

Weekend Getaway

By

D.B. Toth

Sixth Draft, July 4, 2010

JK Toth Productions, 2009
Registered
Writer's Guild of America,
East

5 Southminster Drive
White Plains, NY 10604
917 617 7009
dbtothy@yahoo.com

INT. HOWARD'S STUDY - NIGHT

Study is sparsely furnished with a big desk and an office chair.

HOWARD JENSEN stands in front of a dress mirror. He is 80 years old and wears a dark gray suit with a monochrome tie. He adjusts the belt of his pants; he has clearly lost some weight. Other than that, he looks like a battle ax of an old man with a hard stare and strong features.

He takes off the suit and carefully drapes it over the back of the chair and puts on his "regular" set of clothes, khaki pants and a casual button down shirt.

Takes a last drag on the Cohiba and puts the cigar out in the crystal ashtray.

There's a folded up piece of paper next to the ashtray and Howard puts it in his pocket. He leaves the room and carefully closes the door behind him.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Howard walks down the hall to the stairs which lead to the ground floor. Something causes him to slow his gait, he grabs the railing to steady himself.

He loses his balance.

LIGHTNING outlines his body as he falls.

Howard crashes to the bottom of the steps, THUNDER follows.

BOTTOM OF STEPS

He rubs his injured ankle.

He is also surprised. Sits up halfway, which gives him a view of the corridor and the doorway to the basement. Turns over onto his knee and starts to crawl toward the phone that's on a stand near the front door.

A small green key that presumably has fallen out of his pocket lies on the carpet.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Two-lane blacktop that winds its way through dense forest.

A black Cadillac sedan whips down the road.

INT. CADILLAC - NIGHT

Two teenagers in the front. ROB, black, is driving, MARSHALL, white, is in the passenger seat. They are 17 years old.

Marshall hands a joint to Rob, who inhales deeply and nods his head in approval.

MARSHALL

Not bad, right? He told me the secret is mixing egg shells in with the organic fertilizer.

ROB

(still inhaling)

Who?

MARSHALL

The janitor. I bought an ounce from that creepy mo'fo'.

ROB

With what? They took our money when we checked in.

MARSHALL

My Mom gave me a phone card.

Rob shakes his head.

A third teenager, WILL, leans forward from the back seat, where he was hitherto invisible. He is Asian and he's holding a book.

WILL

What if Wayne calls our parents for some reason?

Rob hands him the joint.

ROB

You're still stuck on that note? Take a hit and relax, man.

Not relaxed, Will nevertheless takes a hit, leans back and goes back to reading his book.

(CONTINUED)

Marshall starts hunting around for something.

MARSHALL

I can't believe they even took our iPods.

ROB

(agreeing)

Downright un-American.

WILL

At least they let us keep our books.

Marshall and Rob shake their heads.

Marshall finds a CD on the center console, but can't read the label in the semi-darkness. Slides it in the player.

Cheesy, synthesized music fills the car, the kind that opens motivational audio books. It fades into a sensitive male voice.

SENSITIVE VOICE

(on CD)

The first step to freeing yourself from addiction. Be honest and admit that there are powerful, destructive forces shaping your behavior. Until you admit that you are powerless in the face of these forces, recovery is impossible.

Marshall turns it off.

MARSHALL

Talk about a buzz kill.

WILL

Is that Wayne?

ROB

Yup. He gave it to me last week to keep me on the right track.

WILL

You actually listen to it?

ROB

Only when my Dad's in the car.

They drive by a gas station, the only thing that's lit up in the night.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

DR. KALDOR, a doctor in his 60s is examining Howard, who is sitting on the examination table. The sleeve of one arm is rolled up.

HOWARD

For the fifth time, no recurring
dizziness.

DR. KALDOR

(German accent)

Okay, Howie, don't shoot me for
doing my job.

HOWARD

Who are you kidding? You enjoy
poking and prodding me. Dr. Mengele
has nothing on you, you sadistic
bastard.

DR. KALDOR

(unphased)

Nurse Scully was right. You're even
more unbearable now that Marie's
not here to put the muzzle on you.

(beat)

Be that as it may, I'd like to know
if this is related to...

Before he can finish, an attractive woman in her mid-forties walks into the room. She is dressed in business clothes, a smart-looking pantsuit, over it an elegant raincoat. Her hair is wet.

In one hand, she has a folded up umbrella, with the other, she's pulling a small luggage on wheels.

She is CAITLIN MAY, Howard's daughter.

CAITLIN

Friday rush hour. I came as fast as
I could.

HOWARD

Next time I'll take a spill during
off-hours.

CAITLIN

It's good to see you, too, Dad. Hi,
Dr. Kaldor.

(CONTINUED)

DR. KALDOR
It's been a while, Caity.

She kisses Dr. Kaldor on the cheek.

No kiss for Dad. Caitlin takes off her wet rain coat and drapes it on a chair.

HOWARD
I wouldn't get too comfortable.
We're leaving.

He rolls down his shirt sleeve.

Caitlin looks at Dr. Kaldor.

DR. KALDOR
He's lucky. He only sprained his ankle. I just need to see him in two weeks to take off the brace.
(to Howard)
Slow down on the curves, okay Howie? I can't have my nurses walk out on me.

HOWARD
A doctor and a comedian. Go to hell, Harry.

CAITLIN
(relieved)
So that's it?

Dr. Kaldor looks at her, then at Howard.

DR. KALDOR
For now, yes.
(beat)
I'll have a wheelchair brought.

HOWARD
Don't bother.

Howard tries to get up, but cannot generate enough leverage with one leg and falls back into the chair.

He grits his teeth against the pain. Dr. Kaldor leaves the room.

Howard eyes Caitlin's luggage.

HOWARD

Are you leaving Julian?

CAITLIN

(quickly)

I came straight from the airport.

(looks at Howard's leg)

I thought Canzano fixed the banister last week.

HOWARD

Not well, obviously.

Caitlin doesn't entirely buy this. She stares at his ankle.

CAITLIN

No dancing tonight.

HOWARD

(distracted)

No.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The Cadillac turns onto a steep, unpaved driveway, past a mailbox on which letters in an old-fashioned font spell JENSEN.

Headlights illuminate a sign.

SIGN - FOR SALE - VERMONT LEISURE HOMES - ANGELA CHERRY

Underneath, maple leaf, phone number, picture of a smiling red-haired woman, all teeth and confidence.

The driveway is lined on the left by the steep hill that leads to the road (the house lies in a valley) and on the right by tall pine trees. Seemingly it comes to an end, then a 90 degree turn to the right reveals a house. Headlights illuminate a dwelling, somewhere between a small house and a cabin.

The headlights also catch the wheel of a motorcycle, but the boys don't notice it.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Front door of a house opens from the inside.

Caitlin and Howard enter. Caitlin pulls her key out of the lock and puts it in her purse.

(CONTINUED)

She's holding a vial of prescription pills.

CAITLIN

Where are your keys?

HOWARD

Don't know. Maybe I was too busy getting taken out on a stretcher to grab them.

Howard makes his way to the kitchen on crutches.

We can now clearly see the foyer, and some of the living room. Unlike most senior citizen homes, Howard's is sparse. No stuffy sofas, no three-tiered coffee table, no knick-knacks. Furniture is old, but in good shape.

Caitlin turns on the lights.

Wrought-iron key-shaped key holder on the wall, no keys on it.

She opens one of the cabinets. It has many other vials. She takes one out and looks at it.

INSERT - Bottle - Faded label. Osteproxin. Marie-Catherine Jensen.

Uncomfortable, she puts it back and puts Howard's pills next to it and closes the door.

Opens the fridge. Slim pickings. Quart of milk, some butter, carton of eggs, half a loaf of bread.

Tries the cabinet above the fridge

Empty save for a box of macaroni and cheese.

CAITLIN

Jesus. When was the last time you went grocery shopping?

Caitlin starts prepping. She reads the label on the box of macaroni and cheese, then pours water into a measuring cup like a neophyte cook.

Howard watches this with disdain. Notices the answering machine's blinking red light and starts crutching his way toward it.

HOWARD

You don't have to stay here tonight, you know. I don't want to keep you from your files...

(CONTINUED)

CAITLIN

Save your breath, Dad. I'm staying.

HOWARD

...or your husband.

CAITLIN

I'm alone. Marshall's at the rehab thing and Julian's on his way to a conference in New Hampshire. He's spending the night at the cabin .

HOWARD

The third conference in New England in the last six months. Must be some kind of record.

CAITLIN

It's not what you think. I saw the invite.

HOWARD

He'll have to find a motel next time. June, too. I finally found a buyer.

CAITLIN

June?

Howard presses the red light. The answering machine gurgles to life.

With a satisfied grin, Howard plops into a chair.

FEMALE VOICE

(chipper, through answering machine)

Hi, Mr. Jensen, this is Angela Cherry calling. I have some good news and some bad news. The couple who signed the papers two days ago changed its mind.

This wipes the smirk off Howard's face.

ANGELA

(cont'd)

Under Vermont law, home buyers have three days to do that, so there's nothing I can do. So that's the bad news. The good news is I already have another couple who's interested and I will show them the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ANGELA (cont'd)

place on Saturday, or Sunday morning at the latest. I know how anxious you are to sell it, so I'm doing everything I can to make it happen. Call me if you have any questions. Bye now.

(she hesitates with the unpleasant news)

Oh, another thing. There's no running water again. I'll have to call Falzerano, he'll charge us double because it's the weekend, but we don't really have a choice.

Howard is pissed. Stomps his injured leg, winces in pain.

HOWARD

For Christ's Sakes. Is it too much to ask for people to make a decision and stick to it?

Caitlin is surprised at his reaction.

HOWARD

Goddamn tire kickers...just when I thought everything was taken care of.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

The boys are standing on the front porch of the cabin.

Rob looks around. Will shivers against the night chill.

ROB

Nice night for a lynching.

Will zips up his sweatshirt.

WILL

Too cold.

Marshall shakes his head, unlocks the door. He strikes a lighter and steps inside.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Marshall walks through the living room. What little is illuminated by the flame seems neat and tidy. He walks through a short corridor that leads to the kitchen.

INT. CABIN - KITCHEN

Small kitchen table with four chairs, old water cooler with bottle on it, little water left in it.

Marshall walks to the back wall, opens the fuse box. To his surprise, the main switch is already in the ON position.

MARSHALL

Alzheimers.

He turns on the kitchen light, then walks back to the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Marshall turns on the main light. It's connected to the standing lamp in the corner and it's not very bright.

Smallish living room with sofa, love seat, armchairs and fireplace on one end, with an antique rifle above it. Hallway leading to kitchen on the other. Wall opposite the front entrance has two doors in it, presumably leading to bedrooms.

Rob and Will enter.

Marshall opens the first bedroom, walks in.

GUEST BEDROOM

Marshall clicks on the light. Small guest bedroom with narrow bed, night table, dresser.

LIVING ROOM

Marshall steps back into the living room, walks to the master bedroom, opens the door and steps inside.

MASTER BEDROOM

Marshall's POV. Light goes on, reveals two figures in bed.

Two GIRLS to be precise. They are both young, late teens, early twenties at the most. The one with short black hair is frightened and screams. The other girl, with longer, brown hair stares at Marshall with hatred.

Marshall's gaze is fixed on the girl with brown hair. Shock, mixed with surprise.

MARSHALL

June?

JUNE hurls the nearest object she can lay her hands on.

The bra hits Marshall's chest. He catches it on instinct. He can't help look at it more closely, even under these circumstances.

But his examination is cut short by a motorcycle helmet which June hurls at him with all her might and which hits him on the arm.

He yells in pain and ducks out of the room.

LIVING ROOM

Rob has grabbed the shotgun from above the mantelpiece. Will hides behind him. Rob is about to go into the bedroom, but Marshall holds him back.

MARSHALL

It's my sister.

This stops Rob dead in his tracks. Will looks bewildered.

WILL

You have a sister?

MASTER BEDROOM

June stumbles around the room until she finds her bathrobe yanks it on. The other girl has the bedsheets pulled up to her chin. This is RITA, June's girlfriend.

RITA

You have a brother?

June shoots her a look by way of answer, ties the bathrobe around her waist and storms out of the room.

LIVING ROOM

The boys are huddled together, Rob stands in the middle with the shotgun.

June, now composed, looks around.

JUNE

Where's Mom and Dad?

MARSHALL

No one said anything about you being here!

JUNE

Grandpa knows I'm here. He's the only one who counts.

June walks to the window, looks out. She turns back to the room, relieved.

JUNE

You came alone. Just you and these two potheads?

WILL

Marshall didn't tell us he had a sister. Nice to meet you, finally.

He extends his hand at June, who just scowls at it. She grabs Marshall by the arm and leads/shoves him to the kitchen.

INT. HOWARD'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Howard and Caitlin eat at opposite ends of a table that could easily accommodate seven people.

CAITLIN

I'm worried about you all alone in this big house.

HOWARD

Maybe you should visit more.

CAITLIN

This house always reminds me of Mom.

He reaches for his water pitcher.

INT. CABIN - KITCHEN

Marshall pours whiskey into a water glass. He opens the freezer, but it's empty.

MARSHALL

June. Perfect daughter.
Valedictorian. Lesbian.

JUNE

None of your business.

MARSHALL

I guess this explains why you
always come home from college with
girls. They're never going to
believe this.

JUNE

Like she would care. This isn't the
90s!

MARSHALL

We'll see.

JUNE

No, we won't. Or I'll tell them you
came up here with your fucked up
friends to get fucked up.

Marshall knocks back the whiskey. They stare at each other
with undisguised hatred.

LIVING ROOM

The door of the master bedroom opens and Rita steps out.

Rob and Will are staring at the master bedroom door. It
opens slightly, and Rita steps out.

ROB

(approving)
Hi, there!

Rita peers around the room shyly, pulls the bathrobe tighter
around herself. Rob extends his hand.

Rita keeps looking at Will.

ROB

I'm Rob.

Rita shakes Rob's hand.

(CONTINUED)

RITA
Rita.

WILL
Will.

Rita and Will shake hands, considerably longer than Rita and Rob.

RITA
Nice to meet you.

ROB
You have an interesting accent.
French?

RITA
German.

ROB
I was close.

June storms into the living room, walks past the boys and goes into the bedroom.

Rita follows her.

INT. HOWARD'S HOUSE - STUDY

Caitlin opens the door, slowly and quietly.

Study is empty. She notices the cigar butt and a key chain sitting next to the ashtray. She closes the door.

GROUND FLOOR HALLWAY

She walks down the steps and sees Howard standing at the top of the basement stairs.

She pulls a little green key from her pocket.

CAITLIN
I found this on the floor by the
stairs.

Howard takes it.

HOWARD
Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

CAITLIN

What's it open?

HOWARD

The wood shed in Vermont. Damn thing must've fallen out of my pocket.

INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM

The kids are passing around a colorful glass marijuana bowl.

Rita sits on the sofa between June and Will and is furiously leafing through her Psychology 101 text book.

Glasses and a half-drunk bottle of wine are on the coffee table.

MARSHALL

Will you give it a rest? You're not in school. Why don't you relax and take a hit?

He hands the bowl to her, but she ignores it.

Rob takes it and hits it. Rita finds what she's looking for.

RITA

Ah! Here we go.

(reads)

Synchronicity is the experience of two or more events that are casually unrelated...

WILL

(interrupting)

You mean causally.

RITA

(impressed at Will's catch)

Yes.

(reads)

...two or more events that are causally unrelated occurring together in a meaningful manner.

ROB

What the hell does that mean?

(CONTINUED)

WILL

It means that us ending up here at the same time is more than a coincidence.

JUNE

That's bullshit.

MARSHALL

Yeah. It's more like bad luck.

ROB

Oh, shit, you two agree on something? That's a first.

JUNE

Here's the part you left out.

ANGLE ON June as she takes the book from Rita. Window that looks out onto the porch is visible behind her.

JUNE

To count as synchronicity, the events should be unlikely to occur together by chance.

(gives the book back to Rita)

It was on last semester's psych final.

A SILHOUETTE is visible through the window. Impossible to see any detail, because of the living room lights.

JUNE

Events that are unlikely to occur by chance. We both knew Grandpa was getting rid of the cabin, so this doesn't qualify.

The shape moves off.

June starts hunting around her bag. She pulls out a cigarette from a pack and puts it in her mouth.

Through this maneuvering, she hasn't realized that everyone stopped talking and that they are looking transfixed in the direction of the door. She follows their gaze.

Standing in the middle of the living room is a middle-aged MAN. Mid to late 40s, handsome with graying hair, looking like a humanities professor at leisure in his name-brand fleece jacket and pressed jeans. June drops the cigarette on the table.

(CONTINUED)

JUNE

Dad?

JULIAN MAY steps into the light. He gives the group the stern once-over.

Picks up the bowl and sniffs it.

MARSHALL

How did you find out?

JULIAN

How did you get out of the retreat?

MARSHALL

They changed the weekend they let us go home. It was in the e-mail update they sent you.

JULIAN

I didn't get any update.

MARSHALL

I know. I deleted it.

Julian shakes his head. Looks out of the window.

JULIAN

You promised this would all stop. No more lies, remember? No more going behind my back. And your Mom's.

The front door CREAKS open.

A GIRL bounces into the living room. SHE is 19, or 20 years old with long, wavy, auburn hair. Thin leather jacket, looks almost like a motorcycle jacket. She's holding a bottle of wine and looks at the group in confusion, then at Julian.

MARSHALL

Yeah. No more going behind Mom's back.

Julian jumps in.

JULIAN

Oh, no. This is Adrienne, my research assistant. She's accompanying me to the conference in New Hampshire. Adrienne, these are my kids June and Marshall and...

(CONTINUED)

The group just stares at Julian and Adrienne, not knowing what to say, or do. June appears more surprised than Marshall, who seems to be taking Adrienne in stride.

MARSHALL

I guess I better call Mom and tell her we're coming home.

He heads toward the phone.

JULIAN

Hold on just a sec.

INT. CABIN - KITCHEN

Julian, June and Marshall.

JULIAN

I think it's best if we keep this to ourselves. Your mother might misunderstand. Possibly draw the wrong conclusion.

MARSHALL

Really?

JULIAN

Watch it!

MARSHALL

You won't tell her about me and my friends?

JULIAN

No. It will be our secret.

MARSHALL

And no military school?

JULIAN

No. You get a free pass on this one.

JUNE

Why, Dad?

Julian doesn't understand what she's getting at until she indicates the living room.

JULIAN

Things are a little complicated between me and your mother. She

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JULIAN (cont'd)
hasn't been the same since your
grandmother died. They were very
close--

The kids don't say anything.

JUNE
That was two years ago, Dad.

JULIAN
Can I count on you, June?

JUNE
Count on me for what, Dad? To lie
for you?

JULIAN
I'm only asking for what you asked
for. Time. I gladly gave it to you.

Marshall looks at Julian, then June. The penny drops.

MARSHALL
(to Julian)
You knew? About her and what's her
face?

JULIAN
Of course.

Marshall is taken aback.

INT. HOWARD'S HOUSE - FOYER

Caitlin stands at the bottom of the stairs. Shakes the
banister. It seems pretty sturdy. She turns away, notices
the grandfather clock.

Clock stands at a little past 8:35.

She walks back to the kitchen.

INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM

Julian comes in with Adrienne, carrying bags. Marshall and
the boys are spreading their sleeping bags in the living
room.

(CONTINUED)

MARSHALL

What time is it?

JULIAN

(checking his watch)

Eight forty.

MARSHALL

Shit. I promised Mom I would call her at eight. Rob, you need to drive me to the end of the road, so I can get a signal.

JULIAN

Use the house phone.

Marshall looks at him like he's an idiot.

MARSHALL

Why not just tell her I'm at Grandpa's cabin?

(to Rob)

Come on, let's go! If I don't call, she'll know something is wrong.

Julian and Adrienne walk into first bedroom, the one not occupied by June and Rita.

ROB

I'm not your chauffeur.

MARSHALL

Then give me your car keys.

ROB

Second thought. I'll drive you.

He gets up from the sofa. Marshall and Rob are about to walk out of the house.

The house phone RINGS. It sounds unnaturally loud and shrill in the otherwise quiet cabin.

The boys freeze in their tracks. Phone rings again.

Bedroom doors open, June and Julian come out of their rooms, stare at the phone.

Marshall walks up to it, looks at the caller ID.

Caller ID - number with 914 area code.

(CONTINUED)

MARSHALL

Westchester number. Not Mom's,
though.

JUNE

It's Grandpa's.

MARSHALL

Fuck. What's he want?

JUNE

It's probably for me. I'm the only
one who's supposed to be here.

JULIAN

I told Caitlin I'd be stopping by.
Maybe she told Howard.

MARSHALL

One of you has to take it.

Julian picks up the phone.

SPLIT SCREEN - Julian on the right, Caitlin on the left.

JULIAN

Hello?

CAITLIN

Julian? Thank God. I'm trying to
reach Marshall. He promised to call
me at eight.

JULIAN

Okay, relax a minute.

CAITLIN

Don't tell me to relax. I can't
find my son. Did he call you?

JULIAN

There's nothing to worry about.

Adrienne and Rita have joined the spectators.

CAITLIN

What do you mean there's nothing to
worry about?

JULIAN

He's with me.

Marshall's eyes widen.

JULIAN

They switched the weekends he was allowed to come home. It was in the e-mail they sent to us both. Didn't you read it?

CAITLIN

No. I thought you handled all that stuff.

JULIAN

I did. I am. They let him come home, but I was going to the conference, so what was I supposed to do? Leave him at home, all by himself?

(losing himself in the lie)
Who knows? He might learn a thing or two about the American Family in the Cold War era. That's the topic of the conf...

CAITLIN

Is June there?

JULIAN

No. Not yet. She'll be here within the hour, though.

CAITLIN

How is she getting there?

Julian looks at the kids.

JULIAN

A friend of hers is driving her. Them.

Marshall can't believe what he's hearing.

CAITLIN

She talked to you?

JULIAN

Very briefly.

Marshall gestures for Julian to change the topic.

JULIAN

What are you doing at Howard's?

(CONTINUED)

CAITLIN

He had a little accident. Hurt his ankle, but he's fine.

JULIAN

Well, thank goodness for that.

Uncomfortable silence.

CAITLIN

Is it raining there, too?

Julian looks out of the window.

JULIAN

No. At least not yet.

More uncomfortable silence.

CAITLIN

I'll call you tomorrow.

JULIAN

Okay. Talk to you then.

End of SPLIT SCREEN.

INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM

Julian hangs up the phone.

RITA

I thought in America everyone always says "I love you" before they hang up the phone.

INT. HOWARD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Caitlin hangs up the phone without looking and the receiver crashes to the floor and keeps dangling. She picks it up and hangs it up properly. Notices Howard standing in the kitchen doorway.

CAITLIN

It's not what you think. Marshall's there.

(beat)

And June's on her way.

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD
A real family reunion.

He walks away.

INT. HOWARD'S HOUSE - BASEMENT

Caitlin runs on the treadmill. She is in great shape.

HOWARD'S HOUSE - HALLWAY

Howard looks at framed photographs in the hallway. High pitched SOUNDS of a treadmill from the basement.

INSERT - Color picture. The May Family with Howard, about ten years ago. Howard, Julian and Caitlin stand behind a seven-year old Marshall and a nine-year old June. Everyone smiles into the camera.

Howard looks at the picture hanging next to it. Between two pictures a framed bullet with the number 1,000,000 and 1968 under it.

INSERT - Black and white photo. It shows a younger Howard in his 40s, standing next to a woman of similar age, and a little girl standing and smiling between them. The backdrop is the Vermont weekend house.

ZOOM IN on the little girl.

The treadmill noise stops.

HOWARD'S HOUSE - BASEMENT

Caitlin's bent over the treadmill. Her heavy breathing degenerates into a crying fit. She wipes them away with a towel.

Howard watches from the top of the basement steps.

She steps off the treadmill. Washer and dryer visible, and a gun cabinet stamped "Remington".

INT. CABIN - MASTER BEDROOM

Adrienne lies awake in bed.

Julian is wrapped in a sleeping bag at the foot of the bed. he tries to get comfortable, rubs his back.

(CONTINUED)

JULIAN

Do you see both those pillows?

She throws her second pillow, which lands squarely in his face.

INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM

Marshall smokes a good night bowl. Weed in the bowl brightens as Marshall pulls on it, then goes out.

INT. HOWARD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Stove burner. Flame jumps to life. Howard is heating up a frying pan.

Caitlin walks into the kitchen, still half-asleep. Marvels at Howard, who is dressed and perky as a rat in liverwurst. He pours her a cup of coffee and hands it to her.

CAITLIN

Dad, it's seven thirty.

HOWARD

I know. I wanted to get an early start.

Caitlin looks at him in disbelief.

CAITLIN

An early start for what?

HOWARD

We're driving to the cabin.

She drinks her coffee and walks to the table.

HOWARD

I'm serious.

She paws through the newspaper.

CAITLIN

Where's the business section?

HOWARD

I have to fix the water main. You heard Ms. Angela Cherry.

(CONTINUED)

CAITLIN

Yes, I did. She said Falzerini will deal with it.

HOWARD

I'm not paying Falzerano twice his fee to do a half-assed job.

CAITLIN

I think Vermont has more than one plumber.

HOWARD

And one's more useless than the next. Some things you just have to take care of yourself.

Caitlin looks at him skeptically.

CAITLIN

The water main? That's what's on your mind?

HOWARD

What else?

Caitlin considers this, then sits down and starts reading the paper. She feels Howard staring at her and puts the paper down.

CAITLIN

No. You can't go anywhere with your leg like that, and besides, I have a lot of work to do. The Chicago audit is a mess...

HOWARD

I can't have unfinished business. I'll drive myself if I have to.

CAITLIN

Don't be ridiculous, Dad. You can't drive on the painkillers.

HOWARD

You know I don't take them.

CAITLIN

Maybe you should start. For my sake.

(beat)

Rain's headed up that way. It will be crappy all day tomorrow.

(CONTINUED)

Howard doesn't say anything, just stands his ground.

Caitlin stands up from the table, takes her paper and walks out into the hallway.

HALLWAY

She drops her paper, bends down to pick it up.

When she stands up, Howard stands in front of her. He walked around the other kitchen entrance.

CAITLIN

I hate it when you get like this.

(beat)

How long is it going to take?

HOWARD

An hour. Two at the most.

(beat)

To fix the water main.

They walk back to the kitchen.

Caitlin notices the eggs sitting in a carton.

CAITLIN

I want all egg whites and don't use any butter.

She goes and picks up the phone. Howard takes the receiver from her hand and hangs it up.

HOWARD

Let them sleep. We'll call from the road.

INT. CAITLIN'S CAR - DAY

Caitlin's driving her green hybrid, Howard sits in the passenger seat. They are on a major, three-lane highway.

They drive past a sign: 95 North.

CAITLIN

Just think about it, that's all I'm saying.

HOWARD

I have thought about and the answer is no.

(CONTINUED)

CAITLIN

Cable TV, internet access, gourmet food, fitness center. I wouldn't mind living there myself.

HOWARD

Then why don't you?

CAITLIN

We didn't keep an eye on Mom, and--

HOWARD

I suppose it's my fault that she hated doctors and never went.

CAITLIN

(slowly)

No, of course not.

INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Marshall climbs out of his sleeping bag, heads to the bathroom. Living room is in slight disarray. Some cups and empty bottles lying around, but not a complete disaster.

INT. CABIN - BATHROOM

Marshall takes a long, satisfying piss.

Through the window, everything looks green and peaceful. Birds are chirping.

Marshall heads back to the living room.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Caitlin drives past the gas station the boys passed last night.

INT./EXT. CAITLIN'S CAR

Caitlin notices that Howard is asleep.

She picks up her cell phone and dials.

INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM

Marshall is about to climb back into his sleeping bag when the phone rings. Puzzled, he gets up and walks to the phone. Checks the caller ID.

INSERT - Caller ID - 914 number, different then the one from last night.

Marshall picks up the phone.

MARSHALL

Mom?

(beat)

I'm fine. What's the matter? You sound...

(beat)

You faded out a bit there, Mom. For a second I thought you said you and Grandpa were on your way to the cabin...oh, that is what you said.

(beat)

You'll be here in a half hour.

Well, that is a surprise, yes.

(beat)

The water main?

INT./EXT. CAITLIN'S CAR

Caitlin is on the phone.

CAITLIN

Is everything all right up there, Marshall?

INT. LIVING ROOM

Marshall looks in the direction of Julian's bedroom.

MARSHALL

Everything is fine, Mom.

INT. CAITLIN'S CAR

CAITLIN
See you in a bit.
(beat)
Love you.

INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM

Everyone's gathered in the living room, rubbing sleep from their eyes.

JULIAN
You're absolutely sure?

MARSHALL
For the fifth time, yes. They're coming and they'll be here in under a half hour.

WILL
What the hell are we going to do?

ROB
We're going to leave, that's what. This has nothing to do with me.

ADRIENNE
I agree.

MARSHALL
(to Rob)
You would cut and run and leave a friend behind?

ROB
I've known you for three weeks. Let's go, Will.

WILL
Go where? Back to rehab? Or home?

ROB
I don't know. We can decide on the way there.

JULIAN
Let's think this through. I'm only supposed to be spending one night here, so I'll just head on up to the conference with Marshall. Problem solved.

(CONTINUED)

ADRIENNE

What about me?

JULIAN

You're coming with us.

MARSHALL

Hell no! I'm not sitting in the car with her!

ADRIENNE

Hey! I will not be judged by a juvenile delinquent.

MARSHALL

Blow me.

JULIAN

Marshall!

RITA

This is not getting us anywhere.

June sits down on the sofa.

JUNE

You guys are so fucked.

MARSHALL

What do you mean, you guys? You're in this, too.

JUNE

No, I'm not. I have nothing to hide really.

MARSHALL

You're right. We all know how open-minded Grandpa is.

JUNE

We had a deal.

MARSHALL

Exactly. Stick to it. Or kiss your tuition good bye.

JUNE

You wouldn't dare!

JULIAN

(interrupting)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JULIAN (cont'd)
Enough with the blackmail. We need
to work together on this. We're
still a family.

ADRIENNE
Which is why this has nothing to do
with me.

JUNE
Ha!

ROB
We're wasting time. We need to get
the hell out before they get here.

WILL
Guys! We're in this together.

MARSHALL
Everyone stop talking for a second,
I can't think with all this noise.

He paces. The others watch him, with a mixture of fear and
fascination. He picks up his bowl from the mantelpiece and
takes a hit, keeps tapping his finger on the stem of the
pipe.

He stops and faces the group.

MARSHALL
Will's right. We're all in this
together. It looks suspicious if
any of us leaves. If Dad leaves,
I'd have to go with him and I just
talked to Mom not 30 minutes ago.
She'd know something is up. Rob and
Will have nowhere to go. Besides,
last night Dad told Mom that June
brought friends. If there's only
Rita, where are the others? Can't
have inconsistencies. And June's
supposed to be staying for the
entire weekend. Rita is the only
one who can plausibly leave...

RITA
I won't leave June by herself.

MARSHALL
...and that solves nothing anyway.

Marshall watches Will who is standing uncommonly close to
Rita.

Marshall's POV. Will's hand is on Rita's shoulder.

MARSHALL

(cont'd)

Besides, we might need her. There may be a way out of this.

RITA

Let me guess. It involves lying.

MARSHALL

Improvising.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD/DRIVEWAY

Caitlin's hybrid turns onto the driveway. All is quiet and peaceful.

INT./EXT. CAITLIN'S CAR

The last turn reveals Julian's Honda parked behind Rob's Cadillac.

Caitlin and Howard exchange a glance. He opens his door.

EXT. CABIN - DRIVEWAY

Howard and Caitlin get out of the car. Howard scrutinizes the house. Curtains are half drawn.

They make their way to the front door. It's slow going; Howard uses his crutches and Caitlin knows better than to help him.

EXT. CABIN - FRONT DOOR

Caitlin digs around in her purse, looking for her key.

Howard tries the door. It's unlocked.

INT. CABIN LIVING ROOM

Picture perfect family. June and Marshall are sitting on either side of the coffee table, a Scrabble board between them. Rob is in the armchair, engrossed in a book.

Howard and Caitlin observe the scene, look at each other in disbelief. June looks up, she's the one facing the door. She

(CONTINUED)

stands up. She has a barrette in her hair, giving her an innocent look.

JUNE

Mom? Grampa? I guess Marshall wasn't kidding after all. You guys really were coming.

Before they can answer, Julian comes out of the master bedroom. He is wearing a bathrobe and a towel is draped over his shoulder.

There's shaving cream on his cheeks.

JULIAN

Rob, do you have any extra razor blades? Looks like I forgot to bring any.

He notices Howard and Caitlin.

JULIAN

Caitlin? Howard? What a surprise.

HOWARD

You bet.

Julian kisses Caitlin on the cheek. She wipes away the shaving cream.

He shakes Howard's hand. Notices the brace on his leg.

JULIAN

I heard--

HOWARD

(cutting him off)
Yes. I'm fine.

JULIAN

What brings you two up here?
Marshall said something about a broken water main.

HOWARD

Yes. Surely you noticed that there is no running water, Julian. Unless you prefer a dry shave.

JULIAN

I did notice that, as a matter of fact. I'm using the water from the cooler.

HOWARD
(disappointed)
There's still some left?

Howard bores his eyes into Rob. Rob, in turns, puts the book down and stands up.

INSERT - Rob's Book - The Ultimate Fishing Guide to Vermont Waters.

JULIAN
Howard, this is Rob. Rob, Howard.

Rob and Howard shake hands.

ROB
Pleased to meet you, sir.

He shakes hands with Howard, then Caitlin.

HOWARD
And you are?

JUNE
Rob's my boyfriend. Mom and Dad know about him, but I don't think I told you, Grampa.

CAITLIN
Or me.

HOWARD
I think I would've remembered.

Rob doesn't know how to take this. Howard walks over to the Scrabble board and looks at it. Board looks like the game's been going on for a while, full of words, not many letters left to choose from.

The master bedroom opens, (the one June and Rita occupied) and Adrienne comes out of it. She's holding a sketchbook and looks surprised at the newcomers.

ADRIENNE
Hi.

CAITLIN
Hello.

Caitlin and Adrienne exchange a long glance.

JUNE

Mom, this is one of my best friends, Adrienne. She drove up with Rob and I.

Another round of handshakes.

ADRIENNE

You have a beautiful cabin here, Mr. Jensen.

HOWARD

Please. Call me Howard.

CAITLIN

I didn't know you were coming up with a friend, June. In fact, I didn't know you were coming up at all.

JUNE

I told Grandpa. He said I could bring a friend. Or two. Rita and Will are here, too, but they went for a walk.

HOWARD

Is that it? Or are there more people in the basement?

JULIAN

Very funny. I didn't expect a full house myself when I showed up with Marshall.

HOWARD

(perking up)

I thought you were the first one here.

JULIAN

We were. And I thought it would be just Marshall and I until the caravan pulled in.

JUNE

It was just supposed to be Rob and me. But at the last second, Adrienne wanted to come and then at that point we figured--

(CONTINUED)

CAITLIN
What's two more?

JUNE
Exactly.

Howard limps to the window.

CAITLIN
You should've asked your
grandfather for permission, June.

JUNE
I know. I'm sorry, Grandpa.

HOWARD
Nonsense. That's what this house
was built for. Family and friends
of the family.

Howard is looking out of the window.

Julian's Honda is parked behind Rob's Cadillac.

HOWARD
Since when do you drive a Cadillac,
Julian?

ROB
The Caddy's mine. We switched
spots, because we knew Julian was
leaving first.

HOWARD
And the motorcycle?

CAITLIN
What motorcycle?

JUNE
Rita's.

Howard notices the blank spot over the fireplace where the
rifle should be.

He hobbles over to the armchair vacated by Rob and sinks
into it.

HOWARD
(to Rob)
Son, would you mind getting me a
glass of water?

(CONTINUED)

ROB

Why me?

HOWARD

Because you're closest to the kitchen.

Rob leaves the room, albeit reluctantly. Howard surveys the scene.

HOWARD

And here I'm thinking that the house is going to waste.

Julian looks at his watch.

JULIAN

How fortuitous, all of us running into each other like this. We should all have lunch together.

Marshall's face tightens at this suggestion.

HOWARD

That is an idea. We'll just have to see how long it takes me to get the water situation under control. Marshall!

MARSHALL

Yes, Grandpa.

HOWARD

There's a tool box in the back of your Mom's car. Get it for me.

Marshall walks toward the front door and crosses paths with Rob who is coming back with a glass of water. Rob's look says 'I'll kill you for this'. Marshall shrugs and walks out of the house.

Rob hands Howard the water.

HOWARD

Much obliged.

Howard puts the glass down on the coffee table without taking a sip.

HOWARD

(to Julian)

How was 95 last night? There was an accident by Westport I heard.

(CONTINUED)

JULIAN

I wouldn't know. We took the Merritt.

Marshall walks in, struggling with a big, heavy-looking toolbox.

HOWARD

Not in here. Take it to the kitchen.

He hobbles across the room.

INT. CABIN - KITCHEN

Howard tries the faucet, nothing comes out of it. He motions for Marshall to put the tool box on the floor, he opens the cabinet underneath the sink and gets on his knees.

MARSHALL

Maybe I should do that.

HOWARD

Do you know anything about plumbing?

MARSHALL

No.

HOWARD

Then hand me the wrench.

KITCHEN

Howard uses the wrench to tighten something under the sink.

HOWARD

Train to Westchester from Long Island, then the drive up on 95. Or did you guys take the Merritt? It's usually quicker.

MARSHALL

Yes, it was. It took a little less than three hours.

HOWARD

(disappointed)
You made good time.

LIVING ROOM

June and Rob are playing Scrabble.

Adrienne comes out of the master bedroom, the one June and Rita stayed in, carrying her sketch pad.

ADRIENNE

I'm going outside to draw for a bit.

She leaves. Caitlin follows her with her eyes.

CAITLIN

You should've told me you were taking Marshall to the conference.

JULIAN

You're right. I'm sorry. I was so distracted with preparing my lecture that I didn't realize until a day before that he was coming home. I didn't have time to make other plans.

CAITLIN

You could've dropped him off at Dad's.

JULIAN

He's here, he's fine, that's all that matters.

EXT. RIDGE TOP - DAY

Rita and Will take the last steps to get to the top of the ridge. The view is spectacular, though they are not very high up, you can see the valley stretching beneath the gathering clouds. Will is breathing hard and coughs.

RITA

Maybe you should smoke less weed.

WILL

Probably.

RITA

Are you really a drug addict?

WILL

Juvenile drug offender. I got caught smoking pot and driving a car.

(CONTINUED)

RITA

Wow. I know the driving laws in this country are harsh, but driving and smoking weed and straight to rehab?

WILL

The car was stolen.

RITA

Oh.

They admire the view.

RITA

Are you one of those rich American kids who takes drugs to forget that he has no problems?

WILL

No. I'm not rich. My parents own two restaurants.

Rita perks up.

RITA

Really? What kind of cuisine?

EXT. CABIN - PORCH SUPPORTS

Howard is on his hands and knees, checking out the porch foundation. The porch is held up by short concrete columns that raise the whole house twenty inches or so above the pebbly ground.

He wipes away dirt from one of the columns. A red marker is now visible.

Howard stands up and finds himself face to face with Caitlin.

CAITLIN

What are you doing?

HOWARD

Checking the foundation. It sank some more since I last checked it six months ago.

CAITLIN

Well, it isn't your problem any more. The water is fixed, so now we can go.

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD
(checking his watch)
It's twelve thirty. Let's have
lunch first.

CAITLIN
We can have lunch on the road. I
know a great sushi place in
Brattleboro.

HOWARD
You're going to let him get away
with it.

CAITLIN
I won't deal with family issues in
front of strangers.

HOWARD
(musing)
Strangers.
(beat)
What I can't figure out is why
they're going along with him.

CAITLIN
(bitter)
They always take his side.

Before Howard can answer, Rita and Will approach from the
path that leads up the ridge.

RITA
Hello. You must be Marshall's
mother and grandfather.

HOWARD
We must be. And you are Rita and
Will.

Handshakes all around.

RITA
Very nice to meet you both.

HOWARD
You're German?

RITA
Yes. What gave it away?

INT./EXT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM

Marshall, Julian, June and Rob are watching from the window as Caitlin and Howard are talking by the porch.

MARSHALL

We're in the clear. 20 minutes and they're gone. Don't take any chances.

They watch as Howard, Caitlin, Will and Rita walk into the house.

LIVING ROOM

HOWARD

Well! It looks like my work here is done.

They try to hide their collective relief.

HOWARD

But I've been thinking about Julian's offer for lunch and it gives me an idea. I'd like to expand on it, if you will.

No one knows how to respond to this.

HOWARD

I noticed there's no food in the house. The fridge is not even plugged in. So it's safe to assume that you were planning on going shopping later?

JULIAN

Sure. We have to make a run to Hanneford at some point. We'll pick up some stuff for lunch. Is there anything in particular you--?

HOWARD

I was thinking on a grander scale, actually.

JULIAN

Grander scale?

HOWARD

I suggest..., no I insist that all of you become my guests for dinner tonight.

(CONTINUED)

Reaction from the group. Marshall's poker face slips for a second, Julian looks like he might be ill. Rob stops leafing through the sketch book.

Caitlin gives Howard an evil side glance.

CAITLIN

You can't be serious.

HOWARD

Give me one good reason why not.

CAITLIN

I'll give you a couple. I have a lot of work to do, your ankle is sprained and you should be at home resting, Julian has to go to his conference and I don't even know what everyone else's plans are. How's that?

Howard thinks for a moment.

HOWARD

Not good enough. If I know you, you've brought work with you, as far as my ankle is concerned, it isn't getting any better if I sit in Westchester instead of Vermont. Julian's conference starts on Monday, so he can get there tomorrow, and as far as everyone else is concerned, they were planning on staying for the weekend anyway.

(beat)

As Julian said they have to go shopping for food anyway. So, I ask, what's two more?

(he lets this sink in)

Unless you all have a good reason to exclude Caitlin and I.

JULIAN

You know it's not that, Howard.

HOWARD

Good. I'm glad to hear that I'm welcome in my own house. It's settled then.

CAITLIN

No, it's not settled. There aren't more than three plates and two cups in the whole house. Or have you forgotten that most things have been moved out already?

HOWARD

Most things, yes. The last pick up included the crate that has all the best china. The ones we used to use for holidays, remember? I've been keeping them here ever since Marie died.

JUNE

(losing hope)

Why wasn't it picked up?

HOWARD

On account of the rain a few days ago. Movers were worried about getting stuck in the driveway.

(beat)

Sometimes coincidences work in our favor.

Will and Rita exchange a glance. June looks like she could murder somebody.

Howard picks up the rifle that Rob left in the corner the night before.

HOWARD

Which one of you is interested in firearms?

ROB

That would be me.

HOWARD

I doubt it would do much good. It hasn't been fired since the Civil War.

ROB

That's cool. I prefer a 9 millimeter over a musket anyway.

He takes the rifle from Howard and hangs it back above the mantelpiece.

Howard surveys the group.

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD

This reminds me of the foundry days. Project management at its most fundamental.

(clasps his hands)

All right, we have two objectives. One, is we have to get the house ready and two we have to prepare the food.

(checks his watch)

It is now 12:44, so we have plenty of time to do both. However, as always, organization and efficiency are key.

MARSHALL

Great.

HOWARD

Now. Do I have any volunteers for cooking detail?

Rita raises her hand. Will does, too. Then, June. Then Rob.

HOWARD

I have other plans for you, Rob.

ROB

You said we're volunteering.

INT. CABIN - BASEMENT

Howard watches as Rob pries the lid off a wooden crate with a crowbar.

Marshall opens a cardboard box and starts unpacking books. One of them is "The Pill Book", a glossary of medications.

He puts the books in piles.

LIVING ROOM

Julian stands between Caitlin and Adrienne.

Marshall comes out of the basement carrying books and heads toward the kitchen, followed by Rob who is carrying dishes.

JULIAN

I better go help.

Leaving Caitlin and Adrienne to eyeball one another.

KITCHEN

Julian is unwrapping dishes.

Rita and Will are pulling dishes out of every available nook and cranny.

The final tally: two frying pans, a big pot, a long and flat Pyrex dish and a sieve.

WILL

This is it?

Rita points to the pile of cook books.

RITA

Yeah. And these are so mainstream.

Howard enters the kitchen.

Julian's back is turned to Howard. He holds up a gorgeous, hand painted plate.

JULIAN

I never thought I'd see this again.
Must be ten years at least.

HOWARD

Twelve. Thanksgiving, '02.

Julian looks out of the window.

INT./EXT. CABIN - FRONT PORCH

Caitlin stands on the porch, staring into the landscape with arms folded.

EXT. CABIN - FRONT PORCH

Howard and Rob attempt to move past Caitlin, but she blocks their way.

CAITLIN

Dad, we need to talk. Alone.

HOWARD

Rob, take these and meet my by the
wood shed.

He hands Rob a key chain. Several keys are on it.

(CONTINUED)

ROB
Which key opens it?

CAITLIN
The green one.

ROB

Rob walks off.

CAITLIN
What the hell are you trying to pull?

HOWARD
I'm helping. It's about time you took your medicine.

CAITLIN
I knew you wouldn't miss a chance to meddle.

HOWARD
Meddle? This is my house. I,--we have a right to know what goes on here. What he's up to.

CAITLIN
You know, whatever is going on between Julian and I is only half his fault. I--

Howard makes a dismissive gesture, turns around and hobbles away.

EXT. CABIN - WOODSHED

Rob tries inserting the green key into the lock. It doesn't fit.

ROB
Green key my ass.

He finds the right key, opens the wood shed and nearly chokes on the dust.

EXT. CABIN - WOOD PILE

Marshall puts a log on the chop block. He picks up the ax, raises it over his head and brings it down with all his might.

Misses the log and buries the ax in the chop block.

MARSHALL

Damn.

He rubs his stung hands together.

REVEAL Howard standing behind him. Howard puts another log on the block and takes the ax from Marshall. He raises it over his head and brings it down.

The log splits perfectly in two.

HOWARD

You're probably not used to a whole lot of physical activity. I bet you mostly sit in circles and talk about your feelings, am I right?

He starts hobbling away.

Marshall picks up the ax and lines up Howard with the log he's about to split. Brings down the ax, and "splits" Howard in two.

The log splits perfectly. The pieces fall by the wayside.

Howard turns back and smiles.

So does Marshall.

KITCHEN

Adrienne is washing the dishes at the sink.

Julian is gathering up the last of the newspapers the dishes were wrapped in. Picks one up and looks at it.

INSERT - Newspaper article - No Child Left Behind

He crumples it up and throws it away.

Rita and Will are making a list. Cook books are closed.

Howard walks to the sink. He picks up a plate from the clean pile and holds it up to the light, discovers a grease spot.

He picks up the entire stack that Adrienne has just washed and puts it back in the sink. She wants to say something, but thinks better of it.

LIVING ROOM

Howard scrutinizes the Scrabble board.

Picks up the cover of the game that's under the coffee table. Compares the cover photo to the actual board. Strong similarity between the two. He smiles.

He clears the board of letters, save for seven, a J, M, R, W, R, J A. He tries out several different combinations, puts the A next to the J, then replaces the A with an R.

J A becomes J R.

As he's pondering this, Caitlin and June walk into the living room. Caitlin grabs her purse from the mantelpiece, June her wallet.

Caitlin slings the purse over her shoulder, June puts the wallet in her front pocket, the way a man would.

They walk out of the house.

INT./EXT. LIVING ROOM

Through the window, he watches Caitlin, Will, Rita and June gather around Caitlin's car.

Picture dissolves to:

HOWARD'S MEMORY

Black and white, or heavily desaturated to indicate it is in the past.

There are tents set up all over the front yard and there are children everywhere.

A LITTLE GIRL (Young Caitlin from the photo in Howard's house) runs around a tent and trips on a stake. She starts to cry.

Young Howard (about 40 years old) responds to the call and picks her up, but she keeps protesting until Marie shows up and takes over the comforting.

EXT. CABIN - DRIVEWAY

Back in the present. Caitlin gets in the driver's seat. Will and Rita get in the back seat.

June has no choice but to take the passenger seat.

The car is parked close to where Rob is chopping wood. June sees Will and Rita sitting very close together.

She walks up to Rob and gives him a long, sensual French kiss.

Caitlin looks away, embarrassed.

BATHROOM

Marshall walks into the bathroom. His shirt is slung over his bare upper body.

Adrienne is kneeling by the bathtub. But instead of washing the table cloth, she is staring at the water cascading down onto the cloth.

He kneels down next to her.

ADRIENNE

I can't do this.

(beat)

I'm telling Caitlin the truth.

MARSHALL

And take down an entire family?

ADRIENNE

I don't think you need me on that regard.

MARSHALL

That's a judgment call. What you need to do is look at what's in front of you. Wash the tablecloth. The rest will take care of itself.

ADRIENNE

How can you do this to her? She's just a stranger to me, but she's your mother.

Marshall rips the tablecloth from her.

(CONTINUED)

MARSHALL

Just stick to the plan, okay?

He rubs soap on his hands and starts washing the tablecloth.

INT. CAITLIN'S CAR

Will watches the wind rustling through Rita's hair.

June watches this through the rear-view mirror.

Rita sees June watching and rolls down her window some more, letting the wind catch more of her hair.

LIVING ROOM

Howard is walking through the living room when the pain flares up. he goes through the same hunched movements as he did in the first scene, before he fell down the stairs.

He pulls out his vial of pills, pries the lid open and spills half of them.

He falls back into the armchair. Fights through the pain. Closes his eyes.

EXT. SUPERMARKET PARKING LOT

Caitlin parks. Everyone gets out.

Caitlin walks next to June.

CAITLIN

How come you never mentioned Rob?
We talk on the phone every Sunday.

JUNE

It's new. I didn't want to jinx it.

CAITLIN

But you told your father, didn't
you?

JUNE

I didn't. He figured it out.

There's a booth set up by the front door of the supermarket. It's manned by two sturdy women.

The sign reads: SAME RIGHTS FOR SAME SEX COUPLES - VOTE FOR PROPOSITION 114.

Caitlin notices the sign. June ushers her mother through the supermarket doors.

EXT. CABIN

Shadows are getting longer. Time has passed.

INT. KITCHEN

Julian sits at the kitchen table with his manuscript in front of him.

He stares out the window.

INT./EXT. KITCHEN

Julian watches Marshall and Adrienne hang the table cloth on a line that's stretched between two trees. He holds it in place while Adrienne clips it to the line with clothing pins.

Julian turns his attention back to the manuscript.

INSERT - Manuscript title: "The Nuclear Family in the Nuclear Age - American Familial Bonds in the Cold War Era".

he throws his pen on top of it. Rubs his eyes. Gets up and walks in the direction of the living room.

LIVING ROOM

Howard wakes up to see Julian putting the pills that he spilled back into the bottle.

HOWARD

That's the benefit of having grown children. You don't have to clean up after them.

Julian startles.

JULIAN

You'd be surprised.

HOWARD

How long have I been asleep?

(CONTINUED)

JULIAN
Almost two hours.

Howard gets up and stretches his arms.

HOWARD
At my age, that's a crime.

Julian grabs Howard's bag.

HOWARD
(quickly)
That's all right. I got it.

He takes the vial from Julian and puts it inside a black zip up bag that sits inside the larger bag.

KITCHEN

Cooking is in full swing. Will is peeling a garlic clove, Rita is chopping onions like a true chef. Everyone is in the kitchen, save for Marshall, Rob and Adrienne.

June is leafing through her copy of "Cosmopolitan".

INSERT - Magazine Article - 10 Ways to Drive Him Wild

She slams the magazine shut.

Julian tries snatching a piece of cheese from the cutting board but Rita slaps his hand with the wooden spoon.

Caitlin walks in just in time to see this.

JULIAN
What the--?

RITA
The cheese is for the lasagna.
There's sandwich stuff in the
fridge.

JULIAN
(rubbing his hand)
Jawohl.

He opens the fridge, pulls out lunch meat and bread and starts making a sandwich.

Howard walks in. Behind him, the front door opens and Rob and Marshall walk in, followed by Adrienne. They are carrying chopped wood.

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD

Have enough?

ROB

For a week.

HOWARD

Good job. It's almost like you two have worked together before.

CAITLIN

Since everything's under control, I'm going for a run.

HOWARD

You ran last night.

JULIAN

Why don't we go for a walk instead?

CAITLIN

It's Day Three. Tomorrow's my day off.

She walks out of the kitchen. Howard watches Julian staring after her.

EXT. WOOD PILE

Rob is standing by the woodshed. Sees Caitlin walking by in her jogging suit. He nods with approval at the slim body, sleek legs and buns of steel as she runs up the incline.

EXT. ROAD

Caitlin runs up a hill, seemingly not even straining. Steady breathing, steady rhythm.

EXT. WOOD PILE

Rob watches with horror as Julian comes out of the house and jogs up the hill. He's wearing old, ratty sweatpants that are too short for him and a zip-up sweater that's too big.

Rob shakes his head as Howard crutches up.

ROB

Did you see that? Where the hell did he get those ratty-ass threads?

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD

He borrowed them from me.

ROB

Oh. Sorry.

HOWARD

It's all right. He probably should have asked you for some basketball threads.

Rob glares at him, but Howard doesn't seem to notice.

EXT. WOOD SHED

Rob, Marshall and Will, (wearing an apron), are rolling the table across the driveway, toward the house. It keeps wanting to go anywhere but the house.

KITCHEN

June is arguing with Rita.

JUNE

Maybe you're not acting. The way you hang on him, it's disgusting.

RITA

I'm only doing for you, you know. I think this whole ...thing is sad and mean. You should all tell your grandfather the truth.

JUNE

He's very old-fashioned. I'd have to get a job like those work-study people.

It takes Rita a second to understand what she's getting at.

RITA

Is that what this is all about for you? Your tuition?

They see Howard approaching. June picks up a knife and starts peeling a potato the way one peels a carrot.

EXT. ROAD

Julian is running up the same hill Caitlin ran before, wheezing like a water buffalo. His shirt is drenched with sweat.

He sits down under a tree and closes his eyes.

KITCHEN

Howard picks up Julian's manuscript. Slips on his reading glasses and leafs through it.

LIVING ROOM

June and Adrienne are cleaning the table that was taken from the wood shed. It's heavy and round and filthy from sitting in the wood shed for years.

Rob watches as Howard sits down at the kitchen table to read.

ROB
(to Marshall)

Now.

Marshall grabs Howard's bag that's sitting by the wall and rifles through it. He finds what he's looking for: a black zip-up bag.

He unzips it, takes out a prescription vial.

INSERT - Vial label - Osteproxin

Marshall reads the label. Clearly not what he's looking for. Takes out another vial.

INSERT - Another vial label - Vicodin.

That's more like it. He shakes out three pills.

June and Adrienne stop cleaning. June shakes her head, then goes back to cleaning.

Marshall pockets the pills, puts everything back.

KITCHEN

Howard puts down the manuscript, takes off his reading glasses. Watches Rita and Will cook.

Rita puts a layer of pasta for lasagna in the Pyrex, Will lays down the ground beef that's been rolled into balls and slathers sauce over it.

They move in perfect harmony.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - ROAD

Julian is sitting under a tree. A shadow falls over him.

Caitlin is looking down at him. He opens his eyes.

CAITLIN

What are you doing here?

JULIAN

Taking a walk.

He holds out his hand for Caitlin to pull him up, but she ignores it. He gets up like an old man.

JULIAN

Do you always have to run for hours?

CAITLIN

Yes. And I'm not done yet.

She starts jogging away from Julian.

JULIAN

Hold on! Wait! I left half a lung back there. The least you can do is walk back with me.

Caitlin stops running.

CAITLIN

Why? So I can listen to some more of your lies?

JULIAN

It's not a lie. I told you I didn't have time to leave Marshall anywhere else.

(CONTINUED)

CAITLIN

Don't play dumb! I'm talking about you cheating on me.

Julian walks to her. Together they start a brisk walk back.

JULIAN

You can't be serious.

CAITLIN

Which one is it? My money's on Rita. You were always a sucker for accents.

JULIAN

That's why I married you. I fell for the Queens dialect.

(not getting a reaction from her)

Seriously, I'm flattered you think I've got that much energy and charm. They're both like 18, 19. I'm 46, for Christ's Sakes.

CAITLIN

She's probably your student. I've seen them milling around you after lectures.

JULIAN

That kind of thing only happens in Woody Allen movies.

CAITLIN

In those short shorts.

JULIAN

They wish they had your kind of body.

Caitlin tries to suppress her pleasure at this flattery.

CAITLIN

Don't change the subject.

JULIAN

I'm not. Believe me.

CAITLIN

Sex? Is that what this is about?

(CONTINUED)

JULIAN

It's a big part of the equation.
That's what Dr. Greenbaum said.

CAITLIN

I don't remember that.

JULIAN

You would if you had come to the
last two sessions. That's the thing
about couple's therapy. You usually
need a couple for it to do any
good.

Caitlin is at a loss for words.

CAITLIN

That woman gives me the creeps. I
think she's a lesbian.

JULIAN

Like you would know.

CAITLIN

What's that supposed to mean?

JULIAN

The point is you have more passion
for tax season than you have for
me.

CAITLIN

I do remember Dr. Greenbaum talking
about giving each other time.

JULIAN

I guess two years is not enough.

CAITLIN

It's amazing how you do that.

JULIAN

Do what? Hit the nail on the head?

CAITLIN

Turn everything around. You're the
one having an affair, but you twist
it around so that everything is my
fault.

Julian throws up his hands.

BASEMENT

Adrienne's looking through boxes. Under the work bench, she finds a box with candles, looks through others.

HOWARD

It's the big black case in the corner.

She hasn't realized that Howard has walked halfway down the basement stairs.

She opens a big black case, closes it and picks it up. Turns around and finds Howard blocking her way.

HOWARD

You're a second year student like June, is that right?

ADRIENNE

Yes.

HOWARD

So, you were there when they build that new library last spring. Olin?

ADRIENNE

No. I wasn't. I studied abroad last semester. Barcelona.

Howard is about to say something, but the basement door opens.

MARSHALL

Do me a favor and grab that extension chord.

Adrienne picks up the coiled up orange extension chord.

When Howard turns to Marshall, Adrienne slips past the old man.

As she walks past Marshall, she mouths "thank you".

MARSHALL

Do you need any help getting back up?

HOWARD

I can manage.

KITCHEN

Will pulls the oven door open, Rita shoves in the lasagna.
Howard enters.

HOWARD
Can you spare Will for a minute?

RITA
What's he done now?

HOWARD
I need him to move your motorcycle.
It's blocking the sunlight from my
grass seeds.

RITA
I can do it.

HOWARD
No, it's better if you stay in the
kitchen. You don't mind, do you,
Will?

WILL
(weakly)
Where are the keys?

Rita leaves the kitchen. Will follows her and Howard follows
the both of them, trying hard to keep up on his crutches.

LIVING ROOM

Adrienne opens the black case and starts setting up the
record player on an improvised table in the living room.

Rob is staring at the record player with fascination.

ROB
Holy shit, I've never actually seen
one of these.

He plays with the arm of the player, combs through the
albums in the box.

Tries opening the sleeve, the way one opens a CD.

Adrienne takes the album from him and slides the record out,
puts it on the turntable, flips the switch.

(CONTINUED)

ADRIENNE

My parents still use theirs.

Music begins to play from the living room. 80s synth rock with a psychedelic undertone.

EXT. CABIN - DRIVEWAY

Howard and Will stand by Rita's motorcycle. Will grabs the handlebar, kicks up the stand and starts pushing it.

HOWARD

I want it all the way on the other side. I think it's easier if you ride it over.

Will gets on the bike, turns the key. Engine doesn't want to catch. He adjusts something.

WILL

She always forgets to leave it in neutral.

The engine catches and Will gives it too much juice and the bike jumps like a spooked horse.

Will rides it across the driveway to the spot Howard indicated in fits and jerks.

EXT. CABIN - FRONT PORCH

Caitlin and Julian arrive from their walk.

Caitlin steps on the porch, starts doing her stretches. She is very flexible. Watches Marshall drying the table cloth with a blow dryer that's plugged into the orange extension chord that runs into the house.

Julian steps onto the porch and collapses on his stomach.

CAITLIN

Stretch, or you'll be sore tomorrow.

HOWARD

I'll take my chances.

He flops over on his back.

His POV looking up at a sky full of pregnant clouds.

Howard's upside-down face comes into view.

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD
How was the run?

JULIAN
(grinning)
I could've used your crutches,
Howard.

LIVING ROOM

Adrienne is on the sofa, reading.

Julian walks in, hears the record playing, listens, not believing his ears. He walks to the record player, picks up the album sleeve and stares at it in disbelief.

Caitlin comes out of the bedroom, carrying a towel and a change of clothes.

JULIAN
Honey, look!

He holds up a record.

Record - Lazy Smoke - Slashed 'n' Burnt. Album cover shows a field burning with a farmhouse in the background. Lame 80s graphics.

JULIAN
We used to listen to it before the
kids were born. I thought it was
lost.

Caitlin stops for a beat.

CAITLIN
Try track two.

She walks down the foyer and into the bathroom.

Julian looks at the album.

INSERT - Track 2 - "Where There's Smoke, There's Liars".

Julian puts the needle on the second groove. "Where There's Smoke" begins to play.

ADRIENNE
Billy Idol is turning in his grave.

(CONTINUED)

JULIAN
He's not dead yet, you know.

Adrienne shrugs her shoulders and goes back to reading.

Marshall comes in with the tablecloth. He drapes it over the table. Adrienne gets up from the sofa and grabs the other end of it.

They make sure it's even, smooth out the wrinkles.

BATHROOM

Julian walks in, closes the door. Bathroom is still fogged up from Caitlin.

He checks his hairline in the mirror, takes off his clothes, scrutinizes his belly and steps into the shower.

Looks at the soap that Caitlin had just used. It's wet and has bubbles on it. He fondles it for a second before picking it up and turning on the shower.

JULIAN
(singing)
You said it was nothing, I say it
was something, a fire that burnt
with a brief flame, I could smell
it, 'cause where there's smoke
baby, there's liars!

He starts getting into it, the soap is his microphone and the shower stall is his stage.

LIVING ROOM

June is sitting on the sofa.

The table is set and looks impressive with the white table cloth, the china and the candles. Looks like a holiday set up.

Marshall is arranging the plates in order to hide the stains on the cloth.

Howard walks in from the kitchen with a glass of water. He bends down and pulls the zip up bag from his carry on. Puts it on the mantelpiece, takes out the vial of pills, opens it and takes one out.

He shakes all the pills out into his hand, looks at it, then smiles. He puts them all back.

(CONTINUED)

He sips his water without having taken a pill.

Rob enters, puts a vase full of flowers on the table, then, rubbing his shoulders, he walks over to June.

ROB
How about a massage?

JUNE
Great idea.

She lies face down on the sofa.

ROB
Should've seen that coming.

He sits down on top of her and starts to massage her shoulders.

Stops when he notices a framed black and white picture on the shelf. He picks it up.

INSERT - Picture shows Howard and a black man standing in front of an industrial looking building. They are both in their late 30s, early 40s, well dressed and smiling. There's a late 60s model car parked next to them by the curb.

Howard walks in, but Rob doesn't see him as his back is to the door.

ROB
Look, it's a picture of Howard and his chauffeur.

June makes an impatient gesture. Rob gets back to work.

HOWARD
Did you lock the wood shed, Rob?

ROB
Yes. No. I don't know.

HOWARD
Then you better go check.

He makes an attempt to stand up, but June pulls him back down.

ROB
Yo, Marshall. Do me a solid and see if the wood shed is locked.

He reaches into his pocket and tosses the key ring to Marshall, who catches it.

EXT. WOOD SHED

Marshall approaches the shed. The door is wide open. He closes it, selects the right key and locks it.

EXT. PORCH

Caitlin stands with her arms folded, facing away from the approaching Marshall.

He stops for a second, as if wanting to say something.

Feeling that she is watched, she turns around.

Marshall sees her wiping away a tear.

MARSHALL

Mom?

CAITLIN

Go inside, Marshall.

LIVING ROOM

Marshall surveys the scene. Rob is giving June a massage. Adrienne is putting the finishing touches on the table. Howard is reading in the armchair.

Julian walks out of the first bedroom. He is wearing a pair of jeans and a tucked in button down shirt. His hair is freshly combed.

He sees Marshall looking at the scene, doesn't know what to make of his son's forlorn expression.

KITCHEN

Marshall walks into the kitchen. Seems surprised.

Will has tears in his eyes.

REVEAL that he is cutting onions and putting them in the individual salad bowls.

MARSHALL

Do you remember when Wayne told us
that our lies hurt the people who
love us the most?

Will looks up, wipes tears from his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

WILL

No. But I came a week late,
remember?

Rita walks in. Her hand is wet, she playfully spritzes water on Marshall's face. He doesn't react.

Julian walks in. He takes a bottle of white wine from the fridge and opens it with a corkscrew. Pours two glasses.

Marshall and Will watch, drooling. Julian sees them staring.

JULIAN

I marked all the bottles.

He marks the bottle with a pencil and puts it back in the fridge. Leaves.

Marshall digs out two pills from his pocket, hands one to Will and dry swallows the other one.

EXT. PORCH

Caitlin holds out the palm of her hand. Watches as a light rain drop falls into it.

Julian walks out and hands a glass of wine to Caitlin. She takes it mechanically and sips it.

JULIAN

I was thinking. We should buy a weekend house of our own. You know, a place, where we can spend time together. As a family.

CAITLIN

I was thinking, too. I think we should live apart for a while, Julian.

Julian sips his wine and stares into the quickly approaching dusk.

JULIAN

I thought we were already doing that.

The front door opens and Rob sticks his head out.

He strikes the dinner bell that was hanging on the wall in the kitchen. It sounds like a boxing ring bell.

(CONTINUED)

ROB
Dinner is served.

LIVING ROOM

Dining room table stands in the middle of the living room, primed and prepped. The hand-made china looks festive on the white table cloth, the two candles complete the picture.

Howard throws another log on the fire and puts the scrim in front of it. He stands up and surveys the group.

Adrienne and Marshall flank the fireplace, June and Rob stand by the sofa.

Will and Rita walk in from the kitchen, followed by Caitlin and Julian. Rita and Will are both wearing aprons.

HOWARD
Everyone's here. Good. I'm very impressed with everyone's...work. You all pulled together at a moment's notice to make this happen.
(beat)
Now. The best thing to do is for everyone to line up and grab a plate in the kitchen.

An awkward pause, then people file out of the living room.

KITCHEN

People grab salads and pour dressing over them. Will grinds pepper.

June cuts the line in front of Marshall.

Howard hangs back and watches. Looks out of the window.

INT./EXT. KITCHEN - FRONT PORCH - DUSK

Light drizzle on the porch steps.

KITCHEN

CAITLIN
Where's the fat free dressing?

WILL
We didn't buy any.

CAITLIN
I put a fat free Caesar in the
cart.

WILL
I put it back. I thought Rita
grabbed it by mistake.

CAITLIN
Great.

She pours a few drops of olive oil on her salad and storms
out of the kitchen.

ROB
I guess June's not the only
high-strung one in the family.

June hits him on the arm, quite forcefully. He almost drops
his plate.

LIVING ROOM

People take their seats.

RITA
Mm. These tomatoes taste different.
Better.

CAITLIN
They don't drown them in pesticide
like they do in New York. That's
one of the things I like about
Vermont.

Howard pours some wine for Caitlin, then Julian.

He's about to put the bottle down, then pours some for June,
then Rob, Will and Rita.

CAITLIN
Dad, they're all underage.

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD

I think we can bend the rules a little, no?

RITA

Yes we can.

WILL

We deserve something for all our hard work.

Howard observes as they all drink. Will and Rob take smaller sips than the rest. Their movements are restrained, but their eyes tell a different story.

Marshall stares at the wine with longing.

HOWARD

How's the drug recovery coming along, Marshall?

(beat)

You must be doing all right if they let you come home on weekends.

MARSHALL

It's not a prison.

HOWARD

Quite the opposite, I heard. In my day drug addicts got jail time. Now they get weekend retreats in the country.

JULIAN

Let me assure you, Howard, the center takes recovery very seriously. Even if their methods are a little unorthodox.

HOWARD

Unorthodox? How so?

MARSHALL

Do you really want me to go into it?

HOWARD

No. I want Julian to go into it.

JULIAN

Me? Well, they tailor the program to the specific personality of the-- offender, if you will.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JULIAN (cont'd)
Everyone's demon has a different face, so to speak. They must all be attacked differently.

HOWARD
And how are you attacking your demon, Marshall?

MARSHALL
I'm performing a skit about my addiction. Some people write poems, some people sing songs, but Wayne said I was a natural actor, so--

HOWARD
The understatement of the day.
(beat)
What's the idea behind it?

MARSHALL
I guess it makes you face things somehow.

HOWARD
Whatever happened to good old-fashioned will power?

RITA
It lacks the element of self discovery.

HOWARD
Or dramatic appeal. I take it you're an actress.

RITA
God, no. Smith has a weird art requirement. It was either acting or sculpting.

HOWARD
And you didn't want to get your hands dirty.

RITA
If I do, it should be in the kitchen.

HOWARD
At last we agree on something.

This statement clearly irks Rita, but she lets it go.

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD

(cont'd)

Smith is a small school. You and June must've had a lot of classes together.

JUNE

A few.

HOWARD

(to June)

How about you and Adrienne?

ADRIENNE

One.

HOWARD

I gather it wasn't acting.

JULIAN

I've been meaning to ask. Is this romaine lettuce?

WILL

A mix of iceberg and butter-head, actually.

Howard keeps looking at Adrienne.

ADRIENNE

Caribbean Literature. It's how we got to be friends.

(beat)

It was a taught by one of those ultra-liberal professors. First class she says why don't we go around the room and everyone name a leader you admire and why.

June and Marshall exchange a glance. Where is this going?

ADRIENNE

Most of the students in the class are black, so one girl says Malcolm X, a boy says Martin Luther King, Jr., all very predictable. And then it's June's turn. She says I'm not comfortable with the question. When you say leader, I think of Hitler, Stalin, Mao and their followers. The whole class was silent for, like, a minute.

(CONTINUED)

JUNE

I dropped the class the same day.

ADRIENNE

So did I.

JULIAN

June always did march to her own beat.

HOWARD

Which is why I can't see her with Rob.

ROB

(cold)

Why would you say that, Howard?

HOWARD

You just seem different from June in every way.

Marshall gives Rob a look. Rob drops the offended demeanor.

ROB

That's funny. I thought the same thing the first time I met her.

CAITLIN

Where was that?

ROB

U Mass. That's where I go to school. Rita and June were attending an equestrian event there.

HOWARD

As spectators?

RITA

I used to ride.

HOWARD

Marie, my wife, did, too. She preferred riding mares.

RITA

Geldings are more easy going. Anyway, it was just a phase.

(CONTINUED)

JULIAN
Opposites attract, I suppose.

HOWARD
My friends who believed that are
all divorced now.

JULIAN
Maybe they didn't have your kind of
stamina, Howard.

HOWARD
Do you?

WILL
Everyone's done with their salad.
Good.

He starts gathering the empty salad dishes. Rita helps him.

KITCHEN

Another line up. This time a little less formal.

Rita is cutting the steaming lasagna in squares and putting
it on the plates with a spatula, a task made difficult by
the stringing cheese.

Julian looks out of the window.

INT./EXT. KITCHEN

Rain.

JULIAN
It's really coming down now.

HOWARD
It rained last night in
Westchester, too.

LIVING ROOM

People take their seats again. They all look expectantly at
Howard.

HOWARD
Please. You don't have to wait for
me.

They start eating.

(CONTINUED)

ROB

Damn, this is great!

He lifts his fork which pulls a string of cheese out from the smoldering dish.

Throughout dinner, people keep struggling to keep the cheese on the fork and in their mouths, it keeps wanting to string everywhere.

CAITLIN

What's it made of?

Will puts a finger to his lips.

WILL

Top secret recipe from my Mom.

ROB

Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.

JUNE

I don't think that saying applies here, Bunny.

ROB

(to Caitlin)

I mean just enjoy it. When you're at a restaurant do you run into the kitchen to ask how many calories are in the soup? I don't think so.

CAITLIN

Thank you, Rob. I'll keep that in mind.

ROB

I'm just sayin'.

HOWARD

I think Rob has a point. This is delicious. That's all we need to know.

JULIAN

You can double your run tomorrow and go for 40 miles, honey.

HOWARD

I think it's great when a couple shares a passion like cooking.

(to Caitlin)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD (cont'd)

Will's parents have a restaurant in Manhattan.

WILL

Two. I met Rita in the one off of Times Square.

HOWARD

I thought you met in college.

WILL

I'm still in high school. She used to come in on Wednesdays after the show.

HOWARD

(to Rita)

You live in New York City, too, I take it?

RITA

Brooklyn.

HOWARD

(to Will)

But you've met June before this weekend, haven't you?

Will takes a pause.

WILL

No. First time yesterday.

CAITLIN

(to Will)

Is that what you want to do after college? Go into the restaurant business?

WILL

Definitely. Except I don't think I will wait until after college. I'll start working there full-time when I graduate from high school in June.

CAITLIN

How about culinary school?

WILL

I thought about it. But the truth is, I can learn everything I need to know by doing it.

(CONTINUED)

(gets lost in a memory)
I love everything about the restaurant business. The speed and that you're always one small step away from disaster, but in the end, you always pull through.

HOWARD

I know just what you mean. Well, if you know what you want, then go for it full steam.

JULIAN

You don't think that education is a bad thing, do you Howard?

HOWARD

Not at all. If I did, I wouldn't pick up June's hefty education tab now, would I?

(beat)

It's just that I believe there are certain things you can't learn in the classroom.

JULIAN

Such as?

HOWARD

Leadership, for one. You learn that in the foundry. Or in the kitchen of a restaurant.

(beat)

Plus, there's something to be said for continuing the family business.

Caitlin reacts to this.

ROB

This might be a stupid question, but what's a foundry?

HOWARD

There are no stupid questions.

JULIAN

Whoever said that never had to teach Sociology 101 at Fordham.
(he notices everyone staring at him)

Sorry.

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD

It's a factory that makes metal castings. In our case, the casting that goes around bullets.

ROB

Full metal jacket. Awesome.

RITA

Bullets for guns?

HOWARD

And rifles. Light artillery of all kinds. We never tooled for the really heavy-duty stuff.

ROB

Did you fight in World War II?

HOWARD

(laughs)

I'm not that old. I was 15 when the war ended. The same year I started working at the foundry.

ADRIENNE

They let you work at that age?

HOWARD

I lied about my age to get hired.

WILL

Why?

HOWARD

I had to support my brother and my mother. I worked my way up and then bought the operation with a partner in the late 50s. It was a good living through the Korean War, then Vietnam. It started fizzling out during the late 80s with the end of the Cold War, which is when I sold it. Had I known the War on Terror was just around the corner, I probably would've held on to it a while longer.

ADRIENNE

You didn't mind profiting from wars?

June and Marshall roll their eyes almost simultaneously.

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD

I didn't start them.

JULIAN

Isn't that a convenient way to deflect responsibility?

HOWARD

My responsibility was to my family.

JULIAN

What if everyone felt that way, Howard?

HOWARD

That's more your cup of tea, Julian. Theorizing. But let's take your question from a practical standpoint. Let's say I did not make shell casings, I doubt the military-industrial complex would throw up its hands and say; we have no more bullets! I guess we better pull out of Vietnam!

Remembering something, Marshall pulls out Howard's keys and passes them to Caitlin, who sits between he and Howard.

MARSHALL

Here's your keys back, Grandpa.

Caitlin looks at the key chain.

CAITLIN

You put it back on the key chain. Good. Maybe you won't lose it this way.

JULIAN

Lose what?

Howard puts the keys away.

CAITLIN

The green key. I found it in the foyer where Dad fell last night.

Marshall is visibly surprised at this news.

RITA

Where are my bike keys?

(CONTINUED)

WILL
I put them back in your jacket
pocket.

CAITLIN
(to Will)
Your parents let you ride a
motorcycle?

WILL
Well, they're not exactly thrilled
about it.

CAITLIN
I would never let June or Marshall
on one of those things.

RITA
It's not that bad. You just have to
be really careful, that's all. Ride
like everyone on the road is trying
to kill you. Expect that old people
won't stop at a red light, that
sort of--
(to Howard)
Sorry.

HOWARD
It's all right. You're all safe at
the moment. My car's in the shop.

CAITLIN
Who was picking you up, then?

HOWARD
Picking me up?

CAITLIN
To take you to Ronolfo's. You go
every Friday night.

HOWARD
Not every Friday night.

WILL
What's Ronolfo's?

HOWARD
Freddie.

MARSHALL
Uncle Freddie?

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD
Uncle Freddie.

ADRIENNE
Your brother, Howard?

HOWARD
No, just a term of affection. He
used to chew the fat for hours with
Marshall.

MARSHALL
I bet he drove the Shelby.

HOWARD
Never in the rain.

WILL
What's Ronolfo's?

HOWARD
It's a restaurant in Yonkers. They
have live music Friday nights. We
used to go every week in the old
days, Freddie, Lynn, Marie and I.
Now it's down to me and Freddie.

ROB
That's what I like to hear, Howard.
It's never too late to kick loose.

HOWARD
Well, I won't be kicking anything
for a while with this foot.

Marshall studies Howard.

Howard leans forward and grits his teeth in pain.

HOWARD
Speak of the devil.

Caitlin stands up.

CAITLIN
I'll get you a pill.

LIGHTNING FLASH

HOWARD
No! It'll pass.

(CONTINUED)

CAITLIN

Don't be a hero, D--

THUNDER CRACK drowns her words.

RITA

That scared the sh...crap out of me.

JULIAN

As if the rain isn't enough.

WILL

Five seconds between the lightning and thunder. That means it's five miles away.

HOWARD

Remember the time, Caity, when the storm tore up the big tree out front and it fell on the power line? We had no electricity the entire weekend.

Marshall stands up.

MARSHALL

I'll get the candles from the basement.

CAITLIN

We'll get them if we need them.

HOWARD

Go ahead. It's good to plan ahead.

Marshall leaves the living room.

BASEMENT

Marshall takes the candles out of the box underneath the work bench. He puts them next to the box containing the books.

He opens "The Pill Book" and leafs through it until he finds what he's looking for. Ponders.

Gets startled back to reality when Adrienne walks down the basement steps.

(CONTINUED)

ADRIENNE
Did you find them?

Notices the candles, then the open book.

ADRIENNE
What's that?

She walks over to take a closer look. Marshall holds on to the book.

ADRIENNE
Come on. I'm the last person you
need to hide stuff from.

He pauses for a second, then hands her the book and points to a section.

ADRIENNE
(reading)
Osteproxin: used as an immune
system suppressant prior to
chemotherapy treatment.
(looks up)
So?

MARSHALL
The pills I found in my
grandfather's bag.

ADRIENNE
He's sick?

MARSHALL
Dying. And hiding it.

ADRIENNE
It's not an easy thing to tell your
family. He just needs time,
probably.

MARSHALL
Maybe. Maybe not.

LIVING ROOM

Marshall and Adrienne return. Marshall puts the candles on the table.

LIGHTNING STRIKE

(CONTINUED)

WILL

One, two, three, four.

THUNDER CRACK

WILL

Four miles. Definitely getting closer.

HOWARD

On nights like this, I'm glad I'm getting rid of this house.

The others stare at him, not understanding the meaning behind his words.

HOWARD

The water coming off the hill will seep into the basement again. They should've built the whole house on stilts, like the porch and without a basement.

WILL

That's too bad. It's a nice house.

HOWARD

It served its purpose.

Marshall's reaction.

HOWARD

It came in handy when Caitlin was young. She and her mother used to spend whole summers here. Then, later, June and Marshall.

WILL

When did your wife--?

HOWARD

Two years ago. After that we came up less and less.

JULIAN

Some of us worked more and more--

CAITLIN

--and some of us went to more and more conferences.

(CONTINUED)

ADRIENNE

I guess houses have life spans,
too.

MARSHALL

Yes. This one held out as long as
it could.

HOWARD

I remember the day I showed it to
your grandmother for the first
time. Your mother was about five
years old and the foundry was going
full steam with the expansion into
the Mid-West. I wanted to have a
place to get away to that wasn't
too far from home. So that if there
was an emergency, I could be back
home in less than four hours. And
to get to it at the drop of a hat
if need be.

(beat)

One of the things I like about this
area is how little it changes.

ROB

A little change can be good,
though. Like paving the roads so
the rocks don't kill your car.

HOWARD

Every year we vote to keep it the
way it is.

JULIAN

Maybe the cabin's best days are
still ahead. A family needs a place
to get away to.

HOWARD

I thought that's only true when the
threat is from the outside world.

JULIAN

I'm not sure I follow, Howard.

HOWARD

Your book. What is it called? The
Nuclear Family in the Nuclear Age.
Catchy title, by the way.

(CONTINUED)

JULIAN
I still don't get--

HOWARD
Let's see. "Facing the imminent danger of a nuclear holocaust, the family turned inwards and the role of the patriarch was reinforced".

JULIAN
Seemingly. I think you would've gotten the irony if you read past the preface, Howard.

HOWARD
I don't need to. I lived it.

JULIAN
The point is that husband and wife shared the burden of the family equally.

HOWARD
Rise and fall together, is that it?

JULIAN
Yeah. That's it.

HOWARD
A very romantic notion. I don't know how realistic, though.

JULIAN
You shouldn't let your own experience bias you, Howard.

He fills up Howard's wine glass. The bottle is empty.

HOWARD
It's true. My father wasn't around when I was growing up. But that's not what this is about.

JULIAN
Of course not.

Caitlin stands up.

CAITLIN
I'll get another bottle.

Will puts his fork down and is about to get up, but Caitlin pushes him back down.

(CONTINUED)

CAITLIN

You've done enough.

Adrienne and Marshall exchange a glance. Adrienne gives a slight gesture toward Caitlin.

KITCHEN

Caitlin uncorks a bottle of red wine. She takes a long slug straight from the bottle, just as Marshall walks in.

MARSHALL

Mom, I need to tell you something.

She wipes the neck of the bottle, turns to face him.

MARSHALL

It's about Grandpa.

Caitlin walks past him and toward the living room. Frustrated, Marshall watches her go, then follows her.

LIVING ROOM

Marshall takes his place again. His movements are getting more and more hesitant.

JULIAN

(finishing an earlier thought)
...sometimes the worst
circumstances bring out the best in
people. That's all I'm saying.

ADRIENNE

I read somewhere that in time of
war, the suicide rate goes down.

Howard tries to mask a reaction.

JUNE

Not this again.

JULIAN

Makes sense. As long as people have
a reason to go on, they usually do.

JUNE

Wars, suicides, nuclear strikes.
What are we going to talk about
next? Infectious diseases?

(CONTINUED)

CAITLIN

June's right. Let's find something more uplifting to talk about.

Silence. The fire sparkles as a log falls.

Marshall gets up and walks to the fireplace.

He puts a log on the fire, then pokes the fire with the poker. Sparks fly.

He sits down.

MARSHALL

The one thing that therapy never lets you see is the consequences of your actions.

The group's collective face: Where is this going?

MARSHALL

I mean, you don't see how you hurt the people around you. It's like Wayne says, the pills, drugs, booze, whatever, it's the most real at the moment and pushes everything into the background.

HOWARD

I think you have us confused with people from your group therapy.

CAITLIN

Let him talk, Dad.

MARSHALL

There's no room for remorse.

(to Howard)

It's like when I tried to sell your rifle, the Kroger-Johnson for drug money. It was right after Grandma died and it seemed so necessary to do it, so...right. To ease the pain.

HOWARD

To ease the pain? Let me tell you about pain.

CAITLIN

Dad!

Howard zips it.

(CONTINUED)

MARSHALL

Mom wouldn't let me visit her in the hospital, because, I guess, you know, the cancer...she probably didn't look too good. June went one time, but she never talked about it. I never even said good bye to her.

CAITLIN

It was hard on all of us.

MARSHALL

That's my point exactly. An addict's pain is always larger than life. That's the truth.

WILL

Wayne, or whatever his name is doesn't have all the answers, you know.

MARSHALL

That's beside the point. The point is it seemed right, at that time, to steal Grandpa's green key to the gun cabinet--

CAITLIN

Green key?

MARSHALL

--and to swipe his most expensive rifle. Single barrel bolt action, I've seen Uncle Freddie fire it at the range, but he wouldn't let me, because of the recoil.

CAITLIN

The gun cabinet has a combination lock.

MARSHALL

12-03-64. Your birthday, Mom. But inside it the rifles are chained together.

HOWARD

An extra bit of precaution. Of course, it's meant to deter burglars, not your own grandchild.

(CONTINUED)

MARSHALL

That's all over now.

HOWARD

Is it? Tell me, my boy, are you making amends, or buying time?

MARSHALL

You tell me.

CAITLIN

What are you getting at, Marshall?

MARSHALL

I tried to tell you, Mom, but you wouldn't listen.

CAITLIN

No one ever tells me anything.

HOWARD

Sounds familiar.

She bores her eyes into June.

JUNE

Maybe if you weren't so judgmental.

CAITLIN

I'm not judgmental.

JUNE

Mainstream, then.

CAITLIN

I'm not. I supported gay marriage.

JULIAN

What's that got to do with the price of tea in China?

CAITLIN

June and I saw a booth at the supermarket. Some sort of amendment to gay marriage. I couldn't see it clearly, because June yanked me into the store so quickly.

Howard perks up.

CAITLIN

(flustered)

I'm more open minded than people realize.

(CONTINUED)

Howard turns around in his chair, looks at the Scrabble board that's lying on top of the coffee table.

INSERT - Howard's POV. J R letter combo.

ZOOM in on J and R.

Howard's POV.

PAN from June and Rita.

Howard puts down his fork. He wipes his mouth with a napkin.

HOWARD

I always thought I knew June the best. She always seemed so simple and straight...forward.

Group watches him intently.

HOWARD

Frankly, I'm a little hurt. Do you really think that I would stop paying for your school if I knew you were gay? Is that how little you think of me, June?

June doesn't know how to proceed. She looks to Marshall for help.

MARSHALL

Go ahead.

JUNE

(to Howard)

You wouldn't?

HOWARD

No. Not for that. Lying about it is another matter.

JUNE

I didn't lie. I just wasn't ready to tell.

RITA

That seems to be the motif this weekend.

HOWARD

Indeed. All this time I'm thinking that June is jealous of Rita, but it's always been Will. Being that

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD (cont'd)
he and Rita get along so well
despite having met only last night.
That answers the question of what's
at stake for June. That was always
the hazy part for me. They rode
here together on Rita's bike. Will,
Rob and Marshall broke out, excuse
me, went missing from rehab.
(to Adrienne)
And you're the "other woman".

Silence.

HOWARD
You side-stepped the questions
skillfully, but I doubt you ever
set foot on the Smith campus.

ADRIENNE
Once for a Fordham-Smith volleyball
game.

Howard looks at Julian, then puts down his fork. Looks at
his watch.

HOWARD
You held fast for almost seven
hours. That must be some kind of
record. But now it's over. Please
forgive us if we don't stay for
dessert.

He gets up, grabs his crutches.

HOWARD
Let's go, Caitlin. I don't want to
get home too late.

Since everyone has stopped eating, the only sounds are the
rain tapping on the window and the wind rattling the panes.

Caitlin stands up, very slowly. She stands looking down on
Adrienne.

Raises her hand.

ADRIENNE
Go ahead.

Caitlin delivers a hard backhanded slap to Julian.

Caught off-guard, he almost falls out of his chair.

(CONTINUED)

Howard stands over him.

HOWARD

You don't get to explain why you abandoned your wife, no matter how many books you write.

ADRIENNE

Maybe he doesn't have to.

HOWARD

Excuse me?

ADRIENNE

I'm tired of everyone putting everything on Julian. Like it's his fault that his son is a mess and that his daughter is a selfish, spoiled brat. and that his wife is a frigid--

Caitlin makes a move toward Adrienne, but Rob gets up and blocks her way.

ROB

Easy.

ADRIENNE

You missed your chance.

HOWARD

You're the last person who should talk.

ADRIENNE

Sure. I'm the home wrecker and I should slink away in shame, but before I do, I'm going to set a few things straight.

Rita and Will exchange a glance.

ADRIENNE

Because you should know the lengths that Julian went to get you out of your rut. He kept switching his office hours to accommodate the therapy sessions, then he started missing them until the Dean called him on it, tenure or no tenure.

This is clearly news to Howard.

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD

Is this true?

CAITLIN

You only know Julian's side of it.
What he tells you.

ADRIENNE

I know what he did. The therapy was
his idea.

HOWARD

And we know how therapy is the key
to recovery.

He points to Marshall.

ADRIENNE

He tried patience, then humor, but
none of it worked. After he gave
you the kama sutra for your
birthday, you wouldn't speak to him
for two weeks.

MARSHALL

What's the kama sutra?

ADRIENNE

Because you haven't had sex in
almost a year.

MARSHALL

Not interested.

CAITLIN

That's not fair. I was taking
anti-depressants. They really kill
your libido.

JUNE

Still not interested.

THUNDER CRACK

ROB

Maybe you should stop talking for a
while.

Julian rubs his reddened face. Caitlin grabs her bag.

Howard grabs his black bag.

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD

You live long enough, you get to hear every excuse under the book.

He starts moving toward the door.

MARSHALL

What's yours?

ADRIENNE

He doesn't need one. He's above the law.

HOWARD

In case you've forgotten, this is my house. I don't owe anyone any of you an explanation.

MARSHALL

How about Mom?

CAITLIN

What are you talking about?

ADRIENNE

Isn't this all for her?

MARSHALL

Otherwise, why go through all this trouble if you're not planning on sticking around?

Caitlin stops. Howard doesn't. She turns around.

CAITLIN

What is he talking about, Dad?

HOWARD

Nothing. Some people can't stop once they're on a roll. Forget drugs. Lying's your true addiction, Marshall.

MARSHALL

Maybe. But a liar always knows when he's being lied to.

JUNE

I'm lost.

Rob grabs June's hand. She rips it away from him.

(CONTINUED)

CAITLIN
I'm getting the car.

MARSHALL
I think you should hear this, Mom.

She opens the door. The wind catches her hair, wind and rain noise intensifies. Sounds like the End Times are near.

HOWARD
(to Caitlin)
Go on. I'll meet you by the car.

She stands her ground.

Howard turns around to face Marshall.

HOWARD
You can't navigate your way out of
this one, Marshall.

Marshall stands up.

CAITLIN
Is this another scheme?

MARSHALL
Not one of mine.

HOWARD
(to Marshall)
This isn't the time or the place.

She closes the door, takes a few steps closer.

CAITLIN
It's a two way street, Dad.

HOWARD
You, too?

Marshall pulls out Howard's chair for him.

MARSHALL
Sit down, Grandpa. Rest that ankle.

Howard sits down. He is losing control and knows it.

Marshall starts circling around the table.

HOWARD
This is ridiculous. What story are
you going to spin now, Marshall?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD (cont'd)

Does it have a point, or are you flying on auto pilot just for the hell of it?

MARSHALL

Why don't you tell us where you were going on a Friday night, in the pouring rain, without a car?

HOWARD

I already did.

MARSHALL

Ronolfo's, yes, so you said. With Uncle Freddy, whom you haven't spoken to in at least five months...

HOWARD

He was coming to pick me up.

MARSHALL

In the Shelby.

HOWARD

I told you. He doesn't drive it in the rain.

MARSHALL

He doesn't drive it at all. He sold it five months ago and bought a hybrid.

JULIAN

So he wasn't going to Ronolfo's? What's the big deal?

HOWARD

Exactly. What's the big deal?

CAITLIN

Then why lie about it?

MARSHALL

The truth is you weren't planning on leaving the house at all.

HOWARD

I was.

(CONTINUED)

CAITLIN

Without your keys? They were still upstairs in your study when we came back from the hospital.

Howard shoots her a dirty look. Whose side are you on?

HOWARD

I don't always lock the front door.

MARSHALL

Just the gun cabinet. Which is where you were headed when you fell.

ADRIENNE

It must be irritating to have your carefully laid plans foiled by fate.

MARSHALL

Or bad luck.

WILL

What plans?

HOWARD

I don't have to listen to this!

ROB

Oh, yes, you do.

RITA

What was he planning?

MARSHALL

He was planning on loading up one the shotguns--

HOWARD

Caitlin! You're going to let your son speak to his grandfather like this?

JULIAN

Yes, she is.

MARSHALL

--probably the one with the shortest barrel so you could easily reach the trigger.

(CONTINUED)

RITA

Load up the shotgun? For what?
(realizing what this means)
OH!

Howard gives a sarcastic laugh.

HOWARD

I have to hand it to you, Marshall,
what you lack in conscience, you
more than make up in imagination.

MARSHALL

Tell me I'm lying, then.

HOWARD

When are you not?

MARSHALL

That's not an answer.

He stands up.

Julian rubs his face, forgetting about his injury and winces
in pain.

Howard is silent, just stares in front of him.

JULIAN

Hold on. Wait a second. Why would
Howard want to off--kill himself?

MARSHALL

He's sick.

JUNE

What?

CAITLIN

How do you know that?

MARSHALL

He's taking Osteproxin.

JULIAN

Isn't that what Marie was taking
before--?

MARSHALL

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CAITLIN
You went through his bag?

MARSHALL
Yes.

Silence for a few seconds. Howard ponders his options.

HOWARD
I'm not even going to dignify that with an answer. The part about the cancer is true. Notwithstanding how Marshall found out. I've started the treatment two months ago. I asked Dr. Kaldor to keep it confidential, because I wanted to tell you all myself. When the time was right.

ADRIENNE
Except with you, actions speak louder than words.

THUNDER, sounds like a gunshot.

MARSHALL
Much louder.

Howard just shakes his head.

JUNE
Grandpa would never do that. Would you?

CAITLIN
Dad?

JULIAN
Howard?

HOWARD
(to Caitlin)
Who are you going to believe? Me, or your son who's been lying every since he was old enough to speak?

Caitlin walks closer to Howard.

CAITLIN
I've been lied to by my kids, by my husband and now it's your turn. Stay here, Dad. You fit right in.

She grabs her bag and is about to storm out.

Marshall tries stopping her, but she brushes him aside, not gently, either.

She bangs the door shut.

A bit later, the sound of a car starting.

ROB

She'll never make it up the driveway.

They all run to the window except for Howard who is lost in his own world. For the first time, we see him in total detachment.

Through the rain-splattered window the hybrid reverses, then jolts forward.

INT. CAR

Wet and angry, Caitlin stomps on the gas and hits the driveway with a vengeance.

Halfway up the hill the car's wheels start spinning in the mud and the car starts sliding backwards and off course.

She tries to regain control.

EXT. CAR

The car rolls back and slips halfway into the culvert.

The wheel hanging over the culvert is off the ground and spins freely.

LIVING ROOM

They all watch as the hybrid lies like a trapped bug in the mud.

ROB

Told you.

June hits him on the arm.

Intermittent HORN sounds.

INT. CAR

Crying, Caitlin keeps banging on the steering wheel with her fists, hence the horn sounds.

The door is opened.

She can't see who it is, but that doesn't stop her from hitting the person with her fists, transferring her anger from the wheel to...

...Marshall. He defends himself until Caitlin realizes who it is and stops.

EXT. CAR

Marshall hugs her. She cries.

They are both soaked to the bone.

LIVING ROOM

Marshall and Caitlin walk into the living room.

Julian hands them a towel. Everyone else is sitting.

Marshall drapes the towel over Caitlin's head, starts rubbing her hair dry.

She starts walking toward the bedroom.

HOWARD

I'll tell you the truth.

Caitlin stops. She turns around. Moves the towel from her head to her shoulders.

She sits down at the table.

Marshall follows, as does Julian.

HOWARD

Marie said she didn't know what was worse, the cancer or the cure. Like being stuffed with cotton balls and wrapped in gauze. That's how she described the chemo...therapy.

(beat)

I couldn't go through that...the loss of control, the false hope,...any of it. I waited until

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD (cont'd)
the pain started getting bad. Right now, I can get through the day with a few pills, but soon, it will be constant and they will dull my will power. So I put my affairs in order, sold the cabin, or I thought I had sold it and updated my will. Took a bath, smoked a good Cohiba. Even wrote a note outlining it all. Put on my best suit, the one that Chams, my business partner lent me money for 50 years ago. That's a picture of him there, on the shelf. We're standing in front of the foundry. Equal partners, Rob.

Shameful look from Rob.

CAITLIN
What were you thinking, Dad?

Howard gets angry.

HOWARD
Do you remember what your mother looked like the last time...when we said good bye to her? Like a--

CAITLIN
I remember. But--

HOWARD
You wouldn't let Marshall see her like that. Do you remember that?

CAITLIN
Yes.

HOWARD
Then how can you stand there and ask me a question like that?

CAITLIN
She fought until the end.

HOWARD
How beautiful. How fucking marvelous. Forgive me if I don't have that kind of fight left in me. I'm 80 years old for Christ Sakes.

(CONTINUED)

ROB

Don't you know that suicide is not
the answer?

HOWARD

What do you call what you're doing?
the only difference is I don't have
your kind of time.

RITA

Fast or slow, it's still a coward's
way out.

HOWARD

Some of us are able to make
choices, Miss I Can Have It Both
Ways.

JUNE

Don't talk to her like that!

HOWARD

Why not? It's about time you
realized she's not as committed to
the cause as you are, June.

Silence descends on the group. It's Caitlin's turn to have
the 100-yard stare. Painful ten seconds go by.

Will stands up and starts walking out of the room.

JULIAN

Where are you going?

WILL

To get the ice-cream.

TEN MINUTES LATER.

Cartons of ice-cream are laid out on the table. Chocolate,
vanilla, and other assorted delicacies from Ben & Jerry's.

Will finishes scooping into the last bowl and gives it to
Caitlin.

She grabs a spoon and the fudge.

Will hands her another bottle.

WILL

We have a low-fat version.

(CONTINUED)

She ignores the second bottle and and drowns her ice-cream in fudge.

WILL

You're right. Whose counting?

The family eats its ice cream.

KITCHEN

Adrienne puts the dishes in the sink and starts washing them.

Rita and Will are putting the leftovers in little Tupperware containers.

Howard is sitting at the kitchen table.

HOWARD

I suppose the table cloth ought to be soaked.

WILL

Marshall's already doing it.

Julian walks in.

HOWARD

How's Caitlin?

JULIAN

She's in the master bedroom. We have to move her car, or none of us are getting out.

HOWARD

We'll have to wait until morning.

Rob and June walk in.

HOWARD

Even if we can move it out of the way, which is difficult in the dark, the other cars will meet the same fate. If it stops raining overnight, the ground should be dry enough by morning to make a go of it.

JULIAN

And where's everyone going to sleep?

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD

Caitlin and I will take the bedrooms, you can have the couch and the kids will take the basement.

JUNE

I'm not sleeping in the basement with the spiders and Marshall.

ROB

Why do you hate your brother so much?

JUNE

Why? Because he always gets all the attention. Even tonight. Everything's always about him. I can't get a word in edge wise, because everyone's always worried about how he's going to fuck up next.

JULIAN

That's not exactly a claim to fame, you know.

JUNE

Please.

ROB

Unbelievable.

JUNE

What's unbelievable is that you could ever beat me at Scrabble.

HOWARD

The fire died out. Could you rekindle it, Julian?

JULIAN

Sure.

He leaves the kitchen.

Marshall walks in. He is drying his hands on his shirt.

June stares at him in hatred. Howard shakes his head in sadness.

He crutches out of the kitchen.

LIVING ROOM

Howard arrives in the living room just in time to see Julian throw his manuscript into the fire.

HOWARD

Don't be melodramatic, Julian. No one these days has only one copy of an unpublished book.

JULIAN

I guess I'm old fashioned.

He walks out of the living room.

Howard grabs a poker and pulls the manuscript out.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

Julian stands outside. The rain slows down to a drizzle, then stops.

BASEMENT

The kids are spreading their sleeping bags.

MARSHALL

I'm sorry for getting you all into this.

RITA

Don't blame yourself. You did the best you could.

JUNE

Ha.

RITA

I didn't see you coming up with any other plan.

JUNE

That's because you were too busy hanging on Will.

WILL

I never have any luck with girls. Can't you give me this little, ...what does Wayne call it, life-affirming experience?

Rita blows him a kiss.

(CONTINUED)

ROB
Please. I don't want to have
nightmares.

MASTER BEDROOM

Howard climbs under the covers.

KNOCK at the door.

HOWARD
Come in.

Howard doesn't react.

Caitlin walks in. She's dressed for bed in sweatpants and a
T-shirt.

HOWARD
Did you come to take away my
shoelaces?

CAITLIN
Very funny. Promise me you won't do
it.

HOWARD
Caity, it's been a long day. Can we
talk about it in the morning?

CAITLIN
I won't let you.

HOWARD
Good night, Caity.

He turns away from her.

She kisses him on the head.

CAITLIN
Good night, Daddy.

EXT. DRIVEWAY

Julian sits on top of Caitlin's car. He takes sips from a
bottle of bourbon.

He watches the full moon.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

The master bedroom opens. Howard walks out.

The sheets and blankets are neatly folded and stacked on the sofa.

Howard walks out of the living room.

KITCHEN

Caitlin is dressed in jeans and a fleece. She gives Howard a cup of coffee.

CAITLIN
Instant's all we have.

HOWARD
It'll do.
(beat)
I suppose we should wake the kids
and get them to move your car.

CAITLIN
Won't be necessary.

She points to the window.

Howard hops to the window.

INT./EXT. KITCHEN

Howard's POV. The kids are gathered around Caitlin's car.

EXT. DRIVEWAY

MARSHALL
Adrienne should be the one in the
driver's seat. She's the lightest
of all of us.

Rita and June give him a dirty look for this insensitive comment.

Marshall hands Adrienne the key, she gets in the front seat.

MARSHALL
When I say "go", step on the gas
and don't let up.

(CONTINUED)

They take up their positions, Marshall, Will and Rita in the back, Rob opens the passenger side door to push from that side.

Marshall finds an empty bourbon bottle stuck in the mud by the rear of the car.

He picks up the bottle.

Julian walks up and takes it from his hand.

MARSHALL

It wasn't me.

JULIAN

I know.

He throws the bottle away.

JULIAN

All right, let's give this a go.

Adrienne starts the engine.

MARSHALL

Go!

Adrienne punches it. The car's wheels spin in the mud, then connect as they all push. It snakes its way up the hill, the engine screaming like a banshee.

At the top, it hits firmer ground and the car accelerates suddenly. It runs over the "FOR SALE" sign and comes to rest in the middle of the road as Adrienne hits the brakes. She pulls over to the side and gets out.

ADRIENNE

Shit. Howard'll be pissed.

KITCHEN

Howard stands by the window. If he's pissed, he gives no indication of it.

Turns to see Caitlin emptying out the fridge and moving to the back to unplug it.

HOWARD

You can leave it plugged in.

She straightens up, looks at him for a long time.

DRIVEWAY

At the top of the driveway, Caitlin puts Howard's bag in the back of her car, closes the trunk and gets in the driver's seat.

At the bottom of the driveway, June and Rita zip up their leather jackets.

WILL
See you later?

RITA
Look in your leftover bag.

She puts on her helmet and gets on her bike. June shoots Will a dirty look.

WILL
Bye, June.

Will walks to Rob's Cadillac. Julian walks up.

JULIAN
(to Rob)
Where are you going?

ROB
Back to rehab.

JULIAN
Good. I'll follow you.

Adrienne walks up with her bag.

ADRIENNE
(to Rob)
Can you drop me off in Westchester?

ROB
Hop in.

MARSHALL
Can I ride with them, too?

JULIAN
No.

MARSHALL
But we're going to the same place.

(CONTINUED)

JULIAN
Get in the car, Marshall.

Julian walks to his Honda.

MARSHALL
(to Adrienne)
If I ever get out of rehab, I'll go
to college. Maybe even Fordham.

ADRIENNE
Are you hitting on me?

MARSHALL
Sorry. I wasn't thinking.

ADRIENNE
Some day you'll make a girl's life
very interesting.

She gets in the back seat of Rob's car, next to Will.

Will looks inside the plastic bag containing a Tupperware
dish with leftover food. There's a note taped to the front
with a phone number.

Will smiles.

EXT. ROB'S CADILLAC

Howard approaches Rob.

HOWARD
(to Rob)
Did you lock the front door?

ROB
I'll double check.

He puts his bag in the back of the Caddy, closes the trunk.

EXT. JULIAN'S CAR

Marshall puts his bag in the back of Julian's car.

Howard approaches. He hands Julian a big zip-lock bag. It
contains Julian's manuscript. Roughly half of it is burnt to
a crisp.

JULIAN
Thanks. I guess I could still give
an abbreviated version of the
lecture.

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD

Aren't you heading to the conference?

JULIAN

Would you?

HOWARD

I can't answer that, Julian.

He's about to say something else, when he (and everyone else) is distracted by three people walking down the driveway.

One of them is ANGELA CHERRY in all her red-haired chipper glory. The other two, or actually three are a couple in their mid-thirties and their four-year old daughter.

ANGELA

Hello, hello! Isn't this a surprise? I had no idea anyone would be here.

HOWARD

You're telling me.

Everyone gathers around them. Rob and Will walk up with Adrienne, Rita puts her bike on the kickstand and walks up with June.

Marshall and Julian, too. The only person absent is Caitlin.

ANGELA

I told you on the phone I'll be bringing by some prospective buyers. Howard, this is Todd and Cathy Masterson from White Plains. Todd is a budget forecaster for New York City. He and Cathy are looking to buy a weekend house.

HOWARD

Pleased to meet you. I'm sure you met my daughter Caitlin. She's sitting in the car up there, she's not feeling well, I'm afraid. This is Julian, my son-in-law, June and Marshall, their daughter and son.

Pregnant pause.

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD

And this is Rob, June's boyfriend,
Adrienne and Rita, her friends from
college and Will, Rita's boyfriend.

Almost unconsciously, the group slides back into the fake
pattern.

ANGELA

Gee, a full house.

(to the Mastersons)

As you can see Howard's family has
gotten a lot of joy out of this
weekend house. I'm sure it will be
the same for you.

HOWARD

Could I talk to you for a second,
Angie?

He pulls Angela aside.

HOWARD

I'm afraid the house is not for
sale.

ANGELA

What do you mean, not for sale? You
said--.

HOWARD

I know what I said, but your buyers
are not the only ones who are
allowed to change their minds.

ANGELA

You can't do this, Howard. This
couple is very interested.

Howard turns away from Angela.

HOWARD

Rob! Could you escort Miss Cherry
and the Mastersons off my property?
They're trespassing.

ROB

With pleasure.

Rob shepherds the protesting Angela and the stunned
Mastersons up the hill.

(CONTINUED)

JULIAN
You made the right call.

He points to the house.

INT. CAITLIN'S CAR

She watches Howard and Julian from the rear view mirror.

EXT. JULIAN'S CAR

HOWARD
Perhaps.

Rob walks past Howard with a grin.

Julian and Adrienne exchange a glance before she gets in Rob's Cadillac and he in his Honda.

Like an expert, Rita rides the bike up the side of the hill, trying to avoid the deepest mud.

At the top of the hill, they ride past Caitlin's car.

June waves to Caitlin, who just scoffs.

EXT. PORCH

Rob opens the door, puts the key in, then slams it shut.

INT. LIVING ROOM

The arm of the record player falls due to the slam. The record player, which has not been turned off begins to play.

RECORD
Ladies and scumbags, live from
Spring Hill, Montana, it's my
diseased pleasure to present
you...Lazy Smoke!

And the crowd goes wild. Screams and shouts of an outdoor concert.

The lead singer takes the microphone.

LEAD SINGER
All right, all right, settle down.
We're not here to start a
revolution. At least not yet.

(CONTINUED)

More screaming from the fans.

Camera rises, through the ceiling, overlooking the driveway.

Julian's Honda makes its way up the hill, followed by Rob's Cadillac.

LEAD SINGER

A wise man once told me. Where
there's smoke, there's liars!

The crowd goes ape-shit. Lazy Smoke's Number One hit from 1983 begins to play, live and thus laced with screams, shouts and other unplanned noises.

Overhead shot of the road.

Caitlin's car followed by Rita's motorcycle, followed by Julian's Honda.

Bringing up the rear is Rob's black Cadillac.

"Where There's Smoke, There's Liars" reaches the crescendo.

FADE OUT

THE END