

THE FIREBIRD

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IN THE DARKNESS...

We hear quiet, and someone walking down a city street at night. Cars, distant conversation, maybe music from a car as it passes. Finally a car pulls up, the sound "what the..." and then a struggle. Quick. Almost unnoticed. A door closes, and the car pulls away. Silence.

SCENE 1

Dan's office. We hear the buzz of the intercom, the buzz of blackberries, the phone ringing...as we come up on Irene in Dan's office, seated. Perhaps they don't even look at each other.

DAN

(breaking the silence) Irene...

IRENE

Don't.

(beat)

DAN

Look, Irene...

IRENE

No, goddamn it. NO! Be quiet. (beat) I don't...I don't know what to do, Danny.

DAN

(quietly)

How is Joe doing?

IRENE

Oh, how the hell do you think he's doing? How are any of us doing?

(gathers herself)

He blames himself for not...Hell, I dunno what he blames himself for.

DAN

All I've done is ask how I can help you...tell me what you need.

IRENE

(full of anger)

How could you let this happen, Danny?

DAN

Let this happen? I did everything you asked me!

IRENE  
Obviously not enough.  
(beat)

DAN  
You screwed me, Irene. You know that?

IRENE  
I what...?

DAN  
You asked me to help you...and you put me in a position where  
I couldn't win. Refuse you, I'm an asshole. Do it, and...I  
don't know what I am.

IRENE  
Goddamn it Danny! This isn't about you.

(They sit there in  
silence for a minute.  
Irene cries a little.)

DAN:  
(quietly)  
Have the police come back with anything new?

IRENE:  
No.  
(beat)

IRENE: (CONT'D)  
How could you let this happen?

DAN:  
(quieter)  
I'm just the fuckin' janitor. This is your mess.

IRENE:  
Fuck you, Danny.

SCENE 2  
Dan and Joe in the living room of Joe's home in Brooklyn.  
Earlier.

DANNY:  
You look good, Joe.

JOE:

I look good? (calls toward the kitchen) You hear that Irene? Danny thinks I look good! (back to him) You know, I have lost a few pounds, I think it's already showing.

DAN:

I think so. (smiles)

JOE:

to kitchen again) Irene, come in here, look who's dropped by! C'mere!

DAN:

How's work been?

(Irene enters)

IRENE:

Well, look who's here? Danny, my love, come here! (Dan crosses to her and she hugs him tightly) We haven't seen you in ages...

DAN:

Hello beautiful! Did you see Joe? He looks great!

JOE:

Not just good anymore, great!

IRENE:

You'd look a lot better if you gave up all that midnight snacking...Danny, you wouldn't believe what this man eats in the middle of the night. I have a full set of dishes I come down to every morning!

JOE:

What, I'm hungry, I wake up hungry, and so I eat. What am I going to do?

IRENE:

Maybe fruit?

JOE:

Danny, you see this. Twenty five years of marriage, two kids, and now, now she wants me to eat fruit...

DAN:

Fruit's good for you Joe. Makes you strong.

JOE:

I'll tell you what makes you strong...steak, eggs, protein.

IRENE:

Oh don't start with that again...

JOE:

Danny, you wanna steak? I can whip some up right now...fried onions, garlic... (starts to get up)

DAN:

No no, I'm good, thanks...

IRENE:

(to Joe) Stop it... (to Dan) Carla finishes high school this year, can you believe it?

DAN:

Wow, talk about time flying fast, huh?...seems like she was a little tiny kid the last time I saw her.

IRENE:

She was. (beat) How are you Danny? Sometimes I get off the bus and still expect you and Ricky to be playing basketball in the park. (She forces a smile, then hesitantly) How are your parents?

DAN:

They're good. I'll tell them you say hello.

IRENE:

Well, use your best judgment.

JOE:

It's long over with.

IRENE:

I know, I'm sure. Sometimes people go different ways is all...

DAN:

(overlapping) Right, of course.

IRENE:

I feel like I want to call Sofia and apologize sometimes, but...

DAN:

Do you want me to have Mom call you?

IRENE:

I...I don't know. We're stubborn old people now, not like we were...

JOE:

(overlapping) Speak for yourself...

DAN:

(changing the subject) Is Ricky home?

IRENE:

(beat) No, he's working. He'll be sorry he missed you.

DAN:

Glad he found something. Last time I heard, he was looking again.

JOE:

He's working for a trucking company in Red Hook. He likes it, he makes good money. We'll see.

DAN:

Not long term?

JOE:

Well...I mean...Look, you know that kid. Me, I've had the shop for 20 years. And god willing we'll have it another 20, til I retire and hand it over to Ricky...

IRENE:

(chuckles) Old man, you are not working into your 70s. And you are never getting Ricky to take the shop..

JOE:

Maybe, you don't know...he's still a young kid now, but maybe when he's a little older, he'll see things different...it'll be a cash cow someday. All this, what...Gentrification. He'll be happy to take it from me.

IRENE:

Joe. He's 28. And not in a million years does he want our life. You should sell it first.

DAN:

Joe would never sell the shop.

JOE:

(overlapping)

Never, Danny. Never! I built that thing, nobody's going to take it away from me til I'm ready to let it go.

(beat. Irene gives Dan a look.)

DAN:

So, Joe...I'm thinking I wanted to get a new car. Maybe something retro, an classic that's been fixed up..

JOE:

You got so much money you can buy a car as a toy now, huh? You see this Irene, Danny's made it. He's a man with money.

DAN:

(overlapping) No no, I just...I want one of the cars we loved as kids, and I thought maybe you'd know someone who I could talk to. I don't want to look online, I want someone I can trust. So who's working on something? I know you know everybody.

IRENE:

Joe, you should show him the Trans Am...

DAN:

You have a Trans Am? What year?

JOE:

It's a '93, but it's probably not...

DAN:

I love the '93! That'd be perfect...

IRENE:

Joe, you should sell it to Danny!

JOE:

(overlapping) No no no...

DAN:

Why not, Joe?

JOE:

You don't want this, it's not done yet and...I was thinking about giving it to Carla for school when she goes to away.

IRENE:

She's not going away Joe, she's going to live with us til she's 30, please...

JOE:

(to Dan) Look, you don't want to buy it...

DAN:

Ok, I don't want you to sell if you don't want to. (Dan looks at Irene)But if you were thinking of selling, it'd be perfect.

IRENE:

Danny, just go look at it, see if you like it. Make him the right offer and he'll take it, won't you Joe?

JOE:

I will not, Irene. I just explained to Danny...

IRENE:

(cuts him off) Joe, you are never going to drive that car, and Carla doesn't want it...Once it's done, then you're going to start tinkering with another car probably, and where are you going to put this one? See if Danny wants to buy it.

JOE:

Danny, I...c'mon, I'll show you the car. I'll grab two beers on the way.

DAN:

That's great, Joe, I appreciate it. I'm going to use the bathroom and I'll meet you out there.

(Joe exits thru the kitchen.)

IRENE:

(softly) Thank you.

DAN:

(softly) I feel really bad taking this car from him if he loves it so much.

IRENE:

It's the right thing Danny. You and Ricky always wanted to be the Knight Rider for Halloween, remember?

DAN:

(looking at her) What's really going on? This is more than just cleaning out the garage...

IRENE:

Listen to me, Danny. I didn't tell you this on the phone, but...this is serious. Joe asked me to clear out a savings account we have for Carla for college so he could use it for the shop. It's not very much, but it's what we have. I didn't want to do it, so we had a long fight about it...Joe saying, what future is there for Carla if the shop isn't there to pay for the rest of her college. He was in danger of losing it, Danny. Then three days later he says he doesn't need it anymore, he found another way.

DAN:

Great, maybe he got a bank loan, or cut costs somewhere, who knows...

IRENE:

There's no legitimate way he got any money! He can't get a loan, the shop is in debt. If not, we might have left with your parents years ago.



DAN:  
So why not just ask Joe? I'll ask him...

IRENE:  
(beat) Danny, please. Go out there and help him. He won't take your charity but he will sell you that car because he loves you. I'll take care of the rest. We'll get the money from you, and make good on whatever he did.

DAN:  
Look, I can just lend you the money...

IRENE:  
He works hard, Danny! (softens) Pay him what he's worth and we'll be fine. (beat) Please.

DAN:  
You could have told me all this on the phone, ya know. I would have come out and helped.

IRENE:  
I wasn't sure.

DANNY:  
Why?

IRENE:  
We haven't really seen you in almost four years...I didn't know if...

DAN:  
I know, and I'm sorry about that. Things get busy and you put things off, before you know it years have gone by and I...

IRENE:  
It's ok, Danny. You're home again. (beat) He's waiting for you.

(Dan crosses out of the living room into the garage area as lights shift)

### SCENE 3

Joe and Dan in the garage. Joe is putting tools down and wiping his hands. Joe and Dan are drinking beer.

DAN:  
She's really coming along...

JOE:  
It's a piece of shit.

DAN:  
Ok...

JOE:  
I would never sell this to you Danny.

DAN:  
Look, Joe...

JOE:  
It's not in good shape, I still need to replace the small block V8 with a V6 for gas mileage, the solenoid is still sticking, the exhaust, the whole thing...(trails off. Beat)

DAN:  
You ok?

JOE:  
Yeah. (beat. He looks at Dan) I'm so proud of you, Danny. You know that, right?

DAN:  
Yeah, I know. (beat) Thank you.

JOE:  
You know, you're Dad and I...we always wanted to figure a way to work together. Same job, side by side. Punch the clock together, cold beers together at the end of the week. It's this weird thing how you can begin at the same spot, think you are making the same exact choices, and somehow two people don't end up at the same point. But you're doing better than we ever did, me and your old man...

DAN:  
You did a terrific job, all of you did..

JOE:  
(beat) Ok. (smiles at him ruefully) I can't sell you this car Danny, I'm sorry. I just...I gotta keep it a little while longer.

DAN:  
Oh, ok, if it's not ready...You fixing it up for Carla?

(Ricky enters from off,  
carrying a six pack of  
cans with only 4 beers  
left in it.)

RICKY:  
Hey, Pop, you out here again? (Sees he's with Dan) Well  
well, a ghost from the past.

DAN:  
Look what the cat dragged in...

RICKY:  
I don't see no cat around here, just a big pussy...

DAN:  
The only pussy round here is the smell of your girlfriend on  
my fingers... (beat)

RICKY:  
(breaks, without smiling) Oh man, that is just terrible...

DAN:  
I know, I couldn't think of anything else...

RICKY:  
Just god awful...

JOE:  
(overlapping) Really terrible, Danny.

DAN:  
Ouch...how you doin? (they embrace)

RICKY:  
(a little stiff) Livin', you know how it is. (Pops a beer,  
hands one to Joe only)

DAN:  
Yeah, I do. Just getting' home from work?

RICKY:  
Yeah, finished up earlier, just seeing people, you know. Dad  
putting you to work on the car? I coulda reminded him you  
don't know shit about 'em...

DAN:  
Hey now, I know some things...who helped you keep that piece  
of shit Tercel running all those years? Remember we had that  
one summer we were going to buy two VW rabbits and pull  
parts from the first one to fix up the other...?

RICKY:  
Yeah, yeah, I remember...good thing we didn't do that, we'd  
still have two VWs back here.

DAN:  
Yeah, probably-

RICKY:  
(overlapping, direct) What brings you out here, man?

DAN:  
Haven't seen you guys in a while, wanted to see how everybody is doin...

RICKY:  
Just out of the blue, huh...just like that?

JOE:  
(a little probing) Been a long time, huh Danny?

DAN:  
Yeah, it has. Too long. What's Carla up to these days?

RICKY:  
You know Lil Sis, she's hittin' them books.

DAN:  
Good for her.

JOE:  
She wants to go to college, Danny. Girl's got big dreams.

DAN:  
That's great.

RICKY:  
She wants to get out. Like you.

JOE:  
(jumping in) She's hungry for all the things, you know. Her friends have iPhones and all this stuff. So she's hustling as fast as she can to get out there and "buy buy buy".

RICKY:  
(to Joe) I told her, she needs stuff like that she should come to me.

JOE:  
Danny wants to buy the Firebird.

RICKY:  
Oh yeah? What'd ya want with a car like this anyway?

DAN:  
We always loved this car growing up.

RICKY:  
Yeah we did. You taking a walk down memory lane?

DAN:  
(beat) Maybe. But I also need a car.

RICKY:  
So go buy one. You got money. You don't need this one.

DAN:  
(suspicious, puffs up a little) What if I want this one?  
Just like when we were kids...

RICKY:  
(cutting him off) People want a lot of things.

(beat)

DAN:  
(things square off a little, Dan's not really even sure why)  
Guess it's up to Joe, right?

JOE:  
Look, Danny, I...

RICKY:  
It's not up to him, it's up to me.

DAN:  
How's that?

JOE:  
Ricky... (beat)

RICKY:  
That car's for me.

JOE:  
Yeah, I'm working on the car for Ricky. He needs something  
to get back and forth to Red Hook.  
beat

DAN:  
I thought it was for Carla for school?

(looks to both of them  
for a beat)

JOE:  
I'm sorry Danny. I told you I needed to keep it a little  
longer, there's more to do...

DAN:  
Forget about it. Just an idea. No harm in asking, right?

(Ricky watches him intently)

RICKY:  
Pop, how about you take a walk for a minute.

JOE:  
Why?

RICKY:  
Danny and I are going to catch up. Haven't seen each other in a while.

(beat)

JOE:  
Sure, you boys catch up. I'll put your beers in the fridge.  
(Joe exits with Ricky's beer)  
(beat)

DAN:  
Alright, let's catch up..

RICKY:  
What the fuck are you doing here man?

DAN:  
Whoa whoa whoa, what the fuck? I'm out here to see your folks-

RICKY:  
Like hell you are. I haven't seen you since the day you moved out of here.

DAN:  
Hey, I know I haven't seen you in a while or your folks, so I came out. What's the fuck's your problem? (Beat)

RICKY:  
Nothing, man. (Ricky exhales)

DAN:  
Irene's cooking finally getting to you?

RICKY:  
(smiling) Hey, Irene is still a helluva cook.

DAN:  
Dude, Jimmy Hoffa used to put her meatloaf on people's feet before he tossed them into the river.

RICKY:  
And so what, you're some sort of master chef now?

DAN:  
No way. Lots of ordering in.

RICKY:  
No way I could eat Chinese every night.

DAN:  
Me neither. Sometimes Greek, sometimes Indian, sometimes  
sushi...

RICKY:  
(looking at him) I guess money makes you a regular fuckin'  
United Nations, huh?

(beat)

DAN:  
How are your folks doing?

RICKY:  
Pop can still fix cars like breathing. Mom's fine. (beat)  
How about your folks?

DAN:  
Good. They ask about you guys all the time.

RICKY:  
Funny, they don't call or come over, either.  
beat

DAN:  
You working for your Dad much?

RICKY:  
Fuck's that got to do with anything?  
beat

DAN:  
How's Marci?

RICKY:  
She's fine. Better than fine.

DAN:  
Well, this makes that "girlfriend pussy" joke even worse...

RICKY:  
Only for you. You the one without the pussy.  
beat

DAN:  
(Big) Well, good chat, glad I came out here... (starts to go)

RICKY:  
You really want this car?

DAN:  
Maybe. Heard it wasn't yours to sell.

RICKY:  
Everything out here is me now. I've gotta be the man now.  
Keep this family together.

DAN:  
They seem just fine, Rick.

RICKY:  
Yeah they do, right? That's cause I make it that way. I  
work. I hustle. Joe can't do it. That man loses money hand  
over fist. Irene never worked a day in her life. Who's going  
to get Carla into college, huh? None of them. Me. (beat) So  
if I say this car is mine, it is. And if I say it's yours,  
it is.

DAN:  
So you the big man now, huh?

RICKY:  
Big as I need to be.

DAN:  
Where you workin' now?

RICKY:  
Shipping company in Red Hook. Crates on and off boats all  
day long. People are either born to work and hustle, or  
they're soft and need cushy jobs to get by. Nothing you or I  
can do about it.

DAN:  
(beat) So how much hustling is really in there?

RICKY:  
You really want to know these things?

DAN:  
I dunno, do I?

RICKY:  
Probably not.

DAN:  
There's nothing wrong with asking me to help out with your  
folks or with Carla or the shop.



RICKY:

What, you think your Dad and Joe didn't hustle to take care of their families back in the day? This is how this works.

DAN:

Fine, let me invest or, or... (Dan sees the car)

RICKY:

(realizing) Is that why you want this car? Way to give me something, give us a little slice of your American Dream?

DAN:

No, it's not...

RICKY:

Fuck you man. Fuck you right in the ass. Don't go giving me shit about how I'm providing and then try and come in as some sort of welfare. We don't want it and we don't need it.

DAN:

Do Joe and Irene and Carla all feel like that?

RICKY:

They feel how I tell them to muthafuckin feel. Ok?

**\*\*FLASHBACK\*\***

(12 years earlier, and Ricky and Dan are playing basketball outside. They're sitting against the fence of a park, sweating and catching their breath. They are 16 years old. Maybe they're drinking Gatorade)

DAN:

Lil fucker's fast, huh?

RICKY:

Yeah. I can't stick him.

DAN:

If we run again with him, maybe force him left...his lefty dribble is shit.

RICKY:

That big dude is tough to shoot over...

DAN:  
I was trying to box him out, but he's just too heavy.

RICKY:  
Fuck, I am sweating my ass off out here, its hotter'n hell.

DAN:  
Fucking blacktop sucks man, meltin' my sneakers.

RICKY:  
You coming over tonight? Meatloaf for dinner at 6.

DAN:  
Lemme check with Marci, she's got some plan about studying..

RICKY:  
Seems like a girl who don't study much when she's  
"studying"...

DAN:  
Well, I am learning something...

RICKY:  
I bet you are.

DAN:  
What about her cousin April, you want me to hook it up?

RICKY:  
Nah man, that girl's annoying... always on your shit, telling  
you to do this for Marci, do that for her...I don't think I  
could take that, man, no matter how big the titties are.

DAN:  
Right. (beat) They are big tho...

RICKY:  
Oh yeah. (They laugh easily. They look up and watch the game  
on the court).

DAN:  
Oh shit, did you see that? Lil fucker crossed that guy up,  
shook him out of his shoes!

RICKY:  
Damn! (watches again as they head back up court; beat)  
Wait, did he just look over here and laugh at us?

DAN:  
(barely looking up) Don't think so.

RICKY:  
I think he did. He's calling us out, Danny.

DAN:  
What? No, he's...

RICKY:  
I want to guard that kid, I can stick him.

DAN:  
How about you take that big kid, Abe...

RICKY:  
I think your slow ass better stick that chump, I'm going after this lil son of a bitch right there... (they sit and watch)

DAN:  
Rick, you can't stay with that guy, you're nuts. Look at him!

RICKY:  
You watch me.

PRESENT TIME, ONE WEEK LATER.  
(Dan is in the living room with Irene and Joe)

DAN:  
On fire?!

JOE:  
It's not that bad, our insurance covers it...

IRENE:  
How do you explain that to the customer? "If you bring your car in, ma'am, it may be set on fire. But our insurance covers it!" Goddamn it, Joe!...

DAN:  
Ok, ok, let's calm down...How did it happen?

JOE:  
You know the neighborhood, Danny. Kids are bored and making trouble, this just got a little out of hand.

IRENE:  
A little out of...What if you had been there?

JOE:  
I'd have kicked their asses...

IRENE:  
Or what if it had spread? Who knows what could have...

JOE:  
(louder) Irene, just stop! (slightly quieter) Please, honey,  
just stop.

(beat)

DAN:  
Joe, how does a car just catch on fire?

JOE:  
I told you Danny. I think some kids must've been playing  
around, maybe fireworks or smoking weed or whatever, and  
they got too close to a car and one thing led to another.

DAN:  
Well, did they cut the lock on the fence or go around back?  
I mean, what happened?

JOE:  
(calmly, too calmly) I dunno, the police are looking into  
it.

(Dan looks at Irene, who  
breaks his gaze. She  
wants no connection to  
what he's about to do.  
Dan forges ahead anyway.)

DAN:  
Joe... Is something going on? If you need anything...

JOE:  
Stop Danny.

DAN:  
(overlapping) Joe, c'mon...

JOE:  
(overlapping) It's just a fire, things happen. Cars have  
electric, they have gas, they have spark plugs and cigarette  
lighters...they have things that blow up.

DAN:  
What the fuck are you talking about, Joe? Cars don't blow  
up...

JOE:  
Dammit Danny, sometimes they do! And we move on, we don't go  
looking for trouble.

(Joe takes Irene's hand,  
who is crying a little to

herself)

DAN:  
And you're just going to let "accidents" happen?

JOE:  
We're going to be fine. Ricky is talking to the police.  
They'll look into it.

(Irene cuts him off,  
quietly at first)

IRENE:  
Joe, please go to the garage.

JOE:  
What?

IRENE:  
Please leave me alone for a minute and go outside.

JOE:  
(confused) Honey, if you are upset or worried ab-

IRENE:  
(exploding) Joe!! Go outside!

JOE:  
(after a beat, he rises and begins to exit) Danny, would you  
mind sitting here with her for a minute? I'm going to check  
on something out back... (he exits)

(beat)

DAN:  
Irene...

IRENE:  
(overlapping) Danny, I swear to god if you let anything bad  
happen to that man I will never forgive you. Never! (she is  
crying)

DAN:  
Me?

IRENE:  
Wake up! Someone set a car on fire in the shop!

DAN:  
(beat) What's Ricky got to say about it?

IRENE:  
Nothing. He's just like his father, denies everything.  
Nothing is their fault, things aren't happening, nothing is  
connected...

DAN:  
How can I help?

IRENE:  
Well do something!

DAN:  
Look, he won't sell me the car, you won't take a loan...want  
me to start paying his bills? I mean...

IRENE:  
Where is your honor?

DAN:  
My honor?

IRENE:  
You think you honor all of our sacrifices for you by telling  
me you don't want to get your hands dirty?

DAN:  
How am I supposed to get my hands dirty? Look, let's just  
calm down and be smart about...

IRENE:  
What if Joe is guilty of something? Or Ricky? What then?

DAN:  
Do you think they are?

IRENE:  
Goddammit Danny! I don't know if they are! That's the point,  
he got money from  
somewhere. And now this. I can't have them hurt Danny. I  
can't have it. I can't. I can't.

DAN:  
Ok. (beat) Fine, what do I do?

IRENE:  
Please, please just find out anything, I just need to know  
they're ok. We need you. (quietly) There's a fire at his  
shop, Danny!

IN THE BAR

(Dan is drinking a beer  
and people watching.  
After a moment, a woman  
sits next to him.)

MARCI:  
They'll let anybody in this place nowadays. Neighborhood  
must really be going to shit. Before you know it, we'll all  
have to move...on... outta here.

DAN:  
Not in the mood for this game today.

MARCI:  
That's not exactly how you're supposed to greet an old  
friend...

(beat)

MARCI: (CONT'D)  
(to bartender) Abe, I'll have a double vodka rocks. Thank  
you baby. (beat, to Dan) So...

DAN:  
How are you?

MARCI:  
Like you give a good shit how I am...please. Don't insult my  
fuckin' intelligence.

DAN:  
Know where I can find Ricky? Heard he still comes in here  
after work...

MARCI:  
He'll be here. He always knows where I am, so he'll come  
sniffin' for it.

DAN:  
(looks at her) You are some piece of work.

MARCI:  
(smiles at him, knowingly) No secret that I've got something  
that boy wants. Always have, always will. Even when you and  
me were together. He always knew I had it, and I knew I  
could give it to him whenever I wanted.

DAN:  
Nice.

MARCI:

And you know what, maybe I did and maybe I didn't. You'll never fucking know...

DAN:

Charming. You still see him?

MARCI:

I'm still fucking him, ain't I?

DAN:

I don't know, are you?

MARCI:

Oh god, Danny. We are. All night sometimes. I'm sore in the morning after a night with Ricky. Good sore. Something you could never give me.

DAN:

Huh. I seem to recall you telling me "Oh, you the man, give it to me Danny, you are the best, nobody fucks like you." Remember those nights in the park, against that fence...I bet you still got chain link marks on your back?

MARCI:

Maybe I tell him all that same shit too. (finishes her drink) Abe honey, can I have another one. Thank you doll.

(beat)

DAN:

Look, you know anything about Ricky's job or anything?

MARCI:

What, like you care now?

DAN:

Of course I care what happens to him.

MARCI:

But not to me?

DAN:

You seem to be doing just fine.

MARCI:

Well what if I wasn't. (beat) You know what, forget it. Fuck you. I'm fine. (beat) Fuck you. (She downs whatever is left in her glass) I gotta go. Abe, baby, I'll settle up with you when I come back in later, ok?

(she exits.)



ABE:  
That bitch is a piece of work.

DAN:  
Yeah? (Dan looks at him)

ABE:  
Yeah. How long were you with her anyway?

DAN:  
On and off, 4 years or so.

ABE:  
Right.

DAN:  
I'm Dan. (extends his hand)

ABE:  
I know who you are Danny.

DAN:  
Do I know you?

ABE:  
It's Abe. We used to play in pickup games over on Grand and Prospect.

DAN:  
Right, right. The big man. (beat)

ABE:  
What happened to you, man?

DAN:  
What do you mean?

ABE:  
I mean, you disappeared. Into thin air.

DAN:  
Folks moved out about 10 years ago, I hung out for a bit living with people, basement apartments and shit, then...a job. Moved out, made some money, got a new place...you know.

ABE:  
We figured you were doin' time.

DAN:  
(chuckles) No, man.

ABE:  
Around here, guys that disappear is either dead or upstate.

DAN:

I was going to school part time, you know and then a guy I know offers me a job, decent money..

ABE:

And that was it. You hit the Pick 6. No looking back, huh?

DAN:

Something like that. (beat)

ABE:

You gotta watch yourself.

DAN:

What?

ABE:

See, they keep us here. Low income people that need things. Someone to peddle to, someone to entice. Let's say you are guy who builds houses, right. You need someone to sell them to. Who you gonna sell to--the guy who can have any house he wants, or the guy who can't have a house? This is a trick question.

DAN:

I don't get it.

ABE:

You sell to the guy who has no chance of the house. Because that motherfucker will keep wanting and trying and wishing and working. And that's desperation. Then they have you right where they want you. You'll do anything, make sacrifices, do shit you would never do, so you can get that house. And then you're vulnerable. You are weak. Exposed.

DAN:

But eventually, you save the money and buy the house right?

ABE:

Nah, you never get there. You die before you get there. That's the fuck of it.

DAN:

I don't buy that.

ABE:

Course you don't, I'm betting you can buy that house now whenever you want. Only thing is, you don't want a house here no more. (beat) People see that, think it's possible to get over the fence line, cuz that motherfucker did it then I can too. Makes you dangerous to a lot of people.

DAN:

And no other alternative, right? Gotta try to rise up, do better than your folks did, right?

ABE:

Nah, no use. It's a sucker's bet. (beat) We grow hides out here. Maybe you don't remember that. We start growing them the minute we stop dreaming about getting out and know that we gonna be here. We get our hides and we thicken 'em up and they not going to get to us.

DAN:

That's totally fucked, you know that right.

ABE:

Fucked for you maybe.

DAN:

Not everybody has to do it your way.

ABE:

Nope, they don't. You know what happens to those people? They blow their fuckin brains all over they bathroom. Or they get strung out. Cuz you can't live with people who dream all the fuckin time. Don't bring that shit here.

(Ricky enters)

RICKY:

This mutherfucker offering to buy your bar, Abe? Out of Christian charity?

DAN:

Just the man I'm looking for.

RICKY:

So I hear.

DAN:

From who?

RICKY:

From who gives a fuck. (beat)

DAN:

(maybe too loud) So...What'd the cops say about your dad's fire?

(beat. Abe moves away,  
Ricky watches him go.)

RICKY:  
(sotto voce) I don't know what you think you are doin'...

DAN:  
(pointed) What's going on? You really talk to the cops?

RICKY:  
I'm taking care of this family. You don't need to ride in and take over my shit.

DAN:  
Oh, cause you are doing it?

RICKY:  
Yeah, that's right.

DAN:  
Cause you are doing a terrific job so far...

RICKY:  
Hey, what do you know about it...

(beat)

DAN:  
Where'd he get the money? You give it to him? From some sort of hustle?

(beat)

RICKY:  
I don't know what you're talkin' about.

DAN:  
(sarcastically) Ok. (drinks his beer)

(beat)

DAN: (CONT'D)  
Marci was here before. She's sweet as ever...

RICKY:  
Yeah, she never quite got over you. But I make her forget for hours at a time though. Maybe she's thinkin of you while we fuck. I really don't care. We don't have love or nothing like that. We have fuckin'.

DAN:  
(cutting him off) Why are you telling me this?

RICKY:  
Because you don't think anything has changed around here. You think you can come back, visit once or twice and be the fuckin king of Ocean Parkway. It's not how you left it.

RICKY: (CONT'D)

People change, and we sure as shit don't need no prodigal son coming home.

DAN:

Fuck you. (Dan stands up) No, really, listen to me loud and clear. FUCK YOU. We all have choices.

(They are aware of the scene they are making. They pull it back. Abe walks over.)

DAN: (CONT'D)

Did I do something? Wipe my ass with your pillow, what?

RICKY:

Funny. (beat) You and me, man, we go back.

DAN:

Yeah, we do. But it's been a while.  
(beat)

RICKY:

You did that, not me.

(Marci enters)

MARCI:

Hello baby (goes to Ricky, gives him a deep kiss, rubs his crotch thru his jeans, a show for Dan, Ricky finally pushes her off).

DAN:

Rick, can you get rid of her, we aren't done talking. (to Marci) Excuse us.

MARCI:

Who the fuck do you think...no, this is not like before where you are telling me what to do.

DAN:

(overlapping) Marci, I'm not telling you, I'm asking you...

RICKY:

(to both of them) Hold up, hold up now...

DAN:

Fine you want her 'a part of this. Fine. (small beat) I don't know what's going on with you, but Joe has a problem. Doesn't he? And whatever solution you cooked up is flammable. (beat, no response) Am I close?

RICKY:

Back off...

DAN:

What're you gonna do? I know you man, and I know when you are scared. You puff out your chest and you bark real loud.

RICKY:

You don't know jack shit. That's old Rick. Little boy Rick. This is what things look like now.

(Dan exits)

MARCI:

Still a prick.

RICKY:

Watch your mouth.

MARCI:

Oh, what's the matter with you?

RICKY:

Same thing that's the matter with you.

MARCI:

Let's get out of here. Take you home. Little booze, little grass, little fucky..

RICKY:

Not now. And don't be hanging on me like this. Just gimme some fuckin' space.

MARCI:

Don't let him rattle you baby.

RICKY:

Oh yeah? Ha...I could say the same to you.

(beat, he motions for a  
beer from Abe)

MARCI:

(looking where Dan just exited) What happens now?

RICKY:

What'd you mean?

MARCI:

Like, I wanna know what happens to us. If you want a kid, I can give you a kid..

RICKY:  
Goddammit Marci, the last thing I want is a kid. Not now,  
not with you.

MARCI:  
It's ok. We just gotta stay calm and get thru this.

RICKY:  
Hey, I don't owe you anything!

MARCI:  
I never said you did, baby...

RICKY:  
Everywhere I look, we owe people. There's not enough to go  
around right now, so you gotta back the fuck off.

MARCI:  
Forget about him, fuck him. It's you and me now.

RICKY:  
Have you completely lost it? It's always been you and me and  
him. Even when he wasn't here. Especially when he wasn't  
here.

MARCI:  
You know that's not how it is...

RICKY:  
(laughs casually) And I don't care Marse, I really don't  
care about it.

MARCI:  
(getting angrier as she speaks) Aren't you supposed to care?  
If you don't, what's left for me?

RICKY:  
Giving in, like everybody else.

(Abe comes up)

ABE:  
Marci, go get lost for a little while. I need Ricky.

MARCI:  
Fuck you Abe!

ABE:  
(flatly) And you still owe me for them drinks from before.

(Marci looks at them both, realizing she can't win. Then slowly walks away.)

ABE: (CONT'D)  
What are you going to do about her?

RICKY:  
Nothing. She's fine. Just annoying sometimes.

ABE:  
If you say so. Look man, people are asking me a lot of questions, so I need to know. (beat) You got it?

RICKY:  
Got what?  
(beat)

ABE:  
The twenty five missing from the dock office.

RICKY:  
No, man. I heard about it though. Sucks for those guys.

ABE:  
Seems like someone thinks you took it.

RICKY:  
I don't think they do. Why would they? I had nothing to do with it.

ABE:  
People talk in here, Rick. Whether you took it or not, they think you took it. You gotta fix this. Point them somewhere else. Come up with money or come up with a motherfuckin' name.

RICKY:  
Look, I don't know anything about this, ok. You tell people when you see them. You gotta tell them, Abe. Ok? (he exits)

ABE:  
Ok.

**\*\*FLASHBACK\*\***

(Ricky and Dan, 16,  
waiting to get into the  
game)



RICKY:  
That big kid Abe is a load.

DAN:  
Slow as hell, though.

RICKY:  
Yeah. But he's a bruiser, don't need to be fast if you the strongest guy down there.

(Dan and Ricky watch again. The "fast kid" makes a move, and people chatter and whoop around them)

RICKY: (CONT'D)  
Man, that little kid...

DAN:  
See what I'm sayin, there's no way you take him without help. I'm telling ya, force him left, or try to get him to go baseline.

RICKY:  
Nah, Nah...I can do this. He wants some of this, he's got it.

DAN:  
"Want some of this?" (laughs) I don't think he knows you're even still sitting here.

RICKY:  
Whatever. He gonna know.

DAN:  
What're you gonna do when he does? Ask him nicely not to take you to the hole?

RICKY:  
You'll see.

(Ricky and Dan look on, watch as the game gets heated.)

RICKY: (CONT'D)  
Big Abe doesn't take no shit, do he?

DAN:  
Got that right. I wouldn't fuck with him.

RICKY:  
(looking out at the game) He ain't so tough.

DAN:  
Dude, he's a mountain.

RICKY:  
So what? He hassled you like that, pound you into the ground like he did to that little Asian kid, and I'd whoop his ass, big or not. You know? And you would too. That's how we roll, right? We slay giants, baby. We slays 'em dead.

DAN:  
Yeah we do.  
(the game ends, they notice)

RICKY:  
(calling to an unseen group of guys)  
Hey are you guys up? Good. We got next.

THE PRESENT, A LITTLE WHILE LATER.

(The garage with the Firebird at Joe and Irene's house. Dan is out there, smoking a cigarette for the first time in a long time. He looks at the car, and looks at the tools. He's there alone for a moment before Irene enters.)

IRENE:  
What're you doin out here?

DAN:  
Not much.

IRENE:  
That girl is here, lookin for you.

DAN:  
Where?

IRENE:  
She's with Joe. She's looking for you.

DAN:  
You know her name, you can say it.

IRENE:  
I don't want to. (beat) You still love her? I mean, you used to.

DAN:  
No I didn't.

IRENE:  
That girl was all you could think about when you were 16. And how many days since then.

(Dan has no reply.)

DAN:  
Long time ago.

IRENE:  
What does she know?

DAN:  
You gotta ask her. (beat) Forget Marci...What are you guys still doing here Irene? Sooner or later something dumb was going to happen.

IRENE:  
And go where? Follow your parents upstate?

DAN:  
Maybe, sure. Anything.

IRENE:  
I was so mad at your mother and father for leaving us. But she and Al were so scared, I dunno why. Scared maybe that they'd live their whole lives and only end up here. But it's all bullshit Danny. Sofia never could get that. And I cried so hard when she left. (beat) Forget going anywhere, we are here. Right now. And we need help here. (beat) I don't care how Danny.

DAN:  
What's that supposed to mean?

IRENE:  
I am a mother, and I never want anything bad to happen to my kids. But I am not this girl's mother, I don't care what happens to her.

DAN:

And what am I supposed to do, water board her?

IRENE:

I don't care Danny! (Beat) She's seeing him, she'll know what's going on.

DAN:

I'm getting a little sick of this.

IRENE:

And you know what I am sick of, Danny? Not sleeping. Not having any peace as I'm wondering if there's going to be another fire at the garage or if the car driving slow down the street is someone trying to hurt us. (beat) I'm going to get her. (she exits)

DAN:

Fuck!

(a beat)

(Joe enters talking with Marci)

JOE:

...if it's slipping like that, it could mean a little adjustment or it could mean something bigger with the transmission. Bring it in this week sometime and I'll take a look at it. Free of charge.

MARCI:

Thank you Joe, you don't have to do that, I can pay you..

JOE:

Please, sweetheart, it will be my pleasure. (to Dan) Danny, you remember Ricky's girl Marci, right?

(beat)

DAN:

Yeah, Joe, I think I remember her (He almost laughs. After moment, brightly) So hey, Joe? Can you give us a moment out here?

JOE:

Oh sure, right. (to Marci) Excuse me.

(Joe exits.)

MARCI:

I always feel stupid coming here. Like no matter why I come

MARCI: (CONT'D)  
over, they already know what's going on, like they can see  
right thru me.

DAN:  
So?

MARCI:  
So like if I'm coming here to fuck Ricky or we're coming out  
here to get high or some shit, it's like they can see it  
already. I don't need them seein' into me like that.

DAN:  
They're not dumb people.

MARCI:  
Well, obviously he's no rocket scientist. He doesn't  
remember you and me but we fucked in their basement more  
times that you can count.

(beat)

MARCI: (CONT'D)  
I ain't been out here in a while. (beat) Joe used to have a  
Jeep wrangler he was working on. Gave it to Ricky, he  
totaled it somewhere down near Coney Island. But when it was  
back here, mmm it was a great car to fuck in. Great shocks.  
Rag top, so the roll bars were great for grabbin' on to,  
holding on to. Hell you could be half in the jeep half out,  
you know (she laughs at him)...fun car.

DAN:  
(impatient) You got any other cards to play?

MARCI:  
You used to really like this pussy, Danny... (she moves to  
him)

DAN:  
Yeah, well, like people keep telling me around here, times  
change. (He walks away from her)

MARCI:  
Awww, Danny... you gone fag?

DAN:  
(Laughs at her, slowly controlling himself) You know...look,  
you got 30 more seconds of my time.

MARCI:  
Then what, you gonna get Mommy Irene to come out and save  
you from the mean ol'girl?

DAN:

I'm going to ask you this once. Is there anything you can think of, some scam he's pulling somewhere that could have gotten Joe a bunch of money real fast?

MARCI:

(in a baby voice, mocking him) Danny you have gone fag, alls you want to talk about is all da other boys...

DAN:

(he grabs her arm ) In about 20 seconds, you're gonna be talking out of the other side of your face if you don't... (catches himself, releases her)

MARCI:

Looks like somebody remembers where he came from.

DAN:

Stop it.

MARCI:

(Laughing) You wanna grab me, throw me a round a little, I don't mind. Make you feel like a man, I'm game...wouldn't be my first time.

DAN:

Shut up. (beat) Ricky hit you?

MARCI:

Lookit you showin' all this concern! (beat) What the fuck are you doin out here?

DAN:

(exhales) I don't know.

MARCI:

You're too late, comin' back for me. (Dan laughs) Don't laugh at me.

DAN:

For you, huh? Try the fire at Joe's garage.

MARCI:

You fightin' fires now, Danny boy? Like Irene's good little boyscout...

DANNY:

You don't really believe it was an accident, you're not that naïve.

MARCI:

I dunno, not my problem..

DAN:  
It's your problem if Ricky is the next thing on fire though,  
right?

MARCI:  
(he has her attention now) Why would Ricky be on fire?

DAN:  
(beat) Maybe he got money from somewhere to keep Joe's shop  
going. And maybe it's a really bad thing.

MARCI:  
(Realizing) So that's what you want with me? So you can run  
back in like a hero and save the day?

DAN:  
Hey, you came here lookin' for me, and I sure as hell didn't  
ask for this...

MARCI:  
But you sure aren't running from it either, are ya?

DAN:  
They're family to me.

MARCI:  
And what am I?  
(beat)

DAN:  
I think you are the girl fucking my best friend.

MARCI:  
You throw "best friend" around like it means something to  
you. You haven't talked to him in years.

DAN:  
You don't know anything about it.

MARCI:  
Did you think you could just fix everything?

DAN:  
Marse, I'm trying to help, because they need somebody to  
try...

MARCI:  
(cuts him off) Ricky will handle it!

DAN:  
Handle what?

MARCI:

I dunno! But look, whatever it is, Ricky will handle it. You should go home. Leave us to fight our own battles.

(beat)

MARCI: (CONT'D)

You know, there was a minute there where I thought...I dunno what I thought, that maybe in the back of your thick head you remembered me, that the thing we had still meant something to you and you...

DAN:

Marse, we were kids a long time ago, it was great, but...

MARCI:

Kids...right. (beat) I don't know when the day was that I stopped looking for you. You had left and a little while later, too soon probably, I was with Ricky. But I kept looking for you. Figured you would come back one day and I'd bump into you and...and I'd be ashamed of being with him. I kept on feeling bad about that. I'd pass by places we went, or places you might go if you came back. Sometimes by chance, sometimes on purpose. And I'd get all nervous and scared. I mean I'd look over my shoulder all the time, expecting to see you coming around some corner or getting off the bus. I was going to tell you I was sorry about him and I'd ask you for your forgiveness. (Beat) And then one day--maybe a year into it, maybe longer--I was at that diner on Eastern Parkway we always used to go to when we were fucked up, and I realized I wasn't nervous anymore, because I wasn't looking around for you. I didn't "expect" you anymore. And I don't know how it happened. It just was, and I knew right away that it had been that way for a long time, only now I was aware of it, you know? And all that time, I'd been figuring you'd be mad and not love me and I'd cry so hard. That was when you were really gone for me. All the rest, I was just waiting to see you again. And I stopped being "a kid" from then on.

DAN:

I came back from time to time, Marse...

MARCI:

But not to me. Not for me. (beat) And yes, I was with him all that time, but my bag was always packed. Then little by little, I unpacked. But (laughs) I'm an idiot, right? He loves you and he thinks I'm a piece of you. And so he possesses me. Allows me in because I used to be yours. And it's so embarrassing now, you knowing all this.



DAN:

Why?

MARCI:

Because I'm not a fucking person like that! Not this gooey shitty mess of a girl who believes in that thing people talk about like it's magic. I refuse to be!

DAN:

Take it easy.

MARCI:

My parents never had it. Thought they did in flashes maybe, maybe they could make themselves believe they did. But we saw them every day and they never had anything but compromise and contempt and sacrifice. (small beat) So I believed different, after you. Cock and pussy. Responsible only for your own needs and your own messes. And that was it. Find whatever you could to cut the bitterness in your mouth and don't apologize for any of it. (beat) But somehow out of the blue... I got fucked. (laughs) I got turned into this person who needs him. Him, of all people. (beat) And knowing he doesn't love me makes it harder some days, you know...but it'd be even harder without him. (beat) Fuck you, stop lookin at me.

DAN:

You have something with him we never had.

MARCI:

Hah, so you remember me and you? (Beat) No, we didn't. This thing with him and me is only one-sided, and it's more than we ever had. That's fucked up but it's true. I think sometimes I could have had him all along, instead of you. Been happy, maybe. Who knows, right?

DAN:

Marse, I'm sorry...

(Ricky enters, carrying his signature four beers in a six pack.)

RICKY:

You gotta stop following me around, man. This is getting annoying. And embarrassing for you.

DAN:

Yeah, well...

MARCI:

Good, you found each other, I gotta go. (she starts to exit)

RICKY:  
Where you gonna be later?

MARCI:  
(beat, looking at Dan but to Ricky) I'll be around, baby.  
I'm not going anywhere. (she  
exits)

DAN:  
I should get going too. Work in the morning. You too, right?

RICKY:  
Don't you worry about me working. I'll get where I gotta be.

DAN:  
You love her, right? Tell me that.

RICKY:  
What, Marci? Why you wanna know?

DAN:  
She's still that kid we grew up with, you know. Not somebody  
who doesn't matter.

RICKY:  
Why you care so much? You want her back? Cause that's not an  
option.

DAN:  
Good, I'm glad it's not. (he exits)

IRENE AND JOE'S LIVING ROOM.

Marci enters, having just left Ricky and Dan in the garage.  
She's cutting thru on her way to the front door and the  
outside. Irene enters from the kitchen. Marci hears her  
enter, turns to look at her. The women look at each other,  
in a standoff. Irene looking through Marci, Marci ashamed  
and hurt and knowing. Finally, Marci turns to go.

IRENE:  
I don't like you.

MARCI:  
(without turning around) I know that.

IRENE:  
He's too good for you.

MARCI:  
You know I love him, right?

IRENE:

Which one?

MARCI:

Ricky! Your son. And if you think I'm too stupid or too trashy or too whatever, it's nothing I don't already know. (beat, quieter) But I love him.

IRENE:

You need to go. Out of my house. Out of my son's life. Away from Danny. All of it.

MARCI:

You throw me out of your house now that Danny's around, but before when it was just Ricky..

IRENE:

When you have little children, god forbid, you can come back and tell me how to raise them and how to love them. Til then...

MARCI:

(overlapping) Maybe it's time for your son to leave the nest. This is fucked up.

IRENE:

And what, have you take care of him? He'd be back here in 3 days. Maybe less.

MARCI:

We'll see about that. See if he's as big a momma's boy as you think.

IRENE:

He's not a momma's boy, he's a man, and he'll see right through you. Like I do.

MARCI:

If you think he's a man, maybe start treating him like that. Instead of having Danny comin in here to fix his business and pick him up. How you think that makes him feel?

IRENE:

You don't know anything about it.

MARCI:

See you think I'm dumb, but I'm not. I see it all. Like it or not, I'm just like you.

IRENE:

Oh, please. It's time for you to go.

MARCI:

I get why you don't like me, but don't come hunting for me. You're not going to like how that ends up. And I'm not going anywhere.

IRENE:

You're going as far away as I want to put you. And there's not a damn thing you can do about it. Now get out.

MARCI:

Sure thing, Mom. I'll give your boy your best when I see him later. After we finish, of course. (Marci smiles and goes)

(Dan enters)

DAN:

Irene, I gotta go. Ricky's in the garage if you need him.

IRENE:

Wait, where are you going? Not with her?

DAN:

With Marci? No, why would I do that?

IRENE:

I don't know, Danny. I'm all mixed up...

DAN:

Look, it'll be ok...

IRENE:

You gotta get rid of her Danny. Get her out of the picture.

DAN:

Wha...you just told me to...

IRENE:

Danny, please, you've got to see how this is going for us...

DAN:

For Ricky and Joe? Or for you? (beat) If you have problems with Marci, go talk to Ricky. I can't help you.

IRENE:

(intensely) I know it kills you, Danny. Them together. And it's ok. Just do something about it. It's the best for all of us.

DAN:

Forget her. This is supposed to be about Ricky, right?

IRENE:  
But she's part of it too, all wrapped up together.

DAN:  
Look, we have no idea what's happening..

IRENE:  
We raised you Danny! You lived in my house!...You made something of yourself. Ricky's never gonna do that.

DAN:  
Irene, stop it..

IRENE:  
No, Danny, it's true. You gotta help him.

DAN:  
Enough! (beat) Look, he doesn't want my help. I offered.

IRENE:  
Everything you are, Joe and Al and Sophia and I made you. You owe us everything!

DAN:  
And what if I do? Am I supposed to, what, drive Marci into the woods and leave her there because you want me to? Take Ricky out and knock some sense into him? You keep telling me you raised us, well act like those people again! Live up to it. (beat) If you want me to find out what's happening, so you know what to do to help him, fine. But nothing more.

(he exits as Joe enters)

JOE:  
What's all the yellin for? He ok?

IRENE:  
Yeah, daddy, he's fine. Just blowing off steam. That girl has him riled up.

JOE:  
What, the one that Ricky goes around with?

IRENE:  
Yeah. (beat) Marci.

JOE:  
Eh, they're boys... they'll work it out.

(beat)

IRENE:  
Why don't you let me in, Joe?

JOE:

In? What'dya mean? (beat) You're my wife, what's mine is yours, you know everything...

IRENE:

No, no I don't, don't buffalo me Joe...Are we ok?

JOE:

What, you and me? Honey, we're never better...

IRENE:

You know what I mean, don't make me spell it out for you. I can't talk to you about it. You won't let me in.

JOE:

Honey, you're just upset because our kids are growing up and they don't need us.

IRENE:

Don't dismiss me like that. Please.

JOE:

I'm not! (beat) You are still as beautiful as the day I met you, you know that? When I see you, I see that young girl, so feisty and yet so scared you for the world. And I remember thinking to myself "that's something I can do. I can take care of her and make sure she's always ok".

IRENE:

Joe, listen...How did we screw it up, Joe? How did we let it get to this?

JOE:

Get to what?

(beat)

IRENE:

Is it the money?

JOE:

Irene, I don't...

IRENE:

Joe, for the love of God, just tell me.

JOE:

Irene, we're fine.

(beat)

IRENE:

I can't look at you right now. (she gets up, starts to go for the front door)

JOE:  
What did I do? I'm taking care of things.

IRENE:  
We're a team. You need to remember that.

JOE:  
Honey...

IRENE:  
Don't honey me! I'm talking serious.

JOE:  
Look, I don't come home and discuss the shop with you, and you don't complain about the living I make for us. That's always been our deal.

IRENE:  
Well it's not good enough right now. You hear me? You need money then you don't, and then the car blows up, and Ricky... and you don't talk to me, Joe!

JOE:  
Stop, just stop. Please.

IRENE:  
I can't stop. If I stop, who's going to make sure you are ok?

JOE:  
I'm fine, we're fine. Ricky is helping me, we're taking care of this.

(beat)

IRENE:  
Where did it come from? JOE!!

JOE:  
(quietly) I dunno. I got it from Ricky.

IRENE:  
Jesus, Joe!

JOE:  
Look, we needed it, ok? You know how things have been.

IRENE:  
Where did he get it from? You know he doesn't have any money!

JOE:

Maybe he does. His new job pays him well. Maybe...

IRENE:  
How much did you get from him? (beat) You gotta tell me everything, Joe!

JOE:  
Twenty five.

IRENE:  
Twenty five hundred, we can do this...

JOE:  
Thousand.

IRENE:  
Joe... (beat) Please... How are you going to pay it back?

JOE:  
I dunno, I just need some time to figure it out. Ricky told me I had tons of time to sort it out. So that's what I'm doing.

IRENE:  
Give it back to him, take it all out of the bank, we'll sell or mortgage or whatever, but give it all back, right now. We gotta do this Joe...

JOE:  
(overlaps her) It's gone honey. We needed it for parts and rent and insurance and payroll. Just to get me through until things pick up, and they will. You know they will, I always come thru for you, you know that.

IRENE:  
Then sell that damn car to Danny.

JOE:  
Irene, please...

IRENE:  
Why? Why hold onto that car. You've fixed up and sold dozens of cars, given them out like people pass out beer at a barbecue. Why...

JOE:  
Because I'm his father! And he loves that car (beat) He's my little boy, Irene. He and Danny loved that car so much when they were little. I need to fix it up for him. Maybe we'll get back to the days when I was a guy he looked up to.  
(beat) I'm not done, Irene!



IRENE:

I never said you were.

JOE:

I had to take money from him to stay afloat. I never had to do that before. My dad never did that with me. He's supposed to be coming to me for help. To us. I've only got one thing I can do for him. And I know it is shitty and sentimental and...it's what I'm holding onto. I can still fix it and make it better and when she's done... that car will be a beaut. And it will be Ricky's.

IRENE:

Oh goddammit, Joe. (she takes his hand)

**\*\*FLASHBACK\*\***

(Ricky and Dan, waiting for "nexts". Marci, 16, enters)

MARCI:

There you are...

DAN:

Hey babe (they kiss)

MARCI:

God, you are all sweaty...

DAN:

Yeah, sorry about that.

RICKY:

"Sorry about that?" Please... (beat) "Hey Ricky, how are you?" "I'm fine Marci, how you doin?" "I'm good, you know..." I'm with your boy, I'm sitting right here...!

MARCI:

You're always here, Ricky. If I had to say hi to you every time I ran into you, I'd never say anything else. You always here. Maybe you should get a girlfriend or something, you know...find something to do.

RICKY:

Oh me and him got plenty to do, don't worry...

MARCI:

Who are you talking about? I know you don't mean him (indicating Dan)...

DAN:  
Alright, take it easy...

RICKY:  
Oh, so you in charge now?...

MARCI:  
(overlapping) You know I am, you know this...

DAN:  
Guys, enough. C'mon. (to Marci) Are you staying to watch us play, or what? Either way, we gotta focus. So you gotta be cool, ok?

MARCI:  
Ok, you know he gets to me, baby I'm sorry (she kisses him)...  
Dan: It's ok, but you gotta be cool. (to Ricky) And you too, muthafucker...

RICKY:  
Yeah, Yeah, I know. (beat) We still going to Coney this weekend right? Shoot the freak an' shit...

DAN:  
Hell yeah, that bitch better bring his running shoes cause we are going to be all over his ass. (high five) Baby, you comin with us?

RICKY:  
Her...she's coming too?

DAN:  
Yeah, you know...

MARCI:  
(grinning) Yeah, you know...

RICKY:  
Right, course...

MARCI:  
You want me to bring my cousin, see if she's free? She's super nice, you would really like her if you tried.

RICKY:  
I don't need help, thank you.

MARCI:  
Alright, don't get snippy with me. No complaining to me when you gotta go solo with your Girls Gone Wild videos again...

DAN:  
Hey, leave him alone. He's got it under control. (To Ricky)

DAN: (CONT'D)

Right?

RICKY:

Totally. (to him) Thank you!

(Beat)

DAN:

Plus those videos are awesome.

MARCI:

(smacks him playfully on the arm) Some people don't need those videos, some people have me...

RICKY:

You finally decided to give it up, huh? (Marci looks at him, dumbfounded) What, he told me.

MARCI:

You told him?

DAN:

What, he's my best friend...I tell him stuff!

MARCI:

Stuff about us?

DAN:

Not all the stuff but...but some of the stuff, yeah. You tell stuff to your cousin, right? (to Ricky) Right?

RICKY:

Don't look at me...

MARCI:

Yeah, don't look at him. Babyyy... (beat. Finally, to Ricky) Look, we're gonna do it when we are both ready, ok? (she goes to smack Ricky on the arm, he tries to dodge) That's two for flinching (she grabs his arm and hits him twice)

RICKY:

Ow! (to Dan) She's strong for being a little thing. (Marci sticks her tongue out at him)

DAN:

You aren't fast enough to not get hit by my girlfriend, but you are gonna stick this little kid with the crossover? Hahahaha

MARCI:

Girlfriend?

(The game on the court  
has ended, and we hear  
Abe's voice.)

ABE:

(offstage) Next!

RICKY:

(Ricky and Dan get up and go onto the court) Let's do this.

THE PRESENT.

(Joe enters the garage,  
where the car hood is  
open and Ricky is looking  
in.)

JOE:

Whatcha doin under there?

RICKY:

I dunno. Sometimes I just open it up, take out the tools and  
just stare at the engine.

JOE:

I used to do that when I was little...looking at it, not  
knowing where to start. Still do sometimes.

RICKY:

Yeah?

JOE:

Sure. You know something's wrong with it, and it's up to you  
to make it work right. I used to get nervous, that'd I'd  
start in the wrong place, or mess up something that wasn't  
the problem to begin with.

RICKY:

So what needs to be done? (Ricky is ready for some actual  
work to take his mind off everything)

JOE:

(beat) Why aren't you out with your girl tonight? She just  
left.

RICKY:

You know women, Pop. Sometimes they're just sick of lookin  
at you, and you are sick of looking them.

JOE:

Yeah. (beat) Look, I uh...

RICKY:

What?

JOE:

Your ma thinks we should sell this to Danny. Maybe I should...We could still use the money, even with what you gave me.

RICKY:

No. (beat) Sometimes we gotta keep what's ours, Pop.

JOE:

She knows about that money now.

RICKY:

(beat) Yeah, so?

JOE:

Well, she's concerned about it. (beat. Joe is calm) I need you to tell me that you had that money, that you were saving it for something, but that it was your money not somebody else's...

RICKY:

Pop, listen...

JOE:

(calm) I need you to do this for me, Rick. I'm not asking a lot here. I'm just asking you to tell me the truth.

RICKY:

What does it matter?

JOE:

(beat) Why won't you tell me? (realizes) Because it's not really true. Christ...and the fire?!

RICKY:

Look, don't get all riled up, alright? Yes, the money came from somewhere else, not from me.

JOE:

Ricky...

RICKY:

Look, don't lecture me, ok? You were gonna go under. And then what? No, you needed it, and I got it. End of story. (begins to walk out)

JOE:

Don't walk out of here, son. (He stops) I need you to tell me everything...

RICKY:

No.

JOE:

Ricky, this is no time to be...

RICKY:

I said no. And I meant it!

JOE:

Who the hell are you talking to?

RICKY:

Pop, I'm sick and tired of being told how I got things ain't good enough for anybody. Danny's on me, Marci...Look, it's good enough. To me it's good enough.

JOE:

Please tell me you didn't do something dumb for it. Look at me!

RICKY:

I did what I had to do. If it was up to you, where would we be, huh?

JOE:

We'd manage somehow, like we've always managed. You think this the first time things have been tight? Get your head out of your ass, son.

RICKY:

So what? You had tough times in the past and you survived, great for you. And now we got the money to survive this one. See, I'm takin after my old man.

JOE:

And what about the fire? Tell me that was an accident like you said.

RICKY:

(beat) I'm gonna take care of it.

JOE:

How?

RICKY:

I'm gonna find a way.

(beat)

JOE:

You didn't talk to the police, did you.

RICKY:  
Look, I just said I would take care of it, and I'm gonna.  
Just stop hassling me about it.

JOE:  
Why are you doing this?

RICKY:  
Because you can't! (small beat)

JOE:  
I haven't thrown a punch in a long time, but I oughtta slug  
you right in the jaw.

RICKY:  
Go ahead, try it. See, this is where we are. You are the guy  
who can't get the job done, Pop...the guy who used to do it,  
but can't do it no more. I love ya, but I gotta provide now,  
anyway I can.

JOE:  
And what about when somebody wants their money back?

RICKY:  
That ain't gonna happen, Pop.

JOE:  
Why not? (beat) Is that person dead, Rick? Did you..

RICKY:  
No, stop it. Everybody's fine, we're just a little richer is  
all.

(beat)

JOE:  
I'm gonna put the shop up for sale, and you are going to fix  
this.

RICKY:  
No, you're not.

JOE:  
The hell I'm not. Just watch me.

RICKY:  
And what, let Danny be right? Pop, he thinks we're fools.  
He's laughing at us. But this is where we belong, you  
runnin' the shop and me takin' care of this family.

JOE:  
Rick, for god's sake, if the shop burns down tomorrow,  
because you didn't think this thru, then we got nothing.  
When I was comin' up, there weren't any guys who could let

JOE: (CONT'D)

25 grand disappear without trying to get it back. So what happens when someone doesn't go to the shop, but they come here to look for you, huh? Or they visit Carla at school?

RICKY:

That ain't gonna happen.

JOE:

(quietly) Son, that's the way this always happens. They squeeze and squeeze until they get what they want.

RICKY:

(overlaps him) Let me handle this...

JOE:

NO! We're doing this the smart way. I got kids I gotta protect, and I gotta wife I gotta protect. You, what do you got to protect? Nothing!

RICKY:

Why the fuck to you think I'm doing this, huh? I'm protecting us!

JOE:

Well then who's going to protect us from you?!  
beat

RICKY:

Fuck you, Pop.

(He exits. Joe is ashamed of what he said, with a scream he tosses a small tool box across the garage, with tools scattering everywhere).

AT ABE'S BAR, A FEW DAYS LATER.

Ricky is on his 3rd shot, empties are in front of him. Abe comes over with another, begins to clear the empty shot glasses.

RICKY:

Leave 'em, I like keeping score.

ABE:

How you feelin? You feelin good?

RICKY:

Yeah, you know...hard day of work, but this little happy hour you buyin' me makes it a little better.



ABE:  
Hard work good for the soul.

RICKY:  
Bad for the back tho. (he downs his shot)

ABE:  
Look man, I need to tell you something. You ain't gonna like this. And look, we ain't friends. There's things that I don't like in this world, things I can't take, and even if I have to do them, I don't have to like them.

RICKY:  
(starting to feel the effects) What the fuck are you talking about man? We're friends!

ABE:  
You think so? Yeah, you would.

RICKY:  
We go way back, we, we, we...we used to play ball and shit..

ABE:  
Look motherfucker, that's all we got. At the end of the day, you there and I'm over here. We know each other, that's it. (beat) And I gotta keep my ass out of hot water just like everybody else around here.

RICKY:  
Whoa, man, calm the fuck down man. Everything is ok, you'll see-

ABE:  
(cutting him off) You gotta keep your sister home from school this week.

RICKY:  
(a little more drunk) And why do I gotta do that?

ABE:  
Because it's the smart thing to do, son. You following me?

RICKY:  
Look, kid's got school, man. Nothing I can do about it. (Abe is amazed Rick is being thick) She's a good kid, Abe. Smart, gonna be something. Who knows, right? I was gonna be something, you were probably gonna be something, who knows, you know. But this kid, man...I think she's the real deal. I call her "The Phenom", like Dwight Gooden or, or like Robbie Cano was, you know..

ABE:  
Look, I'll say I couldn't find her, tell 'em I never saw

ABE: (CONT'D)

her. (beat) I like your moms, and I like your pops. Just keep her at home, man, s'all I'm sayin. (Dan comes in looking for Ricky.) Boyscout is here, watch your back. (Abe drifts down the bar)

RICKY:

What'd I do this time, officer? Did I put too much food on the table or pay too much rent?

DAN:

(tired) I'm not here to argue with you, man. I'm tired of all that shit. I'm done, do what the fuck you want. (beat, he sits)

RICKY:

Then why you here, man?

DAN:

Abe, can I get a Stella?

ABE:

No fancy shit here man. Bud, Bud light, Old Milwaukee...

DAN:

Fine, Bud then.

ABE:

Clean glass or dirty?

DAN:

Are you serious?

ABE:

Well, people from the neighborhood always get clean ones. For suspicious types, clean is optional.

DAN:

Fuck off. (looks at Abe, finally) Fine, clean. Please. (Ricky laughs at Dan's humiliation)

ABE:

Ok, see...there's no need for that fuckin language, son. And clean costs extra for you.

RICKY:

No no man, you don't get it Abe. He came from here. He thinks he still comes from here!

ABE:

Ricky, why don't you shut the fuck up. I'm talking to him.

RICKY:

Hey man, I'm just takin' your lead...

ABE:

Did I ask you to do that? I asked you to do one thing, keep your dumb ass sister under wraps, how about you focus on that for a minute. That's it. Fuck!

DAN:

What did you say?

ABE:

Nothing. Again, I know I wasn't talkin to you right then.

DAN:

(beat) I'm gonna ask you nicely, cause I like you. If you know something about his sister Carla, you better tell me. Or so help me god I will turn this place inside out, and you with it. Abe smiles, thinks for a minute, comes closer to Dan

ABE:

Me and my Glock under the bar might have something to say about that. Now how about you pay for your fuckin beer, and get goin'. (backs up slowly, watching Dan)

DAN:

Did he say something to you about Carla?

RICKY:

Oh I see it now...you still got it in your blood too. The hustle. Maybe you bored where you are. No no, sure, I bet it's all that, all stocks this and trust fund that... But it's boring, and you think to yourself "You know who's got an exciting life? Ricky. Maybe I'll go out and ride with him for a bit". But you know what I really see? I see you running scared. I see you hightailin' it outta here like your folks did, never looking back. Cuz if you looked back you'd see all the things you don't like about yourself... (beat) People know me here. I am where I belong. I made it. You...hell you can't even get yourself a clean glass to drink out of. Shit... (laughs) We ain't people who leave. We protect.

DAN:

(realizing) Fuck that. Listen to me, if Carla's in some kind...

RICKY:

You think I never had a job in the city? I did. I tried. Shipping and receiving. Shirt and tie, just like you. And it sucked. Rat race, commuting bullshit. Trying to be somebody

RICKY: (CONT'D)

I'm not, somebody who gives a fuck about whether you get your shit or not. And I'm not that guy. You give a fuck, what other people think, what you want from them, how they make you feel when you give them things. I don't need that shit.

DAN:

Cars don't just burst into flames. You better hope people don't either.

RICKY:

You think I'm some sort of ignorant fuck who can't handle his hustle.

DAN:

Let's go.

RICKY:

(smiles) Let me tell you something. It ain't like it was when we were kids. "We gotta get outta this place, if it's the last thing we ever do". Remember? Too hard for you, maybe. Maybe not pretty enough. Whatever. And they do need me. You think this town takes care of itself? You think family does? You don't know. Your folks are in Westchester, probably drinkin champagne out of glass bowls and shit...

DAN:

(overlapping) Are you fucking serious?...

RICKY:

What happens to this place? Who fights for it?

DAN:

You aint fighting for it, you dumb fuck, you are asking to get your ass kicked.

ABE:

(returning) Time's up, muthafucker.

THE GARAGE.

RICKY IS IN THE GARAGE. DRINKING MOSTLY, PLAYING WITH TOOLS AND PUTTING SOME THINGS AWAY. AFTER A MOMENT, MARCI ENTERS.

MARCI:

We had some good times in this place.

RICKY:

(sees her) Yeah, we did. What're you doin' here?

MARCI:

You drunk?

RICKY:

Not yet, but I'm tryin' real hard. (offering to her) You want?

MARCI:

I'm ok. (beat) Your mom talked to me the other day. We had a discussion...

RICKY:

Did you? My mom doesn't like to discuss much these days. She likes to tell you how it's going to be, and then yell at you and beat on you til she gets her way.

MARCI:

Yeah, it was something like that. (beat) You know I...I care about you Ricky. About what happens to you.

RICKY:

(stiffens) So...You leaving me too?

MARCI:

I dunno. I don't want to. But I want more than this thing we got now. I want more for me, I want more for you, and I want more for me and you together.

RICKY:

Right. Everybody wanting' more for me. Funny. (beat, he fiddles with wrenches and socket sets) Is it him? You goin with him now?

MARCI:

No! God! But I just don't want to stay the way things are. I feel like maybe I'm not good enough for you, not hard enough for you. Like I gotta be a rock, and like I gotta throw myself as hard as I can at your head so that I'll bruise you every time I hit you and you'll recognize me. (beat) But I'm not a rock. I'm a leaf. And I fall and I hit you, and you don't feel me. I'm easy to brush aside, let fall to the ground.

RICKY:

Well, I don't need this rock hitting me, I'm doing just fine.

MARCI:

But I'm not, baby. (beat, quieter) I'm not. (beat) And I dunno if I'm the wrong girl for you or if you need someone who's more like your ma who's going to yell all the time, or what...

RICKY:

I don't need that. There's plenty of girls out there who want to yell all the time, believe me. I don't want that.

MARCI:

So...what? It ain't working like this, so what do we do?

RICKY:

I dunno.

MARCI:

Ricky, I need to know if me bein here makes any difference in the world to you. Cause I think it doesn't sometimes. You pull back into your little shell and you don't talk to me, you don't let me near you sometimes. And I'm out here, pulling teeth to try and have anything at all with you other than sex...

RICKY:

So what do you want? I'm trying to keep this all together, this house, this family...

MARCI:

So let me know what's going on. (beat) Why not? (beat) It's cause I'm not smart like Danny, right? I can't be like he was for you...

RICKY:

Fuck Danny! No it's got nothing to do with him...

MARCI:

It has everything to do with him! Don't lie to me! (Beat) Look, I know I have my problems Ricky, I know I do. And maybe, I dunno, maybe we just...

RICKY:

We just what?

MARCI:

Maybe we just fuck our brains out because we don't have a lot else to do for each other. (beat) But I don't think I can do that for the rest of my life.

RICKY:

Who said anything about the rest of your life?

MARCI:

(a beat, she's stung) No, right of course, I'm not here permanently, I'm some fuckin'... (beat) Right, I get it. (she starts to go)

RICKY:

Look, nobody said anything like that. You gotta come here...

RICKY: (CONT'D)

(he restrains her from going) Why are you like this. Goddammit, I wish you would just fuckin...

MARCI:

What? Just say it...you want me to just fuckin go away! (she resists him, trying to get out of his grasp)

RICKY:

NO! STOP! I'm...

(they tussle more, and finally he bites her on the neck)

MARCI:

Ow! Muther fucker what are you doin?!? (she stops wriggling around and holds the spot where he bit her)

RICKY:

Now will you just calm the fuck down?

MARCI:

Oww! Why did you fuckin bite me?

RICKY:

I needed to get your fuckin attention.

MARCI:

You do that again, I'm going shove all these fuckin tools in here up your ass. (Ricky starts to laugh) I'm serious, you sick son of a bitch. You...(she starts to laugh at him laughing at her) What, stop it. That fuckin hurt, you prick. You can't bite people. (laughs again, against her will. As the laughter subsides, they sit in silence for a moment)

RICKY:

You ok?

MARCI:

Maybe. If you gave me rabies or shit, you are dead..

RICKY:

(laughing a little) Look, I didn't bite you hard, didn't even break the skin.

MARCI:

How about I bite you and you tell me how it feels.

(Ricky laughs at her)

RICKY:

You sound like the same little kid who used to fuck with us on the bus comin home. You would always make such a big show

RICKY: (CONT'D)  
of how tough you were, then it would go too far and you'd  
tell on us for everything. That little kid...with her braids  
and her backpack and her...well, you know, you was there.

MARCI:  
Yeah, I was there.

RICKY:  
I love that little kid. Man, she was so funny. (beat)

MARCI:  
(quietly) What about the girl she turned into?

(Ricky can't look at her)

RICKY:  
Stop it, please. Please.

MARCI:  
I'm leaving. (she gets up and goes to leave) and no biting  
is going to stop me. You touch me and I will kick you in the  
balls with everything I've got. (beat) You need to stay away  
from me from now on, ok?

RICKY:  
Marse, wait...

MARCI:  
For what? More bullshit?

(beat)

RICKY:  
I remember that first night I slept at your house. We had  
sex, drunken sex which I dunno either of us was ready for...

MARCI:  
(overlapping) Stop it...

RICKY:  
(overlapping) And that night, you were laying there in my  
black guinea tee, looking so small, so delicate. I remember  
wanting to hold onto you so nothing would happen to you, you  
know? But we couldn't figure out a way...I'd put my arm on  
you, and then it was too hot, so like I'd roll back. You'd  
roll to me, but then the legs would get all tangled an'  
shit...It was so new for us, we knew how to fuck but we didn't  
know how to just, you know, sleep together.



MARCI:

Yeah, well, you get hot at night, so...

RICKY:

Yeah, I do. But that night, I remember being so tired but not wanting to be asleep, ya know. If you were up, I wanted to be up. Who knows, maybe we'd find the spot...you'd put your head on my chest in a different way maybe, and then boom it would all make sense. But it never did happen. And I can still see looking at the clock all night and then all morning... 6:25, 6:27, 6:33. There was just... this thing separating us. We were two squares on either side of a wall, right, and this wall only has one round hole in it, and we're trying like hell to get thru the round hole toward each other, you know. But maybe it's impossible to do that. And this wall, it's always been between us. We alike, right...I'm a square, you a square, so we know real well what that's like. But we can't move forward. We can't get through the hole, we stuck where we are. And so it's us not knowing what to do next, baby.

MARCI:

(she doesn't look at him) It's cuz we're left overs, baby. We're after thoughts.

RICKY:

No, uh uh, I ain't no goddamn left over. You ain't neither.

MARCI:

Fine. But baby, let's just go away from here...

RICKY:

(looking at her) Ah no, shit, not you too.

MARCI:

What...?

RICKY:

I ain't leaving here. I got no reason to leave here, everything is here for me. Why can't anybody see that?

MARCI:

And that's great baby, that's great, but we can start fresh, you and me. We can be brand new. (beat) We can be anything. You can fix cars, I'll get a job too, we can live our lives anywhere we want to...

RICKY:

Marse, I can't go. My family is here. Here, where I belong to something. (beat) You see what happened to Danny when he left? He's out there, he loses himself, he's got no idea what he's doing or where he is. Because he lost his anchor.

RICKY: (CONT'D)

He's got no roots no more. And the fucked up part is...once it's gone, it's gone forever. Danny can't come back here and be one of us no more. He can't buy it and he can't steal it and he can't squeeze his eyes tight and wish for it. It's gone.

MARCI:

So what? Let it go...

RICKY:

And then what? What happens to Joe and to Ma and me? And Carla?

MARCI:

They got to take care of themselves, this isn't all on you.

RICKY:

But it is. It has to be because they can't take care of things. And they think I can't either, so they bring in Danny to come and put fuckin band aids on all our problems. I gotta be here to...

MARCI:

(overlapping) ok, ok fine...but listen, Ricky, then you gotta talk to me. You gotta tell me when things are going on with you so I can help you. If you go through everything alone, you're going to die alone and then all this stupid shit you go thru is for nothing. You hear me? Nothing. beat) We can be a team, like Batman and Robin or, or, or like Rocky and Apollo, right? Right? beat) Tell me I'm right!

RICKY:

Fine, yes, you are right!

MARCI:

Or you wanna do this all alone?

RICKY:

No. I don't. (beat) You sound more like my mother every day.

(Marci smiles at this, knowing it's a compliment even though it's a jab. She takes his hand. She starts to kiss him lightly on the face, as he struggles to know what to do. She holds his head softly.)

RICKY: (CONT'D)

Marse, you gotta stop. I gotta tell you something...I did something...I did something wrong and now, I dunno how to get it right.

IN THE DARKNESS...

We hear quiet, and someone walking down a city street at night. Same as the beginning of the play. Cars, distant conversation, maybe music from a car as it passes. Finally a car pulls up, the sound 'what the...' and then a struggle. More intense, kicking and punching. Then it's over. A door closes, and the car pulls away. Silence.

\*\*\*FLASHBACK\*\*\*

Dan and Ricky at 16. They come out of the game, back towards where Marci was watching them. Ricky is angry and the crowd is jawing at him. Dan trails a step behind.

DAN:

What the hell was that?

RICKY:

Fuck off.

(Ricky sits and tries to cool off, physically and emotionally)

MARCI:

Baby, what happened? Is that guy ok?

DAN:

I dunno, is he ok Rick?

RICK:

Look, it's rough out there. Things happen. It's a man's game.

DAN:

And you played like a man?

(Ricky pops up off his seat)

RICKY:

Yeah, you think you know so much? Huh? It's a game, we play to win.

DAN:

There's no need to step on that kids ankle. You could have broken his foot like that.

RICKY:  
He's not taking me to the hole like that...not for a while.

MARCI:  
It wasn't an accident? It looked like you just got tied up...

RICKY:  
We did. That's all. (Ricky sits)

MARCI:  
You hurt that kid on purpose? No way...

RICKY:  
He got stepped on, it happens, there's a lot of feet out there moving around...

DAN:  
You try to squish that kid's foot like you are killing a bug, and you tell me "there are a lot of feet moving around"?

RICKY:  
What'dya want from me? It's not safe anywhere these days.

DAN:  
That right?

RICKY:  
Yeah.

DAN:  
Maybe that's fucked up.

(Abe's voice can be heard  
from off)

ABE:  
(off) Next!

(the game picks up again)

MARCI:  
Why don't you guys come one, we'll get out of here. People are looking at us.

RICKY:  
Nah, we goin again.

DAN:  
I don't think that's such a good idea, man. Let's call it a day.

RICKY:

You go, I'm staying. I was just getting warmed up.

DAN:

(beat, thinks) Ok. If that's what you want. Fuck these guys, let's play. You wanna get your ass kicked, I'm getting my ass kicked too.

MARCI:

You are both fuckin retarded. I'm gonna go...

(she starts to leave, looking over her shoulder to see if they try to stop her, or join her).

Lookit me, leaving...shakin' my little ass...(the boys are toweling off and focused on the crowd, getting back in)

Fine. (to Danny) When we start sleeping together, you better do as I say... (she sits back down)

DAN:

Kid looks like he's in a lotta pain, huh?

RICKY:

He'll be fine.

DAN:

Right, 'course.

MARCI:

Why'd you do it?

RICKY:

How many times I got to tell you, Marci? I didn't do shit. Ankles, toes, elbows...things happen in a game. Damn!

(beat)

DAN:

Marse, would you go grab us two more Gatorades from the deli? I have money.

MARCI:

Why do I have to go?

DAN:

I'd go, but we need to be here when they call "next".

MARCI:

Oh, so I'm the girlfriend and so I got to run and get stuff?

DAN:  
Please, I'd really appreciate it. Ricky would really appreciate it too. (to Ricky) Right?

RICKY:  
Right, yeah. Please.

MARCI:  
Fine. Because I love you, and I tolerate him, I will go get you something to drink.

DAN:  
Thank you. You are the best girlfriend ever (they kiss)

MARCI:  
Ew, you are so sweaty. (starts to go)

DAN:  
You like it... (she exits)

RICKY:  
She's a mess.

DAN:  
What?

RICKY:  
You know what I mean. She's clingy and all lovey dovey all over you...

DAN:  
She's fine.

RICKY:  
Not the same as before. Now she's this person who's always...ugh, I don't know. There. She's always there. beat

DAN:  
You know I got your back right?

RICKY:  
Yeah, I know.

DAN:  
So...don't get us killed.

RICKY:  
In the game?

DAN:  
You know what I mean. It's an accident the first time. The second time, we are running. Got me?

RICKY:

Yeah, I know.

(beat. They watch the  
game.)

RICKY: (CONT'D)

I need you to do something.

DAN:

What?

RICKY:

Look, we fuck some shit up, right? You do. I do...we all do,  
right?

DAN:

Yeah, all the time.

RICKY:

Right well, just stop with the sermons, ok?

DAN:

What?

RICKY:

You know what I mean. These little after school special  
moments we having. I don't need em. I do just fine. Keep  
them to yourself...

DAN:

I'm just trying...

RICKY:

...Cause they're judgments, see? That's that they are. They're  
you telling me what I did ain't good enough for you. And I  
don't need that, man. So just fucking keep it to yourself.

DAN:

Hey, I'm here with you right now, ain't I? We should be  
headed out of here, we know what's coming to us when we get  
out there. Elbows, scratches, all kinds of shit. But you  
ain't running so I ain't running neither. That's us, right?  
Bad mutherfuckers.

RICKY:

I am a bad mutherfucker. You?(laughing a little) I don't  
know man.

DAN:

oh ok, fine, man...two Gatorades for me, I guess.

RICKY:  
(recovering) Ok, fuck...you a bad man. You're Shaft, you're  
Darth Vader...fine.

THE PRESENT.  
Dan enters Abe's bar as if on fire. Bellowing.

DAN:  
Get out here mutherfucker!

(no one else is around)

DAN: (CONT'D)  
I know you are here somewhere, don't make me come back there  
and find your ass. Get the fuck out here!

(Nothing happens. Finally  
Abe enters)

ABE:  
You should ask nicely for things, you want them so bad.  
Might have more luck in the future.

DAN:  
Where is he?

ABE:  
I don't know what you are talking about. Where is who?

DAN:  
Who the fuck do you think?

ABE:  
Language, please.

DAN:  
You keep this smart ass shit going, and it's not my language  
you are going to be worrying about. One more time, where is  
he?

ABE:  
You don't listen. Ask me nicely.

(Dan flies at him, as Abe  
pulls a piece of pipe  
from below the bar and  
shoves Dan backwards with  
it. Dan stops in his  
tracks.)



ABE: (CONT'D)

See, that's a lack of respect right there. You must respect this thing more than you respect me. How about if I bash your fuckin brains in with it, huh? Then I think maybe you'll have respect for me.

DAN:

Look man, I just want answers.

ABE:

And maybe I don't have them.

DAN:

Well I bet you know who does, right? (beat)

ABE:

It's time for you to get out of here, I have work to do.  
(Abe starts to go)

DAN:

What's it going to cost me? (Beat. Abe looks at him) The information I need, what's it going to cost me?

ABE:

You funny, you know that?

DAN:

How's that?

ABE:

You come in here, thinkin that you can, what, flash some cash and get something from me? Do I look like a guy that's needin' your money?

DAN:

I dunno what you are... (beat) Look, he's been gone four days. If, for some reason you know something, I can help make it worth your while...

ABE:

"Worth my while?" Mutherfucker please. Where are you getting this shit? How about you just say "its' worth 10Gs to me"? That make sense to you?

DAN:

Fine, then, it's worth 10Gs to me.

ABE:

(laughs a little at his ability to make Dan do what he wants) Hahaha, fuck you. (begins to walk away)

DAN:

I need to know he's ok.

ABE:  
Most people around here go lookin for someone when they owe something to somebody.

DAN:  
Didn't use to always be like that...

ABE:  
Always been like that.

DAN:  
Then that's fucked. (beat) He owed someone...They come to collect from him?

ABE:  
I don't know anything, man.

DAN:  
Jesus Christ, man!

ABE:  
Look Danny, cut the shit! You don't give a fuck, so how about we come clean here. Whatever guilt trip you are going thru, you go fuckin deal with it. I got my own fuckin' problems.

DAN:  
Fuck you.

ABE:  
You got quite a fuckin' potty mouth on you. (beat) You know how many people own a piece of this bar? Lots. More than I want. And sometimes, there are things that you do to make sure your family and your place in the world are protected. Ricky understood that.

DAN:  
What are you telling me all this for?

ABE:  
Because you need to know how shit goes down. You think you know, but it don't always work like you remember.

DAN:  
Look man, I don't need the history lesson, ok? If you know where I might find Ricky, great. If not, I'm moving on.

ABE:  
(Laughs ruefully) I'm trying to tell you man. There is no finding him. (beat)

DAN:  
Why not?

ABE:

Just is that way. He took, and then he got taken. It's law of the jungle. Let's face it, Ricky was never smart enough to go unpunished.

DAN:

So who's punishing him?!

ABE:

You still focused on that, and that ain't the point. People just disappear, blow away. I don't like it, but I don't get a say.

DAN:

So then what is the point?

ABE:

The point is, what are you going to do from here? You gonna go stirring up shit, til something happens to you? Now you might say "Well, fuck that. Let them mess with me, let 'em try" and maybe you'll tough that shit out for a little while, right? But then they fuck with Carla. She walks home alone a lot from school. (beat) Or Marci. Or his Moms. (beat) They get you to do what they want. And what they want... they want no fuckin trouble. So if you want Carla to go to school, you want his folks to keep that sorry ass junk yard, then you gotta go away too. Just like Ricky. (beat) You know what I mean...

DAN:

It's a Repair shop, actually.

ABE:

Is it, now? Hmm, let me check to see if I give a fuck. Nope.

(Marci enters)

MARCI:

Abe, I ain't seen him in-- (sees Danny) Danny, why are you...

ABE:

Well well, everybody's here this morning.

MARCI:

(shaky, she's been crying) Abe, I haven't seen Ricky in four days. You heard from him, seen him?

ABE:

(looks at Dan) Haven't. When you find him, let him know I have his tab here waiting for him. (He crosses away from her)

MARCI:  
Oh, ok sure. (to Dan) Hey.

DAN:  
(watches Abe, not knowing what to do) Hey.

MARCI:  
Just not like him, you know. He's always tellin me where he is, so not answering his phone is fucked. (she's restless, a bundle of energy) I gotta...I dunno. Do something.

DAN:  
Any chance he's on a bender somewhere? Probably, right?

MARCI:  
(she looks at Dan) Danny, don't lie to me. Don't fuckin lie to me!

DAN:  
I'm just asking a question...

(Abe comes back)

ABE:  
Marci, you want something?

MARCI:  
(a moment, then) Double vodka rocks.

(Abe pours, three drinks.  
Marci grabs hers and slugs it. Abe picks up his glass and stares a hole in the floor. Dan doesn't touch his.)

DAN:  
(to Marci) Look, why don't you head home, I'm sure he's going to try to come by there. I'm going to go to Irene and Joe's.

MARCI:  
He's not coming by there, why would he do that and not call my cell? Danny, that's not him...he would fuckin'...

DAN:  
Ok, ok... (Abe slugs his drink and walks away)

MARCI:  
I'm going to turn over every rock and every fuckin...(sees where Abe is, then) He told me about the money, Danny. He told me about it.

DAN:  
What'd he tell you?

MARCI:  
About the dock and the money, and how he felt like needed to do something, to prove to people that he was good. Good at something.

DAN:  
Marse, it's gonna be...

MARCI:  
You were right Danny, he...he was dumb. So goddamn dumb. And he didn't care about me.

DAN:  
No, c'mon Marse, look...he-

MARCI:  
(cutting him off) How did I get here, Danny? My friends, they think...well, they don't get this with him and me, and now they're really gonna go batshit about it. What am I doin, Danny? (beat) But he was mine. And I gotta go out there and find him.

ABE:  
Maybe leave it be for a bit. Give him some time maybe.

MARCI:  
Abe, with all due respect, fuck you ok? I don't need you, or you Danny, telling me what to do or how to feel. I'm going to go out there and go up and down every street til he comes back to me. And if that doesn't work, I'll go to the pier and suck off the whole goddamn dockworkers union if I have to, til somebody tells me where he is. (puts her glass back on the bar). Put it on Ricky's tab, Abe. He'll settle up with you when I find him. (She exits)

(beat)

ABE:  
You want her to stay safe, you gotta get her to stop lookin for trouble. Play hero now, motherfucker.

(Dan looks at Abe)

ABE: (CONT'D)  
Or don't, what the fuck do I care.

DAN'S OFFICE, SAME AS THE BEGINNING OF THE PLAY.

IRENE:

Fuck you, Danny. (Irene gets up to go, stops and turns) You wanna help me? Fine. Get that girl to stop crusading around. Posters and things.

DAN:

Marci's grieving too...

IRENE:

I don't care! (beat) I need to be able to turn a corner or go to a store without seeing pictures of him everywhere. Just make it stop. At least until we go.

DAN:

Go...? Go where?

IRENE:

Joe is selling the shop, Danny. We won't get much for it, but enough for us to get out. We'll stay with Aunt Rhonda for a while at her place in Pennsylvania.

DAN:

You got me out there to buy that goddamn car, so you could get back on your feet. Not move, but to stay. So you could keep things like they were. You were trying to hold onto something. I don't understand how you can...

IRENE:

Nobody is asking you to understand.

DAN:

Ricky believed in something, fucked up as that was. Maybe you need to sit still for a second, grieve with the rest of us, and then figure out what to do. So he didn't die for...

IRENE:

Don't you say that to me!! Not that word!

DAN:

Fine. But..

IRENE:

I don't have to justify things to you.

DAN:

(matter of factly) Oh really...? That's a load of crap. I think maybe you do...

IRENE:

Carla is going away to school, and I don't want her coming home...back there. She's so sensitive and so bright, Danny, I

IRENE: (CONT'D)  
can't have her face that every time she...

(Dan exhales)

IRENE: (CONT'D)  
I have so much hatred right now. And I gotta let that go.  
But I can't do it there.

DAN:  
And Joe's ok with this?

IRENE:  
Joe...Joe is going along with it.

DAN:  
I'll come out this weekend, I'll stop by to see how Joe and  
Carla are doing...

IRENE:  
No.

DAN:  
Why not?

IRENE:  
You are my boy, and he is my boy. And now he is gone. And so  
I don't know what to do with you. You are incomplete for me.  
Like a single sock or something. Next to you is the empty  
space where he should be. And I am so angry with you Danny.  
I could kill you with my bare hands. Not just you. Anyone.  
Whoever did this to him. (beat) So no, don't come out this  
weekend. Until I figure out what to do with all this.

DAN:  
But I didn't do this to him. And we all lost him.

IRENE:  
Did we "all lose him", Danny? You are an unmarried man with  
no children. Let me know when you understand this the way I  
do. (beat) You had responsibilities. Well, now you don't.  
There's nothing you need out there any longer, so don't come  
around.

(she starts for the exit)

DAN:  
Irene, wait. What if I buy the shop from Joe?

IRENE:  
Why would you want that?

DAN:

I dunno. Look, I'm decent with cars, and I can hire people too. Hell, who am I kidding, I'm not going to work on the cars. But maybe I could set up a...

IRENE:

This is just a joke. You got away from us, and you're not coming back now. And you can't fix a car to...to save your life.

DAN:

(urgently) Maybe I'm not joking. You need this, it'd be a fresh start for you.

IRENE:

And what about for you Danny?

DAN:

What's the opposite of a Fresh Start?

IRENE:

A dead end.

DAN:

Or a homecoming.  
(beat)

IRENE:

No.

DAN:

Why not?

IRENE:

Because I won't take your money to make you feel better when you couldn't take care of my son. Because I don't believe you really mean it, so that when you come to your senses and realize what you are doing, we are still there holding onto a...a failing idea...

DAN:

(overlapping) I would never...

IRENE:

..Because I can't have you taking over our lives and treating them like a toy that you play with when you want. This is our story, Danny. The story of our family! And now it's covered in blood. You didn't save him! Goddamn it, Danny!

(She exhales and leans  
back against the wall,  
spent)



DAN:  
What did I do, huh? What did I goddamn do?!

(he wipes everything off his desk, his computer, phone, pens, etc)

IRENE:  
Danny!  
(beat, Danny looks at what he's done and after a beat, his phone rings. He catches his breath, then fishes the phone off the floor.)

DAN:  
Hi Andrea...no everything is fine, I just dropped something...yeah, everything's fine. Just hold my calls for a little while...yes, yes, I'll need to reschedule that. Thank you. (he hangs up. Beat) So, we close this chapter... Is that how it works?

IRENE:  
That's what we are going to do. And if that doesn't work, we'll do something else. But we need to get away from...

DAN:  
This. Him. Me.

IRENE:  
Yes.

DAN:  
You know, the whole time I was out there trying to...He kept telling me I left because couldn't hack it out there. That I was soft. Do you think he'd want this?

(As previously, we hear someone walking down a city street at night. Cars, distant conversation, maybe music from a car as it passes.)

IRENE:  
He doesn't get a vote anymore Danny.

(She exits. Dan sits there for a moment.)

IN THE DARKNESS

We hear a car pull up. After a moment, Dan starts to pick up his desk things from the floor. As the lights shift, we hear the sound of "what the..." and then a struggle. A brutal beating that goes on for some time. Both sides go at it, breathing heavy, blows being taken and delivered. Eventually a head is thumped against the car repeatedly, and the struggle ends. A body is tossed into the car and a door closes. The car pulls away. Silence.

\*\*FLASHBACK\*\*

Dan and Ricky at 16. Waiting to go on, watching the game.

RICKY:

Where the fuck did she go for that Gatorade man? I bet she took that money and is long gone.

DAN:

(sarcastically) Yeah, probably. You know, you can get tons of shit with five bucks.

RICKY:

You'll see man. Her family's poor, that's more than they see all year.

DAN:

Fuck off man, there's no need for that shit. She's not poorer than you or me. Same poor as everybody else.

RICKY:

Not as poor as you. Your folks still thinking about that house in Mount Vernon?

DAN:

Yeah, maybe even further up. But probably won't happen. You know how these things go, lots of talk, nothing ever happens. We're still poor as everybody else too. We'll be here for a long time.

RICKY:

Cool.

DAN:

Cool that we're poor? Thanks!

RICKY:

Yep. Poor and honest, no crooked fat cats here. Keeping you lean and mean. Livin' small and humble.

DAN:  
On the mean streets of Brooklyn.

(Whooping from the after  
a win. Abe's voice, tired  
and breathing.)

ABE:  
Next!

DAN:  
You ready for this?

RICKY:  
Yep. Let's win this and stay on.

DAN:  
You think that's possible? These mutherfuckers are big.

RICKY:  
Sure, why not. Big fucker's getting tired..Nobody's'  
invincible, right?

DAN:  
Yeah, ok, let's do it. (fist out) In it to win it.

RICKY:  
In it to win it, baby (taps fist to fist)

(Blackout. End of Play.)