

"CASTER'S BLOG"

Screenplay by
Austin McKinley

Based on the book by
Marcus Alexander Hart

06/19/07
PO BOX 48582
Sarasota, Florida 34230
941.266.1381
austin@austinmckinley.com

FADE IN:

A BLANK COMPUTER SCREEN

Enlarged texture. The sound of a computer booting up.

We hear CASTER'S VOICE OVER

CASTER (V.O.)

Did you ever feel like your life is a new hard drive that has just been formatted? Just a sterile blankness spinning at seventy-two hundred RPM. The drive isn't bad. But if you close your eyes and listen all you hear is meaningless white noise.

(waits)

Do you know what I'm saying?

We hear LUVBUNNY'S VOICE OVER. It's a young girl's voice, maybe seventeen.

LUVBUNNY (V.O.)

Sounds like the story of my life!

TITLE CARD

Another Saturday night...
Current mood: lonely

EXT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

We see RAYMOND CASTER (late twenties) open the front door to his apartment over the shoulder of the PIZZA DELIVERY GUY. He's a little gawky and wears big, ugly glasses. He pays the guy and takes the pizza. He speaks towards us, the audience.

CASTER

I was supposed to go out with Turbo Dan and his friends tonight, but he never called me. So it looks like I'm going to spend another Saturday night ordering in some Hungry Howie's and playing "Wheel of TiVo".

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM

We see caster from the TV'S POV, thumbing the remote.

CASTER

I'm really in the mood for an old Voyager with Kes in it, but all I'll probably get is Seven of Nine. It's like the Wheel of TiVo has one space for

"Kes", 10 for "Seven of Nine", and one for "Lose a Turn".

He stuffs a big horking slice in his maw. Like half of it.

CASTER

(continuing)

I don't get what people think is so hot about Seven. Sure there's the breasts, but Kes is a sweetheart. Plus, two words: pointy ears.

He drops pizza sauce on his shirt, smears it with his hand, licks his finger.

CASTER

(continues, gesticulating)

What the hell, I say. What the hell. Tom Paris is right there, Tuvok is right there, even that little puss Harry Kim is right there and horny and desperate! But no, she goes for the lizard pig man.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM

He types on the computer, nodding to himself.

CASTER

(thinks)

Well, whatever. If you didn't like that rant, then thank Turbo Dan for not calling me.

He hits the button to upload, leans back.

EXT. ARBY'S - DAY

Caster walks toward the building, back to us. He's wearing his work clothes, shirt and tie.

INT. ARBY'S

We see TURBO DAN, Mid 20s Florida surfing poseur, in a booth by the window, waving Caster over. Caster sits.

CASTER

So, did you have fun on Saturday night?

TD gets this far-away look like he's trying to remember.

TURBO DAN

Whoa. Yeah. Me and Scottie and Mooker went out to the Beach House and got trashed with these four chicks.

CASTER
And that's it.

TURBO DAN
Yeah, man, it was awesome. You should have been there. We had one too many chicks.

Caster looks at him incredulously.

CASTER
Yeah, sounds fun. Are you going to do it again this weekend?

TURBO DAN
Yeah, man. Tomorrow night. I'll call you.

Caster smirks.

CASTER
Just tell me the name of the bar and I'll meet you there.

Caster looks pleased with himself.

INT. CREDIT UNION/CASTER'S CUBICLE - DAY

Caster sits in his cubicle at work, frowning at his computer screen, his fingers poised above the keyboard.

CASTER
Oh my God. I just reread what I wrote, and now I feel like the biggest loser in the world for getting so excited about scoring a date with Turbo Dan.

INSERT

We see the last few lines he's typed. Below them appears the ICON for HOOCH. It says "Hooch Comments..."

INT. HOOCH'S BACHELOR PAD - DAY

The screen of HOOCH's computer. "FIREFLY" and "FUTURAMA" posters on the wall. A young guy, comfortably hefty, and wearing a fez, types. He smirks to himself.

HOOCH
Whoa, there. Are you telling me that you missed a chance to hang out with three guys named Turbo Dan, Scottie, and Mooker?

INSERT

We see the last few lines he's typed. Below them appears the ICON for RCASTER1138. It says "Rcaster1138 Comments..."

INT. CREDIT UNION/CASTER'S CUBICLE - DAY

The screen of Caster's computer. Widen to reveal Caster typing at his computer.

CASTER

Oh, ha. Okay, when you're as popular as I am, you can't exactly go excluding people from your social circle just because of ham-fisted personal nomenclature.

INT. FLORIDA DIVE BAR - NIGHT

(Possibly O'Leary's, The Bahai Hut, or the Gator Club.)
Caster sits nursing a beer, looking bored and irritated.

INT. FLORIDA DIVE BAR - NIGHT (LATER)

Caster's now drunk, his collar is loose and he's sweaty. Caster looks around him hopelessly as strangers cross through the frame.

CASTER

Okay, if you don't know me, you probably think that I'm a closet homosexual with deep running desires for an idiot named Turbo Dan.

He takes another forlorn sip of beer. There is a puff of smoke and the frame becomes...

INT. FEATURELESS BLACK SPACE

Caster is sitting on his barstool, with his beer, in a featureless black space. Strangers cross in front and behind him, not paying him any attention.

CASTER

You know how they say that pot is a gateway drug that paves the way to harder stuff? Well, Turbo Dan is like a gateway friend.

INT. FLORIDA DIVE BAR - A DIFFERENT NIGHT

Turbo Dan, surrounded by people, laughing.

INT. FLORIDA DIVE BAR - LATER

Caster leans on the bar facing us, alone in a crowd.

CASTER

I mean, how do you even start talking to a girl in a bar without Turbo Dan there to ease you into the conversation? I sure as hell don't know.

The icons for LUVBUNNY and NOSTRADOMINATRIX appear in the air next to Caster, as if they are sitting on the stools next to him, complete with beers.

LUVBUNNY

Girls are tricky beings and frequently cause confusion. Hang out with robots instead.

CASTER

You should get to work on that. I'd like a robot Grace Lee Whitney circa 1966, please.

NOSTRADOMINATRIX

Lose Turbo Dan. He's a schmuck. What about asking some of his friends to go to the bar with you instead?

CASTER

To an outsider, I'm sure bombing out with Turbo Dan's friends seems like a perfectly reasonable alternative. Although if you knew them, I think you'd retract the suggestion. Sometimes it's easier to just be alone.

The icons wobble sympathetically.

LUVBUNNY AND NOSTRADOMINATRIX

Mmm.

INT. CREDIT UNION/CASTER'S CUBICLE - DAY

Caster types away on his work computer.

CASTER

Hey everybody! It's every-other-Thursday again! That means another timesheet reminder poem from Julie the H.R. Vogon.

INSERT

Close on the screen, we see Julie's poem on one of those lame, flowery Outlook stationeries that nobody uses except for HR ladies, and we hear her VOICE OVER:

JULIE (V.O.)

"There's a lucky little man who dresses in the color green./

This is the special time of year when
 his pot of gold is sometimes seen./
 If you should be lucky enough to see
 the leprechaun make sure to say,/ /
 'Don't forget to submit your time
 sheets, And have a Happy Saint Patrick's
 Day!' "

BACK TO SCENE

Caster winces.

CASTER

Oh man, that one hurts. Hey H.R. Julie,
 a little bit of meter might have been a
 nice addition. Discuss.

The ICON for NOSTRADOMINATRIX appears.

"SUPERIMPOSE: NOSTRADOMNATRIX COMMENTS..."

NOSTRADOMINATRIX

Tell her not to quit her day job.

Caster digests this, types.

CASTER

Ironically, it kind of is her day job.

INT. CREDIT UNION/CASTER'S CUBICLE - LATER

The workday is progressing. Caster is bored. Finally he
 perks up, types.

CASTER

As LuvBunny pointed out in her blog, all
 anyone ever does in their online
 journals is gripe. So here's my penance
 in the form of a super happy post! Today
 is the best day evar! It is seventy-six
 degrees and sunny!

Caster looks longingly at a picture calendar on his wall.

CASTER

You know what, Turbo Dan? I don't need
 you. It's sunny and I'm going to the
 beach! And not just over to Lido Beach
 either. I'm going to Siesta beach. I am
so happy that I will wrap this up with a
 summary in haiku form because if you're
 going to write a poem, it should be a
super happy haiku!

(thinks)

Going to the beach!
 It's always sunny outside!

Bite me, Turbo Dan!

INT. HOOCH'S BACHELOR PAD - DAY

Hooch scowls at his computer.

HOOCH

Ray, have you been hitting the Prozac again?

INT. CREDIT UNION/CASTER'S CUBICLE

He types.

CASTER

I'm high on life, man. High on life.

INT. LUVBUNNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

She's a 'microchip girl.' Cute and feminine, but with nerd /techie undercurrents. Her room is decorated pink and black with clouds and bees and bunnies.

She types sarcastically.

LUVBUNNY

Caster, are you bipolar?

INT. CREDIT UNION/CASTER'S CUBICLE

He types.

CASTER

I'm high on life man. High on...
You guys suck.

BLACK OUT

We HEAR the sound of a PHONE RINGING.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

He's pacing the floor, agitated.

CASTER

Unbelievable. I just got a call from Turbo Dan. He actually apologized for his failure to make an appearance at the bar last weekend.

INT. AUTO PARTS STORE - DAY

(Perhaps the Auto Zone on 301, unless there's a more famous store.) We see Turbo Dan from the cashier's POV, talking.

CASTER (V.O)

He said he went to the auto parts store

on Friday afternoon, and he met this "amazing girl" working there named Shadow.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

He stops pacing.

CASTER

Psssht. Whatever! What kind of name is "Shadow"? It's a freakin' cat name, that's what.

He's pacing again.

CASTER

(continuing)

Anyway, he and Shadow ended up hanging out all night, and he lost track of time and whatever. The irritating part is...

INT. TURBO DAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

TD's on the phone.

TURBO DAN

Hey, me and Shadow are going to go out to Siesta and rent jet skis Saturday. You should come out there with us.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Still pacing.

CASTER

Aaarrg! Damn you Turbo Dan! I was going to go there by myself anyway, but now that you've invited me, when you don't show up I'm going to spend all day feeling like I was ditched again.

He stops, exhausted and fuming.

CASTER

Does this make sense to anybody else, or am I just totally psycho?

The icon for ANONYMOUS floats into the frame.

ANONYMOUS

You are absolutely right, I agree with everything you say. Doesn't this make you crave a semi-automatic nine millimeter Beretta?

CASTER

It's the best feeling ever when you ask

the Internet, "Am I a psycho?" and the Internet responds, "No way! Go get a gun!"

EXT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - DAY

He walks out to the car, gets in, and drives off.

INSET

Time-lapse shot of Caster's computer. We see the clock roll forward. There's a little weather widget on his desktop that reads, "76 degrees and sunny," and has a sun that sets, and a moon that rises...

BLACK OUT

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Caster flops at his keyboard, no glasses. He counts syllables on his fingers.

CASTER
(to himself)
Jet ski incident
Beautiful girl named Shadoe
Now I squint blindly

EXT. SIESTA BEACH - DAY

Caster stands in a shell gravel parking lot. Turbo Dan's Jeep pulls up and stops near Caster. He's wearing a short-sleeved ribbed wetsuit.

SHADOE BEAUPRE - mid 20s, gets out of the Jeep. She has blonde dreads. She's wearing a pair of Daisy Dukes, flannel shirt, and bikini top.

TURBO DAN
Hey man, this is Shadoe, that chick I was telling you about.

CASTER
Enchanted to meet you, Shadoe. I once had a cat that went by that name.

Caster winces, can't believe he said that. Shadoe giggles.

SHADOE
(straight-faced)
That's funny, I have an ex named Ray.

Caster's not sure how to take this.

SHADOE
(continuing)
Nah, I'm just jokin'.

Angle on Caster: relieved, impressed, smitten.

EXT. JET SKI BOOTH

We see them talking to the attendant, but Caster talks to us.

CASTER

So the plan was that we would each rent our own jet ski, but we realized that we didn't have enough money to rent three, so...

They sniff in revulsion as they strap on the moldy life jackets and the rental guy starts up the jet-ski.

CASTER

(to Turbo Dan)

You want to go first?

TURBO DAN

Sure, bro.

As soon as he mounts it, Shadoe kicks off her sandals. She jumps on and takes Turbo Dan by his waist.

SHADOE

Hey! It's a two-person!

They go ripping off across the water.

Caster sits on the dock and waits and watches.

SARASOTA BAY

Turbo Dan slices the tail around and this huge wave shoots up. A boat goes by and he jumps the wake. Shadoe is screaming and giggling. She waves to Caster as they go by.

DOCK

Turbo Dan pulls it back up to the dock and they climb off.

TURBO DAN

Your turn, dude!

Caster carefully steps onto the thing, and as soon as his foot touches it, it starts to slip away. Turbo Dan grabs him by the arm before he plunges into the water. Shadoe giggles. Caster flushes with embarrassment.

He gets settled and Shadoe jumps on behind him, grabbing onto his hips.

SHADOE

Gun it, Ray!

Caster grins, squeezes the accelerator and they blast away.

SARASOTA BAY

They zip around the bay.

CASTER

If you've never ridden a jet ski before
let me tell you, it's amazing. I now
know exactly what it feels like to ride
a speeder bike, without Ewok
interference.

Close on Shadoe clinging to his waist, and Caster - drinking
her in with every sense possible.

CASTER

It was the most awesome moment that I
have ever experienced, ever.

They come up on a big cabin cruiser, its large wake
spreading enticingly before them.

SHADOE

Jump it! Jump it!

CASTER

Hell yeah! Hold on to your butts!

He puts it full throttle into the side of the boat wake. The
front of the jet ski hits the water at a weird angle and
Shadoe and Caster flip over the side. Wipeout!

Turbo Dan laughs on the shore.

TURBO DAN

Whoa!

CATER'S POV

The world is a featureless blur.

BACK TO SCENE

We see his face. He's treading water and coughing up a
lungful of salt water.

CASTER

My glasses!

Shadoe's still laughing.

CASTER

I can't see a thing.

SHADOE

Then I guess I get to be your chauffeur.

They climb back on the jet-ski and start it. Shadoe's the
driver and Caster is the passenger.

They cruise around the bay a bit more. Shadoe drives crazier than Turbo Dan, and Caster holds her tightly.

Close on Caster's face, loving it.

EXT. THE JET SKI BOOTH - DAY (LATER)

They meet up with Turbo Dan again. Shadoe is gesturing, suggesting getting a bite to eat.

SERIES OF SHOTS - SIESTA VILLAGE

- A) They pile into Turbo Dan's Jeep
- B) They pull into a beach food joint(Daiquiri Deck/ Salty Dog)
- C) Back in the Jeep, Shadoe and Caster share a basket of chicken fingers. They are still moist and shivering, but having fun.
- D) The Jeep cruises through the village.

INT. TURBO DAN'S JEEP - DUSK - TRAVELLING

Shadoe's in the front seat and she leans her head on Turbo Dan's shoulder. Caster tries not to notice, a little jealous. He leans back, and closes his eyes, listening to the music and feeling the wind in his hair. He's cool.

EXT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Turbo Dan's jeep drives off, Caster waving as it goes.

CASTER

I had to leave my car on Siesta Key on account of my eyes. Tomorrow I'll have to get new glasses and then find a way out to Siesta to reclaim my car.

Caster turns on his heel, and heads to the door.

CASTER

(continuing)

So I guess the day did have a little bit of a down side, but in the end, I still feel like I was the big winner of today.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

He leans back from his computer, stretches, and sighs.

BLACK OUT

INT. CREDIT UNION/CASTER'S CUBICLE - DAY

BLAKE (who we'll meet later) in the next cubicle is ranting,

his voice a dull drone as Caster types. Caster has new "Emo" glasses that look much better on him.

CASTER

I can't stop thinking about Saturday.
I'm still high from it. I can't stop
thinking about that girl Shadoe.

Caster leans back, daydreaming.

CASTER

(continuing)

I want to call her. I wish I knew her
phone number. I know she works in an
auto parts store, but a casual Yahoo!
Yellow Pages search showed about eighty
auto parts stores near Turbo Dan's
apartment.

He sits back. Waits.

INT. LUVBUNNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

She lays on her stomach on the bed with her laptop.

SUPERIMPOSE:

LuvBunny comments...

LUVBUNNY

I can't believe that you're asking how
to steal your best friend's girlfriend.
What kind of sex-crazed bastard are you?

INT. NOSTRADOMINATRIX'S DUNGEON - DAY

NOSTRADOMINATRIX, A lady in leathers types at her computer
in a corner of the dungeon.

SUPERIMPOSE:

Nostradominatrix comments...

NOSTRADOMINATRIX

If you get someone else's chick to go
out with you behind her boyfriend's
back, rest assured that the same will
happen to you later.

INT. HOOCH'S BACHELOR PAD - DAY

Hooch is fixing himself a drink.

SUPERIMPOSE:

Hooch comments...

HOOCH

Duder. Look. Here's the deal. No need to
get all sneaky. From what you've said,

it sounds like Turbo Dan is out for a
good time and not commitment.
So, it's easy enough. Just be all,

INT. THE AUTO PARTS STORE - DAY

Caster and Dan are in the FG talking in low tones, miming what Hooch says while Shadoe works the register in back. We only hear HOOCH'S VOICE, synched to match Caster and Turbo Dan's lip movements.

CASTER / HOOCH

Whoa. Dude. Like, you and that chick
doing the hookup thing or you just
hangin' chill?

HOOCH (V.O.)

His answer should give you insight on
how to proceed. If he replies,

TURBO DAN/ HOOCH

Naw, she's cool and all, but we're just
dropping hat, you know?

HOOCH (V.O.)

Then you've got a good opportunity to
say,

CASTER/ HOOCH

Sweet, Bro. Drop her digits on me so I
can clap her on the jaw jagger, she's
way sweetie.

Freeze on Caster.

HOOCH (V.O.)

Now, if he says,

TURBO DAN/ HOOCH

Shaw, she's all up on it, man,

HOOCH (V.O.)

Or...

TURBO DAN/ HOOCH

Making the sweet nookie on my hang down,
I'm diggin' it.

Freeze on Turbo Dan.

HOOCH (V.O.)

Then you've just been informed of his
intentions.

INT. HOOCH'S BACHELOR PAD

HOOCH

At this point, don't challenge his dominance of the female, simply back away slowly.

INT. CASTER'S CUBICLE

CASTER

I rarely know what you're talking about.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Caster is walking back from Arby's with a sack of lunch.

CASTER

Wow. I guess the answer to yesterday's question of "How can I get Shadoe's phone number out of Turbo Dan" was "Don't steal Turbo Dan's girlfriend, home wrecker."

He shakes his head, takes out his Arby-Q and chows as he walks.

CASTER

I am so bad at dealing with people. I mean, he's known her for less than a week.

INT. HOOCH'S BACHELOR PAD - DAY

Hooch is throwing darts.

HOOCH

What? I didn't say that! Steal her! Steal her! Ok, what I really said was be honest with your friend.

INT. LUVBUNNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

She's on her bed, doing her homework.

LUVBUNNY

I think you have every right in the world to somehow steal Shadoe away from Turbo Dan, you sex-crazed bastard. My idea would be to snag Turbo Dan's phone and then quickly scan through and find her number.

INT. CASTER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Caster is changing out of his work clothes.

CASTER

Okay, here's my plan. It's Thursday, so Turbo Dan is working tonight at Circle K.

INT. THE CIRCLE K - NIGHT

Caster walks in like a master criminal in a caper movie.

CASTER (V.O.)

I'll casually go in there as if I intended to pick up a Thirstbuster.

Caster starts talking to Turbo Dan.

CASTER (V.O.)

I'll either...

As Caster chats soundlessly, the icon for HOOCH appears over his right shoulder.

CASTER (V.O.)

Listen to Hooch, and ask him man-to-man what the deal is with him and Shadoe. Or...

The icon for LuvBunny appears over his left shoulder.

CASTER (V.O.)

Listen to LuvBunny and be justified in borrowing his cell phone long enough to steal her number.

INT. CASTER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Caster looks at himself in the mirror, hands on his dresser.

CASTER

I'm making myself sick to my stomach with all of this second guessing. Wish me luck.

INT. CIRCLE K - NIGHT

Caster walks into the Circle K and sees Shadoe there talking to Turbo Dan. She's leaning against the counter, drinking a strawberry soda. Caster freezes.

CASTER

Um, hi guys! What's going on?

SHADOE

Nothing much, we're just hanging out.

CASTER

Sooo, you guys want to go and do something after Turbo Dan gets off work?

TURBO DAN

Nah. I just got in. I'm graveyard tonight.

CASTER

Okay, no problem. See you later.

He starts to leave.

CASTER (V.O.)

Well, that couldn't have gone any worse. Stupid! Stupid!

SHADOE

Hey, I'll go do something with you.

Caster breaks into a slow smile.

CASTER

Okay.

EXT. LIDO BEACH - NIGHT

They walk along carrying their shoes, barefoot in the sand. The waves roll in slowly, hypnotically. Shadoe is laughing.

SHADOE

Okay then, what are the last three books you've read?

CASTER

Ooh. It won't be pretty. They all start with "Harry Potter and the..." You'd better go first.

SHADOE

Okay, umm. "Stupid White Men" by Michael Moore, "Shopgirl" by Steve Martin, and "Brave New World" by Aldous Huxley.

CASTER

Ahh, you're just asking for a visit from the thought police.

SHADOE

That's "1984," silly.

EXT. LIFEGUARD STAND - LATER

Shadoe is lying on her back using Caster's leg for a pillow, and he's playing with her braids. The stars spilling out above them.

CASTER

Okay, so what do you think is the ultimate question to life, the universe and everything?

SHADOE

Hum. I think it comes down to this:
Do we have any free will in the
universe, or is an outside force calling
all the shots?

CASTER

Personally, I think everybody has their
specific place in life, and it only
seems chaotic and random because we
don't know the whole story yet.

SHADOE

Fate, right? See, I think fate is a
statistical improbability.

We see Caster's face. He is so into her.

SHADOE

I mean, every day is made up of
thousands of variables that can't be
predicted or controlled. How could some
outside force could have a specific
destination planned for each of us?

CASTER

You make a good point. I guess if there
is some being out there vicariously
writing my life, he's got a pretty
pathetic imagination.

INSERT

The sun is starting to come up over Lido Beach.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

Caster's car pulls up in front of Shadoe's trailer. It's
quaint, like a 1956 Airstream but two-toned white and
orange. The reflections of the trailer park's colored
lights play on its sides and her pink bicycle leans against
it.

Shadoe gets out, leans down into the open doorframe with her
arms on the roof.

CASTER

I had a really good time tonight.

SHADOE

Yeah, I did too.

CASTER

Hey, could I have your phone number?

SHADOE
 (avoiding eye contact)
 Oh... I don't have a phone.

CASTER
 Oh. Okay then. I guess I'll see you
 around.

He watches as she goes to her door, disappears.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

He's typing on the computer.

CASTER
 W.T.F? No phone? That's such a lame
 excuse, especially coming from somebody
 as smart as her. I just don't know.
 Maybe it'll make more sense after I get
 some sleep... sleep....

He puts his head down on the keyboard. A beat, then...

There is a plunk, the icon for Nostradominatrix appears
 above him.

NOSTRADOMINATRIX
 She could be telling the truth. Maybe
 she can't afford to have phone service
 and doesn't want you to think less of
 her.

Caster looks up, bleary eyed.

CASTER
 Whatever. Everybody has a phone. Not
 having a phone is like not having
 electricity.

He puts his head back down.

INT. CREDIT UNION/CASTER'S CUBICLE - DAY

Caster is working away, trying to ignore Blake's voice.

CASTER
 It's time for another bit of joy from
 H.R. Julie.

Close on the screen, we see Julie's poem and hear her VOICE
 OVER:

JULIE (V.O.)
 "The month of March is here again,/
 Lucky for us, the weather has been,/
 good enough to take the punch,/ out of
 the fact that this is Frozen Food

Month!/ So submit your time sheets and stay warm,/ and be glad you've avoided the winter storms!"

Caster shudders, types.

CASTER

Ow ow ow! This is the most obtuse theme yet! Nobody should be writing poetry about frozen food unless they are a penguin, or perhaps Mr. Freeze. Not to mention the fact that she rhymed "punch" with "month." No way. Bad H.R. Julie.

He chuckles to himself. Blake's voice intrudes. Caster, distracted, listens.

BLAKE (O.S.)

Yeah? How in hell should I know if we need one? What? Well I don't care what HE says! Tell him that we don't need it. Look, I can take care of it myself!

(beat)

No. No. No no no no! Jesus!

(beat)

Look, let me talk to him. God damn it, I don't care! LET him step on the carpet! Don't you talk to me like that! Don't you dare hang...

There is a beat, we hear the phone slam down.

BLAKE (O.S.)

BITCH!

After another beat, Blake comes over, puts his elbow on top of the cubicle wall, and waits.

CASTER

Um, can I help you?

BLAKE

Women, right? Can't live with 'em, can't live without 'em. Right?

CASTER

I can live without 'em.

BLAKE

HA!

(looks Caster up and down.)

So what, you're some kind of fag?

A beat, Caster's realizing this was the wrong thing to say.

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT

Turbo Dan, Shadoe and Caster approach the theatre on foot.
(The Hollywood Twenty, of course.)

They go up to the ticket counter where TORY is working.

TURBO DAN
Three children for "Zombie Remake."

TORY
Um, you guys aren't children.

TURBO DAN
We're all children, on the inside.

She looks at him with a weird smitten grin.

INSERT

We see the cash register ring up three children's tickets.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE LOBBY

Turbo Dan hands Caster and Shadoe their tickets.

TURBO DAN
Cha-ching!

INT. MOVIE THEATRE

They're watching the movie. Shadoe and Caster are tense, Turbo Dan is too cool to be scared. Shadoe jumps and the popcorn flies off of the chair, and that scares her too. Afterwards, she is so freaked out that she is crushing both Caster and Turbo Dan's hands. Caster is wincing but obviously enjoying it.

INT. TURBO DAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He lives in an unfinished apartment over some family's garage. The three friends are drinking and playing "DUCK HUNT." Shadoe shoots standing up like a cowgirl ninja, leaping around and firing off shockingly accurate rounds into duck after 8-bit duck.

Caster is entranced by this. He leans back, crossing his arms, watching her.

Circles for Nostradominatrix, Hooch, and LuvBunny pop up next to him, like pop up video bubbles.

NOSTRADOMINATRIX
So is Turbo Dan officially going out
with Shadoe now?

CASTER

Turbo Dan is most certainly not going out with Shadoe! At least, not any more than I am. The three of us have been spending a lot of time bombing around together. We're like that show with the two guys who hung out with that chick and nobody scored with her, but you could so tell that she wanted to do that one guy. I'm that guy. Turbo Dan is the other guy.

HOOCH

She so digs you, but I think she's playing two sides of the fence here. As long as she's dating both you and Turbo Dan she gets the best of both worlds. Too bad the sex is falling on his side of the fence.

CASTER

Shadoe is not having sex with Turbo Dan! What's with you people? It's totally that show! You know! With the chick and those two dudes!

HOOCH

I'm telling you, you need to just take Shadoe out on your own.

LUVBUNNY

It's no fun third wheeling with the happy couple.

CASTER

SHUT UP! THEY'RE NOT A COUPLE! I HATE YOU!

INT. CASTER'S CUBICLE - DAY

Caster is typing furiously. Every couple of seconds we hear Blake chuckle or guffaw.

BLAKE (O.S.)

Victoria, this is not up for discussion. I said no.

(beat)

I don't care what your mother says, I'm your father and I said no and that's the final answer!

Caster laughs to himself, shaking his head. He mimics holding a cup of tea with his pinkie out, and a fake English accent.

CASTER

Victoria. Who names their kid Victoria?
Does he actually want her to grow up to
be a lingerie model?

Blake comes over and throws his hands in front of Caster's
monitor and says, for all the office to hear:

BLAKE

Hey, quit looking at all that man porn,
Gay Ray!

Blake laughs loudly and walks away. Caster winces, goes
back to typing.

CASTER

Oh, have I mentioned that he's been
calling me "Gay Ray?"

INT. NOSTRADOMINATRIX'S DUNGEON - DAY

She's hard at work, about to whip some poor soul.

NOSTRTADOMINATRIX

What he's doing is sexual harassment. He
disgusts me.

INT. CASTER'S CUBICLE

Caster is pushed back from his computer, nervously kicking
his trash can.

CASTER

This is sexual harassment? But I'm not
gay. Doesn't he have to grab my butt or
something?

INT. NOSTRADOMINATRIX'S DUNGEON

She twists the whip in her hands, the leather creaking. She
speaks obliquely at the camera.

NOSTRTADOMINATRIX

Sexual harassment is creating an
environment that makes people feel
sexually threatened, having their
sexuality called into question, or
having to listen to coworkers talk about
sexual stuff in the office.

(Stalking back to a good whipping
distance from her victim.)

I realize everyone is all up in arms
about being "PC," but there's a huge
difference between being PC and having
basic manners.

She winds up and lets fly. CRACK!

EXT. SHADOE'S TRAILER - DAY

Caster stands at the door, knocking. The windows are dark. He steps away from the trailer and looks around, frustrated.

INT. CIRCLE K - DAY

Caster walks in and over to Turbo Dan, who is working.

CASTER

So if you don't have her phone number,
how do you get in touch with her when
we're going to hang out?

TURBO DAN

I don't, she just shows up. She's over
at my place like, all the time.

Caster's reaction. Ouch!

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Caster flips the channel, and LuvBunny appears on the screen.

LUVBUNNY

How about this. Tape a map to her door
like a treasure hunt. You could send her
around to a bunch of places with the map
finally ending at your house. That way
she'd "just show up" for you!

Caster breaks into a slow grin.

EXT. SHADOE'S TRAILER - DAY

Caster sneaks up to the trailer like Peter Sellers.

CASTER (V.O.)

You guys are the most amazing people on
the Internet.

Caster tapes a note to her door. As he darts away, we zoom in on the scrap of paper. It reads:

"At the Circle K
No one buys the cereal
Find the next clue there."

INT. CIRCLE K

We zoom through the aisle to focus our attention on a dusty box of cereal with a note taped to it.

CASTER (V.O.)

In all the time I've been frequenting that particular Circle K, I think the entire sell through has been limited to fountain drinks and magazines. Nobody will be buying that crap.

The camera turns around and zooms out the door and down the street.

CASTER (V.O.)

I'm not going to type out the whole thing for you. Get your own stalker.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Caster sits fidgeting on a bench, reading a brand-new copy of Brave New World. (Laurel Park or Payne Park)

INSERT

Cheesy graphics of a flat 2D beach. A flat 2D Caster waits on a towel. Perhaps framed as a Photoshop window.

CASTER(V.O.)

Ideally it would have been the beach, but if she didn't have a car that would almost certainly have wound up bringing Turbo Dan into the equation.

Little 2D cutout Turbo Dan and Shadoe totter into the frame, a red marker frantically scribbles the scene out.

BACK TO SCENE

Now Caster has gone from fidgeting to truly agitated, thinking something has gone wrong.

INT. CIRCLE K

A SHOPPER walks off with the box of cereal just as Shadoe arrives.

CASTER (V.O.)

I actually had myself convinced that somebody had bought the box of cereal, and Shadoe just ended up taking the first note to Turbo Dan's house.

EXT. TURBO DAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Turbo Dan opens the door. Shadoe stands there with the note, and a visible "WTF?" hanging over her head.

EXT. PARK - CONTINUING

Caster looks up as he hears a bicycle approach. It's Shadoe, riding her girly hot pink number. She's wearing her work uniform, and a smile just for him.

CASTER

It's about time. I called for a price check three hours ago!

SHADOE

Sorry, when I saw the note I got so excited I didn't want to waste time changing.

CASTER

Well I hope you're not disappointed with what you found at the end.

SHADOE

Not at all! I've been waiting all day for somebody to make a good "price check" joke.

EXT. PARK - LATER

They sit together, laughing and joking, discussing the book.

EXT. THE PARK - LATER

The evening is winding down, sunset approaching. They walk in the park.

CASTER

I know the treasure hunt was fun, but could I have your phone number for next time?

SHADOE

(rolling her eyes)

I told you, I don't have a phone.

CASTER

How can you not have a phone? Everybody has a phone.

SHADOE

Aborigines don't have phones.

CASTER

Okay, everybody in America has a phone.

SHADOE

Not everybody. In New Mexico there are whole communities that live off the grid.

Caster gives up, nothing to say. She puts her hand on his leg.

SHADOE
 (continuing)
 If it bothers you so much, just give me
 your number and I can call you from
 work.

Caster smiles over at her.

EXT. SHADOE'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Caster wheels her bike to her from around the car.

SHADOE
 I had a great time. Let's hang out
 more, okay?

CASTER
 Okay! We should...go see "Ninja Bride
 Volume Eight" on Friday.

SHADOE
 Okay.

Caster leans over, like he wants to kiss her, but not far enough. He looks down, extends the bike.

CASTER
 Call me!

SHADOE.
 (sighs)
 I don't have a phone.

INT. HOOCH'S PAD - NIGHT

He's throwing darts again.

HOOCH
 I feel the need to point out that the
 "shy guy wants to give you a kiss but
 can't" bit is only cute for so long.
 Next time you gotta get that kiss or you
 risk falling firmly into the friend
 abyss, and I tell you, there's no lovin'
 to be had there.
 (He's thrown them all, goes to
 pluck them out.)
 "Let's hang out more, okay?" is girl
 code. You had permission and you
 aborted. Don't let it happen again.

EXT. SHADOE'S TRAILER - CONTINUING

Caster watches Shadoe go in and close the door.

TITLE CARD

Worst. Date. Ever.
Current mood: bitchy

INT. MOVIE THEATRE LOBBY - NIGHT

Caster comes in the door.

CASTER

Okay, so Shadoe and I went on a "date"
last night. Nothing could have happened
to make the night go worse.

Shadoe is there, looking gorgeous, but so is Turbo Dan,
looking his usual look. Caster is taken aback.

CASTER

(to Turbo Dan)
What are you doing here?

TURBO DAN

"Ninja Bride," right?

Freeze frame on Caster

CASTER (V.O.)

Apparently when I said "we" as in "me
and Shadoe" should go to see "Ninja
Bride," I had been misinterpreted.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT

Caster sits glumly with Shadoe and Turbo Dan.

EXT. BOX OFFICE - NIGHT

Turbo Dan is scamming Tory.

CASTER

You know "children's price ticket" girl
from the box office? Well Turbo Dan
finally got those free passes that he's
been scamming for.

Caster is stewing. Shadoe is unimpressed.

CASTER

And that's still not all.

EXT. BACK OF THE THEATRE - NIGHT

As they're leaving, they run into Tory getting off work.
She's wearing big pants, a mechanic shirt, emo glasses and a
trucker cap.

TORY

Hey, did you enjoy your free movie?

TURBO DAN

The only thing that could have made it better is if you had been there too,
(reading the name on her shirt)
Floyd.

Caster and Shadoe are about to gag.

TORY

Actually, it's Tory.

TURBO DAN

Like Tory Sinclair?

TORY

Yeah, I guess.

Freeze frame on Tory.

CASTER (V.O.)

She obviously didn't know what he was talking about. I just IMDbbed it. Porn star. Unbelievable.

INT. NOSTRADOMINATRIX'S DUNGEON - NIGHT

NOSTRADOMINATRIX

I think Hooch would have to agree that Turbo Dan showed his ass. This is what you want, hon. I'm serious.

INT. HOOCH'S PAD - NIGHT

HOOCH

I would have to agree. Next time, shoot Shadoe a "meaningful glance" to show that the ass showing has been marked, but let it go. She'll appreciate that you're not a hothead.

INT. CASTER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

He's getting ready for a date.

CASTER

I've been rolling my eyes at Turbo Dan's behavior for years. I had no idea I could actually benefit from it!

(He combs his hair.)

I just called Shadoe at the auto parts store and made a date, for real, with just her.

INT. TOMMY BAHAMMAS - NIGHT

Shadoe is wearing a hot red dress. She and Caster are

talking, and laughing, having a good time. Caster beams at her. A beat for us to feel good for him.

SHADOE

You're so much easier to talk to than Turbo Dan. We've been dating for two months and I still can't tell if he really likes me or if he's just using me for sex.

We swing over to Caster. The proverbial iceberg has been hit, and his ship is going down.

INT. CASTER'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

He sits on the couch, near catatonic. His online friends surround him, sympathetic.

LUVBUNNY

Mother of hell. Didn't Turbo Dan say there was nothing going on between them when you asked? Did you even ask?

NOSTRADOMINATRIX

I'm so sorry you had to hear that. But the game ain't over yet, Rocky. Go by there today, take her out again, whatever.

LUVBUNNY

Take this opportunity to strengthen and further deepen your relationship with Shadoe. I know that staying on a friend level might be hard, but you'll fill an emotional void that Turbo Dan doesn't seem to be filling.

HOOCH

For God's sake, don't listen to LuvBunny! You set yourself up as "just a friend" now and you'll become the emotional dumping ground where she complains about crappy guys. And I promise you you won't be filling any voids then, if you know what I'm sayin'.

The phone rings. Caster looks over at it, and his friends have disappeared. We hear the answering machine pick up.

TURBO DAN'S VOICE

Hey man. Me and Scottie are going to go bowling. You should come. Lotsa laughs.

The message ends. A hint of an expression like bottled rage crosses Caster's face, then it's back to nothing. LuvBunny and Hooch reappear.

LUVBUNNY

Get back in there and finish this. Tell her how you feel. If it's a "no," it will suck, sure, but it's not going to be a "yes" unless you take the chance. So do it.

HOOCH

Ray, just this one time, listen to LuvBunny.

EXT. SHADOE'S TRAILER - DAY

Shadoe opens to door to Caster, who is standing outside. We hear some big band music playing inside. She's barefoot, wearing a halter top, braless, and a thin, gauzy skirt.

SHADOE

Hey! Where have you been this week? Come on in!

INT. SHADOE'S TRAILER

Caster looks around, it's hot and he's sweating. The trailer is tiny, with a college-y vibe to it. Not much furniture, just a futon in bed mode and some secondhand stuff. But tons and tons of books on the table, on the floor, in stacks. Books with boards across them making shelves to hold other books.

Ray sits on the futon. Shadoe starts lighting candles.

CASTER

Who are we listening to?

SHADOE

Glenn Miller. Like him?

CASTER

I don't know his stuff, but it sounds familiar.

(He flips through her records)

These things are heavy. They aren't like the "Weird Al" records I had as a kid.

SHADOE

Yeah, they all came from Goodwill with the record player.

She finishes with the candles, puts a different record on, and turns the crank that powers it. The music is hypnotic. She sits next to Caster on the bed. He looks around at the candles.

CASTER

That's pretty cool. I'm a retard about

anything earlier than about 1982 as far as music goes.

She smiles. A beat, and then Caster leans in and kisses her. She doesn't freak, but she doesn't kiss back. He breaks it off.

SHADOE

Ray, what was that all about?

CASTER

Shadoe, you are the most beautiful and intelligent and
 (with a gesture around the room)
 decidedly most well read woman I've ever known, and I've wanted to be close to you since the minute we met.

She looks troubled, but happy, then hurt.

SHADOE

You're sweet. And a great guy. And I really enjoy hanging out with you, but just as friends. Is that okay?

CASTER

But what about all of these candles?

SHADOE

They were for light.

CASTER

But candlelight is supposed to be romantic! Why candles?

SHADOE

I don't have electricity.

Caster takes this in.

INT. FLORIDA DIVE BAR - NIGHT

Caster and Scottie are at the bar, SCOTTIE talking two miles a minute, and Caster just taking it.

Turbo Dan, Shadoe, and Tory show up. Scottie gives Turbo Dan this big manly bear hug thing then kisses Shadoe on the cheek. He takes Tory's hand.

TURBO DAN

Dude, this is that girl I was telling you about before. Tory.

Scottie steps back and looks her up and down.

SCOTTIE

Tory, huh? Short for statutory?

Caster laughs. Tory rebuts with a double-deuce middle finger.

TURBO DAN
 Alright, let's drink it up! Bartender!
 Two cervezas, por favor!

The barkeep looks at them dubiously, indicating Tory.

BARTENDER
 I need to see some I.D. from her.

TURBO DAN
 Come on man, be cool.

TORY
 Nahh, I get this shit all the
 time.

She goes fishing in the big wallet chained to her pocket and gives the bartender her driver's license. He looks at it, then looks at her, then back at it. A long, uncomfortable beat, then he hands it back.

BARTENDER
 (to Shadoe)
 What can I get you?

SHADOE
 Tequila.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- A) They get a booth and start drinking.
- B) Turbo Dan and Scottie are sitting on either side of Tory, bombarding her with attention.
- C) Caster and Shadoe sit on the other side, ignored. Shadoe is detached, drinking hard. But she doesn't lose it. Caster is trashed.

INT. FLORIDA DIVE BAR - LATER

Shadoe goes back to the bar, and Caster follows. We see her face, and she's broken up.

SHADOE
 What is he doing with her? What's going
 on? Is he mad at me? Was it something
 that I did?

CASTER
 I don't think it's anything to do with
 you. Turbo Dan just has a short
 attention span.

SHADOE

Well what am I supposed to do to keep him interested?

CASTER

What you've got to do is realize that he's not worth the trouble.

SHADOE

I'm sorry, Sundrop.

He reaches out, touches her face. She smiles weakly. He walks back to the booth, turns to see her go out the door.

INT. CREDIT UNION - DAY

Caster walks in and sees that Blake's cubicle is filled with boxes of clothes, lamps and a skanky-looking orange chair from the 70's. Blake catches him looking.

BLAKE

Bitch threw me out.

Caster doesn't say anything. He goes to his cubicle and finds an identical orange 70's chair. It looks disgusting. Caster sniffs unappreciatively.

CASTER

Um, Blake, is this your chair?

BLAKE

(comes over)

They didn't both fit in my cube. You can hold on to it until I find someplace for all my shit.

Caster again says nothing, but he's steamed.

INT. CREDIT UNION/LUNCH ROOM - LATER

Office party. Caster hangs by the wall, nursing a drink.

CASTER (V.O.)

Some big boss guy at work just retired yesterday.

Blake is drunk, and hanging on Caster, pretending to flirt with him, and laughing in his face.

CASTER (V.O.)

Ordinarily I avoid this crap like the plague, but hey, free booze, right?

Blake grabs his ass.

BLAKE

I think this fruit is ripe! Ha ha ha!

Freeze frame.

INT. NOSTRADOMINATRIX'S DUNGEON - DAY

NOSTRADOMNATRIX

You have to do something about him. He grabbed your ass. If you were a woman you'd be in court by now.

INT. HOOCH'S BACHELOR PAD - DAY

HOOCH

Don't you guys have some kind of boss that you could like, file a report with or something? I tell ya, if you keep putting up with his shit he's never gonna stop.

INT. CASTER'S CUBICLE - DAY

He's wheeling Blake's orange chair out of his cubicle and back into Blake's.

CASTER

I don't know. I mean, sure I'd like him to get in big trouble, but the idea of reporting him to HR makes me feel like the schoolyard snitch.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- A) Shadoe and Caster hang in her hot trailer, she's showing him books.
- B) At work, the chair has returned to Caster's cubicle.
- C) Caster wheels it to the garbage.
- D) Blake wheels it back, not amused.

INT. CREDIT UNION - DAY

Caster tries to work, but Blake's argumentative voice is a dull drone in the background.

BLAKE (O.S.)

No, go ahead and let her stay out all night with God knows who. Raise her to be a slut just like her mother!

Distracted, Caster gives up and scowls at the chair in his cubicle. He takes a marker and post-it notes, draws big cartoony eyes. He sticks them on the chair, along with two more post-its for buck teeth. He sticks his foot into the back of the chair and makes the seat flap up and down like a big orange mouth.

CASTER

Hi, Chairy.

(making a Muppet voice)

Hi, Ray! Why don't you come over here
and sit on me?

(In his regular voice)

Hey now! Shouldn't you at least buy me
dinner first?

Blake looks over the top of Caster's cubicle.

BLAKE

Say, your cubicle looks so nice and
neat. Maybe you could help me with mine.
I need "Ray's Eye for the Straight Guy."
Ha ha ha ha!

CASTER

(snapping)

If it looks gay in here, maybe it's
because of this stupid orange chair!
I'm going to just throw it away and man
it up in here!

BLAKE

Ha ha. Don't even joke. I've had those
chairs since college, they're all man.

Blake disappears back into his cube, and Caster pathetically
drops his head into his hands, wondering exactly where he
went wrong in life. We hear the sound of a DOORBELL.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Caster's not ready for work yet. He goes to the door, and
opens it to Shadoe. She holds up a little phone card.

SHADOE

Hey, can I use your phone to call my
dad?

CASTER

Sure, yeah! Come in.

INT. BEDROOM

Caster finishes dressing and we hear the murmur of Shadoe's
voice through the wall, upbeat and laughy. He hears her hang
up, and goes out to the

LIVING ROOM

To meet her. Without warning, she bursts into tears.

CASTER

Hey, what's wrong?

SHADOE

(wiping her eyes)

I'm sorry, I'll be OK in a minute.
It's no big deal, I'm sorry I'm acting
all psycho.

CASTER

Is everything okay?

SHADOE

Yeah. Well... no. My dad... he's been
battling pancreatic cancer for the past
few years. So he's in pretty bad shape,
and it's just... every time I talk to
him now I'm afraid it's going to be the
last time.

Caster holds her for a long beat.

EXT. LIDO BEACH - NIGHT

Caster and Shadoe sit on the lifeguard stand.

SHADOE

My dad used to be like, a
serious activist when he was younger. He
worked with my mom in the Peace Corps
and stuff, but for as long as I can
remember they've been retired hippies.
My parents used to save the whales and
whatever but all I do is schlep fan
belts and hang out with my friends.

CASTER

I guess I can relate, my mom is a nurse.
Who knows how many people are
alive today because of her. Meanwhile I
sit in a crappy office, putting up with
all kinds of pointless shit and just
rotting away.

Shadoe looks out over the water, watching an approaching
thunderstorm.

SHADOE

You know, the more I think about it, I
think that the meaning of life is to
just leave the world a better place than
it was when you started. Not everybody
can save an endangered species or end a
war or what have you, but everybody can
make some kind of positive difference,
even if it's just
to one person.

CASTER

Well then your life is a success,
because my life is so much better now
than it was before I met you.

She pats his knee.

SHADOE

You're sweet.

He leans over and kisses her.

WHITE OUT

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He comes in and all the clocks are blinking 12:00. He goes to turn on his computer, and nothing. He clicks the "on" button with increasing urgency.

INT. KITCHEN

In super-fast time lapse motion we see Caster set his computer on his kitchen table, open it up, and spread its guts all over his desk as he tries to troubleshoot it back to life. Back to real-time. Unsuccessful, he flops in his chair, disgusted.

CASTER

Freakin' lightning. Sunshine state my
ass.

INT. CREDIT UNION/LOBBY - NIGHT

Caster heads out with a piece of computer equipment.

CASTER

I think the problem with my computer was
a fried motherboard, so last night I
tried to "outsource" one from the credit
union.

The security guard stops him.

SECURITY GUARD

Whoa whoa! Is that company property?

CASTER

Um, yeah. I'm just borrowing it. They
said it was okay.

SECURITY GUARD

Who said it was okay?

CASTER

You know... that I.T. guy... the one
with the glasses.

The security guard picks up the phone.

SECURITY GUARD
What's his extension?

CASTER
I don't know. I think he's gone home for the night anyway.

SECURITY GUARD
I can't let you take that out of here without a signed equipment removal form.

CASTER
Oh, that's cool. I'll just go and take care of that tomorrow.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

He paces, staring straight ahead at his dissected computer on the table in the breakfast nook, almost shaking like a heroin addict going cold turkey. Shadoe looks on from the couch.

CASTER
And the next day the I.T. cabinet was locked. My computer's a goner.

SHADOE
Well what do you do all night with the Internet anyway?

CASTER
(Guiltily.)
Um, e-mail.

SHADOE
(pointing to the computer)
Okay, go sit down. I'll send you e-mail.

Caster sits down in front of the blank monitor, and she starts scribbling on a Post-it note. She slaps it on the monitor.

SHADOE
You've got mail!

They laugh.

CASTER
I think it's funny that A.O.L. marketing is so ubiquitous that a girl with no electricity knows "You've got mail."

INT. CREDIT UNION/BOSS'S OFFICE - DAY

Caster peeks into a dark room, sneaks in.

CASTER

Ever since that boss guy retired about a month ago I've been walking past an empty office every day on the way to my cube.

Push in on Caster's face.

CASTER

(continuing)

Just out of curiosity I checked in there this morning, and that guy had a sweet machine! It's just sitting there like a huge ripe apple, hanging on the branch yelling "Eat me!" I've been working on a brilliantly devious plan that also smites all of my enemies in the process.

INT. CASTER'S CUBICLE - LATER

He's sitting in his cubicle, staring at Blake's chair and brooding. We hear Blake's voice.

BLAKE (O.S.)

Because I love her you bitch, that's why! If you understood what love was, you wouldn't let her stay out all night doing drugs with those scumbags she hangs out with!

We hear him slam down the phone and pound on the cubicle wall in frustration.

CASTER

Seriously dude, keep it down over there, I'm working here.

BLAKE (O.S.)

Just shut up and leave me alone, faggot. You can't understand what it's like to be a father.

Caster gets up and goes over to Blake's cubicle

CASTER

Blake, I've told you a thousand times to take this chair out of my cubicle and if you don't...

BLAKE

Not now, Gay Ray, I'm not in the mood.

CASTER

Seriously, if you don't take that chair back, I'm throwing it out tonight.

Blake stands up and growls in Caster face.

BLAKE

No you won't. You know why? Because you've got no balls. Go put on a dress, fag. You don't want to mess with me today.

Push in on Ray. He's done.

INT. CREDIT UNION - NIGHT

Caster's head pops up over the cubicle walls. The place is deserted.

He dives back into his cubicle, pulls the bottom cushion off the chair and unzips the back of it. He makes a face at the almost visible wave of smell as he pulls the crumbling rectangle of foam out of it.

He goes in the empty office, unplugs everything from the computer, and stuffs it in the cushion cover.

INT. CREDIT UNION/LOBBY - CONTINUING

Caster, smiling to himself, wheels the chair with the computer in it through the lobby towards the security guard, who looks at the chair skeptically.

SECURITY GUARD

Is that personal property?

CASTER

(grinning)

Not for long, buddy. I'm about to finally throw this old piece of junk away.

SECURITY GUARD

(holds the door for Caster)

Have a good fourth.

Caster walks slowly, unhurriedly away from the guard, around the building, then breaks into a run as soon as he's out of eyesight, pushing the chair ahead of him.

INT. DUMPSTER

Light pours in as Caster opens the lid and heaves the chair towards us.

EXT. PARKING LOT

Caster's car peels out. He drives triumphantly into the night.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Caster wakes up, hearing pounding on the door. We see the

shiny new computer in his bedroom. He opens the front door, and Shadoe enters in a panic, wearing her work uniform.

CASTER

What's going on?

SHADOE

I'm sorry! When I got to work there were like, a hundred messages from my mom. I tried to tell my boss I only gave my mom the store number for emergencies, but he was being a total dick so I just walked out and came over here. I need to call my mom, but it's a long distance call, is that OK?

CASTER

What? Yeah! Call your mom!

Caster brushes his teeth while she talks on the phone. When she's still talking, he cleans the bathroom. Then he's in the living room comforting her as she cries.

SHADOE

Dad's been in the hospital for the past few days. Mom was really scared he was going to pass away and she couldn't get in touch with me. She gave me all kinds of hell about not having a phone and not being responsible and then she's like, "Talk to your father, while you still can."

(beat)

She's not normally like that, she's just been really stressed out lately and she's starting to lose it a little.

CASTER

Why don't you give her my phone number instead?

SHADOE

You're too nice, you don't have to.

CASTER

Seriously. It's no problem.

SHADOE

I guess I had better go back to work and see how much trouble I'm in. Hopefully I'll just end up having to work late.

CASTER

If you tell your boss what happened and he doesn't cut you some slack you need to quit, because you're working with

Satan.

INT. CREDIT UNION - DAY

Blake explodes on Caster the moment Caster steps in the office.

BLAKE

You better not have thrown out my chair, homo. I'll kick your reamed-out faggot ass!

CASTER

I'm sorry. I told you that I would throw it away on numerous occasions. I gave you several weeks and made my intentions clear.

BLAKE

Shut up, fag. I already reported you to HR, so don't go throwing any more of my shit away tonight or your queer ass is fired.

Blake storms off down the hall. We see Caster's face melt from shock, to near-crying, to anger.

INT. HR OFFICE - DAY

Caster sticks his head in the door. ELLIE is in there. She is in her early 50s, but she dresses like she's still a freshman in college.

CASTER

Hi, I need to talk to somebody in HR. Can you help me?

ELLIE

Of course! Come on in!

Caster starts talking.

CASTER

Um, there's this guy in the cubicle next to me named Blake and all he does is call me "Gay Ray," and...

ELLIE

Let me stop you right there. I deal mostly just with health and dental benefits. You should talk to Julie about this. She's in her office. It's the one with SpongeBob on the door.

A flurry of emails on flowery Outlook stationary fly behind Caster's head with the sound of Julie's annoying, sing-songy voice reading them aloud. He winces.

CASTER

Julie.

Caster goes out in the hall and two offices down there's one with a square SpongeBob SquarePants paper plate tacked to it. He knocks and opens the door a crack.

CASTER

Hello?

JULIE

Hey, can I help you?

JULIE is gorgeous woman in her late twenties. Caster comes in and sits down.

CASTER

You probably already know about this from yesterday, but...

Julie's taking it all down on her computer. We see Caster conflicted. She's perfectly nice.

JULIE

No, he never came down here at all, but I promise you he'll be in here today.

She gets up, and she's much taller than Ray. He starts to glance down at her legs and catches himself. She shakes his hand.

JULIE

I'll arrange a meeting with Blake and his manager this afternoon. If you want to talk about him, or about anything, don't hesitate to come down here again. Seriously.

Caster exits.

INT. CASTER'S CUBICLE - LATER

Caster is working, and we hear the phone ring. We hear Blake's voice:

BLAKE (O.S.)

(Burningly sarcastic.)

Oh, I'm sorry can't talk about this now. Apparently it would be inappropriate. It might make some people feel all uncomfortable.

Caster looks guilty.

INSERT

Video clip of Will Smith in a YouTube window.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Caster and Shadoe are looking at video clips of Will Smith on the computer, laughing and doing imitations. The phone rings. Caster picks it up.

CASTER
(his best Will Smith)
Aw hell no!

SHADOE'S MOM
(Over phone, filtered)
Um... is this Ray?

CASTER
Er, yeah, this is Ray. Who is this?

Shadoe, off the phone now, sits cross-legged on the bed and talking through her tears with Caster.

CASTER
So... how long does she want you to go back for?

SHADOE
Well, you know, for as long as it takes.

CASTER
So... are you going to do it then?

Shadoe is quiet for a beat.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- A) Shadoe rides her bike home.
- B) Caster lies awake.
- C) Caster sleepwalks through work the next day
- D) Caster Avoids Blake.
- E) Caster helps Shadoe pack up her trailer.
- F) They donate her furniture to Goodwill.
- G) They donate her books to Selby Library.

We hear Caster's VOICE OVER.

CASTER (V.O.)
So yeah. She's leaving. That's it.
That's that.

INT. TOMMY BAHAMMA'S - NIGHT

Caster and Shadoe have dinner.

CASTER (V.O.)
 And it's not like we're even an
 officially ratified couple either. We're
 just best friends with obvious sexual
 tension.

He presents her with a phone card. She smiles sadly as we
 cut to...

INT. CASTER'S CUBICLE - DAY

Caster's typing. We hear Blake's voice

BLAKE (O.S.)
 HAR HAR HAR HAR! SHUT UP!

INT. CASTER'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELLING

He's driving alone.

CASTER (V.O.)
 Whatever. Shadoe is on her way over and
 we're going to dinner. Well, time to
 make some memories...

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- A) They kiss by the lifeguard stand on Lido Beach. Lips,
 tongue, passion. As soon as their lips come apart we
 see they are torn in half.
- B) At dawn, they retrieve Shadoe's trunk from the empty
 trailer.
- C) They say their goodbyes at the Sarasota airport.
- D) Caster arrives back home to find her pink bicycle still
 chained to the railing outside his apartment. He sits
 down on the steps next to it.
- E) Back inside, Caster watches TV in the dark.

INT. CASTER'S CUBICLE.

He's working, Julie comes into his cube with a box full of
 pens and Post-it notes.

JULIE
 (Kuni from UHF voice)
 Supplies!

CASTER
 What?

JULIE
 Come on, everybody's doing it.

CASTER
 (taking some pens and staples)
 Okay...

JULIE
 (indicating Blake)
 How are things?

CASTER
 Fine. Actually not fine. He's at lunch, so I might as well tell you. Blake isn't pulling his weight. I've been working overtime all week, and that he's been coming in late and leaving early. And he called me "Gay Ray" again.

JULIE
 Seriously? Well that's totally unacceptable. I'll speak with his manager. And I want to take you out to lunch to make up for the way the office has been treating you.

CASTER
 No, I don't need sympathy food. And it's not the whole office. Just him.

INT. CREDIT UNION/CASTER'S CUBICLE - DAY

Blake come sinto his cubicle, pissed.

BLAKE
 If you got a problem with me just tell me, alright? Quit cryin' to your girlfriend, you pussy.

CASTER
 Blake, I don't ask you to be my friend. All I ask is that you do your work and leave me alone. Can we agree on that?

BLAKE
 Screw you, Gay Ray.

INT. NOSTRADOMINATRIX'S DUNGEON - DAY

NOSTRADOMINATRIX
 Is there any "Three strikes and you're out" type policy there? Methinks what he just did is a firable offense.

INT. LUVBUNNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

LUVBUNNY
 Get him fired. Please. Trust me, it'd be well worth it.

INT. HOOCH'S BACHELOR PAD - DAY

HOOCH
I wish I was like Blake. He sounds neat.

INT. CREDIT UNION/CASTER'S CUBICLE - LATER

Caster's working. Blake comes in drunk. He stumbles into Caster's cubicle and starts shoving his monitor like he's trying to pick a fight with it.

CASTER
Um, Blake, can I help you?

BLAKE
You think you're so funny. Why don't you mind your own business you little cocksucker?

CASTER
Go away, Blake.

BLAKE
Or what, tough guy? Are you going to go crying to your giant girlfriend again?

Blake starts laughing in Caster's face.

BLAKE
(continuing)
That's what I thought.

INT. HALLWAY

Caster stalks down the hallway, stifled rage.

INT. JULIE'S OFFICE

She pulls out a riot shotgun and gives it a one-armed pump.

JULIE
Thanks for reporting this, Ray. I'll take care of it.

INT. HALLWAY

Caster walks back down the hallway. We HEAR a PHONE RINGING.

INT. BLAKE'S CUBICLE

Blake picks up the phone.

BLAKE
Yeah?
(He listens, big sigh.)
Get offa my back, Sasquatch.

INT. BLAKE'S CUBICLE - LATER

Blake, escorted by the security guard and Julie, cleans out his desk. Julie stands by with her arms crossed. Caster peeks over the wall.

JULIE

Uh-uh. That stapler is company property.
Leave it.

Cut to Caster. His expression doesn't change, but a TITLE types out below him in frame:

OMFGLOLR0TFL!!!11!!1!!11

INT. LUVBUNNY'S BEDROOM -DAY

She jumps on the bed.

LUVBUNNY

yayaayyaayayyaayyaayyaayayy!!!

INT. HOOCH'S BACHELOR PAD - DAY

HOOCH

Holy crap! You are my hero. Do you have
an action figure yet? Cuz I'd be all
over that...

BLACK OUT

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Scottie and Turbo Dan are watching TV, which blares in the background. Tory takes a magazine out of her backpack. Caster is talking quietly on the phone in his bedroom with Shadoe.

CASTER

So how's your dad?

SHADOE

(over phone, filtered)
He's doing great. In fact, he's
starting to get a little ornery because
he's stuck in bed even though he says
he's healthy as an ox. An ox with
Cancer.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Caster comes back in the living room. Turbo Dan and Scottie are gone but Tory is still there, sprawled out on the couch reading her magazine and writing in it with a marker. The TV is off now, awkward silence.

TORY

The boys went to go and buy some beer.

Caster sits down. He has nothing to say to this girl.

CASTER

So, what are you reading?

She holds it up so we can see the cover: a Frederick's of Hollywood catalog. She sits up and starts showing Caster stuff she's got circled.

TORY

If you were Dan, which of these would you think would be hottest on me?

CASTER

"Dan?"

TORY

I refuse to call him Turbo Dan. He's not a goddamn Power Ranger.

CASTER

Yeah, it's kind of retarded, but than again, so is he.

TORY

Yeah, yeah I know. But he's easy to get along with and he's an incredible lay.

And the conversation again grinds to a painful halt.

TORY

(Continuing)

So who was on the phone?

CASTER

Oh, Shadoe.

TORY

Is she your girlfriend now?

CASTER

Well, kind of. It's complicated.

TORY

Okay, your turn. I told you what I like about Dan, tell me what you like so much about Shadoe.

CASTER

I like Shadoe because she's really smart and she's conscientious about making the world a better place. And on top of that, she actually speaks French.

TORY
You speak French?

CASTER
No, but I kiss that way.

Painful silence.

TORY
So, which of these is your favorite?

After a moment of pain and hesitation, Caster points one out.

TORY
(continuing)
So you want to see me in that?

CASTER
Whoa, whoa there! I just said which was my favorite. I didn't say I wanted to see you in any of these.

TORY
I know, I know. You want to see Shadoe in that.

CASTER
Yes. Yes I do. That plus Shadoe equals the perfect woman.

TORY
Okay, I'll hook you up.

She draws a big word balloon above the picture that says "We've got to save the whales! Quick to the Bookmobile! Sockray Blue!" Then she writes "THE PERFECT WOMAN" at the bottom, tears it out and hangs it on Caster's fridge. He chuckles in spite of himself.

Just then, Turbo Dan and Scottie walk in.

TURBO DAN
We've got Pabst and "Tank Girl," you get the pizza.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A quiet vignette of drinking and movie watching.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- A) Caster at work.
- B) Caster at home watching TiVo.
- C) Caster and Turbo Dan at the bar.

We HEAR Shadoe and Caster's PHONE CONVERSATION OVER

SHADOE (V.O.)
 (filtered, over phone)
 Dad's been feeling even better this week
 than last week.

CASTER (V.O.)
 (filtered, over phone)
 It's all because you make people feel
 better just by being near them.

SHADOE(V.O.)
 You're silly.

CASTER (V.O.)
 You can't argue with results.

SHADOE (V.O.)
 Anyway, I started working a few hours a
 week in a used bookstore. I really kind
 of like it.

CASTER (V.O.)
 Well, duh. That's like, the perfect job
 for you. You should get a job at the
 Main Bookstore when you come back to
 Sarasota.

SHADOE (V.O.)
 (Distant.)
 Yeah, yeah. Good idea.

INT. CREDIT UNION/SNACK ROOM - DAY

Caster is headed towards the vending machines when he sees Julie. He looks for an escape, but she sees him.

JULIE
 Hi Ray, how was your long weekend?

CASTER
 Oh, um. Fine. Bombed out with friends.

JULIE
 It's too bad that Labor Day was last
 weekend, now I've got nothing to use for
 my timesheet poem this week.

He's trying to buy a drink, and when they stand facing each other, he's eye level with her breasts, and he's trying not to look.

CASTER
 (distracted)
 Uh huh.

JULIE

So, tell me something, and I want you to be honest. Do you like my poems?

CASTER

Um, I don't really know anything about poetry. Except haiku. They have this beautiful set meter so they're really hard to screw up. You should try it.

JULIE

Yeah? Okay, I will!

Caster slinks away, drink in hand.

INT. CREDIT UNION/CASTER'S CUBICLE - LATER

Caster is typing when an e-mail comes up. He opens it.

JULIE (V.O.)

"Another Thursday
Payroll wants to hear from you
Submit your time sheets."

Caster leans back, smiling.

CASTER

So full of meter and mystic beauty. More importantly, so short.

We HEAR the SOUND of him RECEIVING another e-mail.

CASTER

(He frowns, and opens it.)
She wants to know if I'm doing anything for my birthday on Saturday, and if I wanted to do something with her.

CASTER

(He starts typing a reply.)
How do you even know it's my birthday?!

He sends, gets a reply.

JULIE (V.O.)

I know where you live too. The girls of H.R. know everything.

CASTER

Okay, now that's a little creepy.

INT. HOOCH'S PAD - DAY

He speaks not directly at the camera, but near it.

HOOCH

H.R. Julie llliiikkees you. If it

wasn't for Shadoe, I'd say get a little
"love in an elevator."

INT. LUVBUNNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

She sits up on the bed.

LUVBUNNY
Freaky. Next thing you know she'll be
hiding in your bushes with a sock
puppet.

She looks up at her hand, speaking to emphasize the
syllables of her haiku:

LUVBUNNY
(Continuing)
H.R. Julie Dear,
You are so freaking me out
I don't date at work.

EXT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - DAY

He closes the front door and walks to Julie's car, waiting
on the street.

INT. JULIE'S CAR

Caster gets in, closes the door.

CASTER
Where are we going?

JULIE
I always go jogging on the museum
grounds, but I've never been in the
Circus Museum and I thought it would be
fun!

Off his reaction as they start to drive.

INT. CIRCUS MUSEUM - DAY

It's basically a dusty old warehouse painted up in bright
colors and filled with old circus wagons and stained clown
suits. They shuffle from one creepy exhibit to another.

INT. BANYAN CAFÉ - NIGHT

They eat dinner, chatting.

INT. JULIE'S CAR - LATER

No sound as she hands him a card. He opens it.

CASTER
Movie passes. Hey, thanks.

He smiles, gets out, walks to his apartment. She's alright, that H.R. Julie. She's just a little bit not right.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT

Caster comes in, checks his messages. Shadoe is on the answering machine.

SHADOE
 (filtered, over phone)
 Happy birthday, Sundrop. If I was there
 I'd jump out of a cake for you.

Caster smiles, a bit forlorn.

INT. CREDIT UNION - DAY

Caster is trying to send a fax when Julie comes by.

JULIE
 Hi, Ray. Seen any good movies lately?

CASTER
 Um, last movie I saw was "Shotgun Zombie Five." It was pretty good, but kind of dumb.

JULIE
 Have you seen "Liberty Valley?" I just saw it the other day and it's really good.

CASTER
 I've been meaning to see that, but none of my friends were interested.

JULIE
 I'll go see it again with you! It was that good!

CASTER
 Oh, that's okay. You don't have to sit through it again, I could just go by myself.

JULIE
 No seriously, I really want to see it again. We can use our passes from your birthday. I'll meet you at the theater tonight.

CASTER
 (gulp)
 Um, okay, sure.

INT. MAIN BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

Caster is browsing. He picks up a book, turns it over, musing. Looks at his watch.

EXT. MAIN STREET

Ray crosses the street towards the movie theatre, carrying a bag with the book he bought. When he gets there Julie spots him out of the crowd and rushes over.

JULIE

I'm so sorry! Did you get my messages?

CASTER

No, what happened?

JULIE

I screwed up on the movie. "Liberty Valley" isn't playing here, it's at Burns Court. We can still make it over there on time though if we hurry!

CASTER

Oh, gosh. Let's forget it then. The passes aren't good for that theater. I guess we'll just have to call it a night.

JULIE

I'm so sorry! I must have looked at the wrong theater on Yahoo! I'll buy you a ticket at Burns Court to make up for it.

CASTER

No no, forget it, don't worry about it.

JULIE

I'm sorry. Are you sure?

CASTER

I'm sure.

JULIE

I'm so sorry.

CASTER

It's no trouble, really.

JULIE

This is such a disaster.

CASTER

It's okay.

JULIE

Let me at least get you a cup of coffee.

CASTER
(gives up)
Fine.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

They sit, Caster not drinking his steaming full cup. Julie notices his book.

JULIE
So, you like to read?

CASTER
I didn't used to read very much, but my girlfriend got me into it again.

JULIE
Oh. Hey, I didn't know you had a girlfriend.

CASTER
Yeah, Shadoe. She's in California right now helping out her father. I think I've mentioned her before.

JULIE
Oh yeah, I remember, I just didn't realize she was your girlfriend.

CASTER
Yep, she's the greatest. You'll have to meet her when she comes back to Sarasota.

JULIE
Definitely, I'm sure she's really cool.
(beat)
Is that book good?

CASTER
I don't know, I just bought it.

JULIE
Well let me know what you think of it when you're done. I really like Harlan Ellison. Did you know "The Terminator" was based on two of his "Outer Limits" episodes?

Caster, reacts, stunned.

INT. HOOCH'S BACHELOR PAD - NIGHT

HOOCH
I still don't understand why you're so afraid of Julie. You realize you are allowed to have "just friends" that are

girls. Plus, you have to admit she probably has more in common with you than you realized.

INT. CREDIT UNION/CASTER'S CUBICLE - DAY

Caster works at his computer. The icons for LUVBUNNY, HOOCH and NOSTRADOMINATRIX float into frame.

CASTER

I just got an email from H.R. Julie asking if I wanted to go to "Oktoberfest Suncoast" with her tonight. Weird.

INSERT

We see some Oktoberfest imagery on the computer.

BACK TO SCENE

CASTER

What do you think? Should I go or not?

LUVBUNNY

Yes! Seriously, why not? She knows where things are at. She seems like she'd be a lot of fun at this sort of thing.

HOOCH

Dude, Oktoberfest! How could you not go?

NOSTRADOMINATRIX

Go! Socializing isn't as bad as it seems. Unless her whole plan to get you drunk and tie you up at her place to be her love slave. Still, it's better than going back to the office.

EXT. OKTOBERFEST - DAY

Caster and Julie tool around the fairground. Julie is dressed like the St. Pauli Girl. We hear German music, see the Keg Hurling contest, the Beer Frauleins courtesy of Hooters, Caster and Julie at the finger wrestling booth.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

He's on the phone, a wreck. We HEAR SHADOE'S VOICE on the phone.

CASTER

Hello?

SHADOE

(filtered, over phone)

Hey, are you okay? You sound awful.

CASTER
...just a bit hung over...

SHADOE
Oh, do you want me to call back later?

CASTER
No, what's up?

SHADOE
Well, I'm going to look a little
different the next time you see me.

CASTER
Oh?

SHADOE
Well, you know the community art program
I was telling you about?

CASTER
Yeah?

INSERT

Shadoe is working with the kids, painting a mural.

BACK TO SCENE

SHADOE
Theresa and I were doing a mural with
the kids today and one of them
accidentally knocked a bucket of black
paint all over my head and back.

INSERT

We see her bending down and helping one kid with something
and this other kid knocks over a stool right on top of her
and dumps black paint all over her hair and down her back.

BACK TO SCENE

CASTER
So is this a look you're going to go
with?

INSERT

She tries to wash the paint out in the shower. Out of the
shower, in a towel, she's taking scissors to her hair.

SHADOE
(giggling)
No, but by the time I could wash it out

it had completely dried and I had to cut
it out of my braids

BACK TO SCENE

CASTER

Oh my god, I would have murdered him.

SHADOE

Yeah, well , what can you do? It was a
mistake.

CASTER

Wow. You must look so different. I
wish I could see you.

SHADOE

I know, me too.

TITLE CARD

THAR BE RANTS HERE!
Current mood: cranky

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Caster has his computer open on the table, trying to get the
burner to work. He's frustrated.

Caster picks up the phone, dials. Her dad picks up.

SHADOE'S DAD

(Filtered, over phone)
Beaupre residence.

CASTER

Um, is Shadoe there?

SHADOE'S DAD

I'm sorry, she's out with Luis. Is this
Caster?

CASTER

Um, yeah. Sorry to bother you, I'll call
back later.

SHADOE'S DAD

It sounds like you have something on
your mind...

CASTER

Um, yeah, but it's nothing important.

SHADOE'S DAD

What is it?

CASTER

Okay. I, uh...

INSERT

In Best Buy, Caster picks up a box. He's in love.

BACK TO SCENE

CASTER

I just went over to Best Buy and they had a Databurn 132-A DVD burner as an open box deal for only fifty dollars.

SHADOE'S DAD

Sweet.

CASTER

Or so I thought. So far I've made about ten dollars worth of coasters. So I went to take it back.

INSERT

A reverse of the commercial where the customer walks happily away from the store, Caster stalks unhappily back to Best Buy. Inside, Caster waits in a long line, struggles with employees.

BACK TO SCENE

CASTER

But it's Saturday, so I ended up having to pay another ninety dollars to upgrade to the 132-B.

The doorbell rings. Caster opens the door, lets Julie in.

JULIE

Hey, you ready for the movie?

CASTER

Yeah. Sorry to cut you off, sir, but I gotta go.

JULIE

No no, that's fine we've got time, talk, I'll just hang out.

Julie starts poking around the apartment.

SHADOE'S DAD

So tell me about your job, your family, a-z.

CASTER

Um, I'm running low on time, you don't really want to get me started on the Credit Union.

SHADOE'S DAD

(filtered)

So, tell me this. Where do you think you'll be in five years?

CASTER

Um, considering the election results, probably be in Canada with the rest of the reasonable people. Can you recommend a nice city?

SHADOE'S DAD

(filtered)

Canada isn't the answer, Raymond. My generation worked hard to end the war and protect civil rights. Do you think the country would be better or worse off if we had all just given up and run to Canada?

CASTER

Yeah, I guess that's true.

SHADOE'S DAD

(filtered)

If you truly care about something, you have to be willing to throw away everything for it.

CASTER

(looks at Julie)

Huh.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - LATER

The second he gets off the phone Julie is pointing at the "PERFECT WOMAN" magazine cutout on the fridge with a scowl.

CASTER

That's a long story. I was here all alone with my friend's annoying girlfriend and she started making fun of me and writing all of these things that she thought I wanted to hear.

JULIE

I see.

CASTER

So you're like, an hour early. What's up?

JULIE

Nothing. I thought we could go and get coffee or something first.

CASTER

Mmnh. Look, even though we had coffee before, I hate coffee, and I don't want to get coffee again, ever.

JULIE

(only fazed for a second)
Okay! Let's get milkshakes!

CASTER

Fine.

They start to go, but Julie stops in the kitchen looking at the inside of his computer case - still open on the table.

JULIE

(confused)
Is that what I think it is?

Caster comes around to see what she's looking at.

INSERT - HER POV

An inventory control sticker inside of the case!

BACK TO CASTER

CASTER

Yeah, it is.

JULIE

(beat)
Let's pretend that I never saw that.

Caster works on that a minute, and we go to...

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT

Caster and Julie come up to Tory at the box office.

TORY

Ooooh, is this your new
giiiiiiiiirlfrieeeeeeeeend?

CASTER

No, no she's just a friend. Shadoe is my girlfriend.

TORY

HA! You wish!

CASTER

Ha ha, shut up.

TORY

(to Julie)
Seriously, though. She is so not his

girlfriend.

They walk away with their tickets.

JULIE
What was that all about?

CASTER
I don't know. I've never seen her before
in my life. Heh.

Julie goes to get seats and Caster waits in the concessions
line and fumes.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - LATER

Caster comes in, sits down at the table. Gets up, tears out
the interior computer sticker, and tries to throw it away
but it sticks to his fingers. He gets it off and plunks
back down, exhausted.

INT. CREDIT UNION/CASTER'S CUBICLE - DAY

Julie comes in to Caster's cubicle.

JULIE
Hey.

CASTER
Hey.

JULIE
I'm getting a new couch delivered to my
apartment tomorrow.

CASTER
That's cool.

JULIE
So I need to get rid of the other one,
and the store is going to charge me a
huge fee for disposal if I have them
take it.

CASTER
Oh, sorry, I don't have room for another
couch.

JULIE
No, I just need somebody to come over
tonight and help me throw it away. And I
know how good you are at throwing away
chairs.

CASTER
Um, okay.

We hear knocking on a door.

JULIE (O.S.)

Come in!

INT. JULIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Caster enters.

JULIE

Hey, strong man, how about a beer
before we start wrestling that couch?

CASTER

Shouldn't we start drinking after
the heavy lifting?

JULIE

If we wait until after, there will be
nowhere to sit.

INT. JULIE'S APARTMENT - LATER

They're sitting there drinking and talking. Caster is
starting to get drunk, but also nervous.

JULIE

But then the company is switching to the
new 401(k) plan. It is so much work for
H.R. it is not to be believed, and...

The sound of her voice fades out as we push in on Caster.
Finally he blurts out:

CASTER

You're not mad at me about the
computer, are you?

JULIE

No no! Not at all. I was just surprised.
I really thought Blake took it.

CASTER

So does that screw up his whole reason
for being fired and everything?

JULIE

Oh no, that never really came into it.
He got fired because he was being so
cruel to you all the time, and he was
creating a hostile work environment.
(predatorily)

So what was that ticket girl talking
about? Shadoe's not your girlfriend?

CASTER

Well, not technically. We were

practically... but then she had to go to California to take care of her dad, and I don't really know.

JULIE

So Shadoe's the perfect woman?

CASTER

If she's not, she's the closest I've ever met.

JULIE

Well, I have to go to the powder room, then we're gonna move this couch!

She goes into the bathroom and Caster gets up... and he's more drunk than he realized.

CASTER

Holy shit, I'm going fall down the stairs and break my neck.

Caster starts moving around, trying to knock the drunk out of himself. Julie comes out of the bathroom wearing nothing but the lingerie from the "Perfect Woman" picture. Caster gapes confusedly at her.

CASTER

How are you going to move the couch dressed like that?

JULIE

(puts her hands on Caster's shoulders)

We've got to save the whales! Quick, to the bookmobile! Sacré bleu!

CASTER

What are you doing?

JULIE

Forget Shadoe, I'm your perfect woman.

Julie leans down and kisses him. The passion builds, and they fumble their way to the couch.

Now they're in a stage of partial undress and awkwardly going at it.

INT. CASTER'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELLING

Caster driving home, he's really torn up.

CASTER

Julie wanted me to stay but I just told her that I couldn't because I had to

come home and change my clothes and whatever, and she said it was okay. So what's our deal now?

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He comes in but doesn't turn on the light.

INT. BEDROOM

He types at his computer.

CASTER

I wish I could just hit "control Z" and never have gone there tonight. I'm such an idiot. I don't know how I can face Julie at work tomorrow.

Caster gets up and paces nervously. LuvBunny, Hooch and Nostradominatrix all appear in the room, talking over one another.

LUVBUNNY

I think you are the victim here. Julie invited you over on false pretenses, she gave you beer, and she had to have been planning this move for a while to be wearing the "perfect woman" deal.

HOOCH

It would behoove you to recall that Shadoe dated Turbo Dan "for the nookie" and nothing else. I think anybody that can do that will understand a one night drunken hookup.

NOSTRADOMINATRIX

People that work in HR have absolutely no right to behave this way. And no nookie is worth what you're feeling right now. But I guess you've figured that out.

HOOCH

I still don't see what's wrong with Julie! Stop pretending you're not a lucky bastard. So your first time wasn't the bed of white dove feathers and rose petals that you had always dreamed of. You did all right.

Caster just flops on his bed, miserable, tuning them out.

INT. CREDIT UNION/CASTER'S CUBICLE - DAY

Julie is in Caster's cubicle talking happily to him, and

he's torn, uncomfortable. When she leaves, she gives him a peck on the lips. DAVE walks by a moment later.

DAVE

Wow, Julie's sure in a great mood today. I wonder what got into her.

Caster looks guilty. We hear the crackle and beep of an answering machine playback. Shadoe is softly crying.

SHADOE'S VOICE

(filtered)

Um...hi. It's me. Just...

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He stands by the answering machine, dejected and exhausted.

SHADOE'S VOICE

(filtered)

Um... call me, okay?

Caster picks up the phone.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He's at home alone, in the dark, on the couch.

CASTER

This has been a tough week.

INT - SHADOE'S PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY

Luis helps Shadoe carry flowers into the house.

CASTER (V.O.)

I talked to Shadoe a lot over the weekend, but there wasn't really very much to say.

INT. CREDIT UNION - DAY

Julie is hanging out in Caster's cube.

CASTER

... so finally, he passed away and I just... really want to be alone for a while. It doesn't have anything to do with you. Thanks for the offer, though.

Julie nods sympathetically.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Caster brings his mail in, opens a sympathy card from Julie.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - LATER

Caster opens the door, there's Julie with takeout.

JULIE

Hey, I just came by to see how you were doing... and to bring you some lunch.

CASTER

(smiles weakly at her)

Thanks. That's... very thoughtful.

(beat)

You know, I'm actually really happy to see you.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - LATER

They sit on the couch, eating the lunch.

JULIE

You know, if you don't have Thanksgiving plans, I'm going up to Tampa tomorrow to have diner with my parents. You're welcome to come along. If you want.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Caster lying on the bed, wiped out.

CASTER

That was weird. I don't know what to do with that one. It seems like a lose-lose situation.

INT. NOSTRADOMINATRIX'S DUNGEON - NIGHT

NOSTRADOMINATRIX

I wouldn't look at it like meeting her parents. Sometimes it's just nice to spend holidays with people. If I were you, I would go with Julie.

INT. HOOCH'S BACHELOR PAD - NIGHT

HOOCH

Nah. Go there. Get out. Eat. Fall asleep in front of the TV. It's the least you can do.

INT. LUVBUNNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

LUVBUNNY

It sounds like a cute companion and free food is just what you need right now. Now that I mention it, that sounds like what I need right now...

INT. JULIE'S PARENT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Caster sits at the dinner table with Julie, JULIE'S DAD and JULIE'S BROTHER. JULIE'S MOM, a German frau, brings a tray heaping with sauerkraut and brats in from the kitchen.

JULIE'S DAD
So, you like football?

CASTER
No.

JULIE'S DAD
You like basketball?

CASTER
No.

JULIE'S DAD
You like baseball?

CASTER
No.

JULIE'S DAD
Well, what do you like?

CASTER
"Star Trek."

INT. LUVBUNNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

LUVBUNNY
So are you and Julie like, an item now,
or are you just "strong friends?"

INT. CASTER'S CUBICLE - DAY

He types.

CASTER
Me and Julie are just friends. I guess
she's a cool chick, but she's not my
cool chick, you know?

Christmassy music kicks in as we see a...

SERIES OF SHOTS

- A) Caster goes Christmas shopping at the mall with Julie.
- B) We see the shopping bags in the garbage as Caster buys gifts online.
- C) Caster makes cookies with Julie at her apartment. They throw flour at each other.

INT. CREDIT UNION/LUNCH ROOM - DAY

Caster walks in to the "holiday luncheon" party. Dave sees him, and comes over.

DAVE

There he is. You're a lucky bastard,
you know that?

CASTER

Huh?

DAVE

(indicates the food table)
Check it out.

There's a huge mountain of cookies with a prominently displayed card: "From Julie and Ray," encircled with tiny red and green hearts.

Everybody's staring at Caster. He turns around to slink out of the room and runs into Julie's Christmas-sweater. He looks up at her face just in time to notice what she's holding. Mistletoe.

She kisses him. After a beat, he kisses her back.

INT. HOOCH'S BACHELOR PAD - NIGHT

He holds a martini.

HOOCH

So, despite what you may think, Julie is
now officially your girlfriend.
Sorry to break it to you.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

He types:

CASTER

Don't I have to sign some kind of
permission slip or something?

INT. HOOCH'S BACHELOR PAD - NIGHT

HOOCH

You did. It's called, "Kissing her in
front of your coworkers." Oh, and you
had hot monkey circus sex with her.
Don't forget that.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Caster's on the phone. We HEAR the voice of SHADOE'S MOM.

SHADOE'S MOM

Hello?

CASTER

Hi, it's Ray. Is Shadoe there?

We see, beside him, a stack of mail.

INSERT

On top is a handmade card with of all kinds of layers of blue paper and glitter. It has a big glittery white sun on the front and says, "Happy Winter Solstice, Love Shadoe and Luis."

SHADOE'S MOM

No, Ray, I'm sorry, she's out with Luis. I think volunteering at a homeless shelter for Christmas dinner.

BACK TO SCENE

CASTER

She's too good for me.

SHADOE'S MOM

I'll tell her you called.

INT. JULIE'S PARENT'S HOUSE - DAY

Warm and festive. Julie and Caster exchange gifts on the couch on Christmas day. It's an old fashioned German-American Christmas celebration. Lots of beer and sausage-based meat products. Julie gives him the "Return of the King" DVD, but he's a little disappointed. He gives her the first season of SpongeBob.

EXT. JULIE'S PARENT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Julie schools Caster at basketball in the driveway. It's a pathetic, emasculating shut-out. They collapse onto the ground.

JULIE

(breathing hard)
Rematch?

CASTER

(at death's door)
Let me catch my lungs first. No, they're gone. Sorry.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Caster scrawls a card.

INSERT

We see, on the table, a little gold necklace shaped like the sun. The card says "Shadoe - Happy Late Winter Solstice. May each of your new days be brighter than the previous."

BACK TO SCENE

CASTER
(chuckling to himself)
Astronomy humor. I'm so clever.

INT. JULIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

They're sitting on the new couch, watching TV.

CASTER
So, do you want to go to Turbo Dan's New Year's party tomorrow? You're welcome, but I've got to warn you, there's going to be a lot of guys there getting drunk and being loud assholes.

JULIE
So why do you want to go? You hate loud assholes.

CASTER
Well, yeah, but they're my friends.

JULIE
But I already bought you a ticket to my party.

CASTER
Ticket? Party? What?

JULIE
The champagne toast at the Clarion. I go every year. The tickets are a hundred dollars each.

CASTER
Why didn't you ask me before getting me a ticket?

JULIE
It was supposed to be a surprise!

CASTER
What, because I didn't have any plans for Thanksgiving or Christmas, you just assumed that I didn't have anything for New Year's either?

JULIE
No, I...

CASTER

Okay, that's fine. Maybe we can go to Turbo Dan's first and then drive up to Tampa.

JULIE

If you just want to go there to get free beer, there's an open bar all night at my party.

CASTER

But I want to see all of my friends at my party.

JULIE

Please, Ray? This means a lot to me, I spent a lot on it, you can see your friends tomorrow.

CASTER

Fine, fine. This is my own damn fault for waiting until the last minute.

JULIE

Thank you.

(kisses him)

It'll be fun, you'll see. Tomorrow after work we can go rent you a tuxedo.

CASTER

A whato?

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - NIGHT

It is a very posh, upscale hotel, and they are on the top floor with a view overlooking the city.

Caster is by the open bar, drinking a martini with focused concentration, looking good in his tux. Julie enters the room wearing an elegant black sparkly gown. Caster looks at her, but doesn't really see her, and she knows it.

She introduces him around, we see a close-up of her lips as she says the word "boyfriend."

She and Caster drink up. Caster is looks concerned at how much she's drinking, but she waggles a hotel room key at him and whispers in his ear. They dance, they drink. They're having a good time, but it's kind of desperate.

At midnight, they toast, they kiss. Fireworks out the windows, but not for them.

BLACK OUT

INT. JULIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

They are watching "RETURN OF THE KING."

JULIE
(pointing to the screen)
So, who is he again?

CASTER
He's Aragorn, son of Arathorn, heir to
the throne of Gondor.

JULIE
And why does he talk to dead people?

CASTER
They're cursed because the first time
the dark lord attacked, they were
supposed to help Gondor and didn't.

JULIE
And why are the dead guys afraid of the
sword Agent Smith brought him?

CASTER
(annoyed)
That's how they know he's the rightful
heir of Gondor, because that's
Ellendil's sword that was broken in the
battle they were supposed to help him
in.

JULIE
But if they weren't there, how would
they know that? And besides, couldn't
anybody just walk up with the sword?
How does that prove anything?

CASTER
(turns off the movie)
I think there should be a law that
people shouldn't be able to see sequels
to movies that they haven't seen
thinking that they can just "catch up."
At least not sequels with plotlines that
aren't about sports teams that finally
win the big championship.

JULIE
Fine, be that way.

INT. CREDIT UNION/SNACK ROOM - DAY

Caster and Julie are snacking.

JULIE
So what were you doing Tuesday? Who were

you with?

CASTER

Oh, it was a "redo" of Turbo Dan's New Year's party, but not really. He still had beer left over from the weekend. So we tear into the stockpile, but every time it almost starts to turn into drunken revelry Turbo Dan is shushing everyone down. It turns out that the cops got called in twice on his real New Year's party, and now he's all worried about getting evicted.

JULIE

Oh, you should have told me, I really want to meet your friends. So what are we doing Saturday?

CASTER

I was going bowling with the Turbo Dan gang again. I don't want to be that guy who meets a girl and then goes M.I.A, you know?

JULIE

I should come and meet your friends!

CASTER

(winces)

Uh... not everybody gets my friends at first. I think they're lovable village idiots, but for most people the jury's still out.

JULIE

If you like them, I'm sure they're great.

Caster looks dubious.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

(Preferably Sarasota Lanes) TD, Caster, Tory, Scottie and Julie are bowling. Turbo Dan, all drunk and wild, gets a strike and spazzes. Caster shakes his head.

CASTER

I don't know how you do it, dude. Okay Julie, you're up.

Julie gets up and tries, very seriously. Gutter ball.

JULIE

Damn it! Son of a bitch!

Scottie passes her, on his way to the lane.

SCOTTIE

Let me put this in terms that you can relate to, Jules. A bowling ball is like regulation W.N.B.A. size. So what you gotta do is slam it, girl. SLAM! POW!

TD and Tory laugh. Julie does big fake sarcastic laugh at Scottie. He stops, a dark look passes between them.

Julie sits down next to TD and Tory. Tory says nothing but is all over Turbo Dan, and Julie is offended by that.

Scottie starts to bowl. Turbo Dan calls at him from the bench.

TURBO DAN

Whoa, Scottie, are you clenching your muffin? You'll never get a strike that way. You're clenching, aren't you?

Scottie falls down laughing on the approach to the lane, and his ball rolls feebly towards the headpin. A strike! Scottie abandons himself to further heights of hysteria. Caster, Tory and TD are laughing too. Julie fumes.

JULIE

(whispering to Caster)
He was over the line!

Caster shakes his head, gasping, and rolls his eyes.

INT. CASTER'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELLING

JULIE

Your friends really made me feel like I didn't belong. Why did they have to be such jerks?

CASTER

I told you that they were like this, but you wanted to meet them.

JULIE

But you weren't helping me at all.

CASTER

It's not worth telling you five years of history just so that you can understand a poop joke that's not funny anyway.

JULIE

Well you didn't even try.

CASTER

Well excuse me! I guess I should have warned you that you wouldn't like them.

INT. CREDIT UNION - DAY

Julie is hanging out in Caster's Cubicle.

JULIE

So, what are we doing tonight, sweetie?
We could go to my place...

CASTER

Oh, sorry. I kind of already made plans
to hang with Turbo Dan because Tory's
working tonight.

Julie frowns and crosses her arms.

CASTER

(continuing)
Is that okay?

JULIE

I guess so.

CASTER

But not really?

JULIE

I don't like who you are when you
hang out with him. You're better than
that.

CASTER

What's so bad about Turbo Dan? Why do
you hate him so much?

JULIE

Because he's an idiot and a jerk!

CASTER

Well I can't argue with that, but he's
my friend! He's not so annoying when
he's not with Tory.

JULIE

So are you going to ditch me every time
his girlfriend isn't around?

CASTER

It's not like this is the tenth time
I've done this or something. Cut me some
slack.

JULIE

Fine, I don't care if you ditch me
tonight, as long as you promise I can
have you on Sunday.

CASTER

I'm not "ditching" you! We didn't have plans!

Julie stalks off.

INT. GOLDEN APPLE DINNER THEATRE - NIGHT

A few shots of a local production. Dancing and singing. Caster and Julie in the audience, digging it.

EXT. ISLAND PARK - NIGHT

Caster and Julie walk along the water in the moonlight.

CASTER

That was actually pretty good. I've driven by that place downtown millions of times, but I never thought I would ever go inside. People give guys a lot of crap about being gay if they like musicals, but that show was full of hot chicks in black lace doing sexy dances. If enjoying that makes me gay, then Gay Ray I am.

JULIE

I have a confession to make.

CASTER

Uh, okay.

JULIE

I've had a crush on you since the first time that you walked into my office. And I kept trying to get you to go out with me and I got all frustrated when you kept dodging me.

Caster chuckles.

JULIE

(continuing)

I'm glad I didn't give up, because now we're together.

Caster holds her hand, touched in spite of himself. Then his expression falls.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Different cuts. Caster and Julie are on the couch, illuminated by the glow of the TV, in different clothes on different days, but in almost the exact same position. Caster speaks to us, breaking the fourth wall.

CASTER

(to audience)

I'm starting to get really annoyed with Julie lately. She's just always there. She's always coming over and watching movies with me at night. Watching movies, watching movies. I don't know what would happen to our relationship if Video Renaissance shut down.

INT. BATHROOM

Caster and Julie get ready for bed, sharing the single sink unsuccessfully.

CASTER

(to audience)

But I don't care about that, the problem is that after the movie, lately she's always too tired to go home, so she just stays over.

INT. BEDROOM

The two of them, comically crammed into Caster's small bed. First they are making out, then they have their backs to each other, and finally we see Caster awake in the middle of the night as Julie steals the covers.

CASTER

(to audience)

That was fun the first few times, but it's losing its charm fast. I mean, I don't even try for any nookie anymore, I just want to go the hell to sleep. But my little loser bed wasn't built for two, especially when one of them is a seven-foot tall mutant.

INT. LUVBUNNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

LUVBUNNY'S

You have to stand up and put some freakin' boundaries in place. And considering you were more or less tricked into this relationship in the first place, the least she should do is to understand that you have a life apart from her.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Julie is asleep on the bed, he sits at the computer.

CASTER

I don't think I was "tricked" into it. I was just too stupid to realize that I was in a relationship until she spelled it out for me. It was my fault.

INT. HOOCH'S BACHELOR PAD - NIGHT

He sits in his chair, staring into space.

HOOCH

Mmmmm... Amazon woman... What were we talking about again?

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

CASTER

Heh. Yeah. I guess I really shouldn't be complaining.

INT. HOOCH'S BACHELORPAD - NIGHT

HOOCH

Well, the fact that you have an Amazon woman to bang and yet you're still worried about these things means that it may very well be an important problem that you should take care of.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - DAY

Julie is making Froot Loops in the BG. Caster is dialing the phone. We HEAR Shadoe's voice when she picks up.

SHADOE

(filtered, over phone)
Hello?

CASTER

Hey, it's me.

SHADOE

Oh, hey. I've got something important to tell you. I didn't know if I should tell you, but I decided that you should know.

CASTER

Okay, what is it?

SHADOE

I can't tell you right now. Will you be home on Monday night?

CASTER

Okay, sure. But...

SHADOE

Don't worry. It's not bad news. I'll talk to you Monday.

INT. ARBY'S - DAY

Caster and Julie are having lunch. Julie's saying something but we can't hear it. Finally we make out:

JULIE

Hey, are you paying attention?

CASTER

Huh? Sorry, what?

JULIE

Okay, you been acting all depressed lately and I know you're just doing it for attention.

CASTER

From who? You? You couldn't give me any more attention if you cut me open and started cataloging my organs!

JULIE

It's going to be a wedding invitation. You're going to get it in the mail on Monday, and that's why she couldn't tell you yesterday.

Caster stares, crushed. Julie breaks eye contact.

JULIE

All of my friends are getting married too. We're reaching that point where it's time to get married.

Caster nearly chokes on his Dr. Pepper.

CASTER

None of my friends are married.

JULIE

That's because none of your friends are worth marrying.

Caster stews.

EXT. LIDO BEACH - DAY

Some music as Caster walks alone on the beach, brooding.

EXT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - DAY

He pulls up and gets out of his car.

He goes up the walkway, and we see Shadoe sitting on the steps, smiling and wearing the gold sun necklace he gave her for Christmas. Caster's brain seizes up. He's trying not to cry as she runs to him and hugs him.

SHADOE

Sorry to be so mysterious on the phone, but I wanted to surprise you.

CASTER

I'm surprised! I gave up hope that you'd ever move back!

SHADOE

Well, I'm not moving back. That's what I wanted to tell you, but I had to tell you in person.

Caster's face falls.

SHADOE

(continuing)

I've been accepted into the Peace Corps. I'm going to be working in Vanuatu for the next two years.

CASTER

(with relief)

What, are you part of the international task force sent to help them recover from hosting Survivor?

SHADOE

I'm serious, Ray. I'm actually going to Vanuatu.

CASTER

Wait... WHAT?!

SHADOE

My dad really inspired me with all of his stories about how he and Mom made a difference in the Peace Corps, so I put in an application last summer.

CASTER

So you... wait... WHAT?!

SHADOE

I found out before Halloween, but with my dad and everything I wasn't even sure I was going to accept. Then when he passed away mom and I decided that this is what he would have wanted.

(beat)

I didn't know how to tell you.

CASTER

Why didn't you just tell me?

SHADOE

I almost didn't tell you at all because I knew you had a girlfriend now and you probably didn't care, but I still care so much about you.

CASTER

So you do care?

SHADOE

(grabbing him)

Of course I care! You mean so much to me!

Caster's world is crumbling in front of him. She lets him go, and they stare at each other a moment.

CASTER

Um, how long are you in town for?

SHADOE

I wanted to spend the rest of my time in the U.S. in Sarasota with my friends, if that's okay.

CASTER

So is Luis here too?

SHADOE

Nope, just me.

CASTER

Oh, did you guys break up?

SHADOE

No, it's nothing like that, I'll miss him a lot.

CASTER

Well, that's noble, to try to make the long distance work.

SHADOE

What are you talking about?

CASTER

Isn't he your boyfriend?

SHADOE

Dude, Luis is gay!

CASTER

Oh. I assumed that you were a couple because of the Winter Solstice card and

everything.

SHADOE

Why do you think he even celebrates Winter Solstice? He's not down with people who think his lifestyle is a sin!

INT. ARBY'S - DAY

Caster and Julie having lunch with Shadoe. A long uncomfortable silence.

JULIE

Well, going into the Peace Corps is okay for your type.

Shadoe looks at Caster, unsure how to proceed.

CASTER

(to Shadoe)

Um, right. So, did you sleep okay last night?

SHADOE

(relieved)

I guess. I ended up sleeping on the floor because Turbo Dan's couch had silverfish.

CASTER

Aaaugh, what?! That's disgusting! I mean, when I think about the times I've passed out on that couch...

(shudders)

Gyuh!

JULIE

You should stay in a hotel.

SHADOE

It's okay, I don't have the money for a hotel.

CASTER

Okay, this can't happen. My couch is vermin-free and you're welcome to sleep on it if you want.

Julie catches his eye. He's going to pay for that.

CASTER

(continuing)

Are you guys cold? 'Cause it's like Hoth in here.

INT. CASTER'S CAR - DAY - TRAVELLING

Caster and Julie are arguing.

CASTER

What? What was I supposed to do, just say "Silverfish, huh? Well, sucks to be you!"

JULIE

You should have asked me first before you made the offer.

CASTER

Whatever! You're my girlfriend; you're not my parole officer. And what did you mean by "her type" anyway? What was that about?

JULIE

You know, the dirty hippie type.

CASTER

Just because she wants to help out in the world it doesn't mean that she's some kind of sixties love-beads burnout.

JULIE

Oh please, you know that she's only doing this because nobody would actually give her a good job here.

INT. LUVBUNNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

She sits back from her computer, appalled.

LUVBUNNY

Arg, just break up with Julie.
Ridiculous...

TITLE CARD

Worst. Night. Ever.
Current mood: exhausted

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Caster and Julie walk in the front door, we HEAR the SHOWER RUNNING.

CASTER

See, she's not dirty.

JULIE

If you're going to let her stay here, I hope you're at least charging her for part of the utilities.

CASTER

What? I haven't been charging you for all the showers you've taken here, which has practically been more than I have lately.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Julie is smothering Caster on the couch. Shadoe sits uncomfortably on the floor with her back to them, trying to watch the movie.

Caster gets up to go to the bathroom. Jump cut to him returning. He sits in a chair instead of going back to the couch.

JULIE

Oh. You don't want to sit on the couch?

CASTER

No, that's okay. You can stretch out your legs on it. I don't mind.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Julie is in the bathroom brushing her teeth, wearing only Caster's shirt. Caster is talking in low tones to Shadoe.

CASTER

I'm really sorry. She's not normally like this.

SHADOE

It's okay, don't worry, forget it.

But Caster looks darkly at Julie.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Julie and Caster lie together in the dark. Julie is rubbing Caster's thigh, over his boxer shorts. When that doesn't work, she traces her finger on his chest. Finally she takes his hand, puts it on her breast, and breathes in his ear, nibbling on his earlobe. A beat, and he jerks his hand away.

CASTER

Would you stop it? You're acting like a total freak!

Julie is hurt, and turns her back on him in a huff, taking up the whole bed.

Fade to white. We HEAR Caster's VOICE OVER.

CASTER (V.O.)

Last night was the worst
Julie is a jealous girl

I did not sleep well

INT. LUVBUNNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

She cups her hands around her mouth.

LUVBUNNY
Break up with her!

INT. HOOCH'S BACHELOR PAD - NIGHT

He crosses his arms.

HOOCH
I concur. Do you concur?

INT. NOSTRADOMINATRIX'S DUNGEON - NIGHT

She raises her hand "aye."

NOSTRADOMINATRIX
I concur.

INT. LUVBUNNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

LUVBUNNY
Is there a petition we need to sign?

INT. CASTER'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELLING

He's driving. Sad. A beat, then:

CASTER
No haiku. Too tired. I can't believe today even happened. I still feel sick about it, but I know it was the right thing to do.

INT. CREDIT UNION/CASTER'S CUBICLE - DAY

Julie dumps Disney tour books on Caster's desk.

JULIE
Let's go to Disney World this weekend! It'll be so fun! We can stay at the All-Star Movies hotel and go to all the parks! It'll be great!

CASTER
Julie! Stop it! I don't want to go away with you this weekend. You know I have a guest staying with me!

JULIE
Well that's why I wanted to go! I thought you could leave her alone while she's staying in your apartment and we

could go and have fun and give her some privacy.

CASTER

Hello?! The whole reason she's in town is to see her friends! I'm not ditching her.

They start yelling at each other. We fade down to HEAR Caster's VOICE OVER.

CASTER (V.O.)

So we got into this huge fight and it just went on and on and kept getting uglier.

People start to prairie dog over the cubicle walls.

CASTER (V.O.)

(continuing)

Finally all of her histrionic bullshit just broke the camel's back, and I couldn't take it anymore. I broke up with her.

INT. LOBBY

Caster heads out of the building. We HEAR Caster's VOICE OVER.

CASTER (V.O.)

I was humiliated, so I just got up and left. It's not like I had to tell anybody where I was going. Somebody in H.R. knew why I was taking a "sick day."

EXT. PARKING LOT

Caster walks out to his car. He rests his arms on it for a long beat, then gets in.

INT. CASTER'S CAR - TRAVELLING

He's driving and crying.

INT. JULIE'S OFFICE

She's crying in her office.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

He sits alone on the couch, in the dark, looking miserable. After a while, he looks over and see a note on the end table. He gets cleaned up, heads back to the car.

INT. TURBO DAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Turbo Dan lets him in. Turbo Dan and Shadoe look guiltily at each other, weirdly quiet.

SHADOE

What's wrong, Ray?

CASTER

I broke up with Julie today. Just now.

TURBO DAN

(relaxing visibly.)

Shit dude, we were just talking about what a bitch she is. We thought you had been outside listening!

Caster chuckles. They comfort and encourage Ray. Turbo Dan grabs his shoulders.

TURBO DAN

You're like, my hero now bro. I want to take you out for a hundred beers!

CASTER

I'm not sure it's really a cause for celebrating.

INT. CASTER'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELLING

Caster and Shadoe are driving home.

SHADOE

I'm sorry you and Julie broke up. I'm sorry if it was all my fault.

CASTER

No it's not. Honestly this was probably long overdue anyway.

SHADOE

I have to confess, I'm a little glad, though. Julie isn't good enough for you.

CASTER

That's so not true. Julie was exactly good enough for me. She was always just good enough to keep me from wanting to break up with her.

(beat)

It's like the end of "The Matrix: Revolutions" where the only way that Neo could beat Smith was by letting Smith kill him, thus causing Smith's destruction as the Matrix balanced itself.

(He's starting to lose her)
 Your non-bitch forces screwed up the equilibrium, causing Julie's reserve bitch forces to double up to take in the slack. Or something. I don't know what the hell I'm talking about. It's been a long day.

Shadoe smiles to herself, leans back in her seat.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

He's typing catatonically, as if compelled.

CASTER
 Holy shit. This is one of those days that I feel like I have to write down the entire thing because it's just too bizarrely impossible not to be documented.

INT. TURBO DAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Turbo, Caster, Scottie and Shadoe are on the couch drinking and playing video games. We HEAR Caster's VOICE OVER.

CASTER (V.O.)
 So I'm bombing out over at Turbo Dan's place with Shadoe and Scottie, and we're just drinkin' beers and playing Nintendo and whatever.

The PHONE RINGS. Turbo Dan picks it up.

CLOSE ON TORY

Talking on the phone, in a panic.

TORY
 (continuing)
 I really want to come over there, Dan, really! But I'm stranded at my friend's house and I don't have my car.

Freeze frame on Tory. We HEAR Caster's VOICE OVER.

CASTER (V.O.)
 In retrospect, this absolutely makes no sense and should have been a red flag.

A freeze frame of Turbo Dan comes in to fill the right half of the frame. He is cross-eyed and wearing a crown made from a Budweiser box with "King of Beer!" written across the front in marker.

CASTER (V.O.)

(continuing)

You have to remember, however, that Turbo Dan took the call, and he had been doing a lot of drinking, so I wasn't paying that much attention to what he said anyway.

BACK TO SCENE

Turbo Dan is scrawling on a slip of paper.

CASTER

(continuing)

T.D., you're way too loaded to be driving. Let me drive.

EXT. RUN-DOWN GHETTO STREET - NIGHT

Caster, in Turbo Dan's Jeep, makes a three-pointer.

CASTER

Are you sure this is the right place?

TURBO DAN

(wasted)

It was fourteenth avenue west, right?

CASTER

Yeah, but this street dead ends. I always get lost when I drive in Bradenton. It's like the twilight zone in here. What was the address?

TURBO DAN

I wrote in on the inside of the beer box.

CASTER

That we left back at your place?

TURBO DAN

Uh, yeah.

CASTER

Jesus.

EXT. GRUNGY APARTMENT - CONTINUING

They pull up to an apartment.

TURBO DAN

Shit.

CASTER

What now?

TURBO DAN

I was supposed to call her when I got here.

CASTER

So?

TURBO DAN

Forgot my phone.

CASTER

(getting out his own cell)
What's her number?

TURBO DAN

I dunno, it's in my phone.

They walk up and knock on the door. A moment, and then Tory opens it and literally shoves them out of the doorway.

TORY

Let's go. Now.
(she looks in her purse, in a
panic)
SHIT! I forgot my keys.

She runs back into the apartment. Turbo Dan and Caster wait for a beat, then we begin to hear shouting from inside. Turbo Dan, still drunk, leans against the doorframe for support. Caster looks uncomfortable and unsure what to do.

TURBO DAN

I'm just going to go in there and get her.

He goes inside before Caster can stop him. Caster hesitates, then follows him in.

INT. GRUNGY APARTMENT

Turbo Dan is standing unsteadily in the middle of the living room yelling.

TURBO DAN

Tory, come on! Let's go!

Caster comes into the room and sees a very familiar orange chair without a mate. We hear Blake's voice from the next room.

BLAKE'S VOICE

Who the hell is that?!

Tory comes flying into the room with her keys in her hand, and grabs Turbo Dan by the arm.

TORY

Come on, let's get out of here.

And right behind her is the voice.

BLAKE'S VOICE

Don't you run away from me, Victoria!

And Blake storms into the room, holding a half-full bottle of beer. Caster freezes up. Blake sees Caster at the same time and he stops dead in the kitchen doorway.

BLAKE

This is your mysterious boyfriend!?
YOU'VE BEEN SCREWING GAY RAY?!

Blake tries to throw the beer bottle at Caster, but spikes it into the carpet.

TORY

I'm not screwing Ray, I'm screwing Dan,
and there's nothing that you can do
about it!

Caster forcefully grabs Turbo Dan's other arm.

CASTER

Come on! We're leaving! Now!

Blake throws a sloppy punch that connects with Turbo Dan's nose. T.D. staggers back, bloodied.

BLAKE

You're going to jail, you faggot! She's
only sixteen years old!

Turbo Dan shoves Blake, knocking him down. He's ready to brawl, but Caster grabs him again.

CASTER

(getting in TD's face)
Come on! Before you get yourself
arrested!

Caster pulls him towards the door. Tory is yelling at Blake who is too fat and drunk to get up.

TORY

You're such an asshole! You can't
control my life!

EXT. APARTMENT

Caster gets Turbo Dan in the car, and drives off.

INT. THE JEEP - TRAVELLING

Caster's driving, trying to explain things to a drunk and

belligerent Turbo Dan.

CASTER (V.O.)
I still don't believe it. I guess
there's no way I could have known, but
damn. I feel like such an idiot.

INT. TURBO DAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Caster is telling the story to Scottie and Shadoe. Turbo Dan is passed out on the couch.

CASTER
She's sixteen, man.

SCOTTIE
Wait, Tory? Back up.

CASTER
Sixteen. I've told you like, ten times.

SHADOE
Her "I'm twenty three" story never
fooled me for a second, but I always
thought that she was at least eighteen
or nineteen.

Caster shakes his head.

CASTER
I mean, I never liked her, but I kind of
feel bad for Turbo Dan.
(He looks over at Turbo Dan, who is
just lost.)
It's one thing to have a girl with
parents that don't approve of the
relationship, but that's not even in the
same ballpark as also having the state
of Florida not approve of your
relationship.

INT. HOOCH'S BACHELOR PAD - NIGHT

HOOCH
Ray, your life is now completely off the
edge of the entire universe.

He shakes his head incredulously.

INT. CREDIT UNION/SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Caster stands accused. Julie looks on, arms crossed.

CASTER(V.O.)
I guess I was naive to think that this
wasn't going to happen. Long story
short, I've been terminated from my job

for stealing company property.

INT. CASTER'S CUBICLE

Caster cleans out his desk, Julie and the security guard watching him. Dave peeks over the cubicle wall.

CASTER
This is so bullshit. SO bullshit.

JULIE
I'm sorry Ray, but you shouldn't have stolen from the company.

CASTER
(rounds on her)
You shouldn't have stolen from me. You shouldn't have stolen my heart!

Julie looks confused. Caster realizes he just spoke gibberish. We HEAR his VOICE OVER.

CASTER (V.O.)
I can't believe that this all goes back to one stupid inventory control sticker I didn't notice.

INT. LOBBY

Caster heads for the door.

CASTER
(to himself)
So if I trace it back to the first step, losing my job over this can be attributed to one broken, open-box DVD burner. Smooth move, cheap ass. That saved you a lot of money in the end.

INT. CASTER'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELLING

He drives home.

CASTER
I suppose it's possible that I could file some kind of counter-whatever that says "Yeah, well she sexually harassed me into a screwed-up relationship!" I don't even know who I'd tell it to at this point anyway. I mean, the head of H.R. already knows what happened, but I somehow doubt that she'd be sympathetic to my side of the story.

A moment of quiet and then he beats on the steering wheel in frustration.

INT. NOSTRADOMINATRIX'S DUNGEON - DAY

NOSTRADOMINATRIX

Join the Corps and go with Shadoe. It can't be too late.

INT. HOOCH'S BACHELOR PAD - DAY

Hooch puts down his mid afternoon coffee and types quickly.

HOOCH

Although I'm all for the Peace Corps, when you join up you do NOT get to pick where you go. They only guarantee assignment to the same location for married couples. Now don't let that give you any crazy ideas.

SERIES OF SHOTS - PIRATE'S COVE - NIGHT

- A) Caster, Shadoe, Turbo Dan, Tory, and Scottie race go carts, and Turbo Dan blows them all away. Caster and Scottie are neck and neck, as are Shadoe and Tory.
- B) They play laser tag, and Shadoe strafes Scottie, Turbo Dan, and some other guy at a flat out run. Caster is amazed because he sucks at it.
- C) They play mini golf, and Caster sinks one.

CASTER (V.O.)

(to all)

Boo yah! Me and my basic understanding of physics say IN YOUR FACE!

D) We see Turbo Dan and Scottie batting, and we truck over to where Caster, Tory, and Shadoe are sitting by the window in the snack bar.

INT. SNACK BAR

Tory is wearing a black T-shirt that says "Jailbait" in big block letters.

SHADOE

(to Caster)

So, are you having fun?

CASTER

Yeah, and being an unemployed loser, it doesn't have to end just because tomorrow is Monday!

TORY

There's got to be a better job for you out there somewhere.

CASTER

The more I think about it, the whole thing feels more liberating than depressing. Screw the office. I'm done with their crap.

Scottie and Turbo Dan come in, talking at the same time, Scottie practically chasing Turbo Dan, who looks about ready to punch him out.

TURBO DAN

Dude, I said I don't even want to talk about it.

SCOTTIE

...teen night, that's not what they meant. I'm just saying, as a friend...
 (gestures at Tory's shirt)
 ...dude, you know I don't care where you hide the sausage, but there are these little things called statutory rape laws.
 (to Tory)
 I mean, do you want him to go to prison?

TURBO DAN

I know all that, but it's not rape. I love her and she loves me. What does the law know?

They all just glare at Scottie. He sits down.

SCOTTIE

Whatever. I never touched her, officer.

They stew in silence for a moment.

SHADOE

(to Turbo Dan)
 It's not illegal for you to be in love with a sixteen-year-old girl, only for you to have a sexual relationship with one.

TORY

Um, hello? It's sitting right here.

SHADOE

Just wait for her to turn eighteen. Two years isn't very long to wait for someone if you're really in love.

Turbo Dan and Tory look unimpressed. Caster looks at her admiringly.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Caster and Shadoe make love tenderly, perfectly.

INT. HOOCH'S BACHELOR PAD -NIGHT

HOOCH

(to the camera)

Okay, you may hate me for being blunt here, but if you keep just letting things happen to you, and if you keep expecting them to go wrong, then that's exactly what's going to happen! If, on the other hand, you start taking charge of your own damn life, then you may find that things generally work out better for you. Just sayin'.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM

Shadoe is asleep next to Caster who lies awake, resolved.

BLACK OUT

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - DAY

They're having their first, actual shouting fight.

CASTER

Can't you not go into the Peace Corps? It's just, you mean so much to me, and I don't want to have you leave my life for two years!

SHADOE

I don't want to lose you either, but we won't be losing each other. We'll just be separated but not apart.

CASTER

But could you at least consider helping people who aren't on the other side of the planet?

SHADOE

Well if you care so much about me You'd understand why I have to go, and stop being so selfish! I'm not the bad guy for joining the Peace Corps, and nothing's stopping you from joining too if you can't stand to be apart.

CASTER

Ah ha! It doesn't work like that! Hooch told me that even if I did join the Peace Corps we still wouldn't be put

together unless we were married!

SHADOE

Well why don't you just marry me then?!

A moment. They both stop to let that sink in.

SHADOE

That wasn't a proposal, it was just an alternative.

Caster looks her in the eye.

CASTER

Well okay then, this is a proposal.

Cater drags her into his bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Caster's on his knees digging through his closet. He comes out with a replica "LORD OF THE RINGS" band, still ensconced in its plastic Mt. Doom base.

CASTER

(struggling to free the ring)

You're everything in the universe to me.
I can't live without you, and I
would be honored and humbled if Shadoe
Moon Beaupre would agree to be Mrs.
Raymond Caster.

He frees the ring in triumph, presents it to her.

SHADOE

Yes!

She throws her arms around him and they kiss. Then he tries to put it on her finger. It won't fit. They try her thumb.

CASTER

I'm sorry. This isn't even the good One Ring. At least it's really made of metal. I just hope it doesn't turn your finger green.

SHADOE

Shh.

They kiss again.

CASTER (V.O.)

The girl of my dreams has agreed to be my wife. Go me! This is the best day of my life! I keep almost crying as I type this out, I'm so happy. I know that this doesn't magically solve all of our

problems, and that we're still going to be apart, but it just feels so good to make an official commitment.

The icons for Nostradominatrix and LuvBunny hover around them.

NOSTRADOMINATRIX

So cute! I'm so proud of you!

LUVBUNNY

That brought actual tears to my eyes!
You're living a fairy tale.
Congratulations! I'm so incredibly happy
for you!

Caster smiles over Shadoe's shoulder at them.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - LATER

They cuddle on the couch.

CASTER

So I guess I'd better start going through the Peace Corps application.

Shadoe looks skeptical.

CASTER

(continuing)

Yeah, I know. It's a stupid idea.

They sit in silence for a moment.

CASTER

(continuing)

From what I've read online and on the forms, it probably doesn't even matter what I decide. I'm absolutely unqualified for any position they have anyway.

SHADOE

Look, even if you were all psyched up and ready to commit to the program, it takes a long time. I might be back in the U.S. by the time you even left if you applied now. Then we'd end up spending four years apart instead of two.

CASTER

You want to call it off, don't you?

SHADOE

Don't be ridiculous. I'm going to marry you because I love you, not because of a

legal technicality.

CASTER

(gazes adoringly at her)
So here's a wild hypothetical. So what if I can't join the Peace Corps, would it be at all possible for me to just move to Vanuatu while you're there?

SHADOE

(thinks about this)
That is the sweetest, most romantic thing that anybody has ever wanted to do for me. But seriously, you're not going to move to Vanuatu. Let's just enjoy tonight.

CASTER

The closest major town has a few international banks, so I could email some resumes and-

She hugs him.

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Caster types at the computer. Shadoe is asleep on the bed behind him. He gets up, looks at the computer for a beat. Then he turns it off, and lays down beside her.

BLACK OUT

INT. CASTER'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

Caster and Shadoe are packing up.

CASTER

So today is officially my last chance to return this computer to the office before I'm past the thirty day deadline.

EXT. CASTER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Caster, conflicted, walks to Turbo Dan's Jeep.

Turbo Dan and Tory are in the front. He climbs in the back with Shadoe and their luggage.

INT. TURBO DAN'S JEEP - TRAVELLING

Turbo Dan steers the jeep out of the parking lot. Caster looks over at Shadoe, the wind blowing in her hair.

CASTER

I found out that even without a visa you're allowed to stay in Vanuatu for thirty days. That's enough time to nail

down a job and apply for residency.
(Shadoe notices his gaze)
What? It could happen.

She smiles, breaking the connection. She leans her head on his shoulder. He leans back, closes his eyes.

EXT. STREET

The Jeep cruises down US 41.

INT. CREDIT UNION/LOBBY - DAY

Caster comes in the door holding the computer, and is taken aback when Julie looks up from where she's standing by the front desk, talking to the receptionist.

CASTER (V.O.)
So this will be my last post for a while. I plan on spending the next few weeks offline.

They don't say anything, but exchange a look for a long beat. Tenderness, regret, confusion.

CASTER (V.O.)
(continuing)
And after that, who knows where fate's path will lead?

Caster sets the computer down on the desk.

FADE OUT.

THE END