

ACTORS ANONYMOUS
Production Draft v005
03-04-2015
Green Pages

Written by

Elizabeth Eccher, Nathan Ellis, Matthew Halla, Kaela Rae Jensen,
Josh Litman, Teddy Martland, A.R. Parslow, Osahon Tongo

Based on Actors Anonymous, by James Franco

actorsanonymousmovie@gmail.com
424.354.1414

EPISODE ONE: DIRECTORS: KELLY & KEVIN LUU

1 INT. VALLEY PLAYHOUSE - THEATER - DAY

An actor sits alone on a stage. Dark, save for one spotlight.

JAKE

We pour out our hearts, our souls,
and lay them naked for all to see.
We expose our secrets, our dreams,
our passions and our fears. We must
endure the private tooth-ringed
maws of self-doubt and the public
naysayers and critics, who lurk and
sting like sideline vipers, before
slithering back into their holes.

He looks directly into the camera. This is JAKE LAMONT (38).

JAKE (CONT'D)

We who are driven to play dress-up
for a living are mostly trying to
hide something from ourselves.

2 INT. BATHROOM - DAY

A needle inserted in a vein. The face of the user. Handsome,
but eyes too weary for his age. Disheveled. Scruffy hair. He
reacts as the drug rushes through him. This is SEAN (26).

JAKE (V.O.)

To escape from lives that are too
dull, painful and insular.

A2 OMITTED

3 INT. SOUTH DAKOTA BAR - STORAGE ROOM ABOVE THE BAR - NIGHT.

A cramped, windowless room, hardly bigger than a closet. Barely enough space for the ratty mattress on which a young man is lying, reading a book of monologues. Wearing underwear. This is BEN (20), tousled hair, strong features.

JAKE (V.O.)

The self-hatred is manifested in the drive for success and fame. The algorithm being: 'If people love me, I won't hate myself anymore'.

The floor is stacked with acting books and plays. Ben mouths the words. Talks to his reflection in the mirror.

4 INT. VALLEY PLAYHOUSE - THEATER - DAY

Mirrors on the sides of the stage reflect Jake's image.

JAKE

We may enter the craft of acting as
a way to escape reality. Yet
reality is the only place in which
to act. Life on stage or before the
camera is reality. The reality of
performers acting out roles.

5 EXT. CHURCH - DAY

A stone angel gazes down on the mortals below. Sean scrambles
up the steps. He pauses to stub out a cigarette, then enters.

PASTOR (O/C)

I waited patiently for the Lord.
And he heard my cry.

TITLE CARD: LOS ANGELES 1997

6 INT. CHURCH - DAY

An ornate chapel, stained-glass and polished pews, sparsely
filled with ELDERLY PEOPLE. Up front the PASTOR (50s), Sean's
father, thinning hair, glasses, reads a bible passage. SEAN'S
MOM (50) sits primly at an electronic piano.

PASTOR

He lifted me out of the mud and
mire. He set my feet on a rock and
gave me a firm place to stand.

Sean sneaks in. The pastor spots him and immediately motions
him to come up front. Sean reluctantly endures the gauntlet
of stares on his way to the altar.

PASTOR (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, my son Sean
here is living testament to God's
divine hand. For so long he was
lost in the devil's work, trapped
in the hellfire of addiction.

He puts an arm around Sean. With a shake of his head Sean
begs his father to stop.

PASTOR

Now, like the prodigal son, he has come back to us. He has been lifted out of the mud and mire. Sin overpowered him. Now he has overpowered sin. Praise be to God!

PARISHIONERS

Praise be to God!

Polite APPLAUSE fills the church. The Pastor mutters.

PASTOR

Smile, Sean. Don't embarrass me.

Sean manages a half-hearted grin.

SEAN'S SON (O.C.)

That's my daddy.

Sean looks up. His smile brightens. Reveal Maggie, sitting with TWO SMALL BOYS (4 & 6). The younger one waves happily at Sean. A ripple of LAUGHTER from the congregation.

7

EXT. CHURCH - LATER

Sean stands awkwardly between his parents by the doors as PATRONS shuffle past. Nods and handshakes. An ELDERLY COUPLE approach. The OLD LADY tugs at Sean's chin with a bony hand.

OLD LADY

Bless you, dear. How long have you been clean?

SEAN

Seventy two days. Since I last shot up heroin.

Sean's mom quickly fills the awkward silence.

SEAN'S MOM

He's in acting school now. Sean's always been really good at doing accents. Do Rocky.

SEAN

(as Rocky)

Yo, Adrienne, you like my house?

Mom is delighted.

SEAN'S MOM
Doesn't he sound just like
Sylvester Stallone?

The woman steers her husband away with an embarrassed smile.
Maggie steps up with the kids in tow. The boys rush to Sean.

SEAN'S SONS
Daddy! Daddy!

He leans down to hug the boys. Gets into a tickling and
giggling battle with them. The old couple move off. Maggie
watches for a moment, then pulls the younger boy away.

MAGGIE
Go say goodbye to grandma and
granpa, boys.

Sean ushers them towards his parents. Maggie pulls him aside.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Your mom tells me you're going to
acting school? Really? Who's paying
for that?

SEAN
Mom is.

MAGGIE
That's your new career plan, Sean?
Go be an actor while I go to work
and try and take care of our kids?
How old are you?

The boys come back. They start into tickling Sean again.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Time to go, boys.

They look up at Sean in confusion. Hiding the hurt, he ushers
them towards Maggie.

SEAN
Go with your momma, guys. I'll see
you soon.

Maggie pronounces as she passes him.

MAGGIE

You can see them as soon as you
start paying child support.

Sean watches sadly as they walk away.

8 INT. SOUTH DAKOTA BAR - BAR AREA - DAY

DAY DRINKERS and BURNOUTS. Ben sits at a stool alone,
highlighting a book of plays, practicing lines under his
breath. The bar owner hands him an empty tray,

BAR OWNER

Break's over, Brando. Back to work.

Ben snakes his way through the bar. Bussing tables. A hand
grabs his arm - belonging to a woman sitting alone in the
corner. Maybe 35. Too beautiful and dressed too nice for this
dump. She runs her finger along the rim of her empty glass.

BEN

Can I help you?

ACTRESS

Another vodka cranberry?

He nods and turns away. But she yanks him back.

ACTRESS (CONT'D)

What's your name?

BEN

Ben.

ACTRESS

That's an unfortunate name. Ben.

BEN

It's actually Benjamin.

ACTRESS

That's even worse. Benjamin. Sounds
like corduroy. Or cardboard.
It's just boring.

BAR OWNER(O.C.)

Ben! Get your ass over here!

Ben turns to leave, but again she yanks him back.

ACTRESS

So are you gonna get me my vodka?

BEN

I'll tell your server.

ACTRESS

Why not you?

BEN

I'm too young.

Their eyes meet as she devilishly chews her ice.

ACTRESS

Too young and boring. Pity.

Ben mumbles an apology. Heads to the bar. She watches him.

9 INT. SOUTH DAKOTA BAR - BACK ROOM - DAY

Ben washes glasses at a sink with a long utility faucet. The only light a dangling, strobing bulb. As if he were on stage:

BEN

I am still young, but what I have been through! I am as hungry as the winter. I am sick, anxious, poor as a beggar. Fate has tossed me hither and thither.

He's into it. Going for the Oscar right there in the kitchen.

BEN (CONT'D)

Yet wherever I have been, every minute, day and night, my soul...

ACTRESS

... my soul has been full of mysterious anticipations.

Ben spins... The woman is standing in the doorway.

ACTRESS (CONT'D)

Cherry Orchard, right?

Ben nods, flustered. She goes into character.

ACTRESS (CONT'D)

I feel the approach of happiness.

She drops her cigarette. Crushes it with her heel. Strolls seductively towards him. Ben doesn't know how to react.

ACTRESS (CONT'D)

I see it coming, Anya.

As she steps into the harsh light, her age lines show. Not quite so beautiful. She leans in. Their lips touch. He responds. She raises her hand and tugs the chain. Lights out.

10 INT. SOUTH DAKOTA BAR - STORAGE ROOM ABOVE THE BAR - DAY.

Ben's cramped little room. The woman shimmies out of her dress. Pulls Ben's shirt off. Their kisses are fierce. They fall onto the bed. She's on top.

She pulls away. Ben looks up into the mirror. Sees himself and the woman's head haloed by cobwebs on the low ceiling.

ACTRESS

Fuck me, Benjamin. Don't be boring.

She slaps him. Ben grabs her ass. Flips her over so he's on top. The sex is fast, messy, and ugly. It's like he's trying to fuck her as hard as he can. But nothing fazes her.

ACTRESS (CONT'D)

Harder, Benjamin! Harder.

Ben climaxes. Collapses next to her. Silence. She suddenly sits up and reaches for her dress. He watches her pull it on.

BEN

You used to be an actor.

ACTRESS

No shit.

BEN

What's your name? I saw you in something.

ACTRESS

Maybe.

She scans the tiny room. Wrinkled clothes. A dirty magazine. Acting books everywhere. She uses one to swat cobwebs.

ACTRESS (CONT'D)

Have you read all of these?

BEN

Every one.

ACTRESS

What are you doing here, Benjamin??
In Podunk, South Dakota?

BEN

It's my uncle's place. He gave me a
job when I dropped out of college.

ACTRESS

You want to be an actor, you need
to be in New York.

BEN

I've been thinking about LA.

Then pulls a pen from her purse. Writes on his thigh.

ACTRESS

I'm going to do you a favor...
Listen. LA is a shit pit. There are
five million people trying to be
actors, and only a handful of them
make it. The ones that don't just
hang around and rot. It's soul-
crushing. But if you're going to
go, this place is the real deal.

She sits back enough for Ben to see the words scrawled on his
thigh: VALLEY PLAYHOUSE. She gets up. Straightens her dress.

BEN

You liked my scene then?

ACTRESS

No. That's why you need acting
school.

Ben is perplexed. Watches her cross to the door.

ACTRESS (CONT'D)

Good luck, boring Benjamin.

EPISODE TWO: DIRECTOR: JUSTIN S. LEE

11 INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - DAY

Decorated like a Mexican village at night. MEN, some in suits, some in sweats, sit at tables pushed together. Others by the bar. Coffee and cigarettes. They all listen to Sean.

SEAN

Until the last few months, all I did was heroin and shit. I screwed up my marriage. Was an absent lousy father. A total mess. Then one day, everything changed. I was high. Riding my bike down the street.

12 EXT. PLEASANT STREET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

We coast down a tree-lined street. A WOMAN and TWO SMALL BOYS walk a LITTLE WHITE DOG. Sean rides his bike. Weaves drunkenly onto the sidewalk, then hops his bike off a curb.

13 INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - DAY

SONNY (60s), a washed-up actor, watches Sean from the bar.

SEAN

... this little dog came outa nowhere. I rode my bike right onto its little white head.

14 EXT. PLEASANT STREET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A loud SQUISH and SQUEAK. Sean happily rides on. The sound of a lady SCREAMING breaks through his perma-glazed grin.

15 INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - DAY

Sean acts out his memory.

SEAN

The dog's owner, this lady, she screamed. That's when I realized I'd done something. I probably would have just kept going. And oh shit, it was pretty sick. Half the face was smashed.

(MORE)

SEAN (CONT'D)

Like flat on the cement. But the rest of the body was still twitching.

Sean lifts one hand, mimicking the pawing motion.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Especially this one front paw. It was pawing the air pretty fast.

16 EXT. PLEASANT STREET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Quick flash of a twitching white dog paw. The LADY OWNER kneels beside the dog, SCREAMING up at Sean. Behind her he sees the two boys staring at him in horror.

17 INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - DAY

The men stare at Sean. Shake their heads in disbelief.

SEAN

This lady was kneeling there, all religious looking, and these two boys - they reminded me of my own kids. And that was it. That was my moment of clarity. I suddenly realized that life is precious. I didn't want to do drugs anymore.

Silence. Sean looks up. Sonny salutes with his coffee cup.

18 INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - DAY - LATER

The meeting is over. The members join hands in unison. *

AA MEMBERS *

God, grant me the Serenity to
accept the things I cannot change,
the Courage to change the things I
can, and the Wisdom to know the
difference. Keep coming back, it
works if you work it. *

They separate. Sonny approaches Sean. *

SONNY

That was a fucked-up story.

SEAN

Yeah. Sorry.

SONNY

Fuck sorry. Don't apologize, young buck. You told a story and it meant something to ya. That's all that fucking matters.

Sonny extends his hand. Sean shakes it. They head out.

SONNY (CONT'D)

They call me Sonny. What did you say your name was? Sam?

SEAN

Sean.

SONNY

Sean, right. What do you do, Sean? What makes you happy?

SEAN

My kids. They make me happy.

SONNY

What else?

SEAN

I watch a lot of movies. I take an acting class around the corner.

SONNY

That right? You act?

SEAN

Yeah, it's been good. Helps keep my mind off getting high.

SONNY

I used to be an actor. Played a lotta thugs and hitmen. Real badasses. Hell of a time, the 60s. You got a sponsor, Sean?

SEAN

No, not yet.

SONNY

Why not? You wanna fucking die?

SEAN

No, I don't want to die.

SONNY

Great. Let's go talk.

19 OMITTED

20 OMITTED

21 INT. SONNY'S HOUSE - DAY

A big place, but largely empty. Sonny and Sean enter. Scripts and loose pages strewn over every surface - a writer's pad.

SONNY
Make yourself at home.

SEAN
Wow. Do you live here by yourself?

SONNY
Depends on how lucky I get.

SEAN
How do you afford this place?

SONNY
I sell my writing here and there.
But mostly my daughter. She hit it
big when she was a kid.

SEAN
Yeah? Where is she now?

SONNY
A good fucking question... You said
like movies? Check this out.

A21 INT. SONNY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Sonny leads Sean into the bedroom. Sean checks around - rows of hand-labeled VHS tapes.

SONNY
I can get you any movie you want.
Cheap. New stuff too, you name it.

He flips on the TV and gets on the bed. Leans back to watch the movie.

SONNY (CONT'D)
I love this fucking movie. C'mon.
Sit down.

Sean hesitates - the only place to sit is the bed. He tentatively sits on the other side from Sonny.

SONNY (CONT'D)
That's my wife's spot.

Sean starts to get up. Sonny cracks up.

SONNY (CONT'D)

She ain't coming home anytime soon. She died six years ago. So who's your favorite actor?

SEAN

I don't know. I like all the greats. James Dean. I love 'Rebel Without a Cause'. Monty Clift. Brando's pretty decent.

SONNY

Fuck you, pretty decent. Brando has more charisma in his left nut than all those guys combined. Even guys love him! You know, when he was a young actor, he rode his bike out to the beach and boned Tennessee Williams to get the part of Stanley in Streetcar Named Desire.

SEAN

No shit?

SONNY

I did his voice once. Sidney Lumet needed some voiceover lines. Brando wouldn't do 'em. So I got a call.

(Brando voice/Snakeskin)

"It's been said that a woman can burn a man down... I can burn a woman down".

SEAN

The Fugitive Kind?

SONNY

Smart kid.

(Brando voice)

"I coulda been a contender. I coulda been somebody".

SEAN

(Brando voice)

"Instead of a bum, which is what I am. Let's face it".

SONNY

Not bad, young buck. You got potential.

SEAN

You got any advice? About getting an agent?

SONNY

You really want to know? You don't need an agent. You need a job. A real job. You can be an actor all you want, but if you don't take care of yourself, make some money, get in a positive routine, then you're shit.

SEAN

No place will hire me. I have no experience and...

SONNY

... that's bullshit. Trying is lying. Try harder. You gotta clean up your whole act, not just the drugs. Step one. Clean yourself up. Make yourself presentable. And get some clothes that don't look like they just got pulled out of a toilet. Be responsible. That's what being spiritual is. Otherwise you're just a selfish little prick and want everyone to serve you.

He stares at Sean searchingly.

SONNY (CONT'D)

You quit dope because of your kids,
right?

(Sean nods)

Then remind yourself of that every
day. Do you have a picture of them?

SEAN

Well, my mom does, but..

SONNY

Get one for yourself. It's time to
grow up and get a fucking life...
You figure hotshot Jake Lamont got
to where he is without me?

SEAN

Jake Lamont? You know him?

SONNY

Think you're the first dopehead
wannabe actor I ever took care of?

SEAN

I thought this was an anonymous
program.

SONNY

Yeah, shut up! Watch the movie.

He goes back to watching the film. Sean stares at him.

B21 INT. SEAN'S PARENTS HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sean is on the phone. A family portrait on the wall.

SEAN

Can I talk to them?

MAGGIE (ON PHONE)

You know what time it is? They're
asleep.

SEAN

Oh yeah, sorry. I'll call tomorrow.

MAGGIE (ON PHONE)

No... I don't want you calling any
more.

SEAN

What?! Are you serious? Listen, I'm clean, I've been going to recovery, I have a sponsor...

MAGGIE (ON PHONE)

My lawyer says...

SEAN

Don't start in with the lawyer shit, Maggie. You and I can work this out.

MAGGIE

We can talk as soon as you start paying child support.

CLICK.

SEAN

Hello? Maggie?... Fuck!

She's hung up. He throws the phone in frustration. He suddenly notices his mom watching.

SEAN'S MOM

You okay, honey?

SEAN

She won't even let me talk to them.

His mom comes over and scrutinizes him.

SEAN'S MOM

Look me in the eye.

Sean pulls away.

SEAN

I'm fine.

SEAN'S MOM

You know your dad's gonna kick you out if you start doing drugs again. Or drinking.

SEAN

I'm clean, mom. Eighty-one days. What do you want from me? Maybe I should just find another place to live.

He heads off.

22 OMITTED

23 OMITTED

A24 EXT. SOUTH DAKOTA BAR - DAY *

Ben carries a box of books over to his beat-up Oldsmobile. *

Hotly pursued by his uncle, the bar owner. *

BAR OWNER

You ungrateful bitch! Things get tough, you run away? Just like your deadbeat dad.

Ben ignores him. Continues to his car. *

BAR OWNER (CONT'D)

You couldn't even finish college. Now you've got some pipedream of being an actor? It's pathetic. Live in the real world, kid.

BEN *

You know what really scares me? I might end up like you. *

He climbs in his car and SLAMS the door. *

25 INT/EXT BEN'S CAR - TRAVELING MONTAGE - DAY/NIGHT

Ben is driving. Day transitions to night. Lights flash by.

He pops in a cassette tape. Drives the highway. Various scenery passes by. He pulls over and checks a map.

Ben has stopped at a fast food joint off the highway. He pulls a Beanie Baby lion out of the burger bag.

The sun sets in the desert. Ben sips coffee to stay awake. Turns on the AC full-blast.

A road sign - Los Angeles 486 miles. Ben smiles. Stuffs french fries in his mouth. The stuffed lion toy now hangs from Ben's rear-view mirror.

Ben's POV as he drives into Los Angeles. First sights of the city - 'Welcome to Beverly Hills'. A palm-lined boulevard.

The beach along PCH. Sunset Strip. Mann Chinese. Skid row.
Bright lights and neon. Ben takes it all in with awe.

A billboard of a Jake Lamont movie.

The Olds pulls up outside a rundown apartment building on a
characterless street in the Valley. Garbage everywhere. The
place badly needs a paint job. Ben peers out at the
'Apartment for Rent' sign on the poor excuse for a lawn.

*

A25 INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

A dingy pad. Bare walls. No furniture. Only Ben's boxes. Ben stares around at his surroundings. Soulless. Depressing. He peeks through the blinds... the urban jungle of Hollywood. Close on his eyes... He's here. Now what?

EPISODE THREE: DIRECTOR: JULIO GAMBUTO

26 EXT. VALLEY PLAYHOUSE - DAY

A sign: 'VALLEY PLAYHOUSE'. A nondescript building on a nondescript street. Ben looks around as he walks from his road-weary Olds. Hurries inside the playhouse. *

27 OMITTED

28 INT. VALLEY PLAYHOUSE - THEATER - DAY

A fifty-seat theater. A couple are SCREAMING at each other on stage. Ben sneaks in to the back row.

SEAN (O.C.)

Oh, that's fucking great! You're going to fucking knit while I'm standing here.

BREE (O.C.)

Yes, I'm going to fucking knit! Don't stand there, asshole!

Ben steps on an older woman's foot. Her name is JENNY.

JENNY

Ouch!

Heads turn. A gray-haired man at the front spins and stares at Ben. SMITHSON, the school's owner and acting coach.

SMITHSON

SHHHHHHHH!

The actors don't miss a beat.

SEAN

I'm standing here, bitch, and you're making me cry!

BREE

Don't call me a bitch! So go cry, you pussy motherfucker.

Ben apologizes. Sits next to the woman. Smithson plays with a rubber band as he turns his attention back to the stage.

On stage, a couch, table, folding chairs. An apartment set. Sean, beardless and short-haired, stands over Bree (21), blonde, big captivating eyes. She sits in a chair and knits. Sean goes to his knees. He uses some kind of gangster accent.

SEAN

Don't you understand? I need the money! They're going to kill her! They're going to fucking shoot her!

He shakes Bree by the shoulders.

BREE

Don't fucking touch me!

She stands. Sean grabs the knitted square violently and throws it on the ground. Then he storms out. SLAMS the door.

Bree sits and cries. Smithson lets her, playing with his rubber band. The students watch intently. Ben doesn't know what to make of it. After an uncomfortable amount of time:

SMITHSON

All right, Sean. Come on out.

Sean comes through the stage door.

SMITHSON (CONT'D)

Do NOT slam my doors!

SEAN

Sorry. I was just so into it.

SMITHSON

You don't get to destroy my stage. Be a professional. You think you can go onto a movie set and start smashing the equipment?

Sean begins to respond. Smithson shushes him with a hand.

SMITHSON (CONT'D)

Bree. That was very good. You were really feeling the situation. Now, Sean, why did you come to her door?

SEAN

Well, I needed money 'cause I got tangled up with the mob for a bad bet I made at the races, and they were going to murder my girlfriend.

SMITHSON

That's not real.

SEAN

It is! I know someone that it happened to! This guy...

SMITHSON

No! It has no resonance with you. Did you see how upset Bree was?

SEAN

Yes, but...

SMITHSON

If you saw it, why didn't you work off it? You were so wrapped up in gangster land that you didn't connect with her.

SEAN

I wasn't in gangster land.

SMITHSON

That's your problem. You always play the story instead of engaging with the other person. Acting is not an isolated exercise. If you're playing the story, you're not connecting. What you're doing is false! Do you understand?

SEAN

Yes, Mr. Smithson.

SMITHSON

Who's next?

Sean gives Bree a hand as they leave the stage.

29 EXT. VALLEY PLAYHOUSE - DAY

Ben finds a parking ticket on his car windshield. Swears.

SEAN (O.S.)

That sucks, man.

Ben is startled. He starts feeding quarters into his meter.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Parking is free down the side street.

He walks over, smoking. Ben shrugs - a little late for that.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Hey, can I snag a couple of those?
Coke machine won't take my dollar.

He holds up a crumpled bill. Ben hands him a few quarters.

BEN

Sure.

SEAN

This is your first time, right?

He gestures towards the playhouse.

BEN

Yeah. Just got to town.

SEAN

From?

BEN

South Dakota. You?

SEAN

Local. Welcome to LA, uh..?

BEN

Ben. Hi. I saw you in there.

They shake hands.

SEAN

Sean. That was a true story, you
know. Seriously, I knew a guy that
happened to. Messed him up.

BEN

I liked it.

SEAN

Thanks. Smithson hates me, but
whatever. He's usually right
though. I wasn't reading her.

BEN

She was really good.

SEAN

Bree? Smithson thinks she's hot shit. Everybody thinks she's hot shit. You think she's hot shit?

BEN

She is hot.

SEAN

Sure. Her father's a big-time producer. Got her a role on a soap.

BEN

I don't really watch soaps.

SEAN

Nobody watches soaps. Except maybe your grandparents. She's been in a few other things, I guess. But whatever. I'm gonna head back in, get that coke. You coming?

He starts back toward the playhouse. Ben follows. Other class members are heading out.

BEN

Yeah, I'm gonna see if I can get into the class. You been coming for a while?

SEAN

A couple of months. I was kind of a junkie before. I mean, not 'kind of'. I just was.

BEN

Oh, that's pretty honest of you.

SEAN

It's the truth.

BEN

It's cool. It's kinda refreshing.

SEAN

But I like it. The class. Keeps me spiritual, ya know?

30

INT. VALLEY PLAYHOUSE - LOBBY - DAY

Sean and Ben enter. Sean heads for the coke machine.

BEN

Your friend from the story, he ever get that money?

SEAN

Oh, yeah, I think so.

He stuffs quarters into the machine, while Ben checks out the Jake Lamont photos and articles on the board.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Jake Fucking Lamont. You know he started here, right?

BEN

Yeah? He actually studied here?

SEAN

Sure. They put his picture up everywhere so everyone will know it and want to sign up. They're kinda using him, but whatever.

He stubs out his smoke. They both enter the theater.

31 INT. VALLEY PLAYHOUSE - THEATER - DAY

Later. Ben watches Smithson interview Jenny.

JENNY

I am cooped up in an office all day, my husband's a eunuch, and I would rather die than continue doing what I'm doing.

She chokes up.

SMITHSON

Okay. You can start next week.

JENNY

Thank you, thank you.

She leaves, looking pleased with herself. Ben approaches Smithson. This is Smithson's one millionth interview.

SMITHSON

Why do you want to be an actor?

BEN

Because I want to do something with my life. And I think I can be good.

SMITHSON

You're a little young. What have you done? Have you ever been in love? Have you ever lost anyone?

BEN

I don't know. Well, my father ran out on my mom and me... I took acting classes in college.

SMITHSON

University acting courses are worthless.

BEN

I know. They just made us pretend to be plants and animals.

32 INT. UNIVERSITY CLASSROOM - FLASHBACK

Students act like animals - mostly expressive creatures, tigers and gorillas. But Ben is a sad, bored little frog.

BEN

Ribbit.

Students sway like tress. Ben moves his arms back and forth. Looks ridiculous. He makes eye contact with a CUTE GIRL across the classroom. His tree stump legs shuffle toward her.

BEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Sometimes I just stood in the corner and acted like a rock. I wanted to do real stuff.

The girl smiles at Ben.

33 INT. VALLEY PLAYHOUSE - THEATER - DAY

Back to Ben and Smithson.

BEN

I've read tons of acting books. I know like eighteen monologues...

SMITHSON

We prefer people with real life experience. To act, you need to have something to pull from.

BEN

I can do it. I know I can.

SMITHSON

It has to be authentic. Acting is living truthfully under imaginary circumstances. You need to know yourself before you can play somebody else. Or this may not be the place for you.

BEN

There was this girl. I fucked up.

Smithson sees that Ben is on the verge of sharing something. Ben can't look at him. Just stares at the floor.

SMITHSON

Who was she?

BEN

She was in the class. Angie.

34 INT. COLLEGE DORM ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Ben and the girl from class sit on the floor. He inhales a joint. Blows it into her mouth with a sealing kiss. They LAUGH. She stands, dizzy, and lays on the bed. He gets on the bed too. Turns out the light. Starts kissing her again, but there's no response. He shakes her shoulder.

BEN (V.O.)

We were both drunk. Kissing and everything. Then she passed out.

35 INT. VALLEY PLAYHOUSE - THEATER - DAY

Ben sits in the theater. Voice shaking. Body trembling.

BEN

She liked me. I should have waited.

36 INT. COLLEGE DORM ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Quick flashes - Ben's body moves on top of the girl. She doesn't respond. He climbs off the bed. Lifts his underwear back up. Eases her panties on. Pulls her skirt down. Shakes her gently.

BEN

Angie?

Still no response. He fumbles into his clothes. Looks back from the door. She's staring at him. Motionless. He quickly closes the door. Stands in the hallway for a moment.

37 INT. VALLEY PLAYHOUSE - THEATER - DAY

Smithson is now watching Ben intently.

BEN

It didn't seem real. But then she looked at me. And then it felt so fucking real. I was an animal. I did it. I did it against her will.

A tear streams down his cheek. He's never said it out loud before.

BEN (CONT'D)

I never told anyone.

He wipes away the tear. Embarrassed.

BEN (CONT'D)

I think she left school after that. I dunno. I never saw her again.

38 INT. COLLEGE DORM HALLWAY - DAY - FLASHBACK

Ben KNOCKS on a college dorm room door. No answer.

BEN

Hey! Angie!

He knocks harder. Nothing. He tries the door. It slowly CREAKS open. The room is totally empty. She is gone.

39 INT. VALLEY PLAYHOUSE - THEATER - DAY

Ben tries to regain composure. Smithson throws his coat on. Heads to the door. Just before he walks out...

SMITHSON

I'll see you on Monday.

The door shuts behind him. Ben sits there alone.

A39 OMITTED

EPISODE FOUR: DIRECTOR: KERRY YANG

40 EXT. VALLEY PLAYHOUSE - DAY

CLASS MEMBERS linger on the sidewalk. Ben comes out of the theater. Still rattled. He spots Sean and Bree talking.

SEAN

Oh, Bree, this is... I'm sorry,
man, I totally forgot your name.

BEN

Ben. It's okay.

BREE

How did you like the class?

BEN

It was cool. I signed up.

BREE

Right on! You're gonna love it. Mr. Smithson is no bullshit, you know.

SEAN

You okay? Why are your eyes so red?

BEN

Allergies, I guess. It's dry here.

BREE

You have this classic face. Did anyone ever tell you you look like a young Sean Penn.

BEN

Really?

BREE

Really. Ah, that's my ride.

A Porsche pulls up. Bree walks over to it. Waves back.

BREE (CONT'D)

Byeee. Sean, call me later. Nice to meet you, Ben.

SEAN/BEN

Bye. See ya.

They watch as she climbs into the car, smiling at the driver. Sean notices Ben's open-mouthed stare.

SEAN

Don't even think about it, man.

The Porsche pulls away.

SEAN (CONT'D)

She dates a dude who drives a fucking Porsch. Your car looks like a turd on wheels.

*

BEN

Gets me around. It was my granpa's.

SEAN

I didn't mean to bag on your car. I don't even own one any more.

He picks up his gym bag.

BEN

Where are you heading? Need a ride?

SEAN

Nah, the bus should be coming soon.

BEN

It's not like I got shit to do.

SEAN

Right. Listen, you're new in town,
... let me show you something.

42 EXT. ELYSIAN PARK - DAY

Ben and Sean sit staring out at an incredible view, overlooking LA. On the hill behind them, the Hollywood sign. Sean offers Ben a smoke. Ben shakes his head. Sean lights up.

SEAN

My ex-wife thinks I'm nuts

BEN

For smoking?

SEAN

For acting. But I dunno, I can't see myself doing anything else.

BEN

When was the first time you acted?

SEAN

Oh, it was at summer camp. Some stupid play where we were all supposed to be monsters or something. I had this wolf's head.

43 EXT. WOODEN STAGE. SUMMER CAMP - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

YOUNG KIDS in monster masks perform a roughly choreographed dance. The others are kinda in sync, but one kid, presumably YOUNG SEAN, is going nuts. Spinning and kicking up his heels.

SEAN (V.O.)

I was about eleven. A quiet kid, right? But damn, with that mask on, it's like I had permission to do anything. As long as it was part of the 'performance', ya know?

The dance ends. Mask off, Young Sean takes a bow. Savors it.

SEAN (V.O.)

The crazier I acted, the more the audience loved it.

44 EXT. ELYSIAN PARK - DAY

The sun is beginning to set.

SEAN

And you know what, I loved it too. Acting may be the only thing I was ever any good at. I've been a fuck-up my whole life, but when you're on stage and realize you can make people smile, that you entertained them, wow, that's really something.

BEN

Getting late. Wanna head down?

SEAN

Sure.

They start hiking back down the hill.

SEAN (CONT'D)

What about you? What was your first play?

BEN

Sixth grade. Romeo and Juliet. I was Tybalt, king of cats.

SEAN

Like king of pussy?

BEN

Right. He gets killed by Romeo in this big sword fight near the end. I should have been Romeo.

45 INT. AUDITORIUM - EVENING - FLASHBACK

PARENTS fill the auditorium, watching the middle school play.

Backstage YOUNG BEN, 12, pale and freckled, in a yellow costume with red tights, peeks thru the curtain onto the stage. The set is a tower facade with fake trees. He eyes...

ELIZABETH, 12, sandy hair, already full-figured. She is Juliet, perched on a ladder for the balcony scene.

ELIZABETH

O Romeo! Wherefore art thou, Romeo?

BEN(V.O.)

I was in love with Elizabeth, the girl playing Juliet. Guys called her 'lizard', but I thought she was beautiful.

He watches from the wings, yearning for Elizabeth. His expression hardens. JESSE, 12, enters the scene as Romeo. This kid has rich little prick written all over him.

BEN (V.O.)

And I despised the round-faced tub of lard playing Romeo. His name was Jesse, but we all called him Porgy.

JESSE

But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the east. And Juliet is the sun.

He sighs deeply, hand to his chest. Elizabeth's eyes shine. Jesse climbs the ladder. Holds out a rose. Elizabeth closes her eyes. Purses her lips. Jesse moves in for the kiss.

46 EXT. ELYSIAN PARK - DAY

Ben and Sean make their way down a hiking trail. Ben is animatedly re-enacting his middle school experience.

BEN

They had this kiss. He'd lick his putrid lips like a snake.

47 INT. AUDITORIUM - EVENING - FLASHBACK

Romeo lays a passionate kiss on Juliet's lips.

BEN (V.O.)

How could she kiss that water buffalo? Even if it was pretend?

ELIZABETH

Good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow.

BEN (V.O.)

I knew I wanted to fuck her. Even though I didn't know what that was yet.

48 INT. AUDITORIUM - BACKSTAGE - EVENING - FLASHBACK

It's intermission. Young Ben spots Elizabeth alone, sipping a soda. He approaches her, moving awkwardly with the sword on his belt. She looks up at him and smiles. He kneels.

YOUNG BEN

Elizabeth... I love you!

She is shocked, but tries to be pleasant.

ELIZABETH

Ben! You don't really love me.

YOUNG BEN

Yes, I do. I love you, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH
Benjamin, stop it!

Rage builds in Ben. His face reddens as he gets to his feet.

YOUNG BEN
What, you love that roly-poly slug
Porgy? Yeah, you guys are perfect
for each other. Fat fucking Romeo
and his lizard queen. Good. I'm
fucking happy for you.

Elizabeth's eyes flash with shock. She glares at him.

ELIZABETH
You're an asshole!

She dashes past him in tears.

BEN (V.O.)
It lit something inside me. Made me
want to kill.

49 INT. AUDITORIUM - EVENING - FLASHBACK

A CLASH of swords. Jesse and Ben fight with corked rapiers. Jesse thrusts at Ben, who parries. Elizabeth watches. Jesse goes for the kill, but Ben swings his sword down at the last moment, stopping Jesse in his tracks. Jesse stumbles.

Ben grins at Elizabeth. Pulls the cork from his blade. Thrusts. Jams the tip of his sword into Jesse's gut. The audience GASPS. Jesse CRIES OUT, drops his sword. Falls, grabbing at the rapier protruding from his belly.

50 EXT. ELYSIAN PARK - SUNSET

Sean eyes Ben - not quite sure what to make of this story.

SEAN
I don't know if that's acting?
Sounds to me like you just straight
up stabbed a kid?

BEN
Yeah, I was so into it, ya know.
But Porgy bellowed like a stuck
pig.

51 INT. AUDITORIUM - EVENING - FLASHBACK

Stunned silence. TEACHERS and ACTORS run onto the stage, surrounding the blubbering Romeo. Elizabeth glares hatred at Ben. He opens his balled fist. The cork drops. He grins.

52 EXT. ELYSIAN PARK - SUNSET

Ben grins the same grin.

BEN

He was fine. It was just a scratch.
Kinda fucked up the play though.

He cracks up. Sean LAUGHS too. Checks his watch.

SEAN

Shit! I have a job interview. I
gotta get home and clean up. Can't
show up looking like crap.

A52 EXT. LA STREET - NIGHT (NEEDS NEW SCENE #)

Sean pedals like crazy. On and off the sidewalk. He's now wearing a nice shirt and pants.

53 EXT. ISABEL'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

An outlet of generic storefronts. Sean rides up on his bike. Sweating profusely through his fresh clothes. He peers through the window of 'ISABEL'S ITALIAN RESTAURANT'. 'Help Wanted' sign. He stubs out his cigarette.

54 INT. ISABEL'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Small. Quaint. Crude Italian murals. Checkered table cloths. Accordion music. No customers yet. Two MEXICANS and a CHINESE GUY set tables. Sean sits in a booth, facing MARCO, short, fat, and all business. Sean wipes off sweat. Guzzles a glass of water.

MARCO

Why do you want to work at
Isabel's?

SEAN

Because I want a job. I mean,
right?

MARCO

Yeah, but why here?

SEAN

Because I love Italian food.

MARCO

Do you know what this place is?
Isabel's?

SEAN

A restaurant?

MARCO

This place is a shrine. To my mother.

SEAN

Okay. I thought it was an Italian restaurant.

Marco slams his fist down into the table with a BANG.

MARCO

It is an Italian restaurant.

Sean is stunned. Marco collects himself.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Dedicated to my mother. That's what Isabel's means. It's her place, you know what I mean?

SEAN

You love your mother.

MARCO

You're damn right I do. My mother will never die as long as I am serving food in her honor.

(crosses himself)

Look, Eminem. Anyone that works here needs to love my mother too.

SEAN

Do all these guys love your mother?

He glances around. A Mexican leans over, butt-crack exposed.

MARCO

Love, love, love her. They all do. Do you love *your* mother?

SEAN

Yeah, I do. But I've kinda been a disappointment to her. I did a bunch of bad stuff.

MARCO

What kind of bad stuff?

SEAN

(shrugs)

Drugs. Got arrested a bunch.

MARCO

You did drugs?

SEAN

Yeah. I almost killed a guy once.

Marco stares at him in disbelief, but is holding back his rage. Sean is oblivious to the impression he is making.

MARCO

You almost killed a guy?

SEAN

I had this job at a golf course, driving the ball-fetching cart on the driving range. I was on drugs and fell asleep at the wheel. The cart just kept going... toward the people hitting balls. Right into this old man.

A heavy silence. Marco glares. Sean glances around to see that the whole staff is looking at him.

MARCO

Get. The fuck. Out of here.

SEAN

Wait, what? I thought I was going to get the job?

MARCO

Are you out of your fucking mind!?
You thought a scumbag junkie like
you was going to get a job here?

Marco stands over him. The others all watch.

MARCO (CONT'D)

You have five seconds to get out of
here before I break your fucking
face. Five! Four!

Sean gets up to leave, but stops at the door.

SEAN

What if I tell you I love your
mother?

Marco lunges for the knives held by the Chinese guy. Hurls one at Sean. Sean quickly ducks out the door.

EPISODE FIVE: DIRECTOR: SHAUN DUFFY

55 EXT. NORTH HOLLYWOOD STREET - DAY

Ben sits in his parked car. He tilts the rear-view mirror down, so he can see himself. Rehearses.

BEN

Your orchard frightens me, Anya.
When I walk through it in the
evening, the cherry trees seem to
see all that happened a hundred and
two hundred years ago in painful
and oppressive dreams.

(MORE)

BEN (CONT'D)

56 EXT. VALLEY PLAYHOUSE - DAY

Ben walks from his car towards the playhouse. Stops in front of the dealership window. Recites to his reflection.

BEN

It is so plain that before we can live in the present, we must first redeem the past and have done with it. It is only by suffering that we can redeem it, only by strenuous, unremitting toil.

57 INT. VALLEY PLAYHOUSE - DAY

Ben is now on stage. Smithson and Sean are watching him, but Ben seems to be directing the monologue at Bree and no one else. She stares back. Engrossed in his performance.

BEN

I am still young, but what I have been through! I am as hungry as the winter. I am sick, anxious, poor as a beggar. Fate has tossed me hither and thither.

Bree's lips move in time with his words.

BEN (CONT'D)

Wherever I have been, every minute, day and night, my soul has been full of mysterious anticipations. I feel the approach of happiness, Anya. I see it coming.

58 INT. VALLEY PLAYHOUSE - BACKSTAGE - DAY

VOICES from a scene in progress on the stage. Ben walks out of the bathroom. He stops. A figure is standing in the dark. As his eyes adjust, he realizes it's Bree. She whispers.

BREE

That was great. I love Chekhov.

BEN

Thanks.

He's embarrassed, but elated. A crack in the stage door lets in enough light for him to glimpse the beauty of her face.

BREE

You're pretty cute, you know that?

BEN

I think you're great too.

BREE

You're really talented. I'd like to do a scene with you.

BEN

I'd love that. You are so unbelievable. I mean believable, but unbelievably talented.

They stand for a moment, neither knowing what to say. She grabs his arm and writes on it with a pen.

BREE

Call me.

She leaves quickly. Ben looks at his arm. Her number has a heart drawn around it.

59 EXT. A STREET IN THE VALLEY - DAY

It's early morning. Sean rides his bike with urgency.

60 EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Sean stops his bike on the sidewalk, across from one of a row of low-rent houses - a small car in the driveway. He checks his watch. Digs in his bag and pulls out a camera.

Maggie and the kids, wearing school backpacks, emerge from the house front door. Sean watches.

MAGGIE

Wait by the car, boys. I'll just be a minute.

She dashes back inside. Sean quickly crosses the street.

SEAN

Hey, guys.

The younger one jumps in excitement when he recognizes him.

JAMIE

Daddy!

Sean kneels in front of them, glancing up at the door. The little one hugs him, but the older one hangs back.

OLDER BOY

Mommy said not to talk to you.

SEAN

Oh, is that right? Let me see your new backpacks.

YOUNGER BOY

Mommy got them for us.

SEAN

I miss you guys.

YOUNGER BOY

We miss you too. Where have you been, daddy?

SEAN

Don't tell anyone, but I've been on this top secret mission, of extreme importance. But it'll be over soon.

The boys are fascinated.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Let me get your picture. Show me your best super-hero smiles.

He holds up the camera. The little one smiles and nods but his brother isn't so enthusiastic. Sean takes a few steps back and frames up a photo.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Say cheese!

He snaps the photo.

SEAN (CONT'D)

I should go before your mom comes out. You know I love you, right?

Another quick hug and he quickly walks away. The boys wave, but look very confused.

61 INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - DAY

Sean sits at the bar with Sonny. They talk quietly but animatedly. Meanwhile a MIDDLE-AGED MAN shares his AA story.

MAN

I didn't expect to go off like I did. I mean, it was my kid's birthday party and all. Things were good, you know?

Sonny and Sean don't pay attention, wrapped up in their own conversation. Note: Their dialogue overlaps the man's.

SONNY

That's bullshit.

SEAN

Some guy almost killed me.

SONNY

Bullshit! You just don't want to work. You're a selfish prick.

He's getting loud. The man telling his story stops and looks over at them. Sean nods an apology. The man continues.

MAN

I just wanted to celebrate like everyone else. Just one small sip. But my wife hid the damn bottle. Well, she said she threw it out. but I wouldn't believe it was gone.

SEAN

(whispers)

I do want to work. I need to make some money. I'd sell my ass if it meant I could see my kids again.

SONNY

(loud whisper)

I don't believe you. You just want to go get fucked up.

MAN

I started out asking nicely about it, you know? Like, 'Honey, come on, where's my stuff?'

SEAN

No I don't! What am I supposed to do? These nice restaurants don't want ex-junkies. I look like crap.

SONNY

Nice restaurants? Are you too good
to work at fucking McDonalds?

MAN

She tries to tell me it's for my own good, but I insist she has no right to touch my stuff. Before I know it, I'm calling her a 'lying cunt bitch' in front of the kids.

SEAN

I'm not too good for anything.

SONNY

Then go apply at McDonald's, motherfucker.

An OLDER MAN, also sitting at the bar, turns to Sonny.

OLDER MAN

Sonny, keep it down.

SONNY

That right, Fred? You want me to keep it down? Why don't you keep my cock down your fucking throat?

Awkward silence. After a few moments, the LAUGHTER erupts.

62

INT. BREE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ben rehearses with Bree in her apartment. The place is hip, probably paid for by Daddy. They have scripts in hand.

BEN

Where do you want to start?

BREE

How about 'I like it a lot'?

She put down her script. Twirls, showing off her cranberry-colored coat.

BEN

I like it a lot.

BREE

Really?

BEN

Really. It's a lovely coat.

BREE

Why? Because it's purple?

BEN

Not just that. I mean, the color is
nice and all. And the fabric.

He steps closer. He feels the sleeve of the coat.

BEN (CONT'D)

The way it fits you. It's the whole package, you know? All of it.

BREE

It does kind of make me feel, I don't know, protected. Like I'm wearing body armor.

She sits on the edge of the bed. He slides down beside her.

BEN

What's there to be afraid of?

BREE

With this coat? Nothing. I'm invincible.

Ben suddenly kisses her. She lets him for a moment, then pulls away - out of character.

BREE (CONT'D)

That was pretty bold.

BEN

I was just kinda in the moment.

Bree stares at him skeptically. An awkward pause.

BEN (CONT'D)

You want to start from the top, or go from here?

She stares at him a moment longer. He shifts uncomfortably.

BREE

You know what... I want to introduce you to my agent. I think you are really talented. You're going to be huge.

BEN

Thanks.

He reaches out to touch her again, but she gets to her feet. Goes to the phone.

BREE

I'm going to call her.

BEN

But we were in the middle of a scene.

BREE

You want me to call my agent or not?

BEN

Sure.

He is flustered. Doesn't know whether to be thrilled or frustrated. She dials the phone.

63 INT. BURGER JOINT - OFFICE - DAY

Sean folds a dollar bill into origami. A female Hispanic-looking INTERVIEWER walks in and sits down across from him. Scans his application. He acts super-friendly.

SEAN

Ola. Como esta?

She smiles, but is unimpressed. She doesn't sound Hispanic.

INTERVIEWER

Hello, Sean. It says here you are interested in the drive-thru order-taker position?

SEAN

I am, yes. That is exactly the position I want. I love this place. I think this place is great.

She's a little taken aback by his choice of words.

INTERVIEWER

Okay. Why?

SEAN

I like your cheese burgers. Great cheeseburgers. Better than Burger King. And Wendy's. Your guys' burgers kicks Wendy's ass. I mean, if Wendy was a girl, she'd be so jealous she'd be on the corner of the street crying, because these burgers are so fucking good.

INTERVIEWER

Please don't use that kind of language.

SEAN

Fuck yes. Sorry. I just love your food.

INTERVIEWER

You know, Sean, you'd be the only white guy working here.

SEAN

I hate white guys.

She stares at him wide-eyed. Then back down at the paperwork.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Look, I love your food. I might not be the most experienced, or the most educated, but I'll take this job seriously. I'll take this job more seriously than anybody ever has. And I'll work my fucking ass off... er, I mean I'll work really, really hard for you.

She eyes him a little more sympathetically.

INTERVIEWER

Can you work nights?

SEAN

Hell yeah!

INTERVIEWER

Can you start tonight?

A63 INT/EXT. BURGER JOINT - NIGHT

Sean is at the drive-thru window, wearing a visor and head set. JUAN, Mexican, mentally slow, with a chubby belly, clumsily fills drink orders. He grins at Sean.

Sean places a picture of his kids by the register. A PRETTY GIRL pulls up to the window. Sean smiles down at her as he hands over her order. She's alone in the car.

SEAN

Three monster stack burgers, super size meals?

She looks at him, not responding.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Is that your order, three burgers?

GIRL

Are you judging me?

SEAN

No, I was just...

GIRL

You're judging me.

SEAN

No, I'm not.

GIRL

Are you implying I'm fat?

SEAN

No, it's er... It's my first night-

GIRL

My boyfriend and I just broke up and I'm an emotional eater, okay?.

SEAN

You're my first customer...

GIRL

Ya know, I do that a lot. Maybe that's why he broke up with me.

SEAN

Well I think you're pretty.

GIRL

Well that's really sweet, but you work at a drive-thru.

SEAN

I do.

She raises her bag of food to him, nods, and drives off. Sean spots another car at the order box. A car of mixed-race 30-year-olds. Sean's voice comes through muffled. He puts on an Italian accent.

SEAN (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Can I take-a your order-a?

CUSTOMER

So let me get, ah, two Number Twos. One with no cheese and no pickles.

SEAN (O.C.)

No-a problem-a.

CUSTOMER

And let me get some chicken fingers for the lady with the beanie baby.

SEAN (O.C.)

You want-a make-a that a meal-a?

BACK IN THE BOOTH - with Sean and Juan: the car pulls up. Sean passes over the order.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Here you go-a.

CUSTOMER

Yo, what the hell is that accent?

SEAN

It's-a Italiano.

CUSTOMER

You're from Italy?

SEAN

I'm-a from Italy, but I grew up-a here.

CUSTOMER

Which part of Italy?

SEAN

Pisa.

CUSTOMER

Oh yeah? Which part?

SEAN

Near-a the tower

Everyone in the car CRACKS UP. Sean gives him the change.

CUSTOMER

Great, Mario! Where's Luigi? You're from Italy, but you grew up here?

SEAN

Si.

CUSTOMER

Shiiit! Where did you go to school?

SEAN

North-a Hollywood High.

CUSTOMER

Great. I'll know never to send my kids there, you fucking moron!

Everyone LAUGHS as he drives away. Sean shrugs. Juan grins.

EPISODE SIX: DIRECTOR: JAY COHEN

64 INT. BEN'S APARTMENT. DAY.

Ratty couch. Mattress on the floor. A board on blocks as a table. A sink. A noisy fridge. Ben is pacing, trying out a scene. A HAMMERING on the door.

Ben opens the door. It's Sean. He digs his copy of the script out of his bag. A Strindberg play.

SEAN

Okay. Let's do this.

BEN

Guess what? Bree got me a meeting with her agent.

Sean has a flash of jealousy. Hides it.

SEAN

Yeah? Wow. How'd that happen?

BEN

We were rehearsing... and she just called her agent.

SEAN

That's cool. How long have you been here?... Do you even have a headshot?

BEN

What?

SEAN

You're gonna need a headshot.

BEN

Shit! I don't have one. Do you?

SEAN

'Course I do! If you want to be a professional actor, you need a headshot... C'mon, let's take a picture right now.

BEN

You can do that?

SEAN

Sure.

He digs in his bag. Pulls out the camera.

BEN

Wait? Do you always carry a camera?

SEAN

It's my dad's. He takes pictures of birds and shit. I borrowed it.

Ben turns to a mirror. Tries to fix his hair.

BEN

Is this shirt alright?

SEAN

You look beautiful. Go stand over there by the window. What kind of character do you wanna be cast as?

He preps the camera. Ben takes a pose.

BEN

How about tortured romantic hero?

SEAN

Okay. Gimme your tortured romantic hero... that's not a fucking tortured romantic hero. Whatever. Smile, c'mon.

Ben smiles.

SEAN (CONT'D)

No, no! Don't smile that much.

Ben pulls it back. Sean snaps more pictures.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Give me your Leonardo.... Your De Niro.... Try to look handsome... Actually you know what... take off all your clothes.

Ben flips him off.

SEAN (CONT'D)

How bad to do you want to be a movie star?...

He starts gyrating his hips sexily.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Give it to me, baby! Show me what you got.

(They both crack up)

Okay. We got it.

He starts unloading the film. Glances around.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Could you use a roommate?

BEN

I guess. The couch is open. I could use help with the rent. The prices here are ridiculous.

SEAN

That's good, because I got a job today.

BEN

Yeah? An acting job?

SEAN

Yeah. You could call it an acting job.

A64 INT/EXT. BURGER JOINT - NIGHT

At the drive-thru station, Juan grins, watching Sean going through the routine of filling a to-go bag. A packet of fries, a wrapped burger, coke. He hands it to a man in a van.

NEW YORKER

Take forever, why don't cha.

He speeds off. Sean quickly downs a cup of coke and imitates the customer's New York accent.

SEAN

Aye fuck yoos too.

He leans on the counter. Gets into his own world.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Who is ziss guy? Who's ziss guy.

Eh, what's da matta wit chu?

He notices a car's headlights shining in his monitor.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Can I take your order?

He sees a girl in a Jetta peering up at the menu. KAREN. Sean stares at the monitor. Captivated.

KAREN

Can I get a small fry and coke,
please?

SEAN

(New York accent)

Yes, ma'am. One small French fry
and one small coke. No prob.

(punches keys)

Two seventy-five at the first
winda, sweethaart.

He smooths his shirt as she pulls up. She's beautiful.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Two seventy five.

She digs in her purse, pulls out three bucks. A slightly awkward money hand off and bag pass.

KAREN

Hey, that a New York accent?

SEAN

This accent? Oh yeah, you know.

KAREN

That's what I thought. What neighborhood?

SEAN

Bensonhurst.

KAREN

No way! My mother was from there!

SEAN

Wow! Yeah, it's not like it used to be, but...

KAREN

Yeah. Okay then. Thanks.

Awkward smiles. Sean is desperately trying to act sober.

SEAN

Have a good night.

She finger-waves as she drives off. Sean stays in the window, watching her go. Suddenly she reappears on the monitor. She has driven all the way round.

KAREN

You forgot to give me ketchup.

SEAN

Ketchup? Oh, you mean caatchup?

She LAUGHS... She pulls up to the drive-thru window. He passes her some ketchup packets.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Here's extra. You don't want to run out. Hey, you want some BBQ sauce? I like it on the fries.

KAREN

Sure.

SEAN

Aye, what's a pretty lady like you doing out at a time like this?

KAREN

Oh you know, my sick mother, she likes fries and coke.

SEAN

You got a boyfriend or anything?

KAREN
(giggling)
No.

SEAN
Hey, we should go out sometime. See
a movie or something.

KAREN
Would you wear that cute visor?

SEAN
(Laughs)
No.

KAREN
You got a pen and paper?

He passes some paper and a pen. She writes. Hands them back.

KAREN (CONT'D)
Call me sometime.

SEAN
Okay, Karen. That's a good name,
Karen. I will.

He smiles. She drives off. Sean notices Juan talking animatedly to MARIA, the girl at the register. Hispanic, cute, innocent-looking. Juan gestures to Sean. She argues. Juan turns to look directly at Sean. He grins and mouths.

JUAN
Te amo

Sean reacts... did he hear right? More argument between Juan and Maria in Spanish. Sean has no idea what they're saying. He smiles at Maria. Gestures her to come over. She looks embarrassed as she approaches. Can't look him in the eye.

SEAN
What does he want?

Maria hesitates before telling him, her eyes down.

MARIA
He wants to jerk you off.

SEAN
What?!

She is the last person he expected to hear this from.

MARIA

Juan. He thinks you're cute and he told me he wants to jerk you off.

She points to Juan, who grins bashfully.

SEAN

Oh, uh... I'm straight. Hey, Juan. Thanks, I guess. But I'm not gay.

MARIA

He doesn't speak English.

SEAN

Oh. Will you tell him that I appreciate it, but I'm not gay?

Maria speaks directly to Juan..

MARIA

(in Spanish)

Hey, cock-sucker. He says he doesn't like your lardy fat ass or the ugly face on your stupid head.

(then in English)

So leave him the fuck alone.

JUAN

(in Spanish)

You should talk, you slut. You give head to anyone who smiles at you. Tell him I'll give him fifty bucks if he lets me play with his junk.

MARIA

(shyly, to Sean)

He says he'll give you fifty bucks if you let him jerk you off.

SEAN

No, that's okay. Uh, sorry.

He notices someone at the drive-thru window and heads over. When he glances back, Juan is still grinning at him.

65 INT. TALENT AGENT'S OFFICE - DAY

An assistant, TRACY, leads Ben into the sleek office. Closes the door behind him. SABRINA (35) attractive, tight blouse, shuffles paper. Doesn't look up. He waits nervously.

SABRINA

You bring your headshot?

He proudly hands her his photo. She turns it over - blank.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

You'll need a list of your credits on the back.

That bursts his bubble. The intercom BUZZES. She picks up.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

... Put him through... Hey, Charles. Hold on a second.

She tucks the phone in the crotch of her neck. Checks out the photo. Ben looks around. Pictures of Sabrina with stars line the walls. Out the window is a vista of Hollywood.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

(to Ben)

You look like Corey Feldman here.

(into phone)

Yeah, tonight looks good... I don't care. You choose... Oh, fuck off.

She hangs up. Ben is still standing. She gestures to a chair.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

Have a seat. Bree thinks you're a good actor.

She shows no enthusiasm. Ben sits awkwardly.

BEN

Thanks.

SABRINA

She said you're a young Sean Penn.

BEN

Wow. I love Sean Penn.

SABRINA

Yeah. Dead Man Walking. Amazing.

No enthusiasm. She studies him without expression. An awkward silence. Ben feels like he should offer something.

BEN

Would you like to hear a monologue?

SABRINA

No, no. That's fine... You've got a great look.

BEN

Thanks.

SABRINA

I need to talk to the rest of the partners before we take you on.

BEN

Yeah. Totally.

The intercom BUZZES. She picks up. Listens a beat, then covers the mouthpiece and whispers to Ben.

SABRINA

I need to take this...
(into phone)
Put him through.

She swings her chair away from Ben. Dismissing him.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

(into phone)

No, I'm not negotiating with you,
Bernie. You like him as much as you
say, that's what you gotta pay.

Ben realizes the meeting is over. Gets up and heads out.

66

EXT. MOVIE THEATER COURTYARD - NIGHT

The marquee displays 'Titanic'. Sean and Karen leave the theater. Walk towards a massive fountain. He tries to hold her hand, but she pulls away. He slyly slips his hand in his pocket instead. He speaks with his New York accent.

SEAN

So, whadya think?

KAREN

Meh, not bad.

SEAN

Not bad? What do you mean not bad??

KAREN

I dunno. I'm not really big on weepy love stories.

SEAN

Weepy love stories? Oh, come on.

KAREN

I'm more of an action-adventure kind of girl.

SEAN

How about that DiCaprio, huh?

KAREN

He's cute, I guess.

SEAN

Ok, first of all, I'm talking about his performance, not his looks. Though I admit, for a guy, he's pretty cute. And second, he was not as good as he was in Basketball Diaries. But pretty good.

KAREN

Just pretty good, huh?

SEAN

Yeah, not great, ya know.

KAREN

So you think you can do better, mister big shot Hollywood actor?

He gives her a devilish smile. Climbs up onto the wall by the fountain. Water shoots up behind him. He reaches his hand out. He does an impression of DiCaprio

SEAN

Do you trust me, Rose?

He reaches his hand down to her. She looks round to see if anyone's watching.

KAREN

Will you please come down?

SEAN

Only if you answer my question. Do you trust me?

She can't help but smile. There's something enchanting about his energy. His spirit. The city lights glow behind him.

KAREN

Yeah, sure. Whatever. Now will you come down please?

He takes her hands and lifts her up with him. She nearly falls into the fountain. Falls into his arms instead.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Whoa! Sean!

Sean leans in and they kiss with the fountain cascading behind them. He whispers.

SEAN

I'm king of the world.

KAREN

So cheesy.

But she GIGGLES. They kiss again.

74

EXT. PARK - DAY

Ben and Bree share a blanket on a patch of grass. Their scripts are open in front of them. They're doing the scene.

BEN

What is there to be afraid of?

BREE

With this coat? Nothing. I'm invincible.

They end the scene. Ben gazes at her silently.

BREE (CONT'D)

You really love acting, don't you?

BEN

I do. Back in South Dakota, I dreamed of doing exactly this.

BREE

What was your life like?

BEN

Kinda lonely. I was working in a bar, saving up some money to come out here.

BREE

Your parents didn't help you?

BEN

No. But now I'm here, I met you, you introduced me to your agent... 'I feel the approach of happiness'.

Bree laughs. She starts to get up. Ben reaches over to her.

BEN (CONT'D)

I love the way you laugh. You're amazing.

BREE

You're amazing. You could be such a huge star.

He leans over and kisses her. She responds. They make out for a few moments. Then she pulls back.

BREE (CONT'D)

We don't wanna be late.

They both get up. Ben takes her hand. Kisses it romantically.

MATCH CUT TO:

75 INT. VALLEY PLAYHOUSE - DAY.

On stage. Ben kisses Bree's hand. She wears the purple coat.

BEN

It's not just the color. It's the
whole package, you know? All of it.

He takes his time - milking it.

BREE

It does kind of make me feel, I don't know, protected. Like I'm wearing body armor.

Ben goes down on a knee. Holds both her hands. Stares longingly into her eyes.

BEN

What is there to be afraid of?

BREE

With this coat? Nothing. I'm invincible.

End of scene. From the audience...

SMITHSON

Good, thank you!

Ben waits expectantly. Sean and the class are watching.

SMITHSON (CONT'D)

Bree. Nice job. Very honest.

Bree gives Ben's hand a squeeze.

SMITHSON (CONT'D)

But Ben... you were forcing it.

(Ben is shocked)

You're not relaxed. You're trying way too hard. You don't have to show us you're in love with her. You need to feel it.

Bree slowly slips her hand from his. Shrugs off her coat.

BEN

I was feeling it.

SMITHSON
Feeling what exactly?

BEN
I was feeling that... I love her.

SMITHSON (CONT'D)
It's more like you're in love with
yourself. You're not listening to
your partner. You're up there
acting by yourself, basically doing
a monologue. You could have been
talking to a mirror.

Ben is humiliated. Bree avoids eye contact with him.

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EPISODE SEVEN: DIRECTOR: JESS MALDANER

A75 EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Sean holds take-out fast food bags. Steps tentatively to the door. RINGS the bell. Maggie steps outside. *

SEAN
Maggie, hey.

MAGGIE
What the hell are you doing here?

SEAN
I was, uh, hoping to see the boys.

MAGGIE
I know you already saw them behind my back.

SEAN
I'm clean now. I'm turning things around. I have this apartment now and a roommate. *

MAGGIE
Yeah? Who is it? Chewy, your dealer? *

SEAN
His name's Ben. *

MAGGIE
Do you have any idea how much child support you owe? *

SEAN
I'm working on it. I got a job. *

He holds up the fast food bags as proof.

MAGGIE
Flipping burgers? Are you serious? *

SEAN
I brought family meals. Burgers, fries, shakes. A couple of toys.

MAGGIE
It's shit, all of it. I'm not letting the kids anywhere near that crap. *

*

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I brought a salad too. I know you
like salad.

*
*
*

He fishes in a bag. A hint of compassion on her face, but...

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Just go. Please.

SEAN

Wait! Can't I see them? For just a
minute?

*
*

He steps towards the door. She blocks his way, arms-crossed.

*

MAGGIE

I need money, Sean. Don't come back
until you have money.

*
*

SEAN

Listen, let me give you my phone
number. Just in case, you know.

He digs in his pocket for a note. She impatiently grabs it.
Shuts the door. Sean glances to the window - no sign of the
boys. He tosses the burger packages into a trash can.

*
*
*

76 INT. BURGER JOINT - NIGHT

The place is mostly empty. Sean looks around. Maria is reading at the register. Juan is cleaning counters. Sean opens the till. Stares at the money... sorely tempted.

He slips his hand into the pile of \$20s... peeks over his shoulder... Maria is looking right at him. Covering, he makes a point of sorting through the bills.

SEAN

Thought I saw a two-dollar bill in here... Nope.

Maria smiles, but there's a hint of suspicion. Sean closes up the till. Looks over at Juan, who gives him his usual grin... and licks his lips.

A76 INT. BURGER JOINT - BACK HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sean glances around as he goes through a door into the back. A hallway full of cleaning equipment. A sign on a door: 'Employees Only'. He tries the door handle. Slowly opens it.

Juan is sitting on the toilet seat. Fully clothed. He grins excitedly up at Sean. Sweating with anticipation.

B76 INT. BURGER JOINT - RESTROOM - NIGHT

Under a stall door, we see two pairs of feet facing each other, one with pants down.

Inside the stall, Sean's back is against the wall. Standing in front of him is Juan, jerking Sean off, whispering.

JUAN

Si, si, ooh, si.

Sean's eyes are winced shut. He knocks the back of his head against the wall, breathing heavily.

JUAN (CONT'D)

Si, andele, ooh si.

SEAN

Shut up.

Juan shuts up. Jerks faster. Sean stares at the wall - graffiti of cocks, asses, tits. Finally has a weak orgasm.

JUAN

Siii, ooh si.

Sean grabs toilet paper. Cleans himself quickly. Pulls up his pants. Grabs the door handle to leave. Avoiding eye contact.

JUAN (CONT'D)

Espera!

Sean looks back. Juan gestures for Sean to jerk him off.

SEAN

No, no, no.

JUAN

Por favor. Quanto?

Juan pleads desperately. Pulls out his money clip. Counts.

SEAN

No way.

JUAN

Setenta y cinco?

77

INT. VALLEY PLAYHOUSE - THEATER - DAY

Ben and Sean are seated on stage in front of the class. Both have attempted to look period. Ben addresses the class.

BEN

This is a Strindberg scene we've adapted.

He sits down across from Sean. They smile at each other.

BEN (CONT'D)

Do you suppose everyone has a skeleton in his closet, my friend?

SEAN

Of course. We all do.

Ben gets up. Crosses the stage, pensive. Sips from a glass.

BEN

I killed a man once. Yet I have not been punished for it.

SEAN

How did you get out of it?

BEN

There were no witnesses, no suspicions. Last winter, on the way back from Uppsala, the old drunken coachman fell asleep and drove off the road into a ditch. In a fit of anger, I struck a blow to wake him... and he died.

SEAN

You didn't tell the authorities?

BEN

There would have been an inquiry. I didn't care to ruin my life, to satisfy some abstract concept of justice.

He sits again. Relieved to have unburdened himself. Sean stares at him in horror.

SEAN

That is murder!

BEN

It was an accident! Should I be punished for the rest of my life for one little mistake?

SEAN

A little mistake? You are a murderer!

Sean is on his feet. Outraged. Ben leaps up too.

BEN

How dare you?!

He swings a backhand fist at Sean, who catches his arm in mid-blow. They glare into each other's eyes in pure hatred.

SEAN

Now you would kill me too?

They freeze. Smithson watches them stare each other down.

SMITHSON

Okay. Ben. Have you ever done anything one might call truly terrible and gotten away with it?

Ben hesitates. Inadvertently catches Bree's eye.

SMITHSON (CONT'D)

Yes or no?

BEN

Yes.

SMITHSON

Then use it!

Ben stares disbelievingly at Smithson.

SMITHSON (CONT'D)

Sean, that was better from you. Listening and reacting. You played the circumstances well. Who's next?

SEAN

Actually me and Jenny have been working on an improv. She's playing my ex-wife Maggie, I'm playing me.

SMITHSON

Okay, let's see it.

Carrying a laundry hamper, Jenny takes Ben's place on stage. Sean takes off his tie and jacket. Leaves by the stage door - makes a point of closing it super carefully. Jenny starts the process of pulling clothes from the hamper and folding them.

A KNOCK. Jenny goes to the door and opens it, revealing Sean.

SEAN

Hi, Maggie.

JENNY

What do you want?

SEAN

I want you to let me see my kids. I've been clean for three months, I have a sponsor, I have a job, I have an apartment...

JENNY

You know what the court decided, Sean. When you start paying support, I will consider letting you see them - at my discretion.

SEAN

Don't give me that legal bullshit. It's bad for the kids not to see their father. And your lawyer's a fucking dick... sorry, but he is.

JENNY

I've got nothing more to say, Sean. Please just go.

She heads back to folding the laundry.

SEAN

Please hear me out! Just this once? It's all I ever think about.

She shrugs. Gestures for him to continue. He paces.

SEAN (CONT'D)

I lie awake at night. Just wishing I could have it all back. The boys used to love red velvet cake, you remember? They used to giggle so much when I let them eat the batter. I'd rub the frosting on Bobby's little nose and he'd laugh and laugh.

She doesn't even look up.

SEAN (CONT'D)

I just want to find a little hole
and crawl up in a ball. It gets so
I hate breathing. I want to fucking
disappear. Looking at other people
flaunting their happy families in
my face... fuck them! Sand castles,
baseball games, I hate all that
shit! I throw up when I taste red
velvet cake. I want my kids back. I
want to see them. I want my life
back! I want it back.

He is broken at this point. Silence. The class is impressed.

SMITHSON

Good, Sean. See, Ben? That's how
you do it.

Ben silently seethes. Sean hasn't moved.

78 INT. BEN'S APARTMENT. DAY

The TV is on, but Ben's not watching. He paces the room, hyper and anxious. Jumps when the phone RINGS. Snatches it.

BEN

Bree?

TRACY (ON PHONE)

Ben? I have Sabrina for you.

A long wait. Ben freaks out with impatience.

SABRINA (ON PHONE)

This is Sabrina.

BEN

(super-casual)

Oh yeah. Hi.

SABRINA

(long pause)

Sorry - who is this?

BEN

Er, Ben... Bree's friend.

79

INTERCUT INT. TALENT AGENCY - DAY

Sabrina has a hand over the mouthpiece. Calls out:

SABRINA

Tracy, get in here!

Tracy steps into the doorway. Sabrina gestures to the phone.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

What the fuck! I need to know who I'm getting on the phone with.

TRACY

(flustered)

But I thought...

SABRINA

Do me a favor. Don't fucking think. Where's his damn headshot?

Tracy pulls it from the top of her in-tray. Hands it to her. Eyeing the photo, Sabrina gets back on the phone. All charm.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry, Ben. It's nuts around here. Listen. I talked to the partners. We just love your look.

BEN

That's so fantastic. You have no idea how fantastic that is to hear.

He bounces on his heels with excitement.

SABRINA

Great. One thing though. They think, well, we think, you need a little more experience... Okay?

BEN

(deflated)

But how do I get more experience?

SABRINA

You need to work more.

She's impatient to get off the phone. Glares at Tracy.

BEN

But how do I get work if I don't have an agent?

SABRINA

Well, we all just thought you need a little more experience.

BEN

Right. That doesn't really make sense, but okay.

SABRINA

Okay. Talk to you later.

She slams the receiver down. Tracy hovers nervously.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

(ice-cold)

It is your job to handle rejection calls. Get it?

At his end, Ben stares at his phone. In a rage, he rips it from the wall. Hurls it at his reflection in the mirror.

80

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - DAY

The usual guys sit conversing quietly. Sonny stands.

SONNY

Right, quit your clucking. Bunch of fucking hens when you get together.

CHUCKLES from the group.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Anybody want to start? You finally gonna pipe up, Sean? You're always quiet as a goddamned titmouse.

SEAN

A titmouse is a bird, I think.

SONNY

Whatever the fuck. You gonna talk?

SEAN

Yeah. I got something.

Sean stands. His chair SCREECHES. The room waits expectantly.

SEAN (CONT'D)

You know, since getting clean
there's a lot I left behind. The
drugs, yeah. I miss that feeling.
But there's a lot I don't miss.

He shifts his weight, eyes wide and bright.

SEAN (CONT'D)

When you're using, you do anything
to get a fix. But it's hard to keep
down a job. So I had to find ways
to get extra cash, you know? So I
started sucking dick. In bathrooms.

Some of the men fidget in their seats. Sean pauses.

81 INTERCUT - FLASHES TO A RESTROOM SOMEWHERE

A hand locks the door. A dark-skinned hand pulls down a zipper. A glimpse of a hairy belly hanging over the top of pants. Close on hands exchanging money. We see it's Juan.

SEAN

I'd be in a restroom. Get on my knees on the cold tile floor. Toilet paper and shit all over the place. And I would do it. I would suck dick.

Flash cuts: Knees on the toilet floor, surrounded by toilet paper and debris. White-knuckled hands grip a toilet bowl.

SEAN (CONT'D)

I would actually do that, just so I could get the hundred bucks. Just so I could get some more shit.

In the restroom - the back of Sean's head pressed against the sweat-drenched hairs on a fat belly. Juan grins grotesquely and MOANS. It's clear that Sean is giving him a blow job.

In the RESTAURANT - The men are mostly looking at their feet. Some show their disgust.

SEAN (CONT'D)

And that's what I don't miss.

Sean sinks back onto his chair. In the silence, Sonny stands.

SONNY

Thanks, Sean. That you would go from doing that for a hundred bucks worth of dope to becoming the responsible member of society you are today, it's a fucking miracle. Finally stepping up as a man.

Sean can't look at him. Sonny addresses the group.

SONNY (CONT'D)

He's even taking acting lessons. For me, there's no better example of the power of spirituality. Hell, why don't we all give the young buck a little encouragement?

He pulls out his wallet. Digs out a couple of bills.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I know he could use help with his
rent, child support, what have you.

Some of the guys move to their pockets, others hesitate. Sean
keeps staring at the floor.

EPISODE EIGHT: DIRECTOR: LEANDRO TADASHI

82 INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Ben reads an annotated copy of a play. An empty cup in front of him. Also a single red rose, its stem wrapped in plastic. JASPER, black, good-looking, peeks over Ben's shoulder.

JASPER
'Streetcar'? Cool. Tennessee
Williams was such a tortured soul.

Ben smiles. Jasper calls over to the counter.

JASPER (CONT'D)
Hi! Can I have a cappuccino?

Ben's pager BUZZES. His eyes dart to it. He leaves the cafe.

83 EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Ben listens on a pay phone. He holds the rose.

BREE (ON PHONE)

Hello.

BEN

Hey, Bree.

84 INTERCUT EXT. STREET - DAY

Bree is walking quickly, holding a mobile phone.

BREE

Ben, you're going to hate me! I just found out I've got an early call tomorrow. I'm playing Jaime Pressly's best friend!

BEN

That's great.

BREE

So I can't make it tonight. You're not already there, are you?

BEN

No. Don't worry about it.

BREE

Oh my God, really?

BEN

Yeah, you caught me just in time. I was about to head out.

BREE

I knew you'd understand. Rain check?

BEN

Rain check. Are you mad at me?

BREE

What do you mean?

BEN

I didn't do well in the scene in class. I thought maybe you didn't like me anymore.

BREE

That's ridiculous. I don't care about a stupid scene in class.

BEN

I can't believe he said I wasn't being honest. I really care about you.

Bree is impatient. She waves to someone off-camera.

BREE

I know you do. Don't worry about Smithson. You're such a good actor.

BEN

So you're not disappointed that your agent didn't like me?

BREE

No.

BEN

Are you free later this week?

BREE

I'm sorry. I'm busy all this week.

Ben is silent. The rejection sinking in.

BREE (CONT'D)

I gotta go. We'll talk soon. Byeee.

She hangs up. Breaks into a huge smile. Walks over to a parked car... Jake Lamont holds the door for her. They kiss.

Ben listens to the dial TONE. Dejected. He steps out onto the sidewalk. Jasper eyes him from the cafe.

85 OMITTED

86 EXT. SIDEWALK - DUSK

Ben hurries to his car. Jasper approaches.

JASPER

What's your name? I'm Jasper.

Flustered, Ben fumbles his keys. He gets in his car. Jasper KNOCKS on the window. Holds up a business card. Eventually, Ben rolls the window down.

BEN

Can I help you?

JASPER

I'm a manager. If you're reading
'Streetcar', you gotta be an actor.

He hands over the card - formal and elegant.

JASPER (CONT'D)

Maybe I can help you? I knew Brad Pitt before he did 'Thelma and Louise'. He was just like you.

As Ben scans the card, Jasper reaches in his pocket. Pulls out a joint. Holds it up.

JASPER (CONT'D)

C'mon. Let's talk.

87

MOMENTS LATER

Leaning on the back of the car, Jasper takes a toke and hands Ben the joint.

JASPER

Good shit, right?

Ben takes a long hit - reacts. It's strong.

BEN

What's in this thing?

Jasper smiles. Watches him closely.

JASPER

Look at those cheekbones. Brad had nothing on you. You are going to be a big, bright, mother fucking star, you know that?

Ben almost chokes on the joint. Jasper keeps smiling.

JASPER (CONT'D)

I'd like to paint you.

BEN

What?

JASPER

I can pay, if you let me paint you.

BEN

Like naked?

JASPER

I was thinking just your face. But sure, if you insist.

He steps closer. Ben leans away.

BEN

No thanks.

He hands the joint back. Jasper smokes it. Moves in to steal a kiss. Ben lets him have a little before pushing him off.

BEN (CONT'D)

What the fuck?

JASPER

Don't play the straight game honey.

BEN

I am fucking straight. Jesus.

He angrily gets back in the car. Jasper leans in the window.

JASPER

I could make you a star.

Ben glances back at him before driving off.

88 OMITTED

89 EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sean walks across the street, envelope in hand. He peeks inside the envelope - we see that there is a stack of money in there. As he stuffs it in Maggie's mailbox, we glimpse a bunny drawing scrawled on it and the words 'From Sean'. He reacts as a light is turned on in the house.

Sean creeps close to the house. He can just see through the curtains into the room with the light on. The youngest boy is crying. Maggie hugs him - looks like he just woke up from a nightmare. Sean is moved... then a man comes over to the bed and helps tuck the boy back in. The boy smiles up at him.

Close on rage building on Sean's face.

CUT TO:

A fist HAMMERS on the front door. Maggie opens it. Reacts to seeing Sean.

SEAN

Who the fuck is that guy, Maggie?

MAGGIE

That's not your business.

Sean shouts.

SEAN

The hell it isn't! I come over to give you money and I fucking see this... some random guy you're fucking putting my kids in bed.

MAGGIE

Keep your voice down! The whole neighborhood will hear you. I just managed to get Teddy back to sleep.

SEAN

I don't give a fuck about the neighbors! Who is this asshole?

A big guy appears besides Maggie. He is intimidating and infuriatingly calm.

MAGGIE'S BOYFRIEND

Leave now, pal... Maggie, go call the cops.

Before Sean can respond, he SLAMS the door. Sean stares impotently at the closed door... then over at the window of the kids room. He drops his head in his hands.

SEAN

Fuck!

Sean reaches into the mailbox and pulls out the envelope of money. He stares back at the house for a moment... takes out a \$20 bill.

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*
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90 OMITTED

91 OMITTED

92

EXT. BREE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Ben parks across the street from Bree's building. He spots her place, two stories up. Lights on. He checks himself in the mirror. Grabs the rose and gets out.

He rolls over the fence, landing in the backyard. He throws coins at Bree's window, but the angle is bad. He keeps trying. Keeps missing. The coins fall into a dumpster.

Somebody comes out the back door with a garbage bag. Ben ducks into some bushes. We hear trash being thrown into the dumpster. The somebody re-enters the building.

He sees lattice work with thick vines growing up to the roof. He tests its strength. Bites the rose and begins to climb.

93 EXT. BREE'S APARTMENT BLDG. ROOF - NIGHT

Ben reaches the top. Breathing heavily. Hoists himself up. Lays there a moment, looking at the stars. Still high.

JASPER (V.O.)

You are going to be a big, bright,
mother fucking star, you know that?

Rose in his teeth, he scoots on his butt along the steeply-pitched roof to the edge above Bree's apartment. Gauges the distance. Grips the drain and goes for it.

He collapses on the balcony with a THUD. Holds still... nobody's seen him. He wraith-floats across to the balcony door. Finds it unlocked and slides into the apartment.

94 INT. BREE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ben tiptoes down the hallway. All is dark except for a dim light from a room at the end. He comes to the door and peers in. Can't see much. Pushes open the door and steps inside.

95 INT. BREE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bree is in bed, asleep. Rose between his teeth, Ben slinks into the room, edges towards her. Gazes down at her lovingly. ... Reaches out to gently touch her arm. She bolts awake.

BREE

Oh my God!

Ben pulls the rose from his mouth. Puts his hands up - an adorable shrug. Still flying high.

BEN

You look beautiful, Bree.

BREE

What are you doing here?

BEN

I brought you this.

He proudly holds out the rose. It's slightly bent from its journey. He tries to fix it. She wraps bedclothes around her.

BREE

How did you get in?

BEN

Through the power of love.

He smiles his most charming smile.

BREE

I'm sorry I didn't show up for coffee. I have to get up at 5.30.

BEN

I wanted to see you.

BREE

Jesus! You can't just break into my apartment.

He sits on the end of the bed. She backs away. Eyes her phone on her bedside table, on the other side.

BEN

I love you. Haven't you ever felt that way? Like you want to be a better person because of that other person? You make me want to do stupid things like drive you to auditions and buy you ice cream.

He reaches out to touch her hair. She freezes.

BREE

(trembling)

You're scaring me. If you loved me, you wouldn't break into my place.

BEN

Romeo did.

BREE

What?

BEN

Romeo. He broke into Juliet's place. Never mind. I just want to be with you. I want to be the best actor I can be, and you make me a better actor and a better person when I'm around you.

He leans close. She edges to the other side of the bed.

BEN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry your stupid agent didn't like me, but I know I'm good.

(MORE)

BEN (CONT'D)

I'm like Sean Penn. That's what you said, right?

She backs up against the headboard. Hugs her knees.

BREE

(firm)

Ben. You have to go.

Ben balls fistfuls of sheets.

BEN

What, you don't think I'm good now?

Silent tears fall down Bree's face.

BEN (CONT'D)

This manager said I'm going to be a big mother fucking star. I know it was because he wanted to kiss me, but still, everyone can see I'm going to be great!

He grasps her by the shoulders. She tries to push him away, but he grabs onto any part of her he can - her legs, her arms. Tries to look her in the eye. She's trying to get away.

BEN (CONT'D)

Everyone can see it. Can't you?

BREE

Get. Out.

She reaches across the bed for the phone. Knocks it off the hook. Ben takes her hand. Clutches it to his chest. Reaches out to touch her face, but she swats him away.

She SCREAMS loud enough to wake the whole building. Ben is shocked. He backs off. Suddenly Bree's ROOMMATE, frizzy-haired and athletic, bursts in, armed with a bat.

ROOMMATE

You better get the fuck out of here. I just called the cops.

BEN

The cops? What are you...?

ROOMMATE

Get out before I beat you death.

BEN

You're not scared are you, Bree?

BREE

You better go.

BEN

You don't want to kiss me anymore?

ROOMMATE

No, she don't want to kiss you. Go!

Ben slides off the bed. Bree doesn't look at him.

BREE

Go. Please!

ROOMMATE

You broke the rules, motherfucker.
Get the fuck out of here. Now.

BEN

Don't you know who I'm going to be?

ROOMMATE

I don't give a fuck if you're JF
Fuckin K. If you don't get out,
I'll tell the cops to shoot you.

She lunges towards him, swinging the bat. He backs away, sending a lamp SMASHING to the floor.

ROOMMATE (CONT'D)

You okay, Bree?

Bree is curled in a ball, in tears. Ben reaches the door. Looks back. The roommate stands at the foot of the bed, heaving with adrenaline, holding up the bat defensively.

BEN

Come on, Bree. This went all wrong.
It isn't how it was supposed to be.

He starts to move forward again. The roommate steps towards him. Swings the bat, barely missing him as he scrambles back.

ROOMMATE

Get out, you moron!

Ben turns at the door. Bree sits up and glares at him.

BREE

You're a fucking psycho.

The roommate SLAMS the door in his face.

EPISODE NINE: DIRECTOR: ABI CORBIN

96 OMITTED

97 OMITTED

98 OMITTED

100 INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - DAWN

The phone RINGS. Ben ignores it. Boxes are strewn around the room - evidence that he has been packing. He is stacking his precious acting books into boxes. The phone keeps RINGING. He ignores it - taking a Jake Lamont poster off the wall - until the answering machine BEEPS. An angry voice:

MAGGIE (ON PHONE)

Brent! Whatever the hell your name is. This is Maggie, Sean's ex. He's asleep on my front lawn. Looks like he spent the night out there. If he's still here in twenty minutes, when the kids get up, I swear to God I'm calling the cops!

She hangs up. Ben looks around the room. Swears.

101 EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Ben rolls up in his car. Sean is passed out face down on the lawn. Ben runs over to him. There's an empty whisky bottle beside Sean on the grass.

BEN
Get up, Sean!

Sean moans. Ben shakes him. Tries to pick him up. Maggie opens the front door. Makes eye contact with Ben.

BEN (CONT'D)
Let's go, buddy.

SEAN
Wait! My kids are almost up.

BEN
Exactly. We're getting out of here.

Maggie goes wordlessly to the faucet where a water hose is attached. Ben sees it. Drags on Sean with renewed urgency.

BEN (CONT'D)
Let's go! Now!

Sean spots Maggie.

SEAN
Maggie! Let me see them. Please! I gave you money!

Her response is to turn on the hose. Water starts spraying out as Ben finally gets Sean moving. Sean shouts drunkenly.

SEAN (CONT'D)
You said when I gave you money I could see the kids.

MAGGIE
Get him out of here!!

She yells. They stagger to the car, getting soaked as they go. Ben tries to get Sean in the passenger seat. Sean resists. He SHOUTS, louder now.

SEAN
You fucking promised, Maggie! I sucked dick for that money!

He keeps shouting incoherently.

SEAN (CONT'D)

You hear me? I sucked dick!
Retarded Mexican dick!

Disgusted, Maggie turns into the house. SLAMS the door. Ben manages to get Sean in the seat and shut his door. As he crosses to the driver's side, he notices two curious little faces in their bedroom window.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Maggie! Please!

Ben starts up the car. Spurts of water dot the window.

BEN

Jesus Christ, dude.

Sean spots the kids... his head slumps against the window.

102 INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

They both walk in. Sean massages his temples to ease the throbbing. Then he notices the packed boxes.

SEAN

You're leaving? Just like that.

BEN

Just like that.

He continues throwing books into boxes. Sean weaves his way to the fridge. Grabs a coke. As he pops the can:

SEAN

You're going to fucking leave?

BEN

Rent's paid till the end of the month. I figure you'll manage.

Sean downs the coke. He's sad, more than angry.

SEAN

Because Bree dumped you? You're being a pussy.

Ben swings on him in fury.

BEN

Who the fuck are you to be calling me names? You're a deadbeat drunk. You still haven't paid any rent. And you suck dick for cash?!

He glares at Sean, who shrugs it off.

SEAN

Whatever. I'm going to class.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Jake Lamont's coming in today.
Don't know what the hell else to
do. I blew off work last night.
I'll probably be fired.

He grabs another coke. Heads to the door.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Don't worry, I'll walk. It'll sober
me up.

He pauses at the door. Watches Ben for a moment. Ben ignores
him, carrying on with the packing. Then glances up.

SEAN (CONT'D)

I guess I'll see you if I see you.
Thanks for being a pal today.

He leaves. Ben looks at the closed door a moment. Goes back
to the books. The first one he picks up is 'The Cherry
Orchard'. He flips the marked-up pages.

He puts the book in the box. Steps on something - one of the
headshots Sean took. Walks to the window. Stares out at LA.

JAKE (V.O.)

There isn't much to know about
acting. Get skilled. Work hard.

103 INT. VALLEY PLAYHOUSE - THEATER - DAY

Jake is on stage, giving a talk to the crowded playhouse.

JAKE

Be simple. Go with your instincts
and be as natural as possible. Let
the material shape you, let the
imaginary circumstances shape you.
Let the character arise naturally
from everything around you.

His audience is riveted. Smithson in the front, as usual.
Sean sits near the back.

JAKE (CONT'D)

When you understand this, it will
be hard to tell where acting ends
and life begins. Except that in
life they don't say action and cut.

Sean turns at the sound of the DOOR opening. Ben enters and finds standing room on the side. He makes eye-contact with Sean and nods.

JAKE (CONT'D)

If you're an actor, make some money if you can. Enjoy while it lasts.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I was no different than any of you when I started. My family didn't want me to do it - anything but acting, right? I thought I had talent, but didn't really know. I knew it was what I wanted and had to give it a try. That or kill myself.

He smiles, pauses. Sean puts his hand up. Jake nods to him.

SEAN

Was there ever a moment where you just wanted to quit?

JAKE

Of course. Almost every day. Here's some advice... try extending your imagination into the future and seeing what you're doing it for - fame, recognition, happiness, money, sex. You will realize that there is nothing as meaningful as the process itself.

Sean listens attentively. Ben scans the audience, looking for Bree - spots her in the front row, near Smithson.

JAKE (CONT'D)

It's the living that is primary. The art of living. Your life is your finest performance.

APPLAUSE as he finishes.

104 EXT. VALLEY PLAYHOUSE - DAY

Jake's car parked by the curb. A CROWD hovers nearby. Ben and Sean stand off to the side. Sean smokes and drinks a coke.

SEAN

What changed your mind?

Jake exits the building with Bree and Smithson. Smiles as people approach, shaking hands, posing for photos.

BEN

Unfinished business.

He is seriously shaken, but hiding it, as he watches Bree, smiling coyly, clinging to Jake's side.

SEAN

Look at 'em. Must be nice.

BEN

When did they start a thing?

SEAN

No idea. She'll probably break his balls too.

BEN

Sometimes I wonder if guys like Jake Lamont are really just full of shit. I mean, take away all the fame and bullshit and what's left?

SEAN

Just some guy trying to get laid.

Ben watches with burning jealousy. Jake and Bree reach the car. Jake signs a few autographs. Opens the door for Bree.

Bree is about to get in when she spots Ben. She reacts as if to an electric shock. She says something to Jake. He listens intently, staring right at Ben.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Is he looking at us?

Jake heads directly towards Ben and Sean. Ben is a little nervous, but Jake disarms him with his movie star smile.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Hey, Jake. I want to thank you. That's just what I needed to hear.

Jake nods but keeps staring at Ben. Seems to search his face. Ben is both wary and star-struck. Sean watches, puzzled.

JAKE

Hey, I'm moving out of my place this week-end. Why don't you come by, meet some of my friends? Friday night? Smithsonian will give you the address. Peace.

He nods and turns back to the car.

SEAN

What the fuck was that about?

Ben shakes his head. Says nothing. They watch Jake get in the car and drive off.

106 INT. SONNY'S HOUSE - DAY

Sean and Sonny sit together on the bed. A movie plays low-volume on the television.

SONNY

You're lucky. You come knocking on my door drunk in the middle of the night, I'll kick your fucking ass. What's your first priority.

SEAN

Sobriety. I know.

SONNY

First priority means before work. Before acting. Before sex. Before your children. Before everything.

SEAN

I get it. I'm sorry.

SONNY

Why you gotta be an idiot all the time? Don't be a fucking idiot.

SEAN

I'm trying.

SONNY

I had another sponsee your age. He wanted to be an actor. They all wanna be actors. He got booked on a soap opera and stopped coming to the meetings because he was so busy. Then Mister hotshit hotshot started going out and getting high. And then you know what he did?

SEAN

No.

SONNY

He took some acid and jumped out of a pickup truck because he thought he could fly. Knocked every tooth out of his fucking face. No more soap. No more hotshit hotshot.

SEAN

Was that in the 60s?

SONNY

Funny. You a hotshit too?

SEAN

No.

SONNY

Sobriety is your first priority. You hear me? First priority!

The phone RINGS. Sonny lowers the volume on the TV. Picks up.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Yeah? Fuck me!... How ya doing, Jake, you mother fucker?

Sean is watching the movie, paying no attention to the call.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Nah, I don't do that sort of shit no more. Didn't you hear? I'm an old man. A fucking old man.

Sean LAUGHS. Sonny listens for a while.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Jesus! That's fucked up... The Playhouse? That's funny, 'cuz I'm actually in the room... Hold on.

(turns to Sean)

Hey, young buck, this is Jake Lamont. You know a guy in your acting class named Ben?

SEAN

Ben? Yeah, he's my roommate. Why?

SONNY

(to the phone)

Just a second, Jake.

(to Sean)

Do you know if Ben's going to Jake's party Friday night?

SEAN

What? I don't know. He's being weird. Why does he want to know?

SONNY

Wants to meet him. Heard he's a good actor or something.

SEAN

No shit?

SONNY

Anyways, can you make sure he goes to the party?

SEAN

I can try, I guess.

Sonny returns to the phone.

SONNY

Alright, I'll do it. But I want something besides the money.

Sean is now riveted to the conversation.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Listen, I've got the best goddamn script you'll ever read. And you'd be great in it. It's like the fucking Godfather, only better.

(listens for a beat)

Trust me, you'll love it. And it's goddamn real too. It's my life.

Sean is enjoying the heavy sales job.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Okay, it's not all real. I mean, I didn't actually take down all those cops with my bare hands. But when I slapped the shit outta that Peking duck motherfucker my daughter was dating and made him chew dog shit on our front lawn, that was real.

(listens a few moments)

You want me to do this thing or not?... Okay. You got yourself a deal... yeah, see ya.

He hangs up. Sean stares at him.

SEAN

So you really do know Jake?

SONNY

I did his security back in the day too. Can you get your pal to this party or not?

SEAN

I don't think I'm invited.

SONNY

Sure you are. I'm inviting you.

He picks a screenplay from a pile. Hands it to Sean.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Do yourself a favor, young buck.
Read this.

A106 INT/EXT. BEN'S CAR - NIGHT

Ben drives through an expensive neighborhood. Sean is in the passenger seat. They are dressed for the party. Ben is hyper.

BEN

You want to be famous, Sean?

SEAN

I guess. I'd like to do a performance so memorable that nobody will ever forget it.

BEN

I say fuck fame, fuck money, fuck being cool. All that bullshit. Fuck movie stars, guys like Lamont. When I was back in my little shithole in Deadwood,, I was happy, you know. I read a play every day. I had a dream. I want to be a real actor. like Pacino. DeNiro. Real actors.

SEAN

Stick with it, man. Things could be a lot worse, believe me.

EPISODE TEN: DIRECTOR: MELANIE AITKENHEAD

107 EXT. JAKE'S MANSION - NIGHT

Ben pulls the beat-up Olds up to the valet stand. Benzes, Bimmers and Porsches. The valet opens Ben's door.

TREY

Hey, anyone ever tell you look like Sean Penn?

BEN

Yeah, I get that a lot.

TREY

You an actor?

BEN

Yeah.

TREY

Me too. Name's Trey.

They shake hands. Ben hands Trey his keys.

TREY (CONT'D)

You should try this gig, man. Great networking. A shitload of agents and producers, not to mention the babes.

BEN

Sounds cool, man.

TREY

Solid good money too. I'm saving up to make my own movie. Like 'Boogie Nights'. It's about this valet with an enormous dick.

He laughs. Gets in the car. Ben and Sean head off, in awe at the impressive Bel Air home. A CROWD parties on the lawn.

SEAN

It's kinda weird, but Jake really wanted you to come. Sure there isn't something you're not telling me?

BEN

Bree probably just told him I'm good.

BEN (CONT'D)

Look, I just gotta say something to
her... she's got me all wrong. Then
I'm outa here.

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108 INT/EXT. JAKE'S MANSION - NIGHT

The place is packed. Ben and Sean make their way through the
party, taking it all in. Beautiful people everywhere -
mingling, drinking, flaunting their bodies.

Somebody's POV - watching them... They go out onto the pool
patio. Camera follows... Ben freezes.

*
*

SEAN

Dude, you coming?

*
*
*

Ben looks like he's seen a ghost. Sean follows his line of sight... Bree. She's making out with Jake in the pool.

BEN

Fuck!

He takes a moment, then disappears back into the house. The camera follows him.

SEAN

Already? Wasn't even two minutes.

Sean turns to the pool in time to catch Bree SLAP Jake across the face. She pulls herself out of the pool. Jake tries to pull her back in, but she wrestles herself away.

JAKE

Baby, where you going?! Bree!

Bree runs by Sean without acknowledging him. Seeing Jake is now alone in the pool, Sean approaches. This is his chance.

109 INT. JAKE'S MANSION - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The camera tracks Ben as he scurries into a bathroom.

110 INT. JAKE'S MANSION - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ben takes deep breaths as he looks in the mirror.

BEN

Grow some fucking balls, you piece of shit.

111 EXT. JAKE'S MANSION - POOL - NIGHT

Jake looks up as Sean walks to the edge of the pool.

SEAN

Hey! I want to thank you again for what you said in class the other day. Meant a lot to me.

JAKE

Sure.

SEAN

Great party.

JAKE

Yeah? Fucking bitches, man.

SEAN
You mean Bree?

JAKE
You know her?

SEAN
We're in Smithson's class together.

JAKE
Right. I remember you, I think.
What's your name?

SEAN
Sean. Can I ask you a question?

JAKE
Get in, Sean.

SEAN
I didn't bring a bathing suit.

JAKE
You wanna talk, get in the fucking
pool, man.

SEAN
Fuck it.

He lowers himself into the pool with his clothes still on.
Jake is obviously high.

JAKE
Feels good, doesn't it? Here I am
and there you are.

SEAN
Yeah.

JAKE
So what was your question?

SEAN
Why did you start acting?

JAKE
Why the fuck did you start acting?

He studies Sean's face. Sean debates how to respond...

SEAN
I've always been an actor, I just
haven't made a dime doing it.
(MORE)

SEAN (CONT'D)

I couldn't quit drinking and using heroin.

JAKE

You wanna know the secret? See all this shit? The party. The money. The girls. It's all fake.

Sean looks around. Jake is high, on a roll.

JAKE (CONT'D)

We're in the business of deception. We act, pretend, put on a show, to make people think that real life has a happy ending. That in the end the hero wins, the bad guy goes to jail, the nice guy gets the girl. That there's meaning to it all. But there isn't. None of it's real.

Sean doesn't know how to respond. Jake suddenly hops out of the pool, his energy boundless. Extends a hand to Sean.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Let's go.

SEAN

Where?

JAKE

Heaven, my friend. Heaven.

Sean hesitantly takes Jake's hand. Climbs out.

SEAN

Fuck, man, I just got in.

Three YOUNG WOMEN in bathing suits swarm Jake as they skirt the pool towards the pool house. Sean could get used to this. Jake ushers Sean inside, keeping the girls out.

JAKE

Excuse us, ladies.
(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

112 INT. JAKE'S MANSION - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ben turns from the mirror. More deep calming breaths. Unlocks the door... as it starts to open, it is suddenly SLAMMED back against the wall. Ben steps back in shock.

SONNY

Where's the fucking pisser?

Sonny stands in the doorway. A backpack in his hand. He puts it on the bathroom counter.

BEN

Hey man, it's all yours.

SONNY

Nah, I don't have to go. I was just wondering how the other half lives. I was worried that this bougie fuck doesn't even shit.

Ben LAUGHS nervously.

BEN

Actually I think he's full of shit.

Sonny moves to one of two gleaming sinks and washes his hands. He gives Ben a pointed look. Ben stands awkwardly.

SONNY

You don't like the party? Lot of beautiful babies. Christ on the cross, the asses on these girls. If I wasn't a crusty old man, you know what I'd do?

BEN

They're hot, sure.

SONNY

What's your name, kid? Stick with me. I can tell which girls put out.

BEN

I'm Ben. What's yours?

SONNY

Probably doesn't matter. Half of them won't remember anything tomorrow anyway. Coked out and all.

BEN

Probably not.

Sonny turns to face Ben. Suddenly intense.

SONNY

Yeah? You'd fuck them anyway? Whether they like it or not? Why not, right?

Ben backs up, running into the wall. Sonny locks the door.

BEN

That's not what I meant.

113 INT. JAKE'S MANSION - POOL HOUSE - NIGHT

Jake leads Sean in. They're both still dripping wet. A pile of towels, easy chairs, a couch and TV. Jake locks the door.

JAKE

We should be good in here.

SEAN

What was wrong with out there? I'm soaking wet, man

Jake grabs a towel and a T-shirt. Tosses them to Sean. Opens a closet. Pulls out a wooden box. Lifts the lid - to reveal a heroin kit.

JAKE

You want to be an actor, Johnny?

(Sean nods)

Then don't act. Be. I like you, Johnny. You got truth in you. I can see you're fucking real, man. Real men like to party.

Sean watches silently as Jake prepares a needle.

JAKE (CONT'D)

When you get to where I'm at, no one's fucking real anymore.

He injects himself in the foot.

114 INT. JAKE'S MANSION - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ben stares as Sonny moves to his backpack. Sonny's eyes are shining, his mouth a flat, hard line.

SONNY

What, you're not a fucking home invader anymore? You don't fucking attack women in their own bedrooms anymore? You're some kind of choir boy? You know what happens to choir boys, you fucking cocksucker?

He pulls a short metal pipe out of his bag.

BEN

Whoa, what? What the fuck, man!

SONNY

They get the pipe, one way or another.

In one swift and practiced movement, before Ben can react, Sonny CLOCKS the side of Ben's head with the pipe, hitting him right in the ear. Ben goes down immediately with a CRY.

115 INT. JAKE'S MANSION - POOL HOUSE - NIGHT

Jake flaunts the needle in Sean's face.

JAKE

Guys like me and you, we gotta stick together. C'mon.

Sean reaches out. His hand shakes as he takes the heroin kit.

116 INT. JAKE'S MANSION - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Sonny delivers carefully timed blows, hitting a different body part each time. Ben tries to flee. Sonny hits hard enough to break, bruise, bloody, but not kill.

SONNY

Does forcing them get you hard?

Ben's nose breaks with a CRACK. First blood is drawn.

BEN

Aaargh! Help me!

117 INT. JAKE'S MANSION - POOL HOUSE - NIGHT

Sean holds the rig, looking at Jake.

JAKE

Join me, Johnny boy. It's all about feeling alive. That's the secret.

118 INT. JAKE'S MANSION - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Sonny strikes Ben's knee. A wet gurgling MOAN from Ben.

SONNY

I'm here to give you a message. Out of retirement, for you, shitdick.

119 INT. JAKE'S MANSION - POOL HOUSE - NIGHT

A tear slips from Sean's eye. He puts the needle down.

SEAN

I already know what's real. And this ain't it. I've lost everything real I ever had. I've gotta do something different.

JAKE

What the fuck are you talking about?

Sean puts the rig down. Gets up to leave.

SEAN

Thanks for the talk.
He closes the door behind him.

120 INT. JAKE'S MANSION - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ben tries to crawl away. Nowhere to go. A blow to his back. He collapses into the blood of his own nosebleed. WHIMPERS.

SONNY

You're not even fucking worth it.
Your mug wasn't pretty enough in
the first place.

Sonny's own breathing slows down. He turns away. Casually starts cleaning the pipe in the sink. Washing off the blood.

SONNY (CONT'D)

You're done in this town, you
pervert sicko.

121 INT. JAKE'S MANSION - HALLWAY/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Still in wet clothes, Sean passes by Bree in the corridor.

BREE

Hey, Sean! Have you seen Jake?

SEAN

Yeah, he's shooting up in the pool
house.

She reacts in shock. Runs off. Sean heads to the bathroom. KNOCKS on the closed door.

SONNY (O.C.)

Get lost! I'm busy in here!

SEAN

Sonny?! That you?

Sonny opens the door a crack.

SEAN (CONT'D)

What the hell are you doing here?

SONNY
Business. Can we talk later?

SEAN
Uh, yeah.

SONNY
You're staying sober, right?

SEAN
Yeah, Sonny. I am.

SONNY
Good boy. I'm proud of you.

Sean turns to leave... when he hears another voice.

BEN (O.C.)
H- Help.

Sean turns back. We hear a THUD from behind the door.

SONNY
Get out of here, young buck.

Another MOAN. Sean suddenly slams the door open... to reveal Ben curled up on the floor by the toilet. Blood everywhere.

SEAN
Ben!? What did you do, Sonny?

SONNY
You mean what did he do. I gave him what was coming to him. Your roommate's a fucking rapist.

Sean pushes Sonny out of the way. Leans over Ben. Sonny grabs his bag. Calmly walks out.

122 INT. JAKE'S MANSION - POOL HOUSE - NIGHT

Bree runs in. Jake is hunched by the wall, legs spread like a child. Skin grey. Eyes half-open. Hands folded over his chest. A needle sticks out of his arm. He smiles innocently.

JAKE
Bree...

All of a sudden, he starts convulsing.

BREE

Jake? Jake!!

(She rushes to him)

Help! Somebody help!

123 INT. JAKE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Bree's SCREAMS draw the attention of party GUESTS. From the bathroom doorway, Sean watches them move away. The coast is clear. With Ben, horribly bloodied-up, draped over his shoulder, he staggers down the corridor.

EPISODE ELEVEN: DIRECTOR: JUEL TAYLOR

124 INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - DAY.

Ben lies face-down on his mattress, melted ice-pack squashed under his face. Sean looms over him.

SEAN

You still with the living, brother?

Ben mutters something inaudible.

SEAN (CONT'D)

That's my boy. No giving up. It's not spiritual. I got a date. Okay if I take your car?

Ben groans agreement. Sean grabs the car keys. Turns at the door.

SEAN (CONT'D)

I left you a burger. And I put some rent money on top of the TV.

He leaves. After a moment, The phone RINGS. Ben GROANS. Pushes himself off the bed. Slowly staggers to the phone.

BEN

What?

TRACY(ON PHONE)
Good morning, Ben! This is Tracy,
Sabrina Leon's assistant.

Ben fights the pain, struggling to make sense of the words.

BEN
Who?

TRACY(ON PHONE)
Listen, there's an audition that
calls for guys with your look.
Someone with a baby face, it says
here. Sabrina feels that...

Ben holds the phone away from his head. Tracy continues to
talk. Ben catches a glimpse of his own reflection - bruises
in various hideous colors around his eyes, mouth, and nose.

BEN
My look? Ha.

Even the LAUGH hurts. He's about to put the receiver down...

BEN (CONT'D)
Hey, Teri?

TRACY (ON PHONE)
Tracy.

BEN
Could you do me a favor? Give Bree
a message next time you see her?

TRACY(ON PHONE)
Why don't you tell her yourself?

BEN
She doesn't want to see me. Tell
her I'm sorry. For everything. And
I won't bother her any more. I only
wish her the best. And emphasize
the part about not bothering her.

TRACY (ON PHONE)
What about the audition? Sabrina...

BEN
Just give Bree the message please.

This time he does hang up. He grimaces with pain.

!25 - OMITTED

126 EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Sean pulls up at the curb across the street from his ex-wife's house. Turns off the engine. Says nothing.

KAREN

Where are we? What's going on?

SEAN

There's something I have to tell you.

He glances timidly at her, unable to maintain eye contact.

KAREN

Where's your accent?

SEAN

That wasn't my real accent. I'm not from Brooklyn. I'm from here.

KAREN

Yeah, it was a little off.

SEAN

There's more.

KAREN

Oh my God, you're married.

SEAN

What? No.

KAREN

Then what?

SEAN

This is my ex-wife's house. We have two kids, who she won't let me see anymore.

KAREN

Why not?

SEAN

Well... I'm in recovery. I'm an addict. I shot up heroin everyday for years and basically screwed up everything I've ever wanted or had, my family, my kids, everything.

(MORE)

SEAN (CONT'D)

But I'm sober now and I was just doing accents when you came through the drive-thru and I thought that's who you liked because why would you like some ex-junkie who works the night shift, right? But that's not me and I'm just in this spot right now and I'm sorry I lied to you.

Karen just looks at him. Doesn't respond.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Okay, I can't say anything more. That's the most words I've said in a row. Ever.

She lets it all sink in.

SEAN (CONT'D)

I'd really, really love it if you would say something here, Karen.

KAREN

You're clean now?

SEAN

I am. Three months.

KAREN

And divorced?

SEAN

Almost a year.

Her eyes shimmer with the hint of tears.

KAREN

I'm two years sober. Thank you for being honest, Sean.

They share a smile. He looks at the house. Gets a glimpse of one of the kids through the window.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Can we just get out of here now?

SEAN

Sure. Just let me do something real quick. I'll be right back.

He takes a piece of paper from his pocket. Then his wallet. Folds the paper around two twenty dollar bills. She watches.

He gets out of the car and walks briskly to the mailbox. Puts the money inside. Hustles back into the car. He glances over at her. She looks right back, openly assessing him.

SEAN (CONT'D)

For Halloween costumes.

He starts up the car. They drive away.

127

INT. VALLEY PLAYHOUSE - THEATER - DAY

Two chairs sit side by side on the stage. Ben sits in one, focused and silent. Sean stands in front of the other and addresses Smithson and the class.

SEAN

We have a scene from a script by a friend of mine. Well, ex-friend. Turns out he's a pretty bad guy. Anyways... Long story. Here we go... Oh, we're in a car.

He mimes opening a car door and climbing in. Ben mimes driving for a while. His face is much improved, but still badly bruised. The scar on his cheek could be permanent.

BEN/DRIVER

I picked you up because I wanted some company. You're not fulfilling your role, ya know what I'm saying.

His voice and body language are uncannily similar to Sonny's. He seems to have aged forty years.

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

Oh.

BEN/DRIVER

'Oh'?

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

I thought you picked me up because
my car was broken down in the
middle of nowhere.

BEN/DRIVER

Least you could do is talk a bit.

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

Crazy weather, huh?

BEN/DRIVER

Jesus. Where are you from?

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

Back there.

BEN/DRIVER

What? That little town?

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

Yeah.

BEN/DRIVER

They actually breed people there?
You like it?

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

I hate it.

BEN/DRIVER

Didn't make it very far, did you? I
guess you got lucky I came along.

Sean nods. Doesn't reply. They sit in silence.

BEN/DRIVER (CONT'D)

You get much pussy back there?

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

Hunh?

BEN/DRIVER

Pussy. You clip it often?

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

Oh, uh, no.

BEN/DRIVER

No? I love pussy. Actually, no. I love ass. I don't do it in the pussy no more. You ever do it in the ass? With a girl, I mean? You should try that shit.

Sean reacts to something outside the imaginary window.

BEN/DRIVER (CONT'D)

Totally psychological. Not that I'm into power struggles. I just like to know they'll let me in. In that super-private place. The dark hole.

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

You see that accident?

BEN/DRIVER

Yup.

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

Maybe we should stop?

BEN/DRIVER

Pick up another winner like you?

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

Maybe someone's hurt.

Ben is totally disinterested. Keeps driving.

BEN/DRIVER

You don't like anal, huh?

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

No.

BEN/DRIVER

No? I bet you've never done it. At least with a girl.

(MORE)

BEN/DRIVER (CONT'D)

Are you gay?

*

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

No.

*

*

BEN/DRIVER

You half a fag?

*

*

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

What?

*

*

BEN/DRIVER

I got no problem with that. If you like putting it in other men's asses, that's okay with me. I got a lot of friends who are half fags.

*

*

*

*

*

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

You should have stopped for those people. Looked like they were in bad shape. Pull over!

BEN/DRIVER

Yeah? If you want to run back there, it's fine with me. I'll slow down to ten miles an hour for ya.

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

(to himself)
Fucking crazy.

BEN/DRIVER

Crazy? You're the one talking to yourself.

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

Who talks about anal sex to a total stranger? I don't wanna hear about it. And you're just leaving those poor people back there! Where are you going that's so important?

BEN/DRIVER

You want to know? To beat on a guy. I gotta punish this fucker for raping this other guy's daughter.

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

What?

BEN/DRIVER

This frat boy fag raped this girl. So I'm gonna go punish him for it.

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

What are you going to do?

BEN/DRIVER

Beat him with a pipe. Till he's out cold. Maybe stick it up his ass.

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

You serious? You sure he raped her?

BEN/DRIVER

If Dad says he raped her, he raped her.

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

That's absurd, anyone can say shit. Where's the proof?

BEN/DRIVER

The money is the proof.

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

That makes no fucking sense.

BEN/DRIVER

You defending this asshole?

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

No! I'm just saying...

BEN/DRIVER

Sounds to me like you're defending a motherfucking rapist. Why? You a motherfucking rapist too?

SEAN/HITCHHIKER

What the fuck? Pull over. I'm finding another ride.

He reaches for the steering wheel. Ben slaps him away.

BEN/DRIVER

Get your fucking hands off!

They struggle. Sean grabs the brake. They keep struggling. Swerving... IMPACT! They crash forward in their seats. Lay still. The audience is impressed. Smithson waits a moment.

SMITHSON

Well... Not sure why you picked that piece? That was some of the worst writing I've ever heard.

Ben is already on his feet. Limping painfully up the steps. Everyone watches him. Smithson shrugs - seen it all before.

SMITHSON (CONT'D)

I was going to say that you were good, Ben. I've never seen you so real and truthful. But...

Ben turns for a moment.

BEN

You know what? I really don't care
what you have to say.

He heads out of the theater.

128 INT. VALLEY PLAYHOUSE - LOBBY - DAY

The bulletin board is covered with news of Jake Lamont's death: 'ACTOR'S LIFE ENDS IN TRAGEDY'. Ben stops and glances at it. Sean comes out of the theater. Walks up to join him.

SEAN

You okay?

BEN

What else did he say?

SEAN

Well, you know...

He gestures 'so-so', then laughs.

SEAN (CONT'D)

You kidding me? You fucking killed it.

BEN

Yeah? You weren't half bad yourself.

Sean nods, smiles, slaps Ben on the back. Ben flinches.

SEAN

Sorry, I forgot... I just don't want to end up like this guy.

He gestures to the billboard cuttings of Jake's death.

BEN

Fuck Lamont. Fuck this place. I'm going to make it on my own.

SEAN

Yeah? I just want to make it through another day.

FADE OUT

ALTERNATE/ADDITIONAL MONOLOGUES:

FOR OPENING OR VOICE-OVER:

JAKE (V.O.)

Imagine your life is a movie. You can be the lead actor and director of your own life. There's a script, but no lines. You have a character, but the character can change. You can change his hair, his clothes, his religion, even his past.

Imagine that an invisible camera follows you everywhere, recording your every move. The audience is invisible too. Let's call them your conscience.

Is the film of your life a comedy or a tragedy? Do you want drama and conflict or just a straight shot to the top? Do you want to be happy? That's not that interesting for other people to watch. Just saying.

Who are you acting for? Are we laughing at you or with you? Who are the villains? Do they get punished? What other characters will appear in your story? Who are the villains? How will it end?

FOR VOICE-OVER OR OTHER SEGMENTS:

The actor's life has provided escape for many, but one cannot live solely in the airy realms of the imagination. That can lead to freewheeling insanity. There is a balance to be struck between life and art, between self-creation and the veridic self.

There is nothing more influential than popular entertainment. It rules the world. Entertainment is an escape, they say.

(MORE)

JAKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But if your life is in
entertainment, is it an escape? Can
you differentiate your life from
your art?

FOR THE PLAYHOUSE SCENE OR OTHER SEGMENTS:

You need to be able to take on all
roles and laugh at all roles. To be
able to mock the role you're
playing while you're playing it.

Be an acting animal. Breathe acting
so that you don't have to think
about it. Let the character be
born. Don't put too much of your
own spin on it. Let it arise
naturally from everything around
you.

Make your characters striving for
something. In need of something.
Good at something. This will make
them interesting. They also need to
love something or they'll be
unlovable.

Basically, if you relax in front of
the camera you'll be good. Don't
worry about consequences. Don't
worry about rejection. Don't take
yourself too seriously. Try to
force your self out of yourself.
Your life is not in your control
anyway.

Only 10% of the Screen Actors Guild
actually support themselves through
acting jobs. That's like barely
able to afford an apartment in
Koreatown. Famous? Maybe like point-
zer-zero percent. I mean there's
half a million actors in LA.