Do You Have A Clubcard?

Ву

Howard Jensen

INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

A handful of nocturnal shoppers occupy the aisles.

CHECKOUTS

Only two are manned. THOMAS (late 20s), slender, average looks, tight hair cut, sits behind one. He glances around the store with visible disdain.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- A) A WELL-GROOMED COUPLE (early 30s) stop at the fruit and vegetables section.
- B) A BOOKISH MAN (mid 40s) pushes a small trolley. He studies a small piece of paper in his hand.
- C) A HUSBAND AND WIFE (late 50s) lightly squeeze the bread loaves for freshness.
- D) Two SLACKERS (early 20s) loosely clothed, snigger and joke by the confectionary shelves. One of them clutches a large tub of "Phish Food" Ben & Jerry ice-cream.

Thomas's cynical eye lands on a group of THREE GUYS (late teens) and a GIRL (late teens) scruffy, student types. They make their way along the pasta and noodles aisle.

The guys debate over what to buy, examine prices, search for the cheapest products. Thomas turns to BILL (late 20s), who sits at the checkout next to him.

THOMAS

Fuckin' freshers, man.

Bill nods in agreement.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I heard the tall one say how he's gonna write his name on all his stuff when they get back to whatever hovel they're squatting in...What a fascist.

Thomas sneers, glances over at a smiling Bill.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Just released from seventeen years perched under the nipple I bet. They each got their own presses in the kitchen, you know. Take turns to cook, share toothpaste, detergent--

BILL

They sound more like commies to me.

THOMAS

Yeah, when it suits 'em. They want the whole store knowing about it too. I got all that from sitting over here.

BILL

You're just begrudging because you never got to go to college and live like a sloth.

(mockingly)

They're learning important life lessons here, man. Gaining independence, fending for themselves from week to week. Consuming four times their R.D.A. of cheap beer and instant noodles...it's the best days of their lives.

The four huddle around the trolley, sift through their items. One of the guys playfully pulls the girl's ponytail.

BILL (O.S.) (CONT'D)

The girl is cute.

THOMAS

(deadpan)

This job has turned me into a misanthrope.

He sighs, checks his watch.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Two more hours...

(brightens)

before three whole days of freedom.

BILL

Anything planned?

THOMAS

No, sir. Just gonna bask in the contentment of not having to be here for another seventy two hours. Grace and Alex are on holidays for a week so I'm also free of listening to their shit.

BILL

The tantric sex?

Thomas nonchalantly pecks away at the buttons on his register.

THOMAS

(pulls a face)

Yeah, fight, then sex, more fighting, more sex, that's all they seem to do. Yet they both could do with losing about five stone between them, I don't understand it.

BILL

Why don't you move?

THOMAS

It's a nice house, cheap too...And why do I have to be the one to leave? They should want their own space anyway.

A WOMAN (late 40s), heavy set, rose cheeked, rolls a week's supply of family groceries up to Bill's checkout. She places her items on the conveyor.

A PENSIONER (70s) thin, frail, approaches Thomas's checkout. His basket cradles only an armful of things.

The "Freshers" wheel their fully loaded trolley in their direction. They notice Bill's occupied checkout, quickly speed up to pass the Pensioner.

The Pensioner slowly makes up the ten or so yards between himself and Thomas -- The "Freshers" bustle in front, brush off him slightly, reach the checkout first.

NICOLE (mid 20s), attractive, curvaceous, stands beside GARY (late 20s) broad, tough looking, watching it all.

The three Guys mess and skit with each other -- They take their items from their trolley, drop them onto the conveyor. The Girl with them stands by sheepishly, slightly embarrassed.

Thomas frowns at them. The Pensioner composes himself, stands behind the group shaking his head in disgust.

Nicole and Gary file in behind the Pensioner in the queue. Gary doesn't appear too bothered; Nicole, however, stares at Thomas in an almost suggestive manner.

She flicks her eyes towards the "Freshers" giving him an "are you actually going to let them get away with this?" expression.

Thomas makes eye contact with her, double takes, not sure if she is looking at him -- Her intensified stare confirms she most certainly is.

Thomas puffs his chest, spurred on. He clears his throat, eyes the guys in genuine contempt.

THOMAS

Hey...fellas, excuse me.

Only two of them pay any heed.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

What do ye think you're doin'...? You nearly knocked down that man barging your way up here.

They all turn to him, one sniggers. Thomas's eyes narrow to a near squint. He glances at Nicole again as if to seek some encouragement before singling out the one who laughed.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

You think that's funny I suppose?

FRESHER #1

(half sneers)

No, we're sorry...I mean, what do you want us to do?

Fresher #1 motions to turn around to the Pensioner.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Well you can start by taking away that bomb shelter menu of yours and going to the back of the queue. The three stare at him, their collective smiles fade.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Go on.

They hesitate, stand their ground.

FRESHER #2

Hey--

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Right, if you're not goin' to do it...

Thomas leans over his counter, tosses the items back into their trolley.

A couple of them swear under their breath but don't make too much of a scene. They sulkily remove their other canned products from the conveyor.

Nicole smiles with admiration at Thomas, who notices. He can't help smirking to himself.

Gary shoots Nicole a wary eye. The "Freshers" move out of the way -- The Pensioner steps up to the checkout, smiles graciously at Thomas.

OLD MAN

Sorry, I didn't mean to cause any fuss.

THOMAS

No problem. Those kind of people need to be reminded of a thing called manners every now and then.

The Pensioner puts his few things on the belt.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Do you have a clubcard?

At the sound of this, Nicole lets out a GIGGLE and squirms ever so slightly. Thomas pretends not to notice but his half furrowed brow gives him away.

The Pensioner searches his wallet as Thomas scans through the items.

Gary frowns, scrutinises Nicole again disapprovingly. He stares down Thomas who avoids eye contact with both.

LATER

The Pensioner carries his shopping out of the supermarket.

Thomas scans through Gary and Nicole's things. The "Freshers" are at Bill's checkout.

THOMAS

Err...Do you have a clubcard?

Gary stares at Nicole, who appears to struggle to contain herself. He turns back to Thomas.

GARY

(gruff)

No, we don't.

NICOLE

(to Gary)

Damn, I need to get conditioner, I knew I'd forgotten something.

(puts her hand on

Gary's shoulder)

You go ahead, dear and start the car. I'll follow you out.

Gary hesitates; he looks at her suspiciously then at Thomas. He gives Nicole some money.

GARY

Hurry up. I want to get home before the game starts.

He walks towards the exit.

GARY (CONT'D)

(shouts back)

I'll pull up 'round the front.

NICOLE

Ok.

She smiles after him before turning to Thomas.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I better go get that conditioner, huh?

She stares at Thomas, unflinching. Pause -- He finds his voice.

THOMAS

Yeah...I suppose you should.

She smiles that seductive smile again, heads towards the aisles.

Thomas turns around to Bill but he's too busy serving the "Freshers".

CUT TO:

Nicole approaches Thomas's checkout with a bottle of conditioner. She hands it to him.

NICOLE

Thanks.

THOMAS

(scans)

That's five forty nine, please.

NICOLE

(hands over money)
I've got a full bottle of this
stuff at home, you know.

Thomas looks up at her.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I like how you handled them boys just now.

THOMAS

(cool)

Oh yeah, it was nothing. Little pricks.

She smiles, looks away, almost shy.

NICOLE

Yeah...little pricks.

(laughs, turns

serious)

Look, I'll be straight with you

(looks at his name

tag)

"Thomas"...I like a man in uniform.

THOMAS

Am...I work in a supermarket. Not exactly the holy grail of uniformed positions.

Bill's checkout is now empty. He cranes his neck towards Thomas's checkout, listens in.

NICOLE

I have a particular fondness for supermarket uniforms if you must know. Especially the stripy number you've got goin' on there.

She laughs. Thomas smiles then frowns, a little sussed. He hands back her change.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Go on, say the line.

THOMAS

What?

NICOLE

You know, the line? The thing you ask everyone... The clubcard line.

Thomas laughs, Nicole remains serious, anticipates.

THOMAS

Is this a wind up or what?

Nicole curls her lips slowly into a grin -- A faint car horn BEEPS outside. Both turn to see Gary parked outside; he beckons her to hurry up.

NICOLE

I better go, my gorilla awaits.

She takes the conditioner.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I'm very serious by the way.

(pause)

See you around, Thomas.

She turns, walks away without looking back. A stunned Thomas turns to Bill.

THOMAS

Did you hear any of that?

Bill is already smiling at him.

BILL

More than enough, man.

Nicole gets into the car. It speeds off, out of the car park.

BILL

What a crazy bitch...and extremely fuckin' hot I may add.

INTERCUT - THOMAS'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM/BILL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Thomas slouches on the sofa. He watches TV, smokes a joint. His eyelids droop lower...lower -- His phone RINGS, he startles awake.

He rubs his face, reaches for the phone.

CALLER ID: "BILL, WORK"

THOMAS

(into phone)

Hey, what's up?

BILL (V.O.)

Hey, what're you doing?

THOMAS

Nothing really, just watchin' TV.

BILL (V.O.)

You weren't lying when you said you had no plans.

THOMAS

Nope.

Bill stretches out on his bed. The TV is on silent as he flicks through the adult channels.

BILL

Guess who called into the shop today...looking for you?

"Mature" soft-core porn comes on the television. The woman writing, half naked on a bed couldn't be any younger then mid to late 40s.

Bill doesn't change the channel.

THOMAS

(sits up)

I dunno, tell me?

BILL (V.O.)

You know...

(smiles)

She was lookin' even better today. Short skirt, fuck-me boots up to her knees. Said she was heading out on a mad one...out for the kill, man.

THOMAS

Yeah?

BILL

I mean, real fuckin' fine. No sign of that double hard boyfriend either.

Thomas swears silently to himself, ruing the missed opportunity -- Bill half watches the TV, as the woman takes off her bra. He nods approvingly.

BILL (CONT'D)

Bet you're pissed you have those seventy two hours off now, huh?

THOMAS

Is she for real, what did you say to her? Did you find out her name?

BILL (V.O.)

She never said. I told her that you were on holidays and you'll be in on Friday for the night shift. She said "OK" and left...that was it really.

INT. THOMAS'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - EVENING

SUPER: APPROXIMATELY 48 HOURS OR LESS LATER

Thomas stands in front of the MIRROR, dressed for work. He studies his appearance, not a hair out of place, not a crease to be seen on his shirt -- He smells under his armpits, grabs the deodorant.

SUPERMARKET - FROZEN FOOD AISLE - LATER

Thomas stacks pizzas into one of the fridges. He peers up and down the aisle before going back to his duties.

BREAD AND CEREAL AISLE - LATER

Thomas pushes a large trolley full of stock. He plods along slowly, lost in thought.

Nicole appears behind Thomas, dressed casually. She walks behind him for a few steps, checks him out.

NICOLE

Thomas.

He turns around, taken by surprise.

THOMAS

Oh...hi.

NICOLE

(sexy smile)

Hi...

(looks at the
trolley)

I see you work the floor too?

THOMAS

Err, yeah...Sorry, I never got your name last time.

NICOLE

Nicole.

THOMAS

Nicole...Ok. Well, pleased to me--

NICOLE

Look, Thomas, what I said to you, you, remember...? I meant it. What time do you finish?

Thomas hesitates, caught off guard. She smiles at him again.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

In case you're worried about that simian who was with me last time, we're finished...He got laid off from work and moved back home to work for his dad for a bit. He wasn't doing it for me anymore anyway, so, you know...fuck 'him.

Thomas nods, relaxes slightly. Nicole leans closer to him.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I have certain...desires, that's all. You understand, don't you?

MR. REEVE (late 40s) frowning, fully suited, spectacled, appears at the top of the aisle. He strides towards them.

Thomas spots him, grimaces. Nicole notices, turns around.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

(faces Thomas

again)

Is that your boss?

THOMAS

Yeah, we don't get on too well. Fuckin' dweeb on a power trip.

NICOLE

Ok, so what time are you outta here at?

THOMAS

Eleven.

Reeve gets nearer; eyes trained on Thomas, then at the trolley stacked up with boxes.

NICOLE (O.S.)

You got a car?

THOMAS

Yeah.

Nicole flicks her eyes in Reeve's direction then back to Thomas.

NICOLE

Do you know O'Malley's bar at the end of the street?

THOMAS

...Sure.

Reeve walks past them, he stops to look at the trolley.

NICOLE

Pick me up there straight after you finish work, 'k? Now I mean straight after, no going home first to change or whatever.

(MORE)

NICOLE (CONT'D)

(whispers)

We won't be staying there.

Reeve watches them.

MR. REEVE

Mr. Buckley, this trolley is awfully full.

He looks over the poorly stocked shelves.

MR. REEVE

And some of those shelves are awfully empty. Don't you agree?

Thomas turns around, affords him a thin smile.

THOMAS

Yeah, I'm right on it, Mr. Reeve.

Thomas turns back but Nicole is already strutting away. She gives a flirty glance back at him before turning the corner, out of sight.

Reeve still has his eyes locked on Thomas who walks over to the trolley, takes down a box $-\!\!-$ Mr. Reeve saunters off.

THOMAS'S CAR - LATER

Thomas exits the car park, drives down the street. He checks himself in the rear view mirror.

EXT. O'MALLEY'S BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Thomas stops outside -- The look and sound of his auto suggest it's been through the wars -- Nicole stands just inside the entrance, smokes a cigarette.

She puts out it out, makes her way towards the car.

INT. THOMAS'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Nicole gets in. Before Thomas has time to say or do anything, she claws her hands over his chest, grips the shirt.

She leans in, kisses him aggressively. After a prolonged embrace, she breaks away.

NICOLE

I've wanted to do that ever since you told them students where to go...behind that checkout, in that shirt.

(laughs childishly) With that name tag.

Thomas's breathing quickens, he's overwhelmed.

NICOLE (COND'T)

And when you delivered the clubcard line...the way you did.

(exhales, fans
herself down)

I nearly creamed myself.

Thomas's baffled reaction is halfway between excitement and fear.

Excitement wins, he grins.

THOMAS

(smiles)

I am at your service.

NICOLE

You got a place?

THOMAS

Yeah.

NICOLE

Let's go there.

Thomas turns on the ignition.

CUT TO:

EXT. THOMAS'S CAR

The car pulls out, trundles up the street.

INT. THOMAS'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER

A framed POSTER of "Raging Bull" is stuck on the wall. Jake Le Motta has just knocked his opponent to the ground. A fearsome look is etched on Robert De Niro's face.

Groans of passion and bodies writhing under sheets are heard. They gradually become more intense.

NICOLE (O.S.)

Yes...yes...keep going.

Thomas lets out a staggered grunt. The rhythmic thrusts of their "lovemaking" steps up a gear.

NICOLE (O.S.)

(breathes heavily,

raised whisper)

Say the line...Say the line.

The thrusting increases. Nicole, topless, is on top, grinds him. Thomas sports his uniform shirt, buttons opened.

THOMAS

(Breathes heavily)

What--

Thomas's room is sparsely decorated room, a few other posters feature on the wall.

NICOLE (O.S.)

(Louder)

Say the fucking line. You know the one I like.

Clothes are strewn all over the floor, bra, trousers, panties, etc.

THOMAS

Uh...Do you...

(Breathes)

Have a...

(pants)

clubcard?

Nicole emits a squeak of pleasure, the bed rocks.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

You like that, huh?

(to the rhythm)

Do-you-have-a-clubcard...madam?

Nicole climaxes, purrs with carnal gratification. They slow down to a near stop. She laughs euphorically.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

Thomas and Nicole lie entwined in bed together.

Thomas still has his shirt on. A sloppy grin is plastered across his face as he takes a long toke of a joint. He passes it to Nicole, she accepts.

THOMAS

I can safely say that line has never elicited such a response before...from anybody, ever.

I've been sitting on the greatest chat up line in the world and didn't even know it.

Nicole smiles at him, prolonged blink. She takes a drag.

NICOLE

Yeah, it's all in the delivery.

THOMAS

How does mine fare?

NICOLE

So, so.

Thomas grins.

THOMAS

So, so? You said you nearly wet yourself.

She takes another pull, leans closer to him, tugging gently on his shirt.

NICOLE

One being lame...uninspiring.

(kisses his neck)

Ten being...well...fucking orgasmic.

She puts the joint into the ashtray sitting on the bedside press and mounts Thomas, grinds him slowly. They embrace.

INT. SUPERMARKET - CHECKOUTS - MORNING

A clubcard swipes through the card reader -- Thomas forces a smile at the customer as she grabs her bags and walks away.

He looks weary, his shirt ruffled, hair untidy.

Bill is at his checkout.

BILL

Hey.

Thomas turns around.

BILL (CONT'D)

So what mark did you get?

THOMAS

Undecided, she needs a cross section of..."circumstances" as she puts it, before making an informed decision.

BILL

(laughs)

You lucky fucker. If I had known this when she came in looking for you...

(shakes his head)
She'd be sitting on my face now.

THOMAS

Well you didn't, and she's too busy on mine now so.

Thomas grins at him, surveys the aisles.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I can't keep it into her, she never lets up...not that I'm complaining or anything. It's just--

BILL

Shut up, you are complaining.

Thomas obeys. He turns back to his register.

BILL (CONT'D)

A super horny, super hot girl wants to fuck you senseless. And all you have to do is say a line every so often. I am right in saying that, yeah...? There are absolutely no drawbacks here my friend, none whatsoever...

(MORE)

BILL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Plus, you'll be able give Grace and Alex a run for their money when they come back.

Mr. Reeve approaches in the background, marches along the checkouts.

BILL (CONT'D)

I'd be more worried if that boyfriend came back on the scene.

Reeve stops in between Bill and Thomas's checkouts. He glares at Thomas's less than presentable appearance.

MR. REEVE

Buckley!

Thomas's expression indicates he knows who it is before looking up. He braces himself.

THOMAS

Yes.

MR. REEVE (CONT'D)

What's this? You can't come in here looking like...

(trails off,

fuming)

What will the customers think, huh? There are spare uniforms in the staff room...and a mirror. Sort yourself out.

A plump girl, AMANDA (mid 20s) tick items on a clipboard a few aisles away.

MR. REEVE (CONT'D)

Amanda! Will you cover here for a few minutes?

Reeve glowers at Thomas, disgusted. He continues on his way, mumbles to himself. Thomas and Bill exchange glances.

Thomas stands up as Amanda approaches the checkout.

EXT. SUPERMARKET CAR PARK - EVENING

Thomas walks across the car park. A message comes through on his phone -- It's from Nicole, it reads: "Look up"

Thomas looks up -- Nicole stands by his car at the edge of the car park, poses. Thomas picks up the pace.

NICOLE

C'mon, we're going to mine.

INT. NICOLE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER

The two fall onto the bed, fully clothed. Nicole is on top. She kisses him hard on the lips whilst un-buttoning his shirt. She STOPS, caresses the fabric.

THOMAS

What's wrong?

NICOLE

This isn't the same shirt.

THOMAS

No, my boss made me change it this morning. I think it was a little too creased for his liking.

NICOLE

(disappointed)

Prick...

THOMAS

It's the exact same as my other one.

Nicole rolls off him.

NICOLE

Yeah, but I like a "lived in" shirt. Days, weeks, even months of wear...I want to smell it on you.

She fidgets, becoming aroused. She studies the shirt again

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Now we got to start all over again with this one.

She looks at it, unimpressed.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

It's so clean.

Thomas frowns at her, bewildered.

THOMAS

C'mon, it's not that big of a deal, is it?

Thomas leans over and kisses her, she reluctantly returns his affection before pulling away.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I've got the other shirt out in the car.

Her face brightens instantaneously.

NICOLE

(authoritative)

Well Mister, get your ass out there, bring it in and take that shit off.

(kisses him)

We can pick up where we finished last night.

Nicole giggles flirtingly. Thomas jumps off the bed in a flash, disappears out the door.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAIRY AISLE - MORNING

SUPER: A FEW DAYS LATER

Thomas and Bill face off the milk containers. Thomas looks even more shattered than before.

His eyes have a dreary, glazed over look, he struggles to keep them open.

THOMAS

These morning shifts are killing me, man. Got to cover for Jean this evening too...shit.

BILL

Another extensive workout last night?

THOMAS

Rigorous.

They continue to arrange the containers.

BILL

I'd advise you to stay well clear of Reeve.

THOMAS

Why, what now?

Bill waves his hand, crinkling his nose.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Am I that bad?

BILL

Just try and keep your distance.

THOMAS

She won't let me wash this shirt, or even change it, man. She's...

Thomas gestures, tries to find the right word. Bill reminds him of the important fact.

BILL

Hot.

Thomas concedes with a sigh and a nod.

THOMAS

I know this is gonna sound fucked up and you're gonna laugh.

(beat)

But I feel like the fuckin' woman here, she's definitely wearing the pants in this...I wouldn't go so far as to call it a relationship, more of an...arrangement. Take last night for example--

INT. THOMAS'S ROOM - BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Nicole lets out a long, slow, relaxed breath, satisfied. She rolls off him.

Thomas breathes heavily, feels the strain. He's panned out on the bed, shirt on, unbuttoned, some missing.

Nicole slips into a robe, steps into the adjoining bathroom. Thomas watches TV, exhausted. Nicole walks back in, takes off the robe.

She lowers herself onto Thomas again.

THOMAS

Jesus, Nicole, can we like...take a break for a minute?

She frowns at him.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

It's been three times in an hour, I'm fucked. I don't know where you get your energy from.

NICOLE

It's a thing called libido, Thomas. Usually you're brimming with the stuff...or at least a lot more than us anyway.

THOMAS

Well, you're definitely an exception to the rule. How about we chill for awhile? I'll roll one. We could, I dunno...talk, actually get to know each other.

Her frown accentuates. She grabs the sheets on top of Thomas, peers under them.

NICOLE

Hold on, just checkin' here... Yeah, what I expected. You're the one with balls and a dick, not me...

(looks at Thomas)
Now, why the fuck are you acting
like you don't?

THOMAS

...I'm just tired is all.

NICOLE

Look I'll--

She runs her hand down to his crotch.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Play around down here for a bit. See can I entice you to come join me.

She disappears beneath the sheets.

Thomas can't help grinning a little -- He reaches over to the bedside press, picks up the rolling papers.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAIRY AISLE - MORNING (PRESENT)

Bill shakes his head in bemusement.

BILL

No, it ended with you getting your dick sucked. Don't worry, you're still the guy. I dunno, after hearing that you're somewhere between a complete tool and my new personal hero, I'm torn.

Bill places some more containers on the shelf.

BILL (CONT'D)

I don't know what to think, man.

CHECKOUTS - EVENING

Thomas sits behind the checkout, a tired but determined expression on his face -- The place is busy, a line of customers wait at each checkout. Thomas scans through items at a steady pace.

CUT TO:

A set of knee high boots CLIP CLOP their way through the supermarket.

CUT TO:

Thomas scans through item after item.

CUT TO:

The boots make their way alongside the line of checkouts.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - CAR PARK - CONTINUOUS

P.O.V: From a short distance away, somebody watches through the windows that tile the front entrance of the supermarket. Cigarette smoke billows into the darkening sky.

Thomas serves the customers inside -- Nicole approaches him in the background. She's dressed to kill.

INT. SUPERMARKET - CHECKOUT - CONTINUOUS

Thomas immerses himself in getting through the large amount of items on the conveyor. He doesn't notice Nicole hustle her way through the queue.

When Nicole gets to the front, she jumps up on top of the counter in one quick, agile manoeuvre.

Thomas looks up in surprise. Before he can react, Nicole leaps on top of him -- Thomas drops a packet of tampons in order to catch her.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - CAR PARK - CONTINUOUS

P.O.V: The person watches all this go on.

INT. SUPERMARKET - CHECKOUT - CONTINUOUS

Nicole engages in her usual hard, aggressive kisses and claws at his shirt. Thomas locks in the embrace, wide eyed. She pulls away.

Nicole's ass partly shows. Her short skirt rides up, revealing a skimpy thong. Surrounding people look on in astonishment, not least the ELDERLY WOMAN (60s) at the front of the queue -- Nicole and Thomas are face to face.

NICOLE

Thomas is speechless, he looks around -- A mix of horrified women and grinning men greet his eyes. A succession of low GASPS, JEERS and LAUGHS sound out.

Bill is a little way up the store at one of the aisles, a "that jammy bastard" look written all over his face.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - CAR PARK - CONTINUOUS

P.O.V: The person outside continues to watch everything unfold.

INT. SUPERMARKET - CHECKOUT - EVENING

Nicole jumps off Thomas, plants another long kiss on his lips.

NICOLE

To commemorate a week together, I'll be at the place you picked me up on our first night.

She smiles, winks then turns to walk away. Thomas hasn't got a chance to utter a single word the whole time.

He turns back to the customers, his face bright red. He clears his throat, attempts to act somewhat composed.

THOMAS

Am...

Thomas doesn't finish, instead bends down, picks up the packet of tampons he dropped -- He scans them through.

EXT. ROAD - LATER

Thomas's car moves along a quiet road. Nicole can be heard laughing.

THOMAS (O.S.)

(chuckling)

I would say "I can't believe what you fucking done back there" but I'd be lying. Nothing you do surprises me anymore.

INT. THOMAS'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Nicole laughs excitedly, pounds her hands on the dash. Thomas is buzzing too.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Though it's fair to say you did catch me a little off guard.

NICOLE

That woman's face.

(laughs)

Her jaw hit the floor.

Thomas laughs too, shakes his head.

THOMAS

You're insane.

NICOLE

And you love it.

Thomas delays his response, the wide grin backs up Nicole's claim.

THOMAS

Yeah, I'm just glad that wannabe despot, Reeve, wasn't around.

NICOLE

Your "colleagues" must think you're way too cool now.

Thomas's grin widens.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Lets--

Thomas's car JOLTS forward violently. Someone rams him from behind -- Thomas knocks his head off the steering wheel. He struggles to keep the car under control. Nicole lets out a SCREAM.

THOMAS

What the fuck!

He looks in the rear view mirror. The CAR behind makes another lunge towards his, sends them forward again. Thomas accelerates.

NICOLE

Shit!

Thomas glances again in the rear view mirror, the car is right behind them. A street light illuminates the driver, its Gary. Thomas's face drops.

THOMAS

It's your ex-fucking-boyfriend.

NICOLE

Oh . . .

Thomas double takes in her direction, not wanting to take his eyes off the road.

THOMAS

What do you mean "oh"?!

NICOLE

I kinda' knew he was back in town.

THOMAS

Kinda'?!

Gary shunts them again.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Fuck! Jesus! He's tryna' ram us off the fucking road here...Does he not know you're in the car with me?

Gary puts the foot down, creeps up alongside them.

NICOLE

That won't make a difference to him. He probably followed us from the supermarket.

Gary is beside them now, he sees Nicole in the passenger seat. He grits his teeth, slams hard into them again.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Thomas's car careens off the road -- Luckily there's a wide margin. The car comes to a stop, sends up a plume of dust.

INT. THOMAS'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Gary drives off ahead, rounds a bend. Nicole and Thomas take a second to collect themselves.

THOMAS

Are you ok?

NICOLE

Yeah, I'm fine...What a fucker.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Thomas's car sits stationary at the side of the road. Dents mangle the driver's door, two rear lights are broken.

INT. THOMAS'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

A flustering Thomas breathes slowly, steadies himself.

THOMAS

I thought he was gone back home or something, workin' for his father, you said.

NICOLE

He did...was.

THOMAS

Were you gonna tell me? Or wait till he pulled something like that?

Nicole leans over to comfort Thomas. She rubs the small BRUISE forming on his forehead.

NICOLE

I'm sorry, dear. He's been ringing me all day, leaving messages and stuff. I don't want anything to do with him.

She caresses him, kisses his forehead and face. Thomas recovers, tries to calm himself.

THOMAS

Do you think we should call the cops on him?

Nicole seems more interested in Thomas now, fondles him intimately, runs her hand through his hair. Thomas still struggles with the shock, checks his mirrors, not taking notice of Nicole.

NICOLE

(in between kisses)

There's no need, I'll talk to him. He was just marking his territory, you know, trying to scare you off. It's what he does. Don't worry about him.

Nicole's kisses become increasingly passionate. Thomas looks at her, finally realises her advances.

THOMAS

What are you doing?

Nicole smiles that smile.

NICOLE

You're all hot and bothered.

She grips the shirt.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

It's soaked.

She laughs, smells the shirt, closes her eyes. Thomas looks away, remains a little on edge.

NICOLE

Come on, you've seen "Crash"?
Don't try and tell me it didn't
turn you on...just a little bit?

Thomas can't resist but thaw out his worried expression. He turns to her, still a bit shaken. She kisses him long and slow on the lips.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Silhouettes move together inside the car against the lights of an oncoming vehicle.

INT. SUPERMARKET - CHECKOUT - MORNING

Besides his dishevelled appearance, a well defined, black bruise is clearly visible on Thomas's forehead. Co-workers and customers alike take the extra second to stare at him as they walk by.

Bill is at his checkout beside him.

BILL

I've made my decision...you are my new personal hero.

THOMAS

Thank you. I've certainly had my work cut out to meet your hallowed approval.

BILL

So you done it, right there and then?

THOMAS

Yep. Four years I've had to wait to christen that piece of shit. Jill was never keen on the idea.

Bill laughs.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Seriously though, it was scary, man. I mean, what a fuckin' lunatic to do something like that.

BILL

I'm guessing she put you at ease.

THOMAS

Nothing fazes her. The car had barely come to a stop when--

Bill smile fades, he looks past Thomas, freezes, eyes locked on whatever has caught his attention.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

She was on top of me, wanting--

Thomas notices Bill's expression. He stops, turns around.

CRACK, a FIST lands full force into Thomas's nose -- He falls back on his seat, but remains in it. BLOOD squirts from his nose, sprays all over his shirt.

Gary towers before him, angry. Thomas lets out a groan, holds his nose to stem the flow of blood.

GARY

I see you've been having some fun with my woman. But as you might have figured from last night, I'm back now.

Once again, people stop to stare at Thomas's checkout, the centre of attention. Nobody however, dares to intervene.

GARY (CONT'D)

You may have swooned her with this place, your fancy uniform.

(smirks)

But you're just a phase she's goin' through, a fad, that's all.

Thomas grips his nose tighter blood leaks through his fingers.

GARY (CONT'D)

I fucked up badly getting fired from the "Convenience Mart" but--

Gary preens himself proudly.

GARY (CONT'D)

I just got a job down at the new "Best Prices" today. Got the uniform...

Gary leans in closer to Thomas.

GARY (CONT'D

The polo shirt...and I get to say the line too, motherfucker.

Gary is practically face to face with Thomas. He unzips his jacket, exposes a tacky bright blue shirt with wine coloured pin stripes.

The "Best Prices" logo is emblazed across his breast.

GARY (CONT'D)

(cool as can be)

Wait till she sees this.

Thomas takes his hand away, nostrils clogged with blood. He looks down at his blood spattered shirt, faces Gary again dead on.

THOMAS

(slowly, nasal)

I wouldn't be so sure...If she likes sweat on her man

(looks down)

She's gonna' go fuckin' wild over this.

Gary's smile fades, but he quickly regains himself, sneers.

He raises his fist again at Thomas who cowers back, his hands up in meek protection -- Gary leers at him.

GARY

You don't stand a chance.

Thomas half shields himself as Gary turns and walks away. Nearby customers and staff look on in puzzlement and horror, some barely able to contain their smiles.

Bill shrugs, nods past Thomas. -- Mr. Reeve makes his way through the crowd in his direction.

THOMAS

(nasal)

Aw, Jesus. This is the last thing I fuckin' need.

Reeve's face changes from confusion to anger when he sees the state of Thomas. He reaches the checkout.

MR. REEVE (CONT'D)

My office now!

He turns away, walks a few steps before looking back again.

MR. REEVE (CONT'D)

And get yourself cleaned up first.

Gary strolls out the front exit.

MR. REEVE'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

Mr. Reeve perches behind his desk. Thomas sits across from him, his jacket zipped up over his uniform. His face is cleaned up, yet he still dabs his nose occasionally with a bloodied tissue.

MR. REEVE

I'm not even going ask what happened to you because...well, I don't care. My only problem is that this "incident" occurred in my store.

THOMAS

I was attacked. You should be having that guy arrested.

MR. REEVE

He's not my problem, you are. I heard about your visitor last night too, that little floozy of yours who's been distracting you from your work of late.

Thomas keeps nursing his nose with the unsightly tissue.

MR. REEVE (CONT'D)

(shakes his head)

Jumping up on top of the counter in front of customers.

(tuts)

Which I have already received one complaint about. Saying how she indecently exposed herself during the course of that particular routine of hers.

He shakes his head again in bitter distaste.

MR. REEVE (CONT'D)

And now this...I'm afraid I have no option but to suspend for two weeks. Taking effect immediately.

Thomas sighs, stands up, leaves the room without objection.

INT. THOMAS'S CAR - MINUTES LATER

Thomas has his phone to his ear as he drives. A bandage covers his nose.

THOMAS

(into phone)

Yeah, it's fucking killing me...and he hasn't come to see you yet?

NICOLE (V.O.)

No. Well, besides meeting him on the road last night, he's just been ringing me, leavin' messages and that.

THOMAS

Fuckin' asshole.

NICOLE (V.O.)

(playful)

Oh you poor thing, get over here, I'll make it better.

INT. NICOLE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Nicole and Thomas are on the sofa. She sits upright, he lies across, his head in her lap. She runs her hand over the blood stained shirt.

NICOLE

Wow, you've really gone all out to impress me this time.

She pulls his head close to her, kisses him.

THOMAS

He said something about getting fired from his job. Is that why ye broke up?

NICOLE

We've been going on and off for ages, he's had numerous employers.

THOMAS

All supermarkets?

NICOLE

Some, he's a loser, yesterday's news. Trust me, I'll sort him out.

Silence. Thomas takes a deep breath, prepares himself.

THOMAS

Am...Well, because of the scene he caused today, along with your antics yesterday.

(Weak smile)

And the...fractious nature of me and Reeve's working relationship.

(Pause)

He's suspended me...for two weeks.

Nicole's aroused expression drops immediately. She puts her hands by her side. Thomas looks at her.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

It's just temporary...a fortnight.

NICOLE

(Not happy)

Suspended?

THOMAS

Yeah. I can still say the line; wear the gear, whatever you want.

Nicole shifts uncomfortably on the sofa. Thomas gets up. She avoids eye contact.

NICOLE

I know, but...it's not the same is it? You don't have the same powers, you don't have any...authority.

THOMAS

I worked behind a counter, I stacked fucking shelves! How did I ever have any--

A stern KNOCK sounds on the front door, both turn towards it.

NICOLE

Who is it?

GARY (O.S.)

It's me. Look, I just want to talk to you, that's all. I swear.

Thomas's frustration evaporates to alarm. He and Nicole glance at one another. Nicole looks back towards the door.

GARY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I got something to show you.

Thomas snorts, swears to himself.

GARY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And, buddy, I know you're in there. Your car is parked out front.

Silence. Thomas and Nicole exchange looks.

GARY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I'm not gonna get violent, I swear...Nic? I just want five minutes with you.

Nicole thinks it over. Thomas eyes her up.

THOMAS

Don't even think of lettin' that bastard in here.

Nicole regards him, no longer in that lustful, sexy way of before. She shrugs.

NICOLE

He just wants to talk.

THOMAS

What!? Look at my fucking nose! He tried to run us off the road last night. You were in the car too, remember?

Nicole gets up, heads for the door.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Is this because I'm outta work?

She ignores him, gets to the door, unlocks it.

Gary stands purposefully in the doorway in the full "Best Prices" uniform. He casts a sly glance at Thomas before focusing on Nicole.

She's taken back, a light COUGH escapes her lips.

NICOLE

Did you get a job at Best Prices?

GARY

(nods)

Received a phone call this morning, got fitted out for this.

(nods at Thomas)

Went to pay your little "flash in the pan" there a quick visit after my induction, show him whose boss. Got my head together and came here, relaxed and ready to talk things out with you.

Nicole eyes Gary with that barely suppressed desire once reserved for Thomas. Gary moseys into the house.

THOMAS

Flash in the pan? Nikki, tell this chimp where to go.

GARY

(calm)

Hey, man, about the nose, the car and that...I get a little over excited, I apologise. Just puttin' down a marker...you understand, right? She is my girl.

NICOLE

(to Thomas)

He gets a little over excited, he doesn't mean any harm.

Nicole can't take her eyes off Gary.

THOMAS

I don't fuckin' believe this!

Gary approaches Nicole. Both seeming to forget that Thomas is even there anymore.

GARY

I got a matching polo shirt too.

NICOLE

And the line?

GARY

Whenever you want, baby.

Nicole runs her hands over Gary's broad frame. She grips the logo the way she used to do with Thomas.

THOMAS

What about me?

NICOLE

We had a good time, Thomas...really. But...you know. You just told me you ain't on the books for two weeks. And then he walks in--

She directs her focus back to Gary, clears her throat.

NICOLE

Lookin' like that. I mean the blood is hot, it is...but--

THOMAS

(meek, desperate)
I can still say the line.

NICOLE

(pulls a face)

Not the same...and anyway, even on a good day you get a seven, seven and a half tops.

THOMAS

What do you mean?

NICOLE

Your delivery

(looks at Gary,

yearning)

Remember, it's all in the delivery. I used to always give Gary an eight, nine on a good day.

Both share a flirty laugh. Thomas gapes at both. He stares at Gary, fury mixed with jealously visibly welling up inside him.

Thomas half acts as if he's gonna jump him, instead averts his eyes away, takes in the difference in physique between them.

He cuts his losses.

THOMAS

Alright, get fucked. I'm outta here.

Thomas turns for the door.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Unbelievable.

He glances over his shoulder; both are already embraced in a steamy kiss. Nicole violently gropes Gary's shirt.

THOMAS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Un-fuckin'-believable.

The door slams. The two continue to embrace, unrelenting.

INT. THOMAS'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Thomas watches TV, a plaster on his nose. The front door opens, irate nattering sounds between a man and woman as they enter -- Thomas rolls his eyes, exhales deeply.

GRACE and ALEX (both mid 20's), enter, both equally rotund in physique. They drag suitcases after them.

Their warm smiles turn to concern when they see Thomas's nose.

GRACE

Oooh, what happened your nose, Thomas?

THOMAS

(flatly)

I fell.

THOMAS'S BEDROOM - LATER

Thomas lies awake in bed. MOANS and a bed ROCKING sound faintly in another room. Thomas stares at the ceiling.

INT. SUPERMARKET - CHECKOUTS - DAY

SUPER: TWO WEEKS LATER

Thomas sits at his checkout, some light bruising still evident. Bill is in the background, busy at his checkout.

Thomas surveys the shop, frowns. He watches the shoppers push trolleys around, carry baskets, pick up and leave back products -- An OLD LADY (70s) makes her way slowly towards Thomas's checkout, carries a basket with a few items.

Thomas waits impatiently.

Four WANNABES (early 20s) tracksuits, white runners, chains around their necks and peak caps at the desired 60 degree angle make their way towards the checkouts.

They push past the Old Lady like she's not there and reach Thomas's checkout.

Nearby, a WOMAN (mid 40s), very attractive for her age, looks on. She is not impressed — The "Wannabes" put a slab of cans, a bottle of Vodka and two bottles of wine on the conveyor. Thomas watches them, sighs abhorrently.

He glances at the attractive Woman who looks right back at him with that "are you not gonna to stand up these thugs" expression though not as overt as Nicole had been.

Thomas eyes up the "Wannabes", then at the Old Lady who scowls at the four guys in front of her.

Thomas lowers his head, clears his throat, swallows. He scans through the "Wannabes" first item.

THOMAS

Do you have a clubcard?

The Woman shakes her head in disgust, steps out of the queue, goes to Bill's checkout. Bill eyes are locked on her as he scans through items. He checks her out as she slips into his queue.

He looks at Thomas whose too busy serving the "Wannabes".

Bill continues to scan through items; he nods approvingly to himself, identical to when he watched the "mature" porn.

His scanning speeds up a notch.