

JUST A RUMOR
A Romantic Comedy
By
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DRAFT 5

DAY ONE (MONDAY)

EXT. CENTURY CITY - MORNING

A BLACK BMW glides out of an underground garage. MUSIC: *Master of the House* (from *Les Miserables*) is pounding. Down Olympic, headed west.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS - DAY

A WHITE SUBARU station wagon cuts down the canyon roads and glides onto Sunset, headed west. "*I Have A Love*" (from *West Side Story*) plays sweetly.

MONTAGE

Of the TWO CARS heading west. BMW down Olympic. SUBARU down Sunset. Easing through traffic. Seemingly effortless, balletic. MUSIC mixing and mashing. BMW plunges down the ramp to Pacific Coast Highway, heading north. SUBARU turns right onto Pacific Coast Highway heading north. The Pacific Ocean laps at the beach peppered with runners, swimmers, bicyclists, sunbathers.

EXT. MALIBU BEACH HOUSE

A simple but quaint beach house. Raw wood and glass. Understated and confident. The Black BMW and the White Subaru glide, almost simultaneously, into the driveway. Engines off. *Master of the House* and *I Have a Love* blend and embrace each other.

Erik (early 40s)(BMW) and Amanda (late 30s)(Subaru) exit their respective cars.

Erik is elegantly dressed, three piece suit, GQ material. Most distinctive are his shoulder-length blonde hair and perfectly trimmed beard. Jesus in an Armani.

Amanda is straight out of the 60s. Wild curly black hair that has never seen a comb threatens to cover her face. A loose-fitting tie-dyed outfit of lavender and orange screams 'impulsive artist'.

They regard each other in silence. With a screech of delight Amanda leaps into Erik's arms, her legs whipping around his waist.

She tussles his hair and buries her face into his neck. Erik turns into the house, balancing himself against Amanda's energy.

INT. MALIBU BEACH HOUSE

Sparse inside. Functional, comfortable, practical. Not a lot of personality. Large windows look over the pounding surf. Fireplace, couches, wet bar. And a large king-size bed in the middle of the room, facing the windows and the pounding waves. In the middle of the bed, Erik and Amanda, stripped naked, in the glorious throes of passionate sex.

THE OCEAN

The surf pounds against an enormous rock outcropping. A piece of the rock cracks off and drops into the raging sea. The MUSIC soars. A title;

"JUST A RUMOR"

INT. MALIBU BEACH HOUSE

Erik and Amanda, post-coital. Naked, lying face to face, staring into each others eyes.

ERIK
(softly)
Hi.

AMANDA
Hi.

ERIK
We're untouchable, you know.

AMANDA
I know. Untouchable. Invulnerable,
unbeatable.

They curl into each other.

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTURY CITY

The cluster of high-tech, high-rise buildings glistens in the morning sun.

INT. HI-RISE LOBBY

Erik emerges from the elevator. He is stunning. With the hair and the beard he radiates a sexual energy that is undeniable. PEOPLE notice and stop and watch in wonder. Erik seems to be oblivious to the attention. He glides to the Newsstand Kiosk that offers everything from candy to cut flowers. ANDY (70s), African American, eternal optimist, works his domain. He hands Erik the NY Times and Wall Street Journal.

ANDY
Morning, Mr. Brand.

Erik nods, selects a single rose with vase. Takes papers. Doesn't pay.

INT. B&B ADVERTISING

Elevators open on the 33rd floor. Erik glides into elegant reception area that announces "B&B Advertising". The entire room becomes alert. They know he is here. MARY (20s), cute, perky receptionist, says her standard litany.

MARY
Good afternoon, Mr. Brand.

Erik places the rose and vase on her desk.

ERIK (CONT'D)
Happy birthday.

He leaves a touched and impressed Mary behind.

Erik is immediately joined by an irate SAM (50s), his loyal partner of many years.

Sam is a rough and tumble Teddy Bear of a man. Nothing quite fits him properly, he always looks a bit uncomfortable. And right now he looks very pissed and scared.

SAM
Erik, you really messed up this time. You missed the whole introductory meeting ...

ERIK
(ignoring Sam)
Where's Brad?

They head down the hallway passing offices and workers, walls displaying awards, trophies, articles in Advertising Age, Fortune, Time Magazine, all featuring Erik.

CHERYL (20s), Sam's vivacious and sexy assistant, joins them, keeping in step with Sam but keeping her eye on Erik.

SAM

Erik, we lose this client and we'll be facing financial challenges that
...

ERIK

Cheryl . . . TUMS

Cheryl peels off on her mission.

SAM

(almost a whisper)
Erik, this Tepelmann guy is a hard nut to crack. I don't think he likes me.

ERIK

You have to charm him. Did you charm him?
(off Sam's weak look)
Of course not. Why do I have to do everything?

BRAD (20s), Erik's overly efficient and uptight assistant, joins them keeping a respectful half step behind Erik.

ERIK (CONT'D)

(without looking at Brad)
You're late.

Brad tries to squeeze out an apology, but is cut off by the arriving Cheryl who throws another adoring look at Erik as she holds the TUMS and water in front of Sam.

CHERYL

TUMS. And water. Flat.

Sam pops a TUMS. Washes it down.

ERIK

You're supposed to chew them.
(Sam winces and swallows)
What time is this Tepelmann meeting, Brad?

BRAD

Two o'clock.

ERIK

And what time is it now?

BRAD
One fifty-nine.

ERIK
Showtime!

And the foursome swings into the

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

Elegant. Befitting a company as highly successful as B&B Advertising. Thirty people around an enormous highly polished table. CLIENTS, WORKERS, ASSISTANTS. The walls are decorated with more awards, high profile campaigns, photos of celebrities etc. Workers and assistants have materials ready for an elaborate presentation: charts, photos, graphs, with bold headlines announcing: 'PSS: PERSONAL SECURITY SYSTEMS'

As Erik and his entourage enter, there's a hush. Brad is handing Erik his coffee latte and a single 3 by 5 card with today's schedule. Sam, a mixture of annoyance, apology and nerves, trails Erik to the head of the conference table.

Cheryl hangs by the door where she can watch Erik unobstructed.

MR. TEPELMANN, owner and CEO of PSS Industries stands erect at the other end of the table. An elegant, proud and successful man with glowing white hair who is at this moment not happy.

On the SCREENS are diagrams of the earth, with satellites beaming messages down to individuals in cars, schools, offices. Impressive.

On one screen is a blowup of an electronic device which is about the size and shape of an Oreo cookie. In fact it looks a lot like an Oreo, three layers, black/white/black. In fact it is called the OREO.

Erik turns to the room, sips his coffee, looks at his 3 by 5 card, holds it out for Brad to retrieve, looks at the clock, glances at Mr. Tepelmann, and for the first time smiles. But the smile seems aimed at a FEMALE EMPLOYEE, who smiles back shyly. The charm, genuine and heartfelt, is on. The room is his.

ERIK
I'm not late, am I?

The entire room shakes its collective head. They would forgive him if he were.

Erik smiles, Brad smiles, Cheryl beams. Sam breathes a sigh of relief. Mr. Tepelmann is still ramrod tense.

EXT. SYLVIA'S BEVERLY HILLS MANSION - DAY

Tucked somewhere behind the Beverly Hills Hotel, this elegant Victorian home boasts more bedrooms and bathrooms than any reasonable family could ever use.

Amanda's White Subaru glides into the long circular drive. She is met by NINA (20s), her assistant, practical, no nonsense. Nina has obviously been waiting. Amanda emerges, glowing, still in her lavender and orange outfit. She pulls a portfolio out of her car.

NINA

She's waiting. She's not a happy camper. I had to make up some story about you being delayed by another client so you'll have to back me up.

AMANDA

(with a wry smile)
Well, I was delayed and he is a client, sort of. No lie there.

Three WORKMEN are constructing a new retaining wall at the edge of the driveway. One workman, CHUCK, has his shirt off exposing a hot, sweaty, well-cut torso.

Amanda takes in the magnificence that is Chuck, moves to him.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Looking good, Chuck. Excellent work.

CHUCK

Thanks, ma'am.

AMANDA

(a bemused look to Nina)
"Ma'am"?

An elderly woman, SYLVIA, watches from an upstairs window as Nina disappears into the house. Amanda laughs at something Chuck says, gives him a playful punch in the arm and turns to follow Nina.

INT. B&B ADVERTISING - CONFERENCE ROOM -

Mr. Tepelmann, an OREO in his hand, is finishing his presentation. On the screen behind him is a projection of a GPS screen, streets, houses, cursor blinking over one house.

MR. TEPELMANN

(soft but distinctive
German accent)

Knowledge is security. Knowing
where your wife, husband, child,
mother or father are at any moment
gives us peace of mind.

(indicating the GPS screen
behind him)

I could tell you where my dog is
right now, front yard, back yard or
crawling under the house.

The GPS screen zooms into the backyard of the house. The cursor is circling around an object.

MR. TEPELMANN (CONT'D)

(bemused)

Ah, chasing a squirrel up the apple
tree. Now, that's peace of mind.

Appropriate applause and murmurs of approval from the room. Mr. Tepelmann looks directly at Erik, then sits, victorious, smug.

Erik rises at the head of the table. Everyone waits.

ERIK

When I was a little boy, I'd rush
home after school, throw my bag and
books into my room and race out
again into the neighborhood. I
might yell something like, "See you
later", but then I was gone for the
rest of the day. And I was okay,
and my Mom was okay because she
knew that all she had to do was
ring the bell, that special bell,
and no matter where I was I would
hear it. And I knew it was time to
come home.

Silence. Mr. Tepelmann looks uneasy, concerned, not the reaction he was expecting. Brad is stoic. Cheryl is infatuated. Sam is hopeful, fake smile plastered on.

ERIK (CONT'D)

I miss those days. I miss that sense of freedom and mystery and independence. And now you want us to join you in convincing the world that there is no security unless you know where every significant member of your life is at every single moment. Is that right?

MR. TEPELMANN

(uneasy)

Yes, exactly. If I know ...

ERIK

(cutting him off)

You've got it all wrong, Mr. Tepelmann. That's not security. That's surveillance, that's paranoia, that's Big Brother, that's 1984.

Erik turns to an eager young WORKER who seems lost.

Erik (CONT'D)

The book. Not the year. Read it. You'll understand.

Mr. Tepelmann is pissed. Sam is nervous. Once again Erik has gone too far. The silence is heavy. Mr. Tepelmann rises to speak.

MR. TEPELMANN

Listen, if you don't like ...

Erik cuts him off again. He's on a roll.

ERIK

Security, Herr Tepelmann, is knowing that every single significant person in your life cares. That they care about you, your well being, your happiness. That they care enough to allow you to be yourself, to be free, to be expressive, to be independent. Security is when my mother says, "Erik, I'm always here for you." Security is when my mother offers me an opportunity to find her whenever I need her.

Mr. Tepelmann is stuck, holds his ground at the end of the table. Erik looks directly at him.

ERIK (CONT'D)

That's PSS, Mr. Tepelmann. PSS is my mother ringing that bell not so she can find me, but rather, so that I can find her. PSS is not surveillance, it's availability. I make myself available to you, whenever and wherever you like. I'm always there for you. That's how we'll sell it. Congratulations, Ladies and Gentlemen. We have a winner.

Relief. Smiles all around. Erik and Mr. Tepelmann share cautious tight smiles across the table.

Sam is, once again, impressed, relieved.

CUT TO:

INT. SYLVIA'S BEVERLY HILLS HOME - DRAWING ROOM

Sylvia, bedecked in a workout attire that should never see a drop of sweat, watches Amanda as she wildly sketches the refurbishing of this room on an art pad. Nina holds fabric samples and a small Buddha against one of the walls. Amanda is in her element. She swipes at her wild black hair that clings to her sweaty face.

AMANDA

(as she sketches)

Red. Red. Tough gritty fabric from the rice fields. With red impulses penetrating the weave, bobbing and weaving.

Sylvia has no idea what Amanda is talking about. Nina is listening to her boss with rapture. Amanda is lost into the energy of her sketching and vision.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

And then up again!

(she stops, they wait)

Only to see - to see - the serenity of -

(quick sketch, a Buddha)

- Serenity. Buddha. Calm.

Confident. Secure. Home.

Amanda sits, exhausted, spent. The sketch is finished. Sylvia takes a peak. She's impressed. It's brilliant.

SYLVIA
Stunning. Ming Dynasty?

AMANDA
Hmm?

SYLVIA
Ming Dynasty. Right? They mixed the curiosity and the rage of proletariat, that's the Red, with the essentials and grittiness of survival, that's the rice, with the necessity of inner peace and tranquility, the Buddha. You're amazing, Amanda, absolutely amazing. Ming Dynasty, in my home!

Amanda has no idea what Sylvia is talking about. She throws Nina a look of "you handle this" and walks out of the room.

NINA
(coming to the rescue)
She's tired. This takes a lot out of her. We just need to give her a moment to collect herself, refocus, regroup, Check the Well.

SYLVIA
She's good.

NINA
The best.

SYLVIA
Check the well?

NINA
You know, tap into that creative zone where all the inspiration comes from. The bottomless pit of resources that ...

SYLVIA
(cutting her off)
Got it!
(pause)
Too bad about her little thing on the side.

NINA
Little thing? What 'little thing'?

SYLVIA

Come on, Nina. Don't act innocent with me. I just couldn't figure out which guy it was at the party of theirs. "Check the well", that's cute! There were so many candidates. But then there was that cute European hunk.

NINA

What party?

SYLVIA

Ah, that's right. Guess you weren't invited.

(without missing a beat)

Can't say I blame her. Boy, she is good! I was good once but I was never that good! And when she reappeared she had that look. That 'just plucked' look. Oh how I love that look. That glow. I miss it. Takes years off.

Amanda returns.

AMANDA

Nina, it's 3:30! You were supposed to remind me!

NINA

Sorry, I ...

Amanda turns and leaves.

NINA (CONT'D)

She'll be back. Soon. Maybe.

SYLVIA

Enough said, Nina. Enough said. Titillating, intriguing. Take a look when she comes back. Look for the glow!

CUT TO:

INT. ERIK'S OFFICE

MR. TEPELMANN

Don't you try and pull a stunt like that with me ever again.

We're in Erik's beautiful office, overlooking Century City and all of LA.

Mr. Tepelmann is planted in front of Erik's desk. His seething energy fills the room. Erik and Sam have just entered.

ERIK

Excuse me?

MR. TEPELMANN

"Surveillance vs. Availability?"

(directly to Erik)

You're clever, quick, deceptive and seductive. I'm sure it works fine with the ladies and it may work with some of your other clients. But not with me. You're not the only game in town, Mr. Brand. I'm prepared to invest Five Million Dollars to launch this campaign ... and at the moment, it's not with you.

SAM

But, Mr. Tepelmann ...

Erik throws Sam a "shut up" look. Mr. Tepelmann moves to Sam.

MR. TEPELMANN

Mr. Baker, you're a decent guy. But unless you can control this Svengali, Lothario ...

(to Erik with a sardonic grin)

Lothario. It's a character. In a play. 18th century. Maybe you should read it. It ends badly.

ERIK

I'm sure it does.

Mr. Tepelmann heads for the door. Stops, turns to Erik.

MR. TEPELMANN (CONT'D)

I'm German, Mr. Brand. We don't get pissed. We get even. You have until Friday to impress me.

And he is gone.

INT. SUBARU

Amanda is driving. Rock MUSIC is playing, loud. Amanda in the midst of one of her personal rants.

AMANDA

... and she thinks she's so smart
... Ming Dynasty! Fucking Ming
Dynasty. What the hell does she
know about ...

(the tears start)

Jesus H. Christ ... okay, Amanda,
okay, you're okay. ... No you're
not, you're a mess, you're a fraud
.. just because you got some stupid
little degree from some community
crap college ...

(to a car moving way too
slowly in front of her)

Hey! Try the fucking peddle on the
right, would you?

INT. ERIK'S OFFICE

Erik is sitting at his large commanding desk in his overly immaculate office. The sun is dipping toward the horizon in the background. He is staring at seemingly nothing.

Suddenly he whips open a drawer, extracts a bottle of Jack Daniels, a glass, pours and downs it all in one gulp. Slams the bottle and glass back into the drawer and closes it. Stares into nothingness.

INT. COFFEE SHOP

Nina with GEORGE, her boyfriend of the moment.

GEORGE

You're kidding.

NINA

No! And Sylvia said that she did
it with some European guy right in
the middle of a party. How cool is
that?

George seems intrigued and impressed.

INT. EXPENSIVE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Sylvia at a table with three of her closest friends, MABEL (60s), EDITH (60s) and CONNIE (70s). All wealthy. All bored. Mabel's intrigued with Sylvia. Edith and Connie barely pay attention as they peruse their menus.

SYLVIA

I mean, doesn't it just set your teeth on edge? These young women throwing their bodies at any available man!

Sylvia smiles flirtatiously at a passing twenty something Waiter. He smiles back.

INT. TRENDY CLUB

A jazz ensemble is playing. The club is just winding up as the night life of LA oozes in. Amanda is sitting at the bar nursing some red wine. Sitting next to her is HARVEY, scotch on the rocks, impressive hunk, elegantly dressed. He's winding up a long story that seems to have Amanda captivated.

HARVEY

... and then she said, "Why don't you join us next time? Bring a friend. Our treat."

AMANDA

A Caribbean cruise? They invited you on a Caribbean cruise? Their treat? And you can bring a friend?

HARVEY

Yeah, it's the way they are. They like to share their wealth.

AMANDA

Well, I'd say 'yes' if I were you.

Amanda sips her wine. Looking for an escape.

HARVEY

So you'll join me?

AMANDA

What? Was that an invitation?

HARVEY

That's the beauty of it.
(winking at the bartender,
pointing to their drinks)
(MORE)

HARVEY (CONT'D)

Set us up again. We'll be here for a while.

BARTENDER smiles back knowingly.

ERIK

And make mine a Dos Equis.

Erik has suddenly settled in next to Harvey. But this is a new Erik. Armani suit - gone. Hair, pulled recklessly back in a tight pony-tail. Sailors pea coat with collar pulled up high. Unlit cigarette dangling from his lips. He slouches into the bar. He's apparently had a bit too much to drink.

ERIK (CONT'D)

(to Harvey)

When's the last time they let you smoke a cigarette inside any one of these goddamn buildings.

HARVEY

Ah, well, I don't smoke ...

ERIK

Of course not.

Amanda focuses on her drink, watching Erik in the mirror behind the bar.

ERIK (CONT'D)

(to Harvey, re: Amanda)

Sorry, man. Don't want to be interrupting anything here.

HARVEY

No problem.

ERIK

Great. Listen, you seem like a nice enough guy. I'm new here. Hate this town. But you know, restraining order and everything ... So, I need a little action. You know what I mean?

HARVEY

Oh, yeah. Action ...

ERIK

But I'm a bit shy and I've been listening to you talk to this nice young lady and you got all the moves, man. You're good.

Awkward silence. Harvey not sure what to say. Amanda restrains a slight smile. Erik peers around at Amanda.

ERIK (CONT'D)
Sorry, ma'am. Don't mean to offend.

AMANDA
None taken.

ERIK
Good. Great. That's good.
(to Harvey, searching for
a name)
So ...?

HARVEY
Harvey.

ERIK
Okay, 'Harvey'. Now you and ...

Erik looks to Harvey, indicating Amanda, searching for a name. Harvey, flummoxed, looks to Amanda for help ...

AMANDA
Harriet.

Erik laughs. A laugh followed by an abrupt snort. Amanda winces.

ERIK
Ah, good, great. 'Harriet'. Nice name. Bit antiquated, sets you apart. Hard to remember, easy to forget. Good choice.

Amanda restrains another smile. Erik takes a deep slug of his beer and turns back to Harvey.

ERIK (CONT'D)
(leaning in a bit)
You see, Harvey, my name's Walter. Stupid name. When I was a kid they called me 'Willy', 'Little Willy'. That wasn't good. Now they call me 'Wally'. That ain't no better.

Time for Harvey to end this conversation.

HARVEY
Look, Walter, there are a lot of nice women here. I'm sure you'll be able to find one.
(MORE)

HARVEY (CONT'D)

And Walter's a nice name. I mean,
look: Walter Cronkite, Walter
Winchell.

ERIK

(getting pissy)
You're not helping, man.

HARVEY

Okay. Okay. Just tell me what
you're looking for and I'll see
what I can do.

Erik takes a moment to think and then starts carefully.

ERIK

Well, I need a woman that's sweet
and quiet. Yeah, that's good. But
likes to talk. Also good. Watches
sunsets. You like sunsets don't
you, Harvey?

(not waiting for an
answer)

And sex. She's gotta like sex. Hot,
erotic, passionate sex. But not
rough sex, can't handle rough sex.
That fucking hurts, man!

Harvey's starting to squirm. Amanda is poker face,
concentrated.

ERIK (CONT'D)

... but I gotta have someone who
wants to make a commitment, have a
couple a kids, you know. But she
can't cheat on me, man. You got all
that, Harvey?

Silence. Harvey no idea what to say, stares at his drink.

AMANDA

Your place or mine?

ERIK

Mine. With a name like Harriet I'm
figuring there's nothing in the
fridge.

AMANDA

Good call.

Harvey whips around to look at Amanda. She's downing the last
of her red wine.

He whips around to look at Erik. But Erik is gone.

Back to look at Amanda, she's gone.

Bartender standing in front of Harvey with a slight smile.

BARTENDER

That'll be forty-seven fifty.

INT. RACQUET BALL COURT

WHACK! A racquet ball caroms off the walls.

George (Nina's boyfriend) and ROLAND (50s), a friend and tough competitor, are in the middle of a heated game.

GEORGE

Yeah, in some back room while the party is goin' on. How cool is that? And he's from some exotic Eastern European country.

Roland makes an impressive shot.

ROLAND

Oh, to be in my twenties again, when everything was possible.

George goes for water.

ROLAND (CONT'D)

So, I rent this beach house to a guy for \$10,000 a month. Does he move in? No. Does he stay overnight? No. Does he use it on weekends? No. What does he do? I ask the neighbors. He visits in the middle of the day, on work days, for about an hour, maybe two. Who's with him? A gorgeous woman. They arrive in separate cars, leave in separate cars.

Roland is about to serve. George is focused.

GEORGE

So the guy's got major problems. He has to spend Ten grand a month just to get a woman to sleep with him. What is he? Some kind of Quazimodo?

ROLAND

No! He's GQ material! Erik Brand!
The Erik Brand. Mr. "People"
 Magazine Erik Brand.
 (off George's incredulous
 look)
 As I live and breathe.

Roland serves. Ace. George doesn't even move.

INT. EXPENSIVE RESTAURANT

Sylvia at her table with her Friends.

SYLVIA

So, ladies, keep this under your
 hat. The woman's working for me.
 And just like Slick Bill Clinton
 ... we have to keep her sexually
 happy until she's finished the job.
 (to the Waitress)
 I'll have the seared Tuna.

INT. GEORGE'S CAR - NIGHT

George is driving. Nina is in her own world.

NINA

And she did. She did have that
 look. I mean, it looked like that
 look ... that glow.

GEORGE

That glow that you get?

NINA

I get it?

GEORGE

Oh, yeah. Big time. It's great.
 Like summer rain.
 (beat)
 So, there's this guy who rents a
 beach house for ten grand a month.
 Does he move in? No. Does he stay
 overnight? No. Does he use it on
 weekends? No-o-o-o ...

NINA

Summer rain?

GEORGE

Honey, you gotta pay attention.
I'll start again.

INT. EXPENSIVE RESTAURANT - LADIES ROOM

Connie (from Sylvia's table) with LUCY (50s), a prim and proper woman who looks like she just came from church. They face each other in the mirrors.

CONNIE

The guy is some kind of European Rock Star, Lucy! And ten years younger than her. Pisses me off. The last time I had a younger guy look at my body I was on a gurney and life support. How romantic is that?

Lucy is visibly upset.

EXT. OCEAN PARK STREET

George and Nina walk with STEVEN and GAIL, a couple in their mid-20s. Nina and Gail in front, George and Steven in back.

GEORGE

(to Steven)

So, now she's bummed because her boss is having an affair and she didn't know anything about it. Tell you the truth, I think she's jealous.

Nina and Gail.

NINA

And then he said I had the same glow! Did Steven ever talk to you about a glow?

GAIL

Are you kidding? He's asleep within thirty seconds. No glow. Nothing. Just me staring at the ceiling feeling like I'm in the middle of a train wreck.

NINA

And then he's suddenly telling me about Erik Brand having an affair.

(MORE)

NINA (CONT'D)

Right in the middle of the most
romantic moment of my entire life!

INT. EXPENSIVE RESTAURANT - LUCY'S TABLE

Lucy (from the Ladies' Room scene with Connie) settles across from her husband, CHARLIE, a distinguished banker, conservative, proper, tight as a drum. Lunch plates sit untouched in front of them.

LUCY

Charles, there's an adultery, an abomination, a Scarlet Letter going on and we are going to have to stop it. Before it becomes a scandal. Let us pray.

They both bow their heads to say grace.

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

It's a networking event. High energy, high expectations. Steven, George, Nina and Gail are checking in. Brad (Erik's assistant) is greeting people at the door. As the others enter Steven hangs back with Brad.

STEVEN

Brad, my man. Have I got a story for you!

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Upscale, modern bedroom. Large king-size bed, sparsely yet elegantly decorated.

Erik and Amanda in the final gasps and squeals of shared orgasms. Magical, powerful, enviable. They collapse into each other. Sweat-drenched bodies. Amanda on top. Heavy breathing, relaxing into each other. Lips next to ears.

ERIK

(whisper)

Hi.

AMANDA

(whisper)

Hi.

Silence. Amanda licks, then nibbles, then licks Erik's ear. Then a soft kiss. Then she pulls slowly back, her naked body slithers out from under the sheets.

ERIK

Thanks for spending the night.

Naked, she heads toward the bathroom.

AMANDA

Just leave the money on the table.

And disappears into the bathroom.

Silence. Erik stares at the ceiling, content, relaxed, confident, bliss. His reverie is jarred by

SLAM

The bedroom door flies open and a young girl, HOPE (9) comes charging in and leaps into the bed with squeals of delight.

Erik, a mixture of shock and joy, defends himself from the swinging arms and legs of his daughter.

TIMOTHY (11) hangs in the doorway.

ERIK

Whoa. Whoa. Easy

HOPE

Daddy, Timmy says that girls are stupid because they don't have a pee pee.

ERIK

(to Timothy)

You really said that?

Timothy rolls his eyes and shrugs.

Amanda comes out of the bathroom tying her bathrobe.

HOPE

Mommy, Timmy told me that...

Amanda sweeps Hope up into her arms.

AMANDA

(throwing Timothy a look)

I heard. I heard. Who's making breakfast this morning?

HOPE

Me! Me!

Hope leaps out of Amanda's arms and heads for the door.

TIMOTHY

I don't want any of that stupid granola!

ERIK

Then I think you better fix your own.

Timothy sulks.

TIMOTHY

How come she always gets what she wants.

ERIK

It's the law of the jungle, my friend. The law of the jungle.

Timothy turns and leaves. Erik reaches out for Amanda. She slides back into bed.

DAY TWO (TUESDAY)

INT. BRAND KITCHEN

HELGA (60s), the live-in housekeeper, removes breakfast dishes from Timothy and Hope.

Amanda, in an outfit reminiscent of Janis Joplin sweeps into the kitchen. Helga hands her a cup of yogurt and fruit.

AMANDA

(to Hope)

Hope, darling, Helga's going to have to pick you up today. But I'll be home in time for your homework.

Erik enters in elegant suit and tie. Helga hands him his cup of cappuccino.

TIMOTHY

(to Erik)

Dad, today is my track meet. You promised ...

ERIK

On the schedule. Two-thirty.

Erik sips his coffee and heads for the door that leads to the garage. Timothy grabs his backpack and follows.

Amanda takes Hope's hand and leads her toward the same door.

ERIK (CONT'D)
 (to Amanda)
 Beach house?

AMANDA
 One o'clock?

ERIK
 Perfect.

All four exit into the garage. Silence.

EXT. BRAND HOME

Two garage doors open simultaneously. Erik's Black BMW and Amanda's White Subaru glide out. They pause at the end of the driveway. Then one turns right and one turns left. The garage doors close sealing the house.

INT. B&B ADVERTISING

Sam and Erik move down the hallway with urgency, through WORKERS who are on alert as they glide by.

SAM
 I had to be the first to tell you.

ERIK
 Sam, there's no way ...

SAM
 (trying to keep it as
 private as possible)
 I know what you're thinking, Erik.
 I know. 'Not me. Not my wife.
 Not my marriage.'

ERIK
 That's not what I'm thinking.

They approach Sam's office. Charlie, the distinguished banker, Lucy's husband, is waiting inside.

SAM
 Charlie is a reliable source. He's
 a Christian and a banker, for God's
 sake.

ERIK
 That's not convincing me, Sam.

Sam cringes. They pass Brad who stands silently, papers and cappuccino in hand, ready to go to work. Erik ignores Brad as they enter:

INT. SAM'S OFFICE

Brad left outside. Sam closes the door. Charlie hovers near a chair with the heavy weight of doom.

CHARLIE

This is the worst day of my life,
Mr. Brand.

ERIK

Do I know you?

CHARLIE

I am president of your bank, Mr.
Brand. And my wife and I are
devoted Christians who believe
passionately in the sanctity of
marriage and ...

ERIK

Stop! Just tell me what you know.

Charlie steadies himself, breathing is difficult. Sam braces himself.

CHARLIE

Well, my wife heard from a very
reliable source, that your wife has
been seen with another man ...

(beat, looking for the
appropriate word)

Cavorting.

ERIK

(stunned at his choice of
words)

Cavorting?

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

Brad, frozen, stares at the closed door, contemplates his next move. Cheryl walks up to Brad taking him in with curiosity.

CHERYL

If I could get one particular guy
to look at me the way you're
looking at the door, my life would
be complete.

BRAD

(staring at the door)
Sometimes you know what you don't
want to know, and you know that
your life will never be the same
for the knowing.

A beat. Cheryl tries to take this in.

CHERYL

But then he might open his mouth
and ruin everything.

She goes. He stays.

EXT. SYLVIA'S BEVERLY HILLS HOME

Nina paces, waiting for the arrival of Amanda. She checks
her watch, considers making a cell call.

INT. SAM'S OFFICE

Sam hands Erik a drink. Charlie waits patiently.

ERIK

This discussion ends here. Never
talk of this again. Understand?

Sam and Charlie nod their heads.

ERIK (CONT'D)

Good.

Erik downs the drink and leaves the room.

CHARLIE

We did the right thing, didn't we?

SAM

I don't know. I thought I knew but
now I don't know.

INT. ERIK'S OFFICE

Erik on the phone. Intercut with Amanda, also on the phone, driving in her Subaru.

ERIK
Can you believe that? You, an affair?

AMANDA
(mock offended)
Are you insinuating that no other man would ever be interested in me?

ERIK
Not at all.
(beat)
I'm just surprised it took this long.

AMANDA
What?

ERIK
The Beach House. Someone had to get suspicious and start a rumor. Comes with the territory.

AMANDA
Ahso. I see. What should we ...
(then, with a playful flirtatious tone)
Hey, is this that pre-emptive phone call where the husband accuses the wife of having an affair in order to divert attention away from the affair the husband is actually having?

ERIK
(playing along)
This is it. Bingo. You got it.

AMANDA
Excellent. Well done.

ERIK
Thank you.

Beat. Now serious.

Amanda rounds a corner and heads into Sylvia's driveway. Nina is waiting impatiently, nervously pacing.

AMANDA
What should we do?

ERIK
Nothing. You fight a rumor and it becomes bigger. You fight it more and it become real. The only way to kill it is to let it die.

AMANDA
We're still untouchable, right?

Erik's not so sure.

ERIK
Right.

EXT. SYLVIA'S BEVERLY HILLS MANSION

Nina is still pacing. Amanda stares out at blankly at her nervous assistant.

INT. ERIK'S OFFICE

Erik behind his desk, immobile, stares at the phone. Empty glass in his hand, Brad stands obediently in front of him.

ERIK
Brad, the definition of 'rumor'?

BRAD
(as if from memory)
Rumor: talk or opinion widely disseminated with no discernible source.

ERIK
And?

BRAD
A statement or report without known authority for its truth.

ERIK
'No discernible source'. 'No known authority for its truth.' Hmm.
(hard look to Brad)
Not something you would want to repeat, right?

Brad is silent for a painful beat, then,

BRAD

Not something I would want to repeat, sir.

(cautiously)

But something I might feel I have to share.

ERIK

Why?

BRAD

If the pain of knowing is so great .. that I feel I have to tell someone .. in order to relieve the pain.

ERIK

What pain, Brad?

Brad's knees begin to buckle. Erik presses him with a look.

BRAD

Well, sir, you know I never give you any information that has not been researched and verified for its authenticity and accuracy ...

ERIK

Get to the point.

EXT. SYLVIA'S BEVERLY HILLS MANSION

Nina and Amanda in the driveway. Nina is gushing, tortured. Amanda is frozen, speechless.

NINA

I know. I know I shouldn't worry and I shouldn't believe what other people think, but I'm not as strong as you. So when I hear things and I think I know what I do know and I believe what I know to be true ... and then I wonder if it's just me wanting to believe what I believe and that really something else is true and not what I believe ...

AMANDA

Nina, stop!

NINA

(shaking uncontrollably)
Okay.

AMANDA

And this man actually saw them?

NINA

That's what he told George. He said they were meeting at her house or something. And that she's young and she's gorgeous.

AMANDA

Who else have you told?

NINA

No one.
(but then she can't help herself)
Well, George knows of course ... and maybe Gail.

AMANDA

Who's Gail?

NINA

I don't know. Steven's girlfriend, I guess.

AMANDA

(holding on to the car for support)
And, who is Steven?

NINA

(trying to dig herself out.)
Friend of George. I don't really know him.
(but then ...)
But that was after Sylvia had told me that ...

AMANDA

Sylvia?
(pointing to house)
That Sylvia? What the hell ...

NINA

... that she saw you and some man at a party ...

She stops herself. Her world collapsing.

NINA (CONT'D)

I've done a bad thing, haven't I.

AMANDA
 (snapping)
 Shut up! Go inside. And just stop
 talking!

Nina grabs her bags and scrambles for the safety of Sylvia's house. Amanda's face darkens. Her worst nightmare.

Her cell phone RINGS. She grabs at it, sees Erik's name on the screen. She struggles to steady herself, answers.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
 What?

Intercut with:

INT. ERIK'S OFFICE

Erik alone in the office.

ERIK
 I heard it again. Why am I hearing
 it again?

AMANDA
 Erik. Is there something you want
 to tell me?

ERIK
 Who is Steven?

AMANDA
 (interrupting)
 Erik. Nina just told me ...
 (inhale)
 ... that a friend of her boyfriend
 has seen you with another woman. A
 younger woman. At her house.

Silence.

ERIK
 Shit. It's happening.

AMANDA
 What's happening?

ERIK
 It's out of control. It's a virus.

AMANDA
 Tell me it's not true.

ERIK
(losing it)
Of course it's not true. Jesus
Christ, Amanda, it's just a rumor.
A goddamn rumor. They're all
rumors.

AMANDA
Then why are you yelling?

ERIK
Because I'm pissed.

AMANDA
You're scaring me.

ERIK
Listen, I can't talk. I gotta go.

AMANDA
See you at one?

ERIK
Can't make it. Not today. Sorry.

And Erik hangs up. Stares at his office. It feels larger
than ever before.

AMANDA
(into dead phone)
Erik? Talk to me?

Amanda stares at the phone. At Sylvia's house. At the
phone.

SYLVIA

watches Amanda from a second story window.

INT. ERIK'S OFFICE

Erik throws a paper weight against the wall, it explodes.

EXT. SYLVIA'S BEVERLY HILLS HOME

Amanda faces Sylvia's house. With cold eyes she prepares to
go in.

AMANDA
(to self)
You can do it. You can do it.
(MORE)

AMANDA (CONT'D)

I am powerful. I am confident. I am
.. I am ..

INT. SYLVIA'S BEVERLY HILLS HOME

Living Room. All of the furniture has been removed or covered. WORKMEN are stripping the walls in preparation for the new design. Sylvia is watching in delight. Nina is in charge, overseeing the Workmen.

Amanda charges into the room, still talking to herself, then right to Sylvia.

AMANDA

Hey! You just couldn't keep it to yourself, could you?

Sudden silence. Tension fills the room.

SYLVIA

Excuse me?

AMANDA

What is it about people like you?
Too rich? Too bored? Too lonely?
Life has no meaning if you can't
bring other people down? Is that
it?

SYLVIA

Amanda, I understand you're under a
lot of pressure ...

AMANDA

I don't need your understanding ...

SYLVIA

... and that it's a shock and a
disappointment to learn that ...

AMANDA

And I don't need your sympathy.

SYLVIA

(calmly supportive)
We women have to stick together.
I'm here to support you.

AMANDA

I need you to stay away from my
husband ... and I need you to ...

Silence. Workmen look to Nina. Nina considers saying something. Doesn't. Sylvia watches Amanda, patiently waiting. Amanda is shaking. Her resolve is slipping, confidence fading fast.

Suddenly Amanda breaks down in uncontrollable sobs, sinks to the floor. Sylvia signals to Nina and Workmen that they should leave. They do.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

(between sobs)

What am I going to do?

Sylvia goes to her. Kneels by her, comforting.

SYLVIA

Only one thing you can do, darling. Nail him! There's a reason we have private investigators, lawyers and judges. Nail him before he nails you. And certainly do it before the media gets wind of this.

Amanda looks up at Sylvia.

AMANDA

You wouldn't!

SYLVIA

No, but somebody else will. You can count on it.

Amanda looks into Sylvia's eyes and sees the confidence, strength and conviction she wished she had.

EXT. STOCKHOLM MEN'S CLUB - DAY

An elegant Old Victorian Building befitting the Old Men who established this club over 100 years ago.

INT. STOCKHOLM MEN'S CLUB

The interior is pristine, refined. The Main Floor contains a large waiting area with couches chairs, bar area, thirty-foot ceilings. Erik and Sam approach the Sign-In Area just inside the front entry.

ERIK

... and some idiot is out there spreading some stupid rumor about me ...

JAMES, the official greeter, recognizes them.

JAMES
Good morning, Mr. Brand, Mr. Baker.

SAM
'Morning, James.

They head into the main lobby. Old Age Elegance.

ERIK
... some stupid, jealous ...
probably some client who ...
(he stops in his tracks)
Oh, shit. Tepelmann. Of course.
It's Tepelmann. He gives us a
ridiculous deadline of four days
for a 5 million dollar project and
...
(a crazed look at Sam)
He's good. He's really good.

SAM
Erik, don't get that look. I know
that look.

ERIK
Bastard. Goddamn bastard. Just you
wait you stupid Kraut.

Sam looks around to make sure no one heard this last remark
and then chases after Erik who is headed toward the health
club entrance.

EXT. SANTA MONICA PARK

Overlooking Pacific Coast Highway far below. Amanda, alone
on the edge of the cliff looks down into the stream of
traffic directly below her, that crazed look dominating every
feature of her face.

INT. MEN'S CLUB STEAM ROOM

Erik and Sam alone. Both naked and soaking wet. Lots of
steam. Sam is focussed, intent, all business. Erik's long
wet hair clings to his face as he stares into the steam.

SAM
.. Jimmy's doing the graphics.
Patrick is jamming on the animatics
and Nick is generating the first
series of radio spots.
(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

Marty is shooting a temp spot
that's gonna be dazzling.

ERIK

Fuck him. Why are we doing all this
work for him?

(sudden realization)

He's just out to get me, Sam. He
wants to destroy me. Can't do it
face to face like a man. He has to
attack my wife. What a pussy!

SAM

Erik, you can't start thinking ...

ERIK

Success, the best revenge.

(suddenly newly focused)

I want the graphics on my desk by
four. Tell Patrick this isn't one
of his sci-fi movies. Nick can't
sound like Walter Cronkite, it
won't fly. And why didn't I see
Marty's script before he started
shooting? You know my rules.

Sam is silent. This is not going well. Sam bristles, starts
a new tact.

SAM

Okay, Erik. I get it. Now just
listen to this ...

EXT. SANTA MONICA PARK

Amanda bums a cigarette from a passerby, lights it, drags
deeply. Walks closer to the edge.

INT. MEN'S CLUB STEAM ROOM

Sam is zeroed in on Erik. Erik's eyes are riveted to a spot
on the wall.

SAM

And you've got one of three
choices. The high ground, the low
ground or the middle ground.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

The high ground is you act all sanctimonious and hurt and deceived and outraged and you force Amanda to come clean and admit her indiscretions.

(beat)

The low ground is you come clean regarding your own little lunchtime indiscretions and tell her that you know about hers and you say that you'll stop if she stops. ... Neither choice is really very pretty. Middle ground might be the best. You just ignore the whole thing and hope that she's more discreet in the future.

ERIK

My 'lunchtime indiscretions'?

SAM

(ever so careful)

Look, I understand. I totally understand. The sexual drive is so powerful sometimes that we have to ...

Erik is still fixated on a spot on the wall.

ERIK

It's my wife, Sam.

SAM

I get it. She'll never know, trust me, I'll never tell. That's why taking the Middle Ground is ...

ERIK

It's Amanda, Sam. Amanda. That's who I meet.

Sam is suddenly quiet, thrown off balance.

SAM

Amanda? You see Amanda?

Erik finally turns to Sam, but is lost in his own world.

ERIK

Yeah. It was perfect. It was so simple at first. Great sex. Spent all our time together.

(MORE)

ERIK (CONT'D)

And then there were kids and businesses and a home and cars and a housekeeper and ... all we wanted was to be alone for just a moment. Totally alone. Just so we could talk to each other.

(beat)

Sam, have you ever just taken an hour and lay down beside the woman you love and talked to her openly and honestly? And then just listened to her and held her in your arms?

Erik's eyes find the spot on the wall again.

ERIK (CONT'D)

And then to feel the comforting rhythm of her breathing, to smell the gentle fragrance of her hair, and to be caressed by her soft breath on my neck.

Sam is confused, impressed, shaken.

SAM

Your wife?

ERIK

Yeah.

SAM

Amanda?

ERIK

Yeah.

SAM

You're kidding!

(trying to lighten the mood)

Your wife? You go to see your wife?

(sudden realization)

Wait a minute. You never told me. I'm your best friend and you ... why didn't you tell me?

Walter suddenly out of his reverie.

ERIK

What? The most private and intimate moments with my wife ... and I'm supposed to tell you?

(MORE)

ERIK (CONT'D)

(zeroes in on Sam)

Sam, you're my best friend and you assumed all this time that I was seeing another woman? And you never asked. You assumed. What kind of friend is that?

Erik rises and walks out of the room. Sam sits in silence.

EXT. SANTA MONICA PARK

Amanda crushes the cigarette. Looks out at the ocean. Checks her watch. She's late. She turns and runs to her car.

EXT. HOPE'S SCHOOL

Kids walking home, riding bikes, being picked up by parents and Nannies. Hope walks to the pick-up area. Waits.

EXT. TIMOTHY'S SCHOOL

Timothy, and other RUNNERS warming up for the race. Timothy keeps looking to the bleachers and the sidelines. Sees BECKY, the object of his desire. She waves at him. Embarrassed he turns only to see another runner, CHRIS, waving back at Becky.

EXT. HOPE'S SCHOOL

Helga arrives in her station wagon. Hope looks at the approaching cars, gives up and gets in Helga's car.

Amanda's Subaru comes around the corner and gets in line behind other waiting cars. She sees Helga and Hope drive off. Frustrated, she beats the steering wheel.

EXT. TIMOTHY'S SCHOOL

The race is on. Timothy is running his heart out. Other STUDENTS and PARENTS are cheering. BECKY is watching intently.

Full effort. Timothy crosses the finish line, first place, barely ahead of one other runner. Chris comes in fifth. Students cheer, Coaches cheer. Panting, Timothy looks up into the bleachers. Becky is talking to a friend. Did she notice him? And no Erik. He sinks inside.

INT. HELGA'S STATION WAGON

Helga and Hope.

HOPE

Caroline's not going to have her sleep over because her Mom and Dad are getting a divorce because Caroline's Dad was having an affair with Jimmy's Mom?

HELGA

Really?

HOPE

Yeah. And Jimmy's Mom and Dad aren't getting a divorce because Jimmy's Dad doesn't know anything about it.

HELGA

I see.

EXT. TIMOTHY'S SCHOOL

STUDENTS exiting. Timothy waits out front, watching for Becky. Chris (who came in fifth place) exits flanked by a couple of CUTE GIRLS, including BECKY. They walk right by Timothy as if he weren't there. Timothy turns to find Erik standing behind him.

ERIK

Great race.

TIMOTHY

You weren't there.

ERIK

You came in first by a half a stride. Chris came in fifth. And then you looked for Becky and couldn't find her. You looked angry and then ran off. What did I miss?

TIMOTHY

I couldn't find you, either.

Timothy turns and walks off.

INT. SAM AND ELIZABETH'S HOME - EVENING

An elegant Spanish styled home in the hills of Beverly. Sam is agitated, pacing. ELIZABETH, his wife of twenty years, sits patiently, listening. Elizabeth is a slightly plump adorable woman who is always eager to please.

SAM

I'm speechless. Utterly speechless. No, I'm pissed. He's my best friend and I thought I knew everything about him. And now this. This big secret suddenly comes out and he acts like I should have known it all the time.

ELIZABETH

And ... were you ever going to tell me?

SAM

I just learned about it today. What do you mean, was I even going to tell you?

ELIZABETH

No. I mean were you ever going to tell me that you thought Erik was having an affair?

SAM

Are you kidding? Why would I tell you that? I tell you he's having an affair and then you'll want to tell Amanda and then I'll tell you that you can't and then you get worried that maybe I'm having another affair and that maybe Amanda isn't telling you something that she knows ... And where does it all end? No! You see, honey, my job is to be the buddy, the pal, the best friend. I'm the gatekeeper. I'm the one he can talk to and who will keep his secrets. Don't you understand that?

ELIZABETH

Of course I do. You cover for him and lie for him as long as you think he trusts you. You cover for him even when you think he's cheating on his wife.

(MORE)

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

But when you think he's been lying to you ... and keeping secrets from you, that's when you come running to me for consolation.

SAM

I'm not coming to you for (consolation) ...

ELIZABETH

Of course you are. You always have, Sam. You only want my help when you've been wounded or betrayed. I can count on that. But what I can't count on is your trust in me. You've stopped trusting me and I don't know when that happened. And maybe you've stopped loving me. And now I don't know if I can trust you anymore. And I find that sad.

Off Sam's totally confused look.

INT. BRAND HOME - DINING ROOM

End of the meal. Empty plate at Amanda's place. Hope is talking non-stop. Erik is on the phone turned away from the table. Helga at a respectful distance.

ERIK

(on phone)
You tell him I don't care if this is 'proper' or not. This guy is a public figure, an international business man and there must be some dirt about him, somewhere.

HOPE

... and Caroline says that she could tell when her Dad was lying to her Mom. Something about his breathing. Do you think that's true Daddy? Can you tell when I'm lying?

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

ERIK

(to Hope)
Sorry, honey. Daddy's busy right now.

ERIK

(back to phone)
Just tell him if he can't find something I'll have to find someone else who can.

HOPE

And Caroline says that her Dad cheated on her Mom because her Mom was working all the time and never home.

*
*
*
*

Amanda enters, more disheveled than usual. Erik gives her a look, then turns back to the phone.

ERIK (CONT'D)

That's right, first thing in the morning.

(hangs up, turns to Hope)

Yes, I can tell when you're lying.

Amanda hangs in the doorway, watching her family.

TIMOTHY

Great. This is just great.

Timothy grabs his plate of food and heads out of the room pushing past Amanda.

HELGA

Mrs. Brand. I saved you some food.
Do you want me to heat it up?

AMANDA

I'm not hungry.

Erik gives Amanda another look. She turns and follows Timothy.

HOPE

Can you, Daddy? How can you tell
when I'm lying?

Erik gets up and follows Amanda leaving a curious and frustrated Hope.

INT. ERIK AND AMANDA BEDROOM

Amanda sitting at the foot of the bed, staring blankly at herself in the bedroom mirror.

INT. BRAND HOME - DINING ROOM

Helga and Hope eating in silence.

INT. BRAND HOME

Erik walks through an empty hallway.

INT. ERIK AND AMANDA BEDROOM

Amanda hasn't moved.

INT. BRAND HOME

Erik hesitates outside Timothy's room. On the door, Timothy's hand-written sign, "Don't you even dare knock".

INT. BRAND HOME - KITCHEN

Helga begins clearing the table as Hope stares at her food.

INT. ERIK AND AMANDA BEDROOM

Amanda's purse drops to the floor. Her head into her lap.

INT. TIMOTHY'S BEDROOM

Timothy in bed, under the covers. Erik's head drops down on Timothy, using him as a pillow. A moment of silence, then:

TIMOTHY

Life sucks.

ERIK

Yeah, you're right.

(beat)

Becky, huh?

TIMOTHY

I don't get it. What has Chris got that I haven't got?

ERIK

Nothing.

TIMOTHY

So, what do I do?

ERIK

Nothing.

TIMOTHY

Nothing? That's stupid.

ERIK

Let her go. If she's meant to be with you, she'll come back, all on her own.

TIMOTHY

Dad, that makes no sense.

ERIK
I know. That's the problem with
the truth. It makes no sense.

INT. HOPE'S BEDROOM

Amanda tucks Hope in, Molly the Bear held firmly.

HOPE
Promise me you'll never get a
divorce.

AMANDA
I promise you.

HOPE
Do you know when you're telling the
truth?

INT. ERIK AND AMANDA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Erik lies alone in bed staring at the ceiling. Amanda comes
in from the hallway.

AMANDA
You hung up on me!

ERIK
And you didn't come home for
dinner.

AMANDA
I was pissed.

ERIK
So was I.

AMANDA
And scared.
(beat)
I feel like I can't talk to you.

ERIK
You can.

AMANDA
I know. But it doesn't feel safe
anymore.

Silence.

ERIK

Timothy has a broken heart.

AMANDA

And Hope is afraid we'll stop
loving each other.

Erik stares at the ceiling. Amanda watches her husband, feels the disconnection.

DAY THREE (WEDNESDAY)

INT. BRAND KITCHEN - MORNING

A new day. Breakfast routine. Timothy and Hope eat. Helga cooks. Erik stares at his food. Amanda enters, sits. Helga brings eggs and toast. Silence. Everyone silent.

INT. ERIK'S BMW

Erik drives, talks to himself more than to Timothy.

ERIK

You see, Timothy, you should act like you know what you're doing, even if you don't. It's all perception. We believe more what we see than what we know. I see a man who looks confident and I believe that he is. I see a woman who looks insecure and I believe that she is. It's all perception.

Silence.

TIMOTHY

You don't look happy. What does that mean?

INT. AMANDA'S SUBARU

Amanda grips steering wheel tightly, stares straight ahead as she drives Hope to school.

HOPE

Are you and Daddy fighting?

AMANDA

No, we're just not talking. You don't need to worry.

(beat)

(MORE)

AMANDA (CONT'D)
Remember what you told me when
Misty died?

HOPE
How my heart hurt?

AMANDA
Yeah. You said ...

HOPE
It hurt like a broken bone.

AMANDA
Yeah. That.

Hope sees Amanda's pained look.

HOPE
Sorry, Mommy.

EXT. WOOD FRAME HOUSE IN SMALL NEW ENGLAND TOWN - DAY

A handsome and sturdy MOTHER steps out of the house. She raises a brass BELL with wooden handle and RINGS it with determination and concern. CAMERA pulls back and up until it reveals the New England Village filled with houses, farms and rolling hills. And idyllic location.

MARTY (O.S.)
Cut!

Reveal that we are in:

INT. B&B ADVERTISING - SCREENING ROOM

ERIK
No. No. No. No. No.

Erik, Sam, MARTY and a small TEAM of designers watch the dailies from Marty's shoot.

ERIK (CONT'D)
This actress is terrible. Where did
you find her? She can't act! She's
supposed to be confident, relaxed,
composed ...

They all cringe. Erik drops his head in his hands.

SAM
(to the group)
Better leave us alone.

ERIK
(to the departing group)
No more casting without my
approval. Got it?

MARTY
No problem, Boss.

Marty and his crew are gone. Sam and Erik sit alone in the darkened screening room.

SAM
Good.

ERIK
What's good?

SAM
You're getting angry, that's good.
Shows you care.
(beat)
Wish I could do it. I don't get
angry. I pout and then I buckle.

ERIK
Now we're not talking any more.
(beat)
And my son sees right through me.
That's scary.

SAM
That's the problem with having
kids. No place to hide.

INT. PHOTO STUDIO

We are in the middle of a high-profile Model Shoot. Several top MODELS are primed and ready. A PHOTOGRAPHER shoots one Model against a lavender backdrop.

Off to one side, Elizabeth adjusts another Model's outfit. Amanda glides in behind Elizabeth.

AMANDA
An emergency? Can't talk on the
phone?

Elizabeth puts a final touch on a Model and turns to Amanda.

ELIZABETH
Yes an emergency. Follow me.

Elizabeth heads away from the shoot, Amanda follows.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
You think I'm foolish, don't you?

AMANDA
Elizabeth ...

ELIZABETH
And you think I don't know what's
going on.

AMANDA
Oh, I think ...

Elizabeth turns to Amanda.

ELIZABETH
Well, I am and I don't. You're
right. And I don't because no one
ever tells me anything. No one
thinks I'm worthy of their trust so
they don't tell me a damn thing.

AMANDA
Elizabeth ...

ELIZABETH
And I wouldn't tell me, either.
I'm not really stable or reliable,
Amanda, you know that. So I guess
I'm not really trustworthy, either.
I mean, if I was having an affair
or something, I wouldn't tell me.
So, I can't blame Sam for not
telling me. He knows me well
enough to not trust me.

AMANDA
Sam? Having an affair?

ELIZABETH
No.

AMANDA
Isn't that what you just said?

ELIZABETH
And the way he finally told me,
Amanda. He tried to make me
believe that it was all in his
imagination what Erik was doing.
For over a year ... in his
imagination! Please. I'm not that
stupid.

AMANDA

Erik?

From across the room:

PHOTOGRAPHER'S ASSISTANT

We need you, Elizabeth. Touch up!

ELIZABETH

Be right there.

(to Amanda)

That's what I said. I said,
'Erik?' And he said, 'yes, Erik,
for over a year ...

AMANDA

A year?

Amanda is sinking fast.

ELIZABETH

...having an affair'. But then he
wants me to believe it's not really
an affair but that you and Erik ...

PHOTOGRAPHER'S ASSISTANT

Elizabeth!

ELIZABETH

Coming!

Amanda is shaking. Elizabeth is suddenly cold.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Why didn't you tell me? I'm your
best friend.

AMANDA

Tell you what?

ELIZABETH

I wish you trusted me more.

And Elizabeth is gone.

Amanda's cell phone RINGS. She sees 'Erik' on the screen.
Hangs up. Fear and panic race through her. She lurches
forward, grabs a clothing rack for stability, she and the
rack crash to the floor.

INT. B&B ADVERTISING DESIGNERS ROOM

Erik and Sam are looking at the artwork for the PSS ads. Many ARTISTS wait with work displayed on tables, the floor and on the wall. The room has been consumed by the PSS Project. Everyone is on alert, more so than usual. Erik stares at his phone.

ERIK

She hung up on me.

SAM

Well, that's fine. I'm sure it was just a ...

Erik speed dials again. Grabs one of the print ads.

ERIK

Why is this all blue? What's with all the blues and greens. It looks like some Medicare ad. We need red, orange, rage and power.

(to Artist)

What's the matter with you?

Erik throws the ad on the floor. Looks at his phone.

Sam gives the wounded ARTIST an apologetic look. Erik obviously experiences another hang up. Slams the phone shut.

ERIK (CONT'D)

What the hell is she doing?

He moves on to another Artist's rendering. Sam follows.

ERIK (CONT'D)

You know I stop, I take a moment out of my day to reach out and offer a little simple apology ...

SAM

Right.

(re: the new renderings)

Sophie has explored a more mystical approach to the notion of 'availability' ...

ERIK

... you know, just to say that I didn't mean to hang up. And what do I get?

SAM

(re: the campaign)
 ... because we thought we might
 want to be subtle about this
 concept. Unconscious in a way ...

ERIK

Hanging up! That's what I get.
 Hanging up!

SAM

... don't want people to get even
 the slightest hint of surveillance
 or paranoia ...

ERIK

(suddenly alert)
 Surveillance?

And Erik is gone.

EXT. B&B ADVERTISING

Erik's Black BMW charges out of the parking garage and whips
 into the moving traffic.

INT. AMANDA'S SUBARU

Amanda, wound up tight, is driving erratically. Nina in
 passenger seat, holding on.

AMANDA

Nina, you didn't tell any more of
 your friends, did you?

NINA

What?

AMANDA

What Miss-know-it-all Sylvia has
 been spouting!

NINA

No, of course not.

AMANDA

And you haven't heard anything else
 have you? I mean, about Erik and
 his indiscretions or anything?

NINA

No, I ...

AMANDA

But you would tell me if you had,
right?

NINA

Well, yeah. Right. Of course.

Amanda pulls the car to a screeching halt in Sylvia's driveway. Workman Chuck gives Amanda a wave. Amanda ignores him. Nina is silent.

AMANDA

Well, go on. Get in there. Go to
work.

Nina slinks out of the car. Amanda drives off.

INT. SYLVIA'S BEVERLY HILLS HOME

Sylvia, at her window, sees Amanda's Subaru careening down the long driveway leaving Nina behind. Sylvia seems concerned .. or is it curious, or pleased?

EXT. STREET

Amanda's White Subaru bursts out of Sylvia's driveway just as Erik's Black BMW comes around the corner. He makes a quick adjustment and follows her.

INT/EXT. SUBARU AND BMW - MONTAGE

Erik tailing Amanda, doing his best to keep her in his sights and not be detected. He's clearly not very good at this. Amanda, irritated, is driving erratically.

ERIK

Jesus Christ. Who taught you how
to drive?

SUBARU

AMANDA

Sitting up there in your 'high-and-
mighty' office with all those
little chippies waiting on you hand
and foot ... "Yes, Mr. Brand. No,
Mr. Brand."

BMW

ERIK

Would you just slow down for a moment? Jesus Christ, who the hell taught you how to drive?

SUBARU

AMANDA

And that idiot partner of yours, Sam. Like he's some icon of integrity! He probably told you that you shouldn't be so dependent, or independent, or interdependent or codependent ... or whatever the hell that is.

She makes a hard left turn.

EXT. ROBERTSON BOULEVARD - DAY

The White Subaru plunges into a Public Parking structure. The Black BMW takes a quick right onto a side street and parks at a meter.

Amanda emerges from the Parking Structure, walks briskly into an Antique and Oriental Carpet Shop. Erik watches from across the street.

INT. ANTIQUE SHOP

Amanda with ANTHONY (30s), Italian, gorgeous super-salesman, charming, definitely gay.

AMANDA

(tough, determined)
Beds. I'm looking for the most expensive bed for the most irritating woman in the world. Whadda ya got?

ANTHONY

(soft Italian Accent)
Well, we could start with our traditional bed of nails and work up from there.

AMANDA

(snaps out a laugh)
Excellent. I like you. We're gonna do a lot of business together.

ANTHONY

This is Beverly Hills, darling.
The bed of nails is our biggest
seller.

They laugh together.

Erik peeks in through the front window. The laughing Anthony puts his arm around Amanda's waist, gives her a pat on the butt. She jumps in delight as they head deeper into the shop.

EXT. ANTIQUE SHOP

Erik pulls back from the window. Takes a breath. Considers his options. Peeks in again. Amanda and Anthony are gone. Erik sees a Cafe across the street, outdoor tables. Perfect place for surveillance.

EXT. CAFE

Erik settles at a table. Waits.

INT. ANTIQUE SHOP

Amanda and Anthony emerge from back room.

AMANDA

How far is 'close'?

ANTHONY

Two miles. I'll drive. We'll be
back in 20 minutes. I'll pick you
up out front.

EXT. CAFE

Erik is being served coffee and croissant by an attractive WAITRESS (30s).

Across the street he sees Anthony emerge from the shop and head into the Parking Structure.

CHERYL (O.S.)

Mr. Brand?

Erik is caught off guard. Quick look, sees Cheryl, Sam's assistant, at another table. Erik keeps his eye on the Antique shop.

Cheryl is on her way over. Waitress returns.

INT. ANTIQUE SHOP

Amanda waits inside. Watches for Anthony's arrival.

Sees cafe across the street. Sees Erik rising to meet Cheryl. Sees them embrace. Shock. Amanda wants to run.

EXT. CAFE

End of embrace. Cheryl turns to Waitress.

CHERYL

Mr. Brand, I'd like you to meet my
good friend, Heather.

Erik turns to Heather, his back to the Antique Shop. Heather, all giggles and grins, leans forward and gives Erik a big kiss on the cheek.

INT. ANTIQUE SHOP

Amanda sees Cheryl's hand gently caresses Erik's back as Heather rubs lipstick off Erik's cheek with a napkin. Anthony's bright Red Porsche convertible drives up. Amanda is frozen. She pulls dark glasses from her purse.

EXT. CAFE

Erik turns to look at the Antique Shop. Sees the waiting Red Porsche Convertible. Sees Amanda in dark sunglasses dash out of the shop, jump into the car and urge Anthony to drive away as quickly as possible. And they're gone.

EXT. STREET

Erik races around the corner to his car only to find a Beverly Hills METER MAID giving him a ticket. She smiles at him and continues writing. Erik sinks onto the sidewalk.

INT. HEALTH CLUB

Amanda, on the phone, comes charging in.

AMANDA

(on the phone, mid
sentence)

I mean right there, Lizzie. Right
on the street for everyone to see.

Among the dozens of Club MEMBERS working out Amanda finds Elizabeth diligently working on a Stair Master.

ELIZABETH
(on her phone)
So Sam was right?

Amanda snaps her phone shut.

AMANDA
He sure was! And Hope was right!
And Nina is right, and Andy is
right. And I have no idea when
anyone is lying.

ELIZABETH
Okay, okay, okay. Time to settle
down.

AMANDA
I can't settle down. How can I
settle down? Why does everyone want
me to settle down?

Elizabeth gets off the Stair Master, guides Amanda to a corner where they sit.

ELIZABETH
The way I see it, you've got three
choices.

AMANDA
Three. Great.

ELIZABETH
One: You could catch him in the
act. It sounds simple, but it's
hard to plan because it usually
happens when you least expect it.

AMANDA
Not good. Give me something else.

ELIZABETH
Two: You could confront him. Just
tell him what you saw and what you
believe. Chances are he'll deny it
all. He's a man. That's his job.

Amanda gives her a look.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Fine. Forget it. Number three: you just close your eyes and hope it all goes away.

(beat)

Problem is, if your eyes are closed you're not going to see anything and you have no way of knowing if it has stopped.

AMANDA

Catch him. Confront him. Close my eyes. That's it?

ELIZABETH

Yes, that's it. Those are all the choices you've got. The first two take a lot of courage and the last one only takes the willingness to live in denial.

AMANDA

How the hell do you know all this?

Elizabeth rises, heads back to the Stair Master.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

(sudden realization)

Oh, no. Not you. Sam? You and Sam?

Amanda follows as Elizabeth starts working out on the Stair Master.

ELIZABETH

I closed my eyes. I closed them so tight that it hurt. They're still closed.

AMANDA

And you never told me?

Silence from Elizabeth who stares straight ahead. Amanda, growing anger, looks around to make sure no one is close.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

You never told me! Why does nobody ever tell me anything?

Elizabeth keeps climbing, large tears flowing.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE - MALIBU - SUNSET

The beach house is dark. Lights twinkle from the houses nearby as the setting sun throws shards of gold across the rolling sea.

INT. BRAND DINING ROOM

Family at dinner. Food ready to be served. Erik stares at the table. Amanda stares at Erik. Timothy watches with curiosity. Hope says grace. Helga waits.

HOPE

And God, tell Caroline that it's not her fault that her Mom and Dad don't like each other anymore. Unless of course it is her fault. Amen.

Hope looks to Amanda for approval. Amanda manages a smile. Erik tries to catch Amanda's eye but she is fixated on Hope. The phone RINGS. Helga answers it.

HELGA

Brand residence.

(beat)

A gentleman for you, Mrs. Brand.

AMANDA

Helga, please get the name of the person calling ...

HELGA

With his thick accent, Mrs. Brand there is not a chance ...

Helga holds the phone in front of Amanda, the caller listening.

AMANDA

Never mind. I'll take it.

She grabs the phone and moves down the

HALLWAY.

AMANDA

(into phone)

Amanda here.

INT. BRAND DINING ROOM

Hope and Timothy and Helga eat. Erik leaves the table and heads into the

KITCHEN

Where he stares at the immaculate kitchen, dessert neatly served on five plates. The kitchen phone, light on, Line One in use.

BEDROOM

Amanda on the phone.

AMANDA

Listen, this is really not a good time for you to be calling ...

KITCHEN

Erik lifts the phone, gently pushes Line One, covers the mouth piece, listens.

ANTHONY'S VOICE

(soft Italian accent)

... know you said not to call you at home. And I promised I wouldn't but this is so exciting it really couldn't wait ...

AMANDA'S VOICE

No, no. It's okay. I'm glad you called. And that you're excited. It's just that ...

(beat)

... it's just that ...

(a breath)

It's been an awful day, Anthony. Not the time I was with you. That was great. Just the rest of the day ...

ANTHONY'S VOICE

I'm so sorry. Okay. I'll be quick. I found the perfect bed for us. Well, for you. Or for whoever. You'll love it. Can you come see it tomorrow?

BEDROOM

Amanda is leaning against the antique bureau that is neatly adorned with family pictures, mementos, drawings from Hope and Timothy, Amanda's jewelry, Erik's wallet, watch and ... and ... a business card with a picture, Cheryl's picture, smiling victoriously into the camera. Smiling, laughing, taunting. Hand written phone number. And a matchbook, Hotel matchbook. Cafe business card. Cheryl, Hotel, Cafe. Phone number. Amanda gasps for breath, for air, for support.

ANTHONY'S VOICE

Are you okay?

KITCHEN

Erik listens to Amanda's gasping.

AMANDA'S VOICE

Okay. Fine. Tomorrow?
Absolutely. Same time. Same
place. Bless you, Tony.

She hangs up. Erik reacts to the 'click' and quickly returns the phone. Heart pounding, racing.

Helga, in the doorway, with an attitude, watching Erik.

DAY FOUR (THURSDAY)

EXT. BRAND GARAGE - MORNING

A new day. The two garage doors open. White Subaru and Black BMW slide out. Stop at the end of the drive.

Erik rolls down passenger side window. Amanda rolls down her window. Timothy and Hope, wait, expectantly.

ERIK

One o'clock. Beach house. We need
to talk.

AMANDA

One o'clock. Good.

Two windows go up. Two cars go their separate ways. The garage doors close.

INT. BMW

Erik is subdued. Timothy listens patiently.

ERIK

And sometimes we hear things we can't believe. Or don't want to believe. But then we see things and seeing is believing. And we begin to believe the things we've heard ...

TIMOTHY

So when I saw Becky with Chris what should I believe?

ERIK

I have no idea.

INT. SYLVIA'S BEVERLY HILLS HOME

Workmen are in full swing on the drawing room and a couple of adjacent rooms. Nina is explaining some of the changes to the ever curious Sylvia. Amanda is deep into a phone call in the corner of the room.

AMANDA

(on phone)

And then he leaves that stupid card with her picture on it in our bedroom.

Intercut with:

INT. SAM AND ELIZABETH'S HOME / WORKROOM

Elizabeth on the phone in her Workroom. Mannequins with designs in progress. Elizabeth pins fabric to one mannequin. High fashion pictures from magazines cover one wall.

ELIZABETH

Okay, he's leaving hints. He doesn't know that's what he is doing. But that is what he is doing.

(beat, she stops her work)

Amanda, I may not be a great wife. And who knows what kind of mother I would have been. But, one thing I am sure of. I am a good friend and I am not going to let you down.

AMANDA

So what do I do? Hire a private
detective? Have him followed?
That's so, so --

It's clear that Sylvia has heard bits and pieces of this conversation as she allows herself to glide closer to Amanda all the time keeping her eye on the workmen.

ELIZABETH

No. You. You have to do it. You
have to do it yourself. You have
to catch him. Face to face.

Amanda is frozen at the thought.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

If you're willing to take the
plunge, I, your best friend, am
ready, willing and able to make you
invisible. That's right ...
invisible!

AMANDA

What?

ELIZABETH

See and not be seen. It's the only
way to catch the bastard.

Amanda sees Sylvia staring at her. Has she heard?

AMANDA

I gotta go.

Amanda hangs up.

Elizabeth hangs up and rips a PHOTO off the wall. Fashion photo of high-priced model, tall, short spiked blonde hair, elegant three piece suit, spiked heels. A killer look. A powerful woman. Elizabeth looks at the photo, an evil glint in her eye.

ELIZABETH

Revenge is so sweet.

INT. B&B ADVERTISING - DESIGN FLOOR

An entire floor dedicated to Designers. Booths, cubicles, open areas. Erik and Sam moving down the long hallway, Designers booths on either side. Various DESIGNERS vie for their attention.

ERIK

In broad daylight in a red Porsche convertible.

SAM

Nice car.

A DESIGNER holds up two versions of an OREO CARTOON character. One very playful, the other more severe.

SAM (CONT'D)

(to Designer)

The first one. We don't want to scare the children.

Still moving.

ERIK

She hates Porches. And she was late to dinner again.

SAM

You know, Lizzie and I never eat dinner together anymore. Better that way.

ERIK

And then he has the balls to call her at our house! And they're meeting again today! To pick out their new bed.

SAM

And besides, she's a lousy cook so it's a blessing and I get to ...

Erik suddenly stops, cuts Sam off.

ERIK

Sam, shut up! This is not about you!

(Sam goes silent)

My world is falling apart and you want to cheer me up with stories of your failed marriage?

Sam stays silent. Erik becomes aware that the entire room is watching them, or pretending not to. Erik turns on Marty who is conveniently close.

ERIK (CONT'D)

Marty, get back to work! And why haven't I seen that rough cut yet?

MARTY

You said by 3 o'clock.

ERIK

(to make a point)
And what time is it now?

MARTY

11 am.

Silence. Erik thrown, walks off, alone. Sam give apologetic looks to all and then scrambles after Erik.

INT. ELEVATOR

Erik in the elevator. Sam slides in as the doors are closing.

ERIK

I don't get you. I'm dying here
and you keep rambling on about your
wife's bad cooking and ...

SAM

I can't help you, Erik. You don't
want my advice. I'm a poor example
of a husband. You have no idea the
things that I've done. Elizabeth
has no idea of the things that I've
done. At least you still love your
wife.

Silence. The elevator hums.

SAM (CONT'D)

I would love to know what it feels
like to just want to be alone with
her for an hour in the middle of
the day.

(beat)

Elizabeth and I are like roommates.
We haven't had sex in over three
years.

ERIK

(almost to himself)
Oh, my God.

SAM

Embrace what you still have, Erik.
You may have lost Amanda for a
moment, but you haven't lost the
love. Hold on to that.

Elevator doors open on the main B&B Advertising floor. Sam exits leaving Erik alone. Doors close. Erik lost in thought. He looks at his watch.

ERIK

Oh, shit!

EXT. MALIBU BEACH HOUSE

The White Subaru sits in the driveway alone.

INT. MALIBU BEACH HOUSE / LIVING ROOM

Amanda stares out at the ocean.

BATHROOM

Amanda looks in mirror. Closes eyes. Opens them. Closes eyes again. Tight.

LIVING ROOM

Amanda stands next to the king size bed that looms in the center of the room. It looks larger than usual. Empty.

EXT. MALIBU BEACH HOUSE

Silence. The Subaru pulls away.

Moments later. The Black BMW arrives, parks. Silence.

EXT. BRAND HOME

The sun is setting on yet another day.

INT. ERIK AND AMANDA'S BEDROOM

Erik and Amanda lying in bed. Erik stares at a book, not reading. Amanda stares at the ceiling.

AMANDA

You didn't show up.

ERIK

I was late.

AMANDA
I thought you were never late.

ERIK
This time I was.

AMANDA
I see.
(beat)
Elizabeth thinks that Sam is
cheating on her
(pointedly)
... again.
(beat)
Is he?

ERIK
He's lonely and scared.

AMANDA
If you knew would you tell me?

ERIK
If he's cheating?

AMANDA
Yes.

ERIK
No.
(beat)
That's his job, not mine.

AMANDA
I see.
(beat)
I think he's afraid to tell her.

ERIK
Perhaps.

Amanda turns out her light. In the dark, Erik continues to stare at his book.

AMANDA
Would you tell me?

ERIK
If Sam was..

AMANDA
No. If you were.

ERIK
Cheating?

AMANDA
Yes.

Beat.

ERIK
Yes.

AMANDA
Yes, what? Yes you're cheating or
yes you'd tell me?

ERIK
Yes, I would tell you.

AMANDA
And did you?

ERIK
Did I what?

AMANDA
Did you just tell me?

ERIK
No.

They lie in the silence.

DAY FIVE (FRIDAY)

EXT. BRAND HOME

A new day.

INT. BRAND GARAGE

Timothy and Hope into their appropriate cars. Erik, twists his hair, pulls at his beard. Amanda in Batik muumuu, straps Hope into her seat.

ERIK
We need to talk.

Amanda feels caught, wasn't expecting this, takes a breath.

AMANDA
Will you show up this time?

ERIK
I'll be there. On time. See you at
one?

AMANDA
See you at one.

He hits his garage door remote.

INT. AMANDA'S SUBARU

Hope holds Molly tightly. Amanda drives a little too fast.

HOPE
Mom, you're driving too fast.
(beat)
Mom, you're scaring me.

AMANDA
What?

INT. ERIK'S BMW

Erik and Timothy.

ERIK
Oh, shit. One o'clock. Today's
Friday. We have Tepelmann today.
Why didn't you tell me?

TIMOTHY
I didn't know.

ERIK
What the hell was I thinking?

TIMOTHY
I don't know.

Erik speed dials his cell phone.

ERIK
Hey. It's me. I forgot. I have
our do-or-die presentation with the
dreaded Herr Tepelmann today.
Sorry.

AMANDA

Fine. That's fine. Gotta go.
Almost at the school.

ERIK

Fine. We'll talk later. Okay?
(realizing she hung up)
Shit.

TIMOTHY

So, is it all better now?

Erik gives his son a look as if he was noticing him for the first time.

INT. AMANDA'S SUBARU

Hope watches Amanda with concern.

AMANDA

'Herr Tepelmann!' He forgot? He's
the boss. It's his company. He
comes and goes as he pleases. Isn't
that what he said?

HOPE

When?

AMANDA

I mean, how stupid does he think I
am?

HOPE

You're not stupid, Mommy.

AMANDA

Of course I'm not. I'm also not
twenty-five years old with 'cute
little me' on my business card.

HOPE

Mommy, you're driving too fast
again.

AMANDA

Sorry.

INT. ERIK'S BMW

They are stopped at a light. It turns green. Erik and
Timothy stare straight ahead. They don't move.

TIMOTHY

It's green.

Erik starts driving, creeping through the intersection. Car behind him HONKS. Timothy watches him with concern.

INT. AMANDA'S SUBARU

Amanda, alone, on the phone in front of Hope's school.

AMANDA

Elizabeth, call me. We need to do this, today! NOW!

INT. ERIK'S BMW

Erik, alone in the car in front of Timothy's school. In anger he flips The Oreo against the dashboard where it sticks magnetically next to the GPS screen. Suddenly the screen comes to life and a computer voice is activated.

GPS VOICE

Congratulations. You are now the proud owner of 'The Oreo'. When you are ready to register this Oreo with your Personal Security System, press the 'activate' button on your screen.

Erik stares at The Oreo. Presses 'activate' button.

GPS VOICE (CONT'D)

System is now activated. This Oreo's ID number is 2322. Record this number in a secure place.

On the GPS screen: a 'flashing' car (Erik's) has been located on a street in Los Angeles.

INT. SAM AND ELIZABETH'S HOME / WORKROOM

Elizabeth is pinning Amanda's long black hair in tight pin curls to her head. The PHOTO of the Blonde Model in three-piece suit is prominent on the wall. A blond, spiky, wig sits proudly on a mannequin head in front of them.

ELIZABETH

Then I noticed that he wasn't looking at me ... Not the same way. He used to look at me with such love in his eyes.

JUMP CUT

Elizabeth applies long and elegant false nails on Amanda.

AMANDA

And when we first started going to the Beach House, it was perfect. We would talk, really talk. Just the two of us. Then we'd make love ... and we would always take a nap. I love naps.

(beat)

When did we stop talking?

ELIZABETH

Hold still. This is delicate work.

Amanda does.

JUMP CUT

Elizabeth is carefully painting the false nails.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

And suddenly I noticed that he was looking at me different ... like he was wondering who I was. A stranger. A curious, disdainful look. And in that moment ... it was clear.

AMANDA

Yes! The look. Erik has that look ... when did he get that look?

ELIZABETH

Hold still!

JUMP CUT

Plucking eyebrows. A little too vigorously. Amanda winces.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

My heart broke into a thousand pieces. It's never been the same. I thought if I was silent ... maybe it would go away.

JUMP CUT

Elizabeth applies make-up, eye shadow, liner, etc.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

But the longer I waited, the bigger the gap became. Then we were like roommates ... trying not to bump into each other in the hallway.

(beat)

You don't want that, Mandy. Being roommates with the person you love is a living hell.

A tear rolls down Amanda's cheek. Elizabeth wipes it away. Applies fresh make-up.

JUMP CUT

Elizabeth adjusts Amanda's beautiful black three-piece suit and blood red blouse. Very elegant, very conservative, screaming power.

Amanda turns and looks at herself in the full-length mirror. For the first time we see the transformation. A tall elegant woman with short, blonde, spiked hair (wig), stunning three-piece suit, high heels ... just like the Photo. Amanda's breath is taken away. She begins to shake. The reality begins to hit her.

AMANDA

Oh, my God!

ELIZABETH

Courage! You look gorgeous. You look dangerous.

She's right. She does. Amanda steels herself. Tries unsuccessfully to take a full breath.

AMANDA

I can't do this.

Elizabeth slides between Amanda and the offending mirror. They are eye to eye.

ELIZABETH

Then just close your eyes.

AMANDA

Can't do that.

ELIZABETH

I'd give anything to be you right now.

EXT. CENTURY CITY

Erik's Black BMW snakes through the traffic and turns into his building, disappears into the underground parking.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING

Erik exits the BMW, dressed in his best Armani suit, Oreos in his hand, cutting between cars on his way to the exit. His long hair flowing behind him.

ERIK

(to himself)

Okay. Okay. Focus. Mr. Tepelmann, let me give you some advice, let me give you some insight into the world of advertising. The quality of the product doesn't matter. It's the quality of the 'sell'. People buy a product because it is sold well, not because it works well, and certainly not because they really need it.

INT. UNDERGROUND SHOPPING CONCOURSE

Adjacent to the parking. Small shops catering to all of the needs of the tenants of the building, Starbucks, Kinko's, The Gap, etc. Erik, on the move, is greeted or recognized by several SHOPKEEPERS as he passes through. He seems simultaneously aware, oblivious and appreciative. He is in his element. A rock star on his way to the stage. A fighter on his way to the ring.

ERIK

You come to me because you know I am the best at what I do. You know I am the only one who can take your object of paranoia and surveillance and turn it into an object of caring and concern.

He heads toward the elevator.

ERIK (CONT'D)

That's why you're going to pay me five million dollars. Because I am your only ticket to success.

A SWEET LITTLE LADY standing next to Erik, looks up at him in admiration as the elevator arrives.

SWEET LITTLE LADY
I'd pay you five million dollars.

INT. HI-RISE LOBBY

Erik emerges from the elevator, charged, in control, ready for battle. He heads to the Newsstand Kiosk. A couple of Passersby notice him, with admiration, with awe. Andy has Erik's NY Times, the Wall Street Journal ready and a single rose.

ANDY
Morning, Mr. Brand.

Erik takes the newspapers, not the rose.

ERIK
What's the news today, Andy?

ANDY
The good news is good and the bad news is sad. But today is your day.

For the first time this stops Erik.

ERIK
"Today is my day." What the hell does that mean, Andy?

ANDY
From this moment in time all things are possible. There is magic in the air if you are willing to let it in.

ERIK
I see. I like that.

ANDY
No rose today, Mr. Brand?

ERIK
You don't have any arsenic, do you?

ANDY
Not my style, Mr. Brand.

Erik puts a large tip in Andy's tip jar, turns, heads for the elevators. He is charged.

Other CUSTOMERS approach Andy's Kiosk.

VOICE (O.S.)
Good morning, Andy.

Erik slows. He knows that Voice.

ANDY (O.S.)
Good morning, Ma'am. And how are you today?

VOICE (O.S.)
I'm excellent, Andy. Excellent.

Erik freezes. Amanda? Could that be Amanda? What the hell is she doing here?

VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Andy, do you know me?

ANDY (O.S.)
Oh, Ma'am, I'd have a hard time forgetting a woman as stunning as you.

VOICE (O.S.)
Bless you, Andy.

Erik creeps around a corner, peeks back at the Kiosk and sees ... no Amanda. Only a STUNNING BLONDE WOMAN in a three-piece suit. Where's Amanda? The Blonde Woman speaks.

BLONDE WOMAN (Amanda)
One Wall Street Journal.

Amanda? That's Amanda? What the hell? She's amazing, stunning, beautiful ... but why the disguise?

ANDY
Here you go, Ma'am.

AMANDA
(with thick French accent)
Dominique. It's Dominique, Andrew.
Nice to meet you.

ANDY
Thank you, Miss Dominique. Please, call me Andy. Lovely to make your acquaintance.

And what's with the accent? Erik scurries around the corner. Hard to breathe. Elevators ... a million miles away. No escape.

Amanda walks to the center of the lobby. She looks at the elevators, tucks the paper under her arm, lowers her dark sunglasses. Ready for business.

Erik watches her from his hiding place, suspicions mounting. She turns, almost sees Erik as he slips through a door marked 'Stairwell'.

INT. STAIRWELL

Erik descends stairs, two at a time. On cell phone.

ERIK

(on phone)

Sam, it's Erik ... I know ... I'm in the building, but I'm going to be a little late ... Tell Herr Tepelmann ... Look, I'll be there when I get there. Start without me.

INT. B&B ADVERTISING

Sam is heading toward the Conference room. Brad is hovering, hands full of documents, files, latte and designs.

SAM

Erik, don't do this to me ...

Sam covers his phone.

SAM (CONT'D)

Brad. Go to the lobby now! Find Erik. Get him up here!

Brad, like the loyal puppy he is, drops everything on a table, neatly, and takes off on his new assignment.

INT. UNDERGROUND SHOPPING CONCOURSE

Erik emerges from the Stairwell into the flow of shoppers and office workers. He runs his fingers through his long hair, smooths his beard, settles in a niche between Starbucks and The Gap.

ERIK

Sam, it is confirmed. It is so confirmed. But she is not going to get away with this!

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM HALLWAY

Through the glass we can see decorations in preparation for the Big Meeting.

Sam, about to enter the Conference Room, does a 180 and pulls himself away.

SAM
(yelling into phone)
Erik! Stop it! Get up here! Now!

ERIK
Wish me luck, Sam.

He hangs up. Sam is stunned.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING LOBBY

Elevator doors open. Amanda watches as Brad leaps out looking harried and stressed.

AMANDA
You okay, Brad?

Brad looks at this elegant woman, puzzled.

BRAD
Excuse me?

AMANDA
You are Bradley Crowley, aren't you? Personal Assistant to Erik Brand?

Amanda gives Brad a flirtatious look and slides into the elevator. Brad is left puzzled and flattered.

INT. BARBERSHOP ON CONCOURSE

Erik in the barber chair. BARBER is buzz cutting his once shoulder length hair. Erik's phone rings, he answers:

ERIK
I'm on the high road, Sam. Face to face. Catch her in the act.

INT. B&B ADVERTISING

Sam is working his way down a corridor, through workers, keeping the conversations as private as possible.

SAM

Erik. Where the hell are you?
 (Sam's phone rings)
 Hold on.
 (he switches lines)
 Brad? Well just stay there, he has
 to be in the building somewhere.
 And keep your eye out for
 Tepelmann.
 (he switches lines)
 Erik?

INT. BARBERSHOP ON CONCOURSE

Erik's hair now a buzz cut. Phone on his lap. The BARBER
 lathers his beard. Erik looks at himself in a hand mirror.

ERIK

Excellent.

INT. B&B ADVERTISING

Sam approaches the reception desk where receptionist Mary
 (birthday flower still in vase) is dealing with a recent
 arrival (Amanda).

SAM

Erik, answer the goddamn phone.

Sam arrives at the reception area. He is immediately taken
 back by the sight of a Beautiful Blonde Woman talking with
 Mary.

MARY

May I help you?

AMANDA

(French accent well in
 place)
 I have an appointment with Mr.
 Brand. Mr. Erik Brand, *s'il vous
 plait*.
 (acknowledging name on
 name plate)
 Mary, right?

MARY

Yes. And who shall I say is
 calling?

AMANDA

Dominique. Dominique DuBois.

Sam is speechless. Smitten.

SAM
 (into phone)
 Who the hell is Dominique DuBois?
 (beat)
 Erik?

Sam turns to Amanda.

SAM (CONT'D)
 (to Amanda)
 Excuse me. I have Mr. Brand right
 here on the phone and
 unfortunately, Miss ...

AMANDA
 Dubois. And you are ... ?

SAM
 Sam Baker, his partner.

Amanda takes Sam's free hand and envelopes it with both of hers.

AMANDA
 Sam Baker. Pleasure to meet you,
 Mr. Baker.

SAM
 And you, Miss DuBois.

Mary enjoys the obvious infatuation, the flirtation. Amanda does not let go of Sam's hand.

SAM (CONT'D)
 (barely able to speak)
 I'm going to have to ... well,
 he'll have to ... He's not here
 right now. He's at our other
 office. You know how it is.

AMANDA
C'est dommage. Mais oui. I
 certainly do know how it is.
Merci.

Giving his enveloped hand a squeeze.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
 Mr. Baker, could you be a
 sweetheart and inform Mr. Brand
 that I will call him later?

Sam is trying to focus. Cheryl, Sam's assistant, approaches.

CHERYL

Mr. Baker. The room is all set up.
Your notes are on your desk. I have
to go now. Are you sure you will
be okay without me today? I can
stay if you need me to.

SAM

(eyes still locked on
Amanda)

No. No problem, Cheryl. You go.
Family obligations and all that.
Give your Dad my best.

Cheryl gives him a quick peck on the cheek.

CHERYL

Bless you.

Cheryl gives Amanda a polite smile as she slides by. Amanda
feels a chill and extricates her hands from the enraptured
Sam.

Suddenly cold, Amanda turns to leave, sees Cheryl disappear
into the elevator. Sam, entranced, watches Amanda go. He
remembers the phone he is holding, pulls himself together.

SAM

(into phone)

Erik! Where do you find these
women? Erik?

INT. UNDERGROUND SHOPPING CONCOURSE

Erik, clean shaven, buzz cut, stands in front of The Gap. He
has cornered a YOUNG SLACKER (late 20s, same size as Erik),
dressed in baggy pants, soiled sweatshirt, old running shoes.

ERIK

(to Young Slacker)

That's right. \$100 for the whole
outfit. And you get the suit. Now!

INT. ELEVATOR

Amanda on the phone, waiting for Elizabeth to answer.

AMANDA

(to self, no accent)

'At the other office'. '

(MORE)

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Family obligations'. What kind of wimpy excuses are those? They don't even have another office.

(Lizzie answers)

Lizzie! It was beautiful. Face to face with Sam and nothing. You would have been proud of me.

Intercut with

INT. SAM AND ELIZABETH'S HOME

Elizabeth on the phone, stares into her refrigerator.

ELIZABETH

You went to the office? Are you crazy? Wow.

AMANDA

... and he got that seductive twinkle he gets - and - he -
(sudden adjustment)
Sorry, Lizzie -

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM HALLWAY

On the phone to Brad.

SAM

Stay there, Brad.

Sam hangs up - dials again.

INT. HI-RISE LOBBY

Amanda, on phone, glides out of the elevator toward the front doors.

AMANDA

I know exactly where he is.

She sees Brad. They give each other polite smiles. Brad watches her exit with fascination and adoration.

Erik enters from the 'Stairwell' door. No beard, buzz cut dressed in the baggy pants, sweatshirt and running shoes of the Young Slacker. Total transformation. He walks past Brad, no recognition. He scans the lobby then runs to Andy at Kiosk.

ERIK

Andy, have you seen my ... shit ...

Erik stops, not knowing how to describe Amanda.

ANDY

(slight reprimand)

Language, young man. Language.

Erik just stares. His phone starts RINGING.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Are you planning on answering that?

Erik is frozen. Brad is ten feet away, on the phone, watching the door for Tepelmann, scanning the area for Erik.

Erik's phone continues to RING. Erik quickly grabs his phone and pulls away from the Kiosk.

ERIK

(into phone)

What?

INT. SAM'S OFFICE

Sam is now on two phones.

SAM

Where the hell are you?

ERIK

She was right here and ...

SAM

Goddamn it!

ERIK

Stop yelling at me! She was right here talking to Andy and ...

SAM

(into second phone)

Brad, he's in the lobby. Find him!

Brad scans the lobby, looks directly at Erik. No recognition. Erik sees something outside.

Erik

Oh my, God.

He hangs up, brushes past Brad and heads out of the building.

INT. SAM'S OFFICE

Sam, still on phone. B&B WORKERS are watching from a safe distance as Sam begins to dissemble.

SAM

Erik. Erik!
(realizing he hung up)
Brad, goddamn it ... I'm coming
down.

Sam hangs up both phones, leaves his office, workers part in front of him as he heads for the elevators.

EXT. HI-RISE BUILDING

Erik runs out onto the sidewalk, to the crosswalk, watches the traffic coming from the right. Hits crosswalk button. Lights change.

Along with other PEDESTRIANS, Erik starts across the street. Middle of the street he turns right and walks down between the rows of waiting cars.

He approaches the White Subaru, Amanda inside, staring ahead, watching the lights, on the phone. Erik walks up to Subaru, Amanda talks passionately on the phone. Can't hear her. She glances at him. He looks at her. Reaches out to her, palm up. She turns away, annoyed. Damn panhandlers. Erik stares directly at her.

The light changes. Traffic moving. Erik pulls Oreo out of pocket and as White Subaru pulls away, SNAP, he attaches it under the rear fender. Cars HONK at Erik as he stands motionless in the middle of the street watching Amanda drive away. His phone RINGS.

INT. AMANDA'S SUBARU

Amanda drives. On the phone.

AMANDA

Why does every homeless guy think
that I'm the one that should give
him money? Why can't they just get
a job?

EXT. HI-RISE BUILDING

Erik heads back inside, on the phone, oddly elated.

ERIK

And she didn't even recognize me, Sam. How awesome is that? And that look she gave me ... total disdain. I haven't seen that look since our honeymoon.

INT. HI-RISE LOBBY

Sam, on the phone, emerges from elevator looking for Erik.

SAM

Fine, great, I'm happy for you.

ERIK

That was a joke, you idiot! Where's your sense of humor?

SAM

Very funny.

Erik sees Sam lost in the middle of the lobby.

ERIK

I am on my way, Sam. Don't worry, I'll be with you in a minute.

SAM

Great! Good!

Erik heads toward Sam who is in the middle of the lobby as other WORKERS stream around him.

Erik pockets his phone and joins the stream of workers. He deliberately bumps into Sam.

SAM (CONT'D)

(to Erik)

Hey, watch where you're going?

ERIK

(his best slacker voice)

Cell phones will fry your brain, man!

And Erik slides back into the crowd.

SAM

Asshole.

(back into phone)

Jesus Christ, we gotta get better security in this building.

Erik exits through 'Stairwell' door. Brad is in the background, still looking for Erik.

INT. STAIRWELL

Erik back on the phone. Ecstatic.

ERIK
This is fucking awesome!

SAM
Where are you?

ERIK
Can you believe that? I looked you right in the eye, Sam, and you didn't see me.

SAM
What?

ERIK
Right in the eye. "Cell phones will fry your brain, man."

SAM
Oh, my God ...

ERIK
By the way, I heard that "Asshole" remark. I will never forgive you for that.

And he disappears down the stairwell.

INT. LOBBY

Sam in the middle of the Lobby tries to contain his rage and fear. He turns and sees Mr. Tepelmann and the PSS entourage emerging from two limos in front of the building. They head toward the building as if they owned the it. Sam is caught flatfooted. He turns his back as the Entourage, headed by Mr. Tepelmann streams around him on their way to the elevators.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING

Erik races to his Black BMW. Gets in. Fires it up. Turns on the GPS system. Punches the 'tracking' button displayed on the screen. Map appears with blinking car (Amanda's) being tracked through the streets.

GPS VOICE

Welcome to PSS Tracking. Your Oreo is now located at 457 Roxford going North at 23.75 MPH. Please drive safely.

INT. LOBBY

Sam watches as the elevator doors close on Mr. Tepelmann and the Entourage. Embarrassed and frightened, he heads for the front doors. Run? Escape?

EXT. HI-RISE BUILDING

Erik's Black BMW lurches out of the underground parking, cuts a quick left into traffic. Sam, dazed and confused, out on the street, sees Erik's BMW disappear into traffic.

SAM

Goddamn you, Erik Brand!

INT. AMANDA'S SUBARU

On phone with Elizabeth.

AMANDA

I'll find him. 'Other office'!
Very clever. Hope stupid does he think I am?

INTERCUT with:

INT. SAM AND ELIZABETH'S HOME

ELIZABETH

How stupid, indeed.

AMANDA

It's time to invade that disgusting, chauvinistic, misogynistic, male-dominated sanctuary of his.

ELIZABETH

Brilliant ...
(phone beeps)
... hold on. Sam's calling.
(switches over)
Yeah Sam?

And INTERCUT with:

EXT. STREET

Sam on his phone, sitting on the curb.

SAM

I don't know why I'm calling you.

ELIZABETH

Okay.

SAM

But, I am calling you 'cause I got no one else to call.

ELIZABETH

Okay.

SAM

Erik's gone off the deep end. We have a meeting with the dreaded Tepelmann who just arrived and I can't go up there.

ELIZABETH

What do you want from me, Sam?

SAM

I don't know.

ELIZABETH

Where's Erik?

SAM

How should I know? He's out chasing some woman. And I'm left here ...

ELIZABETH

Hold on, Sam. I'll be right back.

(she switches)

Amanda, you're right. Sam just confirmed it. Erik's meeting some woman. Don't hang up. I'll get the coordinates.

(puts Amanda on Hold, to self)

Hang on, Elizabeth. You can do it. You can do it!

(she switches)

Sam? Now, this is very important. Where is Erik?

SAM
(babbling)
... all alone. And that goddamn son
of a bitch is out chasing ...

ELIZABETH
Sam! Stop! Stop sniveling and
pull yourself together. Hold on.
(she switches)
Amanda?

INT. AMANDA'S SUBARU

Amanda is driving, searching through her purse. Her phone
lies next to her purse. She pulls out crumpled 'Guest Pass'
to the Stockholm Men's Club.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
Ah ha! Perfect.

ELIZABETH (O.S.)
Perfect? What's perfect?

INT. ERIK'S BMW

The GPS Voice is his guide.

GPS VOICE
Your Oreo is turning left turn on
Mayfield. Please drive safely. You
are now 150 yards behind your Oreo.
Your OREO cannot make visual
contact at this time. Please drive
safely.

INT. SAM AND ELIZABETH'S HOME

Elizabeth back on the phone with Sam.

ELIZABETH
Sam, listen to me. It's your job
to make sure that Erik's little
fling does not damage all that you
have worked for. This is not a
problem, Sam. It's an opportunity.
Go back up into that office and
take control. You can do it. Now,
Sam, now, before it's too late.

EXT. STREET

Sam, still sitting on the curb, shaking, listening to Elizabeth. Traffic zooms by. He rises, turns, looks up at the Hi Rise Building that looms above him like some giant obelisk.

SAM
 (into phone)
 Okay. Okay. I can do this. I can do this.

ELIZABETH
 Walk into the building, Sam.

SAM
 I'm walking into the building.

Sam walks into the building.

ELIZABETH
 Straighten up.
 (he does)
 You are proud. You are strong.
 You are confident. Go straight to the elevator.

Sam heads straight for the elevator.

SAM
 I am proud. I am strong. I am confident.

EXT. STOCKHOLM MEN'S CLUB

Amanda's White Subaru pulls up front. Half a block away Erik's Black BMW, following her, slows and pulls over.

VALET ATTENDANT rushes to the White Subaru. Amanda shows her 'Guest Pass' with 'Valet Parking'. The ATTENDANT holds her door open. She exits the car. Her phone rings. She answers.

AMANDA
 I'm going in.

INT. ERIK'S BMW

GPS VOICE
 You are now 73 yards from your Oreo.

(MORE)

GPS VOICE (CONT'D)
Your Oreo can make visual contact
at this time. Please drive safely.

Erik grabs his cell phone. Speed dials.

ERIK
(into phone)
Sam, she's going into our club.
Our club! Can you believe that?
Mr. Red Porsche belongs to the
Stockholm Club!

INT. B&B ADVERTISING

Sam is walking down the hallway. He is totally focused.
There is a tension in the air. Workers watch Sam as he
glides toward the Conference Room.

SAM
(on the phone)
I'm walking in. I can do this.

ERIK
Of course you can.
(beat)
Do what? What are you doing, Sam?

Sam hangs up.

INT. ERIK'S BMW

ERIK
Sam? Sam?

INT. B&B ADVERTISING

Sam enters the Conference Room full of waiting PSS staff.
Mr. Tepelmann is pacing at the far end of the room. Sam,
feeling empowered by Elizabeth's Pep Talk, and with all the
charm he can muster does his best to emulate Erik.

SAM
I'm not late, am I?

No response. Nothing. Mr. Tepelmann emits an audible growl.

SAM (CONT'D)
Give me a minute.

Sam turns and leaves.

INT. STOCKHOLM MEN'S CLUB

Amanda at the Sign-In desk with James.

JAMES

Welcome to the Stockholm, and our
Friday Brunch. Sign In Please.

Amanda signs the Register. "Dominique DuBois."

JAMES (CONT'D)

(looking at her pass)

I see you're a guest of Erik Brand.

(shows her to the
Reception Area)

Relax, enjoy. I'm sure Mr. Brand
will join you momentarily.

Amanda walks into the large crowded Reception Area. Male Club MEMBERS and their FEMALE GUESTS are gathered in small private groups, all waiting for the Friday Brunch to begin. It's serene and polite, yet it has a feeling of adventure and sexual energy. Mozart plays, of course.

EXT. STOCKHOLM MEN'S CLUB

Erik, on foot, approaches the front of the club. Smiles at the Valet ATTENDANT, no recognition. Nods his head to two MEN exiting. Nothing. He seems pleased, confident.

INT. STOCKHOLM MEN'S CLUB

Erik with James, the Greeter.

ERIK

(out of habit)

Good Morning, James.

He proceeds towards the Reception Area. James stops him. Gives his rumpled outfit a critical look.

JAMES

Sir. Excuse me. This is a private
club. Members only. Unless, of
course, you have a Guest Pass.

ERIK

Guest Pass ...?

JAMES

I'm sorry, sir. I'm going to have
to ask you to leave.

ERIK

James, I ... Right. Guest Pass.
In my car. Be right back.

Erik turns and dashes out of the building.

INT. B&B ADVERTISING CONFERENCE ROOM

Sam returns to the Conference Room. Everyone is waiting. An odd silence and tension. Mr. Tepelmann at the far end of the room is wound tight.

Sam seems to be mumbling to himself. A chant? A mantra? Brad, with a look of concern, hands him his portfolio, notes and a cup of coffee.

Sam mumbles a bit more, puts the papers and coffee down, looks at the room. All eyes are on him.

SAM

I am late. I apologize.
(this is not going well)
Due to circumstances beyond my
control Mr. Brand will not be
attending this meeting.

The room shifts uneasily. PSS Staff give quick looks to Mr. Tepelmann.

SAM (CONT'D)

Regardless ...
(deep breath,
reconsideration)
The day before my wife and I got
married I asked her, "Why me?" And
she said, "Because you're the Best
Man for the job." I think she was
right but it took me twenty years
to figure out what the job was.

The room relaxes a bit. Even some slight laughter and smiles. Mr. Tepelmann is not amused.

SAM (CONT'D)

Today our job is to form an
alliance - a relationship if you
will, between PSS Industries and
B&B Advertising. But, we have a
problem. We're pregnant! And our
unborn child, better known as
'Oreo' is about to be born.

(beat)

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

This is the day before the wedding.
It's not a shotgun wedding ...

Sam pauses, looks directly at Mr. Tepelmann.

SAM (CONT'D)

Verstehen Sie 'shot gun wedding'?

Mr. Tepelmann is suddenly alert.

SAM (CONT'D)

*Sehr amerikanisch. Sehr wilder
Westen. Vater des schwangeren
Mädchens mit einem Gewehr* (Very
American. Very wild west. Father
of the pregnant girl with a rifle)
... you get the picture.

Most of the room is confused. Mr. Tepelmann is amused.

SAM (CONT'D)

And today is the day before the
wedding. And I have selected
myself to be the Best Man ... for
the job.

MR. TEPELMANN

Gute Wahl. Good choice.

And it seems that Mr. Tepelmann is actually smiling. And for
the first time in a long time, Sam feels good.

RECEPTION AREA

Amanda has been approached by an overly officious and eager
SERVER.

SERVER

Welcome, Madame. May I get you
something to drink?

AMANDA

(working back into her
French accent)
'Madame', hmm. Thank you. *Merci.*
Lemonade.

SERVER

Lemonade.

The Server slides off. An elegant, handsome British
gentleman, REGINALD (50s), glides up beside Amanda.

REGINALD

Ah, a new face. What a delight.
Name's Reginald.

AMANDA

Um, Dominique. Pleasure to meet
you, Reginald.

REGINALD

And French no less!
(searching)
So you must be a guest of ...?

AMANDA

Erik Brand.

REGINALD

Of course. Erik Brand. Brilliant.
One of our finer members. And
quite the lady's man.
(moves in closer)
And you're his 'guest'? How
divine.

AMANDA

(unsure what to say)
Merci.

REGINALD

You know, Dominique, one of the
advantages of belonging to the
Stockholm ... discretion. Better
part of valor and all that.

AMANDA

I see. So my little secret is safe
with you, Reginald?

REGINALD

(shifting to Cockney)
Safe as houses.

The Server arrives with her lemonade.

SIGN-IN AREA

Erik hands Guest Pass to James.

JAMES

Sign in, please.

James checks the Guest Pass and gives Erik's attire a
disparaging look.

Erik signs the register, "John Smith".

JAMES (CONT'D)

(seeing name)

John Smith? Ah, 'John Smith'.
Listen, Mr 'Smith' we have a very
strict dress code at the Stockholm.
I'm letting you in this time, but
only because you are a guest of Mr.
Brand.

ERIK

(a bit thrown)

Thank you. I'll make sure it never
happens again.

JAMES

(with and edge)

Very good. Make sure you do. You
may wait in the Lounge, Mr. Smith
and hopefully Mr. Brand, will be
here to collect you shortly.

Erik considers a response but moves into the Reception area
only to see:

AMANDA

Laughing with Reginald and two other MEN. Erik stops,
stunned, intrigued, infatuated.

The Server slides in front of Erik.

SERVER

May I get you a drink, sir?

ERIK

(still watching Amanda)

Ah, yes. Of course. The usual.

(off Server's look)

Oh, right, just a lemonade.

Server slides away. Erik joins a group near Amanda's group,
his back to Amanda.

ERIK (CONT'D)

(to group)

Hi.

GROUP

Hi. Hello. Welcome.

They give him disparaging looks. His outfit is clearly not suitable. They return to their conversation. Erik feigns interest. Behind him:

AMANDA

(laughing)

Reginald. You are just too funny. I adore your accent, your sense of humor. I haven't laughed this hard since ...

Amanda takes a quick look around the room. No Erik.

A tall, gorgeous EXOTIC WOMAN turns to Erik.

EXOTIC WOMAN

Young man, I assume you are aware that you are in strict violation of the dress code here at the esteemed Stockholm?

Erik realizes that she is addressing him.

ERIK

Well, yes, of course. I know. Sorry. But, you see, James at the front desk said ... well, forget that ...

Erik is totally smitten by this Woman.

ERIK (CONT'D)

(off her look)

Do I look as confused as I sound?

WOMAN

(moves closer, hand gently on Erik's arm)

No, but you do sound as confused as you look. And I like that in a man.

Erik, touched and nervous, laughs followed by a snort.

Amanda freezes. That laugh. That snort. Erik. Right behind her. So close.

REGINALD

(to Amanda)

Oh-oh, sudden sadness. Sudden concern. What's up?

Amanda scrambles to stabilize herself.

AMANDA

I ... ah ... Reginald, would you be
a sweetheart and get me another
lemonade?

REGINALD

Delighted.

He takes her glass and goes.

Amanda turns, only to see the Slacker, Panhandler giggling
with some Woman. She turns back and Reginald is gone. Hears
the 'snort' again, turns only to find Erik looking right at
her, only a few feet away. Erik, the Panhandler! They stare
at each other.

Server comes between them.

SERVER

(to Erik)
Your lemonade.
(to Amanda)
Can I get you another lemonade,
Ma'am?

Amanda nods. Server slides away.

ERIK

(to Amanda)
I like a woman who likes lemonade.

Erik's voice. It's confirmed. Amanda struggles to contain
herself. But it can't be Erik. Buzz cut, clean shaven,
sloppy clothes. Erik seems to enjoy her discomfort and his
apparent anonymity. A beat.

ERIK (CONT'D)

John. Smith.

A beat.

AMANDA

(accent, clean and crisp)
Dominique. DuBois.

They stare at each other, transfixed. Neither knowing what
to say, what to do. The Server returns with Amanda's
lemonade.

SERVER

(taking in their look)
Someday I'm going to know what it
feels like to have someone look at
me like that. Someday.

Amanda and Erik continue to stare. Server gives Amanda her lemonade, and departs.

ERIK
 (raising his lemonade)
 Well, Dominique DuBois. Here's to
 the joy of meeting such a
 delightful person who has a passion
 for lemonade.

Amanda stares at Erik with feelings of pleasure, pain, and fear. She raises her glass.

AMANDA
 And to you ... John Smith.

They click glasses. Eyes still locked. Neither drinks. A beat. Reginald returns with Amanda's lemonade, sees the look and that Amanda has a lemonade.

REGINALD
 Ah, timing. I can see you're ...
 I can see that ... Um, wow! Okay
 Reginald, time to make an exit. Be
 graceful.

And he does. And he is.

ERIK
 Did I interrupt something?

AMANDA
 No.

ERIK
 Are you planning on drinking that?

AMANDA
 No.

ERIK
 I see.

Erik drinks. Amanda still frozen, glass in air. After a moment:

ERIK (CONT'D)
 Lemons.

AMANDA
 Excuse me?

ERIK
 Make lemonade.

Silence, then

AMANDA
Ladies Room?

ERIK
Down the hall.

Amanda turns and makes a quick exit.

INT. LADIES ROOM

Amanda on the phone with Elizabeth. Intercut.

AMANDA
(excited. No accent)
And right to my face he's telling
me about the joy of meeting such a
delightful person.

Intercut with:

INT. SAM AND ELIZABETH'S HOME - KITCHEN

Elizabeth is piling carrots on a large cutting board.

ELIZABETH
You're not supposed to be talking
to him. You're supposed to be
following him.

AMANDA
I am following him. But he started
it by ...

ELIZABETH
And now he knows who you are!

AMANDA
No way. Not a chance.

ELIZABETH
Are you sure?

AMANDA
I'm positive.

ELIZABETH
Okay. Excellent!

AMANDA

But he looks so damn good, Lizzie
... hot ... Who knew ... Under all
that hair ...

ELIZABETH

Amanda! Don't lose sight of the
goal. Think Erin Brockovich, Joan
of Arc, Loraine Bobbit.

AMANDA

Loraine Bobbit?

INT. MEN'S ROOM

Erik on phone with Sam.

ERIK

I've got her, Sam. She's right in
the cross hairs. And she didn't
even recognize me.

Intercut with:

INT. B&B ADVERTISING SCREENING ROOM

SAM

No wonder. You look like shit.

Sam is on the phone tucked into a corner, far from the group
that is watching Marty's commercial. We see the Mother
ringing the bell. The Music soars.

ERIK

And she's flirting with me!
(beat)
She shouldn't be flirting with me!

Sam hangs up. The crowd CHEERS the end of the commercial. Mr.
Tepelmann looks impressed. Sam smiles meekly.

INT. LADIES ROOM

Amanda on the phone.

AMANDA

Loraine Bobbit? Jesus!

ELIZABETH

Okay, so that's a bit extreme. But
you get the point.

Amanda checks her hair in the mirror. Flicks her eyelashes up and licks her lips.

AMANDA

I gotta go.

INT. RECEPTION AREA

Erik emerges from the Men's Room. The Lounge area is more populated, more guests, more energy. Erik searches for Amanda. Suddenly the Exotic Woman is right in front of him.

EXOTIC WOMAN

And now you do look lost. Been stood up?

ERIK

Ah, no. I don't think so.

EXOTIC WOMAN

Listen, Mr. ...

ERIK

Bran- Smith.

EXOTIC WOMAN

Listen, Mr. Smith. Let's cut to the chase. We both know why we're here so why don't we skip the small talk and ...

Amanda slides out of the Ladies Room. Through the thickening crowd she sees Erik laughing with the Intense Woman whose hand is seductively rubbing Erik's back. Amanda's body stiffens. Her eyes sharpen, the playful, seductive look slides away. Tiger eyes. But her knees betray her and she begins to wobble.

Erik searches the room for Amanda as the Intense Woman continues her pursuit.

EXOTIC WOMAN (CONT'D)

Wow, most men can't keep their eyes off me. You're an interesting challenge.

She takes his hand and slides it onto her hip. Erik recoils slightly. She whispers in his ear.

EXOTIC WOMAN (CONT'D)

Hmmm. That got your attention!

Then a gentle kiss on the cheek.

Amanda, loses it and starts to sink to the floor. But Reginald is there, just in time, to catch her. With tear-stained face she looks up at him.

AMANDA

Bless you. Can you walk me to my car?

REGINALD

With pleasure.

ERIK

Finally extricates himself from the Intense Woman in time to see

Reginald supporting Amanda, Amanda leaning in to Reginald as they exit the building.

EXT. STREET

Erik charges down the sidewalk on his phone to Sam.

ERIK

... and she's with Reginald, that pompous British prick!

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

The room is a buzz with reactions to the cartoon Oreos. Sam on the phone, listening. He hangs up.

STREET

ERIK

(into the dead phone)
Goddamn it, Sam. How dare you hang up on me!

INT. AMANDA'S SUBARU

Amanda driving. On phone with Elizabeth.

AMANDA

And she's beautiful and sexy and Italian.

ELIZABETH

Did you take a picture?

AMANDA
And she kissed him!

INT. SAM AND ELIZABETH'S HOME, KITCHEN

Elizabeth is CHOPPING her carrots with a large butcher knife.
Intercut with Amanda in car.

ELIZABETH
Turn around. Immediately. Go back.
You have to complete your mission.

Chop. Chop.

AMANDA
And he didn't stop her.

ELIZABETH
Focus, Amanda. Keep your eye on
the goal. He's one step away from
the Fatal Step.

Chop. Chop.

AMANDA
The Fatal step?

ELIZABETH
A kiss is just a kiss. And a sign
is just a sigh.
(catches herself)
Sorry. Look, he's primed. He's
ready. Now we need him to cross
Second and round Third.

AMANDA
Round third?

ELIZABETH
We need him to go for the Home Run.
And you, my darling, need evidence!
Go back, take pictures.

Chop. Chop. Chop.

INT. B&B ADVERTISING

Sam just outside the Conference Room. Through the glass we
can see that Brad has taken over and he has the attention of
the entire room.

SAM

(into phone)

Now, let's assume for the moment that she is your wife. Fine. And that she has somehow managed to totally disguise herself. And let's also assume that she just ran off with that womanizer, Reginald. Fine.

Intercut with:

INT. ERIK'S BMW

Erik on phone, driving. His GPS is blinking Amanda's location.

ERIK

Fine? It's not fine.

It's taking all the strength Erik has to remain patient.

SAM

Erik, what little credibility you have left and what little patience I have left are eroding rapidly ...

ERIK

Sam, don't you see what's happening here?

SAM (CONT'D)

Yeah, I do.

(silence)

I'm in the middle a meeting. It's a rather important meeting. I'm a little busy. So, the next time you call me you better be walking down this hallway in one of your overpriced suits, ready to go back to work.

He hangs up.

INT./EXT. AMANDA'S SUBARU

Amanda is not on the phone.

On her left, a small PARK AREA with a small CARNIVAL. Sign: *St. Bartholomew's Church Fair*. Families in attendance, pony rides, Ferris wheel, games of chance, fortune tellers.

Amanda gives it a look, hits the brakes, makes a U-turn.

Amanda's White Subaru passes Erik's black BMW going in the other direction.

Erik hits the brakes and makes a U-turn.

INT. B&B ADVERTISING - KITCHEN

Sam in the Kitchen next to the Conference Room which is a buzz of high energy. He's fixing himself a cup of coffee. He's on a high. His phone RINGS. He quickly answers.

SAM

You better be walking down the hallway ...

ELIZABETH

Sam?

SAM

Oh, shit. Elizabeth. Sorry.

Intercut with:

INT. SAM AND ELIZABETH'S HOME, KITCHEN

The butcher block is covered with diced carrots. Chopped carrots on the counters, on the floor. Elizabeth pulls out another huge carrot and raises the cleaver.

ELIZABETH

(tough)

Sam? Where's Erik?

SAM

I ... don't know. Why?

WHAM! The cleaver slams through the carrot, sending more carrot parts flying everywhere.

ELIZABETH

Call him. Tell him the clock is ticking. His time is up. There's no escape. We're bringing him down.

Chop. Chop. More carrot parts fly.

SAM

(sudden realization)

Elizabeth, what have you done?

ELIZABETH

I'm opening my eyes. Revenge is
sweet, Sam. So sweet.

Chop. Chop. CHOP! She hangs up.

SAM

Oh, my God.

Sam sits at the kitchen table, speed dials.

SAM (CONT'D)

Erik, answer the phone, goddamn it.
Erik?

He sits with the phone, it rings, rings. Sam's confidence is
eroding rapidly. Mr. Tepelmann appears in the doorway.

MR. TEPELMANN

*Sehr gut, mein Freund. Du hast
eine glänzende Arbeit erledigt.*
(Very good my friend. You have
done a brilliant job.)

He gives Sam a thumbs up and heads back to the Conference
Room. Sam listens to his phone as it continues to ring.

INT. ERIK'S BMW

Erik's phone RINGS and vibrates on the passenger seat. Erik
watches as Amanda's Subaru pulls into:

EXT. PARKING LOT

A Parking Area next to the Carnival. Amanda stops her car
and just sits.

Erik's Black BMW pulls into the Parking Area. He stops,
phone still ringing, watches Amanda.

INT. AMANDA'S SUBARU

Amanda sits and stares at the Carnival.

Erik

kills his ringing phone, considers, and then dials.

Amanda

Looks at her ringing phone. Sees Erik's name on the screen. Hesitates. Answers.

AMANDA

Hey.

ERIK

Hey.

(beat)

Sorry about last night.

AMANDA

Okay.

Erik watches Amanda. Amanda watches the Carnival.

ERIK

Look, I heard your conversation with that Anthony guy. I know you're planning to meet him. It's killing me, Amanda.

AMANDA

And when were you planning on telling me about Cheryl? She's at our party. You meet her for lunch. You see her every day at your office. And she writes you stupid little notes with smiley faces! You think I don't know what's going on?

ERIK

There's nothing going on.

Silence.

ERIK (CONT'D)

I won't be there at one.

AMANDA

Me neither.

Erik watches Amanda as she hangs up and lets herself cry. He fights the urge to go to her. She pulls herself together, takes a big breath and gets out of her car. Heads towards the Carnival. Erik watches her disappear into the crowd.

EXT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - COTTON CANDY BOOTH

Amanda in line at the Cotton Candy booth. LITTLE CHILDREN squealing with delight, are lined up with PARENTS to purchase the bright pink sugar swirls.

Amanda with her Cotton Candy. She stares at it, gives it a gentle lick, closes her eyes and takes a big bite. She begins to relax, eyes still closed. A bit of a smile begins to emerge. Then:

BAM! Explosion. CHEERS from the Children. Calliope MUSIC begins to play.

Amanda snaps her eyes open to see:

Erik at a Game Booth about to throw a dart at a wall of balloons. A giant PANDA doll is the prize. A YOUNG MAN, make-up reminiscent of Joel Gray in "Cabaret", wild gleeful eyes penetrating, darting from person to person. A microphone hanging around his neck amplifies his melodic, taunting voice. He moves seductively inside the booth with fists full of darts and money.

YOUNG MAN

Three for three. The man is on his way to a Panda, Panda, Panda.

Amanda is just a few feet behind Erik. Her Cotton Candy hanging by her side.

A CLOWN on stilts wanders through juggling red balls high in the air. A surreal smile to Amanda. The MUSIC soars.

Erik throws again. POP.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

Four for Four. This is the moment that separates the men from the boys.

(he looks directly at Amanda)

Men from the boys. Men from the boys. Men from the boys.

Erik is nervous, feels the pressure. He steps back to get more perspective, bumps into Amanda.

AMANDA

Sorry.

Erik turns, sees Amanda. They lock eyes.

In Erik's look Amanda sees the boy, the childlike excitement, the pain and wonder and fear.

Erik shutters, grins and whirls releasing the dart at the wall of balloons. POP.

YOUNG MAN

(more amplified now with a
bit of reverb)

Five for five! The man is a winner!
Pick your Panda. Pick your Panda.
He's a winner. Panda. Winner.
Panda. Winner.

The Children cheer! Erik turns to Amanda.

ERIK

(boyish grin of delight)
I want you to have my Panda.

Amanda just looks at him. Arms hanging at her side.

ERIK (CONT'D)

(with impish delight)
And I don't think you're gonna
wanna finish your Cotton Candy.

Amanda looks down and sees a CIRCUS DOG, dressed in a
devilish clown suit, happily licking her Cotton Candy.

EXT. CARNIVAL - LATER

Amanda and Erik walk through the crowd. Soft Carnival MUSIC
plays in the background. Amanda has her arms wrapped around a
large stuffed Panda, holding it tightly, protectively. Erik
watches her with curiosity out of the corner of his eye. Two
children not sure how to talk to each other.

AMANDA

You like throwing darts?

ERIK

I guess so. I've never really done
it before.

AMANDA

Really?

ERIK

(cocky little boy)
Wanna see some magic?

AMANDA

Okay.

They stop. Erik reaches his hand up to Amanda's face, briefly
touches her cheek and then quickly reaches behind her ear and
produces a quarter. Amanda is impressed.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Very clever.

Her eyes radiate a sadness and loneliness that are seductive. Erik turns quickly and keeps walking. She follows.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

I know a boy who is so cocky, arrogant, charming and full of his own self-importance that it's hard to talk to him.

ERIK

Really? He mustn't have very many friends.

AMANDA

He thinks he does, but he doesn't. But he's my best friend.

They keep walking in silence, then ...

ERIK

I know a girl who is extremely talented, inspiring and gifted but she's so insecure that one negative comment will send her into tears.

AMANDA

Sounds awful.

ERIK

For her or for me?

AMANDA

For both of you.

She stops, turns, hands the Panda to Erik.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Give her this. I think she needs it.

Amanda turns, keeps walking. Erik, still holding the Panda, watches her go.

An ELDERLY COUPLE, obviously very much in love, comes towards them arm in arm. Erik watches as they pass Amanda. The Elderly Woman stumbles slightly. The Elderly Man quickly steadies her. They share a look that is enviable and delightful, not lost on Erik. Erik watches them pass then looks back to Amanda and sees that she is gone.

EXT. CARNIVAL

Erik moves quickly through the crowd, searching for Amanda.
His phone RINGS.

ERIK

Yeah?

Intercut with:

Amanda moves slowly to her car.

AMANDA

Erik?

ERIK

Yeah.

AMANDA

I can't do this anymore.

Erik stops. Silence.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

I don't like what I've become. I
don't like what you've become.

Erik, in the middle of a crowd, holding the Panda.

From a distance Amanda can see Erik, PARENTS and CHILDREN
walking around him. Then, with all the courage she can muster
...

AMANDA (CONT'D)

I might not be home tonight.

And she hangs up.

EXT. MALIBU BEACH HOUSE

The midday sun beats down on the tiny beach house. The White
Subaru is in the driveway. The Ocean rises and falls in the
background. A COUPLE walks on the beach, hand in hand.

The Black BMW glides into the driveway. Panda in the back
seat.

INT. MALIBU BEACH HOUSE

Empty house. The only sound, the CRASHING of the ocean.

Erik comes in cautiously. No Amanda. Erik moves from room to room, Living room, Kitchen, bathroom ... and no Amanda.

He sits on the floor in the empty hallway, back to the wall.

ERIK

(to the house, to himself)
Mandy, when I first saw you in that suit and blonde hair, I didn't know what to think. I didn't know who you were. And I just got so angry and scared and ... I was so sure that ... just the thought of you with someone else ...

Silence.

IN ANOTHER ROOM

Amanda sitting on the floor. The surf gently cracks and breaks.

ERIK

Pulls his knees to his chest.

ERIK

I miss that girl who used to break into tears when things weren't going her way. And I miss your tears of joy every time something good would happen for me. I want that girl back.

Silence.

Amanda cries softly.

ERIK (CONT'D)

I would never cheat on you, Mandy.
(beat)
Of course I've thought about it.
And of course I've been tempted.
But I could never do it. I couldn't handle the pain.

Silence.

ERIK (CONT'D)

I can't do this alone, Mandy.

ANOTHER ROOM

Reveal that Amanda is only feet away from Erik, a wall separating them. They are back to back.

AMANDA

You know I would never leave you.

Erik reacts, inhales, feels how close she is.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

What happened to the boy who used to bring me just one rose ... for no reason at all?

(beat)

I miss your insecurity, Erik. I miss your not knowing, your uncertainty, your fears. I miss the little boy who needed to be comforted.

Long silence.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

This Beach House?

ERIK

Yeah?

AMANDA

This was your idea. This was for you and me. So we could talk. When did we stop talking, Erik? Really talking!

ERIK

Maybe we never started.

AMANDA

Or were afraid to.

ERIK

It scares me to look you in the eyes and tell you exactly what I am thinking or feeling.

AMANDA

I scare you?

ERIK

No. The honesty scares me. Not you.

AMANDA

And now?

ERIK

I can't see you. It's easier.

(beat)

Cocky, arrogant and full of my own self-importance? That's how you see me?

AMANDA

Sometimes.

(beat)

Now what do we do?

ERIK

I have no idea.

Silence.

AMANDA

Erik, I felt invisible all day.

ERIK

Mmmmm.

AMANDA

I liked it. I felt safe.

ERIK

Do you think we can keep it?

AMANDA

Not a chance. But it's worth a shot.

ERIK

(almost to self)

Worth a shot.

Silence.

ERIK (CONT'D)

Sorry.

AMANDA

For what?

ERIK

For ever doubting you.

AMANDA

And me. For believing in the worst.

Silence.

ERIK

You know, eventually one of us is
going to have to move.

Silence.

AMANDA

Yeah. Eventually.

They don't move.

EXT. MALIBU BEACH HOUSE

The two cars sitting peacefully in the driveway. The ocean
laps at the shore.

FADE OUT.