

F'ing

By Jack Howland

FADE IN

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - MORNING

A YOUNG MAN AWAKES WITH A START. He's shaking violently. We REVERSE, seeing through the vibrations a TATTOOED PUNK.

PUNK
I need this gurney.

YOUNG MAN
What?

PUNK
C'mon, dude.

YOUNG MAN
Where am I?

PUNK
C'mon!

YOUNG MAN
Would you stop?!

The Punk stops shaking the gurney. We see he's wearing a nurse's white jacket.

YOUNG MAN (CONT.)
You're a nurse?

The Punk gives him "Yeah, so what?" shrug, then lights up. The Young Man looks around.

YOUNG MAN (CONT.)
I'm in the emergency room.

A BEAT while the Young Man processes this.

PUNK
The good news is you're alive,
right?

YOUNG MAN
Am I alright?

PUNK
You're fine.
(rattles the gurney again)
(MORE)

PUNK(cont'd)

I need this fucking gurney. Gotta shithead down the hall with a parasite.

The Young Man feels his chest. It's wet. He looks down. HIS SHIRT IS COVERED WITH BLOOD.

PUNK (CONT'D)

I don't think that's yours.

They look at one another.

YOUNG MAN

Then whose is it?

ON THE YOUNG MAN as the implications come into focus and are abruptly upstaged by something equally horrible.

YOUNG MAN (CONT.)

Wait! What time is it?

The Young Man finds his Blackberry on his belt. The Punk starts shaking the gurney again, even harder.

PUNK

Off the goddamn gurney!!

YOUNG MAN

Take it easy!

The Young Man instinctively holds tight. CLOSE on the Blackberry bouncing. We can't read a thing.

YOUNG MAN (CONT.)

Jesus! Stop! I'm checking my goddamned calendar!

PUNK

Get off the fucking gurney!

YOUNG MAN (THROUGH THE VIBRATIONS)

Are you even allowed to smoke?!

The Punk stops and steps back quickly.

YOUNG MAN (CONT.)

Thank you. Oh shit. Oh shit.

Close on a Blackberry message:

"Ryan.Goldstein@cc.com: Where F R U? It's 7:45!!!!"

YOUNG MAN (CONT.)

It's 7:45.

Over the Blackberry, the Punk presses a button on his collar. A big light on the wall starts blinking. The Young Man stops.

YOUNG MAN
What'd you just do?

PUNK
You don't remember?

YOUNG MAN
No.

PUNK
I'm Nurse Zeke. Remember me, Brant?

Zeke smiles. He's missing multiple teeth.

BRANT
No. You know my name?

A large, black MALE NURSE WITH A MOHAWK (NURSE MR. T) ENTERS.

NURSE ZEKE
Remember Nurse Mr. T?

A beat and BRANT SCRAMBLES INTO A CORNER as Nurse Mr. T descends on him. They struggle. Brant clings to a table leg.

BRANT
Okay!

They stop. Brant stands and straightens himself out. Zeke notes the fact that Brant is moving well.

NURSE ZEKE
See. You're fine.

He flicks his cigarette at Brant and takes the gurney, disappearing down the hall.

BRANT
Jesus! What are we doing?!

INT. HALL

Nurse Mr. T follows Brant.

BRANT (OVER SHOULDER)
Can you just tell me what this is all about? I'm covered with blood.

NURSE MR. T
It ain't yours.

BRANT
Whose is it?

NURSE MR. T
You don't remember?

BRANT
No!

NURSE MR. T
Call your insurer.

BRANT
That's it? That's all you'll ...

His Blackberry buzzes. Brant screams as if shocked. He gathers himself again and disappears into his messages:

"Ryan.Goldstein@cc.com: Where F R U? It's 7:50!!!!"

"Eric_Sedini@RiverFunds.com: Dalton Girls on X"

"Lawrence.Linderman@cc.com:Where (F) Are You?"

He opens the last message and reads:

"BIG SWINGING DICK WILL BE HERE IN MINUTES AND LARRY DOESN'T KNOW WHAT THE F HE'S DOING!"

At a fork in the hall, Brant turns one way, and NURSE MR. T STEERS HIM ROUGHLY THE OTHER, into the

EXT. AMBULANCE PORT

Brant now sees he's being evicted.

BRANT
Hey! Wait!

Nurse Mr. T says zip, frogwalking Brant into the parking lot.

BRANT (CONT.)
Just tell me what happened. Please.

Nurse Mr. T casts him powerfully into the street. Brant wipes out, settling on his hands and knees. People move past.

BRANT (LOUDLY, FOR PUBLIC)
I can just finish the rest of the
stitches at my place! Thanks!!

His phone rings. The caller ID reads: "Goldstein, Ryan."

RYAN (O.S.)
Uh, dude? It's 7:55?

BRANT
I can't ... connection ... passing
through tunnel ... subway ... leave a
message ...

He hangs up and looks back at the hospital, thinking.

INT. ER WAITING ROOM

Brant re-enters. An ADMITTING NURSE giggles into her phone, a very personal conversation. There's no line, only seated, agonizing people. As he passes, they say things like:

PATIENT 1
Where the fuck you going?

Brant approaches the nurse, determined. Like the undead, the others gather round him. Patient 1 appears at his shoulder.

ADMITTING NURSE
(to phone) Ooooh, baby. MMM-mmm!

BRANT
Excuse me, miss?

PATIENT 1
Excuse me, Fuckface?

Off the crowd, the Admitting Nurse wraps up her conversation.

ADMITTING NURSE
Yeah?

BRANT
I ... I'm sorry. Are these people
all taken care of?

ADMITTING NURSE
Absolutely.

BRANT
Good. I was hoping you could help
me ...

ADMITTING NURSE

I'm sure I can.

PATIENT 1

Could you help me, Fuckface? I've got my dick in a ziplock bag.

He holds up the bag, and Brant stalls. He starts to turn, but the Nurse stops him.

ADMITTING NURSE

White boy? White boy.

BRANT

... Yes?

ADMITTING NURSE

Are you extra, extra special?

BRANT

... I'm sorry?

ADMITTING NURSE

Because unless you're extra, extra special -- more special than a man with a dick in a bag -- you have to wait in what we call a "line."

PATIENT 1

Oh, girl!

The crowd loves it, and Brant realizes he's not in Kansas anymore. Brant throws off a hand on his arm.

BRANT

Look, lady ...

ADMITTING NURSE

I'm sorry. "Look, Lady?"

PATIENT 3

Oh shit. Oh shit!

BRANT

I was already in the ER. All I want you to ...

ADMITTING NURSE

Oh. So you're all fixed-up.

PATIENT 2

He all fixed up? This guy gotta dick in a bag!

BRANT
All I want you to do is look me up
in the computer.

She points to a SIGN READING "ADMITTANCE DESK."

ADMITTING NURSE
You see this sign.

PATIENT 2
Here it come!

ADMITTING NURSE
This is the Admittance Desk.

PATIENT 3
Woo!

ADMITTING NURSE
I'm the Admitting Nurse.

BRANT
Yes, but ...

PATIENT 2
She's the Admittin' Nurse!

ADMITTING NURSE
(louder, vibing on crowd) This
ain't the All Fixed-Up Desk.

PATIENT 3
Woo, woo!

ADMITTING NURSE
I ain't the All Fixed Up Nurse.

PATIENT 3
Woo!

BRANT
So where's that nurse?

ADMITTING NURSE
Why don't you try the front desk?

PATIENT 1
Uh-oh! UH-OH!

BRANT
And where's that?

ADMITTING NURSE
It's at the front of the hospital.

PATIENT 1
Oh, no, girl! Oh, no you dint!!

Brant throws his chest over her desk. She reels back.

BRANT (CONT.)
Maybe the front desk can help me
with this. It's blood! It's not
mine! I don't remember a thing!
They threw me out of the ER!

ADMITTING NURSE
They threw you out.

BRANT
Yeah!

ADMITTING NURSE
It ain't your blood.

BRANT
No. It ain't!

ADMITTING NURSE
No ideas.

BRANT
None.

ADMITTING NURSE
I got an idea.

BRANT
You do? Please, tell me!

ADMITTING NURSE
Maybe you killed somebody.

BRANT
Maybe I ...

Brant is stunned. A buzz, and again he screams, contorting
across the desk and CRUSHING THE NURSE'S MCMUFFIN. He reads:

"Ryan.Goldstein@cc.com: SERIOUSLY: WHERE THE F!?!?!?"

Off the Blackberry, we see the same wall light blinking.
Brant rolls to see the Nurse.

ADMITTING NURSE
You best run ...

PATIENT 3
Run, cracker, run!

NURSE MR. T REAPPEARS, and EVERYONE IN LINE SEES HIM COMING.

BRANT SCRAMBLES IN COUPLE DIRECTIONS, sees a stairway and bolts, barely outpacing Nurse Mr. T. He loses him in the

INT. STAIRWELL

and finds his way miraculously to the

INT. FRONT DESK

A LITTLE OLD LADY behind an enormous computer. No line. No people. Brant looks at his watch, at her. SHE SMILES. We just know she's incompetent. He's a charmer, though.

BRANT
Hello, Miss ...

Before Brant can react, she presses her collar button.

BRANT (CONT.)
Oh, shit.

Nurse Mr. T appears through a door. He's shockingly quick. Brant sprints through an entryway.

INT./EXT. HOSPITAL LOBBY AND FRONT DRIVE

Brant runs into a crowded street. NURSE MR. T EMERGES, scanning. Brant raises a hand to hail a cab, then sees his gleaming ROLEX. He looks around: the Bronx. He yanks it down.

Nurse Mr. T spots Brant. Brant sees a line of people, a cab stand, one approaching cab. He hesitates: another line.

INT. CAB

The roar of an angry mob as Brant dives in.

BRANT
Step on it! Step on it! I'll give
you another \$20!

The cab rocks violently as the DRIVER TURNS AROUND.

BRANT (CONT.)
\$50. \$100!! Dollar! I give! Lookee!

DRIVER
Fast?

BRANT
Yes!

The Driver floors it, still looking at and terrifying Brant. The Driver eventually turns around. Brant slowly calms down. He finds his MEDICAL INSURANCE CARD. He calls. Hold music ("Karma Chameleon"). His watch reads 8:15.

He triple-tasks onto his Blackberry, reading:

"Eric_Sedini@RiverFunds.com: 'No, she's that slightly overweight reporter for the Financial Times.'"

Brant skips to another string, reading:

"Haslett_Scott_A@LoringWinn: 'Viagra and Goofballs.'"

He skips to yet another string:

"Haslett_Scott_A@LoringWinn: 'Twenty minutes convincing her I hadn't 'been with a man'"

"Eric_Sedini@RiverFunds.com: 'Have you?'"

"Haslett_Scott_A@LoringWinn: 'Are you judging me?'"

"Eric_Sedini@RiverFunds.com: 'How many?'"

"Haslett_Scott_A@LoringWinn: 'At once?'"

Brant types:

"I'm absolutely serious: What happened to me last night?"

Brant's phone rings. He curses and answers.

RYAN (O.S.)
Hey, Douchebag. It's fucking 8:15.

Brant looks at his watch simultaneously, but struggles to read it. We're driving with increasing recklessness.

BRANT
Oh yeah?

RYAN (O.S.)
Yeah. The BSD is parking his car.

BRANT
Meaning ...

RYAN (O.S.)
Meaning are you gonna fucking be
here at fucking 8:30 to fucking
present your fucking presentation?

Brant sees a police cruiser in the near distance.

BRANT
Oh, shit. Oh, fuck.

RYAN (O.S.)
That's right. That's more like it.

Brant watches as we FLY BY THE CRUISER. It flicks its lights, U-turns, and gives chase.

BRANT
Fuck!

RYAN (O.S.)
Are you coming!?

BRANT
Fuck!

RYAN (O.S.)
Is that siren?

Brant hangs up. A chase for several blocks. As he's thrown around, Brant notes a bobblehead Ayatollah on the dash.

We lose the cop behind a city bus. Brant's eyes and the driver's meet in the rearview.

DRIVER
No license plates in back.

BRANT
Ah. Great. Smart.

They fly downtown. The Driver skids into a cabstand in front of Brant's office, then turns and extends his card.

DRIVER
I get you anywhere in hurry.

Brant takes the card. He looks at his watch: 8:26.

BRANT
Nice driving, Zawahiri.

Brant gives him a \$50 and gets out.

EXT. BRANT'S OFFICE BUILDING

Across the car roof, the driver gets out with him.

DRIVER
Was that joke?

Another chase, a footrace until the Driver bails out, worrying about his cab. Brant charges through a back door.

INT. BRANT'S OFFICE

A fresh suit and tie hang on the door. Brant is in his t-shirt, changing. In a very metro (perhaps homo) move, he reaches into his desk and CHECKS HIMSELF IN A COMPACT.

INT. MEETING ROOM

Eight tense people, including the BSD (HILLMAN) and RYAN. Close on the clock as it ticks to 8:30. BRANT ENTERS.

BRANT
Gentlemen. Hillman. The overhead, please?

Lights drop, and Brant is bathed in blue light. Behind him, chemical diagrams, DNA, etc.

BRANT (CONT)
McCreery and Genecell both explored patents in this area a decade ago. This is what McCreery had in mind. (flip slide). Their approach was similar but materially different. They're ultimately not in your space. Genecell is a matter of more subtlety.

More biotech IP mumbo jumbo. Brant knows what he's talking about, he's professional, he's smooth.

Hillman interrupts.

HILLMAN

Okay. Thanks, Brant. Now I want my, what?, \$250,000 answer.

This is the moment. He signals for the lights to come on.

BRANT

To whether you have a unique, patentable product?

HILLMAN

No. To the meaning of life.

Rich laughter appropriate to the boss's joke.

HILLMAN (CONT)

Shut up.

Abrupt silence. Brant smiles, makes eye contact with the partner in the room, GENE. A Jason-Robards-type.

BRANT

Gene?

Gene folds his arms, happy with Brant's performance.

GENE

Tell him what you think, Brant.

Brant appreciates this gesture.

BRANT

Yes. You've got a patentable product.

Hillman's wary at first.

HILLMAN (TO GENE)

That's what your goddamned firm thinks?

GENE

That's what my goddamn firm thinks.

BRANT

Of course, there's litigation risk.

HILLMAN

Of course there is. Heaven forbid you pick your ass through three rounds of clinical trials.

Slight laughter as Hillman flips through the report imperiously. Brant takes the opportunity to turn to the screen. REVERSE to show him discretely dab a bead of sweat.

REVERSE AGAIN: STREAKS OF BLOODY CLAW MARKS soak through the back of Brant's shirt.

He turns back to the room. PAN OVER Hillman's people (completely focused on him), Hillman (reading), and every lawyer (aghast). End on a FEMALE ATTORNEY, a twinkle in her eye. Brant notices nothing, blinded by the projector.

HILLMAN

Will Genecell sue us anyway?

BRANT

I think so. I would.

Hillman muses, then returns to the report. Brant turns around again, showing everyone his back, just as Hillman looks up with another question. RYAN DIVES ACROSS THE TABLE AT HIM.

RYAN

Hillman! I should draw your attention to this here on page 41. Yes, this chart ... "Recent Canine Testing and Related Patents."

Hillman looks at it, then at Ryan. A "Who let you into this meeting?" look. Hillman and entourage rise to leave.

HILLMAN

Nice work.

BRANT

Hillman?

HILLMAN

What.

BRANT

You wanted to know the meaning of life?

HILLMAN

(intrigued)

Yes, I do.

BRANT

Never get drilled in the can.
Unless that's how you prefer it.

A silence like poured concrete. Hillman twitches, then slowly begins a riotous, communal, terrifying laugh.

HILLMAN

Gene, you ain't paying this kid
enough, whatever it is!

Hillman and his entourage exit. Ryan yanks closed the blinds.

BRANT

What an asshole.

RYAN

What the fuck happened to you?

BRANT

What are you talking about?

The Female Attorney gives Brant another look before leaving.

GENE

Very nice work. Get your personal
life together.

Gene exits.

BRANT

What's he talking about?

RYAN

The claw marks all over your back!

Brant reels at his reflection in the glass.

INT. BRANT'S OFFICE - LATER

Brant struggles to put Neosporin on his back, using his compact. It's like he's chasing his tail. We hear bouncy Musak ("I'll Tumble 4 Ya.") from his speakerphone.

He has an idea, diving at a notebook to write it down.

C/U OF NOTEPAD. We see stick figures, one with x'ed out eyes appears supine, the other is running. "Victim" under the former, "Me" under the latter.

We read:

"Possibilities:

a) Delivered baby!

- b) Murder
- c) Horrible accident
- d) Jekyll and Hyde
- e) Rats!"

The Musak transitions to "Do You Really Want to Hurt Me." Brant curses. He's been on hold awhile. He grabs his Blackberry. We follow the message thread, reading:

"Brant.Will@cc.com: "I'm absolutely serious: What happened to me last night?"

"Haslett_Scott_A@LoringWinn: You expressed yourself fully to me. We returned to my flat. I made sweet love to you."

"Eric_Sedini@RiverFunds.com: Really?"

"Haslett_Scott_A@LoringWinn: Yes."

"Eric_Sedini@RiverFunds.com: Gosh."

"Haslett_Scott_A@LoringWinn: Well, finger love."

"Eric_Sedini@RiverFunds.com: Safety first."

"Haslett_Scott_A@LoringWinn: Thumb Love, actually."

"Eric_Sedini@RiverFunds.com: Hot. Prole."

"Haslett_Scott_A@LoringWinn: Totally prole."

C/U OF BRANT'S THUMBS WORKING OVERTIME.

"Brant.Will@cc.com: So help me God, I am not joking."

"Haslett_Scott_A@LoringWinn: No comprende."

"Brant.Will@cc.com: WHAT HAPPENED TO ME LAST NIGHT."

A long beat, then a response.

"Eric_Sedini@RiverFunds.com: You blacked out. Congratulations."

"Brant.Will@cc.com: 'I am NOT KIDDING when I write this. Two hours ago I woke up in an ER in the Bronx. Covered with blood. Not my blood."

A long beat. We read:

"Haslett_Scott_A@LoringWinn: 'Who'd you kill?'

On Brant's reaction until we hear ...

PHONE REP (SPEAKERPHONE)
New York Columbia Healthcare.

He dives at the phone just as another call arrives. Caller ID reads: STEVE.

STEVE (SPEAKERPHONE)
Hey, heard about that super job
this morning, Brant.

BRANT
Thanks, Steve. That means a lot
coming from you.

STEVE (SPEAKERPHONE)
Well ... Let's get together. Today,
even. Discuss your future at the
firm.

BRANT
Gosh, that sounds really great.

STEVE (SPEAKERPHONE)
It's a conversation you want to
have.

BRANT
I know it. I'm sorry. Steve, I've
got a slight emergency on my hands.
Family thing. Could you excuse me?

STEVE (SPEAKERPHONE)
Absolutely. If it's something I can
help with, please let me know. Or
Cindy, she's got my schedule.
Probably better to talk to her
first. Do you have her number?

BRANT
I do.

STEVE (SPEAKERPHONE)
Great. I may be at the club.

BRANT
Great.

STEVE
Or my other club.

BRANT
Got it.

STEVE (SPEAKERPHONE)
Great.

BRANT
Super.

STEVE
Very good.

BRANT
Right.

STEVE
Pronto!

Steve hangs up. Brant switches lines.

BRANT
New York Columbia! New York
Columbia!

PHONE REP (SPEAKERPHONE)
Yes, sir, how can I help you?

Brant exhales.

BRANT
Great! You're still there! Great.
Listen, I was in the ER last night.
Is your database that current?

PHONE REP (SPEAKERPHONE)
It should be. Did you provide the
hospital with your New York
Columbia information?

BRANT
I believe so.

PHONE REP (SPEAKERPHONE)
You carry your card in your wallet?

BRANT
Yes.

PHONE REP (SPEAKERPHONE)
Then they probably found it. Your
name and coverage number please?

BRANT
Brant Will. W-I-L-L. Number
LM9945321.

A few beats as the representative searches the database.

PHONE REP (SPEAKERPHONE)
I don't see anything here.

BRANT
Huh. And you'd definitely have it?

PHONE REP (SPEAKERPHONE)
Yes, sir. We'd be the first people
the ER staff would call.

BRANT
Huh.

PHONE REP (SPEAKERPHONE)
Would you like to file a report?

BRANT
No, thank you. It was a very minor
injury.

PHONE REP (SPEAKERPHONE)
Even so, sir, we recommend you file
a report.

BRANT
It was a nosebleed.

PHONE REP (SPEAKERPHONE)
Ah, good, Then it probably won't
affect your premium.

BRANT
Nothing violent.

PHONE REP
No, sir.

BRANT
Actually, it was a splinter.
Splinter ... complicated by a
nosebleed. No need. Nosebleed.
Thank you.

He hangs up before the rep has a chance to respond.

RYAN (O.C.)
Nothing violent?

Brant is so startled he nearly falls out of his chair. He
turns to find Ryan in the middle of his office, staring.

BRANT
Figure of speech.

RYAN
Oh, yeah?

BRANT
Yeah. (beat) What?

RYAN
My staring? Is that it? I'm searing
your image into my memory.

BRANT
Why.

RYAN
I've never seen one before.

BRANT
Please. Stop staring.

RYAN
This is what a partner looks like.
Before he's made. This is the young
attorney in the full flower of his
first grand success.

BRANT
Please stop.

RYAN
Aglow with the blush of that first
sweet violation.

BRANT
F off.

RYAN
Yes, sir. Yes, sir, partner, sir.

BRANT
F you.

RYAN (TRANCE-LIKE)
They were talking.

BRANT
Who? Would you stop staring?

RYAN

I was on the can. Gene. Ellroy. Steve. They said they were going to make you a partner.

BRANT

They didn't know you were in there?

RYAN

I had my feet up.

BRANT

How?

RYAN

On the stall door. Doctor's orders.

BRANT

What'd they say?

RYAN

Gene said, "Let's make him." Steve said, "Fine." Ellroy said, "Who?"

This throws Brant. He leans back. He's made it. He's not a murderer, but a partner. Ryan snaps out of his trance.

RYAN (CONT.)

Pretty soon Riley's going to start asking after you. Give you the third degree.

BRANT

Please.

RYAN

Somebody told me he shot a dog once. When he was a cop.

BRANT

I don't have a dog.

RYAN

I know.

Ryan notices the notebook, craning. Brant throws himself over it.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Congratulations, and I say that despite the fact that you've made it considerably less likely that I'll ever make partner.

BRANT
Thanks. I appreciate it.

RYAN
So. Who'd you kill?

BRANT
Nobody.

RYAN
Ah.

BRANT
Yeah.

RYAN
Alright, well, see you 'round.

Ryan exits. Brant takes a long moment to absorb the events of this morning. The phone rings, ID reads "Peggy, Reception."

PEGGY (SPEAKERPHONE)
Brant? Package up here for you. You need to sign personally, honey.

BRANT
Okay. Thanks.

Brant takes the notebook and exits into the

INT. HALL

He walks to the reception desk. It's a slow walk, slowly triumphant. He passes a young, sexy PARALEGAL. She looks at him adoringly. The word is out.

INT. RECEPTIONIST'S DESK

We see Brant approach, seeming to ease into the physicality of being a partner. A BIKE MESSENGER, looking like a flying monkey, stands beside Peggy's desk, talking into his radio and drinking coffee. Brant takes the package.

BRANT
(magnanimous) Great work, Peg.

We note Peggy's reaction to this compliment as Brant signs. He hands the ledger to the Bike Messenger, who looks at Brant, chokes, and spit-takes coffee in Brant's face.

BRANT
Ah!! What the F!?

BIKE MESSENGER
The Duke. You're the Duke.

BRANT
What?!

The Bike Messenger stares a beat more, then frantically gathers up his stuff and bolts.

PEGGY
Hey!

Brant cleans himself up and sees the Bike Messenger fight through the doors and into the lobby. Brant follows.

BRANT
Hey!

INT. ELEVATOR LOBBY

The Bike Messenger boards an elevator just as Brant arrives. His POV on Brant through closing doors. REVERSE on the Bike Messenger leaping to a far corner.

Doors close. On Brant, a mess, speechless.

INT. STAIRS

The back stairs, Brant descending wildly then slamming through another door into ...

INT. BUILDING LOBBY

The vast, modern lobby. He sees the Bicycle Messenger, who sees him too and starts running.

BRANT
Hey! Hey, you!

But he exits. Brant accelerates out the revolving doors.

EXT. BUILDING SIDEWALK

The Bike Messenger takes off on his bike as Brant runs after him. Brant unwinds to a full sprint, is almost NECK-AND-NECK WITH THE BIKE MESSENGER, but loses him.

Brant in the middle of a New York intersection. Horns wail. PEOPLE STARING, and the sun above the glass canyon.

INT. LOBBY

He enters. He doesn't notice a seated man watching him cross.

INT. ELEVATOR

The elevator idles. Brant sees himself in the polished steel. He's vague, poorly put-together, and -- abruptly -- ridiculous. He laughs, edging around a breakdown, but finding some relief, like this is all in his head.

The doors start closing, and a hand arrests them. A MIDDLE-AGED MAN steps inside. They start up, and the man produces a key, inserting it in the panel. The alarm sounds, the elevator stops. The Man turns on Brant.

BRANT

Riley!?

RILEY

What was that all about? Getting a little exercise?

BRANT

What?

RILEY

Who's the Bike Messenger and who is he to you?

BRANT

I ... I don't know.

RILEY

Your dealer?

BRANT

No.

RILEY

Pimp?

BRANT

No!

RILEY

I got news for you. You're on the partner path. Congratulations.

BRANT

Thanks.

RILEY

That's the good news. Want the bad news? The bad news is the partner path goes through me.

BRANT

Oh.

RILEY

The one thing you need to know is this: I'm on you like stink on cheese.

BRANT

Gosh.

RILEY

I'm gonna talk to everyone you love, hate, know, heard of, met, or even saw. So right now, right here in this elevator, this is your Come-to-Jesus, Tell-Dr-Phil, Fess-the-Fuck-Up moment.

BRANT

Alright.

RILEY

Is there anything you want to tell me, Will?

BRANT

No.

RILEY

Anything at all?

BRANT

No.

A ridiculously long staring contest. Riley smiles.

RILEY

Alright.

He unlocks the elevator. The doors open on the next floor.

RILEY (CONT.)

See you around.

Riley disappears as the Female Attorney (ANNIE) enters.

ANNIE

Hi, Brant.

He can't answer. The doors close. A beat. SHE JUMPS HIM.

BRANT

What ... (pushing her away) What was that? I can't breathe. It was like anti-mouth-to-mouth!

ANNIE (A LITTLE HURT OR DERANGED)

What?

BRANT

I'm the one who's asking what around here! What the F!

ANNIE

I thought, when you showed everyone your back, I thought ...

BRANT

You thought what!? C'mon!

ANNIE

I thought you were flirting with me. I mean, after last night ...

BRANT

What? Last night?

ANNIE

The things we did ...

BRANT

What did we do last night?

ANNIE

That probe ...

BRANT

Annie, what did we do?

The doors open on their floor. She realizes he doesn't remember.

ANNIE

You don't remember?

BRANT

I'm sorry. I don't. Tell me what happened.

ANNIE

(getting upset) Or you're pretending you don't remember.

BRANT

I'm not pretending. Annie, you have to tell me. Please.

Her face hints at crumbling. She puts a hand reverently on his crotch. He lets her. Brant is taking on far too many mixed signals. She slowly starts to cry.

BRANT

Wait! Oh, no. No don't cry!

She's crying fully now, uncontrollably.

BRANT (CONT)

I'm sorry?

And she slaps him and runs off the elevator.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

An upscale, hotel restaurant. Brant is catatonic. Eric and Scott look at menus. They all have Blackberries, cell phones, tall cocktails, and compacts on the table.

ERIC

So was it hot? With Annie?

BRANT

I don't remember.

ERIC

Right. Right.

SCOTT

I don't know if I've ever had lunch at 10:30 in the morning.

ERIC

I explained, I could do coffee or lunch but not both.

SCOTT
Yeah. What's good here? In this
fucking hotel.

ERIC
Are you drunk?

SCOTT
(sigh) No.

ERIC
What's our waitress's name?
Electra?

SCOTT
Electra. *Elaine*.

ERIC
Elaine. Right.

SCOTT
Electra.

ERIC
Do you think Elaine is wearing
underwear?

SCOTT
No. Of course not.

ERIC
A thong, maybe.

SCOTT
She's a waitress and aspiring actor
in a Midtown microtel. She's not
wearing any underwear.

ERIC
You're right.

SCOTT
Of course I'm right.

ERIC
Elaine. That's not a good
stripper's name.

SCOTT
(to Brant) How you doing? Better?

BRANT
Yes. Thanks.

SCOTT

It's the booze. It always makes you feel better. (to Eric) Wait, are you drunk?

ERIC

I'm not.

SCOTT

(skeptical, then to Brant) I just wish we could be more help to you.

ERIC

This kind of thing happens all the time in the big city.

SCOTT

But, as I say, we remember nothing.

BRANT

Right, right.

SCOTT

So, they're making you partner. That's great. Very good news.

ERIC

What does a partner pull down?

BRANT

I don't know.

ERIC

You don't know.

BRANT

Can we drop it? All this shit about money. Is that all we talk about? Is that all we are? Money?

ERIC

What's wrong with money?

SCOTT

Nothing. He didn't mean it. Brant, look, I'm telling you, forget about it. You didn't do anything wrong. You hooked up with a chick you'd successfully avoided for, what, five years? She's psychotic, and it was a huge mistake, and you're frankly lucky you don't remember anything.

(MORE)

SCOTT(cont'd)

And it would be an even bigger mistake if you went to her and asked her what happened. You'd be reviving something you'd already, albeit unwittingly, put out of its misery.

ERIC

You better pray she didn't videotape it.

SCOTT

Eric.

ERIC

I'm just saying. Pray.

SCOTT

She didn't videotape it, Eric.
(beat) We go out tonight. We all know we do the same shit every night. If you're still obsessing, you can ask around.

BRANT

Who?

SCOTT

Bartenders, waitstaff, whoever ...

ERIC

If we find anyone who knows anything, you can kill them too.

SCOTT

So help me God.

ERIC

I'm sorry. Continue.

SCOTT

Maybe you'll learn something. Maybe you won't.

BRANT

I'm going to call the courier service.

SCOTT

The bike messenger was on drugs. They all are. But call them. Call them.

ERIC

Look, if you want to know what happened just f'ing ask to Annie.

SCOTT

Didn't I tell you beforehand that I'd do all the talking?

ERIC

If he wants to find out what happened, that's where he's got to start.

SCOTT

You finished? Want to add anything? Maybe he should call the police, see if they have any murders he may have been involved in.

ERIC

Alright.

SCOTT

You're finished? You're sure?

ERIC

Alright.

SCOTT

The man's teetering on the edge of insanity here.

ERIC

So what's the deal? They have a private eye investigating you?

BRANT

Yes.

ERIC

Following you around?

SCOTT

Yeah, like the French Connection. No, it's a background check. Trust me, they don't want to know what you do with your spare time.

ERIC

They probably spilled someone else's blood on you. What you should be worried about is hepatitis.

Scott holds Eric with a look for beat, then raises his glass.

SCOTT (CONT.)

To the newest partner at Clarke-Coldebella.

They toast.

SCOTT (CONT.)

Alright, let's get out of here.

EXT. PLAZA - DAY

The thought sticks with him, and Brant begins scanning the street for a tail or Reilly himself. An escalating comic sequence, a send-up of the French Connection train platform scene. It ends when Brant gets his wrist caught in the closing doors of a leaving bus, and a friendly thief taking his Rolex. Big frustration as he yanks out his cell phone.

BRANT

Peggy. Brant. Listen, can you connect me to Annie. She's not? Shit!

We SEE HIM FROM A DISTANCE, turning to us. A Bike Messenger comes into the foreground. Brant turns to us as a cab arrives. He gets in. The Bike Messenger follows him.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S APARTMENT

The stereo blasts AC/DC's "Dirty Deeds" as we explore the room. Every light is on. We explore the room. It's strangely juvenile, a dollhouse, stuffed animals, Ozzy Osborne poster. Arrive at Brant and Annie having sex. Brant is mid-comment.

BRANT

Stop it.

She hits him.

BRANT (CONT.)

Why are you doing that?! Stop!

She does it again.

ANNIE
You like that?

BRANT
No!

She hits him again.

ANNIE
Huh? You like it, don't you?

BRANT
No!

She hits him again, and he slaps her back. She loves it.

BRANT
Dammit! Stop?!

She plants her teeth deep in his shoulder.

BRANT (CONT.)
Ah! Goddammt! Stop!

Her nails across his still-raw back. He screams. So does she.

ANNIE
You ... dirty ... little ... nasty
... piglet ... faggot ... son ...
of ... a motherless ... bitch!

She climaxes. Brant rolls over, heaving, shocked. She puts her head on his chest lovingly. This surprises him too.

BRANT
Funny.

ANNIE
(snuggling) Hmm?

BRANT
I just thought I would have
remembered that.

ANNIE
That's sweet.

BRANT
So ...

ANNIE
So ... what?

BRANT

So you promised you'd tell me what happened?

ANNIE

What does it matter? We're together now.

BRANT

It matters because I'm in a state of profound moral terror ...

She snuggles closer.

ANNIE

Well. We met at the 106ers.

BRANT

What's that?

ANNIE

It's a bar in the West 70s. You were drunk. I tried to take you home, but you insisted on coming here. We made love until about 4:00 a.m. When I woke up, you were gone.

BRANT

You don't know how I got to the hospital?

ANNIE

No. You probably passed out in the cab, then the driver got scared and dropped you off. That happens to me all the time.

BRANT

Did you videotape us?

ANNIE

Last night?

BRANT

No.

ANNIE

No.

BRANT

Good.

ANNIE
I'm not a whore.

BRANT
I know. Did you pour anything on my chest?

ANNIE
Like what?

BRANT
Blood?

ANNIE
No.

BRANT
Pig blood?

ANNIE
(Suppressing a laugh) No.

BRANT
Bosco?

ANNIE
What's Bosco?

She adjusts to look at him, like he's a curiosity.

ANNIE (CONT.)
You're really concerned, aren't you?

Brant gets up at this and starts dressing.

ANNIE (CONT.)
I love you.

A beat. Brant can't begin to process this.

BRANT
Can you excuse me?

ANNIE
Where are you going?

BRANT
The bathroom.

ANNIE
You want to fuck in the shower?

BRANT
I just want to go to the bathroom.

ANNIE
Oh. Alright. It's down the hall.
You want me to watch?

BRANT
No ... Thanks, no.

INT. ANNIE'S APARTMENT (HALL)

Brant walks down the hall, when he hears:

ANNIE (O.C.)
Duke?

He runs back.

INT. ANNIE'S APARTMENT (BEDROOM)

He stares at her and closes.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
What?

BRANT
Did you just call me "Duke"?

ANNIE
Duke? No.

BRANT
You didn't just shout "Duke!"

ANNIE
No. I did shout "You're the Dude!"

BRANT
Oh ... why?

ANNIE
I'm just excited. About you. Dude.

BRANT
Alright. Excuse me.

He again heads down the hall. He pauses at the bathroom, then continues to the front door.

INT. ANNIE'S APARTMENT (BEDROOM)

On Annie, listening to Brant's movements.

BRANT (O.S.)
 (loudly) I'm sorry, Annie, but this
 can never happen again.

A door slams. We hear Brant running down a hall.

Annie rises, walks to a desk, and sits down at her computer, naked. We may notice a little camera on top of the monitor.

CUT TO:

INT. BRANT'S APARTMENT

Brant enters holding a paper drug store bag. He finds his shirt. He checks the street below from his window (for Riley), then scrambles to the bathroom.

INT. BRANT'S BATHROOM

From the bag, he pulls out a home blood test kit. He yelps as he pricks his own finger. He types it. He looks at the instructions, then takes some dried blood from the shirt and mixes it with hot water. He tests it. A long wait. His cell phone rings: Brant's MOM. He curses and answers.

BRANT
 Hi, Mom. Oh, nothing. Work's going well. No, we broke up. Mmm. Yeah. How's Dad. She said that? Huh.

The test shows "inconclusive."

BRANT (CONT.)
 FUCK! GODDAMMIT! Oh, I'm sorry! I'm sorry, Mom! I just ... someone nearly ran me over. I know. I love you, Mom, but I've got to go ... yes ... I've got to ... Mom? ... I've got to go, Mom. ... Yes, yes I know ... tunnel ... bop ... bat ...

He hangs up. He places another call.

BRANT
 Hi, Peggy? It's Brant. Can you do me a favor?

(MORE)

BRANT(cont'd)

Can you get me the name of that
bike messenger? ... You did.
Nothing? No names at all. You
talked to the manager. Did you ...
Incredible. They're not the fucking
CIA, they should have his name. Did
you ask ... No, I'm ... I'm not
yelling at you ... Peggy ... I'm
sorry. I'm not ... I'm not ... I
understand. Peggy, I'm sorry!

But she's hung up already. He's unphased, switching to his
computer. He searches "blood labs New York." All he gets are
city offices. He searches the crime blotter and finds
nothing. He looks up his credit card bills online. They list
charges at several bars from last night. He prints a MAP OF
LAST NIGHT'S BARS.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR - LATER

Brant's talking to staff as they breakdown lunch.

BRANT

This would have been about seven.
Three of us. The other two very
polite. Late twenties.

The MANAGER shrugs. Brant makes a note on his map.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR #2

Brant talks to an ATTRACTIVE BARTENDER in a faux dive.

BRANT

Early thirties. Professional.
Probably had a few drinks.

EXT. SIDEWALK

Brant walks strangely, almost dancing as he looks for a tail.

INT. BAR #3

BRANT

A couple thirtysomething
boozehounds throwing money all over
the place.

BRANT

These are your friends.

BRANT

Yes.

INT. BAR #4

BRANT

This was around midnight.

BARTENDER #1

You a cop?

BRANT

No.

EXT. SIDE OF BUILDING

Brant furtively sticks his head around the building a couple
times.

INT. BAR #5

BRANT

This was around one in the morning.

BARTENDER #2

You a cop?

BRANT

Yes I am.

INT. BAR #6

BRANT (CONT.)

... actually they're both expensive-
looking, but in kind of Menendez
brothers, way. They're both
functional alcoholics. Very smug.
Maybe a little gay.

ATTRACTIVE BARTENDER #3
These are your friends?

BRANT
Not really ...

INT. BAR #7

BRANT (CONT.)
We're here all the time.

ATTRACTIVE BARTENDER #4
Oh, yeah?

INT. BAR #8

BRANT
We're here all the time.

INT. BAR #9

BRANT
You've never seen us? We're here
all the time.

ATTRACTIVE BARTENDER #5
I've never seen you before. I doubt
I'd remember if I had. A hundred
people fifty just like you come
through here every hour. Even if
one or all of you had told me your
names hundreds of times with a
smile on your fat faces, I would
have done everything in my power to
forget them and you.

REVERSE on Brant with his map, nodding, stunned.

EXT. SIDEWALK

Brant again dances down the sidewalk until his Blackberry
buzzes, and he's abruptly at ease.

"Peggy_Proeitti@cc.com: You're on with Steve. NY Fence
Club. 2:15 today."

Brant looks at his watch. It's 2:05. He panics briefly, then remembers. He pulls on the CAB DRIVER'S CARD.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRONX

A different intersection. The cab skids to a halt.

INT. CAB

Brant dives in, and again the Driver stares holes through him.

BRANT

First of all, I'm sorry about that earlier comment.

The Driver says nothing.

BRANT (CONT.)

It was wrong (beat) More importantly, it was insensitive. To your faith.

The Driver still says nothing.

BRANT

565 Lex.

A cop briefly, unsuccessfully gives chase.

EXT. FENCE CLUB

The cab skids to a halt, and Brant leaps out.

INT. FENCE CLUB

Off a clock showing 2:17, we are tight on STEVE and Brant. From the neck down, they both wear the same white clothes.

STEVE

What do you want out of the law, Brant?

BRANT

Steve, I ... I don't know.

STEVE
That's a good answer. It's an
honest answer.

BRANT
Thanks.

STEVE
I wanted to be a scourge to the
cruel people of the world.

BRANT
Yes, I do.

STEVE
I wanted justice. The kind of
justice that tastes like blood in
your mouth.

Pull back to reveal a fencing studio. Brant and Steve sit.
Behind them, in a fencing mask, is another man. Is it Reilly?

BRANT
We all want that kind of justice.

STEVE
Have you ever fenced?

BRANT
Never.

STEVE
That's good. I've fenced for, well
for thirty years. I had the honor
of representing my country in the
Olympics.

BRANT
I didn't know that.

STEVE
It's true.

BRANT
The U.S.

STEVE
The United States of America, yes.

Steve holds up his foil.

STEVE (CONT'D)
This is a fencing foil.

BRANT

I know.

STEVE

This is ethics, Brant.

BRANT

Yes.

STEVE

Ethics.

BRANT

How, exactly, is this ethics,
Steve?

STEVE

I'm glad you asked me that. Ethics,
like fencing, is an artifice. The
ethical world is an artificial
world, you understand that.

BRANT

Yes, I do.

STEVE

As such, it's incredibly fragile.
All that holds it together is our
willingness to participate, to be
bound by its rules.

BRANT

I see.

STEVE

Unbound, unwilling to participate,
we are capable of anything, the
most venal acts, without a shadow
of remorse.

BRANT

Yes.

STEVE

Ethics.

BRANT

Right.

STEVE

In fencing, the foil is the scourge
of poor play.

BRANT

Yes.

Steve gestures. An assistant brings them equipment.

STEVE

I want you, Brant, to feel the sting of shame.

He rises, and Brant follows. Other assistants hook them up to their boxes and electric cables. A long patient shot as Steve assumes a position, and Brant, mimicking it, follows.

STEVE (CONT'D)

(shouting) Would you dare throw off the moorings of grace and disgrace?! (charging) Ahhh!!!!

BRANT

Ahh!!!

Steve approaches and strikes Brant. A board and tone sound the score as Brant screams.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY

SFX: Muffled, unplaceable noise of underground travel. Brant looks like everyone else, except for a thin layer of moral terror and a bright red mark on his cheek.

He looks at another sheet of paper in his hand. CLOSE on an address: "Mercy-St. Margaret's Hospital, 178th Street."

EXT. BRONX

He emerges from the subway. The Hospital comes into view.

EXT. HOSPITAL - LATER

Brant smokes, standing at a safe distance from the ER with a view of the employees' parking lot. REVERSE on Nurse Mr. T exiting with a bag, heading home. Brant chases after him.

BRANT

Hey!

NURSE MR. T

(turning) What do you want?

BRANT
First of all, I've got a stun gun.

NURSE MR. T
Oh yeah. Well I'm not working right now.

BRANT
What happened to me last night?

NURSE MR. T
How would I know?

BRANT
You'd know more than me. I don't remember anything.

Nurse Mr. T doesn't answer, continuing briskly toward the subway.

BRANT (CONT.)
Please.

NURSE MR. T
Please.

They descend into the

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM

Brant follows him through the turnstile, hopping it.

NURSE MR. T (CONT.)
Can't shake this kid.

BRANT
I just want to know. You're my last resort.

NURSE MR. T
Know what? I can't help you.

BRANT
Are you sure? Can you try?

NURSE MR. T
Yes and no.

They see the train coming. Brant turns back to Mr. T.

BRANT
Did I hurt anyone?

A beat. Nurse Mr. T sees his serious.

NURSE MR. T
You freaked out like you were Iggy
Pop. You knocked Zeke's teeth in.

BRANT
(beat) How'd I get there?

NURSE MR. T
No idea.

BRANT
Did all that blood come from Zeke?

The train arrives. The doors open. We wait. Nurse Mr. T smiles at Brant, then JUMPS AT HIM. Brant leaps several yards away, and Nurse Mr. T boards the train through closing doors. Brant approaches, and they watch one another as the train moves away.

Brant's Blackberry pulses. He checks it:

"Riley@cc.com: 'Let's talk some more.'"

Brant types.

"Brant_Will@cc.com: 'Can't now. Later? Thx, bw.'"

"Riley@cc.com: 'Where are you?'"

Brant starts to type again, but another message pops.

"Riley@cc.com: 'Do you think I can see you right now?'"

Brant is struck with paranoia. He surveys the platform.

"Riley@cc.com: 'Where's the notebook?'"

ON "Notebook," then BRANT, PANIC SETTING IN. He looks for a train. Nothing. The map. He couldn't even get back to the office from here. He runs up the steps.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRONX

A different intersection. The cab skids to a halt.

INT. CAB

Brant dives in, and again the Driver stares, but it's all old hat as Brant draws his cell phone.

BRANT
The office. And step on it.

They peel out. Brant calls Ryan.

BRANT
Did you tell Reilly about my notebook?

RYAN (O.S.)
No. What are you talking about?

BRANT
You did.

RYAN (O.S.)
Help me understand what you're talking about because you sound a little crazy.

BRANT
You little punk.

RYAN (O.S.)
I haven't the faintest idea what you're talking about.

BRANT
You're selling me down the fucking river. I don't believe it.

RYAN (O.S.)
Brant. Calm down. I'm on your side. (s.v., conspiratorial)
If there's a notebook with something incriminating in it, tell me where it is and I'll get rid of it.

BRANT
Ha!

RYAN (O.S.)

Brant
(s.v., more conspiratorial)
Between you, me, and the copier
machine, they're in your office
right now.

BRANT

F you.

RYAN

The notebook. Before it's too late.

He hangs up. He thinks hard: They're definitely searching his office.

ANOTHER COP CRUISER GIVES CHASE. They're doing great again, until the cab starts to choke.

BRANT

What?

DRIVER

No gas!

They roll to a stop. The cop hauls out the driver, saying something through the window to Brant that we can't understand. However, we know it means, "Don't move."

Brant watches the cop drag the Driver away. BRANT BOLTS.

EXT. BUILDING SIDEWALK

Brant running.

INT. HALL

... still running ...

INT. BRANT'S OFFICE

Someone's clearly been in here. Brant frantically searches for the notebook, finding nothing.

INT. RYAN'S OFFICE

Brant enters. It's empty. Brant charges out.

INT. HALL/LOBBY

Brant looks for Ryan. He jabs a door open.

INT. STAIRS

He descends, exiting into a shipping/receiving area, then the alley behind his building.

EXT. ALLEY

The smoker's lounge. Ryan's not here either. Brant reaches for his own cigarettes, and discovers the NOTEBOOK IN HIS JACKET. He promptly tries to light it with his Zippo. It seems to burn well until Brant notices his JACKET ON FIRE. He struggles to get out of it, only barely succeeding.

RYAN EXITS THE BUILDING, sees Brant, and tries to re-enter, succeeding only after wrestling out of Brant's fists. Brant tries to go in after him, but discovers the half-burnt remains of his ID in his jacket hip pocket. Even so, he tries to run the half-card through the reader again and again. His rage spirals.

He stops. He seems to pull himself together. He turns to see the notebook burning. This is all the evidence left.

INT. TWIST AND STRIP BUFFET

We listen to the "Girl From Ipanema." Scott and Eric twist through the buffet line. Strippers dance above and behind hot trays of soul food.

ERIC

So we're just going to hit the places we hit last night?

SCOTT

Yeah.

ERIC

Good. Fine.

SCOTT

Funny, this isn't as fun as I remember it.

ERIC

I'm having a great time.

SCOTT
I can't help but feel I'm going
through the motions. (to stripper)
Hi, Lindsey.

They twist to a booth where Brant sits, without food,
despondent. Eric and Scott slide in on either side of him,
grooving and now eating too.

BRANT
Can we get out of here?

ERIC
What's the problem?

BRANT
The problem is, we were never here
last night.

ERIC
How do you know?

BRANT
Because they were closed. I talked
to Burt. Board of Health, again.

SCOTT
Really.

ERIC
Will those goons ever lay off?

INT. BAR #11

They all walk in, look around. Scott mimes something to Eric:
"Sausage Factory." Brant is barely there.

INT. BAR #12

ON SCOTT as he dances stiffly, but resolutely on the disco
floor. REVERSE to Brant and Eric at the bar, watching him
philosophically. Brant shouts, Eric bends to listen, but
can't. Brant repeats.

BRANT
(shouting over music)
What am I doing with my life?

Eric gives him a vaguely thoughtful look. Brant continues,
encouraged. He points at both of them.

BRANT (CONT'D)
What are we doing?

Eric nods, then gestures while drinking from a straw: "Wait." His nodding we see is actually dancing, as he sets his drink down and heads out on the dance floor. Brant isn't surprised. Scott now dances with a couple girls.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Pan over Brant, Eric, and Scott at the bar. Brant is lost in thought. Scott is on his Blackberry. Eric scans for action.

BRANT
What am I doing with my life?

SCOTT
That's right. Let it all out.

BRANT
My job. My priorities. What are my priorities?

SCOTT
I don't know if you have any.

BRANT
Drinking.

SCOTT
So much drinking. (drinks) Too much.

BRANT
Yeah.

SCOTT
And your job?

BRANT
Yeah.

SCOTT
Yeah. (scoff)

INT. BAR

Brant, Scott, and Eric now in a booth. Brant is still talking. Pan over them again and end on Eric, head thrown back in suffering.

BRANT
It's not like I wanted to change
the world or anything.

SCOTT
You?

BRANT
That's not really me.

SCOTT
Not in your skill set.

BRANT
But what do I do? I protect the
patent privileges of huge, multi-
national pharmaceutical companies.

SCOTT
Money.

BRANT
Is that what I am?

SCOTT
Yes.

BRANT
Is that all I can expect to
accomplish with my life?

SCOTT
If that.

BRANT
And women.

SCOTT
Amen, brother.

BRANT
I'm a serial dater.

SCOTT
And a cheat.

BRANT
What?

SCOTT
I'm sorry, continue.

BRANT
I've never cheated on anyone.

SCOTT
I know. I was just ... well, I was
ad-libbing. Please. Go on.

ON ERIC, his head lolling as he tries to stay awake.

BRANT
You remember that girl, Erin? Now
she was a nice girl.

ERIC
Oh my God.

BRANT
I should have held on to her. Good
girl. Great girl. I don't know why
... why would you lash out like
that?

Eric bangs his head.

SCOTT
I for one don't want to hear you
complain about women. You have no
woman problems.

BRANT
And you do?

SCOTT
I can't meet a nice girl.

BRANT
You've met a number of them. You
turn on every one.

SCOTT
They're into me for the action.

BRANT
So what?

SCOTT
So I'm more than a sex machine. But
once the word is out on the street.
My God ...

BRANT
How does that make you feel?

Eric groans.

SCOTT
I don't know. Cheap.

BRANT
Cheap.

SCOTT
And used.

BRANT
Maybe if you dressed differently.

SCOTT
Are you telling me the way I dress
invites this kind of treatment?

BRANT
Sure it does. You look like ...

SCOTT
I look like what?

BRANT
You look like you want it that way.
Those pants ...

SCOTT
This is the standard Brooks cut.

BRANT
Maybe in 1962.

SCOTT
What do you know about fashion?

BRANT
... you know what? How did we start
talking about you? Can we talk
about me some more?

SCOTT
Are we ever not talking about you?

BRANT
I'm the one with the crisis.

SCOTT
Aren't you always?

Long silence, then Eric suddenly stands. It's the first
excited movement we've seen him make.

ERIC

I think ... Yes! The escorts are here!

Brant goes to the head. It's a CBGB's type of place, filth as aesthetic. As he pees, we flash on different grafitti: "Got Dick?", "Dick Police", "Cock", "Dick", "Dongk" and end with "This is a dick" next to a big cartoon. Brant finishes. He washes up, then checks himself in a mirror with a big dick and balls on it. He turns to exit. The door handles a dick.

He returns to a young woman alone in their booth, so beautiful Brant stops in his tracks. She sees him. A staring contest. Brant recovers.

BRANT

Who are you?

EXIE

So you really don't remember?

BRANT

No.

EXIE

I'm Exie. The other girl is Evie.

BRANT

Cute.

EXIE

We were with you last night.

BRANT

Do you remember anything?

EXIE

No. It's all pretty forgettable in retrospect.

BRANT

Great. Everybody's smoking?

EXIE

Yes.

He sits. They say nothing.

EXT. SIDEWALK

They're looking for the next bar.

BRANT
Ron's? I've never heard of it.

SCOTT
I know we were here.

ERIC
Here it is. It's closed.

BRANT
It closed overnight?

ERIC
Or we weren't here at all.

SCOTT
I know we were here.

ERIC
This looks really bad, Scott.

BRANT
The sign looks like it's been here
for months.

SCOTT
Maybe it was a private party or
something. A speakeasy, rave type
of thing.

SCOTT
Could it have been Rod's?

ERIC
The S&M place?

SCOTT
The place with the state fair
theme.

ERIC
Oh, yeah. That place closed. Board
of Health.

Brant leaves. They start after him.

INT. BAR

Brant and Exie stand near the bar.

EXIE
So where'd all the blood come from?

BRANT
Apparently I knocked a nurse's
teeth out. A male nurse.

EXIE
But ...

BRANT
But I don't know. Do you think
Annie could have poured, like, pig
blood all over me?

EXIE
What, like Carrie? It's pretty hard
to imagine.

BRANT
Maybe she was having her period?

Exie considers.

EXIE
She'd have to be a real gusher.

Brant tries to respond and instead nearly spits up his drink.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Brant and Exie walk together a few paces behind the others.

BRANT
When you're not escorting, what do
you do?

EXIE
... Nothing really. I mean, apart
from being a student.

BRANT
You're a student?

EXIE
Yeah.

BRANT
Of what?

EXIE
Art. Art History. Art and Art
History.

BRANT
Oh.

EXIE
I used to be a medical student.

BRANT
You did.

EXIE
Yeah. But it all started to seem so
pointless.

BRANT
Medicine?

EXIE
Totally.

BRANT
In what way.

EXIE
Well, everyone dies in the end,
right?

BRANT
I suppose that's true, but

EXIE
So what are you really trying to
accomplish?

BRANT
Hmm, yes.

EXIE
I am a doctor. I mean, I graduated.

BRANT
You are? You did?

EXIE
Yeah. I've delivered babies.

BRANT
You have? Wasn't that somehow
inspirational?

EXIE
Yeah ... but it was pretty loud.
I've pulled bullets out of dudes.
(MORE)

EXIE(cont'd)

You know what flattened bullets look like? If they've hit a bone or something?

BRANT

What?

EXIE

Fillings.

BRANT

Oh.

EXIE

You know, cavity fillings.

BRANT

Yes. Yes, I know. (beat) So you're a doctor?

EXIE

I was. Now I'm an escort.

BRANT

Yeah. And an art student.

EXIE

Yeah, and an EMT.

BRANT

You're an EMT.

EXIE

Where are we going? This is taking forever.

INT. BAR #13

BRANT

So, what happens if you like a guy who you're escorting?

EXIE

What do you think?

BRANT

You sleep with him or something?

EXIE

Or something. That's the whole idea.

BRANT

Yeah, but

EXIE

The whole escort industry is based on that.

BRANT

I see.

EXIE

What happens when you like a girl you take out on a date?

BRANT

I sleep with her. I try. That's what I'm supposed to answer, right?

EXIE

Yes.

BRANT

Yes. Perfect moral equivalence.

EXIE

You're buying them stuff, right? So you're paying them, and if they like you, they sleep with you, don't they?

BRANT

But they could refuse, if I made a pass at them.

EXIE

And how often does that happen? In the Big City?

BRANT

All the time.

EXIE

You're soliciting them. You're soliciting sin. They're offering sin. That sounds equivalent to me.

BRANT

So what, if anything, is sin-free sex.

EXIE

Sex without money. Or any kind of transaction.

BRANT
So you're a communist.

EXIE
Love is communism.

BRANT
Jesus.

EXIE
That's what ruined the Soviet
Union.

BRANT
Alcohol ruined the Soviet Union.

EXIE
As it ruins love.

BRANT
Yes. I see. Love is communism.

EXIE
Are you a communist?

BRANT
Of course not. Are you?

EXIE
I'm whatever you want me to be.

BRANT
Right.

EXIE
Right. Have you ever been a
communist?

BRANT
Have I ever been in love?

EXIE
Call it whatever you want.

BRANT
Yes.

EXIE
What happened?

BRANT
She didn't love me. What else
happens?

EXIE
That's too bad.

BRANT
Are you now or have you ever been a
member of the communist party?

EXIE
(beat) No.

BRANT
(beat) That's too bad.

EXIE
(shrug) I lose myself in my work.

Eric, Evie, and Scott reenter.

SCOTT
(to Brant) I thought about what I
said earlier, and I'm sorry.

BRANT
I'm sorry too.

SCOTT
Hit the next place?

BRANT
Yeah.

EXIE
I'm sorry you girls are fighting.

INT. CAB

Brant, Eric, Scott, Evie, Exie, and now BANZ and ANGIE, two
friends, all tight together. Brant keeps looking back at the
cars behind them.

SCOTT
What are you doing?

BRANT
Nothing.

ERIC
He's looking for a tail.

A beat. Somebody (Banz) snorts back a laugh.

EXT. SIDEWALK #2

Brant and Exie walk together somewhere else.

BRANT

So ... so wouldn't art and art history be every bit as pointless as medicine? More so?

EXIE

I suppose. I hadn't really thought of it that way before.

BRANT

Yeah, well, art is almost totally pointless.

EXIE

I guess you're right.

BRANT

I mean, that's the whole point of art, really.

EXIE

I guess.

BRANT

Not that it's not a good use of your time, relatively speaking.

EXIE

Yeah.

BRANT

Relative to escorting, I mean.

EXIE

No, I understand.

BRANT

So what'd you expect to get out of art and art history?

EXIE

I don't know. I guess I thought there'd be better parties.

BRANT

Were there?

EXIE

No.

INT. BAR #15

Scott and Eric look around. A long bar, real regulars, swill on tap.

SCOTT

This isn't faux dive. This is dive.

ERIC

Schlitz.

SCOTT

What is it, 1999?

ERIC

This is faux dive. That's what Time Out says.

SCOTT

F'ing Schlitz.

ERIC

What's wrong with Schlitz?

SCOTT

Well, first of all, it's in a can.

ERIC

I thought you liked it in the can.

Scott rolls his eyes, undeterred, unimpressed.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Scott? Honey?

SCOTT

It's fake faux. I'm outta here.

EXT. SIDEWALK

All walking. ON Brant and Exie, a ways behind the rest. They aren't really talking, but are clearly together. They stop at a light, while the others walk on ahead. They share an awkward moment, then Brant looks around and THINKS HE SEES RILEY.

BRANT

Oh shit!

EXIE
What? Shit?

He sees a revolving door to an office building.

BRANT
C'mon!

He grabs her and they dash across the street. Horns wail.

EXIE
Hey!

They enter the revolving door, Brant pushing her into the same
dividing in the door.

BRANT
Can I hide behind you?

EXIE
What? Why?

BRANT
I'm trying to pick up a tail.

EXIE
A tail?

BRANT
We'll go right around and back out.

EXIE
You're stepping on my foot.

BRANT
Oh, sorry.

EXIE
I'm stuck. I think ... shit, I lost
a heel.

BRANT
Keep going.

EXIE
Stop!

Brant pushes the door and the heel wedges it shut.

BRANT
Oh shit!

EXIE
We're trapped!

They're very close to one another.

BRANT
We're sitting ducks!

He bounces around, looking for the tail.

EXIE
For who?!

BRANT
Your heel! Shit!

EXIE
I'm claustrophobic, you know!

BRANT
I can't get it out!

EXIE
We're running out of air!

BRANT
It's okay!

He puts an arm around her waist as he yanks at the heel. He tries to hide behind her.

EXIE
Oh, God!

BRANT
It's okay! You're alright! I'm
right here, Exie! Shit!

EXIE
Brant!

BRANT
We're going to be alright! I've got
you!

Rising tension. He frees her heel. The door moves. They exit back out on the street.

BRANT
You're okay!

EXIE
Oh, yes.

BRANT
You're okay.

EXIE
Yes.

BRANT
You're okay.

EXIE
(deliberate) I am okay.

They straighten themselves out.

BRANT
Right. False alarm. Ready?

INT. BAR

ON EXIE'S BARE FEET, dangling from her stool. Scott and Brant stand beside her. Eric and Evie giggle in a pair of stools nearby. Their drinks and Exie's shoes are on the bar.

SCOTT
I'm agoraphobic.

EXIE
What? Like sweaters?

SCOTT
Open spaces. I think, if I ever had to walk on the moon, I'd go insane.

EXIE
Let's hope that never happens.

SCOTT
I've steered clear of the space program.

EXIE
(beat) Would you like me to call an escort for you?

SCOTT
Do you know any good ones?

EXIE
Sure. Lots.

SCOTT
Oh, good. Yes, please.

EXIE

Now do you want a whore or a nice girl?

SCOTT

Wow. That's the big question, isn't it?

EXIE

Yeah, it is. Take your time.

SCOTT

Thanks.

EXIE

Usually men want whores at first, then lose respect for them.

SCOTT

Makes sense. However, I think I'd actually gain respect for the right whore.

EXIE

I have to confess, I was lying. All the girls I know are whores.

SCOTT

Oh.

EXIE

Basically.

SCOTT

Yeah.

EXIE

I do know one nice girl. You want to meet her?

SCOTT

What does she look like?

EXIE

You want to meet her or not?

SCOTT

Is she fat?

EXIE

She's not fat on the inside.

SCOTT
Pretty?

EXIE
Pretty is as pretty does.

SCOTT
What does she do?

EXIE
She's a stripper.

SCOTT
Really.

EXIE
No. I lied again. Oops. She's an
EMT.

SCOTT
Let me ask you a question: what do
you think of how I dress?

EXIE
(up and down) Very taut and preppy.
Like an obscure Kennedy fop.

SCOTT
That's bad?

EXIE
Well, I wouldn't get into like a
motorboat with you.

SCOTT
Is it the cufflinks?

EXIE
Yes.

SCOTT
The blazer, the collar?

EXIE
The shoes. What are those? Aldens?

SCOTT
Call your friend. I'd like to meet
her.

EXIE
Good. She's been asking me to set
her up with someone.

(MORE)

EXIE(cont'd)

(starts dialing) She's been, like,
all over me.

SCOTT

You're calling her right now?

EXIE

I'm sure she's not doing anything.

SCOTT

Oh.

EXIE

She hasn't dated in years ...
Jenny? It's me. (to Scott) I'm
leaving a message. (to phone)
Listen (to Scott) What's your
number?

CUT TO:

INT. OTHER SIDE OF BAR

Brant talks to Banz and Angie.

BANZ

Holy shit.

Brant waves for a drink.

BANZ (CONT'D)

So, do you remember anything?

BRANT

Nothing.

BANZ

Holy shit.

Brant makes accidental, intense eye contact with Exie.

BANZ (CONT'D)

So, you don't think you killed
anyone, do you?

We see Banz and Angie share a look in the background, as
Brant doesn't react. Exie returns her attention to Scott, but
Brant continues to stare.

BANZ (CONT'D)

Holy shit!

The bartender brings a drink. Brant snaps out of it, and turns.

BRANT
Quite.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR #10

Brant and Exie in a booth.

BRANT (INTERRUPTING)
Why are you an escort?

EXIE
Why?

BRANT
Yeah. Why?

EXIE
I don't know.

BRANT
You don't.

EXIE
You know, something to do. Why are you a lawyer?

BRANT
Money. Suits.

EXIE
See.

BRANT
Not really.

EXIE
Would I get to dress like this in a straight job?

BRANT
You'd be surprised.

Conversation stalls.

EXIE (CONT)
You want to know why I'm an escort?

BRANT

Yeah.

EXIE

I don't know. I think maybe I'm afraid of men. Or winding up with the wrong man. I can escape.

Brant looks at her carefully for several beats, wondering if it's worth sharing a very private story.

BRANT

Two years ago I left this very bar, drunk, at about three in the morning. I lived in the Village then. For some reason, I took the subway. I came up from the station at 13th Street (?), where I was mugged by two kids with a gun. I took out my wallet and was about to hand it over, when I decided that that night I was prepared to die for it. I put my wallet back. I'm not exactly sure what happened immediately after that, but the next thing I knew, one of the kids was running, the gun was gone and I was smashing this boy's mouth into the sidewalk. I had his head in both my hands. Like a basketball pass. They were hot with blood. My hands. That's what stopped me. Blood on the cuff of my shirt. I ran home. I looked in every paper for a week and never saw anything about it. I don't think he was conscious when I left him.

EXIE

You didn't call the police.

BRANT

No.

EXIE

He probably pulled himself together and walked home.

BRANT

Yeah.

EXIE

But.

BRANT

But I do nothing with my life, then abruptly without thinking, simply by chance really, I do something incredibly brutal. And I feel intense remorse for awhile, and then it's just a memory. Then an excuse.

EXIE

I know what you need.

BRANT

What?

EXIE

You need a woman. A man needs a woman. A woman needs a man. People need one another.

BRANT

Yeah.

EXIE

You've been young too long. You need to get a little old.

BRANT

I wish I knew what that meant.

EXIE

Explanation is witchcraft.

BRANT

What are you talking about?

She takes his hand.

EXIE

Explain why you like this.

BRANT

Is this how you treat your clients?

EXIE

What do you think?

BRANT

I think it sometimes is.

EXT. SIDEWALK

This time, they're slightly ahead of the rest of the gang. They're more serene, almost together. In the distance we may see a flock of Bike Messengers approaching. As we cross the street, Exie does see them, and SOMETHING LIKE PANIC CROSSES HER FACE. Instead of moving, though, she stops Brant and kisses him, a desperate kiss. Then she leans back, looking at him very carefully. He doesn't know what to make of it and doesn't care. He grabs her and kisses her deeply, not noticing the TORRENT OF BIKE MESSENGERS RACING BY.

They disengage, now noticing the Bike Messengers.

A BLONDE BIKE MESSENGER turns on the back seat of a scooter. It's a little scary as the flock wheels around at us.

Scott, Eric, Evie, Banz, Angie and Mr. New York join Brant and Exie. It's a bizarre stand-off, until the BLOND BIKE MESSENGER (ANGEL) pushes through her crowd to Brant.

BLONDE

It's you. The Duke. It's him!

She closes. A fragile smile.

BLONDE (CONT'D)

Win me tonight, Duke? Make me yours?

Brant can't speak. Another BIKE MESSENGER steps forward, taking her arm.

BIKE MESSENGER #2

C'mon!

BLONDE

Let me go!

BIKE MESSENGER #2

C'mon!!

A small, possessive fight, strange theater, and she relents, seeming to accept that she's his property. He puts her back on his scooter, then rides right to Brant.

BIKE MESSENGER #2 (CONT.)

You've been summoned. Midnight. The Lightningdome.

With a dramatic gesture that indicates he's the chief of this set, they all remount and ride off.

BLONDE
(a fading shout) Win me, Duke!
Duke!!

SCOTT
Duke?

EXIE
Duke.

BLONDE
(distant) Duke!

Several beats.

BANZ
What the fuck happened to you last
night?

BRANT
I don't know.

BANZ
You don't know?

ERIC
Duke?

BANZ
Dude, whatever happened to you last
night, it was fucked up.

BRANT
No shit.

BANZ
I mean, fucked.

BRANT
Yeah! It's nice to see somebody
show some f'ing concern!

BANZ
You bet I'm concerned.

SCOTT
Win her?

Banz takes another look into the distance, considering.

BANZ
Did anyone see that Frontline
documentary on Sex Slaves?

At this, Eric steps forward and hails a cab.

SCOTT
Win her?! Holy shit!

A cab pulls up. Eric opens the door.

BANZ
We got to get to the bottom of
this.

BRANT
How?

BANZ
Follow them. Find out. You have to.

BRANT
I do?

BANZ
You definitely have to go. I mean
...

Banz and Angie get in the cab. Eric and Evie are already inside. Brant sees things quickly getting beyond his control. He locks eyes with Scott, who's staring.

BRANT
What?

SCOTT
Nothing.

Scott gets in the cab.

Brant looks at Exie. She's perfectly expressionless.

INT. CAB - SAME

Brant sits in front, in Eric's lap. Scott, Banz, Angie and Exie are in back.

BANZ
(to others) See, it makes sense. He
used to ride motocross.

BRANT
What!

BANZ
Nothing!

ERIC
(to Brant) Is this okay, like this?

BRANT
I'm fine.

ERIC
You're not ... uncomfortable.

BRANT
No.

ERIC
You're sure. I could try something
... different.

BRANT
No.

We see a FLOCK OF SCOOTERS TAKE A TURN a few blocks ahead.

BANZ
There they go!

The cab takes off. They try to catch up with the scooters, hunting through the lower Village. They seem to have disappeared. The cab stops and starts through intersections.

BANZ
I don't see anything.

BRANT (TO THE DRIVER)
It was like 10 guys on scooters.

DRIVER
I looking ...

THREE SCOOTERS PEEL DOWN A PARALLEL STREET.

ANGIE
There!

They give chase again. We can see them. It feels like we're gaining.

BANZ (EARNEST)
You know, Brant, if you're some
kind of stooge in some kind of sex
slave ring ...

BRANT
... yeah?

BANZ
 ... I mean, that's serious shit.
 That's a crime.

BRANT
 Oh yeah? That's your opinion, as an
 attorney?

BANZ
 You can't just win women. My God.
 It's 2007!

THEY'RE ALL THROWN AS THE CAB BANKS HARD TO KEEP UP WITH THE
 SCOOTERS. It seems like we're losing them again.

DRIVER
 I think they see us ...

They turn, and we follow. They turn again. And again. We're
 losing them.

BRANT
 Goddammit, can't you go any faster?

DRIVER
 Where are they?

The scooters have disappeared.

Exie sits up, looking, and falls back.

EXIE
 We lost them.

The cab rolls to a stop. A beat, then BRANT LAUNCHES HIMSELF
 AT BANZ. He can't reach him, though, and relents. Silence.
 Several beats.

EXIE
 Shit. I know where it is.

Exie leans forward to the driver. Only now Brant notices.

EXIE (CONT.)
 You know how to get to West Pier?

DRIVER
 Old one by the leather market?

EXIE
 Yes. Take us there.

She falls back in her seat. Brant's eyes are riveted to her.

EXIE (CONT'D)

I was there last night. With you
and all your friends.

BRANT

Why didn't you say something?

EXIE

Do you remember kissing me last
night?

BRANT

... No.

EXIE

Right. I didn't think so.

BRANT

I kissed you.

EXIE

Yep.

Beat.

BRANT

What happened to me?

EXIE

I don't know. I left.

BRANT

You left?

EXIE

Do you have to repeat everything I
say? You're like a Seinfeld
episode.

BRANT

... were you mad?

EXIE

You might say that. ... Cheese and
crackers!

BRANT

Cheese and crackers?

EXIE

Goddammit!

BRANT

Sorry.

EXIE

I say "cheese and crackers" instead of Jesus Christ when I'm exasperated. Cheese and f'ing crackers!

BRANT

What happened?

EXIE

You kissed some other chick, then you got on a scooter and started popping wheelies all over the place!

(leaning over, to Scott
and Eric)

He's no sex slaver!

DRIVER

Here we are.

EXT. WEST PIERS - NIGHT

Everyone emerges from the cab. Eric and Evie emerge from a cab behind them.

EXIE (EXPLAINING)

It's through these doors, down a ramp and into the world of kids-who-hate-their-parents.

BRANT

Meaning ...

ERIC

It's like a Fight Club meets Rollerball kind of thing? With scooters, right? I remember now.

BANZ

Another Fight Club? That's so lame.

ERIC

It was in Time Out.

EXIE

It's more like a Flash Mob/street theater/Rocky Horror Picture Show kind of thing.

BRANT (TO ERIC)
You remember now?

ERIC
I thought we were here last week.

BRANT
Scott?

SCOTT
I've never been here.

EXIE
That's right. He bailed.

Two Bike Messengers push past, their attire is almost medieval.

BANZ
Like a King Richard's Fair send up thing? That's actually kind of cool.

EXIE
But it's Beyond Thunderdome.

BANZ
Oh. (less impressed)

EVIE
I remember this place.

ERIC
Yeah, you would. It's dirty.

EVIE
Stop it.

ERIC
Stop what?

EVIE
It.

ERIC
Ah. IT.

These two, we realize now, are in love. It's intensely irritating to both Brant and Exie.

SCOTT
This is a lot less interesting than it was ten minutes ago.

Everyone watches as Evie whispers something in Eric's ear. They get back in the cab and take off, without another word.

A beat. Love, we all think, and Scott's cell phone rings. He looks at it and goes pale.

SCOTT
It' the EMT. What do I do?

EXIE
(a touch exasperated) Answer it?

SCOTT
Right.

Scott exits, answering.

ON BANZ AND ANGIE, still staring at Brant.

BANZ
(to Brant) You're going in?

Brant doesn't answer, but it's obvious he is.

BANZ (CONT'D)
You're going to get the shit kicked
out of you.

Brant looks at Exie.

BRANT
You coming?

EXIE
I don't know.

Brant starts. Banz grabs him.

BANZ
Brant!

BRANT
What?

BANZ
I'll have my cell phone.

Brant throws off Banz's arm and charges through the doors.

INT. WEST PIER - NIGHT

A banked, velodrome-style track, an infield, open flames, rabid bike messengers screaming around on tricked-out bikes and Vespas.

Spotlights swing. We feel a change in the room, a pressure drop, then the spots lock on Brant. A needle-skipping silence. Everyone here remembers last night.

Across the velodrome and ON ANDY ENTITY, a Jack-Black-type in a Tina Turner style Mohawk. Two girls drape on him. A third lolls in a throne. His eyes fix maniacally on Brant.

ANDY

You!

Andy runs out into the track and pulls someone off their scooter (think, "First Blood"). He rides to Brant.

ANDY (CONT)

You.

A tense moment. Brant is speechless. Andy grabs another passing scooterist and throws her off her mount. He sets it in front of Brant.

ANDY

It's time to have your ass royally kicked. Descend (bellowing to the crowd now) into the Lightningdome!!

SFX: Flickering, theatrical lightning effect cues on Andy's lavolier mike.

Brant hops on the scooter and peels out, a natural, expert rider. He rides to the throne area. Andy follows.

INT. LIGHTNINGDOME CENTER - NIGHT

Brant dismounts and stands, surrounded by the baying devils of humanity. As if called by a second sense, he turns to the girl on the throne. She rises, walks up to him sexily and throws a tongue down his throat. She pulls back: ANNIE.

Brant moves his mouth. There's something in it. At the same time, Andy skids to a stop, dismounts, walks up and SLAPS ANNIE. SHE SLAPS HIM. THEY TRADE BLOWS, ending in a soul-kiss.

Brant moves his tongue around to discover a pill: Annie tried to drug him. He looks around, finding NURSE MR. T AND NURSE ZEKE standing dutifully behind Annie's throne.

ANDY

Enough!

He pulls down a PA mike and commands a spot. He grabs Brant.

ANDY (CONT'D)

The so-called Duke of New York!!

The crowd roars.

ANDY (CONT'D)

You want another shot at the title?
Well you got it.

The crowd finds another octave of beserk.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Well you got it. (to Brant, s.v.)
Now you listen to me: this is my
flash movie mob! This is my Dad's
abandoned pier! So if you think I'm
going to let some Fair-haired
Fonzarelli take my circus to
another to his town, you gotta
another thing coming.

BRANT

(beat) What are you talking about?

ANDY

What am I talking about? I'm
talking about a race-off, dude. I'm
talking about Rollerball. I'm
talking put your money where your
mouth is. I'm talking about getting
so freaky, you can't tell where the
movie ends and we begin.

(to crowd)

I'm talking about a fucking race-
off. Can you dig it? Can you dig
it? CAN YOU DIG IT.

The crowd completely unwinds.

CROWD (CHANTING)

Race off race off race off

Brant grabs Annie.

BRANT
Explain. Explain everything.

ANNIE
Win me and I'll tell you!

BRANT
Win ... didn't I win you last night?

ANNIE
Well, yes, but Andy Entity remained King. You didn't get the Mohawk.

BRANT
Why not?

ANNIE
I didn't want you to get it. We had that meeting.

BRANT
Meeting? The BSD meeting?

ANNIE
You won me, Clitilla and Eroticon as your whore-brides. I fought Sexasaurus and beat them, took you home drugged and seduced you. I thought I f'ed you to death, so I had the nurses take you to the hospital.

BRANT
F'ed me to death?

Annie suddenly kisses him again, again slipping him a pill on her tongue. He gags. She slaps him.

ANNIE (TO CROWD)
Mohawks!

Brant falls to his knees, gagging.

Nurse Mr. T hauls him up and puts him on a scooter. Fifty yards away, a Hoop of Fire blazes to life. Before it is a short ramp.

Brant SURVEYS THE CROWD. He sees what he has to do.

ACTION SEQUENCE 1 - Fire Jump

Nurse Zeke somehow sets and locks the throttle. The bike takes off under Brant. He knows how to ride, however.

He's a natural. He jumps the scooter through the ring of fire and wipes out Evil-Knievl-style on the other side.

The crowd noise relents. A beat, then Annie grabs a torch and lights the ramp and pulls it back.

Andy fires up his bike and takes the jump effortlessly.

ACTION SEQUENCE 2 - Death Race

They race around the diminutive track. Andy cheats, hits and kicks Brant. When it looks like Brant will win, Andy throws a rod in Brant's tires, sending Brant sprawling.

ACTION SEQUENCE 3 - Chicken Fight/Joust

Andy has effectively won now, but to demonstrate his magnanimity, he announces

ANDY (PA)

Let it be shown that I've won both contests. Truly, I am the Mohawk King.

(cheers)

However, however, so that there will be no doubt, let there be a final contest, of the rabble's choosing, to decide who will reign.

An incomprehensible, building jeer crystallizes into:

CROWD

"Chicken Fight! Chicken Fight!"

ANDY

Very well.

(to Brant)

I shall choose my bitch ... I choose Clitilla!

Andy grabs Annie. Crowd cheers.

ANDY (CONT)

I invite you to choose from my bitches.

Brant scans them.

EXIE (OS)

I'll do it.

Andy, Brant, and Crowd turn to her.

ANDY (PA)
And who is this? Your whore?

Exie takes the mike.

EXIE
No, I'm his escort. And when I'm finished with that bitch, (pointing at Annie) I'm coming after you, Tom Thumb!

A tick of silence from the mob, until Annie lunges at Exie. Andy restrains her.

ANDY
No, Clitilla! Heel! No! HEEL!

ACTION SEQUENCE 3 - Chicken Joust

They make three runs at one another, riding bikes with girls on their shoulders trying to claw each others eyes out. Finally, they pass, and Exie knocks Annie out cold (or leaps off Brant's shoulders).

Brant stops and stares. He doesn't realize it, but they've won. Simultaneous in his realization, Andy brims over with rage. Andy lunges at Brant, wrestling with him jealously, pathetically. Brant barely fights back until ANDY SCREAMS WITH PAIN AND JUMPS AWAY. He and Brant are both covered with blood. ANDY PINCHES HIS NOSE.

ANDY (NASALLY)
You gave me a nosebleed again.
Asshole.

He nods and Nurse Mr. T and Zeke grab Brant, about to give him a Mohawk.

A gunshot. Lights. A siren. A beat, then perfect chaos. BMS scatter in every direction, crying "Narcs!" Reilly stands in front of Brant, Zeke, and Nurse Mr. T, gun raised.

Brant scans for Exie, but doesn't see her.

REILLY
Touch his hair, and I'll blow your brains out.

They throw him down, unwilling. HE SEES EXIE. A beat, and Brant takes the clippers himself. Reilly holsters the pistol, produces a stun gun and turns it on Brant.

REILLY
C'mon, Brant.

BRANT
Leave me alone.

REILLY
It's okay. This is what they pay me
to do. I'm your guardian angel.

BRANT
No, you're not.

REILLY
You think you're the only partner
who ever freaked out?

This stalls Brant.

BRANT
What happened to them?

REILLY
They went back to work. (beat)
Believe it or not, they're
perfectly happy people. (beat)
C'mon.

Brant turns the clippers on.

REILLY (CONT'D)
Don't be a fool.

BRANT
I can't help it. I don't mind.

Brant carves himself a crude Mohawk.

Reilly twitches, a paroxym of contempt. He zaps Brant.

Dolly back on Reilly checking, then leaving Brant crumpled,
alone in the park. THIS BECOMES EXIE'S PERSPECTIVE.

ON ANDY, ZEKE, MR. T, EXIE, and THE CAB DRIVER, over Brant.

Eventually, Mr. T looks at Exie, then Andy.

ANDY
Part of me asks, What would Mao do
in this situation?

He turns to Exie.

ANDY (CONT'D)
 You don't know, do you?

She doesn't react. Andy sees the Cab Driver.

ANDY (CONT'D)
 Who are you?

CAB DRIVER
 I'm the cab driver.

ANDY
 Right, right, right. The cab
 driver. I feel I've summoned you,
 somehow, perhaps telepathically.

CAB DRIVER
 No. Brant call me.

ANDY
 Oh. Yes.

He turns to Mr. T and Zeke.

ANDY (CONT'D)
 Has anyone seen Clitilla and
 Sexasaurus? No? Nothing? Nothing at
 all? My two chief dingleberries?
 ... (beat)
 (impatient, gesturing at Brant)
 Well!

Mr. T and Zeke start toward him. CLOSE ON EXIE, a long shot.

INT. ER #2 - EARLY MORNING

ON BRANT. He seems catatonic. His eyes are wide open. ON
 EXIE, looking right at him. Two people, utterly alone. An
 uncrossable distance between them. Let the actors do their
 thing through long close ups until BRANT BLINKS.

He sits up beside Exie. He kisses her.

FADE OUT