

Greenberg

by

Noah Baumbach

Story

by

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and
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Black.

VOICE

Okay, that was the big box, now let's
use the small box.

INT. MUSIC STUDIO - DAY

Florence Marr, 25, stands on a ball. A tiny woman, 40's, hovers near her.

MUSIC TEACHER

From your groin.

FLORENCE

(singing)

I'm going walking today, I'm going
walking today, I'm going walking
today...

MUSIC TEACHER

Your groin!

FLORENCE

(singing)

I'm going walking today, I'm going
walking today...

MUSIC TEACHER

Let me see your tongue.

Florence sticks out her tongue and the teacher grabs hold of it.

MUSIC TEACHER

Again.

FLORENCE

(with her tongue being
held)

I'm going walking today...

INT. FLORENCE'S COROLLA - LATER

Florence drives. The radio plays.

FLORENCE

(to the car behind her)

Are you going to let me in? Are you?

(waves)

Thank you.

INT. DRY CLEANER

Florence rummages through her purse. A line forms behind her.

FLORENCE

Shoot, I think I left my ticket in the car. It's under Philip Greenberg, two suits and a dress.

The dry cleaner stares at her.

FLORENCE

You don't remember me?

DRY CLEANER

I need the ticket.

Florence hesitates and hurries toward the door.

INT. WHOLE FOODS

The butcher section. Florence points at the lamb chops.

FLORENCE

Really trim the fat, Maurice, okay?

EXT/INT. PHILIP AND CAROL'S HOUSE, HOLLYWOOD

A large, open California craftsman. Florence, clutching grocery bags and dry cleaning, types in a code on the keypad outside the front door and enters.

A boy, 7 and girl, 5, rush her.

KIDS

Florence!

FLORENCE

Hey, guys. Let me put this stuff down.

A German shepherd mutt bounds toward her, wiggling with anticipation.

FLORENCE

Hi, Mahler.

INT. BEDROOM

Florence hangs the clothes in the closets. The kids dancing and chirping around her.

BOY

We're going on vacation!

FLORENCE

I know.

BOY
But we will come back. Right? We're
not going to live there.

FLORENCE
No, that's why it's a vacation.

INT. KITCHEN

Florence unpacks the groceries. The kids still chattering.

GIRL
Are you going to go with us?

FLORENCE
No, remember, I have to stay here.

GIRL
Why?

FLORENCE
Because I do.

GIRL
Why?

FLORENCE
Because the vacation is for family
members only. Mahler and I have to
stay in LA.

GIRL
(horrified)
Mahler isn't coming? I want Mahler to
come. Mahler!

She bursts into tears and runs out of the room. The dog lets
out an anticipatory whine.

Florence feeds the dog. The boy still jabbering. Philip
Greenberg, 30's enters holding a toothbrush, harried, in the
midst of packing.

PHILIP
Did you get the neck pillows?

FLORENCE
Yes. They didn't have those chocolate
covered rice balls.

PHILIP
(concerned)
Did you try Trader Joe's?

FLORENCE
Yeah and Bristol Farms.

Carol, 30's, enters, equally harried, holding a sweater and pair of jeans in her hand.

CAROL
Were you able to find the liquid decongestant?

FLORENCE
Shoot!

She immediately turns around and heads for the door.

CAROL
It's okay, Florence, don't worry about it.

FLORENCE
(on her way out)
No, no, no...

INT. PHARMACY

Florence waits on a long line holding the decongestant.

INT. FLORENCE'S COROLLA

Florence puts the car in reverse, looks over her shoulder. A long scraping sound as she backs up. We STAY on Florence's face.

FLORENCE
(under her breath)
Oh, Florence.

INT. PHILIP AND CAROL'S BEDROOM

Open suitcases and bags on the bed. Florence helps Carol fold clothes and pack. Philip is organizing passports, money, keys.

CAROL
...and the toilet in the pool house is running. What else?

FLORENCE
I'll schedule the plumber for next week.

PHILIP
...and there's a package I need you to mail to my mother...

CAROL
(to Philip)
Did you tell her about Roger?

PHILIP
My brother will be staying here. He
might call you with things...questions
or an errand or two...

FLORENCE
That's no problem.

CAROL
He just got out of the hospital.

FLORENCE
Is he sick?

PHILIP
Not that kind of hospital.

CAROL
He had a nervous breakdown.

PHILIP
Carol, come on...

CAROL
It's relevant. He's fine.
(to Florence)
Don't pack that skirt.

FLORENCE
Okay.

PHILIP
He really is fine now. I mean, he's
delicate, but...

FLORENCE
Uh huh.

PHILIP
And I'm hiring him to do some work
around the house. He's a carpenter.

CAROL
(to Philip)
Does he know about the bookcase?

PHILIP
Yes, he's making the bookcase for the
den.

FLORENCE
That'll look nice.

CAROL
Oh, and can you walk Mahler quickly
before you go...

EXT. RUNYON CANYON

Florence walks Mahler up the canyon.

INT. FOYER

Philip and Carol hug Florence on her way out. The kids grabbing
her legs.

FLORENCE
Have a great trip, you guys.

CAROL
Okay, I'll call you tonight if there's
more to go over which I'm sure there
is.

FLORENCE
No problem.

PHILIP
And you'll confirm the car service and
the flight info for tomorrow.

FLORENCE
(makes a mental note)
Y-es.

CAROL
And we can always call or e-mail. I'm
sure there's e-mail in Vietnam.

FLORENCE
I think there's e-mail everywhere.

PHILIP
Oh, I forgot to write you a check for,
what do we owe you now...

FLORENCE
I think it's three weeks. Don't worry
about it.

CAROL
Oh, Florence, you have to speak up.

FLORENCE

No, I know, but it's fine.

PHILIP

(looking in a drawer)
I'm out of checks.

CAROL

I can give you some cash in the
meantime...

FLORENCE

Really, don't worry about it. It's
better in a way because then I don't
spend it all at once.

PHILIP

I'll leave it for you in the kitchen
drawer before we go.

INT. CHATEAU MARMONT - NIGHT

Florence and her friend, Gina, short hair, 20's, enter. It's a
party. Music pumping.

GINA

Don't wander away.

FLORENCE

Okay.

GINA

Let's make a point of sticking
together.

FLORENCE

Okay. Can I borrow forty bucks until
tomorrow?

CUT TO: Florence makes out with a guy on the couch. Gina
approaches.

GINA

Florence, it's time to go home now.

Florence looks up from her kissing, a dazed look on her face.

FLORENCE

I'm gonna stay.

INT. GUY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

They're kissing. The guy leads Florence to his bedroom.

FLORENCE
(slowing down)
I don't know. I'm...I just got out of
a long relationship.

GUY
This isn't a relationship...

Florence hesitates, not what she expected to hear.

FLORENCE
Um...right...I know. Okay.

She follows him down the hall...

INT. GUY'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Florence looks over at the sleeping young man. He's curled on his side, his back to her. She puts her hand on his naked back and feels his breath move in and out. Quietly she gets out of bed and begins to dress. The clock radio glows: 3:48.

INT. FLORENCE'S COROLLA

Florence drives, in the same clothes, her hair unwashed. The early morning light is starting to creep up.

FLORENCE
(to car behind her)
Are you going to let me in?
(pause)
No. Okay.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO

A low-rent place in the valley. Florence sorts through some song sheets. A tall, bony guy unpacks his guitar from the case.

FLORENCE
Where's Brian?

GUITARIST
Brian got a gig in Frisco.

FLORENCE
(concerned)
I wish someone had told me. Are you
going to play with me next week?

GUITARIST
I don't know.

FLORENCE

You don't know about the gig or you
don't know your schedule?

GUITARIST

Both.

FLORENCE

(nods)

Okay.

GUITARIST

Brian said you pay for gas money.

FLORENCE

Uh huh. How much do you need?

GUITARIST

Five bucks. And...I get fifty an hour
for practice.

FLORENCE

I...I don't pay Brian to practice.

The guitarist shrugs.

GUITARIST

I'm not Brian.

Florence hesitates then opens her wallet. She fingers through
some bills.

FLORENCE

Shit... Can I write you a check?

INT. FLORENCE'S APARTMENT - DAY

A studio with a kitchenette. It's messy. Clothes and magazines
lie on the floor.

Florence, her hair wet from the shower, and in a robe, is on her
computer, answering e-mail. The phone rings. She picks up.

FLORENCE

Hello?

GREENBERG

(through the receiver)

Hi, this is Roger Greenberg. I'm
Philip's brother.

FLORENCE
(pause)
Oh, hey.

GREENBERG
Is this Florence?

FLORENCE
(pause)
Sorry, I'm quitting e-mail. Yes, this
is Florence.

INT/EXT. BEDROOM BALCONY, PHILIP'S HOUSE - INTERCUT

CLOSE on a stack of instructions open to:

If you need anything call Florence Marr at: And the number.

We're on the back of Greenberg, 40, in a T-shirt and boxers. He
anxiously shifts his weight from one foot to the other.

He stands on a second floor balcony and watches a hairy burly
man, 30's, leap in the pool -- his ass curls up over the water
and submerges. Two women and another man, 30's, sun themselves
and chat.

FLORENCE
(through the receiver)
Okay... Hi.

GREENBERG
How are you?

FLORENCE
I'm fine.

GREENBERG
Um, there are people in the pool.

FLORENCE
That's Marlon and Peggy.

GREENBERG
Okay.

FLORENCE
Your brother and Carol let Marlon and
Peggy use the pool.

GREENBERG
There's more than two.

FLORENCE
They don't come in the house.

Greenberg walks back inside, his feet creak on the wooden floor boards. We see his tired face for the first time.

GREENBERG
Okay, thanks.

FLORENCE
Um, your brother left a check for me.
Is that okay if I come by tomorrow?

GREENBERG
Yeah. I'll be here.

Greenberg hangs up. On a side-board is a vintage wind-up toy girl playing vibes. Greenberg winds it and the girl rotates and plunks out a tune. He pours a pill into his palm from a container at his bedside and downs it with a glass of water.

Mahler stretches out in a sun patch on the floor. Greenberg steps into the sun stream and passes his hand aimlessly through the floating dust particles.

INT. PHILIP AND CAROL'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Florence types in a code and enters. Mahler ambles toward her, his long nails scraping the floor. Florence hugs his face and scratches behind his ears.

FLORENCE
Hi little Mahler baby.

Greenberg enters holding his cereal bowl.

FLORENCE
Hey. I'm Florence. I hope this isn't
a bad time.

GREENBERG
No, I guess it's fine.

FLORENCE
(to Mahler)
Treat?

She retrieves a dried chicken lung from a jar in the pantry and feeds it to him. The dog licks her hand thoroughly -- she giggles.

FLORENCE
His tongue is so scratchy.

She slides open a drawer and retrieves an envelope. Greenberg pats the dog stiffly on the top of the head. He chooses a song on the iPod. "It Never Rains in Southern California."

GREENBERG

Do you remember how they used to play
this on the radio every time it
rained.

FLORENCE

I'm not sure.

GREENBERG

And if there was a fire they'd
play...Burn Baby Burn or...

FLORENCE

Uh huh.

GREENBERG

... what's it called? Disco
Inferno. It's funny.

FLORENCE

I don't think I know it.

GREENBERG

Before your time, I guess. You have
to see past the kitsch.

FLORENCE

I can see past it...

She makes a show of listening.

FLORENCE

Cool. Um, Philip said if you need
anything, I can pick you up some
groceries or things.

GREENBERG

I'm okay.

FLORENCE

You sure, it's no problem.

GREENBERG

Well, I could use some things, sure.

FLORENCE

Make a list. I'll be right back.

She disappears into the other room, a door shuts. Greenberg starts a list: whiskey, ice cream sandwiches... The muffled sound of her peeing. He hesitates.

The toilet flushes. Her feet clomp across the floor. He hands her the grocery list. She grabs Mahler's green leash from a hook. Mahler jumps up, excited.

FLORENCE
I'll take him on a W-A-L-K.

GREENBERG
No... No, I got it.

FLORENCE
(hesitates)
Okay. Cool.

She hangs the leash back on its hook, walks quickly, her back to Greenberg and is out the door.

FLORENCE
Bye.

The kitchen door sticks open behind her. Mahler runs along the wall to the window. He jumps up, standing, with his paws on the sill and watches Florence walk away.

CUT TO: Greenberg lies on the floor and sands the bottom of the kitchen door. He climbs up and tests it. It closes smoothly.

EXT. RUNYON CANYON - DAY

Greenberg walks the shepherd on a dirt incline. He wears painter's pants and a sweater, clearly not used to dressing for warm weather or exercise.

EXT. GARDEN - LATER

The swimmers are gone. Greenberg, in a T-shirt and shorts, walks cautiously around the edge of the pool. Mahler runs energetically in the grass. He nudges Greenberg with a frisbee. Greenberg grunts a sound that approximates "Sit." The dog doesn't respond. Greenberg wrestles the frisbee from the animal's mouth and tosses. Mahler bolts after it.

Greenberg removes his shirt and wades into the water. He shivers. Suddenly he pushes out. He can't really swim -- he keeps his head above water and dog paddles to the other end. Finally he reaches the ladder and lifts himself out. He's panting.

He lies down in a chaise and tries to relax.

CUT TO: CLOSE on a handwritten letter:

"Dear American Airlines,

...but my issue is not with the lack of leg room, but with the quality of the buttons on the seats. Not only was my flight attendant button busted, but so was my recline..."

Greenberg scribbles away.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - LATER

He looks in the big, well lit mirror. He zeroes in on a blackhead and starts to squeeze...

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Greenberg -- with a red welt where the black head was -- stands above the sink eating cereal. Mahler lies beneath him.

CUT TO: Greenberg empties his cereal bowl into the toilet. He scrapes at the remaining soggy flakes with his spoon.

INT. DEN

CLOSE a scrap of paper with the name **Ivan** and the number.

Greenberg, his hair damp, dials.

GREENBERG (V.O.)

"...Dear Mayor Bloomberg...if you placed a police officer at strategically chosen corners of Manhattan..."

INT. FOYER/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Greenberg stands in the doorway reading his hand-written letter. Across from him is a bearded man, 30's, in an untucked flannel over a T-shirt and khakis. This is Ivan.

GREENBERG

"...if they can do it in LA -- a car culture if there ever was one -- I'm confident we can do it here in Manhattan..."

IVAN

It's true, no one honks here really.

GREENBERG

In LA they understand the horn is for emergencies only. In New York it's a constant.

(pause)

I don't know, I don't really recognize New York anymore, you know?

Ivan takes a few tentative steps into the space.

IVAN
When did you get in?

GREENBERG
Only Monday, you're the first person I called.

IVAN
No, I didn't mean... GREENBERG
No, I know, I was just saying.

IVAN
Right. How long you staying?

GREENBERG
About six weeks. Can you imagine going to Vietnam?

IVAN
You mean to fight?

GREENBERG
Well, to fight too, but I just meant now -- my brother and his wife are there on vacation.

IVAN
(shrugs)
I don't know. Some people like travel.

Ivan picks up a photo of a teenage girl.

GREENBERG
That's my brother's wife's daughter, Sara. My step-sister?

IVAN
Niece.

Greenberg walks into the kitchen. We STAY with Ivan. He looks at the attractive eighteen year old girl posing in front of the Coliseum.

Greenberg returns with two glasses of scotch. He hands one to Ivan.

IVAN
No thanks, man. I don't really drink now.

GREENBERG
(disappointed)
Okay.

IVAN
Yeah, I think it's best. I've gotten
into these Arnold Palmers, you know,
ice tea with lemonade.

Greenberg pours Ivan's drink into his own.

GREENBERG
Yeah, I don't have that.

Ivan sits on a speaker. Greenberg perches on a window ledge.

IVAN
I thought I'd told you, but I guess I
think we talk more than we do.

GREENBERG
The beard is cool.

IVAN
Yeah, you know, it's a winter beard.

Greenberg stands.

GREENBERG
I probably shouldn't be on the window
here...
(pause)
Maybe don't sit on the speaker.

Ivan stands up.

IVAN
Sorry.

GREENBERG
What do you want to do tonight?

IVAN
Breitbart is having a barbecue which
means, you know...

GREENBERG
What's he up to -- you see him?

IVAN
Not with any regularity. He calls me
with computer questions.

GREENBERG
What a dick.

IVAN
He always offers to pay.

Greenberg grabs scissors from the table and snips at his hair while he talks.

GREENBERG
It's still rude. So, let's not do that. What else, man? We could get a drink at a bar. We could stay here.
(indicates shelf)
They have, uh, Mannequin and...The Day After...

INT. IVAN'S CAR - DAY

A CD plays. Ivan winds his way up Laurel Canyon. Greenberg is shotgun -- he looks down at his feet.

GREENBERG
I'm not sure about these pants. Do they look flare-y to you?

IVAN
I think that's the style.

GREENBERG
I should've worn jeans. No one's going to be dressed up at this thing.

IVAN
Fabula and I are in a trial separation.

GREENBERG
Oh... Uh huh.

Ivan hesitates.

IVAN
It's a lot to go into. I feel terrible for Victor. I really want you to meet him he's like a little person now.

GREENBERG
I saw him a few years ago.

IVAN

Yeah, but now, he's eight, he's like a friend -- he's fun to hang out with.

Ivan gets into the turn lane and waits for the oncoming traffic to pass.

IVAN

I'm glad you're here, man. It's good for me to get out like this.

GREENBERG

You want to put your blinker on?

Ivan does. They make the turn and continue upward, the street narrowing. Greenberg applies cherry chapstick to his lips. Ahead, people are spilling into the street. Kids run around.

GREENBERG

Keep going, keep going, keep going...

Ivan slowly drives past the house, both of them craning their necks to survey the party.

GREENBERG

I hate how the men out here all dress like children.

(watching)

What a nightmare. This kind of thing makes me want to live in Europe.

IVAN

I can maybe park over here.

GREENBERG

No, keep going...keep going...

Ivan continues winding upward. He pulls into a drive-way and turns around. Greenberg yawns, anxious, almost giddy.

GREENBERG

I feel like I have those glasses from that John Carpenter movie and I can see who these people really are...

IVAN

That wasn't bad, that movie.

GREENBERG

I thought it was terrible.

They re-approach the group now from the other direction.

IVAN
There's that space.

GREENBERG
Let's go home.

IVAN
We drove all the way out here. We'll have one drink.

GREENBERG
Let's go home. I shouldn't have let you talk me into this. It's a nightmare here. It's this kind of shit -- why I can't find a movie I want to go to in the fucking multiplex or...why when I'm in Starbucks I hear music I actually like... I had this better when I was saying it to someone a week ago -- I'm having trouble articulating it now.

CUT TO: Ivan waits at a Stop sign.

GREENBERG
Should we go back?

IVAN
We're almost home.

GREENBERG
(hesitates)
They might be okay. What do I know?

IVAN
You want to go back?

GREENBERG
Maybe we should have given it a chance.

IVAN
You're kidding me.

INT. BREITBART'S HOUSE - LATER

People mingle, kids run around. Ivan dumps his jacket on a chair with a pile of coats knocking some onto the floor. Greenberg, in his down vest, drifts toward a wall of packed CD shelves. He looks irritated.

IVAN
What's wrong?

GREENBERG

I just...I find Breitbart's CD collection offensive. He's...you can see all the effort. The amount of Brazilian music...I mean, I doubt he really needs eight Os Mutantes CD's.

MEGAN (O.S.)

Hey, manly men.

IVAN

Hi, Megan.

GREENBERG

(trailing off)

At a certain point you're just showing off.

Megan, a busty short girl, embraces Ivan. She raises an eyebrow at Greenberg and smiles slyly.

MEGAN

Hey, Greenberg, what are you doing out here?

GREENBERG

You know...

MEGAN

Should I know? Insert foot into mouth. Are you really big or something?

GREENBERG

No, Megan...

MEGAN

I'm sorry, I'm all shits and giggles tonight.

GREENBERG

Yeah...I think you'll find I'm pretty much all shits.

(pause)

I'm going to get a drink.

IVAN

Oh, can you get me a Diet Coke?

Greenberg sighs.

MEGAN

And I'll have another white wine spritzer.

GREENBERG
That it?

They both nod.

CUT TO: Greenberg finds the bar area. He suddenly comes face to face with a scruffy guy, 40, in a cream anorak. This is Eric Breitbart.

GREENBERG
Hey, Breitbart.

Breitbart appears to make eye-contact with Greenberg, but quickly engages with another guy in a hooded sweatshirt, Johno. Greenberg taps Breitbart's shoulder.

GREENBERG
Hey, man, how are you?

BREITBART
(dryly formal)
I'm good. I didn't know you were out here.

GREENBERG
I wasn't.
(in a funny voice)
"How is Lenny?"

Breitbart hesitates, confused.

BREITBART
(to Johno)
Duder, it's called Your Grandma's
Pussy -- it's like Anaconda -- you get
seven cards down --

Greenberg nods, trying to participate, but neither guy addresses him. Greenberg applies his chapstick. Finally:

BREITBART
That shit just makes your lips drier.

GREENBERG
I know.

Someone yells: "Beth!" Greenberg turns around. Beth, late 30's, holds a young girl in her arms and the hand of a boy in a Flash costume at her side. She's greeted by Breitbart's wife. Greenberg stares.

BREITBART
She and Steven are getting a divorce.

JOHNO
They were a cool couple.

BREITBART
(looks at Greenberg)
Come to think of it he's kind of a
less Jewish looking version of you.

GREENBERG
Less? I'm not even...I'm only half.

BREITBART
But you're doing this.

Breitbart holds his hands about a foot apart and shakes them,
imitating Greenberg's previous gesture. Johno laughs.

GREENBERG
What's...I'm thinking small...I'm...
(trying to figure out what
he did)
Is this a Jewish gesture?

Breitbart shrugs. Johno laughs.

GREENBERG
(to Johno)
Breitbart, always with the self-hatred.

JOHNO
You kidding, have you been to one of
Eric's Seders? Eric gave trees to
Israel.

BREITBART
Am I not allowed to make a joke about
it?

GREENBERG
No, I know, I'm just saying since you
said "less Jewish looking..." Because
people think I look Italian. And
since my mom is Protestant I'm
actually not Jewish at all.

They stare at him. Greenberg excuses himself and walks through
the crowd over to Beth. At the last moment she sees him coming.

BETH
Oh my God, hey...

GREENBERG

Hey, Beth...

He leans over and kisses her cheek.

BETH

How are you?

GREENBERG

Oh, I'm fair to middling. You know. Leonard Maltin would give me two and a half stars.

BETH

I haven't seen you since --

GREENBERG

In his movie guide...

BETH

-- probably like ten years ago

GREENBERG

I think it was at Matt Levy's wedding actually. It seems like such a long time ago. Or maybe it doesn't, maybe it feels kind of recently.

BETH

It's both.

Greenberg wipes his damp brow with the sleeve of his wool jacket.

BETH

You're sweating!

GREENBERG

Yeah.

BETH

Sad about Matt Levy.

GREENBERG

What?

BETH

You didn't hear? A totally random thing, had a really high fever, went to the hospital and...died...

GREENBERG

(thrown)

Really? I hadn't...I didn't know.

BETH

Yeah. Some kind of rare infection.

GREENBERG

(pause)

We're at that age where people start dying. I mean, not of old age obviously, but the freak ones. The suicides and the...the weird sudden shortness of breath, check into the hospital, dead in an hour ones...

(pause)

How are you?

BETH

(not enthusiastic)

I'm okay. I'm okay...

GREENBERG

(re: the kids)

Are any of those yours?

BETH

Mine are the one in the princess costume and the one in the devil costume.

GREENBERG

(re: devil outfit)

I think that's the Flash.

BETH

You're probably right.

GREENBERG

(trying out his line)

All the men out here dress like children and the kids dress like superheroes.

BETH

What are you doing these days? You're in New York, right? You're making music?

GREENBERG

I haven't played music in years. I'm a carpenter, you know, for money, but now I'm really trying to do nothing for a while.

BETH

That's brave at our age.

Greenberg hesitates. Megan passes by.

MEGAN
You owe me a white wine spritzer.

Greenberg barely nods.

BETH
(seems familiar)
Who is that?

GREENBERG
I don't know.

BETH
Well...it's good seeing you.

GREENBERG
I'm here for a few weeks, at my
brother's...and...do you want to have
a drink or something?

BETH
Okay. Sure. I think I have a pen...

She goes into her purse and writes down her name and number.

BETH
There you go.

He wipes the sweat off his face with his sleeve again.

BETH
You're sure you're not hot.

GREENBERG
I'm fine. But I wish I could be one
of those guys who doesn't care where
he dumps his coat at a party.

She laughs and backs away.

GREENBERG
I like your hair.

BETH
I'm gonna go talk to my
friend, Perry. It was good
seeing you Roger.

Pause.

BETH
What did you say?

GREENBERG

Nothing.

They're interrupted by some chants of "Speech." Breitbart stands up on an ottoman and addresses the crowd.

BREITBART

I'm going to be brief. I've done a lot in my life, I managed a rock band, I've written songs, produced television shows, but I think what I'm best at is being a dad. Dax and Miriam are my two best friends in the whole world. The rest of you are okay too.

Applause. Greenberg looks around for Ivan. He sweats.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

CLOSE: "Dear Starbucks, In your attempts to manufacture culture out of fast food coffee..."

Greenberg drops the pencil, bored already with the letter.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM

He presses play on a portable CD player. The opening organ of Steve Winwood's "While You See A Chance." He stares at himself -- the music swells. We hold. And hold. The vocal starts, he reaches over and stops the CD. He starts it again from the beginning. He studies his face, deadpan, the music playing as sound-track. He stops it again at the same point. And does it again.

INT. LIVING ROOM

It's getting dark. Greenberg flips through a stack of papers, directions, emergency numbers...

Florence Marr.

He hesitates, picks up the phone and dials.

FLORENCE

(through the receiver)

Hello.

GREENBERG

Florence? Hey, it's Roger Greenberg.

FLORENCE

Hi.

(swallowing)

Sorry, I'm eating.

GREENBERG

That's okay.

Silence. She chews.

FLORENCE

A friend said I chew kind of loudly.

GREENBERG

Chewing always sounds louder on the phone, I think.

FLORENCE

(likes that analysis)

That's true.

GREENBERG

You want to get a drink or something?

Silence on the line.

FLORENCE

Uh, sure, okay.

GREENBERG

Is there a bar you know we could go to?

FLORENCE

There's one near my apartment, but it's pretty lame.

GREENBERG

Okay.

FLORENCE

It's in Culver City. Do you want to meet there?

GREENBERG

I don't drive.

INT. FLORENCE'S COROLLA - NIGHT

Florence waits at a light. She wears a green vinyl raincoat. Greenberg, in the passenger seat, roots through the pile of CD's at his feet. The radio is on.

FLORENCE
Those are all kind of cheesy.

GREENBERG
(indicating)
You have the light.

She turns. Greenberg reads the back of a John Mayer CD.

FLORENCE
Oh, do you mind if we stop by my
house. I left my purse. Sorry.

GREENBERG
Do you need it?

FLORENCE
I still get carded.

INT. FLORENCE'S APARTMENT

Florence searches the room, turning things over. Greenberg looks at her books on shelves held up with bricks. Ed McBain and Lawrence Bloch-type mysteries interspersed with psychology, film and literature maybe saved from college. They're both still in their coats.

FLORENCE
(seeing him with her
books)
I don't read enough. I'm such a bad
reader.

A framed photo of Florence around ten wearing a T-shirt that says: Yo-Yo. A blonde man in a polo shirt has his arm around her -- she looks scared and uncomfortable.

GREENBERG
Is that you?

FLORENCE
Yeah...it's one of the rare times I
was actually happy around my dad.

Greenberg nods. He moves over to the refrigerator. A colorful, abstract drawing held up with a La Brea Tar Pits magnet.

GREENBERG
Did you do this?

FLORENCE
No, that's my niece.

GREENBERG

I have a niece. Two and a step one.

FLORENCE

I know, I work for their parents.

GREENBERG

Of course. Right.

(re: the picture)

It's good.

FLORENCE

She's four.

(pause)

I want to have a relationship with her, but she's just not that friendly to me. You want to see, I got her these puppets for her birthday --

She retrieves two puppets -- a witch and devil -- from a drawer.

FLORENCE

They might be too old for her. They have sticks.

GREENBERG

I'm sure they'll be fine. What do you have to drink?

FLORENCE

Oh. Um, okay. You don't want to go to a bar?

GREENBERG

It's Friday -- the bars are probably full of bridge and tunnel people...or whatever the LA version of bridge and tunnel is.

She walks across the room, her foot catches a boot in the middle of the rug. She stumbles.

FLORENCE

Sorry.

She opens the fridge.

FLORENCE

I don't really have...there's a Corona Light and I have some cheap tequila someone left here once.

GREENBERG
Shall we split the Corona.

FLORENCE
Okay.

She opens it and hands it to him. He takes a swig and passes it back to her. She drinks. Hiccups.

FLORENCE
I always get hiccups when I first drink carbonation.

GREENBERG
Don't worry about it.

She offers the beer back to him.

His mouth is on hers. Their arms groping. He pulls her blouse over her head.

FLORENCE
I'm wearing kind of an ugly bra.

He nods and tries to undo it.

FLORENCE
There's no clasp.

GREENBERG
(frustrated)
It's like an ace bandage.

He lifts it -- her breasts heave toward him. The bra awkwardly stuck at her collar bone.

He leads her down on the bed and yanks down her jeans, pulls aside her underwear and shoves his face between her legs. Her eyes search the room uncomfortably.

FLORENCE
Do you hear a train? Is that a train?

She sits up stiffly. He stands, goes over to the kitchenette and pours himself a tequila.

FLORENCE
I get kind of nerdy.

She pulls her bra back down over her breasts.

GREENBERG
Don't worry about it.

FLORENCE

Can we take it slow? I'm sorry, it's just... I just got out of a long relationship and...

(pause)

I don't want to go from just having sex to just having sex to just having sex.

GREENBERG

Uh huh. Who is the third "just having sex?"

FLORENCE

You. If we had sex.

GREENBERG

Okay. Then who's the second one?

FLORENCE

A guy I met at a party at the Chateau.

GREENBERG

You slept with him?

FLORENCE

Yeah...I did.

Greenberg looks annoyed.

GREENBERG

How did that go?

FLORENCE

What do you mean? The sex?

GREENBERG

Yeah, well...

FLORENCE

It was pretty awkward.

She gets off the bed, pulls up her pants and walks toward him. They stand about a foot apart. He takes her hands. The nails and cuticles are chewed.

She undoes his pants and sinks down to her knees.

FLORENCE

(suddenly)

Oh, there's my purse.

He looks at her head at his crotch. He holds onto the counter for stability and comes immediately. She withdraws brusquely and stands up.

Greenberg shivers, still finishing. He registers something on her face.

GREENBERG
What's that on your lip?

FLORENCE
What?
(she touches her mouth)
Nothing.

GREENBERG
It's not...

FLORENCE
No, it's not a cold sore.

GREENBERG
You sure?

FLORENCE
Yeah. I picked it.

GREENBERG
Mm. Where's your bathroom?

INT. BATHROOM

He flushes the toilet with his foot and washes his hands. He inspects a black head in the mirror, but thinks better of squeezing it. He notices a scale on the floor.

He steps on the scale. He frowns. He braces himself on the sink and pushes off his shoes. He gets back on the scale. Still a look of displeasure. He steps off quickly.

INT. LIVING ROOM/BEDROOM

Greenberg exits the bathroom. Florence wears a bulky white robe and smokes a cigarette. She listens to a message on her machine. A girl's voice. She holds the receiver.

FLORENCE
Ugh, this is so annoying, but I really
have to call my friend, Gina, back.
Sorry, it's just if I don't call her
right away I'll be a bad friend.
She's always got an emergency. I'm
sure it's nothing.

GREENBERG
How far do you think it would be to walk?

FLORENCE
To your brother's place? Way too long. It's like five miles. You can stay...

GREENBERG
I have the dog...and...

FLORENCE
I can drive you.
(re: the phone)
This will only take a second.

GREENBERG
You have to call her right this moment -- won't she understand you're in the middle of --

Florence slowly puts down the phone, hesitates.

FLORENCE
No, I can take you now.

GREENBERG
I don't want to make you do that.
You've got your robe --

FLORENCE
It's not a problem.

GREENBERG
I can probably call a cab...

FLORENCE
Okay.

She grabs a flyer from a stack on her desk.

FLORENCE
Oh...this is stupid, but I'm singing Saturday night at this place on Orange and Sunset.

She hands it to him -- it's a drawing of a bird and a guitar. Greenberg debates something in his head.

FLORENCE
I mean...if you feel like it, I know it's last minute...

She grabs it back and writes a 6 over the 4 on the address.

FLORENCE
Gina made the flyers and she copied
the address down wrong...

GREENBERG
I don't think... What time?

FLORENCE
Like at 11:30. It's...there are a lot
of acts so it's hard to pinpoint.
Don't feel obligated.

GREENBERG
(pause)
We probably shouldn't do this again.
I mean, you work for my brother.

FLORENCE
Yeah --

GREENBERG
And I'm really trying to do nothing
right now.

FLORENCE
That's cool. And I've got to stop
doing things just cause they feel
good.

CUT TO: Greenberg is gone. Florence is on the phone, smoking a cigarette.

GINA
(through the receiver)
You just gave a blow job to someone
who got out of a mental hospital.

Florence laughs despite herself.

FLORENCE
Why do you say it like that? He's not
crazy. A lot of people go to insane
asylums.

GINA
A lot of people are in therapy,
they're not in insane asylums.

FLORENCE
I blew a lunatic.

They both crack up.

FLORENCE
He's also forty.

GINA
Jesus.

FLORENCE
(thoughtful)
He seems vulnerable.

We hear a shriek:

INT/EXT. BEDROOM BALCONY - MORNING

From a distance we see Marlon throw Peggy into the pool. Mahler barks and runs playfully alongside the couple.

Greenberg, on the balcony, frowns.

EXT. GARDEN - LATER

Greenberg hauls a wooden plank from the garage. He nods to a Mexican gardener who collects fallen palm fronds from the ground.

CUT TO: He hammers a nail into the wood. He sweats. The gardener revs a leaf blower. The pool man fishes debris from the pool with a net on a pole. An active green hose snakes and curls in the water.

Greenberg looks at the dog lying in the shade. The sun has moved with the day, but Mahler hasn't. Greenberg reaches for the frisbee. He chuck's the disc across the grass.

GREENBERG
Go get it.

Mahler doesn't move. Greenberg hesitates. He stands and approaches the animal slowly. Mahler's breaths are labored gasps.

INT. KITCHEN

Greenberg reads his brother's number in Vietnam off of a sheet of paper and anxiously dials the endless buttons on the phone. He's interrupted by a loud busy signal. He hangs up, irritated, and tries again. Same result. Frustrated he whips through the pages and dials another number. He paces breathlessly, on the phone.

FLORENCE
(through the receiver)
Hello?

GREENBERG
Florence, it's Roger Greenberg.
Mahler is...I don't know, he's
breathing weird and he's suddenly
lethargic and --

FLORENCE
(through the receiver)
Sometimes he gets overheated.

GREENBERG
No, I mean, he hasn't moved period.
I can't get through to fucking
Vietnam...and I'm sorry to have to
call you, but I thought you might
know --

INT. VET WAITING ROOM - LATER

A woman with a guinea pig in her lap sits next to Greenberg who is next to Florence who wears her green raincoat. Mahler breathes heavily at their feet. Florence takes off her shoe and rubs her foot against his fur.

GREENBERG
(finally)
How long do we wait?

FLORENCE
(shrugs)
I don't know they seem kind of busy.

GREENBERG
(eyeing the receptionist's
desk)
Should I go ask how long?

FLORENCE
If you want.

GREENBERG
(hesitates)
Do you want to do it?

FLORENCE
Um, okay...they know we're here,
but...

She rises from her seat.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM

Greenberg looks away while three doctors spay a rabbit. Mahler rests on a brown towel in a cage. An Hispanic female vet addresses them.

FEMALE VET
It seems like sciatica.

Greenberg looks relieved.

FLORENCE
(relieved)
Yeah, he's had that before.

FEMALE VET
But his eyes are jaundiced I'd like to run some tests. We'll keep him over night and monitor him. I'd imagine you can bring him home tomorrow.

EXT. POOL - DAY

Greenberg holds a beer and a hammer. He removes a large sheet of plastic from the wooden planks of his bookshelf in progress.

MALE VOICE
(through the receiver)
Eric Breitbart's office.

CUT TO: The bookshelf lies in the grass, two sides of the frame now completed. Greenberg sits on a low wall, sweating. His beer is finished. He's on his cell phone.

GREENBERG
Hi, is he there please?

MALE VOICE
Who may I say is calling?

GREENBERG
Roger. Roger Greenberg.

MALE VOICE
Let me see if I can get him.

Hold music. Greenberg swallows the last liquid at the bottom of the beer bottle, stands and drifts aimlessly in the garden. He idly sings to himself:

GREENBERG
"It never rains in Southern Mahler-fornia..."

He lands in front of a window. He stares at his reflection.

MALE VOICE
I'm transferring you to Mr. Breitbart.

GREENBERG
Thank you --

Ringing. He mouths "thank you" a second time, admiring the movement and shape of his mouth.

MALE VOICE
Eric, you're on with Roger Greenberg.

Silence on the line.

GREENBERG
Hello?

BREITBART
(through the receiver)
Hello.

GREENBERG
Breitbart, it's Greenberg.

BREITBART
(pause)
Hi.

GREENBERG
We didn't get a chance to talk the other night so much and... Do you want to get a drink or something?

Silence. Breitbart takes a deep breath.

BREITBART
(exhales)
Roger...

Silence. Greenberg continues to stare at himself in the glass.

GREENBERG
Eric, did I... Did I do...

BREITBART
(small chuckle)
What do you want, Roger?

GREENBERG
I'm out here and I...

Silence.

GREENBERG

You know...I've been in New York, but
I don't really recognize New York
anymore, you know?

Silence.

GREENBERG

So, I'm here...and I'm really trying
to do nothing for a while.

BREITBART

Are the rumors true?

GREENBERG

(concerned)

What rumors?

BREITBART

Nothing, I just made that up.

Silence. Greenberg swallows. He studies the reflection of his adams apple moving up and down. He touches it. The sound of Breitbart's breaths on the line.

BREITBART

How about next Thursday?

GREENBERG

Um, I think that's probably fine.

BREITBART

My assistant will call you with a
place.

INT. KITCHEN

CLOSE on a scrap of paper: **Beth and her number.**

Greenberg waits while it rings.

YOUNG GIRL'S VOICE

(through the receiver)

Hello?

Greenberg hangs up. He's sweating. He sees Florence's flyer which is tacked up to a pin board above the phone.

INT. CLUB - LATER NIGHT

Greenberg enters holding the creased flyer. It's bright for a bar with a series of folding chairs and tables facing a badly painted black riser and a cheap glittery back-drop. The place is about a quarter full.

A lanky bearded guy with glasses plays acoustic guitar on a stool and Florence stands and sings at the microphone. Greenberg slides into the bar at the back and orders a beer.

FLORENCE

"Now I was fifteen oh the very first
time love broke completely inside me.
We were young and we were learning
about it together..."

Florence's voice is sultry, low, and unstudied. Greenberg watches Florence sing. Gina, a short haired girl in a striped T-shirt, appears next to Greenberg. She orders from the bartender who's distracted, texting someone:

GINA

Can I get four beers?

She stares at Greenberg. She whispers:

GINA

Are you Roger?

GREENBERG

Uh huh.

GINA

I'm Gina, Florence's friend.

GREENBERG

Uh huh.

GINA

I've heard a lot about you. Do you want to come join our table?

A couple of girls and a short guy sit up front and are clearly Florence's contingent.

GREENBERG

No, I think I'll stay here. Maybe later.

GINA

Isn't she beautiful? She's so ultra sexy and hot up there.

Greenberg nods, uncomfortable.

GINA
What's that look? You're so quiet.

GREENBERG
I'm thinking of a letter I'm going to write.

GINA
I hear you don't drive.

GREENBERG
Uh huh.

GINA
Did you ever drive?

GREENBERG
Uh huh. I grew up here. I drove then. I moved to New York and I stopped. I think I'm done with it.

She collects her beers from the counter.

GINA
It was really nice meeting you.

Greenberg looks back at Florence. It's hard to make out what he's feeling -- he looks completely thrown.

CUT TO: Florence stands at the foot of the stage, holding her amp in one hand and a beer in the other. People are filing out or moving to the bar. She's surrounded by her contingent. Florence sees Greenberg standing alone by the door. She grins and waves. He waves back.

INT. FLORENCE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - LATER

Florence sits in a cushy chair and rubs her feet. Greenberg, stands at the kitchen counter and pours some cheap tequila. He says with his back to her:

GREENBERG
No, it was good.

FLORENCE
Yeah, it felt good tonight. I'm so glad you came. Very unexpected.
Nice.

GREENBERG
(almost bullying)
Really good. You should do it more.

FLORENCE
I know. It helps when you've had
three rum and Cokes. Did you meet
Gina?

GREENBERG
Yeah, I met Gina.

FLORENCE
Stop.

GREENBERG
What? Nothing. I met her.

He wets a paper towel and wipes the bottom of the sticky tequila bottle then runs it across the counter.

GREENBERG
Where's your garbage?

FLORENCE
Under the sink.

FLORENCE
In that last song I kept the singer
male.

He opens the cabinet below the sink and tosses the paper towel in a plastic bag tied to a hook.

FLORENCE
I don't like when people change the
sex in songs.

GREENBERG
What?

FLORENCE
I don't like when people
change the sex in songs.

GREENBERG
No, it was great.

GREENBERG
I used to play in a band...

FLORENCE
Really? What'd you play?

GREENBERG

Keyboards, a little guitar... I wrote
most of the lyrics... Anyway...
(can't help himself)
We had a little following around New
York after college...

FLORENCE

Cool. I'd like to hear something
sometime.

GREENBERG

I just couldn't deal with the bullshit
of the record business...you know?

FLORENCE

Not that I would know, but I hear it's
kind of hellish.

He opens a counter and checks out a near empty cereal box.

FLORENCE

I made Jello if you want.

GREENBERG

What do you mean?

Florence goes over to the refrigerator and opens it. She takes
out a red Jello mold with floating fruit.

FLORENCE

I got the fruit at the farmer's
market.

She cuts off two pieces, puts one in her mouth and hands one to
Greenberg on a plate. He eats it.

GREENBERG

It's good.

FLORENCE

Let's just keep things sweet and
simple, okay?

She begins to unzip his pants. He holds the Jello awkwardly and
then places it onto the counter.

GREENBERG

Can I just... You do this
thing...when you finish...or rather
when I do...you immediately lift your
mouth off of the...

FLORENCE

Uh huh.

GREENBERG

Off of the head of... And it leaves
me feeling...cold. Like cold cold,
winter cold. Not off-put, cold.

FLORENCE

Sorry.

GREENBERG

You don't need to apologize. I mean
the rest of it is great.

She tries to laugh it off, but she's gone a deep shade of red.

GREENBERG

What?

FLORENCE

Nothing, you just basically told me I
stink at blow jobs.

GREENBERG

You don't stink. It's just a small
thing. I don't know, maybe it's how
people of your generation give blow
jobs. I shouldn't have said anything.

FLORENCE

No, and it's probably good advice for
the future...

GREENBERG

(hesitates)

What do you mean, for the future?

FLORENCE

(shrugs)

I don't know. My future.

GREENBERG'S BROTHER (V.O.)

(through the receiver)

They gave him an infusion? Is it his
white blood cells or his red blood
cells?

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Greenberg, on the phone, stands at the window. It pours rain
outside. The wind-up girl rotates and plays the vibes.

GREENBERG
I'm pretty sure white.

PHILIP
(through the receiver)
Well, it makes a difference. Are you taking notes?

GREENBERG
I haven't yet, no.

PHILIP
You have to write this stuff down if you're not going to remember it.

GREENBERG
I'm sorry. I'm almost positive it's white.

PHILIP
(trying not to get angry)
When's he coming home?

GREENBERG
He was supposed to come home today, but the numbers dropped and they have to keep him until he's stable. They asked if the gardeners use rat poison.

PHILIP
They're not supposed to, no... Shit, should we be getting on a plane?

GREENBERG
No, no, he'll be okay. I mean, I'll let you know if --

PHILIP
Fuck, poor Mahler. I'll call Florence to get the information.

GREENBERG
(defensive)
I'm doing it, okay? So you can call me, I pretty much know it.

PHILIP
"Pretty much" isn't very comforting to Carol and me.

GREENBERG
Well, he's not my dog. I'm trying to take care of it.

Silence. Philip's voice breaks:

PHILIP

I know you're trying. It's...it's
scary, you know when you're far away.

GREENBERG

I know. You can trust me. Okay?

PHILIP

Okay. Carol wants me to ask about the
bookshelf.

Roger eyes the pool -- the water has filled almost to the top.

GREENBERG

Um, can the pool overflow?

EXT. POOL - LATER

The rain continues to pour. Greenberg drags the end of a green hose into the pool -- the water's nearly overflowing. He follows the hose back to its other end. He takes a deep breath and sucks from the opening. He removes his mouth and waits. He coughs and tries again. Suddenly water spurts out and he quickly dodges the stream.

INT. AMOEBA RECORDS

Greenberg flips through CD's. He pulls out a Ruth Etting compilation.

EXT. SUNSET

He places the CD in an envelope addressed to Florence. He runs across the street, dodging traffic, toward the post office.

EXT. LA BREA BLVD - LATER

Greenberg carries a grocery bag. The sun beats down. He sweats. Hasidic Jews mingle outside a temple. A boy in orthodox garb bikes swiftly past him.

Greenberg steps into the street. A black Explorer cuts in front of him. Greenberg instinctively smacks the back window of the car in irritation. The driver slams on the brakes. Greenberg runs.

Greenberg, clutching his grocery bag, cuts into an alley behind La Brea. He's panting and sweating.

EXT. STREET

Greenberg trudges back toward home. He holds his jacket and a sweater in his arms along with the bags. Sweat drips from his forehead and seeps through his clothes.

INT. STEAK HOUSE - NIGHT

Greenberg sits across from Ivan who is tucked in the middle of a long, crowded banquet. They're both in blazers, Greenberg his usual sweater but with a collared shirt underneath. Greenberg has a scotch, Ivan a Diet Coke.

GREENBERG

People don't call on my birthday anymore. I guess I don't call people on their birthdays, why should they call me? I didn't call you. When is yours?

IVAN

In February.

GREENBERG

That's right. I'll call you this year.

People at another table erupt into loud laughter. One guy guffaws and claps. Greenberg glances over at them, irritated.

GREENBERG

Laughing already demonstrates appreciation, the applause seems superfluous.

Ivan laughs.

GREENBERG

I'm weirdly on tonight.

IVAN

Should we order?

GREENBERG

I was reading an article in the paper this morning about someone running for office and they gave his age as 41 and my first thought was, that guy's an adult. Adults run for office.

IVAN

Right.

GREENBERG

But what I'm not thinking is, "I'm 41 too." If I was in the paper, that would be my age.

IVAN

I know, it's like when I look at my highschool yearbook now, the seniors still look so old.

GREENBERG

(pause)

Maybe I should've invited Florence. Or I should've had a party...I don't know.

IVAN

Birthday's are hard.

GREENBERG

It's weird aging, right? It's like, "What the fuck is going on?"

IVAN

I know.

GREENBERG

I mean, you know it's happening. We're all playing by the same rules and still...somewhere in the back of my head I thought I'd never actually be forty. Let alone...over forty.

IVAN

Youth is wasted on the young.

GREENBERG

I'd go further, I'd go, life is wasted on...people.

(sighs)

Should I invite her? It doesn't have to mean anything. I don't want to set up a series of expectations with her. What do you think?

IVAN

(shrugs)

Yeah if you want.

GREENBERG

I guess I could call her.

IVAN
Then we should wait to order.

GREENBERG
Maybe it would be good. Do you care?

IVAN
No...I mean... GREENBERG
It's a different dynamic.

IVAN
Right.

GREENBERG
She lives near here. I'll see if
she's around. She probably has other
plans. I won't get into it being my
birthday.

(an afterthought)
She's young.

Greenberg gets up and heads outside. We STAY with Ivan, alone
in his thoughts. He watches different women at the bar. He
hums to himself. The bus boy refills his water.

IVAN
Thanks.

He tops off Roger's water.

IVAN
Thanks.

The bus boy picks up Roger's napkin from the floor and puts it
back onto the table.

IVAN
Thanks.

He overhears a girl, 13, talking to her father at the table to
his right:

GIRL
I have a total love affair with
Hawaii.

Ivan takes a sip of Roger's scotch. He takes out his cell phone
and checks -- no messages. A level of self-consciousness
surfaces as he surveys the restaurant.

GREENBERG (O.S.)
I don't find a lot of girls in LA
attractive, do you?

Greenberg slides back into his seat.

IVAN
I do. Yeah.

GREENBERG
I said, I don't.

IVAN
Oh. I do.

GREENBERG
She isn't as pretty as Beth -- or her face is, but she's rounder. Not fat. I find it sexy. But...you'll see.

IVAN
I never found Beth as beautiful as everyone else did.

Greenberg hesitates, thrown for a brief moment.

GREENBERG
She was my girlfriend.

IVAN
Years ago. I didn't think you'd take offense.

GREENBERG
Well, you like racist Portuguese women.

IVAN
She made one remark! And it's really cultural. I mean, by our standards Fabula's mother is a bigot.

GREENBERG
Florence is... If you worked in an office with her, you'd definitely develop a crush on her.

IVAN
I know you never liked Fabula...

GREENBERG
But outside of the office you'd start to wonder if she's as cute as you imagined.

IVAN
You're describing my experience of
life.

Ivan looks at the table cloth.

GREENBERG
She's young. But I said that already.

IVAN
I'm just saying, Fabula's a lot less
possessive than she used to be...
You'd like her more now --

Greenberg flags a guy in a white smock.

GREENBERG
Can I get another scotch.

IVAN
That's the bus boy.

GREENBERG
Fine, can I get another fork, this one
has some food on it?

The bus boy takes the utensil. Greenberg looks at Ivan -- he
relents:

GREENBERG
Fabula never got you. She thought
she'd bagged some fancy American man
rather than just Ivan... I know she
helped with the addiction and
everything, but... You're over that.
We have to find you someone. It's too
bad neither of us are the type to go
whoreing.

IVAN
Is that her?

Greenberg startles and turns around. Florence hurries toward
their table, smiling. She wears a heavy cardigan, denim skirt
and sneakers. Greenberg half-stands.

GREENBERG
This is Ivan.

FLORENCE
Nice to meet you.

IVAN
You too.

She kisses Greenberg's cheek and sits next to Ivan in the banquet -- Greenberg faces them.

FLORENCE
You guys look like you could be brothers.

Greenberg stares at Ivan suspiciously.

GREENBERG
(pause)
I'll be right back.

Greenberg gets up. We STAY with Ivan and Florence both facing forward in the banquet. Silence.

BETH (V.O.)
(through the receiver)
Hello?

EXT. RESTAURANT

A guy in track pants and a woman with frizzy hair wearing his jacket, smoke and type on their Blackberries. Greenberg -- on his cell -- watches Florence and Ivan, who are still not talking, through the window.

YOUNG GIRL'S VOICE
Hello?

GREENBERG
Beth?

YOUNG GIRL'S VOICE
What?

GREENBERG
Beth?

YOUNG GIRL'S VOICE
Who?

GREENBERG
Is...is this a child?

YOUNG GIRL'S VOICE
Yes.

GREENBERG
Is your mom there?

YOUNG GIRL'S VOICE
Who's this?

GREENBERG

Roger.

YOUNG GIRL'S VOICE

Miller?

GREENBERG

Roger.

YOUNG GIRL'S VOICE

Hold on.

(shrieking)

Mom, it's Miller!

The sound of the phone dropping. Some movement. Finally:

BETH

Hello?

GREENBERG

Beth?

BETH

Who's this?

GREENBERG

Roger.

BETH

Oh, hi.

Laughter in the background on her end.

GREENBERG

What are you doing?

BETH

I'm sewing Charles's pants.

GREENBERG

Uh huh. Is Charles your son?

BETH

Yeah. Hot stuff.

Through the window: Florence and Ivan are now chatting.

GREENBERG

Do you want to have a drink or
something sometime --

INT. RESTAURANT

Greenberg returns to the table. Ivan is sitting alone.

GREENBERG

What'd you do with her?

IVAN

She's in the bathroom.

GREENBERG

(sitting)

You see what I mean about working in
an office?

IVAN

Where'd you go?

GREENBERG

I called Beth.

IVAN

Really?

GREENBERG

Come on. I mean, Beth is a part of my
life. She's... I don't believe
things happen for a reason, but me
being out here at this particular
time, maybe it's happening for a
reason.

CUT TO: CLOSE on a Xeroxed flyer. A phallic magic marker. The Magic Marker Live at Wetlands, March 3rd 1994.

We hear Greenberg and Ivan laughing -- high-pitched giggles escalate throughout the following:

GREENBERG (O.S.)

I can't believe you still have this.

CLOSE on a photo of Greenberg, Ivan and Breitbart standing on a stage. They're all around twenty. Ivan is in a baggy Italian suit with a guitar. Greenberg wears a turtleneck sweater and is on keyboards, Breitbart is in a soft black leather jacket and stands next to them.

FLORENCE

Look how cute you guys are.

IVAN

(funny voice)

"How is Lenny?"

GREENBERG
(another funny voice)
"Lenny not so good."

Ivan now has a beer. The waiters clear what is left of their steaks and fries. Florence holds on to her fries.

IVAN
It really wasn't that funny.

GREENBERG
No, I know, it wasn't.

IVAN
(to Florence)
We opened for Fishbone.

FLORENCE
Cool.

IVAN
(to Greenberg re: photo)
You had kind of a mullet.

Florence laughs.

GREENBERG
(laughing)
No, that's a shadow.

WAITERS/WAITRESSES (O.S.)
Happy Birthday to you...

Two waiters and three waitresses carry a piece of strudel with a candle in it.

GREENBERG
No...don't have them do it. Don't.

WAITERS/WAITRESSES
Happy Birth --

Greenberg furiously blows out the candles while the staff sings. They trail off. Greenberg turns to Ivan.

GREENBERG
You're such a fucking asshole.

IVAN
Roger, relax.

GREENBERG
You know I hate this shit.

IVAN
Relax, man.

GREENBERG
Sit on my dick, asshole.

Greenberg shoves his chair back and walks out. Silence, the waiters disperse. Ivan looks at Florence with disbelief.

IVAN
What the fuck, right?

FLORENCE
Well, he just got out of a hospital.

IVAN
Right. I mean, really?

FLORENCE
Yeah.

IVAN
Wow. Well, now I feel guilty for saying that.
(pause)
Still, this is...this is bad behavior.

FLORENCE
I think he was embarrassed.

EXT. SUNSET BLVD/INT. BAR - NIGHT

Greenberg marches briskly for about a block. He stops, a moment, aimless, then cuts into a bar.

"Africa" by Toto plays. Greenberg sits on a stool and runs his chapstick across his lips.

GREENBERG
Can I get a Stella?

Greenberg drinks the beer and watches a Laker game on the TV. He turns to a guy at the bar.

GREENBERG
How's Shaq doing?

GUY AT BAR
Shaq's on the Phoenix Suns.

GREENBERG
(chastened)
Oh...right. No, I know... I don't
know what...

He takes out his phone and dials.

FLORENCE
(through the receiver)
Hello?

GREENBERG
Hi.

FLORENCE
Where are you?

GREENBERG
At a bar. Where are you?

FLORENCE
We're waiting to get the check.

GREENBERG
Can you pick me up.

INT. FLORENCE'S COROLLA - LATER

Florence drives. Greenberg sits shotgun, still furious.

GREENBERG
I mean, who does that? Gets the
waiters... I'm not one of these
preening LA people who likes
everything to be about them -- some
dickhead who does karaoke at the
Farmer's Market and hosts a running
charades game every Friday night. I
like to keep a low profile. He knows
that too. And this was a big thing
for me, involving both of you
together. I'm happier
compartmentalizing everything. It
just works better.

Florence laughs.

GREENBERG
What?

FLORENCE
You told Ivan to sit on your dick?

GREENBERG
(laughs despite himself)
Did I?

FLORENCE
(laughing harder)
Yeah.

GREENBERG
What the hell does that mean?

FLORENCE
I don't know.

Silence, both of them smiling. Florence quickly glances in the backseat.

FLORENCE
(suddenly)
Shit.

GREENBERG
What?

FLORENCE
I think I left my purse at the restaurant.

GREENBERG
Really?

FLORENCE
I'm sorry.

GREENBERG
Why...why don't you check these things?

FLORENCE
I was flustered. God. It was dumb. Is it okay if we go back? I can drop you at the house first if you want.

GREENBERG
Yeah, maybe.

FLORENCE
(distressed)
Really?

GREENBERG
(annoyed)
Fine, let's go back.

She hits the blinker and starts to make a U-turn.

INT. FLORENCE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - LATER

Florence, with her back to Greenberg, quickly wraps something in an Allure magazine cover. She spins around and hands it to him.

FLORENCE
Okay, now Happy Birthday.

He tears open the paper and holds the witch puppet up from his lap.

GREENBERG
Great. So, I got the witch.

FLORENCE
I made a snap judgement. If you'd rather the devil, you can switch it out.

The devil puppet sits on her bureau.

GREENBERG
No, I'm happy with the witch. Thanks.

Greenberg tries to manipulate the sticks.

GREENBERG
You're right these are too old for your niece.

Florence opens a bag of crackers and pops one in her mouth.

FLORENCE
I'm impressed by you.

GREENBERG
In what way?

FLORENCE
I don't know...I was telling my friend, Gina, how cool it is that...I mean, you seem really fine doing nothing. It's like you don't feel all that bullshit pressure to be successful...I mean by other people's standards...

Greenberg's face turns red.

GREENBERG

I'm... You know I almost had a record deal when I got out of college. I haven't done nothing.

FLORENCE

Cool.

GREENBERG

I want to be doing what I'm doing. I'm doing nothing deliberately.

FLORENCE

That's what I was saying. I don't know if I could do nothing and be that cool with everything.

GREENBERG

(weakly)

Well, there's so much crap out there.

Silence. She leans over and they kiss.

FLORENCE

Mahler's not at home, you could stay over. Wink wink.

GREENBERG

I'm not supposed to get involved...I mean, I'm trying not to... But, fuck it, yeah, okay...

They kiss again.

FLORENCE

Ivan's nice. Is he your best friend?

GREENBERG

Yeah, I guess so. I lost Ivan for a few years there to this racist he met in rehab. But their marriage is ending which is good for him. And me, to be honest.

FLORENCE

Oh. Good.

GREENBERG

You probably wouldn't believe this, but in college he used to be really handsome and stylish and kind of great...

FLORENCE
I can believe that.

GREENBERG
I used to borrow his pants. You know, when you're younger you wonder how do people become who they are. Who are those beaten, ex-junkie, out of work guitar players who end up fixing your computer? And then you realize: they're Ivan. Sad.

FLORENCE
(mumbles)
Who are those personal assistants who sing at open mike nights...

GREENBERG
It's not the same thing. You're young. I know it doesn't feel that way, I mean, I wish I had felt more young when I was your age. I'm probably young now and don't know it.

Florence nods.

GREENBERG
Ivan and I call each other "man," but it's meant as a joke because it's the kind of thing we wouldn't call each other. It's our imitation of other people.

FLORENCE
I know what that's like. This friend of mine, Marnie, and me, we went to this cheesy bar in Hollywood one night and we just thought, let's pretend we're kind of slutty girls looking to get picked up. Even though we weren't. And we ended up talking to these two frat guys, but like 30, who were all into their bodies and cologned, very well groomed. And we ended up going back to one of their places -- and I think one of the them was almost retarded or he was really drunk because he didn't make any sense. And they got out a video camera and Marnie and I did this kind of strip tease...it was crazy because we were still playing these girls, but here we were showing our breasts and...

Greenberg looks stricken. She stops.

FLORENCE

We ran out of there pretty fast. We
were total freaks.

Greenberg, seething, gets up and goes to her computer.

FLORENCE

What are you looking at?

GREENBERG

(terse)

I'm going to see if I can find the
video of you.

FLORENCE

It's not on the internet. And it
wouldn't be under my name if he posted
it, which I'm sure he didn't.

Florence watches as Greenberg types.

FLORENCE

There's a Florence Marr who's an ice
skater who comes up a lot --

Frustrated, Greenberg marches over to the refrigerator and opens it.

GREENBERG

You never have anything good to drink.

He goes into a cupboard and pours himself cheap tequila. She comes up behind and puts her arms around his waist. He pushes her off.

GREENBERG

(furious)

That's like the stupidest story I've
ever heard. Are you sure you didn't
fuck these guys?

FLORENCE

Yes.

GREENBERG

Is there more? I just want to get it
all out now so I don't get any more
disgusting surprises.

Silence. Greenberg shoves his hands in his jacket pockets.

FLORENCE
I feel like I just got beat up.

EXT. PICO BLVD - LATER NIGHT

Cars rumble by. We see Greenberg in the distance walking the pavement toward us. He removes his blazer and throws it over his arm. He clutches his witch puppet.

He looks around for a cab, but there are none. He reaches a bus stop and waits. Nothing is coming. A light drizzle. He looks miserable. He holds the puppet tighter.

INT. VET - DAY

Ivan and a stocky vet assistant slowly lift Mahler up. Greenberg holds the leash.

FEMALE VET
We've basically gone past what we're equipped to do here. We think it's an autoimmune disorder.

GREENBERG
(swallows, uncertain)
Uh huh.

She hands Greenberg a business card.

FEMALE VET
This hospital has more experience with internal medicine. I've called and they're expecting you.

GREENBERG
You can't do it here? I mean, you know him now... Don't we get some say in this?

FEMALE VET
I know, but this is their area of expertise...

Greenberg shows the card to Ivan.

GREENBERG
You know where this is?

IVAN
I've got to pick up Victor at school in half an hour. Can you ask Florence?

GREENBERG

I'm trying not to call her! I'm just going to hurt her feelings, man. I'm trying not to do that to people anymore. I don't want to be asking anyone for a ride. I just turned 41 and I should be able to drive!

IVAN

Why are you yelling at me?!

GREENBERG

(exhales, annoyed)

What a pain in the ass.

EXT. VET HOSPITAL - LATER

A tall modern office building. Greenberg carefully leads Mahler from the open door of a "Pet Taxi." He grips a stack of over-sized X-rays under his arm.

INT. VET HOSPITAL, EXAMINING ROOM - LATER

It's more high-tech and less homey. The X-rays are lit up on the wall. Mahler is slowly lowered on an automatic examining table. A new vet, a man with a mustache, addresses Greenberg.

MALE VET

Survival rate is about 50/50. Hopefully with the right cocktail of drugs we'll be able to get it under control and keep him stable. We'll need to keep him at least a week.

GREENBERG

This is stupid but...I can't catch it, right? I mean...

MALE VET

No. It's something only dogs get.
(pause)
I'll give you some time with him.

GREENBERG

(quickly)

Do you guys take volunteers?

MALE VET

What do you mean?

GREENBERG

Like if someone wanted to help out for a couple of hours once in a while.

MALE VET

No. If you want to volunteer, you should maybe go to a rescue center, but here you need a medical degree.

GREENBERG

Thanks.

The vet shuts the door on his way out. Greenberg sits stiffly on the cold linoleum floor. He pets the lethargic dog. He stares at a diagram of a dog's anatomy hanging on the wall. He places his hand gently on Mahler's torso at different spots.

GREENBERG

(consulting the diagram)

Heart...liver...pancreas...

He hesitates then moves his hand to his own stomach and chest.

CUT TO: CLOSE on feverish scribbling: "Dear Pet Taxi Co., You would think a vehicle made expressly for the transportation of animals would have a soft floor..."

INT. PHILIP AND CAROL'S BEDROOM

Greenberg goes through his brother's closet. He finds a pinstripe jacket and puts it on. It's big, the sleeves are long.

INT. COFFEE SHOP

Greenberg, in the jacket, sits opposite Beth.

GREENBERG

I always felt bad about that night after we played the Viper Room and you were there with your sister and I wanted to go to this party and you were tired and I let you go home and --

Beth nods vaguely.

BETH

Which night was this?

GREENBERG

You were with your sister.

BETH

Uh huh. I don't think I remember that night...

GREENBERG

I should have been straight with you.
You know, I originally got into music
to meet girls and I think when we
started playing around LA and I was
getting some attention --

BETH

-- from girls. I understand.

GREENBERG

But I wasn't clear with you and I want
to apologize for how I behaved. I
kind of just let it end, left town,
and was uncommunicative and I feel
like I didn't even give you a reason --

BETH

But I knew.

GREENBERG

Uh huh. Well, I'm sorry.

BETH

It's okay. Like I said, I don't
remember that night.

GREENBERG

You had bought a new mattress that
afternoon.

BETH

(shaking her head)

Yeah, sounds plausible. Was that like
fourteen years ago?

Silence.

GREENBERG

You didn't like the Sealy, you thought
it was too mushy... We used to make
that 1-800 Mattress joke, the extra S
for extra sex...

BETH

(no idea)

Okay...okay.

Silence.

GREENBERG

We could've gotten married and...had
kids...

BETH

You think? I don't think we would've.

GREENBERG

I don't know, it was a big relationship for me.

Silence.

BETH

You mentioned you've been doing carpentry...

GREENBERG

Uh huh. After the band broke up I was a substitute teacher for a little while, but I was always good at making things so...

BETH

Oh yeah?

GREENBERG

(exasperated)

Beth, I made you that bed! Don't you remember? It was why we were buying the mattress to begin with.

BETH

I do remember that, I do remember that. Sorry. Totally. Go on...

GREENBERG

So, I started making cabinets and things -- I work out of a studio in Bushwick I share with a few other carpenters and...that's been pretty good, I've made some good connections with contractors and designers. It's political, though. Then I had this thing where I couldn't move my legs. Literally. You know, but it was psychological.

BETH

God.

GREENBERG

Yeah, so that took some time dealing with and I think that brings us up to date.

BETH
Are you okay?

GREENBERG
Yeah...I think I just needed to let go, you know. I had a shrink there who said you only missed by five percent. I'm not positive what it means, but in most things ninety-five is pretty good.

BETH
I had a shrink who said to me, "You're of value." It's stupid but it always stuck with me.

GREENBERG
You look really pretty.

BETH
Thanks.

GREENBERG
My dog is sick.

BETH
Yeah? My mom's sick.

GREENBERG
Philip's dog, really, but I'm taking care of him. He has an autoimmune disorder. Since he got sick I keep thinking I have something.

(long pause)
I'm sorry about your mom.

BETH
Yeah...

GREENBERG
Do you want to have dinner one night?

BETH
This week?

GREENBERG
Or next... I kind of meant like on a date.

BETH
(off-guard)
Oh. Oh. Yeah. No.
(MORE)

BETH (cont'd)
Come on, you know that's a terrible
idea. No. But...no. No.

Greenberg nods, mortified. Silence. Beth tries to find the waiter to signal for a check.

BETH
Shit, he didn't see me...

GREENBERG
He looks harried even though no one's here.

BETH
Yeah. I'm just going to go get him.

GREENBERG
I'm sure he'll be by --

She's up, walking into the back. We STAY with Greenberg.

EXT. RUNYON CANYON

Gina and Florence hike the dirt path.

FLORENCE
What's wrong with me? Tell me.
You're mean sometimes, but you're also honest.

GINA
Nothing. Everyone has done gross,
disgusting things when they're young.

FLORENCE
It wasn't disgusting. It was just
dumb. I was like twenty years old
when it happened.

GINA
I'm sure he's done much worse than
flash his tits on video. Whatever got
him in the lockdown ward.

They both laugh, Florence guiltily.

FLORENCE
Lots of great interesting people have
tried to kill themselves.

GINA
He tried to kill himself?

FLORENCE

I don't know, I'm just saying.

(pause)

He sent me a Ruth Etting CD. Probably before our fight. I already have it, but it's still sweet.

GINA

Who buys CD's anymore?

FLORENCE

Should I call him?

GINA

No, I don't like how he treats you. He acts like you work for him.

FLORENCE

Well I do work for his brother.

GINA

Exactly, his functional, successful, attractive younger brother who actually needs a personal assistant.

FLORENCE

(pause)

But just to thank him maybe for the CD. I don't want to be rude.

GINA

He's mean and he's old and crazy. And if you keep driving him places I'll stop speaking to you.

FLORENCE

Okay.

GINA

I mean, who doesn't drive?

BREITBART (V.O.)

You didn't even give it a second thought did you?

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - DAY

CLOSE on Breitbart who talks heatedly.

GREENBERG (O.S.)

I gave it --

BREITBART

You were uncomfortable and you dumped me.

GREENBERG (O.S.)
I didn't dump you --

BREITBART
You dumped me. I paid for you and
Ivan to record the demos.
(getting further riled)
...you were sleeping on my floor. I
paid for the lawyer to make the deal --
money which I didn't have at the time.

GREENBERG (O.S.)
You were going to be reimbursed --

BREITBART
So what! I believed in the thing.
And suddenly you bail --

GREENBERG
I didn't like the deal.

BREITBART
It was completely standard. It was a
record deal. It was a big thing for
us. We weren't going to get any
better than that.

GREENBERG
It was corporate bullshit. I didn't
want to be a slave to the A&R
department -- they'd fuck with the
songs. We had no control.

BREITBART
You weren't the only one in the band.
It's morally reprehensible what you
did.

We now see Greenberg who is shoveling salad into his mouth with a fork. Greenberg says, wiping his chin:

GREENBERG
I'm sorry, but... I didn't want to do
it unless it was on our terms.

BREITBART
Well, you got your way. There's no
record...there's no band! How are
those terms?

GREENBERG
What do you care? You've done all
right. It doesn't matter.

BREITBART

It does matter. I was hurt by you.
You're not who I thought you were.

(pause)

Ivan was counting on it. He co-wrote
the songs with you, he --

GREENBERG

(for the record)

Ivan wrote some of the music with me.

BREITBART

Stop rationalizing.

Greenberg leans down to his glass of ice tea. He slurps from
the wide red straw.

GREENBERG

Ivan can take care of himself --

BREITBART

I'm surprised he still speaks to you.

Greenberg sighs.

BREITBART

What's that, what's that sigh?

GREENBERG

(irritated)

Nothing.

He sucks through the straw at the melted ice in the empty glass.

CUT TO: Greenberg scribbles furiously on a legal pad:

CLOSE: Dear Breitbart, What can you say to "morally reprehensible?" It's
this kind of LA speak where everything is absolutes. In New York we don't
have black and white, it's grey...

INT. GREENBERG'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Greenberg looks at the concert flyer and the photograph of him,
Ivan and Breitbart. A steaming styrofoam microwave soup and a
tall glass of scotch in front of him. The phone lies next to
him. He dials.

IVAN

(through the receiver)

Hello?

GREENBERG
(funny voice)
"How is Lenny?"

IVAN
(pause, different funny
voice)
"Lenny not so good."

They both laugh.

INT. IVAN'S HOTEL ROOM - INTERCUT

Ivan sits up in bed. The TV is on.

GREENBERG
Not too late to call, I hope.

IVAN
Nah. Watching Just My Luck with
Lindsay Lohan on Starz.

GREENBERG
How is it?

IVAN
Kind of funny. She's got charm.

Silence.

GREENBERG
Alright...
(pause)
I was thinking, we should maybe do
something together again -- write some
songs.

IVAN
Aren't you going back to New York?

GREENBERG
Yeah, but... If we got something
going... I could stay here possibly.

Ivan mutes the TV. He stares into space.

IVAN
I don't think I have time really
between the computer work and
Victor...

GREENBERG

Uh huh. It's funny, don't you still think of yourself as a guitar player even though you don't really do it anymore...

IVAN

No...not...I don't. You know I hired a guy to help me with the company so... It's a...I have to concentrate on that.

GREENBERG

Okay. Um, I think I'm having a party tomorrow.

IVAN

Tomorrow?

GREENBERG

A pool party. So, come. Bring Victor. After we hang up, I'm going to call some people.

EXT. RALPH'S - MORNING

Greenberg hurries out of the supermarket clutching two big brown paper bags.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Greenberg watches out the window: Peggy says something and Marlon laughs and claps. Eight year old Victor dog-paddles in the pool. Ivan glides next to him. Megan and her husband are there with two kids.

Greenberg scrapes the store-bought guacamole into a bowl. Ivan enters, in his wet trunks, and goes to the fridge.

IVAN

Megan's husband wants to know...do you know what kind of tree that skinny one with the yellow flowers is?

GREENBERG

(immediately annoyed)

No. I mean, I wouldn't even think to know something like that.

IVAN

Are you coming out? Victor wants to show you his dive.

GREENBERG

Is it okay, is it a dud? I do this, I throw a party last minute and then I'm disappointed no one can come.

IVAN

It's fine. We're having fun.

GREENBERG

(hesitates)

I need to put together the chips and guac and creamsicles I bought. I got you Diet Coke.

IVAN

I see. Thanks.

GREENBERG

I guess I'll make an appearance.

IVAN

Are you pulling a Gatsby and watching the party from afar?

GREENBERG

I don't know that I need to document the reasons how this isn't like Gatsby.

Ivan collects two beers and a Coke. He hesitates then puts the Coke back and takes a third beer. He shuts the fridge door with his hip.

IVAN

It turns out Marlon and Peggy have a ten year old who went to Victor's school. It's such a small world.

GREENBERG

Why is that news to you? It is a small world, I'm surprised we all don't run into each other more often. You and I went to school together.

Ivan heads back outside. The door slams behind him.

CUT TO: Greenberg walks the path toward the pool. He holds a tray with a bowl of chips and guacamole and stacked creamsicles. Through the brush we see: Marlon, Peggy, Ivan and Victor, playing volleyball in the water. Greenberg hesitantly and anxiously approaches. Marlon turns, sees him and waves.

MARLON

Hey!

Greenberg sweats -- he waves back with his pinky, clutching the tray handles tightly. The phone rings inside. Greenberg -- relieved -- turns right around and hurries back toward the house, balancing the tray as best he can.

He enters the kitchen. He stands over the machine, still holding the tray.

FLORENCE (V.O.)

(through the machine)

Hi, it's me. Florence. I'm sorry to be calling, but I wanted to see how Mahler was...

Greenberg lays down the tray with a clank and picks up.

GREENBERG

Hello?

FLORENCE

(through the receiver)

Sorry, I wanted to check in on --

GREENBERG

We had to move him to another vet.

FLORENCE

(alarmed)

Really?

GREENBERG

Yeah, they do better with internal medicine there. I was going to call you, but --

FLORENCE

No, no. And I realize I don't have your cell.

The vacuum turns on with a blast. Greenberg looks at the maid with disbelief.

GREENBERG

Can you --

The maid yanks the cord out of the wall. The roar quickly winds down. He walks into the bathroom and closes the door.

GREENBERG

Did you get anything in the mail?

FLORENCE

The CD. Yeah, I love Ruth Etting.
Thanks.

GREENBERG

(disappointed)
You know her?

FLORENCE

Yeah, but I don't think I have this
compilation.

Greenberg looks disappointed.

FLORENCE

Um, I'd like to visit him at the
hospital. If you can give me the
information. We don't have to see
each other, we can go at different
times.

INT. VET HOSPITAL, VISITING ROOM - DAY

Florence and Greenberg sit on the floor on either side of
Mahler.

GREENBERG

I liked the old vet better.

Florence removes the worn Fiorucci T-shirt she wears over her
dress. She balls it up and places it by Mahler's snout.
Greenberg gets a glimpse of her breasts as she leans toward the
dog.

FLORENCE

Gina told me it's nice to leave them
something that smells like you.

Greenberg does a quick inventory, but has nothing he can take
off. Mahler's eyes blink helplessly.

EXT. POOL - NIGHT

Florence's shirt is open, but she still has on her green jacket.
Greenberg's pants are down, but his oxford is buttoned. They're
having sex on the grass.

FLORENCE

Should we stop?

GREENBERG

No. Why? What are you thinking?

FLORENCE

Nothing. I think I missed my chance
to come.

GREENBERG

Okay.

(pause)

There's probably still a chance for
me.

He rolls her over on top of him. She hesitates.

GREENBERG

What's wrong?

FLORENCE

I don't know what to do on top.

GREENBERG

I guess do what feels good.

FLORENCE

But that's embarrassing -- now that
we've talked about it. I don't know
what I'm saying. Sorry.

GREENBERG

Don't apologize.

She moves a little bit and then stops.

FLORENCE

(laughs nervously)

Moving fast reminds me of the movies.

Greenberg turns her over and is now on top of her.

FLORENCE

We don't have to continue if you don't
want to.

GREENBERG

Why wouldn't I want to?

FLORENCE

Because I'm being annoying.

Florence raises her legs up over his shoulders. He moves
faster. She bucks and sucks in her breath. They both come. He
opens his eyes: She's crying.

FLORENCE

I'm sorry, I'm thinking of Mahler.

CUT TO: Florence sits on the grass, she's naked and wrapped in a left-out beach towel. Greenberg is shirtless and in underwear. He drags his toes through the water. She holds a CD.

FLORENCE

I don't know Judee Sill. Very cool.
Thanks.

GREENBERG

You sure you don't have it?

FLORENCE

No, no. Thank you. Thanks a lot.

GREENBERG

You can tell me if you have it.

FLORENCE

I don't!

GREENBERG

She was like a homeless junkie in the
70's. You know, it's a woman with
sandals. Maybe there's something you
want to sing on there...

She reads the back of the CD.

FLORENCE

You like old things.

GREENBERG

(shrugs)

A shrink said to me once, That I have
trouble living in the present so I
linger on the past because I felt like
I didn't ever really live it to begin
with. You know?

Suddenly:

FLORENCE

Do you think you could love me?

Silence.

GREENBERG

I don't know, Florence.

She winds up the toy girl who bangs on the vibes.

FLORENCE

I think I get excited to see you and
then I worry it might go too quick and
I just say things to get a reaction...

Greenberg sinks into a metal chair. She slides on her jeans.
Greenberg stares at her as she searches in her coat pocket for a
cigarette.

FLORENCE

Have the...orals been better?

GREENBERG

Yeah...much.

She blushes. He looks at her.

FLORENCE

What?

GREENBERG

We've got to stop this. I've
intentionally not called you. Even
when I needed to call you I didn't.
You know, I took a Pet Taxi. You've
got to stop calling me.

FLORENCE

(hurt)

I haven't called you.

GREENBERG

You called today.

FLORENCE

That was for Mahler.

GREENBERG

Oh, come on, it wasn't for Mahler.
Florence, you... Take some
responsibility. Don't put yourself in
this kind of situation.

FLORENCE

What situation? I like seeing you.

GREENBERG

No you don't... You don't like it.
Why are we even having this
conversation, we're not really even
dating and we're seeing other
people...

FLORENCE
I'm not seeing anyone.

GREENBERG
Neither am I, but...I want to.

Florence's eyes pool.

FLORENCE
Who...

Greenberg hesitates. He blurts out in frustration:

GREENBERG
I don't know! Anyone. I'm doing nothing! I'm not tied to anyone. How many times do we have to go over it? Jesus. I should be with a divorced thirty-eight year old with teenage kids who has low expectations about life. I'm not going to call. You do the same. I don't want to fucking do this anymore. God.

Florence quickly collects her things. Greenberg, addled, watches her walk away.

CUT TO: Greenberg primes a side of the near-finished bookshelf.

INT. OFFICE ROOM - LATER NIGHT

CLOSE in long-hand: Dear New York Times ombudsman, The paper's reporters -- or should I say stenographers -- continue to uncritically regurgitate the administration's definition of "Al Qaeda" in Iraq...

CUT TO: A stack of addressed letter-sized envelopes -- The New York Times, ADT, Pet Taxi among them.

Greenberg organizes various hand-written letters with their corresponding envelopes.

EXT. SUNSET BLVD - MORNING

Greenberg hustles across the busy two-way street clutching the envelopes. He wears his down vest. He sweats.

INT. POST OFFICE

Greenberg waits in line. He licks at the corner of an envelope that hasn't properly sealed.

EXT. SUNSET BLVD

A large blue wind-sock shaped like a man blows outside a Jiffy Lube. Using his sleeve as a buffer, Greenberg presses the button at the cross-walk a few times. At a break in traffic, he hurries back across the street. Greenberg enters a Coffee Bean. We watch him through the window as he buys coffee.

EXT. OGDEN STREET

He walks quickly, holding his coffee. He stops, balances the cup on a hydrant while he takes off his down vest and sweater, exposing a damp T-shirt. He throws the clothes over his arm, and sits on the front lawn of a house. We MOVE IN on his face -- he drinks the hot coffee as the sun streams down. Sweat spills down his temples. Greenberg dials his phone and wedges it between his cheek and shoulder.

GREENBERG

(into phone)

Hi, this is Roger Greenberg. I'm calling to check on Mahler...

(listening)

Uh huh...Uh huh...Okay...Okay...

Yeah...

He hangs up and stares into space. A car slows down in front of him and a male driver leans across the passenger seat and says out the window:

DRIVER

You okay?

GREENBERG

Yeah.

The driver nods, satisfied. The car pulls away.

INT. VET HOSPITAL - DAY

Greenberg and Florence are at the front desk signing papers. The nurse is handing Greenberg different bottles of medication. Florence doesn't look at Greenberg.

VET RECEPTIONIST

Half a pill three times a day with food. The blood thinner just at night, that's for blood clots and he'll get prednisone, which is a steroid, twice a day for three days and then we'll bring him down to one and a half a day and the blood thinner every other day.

Greenberg nods and nods and slides over his credit card. He says to Florence, apologetically:

GREENBERG
I tried Ivan, but he had a birthday
party.

Florence nods, refuses to look at him. A vet assistant hands a marginally healthier looking Mahler to Florence. She nestles into his fur.

FLORENCE
Hi, little Mahler baby.

GREENBERG
I didn't want to cram him into a
shitty Pet Taxi...
(pause)
Thanks a lot for doing this.

FLORENCE
(coldly)
I'm here for Mahler. Gina said I'm
crazy to drive you anywhere.

GREENBERG
Gina -- who calls you in the middle of
the night crying about nothing -- Gina
who can't even get your flyer info
correct. Yeah, listen to Gina.

Florence stares at him for a long beat.

FLORENCE
Don't...you know don't say anything
bad about...I can't think anything bad
about Gina right now...
(to the dog)
Come, Mahler...

She carefully leads the dog to the door. The nurse passes the credit card receipt back to Greenberg. He signs.

GREENBERG
Three thousand, eighty-four dollars.
Jesus.

INT. GREENBERG'S KITCHEN - LATE DAY

Florence and Greenberg bring Mahler inside, he walks slowly and stiffly over to his dog bed, circles it and lies down.

GREENBERG
He seems better.

FLORENCE
(all business)
Give me his pills I'll mark them for
you so you don't forget.

Florence grabs a sharpie and begins to code the pill bottles.
She takes out three pills, cuts one in half and puts them all in
little slices of butter. She brings them to Mahler who eats
them from her hand. The phone rings.

FLORENCE
If you put the pills in butter they
go down easier.

She starts a pot of water on the stove and pours in rice. The
machine picks up.

PHILIP (V.O.)
Roger, it's Philip. Pick up. Pick
up. Piiicckkk uuuuppp... Fuck it.
I got an e-mail from Florence with her
hours: market, dry cleaners, market,
market, Rite Aid -- You can imagine,
it goes on... I said you could use
her for things, but not for
everything. And you better be making
that bookshelf. Call me.

He hangs up. Greenberg tries to find Florence's eyes, but she
won't look at him. Finally:

GREENBERG
Are you cooking? You want to make
Jello?

FLORENCE
The vet said the steroids might upset
his stomach. I'll just, I'll cook
this and then I'll go.

GREENBERG
Are you going to make chicken too?

FLORENCE
(sighs)
I can pick up a roast chicken at the
market. He shouldn't have the skin
it's too rich.

GREENBERG

I can eat the skin. Why don't we have chicken and rice with Mahler.

Florence looks at him with disbelief.

FLORENCE

You can walk to Ralph's, it's three blocks from here.

GREENBERG

Okay. Will you be here when I get back?

She marches across the floor and out the front door. Before the door swings shut, she reenters.

FLORENCE

I'll get the chicken, but I'm going to call you when I'm pulling up and you can come out and get it.

EXT. GREENBERG'S STREET - LATER

Florence, in her car, hands Greenberg the shopping bag through the driver-side window. Greenberg lingers.

GREENBERG

I'm sorry about my...freak out by the pool. You know, I got to try not to do that. I get abusive. I'm working on that.

(pause)

Anyway, I apologize.

FLORENCE

(dryly)

Thank you.

Silence.

GREENBERG

I mean, it's not just me...you do participate in it too, though. I mean, don't you think?

FLORENCE

Then you're not apologizing. You know, this isn't a good day for me, I'm going to go --

GREENBERG

I'm apologizing for my side of it.

FLORENCE
That's not an apology.

GREENBERG
Yes it... Florence, I think -- you know what I think -- I think you're transferring shit onto me. You're looking to me for the mental and physical abuse of your father...and sexual molestation or whatever...

FLORENCE
(horrified)
I was not molested.

GREENBERG
Or whatever. He was withholding. I'm right about that, right?

FLORENCE
I was not molested.

She puts the car in gear.

INT. FLORENCE'S COROLLA

We HOLD on Florence as she drives.

INT. LIQUOR STORE

Florence, her phone to her ear, grabs a bottle of champagne from the shelf.

FLORENCE
Gina, call me when you get this.
Okay? Also, we have to be there at seven in the morning so you should pick me up at six-thirty.

She hesitates then grabs another bottle.

INT. FLORENCE APARTMENT

Florence plays Blood, Sweat and Tears loudly on her small stereo. She's drinking champagne and singing along. The phone rings.

FLORENCE
(casual)
Hey.

INT. GREENBERG'S KITCHEN - INTERCUT

Greenberg drinks a tall scotch and studies Florence's instructions. He presses each pill into a slice of butter. Mahler lies next to him.

GREENBERG
(taken aback)
Hey.

FLORENCE
(hesitates)
I thought you were Gina.

GREENBERG
No, it's me. Roger.

FLORENCE
Why are you calling me? You need more granola?

GREENBERG
I wanted to speak to you.

FLORENCE
(making herself laugh)
Or ice cream sandwiches.

GREENBERG
(irritated)
Come on...

FLORENCE
(frustrated)
I mean, I'm just...are we seeing each other or not?

GREENBERG
Well, that's what I want to talk about. I don't know, I mean, I'm leaving in a like a week --

FLORENCE
That gives you enough time to find your thirty-eight year old divorcee.

Silence.

FLORENCE
Hurt people hurt people.

GREENBERG
(confused, repeating it to himself)
"Hurt people hurt --"

FLORENCE

It's something a singing coach of mine told me. Shit! Sorry... Sorry... I spilled...my champagne. Forget it.

GREENBERG

(suddenly suspicious)
Is somebody there?

FLORENCE

No.

She retrieves a sponge from the kitchen and wipes up the spill.

GREENBERG

You never fucked that guy who plays guitar with you?

FLORENCE

No, he's not even the same guy anymore! Sorry, I'm trying to get drunk. I don't mean this to sound dramatic...and I wasn't going to say anything. And Gina's taking me... I mean it's not yours...It's...I found out a couple of days ago...and...I don't know... It's...it's got to be my ex's because I'm six or seven weeks and you and I have only known each other... And you always use a condom anyway... I didn't want to tell you, I mean, it's weird, I've been pregnant this whole time...

GREENBERG

Uh huh.

FLORENCE

I made an appointment for a D and C. I'm really sensitive to pain so I asked for anaesthesia. Sorry, I'm trying to get drunk now. And I can't eat after ten.

GREENBERG

(pause)
I'll take you to do it.

FLORENCE

(considers)
How is that going to work? Am I going to drive you to take me?

INT. IVAN'S CAR - DAY

Ivan drives. Greenberg rides in front. Florence in back.
Greenberg turns up a song on the radio.

FLORENCE
Can you turn it down?

He does.

FLORENCE
I'm sorry, it's...my head is killing
me.

GREENBERG
No, it's fine, don't worry. It's your
day. Or...you know what I mean.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - LATER

Florence is in a hospital gown. She sits in a wheelchair, her
hair in a cotton shower cap. A nurse is behind her.

GREENBERG
We'll be here when you get out.

FLORENCE
Okay. Thanks.

GREENBERG
Don't be nervous.

She nods and looks distracted.

FLORENCE
I just don't know what I'm doing with
my life.

GREENBERG
(pause)
You're of value.

FLORENCE
(irritated, dismissive)
I know that. You don't have to say
that.

Greenberg turns red. She's wheeled away.

IVAN
We could go get her flowers.

GREENBERG

I thought since she couldn't eat she
might be hungry when it's over.

They walk down the hallway.

IVAN

We had Victor in this hospital.

GREENBERG

Do you think they take volunteers
here?

IVAN

In the hospital? I'd think you'd need
some kind of training.

GREENBERG

She likes All American Burger.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Florence opens her eyes. Fuzzy images slowly come into focus. Greenberg sits at her bed-side. A burger wrapped in tinfoil in his lap. Ivan hangs back by the door.

GREENBERG

Here.

He holds out the burger. She tries to take it, but is too drugged. Greenberg places it on her stomach. He thinks better of it and takes it back.

GREENBERG

When you're ready.

FLORENCE

Thanks.

(pause)

Can we go?

GREENBERG

They apparently won't let us go until
you pee.

FLORENCE

Oh. I don't have to.

GREENBERG

Maybe when you get to the bathroom
you'll feel like it.

FLORENCE

I need to lie for a little longer.

GREENBERG

Okay.

FLORENCE

I'm going to close my eyes for a second.

GREENBERG

Okay.

FLORENCE

(eyes closed)

You like me so much more than you think you do.

INT. HOSPITAL LOUNGE

Greenberg straightens a crinkled dollar on the edge of a candy machine. Ivan drinks a soda.

GREENBERG

It's a stupid rule. I mean, what does peeing have to do with anything.

IVAN

I can't remember why it's important.
I used to know.

GREENBERG

I wish it wasn't too late to go to medical school.

IVAN

It's not too late.

GREENBERG

I'd be over fifty by the time I got my degree.

IVAN

It's four years, right?

GREENBERG

Yeah, but I know myself I'd procrastinate, take time off... Eight years at best. Who's going to hire a forty-nine...let's just call it fifty. Fifty year old vet.

IVAN

I'm confused, are you going to vet
school or regular medical school?

GREENBERG

Neither, clearly.

IVAN

I was thinking of going to school for
psychology.

Greenberg tears open a Doritos bag.

GREENBERG

I have to get back for Mahler's pills.

IVAN

(eyes the snack)

Fabula makes this rice dish with
raisins and pineapples that's really
delicious.

GREENBERG

I think you'll find lots of girls will
be able to make that dish.

IVAN

No, this is a Brazilian specialty.

GREENBERG

Still.

A nurse enters the lounge.

NURSE

Are you Florence's friends?

GREENBERG

Yeah.

NURSE

She's sleeping and she wants to stay
the night.

GREENBERG

Did she pee?

EXT. GREENBERG'S HOUSE - EVENING

Greenberg gets out of Ivan's car. He looks back in the
passenger window. Ivan is still in the driver's seat.

GREENBERG
You want to come in? Watch a video.

IVAN
Nah, I should get going.

GREENBERG
Where?

IVAN
I think I'll go back to the motel and take a nap. I didn't sleep well last night.

GREENBERG
I'm leaving in like a week.

IVAN
We'll hang out more, don't worry...

Greenberg doesn't move.

GREENBERG
You're sure it's okay I left? She might wake up and is scared...

IVAN
She'll be fine. The nurse seemed nice. We'll get her in the morning.

GREENBERG
I had to get back for Mahler.

IVAN
I understand.

GREENBERG
No, I know, I'm not explaining
myself to you, I'm just --

IVAN
You're just saying. Right.

GREENBERG
Come on, one drink.

IVAN
I really got to go.

GREENBERG
Okay.
(says awkwardly into his collar)
I appreciate your friendship...

Greenberg releases his grip on the open window. Ivan relaxes and reaches for the gear shift. Greenberg pokes his head back in the window.

GREENBERG

Can I ask... What do people say about me? Like...negative things I wouldn't know.

IVAN

Let me go, man.

GREENBERG

Come on, I'm sure people must trash me when I'm not around.

IVAN

They don't trash you.

GREENBERG

Okay, but what criticisms do they have?

IVAN

I don't... You really want to know?

GREENBERG

Yes.

IVAN

I don't know, I'd say the biggest criticism they have of you is that you have trouble making fun of yourself.

GREENBERG

(surprised)

Really? That's incredible. I'm the funniest person I know.

IVAN

Well, not about yourself.

GREENBERG

Really?

IVAN

That's what people say. I wouldn't get too worried about it. These aren't difficult things to fix.

GREENBERG

(backing away)

Right...

IVAN

Some people think you lie about things
that you don't need to lie about.
That you don't make any effort.

GREENBERG

Who says... Who are these people?
That's just totally insane.

IVAN

I'm just telling you what I've heard.

GREENBERG

If anything I'd say I'm too honest.
Don't you think?

IVAN

(vaguely)

Uh huh.

GREENBERG

I'm pretty up front with... No
effort? I'm making my brother a
bookshelf. Look at my hands, I have
callouses. Does Breitbart say this?

IVAN

I think he's said it, yeah. Others
too... Maybe John once and Anna --

GREENBERG

(stung)
That's funny. Completely wrong, but
funny.

INT. GREENBERG'S FOYER/LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Greenberg, alone, hangs his vest on the back of a chair. He looks upset. His attention turns to objects scattered on the floor: Small, bunched socks, an ice cream sandwich wrapper, a pair of jeans that look like their owner stepped right out of them. Greenberg turns a corner --

Two twenty year old girls sit on the couch drinking white wine. They both have wet hair. (Sara is recognizable from her photos.)

GREENBERG

Sara?

SARA

There's the strange man who's sleeping
in my room.

She jumps up and hugs Greenberg. She's in a one-piece bathing suit with a sweat-shirt over it.

SARA
This is Muriel.

Muriel is tall, round and busty with an open face.

MURIEL
(Australian accent)
Hey.

SARA
I heard you killed our dog.

GREENBERG
No, no, not at all. He's all better.
We just brought him home.

SARA
Where is he? Mahler!

She runs out of the room, leaving Greenberg with Muriel. They stand in silence.

MURIEL
We leave for Australia tomorrow morning.

GREENBERG
Isn't that like a twenty hour flight?

MURIEL
It's fourteen.

GREENBERG
(does the quick math)
So that's like seven movies.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Music blares. The house is filled with twenty year old boys and girls talking, dancing, drinking. Greenberg sits in a corner with a scotch, observing. He dials his cell.

IVAN
(through the receiver)
Hello?

GREENBERG
A party of twenty year olds has suddenly happened in my house.

IVAN
(vaguely)
Hey, man.

GREENBERG
Hey, man, you take your nap?
(pause)
Where are you?

IVAN
I'm...I'm having dinner with my
family.

GREENBERG
Your parents?

IVAN
No...my other family.

GREENBERG
Fabula?

IVAN
Mm hm.

GREENBERG
Do you want me to come over there?

IVAN
No.

GREENBERG
Just don't do anything.

IVAN
I'm not sure I know what you mean.

Two girls walk by Greenberg. He tries to draw their looks, but
they don't turn. Greenberg sighs.

GREENBERG
They're really not interested in me.
I just look like some old guy to them.
It's so insulting.

IVAN
I've got to go, man.

GREENBERG
In my mind I'm still the
youngest guy in the room...

Okay --

IVAN

GREENBERG
You should come here after.

IVAN
I really got to go.

GREENBERG
Okay, man, I'll call you later.

INT. KITCHEN

A girl holds her red plastic beer cup down to the ground.
Mahler laps from it.

GREENBERG
Hey!

The girl looks up guiltily. Greenberg in the doorway.

GREENBERG
He just got out of the hospital.

GIRL
I'm so sorry.

GREENBERG
You know, don't give him beer.

GIRL
I'm sorry.

She slinks away.

GREENBERG
He's got an autoimmune disorder.

Greenberg retrieves a pill container from the pantry. He opens the refrigerator and takes out a pad of butter. He presses the pill into a slice of butter and brings it to Mahler who gobbles it.

Greenberg picks up glasses, pours out cigarette butts, runs the water and starts doing dishes.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Greenberg enters. Two girls push a compact back and forth across the floor trying to get it to land in a square patterned portion of the wood.

A boy, Rich, 20, digs into the pocket of his corduroy jacket and produces a tinfoil ball.

RICH
You have a cool place.

GREENBERG
Oh...thanks... It's not totally mine,
but...

RICH
What do you do?

GREENBERG
Oh, I'm kind of doing nothing for a
while...

Rich peels the tinfoil back --

GREENBERG
Is that coke?

RICH
Yup.

GREENBERG
I'd heard coke was in again.

RICH
You want some?

Greenberg pulls up a chair. Sara, Jerry and two other girls, Olivia and Anita, also scoot over. Greenberg passes him a VHS of Gung-Ho and Rich cuts the lines on the box. He hands Greenberg a rolled dollar bill.

GREENBERG
Is it okay to mix coke and Zoloft?

RICH
Totally.

Greenberg does a line.

GREENBERG
I haven't done this in like fifteen
years. Since college or since a
couple years out.

The kids nod politely, doing their lines in succession.

GREENBERG
This is very unlike me. I actually
hate coke. I hate it politically and
I hate how it makes me feel.
(MORE)

GREENBERG (cont'd)
But when it's done I may have to kill
one of you out of sheer frustration.

Anita looks at him, alarmed.

GREENBERG
(leaps up)
I'm going to change the record. We
need better coke music.

RICH
Put on some Korn.

GREENBERG
I've got the perfect thing.

Greenberg runs across the floor, jumping over one of the compact sliding girls. He enters the CD room. He rifles through the jewel boxes. He takes out his cell and dials while he looks.

IVAN
(through the receiver)
Hello?

GREENBERG
Hey, man.

IVAN
Hey, man.

GREENBERG
I just did a line. I think the last
time I did coke was with you.

IVAN
Uh huh.

GREENBERG
It was just a line, but I feel really
wired. I guess my tolerance is less.

He finds Duran Duran's "Rio" and puts it on the stereo. He advances the tracks -- the song, "The Chauffeur" plays.

JERRY (O.S.)
Oh, come on!

GREENBERG
Fuck off, Jerry.
(into the phone)
Are you done with dinner?

IVAN
No, we're still eating.

GREENBERG

Yes.

GREENBERG
I almost feel like I could get in a car and drive.

IVAN

GREENBERG
You got to come here when you're done.

IVAN

GREENBERG

Man, you've got to come. I can't believe you lied to me about your dinner.

SARA (O.S.)
Do you have ACDC?

GREENBERG
It's actually a pretty fun party.

IVAN

SARA (O.S.)
Put on ACDC!

GREENBERG

Greenberg hangs up. He runs back into the living room. He's about to jump over the girl again, but she throws up her arms:

GIRL
Don't, okay.

Greenberg swerves around her and lands back in a chair.

SARA
ACDC.

GREENBERG
Are you kidding? Duran Duran is great coke music. Give it a chance.

JERRY

Let's maybe not keep saying "coke" in
every sentence.

Greenberg looks the group over.

GREENBERG

I read an article -- aren't you guys
all just fucking on the internet.

JERRY

Not all of us.

GREENBERG

But some?

SARA

I guess, some. No one I know, I don't
think. Well, maybe Paige...

ANITA

Yeah, Paige has a site. But it's more
art than porn.

JERRY

They shot a skin flic on my campus.
Couple of guys and some townies and
they acted in it.

GREENBERG

Sick.

RICH

Can't we put on Korn?

GREENBERG

No, we can't put on fucking Korn.
Jesus. You guys smoke crack at all?

Greenberg massages his neck.

SARA

I haven't.

JERRY

Once or twice.

GREENBERG

I might get back into drugs.

RICH

I've got a Vicodin, if you want?

GREENBERG
I could use that actually.

Rich takes a white tablet out of his pocket, breaks it in half, and hands part to Greenberg. Greenberg downs it with his scotch.

GREENBERG
Thanks.

SARA
You want a neck massage?

GREENBERG
Okay. Normally I'd say, no, cause I'm a little OCD. But okay.

Sara gets behind him and massages his neck.

GREENBERG
That's great.
(pause)
Are you kids really different from me?
I mean, do the movies on the iPods and facility with MySpace pages make you guys really different?

JERRY
I don't know.

GREENBERG
Every article I read seems to be saying that.
(pause)
I definitely feel it. Good coke.

The girls laugh.

GREENBERG
What?

ANITA
Nothing.

OLIVIA
You're funny.

GREENBERG
You're mean. The thing is about you kids is that you're all kind of insensitive. I'm glad I grew up when I did. Your parents were too good at parenting.

(MORE)

GREENBERG (cont'd)
All that Baby Mozart and Dan Zanes
songs. You're so sincere and
interested in things.

(surveying the group)
Would it kill you to use a coaster?
There's a confidence in you guys
that's horrifying. You're all ADD and
carpal tunnel -- you wouldn't know
agoraphobia if it bit you in the ass.
And it makes you mean. You say things
to someone like me who is older and
smarter with this blithe air. I'm
freaked out by you kids. I hope I die
before I end up meeting one of you in
a job interview...

Greenberg turns around to Sara and puts his face in hers.

GREENBERG
Fuck or fight?

SARA
(laughs)
What?

GREENBERG
Fuck or fight?

SARA
What are you so angry about? What are
you fighting against?

GREENBERG
(vaguely quoting Marlon
Brando)
What do you got?

SARA
I don't got much.

GREENBERG
Then that's what I'm fighting against.
Not much.

The Duran Duran shuts off and hardcore music blares.

GREENBERG
What the fuck?!

He leaps up, grimaces in pain.

GREENBERG
Rich, you asshole.

RICH
I didn't do anything.

Rich is sitting on the floor with the compact tossing girls.

GREENBERG
Oh.

Greenberg marches toward the stereo. Two guys in knit caps look at liner notes and go through records.

GREENBERG
Get off the stereo. I was listening to that.

The guys laugh. Greenberg makes a face and presses Stop.

GREENBERG
Where's the Duran Duran?

KID
(mocking)
"Where's the Duran Duran?"

GREENBERG
Careful, those are my brother's records.

KID
"Those are my brother's records."

GREENBERG
(under his breath)
Fuck off.

The kid grabs Greenberg by the collar. Greenberg struggles to pull free. The kid throws him against the stereo. Greenberg smashes into the receiver and slides to the floor.

GIRL (O.S.)
There's something in the pool!

EXT. POOL

Greenberg hobble outside. A guy hands a slice of pizza to Mahler.

GREENBERG
Don't feed him!

Mahler snatches the pizza and runs. Greenberg chases after the dog with his arms outstretched.

GREENBERG
Drop it. Drop. It.

He pulls the pizza from Mahler's jaw, tearing it in half.
Mahler gulps the rest of it down.

A bunch of the kids surround the water. Greenberg approaches.

The sound of the wind-up girl playing the vibes.

A dark animal floats in the middle of the pool. One eye is visible, bobbing above the water. Greenberg edges closer.

RICH
What is it?

GREENBERG
It's a...

JERRY
I think it's a bird or an opossum.

SARA
I think we had one of these once before...

Greenberg squints, tries to make out the creature. The single eye of the dead animal stares back. Muriel grabs him suddenly and fakes throwing him in. Greenberg jolts.

GREENBERG
Holy shit, don't!

The kids laugh. Rich takes a pool net on a pole and starts to fish the animal out. A guy, Zach, hands Greenberg a joint.

ZACH
I'm sorry your dog has AIDS.

GREENBERG
He doesn't have AIDS. It's an autoimmune disorder.

People squeal as Rich swings the animal toward everyone. He turns the net over and dumps the soggy creature on the grass. People gather around it.

Greenberg tokes on the joint and spies his bookshelf on its side in a corner of the yard. Two kids sit on it making out. Discarded cups and glasses lie atop the loose pine boards.

He rubs his cherry chapstick across his lips. A car door slams. Greenberg walks to the fence. Ivan approaches from the street.

GREENBERG
(brightens)
Ivan...

CUT TO: Greenberg hugs his friend on the front lawn. The joint dangling from his lips.

IVAN
Are you okay, man? Is that pot,
where'd you get that?

GREENBERG
You want a puff?

Ivan shoos it away.

IVAN
No, man, you know I quit that.

GREENBERG
I know, man. I know. But you drink.
What's that?

IVAN
But I shouldn't be drinking.

GREENBERG
Okay, man. Okay. Isn't this weird?
It's so weird. How amazing is it that
there really are palm trees in LA.
(pause)
So, how'd it go?

IVAN
Fine.

GREENBERG
And...

IVAN
I think...we might give it another
try.

GREENBERG
(appalled)
You're shitting me!

IVAN
Please don't make this hard for me.

GREENBERG

Oh, god, man. Don't give in. I know it's the harder, more painful decision to stay free, but that's what adulthood is. I mean, I could just stay with Florence because it's easy, but I don't want easy.

IVAN

You've been dating Florence for a month, I've been married for ten years with a child. Don't tell me what adulthood is.

GREENBERG

We weren't dating exactly.

IVAN

That's my point!

GREENBERG

You're shouting at me, man.

IVAN

(sighs)

It's been a really hard time for me, Roger. I mean... I miss my family. I feel like...all the work I've done over the years, you know, kicking the drugs, being a dad. I feel like it's all going away.

Greenberg massages his own shoulder with his fingers.

GREENBERG

It's not going away... It's transforming. You're going through something. Which means...you'll get somewhere.

IVAN

I don't think you understand what it's been like for me out here. How my...how the kind of life I had hoped for... It is huge to finally embrace the life you never planned on.

Ivan wipes a tear from his chin. Greenberg is at a loss.

IVAN

I wanted to make that record.

GREENBERG

We never would have survived at a major label with those restrictions --

IVAN

How the fuck do you know?

GREENBERG

Because that's not how the world works!

IVAN

What could you possibly know about how the world works?! You've never entered the world.

GREENBERG

(hesitates)

Listen, man, I think you're playing out some old family dynamic here. Apropos of what we were saying before about what people say about us -- people feel you hold onto petty resentments and --

IVAN

You asked me what people say about you. I don't want to know.

GREENBERG

No, you should know. People think you play the victim. I don't mean this in a bad way, but you let people feel sorry for you when it just protects your narcissism --

IVAN

I don't want to know!

GREENBERG

Well, that's why I didn't want to be in a band with you! Because you won't acknowledge any of your shit. You were fucked up all the time and -- What do you want me to say?! I didn't know it was going to be our only offer. I didn't know the band would fall apart. I just thought, "Fuck 'em!" Maybe I'd do it differently now...

Greenberg is suddenly crying in sloppy, jagged sobs.

GREENBERG

Of course I know what it's like to live a life I didn't plan on. What do you think I'm doing right now?

He sputters and sobs. Ivan takes a deep breath.

IVAN

You know, the people I hang out with, we say, "Oh, I'll lend you that graphic novel" we mean it. We do it. You don't know how to do that.

Ivan starts to walk away then comes back.

IVAN

This is a small thing and I know it's probably boring for you, but you know it would've been nice if you'd made an effort to know Vic.

GREENBERG

Who's Vic?

IVAN

My son.

GREENBERG

Oh, Victor. I didn't recognize the diminutive...

IVAN

You know what? Intimacy is about telling people who you are, not trashing them for what they're not. Florence told me you were in a hospital. You know, I understand that kind of stuff. We could have talked about it. Maybe made each other feel better. And instead we don't talk about anything good...

GREENBERG

She knew? Who else knows?

Ivan shakes his head and walks away.

INT. GREENBERG'S BROTHER'S BEDROOM - LATER

Music booms through the floorboards. Greenberg's eyes are red and puffy from crying. He climbs into his brother's king size bed. He's on the phone.

GREENBERG

Florence, I'm on coke. You're sleeping in a hospital and I'm on coke. I'm calling to say...I'm sorry you had to go through what you're going through and...Mahler's fine, he ate pizza. I really love him. I'm sorry I can be...whatever it is that I can be. It's half my fault and half the atmosphere. That's a Leonard Cohen lyric. That might be a good song for you to cover. I'm leaving this on your voice-mail, but it's really a letter. I get so angry about the world, you know... If I knew who to write a letter to about the stupidity in the world, I'd do it!

(pause)

You're twenty-five. I was just twenty-seven. How did that happen? You sing great. When I was twenty-seven I could sing great. Take the record deal if they offer it. You should go on YouTube and all that stuff you guys do. Do it. I know they don't play videos on MTV anymore. You're brave. Young people are brave. When I was a kid I was a leader, I thought I might go into space, you know as an astronaut. I can't even swim in the fucking pool! My brother's in Vietnam! We have the same parents, I can't blame that. I really love Philip. I love Mahler. I love my parents. I really...like you. I don't understand what happened to me... Why am I so surprised that I too can be forty-one. I mean, I knew it was going to happen someday, the numbers add up...and still... You remember Charlie Sheen standing on his balcony in Wall Street saying, "Who am I?" Did you see that movie? Philip and I used to make so much fun of it. I'm thinking now it wasn't so stupid. Someone once said to me, "Hurt people hurt people." It's kind of trite, but it stayed with me...

(remembering)

Was that...that was you like a few days ago. I used to have a good memory too... Anyway, we do. I do. Hurt people. Hurt...

(MORE)

GREENBERG (cont'd)
(pause)
...people. I think Ivan and I broke
up. Oh, Florence. I really...like
you. Love, Roger.

INT. BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Sara sleeps in her frilly bed. The witch puppet is on the night stand. There's movement, she opens her eyes. Greenberg is next to her.

SARA
What are you doing?

GREENBERG
It's my bed too.

SARA
Come on, get out -- I have to get up
early.

Greenberg nudges his face right up to hers. She laughs.

SARA
You're bombed.

He kisses her. She responds then pulls away.

SARA
Okay, go away now.

GREENBERG
Come on...

SARA
No, we're practically related -- it's
really disgusting.

GREENBERG
We don't share blood. My brother fell
for your mother, why shouldn't we --

SARA
Seriously, get out.

He gropes at her. She groans and kicks at him. He reluctantly slides out of the bed, grabs a pillow, and leaves.

INT. DEN

Muriel sleeps on the pull-out couch. Greenberg enters, holding his pillow and the witch puppet, and gets under the covers with her. His face glistens with sweat.

GREENBERG

God, my heart is racing. I hope I
don't die.

MURIEL

(laughs)
You won't die.

She coughs -- it's ragged and guttural.

MURIEL

I smoked too much tonight.

He presses his face into her soft, big bosom and closes his eyes.

GREENBERG

Can you just tell me I'm going to be
okay?

The faraway sound of an alarm...

CUT TO: Greenberg opens his eyes. The phone is ringing. All the shades are up and white sharp light fills the room. He climbs off the pull-out couch. He makes a face -- his body stiff and in knots. Greenberg massages his temples. Muriel's bags are gone.

It's morning.

CUT TO: Greenberg treads downstairs in underwear and an old Steve Winwood "Back in the High Life" concert T-shirt. Cups, cigarettes, stains, debris. He shakes his head in irritation.

Murmuring in the other room...

CUT TO: Greenberg enters the kitchen which is a disaster. Sara and Muriel, freshly showered, sit at the breakfast table drinking coffee. Mahler lies amidst their bags on the floor.

SARA

Good morning, Sunshine.

GREENBERG

(holds his head)
Holy shit.

Mahler hops up and approaches Greenberg.

MURIEL

(sly smile)
How are you feeling, Sunny?

GREENBERG
What's...what's Sunny?

They laugh, Muriel's turning into a hacking cough.

SARA
We decided that's our name for you.

Greenberg grins, he likes that. He scoops out a cigarette butt from Mahler's drinking water. Out the window: Marlon and Peggy arrive at the pool. A gardener drags a brown garbage can in the grass.

GREENBERG
I think I'm still drunk.

The New York Times is spread out on the table. Greenberg grabs the A section. He flips to the back. His eyes search. He grins. He tosses the paper down between the girls.

GREENBERG
They printed my letter about Iran.

They both smile politely.

SARA

GREENBERG
"Roger Greenberg, Hollywood
California."

For a moment, Greenberg is glowing. He arranges Mahler's pills on the counter. The girls chat animatedly at the table.

SARA
I mean, I've got no problem with just giving some guy a blow job, but she takes it to the extreme...

Greenberg listens to the girls' conversation. He opens the fridge and takes out the butter.

MURIEL SARA
Why do guys like to do that -- (laughs)
come on you and spread it... They don't all like it --

He collects the butter pads and crouches down. Mahler eats from his hand.

SARA

You're really good with him. You have dogs?

GREENBERG

No. Florence showed me how to do it.

SARA

(grinning)

Did you start an affair with Philip's assistant?

GREENBERG

No.

MURIEL

I'm jealous.

A slight smile breaks across Greenberg's lips.

MURIEL

You should come to Australia with us.

GREENBERG

Yeah? There's a great Kinks song called "Australia."

SARA

Totally. You should totally come.

He licks the remaining butter from his fingers.

GREENBERG

Maybe I will.

SARA

But you better hurry we have to leave in like five minutes.

Greenberg's face.

CUT TO: Greenberg furiously throws clothes into a duffel.

SARA (O.S.)

What are we going to do about Mahler?!

GREENBERG

Fuck.

Greenberg hesitates.

EXT. POOL

Greenberg tears across the garden. Mahler galloping alongside him. Marlon, in his trunks, with blue tinted sunglasses is collecting his things. Peggy, disgusted, holds up a large black feather. Marlon turns -- Greenberg is almost upon him.

MARLON
(startled)
Woa, what's happening?

GREENBERG
(panting)
Can I ask you guys a favor?

MARLON
Okay.

GREENBERG

MARLON GREENBERG
Marlon and Peggy. Hey, hey.

Greenberg's foot kicks over a half-filled beer bottle -- the liquid seeps into the grass.

GREENBERG PEGGY
Sorry it's such a mess. Yeah, we're going home.

GREENBERG
Um, can you take Mahler until
Wednesday?

MARLON
(looks to Peggy)
Uh...yeah, I guess.

PEGGY
Sure. We love Mahler. Come baby!

Mahler runs to Peggy. Greenberg hesitates a moment, seeing the dog eagerly rubbing against her legs. A sadness passes over him.

GREENBERG

Greenberg removes his Steve Winwood concert jersey and hands it to Marlon.

GREENBERG
You know, put it by his nose.

MARLON
No problem.

GREENBERG
Great. I'll write this out for you,
but...he gets prednisone, which is a
steroid, twice a day for three days...

Greenberg looks over at his bookshelf.

GREENBERG
Can you help me with something?

INT. DEN

Greenberg and Marlon lug the bookshelf into the room and put it up against the wall.

MARLON
Nice craftsmanship.

GREENBERG
Thanks, man.

EXT. GREENBERG'S HOUSE

Greenberg, in his sweater and down vest, hurries out, lugging his duffel. The girls wait in their rental car. The engine running.

SARA
Let's go! We're going to have to get you a ticket.

GREENBERG
I'm coming...

MURIEL
(to Sara)
It's fucking peaceful is what it is.

SARA
You saw sharks last time, right?

Greenberg reaches the vehicle, breathing heavily.

MURIEL
I love that you're doing this.

SARA
(to Muriel)
And we have to go surfing in Byron Bay...

Greenberg opens the back door and hits his knee.

GREENBERG
Ow, fuck...

He exhales in frustration and pain. Pause.

SARA
Come on!

Greenberg jumps in.

INT. RENTAL CAR - DAY

Sara drives, Muriel shotgun. Greenberg sits in the back, a giddy look on his face. Music plays on the radio.

MURIEL
I've seen a Great White. And there
are some amazing wrecks --

SARA
I literally cannot wait.

Greenberg massages his temples.

GREENBERG
Is this completely crazy?

SARA
No!

GREENBERG
I mean, it's what people do, right?

SARA
You'll love Australia.

GREENBERG
For some people this is nothing.

MURIEL
Who knows how much longer the Reef's
going to be around. It's these starfish
that are killing the marine life.

SARA
Roger, are you certified?

GREENBERG
To what? MURIEL
And the pollution.

SARA
Dive.

GREENBERG

No. I don't really swim.

The girls laugh, Muriel's turning into a cough.

MURIEL

You can go look at whales while we dive.

SARA

Sunny will look at whales!

GREENBERG

Okay, you can cut out the "Sunny" business...

The car stops at a light. Sun streams into Greenberg's face. He squints and tries to move out of the way of the beam. He reaches into his pocket and fishes around. He frowns, irritated.

GREENBERG

Shit, I left my chapstick...

Greenberg looks outside. A blue wind-sock in the shape of a man billows outside a car dealership. A look of discomfort crosses his face -- the hang-over settling in. His skin glistens, damp and pale. He considers something. He says quietly to himself:

GREENBERG

"Dear Florence..."

He takes a deep breath of anxiety. His hand grips the door handle:

GREENBERG

You know what --

He pulls the handle, but the door is locked. A helicopter passes overhead. The roar vibrates the car. The music is loud, the girls oblivious. Sara is checking out something on Muriel's arm.

SARA

That's so weird.

Greenberg takes deep, hoarse breaths.

GREENBERG

I've got...I'm supposed to get someone from the hospital --

The car starts to move.

GREENBERG
Ho...ho... Hold it!

Sara laughs.

GREENBERG
Open my door!

SARA
No, you're our prisoner!

MURIEL
Exactly!

GREENBERG
Open it. Open the fucking door!

The girls are laughing.

GREENBERG
Come on, open it!

The car brakes. Sara presses the automatic lock just as he pulls the handle. It's still locked. He yanks it again.

GREENBERG
Sara! SARA
I'm trying. Stop pulling it.

She releases the lock. He yanks the handle and shoves it open.

MURIEL
Oh, come on, Roger!

He climbs out, dragging his duffel.

GREENBERG
You know... I can't go. I
can't...afford it, I can't... I have
to pick up my friend --
(pause)
Have a good time.

The car pulls into traffic.

SARA/MURIEL
Bye!

He's left outside the car dealership. The blue man dancing. Greenberg sweats. Cars roar past. Using his sleeve as a buffer, he presses the button for the cross-walk. He pushes it a couple of times.

We HOLD on Greenberg's face. The helicopter circles back overhead. The pavement shakes. Greenberg takes deep hoarse breaths -- his panic escalating with each intake.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING AREA - DAY

A sleepy Florence scribbles her signature on a form. Greenberg, sticky and pale, stands next to her -- his duffel leaning against his legs. He points to another sheet of paper.

GREENBERG

I think you have to do that one too.

EXT. FLORENCE'S BUILDING - LATER

Greenberg helps Florence out of the taxi.

INT. FLORENCE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Greenberg lowers Florence into the bed.

FLORENCE

Thanks.

She's still a little groggy from the drugs.

FLORENCE

I've got to get insurance. The anaesthesia was so expensive, I'm such a baby about pain. I stayed over night! I'm glad your brother's coming back next week, I need to work more hours.

She runs her fingers over her dry lips.

FLORENCE

I really picked my lips in my sleep.
(sleepily feels a scab)
This was possibly about finding a pet
in the canyons.

GREENBERG

Do you get the New York Times?

Florence shakes her head.

GREENBERG

It's good to get the paper. I'll pick you up one.

FLORENCE

Okay.

GREENBERG
Did...did you get my message?

FLORENCE
I haven't checked yet. What did you say?

GREENBERG
Um...I reassessed the movie, Wall Street, among other things.

FLORENCE
I don't know it.

Greenberg's attention goes to a gift wrapped in a Marie Claire cover on the desk.

FLORENCE
I wasn't going to give it to you because I was pissed, but you can open it. Happy Birthday again.

GREENBERG
Thanks.

Greenberg tears open the present. It's the devil puppet.

FLORENCE
Now you have the set. Not that they're a set.

GREENBERG
What about your niece?

FLORENCE
Remember the sticks are too old... She's coming over this weekend -- I framed her picture.

Her niece's drawing is now framed and propped up on the floor.

GREENBERG
You have a tape measure?

FLORENCE
I think there's a ruler in the desk drawer.

Greenberg opens the drawer and finds a foot ruler with each inch representing a different animal. He turns it and they dissolve into dinosaurs. He grabs a pencil.

GREENBERG
You want it on this wall here?

FLORENCE
Okay.

Greenberg measures in one foot intervals on the wall. He makes small marks with the pencil.

He stands on a chair, leans one foot on her desk and bangs a nail into the wall. He crouches down, lifts up the picture and hangs it on the nail.

FLORENCE
Cool. Like a professional.

He steps down from the desk.

GREENBERG
I am a professional. Well, I build things.

Florence smiles sleepily.

GREENBERG
I know you know I was in a hospital.
I'm not hiding it. But it's not what defines me, you know.

FLORENCE
I understand.
(pause)
I want to listen to my message.

She dials her voice-mail. Greenberg watches her.

GREENBERG
I'd...I'd had some to drink.

She listens.

FLORENCE
Gina...

They wait.

FLORENCE
My mom...

Silence.

FLORENCE
Okay. This is you.

She listens. We hear echoes of Greenberg's ramblings. Greenberg tries not to watch, but can't help peaking back at her. Their eyes meet briefly before they both glance away. Florence stares at the floor, Greenberg at the wall.

Someone leans on a car horn in the street. Florence laughs at something, her eyes now finding Greenberg and holding. He brushes off dust from a corner of the desk.

We STAY on Florence's face.

Black.