

MADDIE AND MILLIE

written by

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EXT. PORCH TERRACE -- DAY (2016)

We see the peaceful, picturesque mountains of Piedmont, West Virginia in late afternoon. MADDIE WOLFORD, a 26-year-old white woman, sits in a rocking chair and rests her bare feet on the top porch rail overlooking a Potomac River sunset.

Her beauty is at once uncomplicated and unquestionable. She lifts a candle to fire up a marijuana blunt. "The Only Time" by Nine Inch Nails surges haltingly from a stereo inside the house.

MADDIE

Thorne! Baby, that's enough Mr. Reznor for tonight now, okay? Put on some Miles before you come smoke this with me. It'll put us in the proper zone of twilight.

THORNE (O.S.)

Am I supposed to know what that even means?

MADDIE

Just obey my orders and there'll be no trouble, sir.

THORNE (O.S.)

Okay, boss.

The unmistakably spooky, afro-funk intro to Peter Gabriel's "Shock the Monkey" begins playing. Maddie calmly exhales a plume of smoke and takes a sip from a beer bottle on the stand beside her before speaking.

MADDIE

Thorne, baby, are you in the mood to fuck with me? I mean, hey, that's fine. So long as you realize that it's the only fucking that's gonna be going on between us tonight if you are.

THORNE (O.S.)

Shit, my bad.

Maddie smiles to herself as "So What" by Miles Davis abruptly replaces Gabriel.

HAWTHORNE CHANSE, a 32-year-old black man with a high school track star's build, emerges from the house and sits on a stool next to Maddie. He lovingly kisses her forehead and accepts the blunt from her.

MADDIE

This is great. So **you**. It's so great how twisted you are.

THORNE

Who you calling twisted? And great?

MADDIE

No, I love it. Sitting here all zany and whacked on mushrooms less than three hours after your Aunt Faye's funeral, like it's any other night.

THORNE

Well, except for the 'shrooms, it **is** any other night.

MADDIE

And there's something twisted about that, don't you think?

THORNE

I don't remember you voicing any disapproval before we ate them.

MADDIE

Just because I don't disapprove doesn't mean it's not twisted. I swear it's what's gonna make it the hardest on me whenever I finally decide to ditch your ass, your twistedness. I think I'll miss that the most of all about you.

THORNE

I'll already be long gone before **you** ever decide to ditch **me**. Probably you'll be too busy talking crazy shit like now to notice when it happens. You'll turn around and be like, "Thorne, where'd you go?" And I'll already be down in Florida, fucking your sister, who hopefully doesn't share your crazy-talk gene.

Maddie exhales blunt smoke, pondering it as if trying to peer into the hypothetical future Thorne just described.

MADDIE

Well, as long as you're happy I guess. So, anyway, I've been pondering the possibility that I might be insane.

Thorne takes a hit off the blunt and holds it in as he replies.

THORNE

Great, more crazy talk. And why are you telling me this?

MADDIE

Because, as my boyfriend, you're sort of obligated to give a shit about the state of my mental health maybe?

THORNE

Well even though I don't remember signing up for that, if sleeping with you makes me obligated, then by all means tell me. What it's like to lose your mind, baby?

MADDIE

I didn't say I lost my mind. I only said I was pondering the **possibility** I lost my mind.

THORNE

They say it's always in the last place you look. I'd look there first. Sure you're not just stoned and zonked on 'shrooms?

MADDIE

Well let's see. Yes, I'm sure that I'm not just stoned or zonked on 'shrooms, but my being sure of that is meaningless if I'm insane anyway, no?

THORNE

Unlike you, I'm not into sticking my head up my own ass for fun.

MADDIE

Believe me, it's not as much fun up there as it might feel. Wait, was that your way of changing the subject to my ass?

THORNE

You did that all by yourself.

Maddie casts a flirtatious glance Thorne's way.

MADDIE

I know how much you love it.

THORNE

And I know how much you love me loving it.

Maddie and Thorne gaze out over the Potomac river in silence for some seconds.

THORNE (CONT'D)

Auntie Faye's the one who talked me into moving out here and now she's gone. I have to keep reminding myself I'm not in Baltimore anymore.

MADDIE

I can't see why. The only thing I see West Virginia and Baltimore sharing in common is a relative latitude.

THORNE

I've willfully blinded myself to the differences, but that's gonna be harder to do with her not around. She was my link to home.

Maddie strokes Thorne's head to comfort him.

MADDIE

I know you're gonna miss her. She knew moving here, getting out of the city, would be good for you. You're gonna stay, aren't you? I'm used to you like a bad habit.

THORNE

I've seen plenty of bad habits in this hick town who'd love for you to get used to them.

MADDIE

I've never gotten used to a man the way I've gotten used to you, and the idea having to try again with another man fills me with dread.

Thorne chuckles softly.

THORNE
You're a mess, girl, you know that?

MADDIE
I know that. How's the lasagna coming? I'm famished.

THORNE
Another ten minutes or so.

MADDIE
Mmm. Smells good. Like an... orgasm.

THORNE
In what galaxy?

MADDIE
A garlic jazz orgasm.

Maddie closes her eyes and begins weaving her hands through the air to the Coltrane solo playing from inside the house. Thorne leans back, admiring her.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
See what I mean, baby? That proper zone of twilight?

THORNE
I can scarcely imagine the things you see behind those dreamy lids of yours when you go wherever it is you go. But I swear, I never get tired of getting lost in your translations.

Maddie stops swimming in jazz notes, takes her bare feet off the top rail, and opens her eyes to connect with Thorne's. She smiles and leans in for a lazy, wet kiss. She takes the blunt from him and lifts her feet back to the rail.

MADDIE
Cut it out. You know how sloppy wet I get when you talk all crazy like that about me.

THORNE
First I'm hearing of it, actually. Sorry.

MADDIE
Are you? Sorry?

THORNE

I don't think either one of us really expects that I am. "Sloppy wet" is my second favorite version of you right after "sassy drunk".

MADDIE

"Sloppy wet" isn't your favorite?

THORNE

I don't think either one of us really expects that it's not.

Maddie edges her faces closer to his and strokes his arm. He clutches her above the knee.

MADDIE

Damn you. How long before the lasagna's done again?

THORNE

Twenty minutes.

MADDIE

You said ten minutes two minutes ago.

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Maddie and Thorne have made their way to the bedroom but not the bed. Half-undressed, tangled and tearing at each other, they fuck furiously on the floor -- the mellow flow of Miles' Kind of Blue now having given way to the frantic swing of "Better Git It In Your Soul" by Charles Mingus. Immersed in passion, Thorne's eyes suddenly widen with alarm.

THORNE

You smell something burning?

Maddie is still overwhelmed by passion.

MADDIE

Yes, it's on fire for you, baby.

THORNE

Oh, shit! The lasagna!

Thorne jumps to his feet and scurries into the kitchen just as the smoke alarm begins screeching. Drawing her knees to her breasts, Maddie tucks herself into a ball of quaking, uproarious laughter.

EXT. TERRACE -- NIGHT

Thorne and Maddie sit indian-style on a rug, picking with forks for anything salvageable in the pan of half-charred lasagna centered on the floor between them.

MADDIE

You know, Thorne, this is even more pitiful of an excuse for a bon voyage dinner than I could ever have imagined. This, for our last meal before we head down to my sister's in Florida tomorrow? After I told you she couldn't cook worth a damn? I mean, you've outdone yourself. Or should I say overdone? Yes, you've overdone yourself.

Maddie giggles, taking delight in teasing him.

THORNE

You finished? Or should I say, are you overfinished? Or should I say shut-up? Yes, I see you're eating it, so shut the fuck up. Besides, the food at her place can't be as bad as you make it out to be. At least not any worse than what I had when I was incarcerated.

MADDIE

I don't know. Millie's cooking is frightfully awful. At least it was back when she and I shared a dorm room in Morgantown.

THORNE

Well, I don't know if judging a person's cooking skills in a place where a hot plate and a microwave are all that's available for food prep is exactly fair.

MADDIE

Oh, on the contrary. I'd argue it should have been the perfect test of her culinary resourcefulness.

Maddie leans forward, scrambles her legs out from under her, and begins doing push-ups.

THORNE

What are you doing?

MADDIE

Hallucinogens make we want to exercise.

THORNE

Weird.

MADDIE

No, what the Manson Family did on hallucinogenic drugs was weird. Writing messages in their murder victims' blood on walls. This is healthy.

THORNE

Relatively speaking.

MADDIE

Hey, could you do me a solid and maybe not mention anything about your time spent locked up when we're down there at my sister's?

THORNE

Because I'd embarrass you?

MADDIE

Because I'm a thoughtless bitch and am waiting until the night before we leave to tell you that Millie's husband is a cop with the Panama City P.D. I hope you're not pissed. I would've told you sooner.

THORNE

But you didn't.

MADDIE

But I didn't.

Thorne pokes at the food in the dish between them with his fork but says nothing for some seconds.

THORNE

It's cool.

MADDIE

Cool? Really? That's all you have to say about it? Wow, that's a relief. I'm impressed. I really was expecting you to maybe freak a little.

THORNE

Why? I didn't freak when you first told me last week.

Maddie manages one last push-up and rolls over on her back.

MADDIE

Last week?

THORNE

Wow, I'm impressed. It usually takes decades of weed smoking to achieve the level of memory impairment you've achieved already. You've overdone yourself. Baked your brain. Numbed your noodle.

MADDIE

I'll numb **your** noodle. Seriously, I told you already?

THORNE

Yes, you space case.

Smiling sheepishly, Maddie reaches over to fling some food off her fork at him.

MADDIE

Fuck you, lasagna murderer.

INT. KARATE STUDIO -- DAY

ANSEN MEYERS, 24-year-old husband of Maddie's sister Millie, is in a practice match with a fellow karate student. Ansen is a severe-looking ex-Marine with a crew cut who seems wound spring-tense with aggression. His slightly smaller OPPONENT appears visibly intimidated as they square off on the mat.

The INSTRUCTOR gives the signal to begin and Ansen charges, taking the opponent down swiftly. They resume their starting positions.

The second round, after some blocked strikes and dodged blows, shortly results in Ansen getting punched in the face. A roundhouse kick to his opponent's face is Ansen's angry response. The opponent's nose is bloodied.

INSTRUCTOR

Okay, why don't we stop here?
Ansen we're here to learn, not kill each other.

(MORE)

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)
 You must learn to discipline your
 anger impulse. I'll see you both
 again on Wednesday.

INT. PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA STARBUCKS -- DAY

Ansen and MILLIE MEYERS are seated across a table from another young, apprehensive-looking couple, ANN and RODNEY. The first thing we notice about Millie is that she is not only Maddie's sister, but her identical twin.

MILLIE
 So glad you could talk your husband
 into joining us today, Ann.

ANN
 Me too.

MILLIE
 (To Rodney)
 I'm Millie, I work with your wife
 at Walmart, which I'm sure she's
 mentioned. And this is my husband,
 Ansen Meyers.

RODNEY
 Hello.

Handshakes are exchanged and Millie retrieves a Bible from her bag. She places it between her coffee and Ansen's. As she opens it, her eyes go to notice the empty space between the other couple's coffees. She looks to the Ann.

MILLIE
 Did you remember to bring a Bible?

ANN
 (Sheepishly)
 I'm sorry, Millie. You did tell me
 to bring one before we left work on
 Friday, didn't you?

MILLIE
 Yes, I did.

ANN
 I'm so sorry, it completely slipped
 my mind.

An uncomfortable silence passes as Millie stares her co-worker down without expression for some seconds.

MILLIE

(With a sudden smile)

It's fine. We'll just share mine. Now, I thought it might be most relevant here for us to start with Galatians 5:17 through 21 as it applies to your situation, which states: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Millie pauses to take a careful sip from her hot coffee.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

ANN

I'm rather embarrassed to admit I don't know what half of those words mean. Adultery is the only one of those I'm guilty of, right? What are emulations?

MILLIE

That's when you take joy in the flesh from inspiring envy in others.

Ann laughs nervously.

ANN

Well, I think everyone takes some measure of joy in that, right?

Rodney announces the sudden break of his silence by pounding a fist on the table. He turns his head to address his wife.

RODNEY

It's a sin, okay? And it's about as funny a sin as you climbing in the backseat with that cart-pusher college boy and catching a case of the crabs!

Ann places her hands in her lap and lowers her eyes in shame.

MILLIE

Now, hold on, there, Rodney. You bear some responsibility in this situation, too.

Rodney rises abruptly to his feet.

RODNEY

Me? What the fuck? Me?

The menacing look Rodney catches in Ansen's upturned glare causes him to quickly regain his composure and reclaim his seat next to his wife. Millie stares serenely at him.

MILLIE

Are you both up to doing this now?

RODNEY

Yes. Yes, look I'm sorry to fly off the handle like that. This is still a raw wound for me.

MILLIE

It's all right. What I would hope is that this all might cause you to examine some of your own behaviors as they relate to fleshly indulgences. For instance, your wife tells me you sometimes drink to excess, which can't make for the best home environment for her or for your children.

Rodney shoots a surly glance at Ann, and then a more cautious one Ansen's way, before begrudgingly answering.

RODNEY

I been outta work a while.

EXT. DRIVEWAY OF THE MEYERS' HOUSE -- DAY

Maddie and Thorne pull into Millie and Ansen's driveway in a slightly weathered Jeep Wrangler as Ansen -- smoking a cigarette -- watches from his chair on the porch.

He stands and goes to open the front screen door just enough to stick his head in and holler for Millie.

ANSEN

Honey, your sister just pulled up!

Ansen retakes his seat just as an excited Millie comes running outside and down the front steps to greet her twin sister and the boyfriend she has never met before. Thorne begins unloading luggage from the back as Maddie steps out of the passenger side to embrace Millie. After they hug, Millie steps back, holding Maddie's shoulders to appraise her at arm's length.

MILLIE

How was your trip? I hope you didn't have any trouble finding the place.

MADDIE

Thorne here tried to get us lost a few times, but my natural GPS prevailed in the end.

Thorne comes walking around with two suitcases.

THORNE

(To Maddie)

Funny, I don't remember you being awake for more than three of the fifteen hours it took to drive down here.

Maddie slaps his shoulder playfully before kissing him.

MADDIE

Millie, this is my new favorite pain in the ass, Thorne Chanse. Thorne, this is my twin sister, Millie Wolford. I mean Meyers. Sorry, still getting used to the name change.

Millie shakes Thorne's hand.

MILLIE

So, this is the Thorne that I've been hearing so much, and yet so little about at the same time.

THORNE

I'm afraid I don't follow.

MILLIE

Well, I mean whenever we've talked on the phone, Maddie's always more than eager to share details about your sex life whether I really want to hear them or not, but she completely neglected to mention that you were black.

MADDIE

(To Thorne)

My sister doesn't seem to realize how unimportant your race is to me.

THORNE

(To Maddie)

But you *did* realize I was black, didn't you?

MADDIE

(To Thorne)

No, not until the first time I saw you naked.

MILLIE

Ha ha. Madeline, you know it's not important to me either, but let's not pretend it's something Mama won't notice or have any sideways remarks for you about it.

MADDIE

Which is another possible reason telling you kept slipping my mind. I'd rather her hear it from me than you, if you don't mind.

MILLIE

That's between you and her. I get enough grief from her on my own. Now come on inside so I can show you two to the guest bedroom.

Millie leads her guests up the drive and onto the porch, pausing briefly to introduce Thorne to Ansen.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

Thorne, this is my husband, Ansen. Honey, this is Thorne Chanse from Baltimore.

(To Thorne)

Right?

THORNE

That's right. Good to meet you,
Ansen.

Thorne extends his hand down to a still seated Ansen. Ansen shakes it, unsmiling.

ANSEN

Likewise.

MILLIE

And of course, you already know
Maddie from the wedding.

Thorne sees Ansen wordlessly nod his acknowledgment of Maddie, while also noticing her rather lukewarm vibe towards her brother-in-law in response.

MADDIE

Hello, Ansen.

An awkward moment of silence passes before Millie breaks it.

MILLIE

Well, I'm sure those bags aren't
getting any lighter for you,
Thorne.

THORNE

No, ma'am, they ain't.

MILLIE

Let's get you inside then.

Thorne follows Millie into the house while Maddie's gaze lingers warily for a few more seconds on Ansen, who sits oblivious, lighting another cigarette. She follows the others inside.

INT. DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

Maddie, Thorne, Millie, and Ansen are seated around the dining room table eating dinner.

MILLIE

So, Thorne, I may as well get your
full story now while we have you
captive at our dinner table. What
sort of work did you do before you
moved to West Virginia?

THORNE

Well, Millie, since it wouldn't take much more than a Google search and a prepaid debit card to do a complete background check to find out that I did some time for credit card fraud, I may as well be frank and tell you that I did some time for credit card fraud.

MILLIE

Is that so?

THORNE

I'd also tell you how much I regret my crimes if I could bring myself to feel the appropriate level of remorse, but who's to say what's the appropriate level?

ANSEN

(To Thorne)

How about **any** level?

THORNE

(To Ansen)

Gee, that's asking quite a lot.

MADDIE

Jesus, Thorne.

THORNE

What?

MADDIE

Nothing, nevermind. Millie, continue with your interrogation. Don't mind me. This chicken is heartbreakingly delicious by the way.

MILLIE

(To Thorne)

At the risk of coming off as judgmental, what about your family? I mean, your parents must have expressed some disappointment that your life took such a turn.

THORNE

Considering my older brother is doing life for killing his girlfriend's pimp,

(MORE)

THORNE (CONT'D)

I guess I turned out to be the good son. And it wasn't like I was doing typical, black ghetto shit like slinging crack. Their baby got convicted of a **white** collar crime. The next best thing to being the first in the family to attend college. And Maddie's right, this chicken is good enough to make me wanna slap someone's mama.

ANSEN

(To Thorne)

Doesn't sound to me like you have much respect for the law. Or yourself for that matter.

THORNE

No, just the law.

ANSEN

Your girlfriend did tell you I was a cop, right?

THORNE

Sure. Are you one of those cops who has respect for the law? I heard or read somewhere that they exist.

ANSEN

A comedian. Nice.

THORNE

Just having some fun with you, Ansen. But let me ask you, since we're on the subject of the law and respect for it, would you say the record of the law having respect for black people is all that honorable in America? Hmm? Michael Brown? Eric Garner?

ANSEN

Is this the part where I'm supposed to apologize for 400 years of my ancestors oppressing your ancestors? When are your people going to stop griping about ancient history?

THORNE

Well, I wasn't born yet, but some of my people still living can remember having to drink out of separate water fountains here in Florida. So if that's what you mean by "ancient history", you should know Brown and Garner were lynched by your brothers in blue within the last couple years.

ANSEN

So it's okay for you to lump all us cops together, but not for me to make any blanket statements against young black men?

THORNE

What do you give a damn how we see you? You're not the ones at the mercy of the power structure.

ANSEN

Let me write you a check for reparations. Will that fix it? Or will you find another excuse to shirk personal responsibility?

The table falls silent, Maddie and Millie exchanging nervous glances. The tension is only broken when Thorne begins to laugh and shake his head.

THORNE

Personal responsibility. Y'all love throwing that one around. What about the fact that young black men are 21 times more likely to be killed by cops than young white men? Who's personally responsible for that? Or does Obama becoming president prove the playing field is level?

ANSEN

I wouldn't know. I never voted for the Muslim Communist bastard.

THORNE

Let me guess. McCain?

ANSEN

And Romney. Trump come November. Contrary to what some of you snowflakes believe, conservative values aren't just about how much money you make. Reverence for Christian doctrine is a big part of it.

THORNE

Don't forget sexism and racism too. Which brings me around to a question for you about Obama. Since part of being a card-carrying communist or socialist, or whatever you call him, would mean rejecting organized religion as... What did Marx call it, Maddie?

MADDIE

The opiate of the masses.

THORNE

Right, opiate of the masses. President Obama can only be a communist **or** a Muslim, but he can't be both, right? I mean, nevermind that he's neither, but I want to keep this on a Fox News watcher's level of reality comprehension.

ANSEN

You do a lot of studying in the prison library?

MILLIE

That's enough, you two. You're boring me and Maddie to tears. I'll pick another topic. Maddie, have you been attending church regularly?

MADDIE

Can we go back to talking about politics?

MILLIE

I'll take that as a "no".

MADDIE

But you won't take it as a hint that I don't want to talk about it?

MILLIE

Maddie, what would Daddy say?

MADDIE

He's been dead for five years and I haven't heard a word. But if you're still in contact with him, I'd love for you to let me know what he thinks of my churchgoing habits.

MILLIE

What a horrible thing to say.

MADDIE

Why are you talking to me like a Sunday school teacher? Don't you think I remember the days you used to party 'til you puked and give jocks handjob behind the bleachers?

MILLIE

Maddie!

MADDIE

You only got on this holy roller kick when Daddy got sick. And surprise surprise, he died any fucking way.

Maddie rises from the table and abruptly exits the dining room, leaving a temporary wake of stunned silence behind her. Millie in particular seems the most shaken by her sister's outburst.

THORNE

Millie, the thing is, Maddie and I are agnostic when it comes to our spiritual views.

MILLIE

Well, I'm not sure I know of that particular denomination.

ANSEN

(To Millie)

That's because it's not a denomination, it's a way for liberal snowflakes to justify a world where they can make excuses for other religions without ever having to make a commitment of faith to Christ or any of them. Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists,

(MORE)

ANSEN (CONT'D)
 Christians, even fuckin'
 Scientologists -- just one, big,
 happy, non-judgmental family. All
 bullshit, of course.

THORNE
 Yeah, well I don't agree that Jesus
 would agree.

ANSEN
 And what do you know about Jesus?

THORNE
 Well, to burst a couple prevalent
 conservative bubbles, I know
 there's a good chance he didn't
 have blue eyes and would never have
 accepted an endorsement from the
 NRA.

EXT. BACK PATIO -- NIGHT

Millie sits alone outside on the back patio ledge staring off
 into the night sky. The back glass sliding door opens and
 Maddie stands looking regretful as she observes her sister
 from inside the house for some seconds. She steps outside and
 shuts the door behind her.

MADDIE
 In the mood for some company?

MILLIE
 (Without turning around)
 I actually came out after doing the
 dishes to see if maybe you were out
 here sneaking a cigarette. You
 used to sometimes after you and
 Mama got into it you know?

Maddie resumes her approach and squats down just behind
 Millie's shoulder.

MADDIE
 What's with all the exposition?
 You think I would lose my own
 memories? I quit not long after I
 got together with Thorne. He
 couldn't stand the way it made my
 hair smell or my tongue taste.

MILLIE
 At least something persuaded you to
 quit. What about weed?

MADDIE
What about it?

Millie looks over her shoulder at Maddie.

MILLIE
Do you still smoke it?

Maddie shrugs.

MADDIE
If it's around.

MILLIE
Meaning?

MADDIE
Meaning I don't go out of my way to
find it but I have no issue with
smoking some if it's made
available.

Millie turns her face back towards the heavens and gives no immediate response. Maddie begins playing with her sister's hair with familiar affection, as she probably had when they were in grade school.

MILLIE
Does Thorne get high?

MADDIE
Frequently.

MILLIE
Then I have to assume it's
frequently made available to you.

The sisters exchange a smirking glance before letting their giggles rupture out. They fall into another brief silence and Maddie continues to play with Millie's hair.

MILLIE (CONT'D)
My devotion to being a good
Christian wife is sincere you know,
Mads.

Maddie says nothing, letting another silence pass, her hands busy stroking, braiding, and unbraiding Millie's hair. She casually makes her way around to sit beside Millie on the patio ledge.

MADDIE
You're saying you wanna get stoned?

MILLIE

I was wondering how transparent you wanted me to be.

MADDIE

You're welcome. Come on, let's go for a ride to the marina.

EXT. PANAMA CITY MARINA -- NIGHT

Maddie and Millie sit on a public bench overlooking the Atlantic. Maddie packs a small bowl with some marijuana from a ziplock bag in her purse.

MADDIE

When I smoke with Thorne we usually roll blunts, but a bowl is so much less hassle to me. Plus, it conserves weed.

MILLIE

Do you remember my bong in college?

MADDIE

The one Jimmy John Washington left with you the same night he got locked up for the D.U.I. and never came back for? Sure. I nearly coughed up a lung on several occasions smoking out of that thing. What did you ever do with it?

MILLIE

Ansen came across it when we were cleaning out our attic one day and threw it out. Not before he accused me of being an undercover pothead the whole time we'd been living together of course.

Maddie holds her lighter to the pipe and pulls in the smoke. Holding her breath, she passes the bowl and lighter to Millie before releasing the smoke.

MADDIE

Yeah. Um, remind me why you married him again?

MILLIE

Because he gave me my first, non-orally or manually-induced orgasm.

MADDIE

But not because you love him or anything.

MILLIE

(Holding in a bowl hit)

Oh, yeah, that too. I guess. I just wish he wasn't always so hellbent on needing to be in control all the time.

MADDIE

How's all that wishing working out for you then?

Millie exhales smoke and begins coughing violently.

MILLIE

God, did it used to make me cough this much, or has weed just gotten that much more potent during the last decade?

MADDIE

Yes and yes. Yes, you were always a lightweight, and yes, this is more potent shit. The shit we'll all be smoking when the federal government finally legalizes it.

MILLIE

Ansen says that'll never happen.

MADDIE

Ansen also says Trump will win. Have you considered the possibility that Ansen doesn't know what the fuck he's talking about six out of seven days a week?

Millie turns her gaze away from the sea and towards her sister for a long moment but says nothing.

INT. MILLIE'S SUV -- NIGHT (LATER)

Millie is driving herself and Maddie back home. They're both glassy-eyed, giddy, and giggly from the weed.

MILLIE

I wonder if I should be driving when I'm this high?

MADDIE

Don't be such a pussy.

Millie's speed and dexterity of thought is sluggish.

MILLIE

I never understood.. how.. being called a pussy could be considered an insult to a woman. I mean, yeah,... I have a pussy... And? What's your point?

MADDIE

Don't be such a nitpicking cunt then.

MILLIE

That's better.

The twin sisters erupt in laughter together.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Ansen is sitting alone on the sofa in an unlit room, arms crossed, awaiting his wife's return. Faint laughter can be heard on the other side of the front door along with the sound of keys fumbling in the lock. The door opens and a happy Millie enters with Maddie close behind. Millie switches on a table lamp and is slightly startled to see her husband. She briefly loses, and then regains, her stoned smile.

MILLIE

Oh, hey, honey.

Ansen walks over to inspect his wife's narrowed eyes up close. Maddie stays by the door.

ANSEN

What the fuck, Millie? It's 3 a.m. And are you fucking stoned?

MILLIE

Is it 3 a.m.? And yes I'm fucking stoned.

ANSEN

You're unbelievable.

MILLIE

No, you're unbelievable. Unbelievably adorable.

ANSEN

And to think, I asked you to be the mother of my children.

MADDIE

Hey, Ansen, come on, decompress. It's not like we were out doing meth.

Ansen point threateningly at Maddie.

ANSEN

Shut the fuck up, Maddie, before I bust your ass for possession. This is between me and Millie.

Thorne appears descending the steps going to the upstairs guest room. He says nothing to alert his presence to the room as he halts his descent to listen.

MILLIE

(To Ansen)

I know you're upset, honey, but can we discuss this in the morning?

ANSEN

Your birthday's in two days. I was going to throw you and your sister a surprise party, but fucking forget that now.

MADDIE

Thank god. I don't think I could have endured a whole party where the only people invited were the kind who'd count **you** as a friend.

ANSEN

Maddie, I'm not gonna fucking warn you again.

Thorne draws everyone's attention as he takes a couple steps off the staircase toward Ansen.

THORNE

Say, Ansen, what do you say we take it down a notch before things get out of hand? I'm sure Maddie's real sorry for insulting your friends, whoever they are.

MADDIE

And if not, I'm sure I can figure out

(MORE)

MADDIE (CONT'D)
 something else to be real sorry
 about.

ANSEN
 (To Thorne)
 I didn't think you brothas put up
 with that kind of mouth on a white
 girl.

THORNE
 (To Ansen)
 This brotha likes her mouth the way
 it is, I can't speak for anyone
 else.

ANSEN
 (To Thorne)
 Well it was butting into a
 discussion between me and **my** wife
 in **my** house. You liking it is
 irrelevant to me.

THORNE
 Mad respect with it being your
 house and all. I'm just asking as
 your guest to maybe drop it for
 tonight and take this up again at a
 less ungodly hour.

Ansen steps away from Millie and takes a stance facing Thorne
 at the distance of a gunfighter at showdown, the look on his
 face mixing amusement and hostility.

ANSEN
 You figure after being here all of
 nine or ten hours, you've earned
 the right to tell me what I'm gonna
 do in my own house, Mr. Chanse?

THORNE
 Do you figure treating your wife
 and sister-in-law like they're your
 teenage daughters helps maintain an
 illusion of being in charge of
 shit?

ANSEN
 I'm a second degree black belt.

THORNE
 And I'm sure everyone here is very
 proud of you. We ready for bed yet?
 I'd get into a pissing match with
 you

(MORE)

THORNE (CONT'D)
but I didn't have enough to drink
with dinner earlier.

Millie comes up behind her husband and drapes her arms around
his shoulders.

MILLIE
Come on, honey, let's go. We can
talk more in the bedroom if you
want.

Ansen keeps his glare locked on Thorne another few tense
seconds before striding past him and up the stairs alone.
Millie casts vaguely apologetic glances both Thorne's and
Maddie's way and follows behind her husband.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Maddie and Thorne are in bed discussing the night's recent
events.

MADDIE
I can't stand the son of a bitch.

THORNE
I don't get the sense he'd piss on
you if you were on fire either.

MADDIE
That's only because I wouldn't fuck
him.

THORNE
Excuse me?

MADDIE
After his and Millie's wedding
reception. He said I was too drunk
to drive myself back to my hotel.
He insisted on driving me instead,
even though he'd had his fair share
to drink himself. I come out of the
restroom of this Tom Thumb
convenience store where we'd
stopped for gas, and I'm not back
in the car seven seconds before
he's leaning in and pulling me to
his lips.

THORNE
That motherfucker raped you?

MADDIE

It didn't get that far. I bit his earlobe when he unlatched my bra through my blouse and he stopped. It was the only part of him my teeth could reach at the time.

THORNE

And what happened when you told Millie that her brand new husband tried to rape you?

MADDIE

Nothing, because I never told her. And neither can you. I'm serious, Thorne.

THORNE

What? Why?

MADDIE

Because I knew it would hurt her more to hear what he tried to do to me than it hurt for me to have to go through it.

THORNE

Bullshit. You kissed him back some at first, didn't you?

Maddie responds with a look of guilt on her face. Thorne shakes his head admonishingly. She attempts to further explain.

MADDIE

He surprised me, and my better judgment didn't kick in right away.

THORNE

I knew it. You know how I knew? Because your concern for her feelings would **never** have outweighed your concern for the truth. Not unless you felt somehow complicit in that truth.

MADDIE

Anyway, the point is, once I quickly came to my senses, I told him to stop. And he didn't, until I bit him. Believe me, if he'd actually raped me she'd have been the first person after the police that I called.

(MORE)

MADDIE (CONT'D)

But he didn't, so I thought it best to just never mention it to her. And like you said, I could never entirely convince myself I wasn't a little at fault too. I mean, I remember feeling a bit jealous and sort of depressed over Millie being the first of us to get married. Not that I even really wanted to get married, but hearing about Mama and her planning the details and looking over wedding gowns to choose together for months, I don't know, I just.... I'd been drinking and was in a vulnerable place in my life. So, anyway, just keep it to yourself, okay? Or I'll kill you.

THORNE

Really?

MADDIE

No, not really. Now shut-up and go to sleep. I love you.

INT. KITCHEN -- DAY

VIVIAN "TOOT" WOLFORD, the handsome, sprightly, 48-year-old mother of Maddie and Millie, places several peeled potatoes into a large pot of water, puts the pot over a flame on the stovetop, and goes to chop a celery stalk on her nearby kitchen counter.

Her doorbell rings and she wipes her hands on her apron in going to answer it.

INT. FOYER -- DAY

Millie, Maddie and Thorne all file inside when Toot answers her door.

MILLIE

(Hugging and kissing her mother)

Hey, Mama. Sorry I didn't call to tell you we were coming over first, but I forgot to put my cellphone on the charger last night.

Toot stretches her arms out enthusiastically to embrace Maddie, who not-so-enthusiastically but obligingly hugs her mother back.

TOOT

Madeline, my wildflower, it's so nice to see you.

MADDIE

You too, Mama.

THORNE

(To Toot)

How can you be so sure you're hugging the right daughter?

TOOT

Giving birth to them, wiping their individual asses, nursing their skinned knees, elbows, and first broken hearts, and otherwise raising them gives me a distinct advantage over other people, young man.

MADDIE

Mama, this is my boyfriend Thorne Chanse. Thorne, this is my mother Vivian Wolford.

TOOT

(To Thorne)

Call me Toot. It's the nickname their late father gave me.

THORNE

Pleasure to meet you, Miss Toot. Uh, Mrs. Ms.?

TOOT

Just Toot will do.

MILLIE

Thorne's from Baltimore, Mama.

Toot appraises Thorne silently, her expression betraying neither pleasure nor unease. Thorne smiles back politely.

TOOT

(To Thorne)

So. You're black.

THORNE

Allegedly. My black parents have failed to provide me any solid proof beyond the birth certificate so far though.

Toot's frozen expression takes a few seconds to crack into a grin, and another couple to collapse fully into laughter.

TOOT
 (To Millie)
 Where's Ansen? He didn't come with you?

MILLIE
 No, he couldn't make it. He's on duty right now.

TOOT
 Everyone, let's go into the kitchen. I've got a ham in the oven, and I want you girls to finish cleaning the collards and fixing the potato salad.

INT. KITCHEN -- DAY

Toot sits a bottle of Icehouse beer down at the kitchen table where Thorne is seated. She then sits across from him and twists one open for herself. She drinks straight from the bottle. Maddie and Millie are by the stove helping their mother with the cooking while simultaneously muttering secrets to each other and giggling. Toot and Thorne silently observe them.

TOOT
 (To Thorne)
 I swear, it's like those two pick up right where they left off no matter how much time they spend physically apart from each other.

THORNE
 I see.

TOOT
 So, Thorne. What has Maddie told you about me?

THORNE
 Honestly, only good things.

TOOT
 Really?

THORNE
Mostly good things.

TOOT

Well, she's told me nothing either way, good or bad, leastly or mostly, about you. So it's only fair that you tell me both the good and bad things she's said about me, don't you think?

Thorne takes a long swallow from his beer as a stall tactic. He puts the bottle down and flashes a charming smile at Toot.

THORNE

I see how your daughters got so beautiful.

TOOT

Be sure you know what you're getting into flirting with an older woman. If you're not careful, you'll wind up strung out in a place you never planned on going. Try again.

THORNE

Okay. Um, she told me your husband was a religious man. Strict with her and Millie.

TOOT

He was.

THORNE

And that you would sometimes help her hide things from him. The abortion.

TOOT

Yes. Go on.

THORNE

But that you would hold things like that over her head whenever the situation suited you.

TOOT

You mean like almost every human being who's ever lived to play this life game? Including her?

THORNE

Yeah, like that. Not flirting, but you look young to be a widow already.

TOOT

She told you alot, didn't she? I guess she just really love you. Let me fill in some holes for you though. The reason I look young to be a widow is because I married Riley Wolford when he was 36 and I was 20. Not that he couldn't have easily lived 'til 64 this year if he'd taken proper care of himself.

THORNE

Maddie told me he didn't smoke or even drink.

TOOT

He weighed nearly 300 pounds when he died. Honeybuns and Mountain Dew can kill you as quick as Marlboros and Jim Beam, believe that. Religious as he was, gluttony was the one deadly sin in his blind spot.

THORNE

Having been married to him and all, you must be pretty religious yourself.

TOOT

Not morbidly so, no, but I played along with most of it just to keep the peace in our home -- what little of it there was trying to raise twin girls anyway. And he hadn't always been so pious. Not until I had the miscarriage. It was going to be his first son and he already had a name picked out. Franklin Wolford. Miscarriages don't get tombstones though.

(Chuckling)

I tell you one thing though, Riley would be rolling over in his grave right now if he knew Maddie was living with a black man. Bigotry being another of his spiritual blind spots.

THORNE

But not one of yours.

TOOT

I give everyone the benefit of the doubt until they give me cause to revoke it. So far you haven't said anything to piss me off. And I'm starting to see what my daughter might have seen in you.

THORNE

I'm starting to see some of you in her too.

TOOT

Good lord, don't tell *her* that. She might stab you with something.

Thorne lets out an easy chuckle and takes another swig of beer. Maddie comes over and takes a sideways seat on Thorne's lap, her arms looped around his neck.

MADDIE

What are you two over here discussing?

TOOT

(Winking at Thorne)

Is that how this works? You and your sister get to keep your discussion private, while Thorne and I are expected to divulge the details of ours?

MADDIE

Go on and ask. We'll lie about anything you wanna know. Won't we, Millie?

Millie is by the counter talking on her cell phone, distracted. She looks over to respond.

MILLIE

(To Maddie)

Won't we what?

MADDIE

Nevermind, I didn't know you were still on your phone.

TOOT

(To Maddie)

I was just about to ask Thorne how the two of you first got together.

THORNE

(To Toot)

Where we work.

MADDIE

(To Toot)

Lowe's Home Improvement in LaVale,
Maryland.

THORNE

She's the managing associate of my
department.

MADDIE

I called him in the office to fire
him, but I wound up agreeing to go
out with him instead.

THORNE

(To Maddie)

I thought you said I was getting my
first written warning?

MADDIE

I know, but saying I was about to
fire you makes the story sound so
much more romantically dramatic I
think.

MILLIE

(Into her cell phone)

That's what I'm trying to tell you,
Ansen, I don't know when I'll
fucking be home!

(Pausing to listen)

Yes, that kind of language *is*
necessary when it feels like I'm
communicating with a brick wall.
Look, I'll try to be back to
start dinner before you get home
from work, but see if you can
manage to throw a potpie in the
oven for yourself if I'm not.
Goodbye.

(Hangs up)

TOOT

(To Millie)

Why can't he just come over here
and eat with us?

MILLIE

Something about being too tired and
wanting

(MORE)

MILLIE (CONT'D)
to relax in his own house, I don't
know. Just forget about it. Where's
the beer? I need one.

INT. BASEMENT REC ROOM -- NIGHT

Thorne is sitting alone on a couch in Millie and Ansen's basement gently strumming an acoustic guitar. Tears roll down his cheeks but his expression is stoic. He doesn't seem to notice Millie as she comes down the basement steps and stands listening a few feet away. She appears impressed by his intricate jazz fingerpicking style. She opens her mouth to speak but stops when she notices his tears. He looks up from the strings and stops playing upon seeing her there.

THORNE

Hey.

MILLIE

Hello. Do you know where Maddie
went?

THORNE

To the mall to pick out some
clothes for the party tomorrow.

MILLIE

Sorry, didn't mean to sneak up on
you.

THORNE

(Wiping his tears with his
sleeve)

It's all good. I just hope you
didn't hear all my mistakes.

MILLIE

Hush, I'm sure you must already
know how exquisitely you play. Are
you okay? I couldn't help notice
you crying.

THORNE

I just heard not long ago that
Prince died.

MILLIE

Who?

THORNE

Prince, the musician. Found him
dead this morning.

MILLIE

Oh. That's terrible. Weren't you born around the same time his Purple Rain movie came out? I wouldn't think you'd be old enough to be that big of a fan.

THORNE

My father was. He's the one who got me into Prince's music as a kid. Played his albums all the time at our house and played his cassettes in the car. Taught me how to play Prince songs on guitar when I was 11. I came down here and saw this guitar propped in the corner and felt like playing. Is it yours? Do you mind my playing it?

MILLIE

No, of course, it's fine. It's Ansen's but he never bothered learning how to play it. It's just been collecting dust down here. So, Prince huh?

Thorne looks at Millie's absent expression and smiles.

THORNE

What? You can't relate to music made before you reached puberty?

MILLIE

Well, I used to come home and listen to Nick Drake and write poetry in my diary whenever I had a bad day in junior high. Have you ever heard of him?

Thorne promptly begins picking out the melody to Nick Drake's "Free Ride" and a look of surprised recognition flashes over Millie's face. Thorne sings.

THORNE

I know you / I care too / I see through / All of the pictures that you keep on the wall / All of the people that will come to the ball

MILLIE

(Joining in to harmonize on the chorus)
But hear me calling / Won't you give me

(MORE)

MILLIE (CONT'D)
 A free ride / Hear me calling /
 Won't you give me / A free ride

INT. REC ROOM -- NIGHT (LATER)

An indeterminate amount of time has passed when Maddie descends the basement stairs carrying two large shopping bags. She stalls at the foot of the stairs when she sees that Thorne and Millie are kneeling side by side on the carpet watching a YouTube video on a wall-mounted plasma TV monitor.

David Bowie is on the screen being interviewed by MTV VJ Mark Goodman in the early 80's. Thorne nudges Millie and points up at the screen.

THORNE
 Check out what Bowie says here
 though.

MILLIE
 (Giggling)
 Alright, alright, I'm watching, I'm
 watching, take it easy.

MARK GOODMAN (ON TV)
 We want to play artists that seem
 to be doing music that fits into
 what we want to play for MTV. The
 company is thinking in terms of
 narrow-casting.

DAVID BOWIE (ON TV)
 That's evident. It's evident in the
 fact that the only few black
 artists that one does see are on
 about two-thirty in the morning to
 around six. Very few are featured
 predominantly during the day.

MILLIE
 Bowie was pretty kickass, wasn't
 he?

THORNE
 The man called them out on their
 bullshit with no hesitation.

MARK GOODMAN (ON TV)
 Of course, also, we have to try and
 do what we think not only New York
 and Los Angeles will appreciate, but
 also Poughkeepsie or
 (MORE)

MARK GOODMAN (ON TV) (CONT'D)
 the Midwest -- pick some town in
 the Midwest -- that would be scared
 to death by Prince, which we're
 playing, or a string of other black
 faces and black music.

DAVID BOWIE (ON TV)
 Interesting. OK, thank you very
 much.

MARK GOODMAN (ON TV)
 Does that make sense? Is it a valid
 point?

DAVID BOWIE (ON TV)
 [Smiling]
 I understand your point of view.
 [Laughs]

Maddie finally announces herself.

MADDIE
 I'm back.

Thorne and Millie both look around. Maddie grins slyly.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
 Aren't you two cozy? Should I be
 worried?

THORNE
 (To Maddie)
 Don't play like it wasn't your idea
 for me to talk your sister into
 having a threesome with us now just
 because you've had second thoughts.
 It wasn't *my* fantasy.

MILLIE
 Yeah, Mads, don't back out after
 I've already committed to this.

MADDIE
 Fine, we can go through with it
 under the condition that Ansen has
 to be tied to a chair and forced to
 watch while we go at it.

MILLIE
 Bonus.

Everyone is laughing just as Ansen appears descending the
 steps.

ANSEN

What happened? Did I miss another pot party?

THORNE

(To Ansen)

We could have those here? You'd be cool with that?

ANSEN

(Ignoring Thorne)

Millie, do you remember where I left that envelope with the car insurance statement?

MILLIE

In the car under the visor.

ANSEN

I thought I brought it inside.

MILLIE

You may have thought so, but you didn't. It's under the visor.

ANSEN

Thanks. You coming to bed soon?

MILLIE

I may make an appearance. What's in it for me?

ANSEN

(Flirtatiously)

I washed the dishes?

MILLIE

I suppose that deserves some sort of reward.

MADDIE

I'm gonna puke.

MILLIE

(To Maddie)

Hey, I just put up with your weird relationship stuff, now I expect you to put up with mine.

(To Ansen)

I'll be up in a few minutes, honey.

ANSEN

Got it. See you there.

Ansen turns and ascends back upstairs. Millie looks back and forth between Thorne and Maddie.

MILLIE

You don't think he heard us talking about tying him to a chair, do you?

THORNE

Bonus.

EXT. BACK PATIO -- NIGHT

Maddie and Millie are side by side, drinks and mics in hand, behind the DJ stand singing the karaoke "Juxtaposed With U" by Super Furry Animals at the top of their voices and cheerful hearts. A banner suspended above them reads: HAPPY BIRTHDAY MADDIE AND MILLIE!!!

The patio deck and yard are lively with assembled party guest couples dancing, one pair being Toot WOLFORD and a younger, long-haired Hispanic man.

In a far corner of the patio close to the glass sliding doors, Ansen has set up a four-man, one-woman poker game at a card table whose players include himself, two of his fellow cops (one of these the woman), Thorne, and another male WALMART EMPLOYEE co-worker of Millie's still wearing his Walmart vest.

A bottle of Patron tequila sits by Ansen's pile of bills and change, along with an ashtray holding a burning cigarette. AGNES, the female cop, is in the process of upping the ante.

AGNES

Who taught you motherfuckers how to play Texas hold 'em?

ANSEN

(To Agnes)

Your mother. Last night. After she gave us all blowjobs. Right, Ruiz?

Agnes rolls her eyes. RUIZ, the male cop, glances unsmilingly up from the hand he's playing.

RUIZ

Don't distract me, I'm thinking.

ANSEN

Anyways, as I was saying before we got sidetracked, Trump winning in November would be the best thing to happen to this country since Reagan took office. The man's a visionary. A true patriot who knows what it takes run a country. How could he not? Look how he built his businesses.

AGNES

With money his father gave him?

THORNE

He'll never win. Women despise him.

ANSEN

(To Thorne)

Get real.

THORNE

I keeps it real. My real is kept so I never have to go get it.

ANSEN

Okay, Chanse. Obvious patriot that you are, you tell me why you think a female presidency could result in anything besides disaster?

THORNE

Because I love women and I don't hate women.

ANSEN

What's that meant to imply? That I don't love women? I love women.

THORNE

Love for pussy and true love and respect for the yin of the eternal equation aren't mutually **inclusive** things with you. They aren't with a lot of dudes, so don't feel bad.

ANSEN

Fuck does that mean?

AGNES

(Smiling Thorne's way)

I like the way this one talks. And he's cute.

ANSEN

Shut up, Agnes. You didn't understand him any better than I did, and you know it.

AGNES

Fuck what you understand, I know what he's saying. He's saying that women are worthy and deserving of the love and respect that should be afforded every human being, regardless of what is or isn't hanging between their legs.

ANSEN

Yeah, but weren't you born with a dick, Agnes?

AGNES

Funny.

RUIZ

Are we gonna play cards here or what?

ANSEN

Hey, Chanse, why don't you share some prison stories with us?

WALMART EMPLOYEE

I'd rather he didn't. I got a court date coming up.

ANSEN

Good, he can tell you what to expect.

THORNE

(To Ansen)

Prison stories? You mean stuff like how incarcerating Americans convicted of non-violent offenses has become a profit motive on the stock exchange in the last twenty or thirty years comparable to the slave trade?

ANSEN

I was thinking more along the lines of cafeteria shankings, mishaps involving the dropping of soap in the shower, that kind of thing.

THORNE

Those kinds of stories titillate
you, do they?

ANSEN

The fuck you just say to me?

Agnes and the Walmart employee both burst out laughing and Ansen is visibly irritated.

Across the deck, Maddie and Millie are getting loud and lowdown on "25" by Veruca Salt.

Guests jump to the poppy tune. Toot comes to stand behind the twins and throw an arm around each of them, attempting to sing along.

From over at the card table, a rowdy howl from Ansen can be heard above the music.

ANSEN (CONT'D)

Two pair! Suck it!

Ansen slaps his winning hand on the table and reaches to collect his pot winnings from the center of it.

AGNES

You're a graceless winner, Ansen.
Also a lousy cop.

ANSEN

Well, Agnes, just to prove that I do have some winner's grace, I'll buy you lunch tomorrow. Even though that should really be on Ruiz since he's your partner, and he's the one who talked you into coming over here to give me all your child-support money.

RUIZ

(To Ansen)

I'm just about cleaned out,
asshole.

AGNES

(To Ansen)

You think every single female parent spends the child-support money she receives on herself because you're an ass, Meyers. You and Trump can go 69 each other.

Thorne lets out a slight chuckle as he examines the cards in his hand. Ansen shifts his focus back to Thorne on hearing this.

ANSEN

(To Thorne)

Hope I didn't take all your gas money for the trip back to West Virginia, convict.

THORNE

You know, calling us convicts "convicts" doesn't quite have the endearing effect that a lot of you cops think it has.

AGNES

He's right. And he's still very cute.

ANSEN

He's a pretty nigger, I suppose. Popular with the big men in lockup I bet.

THORNE

There you go projecting your fantasies again, Ansen. Facing your phobias and owning up to your true desires is the only way to resolve the repressed homosexual conflict tearing you up inside. Be brave. You have friends here to support you, and we're here for your drunk ass to a somewhat limited extent.

ANSEN

Thanks, and, uh, you ever given any thought as to what you might do in the event I came at you with the clear intention of unhinging our jaw?

THORNE

No, but I'd be happy to help you play out that fantasy if you'd like. Ain't a problem for me.

ANSEN

(Standing up)

Much appreciated. Get up.

Thorne rises from his seat chuckling.

RUIZ

Shit.

AGNES

Hey, come on, guys, is this necessary?

THORNE

(To nobody in particular)

Is it crazy that I'm not at all surprised by this shit? But can't believe it's happening at the same time? Because I'm not. And I can't.

Ansen charges at Thorne. Thorne uses Ansen's own drunken momentum against him, sidestepping and slinging him into a shrub at the patio edge.

Ansen climbs back to his feet and assumes a karate stance. He swings his foot at Thorne, who in turn intercepts his foot and hurls Ansen flying onto the card table. Cash, cards, change, and shattered drinks scatter on the deck around Ansen and the collapsed table. The music stops and silence briefly falls over the party. Toot comes marching over.

TOOT

What in the name of holy fuck is going on here!

ANSEN

(Attempting to climb to his feet)

I'll fucking kill you, motherfucking black bastard.

THORNE

Better get your police issue.

Toot goes over to Ansen and stoops down to put her face in his after he falls back to a seated position.

TOOT

Not here you're not, Ansen. Not tonight on your wife's -- *my* daughter's birthday!

ANSEN

No? Well last I checked, Toot, you don't pay the mortgage on this house.

TOOT

You disrespectful cocksucker. Sober up.

Ansen looks over to see Millie glaring furiously in his direction. She rushes inside the house. Ansen lumbers to his feet and follows behind her.

INT. GARAGE -- NIGHT

Ansen has followed Millie through the house and into their garage where Millie, with much agitation, stands rifling through her purse looking for the car keys.

ANSEN

What are you doing?

MILLIE

Since me standing in the garage by the car isn't enough of a clue for you, I'm looking for my car keys. When are you due to take that detective's exam again?

ANSEN

Where are you going?

MILLIE

(Pulling out her keys)
The short answer is "out." The long answer is "the fuck out of here." I need to be alone to think.

ANSEN

Baby, please, I'm sorry I lost my head. I had a few too many to drink.

MILLIE

The way that you talked to my mother made me absolutely ill, Ansen.

ANSEN

Right, I know, I'm sorry. Come back out with me and I'll apologize to her right now.

MILLIE

See? That's the issue with you. It shouldn't take me threatening to leave my own birthday party for you to want to apologize to my mother for being an asshole. You should want to apologize to Thorne too, but I'm sure that would be asking too much.

ANSEN

Hey, I've been nothing but a gracious host to your sister and her Huey Newton-quoting boyfriend since they got here.

MILLIE

Oh, is that all you've been? A gracious host?

ANSEN

That's right. You didn't hear what he said to me.

MILLIE

Oh fuck, Ansen, please. I know you well enough to know how capable you are of turning the most innocent comment someone else makes into a declaration of war. I usually **am** that someone else.

Millie opens the car door and gets in. She starts the car and rolls down the driver side window and looks at her husband expectantly. Ansen contemplates her with a cynical look.

ANSEN

So what is it then? You wanna fuck him? See if he can give you the same thrills on the G-spot you share with your twin sister?

MILLIE

Who says I didn't fuck him and found out already?

ANSEN

Filthy whore. What was all the Bible study stuff then, huh? Just a way for us to pass the time until you found a new hobby? Daddy would be proud.

MILLIE

No, dear, just me hoping that faith in God might distract me from my ever-growing suspicion I was married to an unrepentant sack of shit. It didn't. Don't wait up. I don't know if I'm leaving you just for now or for good yet.

Millie pulls out of the garage and her car disappears down the street as Ansen stands watching in anger.

EXT. BACK PATIO -- NIGHT

The music has resumed and proof that not everyone has let their night be ruined can be seen in the festive abandon Maddie and Thorne put into dancing to Kendrick Lamar's "King Kunta" together.

INT./EXT. MADDIE'S JEEP WRANGLER - NIGHT (DRIVING)

Thorne drives and Maddie sits in the passenger seat as they drive Toot from the party back to her house.

TOOT

Well, Maddie, was it that he didn't know or he wouldn't tell you where your sister went?

MADDIE

He just said she left, Mama, that's it. And then he stormed off to his room muttering under his breath something about bitches, presumably for my benefit. And then I came back to the party. Millie will be fine, Mama.

THORNE

Yeah, she probably just went to decompress somewhere. She'll call when she's had a chance to get it together.

TOOT

A chance to get *what* together? She just runs off by herself in the dead of night -- drunk I should add -- to go get something together and I shouldn't worry?

MADDIE

To get her head straight, Mama, she was upset. And she wasn't that drunk.

TOOT

Well, you two are staying with me for the rest of the week until you leave for West Virginia. God knows what that man might try to pull on you there with Millie gone, just to get back at her.

MADDIE

It was either gonna be your place or a hotel. Actually, it was gonna be your place or we drive back a little early.

TOOT

No, stay. I want some more time with my wildflower.

Toot reaches up and clutches Maddie's shoulder with motherly affection. Maddie smiles in comfort, putting her hand over her mother's.

INT. TOOT'S LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Toot descends the stairs coming from her bedroom the next morning to see Millie -- her head in Maddie's lap on the living room couch -- gently weeping as Maddie strokes her hair to comfort her.

TOOT

Well, a mother couldn't ask for a more heartwarming sight. We were worried about you, Millie.

MADDIE

(To Millie)

She was worried about you. Thorne and I told her you'd be fine.

Millie raises her head slightly to look into Toot's face.

MILLIE

I'm sorry I didn't call, Mama. Ansen had my cellphone tied up the rest of last night and well into this morning, pleading with me and arguing with me. I'd hang up and ignore his next three or four calls and then break down and answer and have to listen to him tell me a thousand times how much he loves me, needs me... **owns** me. And how he refuses to give me a divorce.

TOOT

Owens you? You want a divorce?

MILLIE

I don't know. Yes. I mean, I wasn't sure last night, and might have come to a

(MORE)

MILLIE (CONT'D)
different decision if he'd just
left me alone to think about it,
but yes. I want out of this
marriage.

Thorne appears, listening and leaning from the entryway to
the kitchen, apparently unnoticed by anyone until he speaks.

THORNE
How do you plan on telling him?

MILLIE
I have to go back by the house to
pack up a few things while he's
gone on duty today, and I'm going
to leave a note letting him know
I'm filing divorce papers. I'll
probably call him later too, but I
just can't face him right now.
Talking to him dragged my emotions
through all seven circles of hell
last night, and it scares me. He's
so insistent that he knows my mind
and what is right for me. I told
him he'd confused being a husband
with being God, and he went
ballistic for like the ninetieth
time in the conversation.

THORNE
(To Millie)
I have to go take the Jeep for an
oil change before we head back
tomorrow, but I can go with you if
you can wait until I get back.
Shouldn't be more than an hour or
two.

MILLIE
You're sweet. No, I'll be fine,
thanks. Besides, I won't be there
long. I don't have much to take
away with me. Not much I want to
keep anyway.

MADDIE
Well, not to flaunt the joy I'd be
jumping for if your head weren't
resting on my lap right now, Mills,
but I think you're making the right
decision.

TOOT

Easy, Maddie. Your sister's wounds are still fresh.

MADDIE

Cut me a few slices of slack, put them between a couple pieces of what-the-fuck, and give me a break sandwich, Mama. We all knew this marriage was doomed from the start.

MILLIE

Actually, Mads, if I'd known that, I wouldn't have gone through with a wedding in the first place.

MADDIE

Right, sorry. Everyone **except** Millie knew her marriage was doomed from the start.

MILLIE

That's better. Wait, no, clarifying things actually does nothing to make me feel better.

THORNE

(To Millie)

What about me? Did I come up?

MILLIE

Yes. He accused me of wanting you to hit my G-spot. The one he apparently thinks Maddie and I share in the same place. I told him maybe you already had.

TOOT

(Laughing)

Millie!

MADDIE

I'll bet hearing you say that just **thrilled** him to no end.

THORNE

Prick probably believed you too.

MILLIE

I don't know what he believes, all I know is I'm finished trying to prove myself worthy of his trust. All I know is I'm tired of not feeling good.

THORNE

There are two ways to not feel good, you know. I realized that when I was locked up. You have to feel **better** before you can **feel** better. If you don't feel **well**, then you're feeling the wrong way.

MADDIE

Seriously, Thorne, what the fuck? Are you already this stoned this early? And in front of my mother?

Thorne sticks his tongue out and Maddie reciprocates.

EXT. DRIVEWAY OF THE MEYERS' HOUSE -- DAY

Millie pulls into the empty driveway and gets out of her car. She removes mail from the mailbox before walking through the front door of her house.

INT. FOYER -- DAY

Millie sorts through the mail in her hands. Glancing up, she catches sight of a whiskey bottle on the dining room table. She hears Ansen's voice behind her.

ANSEN

Looking for me?

Millie turns to see Ansen standing across the room with a glass of whiskey in his hand.

MILLIE

You're home.

ANSEN

Maybe you were hoping I wasn't?

MILLIE

I didn't see your motorcycle. I thought you'd be at work.

ANSEN

I didn't want you to see it.

MILLIE

Well, I'm gonna go now.

As Millie turns toward the door Ansen fires a bullet from his service Glock 22 into the floor near her feet. She jumps, startled.

ANSEN

What's your hurry? I'm free for the next few hours. Don't you think we should talk? I mean, we **are** still married.

MILLIE

Ansen, you're drunk.

ANSEN

Can't get anything past you. Let's have a seat over at the dining room table.

MILLIE

I don't feel like talking now.

Ansen fires another shot near her feet and further rattles Millie's nerves.

ANSEN

No? All right, then let's take it straight to the bedroom then.

Millie looks at Ansen to gauge his seriousness. He grimly motions towards their bedroom with his Glock. Millie reluctantly obeys, moving slowly in the direction of the bedroom.

INT. KITCHEN -- DAY

Maddie and Toot sit at Toot's kitchen table. Toot is taking a hit of weed from Maddie's bowl. She exhales a large plume of smoke after a few seconds of holding it in.

MADDIE

Not bad, Mama. You sure this is your first time smoking pot?

TOOT

It may be my last. I'm still not sure how I let you talk me into doing this.

MADDIE

Relax, you'll love it. Way better for you than alcohol.

TOOT

And yet still more illegal.

MADDIE

That says more about how warped the law is than it says about the dangers of marijuana.

TOOT

(Handing Maddie the bowl)
Yeah, yeah, you can stop selling me on it now. I've been corrupted.

MADDIE

Shouldn't Millie have called by now to let us know the coast was clear at her house?

TOOT

Did you try to call her cell?

MADDIE

Yes, when I was in the bathroom. I got her voice mail.

TOOT

Well, Thorne shouldn't be much longer getting your Jeep serviced. Maybe he can swing by there on his way back.

MADDIE

I'll call him.

Maddie takes out her cell phone.

EXT. DOWNTOWN PANAMA CITY STREET -- DAY

Thorne is standing at a food truck receiving an order of tacos from the attendant when his cell phone rings. He places the food on a nearby table before answering the call.

THORNE

Hey, baby.

(Pause)

Yeah, I just left the garage. Grabbing something to eat now.

(Pause)

How long did she'd say she'd be before calling you?

(Pause)

Okay, I'll check it out.

INT. BEDROOM -- DAY

Millie sits on the edge of the bed in the midst of redressing herself. Her nose is bleeding a little and her eyes are red and puffy from crying. Ansen stands naked at the foot of the bed smoking a cigarette, his Glock on a dresser nearby.

ANSEN

I should have made you hate me a long time ago. You're a much sweeter fuck when you're angry.

MILLIE

Maybe I should have just left you my dead corpse to screw since love doesn't do it for you.

ANSEN

That's how a real man loves.

MILLIE

A real man needs to punch a woman before he can get it up too?

ANSEN

That's so you remember your God-given place.

MILLIE

How long are you going to keep me here?

ANSEN

You're my wife. This is where you belong. You were fine with that before Maddie and her nigger came here.

MILLIE

So you think you're going to retrain me? I'm not your dog. I don't love you anymore, Ansen.

Ansen steps toward Millie, clutches her by the hair with the hand not holding the Glock near her face, and seethes his response through clenched teeth into her terrified ear.

ANSEN

Well you better reconsider, 'cause we vowed 'til death do us part. And I **keep** my vows, whether you do or not.

INT. JEEP -- DAY

Thorne smokes a blunt as he drives, "Sue Me Jack" by Pavement blaring on the car stereo.

INT. DINING ROOM -- DAY

Ansen and Millie are both now dressed and sitting perpendicular to each other at the dining room table. Ansen has replenished his glass of whiskey and has resumed drinking, his Glock lying beside the bottle.

MILLIE

My mother and Maddie were expecting
me to call them when I got here.
They're probably worried.

Ansen only glares at Millie in drunken silence. The doorbell rings. Millie looks up with alarm, first toward the door and then at Ansen, who only smirks.

ANSEN

Maybe that's them. You want me to
get it?

Millie jumps to her feet.

MILLIE

No, let me, please. If it's them
I'll send them off. Tell them
everything's okay. Let me do it.

ANSEN

You still have some blood around
your nostrils.

Ansen pulls a handkerchief from his pocket and tosses it onto the table in front of Millie. She rushes over to the kitchen sink to wet it under the faucet, wiping the blood from her face as she then goes to answer the door.

EXT. FRONT PORCH -- DAY

Thorne sees the door open and Millie standing before him. She forces a smile.

MILLIE

Oh, hey, Thorne. What's up?

THORNE

Maddie wanted me to come and check on you. Make sure everything was okay.

INT. DINING ROOM -- DAY

Ansen has made his way over to a window adjacent to the front door and is peeking past the curtains to see Thorne standing out front. He is clutching his Glock.

EXT. FRONT DOOR -- DAY

Millie assures Thorne that she is okay.

MILLIE

I totally forgot to call and let her and Mama know everything was fine. Just tell them I forgot, okay?

Thorne sees Millie avert her eyes in the direction where Ansen is inside. Stoned, Thorne still immediately reads the situation and plays along.

THORNE

Cool, cool. Yeah, I'll let them know then. We'll see you at dinner a little later then?

MILLIE

Sure. See you later.

Thorne gives Millie a nod of reassurance and turns to get back in his Jeep. He only takes a couple steps before he hears Ansen's voice in the doorway behind him.

ANSEN

Aw, honey, why didn't you tell me it was my favorite future brother-in-law visiting us? Thorne, come on in. I insist.

Thorne turns around and sees Ansen standing behind Millie, waving his Glock in the air.

THORNE

Dude, what the fuck?

ANSEN

What the fuck? Well, that's the sort of open-ended question I'd prefer to answer inside, sitting down. Come on in. Don't make me have to blow your black brains all over the driveway.

Thorne, hands slightly raised, advances towards the front door again.

INT. DINING ROOM -- DAY

Thorne and Millie seat themselves at the table as Ansen comes behind, his Glock trained on them. He sits last. He pushes the whiskey bottle, sliding it down the table Thorne's way.

ANSEN

Pour yourself a drink, Thorne
Chanse.

THORNE

No thanks, I'm stoned already.

ANSEN

It wasn't a request. Nothing I'm going to be telling you to do from here on out should be taken as one either. If I tell you to pour yourself a drink, you better damn well pour yourself a fucking drink. If I tell you to do anything, you better damn well fucking do it. Or the last day of your life is gonna be over that much sooner. Understand?

Thorne eyes Ansen's Glock cautiously. He stands to go to the kitchen and retrieve a glass. Ansen raises a hand to halt him.

ANSEN (CONT'D)

Put your cell phone over here next me on the table first. I already collected Millie's. This is a private party.

Thorne puts his cell phone on the table and continues on to the kitchen. He reappears with a glass, sits down at the table and pours from the whiskey bottle. Ansen appears amused as he watches Thorne down the entire glass in one motion and set the glass down for a refill.

He takes another couple small sips as he exchanges looks with Millie, who looks as anxious as Thorne appears collected.

THORNE

So, Ansen. As I was saying. What the fuck?

ANSEN

Right. What the fuck *is* this, right? Well, what the fuck *this* is, if you must know, is a reckoning. Ever see that movie "Tombstone"?

THORNE

Val Kilmer, yeah, good flick.

ANSEN

Finally something we agree on. Hmm.

THORNE

Too bad it couldn't have happened before you lost your fucking mind, huh?

ANSEN

Too bad, yeah, I'll give you that one and no more. Anyway, Doc Holliday talked about a reckoning the way the term used to be referenced. As a settling of accounts. I've got some accounts to settle. With Millie. With you. With that cunt bitch girlfriend of yours.

THORNE

You are totally blowing my high, you know that, man?

ANSEN

I'm just getting started, *man*.

MILLIE

Ansen, please, I'll go with you wherever you want, do whatever you want. Just please let him go. He's got nothing to do with this.

Ansen chuckles at Millie and then turns his head to address Thorne.

ANSEN

Someone hasn't been paying attention, has she?

(MORE)

ANSEN (CONT'D)

Does she not remember your black ass embarrassing me in front of my colleagues last night?

THORNE

You embarrassed your motherfuckin' self.

Ansen bolts upright out of his chair and points his Glock toward Thorne.

ANSEN

You too high to grasp the gravity of this situation? I will fucking kill you right here, right now.

THORNE

I stopped pissing my pants the second time someone ever pointed a gun at my head. This time isn't even the third time ever.

MILLIE

Thorne, please, he's serious. You shouldn't... Don't --

ANSEN

Save it, bitch. Let him keep digging his fucking grave.

(To Thorne)

Go ahead, badass. Why don't you tell me some more about white privilege and the plight of the oppressed? What a joke. White privilege? No one's ever handed me or my family anything. My parents and grandparents **worked** for a living.

THORNE

Well, my great-great-grandparents worked as sex slaves and human livestock under threat of death, and my grandparents and parents worked and lived only if **your** grandparents allowed it. But I don't recall hearing about them ever even stopping to laugh over whether or not **black** privilege was a thing. Just didn't have the time I guess.

ANSEN

Always back to slavery. What about now? You and yours either breaking the law or draining on my and every working man's paycheck through social entitlement programs? Getting free healthcare, food stamps, and welfare along with all those undocumented fucks?

THORNE

Most welfare recipients aren't mine. They're white. They're yours.

ANSEN

That's a fucking lie.

THORNE

I could've maybe read a bad pie chart, but it makes sense when you crunch the numbers. Did you read something different in "The Art of the Deal"?

ANSEN

I see it out on the job every day. I don't have to read about it.

THORNE

The soft bigotry of misinformed expectations.

ANSEN

What's that supposed to mean?

THORNE

It's supposed to mean you're a fucking idiot, but I thought I should be subtle under the circumstances.

MILLIE

Thorne, don't. Please don't --

THORNE

(To Millie)

Don't what? Provoke him?

(To Ansen)

You wanna kill me? Have at it. But I ain't about play your game or squirm for you.

(MORE)

THORNE (CONT'D)

Your wife may not have yet accepted what a waste of time trying to appeal to your better nature is, but I didn't need more than a day to figure it out. If I don't have much time left coming to me, I'd rather die quick than spend it feeding you bullshit.

A shot from Ansen's Glock shatters the whiskey bottle in front of Thorne, shards of glass and liquor spread over the table. Thorne looks at Ansen defiantly. Ansen begins to laugh madly.

ANSEN

That's what I'm talking about! Now we're having some fun!

Millie buries her face in her hands in frightful despair.

ANSEN (CONT'D)

Actually, nigger, this is what I needed. Millie's hostility made it all the better when I fucked the shit out of her a short while ago. I'm guessing you putting up some fight will make finally breaking you extra satisfying as well. Let's play.

INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT (LATER)

Maddie and Toot have finished dinner and are looking worried. Their plates are stained with the remnants of roast beef, mashed potatoes, and peas, while the other two table place settings for Thorne and Millie feature clean, unused plates and utensils.

MADDIE

Neither Thorne or Millie are answering their phones now. I know something's wrong.

TOOT

Should we go over?

MADDIE

Not alone we shouldn't. I'm calling Ansen's cop friend I met at the party last night. Agnes.

(MORE)

MADDIE (CONT'D)

We struck up a conversation and she gave me her personal cell number, wanting to maybe have a drink together before I left town.

Maddie dials the number on her cell phone.

INT. PANAMA CITY POLICE CRUISER -- NIGHT

Agnes and Ruiz are parked outside a Dunkin' Donuts, eating donuts and drinking coffee.

AGNES

All I'm saying is, if Bernie Sanders weren't Jewish, he'd probably have a better chance of getting the nomination.

RUIZ

They nominated Obama.

AGNES

Yeah, but blacks are a bigger minority than Jews.

RUIZ

We Hispanics are a bigger minority than blacks.

AGNES

Since like what? A couple years ago? And most of you are illegals.

RUIZ

Where you gettin' your fuckin' lies from? Ansen Meyers?

Agnes' cell phone begins to ring and she answers it.

AGNES

Hello?

INTERCUT -- MADDIE IN TOOT'S KITCHEN / AGNES IN POLICE CRUISER
-- NIGHT

MADDIE

Hey, hello, Agnes? It's Maddie from last night at the party. Hey, listen, have you seen or talked to Ansen at all today?

AGNES

No, the bum didn't show up for his shift. Didn't call in or anything. I figured he was hungover or sore from the ass whipping your boyfriend gave him last night.

(Glancing to Ruiz quietly)
Speak of the devil.

MADDIE

Here's the thing. Millie left him last night, and was supposed to go over to grab a few things while he was at work. But it's been hours and no one's heard from her. I asked Thorne to check on things, and now he's missing in action as well.

AGNES

Say no more. You want me and Ruiz to swing by his place and check things out? Gosh, do you really think Meyers went off the reservation?

MADDIE

I don't know. But if you're going I want to come with you. Could you come by my mother's place and pick us up?

AGNES

Oh, I don't know about that, Madeline. Bringing civilians into a potentially dangerous situation isn't exactly police protocol.

MADDIE

I know, but this is my twin sister and boyfriend we're talking about. We're already crazy with worry over here and I just can't stay blind to whatever's going on. I promise to stay out of your way and let you do whatever you need to do.

AGNES

Well, okay. Give me your Mom's address.

INT. DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

Thorne, Millie, and Ansen are still sitting at the dining room table. The broken glass from earlier remains but a new bottle of whiskey has replaced the shattered one. Both Ansen and Thorne are drinking, but Ansen is much drunker. Millie looks on, weary and wary. Ansen is gesturing drunkenly and recklessly with the Glock as he speaks.

ANSEN

Why shouldn't I, as a white man, be outraged over the rate of black criminality in this country? Why shouldn't I be outraged that people representing only 3% to 4% of the American population -- young black males -- are responsible for more than half the homicides in this country? How does pointing out the plain facts make me a racist?

THORNE

Pointing out facts about black crime rates doesn't make you a racist. Hating black people does. More black folks are poor. Poor folks commit more crime no matter **what** race they are.

ANSEN

I tell you, Chanse, what I don't like... You know what I don't like about you?

THORNE

Would me knowing already stop you from telling me?

MILLIE

Ansen, what's the point in all this?

ANSEN

To show this nigger he's not as smart as he thinks he is. You know what I don't like about you, Chanse?

THORNE

I dunno, what? That I'm an uppity nigger who your wife wants to fuck?

ANSEN

No, no, besides that. I don't like you because you don't know your own potential. You don't know what good you could do.

THORNE

I don't?

ANSEN

No, you don't know. My problem with you and most niggers isn't that I don't think you're capable, it's that too many of you think you shouldn't have to even try. You think you're owed something. Look, my white ancestors... **most** white people's ancestors weren't rich enough to even **own** slaves. We don't owe you a thing.

THORNE

Well, when you put it that way you almost don't sound genocidal.

ANSEN

Oh yeah? Really?

Thorne pours himself another drink and takes a hearty swig. He fixes Ansen with the candid look of a man about to level with another man for the first time.

THORNE

Why shit yourself, Meyers? What you don't like about me ain't about me trying or not trying. It ain't about me expecting or about you owing. It ain't even about me being a convict. What motherfuckers like you don't like about motherfuckers like me is that I'm the black blind spot in your vision. I'm the humanity you envy and look for in your own crippled soul every time you get brave enough face a mirror. I'm the fast soaring free thing you try to chase on weak and withered legs, and seek to ground and beat down with your crutches if you ever catch it. You know, a rapist who lashes out at his own fear of women by raping them never conquers the fear.

(MORE)

THORNE (CONT'D)

And you could lock up or kill every nigger in the world without ever seeing your blind spot get anything but **blacker**.

Ansen is speechless. It is unclear whether his wits have been dulled more by booze or by the merciless dismantling of Thorne's psychological assessment of him. He becomes irritated again.

ANSEN

See? You're so sure. You're **so** self righteous. Your fuckin' people. You got no idea how good you have it.

THORNE

Yeah. Black privilege.

Ansen erupts in a fit of wild laughter and reaches for the whiskey bottle with his gun-free hand. He doesn't bother pouring into a glass now, just drinks straight out of the bottle. He sets it down.

ANSEN

You're funny, Chanse. I'm gonna kill you, but I'll always remember how funny you were. But not yet. Right now, your white-pussy-loving ass is going to do something for me. You're going to kiss my wife in front of me.

THORNE

Maybe you should let me hold the Glock. That way you can watch, jack off and drink at the same time.

ANSEN

I'm not that drunk yet.

THORNE

Neither is Millie.

ANSEN

You're right. Let's fix that.

Ansen replenishes the glass he neglected with whiskey from the bottle and nudges it towards Millie.

MILLIE

Ansen, don't do this.

ANSEN

Drink, Millie. Now.

Millie picks up the glass and takes a timid sip. Unsatisfied, Ansen places the gun down, puts one hand on the back of her head, and forces the drink to her lips with the other. Thorne eyes the discarded Glock, obviously contemplating a move. But it is too far and the weapon is back in Ansen's hands by the time Millie has choked down the forced swallow. She coughs.

THORNE

You know what I don't like about
you, Ansen?

ANSEN

No. Tell me.

THORNE

You're a spineless cocksucker.

Ansen's lazy, drunken demeanor suddenly flashes into anger. He again points his Glock at Thorne.

ANSEN

I told you I was gonna make you
respect me tonight. Get up. Come
over here and kiss my wife.

THORNE

No.

ANSEN

Get up or I'll shoot her in the
femoral artery and you can watch
her bleed out on the floor.

Thorne looks at Millie. She is still trying to keep from puking up the liquor forced down her throat. He stands, walks around the table and approaches her. He lifts her face by the chin to look into his eyes. His look is one of regret but tender reassurance of the necessity due to the situation. She gives a soft look of consent. He kisses her lips gently, pulls away. Their eyes are still locked. He goes to meet her lips again and this time her arms wrap around his neck and all hints of coercion and reluctance give way to untapped passion between them. Ansen's smug look deteriorates slowly into a blind rage.

ANSEN (CONT'D)

Stop.

They keep kissing.

ANSEN (CONT'D)

I said fucking stop.

They keep kissing. Thorne's hand glides gently into Millie's hair.

Ansen fires a shot into the air. We can see Millie visibly, **physically** react to it, but not enough for her to stop making out with Thorne.

Ansen begins to hold back tears. He is confused and angry (and possibly aroused) all at once. Thorne has one eye trained on him and his Glock. Just as it seems Ansen has finally decided to commit murder, Thorne breaks away from Millie and grabs Ansen by the wrist of his gun hand, slamming it down quickly to the table. A shot is fired before he takes it off Ansen. Thorne immediately points the Glock at Ansen. He looks over to see that Millie has been shot somewhere in her shoulder/upper-chest region.

THORNE

Officer, she's hurt.

ANSEN

You wanna fuck her, don't you?

THORNE

Sure, she looks ready to go. But what do you say first we set some priorities here, you crazy motherfucker. She's bleeding. You need to call an ambulance.

A loud pounding on the door commences in conjunction with frantic doorbell ringing.

EXT. FRONT PORCH -- NIGHT

Agnes and Ruiz stand with their Glocks at the ready as Agnes pounds the front door once again. Maddie and Toot stand further back in the driveway, at the head of the police cruiser.

AGNES

Ansen! Millie! It's Agnes and Ruiz!
Open the door please! Let's sort
this out.

INT. DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

Still pointing the gun at him, Thorne looks at Ansen and makes a gesture towards the front door.

THORNE

Get the door, Meyers. I think it's better if you explain what's going on here.

Ansen, tears on his face, stands and staggers to the door. He opens it and Agnes and Ruiz walk in with their guns ready. Agnes first sees a semi-conscious Millie bleeding on the floor. Ruiz begins to handcuff Ansen. Agnes looks to see the gun in Thorne's hand. She smiles at him.

AGNES

Hey, cutie. You wanna put the gun down? Your girlfriend's clued me in. I'm pretty sure I know whatever went down here isn't your fault.

THORNE

Yeah, right. Sorry.

As though he temporarily forgot he had a gun in his hand, Thorne slowly put's Ansen's Glock down on the floor. Agnes rushes over to attend to Millie. She speaks into the radio attached to her shoulder.

AGNES

I got a 10-53 at the residence of one of our own. She is faintly responsive.

Maddie comes rushing through the door with Toot close behind just as Ruiz is reading a cuffed Ansen his Miranda rights. She rushes straight into a brief but fervent embrace with Thorne before rushing to where Toot has gotten as close as Agnes has allowed her to a wounded Millie. Maddie screams when she sees her sister's blood and dives towards her. Thorne kneels and gently takes Maddie by the shoulders to prevent her from getting in Agnes' way.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY (2016)

Millie wakes in a hospital bed hooked to an IV. Maddie springs up from a chair between two others where Thorne and Toot sit asleep. Maddie bends to kiss Millie's forehead.

MADDIE

You had me so scared, Millicent.
All of us.

MILLIE

Good, then getting shot was almost all worth it.

Toot comes over and lifts Millie's hand to her cheek.

TOOT
(To Millie)
How do you feel, sweetheart?

MILLIE
Like I'm dreaming. What did they
give me?

MADDIE
You're on a morphine drip for the
pain. Do you remember anything
after getting shot?

MILLIE
Not with any continuity or clarity,
no. Where's Thorne?

Maddie and Millie stand apart to allow Millie to see Thorne,
still asleep in his chair.

MILLIE (CONT'D)
(To Thorne)
Hey, sleepyhead. Who's the doped up
gunshot victim here?

Thorne opens his eyes to see Millie smiling at him from her
hospital bed. He stands and approaches.

THORNE
Hey, girl. Thanks for not dying on
us.

MILLIE
I'll never be able to thank you
enough for what you did for me,
Thorne.

THORNE
To be honest, I wasn't always sure
I wasn't gonna get us both killed.

Millie laughs and immediately also begins to weep. She
reaches her hand out to Thorne and he takes it.

MILLIE
I was so scared.

THORNE
Don't think that I wasn't. But it's
over now. The next time you face
him will be in a courtroom.

This prospect seems to increase Millie's feelings of dread.

MILLIE

I don't know if I can do that.

THORNE

Yes, you can.

MADDIE

He's right. And you won't be going through it alone.

TOOT

Absolutely. We'll be there and that son of a bitch will never be able to hurt you again.

INT. COURTROOM -- DAY

Millie as a witness for the prosecution sits during her testimony against Ansen, who sits at the defense table. As they'd promised, Maddie, Toot and Thorne are all in attendance for support. The PROSECUTOR is finishing up with Millie.

PROSECUTOR

And can you point out the person who held you against your will and shot you in this courtroom?

MILLIE

(Pointing at Ansen)

That's him.

Ansen sits without any hint of emotion on his face.

INT. COURTROOM -- DAY (LATER)

We see Ansen's DEFENSE ATTORNEY addressing the court.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

The defense calls Hawthorne Chanse to the stand.

Thorne goes to be sworn in and takes his seat by the judge to be cross-examined.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY (CONT'D)

Mr. Thorne, what is your relationship to the defendant?

THORNE

He's the soon to be ex-husband of my girlfriend's sister.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

"Husband" would have been more than sufficient, Mr. Chanse. Now, could you describe your relationship?

THORNE

With him? Sure. We were secret gay lovers.

The defense attorney addresses the JUDGE.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Permission to treat as a hostile witness, your honor.

JUDGE

Permission granted.

(To Thorne)

Mr. Chanse, you will leave the humorous asides for a later, private rendition. Answer the questions or I'll find you in contempt.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Again, Mr. Chanse, I ask you, how would you describe your relationship with the defendant?

THORNE

With brevity. He didn't like me, and I can't say I cared much for him on our first meeting either.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

So are we to understand you haven't known the defendant or his wife very long?

THORNE

That would be understandable, yes, because I haven't known them too long.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

What, in your mind, would be the primary reason the defendant didn't like you?

THORNE

Because he's a Republican.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Could you be more specific?

THORNE

Because I'm black. Because he's spiritually and psychologically two-dimensional.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Again, Mr. Chanse, that's more than I required in your answer.

THORNE

I just wanted to make sure you can keep up. You don't seem too bright.

The defense attorney pauses to throw out a fake chuckle.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

I'm sure you're very charming under certain circumstances, Mr. Chanse, but we're in a court of law. Please restrict your responses to viewpoints related to my questions.

THORNE

I won't treat you like an idiot if you don't treat me like one. Deal?

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Um, okay yes, deal. Now, Mr. Chanse, what exactly made you think the defendant, Mr. Meyers didn't like you because you were black?

THORNE

Because he called me a nigger.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Is that all?

THORNE

You mean did he ever use adjectives? Yeah, sometimes.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

I mean under what circumstances did he call you a nigger?

THORNE

The usual ones. How many kinds are there?

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

So you don't have any specific circumstance you can relate to this court that illustrates Mr. Meyers racial bias towards you?

THORNE

It wasn't just racial. For instance, can't you tell how much I dislike you now? And I have **plenty** of white asshole friends.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

White asshole friends? Who might they be? Let me ask you this, Mr. Chanse, isn't it true you were having an affair with Mr. Meyers' wife, Millicent Meyers?

THORNE

What?

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

An affair. With my client's wife.

THORNE

No.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Do you have a thing for white women, Mr. Chanse?

PROSECUTOR

Objection, your honor.

JUDGE

Overruled. The witness will respond.

THORNE

I have a thing for **beautiful** women. What color they are isn't of primary concern to me.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Is it true that your girlfriend and the defendant's wife are identical twins?

THORNE

Yes. So?

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Must have been an attraction there, no, Mr. Chanse?

THORNE

What does any of this have to do with your client holding me and her hostage and shooting her?

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Your honor...

JUDGE

Mr. Chanse, you will answer the questions without further extraneous commentary.

THORNE

She looks like my girlfriend. She's not my girlfriend. I only just recently met her.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Which brings me back to my question about your sexual feelings towards white women. What are they?

THORNE

I rank them third, after Hispanics and baboons. Asians are fourth.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Can't bring yourself to admit your own biases, can you, Mr. Chanse?

INT. COURTROOM -- DAY

The defense attorney has his client, Ansen, on the stand. In vivid contrast to his emotional state at the defense table, he is now alternately on the verge of crying or openly weeping.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Mr. Meyers, can you describe your emotional state on the day in question?

Ansen displays his acting skills by taking a moment to choke on his own fake tears before answering.

ANSEN

I don't know, I don't know. I just... I just was at a loss. I wanted Millie to know how much I loved her. I still do.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

And what was your reaction when Mr. Chanse arrived at your house, unexpectedly?

ANSEN

I freaked. I mean, I thought we could talk things out. I had no idea she was waiting for her new lover the whole time.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

She alleges that you forced her to have sex with her at gunpoint.

ANSEN

We made love yes. The rape kit will bear that out. But it was consensual. Or so I thought.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

So you're saying she led you to believe there was a chance of reconciliation by agreeing to intercourse with you?

ANSEN

Yes. And when I saw *him* come to the door, all my worst suspicions were confirmed. I freaked. I went for my service weapon.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

And it was never your intention to shoot or harm your wife or Mr. Chanse?

Toot, Maddie, Millie, and Thorne witness the testimony with a look of awe at Ansen's blatant lies. Ansen chooses to weep more openly at this point.

ANSEN

I know I was wrong. I didn't mean to hurt anyone. I just didn't realize what had been going on behind my back for so long.

INT. COURTROOM -- DAY (LATER)

The JURY FOREMAN announces the verdict.

JURY FOREMAN
We, the jury find the defendant,
Ansen Meyers, not guilty.

EXT. PANAMA CITY BEACH -- DAY

Maddie, Millie, Thorne, and Toot sit in chairs on the beach, drinking mixed drinks and watching the tide.

TOOT
Well, at least we'll be finally
past this election come next week.
Who you voting for, Thorne?

MADDIE
Don't mess with him like that,
Mama.

MILLIE
(To Maddie)
I'm not even sure I'm going to be
in the mood to vote after settling
in with you two. I've gotten used
to the sunshine down here. I might
be too depressed.

MADDIE
West Virginia's not as bad as you
remember, Mills. Only **almost** as
bad.

TOOT
Don't talk about your Daddy's
birthplace like that.

MILLIE
Come on, Mama, we all know what a
shithole Piedmont is.

Thorne is disengaged, distracted, irritated.

THORNE
I still can't believe that asshole
got off. I'm an American too. This
fucking system. What's it gonna
take? Really?

MADDIE

Thorne, honey, part of the reason I fell in love with you is because I knew you always, somewhere deep down, believed everything would come around. Eventually.

MILLIE

Yeah, but come around to what? And when?

TOOT

Something tells me I might live to find out.

THORNE

How the fuck did this motherfucker get off?

Maddie, Millie, and Toot have no answer to offer Thorne.

FADE OUT.

THE END

