H I T M A N

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Based on the article in Texas Monthly by

Skip Hollandsworth

WHAT YOU'RE ABOUT TO SEE IS A SOMEWHAT TRUE STORY INSPIRED BY

THE LIFE OF GARY JOHNSON

1 INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY 1

GARY is in front of his students, giving them a lecture about the philosophical basis of living a passionate, active life, rather than a passive one.

GARY
What does Nietzsche mean when he says, "The secret for harvesting from existence the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment is to LIVE DANGEROUSLY! Build your cities on the slopes of Vesuvius! Send your ships into uncharted seas! Live at war with your peers and yourselves!" What's he getting at here? Anybody?

A student, SYLVIA, raises their hand.

GARY (CONT'D)
Sylvia.

SYLVIA
Sounds like he's saying you gotta put yourself out there, you have to take risks and get out of your comfort zone because life is short - you have to live passionately, and on your own terms.

GARY
Well, I have a three-word response to that. Ab-so-lutely.

A STUDENT sitting in the back of the class whispers to the student sitting next to him:

STUDENT
Says the guy driving the Civic.

2 EXT./INT. NEW ORLEANS - DAY 2

Gary's drive home in his Civic.

3 INT. GARY'S HOUSE - EVENING 3

We go INSIDE. The atmosphere is one of a cluttered brain.

As we hear Gary's voice-over, we see his routine:

-Gary waters his plants, meticulously, spraying leaves, etc.

-Amongst various bird illustrations, posters, and sighting logs, Gary fills the different feeders with the right mix of birdseed.

-He dishes out food for his cats in bowls labeled "ID" and "EGO." Soon they are all silently eating together.

GARY (V.O.)
I know on the surface my life looks simple, a little plain. A guy feeding birds and living alone with his cats in the suburbs, but I liked my inner life. I was pretty happy - at least content.

-Gary grades papers, works on an upcoming lecture, rehearses sections for Id and Ego.

Gary's bookshelf includes: "The Complete Works of Shakespeare"... "The Chemistry of Consciousness"... lots of Jung...

GARY (V.O.)
Oh, by the way, my name is Gary Johnson and for a few years I'd been teaching psychology and philosophy classes at The University of New Orleans. While I'd always enjoyed living in a world of questions and ideas, I also had a flair for all things electronic and digital and found myself supplementing my income by working part time undercover with the New Orleans Police Department.

Nothing shakes Gary from his routine.

4 INT. POLICE STATION - DAY 4

Gary walks into the police station.

5 INT. GUN RANGE 5

BANG! BANG! We see Gary practice at a gun range.

GARY (V.O.)
After some obligatory training, I was soon hiding cameras, mics, and getting good at recordings, mostly in murder-for-hire cases.

6 EXT. PHO BANG RESTAURANT PARKING LOT - DAY 6

We now see a run-down Vietnamese Food joint in a low rent strip mall. Down the alley beside the restaurant, and in the back, we find a CAR and a VAN.

GARY (V.O.)
What can I say? I was minding my own business when my life took the oddest of turns.

7 INT. POLICE SURVEILLANCE VAN - DAY 7

Inside the secret surveillance control room, we see Gary, his eyes locked on a monitor, fingers dancing between tapping keys and adjusting levels. He masterfully controls a joystick that zooms in on an EMPTY TABLE. His cohort PHIL looks through a file.

PHIL
Jasper better watch his ass with this Craig guy.

Several assault charges, possession...

Suddenly, the door opens and DETECTIVE CLAUDETTE looks in.

CLAUDETTE
Hey, Gary...

CLAUDETTE (CONT'D)
Look, we just heard - Jasper can't go in. Chief officially suspended him for those teenagers he jacked up.

PHIL
Finally...

CLAUDETTE
Anyway, we're thinking you're up.

GARY
I'm up? What is "up"?

CLAUDETTE
Congrats, Gary, you just got promoted to contract killer.

Gary puts it together. Doesn't like the picture.

GARY
We reschedule - he's not even here yet.

CLAUDETTE
Hitmen don't cancel the first meeting.

GARY
Hitmen don't exist. What, are we following made-up rules now?

PHIL
You've seen this a million times - you can do it.

GARY
Why don't you do it?

PHIL
No way. Tried years ago - almost got killed.

GARY
Well, I don't want to almost get killed either. I'm a civilian.

PHIL
We got your back. We'll move in if it starts getting pear-shaped.

CLAUDETTE
Clock's ticking - and you need to get Jasper's wire.

Phil smacks a file into Gary's chest.

PHIL
And you might want to check this out real quick. It's everything we know so far, Billy.

GARY
What?

CLAUDETTE
Your alias: "Billy." Let's go.

GARY (V.O.)
Oh my God, I'm gonna die.

8 INT. JASPER'S CAR - DAY 8

Gary gets in the passenger seat. Jasper is silent and smoldering as he glares at his replacement.

JASPER
...What a bunch of cancel culture bullshit...

GARY
I'm sorry about this, Jasper. Claude sent me to...

JASPER
You know, A LOT of people are fine with what I did, given the circumstances, they actually had no problem with it. If you read the comment section, it's like two-to-one my side.

GARY
Sucks...

JASPER
Fuck 'em. Fuck 'em. 120 day suspension, WITH PAY. Fuck. Fuckin' fine with me - I'm going fishin', motherfuckers. I'll spend the whole summer in Pensacola. See how everyone around here does without me... and why are you in my car?

GARY
Uh, Claude said to get your mic and transmitter.

Jasper seems annoyed but starts to take it off.

JASPER
So, who's going in my place?

Gary looks at him blankly... points to himself.

JASPER (CONT'D)
You? Oh...

GARY
Right? I feel like there are better candidates.

JASPER
Yeah, yeah. Eh, makes sense - you got this unreadable face, perfectly forgettable.

GARY
I know...so, I've been listening in on these for a while, I kinda know what to say, but... any wisdom? Or tricks?

JASPER
Bottom line - they gotta believe it. They want you to be this killer, so you gotta be that - you can't show any weakness. It's constant aggression until you hear the words out of their mouth.

GARY
Got it.

JASPER
But you gotta be relaxed... easy-breezy...

GARY
Alright, so, I'm looking for --

Jasper's phone rings. He holds it out, puts it on speaker.

JASPER
Your job is to put these assholes in prison... what's up, Claude?

CLAUDETTE
(over speaker phone)
New Billy's got to make moves. Craig's here.

JASPER
Alright.

GARY
Oh, man...

Go time. Gary glances over to Jasper in a bit of a panic.

JASPER
You only get one first impression. Don't fuck it up.
(points to shorts)
You're not wearing those in there, are you?

9 EXT. POLICE SURVEILLANCE VAN - MOMENTS LATER 9

Gary and Phil both in their undies, trading pants in the confines of the van.

PHIL
Honestly, these are pretty good, man.

GARY
They breathe really well.

PHIL
Yeah.
(Phil kicks)
Hah!

10 EXT. ALLEY - MINUTES LATER 10

Gary in Phil's pants is walking slowly toward the restaurant along the side of the building, psyching himself up, summoning an intensity we haven't seen (and maybe neither has Gary).

GARY
You're Billy. You're a killer! You kill for a living!

11 INT. POLICE RENTAL CAR 11

We see Phil watching the surveillance video of the restaurant on the monitor.

12 INT. PHO BANG DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 12

Gary walks in determined, another person, crackling with new energy. CRAIG sits across the mostly empty room, checking his watch, impatient.

GARY
(On monitor)
Grab your shit. Sit down.

Craig complies, following Gary over to another table. Gary looks right down the barrel of a HIDDEN CAMERA for approval.

IN THE RESTAURANT

GARY
Listen, this whole thing has got to be based on trust.

CRAIG
Yeah, man. No shit. So, how long you been doin' this?

Gary slams the table.

GARY
Now, THAT'S none of your FUCKIN' BUSINESS!

IN THE VAN

CLAUDETTE
Oh, shit! Look at Gary.

PHIL
The man is a natural.

CLAUDETTE
Playing some offense here.

IN THE RESTAURANT

Gary throttles back a little bit, becomes a bit more reasonable.

GARY
You called me to do a job. You don't know me, I don't know you, and at some point in the future, that's going to be a good thing. We're not going to be friends, you got it?

CRAIG
Got it.

Suddenly, Gary goes blank, not knowing what to say next, making for an uncomfortable pause.

GARY (V.O.)
Breathe... think...hitman thoughts.

CRAIG
Soo...

GARY
Sooo... you're assessing me.
(gathers steam)
Am I the right guy to eliminate your problem? And, just so you know, I'm assessing you too - are you full of shit? Some big talker who's not serious? And if you're serious now, are you going to one day find Jesus and be so overburdened by guilt and remorse and confess your sins? Are you going to break under pressure, Craig, and point a fucking finger at me?

CRAIG
Never! Fuck, man, never. In fact, I got it all worked out already.

GARY
Okay, let's hear it.

CRAIG
I work a seven and seven, so starting this coming Tuesday, which is crew-change day outta Houma, every second of my whereabouts is documented and accounted for. That way, anything bad were to happen, no one can think I did it, right? Not Craig, nuh uh, cause Craig is out on an oil rig, isn't he? A hundred and twenty miles out in the Gulf the whole time. Whatchu think about that?

GARY
That's a good plan. Alright, then I'd say Thursday or Friday is probably the best time.

CRAIG
Sounds good.

GARY
So, what are you thinking exactly?

CRAIG
Uh, you know, just take care of 'em?

GARY
What does that mean exactly?

CRAIG
C'mon, man. You know what it means. He just needs to just go away for good.

GARY
So, what's your proximity afterwards?

CRAIG
What do you mean?

GARY
You going to the funeral?

CRAIG
Funeral? Uh, in my ideal world, there wouldn't have to be a funeral, would there?

GARY
So, no funeral?

CRAIG
Dude, I'm sorry, are we actually talking about the same thing here?

IN THE VAN

Claudette glued to monitor.

CLAUDETTE
Oh boy... going off the rails here. C'mon... let's get back on track, Gary.

IN THE BOOTH

Gary finds a new tactic - doubles down.

GARY
The reason I'm asking, is because it sounds like to me you're talking about the disposal of a body, which is more risky for me.

CRAIG
Gotcha...

GARY
A faked suicide or botched robbery, I'm in and out. What you're talking about requires me to spend a lot of time with the body, to make sure it's never discovered.

CRAIG
Right... and I'm just curious... How you do that?

GARY
Look, I'll let you in on a few of my secrets. I got different ways, but in this case I'll probably go full on - separate the head from the body and do what I call a bayou burial. You know the Bayou Gauche?

CRAIG
Sure do...

GARY
Well, my family has land out there, so, late at night, I'll drift in undetected, drift out in a little boat, and let the alligators take it from there.

CRAIG
(slightly confused)
Now, we talking about the body, or the head?

GARY
Body. Head... Head is a different story. Head means teeth. And teeth are a fuckin' problem.

CRAIG
Dental records, right? Okay. So, what do you do about that?

GARY
Well, I find a spot in the middle of nowhere, a stick of dynamite in the mouth...BOOM. No more teeth, no more problem.

CRAIG
Just blow that fucker up, huh? God damn. Wow.
(thinking)
Hey, what about fingerprints, huh?
(MORE)

CRAIG (CONT'D)
I mean, those are kinda like teeth, right? They can identify from that? What do you do about that?

Gary talks low, becoming the hitman of Craig's dreams. He grabs the roll on the table and dips it in sauce.

GARY
I can tell you're very thorough in your thinking, which is good. Now, in case the headless, uneaten body is discovered, which has never happened with me, but, yeah, no more fingertips, I would have already removed those, and dispersed them separately.
(he takes a bite of the roll)
Sounds kind of weird, but I've got a ritual. So, I divide the number of miles by the number of fingers, so when I'm driving out to the location, in this case 50 miles...I roll down the window, toss one out every 5 miles or so.

Craig is so impressed.

CRAIG
(Laughs) Just toss them fingers out the window...shit, man, you're the real deal, aren't ya?

IN THE VAN

Claudette glued to monitor.

IN THE BOOTH

Gary smiles.

GARY
And by the way, I'm not running a fuckin' charity here - did you bring the cash?

CRAIG
Oh shit, yeah, of course.

He pulls out a small envelope and passes it to Gary under the table. I've got 25 hundred cash now, and I give you the other 25 hundred after, right?

Gary smiles as he leafs through the envelope.

GARY
Great - now I just need your absolute, final sign-off. We're entering a contract here you won't be able to walk away from in about a week. So I need you to look me in the eyes, and I need to hear the words out of your mouth right now.

CRAIG
Chill. I just thought we'd agreed to it already, but, yeah. Look man, I want you to off this guy in whatever way suits you best.

IN THE VAN

Watching the monitor.

PHIL
Got ‘em!

CLAUDETTE
I knew it.

13 EXT. PHO BANG - DAY 13

Soon, they are shaking hands outside as they head into the parking lot.

GARY
We'll be in touch.

CRAIG
Gotta say, man - hell of a profession you're in.

GARY
Yep. The next time you see me, you'll have a brand new life.

Craig chuckles as he heads over to his truck. Gary lingers.

CRAIG
I guess so.

POLICE CARS suddenly descend on Craig and the arresting officers are on him quickly.

POLICE OFFICER 1
Freeze! Put your hands up!

POLICE OFFICER 2
Go, go, go, go.

CRAIG
What the fuck?

POLICE OFFICER 1
Let me see your hands, let me see your hands. Turn, let me see your hands.

CRAIG
The fuck did I do? Huh?

POLICE OFFICER 1 & 2 cuff Craig and push him against the exterior wall of Pho Bang.

POLICE OFFICER 2
You have the right to remain silent, anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to an attorney. You have the right to an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be provided for you. Do you understand these rights? Do you understand these rights?

Craig looks back to Gary, his Judas, in disbelief as they arrest him.

CRAIG
I understand you should go fuck yourself, how ‘bout that?

Gary wanders back down the alley to the van.

14 EXT. BACK OF RESTAURANT - DAY 14

Gary is a little rattled as he approaches the Van. The door is already open and there’s a celebratory mood in the air.

PHIL
Heey-ey!!!

CLAUDETTE
Okay, Daniel Day! Nailed that fucker.

You got the cash, got the right words out of him, sheesh!

GARY
So, that was good?

CLAUDETTE
Yeah!

PHIL
You got him, man! Great job, Gary. That was so smooth... who WAS that guy in there?

GARY
I don't know.

CLAUDETTE
Open and fuckin' shut. You might have just saved a life. How's that feel?

GARY
Feels good. Feels really good.

PHIL
Hey, can I have my pants back now?

GARY
Yeah. (starts to adjust belt)

They look at Claudette.

CLAUDETTE
God, you guys are weird.

Claudette walks away as Phil and Gary unbuckle belts.

15 INT. POLICE RENTAL CAR - DAY 15

Phil drives, Claudette is in the passenger seat, and Gary is in a seat in the back.

PHIL
(to Gary)
Hey Gary, does your family really have land out on the bayou?

GARY
Oh no, I made that part up. I have been out there a few times, birding.

PHIL
Birding?

CLAUDETTE
You don't say?

GARY
You know, I once saw three pilleated woodpeckers at the same time.

PHIL
Pill-e-ated?

GARY
Yeah. Just these big, beautiful kinda pterodactyl-looking guys - technically, it's the first cousin to the illusive Ivory Bill, which there was rumored sighting of back in 2005 - first in over a hundred years. Caused a big stir, because most people think they're extinct, but others think that they might have just developed a successful strategy to avoid people.

CLAUDETTE
Can we turn up the air, Phil? (she blasts the AC)

16 EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY 16

The Van pulls up and drops Gary off at his car.

CLAUDETTE
Well, great work, Gary.

PHIL
Yeah, man...

GARY
Alright, bye.

He gets in his car and is soon pulling out of the parking lot, leaving Claudette and Phil behind.

CLAUDETTE
Oh, Jesus. Bye!

PHIL
Do you think he knows he was being funny?

CLAUDETTE
I don't think so, but it's hard to tell with Gary.

PHIL
You know, that throwing fingertips out the window every 5 miles shit...

CLAUDETTE
...who even thinks something like that up??

PHIL
That's some specifically twisted shit.

CLAUDETTE
I mean, it's safe to say we got our new hitman, at least till Jasper comes back.

PHIL
120 days... too soon if you ask me.

CLAUDETTE
Yeah, cause Jasper's a dick.

17 EXT./INT. NEW ORLEANS - DAY 17

Gary's drive home in his Civic.

GARY (V.O.)
People feel almost disappointed to learn that hitmen don't really exist.

We see a montage of hitmen in film and TV, on erotic novel covers - spanning decades. This idea that there are people out there at a retail level you can just hire to eliminate your worst relationship issues or facilitate some money scheme, or the usual combination of both. It's a total pop culture fantasy. But, because hitmen have been a staple of books, movies, and TV for the last 50 years, good luck getting anyone to believe their existence is all a myth. But of course the job was not to DEBUNK the fantasy, but rather BECOME the fantasy. And I took that part of the job very seriously.

Back at Gary's home, we see him in his routine. While I wasn't the kind of person that could ever get worked up enough to want to kill or die for anything, maybe they had cast me correctly, because the one thing that had prepared me for my new job was my primary interest: the eternal mystery of human consciousness and behavior.

18 INT. GARY'S HOME OFFICE - EVENING 18

Gary is sitting at his desk. He carefully places down a FRESH FILE.

Surveys his environment. Everything on his desk aligned.

WALT (VOICE)
So I, uh, got your number...from a friend. Heard we should meet.

He opens the FILE to see:

WALT, the type of guy who storms the capitol.

Gary studies his face.

He combs Walt's FACEBOOK, notes his activities, hangouts, political beliefs, sports teams, movies, books (or lack thereof...)

WALT (VOICE) (CONT'D)
Sounds like you have a particular set of skills and what not...

Gary at his desk, scans through Walt's arrests, parking tickets, credit card history, mortgage payments.

WALT (VOICE) (CONT'D)
Shit, there was something else I was supposed to say. Well, uh, I'm sure you're picking up my drift here of the nature of...anyway, call me back. My name is Walt.

We push in on Facebook PHOTO OF WALT proud smile with a deer carcass and MATCH-CUT to --

19 INT. DINER - MORNING 19

Walt in the flesh. His current disposition, a little more timid than the photo. He walks over to a man in a booth.

We don't see him yet, but Walt shifts nervously.

WALT
Uh, how's the pie?

GARY
All pie is good pie.

Walt's eyes bug out. It's on.

WALT
Alright. So...what's next?

FULL SCREEN MUGSHOT OF WALT.

20 VARIOUS NEW ORLEANS LOCATIONS 20

We see a series of folks looking for a hitman:

- In a BAD PART OF TOWN, a BMW rolls down a window to a DEALER on a corner...

GARY (V.O.)
I am forever fascinated and amazed by the folks who actually think some guy they just met 10 minutes ago, for not that much money, would risk the death penalty to help them with some crazy murderous scheme.

- At an AUTO BODY SHOP, a WOMAN talks privately with a MECHANIC...

GARY (V.O.)
I almost envy their naiveté and passion. It doesn't matter who you asked about finding a hitman...

At a burlesque club, a SLEAZY GUY is sitting in a booth with a BURLESQUE DANCER...

SLEAZY GUY
You know... I've uh... been looking for somebody to help me out with a little... problem I've been having lately. Figured you knew somebody in that line of work...

BURLESQUE DANCER
I can ask around.

BACK IN THE BURLESQUE CLUB

The same Burlesque Dancer from the previous scene is now backstage, on the phone with the cops.

STRIPPER
(on phone)
...I don't know how serious he is, but dude was hella sketchy, and I was scared.

GARY (V.O.)
...the referral usually finds its way to the police.

We see a shot of a phone in Gary's hand, with several messages from Unknown phone numbers.

GARY (V.O.)
...who make sure they get my number.

AT GARY'S HOME, he watches YouTube videos on accents, hair, make-up, fake teeth...

GARY (V.O.)
I realized not everyone fantasized about the same fixer.

We see a Gary PREP SEQUENCE: Temp tats...beanie...stained teeth...

GARY (V.O.)
So I found tailoring the hitman to the individual client was much more effective, and I had a knack for being the person they needed me to be.

21 INT. HIP-HOP CLUB - NIGHT 21

We make our way to a back room, where a MUSIC PRODUCER is talking with TREY.

MUSIC PRODUCER
With our album coming up soon, all the drama and everything from that is gonna be good for us. He's beefin' with this cat, Rob49, this real gangster motherfucker, so I feel like everybody's gonna figure 'oh that's his shit'...you know, I'm thinkin... and I'm gonna make sure I'm out of town, so all you gotta do is come through...

GARY/"TREY"
Guy, I don't need your reasons or your fuckin' business plan. Just give me the name and the money.

MUSIC PRODUCER
Alright! Straight to business. I like that.

He hands over cash.

FULL SCREEN MUGSHOT OF THE MUSIC PRODUCER

PREP SEQUENCE: a wig...a snaggletooth...a poolboy uniform...

GARY (V.O.)
By the time they were sitting down with me, they'd mostly made up their minds. They've crossed that psychotic Rubicon and just needed me to confirm that their darkest desires were the right desires.

22 INT. LUXURY CAR - DAY 22

Gary as "BRANDON" sits passenger seat as a SOCIETY LADY has a BLUEPRINT rolled out for him.

SOCIETY LADY
...If you come in the side entrance, near the poolhouse, there are no cameras.

GARY/"BRANDON"
Lady, this is quite the house.

SOCIETY LADY
And I'm not going to let that son of a bitch take it from me. You do your part...

Her hand finds his leg. She slides him a manilla envelope STUFFED with money.

SOCIETY LADY (CONT'D)
...And I'll do mine.

GARY/"BRANDON"
Yes, Ma'am.

As he reaches for the envelope, she pulls it back.

SOCIETY LADY
And after he's gone, I'll be in that big house all alone.

GARY/"BRANDON"
Big house?

SOCIETY LADY
Big house...

A FULL SCREEN MUGSHOT OF SOCIETY LADY.

GARY (V.O.)
Of course I'd charge a high society person more just to seem more realistic, but to me, any payment is evidence, so I'd take whatever they were able to give.

PREP SEQUENCE: Fake tattoo gets applied to neck...

23 INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY 23

A 16-year-old, "MONTE", puts a pile of coins on top of various 20s, 10s and ones, a little over a hundred total.

MONTE
It's not that much, but you can have these too.

He hands over some video game cartridges, including "Call of Duty" and "Mortal Kombat."

GARY/"BECK"
Do you really want to kill your mom, Monte? You’re young, and you’ll be making yourself an orphan.

MONTE
That's the point. Did I ask your opinion? Kill the bitch.

GARY (V.O.)
And they ended up giving this little future school-shooter adjudicated probation...

GARY/"BECK"
Okay, Boss.

FULL SCREEN MUGSHOT OF MONTE.

GARY (V.O.)
My would-be employers run the gamut. Evenly divided between men and women, young and old, rich and poor.

PREP SEQUENCE: Gary puts on a tie... slicks his hair back... puts in contacts...

24 EXT. MOTEL SUITE - DAY 24

Gary is on the top floor of a grimy motel exterior. He knocks at the door.

INT. MOTEL SUITE - DAY

Rita sits on a sofa in front of Gary as "X," meticulous and manicured, very Patrick Bateman.

RITA
I like suicide -- that seems clean.

GARY/"X"
Doesn't it? That's the dream. But...a left-handed person doesn't shoot themselves with their right hand. A person with a phobia for heights doesn't jump. A well-tied noose requires studying. Suicidal people want to leave this world quickly, they don't want to explain themselves. Neither do I.

RITA
Maybe... surprise me?

GARY/X
Sounds lovely.

FULL SCREEN MUGSHOT OF RITA.

25 EXT. HOUSE - DAY 25

Outside a trailer, Gary is in character as "NICO," a steely Russian professional (Stringy black hair, gold tooth, turtleneck). He walks around the side of the house, following TAMMY, who smokes a menthol cig.

TAMMY
See, I filed a mental health warning against him a while back, describing him as suicidal, so it'll make sense to everyone. Then I can sue his doctors for malpractice.

GARY/"NICO"
You are smart lady.

TAMMY
I'm thinking cut the wrists and then hold him till he bleeds to death?

GARY/"NICO"
I 'em in service beezness.

TAMMY
I heard that's a fairly painless way to go, bleeding to death... Now I don't have the kind of money you were talking about on the phone in cash, but I have a deal that'll be worth even more to you.

They've arrived at a large tarp covering a big object of some kind.

Tammy pulls back the tarp, revealing a boat.

TAMMY (CONT'D)
See, you can have this boat, but you can't sell it in Louisiana, because there's an insurance claim against it. But you take it over to East Texas, Beaumont or Port Arthur, I guarantee you'll get at least 6 thousand for it.

GARY/"NICO"
Speed boat. Like Miami Vice.

TAMMY
Yeah! Like Miami Vice!

FULL SCREEN OF TAMMY'S MUGSHOT.

26 INT. NEW ORLEANS UNIVERSITY - LECTURE HALL - DAY 26

We follow a woman, who we'll come to know as ALICIA, into a classroom and find Gary mid-lecture (full chalkboard) to his young college students:

GARY
...Believe me, we will get to all of this eventually, but let me jump in and pose a question, cause I think it's going to be a lot of what we're going to be exploring this semester - these concepts of personality, self, and consciousness. My simple question is: How many of you think you know yourselves?

The class has no movement.

GARY (CONT'D)
Think you have a strong sense of who you are?

The class is slow to respond, with half the hands going up.

GARY (CONT'D)
Oh come on, you don't know yourselves?

He gestures for them to raise their hands. Slowly, silently, the rest of the hands go up.

GARY (CONT'D)
Of course you do. Your entire being is invested with this notion of self, it has to be for its own survival. But what we'll be doing this semester is challenging this notion. What if your SELF is a construction, an illusion, an act, a role you've been playing every day since you can remember?

Gary pauses when he spots a WOMAN (Alicia) in the back.

GARY (V.O.)
It's always a poignant moment when your ex is having a kid with someone else.

GARY
We'll see.

27 EXT. CAMPUS QUAD - DAY 27

Gary now sits across from ALICIA. Clinical psychologist. She's got that over-educated bite to her.

ALICIA
Seems like a pretty good class.

GARY (V.O.)
I know many people despise their exes, but Alicia might have been my best friend.

GARY
I'm glad you approve.

GARY (V.O.)
Or at least the person who knew me best.

ALICIA
So, if the self is a construct, and it's all just role play, do you think people can change?

GARY
Yeah, within our set-points, which isn't really that much.

ALICIA
Yeah, I was never really sure about that. You know, there's actually been a lot of recent research and data that says we can.

GARY
Enlighten me.

ALICIA
I mean, I've been reading a lot recently about how researchers are finding that people can change their personalities well into adulthood. I'm working with numerous clients on it.

GARY
Define change.

ALICIA
K. The five traits that make up personality - extroversion, openness to experience, emotional stability, agreeableness and conscientiousness...they can all be altered within just a few months.

GARY
In what sense, though?

ALICIA
Well, you have to embody the trait rather than just think about it. You know, the "as if" principle, where you behave "as if" you are the person you want to be, and then pretty soon you might realize... that is you.

GARY
And the old you goes... where, exactly?

ALICIA
Still there, just dialed down significantly, and the new you is dialed up.

GARY
So, you just didn't have a couple decades to wait for me to change?

ALICIA
Well, uh, if there was one thing you seemed least interested in, it was probably change.

GARY
I've accepted the idea - a normal relationship isn't in my cards.

ALICIA
But what is normal? Look at it this way: everyone is at least a little fucked up. You just need to find someone who is a little fucked up in a way you like. Or at least, I don't know, in a way that compliments your own fucked-upped-ness. That's a different kind of survival technique, that would involve another person.

GARY
Okay...

Alicia moves on.

ALICIA
Okay... Speaking of fucked up, I thought... I don't know, I thought you were just doing tech support stuff for the police, and now you're like a full-blown undercover murder-stopper?

GARY
Yeah - that's me.

ALICIA
I'm sorry, that must be so weird.

GARY
I'm never gonna give up teaching, but this undercover thing is like field research.

ALICIA
How so?

GARY
Oh man, you would not believe the side of humanity I'm hanging out with. And a lot of it is seeing how love has just curdled into hate, and murder is just the best way out.

Alicia is amused at the thought.

ALICIA
Wow. I have a feeling you never wanted to murder me when we were married.

GARY
You're saying it like it's a bad thing?

ALICIA
No, no... It's just an observation. I mean, to kill someone, I'd just imagine you'd have to be capable of some serious passion.

GARY
I'm not incapable of passion.

ALICIA
For certain things, yes, definitely, but... I think you should see someone.

GARY
Like a therapist?

ALICIA
No, no. Like a woman. Or whatever.

GARY
I have the loyal company of Id and Ego.

ALICIA
(Laughs) Okay... You need to see a woman and a therapist.

28 INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY 28

We come in mid-meeting amongst the undercover division and their immediate supervisor, SERGEANT HANK.

JASPER
...I'm tellin' ya, I just don't think it's the best use of my skills.

SERGEANT HANK
Just remember, Jasper, if it weren't for the police union, you wouldn't even have a job right now.

JASPER
Understood, but now that I am back, I should have my job back.

Indicates Gary.

JASPER (CONT'D)
At least I'm trained for it.

SERGEANT HANK
Maybe you hadn't heard since you were on suspension, but Gary's done a great job. His conviction rate is higher, and frankly, he's got a better range than you do.

Jasper scoffs and goes after Gary, who wants no part of this argument.

JASPER
You believe that, Gary?

GARY
I...

JASPER
You guys think that's true?

They don’t know what to say. When confronted, Phil reluctantly gives the truth.

PHIL
Stats don't lie...

SERGEANT HANK
You don't like your position, Jasper?

Maybe I can find something for you over in traffic patrol.

JASPER
Well, shit. Why don't you just have me clean the toilets around here, Sarge? I can do that!

SERGEANT HANK
Since you're being the asshole, I'll just come right out and say it: we're trying to hide your face, okay?

Hank pulls up his phone, mimes loading a video.

SERGEANT HANK (CONT’D)
(imitates a parent)
"Who's that beating up those teenagers?!"

JASPER
Not for no reason...

SERGEANT HANK
Maybe you've forgotten, Jasper, unlike the 9 million other people who watched your video, but we got an angry public out there, and we don't want them in our business. So take my advice, do yourself and all of us a favor - lay low and keep your goddamn mouth shut. Can you do that?

Jasper steams, saying nothing.

SERGEANT HANK (CONT'D)
Anything else?

29 INT. GARY'S HOUSE - LATER 29

We are back in Gary's domestic routine.

-He delicately opens a file -- with energy bill and deeds.

Gary continues to dig.

GARY (V.O.)
Mother was Miss Del Rio. They all moved to New Orleans after Katrina. Parents divorced... no father in the picture. Short stints hairdressing, flight attendant. Married to husband, Ray Masters. Works in his family's oil and gas business.

Digs deeper.

GARY (V.O.)
Then nothing.

Gary looks through Police Log files of domestic disturbance reports...

GARY (V.O.)
No criminal record... A couple of domestic complaints... no arrests.

Gary looks at her picture as if trying to know her.

GARY
So, Madison, who is your hitman?

30 EXT. PLEASE U CAFE - MORNING 30

We see the surveillance van parked across the street and then follow a moving streetcar in time to catch Madison walking into the Cafe.

31 INT. PLEASE U CAFE - MORNING 31

Similar to the Walt meeting, Madison walks over to Gary's booth. When she sees the half-eaten piece of pie in front of him, she stops -- takes a deep breath.

We see Gary for the first time as RON, scruffy, dirty, sexy. The guy you worry your wife will go back to after you have a fight. Ron is a seducer, a charmer, with a big smile.

MADISON
Are you enjoying your pie?

GARY/"RON"
All pie is good pie.

"Ron" stands, offers his hand.

GARY/"RON" (CONT'D)
Ron.

MADISON
Madison.

They sit across from each other, not sure where to start.

GARY/"RON"
So, tell me, Madison, what do you do for a living?

MADISON
Devoted wife.

GARY/"RON"
Obviously. I assume that's what we are here to talk about.

MADISON
Mm hmm...and to answer your question, he doesn't let me work. He doesn't really let me do anything. Can I have a bite of that pie?

GARY/"RON"
Sure.

He slides it over and she takes a forkful.

MADISON
He has me on this stupid diet.

She takes a bite and smiles.

MADISON (CONT'D)
Oh, this is good.

Madison looks off, eyes catch a small dog at another table.

MADISON (CONT'D)
Oh, look, he's so cute.
(to Gary)
You a dog person?

GARY/"RON"
Do I look like a cat person?

MADISON
Yeah. I don't really get cats.
Kinda creepy...you know?

GARY/"RON"
Really?

MADISON
Yeah, all those stories...

GARY/"RON"
What stories?

MADISON
The ones about jealous cats
smothering babies, that kind of
stuff.

GARY/"RON"
Whoa.

MADISON
Uh huh.

GARY/"RON"
Do you know someone who's lost a
child to a murderous, jealous cat?
I'm just trying to do my fact-
checking here.

MADISON
Not, like, personally, but I've
heard it from like, a lot of
people.

GARY/"RON"
Then there you go. We need to get
to the bottom of this.

MADISON
I agree.

GARY/"RON"
Detective, did we pull any paw
prints off the victim?

MADISON
No sir, but we're herding suspects now.

GARY/"RON"
Ugh, no small challenge as we know.

MADISON
Ugh... an utter Cat-astrophe.

A fun moment of connection.

GARY/"RON"
You're good.

MADISON
You too.
(a beat)
And what do you do...?

Off his look.

MADISON (CONT'D)
Oh. I'm sorry, I forgot.

Madison takes a few deep breaths.

GARY/"RON"
It's okay. This is a lot.

MADISON
Yeah. I can't believe I'm doing this.

GARY/"RON"
You're in good hands with me.

A long beat.

MADISON
So...how does this usually work?

GARY/"RON"
How do you want it to work?

MADISON
I don't know. I'm just really scared.

GARY/"RON"
Why are you scared?

MADISON
(truly frightened)
He's a bad person. You don't know what I married into... and just keeps getting worse and worse.

Madison feels she's said too much, and turns the focus onto "Ron."

GARY/"RON"
I hear you.

MADISON
Did you always know you wanted to be a...?

GARY/"RON"
Not exactly a childhood dream.

MADISON
Do you ever think about... like, if you did something else? Or if you chose a different path?

GARY/"RON"
I don't overthink things, I'm not very sentimental.

MADISON
Well, we all have regrets...

GARY/"RON"
Well, in my line of work, I can't afford to think that way.

MADISON
Wish I could do that. I just feel like I'm in prison, and I am going to die in prison.

Gary locks eyes with Madison. Deeper recognition.

MADISON (CONT'D)
But I'm not going to die in prison, because what if me coming here and meeting with you is the best decision I've ever made because it's for me.

A glimmer of hope in her eyes. It's sweet. Her phone buzzes, she checks it anxiously.

MADISON (CONT'D)
Sorry. Shit, it's him. I have to go. I brought the...

Madison places an ENVELOPE on the table. Gary looks at it, knows what happens if she slides it over to him.

GARY/"RON"
Can I throw something out there?

GARY/"RON" (CONT'D)
Listen, there's nothing in this for me - technically, I'm un-employing myself here, but do your future self, the one that deserves a happy, fulfilling life, that can still have that, a big favor. Take what's in there and get a new life. Right now. Don't go home.

She looks at him, almost confused.

GARY/"RON" (CONT'D)
And, if you need anything or if you change your mind... you have my number.

32 INT. STREETCAR - LATER 32

Gary rides home on a Streetcar. His phone rings.

GARY
Hello?

33 INT. POLICE STATION - SAME TIME 33

In the briefing room, Claude and Phil hover over a CONFERENCE TABLE SPEAKER PHONE as Jasper paces in the background.

CLAUDETTE
So, you're a fuckin' life coach now?!

PHIL
Is what I just saw and listened to what I saw and listened to? I'm not believing it.

GARY
What?

CLAUDETTE
What?

Never mind the sting operation...

PHIL
...let me be your therapist?!

GARY
She's not a killer - she just needs to get it together. I'm trying to serve the overall public good.

Jasper can't take it any longer and comes over to the speaker.

JASPER
Public good?! What you did was one of the most unprofessional things I've ever witnessed.
(to Claudette and Phil)
See? This is what happens when you send an untrained boy to do a man's job.

GARY
C'mon - I steered clear of entrapment...

JASPER
You let the jury decide that - at least you got 'em in custody.

CLAUDETTE
Okay. We can agree to disagree on technique. It's over.

Phil tries to lighten the mood.

PHIL
(to Claudette)
And did you notice how cute she was? I wonder if that had ANYTHING to do with it?

JASPER
Well, we'll never know since this weirdo let her off before she could start incriminating herself.
(beat)
It was, let's say, an unusual outcome, and it'll be written up as such.

GARY
Okay, fine...

PHIL
Okay, talk soon, Gary.

GARY
Bye.

CLAUDETTE
Bye, Gary.

GARY
Bye.

Jasper walks out of the room. Claudette goes to hang up, but turns down the volume instead.

CLAUDETTE
Geez Louise, he's sweatin' Gary hard.

PHIL
We've seen this before: starter goes down, back-up comes in and kicks ass forever more. Jasper is Bledsoe, Gary is Brady.

Back to Gary on Streetcar, still listening.

POLICE STATION CLAUDETTE
I know he dropped the ball on this one, but, what's the name he used?

PHIL
Ron.

CLAUDETTE
Yo, Ron is fuckin' dope. He's like a caucasian Idris.

PHIL (ON RADIO)
I would love to grab a beer with that guy - and I'm not talking about GARY.

CLAUDETTE
I would get black-out drunk with Ron.

PHIL
I'd let him talk me into ripping lines on the way to Vegas.

CLAUDETTE
I'd rip my I.U.D. out for Ron.

I
wouldn't share a straw with Gary.

PHIL
Gary is hung like a straw, but Ron, strictly nightstick.

CLAUDETTE
I mean, it's kind of sounding like you would fuck Ron, too.

PHIL
I would take your sloppy seconds, if it were Ron.

Back to Gary, who has overheard the entire exchange.

34 INT. COURTROOM - DAY 34

We are in a Courtroom where the guy, CRAIG (from the opening) is being tried. As he scowls at Gary from across the room, in a closing argument statement, an over-the-top theatrical DEFENSE ATTORNEY is pouring nothing but vitriol on Gary.

DEFENSE LAWYER
...This whole prosecution has been nothing more than an entrapping, sting operation! And this guy...
(points at Gary)
...is the most dishonest, manipulative, fraudulent kind of person there is! This Gary Johnson isn't a human being. For a human being has humanity. Empathy! A human being AIDS in moments of weakness. Gary Johnson PREYS on the weak. As far as legal procedures go, it's like this undercover ghoul is using an AR-15 to kill a mosquito!

Gary sits, expressionless.

GARY (V.O.)
I'm so used to this. While I've put forth a ton of irrefutable evidence, all they've got is to somehow make me the villain.
(MORE)

GARY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I know they're just doing their jobs, but a personal attack is still a personal attack and kind of sucks to have to listen to.

MOMENTS LATER FOREMAN
We the jury find the defendant guilty as charged.

Craig scowls at Gary.

GARY (V.O.)
...but in the "people are forever mysteries" category, this would often happen:

35 INT. COURTROOM - DAY 35

A new day. A new trial. We see a guy testifying:

HUSBAND
I mean, I've forgiven her, she's forgiven me, and hell, I've done much worse. I think she deserves a second chance...

We realize it's Tammy on trial, and that's her husband - the intended victim - testifying on her behalf.

GARY (V.O.)
Which was usually followed by this:

QUICK CUT to Jury Foreman:

JURY FOREMAN
In light of all the evidence and testimony we've heard, we find the defendant not guilty.

There's a "whoop" of celebration in the courtroom and Gary looks over to the prosecutor sitting next to him. All they can do is shrug their shoulders, "oh well."

Tammy and her husband are now hugging, followed by occasional ugly stares back at Gary.

GARY (V.O.)
Maybe their love wasn't perfect, but it was something.

36 EXT. SWAMP - DAY 36

In the middle of nowhere Louisiana, we hear gunshots.

MARCUS
I hear ya - I swear our country's legal system...PULL!

BAM! A redneck named MARCUS lowers a shotgun. A miss.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Is fuckin' fucked.

Marcus turns to "Tanner" (Gary as a tatted-up-unstable-ex-Veteran, tobacco stains, lots of camo), who's ready to launch another, but is more ready to talk some shit with his new buddy. Marcus hands Gary/Tanner his gun, which Gary turns down.

GARY/"TANNER"
Ah, no. You need the practice a lot more than I do! You can't blame someone for taking the law into their own hands. There's a thing I really believe in, and that's personal justice, for when our pussified justice system fails. When we do this, and, when we do this right, personal justice, that's gonna be yours. You didn't take all that unfairness laying down.

MARCUS
Hell, no I didn't.

PULL!

Tanner releases and a clay pigeon explodes.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
That's the America I miss right there.

GARY/"TANNER"
Amen amen.
(flashes his fingers 9)
There are three things you need to kill a man. The gun. The bullets. And the balls. And, boy, I been stockpiling all three of those things.

Gary/Tanner ball-taps Marcus.

MARCUS
Son of a bitch, Tanner. PULL!

He powders another.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
That's what I'm talkin' about right there.

FULL SCREEN MUGSHOT OF MARCUS.

37 INT. GARY'S HOUSE - DAY 37

Gary is reading next to Id and Ego.

His phone DINGS, not Gary's phone, his "WORK" PHONE...

A TEXT from Madison:

"Hey, Ron! No pressure at all, just thought it may be your speed. Hope you're well!"

Gary scrolls down to see FLYER: a pathetically cute puppy with a leg cast and an eye patch that says: "Cause for Paws."

GARY (V.O.)
I would, of course, never cross this line. I'm a professional.

38 INT. GARY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 38

Later that night, Gary lies in bed looking at the text again.

GARY (V.O.)
But technically she didn't text ME, she texted RON. But, I don't think I'm a dog person. In fact, I may be allergic to them. Physically and emotionally. I find them to be too needy, just pandering to whoever holds the meat.

Gary's thumbs hover over the phone.

GARY (V.O.)
But...at the end of the day, we're all spineless...we beg for more, embarrass ourselves for the scraps of others...

39 EXT. CITY PARK - DAY 39

A TONGUE licks Gary's face...as "Ron."

GARY (V.O.)
...Dogs just don't apologize for it.

It's a gooey-eyed PUPPY.

"Ron" stands among a small section of the park turned into a 'dog carnival.' Refreshment stations, a volunteer sign-up, lots of rescue dogs behind temporary fencing, looking for their forever homes. Madison approaches him.

MADISON
You made it!

Wow, I thought I loved puppies.

GARY/"RON"
Well, I gargle barbecue sauce like Listerine before these things. Keeps the bitches bitchin'.

He gently puts the dog back.

A little later, they are walking slightly away from the group.

MADISON
I'm glad you came.

GARY/"RON"
I'm glad you invited me.

They subtly wander away from the crowd.

MADISON
So, how are you?

GARY/"RON"
I'm fine, I'm fine. The real question is, how are YOU?

MADISON
I'm great. I got out of there almost immediately. I have my own place now in St. Roch - it's a mess but it's mine, so I love it. I'm getting a divorce... Sometimes you just gotta make a move.

GARY/"RON"
I'm so happy for you. You know, when I saw your text, I thought, is she picking a dog charity as the place to re-engage me?

They both laugh a little.

MADISON
No! Oh God no, that crazy moment has long passed. New me, new life, he's like...

She makes a gesture of "it's over" by wiping hands.

GARY/"RON"
And look at you now.

Indicates her new curly hair.

MADISON
Do you like the hair?

GARY/"RON"
Love the hair.

MADISON
He hated it. He hated dogs, hated, so, you know what? I'm just making up for lost time.

GARY/"RON"
Well, I'm just so happy this is how it's all going for you.

MADISON
Thank you. No, but really, thank you. I don't want to be weird, but I couldn't have done it without you. There! I said it.

GARY/"RON"
I don't get a lot of thank you's in my line of work.

MADISON
Yeah, I guess not.

One of Madison's co-workers, JILL, approaches.

JILL
Madison, we have a situation in the husky cage. Code brown.

GARY/"RON"
Hi.

JILL
Hi.

MADISON
Ron, Jill. Jill, Ron.

GARY/"RON"
Nice to meet you. Need any help?

MADISON
No, no, we're good. You okay?

GARY/"RON"
I'm great! I've got things to do!

Madison is all smiles.

Gary/"Ron" takes off running across the field where four 8-10 year-olds throw a football. He intercepts a pass.

GARY/"RON" (CONT'D)
Okay, who's going long?

A COUPLE KIDS take off. Ron gestures for them to go deep as he then hurls a long bomb which one kid manages to catch.

GARY/"RON" (CONT'D)
There it is!

40 INT. VAUGHN'S LOUNGE - NIGHT 40

A little later, they sit across from one another, a few drinks in. Madison is finishing up a funny story and they are both laughing. She gathers herself, looks at Gary, as if studying him...

MADISON
No, no, no. I don't buy it.

GARY/"RON"
What?

MADISON
You're not a hitman. You can't be. You cuddled puppies, you played with kids, you've opened every door for me tonight. And yet...you kill people for money?

GARY/"RON"
Chivalry may be dead, but I didn't kill it.

MADISON
And I tried looking you up, and nothing. It's like you don't exist.

GARY/"RON"
I guess I'm just your fantasy.

MADISON
Okay. We'll see about that. How many? Wait, I don't want to know.
(off his look)
What? Does a gentleman not kill and tell?

GARY/"RON"
Okay. For the record, I love people.

MADISON
And yet you kill them.

GARY/"RON"
Not just randomly. It's always with a purpose. To protect. And make no mistake, there are some people who need killing, right?

MADISON
Right. (Beat) So what's the difference between the real you and...your occupation.

GARY/"RON"
Hmmm... I guess the real me is a people person, I like to have a good time. But to be most effective in this job, I have to be a bit of a lone wolf. I have to never draw any attention to myself, I don't want anyone to remember my face. I don’t want to over or under tip, I don’t want to be pulled into memorable conversations. That’s why I drive a Honda Civic... I want it to seem like I don’t exist. That’s the professional side of me.

MADISON
Tell me a little more about the unprofessional side.
(she takes a sip)

GARY/"RON"
I'd say being here with you right now is pretty damn unprofessional, but hey...

MADISON
Good. I don't want you too professional.

GARY/"RON"
How do you want me?

Madison gives him "that" look.

MADISON
What? Do I scare you?

GARY/"RON"
No. Do I scare you?

MADISON
Should I be scared?

GARY/"RON"
That depends on what your intentions are.

A loaded beat.

GARY/"RON" (CONT'D)
Okay. You want to know all about me, but what about you?

MADISON
You know all you need to know.

GARY/"RON"
Is that right?

You could cut the sexual tension in here with a knife or another lethal weapon.

41 INT. MADISON'S HOUSE - LATER 41

THEY ENTER, slamming against the shut door, devouring each other. He picks her up and she wraps her legs around him.

GARY (V.O.)
I was once told I think too much to be a good lover. She said exceptional sex requires a lack of thought - a certain amount of animal abandon...

He carries her to the kitchen island, she pulls his shirt off...

GARY (V.O.)
I liked Ron - he wasn't a thinker, he was a doer.

...in the kitchen, Ron seductively pushes her back as he goes down...

42 INT. MADISON'S BEDROOM - LATER 42

Madison and "Ron" are in the throes of sex.

GARY (V.O.)
...So, I don't know if I was just better as Ron, or if it was that electric charge going through both of us...After all, in her mind, she was having sex with someone who had murdered a bunch of people, and I was having sex with someone who was clearly capable of having a lover killed.

We see Gary, shirtless in the bathroom, drinking water from the sink, as Madison appears behind him in the mirror in lingerie.

GARY (V.O.)
I'm not proud to say this, but it upped my game.

43 INT. BEDROOM - LATER 43

Hardly dressed, under the sheets, they are having an intimate conversation between kissing, etc.

MADISON
You know, I haven't been with anyone else in so long... Can I tell you something?

GARY/"RON"
What?

MADISON
This is fun.

GARY/"RON"
I agree.

MADISON
I like this, us.

Ron smiles.

GARY/"RON"
Yeah.

Look, on a full-disclosure, cautionary note: I've had a few girlfriends, and that early marriage, but, because of my line of work, I generally have trouble maintaining what most would consider a normal relationship.

MADISON
Fuck normal.

GARY/"RON"
Amen.

MADISON
Do you wanna see me again?

GARY/"RON"
Yeah, but it's a little complicated, isn't it?

MADISON
It doesn't have to be.

GARY/"RON"
Is this is a bad idea?

MADISON
I suppose it is.

A charged moment, then --

GARY/"RON"
For instance, we can never go to my place --

MADISON
Good. I don't want to.

GARY/"RON"
I can never give you any info about my whereabouts, at any time.
(MORE)

GARY/"RON" (CONT'D)
If I'm tracked or traced, you'd be pulled right into the middle of it.

MADISON
I will see you when I see you.

GARY/"RON"
And we can only get so personal. The less you know about me, the less I know about you --

MADISON
Okay, what's your next line, "don't fall in love with me?" I know what this is. I don't want to know where you live, or what you're doing at any given moment. We're just going to meet here whenever we want and nothing outside of here matters.

GARY/"RON"
Well, okay then.

MADISON
Well, okay.

A seductive grin.

GARY
So, we agree to the terms?

MADISON
Where do I sign?

He points to his lips. She kisses them.

MADISON (CONT'D)
Anywhere else I need to sign?

Points to his chest.

GARY/"RON"
Initial here.

She kisses. She moves lower.

MADISON
Anywhere else I need to initial?

She moves lower, soon under the covers...

MADISON (CONT'D)
We gotta make sure...this document...is air tight.

44 EXT. NEW ORLEANS STREET 44

We see the cross street for Piety and Pleasure.

45 INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY 45

Gary paces in front of his class.

GARY
The Freudian concepts of the Id and the Superego, are, in Jung's view, in constant struggle with each other. The "Superego" is our conscience.

46 EXT. MADISON'S BUNGALOW BALCONY - NIGHT 46

Madison pours wine on her naked body as Gary licks it off of her neck.

GARY
It rewards us for behaving properly, adhering to societal norms and moralistic standards.

47 INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY 47

STUDENTS scribble away.

GARY
So, the "Id"...

48 INT. MADISON'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT 48

GARY (O.S.)
...As humans we have desires and instincts that are primitive...

Legs, arms, and skin.

GARY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
...Urges that are solely based in the pursuit of pleasure, ignoring the consequences...

49 INT. MADISON'S BUNGALOW - MORNING 49

Gary leaves her place dressed as "Ron."

GARY (O.S.)
...now the "Ego" is the middle-man. The bridge between instinct and logic...

50 INT. POLICE STATION - LATER 50

Gary walks into the station dressed as "Gary."

GARY (O.S.)
...the law and the lawless. Forever attempting to maximize pleasure while minimizing the cost...

51 EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - AFTERNOON 51

Gary walks through the campus, a little more bounce in his step.

52 INT. MADISON'S BUNGALOW - LATE NIGHT 52

When Madison opens the door, we see she is dressed in a SEXY FLIGHT ATTENDANT UNIFORM.

She uses her fingers to guide Ron in like a plane, and speaks in a flight attendant voice.

MADISON
Welcome to Madison Airlines.

GARY/"RON"
Where we flying?

MADISON
Somewhere hot... and tropical. Please follow me to the upper deck.

GARY/"RON"
First class all the way.

MADISON
Shh. Sir, please unbuckle your belt. It's for your own safety.

She starts up the stairs seductively.

MADISON (CONT'D)
We're anticipating heavy turbulence...
(look)
So prepare to brace for impact.

LATER, Madison puts a pilot's hat on Gary as they make out on the bed.

A LITTLE LATER

Madison and Gary are in her old, "ironclaw" BATHTUB together, candles, bubbles, and all. Gary is in front of Madison. They both laugh, Madison at the end of a funny story.

She eventually segues...

MADISON
I know we agreed to not talk about stuff like this, and you don't have to answer if you don't want to, but how do you do it and not get caught?

GARY/"RON"
Well, you gotta be smart, thorough, a few steps ahead of what you know they're going to be looking for.

Gary pauses. Their contract above the shredder...

GARY/"RON" (CONT'D)
You know the dirty secret is, most murders go unsolved - especially around here. So, my M.O. is to engage in a more controlled environment, then move the body somewhere that says - "chaos."

MADISON
Isn't that messy?

GARY/"RON"
Can be, if you're not smart about it. Quick, you're going to shoot me. Where?

He holds up his hands like she's got a gun on him -- she points her finger at his head.

GARY/"RON" (CONT'D)
No! Lower.
(points at his neck)
Lower.
(points to crotch)
Okay! (laughs)
He gently takes her hand and aims it at his chest.

GARY/"RON" (CONT'D)
The heart. I mean, certain areas like the head or the neck, the blood has nowhere to go, but out. Talk about a bloody mess. I mean, and people, we're just big skin-bags of blood, and you have this big, beautiful thoracic cavity to hold it all in, until you move the body... set the scene, tell the story you want them to find.

PREP SEQUENCE: Velvet pants...black rubber gloves...

53B EXT. NEW ORLEANS POWER PLANT - MORNING 53B

GARY (V.O.)
You know, I was always too shy to go out for the high school play, but I had somehow found my stage, and each arrest was like a standing ovation.

Joe stares at an unsettling ginger, "DEAN."

GARY/"DEAN"
We're about to go into the deep end of the pool here. This is serious. If I take this envelope and leave... This time tomorrow, her head is in a Winn-Dixie bag, the rest of her is pig slop in Opelousas. Now, be absolutely clear with me.

Is that what you want?

Joe considers.

JOE
I got this woman, she's into this iPhone swiping... she boyfriend findin', right? And she's slingin' her kitty across the Causeway with this manager from the Piccadilly, AND then wanna take everything too? Now, I don't know how things work where you from... but from around here, you don't take a man TV, his dog, AND his boat. No way, T. - Kill da slut.

GARY/DEAN
With pleasure.

JOE
(giggles excitedly)

A FULL SCREEN MUGSHOT OF JOE.

54 INT. COURT - DAY 54

Gary sits in the witness box as a Defense Lawyer works the floor in front of him.

DEFENSE LAWYER #2
...Your Honor, a psychopathic predator will always be a threat to society. On the other hand, someone who once commits a crime of passion, or sudden passion as it is known legally, is no more likely to commit that crime again than any other member of society. In this case, I would characterize just the intent to entertain the solicitation of murder, although no one was ultimately harmed, as a kind of "sudden passion" as opposed to attempted premeditated murder.

PROSECUTION
Objection!

JUDGE
Overruled. A question would be welcome.

The defense lawyer closes in on Gary.

DEFENSE LAWYER #2
Mr. Johnson, you testified previously that you felt this was a premeditated act. By that, did you mean YOU conjuring this whole thing and coercing them into a murder scheme was premeditated?

GARY
There was nothing sudden or impulsive about our meeting. The intent was clear. The follow-through was detailed.

DEFENSE LAWYER #2
If you were not attempting coercion...why the research? Why the costumes? Why the disguises? Sure, my client has found himself in compromising circumstances...but my question to you, Mr. Johnson: What are your circumstances?

PROSECUTION
Objection, your honor!

JUDGE
Sustained.

DEFENSE LAWYER #2
What are you hiding with these costumes? Who are you trying to fool?

GARY (V.O.)
What would Ron do?

PROSECUTION
Objection, the defense is badgering the witness --

The Judge waves him off.

GARY
My job is not to analyze the events around my meeting. My job is to meet the client at those circumstances. Complete the picture they've already drawn for themselves...

Gary locks on the Defense. A side they haven't seen.

GARY (CONT'D)
...and I am not in the business of second chances.

55 INT. MADISON'S LIVING ROOM - DAY 55

Madison slowly approaches Gary with her hands behind her back, grinning.

MADISON
I got something we can play with.

GARY/"RON"
I like the sound of that. What do you got back there?

MADISON
Pick a hand.

GARY/"RON"
Left.

She throws up a PISTOL in her right hand.

MADISON
You lose.

GARY/"RON"
Whoa! Shit. What is that for?

His cautionary tone catches her off guard.

MADISON
What do you think? I'm a woman living by myself, I gotta protect myself.

Plus, all that talk of murder freaked me out.

GARY/"RON"
Trust me, that is NOT gonna be making you any safer.

MADISON
You have a gun.

GARY/"RON"
It's a little different - I'm a professional.

MADISON
Are you going to show me how to use it or what?

GARY/"RON"
Now?

Didn't we have a contract or something about nothing outside of here matters?

MADISON
We have to leave our love nest at some point, don't we?

GARY/"RON"
Do we?

BANG! BANG!

56 INT. GUN RANGE - LATER 56

BANG! BANG!

Madison holds the PISTOL steady, all focus downrange.

Gary/"Ron" looks down the gallery - flips a switch, sending the SILHOUETTED TARGET back toward them.

No bullet holes. All misses.

MADISON
Okay. I suck.

GARY/"RON"
Self-healing targets.

MADISON
Why is this so hard?

GARY/"RON"
It just takes practice.

MADISON
Why don't you show me, hot shot.

We see a flash of "Gary," before he pivots back to "Ron."

He takes the GLOCK from her, toggles a SWITCH, sending the target even closer toward them on a rail...

GARY/"RON"
Well, this distance is for weekenders, tourists.

The target comes closer, closer, closer...

It stops. TWO FEET AWAY FROM THEM.

Gary, while looking Madison in the eyes, quickly FIRES almost point blank at the target's heart.

GARY/"RON" (CONT'D)
That's my usual distance.

57 INT. VIRGO'S ALLEY - NIGHT 57

Madison passes a JOINT to Ron as they laugh.

MADISON
Okay, hear me out: if the moon controls the tides, and if we're mostly water, then how could a full moon not affect you? Think about it.

GARY/"RON"
Well technically, that makes no sense.

MADISON
No, it makes sense.

GARY/"RON"
A phase of the moon has nothing to do with gravity - it has to do with shadows. A phase is just how much of the sun's light we are blocking on the way to the moon. The gravitational relationship between the moon and Earth, these two planetary bodies, is fixed...so the moon may look different throughout the month, but nothing is actually changing on Earth, ya know?

MADISON
Okay - I didn't know I was out with Neil fuckin' deGrasse Tyson.

GARY/"RON"
Gotta keep you guessin'.

MADISON
Let's go dance, white boy.

GARY/"RON"
Yeah.

58 INT. VIRGO NIGHTCLUB - LATER 58

Madison leads "Ron" to the dance floor through smoke, laser lights, and grinding bodies. The music is loud -- too loud to talk, too loud to think.

Gary tries to find the beat. He isn't a dancer, so neither is Ron.

But Ron has something Gary doesn't - thoughtless confidence and some joy in just being there. She laughs and smiles.

He looks at Madison -- she's sweaty and completely alive...

59 EXT. ALLEY ENTRANCE TO BAR - NIGHT 59

LATER, Madison and Gary stumble out the exit, laughing. Madison is draped over him, kissing his neck.

RAY'S BUDDY
Ray...

RAY
Madison?

MADISON
Fuck...

She pulls herself off of Gary. Ray stares at her as Madison shrinks. A version of her we've never seen.

RAY, looks loaded on Jaeger and cocaine. Right now he is overwhelmed, even like he might cry.

RAY
Fuck. I've been calling you.

MADISON
Ray, please.

RAY
Guess your hands have been too busy to pick up.

Ray looks to Gary.

RAY (CONT'D)
Who the fuck is this?

GARY/"RON"
I'm her boyfriend.

RAY
Oh, really? Well, I'm her husband.

MADISON
Ray, can we just keep it --

RAY
Keep it what, Maddy? You tell me. You tell me, Maddy. You want me to keep it cordial?

GARY/"RON"
Great. Nice to meet you.

They keep walking.

RAY
Yeah, you too, boyfriend! Madison, you're pathetic!

He follows them.

RAY (CONT'D)
You know what? No.

RAY'S BUDDY
Ray... Ray!

RAY
No, I'm not done, okay? Just get the fuck off me. Get the fuck off me. Hey! I'm just fuckin' around, guys. C'mon! What, is it a crime now to have a little fun with your new friend here?

MADISON
Ray, can you just leave us alone?

RAY
Goddamn it, Madison. Don't walk away from me. DON'T YOU FUCKING

WALK AWAY FROM ME, YOU UNGRATEFUL BITCH!!

Ray grabs Madison aggressively.

Gary pulls the GUN out and points it at Ray's forehead. People react.

RAY
SHIT.

GARY/"RON"
Apologize, motherfucker.

Madison is shocked. Then --

MADISON
He said apologize, motherfucker. He's a professional, he'll do it. Show him.

Ray sizes up Gary -- doesn't want to be wrong -- starts to back away.

Gary lowers the gun.

GARY/"RON"
C'mon.

RAY
Professional what? Professional asshole. Really moving up in the world, aren't you, Madison? See you again, professional.

RAY'S BUDDY
C'mon, Ray, let's get outta here.

RAY
You know what? FUCK Y'ALL... fuckin' deserve each other.

RAY'S BUDDY
C'mon, dude. Get the fuck outta here.

RAY
Shut the fuck up!

Ray and his friend walk off in the opposite direction.

RAY'S BUDDY
Not fucking cool, man.

60 INT. LYFT - NIGHT 60

Gary is still processing what just happened while Madison is still charged up.

MADISON
I can't get over how amazing that was! You were incredible. That entitled fuck doesn't back down for anybody. Did you see his face?

GARY/"RON"
Yeah...

MADISON
He just walked. That was wild.

GARY/"RON"
(scoffs it off) Well...

MADISON
Alright, cool guy.
(she kisses his cheek between words)
(MORE)

MADISON (CONT'D)
Nobody has ever stood up for me like that.

61 EXT. TED'S FROSTOP - NIGHT 61

At an outdoor picnic table in one of those 24-Hour-Late-Night-Eats, Madison and Gary share an ice cream sundae. She's still bubbling, Gary's a little shaken but putting on a good front.

She holds up her spoon of ice cream.

MADISON
Here. Best date ever.

Gary "toasts" with his spoonful, and eats it.

GARY/"RON"
Wow... that's good.

MADISON
Oh, that is SO good.

GARY/"RON"
So, it seems like you and Ray have different takes on your divorce.

MADISON
I'm clear - I can't help it if he's being all crazy. I mean, you saw how crazy he is.

GARY/"RON"
Yeah. You are divorced, though, right?

MADISON
Do you see a ring on my finger? DO you see a ring on my finger?

GARY/"RON"
No.
(new thought)

MADISON
Exactly.

GARY/"RON"
It's just like... what are the chances that the same club we're at is the same club he's at?

MADISON
Okay, what's up with all these questions? Fine! I fucked up. I broke the contract.
(seductively)
But I will happily sign a new one when we get home...

Just then, Gary glances through the take-out window and sees Jasper, grabbing an order to go.

He quickly turns away, returning to the sundae.

MADISON (CONT'D)
(off his look)
Right, well... you seem upset.

GARY/"RON"
I'm not upset - me pulling a gun on some dickhead is not a big deal. I'm just saying, you don't see me bringing you to where all my friends and former lovers are hanging out. We gotta keep this clean.

MADISON
It was a coincidence!

JASPER (O.C.)
Whoa. Lookee who's here.

Gary looks up to see Jasper, smiling creepily from ear-to-ear.

JASPER (CONT'D)
Thought that was you.

Gary has to play it cool even though he's wondering if Jasper is stalking him.

GARY/"RON"
What's up?

JASPER
Just grabbing some takeout. Saw you across the way. What are the odds of this...? This is crazy.

MADISON
Are you gonna introduce me to your friend?

JASPER
Jasper.

MADISON
Madison.

Jasper knows very clearly WHO she is...

JASPER
Madison, Madison? Madison...Have we met before? You look so familiar.

MADISON
No, I don't think so.

He subtly looks to Gary and gives a slight smile, although the "please get the fuck out of here" vibes emanating from Gary are unmistakeable.

JASPER
Eh, whatever, maybe it'll come to me...

GARY
Maybe it will.

He relishes Gary's uncomfortable situation for an extra beat, then let's him off his hook.

JASPER
Okay, well I'll let you guys get back to your dessert. Just wanted to say hi. Have a good night. Enjoy the weekend.

GARY/"RON"
Good to see ya.

JASPER
Alright.

Jasper walks off.

MADISON
Bye!

JASPER
Bye.

MADISON
Now, THAT was a coincidence. Who's he?

GARY/"RON"
Just some guy I used to work with.

MADISON
Mm... So ex-husband, ex-co-worker... are we even?

GARY/"RON"
(flirty)
No.

MADISON
Yes. I'll sign the contract again.

62 EXT. GARY'S CAR - MORNING 62

Gary pulls up to a lot behind the SHONEY'S parking lot, next to the van. As he approaches, the door opens, revealing Claudette, Phil, and Jasper in the back. Gary's a bit flustered.

GARY
What are we doing? I got no notice, I got no research, feel like I'm going in naked.

JASPER
This is when you actually have to be good at your job. Halloween's over. No more costumes, man.

PHIL
Alright. We did not get much on him.

We didn't even have time to get a Title 3 warrant, so it's audio only.

His name is Mike, he's already in there waiting, and he seems a little volatile.

JASPER
Ewww... this is gettin' scary.

GARY
Do we even know what this guy looks like?

CLAUDETTE
No, but he said he'd be the guy sitting alone reading "Catcher in the Rye."

PHIL
Which, historically speaking, is never a good sign.

CLAUDETTE
It's going to be fine, Gary - you could do this in your sleep. Just another pussy too scared to do it himself.

PHIL
You got this, G.

GARY
Okay...

Gary starts to walk away.

JASPER
Enjoy your breakfast.

63 EXT. SHONEY'S - MORNING 63

As Gary walks toward the front door, he glances through the big windows to get a feel for how crowded it is, etc.

He suddenly notices the client, alone in a booth by the window, reading a book.

...RAY (Madison's ex)...

64 INT. SHONEY'S - MOMENTS LATER 64

Gary takes a seat in the empty booth right before Ray's, and slides over so as to be sitting in a kind of back-to-back fashion.

GARY
Mike?

Ray begins to turn to the man's voice.

RAY
Uh, yeah. Judd?

GARY
Eyes forward! It's for your own protection. So, tell me, Mike, how can I help you, Mike?

Ray is a little confused, but continues.

RAY
So, you're...

GARY
I am.

RAY
And you...

GARY
I do.

They slightly turn their heads toward one another as they talk, but never enough to get a good look at each other.

GARY (CONT'D)
So, tell me what you're thinking. Unless you came here for the pancakes.

RAY
My wife.

Gary grips the napkin, tries to keep his cool.

GARY
What do you have in mind?

RAY
What do you think? This slut's killing me. I can't live just knowing she's out there... with someone else. So, now I'm here, with you.

Gary breathes harder.

GARY
So, why do you need me? Why aren't you taking care of this shit yourself?

RAY
Believe me, I want to, but we're going through a divorce right now and I'd be the number one suspect. So, I need the perfect front, the perfect alibi.

GARY
So, you're not technically divorced yet?

RAY
What's it to you?
(beat)
I forgot to mention, it might be a twofer.

She's got this new boyfriend... a real douche.

GARY
...and?

RAY
And, if he's there, you can take him out too.

GARY
I've got no problem with that, but it's gonna cost you more. You good with it?

RAY
Yeah, fuck ‘em both.

GARY
Done. You bring the money?

Ray pulls out an envelope.

RAY
Yeah, it's right here. This should be enough for both of them. I have a special request though.

GARY
I'm in the service business.

RAY
When you do it, I want her to know why. Right before you do it, look her in the eye and say "this is from your loving husband." I want that to be the last thing she fuckin' hears.

Gary slowly turns his head around, quietly speaking to the back of his head.

GARY
You know what? Maybe I'll throw in the boyfriend for free.

Ray turns around - recognition.

RAY
What the fuck?

They're soon up on their feet, Gary quietly walking toward a retreating Ray.

GARY
What? It's very simple - you give me the money and I'll take care of it.

RAY
(under his breath as he leaves)
I'll take care of this shit myself...

Ray makes a quick exit.

65 EXT. SHONEY'S - MOMENTS LATER 65

Gary is walking to the van. The door is open.

CLAUDETTE
The hell was that about?

Gary's mind is moving a million miles a minute.

GARY
I don't know. He just freaked out. Happens...

CLAUDETTE
Does it?

66 GARY'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER 66

Gary gets in, disconnects his hidden mic, and immediately pulls out his CELL PHONE, dials. Ring, ring, ring, message.

GARY
Madison, if you get this, stay out of the house. I'm hearing some stuff about Ray. Call me...

Suddenly, the passenger door opens and Gary hangs up.

JASPER SITS NEXT TO HIM.

JASPER
What the fuck was that?

GARY
What?

JASPER
Guy just bolts out?

GARY
I don't know - he panicked. You can't win 'em all.

JASPER
No, you sure can't with that attitude. If they're uneasy, you put 'em at ease. From my perspective, you're getting a little sloppy.

GARY
Maybe so.
(shifts gears)
Look, I wanted to talk with you about the other night...

JASPER
Oh?? What about it?

Jasper is loving watching Gary squirm and is going to milk it for all he can.

JASPER (CONT'D)
Oh, her? Hey, I get it, man. All makes sense to me now. It's cool - I've fucked my share of suspects. It's no big deal - it's good for ya.

GARY
I just ran into her...she was just thanking me for steering her in the right direction.

JASPER
Uh huh, I bet she was.

Jasper smiles.

GARY
I just don't want things to get misconstrued.

JASPER
Gary, you can trust me.

About the most insincere line you've ever heard.

INT.

67 MADISON'S MASTER CLOSET - DAY 67

Gary and Madison are in the middle of an intense exchange. He's attempting to gather her things.

MADISON
Wait, wait, wait... Tell me this one more time - he's trying to put a hit out on me?

GARY/"RON"
Yes!

He's trying to hire me to kill you! What do you not get about that? We gotta go.

MADISON
And he saw you in person?

GARY/"RON"
Yeah.

MADISON
And he knows what you do?

GARY/"RON"
Yeah.

MADISON
So...are you going to kill me?

GARY/"RON"
What are you talking about?

MADISON
Are you gonna kill me?

GARY/"RON"
No.

MADISON
Then I have nothing to worry about.

GARY/"RON"
I think he might do it himself.

She pulls him close.

MADISON
He won't. He won't.

They kiss. He takes a deep breath.

68 EXT. STUDENT QUAD - DAY 68

Gary's STUDENTS are standing on a beautiful lawn, broken into

TWO GROUPS.

Gary turns to one group.

GARY
So, I ask the modern day jury, what is your verdict?

MINDY
We've decided on life without parole.

GARY
How very modern of you. How did you arrive at that conclusion?

MINDY
Well, even though we felt this person is guilty of a heinous act, we don't think a state-sanctioned killing accomplishes anything and only causes more pain and suffering.

He turns to the other group.

GARY
Okay, a nice example of a legal system that is set up to respond to the will of its citizens. Now, let's jump back in time to our Paleolithic friends, 25,000 years ago, where things are very different. You have no jury, you have no official legal system - you're just a nomadic community. So, what are you going to do about your problem, this existential threat in the form of your unhinged leader who's invading other tribes, he's killing, he's raping, he's pillaging, seems like he's going to get you all killed? What're your options?

MELANIE
We're kinda mixed. Some us think we should exile him --

PETER
We don't have the means to exile him. We gonna put him on a boat?

JERREN
The MAJORITY OF US want to eliminate him. Whatever we have to do for our own survival.

GARY
Woo, don't mess with Jerren. So, how do you solve this problem?

PETER
Execution.

GARY
Ruthless...but historically, potentially the right choice. There's been a lot of scholarship on this very subject recently. And the NEW THINKING is that these kind of targeted killings actually play a larger part in our social evolution than previously thought. This impulse to weed out these destabilizing forces is likely a dark thread in our historical DNA. These killings are thought to have ultimately served a twofold purpose - they not only protected social coherence and norms, but ALSO eliminated a certain kind of abusive and uncooperative person from the gene pool.
(to Jerren and Peter)
Melanie leans over to her girlfriend.

MELANIE
When did our professor get hot?

GIRLFRIEND
I know.

69 INT. POLICE STATION - DAY 69

Toward the end of their weekly meeting:

SERGEANT HANK
...and you'll get those reports over to headquarters this afternoon?

Phil gives a thumbs up.

SERGEANT HANK (CONT'D)
(to Claudette)
They know about the body?

CLAUDETTE
No - I haven't had a chance to tell them yet.

JASPER
What body?

SERGEANT HANK
You remember the lady that came in, trying to have her husband killed, that we let go?

JASPER
No, that HE let go.

CLAUDETTE
Madison Figueroa Masters.

PHIL
The one you were Ron.

CLAUDETTE
Yeah, her husband was just found dead.

W T F. Gary's mind is racing.

GARY
I'm sorry... What happened? Where?

SERGEANT HANK
The body was found in Cabbage Alley off Chef Menteur.

CLAUDETTE
Possible drug deal gone bad. Single bullet to the aorta.

A .38.

Gary looks like he's going to be sick - struggles to choose his words.

SERGEANT HANK
Gary?

GARY
Yeah, when I was researching her, the guy seemed like he had a lot of drug problems... Any suspects?

CLAUDETTE
Not really. Sounds like she and the husband got into it outside of a bar called Virgo's, and then the guy she was with pulled a gun on him.

HANK
Did we ID that guy?

CLAUDETTE
Not yet.

JASPER
Maybe it's a new boyfriend or something? Should we go try to find this guy, talk to him?

Jasper looks to Gary.

SERGEANT HANK
I'm liking that. Let us know what you find out.

JASPER
I think Johnson and I should tag-team this. Is it alright if I bring him?

SERGEANT HANK
Sure.

CLAUDETTE
Are you cool with it, Gary?

GARY
Yeah.

70 INT. JASPER'S CAR - DAY 70

Jasper and Gary are silent as they drive, into the alley of the nightclub where it all went down.

71 EXT. VIRGO'S NIGHTCLUB ALLEY - CONTINUOUS 71

As Gary stands outside the car, Jasper is strangely on all fours, looking under the car.

GARY
What are you doing?

JASPER
Looking for the boyfriend...

Jasper continues to sniff like a bloodhound, bringing him to Gary's shoe.

JASPER (CONT'D)
Oh shit! Found him!

He stands up.

JASPER (CONT'D)
Fuuuck. I'm good.

GARY
C'mon. What are we doing here?

JASPER
Hey, look... I'm not going to tell anybody.

GARY
Tell 'em what?! So I ran into her again - doesn't mean I'm the boyfriend, doesn't mean I have anything to do with anything.

Jasper reaches into his back pocket and pulls out a picture, something he printed.

JASPER
Whoa, whoa. So defensive. Look, nobody's accusing you of anything. I was just wondering if you knew this guy? Does he look familiar?

He shows him a PHOTO OF RAY. Looks like Gary has to play some cards right.

GARY
Yeah, that's the guy that ran out of the restaurant... was his name Mike?

JASPER
Ray... Madison's husband, right?

GARY
Right.

JASPER
You see, I went back and listened to that conversation that you guys had, and it just took on a whole different layer of meaning for me. You really knew what button to push with that whole boyfriend line, huh?

GARY
What are you getting at?

JASPER
Nothing. Look, we're friends, right, Gary? I'll let you in on something, over the years, I've sort of learned to follow my nose on these hunches that I have and - usually something turns up pretty interesting... valuable.

GARY
Let me know what you find.

Jasper has him -- so why isn't he going in for the kill...?

JASPER
Maybe. Well, I don't know... There's nothing here.

72 INT. MADISON'S BUNGALOW - DAY 72

Gary walks in quietly. Getting milk out of the refrigerator,

at first Madison doesn't see him.

MADISON
You scared me!

Tries to read her.

GARY/"RON"
Hi.

MADISON
Why are you looking at me like that?

GARY/"RON"
Like what?

MADISON
You're looking at me like something's wrong.

GARY/"RON"
IS something wrong? Anything out of the ordinary?

MADISON
Okay, what are you doing? Look, Ron, it's too early for this shit.

GARY/"RON"
Did you hear about Ray?

Madison stops.

MADISON
That he's dead? Yeah - how do you know that?

GARY/"RON"
I just know. Were you ever going to tell me?

You just didn't think it would come up?

MADISON
Yeah, but who told you?

His phone rings. He briefly checks it and then silences.

GARY/"RON"
This is sort of my area. I listen to police scanners, I tend to know who's being killed in this town. I'm wondering if you're okay. Cause you seem weirdly okay.

MADISON
I was obviously going to tell you, but I'm still just processing it all. I really don't know what to do with it. It's a weird position to be in. Am I supposed to be playing the role of grieving widow? Well, I don't know how to pretend. Was he a good guy? No. Did I love him? I mean, I loved him. People grieve in different ways.
(new thought)
I just have to know if you had anything to do with this.

He can't believe the question and is kinda pissed at her for the insinuation.

GARY/"RON"
Why the fuck would I have anything to do with it? What motive? I'm the one that talked you OUT of killing him in the first place, remember? You think I'm just out there on my own killing people, for no money?

MADISON
Okay, I just had to ask. I'm sorry.

GARY
It's okay... I understand.

Madison breaks down. She buries her face in Gary's shoulder, sobbing.

MADISON
I'm really happy you're here.

Gary consoles her.

GARY
Me too. So what happened? Did the police call you to let you know?

MADISON
Yeah.

GARY
And what are they saying? Any suspects? Arrests?

MADISON
I think there was a drug deal going on.

They just found him shot.

She starts crying again. He hugs her.

MADISON (CONT'D)
I'm so scared.

GARY
I know, it's so weird, so out of the blue. You don't have to be scared. Why would you be scared?

MADISON
Because I killed him.

GARY/"RON"
You killed him?!

MADISON
Yeah.

Gary's phone RINGS, he silences it.

GARY/"RON"
Why would you do that?!

MADISON
You told me yourself, he was gonna come and kill me!

GARY/"RON"
So, he was attacking you, like self-defense.

MADISON
Technically...

GARY/"RON"
Technically, what? What was he doing?

MADISON
He was either passed out or asleep.

GARY/"RON"
And you KILLED HIM?!

MADISON
Yeah, and I made a story, and they're believing it.

GARY/"RON"
OH MY GOD...OH MY GOD!

MADISON
Why are you getting so worked up about this? You do this shit all the time.

GARY/"RON"
I don't do this all the time. I've never done this. I'VE NEVER KILLED

ANYONE.

MADISON
What are you talking about?

GARY/"RON"
I'm a fake hitman. That's why I didn't put you away, I didn't have you arrested. Because, I was working undercover.

MADISON
You're a cop?!

GARY/"RON"
No. I teach at a college. This hitman thing's just a part-time gig that's... gotten out of hand.

MADISON
You've been lying to me this whole time?!

GARY/"RON"
I was stuck. I didn't want to lose you, and you met Ron first, and you liked Ron... I liked Ron. So, I didn't want to show you Gary.

MADISON
Who the fuck is Gary?

GARY/"RON"
I'm Gary.

MADISON
I don't even know your name!!

GARY/"RON"
My real name is Gary Johnson.

MADISON
Gary?

GARY/"RON"
I know!

The phone RINGS. He looks at it: CLAUDETTE.

GARY/"RON" (CONT'D)
They've called three times - something must be going on... a situation probably...

He answers.

GARY/"RON" (CONT'D)
Hey, how's it going, Claude?

CLAUDETTE (ON PHONE)
Gary, where are you?! We need you back at the station now.

GARY/"RON"
Now?

CLAUDETTE (ON PHONE)
Yes, now. We got a new development on this Madison Masters.

GARY/"RON"
Okay...I'll be right there.

Hangs up.

GARY/"RON" (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, I'm gonna, I gotta handle something really quickly and then I'm gonna be right back...

MADISON
Don't.

Just leave, whatever your name is.

GARY (V.O.)
I might have walked in as Ron, but I left as Gary.

73 INT. BRIEFING ROOM - POLICE STATION - DAY 73

Gary walks into the police station. Jasper approaches him with a cup of coffee.

JASPER
Johnson's here!

Phil, briefing room.

They soon are all entering, Phil pulling up the rear.

JASPER (CONT'D)
Wait till you hear this.

PHIL
Hey! Lookin' good Gary.

Phil gestures to Gary's "Ron" clothing.

CLAUDETTE
Glad you could make it.

Hank, Claudette, Phil, and Jasper are dialed in. They know something Gary doesn't.

SERGEANT HANK
This is looking more and more like we messed this up. Madison Figueroa is now the number one suspect.

GARY/"RON"
Really?!

SERGEANT HANK
Really. Have a seat.
(to Claudette)
Tell him what we just found out.

CLAUDETTE
About 6 months ago, Ray Masters increased his life insurance policy by one million dollars. A policy in which, of course, the wife was named the sole beneficiary.

GARY/"RON"
Hmmmm...

PHIL
The policy pre-dates her initial solicitation attempt, but homicide now thinks there might be some connective tissue here. Maybe after your meeting, she coerced someone else to do it, or she did it herself.

JASPER
(to group)
That's what happens when you let someone off the hook.

CLAUDETTE
Not helpful.

SERGEANT HANK
That's a long time ago.

A sphinx-like Jasper kicks it up a notch.

JASPER
Gary, did you ever talk to her again after that time at The Please U?

What's Jasper up to with this line of questioning, these questions he knows the answers to?

GARY/"RON"
Yeah. Actually, I did.

CLAUDETTE
You did? When?

GARY/"RON"
Yeah, I ran into her at Ted's Frostop. She just thanked me for helping her out, giving her good advice.
(calls Jasper's bluff)
Actually, that was the same night I ran into you. You talked to her.

CLAUDETTE
You talked to her, too?

JASPER
Oh... I didn't realize that was her.

GARY
Yeah, that was Madison.

JASPER
Huh...

CLAUDETTE
Huh. So, do you think she could be involved in his murder?

GARY
There's always a chance, but I would be very surprised. She just seemed so happy. She left her husband, got her own place, just seemed like she was doing really well.

SERGEANT HANK
So, what are we doin' next here, guys?

JASPER
Well, we could pull her in for questioning anytime, but she'll probably just get a lawyer, clam up...if she's really behind this, she's probably got all her lies and alibis in order.
(MORE)

JASPER (CONT'D)
I'm thinking we got a one-time opportunity to maybe get the unvarnished story from her.

THIS GUY.

GARY
Me?

JASPER
Yeah. Question: when you ran into her, were you Gary or were you the hitman - which one were you going under on that one?

GARY
Ron.

JASPER
Okay, so you're still Ron the hitman to her?

GARY
Who else would I be?

JASPER
This is great. Look - she forever knows that he knows that she wanted to kill the guy, and she must like him or trust him enough to be sharing a Sundae at Ted's Frostop.
(to group)
Let's face it - they got the goods on each other, I mean, she'd never in a million years suspect he's recording their conversation. I think we got an opportunity here.

Gary's heart sinks as he sees where this is going.

CLAUDETTE
So we manufacture a random encounter where he can get her talking.

JASPER
Not random - surprise encounter.

I
say we put a wire on Gary and we go now. I'm thinking you can just play this as just a concerned check-in.
(MORE)

I (CONT'D)
You read about the husband's death, and you're up front about why you want to talk with her.

SERGEANT HANK
I'm liking this. There's no tellin' what she'll say, but once you get her talking, you'll be able to tell if she's lying to you.

JASPER
Exactly.

CLAUDETTE
You good with that, Gary?

Gary and Jasper lock eyes. He can't believe this is happening, but has to go along.

GARY
I think it's a good plan. Very good. So, you send me the address, I'll meet you over there. Let's nail her.

JASPER
I'll ride with you. Get you prepped. See you guys in the van.

74 INT. GARY'S CAR - DAY 74

Gary drives while Jasper sits shotgun.

JASPER
You good?

GARY/"RON"
Yeah.

JASPER
Okay. (laughs) You're making me nervous.

EXT. SURVEILLANCE VAN - DAY

Gary pulls up next to the surveillance van and is handed an earpiece.

CLAUDETTE
Really? Does he need that?

JASPER
Yeah, I want to be in his ear on this one.

PHIL
Go get her, Ron!

Phil holds out his fist for a fist-bump, which Jasper knocks away. Gary walks away and Jasper pulls out the mic.

JASPER
Hey. I got you.

He winks and shuts the door, leaving Gary with his thoughts.

75 EXT. MADISON'S BUNGALOW - DAY 75

Gary walks down St. Roch Street as he adjusts his earpiece and types away frantically on his phone.

He takes a deep breath as he approaches Madison's.

GARY
You guys there?

76 INT. UNDERCOVER VAN - DAY 76

Claudette, Phil and Jasper are in the van. Gary's voice comes through his earwig.

GARY (O.S.)
Can you guys hear me?

CLAUDETTE
Loud and clear.

PHIL
Your ears working?

GARY
Yep.

PHIL
Great - remember, audio only - gotta get a good recording.

GARY
Got it.

77 INT. MADISON'S BUNGALOW - DAY 77

From Madison's POV, she whips the door open.

GARY/"RON"
We gotta talk...

Gary walks in and continues talking, as he shows her a notes doc on his PHONE SCREEN: "Police are listening. Follow my lead. We're on the same team."

GARY/"RON" (CONT'D)
..there's a bunch of shit coming down that we gotta figure out quick or we are both fucked.

MADISON
Wait, what?!

IN THE HOUSE

She keeps reading: "I'm still Ron. We're not dating."

GARY/"RON"
Look, people know I handle shit around here, so because of that meeting we had that one time, I'm catching heat for the death of your husband - they're thinking one of us did it.

MADISON
Well it wasn't me!

He points to the phone and she continues reading: "You are innocent. Deny. Deny. Deny."

GARY/"RON"
Look, I know you did it. It's fuckin' obvious, and I don't blame...

MADISON
I didn't kill him! Who's accusing me of this? This is bullshit! You out of all people should know I wasn't capable of this!

GARY/"RON"
Okay, then so who did? What the hell happened?

MADISON
I just know what they've told me...

INT. POLICE SURVEILLANCE VAN.

We see Jasper and Phil listening on headphones.

GARY/"RON" (ON RADIO)
Which is what?

MADISON (ON RADIO)
He got shot buying drugs! Guy was an addict!

IN THE HOUSE

Gary points to his phone: "<u>They know about gun outside Virgo's. Can't be me...</u>"

GARY/"RON"
Okay, so you say you didn't kill him.

When was the last time you

saw him?

MADISON
Not that long ago, at Virgo's.

GARY/"RON"
The club?

MADISON
Yes, the club. I was walking out of Virgo's with this guy that I met on the dance floor and boom, I run into Ray. Ray loses his shit when he sees me with this other guy and starts running his mouth, gets all threatening, and fucking grabs me...And then this other guy, trying to protect me, he pulls out a gun out of nowhere and sticks it in Ray's face...

JASPER (IN EARPIECE)
Find out more about the guy with the gun.

MADISON
... Ray freaks out, he leaves, I just run away... and that was the last time I saw him.

Gary points to the prompt: "NOT ME."

GARY/"RON"
So, who's this guy who pulled the gun? What's his name?

Madison hesitates, looks to Gary for help. He gives her the "keep going, all good" sign.

MADISON
I don't know.

GARY/"RON"
You don't know his name?

MADISON
I don't know his name. We were having fun on the dance floor, I asked him if he wanted to go somewhere else. He said yes. We walked out, all that stuff with Ray happened. So, you know what, if he said his name, I didn't hear it.

GARY/"RON"
So, you don't know his name, you're just leaving the club with some random stranger you just met?

MADISON
Hey, fuck off. I'm a grown woman. I'm single, and he wasn't random. He was a damn good dancer.

GARY/"RON"
Well, I'm happy for you. Cause your mystery man...he's a suspect.

INT. POLICE SURVEILLANCE VAN.

We see Jasper and Phil listening on headphones.

GARY/"RON" (ON RADIO)
I'm hearing they're looking for him...

JASPER
Nail her on the insurance policy.

IN THE HOUSE

Gary begins typing...

MADISON
Shit, so am I. Good men are rare these days. He stood up for me, he protected me. So, you know what? If they find him, you let me know.

Gary smiles at this. A romantic moment in the hot seat.

Gary shows her his phone: "<u>They know about insurance policy. Put it on Ray.</u>"

GARY/"RON"
You know, that first time we met at the Please U, your motive didn't seem financial, like a lot of these other pieces of shit I work for.

MADISON
Yeah, because it wasn't.

GARY/"RON"
Then what about this million dollar insurance policy everyone knows about?

Madison's eyes widen at this amount. Gary indicates "settle down."

GARY/"RON" (CONT'D)
-- Don't act like a million dollars is nothing. Don't fucking lie to me. You know what I'm capable of.

MADISON
Ray's family has money - they do shit like this, they take out insurance. Look, I don't even know if I get any of that money. For all I know, he changed the beneficiary when we broke up.

Gary begins to type...

MADISON (CONT'D)
Listen, I have no mind for financial stuff - Ray would talk about money and investments and shit like that, and it would just go over my head.

Gary shows her his PHONE: "Big Finale. Don't hold back. Kick me out."

GARY/"RON"
So, you're giving me all the answers, but you're not giving me the right answers.

MADISON
I'm giving you the truth!

GARY/"RON"
I still know you did it.

MADISON
Fuck you! I didn't do it. How dare you come into my own house and accuse me. You know what?! Get the fuck outta my house!

GARY/"RON"
Hey, I'm on your side - that is why I'm here. I'm trying to help you get away with this. Not because I'm some great guy or anything, but as soon as the heat's off you, it's off of me, too. We can dig our way out of this mess together.

MADISON
There is no together!

GARY/"RON"
I can push this whole thing off on someone else, but before I do that, you have to tell me the truth so I can get this right.

MADISON
You know what? I'm done. I'm done answering questions from a fucking hitman. You're not a cop - let them find out who really did it - I've told you everything that I know! I had nothing to do with this! Ray was a druggie loser asshole. Now get the fuck out of my house.

Gary drifts toward door.

GARY/"RON"
Hey! Last time, I'm offering you a way out.
(MORE)

GARY/"RON" (CONT'D)
After I walk out of this door, you're on your own. I coulda helped.

MADISON
Good - I don't need it.

GARY/"RON"
And as far as we know, they could be watching us right now, so we should probably never see each other again.

MADISON
Great.

GARY/"RON"
If you see me publicly, don't say hi. Nothing personal. We just gotta keep this clean.

MADISON
Fine by me.

Gary winks at her as he leaves out the front door. She stares in disbelief.

MADISON (CONT'D)
(Quietly whispers) Fuck.

78 INT. UNDERCOVER VAN - DAY 78

The door opens and Gary is there, post-meeting.

CLAUDETTE
What'd you think?

GARY
What did YOU think?

Gary looks from face to face, staring at him, the tension is thick.

CLAUDETTE
You gave her plenty of rope to hang herself.

PHIL
She's either the best liar we've ever encountered...or she's innocent.

CLAUDETTE
Damnit, I thought it was her.

PHIL
Yeah, me too.

GARY
Yeah, she seemed pretty honest in there.

CLAUDETTE
What about you, Jasper?

Jasper looks to Gary, a small knowing grin.

JASPER
Yeah, I tend to agree. I don't think she did it. Great work in there, Gary.

Gary reads Jasper, and decides to really challenge him.

GARY
So, this mystery guy, the one who pulled the gun on him? Should we try to hunt that guy down?

Jasper almost appreciates the brazenness.

JASPER
Nah, he just seems like some guy who pulled a gun on an asshole in an alleyway. Nothing much happened.

CLAUDETTE
Yeah, we're done here.

79 INT. GARY'S CAR - NIGHT 79

Gary drives alone in his car, deep in thought.

Paranoia prevails - he checks his rearview mirror, sees if he's being tailed.

80 INT. MADISON'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT 80

Gary opens the door to find JASPER sitting on a chair in Madison's living room, drinking a beer, while she sits across from him, not reacting much.

JASPER
Oh my god! Yeah! There he is. The man himself. I figured you'd be coming by here, man. C'mon, celebration beer?

Jasper gets up and heads to the kitchen.

JASPER (CONT'D)
I'm gonna get you a beer.
(to Madison)
You got it the first time, I got it.

MADISON
I'll get it.

JASPER
She's awesome.

GARY
So, what's going on, Jasper?

JASPER
I was literally just telling Madison what phenomenal actors you guys are. So, I had to get backstage, poke my head inside the green room. Your performance was flawless, but you, you my friend, knocked my fucking socks off. Maybe I never gave you enough credit, Gary. Or... Ron. Sorry. Gary...Ron...
(to Madison)
I get them mixed up sometimes. Do you?

MADISON
Sometimes.

GARY/"RON"
What the fuck is going on?

JASPER
I was literally just telling the lovely Madison that I was going to be fine with whatever way it went this afternoon. If it all blew up in your face, well, at least I'd get my job back.
(MORE)

JASPER (CONT'D)
But, if you got away with it, which, congratulations, it seems like you did, then I would just have to settle for a fuck-ton of money.

Madison remains quiet while Gary tries to figure all this out.

JASPER (CONT'D)
This is where you'd go "what money, Jasper?" or "money from where?" and then I would say "the dead husband's insurance policy." Okay. This'll be our little understanding, okay? The one that keeps me silent, and you guys out of prison.

Gary slowly moves in on Jasper.

GARY
You got nothing, Jasper...

JASPER
Well, I...

GARY
Because there isn't anything. That we're dating?

JASPER
Oh shit, I didn't know that. Congratulations.

GARY (OVERLAPPING) (CONT'D)
You think anybody gives a shit? You've already played your hand here, so fuck you, get lost!

In his face, about to get physical.

MADISON
Hey!! Stop. Stay. Babe, sit down. We're gonna hear him out.

JASPER
Yeah, babe, you're being a... dick.

Gary goes over to couch.

JASPER (CONT'D)
I'm just trying to help you guys out.

GARY
Help us out?

JASPER
Oh, Jesus Christ, Gary! Enough. Ok?! Enough! Ok?! Cut the bullshit. Here, I'll go first, alright? I've been following both of you. And I'll be even more honest, I wanted my job back. Nothing against you personally, ok, but holy shit! I've got enough evidence to put you away for life, and you... accomplice to murder? Whoooa dogggie. You're gonna be there for a while, and the only reason that I'm 100 percent sure you did it, is because I'm 100 percent sure that your Mr. Tough Guy here couldn't fucking kill a thing.

Jasper starts swaying. He takes off his jacket.

JASPER (CONT'D)
This house is hot.

Gary looks confused. Jasper braces himself on the table as he struggles to get words out.

JASPER (CONT'D)
Ironically, life insurance might have actually saved you guys here. That money got me thinking that this dark, fucking adventure that we've all been on can actually have a happy ending.

Jasper continues to push through his words.. Clearly struggling to breathe... bracing himself on the coffee table. Gary blinks in confusion. Something is happening.

JASPER (CONT'D)
The day you hand over the cash...is the...

He's getting more and more disorientated... He trails off.

JASPER (CONT'D)
Oh, man...

Jasper slides, knee to the floor, struggling to hold himself up.

JASPER (CONT'D)
Fuck.

Jasper fully falls on the floor, unconscious.

Madison and Gary sit on the couch, trying to process what just happened. Madison peeks over the coffee table.

MADISON
I'm fucked.

GARY
What just happened?

MADISON
I put drugs in his beer. I hope I didn't over-do it... if he wakes up, I'm going to jail... I drugged a cop. I'm so fucked.

ON GARY, his mind moving...

...he moves toward the kitchen, walks with purpose...

MADISON (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

Gary returns with a WINN-DIXIE BAG.

MADISON (CONT'D)
What's that for?

Gary ties that bag around Jasper's head.

GARY
Commitment.

Madison realizes what's in process.

MADISON
We can't get away with killing a cop.

A glint in Gary's eye...one we haven't seen...

GARY/"RON"
Not usually, but for Jasper these days, I'm thinking we can. I mean, the police are probably thinking about him the way we are right now - they'd just be better off if he wasn't around anymore.

Madison looks at Jasper with his head covered in the bag and walks to the kitchen in disgust.

MADISON
Oh God.
(beat)
So... what's our story?

GARY/"RON"
He gets found in his car in a remote area. Drugs in his system... a bag over his head... no contusions or signs of struggle... clearly a suicide. I mean, his wife left him years ago - so no one to question the story... He's a racist, misogynistic, abusive, dirty, dirty cop. Fuck him.

MADISON
Are we really doing this?

GARY
We don't have a choice.
(beat)
Look, I know you're taking a big leap with me and there are some factual loose threads we'll be dealing with. But I think I'm in love with you.

MADISON
It's always a leap... And for the record, I think I'm in love with you, too. For better or worse?

GARY/"RON"
(looking at Jasper)
And we can agree this is kind of the worst, right?

A gasp from Jasper.

MADISON
Right.

They once again find themselves staring at Jasper's heaving body.

GARY
So, we're in this till the end? Till death us do part?

MADISON
Yes, because I don't believe in divorce.

Gary freezes.

MADISON (CONT'D)
I'm kidding.

She pulls him close. They turn away from Jasper and stare into each other's eyes, as if exchanging wedding vows.

MADISON (CONT'D)
So, do we agree on the terms?

GARY/"RON"
I do.

MADISON
I do.

GARY/"RON"
Where do I sign?

She points to her lips. He kisses them.

GARY/"RON" (CONT'D)
Anywhere else I need to sign?

Points to her chest.

MADISON
Initial here.

He moves lower.

GARY/"RON"
We gotta make sure...this document...is air tight. There's a little place down here I need to initial.

As they fall out of the bottom of the frame, we can hear the sounds of a honeymoon beginning as we settle on Jasper's unconscious body.

He twitches...then stills.

81 INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY 81

Gary stands in front of a packed assembly hall.

GARY
I know I've thrown a lot at you this semester, but that's the point, isn't it?
(MORE)

GARY (CONT'D)
To be inundated, overwhelmed by perspectives and possibilities, because that is what life is offering you if you choose to look at it that way. And I didn't always - I used to believe that reality was objective, immutable, we were all just kind of stuck, in a Plato/Descartes/Kant sort of way, but over the years, I've come to believe that the truth is created through the integration of different points of view, and there are no absolutes, whether moral or epistemological. Now, I find this to be a much more empowering way to go through life, this notion that if the universe is not fixed, then neither are you, and you really can become a different and hopefully better person. Now, the one thing I know for certain is your reality will change over time, in ways you cannot even imagine, and I urge you to be open for this transformation. So, as we close out this semester, if I have one piece of advice for you moving forward in this complicated world, it is this: seize the identity you want for yourself, and whoever you decide to be after this class, be them with abandon and passion.

A "whoop" comes from one of the students in the class, followed by laughter.

GARY (CONT'D)
Best of luck to all of you on your final exam. You may begin.

82 INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY 82

A little later, Gary holds GWEN (6) while Madison is working out some details with another PTA MOM.

GARY
You see all those white birds out there? Notice the long, orange bill, right? That is the white ibis. Look at those eyes... crazy.

PTA MOM
Alright, so I know we have the croissants and I know we have the cupcakes. Are you bringing the apple pie?

MADISON
Yeah, I'm bringing Gary's famous apple pie.

PTA MOM
That's wonderful.

MADISON
And don't worry about the costumes - I got it.

PTA MOM
Thank God. You're the best, Madison. Thank you. We were hoping someone would step in there and help. Gabby just bailed for Aspen. I could've literally strangled her to death.

PTA MOM and Madison laugh.

PTA MOM (CONT'D)
Anyway, I'll see you next meeting.

83 EXT./INT. NICE NEIGHBORHOOD - EVENING 83

They now have a cool house in a good neighborhood.

Between dinner and dessert, Gary scrapes some excess spaghetti into the compost container.

GARY (V.O.)
As love can do, somewhere along the way, it changed me. I eventually found the proper cocktail of Gary and Ron. After all, life is short. You gotta live on your own terms.

At the dinner table, we realize they also have a 3-YEAR-OLD-BOY, sitting in a kid's chair. Gary brings over a pie and drops it on the table.

GWEN
(so innocent)
Mommy, where did you meet Daddy?

Gary sits down and they look at each other, the smile replaced with a curious look. We knew this day was coming, but...

MADISON
Well, daddy was the nicest guy I'd ever met, even though he was being all tough, I could tell it was an act.

GARY
And your mother, well, what can I say, it was love at first sight... she ended up making a new man out of me... But to answer your question, we met at a magical little place called the Please U Cafe.

Gary takes a bite from the apple pie.

MADISON
Are you enjoying your pie?

GARY
All pie is good pie.

MADISON
It sure is.

The story continues...

CARD READS:

"DEDICATED TO GARY JOHNSON 1947 - 2022"

"VIETNAM VET, COLLEGE TEACHER, UNDERCOVER AGENT OVER 70 ARRESTS, ANIMAL-LOVING BUDDHIST, CHILLEST DUDE IMAGINABLE, ZERO MURDERS (WE MADE THAT PART UP)”

FADE OUT