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## Fat Boy Private Dance

Adam M. Schwartz  
*University of New Orleans*, [amsins@yahoo.com](mailto:amsins@yahoo.com)

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Fat Boy Private Dance

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
In partial fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts  
In  
Creative Writing  
Screenwriting

By

Adam Schwartz

B.A. San Diego State University, 2007

December, 2015

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Focus on MARK, 18, an overweight senior wearing a cheap, rented tuxedo the same way a sausage wears its casing, as he sits on the bleachers drinking punch.

He watches HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS dance to a fast song with a SENIOR PROM 2002 BANNER hanging. Smiles and happiness abound as they enjoy their last big hurrah of high school.

He sees a group of single girls and smiles at them, but they return his smile with a look of indifference. One makes a comment to the group, and they all laugh.

A YOUNG COUPLE sits next to Mark on the bleacher and make out with all the teenage horniness in the world. They knock over his Styrofoam cup, spilling the punch.

He walks to the punch bowl for a refill, arriving the same time as ROSE, 18, Prom Queen winner by a mile, appears with an empty glass.

Mark sees this and fills her cup before his.

She smiles as the song changes to "Careless Whisper."

ROSE  
Dance?

Mark stares at her, soundless.

ROSE (CONT'D)  
Do you want to dance, Mark?

MARK  
With you? I mean, you want to dance  
with me?

ROSE  
Come on.

Mark hesitates.

MARK  
Aren't you with Carl?

Rose looks disgusted.

ROSE  
He left with someone.

Her eyes drop, like she may burst into tears.

ROSE (CONT'D)  
I can't believe he'd do that to me  
on the biggest night of my life.

A single tear falls.

Mark tugs at the handkerchief, not realizing it's sewn in.  
Instead, he carefully smudges the tear off with his thumb.

Rose smiles and leads him to the dance floor.

They get to an open spot and Rose puts her arms around Mark's  
shoulders.

Mark does the same, and Rose giggles as she moves his hands  
down to her waist.

His eyes scream nervously as his hands touch her.

They begin swaying and in the b.g., we see CARL, a blond  
haired and blue eyed wet dream of Hitler's perfect male at  
18, wearing the PROM KING CROWN, creeping up with a group of  
his cronies.

As Carl comes closer, we see his sadistic grin.

ROSE (CONT'D)  
Can I ask you something, Mark?

Carl stands right behind Mark, holding up a finger to his  
lips and looking around to shush the growing crowd.

ROSE (CONT'D)  
Have you ever been in an...

Mark looks at her expectantly as Carl reaches around Mark and  
rips open his shirt, exposing his huge gut. Rose backs away.

ROSE (CONT'D) Earthquake!  
CARL Earthquake!

Carl furiously shakes Mark's stomach as the crowd LAUGHS. A  
FLASH from the official photographer's camera blinds Mark.

Mark breaks away from Carl and holds his shirt closed as he  
sees Rose approach and give Carl a long, deep kiss.

CARL (CONT'D)  
Baby, you're going to make it big  
in Hollywood! Future legendary  
actress here.

ROSE  
And you'll be my Lakers hubby.

They kiss again, as Mark watches heartbroken.

MARK  
I thought you-

CARL  
Get the fuck out of here, Mark.

MARK  
But, our dance...

Carl and Rose laugh.

CARL  
You think someone would ever want  
you to dance, Bulk?

Mark's lip begins to quiver, like he's about to cry.

ROSE  
Aww, are you gonna cry, fatty?

Rose mocks crying.

SEVERAL OTHER STUDENTS see this and join Rose in the mocking.

Mark looks around horrified before making a dash for the exit, hearing the rest of the crowd yelling.

CROWD  
Bulk! Bulk! Bulk!

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Mark emerges from the auditorium into the rain.

He runs toward the main street's bus stop, but has to stop to catch his breath after forty feet.

He continues running as the bus pulls up to the stop, only to trip and fall into a puddle of mud. He cuts his cheek, and it drips blood on the pavement as he watches the bus depart. The traffic light gives him a green hue.

DISSOLVE TO:

SUPER: TEN YEARS LATER

INT. GYM/WEIGHT ROOM - DAY

JIMMY, mid-30s, an older, overweight version of young Mark, makes a struggling face as he pushes up a barbell.

Two hands are prepared to spot him, inches under the bar.

MARK (O.S.)

That's nine. Just one more.

Jimmy lowers the bar to his chest and grunts as he pushes, only getting it half-way up before it stalls.

JIMMY

Help... me....

The hands go up and assist in the lift. After the bar is racked, we follow the body of the spotter...

And it's MARK, today, now 28, wearing a shirt with the gym's logo and his name on the breast. His cheek has a scar, but the last decade has been good to him, or rather he's been doing good.

MARK

That was all you, Jimmy. I barely touched it.

Jimmy sits at the end of the bench, panting.

JIMMY

When does this shit get easier?

Mark hands him his water bottle.

MARK

Never. When it gets easy, you start training harder.

Jimmy drinks from the bottle as they walk to the treadmills.

MARK (CONT'D)

Have fun with cardio. I'll see you next Friday.

JIMMY

Another half an hour of my life spent on the fucking hamster wheel.

Mark gives him a pat on the back and walks away.

INT. GYM/CUBICLE AREA - DAY

Mark's desk is very tidy. He has several pictures tacked on the half walls, all taken within the last few years.

He sits at his desk looking at an EXPENSIVE PAIR OF RUNNING SHOES ONLINE when BRETT, 29, the gym's IT specialist and Mark's overweight best friend, pops his head over.

BRETT  
(sultry voice)  
Happy Birthday, Mr. President.

Brett squeezes his manboobs together through his gym issued polo shirt.

BRETT (CONT'D)  
Let's go see some titties tonight  
to celebrate your big three oh.

MARK  
I'm twenty-eight, dick, and Jenni  
and I are doing something. We'll  
celebrate this weekend.

Brett raises an eyebrow.

BRETT  
Oh really? What does she have  
planned for your big day?

Mark deletes the item from his virtual shopping cart.

MARK  
Steak and a currently unknown  
surprise.

BRETT  
What's the surprise?

MARK  
How the fuck should I know?

Brett looks like he's thinking hard.

BRETT  
Hopefully she'll let you go for her  
ass. That's always a treat.

Mark laughs.

MARK  
You're a perv.

BRETT  
No, I'm sexually enlightened. You  
want to see a perv, check out  
Gunder.

They look at the front desk where GUNDER, early-40s with a horrible mustache and greasy hair, watches women too young for him enter the gym.

TWO WOMEN wearing sportsbras and yoga shorts enter, and Gunder's eyes follow them while he licks his lips.

When he makes eye contact with Mark and Brett, he smiles and pelvic thrusts, but they look away.

BRETT (CONT'D)  
Have you seen the new paint job on his fucking van?

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

An 80's van with a mural of a dragon fucking a woman is parked in the back of the lot.

BACK TO:

BRETT  
I'm amazed we didn't need to warn the local elementary school he works here.

MARK  
You should ask if he wants to see some tits with you tonight.

BRETT  
Be in a room with him while we both have boners? I still have some dignity.

Mark logs off his computer.

MARK  
I've got a few minutes to kill. Want to shoot some hoops?

BRETT  
Athleticism isn't really my thing.

Mark walks off.

INT. GYM/BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Mark plays a full court game of fives.



While he's open from the perimeter, EDWARD, an early-20s, short black man, passes him the ball and he sinks it.

His team runs back to the defensive side, and a player from the opposing team runs the ball down court.

RANDOM PLAYER  
Game point, both sides!

After a few passes, one of their players shoots from twelve feet. The ball clanks off the rim.

Mark gets the rebound and begins dribbling down court.

Three of his team-mates join on the run down the court with only two opponents in their way.

Mark passes it to a team-mate and runs under the basket, where the ball gets passed back to him.

He sinks a lay-up and exchanges high fives and good games.

EDWARD  
Run it back!

MARK  
Not today, Ed. The lady's taking me out to dinner.

EDWARD  
C'mon, man. One more game. Our one two is strong tonight.

MARK  
Next time, man.

Mark walks to the side and grabs his bottle of water.

INT. STEAK HOUSE - NIGHT

A bottle of water sits on the table of a nice restaurant with cloth napkins and waiters dressed in tuxedos while piano music plays in the b.g.

JENNI, 27, a recent medical school graduate whose beauty and intelligence are out of this world, finishes a fatty steak and potato as Mark eats a leaner cut with broccoli. He's wearing the gym polo with jeans and she's dressed casually.

JENNI  
How's twenty-eight feel, old man?

MARK

Each year is better than the last.

Jenni reaches under the table and hands Mark a wrapped box.

JENNI

I know you said you didn't want any presents, but I couldn't resist.

Mark opens the box to see the same pair of shoes he wanted.

MARK

Whoa! How'd you know?

JENNI

If I saw you make it to check-out and change your mind one more time, I was going to flip out.

Mark looks at the shoes a few more seconds before closing the box and placing it under the table.

MARK

Thank you so much.

They lean forward and kiss over the table.

MARK (CONT'D)

I know how you've been budgeting. Let me pay for dinner.

JENNI

Absolutely not. This is your birthday. Enjoy it.

THE WAITER, mid-30s, very proper looking, arrives.

WAITER

How is everything this evening?

JENNI

Perfect, thanks.

MARK

Can I have the rest of this boxed up, please?

WAITER

Certainly.

The Waiter takes Mark's plate.

JENNI

Was the steak not good? You barely ate half.

MARK

It was great, but I can only do so much red meat.

JENNI

It's alright to indulge every once in a while. I'm a doctor. I know.

Mark smiles at the comment.

JENNI (CONT'D)

Speaking of indulging....

The Waiter returns with a decadent piece of CHOCOLATE CAKE and HAPPY BIRTHDAY MARK written in chocolate syrup on the plate and an artistically cut strawberry upon whipped cream.

WAITER

Happy birthday, Sir.

The waiter puts the plate in front of Mark and departs.

Mark looks at the cake longingly.

MARK

That looks super rich.

Jenni frowns.

JENNI

The personal training gods won't smite you for having cake on your birthday.

Mark looks conflicted.

MARK

OK. One bite.

Jenni's smile returns as Mark takes a small piece of the cake and swirls it into the whipped cream. She takes her dessert fork and begins helping to clear the plate.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

They enter the apartment into the living room. It looks like a tidy and efficient Ikea display, with the exception of a dip/pull-up station in the corner.

JENNI

Wait in the kitchen while I get  
your surprise.

Jenni walks toward the bedroom. When she's gone, Mark does a quick couple of pull-ups and heads to the kitchen.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kitchen has the same modern look as the living room, including a long counter top. Taking up tons of space are bottle after bottle of protein, BCAAs, pre-workouts, etc.

He takes a protein shaker and fills it with water.

MARK

Do you want a drink?

JENNI (O.S.)

No, thanks.

Mark waits in the kitchen a few more seconds.

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

Ready.

He chugs the rest of his water and heads to the living room.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The room is dimly lit through a light in the corner. Jenni stands in front of a chair wearing her doctor's coat.

Jenni presses a button to activate the iPod in a speaker dock to play a sexy, seductive song.

She motions to Mark to take a seat in the chair, which he does without question.

MARK

You don't look like my regular  
doctor.

Jenni opens her coat, revealing the lingerie underneath.

She holds the stethoscope to Mark's chest.

JENNI

Your pulse is elevated. Hmmm, do  
you think you'll live through this?

MARK

I'm totally fine with dying now.

Jenni tosses the stethoscope away.

Mark touches her thighs and tries to move his hand around to her ass, but she pushes his arms away.

JENNI

No touching.

Jenni lets the coat fall to the floor, and we see the most perfect fitting black thong in history.

The way she dances, we'd think she's a pro.

She climbs on top of Mark, facing him so her toned abs are inches from his face.

She moves her face down, so her lips are millimeters from his, but when he moves closer to kiss her she backs away.

Turning around from him, she grinds on his lap while she reaches behind to unclasp her bra and tosses it aside.

After the bra is gone, she crosses her arms to cover her breasts and sways her hips a few more times.

Jenni stands, her legs pressed against the sofa between Mark's knees, and moves her hands behind her head with her eyes closed, exposing her perky C cups.

Mark's hands touch her waist and begin moving up before she stops him.

JENNI (CONT'D)

Don't make me call security.

She turns back around and sits on Mark's lap, grinding to the music harder and harder until the song ends.

JENNI (CONT'D)

That's twenty. Since you're cute, I'll do another for ten more.

MARK

Would you believe that I left my wallet in my other pants?

Jenni dramatically gasps.

JENNI

What can we do about that?

MARK

I guess I'm at your mercy.

Jenni kisses Mark and reaches behind him, pulling up his shirt from the back.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

They lay on the floor with Jenni's head on Mark's chest.

JENNI

How was your surprise?

MARK

That was the best birthday present ever.

JENNI

I've thought about what I want for my birthday.

MARK

Oh yeah?

She shifts her position to look up at Mark.

JENNI

I want you to dance for me.

MARK

You mean take ballroom lessons like they do in those shitty movies?

Jenni laughs.

JENNI

More like my own Thunder from Down Under.

Mark has a momentary look of panic, but it fades.

MARK

(Bad Aussie accent)  
Anything for you, babe.

He kisses her forehead.

INT. GYM/GROUP EXERCISE ROOM - DAY

LOUD POP MUSIC plays while Mark pedals furiously on a stationary upright bike. He wears a microphone headset.

The group is comprised of a variety of different shapes and sizes of people.

MARK

We're going up a hill, everyone.  
Stand while you pedal.

Everyone stands, with the exception of RYAN, late 40s and carrying an extra 30 pounds, who struggles.

MARK (CONT'D)

Come on Ryan, join us at the peak.

Ryan, while looking exhausted, gets up.

MARK (CONT'D)

There you go.

They continue to pedal while standing for five seconds.

MARK (CONT'D)

It's all downhill from here,  
people. Sit down, relax, and enjoy  
the breeze.

A few people laugh at his corny joke as he slows his pedaling to a stop.

MARK (CONT'D)

Great workout, everybody. I'll see  
you again next time.

Mark dismounts as Brett enters the room drinking a Frappuccino with a shit-load of whipped cream.

He holds a small, brown bag out.

BRETT

Want half of this scone? I already  
ate one. And a half.

Mark looks at it like he's thinking of accepting.

MARK

Nah, I don't need the empty carbs.

Brett rolls his eyes while he sips his drink and watches while Mark wheels his bike to the back of the room.

Mark heads out towards his desk as Brett follows, loudly sucking on the straw of his drink.

INT. GYM/CUBICLE AREA - DAY

Mark sits as Brett sucks the last drop of the drink and continues to make the sucking noise.

MARK

Fuck! What? What do you want?

He takes one last slurp.

BRETT

Sex details.

Mark looks at him skeptically.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Come on. I tell you everything Anna and I do.

Brett blows a kiss to ANNA, 37, the ultimate MILF if only she had children, as she teaches a step class.

Anna blows a kiss back while keeping perfect rhythm.

MARK

I'll never understand that.

BRETT

I know, right? I'm fucked if she ever sees an eye doctor.

Brett sits in the chair next to Mark's desk and chucks the empty cup at his trash can, missing the target but making no effort to clean it up.

MARK

Not that, but yeah. I don't see how you're so open with the Anna details. I've never even asked.

BRETT

Eh, you meet a girl when you're a DJ at a nudie bar and she's working the poles, there's really nothing to hide.

MARK

Like that. It doesn't make you at all uncomfortable that you let people know she was a stripper?

BRETT

You're Mark, you're not people. I wouldn't tell just anyone.



Brett points his thumb at Gunder over his shoulder, who's tinkering with an unseen object.

Mark looks around to make sure no one is in hearing proximity before smiling and leaning forward.

MARK

Jenni did a private dance for me wearing her doctor's coat and lingerie. It was really hot.

Brett frowns.

BRETT

That's it? What the fuck? You got to see your girlfriend naked. Whoop-dee-fucking-doo.

MARK

She did a sexy, stripper dance for me, and it was amazing.

BRETT

She's hot, I'm not arguing that. Hell, if you wanted to do a swap one night-

MARK

Pass.

BRETT

Joking, unless...

Mark throws an empty water bottle at Brett, hitting him on the forehead as Brett swats too late.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Dick.

Gunder comes over.

GUNDER

Hey bros, check this out.

Gunder holds up a pair of eye glasses and his cell phone, which displays Mark and Brett as seen through the glasses.

GUNDER (CONT'D)

Badass, right? It has a range of a hundred meters.

BRETT

Dude, you better erase any evidence of me on that thing before the cops ultimately confiscate it.

GUNDER

Whatever. Someone's here for a tour of the gym.

BRETT

Why don't you handle it?

GUNDER

I'd rather wait for a bored milf to come in. Daddy needs some action.

Gunder walks off and Brett shudders.

MARK

He didn't touch anything, did he?

BRETT

Doesn't need to. His presence is enough to warrant a quarantine. You mind handling the tour? That coffee's creeping up on me.

MARK

That was a milk shake, not coffee.

BRETT

The shitter knows no difference.

Brett pats his stomach and Mark chuckles.

INT. GYM/FRONT DESK - DAY

As they approach, we see CARL, now 28, looking like he doubled in size since prom night, and not by adding muscle.

Mark's face drops, which Brett notices and decides to forego the bathroom trip until figuring out what's up.

CARL

Holy shit! Mark? Say it ain't so!

MARK

Carl?

CARL

Man, did you get cancer or something?

Mark is momentarily caught off-guard and takes a moment to answer.

MARK

No. I studied nutritional sciences during undergrad and began exercising-

CARL

What was it I used to call you back in high school?

Mark looks like he's pulling a thousand familiar memories, but refuses to answer.

MARK

I don't remember.

CARL

(to himself)  
Man, what was it?

Carl scrunches his face as he thinks.

CARL (CONT'D)

The Incredible...

Carl snaps his fingers.

CARL (CONT'D)

Bulk! Good times. Not as good as now though. Made a fortune playing with stocks. You're a personal trainer though? That's cool. What do you make? Fourteen, fifteen an hour?

Mark looks at Brett then back at Carl.

MARK

This is Brett. He'll be the one showing you around the gym today.

BRETT

Dude, I gotta-

MARK

You gotta show him around. Thanks.

Mark grabs a basketball and walks away.

CARL

That bastard was twice the man a decade ago.

Brett farts loudly while maintaining eye contact with Carl.

INT. GYM/BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Mark stands at the free throw line and examines the hoop. His face is perspiring, like he's been there for several minutes.

He tosses up the shot, nothing but net, and the ball rolls a few feet in his direction after a bounce.

Before the next shot goes up...

CARL (O.S.)

BRICK!

Mark throws the ball, hitting the side of the rim, and Carl begins laughing as the ball rolls right to him.

CARL (CONT'D)

The fatty said a free personal training session is included for new members.

Carl shoots the ball, banking it in.

MARK

His name's Brett. Where'd he go?

CARL

He waddled off to the bathroom. What's included in the session?

Mark gets the ball and walks it back to the three point line, ready to recite a line he's said time and time again.

MARK

First thing we do is an assessment where we determine where you currently stand health and fitness wise. After that, we'll discuss your goals, what it'll take to get there, and I'll show you a few exercises.

CARL

How about you get my rebounds instead?

MARK

Excuse me?

CARL

I don't need any assessments, from you, but if I get a free session, I'll take it. I can shoot the ball, and you can get the rebound and toss it back. It'll be like when we had practice back in the day.

Mark takes a shot and misses the rim by two feet.

CARL (CONT'D)

AIR BALL!

MARK

Maybe a different trainer will be willing to help you with that.

CARL

Incredible Bulk! Come on.

Mark leaves the ball as he exits the court.

INT. GYM/WEIGHT ROOM - DAY

Mark storms through the weight room as he heads to the locker room.

As he walks through the doorway, Brett comes out, wiping his hands on his pants.

BRETT

Dude, you gotta see what I did in there.

Mark pushes through him.

INT. GYM/LOCKER ROOM - DAY

He enters the locker room with Brett following.

Mark walks up and down the rows, ensuring that no one else is present, before punching a locker full force. It leaves a small dent in the metal.

BRETT (O.S.)

Bulk smash!

Mark looks at Brett, furiously.

MARK

What the fuck did you just say?

BRETT  
Hulk smash! I said Hulk smash.

Mark sits on the bench, and after a moment Brett joins him.

BRETT (CONT'D)  
Are you going to tell me what's  
bothering you, or will I have to  
bully it out of you?

Carl enters the locker room.

CARL  
Hey, Marky Mark and the fried  
lunch.

Mark and Brett look at him.

CARL (CONT'D)  
That freak with the 'stache signed  
me up.  
(sarcastically)  
Hope you didn't lose a commission.

Mark remains silent.

CARL (CONT'D)  
I'll catch you on the court one of  
these days.

Carl exits, with Mark's eyes following him the entire time.

BRETT  
Look, if it's about that douchebag,  
I've got a little bit left over in  
the fuel tank.

Brett pats his stomach.

BRETT (CONT'D)  
You hold him down, I blast his face  
with a terror he's never known.

Mark looks like he's contemplating the idea.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Mark sits at a booth with the same expression as before.

Jenni, Brett, and Anna surround him with a bottle of  
champagne in an ice bucket in the center, along with a full  
flute in front of each person.

ANNA  
To my second favorite man at the  
table! Happy birthday!

BRETT  
Happy Birthday, assface!

JENNI  
Happy Birthday, baby!

They clink glasses and take a sip.

MARK  
Thanks, guys.

Jenni gives Mark a kiss, and after it ends, Brett quickly gives Mark a peck before he can move.

Mark pushes him away and wipes his lips while Anna and Jenni laugh.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Fucking hell, Brett.

Brett polishes off his champagne and refills his flute.

ANNA  
I wanna dance.

BRETT  
If you wanna dance, I wanna dance.

Anna takes Brett's hand and they move to the dance floor. Jenni does the same and leads Mark away, reluctantly.

Brett dances like a wild man, lacking skill and flailing his arms around in an almost dangerous fashion. Anna still manages to grind on him.

Mark dances with a fraction of the enthusiasm, barely moving at all, while Jenni dances with her arms around his neck and shoulders.

The song changes to the same fast song from prom night, and Mark stops dancing. A look of panic strikes his face.

He looks at Jenni, but sees Carl's 18 year old face.

CARL  
You think someone would ever want  
you to dance, Bulk?

Mark looks at Carl in shock.

CARL (CONT'D)  
Baby, are you alright?

Carl's face turns back to Jenni.

Mark acts like he twisted his leg.

MARK  
Ow! My ankle.

JENNI  
Oh no, let me see.

She begins to bend over to look at his ankle.

MARK  
I'll be OK. Gonna sit this one out.

Mark fake hobbles back to the booth.

Anna pulls Jenni into the dance, and Mark sits there watching the rest of the world have fun. The club has groups and cliques which resemble the prom night.

The DJ switches songs, and Brett leaves the girls.

ANNA  
You should come to my Sunday night class when you're free.

JENNI  
Is it aerobic?

ANNA  
More like strength training.

Brett slides into the booth.

BRETT  
What do you say about throwing some tequila their way and seeing where the night takes it?

Mark glares at Brett.

BRETT (CONT'D)  
Alright, man. We're here having fun, and you're sitting here like a mopey bastard.

Brett sips his champagne.

BRETT (CONT'D)  
In fact, you've been acting like a different person all night.

Mark looks around, making sure Jenni and Anna are away.



MARK  
You can't tell anyone about this.  
Not Anna, definitely not fucking  
Jenni, no one.

BRETT  
I won't.

Brett holds up his hand.

BRETT (CONT'D)  
Girl Scout's honor.

Mark exhales deeply, digging up a memory.

MARK  
Back in high school, I used to be  
big.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL QUAD - DAY

Stereotypical high school quad area where the popular kids  
hang out during lunch and breaks.

Mark, at 17, presses a button on a vending machine for a  
Snickers.

MARK (V.O.)  
That asshole from the gym was my  
personal nightmare.

Carl, at 17, reaches down and takes the candy before Mark can  
get to it.

CARL  
Thanks for the candy, Incredible  
Bulk.

MARK  
That's mine, Carl.

CARL  
That's mine, Carl.

MARK  
Buy your own if you want one.

CARL  
I'm doing you a favor, buddy. Lose  
a few tons, and maybe you'll make  
it to varsity.

Carl pats Mark on the belly and joins his group of popular friends, all laughing.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Mark carefully lines up a shot from the three point line while other players stretch.

Two more numbers could easily fit on his jersey.

MARK (V.O.)  
He was always there to make me feel  
like shit.

Mark shoots the ball, and immediately comes Carl's hand for a 'Who's Your Daddy' block.

BASKETBALL PLAYERS  
OOOOOHHHHHHH!!!!

MARK  
Prick.

CARL  
You say something, Bulk?

Carl pushes Mark.

Mark looks down and shakes his head.

CARL (CONT'D)  
Didn't think so. Go get my ball and  
let the people who'll play in the  
game practice.

Mark walks to get the ball.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

The basketball court holds an awards ceremony. Bleachers are occupied by the entire student body, faculty, and staff. The front rows seat the athletes and coaches, grouped together by their sport.

MARK (V.O.)  
The length he'd go to be a dick...

Carl stands at a podium, wearing his letterman jacket with a big P on the breast.

CARL

Thanks to everyone who made this championship season possible, but I guess you all should be thanking me since I got the buzzer beater.

Carl mimics an overly dramatic jump shot.

The students die of laughter from the mediocre joke from the popular kid.

As the camera pans through the attendants, we see most of the basketball players have jackets, but not Mark.

CARL (CONT'D)

I'd like to present something while I'm up here as well. A player on the j.v. team deserves some recognition. Mark, please join me up here.

Mark looks flattered, and walks to the stage while people applaud.

CARL (CONT'D)

All I can say is this team wouldn't have been the same without you, so the winners chipped in to buy you your very own jacket.

From behind the podium, Carl pulls out the jacket. The letters on the breast say "IB," and the back is a giant Snickers logo.

CARL (CONT'D)

Had it custom made just for you,  
Incredible Bulk.

Mark's face drops when he sees it and the audience laughs at his expense.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Mark runs away from the crowd with his tux shirt flapping.

MARK (V.O.)

And the prom night prank....

CROWD

Bulk! Bulk! Bulk!

MARK (V.O.)  
(quietly)  
Bulk. Bulk. Bulk.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Mark looks downright disturbed as he stares through Brett.

MARK  
(quietly)  
Bulk. Bulk. Bulk.

Brett slaps the table, causing the champagne bottle to slip.

BRETT  
Fuck that guy. You see him now? He  
looks more like me than you.

Mark shrugs.

BRETT (CONT'D)  
He told me you used to be fat, but  
I thought he was bullshitting.  
That's awesome. I'd love to do what  
you did, but not as much as I love  
dessert and shit.

MARK  
There's no such thing as used to be  
fat. You always are what you were.

BRETT  
People pay you money to help them  
look like you. Shit, man, you  
should tell everyone your success  
story. Business would fucking boom!

Mark jumps forward from his seat.

BRETT (CONT'D)  
Oh, your ankle is better.

MARK  
No. Never. I don't want anyone  
knowing about this. In fact, we're  
not speaking of this anymore.

BRETT  
Fine.

They sip their champagnes quietly for a moment.

MARK

Oh, God.

BRETT

What?

MARK

I told Jenni I'd do a private dance for her birthday.

BRETT

You two are so fucking boring it makes me want to jump off a bridge.

Mark empties his flute and refills it, drinking half of it down before putting the glass on the table. He looks at a reflection of himself in the champagne bucket.

MARK

I've gotta tell her to choose something different. Maybe she'll forget about it if I buy her a car?

BRETT

Fuck, dude. How can you be self conscious about that now? I'd get naked in front of any woman who asks, and probably some who didn't.

MARK

That's you, not me.

BRETT

Exactly my point! I wouldn't even bother owning a shirt if I looked like you.

Mark puts his hands together and places them in front of his face, touching his nose, almost looking like he's praying.

BRETT (CONT'D)

I'll put it in a way you can understand. You have a super hot, doctor girlfriend. She's asking for the lamest birthday gift ever, and you have doubts because of the past you? That's fucking stupid.

Mark looks up.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Do it. Do what she wants, and do it good.

Jenni and Anna come back.

JENNI  
How's your ankle?

MARK  
Better, but I think I'm ready to  
call it a night.

BRETT  
It's barely ten.

Mark stands up and takes Jenni's hand.

MARK  
I'm still on New York time.

ANNA  
When were you there?

MARK  
Four, maybe five years ago.

Mark lets out an exaggerated yawn.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Have fun.

He continues the fake hobble as he walks away.

Jenni turns around and waves with a disappointed look.

INT. GYM/WEIGHT ROOM - DAY

Rock music plays loudly.

Mark busts out three plate squats like they're nothing. After a few reps, we see Brett approaching in the mirror. He stands next to Mark, drinking from a jumbo fast food cup.

Brett's lips move as he speaks, but we can't hear him above the music.

Mark racks the bar and pulls out his earphones, and we hear the music fade away.

MARK  
What?

BRETT  
I told Anna what we talked about.

MARK  
Goddammit! God damn you! I asked  
for one fucking thing and-

Brett puts his finger to Mark's mouth.

BRETT  
Ssshhhhh. You should know me better  
than to think I wouldn't tell her  
everything, you beautiful dumb  
bastard.

MARK  
How much protein is in that finger?

Brett quickly lowers his hand.

BRETT  
Man, she's going to help you.

Anna walks up next to Brett and gives him a giant kiss.

ANNA  
Orange soda?

BRETT  
With a splash of Mountain Dew.

ANNA  
Mmmmm.  
(to Mark)  
Field trip time!

MARK  
Where?

ANNA  
It's a surprise. I'm driving.

Anna and Brett walk off, while Mark watches.

Brett turns around when he realizes they're a man short.

BRETT  
Come on, fatass!

Mark glares at him.

MARK  
Gotta rerack.

Mark begins pulling the weights off the bar.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Anna, Mark, and Brett stand in a strip mall parking lot. Mark looks confused, Anna remains neutral, and Brett has a huge, pervy grin. Brett cracks his knuckles.

One of the storefronts has blackened windows without a sign on top. The one next to it has construction debris and a "Coming Soon - 'The Waiting Room'" sign.

MARK  
What's this place?

BRETT  
The first level of heaven.

Anna grabs each of their hands and marches forward.

INT. POLE EXERCISE STUDIO - NIGHT

Women wearing skin tight clothing stretch all over the place.

ANNA  
(to Mark)  
Go find an open pole.

MARK  
No. Absolutely not. No. No.

Mark heads out the door immediately. Anna follows while Brett stays and watches the women.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Mark tries to open Anna's car door handle.

MARK  
Drive me back, now. I don't want to be here.

ANNA  
Mark, calm down. It's only a group exercise class.

MARK  
That's dancing. I don't do that. How did whatever Brett told you translate to me doing this shit?

ANNA  
You need to do this. If not for Jenni, for yourself.  
(MORE)



ANNA (CONT'D)

When couples stop doing the little things for each other, the spark fades.

Mark stops pulling on the door handle, and slides down the car door to sit on the concrete.

MARK

Jenni only wants a lap dance, and I can't do that. Pole dancing? That's like failing to bench a bar and deciding to add a hundred pounds.

ANNA

Which is why her mind will be fucking blown when you kill a few pole moves.

Brett comes over.

BRETT

Music's cued and ready to rock.

ANNA

C'mon, Mark. Would Jenni prefer a man who can dance for her or a man who sits against a car in a parking lot?

Brett holds out his hand for Mark to take.

MARK

I can leave whenever I want?

ANNA

This isn't Guantanamo.

Mark takes Brett's hand and stands up.

MARK

There are so many people in there.

ANNA

Don't pay attention to them. They're here as students, just like you.

Mark looks at the building and sighs. The group walks to the entrance together.

INT. POLE EXERCISE STUDIO - NIGHT

Once they enter, Mark turns around to bolt out the door, but Anna grabs him before he can.

MARK

(to Anna)

Are you gonna be able to stand next to me?

ANNA

If you want to be in the front of the class, sure.

Anna walks to the pole clearly set up for the instructor.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Well, this looks like a good enough time to introduce our new student. Ladies, this is Mark.

WOMEN IN CLASS

Hi, Mark!

Mark blushes and waves sheepishly.

ANNA

Let's treat him with the same respect you'd want him to treat you.

Anna nods to Brett; the cue to begin the music.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Everyone grab a pole and let's get started.

Mark finds an open pole in the back between TWO ATTRACTIVE WOMEN who smile at him, causing his face to turn a darker red.

ANNA (CONT'D)

First move is the fireman.

Anna does the move, spinning with both legs around the pole.

The women all do the basic move easily.

Mark struggles, and instead of spinning, slowly walks around the pole.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Remember to keep that one leg out for the pinwheel.

Anna pinwheels elegantly.

Mark tries to get the move by jumping, which causes a thud when it doesn't stick and he lands on the ground.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Lean back and use your weight as a counter balance.

MARK

I'm trying.

Mark attempts it again, and can't keep himself off the ground.

ANNA

V spin time. Baseball grip the pole and get that pelvis forward.

Mark puts his hands in the right position.

MARK

(quietly)

One, two, three.

He jumps, but as he goes forward to bring his crotch in, he bangs it on the pole.

As he gasps for air, he slowly slides down and sits at the bottom of the pole with his legs wrapped around it.

Anna stops dancing and goes over to Mark.

ANNA

Are you alright?

MARK

I think I blew my nuts out my ass.

Anna laughs while Mark coughs.

MARK (CONT'D)

This isn't for me, Anna.

ANNA

(to Mark)

Keep on practicing the fireman until you get it. After that, move on to the pinwheel. No quitting.

(to group)

If everyone's ready, let's learn some new moves.

DONNA, an early 30s Asian woman dancing next to Mark, takes a step closer and crouches next to him.

DONNA

You're doing really well so far.  
And kudos for not worrying about  
the gender stereotypes associated  
with this. You're braver than most.

Mark smiles.

MARK

Thanks.

Mark stands and resumes doing the fireman for several more attempts as the women practice more advanced moves.

Anna smiles at him, while hanging upside down on the pole.

He tries the pinwheel, and is getting close as the music stops.

ANNA

Great class tonight, ladies. And  
Mark.

Everyone claps and high fives each other, including Mark.

The women empty out, leaving Mark, Anna, and Brett.

ANNA (CONT'D)

You kicked ass, Mark.

MARK

I barely got the fireman.

ANNA

So what? You were putting forth the  
effort. That's all I wanted.

MARK

I didn't know you guys had a job  
outside of the gym.

ANNA

Well, *I* have a second job.

BRETT

I like to watch.

ANNA

Hey, do you have any money on you?

MARK  
Just a hundred, my emergency cash.

ANNA  
Let me see it.

Mark pulls out his wallet and hands Anna the bill. She immediately puts it in her shirt.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
Thanks.

MARK  
What the hell?

ANNA  
That's for the class.

MARK  
A hundred a session? That's fucking outrageous.

ANNA  
No, for you the class is free. This is deposit money. You get it back after you dance for Jenni.

Anna looks at her cell phone.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
(to Mark)  
Got time for a detour?

Mark shrugs.

I/E. ANNA'S CAR/STREET - NIGHT

Anna drives her sporty coupe with Brett in the front seat and Mark cramped in the back.

MARK  
I never thought I'd be the weakest person in a room full of women barely weighing a buck ten.

Anna laughs.

ANNA  
It's a different kind of strong. If it makes you feel any better about yourself, you can probably lift more than any of them.

BRETT

Dude, did you see the definition of those women? I bet they'd be able to kick your ass.

Brett looks lost in his own thought for a moment.

BRETT (CONT'D)

I'd pay forty dollars to watch.

Anna parks her car in front of an ADULT SHOP with bright neon lights. Mark's jaw drops.

MARK

I'm not going in there.

ANNA

You already said that once tonight, so do we need to keep up the charade or will you save us the trouble?

INT. SEX TOY SHOP - NIGHT

Mark follows Anna and Brett inside.

The shop is very well organized with racks and displays in every section. Toys to the right, DVDs to the left, and costumes straight back, in front of the theater booths.

Brett's eyes perk up.

BRETT

I'll meet you back here in a few minutes or so.

He takes off into the theater, passing shelf after shelf of sex toys.

Anna walks directly to the costume section, passing a SMALL PERSON WEARING LEATHER with TWO WOMEN who look like Stepford Wives.

ANNA

What are you going to wear for Jenni's dance?

Mark looks around at the costumes, then looks down at his own clothing and shrugs.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Does Jenni find Eastern European gangsters sexy?  
(MORE)

ANNA (CONT'D)

No woman has gotten wet looking at an Adidas outfit since nineteen eighty five.

Anna starts looking through a rack of male costumes: an Indian, a construction worker, a sailor, a biker.

MARK

Is this where the Village People donate their old uniforms?

ANNA

Sexy's sexy.

She continues flipping through.

Mark picks up a white collar and bow tie, a la Chippendales. He holds it up to himself and looks in the mirror.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Classic. And classy. You can never go wrong with that. Good choice.

Anna goes to another rack which has male thongs. She finds a black one with a tuxedo design on the package area.

She holds it up in front of Mark's pants.

MARK

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Where's the rest of it?

ANNA

What else do you need?

MARK

A polar expedition outfit.

Anna chuckles and walks to the cashier.

MARK (CONT'D)

Why are you so interested in helping me?

ANNA

Brett looks at you as a brother, so that kinda makes you my brother-in-law.

BRETT (O.S.)

YAHTZEE!!

ANNA

You've been much happier since  
Jenni came around, and I don't want  
you to screw that up.

The CASHIER, an innocent looking college aged female wearing  
hipster glasses and a sweater rings up the two items.

CASHIER

We're running a special on  
buttplugs. Buy two, get one free.

She points to the shelf to their left where a wide selection  
of different styles of buttplugs are on display.

ANNA

No thanks, but I could use some  
flavored lube. I've got a craving  
for orange soda.

The cashier picks a packet from behind the counter and rings  
up the items.

CASHIER

Forty seven dollars and thirty  
eight cents.

ANNA

We're industry.

The cashier presses a few buttons.

CASHIER

Ten percent off brings it to forty  
two sixty four.

Anna looks at Mark until he pulls out his wallet and hands  
over a credit card.

The cashier scans the card and hands it back, along with the  
items in a black plastic bag.

CASHIER (CONT'D)

Enjoy the lube.

MARK

Oh, we're not together. I have a  
girlfriend.

CASHIER

Congratulations.

Mark and Anna head out the door as Brett comes out of the  
theater, zipping up his pants.



I/E. MARK'S CAR/STREET - NIGHT

Mark pulls into his driveway and sees Jenni's car parked on the street.

He pops the button to open the trunk of his car, and grabs the black bag from the passenger seat.

He exits the car and puts the bag in the trunk.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mark enters his apartment and sees Jenni sitting on the couch. She's sipping a glass of wine.

MARK  
(bothered)  
I didn't know you were coming over.

JENNI  
Well, it's nice to see you too,  
grumpy.

MARK  
Sorry. I had a really long day, and  
wasn't expecting any surprises.

Jenni gets off the couch and walks over to Mark. She gives him a kiss.

JENNI  
Aww, baby. Do you want to tell me  
about it? Maybe have a glass of  
wine with me?

MARK  
I want to take a shower.

Jenni wraps her arms around him.

JENNI  
How about I join you?

Mark thinks about it.

MARK  
Not tonight.

Jenni releases Mark.

JENNI

Fuck. You know, I got off early and came over here, excited to see you, and this is how you react?

Mark remains speechless.

Jenni gets her purse from the couch and begins walking to the door.

JENNI (CONT'D)

I should go. It was nice almost having a conversation with you.

Mark grabs her hand as she walks closer to the door.

MARK

Wait.

(beat)

Don't leave.

Jenni sees Mark's stressed out.

JENNI

Are you feeling alright?

MARK

Yeah.

(beat)

No. I'm exhausted. Please just give me a few minutes to relax, alone.

JENNI

What happened today?

Mark thinks for a moment.

MARK

I had a hard time motivating a client to do an exercise which he thought he could never do.

JENNI

Why would he think that?

MARK

Because a long time ago, someone he wished he could be like told him he couldn't.

JENNI

That's stupid. Why did your client believe him?

Mark snaps.

MARK

It's not stupid! People remember things from their past. It can haunt them, no matter how much they change.

JENNI

The past is only relevant if you dwell on it. Tell him that.

Silence.

JENNI (CONT'D)

Do you think your client is happy with his life now?

MARK

He has a job he loves, friends who care about him, and a fantastic girlfriend.

(beat)

So he says. I haven't met her.

JENNI

Well, he sounds like a lucky guy.

Jenni drops her bag.

JENNI (CONT'D)

I think a shower sounds good. Are you going to join me?

Mark smiles and nods.

Jenni walks to the bathroom and starts the shower. After a moment, Mark walks in and begins to undress, but dims the light to almost blackness.

INT. GYM/BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

A full court game of fives runs on the court.

Mark has the ball outside the three point line and passes it to his team-mate in the inside for an easy two.

While turning around, he sees Carl has entered the court.

He rushes back to his spot on defense and guards his guy.

A player shoots and misses, and Mark rushes to offense, practically alone, while Edward gets the rebound.

The ball gets thrown almost full-court to him.

He catches it eight feet from the basket and clumsily dribbles, going for the lay-up but instead throws the ball hard off the backboard.

A player from the other team gets the rebound, and rushes down court, passing three defensive players, to sink the game winning shot.

Mark squats down and hangs his head in shame.

EDWARD

How are you going to miss an open lay-up like that, man?

Carl walks over.

CARL

Bulk, bulk. Always pass the ball. Always.

Mark looks up briefly, then back down.

CARL (CONT'D)

(to the crowd)

I need one more.

EDWARD

I'll run.

CARL

Sorry, Bulk. No room for you on the varsity squad. You should get next though. Give me my second win in a row, after this one.

Mark stands and starts walking away.

CARL (CONT'D)

Some other time then! I paid for the year in advance!

Mark's off the court.

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

And I want my rebounding session!

INT. GYM/WEIGHT ROOM - DAY

Jimmy benches a bit more than last week as Mark supervises. He's struggling, but getting the weight up.

Mark looks at the basketball court area as Carl exits.

He holds the gaze and watches Carl stop in front of the group exercise room and watch the women for a moment.

Jimmy gasps O.S.

Mark looks and sees the bar resting on Jimmy's chest as his face turns red. He quickly helps lift the bar.

MARK  
Fuck, Jimmy.

Jimmy sits up and breathes.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Are you alright?

JIMMY  
No, I'm not alright. That's embarrassing as fuck.

MARK  
I'm sorry. I was distracted.

JIMMY  
I'm done. I hate doing this shit.

Mark looks disappointed.

MARK  
I understand. I'm really sorry,  
Jimmy.  
(beat)  
Your progress has been great.

Jimmy stands.

MARK (CONT'D)  
I'll see you next week.

JIMMY  
Maybe.

He starts walking away.

MARK  
Jimmy!

Jimmy doesn't respond as he exits.

INT. GYM/CUBICLE AREA - DAY

Mark arrives at his chair and notices a POST-IT NOTE on his computer screen. It has a heart with "Mark + Jenni" written in the middle.

He smiles before taking it down and sticking it on the bottom of his monitor.

Mark stands and walks through the weight room, all the way towards the back, where the glass wall separates the group exercise room.

INT. GYM/WEIGHT ROOM - DAY

Mark stands at the window and looks in at Jenni as she is the midst of a step class taught by Anna.

Jenni sees Mark and waves.

GUNDER (O.S.)  
Give me a hibachi and case of beer,  
and I could sit here all day.

We see Gunder standing next to Mark.

GUNDER (CONT'D)  
I may convert to Hinduism and hope  
to get reincarnated as a pair of  
yoga pants. Small yoga pants.

MARK  
Gunder, I hope you get reincarnated  
as a pair of sweatpants worn by  
Brett to an Indian buffet.

Gunder looks at Mark, offended.

GUNDER  
What have I ever done to you?

Mark walks off and Gunder remains behind until Anna furiously waves him away while mouthing "fuck off."

INT. GYM/CUBICLE AREA - DAY

Mark browses an online database looking up new exercises when Jenni comes over.

She sits on his lap and plants a kiss on his cheek. After the kiss, she gives her armpit a quick sniff.

JENNI

I got a good sweat in there. Anna can move.

MARK

You don't know the half of it.

JENNI

Hey, I hate to flake on dinner tonight, but I'm going to start picking up some evening shifts for a while.

Mark tenses up.

MARK

On Saturdays? Is everything OK?

JENNI

Of course. Once I'm done with my residency and make real money, I'll have an easier schedule.

MARK

I can come over to your place when your shift ends, if you want.

JENNI

That's sweet, but not tonight. I have a double starting early.

Jenni's pager beeps.

JENNI (CONT'D)

Or, of course, I could be called in now.

Jenni gives him a kiss.

JENNI (CONT'D)

I'll come to your place the first night I have off.

As Jenni exits Mark's cubicle, he makes eye contact with Carl as he's leaving the locker room.

Carl watches Jenni leave.

INT. POLE EXERCISE STUDIO - NIGHT

Anna leads the group in a round of stretches.

Mark's pole is in the middle, next to the only unoccupied one, with Donna on the other side.

ANNA

Are we all limbered up?

The group lets out different acknowledgements of yes.

The front door opens, and in walks ROSE, now 28, but barely looking a day older since we last saw her at the prom.

Brett immediately ogles her, hard.

Mark sees her and freezes. As he watches her walk in, her clothing morphs back into the prom dress, tiara and all. When she arrives at the empty pole, she's back to regular clothing.

She looks at Mark with a hint of familiarity.

Mark notices her HUGE WEDDING RING on the hand gripping the pole.

ANNA (CONT'D)

A new student. Class starts promptly at seven.

Rose smiles.

ROSE

Won't happen again.

ANNA

We're going to do some beginner moves for warm up, so you could jump right in or stretch.

ROSE

I'm ready.

ANNA

Alright, let's get started.

Anna does the fireman, which all the women do easily, but Mark has digressed and can't come close to doing it.

DONNA

Come on, Mark. You did this last week.

Rose looks over.



ROSE  
Mark? Mark from high school? Holy  
crap!

Mark looks at her, but doesn't respond.

ROSE (CONT'D)  
You look amazing! Like a completely  
different person.

MARK  
Thanks.

ANNA  
This isn't a socialization studio  
back there.

Mark and Rose look at Anna, then go back to dancing. This  
time, Mark gets closer to doing the fireman, but not perfect.

ROSE  
(barely above music)  
Let's catch up after class.

Mark looks at her skeptically for a moment. He goes back to  
dancing.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Rose and Mark exit the studio. She's talking, but he teeters  
on disinterest.

ROSE  
I just can't get over this! We *have*  
to talk. Let me buy you a froyo.  
Please.

MARK  
That's nice of you. Maybe some  
other time.

Anna and Brett exit the studio.

ANNA  
Good job in there, Mark.

MARK  
Thanks, Anna.

Anna looks at Rose. Brett is already staring at her.

ANNA  
Do you two know each other?

ROSE  
Mark and I were friends in high school.

Mark looks at Rose funnily.

MARK  
We were?

Rose laughs.

ROSE  
Still so funny! I'm taking Mark out for a froyo to reminisce about the good ole days.

BRETT  
Froyo! Fuck yes! Babe, let's join 'em.

Anna looks at Brett and shakes her head.

ANNA  
We'll see you tomorrow.

Brett and Anna walk away. Brett looks over his shoulder at Mark and gives him a thumbs up.

ROSE  
I insist. It's just two blocks away.

MARK  
Fine. I'll follow you.

Rose walks off to a new BMW 7 series.

INT. FROZEN YOGURT SHOP - NIGHT

Mark and Rose each have small cups of yogurt. Hers has mini M&Ms on it, but Mark's is plain.

MARK  
That's a hell of a ring.

Mark looks over his shoulder and around the shop.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Is Carl waiting to jump out from behind the counter?

Rose laughs.

ROSE

God. I haven't seen him since the summer after high school.

MARK

So who's the lucky guy?

ROSE

He's a director. We met on the set of a movie. My first speaking role.

Mark eats a small spoonful.

MARK

Good for you, reaching your dream of big Hollywood actress.

ROSE

Not quite. I had a few small parts in movies. Some were big budget, but I never really got noticed, and my husband doesn't believe in mixing business and pleasure, so I haven't acted since.

She eats some yogurt.

ROSE (CONT'D)

So tell me about you? What got you started in this hobby?

Mark smiles.

MARK

I'm doing it to impress my girlfriend.

ROSE

That's so sweet.

MARK

She's a sweet girl. I couldn't have come close to landing someone like her in high school.

They each have a bit of yogurt as the silence lingers.

ROSE

Mark, I have to apologize for what I did to you back in high school. At prom.

Mark looks at her, bordering on disbelief.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Kids can be shitty, and I was a shitty kid. It was mean, and I just want to say I'm sorry and hope you can forgive me for being the little bitch I was back then.

MARK

Thanks, Rose. That means a lot to me hearing that.

Mark has another bite of yogurt.

MARK (CONT'D)

You know, I had the biggest crush on you. I'm sure every guy did, though.

ROSE

To be young.

(beat)

So, my husband's out of town. Do you want to go back to my place and fuck me into a coma?

Mark coughs out the bit of yogurt in his mouth.

MARK

Excuse me?

ROSE

You could do anything you've ever wanted to do to me. I'll even find my tiara and leave it on.

MARK

I literally told you I have a girlfriend ten seconds ago.

ROSE

Yeah, and I'm married. Who gives a shit?

Mark stands up.

MARK

Rose, thank you so much, but just knowing this is enough of a fantasy for me.

Mark picks up his yogurt cup.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Thanks for the froyo. It was great  
catching up.

He walks off.

ROSE  
(loudly)  
Are you fucking serious?

Everyone in the shop stares at her.

ROSE (CONT'D)  
I am not getting rejected by the  
Incredible Bulk!

Mark walks through the swinging door with his hand up.

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mark shuffles through boxes on the floor in his closet. The bottom box has "Basketball Card Collection" written on it.

He picks up the box and walks to the bed. He sits on the side and places the box between his feet. He opens the lid, and it's full of binders with basketball cards. He lifts them out one by one, until he gets to the bottom of the box, where the only thing remaining is his yearbook.

Mark takes it out of the box and flips through the book until he reaches the page which has prom pictures. The first picture is the one where Carl shakes Mark's stomach. He touches the scar on his face.

On the opposite page is a picture of Rose wearing her tiara with Carl standing next to her.

Mark stares at that picture for several seconds before we hear him UNZIP his pants and wiggle as they fall off.

MARK  
Oh, yeah. I could fuck the prom  
queen.

The book sits on his bare lap as his arm starts jerking.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Now you want my incredible bulk,  
but you can't have it.

After a few strokes, the sound of THE FRONT DOOR CLOSING breaks his concentration.

JENNI (O.S.)  
Hey baby!

MARK  
Shit!

Mark jumps to his feet, letting the book hit the floor with a THUD. He pulls up his pants as Jenni enters the room.

JENNI  
What fell?

Mark stands awkwardly, trying to conceal his erection.

MARK  
What? Nothing.

Jenni notices the book and picks it up before Mark can react.

JENNI  
Hey, the prom king looks familiar.

Jenni looks at the front cover before going back to the picture page.

JENNI (CONT'D)  
Is this your yearbook?

Mark grabs it.

MARK  
No!

He closes it quickly.

MARK (CONT'D)  
I found it... in the garbage.

JENNI  
Okaaayyy.

Jenni sees the boxes sprawled out around the room.

JENNI (CONT'D)  
Are you sure it wasn't in your closet?

Mark laughs nervously.

MARK  
Of course. Why would someone else's yearbook be in my closet?

JENNI

Whatever.

She holds up a bag.

JENNI (CONT'D)

I got us some yogurt and rented  
Magic Mike. Can you get it set up  
while I hop in the shower?

Mark nods.

Jenni gives him a kiss on the cheek and hands him the bag  
before walking off to the bathroom.

Mark looks at the DVD cover.

MARK

(mutters)

Look at those fucking lats....

Mark looks at the mirror, obviously comparing himself to  
Channing Tatum. He looks disappointed.

INT. GYM/WEIGHT ROOM - DAY

Mark does wide grip lat pull downs, lat pulls, and weighted  
pull-ups with a belt holding a 45lb plate.

After struggling through a last rep, he ditches the belt and  
walks to the mirror.

He does a few poses to check out his pump, and throws a quick  
dance move in at the end. He sees Brett behind him smiling.

BRETT

Don't stop on my account, Swayze.

Brett moves next to Mark and begins imitating the Chris  
Farley Chippendales dance from SNL.

They dance in rhythm for a moment until Carl walks up  
clapping, causing them to stop.

CARL

Look at that, Bulk. You may  
actually get laid at a dance for  
once.

BRETT

(fake cough)

Fuckface.

CARL

Maybe if you had busted out those moves at prom, you could have taken the prom queen home.

(beat)

Eh, who are we kidding? The universe would have fucking imploded.

Carl laughs at his joke way too hard, and after a moment, Mark joins in the chuckle.

MARK

You know, Carl, I can't change the way the past went down. But, I could have had your prom queen whenever I want.

Carl stops laughing.

CARL

What?

MARK

I saw her the other day, and man, no way you could land her now. I mean, she still looks eighteen, except her eyes are a bit deader.

Carl's face reddens.

Brett begins laughing.

MARK (CONT'D)

Less than seventy two hours ago, I could have done things to her that are probably illegal in South America. Maybe even Holland.

CARL

You're full of shit, Bulk!

BRETT

Is Rose that piece-of-ass you went out with after class?

MARK

Yeah.

Brett holds up his hand for Carl to high five.



BRETT

Dude, score one for the fat guys  
fucking hot chicks, even if it was  
a long time ago for you.

CARL

I'm not like you, asshole.

BRETT

Riiiiight.

MARK

No, Brett, he's right. You're  
better.

BRETT

Well, fucking obviously.

Carl face reddens further as the vein in his forehead becomes  
prevalent.

MARK

Why don't you come on in for a  
personal training session? Maybe  
we'll be able to get you back into  
high school shape in a few years.

CARL

FUCK YOU! You think you could fuck  
my girlfriend? I'm going to fuck  
yours!

Carl storms out of the gym while Mark and Brett laugh. Mark's  
laughter turns into a slight amount of worry.

MARK

Think he's gonna try to sleep with  
Jenni?

BRETT

Please. She's crazy about you and  
he's a fermented stool sample.

Brett looks at his watch.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Come on, I wanna show you  
something.

Brett walks off.

Mark grabs the 45lb plate and puts it on a rack as he follows  
Brett.

I/E. BRETT'S CAR/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Brett pulls into the pole dance studio parking lot and parks in front of the spot close to "The Waiting Room."

MARK

I don't have class tonight.

BRETT

We're not here for that.

Brett kills the ignition of his car and exits.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Brett walks in front of "The Waiting Room" and puts his key into the door.

BRETT

Welcome to-

He pushes the door open.

BRETT (CONT'D)

The Waiting Room.

Mark walks inside as Brett holds the door.

INT. THE WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

On the wall connected to the pole dance studio is the bar. Behind the bar is a curtain with only beer taps in front of it. It's a simple set-up at the moment without any place to sit and very few pint glasses.

MARK

What is this place?

Brett walks behind the bar and begins filling two pints.

BRETT

It's the front for an adoption agency linking wealthy Americans with African children who need homes.

Brett puts a full pint on the bar in front of Mark.

BRETT (CONT'D)

What the fuck do you think it is? A bar. My bar.

Mark walks around.

MARK

There's nowhere to sit.

BRETT

I've got shit on order. I still have to paint the walls, but it should be ready to rock in a few weeks.

MARK

How did you afford this?

BRETT

I've always been a saver, and Anna helped out tons. We got a break on the lease price since it's next door to her studio.

Mark returns to the bar.

BRETT (CONT'D)

I wanted to tell you before it's official, but this is going to be my full time gig once it opens.

Mark's smile fades.

MARK

You're quitting the gym?

BRETT

I'm moving on.

An uncomfortable pause.

MARK

Well, I'm sorry to see you go, but congratulations.

Brett holds up his full pint to clink.

MARK (CONT'D)

I can't drink a beer tonight.

Brett looks upset.

BRETT

Mark, buddy, work out to live, not the opposite. One beer.

Mark looks at the pint for a second before picking it up and clinking glasses with Brett.

MARK  
Just one.

BRETT  
Cheers!

Brett slugs his pint empty while Mark takes a sip.

BRETT (CONT'D)  
That'll be eight bucks.

MARK  
For one fucking beer?

Brett laughs.

BRETT  
Nah, you get to drink for free.  
(beat)  
Tonight.

Mark takes another small sip.

INT. GYM/CUBICLE AREA - DAY

Mark sits at his desk when an Outlook Notification beeps, letting him know that his personal training session with Jimmy is scheduled to start in five minutes.

He goes back to watching pole dance videos as Gunder enters his desk area.

GUNDER  
(loudly)  
Hey, everyone! Mark's watching  
porn.

Mark jumps in his chair.

Gunder laughs.

GUNDER (CONT'D)  
Man, I'm fucking with you. That's  
like a Disney film compared to what  
I've gotten away with.

Mark minimizes the window.

Gunder sits.

GUNDER (CONT'D)  
Speaking of Disney, I was thinking  
of repainting the van.  
(MORE)

GUNDER (CONT'D)

My artist did a sweet sketch of Ariel, you know, the fish lady from the mermaid flick, and she's riding her father's trident through an underwater cave made of dicks, but she's got a pussy and legs instead of the tail.

Mark looks at Gunder while he sits there on the edge, expecting a reply.

GUNDER (CONT'D)

Well? What do you think?

MARK

If she doesn't have the tail, she'd look like any red head, and that would ruin the context of the whole design. No one would get that it's her father's trident. They'd think you have a painting of a drowning girl surrounded by dicks.

Gunder looks pensive.

GUNDER

I'll leave the shells covering her tits.

MARK

Right. That's what real mermaids have. It makes perfect sense now.

Gunder smiles and stands.

GUNDER

Groovy. Good talk.

He takes a step out.

GUNDER (CONT'D)

Could you send me that link you were watching?

MARK

I'll get right on it.

Gunder walks away as Anna approaches, dressed in jeans and a shirt, rolling a piece of luggage. She ducks to avoid him seeing her. Once he's away, she walks to Mark's cubicle.

ANNA

If I hear about mermaids and dicks  
one more time today, I'm throwing a  
medicine ball at his stupid  
mustache.

Mark stands.

MARK

I've got a session in a minute.  
What's up?

ANNA

Pole class is canceled on Monday.

Mark looks surprised.

MARK

What? My dance is like two weeks  
away. I can't afford to miss a  
practice.

ANNA

My parents guilted me into staying  
a few extra days in town.

Mark sits back down, looking nervous.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Look, you'd need to buy a pole  
anyway. Go get one and practice on  
your own.

Brett comes over.

BRETT

Come on, babe. If we leave now we  
can park somewhere dark for a  
quickest and get a sandwich.

Anna rolls her eyes and they walk off.

Mark stands and begins walking to the front desk.

INT. GYM/FRONT DESK - DAY

Mark leans on the front desk while women enter the gym.  
Gunder checks out each one.

Mark looks at the clock and sees it's ten past the hour.

He looks dejected as he walks back to his desk.

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Mark and Jenni lie in bed as the sunlight through the blinds moves up to their faces. Mark's eyes are already open, and Jenni grumbles with her eyes closed.

JENNI  
Turn it off.

MARK  
It's out of my hands.

She pulls the comforter above her head.

Mark gets out of bed and begins dressing in running gear.

Jenni peeks out from under the comforter.

JENNI  
Where are you going?

MARK  
Saturday morning run group. Aren't you coming?

Jenni looks fatigued beyond normal. Mark laces up his new shoes.

JENNI  
I didn't get off until three. Can't we stay in bed... just until noon or so?

Mark kisses her on the forehead.

MARK  
Cycling class is at ten. You look like you could use the sleep.

Mark shuts the blinds tighter and leaves while Jenni pulls the comforter back over her head.

INT. SEX TOY SHOP - NIGHT

Mark enters the sex toy shop as A MAN WEARING ASSLESS CHAPS buys a whip from the same cashier as the previous evening.

CASHIER  
Did you already use all that lube?

She holds up her hand for a high five, which Mark returns after a pause.

MARK  
Where are the stripper poles?

ASSLESS CHAPS  
Can I watch you dance on it?

The man and cashier laugh.

CASHIER  
You are the worst!  
(to Mark)  
Back left behind the sybian  
machines and pocket pussies.

MARK  
What's a sybian?

CASHIER  
You'll know it when you see it.

Mark walks to the back left of the shop. He approaches the sybian and looks at it with curiosity.

He touches the saddle, and doesn't realize that the man approached.

The man turns on the machine with the remote, causing it to buzz.

Mark quickly jumps back and grabs a dildo, holding it up like a sword.

ASSLESS CHAPS  
I like your style.

Mark drops the dildo on the floor.

ASSLESS CHAPS (CONT'D)  
Just thought I'd point out the pole  
I have.

He walks over to one of the poles.

ASSLESS CHAPS (CONT'D)  
You look like the kind of guy who  
goes for discreet, am I right?

Mark nods.

ASSLESS CHAPS (CONT'D)  
This bad girl requires no drilling,  
unlike me, and can be put up and  
taken down in a matter of minutes,  
much like me.



He hands the box behind the pole to Mark.

MARK

Thanks...

ASSLESS CHAPS

No names here, honey.

Mark nods and begins walking to the counter as the man checks him out.

INT. GYM/FRONT DESK - NIGHT

Mark walks through the front desk area on his way out for the evening when Brett comes from around the corner.

BRETT

Yo. What are you up to tonight?

MARK

Practicing my routine.

BRETT

Come on, man. Do that tomorrow. I'm fucking bored without Anna. Let's go see some hooters.

MARK

Sorry, man.

Mark walks out.

GUNDER (O.S.)

The girlfriend have a date tonight?

Brett jumps, startled.

GUNDER (CONT'D)

A new tittie bar just opened. Let's get some beers and check out the talent.

Brett looks through the front glass door and sees Mark driving off.

BRETT

Fuck it. Let's go.

GUNDER

My van's out back. Gotta fill her up first.

(beat)

(MORE)

GUNDER (CONT'D)  
Hopefully that won't be the only  
time I say that tonight.

Brett winces.

BRETT  
I'll follow you.

Gunder logs off his computer and does a two pistol shooting hand gesture, done real slowly, and with a pelvic thrust as he pulls the invisible triggers at Brett before walking off.

INT. SAPPHIRE STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

The place buzzes with customers. Signs advertising GRAND OPENING and DRINK SPECIALS hang on the walls.

Several empty beer bottles rest in front of a swaying Gunder.

One half-full bottle drops from Brett's mouth to the table, joining an empty one.

GUNDER  
Man, this is awesome! We should  
hang out more often.

A waitress drops off another beer in front of Gunder.

BRETT  
(sarcastically)  
Yeah, totally.

They shift their view to checking out the WOMAN ON STAGE, early 20s Amazonian with a sleeve tattoo, down to a thong at this point.

GUNDER  
I'd swim through an ocean of shark  
infested piss and climb up a  
mountain of broken glass to lick  
the lugnuts of the dump truck  
hauling her used tampons.

Brett spits up some of the beer he was drinking and Gunder laughs while slapping him on the back.

The song ends, and Gunder throws a couple singles on the stage before standing up and applauding.

GUNDER (CONT'D)  
Marry me!

The next STRIPPER, early-20s Latina with giant fake tits, gets on stage.

GUNDER (CONT'D)  
Nevermind! I want to marry her!

Gunder sits back down and looks to Brett.

In the b.g. we see Jenni, walking around and mingling.

GUNDER (CONT'D)  
Hey, doesn't she work out at our gym?

Brett looks to his left and his eyes go wide.

BRETT  
I don't think so.

GUNDER  
I'm pretty sure she does, man. I'm gonna go ask.

Gunder starts to stand, but Brett forcefully pushes his shoulder down until he sits again.

BRETT  
Don't do that. You're creepy as fuck. I'll find out for you.

GUNDER  
You're a good friend.

Brett slams the rest of his beer and puts the empty bottle down.

He walks toward Jenni, and when he gets closer she notices him and gets a panicked look on her face.

He stops a few feet from her.

BRETT  
You look exactly like my best friend's girlfriend, but I could swear she's a doctor.

He takes out his wallet.

INT. SAPPHIRE PRIVATE BOOTH - NIGHT

Brett sits in the plush chair.

Jenni looks at him nervously.

BRETT

This is the first time I've ever said this to a stripper and meant it, but let's talk.

Jenni sits on the arm of the chair.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Does he know?

Jenni shakes her head.

JENNI

Please don't say anything.

BRETT

Fuck. It's like I'm the keeper of secrets for you guys.

Jenni looks at Brett, confused.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Nevermind. How long have you been doing this?

JENNI

Well, I stripped in undergrad but stopped my senior year. This is my fourth shift since then.

BRETT

Why now?

JENNI

I don't want to still be paying off my education in a decade.

Brett laughs.

BRETT

I always thought the 'I'm paying for medical school' was a line.

JENNI

Obviously not every time.

The song playing ends.

JENNI (CONT'D)

If you want to keep talking, it's another twenty.

Brett takes out his wallet and grabs a twenty.

BRETT  
I should have gotten the dance  
instead.

He hands her the money.

BRETT (CONT'D)  
You should tell him before he finds  
out himself.

She gives him a light kiss on the cheek.

INT. SAPPHIRE STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

Brett returns and sits next to Gunder. His head rests on the  
table and another three empty bottles sit in front of him.

Brett shakes him awake.

BRETT  
Nope, she doesn't.

GUNDER  
Huh?

BRETT  
Nothing. I'm calling it a night.

GUNDER  
Me too. Fucking ATM has a seven  
dollar surcharge.

Gunder burps.

BRETT  
I better give you a ride home.

Gunder burps again.

GUNDER  
Bad ass.

BRETT  
Try not to touch anything in my  
car, like the seat or handles.

Gunder almost falls trying to stand, but Brett grabs him.

The stripper on stage does a v-spin.

INT. MARK'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

All of the furniture rests against the wall, leaving maximum open space in the center of the room where Mark does a v-spin. He still can't get it, only going partially around the pole, but he's getting better.

INT. GYM/FRONT DESK - DAY

Mark stands at the front desk, waiting for Jimmy. He looks at the clock and sees it's nine after.

Carl walks in.

CARL

Hey, Bulk. Amazing you can fit all that fat in a skinny suit.

MARK

What do you say we take a picture of you, and hopefully use it as a before shot?

Carl frowns.

CARL

You gonna be a bitch out here, or do you want to move the show to the basketball court?

MARK

I've got a training session. Maybe some other time.

CARL

Pffft. Loser.

Carl takes a basketball and walks off.

The clock is now ten past the hour.

Mark sighs and walks to his desk.

INT. GYM/CUBICLE AREA - DAY

Mark sits at the chair.

He opens up his calendar and erases the recurring event of Jimmy as a client.

His phone buzzes. Text from Jenni: Not working tonight. I'll bring dinner. XOXO.

Mark stands and begins walking.

INT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Mark enters the basketball court.

CARL (O.S.)  
Let's do it, motherfucker.

As Mark walks toward the hoop, Carl bounces Mark the ball.

Mark dribbles once and bounces it back.

MARK  
You can bust.

Carl goes to the three point line, staring down Mark.

Mark walks to the middle of the key, stretching his arms.

Carl shoots, making the first shot.

CARL  
Two.

Mark tosses the ball back.

Carl shoots and misses to the right.

Mark grabs the rebound and dribbles it back to the three point line for clearance.

Carl meets him there and assumes a defensive position.

Mark fakes left and Carl falls for it, stepping to his right as Mark dribbles around him for the lay-up.

CARL (CONT'D)  
Lucky move.

Mark grabs the ball after it bounces once.

MARK  
Two two.

He walks to the three point line and makes the shot.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Three two, I'm up.

Carl throws the ball back with fury.

Mark catches it, dribbles once, and swishes the next shot.

MARK (CONT'D)

Four.

Carl slowly rolls the ball back.

Mark throws up the shot and gets an easy bank.

MARK (CONT'D)

And five.

Carl grabs the ball, walks it to the free throw line, and chest passes it hard to Mark.

MARK (CONT'D)

Take it easy.

CARL

Quit being a pussy.

Mark gently bounces it to Carl.

MARK

Check.

Carl bounces it back to Mark.

Mark dribbles it forward a step causing Carl to go back too far.

He shoots a fade away jumper, sinking it.

MARK (CONT'D)

That's seven.

Carl makes no move to retrieve the ball, so Mark walks around him and brings it back to the line.

As he shoots-

CARL

MISS!

The ball circles the rim before falling out.

Carl gets the rebound, runs it to the side, and shoots from deep.

Mark jumps to block it, but isn't quick enough.

CARL (CONT'D)

Four.

MARK

Seven.



CARL

I know what you have, Bulk.

Carl heads to the line while Mark retrieves the ball.

He passes it to Carl from the center of the key.

They stare at each other for a few seconds before Mark turns around to face the hoop in anticipation of the rebound.

Carl uses one hand to rocket the ball off the backboard.

He charges for the rebound, bulldozing over Mark.

Carl dribbles it in and lays it up while Mark is getting off the ground.

CARL (CONT'D)

Six.

MARK

Are you shitting me? You ran me over.

Mark stands and stretches his ankle.

CARL

You were hogging the key, fatass.

MARK

(muttering)  
Prick.

Carl drops the ball and gets in Mark's face, giving him a slight push.

CARL

You say something, Bulk?

Mark looks down, sheepishly, for three long seconds before looking up.

Mark gives Carl a push back.

MARK

I said you peaked at seventeen, you miserable piece of shit.

Carl pushes Mark again.

As Mark pulls his arm back to take a swing, we see Gunder run in the court.

GUNDER

Hey!

Brett follows a second later, out of breath.

GUNDER (CONT'D)

We're getting all of this on camera. Don't hit him, Mark.

Mark tightens his fist.

MARK

When did we get cameras in here?

GUNDER

Corporate put them in last week. None in the women's locker room though.

Gunder winks at Mark.

BRETT

What does that wink mean?

GUNDER

Nothing.

Gunder winks at Brett.

BRETT

Jesus, Gunder. If I find out you're using Anna's likeness to make a doll....

GUNDER

This guy makes his living by suing businesses. You punch him, the gym's fucked harder than a Thai whore.

Carl pushes Mark, again.

CARL

Come on, swing at me, Bulk. Do it, you fat bitch.

Mark looks at Carl.

Carl's face looks crossed between anger and embarrassment.

After several tense seconds, Mark laughs.

Brett joins in on the laughter, and after a few moments, Gunder does as well.

Carl's face turns red.

CARL (CONT'D)  
Fuck this gym! And fuck you, Mark!

Carl runs out the exit to the sound of laughter.

Once he's out, the laughter dies down.

MARK  
How'd you find that out?

GUNDER  
I'm wary of any man who spends that  
much time in locker rooms...

CUT TO:

INT. GUNDER'S VAN - NIGHT

Gunder sits in the back of his van.

He squeezes a NAKED LADY STRESS DOLL while a reflection of a screen shines on his glass.

GUNDER (O.S.)  
So I decided to check him out.

The wall of the van houses screens and monitoring equipment. One of the screens in the top right has a porno playing.

Gunder reads an article with the headline "Man Sues Burger Franchise Following Altercation with Drive-Thru Employee."

Behind Gunder there's a cork board with A DOZEN PHOTOGRAPHS OF CARL GETTING PUNCHED by random employees from different locations and businesses.

GUNDER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
I wasn't sure he was targeting us  
until I ran a tap.

Gunder flips a SWITCH.

CARL (O.S.)  
Yeah, at the gym, Rose. I know it's  
been ten years, but can you help me  
out? One last prank?

ROSE (O.S.)  
Alright. What do you want me to do?

CARL (O.S.)  
Try to get between him and his  
girlfriend. But don't fuck him.

ROSE (O.S.)  
Like I'd ever fuck the Bulk!

Gunder squeezes the stress doll harder.

BACK TO:

INT. BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Mark and Brett look at Gunder with their mouths open.

MARK  
Since when are you a P.I.?

GUNDER  
The gym is my employment. Detection  
work and Eastern European gonzo  
porn are my passion. Besides, it  
gives me a reason to have that  
sweet van.

BRETT  
If you try to not be seen why would  
you do those ridiculous paint jobs?

Gunder chuckles.

GUNDER  
Sometimes the best concealment is  
right under the target's nose.

Gunder's phone BEEPS. He takes it off his belt clip and looks  
at it.

GUNDER (CONT'D)  
Lady's night at the temple.

He reattaches the phone and puts on a yarmulke.

GUNDER (CONT'D)  
Shalom, gentttt...iles.

Gunder walks off the court, as Mark and Brett stand there  
motionless.

MARK  
I didn't know he was Jewish.

BRETT

He's not.

After a few beats, Mark retrieves the basketball and bounces it as he walks off the court.

INT. MARK'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A Laker's game is on TV.

Mark and Jenni watch while eating sushi on the couch.

MARK

It's been forever since we've had dinner together on a Friday.

Jenni pops in a piece of California roll.

JENNI

Just since your birthday.

Mark takes a piece of tuna sashimi.

MARK

We should go out. Do something fun.

Jenni yawns.

JENNI

Not tonight, babe. I have work the next four nights.

MARK

And then your birthday.

JENNI

You remembered.

Jenni smiles.

MARK

Any big plans?

Jenni pushes him, causing him to drop the piece of fish.

Mark picks up the fish and holds it in front of Jenni.

MARK (CONT'D)

Couch tuna!

Jenni backs up.

JENNI  
(dramatically)  
Get it away! Get it away!

MARK  
Nephew-in-law of the land shark!

Jenni starts laughing as Mark eats the fish. He smiles with the big piece of red tuna covering his teeth.

INT. GYM/CUBICLE AREA - DAY

Mark sits at his desk, eating a tuna fish sandwich with a bag of carrots and celery.

Anna enters his space and takes a carrot.

ANNA  
Last class before the big dance tonight. Are you ready for it?

MARK  
Not a damn thing can stop me.

ANNA  
I can tell that girl she's not welcome if it'll make you feel more comfortable.

MARK  
You pieced that one together quickly.

ANNA  
Brett did.

Mark grins.

MARK  
If she's only there to hassle me, she'll quit on her own. You might as well take her money while you can.

ANNA  
You're a bigger man than you appear.

Anna walks off.

INT. POLE EXERCISE STUDIO - NIGHT

The group stretches before class begins, with an empty pole next to Mark.

MARK

How're the kids, Donna?

DONNA

Getting bigger every day. The older one's basketball league starts next week.

MARK

If he wants to practice, I can let him onto the courts at work, free of charge of course.

Donna smiles while doing a quad pull.

Rose enters and walks to the empty pole. Brett glares at her with hatred the entire walk.

She begins stretching as sexy as possible, as close to Mark as possible.

Donna looks at her with curiosity, Mark with indifference.

ANNA

The hour of dance is upon us. And I hate to inform you, but this is the last time we'll have Brett to press play for us, as he's moving on to a new venture. Let's give him a quick round of applause.

The class claps.

BRETT

You were all like really, really hot step-sisters to me.

ANNA

Follow my moves.

Anne begins with the fireman.

Rose starts the conversation while they're dancing.

ROSE

The offer's still on the bed, Mark.

MARK

I know about you helping Carl.

Anna moves on to the pinwheel, keeping an eye on Mark and Rose.

ROSE  
This has nothing to do with that.

MARK  
I'm not the same person I was ten years ago, and it's a shame the two of you are.

Anna does a v-spin.

MARK (CONT'D)  
In fact, it's fucking pathetic.

Mark gets in position, getting completely off the ground.

Instead of doing the move, Rose squirts some water from her bottle under Mark's pole.

Mark nails the move perfectly for the first time, but as he lands on the ground he slips in the water, causing him to twist his ankle and fall on the floor.

ROSE  
I'm fucking pathetic?!

Donna quickly runs over to Rose and belts her one to the eye. She falls to the floor.

BRETT  
Chick fight!

Anna rushes between Rose and Donna.

ANNA  
Get her out of here, Brett.

Brett walks over and holds his hand out to Rose. She looks at it, but doesn't use it to stand.

ROSE  
People like me don't need help from people like you.

She walks off, and Brett flips her off as she goes.

MARK  
Nice punch.

DONNA  
Tae bo Tuesdays.



ANNA  
Are you OK?

Mark grabs the pole to assist in standing.

MARK  
I'm fine.

He lets go of the pole and falls again.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Fuck.

ANNA  
Come on, we're driving you to the hospital.

Anna looks at the class.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
Sorry everyone. Too much action for one night.

Brett helps Mark stand, and Mark puts his arm around Brett's shoulder as they walk out.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Anna parks her car and gets out.

ANNA  
(to Brett)  
Find him a wheelchair.

Mark opens the door.

MARK  
I don't need a fucking wheelchair.

He gets out of the car, takes a step, and hunches over in pain, quickly taking the bad foot off the ground.

ANNA  
OK, Mr. Tough Guy.

MARK  
Come over here.

Brett stands next to Mark. He puts his hand on Brett's shoulder and hobbles to the entrance.

INT. URGENT CARE FRONT DESK - NIGHT

The front door slides open as Anna walks in with Mark and Brett hobbling slightly behind her.

He sweats profusely, more than he did during the dance class.

ANNA

Was that worth it?

He shoots a look at her that says "don't fuck with me."

After three more jumps, they're at the front desk.

The RECEPTIONIST, late-50s chubby woman wearing glasses with a cord, slides a clip board with papers over the counter without looking up.

RECEPTIONIST

Fill these out.

MARK

Can you call Jenni for me?

RECEPTIONIST

Who?

MARK

Dr. Davison.

RECEPTIONIST

She's not in tonight.

MARK

Yes, she is.

The receptionist looks up at Mark.

She picks up the front phone and puts it on loud speaker, staring at Mark the entire time.

RECEPTIONIST

Will Dr. Davison please come to the front desk? Dr. Davison, your large pizza is at the front desk. A three legged billionaire is here to whisk you away to his private island, and all you have to do is come to the front desk, Dr. Davison.

She puts down the phone.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Now why don't you go ahead and fill out these forms while she packs her bags before her getaway.

Anna takes the clipboard and guides Mark to the waiting room.

He plops down on the chair and Anna hands him the clipboard.

MARK

She told me she's working tonight.

BRETT

She may be.

Mark starts filling out the questions.

After writing one quick answer, he puts down the pen and takes out his cell phone.

ANNA

What are you doing?

MARK

I'm calling her to be sure she's alright.

ANNA

She's fine. Fill out the forms before they decide to amputate.

Mark looks horrified at the thought.

INT. EXAM ROOM - NIGHT

DR. ROBBINS, a young doctor wearing a bright white coat, sticks an X-RAY on the light box on the wall.

DR. ROBBINS

The good news is it's not broken.

Mark exhales, relieved.

MARK

And the bad?

DR. ROBBINS

This is by far the nastiest sprain I've ever seen. Like, they should redo the grade levels and add your name to the new one.

Mark looks worried once again.

DR. ROBBINS (CONT'D)  
How'd you do it?

MARK  
Pole dancing.

Dr. Robbins laughs.

DR. ROBBINS  
No, really?

MARK  
Yeah.

Dr. Robbins laughs again, harder this time.

DR. ROBBINS  
Stay off the poles, and your feet,  
for a couple weeks.

MARK  
I'm a personal trainer. I have to  
move.

Dr. Robbins looks down at the breast of his coat.

DR. ROBBINS  
What do I know, I'm just a doctor.

Mark looks blankly at him.

INT. URGENT CARE FRONT DESK - NIGHT

Mark uses the crutches to return to the front desk with his  
ankle in a black brace.

Brett has a perverted look on his face and his flips through  
a People Magazine "100 Most Beautiful People" edition.

ANNA  
How bad is it?

MARK  
Sprained, not broken.

RECEPTIONIST  
You missed her, but she waved from  
the helicopter.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Anna pulls up next to Mark's car in the parking lot of the pole dancing studio.

All of the signs in the strip mall are shut off.

ANNA

What are you going to do now?

MARK

For the first time since I've lifted a weight, get really, really drunk.

BRETT

Dude, I don't think that's the best thing for you now.

ANNA

I meant about the dance.

Mark shakes his head as he closes the door to the car.

I/E. MARK'S CAR/STREET - NIGHT

Mark drives, passing several closed shops.

A song he's heard from the studio comes on the radio. He turns it off.

He spots an open liquor store and makes a right turn into their parking lot.

As he prepares to get out of the car, he sees the BRIGHT NEON LIGHTS OF THE SAPPHIRE ROOM down the street.

Reverse lights come on.

INT. SAPPHIRE STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

Mark hobbles through the front and heads straight to the bar, sitting down in one of the high chairs between two men talking to strippers and placing his crutches to the side.

The BARTENDER, a 22 year old light-skinned black woman with a long braid wearing neon green lingerie, comes over to Mark.

BARTENDER

Hey, handsome. What's your poison?

Mark looks at the collection of bottles beyond her.

MARK

Vodka.

BARTENDER

Do you want a mixer?

MARK

Empty calories. Just four shots of vodka.

The bartender places four shot glasses in front of Mark and fills them to the top.

Mark knocks back all four, one after the other.

He grabs the rail of the bar and leans back, shutting his eyes and sticking out his tongue like he may puke.

BARTENDER

That'll be forty even.

Mark twists his head to the side.

MARK

Woof!

He takes a credit card from his wallet and hands it to her.

BARTENDER

I'll keep it open for you. Another four shots?

MARK

Beer, please.

BARTENDER

What kind?

MARK

Something light.

BARTENDER

We've got Bud, Miller, Coors-

Mark waves a hand in front of himself.

MARK

I've changed my mind. I want the darkest beer you have. I want to tip the glass and think it's used fucking motor oil.

BARTENDER

You got it, sugar.

She fills a pint glass and places it in on a napkin.

Mark picks up the pint and stands.

He tries grabbing the crutches while holding the pint, switching it back and forth between hands.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)  
Go ahead and find a seat. I'll  
bring it to you.

Mark smiles in appreciation.

He takes a huge slug of the beer and puts it back on the bar.

Slowly, he turns around and walks to an empty table two rows away from the stage, near the curtain separating the VIP room.

Using a crutch, he sweeps out one of the chairs and sits.

Once seated, he pushes out the chair next from him and puts his foot on top.

The bartender comes over with his beer, filled up.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)  
I topped you off, free of charge.

MARK  
Hey, thanks.

BARTENDER  
Is there anything else I can get  
ya?

MARK  
You wouldn't happen to have an ice  
pack?

The bartender smiles.

BARTENDER  
I'll see what I can do.

She walks off and Mark shifts his attention to the stage.

A STRIPPER, early 30s blonde, wears a tiny neon print thong as she dances around the pole.

She does the pinwheel.

MARK  
Easy.

The v-up.

MARK (CONT'D)  
I can do that.

She does the angel spin perfectly.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Bravo.

He claps twice, then shifts his weight to reach his wallet.

Inside the wallet are various bills, and Mark finds a single, balls it up, and makes a huge effort to throw it to the stage, but it falls short.

The bartender brings over the bag full of ice and hands it to Mark.

MARK (CONT'D)  
You're the best. If I find myself single, I'm coming for you.

She laughs and walks away.

As he reaches over to place the ice on his ankle, Jenni and Carl emerge from the VIP room.

Mark and Jenni lock eyes before Mark switches his gaze to Carl.

Without hesitation, Mark throws the bag of ice at Carl, pegging him in the eye and nose.

Carl puts his hand over his eye and leans over.

CARL  
Holy fuck! Why?

Mark uses his good leg to push himself quickly out of the chair, and grabs his crutches.

He uses it to stab at Carl, but has no accuracy.

Jenni gets in between them.

JENNI  
Jesus, Mark. Stop. What happened to you? Why are you here?

MARK  
Why am I here?

Mark laughs loudly.



MARK (CONT'D)

Between ruining my ankle and finding out you have been lying to me about where you go at night, I needed a fucking drink. Unless this place doubles as a fucking ER and it's stripper Monday, why are you here?

A BOUNCER, 38 and the size of an offensive lineman on a pro team, approaches.

BOUNCER

What's the problem here?

MARK

The problem is she should be stitching up people or some shit, instead of grinding on the fucking devil!

Mark tries to stab Carl again with the crutch.

CARL

Stop it!

BOUNCER

Time to go, fellow.

Mark wobbles, and balances himself by putting his hand on Jenni's shoulder.

BOUNCER (CONT'D)

No touching the girls!

The bouncer winds back and punches Mark.

Mark falls back, taking the table to the ground with him.

JENNI

Mark!

(to the bouncer)

He's my boyfriend.

Mark stays on the ground, almost passed out, moaning audibly.

CARL

No way. You really are the Bulk's girlfriend?

Jenni bends over and puts a hand on Mark as he's regaining consciousness.

JENNI  
Who's the Bulk?

Mark moans.

CARL  
Mark. We went to high school  
together. Probably weighed a  
hundred pounds more.

Mark moans again.

JENNI  
You're thinking of someone else.  
He's the biggest health nut I know.

CARL  
The only nut he ever saw back then  
was with nougat and chocolate.

ROCCO, a leisure suit and gold chain wearing 50 year old  
manager, comes over.

ROCCO  
(to Bouncer)  
What's going on?

BOUNCER  
Guy on the floor tried to whoop the  
fat boy for getting a dance from  
his girl.

ROCCO  
(to Jenni)  
This true?

Jenni nods.

ROCCO (CONT'D)  
You know the rules, sweetheart.  
Only two things we don't allow here  
are drugs and personal problems.  
Clear out your locker.  
(to Bouncer)  
Make sure this guy gets out of  
here.

JENNI  
Rocco. Come on!

Rocco walks off.

BOUNCER  
He'll be out front.

The bouncer picks Mark up and throws him over his shoulder.

EXT. SAPPHIRE STRIP CLUB VALET AREA - NIGHT

The bouncer drops Mark down on a bench and walks away.

Carl comes over and places Mark's crutches on the bench.

CARL

Is she really your girlfriend?

MARK

Get the fuck away from me, Carl.

Carl puts the bag of ice on Mark's ankle and walks off.

Jenni walks out the front door wearing jeans and a shirt.

She stands in front of Mark and holds out her hand.

JENNI

Keys.

Mark gives her a valet slip.

INT. MARK'S CAR - NIGHT

Jenni parks Mark's car in his designated spot.

MARK

Thanks for the ride.

Mark holds out his hand for the keys.

Jenni hands them over, confused. She gets out of the car and walks around to help Mark out.

EXT. MARK'S APARTMENT/GARAGE - NIGHT

JENNI

Come on, let's clean you up.

She takes his arm, but he pulls it away from her.

JENNI (CONT'D)

What the hell, Mark?

He manages to stand and lean against the car.

MARK

I can't fucking believe that this  
is what you've been doing at night.  
(beat)  
Are you even a doctor?

Jenni looks at him, shocked by the accusation.

JENNI

How can you ask me that? The only  
reason I dance, did dance, was to  
pay down my medical school loans so  
we don't start our life together  
with a quarter million of my debt.

MARK

Our life together?

Mark chuckles ironically.

MARK (CONT'D)

Maybe you'd be better off with that  
piece of shit you were dancing for.

JENNI

Him? That's just a loser I can take  
for hundreds at a time. Who's he to  
you?

MARK

My high school bully. Fuck...  
hundreds?

Mark breathes deeply.

MARK (CONT'D)

I don't even want to think about  
what you did for that money.

JENNI

Danced. That's all.

(beat)

What the fuck do you think I am?

The question lingers.

JENNI (CONT'D)

You've obviously had a bad day. If  
you want to blame the liquor for  
what you're saying, I'll say I buy  
it. We can sleep it off and discuss  
it like adults in the morning.

MARK

How long have you been doing this?

JENNI

The week after your birthday was the first time since I was in undergrad.

Mark looks shocked at this new admission.

JENNI (CONT'D)

After I danced for you, it brought back memories of how much money I made when I was younger. Way more than moonlighting at a clinic somewhere.

MARK

So this is my fault then? I rehashed those thoughts?

JENNI

There aren't any faults here.

Mark pushes off from his lean.

MARK

If you've lied about this, I can't even imagine what else I don't know. Bye, Jenni.

He begins hobbling off.

JENNI

Mark?

He doesn't turn around.

JENNI (CONT'D)

You asshole!

Jenni takes out her phone and dials a number.

JENNI (CONT'D)

Yeah, taxi. I need to pick up my car.

She watches Mark enter the elevator.

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Mark wakes to his cell phone's alarm.

When he swipes the snooze feature, he sees a reminder for Jenni's birthday.

He sees a picture of them on his nightstand, taken after a run they went on together several months back. They were happy.

MARK  
Ugh. Goddammit.

He calls Jenni's phone, but it goes immediately to voicemail.

MARK (CONT'D)  
(into phone)  
Hey. Hi. Happy birthday. Uhhh. I'm  
an idiot. Please, call me back.

Mark puts down the phone and lies in bed.

INT. GYM/CUBICLE AREA - DAY

Mark sits at his desk with the work phone to his ear and his braced leg propped on the desk.

MARK  
(into phone)  
Hey. I'm not sure if you got my  
message earlier. Happy birthday.  
Again.

He hangs up the phone.

INT. MARK'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mark sits on his couch with his foot up on a pillow. He has his cell phone on his shoulder.

MARK  
(into phone)  
I'm sorry. I still want to take you  
out to dinner or something. I hope  
to hear from you.

He disconnects the phone, but immediately redials.

MARK (CONT'D)  
(into phone)  
I forgot to say Happy birthday.  
Happy birthday.

He disconnects again.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Jenni dances with two other women in a half empty night club. She takes her phone out of her purse and sees seven new voicemails and fifteen missed calls.

She begins walking from the dance floor, past a few dancing couples, to a nook in the corner.

INT. MARK'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mark yells at the TV.

MARK  
Pass the fucking ball!

His phone rings, and he immediately answers.

MARK (CONT'D)  
(into phone)  
Hi.

INTERCUT with night club.

Jenni stands in as quiet of a corner as she could find.

JENNI  
(into phone)  
Hi.

MARK  
(into phone)  
Happy birthday.

JENNI  
(into phone)  
Thanks.

Mark hears the music.

MARK  
(into phone)  
Are you already working at another  
fucking strip club?

Jenni looks at her phone disgusted and hangs up.

MARK (CONT'D)  
(into phone)  
Hello?  
(beat)  
Hello?

Mark sighs and puts his phone down.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Fucking idiot.

He closes his eyes.

INT. GYM/CUBICLE AREA - DAY

Mark sits behind his desk with his ankle up and eyes closed.

His face now has stubble, and he looks like he's aged years over the last few days.

Jimmy enters and sits, waiting for Mark to notice his presence.

Jimmy coughs and Mark opens his eyes.

MARK  
Jimmy?

JIMMY  
I'm done pouting. Can we workout?

Mark smiles.

INT. GYM/WEIGHT ROOM - DAY

Mark leans against the wall with his crutches underneath his arms while Jimmy does box steps.

JIMMY  
I still hate these fucking things.

MARK  
If you hate it so much, then why do you keep on doing it?

JIMMY  
Because you told me to.

MARK  
I mean, why'd you come back?

Jimmy steps off the box and stops working out.

JIMMY  
Mostly because I don't want to embarrass my wife by having her walk next to me while I'm scooter bound one day.



Mark chuckles.

MARK

You do it for her and not you?

JIMMY

She dropped out of college to help me pay for my law degree. Put off studying psychology to wait tables. It was a huge sacrifice for her. The least I can do is make myself miserable for a few hours a week.

Beat.

MARK

I didn't say stop.

Jimmy frowns.

MARK (CONT'D)

Break's over. Finish the set.

Jimmy goes back to stepping.

Brett walks over, drinking a Diet Coke and holding a stack of flyers in his free hand.

MARK (CONT'D)

Diet?

Brett looks at the can.

BRETT

Well, you know. One small step for man....

Mark laughs.

BRETT (CONT'D)

I was thinking, maybe when your ankle heals we can go hiking or something.

MARK

I'd like that.

Jimmy finishes the set.

MARK (CONT'D)

Good job, Jimmy. I'll see you next week.

Brett hands Jimmy a flyer.

BRETT

Or you can see him in two days,  
where I'll be selling ten beers for  
the price of nine.

Jimmy puts the flyer in his pocket.

JIMMY

See you later.

Jimmy walks off.

BRETT

I saw your old friend outside.  
Looks like he's been waiting a  
while.

Mark sighs.

MARK

He's called three times a day all  
week. Did he have his lawyer with  
him?

BRETT

What?

Mark points a crutch at the box.

MARK

Can you put this away for me?

BRETT

I dunno. That borders on exercise,  
and I'm not willing to do that  
until you're all better.

MARK

You'll be fine.

Mark hobbles to the front of the gym.

EXT. GYM ENTRANCE/EXIT - DAY

Carl opens the front door as he sees Mark approach. For the  
first time, he has an ashamed demeanor.

Once Mark's outside, Carl lets the door close.

CARL

How's the ankle?

MARK  
Like you give a shit.

Carl looks dejected.

CARL  
Can we talk?

Mark limps to the wall next to the entrance and leans.

Carl walks over and leans next to Mark. They stand silently for several seconds until Mark motions to hurry up.

CARL (CONT'D)  
Give me a second. This isn't easy.

Carl finally looks at Mark.

CARL (CONT'D)  
I want to apologize.

Mark laughs.

MARK  
Yeah, right. Where's the hidden camera? This is another prank, right?

CARL  
I'm serious. The other day was a real eye opener.

Mark stops laughing.

CARL (CONT'D)  
I haven't gotten laid in three fucking years, and the chick was...

Carl shudders.

MARK  
You should speak to someone else about this, man.

CARL  
No, I want advice from you. I mean, shit, you're the one in killer shape, and your girlfriend is a stripper who refused to give me a handjob for seven hundred bucks.

MARK  
Actually, she's a doctor.

Carl's eyes widen.

CARL  
Jesus fucking Christ. That's even  
hotter.

MARK  
I think she's my ex now anyway.

Carl shakes his head.

CARL  
Oh, man. I'm sorry to hear that.  
Really.

They stand silently as two men walk through the door.

MARK  
You know, I wanted to be like you  
back in high school. How idiotic is  
that?

CARL  
Well, I was awesome, but life went  
downhill pretty fucking quickly.

Mark looks at Carl sympathetically.

CARL (CONT'D)  
I know you won't want to be friends  
with me. I get that. But can I hire  
you as my trainer to help me get my  
life back together?

Mark takes a second to think before answering.

MARK  
Being in shape won't make you a  
better person. You'll still be the  
same prick.

Carl looks at Mark, shocked by the honesty.

CARL  
Then what can I do?

MARK  
How should I know? I've apparently  
still got issues sabotaging my life  
courtesy of you from ten years ago.

CARL  
If I could take it back I would.

Another person walks out of the gym.

MARK

I'll create a waiver form, saying  
you can't sue for any reason.

CARL

I'll sign it.

MARK

A cable can snap on a machine and  
crush your dick, and you'll give up  
the right.

CARL

Can that actually happen?

MARK

Probably not.

Carl holds out his hand.

Mark looks at Carl for a moment before shaking.

MARK (CONT'D)

I'll see you Monday at eight.

CARL

Fuck, that's early. Can we do one  
instead?

Mark stands.

MARK

I'll see you at eight.

Mark pushes off the wall and walks back inside.

INT. THE WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

The bar is packed with men for the grand opening celebration,  
including several familiar faces from the gym.

Brett slings beers and collects credit cards and cash while a  
dozen conversations are happening all around him.

Mark enters, wearing gym shorts and a t-shirt, and makes his  
way through the crowd to a spot at the bar next to Gunder,  
who's several beers deep. Brett pours him a beer.

Mark shakes his head no, so Brett starts sipping it.

BRETT  
How're you holding up?

MARK  
She hasn't been returning my calls.

BRETT  
I still don't see why you were so  
upset. Blue Sapphire isn't even  
fully nude.

Mark looks at Brett.

MARK  
I never told you where she worked.

Brett sips his beer and looks away.

MARK (CONT'D)  
(referring to Gunder)  
At least he didn't see her.

Brett takes another sip of his beer, with a guilty look on  
his face. It doesn't get by Mark.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Fuck. I'm the only person who  
hasn't seen her on stage.

BRETT  
Yet.

Brett climbs on the bar to address the crowd.

BRETT (CONT'D)  
Thank you all for coming tonight.

No one notices him.

BRETT (CONT'D)  
Everyone! Shut the fuck up!

People quiet down.

BRETT (CONT'D)  
Thank you! I'm glad you were all  
here to make the grand opening of  
my bar a success.

A round of applause begins.

BRETT (CONT'D)  
Without further adieu, time for the  
show!

Brett pulls a string and the curtain behind the bar opens, revealing a one way mirror between his bar and Anna's pole dance studio.

Everyone starts whooping it up as they see Anna's advanced class getting ready to begin. Most of these women look like they could be pros.

Mark looks through the mirror and sees Jenni in the front.

He gets off the stool and limps out the door as people are still hollering.

EXT. STRIP MALL SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Mark limps out of The Waiting Room next door into Anna's studio.

INT. POLE EXERCISE STUDIO - NIGHT

Mark enters the pole dancing studio. Jenni sees him immediately.

DONNA (O.S.)  
Hi, Mark!

Mark sees Donna is standing at a pole in the back.

DONNA (CONT'D)  
I moved to the advanced class.

MARK  
Congrats. Great progress.

He walks over to Jenni.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Can we talk?

JENNI  
You feel like accusing me of being a whore again?

ANNA  
Class starts in two minutes, Mark.

MARK  
That's all the time I need.

Anna nods.

MARK (CONT'D)  
I'm not an asshole.

JENNI  
Yes, you are.

MARK  
No, but I am an idiot. I was fat  
when I was in high school. Really,  
really fucking huge.

Jenni looks at Mark, curious to where this is going.

MARK (CONT'D)  
I've spent years burying the  
insecurities from those times.

Mark hobbles towards the iPod dock next to Anna.

MARK (CONT'D)  
My biggest fear was dancing, even  
in private, just for you. You  
sacrificed for me and I was too  
stupid to appreciate it. I guess  
it's my turn to do the same.

He presses play on the iPod and loud music starts.

Mark tosses down his crutches and jumps on his good foot to  
the pole in front of class.

He begins dancing, way too tight and tense.

He looks over to Anna, and sees her staring back at him with  
encouragement.

Mark does the fireman, getting a few claps from the audience.

He sees Jenni begin the smallest grin. This gives Mark an  
additional boost and he stands in front of the pole, swaying  
his hips.

Mark goes right into the pinwheel, doing it perfectly. This  
garners more applause from the audience.

While balancing on his good foot, Mark removes his shirt,  
spins it around his head a few times, and tosses it to Jenni.

She catches it and can't contain her smile any more.

Donna walks up to Mark and places a dollar in the waistband  
of his shorts.



Mark motions for the crowd to give him more money, and a few dollars get thrown in his direction.

He steadies himself with his hands holding onto the pole, and does the v-spin flawlessly.

The volume of the applause competes with the music. More dollars thrown.

Upon landing, he stands in front of the pole, unsure what to do next. He puts his hands on the top of his shorts.

INT. THE WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

The men stand, silently watching the dance.

Through the window, they see Mark drop his shorts, wearing nothing underneath.

GROUP  
Nooooo!!!!

Brett smiles and applauds.

Gunder takes a picture.

INT. POLE EXERCISE STUDIO - NIGHT

Mark stands there motionless and nude, with his pale ass in view, as the applause reaches deafening levels.

Jenni walks over to Mark.

JENNI  
Pull up your shorts.

MARK  
Getting jealous that they're all seeing me?

Jenni looks bashful.

JENNI  
No... just pull them up.

MARK  
Not until you say you'll take me back.

JENNI  
Only on the condition of no more secrets.

MARK

Deal.

Jenni pulls up Mark's shorts.

JENNI

Sorry ladies, the rest of the dance  
is private.

They kiss.

Anna takes a hundred dollar bill out of her bag and puts it  
in Mark's waistband.

She turns to face the mirror, smiles, and winks at the bar.

THE END

## VITA

The author was born in the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles, California. He obtained his Bachelor's Degree in English at San Diego State University in 2007. He decided to pursue his passion of writing for the big screen after his second deployment to Afghanistan in the U.S. Army Reserves, and enrolled in the Master's of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program at University of New Orleans in 2013.