

**Meals Included**

Original Screenplay

by

David Hoggan

Registered WGAw  
Second Draft  
June 18, 2013

dave@davidhoggan.com  
www.davidhoggan.com  
916.761.9413

MEALS INCLUDED

FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN PARK - NIGHT

At around four in the morning, all is silent amongst the gently rolling, well manicured lawns and artfully landscaped foliage.

Atop one of the gently sloping lawns, the grass of which is covered in early morning dew, lies a passed-out WOMAN in her late 20s.

This is MARCI DE LORENZO, a former line-cook at a prestigious local restaurant. She is dressed in designer jeans tucked into calf-high boots and an expensive leather jacket.

In spite of her fashionable clothing, she has the ruffled appearance of someone who has slept in these clothes for the last several days and has not had the opportunity to bathe.

At Marci's side lies an empty VODKA BOTTLE.

Marci stirs awake, shivering in the early morning cold.

She tries to right herself and get her bearings, but as soon as she tries to sit up, she falls backwards. It is clear that she has consumed the contents of the now-empty bottle of Russian Vodka.

As Marci falls onto her back, she notices something digging into her side. She reaches into her jeans and is instantly alarmed when she withdraws a HAND GUN.

ANGLE ON AUTOMATIC PISTOL

Marci tries to recall where she got the gun as she slowly manages to right herself into a sitting position on the lawn.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Earlier the same evening, Marci is discovered to be in bed with a tall, dark MAN in his late 30s. This is VLADIMIR DIMITRIEV, a Ukrainian emigree and local gangster.

Marci stirs awake and again in this locale is disoriented. She sits up, the bedclothes falling to her waist exposing her naked breasts.

She instinctively raises her arms to cover her breasts, but relaxes them upon noticing there is no-one around to see as Vlad is clearly passed out.

On the opposite side of the bed, Vlad snores loudly, his mouth agape. A puddle of drool has formed on the pillow beneath his mouth. Marci sneers in disgust as Vlad's exhaling breath causes ripples through the puddle of drool.

On the nightstand adjacent to Vlad's side of the bed are a set of HEROIN WORKS in a LEATHER CASE, a half-empty bottle of expensive RUSSIAN VODKA and a HAND GUN.

After recovering from a spell of dizziness, Marci looks over at the nightstand on her side of the bed and notices a fresh LINE OF COCAINE on a SMALL MIRROR, beside an empty BOTTLE of classified-growth RED BORDEAUX WINE.

Marci leans over, picks up a rolled TWENTY-DOLLAR BILL and snorts the line of cocaine. She sits up straight and shakes away the cobwebs.

Marci gingerly gets out of bed and begins to gather up her clothes that are scattered around the room.

She quickly slips on her PANTIES and a WIFE-BEATER, the rest of her clothes in a bundle under her arm, then carefully reaches over to Vlad's nightstand and retrieves both the vodka bottle and the gun.

Now in possession of a double-armload of stuff, Marci stealthily sneaks out of the room, nudging the slightly-ajar bedroom door open with her foot, stepping through, and closing it the same way.

INT. UPSTAIRS LANDING - NIGHT

Upon exiting the bedroom, Marci carefully puts down her bundle, save for her jeans, which she manages to pull on from a standing position.

Marci then descends to the second or third step of the stairs that the bedroom opens onto, sits and pulls her boots on. She then stands, slips the gun into the back of her jeans, pulls her jacket on and descends the stairs.

INT. GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

At the foot of the stairs is the great room of what is now revealed to be a recently constructed McMansion. The house is built adjacent to a man-made lake, moonlight reflecting off its surface can be seen through BAY WINDOWS at the opposite end of the room.

A 60" LED-TV is displaying the menu screen of a Blu-Ray porn movie in an endless loop, unnoticed by several MEN and WOMEN in various stages of undress, who all appear to be passed out or asleep.

The entire room appears to have a back-alley ambiance with numerous empty ALCOHOL CONTAINERS, half-eaten PLATES of FOOD, DRUG PARAPHERNALIA and SEX TOYS.

Upon descending the stairs, Marci pauses briefly to assess her route of egress. Confident that she will go unnoticed, she crosses the great room and adjacent foyer.

Marci carefully opens the front door and slips out into the night.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN PARK - NIGHT

Marci shudders at the recollection of events while still seated on the gently sloping park lawn.

Nearby, Marci spies the empty vodka bottle. More than a little disgusted with herself, she attempts to stand.

After a couple of aborted attempts, Marci manages to get to her feet.

As she brushes the dew from her clothes and attempts to make the best of her disheveled appearance, she is startled by the SOUND of an APPROACHING CAR.

## MARCI'S POV

The approaching car that catches Marci's attention turns out to be a POLICE CRUISER, traveling slowly along the street that separates the park from the adjacent neighborhood.

The police car turns on its SPOT LIGHT and it begins to cut swaths of illumination through the darkness of the park.

Marci notices a stand of trees nearby and bolts for their cover just as the police cruiser's spot light glints off the empty vodka bottle.

Marci, attempting to conceal herself behind a REDWOOD TREE, breathes a sigh of relief as the police cruiser extinguishes its spot light and drives on.

Satisfied that the police car is well out of range, Marci makes her way towards a bike path that leads in the opposite direction that the police car traveled.

## EXT. BIKE PATH - NIGHT

Marci walks unsteadily along the bike path which leads away from the park atop levee that straddles a CREEK on one side and a HOUSING SUBDIVISION on the other.

Marci notices that some of the homes whose back yards face the levee have black WROUGHT-IRON FENCES that allow a clear view of manicured lawns, patios and swimming pools.

As Marci walks, she progressively gets more unsteady & has to stop. Rubbing her eyes, she has a moment of recollection and pats down her pockets.

She withdraws a VIAL of COCAINE from one of her front pockets, unscrews its cap, dips her pinky finger into it, withdrawing a tiny mound of white powder on the underside of her fingernail.

Marci raises her pinky finger up to her nose and snorts the coke. After the initial rush clears her head, she replaces the vial and continues walking.

Nervous, high and still fairly drunk, Marci's eyes dart back and forth between the WIDE BOULEVARD on the opposite side of the creek and the backs of the homes facing the levee.

## MARCI'S POV

Marci notices that one of the homes with a wrought iron fence that allows a clear view of its back yard has its BACK PATIO DOOR wide open.

Marci stops in her tracks and begins to formulate a course of action. She decides to step off the bike path and descend the levy towards the home whose patio door is ajar.

The bank of the levy is quite steep, and on the way down, Marci practically does a face-plant, but manages to right herself.

Upon reaching the home's back fence, Marci attempts to scale it but is unable to do so, giving up when a neighbor's DOG begins to BARK.

Marci then hurriedly makes her way along the narrow strip of grass between the homes' back fences and the levee until she comes to an AUTOMOBILE OVERPASS.

Marci scales the bank of the overpass and easily hops its GUARD RAIL, stepping onto its side walk.

## EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Marci walks the short block leading from the overpass into the subdivision where her target house is located and turns right at the first intersection she comes to.

Marci continues walking along the street facing the row of homes that she was previously walking behind. As she passes the residences, she carefully counts the homes to identify the one whose back patio door was left open.

As the dark of night begins to give way to early dawn, Marci stops in front of the home whose back patio door is open. She stealthily makes her way up the home's driveway towards the WOODEN GATE that leads to the back yard.

Marci stands on her tip-toes and reaches over the top of the gate to release its LATCH, which fortunately for her is unlocked.

Marci carefully opens the back gate just barely enough for her slender frame to slide through, then carefully closes it.

EXT. BACK YARD - EARLY DAWN

Marci skirts the perimeter of the house until she has a clear view of the back yard. She manages a tight smile upon noticing that she counted correctly and this indeed is the home with the open patio door.

Marci takes a deep breath and tiptoes into the house through the patio door.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - EARLY DAWN

In the master bedroom at the opposite side of the house, asleep in their California King BED, are domestic partners NOAH SCHNEIDER and CHRIS HOLVECK. Both well-groomed and in their early thirties, they sleep soundly.

At the foot of their bed, also fast asleep, is their GOLDEN RETRIEVER, HOOVER.

INT. KITCHEN - EARLY DAWN

By now, Marci has made her way into the kitchen, which appears to have been her intent by the way she attempts to survey its amenities by the dim early dawn light.

Marci carefully removes the gun from her jeans and carefully places it atop the counter adjacent to the REFRIGERATOR.

Marci carefully opens the refrigerator and begins to survey its contents.

MARCI'S POV

Amongst the artisanal SALAD DRESSINGS, MARINADES, SAUCES, and TUPPERWARE CONTAINERS of unknown leftovers, Marci spots a cluster of craft BEER BOTTLES. However, sticking out amongst these artisanal brews is a 40-oz BOTTLE of COLT 45 MALT LIQUOR.

Marci furrows her brow at this incongruity and reaches for one of the craft beers.

Marci attempts to open the bottle, which much to her chagrin is not a twist off. She puts the bottle down very carefully and starts rummaging through the kitchen drawers in search of a bottle opener.

Upon discover the BOTTLE OPENER in the third drawer she opens, Marci freezes in mid-motion upon hearing a rhythmic CLICKING SOUND, approaching from nearby. She slowly turns in its direction.

MARCI'S POV

Hoover, the Golden Retriever comes trudging into the kitchen, failing to acknowledge Marci's presence.

Frozen in stark terror, Marci watches Hoover out through the corner of her eye as he heads straight for his FEEDING STATION where he stops and drinks greedily from his WATER DISH.

After Hoover drinks his fill, he turns 180-degrees and exits the kitchen the way he came, back to Chris & Noah's bedroom.

Marci manages to breathe out a sigh of relief, but since she neglected to close the refrigerator door, the silence is shattered by the SOUND of the REFRIGERATOR FAN coming to life.

This causes Marci's eyes to go wide and the blood to drain from her face. She immediately turns and closes the refrigerator door, which in turn makes a significantly louder SOUND than she anticipated when the REFRIGERATOR DOOR SAMS SHUT.

Marci curses under her breath, closes her eyes and freezes, beads of perspiration gathering on her brow.

INT. BEDROOM - DAWN

While Hoover and Chris continue to sleep undisturbed, Noah stirs, having been awakened by the sound of the refrigerator fan and subsequent closing of the appliance door.

Noah groggily rises on one elbow and looks around the bedroom, bleary eyed, turning towards the foot of the bed where Hoover usually parks himself.

NOAH

Hoover?

The dog fails to respond and while all else seems quiet, Noah decides to use this opportunity to relieve his bladder.

He first checks the IPHONE DOCKING STATION on his NIGHT STAND for the time, which reads 5:53am.

Noah slides out of bed and crosses around the foot board, stepping over the dog, who has arranged himself as a speed bump on the way to the master bath.

Noah enters the bathroom, lifts the toilet seat and urinates. He flushes, reaches behind the bathroom door for his BATH ROBE and slips it on before crossing through the bedroom on his way to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - DAWN

Marci, still frozen from the sound of the refrigerator door slamming, reacts once again to the SOUND of Noah's approaching FOOTSTEPS.

In a state of panic, she picks up the hand gun but otherwise remains motionless.

Noah steps into the kitchen and flips the LIGHT SWITCH to the on position.

As the OVERHEAD FLUORESCENT LIGHTS flicker on and bathe the kitchen in bright illumination, Marci and Noah come face to face with one another.

While Marci is the one with the gun, it is difficult to tell which one of them is more frightened.

After a beat of mutually stunned silence, Marci regains her composure and with drug and alcohol-fueled bravado stares Noah down with the most threatening look she can muster.

Noah, eyes transfixed on Marci's gun, begins quaking with fear, not noticing that Marci is shaking as well.

NOAH

What do you want?

Marci has to think about this for a moment since she herself doesn't really know.

MARCI

I don't know. What have you got?

Confused, Noah begins running a mental inventory of what he can offer this intruder.

NOAH

Uh, I've got about 60 bucks on me. How about a car?

Noah notices the beer bottle on the counter adjacent to the fridge.

NOAH

I see you've already helped yourself to the beer... How about something to eat?

This triggers a synapse in Marci's addled skull which reminds her why she is now standing in this stranger's kitchen.

MARCI

Okay... That's a start.

Not quite expecting to gain agreement so quickly, neither Marci nor Noah are sure what to do at this point and continue to stand immobile facing one another.

MARCI

Well?

NOAH

Look. I don't mean to piss you off, but what do you want? To eat, I mean.

Marci is not processing well and is annoyed that she has to make a decision.

MARCI

Just make me a plain omelet.

NOAH

Okay. I can do that.

While Noah crosses behind the kitchen island to the area nearest the fridge and stove, Marci moves counter-clockwise changing positions with him, keeping him at gunpoint.

While Noah has prepared omelets before, he has never done so at gunpoint and has difficulty formulating the required procedure. He begins to fumble around with INGREDIENTS & UTENSILS.

MARCI

Have you ever even made an omelet?

NOAH

Of course I have, just never while someone was pointing a gun at me.

In exasperation, Marci steps around the kitchen island to stand next to Noah, nudging him out of the way. She places the gun down on the counter.

MARCI

Pay attention. You might learn something.

Marci goes to work cracking EGGS into a PYREX BOWL and whisking them with a FORK.

NOAH

Sorry about my lack of culinary chops.  
I work front-of-house.

Marci freezes mid-motion, recognizing the restaurant parlance & turns to face Noah.

MARCI

Wait. You're a waiter?

NOAH

Yes. Yes I am.

MARCI

Shit. Of all the houses I had to break into.

Marci finishes whisking the eggs and places a NON-STICK PAN atop one of the stove's burners, igniting it.

Noah takes a long hard look at Marci and manages to crack a slight smile in recognition.

NOAH

Wait a second. I think I know you.

MARCI

Well, if you're in the business, I wouldn't be surprised. It's a small town.

Noah tries to place Marci and snaps his fingers a couple of times to jog his memory.

NOAH

You're the Sauté Slut!

Marci has picked up the bowl with the beaten eggs & is about to dump them into the skillet.

MARCI

Marci. My name is Marci.

NOAH

Sorry. Marci. You used to work at Quenelle.

MARCI

If you're front-of-house, how the heck would you know?

Marci puts two and two together and realizes that Noah is a waiter at Quenelle, the restaurant she was let go from. Her head starts to spin.

Just then, Chris, with Hoover at his side, enter the kitchen. They are unnoticed until Chris speaks, his tone influenced by the unusual situation he stumbles upon.

CHRIS

What's going on here?

Marci and Noah, startled, pivot in Chris's direction. Marci releases her grip on the bowl full of beaten eggs & it falls to the floor. The pyrex bounces and doesn't shatter, but the raw eggs ooze all over the floor tiles.

Hoover instantly springs into action and trots over to the area where the eggs have spilled, commencing to lap them up.

CHRIS

Dog...

Panicked, Marci picks up the gun from the counter and points it at Chris, whose eyes go wide at the sight of the weapon and his hands spring into the air.

CHRIS

Holy shit! Don't shoot!

MARCI

Don't move and I wont.

NOAH

(turning to Marci)

Uh, Marci... This is Chris.

Marci nods nervously in Chris's direction. All the while, the dog continues to suck up the spilled eggs.

NOAH

(to Chris)

Chris, this is the Sauté Slut... I mean Marci. She used to work at Quenelle.

Chris relaxes slightly upon realizing that his partner knows this deranged, heavily armed woman.

CHRIS

Pleased to meet you.

By this time, Hoover has finished lapping up the eggs, at which point he saunters over to Chris and lays down at his feet, exuding a snort upon making contact with the ground.

CHRIS

Home security animal...

(to Noah)

Noah, why does your friend have a gun?

Before Noah can answer, Marci steps around the kitchen island to stand at equal distance between Chris & Noah.

MARCI

Okay. Both of you. Behind the counter.

Chris steps around the counter to stand beside Noah. Hoover gets up and follows his human, again laying down at his feet.

MARCI

Okay. Let's try this again. Pick up the bowl and make me a proper omelet.

Chris, having arrived late to the party, is having difficulty adjusting to the dynamic between Marci, himself and his parter.

CHRIS

(to Noah)

How did you say you knew this person?

Noah has already sprung into action, having turned off the burner under the skillet, the butter contained therein having already turned "noisette."

NOAH

Uh, Marci used to be a line cook at Quenelle.

Noah hands Chris the skillet.

NOAH

You wanna rinse this out?

Noah then turns to Marci.

NOAH

Why did you leave? Were you looking for a lifestyle change?

MARCI

No. They canned my ass.

While Chris rinses out the skillet, Noah gets to work scrambling a new set of eggs.

NOAH

How did that happen? Your plates were always spot-on.

MARCI

It's a long story. And I think I'm going to need that beer now.

By this time, Chris has finished rinsing out the skillet and has placed it back on the burner.

Noah, still whisking the eggs, motions Chris in the direction of the beer and the adjacent bottle opener. Chris acts accordingly and tries to hand both items to Marci.

MARCI

Open it.

Chris does as instructed and hands the open beer to Marci, who grabs it with her free hand. Meanwhile, Noah has re-ignited the burner beneath the skillet and has begun to melt a fresh pat of butter.

Simultaneously, Marci begins to pound her beer, observed wryly by Chris.

CHRIS

Don't you know that alcohol and firearms don't mix?

Marci ignores Chris's comment & smacks her lips at the beer she has just consumed.

MARCI

Wow. Hoppy.

Noah dumps the newly scrambled eggs in the skillet.

NOAH

Yeah. That's the 90-Minute IPA. You've got to be careful with that stuff. It'll sneak up on you.

CHRIS

So, Marci. Is it Marci?

MARCI

Yeah. What?

CHRIS

What are you doing here? I mean, what do you want from us?

MARCI

Well, for now, I need you to cook me breakfast. Then we'll take it from there.

Now slightly more relaxed, Noah is handling the omelet preparation a little more deftly. He is about to fold the eggs over in half, but Marci steps over and places her hand on his, forcing the pan back down on the stove.

MARCI

Here. Instead of doing it in half, try it like this...

Marci puts the gun down on the counter, an action which Chris immediately notices. She picks up the pan, folding the omelet over in quarters to make a perfect square.

MARCI

Plate.

Chris reaches into the overhead cupboard and withdraws a dinner plate. Marcy relieves him of it and with one swift motion slides the omelet onto the plate.

Marci begins to season the omelet with SALT & PEPPER.

Again plainly aware that Marci has put the gun down on the counter, Chris moves in a little closer towards her.

CHRIS

So if you don't mind me asking, do you frequently break-and-enter when you get hungry?

Marci grabs a fork and tucks into her omelet.

NOAH

Coffee?

Busy chewing, Marci shakes her head "no" then turns to Chris, her mouth still half full of chewed egg.

MARCI

I didn't break-and-enter. You guys left your patio door open.

Irritated, Chris turns to Noah.

CHRIS

Noah! God damn it!

NOAH

I'm sorry! Hoover keeps waking me up in the middle of the night for Golden Retriever tinkle.

MARCI

Golden Retriever tinkle? As opposed to Dachshund tinkle?

Marci's response is barely intelligible through the constant mouthful of food.

CHRIS

Jesus, girl. Chew your food.

Marci again ignores Chris and takes her last bite, followed by a quick swallow. She then notices Chris staring at the hand gun, so she places her hand upon it.

MARCI

Don't get any funny ideas.

CHRIS

Uh... Now that you've had your breakfast, I guess you'll be on your way?

MARCI

I said we'd start with breakfast. Come to think of it, that omelet didn't cut it. What kind of meat do you guys have?

Chris and Noah exchange glances, running a mental inventory of their refrigerator's contents.

NOAH

Bacon?

Marci's eyes light up.

MARCI

Bacon.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

A bundle of MEAT, encased in BUTCHER PAPER hits the kitchen counter with a THUD. Its adhesive label proclaims it as KUROBUTA PORK BACON, EXTRA-THICK.

Marci begins to unwrap the package enthusiastically while Noah stands at her side and Chris sits on the opposite side of the island on a high KITCHEN STOOL, Hoover again at his feet.

MARCI

You guys are lucky you buy your bacon from a butcher. If you tried to serve me that packaged shit, I'd have to shoot you both.

NOAH

Front of house is not a euphemism for stupid.

While speaking, Noah wipes down the nonstick skillet and reignites the burner.

MARCI

What are you doing?

NOAH

What does it look like?

Marci turns off the burner and motions to Chris.

MARCI

Hey, you...

CHRIS

Chris?

MARCI

Sorry. Chris. Get me a baking sheet and spread some foil on it.

Chris, trying hard not to betray his annoyance, slips down off the stool and crosses around to the opposite side of the island where he begins rummaging around for the requested bake ware.

NOAH

Baked bacon?

MARCI

Yeah. You don't know what you've been missing.

Marci finishes unwrapping the bacon and admires its quality with satisfaction. By this time, Chris has handed her the prepared foil-coated baking sheet.

Marci studies the average-sized baking sheet and compares it against the two-pound package of bacon.

MARCI

What we really need here is a hotel pan. Time to play bacon Tetris.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Chris and Noah watch attentively as Marci manages to arrange the entire two pounds-worth of slices so that they fit on the rack without overlapping.

CHRIS

Marci. Honestly. Have you ever fired a gun?

Annoyed that Chris would have the temerity to ask such a question, Marci delivers her response with proportional bravado.

MARCI

Of course I have. When I was 17, my dad took me on safari in Kenya. My first time out I bagged a tiger.

Chris reacts skeptically.

MARCI

Would you like me to shoot an apple off your head?

CHRIS

Uh, no. That's okay. I believe you.

The tension is broken when the oven BEEPS to signal that it has been pre-heated. The three humans, along with Hoover, react to the electronic chirps.

NOAH  
Oven's ready.

MARCI  
Well, Throw 'em in.

Noah opens the oven door and slides the baking sheet in.

NOAH  
What should I set the timer for?

MARCI  
Don't worry. I'll know when they're done.

CHRIS  
Look, Marci. I need to shower and go to work. What can we do for you so you can get on your way? Do you need money? We've got money. Do you need a ride somewhere? We can take you.

Marci displays irritation at being asked to explain herself and make yet another decision.

MARCI  
I just need to figure things out.

CHRIS  
Can't you do that some place else?

MARCI  
No god damn it! I need to do it here and neither of you are going anywhere until I do.

Noah puts his hand on Chris's arm in attempt to prevent him from making another provocative statement. He then makes a motion to put a hand on Marci's shoulder but thinks better of it at the last second.

NOAH  
That's okay, Marci. Take it easy. Chris can call in sick, can't you, Chris?

CHRIS  
Sure. I'll call in sick.

Marci is crashing hard after the coke and alcohol have worn off and has a bad case of sleep deprivation. It's apparent to both Noah & Chris that she's in bad shape.

MARCI

Look, do you guys have something to take the edge off?

Noah considers this and turns to Chris.

NOAH

Stash box. Stat.

Chris reacts contrarily, but is met with a stern look from Noah and shrugs in acquiescence. He gets up from his seat and moves into the adjacent family room.

Marci rests her head in the palm of her hand with her eyes closed, arousing Noah's concern.

NOAH

Are you alright?

MARCI

Terrific.

Chris returns a few moments later with an ornate WOODEN BOX which he presents to Noah.

Noah opens it to reveal several fat, perfectly rolled JOINTS, along with a CONTAINER of MEDICAL MARIJUANA and a LIGHTER. He extracts one of the joints and hands it to Marci, who lethargically receives it.

NOAH

You have to be careful with this. It's called Trainwreck.

MARCI

Hey. I'm a cook.

Marci brings the joint to her lips as Noah ignites it with the lighter. Marci takes a healthy drag.

CHRIS

Next time I'm at a Zagat three-star, I'll anticipate that half the kitchen staff are probably stoned.

Marci exhales, instantly relaxed.

MARCI

Which one of you has the 'scrip?

CHRIS

It's mine. For chronic back pain.

MARCI

(skeptically)

Really?

CHRIS

Yes. Really.

The extra-strong medicinal cannabis goes to work on Marci and her eyes begin to resemble those of Kristen Stewart.

MARCI

Wow. This is good shit.

NOAH

Told you. You feeling better now?

MARCI

Yes. Thank you. In fact, we're going to need something to pair that bacon with.

Chris realizes the implication of this and looks at his WRIST WATCH.

CHRIS

Marci, it's not even 7 o'clock!

MARCI

Chris, don't you need to call your office?

Chris becomes flustered at the prospect of forced participation in what looks to become an all-day binge, but Noah tilts his head in the direction of the kitchen TELEPHONE urging Chris to make the call.

MARCI

And don't try calling the cops. I'll be listening.

Resigned, Chris shrugs and moves in the direction of the phone to call in sick.

MARCI

So, Mr. Sommelier. What would you recommend to pair well with a large rasher of your finest bacon?

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A thick-glass ultra-premium WINE BOTTLE is placed firmly down on the kitchen counter.

Marci, seated at the counter with Noah standing nearby, picks up the bottle and examines it.

MARCI

Syrah. Nice.

NOAH

It's super-concentrated, but it's also got a little bit of that gamy funk you get from Northern Rhones. It should play well off the bacon.

Chris steps toward Marci and attempts to wrestle the bottle away from her but she pulls it towards herself.

CHRIS

Noah, that's a hundred dollar bottle of wine!

Marci puts down the bottle and picks up the gun, half-jokingly.

MARCI

Is that all your life is worth, Chris?  
A hundred bucks?

NOAH

Please, Chris. Don't get yourself shot over a bottle of wine.

Marci puts down the gun and hands the bottle over to Chris for opening.

MARCI

And it's not like I'm going to drink the whole thing.

Noah goes to work opening the wine bottle.

NOAH

Chris, could you get the Riedel glasses for me?

CHRIS

Okay, but if you break 'em, you buy 'em.

Chris retreats to collect the wine glasses while Noah places the CORK down in front of Marci. She examines the cork, admiring its dark purple tip and no indication of seepage.

MARCI

You guys know how to store your wine.

NOAH

We have a Vinotemp in the garage.

Marci raises her head and sniffs the air.

MARCI

Bacon's done.

She slips off her stool, grabs the pistol, and crosses around the island to retrieve the bacon from the oven.

At that precise moment, Chris returns with three huge crystal WINE GLASSES, each of which could probably hold an entire bottle, and places them on the kitchen counter.

With a pair of TONGS, Marci picks the bacon off the baking sheet and places it atop an OVAL PLATTER while Noah pours a taste of the wine into Marci's glass.

CHRIS

Do you have any idea how farcical this is? We're probably already guilty of aiding and abetting.

NOAH

Please. Just roll with it. I'm sure everything's going to work out fine.

While Marci finishes plating the bacon, Hoover sits attentively at her side, hoping some of the meat will magically fall onto the floor.

Marci makes eye contact with the dog, whose expression melts her heart.

MARCI  
I love your dog.

Marci picks up a piece of the bacon and feeds it to Hoover, who inhales it joyfully.

CHRIS  
Oh, you're in trouble now...

Marci carries the platter in one hand, the handgun in the other, Hoover trotting behind her as she again crosses around the island and places the platter between herself, Noah and Chris.

Marci then picks up her glass, swirls, sniffs and sips.

MARCI  
Awesome.

She puts her glass down and Noah pours for all three of them. Marci then picks up her full pour, prompting Chris and Noah to do the same.

MARCI  
Mud in your eye...

The three unlikely dining companions sip their wine, Chris doing so a bit more hesitantly than Marci or Noah.

After swallowing her wine, Marci picks up a strip of bacon and takes a large bite out of it, again prompting Noah & Chris to do the same.

MARCI  
Are both you guys waiters?

NOAH  
Chris isn't.

CHRIS  
I work in telco. I'm an engineer.

MARCI  
(looking around)  
I was wondering how you could afford these digs and all this stuff.

CHRIS

It's my house. Noah buys most of the goodies.

NOAH

Yeah, but I pay half the mortgage and utilities.

CHRIS

(snickering)

On a sliding scale.

MARCI

I thought you guys were like a couple.

NOAH

We are.

MARCI

It's none of my business, but don't you guys, you know, feel like formalizing things?

CHRIS

You're right. It's none of your business.

NOAH

Chris likes things the way they are.

MARCI

Look, I think marriage and ownership are bullshit institutions, but without that piece of paper, everything is temporary.

CHRIS

You broke into our house and are now force-feeding us bacon and Syrah. I don't think you're in any position to offer financial or relationship advice.

NOAH

She didn't break in.

CHRIS

A minor technicality.

Marci finishes the piece of bacon she was working on and chases it with a healthy swallow of Syrah, sucking air in through her teeth to facilitate the aeration process. She smacks her lips in satisfaction.

MARCI

I need to take a leak.

CHRIS

Bathroom's down the hall on your left.

MARCI

Uh, Chris. I think you're failing to understand the dynamic of our relationship, you being my prisoners and all.

CHRIS

Is that what we are?

MARCI

For lack of a better term...

CHRIS

So I suppose you want us to accompany you?

NOAH

I think that's what she has in mind.

Marci slides down off her stool and with her gun, motions Chris and Noah in the direction of the bathroom.

MARCI

The dog doesn't have to come with.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Chris and Noah enter the bathroom first, not really frightened although Chris does look annoyed. Marci brings up the rear, casually guiding them at gunpoint.

Chris and Noah automatically turn their backs Marci and stand against the shower stall while she puts her gun down on the vanity and raises the toilet seat.

MARCI

I had a feeling I wasn't going to have to ask you guys to give me some privacy.

CHRIS

My dear, you wouldn't be the first girl I've seen naked.

Marci pulls down her jeans, then her panties and sits on the toilet.

MARCI

Noah, what do you think about your boyfriend swinging both ways?

NOAH

Chris used to be one of those guys who thought sleeping with women would make him more popular.

CHRIS

You try being on a high school baseball team in Roseville and coming out. I was a kid. I didn't know any better.

MARCI

I'm going to start calling you guys George & Martha.

Marci finishes urinating and wipes herself off. She pulls her pants back on and flushes the toilet. She then pauses a moment and sniffs her bare underarm.

MARCI

Oh man. I need a shower.

CHRIS

Oh? How are you going to manage that?

Marci contemplates the logistics of taking a shower while keeping an eye on her prisoners.

MARCI

Do you guys have any Ziploc bags?

NOAH

Quart or gallon?

Marci holds up the gun and attempts to determine what size of bag would accommodate it.

MARCI

Better make it a gallon. I might have trouble pulling the trigger otherwise.

In spite of Marci's wry delivery, this is one of the more threatening things Chris & Noah have heard her say and react accordingly, their backs still turned towards her.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The SOUND of the SHOWER RUNNING is heard emanating from behind the closed bathroom door.

Hoover sits attentively outside the bathroom door, hoping to be let inside. He whimpers slightly & paws the door.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Chris and Noah lean against the vanity, waiting for Marci to finish her shower. Chris impatiently looks at his watch again.

From behind the shower curtain, Marci can be HEARD switching the flow of water from the SHOWER HEAD back to the FAUCET and turning the water off.

A moment later, Marci's arm protrudes through the SHOWER CURTAIN holding the hand gun in a Ziploc STORAGE BAG. She waves the gun from side-to-side.

MARCI

(O.S.)

Bath robe, please.

Noah removes a BATH ROBE from a HOOK behind the bathroom door and hands the robe to Marci through the shower curtain.

Offscreen, Marci slips on the bath robe and emerges from the shower stall.

MARCI

Towel, please.

Noah hands her a BATH TOWEL which she wraps around her now-clean wet hair. She then reaches back into the shower stall to retrieve her plastic-encased hand gun.

MARCI

That feels much better.

CHRIS

Okay. What now, Marci?

Marci contemplates her options, the shower seeming to have cleared her head, allowing her to come to a quick decision.

MARCI

What say we kill that bottle, smoke a joint and throw on a movie.

Noah is actually amused by this suggestion, while Chris is again annoyed, but knows better than to object.

Chris opens the bathroom door and motions Marci towards it.

MARCI

After you.

Outside the door, Hoover is doing a happy dolphin dance, delighted to be reunited with his people.

Chris and Noah exit the bathroom, followed by Marci, who is in the process of extracting the gun from its storage bag.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Hoover is the first to enter, excitedly leading the way for Chris, who holds two of the wine glasses; Noah, holding the other as well as the half-full bottle; and Marci bringing up the rear, joint dangling from her lips and gun in hand.

The living room is adorned with two large SOFAS arranged in a L-shaped configuration directly across from a 60" LED-TV. Against a side wall is a BOOK CASE packed with dozens of DVDs and BLU-RAY discs.

Chris & Noah put down the wine glasses and bottle on a coffee table in front of the sofa.

Marci notices the media shelf and begins to take in its contents while simultaneously taking a hit off the joint.

MARCI

Woah. This is quite a collection.

Marci hands the joint to Noah, who also takes a hit.

CHRIS

Please. Feel free with my medication.

Noah attempts to hold in the smoke and speak at the same time, causing small billows to escape with each word.

NOAH

Chris is something of a film geek.

MARCI

Cool. I like you better already. Who's your favorite director?

CHRIS

No one in particular. I'm more a fan of the hostage crisis genre.

Marci glares back at Chris.

MARCI

Funny.

Marci turns back to examining the media collection while Noah offers the joint to Chris.

NOAH

Here. This might mellow you out.

Chris resigns to taking a hit and handing it back to Noah, who in turn hands it back to Marci.

MARCI'S POV

Taking up an entire shelf is every possible incarnation of STAR TREK, including all the TV series and the movies.

MARCI

Jeez. Do you guys have enough Star Trek?

CHRIS

What's wrong with Star Trek?

MARCI

Nothing. I love Star Trek. I have a total crush on Patrick Stewart.

NOAH

So does Chris.

Marci spots something on one of the shelves that entices her. She reaches for the SLIP-CASE and withdraws it from the shelf, examining the cover art. It is Darren Aronofsky's REQUIEM FOR A DREAM, a profoundly dark and depressing film.

MARCI

Requiem for a Dream! I love this movie!

CHRIS

Fine, uplifting entertainment for the whole family.

MARCI

It's in your collection...

CHRIS

Don't get me wrong, it's a fine film, but wouldn't you rather select something a little less bleak?

MARCI

(declaratively)

Noah, you don't mind if we watch this. Do you?

NOAH

Uh, no. I've never seen it.

Marci hands the DVD to Chris.

MARCI

Two against one. Fire it up.

Again resigned, Chris rises, passing Noah on the way to the SHELF containing the BLU-RAY PLAYER, adjacent to the big screen.

CHRIS  
Accomplice.

CUT TO:

ANGLE ON BLU-RAY PLAYER

The disc tray slides open and Chris places the DISC in the tray and shoves the tray closed.

Marci and Noah, wine glasses in hand, are seated on the sofa parallel to the TV screen, anticipating the start of the movie. The hand gun is in Marci's lap.

Chris returns from activating the Blu-Ray player and sits next to Hoover on the sofa perpendicular to the TV.

As the film begins, Hoover promptly rolls over on the couch next to Chris & promptly goes to sleep.

Marci, Noah and Chris watch attentively as the opening credits roll.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Around two hours later, Noah, Chris, their captor and dog are all occupying precisely the same positions as when the film began. Hoover is still asleep and Marci has nodded off.

The wine glasses and original bottle are empty, but a SECOND BOTTLE, half full, also stands on the coffee table.

Chris's expression is unchanged, having seen the film before, while Noah's mouth is agape, clearly having been affected by the profoundly disturbing film.

Chris notices that Marci has nodded off and leans over to nudge Noah to make him aware of her dozing state. The handgun remains in her lap.

CHRIS  
(sotto)  
Noah. Hey. Look.

It takes a moment for Noah to return to the comfort of his living room from the dark journey the film has taken him on, but he finally turns to face Chris.

NOAH

What?

CHRIS

Shhhh!

Chris gestures again toward Marci, and particularly the gun in her lap.

CHRIS

(sotto)

The gun. Grab the gun.

In spite of Marci's semi-conscious state and her less-than-totally threatening demeanor, Noah is uncomfortable with this suggested action.

Noah bites his lip and looks pleadingly at Chris, who returns his look with one of stern encouragement. After a beat, Noah decides to go for it and begins to reach towards Marci's lap.

Just then, Marci jolts awake, eyes looking sleepy, and tries to get her bearings. Noah quickly withdraws his arm, unnoticed.

CHRIS

Shit.

Although Noah is well within the grips of Stockholm Syndrome, he too is annoyed not only at his failed attempt to grab the gun but also that Marci made him sit through this dour film.

MARCI

Is it over?

NOAH

Yes, thank god.

MARCI

I think I fell asleep right before Sara got electroshock therapy and Harry got his arm amputated. Bummer, though. Do you mind if we rewind it? That's such a good sequence.

NOAH

Yes. We mind. What possessed you to make us sit through that?

MARCI

I don't know, it's just a good movie.

NOAH

Just shoot us now and get it over with.

CHRIS

Told you.

Marci is genuinely concerned that the film affected Noah so negatively and puts one hand on his arm while holding the gun in the other.

MARCI

Oh, sweetie. I'm sorry.

NOAH

Was the reason you wanted to see it because you could relate?

CHRIS

Noah. Relax.

Rather than get angry at Noah's interrogative, Marci feels genuinely bummed at having upset him and puts the gun back in her lap.

MARCI

No. It's alright. Wow. What a bummer.

Marci stands to face both Chris and Noah. Hoover also awakens from his slumber to face this wild woman in a bathrobe and towel in her hair brandishing a firearm.

MARCI

Hey, guys. Let me get dressed and I'll make you something to eat.

Chris and Noah remain seated. In spite of the firearm, Marci no longer seems the least bit threatening. Recognizing the degree to which they take her seriously has diminished, Marci ratchets up her aggressiveness.

MARCI

Okay, guys. You know the drill.

She beckons them to stand by waving the gun in a vertical direction. Chris and Noah stand and start moving in the direction of the bathroom, followed by Hoover and Marci bringing up the rear.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Noah and Chris are marched back into the kitchen by Marci, who now appears almost normal. She motions them to sit at the kitchen counter.

MARCI

Have a seat, guys.

They do as instructed while Marci heads toward the refrigerator, opens it and begins rummaging around.

MARCI

Okay. Let's see what we have here. Do you guys know what you want?

NOAH

I'm still trying to digest all the bacon we ate.

CHRIS

Something on the lighter side might be preferable.

MARCI

Okay. What do you have for veg?

NOAH

Check the crisper.

Marci bends down and slides the crisper open, her face instantly displaying an expression of shock.

MARCI'S POV

Arranged amongst CUCUMBERS, ROMAINE LETTUCE and MUSHROOMS, are three barely ripe BEEFSTEAK TOMATOES.

Marci picks up one of the tomatoes and turns accusingly toward Noah and Chris, holding up the offending fruit.

MARCI

What is this?

CHRIS

A tomato.

MARCI

That's debatable. Number one, you don't store tomatoes in the fridge. It permanently kills their flavor. Number two, this thing is barely ripe. Number three, this is frickin' November. You eat tomatoes past September, you don't deserve them even when they're in season. Number four, these probably came from a hot house in Mexico.

CHRIS

So?

MARCI

Don't you care about your carbon footprint?

NOAH

I just want to say for the record that those aren't my tomatoes.

MARCI

That doesn't let you off the hook. As a culinary professional, you should protect Chris from his own deluded ignorance.

CHRIS

What are you, a food cop?

MARCI

Yes. And you're under arrest. Doesn't it bother you that these things have no flavor?

CHRIS

I cut them up and use them in a Caesar salad. And on burgers. They taste fine to me.

NOAH

Oh boy.

MARCI

Tomatoes? In a Caesar? I suppose you're going to tell me you use bottled dressing.

CHRIS

Cardini's. It's awesome.

MARCI

You know, I don't know which one of you is the more egregious violator. You or your complicit partner. Noah, you know how to make a tableside Caesar.

NOAH

Of course. With my eyes closed.

MARCI

Then enlighten the man. Oh, I can see that my work is far from done here.

Marci tosses the tomato at Chris, who grabs it out of the air like an outfielder.

MARCI

Nice catch.

Marci goes back to the refrigerator and resumes her rummaging.

MARCI

You know what we need in here is some music.

NOAH

I can fix that.

Noah moves over to an IPOD DOCKING STATION at the opposite end of the kitchen counter. He picks up the iPod and starts spinning its jog wheel.

NOAH

Do you have a preference, Chef?

Marci turns to face Noah, pleased that he referred to her by her professional title.

MARCI

Wow. Chef. Thanks for that. Just no Grateful Dead, Phish or Billy Joel.

NOAH

I don't think we have any of that.

ANGLE ON IPOD

Noah is about to put on a Coldplay mix.

MARCI

And no Coldplay.

CHRIS

What's wrong with Coldplay?

MARCI

You guys are so predictable.

Noah alters his selection and puts the iPod back in its docking station. Moments later, the unmistakable saxophone of CHARLIE PARKER pours from the docking station speakers. Marci instantly recognizes the player.

MARCI

Bird. Nice.

The mood in the kitchen is instantly diffused by the soothing sounds of CHARLIE PARKER WITH STRINGS, and Marci begins to sway with the music while continuing to inspect the refrigerator.

Noah sits back down next to Chris at the kitchen counter & Chris leans in close to whisper in his ear.

NOAH

Did you hide it?

CHRIS

Hide what?

NOAH

You know...

CHRIS

Oh shit. When did I have a chance?

At almost the exact moment, Marci discovers an OVAL-SHAPED ONE POUND BUNDLE wrapped in BUTCHER PAPER and hidden behind a JAR OF MAYONNAISE. The package is unmarked.

MARCI

Hello. What have we here?

Noah and Chris instantly become aware that Marci has discovered the item they were hoping she wouldn't.

CHRIS

You know, Marci, I could really go for some potato skins.

Marci dismisses Chris's request as another culinary offense and places the mystery package on the counter.

MARCI

Not on my watch.

Marci begins to unwrap the package and freezes when she discovers its contents.

MARCI

Oh, you bad boys...

MARCI'S POV

Laying atop the unwrapped butcher paper is a perfectly formed one-pound lobe of FOIE GRAS duck liver, banned in California.

MARCI

Where did you guys get this?

Chris and Noah have joined Marci at the shrine of Foie Gras.

NOAH

Please put it back. You can have anything else.

MARCI

You know, it would be a shame for me not to cook this thing right now.

Chris suddenly sees Marci's discovery as a potential opportunity.

CHRIS

Why not? She knows what she's doing.

MARCI

Seriously. You can't take any chances with something like this.

CHRIS

If we let you cook it will you leave?

NOAH

Chris!

MARCI

Deal.

Before he can offer another rebuttal, Chris is interrupted by someone banging on the glass patio door. Stunned, Marci, Noah & Chris all turn in its direction.

Standing behind the glass door is an African-American male in his late 30s. This is IKE BUTTERMAN, Noah and Chris's next-door neighbor. Hoover recognizes his friend and does another happy dolphin dance at the foot of the patio door.

Ike holds an economy-size package of USDA-Prime FILET MIGNON STEAKS which he holds up to the glass, pointing towards the meat and grinning widely.

MARCI

(panicked)

Who is that?

Chris and Noah smile and wave at their friend, and while Noah looks genuinely happy to see Ike, Chris looks a little bit annoyed, suggesting that this is not Ike's first unannounced visit.

NOAH

That's Ike. Our neighbor.

CHRIS

We've got to get rid of him.

Marci spots her gun on the counter, opens the drawer directly beneath it and sweeps the gun into the drawer amidst other small appliances, bumping the drawer closed with her hip.

Hoover begins scratching at the patio door, wanting Ike to be let in.

MARCI

Aren't you going to let him in?

NOAH

You want us to let him in?

MARCI

Look what he's holding.

NOAH

Yeah. Wouldn't you rather cook those instead of the Foie Gras?

MARCI

I've got something else in mind.

Meanwhile, Ike begins to wonder why his two friends are standing transfixed in the kitchen beside an unfamiliar woman while their dog is going nuts on the opposite side of the patio door.

NOAH

We're being rude. I'm going to let him in.

Noah starts toward the patio door while Chris turns to Marci.

CHRIS

Okay. What do you have in mind?

MARCI

Something straight out of the Escoffier playbook.

Noah slides the patio door open much to both Ike and Hoover's satisfaction.

IKE

Hey, my man. Am I interrupting anything?

CHRIS

(to Marci)

Who or what is Escoffier?

Marci does not bother answering and prepares to be introduced to Ike, adjusting her expression with a genuine yet slightly nervous smile.

NOAH

No. C'mon in. We're just hanging with a friend of mine from work.

Ike enters with Hoover dancing at his side and heads into the kitchen towards Chris & Marci.

IKE

I saw both your cars out front so I figured you were both hung over and called in sick. And, I just got back from a Costco run.

Ike places the large styrofoam tray of beef filets on the kitchen counter.

IKE

If you gentlemen...

Ike notices Marci, who after bathing looks half-way presentable, although she'd look good even if dragged backwards through a keyhole. Being a ladies' man, Ike slips into Lando Calrissian mode.

IKE

...and lady would care to, I was going to suggest we grill these up.

NOAH

Ike, this is Marci. She used to be a chef at Quenelle.

Ike steps over to Marci and extends his hand, and instead of shaking it, raises it to his face and plants a kiss on it.

IKE

Isaac Butterman. A santé, madame.

MARCI

(amused & charmed)

Hi.

IKE

I love Quenelle. Noah sure knows how to hook a brother up. Why'd you leave?

CHRIS

Marci's currently figuring things out. Right, Marci?

IKE

Aha. Moving up the ladder.

MARCI

Something like that.

IKE

So what do you say? Shall we do some grilling?

MARCI

May I make a suggestion?

IKE

Naturally, I defer to your expertise.

MARCI

Boys, prepare to go back in time.

Ike, and even Chris, are intrigued by Marci's statement while Noah grins slightly, pretty sure what she has in mind.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Marci, Noah and Chris, now joined by Ike, stand before the mound of Foie Gras, with Hoover sitting hopefully at their feet.

Noah holds as IPAD which is displaying a page from WIKIPEDIA.

NOAH

(reading aloud)

Tournedos Rossini is a French steak dish, purportedly created for the composer Gioachino Rossini by French master chef Marie-Antoine Carême. The dish comprises a tournedos (filet mignon) of beef, pan-fried in butter, served on a crouton, and topped with a hot slice of fresh whole foie gras briefly pan-fried at the last minute. The dish is garnished with slices of black truffle, and finished with a Madeira demi-glace sauce.

IKE

I'm glad I refilled my Lipitor prescription.

NOAH

I think we're going to have to substitute some ingredients.

MARCI

I figured as much. The Madeira and the black truffles are probably a wash, am I right?

NOAH

Closest thing we have to Madeira is Port.

MARCI

That might work in a pinch, but it's a different flavor profile.

CHRIS

Don't we have some truffle oil?

MARCI

Truffle oil? Please.

IKE

I'm going to take a seat and let you experts do your thing.

Ike moves toward the refrigerator, opens its door and withdraws the 40oz COLT 45 BOTTLE. He crosses to the opposite side of the island & takes a seat at the kitchen counter, opening the bottle & drinking directly from it.

Marci watches in amusement.

MARCI

That should pair nicely.

Chris elects to join Ike at the kitchen counter. As soon as he sits, Ike offers him the Colt 45. Chris shrugs and takes a big swig, his face contorting.

Marci rips open the package of filets and examines them. She then hands one of the meat-baseballs to Noah.

MARCI

These are the right circumference but too thick. Could you slice them in half for me?

NOAH

Will do.

Noah places the meat on a cutting board and goes to work on a big Wusthoff CHEF'S KNIFE with a sharpening steel. Unfortunately, he scrapes the steel against the blade at too oblique an angle. Aghast, Marci stops him.

MARCI

If I ever see you doing that again I'm going to have to beat you about the head and shoulders.

Marci takes the blade and the steel from Noah and shows him how it's done, scraping the blade with the steel at a parallel angle. She then hands the items back to Noah, who mimics her actions slowly at first, then gets into the rhythm of it.

NOAH

How's this?

MARCI

Perfect.

While Noah goes to work on the steaks, Marci begins rummaging around the kitchen looking for ingredients. She spots a large clear glass CANDY JAR full of GUMMY BEARS.

MARCI

Oh. This is interesting.

NOAH

What?

MARCI

I could make a reduction out of these.

NOAH

Tournedos Rossini with a gummy bear reduction? Are you serious?

MARCI

I've done it before. A little Worcestershire sauce, a little vinegar, some veal stock, maybe a little tarragon...

CHRIS

You're not still stoned, are you?

Marci picks up the candy jar and places it in front of Ike and Chris.

MARCI

You guys can help by separating out the red ones.

CHRIS

There's two kinds of red ones. Light and dark.

MARCI

The dark ones are cherry, right?

CHRIS

I wouldn't exactly call them cherry. They're dark red.

MARCI

But are they the kind made with pectin or with bovine gelatin? The pectin kind won't work.

CHRIS

I'm pretty sure these are the real deal. Cow hooves and sugar.

IKE

What are you, some kind of gummy bear connoisseur?

Chris dumps several dozen gummy bears out on the table and begins sorting them.

CHRIS

You could say that.

NOAH

Chris. Tell them about the time you almost OD'd on those things.

IKE

This I got to hear.

CHRIS

(slightly embarrassed)

A few years ago I ran a 10k and when the race was over I ate about a pound of gummy bears chased with a couple of diet cokes...

MARCI

Did you explode?

NOAH

No, but we had to drive to Reno that morning and somewhere around Truckee, Chris started feeling a little lightheaded and had to pull over.

CHRIS

I had this little Honda Del Sol at the time with a manual transmission that Noah didn't know how to drive.

NOAH

Fortunately it was mostly down hill at that point.

IKE

That's awesome.

Chris, still in the process of separating out the dark-colored candy.

CHRIS

Marci, how many of these things do you need?

MARCI

A couple of dozen should suffice.

Marci carries a SAUCE PAN by its handle and extends it to Chris, who dumps the requisite amount of candy into the receptacle. Marci then carries the sauce pan back to the stove.

When Ike is confident that Marci is sufficiently out of ear shot, he leans in close to Chris and whispers in his ear.

IKE

Dude. She's hot. Does she have a boyfriend?

CHRIS

I have no idea, but Noah says they call her the sauté slut.

IKE

That to me sounds like an invitation.

Meanwhile, Noah has finished cutting the four filets down to eight thinner tournedos while Marci is in the process of reducing the gummy bears.

MARCI

So do you have any tarragon?

NOAH

We should. Check the spice rack.

MARCI

Dried tarragon? I'm not getting through to you guys.

NOAH

Take it or leave it.

MARCI

Somebody's going to have to go on a run.

Noah motions to Chris and Ike.

NOAH

They're not doing anything.

MARCI

You know, as long as somebody's heading out, we might as well get everything we need to do this right.

IKE

Make a list. We'll go.

Marci thinks about this a moment and a lightbulb goes off in her head.

MARCI

You know what? Noah and I will go.

Given the dynamic that existed prior to Chris and Noah giving Marci their foie gras, this suggestion comes as a surprise to them. And while it represents a way of getting Marci out of their house, Chris and Noah feel a little trepidation.

IKE

Or, I can take Marci shopping.

Not quite feeling comfortable with exposing Ike to Marci's as-yet unpredictable state, Noah chimes in.

NOAH

No, that's alright. We'll go.

During the exchange, Marci has backed up against the drawer where she placed the gun earlier. She opens the drawer with her hands behind her back just enough to remove the gun and stealthily slips it into the waistband of her jeans.

Noah grabs his CAR KEYS off the kitchen counter and beckons Marci to come with him.

NOAH

Let's go.

Marci follows Noah out of the kitchen and through the living room on the way to the front door. Hoover trots behind them leaving Chris and Ike seated at the kitchen counter.

IKE

Damn. Can't win 'em all.

CHRIS

I think she just did you a favor.

CUT TO:

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY - ESTABLISHING

The Corti Brothers market is an independent grocer specializing in gourmet foods, locally sourced produce and an outstanding wine selection.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Marci and Noah walk slowly down the PRODUCE AISLE, examining the BRIGHT, FRESH SEASONAL VEGETABLES on offer. Marci pushes a SHOPPING CART, which already has a few of the items required to do their gourmet meal justice.

MARCI

I usually like to go to the farmer's market on Sundays, but this is good too.

NOAH

Sometimes Chef Dean will take members of the wait staff on produce runs with him.

MARCI

He's still doing that? I would have thought by now everything was getting trucked in by purveyors.

NOAH

He doesn't do it as often as he used to. Quenelle's getting a little too popular ever since Bourdain's Sacramento episode.

Marci and Noah come upon the FRESH HERB SECTION and Marci rummages around for a BUNCH OF FRESH TARRAGON. She finds one amongst the thyme and rosemary and raises it to her nose inhaling deeply. She swoons from the sweet anise-like aroma.

MARCI

Oh, man. You could put this stuff on a bumper and it'd taste good.

CUT TO:

INT. CORTI BROTHERS WINE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Marci wheels their cart up to the section of DESSERT WINES, which includes a small selection of MADEIRAS that will be required for their demi-glace sauce.

Marci and Noah study the few bottles on offer.

MARCI

You know anything about this stuff?

NOAH

Not much. I never even worked at a place that had it on the wine list. I do know it was Thomas Jefferson's favorite wine.

MARCI

No shit? Cool.

Noah bends down and picks up a bottle from BROADBENT, a fairly reliable shipper.

NOAH

Probably can't go wrong with this.

MARCI

We don't need anything super high-end. We'll just be reducing it.

Noah places the bottle in the cart.

MARCI

I assume you guys have some good Bordeaux blends we can open with the tournedos.

NOAH

Sure. No problem there.

MARCI

Then I guess we're done.

Marci and Noah push their cart out of the wine department.

CUT TO:

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Noah's TOYOTA PRIUS is parked directly in front of the market with Marci already in the front passenger seat. Noah closes the tailgate after loading their groceries and slips in behind the driver's seat.

INT. NOAH'S CAR - DAY

Noah turns over the Prius's hybrid motor and backs the car out of its parking spot.

NOAH

Marci, can I ask you something?

MARCI

Sure.

NOAH

Was whatever happened to you at Quenelle so bad that you went postal because of it?

MARCI

I suppose it depends. When you've got 80 grand in student loan debt from Johnson & Wales and have finally landed a good gig only to get canned, yeah, that's pretty bad.

NOAH

Why did they let you go?

MARCI

Because Ray the bartender and I were comping some friends of ours and he ratted me out.

NOAH

That guy can mix a mean drink, but he's a total bastard.

MARCI

And like I said this morning. This is a small town and word gets around. I'll be lucky to get a job flipping burgers at the Squeeze Inn.

NOAH

You should talk to Ike. His brother owns a couple of food trucks. One of 'em does barbecue and the other does crepes. Everywhere they go there's lines around the block.

MARCI

I will. Thank you, Noah. I can't believe you're being so good to me after I was such a crazed bitch.

NOAH

Hoover likes you. And that's good enough for me.

MARCI

Noah? I need your help with something.

NOAH

I'll try.

MARCI

I've got to get rid of the gun.

NOAH

Oh shit. The gun. You have it with you?

MARCI

I grabbed it out of the drawer when Ike wasn't looking.

NOAH

You mean we went into Corti Brothers packing heat?

MARCI

I'm sorry. I didn't know what to do.

NOAH

Okay. Let me think. Where did you get it anyway?

MARCI

From a guy. He was kind of a boyfriend. I took it off his night stand when he was passed out.

NOAH

I don't even want to know the circumstances behind that.

MARCI

I don't even know if the thing is loaded. I never even took off the safety.

NOAH

Me and Chris were pretty sure from the get-go you weren't going to use the thing.

After Noah and Marci drive for a few moments in silence, Noah gets an idea.

NOAH

I think I know what to do.

EXT. SUBURBAN THOROUGHFARE - DAY

Noah turns on his LEFT-TURN SIGNAL and moves from the center lane to the left turn lane and makes a u-turn that puts the car on course in the opposite direction.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LUXURY SUBDIVISION - DAY

Noah's Prius turns into a neighborhood consisting exclusively of 4000 square-foot MCMANSIONS built on the banks of a large MAN-MADE LAKE.

The car stops at the apex of a BRIDGE that spans a WATERWAY connecting two halves of the lake.

INT. NOAH'S CAR - DAY

Marci instantly surmises what Noah has in mind.

MARCI

I kind of hate to litter.

NOAH

I shudder to think what the homeowner's association would find if they dredged this lake.

Marci and Noah exit the vehicle.

EXT. LUXURY SUBDIVISION - DAY

Marci and Noah step onto the sidewalk of the bridge and stand at the railing overlooking the waterway. The neighborhood appears quiet with no visible pedestrians or vehicular traffic.

MARCI

Perfect. There doesn't look like there's anyone around.

NOAH

Do you have it on you?

MARCI

Yep.

NOAH

I'll keep a lookout.

Noah turns his back to Marci and keeps his eyes peeled for onlookers. Meanwhile, Marci fishes the gun out of her waistband and nonchalantly dumps it over the rail.

ANGLE ON HANDGUN

...as it falls from the bridge and SPLASHES into the water below.

Marci claps her hands and raises her palms in the air.

MARCI

Okay. I'm vulnerable now. Try not to take advantage of me.

NOAH

You're not my type.

Marci begins to walk back to the car and stops short, remembering something. She fishes into her front right pocket and withdraws the vial of cocaine from earlier, tossing it into the lake over her left shoulder.

NOAH

What was that?

MARCI

It wasn't salt.

Noah understands and smiles approvingly.

NOAH

Let's get out of here.

As Marci and Noah begin walking back to the car, the sound of a heavy front door is heard coming from the McMansion directly across from them.

Both Marci and Noah turn in the direction of the sound.

MARCI'S POV

Vlad, the Ukrainian gangster emerges from the house where Marci spent the previous night. He squints for a moment, then recognizes her. He begins walking quickly in Marci's direction.

Marci's eyes bug out as she recognizes Vlad and immediately bolts for the car.

MARCI

Shit! We've got to get out of here!

Noah, confused and alarmed, hesitates for a split second then realizes that Marci is reacting to the threatening hulk of a man now moving towards them.

VLAD

Hey! Sauté Slut!

INT. NOAH'S CAR - DAY

Marci and Noah climb into the car rapidly, slamming their respective doors. Noah activates the electronic lock. He starts the engine and immediately throws the car into gear.

MARCI

Drive! Drive! Drive!

Noah leans on the accelerator and the car lurches forward as Vlad is crossing the street towards them.

MARCI

I hate that nickname.

NOAH

Who the fuck was that?

MARCI

That was my ex... whatever.

NOAH

You didn't recognize the neighborhood?

MARCI

I was kinda' wasted last night.

EXT. LUXURY SUBDIVISION - DAY

Vlad stands for a moment in the middle of the street and watches Noah's car depart. He curses Marci in Russian and runs toward his big, black BMW 750LI parked in front of the house.

Vlad climbs into his car, starts the engine, throws it into gear and peels out into the street.

INT. NOAH'S CAR - DAY

Both Noah and Marci are bug-eyed with fear as Noah haphazardly navigates his car through suburban streets.

NOAH

Okay. Explanation time! What did you do to this guy to piss him off? Besides take his gun.

MARCI

I also took a bottle of Vodka.

NOAH

That must've been some Vodka!

MARCI

Seriously. I think he just wants his gun back.

NOAH

Well, that ain't going to happen.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Noah's Prius speeds down the street in an attempt to flee from Vlad, whose car can be seen approaching from a distance.

INT. VLAD'S CAR - DAY

Vlad drives with fierce determination, continuing to curse in Russian.

INT. NOAH'S CAR - DAY

Marci looks over her shoulder and sees Vlad's BMW approaching rapidly.

MARCI

I hope you know a short cut.

NOAH

Maybe even better. Hang on.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Noah hangs a right turn at the first available intersection, sailing through a stop sign.

He then hangs another right, drives about a hundred feet, then pulls into a DRIVEWAY on the left side of the street on the opposite side of a CAMPER.

Vlad manages to make the first right, but not the second, and sails right past the second street that Noah pulled onto.

INT. VLAD'S CAR - DAY

Vlad, thinking that he has been given the slip, reacts not with his characteristic anger, but with bemusement, managing a tight smirk, punctuated with some more Russian curse words.

INT. NOAH'S CAR - DAY

Marci and Noah sit in tense silence, wondering if Vlad will appear behind them at any moment.

MARCI

Natural cover. How did you know?

NOAH

I didn't.

MARCI

I never thought I'd be grateful for an RV.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Vlad's car slows down and swings into a driveway on its left-hand side, making a K-turn in the opposite direction to pull in directly behind another car.

INT. NOAH'S CAR - DAY

NOAH

So this guy... Ex-boyfriend. He's dangerous, right?

MARCI

His name is Vladimir Dimitriev and he used to come into Quenelle all the time.

NOAH

I thought he looked familiar. He runs with a bunch of other Russians in Armani suits who order up a bunch of oysters and Cristal whenever they come in.

MARCI

That's them. But whatever you do, don't call him Russian to his face. He's Ukrainian. And I really don't know what else he's involved in, but he used to hook me and the bartender up with blow, so we started fudging receipts.

NOAH

Jesus, Marci. You're lucky the owners didn't press charges.

MARCI

No shit. I only hope I can live down  
this mess.

NOAH

I don't think you're beyond redemption.  
Anyway, I think we might've lost him.

MARCI

Well, take it slow and stay sharp.

Noah throws the car into gear and begins to back out.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

The Prius slowly backs out and pulls a K-turn onto the street to  
travel in the direction from where it came.

INT. VLAD'S CAR - DAY

From his vantage point, Vlad can see the second intersection  
that the Prius pulled into through the windshield of the car  
that he parked behind.

VLAD'S POV

The Prius slowly pulls out from the street where it was  
temporarily hidden behind the camper and turns left, heading  
away from Vlad's car.

Vlad grins when he sees the car and says something else  
appropriate in Russian. He fires the BMW's ignition and slowly  
pulls out onto the street, careful not to follow Noah & Marci  
too closely.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Vlad waits for a car to pass before pulling out behind it at a  
safe distance.

INT. NOAH'S CAR - DAY

NOAH'S POV

Noah looks in his rearview mirror, sees the car that Vlad pulled out behind, but not Vlad's BMW.

NOAH

Looks like we gave him the slip.

MARCI

Nicely done.

NOAH

I need a drink.

MARCI

I think we can arrange that.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

The Prius travels at a safe speed, presumably on its way back to Chris & Noah's place. A couple hundred yards behind, follows the car that Vlad pulled out behind, and bringing up the rear is Vlad's BMW.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHRIS & NOAH'S HOUSE - DAY

The Prius pulls into the driveway from whence it came. Rather than parking outside, the garage door begins to raise mechanically, allowing the Prius to pull inside.

The car that Vlad pulled in behind rolls past as the Prius enters the garage, but Vlad's car is nowhere to be seen.

INT. NOAH'S CAR - DAY

Noah sets the car's parking break and turns off its engine. He and Marci sit in the darkened silence of the garage for a few moments to collect their wits.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Chris and Ike are still seated at the kitchen counter where Noah & Marci left them, the only obvious change is that the 40oz Colt 45 has been drained.

Marci and Noah enter carrying the groceries purchased earlier and discover Chris and Ike waiting for them, somewhat sheepishly.

Noah puts his bag of groceries down on the kitchen counter and heads straight for the refrigerator.

Noah opens the fridge, pulls out two of the CRAFT BEERS, and opens them with the bottle opener that is still on the kitchen counter.

He carries one over to Marci, who has seated herself at the kitchen counter with her elbow on its surface and her forehead resting on an upturned palm. Chris and Ike try to surmise what has transpired on their grocery run.

Marci raises her head and accepts the beer handed to her by Chris.

MARCI

Thanks. I need this.

Both Marci and Chris take long pulls from their beers.

IKE

You two okay?

NOAH

We are now.

MARCI

You guys ready for that lunch I promised you? We've got everything we need to do it right.

CHRIS

Uh... Why don't we wait a bit and make it an early dinner.

NOAH

Sounds fine with me. I think we could stand to chill out for a while.

Marci dusts her beer and sets the empty bottle down. She then begins unpacking the groceries.

Suddenly, LOUD BANGING is HEARD emanating from behind the front door.

Marci and Noah instantly freeze and go wide eyed at the implication of this. However, Chris and Ike react calmly, almost as if they have a different expectation.

Hoover, on the other hand, instantly bristles, and goes tearing off towards the front door, BARKING LOUDLY.

Chris slides off the stool and starts moving toward the front door, right behind the dog.

CHRIS

Hoover! No!

Marci and Noah immediately fall in behind Chris in a state of panic while Ike stays seated at the kitchen counter and helps himself to what is left of Noah's beer.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Hoover sits directly in front of the front door, snarling.

Chris is midway through the living room, almost at the front door while Marci and Chris follow close behind.

MARCI

Chris, you do not want to open that door.

CHRIS

I'm sorry, Marci. I kind of have to.

NOAH

No you don't! Chris!

Before Noah & Marci can stop him, Chris opens the door, but when he does, unexpectedly comes face-to-face with Vlad.

Noah and Marci freeze when they see their worst fears realized.

Hoover, on the other hand, continues to snarl at Vlad, who takes a step back when he sees the dog, apparently unaware of the average Golden Retriever's temperament, especially since this one is now acting more like a Doberman.

CHRIS  
Can I help you?

VLAD  
Control your dog.

CHRIS  
Hoover!

Chris bends down slightly, grabs Hoover by his collar and jerks him backwards. Hoover stops snarling and falls in at Chris's side.

Vlad then notices Marci and smiles at her threateningly. It is at this point that Chris is certain that this visitor isn't the one he was expecting to see.

VLAD  
Hello, Marcella.

MARCI  
(swallowing hard)  
Vlad...

Vlad enters the house like a juggernaut, causing Chris to take a few steps back to make room for the Ukrainian's bulk. Vlad closes the door behind him.

VLAD  
(to Marci)  
Marcella. Introduce me to your friends.

MARCI  
Uh, Vlad, this is Chris and Noah. Noah  
and Chris, this is Vlad.

Vlad recognizes Noah as both the driver of the Prius and as a waiter at Quenelle.

VLAD  
Noah. You are Marcella's new protector,  
yes? You recognize me from your  
restaurant, do you not?

NOAH

Very nice to see you again Mr.  
Dimitriev.

VLAD

You were not so polite earlier today  
when you drove away at the sight of me.  
Did I frighten you?

Noah is uncertain if or how he should reply, and Hoover responds for him instead with another snarl, again causing Vlad to step back.

VLAD

I told you to control your animal.

CHRIS

Hoover! Behave!

VLAD

No matter.

Vlad turns to face Marci.

VLAD

Marcella, You know why I am here?

MARCI

I suppose you want your gun back.

VLAD

That would be a start, but fortunately  
I have another.

Vlad reaches into his jacket and pulls out another AUTOMATIC PISTOL, startling Noah, Chris & Marci, who all take steps back and raise their hands when they see it.

Hoover begins to bark when Vlad threatens Marci, Noah & Chris.

VLAD

(angry)

I shoot dog now?

NOAH

Please. Let me take him outside.

VLAD

Very well. I accompany you.

Vlad waves the three of them into the house, and leads them at gunpoint through the living room, Noah dragging Hoover by the collar.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Upon entering the kitchen, Chris, Marci and Noah all expect to see Ike sitting at the counter where they left him. Instead, there is an empty stool with an equally empty bottle of Colt 45 on the counter above it. The three captives independently refrain from referring to Ike's absence.

Noah continues to drag Hoover towards the back patio door. He opens it with one hand while holding onto the dog with the other, then pushes Hoover outside with some difficulty, sliding the door closed behind him.

Hoover continues to bark and snarl through the glass door while Vlad continues to hold his captives at gunpoint. Vlad turns his back to the patio door to face them.

VLAD

Okay. Back to business.

CHRIS

Twice in one day? I don't believe this.

VLAD

Marcella, our arrangement from last night has not been concluded.

MARCI

What do you want from me Vlad? I threw the gun in the lake. I can buy you another one.

VLAD

Please do not force me to embarrass you in front of your friends.

While the confrontation ensues, no one notices that Hoover's barking and snarling has ceased and the dog no longer stands on the opposite side of the patio door.

MARCI

I did everything you asked.

VLAD

Not quite. Let us just say that I ended up having to stimulate myself last night.

MARCI

I want to make things right, Vlad.

VLAD

I'm sure you do. You will, of course have to come with me.

Marci notices something over Vlad's shoulder on the opposite side of the patio door.

MARCI'S POV

Two POLICE OFFICERS, their GUNS DRAWN, stand directly behind Vlad on the opposite side of the patio door.

MARCI

Actually, I don't think I will.

By now, Chris and Noah are also aware of the cops on the other side of the patio door. Vlad is also slightly confused by a barely perceptible change in his captives' demeanor.

Vlad senses something behind him and turns around just as one of the police officers slides the patio door open. Vlad freezes at the sight of the uniformed officers before they can even command him to do so.

FIRST POLICE

Drop the gun!

Vlad does as instructed.

FIRST POLICE

Kick it over here!

Vlad again does as commanded. The first police bends down to pick up Vlad's gun while the second keeps Vlad covered with his service weapon.

SECOND POLICE

Turn around! On your knees! Hands behind your head!

Vlad cooperates fully and assumes the required position as if this isn't the first time he's had to.

The Second Police pushes Vlad to the ground while the first binds Vlad's hands behind his back with a heavy duty TIE-WRAP.

Satisfied that their assailant has been sufficiently restrained, the two police officers raise Vlad to his feet and holster their weapons.

The Second Police begins to read Vlad his Miranda rights while pushing him out through the patio door. The First Police stays behind with the freed captives.

FIRST POLICE

I'm Officer Stamm. Elk Grove P.D. Is everyone alright here?

Noah begins to suspect that it may have been Chris who called the cops and flashes his partner a dirty look before responding to Officer Stamm.

NOAH

Yes. We're all fine. Thanks.

EXT. CHRIS & NOAH'S HOUSE - DAY

Two POLICE CRUISERS are parked on the street in front of the house with two ADDITIONAL OFFICERS standing by. The Second Police frog-marches Vlad past Ike, who holds Hoover on a leash.

As Vlad passes Hoover, the dog snarls at him again. Vlad responds by cursing in Russian.

Marci, Noah, Chis and Officer Stamm follow at a safe distance, making their way towards Ike and Hoover. Ike hands the leash to Noah who kneels beside his dog. Man and beast express mutual adoration.

NOAH

Hey, buddy! How ya doin'?

Officer Stamm turns to face Ike and Chris.

OFFICER STAMM

I just need to iron out a few details.

IKE

Sure. No problem.

OFFICER STAMM

Which one of you called in the report?

By now Noah has risen to stand beside Chris and is anticipating that Chris will admit to having placed the call. But before he is able to do so, Ike intervenes.

IKE

I did.

This comes as more of a surprise to Chris than it does to either Noah or Marci.

OFFICER STAMM

There seems to be a bit of confusion. The assailant was originally described as a woman. Not a big Russian dude.

IKE

I must have mis-spoken. I was pretty freaked out.

NOAH

So where did you make the call from? We didn't hear anything.

IKE

When I realized what was going down, I slipped out the back and called from my house.

OFFICER STAMM

Uh huh. Well, good thinking. You may have saved some lives today.

Ike suddenly swells with pride, taking credit for the 911 call he didn't even place.

OFFICER STAMM

Just one final thing. The perpetrator, Mr. Dimitriev. Do any of you know him?

MARCI

I do. He was kind of a boyfriend.

OFFICER STAMM

Okay, this is starting to make a little more sense now, Miss...

MARCI

Marcella De Lorenzo, Officer.

OFFICER STAMM

Miss De Lorenzo, if it's okay with you, I'd like you to come over to the station house. I'll just need you to answer some questions so I can file an accurate report.

MARCI

Of course.

NOAH

I can drive you.

OFFICER STAMM

Okay, then. You know where you're going?

NOAH

It's on Laguna Palms, right?

OFFICER STAMM

Exactly. If I get there before you, just tell the desk sergeant you're there to see Pete Stamm. Otherwise just wait in the lobby.

MARCI

Thank you, Officer.

OFFICER STAMM

Right. See you there.

Officer Stamm heads toward his police cruiser while Marci and Noah head back towards the hose. When both are safely out of ear shot, Chris takes a step closer to Ike.

CHRIS

I owe you big time.

IKE

Think nothing of it. I mean, if she was locked up, I'd have to wait at least six months to ask her out.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Marci emerges from the main entrance to the Elk Grove Police Department building. She takes a few steps beyond the door and pauses to get her bearings. A beat or two later she recognizes a familiar sight and breaks into a grateful smile.

MARCI'S POV

Noah leans against his Prius, his arms folded, a welcoming smile on his face.

Marci walks toward Noah and his waiting car.

MARCI

I actually wasn't expecting to see you again.

NOAH

I've got two hungry guys at home waiting for you to cook them dinner.

Marci and Noah hug, like the two close friends they have become in the most unusual of circumstances, and without saying another word, Marci gets in the car on the passenger side while Noah crosses around to that of the driver and gets in himself.

The Prius hums to life, is slipped into gear, and drives away from the police station on its way back to Chris & Noah's place.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

While the end credits roll, the four new friends collaborate in the creation of an epic meal, enjoying magnificent ingredients, wine, and company, all to the tune of Charlie Parker's saxophone.

THE END