

The Sizzler

By Darrell A Pennington

3-29-25 (v.2)

SUPER - MARCH 1988

INT - TRAILER BEDROOM - DAY

70's rock blares as Vern, mid-30s, chubby, pretty blonde, exits her bathroom wrapped in a towel, and sits down at a makeup table. She takes a Kool cigarette from the pack, fires up, takes a long draw, sighs, and sets the lit cigarette in an ashtray. She applies makeup from containers scattered across the table. A red clown wig, clown nose and horn lay on the floor. Vern's face is revealed as she looks in the mirror and applies the last bit of eye makeup before gazing forlornly, making one final dab with the sponge.

VERN

That will do. Just fine.

Another long draw from the Kool, Vern rises to take the clown suit from her bed and wriggle it on, checking to make sure the 3 snaps in the crotch are fastened as she grabs the horn, wig and nose and drags herself to the living room.

INT - TRAILER LIVING ROOM - DAY

Vern grabs a pair of oversized red clown shoes from a chair, throws an oversized purse on a shoulder and walks outside to her pristine and shiny black with red interior 1983 Monte Carlo Super Sport.

EXT/INT - MONTE CARLO SUPER SPORT - DAY

Vern throws her shit into the car as she slides into the driver's seat and turns the key. 80's female rap blares as she throws the car into reverse, slams the gas before spinning out of her gravel driveway onto a blacktopped road.

She's doing 60 in a 35 and sings the song word for word as she barrels towards her destination, passing a sign 'Owensboro 13' followed by a sign that reads 'Leaving Calhoun - Hurry Back.'

EXT - STREET OUTSIDE 7718 HOUSE - DAY

Vern screeches to a halt in front of a 2-story traditional house. Tape Deck clock reads 2:47. The mailbox reads 7718. She exits her car, cigarette dangling from her mouth as she leans back into her car, ass out, to retrieve her items; recklessly shoving her blonde hair most of the way under the wig, putting the nose on a bit cock-eyed and hopping from foot to foot as she tries to get the shoes on. She awkwardly hurries up the drive, to the sidewalk to the porch and rings the door bell.

EXT/INT - 7718 HOUSE ENTRY WAY/PORCH - DAY

Lisa, a late 30's dour looking pretty brunette opens the door.

LISA

Finally! You were supposed to be here at 2:00. The kids are starting to demand cake and presents.

VERN

Demand?

LISA

Yes! You're late!

VERN

A little backhand pop to the mouth usually stops that in its tracks.

LISA

I'm sorry?

VERN

You know. (motions her backhand popping a kid. Squeaks her horn).

LISA

We're not a corporal punishment household.

VERN

Oh no. The government doesn't have to be involved. I always threatened to call CPS on my old man but they never did anything so you're good. Seriously, just a little pop (motions again, squeak).

LISA

I'll take that under advisement, I'm sure. Take your shoes off before you come in. The kids are in the backyard. Hurry up.

VERN

Uh, these shoes are a real pain. Can I just leave them on?

LISA

(huffing before yelling) Aaron? Aaron!

AARON (V.O.)

Yeah?

LISA

I need your help. Now.

Lisa smugly eyes Vern as she waits for Aaron.

INT - KITCHEN - DAY

A youthful, fit-looking late 30's 6'3" man wearing a Kiss The Cook chef's hat and matching apron over khaki pants and a buttoned all the way up golf shirt hurriedly finishes unloading a bought sandwich tray onto a party platter. Takes his hat and apron off and throws it on the counter.

He jogs in sock feet to the front door, almost slipping and falling.

EXT/INT - 7718 HOUSE ENTRY WAY/PORCH - DAY

Aaron's sorts himself as he arrives to the front door to help. He eyes Vern standing in the doorway - her form silhouetted by the sun, momentarily blinding him to Vern's appearance. He pauses next to Lisa.

AARON

What's going on?

As his vision focuses and he sees the clown in his door way the song WORD UP by Cameo sets the scene. Vern extends her hand to Aaron and notices an emerging bulge in his zipper area.

VERN

Vern. The Clown. Here for your party, sir.

LISA

Can you meet her at the gate? She refuses to take her shoes off.

VERN

Refuses? Just a little request to help a gal out. Girl to girl.

Aaron extends his hand.

AARON

Hi Vern, welcome. Pleased to meet you.

VERN

(shaking his hand) I see that.

LISA

Aaron? Aaron!

AARON

Yeah?

LISA

Can you meet her at the gate, please? The kids are getting impatient!

AARON

Oh. Yeah. Of course. Just head around the house, and I'll let you in the back yard.

EXT - BACKYARD - DAY

25+ kids and accompanying parents fill the backyard with a scene of barely controlled chaos. An inflatable slide, assorted lawn chairs, and miscellaneous tables dot the fenced-in space. A food table is littered with platters of sandwiches, bowls of chips and a drink station with a huge super hero sheet cake in the middle. Aaron arrives at the gate and opens it.

VERN

Nice setup.

AARON

Thank you, uh, was it Vern?

VERN

Yeah. Short for Bernice.

AARON

Bern?

VERN

Vern.

AARON

(blank look) uh...

VERN

My Dad had a lisp.

AARON

Uh, OK. That's great Vern. I'm glad you could make it to the party. You come highly recommended.

VERN

Yeah. My reputation pre-dates me for sure. I take pride in that. Not just as a clown either. I mean all areas - ALL AREAS - of my life are highly recommended. Ask any of the exes- they'll fill you in. I mean (looks at his zipper area), seemed like you might be interested.

INT - FAMILY ROOM - DAY

Lisa walks thru the space, looking for something lost. A family picture shows proud parents, 3 kids and a dog.

LISA

Aaron? Where is he? And where is that damn clown?

INT - GARAGE - DAY

Vern braces herself against the rear door (window rolled down) of a station wagon as Aaron grabs her hips from behind, trying his darndest for an Olympic performance. A lit Kool dangles from Vern's mouth. A sudden thrust rockets the cigarette into the back window of the shaggin wagon.

AARON

Do you like that, clown?

VERN

Do you mean 'Do you like that clown' like I'm an asshole or do I really like it?

AARON

Do you like that, Vern?

VERN

I really do. It's been awhile so this is a welcome bonus. I'm still getting a tip though, right? I really depend on tips. Not just the tip, if you know what I mean.

AARON

Can I ejaculate?

VERN

Honestly, I don't know about all that. Maybe add some prunes to your diet. That's something to take up with your doc I think.

AARON

I mean now.

VERN

Like right now? In me?

AARON

Yes. Please?

VERN

Sure, wear yourself out. I wasn't prepared for this, being a family party and all, so I'm not wearing any panties. Guess you already figured that out. Just saying, I might leave a snail trail when I take a seat.

Aaron picks up speed. A determination builds as his 'O' face materializes.

EXT - BACKYARD - DAY

LISA

Aaron? Vern? (paces the yard) Where is that clown?

AARON (V.O.)

Now?

VERN (V.O.)

I'm ready if you are.

INT - GARAGE - DAY

AARON

OK, here it comes.

VERN

Roger that.

AARON

Here it cooomes!

Scene ascends from the garage to the backyard and above before turning completely black. Clown horn squeaks heartily.

VERN (V.O.)

Good job.

OPENING CREDITS ROLL.

INT - PENNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Penny (21), a pretty blonde with long hair and a honey tan, lies in bed, pillow over her head, a Vans styled comforter lies disheveled around her body. A boom box plays Madonna, and random piles of clothes clutter the floor. An oversized framed picture of Penny and a boyfriend occupies the bedside table.

MOM (V.O.)

Penny? Time to get up and get ready for church I said. This is the second time!

PENNY

(removes the pillow from her face) Mom! I have to open today. This is the second time!

DAD (V.O.)

So you're not going to church with us?

PENNY

(returning the pillow to her face) Clearly...

INT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Brutus, a muscular black man in his late 20's wearing a wife-beater and coaches' shorts leans on the edge of his couch, energetically shouting instructions to a 3-year-old Dustin.

BRUTUS

Left buddy. No. Your left. Yeah - there you go. Jab. Jab. Jab. Keep the right tight to your body. Now right jab. Chin down. Don't expose it. That's a weak point.

Deidre (21), a cute red haired freckle faced girlfriend walks into the room, dressed for work.

DEIDRE

Make sure he gets a nap today.

BRUTUS

I will, baby.

DEIDRE

I'm serious, Brutus. He turns into a little shit when he doesn't get a nap. You're the parent too, not just his fightin' buddy.

BRUTUS

I told you I would. Chill.

DEIDRE

You tell me alot of things.

BRUTUS

You're gonna be late for work.

DEIDRE

(walks over to kiss Dustin) Nap today, buddy. No exceptions.

DUSTIN

What's an exception?

DEIDRE

Ask your father. He gets a lot of them.

EXT - SIZZLER PARKING LOT - DAY

Penny, Deidre and Vern sit in Penny's baby blue 65 Bel Air, sharing a joint. The tape deck reads 9:50 and plays 80's rock as Penny waves the smoke from the front of her face.

PENNY

So she busts in the room, she's all pissed 'cause I'm not going to church again and she says 'if you don't enroll in beauty school and start after Easter then you have to find your own place to live'. Can you believe that?

DEIDRE

That's next weekend.

PENNY

I know!

VERN

She's not wrong.

PENNY

Not today, Vern.

VERN

She's not. You're 21. Holy shit! You're not going to college. Why the hell would they just let you stay at home if you're not improving yourself?

PENNY

Improving myself?

VERN

Circle of life, princess. When Momma bird stops kicking her babies out of the nest, that's when you know society is fucked. Kids in their 20's and 30's living at home? Society can't survive that. Fly the coop or eat the poop - your decision.

DEIDRE

Oh shut the hell up Grandma. This ain't 1950.

INT - SIZZLER FREEZER ROOM - DAY

Ralph, early 60's grizzled East Coast transplant and owner of The Sizzler, and Johnny, a late 20's pudgy but cute lead cook stack boxes of beef along the back wall.

JOHNNY

I still don't know about Darin, boss. Something's off.

RALPH

Off?

JOHNNY

Yeah. Just not right. I can't put my finger on it though.

RALPH

Like he's queer?

JOHNNY

Could be. He sure smells good all the time. Gets manicures and wears penny loafers to work but that's not what I mean. I don't

know. I just can't quite put my finger on it. He just showed up out of nowhere. Doesn't talk a lot.

RALPH

Can he cook a steak to order?

JOHNNY

Can do - pretty good too.

RALPH

Does he show up when he's supposed to?

JOHNNY

Never called in once, boss.

RALPH

Then drop it. I don't care if he's queer or a democrat. We can't lose another good cook.

JOHNNY

Right boss. Right.

INT - BREAK ROOM - DAY

Employees buzz about the break room, getting ready for the onslaught to begin. Penny, Vern, Deidre take turns adjusting and primping in the mirror and making sure all of the waitressing essentials are at hand. A locker door stands opened and Deidre goes over and throws her cigarette case into the locker and closes it.

DEIDRE

Brutus's Aunt called last night 'ya'll still got kids eat free tomorrow' Yes Auntie Wanda, last Sunday of the month. Just like always.

PENNY

Who's the seater today?

VERN

Jackie

DEIDRE

Oh Lord - I'll get all the black people.

VERN

You want me to say something to her?

DEIDRE

It's OK, I'm pulling a double too so it'll be alright. Half the tips for twice the time. Yay.

PENNY

I bet if I told my Dad 'that's what a black person would tip' every time he left \$1 for all of us he'd improve his game.

DEIDRE

Make sure I'm around for that. I want to see that face.

VERN

OK gals - shake those money makers. Only 11 hours til closin time.

INT - SIZZLER LOBBY - NIGHT

A young male worker finishes up mopping the lobby and straightens a few salt and pepper shakers on his way to the back. An employee finishes unloading the salad bar and covering containers with saran wrap.

INT - SIZZLER GRILL SPACE - NIGHT

Johnny and Darin are finishing up cleaning the grill. Ralph pokes his head around the corner holding a money bag for deposit.

RALPH

Taking the deposit. See you fella's tomorrow. (a beat) Hey, good job tonight guys. Real ball buster day.

VERN (O.S.)

Boss, we busted it too! And we don't have balls, boss.

RALPH (yelling)

Yeah - really worked those tits off Vern, good job.

VERN (V.O.)

Here for ya, boss!

RALPH

Anyway - we haven't been that busy all year. Appreciate ya.

DARIN

(terrible Bronx accent) Fuh ged about it, Boss.

Ralph starts to get angry. The relaxes but stares a hole through Darin. Glare over, he motions to Johnny, half playful, half serious.

RALPH

Smack him with a spatula.

INT - BREAK ROOM - NIGHT

A tired collective of employees prepares to leave for the night. People mill about, finish up with their lockers, and leave the break room, eventually leaving Penny, Vern, and Deidre.

PENNY

Hey, let's go hang out at the stripper pits tonight for a bit. I have a joint left.

DEIDRE

I can't. I promised Brutus I'd get home as soon as I can.

PENNY

You're never fun anymore.

DEIDRE

I have responsibilities, Penny! A kid and a boyfriend. I don't have someone buying my food, washing my clothes and paying all the bills. I gotta do that shit. Ever since we graduated.

PENNY

Hey....chill. I was kidding. Jesus, lighten up. How long you been bottling that up?

VERN

Day after graduation sounds like.

PENNY

Sure does.

DEIDRE

I'm sorry.

PENNY

I hope so.

DEIDRE

Really, I am. I shouldn't have said that. Honestly, I'm just jealous so just ignore jealous Jenny over here.

PENNY

OK. (a beat) I just wanted to hang out. We haven't hung out since Christmas. I miss my best friend.

DEIDRE

I know. But seriously, Penny. I have a kid and might as well have a husband for all the shit I have to put up with. I just don't have the time. Lord knows I wish I did.

PENNY

So let's make some time. You too, Vern.

VERN

I'm in. Got a great party story from yesterday.

PENNY

See. The three musketeers ride again. Just call Brutus and tell him something. I needed you to come over so I don't have to watch Benny Hill with my Dad.

VERN

You love watching Benny Hill with your Dad.

PENNY

Yeah - but he's black, he'll want you to help me out.

DEIDRE

Brutus loves Benny Hill too! He'd probably want to come over and join.

PENNY

Come on girl...work with me. Just a little (holds up two fingers barely apart)

DEIDRE

Oh OK!

PENNY / VERN

Yes!

DEIDRE

Let me run home and get changed and ya'll pick me up in 45 minutes.

PENNY

45 minutes?

DEIDRE

Give me time to get Brutus to say yes....

VERN

45 minutes? Damn. He got a pill for that or somethin'?

DARIN

(poking his head in) Hey ladies.

DEIDRE

Yes?

DARIN

Sorry. Didn't mean to interrupt.

VERN

Then why did you?

PENNY

Vern?!

VERN

What? He said he interrupted. Rude!

DARIN

Vern's right. Ralph forgot he was gonna give me a ride home and Johnny says he can't cuz he's gotta get Hardees before they close.

DEIDRE

Why can't you just go with him to Hardees?

DARIN

That's what I said.

DEIDRE

And?

DARIN

He mumbled something about a roast beef and cheddar and Big Gulp and then just headed out.

VERN

That's Arby's and 7-11, not Hardees. Are you special?

PENNY

Vern!

VERN

What? We've all asked. He wears Penny loafers to cook at a steak house and now he doesn't know Hardees is a Moose Cup and 7-11 is Big Gulp? A pattern is developing. You rode the short bus, didn't you Darin.

PENNY

Vern!

DEIDRE

Most people do know roast beef and cheddar is Arby's.

DARIN

Sorry, ladies. I'm honestly not entirely sure what he said. Just seemed like he didn't want me tagging along and he said to ask Penny.

PENNY

Me?

DARIN

Yeah.

PENNY

Why me?

DARIN

He said you were the nicest...

DEIDRE

Nigga, please!

VERN

Do you have to ask Brutus if it is OK to say that?

DEIDRE

Not anymore.

VERN

Darin, just cut the bullshit. First beef and cheddar and now he says Penny is the nicest? Right.

PENNY

(blushing) Vern!

VERN

I mean, I can say it. Can't I? You can't say shit mutherfucker, so don't even let it cross your retard mind.

DARIN

No ma'am. But he really did say that. And I said 'Well, that's great cuz she's also the prettiest'.

VERN

Get the fuck out! Now!

PENNY

Vern?!

VERN

What? Oh shit.

Vern shoots a glance to Deidre, surprised in the knowledge that Penny might like Darin.

DEIDRE

Don't look at me.

PENNY

Ignore them, please? They're clearly suffering from the rigors of a double shift. Yes, I'll give you a ride. Just give me a few minutes. It's unlocked. I'll meet ya out there.

DARIN

You're the best!

EXT / INT - PARKING LOT SIZZLER PENNY'S CAR - NIGHT

Darin opens the passenger door and gets in. He looks in the rearview mirror to adjust his hair, give his teeth a once over and give himself a big smarmy smile before opening the glove compartment and rifling through its contents. A single felt dice, an ice scraper, a one hitter, a greeting card in an envelope with PENNY and hearts and flowers handwritten on the front.

DARIN

What's this?

Darin opens the card and reads it a moment before reading out loud

DARIN

Penny, I am gonna be in town for Easter. I hope to see you at church. Maybe we can talk. I've missed you. Darrell

He turns the card over before stuffing it back in the envelope.

DARIN

I've missed you. Yeah, I bet you have. Darrell.

Crumples the envelope and rolls down the window and shoots it like a basketball into the nearby dumpster. Swish.

DARIN

I score Darrell. Darin.

Rummages more in the glove compartment. Finds a half container of Tic Tacs that he empties into his mouth and chews as he tosses the container towards the dumpster. It falls short. He pulls out his wallet to confirm a condom is available. He rolls up the window and looks towards the back door of the restaurant.

INT - BREAK ROOM SIZZLER - NIGHT

VERN

Ok, since Deidre's gonna get poled by Brutus for 45 minutes that gives me enough time to go home and take a shit.

PENNY

Gross

VERN

Gross would be if I took a shit here with those tampon clogged pipes having to deal with this monster and his children.

PENNY

Yuck!

VERN

Yeah, yuck. Trust me, I speak from experience. That one big ass turd that's like 3 foot long and then three little midget turds.

DEIDRE

She don't lie.

PENNY

Well, thanks for giving me all the details.

VERN

You're welcome. And you're welcome for me going home to shit. So yeah, thank you's are in order, I'd say.

The three gather in the middle of the room and cover each other's hand extended between them.

PENNY

OK, the Three Musketeers ride again!

EXT - PARKING LOT SIZZER - NIGHT

Penny can be seen fighting off Darin through steamed-up windows. Her head lurches forward as if being pushed towards Darin's crotch. Deidre and Vern are seen leaving the back door, Vern locking it and the two wave and depart for their own cars. Penny pushes Darin back violently and elbows him in the nose, blood spurting everywhere. She holds her keys up in the moonlight to see which is the ignition key. Deidre and Vern get in their cars at the same time. All three insert their keys, turn. Click. No ignition. Penny looks over at Darin as he lunges towards her.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT - HALLWAY OUTSIDE PENNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Penny's mom knocks on the door. Pauses all of 2 seconds and knocks louder.

PEGGY

Penny, get up! The beauty school opens at 7:30 and I want you there as soon as it opens. Not one minute later.

No response

PEGGY (con't)

Classes start one week after registration. Do you hear me?
Penelope Lynn? Classes start in one week. Tick tock little girl.

Walks down the hallway towards the kitchen.

PEGGY (con't)

7:30. On the nose. Early bird gets the worm, young lady.

INT - PENNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

A groggy and disoriented Penny and Deidre lay in Penny's bed. Seconds pass as they both rouse themselves from a deep sleep, adjusting their eyes to their environment.

DEIDRE

What the fuck? Your mom is cranky in the morning.

PENNY

No shit.

DEIDRE

I don't remember even coming here.

PENNY

Me either.

Deidre props herself up on both elbows and looks around. Notices the clothes she's wearing. Looks at Penny.

DEIDRE

FUCK!

PENNY

Chill. Cranky won't cover it if she hears that.

DEIDRE

We're still wearing our work clothes.

PENNY

(looks down) FUCK!

DEIDRE

Goddamn, Brutus is gonna be all over my ass!

Deidre scrambles out of bed, crawling over Penny to get out.

PENNY

Ouch. Watch the boobs.

DEIDRE

Sorry.

Deidre stands in the middle of the bedroom, bewildered, looking around for non-existent answers. She opens the bedroom door, gingerly peeking down the hallway.

INT - PENNY'S HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

Peggy finishes making fried eggs and bacon, sliding the last of the breakfast items from a large skillet onto a platter with toast and more bacon and eggs. Sits it on the middle of the table. Gary and Vern are having a cup of coffee.

VERN

Yeah, trust me, the clown business is no joke. I have a clown convention Wednesday and if it is anything like last year, well it's gonna be a doozy. That's all I can say.

GARY

Well, I'll be. Never would have guessed clowning - is that what you called it?

VERN

Yessir. That's what the professionals call it.

GARY

Can you believe that Peggy? This clowning is such a serious endeavor.

PEGGY

Hard to believe.

VERN

It's serious alright. These little fuckers, sorry. These little kids have become so entitled. If there's no clown, it's really not a birthday party these days. Not that I'm complaining, I do pretty good. And there are some perks from the job, if you know what I mean.

GARY

I don't.

VERN

Well, I probably shouldn't say but...

Penny and Deidre enter the kitchen gingerly.

PEGGY

Well, hi Deidre. I thought only Vern came home with Penny last night.

Penny and Deidre look at Vern, who raises her cup of coffee to greet them.

DEIDRE

Hi, Mrs. Pennington. Mr. Pennington.

VERN

Have a seat, girls. Your Mom just finished making breakfast. I'm sure we're all famished.

PEGGY

What made you all decide to come back here last night?

PENNY

Hey Vern, are you ready? Deidre has to get home.

VERN

Your mom just made breakfast. It would be rude not to eat it.

PEGGY

Of course. Girls, sit down. There's plenty for everyone.

DEIDRE.

Vern, I got to go. Now.

The three exit the house for Penny's car.

PEGGY

(yelling after them) Beauty school!

INT - PENNYS CAR - DAY

Penny drives back to The Sizzler to take Deidre and Vern to their cars.

VERN

Can we at least stop at McDonalds? My blood sugar is low.

PENNY

Do you remember anything from last night?

VERN

(ponders) I really don't. Deidre and I left at the same time. I remember that. I was gonna take a big shit. By the way, I am so sorry about your toilet. I woke up to that familiar rumble and there was no way I wasn't gonna have a clogger. I warned your Dad ahead of time and he said it was alright. He's so nice. I'm gonna have to get one of those plungers for my house!

DEIDRE

I remember looking over at your car and seeing the windows completely fogged up, so I knew you and Darin were having some fun.

PENNY

I don't remember any of that. I remember getting in the car and then, nothing. Waking up this morning to Monding Morning Mom being a bitch.

VERN

Man, that was some great weed. We need that hookup again.

Penny reflexively feels her front shirt pocket. Pulls out a joint.

PENNY

We didn't smoke the weed.

VERN

What? Of course we did. Classic Three Musketeers, getting wasted and not remembering anything.

PENNY

Vern, I'm telling you. This is the only joint I had. We didn't smoke shit.

DEIDRE

Then why can't we remember anything? And why are we still wearing...

VERN

There's a McDonalds. Pull in.

Penny pulls in and heads to the drive-thru order menu, pulling up so Vern can order.

EMPLOYEE (O.S.)

What can I get you this morning?

VERN

Can I get a hotcakes platter? Extra syrup and butter and a large Dr. Pepper. Make that a diet. And an extra hash brown. Extra ketchup too, please.

EMPLOYEE (O.S.)

That'll be four seventy four. Pull up to the second window please.

VERN

My God, nearly five dollars for a small breakfast. Thanks, Reagan.

PENNY

It's no wonder you have these monster shits.

VERN

Lack of fiber, actually. It all builds up like some sort of concrete mixer in there. That's how the doc described it.

DEIDRE

You went to the doctor because of your massive shits?

VERN

Hey, you gotta be in tune with your body. The first time - it actually scared the shit out of me. Get it??

Penny pulls up to the drive thru and Vern hands the employee a five dollar bill from the back seat. She takes the change and sack of food.

PENNY

I don't think the pancake platter and extra hash brown has much fiber.

VERN

I don't like beans. Baked are pretty good but otherwise, no beans. Once we figured it out, I just chug some exlax once a week or so and I've been pretty regular since then. At least twice a week.

DEIDRE

Twice a week is not regular!

Penny drives off and resumes the journey to The Sizzler. Pulls into the parking lot and parks next to Deidre and Vern's cars.

VERN

Why is my trunk popped?

The girls get out of the car and walk to the trunk and open it all the way. A single penny loafer with dots of blood on it are in the trunk, along with clown paraphernalia, and a Take Hart '88 campaign yard sign for Gary Hart. A black ledger styled book is mostly covered by the sign.

VERN

That's not mine! That's my Dad's. I'm more of a Gore gal. That guy is going places you know. A real serious contender. And not even 40!

PENNY

That's Darin's.

DEIDRE

There's blood on it.

Deidre reaches in to pull out the shoe. Penny smacks her hand hard.

DEIDRE

Hey! That hurt bitch.

PENNY

Don't touch it, dumbass.

VERN

Why?

PENNY

Don't be a clown now Vern, it's not the time.

VERN

I'm serious.

PENNY

Fingerprints! Clearly, something bad has happened.

VERN

What?

PENNY

Darin's blood covered shoe is in your trunk. We can't remember shit after getting off work and...

VERN

I didn't put it there!

PENNY

How do you know? None of us remembers a thing from leaving work to waking up. Who the fuck knows what happened?

VERN

And it's in my fucking trunk. (slams the trunk shut) What the fuck are we gonna do? I didn't do this shit. We gotta figure this out.

DEIDRE

I'd like to figure it out with you guys but I got some serious bitching coming when I get home, and the later it takes me to get home, the more serious it's gonna be.

Deidre gets her keys out of her purse and starts towards her car. Penny grabs her arm.

PENNY

Hold on. Vern's right. We gotta figure at least a few things out. What are you going to say to Brutus?

DEIDRE

I have no idea.

PENNY

Exactly. Let's walk through this. OK, I got in the car with Darin, I remember that. He had my glove compartment open, and I was asking him what he was doing.

VERN

Well, you must of forgot the good stuff because Deidre's right, your car windows were completely fogged up.

Flashback

EXT - SIZZLE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Vern and Deidre exit the back door of Sizzler. Vern puts the key in to lock the door.

DEIDRE

Damn, looks like you nailed it. Her damn windows are already fogged up. Couldn't even wait to get to his house.

VERN

Good for her! Maybe this will help her move past Darrell.

DEIDRE

Yeah right.

VERN

It's possible.

DEIDRE

Givin' up Kools and Clowns is possible too. But you ain't doing neither.

VERN

I might. The clowns at least.

DEIDRE

Nigga please.

VERN

So, you're really allowed to say that? You got the pass because of Brutus?

DEIDRE

I mean, it helps.

VERN

That's so cool. I wish I had a black boyfriend.

DEIDRE

Nigga please. Ain't no black guys playing a clown.

VERN

I got fucked by a non clown Saturday. By the party host. Aaron. Not black though. He was white, alright. Not girthy by any means. Whitest dude ever, really. Announced his cumshot, actually.

End flashback.

EXT - SIZZLER PARKING LOT - DAY

PENNY

You fucked a non-clown?

VERN

I'll tell you all about it later.

DEIDRE

So what are we gonna do?

INT - PENNYS CAR - DAY

Penny pulls into the driveway of Deidre's house and puts the car in park. She and Deidre take a moment of silence before Penny looks at Deidre.

PENNY

All good?

DEIDRE

No.

PENNY

You'll be fine. Tell me one more time. (adopts a Brutus tone) Damn girl, where you been? Comin' all up in here this time of a day without even a goddamn call? I ain't standing for this shit!

EXT/INT - FRONT PORCH AND LIVING ROOM - DAY

Deidre slowly and guardedly unlocks the front door and steps into the house, taking one last look at Penny and waving before fully entering. Brutus is on the couch, replicating the scene from yesterday exactly.

BRUTUS

Jab, little man...

Brutus hears the door close and turns his attention to Deidre. He gets up from the couch and walks towards Deidre purposefully.

BRUTUS

Hey baby. You OK? Everything OK?

DEIDRE

What?

BRUTUS

Are you OK?

DEIDRE

Well yeah. Why?

BRUTUS

Well you don't usually come home from work before it even starts.
Are you sick?

DEIDRE

No, I'm not sick. Why would you think I'm sick?

BRUTUS

Work hasn't even started yet.

DEIDRE

I'm coming home from work, Brutus.

BRUTUS

What?

DEIDRE

What??? What!

Brustus is confused. He glances at Dustin furtively before returning his attention to Deidre.

BRUTUS

Baby, are you fuckin with me? I hit a blunt this mornin'.
Little wake and bake.

DEIDRE

A little wake and bake, huh?

BRUTUS

Yeah. No biggie. Just to get in my groove for training day. Big
match this week, baby! Dustin really can take a big step up if he
knocks this little mutherfucker out.

DEIDRE

Brutus, I didn't come home from work last night. Are you telling me
you failed to notice this? Now you don't notice me when I'm NOT
here?

BRUTUS

Quit playin', babe.

DEIDRE

Nigga, please.

An uncomfortable silence. Dustin looks up to the pair.

BRUTUS

Hey, hey, hey. It's good but not to me.

DEIDRE

You're right. I'm so sorry. I won't do it ever again. Seriously.

They embrace and slowly turn the embrace into a passionate kiss. Dustin impatiently waits, hitting his head with his gloves.

DUSTIN

Mommy, leave him alone. We have training.

DEIDRE

Go to your room, Dustin.

DUSTIN

Why?

BRUTUS

Do what your mother tells you, Dustin.

INT - DEIDRE'S BATHROOM - DAY

Deidre showers, her work clothes in a pile in the corner as Brutus sits topless on the toilet, shorts around his ankles.

DEIDRE

Dustin didn't get a nap, did he?

BRUTUS

Why would you say that?

DEIDRE

Did he?

BRUTUS

No.

DEIDRE

I knew it! Brutus, you promised. I asked nice and everything.

BRUTUS

I'm sorry baby. Really. But training was going so good so we just powered through and went to bed early. Same amount of time so same difference, right?

DEIDRE

No, Brutus, it isn't the same difference. I've told you this hundreds of times. He needs a break in the middle of the day to rest and recharge his brain. It's still growing and he needs rest intervals. It's all in the book I asked you to read when I got pregnant. But did you? Of course not.

BRUTUS

Come on now. That's in the past. He was training so good. He didn't want to stop and take no nap.

DEIDRE

Of course not! He's three!

BRUTUS

This is a big match this week, baby. No lie. He beats this punk's ass and he goes to number one contender. He could get a title match.

DEIDRE

Brutus, he's three. And this shit is made up. It's just your buddies and other people allergic to work puttin' their kids or friends' kids in a boxing ring and watching them slug it out with gloves they can barely lift. He's not actually a boxer.

BRUTUS

Baby, why would you say that? Boxing. You know this is MMA. Mixed martial arts, baby. I've told you this a thousand times. These Tough Guy contests are taking off all over, baby. We are the first 3-7 year old MMA youth organization in the U-S-A baby! Right here in Owensboro, Kentucky.

DEIDRE

Then why is he wearing boxing gloves?

Brutus shakes his head dejectedly, wraps toilet paper around his hand. Stands up, pulling his shorts back up and flushes the toilet.

DEIDRE

Brutus!

INT - SIZZLER BREAK ROOM - DAY

Vern, Deidre and Penny huddle at a table in the far corner of the room. Vern is visibly nervous, sucking down a Kool in one draw and smashing it violently in the ashtray.

VERN

Why me? I'm serious - why fucking me?

PENNY

Quit crying. We don't know what happened. It could have been any of us.

DEIDRE

Wasn't me. Mighta been ya'll but it wasn't me.

PENNY

Or none of us. Just everyone chill the fuck out and walk through this again.

DEIDRE

It's a waste of time Penny. I've wracked my brain over and over and don't remember shit.

VERN

Same.

PENNY

Goddamit.

Ralph pokes his head in the break room.

RALPH

Penny?

PENNY

Yeah?

RALPH

Darin's landlord called in, wanted to know when was the last time we saw him. I told them I'd ask you and let him know.

PENNY

What? How the fuck would I know? Why would you ask me?

RALPH

Cuz you took him home after work last night.

PENNY

No I didn't. Who said that? That's completely false.

RALPH

Johnny. Said you took him home because I forgot to.

PENNY

Well, I didn't. I don't know why he would say that.

Flashback.

As Darin exits the back door and heads towards Penny's car, Johnny walks into the break room.

VERN

Thanks for fucking up our night, numbnuts!

PENNY

Vern! Don't mind her. It's fine. Why didn't you want to take him home though?

JOHNNY

I don't know. Something's not right with him. I just can't put my finger on it. He weirds me out.

PENNY

Well, thanks for pushing him off on me.

JOHNNY

Not like that. Ralph says he might be queer. Or a democrat. I don't know but my dad hates me enough already. I don't need to be

seen with no penny loafer wearing queer democrats. Not in this town. Ol' Reverend Ronnie would hear about it first thing.

Penny walks over to hug Johnny.

PENNY

Your dad doesn't hate you. You're sweet.

JOHNNY

He knows that.

Penny takes Johnny's pudgy face in her hands and lovingly kisses him on the forehead.

PENNY

That's not what I mean.

JOHNNY

Well, I can't take no chances. I told him to ask you. I'm sorry.

PENNY

It's no big deal. Hey, you want to meet out at the stripper pits? Smoke a joint with us.

Vern clears her throat. Penny shoots a glare at her. Johnny looks at Vern. Vern stares him in the eyes before looking away.

JOHNNY

Nah, I got shit to do. Hey, you gonna be at the beauty school first thing Monday.

PENNY

My mom will make sure of it.

JOHNNY

Great. See you then.

End flashback.

RALPH

OK, OK. I'll just tell the landlord I was mistakin'.

PENNY

Please do! And tell me what he says.

RALPH

What?

PENNY

I want to know what he says when you tell him you were mistaken.

RALPH

Tough shit. You wanna know, you call him yourself. Otherwise I'll take care of it as I see fit.

VERN

Thanks boss, We trust you. She's just a little out of it still this morning. We got super fucked up last night and can't remember anything.

PENNY/DEIDRE

VERN!

RALPH

Vern, aren't you a little old to be hanging out with these kids?

PENNY

We're not kids!

RALPH

You still live at home with mommy and daddy. You're a kid.

VERN

He's got a point.

DEIDRE

I don't still live at home!

RALPH

You have a three year old. Kid having a kid retards your growth. You're still a kid emotionally.

VERN

Ouch. That hits a little close to home.

PENNY/DEIDRE

VERN!

INT - SIZZLER FOOD STATION - DAY

Penny walks up to take two orders ready to be delivered.

JOHNNY

I didn't see you this morning.

PENNY

I know. Rough morning. You don't even want to know.

JOHNNY

Hey, I just want to apologize again about last night. I should have just taken him myself.

PENNY

Don't be silly. Not a big deal. And anyway I didn't have to take him.

JOHNNY

Really? How'd he get home?

PENNY

Honestly, I don't know. He was going through shit in my glove compartment and we kinda got in a fight.

JOHNNY

What? He hit you? That mutherfucker.

PENNY

No, no, no. Just yelling. He got mad and got out and walked home I guess.

JOHNNY

So, that's not from him?

Johnny points at the inside of Penny's arm. A large scratch from her bicep to her forearm shows through her workshirt. Penny looks at it, startled, noticing it for the first time. Stammers a response.

PENNY

This? Oh Lord, no.

JOHNNY

You didn't have it last night.

PENNY

What?

JOHNNY

Last night. It wasn't there before we left work.

Penny looks at the scratch. Returns a blank look to Johnny. Pauses before another stammer.

PENNY

Oh, yeah. It happened at the stripper pits. I'm such a klutz.

JOHNNY

No, you're not. You're the most graceful thing around here. You're the only one I know of who's never dropped a tray of food, spilled drinks, broken dishes. Everyone knows that. Ralph tells us all the time when we fuck up.

PENNY

Boy, not lately! These last few days have been one klutzy thing after another. I think I'm getting vertigo.

JOHNNY

I don't think you get vertigo.

PENNY

Well you're not born with it!

JOHNNY

Either you have it or you don't. You don't get it. Like catching a cold.

PENNY

Is that medically proven? I think I am getting it. Just noticed it a few days ago actually. Get up too fast, dizzy. Bend over, dizzy.

JOHNNY

That's blood pressure.

PENNY

Damn Johnny. Are you going to med school at night? Well, my mom always said I was some sort of medical marvel so now I guess I know what she means. So anyway, yeah seems like I'm getting vertigo.

JOHNNY

You need to get that checked out.

PENNY

Will do, doc.

EXT - EMPLOYEE PARKING LOT SIZZLER - DAY

Penny, Vern and Deidre huddle outside for a 10-minute break, shivering as a cool breeze blows through. Penny and Vern smoke a Kool and Deidre tries to warm herself by rubbing her arms.

DEIDRE

What the fuck you thinking?

VERN

Don't ride my ass. He had me flustered. You know I don't do well with silences. I had to say something.

DEIDRE

He wasn't even talking to you.

PENNY

It's fine. Actually might have helped.

DEIDRE

And how is that?

Penny shows the scratch on her arm.

PENNY

Johnny asked me about this. I didn't even know I had it.

VERN

Damn girl. What happened?

PENNY

Darin tried to rape me. I think.

DEIDRE

What?

PENNY

I don't know for sure. But I think so.

VERN

I don't want to be one of those bitches, but I think you'd know if he was trying to rape you.

PENNY

We can't remember anything, bitch!

VERN

Oh yeah. Of course. Of course. But really, I wasn't trying to be one of those blame the victim bitches. I hate those bitches, believe me. Believe me. Come across too many of them at clown conventions over the years.

PENNY

When I saw the scratch, a scene flashed through my head. I could see Darin trying to attack me. He had been going through shit in the glove compartment and when I got in I blasted him. What the fuck are you doing? And he said 'What I've been waiting to do since I got in this town'.

DEIDRE

What?!

PENNY

I think. I don't know. Fuck.

VERN

Damn. are you OK, Penny?

PENNY

Yes. Fine. He DIDN'T rape me. I know that.

Deidre touches Penny's arm lovingly. Moves in for a hug.

DEIDRE

I'm sorry, girl.

Vern joins in for a bear hug.

VERN

I love you guys.

Penny puts a stop to the emotions. Disentangles herself from the hug.

PENNY

So, we got to get our story straight. I told Johnny it happened at the stripper pits last night. So just like we said, we all three went to the stripper pits after work. You decided to not go home and change. And you decided to take a shit here. And we all three went together in my car. And we were out so late and you two were more fucked up than me so I just took you all to my house to sleep it off and then brought you back in the morning to pick up your cars.

DEIDRE

You took me home. I didn't get the car so we could practice what I was saying to Brutus.

PENNY

Fuck.

VERN

Just say your car wouldn't start. It didn't last night.

A sudden realization dawns on Deidre and Vern.

DEIDRE

That's right! I forgot that. How did you know?

VERN

Mine wouldn't start either.

PENNY

Really? Neither of your cars would start? Im-fucking-possible.

DEIDRE/VERN

Why?

PENNY

Mine wouldn't either!

VERN

Get the fuck outta here!

Ralph pokes his head outside.

RALPH

Hey Princesses. 10 minutes was 8 minutes ago.

VERN

We're on our period, boss! Give us a break

PENNY/DEIDRE

What?

VERN

I don't know.

DEIDRE

We'll be right in Ralph. Thanks for being patient.

RALPH

Patience is up in 60 seconds.

Ralph heads back inside.

VERN

Don't even say it. I'm stressed. This is what you get.

PENNY

Everyone got it? That's the story.

VERN

What about the shoe?

DEIDRE

Fuck. The shoe.

VERN

Yeah, the shoe. I have a fucking bloody penny loafer from a rapist in my trunk. What are we doing about that one?

Jackie, the seating hostess, pokes her head outside.

JACKIE

Vern, I just seated in your section. Asked for you specifically.

VERN

For me?

JACKIE

Yeah, some tall guy. Named Aaron. He's kinda cute.

Penny and Deidre look at each other.

PENNY / DEIDRE

Aaron, huh?

VERN

The party host!

PENNY

That you fucked??

VERN

Technically, he fucked me. I let him. Not like Darin or anything.

PENNY/ DEIDRE

Vern!

INT - SIZZLER BREAK ROOM - DAY

Vern pops in the breakroom, looks in full length mirror. Adjusts her clothes. Hair. Applies lip gloss. Surveys herself and is satisfied.

Flashback

INT - AARON'S GARAGE - DAY

Camera shows Vern bracing against the station wagon rear end, window down. Vern's Kool dangles from her mouth and a trail of smoke rise to the car ceiling. Suddenly she thrusts forward and the cigarette flies into the back seat, landing on the leather upholstery, burning a hole in it.

End flashback.

INT - SIZZLER BREAK ROOM - DAY

Vern exits the break room with a big smile on her face.

INT - SIZZLER DINING ROOM - DAY

Vern arrives at a table seated for a family of five. Big frown on her face as Aaorn looks up.

AARON

Vern!

Vern surveys the table. Lisa is there along with three kids, ages 7, 9, 11. She moves her gaze from face to face until she lands on Aaron. A big smile dominates his face. Vern attempts a weak smile back.

VERN

Hi.

AARON

We asked for you specifically.

VERN

So I was told.

AARON

You remember Lisa. This is Emmie, Carson and Kate. You all remember Vern? The party clown.

VERN

Hi guys.

No verbal response. Vern looks at Lisa who looks down at her menu. Kate waives meekly.

AARON

I remember you told me you worked here and I've always wanted to try it. But with a strict vegetarian wife, no steakhouses for us. She didn't mind the kill but no animal blood ever passed her thin little lips.

VERN

What changed??

Aaron and Lisa look at each other. Lisa is horrified. Aaron cracks up.

LISA

Oh Lord no.

AARON

Lisa? Oh no, she's my sister.

VERN

Sister?

AARON

Sister-in-law. Carries twin. My deceased wife. Lisa is helping me get back on my feet with the kids and trying to make everything as

smooth as possible for a few more weeks before we have to let her go and get back to her own life.

Vern's million-dollar smile reappears.

VERN

Oh! I'm so happy to hear that.

The kids all look at Vern as if she has two heads.

VERN

Oh, no! I'm not happy to hear about your mom kicking the bucket. Passing away. Just about Lisa leaving soon.

Lisa looks disgusted.

VERN

I mean that she's able to leave soon. That means you must be getting back on track and all. Ready to face life alone. Well not alone of course. You all got each other. And the dog. I just mean it must be getting better for you if Lisa is able to leave soon. How soon?

AARON

That party Saturday sure helped, I can tell you that.

Aaron winks at Vern. Vern scans the table. Indiscreetly winks back.

VERN

Life of the party! That's a clown's job.

LISA

Your life's calling. Apparently.

AARON

So I love sloppy seconds. What do you recommend?

VERN

Excuse me?

AARON

Sloppy seconds. That's what we call it at my house. I was always asking Carrie for sloppy seconds. What do you recommend?

VERN

You asked your dead wife for sloppy seconds? I mean, when she was alive of course.

AARON

All the time. Once a month was all I got. If I was lucky. Hard to find a vegetarian dish you want seconds from, quite honestly. Much less get sloppy with them. So what does the Sizzler have that tastes so great I'm gonna wanna get seconds and get all sloppy with it?

VERN

Mmm. That is a tough one.

LISA

(scanning the restaurant) I bet.

VERN

Well, I mean everything is so good really. If I was gonna get seconds it would definitely be some pie. Sweetest pie in town. The coconut cream with meringue. So yeah, I think I would want seconds from that. Pie. Get really sloppy with it.

EXT - SIZZLER PARKING LOT - DAY

Aaron has Vern braced up against the back of the station wagon, the car mostly hidden on the other side of the dumpster. Her skirt is pushed up and her panty hose down around her ankles. Aaron is behind her. She bobs back and forth to a steady rhythm.

AARON

I've been thinking about you ever since the party.

VERN

I see that.

AARON

Have you been thinking about me?

VERN

I was just telling my co-workers all about you, actually. Well, not ALL about you. I hardly know anything about you.

AARON

I have a thing for clowns. Does that seem weird?

VERN

Yeah. I think by the strict definition of weird, this would be the textbook example a lot of people would think of.

AARON

Is it weird that I'd like to be with you in your clown outfit?

VERN

Based on what I know about you, which frankly, as I said, isn't alot, I'd say I expect it.

AARON

Does that turn you off?

VERN

Apparently not.

AARON

Can I now?

VERN

Fire away, sport.

AARON

Here I come!

Aaron and Vern sit on the laid down back door of the station wagon. Vern reaches in the pocket of her waitressing apron and pulls out two Kools, one in pretty bad shape. Offers good one to Aaron.

AARON

No thanks. Quit light years ago.

VERN

Light years huh?

Aaron looks at Vern as if he wants to reveal something. Pauses. Pulls out a clowns nose and puts it on Verns nose.

AARON

Yeah, quite a while back.

Vern nonverbally accepts the gift from Aaron without mentioning it. There's an awkward dance of body language and eye contact. Vern breaks the silence.

VERN

Kind of an odd parking spot choice.

AARON

Yeah, Lisa said the same thing. I'm weird so she overlooks most of my idiosyncrasies. She sort of used to them, I guess. I picked this spot. Hoping.

VERN

Really? You tag a lot of waitresses by the parking lot dumpster?

AARON

I wouldn't say a lot. (pause as Vern looks askance at Aaron)
You're my first! My first since Carrie died as well.

VERN

Really? I'm flattered! I've always wanted to be the rebound lay.

AARON

You're my second total.

VERN

Oh, come on.

AARON

Really. Just Carrie and you since I first landed here.

VERN

Landed here?

AARON

In Owensboro. Figure of speech. I told you, I'm weird.

VERN

I like weird.

AARON

I'm glad. Girls that like weird are hard to find. Had to go through hundreds in my time here.

Vern gives Aaron a friendly, playful punch on the arm like a 12-year-old boy.

VERN

And I'm honored! Just your second ever huh? I don't think I've

ever been anyone's second. And I have to say, you keep the station wagon impeccably clean. We had a station wagon growing up. I can't even begin to tell you the unidentified biospheres that were growing in the back of that thing.

AARON

My captain always stressed pride of ownership and was a real task master. Got time to lean, got time to clean he would yell.

VERN

Sounds like our bosses went to the same training for asshole bosses. He was in the military too. I think. Actually, I have no idea.

AARON

Can I see you again. Go do something fun? I think you all call it a 'proper date'.

VERN

You really are weird aren't you? Like a grown up virgin. But with three kids and a dead wife.

AARON

Maybe we could go have a picnic out at the stripper pits. I know you love that place.

VERN

How do you know that?

Aaron pauses. Unsure how to answer. Gathers himself and replies confidently.

AARON

It just seems like a place you'd like.

VERN

That would be nice. No one's ever taken me on a picnic. Can I kiss you?

AARON

Oh, nows not a good time.

Vern looks disappointed and rejected.

AARON

I have a terrible cold.

Aaron wraps his arm around Vern and brings her in tight to a warm and affectionate embrace. Vern looks at Aaron in the eyes. Takes the clown nose off and means to put it in her apron pocket. She unknowingly drops it on the ground. It rolls to right under the edge of the dumpster.

INT - SIZZLER BREAK ROOM - NIGHT

PENNY

What a slut!

VERN

Be who you self. That's my philosophy!

DEIDRE

Yours and yours only.

VERN

It's not just a sexual thing though. He wants to take me on a picnic. Can you believe that? If he hadn't railed me twice, I'd think he might be gay.

Penny and Deidre look at each other.

PENNY

Statistically, it seems highly unlikely that would happen a third time. Two is anyone's max in recorded history.

DEIDRE

He was doing her doggy style. Did you all kiss?

PENNY

Stop! He's not gay. Just a weirdo.

VERN

Yeah, that has to be right. No way I'm a three time beard.

PENNY

Of course not! So tell me more about him. What does he do?

VERN

I don't know. Sure has a nice set up though I can tell you that. Might be military. He had an asshole captain that sounds just like Ralph.

DEIDRE

Ralph is Mob Boss asshole. Not military.

PENNY

Allegedly.

DEIDRE

John Gotti ate here!

VERN

He was passing though to Panama.

DEIDRE

From Queens. Have you ever looked at a map?

VERN

Irrelevant. Anyway, Aaron is no mob guy, I can tell you that. He don't fuck like a mob boss at least.

PENNY

How would you know?

VERN

I worked that night Gotti came. So to speak.

PENNY

OK, let's catch up on your very active sex life with customers later. What the fuck are we doing next?

DEIDRE

Why do we have to do anything?

VERN

Uh, because we have a blood spattered shoe of a disappeared rapist.

DEIDRE

YOU have the shoe. We have our story straight about last night. What the fuck else do we need? No one's gonna ask us shit. We're just three waitresses at The Sizzler.

Ralph and a fit and cute mid 20's man wearing a suit with a black trench coat and black loafers enters the break room.

RALPH

Oh good. You're all here together.

The three waitresses say nothing. Penny and Deidre look at each other, panicked. Vern looks unimpressed.

TERRY

Penny. Deidre.

PENNY/DEIDRE

Terry.

Flashback

INT - RALPH'S OFFICE AT SIZZLER - DAY

A cluttered office punctuated by Mets baseball paraphernalia with the floor over populated with stacks of papers, bankers boxes and New York Times papers. A framed picture of Ralph and John Gotti, arms around each other, standing in front of The Sizzler sign hangs behind Ralph's desk. Ralph throws a baseball in the air while talking animatedly on the phone.

RALPH

I don't give a shit, Moose. I gotta find this kid.

Ralph pauses for a response.

RALPH (con't)

Then have Terry come over and get started. When we hit 72 hours send over another couple of detectives. I'm telling you, Uncle Johnny is gonna have both of our asses in a sling if we don't get that ledger book back. That queer fucker took it and we gotta get it Back. This is the last fucking time I take on someone else's punk Malcontent nephew, I can tell you that.

End flashback

INT - SIZZLER BREAK ROOM - DAY

Terry and the waitresses sit at a round table. No one else in the room. Terry reads notes from a small spiral-bound notebook.

TERRY

So you didn't give him a ride home and went to the stripper pits. Never saw him after that?

VERN

That's the third time. You wrote it down in your Go Go Gadget notepad.

Penny and Deidre look at Vern, impatiently.

VERN (con't)

It is. Look we're not changing our story. You got it all down. Are we done here?

PENNY / DEIDRE

Vern!

TERRY

She's right. I got it all here. Just wanting to be thorough. You understand, right?

PENNY

Of course. We're happy to help. I hope you find him real soon. We can't afford to lose another cook.

TERRY

You've had other cooks disappear?

PENNY

Oh no. Not that. Just they're hard to keep. Golden Corral always comes poaching the good ones.

TERRY

Mmmm. they do have good steaks.

Terry unconsciously rubs his gut. Penny reflexively puts her hand to her mouth and waves her fingers under her nose. Vern and Deidre look at each other and snigger.

TERRY

OK, ladies. I think that's all I need. For now. I would ask that none of you leave town for the next few days. Just in case there are any more questions.

VERN

No can do, Columbo. I have a convention Wednesday in Louisville.

TERRY

I'd say it's postponed for you.

VERN

Postponed? Do you know what that word means?

PENNY / DEIDRE

Vern!

VERN

You don't postpone a clown convention. Everyone knows that. I paid \$50. You gonna reimburse me for that, private dick?

TERRY

Police matters take priority.

VERN

You're not the police.

TERRY

My dad is the police chief. I'm here at his request.

VERN

And even he couldn't get you on the force. Am I under arrest?

TERRY

Of course not.

VERN

Then I'll be in Louisville Wednesday. They're unveiling a new routine they expect to be the next big birthday party sensation. Midget clown bowling.

Vern gets up to leave. Deidre stands up to follow.

DEIDRE

Can I be dismissed too?

TERRY

Of course.

Vern and Deidre walk out of the break room. An uncomfortable silence hangs in the air as Penny and Terry sit at the table alone. Finally, the silence is broken.

TERRY

It's good to see you again. I haven't seen you since I got back in town. Thought I would see you at church some Sunday.

PENNY

I've been working every Sunday. Better tips.

TERRY

Your mom told me.

PENNY

So, private investigator, huh? Quite the transition.

TERRY

It sure is. Just temporary. I'll get on the force. I just gotta pass the damn test. My old man throws me leads every now and then when they are swamped or can't start an investigation just yet.

PENNY

How's the pay?

TERRY

Zero.

PENNY

Zero?

TERRY

Dad says they have no funds in the budget anymore for PI's. But I still have some money from the settlement. I'm doing OK.

PENNY

Oh yeah. I was so sorry to hear about that. You look good. No lingering effects, looks like.

TERRY

I hide it well. You get waylaid by a 300 pound llama, it's gonna linger.

Flashback

EXT - LLAMA FARM - NIGHT

Terry is in the middle of his llama farm. Doing chores. It is on the dark side of dusk. He climbs onto a tractor to drive it back to the barn. A sudden and violent gust picks up debris and blows it

across the fields. A milking bucket flies through the air. Terry is covering his eyes, trying to see where the disturbance is coming from. A sudden spotlight appears in the sky, completely blinding him. He turns the key in the ignition. Click. He looks to the sky. Removes his hand from his eyes. Stares directly into the light. Suddenly, a llama flies through the air, knocks Terry off the tractor 20 yards away as he lands on his stomach. Struggles to roll over to his back. He sees something that frightens him before going unconscious. Wakes up hours later. Struggles to his feet and surveys the scene. 10 llamas lay dead, scattered around the farm. He examines them and notices a silk like substance starting to encase one of the llamas. The job just started, not finished, as if the entity was startled by something.
End flashback.

PENNY

Kenny told me. That's unbelievable. I've never heard of a tornado coming out of nowhere like that.

TERRY

Wasn't a tornado.

PENNY

Oh. That's just what Kenny said.

TERRY

Because that's what my Dad told us all to say. Insurance. But that damn light didn't come from a tornado. I can promise you that.

PENNY

So what do you think happened?

TERRY

I wish I could remember. But it wasn't a tornado. So, are you still seeing Darrell?

Penny looks away, uncomfortable with the topic.

PENNY

WE're on a pause. It's his last semester. He wants to focus on classes. Doesn't come home on the weekends anymore.

TERRY

Maybe we could go get a cup of coffee sometime.

PENNY

Oh Terry. I don't think that's a good idea.

TERRY

Not like that. Just to catch up. It's been too long.

Penny is unsure.

TERRY (con't)

Seriously. Just to catch up. I can tell you all the crazy cases I'm working on.

Penny doesn't answer. Looks at Terry. He flashes a familiar smile. Reluctantly, Penny agrees.

PENNY

Yeah, sure. Why not?

INT - PENNY'S CAR - DAY

Penny, Deidre and Vern sit in Penny's car, smoking a joint. 80's americana rock plays in the background.

VERN

Guess you like keeping your options open, huh?

DEIDRE

Don't be a bitch.

VERN

What? Darrell will be back Easter. Terry and a cup of coffee. Never hurts to have options.

0

PENNY

Terry's not an option. He's a nice guy. But that ship has sailed.

VERN

All because of a mexican food burp?

PENNY

You weren't there Vern! (makes a throw up sound) I can never get that smell out of my nose when he's around. Getting questioned in the break room, I could smell it! My God, when he rubbed his stomach.

DEIDRE

It has been 4 years.

PENNY

I know! And I can still smell it!

Flashback

INT - CHI CHI'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A table of plates and glasses signifies the end of a large meal.

TERRY

Man, I love Mexican food! May have went a bit overboard tonight though.

Terry rubs his bloated belly. He burps and unconsciously exhales.

TERRY (con't)

Oh. Sorry about that. More room out than in, they say.

The smell hits Penny's nose. A look of revulsion covers her face. She looks around somewhat frantically. Her gag reflex starts to kick in.

TERRY (con't)

You OK?

PENNY

I'm not feeling well.

Penny exits the booth and hurries to the bathroom.

End flashback.

INT - PENNYS CAR - DAY

Penny waives her hands back and forth in front of her face, waving away the imprint of the 4 year memory and makes another throw up sound.

PENNY

We broke up the next day. No way I could ever kiss that mouth again after what I smelled.

DEIDRE

Darrell's never burped?

PENNY

Not like that!

VERN

What does it matter?

PENNY

Let's give my love life a rest. We have more important things.

VERN

I haven't kissed Aaron.

PENNY

Why would you have?

VERN

We've made love twice.

DEIDRE

He's fucked you from behind on his station wagon. Not really a kissing scenario.

VERN

I asked to kiss him. He said he had a cold. I think he likes me.

PENNY

Vern...

VERN

He could. Darrell loved you the first time he saw you.

PENNY

We were ten! In Sunday school class.

DEIDRE

And you're broke up.

PENNY

We're on a pause. Vern, I love you. You know that. But you can't keep doing this, girl. You gotta learn.

VERN

Hey, you worry about your love life and I'll worry about mine.

PENNY

Moving on. So we need to make a plan.

VERN

For what?

Penny and Deidre look in the backseat at her as if she's an imbecile.

VERN (con't)

Right. Darin. Right?

PENNY

Yes. Now focus. I'm gonna have coffee with Terry tomorrow. I'll be able to find out everything he knows.

DEIDRE

Go girl.

PENNY

Use it or lose it. Right?

DEIDRE

Nigga, please.

VERN

You're so lucky.

PENNY

F-O-C-U-S!

VERN

OK. Right. You're right. OK, soooo you'll seduce Terry and milk him for all he's got.

Vern pauses dramatically. Big wink to Penny and Deidre.

VERN

What'll we do?

PENNY

You definitely go to the convention. Terry said the police won't start anything before 72 hours of an adult reported missing. Stay out of Terry's sight as long as possible and it gives us more time to figure this thing out.

VERN

Oh, I'm so glad you said that. Midget clown bowling! Seriously guys, there's a big market here for that kind of thing. I gotta make connections. I can blow this shit up.

DEIDRE

Uh yeah. Connections. We know all the connections you make at clown convention.

VERN

Not this year.

PENNY

Right...

VERN

Seriously. I couldn't do that to Aaron.

PENNY/DEIDRE

VERN!

INT - DEIDRE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Deidre and Brutus relax on the couch, the end of a long day having taken its toll on both. They share a joint.

BRUTUS

Damn baby girl. That shit is wild.

DEIDRE

You promised Brutus! We pinkie swore. Not a fucking soul! I don't need one of your deadbeat friends blurting any of this out ringside. I mean it!

Brutus takes the joint from Deidre and inhales deeply. Talks while holding the smoke in his lungs.

BRUTUS

Chill baby. Pinkie swear. Never broke a pinkie swear and ain't gonna start.

DEIDRE

OK good. So I know! That shit is so wild. So what do you think we

should do?

BRUTUS

Penelope needs to convince that poser that he needs to stay on the case and keep the police out of it. He ain't gonna break nothing but his feeble ass neck again.

Deidre slaps Brutus.

DEIDRE

That's mean! We went out with them a lot.

BRUTUS

Dude's fine. I chill with him just fine. But he ain't breaking no records on an IQ test. Penelope can go all Jedi mind trick on him and convince him to convince his old man to let him stay on the case. Tell him that he's got an inside track since he used to date one of the suspects.

Deidre slaps Brutus.

DEIDRE

Suspects??

BRUTUS

What you think?

DEIDRE

We're not suspects!

BRUTUS

Police come down to talk to y'all?

DEIDRE

He's a private investigator

BRUTUS

Sent by the police. Y'all suspects, girl.

DEIDRE

Oh shit. You're right, Brutus.

Deidre considers for the first time the true seriousness of the situation. She looks at Brutus, desperate for guidance.

DEIDRE (con't)

Do I need an attorney? Do Penny and Vern need attorney's?

BRUTUS

Dy'all do that mutherfucker?

DEIDRE

I don't know, Brutus.

BRUTUS

Then y'all need an attorney.

INT / EXT - PENNY'S CAR AND STRIPPER PITS - NIGHT

Penny, Deidre and Vern huddle in Penny's parked car. Windows cracked as they pass a joint. 80's country plays in the background.

VERN

I don't know an attorney. I know a bunch of clowns.

DEIDRE

Same difference.

PENNY

Damn. An attorney.

DEIDRE

Brutus said we can go to Ralph and get some mob attorney hook up.

PENNY

Allegedly.

DEIDRE

Brutus said he helped him out of a couple of jams while he was managing the restaurant.

VERN

Jams? He kill a nigga too?

DEIDRE

Uh uh. Nope. You ain't fuckin' him you don't get to say it. Take it back.

VERN

Ok, ok. Yes, I crossed the line there. I did. I thought I was just tip toe-ing up to it. But I tripped and went right over. I'm sorry.

DEIDRE

Damn girl. You say that to the wrong person and it ain't gonna go well.

VERN

I'm sorry.

DEIDRE

Ok. All good. So yeah, he said we should talk to Ralph and get him to help us out.

PENNY

Then let's talk to Ralph.

INT - RALPH'S OFFICE, SIZZLER - DAY

PENNY

So, it is just a terrible misunderstanding. I understand how it happened but I didn't give him a ride and I don't know what else to say. None of us do.

RALPH

Vern said you all got so fucked up you couldn't remember that night.

VERN

Oh Boss. I was just trying to look cool. Don't pay attention to me.

RALPH

Cool?

VERN

Yeah. You know. Hey, we're all so fucked up we can't remember shit. Fuh ged about it paisono.

PENNY / DEIDRE

Vern!

VERN

Don't pay attention to me, boss. Penny explained it to you. It's just like she said.

Ralph stands up from behind his desk and surveys the trio standing in front of him.

RALPH

I like you all. You're cute and sassy. But not too sassy.

VERN

Here for ya, boss.

PENNY / DEIDRE

(stammering and stomping one foot) VERN!

Vern bows her head. Ralph eyeballs each and begins again:

RALPH

I'm gonna do you ladies a favor. I got a guy gettin' here tonight. I'll apprise him of the situation and get back to you.

EXT - SIZZLER SMOKING AREA OUT BACK - DAY

Penny, Deide, and Vern all smoke a Kool nervously.

VERN

We're getting too deep guys. I'm gonna crack. I know it. I'm a cracker. Through and through.

DEIDRE

You sure are.

PENNY

No one's gonna crack. We have our story. THE TRUTH. We tell everyone we talk to the same exact story and nothing else. Clearly, they don't have a body. No body, no crime.

VERN

Oh, OK. Quincy is on the case. All solved. No body, no crime. Hey Deidre, Quincy M.E. has just solved all of our problems. We're free to get on with our lives. What the fuck is wrong with you?

PENNY

What the fuck is wrong with you? We have THE TRUTH. And we tell the truth. It's as perfect as can be. They got nothing. We got nothing. Nothing to see here.

INT - COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Terry and Penny sit at a booth. A carafe of coffee and cups are on the table. Terry pulls out a clown nose from his coat pocket.

TERRY

What do you see here?.

PENNY

Uh, what?

TERRY

What do you see here?

PENNY

Uh. You holding a red ball in the air?

Terry puts the nose on.

TERRY

A nose. Clearly a clown's nose.

PENNY

Uh. Yeah. OK. A clowns nose.

TERRY

Vern's a clown.

PENNY

That's not very nice. She's a bit loopy from time to time...

TERRY

She's a literal party clown. She puts that on her tax returns.

PENNY

Tax returns? What? How do you know that?

TERRY

I'm a private investigator, Penny. I know everyone thought I was

some FFA hick that went off the deep end after a bad trip at 4H camp and became a Old McDonald llama farmer. It wasn't like that. I know what the fuck I'm doing.

PENNY

What? Of course you do. Everyone knows that. That's why you're the one on the case.

TERRY

Right. I am the one on the case. So don't fuck around with me.

PENNY

Fuck around with you? I'm so happy you are the one on the case.

TERRY

Yeah?

PENNY

Who else? The son of Moose Fucking Cravens?

TERRY

(interupts abruptly) Don't use that name in public!

PENNY

Yes. Of course. I'm sorry. It just slipped out.

Terry looks around the nearly empty diner. Scans the bar and eyeballs employees.

TERRY

No one knows that nickname. It's a family secret. I'm serious. You haven't told anyone, have you?

PENNY

No, of course not. I promise.

TERRY

Swear?

PENNY

Swear. The point is, you are his son. My shit is on the line, so yes I want him on the job. I know you know what the fuck you're doing. I know. Better than most.

Penny smiles and lets it linger.

TERRY

Really?

PENNY

Of course. And you gotta remind (whispers) Moose, your dad, why you're the man for the job. The most qualified man for the job. The only man for the job.

TERRY

Yeah. Explain it to him. So it's obvious.

PENNY

Exactly!

TERRY

Obvious.

PENNY

Because you dated one of the suspects....

TERRY

Because you used to be my girlfriend until you broke my heart.

PENNY

Oh Terry.

A tear runs down Terry's cheek. He wipes it away.

PENNY (con't)

This is what I was hoping to avoid.

TERRY

I know. I'm sorry. I'll get it together.

Terry takes his napkin and blows his nose. Clown nose comes off in the napkin. Terry half-ass wipes it off and stuffs it back in his pocket.

TERRY (con't)

But I have to ask. What happened? I haven't been able to stop thinking about it. 4 years. I've thought about it every day.

PENNY

Oh Terry. Don't say that. I'm so sorry. Really

TERRY

I don't understand it. I have wracked my brain this whole time. I remember our last date was Chi Chi's.

Flashback

INT - CHI CHI'S - NIGHT

Terry sits at a booth alone. Table is still covered in the evidence of the mexican buffet he and Penny shared. Penny walks back from the bathroom.

TERRY

Everything OK?

PENNY

Yeah. Yeah. It's fine. Something just came over me all of the sudden. Completely out of the blue.

TERRY

That's probably the refried beans.

Terry holds his hand up to his mouth to cover a burp.

TERRY

Doing it to me right now.

End of flashback.

INT - COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

TERRY (con't)

If I'd known you didn't like mexican food we could have had Chinese.

PENNY

Oh, don't be silly. It had nothing to do with the mexican food.

Penny holds her hand up to her mouth and (in)discreetly waves her fingers under her nose.

TERRY

Well then what was it?

Penny contemplates and searches for inspiration.

PENNY

Beth Burns.

TERRY

Beth Burns? From church.

PENNY

That's her.

TERRY

What does she have to do with you breaking up with me?

PENNY

She was my best friend. She was having a really rough go of it. Lost a 12 year old dog, her brother got a DUI, her Dad embellished some money from Kroger's. She was a real mess. And she needed me. I just had to focus all of my emotional energy on her and that wouldn't have been fair to you.

TERRY

That doesn't make any sense.

PENNY

I was seventeen. Nothing I did made any sense. Just ask my mom and dad. They told me every day.

TERRY

That's not true. You were the most together girl I'd ever met. I really thought we had something special. It hit all of my senses. I could feel it, I could see it, I could hear it. Hell, I could even smell it. Smell it a mile away. I still remember that smell. And just seeing you, I can smell it all over again. Does that make sense?

Penny anxiously waves her fingers under her nose. Less discreet than last time.

PENNY

A lot. A whole lot. And I'm sorry. I really am. I didn't mean to hurt you.

TERRY

Hey, worked out well for Darrell at least.

PENNY

Next subject, please.

TERRY

What? Come on. Everyone knows you all are meant to be together. A pause is nothing.

PENNY

It's something. But that doesn't matter. What matters is that you make sure (whispers) Moose knows he's already got his best man on the job. No need to spread other resources thin. Probably just a punk kid that decided to go back where he came from. Hell, Ralph said he was a queer democrat. In this town? No. So, I'm sure he just had enough of Owensboro because Owensboro had had enough of him and he skidaddled on back to Queens.

TERRY

Queens?

PENNY

Yeah. Where he's from. I.... think.... so....

Penny recognizes her mistake. Terry pulls out something from his pocket. The clown nose. Stuffs it back in and pulls out his small notepad. Flips forward a few pages. Back one. Reads his notes out loud.

TERRY

PI asks suspects

PENNY

Suspects?

TERRY

What would you call it?

PENNY

Witnesses.

TERRY

Did you witness anything?

PENNY

No.

Terr returns to his note pad.

TERRY

PI asks suspects...to provide any background info that would help investigation. Asked if they knew hometown, local contacts or relatives, date of birth...

PENNY

Why would we know his date of birth?

TERRY

You know he's from Queens.

PENNY

That's not the same.

TERRY

On the day of interrogation...

PENNY

Interrogation? Do I need an attorney, Terry?

Terry pauses before answering. Chooses his words carefully and proceeds confidently.

TERRY

No. Of course not. I just have to make my notes sound official and professional. Just in case my dad ever wants to look at them. You know the drill.

Terry winks. Penny struggles to interpret the sign.

PENNY

Yeah. Of course. I know the drill.

TERRY

So anyway. You wanted to give me an updated statement tonight and that is why we met here. And during your statement you did remember that you understood him to be from Queens. That's right?

PENNY

Yes. That is exactly right.

TERRY

And you confirmed that Vern is indeed a professional clown.

PENNY

Not fair.

Terry retrieves the nose from his pocket and places it in the middle of the table.

TERRY

I need to know about this, Penny. Don't play me.

PENNY

I don't know anything about it. Yes, Vern's a clown. Big deal. She's not the only one.

TERRY

It was in the Sizzler parking lot.

Flashback

Terry surveys the parking lot after questioning Penny, Deidre and Vern. He has his notebook in one hand and a pencil in his mouth. He walks towards the dumpster. Looks inside. Walks around to the other side. Bends down. Finds a clown nose. Picks it up and examines it before putting it in his coat pocket.

End flashback

INT - COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

PENNY

That could have been there forever.

TERRY

It wasn't.

PENNY

You know this how?

Terry pats his stomach. Penny puts her hand to her mouth instinctively.

TERRY

Gut. I can feel it. Never steered me wrong, this gut.

PENNY

I wouldn't be so sure about that.

INT - DEIDRE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Vern, Penny, and Deidre sit around her kitchen table. A box of donuts from The Rolling Pin bakery sit in the middle of the table. Two are missing. Vern stuffs one in her mouth and holds one in her other hand.

DEIDRE

So what do you think? He playing you or you playing him?

PENNY

I honestly don't know.

Brutus walks in in his training day attire. Reaches over and grabs two donuts with one hand.

BRUTUS

Nigga, please.

VERN

Can I get permission to use that?

DEIDRE / BRUTUS

No!

VERN

OK, OK. Got it. Loud and clear. Got it.

BRUTUS

That cracker

VERN

Hey, no fair!! I call bullshit.

BRUTUS

(nods towards Deidre) That cracker ain't playing no one. Especially not you, Penelope. He's still hopin'.

VERN

Oh yeah. I get it. Cuz' Deidre's a cracker. Fair.

Penny looks at Vern to shut her up. Replies to Brutus.

PENNY

You really think so?

BRUTUS

I know so. He still calls me every now and then asking about you.

DEIDRE

Really? You never told me that.

BRUTUS

Oh yeah baby. You musta forgot.

DEIDRE

That Terry Cravens is calling you asking about Penny? Tell me the last time I forgot anything? No matter how small.

Brutus is flustered, begs with his eyes for Deidre to play along.

BRUTUS

The point I'm trying to make is that there's no chance he's playing you. He don't have it in him.

Penny considers the argument. Switches topics.

PENNY

So, Deidre tells me the big match is tomorrow. Dustin fighting to be a contender, huh?

BRUTUS

Gonna be. This win is in the bag. Ain't no way he's not takin' this punk ass kid down. Can't be beat. Y'all should come down. It's our first show at the Sportscenter. Stepping up to the big leagues.

EXT - PORTSCENTER PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Penny, and Deidre sit in the stands looking down on a child sized boxing ring. The Sportscenter is filled to capacity. There is a buzz of anticipation in the air. The headline match with Dustin and Dayshaun starts in minutes.

PENNY

I thought you said this was all made-up fake shit.

DEIDRE

I'm more surprised than you are.

Brutus walks up to the girls.

BRUTUS

So whadda you think?

Deidre gets up to hug Brutus and give him a kiss.

DEIDRE

Baby, I had no idea. Wow! I'm so proud of you.

BRUTUS

I been tryin' to tell you.

PENNY

Are you nervous?

BRUTUS

Bout that little punk ass Dayshaun? Nah. In the bag. I told you. You still have time to go put a bet in if you want. See that guy down there?

Brutus points to a slick looking New Yorker in a black suit, wearing a crimson fedora. People walk up and give him money. He writes down notes in a black ledger.

PENNY

Kinda obvious, isn't he?

BRUTUS

It don't matter. Long as Moose is on alert we're all good.

PENNY

Moose Cravens?

BRUTUS

Cravens? Like Terry? Nah. That's just his nickname. Manager of the Sportscenter walked me thru the rental agreement. While we were going through it, he gets all discreet and says 'If you want a cut on the gambling I can do that but it'll cost you extra' Told me that Moose is in charge of all of that, guaranteed no issues.

PENNY

Huh.

BRUTUS

Where's Vern?

DEIDRE

On her way. Probably doing 90 coming back from clown convention. She knew what time the match was and promised to be here. OK, baby. I know you gotta go get Dustin ready. I love you so much.

Deidre and Brutus share a passionate kiss. She pushes him away, laughing.

DEIDRE

Give Dustin a hug and kiss from Mommy. And good luck!

Brutus gives Deidre a peck on the forehead and is headed off as Vern rushes up to grab her seat.

BRUTUS

Luck? Don't need no luck. Punk ass Dayshaun needs the luck.

INT - SPORTSCENTER BOXING RING - NIGHT

Dayshaun prances, skips and jumps around the body of a crying Duston, laid out in the middle of the ring.

INT - SPORTCENTER STANDS - NIGHT

Penny, Deidre and Vern stand, hands on hips and mouths agape. Wordless. Vern breaks the silence.

VERN

Damn, Tyson would have been proud of that one. What's his name? Dayshaun? That kid is going places.

Before Deidre and Penny can reply a commotion down from Vern arises. A cadre of police officers arrive.

LEAD POLICE OFFICER

Vern Rogers?

VERN

Who wants to know?

LEAD POLICE OFFICER

You're under arrest for suspicion in the disappearance of Darin Evans.

PENNY / VERN / DEIDRE

What?

Police turn Vern towards Penny and Deidre.

LEAD POLICE OFFICER

Put your hands behind your back. Lace your fingers.

VERN

Call Aaron.

PENNY

What?

VERN

He's my emergency contact.

DEIDRE

Already?

VERN

We haven't had the conversation yet. I didn't think I would need one again anytime soon, honestly. Will you tell him? He won't be expecting it, I don't think.

PENNY

I don't know his number. Or his last name.

VERN

Cashmere. 7718 Landsdowne.

Police lead Vern away. Vern looks over her shoulder yelling.

VERN

C-A-S-H-M-E-R-E

INT - JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Vern leans on the front of her jail cell door. Two cell mates, prostitutes, sit on the bench behind her.

VERN

When do I get to call my attorney?

OFFICER (O.S.)

He's on his way.

VERN

(mutters) He's on his way?

Vern turns and walks to the bench and sits in between the prostitutes.

VERN

What are y'all in for? Corporate espionage?

PROSTITUTE

Blowjobs.

Vern reaches into her pocket and pulls out a box of tic tocs. Offers to each of the prostitutes.

VERN

Here. This always helps me.

Officer walks up to the cell, inserts key and turns.

OFFICER

Rogers?

Vern looks up.

OFFICER (con't)

Your attorney is here.

INT - POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

A slick New Yorker wearing a black suit and crimson fedora sits opposite of Vern.

VERN

First off, I want to clarify. I don't have any clown gigs for the next three weeks so running a little tight right now. Do you have an installment plan?

ATTORNEY

Don't worry about it. It's covered.

VERN

Covered? By who.

ATTORNEY

Don't worry about it.

VERN

Easy for you to say. What, am I gonna be someone's sex slave now? I have a boyfriend. If you had caught me last week then maybe. But things have changed.

ATTORNEY

I said don't worry about it. No one wants you for a sex slave.

VERN

Well maybe not in this room. But they're out there. I have the receipts.

ATTORNEY

What do you know about this Darin Evans kid?

VERN

Nothing. He was a pretty decent grill cook at The Sizzler. Not gonna say he was the most likable person in the world.

ATTORNEY

Why's that?

VERN

Well, let me say first off. I'm a sexual libertarian. I got no problems with what quenches your thirst, if you know what I mean. But some said he was queer. And a democrat. Jury is still out. On both fronts. But I think it just sorta made him edgy. Kinda jumpy. Aggressive and angry maybe. Not the nicest dude.

ATTORNEY

Aggressive. In what way?

Realizing the error of her ways.

VERN

Not aggressive in a bad way. Just on edge because he thought people were making fun of him all the time.

ATTORNEY

Were they?

VERN

I mean, he did wear penny loafers to work. You do the math.

ATTORNEY

So you don't know anything else about him? Nothing about his disappearance? Where he may have gone and with who?? You see him with anything in his possession.

VERN

Like what?

ATTORNEY

Like anything. A Briefcase.

VERN

Definitely no briefcase.

ATTORNEY

A black ledger book. Like this one.

Vern examines the book. Solid black on black cover inset imprint with the word 'LEDGER'.

VERN

Never saw him with anything like that. So, what is my defense? We gotta figure out some sort of plan and discuss what we think the prosecution is going to go after, right?

ATTORNEY

You're free to go.

VERN

What?

ATTORNEY

Cops made a mistake. Mistaken identity. You're free to go.

VERN

Just like that?

ATTORNEY

Did I stutter?

INT - THE SIZZLER DINING ROOM - DAY

Penny and Deidre sit on one side of a big booth. Vern and Aaron sit on the other.

VERN

Did I stutter? So I just got up and walked out. No problems at all.

PENNY

That's so weird.

AARON

Well, I knew it was just a matter of time.

VERN

I know this is an awkward time to introduce all three of you but honestly I thought it was time. Him being my emergency contact and all.

PENNY

We had a very nice conversation on the phone. Nice to meet you in person, Aaron.

AARON

Likewise. Vern has talked a lot about you two.

He reaches out to kiss Penny's hand. She obliges. As he kisses and draws his mouth back, spittle strings from her hand to his mouth. Vern wipes it away quickly. Rubbing it off Penny's hand completely. It has a texture she wasn't expecting, sort of rolling in her fingers like silk.

VERN

Slow down hoss. Little premature ejaculation there?? He usually announces that.

AARON

I am so sorry. I ate a box of lemonheads before I got here. Those things stimulate my salivary glands like you wouldn't believe. So back to you beautiful lady. I knew there wasn't going to be any problems. No body no crime.

VERN

Boy, never knew how many people love Quincy. I knew he pulled tail on the show and all but you people really like him don't you.

PENNY

How'd you know there was no body. I didn't know that when I called you.

AARON

Mistaken identity. Body wasn't Darin's.

Looks at each of the three as there is a silence.

PENNY

Vern was the mistaken identity. They arrested the wrong person.

VERN

Yeah silly. They were mistaken about me.

PENNY

There wasn't a body. I called Terry to confirm.

VERN

There wasn't? And they arrested my ass? What the fuck? I need to call my attorney and start a lawsuit.

DEIDRE

I didn't know you even had an attorney. Maybe I need to be a clown.

VERN

The more the merrier!

DEIDRE

No chance.

VERN

That hurts.

PENNY

So, who is your attorney?

Vern pauses to think.

VERN

I never got his name.

PENNY

He didn't give you a card?

VERN

No.

PENNY

How are you going to call him?

VERN

Oh you know all those guys put their picture in the yellow pages ad. Look at me. Sharp dressed guy. I'll recognize him. Especially if he's wearing that ridiculous hat.

PENNY

Hat?

VERN

Yeah, one of those old time hats. Like gangsters wear. Crimson. Like I said, sharp dressed guy.

INT - COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Penny and Terry occupy a booth at the very back. Coffee service sits on the table.

PENNY

You fucked us!

TERRY

I swear. I didn't say anything about the clown nose to my Dad.

PENNY

Then why was she arrested?

TERRY

I really don't know. My dad called a couple of nights ago and asked me to come over and give him an update. The night we met.

PENNY

And.

TERRY

Was quizzing me about what I had found out. Said he had a couple of officers he needed to bring up to speed. I told him like you said. He needed to keep me on the job. And I explained we dated and that I would have good access and you all trust me.

PENNY

And.

TERRY

And that was it basically. Ralph said if anyone had info and would spill it it was that clown Vern. That's really how I knew she was a clown. I don't have access to tax returns. That shit is expensive!

PENNY

Ralph?

TERRY

Yeah. My uncle.

PENNY

Ralph's from New York. All your family is from Kentucky.

TERRY

He's not an actual uncle. That's just what my dad always called him. My brother from another mother, Uncle Ralphie.

PENNY

I never heard about any of that when we dated.

TERRY

Why would hear about Uncle Ralphie?

PENNY

I went to a family reunion.

TERRY

I told you. He's not family. He's a secret. Like Moose.

PENNY

Y'all sure have a lot of family secrets. We can't keep secrets for shit in my family.

TERRY

You ever fuck with a Moose?

PENNY

No.

TERRY

You don't want to. No one does. So, no one does. Ever.

PENNY

OK, I need some time to think.

TERRY

About what?

PENNY

Terry! Something isn't right here. Why would your dad bring Vern in and question her? And her attorney is the bookie from the Sportscenter and Brutus said some one nicknamed Moose is in charge of him. No one's heard from Darin. No family or friends have come asking about Darin. There's no body. He could be alive for all we know. But Ralph is working with your dad on it? Why the fuck would he care? That doesn't seem weird to you?

TERRY

When you put it that way.

PENNY

Let's go talk to Vern. Maybe the three of us can figure something out.

INT - VERN'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Penny and Terry sit on a couch in Vern's living room. Clown paraphernalia, including a few bowling pins are strewn across the space. Vern sits in an oversized chair, her legs crossed underneath her, elevating her in the chair an absurd amount. She flips through the yellow pages.

VERN

You're right. He's not in here.

PENNY

Beause he's from New York! I told you that.

VERN

So what does that mean?

PENNY

Still trying to figure that one out.

VERN

Did you tell Terry about the shoe?

Penny nearly breaks her neck looking first at Vern, then Terry, then back to Vern.

TERRY

What shoe?

VERN

What? I thought he was on our side now.

TERRY

What shoe?

VERN

Don't pay attention to me, Terry.

PENNY

Oh for fucks sake, Vern. You might as well tell him now.

TERRY

What shoe?

EXT - OUTSIDE VERN'S TAILER - NIGHT

Vern unlocks her trunk and raises it. Penny and Terry look in. Darin's bloody Penny loafer lays in the middle of the trunk.

TERRY

Holy shit. Is that Darin's?

PENNY

Uhhhh....

TERRY

Of course. Has anyone touched it.

VERN

Not since we saw it Sunday night. It's just sat here in the trunk.

TERRY

And I'm the only one that knows about this?

VERN

The three of us and you. That's it.

PENNY

We have no idea how it got there.

TERRY

What's this?

Terry reaches in the trunk. Moves the Gary Hart sign. A black on black ledger book appears. Terry instinctively grabs it.

VERN

I've never seen that.

PENNY

Me either.

VERN

Hey, let me see that.

Grabs for the book from Terry. He resists. Vern jerks it from him. She runs her fingers of the imprinted word LEDGER.

VERN (con't)

This is just like the one my attorney had. When he came to the jail.

PENNY

Really?

Vern starts to open it. Terry grabs it out of her hand.

VERN

Hey!

TERRY

I don't think that's a good idea.

VERN

Why?

INT - DEIDRE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Brutus sits on the couch. It's training day. Dustin jabs away. Brutus lacks his usual energy and enthusiasm.

BRUTUS

Chin down buddy. I told you - it's a weak spot.

DUSTIN

Yes daddy.

BRUTUS

Left, left. Right. Chin down.

Deidre walks into the room. She walks over and gives Dustin a kiss on his head. Sits down beside Brutus and pats his leg.

DEIDRE

He'll get another shot.

BRUTUS

I know. Gotta keep that chin in. We're working on it. (enthusiasm returning) This time next year, top of the world baby. Top of the world.

DEIDRE

Nap today?

BRUTUS

Pinkie swear.

Deidre kisses Brutus on the lips.

DEIDRE

Thank you. Another double today.

BRUTUS

I'll wait up for you.

DEIDRE

Promise?

Brutus holds up his pinkie. Deidre holds hers up. They intertwine.

INT - SIZZLER DINING ROOM - DAY

PENNY

Can I get a couple of extra onion rings? I'll split the tip with you.

Johnny puts five extra onion rings on the plate.

JOHNNY

Keep it.

PENNY

You're so sweet.

JOHNNY

Our secret. Did you get over to the beauty school?

PENNY

Yep! Met the owner, Steven. He gave me an exception to be able to start Monday. So I'll see you there!

Vern walks up.

VERN

Smoke break? I got big news!

PENNY

Sure. Let me deliver this. Grab Deidre.

EXT - SIZZLER SMOKING AREA - DAY

DEIDRE

So, what's all the big news??

Vern pulls her hand out of her apron and wiggles her right ring finger in front of their faces. A BIG diamond and gold band is proudly displayed. Penny and Vern squeal in disbelief.

PENNY

Oh my god!

VERN

I know! It's from Aaron.

DEIDRE

We assumed!

VERN

You don't think it's too soon?

PENNY

A week? Seems par for the course.

VERN

I know! Isn't it great?

PENNY

Are you happy?

VERN

I'm so elastic!

DEIDRE

Of course you are. Then we are too!

The girls squeal and get into a bear hug, kissing each others cheek and squeezing each other's hands. Ralph pokes his head out.

RALPH

If you girls aren't still on your period, we could use some help in here.

VERN

Be right there boss.

Ralph walks back in the restaurant.

VERN

We're going to have a long engagement. One year I said. I want to make sure we get to know each other well. He's weird you know.

PENNY

It's been discussed.

VERN

But, I'm a little weird too.

DEIDRE

It's been discussed.

PENNY

So are you going to move in with him?

VERN

Oh no. You know me. I'm a traditional girl. No co-habitation until we're married. I'll spend the night the day we get married.

Johnny pokes his head out.

JOHNNY

Holy shit! Get in here now!

INT - SIZZLER DINING ROOM - DAY

A group of six men wearing FBI jackets escort Ralph, hand cuffed behind his back, out of the restaurant. The patrons and employees gawk in suspended animation and Ralph cusses up a storm.

RALPH

I want my goddamn attorney. Do you know who you're fucking with? Do you know?

The FBI lead him out the restaurant and place him in the back of an unmarked car as he continues cursing and yelling.

DEIDRE

What the fuck?

Terry walks in and surveys the scene. Hands in his coat pockets. He glances around the restaurant still abuzz over the events. Catches Penny's eye and flashes that familiar smile.

INT - SIZZLE BREAK ROOM - DAY

Terry and Penny sit at one of the break tables. Penny moves the half full ashtray out of the way.

PENNY

Gambling, huh?

TERRY

It was all in there. Or at least enough to get the FBI moving. Obviously. It's always their downfall. Must be over a thousand names in there. Some big ones.

PENNY

I'm sorry about your dad.

TERRY

Don't be. I'm not, I can tell you that. None of my family is. Well, except for Uncle Ralphie I guess. He won't bother us ever again if we're lucky. No more secrets I guess.

PENNY

About that...

INT - BASEMENT ROOM - DAY

A darkened room permeates foreboding. A barely perceptible outline of what appears to be a life sized cocoon hangs in the middle of the room. A gurgling sound can be heard as a 7+ foot tall figure seems to spin silk coming from his mouth.

INT - SIZZLE BREAK ROOM - DAY

PENNY

...so nothing to do with Beth Burns. She did have a dog die but that old mutt was a son of a bitch they were glad to see him go.

TERRY

I can relate. Sorry about the burp.

PENNY

It's OK. I'm overly sensitive to smells.

TERRY

So, you can smell it right now? Even though I had boiled eggs for breakfast?

PENNY

If I think about it. Yep there it is. (throw up sound).

TERRY

OK, well I gotta go home and celebrate. May bring everyone here for Easter brunch! See you then?

PENNY

Not working tomorrow.

TERRY

But, it's Sunday.

PENNY

Darrell is coming in town.

INT - CHURCH SANCTUARY - DAY

Easter music from the church organ fills the space. An overflowing attendance has all spots taken. Except one. Penny pokes her head in the balcony, scanning the rows. She sees Darrell. He spots her and motions her over. She walks over and sits in the only available spot.

ONE YEAR LATER

EXT - STRIPPER PITS - DAY

A wedding is taking place beside the stripper pits. Tents house over 100 guests and food. A DJ is setting up at the back of the tent as the minister delivers the final vows. Penny and Deidre are in the bride's wedding party. Terry and Brutus are in Aaron's.

MINISTER

Ladies and gentlemen, for the first time, I present Mr. and Mrs
Aaron Cashmere Rogers.

Darrell stands up and applauds. Others follow suit. Johnny and a male date. Dustin stands with Deidre's parents. He wears an oversized championship belt around his waist. Assorted others follow suit and everyone is standing as they walk down the aisle to the back of the tent. Vern turns around and spikes her flower bouquet instead of tossing it in the crowd. She raises her dress way to high. Takes her garter off and places it as a headband on Aaron. The audience applauds rapturously as the DJ starts spinning tunes and people fill the dance floor.

EXT - WEDDING PARTY TABLE - DAY

The party is winding down as day is turning to night. A few stragglers hang around. The DJ breaks down his gear and the bartender loads milk crates with bottles. Penny raises a glass to toast as Aaron, Vern, Deidre, Brutus, Darrell and Terry raise their glasses in anticipation.

DUSTIN

Wait!

Dustin runs to grab one for the bar. Bartender fills it with Sprite. He runs back to the table.

PENNY

To Vern and Aaron! A match made like no other! May love and joy
fill your days.

Vern pokes Aaron in the ribs.

VERN

And nights!

She smiles big and leans in to kiss Aaron on the mouth. He turns ever so slightly as it lands on his cheek.

DEIDRE

Here here!

BRUTUS

So, Cashmere Rogers Huh? Little ladies lib I see.

VERN

A little? Nigga please...

Everyone looks around, unsure how to respond. Brutus maintains a stone face as he looks at Vern. Vern turns somber. No one cracks a facial response or says a word. Finally, the tension is released and Brutus raises his glass in the air.

BRUTUS

Please indeed!

Everyone looks around. Laughter erupts as Vern replies.

VERN

Thank you. That was the best wedding present you could give me.

BRUTUS

That's your one and only.

VERN

Maybe the baby shower too??

PENNY

You're pregnant?

VERN

Oh Lord no. Couldn't be. I told you, I'm a traditional girl. Aaron and I kept a vow of chastity our entire engagement. Well, we'd give each other handies, but that doesn't count.

The crowd dwindles further. Its just Terry, Darrell, Penny, Vern and Aaron.

PENNY

So not a single lead at all?

TERRY

Still nothing. It's like he disappeared off the face of the earth.

AARON

Probably hid himself somewhere where no one can bother him.

Everyone looks at Aaron oddly,

VERN

Don't mind him. He's a weirdo.

TERRY

Did you ever remember anything else from that night? Aside from the scratch?

PENNY

No. I've tried hypnosis. Mushrooms. Anything I can think of. It's just like there's a big blank space in my mind from that night.

VERN

Same. I don't know how you can be haunted by a non-memory but I am.

AARON

You don't have to even think about it anymore. New life. Plenty of memories to make.

Vern leans her head on Aaron's shoulder and grabs his arm.

VERN

Ahhh. How sweet. He's all mine people!

EXT/INT - AARON'S FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Aaron and Vern wait on the front porch. Aaron pulls out a single key that has a bow on it. He hands it to Vern.

AARON

I have a present for you.

Vern is genuinely touched and caught off guard.

VERN

Really? I didn't get you anything. I didn't know to do that. My other two we just ordered a pizza and extra breadsticks. Same place actually. Grecian Pizza. Man they have some good pie.

AARON

Let's go in. I'll show you.

Aaron opens the front door and they enter the house.

INT - BASEMENT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Aaron opens the door that leads down to the basement. A nightlight illuminates the staircase. Vern looks down the steps. Looks at Aaron. Feels slightly uneasy.

AARON

Let's go.

Aaron places his hand on the small of Vern's back. Applies a little pressure. Vern doesn't move.

AARON (con't)

Go ahead.

Vern takes the first step cautiously. Takes the next steps with a little more confidence.

AARON

You won't remember this, but I started working on this gift exactly Fifty three weeks ago.

VERN

Wow. What a memory. Fifty three weeks. How'd you possibly know what I would want fifty three weeks ago?

AARON

Maybe you'll remember when you see.

They walk to a door at the far end of the basement. Vern attempts to open it. It is locked.

AARON

The key.

Vern looks at and squeezes the key. She puts it in the lock. Turns to unlock. Hears a click. Reaches and timidly turns the knob. Pushes the door open. Light from the basement glides across the floor of the secret room. A shadow blankets a large item hanging from the ceiling. A

faint outline can barely be seen. Vern squints her eyes and adjusts them to the light/darkness horizon falling across the room. Vern brings her hand to her mouth in shock.

AARON

What do you think?

Vern looks at Aaron in disbelief. Aaron starts talking as a flashback begins as lightning flash disrupts the screen.

AARON (V.O.)

I couldn't get you out of my mind after the party...

Flashback

EXT - SIZZLER PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Aaron turns his car into the parking lot and parks up front. He gets out of his car and walks to the door. It's locked. He peers in. Sees no one. Starts to walk around the building.

AARON (V.O.)

So I was sitting at home. Wondering when I could see you again. And I thought 'why not now?' I remembered that you told me you worked at the Sizzler.

INT - AARON'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Aaron walks into the kitchen of his house. Lisa sits at the bar, drinking a glass of wine and flipping through a magazine.

AARON

I'm gonna go for a drive. I'm a little restless tonight.

LISA

OK. Kids are all in bed. No problem. Everything OK?

AARON

Yeah - just got a lot on my mind.

LISA

I understand. Yeah, go clear your head. I can hold down the fort.

EXT - SIZZLER PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Aaron walks around the side of the building. Sees a faint light barely casting a glow across Penny's car. Deidre and Vern exit the back door and Vern locks it. He steps back into cover of darkness.

AARON (V.O.)

So I drive over and see if I can catch you before you leave work. The door was locked and no one was in the dining room. So I walked around to the back of the parking lot. I saw your cars. I heard you and Deidre leaving the building. And then I noticed something in Penny's car.

Looks at the commotion in Penny's car. Hears Deidre and Vern tell each other bye

VERN

Stripper pits, here we come! I can't wait!

They get in their cars. Aaron steps towards Penny's car. He looks transformed. Over seven feet tall. His body and face contorted to be not recognizable any longer. He looks alien. He raises his hands over his head and clasps them together. There is a blast of light. All four people in the cars go unconscious. He strides with great purpose to Penny's car, opening the passenger side door and violently grabs Darin by the collar. He jerks him out in one swift motion, one of his penny loafers hitting the ground. A black book falls out of the back waist of his pants and lands next to the shoe. Aaron drags an unconscious Darin to his car.

VERN (V.O.)

Darin was attacking Penny.

AARON (V.O.)

Yes. It looked severe. So I stopped time. And took care of it the way I've been trained. I can erase memories for eight hour blocks of time.

Vern flashes back to various points in her relationship with [Aaron as](#) he keeps talking:

*My captain always said 'time to lean, time to clean'

VERN (V.O.)

Stopped time?

AARON (V.O.)

We're able to do that. It's what allows us to travel light years in seconds.

*I quit light years ago

Aaron returns to Penny's car. Checks to make sure Penny is unharmed. Notices the scratch on her arm bleeding. Rubs his alien finger over it and stops the bleeding. Picks up the shoe and book. Walks over to check on Deidre. She's out like a light. Checks on Vern next. Same. He looks at the shoe and book in his hand. Walks to the trunk of Vern's car. Touches it. A car drives by the parking lot slowly, as if looking for something. The trunk opens. He nervously puts the shoe and book in the trunk. The car speeds up and drives off.

AARON (V.O.)

The car startled me and I sort of panicked and just put the stuff in your trunk. I was going to take it out the next time I saw you. I honestly forgot.

*Vern saying to Aaron 'I like weird'

AARON (V.O.)

So now you can understand more.

The item hanging from the ceiling comes into clear view. A human sized silk like cocoon hangs from the middle. Darin is inside. Alive. He looks at Vern, terrified, silently screaming for help with his eyes. Vern is still confused and horrified.

*Vern attempts to kiss Aaron on the mouth at the wedding and he turns his face.

AARON (V.O.)

I just finished his cocoon today. So after today we can finally kiss. I don't need to produce any more cocooning material.

*Vern wiping his spittle off of Penny's hand and it feeling odd

AARON (V.O.)

I did this for you. Do you like it?

*Aaron applying the clown nose to Vern in the Sizzler parking lot.

INT - BASEMENT - NIGHT

AARON

Do you?

Vern looks at Aaron. All emotion has left her face. No color remains. She looks at Darin. Then to Aaron.

AARON
So? What do you think?

FADE TO BLACK.