

KINGS OF HOLLYWOOD

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY.

FADE IN on a well-maintained graveyard. It is raining lightly.

We focus on BRANDON LEE, a handsome clean-cut young man of 22, who is standing in front of one of the least elaborate gravestones, gazing intently at it, ignoring the drizzle. He holds a bunch of flowers in his right hand.

KEVIN (V.O.)

I want to tell you about the most important lesson I ever learned. No matter how hard we try to struggle against our true natures, against what we really are, the most basic desires always triumph in the end. If I had allowed myself to accept that back then, well, none of this would have happened and no one would have gotten hurt. But when does life ever turn out the way it's supposed to? Welcome to the real world.

CUT TO -

INT. BUS - DAY.

The interior of a crowded bus.

The now vibrant Brandon is gazing out onto Hollywood Boulevard. He beams with excitement as he recognizes the famous landmarks.

BRANDON

Musso and Franks - Egyptian Theater - Guinness Museum - First National Bank - Holly-wood.

The bus reaches Highland Avenue and cruises to a stop.

EXT. CENTRAL HOLLYWOOD - DAY - CONTINUOUS.

Brandon gets off the bus, still wearing the same awed expression. He is smartly dressed but is carrying a large backpack.

Smiling, he sets off down the street.

CUT TO -

EXT. CENTRAL HOLLYWOOD - DAY - LATER.

Brandon is walking along the road towards a row of identical white-faced office buildings. He approaches the first one on the right.

INT. CENTRAL HOLLYWOOD CASTING AGENCY - DAY - CONTINUOUS.

Brandon walks through the entrance into the reception area.

A too-bubbly young female SECRETARY sits behind the front desk. She is wearing a headset.

SECRETARY

(into headset)

Hello, John Taylor's office - I'm sorry, his line's busy at the moment, would you like to hold? Thank you.

Brandon opens his mouth to speak to her, but she motions to him to be quiet.

SECRETARY

(into headset)

Hello, John Taylor's office - I'm afraid that line's still busy, sir. Thank you. Hello, John Taylor's office - I'll put you right through, Mr. Spielberg.

Brandon's eyes widen at this. He tries again.

BRANDON

Hi, I'm Brandon Lee. I'm here to see Mr. Taylor.

The secretary glances down at the extensive list of names on the desk in front of her, tracing her finger down the page until she finds Brandon's slot.

SECRETARY

Ah yes. Take a seat over there please, Mr. Lee.

She indicates the adjacent waiting area with her hand.

SECRETARY

(into headset)

Hello, John Taylor's office -

Brandon sits down in the "waiting area", which consists of a dozen plush chairs arranged in a crescent. About half are occupied by an assortment of WANNABE ACTORS and ACTRESSES, all dressed to impress in the best clothes that their respective varying budgets permit.

CUT TO -

INT. CENTRAL HOLLYWOOD CASTING AGENCY - DAY - LATER.

Brandon is seated alone in the waiting area, slumped down slightly in the chair. He looks tired. He glances at his watch, surreptitiously.

SECRETARY (O.S.)

Mr. Lee? Mr. Taylor will see you now.

Brandon jumps up, enthusiastic once more, and picks up his bag.

He smiles back at the secretary as he walks towards a nearby door, marked "JOHN TAYLOR". He knocks on the door.

CUT TO -

INT. FIRST AGENT'S OFFICE - DAY.

An impressive, imposing office.

The FIRST AGENT, 52 and well-groomed, luxuriates behind a huge desk in an even bigger chair, carelessly flicking through Brandon's résumé, which contains a number of photo shots from Brandon's recent modeling assignments.

Brandon sits across from him, uncomfortably shifting position in his tiny chair.

The agent picks out one particularly cheesy photograph and looks it up and down with faint distaste.

FIRST AGENT

So, having conquered the fashion world, you thought you'd give the movies a shot, huh?

BRANDON

Well, not exactly, sir.

The agent snorts and turns back to the résumé. He scans through it disinterestedly for a few moments before something finally catches his attention.

FIRST AGENT

Aha. I see you've appeared in *Esquire*. Interesting. Now, you say here that you've done TV work?

BRANDON

Well, I was in a dog-food commercial - uh, it was a couple of years ago. Y'know the one

where the little Labrador puppy follows the kid to college? I was in one of the corridor scenes, there's quite a good shot of me in the longer version-

The agent looks up at him, contemptuous.

BRANDON

But - but - I've done lots of amateur stuff. I woulda got the lead in my high school play if I hadn't of broken my arm playing baseball over spring break, and I'm good at picking things up, y'know, lines and everything.

FIRST AGENT

Look, kid, I've got enough pretty boys on my books already, and the last thing we need around here is another fucking John Malkovich wannabe.

Brandon looks miserable at this. The agent spreads his hands wide in an expression of hopelessness.

FIRST AGENT

I just don't think that we're quite the right agency for you. Sorry.

Brandon opens his mouth to say that this is OK, but before he can speak the intercom on the agent's desk crackles. He leans forward and speaks into it, irritated.

FIRST AGENT

Samantha? What the hell happened to my two o' clock?

The intercom crackles again and a very distorted voice answers, unintelligible to us, but the agent appears to understand it.

FIRST AGENT

Look, I really don't care what his mother's got, either he takes the job or he doesn't. Like there's suddenly no doctors or starving actors in L.A.?

More unintelligible crackle.

FIRST AGENT

No, you can send him in now. I'm just about finished up here.

He turns back to Brandon, who realizes that the interview is over.

Brandon stands up and offers his right hand. The agent takes it, surprised by his courtesy.

BRANDON

Well, thank you for your time, sir.

He picks up his bag and heads for the door. The agent calls after him.

FIRST AGENT

Hey kid, I hope you find something soon!

As Brandon leaves, the agent swings round in his chair, screws up the résumé, and tosses it into the wastepaper basket, which is decorated with a miniature basket ball hoop. Another one bites the dust.

CUT TO -

INT. SECOND AGENT'S OFFICE - DAY.

The following few sequences all show AGENTS similar to the first agent, wearing similar clothes, similar expressions, and sat in similar offices.

Brandon grows increasingly discouraged as each one in turn rejects him.

SECOND AGENT

(very abrupt)

No. Can't help you.

CUT TO -

INT. THIRD AGENT'S OFFICE - DAY.

THIRD AGENT

Sorry, kid, I got no work for you here. We don't take on outside the Guild. Too much paperwork, too many ulcers and not enough Alka Seltzer to do the rounds. You know the feeling? Well, you will.

CUT TO -

INT. FOURTH AGENT'S OFFICE - DAY.

FOURTH AGENT

You might want to try again in a couple of months. Summer's our busy season, know what I'm saying? After Labor Day, town goes dead.

CUT TO -

INT. FIFTH AGENT'S OFFICE - DAY.

FIFTH AGENT

(laughing)

I can't take on someone with no experience. You know what ten percent of nothing is, kid?

CUT TO -

INT. SIXTH AGENT'S OFFICE - DAY.

The agent is leafing through the large pile of faxes and casting notices on his desk.

SIXTH AGENT

No - no - filled - cancelled - filled - put
back into turnaround - Hmmm.

He sighs and looks up at Brandon.

SIXTH AGENT

Look, wait for my call, OK?

CUT TO -

EXT. CENTRAL HOLLYWOOD - EARLY EVENING.

Brandon is trudging down the road, dragging his feet. He comes to a halt and sits on the sidewalk, sighing.

He runs his hand slowly through his hair, then covers his face with his hands. He takes a pen and a piece of paper out of the front pocket of his bag and goes through the list of names on it, muttering to himself as he ticks them off one by one. He taps the end of the pen on the last name on the list and looks up and down the street.

Finally, he gets up and stumbles towards the last white-faced office building on the row, which is somewhat more run-down than the others we have seen.

CUT TO -

INT. MARSHALL'S OFFICE - EARLY EVENING.

Another agent's office, small and seedy.

MARSHALL, a dapper man of 55, flicks through Brandon's résumé.

MARSHALL

Hmmm - yes, well, this is good as far as it goes. You say you have no film experience?

BRANDON

(sighing deeply)

No.

Marshall thinks for a moment.

MARSHALL

There is one project I might be able to put your name forward for. You certainly have the right looks for it, but -

BRANDON

Oh, I'll take anything. Please?

MARSHALL

Well, it's like this. One of my clients - our star draw, actually - he's recently got it into his head that he'd be good on the other side of the camera, absurd idea if you ask me, but I know he's looking for - uh - young men to audition for a piece. Here -

He hands Brandon a script.

MARSHALL

(continuing)

- have a look for yourself.

Brandon thumbs through the script.

BRANDON

This seems OK.

MARSHALL

You could go there tonight if you like.

Brandon looks up at him. Marshall smiles, reassuringly.

MARSHALL

Look, I realize this must all seem a bit sudden, but that's how we try to operate around here. It's the only way we can keep up with the Mike Ovitzes of this world. I'll write the address down for you.

Marshall rips a piece of paper from his studio note pad, scribbles on it, and hands it to Brandon. Brandon reads it.

BRANDON

Wow! Is this who I think it is?

Marshall nods.

BRANDON

But this is the guy who -

MARSHALL

Just get there around eight. I'll phone ahead and tell him to expect you. Is that alright?

BRANDON

Yeah. You bet.

He gets up and picks up his bag, then shakes Marshall's hand, eagerly.

BRANDON

Thank you so much for taking me on, sir. I mean, I've been everywhere - I was beginning to lose hope, y'know?

MARSHALL

Well, you want to try to hold onto that for as long as you can. You know what they say, if you are tired of Hollywood, you are tired of life itself.

BRANDON

(a little confused)

Yeah. Right.

He heads for the door, still clutching the script. He reaches out to open it, then turns back to Marshall, expectantly.

MARSHALL

(cheerily)

You take care now!

Brandon grins and nods. He exits.

Marshall smiles to himself.

MARSHALL

Good luck, kid.

CUT TO -

EXT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - EARLY EVENING.

An imposing Hollywood mansion.

Brandon stands outside the front door, holding the script, now rolled up newspaper-style, in his left hand. He shifts his weight from foot to foot, nervous.

He takes the piece of notepaper out of his pocket to check the address, then folds it up and puts it back there. He reaches his hand up to the doorbell, then snatches it back again. He takes a deep breath and finally presses the bell, which CHIMES with a deep resonant sound that can be heard outside the house.

There is a brief pause, then the door swings back to reveal KEVIN, a short, handsome, intense man of 40. He smiles knowingly down at Brandon, who gazes back at him in awe.

KEVIN

Ah, you must be Marshall's new boy. Been expecting you.

Kevin swings back the door so that Brandon can enter. He approaches, a little hesitantly.

KEVIN

You gonna stand there all night or what? Come on in.

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - EARLY EVENING - CONTINUOUS.

Brandon follows Kevin into the sumptuous lounge area that leads off from the front door. He looks round appreciatively.

Kevin looks him up and down, slightly contemptuously.

KEVIN

So, you want a drink?

BRANDON

Uh, sure. Uh - you got any bourbon?

KEVIN

Bourbon, eh? I see you're getting a taste for the high life already. When I was your age all anyone ever drunk was root beer. Still, when in Hollywood -

Kevin smiles and walks over to the drinks cabinet on the far wall.

Brandon continues to look around, shaking his head in astonishment.

BRANDON

Wow. I can't believe this. I really loved your last movie, the one you did with Sandra Bullock? Man, that was awesome.

KEVIN

(with his back to Brandon)

Uh huh.

Kevin's dog, MAX, a half-grown German Shepherd, bounds into the room. Brandon kneels down to pet him.

BRANDON

Oh, hey boy. It's Max, right?

Kevin turns round.

KEVIN

(nodding)

Max.

BRANDON

I read that in *People*.

KEVIN

Right.

Brandon strokes the dog, nuzzling his face into its fur. Kevin watches this with faint distaste.

KEVIN

Max -

He jerks his head sideways. Obediently, the dog goes. Brandon stands up.

BRANDON

This is such a great house.

Kevin comes over to him and hands him the drink.

KEVIN

Thanks.

BRANDON

Do you live here alone, or - ?

He asks this question in a perfectly innocent fashion, but Kevin seems disturbed by it.

KEVIN

(sharply)

Yeah, that's right. Just me and Old Yeller.
What did you say your name was?

BRANDON

Brandon. Brandon Lee.

KEVIN

(laughing)

Well, we'll have to change that.

BRANDON

What do you mean, why?

KEVIN

Huh. You can tell me what the dog in *T2* was called but you don't know who Brandon Lee was? Bruce Lee's kid. The one that got iced when the stunt team fucked up on *The Crow*.

BRANDON

Oh yeah, him.

KEVIN

Tragic, but good for the movie. You can't do better than a gothic drama where the hero really is a dead guy right? Still, I guess you were just a pretty little boy back then.

BRANDON

(embarrassed)

I guess.

(a BEAT)

Uh - could I have your autograph?

KEVIN

(incredulous)

Could you have my what?

BRANDON

Just to - you know - kinda prove that I was here.

(a BEAT)

It would mean a lot to me, really.

He holds the script out to Kevin.

Kevin looks at him fixedly for a moment, then shrugs and takes a pen from the inside of his jacket and signs it. He thrusts it back at Brandon.

BRANDON

Thanks! Ah, my mom's gonna freak. She just loves you, mister -

KEVIN

Kevin. It's just Kevin. OK?

BRANDON

(smiling)

Kevin. Wow.

Kevin rolls his eyes, then turns and walks across the room.

Brandon finishes the drink and places the empty glass on the coffee table.

There is a brief silence, then -

BRANDON

So, would you like me to read for you?

Kevin turns around to face him again.

KEVIN

(lazily)

What?

Brandon holds up the script.

BRANDON

From the script?

KEVIN

Why would I want you to do that?

BRANDON

Well, how else are you going to tell whether I'm right for the part?

Kevin smiles, Cheshire Cat like, a characteristic gesture that will soon become familiar to Brandon.

KEVIN

Ah, yes, the part. Well, that all depends on what happens in the next few minutes, doesn't it? I wanted to make sure that you understood that, because it's very important at this stage that we understand each other.

BRANDON

Uh, OK.

KEVIN

Good. You wanna get down on the floor?

BRANDON

Sorry, what?

Kevin starts to undo his pants.

KEVIN

You heard what I said. Get down on the floor and suck me off.

Brandon does not move.

KEVIN

You got a problem with that, kid?

BRANDON

Do I have a problem with it? I'm a model, not a prostitute!

Kevin laughs, derisively, and shakes his head.

KEVIN

God. Look, I'm going to explain this to you just once, OK? In Hollywood, "model's" just one step up from "rent-boy". Now are you going to do as you're told or not, 'cause I haven't got all day.

(a BEAT)

I'm clean, if that's what's bothering you.

Brandon stays still, a look of consternation and horror crossing his face.

Finally, he places the script on the coffee table and kneels down in front of Kevin.

Kevin smiles, triumphant.

KEVIN

There's a good boy.

Kevin places his hands behind Brandon's head, pulling him towards him.

We focus on Kevin's face as he becomes more aroused, moaning softly, then close in on the discarded script.

Kevin climaxes and pushes Brandon away, roughly, recovering quickly. He turns away from the younger man and pulls his pants up.

Brandon gets to his feet, rather dazedly.

KEVIN

Well. Provided I can sort out all the Guild bullshit with Marshall, I'll see you on the set Monday.

(a BEAT)

You got a place?

BRANDON

Uh - no, not really.

KEVIN

Well, get a place. I don't want any problems with this gig, OK? This is a big deal for me.

BRANDON

(softly)

Sure.

Kevin waves his hand in Brandon's direction in a dismissive fashion.

KEVIN

Now vamoose, get out of here.

Brandon stares at him, confused.

KEVIN

Go on, scoot. I got things to do.

Brandon stumbles towards the door, the script forgotten. He looks back at Kevin, but Kevin does not return his gaze.

He exits, shivering slightly as he pulls the door shut behind him.

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT.

A sparse and fairly cheap Hollywood hotel room.

Brandon is lying on his back on the bed, staring fixedly up at the ceiling.

There is a telephone on the cabinet next to the bed. He reaches across and dials a number on it without looking at the buttons. Still lying down, he places the receiver to his ear as it starts to ring.

BRANDON

Hello? Mom? It's me, Brandon. I'm sorry to call you so late, but I haven't - yeah, I got here OK.

(a BEAT)

It's fine, everything's fine, I got a job already.

(a BEAT)

It's a movie job. An indie prod.

(a BEAT)

Yeah, I know, they said they'd sort all that out.

(a BEAT)

No, don't worry. I - uh - met the guy who's going to be dealing with it all, and he seems - OK.

(a BEAT)

No, you don't know him.

(a BEAT, laughs)

No, I don't think he was in that show.

(a BEAT)

OK then, I'll call you soon.

(a BEAT)

It's fine, really. Everything's great. 'Bye.

Brandon replaces the receiver. He shudders, suddenly overcome with emotion.

BRANDON

(softly)

It's great, Mom. Everything's just peachy.
There's no turning back now.

CUT TO -

INT. MARSHALL'S OFFICE. DAY.

Marshall is sitting in his chair with a mound of paperwork on his desk.

Kevin is perched on the edge of the desk. He is in an irritatingly cheerful mood.

MARSHALL

So, am I to take it that everything worked out
with the little package I sent round last
night?

KEVIN

Brandon? Yeah, great. He's a natural. Got a
real bright future lined up for him.

MARSHALL

Since we're alone, why don't we just cut the
crap? You mean you liked the way he sucked
your cock.

KEVIN

Kid looks good on camera - kid gives good head
- what's the difference?

Kevin slides off the desk and starts wandering around the room, pretending to admire the tacky artifacts it contains. This irritates Marshall.

KEVIN

Well, enough to keep me on your payroll, anyway.

MARSHALL

Don't push it, Kevin.

KEVIN

I mean, though, isn't it a classic? That kid wouldn't have stood a chance in hell anywhere else without a SAG card. And you're relying on me to pick the talent now? There's no sadder sight than a really desperate agent. Maybe you should change your name to Jerry Maguire. (imitates) "Show me the money!".

And people think I stay here out of - what's that word? - ah, yes. "Loyalty". Well, I think it's funny.

MARSHALL

Look, wiseass -

(a BEAT, calmer)

You need me as much as I need you. You ever try to walk out on our little deal, and every major studio in town will know about your chorus boys by the next day, I swear to God.

KEVIN

(sarcastically)

I really appreciate the way you always have my best interests at heart. Thank you so much. Maybe you've forgotten who I had to suck off to get here, 'cause I sure as hell haven't.

There is a brief pause. Stalemate.

MARSHALL

Look, do you want this kid or not?

KEVIN

Oh yeah. Absolutely.

MARSHALL

Well, let's get the Taft report sorted out then, shall we?

Kevin pulls a face.

MARSHALL

You wanted to go indie with this thing, so we're gonna have to do it by the book. Not that writing a Taft is an agent's job, but what the hell.

KEVIN

What you going to put in it?

MARSHALL

Oh, I'll think of something plausible. Bullshit is my business, right? Damn thing probably won't be processed for weeks anyway.

KEVIN

(suggestively)

Well, maybe I can't wait that long.

MARSHALL

Well, maybe you're just gonna have to.

Kevin grimaces again. Marshall smiles.

MARSHALL

Look, I'll get it pushed through as quickly as I can. You'll get your one hundred-sixty pounds of flesh, don't worry. Just be careful who you fuck around with, OK?

KEVIN

Sure thing - boss.

Marshall shuffles through the paperwork on his desk.

Kevin watches him with a thoughtful expression on his face.

KEVIN

I'm so glad we understand each other. We have such a great working relationship, don't you think?

MARSHALL

Yeah. Model.

They both laugh, the tension gone.

CUT TO -

INT. "WORD ON THE STREETS" FILM SET - DAY.

A sound stage set up to resemble an inner-city classroom.

Several handsome YOUNG ACTORS are dotted around the set, some earnestly trying to rehearse, others chewing gum, shouting at one another, or looking bored.

Kevin is in front of the set, being interviewed by a female TV REPORTER, complete with CAMERAMAN.

TV REPORTER

So, from action hero to indie director - quite a radical change. Even if, as you say, this is strictly a one-off, career-wise, it could be risky.

KEVIN

Well, perhaps, but that isn't my primary concern here. I feel *Word on the Streets* makes a very important statement about the grim realities of inner-city life, and that's what attracted me to the project. I couldn't pass up the chance to direct something with as much potential social impact as this. The public needs to be made aware of the pressures some of our young people are under. Names have been changed to protect the not-so-innocent, but it's basically a true story.

TV REPORTER

From saving the world to saving our students. Extreme.

(to camera)

This is Cathy Storm for *Entertainment Insider*.

She turns away from the camera and grips Kevin's hand.

TV REPORTER

I'm sure it will be a great success. Thank you so much.

KEVIN

(smiling)

Oh, the pleasure was all mine.

She smiles sweetly at him and moves away. Kevin sneers at her departing figure.

KEVIN

(to himself)

What a crock. I'd better get something at Cannes for this.

Brandon arrives on the set, accompanied by two SECURITY MEN.

SECURITY MAN

(to Kevin)

This one of yours?

Kevin looks at Brandon contemptuously.

KEVIN

He is working on the film, yes.

SECURITY MAN

(to Brandon)

Don't you know you're supposed to have a pass?
Where's your pass?

KEVIN

Thank you, I'll sort this out.

The men leave. Kevin turns on Brandon.

KEVIN

So where the hell is your pass? Are you trying
to show me up in front of the below-the-
liners, or what?

BRANDON

But - I don't have one, no one's given me -

KEVIN

Yeah, whatever. Get it sorted.

He motions to the other actors.

KEVIN

Can I please have everyone's attention?

At the sound of his voice, the young men instantly stop whatever they are doing and gather round
him - Kevin's harem.

KEVIN

This here's Brandon Lee, and just like the
rest of you little shysters he's going to be
playing a very important part in making this
movie magic. Say "Hi, Brandon Lee."

YOUNG ACTORS

(chorus)

Hi, Brandon Lee.

KEVIN

Right, that's that then. Introductions over,
back to the main feature. Everybody happy?
Good. Scene twelve.

The actors take up their respective positions on the set. Brandon looks at Kevin for guidance.

KEVIN

Brandon - today, if you don't mind.

Brandon looks bewildered, then realizes that this is one of his scenes.

As he moves towards the others, Kevin gives him a friendly slap on the shoulder.

KEVIN

Don't worry, you'll soon pick it up. Nothing
to it. Really.

Brandon takes up a position to the far side of the "classroom", in the background. Kevin looks
at the tableau thoughtfully.

KEVIN

And - ACTION!

CUT TO -

INT. "WORD ON THE STREETS" FILM SET - DAY - LATER.

Break time on the set. Brandon is sitting by himself, looking earnestly through the script.

A young man wearing make up and pseudo Gothic clothes, ALEXIS, is standing a few feet away,
watching him. Now, he approaches Brandon.

ALEXIS

So you must be the new boy.

BRANDON

Guess so. My name's Brandon.

Alexis shakes his hand.

ALEXIS

Bon chante. Good to know you Brandon. I'm Alexis.

BRANDON

Alexis?

ALEXIS

Yeah, Alexis, as in Carrington.

BRANDON

What?

ALEXIS

Dynasty, honey, Dynasty! Or don't they have re-runs in Kansas City anymore, huh Dorothy?

BRANDON

(smiling)

I'm from Iowa, actually.

ALEXIS

Gee, I'm sorry. But if you're not an Angel, you might as well be from Mars, baby.

BRANDON

So I'm learning. Are you in the movie? I don't remember seeing your name on the cast list.

ALEXIS

Moi? No way, honey, this stuff is far too low culture for me. I need to be here though, just in case anyone's in need of a little spiritual sustenance.

BRANDON

Uh huh.

ALEXIS

But the way I see it, you got yourself all covered there.

He nods his head over at Kevin, who is standing a few feet away, deep in conversation with a GROUP OF "SUITS" - the financiers.

Brandon frowns. Alexis, clearly amused by Brandon's discomfort, slaps him lightly on the shoulder.

ALEXIS

Honey, I gotta fly, I got some boys over at Fox that need my ministering, but I'm sure that we'll be seeing a lot of each other.

He goes, waving jauntily back at Brandon.

ALEXIS

Ciao!

BRANDON

Hello and goodbye, I guess.

As Alexis walks off, Kevin approaches. He looks at Alexis with distaste as he passes him. Alexis smiles back.

ALEXIS

Hiya, sweetie! You want some?

KEVIN

Go screw yourself, alright?

ALEXIS

Lord knows I'd like to!

(soft)

But not as much as you would.

Kevin spins round, but Alexis has gone. Kevin frowns.

KEVIN

Would someone like to tell me just what the hell he is still doing hanging around my set?

He glares at one of the security men, patrolling around the set, who shrugs.

SECURITY MAN

Sorry. But you know who his father is.

KEVIN

Yes, I do know who his father is. God himself. Might as well be. A V.P. at the town's biggest studio? Now that's having arrived. Suppose we should be glad he doesn't do Viagra, or we might be stuck with a whole lot full of the little fuckers.

The security man smiles. Kevin turns back to Brandon and holds out his pass to him.

KEVIN

And you - this is yours. The Holy Grail of the movie business. You want to take good care of it, 'cause if it gets lost you're not getting another one. OK?

Brandon nods. Kevin leans closer to him.

KEVIN

(softly)

I think that we need to discuss your character's motivation in a bit more detail. Be at my place by nine tonight.

Brandon nods again.

Kevin turns his back on him and moves away, slapping his hands together.

KEVIN

(to the cast)

Ri-ght, you bunch of ingrates -

CUT TO -

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - EVENING.

Kevin is seated on the sofa, eating the last of a white-bread sandwich. There is a bottle of white wine and a half-full glass on the coffee table.

The doorbell CHIMES. Kevin smiles his Cheshire Cat smile to himself.

KEVIN

Aha! Dessert.

He licks his fingers and moves towards the door.

KEVIN

Wonder what's on the menu tonight?

He opens the door. Brandon is standing outside. It is raining lightly, and he is beginning to get wet.

KEVIN

Ah, Brandon! Come on in.

He steps aside so that Brandon can enter. Brandon shakes the rainwater out of his hair.

KEVIN

How are you doing, kid? Enjoy your first day playing in the big leagues? St-rike!

He mimes swinging a baseball bat. Brandon smiles wearily.

BRANDON

Yeah, I'm fine thanks, Kevin.

KEVIN

Good, that's good. We'll make a star out of you yet. You want a drink?

BRANDON

No.

KEVIN

Not this time, eh? I never really had you down as a bourbon man. How about a sandwich?

BRANDON

No thank you.

KEVIN

(sighing)

No? I wonder what else there is to offer you. I'm all outta blow.

BRANDON

Actually, I don't -

KEVIN

Well of course you don't. It would go against everything you've been brought up to believe in, right? I'm glad to see they still like to keep 'em young minds pure and simple in Wyoming.

BRANDON

(grimly)

Iowa.

KEVIN

Iowa, of course, Iowa. Still, I was only two states out, huh?

Brandon does not respond to this.

Kevin turns around to the coffee table, picks up the glass of wine, downs it, then replaces the glass on the table.

KEVIN

Ah! Perfection. A good year.

He picks up the bottle and holds it out to Brandon, who shakes his head.

KEVIN

Still no? Well then.

He puts the bottle back down and smiles hungrily at Brandon.

KEVIN

Come upstairs.

Kevin turns around and heads for the stairs that lead off from the lounge. Brandon follows.

INT. KEVIN'S BEDROOM - EVENING - CONTINUOUS.

Kevin leads Brandon into the main bedroom. It is as visually impressive as the lounge, dominated by a large four poster bed.

Brandon looks at it, then shivers slightly. Kevin turns to him, surprised.

KEVIN

You have done this before, right?

BRANDON

Not - not with anyone like you.

Kevin seems satisfied with this explanation.

KEVIN

Oh.

Kevin walks across the room and takes a brief glance out of the window.

He draws the curtains, then begins to undress in the same detached manner as before. Brandon watches him, silent, and sits down on the edge of the bed.

Kevin comes towards him, and touches Brandon's face with his hands, tilting his head up to face him. Brandon tries to kiss him, but Kevin pulls away.

KEVIN

Take off your clothes.

Brandon complies. He is not reluctant to do so, but there is a somewhat mournful expression on his face. Kevin does not appear to notice this.

When they are both naked, Kevin gently pushes Brandon over, so he is lying face down on the bed. Brandon moans slightly. Kevin slides on top of him and puts his face close to Brandon's.

BRANDON

(whispering)

I want you - all of you - in all of me. I want to - be a part of what you are. Everything.

KEVIN

(gently)

Shut up.

We focus on their faces. Kevin's is bright with lust, triumph, Brandon, though evidently aroused, appears a little dejected.

He cries out, in pain first, but then with pleasure, drowning out Kevin's softer moans.

They climax, together. Kevin again recovers quickly and moves away from Brandon, leaving him lying on the edge of the bed. He closes his eyes.

CUT TO -

INT. KEVIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER.

Kevin is sitting up in the bed, naked, smoking a cigarette.

Brandon is seated on the edge of the bed in his shirt and underwear, staring into space.

BRANDON

I take it that you're not going to ask me to stay the night.

Kevin takes a long drag from his cigarette.

KEVIN

I'm glad that we understand each other. This really could be the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

We close on Brandon, who shakes his head resignedly.

He gets up slowly from the bed and picks up the rest of his clothes, which are lying in a heap on the floor.

He pulls on his pants and shoes. Kevin watches him impassively.

Brandon finishes dressing and walks over to Kevin.

BRANDON

Well - goodbye then.

Absurdly, he holds out his hand. There is a moment's pause, then Kevin takes it.

KEVIN

Goodbye.

INT. KEVIN'S LANDING. NIGHT - CONTINUOUS.

Brandon steps out of the room. Max is waiting outside, expectantly. He pats the dog's head.

Max goes into the bedroom. Brandon walks down the stairs.

INT. KEVIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Max walks over to Kevin, then jumps up on the bed. Kevin pats the dog.

He slumps down under the covers, and the dog lies next to him.

Max licks Kevin's ear. Kevin closes his eyes.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE HOTEL - NIGHT.

Brandon is completing his journey back from Kevin's house. It is raining heavily now, and he is almost completely drenched.

He passes a group of slightly wasted but still attractive MALE HUSTLERS. He keeps his head down, but one calls out to him.

FIRST HUSTLER

Hey, man. You got a light?

BRANDON

(coldly)

I don't smoke.

FIRST HUSTLER

Well ain't that a shame. Bet you got plenty other bad habits though, huh?

The men laugh. Brandon turns away from them. The first one shouts after him, swaying drunkenly on the sidewalk.

FIRST HUSTLER

See that boy, you see that boy? That boy can resist every-thing!

SECOND HUSTLER

Everything except temptation.

FIRST HUSTLER

Whaaa?

SECOND HUSTLER

Oscar Wilde.

The first hustler stares at him, uncomprehending. A third speaks up.

THIRD HUSTLER

Hey, someone's been going to night school!

SECOND HUSTLER

Have not!

He walks back to the group. They play-fight, amiably, laughing again. Brandon pauses for a moment at the sound, and turns back to look at them. They do not notice him now.

Brandon walks on. He reaches the hotel.

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS.

Brandon walks through the entrance to the front desk. The DESK CLERK, an untidy man of 50, is dozing in his chair, a porno magazine in his lap.

Brandon bangs on the desk. The clerk jerks awake with a start.

DESK CLERK

Uhhhh. Room?

BRANDON

Yeah, thirteen please.

DESK CLERK

Unlucky for some, huh?

Brandon smiles wearily. The clerk thrusts the key at him. He takes it and turns around to the stairs. The clerk turns back to his magazine, shaking his head.

DESK CLERK

(to himself)

Fucking homos -

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT.

Brandon enters the room and walks over to the window. He looks out across the bright lights of Hollywood.

BRANDON

imitates)

"One day, my son, all this will be yours."

(a BEAT)

Like hell it will.

He sighs and goes over to the unmade bed. He collapses on it, utterly exhausted.

BRANDON

Man. I gotta get out of here.

He kicks off his shoes and slides under the covers.

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY.

Brandon is lying asleep in the bed. The room has changed; clearly he has spent some time here as his possessions are scattered all around.

We hear the sound of laughter in the corridor outside, and there is a sharp rap on the door as someone passes by. Brandon wakes up.

CUT TO -

EXT. CENTRAL HOLLYWOOD - DAY.

Brandon is trudging along the sidewalk, carrying his by now rather battered backpack. Perhaps he passes over the Walk of Fame.

Alexis is walking down the other side of the street. He sees Brandon and calls out to him.

ALEXIS

Hey! Farm Boy! Brandon!

Brandon spins around.

Alexis races over, nearly getting knocked down by a sleek new Porsche. The handsome young DRIVER leans out of the window and shakes his fist at him.

DRIVER

Goddamn fairy!

He speeds off. Alexis blows him a kiss.

ALEXIS

I love you too, darling!

Unperturbed, he turns to Brandon, smiling.

ALEXIS

Hello.

BRANDON

Oh. Hi.

ALEXIS

Not working today then, huh?

BRANDON

No, I got some time off to go house hunting.

ALEXIS

(delighted)

What?

BRANDON

I gotta find an apartment, though with prices round here the way they are I'd be surprised if I could afford more than a shoebox. But I just can't stand another night in the Skunksville Hilton, know?

ALEXIS

Boy, is this your lucky day. You are looking at the Ideal Homes Rental King of these parts. You know what the most important aspect is to consider when acquiring your beautiful new condo? Well, I'll tell you. Im-age. You need to get the décor right, because the last thing you want in this town is an interior that's *passé*.

BRANDON

Oh, and I guess you'd be the best person to advise me on that.

ALEXIS

You got it in one, babe. Imagine what would happen if Keanu Reeves popped round for coffee and discovered that you had lime green

curtains. Before you could say "Loved you in *The Matrix*", he'd be out the door. Last season's hot news is today's junk mail, honey. Besides, you haven't lived until you've got carpet burn from a rug that I picked out.

BRANDON

(laughing)

You're crazy.

ALEXIS

Ah well. Maybe a little. You sometimes find, you know, that it's the craziest people who have the most realistic outlook on life.

BRANDON

Yeah, like you don't have to be mad to work here, but it helps.

ALEXIS

True blue. Anyways, I shouldn't let it worry you. I don't. Worry not and live a lot, that's always been my motto. What's the point in being alive if you don't know how to live?

Alexis raises his eyebrows suggestively at Brandon, who shrugs.

ALEXIS

Profound, huh?

He clasps his hand to his heart as if in prayer.

ALEXIS

But, please God, if I'm destined to be cruelly mown down in the prime of life by some hot young stud, then let him be driving a Ferrari.

BRANDON

Long as it's not one of those horrible yellow models.

ALEXIS

Baby, you are so right. I can't think of a worse way to spend half a million dollars, and believe me, I know some pretty bad ones. Red's always been my color. Color of passion, don't ya know.

BRANDON

Uh huh. So anyway, what exactly is it that you do?

ALEXIS

Besides hanging around movie sets and annoying your boyfriend, you mean? Well, I perform.

BRANDON

Perform what?

ALEXIS

You know the Club Elysium off Vine?

BRANDON

No.

ALEXIS

Well don't worry honey, you will by tonight. I do a little act there, up on the stage, just *moi* and about a thousand horny admirers.

BRANDON

You're a - drag queen?

ALEXIS

What???? Honey, don't you ever use those words in my presence again. I am an *artiste*.

BRANDON

Oh?

ALEXIS

Of the very highest caliber.

BRANDON

Right.

Alexis shams offence, then laughs softly. Brandon joins in.

BRANDON

Keanu Reeves?

ALEXIS

Keanu Reeves.

BRANDON

In my front room?

ALEXIS

Keanu Reeves in your front room. Straight up.

BRANDON

How about Tom Cruise?

ALEXIS

Ah, well now you're pushing it.

BRANDON

A man can dream though, can't he?

ALEXIS

That's not a dream, baby. That's an orgasm!

They walk on, laughing together.

CUT TO -

EXT. THE FIRST APARTMENT - DAY.

The following few sequences are a series of montage shots of Alexis and Brandon visiting prospective apartments, intercut with scenes of Kevin and Brandon together, set to MUSIC.

Alexis and Brandon approach the first apartment. A sweet little OLD LADY opens the door and beckons them inside.

INT. THE FIRST APARTMENT - DAY - CONTINUOUS.

The old lady leads Brandon and Alexis into the lounge.

Alexis takes one look at the tawdry décor therein and screws up his face in horror.

Brandon looks embarrassed.

CUT TO -

INT. "WORD ON THE STREETS" FILM SET - DAY.

Brandon and the other actors hard at work in rehearsal for "*Word on the Streets*". Kevin is watching from the sidelines.

CUT TO -

INT. THE SECOND APARTMENT - DAY.

Brandon and Alexis in the lounge of another apartment.

There is barely room to move, and the apartment is filled with cats.

A garishly dressed ECCENTRIC MAN stands in the center of the room, holding a cat in his arms, stroking it fondly.

Brandon turns around and half trips over one of the cats. The man is not amused.

CUT TO -

EXT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

Brandon outside Kevin's house. The door opens, and Kevin motions Brandon inside. The door shuts again.

CUT TO -

INT. THE THIRD APARTMENT - DAY.

Brandon and Alexis trudging up a flight of stairs to reach another apartment. There are at least fifty of them, and both men are worn out already.

At the top, Alexis tries knocking on the door. No answer. He turns to Brandon, a look of consternation crossing his face.

CUT TO -

INT. KEVIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Brandon sitting on the edge of Kevin's bed, moodily putting on his clothes. Kevin is lying in the bed, smoking as before.

CUT TO -

INT. THE FOURTH APARTMENT - DAY.

Brandon and Alexis in the lounge of another apartment.

This one looks reasonably decent, but when Alexis bangs his foot on the floor, part of the floorboard gives way.

Alexis turns and smiles at Brandon. The FIRST RENTAL AGENT who has accompanied them to the viewing scowls.

CUT TO -

EXT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

Brandon leaving Kevin's house through the front door.

CUT TO -

INT. RENTAL AGENT'S OFFICE - DAY.

A small and slightly shabby office.

The SECOND RENTAL AGENT sits behind a desk with Brandon on the other side of him. Alexis stands in the corner of the room, watching them.

Brandon is signing the contract. He passes it over and the agent hands him the keys. He holds them tightly in his hand, looking at them in wonderment, smiling.

CUT TO -

EXT. OUTSIDE BRANDON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Brandon completing his journey back from Kevin's house.

He returns to his own apartment, which is on the ground floor of the block.

He pulls out his keys and opens the front door.

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS.

Inside the apartment.

It is small, but well furnished and comfortable. The front door leads through into the lounge.

Brandon enters the room and flops down onto the sofa, exhausted. On the wall above his head, there is a full-size poster of Alexis in full regalia, advertising the Club. Brandon looks up at it, and smiles. End of MUSIC.

CUT TO -

EXT. CLUB ELYSIUM - NIGHT.

Brandon is walking down the street towards Alexis' club.

There is a long LINE OF PEOPLE outside the front entrance. A quasi-attractive MAW is arguing with one of the BOUNCERS.

MAW

For Chrissake, I'm *forty*! C'mon, I'm trusting you with my life here. That's a hell of an admission to make in this town.

BOUNCER

Lady, I'm sorry. No ID, no entry.

She flounces off. Brandon turns away, but the BOUNCER calls him back.

BOUNCER

Brandon Lee?

BRANDON

Uh, excuse me?

BOUNCER

Is your name Brandon Lee?

BRANDON

Why yes. But how did you know -

The bouncer stands aside so that Brandon can enter the club. He holds up a clipboard.

BOUNCER

Your name's on The List. Honored guest.

BRANDON

Really?

BOUNCER

You should enjoy it while it lasts. This list, you see, is like everything else round here. Ephemeral. Transient. Fleeting. Gone with the wind, you might say.

Brandon frowns. This seems an odd comment for a bouncer to make. He shrugs and goes through the entrance.

INT. CLUB ELYSIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS.

Inside, the Club is packed full, mostly with a YOUNG MALE CLIENTELE, some in drag. It is dimly lit with blue lighting, and there is a raised stage at the far end with a grand piano on it.

Brandon looks around appreciatively, then approaches the bar. The flirtatious young BARTENDER views him with interest.

BARTENDER

And what can I get for you, oh sweet one of the dawn?

BRANDON

I don't know. What have you got?

BARTENDER

Well, the same sort of stuff as you get in straight bars really. Beer, spirits, wine. Or I could do you a cocktail - with plenty of cock, eh?

BRANDON

Sure, OK.

BARTENDER

How about a Slow Satisfying Screw?

BRANDON

(alarmed)

What?

BARTENDER

Baileys, amaretto, rum. Warms the soul, don't ya know.

BRANDON

Oh! Right, sure.

BARTENDER

Or you could always go for the quick fuck under the table, huh?

BRANDON

(smiling)

I think I'll just stick with the slow one.

BARTENDER

I see I can't bite you twice.

BRANDON

I guess not.

BARTENDER

You new to L.A.?

BRANDON

(sighing)

Not new enough.

BARTENDER

Ah. In that case I'll put a drop of brandy in there too. The Hollywood Survival Kit. Pep you up some.

BRANDON

I appreciate it. Thanks.

The bartender disappears to the other end of the bar and returns a few moments later with Brandon's cocktail, complete with umbrella.

Brandon takes it and holds out the money to him.

BARTENDER

Nah, have this one on me. For your pain.

Brandon nods, suddenly blinking back tears at this arbitrary act of kindness.

He pockets the money and moves to a table near the front of the stage. The bartender watches him go.

BARTENDER

Well, so long, blue eyes. Catch you at a read-through sometime maybe.

A COMPERE comes onto the stage.

COMPERE

Ladies and Gentlemen. Please put your hands together for our very own Lady of the Night - Alexis!

Enthusiastic response from the patrons.

A spotlighted Alexis, accompanied by his PIANIST, comes onto the stage, dressed up like a Carnival Queen.

Alexis takes the mike from the compere and addresses his captive audience.

ALEXIS

How are my sweet baby darlings tonight? You're all looking great. Obviously not as great as me, but that really would be attempting the impossible now, wouldn't it?

He notices Brandon in the crowd.

ALEXIS

Hey, I want to introduce y'all to someone. Shine the spotlight over there.

The spotlight obligingly alights on Brandon, who blinks and raises his hand against the sudden light.

ALEXIS

This is my very special new friend Brandon Lee. I helped him pick out an apartment. Just a few days ago he was slumming it in a hotel, now he's got the most tasteful curtains this side of Culver. How about a hand for my man!

The patrons obligingly applaud Brandon. He is slightly embarrassed, but fascinated by, this strange new world that Alexis has introduced him to, a world where people feel free to celebrate their sexual identity.

He watches intently as Alexis launches into his "act" - singing a well-known sultry fifties tune (anything that could plausibly have been covered by Marilyn Monroe would fit well here), whilst draped alluringly over the piano.

During the song, he frequently slides off the piano to wave at and fondle the audience members, Brandon among them. As the song ends, Brandon applauds him with great enthusiasm.

CUT TO -

INT. "WORD ON THE STREETS" FILM SET - DAY.

Filming of the classroom scene is taking place with Kevin directing, watching from the sidelines.

Brandon arrives on the set, moving quietly across the floor so as not to disrupt filming. Kevin notices him.

KEVIN

CUT!

The actors stop in mid flow, surprised. This looked like a good take.

Kevin turns to Brandon, who is clearly still in a state of euphoria. He points an accusing finger at him.

KEVIN

You are late.

BRANDON

(casual)

Yeah, I know, I'm sorry.

KEVIN

You're what?

BRANDON

I'm sorry. OK?

KEVIN

Oh no. No-no-no-no-no. D'you remember when you were back in grade school, Brandon?

BRANDON

(confused)

Yeah, sure.

KEVIN

And you remember when there was something you thought you couldn't do, and one of the teachers would always come up to you and say

(mimics)

"There's no such word as can't"? Boy, that sure used to get me some, that bitch Mrs. Russell - You remember those days, huh?

Brandon nods, miserably.

KEVIN

Good. I'm glad you do remember, 'cause it's the same thing here. Don't be sorry, there's no point in being sorry, there's no such word as sorry when you're in the middle of a film shoot. Now you have just ruined a perfectly good take, so are all these people -

Kevin indicates the actors.

KEVIN

(continuing)

- wonderful though they may be, going to forgive you for screwing up their day's work just because you say

(mimics)

"I'm sorry"?

I don't think so.

Brandon looks round at the other actors, who are all staring at him, a few with sympathy, some with malicious amusement, some in anger.

He turns back to Kevin, defiant.

BRANDON

You didn't have to cut it. I wasn't even in the scene, so what difference did it make if I was here or not?

KEVIN

Do you wanna be an ex-actor? 'Cause I can arrange for that to happen!

BRANDON

(firmly)

Whatever.

Kevin glares at Brandon, but the younger man refuses to be intimidated this time. Kevin turns to the others.

KEVIN

I think we need to have a little talk in private. Excuse me, everyone.

Kevin leads Brandon to the far end of the studio, where there is a small office. He ushers Brandon inside and shuts the door.

KEVIN

What the hell are you trying to do to me? I mean, are you out to wreck the whole film, or what?

BRANDON

You didn't have to cut it. And I would appreciate it if you didn't attempt to humiliate me in front of the rest of the cast.

KEVIN

Look, I got you this part, and I happen to think that you should work damn hard for it.

BRANDON

I wouldn't worry about that. I think you've had more than your money's worth out of me already.

Kevin sighs and looks away for a moment. When he turns back to Brandon, his voice is calmer, almost gentle.

KEVIN

I'm just trying to do my job. I mean, it isn't easy - I've never done this before. I'm laying my career on the line for this gig. What if it all goes wrong?

The plea works - just. Brandon frowns, but his initial anger has subsided.

BRANDON

Well - yeah. I guess we must all be feeling the pressure round here, huh?

KEVIN

Of course we are. It gets to the best of us. But if it helps win awards, then what the hell, right? Remember that we serve a greater good, the God of motion picture making, and He is a powerful God indeed. Try not to piss Him off too much.

He gives Brandon a sly wink. Brandon nods.

BRANDON

Sure, if you say so.

KEVIN

Good.

(a BEAT)

So, anyway, do I take it from your little burst of euphoric rebellion out there that you've finally managed to land somewhere to stay?

BRANDON

Yeah, I got an apartment a way off the Boulevard. It's not much, y'know, compared to - to where you live, but it's home for now, I guess.

KEVIN

(laughing)

You should have seen my first little Hollywood hideaway. Mice, rats, horrible green slimy stuff crawling up the walls. And that was just the front room. I still have nightmares about the bathroom. Ugh.

He shudders in mock fear. Brandon watches him, entranced.

KEVIN

I'm glad it's all falling into place for you, Brandon. Truly. Maybe I'll come over and visit you sometime.

BRANDON

I'd like that.

Brandon smiles. Kevin smiles back, not his usual lustful grin but a gentler expression, and for one brief moment - they connect.

KEVIN

Brandon - I -

BRANDON

(softly)

Yes?

Brandon moves closer to Kevin, encouragingly.

Kevin seems about to speak, but then the spell is broken. He sighs and turns away.

KEVIN

Ah, nothing. Doesn't matter. We should be getting back to work.

BRANDON

OK. And Kevin - I really am s - well, you know.

KEVIN

Don't worry -

He reaches over and squeezes Brandon's hand, gently.

KEVIN

(continuing)

- you can make it up to me later, huh?

Brandon nods. Kevin opens the door and Brandon follows him out.

He turns back to the other actors, slapping his hands together.

KEVIN

Right, you little cretins, let's make your mothers proud! Scene twenty-one, from the top!

The actors hastily scramble into position. Brandon is forgotten again.

CUT TO -

INT. "WORD ON THE STREETS" FILM SET - DAY.

Break time on the set.

A rather subdued Brandon is sitting by himself, morosely staring into space, whilst the other young actors, glad of the break, are dotted around the set in small groups, talking animatedly to each other.

BILL HEARST, 45, a brash and overbearing journalist whom we may have seen lurking in the background of earlier studio scenes, is wandering around the set, exchanging "hello's" with people. Now, he approaches Brandon.

BILL HEARST

Hi, I'm from the *LA Correspondent*. You don't mind if I have a few words with you about the film, do you?

He bends down and grips Brandon's hand in a firm shake.

BRANDON

No, not at all. I'm Brandon Lee - uh, no, it's Lee-Jones now, sorry. I play College Student Number Four.

Hearst raises his eyebrows. Brandon shrugs, almost apologetically.

BRANDON

It's only my first movie.

Hearst sits down next to him.

BILL HEARST

(to himself)

Ah well. Great things can come from such insignificant beginnings.

(to Brandon)

Pleased to meet you, Brandon -

Lee - Jones. Name's Bill Hearst. No relation, I'm afraid.

BRANDON

What?

BILL HEARST

Don't you think it's strange how everyone round here shares a name with somebody famous? Stewart Granger's real name was James Stewart, did you know that?

BRANDON

Uh no, I didn't.

BILL HEARST

Those were the days, eh? Hollywood's Golden Age. When you look at some of the trash we turn out today - But when you're up against a paying public that would rather watch cannibalistic serial killers than singing

nuns, what else can you do? For a City of Angels, we sure love our devils. Still, why should I complain? It's what keeps us all in business, right?

BRANDON

Yeah, I guess so.

BILL HEARST

Anyway, at least we've kept some relics from the good old days. The legend of the ol' casting couch to stardom is still alive and well. That's one thing that didn't die out with the studio system, wouldn't you agree?

BRANDON

I'm sorry, I don't quite understand what you mean -

BILL HEARST

Come on, you must have heard of the Hollywood Casting Couch. Pretty young actresses - Well, actresses usually - lecherous old production heads, that type of thing. Even Clark Gable got his big break that way, pretty much.

BRANDON

I - I thought you wanted to talk to me about the movie.

BILL HEARST

(laughing nastily)

I'm sorry, am I confusing you? I'm always going off on a tangent. As if you wanted to

hear about all that shit anyhow. Right, the movie. So, how did you come to be cast in this gritty little urban extravaganza by our most recent graduate of the Hollywood High acting-to-directing school?

BRANDON

Well, I got a couple of meetings set up with agents here - sort of set up, anyhow, before I left home - my home in Iowa, I mean. That's how I met Marshall Grant - you know Marshall?

Hearst raises his eyebrows again in a knowing fashion.

BRANDON

Anyway, after he saw my résumé he offered to take me on, and then he kinda - introduced me to Kevin -

BILL HEARST

Just like that, eh? That's very impressive. Your mom must be so proud of you.

BRANDON

I suppose. I don't really know - we haven't discussed it - much.

There is a brief silence, then Hearst glances at his watch and gasps in mock horror.

BILL HEARST

Lord, is that the time? Listen Brandon, I'm fascinated by your story, I really am, but unfortunately I've got a meeting at Paramount in five, so I'm afraid I'm going to have to run. We should do lunch sometime, because I

really want to hear about it all. Is that OK,
yeah?

BRANDON

Sure - if you want.

BILL HEARST

Marvelous. Good man.

He gets up, shakes Brandon's hand again, then walks away, jauntily.

Brandon stares after him, confused. A bell RINGS, making Brandon jump.

KEVIN (O.S.)

OK everyone, places. And how about we try to
get it right this time? I'm sure most of you
little shits wouldn't mind hanging around
until the next Millennium, but I'd really like
to get this thing finished by Thanksgiving, if
it's all the same to you.

There is a collective moan as the other players get up and assume their places on the set.

Brandon rises last, and makes his way towards the group.

CUT TO -

INT. "WORD ON THE STREETS" FILM SET - EARLY EVENING.

Dusk at the studio. The set is deserted, with only Kevin and Brandon remaining.

Kevin is leant over a table, putting a sheaf of papers into his briefcase.

Brandon stands a little apart from him, watching him. Finally, he speaks.

BRANDON

Kevin, I have to ask you something.

KEVIN

(not looking up)

Uh huh?

BRANDON

Do you - do you care about me even a little bit?

KEVIN

(casual)

Sure I do, sure. You're practically indispensable. Don't know how I'd get by without my nightly treatment, eh?

He winks at Brandon, lasciviously. Brandon frowns.

BRANDON

That's not what I meant.

KEVIN

You scoping for an assistant credit? Is that what this is about?

BRANDON

What? I don't -

KEVIN

(sighing)

No, I know you don't. I've been wondering when we'd get to this. Well, I planned ahead.

Kevin sighs and turns to face Brandon, taking a quick look around first to make sure that there is no-one left to overhear them.

KEVIN

Let me tell you something, Brandon. I never ever let personal feelings get in the way of my work. Now, there's sex, and then there's what people in the world outside this one foolishly like to call "love", and they're two very different things. Now I thought you understood that.

BRANDON

Well, yeah, but -

KEVIN

Because if you don't, I can easily find someone else who does.

BRANDON

Just like that?

Kevin shrugs, seemingly unconcerned.

KEVIN

Just like that. It's not pretty, but it's the only way I know. Comes with the territory. Survival of the most emotionally detached.

BRANDON

(angrily)

Fine.

Brandon stalks away, but then suddenly stops and turns back.

BRANDON

Just tell me one thing. Was it always this way with you, or was there ever a time when you weren't such a cynical bastard?

KEVIN

(hesitant)

Yeah. Of course there was. What, you think I walked straight out of high school onto Hollywood Boulevard? You think someone just handed me all this on a golden platter and said "Hey, Kid, you wanna be a big shot, well here you go"? I paid my dues. You're not the only farm boy round here, you know.

BRANDON

So what happened, then?

KEVIN

What happened was I had to make a choice. I could have stayed in the town - such as it was - that gave me life, stayed there with him, followed him in his naïve little fantasies, worked my ass off in that godforsaken place for a lowly wage and a lot of grief, or I could have been somebody. I mean, the man had no vision, he'd rather have played to an audience of fifty in some shitty stage show in the backwater than an audience of fifty million in the movies. You think I could have put up with that?

BRANDON

So where is he now, this mysterious lover of yours?

KEVIN

(sighing)

Michael? I don't know. Probably still stuck in the same sorry place where I left him. Some people never move on. But hey, we were never really any good for each other. It's better it turned out this way. Yeah.

He tries to say this in a casual manner, but it's pretty clear that Brandon has touched a nerve here. He presses on.

BRANDON

Don't you ever get tired of trying to be something that you're not?

KEVIN

You know what the secret to acting is, kid? Well there ain't one. You just gotta pretend to be someone else for ninety minutes. That's it. Simple. But you wanna be a great actor, you gotta - well, you gotta actually become someone else sometimes. I gave up pretending a long time ago. Whatever you see now is what I am. A survivor.

BRANDON

But that doesn't make it right, Kevin.

KEVIN

Right???? Don't talk to me about right. There is no right around here, just varying degrees of wrong. I mean, Jesus, kid, the sooner you start giving up this pathetic little fairy tale you seem to carry around with you the better. You wanna play Boy Genius, huh? Well, OK. Here's one.

Kevin closes his eyes.

KEVIN

What color are my eyes?

BRANDON

Uh - this is -

He shrugs, helplessly, a victim once more.

KEVIN

Come on, tell me. What color are they?

BRANDON

I - blue?

Kevin opens his eyes, slowly, smirking in triumph.

KEVIN

My eyes are green, Brandon.

BRANDON

(defeated)

So? What does that prove?

KEVIN

I'll tell you what it proves. It proves that you don't know a goddamn thing about what goes on out here.

BRANDON

I don't - I don't -

KEVIN

Look, I'll make it real simple. Once you got your name up there on the big screen, no one can tear it down again, OK? Even if the flick bombs, there's always ancillary. No way you can lose. But you have to really want it, you have to make sacrifices if you want to succeed, and let me tell you now that "love", or pretty much any significant kind of relationship, is gonna have to be the first thing to go. Can you even imagine what it is like to be at war with yourself from the moment you first open your eyes in the morning, to have to fight every sensation and instinct in your body just so's you can come home to an empty house, to go to sleep every night alone next to a pillow soaked by your tears, knowing you'll have to do it all again the next day and every day after that for the rest of your life? Could you live like this, Brandon? Could you?

(a BEAT)

Because if you want to make it big in this town, then that's the way it has to be. You can't cut a deal on this one. Ever.

Kevin closes the briefcase and walks away, leaving Brandon alone in the darkened studio.

He turns and calls back over his shoulder to him.

KEVIN

It's your call, kid. Your call.

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - DAY.

Brandon is seated on the sofa, eating a sandwich.

The phone RINGS. He reaches over and grabs the receiver.

BRANDON

Hello, Brandon Lee-Jones speaking.

Split screen or intercut to show Bill Hearst at home, sitting on his rather more elaborate sofa.

BILL HEARST

Brandon! So glad I caught you at home. How's about we do this thing?

BRANDON

Who -

(realizing)

Hey, how did you get my number? I never gave it to you.

BILL HEARST

(laughing nastily)

Brandon. How do you think I make a living, lie back and just wait for the next day's headlines to magically appear before my eyes?

BRANDON

No. Of course not.

BILL HEARST

No. If I wanted to do that I'd go write for the *Los Angeles Times*.

BRANDON

(wearily)

Uh huh.

BILL HEARST

So, anyway, back to the main event. Lunch. Can you do one o' clock on Thursday?

BRANDON

Well, I don't -

(a BEAT, thinks it over)

Oh sure, why not, why in the hell not? I'm not expecting any other offers for dinner dates anyway.

BILL HEARST

Fantastic. What do you think of the Arcadia on Las Palmas? It's a little garish, I know, but the food's good - and the wine! Vintage.

Pretty babies too, if you're that way inclined.

BRANDON

Yeah, I'm sure that would be fine.

BILL HEARST

Wonderful. See you there on Thursday then.
Don't be late.

He hangs up the phone. Brandon does likewise.

BRANDON

(to himself, sarcastic)

And I haven't got a thing to wear.

CUT TO -

INT. ARCADIA RESTAURANT - DAY.

A chic but comparatively inexpensive Hollywood restaurant, about half full to capacity with the also-rans of the town.

Hearst is sitting at a table with an extravagant looking cocktail in front of him, wearing sunglasses and reading the *National Enquirer*. He turns a page and grimaces.

BILL HEARST

Bastards take all my best leads!

Brandon enters, and hesitantly approaches the table. Hearst smiles broadly as Brandon draws near.

BILL HEARST

(softly)

But not this one, fellas. This is my baby.

He puts down the magazine and holds out his hand.

BILL HEARST

Brandon! Hi! So glad you could make it. It's really nice to see you again.

BRANDON

Uh, yeah. You too.

He sits down at the table opposite Hearst.

BILL HEARST

(with mock sincerity)

Listen, I wanted to - well, apologize for the things I said at our last meeting. All that casting couch stuff is bullshit, really. I didn't mean to scare you.

BRANDON

(shrugging)

That's OK.

BILL HEARST

So, anyway, you must be getting pretty excited, huh, with filming nearly completed, you'll be seeing yourself up there on the big screen soon?

BRANDON

Sure, for about five minutes.

BILL HEARST

But what five minutes, huh? The critics are already raving about this one - it's *kids: The Next Generation*. You never know, some big talent scout might just see you in it, and bam! - you could be the next Brad Pitt before long.

BRANDON

Yeah, well I won't hold my breath.

Hearst stares deep into Brandon's face for a moment, then sighs and frowns in an exaggerated expression of concern.

BILL HEARST

Y'know, it's probably none of my business Brandon, but I can't help noticing that you seem a little - distracted. Is anything the matter?

BRANDON

No. Yes, well there is, but -

BILL HEARST

Do you want to talk about it?

BRANDON

No, I don't think so.

BILL HEARST

It's just that I've been around Hollywood a long time, and I know how it can get you down sometimes. And don't worry -

He picks up the little Dictaphone that has been running throughout the conversation, unseen until now, and makes a play of switching it off.

BILL HEARST

(continuing)

- we can keep it to ourselves, eh?

BRANDON

I wouldn't feel right - talking to a journalist about this.

BILL HEARST

I said off the record, didn't I? That means that right now I'm not a journalist, and I assure you that you can trust me completely in a personal capacity.

(a BEAT)

It's Kevin, isn't it?

BRANDON

(horrified)

What????

BILL HEARST

I bet he pushes you hard, doesn't he? Sometimes these big stars forget just how tough it is to be a struggling young actor like yourself.

BRANDON

No, it isn't that exactly. It's just - he's - the way he treats me - Every time I think I've opened a door, he slams it shut again right in my face.

BILL HEARST

(nodding earnestly)

You want him to respect you.

BRANDON

But there's something about him - the way he fights himself - it's so sad.

BILL HEARST

It must be really difficult to keep up with a guy like that. But I think I can help you, if only you'd let me.

BRANDON

Sure. I'm sorry, I guess I never expected you to be -

BILL HEARST

Human?

BRANDON

Yeah.

BILL HEARST

I hide it very well. Now, why don't you tell me the whole story?

He leans closer to Brandon, conspiratorially.

Slightly confused, Brandon leans in too. The trap is set.

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - DAY.

Brandon is sitting on the sofa, flicking through a copy of the *National Enquirer*, his eyes widening in surprise at some of the lurid articles it contains.

The telephone RINGS. He leans across to answer it without looking up from the magazine.

BRANDON

Hello? Oh, hi, Mom.

(a BEAT)

Yeah, I know I haven't been in touch for a while, I'm really sorry, it's just that I've been so busy with the movie and all.

(a BEAT)

Oh, not long now. We've nearly finished filming - well, my part, anyway.

(a BEAT, laughs)

Yeah, I guess it will feel kind of strange to be a movie star.

(a BEAT)

I was, but I feel much better now. I talked it over with someone, and that helped a lot.

(a BEAT, laughs)

Yeah, there are some nice people around, even in this town.

(a BEAT)

No, you don't know him either.

(a BEAT)

Of course I will, I'm sorry.

(a BEAT)

OK, 'bye Mom. I love you.

Brandon replaces the phone, then turns back to his magazine.

CUT TO -

INT. STUDIO CAFÉ - DAY.

A small, slightly seedy cafeteria, mostly occupied by various cast members from "*The Word on the Streets*", who are gathered in small groups, talking quietly amongst themselves.

As Brandon enters, the players suddenly fall silent, nudging one another.

BRANDON

Hi, Joe, hi guys -

The actors continue to stare at him. He realizes that something is wrong.

BRANDON

What's going on here?

The actors exchange worried glances. Finally, one of them speaks.

YOUNG ACTOR

You mean - you haven't heard?

BRANDON

Heard what?

YOUNG ACTOR

You haven't seen the paper?

Brandon continues to look blank. The young actor takes a paper from one of the other players and hands it to Brandon.

He looks at it. It is a copy of the *LA Correspondent*. The headline reads "QUEEN OF HOLLYWOOD?" and is accompanied by a large picture of Kevin and a small, grainy one of Brandon.

Brandon freezes for a moment, then opens his eyes wide with horror.

BRANDON

Oh my God.

YOUNG ACTOR

You have to watch that guy, Brandon. He screws with everybody.

The other actors murmur assent. Brandon does not appear to hear them.

He lowers his arm and lets the paper fall to the floor.

BRANDON

(softly)

Kevin.

CUT TO -

INT. MARSHALL'S OFFICE - DAY.

Marshall is sitting behind his desk, holding the newspaper. Kevin is standing across from him. The tension is palpable. Marshall taps the paper with his hand.

MARSHALL

What the fuck is this?

KEVIN

Well, it looks like the *LA Correspondent* to me.

MARSHALL

Don't get smart. Of all the times you could choose to get smart, this is definitely the worst. The "Queen of Hollywood". Jesus Christ!

KEVIN

Look, I messed up, OK?

MARSHALL

And how. Have you got any idea how this little piece of tabloid trash is going to affect the movie? You can kiss that Oscar nom goodbye.

KEVIN

(desperate)

Well, you're the one who took the kid on -

MARSHALL

Don't you dare try to blame this on me. If you'd learnt to think with your head up here -

He taps the side of his head.

MARSHALL

(continuing)

- instead of the little one then none of this would have happened. However, since it has, one of us had better figure out just what the hell we're going to do about it, not that I see you coming up with any staggeringly bright ideas.

Kevin glares at him. He sighs and pauses for a moment to consider the problem.

MARSHALL

I might be able to salvage something of our collective careers, if you keep to the rules this time. First thing, you must never see that kid again. Soon as the payroll's settled, I'll get him on the first bus back to whichever little hillbilly place he came from. That should be easy.

KEVIN

(reluctantly)

Yeah, I guess so. Baby Jesus apart, he doesn't really have any connections. Won't even know he's being screwed.

MARSHALL

Prec-isely. Be like clubbing a baby seal, eh?

(a BEAT)

I hate to have to ask this, Kevin, but you don't have any - well, personal feelings for this kid, do you?

KEVIN

Uh - no. Of course not. You know me - I could never give that much of myself to another person. All pleasure is strictly business, right?

MARSHALL

That's my big draw talking. Just you keep out of trouble for the next few months and then who knows, maybe in a little while I could find another nice farm boy for you, long as you promise to keep him away from the hacks, eh?

KEVIN

Yeah. Whatever.

MARSHALL

Look, you make your decision, in this room, right now. D'you really want to lose everything you've worked so hard for?

KEVIN

You mean - do you.

MARSHALL

Don't you go developing principles boy. In this town it'll get you killed. You're just like me. You wouldn't have got where you are today if you weren't. Do we have a deal?

There is a slight pause as Kevin appears to consider this.

KEVIN

You can't drop him. I mean, you really can't. Brandon - Brandon's got something, potential, mass appeal, star quality, whatever the hell you want to call it. Gonna be big someday. You wouldn't want to miss out on that.

Marshall spreads his hands in a conciliatory fashion.

MARSHALL

OK, fine, we won't drop him. I'm sure I can get him some work outside the diamond, far away from you. Hollywood can seem so big when no one knows your name.

KEVIN

(bitter)

Yeah. But it suddenly becomes the smallest place on earth if you've got something to hide.

MARSHALL

Well, that's why we have to do this. You didn't really think that it was all going to end up flowers and sunshine, did you? I mean, c'mon, the kid is younger than Macaulay Culkin, for Chrissake.

Kevin looks at him sadly. Marshall frowns.

MARSHALL

Look, I'm speaking as a friend here. This is the best option for all of us. We couldn't go

on being one big happy dysfunctional family forever. Just think of it as a damage limitation exercise, the way it was with - Matthew?

KEVIN

(sharply)

Michael!

MARSHALL

Michael, of course, Michael.

(laughing to himself)

And I thought the kid was a hick, but that guy - Jesus! Talk about backward. He'd have made Elvis look like a Suit.

(breaking off)

Now how about it? Do we have a deal?

We close on Kevin as he is forced to make the most momentous decision of his career.

Finally, with more despair than conviction, he nods. Marshall is pleased.

MARSHALL

Model.

CUT TO -

EXT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - EVENING.

Brandon is standing outside the front door. He reaches for the doorbell and presses it. It CHIMES loudly.

There is a long pause, and then Kevin opens the door. He looks tired and harassed.

KEVIN

God, Brandon, what are you doing here?

BRANDON

I just wanted to talk.

KEVIN

I think you've done enough talking already, don't you?

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - EVENING - CONTINUOUS.

Kevin grabs Brandon roughly by the collar and drags him into the front room, furtively pulling the door shut behind them.

KEVIN

I don't want anyone to see us together. I hope to God that you weren't followed.

BRANDON

Kevin, that whole thing with the Press and everything - I didn't mean to speak to him in that way, honest - it's just he said he could help. I'm sorry.

KEVIN

And that's supposed to make everything alright is it? I'm supposed to take you in my arms and say

(mimics)

"That's OK, I forgive you"?

Uh-uh. There is no such word as "sorry", remember? And I mean fucking Hearst, of all people - Jesus. How could you do this to me?

BRANDON

But - is it really so bad? People knowing that you're gay, I mean? They must have suspected something before -

Kevin is genuinely outraged that Brandon has finally mentioned the hated word.

KEVIN

What did you call me? Gay, I'm not gay. Just 'cause I fucked you don't make me gay.

BRANDON

Well, what does it make you?

KEVIN

What, you think you're so special? You think we had something deep and meaningful going? Did I bring you flowers, or send you sappy emails, or take you home to meet my mother? Of course not. I'm not one of them.

Kevin appears to calm down a little and paces around the room, shaking his head.

Brandon watches him with a hurt expression on his face. Kevin turns back to him.

KEVIN

I mean, gay people - they have relationships,
Brandon, y'know, and - it's just not me.

BRANDON

(bitter)

It scares the hell out of you, doesn't it? The
idea that one day you might have to give a
damn about all of this?

KEVIN

Look, I didn't join the Vipers Club for
nothing, alright? This is the way things are
in this place. Period. End of story.

BRANDON

(shaking his head)

No. No!

He's near to tears. Kevin is touched, despite himself.

KEVIN

(gently)

You crazy kid.

BRANDON

Oh Kevin. Why can't we just forget all of this
Tinseltown crap and - and - try to make
something out of what we have together - like
normal people do? I mean, if I were to tell

you, right now, that I love you - and you believed it - what d'you think would happen?

A few short words, but their effect on Kevin is electrifying. He turns on Brandon, furious.

KEVIN

Don't you say that, don't you ever ask that of me, OK? I tried to teach you, didn't I, I warned you, but you wouldn't listen, and now you've screwed up everything. You don't mean anything to me! Get out of here!

BRANDON

Kevin - I -

KEVIN

I said - get out. Get out of my life, you - you - ridiculous little - extra!

A beat. Brandon stares at Kevin, stunned by this insult.

For a moment neither of them move, then Kevin opens the door. Brandon moves reluctantly towards it.

He takes one last sad look at Kevin, who glares back at him.

BRANDON

Good luck at Cannes. I guess you could always take the *Palme d'Or* to bed with you.

He leaves. Kevin shuts the door, slowly. For a moment he seems close to tears, but then his expression changes to one of anger.

KEVIN

(softly, to himself)

There, I've done it, you bastard. The deal is safe.

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - EVENING.

Brandon enters through the front door, tripping over the mail as he does so.

He leans down to pick it up, then sees that the offending copy of *LA Correspondent* is sitting on the top of the pile. He glances briefly at the cover, then angrily rips the paper in half, hurling it across the room.

He puts the rest of the mail on the kitchen table without looking through it.

The phone in the lounge RINGS. Brandon picks it up.

BRANDON

Hello, Brandon Lee-Jones speaking.

Split screen or intercut to show Alexis on his mobile, held under his ear. He is painting his nails.

ALEXIS

Boy, I love that double barrel. So sexy. How are ya doing, babe?

BRANDON

Well, not great. I've just been to see Kevin.

ALEXIS

And he blew you out over that article, huh?

BRANDON

So you saw it too?

ALEXIS

Kid, everybody saw it. I mean, it's the *LA Correspondent*, honey. Coast to coast with a free lottery coupon.

BRANDON

Jesus. How could I have been so stupid?

ALEXIS

Don't sweat it. You just haven't learned to play the Hollywood game yet, that's all. It's like everyone's got a hidden agenda. They either want to fuck you, or fuck you over - or both.

BRANDON

Yeah, well, I sure got the worst case scenario from Kevin.

ALEXIS

Trust me, you're better off without him. That guy has issues. There's plenty more honey in the hive, if you know what I mean. He'll probably have got himself shackled up with a new baby from the Santa Monica shopping mall by next week anyway. Don't think you can change a guy like that. Hey, you wanna come with me to the Club tonight?

BRANDON

(wearily)

No.

ALEXIS

Why, what else you gonna do, sit at home and mope about Ke-vin?

BRANDON

Look, I just don't feel like it, OK?

ALEXIS

C'mon honey, there ain't nothing you can't cure with a party. You need to start having some fun. Forget all that dream lover shit, because it ain't never gonna happen. When are you going to learn that you have to live for the moment? Come on babe, wake up, wake up, wake up!

BRANDON

Alright, alright, I'll come.

ALEXIS

My man. Pick you up at nine.

Brandon opens his mouth to say something else, but Alexis has already hung up the phone. He replaces the receiver, a slight smile crossing his face.

CUT TO -

INT. CLUB ELYSIUM - NIGHT.

The club is about three-quarters full tonight, with the same clientele as before.

Brandon and Alexis enter. A horde of YOUNG MEN descend on Alexis, greeting him with shouts and kisses, whilst looking approvingly at Brandon.

ALEXIS

OK, that's enough, darlings. It's my night off.

(to Brandon)

Let's get the drinks in, huh?

They walk towards the crowded bar.

As Alexis leans over to talk to the bartender, Brandon notices PETER, a handsome young man slightly older than himself, sitting at the opposite end of the bar.

Peter smiles at him. Brandon hesitates for a second, then smiles back.

ALEXIS

What's your poison tonight, babe? Brandon?
Bran-don!

Brandon, still entranced by Peter, does not react.

ALEXIS (O.S.)

Oh Lord.

CUT TO -

INT. CLUB ELYSIUM - NIGHT - LATER.

Brandon and Peter are sitting together at the bar, talking.

PETER

So, a movie star, huh?

BRANDON

Well. Trying to be.

PETER

I knew it. I thought your face looked familiar. Have I seen you in anything?

BRANDON

No. Not yet. Unless -

He stops himself just in time.

PETER

Unless what?

BRANDON

Oh, nothing.

PETER

(amused)

Aw, go on. You can tell me.

BRANDON

No. It's just - no.

PETER

OK then. If you really don't want to talk about it. Do you mind if I ask you something though? It sounds stupid, but I've always wanted to know. Just how hard is it to form meaningful relationships in your line of work? It's like, every day you open the papers and there's some celebrity couple, one minute they're doing *Hello!* and the next they're splitting up.

BRANDON

(nodding)

Kate Winslet Syndrome.

PETER

Winslet?

BRANDON

Yeah, you know, the fat girl from *Titanic*.

PETER

Oh yeah. That's what I mean. How do you handle stuff like that?

BRANDON

Yeah, it's - tough. You get to thinking you're better off just being alone sometimes. At least then nobody can hurt you.

PETER

So, no serious partners?

BRANDON

No serious partners.

(remembering)

Survival of the most emotionally detached.

PETER

(nodding)

In-tense.

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Brandon and Peter are positioned near the door, in silhouette, kissing and frantically tearing each other's clothes off.

They stagger inside, still locked together, and Brandon knocks the door shut.

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - DAY.

The next morning. Brandon is lying in bed, asleep, his clothes scattered round the floor.

He opens his eyes and looks around, appearing dazed for a moment. He leans over to the bedside cabinet, and picks up the piece of paper lying there. It reads "PETER", followed by a telephone number.

Brandon smiles to himself, then leans back in the bed. He closes his eyes again.

CUT TO -

EXT. CAFÉ - DAY.

A small, relatively quiet café.

Alexis and Brandon have a table outside. They are drinking coffee.

ALEXIS

So, do I take it that someone got his all-important dose of lurve medicine last night?

BRANDON

I wouldn't put it quite like that.

ALEXIS

Still, beats fucking for a fee, eh?

BRANDON

What? Oh. I guess when you look at Kevin and me - the whole thing - through rational eyes, that's all it ever really was.

Alexis nods.

BRANDON

But in my warped little mind it will always be something more.

ALEXIS

Now that, my dear Brandon, is warped. What did you say he called you?

BRANDON

Oh, it doesn't matter. He was just angry, that's all. I don't want to think about it right now.

ALEXIS

Yeah, fuck it. Hey, let's make a toast.

BRANDON

With cappuccinos?

ALEXIS

Sure. Now, what shall we drink to? How about health, wealth, happiness - and copious amounts of casual sex, of course.

BRANDON

(smiling)

I'll settle for the first three.

ALEXIS

(shrugging)

First three it is then. If you're quite sure that you can have number three without number four.

BRANDON

It has happened, you know. In the history of mankind, there have been occasions where certain people, for one reason or another, have had to go without sex for long periods of time, and in not a few cases, have actually emerged the better for it.

ALEXIS

Yeah, sure, but not in Hollywood, babe. The entire population of this town would drop dead if they didn't all get it at least once a fortnight.

BRANDON

So who's to say that I can't be the first to break the trend? I mean, with Peter, it was - nice, but maybe that was just something I had to get out of my system. I don't want to make

a career out of it. I need someone who won't be gone in the morning, y'know?

ALEXIS

(sighing)

Baby boy still wants a rel-ation-ship. Here's to attempting the impossible. Well, I have faith in you. You're the man to do it. Cheers.

They bang their coffee mugs together.

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - DAY.

Brandon is seated on the sofa with a sheaf of assorted papers stacked on the table in front of him. He is feeding the papers into a mini shredder.

He takes the *LA Correspondent* from the top of the pile and begins to feed it into the shredder page by page, evidently taking great pleasure in this.

The piece of paper with Peter's number on it is underneath. Brandon hesitates for a moment, then shrugs and feeds this into the shredder also. He takes the next item from the pile, a script, and studies it thoughtfully.

The phone RINGS. Brandon reaches across to pick it up.

BRANDON

Hello, this is Brandon Lee-Jones.

(a BEAT)

What? No, he must have me confused with someone else. I've never been to Aspen. Really!

(a BEAT)

In which paper?

(a BEAT, reluctantly)

Oh yeah, that was me.

(a BEAT)

Well, since you ask, I'd just like to say that we've both suffered quite enough already because of that dishonest and malicious article, and I don't see how you have any right to - A what? A television show?

(a BEAT)

No, I'd be -

He gropes around for a pen and paper, finds them, and begins scribbling frantically.

BRANDON

Three o' clock?

(a BEAT)

No, that's great, I can do that. Thank you very much. 'Bye.

Brandon replaces the receiver and smiles to himself.

BRANDON

(softly)

Wow.

CUT TO -

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY.

The following few scenes are a series of shots of Brandon adjusting to life in Hollywood, intercut with scenes of him speaking on the telephone, perhaps set to MUSIC. His appearance should be slightly different in each one, to show the time passing.

A cramped studio. Three o' clock has arrived - audition time. A GROUP OF YOUNG MEN wearing dark suits and sunglasses sit in a row along the edge of one wall. Brandon is amongst them.

An ASSISTANT beckons him. He follows her out of shot.

CUT TO -

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY - LATER.

Brandon is standing in the center of the room, gesticulating wildly at a YOUNG WOMAN wearing a rubber alien mask.

He suddenly sweeps her up into his arms and kisses her. She flails around wildly for a moment, then surrenders to his embrace, dropping her script in the process.

The DIRECTOR of the show is seated to the far side of the wall with a FEMALE ASSISTANT on either side of him, utterly engrossed in the performance.

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - DAY.

A pile of mail arrives. Brandon dashes towards it and snatches it up, frantically flicking through until he finds the letter he has been waiting for.

He opens it, scans the contents quickly, and lets out a yell of triumph.

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - DAY.

BRANDON

(into phone)

Can you believe it, Alexis? Six lines!

(a BEAT)

Yeah, they saw my picture in the *LA C*. I feel like Divine Brown or something.

(a BEAT, laughs)

No, not Joan Crawford! At all!

(a BEAT)

Yeah, and you could play the wicked sister.

(a BEAT)

'Cause I'm too innocent looking, that's why!

CUT TO -

INT. CLUB ELYSIUM - NIGHT.

Brandon and Alexis are sitting at the bar with their drinks.

A handsome YOUNG MAN walks past. Brandon sneaks a clandestine look at him, which Alexis notices and laughs at.

Brandon turns to him with an expression of mock puzzlement on his face. Alexis jerks his head in the young man's direction encouragingly. Brandon smiles and shakes his head.

When Alexis persists, Brandon shakes his head more vigorously and then bangs it on the counter in mock frustration.

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - DAY.

BRANDON

(into phone)

Well, it's just a pilot, Mom, you know what a pilot is? It might get optioned for a series, it might not.

(a BEAT, laughs)

No, he's not in it! I've never worked with him. Anyway, isn't he dead?

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - DAY.

Brandon and some other YOUNG ACTORS are gathered tightly around the TV set watching the end credits of *Gemini*, the cheesy sci-fi TV pilot that Brandon secured a role in earlier. They excitedly point their names out to each other as they flash up on screen for a millisecond.

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - DAY.

BRANDON

(into phone)

No, it's just I'm sure I remember reading his obituary in *Entertainment Weekly*.

(a BEAT)

OK, OK, Mom, he's not dead, whatever you say -

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - DAY.

Brandon is seated on the sofa with a pile of magazines stacked on the table in front of him.

He takes one from the pile and scans through it quickly until he finds an article about *Gemini*. He skim-reads this, smiles, and throws the magazine away.

This process is repeated four or five times before he finds an uncomplimentary review. He reads this through carefully, tracing his finger down the page, frowning.

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - DAY.

BRANDON

(into phone)

- and then you can roll it up and shove it straight up your ass. No, scratch that. Your cheap little excuse for a magazine isn't even good enough to use as toilet tissue.

(a BEAT)

Yeah, I'll hold.

CUT TO -

INT. BAR - NIGHT.

A very chic cocktail lounge. Brandon is standing beside the bar drinking an extravagant looking cocktail, deep in animated conversation with a group of other YOUNG ACTORS and ACTRESSES. He looks very comfortable.

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - DAY.

BRANDON

(into phone)

I'd love it if we could do lunch, but I really don't have any windows in my schedule this month. How about November?

(a BEAT)

New Year then. Look forward to it.

CUT TO -

EXT. CENTRAL HOLLYWOOD - DAY.

Brandon is walking down the street, wearing a designer suit and carrying a briefcase.

He pauses for a moment as he notices a yellow Ferrari parked up on the sidewalk. He smiles to himself and pats it gently, then walks on.

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - DAY.

BRANDON

(into phone)

You gotta be kidding me. You think I was born yesterday? I wouldn't even get out of bed for that much.

(a BEAT)

So, what, that's based on the profit points margin of the domestic box office gross?

(a BEAT)

How about the projected revenue from ancillary markets?

(a BEAT)

Now you're talking!

CUT TO -

EXT. ASPEN SKI RESORT - DAY.

An icy peak. Brandon is standing at the top of it, goggles up on his forehead, proudly surveying his new territory.

He pulls the goggles down and launches himself down the slope.

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

BRANDON

(into phone)

Not at all, Mr. Spielberg. Thank you.

Brandon replaces the phone and collapses on the sofa, happy.

He stares up at the ceiling with a shark-like, almost idiotic grin. He truly is a King of Hollywood.

FIRST AGENT (V.O.)

So there you have it, ladies and gentlemen. Proof that here in Hollywood, anything can happen - well, almost anything. Dreams really do come true.

SECOND AGENT (V.O.)

It's an old, old story. Smalltown Boy comes to the Big City -

THIRD AGENT (V.O.)

Seeking fame and fortune -

FOURTH AGENT (V.O.)

Does a little schmoozin' with the right people
-

FIFTH AGENT (V.O.)

And after a few - minor setbacks-

SIXTH AGENT (V.O.)

Hey, he's just one big bang short of becoming
a star.

ALL AGENTS (V.O.)

(chorus)

The End.

KEVIN (V.O.)

The hell it is!

The MUSIC (if used) stops abruptly, as if the needle has been yanked off the record.

Brandon's grin wavers. He frowns. He sits up.

BRANDON

What was that - that last bit?

He looks around for an answer.

MARSHALL (V.O.)

Oh, that was nothing. Just dead air. Useless
noise.

BRANDON

Ri-ght.

He stares at the phone for a moment, then reaches out towards it, uncertain.

MARSHALL (V.O.)

Aw, c'mon. Forget about it. Once you've got your name on the Gulfstream waiting list, what else matters?

BRANDON

(astonished)

I could have my own plane?

MARSHALL (V.O.)

Sure! Anything you want. If it can be bought, you'll have it. Pay or play. Just name your price.

CUT TO -

INT. BAR - NIGHT.

A small, NOISY local tavern, about half full to capacity with mostly BLUE COLLAR MALES, grouped round tables dotted around the room.

Kevin, slightly drunk, is sitting at the bar, morosely staring down at a half-full shot glass of whisky. He picks the glass up and drinks it dry, then slams it down on the counter, hard. He looks around the bar, trying to find something to interest him.

At the opposite end, a COUPLE are having a heated argument. THE MAN is in his early forties, bearded and thick set. THE WOMAN is in her early thirties, pretty in a trashy sort of way. We only hear snatches of the conversation, which consists of his accusing her of lying to him over a relationship with another man, and she denying it.

Kevin watches them, curious. The argument intensifies, and the Man pushes the Woman roughly against the side of the bar. She cries out. Her eyes meet Kevin's for a second. She needs help.

Embarrassed, he turns his face away from her. The Man shoves her again, and the cry is repeated. Kevin looks round, but no one else seems interested in the dispute.

Slightly reluctantly, he slides off the barstool and walks towards the couple, who break apart as he approaches. The Woman gives him a slight smile, the Man looks at him with hostility.

THE MAN

You got a problem, pal?

KEVIN

Look, why don't you just leave the lady alone?

The Man gives him a rough shove.

THE MAN

What's it to you anyways, faggot?

Kevin is clearly angered by this remark, but manages to restrain himself from hitting out at the Man. He shoves him again.

THE MAN

Huh? You gonna answer me or what, fag? Huh?

(a BEAT)

Cocksucking little pussy.

He shoves Kevin a third time. Kevin finally snaps and charges the Man back, pushing him against the bar.

A brief punch-up ensues, with the Man faring slightly better than Kevin but with neither sustaining any significant injury.

The other male occupants of the bar crowd round to cheer them on, whilst the Woman stands apart, watching them worriedly, her eyes flicking from one to the other.

The Man swings back his fist to punch Kevin hard in the face, but the BARTENDER intervenes before he makes contact.

BARTENDER

Hey, I don't want no trouble in here. Put your fists away or take it outside.

The Man sneers at him, but lowers his fist and slowly backs away from Kevin.

The other men begin to disperse, and normality is quickly restored.

The Man comes towards the Woman but stops a foot away from her.

THE MAN

You're not worth it anyway, bitch.

He spits on the ground and then turns away. Kevin, embarrassed, smiles shyly at the Woman.

THE WOMAN

Thank you.

KEVIN

No problem.

THE WOMAN

My knight in shining armor.

KEVIN

Hardly.

There is a brief awkward pause as they gaze at one another like adolescents on a first date, unsure of what to do next, then -

KEVIN

Can I - uh - buy you a drink?

The Woman smiles and jerks her head to the left to indicate the other occupants of the bar, now all seated.

The bar suddenly seems very quiet. The men have put down their drinks and are all glaring intently at the pair.

THE WOMAN

(a conspiratorial whisper)

I think we've suddenly become very unpopular.

KEVIN

(copying her tone)

Yes.

THE WOMAN

I think we should leave now.

KEVIN

OK.

She giggles and grabs his hand. He is a little bemused by her sudden forthrightness. She leads him out of the bar.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE BAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS.

Kevin and the Woman step out onto the street. She is still holding his hand, pulling him along beside her.

KEVIN

Do you live near here? Can I walk you home?

THE WOMAN

Yes and no. I live on Cherokee, but I have this room-mate, Kelly, she's a beautician and tonight she's throwing this wild party where everyone gets their hair and nails done - there's probably twenty girls decorating my bedspread with mascara as we speak.

KEVIN

(smiling)

Oh, that's a lovely image.

THE WOMAN

Mmm. So, how about yourself? Where do you live?

KEVIN

Oh, not far.

THE WOMAN

Well, why don't you walk me there instead?

He opens his mouth to answer her, then hesitates, suddenly unsure of himself.

She smiles at him, encouragingly. He shrugs.

KEVIN

Sure, OK.

CUT TO -

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER.

Inside the front room. Kevin opens the door and stands back so that the Woman can enter before him. She is suitably impressed.

THE WOMAN

What a beautiful place you have here.

KEVIN

Well, it's - home.

THE WOMAN

So, should we be expecting some pretty wife to walk in on us at any moment, or do I take it that you live alone?

KEVIN

(a little too quickly)

Here, I'll get you a drink. What would you like?

THE WOMAN

I wouldn't mind a martini.

KEVIN

Martini, right.

He turns around to the drinks cabinet. The Woman sits down on the sofa.

Max wanders into the room. She reaches down to pet him.

THE WOMAN

So you do have a housemate. Hey boy. What a cute dog!

(a BEAT, coyly)

Must take after his owner.

KEVIN

(ignoring this)

So, uh, was he your boyfriend, that man in the bar?

THE WOMAN

He tried to be. He was really just one of those assholes who think that if you buy a girl a drink it somehow gives you the right to -

Kevin hands her the drink.

THE WOMAN

(continuing)

- thanks - treat her like a whore.

KEVIN

Yeah - I guess some guys are like that - use women - for, for sex. Terrible.

THE WOMAN

(smiling)

But not you, right?

Kevin is clearly uncomfortable with the conversation and begins to pace around the room. The Woman watches him.

THE WOMAN

You seem so nervous. Is something wrong?

KEVIN

No, it's fine.

THE WOMAN

Well come and sit beside me then. I really don't want to watch you slinking around like a hunted animal.

Kevin sits down on the sofa next to her, leaving about a foot of space between them.

THE WOMAN

So what do you do all day, in a big house like this, all by yourself?

KEVIN

Uh, what?

THE WOMAN

(laughing)

Never mind.

There is a brief silence, during which the Woman's expression changes from amusement to one of concern as Kevin does not relax.

THE WOMAN

You're not at all how I imagined you would be. Looking at you now, it's hard to believe that you played that misogynistic prick in *Hit Man Husband* so effectively.

KEVIN

(realizing)

You do know who I am.

THE WOMAN

Matter of fact, you're one of my favorite actors.

KEVIN

And that's why you were - chosen.

THE WOMAN

Yes.

KEVIN

The whole thing was a set up?

THE WOMAN

Yes.

KEVIN

The boyfriend, the barroom brawl, the wild room-mate - all of that?

THE WOMAN

Yes.

KEVIN

Jesus.

He considers it for a moment.

KEVIN

I suppose I should have guessed. It was kind of a cliché - the old damsel-in-distress routine.

THE WOMAN

We didn't really have the time to plan anything more elaborate.

KEVIN

We? It was Marshall, wasn't it? I bet this was his idea. Anything to keep me in his mediocre little agency, had to have a Plan B to stop the tabloids talking. Just couldn't stand the thought of losing his ten percent, could he? I see it all now - obscure little actress stroke singer stroke glamour girl, who's fast approaching the wrong side of thirty-five and is tired of waiting tables to supplement what she makes doing lame promos for the Home Shopping Channel - as if she's going to pass up the chance to convert her favorite film star. It's fucking perfect.

THE WOMAN

(nodding)

That's not far wrong. You're very perceptive. We actually worked together once, I had a bit

part in *Fatal Impact*, but we figured you wouldn't remember me.

KEVIN

So, having revealed yourself, what happens now?

THE WOMAN

I don't know. I suppose I shouldn't have - but I just couldn't stand that lost-little-boy routine you were pulling.

KEVIN

And I thought that women were supposed to like that.

THE WOMAN

Yeah, you were threatening to bring out my maternal side.

Kevin laughs. The Woman finishes the drink and places the empty glass on the coffee table.

THE WOMAN

Let's try a second take, OK?

She moves closer to him and takes his hand.

KEVIN

Why do I feel like I'm being tested?

Kevin takes the Woman in his arms, somewhat awkwardly, and pulls her towards him so that her face is only inches from his own.

He gazes intently into her eyes for a few moments, then turns away with a soft moan.

THE WOMAN

Is it really so hard to be heterosexual?

KEVIN

(laughing sadly)

I can't do it. I - I can't. And you know what the funny thing is? I mean, it's only acting, I've done it a thousand times before, up there on the screen. But it just doesn't seem real any more. I've finally had enough of playing the straight man. And now I really have lost everything.

THE WOMAN

(frowning)

Hmm. This last boy - he wasn't like all the others, was he?

KEVIN

He talked too much - it's better when they don't talk -

THE WOMAN

This young man Brandon -

KEVIN

Because if they don't talk then you won't have to listen, and if you don't have to listen you won't have to think about what you're doing to them -

THE WOMAN

So different, this one -

KEVIN

Or to yourself.

THE WOMAN

Because despite all the pain you have caused him, he will be back to finish what was started in this very room. It's not in his nature to act otherwise.

Kevin shakes his head in despair.

THE WOMAN

It's not a crime to hope for the best. Even in this town you can hold out for a happy ending, for that tentative tap on the door that says it isn't all over.

KEVIN

Maybe. Or maybe you're just telling me what I want to hear. A beautiful stranger appears to guide me to the light - it's just another cliché, isn't it?

She gets up from the sofa.

THE WOMAN

I should be going.

Kevin gets up too.

KEVIN

I'd like it if you could stay.

THE WOMAN

I don't think that's a good idea. Having failed in my primary objective and all.

KEVIN

What did they pay you for this?

THE WOMAN

(slightly reluctant)

Ten.

KEVIN

That much? That's about what I'd figured. Personally, I'd have asked for at least twenty-five.

THE WOMAN

Well maybe someday, when I graduate to leading lady status.

She stands close to him. He kisses her on the cheek, formally.

KEVIN

I don't even know your name.

THE WOMAN

What do names matter round here if they're not up in lights?

KEVIN

You know, if things had been different, we might have -

THE WOMAN

But they're not, are they? Goodnight, Kevin.

She leaves the house, closing the door behind her.

Kevin, slightly dazed, walks back to the sofa and slumps down upon it, exhausted.

Max trots over to him. He pats the dog's head, disconnectedly at first but then with affection.

KEVIN

Man. It sure is a fucked-up thing that we got going on here, boy. But that's showbusiness.

He lies back and shuts his eyes.

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Brandon is still sitting with his hand positioned over the phone. Suddenly, he withdraws it.

MARSHALL (V.O.)

Attaboy. Hey, maybe we can get matching ones!

BRANDON

(softly)

I get airsick.

He rises and heads determinedly for the storage closet at the far end of the room, taking out his overcoat and putting it on.

He opens the front door and steps outside, slamming it shut behind him and leaving the Ghosts of Hollywood Present alone in the empty room.

MARSHALL (V.O.)

Brandon! You fool!

FIRST AGENT (V.O.)

Aw, he'll be back.

SECOND AGENT (V.O.)

They always come back.

THIRD AGENT (V.O.)

Whole or in bit parts!

The Agents laugh *en masse*, a hollow sound that reverberates around the deserted apartment.

CUT TO -

-

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

Kevin is slumped on the sofa in a slightly different position to his previous scene.

We hear the sound of the doorbell CHIME. He jerks awake with a start and looks around with a puzzled expression on his face, then grabs the clock on the nearby coffee table. Its display reads 10:00.

KEVIN

What the -? Did I -? Was she -?

The bell CHIMES again. Kevin gets up slowly from the sofa and smoothes down his clothes, shaking himself awake.

The bell CHIMES one more time. Smiling, he opens the door to be faced with the maniacal MICHAEL - a sinister and slightly taller version of himself. He speaks with a strong Southern accent.

MICHAEL

Hello, Kevin.

KEVIN

Michael???!!! Shit!

MICHAEL

You were perhaps expecting someone else? Sorry to disappoint.

KEVIN

What - what the hell are you doing here?

MICHAEL

Oh, we have unfinished business, you and I.

Michael pushes past Kevin and into the house. Kevin is too shocked to attempt to stop him.

Michael wanders around the room, admiring it, enjoying Kevin's obvious discomfort at his presence there.

MICHAEL

This is a nice place. Real nice. I'll bet it's seen some pretty sweet pieces of candy passin' through. Kinda - cold though. Nothin' that a wife and a coupla rugrats wouldn't fix - but I guess you couldn't pretend that much.

He stops still and turns to face Kevin.

MICHAEL

Y' know, I loved all that stuff about you and the young lad in the paper. Reminded me of old times. Got me thinkin' 'bout things - a whole lot of things.

(musing)

At first I was confused, but then it was like this little light went on inside of my head, and everything became clear. I finally understood what it was I had to do.

(breaking off)

What was his name again?

KEVIN

(grimly)

Brandon Lee.

MICHAEL

That's it. Hmm. I always thought that was the name of Bruce Lee's kid, y'know the one who got himself killed on the set of - *The Crow*, was it? I don't follow the movies much. Helluva way to go though.

KEVIN

Well, this was a different Brandon Lee.

MICHAEL

I'll say. And you could give him everything you were never prepared to give me, am I right?

KEVIN

It wasn't like that.

MICHAEL

Oh really. Now I'm confused. So what was it like then?

KEVIN

Look, I don't want to discuss it with you. Can you leave, please?

MICHAEL

(feigning disappointment)

Aw, Kevvy, how can you be like that when I've come all this way to see you? All the way from the "sticks", you might say.

KEVIN

Could you please just leave, this really isn't a very good time -

MICHAEL

Well, it may not be a good time for you, Mister Movie Star, but-

Michael smiles wickedly as he pulls a handgun from his pocket and aims it at Kevin.

MICHAEL

(continuing)

- it's a very good time for me.

Kevin stares at him in shock and anger for a moment, then makes a move for the mobile phone attached to his belt. Michael raises the gun.

MICHAEL

Uh-uh.

Kevin stops short. Michael turns the gun over in his hand, examining and admiring it.

MICHAEL

Y'know, it's a funny thing, the way people suddenly start takin' notice of you just 'cause you have a little piece of metal in your hand -

(suggestively)

or the right cock in your mouth. You ever thought about that, Kevin, 'cause I sure have. Boom!

Michael mimes shooting Kevin, who shudders with fear.

Michael laughs, then walks towards him and with one swift movement takes the phone and hurls it across the room. It hits the ground and shatters.

MICHAEL

That's better. We don't want anyone disturbing us now, do we?

He looks down at the smashed phone.

MICHAEL

Really Kevin, I'd have thought that with all that money you could have gotten yourself a

psycho resistant mobile. What a piece of crap. Always be prepared, that's my motto, since you ran out, anyway.

KEVIN

Look, what do you want? If it's about that bullshit article -

MICHAEL

What do I want? Well now, I'll tell you what I want. Rev-enge, pure and simple. It's not a glamorous motive, it won't wow an audience or sway a jury, but in the end it's all there is. I want to fuck you over, the way you fucked me over when you left me to rot in that slimy little hole of a town. Your town.

KEVIN

It wasn't like that, I couldn't take you with me, you knew I couldn't take you with me -

MICHAEL

Oh no. I gave up my big chance for you, but you wouldn't give me jack. I dunno, I guess you figured that becoming a Hollywood hotshot was somehow more noble than anything I could ever hope to achieve. But never mind, because I'm here now, here to make amends, and I've brought you a present, a little movie scene I've written just for you, and its called "Kevin On Trial". Rather - Brechtian, don't you think?

(a BEAT)

You couldn't evade me forever, you know. There's one more due to pay.

KEVIN

Don't do this. God, don't do this.

Michael grabs Kevin, turns him around and runs the muzzle of the gun gently up and down his back, then rams it between his legs, hard.

Kevin winces. Michael pulls him close and whispers in his ear.

MICHAEL

Don't worry, you won't miss anything this time, sweetheart. You got a front row seat.

Kevin laughs to himself, sadly.

KEVIN

It's insane. All this over one little story - one stupid little bullshit story.

MICHAEL

Shut up. Don't you get it? You're not the hero no more. My fifteen minutes ain't up yet, and this time I get to do all the fucking! Hell, I'm gonna take the full hour, baby! I - what is that?

The sound of barking. They turn round. Max is framed in the doorway that leads off into the kitchen.

KEVIN

Max! Get away! Get away, boy! Go on!

MICHAEL

Mmmm.

He walks over to the dog, still clutching the gun.

MICHAEL

Hello, Max. C'mere, boy.

He pats the dog. Kevin watches him worriedly.

KEVIN

Please don't hurt my dog.

MICHAEL

(sniffing)

I'm not a monster. I don't want to hurt him. I just want him out of the way. I said no interruptions, remember.

He leads Max off into the kitchen. Kevin looks around for escape, but before he can move we hear a GUNSHOT. Kevin gasps.

Michael comes back into the room, shutting the door. He smiles at Kevin.

MICHAEL

Oops. Guess my finger musta slipped.

KEVIN

(sobbing)

No - God, no - not my fucking dog. What did he ever do to anyone? He's just a baby. Nine months old.

MICHAEL

(very calm)

But that's the way of the world, Kevin. The innocent must suffer along with the guilty. Haven't you ever found that?

Kevin shakes his head, horrified.

KEVIN

No - Max -

Michael jabs him with the gun again.

MICHAEL

Now, where were we? Ah yes. The curtain is about to fall. Are you ready my love, because here it comes! It's - showtime!

Michael shoots Kevin in the back. Kevin falls to the floor, screaming in pain.

MICHAEL

Does that feel good, huh? Can you feel the pain? That's my pain! Mine!

Kevin continues to scream, rolling around on the floor in agony.

MICHAEL

C'mon, this is the grand finale! Final cut! You can do better! Show me how badly you want that Academy Award.

Kevin's screams begin to be replaced by little sobs.

KEVIN

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry for everything I ever did to you, you and Brandon. I know it doesn't

mean much after fifteen years, but I'm sorry I made the wrong choice.

MICHAEL

Oh, you are, are you? No. No one's ever sorry for anything around here. Even I know that much. When you went AWOL you left your conscience behind too.

(sarcastically)

But hey, I suppose you could make it all up to me if I let you live, isn't that the way it goes? Do you really think that after all this time I'm going to take you in my arms and say

(mimics)

"That's OK, I forgive you"?

God, you're pathetic.

KEVIN

Sometimes - that's - the - the only way. You - you can't settle everything with - a - bullet. Me - you - him - us -

Michael raises the gun and aims it at Kevin's head. Kevin cries out in pain as he tries to drag himself across the floor.

A brief look of pity crosses Michael's face, then he scowls.

MICHAEL

(softly)

No. No. Not good enough. Like you said, it's too late.

Michael cocks the gun. Kevin whimpers and closes his eyes in anticipation.

A SHOT rings out.

CUT TO -

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE KEVIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER.

Brandon is walking down the road towards the house, downcast but determined. He mutters to himself as he draws nearer.

BRANDON

Look, Kevin, I've been thinking a lot about you and me - well, us, over the last few weeks, and I really think that we should have a proper talk about this - no - I mean, you never even gave me the chance to explain -

Brandon pauses. He frowns. He is angry now, frustrated.

BRANDON

Why do you have to be such a pig-headed fool, anyway? Why can't you just - open your goddamn eyes and - and - see me.

Brandon's voice trails off as he reaches the house. He lifts his hand towards the door, then notices that it is slightly ajar.

BRANDON

(to himself)

That's weird -

He pushes the door. It swings open.

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS.

Brandon cautiously ventures inside the house.

BRANDON

Hello? Kevin?

Brandon sees the blood stains on the floor. He frowns.

BRANDON

What the -?

Brandon follows the trail of blood with his eyes, which widen with shock as they come to rest on Kevin and Michael, huddled together in a corner of the room, Kevin with his arms wrapped tightly around Michael.

At first it appears that both are dead, but then Kevin shudders and opens his eyes. Michael's eyes are closed, but there is a smile on his face.

Brandon comes towards them. He tries to speak, but can only manage a series of gasping sounds. He reaches out to Kevin, who seems unaware of his presence, then draws back in horror.

BRANDON

Oh Jesus God, what happened here?

Kevin lifts his head slightly so that he can look Brandon in the face. Blood dribbles from his mouth.

KEVIN

I'm - I'm just trying to - to - keep him safe, to protect him, to - Like I should have done - before. I shouldn't have left - him - then.

BRANDON

I gotta get an ambulance.

He turns and trips over Kevin's smashed phone. He looks down at it, then rushes out of shot.

As Kevin speaks the next few passages of dialogue, his voice takes on a slight Southern twang.

KEVIN

We have all the time in the world. You ever see that James Bond movie, the one where he gets married and his wife gets shot right after and she's dead, right, but then there's this cop - least, I think it's a cop - he comes up to him on his big ol' motorbike there and Bond says: "It's alright, she's only sleeping, we have all the time in the world?". You ever seen that? Because that's how I feel right now - like all this is a scene from a movie -

Kevin laughs, painfully, coughing blood.

KEVIN

Maybe I'm sleeping too - maybe I'm dreaming -

BRANDON (O.S.)

(frantically)

Hello? 911?

KEVIN

But if I'm dreaming - then why does it hurt so bad?

Kevin flutters his eyelids, close to unconsciousness.

We hear Brandon's voice, muffled, yelling into the phone, and underneath it, a frenetic barking.

KEVIN

Must be. Nothing is ever real in this town. In a little while, I'm - I'm - gonna wake up and I'll be back home - I'll be twenty five again - God, I was happy then.

He smiles to himself, then closes his eyes and rests his head on Michael's chest again, content. Off, Brandon begins to sob, then we hear the sound of approaching SIRENS.

KEVIN

(sleepily)

They got here quick. But then they always do.

Max rushes into the room, yelping, and licks Kevin's face. There is no reaction. His eyes remain closed.

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

The apartment is deserted. The phone RINGS. After a couple of rings the answer-machine activates.

BRANDON'S VOICE

Hello, this is Brandon Lee - uh - Jones speaking. Sorry I'm not available at the moment, if you leave your name and number I'll get right back to you. Uh - have a nice day.

MARSHALL'S VOICE

Brandon, where the hell are you? I've been trying to reach you all fucking afternoon. I've got some great news for you. I've just had word from Oliver Stone's casting agent, he saw you in that *Gemini* pilot and thinks that you'd be perfect for one of the lead roles in his new movie, shooting starts in a couple of

weeks so you'll have to fly to New York straight away. Well done, my boy, well done. I always knew that you had what it takes.

CUT TO -

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT.

The waiting room, almost deserted. Brandon is sitting huddled up in a chair.

Alexis, dressed untypically conservatively, enters. He goes to Brandon and hugs him, then sits down.

ALEXIS

I came as soon as I got the message. Are you alright, babe?

BRANDON

Oh, I'm great. You want to know something? They said I got there just in time. If I hadn't been there, he would have bled to - to -

ALEXIS

Hey, it's OK. Don't think about that now. You should go home, get some sleep. They won't let you see him tonight anyway.

BRANDON

(near tears)

I went there to try to sort things out. I wanted to see if I could make it all right.

Everything else has come together, why not this?

ALEXIS

(sighing)

I don't understand why you'd even want to do something like that. I don't think I ever will. He used you Brandon, used you from the moment he first set eyes on you, turned you into some kind of cheap street hustler. Everything you have now, it's yours, your achievement, no one else's. You would have got it with or without that glorified pimp to help you. And now you'd let the one thing you don't need destroy everything that you do? You know you can't have it all.

BRANDON

No. There's more to it than that. You've never seen his other side. Maybe no one else has. Hell, maybe even the very idea that there could actually be a decent human being in there somewhere is just another fantasy of mine. But I can't help the way I feel.

ALEXIS

The way you feel is fucked up. They won't let you see him. You're not family, Brandon. Come on. I'll take you home.

BRANDON

I know how it looks. I know I should go. But what if he wakes up and there's no one - no one here? He's been alone for so long.

ALEXIS

That was his choice, Brandon, he chose to follow that path. Whatever happened tonight, he brought it on himself - all of it. Why are you doing this to yourself?

BRANDON

Maybe it would be easier - if we could all learn not to care. You'd think that the easiest option would be the best one. But it isn't. Not ever. There can't be anything waiting for me back at the apartment that's more important than this.

There is a brief silence, then Alexis sighs resignedly.

ALEXIS

So, no Tom Cruise, huh?

BRANDON

I guess not.

ALEXIS

(softly, amazed)

Man. This is so twisted. I sure hope I never fall in love.

Brandon smiles sadly. Alexis gets up and pats him gently on the shoulder.

ALEXIS

Look, crazykid, call me soon, OK?

Brandon nods. Alexis slowly makes his way back down the corridor, shaking his head in disbelief.

Brandon is alone again.

CUT TO -

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Brandon enters through the front door and collapses onto the sofa.

He lies there for a moment, too exhausted to move. He notices that the message button on the answerphone is flashing and reaches over to press it.

He smiles resignedly at the sound of Marshall's voice.

MARSHALL'S VOICE

Brandon, where the hell are you?

CUT TO -

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY.

A sparsely furnished private hospital room. We focus on Kevin, who is lying in the bed with his eyes closed. He looks very pale, sick, insignificant.

MARSHALL (V.O.)

Brandon? BRANDON!

Kevin gasps and opens his eyes as the door opens and Brandon enters, carrying a bunch of flowers.

BRANDON

Hello, Kevin.

Kevin raises himself up on his elbows, clearly surprised to see Brandon.

KEVIN

Brandon. Uh - hi.

BRANDON

How are you feeling?

KEVIN

(smiling weakly)

Well, I've been better. But you know what they say - whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger, right?

BRANDON

(frowning)

Nietzsche?

KEVIN

Marlon Brando.

BRANDON

Oh. Well, anyways, that's bullshit. It's just a stupid cliché. When you feel pain, you feel pain, and that's all there is to it.

KEVIN

Yeah, I guess so. Just trying to look on the bright side -

Kevin sees the flowers.

KEVIN

So, you bringing me flowers now?

BRANDON

(smiling)

Yeah.

KEVIN

(remembering)

Flowers and sunshine.

BRANDON

What?

KEVIN

Ah, nothing.

Brandon puts the flowers down and seats himself on the chair by the side of the bed. There is a brief silence, then -

KEVIN

Oh! Congratulations, by the way.

Brandon looks at him blankly.

KEVIN

For landing that part in Oliver Stone's new film. Marshall dropped by earlier, under duress no doubt - I'm pretty much dead to him at the b.o. now - and told me all about it.

BRANDON

Oh yeah, that.

KEVIN

You don't seem too pleased. I mean, c'mon, this is your big break, this is the one that's going to make you. I know it.

BRANDON

Well, I can't take it.

KEVIN

What??? Believe me when I tell you, this is the one.

BRANDON

Oh, I don't doubt that. It's just that there are more important things, y'know?

KEVIN

Kid, you turn this down, you might not get another chance.

BRANDON

Kevin, how can you expect me to go to New York while you are like this?

KEVIN

Oh no, look - you won't have to do that anymore, hell, you're already a lot further down the line than I was at your age. Anyway, I can't - I won't be able to. The bullet - they told me there was too much damage. I'm - I'm going to be paralyzed.

BRANDON

(smiling sadly)

You really can't see it, can you? Even after everything that's happened - you still think this has to be all about sex. That night at your house, when I tried to tell you how I felt, you wouldn't listen - but do you believe me now?

KEVIN

Brandon, I'm going to be in a wheelchair for the rest of my life -

BRANDON

You were right, y'know, when you said that success always demands sacrifices, but you forgot the most important part of the deal. Priorities. You gotta choose your offerings well, to know what's worth it and what isn't. Or should I say - whom.

KEVIN

You mean that - you -

He falls silent for a moment.

KEVIN

But why? Why me? You've not seen anything of life, Brandon, there's hundreds of other guys out there, and - this is your career, your life opportunity that you're throwing away here! You deserve better than this - me -

BRANDON

You're finally asking the right questions. Before, you just told me it was wrong, you never thought about why, about whether the end really could justify the means.

(a BEAT, sighs)

So let's cut to the chase. You're ready for the Big One, huh? The Million Dollar Question. What is it about you that I should want to make what I know will probably be the most irrational move of my entire adult life?

KEVIN

(softly)

Yes.

BRANDON

Well - this isn't exactly the ideal place for a proposal, but here goes.

He slides off the chair and kneels down by the side of the bed, taking Kevin's hand in his own.

BRANDON

The oldest reasons are still the best ones, don't you think? Three little words, Kevin.

KEVIN

(shaking his head)

No - no!

BRANDON

Yes! I do love you. It's crazy, it's insane, it defies all reason and judgement, but I do.

I love your intensity, your mystery, your drive, your passion, all these things you try to hide but can't hide. The way you laugh, the

way you smile, the way you look when you're
angry -

Kevin begins to weep softly.

BRANDON

(continuing, serene)

- the way you cry, yes, the way you hardly
notice how you're always scratching that
little scar on your chin.

KEVIN

(sobbing)

I - I - when did you ever -

BRANDON

But most of all, I love you because I know
that, somehow, in your own embittered,
distorted, confused way, you must love me.
Because you were me, weren't you? Once upon a
time. Michael knew that. I guess he couldn't
save you from yourself, but maybe I can. I
called Oliver's casting agent back first thing
this morning, and he's already offered the
part to the next lively young Leo clone on the
list. You see, Kevin, in the end, all that
really matters is finding someone who you can
wake up with.

Kevin sobs louder. Brandon gazes down at him, fondly.

BRANDON

That reason enough for you, huh?

Brandon leans forward, seductively, so his face is only inches away from Kevin's.

BRANDON

'Cause I got more, if you're interested.

Kevin's sobs finally subside. He laughs softly.

KEVIN

Marshall's gonna be so pissed.

BRANDON

(shrugging)

Screw him.

Brandon leans forward to kiss him. They embrace, gently, the first really tender moment between them.

Eventually, Brandon pulls away slightly, still keeping very close to Kevin. Kevin laughs again.

BRANDON

What?

KEVIN

I was just thinking - I don't really know anything about you. With one glance you can see right through me, deep into my soul - or what's left of it, anyway - and yet - I don't even know where you live.

Brandon frowns in mock seriousness.

BRANDON

Hmm. What can we do about that? Aha. You'll have to come visit my apartment. And maybe

afterwards I'll take you home to meet my mother.

KEVIN

Your mom? Really? You promise?

BRANDON

Sure.

KEVIN

Is that a Hollywood promise or a real one?

BRANDON

Well, as real as we are, I guess.

Kevin frowns. Brandon suddenly looks very serious, then smiles broadly.

BRANDON

I want you to remember one thing though.

(mimics)

"This time I get to do all the fucking, farm boy".

KEVIN

OK.

There is a brief pause, then they both laugh again.

BRANDON

And Kevin?

KEVIN

Yes?

Brandon closes his eyes.

BRANDON

What color are my eyes?

KEVIN

(softly)

Your eyes are green. Like mine.

Brandon opens his eyes, smiling.

BRANDON

Right.

CUT TO -

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY.

Brandon is standing in front of the grave in the same position as in the opening scene. The rain has stopped.

KEVIN (V.O.)

So there you have it. That's my story. You wanna hear the worst part? I still can't say for sure whether I would have made this decision if it hadn't been forced upon me. I guess some things never change. But at least I know now that if you have to spend your whole life in darkness to get what you think you want, then it's better to give it all up and come into the light. Maybe then you'll find

what you're really searching for, because in reality, there are no perfect takes.

(a BEAT)

If none of this makes any sense to you, then you can probably count yourself among the lucky ones. As for the rest of us, well, I guess we'll just have to go on waiting - and hoping - for whatever it is that finally gives us the power to be free.

Brandon leans over and places the flowers beside what is now revealed to be Michael's gravestone.

BRANDON

(softly)

Your vision - is ours now. Your gift to us.
Our gift to you.

Brandon walks away from the gravestone. We follow him as he walks out of the graveyard to his car (perhaps the ubiquitous yellow Ferrari), which is parked on the roadside nearby. Kevin is seated in the passenger seat with Max behind him.

Brandon walks around to the driver's side and opens the door. He slides into his seat and leans over to kiss Kevin on the cheek. He pulls the door shut and starts the car on its lonely, solitary drive down the road.

The car stays in vision until it becomes a tiny black speck, finally disappearing over the horizon towards the setting sun as we FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.