

FADE IN:

INT. WKUM RADIO BOOTH - DAY

We hear HANDS POUNDING ON GLASS

We see A RADIO DJ'S 'CALL IN' PANEL, all lights blinking - calls waiting.

MITCH STRAIT stares numbly at the lights, no grin, no emotion spelled across his tired face of scraggly beard and neglected hygiene. Just the WKUM microphone hovering in front of him, headphones over his ears while...

Behind him A WOMAN AND MAN IN SUITS are pounding the large VIEWING BOOTH window, trying to get the attention of...

FREDDIE, a young, impressionable looking tech with headphones of his own on, sitting in the ENGINEER'S BOOTH, behind his own pane of glass across from Mitch and the VIEWING BOOTH, commingled confusion and worry fixed across his pate.

FREDDIE'S POV -

Glancing between the frazzled Mitch at the mic, starring at him, his finger hovering over the call in panel, and the furious executives pounding the VIEWING BOOTH glass for him to...

INT. VIEWING BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

FEMALE EXECUTIVE  
(yelling)  
Cut him off, Freddie!

She is a vigorous woman in a suit and skirt, born of success and determination. This is ROXANNE SLOAN. Beside her another suit hits the window. He's younger than her, but no less determined. TABER ALMOND is definitely flustered. Whatever is going on in the radio booth is bad - very bad.

TABER  
Why isn't Freddie cutting him off?

ROXANNE  
Shit!

Roxanne turns her ire to MEAGEN SMITH, a younger woman, less advanced by attire alone in the radio business. Meagen sits in a viewing chair, the epitome of dumbstruck innocence lost.

ROXANNE  
Meagen, did you know about this?

Meagen shakes her head, her lush blonde hair waving like a shampoo commercial.

MEAGEN

I didn't even know, okay! Like I need to loose my job!

ROXANNE

We're all going to loose our jobs. He's sunk all of us.

They continue hitting the window as...

More radio staff venture down the hallway to the commotion at the viewing room.

On the WALLS we see massive posters of MITCH'S CLEAN SHAVEN, HOLLYWOOD SMILE, a warm face, the 'every man' kind of face with the banner: *"Strait Talk" with Mitch Strait on WKUM.* He's the star of the radio station.

On a smaller poster we see: A rugged MANNY BRETCHLIN in T-shirts overhanging faded jeans, the look of arrested adolescence. *"Speak your mind" with Manny Bretchlin on WKUM* - the rising star.

Manny in his trademark attire, looking like he just stepped right out of his own poster with the widest of grins, pokes his head past lesser staff into the VIEWING ROOM.

MANNY

So, Rox, I get his slot, right?

ROXANNE

Manny! Not now.

MANNY

(glancing into the dj booth)

What an idiot.

ROXANNE/TABER

Manny!

Manny only preens - victory - while they pummel the window with open palms.

TABER

Shit. He's taking the call!

Roxanne and Taber pound the glass with renewed enthusiasm.

ROXANNE/TABER  
 (yelling)  
 Freddie..!

As...

INT. WKUM RADIO BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Mitch eyes Freddie, who's young head darts between his Radio DJ and the executives pounding for him to do the right thing. Mitch's finger inches to the CALL IN PANEL - caller one.

Freddie is panicking now - the moment upon him. What to do, what to do...

And then the instant Mitch's finger is about to push caller one, the PANEL LIGHTS BLINK OUT. The lines all gone. The red ON AIR light extinguishes. The standoff over.

The executives stop pounding, breathing heavily on the other side of the window, exhausted and haggard.

Mitch's melancholy eyes seek out Freddie. The young engineer can barely meet his disappointed gaze, can only say...

FREDDIE  
 (mouthing)  
 I'm sorry.

From the other side of his window.

Mitch takes a deep sigh, strangely calm as we hear...

FEMALE JUDGE (V.O.)  
 I've deliberated long and hard over  
 this case.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Where a wealthy CLIENT in tacky suit clenches his fist, eagerly waiting the judge's ruling. Beside him a calm and confident RICHARD NARROW is already smiling, as if knowing the win is his. Richard is a striking man, the cover of GQ magazine, the picture of success.

Behind them a BUBBLE BLOND PINUP GIRL bounces, her manufactured breasts bopping against her blouse and estrogen lips pouting anticipation.

And beside her, a wholesome and studious Sissy Mann with court documents braced in folded arms, a coquettish smile at Richard. Courtroom tension addictive as hell.

The CLAIMANT'S TABLE is the opposite side of the game. A FEMALE LAWYER and her housewife CLIENT lash condemning stares at the DEFENDANTS TABLE - the winning side.

The judge a wiser, older woman adjusts bifocals and...

JUDGE

As much as it pains me to do this,  
I have to concede to Mr. Narrow's  
precedent.

(eyes Richard)

That was quite a genius stroke.

The Claimant's lawyer leers across at Richard. His client gives him a nudge and a wink - *she wants you*. Richard dismisses the innuendo, focusing on...

JUDGE

And so it is my ruling that the husband, Milo Theisen, is only responsible to keep his wife in the manner she was accustomed to during their marriage and not entitled to any winnings Mr. Theisen has made since their final divorce, regardless of his past indiscretions and absenteeism for his son. Or how appalled I am with his conduct.

Her gavel thunders through the room.

JUDGE

Court is adjourned. Thank God.

And Mr. Theisen catapults out of his chair, shaking Richard's hand vigorously. Richard retracts instinctively - *no touching* - a personal flaw.

MR. THEISEN

Mr. Narrow, you did it, man. I  
can't believe it!

And while the bubble blonde lunges her massive breasts over the railing for Theisen, Richard is WIPING HIS HAND with his LAPEL CLOTH - *no touching*. But then he's held by the other table, the defeated housewife sobbing into her hands. Her lawyer's condemning stare.

RICHARD

Mr. Thiesen, make sure you do what we talked about. You see your son.

Thiesen glances over at his former wife, unaffected by her hardship, his demeanor telling us he's no real father.

MR. THEISEN

Yeah sure. You bet.

He takes the bubble blonde by the hand and they leave victoriously.

Richard knows what we know about his client and packs up his briefcase with Sissy's help - regret and victory hand in hand.

INT. COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Richard has his iPhone to his ear as he walks through the rotunda. It's ringing, ringing, then...

WOMAN'S VOICE

(over phone)

Hi, you've reached Gretchen...

MAN'S VOICE

(over phone)

...and Chuck...

LITTLE BOY'S VOICE

(over phone)

...and Ricki...

GRETCHEN'S VOICE

(over phone)

...Sorry we're not in to take your call, but leave us a you know what and we'll call you back.

Beep...

RICHARD

(to phone)

Hi, guys, it's me. Just wanted to make sure I had the right time for the sports awards today. I'm proud of you, Rikki, love you. See you later, okay.

Richard hangs up and makes the CROWDED ELEVATOR just in time, hesitating - *no touching*.

Sissy holds the door, waving him in. Richard musters over his phobia and squeezes in tightly to Sissy, riders nudging against him. The doors close as...

WINSLOW (V.O.)

(angry)

Have you lost your damn mind!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. WKUM - WINSLOW'S OFFICE - DAY

Mitch sits in an expensive office of GLASS WALLS AND CHROME with a ridiculously good view of the city beyond floor to ceiling windows. It reeks of wealth and stature. WINSLOW GOLD is a bold man in his fifties, with trimmed hair bleached free of any grey and a tailored suit smartly concealing any signs of a paunch belly. And he's pissed, pacing around the dour Mitch.

WINSLOW

You know even the Lion's Gate jammed up with fender benders because they all say they were listening to you this morning. You wanna believe that.

Winslow plunks into his plush chair.

WINSLOW

We'll be sued for that, sure as shit. I can't wait for the CRTC's call.

He eyes Mitch for a long beat, as if seeing his neglected appearance for the first time.

WINSLOW

And you look like hell.

Mitch only stares back - vacant. A long moment collects between them, Winslow softening.

MITCH

(dour)

She left.

WINSLOW

Christ, Mitch.

MITCH

She's not going to let me see Jasper.

WINSLOW  
How'd he take it?

MITCH  
How else would a ten year old take his father telling him, 'hey, guess what, your dad is coming out of the closet...  
(vaudevillian hands)  
...and here I am...Gay daddy.

Winslow sighs.

WINSLOW  
Jesus, Mitch.

Mitch seems confused - looking directly at Winslow.

MITCH  
Thought you'd understand.

WINSLOW  
Why, because I'm gay you think I'd understand. Have you forgotten I own this radio station. Who's going to help me understand. How am I supposed to help my shareholders understand.  
(eyes Mitch hard)  
And it couldn't have been at a better time. Fucking Internet punks!

Mitch just sits there, the cause of all he didn't figure on.  
Winslow again softens - more friend than boss.

WINSLOW  
At least I came out when I was fifteen.

WINSLOW  
(sarcastic)  
Congratulations.

WINSLOW  
I'm not judging. What are you going to do?

MITCH  
What are you going to do?

WINSLOW  
I'll have no choice.

MITCH  
(disgusted)  
You're gonna give my spot to Manny?

WINSLOW  
Hardly the least of your concerns  
right now. Do you have a lawyer?

Mitch just shakes his head. Winslow hits his intercom button.

SECRETARY  
(over intercom)  
Yes, Mr. Gold.

WINSLOW  
Get me a meeting at Simmons and  
Taylor first thing in the morning.

SECRETARY  
Yes, sir.

Button off. Something catches Winslow's attention beyond his door. Beyond the GLASS WALLS we see...

POV - ROXANNE AND TABER

Standing in the middle of the main area, eyes fixed on Gold's office, arms crossed indignantly, ire reddening their faces.

WINSLOW  
Rox and Taber are going to be twice  
the pains in my ass they are now.

Mitch looks over his shoulder and we...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. WKUM - CENTRAL AREA - DAY

Mitch strolls reluctantly up to A CENTRAL PROGRAM DESK where Roxanne is editing news copy with swift, angry strokes and issuing orders to underlings who fly at her very command. Behind her a suspended LCD TV broadcasts the breaking story on Mitch's shocking morning show revelation, his poster smile looming over the anchorman's shoulder. Rox rolls her eyes at the newscast, her shame and humiliation obvious.

ROXANNE  
(to Mitch - terse)  
Great.

She blows past Mitch, as if stronger than he, but...

MITCH

Roxanne, I just wanted to say I'm  
sorry.

She stops sharply, slowly turns, a hurt seeping out of her.

ROXANNE

You know, Mitch, it's not that we  
had the highest rated morning show  
in the country, or that we had this  
amazing moment in a career where  
you're lucky if that happens even  
once, ...it's that after ten years  
of working together I find out my  
friend lied to me.

MITCH

Actually, you're friend couldn't  
take lying to you anymore.

A subordinate runs up with news copy, his heart pounding.

COPY BOY

Roxanne, we just pulled this off  
the AP.

She reads quickly with a 'tsk'.

ROXANNE

So the airline ground crews may  
strike after all.  
(to copyboy)  
Do a cut in and get this out right  
away.

And he runs like the wind, leaving Roxanne and Mitch with an  
awkwardness we see plainly.

ROXANNE

Well, at least I can still produce  
the news. Bye.

And she breezes off.

MITCH

(to himself)  
Bye.

And then Mitch's attention is lured to...

## THE LCD TV - A BREAKING NEWS STORY

We see a refined mid-forties man boasting a triumphant smile as he steps into a reporter's scrum gathered on COURT HOUSE STEPS, boom microphones and camcorders flooding around him. FRANCIS MALLORY is hot news.

REPORTER

(on TV)

Mr. Mallory, do you feel vindicated?

MALLORY

(on TV)

Vindicated. Mrs. Stiez spent a ton of money to just find out what I've always said I am.

(even bigger smile)

A business man.

He pushes through the scrum and we're back to the anchorman as a professional picture of SUZANNE STIEZ fills in over his shoulder. You'd guess she's mid thirties, confident and sure of herself, a staunch professional.

ANCHORMAN

(on TV)

Regardless of all charges cleared against Mr. Mallory, prosecutor Suzanne Stiez maintains he is still a suspect in the recent disappearance of his brother, Jimmy Mallory.

ON TV

Another picture. Jimmy Mallory is a slick young man in a sleazy blue suit and a cheesy smile.

ANCHORMAN

(on TV)

Jimmy was the prosecution's lead witness before...

AND THEN MITCH NOTICES two lackeys who pull his POSTER OFF THE WALL and carry it off as if he's not even there - *wonderful*.

A young and very effeminate staffer is standing behind Mitch, appalled at...

RAEOUL  
 (to lackeys)  
 Do you imbeciles not have any  
 feelings.

They roll their eyes and continue. Mitch's head droops - *oh great.*

MITCH  
 It's okay, Raeoul.

Raeoul's eyes radiate with a massive Colgate smile, his hands together over his chin, every gesture feminine.

RAEOUL  
 I just have one thing to say you,  
 Mitch Strait. Power! Power to  
 you!

Mitch only sighs watching Raeoul's butt clenched strut. The macho Manny breezes past with a laugh and shake of his head.

MANNY  
 Gettin' you hot.

More humility. We hear applause and...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. SIMMONS & TAYLOR LAW OFFICE - BOARDROOM - DAY

As the star of the hour, Richard, strolls in with a cigar handed to him by adoring intern, Sissy, and thunderous applause erupts from the crowd of lawyers. He's eyed with both admiring and jealous leers.

Two older, sophisticated men, who hold a commanding presence among the group, come together at the head of the table. LAWRENCE SIMMONS and JACK TAYLOR look like senior partners. And regarded as such, as the cheering fades with Simmons's raised hand.

LAWRENCE  
 Well, maybe Mr. Thiesen had won the  
 lottery, but we've certainly hit  
 the jackpot.

Laughter echoes the room.

JACK  
 Good job, Richard.

LAWRENCE

Yes, yes. I think its time to  
spill the beans, wouldn't you say,  
Jack.

JACK

(motioning to Richard)  
All yours, Lawrence.

LAWRENCE

(to Richard)  
Well, Richard, how do you feel  
about junior partner.

Richard is struck, the cigar limp in his mouth - more  
applause. More leers - mostly all jealous now. One such  
vivacious woman with a jealous eye steps closer, leaning to  
Richard's ear. Every man wants MARANDA LORDS.

MARANDA

(whispering)  
Way to go, partner.

RICHARD

(dumbstruck)  
Thanks, partner.

INT. WKUM - MITCH'S OFFICE - DAY

Mitch ambles in to find Meagen distraught and halfheartedly  
clearing his desk, packing his personals in a filing box.  
She stops as if caught doing something bad.

MEAGEN

Roxanne's orders.

MITCH

It's okay.

Meagen just stands there, twisting at her fingers while Mitch  
reluctantly takes a family picture of himself, wife,  
SAMANTHA, and ten year old son, JASPER, off his desk and puts  
it in the box. Just putting it away seems painful.

Meagen stares for a long beat at him - disbelieving.

MEAGEN

Are you really..?

MITCH

I'm sorry.

MEAGEN  
No, I...I mean I...it's just...

The family photo holds him.

MITCH  
It doesn't make sense to me right  
now either.  
(reassuring)  
Meagen, you'll be fine...here.

MEAGEN  
Yeah...working for Manny. He'll  
tell me how nice my breasts look  
every morning.

MITCH  
(he looks)  
You're breasts do look nice though.

That breaks her up. But the laugh covers a cry, fingers over  
her mouth. She gives Mitch a quick hug.

MEAGEN  
I'm gonna miss you.

MITCH  
Me too.

MEAGEN  
Take care.

MITCH  
You too.

He's alone...again.

INT. SIMMONS & TAYLOR - RICHARD'S OFFICE - EVENING

Richard is on the phone, in his perfect office, behind his  
perfect desk, in the middle of an argument with...

GRETCHEN  
(over phone)  
...I don't believe this.

RICHARD  
(to phone)  
No, no, no. Gretchen, you don't  
understand. I've made partner.

Lawrence stands in the doorway, a man not to be refused. His  
Rolex watch held up.

LAWRENCE  
Reservations upstairs in half an  
hour.

Richard stalls him with a finger while...

INT. HOUSEBOAT - CONTINUOUS

GRETCHEN  
(on phone - angry)  
Don't you do this, Richard. Don't  
you let him down again.

GRETCHEN is the perfect blend of woman and mother, pacing the aft deck while RICKI, the ten-year-old image of Richard without the suit, sits with his soon to be stepfather, CHUCK, a casually successful man. Ricki looks like any kid sitting in the middle of his parent's arguing.

GRETCHEN  
(on phone)  
He doesn't care about your career  
climbing. He cares...

INT. RICHARD'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

GRETCHEN  
(over phone)  
...about his father being there for  
his sport awards. He did this for  
you!

RICHARD  
(to phone)  
I know, I know. Just tell him I'll  
be a bit late, but I'll be  
there...promise.

She abruptly hangs up then...

INT. HOUSEBOAT - CONTINUOUS

Gretchen storms off the aft deck cursing...

GRETCHEN  
I'm at the end of my nerve with  
him!

Ricki sinks into the couch, cowering as if he's the one in trouble. Chuck nudges his shoulder, a reaffirming wink. They're both in the middle.

INT. RICHARD'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

After a beat Richard instantly transforms into the appreciative new partner, smiling the smiles to end all smiles at Lawrence.

LAWRENCE  
Everything alright?

RICHARD  
It's Fine. I'll be just a minute.

LAWRENCE  
Okay.

As Lawrence shuffles into the crowd of lawyers, Richard's smile turns off and he looks deeply at Ricki's beautiful picture on his desk - a father's remorse.

EXT. WKUM PARKADE - EVENING

Mitch shuffles through the parkade totting the filing box Meagen packed. He despairs. *Shit!* He sighs heavily looking at his...

BMW COUPE

It's been vandalized. *FAG* spray painted across the hood and side panels. Mitch glances at the parking stall marker: *Mitch Strait* - Any wonder they found his car.

A whistling Manny sashays to his MASSIVE FOUR WHEEL DRIVE MONSTER TRUCK - testosterone overkill - and winks at Mitch while patting his buttocks, chuckles at the vandalism then drives off shaking his head - *loser*.

Mitch simply pops the trunk and chucks the box in - drained of humility. He goes to close it but the trunk lid won't click - *damn* - he pushes it down again - harder. Pops open. *Fuck!* Slams it down. Pops open. Punches it down. *Fuck!! Fuck!!* Pops open. The CAR ALARM sirens throughout the parkade. *FUUUUUCCCCCKKKKK!!!* Mitch is suddenly the numb guy again, defeated and beaten. As if taunting him, the trunk lid pops open again. The alarm wailing.

RICHARD (V.O.)  
(surprised)  
Are you kidding me!

INT. SKYSCRAPER COCKTAIL LOUNGE - LATER

Cloistered by his adoring senior partners and the sexy Maranda, Richard's eyes bug out at an open ROLEX WATCH CASE in his hands.

LAWRENCE  
Only the best for our new partner.

Richard pulls the GOLD WATCH out of the box - enamored - and reads an inscription on the back: *Congratulations Richard - Simmons & Taylor.*

RICHARD  
This is too much.

Maranda takes the watch and clasps it around his wrist while the other males in the pack leer and smile - aroused themselves.

JACK  
(pointing at the Rolex)  
That thing is a woman magnet.  
Right, Maranda.

MARANDA  
Better than a Porshe.

More laughter - more drinks. And then...

LAWRENCE  
We've brought you up for a reason, Richard. We're in the midst of a major airline strike, and we're on the good guys side. We got the airline contract. Mediation with ground crews begins tomorrow.

Jack pats Richard's back. Richard flinches slightly - *no touching.*

JACK  
You ready for real law?

RICHARD  
(big smile)  
I am.

Suddenly...his cell beeps. A text message - "Where are you!".  
*oh oh.* Big smile gone.

EXT. HARBOUR DOCK MARINA - NIGHT

Richard carefully scoots up the primary pier to a FLOATING DOCK. Another phobia freezes him with every slight sway, eyeing the WATER with a childhood fear. He gets close to a SLIP and sees...

GRETCHEN AND RICKI

Walking up the dock, about to scuttle the gangplank onto their...

HOUSEBOAT

RICHARD  
(calling)  
Gretchen...Ricki.

They pause in the distance, waiting for him to reach them one cautious step at a time. Richard is seemingly proud of conquering yet another phobia, glancing at the shore behind him.

RICHARD  
Wow. You wanna believe that.

Gretchen is clearly disappointed while Ricki ambivalent - caught between them.

RICKI  
You okay, dad?

RICHARD  
I'll be fine.  
(looking at the water -  
uneasy)  
I'll be okay.

GRETCHEN  
(edgy)  
You'll be okay.

RICHARD  
(quip)  
Well, if I go in you'll come after  
me, right?

Her arms fold. Ricki winces - *wrong tactic dad.*

GRETCHEN  
You want me to answer that?

RICHARD  
 I'm sorry. But a great thing  
 happened today.  
 (to Ricki)  
 A real big thing.

RICKI  
 Really?

RICHARD  
 Really.

We see the a BASEBALL TROPHY in Ricki's hand.

RICHARD  
 (proud)  
 Is that the trophy you got?

GRETCHEN  
 (sarcastic)  
 Yeah, kind of a big thing isn't it.

Suddenly Richard and Gretchen eye each other - familiar hostility.

RICKI  
 You guys going to fight?

RICHARD  
 No.

GRETCHEN  
 Yes.  
 (to Ricki)  
 Go aboard.

RICHARD  
 Gretch\_\_\_.

Her palm instantly raises.

And Ricki listens - mom is the boss. Richard watches Ricki shuffle over the plank to the houseboat.

RICHARD  
 Ricki, this weekend, we'll do the  
 whale watching thing.

RICKI  
 You sure?

RICHARD  
I'm sure. I'll wear a life jacket.  
Okay.

RICKI  
(smiling)  
Okay.

But Gretchen isn't smiling. The moment Ricki is aboard and behind sliding doors...

GRETCHEN  
Why do you do that?

RICHARD  
Why do I... Why do you do that in front of him.

GRETCHEN  
Because I'm so fed up with you letting him down, Richard.

RICHARD  
Letting him down. I'm sorry, I'm trying to change things. I have a career.

GRETCHEN  
And I have a child to raise and you're a partner now. So more and more I'm doing all the parenting and Ricki is going to be where I was. Behind you, waiting. That's no fun, Richard. I know.

RICHARD  
Cause I work hard. Hey, maybe now my son doesn't have to live on a boat.

GRETCHEN  
It just so happens our son likes the boat.

RICHARD  
No, you and your boyfriend like the boat.

GRETCHEN  
(defiant)  
Fiancee.

Richard stops cold - pummelled deep inside.

RICHARD  
Fiance?

GRETCHEN  
Yeah. Chuck is a guy who's there,  
Richard.

She crosses the blank.

GRETCHEN  
No more let downs.

RICHARD  
(defeated)  
I'll be here Saturday.

GRETCHEN  
Call me tomorrow when you've rented  
the boat for whale watching. I'm  
warning you this time.

Richard can only nod as Gretchen slides the aft door closed. Richard stands there a moment, watching them inside - their lives without him. Ricki waves at him through the sliding door. Richard waves back.

RICHARD  
(to himself)  
I'll be here.

INT. MITCH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Resembles the reluctant bachelor's home, day old pizza boxes and beer bottles on the kitchen and living room tables, the WKUM POSTER: "*Strait Talk*" with Mitch Strait and his clean shaven face tacked to the walls - a former life. We see THE FILING BOX FROM THE OFFICE discarded on the couch while...

Mitch is poking away at the computer, his face flushed with MONITOR GLARE, waiting for...

MITCH  
C'mon, Jasper...be there, buddy.

And then...

AN MSN POP UP WINDOW - *JASPER10-13*

Is online. Mitch lights up - like a wave of relief washing through him. He types:

*How are you doing, buddy?*

*Okay.*

*How's the new school?*

*Okay.*

MITCH  
C'mon, Jasp, it's me.

Mitch types:

*You okay?*

*Heard bout your radio show today.* One of those "sad face" emoticons punctuates the sentence.

MITCH  
(sighs)  
Shit.

He eyes the web cam perched atop the monitor then types:

*Wanna webcam?*

*Okay.*

Mitch fumbles like a total nerd trying to plug the computer mic in, adjusts the webcam and then suddenly...

ON HIS MONITOR

Jasper's ten year old fresh face looking right at us, his static voice coming out of the speakers.

JASPER  
Hi, dad.

MITCH  
(elated)  
Hey, Jasp. Awe, it's good to see you. You okay?

JASPER  
Yeah, I'm okay, dad. Stop asking.

MITCH  
Okay. Okay. You know, just checking. Still dad here.  
(heavy sigh)  
Miss you, man.

JASPER  
 (reluctant)  
 Yeah, I miss you too.

MITCH  
 So the new school is okay?

JASPER  
 Yeah, it's cool.

MITCH  
 Met some new kids?

JASPER  
 I have a new friend.

MITCH  
 Just one...okay, good. Good, I mean  
 it all starts with one, right.

Jasper's eyebrow warps at that one. There's a long pause -  
 an awkwardness.

MITCH  
 How's your mother?

Jasper's face tenses, a quick look over his shoulder.

JASPER  
 She's okay, I guess.

MITCH  
 Aunt Suzanne?

JASPER  
 I shouldn't talk about that, dad.

MITCH  
 Oh...okay.

JASPER  
 I'm not even supposed to be talking  
 to you.  
 (another glance behind  
 him)  
 If mom finds out she'll take my  
 computer away.

Mitch wounds a little.

MITCH  
 Oh..okay. B-Bu-But we're okay, r-  
 right, Jasp?

Jasper eyes us through the monitor - hurt and confused.

JASPER  
I don't know. I mean it's weird. I  
feel like I don't know you, you  
know.

Mitch is trying to be strong - *be strong*.

MITCH  
Yeah, no, I-I know. And that's my  
fau\_\_\_.

Suddenly Jasper's head reels around...

JASPER  
Mom's coming! I gotta go. Don't  
call, dad. Promise me!

MITCH  
Ah...

JASPER  
Dad!

MITCH  
Y-Yeah, I-I...

And he's gone - instantly gone.

MITCH  
(to himself)  
...promise.

Mitch just stares at the blank monitor for a long beat, clearly reeling, then calmly turns off the computer, then the lamp, everything in order - controlled. He wanders to...

INT. MITCH'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

...the fridge and opens it, goes for the LAST BEER then freezes, staring at...

A STACK OF LUNCH SIZED JUICE BOXES AND LUNCHABLES SNACK PACKS

...in the bottom tray. He kneels down and pulls the juice boxes from the fridge, rubbing them like a lost life, his face twisting with pain we can only imagine. His eyes welling, squeezing APPLE JUICE over his jeans now, over the floor, his hands squeezing until their red, sobbing gasps coughing out of him till he slumps to the floor and...cries.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. SIMMONS & TAYLOR - ELEVATOR - DAY

Richard sails out of the elevator a new man - a partner, ten feet tall, suit fitted to a tee - ready for real law.

He struts into...

THE OFFICE

And lumbers past the BOARDROOM then stops short when he sees...

THROUGH THE BOARDROOM DOOR

Lawrence, Jack and Maranda sitting with WINSLOW GOLD - *what the..?*

Lawrence and Jack rise out of their seats when they see him and step out of the room, the door closed behind them - something secret.

LAWRENCE  
Morning, Richard.

RICHARD  
Morning.

JACK  
We have a slight change.

RICHARD  
(dumbfounded)  
I don't understand. I thought I was on the airline case.

LAWRENCE  
You will be. If they strike by deadline Thursday, we'll need you in there with us.

JACK  
But right now we need you to do a Pro Bono.

RICHARD  
(shock)  
What?

LAWRENCE

A quick case. In and out. A fast divorce I'm sure.

JACK

He's in your office.

Richard glances between Lawrence and Jack - *I don't believe this.*

INT. RICHARD'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Richard walks in, a deliberate and concerted effort to conceal disappointment from his new client...

RICHARD

Hello, Mr. Strait. How are you today?

Richard's oversold smile hangs there - waiting. Mitch is even more downtrodden, a day more beard growth and neglected hygiene.

MITCH

You always this jovial?

Richard's smile droops and he slips behind his desk, legs crossed, a professional.

RICHARD

Strait talk, right. Give it to me strait?

MITCH

Yeah. Only now we're thinking of calling it "queer talk"

RICHARD

(laughs)  
Right.  
(then...)  
You serious?

MITCH

No.

RICHARD

Right...well, I'm sure that will all blow over. Now I understand you're wife has \_\_\_.

MITCH

They fired me.

RICHARD  
Oh. Well, that should help you in  
the divorce.

MITCH  
I want to sue them?

RICHARD  
(surprise)  
You want to sue WKUM. I thought  
this was about your wife.

MITCH  
Fuck her. They fired me. I want  
them to burn. Fifty mill minimum.

RICHARD  
(quips - surprised)  
Are you serious?  
(serious)  
Are you serious?

Mitch just deadpans him and Richard gets it - gullible. He  
checks his watch like all lawyers do, like time is money.

MITCH  
(eyes the Rolex)  
Nice watch.

RICHARD  
I won a big case and...well, they  
made me partner. It's a gift.

MITCH  
Congratulations.

RICHARD  
Thanks.

MITCH  
What case?

RICHARD  
You heard of Milo Thiesen? He won  
the million for life.

MITCH  
Oh yeah. Heard his ex wife didn't  
get any of it. Wow, you are good.

RICHARD  
I can be. Did we get off on the  
wrong foot? My fault or yours?

Mitch relents -

MITCH  
Sorry. Kind of a shitty week. I  
didn't make partner.

Richard smiles that one off.

RICHARD  
But this is about your wife though,  
right?

MITCH  
Yeah.

RICHARD  
So, I'm guessing you coming out,  
wasn't so good for her.

MITCH  
You could say she's a bit miffed.

RICHARD  
Kicked you out?

MITCH  
Left. Moved in with her sister in  
Winnipeg.

RICHARD  
Sorry.

MITCH  
With our son Jasper.

Richard sighs on that one.

RICHARD  
How old is he?

MITCH  
Ten. You have kids?

Richard eyes Ricki's picture.

RICHARD  
A son. He's ten too.

MITCH  
Well, what do you know. Something  
in common.

Richard smiles that one off too.

RICHARD  
How much does she want?

MITCH  
She doesn't want any money.

RICHARD  
Oh.

Mitch hollows - the real strife.

MITCH  
No contact. And I'm not allowed to see Jasper. Can they do that?

RICHARD  
Hey, when it comes to the whole gay parent thing, y'know, we're still in the dark ages.

Mitch's face tightens. Richard realizes...

RICHARD  
Sorry. That was a bit insensitive.

MITCH  
It's okay, Mr. Narrow. I'll have to get used to that now won't I.

RICHARD  
Does she have a lawyer?

MITCH  
Suzanne Stiez.

RICHARD  
(surprise)  
The same Suzanne Stiez who's trying to prosecute Francis Mallory?

MITCH  
Yeah. She's Samantha's sister.

RICHARD  
(more surprise)  
Are you kidding.

Another dead pan look.

RICHARD  
And that's where your son is staying?

MITCH

Yeah. I have to appear in Winnipeg Wednesday or I forfeit my visitations.

RICHARD

You're not going to lose your son cause your gay. No court in this country is going to pass that. Not to mention he's staying with an aunt who's probably a target for the mob.

MITCH

(concern)

Mob?

RICHARD

Don't worry. They're just using a tactic. You love your son?

The question catches Mitch off guard.

MITCH

More than anything.

RICHARD

Good. Because that says everything.

He touches a phone button and...

Sissy springs in, ready herself for new law.

SISSY

Yes, ...Mr.Narrow.

RICHARD

(to Mitch)

Sissy is my paralegal.

(gestures to...)

Mitch Strait.

SISSY

Hi.

MITCH

Hi.

RICHARD

Mr. Strait should be on the docket in Winnipeg. Find out the time and book us two tickets.

SISSY

Okay.

RICHARD

And get copies of the documents  
from his wife's lawyer out there.  
Suzanne Stiez.

SISSY

(surprise)

Okay.

And she's dutifully gone.

MITCH

She's cute.

A dead look.

MITCH

I'm gay, I'm not dead.

That one confuses Richard but he smiles it off.

RICHARD

Okay, Mitch, I'll contact your  
wife's lawyer and we'll draft up  
your deposition. Sissy will take  
that. And don't worry.

(leans to Mitch)

And then we'll sue WKUM for a  
hundred mill minimum.

Mitch dead pans again.

MITCH

Right.

They shake hands - and their new lives begin.

EXT. INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - PARKING ANEX - DAY

Mitch's FAG PAINTED BMW rolls up to the valet hut, two young  
valets standing with their mouths hanging open - *holy shit*.

Mitch climbs out, surprisingly clean shaven and presentable,  
the every man we've seen on his posters. He gives them the  
keys - blank as usual.

MITCH

Make sure nothing happens to it.

They give him a parking voucher. He leaves them to argue over which of them is parking it.

INT. INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - GATE 5 - DAY

Mitch finds Richard and Sissy huddled together at the far end of the crowded gate, last minute brainstorming over court documents. Richard is GQ this morning, a fifty dollar smile greeting his...client??

RICHARD  
(surprised)  
Mitch?

Sissy is equally taken with Mitch's presentable good looks.

MITCH  
I'm ready.

RICHARD  
You look ready. Let's go get your son.

EXT. RUNWAY - DAY

The plane ripping over us into the clear blue sky. And then we hear PUKING and...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. COURTHOUSE BATHROOM - DAY

And still more puking till finally the stall door opens and the presentable Mitch in his fine suit staggers to the sink. His face drained and white. *Oh my God.*

JUDGE WHITLEY (V.O.)  
Good Morning.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. MEDIATION CHAMBER ROOM - DAY

AS JUDGE WHITLEY, an icon of fairness and wise judgements, saunters into the marble chamber. She sits at a massive table with a demur SAMANTHA STRAIT beside Suzanne Stiez, who looks exactly like her TV picture, and ready to win. Mitch and Richard sit opposite, the tension automatic between Mitch and Samantha, him constantly staring at her, and her avoiding him.

Judge Whitley smiles...

JUDGE WHITLEY

(to Richard)

We appreciate you appearing this morning Mr. Narrow. I think we can all agree with the notoriety surrounding Mr. Strait, these proceedings can move along more smoothly here.

Suzanne and Richard exchange a professional glance. Mitch still stares, Samantha still avoids.

RICHARD

Thank you, your honor.

JUDGE WHITLEY

So, as this is rather informal, let's see what we can work out today.

Mitch leans to the table - genuine.

MITCH

(to Samantha)

I'm sorry.

Samantha is clearly hurt - still avoiding. But Suzanne...

SUZANNE

You're sorry. Just like that. That's not going to cut it here, Mitch.

MITCH

You don't understand\_\_.

SUZANNE

I don't have to. No one has to. But Samantha and Jasper have to find a way to repair their lives. You should be ashamed.

MITCH

I am. I\_\_.

RICHARD

I think we should refrain from the personal, or we can adjourn until such a time as Mrs. Strait retains impartial representation.

Suzanne smiles - first blood.

SUZANNE

This is simple, Mr. Narrow. Before we even go a step further, your client is going to undergo a psychological assessment, because there is grave concern over the emotional damage he's inflicted not only to my client, but their son.

RICHARD

Wow, that was moving.

SUZANNE

Excuse me.

RICHARD

This is family law, Mrs. Steiz. Not criminal court. There's no reporters to sway sympathy. We need real depositions and not just your grave concerns.

SUZANNE

(sarcastic)

Thanks for the enlightenment.

(gestures to Samantha)

Do you see my client, Mr. Narrow?

RICHARD

What I see are two sisters who really didn't expect us here this morning. And, as much as I regret Mrs. Strait's hardship over the state of their marriage, that does not dismiss my client's right to parent his son, who was whisked out of home without his consent.

SUZANNE

He's told the world he's gay.

RICHARD

Well, from what I learnt in law school, that's not illegal. Absconding a child is.

SUZANNE

Absconding!

RICHARD

I get nasty with this, your client goes back to ratify that remiss of law in our backyard, their son goes to an appointed guardian for the duration, and we do a proper disclosure. I don't remember getting a request of venue change. Coming here was a curtesy to you and your client, and the wish of my client to not create more hardship for them.

Suzanne withdraws, a reassuring hand on Samantha's forearm who is fighting the urge to weep. For the first time her eyes burn through Mitch.

SAMANTHA

How could you do this to us! He heard you on the radio!

MITCH

I'm sorry, Sam, I\_\_\_.

SAMANTHA

(outraged)

Don't you ever call me that again! EVER! You've lied to me. You hurt us, Mitch. You hurt Jasper. I don't want my son to be gay!

MITCH

It doesn't mean he's going to be gay.

SAMANTHA

(slams the table)

I hate you!

Suzanne pulls Samantha into her shoulder - sister to sister. The moment hangs there, saturating the room. Mitch's face twists with the guilt. Richard annoyed with the tactic.

RICHARD

Your honor...

JUDGE WHITLEY

(to Suzanne)

Get your request in place and on Mr. Narrow's desk and let's avoid a drawn out court battle if possible here.

(to Richard)

(MORE)

JUDGE WHITLEY (cont'd)  
 Regardless your client is going  
 through an assessment, Mr. Narrow.  
 This court's concern is the child.

SUZANNE  
 We've petitioned for a financial  
 disclosure as well, your honor.  
 Mr. Strait was notified.

This is news for Richard, his eyes boring through Mitch - *it was?*

SUZANNE  
 We've seized your client's  
 accounts. He's frozen until he  
 complies.

Richard looks to Judge Whitley who...

JUDGE WHITLEY  
 (to Richard)  
 I suggest you prepare that.  
 (to both)  
 I'll give you two weeks from today.  
 Agreed.

RICHARD/SUZANNE  
 Thank you, your honor.

Mitch stares at Samantha, who can't look at him. He's numb - overwhelmed.

INT. COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

While Richard is on his iPhone, Mitch paces in the hall until Samantha and Suzanne step out of another chamber door with JASPER shuffling behind. Mitch is galvanized, his gaze locking with Jaspers, a boy clearly caught in the middle.

MITCH  
 Jasper.

Jasper waves back but Samantha tugs his hand out of the air and leads him off down the massive marble corridor. Jasper glances back at Mitch, who's forced smile trembles. Richard sees what we already know. Mitch is a dad.

INT. INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - BOARDING GATE - DAY

Richard on his iPhone, pacing in front of...

Mitch, sitting there with that vacant look on his face. Then he notices...

AN ANGRY CROWD COLLECTING AT THE AIRLINE KIOSK

Richard is oblivious, more concerned with...

RICHARD

(to phone)

No, I need a boat for this weekend.  
Something big enough for whale  
watching, y'know. Yeah, sure, hang  
on...

He opens his briefcase, pulls out a credit card from a billfold. The crowd is growing - some angry voices yelling "We want our money back." - luring Mitch out of his chair - curious.

RICHARD

(to phone)

Okay, my number is 3432 1232 1233  
7894. Yeah, yeah. The expiry is  
11/09.

His face sinks, mouth dropping open.

RICHARD

(to phone)

What do you mean. No, try again.  
No, no, no, wait. I need that\_\_\_.

He looks at the phone - completely bewildered - a hang up - and now notices...

THE ANGRY CROWD

He looks to Mitch ambling back with a 'what else could go wrong' look.

MITCH

The Strike.

INT. INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - CAR RENTAL KIOSKS - CONTINUOUS

As they run for the kiosks...

RICHARD

It was supposed to be mediation  
today.

MITCH

Guess they changed their minds.

RICHARD  
 Changed their minds. We've got  
 tickets.

MITCH  
 I don't think they care. The  
 planes are grounded.

RICHARD  
 Real law my ass!

MITCH  
 What?

RICHARD  
 Nothing...

POV - CROWDED CAR RENTAL KIOSKS

They're running grinds to nothing. The terminal masses racing  
 past them for rentals and salvation from being airport  
 stranded. Now what? Rental attendants overwhelmed, yelling  
 voices swirling everywhere.

RICHARD  
 Dammit!

Mitch sees...

ONE LONE CAB WAITING OUTSIDE

He nudges Richard's arm and they bolt for...

EXT. GREYHOUND BUS DEPOT - DAY

The cab pulls to the curb and Mitch and Richard hustle out,  
 Richard leaning in the passenger door.

RICHARD  
 (to cabbie)  
 Wait here!

CABBIE  
 Okay.

They run for...

INT. GREYHOUND BUS DEPOT - CONTINUOUS

Only to find more displaced passengers with airline bags  
 slung over shoulders, more people than the depot can  
 accommodate - *shit!*

EXT. CAR-EX RENTAL OFFICE - DAY

The cab drives up and Mitch and Richard fumble out of the back, Richard's briefcase clenched in his hand - determination laced across his face.

RICHARD  
(angry)  
I'm kicking someone's ass when I  
get home.

Mitch only rolls his eyes at that one as...

INT. CAR-EX RENTAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

They approach the desk all smiles and the sure thing. There is no crowd, the attendant relaxed and fresh faced, a cheery smile returned. She's immediately taken with Richard's GQ looks.

ATTENDANT  
Morning.

RICHARD  
(short)  
Hi.

MITCH  
(nicer)  
Hi. Do you have rentals left?

ATTENDANT  
We do. The strike, right?

MITCH  
Yeah.

Her flirtatious smile thrown right at Richard.

ATTENDANT  
Today is your lucky day.

Mitch glances between the girl and Richard - *she's flirting idiot!*

RICHARD  
(short)  
That's great. We just need a car.

Smile gone. Flirting over. Mitch sighs heavily - *moron!*

ATTENDANT  
 (jilted)  
 Sorry.

She's on the computer, and while she simply does her job now,  
 Richard is on his iPhone, calling...

INT. SIMMONS & TAYLOR - BOARDROOM - DAY

The sky has fallen in the world of real law, where Maranda,  
 Lawrence and Jack brainstorm over legal texts with several  
 uptight guys in suits - men of power - sitting in judgement  
 of their lawyers. Sissy dashes in with another pile of  
 folders. Maranda eyes their clients and pulls Sissy aside.

MARANDA  
 Where the hell is he?

SISSY  
 I don't know.

MARANDA  
 Well if he still wants to be  
 partner, he'd better get his ass in  
 here. Go get us latte's...  
 (eyes the clients)  
 and a bottle of Bailey's.

Sissy steps out of the boardroom into...

THE CORRIDOR

Her cell phone VIBRATING. The LED says its...

SISSY  
 (on cell - hushed)  
 Richard.

INT. CAR-EX RENTAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The attendant still doing her job, Mitch picking out a car,  
 Richard pacing by the window while...

INTERCUT RICHARD/MARANDA

RICHARD  
 (on iPhone)  
 Sissy, what the hell happened?

SISSY  
 (on cell)  
 Where are you? Everyone is  
 freaking out.  
 (MORE)

SISSY (cont'd)  
The airlines went to strike first  
thing this morning. You'd better  
get in here.

RICHARD  
(to iPhone)  
Slight problem. I'm still in  
Winnipeg.

Mitch waves him over and Richard passes his credit card to  
the attendant, Mitch smiling enough for both of them -  
smoothing it over.

SISSY  
(on cell)  
Oh my God. Maranda is about to cut  
your head off.

RICHARD  
(to iPhone)  
Tell her I had to be in court this  
morning.

SISSY  
(on cell)  
I don't think that's going to work.

RICHARD  
(to iPhone)  
Hang on.

The attendant is frowning, Mitch's smile gone. She hands the  
card back, Richard perplexed.

RICHARD  
(to attendant)  
What's the problem?

ATTENDANT  
(short)  
It's declined, sir.

Mitch's hands press against his cheeks - *holy*.

RICHARD  
(shocked)  
What the hell.

He looks to Mitch.

MITCH  
I'm frozen, remember.

And then something dawns on Richard - realizing.

RICHARD  
Gretchen froze me.

MITCH  
Who's Gretchen?

RICHARD  
My ex.

Mitch sighs - *we're fucked.*

While Sissy calls over the iPhone, Richard quickly digs into his suit pockets, finds his wallet and pulls out...

RICHARD  
I've got two hundred.

The attendant smiles - the scorned woman's revenge.

ATTENDANT  
I'm sorry. I require a credit card  
to secure the rental.

Mitch sighs again - *we are so fucked.*

Richard panic thinks, then...

RICHARD  
(to iPhone)  
Sissy, I need your credit card.

SISSY  
(on cell)  
I don't have a credit card,  
Richard.

RICHARD  
(to iPhone)  
I don't believe this.

SISSY  
(on cell)  
Who could I ask here?

Richard pinches the bridge of his nose - *fuck!!*

RICHARD  
(to iPhone)  
Don't ask them. They get wind of  
this, my partnership is history.  
Call Gretchen's lawyer. See if we  
can work something out.

SISSY  
                   (on cell)  
 Okay.

And she's gone. Mitch can only watch Richard pace nervously - mumbling about his career collapsing as...

A YOUNG, HIP HOP COURIER DRIVER struts into the rental office, a package under his arm and iPod phones in his ears.

Mitch and Richard huddle in, whispering...

                  MITCH  
 Don't you have a corporate credit card? Thought you were a partner.

                  RICHARD  
 For one day.

                  MITCH  
 Just my luck.

                  RICHARD  
 What's that supposed to mean?

                  MITCH  
 Nothing.

                  RICHARD  
 No, no really, what's that supposed to mean? I'm not a good lawyer.

                  MITCH  
 No it means we have no way to get home, and I'm about to be crucified if I don't get back.

                  RICHARD  
 You don't think that I don't know that.

While they argue the attendant tells the story to the courier driver as she signs for the package, the driver eyeing up the feuding lawyer and client.

                  MITCH  
 What do you care, you didn't want this case, least of all me. It's pro bono anyway.

                  RICHARD  
 Okay, okay, you know what. I'm a partner, y'know.  
 (MORE)

RICHARD (cont'd)  
 Partner's don't do pro bono. So,  
 yeah, I was a bit pissed. I've  
 busted my ass. But that doesn't  
 mean\_\_\_.

MITCH  
 Typical.

RICHARD  
 What?

MITCH  
 Typical.

RICHARD  
 What's typical? What is that  
 supposed to mean?

MITCH  
 That I get a dead beat dad for a  
 lawyer.

RICHARD  
 Says the gay man!

That wourd silences Mitch. And Richard is none too proud  
 saying it.

The driver ambles over, a swagger to his stride, a sense of  
 street and a salesman's smile.

DRIVER  
 I'm Reggie. You dudes need a car,  
 huh.

INT. REGGIE'S VAN - MOVING - DAY

Richard and Mitch sitting on the RIBBED FLOOR in the back of  
 the van, packages all around them, while Reggie drives like a  
 maniac, looking over his shoulder at his riders, who are  
 nearly shitting themselves.

REGGIE  
 So, wow, that's a bitch, man. She  
 cut off your credit cards just like  
 that? Man, I know how you feel.  
 I'm up to my butthole in alimony.

Richard gets a package in the back of the head, his Armani  
 suit taking a beating. Another package slides into Mitch when  
 Reggie takes a sharp corner. Then we hear...

GRAVEL ROAD SPITTING UNDER TIRES

REGGIE

Well, you don't worry about it. I know my Uncle Maurice has a car for you guys. Now how much did you say you had?

MITCH

Two hundred.

Richard eyeballs him - *are you crazy.*

Mitch glares back - *got any better ideas.*

And then the van suddenly stops. Reggie has hopped out and...

PULLS OPEN THE REAR DOORS

Sunlight spills through the dust and packages. Reggie's friendly smile is gone, and a SHORT BARREL .45 is held firmly in his outstretched hand.

REGGIE

Two hundred works for me.

Richard and Mitch are sudden fear and shock, their hands raised.

Reggie glances around, no witnesses - a nervous small time thief.

REGGIE

This works better if you guys c'mon out here.

They crawl out ...

EXT. THE VAN - CONTINUOUS

Onto a COUNTRY ROAD, nothing around but ONE LONE FARM HOUSE off the road, otherwise nothing but wide open prairie for miles. The city nowhere in sight.

Reggie watches Richard climb over boxes, trying his damndest to not muss up the suit.

Mitch wishing Richard would move it - hands raised.

REGGIE  
 Man, hurry it up. Damn. My  
 grandmother can get out of there  
 faster.

He's finally out - every phobia alive.

RICHARD  
 This is an Armani suit, okay.

MITCH  
 Good time to bring that up.

RICHARD  
 Shut up.

Reggie's gun points right at them. Hands reach for the sky.

REGGIE  
 Hey, hey, hey, who am I?

MITCH  
 Uh...Reggie..?

REGGIE  
 A robber. And they makes you  
 two..?

MITCH  
 ...The victims.

RICHARD  
 The idiots.

REGGIE  
 (laughs)  
 That's right. Makes you the  
 fuckin' idiots. Okay, so let's just  
 focus on what we have to do here.  
 (notices the suit)  
 That's Armani? Really?

He reaches over, touches the lapel.

REGGIE  
 Man, that's nice.  
 (notices the...)  
 Get out of here! Is that a Rolex?

He pulls down Richard's hand, oogling it like a fine piece of art.

REGGIE

Wow. Man, that's like a James Bond watch right there.

MITCH

Actually he wears an Omega.

REGGIE

He does?

MITCH

Yeah, yeah, he does. Are you going to shoot us?

Reggie steps back - gun more relaxed - inexperienced.

REGGIE

If you don't make me, I won't. But lucky for you guys I'm a cash only kind of guy.

Mitch and Richard share a glance - *what?*

MITCH

Have...you done this before?

REGGIE

(offended)

Hell yeah. You guys are from out of town, so you don't know my rap, but I'm serious. My sheet is longer than this road.

MITCH

Well then why not take the Rolex?

RICHARD

(shocked)

What?! Give him your watch.

MITCH

It's a Timex!

REGGIE

Yeah, I couldn't even get five dollars for a Timex.

Richard tugs at the watch.

RICHARD

Okay, fine. What the hell!! It's the kind of day I'm having anyway.

Reggie points at the gun in his hand.

REGGIE  
Hello, robber with a gun.

Hands back in the air.

REGGIE  
Look, I'd like to help you guys out  
and everything, but fencing stuff  
is just not a good career move,  
y'know.

MITCH  
You're a courier driver.

REGGIE  
I'm changing careers, okay.

RICHARD  
(to Mitch)  
Good idea. Piss off the guy with  
the gun.

MITCH  
(to Richard)  
I'm just saying, he doesn't seem  
like a "harden criminal."

RICHARD  
(to Mitch)  
I don't think his resume matters.

Reggie can't believe these two - gun pointed, hands raised  
higher.

REGGIE  
I should shoot you guys for just  
being so damn annoying.  
(to Richard)  
Now give the man with the gun the  
money.

Richard hands it over.

MITCH  
Are you going to leave us out here?

RICHARD  
(edgy)  
Do you have to ask the questions?

MITCH

Seems like a good question to me.

REGGIE

Yes, I'll be leaving you out here.

(points at...)

I'll be taking that phone. I can't have you guys calling the cops.

(looking around)

I need some time, y'know. My whole day is kind of rearranged now.

Richard eyeballs Mitch as if it's all his fault and hands over the iPhone.

REGGIE

Nice phone. I'll send this to you, okay. Promise.

RICHARD

Right.

MITCH

No, I think he promises.

Another eyeball - *shut the hell up.*

REGGIE

Okay, you guys have some issues to work out.

(holds up the money )

But nice meeting you anyway. Have a good trip to wherever your going.

Reggie heads for the van, then...

REGGIE

You can put your hands down now, guys. We're done.

They're hands slowly rescind - *idiots.*

And the van peels off down the gravel road. They stand there for the longest of painful moments watching the dust tail all the way down the long, lonely road to nowhere.

RICHARD

This is unbelievable.

And then in the FARMYARD DRIVEWAY they see...

A '69 CHEVY HALF TON FOR SALE

RICHARD  
And what do we buy that with?

Mitch shakes his head - *idiot*.

MITCH  
They'll have a phone.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - PORCH - DAY

Mitch pulls open a screen door that squeals with fifty years of heartache across the farmyard. Richard stands off the porch, one of many eye rolls, arms folded in judgement. Mitch knocks on the door.

MITCH  
Hello.

INT. FARMHOUSE - WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

Mitch peers inside from the porch. The house is still - forgotten.

MITCH  
(through the window)  
Hello.

Furniture and fixtures dulled with layers of dust and impressive cob webs.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - PORCH - CONTINUOUS

MITCH  
I don't think anyone lives here anymore.  
(calls over the yard)  
Hello!

Richard checks out THE '69 CHEVY HALF TON.

POV - NEW LICENSE PLATE

RICHARD  
Well someone must.

They amble to...

THE TRUCK

And in the box is AN OLD SPARE TIRE AND TIRE IRON holding down A BLUE TARP COVERING SOMETHING BOX LIKE and SOMETHING LUMPY.

Mitch's face is pressed to the driver's window.

POV - KEYS!!

MITCH  
(relieved)  
I don't believe it.

He tries the driver's door - it opens.

RICHARD  
What are you doing?

Mitch doesn't have to say it - gotta do what you gotta do.

He slips behind the wheel. Turns THE KEY to power. The GAS NEEDLE RISES TO...FULL!

Richard opens the passenger door.

RICHARD  
You're not seriously...

MITCH  
Got a better idea. I'm all ears.

RICHARD  
How 'bout jail.

MITCH  
We're just borrowing it.

RICHARD  
Borrowing it. I don't believe this. Borrowing it. Maybe that's what Bonnie and Clyde said their first time. 'We'll just borrow it.'

MITCH  
They were killers.

RICHARD  
Maybe they started out as borrowers.

MITCH  
 Hey, I'm NOT losing my son, okay.  
 (upset)  
 I've got two days to get home and  
 prove I'm not a perverted crazy  
 person. So, we're stealing this  
 fucking truck.

Richard has thoughts of his own - *maybe a good idea.*

RICHARD  
 Okay...okay. But we have to leave  
 something.

He pulls a slip of paper and pen from his breast pocket.

MITCH  
 (sarcastic)  
 You're going to leave them a note.  
 Well, your honor, I don't  
 understand. We left them a note.

RICHARD  
 I'm a partner. I don't steel  
 trucks.

MITCH  
 Then leave your watch.

RICHARD  
 I'm not leaving my...watch.

...winces, looking down the road, reconciling the situation.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - PORCH - CONTINUOUS

As THE '69 CHEVY pulls out of the drive with gears fatally  
 grinding we see:

RICHARD'S ROLEX LEFT ON THE PORCH TABLE

With a note under - *sorry, had to borrow your truck.*

We see the INSCRIPTION ON THE BACK OF THE WATCH -  
*Congratulations Richard - Simmons & Taylor.*

EXT/INT. '69 CHEVY - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Mitch behind the wheel, forcing the STICK SHIFT into what  
 should be first gear, grinding and lurching - a standard  
 transmission. Richard hanging on like it's a carnival ride.

RICHARD  
You can't drive standard?

MITCH  
No. Can you?

RICHARD  
No. You didn't think of that.

Heads bobbing - gears grinding.

MITCH  
Yeah, cause there were so many to  
chose from. I really think we  
should've went with the sedan, and  
got the extended warranty.

RICHARD  
Hey, it was your idea to jack the  
thing.

MITCH  
Did you just say 'Jack'.

More lurching, heads hitting the back window.

RICHARD  
Ouch! Try second. Try second.

Mitch grinds into second...a bit better. The engine  
sputtering, getting more momentum.

MITCH  
That's better.

Still lurching.

RICHARD  
(sarcastic)  
Yeah, a lot better.

THE TRUCK

Lurches down the GRAVEL ROAD, threading over the vast PRAIRIE  
against THE SETTING SUN.