

HONEY BOY

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Written by

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EXT. WRECKED AIRPLANE ON A WRECKED SET - AFTERNOON

Scrap metal parts: everything that can't be salvaged. GIANT green screens are located at key points. Black smoke.

OTIS LORT (22) looking into the camera. He's laser focused and fine-tuned like an owl statue.

CLOSE ON: Otis registers a threat. We can't see it. But it's no good - he holds up his hands, terrified.

OTIS

No... No, No.... No. No, no...

ON INVISIBLE IMPACT - RAMP SPEED: Blood flies, Skin ripples. Otis is ratcheted hard across a flipped car, EXPLOSIONS go off on cue all around him. Debris and black smoke everywhere.

And... CUT. We see the DIRECTOR getting excited about the shot in a hand held monitor.

Otis gets lowered to the ground still tied in a harness.

The Stunt Coordinator arrives and sprays the set and Otis with foam. 2nd A.C. enters with the sticks.

Otis walks back up to reset. He looks into the camera to do it all over again.

Frame up on the slate: 2005

TO BLACK.

INT. WRECKED SET - LATE AFTERNOON

We're over Otis's shoulder, walking stiffly through production in a body harness he can't remove.

As he walks towards his trailer we see flashes of various ACTION SCENES he's filmed for the movie.

- Shirtless and fist-fighting in a dark trailer... and CUT.
 - Breaking out of jail through an underground tunnel... and CUT.
 - Wandering through the desert holding a shotgun... and CUT.
- Until he reaches his trailer.

INT. STAR WAGON TRAILER - EARLY EVENING

Door opens. Light switch. Otis enters his plushy trailer. Fruit basket. Chandelier. It looks neat.

Otis is a mess.

He is still in his body harness. He puts his fingers in his mouth to calm himself the way we learn later he did when he was a kid. Like a pacifier.

He sits back but his back gets pinched by the harness. He jumps forward and reaches for the back strap.

He can't get it. He tries again. Nope.

He grabs a bottle of water and takes a sip. A breath. Shakes his arms. Leans forward and tries again. He touched it. He touched the strap!

He stops. New plan.

He finds room in the middle of the trailer, bends down starts swaying with his arms around his back, trying to catch the strap. Left, Right. Fuck... Almost.

He takes a break.

Looks for his pack of smokes. Can't find them. He opens a gift basket and pulls out a BOTTLE OF WHISKEY. He downs a third of the bottle. He opens the fridge, closes it before he looks inside and runs out of the trailer...

Our shot remains locked off.

OTIS (O.S.)
ANYBODY GOT A WALKIE! FUCK ME!

We see the water in a glass on the table settle. We watch the chair stop spinning. Then we hear Otis run past us the other way. His breathing has quickened. We hear him punch the side of the trailer in frustration. BANG!

OTIS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'm in this fucking... You fuckers
lit me on fire and left me in a
vice!!!

He storms back in the trailer and leans forward. Stretches his arms in front of him and slowly brings them around. He starts swaying again. Left and Right. Left and Rightttttt....

Fuck.

Otis kicks the stove again. He punches it again and again.

Beat.

Guilt. He tries to fix the bent metal.

He sits on the couch and looks at it. He stands up and opens the trailer door. He props the door open and sits on the stairs. He fold his arms. He's uncomfortable. He stands up walks back in but realizes he got caught on the door. He tries to swing out.

OTIS (CONT'D)

I'M HERE!!! I'M ALONE IN HERE!!!
AND I CAN'T REACH THE THING-FUCK!!!

We see his hand go white as he grips the door rail. He manages to get off the door and goes to the bathroom mirror. He looks down and is about to break. He runs the water and wipes his face, sits on the bed.

He rises, walks back to the door and dents it with his fist as we flash to more scenes from the film.

Otis's character:

- Slammed against a police car over and over again. Screaming.
- Wiping a shotgun clean in a blood red lit room.
- Fighting or flirting or maybe both, in a bath tub with a beautiful young actress... and CUT.

BACK TO:

INT. STAR WAGON TRAILER - EARLY EVENING

Otis enters, leans his forehead on the top drawers.

He breathes. For a long, long, long time. His breath purrs like when you're about to cry. He picks up the Whiskey bottle and downs half of it.

He feels inspired.

If he rotates his shoulder counter-clockwise, over his hip and can get the weight off his right leg... The bed.

He lays in the bed and reaches behind for the strap while pushing his foot onto the wall of the trailer for leverage and leaning on the edge of the bed wedged in the passageway of the trailer. He pushes... He rotates His body and sits up with a red face...

Knock knock.

His co-star SANDRA (20'S) enters the room.

She's perceptive and kind. You also get the feeling that this girl knows everything in the world, in the best way. The intelligent way. Good at helping others way.

SANDRA

Ready?

She sees him. He's struggling on the couch out of breath.

She walks over and in one casual movement releases him.

He's free.

She leans right in for a kiss. It's fire.

He falls back with her on the bed and they open a new cycle of breathing and pushing around the room. He tries to get her out of her shirt. She tries to get him out of his... Somehow despite all the passion involved it looks like the harness battle.

INT. CHEVY SILVERADO - STREET - NIGHT

HONK HONK!

Close on Sandra's hand pushing the horn as Otis drives.

Come up to find them in the car. Otis in the driver's seat. They're passing an EXTRA SMOKEY BLUNT. It's thick. Her legs are on the dashboard.

They are now passing back a lit half cigarette. Otis drops it. He steers with his knees as he looks down to find the smoke.

BANG.

RAMP SPEED: A Toyota Tacoma hits the breaks hard just as it makes a FULL IMPACT at 70 mph, causing the front end to go low. This shovels the truck, sending it up and over.

Everything goes silent.

The whole world turns upside down. Otis holds onto the window frame and Sandra as they corkscrew through the intersection.

One flip. Two flips. Three flip. IMPACT.

Airbags.

UPSIDE DOWN - Otis is barely conscious. He looks at his hand. The TWO FINGERS he always puts in his mouth are covered in blood.

EXT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Otis gets bumped against a police car while being arrested, except this time it's real life. He struggles and fights but they're holding his head down.

OTIS
WHAT AM I BEING ARRESTED FOR??

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Otis is arrested in the back seat.

Otis is screaming at the cops behind the steel mesh cage.

OTIS
You think you're fuckin' hot shit?
Cause you doooooon't know how good
I am at what I do!

They ignore him.

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Total darkness. Otis is terrified.

OTIS
Why am I here? Come on! Answer the
question you dumb fuck! Why am I
hear? Answer the question!

INT. CAR - THE NEXT DAY

Otis's mom LINDA is driving.

He stares out the window, his face cut in several places. He's wearing a hoodie and baseball cap and can't bring himself to look at her.

INT. REHAB WATSONVILLE - COMMON AREA - SUNSET

Beautiful light from every window.

Otis is terrified.

He's asked to take his shoes off. People mill about the house in pajamas. Holding board games and staring at him.

A black man is knitting a scarf. They exchange looks.

We follow Otis and the R.S. upstairs and through a hallway. We walk through the door to a medical examination room.

INT. REHAB - EXAMINATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A locked MEDS CABINET.

Otis strips behind a curtain and hands his clothes to the R.S. He gets searched and they take his phone and his bags. After the clothes are looked through he is handed them back.

INT. REHAB - TREATMENT OFFICE - DAY

There is big mural of a forest. A small cactus on a little table. A white board with twelve names, small colored dots next to each name, with weekly numbers of the S.U.D.S (Subjective Units of Distress Scale), and treatment profiles.

Otis sits in a swivel chair.

DR. MORENO (late 40's), small woman with a no bullshit presence, adds his name on the board and goes back to her chair. She tries to sit but her back is not making it easy.

DR. MORENO

There are no guards on the premise
Otis.

OTIS

I noticed.

DR. MORENO

But since this is your third
drunken altercation with the
police, if you leave we have to
notify the judge and you'll serve
those four years... That's the
deal.

OTIS

Right.

DR. MORENO
So where do we start?

OTIS
I don't know boss. You tell me. I'm obviously not equipped to make any decisions... I'm an ego maniac with an inferiority complex...

DR. MORENO
Let's try again.

OTIS
How about? I'm a professional schizophrenic... What do you want me to say? I'm a piece of shit.

Dr. Moreno looks at him for a minute.

Otis's eyes are terrified and his body is wired.

She turns around on her chair. It's painful. She pulls out a NOTEBOOK from a stack. She hands it to Otis.

DR. MORENO
I want you to write an account of your memories so we can get you started with imaginal exposure.

OTIS
What's that?

DR. MORENO
It's a simple way to stop avoiding trauma reminders that get you triggered.

OTIS
I avoid trauma reminders?? My whole job is motivated by trauma reminders. It's a requirement.

DR. MORENO
We're not talking about you using trauma for your work. I'm talking about triggers that make your distress levels unmanageable and result in violence.

OTIS
Like what?

DR. MORENO
 Whatever makes you angry is usually
 a good place to start.

Beat.

DR. MORENO (CONT'D)
 Otis, I have been doing this for a
 long time... I saw your tests and
 you have clear signs of P.T.S.D.

OTIS
 No I don't... From what??

We hold on his face and cut to title: HONEY BOY

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY - SOMETIME IN THE PAST

YOUNG OTIS LORT (12) peering into the camera.

He stares for a while. He's once again laser focused and fine-tuned like an owl statue. He runs his tiny hand through his bowl cut and looks to the lens with an adamant, striven for smile when...

A WHIP CREAM PIE SMASHES into his face.

ON IMPACT - RAMP SPEED: His hardly anything body is ratcheted out of focus into the air.

SLOW MOTION: Otis flying in the air until -

Normal Speed - He hangs in the air held by a wire. In front of a white picket fence.

The form of a Stunt Coordinator arrives. He helps Otis down, gives him a weary high five, and begins to walk him right back to center to do it all over again.

2ND A.C. enters frame with the slate.

Frame up on the slate: 1995

TO BLACK.

INT/EXT. RALEIGH STUDIOS - LATE AFTERNOON

FADE IN: We're over Otis's shoulder, walking stiffly in a body harness out of a dark soundstage on the lot. He picks up his Disc-Man that he left behind. Play.

Adult figures surround him in silhouette.

MAKE-UP LADY (O.C.)

Otis.

She grabs him and quickly wipes his face from all the pie left overs. He keeps walking.

Two people walk behind him carrying a beautiful sky matte painting. They pass to reveal -

JAMES LORT (35), in-artfully wearing a BANDANA on his head to cover his pronounced balding. He figures more hair is more hair = thick sideburns. His vest tells you he is in the Combat Vets MC, Desert Storm.

He pitches casually to the Crafty woman, PAM. A fairly attractive, straight-laced woman circa his age. She's got no choice but to listen.

Otis arrives mid-conversation.

JAMES

I had a chicken named Henrietta Lafowl.

PAM

Henrietta Lafowl?

JAMES

World's first daredevil chicken.

OTIS

Dad, can you loosen the back part?

JAMES

One sec pal... So I'd come out, put her on my head and do cartwheels. Henrietta'd run from my head to my butt, from my head to my butt...

PAM

Oh wow.

Otis tries to get out of his harness. No luck.

JAMES

Yes, ma'am. Spent a lot of time with chickens... Rodeo. Lot of time.

PAM

I can imagine.

OTIS
Dad, I can't...

James reluctantly starts unbuckling his son's harness while continuing his story. Pam is watching them both.

JAMES
...Used to put her on my head, top of my hat. I'd run an electrical wire down my sleeve to her... Couldn't see it. I'd go and put a K.F.C. bucket on the floor, light the rim on fire for drama... and when I'd hit that electrical charge, Henrietta'd fly off'a my head and land right there in the center of that bucket. Hey-O!

PAM
Oh...

JAMES
Crowd ate it up. I once opened for the Stevie Nicks at the Forum.....

James is not looking at what he is doing. Otis feels a PINCH.

OTIS
Oww... Fuck, Dad.

Pam reacts to the curse word. James tracks that. Gives Otis a "Leave It To Beaver" disciplinary slap on the hand.

JAMES
Hey. What did we say about talking like that?

They share a knowing look.

Otis doesn't wanna cock-block. He plays up his innocence. Dad plays up his caring father. They perform together. What better practice for a young actor.

OTIS
That we... That I'm not supposed to talk like that.

JAMES
Apologize to Pam.

OTIS
I'm very sorry Pam.

Pam tries to be nice about it.

PAM
That's okay.

JAMES
Go hang up your wardrobe and thank Donna for the day. You had a good day otherwise.

OTIS
Yes, Daddy.

James is wearing his proud father face as he watches Otis head off. He then pivots instantaneously to chasing pussy again.

JAMES
So yea... Spent a lot time with Chickens... In all that time you know what I learned about chickens... You know what's that white spot is in the center of chicken poop?

Pam, whose never given as much of a shit about shit prior to this, is trying to care.

PAM
What is it?

JAMES
That's chicken poop also. Hey-o!
Got you.

James laughs shamelessly at his own joke. It's the kind of laughter that separates a clown from the crowd.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Hey you got a phone number?

PAM
Yeah...

JAMES
Can I get it from you?

He senses her hesitation.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Later? Maybe tomorrow?

PAM
Okay.

JAMES
Have a good day.

He walks out.

EXT. RALEIGH PARKING LOT - LATE AFTERNOON

James guns the bike. Otis jumps in the back. Crew members hanging out while eying James.

Otis knows what they're thinking. We stay behind.

EXT. BUSY BOULEVARD - SUNSET - CONTINUOUS

A Burgundy Honda Shadow 1200, flies down the junction outside the parking lot, causing two cars to halt and nearly causing an accident. Daily commuter at the helm is James. Bandanna on his face now in a half shell helmet, cleaving lanes with confidence.

His passenger Otis, in a Vespa helmet and a Jan-sport, tucks his father's hair into the back of his coat and hugs him from behind.

In this town, you discern people best by how they maneuver the road. James looks over his shoulder and gets between two driving lanes cutting off everyone in sight. He turns left in the junction and causes a car in the coming lane to halt.

Otis hand surfs the wind to flip the driver off.

CLOSE ON: Otis holding for dear life and enjoying the closeness. This is the closest thing to a hug he knows.

Asshole. James downshifts, guns the yellow and expertly slides into his parking spot at THE VISTA MOTEL: A parking lot with twenty-five rooms and a swimming pool.

INT. VISTA MOTEL - POOL - EARLY EVENING

Otis jumps into the motel pool. He dips under then surfaces and takes a moment to himself.

INT. VISTA MOTEL - BEDROOM

Otis sits by a little desk tucked in between the restroom door and the window. He's reviewing the next day's lines.

EXT. VISTA MOTEL - PARKING LOT

Across the parking lot a young prostitute is coming back from a long night. Otis watches her. This is LITTLE Q, a queen in a T-shirt. You'd guess thirties and be wrong. She's barely 18. She's not as beautiful so much as she is fascinating. The whites of her eyes are neon white and soulful. She leans in when you talk. That type.

Her pimp, MAMA DJ, pulls up. She gets out of her car and walks over to her.

MAMA DJ

Who you been talking to? And I told you not to wear that top didn't I?

LITTLE Q

I didn't have anything else clean...

INT/EXT. VISTA MOTEL - BEDROOM / DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS

James stands in the doorway with an unlit cigarette between his lips while he watches over his bike.

He shouts out to another guest in a laundryroom we can't see.

JAMES

Rocco! I'm in there!

(to Otis)

Hey give me the call sheet. Got the per diem in there.

(to guest)

Don't touch 'em Rocco, those are my socks!

Otis hands James a MANILLA ENVELOPE. James takes out the cash inside and counts before yelling back across the lot.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You can't give it ten more minutes?

James gives up and lights the cigarette.

JAMES (CONT'D)

They gotta get another washer and dryer in this place man, it's turning into a nightmare.

Otis moves to the bathroom. Urinates with the door open.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Oh no... oh no... hear that baby trickle? You got one of them Lil Jew rivulets. Oh shit, you can thank your mother for that. You got a dick like a golf pencil son.

OTIS

It's enough to get the job done.

JAMES

What job are you going to get done?

OTIS

Girls.

Otis washes his hands; zips his fly and heads back to his little desk.

JAMES

Girls? You couldn't fuck yourself with that thing Otis. You probably got piss on your balls just now. You got wet balls right now?

OTIS

(eye roll)

I'm twelve.

James steps toward the bathroom, takes a piss.

JAMES

When I was 12 my dick sounded just like this.

Only a dribble comes out.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Wait for it...

(the stream picks up)

You hear that? You hear the depth of that bowl? That's roots buddy. That's blood. Where you come from. Shit's important but you don't give a fuck.

James exits without washing his hands. On his walk back to the doorway he flicks Otis in the chest who is still reading his script while keeping two fingers in his mouth.

JAMES (CONT'D)

What I just say?

James, grabs another smoke and opens the front door, lights his Kool and stares at his bike.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You hear me? What I just say? You don't listen that's your problem... and you're selfish. I just told you about your family and you're over there just staring at the thing? I see you, you're concentrating. I know it takes a lot of concentration to play a twelve-year-old. Have a pie fight. I get it...

OTIS

...It's not a pie fight.

JAMES

Oh yeah? What do you got tomorrow? I know what it is. It's clowning, poop-butt... with lines; It's the same thing as clowning. It's rodeo.

OTIS

It's not.

JAMES

It's not what? The fuck would you know... You never been to a rodeo.

OTIS

Yeah, I have.

JAMES

Don't lie to me. When?... Who took you to the rodeo?

OTIS

Tom.

That hits James. He looks back at his bike.

JAMES

Tom took you to the Rodeo? Of course he did. Where did you go?

OTIS

I don't know... it was a rodeo.

JAMES

See, you can't remember. See there. They have clowns at your rodeo? You went to Pomona. That's not even a fucken rodeo. That's a fair.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

You went to a fair. You come seen me in Muskogee, boy. That's THE rodeo. I'm talkin bout lights. Attractions. Animals. Face-paint. Costumes. Commedia del'arte. I made those bulls run til I broke every bone in my cultured ass.

OTIS

It's different... I'm not a clown.

JAMES

You bet your lil' dick it's different... It's all the same too. Motherfucker...

(across the parking lot)

He in there? HEY! Rocco! Didn't I just say? Those are my socks!

(back to Otis)

Goddammit give me the call sheet and get the bag. This motherfucker.

Otis takes a breath, puts his highlighter down and grabs the manila envelope out of the trash. He reaches in and hands a piece of paper to James.

EXT. VISTA MOTEL - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

James and Otis walk towards the laundry room. James holding the call sheet, Otis the laundry bag.

JAMES

(to Rocco)

Thank you. You'll get it after.

OTIS

Hey, um, dad?

JAMES

Six A.M. you gotta go to sleep early tonight.

OTIS

Yeah. About that. A.J has got me tickets to the Dodger's game.

JAMES

No shit? That is really cool.

OTIS

'Cause Nomo's pitching so he's going to take me to the game after set tomorrow.

JAMES
Who is pitching?

OTIS
Nomo.

JAMES
His name is Nomo?

OTIS
Yeah. Nomo the Tornado.

JAMES
No shit.

OTIS
I'm going to need some of that per-
diem for a hot dog...

JAMES
Shit a name like that he could
probably strike em' out
blindfolded, this guy.

OTIS
Probably.

James reaches for his back pocket and hands Otis some cash.

JAMES
You know what they call a Japanese
blindfold don't you?

Otis stops in the laundry room doorway and looks back.

JAMES (CONT'D)
They call it a shoelace.

James cracks up at his own joke.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Hey! Come on now, that shit was
funny you know it is.

INT. VISTA MOTEL - LAUNDRYROOM - CONTINUOUS

James follows Otis inside. He's still laughing.

JAMES
I was getting ready to lean into
another one, you seen me coming
with it?

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

I was going to hit em with that Sum Ting Wong joke. You know that one? You know it's funny!

James jokingly pokes him.

Otis recoils and accidentally knocks James in the face. James is pissed and takes off his glasses.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Hang on now buddy, you gonna break my shit.

OTIS

I didn't mean to...

JAMES

Load the fucking bag up. Watch where your hands are going, man.

They start to take laundry out of the dryer.

JAMES (CONT'D)

So you're going to this game with AJ?

OTIS

Yeah.

JAMES

Who is driving you?

OTIS

A.J....

James puts his hands up on a laundry-cart in the center of the room. He isn't playing at all anymore.

JAMES

No, no, no. You're going to the game with A.J. but who is driving? Cause he's fourteen years old and his parents are in Castaic, so who is driving you to the game?

A long beat.

From the other side, Otis puts his hands on the laundry-cart too, so they are now face to face.

OTIS

Tom.

JAMES
Tom's driving you? That's all you
got to say to me?

OTIS
I'm sorry dad.

JAMES
For what?

Otis let's go of the laundry-cart.

OTIS
For lying to you. I just thought
you'd get weird, ya know?

Otis starts putting clothes in the laundry bag.

INT. VISTA MOTEL - PARKING LOT

They walk back to their room in silence.

INT. VISTA MOTEL - BEDROOM

They enter the room and James immediately shuts the door.

JAMES
Pull out five socks.

OTIS
Five?

JAMES
Yeah. You do two. You drop it you
do ten pushups.

Otis hands his dad three pairs of rolled up socks and keeps two for himself. They start juggling. Throwing the socks up in the air to themselves and to each other.

OTIS
Hey dad? Remember how you said you
were going to build me a treehouse?

JAMES
We never owned a tree, son. Buy me
a tree and I'll get to work.

Otis drops a pair of socks.

JAMES (CONT'D)
What was that?

OTIS
I'm sorry.

JAMES
Pick it up.

He does as told and they start juggling again.

OTIS
You go to your meeting?

JAMES
Yeah...

OTIS
Was it good?

JAMES
Yeah.

James drops a pair of socks and picks it up.

OTIS
Missed it!

JAMES
We're even.
(back to the conversation)
Yeah... Ray's got 45 years in a
row... big cakes.

OTIS
Woah.

JAMES
I'm coming up on four myself, you
know that right?

OTIS
That's crazy.

Otis drops a sock.

JAMES
Alright go ahead.

OTIS
Ten?

JAMES
Yup. Ten.

Otis starts doing push-ups.

JAMES (CONT'D)
You gonna give me a cake?

OTIS
(mid push-ups)
Yeah if you want one.

JAMES
You know what else I want?

OTIS
What?

JAMES
To meet your buddy Tom and make
sure he's not a chicken-hawk.

Otis stops doing push-ups and gets up.

OTIS
He's not.

JAMES
I want to make sure he's not.

OTIS
You need to trust me.

JAMES
No you need to trust me! I don't
know why I don't get to meet him.

OTIS
Mom thinks you'll get weird.

JAMES
Your mother thinks a lot of things
that aren't true. Your mother lives
in fuckin' space.

OTIS
She's always been there for me.

JAMES
Yeah she's been there for you and
she's been at the Renaissance Fair.
I've been there for you too. I'm
the one that gets you up at four in
the morning. Who's the one here
now?

OTIS
She's busy! She has a job.

JAMES

Why is she busy? Why does she have a job? Think it through. Play the tape out.

Otis sits down on the bed.

JAMES (CONT'D)

What does your mother have a job for?

OTIS

Just in case.

JAMES

In case what?

OTIS

I don't know!

JAMES

In case you fail.

James drops down to eye level with Otis.

JAMES (CONT'D)

In case it don't work out.

OTIS

No.

JAMES

Yes man. She's filling your head full of fear. I would never do that to you. I pump you full of strength! Because we're a team and I know you got what it takes. You're a fucking star and I know it. That's why I'm here. I'm your cheerleader, honey boy. You trust me?

OTIS

Yeah.

JAMES

Okay then! I'll make you a horse trade. I'll give you this pack of cigarettes--

OTIS

The whole pack?

JAMES

The whole pack... if you bring him in here. You gotta smoke them in the bathroom though cause I don't want people to think I'm a shit father.

OTIS

No one thinks you're a shit father.

JAMES

No one thinks I'm a shit father? You're mother thinks I'm a shit father.

OTIS

That's in your head.

JAMES

Tom thinks I'm a shit father.

OTIS

That's also in your head.

JAMES

How do you think you get in the big brother program? Huh? What's the main reason?

OTIS

There is no main reason.

JAMES

Yeah there is a main reason. You gotta have a shit father.

OTIS

No...

JAMES

Yes you do. And your mother is advertising what a shit father I am every time you go to these fuckin' Dodger games or paint ball or dirt bike or whatever it is you're doing. And look, I got four years sober son... four years is REAL. You bring him over here and how about this, I'll barbecue for him?

Otis isn't sure.

JAMES (CONT'D)

It's just a start... just planting seeds ya' know? Come on man. You gotta let me in a little bit!

OTIS

Just a barbecue?

JAMES

Yeah...

He hands Otis the pack of cigarettes.

OTIS

Okay.

(smiling)

I'll ask but it doesn't mean he's going to come.

James holds Otis's face in celebration.

JAMES

Thank you! That's all I'm asking you to do!

James gets up, mission accomplished...

JAMES (CONT'D)

You want a soda?

OTIS

Yeah.

And heads out of the room.

Otis stays on the bed looking over the cigarette in his hand.

He looks for a lighter but can't find one. He puts the cigarette behind his ear and starts folding the forgotten laundry on the bed.

CLOSE ON: Otis's face staring into the lens, the glow of the motel T.V flickering off his face.

ON THE SCREEN: James, in clown face, in a desert. He's looking into the camera while performing with his chicken on top of his hat.

JAMES

(on TV)

And now, ladies and gentleman, boys and girls, performing live, Henrietta Lafowl, world's first daredevil chicken.

With the chicken still on his head, James turns away from the camera to face the desert.

He does a headstand while Henrietta climbs his back to stop and stand on his butt.

James, now standing on his head, with his chicken resting on his butt, looks directly into the camera.

JAMES (CONT'D)
(on TV)
*Henrietta Lafowl! World's first
daredevil chicken!*

CUT TO:

INT. REHAB WATSONVILLE - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 2005

Otis wakes up breathing heavy from a dream.

He looks over and sees Percy still asleep. He's okay.

INT. REHAB - GYM - NIGHT

Otis alone in the gym aggressively running full speed in his underwear.

A physical therapist walks in and watches him. Writes something in his pad and leaves.

Otis cranks up the speed.

EXT. REHAB - POOL - AFTERNOON

Soft music playing.

A group of twelve clients floating in the pool. Some are being held by others.

Otis watches from the sides.

ALEC (30s), caucasian Anger Management Coach, gives his "Anger management coach exercises" to the group while eyeing Otis. We get the sense Alec's calm exterior seems to hide a suppressed interior.

ALEC
Can I get everyone's attention
please. We're going to do a small
trust exercise, okay?
(MORE)

ALEC (CONT'D)
 You're just going to grab your
 partner, good, now you just
 switch...

Alec keeps his eyes focused on Otis who can only manage to
 look away from the group.

INT. REHAB - PING PONG ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Otis is eating alone.

In front of him knitting needles and a ball.

He pushes them further and further away as he eats.

INT. REHAB - OFFICE - LATER

Dr. Moreno sits in a swivel chair while Otis paces back and
 forth.

OTIS
 What is this? What are you trying
 to do? You can't have me in the
 fucking room knitting for two
 hours!

DR. MORENO
 What are your SUDS right now?

OTIS
 70!

DR. MORENO
 Okay let's bring it down. I want
 you to name four objects and let
 them bring you to the present
 moment--

We watch Otis's eyes pick four things.

OTIS
 Door! Vase! Lightbulb--

DR. MORENO
 Snap the rubber-band with each
 item.

OTIS
 Shoe!
 (snap)
 Shoe!
 (snap)
 (MORE)

OTIS (CONT'D)

Shoe!
(snap)
Shoe!

DR. MORENO

One more.

Otis contains his frustration. But it shows.

OTIS

Door.

He slaps the door.

DR. MORENO

Let's try again. Name four things
and let them bring you back into
the room.

He can't look at her again when he talks.

OTIS

No.

He continues to pace the room upset.

EXT. REHAB - CHICKEN COOP - DAY

Otis and Percy retrieve eggs and place them in construction buckets.

PERRY

You know chickens outnumber humans
3 to 1? They're gonna take over the
world, we gotta do something about
this!

Otis stops shoveling and sighs.

PERRY (CONT'D)

That's a true fact. You can look it
up.

They get back to work.

INT. REHAB - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Otis and Percy are in their beds. The room mirrors the Motel.

Percy shares the fruit he saved from lunch.

Otis eats it.

PERCY
...You don't pray before you eat?

OTIS
No... After.

PERCY
Why?

He takes another bite.

OTIS
I'm fucking with you. I don't.

He goes to brush his teeth.

INT. REHAB - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

He closes the door and stares at himself in the mirror as he starts to pee.

He watches himself as he listens to the sound of his urine.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. VISTA MOTEL - BEDROOM - MORNING - 1995

Otis wakes up but stays in bed for a second to stare at the ceiling.

He gets up and packs a few things. He waits for the coffee maker with the shades drawn. Light creeping in through the slit. He pops a CD in his walkman and looks at the dust specs in the light.

He sees James sleeping in his bed.

Otis places a hot cup of coffee by his glasses and a small wrapped up gift.

He rubs his hand across his dad's bare-feet to stir him awake and then grabs his backpack and goes.

Door closes.

James's eyes open. He grabs the gift and opens it. It's a Scratch N' Sniff watch. He scratches. And Sniffs.

EXT. VISTA MOTEL - PARKING LOT - DAY

James sits by the door with his coffee and works on bending two Paper Clips into a lock opener.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - INTERCHANGE AT LOST HILLS - LATE AFTERNOON

Patches of green the city waters on large sprinkler systems.

James looks over his shoulder and PICKS THE LOCK to the LA riverbank's gate behind the Free-Way.

James lays his bike up and opens his side-saddle. He pulls out a bright "Adopt-A-Highway" safety vest, hard hat, gloves, a pick-up stick, goggles and a white trash bag. He walks up and over to the bank of the freeway and lowers to a knee.

CUT TO:

INT. AA MEETUP - EVENING

Chandler Lodge's Moto-Meeting Stag. Eighteen men in chairs sit in a circle under an awning smoking cigarettes.

A few who are not club related. Lawyers, a few Dads, an old Veteran, two twenty-something's from a band, all encircling a Folger's can by the twelve or so motorcycles in the back.

CRAIG (late 40s), looks like a man who has been scraping the bottom longer than the top, is in the midst of a share...

James watches him like a hawk.

CRAIG

I guess I'm here because of my old man... He was a preacher. A bullshitter basically. A liar. A thief. But mainly he was never there for me. He was doing his own thing. And I thought wow, good, well cool for him. But what about me?

CUT TO:

INT. TRAILER - DAY

Otis sits alone in his trailer in pajamas. He opens the door and looks but no one is there. He heads back inside and sits down and lights up a cigarette.

BACK TO:

INT. AA MEETUP - EVENING

Craig continues his share.

CRAIG

Nobody was there so I thought I'll drink it out. Getting shit-faced worked... ya know? It worked like a charm. Took away the "cut and dried" feeling... For a bit.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - RIVERBANK

James kneels down and digs into the soil.

BACK TO:

INT. AA MEETUP - EVENING

James adjusts his posture to look taller than Craig. Like little kids do when they take pictures together.

CRAIG

So I ran with that because what else was offered. Church? God? Yes... But that didn't quite work for me... It's bullshit really.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUNDSTAGE - EARLY EVENING.

Otis, still alone, looking to see if his ride is coming...

BACK TO:

INT. AA MEETUP - CONTINUOUS

Craig still sharing. James still watching him.

CRAIG

I thought if God was real, he built me with a question that only I can answer. And that's what you have to do. You have to answer that question yourself. You have to do it yourself. You've gotta ultimately save yourself.

James gets uncomfortable and looks around to see if anyone else is hearing this... He checks Craig.

JAMES

I'm sorry, what book were you reading?

CRAIG

I know what the book says but what I am saying is what's honest with me--

JAMES

It says we came to believe, partner. Why don't you read the fucking book again? I can't do it anymore, man.

He stands and leaves while shouting over his shoulder.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You guys are gonna keep signing up for this shit why don't you just sign up for the Kool-Aid committee cause all you fuckers are drinking it.

James leaves the meeting still yelling.

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

Why don't you write your own fucking book, huh?

CRAIG

You're not alone brother!

JAMES (O.S.)

Shut the fuck up. I needed a fucking meeting today!

And they let him go.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUNDSTAGE - NIGHT

Otis stands around still waiting when a PA in a golf cart pulls up.

PA
You got a ride Otis?

OTIS
Yeah my dad is just over there getting his bike...

PA
You sure? I didn't see him on set today.

OTIS
Yeah he was here... yep.

PA
Well good work today. Take it easy.

OTIS
Thank you. See ya!

She drives away. Otis waits til she is out of sight and then starts to walk home.

CUT TO:

EXT. WILSHIRE BLVD - NIGHT

James and Otis walk holding hands.

As they approach a TACO TRUCK and its line of customers, James recoils and lets go.

Now at the truck, Otis hands him some money.

OTIS
I'll get chicken tacos. Two please.

James approaches the window.

JAMES
I'll get four chicken tacos. You got Horchata up there?

A girl sees Otis and whispers to her friend. They turn and stare. James clocks it.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Holy shit. They recognize you.
Sometimes I wish I was you, man.

OTIS

You do?

JAMES

Course.... Be famous, people
chasing me with cameras and shit,
Women... Not these junk whores...
you know, good ones.

OTIS

What's a good one?

JAMES

Dolly Parton type. Woman with a
strategy.

Otis actually laughs now.

JAMES (CONT'D)

What's funny bout that Otis? Dolly
Parton's got her shit together. You
know she's got her own theme park?

James grabs their food and hands Otis his tray.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You ain't got a fucking theme park.

CUT TO:

EXT. VISTA MOTEL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Otis is asleep inside the room.

James is sitting outside. Smoking. Alone.

Little Q is back from another long night.

She puts her bag inside the room and sits outside to smoke a
cigarette.

James gets up and walks past the grassy area between their
rooms.

He starts to perform a small clowning/Mime routine for her.

She watches for a while and smiles at him.

He finishes and bows to her.

When he looks up she's gone into the room.

INT/EXT. TOM'S CAR / VISTA MOTEL PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

A beautiful yellow HOT ROD TRUCK pulls into the driveway with Otis in the passenger seat.

He's in a Dodger hat, holding a signed ball by Nomo.

Driver is TOM (35), A strong chinned Hispanic man dressed casually in a leather jacket.

OTIS

So uh... he doesn't really like the Big Brothers program so just don't bring it up and stuff if that's okay.

TOM

Oh okay.

Tom apprehensively waves to James who is outside watching them park.

JAMES

Wow. Nice car.

TOM

Hey thanks. I'm Tom.

EXT. VISTA MOTEL - PARKING LOT

They shake as Otis gets out and runs off to the room with his bag.

JAMES

I'm his father.

TOM

Nice to meet you.

JAMES

Beautiful truck. You do the work on her?

TOM

Sure did.

JAMES

Pop it! Go ahead.

Tom pops the hood.

JAMES (CONT'D)

292 huh?

TOM

This is actually the 352. 5.8
Liter.

JAMES

Right. Y-blocks, that's the 292...

TOM

Y-block 292 to 272, that was the
big engine in the T-bird.

JAMES

That's right, yeah.

TOM

Then they upgraded in '65 to the
352 cubic.

JAMES

Fuckin' pretty man.

TOM

Thank you brother.

JAMES

Sits low four a 4x4 isn't it?

TOM

It's the original coil springs on
the I-beam.

JAMES

Well all 64 trucks had leaf springs
in 'em.

TOM

You don't say?

Otis runs back out in his swim trunks and heads to the pool.

JAMES

You going swimming partner?

OTIS

Yeah it's hot...

JAMES

Smart.

(to Tom)

You good in that coat boss?

TOM
Yea. I'm good, thanks.

JAMES
Ok...

They follow Otis to the pool. Talking as they walk.

JAMES (CONT'D)
You know what FORD stands for don't you?

TOM
It's the old man's last name. Henry Ford.

JAMES
No sir.

TOM
What's it stand for?

JAMES
Found on the road dead.

James laughs. Tom is polite. Otis keeps walking ahead.

EXT. VISTA MOTEL - POOL - CONTINUOUS

Otis gets in the water. We stay with him watching them nervously as they get to know each other.

JAMES
So you working for the FBI or something?

TOM
No nothing like that, that's a little out of my pay-grade. I'm a passport specialist.

JAMES
Oh what's that? State Department? What the fuck you doin' over there?

TOM
I majored in telecommunications, I'm half Mexican... so I've got a vested interested in fighting discrimination here in the city...

JAMES
That's fantastic.
(to Otis)
Hey go get some soda and the
ketchup!

Otis hops out of the water. James tosses him the keys to their room.

JAMES (CONT'D)
So you're saying you're an
idealist? Yeah, man. That's cool, I
know a little bit about that. Like,
uh, 'I don't know where I'm going
but I'm on my way there!' Am I
right?

TOM
Yeah...

Tom sits.

JAMES
Alright, take a seat man, we got a
little time.

James sits down next to him.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Woo, sun in your eyes?

TOM
No...

JAMES
Well it's good having you here.

TOM
I appreciate it man. I've heard all
about ya.

JAMES
So what's your story Tom?

TOM
I'm from Detroit. I still have both
my parents... twin sister...
Graduated from Calvin in Grand
Rapids...

EXT. VISTA MOTEL - PARKING LOT

Otis runs out across the lot to the soda machine. We go with him. He passes the Vista maid doing the rounds.

INT. VISTA MOTEL - LAUNDRYROOM - CONTINUOUS

Otis arrives. Little Q and Mama DJ are in a tense argument nearby. Little Q's shoulder is bruised.

He listens in while pretending to look for his money.

MAMA DJ
Get outta my face!

Mama DJ leaves.

Otis starts to put quarters in the soda machine. Once Mama DJ is gone, Little Q unearths a pack of cigarettes hidden under the soda machine.

Beat.

OTIS
I like your Jellies.

LITTLE Q
Jellies?

Otis points at her shoes.

LITTLE Q (CONT'D)
Oh. Thanks.

Like a business man, Otis puts his hand out for a handshake.

OTIS
I'm Otis. I live over there in
number 6.

He's twelve. It's strange.

She grabs it and begins to THUMB WRESTLE. She wins. She keeps his thumb under hers for a little longer.

He's uncomfortable.

She smiles and lets go. She takes out a cigarette but sees it's broke down the center. Otis, soda now in hand, notices.

OTIS (CONT'D)
Hey! Wait right here...

BACK TO:

EXT. VISTA MOTEL POOL

James is manning the grill.

JAMES

So Calvin is a big school. I know that. They got a basketball program. That's an expensive school isn't it?

TOM

I had a little help.

JAMES

Got to! How the fuck you swing that man? Shit, Mexican, come from poverty. Gotta be hard as fuck to get in there.

TOM

Lot of hard work...

JAMES

You get some kinda Spanish grant or something?

Otis approaches and listens in for the right moment to disturb.

OTIS

(to Tom)

Hey, are you good?

TOM

I'm good Otis thanks.

OTIS

(to James)

Dad can I bum a smoke?

James hands him one.

OTIS (CONT'D)

Thank you.

JAMES

Hang on to your butts.

Tom knows he can't interject but "what the fuck". Otis runs off. We stay with James and Tom as he re-composes.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Love that kid.

TOM
He's a great kid...

JAMES
Yessir.

TOM
I think that's why the Big Brother
program is so important. To have
more voices to listen to.

JAMES
Sure I'll bet.

James plops a plate of burgers on the table and sits down.

JAMES (CONT'D)
So this father figure--

TOM
I had a strong voice and now I have
a chance to pay it forward. Help
out when I can.

James leans forward to look Tom in the eyes.

JAMES
That's good on you. I appreciate
you Tom. I know my son appreciates
you also. He likes you. I can see
it on his face.

James goes to light a cigarette then stops.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I bet if you went over there right
now and asked that boy who he wants
to be when he grows up, he
wouldn't say me.

TOM
No?

James lights the smoke.

TOM (CONT'D)
Why's that?

JAMES
I don't know. Would he say you,
Tom?

James stares into his soul.

TOM

It's not about that for me James...

JAMES

What's it about for you?

TOM

Giving back. Letting somebody know you are there for them. Being of service.

JAMES

No I know about that cause I do a little bit of service myself. I got about four years sober.

TOM

That's good.

James laughs.

JAMES

Is it good?

TOM

It's great.

JAMES

It is great isn't it.

TOM

I've seen a lot of lives get ruined...

JAMES

It's tough.

TOM

I can only imagine.

JAMES

One day at a time man... Look I don't know what you've heard about me Tom, but I know what you haven't heard about me. What you haven't heard about me is that if I catch you around my son again, in any capacity whatsoever, I will skull fuck your well-adjusted twin sister's carcass on top of your casket until my dick runs through the back of her half-Mexican brain plate. You hear what the fuck I'm saying?

Tom gets up to walk away. James shoots up.

JAMES (CONT'D)
You going to take that jacket off
cause it's hot as shit?

James starts fiddling to get Tom's coat off him. Tom resists. It gets messy. A NEAR BRAWL ENSUES and James THROWS TOM INTO THE POOL.

JAMES (CONT'D)
GET YOUR OWN FUCKING KID! AND YOUR
OWN FUCKING SANDWICH MOTHERFUCKER!

Otis rushes back over just in time to see James throw the buns at Tom in the pool.

JAMES (CONT'D)
(sotto)
I need the fucking ketchup.

James walks out past Otis looking helplessly at Tom.

CUT TO:

EXT. REHAB - POOL - LATE AFTERNOON - 2005

Otis sits on the ledge of the pool trying to ignore everyone in the water.

ALEC
(to the group)
And now everyone find your way into
the hug circle.

Everyone forms a circle and hugs themselves.

Alec holds himself as he speaks to the group in a hushed tone.

ALEC (CONT'D)
Otis will you please join us?

He does.

ALEC (CONT'D)
We all know what to do in the hug
circle right? This is a feeling you
can have anywhere you are. You can
always come back here. To this
pool, to this circle, to this
feeling...
(MORE)

ALEC (CONT'D)
Hugging yourself releases the
cuddle hormone. Can you feel that?

The group sorta feels it.

ALEC (CONT'D)
That's a tool we can use wherever
we are.

Otis is not having it.

OTIS
You can't do this everywhere.

ALEC
You can actually...

OTIS
You can't do this in a car on the
freeway or in court.

ALEC
Well maybe if you used this tool
you wouldn't end up in court.

OTIS
Isn't hugging yourself like
tickling yourself? Like you can't
tickle yourself?

Percy shakes his head.

PERCY
My shit feels good. I'm releasing
all them hormones!

ALEC
Percy you might be too good at
this.

PERCY
It's my fourth time in rehab... and
I tried this in court, that's how I
ended up here!

Otis laughs. The group laughs. Alec smiles.

EXT. REHAB - POOL DECK - EARLY EVENING

Otis and Percy are leaving with everyone.

ALEC
Otis?

He lingers. Percy heads off.

ALEC (CONT'D)

I have a suggestion. In the next few days I would like for you to go to the woods alone and scream as loud as you can...

Beat.

OTIS

Are you fucking with me?

ALEC

Let me know how it went...

EXT. REHAB - TENNIS COURT - NIGHT

Otis and Percy passing a cigarette under the stars.

PERCY

They got you doing exposure?

OTIS

Yea. She says I got P.T.S.D.

PERCY

Get the fuck outta here. I thought only soldiers and black people got that shit...

Otis laughs.

OTIS

I don't know. I just know I'm stuck here... Life is in session and these people are wasting my fucking time.

PERCY

What do you know about time?

Otis looks at him.

PERCY (CONT'D)

My cousin got 8 years inside and they got a nigga here knitting a mother fucking scarf... Listening to you bitching about time. Look at this place? If my cousin saw me he would beat my mother fuckin ass...

OTIS
You should send him the scarf.

Otis cracks up at his joke.

PERCY
What am I going to say? Stay warm
nigga... I'm in this pool. Hugging
myself...

They laugh.

INT. REHAB - PING PONG ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Otis is juggling 5 balls with chicken faces.

One of the balls falls. He looks for it.

He looks under the table and is STARTLED when he sees an
ACTUAL CHICKEN.

Otis reaches out for the juggling ball as we

CUT TO:

INT. REHAB - BEDROOM - NIGHT

He wakes up. He sees Percy asleep. It was a dream.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - CRAFT SERVICE TABLE - AFTERNOON - 1995

Otis looks over his shoulder, coast is clear.

He dips under the tablecloth and takes his backpack off.

He loads it full of his father's favorite goods. Coke, chips,
chocolate, Peanut Butter, some sliced bread...

EXT. HIGHWAY - INTERCHANGE AT LOST HILLS - LATE AFTERNOON

The city sprinklers go off.

A weed plant sprouts from the dirt.

James hops on his bike and takes off.

EXT. SOUNDSTAGE - DUSK

Otis waiting outside. Almost giving up when James pulls up on his bike. Otis smiles and they ride off.

INT. VISTA MOTEL - BEDROOM - NIGHT

James grabs a snack from Otis's bag that is filled with the food Otis stole from set. The phone RINGS, Otis picks it up.

OTIS

(on phone)

Hey Mah...how are you? Yeah, yeah
I'm good, thank you. I was on set
and Mr. Walsh came--

JAMES

Gary Walsh.

OTIS

(on phone)

Harry Walsh--

JAMES

GARY Walsh.

OTIS

(on phone)

Gary Walsh -- I don't know his
first name -- he asked me if I
wanted to be in an M.O.W...Movie of
the Week. It's shooting in
Vancouver in a couple a months...

James listens to the conversation Otis has with his mom,
nodding his head...

JAMES

You need to get your
passport.

OTIS (CONT'D)

(on phone)
Oh, uh...I think so.

OTIS (CONT'D)

(on phone)

I think he, uh, I think he can go.
Hang on, let me ask.

(to James)

She wants to know if you can leave
the country?

James sits silently and stares at Otis holding the phone.

JAMES

Why does she ask you that?

Otis puts the phone to his ear and listens.

OTIS
(to James)
Well she said, "because of your record."

James stands up abruptly, leans into Otis and SHOUTS into the phone.

JAMES
I know because of "my record!" I know because of "my record!" I'm asking why you're asking a twelve year old, woman!

James begins frantically pacing around the room.

| | |
|---|--|
| JAMES (CONT'D) | OTIS |
| Fuck me, man. You know, you don't fucking get it. | (on phone) I'll ask. (to James) Do you want to talk to her? |

JAMES (CONT'D)
No! Fuck no, I don't want to talk to her! Not available! Fucking drama queen!

OTIS
(on phone)
He doesn't want to talk to you...Oh, you did?...Oh yeah, okay...She said, "she can ask Tom to deal with the passports" --

JAMES
Oh fucking fantastic! Great! Fantastic. Oh, Tom's gonna do it?! Yeah, Tom'll fucking do it!

Otis watches his father bounce around the room, thrashing everything around.

OTIS
(on phone)
He's...he's definitely not gonna come to the phone...yeah...

JAMES
Tell Tom to come to the fucking phone!

James continues looking for something.

JAMES (CONT'D)
 Dammit, where's my lighter at?
 (to himself)
 Oh wow, you just want to keep
 pushing my fucking buttons, girl.

Otis patiently listens to his mom on the phone.

OTIS
 (on phone)
 Okay, and just repeat it?...Okay, I
 can try...

Otis then parrots what his parents say as if he were them. As if he were playing them to each-other.

A young actor prepares.

OTIS (CONT'D)
 (to James as the mom)
 "I have long ago forgiven you,
 James."...

JAMES
 Who you talking to?

OTIS
 (to James as the mom)
 "But I'm not the one who had to
 jump out of a moving car so you
 didn't rape me!"

JAMES
 Here we go. Here we go with this
 fucking victim shit!

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>OTIS (on phone as James) "Here we go with this fucking victim shit."</p> | <p>JAMES (CONT'D) She does this every time she calls up here.</p> |
|--|---|

JAMES (CONT'D)
 She goes on and on every time she
 fucking calls up here! Say it into
 the phone!

OTIS
 (on phone as James)
 "Every fucking time!"...
 (to James as the mom)
 "You were the biggest love of my
 life"...

JAMES
Well then treat me better, bitch!!

OTIS
(to James as the mom)
"Do you know what I went
through?"...

James erupts and starts yelling toward Otis again. Otis holds up the phone so James can shout directly into it.

JAMES
What who went through?!! They put
me in a fucking box!! I didn't even
-- what is the point of calling up
here?!! FUCK!!

Otis puts the phone back to his ear, listens to his mom's response.

OTIS
(to James as the mom)
"I was always there for you"--

James YANKS the phone from Otis's hand.

JAMES
Go outside!

Otis gets up from the bed and walks outside.

EXT. VISTA MOTEL - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

We stay with Otis, outside of their room. Watching James scream into the phone inside.

JAMES
(on phone)
You know what the fuck I do?!! I
put my fucking ass on the line
every fucking day!! For this boy!
For this boy!!

Otis paces back and forth not knowing what to do or where to go. He grabs a stick heads toward a debased car junk yard in the back of the hotel.

EXT. VACANT PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Otis walks amongst old rusty broken down cars.

He picks up a brick from the ground. He looks at it. Feels the weight of it in his hand. He THROWS THE BRICK through a car's front windshield.

Glass everywhere.

Otis rests on the hood of the car he just shattered.

He takes out his pack of Kool's. He smells the cigarettes then takes one out and lights it.

EXT/INT. AA MEETUP - ALANO CLUB - NIGHT

James locks his helmet down and walks up the stairs of the Alano club. We go up the stairs with him, hovering over shoulder as he greets the card players in the front room.

They're happy to see him. It's his day.

James knows everyone. CARLOS, a Hispanic man with long curly hair, holds the Blue Book and a laminated "Traditions" page. He's immediately avuncular.

As James greets the group we hear his share.

JAMES (V.O.)

How you doing, I'm James. I'm a double winner.

AA GROUP (V.O.)

Hi James.

JAMES (V.O.)

My sobriety date was June 4th, 1988. Carlos is my sponsor. Moorpark is my home group. Thank you for bringing me in here.

CUT TO:

EXT. VISTA MOTEL - POOL - NIGHT

Otis spots Little Q sitting by herself. He walks over and notices she is looking at a SNAKE gliding on the water like Jesus.

James's share carries us over the action.

JAMES (V.O.)

Jocelyn Joy Ginger... My mother. She wrote a lot of songs. A lot of poems.

(MORE)

JAMES (V.O.) (CONT'D)

She ended up as an alcoholic working in Shreveport, Lucky Luciano's gambling Casino and whore house... And that's where she met my Pop who was an alcoholic too. They were the only ones left in the bar... Sometimes love is like that...

CLOSE ON: The snake as he moves.

OTIS

The fuck is that?

Otis sits next to her.

LITTLE Q

You can walk on water until someone tells you that you don't know how.

Beat.

LITTLE Q (CONT'D)

Do you understand?

They both remain fixated on the snake.

OTIS

Yeah.

LITTLE Q

Hey, are you cold? Come here.

Otis falls into her. She holds him. He smiles.

BACK TO:

INT. AA MEETUP - ALANO CLUB

James still in the middle of his share. His eyes closed. Everything from memory.

JAMES

I was 11 when my Mom told me that she would rather be with women and particularly this woman who was a mean ass woman and an outrageous alcoholic. She'd beat you over the head til she broke her hand and just keep laying in on you. Just did not give a shit and would do it again the next day. Always remember her hand in a cast...

He opens his eyes and looks up.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Drama... It was always drama. My mom ended up falling out of a window and landed on a freeway... Major fucking drama. After she died I had booze and weed. You know... I grieved her... then I joined the army to find some structure cause what else? Then I came home and I spun out. I did so much fucking cocaine I can't breathe out my nose no more. I started shooting in my arm. Just didn't give a shit no more. Drinking everyday straight. Weeks. Fell into a blackout.

(a long, tough, beat)

Woke up a sex offender. They told me I didn't rape this woman but I did enough to get her to jump out of a moving car... That's where my disease took me... and they took me up to Tehachapi and I stayed there for three years and nine months... Lost a lot... Found the program in jail. Found God in the program. Found page 429 says those actions that once made you feel completely ashamed and totally discouraged will allow you to share with other people how to be a useful human being. By the gratitude of God I realized I had a son I had to raise. A boy. My boy... Otis.

CUT TO:

INT. VISTA MOTEL - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Otis looks at his reflection in the bathroom mirror.

He looks directly into his own eyes. No shame. Not yet. He feels good about himself and exits the bathroom into the main room.

A pillow flies at him from his father's bed. We find Little Q.

BACK TO:

INT. AA MEETUP - ALANO CLUB

James looks down, starting to cry.

JAMES

I'm trying my best. For that kid.
But I'm in pain like a motherfucker
man.

CUT TO:

INT. VISTA MOTEL - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Otis timidly walks towards Little Q.

She reaches out her hands. He rests his on top of hers... She turns hers over quickly to try to slap his. They laugh and play. Innocent but flirty.

She looks at him. She leans in closer and softly kisses his cheek. She closes her eyes. He kisses her eyelid. She opens her eyes and runs her hand down his face.

Feeling emboldened he takes off his shirt. They lay in bed.

Otis finds a way under her arm. Little Q holds him like a mother. Gives him warmth. Otis nuzzles like a tomcat.

He has an idea. He gets up and pulls out money from the nightstand.

He gets back in bed and looks her in the eyes. He rubs her face like she rubbed his. He takes her hand and places the money inside.

He gets up and leaves. We don't know where to.

She looks down at the money...

CUT TO:

EXT. REHAB - WOODS - DAY - 2005

Otis is alone in the woods.

He walks for awhile and takes a deep breath. He grabs a walking stick.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. VACANT PARKING LOT - DAY - 1995

Otis walks through the rusty cars and finds a stick. He rubs the hood of a car.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. REHAB - WOODS - 2005

Otis rubbing a tree stump. Just like he was a boy.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. VACANT LOT - CONTINUOUS - 1995

He stands on top of a car. He looks up at the sky.

He raises his arms and YELLS. It's high pitched and hopeful. From his yell we

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. REHAB - WOODS - 2005

Where Otis lifts his head and SCREAMS as loud and as long as he physically can. Until he is shaking and we hear a small shrill sound...

Into rationalization and hysterical piss yourself manic laughter.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. HALF BANGER TRAILER - MORNING - 1995

There are GLITTERY silver party streamers tacked up as decoration over the entrance of Otis's trailer.

James and Otis are playing gin and drinking coffee. The T.V. is on T.B.S. Set-life whirlwinds in the B.G.

JAMES

You're sandbagging... Do what you do, but Ima' catch you with them face cards in your hand.

OTIS

If I had something, I'd put it down.

JAMES

I know what you have. You've got a mirror behind you smart-ass.

James pulls his discard off the top.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I like those nines too so keep those coming.... Please?

OTIS

No can do.

Otis lays down all his cards.

OTIS (CONT'D)

Gin... Fifty, plus whatever you got in your hand.

Otis grabs the pencil and the paper.

JAMES

Your... Fuck-n-hell... Twenty, twenty-five, thirty-five, thirty-six...

OTIS

Eighty-six...

He writes it down. James stands to use the toilette.

JAMES

I fucking knew it, too. I saw it on your face!

Otis is smiling.

OTIS

I'm getting better... Learning to lie.

JAMES

You lie for a living, poop-butt.

OTIS

We all do.

JAMES

I don't.

James comes back, Otis is shuffling.

OTIS

Yeah, you do.

JAMES

I'm a lot of things honey boy. A liar isn't one of em'.

OTIS

You lie.

JAMES

Never in my life.

OTIS

Why won't you hold my hand?

James lights a cigarette. Exhales out the door.

JAMES

I don't want people thinking I'm a chicken-hawk... Deal the cards. I'm going to get a soda.

CUT TO:

INT. REHAB - ALEC'S OFFICE - 2005

Otis walks in and goes right to shake his hand.

OTIS

Hey. I wanted to thank you. That was really amazing. I felt like a demon moved out. That was powerful.

ALEC

Are you acting right now?

OTIS

We all are. All the time.

ALEC

Ok... Are you being sincere right now? Or are you mocking me?

OTIS

Both.

Beat.

ALEC

I'm not going anywhere.

OTIS

Good.

ALEC
You're not gonna wear me out Otis.

OTIS
...I'm not trying.

Beat.

ALEC
...This is not me judging you.

OTIS
What is it then?

ALEC
Me telling you that I'll see you in
class.

Otis leaves and SLAMS the door after him.

The Coach comes out after him.

ALEC (CONT'D)
Otis, do you know how to close a
door gently?

OTIS
Of course.

ALEC
How?

OTIS
You pull with one hand and push
with the other.

Alec smiles.

ALEC
Good.

Otis nods and walks away.

INT. REHAB - DR. MORENO OFFICE - LATER

On the table is a notebook labeled DAD. Otis is pacing.

DR. MORENO
It's ok to be frustrated.

He still can't look at her when he talks.

OTIS

I just... I don't need to talk about my fucking father. My dad's not the reason I drink... He's the reason I work! He just takes credit for everything in my life that is good. My dad is the kind of guy that takes credit for other people's ideas... Even his AA shares are an amalgamation of other AA shares...

Beat.

Dr. Moreno stays quiet for a while until he looks at her.

DR. MORENO

So having your OWN ideas is key?

Otis's face.

DR. MORENO (CONT'D)

Start writing Otis.

Without even realizing it he hugs himself as he thinks it over...

EXT. REHAB - NEAR CHICKEN COOP / TENNIS COURT - DUSK

Otis walks from the treatment facility across the campus to the housing unit as the sun drops.

He sees a SINGLE CHICKEN wandering around.

He looks at it. Doing its thing. Free.

He bends down and picks up a piece of chicken poop and examines it.

OTIS

(sotto)

You know what the white spot is?
It's more chicken shit.

The chicken is on the move. He discards the poop and follows.

EXT. SURREAL TRAILER PARK ENTRANCE - EVENING

Otis enters a weirdly familiar trailer park that is setup in the same layout as the Vista Motel.

He keeps following the chicken until he sees a MOTORCYCLE. He touches it.

He sees a trailer he recognizes. He enters it.

INT. SURREAL TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Otis enters the trailer and starts to hear an old recording.

YOUNG OTIS (V.O.)
Give me a cigarette, Dad.

JAMES (V.O.)
*Not until you get this scene.
You're gonna make me laugh or were
gonna do this all fucking night.*

YOUNG OTIS (V.O.)
*You know I'm doing you a favor...
by paying you to be my chaperon.
Give me a fucking cigarette, Dad.*

JAMES (V.O.)
Whoa. You're doing who a favor?

YOUNG OTIS (V.O.)
*You... Who else is gonna give a
felon a job? I'm not stupid.*

Otis picks up a radio and the reception scrambles. He tries to fix it until something outside catches his eye.

EXT. SURREAL TRAILER PARK - CONTINUOUS

Otis walks towards an OLD MAN IN A CHAIR. As he walks he still hears the recording but now it's 2005 Otis and James.

JAMES (V.O.)
You been fucking your life up.

OTIS (V.O.)
Yeah what'd you hear?

JAMES (V.O.)
*I thought they were going to put
you away for real this time.*

OTIS (V.O.)
That wasn't me.

JAMES (V.O.)
Oh it wasn't you? Who was that then?

OTIS (V.O.)
It was you. It's magic. Every single time I drink you takeover.

JAMES (V.O.)
Oh yeah? I takeover? Your dick get bigger too pecker-wood?

CUT TO:

INT. REHAB - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 2005

Otis wakes up. He looks over at Percy snoring. It was another dream.

He reaches for the rubber-band on his wrist. Snap.

He tries to go back to sleep. He can't.

EXT. REHAB - TENIS COURT - DAY

Otis is writing in his notebook.

On the ground is a sample of clean urine and his knitting. It's a beginning of a scarf.

EXT. REHAB - LABRYTINTH - EARLY EVENING

Otis and Percy dance outside on an empty maze / recess area.

INT. REHAB - BEDROOM - MORNING

Otis is typing on his laptop in bed. He's FINALLY all in. Percy is reading "Nat-Geo" on his bed and drinking lemonade.

EXT. REHAB POOL - LATE AFTERNOON

Otis watches a ladybug crawl up his arm. He lets it find its way until it flies off.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. VISTA MOTEL - POOL - DUSK - 1995

Otis, wet from a swim, takes a moment to sit on the ledge and smoke a cigarette.

CUT TO:

EXT. FREEWAY NURSERY - DAWN

We watch the city water move over James's first sprouts. Like one of those Vegas water-dance shows.

It's beautiful.

CUT TO:

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

A family house interior. Unreasonable strong wind is blowing.

Otis is in hair rollers, lipstick and a nightgown. He is performing a Karate sequence and mouthing the sound FX to his sister... His Grandma is sitting next to him.

James sporting a left-eye shiner, a cut on his eyebrow and a swollen lip. He watches Otis from off-camera with a touch of envy mixed with pride. Repeating lines that he's helped his son rehearse.

OTIS

Rain drops! What's up now dog? I'm the funny one around here... I can probably kick Grandma's butt!

He looks at his Scratch and Sniff watch, checks the clock on the wall... And walks over to the camera man. With one confident movement he shuts down the camera in the middle of the take.

The whole set is up in arms.

JAMES

I don't care. I'll be the bad guy. That's it! Good take, good take.
(now clapping)
You did it. Good job everybody. Let's go. That's it. It's going to take another twenty minutes to get the boy out of costume.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

We breaked for three hours of school today Kev, you said it was over ten minutes ago? It's been thirty minutes! Get the man another watch!

They walk off while the crew remains silent. Otis stops.

OTIS

Dad I was getting the scene!

James THROWS open the exit door.

JAMES

I don't care! Come here.
(to the crew)
CHILD LABOR LAWS!

CUT TO:

EXT. VISTA MOTEL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Guests are partying. Mama J. Little Q. Playing music and drinking. Having fun. Not thinking about volume.

INT. VISTA MOTEL - BEDROOM

James sits on a bed rehearsing lines with Otis who is pacing.

JAMES

It says here you are part of that sight gag. That's your opportunity. Workout faces are funny. Your workout faces are your opportunity... Flare your nostrils when you breath! Show me!

James flares his nostrils.

OTIS

That's not funny though.

JAMES

What's not funny?

OTIS

When you flare your nostrils.

JAMES

I like it a lot. I think it's very funny.

OTIS
Okay. Fine.

JAMES
Just try it.

OTIS
Let's go.

Otis drops to do push-ups.

JAMES
You're going to start on the floor
when I told you it's a sight gag?

OTIS
I told you, It's just for heart
rate.

JAMES
I told you it's a sight gag how am
I supposed to see your face?

OTIS
I don't need to do it in the scene.
It's not going to happen in the
scene.

JAMES
No one cares about the fucking
heart rate they just want to see
funny faces.

OTIS
I care about the fucking heart
rate! Okay?

JAMES
Alright heart rate man. They want
to see funny faces but okay.
(reads from script)
"Jeff, come on it's been over an
hour. I gotta date with Dewey... I
gotta get in there and do my hair.
What are you doing in there?"

Otis is breathing hard now, with the remote controller in his hand like a dumbbell. Starting to make some genuinely funny faces as he says each word with each rep.

He flares his nostrils...

OTIS
 "What... If... I... Was... Doing...
 Some... Thing... Stupid... In...
 Here... Jac... Que... Lin..."

James laughs. It's good. He joins in and they both grunt and flex. James reads again from the script.

JAMES
 "Uh, as opposed to this?"

OTIS
 "I know you wanna hang out with
 your secret buddy"--

JAMES
 (correcting)
 Buddies...

OTIS
 "But I have"--

They're interrupted by a LOUD ARGUMENT outside between prostitutes and Mama J.

James throws open the door and yells.

JAMES
 Shut the fuck up!

EXT.VISTA MOTEL - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

James storms across the lot towards the party.

JAMES
 I can't think in here! It's twelve
 midnight! Shut the fuck up! Some of
 us got jobs!

They don't. He loses it.

JAMES (CONT'D)
 SHUT THE FUCK UP! I DON'T DO THIS
 SHIT TO YOU! TURN OFF YOUR
 QUINCINERA IT'S TWELVE MIDNIGHT!
 KEEP GOING WITH THIS SHIT I'LL CALL
 THE BPD IN A FUCKING HEARTBEAT I
 DON'T GIVE A FUCK!

PARTY GOER
 Go back to your side and worry
 about your son and yourself!

He turns and walks back to their room.

INT. VISTA MOTEL - BEDROOM

Otis sits on the bed with two fingers in his mouth.

James slams the door and sits on his bed.

JAMES

I'm going to crack in half. I swear
to god this place...

There's a pounding KNOCK on the door. James opens it. It's
Mama DJ. He immediately closes it.

JAMES (CONT'D)

No! Nope!

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

INT/EXT. VISTA MOTEL - BEDROOM / DOORWAY

James opens it and points at her with his copy of the script.

JAMES

Get off my door!

She takes a step back.

MAMA DJ

I will do that. I understand that
but you gotta respect me and my
girls are over there chillen at our
party enjoying ourselves, ok?

Otis looks through the window and sees Little Q peering
inside. She smiles and waves at him. He shyly waves back.

MAMA DJ (CONT'D)

You knew it was a spot when you
moved in here and it is what it is.

JAMES

It is what it isn't! It ain't what
it fuckin' ain't! So why don't you
get your silly ass back over there.

MAMA DJ

You actin' like you run somethin'?

She THROWS her drink at him and it smashes against his wall.

MAMA DJ (CONT'D)
 You don't run a damn thing! You
 better miss me with that!

She walks away still looking at him, "what you going to do".

JAMES
 That's strike one! Now it's fucking
 war!

He PUNCHES the wall covered in her drink and heads inside.

INT. VISTA MOTEL - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

JAMES
 Ready?

OTIS
 Let's take a break.

JAMES
 I don't want to take a break.

OTIS
 Let's take a break. I have the
 scene.

JAMES
 You don't have the scene yet!

OTIS
 I think it's ok--

JAMES
 Ya but I don't think it's ok so
 we're gonna keep going til you make
 me laugh or we're going to do it
 all fucking night.

We now realize this is the memory from Otis's rehab dream.

OTIS
 Give me a fucking cigarette, dad.

JAMES
 You want a cigarette? Here.

James FLICKS HIS LIT CIGARETTE at him; it hits Otis in the
 head and falls on the floor.

JAMES (CONT'D)

There, you happy now, Little Lord Fontenroy. You got a cigarette now. Go ahead and smoke it.

Otis rubs his head where it hit his hair.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You just gonna let it burn a hole in the carpet... I don't give a shit, you're paying for it. Do what you want.

Otis doesn't move.

OTIS

You know I'm doing you a favor... by paying you to be my chaperon. Who else is going to give a felon a job? I'm not stupid.

JAMES

I don't like when you talk to me like that. I don't like you talking to me like I work for you.

OTIS

You do work for me. I'm your boss.

JAMES

You know what? Don't say another fucking word. I'm about to lose my shit. You're pushing me over the fucking edge. You understand what I'm saying? I don't have to be here. I could be gone in a second. I could be pulling eight, ten grand a week.

OTIS

...I want you to be here Dad.

JAMES

Didn't I tell you not to say another word?

OTIS

I want you to be--

JAMES

Shut the fuck up!

James JUMPS off his bed and HOLDS his hand over Otis's mouth while pressing him into the bed.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Didn't I say don't say another
fucking word? Say one more word!

OTIS
(pleading through his
dad's hand)
I want you to be here!

JAMES
Now you want me to be here? I can't
figure out who you are Actor Man.

He removes his hand from Otis's mouth and sits back down.

JAMES (CONT'D)
What the fuck do you want me to be
here for? Give me one good reason.

OTIS
You have good instincts.

JAMES
I'm from the mud. I got rodeo clown
instincts. I couldn't make it in
Hollywood... I like pussy too much!

OTIS
You could if you started when I
did.

JAMES
Yeah... Then what?... Then I could
have been something? Stand around
getting paid to fucking pie fight?
Doing push ups?

Otis starts to tear up. James can't watch.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Wipe your face Otis. Don't cry in
front of me. I'm not going to ask
you again, Otis.

They both sit there, staring at the ground.

JAMES (CONT'D)
You keep pushing me...

CUT TO:

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - AFTERNOON

Against the matte painted blue sky we saw in the opening, sits Otis, in a plush coat, sunglasses and bling rings.

A long table covered with everything good is stretched between him and the camera.

Next to him is his Butler, ROYSTON, dressed in a suit and massaging Otis's shoulders the whole time. They look out of place in the sand pit set.

By the plastic palm tree stands Otis' T.V. Dad, an American dreamboat, who on "Action" is walking toward the sand pit.

T.V. DAD

This culinary spread is beautisimiss, Jeff.

OTIS

It's all thanks to Royston.

T.V. DAD

Thank you, this is splendid Royston.

OTIS

This is splendid Royston.

T.V. Dad assesses his son.

T.V. DAD

What has gotten into you son?

Otis pulls keys out of his pocket.

OTIS

You know what, here... Here's the key to the new house... take that.

T.V. DAD

Wait, Jeff. What's going on here?

Royston nods politely and moves to massage Otis's neck.

T.V. DAD (CONT'D)

Is that what you think this is all about? You think I'm leaving you because mommy and I bought a second house?

Otis takes his sunglasses off.

OTIS
Well... Yea.

T.V. DAD
Royston, do you mind?

OTIS
You heard him, Royston.

Royston nods and leaves but not before making sure Otis's cup is full of fresh coffee.

OTIS (CONT'D)
So you're staying?

T.V. DAD
Of course. Do you really think I would leave you and Royston behind?

OTIS
Wow... I just thought you didn't love us anymore...

T.V Dad puts his arm on Otis's shoulder.

T.V. DAD
I love you, Jeff... I love you more than words can say.

Otis is feeling far more than what this kids show requires.

And...

DIRECTOR (O.C.)
CUT!

Otis looks for his father's eyes and sees him talking to a woman backstage.

T.V. DAD
(to Otis)
Hey are you feeling alright?

Otis puts his sunglasses back on.

CUT TO:

INT. VISTA MOTEL - NIGHT

CLOSE ON OTIS: Same vibe.

He sits in the chair in the doorway, looking at his father's bike. He is smoking and fidgeting with his leg.

James is laying on his bed.

ON THE T.V.: The video of Otis and the T.V. Dad's scene.

We stay here long enough for Otis to smoke half his cigarette. He turns toward his father.

OTIS

Dad.

James is totally into the TV, unaware of Otis's gaze.

OTIS (CONT'D)

I need you to hear me. I'm gonna say some things that I gotta say and I need you to not interrupt me or run off...

CLOSE ON: Otis's face staring into the lens, the glow of the T.V. flickering off his face.

OTIS (CONT'D)

I was thinking the other day when you asked me about the Rodeo and Tom... I was thinking about what other happy memories I had of you and me and I swear to god... I've always been waiting for you to act like a real dad. You haven't done that one time.

Back in the room: James's face frozen watching TV; eyes to us.

Then... We see Otis enter his frame in profile.

James keeps his eyes on us. Otis leans close to his father's ear and whispers.

OTIS (CONT'D)

I've missed you for a longtime, dad.

James's face is frozen. Eyes into the camera. He slowly turns to his son and stares into his eyes.

Left eye to left eye.

JAMES (AUDIO LIP SYNC OF T.V DAD)

I love you Jeff... I love you more than words can say.

James wipes his son's tears away and tenderly holds his face.

WIDE AGAIN: Otis never left his seat.

From the bed, James sees Otis crying in the doorway.

JAMES (CONT'D)
What are you crying for?

Otis tries to wipe away his tears. He realizes his cigarette is burnt to it's end when it burns his fingers. He FLICKS IT AWAY and puts two fingers in his mouth to calm down.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Go pick that up.

Otis walks to the parking lot to retrieve the butt then reenters the room.

JAMES (CONT'D)
What are you crying about?

OTIS
What? Wh.. I'm not.

JAMES
You're crying about something.

OTIS
Tom.

JAMES
Oh, for fucks sake...

OTIS
He still fixed our passports after you threatened to face-fuck his dead family.

James looks at him.

OTIS (CONT'D)
You're a sex offender. He's a federal employee! Don't you think you should...

JAMES
He kept pushing it.

Otis gets right in his face.

OTIS
SHUT THE FUCK UP!

This is the first time we've seen Otis like this. James's voice remains steady and calm.

JAMES
Don't talk to me like that.

OTIS
LISTEN TO ME AND LET ME TALK.

JAMES
Lower your voice Otis.

OTIS
I want you to be a better dad to me. Promise me. Put your pinky out right now and promise me you'll be better.

JAMES
I'll be better...

James offers up his pinky. Otis slaps it away.

OTIS
This is not a joke. This is not one of your stupid little jokes.

Long beat.

JAMES
What is this then?

OTIS
The end of our agreement.

JAMES
End of our agreement? I'll tell you what, I hear you man. You want a better father, a father that teaches you lessons and stuff? And you deserve one. You do.

Otis sits on his bed. They face each other.

JAMES (CONT'D)
So I'm going to try harder. We're going to start fresh right here, right now. Lesson number one all smart guys know, if you can hit your boss once...

James SMACKS all vitality out of his boy. WHACK.

CLOSE ON: James's face. Pure anger.

We hear Otis moaning.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Then you can hit him twice.

WHACK...

JAMES (CONT'D)
Don't talk to me like that.

Otis is coiled up on the bed crying.

OTIS
Go away!

James gets up.

JAMES
Gladly, pal.

Through the doorway we see James walk outside, get on his bike, gun it and go.

EXT. VISTA PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Otis, sentimentally walking out to the parking lot. Passing units on the way. Some with open doors. We pass an OLDER WOMAN in a wheelchair in front of her unit smoking.

He cries as he goes.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

James rides on his bike. We don't know where he's going.

EXT. VACANT LOT - NIGHT

Otis heads back toward the debased car junk yard in the back of the hotel. He's smoking a Kool and looking up at the moon.

He sits on a car and rocks back and forth.

CUT TO:

INT. REHAB - OFFICE - AFTERNOON - 2005

Otis is sitting on the floor against the wall. Dr. Moreno sits on a special mattress for back support.

Otis is barely reading from a note pad as tears streak his face. His voice is breaking.

He holds his index to a post it on the wall marked: DAD.

Points to his Dad.

OTIS

I make a lot of people laugh son. I know what's funny. This is shit right now...

Points to himself.

OTIS (CONT'D)

Give me a cigarette, Dad.

Points to his Dad.

OTIS (CONT'D)

Not until you get this scene. You're gonna make me laugh or were gonna do this all fucking night.

Points to himself.

OTIS (CONT'D)

I'm doing you a favor... by paying you to be my chaperon. Give me a fucking cigarette, Dad.

Points to Dad.

OTIS (CONT'D)

Whoa. You're doing who a favor?

To himself.

OTIS (CONT'D)

You... Who else is gonna give a felon a job? I'm not stupid.

Dad.

OTIS (CONT'D)

I don't need you to do that...

Otis breaks. We hear his pain.

Beat.

DR. MORENO

What are your S.U.D.S. now?

Otis explodes and gets up.

OTIS

I DON'T FUCKING KNOW! I'M NOT A
FUCKING NUMBER!!! I CANT...
FUCK!!!... I'M... It hurts, What is
the fucking point of putting a
number to it?

DR. MORENO

So we can chart progress.

OTIS

FOR FUCKING WHO!?!? If this works
I'll know won't I?

DR. MORENO

For court.

Beat. He sits down.

OTIS

80.

Dr. Moreno writes it down.

DR. MORENO

Let's bring it down.

OTIS

Oh my god.

Otis shakes his head.

OTIS (CONT'D)

Cactus...
(snap)
Window.
(snap)
Notebook.
(snap)
Carpet.

DR. MORENO

One more.

Otis can't look at her.

OTIS

YOU'RE A RIDICULOUS PERSON YOU KNOW
THAT? YOU THINK YOU'RE SMART
BECAUSE YOU GOT ME TO ACT FOR YOU?
I'VE BEEN DOING THIS SHIT MY WHOLE
LIFE FOR A LIVING. Wouldn't I know
if it works? You're running my
entire fucking life...

(MORE)

OTIS (CONT'D)

It's all bullshit. How am I supposed to have therapy with my probation officer??

DR. MORENO

Name one more thing.

Beat. He looks at her.

Deep breath.

OTIS

You...

She's there.

He calms down.

OTIS (CONT'D)

The only thing my father gave me that was of any value to me is pain.

Dr. Moreno nods.

OTIS (CONT'D)

And you want to take that away?

DR. MORENO

Can I?

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. VACANT LOT - NIGHT - 1995

Little Q comes up behind Otis.

She throws her robe over his face and wipes gone his tears. She holds his face in her hands through the robe. After a long, long beat he moves his hands to hold her hands holding his face.

They stay like this rocking back and forth under the good looking Los Angeles moon and then back up and look at each other.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BARE ELEGANCE LAX - NIGHT

James enters a fairly vacuous strip-club.

He walks up to the bar and orders a drink. He sits close to the restroom, smoke machine blasting in his face.

WAITRESS approaches, hands him his drink. He murmurs in her ear. She appears to agree. He stuffs money in the check sleeve.

EXT. VACANT LOT - NIGHT

Otis starts doing a little Mime routine...

Little Q answers it with a little dance.

INT. BARE ELEGANCE LAX - RESTROOM - NIGHT

James crushing two O.C's on the sink counter of an open faucet. Small piece of scalded tin foil. Suck it in through the straw. Cherry ignites. We hold it.

Hillbilly heroin.

EXT. VACANT LOT - NIGHT

Otis miming he's dead...

INT. BARE ELEGANCE LAX - RESTROOM - NIGHT

James is all sweat.

Lights the bottom again. One more. Then a look in the mirror. He looks down into the sink. The running faucet over-flowing. Water is covering the whole floor.

EXT. VACANT LOT - NIGHT

Little Q brings Otis back to life. He rises. She pretends to pull him towards her like a puppet on a string.

They hug. They dance.

EXT. VISTA POOL - NIGHT

Otis dives into the pool.

We stay with him underwater. He touches the bottom then shoots back up to the surface.

INT. BARE ELEGANCE - NIGHT

James tries to keep his eyes open while a STRIPPER performs.
He dives into his Oxytocin dreams.

CUT TO:

EXT. VISTA MOTEL - PARKING LOT - THE NEXT MORNING

James rides his bike back into the lot.

EXT. VISTA MOTEL - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Otis and Little Q are in bed together.

They hear James pull into the lot. They immediately JUMP UP
and try to make the bed.

James staggers in. Looks them over. Little Q in her robe. He
stops.

Beat.

JAMES

What are you doing here?

He closes the door.

LITTLE Q

I'm looking after your son.

Otis sits in the bathroom. He knows what's coming.

JAMES

Otis?

Otis gets up and enters the main room. Silent.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(back to Little Q)

You fucked my son?

She shakes her head "no".

LITTLE Q

You fuck your son.

James charges at her and she slaps him.

He falls to the ground and she runs out the door. He calls
out to Otis from the ground.

JAMES
Get my glasses!

Otis slowly hands him his specs.

JAMES (CONT'D)
You fuck that woman?

OTIS
She's just friendly.

JAMES
She doesn't give a shit about you
Otis. You think she gives a
"friendly" fuck about victims?

OTIS
I'm not a victim.

JAMES
It's a crime is what it is. You're
twelve years old. That's a victim.
Wake up. You think what? You're her
friend?

Otis stares at James...

OTIS
I love her.

JAMES
Fuck you; you love her.

OTIS
I do.

James goes to the bathroom, gets on his knees and THROWS UP
into the toilet. Otis looks away.

JAMES
(head in the toilet)
Love sells diapers pal.

OTIS
She holds my hand. You slap me in
the face.

JAMES
I'm your father. Can't buy that.

OTIS
Yes, you can. I do...

Beat.

JAMES

Don't... Don't fucking push me.

OTIS

I'm not scared of you.

James gets up and sits on the closed toilet.

JAMES

Don't I know it. Fuck this shit. I don't want to be here no more.

OTIS

You can't leave.

JAMES

I can do what the fuck I want. I'm an adult. You can't leave.

OTIS

Fine. Take me with you.

James takes a sip of water.

JAMES

Fuck off. Call Tom and tell him to pickup some applesauce and take you camping...

OTIS

Let me in dad.

JAMES

Fuck off. You're in. You are SO fucking in! You made it. HEY-O! I never could. Congratulations! Good on ya, honey boy!

James claps then back to staring at the bathroom floor.

OTIS

None of it's real though.

JAMES

There it is though isn't it? None of it's real... it's more valuable that way. That's my fucking advice. That's my fatherly advice, you picking up on that? Chase the bullshit forever, man.

OTIS

Mother says--

JAMES

Your mother says a whole lotta
shit, your mother. It's naive. Real
world the truth is wood rots. Stone
crumbles. People fucking die.
That's the real world. The only
thing that is going to live on is
fables and stories and dreams--

OTIS

I don't understand?

JAMES

You're twelve fucking years old.

OTIS

I want to understand. I want
stories--

JAMES

You get stories every week. You
pull them out of the envelope. You
don't need me for stories. You make
your own stories.

(a long beat)

How do you think it feels for me to
get to have my son talk to me the
way that you talk to me? Have my
son paying me... how do you think
that feels?

OTIS

You wouldn't be here if I didn't
pay you.

James starts to cry. Ugly cry. Hands on his forehead.

Otis watches. He's near tears too.

James looks at his son and takes out a cigarette and lights
it. Otis mirrors his dad and does the same.

JAMES

Horse trade. You stop putting me
down. You stop shitting on me and
bringing up the past. I can't get
out from under it and I'll teach
you what I know. I'll give you what
I have.

OTIS

Ok. Deal.

From the bathroom James reaches out his pinky.

Otis moves closer. He reaches out his pinky and they each kiss their hand to lock in the pinky swear.

CUT TO:

EXT. REHAB - TENNIS COURTS - 2005

Otis is following something we can't see.

DR. MORENO (V.O.)
There's no quick fix. But you can start from here. You need to get rid of what doesn't work Otis...

He sees the chicken. He walks towards it.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. VISTA MOTEL - BEDROOM - 1995

The same scene as before.

James in the bathroom. Otis in the living room.

JAMES
I'm growing, son.

OTIS
I know. I see it.

JAMES
Fuck you, you see it. I'm growing marijuana on the side of the freeway. 'Sensemilla' on the 101.

OTIS
Dad...

JAMES
What?

OTIS
What if they catch you again?

JAMES
Who is 'they'?

OTIS
The police. The city.

JAMES

The city? They water it for me...
no trail. This crop works you and
me are going to build a tree house
on the fucking moon. Trust me honey
boy, I'm your father.

Otis smiles, "ok".

EXT. HIGHWAY - EARLY EVENING

James and Otis ride on the bike. Otis holds onto his dad and
closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. REHAB - CONTINUOUS - 2005

Otis keeps walking towards the chicken.

JAMES (V.O.)

You know the older you get you
learn a couple of things about
life. You get to know what you come
from. Now you come from a line of
alcoholics, son.

BACK TO:

EXT. 101 BANK GARDEN - CONTINUOUS - 1995

James and Otis pull up to his crop on the side of the
freeway.

Bike parked. Otis is wearing the bright yellow "Adopt-A-
Highway" vest.

JAMES (O.S.)

You wanted a tree house?

Otis surveys the plants and smiles.

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

Yes sir... Man of my word.

Otis runs through the greenery.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Get in there! It's yours.

Otis kneels and holds a plant.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DUSK - 2005

Otis keeps after the chicken.

JAMES (V.O.)

A long line of good people who were hurting and didn't know what the fuck to do so they drank a lot.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. 101 BANK GARDEN - 1995

James leans in close by Otis.

OTIS

It's sticky!

JAMES

That's magical stuff right there.
That's god, pecker-wood.

Our boys are in a world of their own. James puts his arm on Otis. It is as affectionate as we've ever seen them.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DUSK - 2005

Otis watches the chicken cross the road. He continues after it.

JAMES (V.O.)

Every single one of us got a grudge. Every single one of us got somebody that fucked us over. I know you got one. You gotta lay the grudge down. Or it's going to fucking kill you.

EXT. VISTA PARKING LOT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Otis follows the chicken into the lot he grew up in. He walks towards his dad's bike.

He sees the door to their room is open.

James appears in the doorway dressed in FULL CLOWN COSTUME. He waves to Otis then starts to perform a miming routine.

Otis stands there frozen and watches.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. 101 BANK GARDEN - DUSK - 1995

Otis and James sit on the side of the freeway. Otis between his father's legs. James holds a joint in Otis's mouth.

We stay on him as he blows a cloud of SMOKE... And then it comes.

A PAINFUL COUGH.

A proud James smiles and laughs.

JAMES

You know a seed has to totally destroy itself to become a flower... And doing that is a violent act, honey boy.

CUT TO:

EXT. VISTA PARKING LOT - NIGHT - 2005

Otis approaches James in the clown costume.

A tense moment. They hug. A big hug.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. 101 BANK GARDEN - 1995

James hugging young Otis.

BACK TO:

EXT. VISTA MOTEL - POOL - NIGHT - 2005

Otis and James sit with their legs in the pool. James's clown costume, makeup, and shoes still on. He turns to his son.

JAMES

Nobody is mad at me anymore.

OTIS

Huh?

JAMES

That's all I ever wanted.

The chicken walks by them.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You'll get there too.

He hands Otis a lit joint. Otis inhales and smiles.

OTIS

I'm going to make a movie about you.

JAMES

You're making a movie about me?

Otis nods, "yeah".

JAMES (CONT'D)

Well, Make me look good honey boy.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEAUTIFUL ROAD OUTSIDE TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

Our boys cut through it like a crazy knife on wheels.

Otis and James are gliding down the freeway. It's a tight operation. Otis at the helm, James holds tight. He moves with his son. Hugs him at 120 mph.

Full Speed Love.

CLOSE ON: Otis in the front this time around.

High rises bulging through the thick haze of Los Angeles smog. The Sierra Madres bitching in the distance.

Our boys flying down the freeway. It's an expert working unit.

Only they know where they're going...

Until we realize it's just Otis on the bike.

FADE TO BLACK