Did you make sure the bar was put away?

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

Yes! Everything is done.

JOHNNY grabs his backpack and starts to walk toward the exit, when MR. MORANO stops him.

MR. MORANO

Listen Johnny, we need to talk.

JOHNNY

(remembering something)

Yeah! We actually do. What's your thing?

MR. MORANO

Johnny...*(sigh)*... are you okay? I just feel like I don't see you anymore lately and I'm starting to worry that we're losing you.

JOHNNY

What? Mr. Morano, I'm not- No. You aren't losing me. I've just been really busy with the new work and that's actually what I needed to talk to you about. I probably need to cut back another day or two.

MR. MORANO

Day or two?!! You're hardly working as it is! Johnny, please! This is exactly what I'm talking about.

JOHNNY

I don't understand. I told you that this was going to be really demanding.

MR. MORANO

And what is "it" *exactly*?

JOHNNY

It's an internship. I can't say much more than that right now.

MR. MORANO looks disappointed.

MR. MORANO

Listen, I don't know if this is a job or a girl or whatever, but either way it's not worth giving up everything else. Life ain't ever about just one thing, my friend.

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

What do you care? You've got plenty of staff and plenty of people dying for a great opportunity like this.

MR. MORANO

What do I care?! WHAT DO I CARE? I CARE ABOUT YOU. And you care about people! So when you make Sartini cover for you again and again, without asking anyone, I worry. It's not like you Johnny. You were always there for everybody when they needed help.

JOHNNY

(defensive)

And now it's their turn to be there for me.

MR. MORANO looks down out of shame.

I-- I mean, what did you expect? You wanted me to work as a waiter in your restaurant for the rest of my life?! Serving food to assholes and cleaning the plates of spoiled kids? That's not a career Mr. Morano. When I came to this vain hellhole six months ago, I quickly learned that you either fight tooth and nail to be apart of the crowd or you sit around and serve the crowd like a giant fucking loser.

MR. MORANO

If your sister heard you now...

JOHNNY

What? My sister? You don't know her! You think she wanted me to work here the rest of my life? No. She only got me this freaking job as a way to get by until we could escape. She's working her ass off in Denver, doing everything she can to get us to New York and far away from here. It was never about you or liking you or even your overpriced damn food! You babysat me for five days a week and I don't need it anymore.

(CONTINUED)

MR. MORANO sits with a tear in his eye. He unfolds his hands to wipe a tear out of his eye. JOHNNY realizes he has hurt his dear boss and attempts to make amends.

Listen, Mr. Morano... I-- I can work three days a week, but that's it. Sorry. I'll be able to work more soon, but for now, I need that time.

MR. MORANO

You can have all the time you want. You don't need to show up here again.

MR. MORANO slowly walks into his office and closes the door behind him. JOHNNY, still defiant, throws his uniform in the corner, grabs his jacket and storms out the door.

CROSSFADE

20

SCENE 19: INT. O'CASEA HOUSEHOLD - LATE NIGHT.

JOHNNY knocks on the door of JESSICA'S house later that night. He bounces back and forth - partly due to nervousness, partly due to cold. He notices the breath in front of his face and is reminded to look around to see if anyone is looking. He checks his watch: 11:00. JESSICA answers the door.

JESSICA

Hello handsome.

He pushes her inside.

Ooh! Starting off with dessert? Ah, ah, ah! Not yet! You have some explaining to do.

JOHNNY

Oh, is that so? And what pray tell would that be?

JESSICA now acts a little distant and wanders away from him. She looks down and plays with her necklace.

JESSICA

I heard that you were seeing another woman....

JOHNNY

That's news to me. What's her name?

She turns around and faces him.

(CONTINUED)

JESSICA
(*optimistic*)
So the rumors aren't true? Oh
darling, I was so worried!

JOHNNY
Where would you get a ridiculous
idea like that?

JOHNNY moves toward her seductively.

JESSICA
Well... I'm ashamed to say. But I
guess I should tell you. I-- I saw
you the other day skiing with a
woman. She was younger and very
beautiful and, well, I thought--

JOHNNY
Jessica, sweetheart, you can't
assume that I'm sleeping with every
woman I walk next to. You'll end up
with terrible migraines.

JESSICA
Well, I was worried that you would
wander away from me. I suppose
skiing is one thing, but I let my
mind wander and before I knew it,
you were at Delgado's eating tacos
with Brittany Weiss.

JOHNNY moves closer, apparently with the intention of
starting sex.

JOHNNY
I have no interest in Brittany
Weiss' tacos.

JESSICA
Well, I'm just happy to know that
you're still here and trust me, you
are not going to regret it.

JOHNNY goes to kiss her neck.
Oh Mr. Nightly! I -- I-- Hold on.
Not just yet.

JOHNNY
What? What is it?

JESSICA

I was thinking we could go into town and grab a drink first.

JOHNNY looks a little annoyed. He looks at the time and gets nervous.

JOHNNY

Don't you think that would be a little dangerous? We might run into your husband after all.

JESSICA

Oh that rat? (*she giggles*) We're in luck! He's out of town tonight and I've sent the help away as well. So come. Let me grab my coat and let's go.

She goes for her coat. JOHNNY texts MR. O'CASEA to ask for an extension, but is denied with a text that says "*Midnight is the deadline. No exceptions.*"

JOHNNY

W- What about the other people in town? Don't you worry they'll talk?

JESSICA

Well just let them talk! It won't matter in the end, because I've decided as of yesterday that I'm leaving him.

JOHNNY

Leaving him?

JESSICA

Yes. For you.

JOHNNY

For me? Jessica I appreciate the sentiment, but--

JESSICA

But what? Come now. Let's go.

Quickly, JOHNNY makes a move on her. She seems delighted.

JOHNNY

What if we go for a drink after?

JESSICA smiles. She rips open his shirt and runs her hands across his chest. He kisses her again.

(CONTINUED)

JESSICA

I suppose if you're quick. (*she winks*)

JESSICA slowly slinks out of her dress, strap by strap and lets the whole thing fall to the floor. She stands in front of him in her underwear. He smiles. She then pushes him down and crawls on top of him.

21 EXT. O'CASEA HOUSEHOLD - EVENING.

MR. O'CASEA pulls up to his house with two people in tow. One of his accomplices looks like a butler.

MR. O'CASEA

Don't pop that champagne just yet.

They walk inside and hear JESSICA moaning loudly. MR. O'CASEA chuckles.

MR. O'CASEA

Bingo.

His friends enter the house. They look at each other disturbed.

You can open up the bottle over there. I'll be back in a moment.

MR. O'CASEA walks up the stairs and looks down the hall where he sees JOHNNY and JESSICA having sex. He takes a moment to observe them from afar. He creepily observes them and pulls out his phone to take a picture.

MR. O'CASEA

(*whispers*)

Nice job honey.

JESSICA looks exhausted.

JESSICA

Oh baby, you've done amazing. You can finish now!

JOHNNY hesitates, realizing he needs to be caught.

JOHNNY

Not yet....

MR. O'CASEA realizes why he's waiting. He storms in.

(CONTINUED)

MR. O'CASEA
Yeah, you can finish now.

JOHNNY
Oh shit!

JOHNNY separates from JESSICA. He runs to put his clothes on. He acts panicked, but she looks fairly calm considering.

JESSICA
Darling! I-- I thought you we're going to be gone for the night.

MR. O'CASEA
I changed my mind and look what the fuck I find when I return! My wife fucking some punk? Who the fuck are you?

JOHNNY continues gathering his things and he ignores the question.

JESSICA
This is Mr. Nightly darling. He and I are... well, we're in love.

MR. O'CASEA
Oh is that so? (to Johnny) Get the fuck out of my house. LEAVE!

JOHNNY continues gathering his things and makes his way out.

JESSICA
Wait! Don't leave!

JOHNNY and MR. O'CASEA acknowledge each other silently on the way out. JOHNNY leaves. JESSICA looks angrily at her husband. She puts back on her clothes.

MR. O'CASEA
Well, what the fuck do you have to say for yourself?

JESSICA
Nothing. I would have preferred for you to find out another way, but I suppose it's best that you at least know.

MR. O'CASEA
Is that so? Well you're one heartless bitch. And I hope you know that this is going to ruin you
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MR. O'CASEA (cont'd)
in court. You're finished after
this.

JESSICA looks uneasy.

JESSICA
Wh- What do you mean?

MR. O'CASEA
You cheated on me - and
shamelessly, might I add. I am
getting a divorce. And all this
time you've wasted with that loser
is going to come back and bite you
in the ass. Yeah, remember life
before it was nice and easy with
me? Well you're going to... bitch.

Jessica looks troubled.

CUT TO BLACK

22 SCENE 20: INT. PATRICK CHALET - MORNING.

At GRANT PATRICK'S chalet escape, an excited ELISE comes
fluttering in the door. GRANT is on the phone with someone as
he peers around the corner.

GRANT
I'll have to call you back. Mmmhmm.
Bye.

ELISE enters.

ELISE
Honey! I'm home! I have such good
news.

GRANT
Hello dear, how was your day? Where
were you all day?

ELISE
It was great! I had the interview
this morning with Harper's Bazaar,
I went cross-country skiing for the
first time-Are you going somewhere?

GRANT
I'm afraid I must. I have a meeting
tomorrow and I fly to California in
a few hours. I would have invited

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GRANT (cont'd)
you, but it's only for the day.
(her excitement seems barely
phased) Cross-country skiing? The
girls wanted to be outside today.

ELISE
No, this wasn't with the girls. It
was a new friend of mine, a guy.
You would really like him I think.

GRANT
Oh a man, huh? Should I be worried?

ELISE
More like a boy. Grant please! The
only man you have to worry about is
one David Lewis because I just got
officially offered the role in his
next picture!!!

GRANT looks a little disappointed.

GRANT
Ah. Congratulations dear.

ELISE
Aw. Are you upset?

GRANT
No, i'm very happy for you.

ELISE
I know you really wanted me to work
on that next picture with you
honey.... So, I made it so that you
actually can!

GRANT looks taken aback.

GRANT
What do you mean?

ELISE
I mean they want you to be the lead
producer on the project!

GRANT
And in what capacity?

ELISE

What do you mean '*in what capacity*'? Producing! (*sheepishly*) They actually need you to get the project off the ground. The Peterson company pulled out of the project and they're short on funding.

GRANT

So they *need money*?

ELISE

Yes but only fifty...to get it going. That's nothing darling!

GRANT

Elise, I'm not going to support Mr. Lewis in one of his pipe dream pictures. I have my own films to worry about.

ELISE

It's not a pipe dream! You've funded a lot worse for one hundred times as much.

GRANT

Well dear, as a producer, it's my job to oversee the production of a film. But as a businessman, it's my job to make a profit. I have reached the level of success that I have now by investing in these profitable ventures. Throughout the entirety of my career, I have not picked a single film that ended up failing, financially, at least. Not every art project is worth the money.

ELISE

This is important to me. Don't you see that? Is this all because wouldn't be in your movie.

GRANT

Do you hear yourself? You're acting like asking for ridiculous kinds of money isn't asking much. If you were the true altruist that you presented yourself as, you would see that money going to your charity.

(CONTINUED)

Elise looks appalled, but confused.

I know David Lewis and, as respectable a director as he is, he's a holdover from the independent film scene of the 1970's. He's only survived because of the generosity of academic institutions like the UCLA film department and a number of fanatic hopefuls like yourself.

ELISE

Why are you- why are you acting like this?

GRANT

I have to go.

ELISE

Where?

GRANT

I have a meeting in Malibu tomorrow with Vida Pomello. We're casting her in the film.

ELISE

Vida? She's a baby! Is she even eighteen?

GRANT

She plays twenty-four pretty convincingly and we think she'll be able to help us franchise the damn thing.

GRANT notices that she's upset and tries to rationalize his aggressiveness.

Listen, I'm sorry but this is what we signed up for when we married. We knew we were working in the same industry and we each have to be looking out for our own careers here. We both succeed that way... together.

ELISE

You've made yourself clear. We'll go elsewhere.

GRANT grabs his suitcase and jacket.

(CONTINUED)

GRANT

I'll be back tomorrow evening.
You're welcome to entertain if you
want to... or perhaps you should
head out. I heard Nicola Martola
was interested in seeing you. She's
hosting a party and a lot of our
friends in the industry should be
there.

ELISE remains silent. GRANT walks over and kisses her on the head. Then leaves. She slumps into the couch in the main living room. She looks around the empty house and then proceeds to turn on the television. She sees a cosmetic commercial with herself and rolls her eyes. She grabs a bottle of wine and pours herself a glass. After the commercial, programming returns. "Roman Holiday" is on. She sees Audrey Hepburn and smiles. She watches intently and gets excited about watching an "old Hollywood" classic.

FADE TO BLACK

23 SCENE 21: INT. JOHNNY'S APARTMENT - MORNING.

The next day, JOHNNY wakes up upset. He sees STEVEN pouring himself a bowl of cereal.

JOHNNY

Are we having a movie night this weekend?

STEVEN

Well....yes. But I thought you were working Friday night. Where did you hear that?

JOHNNY

Nadine came by the Fidelio.

STEVEN

Oh yeah. Well, you're welcome to come if you're not working.

JOHNNY

Yeah I'm using up some vacation time. So, I'll have some freedom. Thanks for letting me know about what's going on at *our* apartment by the way.

STEVEN

What? Normally you're trying to get away from Sarah and I anyways.

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

I'm trying to spend more time with friends.... I read it's good for your overall well-being. Speaking of, any interest in grabbing coffee and having that chess rematch?

STEVEN

I would man, but I gotta be off to work. Sorry about that.

STEVEN leaves JOHNNY alone with his thoughts.

END SCENE

24

SCENE 22: INT. O'CASEA HOUSEHOLD - EVENING.

JESSICA sits patiently with a glass of wine staring blankly at the wall. In the other room, she can hear her husband discussing terms with his lawyer. He revels in the fact that he is going to get to keep all of his assets. He comes out and begins to gather his things, paying no attention to her. He finally notices her, undeterred.

MR. O'CASEA

You realize how bad this is going to be for you?

She continues to stare blankly.

All this (*referencing the decor*) is going away. All those parties that you *hated* going to? You aren't going to be able to come within a mile of them now.

She continues ignoring him and sips from her wine.

This comfy, expensive couch you *had to have*? Your apres-ski spa trips? Bye bye. You don't get to fuck some kid and expect for everything to work out well.

JESSICA

I don't care.

MR. O'CASEA

Oh you don't? We'll see about that.

She stands up to face him. She finally looks him dead in the eyes and smirks. She then tries to walk past him, but he stops her.

You think you got the best of me?
By acting like a whore? Well I've

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MR. O'CASEA (cont'd)
got my own squeeze and, unlike you,
she doesn't have saggy tits and a
wrinkled mouth.

JESSICA just looks him in the eyes again and smiles.

JESSICA
Congratulations.

She begins to walk out.

MR. O'CASEA
Where do you think you're going?

JESSICA
I'm going to run some errands. I'll
be back for my things later.

She slams the door.

CROSSFADE

25 SCENE 23: EXT. SKI TOWN - DAY.

The next day, ELISE and JOHNNY are walking through town
enjoying one another's company.

JOHNNY
They did *not* need to stretch it
into three movies. At a certain
point, they're scraping the bottom
of the barrel.

ELISE
I agree with you there. Somehow
making five pages of literature
into a two and a half hour movie
takes away a lot of the magic.

JOHNNY
I know. I think of that every time
I see Rachel Biello from the Dancer
trilogy in town. I think-

ELISE
Shit! Ah damn.

JOHNNY
What? What is it?

(CONTINUED)

ELISE

It's nothing. It's just-- It's the big Winter Gala tonight. I forgot.

JOHNNY

So? I thought you hated those things.

ELISE

I do. I *really do*. But I have to go to this one. It's for my husband's foundation and he will kill me if I don't go, which is ironic because he isn't even here.

JOHNNY

Oh shit. Do you need a ride? I have a car over here.

ELISE

Yeah I might. Say.... would you want to come with me?

JOHNNY

To the gala?

ELISE

(laughing)

Yes. What else?

JOHNNY

Are you sure? Isn't there like a code on who to bring and who not to bring? Wouldn't it look bad for you to come with another man to your husband's event?

ELISE

Please. I am allowed to bring whomever I damn please. Besides, plenty of people bring their friends as dates. I need you to keep my sanity!

JOHNNY

Okay. I could make that happen!

ELISE

Great. We can hide away in the corner to avoid all the chaos.

From a distance, we hear a woman calling out for "Mr. Nightly!". ELISE turns around.

(CONTINUED)

JESSICA
Mr. Nightly! Mr. Nightly!

She begins to run towards them, still calling out to him. Johnny tries to ignore it, but then panics.

JOHNNY
Give me a sec. I'm going to go see what's up.

Johnny runs towards her so as to prevent Elise from following him. They meet some distance away from Elise and Jessica attempts to embrace Johnny, which he carefully evades. Elise is confused but keeps away.

JESSICA
Mr. Nightly! What is it? What's wrong?

JOHNNY
Ms. O'Casea, what are you doing?

JESSICA
Why won't you kiss me, Nightly? Is it her?

JOHNNY
She's a friend and we're in a public space Ms. O'Casea.

JESSICA
Is that *Elise Chevalier*? What are you doing?

JOHNNY
That woman is a friend Ms. O'Casea. What did I tell you about being paranoid?

JESSICA
I'm out running errands. I was off a meeting with my lawyer and was lucky enough to find you Nightly. I had to tell you that my husband is leaving me, like I expected. I am liberated! I am liberated! We can soon be together.

JOHNNY
Ms. O'Casea....

JESSICA

Oh, enough with the Ms. O'Casea business. We'll call each other by our first names from now on, okay....uh--

JOHNNY

Jessica, I cannot see you anymore.

JESSICA

What? Wha- Why not? Did I do something?

JOHNNY

No. No! You've been wonderful. It's just... It's your husband.

JESSICA

Oh he'll be gone soon enough. That's no worry to me!

JOHNNY

It's more about what we did to your husband collectively. He's got his eye on me now and your husband has a lot of power. We humiliated him, you and I.

JESSICA

And? He's leaving me. He'll have no power in my life very soon.

JOHNNY

I know, but don't you understand? He's very angry at us. It's not something he will soon forget. I can't take a risk and be seen with you right now. It's best if we both just move on, for the sake of our well-being?

JESSICA

So we're letting my dopey husband stand in the way? Why?

JOHNNY

Ms. O'Casea, I am doing this for your own good. I can't hurt your husband anymore.

JESSICA looks puzzled as her eyes race back and forth between bricks in the ground.

(CONTINUED)

JESSICA
I think I understand.

JOHNNY
You do?

JESSICA
Yes darling.

She kisses him on the cheek. She comes close to his ear to whisper to him.

I'll see you soon.

She runs away, giving a look at ELISE. JOHNNY runs back to ELISE.

ELISE
What the hell was that? Did you know that woman?

JOHNNY
I have no idea. She thought she knew me from a friend of her husband's, but I think she's crazy.

ELISE
Weird. What did she whisper in your ear?

JOHNNY
Honestly, it was pretty much unintelligible. I was trying to do the right thing without offending her. You know?

ELISE
Anyway, I think you should probably drop me off first, go back to your place and change, and then we'll meet up at the party.

JOHNNY
Okay.

ELISE
And Johnny? Thanks for this.

CUT TO BLACK

SCENE 24: INT. WINTER GALA - EVENING.

Later that night, all the big names gather under one roof for the biggest event of the season. Decadence reeks through every crack and crevice as the party guests indulged in excess and celebrate sensationalism. They exist in one big melting pot of greed and glamour. They are not self aware. They are self referential. They gather only to celebrate each other, their achievements and inherited success. They do all this by looking down from their high tower and feign benevolence to the pawns below. The event venue looks nothing short of a castle and the aristocracy is rolled out and doted upon one by one.

TV HOST

This is the hot event of the season! It's the annual Patrick Winter Gala. Where the celebrity world gathers to put their soapboxes to use and support the charities which really matter to them. Millions of dollars will be dispersed tonight to charitable organizations and the hottest celebrities are expected to be in attendance. We're anxiously awaiting the arrival of Mr. Patrick himself. Everyone who's anyone is going to be here tonight, stay tuned.

At the party, SAM the paparazzi photographer sneaks his way into the high-class affair, hiding his press pass to sneak by the starving hoards of journalists and blending in as an invitee. He grabs a drink and a fancy shot off a plate and revels in his success. He waves to a couple of celebrities who look angrily at him.

On the other end of the room, ELISE and JOHNNY, who are both looking a bit more polished than usual, sit back and enjoy casual conversation. JOHNNY scans the room to make sure he doesn't know anyone here.

ELISE

What are you doing?

JOHNNY

I'm making sure I don't know anyone

ELISE

Good thinking... I wish I could be in your position.

A group of ladies wave to ELISE.

(CONTINUED)

EILEEN DERMOTT

Elise? Elise! Come over here.

ELISE

Sorry. That's Eileen Dermott. She's the biggest donor to the foundation. Are you going to be okay if I head over there for a bit?

JOHNNY

You're okay! Go. I'll be fine here.

She leaves JOHNNY to sip on his Long Island Ice Tea. Johnny continues looking around, causally avoiding eye contact with a number of people. Just as he looks like he's about to sneak away, SAM catches up with him.

SAM

Well, well, well! Look what the fuckin' cat dragged in! What the hell are you doing here? Trying to bag an A-Lister?

He wraps his arm around JOHNNY'S shoulder and scans the room. JOHNNY looks a little uneasy.

I'm fucking with you dude. I see you guys are catering tonight. I don't blame you for sneaking away.

JOHNNY notices MICHAEL and a few others serving snacks in the corner.

JOHNNY

What are you doing here Sam?

SAM

I'm here for the biggest paycheck of the year! (*he pulls out his camera and snaps a picture*) I'm also here to get drunk. You guys making cocktails?

JOHNNY

I don't know. I'm kind of trying to distance myself from that crew...

He takes a sip from his drink.

SAM

Oh don't worry! I won't rat you out. Say, you seen Amanda Cicorka? I get a snapshot of her and I get a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SAM (cont'd)

grand. A GRAND! Fuck me, right?
Damn. Holy shit! There's Damien
Brennan! Yo! Yo! Damien! Ah, shit.
You're fuckin lucky dude. You know?
Everyone here.... they look at me
like I'm the devil. Like I'm here
to ruin their lives. You think
that's what I want? I'm just trying
to get by. That's how I make a
living.

JOHNNY

Yeah.

A server comes by with shots and SAM grabs two.

SAM

Here. This is to us: the scrubs.
May we be lucky enough to be mortal
men amongst the elite.

They cheers and take a shot. On the other side of the room,
ELISE is talking with EILEEN.

ELISE

Thank you guys again. I'm so happy
that you were able to make it.

EILEEN DERMOTT

And miss all of this? Not for the
world sweetheart. How are you
finding your first gala?

ELISE

It's certainly flashy!

EILEEN DERMOTT

Well that's the best part! I mean
have you ever seen so many Oscar de
la Renta originals in one place?
It's downright ridiculous.

ELISE

Yes. It certainly is for a gala
meant to attract charity money.

EILEEN seems to recognize the slight dis.

EILEEN DERMOTT

Elise, where is your dashing
husband? I can't seem to find him
anywhere.

(CONTINUED)

ELISE

He's actually out of town right now.

EILEEN DERMOTT

What? But it's his gala. You're telling me, your husband left town during his own gala?

ELISE

I don't quite understand it either.

EILEEN DERMOTT

Well I feel bad for you! You poor thing. Who did you have accompany you in his place?

ELISE

A friend. My friend Johnny actually.

EILEEN looks at the women around her, who all look suspicious of ELISE'S claim. They think she might have made the whole thing up.

EILEEN DERMOTT

Well do pass on to your husband that his presence was sorely missed.

Moments later, reporters swarm the ladies.

REPORTERS

Elise! Rachel! Elise! Elise!
Eileen! Elise! Ms. Chevalier!
Rachel! Ms. Chevalier! Can we get an interview?

EILEEN DERMOTT

I'm sure Mr. Patrick's darling wife would be more than happy to grant you an interview.

ELISE smiles reluctantly. She approaches the reporter and starts to engage in conversation. SAM and JOHNNY are still getting drunk together.

SAM

Hey man. Can I take your picture?

JOHNNY

Sure, why not.

SAM takes his picture.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

I have to feel like I'm doing something important here.

JOHNNY

I think I might just head out-

SAM

Holy shit dude. Holy shit. Holy shit. Holy shit!!!! Fucking Elise fucking Chevalier is coming this way. We *have* to get a picture with her.

ELISE approaches them, walks right up to JOHNNY and starts talking in an exasperated voice.

ELISE

People here drive me nuts!
(*noticing Sam*) Are you apart of the press?

SAM

Oh no. I mean yes. I mean I'm doing freelance work right now.

ELISE

Well I just want you to know: for once, I don't find you people to be the most annoying people at this place.

SAM

M-mind if I take your picture?

ELISE

Why the hell not?

ELISE throws her arm around JOHNNY and squeezes him tightly. Only if he can be in it.

SAM looks at JOHNNY and mouths the words, '*Elise Chevalier, you lucky bastard!*'

SAM

Alright you two! Get close. Closer. Smile!

She looks at JOHNNY who is uncomfortable with the idea that at any moment he might get caught. But just before they say anything, SAM butts in.

Say... you two want to take a shot?

(CONTINUED)

ELISE

Yeah!

They clink three glasses and proceed to spiral into a drunken mess. The three of them come together time and time again at the bar and JOHNNY makes extra sure to take every opportunity to liquor up SAM. JOHNNY and ELISE dance and SAM photographs, SAM and ELISE dance and JOHNNY photographs. They proceed to laugh in the faces of the high society folk and make cringe-worthy answers to booze-fueled interviews. At one point in the night, SAM appears passed out and they hail a cab for him. People are looking for ELISE, but she and JOHNNY sneak out as someone is calling her name. JOHNNY and her walk with their arms around each other singing through the street.

ELISE

Did you see her? Did you see her face?! I have always wanted to tell her off. The Post is a load of shit and literally her whole goal in life is to find the biggest flaws in me and exploit them. I mean, come on! But you! You just went off and did it like it was no big deal. You literally made my entire existence in that moment.

JOHNNY

Well, she was being mean to you! So it was really a no-brainer. Don't worry about it.

ELISE

It was very sweet of you! And it was very sweet of you to come with me tonight as well. My husband really blew it on this one. I am so *mad* at him for this.

JOHNNY

Yeah, well I normally don't have a great time at these things, but for once, *I actually* had a good time and I think it was thanks to you. So, forget about your husband for tonight. It was his loss.

They stop outside of a hotel. They face each other and exchange cute glances.

So you'll be good here tonight?

(CONTINUED)

ELISE

Yeah, I could call a car, but they offered the room for free, so I thought, what the hell!

JOHNNY

Thanks for taking me tonight.

ELISE

Thanks for coming with me. You're a really good guy.

JOHNNY takes that as an invitation and proceeds to go in for a kiss, which she backs away from. JOHNNY doesn't know what to do.

JOHNNY

Too soon?

ELISE

No. It's not that. It's-- (*forcing a reassuring smile*) I love my husband. I really do. And even though I'm mad at him, it's not like I would leave him.

JOHNNY

I understand.

She smiles, grabs his chin and lifts it up, trying to make him smile.

ELISE

I know you're a good guy. (*Johnny smiles*) I like you, just not like that. We had a lot to drink...I won't hold it against you.

JOHNNY sighs and they hug. She walks into the hotel after bowing to the doorman. JOHNNY stands outside looking onward. It begins to snow.

JOHNNY

Shit.

CUT TO BLACK. END SCENE.

27

SCENE 25: INT. PATRICK HOUSEHOLD - DAY.

A few days later, JOHNNY arranges to meet up with GRANT PATRICK. He is driven in a secret car to a mountain overlook which views the whole town. MR. PATRICK sips his espresso as he looks onward towards the town. JOHNNY is seated, donning his signature sunglasses, with a pair of security guards behind him. GRANT PATRICK leans on a railing, avoiding eye contact with JOHNNY.

GRANT

What seems to be the problem, Mr. Nightly? You've cut short a valuable vacation.

JOHNNY

I mean, simply put Mr. Patrick, your wife loves you too much.

GRANT

I don't understand.

JOHNNY

I've spent a considerable amount of time with the woman in question and, there's no other way of putting it: she's in love with you.

GRANT

I still fail to see a problem Mr. Nightly.

He walks toward JOHNNY and takes a seat.

JOHNNY

Well I think-

GRANT

You never mentioned love being problematic in the past. (*Grant snaps his fingers and one of his men hands him papers*) August 18th.... A statement from a Mr. Foster says: "Love is just a word with Mr. Nightly. My wife told me she loved me everyday until she met him. Thank god for Nightly". December 27th, Mr. Boehm says, "My wife told Mr. Nightly she loved me, but apparently that turned into some strange fetish she used to get off, her love for me was in name only." November 11th, "My wife

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GRANT (cont'd)
loves me. She told me herself. She proceeded to tell Mr. Nightly that she loves me too, only to fuck him on our bed minutes later."

PATRICK sets the papers down and gives Johnny a cold stare. These are statements which you have hand-selected to be in your personal brochure.

JOHNNY
Your wife *actually* loves you.

GRANT
I know she does. If I thought this was easy, I wouldn't have attached such a price tag to it. Do you think I'm putting all this money on the line for nothing?

JOHNNY
It's just.... I've never seen someone care as much as she does. She's a really good person.

GRANT
I am on a time-crunch Mr. Nightly. If I had time for you to woo my life with love letters over the course of years and slowly unhinge the sticky nature of our relationship, than I would have hired an author. You are....not an author. I'm going to pay you a healthy fee if you can complete a difficult task. If you don't want the money-

JOHNNY
I need time to--

GRANT
I don't have time. I need to be able to go public with a new relationship in two months, it's when the biggest formal ball of the season is and the best chance to introduce a new face to the world of entertainment. The press will eat me alive if I have moved on any sooner. Which means, I need to be able to distance myself from my wife as soon as possible.

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

Why not just tell the press
yourself?

GRANT

I signed away any rights that I had
to do anything of the sort the
moment that I claimed success.
Every step along my journey to
where I am today has been so
successful mostly because I made
sure to keep my feet clean. Not a
speck of misfortune, no foul play
afoot all because I was very, very
careful. I have utilized people
like you my entire life, people who
get dirty for me, when it's
important for me to be clean. If
you're not willing to get dirty for
me, than I will find someone else
who could use the money.

JOHNNY sits and stirs. He vacillates between his moral
opportunities. We are left uncertain of his decision.

END SCENE.

28

SCENE 26: INT. JOHNNY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

That weekend, JOHNNY gathers with a crew of people at his
apartment watching *Belle de Jour* on TV and sipping on
drinks. SARAH, STEVEN, NADINE, SAM, and two of Sarah's other
friends are all sat around a TV. They all are experiencing
different reactions to the film: JOHNNY is lost in his
thoughts, NADINE is indifferent, STEVEN is suffering, SARAH
is crying, SAM is texting, SARAH'S brunette FRIEND is
sleeping and her other FRIEND is curious. Finally, STEVEN
breaks the silence.

STEVEN

Okay. Why did you pick this movie?

SARAH

Excuse me for having taste.

STEVEN

Am I the only one that hates this?

They pause it.

SARAH

I think you are. Why do you hate
it?

(CONTINUED)

NADINE

Probably because it's an older movie. Not everyone can handle old movies.

STEVEN

(*defensive*) No! I love older movies. I love like *The Sound of Music* and shit. I just hate *this movie*.

SARAH

The Sound of Music? Really? Who doesn't like *The Sound of Music*?

SARAH'S sleeping FRIEND raises her hand.

STEVEN

What are you trying to say?

SARAH

Name another classic that you like.

STEVEN

Pff. Classic by your definition....

NADINE

It's honestly okay. We all don't have to like the movie!

SARAH

I just don't want him ruining the movie for those *who do like it*.

SAM

I mean, I fuckin' hate old movies. Especially foreign ones. So-

STEVEN

Okay! Thank you. See? We should watch something different.

SAM

Well I was going to say, you don't have to pay attention to the movie.

SARAH

You haven't been watching?

SAM

Hell no! But I wouldn't ruin it for everyone else.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

Uh! Are you serious? Ladies, back me up on this?

NADINE'S phone rings.

NADINE

I- I've got to take this. Sorry!

NADINE leaves the room. The rest of the room sits in silent tension.

STEVEN

Johnny? Any opinions?

JOHNNY

I dunno. I mean, I actually don't mind it.

STEVEN

Bro! Come on!

JOHNNY

Dude, you almost didn't tell me this was happening.

SARAH

Okay that's 4-3 in our favor....
(notices her friend snoring) Really it's 4-2. So we're playing it. Nadine! Grab me a gin and tonic in the kitchen, will you? Nadine?

With no response, SARAH looks confused.

STEVEN

I think she's still on the phone.

SARAH

Steven, go make sure she's alright.

STEVEN

I think she's-

JOHNNY

I'll do it.

JOHNNY gets up and heads to the kitchen. She's nowhere to be found. He heads outside and NADINE is opening up the door to her car.

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

Woah! Leaving already? They're done fighting in there.

NADINE

You caught me. I actually have to go. Tell everyone inside bye for me!

She gets in. JOHNNY walks over to her, confused.

JOHNNY

Is everything okay? You were my invite to this thing. I might be kicked out if you leave.

NADINE

Yeah everything is fine. I've just got to see a friend who really needs me right now.

JOHNNY

A friend? Okay.

NADINE

But hey, I'll call you and we'll meet up soon, okay?

JOHNNY looks disappointed. He forces a smile and waves her off. He comes back inside and plops a poorly made gin and tonic into SARAH'S hand.

SARAH

Thanks Johnny! (*disgust after poor ratios*)

JOHNNY sits back in his spot with an empty space next to him. He lets his face slump into his palm and sighs. Others notice his negativity.

JOHNNY

Are we watching this or?

FADE OUT. END SCENE.

29

SCENE 27: INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - DAY.

The next day, ELISE is at a gathering with a women's society luncheon. They are having lunch cocktails as the television drones in the background. She yawns through their thick conversation and does her best to stay awake. On the television, there is a news alert that shows up.

(CONTINUED)

TV HOST

Breaking local news coming in here at the top of the hour. A Mrs. Jessica O'Casea has been arrested for the murder of her husband, Venture Capitalist director James O'Casea here on the east side of town last night.

Images on screen are shown of MS. O'CASEA being carried in handcuffs off of her property.

The couple, who live part-time in this eleven and a half million dollar mansion, had engaged in an argument the night before regarding their impending divorce. Following the argument, Ms. O'Casea bludgeoned her husband with one of his golf clubs and pushed his unconscious body into their indoor pool. In a shocking turn of events, Ms. O'Casea says she feels no remorse about the murder.

JESSICA

I did what I had to do. Mr. Nightly, when you see this, know that it was all for you! You made this decision easy for me! Now there is nothing stopping us.

TV HOST

When pressed about a Mr. Nightly, Mrs. O'Casea refused to divulge any information, though the local authorities are certain that she acted alone.

OFFICER

We have security footage which shows plainly everything that happened. Based on our experience with Mrs. O'Casea so far, I believe that she evidently is an unstable person and she probably should have received medical advice a long time ago. Investigators will continue to determine the motive behind the murder and we'll keep you up to date with any news we find out along the way.

(CONTINUED)

The ladies return to their conversation. A socialite by the name of CHANTAL ASTER smirks as she heads back into the conversation.

CHANTAL

Another one bites the dust, eh?

NICOLA

What? Are other husbands dying?

CHANTAL

No. Have you heard about this Mr. Nightly?

ELISE

What do you mean? What would we hear?

CHANTAL

Well apparently he has bedded more married women in town than a his and hers Temper Pedic. The man is classic player who prays on the sad, disappointed wives throughout the town here.

ELISE

Where did you hear that?

CHANTAL

Well Theresa knew a few women who admitted to have slept with him, like that Prissimmon woman. Apparently he does good work! Although those ladies are paying for it now post-divorce.

ELISE stands up from the table angrily. She storms out of the room and grabs her purse. The women look concerned for her.

JUMP CUT. END SCENE.

30

SCENE 28: INT. JOHNNY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

It's STEVEN'S birthday and SARAH, JOHNNY, NADINE, SAM and CAMERON are all there to celebrate as well as a few work friends. They gather around at a pub and blow out the candles on the cake. On the walk back, JOHNNY walks with NADINE behind the rest of the group. They laugh and seem to be getting on quite well. When they arrive at the house, Sarah goes to get dessert ready and many of the guests make their way out. NADINE grabs her coat and JOHNNY walks her to the door.

(CONTINUED)

NADINE

You didn't have to see me out.
You're missing the party!

JOHNNY

Me? You're the one who's leaving.

NADINE

Yeah I'm sorry. As you can imagine,
I have to be back up on the slopes
early tomorrow, so I'm afraid I
have to leave you alone with this
bunch of hellraisers.

SAM, STEVEN and SARA are all playing a very tame game. They
walk out the door and JOHNNY stops her with his arm.

JOHNNY

Wait a sec Nadine.

She turns around towards him and walks very close to his
face. She stares in his eyes with an intimate look.

NADINE

Yes?

JOHNNY

I was thinking that you and I could
grab a drink a little later this
week.

NADINE smirks and holds commanding eye contact.

NADINE

Is that so? I don't know that
you're actually a good guy.

JOHNNY

Well let me prove it to you then.

She leans in close.

NADINE

Maybe later.

NADINE quickly turns around. She walks away with a big grin
on her face.

JOHNNY

Is that a yes?

NADINE

Wednesday night! I'll let you know.
Maybe we can go night skiing!

Feeling elated, JOHNNY shuts the door. He heads back into the room, where his friends all afford him a brief glance before returning to their game.

STEVEN

Dude! Where've you been? You've been missing out on my birthday.

JOHNNY

Alright! I'm coming over now.

SARAH

It's too late. We already started the game.

SAM reaches for a can of beer but the box is empty. He stands up.

SAM

That's alright. He can take my place.

STEVEN

Dude! You can't leave yet!

SAM

Don't worry. I'm just going to get some more beers, I'll be right back.

SAM exits and JOHNNY takes his place.

SARAH

(to Johnny)

It's your move.

STEVEN

Ya know dude, I understand that you've got a lot of exciting things going on with Nadine and your restaurant catering fancy parties and shit, but it is my birthday today and all I really want is to be app--

The doorbell rings.

JOHNNY
I'll get it. I bet it's Nadine.

STEVEN
Oh, come on!

SARAH
No, i'll get it! I think its Sam.

JOHNNY gets up and SARAH promptly grabs him by the collar and yanks him away.

JOHNNY
Sam? Who is somehow already back with beers? What the hell?

SARAH
I am the person that checks in with everybody at the door. That way I am able to properly decide who should and who shouldn't be here.

JOHNNY
What? It's my house!

SARAH
It's my party.

JOHNNY sits back down next to STEVEN.

STEVEN
(mumbling)
I thought it was my party.

SARAH answers the door and is shocked to see ELISE CHEVALIER standing at the door. ELISE, still in semi-formal wear, looks overdressed for the occasion and takes a second to survey the modest surroundings. SARAH is in complete shock.

ELISE
(angrily)
Hi.

SARAH
.....Hi.

ELISE
Is Johnny Nightly here?

SARAH
Johnny.....Nightly? Uh..... Johnny?
Johnny? (calling to him)

JOHNNY gets up and heads towards the door. He sees ELISE and panics.

JOHNNY
Elise! Shit!

ELISE
You fucking asshole!

JOHNNY
Elise, what are you doing here? How do you know where I live?

ELISE
Don't give me that shit. You've met me before very close to here. You're the only one I know who drives a black Jetta. This is your place? Modest for a man of your stature!

SARAH
What the hell is she talking about?

STEVEN gets up and heads to the room.

STEVEN
What the hell is going-- oh my god...

STEVEN'S eyes drop out of his face. He turns to a very shaky JOHNNY and gives him a big hug!

You did get me a present! Holy shit dude.

SARAH smacks him aside the head.

Hi, I'm Steven.

SARAH
I apologize for his terrible manners. It is so horrible that people have to ogle you like that, especially someone with a reputation like yours - a woman of class, like myself. I wear your perfume everyday by the way. (*she extends an arm*) Sarah.

ELISE
Who are you guys?

JOHNNY

Guys, I think Elise and I need a minute alone.

ELISE

EXCUSE ME? Fuck that. You have a lot of explaining to do asshole and anything you say to me these two can hear.

SARAH

How...how do you know Johnny?

ELISE

We were friends. Or, at least, I *thought* we were.

STEVEN

Damn. Well, I'm Johnny's confirmed friend slash roommate, Steven. Here, let me write it down for you so you can find me on Facebook later.

SARAH

And I'm Steven's (*quietly*) fiancée Sarah.

STEVEN

What?!

ELISE

Roommate? What? I cannot even believe what I'm seeing right now. You know, I heard your name on the news earlier Johnny? You ever watch the local news?

JOHNNY

I didn't even know there was local news.

ELISE

That woman, who you claimed not to really know, that woman who I *distinctly* remember stopping you in the streets - Jessica O'Casea? She's going to prison. She killed her husband.

JOHNNY freezes in his tracks. He breathing starts to really intensify.

She killed her husband and it's all because she wants to be with a 'Mr.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ELISE (cont'd)

Nightly'. I thought maybe she was crazy, but then it comes to my attention that you've been doing this recreationally. You've been going around and ruining these women's lives.... And you pretend like its nothing. The crazy thing is that I know Johnny Nightly. You've made me question our entire relationship.

STEVEN

Johnny Nightly? Who the hell--Johnny?

They look confused, but look at each other and recognize the mistake.

ELISE

That's not even your name is it? You fucking liar. Everything you said to me..... It was all a complete fraud.

JOHNNY

Elise, that's not the whole story! I-- I really care about you. It's not like that with us--

ELISE

How am I supposed to believe you? After everything you've done?

JOHNNY

That's not... There's... That's not the whole story.

ELISE

Well it's a bit too late now. I'm just here to tell you that I'm done with you Johnny. Good luck asshole.

ELISE storms out. She leaves JOHNNY, SARAH, and STEVEN in complete shock. They sit there for a moment in silence. JOHNNY buries his head in silence.

SARAH

Johnny? What the hell was that all about?

JOHNNY movies past her and heads to his room.

(CONTINUED)

STEVEN
It's still my birthday...

SARAH
Not now Steven.

Outside, SAM puts his beers down to capture a picture of the departing ELISE, who speeds away with tears in her eyes. SAM, looking suspicious, picks up the beers and heads inside, where STEVEN and SARAH are both waiting for him.

STEVEN
Dude! You just missed it! You'll never guess what just happened.

SAM
Elise Chevalier was here?

STEVEN
How'd you...

SAM
I didn't tell you guys about our drunken night together? Elise, Johnny and I?

SARAH
No. You guys were friendly?

SAM
I guess one of us got *really* friendly.

SAM looks towards the door where JOHNNY'S room is. He dons a devious smile and then returns his attention to STEVEN.

CROSSFADE. END SCENE.

31 SCENE 29: INT. PATRICK HOUSEHOLD (CHALET) - EVENING.

Back at her home, ELISE busts open the door and runs, teary-eyed towards her husband's office. She bursts open the door in tears and GRANT peels the glasses off his face and stands up to brace himself for her emotional distress. She falls into his arms, sobbing. He doesn't know quite what's going on.

ELISE
Grant, sweetheart, can we please leave this horrible place?

(CONTINUED)

GRANT

What the hell are you talking about?

ELISE

Tell me we can leave this empty place....

GRANT

Darling... You know I can't leave. I have the farewell dinner that I have to be at.

ELISE

Why?! We can't even spend any fucking time together while we're here! Why can't we just go back to California?

GRANT

I'm still working on securing some very important clients-

ELISE

-- Why? What?! You need an actress? I'll do it! I'll do your damn picture if that's what it's going to take to spend time with you!

GRANT

Elise....

ELISE

What? Isn't that what you want? I feel like you brought me out here to suffocate me into working for you! That's what you wanted, isn't it?

GRANT

Is that really what you think of me?! Elise... We've already signed Charlotte Dawson as the lead. I don't know what would cause you to say such terrible things.

ELISE

Charlotte? Dawson? Is she old enough to appear on camera without a parent present? That Disney Channel princess? She couldn't act her way out of a box!

(CONTINUED)

GRANT

Elise. You told me that you didn't want the role. I wasn't going to force you into anything you didn't want to do.

ELISE

Well I hope you have fun with Charlotte Dawson! Maybe she'll be a better time than me! Cause guess what? I NEVER CARED ABOUT YOUR DAMN FILM. I cared about you! I wanted YOU! Not your connections, not your resources -- YOU! AND I thought you cared about me too! But apparently, I was never anything but in your way. I came out here to be with you and ended up feeling more alienated than ever before.

GRANT

Elise, I care about you.... You're not acting well. You need rest. You're obviously in need of some help and attention. I'm leaving tonight for a meeting in Malibu, but....

ELISE

Fuck you! You're leaving me, again? I'm leaving this town first thing tomorrow.

She runs upstairs and slams the door. GRANT grins.

CUT TO BLACK. END SCENE.

32

SCENE 30: EXT. JOHNNY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Back in his room, JOHNNY stews. He hears the voices of all of his critics weighing on him. He thinks about how badly he needs the money. He puts on a nice shirt and sends a text to GRANT. He heads to their apartment in the dead of night. He knocks on the door and awakens a crying ELISE, who looks rather disheveled in her pajamas.

JOHNNY

Listen, Elise-

ELISE

Dammit!

(CONTINUED)

She starts to kiss him though her tears. You can tell that the pain of the embrace affects both sides. Both are fighting a hesitation, but persist further anyways. They shakily strip off each other's clothes and continue wearily pushing towards their inevitable bodily linking. The entire mood is sour and almost ominous. We soon see GRANT'S perspective - through a security camera. He looks at his phone and smiles. He drives back to his house. When he slams open the door, JOHNNY and ELISE look like wounded soldiers, defeated in battle. ELISE reacts with fear and more tears as she runs to apologize to GRANT. JOHNNY sits stoically. He has removed himself from the weight of responsibility. He leaves the house without even saying goodbye to ELISE.

In the back of GRANT PATRICK'S limousine, JOHNNY sits completely stunned, unable to speak. A few moments later, GRANT joins him and takes a minute to collect his things. He clasps his palms together, takes a deep breath, and puts on a genuine grin as he stares at JOHNNY.

GRANT

I have to say Mr. Nightly, for a minute there, I really doubted you.

JOHNNY lets his eyes drift towards the floor. He stews in deep regret.

I should just kick you out on the side of the street. You're lack of enthusiasm and disrespect for our contractual agreement put me through unnecessary stresses. No one gets to conduct business with me like that and my colleagues have advised me several times how I should handle this situation.

GRANT pauses.

But I am a man of my word. And, despite an annoying hassle, you have fulfilled your side of the bargain. I will proceed with our agreed upon transaction.

JOHNNY looks up and makes eye contact.

That being said, I cannot allow you to continue to participate in your current field of work. I'm going to need you to retire.

JOHNNY

Why?

(CONTINUED)

GRANT

Simply put, I can't have any liabilities heading forward. And the following weeks are going to be crucial for me. My end of season banquet can't have anyone connecting the dots. But considering the sum you're receiving, I think you can manage. I've essentially provided you the ultimate key to your freedom. You can continue to be anyone you want.... you just can't be Mr. Nightly.

CROSS DISSOLVE. END SCENE.

33 SCENE 31: INT. JOHNNY'S APT - DAY.

On the TV back in JOHNNY'S apartment, Access Hollywood comes on.

AH HOST

Good evening and welcome to Access Hollywood! We have breaking news for you tonight and when we say breaking, we might as well say heartbreaking, don't you think?

AH CO-HOST

Indeed. It seems that we've just been informed that the fairytale romance between Studio Executive and Producer Grant Patrick and budding Actress Elise Chevalier has come to a tragic ending after new photographic evidence suggests Ms. Chevalier has been engaged in an extra-martial affair with a unnamed gentleman.

AH HOST

That is just heartbreaking...I mean, the couple was married for three years and both were seen as really genuine people. Grant Patrick is still kind of Hollywood's slightly greying, sweater-wearing, grandfather who is just beloved by the public for his charitable endeavors.

(CONTINUED)

AH CO-HOST

And Elise Chevalier *did* have a similar reputation.

AH HOST

But in light of recent events, I do suspect that public perspective of her might change a bit.

AH CO-HOST

Well to be honest Tommy, it looks like it already has. Veteran filmmaker David Lewis had Elise slated to star in his upcoming epic and there's a confirmed report showing that she has actually been dropped from the cast list.

AH HOST

Ouch!

AH CO-HOST

That's not all, several of her upcoming projects have been....

We see STEVEN watching the TV with a morose expression. He looks over at JOHNNY, who is in the corner lying on the floor. He walks over to him and, trying to be sensitive, he nudges him with his foot.

STEVEN

Dude.

JOHNNY stays frozen, but slowly moves his eyes to meet STEVEN'S.

STEVEN

Dude, you've got to tell me what's going on.

JOHNNY

I'm lying down.

STEVEN

You know what I mean. The famous woman who I've practically worshipped for years was in our house last night and now she's all over the TV today because she cheated on her husband.

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

I don't really want to talk about it. But I will say that I contributed to this...disaster.

STEVEN

Did you...did you have sex with Elise Chevalier?

JOHNNY gives him a glare.

STEVEN

(under his breath)

I hate you so much.

JOHNNY

Stove...I'll be leaving soon. Figure out how much money I'll owe you through the rest of our lease and send me an e-mail. I'll send it to you soon.

STEVEN

Wha- Johnny, what are you talking about?

JOHNNY stands up and sighs, he heads back into his room.

STEVEN

Johnny! Explain what's going on!
For fuck's sake man!

JOHNNY closes his door. STEVEN, feeling exasperated, decides to give up on the endeavor.

FADE TO BLACK. END SCENE.

34 SCENE 32: INT. PATRICK CHALET - DAY.

Back a GRANT PATRICK'S, a few lawyers exit their consultation with GRANT, shaking hands and grinning. ELISE walks out, completely disturbed. When they leave, she turns to GRANT, teary-eyed, and gives him a long, sad stare.

ELISE

You think I care about *your money*?

GRANT

Well you certainly don't care about me.

(CONTINUED)

ELISE

I had a moment of weakness Grant,
please.

GRANT

I'm sorry, but marriage has no room
for caveats.

ELISE

This wasn't a fucking caveat Grant!
This was you not listening to me. I
feel like- I feel like you have
been breaking me down, slowly over
time. I tried to come to you for
help. I *tried*.

ELISE starts sobbing. GRANT couldn't seem less sympathetic to the cause. He stacks some paperwork and puts it in a briefcase and pauses to process his thought.

GRANT

So, you're saying that it's my
fault you're a whore.

ELISE is stunned. She couldn't imagine such words from her husband's mouth.

ELISE

I... I only ever wanted you. I
never wanted any of *this*
(referencing the grandiosity of
their lodge).

GRANT

(*snide*)

Clearly. You've hurt me and now
your career is going to burn up in
flames. You'll be a Hollywood
washout in two years time. Might as
well become a junkie.... or a
prostitute, since that's shown
promise for you already. Consider
yourself blacklisted.

Without even making eye contact, GRANT exits. ELISE buries her head in her palms, scratching her face with her nails.

CROSSFADE. END SCENE.

35

SCENE 33: INT. FIDELIO RESTAURANT - DAY.

STEVEN sneaks through the Fidelio kitchen entrance. He startles MICHAEL, who knocks over some goods. MR. MORANO enters and looks upset with MICHAEL.

MR. MORANO
Michael! You idiot!

MICHAEL
It wasn't me this time, I swear. It was this guy!

MR. MORANO recognizes STEVEN, but can't put a face to a name.

MR. MORANO
So, this guy knocked over our two-thousand dollar prosciutto slicer? On the complete other end of the room?

STEVEN
Excuse me, Mr. Morano, I don't mean to interrupt. I'm Steven. Johnny's roommate? We've met once or twice.

MR. MORANO
Johnny? He doesn't work here anymore.

STEVEN
Shit. Really? Well, he's in big trouble now. He won't talk to me and I don't know who else can help.

Back outside, their apartment, JOHNNY is packing up his car out by the street with an assortment of things. He seems to be hating the entire process. In the midst of his packing, NADINE walks by and notices him in the distance. She smiles and calls out to him.

NADINE
Well hello there stranger!

JOHNNY looks over his shoulder, but seems to care very little.

JOHNNY
Hey Nadine.

He gives her a smile and then returns to his business. She walks up to him.

(CONTINUED)

NADINE

What do we have going on here?
Going on a trip?

JOHNNY

I'm actually moving out.

NADINE

What? How's that work? Where to?

JOHNNY

New York City.

NADINE

How are we supposed to go night
skiing from there? Or did you
forget we have plans coming up?

JOHNNY

We might have to pick up those
plans somewhere else way down the
line. I'm sorry I-- The timing of
this whole thing has been very
unfortunate. (turning to face her)
But I wish you well.

NADINE

Alright stranger. Take it easy.
I'll see ya around, I'm sure.

NADINE drifts away without a hint of physical contact.
JOHNNY goes back to packing and he hears another voice, he
thinks NADINE has returned.

JODI

Hey!

JOHNNY

Nadine-

He turns and sees his sister, whom he hasn't seen for
months. He looks shocked. She walks over and gives him a
hug.

JODI

I thought we were leaving
together...

JOHNNY

We are! I was going to head over to
your place first thing in the
morning.

(CONTINUED)

JODI
How are you Johnny?

JOHNNY
Um, I'm alright.

JODI
Yeah? How's Mr. Morano? How's the roommate? What have you been doing with yourself? Do you have a girlfriend?

JOHNNY
Umm.... things around here have gotten really complicated. But it doesn't really matter because I've now got enough money for us to move to New York, *buy* a Brownstone in Manhattan and *still live comfortably* while we figure things out.

JOHNNY is trying to share his excitement with his sister, but she seems more concerned than anything.

JODI
How?

JOHNNY
How what?

JODI
How did you get the money?

JOHNNY
That's not important. Honestly. It's completely legal as well. You have to trust me.

JODI
I have to trust you, but you can't tell me?

JOHNNY
Well, I signed an NDA.

JODI
An NDA? We're talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of hush money.

JOHNNY

Millions.

JODI pauses and gives him a long stare.

JODI

Tell me this: did you have to hurt anyone - physically or otherwise - to get the money?

JOHNNY pauses and sighs, he seems lost for words.
Well then I don't want it.

JOHNNY

WHAT?

JODI

I don't want it Johnny. You and I are supposed to honestly earn our way to our dreams. Shortcuts like this don't help. We could spend a lifetime trying to move out east.... But I would rather wait around and rough it until we had some sparkle of hope, rather than step on people to get ahead.

JOHNNY

You don't even know-

JODI

And I know that you feel that way too. Johnny, I want to get out of here too. But I want to be proud when we get that last dollar. I want us to know that we've been a force for good. That we've made someone's life better. It could be a billion dollars in that case. So you're welcome to go on your own, but don't expect that I'll be joining you.

JOHNNY

What do you expect me to do?

JODI

Make things right! Obviously things in your life are messed up right now. I don't know how to help you. I've actually got to drive back tonight-

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

Tonight?

JODI

Tonight. But there are people here who can help you. There are people who care about you and want to make sure you make it out of this okay.

She gives him a big hug and starts to head back towards her car, which we now see parked across the street.

JOHNNY

What do you know, Jodi?

JODI

All I know is that Mr. Morano called me and begged me to come down here because you were in some kind of trouble. I didn't get any details and I didn't need to. Just be honest. I know you'll do the right thing. *(She blows him a kiss)*

HARD CUT TO BLACK. END SCENE.

36 SCENE 34: INT. FIDELIO - NIGHT.

That night at the Fidelio, JOHNNY walks in after closing without making much noise. He takes a moment to watch MR. MORANO clean a few dishes before knocking on a wall to announce his presence.

MR. MORANO

Johnny?

JOHNNY

Listen, Mr. Morano. Before you say anything... I need to say so much more than sorry to you. When I acted, well, like a complete asshole earlier, I deserved to be smacked across the face. In this town, people disown you for a lot less than that. And yet you, being the saintly man that you are, you still cared. I can't- I don't know anyone that forgiving and I can't think of anyone less deserving of forgiveness. I lied to you-- I lied to so many people! *(Johnny starts to visibly struggle)* I...hurt so many people. And now, it's all come

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY (cont'd)
collapsing on me. I fucked up. So
badly.

MR. MORANO holds a stoic stare, but he seems to be listening
very intently.

I need your help. Please.

MR. MORANO'S smile grows.

MR. MORANO
I thought you'd never ask.

JOHNNY smiles through his tears and they share a brief hug.

JOHNNY
What do I do now?

MR. MORANO
First things first? You have to
make things right. Come clean. Tell
me everything.

MATCH CUT DOORWAYS.

Meanwhile, SAM is out on a Saturday night and he enters a
very exclusive club, where the most elite members of society
play. He approaches two BODYGUARDS who are protecting the
door to a VIP room in the back where GRANT PATRICK waits.

SAM
I need to see Mr. Patrick.

BODYGUARD
And you are connected to?

SAM
I'm a photojournalist. I have some
pictures of his wife's
mister...lover? Paramour? Whatever
you want to call him, I have some
pictures I think he will be very
interested in seeing.

He hands the man some pictures of JOHNNY and ELISE. The
guards look at each other and let him into the back room,
where GRANT PATRICK sits listening to Mozart and facing away
from the entrance, staring out his huge window at the
falling snow. He has a few people around the boardroom style
table, all with their eyes on the back of GRANT'S head,
eagerly awaiting orders. The bodyguard approaches GRANT,
whispers in his ear and begins to empty the room. SAM is sat
in an empty seat and GRANT is handed the pictures.

(CONTINUED)

GRANT

Where did you get these?

SAM

I took them. I'm a photojournalist.
I-

GRANT

You're a paparazzi. Don't make it seem like you aren't about to exploit these people for financial gain.

SAM stays quiet. GRANT still stares out the window.

GRANT

What do you want?

SAM

I would think you would want these pictures, considering they're of your wife and her alleged cheater. I was thinking of offering them to a few publications, but I came here to see if you had a better offer.

GRANT looks at the photos and laughs.

GRANT

Why? What would this give me?

SAM

I don't know... bargaining power? Your dignity? Whatever you want.

GRANT

I have the pity of the entire world. You think these pictures will affect me in anyway? I could care less. Take him away.

The guards come and pick up SAM.

SAM

Wait! I know the guy in the pictures. I know where you can find him!

GRANT

You really are willing to sell anyone out, aren't you?

(CONTINUED)

GRANT raises his hand. The next thing SAM knows, he's bruised, bloodied and out on the corner. He stands up and slams on the door.

SAM

Hey! You have to pay for those copies.

SAM sinks to the ground.

Back at the Fidelio, MR. MORANO and JOHNNY sit opposite each other with a glass of wine. They seem to be in better spirits.

MR. MORANO

What a jerk.

JOHNNY

I know. It haunts me everyday.

MR. MORANO

No, I mean him! Mr. Hollywood hotshot.

JOHNNY

Oh yeah! He's a huge dick. So what do I do?

MR. MORANO

I think it's simple: you have to make things right. All those people you've hurt? You're gonna have to make things better. All those people you lied to? Be honest with them. Things will get better.

JOHNNY

That's great and all, but what about Elise?

MR. MORANO

You're gonna have to make things better with her too.

JOHNNY

But *how*?

MR. MORANO

You'll need to get the truth out somehow. Show the world what a total douchebag that guy is!

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

I can't just tell people. That won't solve anything.

MR. MORANO

No, you've got to do it at the right place and the right time. But it ain't gonna happen overnight. First, you gotta work on you.

MR. MORANO passes JOHNNY'S apron to him.
What do you say?

JOHNNY smiles and takes the apron.

CUT TO BLACK. END SCENE.

37 SCENE 35: INT. JOHNNY'S APT - NIGHT.

At dinner that night, SARAH and STEVEN sit across from each other and engage in a game of Scrabble. After a few moments by themselves and much to their surprise, JOHNNY joins them shortly after. SARAH and STEVEN look at each other.

SARAH

Feeling better?

JOHNNY

I've got a lot to tell you...both.

JOHNNY then proceeds to tell SARAH and STEVEN everything about his moonlighting career and the catastrophe that has ensued. STEVEN stands against the wall, completely blown away by what he's hearing.

STEVEN

Let me get this straight: these rich guys pay you large sums of money to seduce their wives and you ultimately help them get caught in a compromising position...because you're fucking them. The wives, that is.

SARAH

Steven! *(she smacks him)*

JOHNNY

Yes.

STEVEN

These beautiful ladies, who are all basically trophy wives, have sex

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STEVEN (cont'd)
with you and you make good money
from it? And to top things off, you
slept with one of the most
desirable women in the world -
Maxim magazine said it first, not
me - and you got paid for it. But
now you feel guilty?

JOHNNY
Yeah, that pretty much covers it.

STEVEN
Holy shit dude. You aren't real.
There's no fucking way! This is
insane! Do you know what kind of a
crazy-ass story that is? I hate
you! You are an asshole! You lucky
son of a bitch! And you're
complaining!

SARAH
Steven! COME ON! I never thought I
would feel sympathy for Johnny,
especially considering what he just
told us, but it took a lot to say
what he just said. It obviously
bothers him.

STEVEN
Alright, alright. That would
probably fuck me up in the head
too. Especially considering the
mediastorm coming after you.

JOHNNY
You guys can't say a word,
seriously. (They nod) If I can
escape this, that'll help. But I
need to make things right.

STEVEN
Woah! Won't you lose all the money?

JOHNNY
It doesn't matter anymore! Jodi's
right! I'm no better than any of
them if I take the money.

STEVEN
So what now?

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

I'm not sure. I'm going to go back to the Fidelio for a while. Grant Patrick leaves town in a few months and I want to bust his ass by then.

STEVEN

Bust his ass because you fucked his wife.

JOHNNY gives STEVEN an annoyed look.
Just clarifying.

JOHNNY

Bust his ass because it's the only way that I can make things right with Elise.

SARAH

It sounds like she's not the only one who deserves an apology.

JOHNNY

She's not. And I'm going to do my best to make it up to all them as well.

STEVEN

Hey I know Grant Patrick has an end of season gala. It's apparently a pretty big deal and could give you an opportunity to confront that asshole.

SARAH

Woah! How is that supposed to work?

JOHNNY

No... that could be perfect. Sounds like a pretty invite only affair though.

STEVEN

Yeah, I only know about it because my firm is invited. So I'll see if there's anything I can do for you.

JOHNNY

Thanks man. I'm gonna need all the help I can get.

JOHNNY starts to make his way out.

(CONTINUED)

STEVEN

Hey, if it's any consolation,
you're still the same shitty-ass
roommate to me.

JOHNNY smiles.

JOHNNY

Thanks! I'm gonna work on that.

CROSSFADE. END SCENE.

38 SCENE 36: INT. BAR - EVENING.

On the television, Access Hollywood HOSTS update everyone on the impending divorce.

AH HOST

Another sad update in the
unraveling marriage of Hollywood
superstars Grant Patrick and Elise
Chevalier. It appears Ms. Chevalier
has returned to Malibu and is
seeking the support of friends, but
rumor are swirling that she may
have turned to substance abuse in
thesedark times. A picture of a
rather disheveled Ms. Chevalier was
seen-

SARA enters a bar after work one day and finds SAM sitting alone and drinking. She looks concerned, so she approaches him.

SARAH

Sam! Where the hell have you been?

SAM sits quietly and avoids eye contact.

SAM

I'm about to meet with a contact
from *Vanity Fair*. Selling a big
story.

SARAH

What? That's amazing. What is it?

SAM

It concerns someone dear to both of
us actually. (sly grin)

SARAH realizes what he's talking about.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

No Sam! You can't!

SAM

What? You know?

SARAH

Johnny came clean and he's not acting like a complete asshole. I don't want to ruin that.

SAM

(seeing her resistance)

My career could launch after this Sarah.

SARAH

At what cost? Screwing over your friends?

SAM

A friend who didn't tell you he was working as a slimey man-whore for celebrities?

SARAH

SHHHHH! He didn't tell anyone that and can you blame him? All I'm saying is that he's trying to step up to the plate now and so should you. *Prove to everyone that you're more than what people give you credit for.*

SAM

It's gonna hurt me to sell the story. And Grant Patrick was such a dick! But I--I need this for me. It what I want. It's what the people want.

SARAH

Don't help Grant. He's the real douchebag. Selling something like this only validates men like him. Men who use their power to protect themselves and only themselves. There are better stories out there with more value to everyone.

SAM sits in silence. SARAH starts to walk away.
Just think about it.

SARAH EXITS.

(CONTINUED)

CROSSFADE. END SCENE.

39 SCENE 37: INT. FIDELIO KITCHEN - MORNING.

We begin with a montage. JOHNNY proceeds to make amends with a whole host of the people he hurt, coming clean to the few women nearby and offering the reparations money or an explanation to their families. Many seem to just appreciate the apologies. He continues working in the restaurant tirelessly for months.

Several weeks later, as the snow has begun to melt and spring begins to show it's first glimpses, things seem to have been put back into place in JOHNNY's life.

JOHNNY, SARAH, MICHAEL and STEVEN gather at The Fidelio with MR. MORANO addressing the group from behind a round table.

MR. MORANO

Okay, now let's go over the plan one more time. Mr. Patrick's grand end of the season benefit is tomorrow night. It's invitation only, of course, but thanks to Steven, we have an in.

STEVEN

Yes! Thank you again to my firm and being important slash probably corrupt.

MR. MORANO

But it's thanks to him and his buddy Cameron, that we were selected as the official caterers of the event. This is going to be our way of getting everyone in.

JOHNNY

Only problem is, they monitor everyone who comes and goes, it's not like you're just going to be able to sneak *me* in.

MR. MORANO

And that's where Michael comes in. We've already gotten the clear to enter the party, so we're going to have Johnny take Michael's place as soon as they check us in. Michael, meanwhile will come with Sarah and Cameron will let Steven in as soon as we know everyone else is in

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MR. MORANO (cont'd)
their places. After we get in,
Michael will do some table
switching, getting Johnny as close
to the stage as possible, while
Steven - who should be sitting
close to the guest of honor table -
distracts Grant and Johnny has a
chance to call him out. At which
point, Sarah will try and capture
some proof of Grant's guilt-

SARAH
I'm...still figuring that out.

MR. MORANO
Well, you have a few hours to
figure it out. Otherwise, that's
the plan. Everyone understand?

JOHNNY
Sounds good to me.

MICHAEL
Cool.

STEVEN AND SARAH
Perfect!

JOHNNY
Let's give this guy hell.

HARD CUT. END SCENE

40 SCENE 38: INT. MAGNIFICENT GALA VENUE - NIGHT.

It's the night of the grand gala and everything is falling into place. STEVEN gets a bit jealous of MICHAEL walking in with SARAH, but they quickly switch with JOHNNY once inside. CAMERON, to his surprise, has to come let STEVEN in, who quickly takes JOHNNY'S place. Like a Rube Goldberg machine, everything is going off perfectly. Outside, the media eagerly awaits new arrivals.

AH CO-HOST
Some might say it's the starriest
night of the year over this quiet
ski town as celebrities and VIPs
from all over flock to this
building to support the wonderful
work of the Patrick foundation. All
eyes are eagerly awaiting the
arrival of Mr. Patrick himself
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

AH CO-HOST (cont'd)
who's rumored to have a new love in his life and his heart mended after months of heartbreak. Mr. Patrick will be receiving the humanitarian award for his great service to the world through his philanthropy and contribution to industry.

The stars pour in droves to fill up the auditorium. STEVEN is seated by GRANT PATRICK and notices the seat next to him is empty. GRANT introduces himself to everyone at the table. He looks at STEVEN a bit perplexed.

GRANT
You must be Steinway? From the legal firm?

They shake hands.

STEVEN
Mr. Steinway is actually my boss, I--

GRANT
I thought he was joining us.

STEVEN
He-uh-- he's not feeling all that great. He's got a terrible case of laryngitis and is hanging back a ways. He sent me as his emissary...the firm's representative.

GRANT looks confused, but seems to accept the notion.

GRANT
Well-

STEVEN
Steven.

GRANT
Well Steven, you can tell your boss that I would be happy to fund his education campaign. I think it's noble and I think it's just.

He notices SARAH.
Ah and you are?

SARAH
I'm Steven's--

SARAH
This is *my wife*, Sarah. (defensive)

GRANT
Ah well I hope no one here minds,
my lady will be joining us as well
tonight. She's finishing up work
first.

Just then, the lights dim and JOHNNY'S phone goes off. He runs into the hallway.

HOST
And now, Ms. Chantal Aster will provide the opening remarks for the evening.

CHANTAL
Thank you! I have been a friend of Grant Patrick's for some time now. His generosity has inspired an entire industry...

Meanwhile in the hall, JOHNNY answers the phone: it's ELISE.

JOHNNY
...Elise....?

ELISE
...I, I didn't know who else to call.

JOHNNY
Are you okay?

ELISE
Everyone here... has left me. It's pure pain--

JOHNNY
Elise, I need to apologize right now. I-- I didn't think you would listen to me, but you were set up.

ELISE
I know.

Back at the table, everyone is being served dinner, but to everyone's shock, NADINE comes and sits in the empty sat next to GRANT.

(CONTINUED)

GRANT

Ah darling! You've made it.
Everyone, this is my girlfriend,
Nadine.

SARAH and STEVEN can't believe their eyes. They start to uncomfortably shake. She notices them and flashes a look of uncertainty before retaining her composure. STEVEN tries to engage her.

STEVEN

Nadine-

Before he can finish his thought, NADINE extends an arm towards SARAH.

NADINE

I'm sorry, I didn't catch your
name.

SARAH pretends to sneeze into her hand and slips in the word 'ho'. She extends her arm.

SARAH

Sorry about that! You can call me
Mrs. Sayers.

JOHNNY sits on the phone with ELISE in the hall. Everyone is eating behind him.

JOHNNY

He's a manipulative son of a bitch
and I'm going to take him down.

ELISE

How? He's painstakingly carved this
picture of himself into stone.
Everyone believes everything he
says.

JOHNNY

Well I'm going to call his ass out.
We'll see if he can keep up his
rouse when the spotlight is on him.

ELISE

He'll... Well maybe if you get
everyone to listen to you, but then
he'll deny---

JOHNNY

I've got my contract.

(CONTINUED)

ELISE

He'll say it's fake-

JOHNNY

Elise! Listen to me, if we can so much as get people to speculate, we're on the right track.

ELISE

He'll never let the story leave the room.

JOHNNY

He won't need to. The court of public opinion can really fuck people these days.

Back at the table, GRANT is telling a story. SARAH'S phone buzzes and she stands up.

SARAH

Excuse me, I hate to be terribly rude, but I have to take this call. Could be my other husband!

They laugh and she exits. STEVEN turns his attention to GRANT and NADINE.

STEVEN

Remind me one more time of how long you two have been seeing each other... for that matter, how you even met?

GRANT and NADINE look at one another.

GRANT

It's a new love, but a powerful one, for sure.

STEVEN

Right. But is that *like three weeks new*? Or *like ten months new*?

GRANT looks suspicious.

STEVEN

I'm just trying to figure out exactly when you met.

GRANT

The lights begin to dim, JOHNNY is on his call with ELISE.

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

I'm so sorry that I hurt you. But the truth is going to come out. Stay strong.

ELISE

Johnny... be proud of yourself. *This*, this is worth being proud of.

JOHNNY

Indeed. If I make it out of this okay, I'll think back on this in New York. Gotta go.

ELISE

Good luck.

At the table, NADINE leans over and whispers in GRANT'S ear, he looks at STEVEN with suspicion.

GRANT

Steven, is there a way I could get ahold of your boss? Or perhaps I could speak to another associate of yours? I'd really like the chance to thank everyone in person.

STEVEN

Well, I have a couple associates sitting either at table F or table U.

GRANT

Table U is right there...

STEVEN

Must be table F then!

STEVEN smiles. GRANT gets up.

GRANT

Well I should really go find them, it was--

Just then, a man walks out in center stage.

HOST

And now, we're moving on to the live music and dancing portion of the evening. So those of you who aren't ashamed of your two left feet, please make your way up front now.

(CONTINUED)

GRANT sees this as an opportunity to slip by as people partner up. STEVEN turns to a heavier lady at the table. Waltz of the flowers begins.

STEVEN

Mrs. Brown, did you want first dance with Mr. Patrick? I'm sure he wouldn't mind.

She looks excited at the idea. Smiling through his teeth, GRANT gives her the opportunity. Everyone waltzes in unison and JOHNNY heads to join in the group. JOHNNY sees a message on his phone from SARAH: *NADINE is with him*. JOHNNY gets angry. MICHAEL grabs his ear for a moment.

MICHAEL

Now's your chance. You can start to head towards the front.

JOHNNY moves forward and is quickly stopped by a woman who sweeps him into a dance.

SHARON

Mr. Nightly! What are you doing here? (*he looks blank*) It's Sharon? I had a little work done on my face. A nip here a tuck there.

JOHNNY

Sharon, this isn't exactly a good time.

SHARON

Don't worry! I'm remarried now. No naughtiness here - just give me the rest of this dance.

JOHNNY

Sorry, I have to- (*he starts to pull away*)

SHARON

Mr. Nightly!

Not wanting to be noticed, he continues dancing with her. STEVEN is dancing with another older woman.

STEVEN

(*whispering*)

You know, Mr. Patrick told me he would love to dance with you next.

HOST

Switch!

All the waltzers switch partners, JOHNNY moves onto another woman as GRANT takes the next woman STEVEN pushes on him. Once again JOHNNY is faced with a former flame.

BETSY

Mr. Nightly! How good it is to see you.

JOHNNY seems frustrated. STEVEN finds another woman for GRANT, who is too nice to turn them down.

HOST

Switch!

GRANT

I'm sorry, but I'm looking for my girlfriend...(she ignores him)....alright.

This cycle continues as JOHNNY and GRANT both seem to make their way closer and closer to the middle. STEVEN pulls ahead from lady to lady, after the next "Switch!", STEVEN ends up with NADINE. He seems visibly upset with her.

STEVEN

(quietly singing to the music)
You are such a bitch. Bitch bitch bitch. Such a fucking bitch. Bitch bitch bitch.

NADINE

Really mature Steven. Why are you trying to ruin this for me?

STEVEN

Maybe because your boyfriend is a psychopath and you're a liar!

NADINE

When did I ever lie to you?

STEVEN

All those times you said you were going to visit "friends" in California?

NADINE

I have friends out there! Grant is a friend.

(CONTINUED)

STEVEN

Yeah but you knew damn well that's not what we thought! That's fucking deception. You deceived us.

NADINE

Deceived?

STEVEN

Ya admit it right there, *you total bitch!*

She seems annoyed.

HOST

Switch!

STEVEN sends NADINE elsewhere. GRANT seems swamped in old ladies. MR. MORANO sees that GRANT and JOHNNY seem headed for one another and signals JOHNNY to quickly get onstage. STEVEN notices GRANT and JOHNNY'S proximity and get's panicked. The HOST yells "Switch!" again and JOHNNY and NADINE become entangled. NADINE is in shock.

NADINE

Johnny...

JOHNNY

Don't bother Nadine, I know everything.

NADINE

I don't think you do. Grant is doing a lot for everyone. He's not like--

JOHNNY

-I just can't believe you. I thought you weren't celebrity obsessed! I thought you said you couldn't stand people like that.

NADINE

Look in a fucking mirror.

JOHNNY

What is he giving you?

NADINE

Nothing! You know what? Grant is going to help fund the school. He doesn't want me to star in anything or sell me out. *That's how I know it's real.*

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

Well he won't be funding anything
after tonight.

HOST

Switch!

NADINE

You're making a huge mistake.

They part from each other and NADINE starts to try and move closer to GRANT. She makes eye contact and makes it seem like they need to talk. STEVEN, seeing the impending confrontation, forces another woman to dance with GRANT. JOHNNY continues to make his way towards stage. STEVEN makes his way towards the HOST table as the song begins to close. MR. MORANO signals JOHNNY to hide backstage. GRANT and NADINE get very close to reconnecting with one another, but before that can happen, STEVEN grabs the HOST'S microphone.

STEVEN

Alright! Great dance ladies and
gentleman. Now I think it's time to
give that award to Mr. Grant
Patrick! Where is that man?

A spotlight makes it's way onto GRANT PATRICK, who ends up freezing several feet away from NADINE, who is trying to warn him about JOHNNY. The HOST takes back his mic.

HOST

Sorry about that folks! Just shows
that some of us are enjoying the
party more than others. But indeed,
we are getting to about that time.
Let's have Ms. Astler come up here
for a brief introduction. Everyone
can take their seats. Mr. Patrick,
if you'd like to make your way to
stage as well...

The spotlight follows GRANT as he walks up stage. Everyone makes their way back to their seats. JOHNNY hides behind a curtain and sees a microphone on the table in the back. He turns it on and taps it. It works. Meanwhile CHANTAL is introducing GRANT.

CHANTAL

...And he's been a role model and
father figure to many of us here
tonight. His generosity and
benevolence has helped provide the
foundation for many within the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CHANTAL (cont'd)
industry and outside. Ladies and gentleman, receiving the Philanthropic Achievement Award is the one and only, Grant Patrick.

A round of applause brings him slowly to the microphone. He seems calm.

GRANT

Thank you! Thank you! I am truly touched by your kind words. When I started coming to this town in the winter of eighty-seven, I knew I would do something that everyone here would appreciate. Everything that I have contributed has never been for my own benefit, but rather for the benefit of the community at large. I simply set the pieces in motion. It is you all who make it work so well. I remember when I was producing one of my first films at Patrick Media, Harvey Weinstein came up to me and said: remember, you aren't the director, you aren't an actor, you aren't the cameraman - but you are responsible for making them all work together and work together well. That's the beauty of my job. I hope to continue to do work in film and you'll see me invest my time in other, local ventures as well. As you all know, this has been a very difficult transitional time for me. I am grateful to have the support of the media and so many others. So, I'd like to thank my friends at Harrowby Publishing, my darling friends at MediaWorld, my friends back at Patrick Media, my friends at Howell Limited, my son Jonathan, who has been a source of hope in these dark times, which, by the way, I hope you're getting sleep in Ibiza! I'd also like to extend a special thank you to my date this evening, my girlfriend, my partner, my new source of inspiration and renewed hope, Nadine.

The spotlight shines on NADINE.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GRANT (cont'd)

Thanks to you, the world has color again! With her help, I am going to fix as many pieces of this broken world as possible. If I could only leave everyone with a little more happiness and a sense of a purpose, then the world would be a lot better for me.

Out from the loudspeakers, JOHNNY'S voice booms.

JOHNNY

If only that were true.

GRANT stops talking and looks around. JOHNNY slowly walks on stage, mic in hand, staring GRANT down in the eyes. The audience is shocked.

But that isn't true, is it? Ladies and gentleman, this man, the man who you call 'Father Hollywood' is not telling you the whole story. In fact, he's doing you one worse: he's lying to you. Grant Patrick, the beneficiary of the evening is not a purely benevolent man. To many of you, he was the man behind the magic of many of your childhood hits. He was the guy who spawned a new generation of adventures that we all lived through. But make no mistake, that image that you have is incomplete. Somewhere along the line, he went sour. You see, everyone here is aware of his high-profile divorce from the actress Elise Chevalier (someone yells 'whore!') and everyone seems to have used that as an opportunity to rally to his side and support him. They think Elise Chevalier was having an affair with a strange man. (pause) Well I am that strange man and I'm here to tell you: that's not the whole story (whispers). I did sleep with Elise Chevalier, it's true. But I was paid to do it by Grant Patrick himself. This man, this 'perfect' man has clouded your vision. He sought me out to help him pull off the most successful high-profile divorce that he could. You see, I'm

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY (cont'd)

a bit of a fraud myself. Many people in this room know me by the name Mr. Nightly, but few know me by my real name, Johnny. I see a lot of familiar faces out there tonight and that's because my line of work caters to the wealthy men in this town who need an excuse to screw their wives over. I'm practically a gigalo, but worse: I try and appeal to people's emotions as well. I manipulate. I leave people in ruin. Grant Patrick came to me and offered me a very large sum of money to seduce and compromise his young wife. I took the job and tried my best to complete it, but Elise loved her husband. Whatever image that was passed around was a fraction of the true story. A story so controlled and manipulated by this man all for the sake of retaining his reputation. He's not perfect. And as many people as I've hurt, I'm confident that he's hurt more.

GRANT looks on pondering his next move. With a shaken voice, he takes to his mic.

GRANT

Obviously, this man needs help. He's probably one of the many men to have claimed to have had sex with my very beautiful ex-wife, hoping to get the attention of one of the local media outlets. I have never seen this man before in my life but his accusations do not fall on deaf ears, instead they succeed in pouring salt in a very deep, very fresh wound. I don't know what kind of blasphemy you're trying to peddle here, but these people know me.

The crowd starts to get rowdy and upset with JOHNNY.

JOHNNY

I'm not lying to you people! I'm giving up a lot of money to come here tonight. This man offered to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY (cont'd)
pay me twenty-five MILLION dollars
to tarnish the reputation of the
woman he loved-

GRANT
We've had enough lies--

JOHNNY
I have the contract that he signed
right here. His handwriting on the
page.

JOHNNY pulls out the contract and the crowd gasps. GRANT assesses the crowd and then lunges for the contract, a flash from the crowd goes off and GRANT rips the paper out of JOHNNY'S hand. He rips it up and throws it away.

GRANT
We have had enough of this. Crazy
stories, forged documents.... You,
sir, are ruining everyone's
evening. Security, can we?

Men begin to head quickly towards JOHNNY onstage.

JOHNNY
Don't you see what's going on here?
I fully believe that Mr. Patrick
was a great, noble man in the early
days. But just like many great men
before him, greed got the best of
him. I mean, he's here tonight to
receive an award that this town
made up *specifically* for him at
his own event, so let's take a long
hard look at *that*. I think what
happened to him is a symptom of a
bigger problem. He's a man who did
great things, but soon enough greed
got the best of him. And this is
something that has plagued men time
and time again.

The men reach JOHNNY and try to drag him back, but he
resists.

These men accomplish great things
and do great things as a result,
but they want more. At first it's a
better staff, then a better office,
a better job, a newer home and
finally a younger wife. It's a
spiraling greed that affects them

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY (cont'd)
 with this sickness and everyone has
 just, just.... turned a blind eye
 to it! We're rewarding it. It's a
 sickening wealth that's poisoning
 our minds! Who cares so long as it
 doesn't affect us though?

Another man comes to help and JOHNNY starts to get dragged
 off stage.

But it does! There are tons of
 people here tonight, tons of women
 who have slept with me with no
 knowledge of this contractual
 obligation. You all lost! How can
 you sit there and say nothing? Is
 it because everything's normal now?
 Come on! One of you, please!
 PLEASE! Say something.

JOHNNY is on the brink of tears as he's slowly dragged away.
 The audience remains silent. Eyes wander across the crowd as
 each looks at another with the look of guilt. They watch as
 JOHNNY is dragged across stage and towards the exit. Just
 when it looks like all hope is lost, SARAH stands up.

SARAH
 I slept with Mr. Nightly!

The crowd gasps. SARAH winces, hoping her gamble pays off.
 They look in awe. The guards stop dragging JOHNNY. STEVEN
 looks confused, but quickly realizes her bluff. Everyone
 else looks on high alert.

He's telling the truth. I've been
 having an affair behind my
 husband's back with that man. It
 was only a few days ago I found a
 contract that looked identical to
 the one he showed us hidden in my
 husband's desk.

GRANT looks like he's about to say something, but another
 woman stands up.

SHARON
 I slept with Mr. Nightly! I know
 what he's saying is true.

SHARON'S stand leads to a domino effect of several women
 standing up and admitting to having slept with Mr. Nightly.
 Soon, there are more than a dozen women looking defiantly at
 GRANT PATRICK, who looks painfully nervous. Another flash
 goes off as they all start to yell at him. GRANT realizes

(CONTINUED)

that he's lost. They start throwing stuff at him and the sign celebrating his award starts to fall. He runs to the mic.

GRANT

It looks like we'll be ending the event early tonight. Thank you for coming.

GRANT turns to his guards and whispers in their ears. They and him run to different media outlets and offer them money in exchange for keeping this ordeal private. Several of the media big whigs he thanked in his speech nod their heads. JOHNNY reconvenes with MR. MORANO who pats him on the back. People seem to calm down on their way out. NADINE flashes them a glare. STEVEN and SARAH come to give JOHNNY a hug as GRANT watches from afar. They all split up and JOHNNY slips out the back. GRANT sends his men after JOHNNY and his friends.

HARD CUT. END SCENE.

41 SCENE 39: EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT.

In the alleyway, JOHNNY walks away with a sense of accomplishment. He turns the corner but is yanked on his collar by GRANT PATRICK. He chokes and falls to the ground. GRANT'S bodyguards come to pick him up and hold him back. GRANT steps out of the shadows. Guards look frantically for the others.

GRANT

Don't worry. We've got the only one we need. Hold him up.

GRANT punches JOHNNY across the jaw.
You're a special kind of idiot aren't you?

JOHNNY smiles and the gets gut-punched.
I don't remember sending you an invite to my party.

JOHNNY

That's okay. I knew (*spits out blood*) just about everyone there.

JOHNNY smiles and GRANT slaps him. GRANT look unamused.

GRANT

Do you think you've won something?
Do you think you've gotten away with anything?

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY just keeps on smiling. GRANT motions to drop him and JOHNNY falls, practically limp.

What do you think you accomplished with your scene here tonight Mr. Nightly?

JOHNNY

I showed everyone what a fucking asshole you actually are. Now the world will know.

GRANT

You made me look like a fool in a way that *nobody* has before, I'll grant you that. But if you think for one second that you're little sabotage is going anywhere outside of that fucking opera house, then you're a goddamn lunatic.

JOHNNY looks horrified.

Yeah, that's right. Because you know what? The Editor in Chief of the Times? Longtime friend of mine, we went fishing last summer. The Editor in Chief of the Herald? My golfing pal, plays with a handicap of two. Their boss? Head of MediaWorld? Works for me - owes me money in fact. Every single journalist, media personality, and blogger inside that building is mine. I own them. They are mine! I have spent years building up a very strong infrastructure around my image and it leaves no room for liabilities. Part of that process is being so much more than a producer. And what I've done has given me the ability to prepare for these situations. All I had to do was say the words and no one outside that room will remember tonight all because a group of people inside will forget tonight.

JOHNNY

These men have consciences. You don't own the media.

GRANT

I AM THE MEDIA!

JOHNNY sits frozen.

(CONTINUED)

Controlling what people see and hear? That's a unique power that a film producer has. But controlling what people think and how they view things? *That's how you get real power.*

JOHNNY

I'll tell everyone. I go to other news outlets. Your competitors....

GRANT

No one will believe you. You don't have one shred of evidence.

JOHNNY

I'll get one of the people here tonight to talk...

GRANT

Then you'll have two crazy people looking for attention on TV. It's a lost cause. You don't have anything to prove the night ever existed.

SAM

But I do. I've got a picture of you reaching for a contract you tore up and another of a room full of women revolting against you.

At the end of the alleyway, SAM sits on his motorcycle, takes a picture of the abusive scene and then smiles. He nods to JOHNNY, who nods back.

I think I'll get a pretty good story out of it too.

GRANT

Nightly, you know the paparazzi?

SAM

Photojournalist.

GRANT

How much do you want? I'll give you a million.

SAM looks at JOHNNY who shakes his head.

Ten million.

SAM pauses and starts his motorcycle back up.

Fifty million!

(CONTINUED)

SAM
(to the henchmen)

If I were you guys, I would start distancing yourself from this guy as quickly as possible.

GRANT
Come on you fucker! You little
bitch! What's it going to take?

The HENCHMEN start to walk away, perturbed by GRANT erratic behavior.

A hundred million!!! You'll live
like a KING for a ten lifetimes!

SAM
This is one journalist you can't
buy. The truth is too important.
I'm taking this story to a
publisher and it's going to do far
more for me than any check you'd
write.

SAM starts to drive away. GRANT chases after him frantically for a second of desperation.

GRANT
TWO HUNDRED FIFTY MILLION! YOU
LITTLE BITCH! FUCK YOU!

SAM rides away. The guards have left. JOHNNY chuckles and GRANT hears it and it angers him.

YOU! I'll teach you!

GRANT comes over, kicks him and lifts his foot as though he's going to stomp JOHNNY on the face. A moment later, he's smacked by a big metal pan and it knocks him over. He lies in the ground moaning in pain. It was MR. MORANO.

JOHNNY
Thank you!

MR. MORANO helps lift him and they hug.

MR. MORANO
Hollywood needed more original
stuff these days anyway.

They exit and leave GRANT, bruised and moaning on the ground.

CROSSFADE. END SCENE.

42 SCENE 40: INT. FIDELIO - DAY.

On the TV, the news reports about the current situation.

AH HOST

Big shakeup in the entertainment world. The fall of a hero. A man previously dubbed "Father Hollywood" is now convicted of fraud after a story surfaced in Vanity Fair exposing a ring of underground romantic set-ups aimed at benefitting wealthy husbands in their divorce proceedings. These men would pay a man known as "Mr. Nightly", identity still unknown, who would take high-dollar contracts to seduce their wives in a sort of sting operation, gaining leverage for their impending divorce proceedings. The young reporter who broke the news in Vanity Fair is photojournalist Sam Jorgensen, who managed to get the story of the year by sneaking into the event.

Cuts to interview of SAM.

It just goes to show you that it doesn't matter how much money you have, there's no covering up the truth.

AH CO-HOST

Another nail in Mr. Patrick's coffin, his girlfriend of almost a year Nadine Thompson has confessed to having knowledge of all of Mr. Patrick's wrongdoings. (*Images of Nadine crying and saying "I am so sorry"*) She's also under investigation for potentially assisting Mr. Patrick. As for Mr. Patrick himself, he's locked himself away in his south Florida mansion and reportedly hasn't left for the past week. In brighter news, Ms. Chevalier appears to have landed on her feet because of the incident. Swirling rumors alleging addiction and suicidal thoughts have all been dispelled and it appears that she will appear in the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

AH CO-HOST (cont'd)
highly-anticipated Theodore Lewis
film this fall.

Cuts to ELISE interviewed onscreen.

ELISE
I'm just happy that the whole story
got out. I made mistakes and I'm
not the only one. The way to move
on is to fess up and not try and be
something you aren't. He tricked
everyone, myself included. But I
think better things are around the
corner. It's not about how low you
fall, it's all about how you bounce
back.

AH HOST
Though Ms. Chevalier has come out
on the winning end of these
proceedings, she's not without her
skeptics. *(Cuts to The View
discussing the situation)* "But,
but, but, but....She cheated on her
husband. I mean, she's not exactly
innocent" "But she came forward!" "If
I came forward, would that excuse
me?" "She was in a compromised
relationship. It was fraudulent
until the start." Her love life
certainly does have it's
complications, but for now, all
that is history. Next up, is the
warmer weather making these people
happier?

We back away from the TV to see JOHNNY cleaning the bar in
the middle of the day. MR. MORANO comes and pats him on his
back, shakes his head and smiles. A few seconds later,
STEVEN pops his head in and SARAH waves as she passes.

STEVEN
Hey dude! I just wanted to see if
you wanted to come to some piano
concert thing - not my choice,
obviously. There'll be a few
eligible bachelorettes there. All
under forty, too!

JOHNNY
(smiling, reflecting)
Best not. Appreciate the offer
though!

(CONTINUED)

STEVEN

C'mon man! You said you're moving out in a month! Make some time for your boy (*gesturing to himself*).

JOHNNY smiles

JOHNNY

I will soon. We'll go play pool tomorrow. I'll kick your ass. Tonight, you should make time for your lady.

STEVEN smiles and starts to leave. He pauses after he walks outside and rushes back in.

STEVEN

Hey, by the way, you got mail....
Mr. Nightly!

STEVEN tosses JOHNNY a letter and leaves. JOHNNY looks down at the letter, which is addressed to MR. NIGHTLY. He opens it up and the note inside reads "*Johnny, you earned this for doing something you can be proud of. Keep it up. One day, you might be able to do it without the help of an old lady - ;) Wishing you the best, Elise*".

He pulls back the note to find a check for "one hundred thousand dollars." He smiles, looks up and puts on his sunglasses. He fidgets with the envelope showing the bold Mr. Nightly on the front, tosses it aside and exits out the front door of the restaurant, towel over his shoulder - ready to face the world as he truly is. The Mr. Nightly envelope sits in a bin near the exit.

Foster the People's SHC comes on.

HARD CUT TO BLACK. CREDITS ROLL. THE END

Fin.