

ST. SIMMONS

Written by

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FADE IN:

An impish, middle-aged man with a delightfully frizzy afro, wearing a sparkly red tank top and dolphin shorts grins at us...

The twinkle in his eye is the most mischievous thing imaginable. He's outrageously, fabulously effeminate. He's a glorious bundle of light and love...

He's RICHARD FUCKING SIMMONS.

RICHARD
It's sweatin' time!

Multicolored lights blast on behind him, revealing rows of HAPPY PEOPLE of all shapes and sizes in workout gear.

Richard leads them in a fun, energized, cheekily-sexy aerobics routine.

The **TODAY SHOW** bug appears in the lower corner of the screen.

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE (V.O.)
For forty years, this has been the Richard Simmons the public has been accustomed to seeing -- energetic and irresistible.

INSERT VIDEO: Richard beams and waves to SPECTATORS from atop a turtle float at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE (V.O.)
But the fitness guru disappeared from the public eye in 2014, leaving many -- including his closest friends -- deeply concerned.

INSERT PHOTO: A too-skinny Richard forces a smile on a red carpet. His afro has seen better days.

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE (V.O.)
But Simmons is now breaking his silence, after opening up to us by phone.

Richard, via phone, tries to conjure the liveliness seen in the video clips. But there's a despondency he can't hide...

RICHARD (V.O.)
Savannah, it's Richard Simmons. How are you?

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE (V.O.)
I'm good, Richard. How are you?

INSERT VIDEO: Richard, in red Michael Jackson THRILLER getup, delivers an inspirational speech to a group of YOUNG PEOPLE.

RICHARD (V.O.)
I'm feeling good. I'm just sort of... enjoying the day.

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE (V.O.)
What do you make of people being fearful that you've become a recluse?

INSERT PHOTO: Paparazzi shot of Richard, dressed up like a cowgirl, skipping down a street.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Yunno, I do what I want to, as I've always done.
People should just respect that I know what's best for Richard Simmons, because, like... I'm Richard Simmons.

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE (V.O.)
You've always been very public and open about going through ups and downs, and your own struggles with depression and different things.

INSERT VIDEO: Richard demonstrates how to use a food steamer for DAVID LETTERMAN on THE LATE SHOW. The steamer bursts into flames in an obvious prank by Dave.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Survival has always -- yunno -- meant a lot, when you're an overweight kid, and you're made fun of, and you're put down.
Some of that stuff never leaves you, Savannah. It always sort of is like a shadow, like Peter Pan.

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE (V.O.)
Are you surprised that people have been so worried about you?

INSERT VIDEO: From a stage in a public square, Richard leads a massive gathering of PEOPLE in an aerobics routine. These folks absolutely love him.

RICHARD (V.O.)
 For all the people that are
 worrying about me. I want to tell
 them that I love them, with my
 whole heart and soul...
 I just really... don't want to do
 anything.

Richard raises his arms, as if in a blessing, to his flock in
 the square.

BLACK.

INT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL - DAY

BISHOP RUMMEL (80), an ancient Roman Catholic relic, delivers
 a droning sermon to the pews full of khaki uniform-clad
 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLERS in this grand, 18th century church.

BISHOP RUMMEL
 ...And St. John de Brebeuf left
 France because he knew the Gospel
 must be spread, and traveled to
 serve the Huron nation in Canada...

Seated front row center, clutching a Bible to his chest, and
 gazing at the giant crucified Jesus on the stage, is MILTON
 SIMMONS (10), a cherub with a frizzy afro, an effeminate way,
 and that mischievous sparkle in his eyes.

*Milton is Richard, before the name change. For simplicity's
 sake, let's just call him Richard.*

Richard is different from the other kids. Simply put, he's
 fat -- like challenging the integrity of his belt fat.

Next to him is LENNY SIMMONS (12), Richard's more handsome
 and less frizzy brother, who's zoned out on this sermon.

BISHOP RUMMEL
 ...The land had roaming bands of
 Iroquois determined to kill and
 torture every Huron, or Frenchman,
 they met...

Richard's gaze drifts to TOM (10), the beautiful altar boy on
 the stage.

Tom smiles at Richard. Wiggles his fingers in a little wave.

Richard smiles back. Blushes. Looks away.

MOOSE (12), the resident bruiser, leans forward to whisper in Richard's ear.

MOOSE

Hey, retard. Ever smell pussy?

BILLY (12), the jock next to Moose, chuckles.

BILLY

Pussy's the only thing fat faggot doesn't eat.

RICHARD

(turns to face them)

Did someone say eat? That communion wafer wasn't enough for me -- I'm starving.

Moose and Billy roll their eyes -- annoyed they couldn't get Richard's goat.

BISHOP RUMMEL

...And as the Iroquois drank his blood, de Brebeuf turned to his fellow captives and said, "Bear up with courage under the few torments remaining. The sufferings will end with your lives... The grandeur which follows will never have an end."

This brings a smile to Richard's lips.

The church bells vibrate through the pews. The children spring to their feet and rush to the exit.

Richard grabs his book bag. Bobs, weaves, and races past the other kids, into the warm Louisiana sunlight.

EXT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL - MOMENTS LATER

New Orleans is drunk early today. PEOPLE chat, laugh, and dance from the church steps to the nearby Mississippi.

Richard surveys the scene -- delighted.

The sound of a brass band playing a festive tune drifts in from the distance. Richard dashes, with a penguin-like waddle, toward the music.

Lenny ducks his head out of the church.

LENNY

Don't be late for dinner!

RICHARD

I never am!

I./E. CANAL STREET - VARIOUS - DAY

Richard weaves through the thick crowd. PEOPLE everywhere are dressed in loud colors, feathered masks, and wild costumes.

It's Mardi Gras, and Richard feels completely at home.

He rips off his tie. Loosens his belt. And can finally breathe.

The BRASS BAND blows loud and proud as they dance down the parade route. Their song carries us through...

--A MARDI GRAS INDIAN CHIEF in an insanely ostentatious, feathery costume dances for the crowd. Richard leaps in front of him and shows off his own unhinged dance moves.

--Richard ducks into a SWEET SHOP. He slides a nickel across the counter. The SHOPKEEPER flashes a knowing grin and hands Richard a bag of creamy dreamy pralines.

--Richard sells his pralines to REVELERS for a dime a piece.

--Richard dumps a load of candy bars on a CORNER STORE counter. Pays for them with a few of his dimes.

--Richard polishes off a candy bar. His jaw drops at a scantily costumed WOMAN. He scurries over... And bites one of her toned, glistening calves. She yelps and smacks his head.

--Richard marches with a gaggle of DRAG QUEENS. Their blonde leader winks at him. Places her wig on his head.

--He jumps on the back of the iconic court jester float. Raises his arms in triumph... And is hit by a barrage of Mardi Gras beads.

INT. D.H. HOLMES DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

The brass band fades away. Richard is in the doll section. He gazes at a Barbie, clad in a zebra striped swimsuit.

Richard glances around... Opens the Barbie box.

He wraps his stubby fingers around the doll's teeny waist -- *wow, so skinny.*

Richard catches a glimpse of himself in a nearby mirror. He frowns. Sucks in his bulbous stomach.

1950's Barbies all have bitchy sneers on their faces -- this one looks like it's judging him.

He rips the Barbie's head off. Crams its body in his bag.

A slow, gently-jazzy baseline eases toward Richard. His ears perk up.

Then he hears it... Her voice...

HER VOICE

(singing)

*Now you say you're lonely
You cry the lone night through
Well you can cry me a river
Cry me a river
I cried a river over you...*

Richard is drawn toward her dulcet tones. He finds himself in the electronics section.

A record spins on a turntable. The album cover beside it...

Richard is transfixed by the woman on the cover. Her full, pursed lips behind a microphone. Her mysterious, gleaming eyes. Her pronounced yet perfect nose...

It's BARBRA STREISAND at age twenty-one, gracing the cover of **THE BARBRA STREISAND ALBUM**.

With his eyes locked on Barbra's image, Richard mimes a microphone in his hand. Purses his lips like hers.

His eyes gleam.

INT. GIN'S CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Chinese lanterns glow down upon the bustling dining room.

Richard drools over the menu at a table with his mother SHIRLEY (47), father LEONARD (61), and brother Lenny.

Leonard is a slender, neat man -- the spitting image of Fred Astaire -- with beautiful eyes that you wish weren't so hard. He turns to the WAITER.

LEONARD

Chicken chow mein, glazed pork belly, and beef with broccoli for the table.

LENNY
Dad, can I have an egg roll?

LEONARD
Sure.

RICHARD
(to waiter)
We'll also have the lobster yee
mein, orange chicken, annnd--

Leonard grabs Richard's menu. Shakes his head at the waiter.

The waiter nods. Takes the menus. Departs.

Shirley, with a gentle heart that belies her glamorous exterior, softens Leonard's blow with a smile to Richard.

LENNY
We got our report cards today.

Lenny presents his report card to Leonard, who scans it.

LEONARD
Excellent. Very nice.
(to Richard)
Where's yours?

RICHARD
I didn't get one... Mother Mary
Porter died.

SHIRLEY
Oh my God.

LEONARD
Mother Mary Porter did not die.
(glares at Richard)
Give it to me.

Richard pulls out his report card. Hands it to Shirley.

SHIRLEY
This is good, honey. What were you
so ashamed of?

Richard shrugs. Lenny glances at the report card.

LENNY
A "C" in conduct is almost failing.

LEONARD
 (to Richard)
 Quit acting up. The classroom isn't
 your stage.

Richard scowls... But remembers something. His eyes sparkle.

RICHARD
 I found my new favorite singer
 today.

He pulls Barbra's album out of his bag. Shows it off.

RICHARD
 The lady at the store said she's
 performing at the Saenger on the
 third. I have to go.

LEONARD
 Your confirmation is on the third --
 and nobody needs you going to any
 performances.

RICHARD
 Can't I just skip my confirmation?

LEONARD
 That'd make it real hard to get
 into seminary school.

RICHARD
 Well maybe I don't want to be a
 priest.

Leonard's eyes blaze. But he's got something in his back
 pocket...

LEONARD
 Your mother is going on a trip
 tomorrow.

RICHARD
 (jumps out of his chair)
 Again?!

Sit down.

LEONARD

SHIRLEY
 I'm sorry, sweetheart.

RICHARD
 No -- you can't keep leaving --
 it's not fair -- it's... bullshit!

Nearby DINERS scowl at this foul mouthed little boy.

The waiter arrives with the food. Places it on the table.

LEONARD
(to the waiter)
Call a cab. My son is going home.

The waiter nods. Rushes off.

Richard glowers at Leonard.

Gazes at the steaming, savory food...

And stomps out of the restaurant.

INT. SIMMONS RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The last room of this shotgun house -- all the rooms are in a direct line with each other, like living in a train.

The ceilings are high, with ornate moldings and chandeliers. The walls are decorated with Simmons family photos.

Richard's tear-brimmed eyes are locked on the big, white refrigerator. He's in checkerboard pajamas.

He stalks to the fridge. Hauls open the door...

A bevy of food worthy of a fine restaurant stares out at him.

Richard dives in. Cheese, cold cuts, pie, leftovers -- they all fly down his gullet. Food stains his PJs.

The binge of all binges.

INT. SIMMONS RESIDENCE - RICHARD'S ROOM - NIGHT

The walls of the tidy bedroom are covered with movie posters: SINGIN' IN THE RAIN, CINDERELLA, PILLOW TALK, and the like.

Richard holds his achey belly. Places his new Barbra album on the nightstand, behind a little piggy bank.

He slips the remaining dimes from his praline sales into the bank. Smiles at Barbra's image on the album cover.

Richard reaches into his book bag...

Pulls out the Barbie doll body.

He opens his closet. Whips a sheet off something big...

It's a decrepit dollhouse in Antebellum fashion. And it is full of headless Barbies.

Richard sets the new Barbie body with the zebra swimsuit, and three others -- in a gold gown, red bikini, and blue dress, respectively -- around the kitchen table.

Richard does a little scene with these four headless dolls. For the ZEBRA SWIMSUIT, he uses a deep male voice. For GOLD GOWN, a high pitched voice. BLUE DRESS has a bratty voice. And RED BIKINI speaks in Richard's own voice.

ZEBRA SWIMSUIT

A "C" in conduct?! Mother Mary Porter must be a crackpot -- the kids all love your jokes and gags. Milty, I'm going to march in there tomorrow and--

RED BIKINI

It's okay, Dad. I've already forgiven her -- for she knows not what she does.

ZEBRA SWIMSUIT

Lenny, why can't you be more like your brother?

BLUE DRESS

I'm trying, Dad. Milty's just so good at everything.

RED BIKINI

Dad, please don't be so hard on Lenny. He's my brother, and I love him.

ZEBRA SWIMSUIT

You're right. I'm sorry, Milty... Shirley, can I please eat your pussy?

GOLD GOWN

Of course, darling. I'd love that.

ZEBRA SWIMSUIT

Thank you.

Richard places Gold Gown on her back atop the kitchen table, and rubs Zebra Swimsuit back and forth on top of her.

GOLD GOWN

That feels good.

ZEBRA SWIMSUIT

Yes, that feels very good.

GOLD GOWN

I like when you eat my pussy--

Richard hears the front door open -- his family's voices drift into the room.

Richard throws the sheet over the dollhouse. Slams the closet door. Jumps into bed.

INT. SIMMONS RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Leonard places three plates of eggs Benedict on the table. Lenny joins him. They dig in.

Richard rushes in. Leaps onto his chair. Grabs a fork and--

Leonard notices the food stains on Richard's PJs.

He grabs Richard's plate. Dumps the food in the trash.

RICHARD

Dad, I'm starving!

LEONARD

I'm taking you to the doctor.

RICHARD

But I'm not sick.

INT. DR. HALLMAN'S CLINIC - EXAM ROOM - DAY

Sickly green walls. Harsh neon lights.

Richard is nearly naked and completely miserable. He's seated on the cold, metal exam table. His stomach fat rolls over his Jockey shorts. His arms are crossed to hide his flabby chest.

Leonard is seated by the door -- impassive.

DR. HALLMAN (60), balding and distant, opens the door. Gets a load of Richard...

DR. HALLMAN

Whoa. You're a big fella.

Richard sighs.

QUICK FLASHES:

--Hallman grips Richard's belly fat with a pair of calipers.

--Richard's eyes plead to Leonard. Leonard looks away.

--Richard steps onto a medical scale. Hallman adjusts the weights on the balance bar.

--A wince betrays Hallman's face.

--Tears well up in Richard's eyes.

INT. DR. HALLMAN'S CLINIC - OFFICE - DAY

Richard and Leonard sit across the desk from Dr. Hallman.

DR. HALLMAN

We've got to get some weight off you. Start this diet today.

Hallman hands Richard a sheet of paper.

Richard reads it. His soul fills with dread.

EXT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL SCHOOL - SPORTS FIELD - DAY

Richard is alone on the bleachers. He watches his male classmates play shirts vs. skins flag football.

FATHER LAWANGA (40), a human buzzcut of a PE teacher, glances at Richard.

FATHER LAWANGA

Asthma not getting any better, huh?
(Richard shakes his head)
You'll never feel good unless you get some exercise.

Richard takes a passive aggressive hit from an asthma puffer.

Lawanga shakes his head. Turns his attention to the game.

Richard spots Tom, the gorgeous altar boy, on the skins team.

He gazes at Tom's glistening, athletic torso.

INT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

A reel-to-reel projector plays a choppy, black and white film for Richard and his classmates...

ON THE PROJECTION SCREEN: RALPH, a middle aged man, and JIMMY, a teen boy, fish by a secluded river.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

What Jimmy didn't know was that Ralph was sick. A sickness that was not visible like small pox, but no less dangerous and contagious -- a sickness of the mind... You see, Ralph was a homosexual...

Richard furrows his brow -- disturbed.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

...A person who demands an intimate relationship with members of their own sex.

Richard glances a few desks down -- catches Tom's eye.

Tom stifles a chuckle -- amused by the film. He gives Richard a grin and a shrug.

Richard grins back.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

One never knows when the homosexual is about. He may appear normal, and it may be too late when you discover he is mentally ill.

INT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

Richard gazes at the trays of meatloaf and mashed potatoes...

He sighs. Places a half grapefruit on his lunch tray.

ANNA (10), cute and roguish, steps up beside him.

ANNA

Hey, Milty. Wanna eat with us?

Richard smiles.

MOMENTS LATER

Richard and Anna sit at a table with SUSIE, LINDA, and PATTIE. All three girls are ten years old and slender. Their plates are loaded with meatloaf.

SUSIE/LINDA/PATTIE

Hey, Milty./How are you?/Milty!

ANNA

We were just talking about the time
you whoopie-cushioned Mother Mary
Porter.

PATTIE

Fuck that whore.

LINDA

I still think that fat bitch really
farted.

SUSIE

I bet she takes it up the ass.

The girls giggle.

Richard's jaw drops -- delighted by the crude language.

PATTIE

(re: Richard's lunch)
You're just having a grapefruit?

RICHARD

(embarrassed)
My dad put me on a diet... I guess
I need to lose some weight.

Anna notices the woe in Richard's eyes... She gets an idea.

INT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL SCHOOL - GIRLS ROOM - DAY

Richard gazes into the open prescription bottle in Anna's
hand... It is full of little red capsules.

ANNA

My mom takes these. She lost a
ton... Maybe they'll help you.

Susie, Linda, and Pattie bob their heads.

SUSIA/LINDA/PATTIE

They work./My mom takes them too./I
can steal some for you.

Richard is wide eyed. He fishes a pill out of the bottle.

Susie hands him a Dixie cup of water. Anna touches his arm.

ANNA

Go ahead.

Richard pops the pill. Swallows it with water.

He waits for something to happen...

Richard's skin begins to glow... then glitter, like he's covered in Swarovski crystals.

...A beaming smile blossoms on his face...

I./E. NEW ORLEANS - VARIOUS

--Richard dances down busy BOURBON STREET.

--Leonard and Lenny feast on bacon and eggs. Richard eats a tiny bite of dry toast. Flashes a sly grin at Leonard.

--MOTHER MARY PORTER (65), a very toad-like nun, hands Richard his marked test -- he got an A+!

--Anna, Susie, Linda, and Pattie open bottles of diet pills for Richard. Each has a different color: red, pink, yellow, green.

--Richard pops a pink and a yellow pill at once.

--Richard is in the CHURCH CONFSSIONAL. He yaps a mile a minute at the PRIEST behind the screen...

RICHARD

I steal dolls all the time -- all the time -- but I don't just steal them -- I rip their heads off. I was soooo gluttonous -- I'd shove anything in my face -- but that was the old me -- I'm fine now. I make my dad's life hell -- but he's a jerk anyway. I have very unsavory thoughts -- lustful, I guess -- and I wonder if I should touch myself--

PRIEST (O.S.)

That's enough, son -- it's been two hours.

--Richard pops a pink, a yellow, a blue, and a red pill at the same time. He flicks out his tongue like a happy lizard.

--Richard is on the skins team in football. But he care not about his fat on display. He bolts down the field -- easily outruns Moose, the bully.

Tom throws Richard the ball... Touchdown!

Father Lawanga leaps up and cheers.

--Susie, Linda, and Pattie look on in horror as Richard grabs Anna by the collar.

RICHARD

I said gimme some fucking pills!

--Anna hands Richard a new prescription bottle. Richard's mouth waters at the nasty looking black pills inside.

--Richard pops a black pill. Swallows it dry.

--Richard runs past ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL with three adorable Dalmatians behind him. He grins up at the bell tower.

RICHARD

Thank you, God!

INT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL SCHOOL - THEATRE WINGS - NIGHT

BOYS in suits and GIRLS in white dresses fill the air with nervous chatter.

Richard, crammed into a suit, peeks through the curtain into the theatre. PARENTS filter inside and take their seats.

Richard spots Leonard and Lenny in their seats, third row center. There's an empty seat next to them.

Richard frowns. Turns -- Tom is right beside him, looking fantastic in his suit.

TOM

You okay, Milty?

RICHARD

...My mom's not here.

(shakes it off)

Can I talk to you for a minute?

Tom flashes his million dollar smile.

EXT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL SCHOOL - SPORTS FIELD - NIGHT

A crystal clear night. No one around.

Richard and Tom stroll side-by-side to the 50 yard line.

TOM

You nervous about confirmation?

RICHARD

No. I love being on stage.

But Richard does look nervous. Something's on his mind...

RICHARD
...Do you want to go to spring
formal with me?

TOM
(halts, blushes)
...We're supposed to go with girls.

RICHARD
Yeah... But that's a stupid rule.
We should be able to go with
whatever friend we want.

Tom ponders this.

Ricard gazes at him -- hopeful and anxious.

RICHARD
So--

Tom punches Richard in the stomach--

Richard staggers back--

Tom knees him in the balls--

Richard crumples to the ground -- his breath wheezes.

TOM
(spits on Richard)
I'm not queer, you fucking faggot.

Richard struggles to his feet. Full of confusion... Shame.

TOM
You have a sickness of the mind --
don't infect me.

Richard wants to speak -- but can barely breathe.

Tom spots a stray lacrosse stick. Picks it up.

TOM
Ask the Lord for forgiveness and be
healed.

Tom rears back -- swings the stick--

RICHARD
No--

BLACK.

EXT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL SCHOOL - SPORTS FIELD - NIGHT

Richard's eyes drift open. His body in a heap. Tom is gone.

Richard touches his head -- winces.

He looks up at the dark sky. At God.

Silent tears trickle down his cheeks.

INT. THEATRE - NIGHT

The house lights are low. The curtain ripples... And rises.

A spotlight hits the stage.

Her glittery dress sparkles. Her eyes smile. And that nose...

Barbra Streisand sings Billie Holiday's achingly bittersweet
GOD BLESS THE CHILD in her own distinctive style...

BARBRA

*Them that's got shall get
Them that's not shall lose
So the Bible said and it is still
news...*

Richard sits third row center in the packed, Baroque style
SAENGER THEATRE.

His breath catches in his throat -- astonished by Barbra.

He nods to himself...

And lets Barbra's song break his heart wide open.

INT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL SCHOOL - THEATRE - NIGHT

On stage, Anna receives the blessing from Bishop Rummel.

BISHOP RUMMEL

Peace be with you.

ANNA

And with your spirit.

Anna skips off stage. Rummel refers to his list.

BISHOP RUMMEL

Milton Simmons.

From his seat, Leonard looks to the wings...

No Richard.

BISHOP RUMMEL
 ...Milton Simmons?

...Nothing. The parents murmur.

Leonard can hardly contain his fury.

INT. SAENGER THEATRE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Barbra is surrounded by a group of excited FANS.

Richard scurries toward the pack. Squeezes past a woman.
 Ducks under a man's legs...

He emerges right in front of Barbra. Gaze up at her...

She is bathed in Holy light. Her smile so divine.

Nothing exists but her.

She reaches toward Richard as God reaches toward man.

She runs her fingers through his frizzy locks.

BARBRA
 Well hello, cutie.

Richard can't respond -- can't move -- can only stare...

BARBRA
 Are you okay?

Richard snaps back to reality.

RICHARD
 I want to do what you just did.

BARBRA
 Go for it, doll. You've got what
 they call "it."
 (Richard beams)
 But if you really want to be a
 performer, there's one thing you
 need to remember...

RICHARD
 What is it?

Barbra smiles... Opens her mouth to speak--

A hand grabs Richard -- rips him away from Barbra.

Richard looks up -- it's Leonard.

EXT. BOURBON STREET - NIGHT

Leonard drags Richard, kicking and screaming, down the block.

LEONARD

Where do you think you're going to
get in life acting like such an
idiot?

RICHARD

I'm gonna study art and be a
performer like you and mom -- and
I'm not gonna fail like you did.

Leonard stops in his tracks. Scary and scared.

LEONARD

You will not be a performer.

RICHARD

Then I'm running away.

LEONARD

You're going away alright. I'm
sending you to your Uncle Dick's in
Florida.

RICHARD

Good. I fucking hate you.

LEONARD

I love you too, son.

Leonard drags Richard out of sight.

The crucifix atop St. Louis Cathedral looms in the distance.

EXT. DUOMO DI FIRENZE - DAY

The Duomo stands tall in its grand, sacred glory.

Richard, now nineteen, gazes up at it as TOURISTS flutter by.
At 5'7" and at least 240lbs, Richard looks like a Jack-o-
lantern in his big, orange overalls.

He closes his eyes in silent prayer.

INT. RICHARD'S TINY APARTMENT - NIGHT

The bangs and shouts of NOISY NEIGHBORS drift up through the floorboards of the dark efficiency.

Richard writes by candlelight at his art table...

RICHARD (V.O.)
Dear Dad... I made it to Florence.
Or, as the locals call it, Firenze.
I'm having such a great time...

EXT. VILLA FABRICOTTI - DAY

Richard waddles out of the school with his art portfolio. He spots some bohemian ART STUDENTS laughing and smoking nearby.

RICHARD (V.O.)
...Everyone in my art class has
welcomed me with open arms...

He waves. They ignore him.

EXT. VIA DE' TORNABUONI - DAY

EUROPEANS in stiletto heels, boxy jackets, and crushed velvet suits strut the promenade of the fashion district.

RICHARD (V.O.)
...For once, I feel like I really
fit in somewhere...

Richard edges through the crowd. In red overalls, he looks like a literal sore thumb. He glances around -- ashamed.

INT. TRATTORIA MARIO - DAY

The no-frills eatery overflows with boisterous ITALIANS.

Richard sits alone. Stuffs his face with steak and penne.

RICHARD (V.O.)
...And wow -- the food... Turns out
Italians eat as much as I do...

Richard's eyes dart about at his fellow diners...

A woman forks a big piece of steak into her mouth--

But her waist is so tiny...

A man stabs a forkful of penne--

But has the chest of an underwear model.

Richard frowns in disgust at his own bulging belly.

INT. STUDIO TELEVISIO - DAY

Mid-shoot. A CINEMATOGRAPHER films. FREDO DEFONZO (35), a hunky talent agent, is nearby -- loving what he's seeing.

RICHARD (V.O.)

...And guess what, Dad? I got an agent! He's gotten me some terrific roles. I can feel myself growing as a performer...

We see what they're filming...

Richard, in a bulbous meatball costume, plops his ass down onto a giant plate of pasta. He rolls around. Giggles maniacally. Stuffs the huge noodles in his mouth.

INT. RICHARD'S TINY APARTMENT - AS BEFORE

RICHARD (V.O.)

...I'm so grateful to Uncle Dick for paying for me to study abroad. In fact, I've decided to call myself Richard, to honor him. Wish you were here, Dad.

He signs the letter with a flourish:

**Missing you,
Richard**

INT. CINEMA - DAY

Richard is third row center in the tiny, sparsely populated theatre. He dumps a box of Milk Duds onto his butter drenched popcorn without taking his eyes off the movie...

On screen, FUNNY GIRL is projected twenty feet high with Italian subtitles:

Now mid-twenties, Barbra Streisand's character, FANNY, sits in the third row of the empty New Amsterdam theatre. EMMA (26), the theatre assistant, speaks to her from the stage.

EMMA (ON SCREEN)
Mr. Ziegfeld wants to see you --
when you feel like it, he says.
He'll be waiting in his office.

FANNY (ON SCREEN)
Thanks, Emm.

Emma walks backstage, leaving Fanny alone in the theatre. A little smile blooms on her lips.

FANNY (ON SCREEN)
Did you hear that, Mrs. Strakosh?
Ziegfeld is waiting for me...
(leans back)
For me... See, you were wrong, Mrs.
Strakosh.

The same grin on Fanny's face appears on Richard's.

He looks beside him -- keen to share the moment with someone.

But instead he spots a COUPLE making out near the aisle.

Richard looks to his other side... Two HANDSOME GUYS neck nearby -- there may be a handjob in progress.

Richard squirms in his seat. Breathes shakily.

He focuses on the screen. Fixates on Barbra as she breaks into I'M THE GREATEST STAR, alone on the Broadway stage.

His breath calms. A blissful smile grows.

EXT. PONTE VECCHIO - DAY

I'M THE GREATEST STAR continues to blare as Richard practically floats across the medieval arch bridge, with a FUNNY GIRL record under his arm, and Barbra in his heart.

ITALIAN TEEN (O.S.)
(giggles)
Polpetta -- polpetta grassa.

Richard turns... A trio of ITALIAN TEENS giggle at him.

RICHARD
Excuse me?

ITALIAN TEEN
You are the big meatball.

Richard glows -- he's just been recognized.

RICHARD

That's me.

ITALIAN TEEN

We take photo?

RICHARD

Of course.

Two of the teens pose with Richard. Their hands comedically on his belly.

Richard flashes a big, famous grin.

The Kodak flash blinds us.

EXT. FLORENTINE MANSION - POOL - NIGHT

I'M THE GREATEST STAR gives way to the chatter and giggles of SEXY ITALIANS in designer bathing suits.

Fredo, in a silk robe, has his arm around Richard, in bright overalls. Richard is bigger than ever -- near 300lbs.

FREDO

Never go back to America, Riccardo. You will have work in Italy as long as you want it. Television shows next. Then films -- starring roles.

RICHARD

(hopeful)

You really think so?

FREDO

Of course. You will be the biggest fat actor in Italy -- bigger than Saro Urzi.

RICHARD

Who's Saro Urzi?

Fredo gestures to SARO URZI (55), morbidly obese and naked. Saro pours a bottle of olive oil on himself and shakes his fat rolls to the delight of the party guests.

SOMEONE hands Saro a sumo thong. He puts it on.

RICHARD

Who's he going to sumo wrestle?

Richard turns back to Fredo... Who's holding a sumo thong out to Richard.

RICHARD

...Oh...

MINUTES LATER

Richard and Saro, in sumo thongs, circle each other in an olive oil-filled kiddie pool. Surrounded by a cheering crowd.

SARO URZI

(sneers at Richard)

Sono il più grasso.

Richard makes a tentative lunge at Saro--

Saro bats Richard away -- slaps him around and laughs.

SARO URZI

Magro pezzo di merda americana.

Saro turns his back to Richard. Poses for the spectators.

Richard's eyes dart around the crowd -- these pretty fucks are all laughing at him.

Richard's eyes blaze -- he tackles Saro.

RICHARD

Fuck you, fat retard. I bet pussy's the only thing you don't eat.

Richard sits on Saro's back -- grabs Saro's head -- shoves his face in the oil.

Saro flails -- Richard snarls.

Fredo breaks through the crowd -- grabs Richard by the thong -- but Richard will not relent.

Fredo slips and falls in the oil.

Others grab Richard -- finally pull him off.

He struggles against their grasp -- his eyes wild.

Richard shrieks as we beam toward his bloodshot eyes -- into his black pupil.

Suddenly, we're in--

RICHARD'S POV:

It's blurry and bright. Richard huffs and puffs. Running.

Laughter chases him.

Richard runs smack into a marble wall. He rises. Turns...

There's a huge CROWD around him. All pointing and laughing.

INT. GALLERIA DELL'ACCADEMIA - THAT MOMENT

OUT OF RICHARD'S POV: Richard is standing in the crowded art gallery -- completely naked.

The perfection of Michelangelo's David looms above him. The contrast between their two bodies speaks for itself.

The crowd's laughter gets louder -- deafening.

Richard has never been so ashamed... He makes a decision.

INT. RICHARD'S TINY APARTMENT - DAY

Richard rips all the food out of his cupboards and fridge.

He chucks every last bit in the garbage.

LATER

A thin strip of light beams through a crack in the drapes.

Richard, in his orange overalls, is slumped on the couch. He casts a thousand yard stare at his television.

On the grainy TV screen is a commercial starring Richard: pieces of cheese move quickly past him on a conveyer belt as he tries to stuff as many pieces into his mouth as he can.

Richard's blank gaze stays locked on the TV as he loses weight before our very eyes...

From morbid obesity...

To chubby...

Ideal...

Skinny...

Emaciated.

His skin is gray. His hair thin. His overalls hang off him.

Richard struggles to his feet...

And collapses.

BLACK.

An ambulance siren wails...

QUICK FLASHES:

--A headless Barbie doll in young Richard's plump hand.

--Richard, lifeless on a gurney, is rushed down a HOSPITAL hallway.

--Richard's mom, Shirley, steps out the door of the SIMMONS RESIDENCE with a suitcase. Closes the door behind her.

--NURSES scramble around Richard's body. A DOCTOR barks commands.

--That disappointed, disgusted look on Leonard's face when he ripped Richard away from Barbra.

--A heartbeat monitor flatlines...

--Enraged Tom swings his lacrosse stick at us.

BLACK.

INT. NEW AMSTERDAM THEATRE - NIGHT

A scene from FUNNY GIRL, complete with the slight imperfections of projection film.

But something's different... The gaunt Richard edges out onto the empty Broadway stage. Scans the empty theatre seats.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Well hello, cutie.

His head whips to the third row...

It's Barbra Streisand, in her Fanny costume from the movie.

Her smile blooms for him. She rises. Drifts toward him.

BARBRA

Why are you doing this to yourself?

RICHARD

...I want to be skinny...

BARBRA

You need to eat...
 But you have to eat healthy.
 Love yourself...
 You need to stay alive.

Richard averts his gaze -- still so disheartened.

Barbra is right in front of him now.

She grabs him by the chin. Forces him to look at her.

BARBRA

Take it from me...
 A big nosed little girl from
 Brooklyn...
 Who realized one day she had a
 voice.
 ...Go where you'll be seen...
 ...You can help people...
 Don't let them suffer like you
 have.
 And make a lot of money, so you can
 build your own church...
 ...And become a saint...

Richard isn't so sure -- *how could I help anyone?*

BARBRA

Richard...
 Do you want to live...
 Or do you want to die?

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. SANTA MARIA NUOVA HOSPITAL - HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Richard's eyes shoot open.

He gazes at the crucifix on the wall above him.

He's in a hospital bed. An IV in his arm.

Richard notices a plate of pasta on a tray beside him.

He stares deep into the sea of spaghetti...

EXT. LOS ANGELES - SUNSET

We soar backward, above the **HOLLYWOOD** sign... Over the seedy
 Sunset Strip... Into glitzy Beverly Hills...

Down toward a restaurant canopy, bearing the name **DEREK'S...**
 We travel through the window, into...

INT. DEREK'S RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

And there's Richard, looking healthy and slightly plump. Now twenty-five, he's focused, with a newfound confidence -- and very fabulous.

Richard holds two plates of spaghetti, and is dressed in a black shirt and slacks -- like the rest of the WAIT STAFF in this busy Italian restaurant.

We track Richard as he proves he's the best waiter in LA...

He puts the plates down in front of a POSH MAN and WOMAN.

POSH MAN

Oh -- I ordered the ravioli.

RICHARD

(twinkle in his eye)

It's hot. It's here. You're hungry.
 Eat it.

The man and woman laugh.

Richard glides toward the foyer. Spots ROBERT EVANS (44), the ultra-tan megaproducer, with two slim, busty ladies -- a BLONDE and a BRUNETTE -- in mink coats.

RICHARD

If it isn't Mr. Robert Evans.

ROBERT EVANS

Hiya, Richie.

RICHARD

(to the ladies)

Let me take those coats.

(he does)

These are just beautiful.

He tosses the minks in the corner like they're towels.

Robert cackles as Richard seats the trio.

Richard heads toward another table -- gets a handoff of menus from JOSIE KENNELLY (24), a svelte and winsome waitress. They wink at each other.

Richard lays the menus in front of a MOTHER and DAUGHTER.

RICHARD
It's so nice to see sisters eating
together.

MOTHER
(giggles)
I'm her mother.

Richard slaps his own face like Faye Dunaway in CHINATOWN.

RICHARD
Sister -- mother -- sister --
mother!

The mother cracks up.

Richard returns to Robert Evans' table -- plops himself down
in Robert's lap.

RICHARD
Have you decided what you'd like?
(looks at Robert's crotch)
Apparently today's special is
sausage.

ROBERT EVANS
(cackles)
Gimme a steak. Biggest one you got.

RICHARD
Got a nice, big, thick one for ya.
(to Robert's dates)
Ladies?

BLONDE
We're on a diet.

BRUNETTE
We'll just have salad.

Richard grimaces. Gestures to a sad little salad bar in a
dark corner.

RICHARD
Salad bar's over there.

They take one look...

BLONDE
That's okay...

BRUNETTE
I'm not that hungry...

INT. DEREK'S RESTAURANT - LADIES ROOM - NIGHT

Richard counts a huge stack of tips. Josie, who we met briefly in the dining room, pounds cannolis next to him.

CHANEL (22), a glamorous waitress, snorts a line of coke off the sink and lights a cigarette.

CHANEL

Damn, Richard -- how do you get such good tips?

RICHARD

I'll tell you as soon as you girls tell me how you stay so skinny.

JOSIE

Genetics, I guess.

CHANEL

Smokes and coke sure help. And a little of the 'ol...

She makes a finger-down-her-throat motion.

RICHARD

That's so bad for you.

JOSIE

You shouldn't do that.

CHANEL

Okay, moms.

A toilet flushes. MAGGIE DAVIS (25), shy and quite overweight in chef's whites, steps out of a stall and washes her hands.

RICHARD

Hi, Maggie.

JOSIE

Hey, Maggs.

Maggie flashes a no-eye-contact smile.

RICHARD

How's your daughter doing?

MAGGIE

Good.

Maggie gets the hell out of there.

CHANEL

Damn -- has she gotten even fatter?

JOSIE

Hey -- shut the fuck up.

Richard clocks Josie's reaction.

CHANEL

Jesus. Excuse me, Josie.

Richard gazes at the door Maggie just stepped through.

EXT. WILSHIRE BOULEVARD - NIGHT

Richard walks with Josie. Neither in any hurry.

JOSIE

Will you come somewhere with me?

RICHARD

(a little nervous)

Like a date? I have to warn you,
Josie, I love the single life.

JOSIE

(chuckles)

Of course not a date.

"Of course not" stings Richard a bit.

JOSIE

This Saturday. Wear something you
can move in.

INT. BODY BY GILDA - DAY

Josie, looking flawless in a skintight leotard, leads
Richard, in a baggy sweatsuit, into the aerobics studio.

Richard halts -- overwhelmed...

Floor to ceiling mirrors. Pristine wood floors. A goddamn
grand piano in the corner...

And the studio is full of stunning, slender YOUNG WOMEN
stretching in colorful leotards.

RICHARD

Holy shit.

Josie grins. Leads Richard to the front of the class, with
smiles and waves to the other women.

Richard's eyes dart around--

Suddenly, all these gorgeous women are headless Barbie dolls.

Richard snaps back to reality. Realizes something...

RICHARD
(whispers to Josie)
Where are all the fat people?

Josie shrugs.

GILDA MARX (30), a blonde warrior princess in a sparkly leotard, steps out from the back room with a big smile.

GILDA MARX
You girls ready to sweat?

The women hoot and holler.

Gilda signals the PIANIST, who breaks into ROCKIN' ROBIN.

Richard lights up. Josie winks at him.

Gilda breaks into a brisk, but somewhat robotic, aerobics routine: lunges, box step, grapevine, etc.

The women follow along -- Richard finally realizes he should follow along too, and springs to action.

Gilda utters occasional instructions and encouragement.

Richard puts his own sassy panache on every move.

He dances wild and free.

He is possessed by the Holy Spirit -- bathed in white light.

He can't keep quiet--

RICHARD
This is like dancing!

The women holler in agreement -- which only eggs him on...

RICHARD
C'mon, girls -- move those hips!
Your boyfriends'll thank you later!
I want our asses to hurt tomorrow!
Mine's getting tight as a drum --
someone touch it!
Get rockin' you sexy little robins!

The women laugh and cheer him on.

Gilda gives him a death stare...

But Richard doesn't notice -- he's too busy performing.

He turns around to face the class and bursts into an arm-flapping bird dance, while singing along to ROCKIN' ROBIN.

RICHARD

*Go rockin' robin 'cause we're
really gonna rock toniiight!*

Richard thrusts up his arms in victory.

RICHARD

Yes!

The class devolves into chaos -- the women cheer, sing, and break into their own little dances.

Richard surveys the madness. Breathing heavy. Sweating.

Happy.

EXT. BODY BY GILDA - DAY

Richard, who is positively glowing, and Josie bound out of the studio.

RICHARD

I love it -- this is going to make
my body beautiful -- a few more
weeks of this and I'll look
terrific--

Gilda steps out behind them.

GILDA

Josie...

Richard and Josie look back.

Gilda's hard look makes Richard's smile evaporate.

GILDA

I need to speak to your friend.

EXT. CIVIC CENTER DRIVE - SUNSET

Richard looks like he was just given three months to live.

He and Josie trudge through the part of Beverly Hills Regis Philbin once called "the wrong side of the tracks."

RICHARD

She said having a man in the class
made the women uncomfortable.

JOSIE

She's a liar. Boring bitch just didn't want to share the spotlight.

RICHARD

Do you think I went too far?

JOSIE

No fucking way. Everyone loved it -- I've never seen those bitches move like that.

RICHARD

...I'm an idiot.

JOSIE

Would you cut it out? Let's just go to a different class.

RICHARD

...No...

JOSIE

We can do whatever we want... What do you want to do?

RICHARD

I don't know... Feel what I felt in there, I guess... I know they were having a good time... Maybe I could start my own class.

He stops walking. Stares into Josie's eyes.

RICHARD

I think I could help people... Is that stupid?

JOSIE

(takes his hands)

No.

RICHARD

(little smile)

What do you want to do?

JOSIE

(bashful)

...Be a comedian, like Joan Rivers -- have my own talk show... Now that's stupid.

RICHARD

No way... When I'm a big time
aerobics instructor, can I be on
The Josie Show?

JOSIE

Fuck yes.

They beam at each other. Glow together.

Richard spies something over Josie's shoulder... He's drawn
toward it...

A ramshackle, grey warehouse: **WILSON'S HOUSE OF SUEDE**

There's a **FOR LEASE** sign in the window.

Richard cups his hands around his eyes and peers through the
filthy window for a long moment.

He turns back to Josie -- his eyes sparkle.

INT. DEREK'S RESTAURANT - LADIES ROOM - NIGHT

Richard is alone with Maggie, the overweight chef. She's
avoiding eye contact, like always.

RICHARD

I just want you to know -- if you
ever need anyone to talk to, I've
been in your shoes.

(no response)

A few years ago I weighed almost
three-hundred pounds.

MAGGIE

...Really?

He nods. But discouragement takes control of her.

MAGGIE

It's pointless to talk about. I've
tried every kind of diet... There's
nowhere for me to work out.

RICHARD

Sure there is. Apparently every
aerobics class in town is for
women.

MAGGIE

(scoffs)

What about fat women?

Richard doesn't have an answer.

MAGGIE

I don't want to get laughed out of another class. Thanks anyway.

Maggie plods out of the restroom.

Richard broods over her words -- *must investigate further.*

I./E. LOS ANGELES - VARIOUS

--GYMNASIUM: Two buff GYMNASTS hoist Richard up to a pair of gymnastic rings. Richard grabs hold. The gymnasts let go -- Richard immediately crashes to the mats.

--PILATES STUDIO: The lithe RON FLETCHER (53) leads Richard and his fit, female CLASSMATES in balance exercises. Richard watches Ron make a painfully slow and boring transition to a new position. Richard rolls his eyes.

--DEREK'S RESTAURANT: Richard flits from table to table like a hummingbird. He picks up his tips from tables. Leaves DINERS laughing in his wake.

--MUSCLE BEACH: Huge JUICEHEADS everywhere. A shirtless, ripped VINCENT GIRONDA (57) screams commands at Richard who struggles to benchpress a bar with no weights on it... Richard glances up Vincent's shorts.

--BIKRAM YOGA STUDIO: Richard sweats his balls off with glistening, svelte WOMEN in a hot yoga class. BIKRAM CHOUDHURY (30) "helps" a woman with a chest stretch by groping her breasts. Richard eyes the interaction curiously.

--MOVIE THEATRE: Richard and Josie sob together, watching Barbra Streisand in THE WAY WE WERE.

--RICHARD'S KITCHEN: Way too many heads of lettuce in here. Richard, in an incredibly stained **KISS THE COOK** apron, mixes some dressing. Pours it on a salad. Tastes... Not bad.

INT. LA CONVENTION CENTER - DAY

Richard sits among thousands, watching ultra-fit JACK LALAINÉ (60) speak on stage in front of a banner that bears his name.

JACK LALAINÉ

It matters not what your age is.
It matters not what your physical
condition is.

(MORE)

JACK LALAINÉ (CONT'D)
 If you obey nature's laws you can
 be born again.

Richard drinks this in. Nods at its profundity.

INT. RICHARD'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Richard gazes at a big piggy bank. There's a picture of his old, fat self in that Italian meatball costume taped to it.

Richard smashes the piggy bank with a hammer -- freeing the loads of cash within.

EXT. WILSON'S HOUSE OF SUEDE - DAY

The warehouse space Richard discovered with Josie.

A beaming REAL ESTATE AGENT hands Richard a set of keys.

REAL ESTATE AGENT
 What are you gonna call this place?

RICHARD
 The Anatomy Asylum.
 (dead serious)
 Because I'm fucking crazy.

INT. DEREK'S RESTAURANT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Richard and Maggie are alone by the meatballs.

She stares at a flyer in her hand: a B&W photo of Richard wearing a huge grin, pointing right at us, with a dialogue bubble: **LIGHTEN UP AT THE ANATOMY ASYLUM!**

RICHARD
 Will you come?

MAGGIE
 Money's tight. I'd need a sitter--

RICHARD
 Your classes are on the house. I'll pay for a babysitter.
 (let's get serious)
 No one's going to laugh you out of this class. I started this place for people like us.

She finally meets Richard's gaze. There's a glimmer of hope in her eyes.

INT. RICHARD'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Barbra Streisand's A WOMAN IN LOVE gets our juices flowing as Richard gets ready...

--He hairsprays the heck out of his frizzy afro.

--Spreads foundation on his cheeks.

--Pulls on a skintight red leotard.

--Richard gazes at the three items taped to the top corner of his full length mirror...

--A photo of him and Josie grinning in their waiter uniforms.

--A picture of Barbra Streisand lookin' gorgeous (ripped out of a magazine).

--A department store portrait of Richard at age ten with Leonard, Shirley, and Lenny -- all beaming.

--He checks himself out in the mirror. It's hard to pull off that leotard. But he is absolutely rocking it.

Richard stares deep into his reflected eyes.

RICHARD

...Your first real performance...

...You can help people...

EXT. ANATOMY ASYLUM - DAY

The old WILSON'S HOUSE OF SUEDE warehouse has been dolled up, and now bears the name: **ANATOMY ASYLUM**

Colorful helium balloons line the walkway, where a small group of WOMEN of various shapes and sizes has gathered.

Among them are Josie and Maggie, the largest of the group. She's all kinds of nervous in a baggie sweatsuit.

The front door swings open. All heads turn...

Richard leaps out the door in his red leotard -- vibrating fabulousness. He throws his arms in the air.

RICHARD

Welcome to the Anatomy Asylum!

(the women cheer)

And if you don't like havin' fun,
then you best not come in here!

INT. ANATOMY ASYLUM - STUDIO - DAY

Floor to ceiling mirrors. Pristine wood floors. A disco ball sparkling above.

The women have gathered in rows before a glowing Richard. The studio is about one third full.

Josie's front row center. She and Richard wink at each other.

He turns to the record player behind him.

Puts the needle down on a record.

Doubt flits across his face.

Vinyl static crackles through the studio.

He turns to face the women. A mischievous smirk on his lips.

LOCOMOTION by Little Eva blasts through the room.

Richard strikes a pose -- a true performer.

The women catcall and wolf whistle.

He bursts into his first movement -- a thumb pointing, right-left-right-left kinda thing.

RICHARD

Hitch a ride, girls!
It's gas, grass, or ass to get in
this car!

The women giggle and follow along.

He transitions to another move -- essentially "the twist."

RICHARD

Twist and shout, ladies -- lemme
hear ya!

The women hoot and holler as they twist.

He transitions to another move. Then another.

These are simple, uncomplicated movements. More dancing than the aerobics Gilda Marx taught.

He glances at Maggie at the end of the back row. She's huffing and puffing, but keeping up.

RICHARD
Are we sweatin' yet?
I wanna get you wet!

Richard busts out some sexual hip thrusts.

The women scream like he's The Beatles.

MINUTES LATER

Richard struts through the class like a sassy drill instructor as the women struggle through knee pushups.

RICHARD
Up -- down -- up -- down.
No baby steps -- get your shit
together!

MINUTES LATER

Richard leads the women in a backstroke move. He notices Maggie's excellent form.

RICHARD
Beautiful, Maggie!
Everybody do it like Maggie!

The women look back at Maggie with big grins on their faces.

Maggie beams at Richard.

MINUTES LATER

The women dance in circle. Richard is in the center.

He strikes pose after pose -- an early adopter of voguing.

MAURO OLIVEIRA (20), buff and Brazilian in a tank top and short shorts, pokes his head into the room.

Richard notices. His eyes sparkle.

RICHARD
Hey, good lookin'!

MAURO
(thick Brazilian accent)
...I'm looking for the salsa class.

RICHARD

This ain't it -- but I could use a little salsa on my burrito.

Mauro giggles. Scans the class -- *looks like fun.*

MAURO

Is this women only?

RICHARD

Hell no -- it's for everybody. Get that tight caboose over here!

Richard points to the floor in front of him.

Mauro grins. Dances to the center of the circle with Richard.

RICHARD

Take your shirt off!
C'mon -- take your shirt off!
(a little bit fierce)
Take your fucking shirt off.

Mauro shrugs and whips his shirt off. The women cheer.

Richard grabs Mauro's tank top and flosses his own crotch with it.

Mauro bursts out laughing.

KCET NEWS SEGMENT: GRAINY TV STATIC THROUGHOUT...

THE VERY 1970'S **KCET MORNING NEWS** LOGO FILLS THE SCREEN.

INT. ANATOMY ASYLUM - SALAD BAR - DAY

In the all-white, twinkly-lighted dining area, featuring an extra large salad bar, the burly HUELL HOWSER (30) speaks directly to camera.

HUELL HOWSER

It's the first salad bar in Los Angeles to have an aerobics studio under the same roof. But the reason people are coming isn't just the healthy food and upbeat exercise--

QUICK SHOTS:

--SALAD BAR: Richard dances on top of the tables as PATRONS munch their salads.

RICHARD
 (singing)
Like a rhinestone cowboy...

--STUDIO: Richard plays butt bongo on a WOMAN who's touching her toes in the packed studio.

RICHARD
 (singing, a la Desi Arnaz)
Babalu -- Baaabaaaluuu!

INT. ANATOMY ASYLUM - SALAD BAR - AS BEFORE

HUELL HOWSER
 His name is Richard Simmons. And he's not just the founder and head chef of the Anatomy Asylum -- this bundle of energy teaches every single aerobics class. His goal is to make exercise enjoyable for everyone, no matter their size.

HUELL HOWSER INTERVIEWS RICHARD:

RICHARD
 I went to aerobics classes and fitness centers all over Los Angeles, and I didn't see anyone who was overweight. It seemed like you had to be in shape already to even get started.
 I knew there were a lot of people out there who would never find the power to change their lives unless someone changed the way we exercise.
 And I knew I had to make it fun -- 'cause let's face it...
 (turns to camera)
 If it ain't fun, it ain't gonna get done!

END KCET NEWS SEGMENT.

INT. ANATOMY ASYLUM - SALAD BAR - NIGHT

Richard mops the floor, lit only by the streetlights outside.

Between the big, empty dining room and his uncharacteristic slouch, he looks so very alone.

The front door creaks open. Richard looks up.

RICHARD
...Hello...?

JACKIE SMITH (40), an alpha female in a paisley skirt suit, steps through the doorway.

JACKIE
I've seen you jumping around on television.

RICHARD
Oh... Yeah, that sounds like me.

JACKIE
I'm Jackie Smith. Vice President of Daytime Programming at ABC.

RICHARD
...Okay...

JACKIE
You're very funny. I've never seen anyone like you.

RICHARD
Well, I guess there isn't anyone like me.

JACKIE
I want you on General Hospital.

RICHARD
The soap opera?

JACKIE
That's right.

Richard puts down his mop -- overwhelmed.

This is an opportunity to perform. He wants it so bad, but...

RICHARD
I've had some bad experiences with acting.

JACKIE
(sly grin)
Trust me -- you won't have to act.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Richard, in a form-fitting sweatsuit, is perched on a bench beside BEVERLY (21), a morbidly obese woman. He's very intense -- almost angry.

RICHARD

Get up in the morning and count
your blessings -- and you've got
lots of 'em.

How many people love you?
How many people count on you?
How many people would be lost
without you?

(softens his tone)

You can lose the weight.
Just don't stop dreaming.
'Cause if you really dream, you can
get anything you want in life.

BEVERLY

(sobbing hard)

Okay, Richard. I'll try. If you
believe in me, I can do anything.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

Cut! Moving on!

We pull way back. This isn't a park -- it's a set in...

SUNSET GOWER STUDIOS - STAGE 7

The CREW sets up for the next scene.

Richard grins and hugs Beverly. Who is, of course, no longer crying.

RICHARD

Great crying.

BEVERLY

Loved your intensity.

Richard rushes over to Jackie.

RICHARD

What'd you think?

JACKIE

I think the writers need to give
you more scenes.
Oh, and if you have any lady
friends -- thin, pretty -- we're
casting a new nurse.

RICHARD

Really? My best friend Josie would be perfect.

JACKIE

Great. Give her my number.

Richard's eyes light up -- *everything's coming together.*

JACKIE

Friend of mine wants to meet you.

Jackie beckons to WOODY FRASER (45), a silver fox with the smile of your favorite uncle.

Woody makes a beeline for Richard. Shakes his hand fervently.

WOODY

Pleased to meet ya. Woody Fraser.

JACKIE

Woody here created The Mike Douglas Show.

RICHARD

I love Mike Douglas! Those big asterisks all over his set -- I need them for my bedroom.

WOODY

(chuckles)

I'll send you some.
And if you ever think about doing your own TV show, just lemme know.

This blows Richard's hair back -- *my own show?*

JACKIE

(to Richard)

Hey -- have you seen what's in your dressing room?

Richard has not. And he loves a good surprise.

INT. SUNSET GOWER STUDIOS - RICHARD'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Richard stands in the doorway. Stares at the huge sack in the middle of the room -- it's overflowing with letters.

A PRODUCTION ASSISTANT passes behind him.

RICHARD

Excuse me. I think somebody left everyone's fan mail in here.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

No -- that's all for you. You got as much as Tony and Genie.

RICHARD

(holy shit)

As much as Luke and Laura?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Want me to get rid of it?

RICHARD

Get rid of it? I'm going to answer every single letter.

DAY TO NIGHT

Barbra Streisand's SOMEWHERE makes our souls weep as Richard spends hours going through his fan mail...

--Richard reads a multi-page letter...

WOMAN #1 (V.O.)

Dear Richard, I'm sorry about the long letter -- but I feel like you're the only person I can talk to. I've been overweight since I was seven years old...

--He reads another. Getting emotional..

WOMAN #2 (V.O.)

...I'm so big, and my knees hurt so much, that some days I can't get out of bed...

--Another...

TEEN GIRL (V.O.)

...My grandma always tells me someone will love me when I lose weight...

--Reading through tears...

OLDER WOMAN (V.O.)

...My daughter died of heart failure. She was twenty-eight years old...

---Pacing and reading...

WOMAN #3 (V.O.)

...I was raped when I was eighteen,
and I think I started eating to
avoid everything I was feeling...

--Sipping coffee and reading...

WOMAN #4 (V.O.)

...I go to bed hoping I won't wake
up...

--Reading. More tears...

WOMAN #5 (V.O.)

...Please write back. I need your
help.

Richard puts the letter down. Pauses...

And picks up a pen.

SUNRISE

Richard signs his name at the bottom of a long letter:

**With all my love,
Richard Simmons**

He slides it into an envelope and adds it to the stacks of
outgoing mail on the countertop.

Richard massages his writing hand. Takes a quiet moment of
reflection.

Something catches his eye... A glittery envelope he missed at
the bottom of the empty mail sack.

He opens it. Inside is a photo of MICHAEL HEBRANKO (30), a
sweet, sad-eyed man who's girth nearly fills the sofa he's
seated on.

Richard's shoulders slump -- *that poor man.*

He reads the letter...

MICHAEL (V.O.)

Dear Richard, My name is Michael
Hebranko, and I weight over one-
thousand pounds. My father, mother,
and brother are all skinny, but
I've always been fat.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 The kids in school tormented me.
 When I was nine years old, I
 started stealing my aunt's diet
 pills...

Richard's eyes widen.

INT. ANATOMY ASYLUM - STUDIO - DAY

Richard bounds into the studio. Delightfully manic. Can't wait to share all his news--

He stops short...

EVERYONE in the class is weeping.

RICHARD
 ...What's wrong...?

Maggie, who's lost some serious weight, finds the words...

MAGGIE
 ...Josie died.

The breath is sucked out of Richard.

This can't be happening. But it is.

NIGHT

The lights are low. A small, intimate group of OVERWEIGHT WOMEN, Maggie, and Mauro, Richard's first male student, is gathered in a circle. All eyes are misty.

Tears stream down Richard's cheeks.

RICHARD
 It's my fault. I can't believe I
 didn't see it. I wish she'd told me
 so I could've helped.
 (a hint of anger)
 This goes to show that we cannot
 take short cuts.
 We can't do what Josie did and jam
 our fingers down our throats to
 stay thin.
 (the anger fades)
 We're working so hard. And I know
 that this time we're going to make
 it -- because we're doing this
together...

(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

We just have to remember the three
rules...
Move your body...
Watch your portions...
And love yourself.

Richard takes a deep breath. Locks eyes with Mauro.

RICHARD

Mauro, with Josie gone, I'm going
to need some help around here. Will
you be my second in command?

MAURO

Of course, Richard.

Richard wipes the tears away. Tries to brighten up.

RICHARD

I have a very special announcement
to make tonight... Since starting
here at Anatomy Asylum, Maggie has
lost seventy-five pounds -- I love
you, Maggie.

Richard rises and claps for Maggie, tears flowing once again.

The group joins in on the applause, and the tears.

Maggie sobs as she runs to Richard and wraps him in a hug.

One by one, the group members join the embrace.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Richard has a bigger apartment, but the same full length
mirror. With the same items taped to the top corner.

He stares at the photo of him and Josie.

He reaches out... And strips the photo off the mirror.

EXT. NORMA TRIANGLE - NIGHT

The witching hour. Richard, in a dark coat and baseball cap,
wanders past the eclectic mix of West Hollywood homes.

He turns onto the Sunset Strip. A neon sign stops him cold:

**SECOND HAND ROSE
ADULT BOOKSTORE**

INT. SECOND HAND ROSE - MOMENTS LATER

So much more than books.

Richard edges inside... Glances at the sex toys... The kinky outfits...

And finds himself by the magazine rack. The hot, fit guys on the covers of **BLUEBOY**, **PLAYGUY**, and **DRUMMER** magazine stare out at him...

He reaches toward one--

But hears a short, shrill whistle.

His head whips to the sound. A HOT GUY by the video booths gazes back at him.

The guy makes the slightest gesture toward a video booth... Disappears inside.

Richard freezes... Shame creeps across his face.

He gets the fuck out of there.

INT. SUNSET GOWER STUDIOS - STAGE 7 HALLWAY - DAY

48 hours without sleep has caught up with Richard.

But he's on a mission. In search of someone...

He spots Woody Fraser -- *there he is* -- and races over.

WOODY

You okay--?

RICHARD

I want my own show.

(Woody grins)

I'll start every episode with a skit -- something fun and outrageous -- bring a little light into people's lives -- like a scene from "Gone With the Wind" where I play Scarlett.

Then I'll have an exercise segment -- everyone at home can feel like they're right there in my studio. I'll talk to people with problems -- give them advice.

And even do a little low-cal cooking segment.

(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)
 (sparkles at Woody)
 Whaddaya say?

Woody is impressed... He sticks out his hand--

Richard mauls him with a hug.

RICHARD
 You're my Louis B. Mayer, and I'm
 your Bette Davis!

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Richard tiptoes through the door. There's someone under the covers in bed.

RICHARD
 ...Honey... Honey, are you okay?

He whips the covers off the bed, revealing a GIRL who looks remarkably like Linda Blair in THE EXORCIST -- her wrists are tied to the bedposts.

She snarls and screams. Writhes around.

RICHARD
 Regan, what's wrong? Look at this --
 who tied you up like this?
 (unties her wrists)
 This is so bad for your
 circulation.

Her arms freed, the girl throttles Richard's neck.

RICHARD
 Stop -- stop!
 The power of exercise compels you.
 The power of exercise compels you!

Dance music hits.

We pull way out to reveal that the bedroom is a set in...

SUNSET GOWER STUDIOS - STAGE 4

The LIVE STUDIO AUDIENCE laughs and applauds.

Richard and the girl exercise-dance downstage.

Richard grins into a studio camera.

RICHARD

Today I'll be talking to people who say they're demonically possessed. I hope those demons don't leap into me -- it's already crowded in here. Stay tuned to The Richard Simmons Show!

ANATOMY ASYLUM COMMERCIAL:

A closeup shot of Richard appears in the middle of a black screen. He speaks excitedly to camera.

RICHARD

Hi, I'm Richard Simmons. My first Anatomy Asylum in Los Angeles was the start of something great...

A red, laser-etched outline of the United States is drawn on the black screen. The rectangle containing Richard shrinks and moves to the Los Angeles area of the map.

RICHARD

...A great national network of seventy-two clubs in thirteen cities, including yours...

Identical little video boxes containing the same shot of Richard pop up all across the laser-etched map.

RICHARD

...Where people like you can look good, lose weight, and feel great.

MATRIX WIPE TO:

A MALE AEROBICS INSTRUCTOR with big, curly hair -- meant to resemble Richard -- leads an energized AEROBICS CLASS.

RICHARD (V.O.)

Now we've got the music, the instructors, and the facilities right here to help yourself get back in shape. Join me and over one-hundred-thousand members all over the country...

CUT TO:

CLOSEUP OF RICHARD: He speaks directly to camera.

RICHARD
 Isn't it time you were committed...
 to the Anatomy Asylum?

END ANATOMY ASYLUM COMMERCIAL.

INT. MAPLEWOOD MALL - DAY

A ROWDY CROWD, consisting mostly of overweight women in mostly muted colors, surrounds a stage in the center of this bland, Middle American galleria.

Epic, Catholic organ music blares through giant speakers...

Richard, in a hot pink sweatsuit, rises from beneath center stage on a hydraulic platform. His face placid. His arms raised like Jesus blessing his flock.

Richard surveys the gathering. Flashes that mischievous grin.

RICHARD
 Hello Minneapolis!

The crowd goes crazy.

Women weep. Someone throws their panties.

The music stops. The crowd hushes.

Richard grabs a microphone. Drifts around the stage.

RICHARD
 (sermon-esque)
 I know some of you want this very
 bad.
 I know some of you are living in a
 body that you don't want to live in
 anymore.
 Let today -- let right now be your
 starting day!

The crowd cries out in agreement. Arms fly high in the air.

RICHARD
 I want someone to come up who
 promises that they are going to
 start now.

Hundreds of hands wave for Richard's attention.

Richard spots JOANIE (60), an overweight woman with big salt-and-pepper hair, crying in the front row.

RICHARD

You -- c'mon up here.
 (she stumbles onto stage)
 C'mere. Why are you crying?

He gives her a big hug and smooch on the cheek.

JOANIE

(thick Minnesota accent)
 Well I love your show. And I admire
 what you've done to help people.
 And... And I just lost my husband
 at Christmas time, and I've been so
 sad, and all I do is eat. And I --
 this is my last chance -- I really
 wanted you to try to help me... And
 I know I can do it now.

RICHARD

We're all here to help you.
 (to the crowd)
 We're all here to help her, aren't
 we? Aren't we?
 (the crowd cheers)
 Whaddaya say we dance together,
 huh? Hit it!

Leslie Gore's IT'S MY PARTY blasts through the mall.

Richard leads Joanie and the crowd in a fun aerobics dance--

A PRETTY WOMAN, with a wild look in her eyes, rushes the
 stage. Grabs Richard.

PRETTY WOMAN

You saved my life -- I love you --
 I need to be with you.

Richard is thrown -- he struggles to break free.

More women storm the stage. Paw at Richard.

RICHARD

Easy, girls -- I love you, but --
 hey, cut it out!

SECURITY GUARDS rush the stage. Grab Richard.

The women give chase as security whisks Richard away.

RICHARD

Goodbye Minneapolis -- I love you!

INT. HEBRANKO RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Michael Hebranko, the thousand pound man who wrote to Richard, is sunk in the sofa in this modest two-story home.

He blankly watches his chubby son, MIKEY (6), play with Matchbox cars.

MADELINE (O.S.)

Honey -- there's someone here to see you.

MADELINE (29), Michael's overstressed wife, steps into the room. Her eyes are misty.

MICHAEL

Why're you crying, babe?

Richard steps in beside her, with an empathic smile.

Michael bursts into tears.

Richard bursts into tears.

MICHAEL

I wish I could get up to hug you.

Richard leans down. Hugs Michael. Kisses his cheek.

RICHARD

Reading your letter was like reading about my own childhood. I'm going to help you. I'll call you every day. You're going to lead a long, happy life with your family. I promise.

MICHAEL

I wish I had your discipline.

RICHARD

Oh, I struggle -- trust me. I just take it one day at a time.
(wipes Michael's tears)
What do you say to some exercise?

MICHAEL

I'll try my best.

RICHARD

Now, Michael -- I have a camera crew outside. Is it okay with you if I bring them in to film?

(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

(Michael is unsure)

I don't want to do anything you're not comfortable with. But if someone who needs help sees you doing this, they might feel like they can do it too.

Michael considers it. Looks to Madeline.

She nods.

Michael smiles at Richard.

LATER

TV CAMERA POV: GRAINY TV RESOLUTION...

Richard is in a folding chair, facing Michael.

He leads Michael in a series of seated aerobics moves: reaching up, a swimming motion, arm circles.

RICHARD

That's great, Michael -- you're doing so good.

Let's see who can sweat the most.

(smiles to camera)

I hope you're working out with us at home.

(to Michael)

This is great workout spot -- can I move in with you?

Michael giggles. They keep moving.

I./E. STRETCH LIMO/SUNSET STRIP - DAY

Richard sings along (loudly) to Barbra's LOVE THEME FROM A STAR IS BORN on the limo's sound system.

Leonard, now a distinguished elder statesman, sips a glass of champagne, unable to hide how impressed he is by the limo -- *ooh, there's a phone in here.*

He spots something out the window...

LEONARD

Is that...?

Richard looks... It's a gigantic billboard with Richard's grinning face on it:

**THE RICHARD SIMMONS SHOW
TV THAT MAKES YOU SWEAT**

RICHARD
There I am -- hi, Dicky!
(re: the song)
Sing along with me.

Leonard turns up his nose.

RICHARD
(singing)
*Two lights that shine as one
Morning glory and midnight sun*
(to Leonard)
C'mon, Dad -- it's Barbra.

Leonard chuckles -- *why the heck not.*

RICHARD/LEONARD
*Time, we've learned to sail above
Time, won't change the meaning of
one love
Ageless and ever, evergreen*

Richard shrieks with glee as the limo blazes into the distance.

I./E. STRETCH LIMO/HOLLYWOOD HILLS - DAY

Richard and Leonard's limo pulls to a stop by a stunning, all-white Southern Antebellum mansion, guarded by a tall gate.

LEONARD
What's this place?

RICHARD
(his big moment)
...It's my new house.

Leonard's face is unreadable.

The LIMO DRIVER opens the door. Leonard steps out, with Richard close behind him, eager for dad's reaction.

Leonard's eyes drift over the property...

LEONARD
Now this is a house.

Richard has never beamed brighter.

INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Richard, so jazzed, drags Leonard inside.

RICHARD

They used the outside for a scene
in "Gone With the Wind."

Leonard takes it all in. High ceilings. Restored Victorian furniture. Outlandish, colorful artwork. He's in awe.

Six Dalmatian pups bound out of the kitchen. They bark, sniff, and leap around Leonard.

RICHARD

(to the dogs)

No humping -- yes, I'm talking you,
Scarlett.

Leonard chuckles and pats the doggies.

Mauro edges in from the kitchen -- a little nervous.

RICHARD

Dad, I'd like you to meet Mauro, my
assistant, masseuse, and personal
artist.

(gestures around)

He did all these paintings.

LEONARD

Oh -- hi there -- lovely work.

MAURO

I've heard so much about you.

RICHARD

(to Leonard)

Lots of space here... Maybe you and
Mom could move in with me.

Leonard eyes Mauro. Doesn't respond.

RICHARD

You should see Mauro's bedroom --
it's even bigger than mine.

LEONARD

(to Mauro)

You live here?

Mauro shifts in his shoes.

Richard grabs Leonard and drags him back toward the door.

RICHARD
Let's get going. My taping starts soon.

LEONARD
Jeez, Dicky -- we just got here.

INT. SUNSET GOWER STUDIOS - STAGE 4 HALLWAY - DAY

Richard leads Leonard through the pre-show hustle and bustle. Leonard is astonished -- *all this for little Dicky.*

Woody hustles over. Hands Leonard a script.

WOODY
Here's your script, Mr. Simmons.

The blood drains from Leonard's face.

LEONARD
...My script?

RICHARD
I thought it'd be fun to have you on the show. It's a great little skit.

LEONARD
I'm not doing it.

Woody gives Richard a nervous look.

RICHARD
Dad, we're on in five minutes.

LEONARD
I'm not doing it!

The STAFF notice the fuss. Leonard notices them noticing.

WOODY
Mr. Simmons, the set is on stage. We don't have a backup skit. If you don't do this we're -- pardon my language -- we're fucked.

RICHARD
Please, Dad?

Leonard sighs.

INT. SUNSET GOWER STUDIOS - STAGE 4 - DAY

THE RICHARD SIMMONS SHOW POV: Grainy TV static...

The STUDIO AUDIENCE applauds as Richard, in a bright red sweatsuit, leads Leonard, in a cardigan and perfectly pleated slacks, onto a dressing room set.

Leonard acts thoroughly impressed by the "dressing room" -- this guy is a performer through and through.

LEONARD

Well, you really do have your own show now, huh?

RICHARD

Yes, I do.

LEONARD

You're doing really good. I like it. I'm very proud of you, son.

RICHARD

Thanks, Dad.

Leonard eyes a rack of sweatsuits.

LEONARD

But look at all these jogging suits. When are you going to start dressing like an adult?

The audience laughs. Richard feigns being hugely offended.

RICHARD

Well, Dad -- maybe I'll go shopping and find some adult clothes.

Richard winks at the camera. Exits.

Leonard steps toward the sweatsuits. Takes off his cardigan.

He glances around -- *good, no one's looking.*

Leonard takes a bright green sweatsuit jacket off the rack... And slips it on.

He looks at the camera with a huge, self-satisfied grin -- what a ham!

The audience erupts in laughter and applause.

Colorful text is superimposed on the screen:

**WHOEVER YOU ARE
IT'S GOOD TO BE YOURSELF!**

INT. SUNSET GOWER STUDIOS - STAGE 4 HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Leonard steps backstage. Richard rushes toward him.

RICHARD
You were great--

Leonard slaps Richard.

Richard is stunned -- tears form instantly.

The backstage bustle screeches to a halt.

Woody inches closer -- concerned.

LEONARD
(on fire)
I said I didn't want to do it. That
was a complete embarrassment.
(Richard is dumbstruck)
When's the play going to be over,
Dicky?
What are you really going to do?

RICHARD
I--

LEONARD
Do you have any friends?
Are you going to get married?

Richard scrambles for a comeback. He reaches for something.
Anything...

RICHARD
It just so happens I'm dating
someone... Barbra Streisand.

This throws Leonard for a loop.

LEONARD
Well... Good!

Leonard storms off. Richard stands frozen -- destroyed -- and
a liar.

WOODY
(to the staff)
Okay, everyone back to work --
we've got a show to do!

The staff does as they're told. The tension hangs in the air.

WOODY
(approaches Richard)
Are you alright?

RICHARD
(hard)
Get the fuck away from me.
(Woody is stunned)
Fire whoever wrote that skit.

WOODY
...Okay, Richard.

RICHARD
And get me on every talkshow you
can... I need to win an Emmy.

INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - OFFICE - SUNSET

On a table by the window sits a dollhouse -- a striking
replica of Richard's own Antebellum mansion.

Richard stands before it, holding an open delivery box. His
phone is on speaker...

RICHARD
Hi, Mom. Is Dad there?

SHIRLEY (ON PHONE)
...He's busy right now, sweetheart.

Richard reaches into the box. Takes out a doll made in his
own image, complete with mischievous grin.

He places the Richard doll in the dollhouse.

RICHARD
He's been "busy" for months. Did he
get the tape of the show I sent?

SHIRLEY (ON PHONE)
Yes.

He places a Mauro doll in the house.

RICHARD
...Did he watch it?

SHIRLEY (ON PHONE)
...No, Dicky.

Richard sighs. Places a Woody doll in the house.

RICHARD

I don't suppose he told you that I want you guys to come live with me.

SHIRLEY (ON PHONE)

He did... It's not the right time.

RICHARD

You can't be serious. When would be the right time?

Richard gazes at the Shirley doll in his hand. Bitterly places it in the dollhouse.

SHIRLEY (ON PHONE)

...Our home is in New Orleans...
Would you like me to tell Dad anything for you?

RICHARD

...No.

Richard takes the Leonard doll out of the box... Throws it into the house.

The Leonard doll smiles out at him.

SHIRLEY (ON PHONE)

I hope you're not working too hard, baby. You need to remember to take some time for yourself.

Richard notices something outside...

Mauro scurries through the front gate... Into the arms of KEITH (25), sexy and very fit.

RICHARD

...I'm fine.

SHIRLEY (ON PHONE)

Okay, Dicky. I love you.

Shirley hangs up.

Richard watches Mauro and Keith hop into Keith's Thunderbird and speed off.

His heart sinks even lower.

INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - SECRET ROOM - NIGHT

It's very dark... A key turns in the lock. The door creaks open. The lights burst on--

The room is packed with dolls -- a vast assortment of Barbies, Raggedy Anns and Andys, Polly Pockets galore.

Richard slogs to a closet. Opens the double doors.

In the shadowy closet stands a large doll on a pedestal.

He flicks a light switch -- a spotlight hits the doll...

It's Barbra, in a gorgeous red ballgown. It looks exactly like her. This thing must've cost \$10,000.

Richard gazes at the Barbra doll. Sighs.

INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Richard sneaks toward the hushed laughter in the distance.

He peeks around a corner. Spies Mauro and Keith tiptoeing down the hall.

Keith grabs Mauro's ass. Mauro stifles a giggle. They step into Mauro's bedroom and close the door.

Richard creeps to the door... Puts his ear against it...

Gentle moans and giggles drift out from within.

INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - FOYER - SUNRISE

Mauro and Keith share a sweet and passionate kiss.

Mauro glances around. Opens the door.

MAURO
(whispers)
See you soon.

KEITH
(whispers)
We don't have to be so quiet.

Mauro smiles -- embarrassed.

Keith kisses him again. Strides out the door.

Mauro closes it. Turns...

Richard is on the landing. Silhouetted against the early sun.
This startles Mauro. He quickly composes himself.

MAURO
Good morning, Richard.

RICHARD
Ready for our morning calls?

MAURO
...Maybe we should take a day off.

RICHARD
I can't do that.
(long pause)
...Were you safe last night?

MAURO
Excuse me?

RICHARD
With your friend.

MAURO
(thrown)
Oh... Yes, of course.

RICHARD
...Good. I can't lose you.

INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - OFFICE - DAY

Richard and Mauro sit across the desk from one another. State of the art touchtone phones before both of them.

Mauro dials number after number. Tells each to, "*Please hold for Richard Simmons.*"

Richard has a phone to his ear. He smiles down at a photo of Michael Hebranko, who has made an incredible transformation -- he looks to be in the 300lb range, and wears a shining smile.

RICHARD
I'm looking at it now, Michael.
You've done such an amazing job.

MICHAEL (ON PHONE)
It's all thanks to you, Richard.

RICHARD

No. Who was the one sweating? Who was the one saying no to bad foods? Who was it?

MICHAEL (ON PHONE)

(chuckles)

It was me.

RICHARD

I want to show your sweet ass off to the world. You're coming to Los Angeles.

EXT. ANATOMY ASYLUM - DAY

Richard stands at a podium. A velvet drape hides the Anatomy Asylum marquee above him.

FANS buzz before him. TV cameras film.

RICHARD

...And before the big unveiling, I have an huge announcement...

The Richard Simmons Show has been nominated for an Emmy!

(the fans cheer)

So without further ado, allow me to show you the new name for my studio that'll usher in the next phase of my crazy fitness journey...

Richard pulls a rope. The drape falls. The marquee now reads:

SLIMMONS

The crowd hoots and hollers.

RICHARD

Slim -- Simmons -- Slimmons! Get it?

INT. SLIMMONS - STUDIO - DAY

A new lighting grid beams in every color. Duran Duran's HUNGRY LIKE THE WOLF booms through hi-tech speakers.

The room is filled with PEOPLE of all shapes and sizes, including Mauro and Maggie, who's toned and glowing.

Richard stalks down a row of students doing push ups. There's an impudent edge to the way Richard runs the class.

RICHARD
Up -- down -- up -- down.

A few people struggle and whine.

RICHARD
Stop complaining -- you've gotta go
home with that body, not me, so
let's do it!

MINUTES LATER

He leads the group in abdominal crunches.

RICHARD
Absolutely no farting! You people
eat fucking Mexican food and I have
to suffer!

This earns some hearty chuckles.

MINUTES LATER

The students do lunge after lunge -- sweating buckets.
Richard stands by the lone oscillating fan in the studio.

RICHARD
I want you sweating!

He turns off the fan. The class groans.

Richard's eye twitches. He dashes to the open door.

RICHARD
Turn on me and I'll close the doors
like Anne Frank!

An audible gasp from the group.

MINUTES LATER

HUNGRY LIKE THE WOLF fades away. Richard grins and applauds
the class as they applaud him.

RICHARD
Now get your sexy bodies outta
here.

Maggie rushes to him.

MAGGIE

Congratulations about your show...
It doesn't mean you're going to
close this place, does it?

RICHARD

I just changed the name -- why
would I close it?

MAGGIE

You're right -- sorry. I just don't
think I can do this without you.

RICHARD

This place is gonna stay open 'til
I get hit by a Little Debbie truck.
Wanna grab a salad?

INT. SLIMMONS - SALAD BAR - DAY

All red and sparkly now. It's busier than ever.

Richard and Maggie munch salad at a hightop.

RICHARD

Applying to college already? Jeez
Louise, just yesterday your little
girl was a... little girl.

MAGGIE

(chuckles)
And I'm... seeing someone.

RICHARD

Maggie! You nasty little trollop.
Is he a good one?

MAGGIE

He might be the one.
(Richard squeals)
How about you? Anyone special?

RICHARD

(caught off guard)
Oh, no. I'm just so busy. It
wouldn't be fair.

MAGGIE

Really? I always thought you and
Mauro...

Richard looks away like a nervous little boy.

RICHARD

No.
 (forced giggle)
 Mauro? No.

INT. THE TONIGHT SHOW STUDIO - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Richard watches from the wings as THE TONIGHT SHOW's glam and fab guest host, JOAN RIVERS (48), delivers her opening monologue to the LIVE AUDIENCE.

RICHARD

(sotto)
 I made it, Josie.

Woody scurries up behind him.

WOODY

Big things happening... Reagan just lifted the restrictions on TV commercial time.

RICHARD

...Okay. So there'll be like two minute commercials now?

WOODY

Hour long commercials. Guess who's making the first big splash?

Richard raises his eyebrows -- waits for the answer.

WOODY

Jane. Fonda.

RICHARD

What's she selling?

WOODY

(get this)
 Exercise videos.

RICHARD

No fucking way.

WOODY

Want to get out ahead of this?

Richard chews on it.

INT. THE TONIGHT SHOW STUDIO - STAGE - NIGHT

Richard is in the guest chair beside Joan's desk, with Michael Hebranko on his other side.

The audience applauds. We're back from break.

JOAN RIVERS

We're back with fabulous fitness guru Richard Simmons and his protege, Michael Hebranko.

(to Richard and Michael)

Congratulations both of you -- that weight loss is fantastic -- it's just a miracle.

Richard and Michael beam at each other.

JOAN RIVERS

We've got something very special tonight. We have some people on the phone -- fans of Richard -- who've been inspired by him and want to share their stories.

(to the caller)

Trisha -- you there?

TRISHA (THRU SPEAKERS)

(tearful and scared)

...Yes...

RICHARD

Hi, Trisha. How are you?

TRISHA (THRU SPEAKERS)

(whimpers)

...Hi, Richard...

RICHARD

Thanks so much for calling.

More whimpers from Trisha.

JOAN RIVERS

You got your hand down your pants? What's going on over there?

The audience laughs.

Richard senses something serious...

RICHARD

Trisha, are you okay?

TRISHA (THRU SPEAKERS)
 ...I'm sorry to do this here, but I
 didn't know how else to talk to
 you... I have to kill myself.

The audience chuckles nervously.

JOAN RIVERS
 Gimme a break -- this is a prank.
 (to someone on set)
 Hang up on this joker.

RICHARD
 Don't you dare.

Richard stares into the camera. Knows this is the real deal.

RICHARD
 Tell me what the problem is,
 Trisha. What's wrong?

TRISHA (THRU SPEAKERS)
 ...I weigh four-hundred-and-twenty-
 seven pounds. I look like... I just
 look like a pig.
 My husband left me two weeks ago --
 he said it made him sick to look at
 me...
 'Cause I'm disgusting.
 No man wants to be near me...
 His gun's in my hand.

RICHARD
 (laser focused)
 Now, Trisha -- I want you to listen
 to me...

INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - TV ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Mauro watches the show -- transfixed.

RICHARD (ON TV)
 ...When I was a little boy, another
 boy who I thought was my friend
 attacked me because of what I was.
 That was the first time I wished I
 was dead...

INT. SIMMONS RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Leonard and Shirley's eyes are glued to the show.

RICHARD (ON TV)

...When I was nineteen years old, I lived in Italy. Everyone there was so beautiful -- and I was so disgusted by the way I looked that I starved myself down to a hundred-and-nineteen pounds in two and a half months. When I think back on that now, I know I was trying to kill myself.

Leonard and Shirley look at each other -- they had no idea.

INT. THE TONIGHT SHOW STUDIO - STAGE - THAT MOMENT

Woody watches from behind a camera. Eyes fixed on Richard. Not breathing.

RICHARD

...I ended up in a hospital, and someone asked me a question that changed my life...
 "Do you want to live, or do you want to die?"
 ...And I just chose to live...
 Are you still with me, Trisha?

TRISHA (THRU SPEAKERS)

...I'm here...

RICHARD

You're only here once.
 God has bestowed you with life.
 He could have made you a rose that lasted seven days.
 Or a butterfly that only lasted three weeks.
 But He chose to give you the highest form of life...
 That of a human being.
 And He gave you the ability to heal yourself.
 And I'm here to tell you that it's possible.
 And you're not alone...
 I want you to stay on the line, and give your number to whoever's taking the calls. And I'm going to call you the second I'm done here.
 And I'm going to call you tomorrow.
 And I'm going to do whatever it takes...
 Can you do that for me, Trisha?

TRISHA (THRU SPEAKERS)
 ...Yes, Richard.

Richard exhales.

JOAN RIVERS
 ...I just had a coronary. Uh --
 let's go to break. Go to break.

STAGE MANAGER (O.S.)
 We're clear! Back in two minutes!

Richard slumps back in his chair. Michael grabs his hand.

Woody dashes to the exhausted Richard.

WOODY
 That's going to get you your Emmy.

RICHARD
 ...I need a break. I'm going to go
 home for a while.

EXT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL - DAY

Richard gazes up at the bell tower that stretches to the heavens.

EXT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL SCHOOL - SPORTS FIELD - DAY

Richard stands on the 50 yard line of the empty field. He gazes down at the spot where Tom attacked him.

He turns and looks at the bleachers...

A boy with a frizzy afro, in a khaki school uniform, is slouched there...

It's YOUNG RICHARD. Overweight. Unhappy. Alone.

The sound of boys playing football whispers in the wind.

INT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL SCHOOL - GYM - DAY

From a small stage, Richard leads a bunch of MIDDLE SCHOOLERS in an aerobics routine.

Many are overweight. They're having fun, but struggling to keep up.

RICHARD
 C'mon, my children!
 You can keep up with an old man,
 can't you?
 Let's go now -- kids are supposed
 to have energy!

He focuses on two rather overweight kids...

Three larger children...

The heaviest boy in the class.

EXT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL SCHOOL - DAY

Richard strolls down a walkway with the principal, Father Lawanga, who we may remember as Richard's old PE teacher.

RICHARD
 Why are the kids so fat?

FATHER LAWANGA
 You noticed. Well, they took PE out
 of the curriculum. And that
 cafeteria food...

RICHARD
 The school got rid of PE?

FATHER LAWANGA
 No school is doing it anymore.

RICHARD
 (shocked)
 No school in the state?

FATHER LAWANGA
 ...In the country.

RICHARD
 (beside himself)
 If these kids don't get exercise
 they're going to be miserable.
 Someone has to do something.

FATHER LAWANGA
 ...If God wills it.

Richard stews on this.

INT. SIMMONS RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Not much has changed since his youth. Richard gazes at the splendid array of food inside the big, white refrigerator.

The front door creaks open and slams shut.

LENNY rushes in. He's now late thirties and a bit chubby, but still the spitting image of Richard. His expression is grave.

LENNY

There you are. I thought you were flying in this morning.

RICHARD

I was teaching a class. What's wrong, Lenny?

LENNY

Dad's surgery didn't go well.

RICHARD

...But it was just kidney stones.

INT. TOURO INFIRMARY - INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - NIGHT

Richard edges inside. Leonard is hooked up to so many machines. So frail.

Richard nearly crumbles.

RICHARD

...Dad?

LEONARD

(drugged to the gills)

...Milty...

Richard sits on the edge of a chair next to Leonard's bed.

LEONARD

How are you?

RICHARD

I'm okay... I was nominated for an Emmy.

LEONARD

That's fantastic... I'm sorry I slapped you.

RICHARD

It's okay... I had it coming.

LEONARD

...Nah...

RICHARD

Is there anything I can do for you?

LEONARD

Yeah... Pray for me...

RICHARD

Of course. I already did on the way over here.

LEONARD

...Pray with the pope...

RICHARD

...Huh?

LEONARD

Are you still dating Barbra?

RICHARD

...Yes.

LEONARD

I want you to marry her... Could you do that?

Leonard drifts off to sleep.

Richard watches Leonard's heartbeat monitor slowly, weakly
BEEP BEEP BEEP.

He dwells on his father's words... Comes to a decision.

INT. ORNATE HALLWAY - DAY

Richard, his heart racing, follows a silk-suited MAN down a red carpeted floor, past Catholic works of art.

The man opens the double doors at the end of the hall...

The light blinds Richard.

He shields his eyes.

RICHARD

Oh God...

Richard lowers his hands, he is in...

INT. APOSTOLIC PALACE - PAPAL CHAMBERS - DAY

Light beams through the tall windows.

POPE JOHN PAUL II (62) stands before Richard. In his pure white papal vestments he could be God himself.

Richard is thunderstruck.

POPE JOHN PAUL II
My child, thank you for spreading
your message of health. You do the
world a great service.

RICHARD
...You're welcome...
(getting it together)
Your holiness, my father is very
ill. He asked me to pray with you.

POPE JOHN PAUL II
When was your last confession?

RICHARD
Oh... Twenty-five-ish years ago...
I'm sorry.

POPE JOHN PAUL II
Would you like to confess your
sins?

RICHARD
(ugh)
If you want.

POPE JOHN PAUL II
We can then pray for your father.

RICHARD
Okay...
(deep breath)
Forgive me, father, for I have
sinned.
It's been -- we've been over this.
...I don't always honor the sabbath
day. But I do pray -- quite a bit.
...I curse sometimes -- bad words,
not witch hexes or anything...

The pope's eyes penetrate Richard's soul...

RICHARD
(gives in, gets real)
There's been so much gluttony.
(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

For years, I just ate. And I've gotten better, but I can feel it -- I can always feel it. Pulling at me. Every second I'm this close to stuffing my face with french fries or something...

(getting tearful)

There's something inside me... I feel -- it's not lust... It's like sadness and anger where lust should be. But it's terrible. It burns.

(manic)

I haven't honored my parents -- my father, especially. I was so awful to him. He wasn't the nicest guy either -- but hell -- heck -- he tried hard, and I was just some fat little reptile -- eating everything, and poking at him.

...And now he's gonna die...

I don't even know what I'm doing. I told him I was dating Barbra Streisand, for crying out loud. I'm insane -- I think I'm just insane.

(desperate)

I'm a complete phony. I always tell people they can do it -- when I don't even think I'll be able to make it through the day.

These people just count on me -- it's so much pressure. If I'm not available for one second, I think somebody's gonna drop dead.

And I won't be able to handle that if it happens again.

I'm tired, father. I'm really fucking tired...

POPE JOHN PAUL II

You give of yourself too freely.

RICHARD

But isn't that what Jesus did?

POPE JOHN PAUL II

And look what happened to him.

This love you give away... You must keep some inside you.

Richard tries to digest this.

POPE JOHN PAUL II

Let us pray.

The pope kneels. Richard falls to his knees. They bow their heads.

POPE JOHN PAUL II
 Carissimi Jube domne benedicere
 Dominus Simmons per patris
 discrimen salutis...

Richard peeks up at the pope -- *looks like good praying.*

INT. PASADENA CIVIC AUDITORIUM - THEATRE - DAY

The lower level is filled with tuxedo and gown clad SOAP OPERA STARS and TALKSHOW HOSTS. The gallery teems with fervent SOAP FANS.

Richard, in a tux, squirms in his seat next to Woody and his wife, NORA (42).

SUSAN LUCCI (36), the picture of daytime TV glamour, stands behind the podium on stage.

SUSAN LUCCI
 And the winner for outstanding talk
 or service series is...
 (opens the envelope)
 The Richard Simmons Show!

The gallery erupts. The soap stars clap politely.

Richard goes absolutely insane as he rushes onto the stage. Makes Roberto Benigni look like Angela Lansbury.

He grabs the Emmy statue from Susan -- and practically makes out with her.

Finally, he takes the mic. On his way to tears...

RICHARD
 Dad... We won an Emmy.
 Thank you for being on my show, and
 letting me get a little glimpse of
 the incredible performer you are.
 There's so much I want to say.
 There's so much I want to know
 about you.
 I can't wait to see you again and
 talk to you.
 Maybe I'll finally work up the
 nerve to ask if I can shake your
 hand.
 ...I'm so sorry, Dad...
 (MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

But I know you're going to be okay,
because God loves you.
I'm going to come straight to New
Orleans and put this Emmy in your
hands.
I love you, Dad.
Everything I do is for you.

The "get off the stage" music plays. The crowd applauds.

Richard wipes his tears. Stands tall. The weight of the world
lifted from his shoulders.

He scurries into darkness of...

BACKSTAGE

...and is delighted to see Woody. Richard wraps him in a hug.

He realizes Woody is crying.

RICHARD

Dry those tears. It's a happy day.

WOODY

No, Richard. He's gone... Your
father died.

The Emmy slips from Richard's grasp -- crashes to the floor.

INT. HOLLYWOOD ROOSEVELT - BLOSSOM BALLROOM - NIGHT

Old Hollywood architecture at its finest. Drunk as fuck Emmy
AFTER PARTIERS schmooze and flirt.

Richard, with a dazed, forced smile on his face and his
dented Emmy in hand, accepts passing congratulations.

PHIL DONAHUE (50), white haired and gregarious, bounds over.
Gives Richard a good natured slug to the arm.

PHIL DONAHUE

Son of a bitch -- I thought I had
that trophy in the bag. Does this
mean I need to start working out on
my show, too?

Richard doesn't respond. His glazed eyes are fixed on a woman
in a red ballgown weaving her way toward him...

Phil's blabbering fades into the background...

The red woman glides up to Richard... Brushes her hair away from her face...

It's her... Barbra.

She's aged ever so gracefully. That youthful gleam in her eyes. That soothing smile on her lips.

BARBRA
Well hello, cutie.

RICHARD
Barbra... Thank God you're here.

BARBRA
Look at that trophy...
I'm so proud of you.

RICHARD
But my dad didn't live to see it.

BARBRA
None of us live forever...
But I keep making music so my voice
can live on after death.
...You know what you have to do...
You can keep helping people long
after you're gone.

She runs her fingers through his frizzy locks.

BARBRA
...And Richard...
Save the children.

Richard's eyes widen. He understands completely.

Barbra purses her lips...

Richard purses his...

Each mouth drawn toward the other...

An inch from heavenly connection...

They--

WOODY (O.S.)
Richard!

Richard snaps back to reality -- Barbra is gone.

Woody stands beside him -- deeply concerned.

WOODY

Phil Donahue said you went
catatonic. Let's have the driver
take you home.

Richard's spine straightens. His eyes are bonfires.

RICHARD

I'm not going anywhere.
How fast can you get a crew
together? We need to start
shooting.

WOODY

(confused)
The show's on hiatus.

RICHARD

Not for the show.

WOODY

(gets it)
...Oh... I can do it fast.

RICHARD

And I need to get PE back in
schools. But not that jock shit --
know what I mean?

WOODY

...Not really. But -- uh...

He spots an overweight, balding man nearby.

WOODY

Roger -- c'mere a minute.

The man grins at Woody. Struts toward him.

WOODY

(to Richard)
He'll know what to do.

Richard sizes the man up. This guy drips arrogance, and has a
body like a too-full garbage bag.

WOODY

Richard Simmons, meet Roger Ailes.

Richard shakes ROGER AILES' sweaty paw.

WOODY

Roger worked for me on Mike
Douglas.

ROGER AILES
Before I left to get a president
elected.

RICHARD
Which one?

ROGER AILES
Nixon.

RICHARD
(slight grimace)
...Great.
(steamrolling)
I need to get a law passed to get
PE back in the school system.

ROGER AILES
I always hated PE.

RICHARD
Me too! Wouldn't it be better if
instead of playing sports we just
danced around?

Roger stares at him -- completely unimpressed by the idea.

ROGER AILES
You're gonna need to get a bill
passed through congress. Get in
touch with George Miller --
representative from California.
Total media whore. Loves
celebrities. But you'll still need
a petition -- those idiots love
signatures.

RICHARD
Yes!

Richard jumps Roger with a hug. Roger wrenches free.

RICHARD
(re: Roger's big belly)
If you ever want to give me a call,
please don't hesitate... I think I
can help you.

ROGER AILES
Fuck off.

Roger stomps off. Woody puts a tender hand on Richard's arm.

WOODY

Maybe you shouldn't do all this at once. Take a minute to grieve.

RICHARD

There's no time.
God could take me at any moment.

Richard dashes outside to the...

EXT. HOLLYWOOD ROOSEVELT - RED CARPET - CONTINUOUS

Flashbulbs flare. FANS shriek. Richard poses for the cameras.

REPORTER (O.S.)

Richard -- what's next for you?

NEWS CAMERA POV:

Richard flashes a maniacal grin right at us.

RICHARD

I'm going to do something that's never been seen before. I'm going to reach every person in America -- every child in every school. Richard Simmons is going to save every overweight person in the whole wide world!

INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Richard stares at the smiling Leonard doll in his dollhouse.

Richard wears his emotions now. His being has been shattered.

The Emmy lies toppled on Richard's desk. There's a phone to his ear.

LENNY (ON PHONE)

...All of a sudden he was just gone...

RICHARD

I needed him to hear my speech.

LENNY (ON PHONE)

I'm so sorry, Dicky...
I'll start planning the funeral tomorrow.

RICHARD
 ...I can't go.

LENNY (ON PHONE)
 Dicky--

RICHARD
 I'll pay for everything. I'll order
 every white rose in New Orleans.
 But I'm not coming.

LENNY (ON PHONE)
 One of these days you're going to
 have to grow up.

Lenny hangs up.

Richard screams -- guttural -- primal.

He claws at his hair -- his neck.

Agony. Rage. Like an angel cast out of heaven.

He collapses into his chair. Draws heavy, wheezing breaths.

Richard stares outside. Clouds drift past the waning moon.

The moon disappears. The darkness turns to the pink sky of...

SUNRISE

Richard stares at his dollhouse...

The Leonard doll is gone.

In front of the house sits a small, distinguished urn.

There's a note beside it:

**A LITTLE PIECE OF DAD
 LOVE, MOM**

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

The size of an airport hangar. Woody has assembled a team of
 PRODUCERS, CREW, and PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS.

There's a nervous energy. Woody's eyes are on the doors.

They swing open. Light floods in. A silhouette appears...

A woman with a big hairdo, in a long, thick coat. This bad bitch struts inside...

It's Richard, in a half-black, half-white wig and Dalmatian fur coat -- Cruella De Vil.

The staff gape at him.

PRODUCER/GAFFER/PA

Sorry for your loss./ My
condolences, Richard./ I'm so
sorry.

RICHARD

Fuck it.
Welcome to my church.
There are no limits to what we can
do here.
We are going to provide every
person in America with the tools
they need to live a healthy
lifestyle.
We are going to inspire, educate,
and sell.
And we're going to have the time of
our fucking lives doing it.
This is the new frontier.
I'm buying my airtime now.
And everybody's gonna see me.

INT. RICHARD'S ROOM / INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Barbra's PAPA CAN YOU HEAR ME rips at our heartstrings as we intercut between a studio being assembled and Richard putting on his new armor...

--RICHARD'S ROOM: He slowly, methodically spreads foundation on his face. Covers the wrinkles around his eyes and mouth.

--WAREHOUSE: Three sets are built at once: a kitchen, an exercise studio, and a talk show set.

--RICHARD'S ROOM: He sprays bald spot concealer on his thinning crown.

--WAREHOUSE: Telephones are placed on row after row of desks.

--RICHARD'S ROOM: He pulls on a pair of red-and-white striped dolphin shorts.

--WAREHOUSE: A huge digital **SALES TRACKER** is mounted on a wall.

--RICHARD'S ROOM: He sprays his legs with PAM 'til they glisten like a basted ham.

--WAREHOUSE: Five state of the art TV cameras are wheeled in.

--RICHARD'S ROOM: He pulls on a red tank top. It glitters with Swarovski crystals, and reads: **FAREWELL TO FAT**

--WAREHOUSE: The studio lights blast on.

--RICHARD'S ROOM: Richard, ready for sparkly battle, stares at himself in a full length mirror... He looks amazing. Magical. One of a kind...

But his eyes are dead.

INT. RICHARD'S STUDIO - DAY

The warehouse has become a studio that would make Paramount drool.

The rows of AUDIENCE MEMBERS murmur with anticipation.

Richard, with a sharklike focus, finds his mark in the middle of the talk show set.

Woody stands beside one of the cameras trained on Richard.

Woody thrusts a finger toward Richard--

WOODY

Action!

A mask of a lively grin crashes onto Richard's face.

RICHARD

(to camera)

Isn't it time to deal with the
problems in your life?
Isn't it time to deal with the
things that are happening to you?

He holds up a **DEAL-A-MEAL** food card wallet.

RICHARD

Well it's time to Deal-A-Meal!

The audience cheers--

QUICK SHOTS:

--The rows of phones are now manned by OPERATORS. Their switchboards light up. They pick up their phones.

--The digital sales tracker is at 0... It flickers to 1... 2... 3 -- the numbers begin to move lighting fast -- into the hundreds -- hundreds of thousands -- millions--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. SLIMMONS - STUDIO - DAY

Richard is sickly skinny. His afro is a rat's nest. Dark circles mar his eyes.

Richard attempts to lead an aerobics CLASS. But he's spent. Every movement is labored.

RICHARD
(near deadpan)
Right and left and right and...

Richard grinds to a stop -- defeated. He beckons to Mauro.

Worry dances across Maggie's face.

Mauro rushes to Richard.

MAURO
Are you feeling alright?

RICHARD
I'm fine. Take over for a minute.

MAURO
Of course.
(to the class)
Uh -- who's ready to go swimming?
Let's do the backstroke!

Richard slogs out the door.

INT. SLIMMONS - RESTROOM - MINUTES LATER

Richard gazes at the three black diet pills in his hand...

He exhales. Pops them. Swallows 'em dry.

INT. RICHARD'S STUDIO - HALLWAY - DAY

Richard, in a purple zoot suit, stalks down a hallway lined with men in SUITS.

Woody follows close behind. His concerned gaze locked firmly on Richard.

SUIT #1

We should do another workout video--

SUIT #2

How about Richard Simmons low fat salad spray--

SUIT #3

Cheese puffs. Richard Simmons cheese puffs--

SUIT #4

The Richard Simmons cruise--

SUIT #5

An official Richard Simmons Halloween costume--

QUICK SERIES OF EXERCISE VIDEO INTROS:

--Richard on a set decorated with musical notes. He's got more manic energy than he knows what to do with.

RICHARD

It's "Sweatin' to the Oldies 4!"

--Richard on a set made to look like a commercial district street corner.

RICHARD

--"Sweatin' to the Oldies 5!"

--Richard on a disco dance floor set.

RICHARD

--"Disco Sweat!"

--Richard on a city park set.

RICHARD

--"Dance Your Pants Off!"

--Richard on a health club set, with a row of ELDERLY PEOPLE in jogging suits behind him.

RICHARD
 --"Richard Simmons and the Silver
 Foxes!"

INT. THE ROSEANNE SHOW STUDIO - STAGE - DAY

THE ROSEANNE SHOW POV:

Richard, with amphetamine gusto, forces ROSEANNE BARR (48), at peak annoying, to simultaneously bite into a cheeseburger with him in a disturbing reimagining of LADY AND THE TRAMP.

The LIVE AUDIENCE cheers and catcalls.

He tosses the burger aside and plants a big, wet, never-ending kiss on her lips.

ROSEANNE BARR
 Nooo! Urgh--

She finally wrenches free.

He giggles. She shrieks and shrieks and shrieks.

MINUTES LATER

Richard is seated beside Roseanne. They've finally made it to the interview portion -- and it's gotten contentious...

ROSEANNE BARR
 Diets have never ever worked for me, and I think the majority of people they don't work for either. And I can't exercise--

RICHARD
 What do you mean you can't exercise?

ROSEANNE BARR
 I don't want to--

RICHARD
 You don't want to, fine--

ROSEANNE BARR
 And I resent you calling me lazy for that.

RICHARD

I think you're lazy. And I want to get PE back in school so these kids don't have the childhoods we did.

ROSEANNE BARR

Well I don't think exercise is going to help kids lose weight.

Richard is done with this bullshit. He turns to the camera.

RICHARD

You watching at home. I need you to go to Richard Simmons dot com, and sign my petition.

INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - NIGHT

Richard, in a coat and baseball cap, skulks down an aisle. His greedy eyes scan food item after delicious food item.

He stops at an end-cap display.

It is filled with Richard Simmons food products -- every package bears his grinning face: one calorie salad spray, low fat cheese puffs, fat free buttery toffee popcorn, etc.

He's drawn to the candy bar rack. Glances around...

Grabs a SNICKERS. Rips it open. Devours.

3 MUSKETEERS. Down his throat.

MOUNDS. Inhales it.

He ditches the wrappers behind the Kotex boxes.

EXT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - MOMENTS LATER

Richard rushes out. Heads for the shadows.

A digital muzak version of Barbra's YOU DON'T BRING ME FLOWERS blasts out of his pocket -- startles him.

He takes out his bulky flip phone. Answers.

RICHARD

Yes?

LENNY (ON PHONE)

Dicky... Mom is sick.
You need to get down here.

A knife in Richard's gut.

RICHARD
...I can't -- I have all these
appearances lined up--

LENNY (ON PHONE)
Dicky--

RICHARD
You don't understand -- it's for
the kids. I have some very
important things to do--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. THE ED SULLIVAN THEATRE - NIGHT

Richard, in an elaborate turkey costume and headdress, jumps up and down on THE LATE SHOW stage.

RICHARD
(to the audience)
Get up! Get up! Get up! Get up!

The AUDIENCE cheers and rises.

DAVID LETTERMAN (50) rolls his eyes from behind his desk.

RICHARD
I want PE to be fun for kids.
Dancing -- laughing -- sweating.
Like this!

PAUL SHAFFER'S BAND breaks into TUTTI FRUTTI.

Richard shakes his tail feathers to the delight of the crowd.

He backs his gyrating behind toward David, finally rubbing his ass on Letterman's shoulder.

David grabs a fire extinguisher from behind his desk -- shoots a massive plume of white smoke at Richard.

Richard shrieks and stumbles. The audience howls.

Richard gags and coughs as the fire extinguisher smog swirls.

He falls to his knees. The coughing fit won't stop.

The audience stops cheering.

DAVID LETTERMAN

...Shit.

INT. PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Richard, in a hospital gown, lies in bed -- wheezing.

A DOCTOR stands over him.

DOCTOR

Asthma and a fire extinguisher
aren't a good mix.
But I'm more concerned about your
test results. Elevated liver
enzymes -- your blood pressure is
through the roof.

RICHARD

When can I get back to my normal
routine?

DOCTOR

There's nothing normal about your
routine. You have to take better
care of yourself.

RICHARD

...I will. There's just one more
thing I have to do.

The doctor gives him a skeptical, stern look.

DOCTOR

Mr. Simmons...
Do you want to live, or do you want
to die?

That question again... Richard averts his eyes.

INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mauro rubs his oiled hands up Richard's bare legs.

Richard is lying on his front on a massage table. A towel
covers his butt.

MAURO

I've never felt you this tense. You
need to slow down.

RICHARD

You need to not tell me what to do.

Mauro gazes at the back of Richard's frizzy head... Makes up his mind.

RICHARD
I just need a few thousand more signatures--

MAURO
Turn over.

RICHARD
(turning over)
--Once I go on Howard Stern my petition'll be golden--

Mauro kisses Richard on the lips.

Richard freezes.

Mauro stares into his eyes... Slips his hand beneath Richard's towel.

MAURO
(whispers)
You're wearing yourself out...
I'm worried about you...
Just relax...

Tears form in Richard's eyes. He blinks them down his temples.

Mauro's hand moves up and down beneath the towel.

Richard quietly sobs.

MAURO
...It's okay...

Mauro lowers his head for another kiss--

Richard turns away.

RICHARD
Please leave.

Mauro's eyes go wide. He whips his hand out from under the towel.

MAURO
I'm so sorry. We don't have to do anything. I just wanted you to feel better.

RICHARD

...I need you to move out. I'll pay for an apartment. But you can't stay here.

MAURO

You're tired. Let's talk about it in the morning.

RICHARD

No.

Richard still can't look at Mauro.

Mauro is devastated. He takes one last look at Richard...

And drags himself out the door.

INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Richard stares at the smiling Mauro doll in the dollhouse.

He takes it in his hand...

Tosses it in the trash.

INT. RICHARD'S STUDIO - BOARDROOM - DAY

Richard sits at the head of a long table. His blank eyes stare straight ahead.

Woody is next to him. The suits take up the other seats.

SUIT #1

United wants you on their in-flight safety video.

SUIT #2

Richard Simmons frozen dinners--

SUIT #3

A Richard Simmons theme park -- I mean the rides create themselves--

RICHARD

No.

All the eyebrows raise.

RICHARD

We're shutting down. You all can go.

No one moves.

WOODY

You heard him -- get the hell outta here.

The suits stand. Glare. And filter out.

Richard gives Woody a sad smile.

RICHARD

You're fired too, Woody.

Woody lays his hand on Richard's. Chuckles...

WOODY

I know.

INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Richard takes the Woody doll out of the dollhouse.

DAY

Richard looks like he's been sitting here for hours. Because he has. His desk is covered with photos of overweight people.

He holds a photo. It's him and Joanie, the lady he brought on stage at the Minneapolis mall.

Richard speaks into the phone...

RICHARD

I'm sorry, Joanie. I'm glad my calls helped you -- but I just can't do it anymore.

JOANIE (ON PHONE)

(crying)
I'm gonna miss you.

RICHARD

I'll be thinking about you.

Joanie hangs up.

Richard rubs his eyes. Picks up another photo...

It's Michael Hebranko and Richard on the set of THE TONIGHT SHOW, grinning with their arms around each other.

A smile flits across Richard face.

He dials a number. It rings...

MADELINE (ON PHONE)
Hello?

RICHARD
Madeline? It's good to hear your
voice -- it's been so long. It's
Richard.

MADELINE (ON PHONE)
...I know.

RICHARD
Is Michael there?

MADELINE (ON PHONE)
...Michael is dead, Richard.

RICHARD
(heart plummets)
...What happened?

MADELINE (ON PHONE)
You stopped calling... He gained it
all back.

Richard searches for words. But none come.

Tears flirt with his eyelids as his gaze drifts across the
photos on the table.

EXT. SLIMMONS - DAY

Maggie leads the first CLASS of the day up the walkway.

There's a sign tacked to the door...

SLIMMONS IS CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Maggie's heart breaks.

She turns and plods back toward the street.

INT. NEW AMSTERDAM THEATRE - NIGHT

Richard, front row center in the sold out theatre, watches
Barbra sing LOVE THEME FROM A STAR IS BORN.

She spots him. Winks. Sings right to him.

He is in awe.

INT. NEW AMSTERDAM THEATRE - BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Richard races down the busy hallway... He spots a closed door, with Barbra's autograph in gold on it.

He steels himself. Opens the door. Ducks inside.

INT. NEW AMSTERDAM THEATRE - DRESSING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Richard stares at Barbra, who wears a delighted smile.

BARBRA

Richard -- it's so nice to finally meet you.

RICHARD

I love you.

BARBRA

I love you too, doll. You're so hilarious.

RICHARD

(deep breath)

When I was a kid, I was miserable.
I was fat. Lonely...
My father hated me...
But one day I heard your voice, and
it felt like you were singing just
for me.
All of a sudden I wasn't so alone.
You didn't look like other girls...
And I definitely didn't look like
other boys.
...You saved my life...

He drifts to Barbra.

She takes his hand -- genuinely touched.

RICHARD

One of the last things I ever told
my dad was that I was dating you...
...I don't want to be a liar
anymore...
I know I'm nothing special...
But I think I'm just a good example
of just being myself.
And so are you.
...Maybe I can make things right...

Richard gets down on one knee.

Richard takes a Tiffany ring box out of his pocket.

He stares deep into Barbra's wide eyes.

And opens the box to her. The five carat diamond engagement ring sparkles.

RICHARD

Barbra Joan Streisand, will you
marry me?

BARBRA

(stunned)
...Richard...
Aren't you gay?

Richard remains frozen a long moment.

His head lowers. His eyes find the ground.

Richard rises. Trudges out the door--

But he remembers something. Turns back...

RICHARD

I met you once when I was little...
You said if I wanted to be a
performer there was one thing I
needed to remember...
What is it?

An angelic twinkle lights up Barbra's eyes... Somehow she knows exactly what he's talking about...

BARBRA

Don't give the audience everything.
...Save some of you for yourself...

This washes over Richard... He nods.

INT. THE HOWARD STERN STUDIO - DAY

HOWARD STERN (45), with his Samson hair and dark shades, sits behind his console. ROBIN QUIVERS (47), his sidekick, is perched in her glass booth.

They're grilling Richard, who hasn't slept all night and has made some deal with the devil that's giving him the power to withstand it...

HOWARD STERN
 (knowing grin)
 You have everything a woman would
 want, and yet you refuse to get
 married. Are you dating a woman
 right now...? Maybe a man?

QUICK FLASH:

The first class at Anatomy Asylum. Mauro grins and dances
 toward Richard.

INT. THE HOWARD STERN STUDIO - AS BEFORE

RICHARD
 I'm not good for one person -- I'm
 good for a lot of people.
 But I came here to talk about
 congress--

HOWARD STERN
 Did your father love you?

RICHARD
 Oh yes. He was a wonderful man.

HOWARD STERN
 Were you a loved child?

RICHARD
 Of course.

QUICK FLASH:

Young Richard is nearly naked on Dr. Hallman's exam table.
 Hallman grips Richard's belly fat with a pair of calipers.

Richard's misty eyes plead to Leonard. Leonard looks away.

INT. THE HOWARD STERN STUDIO - AS BEFORE

HOWARD STERN
 Then why did you eat so much as a
 child? What did you think was
 bothering you?

RICHARD
 Listen for a second. Stop it --
 stop it!

(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I need you to tell everyone to go to my website and sign my petition to get PE back in schools. This is the most important crusade I've ever had in my life--

HOWARD STERN

(suggestive)

Growing up, did you have some issue that was bothering you that you felt you had to keep like a secret or something?

RICHARD

(getting frazzled)

No -- I uh -- was just very unhappy because I was overweight--

HOWARD STERN

But why were you overweight? Did you just--

RICHARD

Because I just loved food--

QUICK FLASH:

Young Richard, in his checkerboard pajamas, gorges on food straight out of the refrigerator.

INT. THE HOWARD STERN STUDIO - AS BEFORE

HOWARD STERN

Richard. You've dealt with weight loss your whole life -- you can't be that naive.

ROBIN QUIVERS

Richard, you're deflecting.

HOWARD STERN

You're deflecting my question.

RICHARD

(whispers, joking)

What does that mean? I don't know what that means.

ROBIN QUIVERS

Did you have friends growing up?

HOWARD STERN
Probably not.

RICHARD
Uh -- I pretty much stayed to
myself.

HOWARD STERN
(to Robin)
I invited Richard over for dinner
once. He dragged me in the bathroom
and told me I was his only friend.

ROBIN QUIVERS
Is that true, Richard?

RICHARD
(to Howard, hurt)
You promised not to talk about
that.

HOWARD STERN
(very suggestive)
So growing up, you never slept over
at the other little boys' homes?
They never invited you to sleep in
their rooms with them?

QUICK FLASH:

Tom rears back with his lacrosse stick -- swings at young
Richard--

RICHARD
No--

INT. THE HOWARD STERN STUDIO - AS BEFORE
Something inside Richard breaks. He screams.
Richard bolts out of the studio.

EXT. STREETS OF MANHATTAN - DAY
Richard runs screaming down the street. PEDESTRIANS stare.

EXT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL - NIGHT
A disheveled Richard skulks through the church's doorway.

INT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL - SUNRISE

Richard is seated, with perfect posture, in the front row of pews. He gazes up at the giant crucified Jesus on the stage.

His hair is a mess. His eyes bloodshot.

The door swings open. Lenny pushes Shirley, now ninety years old and frail, but still glamorous, in a wheelchair up to Richard.

Lenny glares at Richard and sits a couple rows back.

RICHARD

(takes Shirley's hand)

Do you think Dad's watching us now?

SHIRLEY

He is -- and he loves you. He had a hard time of it as a performer. He just didn't want to see you get hurt... But he would tell everyone in town that his son was on television. Once he said that his finest performance was being your father.

This should comfort Richard... But it doesn't.

SHIRLEY

This was forwarded to the house...

Shirley hands Richard an envelope... With a **CONGRESSIONAL SEAL** on it.

Richard opens the letter. Reads...

RICHARD

I've been invited to speak to congress...

(sighs)

...I'm almost done, Mom...

INT. FUNERAL HOME - VIEWING ROOM - DAY

Shirley lies dead in a pink coffin. In a pink dress. Surrounded by a sea of pink roses.

INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Richard takes the Shirley doll out of his dollhouse.

Only the Richard doll remains inside.

EXT. THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL - DAY

NEWS CAMERA POV:

From the steps of the Capitol Building, a NEWS REPORTER speaks directly to camera.

NEWS REPORTER

Fitness guru Richard Simmons will speak before congress today to propose a bill that would reintroduce physical education into the school system.

Richard, in a grey suit, appears behind the reporter. Stalks up the steps.

NEWS REPORTER

Richard, could we have a few words?

Richard blows past the reporter.

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

POLITICIANS mill about. Wheeling, dealing, and scheming.

Richard spots the mustache known as Representative GEORGE MILLER (55) at the other end of the hall.

RICHARD

(rushing over)
George -- George Miller!

GEORGE MILLER

(grins)
Glad to have you livening up the house today.

RICHARD

I've waited for this for so long. I really believe my Fit Kids Bill will change America.

George studies the passionate desperation on Richard's face. His smile fades.

GEORGE MILLER

I've got to be honest with you... This dog and pony show might not result in much.

(MORE)

GEORGE MILLER (CONT'D)

This government can barely get a pothole fixed.
If you want to convince these folks, you're going to have to make the speech of your life.

Determination floods Richard's eyes...

But doubt creeps in. Does he still have it in him?

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

George Miller sits behind a dais with his fellow REPRESENTATIVES.

Richard stands before a microphone, facing the politicians, in front of rows of SPECTATORS.

GEORGE MILLER

First -- uh -- is Richard Simmons.
Uh -- who needs little introduction...

Mr. Simmons is a national leading fitness expert and advocate, who has helped millions of overweight men and women lose close to three million pounds by adopting sensible, balanced eating programs and exercise regimes that are energetic, fun, and motivating...
Mr. Simmons has prevailed over his own weight problems as a child, and has helped tailor fitness workouts for all Americans, including the physically challenged and older Americans...

(nods to Richard)

Mr. Simmons, the floor is yours.

Richard glances at the CSPAN camera filming him.

He takes a breath. Speaks into the microphone.

RICHARD

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.
My name is Richard Simmons, and I never took a PE class in my life.
I was overweight and a little lethargic. A little short.
At St. Louis Cathedral School in New Orleans, it was all sports -- and I was not a jock...

INT. SIMMONS RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lenny watches Richard on CSPAN.

RICHARD (ON TV)

...I spent my elementary school, my high school, and my college, sitting on the benches, watching everyone play sports. And to get back at them, while they were playing sports... I ate their lunch...

INT. FREDO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Fredo, Richard's Italian agent, streams the choppy CSPAN feed on his laptop.

RICHARD (ON TV)

...I tried a lot of ways to lose weight, including starving myself -- because I never took PE...

INT. WOODY'S HOUSE - DAY

Woody and his wife Nora watch the speech together. Woody beams with pride.

RICHARD (ON TV)

...I was twenty-five years old when I took my first exercise class -- I was bitten by the sweat bug. Twenty-five years ago, I opened my exercise studio up in Los Angeles, and there I began my pilgrimage to help people...

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Maggie's gaze is fixed on her television.

RICHARD (ON TV)

...Overweight, out of shape. Two-hundred pounds, four-hundred pounds, eight-hundred pounds. And I've dedicated all these years to giving them support and self esteem...

INT. MAURO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Mauro's eyes brim with tears as he watches Richard.

RICHARD (ON TV)
 ...Everyone is not a jock!
 Everyone cannot play sports!
 Everyone cannot run!
 But everyone can be fit.
 It's not important if you're a
 jock.
 It's important that you have your
 health.
 And our children right now do not
 have it...

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - NIGHT

Richard's speech is up on the big screen. PEDESTRIANS watch from the street below.

RICHARD (ON TV)
 ...Every school that I've been in,
 I put the kids' music on.
 I get them going.
 They feel great...

INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Two FRAT GUYS rip bong hits while watching Richard's speech on YouTube.

RICHARD (ON TV)
 ...And when you're feeling great
 about yourself.
 When you have self esteem and self
 respect for yourself, there's
 nothing you can't do...

INT. LA FITNESS - DAY

A YOUNG WOMAN watches the speech on her phone while running on a treadmill.

RICHARD (ON TV)
 ...I'm still not a jock.
 But I'm fit! And I've dedicated my
 life to this...

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

RICHARD

...And I hope you know there's no other way to do this.
 Or our kids will get more sick...
 And they'll keep feeling bad about themselves...
 And our children will die young...
 (near tears)
 What have we done?!
 What have we done to the kids of the United States of America?
 This is wrong!
 We can't have one kid feel lousy about himself and get made fun of because of their weight.
 We have to support them!
 I do not want any child in America to have my childhood -- because it was taken away from me, because I just wasn't good enough...
 (straightens his spine)
 Well I'm good enough now.
 And I've -- I'm fifty years old -- and I've devoted my life to this.
 And I will devote my life to this until the day I die...

Things become slightly grainy.

We pull out to reveal that Richard's speech is being played on a television in...

INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Tiny beams of daylight poke through the few tears in the aluminum foil taped over the windows.

The TV provides the only other light in the room.

RICHARD (ON TV)

...And I hope that one day, every kid gets to feel the self esteem and self respect that I have.

A wingback chair faces the television. Richard's frizzy, thinning afro peeks out from above it.

RICHARD (ON TV)
God bless you all.
And God bless the children of the
United States of America.
Thank you very much.

The crowd in the Capitol Building applauds--

The TV cuts to static.

The static hiss grows louder and louder and louder--

SMASH TO BLACK.

TEXT APPEARS:

**RICHARD SIMMONS' FIT KIDS BILL
WAS PASSED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

IT DIED IN THE SENATE

RICHARD HAS NOT BEEN SEEN IN PUBLIC SINCE 2014

FADE OUT.