

CROSSING THE RED LINE

an original screenplay by

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FADE IN:

EXT. FARM WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Visible looking in from outside, through a grungy window: farm implements; an ice hockey goal with tattered net; a well-stocked workbench.

Posters of hockey greats plaster the wall. Gordie Howe. Wayne Gretzky. Steve Yzerman. Also ads for tomato seed varieties. Canadian Tire flyers.

Beneath a hooded light, YOUNG ADAM COOLEY (16) – a strapping farm boy – wrenches on a small pump. Unruly blond hair. Work shirt and overalls. Focused on his task like a dog with a bone.

Lightning flashes. Thunder rumbles in the distance.

From the POV outside, we see another man saunter into the shop – PADDY (early 30s), an Adonis in dungarees. He sidles up to Adam. Whispers something to him.

Adam smiles.

Paddy kisses Adam's neck as his hands move on Adam's body. Unbuttoning and unclasping. Adam forgets the pump.

Outside, a hand cleans the glass to get a better view.

The hand clenches into a raging fist.

INT. FARM WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

Paddy strips Adam's torso bare to the waist. Adam leans back against the workbench as Paddy tongues his way down Adam's treasure trail.

Adam closes his eyes, his face euphoric...

Lightning flashes, illuminating a big man – ELIJAH COOLEY (40s) – as he storms toward them.

ELIJAH

You defiler!

He grabs a length of frayed Romex wire from the workbench. Slashes at Paddy, ripping his face and tearing his eye open.

Paddy screams. Covers his savaged face. Stumbles from the shop as Adam struggles to pull on his clothes.

Elijah advances. Corners Adam. Slashes him across the chest.

ELIJAH
YOU FUCKING FAGGOT! I'll beat you
'til you can't move!

Elijah flays Adam's back with the wire. Adam screams. Tries to protect himself. Blood spatters the window and runs down the glass in gory lines.

Then Adam bolts. Toward his father, bowling him over. He scrambles over Elijah and flees the workshop.

INT. BARN - MOMENTS LATER

Young Adam climbs between animal stalls. Stumbles over farm implements. Terrified.

ELIJAH (O.S.)
YOU FILTH WHORE! I'LL FIND YOU!

Adam peers from behind a stack of hay bales. Finds an old t-shirt and barely stifles his agony as he pulls it on. Blood soaks it immediately.

Adam crawls to a late-model, turquoise-over-silver pickup truck. Pulls himself to his feet. Carefully opens the door.

EMMA (O.S.)
Adam, what's happened? Your father's
raging, looking for the shotgun.

Adam faces his mother — EMMA COOLEY (40s), a faded beauty, stern and concerned.

She sees the blood.

EMMA
What did you do? Where's Paddy..?

ELIJAH (O.S.)
(distant)
You can't hide, boy.

Emma shoves Adam into the pick-up.

EMMA
You have to run.

YOUNG ADAM
He'll kill you, Ma --

EMMA
-- Wait a minute, then go. Drive to
the Soo, to Aunt Jean's. She'll
take care of you.

Emma slams the pick-up's door shut. Dashes from the barn.

PICKUP TRUCK - LATER THAT NIGHT

Adam drives, his face blood-spattered and tear-stained but resolute in its purpose.

The pick-up truck races into the night. Its headlights flash on a sign as it passes: "SAULT STE. MARIE: 450 km."

SUPER: THREE YEARS LATER

INT. HOCKEY ARENA - SUNDAY AFTERNOON

The capacity crowd roars as the OHL's Soo Greyhounds ("Hounds") battle the Sarnia Sting on their home ice. Fans wave towels. Some pound on the glass, thirsting for action.

In the maintenance area near the locker room, kids wait for autographs with their mothers. Young women on-the-make (the "Pucks") primp to flaunt their wares.

ROXIE (18) - a stunning First Nation woman in demure leather - files her nails indifferently.

On the Zamboni, JAYSON (30s) - a lanky hunk of hockey past - smokes a joint as he waits for intermission. He winks at one of the Pucks. She thrusts out her boobs and poses, thrilled to be noticed even by a rink rat.

ON THE ICE - CONTINUOUS

Adam (19) - older, bigger, harder - stares down an imposing OPPONENT (20) across a face-off circle.

OPPONENT
That puck's mine, candy-ass.

ADAM

That's what I told your whore
girlfriend last night.

The REFEREE drops the puck. Adam expertly clears it to his
teammate, then knocks the center on his ass.

Adam leaps over his fallen opponent. He receives the puck.
Crosses the red line, his blades slashing the ice.

He spins around another Sting player. Plants a perfect pass
on the stick of his team's captain. A quick slap shot. He
SCORES!

INT. CORPORATE SUITE - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON TWO HANDS as they frame the retired number of Wayne
Gretzky where it hangs from the rafters.

MR. MCINESS (O.S.)

He was our best player. Still is.

BEVERLY HAINES (late 40s), a tanned California blonde, lowers
her hands and accepts a beer from MR. MCINESS (50s), the
portly GM. A stylish blazer and scarf set her way apart
from the sweatshirt and jeans crowd in the suite.

BEVERLY

Hot dogs following the filet mignon.
I've been there.

She grudgingly sips her beer.

MR. MCINESS

More like unfilled casings, just
kids who left home to billet with
strangers. Some with family, but --

BEVERLY

-- Billet? Like the army?

MR. MCINESS

Yeah, sorta. Billet families house
and feed the players, get them to
school, to the arena. Molding them
into NHL pros ain't a walk in the
park, ma'am. Kinda like that fairy
tale, turning straw into gold..?

BEVERLY

Rumpelstiltskin.

MR. MCINESS

Yeah. Heck, they all say they wanna go pro but their focus is the next pizza slice and blow job -- sorry...

BEVERLY

I get it. Food and sex are motivation and influence. Teenagers understand that better than anyone.

MR. MCINESS

We have some billet families here.

The GM guides Beverly over to a group of adults who watch the game.

GALEN (mid 40s), bearded and amiable, shakes her hand warmly as does MRS. EAMES (70s), a spry sexagenarian, her sweater-vest festooned with Hound paraphernalia.

BEVERLY

(to Mrs. Eames)

Forgive me but, you house one of the players?

MRS. EAMES

Yes ma'am: the rookie Blake Santorini. He's a dear boy. I've housed 17.

GALEN

Adam Cooley's my nephew -- my wife's sister's son actually. We're lucky to have him. You got kids?

BEVERLY

Mr. Cooley's quite a firecracker. Nine assists already?

GALEN

He's a handful, as teenagers are. Join us?

BEVERLY

I wish we could, but...

MR. MCINESS

What? Oh, right, we should -- things to discuss.

They excuse themselves.

MR. MCINESS

It's a good, tight team, great chemistry. Should make the finals this year, and we'll send a couple kids to the Entry Draft.

He fingers his tie absently. Notices a stain on it.

MR. MCINESS

This documentary thing. I know the league wants to raise hockey's profile, especially in the States.

BEVERLY

When I'm done, Wayne Gretzky will be a distant memory. Don't worry.

She pats his arm reassuringly. Abandons the beer on a table. Turns her attention to the players.

BEVERLY

What I need is a name.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - LATER

A clubhouse for young warriors. Player stalls surround the perimeter, each personalized with photos and mementos.

A table filled with energy bars, fruit and Gatorade sits in the center of the room.

The players pour in. They throw off their uniforms, revealing 18 young Caucasian men with hockey imprinted in their DNA. Sweat and testosterone are the cologne of the hour.

Adam – the only player still in full uniform and skates – eats a protein bar as if reluctant to shed this skin.

Team captain KEITH "CRACKERS" McCRACKEN (20), a man mountain whose goatee barely hides his cherubic face, lets out a victorious whoop.

CRACKERS

Yeah! Suck it, Sarnia!

Adam gives Crackers a high five.

COACH BUNSON (38), a still-fit former player, and his staff work the room.

COACH BUNSON

Nice teamwork, men. Really stuck it to those pussies.

MATTY (18), freckled and bespectacled, nudges BLAKE "SANTE" SANTORINI (16), a burgeoning Italian beefcake.

MATTY

You want pizza?

SANTE

Mrs. Eames said I gotta study but screw it, I'll go with ya.

STEWIE (20) – bawdy, blue-collar and already down to his jock – turns on some hip hop and begins dancing on a bench.

CRACKERS

Give it a rest, Beyonce. I'm gonna lose my lunch.

STEWIE

More room for dinner, baby.

Mr. McIness enters the locker room followed by Beverly. She gets an eyeful of Stewie's ass.

MR. MCINESS

Gentlemen...

CRACKERS

(yelling)

Stewie, turn it off!

Stewie clicks off the music and plops onto a bench. Modesty is not in his play book.

MR. MCINESS

This is Beverly Haines, a filmmaker from Hollywood. The league has asked her to produce a documentary about...

He spreads his hands indicating the team.

SANTE

We're gonna be in a movie?

BEVERLY

You bet! A grand spectacle about your efforts to make the Entry Draft.

MATTY
Is it for CBC?

SANTE
I'll get laid every night.

CRACKERS
There better be extra
dough in this.

STEWIE
Damn, you shootin' locker
rooms and showers and shit?

BEVERLY
Think of it, boys! NHL scouts will
see your best skills, playmaking --

ADAM
-- You mean you'll film every screw-
up and piece it together for prime
time. I'm not doing it.

MR. MCINESS
You don't have that option, Cooley.

ADAM
Ice dancing in some movie? We'll be
the joke of the league.

COACH BUNSON
-- ADAM. Shut your hole.

Beverly holds Adam's icy stare.

BEVERLY
I'll keep your salchows and lutzes
to a minimum mister, Cooley, is it?

CRACKERS
Questions over here, ma'am.

BEVERLY
Do your worst, boys.

EXT. ARENA - LATER

Adam crashes out of the arena, a backpack over his shoulder.
He stalks past the Memorial Tower, its torch glowing in the
autumn sunset.

Crackers follows Adam with his arm around Roxie. Roxie smokes
a slim Vogue cigarette.

CRACKERS
Dude, where's the fire?

ADAM
We lifting or what?

CRACKERS
C'est dimanche, n'est-ce pas? You
e-mail your mom?

ADAM
Dang it, no. I'm such an idiot.

Adam accesses his iPhone and begins to type. Nearby, Stewie shops Sante to the flock of young women as Matty paces.

CRACKERS
Pucks all gotta ride the rookie.

ROXIE
They should aim a little higher.

CRACKERS
Like you, Rox?

ROXIE
Caught me a film star. Suppose they
need any extras?

Adam shoves his iPhone into a pocket.

ADAM
I'm gonna need a shave. C'mon!

PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

"WEEDS" WEIDERMANN (32), grungy with a shaggy goatee, leans against the broken grille of Adam's pickup truck. He snaps a bracket of photos as Adam stomps toward him.

ADAM
That's my truck.

WEEDS
I'm with the documentary. Shooting
background? I'm Weeds --

ADAM
-- Move it, dandelion. Before you
make the grille worse.

Weeds steps away from Adam's vitriol and tumbles over his camera bag. Adam watches with dismay as he hits the pavement.

ADAM

Geez, I'm sorry. Are you hurt?
Your camera?

WEEDS

I'm okay. Ego's a bit bruised.

Adam extends a hand and pulls Weeds to his feet.

ADAM

I'm not usually such an ass -- it's
been a weird, crappy day and I'm --
I gotta go.

Weeds steps out of the way as Adam mounts his truck and roars
out of the parking lot. Weeds snaps photos as he goes.

INT. CRACKER'S BASEMENT - LATER

A carpet remnant and yard furniture comprise the decor of
this damp cellar. A simple weight bench sits beneath a single
light bulb.

Adam struggles with bench presses as Crackers spots for him.

CRACKERS

Push it, champ. Kick its ass.

Adam succeeds. He stands and takes two big gulps from a
carton of chocolate milk.

CRACKERS

You need a Roxie.

ADAM

Like an Inuit needs an ice tea.

Adam pulls a stress ball shaped like a tomato from his
backpack and squeezes it.

CRACKERS

Been over a year and it feels good,
y'know? Just wish she'd put out.

ADAM

Her moon in the wrong wigwam or what?

CRACKERS

She's saving herself. Wants a ring.

Crackers opens his hands like a baseball catcher. Adam tosses the tomato stress ball to him.

CRACKERS

It's our year, buddy. Hello, Entry Draft. Hello, NHL. We're like two tomatoes, ripe and ready. Pluck: Bruins. Pluck: Devils.

ADAM

Like it's so simple.

CRACKERS

Where's your mum want you? Toronto?

ADAM

In any pro sweater, on any pro team. Anything less and I'm --

Adam pauses. He sips his milk.

Crackers surprises Adam by yanking the milk from his hand. He replaces it with the tomato stress ball.

CRACKERS

Fuck doubt. Fuck what ifs and maybes. We're doing this. You and I.

Adam feels his energy. Crackers guzzles the milk.

CRACKERS

Maybe another set will adjust that attitude. Sit.

EXT. ADAM'S BILLET - THAT EVENING

Establishing shot of Adam's billet, a rambling Craftsman-style home. Adam's pickup pulls into the driveway.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

A family kitchen with worn wood cabinets and a fridge covered with photos. A crucifix hangs in the hallway. Logs crackle in a fireplace. Everything about it says "home."

Adam enters, drops his backpack and kicks off his shoes.

JEANETTE (early 40s), an attractive woman in doctor's scrubs, mashes potatoes at the sink.

JEANETTE

Backpack upstairs, shoes in the closet.

ADAM

I just got here.

JEANETTE

Give me a hug, then put away your stuff.

Adam hugs Jeanette without qualms.

ADAM

Save any lives today?

JEANETTE

Just a prostate removal and penile implant.

Adam is sorry he asked. He peeks into a pot on the stove then opens the fridge.

JEANETTE

It's your mom's pot roast recipe -- and we're eating in five minutes.

Adam closes the fridge door. KIMBERLY (10), a lithe ballerina of a girl, stands behind it. She hugs Adam with gusto.

KIMBERLY

You play well today?

ADAM

Not on the NHL's speed-dial yet.

KIMBERLY

Their loss.

DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A Rockwellian Sunday dinner. Galen lights candles in a floral centerpiece. Jeanette and Kimberly set dinner on the table. Adam follows with a basket of rolls.

He offers a roll to Kimberly, then Galen.

GALEN

Youth before wisdom?

Adam winks at Kimberly and takes his seat.

GALEN

A real team effort, Adam. Say grace,
won't you? You never get a chance.

The four clasp hands. Hungry, Adam jumps in:

ADAM

Lord, bless the assembled: Aunt Jean,
Uncle Galen and the scamp Kimberly.

Kimberly grins widely, Adam's biggest fan.

ADAM

Keep my teammates healthy and bless
this food we're about to share. And
watch over Ma in Grand Valley. Amen.

JEANETTE & KIMBERLY

Amen.

Adam reaches for the potatoes and Galen clears his throat
with authority. The others pause.

JEANETTE

Galen --

GALEN

-- He needs to be remembered, for
his soul's sake.

Adam sets his jaw, but bows his head again.

ADAM

Bless my father; may he rest in peace.

Galen nods, satisfied. He begins to carve the roast.

JEANETTE

Dr. Arthur's daughter wants to meet
you some time, Adam -- pass the beans --
you'll love her...

INT. ICE CREAM SHOP - THAT NIGHT

Adam holds the door for Kimberly as they enter. Folk art
and nautical artifacts complement eclectic chairs and tables.

Kimberly studies a sign that reads "HOMEMADE ICE CREAM".

KIMBERLY

Doesn't that sign imply that somebody
lives here?

The buff ICE CREAM GUY (20s) rises to her challenge.

ICE CREAM GUY

Maybe I do.

ADAM

Don't get her started.

KIMBERLY

Chai Latte Crunch, please.

ADAM

Vanilla.

ICE CREAM GUY

I pictured you as a salted caramel
kinda guy. You live around here?

KIMBERLY

Adam billets with us. We're cousins.

Ice Cream Guy hands a cone to Kimberly.

ICE CREAM GUY

You're with the Hounds? Sweet.

ADAM

How much is it?

ICE CREAM GUY

I suck at hockey. Maybe I need a
good teacher.

Ice Cream Guy adds an extra scoop to Adam's cone before
handing the phallic construction to him.

ICE CREAM GUY

\$4.50.

Ice Cream Guy takes the money from Adam. He returns with
change and penetrating eye contact.

ICE CREAM GUY

Maybe I'll come to a game now that I
have, you know, someone to watch.

ADAM

Great, yeah – the team's great.

ICE CREAM GUY

Kick ass this season, Mr. Hound.

Adam holds the door for Kimberly. Glances back at Ice Cream Guy and gets a "call me" hand gesture. He exits quickly.

EXT. RIVERFRONT PARK - MOMENTS LATER

Kimberly and Adam stroll the wooden boardwalk that fronts the St. Mary's River.

KIMBERLY

Chad Roberts, at school? He said he wanted to kiss me.

ADAM

Chad and I can have a chat.

KIMBERLY

Have you ever been in love?

Adam is noncommittal.

KIMBERLY

That ice cream guy was totally jonesing on you.

ADAM

As if I'm some hot commodity.

KIMBERLY

Don't be stupid. You'll become a meme on some app.

They eat their ice cream in silence.

KIMBERLY

You're gonna blow them away.

ADAM

I'm gonna be some monkey on a stage.

KIMBERLY

According to IMDB, that movie lady films controversial stuff.

ADAM

I just wanna be left alone.

KIMBERLY

Well, they'll need water boarding to
make me spill the beans.

ADAM

Anyone touches you and they'll be
living on meatloaf milk shakes.

Kimberly squeezes Adam's hand. Adam is touched.

ADAM

So, this Chad Roberts guy...

KIMBERLY

Totally annoying geek, but cute in
his own way, you know?

He knows. They sit on a bench and watch a passing ship.
Adam inhales deeply. He drapes an arm over the back of the
bench and Kimberly leans against him.

INT. ARENA STAGING ROOM - MORNING

A conference room supplanted. Video equipment blankets the
table. A portable white seamless stands in a corner.

Weeds adjusts a video camera as Adam fidgets on the seamless,
holding a hockey stick.

Beverly studies Adam as an ASSISTANT reviews paperwork.

WEEDS

Chill out, Mr. Cooley. I'm not a
firing squad.

Adam exhales and bounces on his feet. It's not helping.

BEVERLY

(to the assistant)

They need big fat logos on their
chests to draw in the fan base.

The assistant hurries out as Crackers, Sante, and Matty
saunter in. They make a beeline to Adam.

CRACKERS

It's all about you, isn't it.

ADAM

I feel like an idiot.

BEVERLY

You're a natural. By the time we wrap, you'll have a tough time buying coffee.

Adam runs a hand through his hair, an inadvertent beefcake move that proves Beverly's point.

SANTE

Heads up, stud.

Sante tosses a hockey puck to Adam. Adam catches it deftly with the stick and begins to do tricks.

Weeds presses "RECORD" on the camera. Impressed.

The assistant returns with team t-shirts.

BEVERLY

Put these on, boys. I want that all-for-one team look.

Adam and his teammates shuck their shirts as the assistant hands out sizes.

Beverly's eyes roam over Sante's curly chest fuzz and Crackers' tattoos, but Adam's scars rivet her: a slash across his chest and a macramé of welts that covers his back.

BEVERLY

It's Crackers, right? Your tattoos must have a story.

ADAM

Show her the one on your dick.

CRACKERS

Matches the one up his ass. So, this one is Celtic, for my mum...

Beverly half-listens as she watches Adam cover his scars.

P.O.V. REALITY SHOW CAMERA - MOMENTS LATER

Recorded on camera – cuts between individual players on the white seamless. The players hold a hockey stick as a prop.

Beverly asks questions off camera.

CRACKERS

From just outside Ottawa.

MATTY

Leamington. A farm town near Windsor.

SANTE

Sudbury. Garden spot of fuckin'
Ontario -- wait, can I say that?

STEWIE

Toronto, eh? Them chicks were cryin'
when I left.

ADAM

Chesley. Near Owen Sound.

BEVERLY (O.S.)

(to Sante)

Any siblings?

SANTE

Two brilliant sisters, to hear Mom
tell it.

CRACKERS

Five brothers, two sisters. Granola
heads and tree huggers, the lot.

ADAM

Just me. The guys are my brothers.

MATTY

My dad started a winery on Lake Erie.

SANTE

Dad's a friggin' union electrician.
Not me, man. I've got dreams.

CRACKERS

Provincial paper-pushing bureaucrats.
I don't have a clue what they do.

ADAM

Ma works the farm. Tomatoes, mostly.

BEVERLY (O.S.)

Your dad's not a farmer?

Adam picks at the tape on the hockey stick.

ADAM

Not anymore.

BEVERLY (O.S.)

(to Matty)

So, a hot property like you must be dating someone.

MATTY

What, ME? Nooooo...

CRACKERS

Roxie. A lovely lass.

STEWIE

Like I'm gonna limit myself?

SANTE

I get off a lot. Does that count?

ADAM

My focus is hockey. Period.

BEVERLY (O.S.)

Someone must catch your eye.

ADAM

Sure: Black Hawks. Bruins. Flyers.

BEVERLY (O.S.)

What's your goal, beyond your next pizza slice?

ADAM

Is that what you think of us?

MATTY

NHL draft. What else?

STEWIE

Big game in a big house, baby.

ADAM

We've got dreams.

CRACKERS

Championship. Entry Draft. NHL paycheck.

ADAM

The NHL is what we live for.

INT. ARENA STAGING ROOM - LATER

Beverly paces with her cell phone.

BEVERLY

Josh, honey, is now the time to hash out my parenting model? You're the one at Betty Ford, drying out. Drink a coconut water and take a nap.

Weeds reviews photos with Beverly's assistant.

ASSISTANT

(aside to Weeds)

Her son got ten years.

WEEDS

Rehab? How many drugs was he on?

ASSISTANT

The other son. The meth dealer.

BEVERLY

Who's therapy is this? No, you call Mr. Three-Picture-Deal for money – you love him better anyway. Okay, yes, fine ... when you need to "experience more emotions," you conference me in.

Beverly cuts him off. Weeds hands her an iPad.

BEVERLY

Josh is 26 years old – when does he deal with his own problems?

WEEDS

Photos of the players, Bev...

BEVERLY

-- My navel-gazing son – who should be running a production company by now – is obsessed with feelings. "I have dreams," he says, then pulls lint from his belly button all day.

She pages through the photos. Studies them superficially.

BEVERLY

At his age, I pursued what I wanted.

(MORE)

BEVERLY (CONT'D)

On the road, documenting the problems of the day. Look at these, these children. Like they have dreams.

WEEDS

Their dreams seem pretty concrete.

BEVERLY

Okay. Let's test that theory. I want dirt on every player, especially Mr. Enigma with the scars. Let's challenge them. Their reality.

WEEDS

Bev, the league wants a documentary. Actual events, not manufactured ones.

BEVERLY

They'll get a testosterone-filled soap opera. You wait - I won't have to do anything. The odd duck will just stroll out from the flock.

INT. BUNGALOW - NIGHT

A tiny, knotty-pined bachelor pad filled with second-hand furniture, tacky lamps and Molson bar mirrors. Players, WOMEN and HANGERS-ON pack the small rooms.

KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Adam sips a water and shares a laugh with Stewie in the crowded kitchen. Stewie flirts with a fan. Weeds wedges beside Adam and Stewie exits to avoid him.

Weeds strangulates a beer with both hands as he studies the young crowd. Adam assesses Weeds with some amusement.

ADAM

Real party animal, eh?

WEEDS

Yeah. A chameleon. The beer helps.

Weeds sips his beer.

WEEDS

So I, um, I imagine your parents had you pushing a chair across the ice in diapers, huh?

ADAM

Yeah – and all Canadians are friggin' swell people, right?

WEEDS

Present company excluded, apparently.

Weeds moves to leave, but Adam grabs his jacket.

ADAM

Look, I didn't mean anything --

WEEDS

-- I played pond hockey in North Dakota as a tyke and got my scrawny butt handed to me on a regular basis. I get you guys. I do.

ADAM

And you're stuck here 'til May?

Weeds nods like it's a jail sentence.

ADAM

Jesus. Alright, c'mon. You can't be a stranger all winter.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Adam leads Weeds to Sante and Matty and makes introductions.

Matty nods a greeting and returns to texting. Sante, rocking a pec-defining t-shirt, throws an arm over Adam's shoulders.

SANTE

Bobbing for pucks tonight, buddy?

ADAM

Whatever.

Sante gives Weeds a once over. An awkward silence follows.

WEEDS

So, I heard once that hockey players need only three things: to play

(MORE)

WEEDS (CONT'D)
 hockey, drink beer and fornicate.
 And the first leads to the other
 two. Any truth to that?

Matty sends his text and pockets his iPhone.

MATTY
 Anyone need a beer?

Crackers lifts the beer from Sante's hand as he joins them.

CRACKERS
 You don't, rookie. And I better not
 catch you with another one.

KITCHEN - LATER

Beverly sips whiskey and observes the crowd. Jayson the
 Zamboni guy sidles up to her.

JAYSON
 Hollywood arrives at the 51st state.

BEVERLY
 You look like you could handle a
 puck. I assume you played.

JAYSON
 One year in the big time, blew out
 my ACL, now I'm a rink rat. Drive
 the Zamboni, do maintenance - other
 stuff as it makes itself known.

BEVERLY
 I need neither driver nor mechanic.

JAYSON
 I was an instigator. Got under the
 skin of the opponent, threw them off
 balance, y'know? Found their quirks.

Beverly swirls her whiskey.

JAYSON
 I work cheap. You know where to
 find me.

Jayson shoves past Sante as Sante enters the kitchen.

Sante rips open a bag of potato chips. He notices Beverly noticing his t-shirt.

BEVERLY

Aren't you cold? I'm freezing.

SANTE

I got body heat for two.

BEVERLY

Generous offer, but no.

Sante shrugs and scoops a handful of chips. He offers the bag to Beverly. She selects a few.

SANTE

Don't you love these things? Once I start, I can't stop.

BEVERLY

Obsessions make a man intriguing.

Beverly pulls a pint of whiskey from her purse and adds more to her glass. She abandons the bottle on the counter.

BEVERLY

BYOB. Look out for number one in all things.

SANTE

Good motto that.

BEVERLY

Smart, charming; the audience will love you - just keep being you.

Beverly pushes into the crowd.

Sante examines the whiskey bottle. Opens it. Sniffs it. A GIRL in a kilt presses against him.

KILT GIRL

You pouring?

Kilt Girl finds two glasses. Fills each with whiskey. Colors them with Coke.

KILT GIRL

You're the rookie, aren't you? I'm into new things.

SANTE

New things could be into you.

LIVING ROOM - LATER

Adam studies a *Hockey Digest* in an out-of-the-way corner. Three COLLEGE GIRLS invade his space.

COLLEGE GIRL #1

We were just deciding who gets you tonight.

ADAM

Don't hurt yourself.

Beverly and Weeds observe Adam from across the room.

BEVERLY

They're like fish in a barrel.

WEEDS

So, I talked to one of these so-called "pucks" that get passed around the team? She said she gets just what she wants: no-strings-attached sex with prime beef who, to quote her vast experience, "got game for days."

BEVERLY

So he doesn't even need bait.

WEEDS

Bait? That boy isn't even casting.

BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Beverly slips into the room as Adam pees.

ADAM

Cougars are not my type.

BEVERLY

Jocks aren't mine, though in your case I see the attraction.

Adam zips up. He tucks and untucks his rugby shirt, not happy with either.

BEVERLY

Tuck in the front only. Show off that washboard stomach while you still have one.

Adam tries it. Unsure how it looks.

BEVERLY

You set yourself apart. Why?

ADAM

I'm a team player.

BEVERLY

You're a basket of contradictions – the perfect focus for the show.

ADAM

I'm nobody...

Adam moves to leave but Beverly blocks his exit.

BEVERLY

I can give you exposure.

Adam scoops Beverly up in his arms to move her.

BEVERLY

-- SCOUTS! Does access to NHL scouts fit into your career plans?

ADAM

You don't know scouts.

BEVERLY

Flyers. Red Wings. Maple Leafs. I took some time to meet my audience.

Adam sets Beverly into the bathtub. But hesitates...

ADAM

What about the others?

BEVERLY

What about them?

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dazed, Adam pushes past the three college girls ogling him. Crackers stands with Roxie. He motions Adam to join them.

CRACKERS

A couple of the guys noticed some
indecision. You gotta make a choice.

ADAM

I'm bouncing.

ROXIE

They're wondering --

CRACKERS

-- NHL wants decision-makers, buddy.
In all things. You gotta lead here.

BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Sante slouches in an Adirondack chair – shirt off, jeans and
boxers bunched at his ankles. Kilt Girl rides him.

Footsteps on the stairs fail to halt their coupling.

COLLEGE GIRL #1 (O.S.)

Word has it that you're a machine in
the sack -- oh, man. Sorry.

KILT GIRL

It's all good. SO GOOD!

Adam yanks off his shirt and pulls a condom from his pocket.
College Girl #1 touches the scar on his chest and he shoves
her hand away.

ADAM

You need a tweet to figure this out?

She adeptly shucks her dress and unbuckles Adam's belt.

COLLEGE GIRL #1

I only tweet performance.

Sante adjusts his position so he can watch them.

COLLEGE GIRL #1 (O.S.)

High marks for presentation.

ADAM (O.S.)

You givin' it, buddy?

Sante increases his tempo as he watches Adam perform.

EXT. ADAM'S BILLET - PAST MIDNIGHT

Adam's pickup creeps up the moonlit street. Its lights go out, and it turns into the driveway.

INT. GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The pickup's engine dies. Adam climbs out of it and slams the door.

A smoking FIGURE in the corner startles him. Galen steps into the dim light. He crushes his cigarette on the floor.

GALEN

Thought I'd sin while I waited.

ADAM

It's just twenty minutes --

GALEN

-- Promptness is a professional trait.
You are going pro, right?

ADAM

No, I'm here for the fun of it.

GALEN

I think your mother would find that surprising.

Adam tries to leave, but Galen grabs his arm to hold him.

GALEN

She didn't send you to us just to make you a hockey player, Adam. So while you're under my roof you will be home by midnight --

Adam violently jerks his arm away and stomps to the house.

CUT TO:

P.O.V. REALITY SHOW CAMERA - OUTSIDE THE ARENA, MORNING

Sante plods toward the arena, his eyes shielded behind dark glasses. Weeds keeps pace.

WEEDS (O.S.)

Tough night?

SANTE
Slept like the dead.

WEEDS (O.S.)
Any idea where Adam got those scars?

SANTE
I gotta get to practice.

INT. ARENA, ON THE ICE - LATER

The team runs drills and Coach Bunson directs them. Beverly and her crew film the action.

COACH BUNSON
(yelling)
SANTE! I've seen fag figure skaters with more legs. Get the lead outta yer ass and move!

Crackers and Matty stand with other PLAYERS at center ice.

MATTY
Sante got the flu or something?

CRACKERS
Three hand-helds. Four cameras mounted in the stands. They could remake *Harry Potter* in here.

Stewie raises his jersey and caresses his six pack.

STEWIE
It's so the babes can check this from every angle.

CRACKERS
The gays will love that shit.

STEWIE
Like faggots watch hockey.

Adam slides to a stop beside Crackers.

ADAM
My uncle ratted out my sorry ass. Gotta help with rehabs.

CRACKERS
You billet with family, buddy. Don't knock it.

AT THE PLAYER'S BENCH - MOMENTS LATER

A pissed-off Beverly manages a camera crew from the bench.

Adam accepts a pass and joins the drill. He deftly dekes around another player and fires a shot at the goalie.

A CAMERAMAN pans as Adam races by.

BEVERLY

This shot lacks pizazz.

CAMERAMAN

Agreed, but the angle, speed -- we'd be better off on the ice.

BEVERLY

Coach Bunson!

Coach Bunson skates over to her.

COACH BUNSON

Ms. Haines, we're in the middle of --

BEVERLY

-- And doing an amazing job. I want to put a camera on the ice.

COACH BUNSON

You got frigging booms hanging over the glass now.

BEVERLY

Think of the impact! Viewers would be right there --

COACH BUNSON

-- NO. Too distracting.

ON THE ICE - MOMENTS LATER

A camera crew sets up on the ice. Beverly confers with Mr. McIness at the bench as Coach Bunson seethes.

Crackers stands in a corner with Sante and studies the debate at the bench.

CRACKERS

Looks like coach's wife loaned his nuts to the new girl. Shit.

Sante bends over and vomits beside him.

ON THE ICE - LATER, AFTER PRACTICE

Adam fires pucks from center ice to two rehabilitating PLAYERS. ASST. COACH HARPER (50s) stands behind him.

ASST. COACH HARPER
So, you got your nut last night.

Adam scatters the players with his last few pucks.

ASST. COACH HARPER
Where pucks are involved, no indiscretion remains secret for long.

ADAM
I'm doing my job, coach.

ASST. COACH HARPER
Like life, this job is what you make it. Sometimes it's just pucks and sticks, but every tool, every person, every act has consequences attached to it. Just don't be an idiot - scouts notice that shit.

Adam concentrates on the end of his hockey stick.

ASST. COACH HARPER
Okay. Hit the showers. And kid?

Adam meets Harper's gaze.

ASST. COACH HARPER
Disrespect at your peril. Your uncle. Your teammates. Yourself. Got me?

TUNNEL TO LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Crackers and Roxie scream at each other as Weeds films.

CRACKERS
Who was it, huh? A rink rat? A concessionaire? If it was one of the guys --

ROXIE
-- Like I'm that stupid.

Adam approaches quietly. Pauses beside Weeds. Gives him an emphatic middle finger. Weeds nods but keeps filming.

CRACKERS

So you banged the first swinging dick that stood up for you. What happened to saving yourself?

ROXIE

I got tired of it, okay? And tired of you.

Roxie turns and sashays up the ramp.

Crackers throws his stick after her. Then his gloves. And helmet. Adam moves to comfort his friend.

ADAM

C'mon. Let's clear away from Weeds.

Adam retrieves Crackers' equipment. Realizes that the camera is now on him. Pauses for poignant effect before following Crackers into the locker room.

LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Weeds films as Adam and Matty console Crackers. Beverly watches a monitor.

BEVERLY

You mounted the other cameras in here, didn't you? Showers?

WEEDS

Bev, they're just kids. Sante is only sixteen.

BEVERLY

We'll edit their penises out in post - and their parents all signed releases. Obviously they understand the power of advertising. C'mon, Weeds, I need you on board with this.

WEEDS

I am. It's just, your boundaries are really -- non-existent.

BEVERLY

Boundaries protect you from Emmys. And your alimony won't pay itself.

Weeds doesn't like her implication.

WEEDS

So there's no hospital record of Adam ever being treated for those scars. Here or near Chesley.

BEVERLY

He didn't thread the needle himself.

WEEDS

And one of them there pucks had skinny on Adam...

INT. ADAM'S BILLET, KITCHEN - MORNING

Jeanette monitors breakfast as it sizzles on a griddle.

WEEDS (V.O.)

Turns out, Adam's mom is serving time for manslaughter.

Crackers watches Jeanette cook. Adam paces.

CRACKERS

We used my mom's pancakes for pond hockey.

JEANETTE

Adam, you're making me crazy.

A knock at the door distracts them. Adam discovers Weeds standing outside.

ADAM

You're way early.

JEANETTE

I invited him. Come in, Mr. Weidemann.

ADAM

It's always just the three of us.

JEANETTE

Now it's the three of you and it's a long drive. He needs breakfast.

Adam slams the door behind them.

JEANETTE

Adam Cooley, what did you expect?
The show focuses on you --

CRACKERS

-- Whoa, what?

Jeanette shoves a heaping platter into Crackers' hands.

JEANETTE

Get started, hon - save some for us.

Crackers telegraphs a questioning look at Adam but leads the way to the dining room.

Weeds joins Jeanette at the griddle.

JEANETTE

This tears Adam apart. Every month.

WEEDS

I get it's a tough trip.

JEANETTE

He drifts without his parents.

WEEDS

My parents were killed by a drunk driver when I was ten. Drifting, I understand.

EXT. PRISON - THAT DAY

Cracker's Jeep Cherokee cruises past a sign for the GRAND VALLEY INSTITUTION FOR WOMEN.

INT. PRISON VISITING ROOM - LATER

A uninviting white cinder block room. Rows of metal tables and plastic chairs, some with FAMILIES chatting at them.

Emma glowers across a table at Adam. A GUARD watches them.

EMMA

A bunch of assists and no goals.

Adam fidgets in his chair.

ADAM

Coach hasn't said --

EMMA

-- Assistants aren't drafted. Leaders are drafted.

ADAM

Gretzky led in assists --

EMMA

-- What about fights? You drop your gloves yet this season?

ADAM

I'm not paid to fight --

EMMA

-- GET IN THERE! Draw some blood, make an impression. Force the NHL to notice you.

ADAM

Sorry, ma, I, I'll try.

EMMA

Amateurs try. I want more goals, more physical play, more ice time.

Emma takes a calming breath. Smooths her prison blouse.

EMMA

Remember, the thought of you in an NHL sweater keeps me sane.

ADAM

I know, ma, geez...

EMMA

Stay away from those puck sluts. You're better than they deserve --

GUARD

-- Another minute, Cooley.

EMMA

What about this inane documentary. They know about me - what else?

ADAM

Nothing else --

EMMA

-- You're sure?

Adam glances at the guard. Nods anxiously. Emma stands and tries to embrace her son.

GUARD
NO TOUCHING!

EMMA
I know this is hard for you, Adam.
But you know why I'm here.

CUT TO:

P.O.V. REALITY SHOW CAMERA - OUTSIDE THE PRISON, LATER

Crackers takes a drag on a cigarette.

CRACKERS
My only vice.

WEEDS (O.S.)
Our man Adam got any vices?

Crackers examines the cigarette. Takes another drag.

WEEDS (O.S.)
His mother ran over his father with
the family car. Pretty extreme.

CRACKERS
Compared to what? Getting the shit
beat out of you on a daily basis?

WEEDS (O.S.)
You think there's more to the story?

Crackers considers it as he picks tobacco off his tongue. He crushes the cigarette out on the ground.

CRACKERS
I think I need a better vice.

They hear rather than see Adam burst through the doors of the prison. The camera films Adam as he hurries across the lawn. Crackers simply climbs into the Jeep.

Adam ignores the camera. Wrenches open the passenger door and drops into the seat. Slams the door behind him.

INT. ADAM'S BILLET, STUDY - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a roaring fire in a rustic stone fireplace.

Adam stares into the fireplace from a leather club chair.
Galen sips scotch in the chair beside him.

GALEN
Josh Burnside.

Galen waits, then sets a printout on his lap.

GALEN
Adam, that Jezebel producer found
all she's gonna find.

Adam pulls a pillow against his chest.

GALEN
Didn't she?

ADAM
I won't go back there.

GALEN
You owe your mother these visits.

Adam throws the pillow down. He snatches up the poker and
stabs at the fire. Sparks fly.

GALEN
Scouts start looking at players by
Christmas. If you're not prepared,
even God won't help you.

ADAM
Who were we on?

GALEN
Josh Burnside. Weaknesses?

ADAM
He, um, shoots left, slow skater,
weak left shoulder from an injury...

EXT. ARENA - MORNING

Players mingle beside a motor coach that rests at the curb.
"DROP THAT PUCK: THE ROAD TO THE DRAFT" screams in vinyl
lettering from the side of the coach.

Adam pulls Beverly around the coach and out of earshot.

ADAM
Get Coach to up my ice time.

BEVERLY
What for?

ADAM
More playing time for me is more
film time for you.

Matty listens from an open bus window above them.

INT. VISITOR'S LOCKER ROOM - LATER THAT EVENING

Stewie slams his fist against a locker.

STEWIE
Coach just moved my ass to third
line. That's half the ice time.

Matty leans in to Crackers.

MATTY
I think the team's got a new coach
and she's wet for Cooley.

INT. ARENA - LATER

B-Roll of a crowded arena during a game.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
-- Adam Cooley dashes up the ice
with the puck. McCracken is open
but -- Cooley ignores him. Dekes.
Shoots and SCORES!

P.O.V. REALITY SHOW CAMERA - VISITOR'S LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Adam tosses his jock on the floor. Drapes a towel over his
shoulder. Grabs his iPhone.

STEWIE
Hey, Cooley! Thanks for playing my
time tonight.

ADAM

Scouts like goals better than goose
eggs, jerk-off.

MATTY

I wonder if they like team players.

His comment silences the locker room for a moment.

CRACKERS (O.S.)

Enough jibber-jab. It's a team win.

Adam glances at a camera. And winks.

INT. ARENA - ANOTHER NIGHT

B-Roll of another crowded arena during another game.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

-- And Adam Cooley works the puck up
the boards -- Oooo, Malachi checks
him hard. Cooley is up and swinging --

ON THE HOUND'S BENCH - CONTINUOUS

Coach Bunson leans in to Stewie.

COACH BUNSON

Fucker's outta line. Have a go with
him on your next shift.

STEWIE

Huh? Why me, coach --

COACH BUNSON

-- Because I said so. Or aren't you
man enough to use your frigging fists
anymore?

VISITOR'S LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Beverly stands with Weeds as he films the players post-game.

A TRAINER stitches a split in Stewie's lip.

STEWIE

Hey, Cooley! Tell me when coach
lets you fight your own battles again.
I need a night off.

Adam ignores him. Meets Beverly's glance as she chats with Weeds. She gives him a thumbs up.

Sante plops down beside Matty. Steals a glance at Adam.

MATTY

Cameras love him, eh?

SANTE

Who?

MATTY

Cooley. When was the last time a camera pointed at you?

SANTE

Shut you're fucking hole. Like you're hot shit on the ice.

Matty turns his back to Sante and strips off his gear. Sante steals another glance at Adam.

P.O.V. REALITY SHOW CAMERA - OUTSIDE THE TEAM BUS - LATER

The camera approaches Stewie as he shoves a bag into the cargo hold.

WEEDS (O.S.)

Tough road trip for you.

STEWIE

You wanna piece of me, you better be scouting for the Leafs or kneeling to suck my cock.

WEEDS (O.S.)

Was it coach or Adam Cooley that dropped you to third line?

STEWIE

You get the fuck outta my way.

INT. TEAM BUS - MOMENTS LATER

Matty reads as the bus fills up. Sante finds a backpack in the seat beside him.

SANTE

You want this up top?

MATTY

Leave it where it is.

Sante takes a moment to comprehend Matty's slight.

Adam sips a chocolate milk beside Crackers. Squeezes his tomato stress ball. Nods to Sante as Sante stomps past him.

ADAM

Team's getting weird.

CRACKERS

Makes damn good video though.

Sante drops into the back row. He pulls a Gatorade and a pint of whiskey from his pack and mixes them together.

SANTE

Thank you, Mr. Zamboni.

EXT. ARENA, PARKING LOT - THAT NIGHT

Adam plods to his pickup. He pauses in front of it to consider the broken grille. Touches the dent in the hood.

SANTE (O.S.)

Old girl's been through it, eh?

Adam doesn't answer as Sante joins him. He does smell something odd...

SANTE

Matty's bein' a prick. Drop me off?

ADAM

Booze is a sure ticket off the team.

SANTE

Take me home. Coach will never know.

Sante tosses his gear in the pickup's bed and hops in before Adam can answer.

INT. SANTE'S BILLET, BEDROOM - LATER

A walk-out basement that doubles as a bedroom. Clothes and magazines lie about. Thumbtacks pin a Red Wing poster to the ceiling above the bed.

Sante and Adam enter. Sante kicks his shoes into a corner and flops onto the unmade bed.

SANTE

Throw your coat wherever.

Adam drapes his coat over a chair and glances around.

SANTE

Wait! I'll give you the tour.

Sante jumps up. Throws an arm over Adam's shoulders and maneuvers him around the room. Intimate.

SANTE

Midget trophies. Signed puck from the 2010 Stanley Cup. Videos, iPad, porn – you gotta get home, or..?

Sante's proximity unnerves Adam. He escapes to the chair.

ADAM

You got a hard-on for Darren Helm?

SANTE

It's, you know, inspiration.

Sante pulls off his shirt and tosses it playfully at Adam. Lies back on the bed.

SANTE

Okay, see, if I look up at him, I can imagine me on a poster, right? The NHL sweater, the look.

ADAM

You'll get there if you play the game right.

Sante props himself up on his elbows. Adam can't take his eyes off of him.

SANTE

And, um, so I imagine there's stuff in the poster I can't see, y'know? Things he's done that I haven't done...

Like a canyon of rugged granite, Sante invites exploration.

ADAM
I should go.

Adam squeezes Sante's shirt. He doesn't go anywhere.

SANTE
So?

ADAM
So...

Adam stands to leave. He hands the shirt back to Sante - but doesn't let go when Sante grabs it.

ADAM
I've done some things.

SANTE
(his mouth dry)
Like -- like what?

Adam hesitates, then sits beside Sante. He sets a shaky hand on Sante's rock hard abs.

ADAM
You sure about this?

Sante nods. Adam shoves his hand into Sante's pants, grabbing his tumescence. Sante quickly shucks his pants and boxers, and Adam wastes little time giving Sante what he wants.

EXT. WOODSHED - MORNING

A sliding door accesses the wood shed. Adam stands inside the door wielding an ax. He splits a log with one swing.

Galen and Jeanette stand outside the shed. Weeds films. Beverly observes and makes notes.

JEANETTE
You dropped Sante off --

ADAM
-- And went to Timmy Ho Ho's.

GALEN
Until 2:00 a.m.? What in God's name were you doing?

Adam positions a log on the block and grabs the ax. Galen grabs it too and they tug it between them.

GALEN
Answer me! Drinking!?

ADAM
I thought you liked Sante.

JEANETTE
We love Sante, but you need to focus
on the scouts. On winning --

ADAM
-- All I hear is scouts and winning.
WHAT THE FUCK ABOUT ME?

GALEN
USE THAT LANGUAGE ONCE MORE AND YOU
CAN PACK UP RIGHT NOW!

Adam releases the ax. It jumps toward Galen and grazes his arm. Blood sprouts from the one-inch gash.

Galen throws the ax to the ground and raises a fist. Adam cowers back in surprise.

GALEN
Dear God - Adam, I'm sorry!

Adam slams the barn door shut, closing himself into the shed.

BEVERLY
And, cut.

GALEN
(to Beverly)
I blame you for this.

BEVERLY
I record events and their
consequences.

GALEN
I'll give you consequences.

BEVERLY
You already have them. How long do
you think he'll stay here?

JEANETTE
Adam just needs some alone time.

Jeanette applies pressure to Galen's wound and leads him toward the house.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Weeds loads the gear into the van.

BEVERLY

Doesn't Adam usually go home after road games?

WEEDS

Creature of habit, that one.

Beverly crams her note pad into her purse. She considers the woodshed for a moment.

BEVERLY

Billets and curfews make boring television. But a suggestion that Adam needed his own place...

WEEDS

That is a slippery slope.

BEVERLY

He's an adult, isn't he? It's just a little shove from the nest.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Adam throws his knapsack into his stall. Pissed off. The few players present note his mood. Gossip blooms.

CRACKERS

What's got your jock in a knot?

ADAM

My uncle, my billet, my life all sucks. I'm finding my own place.

CRACKERS

Most guys would kill to billet with family. I'd give this a think.

ADAM

And I am damned tired of hearing what I should do.

Crackers takes Adam's vitriol with grace. He continues dressing. Sante catches Adam's eye and winks.

Adam blushes. Turns his attention to his gear.

INT. ADAM'S FLAT - DAY

An efficiency flat: tiny kitchen, bath off the main space. Windows face an alley.

Adam examines the flat with the LANDLORD as Weeds films.

LANDLORD
\$800 a month includes heat and water.

P.O.V. REALITY SHOW CAMERA - CONTINUOUS

Adam studies the listing sheet. He's out of his element.

ADAM'S FLAT - CONTINUOUS

Weeds turns off the camera.

WEEDS
Dude, you need money for food besides the rent. And gas for your truck. A budget? Um, ok. Here, look...

Weeds jots figures on a sheet of paper as Adam watches.

ADAM'S FLAT - LATER

Adam pleads on his iPhone.

ADAM
--C'mon Chili, please? An hour?
It's just one sofa and none of the guys will -- what? Okay, I, okay.

Adam hangs up. Aggravated. Stares at his iPhone. Wavers, then accesses another number.

ADAM
Hey.

EXT. ADAM'S FLAT - LATER

Adam and Sante wrestle the sofa up the stairs to the flat.

INSIDE

Weeds films Adam and Sante as they settle the room.

Adam empties a shopping bag into the cabinets of the efficiency kitchen. He steals a glance at Sante.

Sante positions a new mattress and box springs. He sits and bounces on the edge.

SANTE

You got sheets?

ADAM

No money so no sheets. Just that pad and quilt.

Adam crumples the bag and looks for someplace to throw it.

ADAM

And no trash bin. Wonderful.

Weeds turns off his camera and stows his gear.

WEEDS

Tribulations of the tenant. Tomorrow, you'll walk around bare-assed like you own the place, eh?

Sante watches Adam from across the room. Moves to the window. Fingers a tear on one edge of the yellowed shade.

SANTE

You got any tape?

ADAM

(to Weeds)

I owe you pizza or somethin'.

WEEDS

Nope, glad to do it. I'll be back tomorrow, yeah?

INSIDE - MOMENTS LATER

Adam closes the door behind Weeds. He peeks out the window as if checking whether he's really gone.

SANTE

So, I can go, or -- or we could order Chinese...

Sante fusses with the quilt as Adam shuffles over to him. He runs his fingers down Sante's back and Sante shivers.

SANTE

I, I don't know if --

Adam slides his arms around Sante. Leans his head against the nape of Sante's neck.

SANTE

I'm not queer.

ADAM

I don't care.

Sante faces Adam. Hesitant. Their lips touch. Adam pulls him close and schools him in kissing a man and meaning it.

ADAM'S FLAT - LATER THAT EVENING

CLOSE ON a pair of chopsticks as they dip into a Chinese carry-out box.

SANTE (O.S.)

Am I still considered a rookie?

The chopsticks grab, then fumble a piece of chicken.

Adam lies on his stomach, loosely covered with the quilt. He fails to manipulate his chopsticks.

Sante lies on some pillows barely covered by a paper napkin. A chopstick master, he shovels in the food without a thought.

ADAM

I'd look less foolish with a fork.

SANTE

Hold on...

Sante moves beside Adam. He shows Adam how to hold the chopsticks.

SANTE

See the fingers?

Sante lifts some chicken into Adam's mouth and wipes a drip from Adam's chin.

SANTE
We're gonna stain the mattress.

ADAM
Too late.

Sante chopsticks another piece of chicken into Adam's mouth.

ADAM
I'm gonna screw this up.

SANTE
We're just playing around. It's not
like we're, you know...

But Sante snuggles closer. Smitten.

SANTE
I'm not the first bronco at your
rodeo, am I.

Adam gazes at Sante, everything else forgotten. Sante feeds a baby corn to Adam with his fingers, and catches his breath as Adam sucks the sauce off his thumb.

SANTE
Fuck. I can't believe I'm so turned
on by a dude.

Adam rolls against Sante. Kisses him. Sante responds with growing ardor.

ADAM
Don't you get attached to me. I'm
too screwed up.

SANTE
I don't care.

ADAM
What if I get drafted?

SANTE
You think you can ditch me that
easily?

Passion grows between them and they make love – chopsticks and Chinese food forgotten.

EXT. ADAM'S FLAT - MOMENTS LATER

Jayson the Zamboni guy smokes in the alley below the flat. He checks the mailbox address, then makes sure he's alone before mounting the stairs.

At the top, he peers through the tear in the shade. Removes an iPhone from his pocket. And presses RECORD.

VIGNETTES OF ADAM AND SANTE

- In the locker room: Adam discovers a chocolate milk in his stall. Sante winks at him.

- Walking toward Adam's pickup: Adam takes Sante's Gatorade from him. Smells it. Pours it out over Sante's objections.

- In line at the bus: Sante covertly squeezes Adam's junk. Adam glances around, anxious, but doesn't stop him.

- At Sante's billet: Adam and Sante hurry past Mrs. Eames.

MRS. EAMES

Another big test?

SANTE

Yes, ma'am -- biology. Adam is killer at biology.

- Walking toward Adam's pickup: Adam takes Sante's Gatorade from him. Smells it. Nods his approval.

- Strolling the riverfront boardwalk: Sante tries to hold Adam's hand but Adam pulls away. Sante jams his hands in his pockets. Adam bumps shoulders with him, manly and safe.

- In the post-game locker room: Sante gazes at Adam as Adam revels in a team win. Totally in love.

P.O.V. REALITY SHOW CAMERA - OUTSIDE THE ARENA - DAY

Crackers strolls toward his car.

WEEDS (O.S.)

Team's in first place. Any ideas what changed?

CRACKERS

Not a frigging clue. As long as we hold together, I don't care.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A family-owned Italian joint packed with PATRONS. Beverly and Weeds share a two-top. She sips red wine as Weeds reviews video on a laptop.

BEVERLY

Netflix bought in, contingent on completing six episodes. We need to screen one at the benefit.

WEEDS

What, a deadline? Awesome. Where's the money coming from?

BEVERLY

I took out a second mortgage.

This surprises him. Beverly tentatively sets a USB drive beside his laptop.

BEVERLY

Weeds, I need your professional opinion.

Weeds plugs the USB drive into his machine. He accesses a file. Squints at it.

WEEDS

Looks like a smart phone video. Amateur gay porn -- wait, that's -- Adam and SANTE? Who shot this?

BEVERLY

An anonymous source.

WEEDS

ARE YOU HIGH?

His exclamation draws the interest of several diners.

BEVERLY

Would you lower your voice!? Look, the gay angle is perfect, isn't it? We can make them icons, shed light on issues --

WEEDS

-- Bev, you can't be serious.

BEVERLY

The show needs a bump and I've bet my financial future on --

WEEDS

-- You're selling their future for money and ratings --

BEVERLY

-- Then I'm no different than the NHL, am I?

Weeds yanks out the USB drive. Slams his laptop shut.

BEVERLY

We quit now, and you don't get paid. None of us do. So your professional opinion: is it a potent dramatic angle or not?

Weeds can't bear to agree with her -- but does anyway.

EXT. ARENA - DAY

Wreathes and other Christmas decorations festoon the light poles around the arena. Snow blankets everything.

INT. ARENA, ON THE ICE - CONTINUOUS

The players run drills. Crackers, Matty and Stewie stand at center ice. Sante and Adam stand apart from them.

STEWIE

My hockey career has boiled down to, "Fight that guy." Mom is so proud.

CRACKERS

Make it your own, buddy.

STEWIE

I better have a face for the ladies once all is said and done.

Sante shares a laugh with Adam.

SANTE

Matty! We're goin' for pizza. You wanna join?

MATTY

Gotta study.

Sante shrugs. He and Adam carry on an animated conversation. Matty watches them – envy and disappointment etch his face.

Stewie chases after a puck. Crackers moves closer to Matty.

CRACKERS

Nice excuse, studying. Plausible.

MATTY

It's true.

CRACKERS

You could pass any test they give you blindfolded. What's the deal?

Matty worries the tape on his stick.

CRACKERS

You miss Sante.

Matty's face says it all: yes, he does.

CRACKERS

I think Sante has a crush, and quite possibly spends his spare time in flagrante delicto with...

Matty studies Sante and Adam. Their closeness and warm interaction.

MATTY

God, I am such an idiot.

CRACKERS

Meh. But he's gonna need a friend --

Crackers leans in to Matty.

CRACKERS

Look, I know your heart given your sister and her wife, but hic sunt dracones, eh? Walk softly.

INT. ADAM'S FLAT - MORNING

Adam nuzzles Sante's neck. Sante sighs. They lie together in a tangle of bedclothes as light filters through the tear in the shade.

KNOCK.

Adam raises his head from the pillow.

KNOCK. KNOCK.

ADAM

Blake, get up!

They scramble from the bed and freeze as the knocks becomes more insistent.

ADAM

You gotta hide!

SANTE

NO! I slept over on the couch!

ADAM

They won't buy it!

KNOCK. KNOCK. Sante pulls on his boxers and grabs the quilt.

SANTE

You got a better idea?

Sante grabs a pillow and arranges himself on the sofa as Adam throws their clothing into two piles.

He opens the door as Sante feigns jolted-awake indignation.

Beverly barges in - expecting a compromising situation - and barely hides her surprise. Weeds steps in, camera ready.

BEVERLY

Did I wake you? Don't you have practice --

SANTE

-- We had a fucking game last night. Don't you watch what you're shooting?

Sante grabs his pile of clothes and stomps into the bathroom, slamming the door behind him.

ADAM'S FLAT - MOMENTS LATER

Adam pauses as he pours coffee.

ADAM
You wanna what?

BEVERLY
Hook you up with a -- love interest.

ADAM
Right. We can go curling together.

BEVERLY
We need a spark. A sexy liaison
will draw in the audience.

Adam looks to Weeds for support.

ADAM
This will never work.

BEVERLY
-- Adam, here's the hard truth.
Without a definitive someone in your
life, people will wonder.

ADAM
Wonder? Wonder what?

BEVERLY
If you prefer the company of women
at all.

Sante steps from the bathroom, very aware of the conversation.

BEVERLY
Do you have a romantic attachment?

A knock, and Roxie enters with ornaments, lights, tinsel.

ROXIE
I got props and the cutest tree --
hey, Sante! You're here early!

Sante awaits Adam's answer.

ADAM
I, I don't really have --

Sante stomps out the door. Roxie closes it behind him.

BEVERLY

Look, this may be temporary. Or,
this may lead to something bigger,
grander - for both of you --

WEEDS

-- Bev, for Gods sake --

BEVERLY

-- SO. Talk. Let's see what happens.

Weeds tries to disappear behind his camera as Roxie pours herself some coffee.

ADAM

Crackers loved you.

ROXIE

And now I love you. Imitation is
the closest thing to reality, don't
you think?

INT. PRISON VISITING ROOM - DAY

Adam faces Emma, arms tightly crossed as if guarding his vital organs.

EMMA

They can't just give you a girlfriend.

ADAM

They can. They did.

EMMA

Well, get rid of her. It's lying,
sinful lying, and it will destroy
you and your career.

ADAM

You get the socks I sent? They're
wool. I know your feet get cold.

EMMA

-- Forget the damn socks. You're
screwing some whore when you should
be concentrating on your game --

ADAM

-- Screwing some whore is part of
the game, ma.

EMMA

And you think THIS is what passes
for NHL material?

Adam smacks his palms onto the table.

EMMA

Adam Berrigan Cooley, I am your mother --

ADAM

-- I used to sit on your feet to
warm them up, remember? Remember
the flowers and canning tomatoes and
manning the farm stand? Now I can
only send socks and texts and see
you once a month and hope that some
shred of what I remember --

EMMA

-- You are such a weak little PANSY!
Your father always said --

ADAM

-- MY FATHER IS DEAD, ma, I am damaged
goods. Sometimes I think getting
whipped once by my father was easier
than getting beaten up by you every
fucking month.

Adam's chair shrieks as he shoves away from the table.

EMMA

I'm in here because of you. I
protected you!

Adam slams his chair into the table.

ADAM

Merry Christmas, ma.

EXT. PRISON - LATER

Adam marches across the lawn as Weeds films. Roxie stands
beside the car.

ROXIE

You enjoy your visit?

ADAM

Get in the car.

BEVERLY (O.S.)
 Good God -- CUT!

Beverly steps between Adam and Roxie. Weeds paces nearby.

BEVERLY
 Let's re-shoot this. It needs to
 appear that you at like each other.

ADAM
 We don't.

ROXIE
 I will if he will.

ADAM
 Are you shooting reality or make-
 believe?

WEEDS
 It's Disney on ice...

BEVERLY
 -- Unless you have another idea for
 a romantic attachment, can you please
 make this work?

CUT TO:

P.O.V. REALITY SHOW CAMERA - OUTSIDE THE PRISON, LATER

Adam plods across the prison lawn.

ROXIE
 Did you enjoy your visit?

Adam kisses her tenderly and they embrace -- a poignant,
 manufactured moment.

INT. ARENA - ANOTHER NIGHT

B-Roll of a crowded arena during a game.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 -- And Adam Cooley tries to clear
 the puck from the zone. Sees
 Santorini open and passes. Santorini
 misses it -- Sudbury's Evans snags
 it. Fires on goal...SCORES!!

INT. ARENA SHOWER - POST GAME

Sante follows Adam into the shower room, a tile space with shower heads evenly spaced around the walls.

SANTE

I'm sorry, okay! I shoulda had it.

He grabs Adam's arm as he hangs his towel on a hook.

SANTE

Jesus, would you talk to me! I haven't seen you in weeks. This Roxie thing --

ADAM

(emphatic)

-- Shut your hole, would ya? We'll talk - after the benefit.

Adam stalks to the far end and turns on a spigot.

Sante's frustration is palpable. He plods to a corner shower head and just leans his forehead against the tile.

Other players flow into the room. Crackers and Matty enter and tag team the situation. Matty moves toward Sante.

Tears run down Sante's cheeks. Matty turns the water on for Sante and urges him into it.

MATTY

The water hides a lot. And pizza's on me tonight, eh?

Crackers steps to the shower beside Adam.

CRACKERS

Wanna come over and lift tonight?

Adam speeds up his bathing.

CRACKERS

Or we could get a sugar buzz at Timmy Ho Ho's? Or watch some footie? Curling? Badminton? Checkers?

ADAM

-- Why can't you leave me alone?

CRACKERS

Because my friend has become a douche
and I want to know why. You have a
flat I've never seen...

Adam cranks off his spigot and stomps from the shower.

EXT. AN OPULENT MANSION - NIGHT

Establishing shot of a mansion decorated for Christmas. A
sign beside the valet reads: "Hounds Holiday Benefit."

INT. MANSION, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Poinsettias and decorated trees create a festive atmosphere.
Players in ties and jerseys mingle with boosters and fans as
Beverly, Weeds and their crews film the action.

Coach Bunson plays Santa on a throne in a corner.

Mr. McIness introduces an NHL SCOUT to Stewie. Stewie shakes
hands and attempts to smooth a cowlick.

STEWIE

I'm workin' on my plus/minus, sir.

NHL SCOUT

I'm most impressed by your hands.
Flyers could use an enforcer.

Galen and Jeanette chat with Mrs. Eames.

MRS. EAMES

-- No liquor bottles, and Blake's
grades have improved.

GALEN

Adam's been a good influence on him.

JEANETTE

That Roxie better know what she has.

Sante and Adam sell 50/50 tickets in festive Santa hats.
Adam holds a coffee can with a slot in the lid.

SANTE

(boisterously)
Get your 50/50 tickets. Three for
five. Extra five gets a kiss.

Roxie sashays toward them with two FRIENDS.

ROXIE
What does twenty get me?

SANTE
You kiss whatever you want. Or I
do.

ADAM
-- Five. Five is good.

Sante takes her money and hands her the tickets. Roxie puts her arms around Adam's neck.

ROXIE
Make it count, Santa baby.

Adam, acutely aware that others are watching, kisses Roxie deeply. Several people nearby applaud.

Sante shoves them apart.

SANTE
Jesus, get a room, eh? Got some for
me too, Rox?

ROXIE
Don't be a dick.

SANTE
Hey, just selling tickets. Maybe
you two turtle doves need some space.

Sante grabs the tickets and coffee can from Adam and pushes between them into the crowd.

CRACKERS (O.S.)
I remember those kisses.

Roxie slips her hand into Adam's hip pocket.

CRACKERS
Look, what you have here is --

ROXIE
-- Sweet? Hot?

CRACKERS
Gonna be popular on video, but...
(MORE)

CRACKERS (CONT'D)

(to Adam)

Your heart is somewhere else.

ADAM

Jealous much?

CRACKERS

Nice rejoinder.

(to Roxie)

But I am curious who got to you.
What youthful Romeo swayed the fair
maiden?

ROXIE

More like size and experience. And
I don't kiss and tell.

ADAM

You told me. Jayson, the rink rat.

CRACKERS

And you said that *pucks* should aim a
little higher.

Roxie, miffed, drags Adam away from her former lover.

MANSION PARLOR - LATER

Sante sneaks a drink from a glass hidden in a plant. Beverly
slips an arm around his waist, surprising him.

BEVERLY

Tell me that's not real booze.

SANTE

Ginger ale. You want a ticket?

BEVERLY

What's your going rate?

SANTE

Three for five. I let a couple
cougars do my inseam for, like, fifty.

BEVERLY

That's worth five hundred at least.

Sante crosses his arms around the roll of tickets and coffee
can. Chews a fingernail.

BEVERLY
 Girl trouble, hon?

SANTE
 It's nothing.

Beverly gives Sante a motherly squeeze.

BEVERLY
 An act of love now could pay dividends
 in the future.

MANSION SCREENING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A crowd of party PATRONS watch a screening of "Drop That Puck" on a large TV. Galen and Jeanette stand in the back near Stewie and Matty.

STEWIE
 They should call it "Drop That Puck
 in Front of Cooley."

The action on screen cuts to the locker room.

STEWIE
 (on screen)
 Hey, Cooley! Thanks for playing my
 time tonight.

ADAM
 Scouts like goals better than goose
 eggs, jerk-off.

MATTY
 I wonder if they like team players.

The party crowd murmurs.

CRACKERS (O.S.)
 Enough jibber-jab. It's a team win.

Adam winks out at the audience from the screen...

ADAM
 Coach knows who scores the goals.

MATTY
 What a dick.

Galen storms from the room.

MANSION DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Adam and Kimberly browse the dessert table. Sante throws his arm over Adam's shoulders.

SANTE

What looks good?

KIMBERLY

Blueberry trifle. You're Blake, right? It's a good name.

SANTE

Thank you, miss. I need to borrow your cousin for a moment.

ADAM

We're eating --

SANTE

-- C'mon, please? It's the last time I'll bother you. Ever.

Adam hands his plate to Kimberly.

ADAM

Don't let go of that, eh?

MANSION FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Sante leads Adam toward the staircase.

Kimberly follows them. She steps slowly up the staircase, both plates firmly in grasp. Glances behind her. Sees Beverly point up the stairs and Weeds, video camera in hand...

Kimberly reverses direction. She holds the plates out at her side, blocking Weeds' way.

WEEDS

Excuse me.

Kimberly body checks Weeds. She tips the blueberry trifle onto her dress and sends both plates over the railing. They smash onto the floor.

KIMBERLY

You ruined my favorite dress!

Kimberly yanks Weeds' sweater over his head like a hockey jersey and pounds him with her small fist.

UPSTAIRS - MOMENTS LATER

Sante pulls Adam into an anteroom and points up. Adam squints at a clump of green tied to the chandelier.

SANTE
Mistletoe. Merry Christmas, dude.

Sante completely surprises Adam with a kiss. Initially stunned, Adam melts into Sante's embrace.

A door opens and a WOMAN steps out of a powder room. She catches them mid-embrace.

WOMAN
Oh, excuse me.

Adam shoves Sante away and flees the room.

SANTE
Adam, wait!

STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

Adam bolts down the staircase with Sante close behind.

SANTE
Adam!

Adam manages to avoid Kimberly, Weeds and Galen on the stairs.

Sante slips on the trifle and tumbles down the stairs. His wrist snaps as he tries to catch himself.

Ignoring the pain, Sante bounces up. Holding his crushed wrist against his body, he chases after Adam.

EXT. MANSION - CONTINUOUS

They burst into the crisp air and chase down the driveway.

SANTE
Adam! We gotta talk about this. We got something here!

Weeds follows with his camera. Patrons flow from the house. Adam sees the crowd. Sees their cell phones recording.

ADAM
Shut up, damn it. SHUT UP...

Weeds is in close with his camera.

SANTE
Please, Adam. I've never felt like this with anyone.

Adam punches Sante in the face, drawing blood. Sante stumbles to his knees. Galen and Matty separate the two of them.

GALEN	MATTY
Adam, what's gotten into you!	Jesus, calm down!

P.O.V. REALITY SHOW CAMERA - CONTINUOUS

Crackers and Matty stoop to help Sante. Crackers looks into the camera then grabs it by the lens.

The camera films a high arch over the trees and video-ending smash to the pavement.

EXT. MANSION - MOMENTS LATER

Mr. McIness and the NHL scout watch the fracas from the porch.

NHL SCOUT
He's feisty, but not the feisty we're looking for. What's his name?

MR. MCINESS
Cooley. Adam Cooley.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Adam hunkers down beside his pickup. Galen looms over him.

GALEN
You tell me why.

ADAM
He's a crazy horndog.

GALEN

He's a lovesick kid who trusted the village idiot --

ADAM

-- If he screwed up something I said, that's his problem. But he's the gay one, not me.

GALEN

You Judas! You'd throw your mother under a truck to save yourself. You don't deserve a kid like Sante, or your teammates.

Santa-dressed Coach Bunson saunters over to them. Beard askew. Cigar hanging from his mouth.

COACH BUNSON

You okay, Adam? Can I..?

GALEN

-- Take him. I wash my hands.

Galen abandons them.

COACH BUNSON

Listen, bud. I gotta suspend you for three games. Take the time, get your head straight. We'll need ya for our playoff run. Oh, and between us men: Santorini's finished. I ain't keepin' a faggot on my team.

Coach Bunson tousles Adam's hair and shuffles away.

COACH BUNSON

Ho, ho, ho.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Weeds chain-smokes at his van. Beverly paces.

BEVERLY

It's great footage, Weeds.

Weeds scuffs at the road with his boot.

BEVERLY

If we don't follow through, we'll lose everything --

WEEDS

-- Shut it down. Tonight.

BEVERLY

Weeds, we can make this right.

WEEDS

What with, cake and ice cream? They need to figure this out away from the camera.

BEVERLY

Isn't this exactly why we did this? Emotion. Truth. We can't leave these revelations to die - imagine the youth it could impact! There's so much at stake --

WEEDS

-- Like your house? Your kid's respect? Manipulating teens appears to be familiar territory for you.

BEVERLY

My kids made their own decisions --

WEEDS

-- Your kids are screwed because making movies was more important.

Beverly knows it's true. Weeds crushes his cigarette on the pavement.

WEEDS

I need this fucking job, but if you decide to sell their souls for ratings, I'm out. My soul is not negotiable.

INT. ADAM'S FLAT - NIGHT

Adam crashes into his flat. He sees the glow of Christmas lights and tinsel and rips them down. Destroys the Christmas tree. Clears a crèche off the kitchen table.

He grabs the quilt to rend it. Smells Sante in the fabric and mourns what he has done.

His tomato stress ball sits on the floor amid the debris.

INT. ARENA - NIGHT

B-Roll of a crowded arena during a game.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

That's another goal for Mississauga,
putting the Hounds down by six with
an entire period to go. Without
Adam Cooley and Blake Santorini,
this team is in trouble.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Assistant Coach Harper reviews a roster. He monitors the subdued players as they dress for practice – as do Beverly, Weeds and their crew.

Stewie scans Facebook on his iPhone. He clicks on a meme:

ADAM (V.O.)

(through the iPhone)
Shut up, damn it. SHUT UP...

STEWIE

Looks like beating up a queer was
Cooley's fast lane to Meme-ville.
At least he ain't sharing the shower.

ASST. COACH HARPER

-- That's enough.

STEWIE

C'mon, coach. You think we want a
homo gawkin' at us?

ASST. COACH HARPER

Like you guys haven't been sizing up
the competition, every shower, every
night this season. He's still your
teammate so nothing has changed --

Sante, a cast covering his arm to the elbow, stands in the doorway. Matty moves some gear to make room for him.

MATTY

How's the wing, bud?

SANTE

Can't play for a month, but I wanna
watch practice.

STEWIE

I bet you do.

CRACKERS

Coach was talking to YOU, asshole --

STEWIE

-- Why the hell should I be quiet?
What's he doing here besides checking
out our junk --

ASST. COACH HARPER

-- STEWART. I SAID ENOUGH!

Stewie yanks off his towel and presents himself to Sante.

STEWIE

Well, have a good look, cornholer.

Sante bolts from the room. Matty chases after him; Beverly follows them both.

Crackers advances on Stewie. Livid.

STEWIE

Oh, you wanna go, captain? Defend
the sissy? C'mon. These fists have
some experience --

Cracker smashes his fist into Stewie's face. They exchange blows, trashing the locker room in the process. Crackers proves an able opponent, throwing Stewie onto the snack table -- Gatorade and power bars fly everywhere.

He applies an iron grip to Stewie's manhood.

CRACKERS

Only sub-human filth spews that kind
of trash at a teammate, especially
one who has never -- NEVER -- said a
bad thing about you. And I know
you're better than that so consider
this your free pass. But you open
your maw again -- about anything --
and I will rip these off, feed them
to you for dinner and break your
knees for dessert. Are we clear?

Crystal clear. Stewie nods, terrified.

CRACKERS

(loudly)

YOUR TENURE AS INDIVIDUALS IS OVER.
Henceforth, we are a team. Unified.
Respectful. Got it?

The locker room is dead quiet. He glares at Stewie.

CRACKERS

I can't hear you...

STEWIE

-- Yes sir, captain, sir.

The other players agree one by one. Asst. Coach Harper appreciates this turn of events - so does Weeds.

ARENA ZAMBONI GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Matty stops beside the Zamboni.

MATTY

(yelling)

C'mon, buddy. It's okay!

Beverly joins Matty - much to his consternation - but:

BEVERLY

I'll look on the concourse level.
You see if he's down here.

Beverly hurries off as Matty continues his search.

CLOSE ON a door off the garage that reads "DANGER: HIGH VOLTAGE".

ELECTRICAL CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Sante sits on the floor behind a generator. Sobbing.

EXT. BEHIND THE LCBO - THAT EVENING

Jayson the Zamboni driver exits the LCBO with a brown paper bag. He strolls behind the building and toward a dumpster.

Sante waits there in his sling.

JAYSON

I got you a twenty-sixer. Looks like you need it.

He hands the bag to Sante. Sante feels the heft of it.

JAYSON

Let me loan you a hand.

Jayson extracts the whiskey and opens it. Takes the first drink before handing it back to Sante.

JAYSON

Didn't think you'd mind.

Sante takes a long pull from the bottle.

JAYSON

Rumor around the rink is, you're history. Coach wants you out.

SANTE

What -- why? I'll be good as new next year.

JAYSON

Your, um, proclivities. Preferences? I don't judge - whatever gets you off - but Coach Bunson?

This stuns Sante. He takes another drink.

JAYSON

That babe Beverly thinks you and Bunson need a heart-to-heart, y'know? A bit of a chat? I know for a fact that he's working late tonight, tryin' to straighten out this shit show.

SANTE

She said that?

JAYSON

Couldn't hurt, could it? Just go easy on that bottle before, eh?

SANTE

Yeah. Right. You're okay, Jayson.

Jayson shakes Sante's hand warmly.

JAYSON

Maybe a stop at Cooley's place on
the way. Patch this thing up.

Sante agrees. He saunters off with optimism in his step.

Jayson watches him go. He wipes his hand on his jacket as
if Sante had the Plague.

INT. ADAM'S FLAT - LATER

Adam leans against the stove and stirs some soup. The
doorbell distracts him. He finds Roxie waiting outside.

ROXIE

Need a friend?

Roxie pushes past him. Drops her purse and coat on the sofa.
Glances around.

ROXIE

Where's our tree?

Adam returns to the stove. Roxie slinks over to him.

ROXIE

So, you and Sante...

Roxie touches his back. Begins to rub his shoulders.

ROXIE

I don't care. People do what they
do these days, even in the NHL. And
you're NHL material, Mr. Cooley.

Roxie presses against Adam. Slides her arms around him.

ROXIE

Your reputation as a dude, however,
is kind of on shaky ground.

Adam extracts himself from her embrace.

ROXIE

I could provide you a solid, hetero
image while discretely looking the
other way. A persuasive ally with
the media, with your teammates.
Freedom to just be you.

He looks at her with some measure of hope. She touches his chest. Fondles his buttons. Kisses him...

EXT. ADAM'S FLAT - CONTINUOUS

Sante plods up the stairs to the landing with the brown bag. He pulls a carton of chocolate milk from it and reaches for the door bell. And pauses.

He peeks through the tear in the shade. The milk slips from his hand and he flees down the stairs.

INT. ADAM'S FLAT - CONTINUOUS

Adam shoves her away.

ADAM
I'm done playing whatever game this
is with you.

ROXIE
Seriously? You're this stupid?

ADAM
I've been chasing my mother's dream
since I was in diapers. She wants
me in the NHL. I want one thing --

ROXIE
-- You can't have him.

ADAM
Out.

ROXIE
It's me, or nothing.

ADAM
GET OUT!

EXT. ARENA - LATER THAT EVENING

Sante weaves across the cold, empty parking lot. He pauses under a light post to take a drink.

He sees a BURLY MAN in a ski mask approaching from the arena.

SANTE
HEY! Is the arena open?

Another man in a mask appears to his right. A third man approaches from his left - and he's carrying something.

A baseball bat.

Sante drops the bottle. Turns to run and crashes into the arms of a fourth man. Sante struggles.

BURLY MAN
Little faggot hound.

He punches Sante in the face.

BURLY MAN
Strip him.

Hands reach out and Sante bolts. He bowls one man over. Kicks another. Fights for his life.

But the others wear him down with punches. Burly Man watches over the sounds of fists on flesh and ripping fabric.

BURLY MAN
Tie him to the post.

Someone watches from a distance through a haze of cigarette smoke. From their POV: the baseball bat swings. Sante screams.

EXT. ADAM'S FLAT - LATER

Adam steps out of his flat into the cold air and locks his door. He turns and crushes something beneath his feet. Stoops to pick it up.

A chocolate milk carton.

ADAM
Damn it, Sante -- you frigging softie.

EXT. SANTE'S BILLET - LATER

Adam jogs onto the porch and rings the doorbell. After a moment, Mrs. Eames opens the door in a robe.

MRS. EAMES
You have some nerve, Mr. Cooley.

ADAM

I know, and I'm so sorry for this mess. It's just -- is Sante here?

MRS. EAMES

I assumed he was with the team after practice. He left early this morning.

ADAM

He left something on my porch, recently. It hadn't frozen.

MRS. EAMES

Perhaps at the arena then, though why he would ever talk to you --

ADAM

-- Thank you ma'am. Sorry, I --

He hurries away before he finishes.

EXT. ARENA - LATER

Adam's pickup parks in the lot near the arena. He gets out, shivers in the cold and begins to walk toward the arena.

And then stops. The wind blows. Snow drifts down, swirling around the lights. So cold. Adam trudges back to his pickup. Past it. Stares into the vast lot.

What does he hear? The wind? A whimper?

Adam walks into the lot. Spooked, he scans it. Its grid of parking spaces. Its light poles on concrete plinths. An odd growth on one. Rope? An animal?

A hand.

Adam runs toward it. He soon makes out a human form tied there. Naked. Frozen.

ADAM

SANTE!

Adam gathers Sante in his arms, eliciting a scream. Still pliable. Legs at odd angles. Adam shucks his coat and wraps it around Sante. Calls 9-1-1.

ADAM

Help me! In the arena parking lot.

(MORE)

ADAM (CONT'D)
 There's a, a man here. Beaten.
 Nearly frozen. HURRY!

INT. ADAM'S BILLET, STUDY - LATER

Adam sits in front of the fire. Kimberly sits beside him and Jeanette sits in one of the club chairs. Galen paces slowly in a beat-up robe.

ADAM
 We don't know for sure.

JEANETTE
 They smashed his knees. If he walks again, it will be a miracle. But hockey? That ship has sailed.

ADAM
 I need to see him.

GALEN
 Impossible. His parents already arranged an airlift to Sudbury. They -- you can't see him.

Adam is bereft.

ADAM
 How could I do this to --

GALEN
 You didn't --

KIMBERLY
 You were scared.

GALEN
 Hush. Adam, you could have come to us.

ADAM
 Could I? Really?

GALEN
 Adam -- okay, yes, we're a Catholic family. We go to Mass every Sunday and, and I insist you do too but -- Adam, I love you more than anything.

KIMBERLY
 That robe is really awful, Dad --

GALEN

KIMBERLY!

KIMBERLY

-- I can say that because of our relationship, right? Your tie is crooked, your shoes are out of style and that beard -- we trust each other. Adam was beaten nearly to death by his own father AND had to escape AND then drive hundreds of kilometers to find refuge. All because he was born a different way and loves different people? Get real, Dad. Would you trust -- REALLY TRUST -- anyone after that?

Adam squeezes Kimberly's hand. Galen, though hurt, understands.

GALEN

You must trust someone. Someone besides Kim?

He does.

INT. HOTEL ROOM -- DAWN

Beverly paces in a bathrobe following a sleepless night. She pauses to stab a fork full of cake from the half-eaten confection on the desk.

A strident knock startles her. She shuffles to the door and looks through the viewer.

BEVERLY

You've done enough.

JAYSON (O.S.)

Maybe a visit to your son at the Betty Ford Clinic?

BEVERLY

-- Wait! Okay, hold on.

Beverly chews her lip. Quickly pockets the fork from the cake. Opens the door.

BEVERLY

I fired you. We're done

JAYSON
Not even close, chickie.

Jayson shoves his way into the room, slamming the door behind him. Beverly retreats to the window.

BEVERLY
You were just supposed to stir things up. Instigate.

JAYSON
Seduce the captain's girlfriend.
Check. Hook the rookie on booze.
Check. Dig up dirt on your star?
Yeah, I did that too.

He drops his coat on the floor. Holds up his bandaged hand.

JAYSON
The pièce de résistance. God, so much gratification I shouldn't even charge you – but I will.

She brandishes the fork.

JAYSON
Oh, Bev – we were business partners.

Jayson grabs for her and Beverly stabs with the fork. He dodges, smacks her hard, and the fork flies from her hand.

She scampers toward the door and grabs the prop hockey stick beside it. Jayson attacks but she parries, smacking him several times before he rips the stick from her hands.

He throws her onto the bed. Breaks the stick in two...

...And then the door opens via keycard. Weeds strides in.

BEVERLY
WEEDS! Help --

JAYSON
-- Hey, beanpole! We were just getting busy, so – get the fuck out.

WEEDS
You first, rink rat.

The door gapes wide open to the hall. Jayson considers his options, then grabs his coat and hurries out.

BEVERLY

He'll hurt me. He'll hurt my son.

WEEDS

He's not hurting anybody.

EXT. ADAM'S FLAT - MORNING

Adam's pickup parks below his flat. He climbs out and plods up the stairs.

Crackers sits on the top step. Smoking.

CRACKERS

I'm half a pack in. What took you so long?

ADAM

Galen call you?

CRACKERS

He thought you needed a chat.

Some dam inside Adam suddenly bursts, and he begins to sob. Crackers just gathers Adam in his big arms and hugs him.

INT. ADAM'S FLAT - LATER

Adam wakes with a start. He sits up in bed, still in his street clothes. He sniffs the air.

Crackers stands at the stove.

CRACKERS

I hope you like eggs. It's the only friggin' thing I don't burn.

ADAM

What time is it?

CRACKERS

Dinnertime. I told Coach Harper we wouldn't be at practice.

ADAM

Coach -- Harper?

CRACKERS

They sacked Bunson this morning.

(MORE)

CRACKERS (CONT'D)

Harper was deemed "a better influence"
for the team.

Adam shuffles to the kitchenette. He watches Crackers
scramble the eggs.

ADAM

I'm gay.

CRACKERS

Worst-kept secret ever. What else
you got?

ADAM

I killed my father.

INT. BARN - THREE YEARS AGO

Young Adam watches as Emma dashes from the barn. Lightning
flashes, and he can hear arguing through the open door.

EMMA (O.S.)

In the name of Jesus and Mary, what
have you done!?

ELIJAH (O.S.)

Our son is a heathen. A defiler of
God's grace --

EMMA (O.S.)

-- Give it to me. Give me that gun!

Determination etches Young Adam's face. He starts up the
pickup and roars from the barn.

EXT. FARM LOT - CONTINUOUS

Rain pours down. Thunder rolls.

Emma struggles with Elijah, the shotgun between them. Elijah
rips the gun away, knocking Emma into the mud.

Headlights illuminate them. Elijah raises the shotgun.

EMMA

Elijah! HE'S YOUR SON!

Elijah hesitates and the pickup plows into him. His head smacks the hood on impact and the truck crushes him into the earth.

It skids to a stop. Young Adam scrambles from the cab, looking for his father.

ADAM

PA?! PA, WHERE ARE YOU!

Emma pulls Young Adam from the mud.

EMMA

GO, ADAM! Save yourself, save our future! I'll take care of this.

She shoves Adam into the truck. Onto the blood-soaked seat.

EMMA

Adam, RUN!

Adam floors it and races from the farm.

EXT. FARM LOT - MOMENTS LATER

A Toyota rolls into the pouring rain from the barn. It surges forward until it bumps up onto some mass in the mud.

Emma climbs from it. Uses a log to bash in the Toyota's hood and grille. Throws the log away from the car.

She reaches under the car to check the body. Smears some blood on her. Tears her dress. Then climbs back into the car and dials a number.

EMMA

I want to report a murder.

EXT. ADAM'S BILLET - EARLY MORNING

Adam stands shattered on the doorstep. Rings the doorbell. Jeanette opens the door and Adam falls into her arms.

JEANETTE

GALEN! KIMBERLY! HELP ME!

INT. ADAM'S FLAT - NIGHT, PRESENT DAY

Crackers sits dumbfounded at the kitchen table amid dirty plates and bowls.

CRACKERS

Why didn't you fix the damn truck?

ADAM

Driving a murder weapon gives you a lot of focus.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

CRACKERS

You're sure about this?

Adam answers the door without qualms. Beverly and Weeds stand outside with Galen. Weeds has a camera.

GALEN

Okay, Adam. We're here for you.

ADAM

You'll need coffee.

BEVERLY

I need a drink.

WEEDS

Crackers, can we talk? Outside?

CRACKERS

Um, yeah, sure.

They step out and close the door. Adam pops the tops on three beers and shows Bev and Galen to the couch.

BEVERLY

When you called, I didn't know what to think.

ADAM

I have an ending for the show, but we're doing it my way.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The players crowd the room. Cameramen film discretely. Beverly watches from a corner.

STEWIE
What's this about?

CRACKERS
Just chill out, will ya?

Coach Harper escorts Adam into the room.

COACH HARPER
Okay, Adam -- say your piece.

ADAM
Yeah, so I, um, I've been a grade-A
douche bag --

MATTY
-- So you're gay, right?

ADAM
Uh --

STEWIE
And you picked Sante outta the rest
of us studs?

ADAM
He -- he kinda picked me.

COACH HARPER
Adam, they're not idiots -- well,
Stewie is. They all figured it out.

MATTY
Can we get dressed? I got new laces
for my skates.

The players begin to undress. Adam can't believe it was
that easy.

STEWIE
Hey Cooley! You check out my awesome
junk anytime you want to.

The team catches its collective breath.

ADAM
There's nothing to check out.

Stewie throws a jock at Adam and the room settles into its
usual chaotic camaraderie.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Beverly writes a note at the desk. A camera sits on a tripod beside her.

There is a knock at the door. Beverly quickly signs the note and seals it in an envelope. She turns on the camera and hurries to the door.

Roxie bursts into the room.

ROXIE

Tell me! What's next!?

BEVERLY

I'm returning to California to edit. Weeds will finish shooting the playoff run - Adam's rise or fall as it happens and whatever debris he leaves behind. You...

Beverly opens a diet Coke and takes a sip. Roxie vibrates with anticipation.

BEVERLY

Need to walk away.

ROXIE

But I can still stir things up.

Beverly watches the snow fall outside.

BEVERLY

If I could go back five months, I would have seen the inherent drama in the players and their stories. Growing up. Becoming men.

Roxie perches on the bed in front of the camera. Lights a Vogue cigarette.

BEVERLY

Yes, please light up in my non-smoking room --

ROXIE

-- Shut your hole. You think this is over? Think again.

BEVERLY

Every one of your scenes will be cut. They're superfluous.

ROXIE

Listen to me, bitch. This is my ticket off the reservation and out of this frozen hellhole. I deserve Hollywood. Sun and palm trees and --

BEVERLY

-- Deceit and treachery aren't the path to stardom, Roxie, despite what Twitter tells you. Neither is conspiring to commit assault.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARENA - NIGHT

Roxie stands wreathed in smoke, a cigarette in her hand. Sante screams in the background. She smiles.

CUT BACK TO:

P.O.V. REALITY SHOW CAMERA - CONTINUOUS

ROXIE

Sante was screwing up the dynamic! Adam needed focus -- you'll crawl back to me when you realize who your star really is.

Roxie grinds her cigarette into the carpet with her Uggs and marches for the door.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Beverly sips her Coke. A CONSTABLE enters from the bathroom.

BEVERLY

She played right to the camera. That takes talent.

CONSTABLE

That and the DNA on that cigarette butt should put her behind bars. How did you know it was her?

BEVERLY

A woman knows.

EXT. BEHIND THE LCBO - LATER

Jayson climbs from a ratty Chevy.

JAYSON

(calling out)

Bev, darlin'! A note stuck to my
Zamboni? Best come-on in years.
You ready for nine inches of Jayson..?

Crackers steps from behind the dumpster.

CRACKERS

Ms. Haines sends her regrets.

Jayson backtracks to the Chevy, but a half dozen Hound players block his way. Matty, Stewie and others join Crackers.

JAYSON

You can't hurt me. I'll go to the
police. All these witnesses --

A player shoves Jayson from behind.

CRACKERS

I didn't see a thing. Did you see
something, Matty?

MATTY

Just another dirty rink rat.

STEWIE

With an ACL injury that ended his
career - or so we hear.

Stewie hands Crackers a hockey stick.

CRACKERS

Ready for 65 inches of McCracken?

Crackers swings the stick at Jayson's knee. He jumps back. Several players shove him forward again.

CRACKERS

Sante would have earned at least
forty more points this season.

(MORE)

CRACKERS (CONT'D)

So let's assume you re-injure that knee 40 times - say, a slip on ice behind this dumpster or a fall down some stairs. Or, maybe your leg gets slammed in a car door, or you step in front of a bus. Knee replacements. Canes. Wheelchairs. Suddenly walking is just not going to happen anymore. Or maybe eating. Or breathing.

JAYSON

Wait a minute --

Crackers drops Jayson to his knees with a jab as several players smash in the windows of his Chevy.

STEWIE

We'll need the names of your cohorts in assault and battery.

MATTY

And your clothes. Every thread.

CRACKERS

Reasonable, *n'est-ce pas?* You get a naked ride on a frozen seat of broken glass to the police station of your choice, where you will give up the names of your buddies and go quietly to prison. Or, 40 broken knees. Your choice.

INT. CORPORATE SUITE - NIGHT

Galen and Mr. McIness watch the action. The sounds of a boisterous crowd drift up to them.

The scoreboard shows 1-1 with less than two minutes to go in overtime.

GALEN

C'mon...

In the press box, a play-by-play announcer calls the action:

ANNOUNCER

-- Sudbury has pulled their goalie!
(MORE)

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Evans is the sixth man, and HE'S
OPEN! The puck glides to him and --
wait! HE LOSES IT! McCracken snags
it as Cooley dashes up the boards.
A perfect pass. It's Cooley one on
one. He shoots - and SCORES!

The suite erupts. Tears fill Galen's eyes. The GM slaps
Galen on the back.

MR. MCINESS

Guess our show will have a happy
ending after all.

GALEN

Just like a fairy tale.

INT. ADAM'S BILLET, STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

Jeanette tries to concentrate on a novel in front of the
fireplace. A television murmurs in another room.

Kimberly bounds in and plops on the arm of her chair.

KIMBERLY

"Drop That Puck" is on. Come watch.

JEANETTE

I can't.

KIMBERLY

Adam's an inspiration. The whole
team is behind him.

JEANETTE

You go. Tell me how it ends.

Exasperated as only a 10-year-old can be, Kimberly leaves
her. The fire pops. Jeanette stands and grabs the poker...

KIMBERLY (O.S.)

Oh, God - MOM!

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jeanette rushes into the room.

JEANETTE

What? What is it?

ADAM

(on the television)

-- I didn't mean to. I'm not a killer, I mean. He had a gun and my mom was in danger so I just, I ran him over --

KIMBERLY

-- It's not true. Adam couldn't...

Jeanette reaches for Kimberly. Kimberly fights her.

KIMBERLY

It's just a show. Made up. Adam's a good person, HE DIDN'T DO IT!

Jeanette pulls Kimberly close as she sobs.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The players flow into the room, slapping backs and exchanging hugs. Crackers lets out a victorious whoop.

CRACKERS

Yeah! Suck it, Sudbury!

Adam yanks off his sweater and is promptly soaked with root beer. Matty bear-hugs him.

MATTY

Sante would be proud, man!

Coach Harper strides into the room to a tremendous cheer. A line of CONSTABLES follow him.

The party ends abruptly.

COACH HARPER

Adam. Get dressed.

EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - LATER

Beverly relishes the sunset from her convertible. Her cell phone rings, and she pulls into a lot to answer it.

INT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Adam stands in handcuffs at a pay phone.

ADAM

Hey, Bev? This is Adam. It's done.
The show aired and the police picked
me up. I told them everything.

BEVERLY (O.S.)

My God, Adam, why call me of all
people?

ADAM

Who else is there?

EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - CONTINUOUS

Beverly finds herself wiping tears from her eyes.

BEVERLY

At least I kept your salchows and
lutzes to a minimum. Take care of
yourself, Adam Cooley. And call me.

She hangs up and just sits for a minute. Then:

BEVERLY

Siri: map directions to the Betty
Ford Clinic from this location.

Her car pulls back onto the road and cruises into the
beautiful sunlit day.

INT. PRISON COMMON ROOM - A DAY IN JUNE

Adam watches TV with other INMATES.

TEAM REP (O.S.)

The New York Rangers select Keith
McCracken in the second round.

ANNOUNCER #1 (O.S.)

"Crackers" McCracken, a solid 200
pounder. Great two-way player.

INMATE

Shit, he sucks. LaPointe could skate
circles around that guy.

Adam flashes his middle finger at the man.

INMATE

Watch where you point that, faggot.

Adam leans unperturbed toward the TV. He rolls his tomato stress ball in his hands.

ANNOUNCER #2 (O.S.)

He must be thrilled to put that side show in the Soo behind him.

ANNOUNCER #1 (O.S.)

Right? It made great television, though.

Adam tosses the tomato stress ball into a trash can.

SUPER: EIGHT YEARS LATER

EXT. PRISON - DAY

Heat shimmers on an asphalt road bordered by a razor-wire-topped fence. At the end of the road, a gate opens.

Adam, with shaggy hair and a chiseled physique, exits the gate. He strides with purpose to the main road.

A bright red Corvette kicks up dust on the road. The passenger window opens as it pulls to a stop beside Adam.

CRACKERS

You need a lift, buddy?

EXT. MOTEL - LATER

The Corvette enters the parking lot of a well-kept family motel and pulls into a space.

Crackers and Adam step from the car. Crackers hands a key and a piece of paper to Adam.

CRACKERS

Room 211, second floor.

Surprised, Adam accepts the key.

ADAM

Let's get some food. I haven't seen you in ages.

CRACKERS

My cell number – and others – are on that paper. Give a ring when you're ready, and we'll have a rager that Mayhem would be proud of. You got someone else to see.

Crackers gives Adam a big hug and speeds away.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATER

Adam steps from the bathroom in a towel. An exquisite tattoo of a dragon conceals the scars on his back. He finds a collection of shirts and other clothes on the bed.

EMMA (O.S.)

The sizes are a best guess.

Adam faces his mother. Prison has aged Emma, but she looks relaxed and peaceful. Her eyes sparkle.

EMMA

You need a haircut.

MOTEL ROOM - LATER

Adam sits with a towel over his shoulders as Emma completes his haircut. He lights a cigarette. Emma grimaces.

EMMA

Tattoos *AND* cigarettes?

ADAM

Crystal meth seemed too obvious.

EMMA

Quit. Sooner rather than later.

Adam takes a deep drag, enjoying it.

ADAM

I wanna see the farm.

EMMA

I sold it to a young Amish family.

Emma pulls the towel from Adam's shoulders. Touches a tattoo-camouflaged scar on his back.

EMMA

I bought a small condo in Owen Sound
and a smaller one in Florida. They
have guest rooms.

She traces one of the slashes with her finger.

EMMA

How was it, for you?

ADAM

Nothing happened I didn't want to
happen. I read. I finished a degree
in sports marketing.

Adam grabs hair gel from the desk. Fusses with his hair.

ADAM

I wrote a letter to pa, y'know?
Pages and pages. Screamed at him.
Forgave him. Mourned him. My shrink
and I burned it in a coffee can.

EMMA

I hope he rots in Hell.

Emma pulls an envelope from her purse and sets it on the
desk. She places a new tomato stress ball beside it.

EMMA

There's an investment account. Your
passport - enough to start over.

ADAM

-- Mom. I'm gay.

EMMA

Then bring a nice man home - as nice
as Paddy.

She hugs Adam close.

EMMA

Go where your heart leads you, son.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - NIGHT

Adam squeezes the tomato stress ball as he watches the world
go by from the back of the bus.

INT. A CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY

A woman shows Adam to a table.

ADAM

Some tea, please? I'll wait to -
I'm waiting for someone.

Adam waits. Patrons come and go. He orders finally. The waitress sets a bowl and chopsticks in front of him. He tries the chopsticks, again and again, until his patience runs out. He throws them onto the table.

Someone reaches from behind Adam with a set of chopsticks and deftly picks a piece of chicken from his bowl.

Adam spins around.

Sante chews the chicken as he gazes at Adam - hard-bitten, but every bit the Italian beefcake he promised to be.

SANTE

You never did get the fingers right.

Sante uses a cane to maneuver himself into a chair.

ADAM

You're four hours and three pots of
tea late.

SANTE

Oh, I watched you walk in. I wanted
to see if you'd stay.

Adam looks at his hands. Fiddles with his napkin.

ADAM

Jesus - how can you even look at me?

SANTE

I love you. Did you think you could
ditch me that easily?

Adam meets Sante's gaze with moist eyes.

ADAM

I don't have a clue where to begin.

SANTE

How about where it ended?

Adam isn't sure until Sante leans over the Szechuan Chicken. He leans forward himself and touches a hand to the side of Sante's face. Kisses Sante tenderly. And glows.

With that, Sante chop-sticks a piece of chicken and glides it into Adam's mouth. All is right with the world.

FADE OUT