

# Lattes and Limo Rides

A Screenplay

by

Christopher Rodgers

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INT. LIMO DAY

CLOSE UP: Bottom of glass. It is filled with a clear, bubbly liquid and a couple ice cubes.

TOM (O.S.)  
(young but tired)  
Palmaroy, a great man once said, life is  
hard and short like a bodybuilding elf.

The CAMERA follows the glass as it is lifted and brought to Tom's face. The glass blocks his face as he takes a sip.

The sun beats down on the car but can invade the dark tinted windows. The CAMERA PULLS BACK and we can see TOM CRUISE (27). He is not the Tom Cruise you normally associate with the name. There is nothing really overly distinguishable about this Tom Cruise. He hides his eyes behind a pair of sunglasses.

PALMAROY (O.S.)  
(Dennis Hopper's voice)  
Truer words have never been spoken.

We watch Tom from Palmaroy's P.O.V, but we still haven't seen what he looks like.

PALMAROY (O.S.)  
Where's your reality right now?

TOM  
(rolls eyes and  
sighs)  
It's in the bottom of this glass. What  
you call this drink again?

PALMAROY (O.S.)  
Gin and tonic.

Tom downs the drink and crunches on the ice.

PALMAROY (O.S.)  
(con't)  
Tom, if you want to be a celebrity you  
gotta be able to do interviews. Your  
birth certificate says your name is Tom  
Cruise. You got to be Tom Cruise.

TOM  
(excited)  
Hell, yeah I'm Tom Cruise. Ask away.

PALMAROY (O.S.)  
So, tell us about your childhood?

Tom stares out the window pondering the question.

TOM

My childhood? Well, my parents own the Woodbridge Valley Mall. Divorced when I was ten.

(pause)

How's that?

PALMAROY (O.S.)

It's a start. The divorce stuff plays better on the Oprahish shows. Keep going.

TOM

Ah, my mom got the mall in the settlement. She remarried. In fact...

(fake interview laugh)

It's a funny story really. She married Vincent Bartucci.

PALMAROY (O.S.)

*Sin Vinnie?* The mobster?

TOM

(doing shtick)

It's a funny story really. Damn! I just said that.

(beat)

Anyway, my mom married into the mob a few years back and my new thirty-five year old brother was a made man. So when I stepped outta line he didn't hit me. He put a hit on me.

Tom expects a laugh but receives none.

TOM

Not funny?

PALMAROY (O.S.)

Tom you're not a comedian. You're interesting, not funny.

Tom gazes out the window. He looks frustrated.

TOM

This shit's tough.

(looks out

the window)

Where is this? Where are we?

PALMAROY (O.S.)

Indiana.

TOM

Indiana? Never been.

PALMAROY (O.S.)

You've never left the state of New Jersey  
until this week.

TOM

Yeah, well I'm halfway to. . . How do  
ya say it? La-La-Land?

Tom looks down at his empty glass.

PALMAROY (O.S.)

Need a refill?

TOM

Ah yeah, but something warm.

PALMAROY (O.S.)

Latte?

TOM

Latte.

Tom's smiles.

TOM

(yells)

Starbucks run!

The limo slows and pulls into the parking lot.

TOM

Want anything Palmaroy?

PALMAROY (O.S.)

No. You know I can't drink that  
shit.

Tom shuffles his feet as the car comes to a stop. The CAMERA pans down to find his feet buried in about three dozen empty Starbucks cups laying on the floor. Tom opens the door and lets in an explosion of sunlight. Clumsily, he pulls himself out of the car, bringing a number of the cups with him.

Tom shoots a glance back into the car.

WHIP PAN OVER TO REVEAL: A GOLDFISH SWIMMING IN A SMALL FISHBOWL WHICH RESTS ON THE SEAT OPPOSITE OF TOM'S. Palmaroy is a fish.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - DAY

ONE WEEK EARLIER

The cubicle is small like a fish tank. The computer monitor displays a screensaver. Junk clutters the desk. The gray swivel chair is empty.

TOM (V.O.)

The cubicle is five feet by five feet.  
Smaller than a prison cell.

The camera begins to move away from the cubicle and slowly pans down the hall. We pass cubicle after cubicle. The MEN and WOMEN are sitting at their desks. Everyone has various bandages on their bodies. All work steadily, oblivious to their wounds.

TOM (V.O.)

These are the working wounded. People  
with injuries that go unseen to the  
naked eye.

(beat)

But they can't hide it from me.

A MIDDLE-AGED BLOND has bandages wrapped around her chest.

TOM (V.O.)

Helen has a heart problem. She checked  
it in at the door. It's still sitting  
in her inbox.

The CAMERA PANS to a bloodied heart sitting on top of a stack of papers. Helen works right next to it, preoccupied.

Next, the CAMERA PANS to a TWENTY-SOMETHING MAN with bandages around his head.

TOM (V.O.)

Dave lost the right side of his brain  
some time ago. He hasn't had an original  
thought since. Funny to think he works  
in the creative department.

Next up is a FORTY-SOMETHING MAN has bandages covering his lips.

TOM (V.O.)

Excessive ass kissing.

The CAMERA continues down the hall, away from the cubicles, past the water cooler.

TOM (V.O.)

(con't)

The list goes on and on. Carpal Tunnel  
syndrome, sick building syndrome. No one  
will tell you they want a desk job as a  
kid. But chances are that's where you'll  
find them.

(beat)

And you'll find me in the copy room.

CUT TO:

INT. COPY ROOM - DAY

A copier the size of a car fills up three-quarters of the windowless room. It's loud as it shoots out several dozen sheets a minute. Shelves holding reams of paper in every size and color line the walls. Tom watches as the copier spits out sheet after sheet.

WARBLYBIRD (O.S.)

What's the word, Cruise?

MR. WARBLYBIRD - - fortish, thin and fit enters the room. Dressed in khakis and a golf shirt. His mustache covers his top lip. A smile reveals a lot of teeth. He carries a Starbucks cup in his hand.

TOM

The word? Boredom. The truth is I'd rather be bagging groceries, Mr. Warblybird. At least then I'd know what the weather's like.

Warblybird laughs uproariously. Everything about him seems loud.

WARBLYBIRD

Your sarcasm is like a good kick in the balls Tom.

(beat)

Didja know they don't have sarcasm in China? They're hard workers over there, kid.

TOM

That's cuz they're a bunch of commies. And they're all scared shitless of their bosses.

WARBLYBIRD

Their boss is their equal. Aren't you afraid of being fired?

TOM

Hell no. I'm afraid of quitting, but I pray that you fire me. Give me a reason to do something worthwhile. God knows I can't do it on my own. So you ready to can my ass?

WARBLYBIRD

No thank you. Ask for volunteers to run the company and everyone wants the company car and the latest model blond to take notes. Ask for someone to clean the shit off a toilet and everyone's playing pocketball. Are you following me?

TOM

I'm ahead of you, dude. But I'm still cleaning the shit.

Warblybird reaches into his pocket and pulls out a CD. He hands it to Tom.

Tom looks at it. It's a self-improvement tape.

WARBLYBIRD

Change your life. That's a top notch way to go about it.

Tom looks down at the CD once more. He's totally unimpressed.

TOM

(bubbly)

This'll look great on the bottom of my trashcan. Thanks.

WARBLYBIRD

(laughs)

I swear like a good kick in the balls.

Mr. Warblybird walks out and JAKE WATERMAN(30) walks in. He's tall and carries a vain air. His clothes scream Banana Republic. He's holding a stack of papers and a cup of Starbucks coffee. He sets the papers down next to the copier.

JAKE

I hate to do this to ya, but I don't do copies.

Jake turns and attempts to make a quick exit, but Tom grabs his shoulder to stop him.

TOM

(quietly)

Jake, what's the deal? What's this project? Warblybird just got me doin' copies, man. How come I can't get the 411?

JAKE

Hell, if I had the answers to that, do you think you'd be asking them?

TOM

(confused)

What?

(pause)

But I.. *I am* asking them.

JAKE

Exactly.

Tom is dumfounded. There are a few moments of silence.

JAKE

Hey, do you wanna dog? I bought a dog and I can't keep him.

TOM

Then why'd you buy it?

Jake smiles smugly.

JAKE

Because I'm fuckin' brilliant.

Jake walks over to the door and shuts it.

JAKE (con't)

I was at my parents beach house with Erin in sales. You know her?

TOM

Yeah, wears a wig 'cause of the chemo, right?

JAKE

Nah, this is a different Erin. Brand new. So I was saying, we were down the shore and my parents weren't around. Erin and I were goin' at it on my parents white leather sofa, right? Well turns out she likes it going in the back door. You know? And I'm totally down with that. But what I'm not down with is shit all over the couch. She lost control man.

TOM

What do you mean lost control?

JAKE

Dude. Her bowels? You know what bowels are? She lost them. All over the place.

TOM

You're shittin' me.

JAKE

I shit you not. It was all over the white leather. I was so pissed. I didn't know what to do. I kicked her smelly ass out and tried to clean it off. I had to stick fuckin' Vicks up my nose just so I wouldn't puke. But leather ain't a good cleaning material. I was panicking. I mean my parents were gonna be home in like an hour.

TOM

What'd you do?



JAKE

(grins smugly)

Shit man, I went to the pet store and bought a dog. When my parents came home I blamed it on him. Told 'em it was the boss's dog and I had to watch it.

TOM

They believed you?

JAKE

Fuck yeah! My dad calls the dog, Mr. Butts. How's that for irony?

TOM

That's crazy.

JAKE

So listen, you want it?

TOM

Nah, I can't even take care of myself.

JAKE

Fair enough. Well don't tell Erin we had this conversation. I'm seeing her again tonight.

TOM

Ah. Yeah, sure, whatever.

Jake exits the copy room. Tom goes back to his work.

INT. HONDA CIVIC - NIGHT

Tom is driving home from work. The road is empty. His car is cold and unadorned. He plays with the radio but is having a hard time finding anything to suit his taste.

A CELL PHONE RINGS. Tom looks over to the passenger seat. There is no phone in sight. He reaches under the seat blindly, but comes up with nothing. The phone continues to ring. Tom focuses less on the road and more on the missing phone. Finally, he is all but ignoring the road. He doesn't notice that he's now driving on the road's shoulder. He looks up to see his car hurdling towards a pole. With no time to react the car slams into the pole. Tom is knocked unconscious.

EXT. HONDA CIVIC - NIGHT

A short while passes. Tom remains unconscious in the driver's seat. A tow truck pulls up behind his car.

A skinny man with a mullet hops out of the truck. The MULLET MAN walks over to Tom's car and KNOCKS on the window.

MULLET MAN

Hey, you all right in there?

Tom stirs. The mullet man hits the window again.

MULLET MAN

Hey, you okay?

Tom nods his head wearily.

The mullet man opens the door. He reaches under Tom's arms and pulls him out of the car.

TOM

(groggy)

Are we goin' somewhere?

The mullet man stands Tom up and they walk arm-in-arm to the tow truck.

MULLET MAN

We going to the hospital, buddy.

INT. TOW TRUCK - NIGHT

Tom sits in the passenger seat of the tow truck. The mullet man hooks Tom's car to his truck. Tom watches as winch pulls his car's front tires off the ground. He seems enthralled.

The mullet man hops in the truck.

MULLET MAN

Let's rock.

TOM

(bewildered)

Where we rockin' to again?

The mullet man laughs.

MULLET MAN

The hospital, man.

TOM

(smiles)

Oh yeah.

The truck motors off.

INT. TOW TRUCK - NIGHT

The mullet man sits behind the wheel as the truck pulls up to a red light. Tom leans against the window staring at the Mullet Man at his left. He focuses on the man's mullet haircut. It is amazingly clean and shinny.

TOM

(dazed)

I really like your hair. What do  
you put in it?

The mullet man looks over to him.

MULLET MAN

Ah...nuttin special. Some conditioner.  
It ain't nuttin to get it like this.

TOM

Where'd you get it cut?

MULLET MAN

My sister cuts it. Why?

TOM

It's cool.

(pause)

You like drivin' this truck?

The light turns green. The tow truck moves loudly.

MULLET MAN

Hell ya. This thing's a fuckin' beast.  
It can tow a bus.

TOM

(reserved excitement)

There's this copier at my work. The  
Cannon Tr-12.

(beat)

It's like this truck but it makes  
copies instead of towing trucks.

MULLET MAN

Fuckin' A. I'd like to see that.  
Power fuckin' rocks man.

TOM

Power *does* fuckin' rock.

Both men smile contently and stop talking.

The tow truck pulls up in front of the hospital.

TOM

You know, I'm okay. I don't hav'ta  
go to the hospital. Really, I don't.

The mullet man smiles.

MULLET MAN

You knocked yo'self out cold back there.  
You betta get yourself checked out.

(pause)

How'd the hell you'd wreck your car anyhow?

TOM

The phone was ringing. I couldn't find it.

MULLET MAN

Goddamn cell phones. You need to get rid of that thing.

TOM

But the thing is. . .I don't even have a cell phone. It kept ringing, but I don't know why or where. Maybe it was the radio. I dunno.

Tom hops out.

EXT. TOW TRUCK - DAY

Tom closes the door and notices the spelling on the side of the door; tow truck is spelt "toe truck".

Tom reopens the door.

TOM

Did'ja know you spelt "tow" wrong on your door.

MULLET MAN

How'd I spell it?

TOM

T..O..E.

MULLET MAN

Ain't that how you spell toe?

TOM

Right. But...

(pause)

Ah forget it. Thanks for the ride.

Tom slams the door shut. The tow truck pulls away, towing Tom's car behind it.

INT. WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

INJURED PEOPLE who have done various bodily harm to themselves wait outside the emergency room. A television hangs down from the ceiling. Tom sits slouched in his chair watching TV.

A dating show begins. It is entitled "The Dating Diaries." The HOST of the show is a tan gentleman, not unlike the typical game show host.

Tom's eyes close and he falls asleep. The CAMERA ZOOMS in on the television. The host stands in a studio talking into the camera.

HOST

Welcome to another episode of the  
Dating Diaries. Every night we set up  
two single people on a blind date.  
Tonight, we have a little show we like  
to call The Cheapskate.

Tom happens to be the focus of this evening's program. The cameraman follows him to the front door of his blind date's house.

HOST(V.O.)

Our man Tom is a marketing assistant.  
He says he lives a boring existence  
and is looking for someone to show  
him a good time.

The CAMERA PANS away from the television and back to the emergency room. Tom remains asleep. The injured people seated around Tom look at him, recognizing that he is the man on the television.

The CAMERA PANS back to the television. TOM'S DATE opens the door. She is blond and pretty. She can't hide her disappointment when she sees Tom.

HOST (V.O.)

Did you catch that?

The show replays the date's disappointed look.

HOST (V.O.)

That's the look of disappointment. Guys,  
if you see that go back to the car.  
Girls, just go back inside.

Everyone in the waiting room laughs. The CAMERA PANS back to the room. Tom is stirred by the laughter. He looks up to the television and sees his date. He throws his head back in disgust.

A GREY-HAIRED LADY sitting next to him taps him on the shoulder.

GREY HAIRED LADY

You're a television star. What other  
shows have you been in?

TOM

I'm not an actor lady. That's real.

GREY HAIRED LADY

(embarrassed)

Oh my.

A NURSE walks in front of the room.

NURSE  
(shouts out)  
Tom Cruise.

Tom jumps up.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - NIGHT

Tom sits alone in an empty hospital room. He rubs his head painfully.

The door opens and DR. SEAN CONNERY (50) enters. Dr. Connery is a very distinguished looking man with a full head of white hair. He holds Tom's medical file.

DR. CONNERY  
Evening Tom. I'm Doctor Connery. Doctor  
Sean Connery. How's the noggin?

TOM  
It's kinda nasty in there, Doc.

The doctor pulls out a small flashlight and shines it into Tom's eyes.

DR. CONNERY  
When did it start? The pain that is.

TOM  
Ah, I don't know if you heard, but I  
got in a wreck.

The doctor feels Tom's scalp. He takes a step back and sits down.

DR. CONNERY  
Of course your accident brought you  
here but when did the pain begin.

TOM  
(frustrated)  
I just told you. It's started when  
my head hit the steering wheel.

Dr. Connery smiles warmly.

DR. CONNERY  
Are you happy, Tom?

TOM  
Ah, no 'cause my doctor isn't listening  
to what I'm saying.

DR. CONNERY  
Would you like to be happy more?

TOM  
Got pills or something?

DR. CONNERY  
I have something better.

Dr. Connery reaches into his pocket and pulls out a business card. He walks over to Tom and hands it to him.

The only writing on the front of the card is T.O.N.B.

TOM  
(awkwardly)  
Tooonnbbbbb.

The doctor smiles and shakes his head.

DR. CONNERY  
(dramatic)  
It's just T-O-N-B. Take Our Names Back.  
(pause)  
You see Tom there are others like you who share the same semantic disability. I myself was blessed with the name Sean Connery.

Tom's eyes widen. He finally gets it.

TOM  
Are you takin' bout my name?

DR. CONNERY  
Yes.

TOM  
Blessing? Blessing my ass. It's a friggin curse.

Dr. Connery ignores Tom's comment.

DR. CONNERY  
We can change your mind. We meet tomorrow. The address is on the back of the card. I strongly suggest you make it.  
(pause)  
It will change your life.

He then hands Tom a bottle of pills.

DR. CONNERY  
They won't make you happy, but they'll make your head feel better.

TOM  
Thanks.

Dr. Connery exits the room.

INT. WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Tom fills out some paperwork. He stands under the television. The "Dating Diaries" program is still on. It is near the end.

The CAMERA PANS up to the television. Tom can hear the television clearly from where he is.

TOM'S DATE

I can't believe you set me up with that looossseer. He took me to a hospital cafeteria on a date! A hospital cafeteria? Still can't believe that. Are you really gonna air this?

(imperative)

No. No. No. I won't go out with that guy again.

(pause)

I did see a doctor in the cafeteria that was pretty hot.

The show cuts to Tom's testimonial, where he is standing out by his car.

TOM

I thought the hospital thing would be funny. I really did. I mean, the food ain't that bad. It's well balanced and cheap. I thought, all in all, that it was a good date. So sure, I'll call her again.

The CAMERA PANS back to Tom as he finishes the paperwork.

A NURSE walks over to him.

NURSE

Didja call her?

TOM

Yeah.

NURSE

Did she talk to you?

TOM

Ah... No.

(pause)

But, I did make it to national television.

NURSE

Good for you.

The nurse rolls her eyes and walks away.



EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Tom stands alone in the cold outside the hospital. He leans against the wall watching his breath turn to vapor as it passes through his lips.

Suddenly, a Black BMW with tinted windows SCREECHES around the corner entering our view. At a rapid speed it motors into the emergency exit bay coming to a quick and noisy halt.

The passenger door opens. DANTE BARTUCCI (35) steps out of the car. Dante is short with slicked-back hair and gold loop earrings.

Dante spots Tom leaning against the wall.

DANTE

Tommy-boy. What the fuck you doin' here?

Tom steps away from the wall. He begins to walk away from Dante.

DANTE

Hey, I see you there. Get ova here and gimme a hand.

Dante walks around to the other side of the car. He stands by the rear passenger side door waiting for Tom.

Tom stops his retreat and heads over to Dante apprehensively.

TOM

(nervous)

I...Ah?

DANTE

So where's my money?

TOM

(timid)

I don't got it.

DANTE

Is that how you talk at work? It's *have*. I don't *have* it. Don't pretend to be the shit when you're really just a pansy-assed dork.

(grows increasingly  
aggravated)

Goddamn, why'd my dad marry your mom? Being a fuckin' stepbrother to the likes of you hurts my fuckin' business. You fuckin' owe me twenty five grand and I'm gonna get it. I'm sick of you hiding behind your mom.

Tom stands motionless, looking like deer caught in the headlights.

Dante opens the rear passenger door. A bloody arm falls out. It's attached to a MAN lying unconscious in the back seat. Blood oozes from his stomach.

TOM

Jesus. What's happened to him?

Dante grabs the man's arms and begins to pull him out of the car.

DANTE

He got a little shot.

TOM

I've never seen a shot person before.

DANTE

Well you haven't been my brother long.  
Grab his legs.

Tom takes his legs and together they carry the man to the front door.

They drop him at the door and Dante heads back to the car.

DANTE

It's a good thing you were here  
to see this. I have a good heart,  
Tommy. I didn't hav'ta bring him  
to the hospital after shootin'em,  
but I did. I'm not all-evil. Just  
know when I come for you, you got a  
free ride to the hospital.

(pause)

That is, if you need it.

Dante gets into the car and speeds off, leaving Tom alone once again.

A cab pulls around and Tom gets in. As the cab pulls away, an ORDERLY spots the bloodied man resting on the concrete.

A small crowd forms around the bloodied man as they place him on a stretcher and wheel him off.

INT. CUBICLE - DAY

Tom sits at his desk with the phone glued to his ear. The phone book lays open on the desk.

TOM

Yeah, hi. I'm calling to see if you  
have a tan Honda Civic that woulda been  
dropped off last night.

(pause)

You don't? You sure?

(pause)

Okay.

Tom hangs up the phone.

TOM  
(quietly)  
Where the fuck is my goddamn car?

INT. COPYROOM - DAY

Tom stands by the copier in a trance-like state, watching the copies shoot out.

Jake walks into the room.

JAKE  
I saw your date again on cable last night.

TOM  
Do you watch it every time?

JAKE  
(laughs)  
Yeah, and I got it on tape too, dude.  
It's fuckin' classic.

Warblybird walks in holding a Starbucks coffee.

WARBLYBIRD  
Our future leaders in conference.

JAKE  
That's right. We were discussing ways to up productivity.

WARBLYBIRD  
Top notch. Wonderful.  
(to Tom)  
Is the project online Cruise?

TOM  
Ah. If that means going well, then yeah, I've killed another forest's worth of trees. I shoulda been a lumberjack Mr. Warlybird.

MR. WARBLYBIRD  
Stop with the shoulds. You're shoulding all over yourself. You've got to turn those shoulds into musts.

TOM  
Then I *must* kill more trees?

MR WARBLYBIRD  
(excited)  
Top notch. Tom. Jake. I'm off.

TOM

Hey, Jake.

JAKE

What's up?

TOM

What are ya drinking there?

JAKE

Ah...You know, a latte.

Jake holds up his drink for Tom to see. There is a smiley face drawn next to Jake's name.

JAKE (con't)

See the girls down at my Starbucks put my name on it. They know I'm coming. Like clockwork.

TOM

Do you actually drink it?

JAKE

(defensive)

What are you talking about? Of course I drink it.

TOM

It's past eleven and you have the same cup for three hours.

Jake walks out into the hall, comes back in and closes the door.

JAKE

Listen, if you haven't noticed everyone has one of these. At least everyone who's important. If I drink it, I get all fucked up. It's liquid crack, but I wouldn't get caught empty handed, ya know. It's a rite of passage from the cube to the window.

TOM

Does *anyone* drink it?

JAKE

Some do, yeah. Davis in I.S.? He drinks it. He's also fuckin' wacked workin' on those crazy-assed servers. He *needs* it. We don't. I fuckin' don't do shit 'round here.

(pause)

Buy it, but don't drink it. That's my advice.

TOM

I guess it can't hurt to try, right?

JAKE

Nope. Being empty-handed is sorta like not wearing a tie 'round here. If you wanna be accepted, you gotta do like the Romans. It'll change your life.

(beat)

Listen, nice chat, but I've used up all my roaming minutes. I've got to find those copies.

Jake opens the door and heads out.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The night is brisk and the street empty. Tom hustles up the block and walks up into the entrance of a stately looking apartment building. He passes through the revolving door and goes in.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

The lobby is ridiculously large. It resembles the inside of a bank. Polished black marble covers the floor. Ornate furniture sits by the windows. A DOORMAN waits at the other end of the lobby. Behind him the elevators.

As Tom enters, he spots the doorman and begins walking towards him. His feet squeak loudly on the reflective marble. Suddenly, as if walking on ice, Tom's feet slip and he lands squarely on his back. He tries feebly to stand but can't manage to find his footing. He falls several more times, before giving up. He lies motionless for several moments.

The doorman looks on emotionless as Tom starts to crawl over towards his desk. Tom's lower body has gone limp and he pulls his body with his arms like a soldier crawling under enemy lines.

He reaches the doorman and uses the desk to prop himself up. Tom brushes himself off.

TOM

I must've just missed the zamboni.

DOORMAN

Who are you here to see?

TOM

I'm here for Dr. Connery.

DOORMAN

And who are you supposed to be?

TOM

My name is Tom, that is me.

DOORMAN

Sign the book under Tommy Lee

The doorman puts the sign-in book on the desk and hands Tom a pen. Tom glances at the book and sees a whole page of famous names. There is the before mentioned "Tommy Lee", "Whitney Houston", and "Sean Connery" among others.

DOORMAN

Ninth floor. Nine o'two.

TOM

I'll be fine, thanks to you.

Tom starts to head toward the elevators. He slips and falls again. He crawls the rest of the way. The elevator doors open and he crawls in.

INT. DR. SEAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dr. Connery's apartment is large and grandiose. The artwork and furniture is beyond ostentatious. Dr. Connery lives like a 18<sup>th</sup> century French Nobleman with a few obvious differences.

A dozen or so GUESTS sit around drinking tea and snacking on little cakes. Dr. Connery escorts Tom into the main room. Everyone wears a nametag. The three closest to the front are WHITNEY HOUSTON(26), TOMMY LEE (40), and JULIA ROBERTS (55). Others in the back include a woman named DANA CARVY, an African-American man named GEORGE BUSH, and an elderly man named JACK NICHOLSON.

Whitney Houston is one of younger people in the crowd. She very attractive despite dressing like a punk. Streaks of purple mix with her natural brunette hair. Her skin is very pale.

Tommy Lee is an UPS deliveryman still in uniform.

Julia Roberts looks like a mom from a black and white television sitcom.

Dana Carvy, a middle-aged woman with over styled hair and a low cut dress, who seems desperate to attract a man.

Tom and Dr. Sean come down the hall. Dr. Sean clothes are very frilly. His white button-down shirt looks like something stolen from. We catch them mid-conversation.

TOM

I just didn't realize that you were so gay.

SEAN

(laughing)

Well work *is* work.

(quietly)

You're not are you?

TOM

(emphatically)

No.

DR. SEAN

Thought I'd ask.

Dr. Sean claps his hands very effeminately

DR. SEAN

Everyone. Everyone, please shush.

The room quiets. All attention turns to Dr. Connery.

DR. SEAN

This is Tom. As in Tom Cruise. Not as dreamy as the actor but a much nicer person inside. Please, everyone. Say hello.

GROUP

(collectively)

Hi, Tom.

TOMMY LEE

It's Maverick.

JULIA

I've never met a Tom Cruise before.

DR. SEAN

He's just Tom here remember.

(turns to Tom)

So, why don't you give us a 'li tidbit on your life and why your name is such a burden.

Dr. Sean turns the floor over to Tom and finds a seat amongst the others. Tom stands silently and uncomfortably in front of a captive audience.

TOM

(nervous)

Ah...Well. I really wasn't expecting to do this so I'll keep it brief. My life sucks.

(pause)

Sucks big time. Thanks.

Tom takes a seat. Dr. Sean stands back up.

DR. SEAN

It's because of that big time...sucking that Tom is here today.

(to Tom)

I know you're nervous, but tell a 'lil more.

Tom remains seated.

TOM

Ah, well I've been on a bunch of blind dates and when these chicks, I mean girls see me they can't help but be disappointed. In their head they have a picture of Tom Cruise and it ain't me.

DR. SEAN

And when you go to a bar?

TOM

I can't drink. They don't believe I'm 21. They all think I got a fake ID.

Some of the younger members of the group grunt in agreement.

DR. SEAN

How does this make you feel?

TOM

Like...bad. Real bad. It's like I've got a wet blanket thrown over my whole existence, ya know?

Tom gets upset and puts his head in his hands.

Julia Roberts moves over to Tom's seat and hugs him.

JULIA

You've got us now Tom. We'll help you. Right Sean? We can change things.

Julia and the group collectively look to Tom sympathetically.

DR. SEAN

(defensive)

You guys, I brought him up here to share his feelings. I think it's a bit to early to start casting spells.

Tom leans back in the chair. His eyes shift nervously.

TOM

This ain't no Rosemary's Baby shit, is it? You guys aren't really witches or something right?

Julia puts a comforting hand on Tom's knee. Slowly, everyone rises from their chairs and form a semicircle around Tom.

JULIA

(soothing)

No, it's nothing like that. The devil's not involved.

(smiles)

But we do read palms.



Sean holds up his Palm Pilot.

TOMMY LEE

The palm pilot that is.

The group sighs in a giddy excitement.

TOM

I'm lost.

DR. SEAN

You see, Tom. With some properly placed rumors we can destroy a anyone's reputation. No matter how big they are.

TOMMY LEE

It's a zero-sum game. When things go well for them it goes badly for you. They go down and you go up. They can kiss their careers goodbye.

DR. SEAN

Well, something to that effect is true. We are a strong organization with great influence.

(his eyes light up  
with pride)

And really no one knows we're even here.

There is a long pause to let Tom absorb the information.

GEORGE

But Doctor, Tom Cruise is quite a large target.

DR. SEAN

Sure he is. But all nuts crack.

DANA

But I like Tom Cruise.

JULIA

Then make it a Blockbuster night Dana. Our Tom Cruise needs help.

DANA

(under her breath)

Bitch.

DR. SEAN

(to Dana)

Must I remind you that Dana Carvy was very well liked when he made Wayne's World. You needed help then and we gave it to you.

TOM

Didn't Dana Carvey get cancer or something?

DR. SEAN

That wasn't us.

DANA

Tom Cruise is just so hot.

DR. SEAN

We're just gonna make him straight-video-hot.

GEORGE

You can't make anyone straight anything Doc.

They all have a good laugh, except Tom.

Jack Nicholson comes by with a cup of tea for Tom.

JACK

This'll relax you.

TOM

Do I need relaxing?

Tom takes the tea and takes a sip.

TOM

What do you all want from me? What does this cost?

DR. SEAN

Oh please Tom. We're not some whore. You're one of us now.

TOMMY LEE

(uneasy)

Cool. I guess I could use some new friends.

Everyone joins in the lovefest giving Tom congratulations.

Tom eyes look heavy. They blink several times in rapid succession. He's can barely stay awake. He peers into his drink.

DR. SEAN

(slow-motion)

Everything will be wonderful very soon.

TOM

(intoxicated)

Do you know where my car-

Tom's eyes slowly seal shut. He falls asleep and his cup drops out of his hands and onto the floor.

FADE OUT:

INT. COPY ROOM - DAY

Tom works on a paper jam. He has all of the compartments open. Ink is smeared on his hands and some on his clothes.

Warblybird pops his head in.

WARBLYBIRD

Where we at, Maverick? Almost done?

TOM

No. I can't do it. Paper goes in.  
Nothin' comes out.

WARBLYBIRD

Well, I need the final copy on my desk  
first thing in the AM tomorrow.

TOM

But the copier. It's...fucked, boss. Like  
a...a two bit whore.

WARBLYBIRD

Tom. This is your project. You own this.  
You need to get those copies on my desk.  
I suggest Kinkos. Can you handle it?

Warblybird ambles over to Tom and puts a firm hand on his shoulder. He turns Tom around so they are shoulder to shoulder facing the same direction looking off at some imaginary object.

WARBLYBIRD

(paternally)

Tom, there are times in a man's life that  
they have to cut those proverbial ties and  
sail off on their own. Are you understanding  
me?

Tom shakes his head, no.

WARBLYBIRD

(con't)

If you encounter a problem in you're life,  
you hav'ta think what will Mr. Warblybird  
do? I don't care if you in the office or  
doing the nasty with a waitress from  
Denny's. The question remains the same.

(pause)

What would Mr. Warblybird do?

TOM  
 (humored)  
 What would Mr. Warblybird do?

Warblybird takes his hand off Tom's shoulder and smiles. He faces Tom and looks him dead in the eye.

WARBLYBIRD  
 There ya go. Now Tom, repeat after me.  
 I will lead, not follow.

TOM  
 (apathetic)  
 I will lead, not follow.

WARBLYBIRD  
 I will believe, not doubt.

TOM  
 (more empowered)  
 I will believe, not doubt.

WARBLYBIRD  
 I will create, not destroy.

TOM  
 I will create, not destroy!

WHILRLYBIRD  
 (forceful)  
 I am a force for good!

TOM  
 (yells)  
 I am a force for good!

WARBLYBIRD  
 Fan-fuckin-tastic! How does that make  
 you feel?

He slaps Tom on the shoulder.

TOM  
 Retarded.

WARBLYBIRD  
 A motivated retard though. Better  
 than a good swift kick in the balls.  
 Isn't that right?

Tom rolls his eyes as Warblybird exits the copy room.

INT. LIMO - DAY

Tom sips on a Starbucks beverage. The fishbowl sits on the seat across from him. Palmaroy swims around, but not taking his eyes off Tom.

PALMAROY

(interview mode)

You live in a mall. Tell us about that.

Tom takes a sip from his drink before speaking.

TOM

After graduating college my mom told me to move out. Being broke, they let me move into where the old Fashion Bug used to be. I mean, she owns the place.

PALMAROY

Did you like this arrangement?

TOM

Hell yeah, geez it was heaven. It was supposed to be temporary, but that was three years ago. For some reason that's like my..my..zen palace. It's the only place where I can interact with people from the outside world and not feel like a total tool.

(beat)

I once spent a whole month inside it's walls without leaving.

PALMAROY

I think most people would believe that to be antisocial.

TOM

But the mall's the social capital of every town, and I was the mayor!

(beat)

Outside the mall though, I'd describe my life as violently mediocre.

INT. PACIFIC SUNWEAR - NIGHT

The surfing and skating clothing store is empty. RYAN(17), a stoner, stands behind the counter reading a surfing magazine.

Tom walks in.

TOM

(calls out)

Hey, Ryan.

Ryan, startled, drops the magazine. He's slow to react.

RYAN

(stoned)

Yo bra. What's up?

Tom laughs.

TOM

You tell me.

(sniffs)

Smells funny in here. Did you rock  
the ganga or what, man?

RYAN

Shit, man. Like an hour ago. In  
the dressin' room.

TOM

You betta wait till closin' time.

Tom continues past the counter and heads to the back. Sitting in the corner is a bright red motor scooter. Used for decoration, it has clothes draped over it. Ryan joins him. They both study the scooter. Although, it's obvious that Ryan doesn't have a clue why.

TOM

Tell me. Does this make you wanna  
buy clothes?

RYAN

The scooter?

TOM

Yeah.

RYAN

(stoned)

Ah...no?

Tom starts taking the clothes off the scooter and placing them on the rack.

TOM

I mean, how useless is an old motor  
scooter in a clothing store?

RYAN

Pretty fuckin' useless, I'd say.

Tom takes the brakes off and starts wheeling it toward the front of the store.

TOM

I'm glad you agree. Got the keys?

Ryan can only watch as Tom wheels the scooter to the front of the store.

RYAN

Yeah...hold on.

Ryan jogs over to the counter and opens the cash drawer. Inside he finds the keys.

RYAN

Catch.

Ryan throws the keys, but his aim is horrible. The keys whiz past Tom's head and out into the mall.

TOM

Thanks Ryan. I'll return this later.

Tom takes the scooter out into the mall.

INT. MALL - NIGHT

The main portion of the mall is rather empty. The stores are beginning to close down. The last of the SHOPPERS head out. Tom searches for the keys.

TAKISHA (O.S.)

Looking for these.

Tom spins around and sees...

Takisha (24) a half African-American and half-Asian woman. She's tall, attractive, but somewhat homely in appearance. She's also the mall's security guard, holding the scooter's keys in her hand.

TOM

(smiles)

Ah, Takisha. There they are.

Takisha walks over to him.

TAKISHA

Taking the Pacific Sunwear scooter?

Together they start walking through the mall at very slow pace.

TOM

Chill out. They know I'm taking it.

The mall's fake cobblestone floor and lit window make it look like they are walking outdoors, in some French village.

TAKISHA

What are you goin' to do with it?

TOM

Ride it to work. I lost my car.

(pause)

Tough night?

TAKISHA

Nah..How can it be hard?

They continue to walk through the mall.

TOM

Lemme ask you. Do you like your job?

TAKISHA

You always ask me that. If you ask a question you should listen for the answer.

TOM

Well?

TAKISHA

I like it, but don't love it. But how many people can get paid to do what they did as kids?

TOM

You mean, wander the mall?

TAKISHA

Yeah, totally. This is where I finally broke free from my parents. Walk around for a few hours, get in some trouble. Liked it then. Like it now.

(pause)

You should just quit your job if you don't like it.

TOM

This isn't about me.

TAKISHA

Sure it is. You want me to tell you to quit your job. Quit your job.

TOM

Okay, but then what? When will I get my due.

TAKISHA

(laughs)

Ah, never. You ain't due nothing.

(flirtatious)

You could work with me in the exciting world of mall security.

TOM

Sounds temping. Actually, no it doesn't. I just sorta figured I'd know what I was here for. I don't think I'm here to make copies.

TAKISHA

No one's on this planet to make copies. It's not like God invented copiers.

Tom claps.



TOM

Totally. That's how I feel. My job will be extinct in fifty years. So why bother.

TAKISHA

Just...just don't do anything stupid. You're not old. It's not like there is a rush.

TOM

There is for me. I'm tired of waiting around, waiting for my turn.

They come up to a store with no sign and tinted windows. An outline remains where a sign once was. Faintly, you can see the FASHION BUG spelled out. They stop walking.

Tom looks beaten down. He wants to talk more but, he's visibly struggling internally.

TOM

(looking down at  
the scooter)

Think it would be okay if I left this out over night?

TAKISHA

Yeah, I'll watch it.

They stand uncomfortably for a few seconds.

TAKISHA

You know. The world ain't only in this mall. Or this town. You may have to leave it someday to get what you need.

Tom smiles. He seems warmed by Takisha's presence.

TOM

You're right, but I'm a pussy.

TAKISHA

Don't use that word.

TOM

Sorry.

(pause)

But, I am that word. I can't take a risk to save my life. I'll draw an ace and hold. You know?

TAKISHA

That's cause you are lookin' for the easy way out. What you need is support.

Tom unlocks the door to the store, his apartment.

TOM

G'nite Takisha. You're like my own  
personal security guard, protecting  
what's left of my sanity. You're  
a good friend.

Tom walks into his apartment and closes the door. Takisha remains by  
the door for a few moments.

TAKISHA

(gently)

I could be so much more.

INT. APARMENT - NIGHT

Tom turns on the lights, revealing a store that makes a very convincing  
apartment. The only noticeable holdovers from the store are the  
circular racks that Tom has hung his clothes. Otherwise it looks like a  
big studio apartment. The register counter is now a bar. The dressing  
room is a bathroom.

Tom walks over to the counter and he sees that there are two messages  
on his answering machine. He presses down.

WHITNEY

(on machine)

Hi, Tom. This is Kinkos. Your order  
is ready.

Click.

TOM

(weary)

Shit.

Beep.

DANTE

(stern)

Yo assfuck. This is Dante. You owe  
me twenty-five Gs. You got till  
Saturday.

Click.

TOM'S DATE

Hey Tom, this is the girl you've been  
harassing. Just because two producers  
thought we'd have chemistry doesn't make  
it so. Tape the damn show and stop  
calling.

Click

Tom winces. He takes unplugs the answering machine from the wall. He  
walks to the refrigerator. He tosses the answering machine into the  
freezer.

EXT. KINKOS - NIGHT

The shopping plaza's parking lot is quiet. Only a few cars remain. The clock on the plaza tower reads "12:15". The only store with its lights still on is Kinkos.

Tom enters the parking lot on the motor scooter. He parks it on the sidewalk in front of the store. He hops off and strolls over to the entrance to Kinkos. He attempts to open the door, but it's locked. He notices a bell by the door. A sign states: PLEASE PRESS AFTER 11:00PM.

Tom presses the button. A girl's head pops up from behind the counter. It is Whitney Houston, the girl from the meeting. She buzzes Tom in.

Tom walks over to the counter where she is standing. He gives her a look of recognition.

TOM

You were at that meeting. Whitney, right?

WHITNEY

(suspicious)

Yeah. What are you doin' here?

TOM

(sarcastic)

Ah, I have an order. You guys print stuff right?

WHITNEY

Yeah, yeah. Funny guy.

Whitney moves behind where the finished orders are stored.

WHITNEY

What's your last name?

(pause)

Oh duh.

Whitney brings over a box full of bounded booklets to Tom. Tom examines them.

WHITNEY

You picked a beautiful font.

TOM

Thanks, but it wasn't me. I just make the copies.

WHITNEY

Actually, I made the copies.

TOM

(defeated)

Then I guess I just pick 'em up.

WHITNEY

Oh. Well, the binding is very professional looking.

TOM

Thanks.

(uncomfortable)

Hey uhm...What the hell happened the other night? How the hell did I get home? I must've blacked out.

WHITNEY

You fell asleep for a spell. Woke up and drove home.

TOM

Really?

(thoughtful pause)

God, I don't remember a thing. That's so bizarre.

There is a long silence. Tom doesn't seem to want to leave

TOM

So what's it like ah, working the overnight? Do people really need copies made at three in the morning?

WHITNEY

Mostly drunk kids makin' Brittany Spears posters.

TOM

Catering to drunks. Corporate style. That's good stuff. I found some copies of asses in the copy room once. You can have 'em. Start a gallery.

WHITNEY

Works for me.

(pause)

But the thing is, I hav'ta work at night.

TOM

Because?

WHITNEY

Ah...I'm a vampire.

TOM

No way. I've never met a vampire before.

WHITNEY

Actually, I'm not. Although, I can't go into the sun. That much is true.

TOM  
(intrigued)  
You're not missing much. Sunburn. Cancer.

WHITNEY  
My skin's extremely photosensitive. My skin burns with even the smallest amount of direct sunlight.

TOM  
I've never heard of that.

WHITNEY  
Are you a dermatologist? Do you do research?

TOM  
Ah no. You're right. I'm just an lowly office boy.  
(beat)  
Okay. Well, I suppose I better go. I got work in the morning. Thanks for the copies.

WHITNEY  
Anytime.

Tom turns and is set to walk out the door, but stops. He turns back to Whitney.

TOM  
(walks back to the counter)  
I think you owe me a dinner.

WHITNEY  
(dubious)  
Oh yeah? I don't think so.

TOM  
You said I fell asleep, woke up and drove home. Right?

WHITNEY  
Yeah?

TOM  
Well, I don't have a car. I took a taxi that night.

WHITNEY  
I guess you took a taxi.

TOM

Perhaps, but where did I get money?  
I would've had to stop at the ATM,  
which I was planning to do, but  
according to my balance, I never did.

WHITNEY

(with humor)

Okay, you're psycho.

TOM

Someone drove me home. Was it you?

WHITNEY

No. Hey, look. You wanna have dinner  
with me fine. But I pick the place and  
you pay.

Tom smiles.

TOM

Alright.

INT. FOOD COURT - DAY

The mall is almost empty. The stores are closed, but the food court is open. There is a line of CUSTOMERS at the Starbucks counter.

Tom walks through the mall waving to the various MALL EMPLOYEES he knows. He sees the Starbucks and stops. He's flustered. He sees the customers enjoying their drinks. He seems curious, but reluctant to get in line. After a few moments of hemming and hawing, he takes a deep breath and steps up.

When Tom's turn comes he appears unable to figure out what to order. A teenage female STARBUCKS EMPLOYEE walks over to him.

EMPLOYEE

(perky)

Good mornin'. What can I get for ya?

TOM

(nervous)

Uhm...I don't know. What..Ah..What do  
you recommend?

The customers behind him look disturbed by his indecisiveness.

EMPLOYEE

Well. I like Frappachinos.

TOM

Does that come in a paper cup or one of  
those see-through plastic cups with the  
dome lid?

EMPLOYEE

Plastic.

TOM

Nah I don't want that. I want something  
in a paper cup. I don't care what it is,  
but make it a grande.

EMPLOYEE

You got it. That'll be three twenty-five.

Tom pays and the girl spins around and places the order.

Moments later a MALE EMPLOYEE brings over a grande-something in a paper cup.

EMPLOYEE

Here ya go.

He hands the drink to Tom.

TOM

What is it?

EMPLOYEE

It's a special Latte. For first timers.

The employee returns to the counter. Tom takes the drink and holds it under his noses. He looks wary to try it, but he finally works the courage to take a sip. He swallows a mouthful and smiles warmly.

He takes his drink and heads out of the mall.

INT. WARBLYBIRD'S OFFICE - DAY

Warblybird's office is large and spacious, but under decorated. The paintings on the wall show mountains and oceans with motivational phrases printed over them. His desk is clear. Only a phone, a computer and some pictures of his family. There are no papers anywhere.

Warblybird sits in his highback leather chair holding the phone to his ear.

WARBLYBIRD

Find out what our price point is and  
that's where we'll be.

Tom walks into the doorframe. He's holding a copy of the booklet he made in one hand and his Grande Latte in the other. Warblybird sees him and motions for him to come in.

WARBLYBIRD

(to phone)

Let's get it in the stores.

(beat)

Live with passion.

Warblybird hangs up the phone and turns his attention to Tom.

WARBLYBIRD

So, lemme see it.

Tom hands Warblybird the booklet. Warblybird skims through it reading in silence. Tom looks nervous.

WARBLYBIRD

Looks good Tom. Top Notch. Nice paper. Clean copies.

TOM

Mind if I put my drink down?

Warblybird sees the Starbucks' label and smiles. Tom sets the drink down on the desk.

WARBLYBIRD

Close the door, Tom.

Tom gets up and closes the door. He returns to his seat.

Warblybird passes the booklet back to Tom.

WARBLYBIRD

Tell me, Cruise. What do you see on those pages? What does it mean to you?

Tom looks through the booklet. He sees graphs, some diagrams relating to productivity and business models.

TOM

I'll be honest with you, Mr. Warblybird, it doesn't mean much. Bunch of technical mumbo jumbo.

Warblybird reaches into his desk and takes out a pair of 3-D glasses. He hands them to Tom.

WARBLYBIRD

Try it now.

Tom puts on the glasses and looks at the booklet once more. Everything has changed. The old wording has been replaced with new wording. The graphs have become pictures. The booklet is entitled "The Sphere".

TOM

What is this?

Warblybird leans in closer.

WARBLYBIRD

Tom, in order to ensure our job safety you guys down the ladder don't get to see all the information we have. That keeps you stupid.



(pause)

I'm not sure that you're aware, but we are a toy company. The Sphere is our product.

Tom flips through the book. There is a picture of a silver ball.

TOM

All I see is a silver ball.

WARBLYBIRD

That's the sphere.

(inspired)

Just a silver ball that can activate the imaginations of both the young and old alike.

TOM

What can you do with it?

Tom removes the glasses and tosses the booklet back on the table.

WARBLYBIRD

You can throw it or catch it. With the proper receptacles, which of course..., you can only get from us.

TOM

I don't get it. Can't you just get a baseball or tennis ball or something? Something soft.

WARBLYBIRD

But this is the epitome of style. It's for those seeking only the very best. Those who drive SUV's in the suburbs and have instant messaging on their phones. You don't want a softball or volleyball. That's stale. You want substance. You want... The Sphere.

TOM

But, it's made of steel.

WARBLYBIRD

Not steel, but a completely new alloy we've developed. It will never grow old or break. It's indestructible. In fact, marketing came up with a contest. Inside each sphere we put a check for fifty grand. The first person to get to it, gets the money!

TOM

(despondent)

That's crazy. Oh my god, I can't believe I'm a part of this.

WARBLYBIRD

Isn't it wonderful? The most amazing feature is every Sphere is embedded with a microchip that sends us information about the user. So we know where every Sphere is at all times!

TOM

Why don't you just call this thing a useless homing device?

Warblybird laughs.

WARBLYBIRD

You crack me up. I think that would just be a bit obvious don't you.

Tom grabs his latte from the desk and takes a sip. Warblybird grabs a Sphere from underneath his desk. It is only a bit smaller than a soccer ball.

WARBLYBIRD

Here ya go. Advance copy. I'll tell you what. You get to the middle of thing and I'll let you collect the money.

He tosses the sphere to Tom, who looks at it like it was a baby with three eyes.

TOM

Okay. I gotta get back to work.

Tom stands up and walks unevenly towards the door.

INT. OFFICE CORRAL - DAY

Tom exits Warblybird's office. He sets the sphere down on his desk. Over the top of the cubicle, he can see Jake's head. He heads out to where Jake is standing talking to a few COWORKERS.

JAKE

Tom, my man. What are you doing this weekend?

Tom looks taken aback. He glances down at his drink.

TOM

I ah...ah. Don't know.

JAKE

Hey do yourself a favor. Don't go see Mission Impossible Three. I saw it last night. It blows. And I'm not the only one exposing this fraud. The critics agree.

Tom seems to snap out of his latte-induced daze.

TOM

Who? What critics?

JAKE

All of 'em. They say he's lost it.  
And if the critics say that, then it's  
gotta be right then, right?

Tom whispers in Jake's ear.

TOM

Can I talk to you for a minute?

Jake turns to the women.

JAKE

Ladies, I'll be right back.

Jake and Tom walk to a private corner of the office.

JAKE

Glad to see you made a Starbucks run  
this mornin'.

TOM

Yeah, it freakin' me out. I'm getting  
respect.

JAKE

Told you.

TOM

Listen, the birdman told me what the big  
plan is.

JAKE

No shit? Welcome to the club.

TOM

I think it's dumb.

JAKE

The Sphere? You kidding? I think it's  
fuckin' brilliant.

TOM

Who's gonna buy it?

JAKE

The question is, who's not? Wait 'til  
you see the commercials. We got the guy  
who shot Armageddon directing it. It's  
gonna be dope.

Jake starts to head back over to the two female co-workers when Tom grabs his shoulder.

TOM

I think the latte is doing something to my mind.

JAKE

(whispers)

You're not drinking it are you?

TOM

Yeah.

JAKE

Jesus, when you gonna listen to me, bro? I told you not to.

TOM

So, what do I do?

JAKE

Enjoy it. You're officially hooked. It's not meant to be tried once and set aside. You'll be chasing the latte with an espresso. Oh and if you start seeing shit? That's normal. Now...if you'll excuse me

Jake walks back the women. Tom stands in the corner momentarily watching them.

INT. WHITNEY'S CAR - NIGHT

Whitney and Tom drive around in Whitney's old beaten-up car. She doesn't seem to pay much attention to the road. She drives very haphazardly.

TOM

Thanks for drivin'. I swear I gotta car. I just don't know where it is right now.

WHITNEY

Stolen?

TOM

Ah...Not stolen. I forgot where I put it.

(pause)

Where we goin' anyway?

WHITNEY

It's a theme restaurant. It's called Eat Me.

INT. EAT ME - NIGHT

The restaurant is sex-themed. It has the ambience of a Planet Hollywood, but all the Hollywood memorabilia has been replaced with porn. There are posters, costumes, and WAITRESSES dressed in all sorts of erotic outfits.

Tom and Whitney walk into the restaurant. Tom looks around in disbelief.

TOM

You gotta be kiddin' me.

A FRENCH MAID escorts them to their table. They sit down and the French Maid hands them menus and walks away.

TOM

I think this is a bit intimidating  
for a first date.

WHITNEY

(crooked smile)

But the food's so good.

(beat)

Try the chicken cordon blow with  
the seaman sauce.

TOM

Jesus, I can't order that, let alone  
eat it!

WHITNEY

Then I don't recommend the penis pasta.

Whitney closes her menu. Tom follows suit.

WHITNEY

So are ya getting'?

TOM

The shrimp skanky.

LATER

Tom and Whitney remain seated. They have finished their dinner as their dirty plates sit on the table.

WHITNEY

So, whatta you look for in a girl?

Tom wipes his mouth off with his napkin and tosses it on the table.

TOM

The way I work is, in the beginning  
everyone's fair game. As I date I  
start associating certain things to  
girls I want no part of.

WHITNEY

Who's been eliminated so far?

TOM

Well, girls with vanity plates on their cars for one. Girls who drink Corona.

WHITNEY

Corona?

TOM

I dunno. Normally girls who drink Corona are fat slobs.

WHITNEY

I drink Corona. Am I a fat slob?

TOM

Well, there's always exceptions.

WHITNEY

So lemme get this right. The naked woman is more important than a smart woman? Or a funny woman?

TOM

Naked doesn't matter. Looking good while naked matters.

(pause)

How much deeper can this hole get? Do I have any chance to climb out?

WHITNEY

It's not lookin' good. What other qualities make for an incompatible mate...in your eyes.

TOM

Ah, girls who consider tanning a hobby.

WHITNEY

Nice save kiddo..

Tom smiles. He's embarrassed.

TOM

Wanna get some ice cream?

WHITNEY

Is this some kinda test? Girls who eat a lot of ice cream tend to be fat slobs kinda thing.

TOM

No. I want ice cream. Do you want ice cream? That's it.

WHITNEY

Then I want ice cream.

TOM

Okay. Now that we settled that, I gotta use the restroom. You'll be alright without me?

WHITNEY

Probably better off.

TOM

Ouch.

Tom gets up from the seat and walks away.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

The bathroom is very colorful. The stalls are colored in bright colors. The urinals are both painted pink.

The room is empty except for a scuffle going on in one of the stalls. A man is on his knees with his face being held in the toilet. The toilet FLUSHES repeatedly. The other man holds him down. We can't see the men's faces.

Tom walks into the bathroom. He unzips his fly and then notices the commotion in the neighboring stall. He quickly zips his fly back up and heads for the door.

DANTE (O.S.)

Yo, Tommy boy.

Tom stops. He turns around. Dante has poked his head out of the stall and we can see his face. He looks flustered. His hair going in a million directions. He continues to hold the other man down.

DANTE

Lock the door.

Tom locks the door.

DANTE

Give me a hand wit dis guy.

Dante pulls the man's head out of the toilet. Water puddles on the ground. Tom walks over to the stall and pokes his head in. The man is old and overweight.

TOM

Is he dead?

DANTE

Nah, he's good. Just got some water  
in his lungs or something. How'd I  
make money if I killed everyone who  
owed me?

Dante drags the body over to the opposite side of the bathroom. A narrow window hangs open close to the ceiling over both Dante's and Tom's heads.

DANTE

A'ight, we gotta get him through the  
window.

Dante grabs the body and tries to lift him off the ground. Tom stands motionless.

DANTE

Shit for brains! Grab 'em.

Tom reacts and lifts the lower part of the man's body. The man's arms and legs go in different directions making the body very unwieldy to lift. It takes close to a minute to get him even close to the window. Finally, they start working his body through the window. Suddenly, more of the body is out the window then in and they can't hold him any longer and the body falls out.

DANTE

Well, he may be dead now.

Tom looks at Dante stunned. Tom's face is covered in sweat. His clothes are dripping wet.

Dante takes a notebook from his pocket. He crosses something off the list.

DANTE

How 'bout that? You're next on  
the list.

TOM

Hey man, can't I get some kinda  
employee discount or something.  
(pause)  
You know? For helping you.

Dante laughs.

DANTE

Yo bro, this ain't Walmart.  
(he pats Tom  
on the back)  
See ya Saturday. I guess that'  
tomorrow.

Dante laughs mildly, unlocks the door and exits the bathroom. Tom walks over to the urinal. He gets performance anxiety.



INT. EAT ME - NIGHT

Whitney sits at the table. She looks bored. Tom comes out of the bathroom. He's wet and disheveled.

He plops down on the seat across from her. Whitney looks surprised by his appearance.

WHITNEY

What happened to you?

TOM

What do you mean?

WHITNEY

Forget it.

TOM

Fair enough.

Tom works his hand through his wet hair.

INT. WHITNEY'S CAR - NIGHT

Tom and Whitney are back in the car. Whitney looks over at Tom and Tom smiles. There seems to be some resemblance of a connection.

TOM

(excited)

What was that look?

WHITNEY

What look?

TOM

That, "your not such a shithead" look.

WHITNEY

You're not a shithead.

TOM

Thanks.

WHITNEY

You're an ass.

TOM

It's not easy being the ass I am.

(pause)

Do you really believe in the whole name thing?

WHITNEY

You mean the rules?

TOM

I didn't even know there were rules.

WHITNEY

You already know the zero-sum thing. He do good, you do bad. The second rule is you'll never outfame your namesake.

TOM

Rules were meant to be broken.

WHITNEY

It's less a rule and more a law of science. I wouldn't worry 'bout that one if I were you.

TOM

Gee thanks a lot.

WHITNEY

It's the truth. Whatta are you goin' to do to out do that guy?

TOM

I dunno. I'm young.

WHITNEY

And dumb.

Tom looks ticked off.

WHITNEY

Sorry. That's was wrong, but lets face it Tom, you weren't as lucky at birth as he was.

TOM

I'm not done yet.

They continue driving. The mall comes up on the right. Tom points towards it. The parking lot is empty. A few SKATEBOARDERS practice their tricks under the lights. Whitney turns into the lot.

WHITNEY

The mall? The mall's closed Tom.

TOM

Your mall is. My mall ain't

WHITNEY

This is where you live? The mall?

TOM

Yeah.

WHITNEY

You get discounts?

TOM  
Perks. Cheap dates.

WHITNEY  
Figures. You're a cheapskate.

TOM  
You saw me on that show?

WHITNEY  
What show?

TOM  
Nothing. What the hell happened  
to this date?

WHITNEY  
I let you talk.

Whitney pulls up in front of the mall.

TOM  
You still want ice cream?

WHITNEY  
Ah...yeah.

INT. MALL - DAY

The mall is quiet. The lights are dimmed and the music is off. The faux cobblestones make the hallways resemble a quite little village road.

Tom and Whitney saunter through the mall towards the food court.

TOM  
If you want frozen yogurt there's TCBY  
next to KayBee, but Baskin-Robbins rules  
the world in my opinion.

WHITNEY  
Frozen yogurt isn't ice cream.

INT. FOOD COURT - DAY

The food court is circular and is bordered by a dozen or so fast food restaurants.

In the center is a circular track where a kid-sized train runs while their parents can eat. It sits motionless.

Tom walks over to the Baskin-Robbins' counter and jumps over to the other side.

WHITNEY

Whatta they let you use their machines  
for? Surprised they trust ya.

TOM

(defensive)

Hey, I'm a responsible individual. I  
clean up after myself. I have a job  
and I live on my own.

WHITNEY

(uninterested)

In the mall. What flavors you got?

Tom grabs the ice cream scoop.

TOM

Pick your poison.

WHITNEY

Chocolate.

TOM

I'm goin' vanilla.

WHITNEY

No shit?

He starts scooping the ice cream into the cone. Some falls off on to  
the floor. He hands her the cone.

WHITNEY

Oh and another little factoid about  
me. I have a personalize license  
plate.

TOM

Yeah? What does it say?

WHITNEY

It spells. B-C-H girl.

TOM

Beach girl.

Whitney smiles.

WHITNEY

Wrong.

She takes a long seductive lick of her ice cream cone.

TOM

Wow, I'm getting shit on repeatedly  
here tonight.

WHITNEY

It's been great watching you place your foot repeatedly in your mouth. As a date you fail, as a social experiment you're getting a perfect score.

Tom makes his cone. He jumps the counter but on his way down, his foot catches the counter top and he falls face first to the ground, landing on his

Whitney laughs. She doesn't offer any help to Tom. He gets up on his own.

TOM

Ah, that license place. It says bitch girl. Doesn't it?

Whitney smiles.

Ice cream drips off his shirt. Whitney takes another lick before throwing the cone in the trash.

WHITNEY

So where's your apartment?

INT. MALL - NIGHT

Tom and Whitney walk slowly towards Tom's apartment.

TOM

Here we are.

Whitney smiles. Her eyes look unfocused.

TOM

You okay?

She nods and continues to smile. She looks dopey. Tom is totally baffled by her demeanor.

TOM

Are you on drugs?

She nods, yes.

TOM

(surprised)

Really?

She nods once more.

TOM

What? Pot?

She shakes her head "no".

TOM

Coke?

She takes her arms and makes an "x"

TOM

X? Ecstasy?

She smiles.

TOM

That explains a lot.

(mutters)

Freak.

He turns around and unlocks the door.

TOM

Okay? Well it's been fun.

(pause)

Not really.

WHITNEY

You're not inviting me in?

Tom looks stunned.

WHITNEY

I don't play hard to get.

TOM

(mutters)

Ah...okay. Wow, that latte really works. I score even on bad dates.

Tom opens the door and they both walk in.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tom turns on the lights. Whitney walks right past him. Her eyes trained on the bed.

TOM

Don't want the tour?

She shakes her head. She finds a corner of the bed to sit on.

TOM

What's this all about? You play like you don't want me then you come in here looking for the penis. I don't get it.

WHITNEY

When was the last time you saw a girl naked?

TOM  
Ah..I dunno. Not long.

WHITNEY  
How long?

TOM  
A couple months.

WHITNEY  
You have, right?

TOM  
(angry)  
Yeah. Of course. Okay it's been a long  
time. Couple years.

WHITNEY  
You're just a boy.

TOM  
I'm the same age as you.

WHITNEY  
Apples and oranges Tom. A boy cannot  
be a lover, but a boy listens. But a  
boy only listens to a girl when he thinks  
she'll be naked.

Tom wasn't listening. He sets his keys down on the countertop. He  
takes off his coat and sets it down on the chair.

TOM  
What? Sorry. I was thinking where I  
left the condoms.

Tom checks a drawer. He takes out a condom. It looks to be ten years  
old.

TOM  
(to condom)  
Your day has come.  
(to Whitney)  
I got this for free at an Aerosmith  
concert.

WHITNEY  
You're a piece of shit, you know that?

TOM  
You're just saying that cause I'm too  
funky to touch.

WHITNEY

You are the most self-centered person  
I've ever met. Me this. Me that. You  
deserve fame. You got the personality  
down.

Despite her scolding Tom, she doesn't get up to leave.

TOM

No matter what I say you don't leave,  
you must like it.

WHITNEY

What I like is what you'll be doin' to me  
the rest of this night. I don't want you  
to say the word I. Nor do I want to hear  
you say the word me. All I want is the  
word you. Don't follow those rules? Then  
I leave.

Tom looks humbled.

TOM

What's in it for me?

WHITNEY

You get to see a naked girl.

(beat)

I'm feeling very tingly. I'd like you  
to undress me.

Tom

I can..

(catches himself)

Yes Whitney.

WHITNEY

Smart boy.

Tom walks apprehensively towards the bed. Whitney lies in bed staring  
at the ceiling. He kneels to the floor. He quickly removes her right  
shoe.

WHITNEY

Tom. Slow motion. I want this to  
take an hour.

TOM

(skeptical)

An hour to undress you?

WHITNEY

Yeah, I'm feeling tingly.

Tom begins to remove the other shoe.



WHITNEY

(softer)

Slower.

(even softer)

Slower. And don't talk.

Tom continues to remove her shoe. He moves at a snails pace. He doesn't seem happy

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

The clock reads "4:30". Tom is in bed, sound asleep. Whitney is gone. Takisha enters the apartment and quietly walks over to Tom's bed. Standing in the shadows she begins removing her clothes. With only her underwear remaining she gets into bed and moves up against Tom. She spoons him and kisses him on the back of the neck. Tom smiles. He doesn't open his eyes. He purrs.

TOM

(sleepy)

I knew you'd come around Whitney.

Takisha smiles coyly and continues to kiss him, while caressing his arm with her fingertips. He is completely unaware that it is a different girl in his bed.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

The alarm clock reads "10:30".

Tom lies in bed. He's alone. Takisha is gone as well. He rolls over and feels the passenger side of the bed and finds it empty.

INT. FOOD COURT

The food court is bustling. People shopping until their dropping. Kids ride the little train from the Taco Bell to Cinnabon and back.

The line at Starbucks is as long as usual. Tom is next.

It's Tom's turn in line. The Starbucks' Girl smiles warmly to Tom.

STARBUCK'S GIRL

Back for more?

TOM

Doesn't everyone come back?

STARBUCK'S GIRL

Most.

Tom leans in.

TOM

Did you put some booze in there or something? Drugs?

The female employee shakes her head "no".

STARBUCK'S GIRL

Nope.

TOM

Gimme the same thing then.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE

Three-twenty-five.

Tom hands her the money. He has the exact change. She gives him an envelope.

EMPLOYEE

I almost forgot this was left for you.

Tom takes it and the girl moves on to the next customer. He takes a sip of his beverage and smiles contently.

He sets the cup down on a counter and looks at the envelope. His name is written in poor handwriting.

Inside a letter reads only: MEET ME AT THE PET STORE AT NOON.

Tom glances down at his watch. It's only ten after eleven. He tastes his drink.

INT. BATHROOM STALL - DAY

Tom is in a stall in the men's room. He's reading the newspaper and sipping on his drink. Graffiti declaring a particular high school #1 surround the walls around him. He reads the entertainment section. His eyes widen. A headline reads: TOM AND NICOLE SPLIT UP. His mouth drops.

Tom finishes his drink in desperation. He drops the empty cup to the ground. The headline of another section of the paper reads: TOM AND WHITNEY GET KINKY AT KINKOS. There is a picture of Tom with Whitney at the Kinkos.

He throws the paper to the ground. He looks at his watch it is five to twelve.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Tom exits the stall. He rushes over to the sink and looks at himself in the mirror. He sees the actor Tom Cruise's reflection and not his own. He splashes water in his face furiously and looks back in the mirror. His own reflection has returned. He throws the cup in the trash.

TOM

Goddamn latte.

INT. PET STORE - DAY

A wall of glass separates the customers from the sad looking puppies. Kids press their faces up to the window.

Tom walks in and moves right over to the FEMALE CLERK behind the register.

CLERK/ROSE

Hey Tom.

TOM

Hey Rose. He ah, did anyone come in here asking for me?

ROSE

Not that I know of.

TOM

Okay. Thanks.

Tom checks out in the dogs in the window. Their BARKS sound muffled though the glass. The kids laugh, as a small Welch Corgie smells his own feces. He looks like he's going to eat it. Tom looks on.

TOM

(mutters)

No. Don't. Don't do it.

The dog sniffs closer. He then takes a bite.

TOM

(winces)

Ah...no.

The kids go crazy. They point and laugh at the dog.

TOM

C'mon man. Who's gonna buy...

PALMAROY (O.S.)

Tom.

Tom hears his name but no one around him seems to be the one calling him. He can't determine who called his name.

PALMAROY (O.S.)

Hey Tom.

The voice is coming from the back of the store, back where the fish swim. Thirty aquariums stacked one on top of the other filled with various fish from all over the world line the back wall of the store. It is much darker and void of customers.

Tom moves slowly. There's no one there.

PALMAROY (O.S.)

Atta boy. Keepa comin'.

Tom reaches the rear of the store. Fish tanks surround him.

PALMAROY (O.S.)

Tom! Ten o'clock.

Tom turns his head to ten o'clock but he doesn't know what he's looking for. There's only a tank full of goldfish.

TOM

(murmurs quietly)

Dennis Hopper?

Tom looks in the space between tanks.

PALMAROY (O.S.)

No, I'm *in* the tank.

The CAMERA ZOOMS IN on a particular fish tank. Several dozen fish swim together in an imperfect circle. One fish however remains still facing Tom. Tom leans toward the tank.

TOM

(normal tone)

You're a fi...

(lowers voice

in embarrassment)

You're a fish.

PALMAROY

Yeah, I'm a fish. The name's Palmaroy.

TOM

Palmaroy, you sound like Dennis Hopper.

PALMAROY

That's cause I'm in your mind. You've seen Easy Rider how many times?

(pause)

So listen to me...Things are getting out of control.

TOM

Tell me about it.

Tom continues to talk to the fish. Customers are beginning to notice his conversation.

PALMAROY

Those drinks are messing with your mind. T-O-N-B is doing good things for you. I don't want you to end up face down in the dumpster.

TOM

You talkin' 'bout my brother?

PALMAROY

He's not fuckin' around. You need to get the money?

TOM

How?

PALMAROY

The Sphere. Remember what you're boss said. You gotta get to the middle. There's a check in there. More than enough to pay your brother.

TOM

(enlightened)

You're right.

PALMAROY

No. You're right. Don't forget I'm you, buddy.

TOM

Ah yeah. So how do we crack that thing?

PALMAROY

Drop it from the roof onto the cement. If that doesn't work, use a gun. Blast the mother open.

Tom nods accepting the fish's words.

TOM

Will you still be here when I get back?

PALMAROY

If you need me.

TOM

Okay. Wish me luck.

PALMAROY

Godspeed.

Tom turns around and swiftly exits the store.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

Tom stands on the mall's roof. The wind is blowing briskly. Tom works hard to keep his hair in place. He leans over the side and looks down to the parking lot below. He holds the Sphere over the side and lets go. The sphere lands with a dull THUD.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Tom walks to where the Sphere landed. The Sphere has formed a miniature crater in the asphalt. Tom picks the Sphere from its hole and examines it. There's not even a scratch on it. Tom looks disappointed

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Tom stands at the bottom of a small hill. There is nothing for miles in any direction except empty road and hills. Tall brown grass surrounds him. Tom wears headgear to protect his ears.

With Dirty Harry-like ease, Tom reaches into his shirt and pulls out a large handgun. Thirty yards from Tom's position the sphere sits on an milk crate, slightly uphill.

Tom takes aim and fires. The bullet hits the sphere but ricochets off. Tom fires again and this times the bullet ricochets back towards him. He jumps to the ground. The sphere falls off the milk crate and rolls down the hill toward him. It picks up speed and when it finally reaches Tom it knocks him over when he attempts to catch it.

He gets back on his feet and dusts himself off. He tucks the gun back into his waistband and walks over to where the Sphere lays. He picks it up and inspects it. There is a bit of dirt on it, but nothing even close to a crack.

TOM

For fuck's sake.

He picks up the sphere heads back to the scooter.

DANTE (O.S.)

Danny Boy!

Tom swings around. Dante is standing up the hill with two of his HEAVIES. Both of the HEAVIES are massive guys dressed in jogging suits that are covered in dirt. They both hold shovels.

Tom looks around. He can't believe that Dante found him in the middle of nowhere. They walk down the hill towards him.

TOM

What the fuck? How are you everywhere?

DANTE

Guess I have no problem smelling fresh meat. Got money?

Tom turns around and takes off for the scooter.

TOM  
(shouts while  
running)  
Lemme get it!

The men drop the shovels and take off after him. He drops the sphere and it rolls down the hill. Despite their size they are much more agile than Tom. Tom runs like a chicken with his head cut off and the men catch him.

HEAVY #1 tackles him. HEAVY #2 picks him off the ground and holds him while Dante meets up with them.

HEAVY #1  
He's packin' heat.

TOM  
(nervous)  
Geez, man. Can't you give a  
guy a break.

Dante laughs as he pulls Tom's gun from his waistband.

DANTE  
You're fuckin' kickin' me in the  
balls man.

TOM  
Oh god, you sound like my fuckin' boss.

DANTE  
Treatin' me like a woman. Gonna fuck  
me and leave? Didja bring the gun  
to shoot me?

Tom shakes his head violently in disagreement.

DANTE  
Well I was gonna let you go light.  
Scare ya a bit. Seeing that we're  
brothers. But now? Now I'm gonna  
hurt you.

Tom struggles. The heavies lift him up and then slam him back on the ground.

TOM  
Ow..fuck.

The heavies hold Tom down. Dante begins to untie Tom's shoes.

TOM  
(alarmed)  
Watta you doin' Dante?

DANTE

I just told you. I'm gonna hurt you.  
Pain is fuckin' pain right. Whatever  
doesn't kill you blah blah blah.

The first shoe comes off. Dante works on the second.

DANTE

I'm still gonna go light on you. I'll  
only take the pinky toes.

The second shoe slides off. Tom is left with only his socks covering his feet. Dante reaches into his pocket and takes out a cigar slicer. Tom takes one look at it and his eyes widen.

TOM

(desperate)

Jesus, man be original. The cigar  
slicing thing's been done. Didn't you  
see Darkman?

Dante laughs and looks at the other guys.

DANTE

I told you fat fucks it wasn't the  
Godfather.

Turns his attention back to Dante.

DANTE

Just two toes. That's it.

TOM

And the debt's gone?

DANTE

Are you bustin' my balls? It's not  
going anywhere. Just the toes are.

Tom leans back and looks to the sky. Dante is set to pull of the first sock. The Camera quickly zooms in on Tom's face. His face is all squished together, ready to accept the painful blow. He closes his eyes.

Nothing happens. Tom doesn't scream. A few seconds go by, but still nothing. Tom's face becomes semi-relaxed. He looks up to the heavies that are holding him down. They in turn are looking at Dante.

TOM

Okay. C'mon get it over with.

DANTE (O.S.)

(stunned)

I can't.



TOM

Whatta you mean you can't?

Tom slowly lifts his head up. His mouth opens drops.

DANTE

Your toes aren't fuckin' here.

The CAMERA ZOOMS in on Tom's toes. There are four on both feet. The pinky toes are gone. Tom looks at Dante as if he's done some feat of magic.

TOM

Oh shit. Where'd they go?

DANTE

I dunno.

Dante stands and the heavies release their grips on Tom. They stand up as well.

DANTE

(baffled)

You got lucky today. I'm just gonna blame this one on God or something.

Tom sits up and brings his feet in for closer inspection.

TOM

(disbelief)

You call this lucky! My fuckin' toes are gone. My fuckin' pinky toes.

Dante seems uninterested.

DANTE

You bought yourself some time, freak.

(to his men)

Let's get outta here. We got a hole to dig before the sun goes down.

Tom watches Dante and the two heavies climb the hill. He looks down at his toes and uses his finger to play around the area where his toes once were.

TOM

Things to do. Find toes. Find car.

EXT. KINKO'S - NIGHT

Tom drives his scooter up onto the sidewalk. Again the parking lot is empty. He hops off and buzzes to be let in. Whitney appears from the back. She lets Tom in.

WHITNEY

If you're looking for your pride, it's not here.

Tom marches to the counter. He looks to be in no mood for chitchat.

TOM

Where are my pinky toes?

WHITNEY

What?

TOM

(out of breath)

The two outermost toes that go on the  
end of my feet are gone. Disappeared.  
I want to know where they are.

Whitney pauses for a moment before answering.

WHITNEY

I don't have 'em. Anyway why would you  
need to know where they are? It's not  
like you can put 'em back on your feet.

TOM

(flabbergasted)

But why would anyone take them?

WHITNEY

Are you sure you had them in the first  
place?

Tom thinks for a moment.

TOM

(unsure)

Yeah.

(certain)

Of course I had. Yeah, of course.

Whitney seems amused.

TOM

This isn't funny.

WHITNEY

C'mon Tom. Do you really need them?

TOM

Do I need them? Do I need my toes?  
Yeah, I'd like to have them? I need  
them.

WHITNEY

Well. I'm sorry they took them. If it  
makes you feel any better, they took my  
tonsils.

TOM  
(distressed)  
Your tonsils!

Tom walks away from the counter.

TOM  
This is SO bizarre!

Whitney hops over the counter and sits on the edge.

WHITNEY  
Well, to every pro there's a con.

TOM  
Well, then what's the pro?

WHITNEY  
You haven't read the papers?

TOM  
You mean the whole Tom and Nicole  
breakup? Yeah I read that. That's not  
what I wanted. I only want to be happy.  
Not by destroying marriages.

WHITNEY  
Whatever. It's too late now.

TOM  
Is it? Can't I change it?

WHITNEY  
The world doesn't revolve around you,  
Tom.

TOM  
MY world does.

WHITNEY  
(disgusted)  
Your world revolves around an idiot.

Whitney moves to the back behind the counter.

WHITNEY  
I got work to do.

Whitney goes to the back.

Tom stands at the counter. He is angry, but doesn't know how to take out his frustration. He finally takes a stack of the colored paper and throws them into the air. They float back to the ground all around Tom as he walks out the door.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Tom rides along the deserted suburban streets on the scooter. It's loud engine pushes the vehicle at a pretty fast clip.

Behind the scooter a black stretch limo pulls around the corner and closes in on Tom. It swerves out of its lane and pulls right along side of him.

Tom does his best to ignore the limo, but it is now only a foot or two away from his scooter. The rear window opens as the car closes in on Tom.

Tom finally looks to his right and sees inside the limo. From the darkness within the car, two large hands reach out of the car. Tom is lifted off the scooter and pulled into the car. The scooter, without a driver, runs off the road, slams into the curb and flips into the air before stopping on someone's front lawn.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

Tom sits squeezed between TWO LARGE BODYGUARDS and across from The Publicist(40). The Publicist is an extremely well-groomed and well dressed man. He can be described as distinguished.

TOM

(hyper)

Okay. I'm just gonna pretend that didn't happen. It helps me not go completely crazy. Cuz I think I'm going crazy. I feel like I need to tell people that I'm going crazy. Just to keep me sane. You know what I'm saying?

Tom looks around the limo. He spots the bar. He looks really nervous.

TOM

Mind if I have a drink?

THE PUBLICIST

Be my guest.

TOM

I'd like to have something James Bondish seeing that I'm in a limo, but to be honest I'm not a big drinker. I like lattes. In fact, I think I'm addicted. Makes me see strange things. In fact part two, it makes me think I'm Tom Cruise the actor and not the guy that I am. You know what I'm saying?

THE PUBLICIST

All too well.

Tom moves over to the bar, but the bodyguards pull him back in the seat.

THE PUBLICIST

Relax. Allow me.

The Publicist moves over to the bar and starts mixing Tom a drink. He hands the drink to Tom. Tom takes a sip.

TOM

So, you guys work for my brother?

THE PUBLICIST

Your brother?

TOM

Dante? You know? The big goomba.  
Right? Right?

Tom looks to at the men to his left and right and then back to The Publicist. They show no emotion whatsoever. Tom realizes they aren't with his brother. He has suddenly become nervous and finishes his drink.

TOM

That's pretty stiff. How does Bond do all  
that crazy spy stuff after a few of  
these?

Tom tries to force a laugh

THE PUBLICIST

(firm)

Who is Dante, Tom?

TOM

He's my brother. You guys aren't working  
for him I take it?

The Publicist shakes his head "no".

TOM

Then...who are you?

THE PUBLICIST

I work for Mr. Tom Cruise. The actor.  
Not you. I am his publicist.

TOM

Interesting work. Kidnapping. Shouldn't  
you be saving his career?

The Publicist laughs. The two large men follow suit. Tom tries but fails.

THE PUBLICIST

I am. That's why you're sittin' across from me.

TOM

What do I have to do with him? We share the same name, yeah. But that's it.

THE PUBLICIST

Tom, I know about the meetings.

TOM

So?

THE PUBLICIST

Stars can only become as big as the publicity that surrounds them. Mr. Cruise is the most popular actor alive.

TOM

Was.

The bodyguard to Tom's left punches Tom in the stomach. Tom groans in pain.

TOM

(grimacing in pain)

What was that for?

THE PUBLICIST

Just protecting my client and to show you we are serious. You have three days to change things around.

TOM

I can't. Sorry. Things have been going real well for me in the last week. Perhaps I'll take you on as *my* publicist.

The publicist laughs once again.

THE PUBLICIST

That laugh I just did? That is an evil laugh. That is the laugh normally associated with someone getting hurt very badly.

(beat)

Three days.

TOM

I guess this is the part where I get thrown out of the moving car.

THE PUBLICIST

Bingo.

Tom hands David his empty glass.

One bodyguard opens the door while the other grabs Tom and throws him out of the limo.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Tom lands hard and rolls a couple of times before coming to a stop. He lays spread eagle looking at the sky.

TOM

Car. Toes.

(beat)

Scooter.

INT. MALL - NIGHT

Tom enters the mall. It is empty. He looks despondent. His clothes are grubby. His movements are slow and deliberate.

He walks to the door to his apartment. There is an envelope stuffed in the door. It's from Palmaroy. Tom opens the envelope and reads the letter inside. It reads only: WE MUST TALK

Tom looks down the corridor.

INT. DIANE CRUISE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The lights are off. A small amount of light filters in from the deserted parking lot outside. On the desk there is a nameplate that has "Diane Cruise" and numerous photos of Tom at different stages of his life.

Tom sneaks into the office and turns on the lights. He moves around to the desk and sits in the chair. He opens the wide front drawer and in it are a few dozen sets of keys. He grabs the one that belongs to the pet store.

INT. MALL- NIGHT

Tom runs over to the Pet Store. He uses the lock to open the door. He goes in and doesn't bother turning on the light.

INT. PET STORE - NIGHT

Tom walks to the back of the store. Lights from the aquariums glimmer from the back of the aquariums.

He finds the goldfish tank and looks in. The fish are sleeping

TOM

(quietly)

Palmaroy. You in there?

(tapping on  
glass)

Palmaroy.

One of the goldfish meanders over the glass.

PALMAROY

You woke me up.

TOM

You said you had to talk to me.

PALMAROY

Things are getting outta control Tom.  
When you made Losin' It back in the  
eighties you were outta control just  
like now.

TOM

Hey Palmaroy. I'm not the actor.

PALMAROY

The hell you not. Look at you. You  
got the looks my friend. You're Tom  
Cruise. You just need to update your  
style. Look the part.

TOM

That's all?

PALMAROY

That's it. Don't let that publicist fuck  
with your mind. He's trying to destroy you.  
You need to get that fifty grand and get  
outta town.

TOM

(disconsolate)

It's impossible. That thing is solid.

PALMAROY

When you wanted the part in Interview  
with a Vampire. What did they say?

TOM

That it was impossible?

PALMAROY

Right. And what did you do? You got it.  
You wanna be in that office for the  
rest of your life? I know what confine  
spaces are like. Man was not meant to  
be confined. Are you a man? Well of  
course you are. Now fuckin' act like one.

TOM

(smiles)

Yeah!



Light from a flashlight shines in Tom's face. Tom is blinded by the light and unable to see who is there.

TAKISHA (O.S.)

Tom?

TOM

Yeah?

Takisha turns off the light. She walks to the back of the store to where Tom.

TAKISHA

Who are you talking to?

TOM

This goldfish here. His name is Palmaroy. Say hi, Palmaroy.

Takisha looks at the fish. Nothing interesting happens.

TOM (con')

C'mon Palmaroy.

Takisha sees that Tom's getting embarrassed.

TAKISHA

Maybe he's just shy 'round girls.

TOM

This dude ain't shy 'round no body.

TAKISHA

Well, he ain't talking. Look Tom you can't just open shop when you please. The food court that's your domain. The stores are off limits.

Tom nods his head in agreement.

TOM

I know, I know.

TAKISHA

If Paul were on tonight. He'd have you arrested.

TOM

Then my mom would fire him the next day.

TAKISHA

That's not the point. The point is I allow you freedoms cause I like you and I trust you.

TOM

You like me?

TAKISHA

I like you. I like my job. So, game over. Let's get out of here.

Takisha grabs Tom's shirt and pulls him toward the front of the store.

TAKISHA

Say goodbye to your friend.

TOM

Can I get a latte?

TAKISHA

Starbucks is off limits too.

TOM

(pleading)

I only need a sip.

They exit the store.

INT. MALL - DAY

The mall is crowded. Tom exits a vintage clothes shop with two bags in hand. He's sipping on his latte. He walks with a spring in his step and a smile on his face.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Tom enters his apartment and throws the bag on his bed. In the bag is a pair of sunglasses and an aviator jacket just like the one from Top Gun. The sunglasses are also similar to the one that Tom Cruise wore in the movie.

Tom puts on the jacket and the sunglasses and looks at himself in the mirror. He smiles. He gets serious and then smiles again.

TOM

Dude, you rule.

Tom laughs and slams his hands together in celebration.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

Tom enters Dr. Connery's building. He's dressed in his TOP GUN outfit, complete with sunglasses in the dark night. He chews on some gum incessantly.

The doorman sits at his desk across the way.

Tom walks cautiously being sure he doesn't repeat his performance from the previous time.

TOM

I see you haven't waxed the floor.

The doorman smiles. Tom reaches the desk.

DOORMAN

Is your back still a bit sore?

TOM

Not quite as bad.

DOORMAN

That makes me very glad.

TOM

I need to see the doc.

DOORMAN

Just go up and knock.

Tom heads for the elevator. The doorman reaches under the desk and pulls out a bouquet of flowers.

DOORMAN

(calls after Tom)

I forgot to send these up. Would  
you be so kind?

Tom takes the flowers.

TOM

Yeah, it's no problem. I don't mind.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Tom knocks on the door to Dr. Connery's apartment with flowers in hand.

CONNERY (O.S.)

(dainty)

Coming. I'm coming.

Tom grimaces at the sound of those words. He looks down at his flowers and throws his head back in disgust.

The door opens. Dr. Connery is wearing cut off shorts and a mesh T-shirt. He smiles expansively. He sees the flowers.

CONNERY

Oh my. I was expecting someone else.

(points to the  
flowers)

For me?

TOM

For you but not from me.

Tom hands him the flowers.

CONNERY

Come in.

Connery turns around and Tom follows him back into the apartment.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tom and Dr. Connery sit across from one another. Tom seems uncomfortable in the setting and what he is attempting to say.

CONNERY

So why am I so lusciously lucky to have you're presence in my apartment tonight?

TOM

I want my toes back, doc.

CONNERY

(fained surprise)

You toes? I'm not following you.

TOM

(straightforward)

You took my toes. My pinky toes. Look I'll show you.

Tom leans over to take his shoes off.

CONNERY

(impatient)

Fine. I took your toes. Is that a crime?

TOM

I dunno...Probably. It's not a nice thing to do, that's for sure.

CONNERY

Well, you never would've agreed to it.

TOM

YA THINK?

Dr. Connery smiles calmly. He looks unconcerned.

TOM

God stop smiling? Jesus.

(pause)

I want out. I want your...your spell erased.

CONNERY

But Tom. You've gained acceptance at work.

TOM

I don't care.

CONNERY

Things have been going right for-

TOM

I don't care.

CONNERY

You're getting laid Tom! That doesn't come for free.

TOM

Okay..well that maybe true. But-

CONNERY

You can't have'em back.

TOM

Where are they?

CONNERY

They've been sold.

TOM

To who?

CONNERY

Doesn't matter. That's how we finance all this.

TOM

I want out.

CONNERY

We'll discuss this tomorrow at the meeting.

Tom jumps to his feet.

TOM

Fine. I'll there...here.

Tom storms out of the room.

INT. FOOD COURT - DAY

DAY AFTER SUNDAY

Tom stands in line wearing the "Top Gun" jacket and sunglasses. He looks absolutely nothing like Tom Cruise, the actor. The girl behind the counter hands Tom his drink.

TOM

Recognize me?

The girl smiles.

EMPLOYEE

Of course. Top Gun was killa'.

Tom moves his sunglasses away from his eyes and winks.

TOM

Thanks for the java.

EMPLOYEE

It's a latte.

TOM

Whatever.

Tom walks away.

INT. CUBICLE - DAY

The computer is off. The Sphere sits on Tom's desk. Tom turns the corner and enters his cubicle. He remains dressed in the Top Gun outfit.

TOM

(sees the Sphere)

Hey, I already have one of these.

With his latte in one hand he lifts the sphere off the desk. The sphere drops out of his arm and hits his latte and they both fall to the ground. The latte spills and the sphere lands in a puddle.

Tom curls his lips to curse but through sheer determination he manages to withhold any profanity.

He grabs some papers from his desk and begins to wipe up the spill.

He rolls the sphere away and as it moves there is a METALLIC CRACKING sound. Tom perks up. He listens closely. The cracking sound continues. It comes from the sphere. Tom's face lights up. He picks up the Sphere and notices dozens of tiny cracks.

Like an ancient warrior Tom lifts the Sphere over his head. Leaves it there for a few moments and suddenly slams it down on the ground.

VARIOUS COWORKERS peer over the dividers. They look at Tom, with his aviator jacket and sunglasses and they seem dumbfounded.

Tom inspects the Sphere. The small cracks are now larger.

TOM

Fuck yeah!

Tom lifts the Sphere once more. He slams it once more. This time the Sphere cracks open like an egg.

Inside there is a check. Tom drops the two halves to the ground and removes the check.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The conference room is void of decorations. Nothing but a large table, and a half-dozen leather chairs. There are even no windows. A number of phony plaques hanging from the wall. CORPORATE MEN and WOMEN sit around the table with Warblybird sitting at the head. Jake sits to his right.

Tom busts into the room. He holds the two halves of the sphere and the check. The meeting abruptly halts with Tom gaining the attention of everyone.

JAKE  
(whisper)  
What's with the outfit man?

Tom looks over to Jake with contempt. He pauses momentarily to gather his thoughts.

TOM  
Jake, who's butt did you kiss to get  
in here anyway?

Tom is in character quoting Top Gun. Jake figures it out and plays along.

JAKE  
The list is long, but distinguished.

TOM  
Yeah, well so is my Johnson.

Jake bursts out laughing. Warblybird jumps from his seat.

WARBLYBIRD  
That's enough, you two.  
(turns to Tom)  
Tom, what are you doing in here?

TOM  
I deserve to be in here. Lemme ask you  
something, if you had to go into battle  
would you want him on your side?

JAKE  
(looking for  
support)  
He's crazy. The guy quoting Top Gun  
for Christ's sake.

Tom appears hurt by Jake's words.

TOM  
What the hell's Top Gun?

He drops the pieces of sphere down on the conference table it lands with a loud THUD.

WARBLYBIRD

Oh boy. That's a problem.

TOM

For you.

Warblybird, the other executives, including Jake lean with their mouths gaping open. They're shocked.

Tom pauses. Sighs audibly. He reaches into his chest pocket and pulls out the check. He opens it wide.

TOM

So who signs this thing?

Warblybird slowly picks up the pieces and examines it closely.

WARBLYBIRD

I do.

Tom slides the check over to Warblybird.

TOM

Be sure to write clearly.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Tom is alone on the elevator with the cell phone to his ear. He pushes the button.

TOM

Dante it's Tom. I got your money.

(beat)

Yeah..All of it.

The elevator stops. The doors open and Tom walks off. Several BUSINESS PEOPLE walk on.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The elevator doors close. Tom looks around and sees he got off on the wrong floor.

TOM

Shit.

(pause)

Hey look. Meet me at the food court.



EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Tom exits the building and finds his Honda parked in front. It is spotless. The damage has been repaired. Tom walks cautiously over to the vehicle. He inspects it. He goes on his knees and looks at the underbelly of the car. No bombs. He looks around for the person who left it but no one is around.

INT. HONDA BUILDING- DAY

Inside the car a note is taped to the steering wheel.

The note reads:

I CAME BACK TO YOU BECAUSE I DON'T WANT YOU TO RUIN WHAT YOU HAVE AT  
TONB. FONDLY. MR. HONDA.

Tom crushes the note and throws it in the back seat. He tears off.

INT. FOOD COURT - DAY

The mall is not very busy. Tom sits across a table from Dante. Tom has changed out of his Top Gun uniform.

DANTE

How'd you get it?

TOM

How you get it is the important thing.

Tom reaches into his pocket and pulls out an envelope.

TOM

And I'm handing it to you.

Tom slides the envelope across the table.

Dante looks in the envelope and grins.

DANTE

Twenty-five grand is a lot of money.  
I'm surprised you paid up. Maybe  
I was wrong 'bout you.

Tom pulls out another envelope.

DANTE

Whadda you got there?

TOM

Smell money?

DANTE

No. I can only smell those fuckin'  
Cinnabons.

TOM

For this envelope you have to do something for me?

DANTE

I'm in the doin' business.

TOM

I want you to go to my work and steal everything in the whole damn place. From the computers to the fuckin' tampons in the woman's room. I want it emptied.

DANTE

What do ya want me to do with the shit?

TOM

I don't care. Be creative. Dump it in the river, sell it. I don't give a shit.

(beat)

Actually, don't throw it in the river. Don't pollute.

(beat)

I'll give you the code and whatever else you need. How 'bout it?

Dante thinks momentarily.

DANTE

Fuck it. Yeah. It's money right? I'm not in the saying no business.

Dante snaps the envelope off the table and stuffs it in his jacket pocket.

DANTE

It's a done deal. See ya at Christmas.

Dante slides his chair backwards and exits the food court.

INT. PET STORE - DAY

Tom is hanging out by the fish in the back of the store. He sips on his latte and leans in close to the tank to talk. Palmaroy swims in place by the glass.

TOM

(whispers)

But I'd like to have my toes back.

PALMAROY

(pep talk)

Fuck the toes. They're floating in a jar somewhere. You got your car back. You had the worst date ever and still got laid. You got money. Enough money to get to the left coast. That's where you'll perform a coup d'etat and reclaim your thrown as king of California.

TOM

(smiles)

A coup d'etat. Yeah. I like that.

A YOUNG BOY wanders over to where they are standing. He looks at Tom with a quizzical look.

TOM

(to kid)

Whatta you looking at?

YOUNG BOY

You talkin' to a fish.

TOM

(strict)

That was a rhetorical question kid. It's means get lost.

The kid shoots him the finger and skips off.

TOM

Fuckin' li'l prick. Jesus, I can't even scare off ten year olds.

(beat)

I gotta go.

Tom is set to leave the store.

PALMAROY

Hey Tom. Hold up.

TOM

What?

PALMAROY

Buy me.

TOM

Nah, you're a pain in the ass. You're my devil fish. I'm looking for my conscious fish.

PAMAROY

I ate him. So now you can buy us both. I'm cheap and right now I'm the only person..er fish you can talk to.

CUT TO:

Tom stands at the front counter holding Palmaroy in a plastic bag filled with water in one hand and the Starbucks cup in the other. Rose gives him his change.

CHASHIER

You need a bowl?

TOM

Ah, I suppose so.

Rose reaches under the counter and grabs a fish bowl. She sets it down on the counter. Tom opens the bag and spills its contents into the bowl.

TOM

I get a cubicle and he gets a bowl.  
That's fair.

(holds the bowl  
up to his face)

Ain't that right Palmaroy?

Rose shoots Tom an odd look.

TOM

He's very sensitive.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Dr. Sean Connery meanders towards the door. His outfit is much more understated and less colorful. He opens the door and finds Tom standing there with his fish and of course a Starbucks drink. He is dressed like Tom Cruise in the movie, Cocktail.

Dr. Sean looks at him and looks at the fish.

DR. SEAN

Bearing gifts once again I see.

TOM

Nah, this guys with me. He's my representation.

DR. SEAN

C'mon in.

Tom and the doctor walk to the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The living room is filled with TONB members. There are a few more than last time. Tom searches for Whitney.

PALMAROY

A motley cast of characters, I'd say.

Only Tom can hear the fish

TOM

(to fish)

Shhhh.

(to Dr. SEAN)

Where's Whitney?

DR. SEAN

Hmm..Turns out Benedict Arnold was a more suitable name. She sold you out my friend.

TOM

(mutters)

So *that's* how the publicist found me?

DR. SEAN

I was hoping you were goin' to be a no show. I can't tell you how disappointed I was when you're lil face in my peephole.

TOM

Sorry to disappoint.

DR. SEAN

After the vote we'll expect your resignation.

TOM

Yep Yep.

DR. SEAN

People! People! Please. People.

The room grows silent.

DR. SEAN

Mr. Cruise here has come to me and asked for reversal.

A low MURMUR fills the room as everyone looks for the opinion of the person next to him.

GEORGE BUSH

Screw that. If the grass is green play ball.

Everyone laughs.

DANA CARVEY

What the perv means is you reap what  
you sow.

TOM

(defensive)

I didn't wanna sow anything.

GEORGE BUSH

I suppose you came here all accidentally  
and everything then right.

TOM

No. I mean yeah, but this shit's whacked.

PALMAROY

They want you to shut up, Tom.

JULIA

Celebrities are evil.

TOM

No. They're not.

PALMAROY

Yes they are.

Tom looks down to the fishbowl. Palmaroy is looking back up at him.

TOM

You're not making this any easier  
on me.

DR. SEAN

A reversal is highly unheard of.

Tommy Lee stands up.

TOMMY LEE

But not unheard of though, right Doc?

DR. SEAN

Tommy. Please sit down.

TOMMY LEE

(to Tom)

You are being misinformed Tom. *The  
fact is the one we've done was for the  
doc.*

Dr. Sean looks to the ceiling, frustrated.

DR. SEAN

That was quite a while ago.

TOM  
(to Tommy Lee)  
What happened?

TOMMY LEE  
Let 'em tell you.

Tommy flops back down on the couch.

DR. SEAN  
Fine. Sit down Tom.

Tom takes a seat in a nearby chair. Dr. Sean remains standing in the center of the room.

DR. SEAN  
Alright well, one day I was getting on a plane. I was going to Hawaii. It's the most liberal state you know? They sat me in first class. Although, now first class is like a second home to me I was strictly second class at the time so I thought it was odd. But of course I didn't question it. I had a sailor friend in Hawaii and I thought it maybe it was a birthday gift for myself. How wrong was I? A few minutes later, James Bond himself saunters on the plane like a Scottish God. The stewardess tells me I'm in the wrong seat. Disappointed, I started getting all my items together when Mr. Connery tells me to stay in first class and *he'll* sit in coach. I couldn't believe it. The man who I've been trying to ruin was actually giving up his first class seat to me. I was stunned. So, needless to say, the guilt made for a very long trip. And when I finally made it back, I reversed it.  
(thoughtful pause)  
I reversed the process.

Julia stands up to protest.

JULIA  
But he did something to have it reversed.  
(turns to Tom)  
What has Tom Cruise the actor ever done for you?

TOM  
Ah, he doesn't even know I'm alive.

JULIA  
Exactly.

DANA  
But I like Tom Cruise. The actor.

TOMMY LEE

Well Dana Carvy was quite funny in  
Wayne's World. I didn't think he deserved  
what we did to him.

DANA

Oh, right. *Tommy Lee*. He's a worthy  
dude.

Suddenly, the entire room begins to shout at each other. Each person's  
argument gets drowned out by next. JASON PRIESTLY (40) walks over to  
Tom. Jason wears his hair long and in a ponytail. His clothes are  
several years outdated. His face is fuzzy. He leans over to Tom.

JASON

My name's Jason Priestly. I think I  
can help you. Come with me.

The room grows even louder. Dr. Sean has lost control. Jason heads for  
the door and Tom follows holding onto the fishbowl. No one seems to  
notice them leave.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The hallway is empty and very quiet. Jason paces nervously before  
speaking. Tom stands motionless and confused.

JASON

You're never gonna get the votes.

TOM

Doesn't matter. I'll find another  
way to get what I want.

JASON

Well, you can fool 'em all.

TOM

Whatta you mean?

Jason waits a few moments before he speaks.

JASON

Jesus, I can't believe I'm gonna tell  
you this!

TOM

What?

JASON

(apprehensive)

Alright, when I was in college I studied  
chemistry. I was fuckin' good. A bunch of  
us at Stanford developed all sorts of  
fuckin' LSD and escasty-like stuff. It  
was all mind blowing shit.



(takes a breath)

So one day we all got busted. They locked us up, scared the shit outta us, and offered us all a deal. We took it.

TOM

What was the deal?

JASON

They wanted us to develop some kinda mind control shit. You know? Something that would keep the masses at bay. Make us all timid and weak. It was called the Starbucks project.

TOM

Like the coffee?

JASON

Fuckin' exactly the coffee. So we developed this drug that would sedate the population. That was it. That was the extent of our involvement.

(catches his breath)

But not too long later, the first Starbucks opened. It started slow. People hated the taste, but something brought 'em back. They paid more and kept coming. And like a virus it spread. Fuck, if there isn't one in every town.

TOM

So what does this havta do with me?

JASON

Dude, man I saw you with that cup. I can see it in you eyes. You have the problem I had. You're hooked on the latte, man. It's making you believe that you're Tom Cruise, isn't it?

TOM

Yeah. Well technically *I am* Tom Cruise, but yeah...yeah I know what you mean.

JASON

I know the feeling. I started seeing Jason Priestly in the mirrors. But not me Jason Priestly, but the guy from Sister Kate and then later on 90210. Brenda's bro.

TOM

(stunned)

That's it. That's what I'm feeling.

JASON

Of course, man. I mean look at you.  
Your dressin' like him.

TOM

What do I do?

JASON

As I see it. They're two routes to take.  
You either quit or you go all the way.  
Balls to the walls.

TOM

I can't quit. I don't got the votes,  
right?

JASON

Then lemme tell you about latte X.  
It's a drink that you can make at Starbucks,  
but they don't sell it. They can't. The  
whole country would be trippin' permanently

TOM

But you want me to take that trip?

JASON

I'm on that trip and believe me it's  
better than the other options. You  
won't need that group of misfits in  
there.

TOM

Then why are you here?

JASON

The women. That Whitney is a good  
time if you can get your hands on her.

TOM

Ah. I'll keep that in mind. Thanks.

Jason reaches into his pocket. He pulls out a sheet of paper and hands it to Tom.

JASON

That's the recipe. You make it, you  
drink it and then things change. It's  
a different world, take it or leave it.

Tom grabs the recipe and sticks it into his pocket.

TOM

Things change. I get it. I'll take it.

Jason pats Tom on the shoulder.

JASON

I think it's time we go back in.

Tom opens the door and the two men go back into the apartment.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

A large moving truck sits parked in the darkness in front of the building. TWO MOVERS wheel a copier up the ramp and into the truck.

INT. OFFICES - NIGHT

The office is already almost halfway cleared out. Several MOVERS work feverishly moving furniture and equipment into a freight elevator.

Dante supervises the process.

DANTE

Whattya think fellas...Ebay? They got that Mister Lister thing and you can put on like a thousand things on there at once.

The movers continue working without responding.

DANTE

I dunno. Maybe I'll just have a yard sale.

He takes a three-hole punch from the desk and inspects it closely.

DANTE

Is there anyway we can torture someone with a three-hole puncher?

A mover walks by with a dolly full of boxes.

MOVER

Yeah, bring it down on someone's head.

Dante drops the puncher in a box.

DANTE

I'm gonna go get my grub on.

Dante gets into the packed freight elevator and closes the door behind him.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

Dante steps off the elevator and walks briskly across the parking lot.

From across the parking lot a car shines its headlights and approaches Dante. The car, which now presents itself as the publicist's limo, blocks Dante's path to his car. The back window slides open and the publicist shows his face. Both Dante and the publicist stand stone still for a few moments.

DANTE

Whatta you fuckin' gawking at?

THE PUBLICIST

I'm Tom Cruise's publicist and you're Tom Cruise's brother.

DANTE

So fuckin' what does that do for you?

THE PUBLICIST

Gives me leverage.

The Publicist pulls out a tranquilizer gun. He aims it at Dante.

DANTE

What the fuck?

Dante spins around and starts running. He gets about twenty yards before The Publicist shoots him in the butt with the feathered dart. Dante shouts in pain but continues running. He goes another twenty yards before losing muscle control and collapses.

The limo slowly moves toward its prey.

INT. FOOD COURT - NIGHT

Tom enters the mall in no great rush. He locks the door behind him. The mall is empty. The lights are dimmed. He strolls past his apartment and towards the food court.

He reaches the Starbucks and sees the front gate has been shut and locked securely.

DAN (O.S.)

What are you doing over there  
Cruise?

Tom, startled, spins around and sees DAN (30) standing on the other side of the food court. Dan, a security guard, is a huge man, but his size is mostly attributed to fat.

TOM

Ah, hey Dan. How's it going? I..ah.  
just ah getting some air. Where's  
Takisha? Thought she was on tonight.

Dan walks closer.

DAN  
She'll be in at open.

Tom slowly begins to walk away. He tries to go back toward his apartment

DAN  
They've told me to keep an eye on you.

TOM  
Who did?

DAN  
Your mom.

TOM  
My mom? Are you kiddin' me? Geez man. You don't tell on me and I won't tell on you.

DAN  
I don't take shit.

TOM  
An employee with morals. Why even work if you don't wanna fuck over your boss.

DAN  
You mean your mom?

TOM  
Stop talkin' smack 'bout my mom. I'm just saying...

DAN  
I'm just saying, don't take stuff.

TOM  
Alright, alright. I'm off to bed.

Tom walks toward his apartment.

TOM  
Later.

Dan turns around and walks in the opposite direction of Tom.

LATER

In another portion of the mall Dan marches through the corridors searching for anything out of the ordinary.

He doesn't see Tom hiding behind a cell phone kiosk. Without warning, Tom jumps from behind the kiosk and charges towards Dan screaming the whole way.

Dan takes out his stun gun and as soon as Tom reaches him Dan stuns him in the chest. Tom falls to the ground quite dramatically. He looks unconscious.

DAN

Tom, whatta you doin?

Dan moves closer to Tom. He leans over so that he is only inches away from Tom's closed eye. The hand holding the stun gun hangs right over Tom's body.

DAN

Tom? You alright?

Tom's eyes open suddenly. He head butts Dan and takes the stun gun from Dan's hand. He jumps to his feet and shocks Dan several times in the arms, shoulder and back. Dan, being such a big man needs three times the amount of electricity to stun him. Finally, Dan falls to the ground with a loud GRUNT. Tom jolts him once more for good measure and throws the stun gun across the hall. He takes electrical tape from his pocket and tapes Dan's hands, feet and mouth.

TOM

Sit tight, big guy.

Tom leaves Dan on the ground and sprints back toward the food court.

Tom takes a long piece of rope and ties one end to the Starbucks's gate. He runs across the food court to the children's train that runs in circles around the food court. He ties the other end of the rope to the train's caboose. He checks to make sure it's fastened tightly.

Tom runs to the train's controls. He turns the power on, waits a few moments for it to warm up and then powers the train forward full speed ahead. The train struggles as the rope tightens, but gradually it continues forward. The gates over at the Starbucks vibrate wildly until they are pulled partially off.

Tom turns off the train and runs over to the Starbucks. He crawls through the opening in the gate and enters the Starbucks.

INT. STARBUCKS - NIGHT

Tom sets the recipe on the counter and goes to work. He goes into the refridgerator and take out his ingredients. He begins mixing ingredients, using milk, syrup, and some unspecified items.

After several minutes of testing, Tom has set a layer of foam on top of his drink. Steam works it's way through the foam and floats into the air around Tom's face. He inhales the aroma and smiles.

He lifts the plastic see-through cup off the counter and holds it close to his face. He appears hesitant to sip, but musters up the courage and pours the dark liquid over his lips. The foam clings to his upper lip. Tom swallows his first taste, allowing the flavor to settle. He takes another abbreviated taste and then swallows. He then begins to take massive gulps. Thirty seconds later the cup is empty. The drink has been disposed off.

Tom drops the cup to the ground. His face looks flushed. He leans against the counter for support, but his legs won't stabilize. He falls to the floor. Tom's eyelids fall over his eyes repeatedly. He tries to remain conscious, but fails. His body falls limply to the ground. His eyes closed.

EXT. MALL - DAY

The sun has just risen. The parking lot is almost empty. Outside the main doors a handful of EMPLOYEES and SENIOR MALLWALKERS wait. They repeatedly try to open the doors but cannot. They bang their fists against the glass hoping that they will be allowed in soon.

INT. STARBUCKS - DAY

Tom is still spread out on the floor. His eyes are open, but are confused. Slowly, he works on standing up. His body is weak, but after a minute or so he is on his feet and leaning against the counter.

It appears that Tom slowly realizes what's going on. He sees the sunlight coming in and jumps on the counter and back through the gate.

INT. FOOD COURT - DAY

From the food court Tom can see a growing number of people waiting outside.

INT. MALL - DAY

He sees the crowd waiting outside the doors. He looks confused. Frozen. He sprints in the opposite direction from the awaiting crowds.

Tom runs right through the food court, past the debris and can see Dan lying on the ground.

Tom slows down as he nears the guard. The guard is unconscious. Tom begins to remove the tape from around the man's wrists and ankles. The guard's eyes open. He looks at Tom with a crazy, half-confused, and half-awed look.

Tom slowly removes the tape from the guard's face.

GUARD

You're him. You're Tom Cruise.

Tom smiles. He seems very calm.

TOM

I've always been.

Tom heads back towards the main doors and the people waiting outside. He walks past the Movie Theater and stops. The Mission Impossible 4 poster has been changed. Tom's face now appears on the poster, and not Tom Cruise the actor.

Tom stops at his apartment.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Tom walks into his apartment. He moves right over to the kitchen where Palmaroy rests in his bowl on the counter.

PALMAROY

Let's go bucko.

He lifts the bowl off the counter and sees there is a message on his answering machine. He presses the button.

THE PUBLICIST (O.S.)

This is the publicist. Listen up. I have your brother. If you want to see him again you must take care of what we talk about.

The message ends. Tom smiles.

TOM

What if I don't wanna see 'em?

He exits the apartment.

INT. MALL - DAY

Tom walks toward the door. The crowd outside closes in towards the door as he approaches.

He unlocks the door slowly and pushes it open. The crowd sees him and steps backwards. A BLUE-HAIRED LADY steps up.

BLUE HAIR

You're that guy from the TV.

TOM

Yeah, that's me.

Suddenly, the crowd swarms around Tom. Their voices meld into one. Tom can't mask his uneasiness. The crowd starts to hold up things for Tom to sign. Confused and overwhelmed Tom pushes his way through them.

TOM

(breathless)

Please. Give me space.

The crowd continues to grow and envelop him. He breaks through and jogs toward the car. The crowd follows suit.



On the opposite side of the mall parking lot a BLACK LIMO jumps the curb, narrowly missing a street lamp. It's tires SCREECH as it moves wildly across the parking lot. It's picking up speed as it goes along.

The crowd surrounding Tom flees seeing the car's trajectory is aimed right at them. Tom is left standing only feet away from his own car. The limo slams into a pole directly in front of Tom. Tom doesn't move.

The crowd watches in awe from a safe distance. Nothing moves for several moments. Tom then walks toward the limo. Suddenly, the back door opens. Dante rushes out. His face is bruised. He is dressed only in his boxers. His mouth is taped and his hands are tied together. He runs around the car and runs into Tom.

Dante's eyes widen. Tom casually removes the tape from Dante's mouth. Dante exhales loudly.

DANTE

The publicist is trying to kill me.

Tom places the tape back over Dante's face. Dante runs towards the mall.

The back door reopens and The Publicist falls out of the car. His hair is mangled and his clothes bloodied. More blood trickles from his nose.

The publicist struggles to his feet. He sees Tom.

PUBLICIST

Tom?

Tom maintains an air of confidence.

TOM

Yes?

The publicist wipes some blood from his nose. He looks panicked. He looks at Tom, but from his P.O.V. his vision is blurred and Tom really does resemble the actor.

PUBLICIST

Why are you here? I've been trying to get your life back.

Tom pats him in on the shoulder.

TOM

And you're doing a bang up job.  
(looks at the limo)  
Excuse the pun. But I'll be okay.

Tom walks over to the limo. The limo is totaled. The front tires flat.

He opens the driver side door and the driver falls out. He is unconscious. Tom pulls the body from the car.

TOM  
 (yells to the crowd)  
 I need a driver. Any volunteers?

The crowd looks at each other but no one volunteers. Suddenly, from the back of the crowd, Takisha steps forward assuredly.

TAKISHA  
 I'll drive.

She walks over to the car.

TAKISHA  
 Where we goin'?

TOM  
 Malibu.

TAKISHA  
 What's in Malibu?

TOM  
 That's where I live. I hear someone's  
 livin' in my home. I gotta kick 'em  
 out and see if I can patch things up  
 with my wife.

TAKISHA  
 You got directions?

TOM  
 Nope. Just chase the sun.

Tom heads inside the limo. Takisha looks at the limo. The car is totaled and the tires are flat.

TAKISHA  
 (calls after him)  
 Shouldn't we take your car?

Tom sticks his head out of the limo.

TOM  
 Not when you got the keys to a limo?  
 That's a negative.

He pokes his head back into the car. He closes the door.

EXT. OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Warblybird and Jake exit the elevator together. Both of course hold on to their requisite drinks. They walk through the front entrance and find that the entire floor has been cleared out.

MR. WARBLYBIRD  
(stunned)  
Is this the right floor?

JAKE  
(equally stunned)  
Yeah.

MR. WARBLYBIRD  
Well, where is everything?

JAKE  
I dunno.  
(beat)  
Guess I'll just go back home 'til you  
figure it out.

Jake turns around and heads back toward the elevator. He notices the Sphere lying on the ground against the wall.

JAKE  
(laughs)  
Hey, look what they left.

Mr. Warblybird walks over to the Sphere and picks it up. He looks concerned.

MR. WARBLYBIRD  
Why didn't they take the Sphere?

JAKE  
Guess they weren't in our demos.

MR. WARBLYBIRD  
That's not true. We just gotta market  
this better.

JAKE  
With what? Take a look around.

Jake moves over to the elevator.

JAKE  
I think I quit.

The elevator doors open and he steps on.

Mr. Warblybird remains standing in stunned silence with the sphere in hand.

INT. LIMO - DAY

Somewhere in the middle of the desert

The limo rambles through the dusty highway. Tom lies across the back seat. The fishbowl sits on his belly.

Top Gun plays on the VCR. Tom is playing Maverick, not the actor we have grown accustomed to.

TOM

I don't think I look so good on TV.

PALMAROY

Are you kidding? You're a stud.

TOM

C'mon look at me. I don't photograph well from the right side at all.

PALMAROY

Then we'll shoot from the left. I'll get that in every contract.

TOM

Yeah.

(listens to his own  
words)

No. No. That's ridiculous.

PALMAROY

That's showbiz.

TOM

I wanna change that perception, man. I'll use my fame for good.

PALMAROY

(annoyed)

You want the best girls. Celebrity pussy. You're not a public service announcement.

TOM

(ignores Palmaroy)

And I'm not cursing anymore. That's it. Just like Will Smith.

There is a long pause.

TOM

I feel ill.

PALMAROY

You haven't had a latte for a bit. Tell her to stop.

TOM

Her name's Takisha.

(yells)

Takisha!

The window separating the driver from the passengers opens. Takisha pokes her head in.

TAKISHA

Starbucks?

TOM

Starbucks. And can you get a  
biscotti for Palmaroy

The window goes back up.

INT. LIMO - DAY

The car is parked in front of a Starbucks on a lonely highway in the  
middle of nowhere.

Tom sits upright in the seat. The fish bowl lies on the seat across  
from him.

PALMAROY

You've escaped Tom. You're not gonna  
be counted among the ranks of the  
working wounded. You've gone AWOL and  
you're not going back.

TOM

I did it the American way too. I  
found the easiest way possible and  
exploited it.

(pause)

Boo-ya.

(pause)

Do you think Nicole will take me back?

PALMAROY

I don't see why not. You're a changed  
man.

(pause)

You know that wannabe actor who asks  
celebrities questions on Bravo?

TOM

The Actor Studio dude?

PALMAROY

Yeah, I'm gonna try to get you on there.  
That'll give you street cred.

TOM

Cool.

PALMAROY

Let's practice. What is your favorite  
word?

TOM

Gel.

PALMAROY

Least favorite word?

TOM

Font.

PALMAROY

Favorite curseword.

TOM

Ah...Dickwad. Oh wait, I'm not cursing anymore so I don't have one.

PALMAROY

When you come to the gates of Heaven what would you like to hear God say?

Tom pauses for a moment

TOM

Wanna make that a grande, Tom?

Tom laughs.

EXT. STARBUCKS - DAY

The Starbucks is the only store in sight. A large coy pond sits just a few feet from the front doors. Takisha looks into the pond as she goes into the store.

INT. STARBUCKS - DAY

The inside of the store looks just like any other Starbucks. Takisha stands behind the counter. There are no employees visible.

TAKISHA

Hello?

WOMAN (O.S.)

Be right there.

A few moments later a woman emerges from the back. She is middle-aged and tiny.

WOMAN

You're our first customer.

TAKISHA

It's still pretty early in the day.

WOMAN

No, you're the first customer this month.

TAKISHA

Doesn't seem profitable?

WOMAN

(optimistic.)

Not yet, but they're predicting a  
turnaround in the third quarter.

TAKISHA

Good luck with that. Can I get two  
grande lattes?

The woman looks around for another person.

WOMAN

Two?

TAKISHA

One for me. One for Tom Cruise.

WOMAN

*The* Tom Cruise?

TAKISHA

A Tom Cruise. He thinks he's the one.

(pause)

I just know he's the one for me.

INT. LIMO - DAY

Tom remains seated with the fish bowl on his lap.

PALMAROY

Are the keys in the ignition?

TOM

Yeah. Why?

PALMAROY

I think it's time we let Takisha go.

TOM

I'm not leaving her.

PALMAROY

She's gonna want to stop you.

TOM

She won't stop us.

INT. STARBUCKS - DAY

The woman is making up the lattes. Takisha waits by the counter.

WOMAN

Where ya guys headed?

TAKISHA

Arizona. That's where my mom lives.  
He wants to go to California, but  
he's not of right mind to decide  
these kinda things.

WOMAN

I love Arizona. You guys married?

TAKISHA

Nah. I don't even think he knows  
I like 'em. But we're good friends.

WOMAN

That's a good foundation for something  
more.

TAKISHA

For real.

WOMAN

But don't wait to long or he'll find  
someone else to get 'em his lattes.

Takisha wanders around the store and checks out the various trinkets up  
for sale.

TAKISHA

Don't worry 'bout that. He ain't  
going nowhere.

She hands Takisha the lattes. Takisha pays up and heads out the door.  
We follow her out.

EXT. STARBUCKS - DAY

Takisha walks along the building. The parking lot is around the back  
so the car remains out of sight. She turns the corner and the limo is  
not there, but Tom's Honda is. From Takisha's POV the car is clearly  
the Honda and the limo is only a figmint of Tom's imagination.

As Takisha approaches the Honda we can see Tom's body contorted in the  
back seat.

Takisha opens the door.

INT. HONDA - DAY

Tom sits up when the door opens. He holds the fish bowl in his hands.  
Takisha hands him a drink. She takes out a biscotti and gives it Tom.

Tom crumbles the cookie and drops some into the fishbowl. Palmaroy  
chows down.

TAKISHA

He's got a sweet tooth.



TOM

Yeah, he and I are alike in a lot of ways.

TAKISHA

Does he know where we're going?

TOM

Yeah, California.

TAKISHA

Do you?!

TOM

(laughs)

Yeah, duh. California.

Takisha looks dejected.

TAKISHA

No Tom, you're not. You're going to Arizona.

TOM

That's ridiculous. I told you to take me to Malibu.

TAKISHA

What are we driving?

TOM

My limo.

TAKISHA

No Tom. This is a Honda.

Tom looks frustrated, but Takisha looks more frustrated. Takisha takes Tom's latte out of his hand. She spills it out of the window.

TOM

Are you crazy?!

He sits up. Some of the water in the fish bowl spills out.

TAKISHA

No you are. You're a nut! I can't take this!

She then takes the fishbowl and exits the car.

TOM

Hey, where are you going?

Tom jumps out of the car and follows her.

EXT. STARBUCKS - DAY

Takisha walks along the building back to the front of the store. She walks quickly. Water pours out of the fishbowl as she moves.

She reaches the coy pond and stops.

Tom turns the corner and sees her at the pond.

TOM

Don't do it!

She holds the bowl over the pond.

TAKISHA

He's going home.

TOM

(pleading)

Please.

Takisha turns the fishbowl upside down. The water and Palmaroy spill out and tumble into the pond.

Tom runs over to the pond. Palmaroy swims to the surface as if to say goodbye and then darts down to dark depths below.

TOM

(depressed)

I can't believe you did that.

TAKISHA

Tom.

She waits for Tom to give her his full attention.

TOM

(hurt)

What?

TAKISHA

I love you.

Tom looks puzzled.

TOM

What do you mean?

TAKISHA

You nerd, what do you think I mean?

TOM

I dunno. No one besides my mom ever said that to me and she only did cause her therapist said so.

TAKISHA

I want you to spend the rest of your  
life with me. My heart stops when you  
come into the mall.

TOM

Your heart? I'm ..I'm...

TAKISHA

Beautiful.

Takisha moves closer to him.

TOM

No.

TAKISHA

(on the verge  
of tears)

Yeah. Listen, I won't let you go crazy.  
I may never feel this way about another  
human being. So I will invest  
everything...everything to support you.

(pause)

But if you go to Malibu. They'll arrest  
you. That's not your house. Nicole  
doesn't want any part of you. You'll  
make it on Entertainment Tonight alright,  
but not as a star. Just as an obsessed  
fan.

Tom stands listening with his mouth wide open.

TOM

Oh my God.

TAKISHA

I should've told you earlier.

TOM

Yeah you should've. But I'm glad you  
did.

(pause)

Geez, I've fuckin' lost it.

Takisha punches him in the shoulder.

TAKISHA

No man. You've found it.

Tom takes a look into the pond. Palmaroy is nowhere to be found.

TAKISHA

So let me ask you again. Where  
are we going?

TOM  
Arizona?

TAKISHA  
(smiles)  
Yeah. Let's go.

Tom takes Takisha's hand and they walk back towards the car.

A BODYBUILDING ELF turns the corner and walks past Tom and Takisha.  
Tom turns around and points to the muscular midget.

TOM  
(laughs)  
That's life. Hard and short.

They turn the corner and walk off CAMERA.

TOM (O.S.)  
Where's the limo?

INT. UNDERWATER - DAY

Palmaroy swims in the large pond. He looks frightened. Large fish loom nearby.

PALMAROY  
Tom.  
(pause)  
TOM!

He doesn't know there is a large fish coming up behind him. The fish opens his mouth wide. The CAMERA ZOOMS into the mouth.

PALMAROY  
TOM!

FADE OUT:

THE END