

BUDS

By

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EXT. WOODED COURT - DAY

TITLE SEQUENCE:

A blacktop road runs through a densely wooded area. The sun beams through the leaves of the trees, dappling the ground with shimmering spots of light. A blue Honda CRX comes driving up the road toward us, goes around a cul-de-sac and parks at the far side of the court.

Sitting in the driver's seat with the window open is JAY BENNETT, a handsome, square-jawed man of thirty-four with short, dark hair and a mustache. He takes a pack of generic, Best Buy, 100mm cigarettes out of his shirt pocket, shakes one out, breaks off the filter, lights up and starts to cough. Jay hocks a big loogy out the window.

Jay sits there for a second in contemplative silence, his smoke rising into the clear air. Finally, Jay turns and looks all around: right, left, front, back -- nothing.

INT. JAY'S CAR - DAY

Jay shrugs, reaches into his pocket and removes a bag of weed and a pack of Zig-zag rolling papers. Jay pulls out a restaurant change tray from beside his seat, sets it on his lap, takes a fat bud out of the bag and drops it on the tray.

Jay begins the rolling process. He breaks the bud up and tosses the stem into the ashtray. He pulls a rolling paper out of the pack, puts an extra fold in it, sets the paper between the index and middle fingers of his left hand, scoops up the weed with the flap of the Zig-zag pack and dumps it into the paper. With both thumbs he rolls the bottom of the paper upward, brings the gummed edge to his tongue, licks it, gives it one more roll and twists the ends. He holds up the completed, symmetrical, well-rolled joint and admires his handiwork.

Jay looks all around one more time, then lights the joint and takes a big hit. He blows out the smoke slowly and smiles contentedly.

END TITLE SEQUENCE:

Out of nowhere, PETE HERMAN, a thirty-two year old fellow with shoulder-length dark hair, a Van Dyke beard and mustache and round glasses, pops up at Jay's window and says . . .

PETE

Boo!

Jay jumps in his seat and screams.

JAY

(gasps)

Good God! Don't do that!

PETE

(laughing)

Sucker.

Pete goes around to the passenger door and gets in. Jay hands Pete the joint and he takes a hit.

JAY

Someday I'm gonna have a heart attack and die,
then you'll be sorry.

PETE

It'll be revenge for all the times you've beat me up.

JAY

(confused)

When did I *ever* beat you up?

PETE

When we were kids you used to always beat me up.
You were a bully.

JAY

I was not a *bully* and I *never* beat you up.

PETE

Yes, you did.

JAY

No, I didn't. I may have pushed you around a little
bit, which you undoubtedly deserved, but that's it.

PETE

Do you remember for a fact *not* beating me up?

JAY

(hesitates)
Well . . . Not for a fact. But I just wasn't like that.

CUT TO:

INT. JAY'S CAR (WINTER) - NIGHT

It's now night and winter. Huge flakes of snow are drifting down from the sky. Pete and Jay sit in their same positions, still smoking a joint, but now they wear winter coats and hats. The car windows are completely steamed up.

PETE
(philosophically)
The memory is not so clear to the one who does the beating as to the one who is beaten.

JAY
Who are you? Charlie Chan? Come on already. You're such a little weasel. I push you once when you were ten and you haven't stopped bitching about it for twenty-five years. Isn't there some sort of statute of limitations? Seven years? Fourteen years?

PETE
I just want you to own up to it, that's all.

JAY
Why?

PETE
For the sake of truth.

JAY
Get outta town. What do you care about the truth? People ask you what you do and you tell 'em you're a comic book artist. How many drawings you sold to comic books?

PETE
That's not the point.

JAY
It's not? What is?

PETE

The point is that I draw comics. I don't have to sell 'em to make it real.

JAY

On what planet? Sunev?

CUT TO:

EXT. JAY'S CAR (AUTUMN) - DAY

Pete and Jay are in the their same positions in the car, both wearing windbreakers. Dead leaves cover the ground and blow past the car.

PETE

Sunev. That's Venus backward. I saw that Stooges. That's the one where they eat clamshells and wash them down with battery acid.

They both take another hit and go silent for a moment. Both of them look like they're thinking about something. Pete looks down at the roach in his hand; it's out.

PETE

And another thing . . . Women don't have a sense of humor.

JAY

I'll second that, they sure can't tell jokes.

PETE

Or remember them.

JAY

That's for sure. But we men are expected to be amusing and charming on dates. Tell jokes, be funny.

PETE

I can't stand women that need to be amused.

JAY

But if I want to get laid, I have to transform into someone else. It's creepy. Luckily, alcohol does help.

PETE

And it's like that whole thing about how when women say "no" when they really mean "yes," except when they don't.

JAY

Right.

(thinks)

Uh . . . What were we talking just about?

CUT TO:

INT. JAY'S CAR (SUMMER) - DAY

Pete and Jay, same positions as always, now in t-shirts. The trees out the windows are now thick with leaves.

PETE

When?

JAY

Before this.

PETE

Women.

JAY

No, before that.

PETE

(laughs)

How am I supposed to know?

(remembering)

Oh, did you get my shit?

JAY

Yeah.

Jay reaches into his pocket, takes out a baggy of marijuana and hands it to Pete.

PETE

How much was it?

JAY

Uh . . . It was seventy-five.

Pete takes the bag and hands Jay the money.

PETE

Isn't that more than it was before? I've only got sixty-five.

JAY

Yeah, it's gone up. You already owe me five, so that's fifteen bucks you owe me?

PETE

Sorry. I'll get it to you next week.

Jay hands Pete the change tray and rolling papers.

JAY

That's O.K. Here, impress me with your weed. So, you going to Kaye's party Sunday afternoon?

PETE

Can't. I'm working. How 'bout you?

Pete starts to roll one up. He clearly doesn't know how to roll and tears the paper.

JAY

Yeah. Sure. I'll go after the Piston game. Can't be enough parties as far as I'm concerned. When you get to be this age and still single, you gotta have a mechanism for meeting the bodacious babes. Parties are it.

PETE

(snaps his fingers)

Oh, shit!

JAY

(surprised)

What?

PETE

I bet Jennifer Moore's gonna be there.

JAY

Who?

PETE

Jennifer Moore. You've met her.

Pete now has a little rolling machine in his lap. He turns it, pops out the joint and it falls apart -- he forgot to lick the paper. Pete frowns.

JAY

I have?

PETE

Yeah. At Kaye's last party. I think you'd met her before that, too.

JAY

I did?

PETE

Don't you remember? At Kaye's party I was talking to her and I introduced you. You gotta remember 'cause she's a 100% bona fide knockout. Dark hair, beautiful eyes, perfect body, great tits, terrific smile.

Jay doesn't remember anything.

JAY

Sure. Of course I do.

Pete hands Jay a loaded pipe.

PETE

Just thinking about her is making me pop a woody.

JAY

All two inches of it?

PETE

It may be small, but it's insatiable.

(disappointed)

I'm really pissed I can't be there, I'd love to get something going with her. If I could just get a woman like her, my life would be all right. I tried calling and her line was disconnected. I

called the new one from the recording and it was some weird foreign guy. Damn!

JAY

Call in sick.

PETE

I can't, I'm filling in for someone else. Crap!

JAY

(guffaws)

Shit detail at the gas station. You know, Pete, may well be the least ambitious person I've ever met.

PETE

That may be, but I have ambitions to go out with Jennifer Moore, so do me a favor, will you? If you see her, hands off, O.K.? I'm gonna track her down.

JAY

Fine, whatever. But I'm gonna go to this party and I'm gonna have a great time. See, I used to have a bad time at parties, but luckily, now I'm older and more mature and I know how to comport myself public-wise . . .

EXT. KAYE'S YARD - DAY

A backyard barbecue party is going on. People are eating chicken, burgers and hot dogs on paper plates, drinking beer, laughing and having a fine old time.

Our view starts to move back and we realize that we're seeing the backyard through a window. As we continue pulling back we find ourselves in . . .

INT. KAYE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

. . . Kaye's living room where we see Jay sitting in an easy chair looking forlorn and depressed, a beer in one hand, a cigarette in the other. The living room is deserted except for one other person, a good-looking blonde, GINA, who looks more unhappy than Jay, and scowls at the floor.

Jay looks over his shoulder, out the window, at the party outside. He turns back, looks at Gina and smiles. Gina glances back at Jay and sneers. Jay gives her an "excuse me" look and takes a big slug of beer.

Suddenly, a really great looking girl comes walking through the front door. Long black hair, black leather jacket, black leather skirt, black stockings, high heels and radiating a sense of wildness; a drunken abandon.

She steps into the living room and scans the premises. She and Gina look right at each other, but neither says a word. They just stare. Gina finally looks away, continuing to scowl.

The wild, dark-haired girl turns her gaze on Jay who is looking right at her. She has a mole on her cheek. They stare into each other's eyes, daring one another to look away. Slowly, they both begin to smile. Jay finally blinks, but doesn't look away.

She steps forward until she is looming over Jay and she's only 5' 2". She swings one of her feet over his legs and is now standing directly over him, all the while holding his smiling gaze. She slowly lowers herself onto his lap. She is JENNIFER MOORE.

JENNIFER

Remember me?

JAY

(grinning)

Sure.

Jen leans closer to his face, smirking.

JENNIFER

From where?

Jay considers this for a moment.

JAY

(improvising)

Marseille, during the war. You wore blue, the Germans wore gray.

She smiles and leans even closer. Their noses are touching.

JENNIFER

You have no idea, do you?

JAY

(straining)

Burton Elementary School?

She moves her face slightly back and forth, indicating "no."

JAY

(shrugs)

Who cares?

He kisses her. It's a first-rate, lengthy kiss, too. Their lips separate, but their faces remain together.

JENNIFER

You still don't know who I am?

JAY

Would the kiss have reminded me?

JENNIFER

No.

JAY

(shrugs again)

It's the Alzheimer's, I forget sometimes.

Jen shakes her head in amazement.

JENNIFER

We met at Bill's house.

JAY

Bill?

JENNIFER

Bertelli.

Jay doesn't remember her and he can't hide it.

JAY

Oh, Bill Bertelli's. Sure. Now I remember you.

JENNIFER

(amazed)

No you don't. You're lying.

JAY

Well, I remember Bill. 'Course I've known him for most of my life.

JENNIFER

We met again right here at Kaye's last party.

JAY

Really?

JENNIFER

My God, I always thought I left more of an impression than this.

JAY

My short-term memory is shot.

JENNIFER

This was a year ago.

JAY

My long-term's not so great, either.

JENNIFER

Well, we *have* met. I don't want you thinking I always walk up to strange men at parties and sit on their laps.

JAY

Just starting tonight, huh?

JENNIFER

Why don't we go out.

JAY

Let's go.

JENNIFER

Another night. I've got something I've got to do now.
(she glances over at
Gina, then back)

This week.

Jen takes Jay's pen out of his pocket, uncaps it, takes hold of Jay's wrist and writes her number on his hand. "555-3738." Jay looks at his hand.

JENNIFER

Now don't wash your hand.

JAY

It's O.K., I never do.

Jen puts the pen back into Jay's pocket.

JENNIFER

Call me.

JAY

I will. Nice meeting you.

JENNIFER

We've already met.

JAY

I meant, again.

Jen stands up.

JENNIFER

'Bye.

Jen turns and walks right out of the party, teetering on her high heels.

Jay takes a deep breath, sighs and smiles happily. He looks up at Gina, who is still scowling, looking directly at him.

JAY

(grinning)

How about you, beautiful? What are you doing tonight?

GINA

(finally smiles and points)

Your pen's leaking.

Jay glances down and sees a black spot of ink on his shirt under his pocket. He pulls out his pen and the cap is on the wrong side.

JAY

Oh, shit!

Gina wears a self-satisfied smirk.

Jay tries wiping the ink spot with a napkin, but it's really no use. A thought hits Jay.

JAY
(to himself)
I didn't get her name.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. WOODDED STREET - DAY

It's a beautiful summer day: sunshine, blue sky and singing birds. Pete and Jay are taking a walk. Jay is smoking a cigarette.

JAY
Man oh man, smell that fresh air.

Jay takes a hit of his cigarette, starts to cough and hocks a goober. Pete points.

PETE
Oh, look. Part of your lungs.

JAY
(waves his hand)
I got more.

PETE
So, how was Kaye's party?

JAY
It was pretty good.

PETE
You have a nice time?

JAY
Yeah, great.

PETE
See anyone interesting?

JAY
Yeah, this really terrific babe just came up, sat down on my lap and asked me out.

PETE

No shit? You gonna call her?

JAY

Sure. I mean, I guess so.

PETE

You see Jennifer Moore there?

JAY

(pause)

Who?

PETE

Jennifer Moore. Don't you remember, I told you about her.

JAY

I remember you telling me, but I don't know who she is.

PETE

I introduced you to her.

JAY

I know you said you did, I just don't remember it happening.

PETE

Man, you must have a brain tumor or something, you can't remember anything. Black hair, really cute, about five-two?

Jay remembers her.

JAY

A little mole on her cheek?

PETE

(lights up)

Yeah, that's her..

Now Jay realizes he's stepped into it.

JAY

Uh . . . An earring in her nose and a tattoo of a flower on her shoulder?

PETE

(smile fades)

No, that's not her.

JAY

Oh, I guess I didn't see her. What's the big deal here, anyway?

PETE

Her phone's disconnected. I can't get in touch with her. I'm just interested in how she's doing and where she's living. I called Kaye this morning and she said she didn't see her either. I guess she wasn't there.

JAY

I guess not.

PETE

That's too bad.

JAY

Yeah, it is.

Jay looks away.

INT. JAY'S KITCHEN - DAY

Jay sits at the kitchen table drinking coffee, smoking a cigarette, reading *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, and taking notes. Jay suddenly shuts the book and looks at his hand, which is streaked with grease and filthy, the smeared phone number still visible. He grins, picks up the phone and dials. Jay coughs and composes himself. There is a pause, then Jen answers.

JENNIFER

(O.S.)

Hello?

JAY

Hi. Jennifer?

JENNIFER

Yes. Who is this?

JAY

It's Jay. From the party.

JENNIFER

Oh, yeah. Sure. How are you?

JAY

Great. You?

JENNIFER

Great. What's up?

JAY

Not much. Wanna go out tonight?

JENNIFER

Tonight? Sure, what time?

JAY

Eight o'clock?

JENNIFER

O.K.

JAY

Great. What's your address?

Jay grabs a pen, can't find paper and writes on his grimy hand.

JENNIFER

2636 Virginia.

(there's a voice in the B.G.)

What? Hold on.

(Jen speaks to someone else)

No, it's not long distance. I'll be off in a minute.

(into phone)

Hi, I'm back.

JAY

So, I'll see you at eight, then, Jenny --

JENNIFER

-- I don't like to be called Jenny.

JAY

(frowns)

Sorry. Is Jen O.K.?

JENNIFER

Fine.

JAY

All right, Jen, see you at eight.

JEN

I don't mean to be bitchy, I just don't like Jenny.

JAY

That's O.K. Not a problem.

JEN

I'll see ya. Thanks for calling.

JAY

My pleasure. 'Bye.

He hangs up. The second the receiver is back down the phone rings. Jay answers and it's Pete.

JAY

Hello?

PETE

(O.S.)

Hi. We still on for the movie tonight?

JAY

(hesitates)

. . . Uh, I can't make it tonight. My Gramma just called and she's not feeling real well, so I'm gonna go see her. How about Tuesday?

PETE

Tuesday's cool. I'll see ya then. Hope your Gramma feels better.

JAY

Thanks. See ya.

Jay hangs up looking tortured and a guilty. He thinks about it for a second, then waves his hand.

JAY

Ah . . . fuck it. What am I gonna wear?

Jay exits the kitchen.

INT. JAY'S GARAGE - NIGHT

Jay steps out the door into the garage wearing tight black jeans, black cowboy boots, a long sleeve shirt, a black and white, herringbone sport coat and a thin black tie. He pulls his pants up, his jacket down, unzips his fly, reaches in and pulls his shirttails tight.

Jay gets in his car, puts in the key, turns it and gets a click and nothing else. His face drops.

JAY

Oh no.

Jay tries it a few more times and still gets nothing but clicks.

JAY

Shit!

He gets out of the car and opens the hood. He starts to putter around in the engine, then looks down and sees that not only does he have grease all over his hands, he's got it on his sleeves.

JAY

Oh, Goddamnit anyway!

Pissed, but moving on, Jay goes back into the engine.

JAY

Ah ha, there it is.

He reaches deeper in, then suddenly the engine starts and there is the -- ZZZING!! -- of something caught in the fan. Jay jerks his hand out and does a James Brown spin on one foot.

JAY

Son of a fucking bitch!!!

He looks down at his hand and sees his finger gushing blood.

JAY

Oh, great! Fantastic!

Jay slams the hood closed, goes to take a step and his coat tail is caught.

Jay gets in the car and wraps his finger in an old napkin.

EXT. JEN'S AUNT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jay's blue Honda pulls up in front of a nice old brick house.

INT. JAY'S CAR - NIGHT

Jay looks down at the napkin on his finger which is totally soaked with blood.

JAY

Oy gevult!

A SUPERIMPOSED SUBTITLE APPEARS: "The pain and suffering that my people have endured."

Jay pulls the napkin from his finger and blood starts running down his palm. He quickly replaces the napkin.

EXT. JEN'S AUNT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jay steps up to the door and knocks. Jen answers looking terrific.

JENNIFER

Hi.

JAY

Hi. You look great.

JENNIFER

Thanks.

(they walk to Jay's car)

What's all over your sleeve?

JAY

Grease. Would you mind driving?

JENNIFER

No --

JAY

-- Great --

JENNIFER

-- Except my car's in the shop. Something wrong with yours?

JAY

No, no, it's fine.
(waves his hand)
Not a problem.

JENNIFER
(concerned)
What's wrong with your finger?

JAY
I cut it. It's no big deal.

He removes the napkin and blood drips down.

JENNIFER
You know, I took first aid classes, if you've got a
needle and thread I could sew it up.

Jay opens the passenger door for Jen and she gets in.

JAY
It's not that deep.

He goes around to the driver's door, gets in, turns the key and . . . Click! Jay turns to Jen and forces a smile.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Jay and Jen sit at a booth. A waitress goes walking by. Jay raises his hand to get her attention and we now see *two* bloody napkins on *two* of his fingers.

JAY
(to waitress)
Excuse me . . .

The waitress walks right past.

JAY
(perturbed)
Well . . .
(turns to Jen)
So, what do you do?

JENNIFER
I'm a graphic designer.

JAY

Oh, is that like business cards and stationary and stuff?

JENNIFER

It could be, but that's not what I do. I do corporate logos, TV bumpers, film credits, that kind of thing.

Jay isn't paying attention. He's looking at his injured fingers.

JAY

These damn things won't stop bleeding.

(looks up, annoyed)

And where the hell is the waitress? What do we gotta do, send up a flare? So, like, if I needed stationary, you could do it for me?

JENNIFER

Yeah, I guess. Do you need stationary?

JAY

No.

(sticks his arm straight up)

Hello! Jeez, usually the service is just fine here, I don't know what's gotten into them?

JENNIFER

So, what do you do?

JAY

I'm the assistant manager of a dinette store.

JENNIFER

(uninterested)

Really?

JAY

(smiles)

Yeah, it's not half as interesting as it sounds.

JENNIFER

(smiles back)

Do people still buy dinette sets?

JAY

Only the ones that want to eat at tables while sitting in chairs.

JENNIFER

Do you have any hobbies?

JAY

I write.

JENNIFER

Write what?

JAY

I'm writing a novel. Or, let me say, I'm rewriting it. It's already written.

JENNIFER

(interested)

That's fascinating. What's it about?

JAY

Well, ostensibly, it's about Heinrich Himmler. But it's really about his best friend who ends up killing him. The theme is friendship and betrayal. It begins in 1933 when the National Socialists came into power and --

JENNIFER

-- National Socialists?

JAY

The Nazis.

JENNIFER

Oh. So it's about World War Two?

JAY

World War Two is just a sub-plot.

JENNIFER

Sounds ambitious.

JAY

(smiles)

Thanks.

(his smile fades)

If we don't get served soon we'll miss the movie.

(looks up)

Hey! Could we get some service around her or what?!!

Jen winces.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

A green and white Checker cab pulls up in front of a movie theater. Jay and Jen get out of the cab and head over to the box office.

INT. THEATER LOBBY - NIGHT

Tickets in hand, Jay and Jen cross the lobby and pass a poster for Akira Kurasowa's *KAGEMUSHA*.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

We hear the film's soundtrack: the sound of wind blowing and the occasional, grunted, monosyllabic word in Japanese. Jay sits in the dark completely enraptured by the movie, his eyes wide, his mouth open. Jen looks bored. She glances over at Jay, then down at her watch, sighs, then looks back up at the screen. Jen starts to get out of her seat. Jay glances over, not wanting to look away from the screen.

JAY
(whispering)
Something wrong?

JENNIFER
(whispering)
I've got to go to the bathroom.

Jay nods and turns back to the movie. Jen stands and walks up the aisle.

INT. THEATER LOBBY - NIGHT

There are two closed doors leading into the auditorium. Jen comes out the right door at the exact same moment that Pete comes out the left door. They see each other and do double-takes.

PETE
Jennifer?

Jen points at Pete indicating she knows him, then snaps her finger indicating she can't remember his name. He helps her.

PETE
Pete.

JENNIFER

(sighs)

Pete Harold.

PETE

(corrects her)

Herman.

JENNIFER

(confused)

Herman Harold?

PETE

No, Pete Herman.

JENNIFER

Right. What're you doing here?

PETE

I heard this was a good movie.

JENNIFER

Me, too.

They both start to laugh. Pete walks over to a bench and Jen follows. They both sit down.

PETE

How are you? It's great seeing you.

JENNIFER

I'm fine. It's good to see you, too. What's happening?

PETE

Well, I've actually tried to call you, but there was a recording. I called that number and got some weird foreign guy.

JENNIFER

Yeah, that was the guy I moved in with.

PETE

(quickly depressed)

Oh.

JENNIFER

But, I've already moved out.

PETE

(quickly happy)

Oh. Where are you living now?

JENNIFER

(shakes her head)

Well . . . I'm staying at my aunt's house, which is completely impossible. See, my parents moved out of town, so I've got nowhere to go home to for the first time in my life. So, I guess I'm looking for a place.

PETE

Really? Well, ya know, I have a two-bedroom apartment and my asshole, metalhead roommate just moved out last month, so, ya know, if you want to move in, you're perfectly welcome.

JENNIFER

(lighting up)

Really? I'm interested.

PETE

(grinning)

You'll have to redecorate.

JENNIFER

Big deal.

PETE

(curious)

You're moving in doesn't mean we can't date while you're there, though, does it?

JENNIFER

Well . . . no, I guess. But if I move in it's strictly as a roommate.

PETE

Right, of course. What do you say we start this dating process right now, go over to Union Street and get a drink?

JENNIFER

I'm here with someone. I'm on a date.

PETE

(embarrassed)

Oh.

JENNIFER

It's not serious, just a date. Why don't you give me your number and I'll call you.

PETE

Sure.

Pete and Jen both write their numbers on the back of flyers and exchange them. Jen stands.

JENNIFER

I'll call you. It was nice seeing you again, Pete.

PETE

You, too, Jen.

JENNIFER

And thanks for the offer.

PETE

Not a problem. 'Bye.

JENNIFER

(smiles)

Sayonara.

Jen goes back into the auditorium. Pete sits there for a moment grinning to himself. Finally, he shrugs.

PETE

Well, maybe I'll watch just a little more.

Pete goes back into the auditorium as well.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Pete walks down the aisle. The wind is still blowing and there is still the occasional Japanese grunt. Pete looks for Jen in the crowd. He spots her, grins and waves. Jen sees him and waves back. The fellow beside her turns back toward the screen and Pete sees that it's Jay. Pete's face goes stony. He quickly turns and leaves. Jen watches him go with a confused expression. Jay is oblivious.

INT. PETE'S CAR - NIGHT

Pete's hand pounds the steering wheel. He looks very pissed off.

PETE

That really burns my ass!

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Jay and Jen exit the theater. Jay looks very pleased, Jen looks confused. They walk along the sidewalk.

JAY

I don't know what kept you so long in the bathroom, but you missed the best part. I love that movie.

JENNIFER

Are you friends with Pete Herman?

JAY

Yeah, we're good friends, why?

JENNIFER

I ran into him recently. I was just curious.

JAY

Pete and I have been friends since we were kids. He's my best friend. You couldn't find a nicer guy if you tried. So, you wanna get a cup of coffee or something?

JENNIFER

No, I'm tired. I'd like to go home if that's O.K.

with you?

JAY

Sure, fine. What's the matter? You didn't like the movie?

JENNIFER

No, it was great. I'm just tired.

JAY

Whatever you'd like. So, what are you doing tomorrow?

JENNIFER

Well, I'm not sure. I may have something.

JAY

I'll call you.

JENNIFER

(shrugs)

Well . . . All right.

EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

They have arrived at the bus stop. A bus pulls up, stopping with a hiss of its air brakes.

DISSOLVE:

INT. JAY'S KITCHEN - EVENING

Jay sits at the kitchen table reading *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* and taking notes. He puts the book down, picks up the telephone and dials. The phone rings and rings, then the machine gets it.

PETE'S VOICE

(O.S.; recorded)

Yeah, what do you want?

INT. PETE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

We see the answering machine on Pete's desk with its lights lit up and its tape spinning. It beeps. As we hear Jay's voice leaving a message our view moves away from the machine and roams across Pete's apartment where we see a number of cardboard boxes sitting on the floor.

JAY

(O.S.)

Hey, motherfucker, just calling to see what's goin' on? Thought we might get together and, ya know, have a meeting with Mr. Green. So, give me a call when you get in. 'Bye.

Our view stops at the front window, where, out in front of the building, Pete is helping Jen unload the boxes from her car. They both grab as much as they can hold and carry it into the apartment.

They get inside and set the stuff down. Winded, they both sit down. Pete can't stop looking at Jen and grinning.

JENNIFER

Do you have a washer and dryer?

PETE

In the basement. It takes quarters.

JENNIFER

(Jen nods)

Good, I hate laundrymats, they seem so desperate.

PETE

Be careful in the basemant, though, there's giant bugs from the Pleistocene era.

(grins)

So, for dinner, I'm going to make you my specialty -- Chicken a la Herman Supreme, and I bought a bottle of wine. Two, as a matter of fact.

JENNIFER

That's fine, but I'm still just here as a roommate.

PETE

I know, I know. That doesn't mean I can't try. Besides, now I get to go out on dates without leaving home. Think of the money I'll save in gas.

(Jen smiles. Pete continues conversationally)

So, uh, what were you doing out with Jay the other night?

JENNIFER

You have a problem with that?

PETE

No, no. Don't get me wrong, Jay's a great guy, but where did you meet him?

JENNIFER

You introduced us, don't you remember?

PETE

I mean recently?

JENNIFER

(stands up)

Oh. At Kaye's party.

Jen grabs a box and walks out of the room. Pete sees the light on the phone machine blinking. He pushes the button and hears Jay's message.

JAY

(O.S.)

Hey, motherfucker, just calling to see what's goin' on? Thought we might get together and, ya know, have a meeting with Mr. Green. So, give me a call when you get in. 'Bye.

PETE

(angry)

I think *my* Gramma's gonna be sick for a while, *motherfucker!*

INT. PETE'S SPARE ROOM - NIGHT

Jen stands in Pete's spare room holding a box and looking around in amazement. The walls are completely covered with pictures of heavy metal musicians.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. WOODDED COURT - DAY

Our view tilts down from the sky to the wooded court to find Pete standing there by himself. He kicks at some pebbles looking troubled.

After a moment, Jay's car comes driving up. Pete doesn't move as Jay goes around the cul-de-sac and pulls up beside him. Jay gets out of the car.

JAY

Hey, man.

PETE

Hey. How ya doin'?

JAY

O.K. Where you been?

PETE

Been?

JAY

Yeah, for like the last two weeks? I keep calling and leaving messages and you don't call me back. In fact, I don't know where anyone's been. It's like everybody went on vacation and forgot to tell me. It's like a "Twilight Zone" episode. So where've you been?

Pete looks away, troubled.

PETE

Well . . .

JAY

Yeah?

PETE

. . . I've been seeing Jen.

JAY

You've been *seeing* her? Where?

PETE

What do you mean, where?

JAY

Well, there's been no answer at her aunt's house for a week. Where have you seen her?

PETE

Well . . . I've seen her in a number of places.
Like my place, for instance.

JAY
(eyes widening)
You're place. Are you sleeping with her?

Pete pauses and bobs his head around like it's on a spring.

PETE
Maybe I am, what's it to you?

JAY
(furious)
You fucker! You little fucking motherfucker!
How could you do this to me? I was going out
with her!

PETE
But I told you not to! You went and did it anyway,
not even thinking about my feelings, so don't play so
pouty and hurt. You stabbed me in the back without
a second thought and I'm your best friend.

JAY
So now you're stabbing me back, huh?

PETE
I'm not doing anything to you. This is something
Jen and me are doing to each other. She really likes
me, what can I say? I didn't force her to move in.

JAY
(eyes widen again)
Move in?

PETE
That's right.

JAY
Jesus fuckin' Christ! I'm losin' my mind!

PETE

Hey, come on. You and her only went out once,
and you didn't even have a very good time.

JAY

I had a great time!

PETE

Well, *she* didn't. She doesn't like *KAGLAMANCHA*
and neither did I.

JAY

(indignant)

Hey! Fuck you!! It's *KAGEMUSHA* and it's a great
fuckin' movie! What do either of you know? Besides,
she missed the best part!

PETE

Jay, look, just accept it. Jen and I are living together.
That's how it is.

Jay gets back in his car.

JAY

Oh yeah? Like hell I will! *Fuck you and fuck her!*
(Jay turns the key and
gets nothing but a click)
And another thing, you owe me fifteen bucks!

Jay pops the hood release and gets out of the car.

PETE

Oh, really? As it turns out, I talked to Bill and that
bag was only sixty-five. You over-charged me by
ten bucks.

Jay goes under the hood.

JAY

All right, fine. You still owe me five bucks.
Cough!

PETE

I haven't got it, but I'll get it to you.

Jay sticks his hand into the engine -- ZZZING! -- the engine starts.

JAY

Holy shit!!

He pulls his hand out and it's bleeding. Pete starts to laugh.

PETE

Are you all right?

Jay pushes his way past Pete and gets in his car.

PETE

Come on, Jay. Don't be like this.

Jay burns rubber and peels up the street, spraying gravel.

Pete is left standing by himself in a cloud of dust. He waves the dust away and watches Jay's car disappear.

DISSOLVE:

INT. PETE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Pete is getting dressed for work: black leather shoes, khaki pants, a V-neck sweater, a white shirt and a tie. Once he's done he leaves the bedroom.

Pete steps into the living room and finds Jen sitting at the desk in front of her computer.

JENNIFER

Pete, what exactly do you do?

PETE

I'm an artist.

JENNIFER

I thought you worked for a petroleum company.

PETE

I do. But in my heart I'm an artist.

JENNIFER

(exasperated)

Really? And what is it you do for this petroleum company?

PETE

I'm one of their top sales representatives.

Jen nods, kind of impressed.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Pete is pumping gas into a car.

PETE

Would you like me to clean the windows?

We hear a customer's VOICE.

VOICE

(O.S.)

Sure, and check the oil, too.

PETE

You got it.

INT. GAS STATION - DAY

Pete comes into the station. Sitting inside is BEAR, a big guy with a very long beard. He is chain-smoking cigarettes.

BEAR

So, you finally got a broad to move in with you, eh, pal? That's a big accomplishment. How'd ya do it?

PETE

(shrugs)

It just happened.

BEAR

Did you lie to her about workin' in a gas station?

PETE

(patiently)

No, Bear, I didn't. She did it because she likes me.

BEAR

Wow! You mean there really is a broad in the world that *actually* likes a guy that works in a gas station. I'm impressed.

PETE

(condescending)

What can I say, Bear, some guys got it and some don't. I guess she just respects me for who I am.

(a customer steps up
to the window)

. . . Hold on a second.

(Pete turns and finds
Jen standing there. He
blushes and stutters)

Uh, uh, uh, Jen. Hi.

JENNIFER

(flatly)

Hello, Pete. So this is where you work?

PETE

Yeah, come on in.

Jen comes inside. Bear watches with amusement. Jen looks around.

JENNIFER

Is this the regional sales office?

PETE

Uh, no, not really. Jen, I'd like you to meet Bear.
Bear, Jen.

Bear plugs a butt in his face and shakes Jen's hand.

BEAR

Lookin' good, hon. What'cha doin' with a loser like
Pete?

JENNIFER

(cold)

None of your business, weird-beard!

(to Pete)

Top sales representative?

(points at Bear)

Who's he? The CEO?

PETE

O.K. I'm sorry. I lied.

JENNIFER

But why didn't you just tell me the truth?

PETE

I don't know.

(glances at Bear)

Uh, look, could we talk about this later?

JENNIFER

Sure. I mean, it doesn't matter to me anyway.

We're just roommates. I don't care what you do.

PETE

(leans toward Jen and
whispers)

You know, I really like you. A lot.

JENNIFER

(nods)

I'll take ten dollars on pump three.

Jen hands him a ten dollar bill.

PETE

Right. I'll see you at home when I get off.

Jen nods and goes out the door. Pete punches up the gas purchase. Pete turns and finds Bear staring at him, grinning.

PETE

Up yours!

DISSOLVE:

EXT. PETE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Pete gets home from work looking weary. He unlocks the door and goes in.

INT. PETE'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Pete enters the kitchen without turning on the light and starts to make himself something to eat. Because it's dark, he goes to set a pot on the counter, misses and it clangs on the floor. Pete picks it up, turns and runs into a chair knocking it over.

The kitchen light goes on and there stands Jen wearing an oversized T-shirt, clearly having just been woken up. She rubs her eyes.

JENNIFER

What's going on?

PETE

Just making myself something to eat.

JENNIFER

In the dark?

PETE

I didn't want to wake you.

JENNIFER

Good work.

PETE

Sorry. Where's the cereal?

JENNIFER

(points)

It's in the cupboard with the coffee and the oatmeal.

PETE

What was wrong with where I had it?

JENNIFER

Under the sink? Nobody keeps cereal under the sink.

PETE

I do.

JENNIFER

What if the faucet leaks?

PETE

What if the ceiling leaks? What's the difference?

JENNIFER

(looks at Pete for
a long moment)

Why do you work in a gas station?

PETE

Hey, where else am I gonna work with hair this long?

JENNIFER

That's not an answer. You're a bright guy, you draw pretty well, there's a lot of things you could do.

PETE

Yeah? Like what?

JENNIFER

(long pause)

. . . That's not the point. You're thirty-two years old. Isn't there anything you'd rather be doing?

PETE

Yeah, drawing comic books.

JENNIFER

So why don't you?

PETE

I do.

JENNIFER

Pete, if you took your complete works and collected them you wouldn't have one whole comic book.

PETE

I'm not fast; I'm precise.

JENNIFER

(skeptical)

Oh, really?

PETE

Yes, really.

JENNIFER

Hang onto your gas station job.

PETE

I will.

Jen exits the kitchen and Pete sits down.

DISSOLVE:

INT. PETE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Pete sits at the kitchen table trying to draw. His paper is blank. Jen can be seen in the background working at her computer. Pete glances at the phone, then looks away.

Pete frowns, sighs, goes over and dials. Jen looks on. The phone rings four times, then a machine clicks in.

JAY

(O.S. on machine)

Hi, this is Jay. I'm not home right now, but please leave a message . . . That is, unless your name is Pete Herman, in which case you can go fuck yourself!

Beep.

Pete hangs up looking forlorn. He goes back to his drawing pad and sits down. Jen watches with a look of concern, then turns back to what she's doing.

Pete taps his pen on the blank page.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. WOODED COURT - MORNING

The vacant wooded court sparkles with dew in the warm early morning sun. Pete comes walking up through the woods smoking a joint. He steps onto the road and looks sadly at the cul-de-sac. Pete walks slowly around the circle as he forlornly huffs the joint. Finally, he flicks away the roach and walks away.

INT. JAY'S GARAGE - DAY

Jay opens the door wearing his coat and tie and steps out into the garage. He opens the garage door and finds Pete standing there. Jay's expression tightens as he and Pete look at each other.

PETE

Hi.

JAY

(flatly)

What do you want?

PETE

I want us to get past this. We've been friends too long to not be friends.

JAY

(shakes his head)

I don't think so. I'm still pissed at you.

PETE

Why? You only went out with her once. Come on, gimme a break.

JAY

I don't know.

PETE

Come on. We've been friends our whole lives. We can't let a woman get between that. Our friendship is too important.

JAY

Well . . .

PETE

I'll stop bringing up that you were a bully when you were a kid.

JAY

I was *not* a bully.

PETE

Yes you were, but I won't bring it up anymore. I swear.

JAY

Well, that'll be a relief.

(looks away)

Uh, I've got an hour before work. Wanna go get a cup of coffee?

PETE

(smiles)

Sure.

JAY

You wanna drive?

PETE

O.K.

(they start toward Pete's car. Pete puts his hand in his pocket)

Oh, shoot!

JAY

What?

PETE

My keys. I must've left 'em at home.

JAY

(stops short)

Oh, great!

PETE

(pulls out his keys)

Sucker. How would I have gotten here?

JAY

(shakes his head)

Why do I always fall for that kind of crap?

PETE

'Cause you're a sucker, that's why.

They get in Pete's car and drive away.

DISSOLVE:

INT. PETE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Pete enters and finds Jen standing there, waiting for him.

JENNIFER

You're late. You know what time it is?

PETE

No, I don't wear a watch.

JENNIFER

(amazed)

That's not an excuse. You said you'd be back by noon.

PETE

I was with Jay. We made up.

JENNIFER

(surprised)

Oh, really? That's nice.

PETE

Yeah, I invited him over tomorrow night.

JENNIFER

I thought you worked tomorrow night.

PETE

No, they switched me. I work tonight.

JENNIFER

But we were going to go out. Remember?

PETE

Sorry. I gotta go get ready.

Pete walks past Jen.

JENNIFER

Get ready? What do you have to do to get ready to work at a gas station?

PETE

What's wrong with you?

JENNIFER

What do you mean?

PETE

Well, you can't stand anything I do, and everytime you see me you get pissed off.

JENNIFER

Do I really?

PETE

Yeah, and I don't like it very much.

JENNIFER

(sits down)

I'm just going through something, I guess. I mean, I probably shouldn't have moved in here in the first

place. I just broke up with someone and I don't know what I'm doing. It seems like we're both dealing with this like we were lovers, which we're not. We're roommates.

PETE

As a footnote here, roommates pay half the rent. That's two hundred and fifty-six dollars.

JENNIFER

(shocked)

You pay five-twelve? For this place?

PETE

Yeah?

JENNIFER

I'm sorry but it's not worth it.

PETE

It's centrally located, in a nice, wooded area. I don't have any complaints.

JENNIFER

You ought to.

PETE

That's the difference between me and you. I'm perfectly happy with my life; you want to bitch about everything. You ought to get together with Jay, he's always bitching, too. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to get to my degrading, low-wage job. I've got five hundred and twelve dollars rent to pay.

Pete walks past Jen into the bedroom. Jen looks like she has a headache.

INT. JAY'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

There are eight fat piles of manuscript pages sitting on the kitchen table. Jay sits in front of the piles literally cutting and pasting with the use of a scissors and tape. Having created a brand-new page, Jay stops and reads it. It seems OK. He puts the page aside, shrugs and keeps cutting.

INT. PETE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jen sits at her computer and talks on the telephone.

JENNIFER

Look, I can't listen to you tell me you love me after you've fucked my best friend. Those things don't go together. So just leave me alone, will you? Don't call me. I don't want to talk you anymore, ever.

Jen hangs up. Pete comes through the door and he is really dragging his ass.

PETE

(tired)

Hi.

JENNIFER

Hi. How was work?

PETE

(sarcastic)

Excellent. Couldn't be better. I just love working all night, then working someone else's shift all day.

JENNIFER

You ever hear of saying no?

PETE

I couldn't do that.

JENNIFER

Of course not. When's Jay gonna be here?

PETE

Soon.

JENNIFER

What about dinner?

PETE

He said he'd bring it, and a video.

JENNIFER

Nice.

PETE

Yeah. I'm gonna take a quick shower, see if I can't wake myself up a little.

Pete goes into the bedroom and shuts the door.

There is a knock at the front door. Jen answers it and it's Jay. He's well dressed and looking good. He holds several plastic bags.

JAY

(smiles)

Hi. How ya doin'?

JENNIFER

(smiles back)

I'm great. You?

JAY

Terrific.

Jay swings the bags around and gives Jen a hug. Jen hugs him back, holding on a second longer than he does. A look comes in to Jay's eyes. Hmmmm?

INT. PETE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jay, Jen, and Pete sit at the table finishing eating Chinese food. Pete is done and sits back in his chair, his eyelids growing heavy.

JAY

. . . So then, the next people that come walking in are this fat, ugly, obnoxious couple who immediately hate everything in the store. The woman's got a mustache and the man --

Underneath the table, Jen's foot touches Jay's foot.

JAY

(forgetting what he was saying)

-- Uh --

JENNIFER
(casually)

Yeah?

JAY
What was I saying?

Jen's foot is now on top of Jay's.

JENNIFER
The fat, ugly, obnoxious couple.

JAY
Yeah, well, who cares about them anyway? So,
who wants to watch a great movie?

JENNIFER
Sure.

PETE
(weary)
Yeah, why not?

Jay holds up the video tape of Akira Kurasowa's *RAN*.

JAY
Let's put it on.

INT. PETE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jay sits in a chair raptly watching the TV. We can hear the wind blowing and Japanese voices grunting. Jay glances to his right. Our view moves over to the couch where Pete is crapped out asleep. Our view continues to move and now we see Jen who is looking right back at Jay.

JENNIFER
(quietly)
You want something else to drink?

JAY
O.K.

JENNIFER
(stands)
I'll go get it.

JAY

I'll come with you.

Jay gets up and follows Jen out of the room.

A moment later Pete opens his eyes. He sits there on the couch wearing a disturbed expression, then very quietly stands up. He steps softly across the living room, gets to the kitchen door and clandestinely peers inside. He sees . . .

INT. PETE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

. . . Jay and Jen standing in the kitchen seriously making-out, their hands all over each other.

Pete turns around looking very angry, then steps out of sight.

Jen and Jay finally break apart and breathlessly whisper to each other.

JAY

What're you doing here? Come stay at my place.
I have five empty bedrooms.

JENNIFER

You do?

(Jay nods)

What about Pete?

JAY

Forget about Pete.

JENNIFER

But he's your friend.

JAY

Fuck him. He doesn't know what he wants.
The guy's thirty-two and works in a gas station,
for God's sake.

JENNIFER

(confused)

I know, but I also know I shouldn't be here. It's
not fair to Pete, he's taken it all the wrong way.

JAY

Honestly. Five empty bedrooms. No kidding.

JENNIFER

I'm not sure what I'm doing. We'll see.

JAY

I'm gonna go. Walk me out, O.K.?

JENNIFER

O.K.

They kiss again, then leave the kitchen.

INT. PETE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

As Jay and Jen cross the living room they both glance over at Pete. Pete is seated on the couch, exactly where he was before, his eyes closed, ostensibly snoozing away.

Jay ejects *RAN* from the video machine, then steps up to Jen at the door.

JAY

(whispering)

We can finish watching this later.

JENNIFER

(grins)

Can't wait.

Jay leans forward to kiss her and Jen turns to look at Pete. So does Jay. Pete's eyes are closed. Jen waves her hand indicating that this isn't a good idea. Jay shrugs.

JAY

Tell Pete I'll meet him at the court tomorrow at noon, O.K.?

(Jen nods)

Walk me out to the car.

JENNIFER

O.K.

Jay and Jen go out the door. The moment the door closes Pete's eyes open and he sits up looking truly pissed off.

Pete goes to the window, looks out and sees . . .

EXT. PETE'S BUILDING - NIGHT

. . . Jay and Jen stand by Jay's car embracing and kissing. Finally, their lips part. Jay gets in his car and Jen heads back inside.

INT. PETE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jen comes back in Pete's apartment. She shuts the door looking rather wistful and, through the window, sees Jay's car drive away. Jen glances over at the couch and sees that Pete's not there. Jen furrows her brow, crosses the living room, and steps up to the bathroom door.

INT. PETE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Pete is busily stuffing items into a pillow case.

JENNIFER

What are you doing?

PETE

(flatly)

Packing.

JENNIFER

(confused)

But this is your place.

PETE

Yeah, but this is *your* shit!

JENNIFER

You weren't asleep?

PETE

Not tonight, but I guess I was for the past couple weeks.

JENNIFER

What does that mean?

PETE

It means, I thought this was possibly leading somewhere.

JENNIFER

Come on, Pete, you're kidding yourself.

PETE

(stung)

Oh really? Anything else I'm kidding myself about?

JENNIFER

Honestly?

PETE

Yeah, sure. Why not?

JENNIFER

Aside from the fact that you have absolutely no ambition, you're not a very good artist. Your perspectives aren't natural, your detail work is shabby, and I don't think you could ever make a living at it.

PETE

You said you liked *Radiator Man*.

JENNIFER

I was trying to make you feel good. Look, I make my living as an artist, you've got to know the basics. It's the same reason you've worked in a gas station for seven years --

PETE

-- Eight, actually.

JENNIFER

Fine, eight years. You take whatever is handed to you, Pete. You won't make anything happen.

PETE

Anything else?

JENNIFER

Pete, I came here as a roommate and you've taken this all wrong. Can't we still be friends?

PETE

My friends encourage me, they don't put me down. I don't think I need a friend like you.

JENNIFER

All right, fine. Let me get the rest of my stuff.

Jen grabs the pillow case and leaves the bathroom. Pete follows.

INT. PETE'S SPARE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jen enters the bedroom with Pete in tow and begins packing her clothes in her suitcase. Pete's expression completely changes from fury to desperation.

PETE

Look, don't go. Stay. It doesn't matter. I didn't mean it.

JENNIFER

Jesus Christ, Pete, for a second there I actually thought you had some backbone, obviously I was mistaken about that, too. Have you ever tried to get a better job?

PETE

I like my job, what's the big deal?

JENNIFER

It's no big deal. It's perfectly fine. Work there for the rest of your life. How are the retirement benefits?

PETE

(thinks)

Well, not bad. Medical and dental are pretty goo --

JENNIFER

-- That's terrific, you're all set.

PETE

(totally desperate)

Jen, please stay. I won't ever bug you again. You're just my roommate, I can handle that. But please don't go.

JENNIFER

Look, Pete, I like you. You're a nice guy. Let's just say goodbye and be done with it, O.K.?

PETE

(defeated)

O.K.

Jen has all of her stuff together.

JENNIFER

Fine. Goodbye.

PETE

'Bye.

Jen hoists up her suitcase and walks past Pete as he slowly sinks down until he's sitting on the bed.

Jen goes out the door and shuts it behind her.

ANIMATION SEQUENCE:

Sitting on the bed is RADIATOR MAN who looks a lot like Pete except that his body is an automobile radiator. He grabs his head in frustration and steam hisses out of his ears. Radiator Man has lost his cool. Suddenly he leaps to his feet, stomps across the room and kicks the door down!

There's Jen just going out the front door. Radiator Man grabs Jen, lifting her into his arms. She smiles and puts her head against his shoulder. He takes her back into the bedroom.

JENNIFER

I love you, Radiator Man.

RADIATOR MAN

I know you do, baby. My temperature gauge is rising dangerously into the red zone. If I don't blow off some steam I'll explode.

They sink down out of sight and a cloud of steam rises up.

END ANIMATION SEQUENCE:

INT. PETE'S SPARE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pete still sits there forlornly on the bed. A moment later the door opens and Jen walks back in. Pete smiles at her hopefully.

JENNIFER

I forgot my clock.

Jen grabs her clock and leaves again. Pete smile fades and his head droops forward.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. WOODDED COURT - DAY

Jay's blue Honda drives up the wooded street, goes around the cul-de-sac and parks. Jay breaks off the filter of a Best Buy cigarette, lights up and as he blows out the smoke his face is a study of confusion. He looks all around, but doesn't see anything. He sighs and takes another puff of his cigarette.

Suddenly, a 32 oz. cup of Coca-Cola is thrown into Jay's face, dousing him and putting out his cigarette. Before Jay knows what's going on, Pete reaches in through the window, grabs Jay by the lapels of his jacket and starts to pull him out the window.

PETE

Son of a fuckin' bitch! I'm gonna kill you!

JAY

What the . . .

Pete pulls Jay the rest of the way out the window and lets him fall to the ground.

PETE

You bastard! You stole my girl!

With that Pete begins kicking Jay as hard as he can. Jay covers his face.

JAY

Jesus Christ! Are you outta your mind? Stop it!

PETE

No, you stop it, fuckstick!

Pete kicks Jay very hard several times in the stomach. Jay crawls under the car holding his stomach.

JAY

I didn't steal her, for God's sake. She's not property, she does what she wants.

PETE

Get out from under there, you chicken!

JAY

Don't call me a chicken.

PETE

Chicken!

Jay reaches out, grabs Pete's ankles and pulls. Pete falls on his ass.

PETE

Owww! Shit!

Pete kicks at Jay under the car.

JAY

Stop it!

PETE

Come out and face the music!

JAY

If I come out from under here you're gonna wish I didn't!

PETE

Promises, promises.

Pete runs over to the woods and grabs a big dead stick. He dashes back over and jabs the stick very hard under the car. Jay is stuck in the cheek and screams. Jay grabs his cheek and sees that he's bleeding.

JAY

Holy shit! What's wrong with you?

PETE

Nothing's wrong with me, but plenty's gonna be wrong with you, now come outta there!

JAY

Don't force me, man.

PETE

Come! Out!

Pete goes to jab the stick under the car again, but hits the side of the car causing the rough edge of the stick to run through his hands. Pete gasps in pain, then pokes the stick under the car as hard as he can, jabbing Jay in the chest.

JAY

Owww! All right, that's it!

Jay crawls out from under the car on the opposite side. His cheek is cut and bleeding and so is his nose. Pete runs around to confront him, the big stick held out in front. Jay is really pissed-off.

JAY
Put that Goddamn thing down!

PETE
Make me!

Pete whips the stick back and forth in front of Jay's face and whacks him on the side of the head. Jay finally grabs hold of the stick and pulls it out of Pete's hands. Jay tries to break it over his knee, but it won't break and hurts his knee. He finally just throws it. Jay wipes under his nose, looks at his hand and sees blood.

JAY
See what you did?

PETE
I see.

JAY
The only reason I don't kill you is that you're my friend.

PETE
Oh, really?

JAY
Yeah, really. Now enough, O.K.?

PETE
Well . . . O.K.

Pete starts to turn away.

QUICK INTERCUT TO . . .

EXT. WOODED AREA - DAY

TWELVE YEAR OLD JAY is pushing TEN YEAR OLD PETE while humming the Batman TV show theme.

BACK TO THE PRESENT DAY . . .

EXT. WOODED COURT - DAY

Jay sighs and takes a step forward. Pete suddenly swings around with his fist and sucker punches Jay in the mouth. As Jay spins around and drops to his knees, Pete dives on top of him swinging wildly.

Jay tries to crawl away with Pete on his back.

JAY

Don't make me use the restraining hold, 'cause you know I will!

PETE

Lay it on me, Bobo Brazil!

JAY

You really want me to?

PETE

Yeah I do. I've been hearing about your stupid fucking restraining hold forever. Let's see it.

JAY

You got it, bud!

Jay quickly flips over, gets a hold of Pete's throat, turns him around, gets him in a half-nelson with his right arm around Pete's throat, while pinning Pete's wrist up behind his back. Pete struggles as hard as he can, rolling them both around, but there's no getting out of Jay's restraining hold.

JAY

Had enough?

PETE

Fuck you!

Jay pushes Pete's wrist up higher.

PETE

Owww! Shit!!

JAY

You're not getting out of this, you know that don't you? I learned this hold the summer I worked at the mental hospital.

Pete's lower jaw is being pushed upward by Jay's bicep so he must speak through clenched teeth.

PETE

I've heard this story a million fucking times.

JAY

Give up or I'll break your arm.

PETE

Forget it.

Jay pushes Pete's wrist up even higher.

JAY

Give!

PETE

AHHH!! Fuck, I give.

JAY

You swear?

PETE

I swear.

JAY

Don't come at me again, O.K.?

PETE

O.K.

Jay lets Pete go and pushes him away. Pete rubs his aching shoulder.

JAY

Look, man, I'm sorry about all of this. She walked right into the party and sat on my lap. I didn't even know it was her.

PETE

And did you know it was her when you were making out with her last night right in front of me? Huh?

JAY

(abashed)

Well . . .

PETE

Well don't think for a second she gives a good
Goddamn about you! She was just doing that to
piss me off. She doesn't give a shit about you!

JAY

That's crap!

PETE

Oh yeah? You invited her to stay with you, didn't
you?

(Jay nods)

Well, I threw her out of my place last night. Did
she come to your house?

JAY

. . . No.

PETE

That's right. She doesn't give a shit about you and
neither do I!

JAY

Oh, well, great. Fine. Fuck you, too.

Pete walks away giving Jay the finger over his shoulder.

PETE

Go crawl in a hole somewhere and die!

JAY

No, you! Loser! Got that five bucks you owe
me?

Pete pulls out his wallet and looks inside -- he hasn't got any money at all.

PETE

Fuck you!

Pete keeps walking until he's out of sight.

Jay shakes his head. He touches his swelling lip, his cut cheek, his bloody nose, then his bruised
eye.

JAY

Oh, man!

He sighs, gets in his car, turns the key and . . . Click!

Jay drops his head back and laughs sardonically.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. JAY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Jay's house is very large, sits on an acre of land and has a rock garden and a car port in front. Jen's car drives up.

Jen steps up to the big wooden front door and knocks. After a moment the door is opened. Jen gasps in horror and recoils.

JENNIFER

Oh my God!

Jay's face is swollen and bruised, covered with several band-aids, one eye squinting. He holds a drink in one hand, a joint in the other, and wears a sombrero.

JAY

(pleased, but can't
really smile)

Jen, hi, que pasa?

JENNIFER

What happened to you?

Jay touches his face and recoils.

JAY

What? This? It's no big deal. Come on in.
How 'bout a margarita?

Jay ushers Jen inside. Jen steps in and Jay shuts the door.

INT. JAY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Jen is impressed as she looks around, then comes back to the issue at hand.

JENNIFER

No big deal? You look like you lost a bullfight.
(realizing)

Did Pete do this to you?

JAY
(walking away)
Fuck Pete -- the loser.

JENNIFER
(following)
So then he *did* do it?

JAY
The weasel caught me off guard! He hit me in the face with a stick, then sucker punched me.

JENNIFER
(in disbelief)
He hit you with a stick? A big one?

Jay indicates the circumference of the stick by making a circle with his fingers.

INT. JAY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

He has led Jen into the large living room. Jay takes off his sombrero and tosses it. He goes to the full bar where a pitcher of margaritas sits on the blender. He pours one for Jen, then freshens his own. They take their drinks over to the couch and sit down.

JENNIFER
I can't believe Pete would beat you up.

JAY
(holds up his hand)
Whoa! Pete did *not* beat me up. He took advantage of my good nature and started hitting me with a stick. That's when I got him in the restraining hold and that's when he gave up.

JENNIFER
Does he look as bad as you?

JAY
Well . . . No. But I still won the fight.
(toasts)
To victory.

Jen dubiously touches glasses with him and they both drink.

JENNIFER

Oooh, that's good. You make a mean margarita.

JAY

'Course I do, as long as I have a bottle of margarita mix. Drink up, there's plenty more . . . for Jennifer Moore.

Jay laughs and his face hurts. They both take a big gulp. Jay lights a match, ignites the joint and hands it to Jen.

JENNIFER

Gee, I haven't done this in years.

(she takes a hit)

So then, I'd have to assume, you and Pete aren't talking anymore.

JAY

No.

He takes a hit of the joint and passes it back to Jen.

JENNIFER

I'm stoned already.

JAY

It's good shit. Senegalese Thunderfuck.

Jay goes and gets the pitcher of margaritas and refills their glasses. Jay sits back down and slides close to Jen.

JENNIFER

I'm really sorry I caused the fight.

JAY

You didn't cause it, it's been coming for a long time.

JENNIFER

But you guys were such good friends.

JAY

Emphasis goes on the word "were." Past tense.

Jay snuggles up beside Jen and puts his arm around her. He goes to kiss her and just as his lips are about to make contact, Jen turn to look at the room. Jay gets Jen's pearl earring in his mouth and swallows it.

JENNIFER

That's a real pearl.

JAY

I'll give it back to you tomorrow.

JENNIFER

This is a beautiful house.

JAY

Thank you.

JENNIFER

How many rooms?

JAY

Sixteen.

JENNIFER

(impressed)

How is it that you afford all this on an assistant manager's salary?

Jay is slowly easing Jen back on the couch while nuzzling her neck.

JAY

Hey, I get three percent commission and a percent and a half percent spif. However, I don't afford it. My mom and dad are getting divorced. My dad moved in with his girlfriend and my mom's down in Florida and I'm here taking care of the place.

JENNIFER

How long were they married?

JAY

Forty years.

JENNIFER

Does it really upset you?

JAY

No, not really. You gonna stay here?

JENNIFER

How could it not upset you?

JAY

I think it's doing both of them a world of good.

JENNIFER

I was thinking about staying a couple of days maybe.

Jay begins unbuttoning Jen's blouse.

JAY

O.K. You can stay longer if you want.

JENNIFER

We'll see. What're you doing?

Jay is now entirely on top of Jen.

JAY

I'm removing all unnecessary, constrictive clothing, then I will administer Cardio-pulmonary resuscitation.

JENNIFER

(grinning)

I'm not choking.

JAY

Better safe than sorry. Call it preventative medicine.

JENNIFER

Help me off with my boots, will you?

JAY

Sure.

He unsteadily gets to his feet, turns around backward and Jen puts her boot up between Jay's legs. Jay grabs hold of the toe and heel and pulls. It won't come off. Jen puts her other boot against Jay's butt and pushes. The boot suddenly comes off and Jay goes flying over the coffee table and lands on his face on the carpet with a thump. He just lies there for a second not moving. Jen dashes over to him.

JENNIFER

Are you O.K.?

He sits up holding his aching face. Jen takes hold of him, pulling him to her breast.

JENNIFER

I'm sorry. I'm really sorry.

Jay puts his arms around her and they kiss. The kiss goes on and on, then they fall back on the floor. As they're seriously making out, they begin pulling off each other's clothes. With their shirts off and their pants undone, Jen whispers . . .

JENNIFER

(breathlessly)

Have you got some kind of protection?

JAY

I've got an alarm system with an electric eye.

JENNIFER

That's not what I mean.

JAY

Oh, a condom?

JENNIFER

Yes.

JAY

(aside)

I'm doing better than I thought.

(to Jen)

I'll be right back.

Jay jumps unsteadily to his feet and dashes out of the room.

EXT. JAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Pete sits in his car in Jay's driveway behind Jen's car looking perturbed. Just as he's about to drive away he looks over at the window. Through the white curtains he sees Jay's silhouette step up. A moment later Jen's silhouette steps up, then the two silhouettes move into each other's arms and kiss.

Pete is so bugged he now looks sick. He puts his car in gear and drives away.

INT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Pete sits at the pay window and Bear sits behind him smoking cigarettes. The smoke keeps wafting forward causing Pete to look angrier than he already is.

BEAR

. . . So the guy says, "You got change for a fifty?" and I says, "Read the sign, nothin' bigger'n a twenty," and the guy says, "But a fifty's all I got" and I says, "I don't give a good Goddamn" and he says . . .

Meanwhile, Pete is watching a fellow in a SUIT & TIE at the pump vainly attempting to put some gas in his new Cadillac and clearly unable to do so. Pete can hear the guy's voice through the intercom.

SUIT & TIE

What's wrong with this stupid thing? Jesus Christ anyway, why can't they make these silly things so they work?!

Pete keys the button on the intercom and speaks into the microphone.

PETE

Try reading the directions.

The guy in the Suit & Tie looks toward the office.

SUIT & TIE

What directions?

PETE

Just give up. If you're not smart enough to put gas in your car you probably shouldn't be driving.

Bear's impressed. He's never heard Pete talk this way.

SUIT & TIE

And just who the hell do you think you are?

PETE

(grinning)

Me? I'm the guy with a full tank of gas.

SUIT & TIE

And a job in a gas station. How you think you can act superior to *anyone* is a complete joke,

asshole!

The guy gets in his Cadillac and drives away.

Pete doesn't look pleased by the outcome of this exchange. Bear, however, thinks it's pretty funny.

BEAR

That guy really zinged you, Petey-boy.

Pete swings around in his chair to face Bear.

PETE

Let's get three things straight, shall we? 1.) don't ever call me Petey-boy, B.) don't sit behind me and blow smoke at me, and 3.) what the hell're you doing here anyway, it's not even your shift?

Bear puts out his cigarette and stands up.

BEAR

You think you're so Goddamn smart, but you're not. You're just as dumb as me. The difference is I'm not pretending and you are, *Petey-boy*.

Bear leaves.

Pete, looking even more depressed, glances up at the "Employee of the Month" plaque on the wall with a photograph of him on it -- his hair is shorter and he wears a foolish grin.

CLOSE-UP - PLAQUE

Magically, the photograph of Pete on the plaque comes to life.

PETE IN PHOTO

Yes, sir, you pull the handle up, wait seven seconds and the pump will engage.

VOICE

(O.S.)

Thank you.

PETE IN PHOTO

My pleasure, sir.

INT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Pete looks down with a confused, angry, unhappy expression.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. JAY'S HOUSE - MORNING

The bright morning sun shines down on Jay's house. Jen's car sits in front.

INT. JAY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jay's hand lies on his chest. It starts to twitch, then moves up to Jay's beat up and swollen face. His hair is askew and clearly he has a ripping hang-over. Jay rubs the side of his head and starts to sit up, but his head is splitting. For a second he looks like he might throw up, then he sees a pair of panty hose on the floor. He smiles through the pain. Jay smells something which catches his attention. He stands causing his head to pound and goes into the kitchen.

INT. JAY'S KITCHEN - DAY

Jen sits at the kitchen table drinking coffee and looking rather hung-over herself.

JAY

Morning.

Jen looks up at Jay and gasps in horror.

JENNIFER

You look terrible.

JAY

Thanks, I feel terrible, too.

JENNIFER

Want some coffee?

JAY

Sure.

Jen pours Jay a cup from the percolator. Jay ruffles through his pockets and finds a smashed pack of Best Buy cigarettes. He digs out a crooked, bent cig, breaks off the filter, lights up and starts to cough violently.

JENNIFER

You make smoking look so glamorous.

JAY

Thanks.

(Jay takes a sip
of coffee)

So, how do you feel?

JENNIFER

Hung-over. How about you?

JAY

I feel like someone hit me in the head with a big
stick, then put a used sweat sock filled with shit in
my mouth.

JENNIFER

You certainly have a way with words.

JAY

When you work with words, words are your work.

JENNIFER

How's your book coming?

JAY

Like shit. I'm stalled out on the eighth rewrite.

JENNIFER

Why don't you send it out?

JAY

It's not done.

JENNIFER

When will it be done?

JAY

How am I supposed to know?

JENNIFER

Sometimes you just have to say something's done
to make it done.

JAY

Really? I'm gonna get some aspirins, want some?

JENNIFER

O.K. A clear end isn't always apparent.

Jay goes to the cupboard and gets a big bottle of aspirin.

JAY

I don't think that's true. I'm sure the end will make itself clear.

JENNIFER

How? When you run out of paper?

Jay pops three aspirins in his mouth and chews them up, then hands the bottle to Jen who can't believe her eyes.

JENNIFER

(grossed out)

You chew them?

JAY

(with white teeth)

They work faster that way.

JENNIFER

(sighs)

So, look, about last night . . .

JAY

. . . It was pretty good, wasn't it?

(rubs his face)

I think I'm going to have to have jaw surgery.
You are one wild lady when you're smashed.

JENNIFER

Yeah, tequila does something strange to me. I forget that I have any moral standards at all.

JAY

(grins)

I'll make sure to keep a couple of big bottles in the house at all times. I just want you to know that I had a great time. Did you?

JENNIFER

(hesitant)

Well . . . Yeah, I did.

JAY

Good. I've got to go to work. There's extra keys to the cupboard right there.

(he points)

My number at work is on the board there and I'll be home about six-thirty if you want to get dinner or something. See ya.

Jay gives Jen a quick kiss on the cheek and exits.

Jen sits there looking dazed. She dumps some aspirins in her hand, looks at them and winces.

JENNIFER

He chews them?

Jen puts them in her mouth and slowly brings her teeth down on the aspirins. The moment they crunch the taste is horrible and her face twists into a knot. Jen quickly washes them down with hot coffee which just makes it worse.

JENNIFER

Blahh!

INT. PETE'S APARTMENT - DAY

The telephone in Pete's place rings. Pete's hand comes into view and picks up the receiver.

PETE

Hello?

He hears the voice of PHIL, Jen's old boyfriend, who has an Australian accent.

PHIL

(O.S.)

Hoy. Could I please speak with Jennifuh Moore?

Pete's eyebrows go up.

PETE

I'm sorry, but Jennifer isn't staying here anymore. Would you like to know where she is?

PHIL

Yes, I would.

PETE

All right. She's staying with Jay Bennett. The number is 555-3133.

PHIL

Thanks a lot, mate.

PETE

My pleasure, mate.

Pete hangs up looking smug.

INT. JAY'S KITCHEN - DAY

Jen sits in front of her computer at the kitchen table. She is having some kind of technical difficulty and she looks pissed off. She pounds several keys hard, then pops out the floppy disk.

JENNIFER

Shit!

The phone rings, but Jen doesn't answer it. The machine gets it. She hears Phil's voice leave a message.

PHIL

(O.S.)

Hoy, this is Phil McElwee calling for Jennifuh Moore. You've got moy numbuh, Jen, please give me a call, OK? 'Boy.

The machine beeps off.

Jen sits looking at the phone machine with a tense expression.

JENNIFER

How'd you find me, you son of a bitch? How?

She looks around as though she were being watched.

DISSOLVE:

INT. JAY'S GARAGE - NIGHT

Jay steps up to the back door in his coat and tie, unlocks the door and goes in.

INT. JAY'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jay has changed into jeans and a t-shirt. He sits at the kitchen table smoking a cigarette and watching the clock -- 8:15. He puts out his cigarette in a pile of seven other butts.

Jay hears the front door open and Jen enters.

JAY

Hello.

JENNIFER

Hi. How are you?

JAY

Fine.

Jen sits down.

JENNIFER

Look, Jay, I think we have to talk. Last night was a mistake.

JAY

Really? Let's try it again and see if we can't fix it.

JENNIFER

That's not what I mean. I think we ought to cool out a little. I came here 'cause I need a place to stay.

JAY

So what are you saying? You don't like me?

JENNIFER

I like you, that's not it.

JAY

What is it?

JENNIFER

(confused)

. . . I'm just not sure what I'm doing right now.

JAY

Look, Jen, I'm not a kid. I'm thirty-four years old and I've never been married. I've been on five hundred dates and I've had fifty girlfriends and none of them worked out, so my expectations are pretty low.

JENNIFER

(chuckles; giving in)

Cast in that light it doesn't sound like we've got anything to lose.

JAY

I don't think we do. Want a margarita?

JENNIFER

Oh, I don't know. I finally got my head feeling better.

Jay stands and heads out of the room.

JAY

Another margarita will make it even betterer. I'll just make 'em and if you want one you can have it.

JENNIFER

(her head sags, but she's smiling)

If they're there I'll drink them.

JAY

(O.S.)

Exactly. I'll get my sombrero.

JENNIFER

(snaps her fingers)

Ole'

JAY

(O.S.)

Let's have a drink first.

Jen sighs wearily, rolls her her eyes and shakes her head.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

There is a sign draped across the front of the building stating, "Just Opened!"

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Jay and Jen sit at a booth and neither one is talking. They have neither water nor menus and Jay is looking around in annoyance.

JAY

What's the Goddamn deal here? They opened the restaurant and forgot to hire waiters.

JENNIFER

Just calm down, they'll get here.

JAY

I really hate to be told to calm down. Don't tell me that.

JENNIFER

Look, Jay, it's not working.

JAY

I know.

JENNIFER

What should we do?

JAY

We could try throwing the silverware, that might get their attention.

JENNIFER

(angry)

Not that, Goddamnit! I'm talking about our situation.

JAY

(rolls his eyes)

What situation?

(sighs)

All right, I'm sorry, go ahead.

JENNIFER

Well . . . A relationship is based on a lot of different things: attraction, trust, respect, shared

interests. Other than screwing when we're drunk,
I'm not sure that we have anything in common . . .

Jay's eyes have gone glassy like a dead fish.

INSIDE JAY'S HEAD . . .

EXT. THE NUREMBURG RALLY (STOCK SHOT) - DAY

Six hundred thousand Nazis raise their hands in salute to Der Fuhrer. Adolf Hitler stands at the podium smirking smugly from beneath the visor of his cap. Heinrich Himmler, Joseph Goebbels, and Hermann Goering all lurk nearby. The crowd's roar is deafening.

However, through the din we can begin to hear Jen's voice.

JENNIFER

(O.S.)

. . . And even though, theoretically, I'd actually kind
of like it to work, I just don't think that it is . . .

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Jen is talking to a dazed-out Jay who isn't paying the slightest bit of attention.

JENNIFER

. . . Do you?

Jay snaps out of his reverie and focuses in on Jen.

JAY

(in German)

Nein.

(back to English)

I mean, no. It isn't. Look, the only time you
loosen up enough to have a good time is when
you're drunk. I mean, you can't actually expect
me to fall in love with someone who has to get
totally shitfaced before she'll have sex with me,
do you?

JENNIFER
(looking around)
Say it louder, there might be someone in the back
that missed it.

A WAITER walks past and Jay grabs his sleeve.

JAY
Are you our waiter?

WAITER
No, sir. I'm not.

JAY
(pissed)
Then get the Goddamn manager because I'm
furious!

WAITER
Yes, sir.

The waiter scurries away.

JENNIFER
And what do you think you're going to accom-
plish?

JAY
It's a new restaurant, this is the time to make sug-
gestions.

The MANAGER, with short hair, glasses, a suit and tie, looking down at a clipboard comes walking up to the table. *He looks up and it's Pete!* His hair is cut off and he's clean shaven. His expression is completely deadpan.

PETE
Yes?

JAY
(amazed)
Pete?

JENNIFER
(shocked)
Oh my God.

PETE
(flatly)
Can I help you?

Jay and Jen are dumbstruck.

JAY
What happened to you?

JENNIFER
You cut off your hair.

PETE
I made a change. It was time. What's the problem?

JAY
Well, we can't get any service.

PETE
We're understaffed at the moment. We're in the process of hiring more people. I apologize for the inconvenience. I'll get your waiter for you right away. Enjoy your meal.

Pete walks away, his face expressionless, his eyes burning.

Jen and Jay look at each other in amazement.

JAY
I can't believe it. He's like a whole nuther person.
Why would he do that?

JENNIFER
Change can be a good thing sometimes.

Jen looks straight at Jay.

EXT. JAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jay's car sits in the driveway in front of the house.

INT. JAY'S CAR - NIGHT

Jay and Jen sit in the car facing straight ahead not talking. Finally . . .

JENNIFER

I'm leaving.

JAY

You see, I'm right. The end is *very* clear.

JENNIFER

(nods)

Yeah, in this case.

JAY

Where will you go?

JENNIFER

I'll stay with a friend for a while, then I'll get my own place.

JAY

(nods)

It was bound to be.

JENNIFER

Why?

JAY

'Cause you never wanted it to work. This was just a stop-over on your way from one place to another.

JENNIFER

What about you? Did you want it to work?

JAY

(hesitates)

. . . I don't know. I'm pretty used to being alone. I kind of like it. I'm not sure it's possible for me to share my life with anyone else anymore.

(looks away)

I don't seem to have any friends anymore, either.

JENNIFER

I'm sorry about you and Pete. He didn't seem very

happy to see us.

JAY

No, he didn't.

(chuckles)

He looks like he did when he was ten.

They both drop into silence, then they speak simultaneously.

JAY & JENNIFER

Well . . .

They both shrug, then laugh. They reach over and hug, then kiss. The kiss goes on for an extended moment, then their lips part.

JAY

How about a margarita?

(Jen smiles, looking
doubtful)

I'll tell you what, I'll just make them and if
you want one you can have it, O.K.?

JENNIFER

If they're there I'll drink them.

JAY

(grins fiendishly)

I know.

They get out of the car and go inside.

DISSOLVE:

INT. JAY'S KITCHEN - DAY

Jay takes a ream of three-hole punched paper out of a plastic bag. He then takes a black, cardboard report cover, puts the metal binder through the holes of the paper, attaches the front cover, bends the metal bands and there it is: a book. He opens the front cover revealing the title page -- "*This Gun For Himmler*" by Jay Bennett. Jay shuts the cover and slides the book into a manila envelope addressed to "Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10103."

JAY

(to himself)

She better be right.

EXT. JAY'S HOUSE - DAY

Jay drives down the driveway and stops at the mailbox. He puts the manila envelope into the mailbox, raises the red flag, looks up to God, puts his hands together and says a quick prayer in Hebrew.

JAY

Baruch atah adonai eluhaynu melech haolom . . .

SUPERIMPOSED SUBTITLE: "Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be they name, please get my book published and have it become a best-seller."

JAY

. . . Amen.

Jay gets back in his car and drives away.

EXT. WOODDED COURT - DAY

The sun shines through the trees dappling the wooded court with radiant beams. Jay's car drives around the circle and parks. He shuts off his engine and all is quiet save the wind and the chirping birds.

Jay sits there smoking a cigarette and thinking, the window open, the smoke floating up into the sky. After a moment he takes out his Best Buy cigarette pack and shakes out a joint. Jay looks north, south, east and west, satisfies his paranoia, and lights the joint.

As he holds in the first big hit, Jay turns and looks at the empty passenger seat. He takes another big hit and fantastically, *Pete materializes beside him and takes the joint.*

PETE

. . . You came and got me at my cabin and you led me up Voyager hill to another cabin, maybe your own, I don't know, and everyone inside was playing Monopoly on the floor. You had tons of firecrackers . . .

JAY

. . . Yeah, I did. I always did . . .

PETE

. . . And we lit the firecrackers and dropped them through a hole in the screen right onto the Monopoly board where they blew up and blew all the pieces and the money to hell! Remember?

JAY

(smile fades)

. . . No. I don't remember that.

PETE

(shocked)

What do you mean? How could you *not* remember?

JAY

I don't. I remember being at camp that summer, I kinda sorta remember you, but not really.

PETE

This was a memorable and exciting day for me. It stood out. What do you mean, you don't remember me? We were friends.

JAY

Oh, come on. You were a little kid. We older kids didn't hang around with you younger kids. It wouldn't have been cool.

PETE

You hung around with me.

JAY

No I didn't. We didn't become friends until a couple of years later, when I was in high school and you were in junior high.

PETE

No, no, no. Totally wrong. We became friends . . .

Pete's voice and body fade away and disappear. The passenger seat is empty.

Jay is left by himself smiling. After a while his smile fades. He goes to hit the joint and it's out. Jay brings the lighter up to the end of the roach and . . .

PETE

Boo!

Pete has popped up out of nowhere.

JAY

Holy shit!

Jay screams like he's going to die. Pete, with his short hair and no beard, starts to laugh, but backs away from the window just in case. Pete and Jay look at each other without saying a word, assessing each other motives. Finally, Pete reaches into his pocket, takes out a five dollar bill and hands it to Jay.

PETE

Here. I owe you this.

Jay takes the money.

JAY

Thanks.

They look right at each other for a second, then Pete shrugs and walks away.

Jay sadly looks down at the five dollar bill in his hand. He sighs and puts it in his pocket.

The passenger door opens and Pete gets in. Jay smiles and hands him the roach. Pete waves it away.

PETE

I've got another one.

JAY

Toast it up.

Which Pete does. He takes a hit and passes it. Jay takes a big hit and they both sit there in the smoky car holding it in. They both exhale.

JAY

And another thing . . . Women don't like the Three Stooges.

PETE

No, they don't. They think they're stupid.

JAY

And they are, but that's the point.

PETE

Exactly. Guess what?

JAY

What?

PETE

Guess where Jen is?

JAY

Working for the government?

PETE

No, she moved to Australia with her old boyfriend,
Phil McElwee.

JAY

Oh, get out!

PETE

No, it's true. They moved to Melbourne.

(pauses)

You know, I really liked her. She was terrific.

JAY

(considers)

Fuck her. She didn't know what she wanted.

PETE

Sure she did. Phil McElwee.

JAY

Bullshit. Just remember, all three of us are good
men, he just has an accent.

PETE

Which brings us to another thing . . .

(end titles roll)

Women are suckers for accents. You could have the
nicest guy in the world over here, and the biggest asshole
in the world with a British accent over there and women
will always go for the guy with the accent.

JAY

Right. And another thing . . .

They keep right on talking as we . . .

FADE OUT:

THE END