

How We Do
Episode 101 V5.5

Based on the short story

And written by

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HOW WE DO is a half-hour serialized drama. The cast is divided into three clusters of characters who do not intermingle.

Episodes one through three are dedicated to one cluster each to introduce the three story lines. Subsequent episodes will contain sequences for all three clusters.

FADE IN:

EXT. ART GALLERY - DAY

ALEC (Millennial), in a suit with a shoulder bag weighing on him, studies a painting in the gallery window. A white object reflecting in the glass catches his attention.

He turns around to face the object. Sighs resignation.

INT. WEBER HOUSE (BEDROOM) - MORNING

SUPER: "7 HOURS EARLIER"

GLORY and FRANK WEBER (borderline Boomer/Gen X) doze peacefully, Glory on her back, Frank on his side.

Glory's hand rests on her décolletage. A thin line of DRIED BLOOD trails away from her index fingernail.

EXT. DESERT TOWN NEIGHBORHOOD - SAME

Above the Weber's roof. From a drone's-eye view we RISE, revealing a small, arid yard closed in by a cinder-block wall. Neighboring houses appear, shoulder-to-shoulder, the only privacy courtesy of more block walls.

EXT. DESERT TOWN HIGHWAY - DAY

Not even eight o'clock and already the heat rising from the asphalt distorts the view. The morning commute speeds along impossibly wide straight roads that roll out to the horizon and beyond.

Drivers fill their tanks at Terrible Herbst.

Worker-bees elbow their way in and out of Starbucks.

It could be any desert town until the narrow gaps between buildings and trees grant fleeting glimpses of the Luxor's pyramid, the High Roller's enormous Ferris wheel, and the Stratosphere's needle in the distance, sleeping off the night before.

INT. THE WEBER HOUSE (KITCHEN) - DAY

Frank and Glory finish breakfast. Though gregarious, Frank often gets lost in his own thoughts.

Glory has genetics to die for, but you get the sense there is always something she is not saying. Frank has stopped trying to guess what that might be.

CHLOE (7) whirlwinds into the kitchen. Alec LIMPS behind, stuffing an iPad into his shoulder bag.

ALEC
Backpack?

CHLOE
Check.

ALEC
Homework?

CHLOE
Check.

ALEC
Anything else?

Alec holds up her LUNCH BAG. Chloe snatches it.

ALEC (CONT'D)
And...?

Chloe SIGHS and runs to kiss her grandparents goodbye.

FRANK
Have fun, sweetheart.

GLORY
Make good decisions today.

Alec spirits Chloe out. Suddenly - quiet. Frank and Glory savor the peace as long as possible. Then sigh. They know the respite is over. To work they must go.

EXT./INT. CONCORDE HOTEL - DAY

If you didn't know what you were looking for, you'd pass off this purposely anonymous building as another garden variety financial district office tower.

Inside, elevator doors open to an upper floor. In a well-tailored business suit, JOEY (Female millennial) tugs a rollaboard, navigating the hall with familiarity.

Her phone RINGS as she taps the key card on the lock.

IN JOEY'S ROOM

She juggles the call and her belongings. Her voice is lilting and friendly in a salesperson manner.

JOEY

Hello? This is her. Yes. I just got in.
Can you hold just a sec? Thanks.

She sets the phone down. The roll-aboard lands on the bed, the laptop on the desk. While it whirs to life, she stows clothes and toiletries in their places. Back to the call.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Sorry -- my laptop is still starting up.
Are you on the website? Scroll down a bit. The terms are there.

The computer is ready. She studies the screen.

JOEY (CONT'D)

I have time tomorrow at ten or two.
Perfect. Uh-huh? Generally no, but maybe down the road, depending on volume. Sure.
I'll see you tomorrow at two.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD DROP OFF - DAY

Alec steers a well-worn minivan to the curb.

ALEC

Good luck on your spelling test.

CHLOE

Good luck on your job test. And remember:
if you can't be on time...

ALEC

Be early. Love you.

INT. ADVERTISING AGENCY - DAY

A female AD EXEC scans the portfolio on Alec's iPad.

AD EXEC

Tell me about the gap in your work history.

ALEC

I went back to school to get up to date on web design and learn enough programming to be able to ask the right questions.

AD EXEC

This is schoolwork? Wow. These are right on point. I wish I had something for you. Can you check back in six months or so?

INT. CONCORDE HOTEL (LOBBY) - DAY

SCOTT, an overweight balding man in his 50s slouches on a wing-back chair.

Joey appears. Effusive to a fault.

JOEY

Scott? Hi, I'm Joey. Sorry to keep you waiting.

Scott checks his watch and strains to stand.

IN THE ELEVATOR

Scott's eyes never contact Joey's.

INT. JOEY'S HOTEL ROOM (BATHROOM) - LATER

Joey showers. She has a four-leaf clover tattoo on her left shoulder blade.

-- FLASHBACK --

She and Scott in bed, having sex. There is nothing pretty, hot, or sexy about it. A nude Scott is not a turn-on. He remains on his back for the duration, forcing Joey to do all the work and put on a convincing performance. The word 'Baby' is overused.

When finished, Joey retires the condom to the bathroom.

JOEY

You were on fire, mister.

SCOTT

Yeah? You enjoy yourself?

JOEY

Oh, my god. Twice.

INSERT: Joey enjoys herself FOUR times.

-- BACK TO SCENE --

Later, Joey works on her laptop and sips tea.

INT. DEREK'S OFFICE - DAY

This sleek downtown penthouse office drips money.

RAE (20s) has just put a caller on hold.

RAE

Derek! Eva's on one.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. SHEAR MANSION - DAY

The owners of this huge multi-million-dollar home have enough dough to collect original art.

EVA SHEAR (40) makes final adjustments on a tennis outfit as she talks on the phone.

EVA

How late are you working?

INT. DEREK'S OFFICE - SAME

DEREK SHEAR (40s) paces. He's a confident go-getter with a type-A personality and a sparkle in his eye.

DEREK

Good question. I've got back-to-back meetings here all afternoon.

EVA

What about Joe?

DEREK

Oh, for God's sake. All morning I've been thinking it's Friday.

(yells to his assistant)

Rae!

EVA

Anything else you've forgotten?

He grimaces, recalling the important thing.

DEREK

Seven-thirty. Why don't you surprise me
in something new and slinky?

EVA

I'll take you up on that. I'm off to meet
the girls. Love you.

DEREK

Love you, too.

RAE sticks her head in the door. Her eyes ask, "What?"

EXT./INT. CARDS 'N THINGS - DAY

Frank and Glory's strip mall knickknack shop caters to
the Hallmark crowd. But calling the TWO WOMEN currently
browsing a 'crowd' is generous.

Mid-aisle, Frank organizes greeting cards.

AT THE CHECK-OUT COUNTER

Glory tries to open a shipping box with her bare hands,
but the packing tape won't give. She finds an X-acto
knife under the register and guides the blade through the
tape in one smooth continuous motion. A quarter-inch
before the end, she pauses. Breath held and core flexed,
she leans into a test of wills.

Finally her muscles give out. Her torso lunges forward
and the blade breaches the tape's edge. The box blooms
open with a gratifying release. Glory shudders.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Ignoring a coffee, Alec pores over discouraging
Craigslist job listings on his iPad. But then...

ON SCREEN: "WEB DESIGNER NEEDED IMMEDIATELY"

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CARDS 'N THINGS - SAME

Glory unpacks the box. The phone rings.

GLORY

(answering phone)
Cards 'n Things.

ALEC

Glory, it's Alec. I've got two more interviews, but one is at two-thirty.

GLORY

Ah... Hold on.

(yelling to Frank)

Frank! Can you pick up Chloe from school?

In the stockroom, Frank quickly closes his laptop.

FRANK

I don't see why not.

GLORY

(to Alec)

Grandpa to the rescue.

ALEC

One day, I'll make all this up to you.

INT. CONCORDE HOTEL (LOBBY) - DAY

An echo of previous events. GARY (they're all middle-aged) waits in the wing-back chair. He's dumbstruck when Joey appears.

JOEY

Gary? Hi, I'm Joey.

(on his silence)

Is everything all right?

GARY

Your pictures do not do you justice.

IN THE ELEVATOR

Gary is a bundle of constant, tiny motions and throat-clearing. Joey gently forces the conversation.

JOEY

Never been to Houston. Would I like it?

GARY

Don't know, but I got a lot of friends who would love to meet you if you come.

EXT. TENNIS CLUB - DAY

An exclusive club, judging by the manicured landscaping in the middle of the desert.

ON THE COURTS

Eva and ROSIE face twins, TONY and TRISH in ladies' doubles. They are all 40s, fit, and well-groomed.

INT. JOEY'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Joey guides Gary into her room.

JOEY

This is us.

Gary goes blank for a moment and then remembers he must pay in advance. Fishes an envelope from his jacket.

GARY

Unsealed.

Joey nods to the bathroom. Gary shrugs acknowledgement.

JOEY

There's a robe on the door.

He carries the envelope to the bathroom and sets it on the vanity. Starts the shower. Unbuttons his shirt.

MOMENTS LATER

Gary returns to the bedroom in the robe. He finds Joey sitting on the edge of the bed, changed into an Agent Provocateur lingerie set, *PATTING* the space next to her. He sits beside her. She plants a deep kiss on him.

GARY

Holy crap.

MOMENTS LATER

Sex. Still neither pretty nor sexy. More 'Baby' talk. At least Gary is able to be on top occasionally. But even in a subordinate position, Joey directs the activity.

AFTERWARD

Sitting back against the headboard, Gary chugs water. Joey reclines next to him.

JOEY

How was your first professional experience?

GARY

Mind blown.

JOEY

Next time you'll get more out of it.
(on his look)
You're kind of a fast worker.

GARY

Usually not that fast. But I never been
with a woman your kind of pretty before.

JOEY

Aw, that is so sweet. But this is the
part where I kick you out.

GARY

I thought I had an hour.

JOEY

Yeah, it doesn't work that way.

GARY

Dang. I feel like I cheated myself out of
forty-five minutes. What's that - six
hundred bucks worth?

He leans to get up. Joey wrestles with a decision for a
second and then stops him with a hand to his chest.

JOEY

Nothing another three hundred can't fix.

Gary exhales hard at her proposition. Joey wraps Gary's
leg with hers and walks her fingers down his torso.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Satisfaction guaranteed.
(flexing her hips)
Or you could take your chances at a
blackjack table.

Her fingers reach his abdomen. Sold.

GARY

Goddamn.

INT. JOEY'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Joey holds an ICE PACK to her knee and picks at room
service while working the laptop.

ON SCREEN: Her stock brokerage account shows she has
purchased no stocks, but has \$25k in cash.

She types "CPTK" in a search, which opens a screen for a company called "CAP TEK". A chart indicates the stock has bounced up and down numerous times and landed on down.

She clicks "BUY" and enters \$25,000 in a dollar amount field. The screen asks her to "CONFIRM" a purchase of 1,990 shares. Pausing, she closes the laptop.

INT. DEREK'S OFFICE - DAY

As Rae removes an emptied plate from Derek's desk, Derek brushes his teeth in the adjacent private bathroom.

Passing Rae, he slips an envelope into his blazer pocket.

RAE

You've got the cousins at three-thirty.

DEREK

Don't let the place burn down.

EXT. TENNIS CLUB - DAY

The tennis gals lunch at an outdoor table. Mixed greens and chardonnay all around. Glued to her phone, Rosie has apparently just dropped a bombshell.

TRISH

How could you possibly support that pig?

ROSIE

My vagina is not a single-issue voter.

TONY

What about reproductive rights?

ROSIE

At our age?

EVA

(re: Rosie's phone)

What is so interesting on that thing?

ROSIE

If you must know, I've joined Tinder. I haven't been on a date since Jake left. I'm tired of being lonely.

TRISH

Is that safe?

ROSIE

It's how things are done now. I can't sit around waiting for someone to wander along while my prime years slip away.

TONY

Don't you miss the boy-meets-girl thing?

ROSIE

The last time that happened I was seventeen. So much lost time. I don't need to be wined and dined. Come over, bang me, and go home. I don't care.

TRISH

Sounds heavenly.

TONY

You're awfully quiet, Eva.

EVA

I have no complaints.

TRISH

After all these years? What's your secret?

EVA

Derek keeps a whore on the side. He's on his way to her right now – his Thursday appointment with 'Joe' the kinesiologist.

TRISH

Today? What in the actual fuck?

TONY

How can you just sit here and not go rip his balls off?

EVA

I've made peace with it, Tony. I can handle anything as long as I know the truth.

(on their groans)

I lead a very comfortable life. Should I give it all up because once a week, he needs to feel like he's not missing out on something?

TRISH

Fuck what he needs.

EVA

Trish, I'm the only one at this table not divorced. I've seen what you all went through. I'm just not built for that.

ROSIE

How did you find out?

EVA

I hired someone.

INT. MARKETING FIRM - DAY

A very stylized CREATIVE EXEC studies Alec's portfolio in silence, then abruptly hands it back to him.

CREATIVE EXEC

Let me ask you a few either/or questions.
First thing that pops into your head.

ALEC

Fire away.

CREATIVE EXEC

Red or blue?

ALEC

Purple.

CREATIVE EXEC

Filet mignon or vegan tacos?

ALEC

Steak tacos.

CREATIVE EXEC

Passion or security?

(on his pause)

Why the hesitation?

ALEC

Seven-year-old daughter. Passion is a nice-to-have, not a must-have.

CREATIVE EXEC

Not on my team.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

Alec limps along, his shoulder bag weighing heavily on his soul with each step. A PAINTING in an ART GALLERY WINDOW catches his eye.

-- FLASHBACK --

ANOTHER ART GALLERY -- NIGHT

A crowded, energetic gallery opening. Alec, in a younger hairstyle, is the center of attention. He moves around one of his pieces without limping, explaining his process to a rapt audience.

-- BACK TO SCENE --

Alec scans the gallery. Toward the back, KATHERINE and JACOB (African American, Millennial) work across each other at one desk on opposing computers.

A white object reflecting in the window catches his eye. Across the street, a "BUSBOY WANTED" sign taunts him from a cafe. He checks the time: "1:45"

Alec braces himself and steps forward.

INT. CAFE - MOMENTS LATER

It's a casually upscale place. Alec forces himself to the counter, where the CAFE OWNER sorts receipts.

CAFE OWNER
You can sit anywhere.

ALEC
Actually... You still need a busboy?

CAFE OWNER
Got a resume?

For a busboy? Nonetheless, Alec hands one over.

CAFE OWNER (CONT'D)
P.C.C. Good arts program.

ALEC
I finished at L.V.A.

CAFE OWNER
Looks good. I should know by next week.

ALEC
Can I persuade you to decide now?

INT. JOEY'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Joey adjusts her makeup with care. Her phone buzzes. She smiles at a text from a JASON: "IN THE BAR"

IN THE LOBBY

Joey breezes past the wing-back chair to the bar, where Jason, his back to her, chats with the only other patron.

JOEY

Hey, you.

He spins around. 'Jason' is in fact DEREK SHEAR.

DEREK

Hey, yourself.

IN THE ELEVATOR

Joey and Derek kiss passionately.

IN JOEY'S HOTEL ROOM

Their sex is passionate and mutually beneficial. Her movements are less exaggerated, more natural. No 'Baby.' Clearly Derek is no ordinary client.

Afterward they linger in bed. No rush for him to get out.

IN THE BATHROOM -- LATER

As the last drops sneak out of the shower head, Joey wraps herself in a towel and hands another to Derek.

JOEY

That company you told me about -- Cap Tek? The stock is up and down like crazy.

DEREK

What's your position?
(on her confusion)
How much did you invest?

JOEY

Nothing yet.

DEREK

Don't wait too long.

JOEY

You promise it's going to take off?

DEREK

Promise. But be prepared for a few bumps.

Her phone BUZZES.

JOEY

Sorry. I need to take this.

She presses 'Accept' and revives her sales pitch voice.

JOEY (CONT'D)

This is Joey. Hi, Ronnie. Well, I have one last slot open today. Yes, yes. Ah... I love 'Greece' but sadly, I'm not prepared for travel today.

She rolls her eyes at Derek. Not pleased, he disappears to the bedroom.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Yes, it says that on the website. How about first thing tomorrow, like ten? I look forward to it.

Joey wanders into the bedroom and finds Derek dressed. She slips into her 'greeting' outfit.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Sorry about that. This convention is kicking my ass.

DEREK

You know you could do this without all the juggling.

JOEY

And what miracle will let that happen?

DEREK

One client. The right one.

JOEY

Ha! Jason, between this and modeling I make almost three grand a week. During conventions that can double, easily.

DEREK

And after expenses?

JOEY

It's still good money.

DEREK

I'll pay you four and get rid of your overhead.

JOEY

How?

DEREK

Get you out of here. Set you up with a condo in one of my properties. Just make yourself available whenever.

JOEY

I only work three days a week.

DEREK

My schedule won't allow more than that.

JOEY

What happens when you get tired of me?

DEREK

Who could possibly get tired of you?

JOEY

I've built up a stable client base. What if you change your mind?

DEREK

Five grand. That's an unbeatable deal.

JOEY

I have extenuating circumstances.

DEREK

Nothing is insurmountable.

She receives a text.

JOEY

My next client is in the lobby and you need to get back to work.

DEREK

Think about it.

JOEY

You once told me relying on a single customer is not a viable business model.

DEREK

In most cases.

JOEY

And what makes this case different?

DEREK

Me.

JOEY

Yeah, but if I put all THESE chips on one color, I've got a fifty-fifty chance of losing everything.

DEREK

Those odds are better than most things in life. What's your concern?

JOEY

I can't tell if you're red or black.

INT. CONCORDE HOTEL (LOBBY) - MINUTES LATER

Derek crosses the lobby behind the wing-back chair without noticing the WOMAN sitting in it.

Behind him, Joey's heels on the marble announce her approach. She smiles and offers the woman her hand.

JOEY

Hi, I'm Joey. You must be Marie.

EVA SHEAR rises and takes Joey's hand.

EVA

I am. It's so nice to meet you.

Joey studies Eva's face.

JOEY

You're gorgeous.

(tugging her hand)

Come on. This is going to be fun.

INT. HOTEL ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Joey smiles at Eva.

JOEY

I would love to see your closet.

EVA

Oh?

Joey eyeballs Eva from her shoes up.

JOEY
Gucci sandals, vintage Kelly bag. You
have an amazing closet.

INT. JOEY'S HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Joey leads Eva in.

JOEY
This is us.

Eva fixates on THE BED. Stresses. Joey caresses Eva's
face with her fingertips and pulls in for a kiss.

JOEY (CONT'D)
Let me show you where you can get ready.

She trails one hand down Eva's arm and leads her into the
bathroom. Eva takes in every detail of the room. Joey
runs the shower and leans against the vanity. Taps her
nails on the counter. Eva sets an envelope on that spot.

JOEY (CONT'D)
You'll find a fresh robe on the door.
I'll see you in a few.

The second she is gone, Eva inspects every drawer and
cabinet. Nothing. She blanches at the possibility of what
the trash bin might hold. Empty.

In the shower, she inhales the soap. It's sadly familiar.

MOMENTS LATER

A robed Eva returns to the bedroom. Joey has changed into
a short silk kimono and set two chairs near the desk.

JOEY (CONT'D)
I made tea. Come sit. Let's get to know
each other.

Exactly what Eva wanted. She settles into a chair while
Joey pours. Joey's manner is more relaxed than with her
male clients. Familiar. Chatty, even.

JOEY (CONT'D)
So, Marie, how long have you been
married?

EVA
Ten years.

JOEY

What does your husband think about this?

EVA

Are you certain I'm married to a man?

Joey tugs at Eva's wedding ring.

JOEY

As stunning as this is, a woman would never give it to another woman.

EVA

I didn't discuss this with my husband.

JOEY

How long since you've been with a woman?

EVA

What makes you think I ever have?

JOEY

First-timers can be... giddy. You appear to know what you came here for.

EVA

I wish.

JOEY

Okay. Then I'll help you figure it out.

EVA

What about you? You work with all genders. Is that strictly work, or is it also a part of your personal life?

Joey leans back, revealing a large scar on her knee.

JOEY

I'm an equal opportunity lech at work and at home.

EVA

Any preference?

JOEY

I do like a good penis, but sometimes their life support systems can be such dicks.

Eva can't suppress a laugh. It relaxes her.

EVA

You're the first sex worker I've met.

JOEY

Really? Aren't we all sex workers in one form or another?

EVA

Well...

JOEY

You carry a fifteen-thousand-dollar handbag. But what was the price?

(on Eva's look)

There's no shame in how any of us get by.

EVA

I didn't mean that. I just wonder what...

JOEY

What tragedy led me to ruin? Please. I come from a stable family. My parents are still married. Daddy never abused me. I've never been molested or raped. My mother knows what I do and lives somewhat vicariously through me.

EVA

I still can't imagine the path you must have taken.

Joey relaxes her shoulders. Takes a healthy breath.

JOEY

I despise the cliché of my life, but okay. I danced my way through school. I was under twenty-one when I started and could only work in the fully nude clubs that don't serve alcohol.

EVA

But you were old enough to vote. That's absurd.

JOEY

It was decent money. And when you parade around naked for a living, you get a lot of offers to make even more. Ninety-nine percent of them were bullshit. But I had plans, so I explored a lot of opportunities.

EVA

What kind of plans?

JOEY

Doesn't matter. Life intervened and I suddenly needed to earn more than I could on the pole. So here we are.

EVA

What about the transactional aspect? Does that impact your view of sex in general?

JOEY

Sex is always transactional. And I'm good at leaving work at the office, especially during convention weeks.

EVA

Like this week?

JOEY

(nodding)

You do have to psyche yourself up for it. Good thing I like the work.

EVA

Doesn't everyone like sex?

JOEY

But think about the first time you're with someone; that first kiss, the thrill of new skin against you, inside you. Remember those first six months with your husband? That's how it is for me every day.

Eva can't contain her sudden discomfort. Her eye twitches. She rubs her temple. Joey slides forward.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Are you all right?

EVA

Just a little tension in my eye.

Joey pulls Eva's foot onto her lap.

JOEY

Try to relax.

She massages between Eva's second and third toes.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Hold on, it will get better.

The pain subsides. Eva relaxes.

EVA

Wow. What did you do?

JOEY

It's a reflex point that leads up behind your eyes.

EVA

Where did you learn that?

JOEY

I studied kinesiology. And now you know my plans.

Eva is stunned but presses on.

EVA

My husband sees a kinesiologist... among other professionals. Do you have a practice? I mean outside of this.

JOEY

No. You're my first patient other than my family.

Eva strains to conceal her anger.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Do you want to try something that will blow your mind?

Eva is skeptical. Joey climbs onto the bed, leaving enough room for Eva.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Lie on your back.

Eva does as she's told. Joey kneels beside her and opens Eva's robe just enough to expose her abdomen. She massages an inch below Eva's bellybutton.

EVA

That's... Different.

JOEY

It's your CV 6, the sixth pressure point of the conception vessel.

EVA

What does it do?

JOEY

Sends blood and energy down to the parts
I'm not going to touch. Breathe slowly.
Count four on inhale and four on exhale.

Eva's breathing intensifies.

EVA

Those parts are getting warm.

JOEY

Good. Try to slow down your breaths.

Her breaths become even stronger.

EVA

I can't. What are you? Wait... That
can't... Oh, fuck!

Her body clinches and convulses into an intense climax,
surprising both women. She shakes head to toe.

JOEY

Holy shit! I've never seen it happen that
fast.

Tears well in Eva's eyes. Joey strokes her hair.

JOEY (CONT'D)

It's okay. It's okay.

Joey's face hovers above Eva's on the precipice of a kiss.

EXT./INT. PORN SOUND STAGE - DAY

An industrial building. Inside, two video sets made to
look like a hotel room and a residential bedroom flank a
functioning bathroom.

MIKEY, an athletic, upbeat 40-ish porn entrepreneur,
directs Alec's attention to the set as he pops a Cialis.

MIKEY

This is where I shoot the "Mikey's World"
POVs, and the other one is for the "Video
Virgins". Did you check out the website?

ALEC

It's not as bad as you made it out to be.
You did it yourself?

MIKEY

I do everything myself. But the business suddenly blew up and I can't keep all the plates in the air anymore.

Two ACTRESSES (Gen Z) enter.

ACTRESS 1

Hey, Mikey.

MIKEY

Hey, girls. This is Alec.

ACTRESS 2

Are we doing a four-way?

MIKEY

Just me. I'll be ready in five.

He returns his attention to Alec. The actresses drop their bags near the residential bed and disrobe.

MIKEY (CONT'D)

What do you think?

ALEC

Four to five days.

MIKEY

That's it? When can you start?

ALEC

Give me an admin login and I can dig in tonight.

MIKEY

Right on! Oh, man, I didn't even ask - are you cool with the content?

Alec looks over at the casually nude actresses.

ALEC

No problem.

MIKEY

You want to stick around and see how it's done? I don't know - it might give you some ideas for the website.

ALEC

I can stay a little while.

In a flash, Mikey strips down to nothing. Grabs a video camera. Lies on the bed, camera pointed down his torso.

The two actresses position themselves on either side of his legs and get rid of their gum.

Alec pays rapt attention.

EXT. LAS VEGAS OUTSKIRTS - LATER

The sun sets and the lights awaken in the distance.

INT. JOEY'S HOTEL ROOM (BATHROOM) - EVENING

Now dressed, Eva studies Joey's toiletries. She opens a small bottle of cologne and sniffs.

MOMENTS LATER

Eva returns to the bedroom, \$15k purse in hand.

EVA
I think I owe you extra.

Joey leads the way to the door.

JOEY
We're square.

She leans against the open door. A silent pause.

EVA
Well.

JOEY
Well.

Unsure of the etiquette, Eva leans in. Joey stops her by raising her hand to her own face. Brushes her fingers on her lips and tongue. Inhales.

Eva takes the cue and mirrors Joey's actions. Joey offers her hand to Eva. Their fingers intertwine.

Eva backs into the hall and walks away. Joey watches her for ten paces and then slips back into the room.

At the sound of the door closing, Eva stumbles and braces herself against the wall, trembling.

IN JOEY'S ROOM

Joey opens her laptop. Her brokerage page still shows her poised to go all in on the CPTK stock. She clicks "BUY."

INT. THE WEBER HOUSE - NIGHT

Glory prepares dinner. Chloe uses real artist's pencils to sketch on a pad. Alec arrives in a better mood than when he left the house. Chloe beams.

CHLOE
Daddy in the house!

ALEC
How did we do on the spelling test?

She holds it up for him to see.

ALEC (CONT'D)
A-plus? Nailed it!

CHLOE
Did you pass your test?

ALEC
I passed TWO tests.

GLORY
Two?

ALEC
One short term, the other part time. I think the short term one can lead to more, though.

GLORY
Dinner's in ten minutes.

ALEC
I'm going to wash some of this day off.

The instant Alec turns away, his face falls slightly.

IN THE BEDROOM

Alec shuts the door behind him. Tosses the shoulder bag on a chair. Sits on the bed and rubs his forehead.

INT. JOEY'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Joey stuffs a hundred dollar bill in each of three envelopes and drops another on the bed.

IN THE LOBBY

Passing to the exit, Joey discretely leaves one envelope each with the SECURITY GUARD, DESK CLERK, and CONCIERGE.

INT. SHEAR MANSION (BATHROOM) - NIGHT

Eva sets her handbag on the vanity and starts the shower.

-- FLASHBACK --

Eva recalls several ways she came into contact with Joey's cologne and natural scent.

-- BACK TO SCENE --

Eva pulls Joey's cologne bottle from her handbag.
Inhales.

INT. DEREK'S OFFICE (PRIVATE BATHROOM) - NIGHT

Derek finishes a shave, towels off, and splashes cologne.
Slips into a dress shirt. Ties a tie.

INT. UBER CAR (DRIVING) - NIGHT

Rear seat: Joey spots a pharmacy.

JOEY

Excuse me? Can we stop at the CVS?

INT. THE WEBER HOUSE - NIGHT

Glory, Frank, Alec and Chloe at the dining table.

ALEC

(to Chloe)

Truth or dare?

CHLOE

Um... Truth.

ALEC

How many scoops of ice cream did Grandpa
buy you after school?

CHLOE

No fair!

A car comes to a stop outside. Its door opens and closes.

ALEC

I knew it!

(to Frank)

You're not to be trusted.

Footsteps approach. The front door opens.

ALEC (CONT'D)
(to Chloe)
Who's that?

CHLOE
Mommy!

Joey, carrying her purse and a CVS bag, pulls her rollaboard into the dining room. Chloe rushes to her.

JOEY
How's my good luck charm?

CHLOE
I got an A-plus on my spelling test.

JOEY
You are so smart. You deserve a prize.

She pulls a package of shiny stickers from the CVS bag.

CHLOE
Stickers!

Joey kisses Alec on the cheek. They are not overly affectionate.

ALEC
Hey.

FRANK
How was your day, Brynn?

He calls her BRYNN because that is her actual name.

BRYNN
Good.

Glory rises and heads toward the kitchen cabinets.

GLORY
I'll get you a plate.

BRYNN
That's okay, mom. I had a late lunch.

Alec's expression sours. He gets the hidden meaning of her words, though no one else does.

FRANK
At least have a glass of wine. Alec has good news.

Brynn wants to go anywhere else, but stuffs the CVS bag and its remaining contents into her purse. Sets the bag and her rollaboard off to one side. Takes a seat.

BRYNN

A job?

Alec chases down a glass for Brynn. Glory scoots her chair close to the table. Places her napkin on her lap with both hands but leaves her left hand in her lap when she picks up her glass with her right hand.

ALEC

Two. The best one is a web design gig.

FRANK'S EYES glaze over.

BRYNN

That's fantastic.

GLORY

What kind of website? You didn't say.

Alec tops off Glory's wine. Fills Brynn's glass. Sits.

ALEC

Sort of a social media thing based on video content.

BRYNN

Which website?

ALEC

They have a few channels, but the main company is called Mikey's World.

Frank snaps back into the conversation.

INT. ELEGANT RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Derek and Eva, midway through dinner.

DEREK

How was tennis?

EVA

Rosie and I wiped up the court with the twins. She's on Tinder, by the way.

DEREK

Rosie? Good for her. Jake was an idiot to let her go. But then again, she can't fill a dress the way you do.

EVA
You approve?

DEREK
I do.

EVA
What did Joe have to say?

DEREK
Same as ever. My ileocecal valve is acting up. Don't we have better things to talk about?

Derek slides a narrow box to Eva. It's a diamond necklace. A pricey one.

DEREK (CONT'D)
Happy anniversary.

INT. THE WEBER HOUSE (CHLOE'S ROOM) - NIGHT

Brynn tucks Chloe in.

CHLOE
Aren't we a little old for this?

BRYNN
Never. But you do need to go to sleep. And I'm tired from work.

CHLOE
What do you do at work, Mommy?

BRYNN
I'm in sales.

CHLOE
What do you sell?

BRYNN
Services.

CHLOE
What are those?

BRYNN
Well, there are goods and there are services. Goods are things you can buy like groceries, clothes, or art supplies. Services are things people do for you like fix your teeth, mow your lawn, teach you how to play piano.

CHLOE

What kind of services do you sell?

BRYNN

The kind that make people happy.

CHLOE

Does that make you happy?

BRYNN

It does.

CHLOE

Then I'm happy, too.

Brynn kisses Chloe's forehead.

BRYNN

Night, Boo.

She turns off the light and leaves the door ajar.

INT. WEBER HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - NIGHT

Glory stares blankly at CSI. Brynn pokes her head in.

BRYNN

Staying up?

GLORY

Just till the weather. You look tired.

BRYNN

Long day.

GLORY

Brynn, honey... You understand your father and I enjoy having all of you here, don't you?

BRYNN

You've been too generous. As soon as Alec and I...

GLORY

No pressure. We know what it's like. We struggled when you were Chloe's age.

BRYNN

I never noticed.

GLORY

Kids never do. Chloe will remember this as her first house. Soon, you and Alec will get back on your feet and we'll complain how we never see you.

BRYNN

I won't let that happen. Good night.

INT. WEBER HOUSE (GARAGE WORKSHOP) - NIGHT

Frank noodles on his laptop.

ON SCREEN: From a web browser menu, he navigates to "BOOKMARKS > HOUSE > GARDEN > DIRT". It opens an alphabetized list of porn websites. He scrolls down till he lands on "MIKEY'S WORLD".

INT. WEBER HOUSE (ALEC & BRYNN'S ROOM) - NIGHT

Alec works on his laptop in bed. Brynn slips in, closing the door softly. She looks over Alec's shoulder.

ALEC

Is she down?

BRYNN

Yeah. Is that Mikey's World?

ALEC

Yup.

BRYNN

Hmm. I'm going to shower.

INT. THE WEBER HOUSE (GLORY'S BATHROOM) - NIGHT

Glory moisturizes her legs. Dozens of faint straight-line scars show on her upper thighs.

INT. WEBER HOUSE (BRYNN'S BATHROOM) - NIGHT

-- Brynn retrieves an enema kit from the CVS bag.

-- Lies on her left side on the floor.

-- Flushes the toilet.

-- Showers one final time.

INT. SHEAR MANSION (BEDROOM) - NIGHT

Eva lifts her hair to allow Derek to unzip her new dress.

She turns to face him, letting the dress drop to the floor. She unbuttons Derek's shirt. Undoes his belt. PUSHES him to the bed. As he falls, his belt slides out of the loops into her grip. He strips his shirt away.

Eva high-heels her way to him and WHIPS him across the chest. He jumps. She WHIPS him again. PUSHES him to his back. CLIMBS atop him. REACHES between his legs and SQUEEZES. Derek winces in half pain, half pleasure.

Eva RUBS his face with hers, giving him a good whiff of where she's been. His eyes WIDEN.

-- FLASHBACK --

Eva recalls standing in her bathroom while the shower runs. She regards the bottle of cologne. Turns off the shower. Sprays her neck and wrists with Joey's cologne.

-- BACK TO SCENE --

Eva JAMS her fingers into Derek's mouth. He recognizes the scent and taste, but it can't be.

Eva TIGHTENS her grip between Derek's legs. He winces.

EVA
(whispers)
I forgive you.

INT. THE WEBER HOUSE - NIGHT

Brynn returns to a now dark bedroom. Alec lies with his back to her side of the bed. She spoons him. He detects remnants of Eva's perfume but misreads the source.

ALEC
Somebody wears some flowery aftershave.

BRYNN
Sorry. I thought I got it all. I must be nose-blind.

ALEC
Yeah.

BRYNN
This won't last forever.

She kisses his ear and neck. Reluctantly, he faces her.

They begin unhurried lovemaking. As passion intensifies, Alec puts Brynn on her back and half-planks above her. Eyes locked, she relinquishes control to him. He TURNS Brynn to her stomach. PULLS her hips upward and back.

She flinches. Relaxes. Savors the soft ache.

Alec's motions steadily gain intensity. He is assertive but not punishing. A look of peace comes over Brynn's face as she reclaims her husband. Then she remembers she has to work in the morning.

BRYNN (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Honey... Don't cum inside me.

INT. WEBER HOUSE (FRANK'S & GLORY'S BEDROOM) - SAME

Frank sleeps in the dark. Beside him, Glory studies the ceiling, her hand absently grazing her décolletage.

MUFFLED SOUNDS of Alec and Brynn penetrate the walls.

Glory INHALES DEEPLY and closes her eyes. Her fingernail DIGS into her skin until a drop of blood appears.

THE END