

DANNY GRAVES' MAN CAVE

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VOICE OVER BLACKNESS

DANNY (V.O.)

Okay, I want you to sit back...and
imagine your perfect life.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

-- a wide-eyed YOUNG WOMAN looks straight into camera --

YOUNG WOMAN

I want to quit teaching and go hike
Machu Picchu...
(holds up her pet IGUANA)
...just me and Kyle.

-- an ELDERLY COUPLE smiles warmly at us --

ELDERLY HUSBAND

...a beach house, near our
grandkids...

ELDERLY WIFE

...where they're not so square
about nudity...

-- an ANGRY MIDDLE-AGED BALDING MAN --

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

My perfect life? Enough money to
RUIN every worthless bitch who ever
dumped me.

A desk sign reads: DANIEL GRAVES -- FINANCIAL PLANNING.

In his cramped, windowless office, DANNY GRAVES stares across
the desk. Not entirely sure how to respond. He's 34, weary
and a little baffled at how his life has turned out. But he
hasn't given up. Not yet, anyway.

DANNY

Okay, revenge on the bitches, good
plan. Just gonna throw it out
there 'cause I don't know how long
that list is, you might also want
to consider some sort of financial
stability for yourself.

(flips open a portfolio)

There's this great no-load mutual I
recommend...

But they keep coming -- we watch Danny's pained reaction as
CLIENT AFTER CLIENT offers him their life's ambition --

BUBBLEHEAD BLONDE

-- it's a cosmetics line, silly:
Pretty Doggy Nail Polish --

LEBANESE TERRORIST

-- no, no, is okay. The bombs I
want, very tiny --

TWENTY-SOMETHING DUMBASS

-- one word, bro: Iditarod.

Danny lifts his head off the desk. Actually, that does sound pretty cool.

DANNY

With the sled dogs?

TWENTY-SOMETHING DUMBASS

Bro. Tell me that is not fully balls out. Just you and your mush buddies versus raw, savage nature. Maybe a little Eskimo *nuk-nuk* on the side. Reminds you what it is to be a man, know what I mean?

An uncomfortable pause. Danny clears his throat.

DANNY

Well, I have a home and family, so, you know.

(beat)

That has its own rewards.

INT. METRO TRAIN CAR - EVENING

An assortment of questionable and vaguely threatening characters sway with the train as it heads out of the city. Businessmen bark into cell phones, a homeless guy has built a tent in the corner. A gangster teen, gun clearly visible, gives Danny a gold-toothed grin. He turns away --

-- on his other side, a SWEATY FAT MAN pulls uncooked hot dogs out of the package, crams them in his mouth.

Danny stares out the window, miserable. James Brown's "It's a Man's Man's Man's World" fades up, as the train enters a tunnel, plunging us into BLACKNESS --

SUPER OVER BLACK: DANNY GRAVES' MAN CAVE...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BASEMENT - MORNING

A dark, unfinished basement. Silent, foreboding.

Exposed plumbing, rusted paint cans and assorted junk, a bare bulb on a chain. In one corner, the sloping underside of a staircase, disappearing into the shadows.

James Brown continues as we drift up...through the floor...

LIVING ROOM

...into the early morning stillness of a suburban home. It's estrogen overload in here, the living room done in florals and lace, family photos in heart-shaped frames on the walls. We keep moving, up through the ceiling...

BEDROOM

...a TV flips channels quietly, each station a perfect specimen of IDEALIZED MACHO FANTASY --

-- a LONE COWBOY, rugged against a sparse Western backdrop --
a GILLETTE COMMERCIAL, a hottie caressing the silky smooth
jaw of a stud with waxed, chiseled pecs -- STALLONE AS RAMBO,
biceps rippling as he unloads a flurry of machine gun fire --

And then...there's Danny. Propped against the headboard, he clicks the remote, glum. So not any of that.

-- VICTORIA'S SECRET ANGELS, seductive in lingerie --

He looks over: in a flannel nightgown that screams 3-for-1-at-Costco, his wife ALISON, 32, snorts through her Breathe-Rite nasal strip and mouth-guard. Scratches a stubbly armpit.

A five-year-old FOOT smacks him in the face. Pulling a toe from his mouth, Danny sighs at the lump under the blanket that is his son LUCAS, sleeping half on the bed, half off.

Sliding over, he reaches out a careful hand...and places it on Alison's boob. Without even bothering to open her eyes, she groans out what every guy dreams of hearing...

ALISON

Oh, honey, seriously?

A beat. Guess not. Danny withdraws his hand and rolls back over...putting his cheek down on a BIG WET PEE STAIN --

DANNY

-- oh, shit --

-- he recoils, startling his son, who kicks Danny in the face again -- Danny yells, Lucas starts to cry -- in an instant Alison's out of bed, wide awake.

ALISON

Lucas is in here? You were feeling me up while your son was in bed with us? Are you perverted?

DANNY

I was...being spontaneous.

ALISON

Try jazz. It won't scar our child.

She flips on the light and carries Lucas into the bathroom.

DANNY

(calls after her)

As much.

Danny sits there in the sudden brightness, blinking. The ALARM clicks on with a shrill beep. Good morning.

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - MORNING

Danny lugs the dirty sheets out of the bedroom...

...past a jumbo box of maxi-pads outside the bathroom...
crunching on the crayons cluttering the stairs...a dry-erase board with a lengthy "HONEY-DO LIST" in green marker...

...he pauses at a FAMILY PHOTO on the wall, a posed "Western" shot: Danny, looking idiotic and miserable in chaps and a ten-gallon hat, Alison beaming in her hoop dress, Lucas captured mid-wail. He hates this picture.

LIVING ROOM

Sesame Street plays to an empty room. Buttoning a drab work suit, Danny slips in to catch a few minutes of SportsCenter. He flips channels, watches as a batter hits one deep...

...Alison steps right in front of the TV, in a faded bathrobe and severe bed-head, holding a smoking frying pan.

ALISON

He's in the clock again.

Danny sighs, turns off the TV and crosses to the foyer...

...where he approaches a grandfather clock against the wall, pulls it open -- Lucas is scrunched inside, chewing anxiously on a pair of RAINBOW-COLORED GLOVES. Danny crouches down.

DANNY

Hey buddy. Boogeyman come back?

(Lucas nods)

You ready to come out of there?

After a beat, Lucas nods tentatively. Danny reaches out, and Lucas crawls into his arms.

DANNY (CONT'D)

So you know what? I think you might be brave enough to start sleeping in your own room again --

LUCAS

NO.

DANNY

-- okay. It's just that daddy took some fairly serious kicks to the face last night, and...

(Lucas starts to whimper)

It's safe up there, promise.

C'mon, want me to show you?

He starts to carry Lucas upstairs, but the little boy screams bloody murder, flailing -- Danny drops him -- still screaming, Lucas grabs the phone off a side table and HURLS IT THROUGH THE FRONT WINDOW, shattering it. He darts back to the clock, climbs in and starts chewing on his gloves.

Danny stares at his son. Jesus.

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - MORNING

Danny collects broken glass from his front lawn.

He looks around at suburbia -- sterile, depressing. Rows of identical homes, a couple in matching track suits speedwalk past a church on the corner. Two children on leashes drag their mother down the street.

His next-door neighbor NORM, 40s, stands in the front yard in a bathrobe, halfheartedly watering his immaculate lawn.

He looks over at Danny with lifeless eyes.

INT. BASEMENT - MORNING

Danny pulls sheets out of the washing machine, stuffs them in the dryer. He spots a CARDBOARD BOX against the wall. He walks over and pulls it open, peers in: photos, yearbook, a tattered old shirt, concert ticket stubs...his old stuff.

A car horn HONKS. He closes the box and hurries upstairs...

...we linger on the basement for a moment...

INT. STATION WAGON - MORNING

Alison drives, still in her bathrobe, the passenger seat jammed with curtain rods, children's videos, a tray of geraniums. Lucas sits buckled into the back seat. Wedged awkwardly against the door next to him...Danny.

He stares out the window as the suburbs roll by. At the WATER TOWER in the distance, American Flag and message boldly painted onto it: YOU'RE IN BUSH COUNTRY.

ALISON

What do you think about signing
Lucas up for t-ball next weekend?

DANNY

Okay.

They pass a driveway, a family climbing into their minivan.

ALISON

I think it would be really good for
you both. You'd get out of the
house, Lucas can socialize with
some kids his age...it could be one
of those father-son bonding things.

Another driveway -- another family, another minivan.

DANNY

Yeah, fine, I'll take him.

ALISON

What do you think about that?

DANNY

I just said I'd do it.

ALISON

That's not what I asked.

DANNY

You asked me to take him to t-ball.

ALISON

No, I asked what you think about taking him to t-ball.

Seriously? Danny turns to look at her.

DANNY

So when I say "I will take him to t-ball," it's a complete mystery to you what I *think* about the idea? Like, I might secretly hate that idea, but I'm gonna go ahead and do it anyway just to psyche you out?

He goes back to the window. She watches him in the mirror.

ALISON

It doesn't have to be t-ball, did you want to sign him up for soccer or something?

Danny shuts his eyes as they motor on.

EXT. METRO STATION - MORNING

Danny climbs out of the car and heads for the crush of morning commuters. Alison leans out her window.

ALISON

Hey. Have you thought about what you want to do for your birthday?

Danny pauses. Not a topic he's thrilled about.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Thirty-five, it's a big one.

DANNY

I know.

ALISON

Huge.

(really not helping)

Kind of a milestone, actually --

DANNY

-- I'll think about it, okay?

Okay. Alison blows him a kiss and drives off.

INT. TITAN FINANCIAL SERVICES - DAY

A drab, cubicle-filled high-rise office. Danny lingers at reception, keeping one eye on the elevators. He smiles as a SULTRY COWORKER glides by -- she looks right through him.

At last the elevator dings and PHIL STRAND, 50s, emerges. Danny falls in step with his gruff boss.

STRAND

You got two minutes, hit me.

DANNY

Okay, so um, I was wondering if you've given any more thought to kicking me the Bosch account?

STRAND

What's wrong with your clients?

DANNY

Nothing. I mean, there's the total insanity and the one guy with the communicable diseases, but otherwise, nothing. I just think I could...use more of a challenge.

STRAND

You're good with the little guys, Danny. They need someone to look out for them, give 'em that personal touch they deserve. Why would you want to go corporate? It's a cesspool. Those guys'd pimp out their grandma for a commission.

DANNY

I would so do that, except she's got this hip thing now, and...

(Strand eyes him)

Look, it's just, I know Peterson's retiring...I mean, what do I have to do to get considered, dance around like an asshole telling everyone how awesome I am?

He forces a laugh...as a door FLIES OPEN and CARL REEMS, 27, does a victory slide out of his swank glass-walled office.

REEMS

Who just sold Bosch Enterprises on half a dozen gi-mondo securities?

His kiss-ass office POSSE -- JENKINS and CULPEPPER -- pile out of the office behind him.

CULPEPPER
Art of the kill, bitches!

JENKINS
Like watching a Zen master.

REEMS
All aboard the Carl Reems express,
next stop, fat commissions.

He starts to "chug-a-chug" down the hall, as his posse falls in line to soul train it with him.

CULPEPPER
Did you guys get that? Like,
commissions is a literal place?

REEMS
Phil, you steered 'em my way, get
your butt over here.

Danny watches in disbelief as his boss boogies over and joins them, laughing. Around the office, coworkers grin, applaud.

STRAND
One helluva home run, Reems. Can't
think of a more deserving guy.

Strand gives Reems a manly hug-pound and moves off. Reems turns...right into Danny, who stands there glowering.

REEMS
Danny boy, why the long face?
You'll get there, just takes time.

DANNY
I've been here eight years, Carl.

REEMS
Really? Didn't we start at the
same time?

DANNY
I trained you.

REEMS
What? No, you shoulda seen my guy.
(laughs)
Always wore those gay shirts where
the collar's a different color...

They both look down at Danny's shirt...a long silence.

REEMS (CONT'D)

...which you totally pull off, and
in a completely hetero way.

(spins to his posse)

Dim sum's on me today, fellas.

Danny watches as Reems leads them away, kings of the office. They pass that Sultry Coworker -- Reems reaches out to goose her. She blushes and giggles, slaps his hand away, *oh Carl*.

Danny turns back to his tiny office. That wide-eyed young woman waits at his door, her iguana crawling up her arm.

YOUNG WOMAN

Kyle just wanted to say thank you
for our great quarterly dividends.

She holds out the creature. Danny pauses...then puts out his arm, defeated. Kyle clambers on. They stare at each other.

INT. TRAIN CAR - EVENING

Danny takes the train home, trying to watch the ball game on his cell phone -- but the YOUNG LOVERS furiously sucking face in the next seat keep jostling him, her ass slipping off the armrest into Danny's lap. When a HAND slides into Danny's pants, he decides to let them have both seats.

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Danny drags a recycling bin to the curb, drags his trash bin back into the driveway. He pauses, looks around -- *at every house on the block, a husband is doing the exact same thing.*

NORM (O.S.)

Hey Danny.

Danny turns as his neighbor Norm shuts his trash bin. He holds a bowl of disgusting looking JELLO.

NORM (CONT'D)

Sharon made ambrosia, she said to
ask if you wanted some.

His voice is as dead as his expression. Danny shakes his head, no thanks. Norm nods, dumps the ambrosia in the trash, and heads back inside. Danny calls after him.

DANNY

Hey Norm. We made it, right? The American Dream?

Norm stops, turns back to Danny. He looks vaguely suicidal.

NORM

Hell yeah. We're the lucky ones.

The front door bangs open and Norm's wife SHARON stomps out, glass of wine in hand. She gives Danny a tight smile.

SHARON

Guess who got her fucking belly button pierced today?

(turns and screams back at the house)

I CAN TELL YOU ONE THING LITTLE MISS SLUT-FOR-BRAINS, WHEN YOU'RE KNOCKED UP AT SEVENTEEN I AM NOT PRETENDING IT'S MINE! I WILL PARADE YOU AROUND THE MALL AS A CAUTIONARY TALE!

(back to Danny)

Where's your wife?

She marches past Danny without waiting for an answer, up the steps into his house. Norm looks over at Danny.

NORM

Did you know the average male lifespan is 75 years?

(gazes up at the sky)

Some people die early, though.

Norm trudges inside. With a deep sigh, Danny does the same.

In ULTRA HIGH-SPEED, the sun whips across the sky, drops out of sight...

...and pops back into view on the other side. Another day. Looks exactly like the last one.

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - MORNING

Once again, Danny lugs his pee-stained sheets downstairs...

...pots and pans clanging in the kitchen...ELMO'S cheery voice wafting in from the living room like a fork in his fucking eye...

INT. BASEMENT - MORNING

Danny stuffs sheets into the washing machine, turns it on -- it starts up with an alarming shudder, then grinds to a knocking, sputtering halt.

You have got to be kidding. He turns to look for his tools, shoving his box of old crap out of the way in frustration --
-- and suddenly he can hear the ball game.

It's coming from the box. Danny pulls open the flaps. Sure enough, there's a RADIO in there. He lifts it out, listening to the announcer call the game.

He looks around the basement, for the first time noticing how...*quiet* it is down here. He thinks for a moment. Then hops up the steps to the basement door, cracks it open --

-- A CACOPHONY OF TV, LUCAS CRYING, ALISON YELLING FOR HIM --

Danny shuts the door. Silence.

He looks around the basement, a smile spreading across his face...he pulls the door open and runs out...as we drift over to the back of that radio: no batteries...

Cue the music: VINTAGE, ASS-KICKING AEROSMITH...

INT. HOME DEPOT - DAY

Danny pushes a cart through Home Depot, a spring in his step. Shelving, hardware, a cordless drill -- he flips it all into his cart. Maneuvers a MINI-FRIDGE on top.

Workmen eye his haul with envy. Danny grins back. This is gonna be awesome.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Squeezed into a ratty Aerosmith t-shirt at least three sizes too small, Danny rocks out to a boombox on the floor, singing along word-for-word as he lays out home improvement supplies.

Alison watches from the stairs, a smirk on her face.

ALISON

He broke out the Aerosmith, why do
I have a bad feeling about this?

DANNY

Don't hate on the greatest band of all time.

ALISON

Okay, I'll bite. What is this?

Danny slams a battery in his drill like he's loading a clip.

DANNY

You've got a sewing corner, a walk-in closet, and your own bathroom. Even Lucas gets his own room, which he doesn't use, by the way. What's wrong with this picture?

(triumphant)

No place for Danny. So guess what? I call the basement.

ALISON

For what?

DANNY

Whatever I want, that's the point. Get away from it all, do what guys do. All my stuff's already down here anyway.

ALISON

So...it's like a fort?

DANNY

Ha ha ha, no, unless forts have redwood paneling and a kickass home theater. And I found this thing online that shows you how to turn a mini-fridge into a kegerator.

(beat)

It will be no girls allowed though.

Alison steps down into the room, looking around.

ALISON

Ooh, you know what you should do over here --

DANNY

NO. No. This is my space. Mine. From here --

He marks off his territory with arms spread, pushing Alison back onto the stairs.

DANNY (CONT'D)

-- to here.° I get to decide what goes down here, and it's only gonna be guy stuff, and the only food is gonna be beer, and the only conversation is *no conversation*.

ALISON

Are you sure you're okay?

DANNY

I'm better than okay. I have purpose. I'm creating something important for men everywhere.

ALISON

What?

DANNY

(pleased)
Hope.

Alison stares at him for a moment. Then stifles a chuckle.

ALISON

Oh my god, that's so sad.
(heading back up)
Okay. Have fun working on your little man cave.

His *man cave*...yeah. Danny looks around the basement happily, guns his drill...

SERIES OF SHOTS -- DANNY BUILDS HIS MAN CAVE...

-- putting together a stereo shelf...he squints at the directions...then crumples them up, tosses them aside...

-- positioning a La-Z-Boy just so...

-- hanging a NEON BEER, SIGN...he flips it on -- BLINDING...

-- TORCH WELDING his mini-fridge...he pauses, flips up his mask, then notices: he's seared off his own shirt sleeve...

-- repositioning that La-Z-Boy, inch by painstaking inch...

-- MORE STUFF sliced in half by the blowtorch: a garden hose, box of detergent...Danny surveys the damage, oh well...he pops a Bud...beer gurgling out of a melted hole in the can...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Alison sits at the table as Sharon stands in the doorway, a nearly-empty glass of white wine in her hand, listening to the metallic screech of a SKILLSAW from the basement.

SHARON

So he's doing what again?

ALISON

(shrugs)

It's like a place for him to be alone and do activities, or something. Is that weird? I think it might be weird.

SHARON

He needs the whole basement to think up new names for his wiener?

Sharon slugs the rest of her wine, grabs a fresh bottle and uncorks it expertly, reloads.

ALISON

Lately Danny's seemed...I don't know, distracted. I guess he's looking for a place to find himself or something.

Sharon puts her wine down and spins on Alison, dead serious.

SHARON

Kill it. Kill it now.

(off her surprised look)

Sweetie, he's a man. You let him start trying to "find" himself, I guarantee you he will -- in a line of blow off the ass of some tramp at a Motel 6.

ALISON

I don't think that's what Danny --

SHARON

Did you hear about the Laughlins down the street? Real nice couple, always wore the matching sweaters?

(Alison nods)

Divorced. Turns out his "night classes" were actually at one of those Asian massage places where they do you-know-what.

ALISON

Oh my god, he was getting...?

She mimes a tentative handjob. Sharon shakes her head.

SHARON

Giving.

Wow...Alison sips her wine, stunned.

SHARON (CONT'D)

In every man there's a fine line between normal and spinning completely off his axis. It's our job to keep them focused on things they can understand, that's how they stay out of trouble.

ALISON

Not Danny. Sure, he gets stressed out sometimes, but he would never...spin off his axis. His axis is solid.

(beat)

He's a financial planner.

SHARON

If you say so. But do you really know what's going on in his head?

Sharon leans in close, as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Slowly, we circle down on Danny, grimy and soaked with sweat, putting the finishing touches on his man cave.

SHARON (V.O.)

Trust me. The male psyche is a scary, scary place...

Done. He steps back to view...a total disaster.

Shoddy, amateur construction. Splintered wood, a filthy rug underneath a coffee table built a couple of feet too tall. A pathetic little string of jalapeno lights stapled to a beam.

This looks like ass. A crooked shelf swings loose, sending his boombox smashing to the floor. Frustrated, Danny yanks a beer out of the mini-fridge, slams the door shut.

With a pop and a shower of sparks, the fridge blows its circuit, and everything goes black.

A STREAM OF LIGHT filters in as the basement door creaks open. Danny spins, what now --

-- to see Lucas at the top of the stairs, decked out in a t-ball uniform. Oh yeah.

EXT. ATHLETIC FIELDS - DAY

The t-ball field is a circus of 5-year-olds -- running in circles, rolling in the grass, throwing bats in the air and trying to catch them. Parents half-watch from the bleachers.

A COACH, 30s -- coach shorts, coach socks, coach mustache -- tries to maintain some sense of order. He notices something in the parking lot...slowly, everyone follows his gaze...

LUCAS (O.S.)

NO I HATE YOU!

...in the distance, Danny holds Lucas by the ankles, trying to pull him away from his death grip on the chain-link fence.

Finally he pries his fingers free, Lucas going limp in his arms like a wet noodle. Everyone watches as Danny makes the long, humiliating walk through the parking lot, across the outfield...stopping at the Coach, who checks his roster.

COACH

Lucas Graves?

(off Danny's nod)

You here to play some ball?

Lucas shakes his head no. Danny grits his teeth.

DANNY

Yes you are.

(to the coach)

He is, really. He wants to.

He sets him down. Coach gives Lucas a once-over, leans in.

COACH

Is he...you know...special?

(off Danny's stare)

Aw crap, sorry, is he *differently* abled? They told us every team might get one, which I'm totally cool with, I mean he'll get playing time and stuff...

DANNY
No, he's not *special*.

LUCAS
I'm not *special*?

His eyes brim with instant tears. For chrissakes...Danny bends down to his son.

DANNY
No buddy, of course you're *special*.

COACH
So he is then.

DANNY
(clenching everything)
Could you -- just -- where do you want him?

The Coach gives Danny a cool stare.

COACH
How about we let him bat.

DANNY
You're up to bat, Lucas! Yay!

Lucas goes limp again. Forcing a smile for the other parents, who are now murmuring to each other, Danny picks him up and carries him to home plate.

DANNY (CONT'D)
It's crazy, he was so excited about this earlier, like *blaaarrrrgghh...*

He sets Lucas down in the batter's box, picks up the bat and tries to hand it to his son. Only Lucas won't take it.

PARENT IN THE STANDS
Hey, if the kid doesn't want to play, he doesn't have to.

DANNY
He WANTS to play, could you just mind your own business please?
(sotto, to Lucas)
Buddy, people are watching. Can we just have some fun? And show everyone that a call to child services is totally unnecessary? Come on, here we go, ready, one, two, three!

Wrapping his arms around Lucas from behind, Danny holds his son's hands to the bat and swings his arms for him. Together, they hit a dribbler off the tee.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Run!

Startled, Lucas takes off for third. The peewees go into action, banging into each other and kicking the ball all over the infield as they try to throw out the runner.

Lucas arrives at the bag, safe...sort of.

COACH

Out.

DANNY

Out? Come on, he made it to the bag, just call him safe.

COACH

He's on third.

DANNY

Which I believe they call a *triple*. What, this is the Yankees farm team all of a sudden? Give him a break.

Snickers from the bleachers. One PARENT leans to another.

PARENT IN THE STANDS

...great, we got a "sports dad"...

A what? Danny crosses to the backstop, getting agitated.

DANNY

You know, I don't exactly see your pride and joy pulling any Willie Mays shit out here.

ANOTHER PARENT

Did you just say the S word?

VARIOUS KIDS

S-word, shit, S-word means shit...

He's starting to lose it. Coach puts a hand on his shoulder.

COACH

Okay, maybe you need to go take a seat --

Danny throws off his hand. Whoah -- Coach backs off from the crazy person. A few parents cautiously stand.

DANNY

Maybe YOU need to go take a seat!

(points)

You're the one playing the fat kid at shortstop, you call that strategy?

Fat kid? All the parents go eerily silent. Danny looks around...he just crossed the line...then he spots the dad in the stands, VIDEOTAPING IT ALL.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Hey! Hey! What are you taping? This isn't one of those! There's nothing to tape!

But as he's running over, one parent SCREAMS, pointing out at third base --

-- where Lucas stands frozen, clutching a KITCHEN KNIFE. Time stands still for a moment...

Then UTTER CHAOS. Kids running in all directions, hysterical parents rushing the field. Lucas watches everyone stream by with a deer-in-the-headlights stare.

Then he runs to second.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

DANNY

They said maybe he's not ready for t-ball.

Danny paces the bedroom, worked up. Alison rummages through her dresser drawer.

ALISON

What I don't understand is how you missed the knife in the first place.

DANNY

He snuck it in his sock.

ALISON

He planned ahead? That's kinda clever for a five-year-old, I think.

DANNY

You're proud because the felony our son committed today was *premeditated*?

ALISON

I'm trying to make the best of a bad situation. One of us has to.

She pulls out tweezers and a mirror, crosses to the bathroom.

DANNY

Not ready...two of those kids were eating their own boogers, Allie.

ALISON (O.S.)

I told you not to call me that, I don't like it.

DANNY

I mean it's just a phase, right? He's not gonna be like this forever, is he?

ALISON (O.S.)

What if he is? What are you gonna do, trade him in because he's not normal enough for you?

DANNY

No, but does he have to be scared of *everything*? He's gonna get his ass kicked in school.

ALISON (O.S.)

So you want HIM to be the bully.

DANNY

Of course not, I just --

He walks into the bathroom and recoils -- Alison's on the toilet, pants around her ankles, tweezing her pubes. She notices Danny's horrified look.

ALISON

Oh please, you've seen me give birth.

(back to tweezing)

I have an ingrown hair. Would you rather I let it get infected?

As if the image wasn't already bad enough...Danny turns and heads for the door. Alison calls out to the empty room.

ALISON (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

(beat)

Danny?

INT. HOME DEPOT - DAY

Back at the Home Depot, his cart overflowing once more...but there's no spring in his step this time. He's on a mission. Those same workmen give him a thumbs-up -- glowering, Danny shoves his cart right past them.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Danny saws down his coffee table, trying mightily to salvage his crappy man cave. He sets it on the floor to have a look. The legs are all different lengths now. Fuck. He flips it on its side and starts sawing...the leg snaps completely off.

The mini-fridge BLOWS ANOTHER CIRCUIT. The outlet pops and sparks in the darkness, flashing like a STROBE LIGHT...

...in which we can see Danny, throwing a tantrum.

CUT TO:

INT. TITAN FINANCIAL SERVICES - DAY

A GLOWING YOUNG NEWLYWED COUPLE hold hands.

NEWLYWED WIFE

...but all I really want is to have my Ricardo next to me, so we can always be as happy as we are right now.

Awww, sweetie-pookins...they gaze at each other with so much goddamn love it hurts. Across the desk, Danny watches them through lidded eyes...and starts to laugh.

DANNY

You guys are happy, huh? Does it just feel right? That is awesome.

They smile back, blissful. Danny points at the husband.

DANNY (CONT'D)

She still say it's okay if you go out for beers after work?

(to the wife)

(MORE)

DANNY (CONT'D)

It's good for him to have his space, is that what you think? And it's okay if she stays at that nonprofit, right, because love'll pay the rent? It probably will.

The couple's blissful smile is still there, but now they're not so sure about it, as Danny laughs harder...

DANNY (CONT'D)

Oh god, I bet you guys are still having sex. And you believe in...
(losing it completely)
...personal fulfillment...

He pounds the desk, laughing. The couple's not smiling.

DANNY (CONT'D)

But just in case anything changes...just in case, five years from now, you wake up and realize you hate your job and your kids are weird and this little love story you're writing together has turned into a fucking grocery list, can you come back and let me know how it all worked out? You guys'll be all, "hey, future Danny, can you take us back to the day we were in your office, so we can change our minds and *get out alive?*"

A beat. The couple stares at Danny in stunned silence. Then the wife bursts into tears.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Yeah, now you're getting it.

He jots a few notes in their portfolio...so he's not prepared when the husband stands and PUTS HIS FIST into Danny's eye.

INT. TRAIN - EVENING

Danny rides the train home, holding a cup of ice to his eye.

LAUGHTER from a few seats over -- a couple of teenagers clustered around a cell phone, watching a video off YouTube. Wait a second -- Danny cranes over their shoulder:

DANNY'S VOICE

*...I don't exactly see your pride
and joy pulling any Willie Mays
shit out here...*

That's HIM on the video, going berserk on the parents at t-ball. Danny sits back in his seat, faces forward.

Without warning, the Fat Hot Dog Man sitting next to him leans over and PUKES in his ice cup.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Danny works feverishly on his man cave.

The door opens and Alison comes down. Danny keeps working, trying to ignore the invasion of his space.

ALISON

I meant to tell you, the washing machine's been acting funny.

DANNY

Yeah I know, it's broken.

ALISON

Why would it be broken?

Why? He looks up at her.

DANNY

...as in why would God break our washing machine?

ALISON

Did you do something to it?

DANNY

No, I didn't do something to it. Sometimes things break.

ALISON

I'm just saying, it's barely a year old, it seems kind of strange. Doesn't it seem strange to you?

This is getting really annoying, really fast.

DANNY

I don't know. I'll take care of it. Okay?

Alison pauses. Then nods and heads upstairs. Danny turns back to the shelf...

...but only for a moment -- Alison comes right back down.

ALISON
You seem frustrated.

DANNY
(takes a deep breath)
I'm fine.

ALISON
Do you want to talk about
something...?

DANNY
You know what? This is supposed to
be my space. Private.

ALISON
Okay, sorry, you're right. I won't
bother you anymore.

She heads back up. *Finally*...alone at last, he picks up a
shelf, holds it to the wall, starts to drill a screw in --

-- a KNOCK at the basement door -- the wood splinters and the
shelf drops to the floor. Danny slams down his drill, at the
end of his rope, as Alison pokes her head in again.

ALISON (CONT'D)
I'm not bothering you, I just had a
thought...do you think they knew
this would happen?

DANNY
Who?

ALISON
Sears.

A long pause. Then Danny just explodes.

DANNY
You mean, do I think the nice
saleslady with the back brace and
the calculator watch sold us a
defective washing machine on
purpose? No. Why? Because it's
ridiculous. There's no conspiracy,
it's not personal, it's just
BROKEN, like everything else in my
stupid life!

He regrets saying it instantly. Alison stares at him, hurt.
She pulls the door closed. Great. Now he feels guilty. He
kicks the broken shelf across the floor...

...and it vanishes into the darkness under the staircase.

Danny walks over for a closer look. There, under the stairs where the wall is supposed to be, the basement...keeps going?

Danny gets on his hands and knees and crawls forward, the cement floor turning to dirt...

...his knee bumps the shelf. He picks it up, looks around.

He's in the BOTTOM OF A SHAFT. Rungs going up the earthen wall to a STORM GRATE, the moon visible through the slats.

This wasn't here before. Puzzled, Danny starts to climb.

EXT. DANNY'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

...the grate pops open and Danny climbs out, into his backyard. Looks back at the shaft. Weird. He kicks at the grate, embedded in the lawn.

DANNY

Must've been buried or something...

With a shrug, he heads back toward the house...then freezes.

Off in the distance, that water tower still reads "You're in Bush Country." But now, lit up in the floodlights, is an enormous drawing of a hairy female crotch.

He stares at it for a moment.

FRONT YARD

Danny walks out onto the sidewalk in front of his house, looking around. Everything's...*different.*

A HOUSE PARTY blares from across the street, people laughing, playing beer pong, stumbling around a keg in the yard. A few doors down, neighbors kicking back with mojitos in a HOT TUB. That church on the corner is now a bar, THE SALVATION ROOM.

What's going on? Glancing around, Danny walks up the steps to his house and goes inside...

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

...shutting the door behind him and turning -- his jaw drops:

No more lace and florals. Everything's been redone in rich wood tones, stainless steel, leather. Plasma TV on the wall. His house has been masculinized. Danny walks from room to room, unable to believe his eyes. And then --

ALLIE (O.S.)

Hey baby.

Oh my god. Coming down the stairs, dabbing with a towel at her sweat-moistened, spandex-clad, perfectly toned body...

ALLIE (CONT'D)

I wasn't expecting you home so soon. I must look hideous.

...is his wife. Glowing with a sexy smile all for him.

Danny just stares. Allie -- let's call her Allie here -- looks *unbelievable*. Every curve accentuated, her makeup and hair perfect even after her workout.

DANNY

You...I...you're not...

ALLIE

Did you need more money for poker?
Let me get my purse.

Danny instinctively backs away from her as she rummages through her purse and holds out a handful of bills.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

Here's a little extra, in case you and the guys go out after.

DANNY

No, I was -- in the basement --

Allie laughs delightedly, like the tinkling of little bells.

ALLIE

What are you doing in the basement?
Do you need some space? I'll go
down in the basement, you stay up
here, okay? Unless...

(seductive smile)

...you're here for something else.

She slinks towards him. Danny backs away, voice cracking.

DANNY

Like...to clean the gutters?

ALLIE
If that's what you want to call it.

DANNY
I don't think I do.

She inches closer, walks her fingers up his chest. Danny's a little freaked out, not sure what to do here...

DANNY (CONT'D)
What about Lucas?

LUCAS (O.S.)
Move dad!

He double takes as LUCAS AND A PLAYMATE come charging through the living room, having a ball, yelling their heads off.

DANNY
Is that a friend? He has a friend?

ALLIE
Sweetie, are you sure you're okay?
(caresses his forehead)
You need Nurse Allie to take away
the fever?

She drapes her arms around his neck, nowhere for him to go...

DANNY
You hate the name Allie.

ALLIE
I love anything you call me. Dirty
girl, your wife's best friend...
(licks his ear)
...the babysitter...

She presses him against the wall -- knocking a PICTURE FRAME to the ground -- Danny looks down:

THAT FAMILY WESTERN SHOT IS NOW A PICTURE OF DANNY AT THE IDITAROD. A big snow-caked smile from beneath a hooded parka, his team of sled dogs at the ready behind him.

That's it -- losing his cool, he shoves Allie aside and bolts from the room. She calls after him.

ALLIE (CONT'D)
Give me a call when you're on your
way home, I'll put a roast on.

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Heart thumping in his chest, Danny races out to the backyard, looking around wildly -- there's that STORM GRATE -- he dives in, scrambles down the shaft...

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

...emerging back in the basement. What the hell just happened? After a moment, he looks up at the basement door.

Tense, he starts up the stairs. We follow him, one foot after the next, reaching the door and opening it to --

DANNY
YAAAAAAAAAHH!

-- FRUMPY, NORMAL ALISON, FROWNING AT HIM.

ALISON
Oh, that's mature.

Danny pushes past her: familiar lace curtains, that Western photo back on the wall...he runs to the window: the suburbs look as drab as always. He's back -- he spins to Alison.

ALISON (CONT'D)
What is with you?

DANNY
Nothing, you look...I have to...

He turns and hurries out. Alison watches him go, shaking her head, as the GRANDFATHER CLOCK CHIMES --

-- Lucas, chewing on his rainbow gloves, crawls out of the clock and staggers off, a little wobbly.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - DAY

A SHOVEL turns over a spadeful of earth.

Standing in his backyard, Danny consults a set of blueprints. The yard around him is pockmarked with holes...but that storm grate is nowhere to be found.

He brushes dirt off his hands, traces a path from the basement, scans the yard again. Where is it?

Norm peers over the fence.

NORM
You got gophers, huh?

Danny sizes Norm up. With a glance over his shoulder, he hustles up to the fence.

DANNY
Norm. Did you notice anything...unusual yesterday?

NORM
Like gophers?

DANNY
No. Like...just things you don't expect to see around here.

Norm looks extremely uncomfortable all of a sudden.

NORM
Okay, look, I don't know how much you saw, but I'm not really trying to kill myself, I just do that sometimes. Just to see.

Danny stares. Not where he was going with that. At all.

DANNY
...see what?

Norm blinks at him. A beat.

NORM
So, weird things, huh?

DANNY
I don't know. I'm not sure it even happened anymore...
(glances around)
I don't know if I'm going crazy or if it was real or what, but there's this place. In my basement.

NORM
(nodding)
Where you go to cry.

Another beat.

DANNY
You ever think about taking Prozac?

Norm reaches in his pocket and sets a bottle of Prozac on the fence. Then a bottle of Zoloft. Then a bottle marked "Not Authorized For Use in the U.S."

...and now it's awkward. Danny goes back to digging.

DANNY (CONT'D)

It's weird, I felt like I'd been there before. I mean I have, it was here, just...better. But better in a familiar way, you know?

NORM

I don't think we're in the same conversation...

Danny jams his shovel in the ground, spins to Norm.

DANNY .

Are you happy here Norm?

NORM

(uncertain)

They say happiness is a state of mind.

DANNY

What if they're wrong? What if it's not in our head? What if there's an actual *place*, where all those things we dream about really exist?

That's never occurred to Norm. He looks a little scared.

NORM

I guess I'd...have to ask Sharon.

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - MORNING

Another day. Danny and Alison's station wagon pulls out of the garage and heads down the road.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Alison drops Danny off at the train. He heads through the turnstile and climbs aboard. Alison pulls away...

...and Danny pokes his head out. All clear. He steps off the train and hustles off in the other direction.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Danny hurries down the sidewalk, on his cell phone.

DANNY

...yeah, fever and flu and diarrhea
and all that stuff, like six things
coming out at once, it's totally
gross. I want to come in, but..

He hacks out a throaty, gagging cough. A mother pulls her daughter to the far side of the sidewalk.

DANNY (CONT'D)

...yeah, maybe I should stay home.

He slaps the phone shut and breaks into a run.

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - DAY

Danny slows to a stop on the sidewalk. He takes up position behind a tree, across the street from his house. Waits.

Shortly, Alison walks out of the house, Lucas holding her hand. She puts him in the car and drives off. Danny watches from his hiding place. Once she's gone, he scurries across the street and goes inside.

INT. BASEMENT - SAME

Danny descends the steps, anticipation mounting. He reaches the bottom and turns to that dark corner of the basement.

He hesitates for a moment. Then with a deep breath, he crawls in...

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE (MAN WORLD) - DAY

Danny pops his head out of the storm grate, looks around his backyard. So far so good. He climbs out, makes his way around to the front...

...and stops in awe at the DUDE'S PARADISE IN FRONT OF HIM.

Up and down the street, suburbia has been transformed: paint jobs, hedge sculptures, half-court basketball. BIKINI GIRLS play volleyball in a nearby yard. At the curb, a dad and his son build a half-pipe together.

Honking loudly, a BEER DELIVERY TRUCK takes a corner on two wheels and careens off down the street. Danny watches as the side door rattles open and a SINGLE CASE OF BEER flies out...

...sliding to a stop on the grass at his feet.

The truck rumbles away. Danny gingerly picks up the beer, like it might not actually be there. Looks up at his house.

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE (MAN WORLD) - SAME

Just as it was before. Danny steps inside, marveling at the change. At the sound of pots and pans clanking, he turns to the kitchen. Is he ready for this? He swallows hard...

KITCHEN

Allie stands at the stove, in nothing but a pair of panties and one of Danny's button-up shirts. Sexy as hell.

Danny stares at his gorgeous wife from the doorway as she *cans peaches* over a steaming pan:

A bead of moisture rolling down the curve of a breast...her shirt riding up her ass as she reaches for the sugar...head thrown back as she bites into a tender peach wedge...

DANNY

...Allie?

Allie spins, shrieks -- already on edge, Danny shrieks too.

ALLIE

Danny! Oh my god, you scared me!

DANNY

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to --

ALLIE

No, no, it's my fault. I was so wrapped up in all this cooking.

(approaching him)

My heart's still pounding, feel it.

She grabs his hand and puts it to her breast. He stands frozen, cupping a boob, not entirely sure he's allowed.

DANNY

Well, the heart's a powerful muscle. Of love.

(beat)

(MORE)

DANNY (CONT'D)

It's a love muscle.
 (yanks his hand away)
 You should get that looked at.

Allie bounces back to the stove. Danny just stares at her.

ALLIE

Well this is a nice surprise, but
 aren't you supposed to be at work?
 (he just keeps staring)
 Danny? Did you hear me?

DANNY

-- what? Yeah, of course I --

Hang on a second -- he stops himself.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Actually...
 (careful)
 ...I wasn't paying attention.

ALLIE

(shrugs)
 Oh. Okay.

DANNY

You don't care that I wasn't paying
 attention?

ALLIE

(pats his cheek)
 You're cute.

He's cute? Slowly, a broad smile spreads across his face...

DANNY

So work, huh? Yeah, that sounds
 interesting. Can you take me to
 the train?

Allie gives him a funny look.

ALLIE

Train?

CUT TO:

EXT. GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The garage door rumbles open to reveal Danny standing in the
 driveway, peering in. A beat. Then he smiles...

A moment later, a VINTAGE MUSTANG ROARS out of the driveway and fishtails off down the street.

Danny raises a fist in the air with a whoop of joy.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

Heads turn as Danny cruises past in his Mustang...he soaks up the attention, nods to the ladies and police officers and cholos who admire him as he rolls by.

He pulls into his building's parking structure. A PARKING SPACE with Danny's name on a placard sits right next to the entrance. Danny rumbles to a stop. He's liking this.

INT. TITAN FINANCIAL SERVICES - DAY

The elevator doors open and Danny strides in -- and his face falls. Everything looks the same. Same drab cubicles, same fluorescent lights, same coworkers.

There's Reems, cocky as ever, strutting his way, Jenkins and Culpepper trailing him. Guess not everything's great here...

...or is it? Jenkins and Culpepper aren't following Reems, they're pushing past him...to get to...

JENKINS

Danny!

CULPEPPER

Move it, dumbass, Danny's here.

They hurry up to a surprised Danny and stop, looking up at him like eager puppies, waiting for him to talk.

DANNY

Hi guys...?

(beat)

Sorry I'm late.

Sorry I'm late...the posse explodes in hysterical laughter. Danny looks around, confused. Was that a joke?

CULPEPPER

That is *hilarious*.

(to the whole office)

He's late. Get it?

DANNY

Yeah, I, um, I took a wrong turn
off the freeway...

JENKINS

Oh my god, stop, you're killing me.

Reems sidles up alongside them, trying to get in on the fun.

REEMS

If you do kill him, I got dibs on
his accounts.

The laughter stops instantly. Jenkins and Culpepper glare at
Reems, who shrinks.

JENKINS

Dude. What are you doing?

STRAND (O.S.)

Danny, thank god.

Strand approaches them, holding his arms out to Danny.

STRAND (CONT'D)

We have a situation. Bosch is
about to go with another firm, you
need to get in there and work your
magic.

DANNY

You want me?

STRAND

The account is riding on this, you
think I want Reems to handle it?

Everyone laughs except Reems, who appears used to it.

REEMS

Actually Phil, I'd still like to
talk to you about my clients --

STRAND

How about you call me boss, okay?
When you earn first name basis I'll
let you know.

(back to Danny)

Come on, they're waiting.

DANNY

Okay, lemme just -- get my notes...

Flustered, Danny hurries over to his tiny little windowless office...and stops. The door now reads: CARL REEMS.

Where's his office? The others watch puzzled, as Danny looks around, walks in a tentative circle. Culpepper points him to that sweet corner office, Danny's name etched into the glass.

Of course. Danny walks over as casually as he can, goes in.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A group of Armani-clad execs wait around the conference table as Danny pokes his head in.

DANNY

Hello, my name's --

MR. BOSCH

Look, we don't want to waste your time. We've made up our minds.

DANNY

(gulps)

Okay, sir, well I'd like to try and change your...mind about that.

He walks in, sets up an easel and pie chart, and begins a weak sales pitch. He's in way over his head and it shows.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Titan Financial Services is an industry leading firm that offers a balanced portfolio of risk-averse investments and...

None of the executives are paying attention. Some stare out the window, other twirl in their chairs. One guy's asleep. Starting to sweat, Danny flips through his portfolio.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Quarterly returns at the margin we estimate for you...

(trails off)

...at current market rates...

He's lost them -- they're ignoring him completely.

MR. BOSCH

(interrupts him)

Come on, let's just call this what it is. We're all men here.

He keeps talking, but Danny's not listening. He scans the room, Bosch's words ringing in his ears as he starts to understand...

-- *we're all men here* -- an exec showing off his biceps to his coworker, daring him to punch him...

-- *we're all men here* -- a guy, feet up on the table, cigar in one hand, the other stuck down the front of his pants --

-- *we're all men here* -- a couple of guys checking websites on their iPhones...*what's the score...can you believe the rack on that secretary...*

Danny pauses...THEN THROWS THE EASEL THROUGH THE WINDOW.

The room goes silent. Execs swing around in their chairs to face Danny, who whips off his coat, loosens his tie.

DANNY

We're all men here? Then let's get real, man-to-man.

He snatches the cigar out of the one exec's mouth, LIGHTS HIS PORTFOLIO ON FIRE, and tosses it onto the conference table, still burning. He's sure as hell got their attention now.

DANNY (CONT'D)

You've crunched the numbers, you know we're all the same, so who cares about forecasts or research or these retarded pie charts?

MR. BOSCH

Okay, what should we care about?

Danny leans forward on the table and eyes each of them.

DANNY

Balls.

Whoah. The execs murmur to each other, impressed. This is working -- Danny continues, building steam.

DANNY (CONT'D)

You can play it safe, and you'll do fine. Or you can sack up and ride the tiger.

Around the table, people start to nod. Danny keeps rolling, in the zone now --

DANNY (CONT'D)

It's a battle out there, gentlemen. Last one standing wins. You don't need a businessman, you need a warrior. Someone who's willing to get bloody for you, who's willing to kill for you.

Danny crosses to the broken window and, never breaking eye contact with the wide-eyed execs, slices his hand on the broken glass. He holds up his bloody hand.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I am willing to kill for you.

Dead, stunned, silence. Then from the back of the room, an exec LEAPS TO HIS FEET AND RIPS HIS SHIRT OPEN --

EXEC #3

YEAAAAAAAAHHHHH!!!!

Everyone turns and looks at the guy, who freezes. The portfolio still burning in the middle of the table.

Then as one, the whole room erupts in a roar of pure animalistic passion, tearing open their shirts, high-fiving.

Danny basks in the madness and glory. He did this. He glances down at his hand, dripping blood...and faints.

CUT TO:

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE (REAL WORLD) - MEANWHILE

Alison sits in the living room, working on a laptop.

A breeze ruffles her hair. Odd...she turns around. Nothing there but the basement door, slightly ajar. Puzzled, Alison gets up to investigate. She reaches for the doorknob...

...then notices the clock. She turns and grabs her keys.

ALISON

Lucas! Time to go get daddy! I bet he can't wait to see us!

BACK TO:

INT. TITAN FINANCIAL SERVICES (MAN WORLD) - AT THE SAME TIME

Champagne flows as the entire office cheers Danny...

...hand now bandaged, being toted around on a chair by Jenkins and Culpepper. They lower him to the floor -- he's loving every minute of this. Strand gives him a hug-pound.

STRAND

That was without a doubt the craziest, ballsiest move I have ever seen. And you pulled it off.

(sotto)

You heard Peterson's retiring, right?

DANNY

I might have heard something...

That Sultry Coworker saunters by Danny. She looked right through him before, but this time...

SULTRY COWORKER

Hi Danny.

Danny just laughs to himself. This place is amazing. Jenkins and Culpepper walk by, grinning ear to ear.

JENKINS

I haven't had this much fun since we got Gina Luciano to pull a train in the bathroom at prom --

Train? Danny grabs Strand's wrist, checks his watch. *Shit --*

DANNY

-- the train.

He bolts for his office, grabs his things and beelines for the elevators.

As he races out, his old office door bursts open and Reems runs out screeching, an iguana swinging from his lip. Danny looks heavenward as he rushes off...*thank you for that...*

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Danny's Mustang peels into the street, sending other drivers skidding to a halt as he roars off down the road...

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - DAY

...he skids into his driveway -- races for the backyard...

INT. BASEMENT (REAL WORLD) - SAME

...crawling out of the shaft, into his basement and straight up the stairs...

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - SAME

...sprinting down the sidewalk, briefcase in hand...he stops, doubles over and gasps for bréath, then keeps running...

INT. STATION WAGON - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Alison sits in the car, watching passengers exit the train. Where's Danny?

Wait, there he is, waving as he steps out of the bathroom and jogs to the car -- drenched in sweat, heaving, face blotchy. He gives her a smile that looks like he's in pain.

She watches in the mirror as he climbs in the back. No one says anything for a moment.

ALISON	DANNY
How come you're so --	I bet you're wondering why --
They both stop to let the other finish. Silence.	

DANNY
Desk yoga.

That's a lame answer...but Alison says nothing, just pulls the car out onto the road.

We push in on Danny, a faraway look in his eyes...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - MORNING

...Danny sits at the kitchen table, lost in thought as Alison tosses a plate of reheated frozen waffles in front of him.

ALISON
When do you think you can take a
look at the washing machine?

Lucas is already tucking into his reheated frozen waffles, chewing on one with a gloved hand, pulling syrupy glove lint from his mouth.

Danny looks at Alison, in her frumpy bathrobe. Watches her pour herself a cup of coffee.

DANNY
Know what would be great on these waffles? Freshly canned peaches.

ALISON
You can get them at the store.

DANNY
I know, but don't you think homemade tastes so much better?

Alison stops what she was doing. Slowly, like a deadly cobra, she turns on him. This may have been a mistake.

DANNY (CONT'D)
...because I don't think that.

ALISON
You want me to *can peaches* for you?

Yeah, definitely a mistake.

LUCAS
I like peaches.

Alison bends to Lucas with a sweet smile.

ALISON
Then you and your daddy can go to the store and buy some peaches, and boil them, and peel them, and pit them, and slice them, and make the syrup, and heat the jars, and pack them, and seal them yourselves, okay sweetie?

Lucas looks hopefully to his dad as Alison stomps out. Danny calls after her.

DANNY
So you do know how, though.

INT. MACY'S - DAY

Alison and Sharon stroll through Macys. Sharon goes from test perfume to test perfume, spraying one wrist, then the other, then her neck.

SHARON

I hate to say I warned you,
but...well I did warn you.

ALISON

He's just acting a little funny.
You think I need to be worried?

Sharon gives Alison a sympathetic tilt of the head.

SHARON

Oh, honey, of course you do. You
should have been worried starting
on your wedding day. If you bring
an orangutan home from the jungle,
do you just open the front door and
let him run off wherever he wants?
Of course not, he'll get hit by a
car or shack up in a treehouse with
some monkey slut. As much as you
love that stupid animal, you have
to cage him for his own good. And
he learns to trust the cage, and
trust you. That's why Norm and I
have lasted as long as we have. No
room for error.

Alison examines a jar of rejuvenating facial cream.

ALISON

I just wish I could put my finger
on what's going on with him...

INT. TITAN FINANCIAL SERVICES (REAL WORLD) - SAME

Danny walks up to his office door...and stops, his hand on
the doorknob. Abruptly he turns in the other direction.

ALISON (V.O.)

...it's like he's somewhere else.

STRAND'S OFFICE (REAL WORLD)

Strand works at his desk as Danny marches in, full of
confidence and a newfound manly swagger.

ALISON (V.O.)

...like something in him is
changing.

He leans over the desk and gets in Strand's face.

DANNY

Let's get down to it. It's about balls. I've got 'em, and they're big, and I want you to take advantage of them so we can both start getting somewhere.

SMASH CUT TO:

AN H.R. REPRESENTATIVE

Reading over a formal complaint. She peers up at Danny, sulking across the desk from her.

HR REPRESENTATIVE

So for the record, you deny that you sexually propositioned Mr. Strand in order to obtain a promotion?

Danny shoots back, his voice dripping with attitude.

DANNY

How about you put this down "for the record"...

SMASH CUT TO:

AN H.R. MANAGER

In a new office, Danny sits across from a senior H.R. Manager. The first H.R. Rep glaring from the corner.

HR MANAGER

...so when you say "pull out the horseshoe, lady," your implication is that said horseshoe is lodged in Ms. Cole's rectum?

Danny just sits and stews.

CUT TO:

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE (REAL WORLD) - DAY

Briefcase in hand, Danny peers out from behind the tree across the street, watching the house. Checks his watch.

But Alison doesn't come out. Growing impatient, he sneaks across the street and crouches below the open kitchen window.

He waits, checks again -- nope, she's still in there. He starts to fidget, growing agitated.

At last he can't take it anymore. The moment she leaves the kitchen, he hoists himself through the window -- headfirst through the sink -- and to the floor. He's in.

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Danny creeps through the house. FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING -- he flattens himself against the wall, holding his breath...

...the footsteps recede. He inches back out, all clear, and tiptoes through the living room towards the basement --

-- his CELL PHONE RINGS. Shit. He glances down at it:

IT'S ALISON CALLING. Fuck. He weighs his options, then with a grimace, picks up, whispering into his phone.

DANNY

Hi, honey.

ALISON (O.S.)

Why are you whispering?

DANNY

New office rule. They're cracking down on noise pollution.

She's coming this way -- Danny dives around the corner to the foyer, under a table, as Alison walks into the living room, on the phone, just a wall separating them.

ALISON

Really? Isn't that usually for traffic and stuff?

DANNY

It's a healthier work environment.

He looks around frantically, spots the grandfather clock. He yanks it open and wedges himself inside.

ALISON

Okay, well, I just wanted to say I'm sorry about the other day.

DANNY

Me too, I'm sorry too, hey can I call you back --

He cringes as her legs walk right past the clock.

ALISON

I didn't mean to snap at you, but sometimes I just feel like...

(pause)

Do I hear another woman? Is someone there?

Now the legs turn around and come back the other way. Jesus Christ. Danny tries to cover the mouthpiece.

DANNY

Oh, no, that's...a client.

ALISON

She's talking to you while we're in the middle of a conversation? Kind of rude, don't you think?

(laughs)

I can still hear her talking. What a bitch.

DANNY

Oh, I don't know...

Suddenly Lucas stands in front of Danny, reaching for the clock with his gloved hands -- Danny freezes --

ALISON

Lucas! You don't need to be in there. Ready to go to pre-K?

(to Danny)

I need to go, he's getting antsy.

She hangs up and walks Lucas away. Danny exhales, saved -- he jumps out of the clock and darts across the room to the basement, pulling the door closed behind him.

ALONE IN THE BASEMENT

Danny stands at the bottom of the steps. That dark corner of the basement beckons to him.

We zoom close...INTO HIS EYE...which BECOMES THAT BASEMENT SHAFT...hurtling up, through the storm grate and into...

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE (MAN WORLD) - EVENING

DING-DONG. The door swings open on...is that Sharon? Yup, that's her, dainty and demure in a skirt, waving a shy hello...and *not talking*.

Chomping gum with a cocky grin, the collar turned up on his silk shirt, the NEW IMPROVED NORM steps in front of his wife.

NORM

I believe the little ladies are gonna do some baking.

Norm sends Sharon inside with a pat on the ass. She skips past Danny into the kitchen. Danny just stands there with a silly grin on his face, watching Norm smack his gum.

NORM (CONT'D)

What?

DANNY

How you doing, Norm?

NORM

A little creeped out by you right now, actually. Wanna hit the bar?

This could not be any better. Danny's grin grows even wider.

DANNY

I would LOVE to go the bar. Let me just check with Allie --

Norm scoffs, is he serious? He screams at the kitchen door.

NORM

WE'RE GOING OUT! DON'T WAIT UP!

He turns and marches down the steps towards that corner bar. Danny runs after him, gaping.

DANNY

(going for the high-five)
That was awesome --

NORM

What, you got a vagina today?

ALLIE AND SHARON

Chat in the kitchen, icing a cake together.

ALLIE

No, see, you have to be able to relax your throat.

SHARON

I just don't think I can do it.

Allie reaches for a banana...

ALLIE

Sure you can, I'll show you.

...and proceeds to slice it onto the cake while demonstrating an impressive ARIA. She pats her diaphragm, see?

ALLIE (CONT'D)

It comes from here...

(touches her throat)

But it has to flow through here.

She tosses the banana peel in the garbage.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

It helps with blowjobs too.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

The Salvation Room is rocking, packed with people. Danny and Norm shoulder their way to the bar. Norm shouts over the crowd noise, upbeat and confident.

NORM

...so I was like, no, I don't care, you don't call in the middle of a man's golf game.

(beat)

She went to college, she can figure out how to change a carburetor.

He holds up a finger and the bartender puts two beers in front of them. Danny takes a long pull, savoring the moment.

DANNY

This is how I always imagined it. Life, I mean.

NORM

(raises his beer)

To the American Dream.

DANNY

We really are the lucky ones.

NORM

Luck's got nothing to do with it.

(gestures to the room)

Give yourself some credit for all this. It only exists because you wanted it.

Danny turns to Norm, wide-eyed. He knows.

NORM (CONT'D)

The human mind is amazing, man.

What goes on in here --

(taps his head)

Is way more powerful than what's going on out here. It's like that Robert Frost thing in the woods? We chose this road.

DANNY

(hushed)

You mean...through the basement?

Now it's Norm's turn to look at Danny.

NORM

Through the what? No, the woods, dude. It means taking life by the horns and making it your bitch.

DANNY

I don't know if that's what the poem means --

NORM

Yeah it is. It's a poem, it means whatever you want it to mean. Now shut up and enjoy the show.

The show? Danny looks up, just as the BAR OWNER climbs up onto the tiny stage, leans into the microphone.

BAR OWNER

Folks, we've got a special treat for you. Some old friends are in town tonight, and they agreed to stop in for a set. So how's about you put your hands together, for...
AEEERRROOOOOSMMMMIIIIIIIIIIIIITH!

With a crunch of power chords, AEROSMITH STEPS ONSTAGE.

The crowd goes ballistic. Danny's jaw drops. This is a dream come true. Aerosmith, rocking out in front of him, close enough to touch...except...

...where's Steven Tyler? The other band members look around at each other, confused, as the music slowly dies out.

ON HIS KNEES IN THE BATHROOM --

A man kneels over the toilet, retching. We can tell it's STEVEN TYLER because of the leather pants and scarves.

Danny pushes through the commotion to the backstage door, where the TOUR MANAGER is arguing with the Bar Owner.

BAR OWNER

Those people were promised a show!

TOUR MANAGER

What the hell do you want me to do, un-food-poison him? The man's too sick to sing! You know anyone else who knows the words to their entire catalog, plus b-sides?!

A beat. Sensing eyes on them, they both turn...to Danny, who tentatively raises his hand.

STAGE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

The crowd's getting restless. A smattering of boos.

DANNY -- IN A LEATHER VEST -- steps cautiously onstage. He takes the mic and nods to the band, terrified. Joe Perry begins to play, a familiar melody. Danny turns back...

...the whole crowd watches him, dead silent. The spotlight blinding him. His breathing amplified through the speakers.

Danny swallows. Tries to make his mouth form words.

DANNY

Ev-every time that I look in the mirror...all these lines on my face getting clearer...

His voice is quavering, but he's getting it out there. He looks over at Joe Perry, who nods. Okay, yeah...he turns back to the crowd, starting to warm up to him.

DANNY (CONT'D)

The past is gone...it went by like dusk to dawn...isn't that the way...everybody's got their dues in life to pay...

From the wings, Steven Tyler stumbles over to watch, holding a bucket and towel. Not bad...he gives Danny a thumbs-up.

Danny's starting to enjoy himself, the crowd is getting into it...the band hits its stride as the song kicks in fully.

DANNY (CONT'D)

*Yeah -- I know nobody knows, where
it comes and where it goes...I know
it's everybody's sin...you got to
lose to know how to win...*

Surprising even himself, Danny FLIPS THE MIC from hand-to-hand, bringing a cheer from the crowd. He looks out at Norm, who gives him a fist pump from the back of the room.

Danny basks in the spotlight. The song continues as we pan away...TO THE REAL WORLD/MAN WORLD MONTAGE...

DANNY AND LUCAS --

In ULTRA-SLO-MO, strutting towards the t-ball field in matching baseball shirts, a bat slung over Lucas' shoulder...

...Danny watches from the bleachers, proud as hell, as Lucas DOMINATES THE GAME like a little 5-year-old pro, bashing home runs, stealing fly balls from the other kids...

INTERCUT WITH:

THE STREETS OF SUBURBIA --

Danny's on his cell phone, hurrying down the sidewalk as he plays hooky from work again --

DANNY

*Yeah, bird flu...I know, really
rare...no, definitely, that's a
good idea, I'll stay home...*

INTERCUT WITH:

ON A PROJECTION SCREEN: A GIGANTIC DOLLAR SIGN --

Executives around the table applaud as Danny wraps up his awesome presentation, strikes a match on his shoe, and flares up a cigar. We PULL BACK...

...they're on a BLIMP, gliding over a baseball stadium...

INTERCUT WITH:

THE STREETS OF SUBURBIA --

Once again on his cellphone...another day, another excuse...

DANNY

...and I believe jury duty is my
moral obligation as a citizen...

INTERCUT WITH:

DANNY'S VINTAGE MUSTANG --

Rolling slowly down the street, but Danny's not driving...

...nope, he's dancing alongside his car, "ghost riding the
whip" for a throng of cheering, laughing street racers...

...until the door swings shut ON HIS PANT LEG...he grabs at
it -- *locked* -- the car keeps rolling, dragging him -- an
onlooker runs over, dives through the passenger window...

INTERCUT WITH:

DANNY, CHECKING HIMSELF OUT IN THE MIRROR --

Are his muscles just a little bigger? Nice...Danny turns
this way and that, admiring himself. Thinks for a moment --

-- then pulls open his boxers...*nice*...

INTERCUT WITH:

THE STREETS OF SUBURBIA --

Back on the cellphone --

DANNY

No, it was, uh...roofies.

(beat)

Yes, the date rape drug. No, I
didn't get raped, just the roofies
part. Yes, I'm sure.

(beat)

How would I check that?

INTERCUT WITH:

LUCAS, SCREAMING WITH JOY --

On an amusement-park boat ride, Danny and Allie in the seat behind him. Allie leans over to Danny in the dark, caressing him, BITING THE BUTTONS off his shirt...

Whoah -- Danny leaps up -- toppling backwards into the two feet of water. He leaps to his feet, making excuses, and quickly sloses away...it's still too weird...

INTERCUT WITH:

DANNY ON STAGE --

In full rock star mode, the crowd roaring their approval...

DANNY

*Sing with me, sing for the years,
sing for the laughter, sing for the
tears...sing with me, if it's just
for today...maybe tomorrow, the
good Lord'll take you away...*

INTERCUT WITH:

THAT SULTRY COWORKER --

Coming Danny's way like a man-eater on the prowl. THE MONTAGE MUSIC PAUSES as she leans in, whispers something scandalous. Danny smiles, gently takes her chin in his hand.

DANNY

Carmen. Carmen, Carmen, Carmen. I could say yes, couldn't I? And it'd be magical, maybe the greatest six minutes of either of our lives. But where would that leave us? Back here, sharing awkward glances at the sandwich cart? Filling up your Facebook page with poems of resentment and longing?

She starts to respond, but Danny puts a finger to her lips.

DANNY (CONT'D)

You don't want that. I don't want that for you. Besides, this...
(waggles his ring finger)

(MORE)

DANNY (CONT'D)

...this stands for something so much bigger than the carnal needs of a couple of fools like you and me, and I wouldn't jeopardize that for anything in the world. But you know what, Carmen? There's someone out there who WOULD jeopardize that for you, and more, and you deserve to find him. Don't you?

Sultry gazes at him, touched. A tear slips down her cheek.

SULTRY COWORKER

Why can't more men be like you,
Danny Graves?

She gives him a kiss on the cheek and saunters off. Danny watches her go. He is the fucking king...

AEROSMITH KICKS BACK IN FULL FORCE as we keep going --

INTERCUT WITH:

DANNY'S BACKYARD --

Danny pops up from the grate...looks around, pleased...

DANNY (V.O.)

Dream on...dream on...dream on...

INTERCUT WITH:

ALISON IRONING CLOTHES --

She stops, examines one of Danny's shirts...*no buttons*.

DANNY (V.O.)

Dream until your dream comes true --

INTERCUT WITH:

DANNY IN THE BASEMENT --

Climbing that ladder to man world, an addict after his fix...

DANNY (V.O.)

Dream on...dream on...

INTERCUT WITH:

DANNY IN BED --

He quietly slips out of bed and tiptoes downstairs...

DANNY (V.O.)

Dream on...dream on...

...Alison listens to him leave, her eyes open...

INTERCUT WITH:

DANNY ON STAGE, WAILING THE HIGH NOTES --

DANNY

Dream on...dream on...dream on...

We spin round and round him, as he screams the final strains, until at last we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE (REAL WORLD) - MORNING

The front lawn is overgrown, neglected. Like it's been abandoned for weeks. On either side, the neighboring lawns are immaculate.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Alison looks out the window at the lawn, troubled.

From the other room, a SMASH of broken something-or-other, and Lucas starts to wail. Alison glances over at Danny, who sits at the table, calmly eating cereal as though he's the only person in the world.

ALISON

I got a call from the school counselor this morning.

He keeps eating. She RAPS her knuckles on the table --

ALISON (CONT'D)

Did you hear me?

DANNY

(annoyed)

What? I was in the middle of something.

ALISON
You were eating.

DANNY
Well I was also thinking, but I'm
not doing either of those things
now, so what can I do for you?

Alison stares at him in disbelief.

ALISON
Lucas and his class were outside
playing, and Lucas freaked out and
ate a bunch of fertilizer and
scared the other kids.
(beat)
The counselor thinks he needs to
see a therapist.

Danny takes this in. A beat. Then he drinks down the last
of his cereal and gets up to leave.

DANNY
I have to go to work.

ALISON
That's all you have to say?

DANNY
What do you want me to say?

ALISON
He ate fertilizer, Danny.

Danny pulls open the closet and rifles through coats, tossing
them one by one to the floor. Alison watches him, baffled.

DANNY
He's a weird kid, I can't help
that. Maybe he's just being
clever, like you said. Maybe
Einstein ate fertilizer before he
solved quantum physics.

ALISON
Einstein didn't solve quantum
physics!

DANNY
Maybe he should have eaten more
fertilizer.

ALISON
 Why won't you take this seriously?
 (re: the closet)
What are you doing?

DANNY
 God, would you give it a rest? I'm
 way behind at work, I'm subbing for
 Aerosmith twice a month now, I
 don't need you nagging me about
 this too --

ALISON
 -- I'm not nagging you, I'm --
 (wait a sec)
 You're doing what?

Oops. Mixed up his worlds.

DANNY
 ...it's a figure of speech.

Alison studies him for a moment.

ALISON
 Are you on drugs?

DANNY
 What? No.

ALISON
 Are you having an affair?

DANNY
No. Jesus, Allie.

She frowns at him. He throws up his hands, whatever.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 Fine, sorry. Can you help me find
 my leather jacket please, Alison?

ALISON
 (cold stare)
 You don't have a leather jacket.

INT. TITAN FINANCIAL SERVICES (REAL WORLD) - DAY

Danny walks in...and pauses. On a table in the corner, a
 CAKE BOX with plates and forks. Written in icing: *HAPPY
 BIRTHDAY DENNY!*, spelled wrong.

DANNY
My birthday...

He's forgotten all about it. He walks over to the table, just as Jenkins and Culpepper stroll around the corner.

JENKINS
Danny boy. Reems wants to see you
in his his office.

Danny turns to Reems' office...which has been cleared out. Culpepper clears his throat, points to the floor above them.

CULPEPPER
...his new office.

INT. REEMS' OFFICE - DAY

If possible, this office is even swankier than his last one. Reems kicks back, dwarfed by his enormous leather executive chair. Danny enters.

DANNY
You got Peterson's job.

Reems gives Danny a patronizing smile.

REEMS
First off I want to be clear, this isn't about the sexual harassment thing with Phil.
(clarifying)
It isn't just about the sexual harassment thing. Although you do wear those shirts.

He lets out a big deep fake sigh, crosses to the window.

REEMS (CONT'D)
This is the hardest thing an executive VP has to do.

DANNY
You've been executive VP for an hour and a half.
(beat)
Are you...firing me?

REEMS
They try to prepare you for this in B-school, but -- did you go to B-school?

(MORE)

REEMS (CONT'D)

(waves it off)

Doesn't matter. Point is, the last few weeks you've missed a lot of work, as you may have noticed.

DANNY

Yeah, I was there. It's a yes or no question, Carl.

REEMS

And those of us in certain... positions... have begun to question your commitment to --

DANNY

Yes or no, Carl.

REEMS

Yes. But could you call me boss, I'm trying to establish a tone...

Danny turns and walks out. Reems calls after him.

REEMS (CONT'D)

Hey, can you make sure you leave the stapler when you clear out your desk? Company property. And hey, did I wish you a happy birthday?

INT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

Danny sits at a lobby bar, his box of cake and several beers in front of him. A bartender tries to clear the box away -- Danny snarls at him, scoops out a fistful of cake, eats it.

O-kay...the bartender offers him a napkin. Glaring, Danny wipes his chocolate-covered hand on the front of his suit.

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - LATER

The door swings open and Danny stumbles in, cake box still in his arms. He's drunk. Alison runs up to him.

ALISON

I've been calling, where have you --
(looks at his suit)
Is that cake or poo? Please say
cake.

Danny weaves his way to a chair and falls into it. He fishes around in his box, digging through empty beer bottles until he finds an unopened one. Cracks it open.

DANNY

I was celebrating my birthday, with
the only person who cares about me.

He jerks a thumb at himself, sloshing beer onto his lap.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Nice of you to remember.

Alison shakes her head, disgusted, as Sharon, Norm, and a group of neighbors all halfheartedly pop out from their hiding places, mumbling...*surprise, happy birthday...*

Danny's mouth flops open in drunken surprise. He stares at the party guests, leans over to whisper to Alison, although he's still loud enough for everyone to hear...

DANNY (CONT'D)

I don't even like most of these people.

Alison tries to steer him towards the bedroom with an embarrassed smile for the guests.

ALISON

He doesn't mean that. Okay, you're drunk, let's just --

He yanks away from her, starts loosening his tie.

DANNY

I'm fine. If I'm having a party I can get ready for my own party. Just everyone give me a minute.
(beat)
Amuse yourselves.

He rips his shirt off, drops it to the floor.

ALISON

Did you get a tattoo?

Danny glances down at the DANCING GIRL TATTOO on his bicep.

DANNY

Oh yeah. Look.
(flexing, singsong)
She - does - the - *huuuula...*

Everyone just stands there, flabbergasted. Sharon shoots Alison a knowing look...*I warned you...*

Alison pulls Danny aside, whispers fiercely at him.

ALISON

I don't understand what's going on with you. What you're doing right now, I don't even know who this is.

DANNY

No, this is me. Now you know me, you didn't before.

ALISON

Danny, listen --

DANNY

(getting louder)

No, I'm done listening. You talk a lot, all the time actually, but all you say is "blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah, what do you think about that, give me a five-page essay."

ALISON

Please, you're embarrassing yourself.

DANNY

In front of them? They're not even awake.

ALISON

I'm really sorry, everyone, maybe tonight's not the best --

DANNY

And the hilarious part is, what's hilarious is that you don't even *realize* how miserable you are. Well Norm does, but I don't think anyone's advocating his point of view.

Norm casts a frightened look at Sharon.

NORM

I'm really okay with things...

DANNY

No, it's okay Norm, we can tell them the truth. They'll never do anything about it anyway, know why? Because the human need for security is greater than the fear of bondage.

This is getting super uncomfortable, but Danny's on a roll now. He gets in their faces.

DANNY (CONT'D)

See, but this is what they don't tell you, is that your REAL life, the life you're supposed to have, is right there for you if you want it. It's under our nose.

The guests glance around nervously. Danny begins to dart to and fro, running around the living room like a maniac.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Looking around? Trying to find it? Is it in this vase? No? How about over here? Where can it be, aren't you just dying to know?

(jukes left, then right)

Warm, getting warmer, no, colder -- need a little help, want a little hint? Ladies and gentlemen...

He grabs the basement door and swings it open, triumphant --

DANNY (CONT'D)

...welcome to my world.

BOOM. THE WASHING MACHINE EXPLODES, sending a geyser of water up the stairs, all over Danny.

He stands at the top of the steps, soaking. The guests quickly file out. Sharon leans over to Alison as they exit.

SHARON

We'll come back for the cake pan another time.

The door closes behind them, leaving Danny and Alison alone in the room. She walks up to him and stands there, silent.

DANNY

You know what I'm talking about. I've seen that side of you.

Without warning, she SLAPS him. Then turns and walks out.

Danny rubs his jaw. Alone in the hall, he looks around...at the lace curtains, the crappy TV, the family photos...he doesn't need this anymore. He shouts it to the world.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I DON'T NEED THIS ANYMORE.

He turns and walks through the door to the basement. Takes one last glance back.

Then shuts the door behind him. The room fades away, as we

DISSOLVE TO:

DANNY'S ULTRA-MASCULINE LIVING ROOM...

Allie, looking stunning in an evening dress, sways all alone to Sinatra. She turns, puts out her arms with a smile.

ALLIE

Dance with me?

In the shadow of the doorway, Danny takes in the sight of his gorgeous wife. Slowly, he crosses to her, takes her face in his hands and kisses her for the first time...

She melts into him. He lifts her off her feet and carries her up the stairs, disappearing into the bedroom.

We PAN around the house, drifting out to the backyard...

...where the grass has started to grow over that storm grate, sealing it off, just a little...

FADE TO:

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE (MAN WORLD) - MORNING

Birds twitter outside as Danny blinks awake, relaxed and happy. The sun streams in the window, a perfect morning. It's the first time he's stayed in this world through the night -- he pauses to savor the moment.

DANNY

Why didn't I do this sooner?

ALLIE

I'll say.

Allie, curled up next to him with a post-orgasmic smile still on her face, stretches, puts her head on his chest.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

You know we'd be in jail in some states for the things you did to me last night? We should think about a safe word.

DANNY
You are a dream come true, you know
that?

She gives him a sleepy smile.

ALLIE
Mmmmm, stay here with me.

DANNY
I plan to.

He gives her a kiss and gets out of bed, but she pulls him
back for another one, this one deep and sensual. Mustering
up all his willpower, he pulls away.

DANNY (CONT'D)
I gotta go to work, baby.
(realizes with a smile)
I want to go to work. Isn't that
amazing?

She pouts a little, but lets him go, admiring him as he picks
out a shirt and tie.

ALLIE
I'll miss you.

DANNY
I'll miss you too.

ALLIE
I'll miss you till it hurts.

DANNY
Well then don't you go anywhere,
'cause I'll be back tonight.

ALLIE
I'll be right here waiting.

Danny laughs to himself as he exits. Does it get any better?

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Danny walks by the living room, then stops, backs up.

Lucas kneels at the coffee table, busily snipping the fingers
off those infamous rainbow colored-gloves. Danny kneels down
next to him.

DANNY
Whatcha doing to those gloves, bud?

LUCAS
They're for babies.

DANNY
And you're not a baby.

LUCAS
Nope.

Danny beams at his son.

DANNY
Nope. Just a normal little kid.
(grabs him in a hug)
C'mere. I am so proud of you --

LUCAS
(shoving him away)
Don't, daddy.

Danny hesitates, surprised. Lucas runs off.

DANNY
Right. Yeah, awesome. You go do
your thing.
(calls after him)
Free like a bird.

Smiling wistfully to himself, he gets up and leaves.

INT. TITAN FINANCIAL SERVICES (MAN WORLD) - DAY

All heads turn...as Danny does the Reservoir Dogs SLO-MO STRIDE into the office. He's a bad-ass and he knows it.

He shoots out an arm -- stopping Phil Strand in his tracks.

DANNY
Anything you want to tell me this morning?

STRAND
...we're giving you Peterson's job?

DANNY
Wow, didn't see that coming, I'm really honored, Phil, hmm, let's see, what is it that VPs do again? Oh yeah. REEMS!

Reems pokes his head out from Danny's old office. Danny waves him over, puts an arm around him for a little walk and talk. A few coworkers turn to see what's going on.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Reems, Reems, Reems. Hi Reems.
It's not your birthday is it?
(Reems shakes his head)
Too bad. Did you hear I got the promotion?

REEMS

Yeah, bro, I was going to congratulate you when you got in --

DANNY

Too late, I'm already here, and now I don't believe you.

What -- ? Reems balks. Sensing something going down, coworkers start to drift over.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Don't worry about it. What do you say we talk about your future? Where do you see yourself in two years?

Reems glances around at everyone, tries to compose himself.

REEMS

Well, not to blow my own horn, but I've been thinking department supervisor...I've been working on my leadership skills...

DANNY

Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, right...oh, you mean here? At this firm?
(sympathetic smile)
Yeah, I don't see it.
(pats his shoulder)
Yeah, see, we're letting you go.
Tough break, I know.

Reems blanches. The other coworkers pause, not sure how they should react to this. Then from the back...

JENKINS

Aw, burn!

CULPEPPER

Dude, you totally had him thinking one thing and then you told him something else!

Coworkers start to chuckle. This is humiliating.

REEMS

I think I have a lot to offer --

DANNY

Like failing upwards and backstabbing?

REEMS

Wh-what? I haven't done that.

DANNY

You would if you could, trust me. But listen, I really really believe that if you want to be department supervisor, at some other company --
(beat)
-- actually, maybe you shouldn't set the bar so high...

Coworkers laughing harder now, getting into it. Danny's loving the attention. He plays to his audience.

DANNY (CONT'D)

You know how they say this is the hardest thing a VP has to do? The people who say that are losers, 'cause I'm not even breaking a sweat!

REEMS

This isn't fair, I don't deserve --

VOICE FROM THE BACK

Make him beg for it!

Oooh...the crowd loves this. Reems looks around, are they serious? Danny pauses too -- that might be a little much.

REEMS

I'd like to keep my job.

CULPEPPER

That was a big bowl of suck! Beg like you mean it!

A beat. Reems slowly lowers himself to the floor.

Danny watches his coworkers close in around Reems, smelling blood. This is getting uncomfortable...

REEMS

Please don't fire me.

CULPEPPER

Ooooh, really close, but no.

JENKINS

You know why? Because you're a
DICK.

Everyone roars with laughter.

CULPEPPER

And I banged your mom!

Whoah -- that's kind of -- well, okay, everyone's still laughing, so Danny keeps laughing too...as another coworker steps in and KICKS REEMS IN THE STOMACH.

Danny stops laughing. Reems goes down hard, as people begin to stone him with office supplies. Holy shit.

COWORKER

Let's stick his head in the toilet!

The crowd cheers as they carry Reems off...leaving Danny standing there, horrified.

INT. DANNY'S VINTAGE MUSTANG (MAN WORLD) - DAY

Danny drives through the city, paying no attention to where he's going, making turns at random. What happened back there? He stops at a red light, loosens his tie...

...a TRICKED-OUT MUSCLE CAR WITH NEON UNDERCARRIAGE pulls up, carrying a group of HOMEBOYS. From under his do-rag, the DRIVER looks Danny's car over, nods whattup -- we gonna race?

Danny ignores him, faces forward.

HOMEBOY DRIVER

Yo.

Danny glances over, out of the corner of his eye. The driver nods again, more intently -- we gonna race. Trying to play it cool, Danny shakes his head, faces forward.

HOMEBOY DRIVER (CONT'D)

Yo.

DANNY

Sorry, I'm not avoiding you, or your crew, I just -- I have a lot on my mind today.

HOMEBOY DRIVER

You don't bring that machine into this hood and not drive it, Holmes.

Danny finally registers where he is -- empty streets, windows boarded up, a long stretch of asphalt in front of them.

DANNY

I do drive it, just not...very fast.

HOMEBOY DRIVER

'Cause you a pussy, right?

His boys all crack up...oh damn...

HOMEBOY DRIVER (CONT'D)

One of them suburban dudes who buys him a race car and now people think maybe he ain't so white bread? Maybe he a pimp now?

DANNY

See, now you're just baiting me. The thing is, if we race, I'm gonna win. That's just how things go for me here. And then you'll get mad, and I don't really know how to handle "street justice."

Glaring menacingly, the Driver SPINS HIS TIRES till they're smoking. Danny tries to ignore it, but finally he sighs, fine. He REVS HIS ENGINE till it screams.

It's on. Homeboy Driver grips the wheel as his boys slap the side of the car, whooping. All eyes on the light...GREEN.

INT. HOMEBOYS CAR - CONTINUOUS

Homeboy Driver peels off the starting line, his boys hanging out the window, everyone screaming and hollering...

...but they all shut up as Danny goes cruising past them. He looks over apologetically, *told you...*

...and then leaves them in the dust.

EXT. EMPTY STREET - CONTINUOUS

At the end of the street, Danny's car whips around in a 180.

Homeboy Driver and his crew pull up and climb out of their car, fuming. Danny walks over.

DANNY

Hey, sorry I had to serve you like that. But it was fun, good game.

He reaches out for a handshake. Instead, Homeboy Driver sucks it up and holds out the KEYS TO HIS CAR.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Oh, no, that's okay.

(beat)

I already have one.

HOMEBOY DRIVER

You won it. Rules is rules.

DANNY

I can't take your car. If you had won I wouldn't give you MY car --
 (Homeboy's nostrils flare)
 -- although that is a moot point at this time.

HOMEBOY DRIVER

You ain't gonna honor what happened here? That's jungle code, man.

DANNY

Okay well, how about this time we go with code of the civilized adults, which I think we all are, I mean you look like decent law-abiding citizens, except for the street racing of course --

HOMEBOY DRIVER

Take the keys.

DANNY

No.

HOMEBOY DRIVER

Take the damn keys.

DANNY

No.

HOMEBOY DRIVER

I'm letting go of the keys. When I do you better be holding them.

He holds out the keys, and drops them. To the ground.

DANNY

Okay? See? It's not gonna happen. So you can just take them back, and we can all remember who won today without --

Homeboy Driver lifts his shirt, flashing a GUN. Every single homeboy there follows suit. Danny kneels and grabs the keys.

DANNY (CONT'D)

So you guys need a ride home, or --

With one last glare, Homeboy Driver and his crew pull up their baggy jeans and head off down the street.

Danny looks at his new prize. At his own car.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - EVENING

An empty residential street. Coming into view at the far end of the block...

...an exhausted Danny drives both cars home at the same time, pulling one of them forward a few feet, then jumping out and running back to the other one, driving that one forward a few feet, then back to the first one...

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Danny pulls his cars into the driveway. He waits for the garage door to open, troubled by the events of the day.

Next door, Sharon pushes a lawnmower around the yard. She's clearly straining, covered in sweat and mulched grass, her overalls falling off her shoulder.

NORM

Missed a spot, babe.

Norm points from the porch, his feet kicked up, sipping an iced tea as he lets his wife do the work. He raises his glass to Danny, who waves back, a little unsure.

Sharon pulls up, clutching at her back in pain. Norm makes rolls his eyes at Danny...women.

NORM (CONT'D)
You're fine, walk it off.

Weird...Danny pulls into the garage.

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - EVENING

The house is empty. Danny tosses his bag on the table.

DANNY
Hello?

Nothing. He heads upstairs, pulling off his jacket.

BEDROOM

Danny walks in, tossing his coat on the chair -- then jumps:
Allie lies in bed, still in her negligee.

ALLIE
Hiya handsome.

DANNY
Hey. You're...still in bed.

ALLIE
I told you I'd be right here
waiting for you.

Danny laughs nervously.

DANNY
Yeah, but not literally, right?
(beat)
Right?

ALLIE
You look yummy.

DANNY
(beat)
Thanks. You look...pretty much the
same as this morning.

She throws the covers back and crawls towards him. This is a
little unsettling...he tries to play it light.

DANNY (CONT'D)
So I got promoted and won a drag
race today, what'd you do?

ALLIE

Nothing.

DANNY

Yeah, but not *nothing* nothing.
More like the 'had some lunch, took
a shower, left the room at least
once' kind of nothing, right?

She grabs his tie, pulls him close.

ALLIE

Last night blew my mind. Tonight
I'm paying you back with interest.

DANNY

You know what, I'm still kind of
recovering from last night, so we
can just call it a gift --

She throws him down on the bed and straddles him.

ALLIE

I sent Lucas to a friend's house
for a sleepover, so we've got the
whole place to ourselves.

DANNY

Well there you go, you did
somethmmmpphhh...

She cuts him off with a kiss, RIPPING his shirt open and
bearing down on him with a snarl...

We stay on Danny's face, growing more and more strained as
ALLIE SCREWS HIM ALL NIGHT...

...riding him on the floor...

...some tortured Kama Sutra position involving harnesses...

...pinned against the window...Danny collapses, Allie drags
him to his feet to keep going...

...at last the lights go off, and it's quiet. Until the
lights come back on, and it starts up again...

...big floppy dildos, Danny yelping...

...studded dog collar and whip cracks, Danny SHRIEKING...

FOUR HOURS LATER

Danny stumbles out of the bedroom, covered in hickeys, bites, welts. He's been worked over, and looks it.

He limps into the bathroom and flips on the light...the sound of peeing, accompanied by an equally long MOAN OF PAIN...

At last he emerges. With a furtive look at the bedroom, he sneaks downstairs.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Danny rummages in the fridge, pulls out a bottle of Gatorade and shuts the door, sinking to the floor. He chugs half the bottle, mumbling to himself.

DANNY

You're not gonna die...just gotta recharge...get some electrolytes...

He chugs the rest of the Gatorade.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

With a fresh Gatorade and a sandwich, Danny pads in. He clicks on his plasma screen, flops onto his manly leather sofa -- and sinks two feet into it, his knees nearly smacking him in the face.

He digs himself out, tries another spot...nope. For all its good looks, this thing isn't comfortable.

Gloomy, he perches on the arm of the sofa, eats his sandwich.

A KNOCK at the door startles him. Danny checks the clock -- it's after midnight. Getting up, he tiptoes to the door...

Outside, a couple of ANGRY PARENTS stand on the porch. Danny opens the door and Lucas runs past him into the house. He looks up at the parents questioningly.

ANGRY DAD

Your jerkoff son beat my kid up.

Danny stares at them, stunned.

ANGRY DAD (CONT'D)

I'm a psychiatrist, lemme give you
a piece of advice -- get that kid
into therapy before it's too late.

Lucas needs therapy *here* too? Danny blanches as -- wait a
second -- the wife peers at Danny a little closer.

ANGRY WIFE

Are you that guy who's been singing
with Aerosmith?

(starstruck)

I've seen you twice.

Suddenly she's not so mad anymore. More like...giddy. Her
husband looks at his wife, at Danny, back to his wife...

ANGRY WIFE (CONT'D)

You know what, don't worry about
Lucas, I'm sure it was just a
misunderstanding.

ANGRY DAD

Claire --

ANGRY WIFE

Sammy probably deserved it, honey.
You know how he is.

(to Danny)

We'll have a serious talk with him
when we get home.

Incensed, her husband grabs her by the arm and pulls her down
the steps, whispering furiously to her. She keeps turning
back to look at Danny, giggling.

Danny stands in the doorway, distressed. He jumps as Allie
slides her hands around him from behind.

ALLIE

Well at least he's not a 'fraidy
cat. That would be the worst.

(purrs)

You ready for round four?

Danny stares out into the night. This isn't good.

And meanwhile in the backyard, that storm grate is closing
over even more...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE (REAL WORLD) - DAY

In the bedroom, Alison goes through Danny's drawers. She looks like she hasn't slept in a couple of days. Sharon sits on the bed with her customary glass of wine.

ALISON

...so then I called his work and they said he was fired. He didn't tell me he got fired?

SHARON

After the other night, I'm guessing there's a lot he didn't tell you.

Alison slams the drawer shut, rifles through the closet.

SHARON (CONT'D)

Maybe it's a gift. Maybe now that he's gone you'll find this dynamo of a woman ready to come out. You can take up pottery, learn to skydive --

(gasps)

You could write a romance novel.

ALISON

He's not gone. He left his phone, his wallet, he didn't take ANY clothes...

SHARON

It's been two days, hon.

Alison's shoulders slump. She gazes at the floor.

ALISON

Is it me? Did I push too hard?

Oh, honey...Sharon kills the rest of her wine, gives Alison a hug and heads for the door.

SHARON

I have to take Breleigh-Anne to the mother-daughter booster club banquet. You want me to stop by after?

Alison shakes her head, wipes away a tear.

ALISON

No, I'll be okay.

SHARON

I'll stop by after.

(exits, rolling her eyes)

Mother-daughter banquet. Let's all
lock ourselves in a big room and
ignore fifteen years of resentment.
With a spaghetti buffet.

Alison stands there in the bedroom, staring at nothing.

INT. TITAN FINANCIAL SERVICES (MAN WORLD) - DAY

Danny paces his new office, on the phone. Stressed out.

DANNY

...I'm just saying I could use a
little break. Just for a while.
No, it has nothing to do with you.
(beat, exasperated)

Yes, I like your band, Steven.
(beat)

Steven -- hey, Steven -- can you
pull it together for me? I gotta
go. No, I'll call you. Okay.
Love you too. Bye.

He hangs up, rubs his forehead, jesus. Then looks down...

...as an iguana plods in, his leash dragging behind him.
Confused, Danny picks up the creature.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Kyle?

He pokes his head out of his office. Down the hall, that
Young Woman sits by herself against the wall.

He carries Kyle over to her. She smiles a sad thank you.

YOUNG WOMAN

I don't suppose you're in the
market for an iguana.

She doesn't recognize him. Danny stares at her, stunned.

DANNY

You're selling him?

She gives a tearful little laugh.

YOUNG WOMAN

A girl's gotta pay the rent, right?

DANNY

But you...you were going to hike
Machu Picchu together.

YOUNG WOMAN

How did you know that?

(beat)

Well it doesn't matter anymore. My
financial planner didn't exactly
work out for me.

She picks up Kyle and walks away, cradling him close.

This world is going very wrong. Distressed, Danny turns and
makes a beeline for the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - SAME

Danny goes straight to the sink, splashes water on his face.

A commotion from one of the stalls makes him look up. He
walks over and pushes the stall door open...

Jenkins has a YOUNG INTERN by the coat, gleefully DUNKING his
head in the toilet. He sees Danny and grins.

JENKINS

He parked in my parking space --
(goes for the high-five)
-- *whatsup?*

No. He's not going to high-five him for that. Danny backs
out of the bathroom.

INT. DANNY'S OFFICE - SAME

Danny walks back into his office, shuts the door -- and
freezes: someone's in his chair.

That Sultry Coworker spins around to face him. In lingerie.

SULTRY COWORKER

I saw you with the iguana whore.
If you can stick it in her you can
damn well stick it in me.

DANNY

...I'm going to go out, and then
come back in, and let's both
pretend you never said that...

She laughs loudly -- then starts to slide off her lingerie.

SULTRY COWORKER

I'm not jealous. I know you're just afraid. Afraid of the happiness we could have together.

DANNY

I thought we went over this.

SULTRY COWORKER

Oh, silly, none of that matters... when you're soulmates.

DANNY

Okay, you have to get out.

SULTRY COWORKER

Surrender to your destiny, Daniel. Right here on this desk.

She SWEEPS everything off the desk. This girl is cuckoo. Danny grabs her by the arm, escorts her to the door.

SULTRY COWORKER (CONT'D)

Every time you tell me no it makes me want you more.

DANNY

Then you're really gonna want me after this --

SULTRY COWORKER

But you love me...you want to be near me always, Danny...please...

DANNY

You're right, I do, but first I think we need to meditate on our special connection...and we should do that far away from each other.

He shoves her out the door, thinks for a moment, yanks her back in, pulls off his coat and covers her with it, then shoves her out the door.

This is getting out of control. A knock at the door -- Danny yanks it open --

DANNY (CONT'D)

What now?!

-- a BURLY DAD stands there.

BURLY DAD
 You Danny Graves?
 (pulls out his wallet)
 I saw your boy play t-ball. I need
 you to coach my son.

He has to get out of here. Danny shoves past him into the

HALLWAY

-- where Strand waits for him, holding out a list --

STRAND
 Danny, hey, I need to make a few
 layoffs, and since you seem to
 enjoy it so much --

-- shuddering, Danny pushes past him, breaking into a run for
 the elevators --

-- which open to reveal a GAGGLE OF HYPED-UP AEROSMITH FANS
 in full Aerosmith paraphernalia.

AEROSMITH FAN
 There he is!
 (to Danny)
 Ready to get ridiculous?

DANNY
 No...

Cheering, they swarm Danny, ushering him onto the elevator
 whether he likes it or not.

AEROSMITH FAN
*We're in an ele-va-tah...we're in
 an ele-va-tah...*

As the doors close on Danny's distraught face, the Young
 Woman runs screaming out of the break room.

YOUNG WOMAN
 SOMEBODY BOILED KYLE!

The Exies' dark acoustic cover of "Once in a Lifetime" fades
 up as we...

FADE TO:

DANNY'S HORRIBLE NIGHT --

A nightmare of bleary, dizzy excess...

...at a bar, Aerosmith fans partying like reckless idiots, pounding him on the back as Danny downs shot after shot...he tries to get up, but they push him back down...

...a row of fans drunkenly shouting Aerosmith tunes...Danny in the middle of them, miserable, not singing...

...a pair of GROUPIES pressing their breasts into Danny's face, begging him to sign them...instead, he VOMITS under the table...another round of drinks appears in front of him...

...in the bathroom, Danny looks around in desperation, climbs out the window...he drops to the ground and runs off...

FADE TO:

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE (REAL WORLD) - DAWN

Sunrise through the kitchen window. Alison's already up. Or maybe she never went to bed. She yanks dishes out of the dishwasher and puts them away, anything to keep herself busy.

She fumbles the silverware, spilling forks and knives to the floor, and kneels to get them, fighting to hold it together.

She looks up -- Lucas stands in the doorway in his pajamas.

LUCAS

When is Daddy coming home?

ALISON

Soon, honey.

LUCAS

Did the boogeyman get him?

Alison doesn't look so sure as she pulls her son into a hug.

ALISON

No, the boogeyman didn't get him.
Go back to bed.

Lucas runs out and Alison turns back to the silverware...

...a breeze flutters her hair. She stops, turns. That's the second time. She stands up and follows it into the hall...

...to the basement door. She pulls it open. A beat.

BASEMENT

It's dark down here, unnaturally still. Danny's crappy man cave looks like a museum display. Alison descends the stairs. The floor is still damp from the washer explosion.

ALISON

Danny?

She flips a switch, and that sad little string of jalapeno lights turns on with a dull orange glow. She turns in a circle, examining the room.

Something's odd about that area under the stairs. She walks over for a closer look...

...there, where the wall is supposed to be, is the bottom of that shaft instead. Alison steps in, looks up.

After a moment, she begins to climb.

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE (MAN WORLD) - DAWN

The storm grate opens and Alison's head pops out, into Danny's world. She pulls herself up, brushing away loose dirt, and looks around. Spots the water tower.

This is definitely a different place.

She walks to the front, taking in this strange world. The neighbors in the hot tub wave to her -- not sure what else to do, she waves back.

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - SAME

Alison enters cautiously, examining her house with a mix of amazement and fear. She runs a hand along the leather sofa, scans the photos on the wall.

Then turns as someone bounces downstairs...

...Allie. In sporty tennis whites, racket over her shoulder.

ALLIE

I'm going for my lesson, so you better watch out next time we --

She sees Alison and freezes. They stare at each other. Simultaneously brush a lock of hair behind their ear.

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE (MAN WORLD) - DAWN

Danny stumbles home in the early morning light. He's a wreck, hungover and exhausted. It's been a shitty night.

Up and down the street, ALL THE MEN IN HIS NEIGHBORHOOD stumble home, ties loose and shirts untucked, like an invasion of zombies.

Danny walks up the steps to his house...

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

...and stops. *Allie and Alison sit side by side*, waiting for him. Alison looks furious, Allie -- a little scared.

Busted. Danny looks back and forth between them.

DANNY

So...have you two met?

Alison doesn't say a word. Allie leans forward to Danny.

ALLIE

Is she really me?

(whispers)

How did I get so mean?

DANNY

Okay, this is obviously a weird situation for everyone, so why don't we all take a moment --

Alison finally speaks, her voice low.

ALISON

So this is what you want?

DANNY

(gesturing at them both)

Well, not this, exactly...

ALISON

You know what I'm talking about. Are you happier here?

A long pause as Danny considers the last few days.

DANNY

I don't know.

ALLIE

You're not happy, baby? Did I do something?

Lucas runs in, tossing a baseball. He stops, looks up at his two mothers, extremely confused. Without a word he turns, walks to the foyer, and climbs into the grandfather clock.

ALISON

What is it about this place?
What's so much better that would
make you walk out on us?

DANNY

I haven't walked out on you.
(gestures to Allie)
I have you right here.

Alison points at Allie, livid.

ALISON

If you have ME --
(points at herself)
-- then what is SHE doing here?

DANNY

I don't...understand the
question...

ALISON

NEITHER DO I! You think I know how
to handle this? You think they
cover this sort of thing on Oprah?!

Taking a breath, she tries to settle herself down.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Just answer me this. Did you sleep
with her?

DANNY

(beat)
...would that be a problem?

ALISON

Did-you-sleep-with-her?

Danny pauses, not sure if he should answer. Unfortunately for him, Allie has no such qualms.

ALLIE

Not much sleep, if you catch my drift. Wait, of course you catch my drift, it's your drift.

(lights up)

You know this could be amazing. We could go on tour or something, read each other's minds.

Devastated, Alison gets up to leave. Danny goes after her.

DANNY

Wait -- Allie --

ALLIE

-- yes?

DANNY

-- no, not --

(gathers himself)

Alison. She's you. When I slept with her, I was sleeping with you --

ALISON

Only better.

DANNY

-- yes. NO.

ALLIE

(helping to explain)

Like a threesome.

This woman is a blank canvas. Alison shakes her head at Allie in disbelief.

ALISON

Do you get anything?

ALLIE

Um, yes. Laid.

DANNY

This is ridiculous. You can't be jealous of yourself --

ALISON

This -- thing -- is not me! This is an empty shell of me with too much makeup!

ALLIE

And firmer boobs, from the looks of it.

ALISON

Make her stop talking.

DANNY

Allie, could you --

Say no more -- Allie mimes zipping her lip. Alison stares.

ALISON

So this is what you wish I was.

DANNY

Sometimes, yes! Sometimes it would be nice if things were just easier!

ALISON

Who told you it was supposed to be easy? You make your choices and you do your best and you accept what comes!

DANNY

Well maybe I don't want to accept! Maybe I don't want to settle for just okay!

A tear wells in Alison's eye. That hurt.

ALISON

Well you don't have to.
(turns to leave)
You can have her.

ALLIE

(raises arms in victory)
Yay...?

Alison heads for the door, holding back tears. Danny runs after her.

DANNY

Alison --
(she turns)
Things used to be different with us. Do you remember?
(beat)
What happened?

ALISON

Life happened. You just can't handle it.

She turns and walks out, leaving Danny standing there. He drops his head.

DANNY

Did I just make a huge mistake?

He turns to Allie, smiling sweetly at him.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I really don't know what I'm supposed to do here.

ALLIE

Whatever you think is best.

That's not an answer. Danny stares at her.

DANNY

This whole thing that just happened...my wife...
(Allie nods)
...you're not bothered by that.

ALLIE

Do you want me to be?

She tries to embrace him, but Danny pulls away, reeling.

DANNY

This isn't right...I never wanted it to be like this...

ALLIE

Danny, what's the matter?

DANNY

Please, I'm asking you, I need your help. Talk to me, what do I do?

Slowly, Allie's smile fades into uncertainty.

ALLIE

I...I don't --

She laughs, nervous. Danny looks at her in shock. She's not CAPABLE of having this conversation with him.

A beat, as he realizes --

DANNY

I have to go now.

He turns and runs out the door after Alison.

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE (MAN WORLD) - CONTINUOUS

Storm clouds are gathering, a few droplets of rain. Danny runs out onto the street --

-- but immediately skids to a stop as cars screech up to the curb and the Aerosmith fans from last night jump out.

AEROSMITH FAN

Where'd you go last night, Danny?

Danny glances around. It's more than just those Aerosmith idiots now. An entire MOB has started to gather: groupies, clients, street racers, Sultry Coworker...

SULTRY COWORKER

You're not trying to get away from us, are you?

Danny backs away from them...coming from all directions...

AEROSMITH FAN

We just want to be with you.

...he turns and sprints down the street.

EXT. SUBURBIA (MAN WORLD) - DAY

Danny races through backyards, across streets, the mob on his tail, shouting after him.

He darts across the t-ball field -- one of the parents jumps to their feet, pointing, and suddenly T-BALL PARENTS AND THEIR KIDS are all running after him too...

...he rounds a corner and dives into a DUMPSTER to hide...the mob goes streaming past.

Danny pops out, looks around...thank god. But as he's climbing out of the dumpster, a HOMELESS GUY charges over. Danny double-takes: IT'S REEMS.

REEMS

That's mine, get your own dumpster!

And at the noise, the mob turns. *There he is...* they come running back in his direction. Shit -- with a regretful glance at Reems, climbing into his dumpster, Danny runs off.

The rain starts to come down.

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE (MAN WORLD) - CONTINUOUS

Danny comes sprinting down the block, running for his life. As the mob rounds the corner and rumbles his way, he leaps up the steps to his house, slips inside --

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

-- and locks the door, heaving.

He listens to footsteps on the porch, jumps as HEAVY POUNDING on the door begins. He steps back.

Allie comes out of the bedroom, no makeup, a ratty robe, her hair mussed up like Alison's.

ALLIE
Is this better?

The SMASH OF GLASS -- they're coming in the windows.

ALLIE (CONT'D)
I don't know if this is like a
fetish or something, but...

Arms, legs, pushing through...the door looks like it may not hold much longer...Danny looks around frantically...

...the basement door. He dives in and pulls the door shut.

BASEMENT

For a moment, safely away from the mob, it's quiet, safe. Danny descends the steps, looking around in wonder.

Down here, his man cave looks just the way he always pictured it: elaborate home theater with recessed lighting, polished bar along the wall, signed sports jerseys in frames...

...and in the corner under the steps, illuminated by track lighting, that same shaft, with the ladder going up. Danny pauses. What would happen if...?

He tentatively walks over...and begins to climb.

EXT. BACKYARD (2ND MAN WORLD) - DAY

Danny pushes up through the grate and climbs out...into the man world *inside* his man world. It's not raining here.

His yard is AstroTurf. The water tower now reads: "WE LIKE 'EM SHAVED" -- you can guess the picture.

Dread rising, Danny walks around to the front.

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE (2ND MAN WORLD) - SAME

This place is darker, more ominous, more masculine.

The homes are modern, cold. In every driveway sits a studly car -- a Ferrari, a monster truck with gun rack, a Harley. That bar on the corner that used to be a church is now a STRIP CLUB, a neon sign proclaiming "Fully Nude!"

Danny starts to sweat. He looks over -- next door, Norm has Sharon by the hair and is dragging her across the lawn.

NORM

Are you not listening, bitch? I said get in the damn house!

He looks up at Danny with a grin -- HIS FACE IS NEANDERTHAL.

Horrified, Danny backs away, up the steps to his own house. He hesitates for a moment -- then pushes open the door...

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE (2ND MAN WORLD) - CONTINUOUS

Standing in the living room is Allie...dressed like a porn star in leather corset, gaudy makeup, and teased hair.

ALLIE

(strikes a pose)

What are you in the mood for tonight babe? Me...

SULTRY COWORKER steps forward, also dressed like a porn star.

SULTRY COWORKER

...or your other wife...

ALLIE

...or both of us together?

His OTHER WIFE? Danny stares at them as they giggle, caress each other.

DANNY
I don't want...

ALLIE
No sex? How about food?

From nowhere, she produces a PLATE OF WINGS AND A MUG OF BEER. Sultry Girl pulls out a WHOLE CAKE.

SULTRY COWORKER
Food?

ALLIE
We'll make sure to shut up while you eat.

Danny spins away from them --

-- at the dining room table, a 5-YEAR-OLD CARBON COPY OF HIMSELF gnaws on a chicken wing, a hunk of cake in his other hand. Same hair, same clothes...oh, god...

LUCAS
Shut up while I'm eating!

Danny looks around wildly...then stops: the basement door is open, as if it's waiting for him.

He's scared now, but he can't stop himself. He walks over.

BASEMENT

This man cave is cruder than the last. Animal heads on the walls, a dented keg where the bar used to be, a stripper pole with an ACTUAL STRIPPER gyrating on it. Danny pays no attention, blowing right by her to the stairs.

He peers under...yup, there's the shaft. Afraid of what he's going to find but needing to know, Danny starts to climb...

MEANWHILE:

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE (REAL WORLD) - AT THE SAME TIME

Tears streaming down her face, Alison throws clothes into a suitcase. Lucas watches from the bed.

ALISON

Get your suitcase out, we're gonna go see grandma and grandpa for a little while.

LUCAS

Are we going to wait for Daddy?

ALISON

(chokes on her words)
Not this time, sweetie.

BACK TO:

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE (3RD MAN WORLD) - CONTINUOUS

This world is surreal, frightening. The sky is a different color. Danny looks around, almost afraid to move.

Everywhere he looks -- unfiltered, primal masculinity. Fistfights on the corner. Women running topless through the streets, some laughing maniacally, some crying, as simian-faced men chase them around, ride them piggyback.

On the corner, Reems wears a miniskirt and heels, his makeup smeared with tears. A CRACK PIPE dangling from his fingers.

REEMS

Ten dollars gets you heaven, ten dollars gets you heaven...

Then...they spot Danny. A HUSH overtakes the entire block. Slowly a murmur builds...*Danny...Danny...*

Dizzy, he stumbles up the steps to his house, tripping, picking himself back up, and goes inside...

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE (3RD MAN WORLD) - CONTINUOUS

...and stops. DANNY'S MOTHER, 60, stands there in a silk nightgown with a funny smile on her face.

DANNY

Mom? Where's Allie?

She grabs his face and *pulls him in for a kiss*, reaching for him with her tongue -- Danny shoves her away.

DANNY (CONT'D)

What the hell mom?!

DANNY'S MOTHER

It's okay, honey, we don't have to worry about your father anymore.

(seductive smile)

You killed him.

Oh my god... Danny spins away from this Freudian nightmare, heaving...heading for the basement...

DANNY'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

Who's Allie?

BASEMENT

We're right behind him as he plows through CHILDHOOD MEMENTOS that now fill the basement...a stuffed giraffe, a letterman's jacket, a vintage Playboy, a pair of Spiderman Underoos...

...past CANDID SNAPSHOTS FROM HIS LIFE plastered on the walls...his first kiss...getting beat up on the playground...spying on his parents having sex...

There it is. The shaft. Danny crawls in, looks up...but all he can see is black. Trembling, he begins to climb...

THE GRATE CLANGS OPEN --

-- and Danny pokes his head up.

It's almost too dark to see. We can just barely make out the walls of a BLACK PIT. Nowhere to go from here.

And then he sees it: something's watching him from the darkness. It inches forward, gradually becoming visible...

It's a person. A hairy, filthy, fat naked beady-eyed monster. But there's no mistaking it, as Danny's eyes go wide with horror...

...IT'S HIM.

Danny SHRIEKS -- and loses his footing, his fingers scrabbling to pull the grate shut -- he FALLS --

-- landing with a THUD at the bottom of the shaft. He leaps to his feet and tears out of there.

We linger behind...panning back up to that grate...

...as TWO FILTHY FINGERS curl around it, yanking it open...

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE (3RD MAN WORLD) - CONTINUOUS

Danny slams the basement door, shaking. His mother waits for him. Danny looks up at her, devastated.

DANNY

I'm a monster.

DANNY'S MOTHER

Oh sweetheart, you're not a monster...

(caresses his cheek)

You're a man.

That sends chills down his spine. He runs out.

3RD MAN WORLD --

Danny races over to the storm grate, throws it open, climbs down as fast as he can...

2ND MAN WORLD --

...emerging in the basement, one level up -- he scrambles up the stairs and out to the backyard, climbs down the grate...

1ST MAN WORLD --

...emerging one level up. He races upstairs.

It's pouring rain outside now. The mob is long gone, the house demolished, rain coming through the broken windows. Allie still waits for him expectantly.

ALLIE

Danny?

He rushes right past her, straight out to the back.

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE (MAN WORLD) - CONTINUOUS

Ignoring the rain, Danny runs into the backyard, headed straight for the storm grate...

...WHICH IS GONE.

He looks around, his breath quickening. Nothing but mud and grass. It's vanished -- no way home.

With a cry of anguish, he drops to his knees and starts to dig, attacking the ground with his bare hands.

Nothing. He pounds helplessly at the mud, sobbing. Norm runs up to the fence, covering himself from the downpour.

NORM

Are you crazy? What are you doing?

DANNY

I want to go home!

NORM

You are home!

DANNY

This isn't my home! This isn't my LIFE! I don't want this anymore!

He spins to Norm, the rain pelting his face.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Everything that matters, I threw it away! And for what? Because I thought I could do better?

He rolls onto his back.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I miss my wife. I miss my son. He needs me.

(laughs through his tears)

He always wears these stupid gloves, I hate those things...and Alison...she can bore a hole through your skull talking to you, but the thing is, she's usually right. And that's annoying as hell, and god do I love it. I loved it all...

He lets out a rueful laugh as the irony sinks in.

DANNY (CONT'D)

...and I left it all behind...to be *happy*.

Norm kneels down next to Danny, holding an umbrella over the both of them.

NORM

Happiness is a state of mind, Danny.

Danny opens his eyes. Looks up at Norm.

NORM (CONT'D)

Just something I say, dude, we're not gonna make out or anything.

(glances over)

Did you know you had a storm grate in your backyard?

Danny looks over...the storm grate is back. He scrambles over to it and throws it open, weeping with relief.

He turns back to Norm. This is it. He digs through his pocket and pulls out a set of car keys, presses them into Norm's hand.

DANNY

I want you to have these.

His Mustang? Norm looks at the keys in shock, as Danny pulls out a second set of keys from his other pocket --

DANNY (CONT'D)

-- and these.

He starts down the storm grate. Pauses to look up at Norm one last time. And smiles at his friend.

DANNY (CONT'D)

See you on the flip side.

Then he's gone. Norm looks at the storm grate. At his two new sets of car keys. He starts to chuckle.

NORM

What a douche.

Stuffing the keys in his pocket, he walks back inside.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT (REAL WORLD) - DAY

He's back. Danny looks around his busted-up, mildewed, piece-of-shit man cave with utter joy.

He walks through the room, embracing the La-Z-Boy, running a loving hand along his homemade shelf -- it collapses beneath his touch -- he just smiles. Home is where the heart is.

He takes the steps two at a time, bursting into the hallway --

DANNY

Alison?

No answer. He bounds upstairs to the

BEDROOM.

Empty. Drawers half-opened, closet ransacked. Danny goes pale. She's gone.

He glances out the window, where next door, old suicidal Norm is back to watering his lawn. He bolts down the stairs.

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - SAME

Norm looks up with some apprehension as Danny comes flying out the front door and races towards him.

DANNY

Norm! Have you seen Alison?

A beat. Norm shuffles, looks at the grass.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Not asking for a kidney Norm.

NORM

I'm not really supposed to talk to you anymore. 'Cause of the other night.

DANNY

Norm. Where'd she go?

Norm hesitates. Then, not wanting to get caught, he tries to point Danny in the right direction with a subtle nod and glance. Danny follows his eyes.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Your house?

Norm shakes his head no, nods "farther."

DANNY (CONT'D)

(spitting out locations)
The movies? Macys? The train station? The water tower?

Norm tries to keep up, shaking his head -- no -- no -- yes -- no --

DANNY (CONT'D (CONT'D))
FOR GOD'S SAKE, NORM!

NORM
The train station. But you can't
say I told you, you have no idea
what she's capable of --

DANNY
The train...
(to Norm, determined)
I need you to drive me.

Norm gives Danny a helpless look...he just can't.

NORM
Danny...

DANNY
Norm? Yes you can. Look at me.

He grabs Norm by the shoulders, fire in his eyes.

DANNY (CONT'D)
There comes a time in every man's
life when he has to face himself in
the mirror and say, who am I? What
do I stand for? Am I ready to do
the right thing, grab life by the
horns and make it my bitch? Norm,
that time for you is now.

(points down the street)
The only thing standing between me
and my family is a twelve-and-a-
half-minute car ride, if you take
Elm Street to avoid the traffic.
And I'm not just asking you to do
it because I need you to be a hero,
Norm, I'm asking because deep down,
I know you want to be that hero.

(triumphant)
So...will you drive me?

SLAM TO:

MOMENTS LATER

Danny waits in the yard as Norm plods out the front door.

NORM
Yeah, she says no.

Dammit, Norm...but Danny's not about to be stopped now. Grabbing him by the arm, he hustles him down the steps --

-- and over to his MINIVAN, Norm protesting the whole way. Danny shoves him into the driver's seat and runs around to the passenger side.

INT. MINIVAN - CONTINUOUS

He jumps in and slams the door shut.

DANNY

Drive.

Norm looks at Danny, not sure who he should be afraid of more. At last he hesitantly starts the car, looks over his shoulder to back it out of the driveway.

NORM

You should probably know I still
have mixed feelings --

Danny JAMS HIS FOOT ON THE GAS, sending the minivan squealing backwards into the street -- through a neighbor's fence --

-- he throws it into drive and punches the gas again -- and they're off.

EXT. SUBURBIA - DAY

A placid suburban neighborhood. Peaceful, calm.

Everyone looks up as Norm's minivan TEARS AROUND A CORNER ON TWO WHEELS, bounces roughshod over the curb and back out into the street, narrowly missing oncoming traffic, then gone.

Everyone goes back to what they were doing. Peaceful, calm.

INT. MINIVAN - CONTINUOUS

Norm clutches the steering wheel for dear life as Danny practically stands on the accelerator.

NORM

TWENTY-FIVE MILE-AN-HOUR ZONE!
TWENTY-FIVE MILE-AN-HOUR ZONE!

DANNY

Just get me there, you can drive
home as slow as you want.

The minivan shudders as it slams over another curb.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Come on, buddy, you can't look me
in the eye and tell me there's not
a little part of you that's
enjoying this..

NORM

THERE'S NOT A LITTLE PART OF ME
THAT'S ENJOYING THIS!

DANNY

See, but you didn't look me in the
eye, so...

The minivan goes careening across the median, flattening
bushes and tearing up the grass. They bounce back into the
street, leaving a smoking trail of rubber behind them.

NORM

Sharon's going to kill me if I
scratch the Odyssey...

They swipe a parked car -- and the Odyssey's side mirror
SMACKS off. Oh jeez...

DANNY

Quit worrying about Sharon! Do you
really even care about this piece
of shit?

NORM

Okay, when you carjack someone, I
think it's astonishingly bad form
to insult the vehicle --

DANNY

I mean seriously? A minivan? Or
was it Sharon, making another
decision for you?

Danny's foot is still on the accelerator as they approach a
busy intersection.

NORM

It was a sensible investment that
we both -- Danny, intersection --

Up ahead, the street light turns YELLOW. Norm tries to
brake, but Danny fights him off.

DANNY

We can make it! Take the light!

NORM

Are you crazy?

DANNY

Take a chance! Make your own
decision! Are you married or dead?

NORM

I -- I don't know...

...skidding towards the intersection...

DANNY

That yellow light is Sharon, Norm!
Every day, telling you what to do,
what to think, how to feel! Is
that how you're going to live your
life? Stopped at the yellow light?
(deadly serious)
Take the light.

Norm turns to Danny, eyes wide.

NORM

I hate this car so bad.

...he pulls his foot off the brake and STOMPS DOWN ON DANNY'S
FOOT, PUNCHING THE GAS -- the minivan leaps into the
intersection as the light turns RED --

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

-- cars skid sideways, horns blaring, as Norm rumbles
straight through the middle of it all --

-- a SEMI cuts them off, they're dead -- but Norm whips the
minivan into a slide, spinning sideways past the truck --

-- turning completely around as the car JUMPS THE CURB
BACKWARDS, GOES AIRBORNE --

-- and lands hard in the metro station parking lot, skidding
to a stop.

INT. MINIVAN - CONTINUOUS

Are they alive? Norm turns to Danny, shaking...

...then lets out a PRIMAL SCREAM OF TRIUMPH.

Danny pats Norm on the shoulder, way to go -- then jumps out and races for the train.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

Danny sprints onto the platform...

...just as the last car glides away. He's too late. He turns, defeated, back down the steps to the parking lot --

-- as a battered minivan screeches up next to him. Norm lowers the passenger window.

NORM

You got a vagina now, or are we going after 'em?

He grins at Danny, whose face broadens into a smile of his own...*all right*...Danny leaps into the minivan, Norm punches the gas and the minivan leaps forward --

-- right off its axles -- and smashes on the asphalt.

A beat. So that's not going to work. Danny looks around -- behind him, the snarled intersection, police officers picking their way towards them through the mess of traffic...

...in front of him, HORSE STABLES. Not a vintage Mustang, but it'll do -- Danny jumps out of the van, leaps the fence and runs for the stables.

INT. TRAIN CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Alison sits lost in thought, Lucas next to her, chewing on his gloves as he looks out the window.

LUCAS

Daddy!

ALISON

I know, honey, me too. But we're gonna work it out, okay? I'm gonna make sure you get to see him all the time.

LUCAS

I can see him now!

ALISON

(smiles)

I can too. And I promise to always keep the good memories of him in my heart.

LUCAS

I can see him in my eyes!

Wait -- what? Alison turns to the window...

...as Danny comes galloping into view, riding a horse for all he's worth, looking for all the world like one of those manly action heroes we saw at the beginning.

ON THE HORSE - DANNY

Scans the train for his family. THERE'S LUCAS, waving at him in the window -- Danny spurs his horse closer.

DANNY

ALISON!

Alison's stunned face appears in the window. Bouncing along on his horse, Danny manages a smile and a wave.

IN THE TRAIN - ALISON

Stares at Danny, dumbstruck. Lucas waves back, delighted.

LUCAS

Hi Daddy! I like your horse!
(to Alison)

I told you we should wait for him.

Other passengers turn to see what all the commotion is about. They gather along one side of the train to watch as Danny pulls alongside, stands up in the saddle...

...everyone gasps as he leaps for the passenger car, grabs a railing -- slams against the side of the train and gets pulled under, vanishing below the window.

ALISON

Danny -- !

But there's nothing she can do. She presses her face to the glass, looks everywhere for him, but he's gone...

...suddenly the compartment door opens and Danny limps in. Bruised and battered, but very much there. He pauses, cracks a dislocated finger back into place.

Everyone murmurs as he marches down the aisle toward Alison.

DANNY

Close your eyes...and imagine your perfect life.

(a passenger complies)

Not you, I'm talking to my wife.

Passengers turn to watch Alison, fighting to keep her composure as Danny draws near.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Now throw out all the easy parts. All the fantasy, all the unrealistic expectations, because they're not part of it. If you still like what you're left with, you're probably onto something.

The EMERGENCY BRAKES ENGAGE -- Danny pitches forward, his face bouncing off the back of a seat -- he drops to the floor...but pulls himself up and keeps coming.

DANNY (CONT'D)

See what I mean? Life is messy, and it's awkward, and it's not always fun, but it's real, and finding our way through it together is the best thing I could ever dream up.

(beat)

I always had everything I wanted.

Alison looks away, a tear sliding down her cheek. In the distance, SQUAD CARS storm across the field toward the train.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I know I hurt you. I can't take it back, but I can tell you that I will never leave you again. And I won't let you go.

(beat)

Also if it helps, I'm in a reasonable amount of pain myself right now. Riding a horse is way more crotch-punishing than it looks.

Alison lets out a sniffly laugh.

DANNY (CONT'D)

But more than anything, I want you to have the life you deserve, and if you've still got that picture in your mind, and I'm still in there somewhere...

(beat)

Well, I just hope I'm still in there somewhere. Because when I picture my perfect life...

(beat)

You're all I see.

All eyes on Alison as she looks at Danny, teary-eyed...then gets up and pulls him in for a kiss --

-- just as police flood the compartment and tackle Danny to the floor.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Neighbors step out of their homes to watch as a squad car pulls up, and Danny, Alison, Lucas -- and Norm -- climb out.

Danny walks his family to the door as Sharon comes charging out of her house, straight at Norm.

SHARON

Some example you're setting for our impressionable teenage daughter! I mean are you freaking serious, horse theft? Who does that?

NORM

I also wrecked the car a little.

He doesn't seem at all perturbed. Jesus Christ -- Sharon throws her hands to the sky.

SHARON

What's a little? Is it less then or equal to your stupidity? Why don't you ANSWER ME when I'm --

NORM

(finger to her lips)
Shhhhhhhhhh. I'm home now.

Surprised, Sharon shuts up. Smiling calmly, Norm walks past her into his house, a man in full. With a glance back at Danny, Sharon follows.

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - SAME

Danny leads his family inside. They all stand in the dark foyer for a moment.

ALISON

Okay, it's been a long day. Lucas,
let's get ready for bed.

She takes his hand and they go upstairs, leaving Danny alone. He looks around. It's good to be home.

But...wait. Something's not right. Danny flips on a light: it looks like an animal got loose in here. Curtains torn down, cushions ripped open, dirt and hair all over the place.

KITCHEN

The kitchen is *destroyed*. Garbage tipped over, the fridge ransacked, food everywhere, broken dishes on the floor.

Danny looks around in shock. He spots greasy handprints on the counter. Pauses. Then, dreading the answer, he puts his own hand down on one of them...

...IT'S A PERFECT MATCH. He looks up, alarmed -- *Alison*.

UPSTAIRS

Alison tucks Lucas into bed and tiptoes out into the hall.

She gasps in surprise and pleasure as she's grabbed from behind and pressed against the wall, hands all over her...

ALISON

Oh. Quite a welcome home.

...*hairy hands*. Mauling her from behind is that MONSTROUS DOPPELGANGER from the deepest level of Danny's man cave. Cleaned up, shaved, and looking frighteningly...*just like Danny*. Alison sighs, nuzzles back.

ALISON (CONT'D)

I missed you too.

The Other Danny presses her into the wall, more urgently...

ALISON (CONT'D)
 Oh my. Getting a little rough
 there, cowboy...
 (eyes pop open)
Oh my.

She starts to turn around...mmm...

ALISON (CONT'D)
 So did you bring this wild side
 back with you? Because I kinda --

Then stops, as she looks up at...Danny?

WHAM. Danny -- the REAL Danny -- comes flying into frame,
 tackling his alter-ego to the floor.

Alison SCREAMS. Looks closer -- two Dannys, wrestling each
 other on the landing -- she SCREAMS AGAIN.

Lucas comes running out of the bedroom -- Alison pulls him
 close. They watch, eyes wide...

...as Danny battles himself. He's furious, throwing kicks
 and haymakers with the rage of a man fighting for his life...

...but his alter-ego fights dirty. He slams Danny's head
 through the banister -- rips off a broken chunk of banister
 and stabs at him -- Danny just manages to roll away.

Brandishing his weapon, the Other Danny backs Danny down the
 stairs. Alison grabs a nearby vase and slips up behind the
 Other Danny, about to smash it over his head, when he turns --

THE OTHER DANNY
 Honey, what are you doing?

Alison hesitates -- and the Other Danny grabs her with a
 sinister grin. With a roar, Danny charges up the stairs and
 piledrives the monster over the railing -- GOING WITH HIM --

-- they crash to the floor, demolishing the coffee table.
 Groaning, they stagger to their feet...and go in again.

Alison inches down the steps, not sure what to do --

-- fists flying, slamming each other down the hallway, locked
 in an indistinguishable clinch, no way of telling who's who
 as they topple -- through the basement door --

ALISON
 Danny!

BASEMENT

-- Danny and the Other Danny TUMBLE DOWN THE STAIRS, locked in their embrace -- crashing to the ground --

-- a HEAD SLAMS against the washing machine --

-- and suddenly the fighting stops. With a mechanical hum, the washer churns to life. Fixed.

Alison and Lucas skid to the top of the steps and stop, peering down into the basement. Who won?

Slowly, painfully, Danny gets to his feet, as the Other Danny slumps to the floor, unconscious.

Danny turns to Alison and Lucas, holds out his arms -- they rush down the stairs --

-- Alison SMASHES A VASE OVER HIS HEAD. He staggers back as she reaches for a hammer --

DANNY

Wait, wait -- it's me!

ALISON

Prove it!

DANNY

I wouldn't mind some freshly canned peaches!

Alison considers. That works. She drops the hammer and throws herself into his arms, kissing him furiously. Lucas joins them, and Danny hugs his family close.

LUCAS

Daddy, can I sleep in my own bed tonight?

DANNY

What about the boogeyman?

Lucas glances over at the unconscious Other Danny.

LUCAS

He doesn't scare me anymore.

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE (MAN WORLD) - NIGHT

Straining with all his might, Danny pulls the unconscious body of the Other Danny out of the storm grate and rolls him onto the grass.

That'll do. Brushing off his hands, he takes one last look around at his fantasy world.

ALISON (O.S.)
How's it going up there?

He looks back down and smiles...Alison stands at the bottom of the shaft, back in the real world, looking up at him.

DANNY
Eh, nothing special.

Now it's Alison's turn to smile, as Danny climbs back down.

We follow him down as he crawls out of the shaft, takes a plank of wood, and nails it over the entrance, sealing us in BLACKNESS...

FADE TO:

EXT. DANNY'S NEW OFFICE - DAY

Main Street, Suburbia. Quiet, peaceful, sunny.

Danny steps out of a two-story office complex, backpack over his shoulder. The double glass doors are etched with several businesses, including a new one: THE GRAVES GROUP -- FINANCIAL PLANNING FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES.

He holds the door open as that Young Woman follows him out, carrying Kyle the Iguana. She hugs him gratefully.

YOUNG WOMAN
I can't believe we're really going.

DANNY
I can. You've told me so much about it I could be a tour guide.
(to Kyle)
And you. Go learn some Spanish.

The Young Woman giggles and beams, holds Kyle out to Danny, who dutifully scratches the creature under the chin...Kyle shows no sign of liking or disliking it, but whatever...

He waves goodbye, and turns to a nearby BIKE RACK.

As he unlocks his shiny new mountain bike, Carl Reems comes running up, out of breath.

REEMS

Hey. Oh, shit, am I too late? I mean are you still open?

Danny stares, surprised, as Reems bends to catch his breath.

REEMS (CONT'D)

Sorry, I couldn't get away from --
(jabs a thumb behind him)
Well, you know.

DANNY

What do you want, Carl?

Reems looks up at him, plaintive. Then jams a STACK OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS into Danny's hands.

REEMS

A bed and breakfast. Nothing big, just a place where folks can enjoy long walks and homemade currant scones. Upstate somewhere, maybe?

Slowly, a smile creeps across Danny's face. He pats Reems on the back and pulls out his keys, leading Reems back inside.

DANNY

Come on in.

The Rolling Stones' "You Can't Always Get What You Want" fades up...

EXT. SUBURBIA - DAY

Danny coasts his bike down the block, breeze in his hair...

...past the ball park...

...down a side street...

...that water tower off in the distance...

Somehow suburban monotony doesn't seem so terrible anymore. For the first time, he looks...content.

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - DAY

The sun is low in the sky as Danny parks his bike in the driveway and walks around to the back.

In the backyard, there's a cookout going on. Norm mans the grill, animatedly telling a story, while Sharon and Alison sip wine in lawn chairs.

Lucas tosses a baseball back and forth with a teenaged girl who can only be BRELEIGH-ANNE. They all wave hi to Danny, who smiles and goes to join them...

...as we pull back from this picturesque scene...

...into the house...down the stairs to the basement...

...which has been transformed: there's the flat screen, sectional sofa, working mini-fridge and shelves that look pretty damned good, actually...

...but along one of those shelves are rows of CANNING JARS, filled with peaches...

...on another shelf are children's books...stacks of Sports Illustrated next to stacks of Cosmopolitan...on the floor, toys, crayon drawings...an ironing board built into the wall next to the washer and dryer...

...and that area under the stairs? Sealed over with drywall. Hanging over it, a brand new framed "WESTERN" PHOTO, Danny front and center in his goofy cowboy outfit...

...smiling happily this time.

The Rolling Stones take us out, as we...

FADE TO BLACK.