

The Motherf\*\*ker With The Hat

by  
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\*\*Thursday, February 4th\*\*

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## ACT ONE

### SCENE 1: LATE AFTERNOON

**A single room in a Residential Hotel in Times Square. Bottles. Ashtrays. Underwear. VERONICA is cleaning up and making the bed. She talks on the phone, cleaning as she goes.**

VERONICA

Yeah...Um-hmm... Nah, Ma, I'm lissening. I'm just cleaning...Cleaning!.. Cuz Jackie don't clean, and I like my shit clean, Ma -- alright? Um-hmmm... Um-hmmm...Yeah, well, you know my opinion on that, Ma -- you should dump his ass!...Ma -- the guy's an angry, bald, deadbeat alcoholic crook who looks like a fuckin' fish, I'm sorry!.....Yeah, well, I'm sure Attila the Hun had his good points too, but that don't mean I'd wanna shack up in his hut!...Attila the Hun...Attila the Hun, you know, he was a Hun?... A Hun, Ma, a Hun, I dunno, a fucked up guy -- a fuckin' Hun!... I am speaking louder...It's cuz you drink too much, you shouldn't do that -- hold on a sec..

**She spots a line of blow and snorts it**

VERONICA (cont'd)

Ma, let's talk in the morning...Ma?...Ma? Okay, look, for the last time, my opinion, you're still a good lookin' woman with a huge, lovin' heart and you're not hard to please -- clearly -- but you're dating a fuckin' big time loser with a head like a actual fuckin' fish!...Okay, look, please, alls I'm gonna say, Ma, when you see him tonight: Take a moment. Take a breath. Take a real good look and just ax yourself in all honestly -- "Do I wanna fuck him -- or fry him up with a little Adobo & Paprika an feed him to fuckin' Buster and Negrito, okay?!..... I love you too. I miss him too. Kiss Buster and Negrito for me. I got your check for the cable on Thursday, we'll eat ice cream....love you, okay...

**Jackie enters with flowers**

**She hangs up.**

VERONICA (cont'd)

**(to Jackie)**

Oh my God, are those for me?!

JACKIE

I dunno! These flowers are for my "Beautiful Boriqua Taino Mamacita Fuck Me Long Time Princess Fuckin' Beauty Queen"! Are you my "Beautiful Boriqua Taino Mamacita Fuck Me Long Time Princess Fuckin' Beauty Queen"?!

VERONICA

Yes, Mr. Man -- I am your big, beautiful, whatever the fuck you just said Princess Queen!

JACKIE

Then I guess these are yours! **And** this chocolate bar, and this Lotto ticket, and this little tiny fuzzy bear that grips an shit, AND -- Hold up! -- AND these two movie tickets to see the movie that's playing at the movie theater later when we go see the movie and eat popcorn and Junior Mints and whatever the fuck else you want 'cuz you're my fuckin' "Beautiful Boriqua Taino Mamacita Fuck Me Long Time Princess Goddess Supergirl Queen" -- **who happens to be eyeballing the newest member of this city's fine ass working class work force!**

VERONICA

You got a job?!

JACKIE

Yo! Lemme tell you something about the man you share a fuckin' Bed of Love with: When he says; "Baby, I'm a come home with a job today" --

VERONICA

--The motherfucker delivers?!

JACKIE

Like Fed Ex, baby!

VERONICA

I'm so fuckin' proud of you!

JACKIE

I think I'm hyperventilating!

VERONICA

Me too!

JACKIE

I got a job today!

VERONICA

I know you did!

JACKIE

I did it because of you, Veronica!

VERONICA

Nah baby, you did it cuz you're the fuckin' MAN -- that's why you did that shit!

JACKIE

I ain't saying I'm not the MAN -- cuz clearly I AM the fuckin' MAN -- but, It's because of you, Veronica -- cuz you wanna know why?

VERONICA

Why?

JACKIE

Because get in this bed right now and lemme show you why!

VERONICA

...Lemme shower first

JACKIE

I don't care about that

VERONICA

But I wanna shower

JACKIE

But I like it like that.

VERONICA

Jackie. I'll be quick.

JACKIE

...I love you, Veronica

VERONICA

I love you too, Jackie

JACKIE

How much? How much you love me?

VERONICA

More than you'll ever know.

JACKIE

Only that much?!

VERONICA

Lemme shower, stoopid.

**Beat**

JACKIE

Veronica?

VERONICA

Yeah?

JACKIE

Why you gettin' misty over there?

VERONICA

I can't get misty when my man warms my heart?

JACKIE

Nah, yeah, you could get misty.

VERONICA

You're sober. You got a job. You got me a little fuzzy bear that grips an shit -- what? -- I can't get misty if I'm feelin' like that?

JACKIE

Nah, yo, mist away -- I'm good with dat.

VERONICA

...I'm gonna go to Carvel after we finish our business, and I'm gonna get you a fuckin' cake, baby.

JACKIE

Yeah?

VERONICA

A big ass Wally The Whale Cake wit chocolate and sprinkles and icing and Carvel goodness and Carvel love all up in it.

JACKIE

Take a fuckin' shower cuz I'm ready to do work!

VERONICA

Oh yeah?

JACKIE

Yo: When I'm done with that ass, that ass gonna levitate 3 feet off the mattress! And you gonna be like; "Yo, Jackie: Why me and my ass floatin' in the air like this"? And I'll be like --

VERONICA

Hold that thought. I'll be back in a minute.

**Veronica exits to the shower.**

JACKIE

Oh! And yo, I didn't even tell you about the best part!

VERONICA

Did you tell your P.O. yet?

JACKIE

What?

VERONICA

Your Parole Officer, you told him about your job?

JACKIE

Yeah. He told me; "Whaddya want? A medal for doing what you're supposed to be doing"? -- but I could tell his ass was happy...

VERONICA

...I'm gettin' in the shower now.

JACKIE

Okay..... Can you hear me?

VERONICA

Mmm-hmm

**Jackie strips. Gets in bed.**

JACKIE

Yo, the best part: Career advancement! This guy, Veronica -- the Boss an shit -- he talked to me just like one human being to another, Veronica. He toal me; "We only got 2 rules here: Be polite to the tenants, and be polite to each other"... And I thought about it, and I was like; "Those are good rules, sir" and then he was like; "Good enough. Start Monday". And after I left, I was like; "That motherfucker was right". Cuz, really, life is too short, ya know"? Why shouldn't we all be nice, or at least, like **try**... Ya know? An yo -- career advancement! If I hook this up right, these people got like five buildings. I could go from porter to maybe even a Super 'cuz I already got the repair shit down, and then you get free rent and cable and even fuckin' internet for like emails an shit, and Union Benefits -- and they got a strong ass union -- and anyway, I started thinkin', Veronica, ya know, and I started makin' plans, you know? Like-- grown-up plans, like "you and me" plans, happy plans, like; "next step " plans, Veronica, you know, like how you been saying? And I juss.....

**He stops. He notices a hat on the table. He fixates on it.**

**Beat**

**He crosses to the hat and examines it.**

**He picks up the hat and sniffs it.**

**Beat**

He looks around the room. Then goes back to the bed. He smells the sheets and pillows.

Beat.

Veronica enters from out the shower. She looks good and she knows it.

VERONICA

...Hey

JACKIE

Hey

She moves towards him

VERONICA

I look good, right?...

JACKIE

...Um, yeah

VERONICA

You had to think about it?

JACKIE

Nah.

VERONICA  
(re:his demeanor)

...What?

JACKIE

Um..... Was someone here?

VERONICA

No. Why?

JACKIE

Nah, just.... Nobody was here?

VERONICA

I thought I just answered that.

JACKIE

Um..... Wass up with the hat?

VERONICA

What hat?

JACKIE

That hat over there. That Man hat that ain't my hat that's right over there.

VERONICA  
Dass not your hat?

**Pause**

JACKIE  
... Anything you need to say?

VERONICA  
'Bout what?

JACKIE  
You don't need to say nuthin?

VERONICA  
Jackie--

JACKIE  
--Don't "Jackie" me, okay? I'm calm, I'm civil, I'm **polite**.

VERONICA  
.... And?

JACKIE  
You know my mother gave us this bed, right?

VERONICA  
If you got something to say, why donchu just leave your fuckin' mother out of it and say what you gotta say.

JACKIE  
The hat: it ain't mine.

VERONICA  
So? It's prolly your friends.. Or your fuckin' Sponsor's. Or whoever the fuck else comes up here sometimes -- that fuckin' old man down the hall you always got coming the fuck by. I don't know.

JACKIE  
You don't know?

VERONICA  
You know what? Go fuck yourself. I don't know what your problem is, and I don't know why you're buggin' the fuck out over a fuckin' hat could belong to fuckin' **anybody** --

JACKIE  
--You're right

VERONICA  
I know I'm fuckin' right--

JACKIE  
 Fuck the hat.

VERONICA  
 Fuck the hat?

JACKIE  
 Dass what I said. Fuck the hat.

VERONICA  
 Good. Fuck it.

JACKIE  
 Dass right: The hat, fuck it!

VERONICA  
 Okay then.

JACKIE  
 That hat: dass a hat I got no interest in.

VERONICA  
 How about my apology now? You got any interest in that?

JACKIE  
 The bed.

VERONICA  
 The bed what?

JACKIE  
 Aqua Velva and Dick. Why the bed smells like Aqua Velva and Dick? Huh?! Why?!

VERONICA  
 Jackie --

JACKIE  
 --Stay away from me!

VERONICA  
 You're fuckin' crazy, you know that?

JACKIE  
 I'm crazy? Yo, head of the bed: Aqua Velva! Mid bed: fuckin' Dick! Here. Smell it. Smell that shit and tell me it ain't dick!

VERONICA  
 You're acting fuckin' retarded--

JACKIE

Maybe I am retarded! Maybe I'm fuckin' you know -- like the guy from the bodega who sits on the milk crate and asks you if you like Batman and Ritz Crackers every fuckin' day! Maybe I'm that fuckin' guy!

VERONICA

You actin' like that guy--

JACKIE

-- Cuz I'm trying very fuckin' hard not to leap to fuckin' conclusions, Veronica, but I'm a bit -- I don't know -- unable to ascertain why this bed -- my **mother's** fuckin' bed --

VERONICA

-- Again with your fuckin' mother--

JACKIE

--You watch your mouth about my mother--

VERONICA

"Watch **my** mouth about your mother"? No. **YOU** watch my mouth about your mother! Fuck your mother! Okay? Fuck your fuckin' bitch ass mother, and her bitch ass big deal second hand bed, and fuck her bitch ass son, okay?! If your mother -- Rest in Peace -- was here right now I'd strap on a fuckin' dildo and fuck the two of youse right in your little faggot-ass, lesbian asses, you little fuckin' bitch -- okay?! "Over, the end, don't like you no more"! Get the fuck out!

**Veronica goes to the table, does a line of blow**

JACKIE

My sponsor told me you were a little fuckin' whore and I didn't believe him!

VERONICA

Fuck your sponsor!

JACKIE

I toal him; "Nah, man, we got a special thing going down between us"--

VERONICA

Why don't you go down on your fuckin' Sponsor, okay?

JACKIE

He said; "You can't live with an active user"--

VERONICA

--Hey! I don't here this shit!

JACKIE

Who was it?

VERONICA

Go lick your sponsor's fuckin' balls, bitch.

JACKIE

You know what? You wanna flip the script on me like a text book fuckin' cokehead alcoholic streetwalkin' skank ass trick, dass fine -- but I strongly suggest that you don't underestimate my capacity for violence!

**Veronica grabs a Vodka bottle and breaks the end off it**

VERONICA

You wanna play? Try me!

**Jackie rises from the bed**

JACKIE

I'll fuckin' kill you. You think I won't kill you 'cuz I'm a nice fuckin' guy, but believe me, I don't give a fuck about nuthin' right now and I will end your life like you just ended mines!

VERONICA

You stay away from me!

JACKIE

Or what? You gonna hit me with that?

VERONICA

Back the fuck off, bitch! I don't play that doormat punchin' bag shit --

JACKIE

-- Who was it? Just tell me who, dass all I wanna know!

VERONICA

Who was who?! There wasn't no "who" 'cuz no one did nuthin' over here, and you're out your mind playin' fuckin' Sherlock Holmes cuz I don't know why!

**Beat.**

**Jackie starts dressing**

VERONICA (cont'd)

Whaddya doing?

**Silence**

VERONICA (cont'd)

Jackie, whaddya doing?

**Silence**

**Jackie takes a liquor bottle from out the closet**

VERONICA (cont'd)

Whaddya doing? Whaddya -- gonna drink? A little misunderstanding happens because you're fuckin' stupid, and now you're gonna pick up a drink and get yours ass Violated back Upstate and ruin fuckin' everything 'cuz you're a jealous maniac with no leg to stand on?

JACKIE

It was that motherfuckah downstairs, wasn't it?! That Motherfuckah with the Hat! He always wearing a hat, and now, suddenly, I got an unidentified fuckin' hat sitting on my breakfast table!

VERONICA

Jackie, don't get this twisted cuz I personally don't give a fuck what you do, but, if you want my advice, put down the bottle, go to a fuckin' meeting or something, meet up with that "sponsor" or whatever,

JACKIE

You so lucky I don't hit women

VERONICA

Yeah right I'm a fuckin' 4 leaf clover, let's go down to the casino and win a million bucks --

JACKIE

-- Make jokes. Jokes are funny--

VERONICA

-- Jackie --

JACKIE

--Don't look at me!

VERONICA

I'm lookin' at you -- whaddya gonna do?! I'm fuckin' sorry that you jumped to conclusions and had a fuckin' coniption over nuthin, okay? And maybe I over-reacted because you questioned my integrity--

JACKIE

Questioned your integrity??!! You fucked some motherfucker in this bed, Ronnie!

(MORE)

JACKIE (cont'd)

There's blow and Vodka and cigarette butts and you didn't think I'd be home so soon, and the Motherfuckah left his **Hat** like motherfucking Zorro leaving his "Z" all over the scene of the crime! Dass what happened! Fucking occured here! Another man's Dick was right the fuck here and here and here and here and fuckin' here! And **all** I'm asking -- in a world where fuckin' murder right here and now would be fucked up but understandable -- All I'm asking for is the owner of that dick! I want the owner! Tell me!!

**Beat**

VERONICA

Okay... You know what?...Let's go to the pie place, okay?

JACKIE

What??!!

VERONICA

Cajate! Look,let's just go there, to the pie place, and we'll have, like, some pie, and we'll just, like, talk, or not even talk, we'll just eat pie first and Be. And after that, we'll talk. You have got this wrong, Jackie. You're so far out of line you're like in Zimbabwe or some shit, but I think maybe cooler heads could prevail on both our parts at the pie place, so let's just go there. I'm willing to do that. I'm willing to put the ghetto on hold and eat some fuckin' pie with you, if you're willing to entertain the notion that you're a fuckin' retard ex-con who almost blew it cuz you got an imagination like -- I dunno -- Dr. Fuckin' Seuss an shit. Okay?

**Beat**

JACKIE

But you're lying.

VERONICA

Look at me: I didn't fuck no body. Jackie, you know how I am. You know I'm a little fuckin' crazy just like you're a little fuckin' crazy, and you know I'd rather spit on a Nun's fuckin' cunt than give a fuckin' inch when I been wronged. I been wronged here. You wronged me. Really, really fuckin' badly. But I will concede to you -- and it ain't a small concession -- that I love your ass. And I'll kick a 3-legged kitten down a flight of fuckin' stairs rather than say some shit like I love you. You know that. So let's go get some fuckin' pie before someone here says something that can't be changed. Okay?

**A Beat. He searches her eyes**

JACKIE

Pie?...

VERONICA

Dass right. Right now.

JACKIE

Pie..... Aaaight..... Pie...

**SCENE 2: SEVERAL HOURS LATER**

**A living room in Hell's Kitchen. There are posters of Vitamins and Nutrient Supplements on the wall.**

**Ralph D is sipping a strawberry colored nutritional beverage. Jackie rants, midstream --**

JACKIE

--Right in my face she lied!!

RALPH D.

Sit down, man.

JACKIE

Right in the middle of a coconut custard pie with the chocolate carmel fuckin drizzle! I mean, she lied like it was nothing, man -- with the fork right in her lying fuckin' mouth!

RALPH D.

Sit down, bro!

JACKIE

I mean, it might sound stupid to you, but that was our special place, that pie place bro, and there was, there was a fuckin', I'm serious, there was a fucking **sanctity** to when we used to go there, you don't know, it was like; "When it's pie, don't lie" -- and she just lied the fuck all over it!!

RALPH D.

Sit!

JACKIE

I'm telling you: I need a fuckin' gun, bro!

RALPH D.

You bring your Big Book with you?

JACKIE

Can you get me a gun or not?!

RALPH D.

I thought you came here for guidance?

JACKIE

I did. I came for guidance. And a gun.

RALPH D.

First off, you need to calm down

JACKIE

I'm calm

RALPH D.

No, not "Jackie" calm, Higher Power calm.

JACKIE

I'm calm. Really. I'm very calm.

RALPH D.

Calm enough to pray with me?

JACKIE

Pray?!

RALPH D.

Pray. Yes. You remember prayer, right? That little thing we do that saves our ass when we're about to lose our fuckin' minds over nothing 25 times a day?

JACKIE

This ain't nuthin, man

RALPH D.

All the more reason.

JACKIE

Bro -- I already prayed. Like, a lot, okay?

RALPH D.

So pray again. Right now. Or get the fuck out. How's that?

JACKIE

.....Fine.

**They join hands**

JACKIE (cont'd)

"God -- Hello again. You may remember that I already prayed to you like 57 fuckin times on my way over here --

RALPH D.

Stop fuckin around.

JACKIE

Fine... "God, I'm here at Ralphs, I didn't kill anybody or pick up a drink, so, thank you..... seriously, thank you"

(to Ralph)

Okay?!

RALPH D.

Say Amen

JACKIE

Amen.

RALPH D.

Good. Thank you. That was good, that's a start.

JACKIE

It's true, I prayed the whole way over here. I did do that.

RALPH D.

Good...Now: did you go to a meeting?

JACKIE

Nah, I just came here.

RALPH D.

Did you read page 449 in the Big Book like I suggested?

JACKIE

I did.

RALPH D.

Did you journal about it?

JACKIE

Bro, I hear you, and no, I didn't journal, but I did read it, and I plan to journal, like soon --

RALPH D.

Hold up...

(calling to the kitchen)

Sweetie, could you blender up my Sponsee a nice nutritional beverage, please?

VICTORIA

(off-stage)

Go fuck yourself, Ralph!

RALPH D.

Okay, honey, I'll do that.

(to Jackie)

Minor tiff. Husband and wife stuff. Anyway, where were we?

JACKIE

I was axin' could your cousin Philly get me a gun, please.

RALPH D.

No.

JACKIE

I'm not gonna do nuthin' with it--

RALPH D.

Big Book. Page 449. It says what?

JACKIE

... "Acceptance"

RALPH D.

That's right. "Acceptance" what?

JACKIE

Acceptance -- it's the answer.

RALPH D.

No. It says; "Acceptance is the answer to all my problems today". And what day are we concerned with here?

JACKIE

Ralph, man, I understand that shit, like in theory.

RALPH D.

It's not a theory. "The Lone Gunman", that's a theory. "Dinosaurs invented waterfalls" -- that's another theory. This program, Jackie, It's a Practice -- not a Theory. How's it been working for you so far?

JACKIE

Yeah, man, pretty good.

RALPH D.

But now you wanna change from the AA Practice back to the Jackie fuckin' Practice?

JACKIE

I'm not saying that!

RALPH D.

How was the Jackie Practice working for ya?

JACKIE

Shitty.

RALPH D.

Just shitty?

JACKIE

Really shitty.

RALPH D.

How fuckin' shitty?

JACKIE

C'mon man, you know how shitty.

RALPH D.

It's not important that I know. What's important is that **you** know.

JACKIE

I know.

RALPH D.

Look man, I'm gonna make this real simple: If the Duane Reade is on fire, and I **know** it's on fire, and yet, I go running back in cuz I left 2 bucks in my wallet on the counter, and I come running back out looking like the Human Torch from the Fantastic Four but without the Superpowers, and I start cryin'; "Look at me, Jackie, Woe is me, I'm engulfed in flame like a fuckin' marshmallow at the bottom of the campfire", then -- what are you gonna tell me?!

JACKIE

**(confused)**

....What?

RALPH D.

You're girlfriend is an addict, and she has many qualities, that even to the casual observer, would seem to indicate that she has basic fundamental issues with impulse control and making good judgements. Do I need to say more?

**(calls out again)**

Victoria, seriously, a beverage for my Sponsee would be very nice!

VICTORIA

**(off stage)**

You know what would be nice, Ralph? If you dropped dead of a fuckin' coronary -- that would be nice!

RALPH D.

**(to Jackie)**

Acceptance. See? My wife is the re-incarnation of Benito Mussolini. What do I do? Acceptance. 449. Learn it. Live it. Be free.

JACKIE

Yo, if Veronica spoke to me like that--

RALPH D.

She don't speak to you like that?

JACKIE

Nah, I mean, she does, but --

RALPH D.

-- Yeah well, Victoria? Same thing. But the **difference** between Veronica and Victoria is that Victoria is in Recovery, okay -- and you're girl -- she's a wild fuckin' animal who was raised by wolves in fuckin' Puerto Rican Transsylvania, okay? And that's a problem. As evidenced by you showing up here looking for weaponry.

JACKIE

(rising)

...I gotta go.

RALPH D.

Go where?

JACKIE

I just gotta go.

RALPH D.

If you go back to her, you'll be using again within 24 hours, you know that.

JACKIE

I ain't goin' back to her! Fuck her.

RALPH D.

You see? Now you're being sensible. You know what? You should stay with us for a while.

JACKIE

Nah.

RALPH D.

Yo, I'm serious. We got room. And I'll tell you what: one month with us, you'll be shocked at what a new man you'll become. We got all kinds of health foods here, bro. And not just the beverages! Victoria, she prepares all kinds of healthy dishes -- soy and tofu and fresh vegetables -- did you know that I'm a vegan now?

JACKIE

So?

RALPH D

Yeah, I said "so" too till I started feeling better than I've ever felt in my life. Not only that: I practice yoga now, bro. Yoga...I always thought yoga and fuckin' soy milk an shit -- they're for fuckin' assholes, right?

JACKIE

I mean, yeah, kinda

RALPH D.

Exactly. Well guess what? I'm an asshole. And so are you. Who else but a couple of real fuckin assholes would end up fucking their lives up so bad that they had to go to meetings all the time, and fuckin' pray, and be honest and shit, and do all that bullshit because if they don't, they'd be fuckin' dead in a year? So yeah, we're fuckin' clowns, but it's okay. Hence -- yoga. I may be an asshole, but I'm fuckin limber, bro. And healthy. And I like it. And it's okay...I've always wanted to learn how to surf -- guess what?

JACKIE

You're surfing now

RALPH D.

Fuckin A right. 3 days a week I'm on the A train to Rockaway at 5:30 in the morning, and I'm fucking surfing. Not "thinking about surfing". Surfing, bro! I'm also learning how to speak French, I'm taking a fucking Archery class, I floss now, I even showed up for Jury Duty for the first time in my life last month and I didn't mind it at all-- I read a great detective novel and ate licorice till they dismissed me-- it was fuckin enjoyable!

JACKIE

Ralph --

RALPH D

No. Listen to me: I do all these great things for myself, and I feel like a fuckin' Rock Star. Why? Because my focus is on my recovery and being of service, and my girl is an adult who sips tea, not an active addict who sips bong hits and tequilla sunrises. Those are the facts. End of story. I know you're upset right now. I don't blame you. It's fucking upsetting.

JACKIE

It is!

RALPH D.

I know it is. But this shit with your girl, it's a blessing in disguise. And you know I'm right. And the fact that she would cheat on you is proof. And believe me, anybody that would cheat on you once, will do it again. It's what they call The Cycle of Self-Sabotage. And that's what addicts do. They self-sabotage. You know that. And I don't want to see that happen to you. You're my sponsee. I care about you. But it's up to you.

JACKIE

I know.

RALPH D.

Look bro, every day ain't Christmas morning, but I been clean and sober 24/7 for the last 15 years, so most days, I pretty much know how to call it like I see it. My life isn't about bullshit and heartache no more, and yours doesn't have to be either. And you're doing so good. Stay with me and Victoria, get on my nutritional beverage plan, go to meetings, come to fuckin Rockaway with me, and you'll see the damn difference. I mean, look at me -- how old you think I am?

JACKIE

I dunno. 42?

RALPH D.

Okay. But do I look 42?

JACKIE

Look bro, I, I'm sorry -- but I don't really give a fuck how old you look right now!

RALPH D.

You're right. It don't fuckin' matter. What matters is you. I'm here for you. I'm here... I mean, do you have any idea how proud I am of you?

JACKIE

I'm proud of you too

RALPH D.

No man, seriously: I'm fucking proud of you. You're an exceptional fuckin' guy, Jackie.

JACKIE

You too.

RALPH D.

Nah, fuck me -- I'm talking about you. Okay?

JACKIE

Yeah, man.

RALPH D.

I'll tell ya something --

VICTORIA

(off-stage)

Ralph?

RALPH D.

Yes, honey?

VICTORIA

Could you take it outside now, please -- my show's about to start!

RALPH D.

You don't wanna watch your show in the bedroom where it's more comfortable?

**Victoria enters**

VICTORIA

Are you asking me if I would rather watch it on the 9 inch screen in there, rather than on the 58 inch plasma out here that I said we couldn't afford but you went ahead and bought it anyway?!

JACKIE

I'm gonna split, bro.

RALPH D.

Split where? To get a gun and do something stupid?

JACKIE

No.

RALPH D.

To go back to Veronica?

JACKIE

No.

RALPH D.

To drink?

JACKIE

Nothin' like that.

VICTORIA

Ralph?

RALPH D.

You're not gonna confront this Motherfucker with the Hat, right?

JACKIE

Nah, man. I'm just gonna walk. Give you and your lady some space. You, you made a lotta good points. And what you talked about? I want that. Not, like, the archery, but, you know, the life.

RALPH D.

Gotta work for it.

JACKIE

I know.

RALPH D.

"By your integrity, so shall you be measured", right?

JACKIE  
Yeah, man...I'm gonna walk, hit a meeting, come back and  
crash on the couch.

RALPH  
Good.

VICTORIA  
Ralph!

RALPH D.  
(to Victoria)  
Okay, baby, my bad -- bring in those dried apricots strips --  
we'll watch together!  
(to Jackie)  
Call me if you're feeling fucked up.

JACKIE  
Yeah bro, absolutely.

RALPH D.  
No guns, no bullshit. Right, man?

JACKIE  
Nah.

RALPH D.  
Proud of you.

VICTORIA  
(to Jackie)  
I'll make up the couch for you, Jackie -- and there's fresh  
towels in the hallway closet

JACKIE  
Thanks, Victoria

**Ralph has grabbed the remote to turn on  
the TV**

VICTORIA  
(to Ralph)  
I'm in charge of the remote, Ralph

RALPH D.  
I'm just turning the thing on

JACKIE  
Thank you, Ralph.

RALPH D.  
Don't thank me, you doing it your self.

JACKIE

Still, thank you.

RALPH D.

It's what we do... And remember, bro: "No stinkin' thinkin', be wise like Abe Lincoln"

JACKIE

No doubt, bro. No doubt..

**END SCENE**

**SCENE 3 -- THE NEXT DAY.**

A living room in Washington Heights with a lot of plants. Jackie and Ralph D sit on the couch waiting for Jackie's cousin, JULIO, to return from the kitchen.

JACKIE

(calling out)

Yo, Julio, hurry the fuck up, bro!

COUSIN JULIO

(calling out)

Be right there.

JACKIE

(calling out)

We ain't got all day!

COUSIN JULIO

(calling out)

I'm deep frying Empanadas. Would you like one?

JACKIE

(calling out)

Nah.

COUSIN JULIO

(calling out)

How about your friend? I've got plenty of hot Empanandas here.

RALPH D.

(calling out)

I'd love an empanada. Thanks.

COUSIN JULIO  
(calling out)  
Spinach or Garden Delight?

RALPH D.  
(calling out)  
Uh... Which would you recommend?

COUSIN JULIO  
(calling out)  
It depends on your feelings toward spices. One is spicier,  
the other is less spicy but a bit more fragrant.

RALPH D.  
(calling out)  
I'm good with whatever.

COUSIN JULIO  
(calling out)  
Do you have strong feelings either way about Cilantro and  
Yellow Peppercorns?

JACKIE  
(calling out)  
Yo, Julio, could you just get the fuck out here, please?!

COUSIN JULIO  
(calling out)  
I'm coming.

RALPH D.  
(calling out)  
I think I'll take the spinach

COUSIN JULIO  
(calling out)  
The spinach is spicier!

JACKIE  
(calling out)  
Julio!!! C'mon!!!

RALPH D.  
(calling out)  
Spicy's good. I'm a spice guy.

COUSIN JULIO  
(calling out)  
Jackie?

JACKIE  
(calling out)  
What?

COUSIN JULIO  
 (calling out)  
 You sure you don't want an empananda?

JACKIE  
 (calling out)  
 Empananda, fine. But, fuckin' **today!**

COUSIN JULIO  
 (calling out)  
 I'll just bring out a tray.

**COUSIN JULIO enters with a tray of empanadas and 3 cold Buds. JULIO wears workout gear. His physique is impressive.**

COUSIN JULIO (cont'd)  
 Empanadas y Cerveza Seguro!

JACKIE  
 We don't drink, bro.

COUSIN JULIO  
 But you drank at Mercedes' christening last weekend.

RALPH D.  
 (to Jackie)  
 You drank?

JACKIE  
 Nah, man. This motherfuckah, my cousin Julio, he like to drink so much that he think everybody drinks even when they don't.  
 (to Julio)  
 Tell him.

COUSIN JULIO  
 I was tipsy at the christening, pero, I coulda sworn I was feeding you Margarita's whenever I hit the bar.

JACKIE  
 For Veronica, man -- not for me!

COUSIN JULIO  
 If you say so.

JACKIE  
 Motherfucker, I do say so! Cuz that's the facts!

RALPH D.  
 If you had a slip, Jackie, it's okay to say so--

JACKIE

--Bro, I didn't **slip** nothin'. Everything that motherfuckers tell me to do ever since I got out, I do it. You tell me don't drink, I don't drink. My P.O. say "Pee in a cup", I pee in that shit. The State say I can't be out after 8, my ass is home 7:59. All I do is be obedient, and all motherfuckers do is doubt me!

RALPH D.

Okay. I'm just saying --

JACKIE

All due respect, I'm a little offended you don't believe me.

RALPH D.

Offended?

JACKIE

A little bit. Yeah.

RALPH D.

Put it in your journal.

JACKIE

Oh, I will.

RALPH D.

Yeah, put it in right after the part where I said; "No bullshit, no guns", and you said; "Oh, absolutely, I'm going to a meeting"

JACKIE

Those are two separate issues. The gun and the drinking, they're completely different things.

RALPH D.

It's interesting that you see it that way.

COUSIN JULIO

Papi, are we talking about what? Guns?

JACKIE

(to Ralph)

It's just: Trust, it's a two way street, bro.

RALPH D.

It's funny: My sponsor used to annoy the fuck outta me too -- until the day I realized maybe he knew something I didn't.

JACKIE

I'm just saying -- I'm not drinking.

RALPH D.

Okay. And I'm just wondering how "offended" you were when I came to visit you in the prison every month for the last two years?

JACKIE

I apologize, okay.

RALPH D.

Not too "offended" then, huh?

JACKIE

I said I apologize.

RALPH D.

No need to apologize. I got no opinion about it one way or the other.

COUSIN JULIO

Anyway, you know -- maybe I got it wrong, I must confess I do enjoy a frothy margarita or a nice cold Beck's Beer every now and then -- particularly at gatherings. That's why I work out.

RALPH D.

I can see that. Whaddya bench?

COUSIN JULIO

It's not about numbers, it's about reps.

RALPH D.

I've heard that. But is it really true?

COUSIN JULIO

My trainer says the only number that matters is the time on the alarm clock when you get your ass up and hit the gym.

RALPH D.

Makes a lot of sense. I work out too. Over at the Y.

COUSIN JULIO

I'm at David Barton's.

RALPH D.

Cool. Yeah, I try to get Jackie to come along with me, get the blood flowing in a positive direction, but he don't listen. Say, are you into Nutritional Beverages?

COUSIN JULIO

I brew my own, papi, -- Wanna check out my fridge?

RALPH D.

Hey, lemme just ask: do you take Vitamins for your hair?

COUSIN JULIO

My hair?

RALPH D.

You got great hair, that's all. I'm a little embarrassed, but I feel like I'm going bald too quick.

COUSIN JULIO

Really? I don't think so. Bend your head, let me see your follicle base.

JACKIE

Yo, can we get to the matter at hand?!

COUSIN JULIO

Sure... Sorry... So, what's the matter at hand?

RALPH D.

By the way, I'm Jackie's sponsor. Ralph D.

COUSIN JULIO

It's a pleasure. And on the hair: Elmwood bark and the Paste of Chermoula and fresh Harissa, twice a day to the scalp.

RALPH D.

Really?

COUSIN JULIO

Oh yeah.. In ten weeks: Afro.

JACKIE

Yo!

RALPH D.

Anyway, yeah, I told Jackie I would be accompanying him here today, so he doesn't try to pull the wool over your eyes.

COUSIN JULIO

Well, glad to have you. How's the empananda?

RALPH D.

Fuckin' delicious.

(to Jackie)

Jackie, why don't you tell Julio here about your present predicament?

JACKIE

(to Julio)

I need you to hide this gun for me, man.

RALPH D.

(to Jackie)

Start at the beginning, Jackie.

COUSIN JULIO

I don't think I wanna hear this.

JACKIE

(to Julio)

Wait. Look, Julio: events transpired--

RALPH D.

Be specific.

JACKIE

There was a small incident --

RALPH D.

From the beginning, Jackie.

JACKIE

Aaight. A coupla months ago, when I first got out, me and Ralph here had a fight--

RALPH D.

--A disagreement

JACKIE

-- A disagreement. We had a disagreement, and he fired me as his Sponsee.

RALPH D.

You fired yourself.

JACKIE

Okay, for the sake of fuckin' brevity, I fired myself, and then I needed a new Sponsor -- you know what a sponsor is?

COUSIN JULIO

I was in a sex addiction fellowship, so, yeah, I know.

JACKIE

Sex addiction?

COUSIN JULIO

It's all behind me now -- no pun intended.

JACKIE

Anyway, I needed a new sponsor so I got this **woman**, which, everyone said don't get a girl as a sponsor for a guy, but I was in a pinch--

RALPH D.

-- You were attracted to her

JACKIE

-- She had a very strong program--

RALPH D.

(to Julio)

Strong set of "C" cups, Julio -- fuckin' Betty Boop with a Big Book, believe me--

COUSIN JULIO

-- I see --

JACKIE

-- Anyway, **nothing** happened, but Veronica fuckin' hated her, threatened to -- quote -- "rip the bitch's vagina from out her fuckin' mouth" -- so I had to lie and say I wasn't working with her no more; and lying about it led to doing things on the DL, and the DL led to, like, feeling like something was going on, and then feeling like something was going on led to --

COUSIN JULIO

You fucked her.

JACKIE

I didn't fuck her. She fucked me.

RALPH D.

Yeah, you know how that goes, Julio: women overpower men through sheer physical force and pin them down and ride them like ponies all the fuckin' time -- it's in the papers every day.

JACKIE

Whatever -- something fuckin' miniscule happened. And I **immediately** ended it, and apologized to Ralph who took me back, but then this crazy AA girl started calling the house -- and even though she never said nothing about we fucked, like, on tape, Veronica got in her head that we had -- which -- for all she knew, we hadn't!

COUSIN JULIO

But you did.

JACKIE

But she didn't know that! And really, the whole thing was like a dream -- not a dream that I, like, **aspired** to, but like a nightmare where you wake up all fucked up, and you're like; "Did that just fuckin' happen?!". But unfortunately, in this particular, **completely unintended** instance --

COUSIN JULIO

It did.

JACKIE

Kinda. Yeah.

COUSIN JULIO

You fucked her.

JACKIE

Technically! And that's my cross. But in **reality**, Julio -- in the fuckin' dimension outside of temporary insanity -- IN MY HEART?? In my heart -- YOU GOTTA BELIEVE ME -- dat shit never happened!

COUSIN JULIO

Okay: except for the fact that it actually happened, it didn't really happen.

JACKIE

Exactly!

RALPH D.

Good to see we're all on the same page here.

COUSIN JULIO

Yeah, man, I get it. I do. It happened to me once with a guy named Frank before I got married to Marisol. And I'll tell you--

JACKIE

We doan need to hear about that right now. Anyway, because of this crazy AA woman, which, I had a part in it, I'm not trying to make it like I'm a Saint even though I'm straight up more or less not guilty -- but the point -- the point -- is this: Do you know that Motherfuckah With The Hat that lives downstairs from me?

COUSIN JULIO

A man with a hat?

JACKIE

You know him. You seent him. He's, like, fake dapper, his pants got creases an shit, only wears brand new white t-shirts, then throws out them out after one day -- you know, that "thinking he's a GQ" motherfucker" --and all the time sportin' a brim to cover his big fuckin' head?!

COUSIN JULIO

I don't know

RALPH D.

Anyway.

JACKIE

Anyway, Veronica, I think, was upset about the AA woman even though for all she knows nothing happened, and so, my belief is she started fuckin' the Motherfucker With The Hat so she could prove to herself that she don't love me, but, of course, we all know she do love me, but now, I found out about it 'cuz the Motherfucker left his Hat on my table -- so -- I got upset, I got a gun from Chuchi, and I took the hat and the gun to the Motherfucker with the Hat's apartment downstairs, and... that's when a incident happened.

COUSIN JULIO

Dios mio, you didn't shoot him, did you?

JACKIE

See, that's what Veronica woulda done! She woulda just knocked on a door and started capping bodies an shit! But that ain't me. You known me since chinese handball, Julio -- is that me?

COUSIN JULIO

(to Ralph)

It's not him. It's really not.

JACKIE

All I did: I knocked on the door. Motherfucker with the Hat answered. I didn't say nothing. I just took the Hat -- the hat from my house, tossed it on his carpet, stared him straight in his eye, cocked the gun, and shot the fuckin' Hat on the carpet. Dass all I did.

COUSIN JULIO

You opened fire in his residence?

JACKIE

I shot his Hat. Dass all. And -- BELIEVE ME -- the motherfucker KNEW what that was about! The problem is, the bullet went through his hat, ricko-shayed off his floor, blew out his big screen TV, and put a hole into the guy next door's apartment who was home at the time, so, I had to, like, flee... And now I gotta return the gun to fuckin' Chuchi, but he ain't around, so could you please hide the fuckin' gun until, like, Chuchi could be located, please?

COUSIN JULIO

You borrowed a gun from Chuchi?

JACKIE

I know --

COUSIN JULIO

Chuchi?!

JACKIE

I wasn't thinkin' right.

COUSIN JULIO

You borrowed a gun from Chuchi Alvarado, you did bad things with it, and now, you want me to hide the gun of Chuchi Alvarado.

JACKIE

I'll understand if you say no.

**Beat**

COUSIN JULIO

Can I be honest with you?

JACKIE

Ah, man, c'mon -- please???

COUSIN JULIO

No, Jackie. It's okay. I'll hide the gun.

JACKIE

Thank you--

COUSIN JULIO

--All's I want to say to you is that I'm happy to help you out because you're my cousin -- you're my blood-- but really, I'm doing it In Memory of your Mom more than for you and I'd like to tell you why.

JACKIE

Okay, whatever.

RALPH D.

Julio, would you like some privacy for this -- I could wait in the kitchen or on the stoop outside?

COUSIN JULIO

Ay, no. Thanks, though. And if you ever need a massage or some waxing, here's my card.

RALPH D.

Thanks.

COUSIN JULIO

Rolfing is my specialty. And Brazilian.

RALPH D.

Cool.

COUSIN JULIO

I'm also a Notary Public.

RALPH D.

I'm in Nutritional Beverages, take a card.

COUSIN JULIO

Great. Give me a few to pass out -- I'm all about networking.

RALPH D.

That's kind of you. Gimme a few more of yours.

COUSIN JULIO

Ay, Bless you!

JACKIE

Yo -- y'all got any more cards need passing out, or can you tell me what you wanna tell me, Julio, so's I can be on my way?!

COUSIN JULIO

Oh, I'm sorry -- I didn't realize you were in a rush to get what you want and leave.

JACKIE

I'm not

COUSIN JULIO

Yeah. You are. And that's okay. The reason I said I'm doing this more for your Mother's memory than for you is because, maybe I never said this before, but, I don't like you very much. And the reason I don't like you very much is because you think you're a nice guy, but really Jackie, you're not that nice. You've basically made fun of me my whole life, you talk a lot of shit, you fuck people over -- not all the time but sometimes -- and really, the space between who you **think** you are and who you **actually** are is a pretty embarrassingly wide gap. I hope this AA thing works out for you. Because the cousin I loved and hung out with and played Booties Up with when I was 8 -- he bears no resemblance to the little cabroncito I'm looking at right now. When I first came to the States from PR, you had my back, and, really, you were a hero to me. And now, Dios perdona, the hero is a zero, mijo! My Marisol was right about you: It's always all about Jackie. We've been married three years now, and whenever you come by our home, you don't even bring so much as a bag of pistachios. And yet, you see nothing wrong with jeopardizing my relationship and my apartment and our safety by bringing criminal things like this caca into our home. You're not a good friend, and you're not a good relative. My relationship to you is that of a memory that ceased to be any kind of reality years ago. My Marisol called it: You're a user. But thass okay. And that's all I got to say on that, so you can get out of my apartment now, and go do all those very more important things then spending time with your cousin Julio, okay?

JACKIE

Yo, Julio, it's --

COUSIN JULIO

No, no! Go. Pa fuera... Leave the gun. Take the Empanadas.

**End of Scene**

**SCENE 4: THE NEXT EVENING**

**Veronica's apartment. Veronica is in the living room getting dressed, smoking a joint, and talking to someone in the bathroom.**

VERONICA

I can't do this no more, okay?. This was the last time. So please don't gimme no static about it, 'cuz, you think you know me, but you don't: I'll fuckin' hurt your ass, okay? I'll wrap a fuckin' turban round my head and go straight up Al Queda on you -- I'll destroy you. And I don't wanna do that, and it ain't necessary to do that, but if you ever fuckin' call me again -- no matter what -- that's how it's gonna be, okay? We're finished! And I'm being nice about this 'cuz it ain't like we had nuthin', it was something. It was messed up, and it messed me up, and basically I'm ready to hurl myself off a building any fuckin' minute now, but I'm not saying what we had was nuthin' because it wasn't nuthin' and I can acknowledge that and I can even thank you for it, but now it's over, so Leggo my Eggo and have a nice life nowhere the fuck near me, okay?! Don't say goodbye. Just go....

**A man emerges from the bathroom. It's Ralph. Naked.**

RALPH D.

...You know that Sponsor he had when he first got out? He fucked her.

VERONICA

....I know.

RALPH D.

Like a lot. He said after being with her, physically, that the thought of being with you for life felt like he was settling. He was gonna leave you for her until I talked him out of it.

VERONICA

Why would you tell me that?

RALPH D.

Because it's true. Because you deserve to know it.

VERONICA

But you're his friend.

RALPH D.

I'm not his friend. I'm his Sponsor. There's a difference.

VERONICA

And is there something in the fuckin' Sponsor book about how it's okay to fuck your Sponsee's girl for two years off and on -- even though you got a wife and your Sponsee is not just a Sponsee, but a fuckin' friend?

RALPH D.

I like Jackie. Don't get me wrong. But he's not a friend.

VERONICA

Pssss! You fake AA motherfuckers make me sick. Y'all all the time preaching honesty and selflessness, meanwhile y'all more dishonest and selfish than half of C Block at fuckin' Rikers. Just get out of here, alright?

RALPH D.

That's your excuse to stay fucked up? That's the best you can do?

VERONICA

Bitch, I hold down a job, I pay the rent, and I mostly don't act the fool or be nasty for no reason, so in my book, if giving up my substances means I gotta turn into the navel-gazing, fake recovered, self-satisfied clown like the bitches I see up at your meetings, then you know what -- pass the joint, shake me a margarita, and kiss my ass while I blow a fuckin' crack pipe, Ralph! Go put that in your fuckin' Big book, bitch.

**Beat**

RALPH D.

What if I told you I'd leave my wife? That I'd be your man full time no bullshit?

VERONICA

You was never my man **part-time**, Ralph. You was never nuthin' but an emotinal fuckin' escape hatch, and a free ride upstate once a month to see my man -- and dass the all of it.

(MORE)

VERONICA (cont'd)

We fucked 5 times in two years, and this makes six, and we done now -- so please, for the last time, leave quietly before I get agitational on your ass -- cuz believe me, right now, I got nuthin' better to do than to go Buck on a motherfucker-- and if you keep trying me, that exactly what I'm gonna fuckin' do!

RALPH D.

Yeah, that's your addict talkin, girl! That's your "King Baby" squawk-ing cuz she didn't get that pink bicycle with the banana seat on her 7th birthday -- I know.

VERONICA

Keep playing!

RALPH D.

Your fuckin' bravado, Veronica-- it's a lotta bull and you know it! It feels so good when you're spewing it, doesn't it? Because it's so "in the moment", so, whaddya like to call it-- "how we do"?, "in your face"?, "talk to the hand", fuckin' "you go girl!" and all that nonsense. But what happens when the rush of acting like a fuckin animal passes, and you've vented your shit, and there's nothing and no one left to lash out at, and no more drugs till morning, and you're just alone by yourself with nothing to feel except how fucked up your life is and how you basically just wanna die?... **Again?!...** And the one person with the actual means to help you, who actually got a real feeling in his heart for you, who thinks being with you would be nothing like "settling"; the one guy who's been there for you for the last 2 years 24/7 whatever you need, who jeopardized his **marriage** for you, who picked you up out of bars when you were stumbling like a fuckin' suicidal, homeless zombie, who took you home and **didn't** fuck you? That guy?! Me?! Well you just went "buck" on him, so forget about that guy!

VERONICA

I already have.

**Beat**

RALPH D.

..... Okay...I'll tell you what... I'm married 12 years. My wife owns 50 percent of the business. We got a rent-stabilized apartment in both our names. We just bought a car together because her father left us a little place near the mountains, that I kinda like -- and lately, we've been talking about maybe adopting a Chinese kid. So you better mean what you say when you say it. You wanna go to rehab, I'll drive you there and sign the check. But I won't take you on as mine unless you clean up. I wish I could do it for you. But I can't.

VERONICA

You wanna do something for me --

RALPH D.

-- Okay. I get it. I get it. I been there.

VERONICA

Good. Be gone, bitch.

**Beat**

RALPH D.

It's funny. I look at you, I see myself 15 years ago: carbon copy. And the bitch of it is that there's one way that it's ever gonna get better -- and 50 million ways that's it's only gonna get worse and worse and worse.

VERONICA

I axed you politely to get the fuck out of my house.

RALPH D.

...I'm going.....

VERONICA

Thank you.

RALPH D.

...I'll miss you.

VERONICA

Yeah well, I missed the Easter Bunny, but I got over it.

**Ralph dresses**

RALPH D.

....So which salon are you cutting hair at now?

VERONICA

It's a little place off 7th called "None of your fuckin' business".

RALPH D.

Well if you need money for rehab -- or an exorcism -- let me know.

VERONICA

Oh doan worry. The little money you helped me out with, that you hold over my head like you donated a fuckin' kidney, it will all be paid back in full.

RALPH D.

That's not necessary. I was glad to help.

VERONICA

Whatever.

RALPH D.

It ain't never gonna work between the two of you -- you know that, right? People attract who they're ready for -- and the two of you ain't ready for nothing but more of this same type spinning your wheels bullshit.

VERONICA

Just get outta here.

RALPH D.

It takes courage to change.

VERONICA

Yeah, and it's gonna take me maybe 5 seconds to bust you in your ass with this fuckin lamp if you don't shut the fuck up and go.

RALPH D.

Tough lady.

VERONICA

That's me.

RALPH D.

Tough like a feather.

VERONICA

Go.

RALPH D.

You got it.....You're not gonna say anything to Jackie, are you?

VERONICA

.....No. Are you?

RALPH D.

.....No. That would be helping no one. He's staying at my place you know.

VERONICA

That's nice.

RALPH D.

Hey, we do what we can.

VERONICA

.....Right....Bye.

RALPH D.

You could do a lot better though. And you always got my number.

VERONICA

You're all class, Ralph.

RALPH D.

I try.....

VERONICA

Uh-huh

RALPH D.

...I love you.

VERONICA

Oh please.

RALPH D.

I'm serious. I think I love you.

VERONICA

Good. Love me from afar.

RALPH D.

Call me when you're sober.

VERONICA

Call me when you're fuckin' dead.

**Ralph exits. End of scene**

**SCENE 5: RALPH'S APARTMENT -- THE SAME NIGHT**

Ralph's living room. Victoria and Jackie drink beer and share a joint on the couch. There's a fresh bouquet of flowers on the table. Lights are low. Victoria embraces Jackie, they make out for a second, then Jackie pulls away --

VICTORIA

Oh my God -- I am so, so sorry!

JACKIE

No no no no no no! I'm sorry.

VICTORIA

No no no no no no -- it's okay

JACKIE

No no no no no no! It's not okay. I could go. You want me to go? I'll go!

VICTORIA

No no no no no no -- I just hate him so much, please don't go, ya know!

JACKIE

No no no no no -- I'm mean, yes, I DO know, I mean, I mean, I **don't** know, but if I did know, I'd know, ya know? And I won't go, unless you want me to go, then I'll go.

VICTORIA

No no, don't go!

JACKIE

Okay.

VICTORIA

I just fuckin' hate him! Cheating prick!

JACKIE

I mean, I never heard nothing bout Ralph cheating.

VICTORIA

Well he did. Would I be acting like this if I had made it up in my head? I hate him. Ya know?

JACKIE

I know. I. I hate Veronica too.

VICTORIA

Me too.

JACKIE

You do?

VICTORIA

I mean, if you do..

JACKIE

Yeah. I fuckin' hate her. I hate her so much I can't stop crying.

VICTORIA

I know.

JACKIE

I wish I could stop thinking about her, you know? Like everything I think about, it comes up her. Like even when I'm not thinking about her, I'm thinking about her. It's fuckin' unstoppable.

VICTORIA

I know.

JACKIE

Like, even when I'm on my **bike**, like in **traffic** an shit, all of the sudden she pops up and, I'm like blinded, and I can't see shit cuz my eyes, they so full of heartache like I'm back in 6th grade on a 3 speed -- instead of crossing 42nd and 8th on a fuckin' adult bike in my adult body all crying an shit and almost getting my ass killed...I'm so fuckin' stupid.

VICTORIA

You're in touch w/ your feelings, thass all. You're a sensitive, feeling man.

JACKIE

I swear to God: being in love with Veronica -- it's like feeding your balls to Godzilla every morning, and every morning you go; "Yo, 'Zilla, these shits are very delicate so please chew softly" -- and every morning -- the motherfucker just goes Crunch!

VICTORIA

You're a beautiful guy, Jackie. You deserve more.

JACKIE

Yeah?

VICTORIA

Umm-hmmm.

JACKIE

I mean, nah, I ain't easy either, believe me, I'm fucked up, but Veronica, even though she's fucked up, and she's really fucked up, but her heart, her heart is pure, like a lioness, you know, I mean --

VICTORIA

Jackie.

JACKIE

Yeah?

VICTORIA

You're upset. I'm upset. The air in this room -- look at me.

JACKIE

Yeah?

VICTORIA

Maybe we need to ...do what we both know we wanna do.

JACKIE

You mean, like --

VICTORIA

Fuck. Like mad dogs chasing heartache.

JACKIE

Victoria--

VICTORIA

You see me? I'm not built like some talking head on a stick.

JACKIE

I could see that

VICTORIA

And I really need to disappear. Just. Temporarily. Ya know? Would you do that for me? Would you help me ...disappear?

JACKIE

I wanna disappear too.

**They start to go for it. Jackie stops.**

JACKIE (cont'd)

I can't. I'm sorry. But I just can't.

VICTORIA

Why not?

JACKIE

I just can't. If I could, I would, but I can't, and dass dat. Okay?..I mean, what are we -- Europeans or some shit? I'm from the neighborhood, you're from the neighborhood too, I mean originally, right?

VICTORIA

So?

JACKIE

So, so -- I don't know, but, it ain't this... And this ain't you.

VICTORIA

I'm not saying this is me. I'm saying this is this, and this is me asking you to make this **not this** -- not horrible, not feeling like I wanna die, just alive in the present, with an ounce of delight, for like a moment -- and then -- then wake up and go back to forgetting.

JACKIE

Forgetting what?

VICTORIA

Just fuck me, Jackie, you want to, I want to -- it's what's supposed to happen -- like how you're not meant to feel it when you fall off a roof --

JACKIE

Veronica --

VICTORIA

It's the only civil thing left to do.

JACKIE

That's, that's the weed talking, Victoria. The wine. That's ain't you. I know you in real life. This is not you.

VICTORIA

What? You think you're being honorable, Jackie -- with your hands all over my tits two seconds ago?

JACKIE

I'm not trying to be honorable.

VICTORIA

So then what? You're like Ralph? You don't find me attractive?

JACKIE

Dass not true. And that's not true about Ralph neither -- he talks about you all the time.

VICTORIA

Yeah, I'll bet. That fuck. You know, when I met Ralph, forgettaboutit, I was smoking hot, making a 100k a year as a junior trader on Wall Street -- and dating a fuckin' art dealer who was a hell of a man and wanted to marry me. And what did I do? I heard Ralph speak at a meeting -- I mean the man was wearing acid washed jeans and white sneakers from, like, PayLess for Christ's sakes, and still, he charmed me, he listened to me, he begged me -- and I threw my life away because I thought I met my soul mate. And the truth is that there's no such thing.

JACKIE

Veronica --

VICTORIA

I let Ralph beat me down emotionally and psychologically with his scamming and philandering, and I took care of the physical part my own self by shacking up with Ben and Jerry and cable TV, and now, who the hell's gonna want me? I've regressed. And gotten old. I got about 10 more minutes of gravity left before it all comes crashing down. And even you won't fuck me.

JACKIE

That's bullshit. You're fuckin' hot -- and smart, and hot -- And if it wasn't for Ralph, believe me, I'd be all up in that, for real.

VICTORIA

You're just lying because you think lying is being nice.

JACKIE

I'm not lying. And I'm not nice. You're, like, c'mon! You know you're fuckin' hot. And got flavor. And, like, mad desirability up the ass! But Ralph's my sponsor. And my friend. And Men, even though we're fucked up, we got a code. It's a fucked up code, but still, it's a code. And I respect the code. Cuz I respect Ralph. But even if I didn't respect Ralph, I'd still respect the code, unless, like, I fell in love with you instantly -- but even if I did fall in love with you instantly, I'd still call Ralph and tell him that I had to break the code before I even tried to touch you, cuz, that's the only exception to the code, and maybe the code is stupid, but to me, it ain't fuckin' stupid. That's why I shot The Motherfucker with the Hat's hat. Even though we wasn't exactly friends, we was neighbors and we knew each other, so, in my mind, his ass broke the code. Ya know?

VICTORIA

I don't think Ralph plays by those rules.

JACKIE

Yeah, well, on that: can I ask you something? How you know Ralph's having affairs, cuz, you know -- he ain't never said nuthin' to me, and he tells me everything.

VICTORIA

...Really?

JACKIE

Yeah.

VICTORIA

Well the harlot called here. Told me she's been sleeping with him for months and then he dumped her by saying that **I had just died and he was in grief!** She was just calling to see if he got the flowers she sent! I mean, be honest: Can you even imagine the diabolical mind that could even come up with that shit?!

JACKIE

Dag.

VICTORIA

She's one of our best customers too -- we ship like 6 units of NutriFlex to her Health Food Store in White Plains every week. Fuckin bitch.

JACKIE

Well, I mean, but maybe it was a misunderstanding.

VICTORIA

A misunderstanding?

JACKIE

Yeah, like, sometimes one person thinks one thing, but the other person, they think --

VICTORIA

This isn't about "thinking", Jackie. "Thinking", I got no jurisdiction over. But, fucking -- whole other story. Do you get the distinction?

JACKIE

Yeah, but, sometimes women, you know --

VICTORIA

You never covered for him?

JACKIE

For Ralph? Hell no!

VICTORIA

All that "step work", all those midnight meetings and the coffees afterwards -- Ralph never told you to cover for him?

JACKIE

Nah.

VICTORIA

Never?

JACKIE

Absolutely not.

VICTORIA

Jackie, I'm giving you a free pass here. I'm not stupid. I know how men do. You can tell me the truth now, and I won't hold any hard feelings for anything that came before this moment here. I'm serious. You wanna be serious? Because this is me being serious.

JACKIE

Look, I understand what you're going through here, and I identify, like, obviously, like, my heart and your heart, it's, like, we're both fucked up, but, I'm starting to feel a little uncomfortable.

VICTORIA

Cuz Ralph is your friend?

JACKIE

Yeah. And my sponsor too, I mean, don't forget that!

VICTORIA

Right.

JACKIE

So, you know, maybe we should, like, clean up in here, cuz I'm sure he's gonna be back soon.

VICTORIA

From where?

JACKIE

I dunno, from where ever it is that he's doing.

VICTORIA

Like fucking somebody?

JACKIE

Look, Victoria, I know you got in your head that Ralph's been stepping out or something, but, like, all I can say is I've never seen it, and maybe, like, you should talk about it with Ralph and not me, because I don't know shit even if there is shit, which I gotta say I kind of doubt just based on me knowing him, and being --

VICTORIA

Ralph is not your friend. Not even close. He always wanted a dog. I never let him have one. And now he has one. And it's you.

JACKIE

...Meaning what?

VICTORIA

Meaning you maybe oughta find yourself another sponsor.

JACKIE

Why?

VICTORIA

Ask Ralph

JACKIE

Ask Ralph what?

VICTORIA

Ask Ralph about your girlfriend.

JACKIE

What? What about my girlfriend?

VICTORIA

No. That's between you and Ralph.

JACKIE

Victoria, if there's something I should know --

VICTORIA

This is what you should know: you just told me you had no knowledge about any of Ralph's affairs, and that's just a lie.

JACKIE

Victoria--

VICTORIA

Whenever I see you, you kiss me on the cheek, and smile that dopey smile, and sing Ralph's praises to me, and act all carefree like nothing is wrong, and meanwhile you totally know that Ralph is doing his business every chance he gets. True or False?

JACKIE

False.

VICTORIA

Yeah right. Half of AA knows Ralph is a cheat, but somehow, you, the guy he spends most of his time with -- when he's not out fucking strippers and newcomers -- you -- his number one sponsee -- you were somehow completely in the dark about the whole thing.

JACKIE

He's my sponsor.

VICTORIA

And who am I? A punch line over cheeseburgers after your Men's Meetings? I was there, Jackie, when you brought your mother to Park 11 to get your 30 day chip! I took her home in a taxi! I was at the damn funeral! You're staying in my house. Is this how she taught you to respect women? To accept their kindnesses and shit all over them in return?

JACKIE

I, I think you're overstating things.

VICTORIA

Am I?

JACKIE

Look. Whatever I might have heard or didn't here, it wasn't my business.

VICTORIA

You lied for him.

JACKIE

Like I said --

VICTORIA

Do you lie for him or don't you? You need to declare yourself right now.

JACKIE

I don't lie for him.

VICTORIA

.....Okay.

JACKIE

Okay?

VICTORIA

Okay

JACKIE

Good. Okay. So we're good then?

VICTORIA

Ralph got your girlfriend pregnant while you were locked up. Which is a miracle because the man's sperm count is, like, 8! Okay?!

JACKIE

What?

VICTORIA

She had an abortion. Ralph paid for it. And the fuckin' idiot put it on his Mastercard.

JACKIE

.....Dass, dass bullshit.

VICTORIA

No. No. That's Ralph. That's your friend Ralph.

**Pause**

JACKIE

No way. There is absolutely no fuckin' way that that could be true.

VICTORIA

Why not? Because Ralph is such a good guy? Because Veronica is so strong? Or because her daddy issues and lack of security in her relationship with you could never manifest into her acting out -- or being charmed by a fuckin' master dickhead like Ralph with his Ph.d in manipulation and self-loathing?

(MORE)

VICTORIA (cont'd)

...Or, maybe it's not so much because you think Ralph **wouldn't** do it, but that he just somehow wouldn't do it to **you**. Well, he would, and he did...

JACKIE

...That's fucking -- how would you even know all that?

VICTORIA

No. That's not a conversation you get to have with me. I'll tell you this, though: the one thing bigger than Ralph's ego is his package -- and trust me, when he wants to, he can bang away with the best of them. I'm sure he banged her to the moon and back. The sonuvabitch...

JACKIE

Victoria?

VICTORIA

There's your fuckin' Boys Code. Take it with you on your way out.

JACKIE

Victoria --

VICTORIA

I'm leaving his ass tonight. You see the bags?

JACKIE

Oh. I didn't notice them.

VICTORIA

Um-hmm. I've threatened before, but this time I'm going. Got a van coming in the morning. And I'm taking fucking everything.

JACKIE

Well, um, I just wanna --

VICTORIA

No. Don't act the friend.

JACKIE

This shit with him and Veronica --

VICTORIA

All true. You did your time at Clinton Correctional outside Dannemora upstate?

JACKIE

Yeah?

VICTORIA

Got a Dannemora Red Roof Inn bill on my bureau dated last June.

(MORE)

VICTORIA (cont'd)

They had them some chicken wings and a Party Fixings Pizza from the Dannemora Dominoes that night too. It's right next to the abortion bill. Yeah, baby, they did you too. Goodnight.

**Victoria begins to break down**

VICTORIA (cont'd)

I got more packing to do.

**Jackie surveys the room. Surveys Victoria. And exits.**

**SCENE 6: VERONICA'S APARTMENT. 2 A.M.**

**Veronica is in a nightgown and grips a stickball bat, ready to swing away. Jackie is wasted off his ass.**

VERONICA

I called the fuckin' police!

JACKIE

Good! I loooooove fuckin' police! I love police like I love fuckin, I dunno, but I fuckin' love it!

VERONICA

You better fuckin' run!

JACKIE

Love it!!! Yo, how's the Motherfucker with the Hat doing?! Huh?! I looove that Motherfucker with the Hat! He's a good lovin motherfucker, that 1st floor motherfucker!

VERONICA

If you wanna talk, we could do it in the morning, but you gotta go right now --

JACKIE

Talk?! Who said I wanna talk to your ass?! What's there to talk about? Hats?! Fuckin' Haberdashery??!!

VERONICA

Jackie --

JACKIE

Nah, because I wrote you a song, Veronica --

**Veronica advances towards him**

VERONICA

-- Get outta here! Get outta here before I fuckin' clock you cuz I'll clock you!

JACKIE

Aaight, ssh! sssh! Here goes. This song is debilated to you Veronica, since the 8th grade! 8! Remember? Okay, ready -- this song, this long distance dedication from me to you, is called... "Fuck... You":

VERONICA

Don't you do it!

JACKIE

"Fuck your dead step-father Tito -- Fuuuck you"!

VERONICA

I'm warning you!

JACKIE

"Fuck Buster and Negrito, I hope they get run over by cars -- Fuuuuck you"!

VERONICA

You think you're the only motherfucker who's hurting here?!

JACKIE

"Fuck those Commodores records we usta make it to -- Fuck you"!

VERONICA

What about me, huh?! What about my pain?! What about the promises your ass made?! Where's my ring? Where's my 2 family house in Yonkers? Where's my little baby Jackie and my little baby Veronica playing on their fuckin' swing set?! Where's your "air conditioning an refrigeration" degree? Where's my "going back to school"? Where's my Jackie that used ta live in my heart -- and why he out fuckin' played out AA ho's?!

JACKIE

"Fuck your whole generation cuz you're a ugly, disgusting, fucked up bitch who no one loves because you're so fucked up and selfish and retarded and mean-- Fuck...

**Veronica snaps -- slugs Jackie in the head flush with the stickball bat. Jacie falls.Out cold. Veronica hovers.**

**END OF ACT ONE.**

**ACT TWO****SCENE 1: THE FOLLOWING MORNING.**

**Julio's breakfast table. Jackie is banged up, hung over, but functioning.**

JACKIE

Bro, I can't eat this.

COUSIN JULIO

Please papi, you have to try to eat.

JACKIE

Nah man, I can eat, I just can't eat **this**.

COUSIN JULIO

Papi, you eat that, your body gonna thank you, believe me.

JACKIE

These eggs are green, bro!

COUSIN JULIO

Spirulina.

JACKIE

What?

COUSIN JULIO

Spirulina. It's the green algae from the sea. Pure protein. You see: the eggs, protein. The Spirulina, protein. Aged, Asiago cheddar, protein. That's triple protein, papi -- with a rosemary garnish! That's power.

JACKIE

Power?

COUSIN JULIO

Thass right. Healing power and "power" power! And right now, you need power. Power.... And a mimosa!

JACKIE

I shouldn't drink this.

COUSIN JULIO

It's a virgin Mimosa. I went to the store while you were sleeping it off.

JACKIE

I'm sorry about last night.

COUSIN JULIO

You peed on my floor.

JACKIE

I'm, I'm really sorry about that.

COUSIN JULIO

Forget about it. If my Marisol was here -- big problem. But she's at a conference, so, just eat your eggs so you can get the power.

JACKIE

...I don't know what to do, Julio.

COUSIN JULIO

Right now, all you gotta do is eat. Later, we gonna figure everything out.

JACKIE

I gotta go.

COUSIN JULIO

Go where.

JACKIE

Kill that motherfucker Ralph! I told you?

COUSIN JULIO

Hey! Nobody gonna kill nobody, Papi. Especially not you. Karma's gonna kick that motherfucker's ass, it don't need no help from you. And if Karma don't do it, I will.

JACKIE

You?

COUSIN JULIO

You say that like it's a joke that I could kick his ass. Believe me, I could subdue him with these two fingers!

JACKIE

Bro--

COUSIN JULIO

You want me to try it on you? Oh yes, I know, "Julio", "Julio", he's "mariconcito", right?

JACKIE

I didn't say that.

COUSIN JULIO

Trust me, you don't want no part of this mariconcito on the wrong night, mijo, and neither does that friend of yours. Whaddya think I do at the gym every day, sit in the steam room and do reach-arounds?! Thass not me, senior. Yo soy un hombre, papi! Make no mistake.

JACKIE

Okay. I got it.

COUSIN JULIO

Good. Eat those fuckin eggs, I want a clean plate. Okay?

JACKIE

Okay.

COUSIN JULIO

Bueno. After you eat, we get your stuff from that Ralph's house. And after you get your stuff, even though it's over, maybe you go see Veronica and apologize.

JACKIE

Apologize? For what?

COUSIN JULIO

You don't remember breaking into her home last night?

JACKIE

What?

COUSIN JULIO

You did very bad things in her home.

JACKIE

I didn't go to her house!

COUSIN JULIO

Where do you think I picked you up from?

JACKIE

C'mon bro

COUSIN JULIO

Laying in a pool of blood, papi! You're lucky she called me to get you.

JACKIE

Wait a second. For real. You telling me I saw Veronica last night?!

COUSIN JULIO

Saw her?! Jaquito, believe me, you more than saw her!

JACKIE

Well what did I do there?

COUSIN JULIO

Ay Papi, God created blackouts for a reason -- trust me -- you don't wanna know.

JACKIE

Yo Julio, whatever I supposedly did, she fuckin' deserved it, believe me, and I don't give a fuck anyway, in fact, I don't care at all, so just tell me, what is it that I supposedly did?

COUSIN JULIO

You said many unkind things.

JACKIE

Like what?

COUSIN JULIO

They were unkind. I can't elaborate.

JACKIE

Why not?

COUSIN JULIO

You also told her about all your infidelities while you were with her from the 8th grade up until last month. You had 4, correct?

JACKIE

Oh my God, I told her that?

COUSIN JULIO

Plus, you mentioned a Raquel Marrero? That you wanted badly to fuck, but used to **imagine** you were fucking while you were fucking Veronica instead --

JACKIE

I said that name exactly?

COUSIN JULIO

Si. I believe you did. In fact you mentioned a nice session you and Veronica had last week, and that you had achieved that extra vigor cuz in your mind, you were with Raquel Marrero

JACKIE

Fuck.

COUSIN JULIO

Oh yeah, papi. I mean, Your list of infidelities wasn't long, but it was graphic. And when it comes to affairs of the heart, Jaquito -- even one name is too many. It happened once with my Marisol, she confessed an infidelity to me. She blew a co-worker at a holiday gathering -- I was devastated, believe me.

JACKIE

Man. Sorry.

COUSIN JULIO

Thank you. It's okay. It only goes to show you: even picture perfect relationships, you have to tend to them. I had become distracted, I was neglecting my Marisol, I was withdrawn and sullen, not communicating, not giving her the cock of Julio -- and eventually, the result happened: oral sex in the bathroom of a 3rd rate family restaurant. Applebees. Disgraciado! Very unpleasant.

JACKIE

But you worked it out?

COUSIN JULIO

Yes.

JACKIE

Did she tell you who it was that, you know?

COUSIN JULIO

She made that mistake. Yes. I located him. I confronted him. The results were not pleasant.

JACKIE

What happened?

COUSIN JULIO

Violence. Like I told you before, I hear the whispers when people say things about me. That man, who defiled the mouth of my Marisol -- he thought I was passive -- a Mary Jane. A pansy. No sir. I punished him. I punished him badly. I punished him like Van Damme, papi. Like Jean Claude. He had to know who Julio was. I showed him. I think he will be much more careful where he slides his penis in the future. Afterwards, I threw up all night.

JACKIE

I gotta go.

COUSIN JULIO

To see Ralph?

JACKIE

No

COUSIN JULIO  
You're lying

JACKIE  
Stay out of it, bro.

COUSIN JULIO  
I'll go with you.

JACKIE  
No.

COUSIN JULIO  
Jaquito: Either I go with you, or you don't go.

JACKIE  
You're gonna stop me?

COUSIN JULIO  
No. Never. This Ralph, he deserves punishment. Maybe he has guilt. He deserves guilt -- and a Louisville Slugger up the ass. I know that. You know that. Even Ralph knows that. But that will not happen because you are on parole... Do you appreciate me, Jackie?

JACKIE  
Yeah, man, of course.

COUSIN JULIO  
Do you like me?

JACKIE  
Bro, thass a stupid question. You're my cousin. Of course I like you. And I'm sorry --

COUSIN JULIO  
Cajate. We will go see Ralph together. Two cousins. We will get your things. We will strive to avoid violence. But if violence comes, leave it to Julio.

JACKIE  
Bro --

COUSIN JULIO  
I will be a perfect gentleman. But say the word, and believe me -- Van Damme will happen. You will be more than satisfied.

JACKIE  
I can handle this on my own

COUSIN JULIO  
Maybe you can, maybe you can't. But it's always good to have a friend.

JACKIE

I don't need a friend

COUSIN JULIO

Don't be stupid -- who doesn't need a friend?

JACKIE

Look bro -- we're not really friends, okay? I mean you helped me out last night, and you helped me out with the gun, and you send greeting cards for like Holidays that I didn't know even existed and I appreciate all that, don't think I don't, but I ain't looking to go on, like, camping trips together, or, like, go bowling, or be buddies, cuz that ain't reality, okay? I am who I am, and you are who you are --

COUSIN JULIO

-- Meaning what?

JACKIE

Meaning you're fucking weird, bro. Meaning, we got no common interests, meaning I ain't try to shop at rent-a-friend. You said it yourself the other day: I'm not very nice to you, I take you for granted, I don't visit --

COUSIN JULIO

What I do, I do for your mother

JACKIE

Well don't do it for her cuz she's fuckin dead. And that's bullshit anyway. You don't do it for my mother, you do it because you're lonely and you don't really got anything else to do.

COUSIN JULIO

That's -- that's startling. You startle me with bad manners and stupidity and ego.

JACKIE

Well it's the fuckin truth, ain't it?

COUSIN JULIO

(re: Jackie)

...Some people, they just refuse to be loved. That's your problem, not mine. I love being loved. I love loving. I love life.

JACKIE

Well that's good.

COUSIN JULIO

It is good. You should try it some time.

JACKIE

Yeah -- I know a few things you should try.

COUSIN JULIO

You want to end this relationship? You want me to go away and leave you alone? Okay. Then tell me what I should try. Tell me, Jackie. Tell me now.

**Pause**

JACKIE

I'm in pain. I'm hurting. Okay? Can't you see that? I fuckin hurt. And my whole life -- the little bit of a life I had -- that shit is gone. Sobriety: gone. Best friend: gone. Veronica: gone. Apartment: gone. I got a job like 2 days ago: that shit is already gone. My mom is gone. Veronica is gone, man. She's gone.

COUSIN JULIO

You don't know that for sure.

JACKIE

Everything I love, it goes away...

COUSIN JULIO

...I'm sorry for that.

**Beat**

JACKIE

I gotta go.

COUSIN JULIO

Not alone you don't. And if the situation was reversed, you'd do the same for me.

JACKIE

I wouldn't.

COUSIN JULIO

You would.

JACKIE

Believe me, bro -- I wouldn't give a fuck.

COUSIN JULIO

Because you're such a "bad" guy?

JACKIE

Dass right. I'm a fuckin asshole, bro -- okay? I'm a fuckin' asshole. I'm fucked...

**Jackie turns away. He sits and grows quiet**

**Pause**

COUSIN JULIO

Hey. Jaquito. Do you remember the first time we smoked marijuana together? By the sun dial at Columbia after dark? With those boys and girls, and Veronica was there and you liked her so much but you couldn't talk to her?... And we all smoked that marijuana, then we smoked those cigarettes -- Kools, yes? And then that boy Victor Collado and his sister, I don't remember her name, they invited all of us for spin the bottle on Morningside, but they said I couldn't come?

JACKIE

Yeah, man, whatever

COUSIN JULIO

Not whatever. You left me, remember? Stoned for the first time, and you left me on the sun dial alone and went off with them. And I remember, when you all walked away, when you were almost out of sight, Veronica, she took your hand. You remember that?

JACKIE

C'mom, man.

COUSIN JULIO

I was alone. And I was high like shit. And I was sad like shit. And I was thirsty like shit, my mouth was like sand. And I couldn't believe you left me. I understood about Veronica, how you liked her so much, and spin the bottle, and being invited, and that opportunity, but still, I never thought you would do something like that, leave me, but you did, and I didn't know what to do. I was stoned, yes, but I truly felt my life was over. Gone. And then, after 5 minutes, I hear; "Yo, stupido". And there you were. With a Welch's Grape and a 25 cent juicy and a little red bag of barbeque potato chips. How old were we?

JACKIE

Eleven. Twelve maybe.

COUSIN JULIO

How did my eleven years old cousin have the sensitivity to pass on being with the girl whose name he wrote in all his notebooks, and the cool crowd of Victor Collado and his sister's friends, in order to waste his first high eating potato chips with his faggot cousin and talking about, what, speed boats? Loni Anderson?

JACKIE

That was a long time ago.

COUSIN JULIO

Yes. It was a long time ago. And it was yesterday. So. I brush my teeth now, I tape my left knee, then we go to Ralph. You. Me. Van Damme.

**END OF SCENE**

**SCENE 2: RALPH'S APARTMENT -- THAT EVENING**

**Ralph and Victoria eat pancakes in their bathrobes.**

RALPH D.

Pancakes for dinner -- now this is a treat, eh?

VICTORIA

Umm-hmm

RALPH D.

Come on, admit it: your boy Ralph can flap a fuckin jack!

VICTORIA

They're very good.

RALPH D.

And these sausages -- someone call the vegan police!

VICTORIA

Once in a while is okay.

RALPH D.

.... So, "I know, I know", but, I was thinking maybe we could go down to Miami for, like --

VICTORIA

Ralph, don't over-do it.

RALPH D.

Over-do what?

VICTORIA

Ralph.

RALPH D.

Okay. You're right. Sorry.

**Beat**

VICTORIA  
... The pancakes really are very good.

RALPH D.  
...They are. They definitely are.

**Beat**

VICTORIA  
It was thoughtful of you to make them

RALPH D.  
Well, and it's thoughtful of you to eat them.

**Beat**

RALPH D. (cont'd)  
I love eating breakfast for dinner with you.

VICTORIA  
Ralph.

RALPH D.  
Sorry.

**Beat**

VICTORIA  
But these are really good pancakes.

RALPH D.  
Thanks.

**There's a knock at the door**

VICTORIA  
Who is that?

RALPH D.  
I don't know.

VICTORIA  
Answer it, I'm going inside.

**Victoria exits to the bedroom. Ralph answers the door.**

RALPH D.  
Wow. Hey guys, it's good to see you. How are you?

VICTORIA  
**(off stage)**  
Ralph! Who's at the door?

RALPH D.

It's Jackie, honey. And his cousin Julio. They came to say hello.

(to Jackie)

Been a couple days -- you okay?

JACKIE

I been staying with Julio

RALPH D.

Cool. How are you, Julio? I been handing out your business cards.

COUSIN JULIO

How generous of you.

**Victoria enters in sweats carrying a purse**

JACKIE

Hey Victoria

VICTORIA

Hey Jackie

COUSIN JULIO

I'm Julio.

VICTORIA

Nice to meet you.

COUSIN JULIO

The pleasure is mine.

JACKIE

(to Victoria)

You're still here.

VICTORIA

Where else should I be?

JACKIE

I dunno. How's things?

VICTORIA

Good. And you?

JACKIE

Um. Good.

VICTORIA

Good.....Ralph, I'm going for a walk. I'll be awhile.

RALPH D.

Okay honey, hey, bring back some of that papaya shit from that place okay?

VICTORIA

I'm not going that way.

RALPH D.

How bout on your way back?

**Victoria exits**

RALPH D. (cont'd)

So what's up, bro, how you been -- you wanna watch the game?

JACKIE

Do I wanna watch the game? Um, nah, I don't think I wanna watch the game.

COUSIN JULIO

We've come for Jackie's things. Step aside. Please.

RALPH D.

Excuse me?

COUSIN JULIO

Friend, I don't think you want me to have to repeat myself.

RALPH D.

(to Julio)

Uh, Bro, what's up with that?

COUSIN JULIO

"What's up with that"? Hmmm. I do not know.

**Julio brushes past Ralph and picks up a bag with Jackie's things.**

RALPH D.

(re: Julio)

What's up with him?

JACKIE

I don't know.

RALPH D.

You okay?

JACKIE

Me? I'm fuckin' great.

COUSIN JULIO

Ready to go?

JACKIE  
 No.

COUSIN JULIO  
 Are we staying then?

JACKIE  
 I'm staying for a little bit. Could you wait for me in the lobby?

COUSIN JULIO  
 Van Damme?

JACKIE  
 No.

COUSIN JULIO  
 Van Damme is ready.

JACKIE  
 Nah, man, no Van Damme. I'm cool, bro.

COUSIN JULIO  
 Van Damme is hungry.

JACKIE  
 Bro. Wait in the lobby. I'm cool.

**Julio considers then, then approaches Ralph**

COUSIN JULIO  
 I'll be in the lobby.

RALPH  
 Uh....okay?

COUSIN JULIO  
 The Lobby. Yes.

RALPH  
 Right. The lobby.

**Julio gets extremely close to Ralph's face**

COUSIN JULIO  
 If anything happens bad here, to my cousin, my friend: you will know me. And you don't want that. Believe me... Believe me good. Yes... Besos.... Ciao.  
 (to Jackie)  
 I'll be in the lobby.

**Julio exits**

**Beat**

RALPH D

This must be about Ronnie.

JACKIE

"Ronnie"?!

RALPH D

Veronica, yeah. That's what this is about, right?

**Jackie takes out the gun**

RALPH D (cont'd)

Whoa. What the fuck are you doing?

JACKIE

It's empty

RALPH D

Yeah?

JACKIE

Yeah. See?

RALPH D

Oh. Okay. Whoa.

**Jackie tosses the gun on the floor**

RALPH D (cont'd)

What about the bullets?

JACKIE

Julio hid them. I don't know where. I looked though.

RALPH D

You did?

JACKIE

Oh yeah. I looked pretty hard. Until I realized that if I wanted you dead, I don't need Chuchi Alvarado's gun to do it.

RALPH D

Bro, let's just talk, okay? I mean whatever you got to say, whatever you wanna know --

JACKIE

Fuckin' Chuchi, he's fuckin' crazy.

RALPH D.

I heard that, yeah.

JACKIE

Yeah man: Chuchi don't give a fuck. Some people, they **act** like they don't give a fuck, but Chuchi, he ain't acting.

RALPH D

What, is he downstairs or something?

JACKIE

When we were little, bro -- Chuchi lived upstairs from us. His fuckin' mother, she was a hooker, liked to party an shit, ya know -- she'd leave Little Chuchi all alone at night, pay him 25 cents an hour to baby sit himself, and he'd be all crying and scared --

RALPH D.

That's, uh, that's rough --

JACKIE

Yeah, so every night, after his mother would leave, My moms would go bring Little Chuchi over to our house, and stay up with him so he didn't have to be alone. I didn't even see him half the time, I'd already be in bed, my Pops too, but I could hear my moms reading stories to Chuchi, and then sneaking him back upstairs at dawn before his moms came home.

RALPH D.

Yeah, man --that's real nice --

JACKIE

-- Yeah, but his mother was a whore, and her boyfriend was violent coke fiend, plus Chuchi's real father liked fucking Little Chuchi in his ass whenever he paid the occasional visit, so, basically, Chuchi grew up to be a fuckin' maniac. A killer at 14. I mean, we would literally sprint -- not run-- fuckin' sprint if we saw his ass within a 4 block radius. But what I didn't know at the time was that Chuchi remembered about what my moms did for him, so, the funny thing is: he fuckin' loved me. And I never knew till I was like 18 cuz I was always running. But ever since, it don't matter what, he could be in the middle of a fuckin' armed robbery, and if he saw me coming down the block, he'd be like; "Yo, Jackie O, what do you need". It's fuckin' crazy. I mean, Chuchi once ripped a guy's face off. Like actually peeled it off -- it was in the Post. And yet he cried at my moms funeral like a baby. He didn't wanna be a pall bearer -- nah -- he wanted to carry her coffin on his back by his own self...Funny how people can be more than one thing -- ain't it?

RALPH D.

Look, Jackie --

JACKIE

He'd kill your ass like it was opening presents on Christmas morning, bro. Like that. And the motherfucker would thank me for letting him do it. Ain't that something?

RALPH D

Okay, so, I'm supposed to live in fear for the rest of my life, or, like, move to Pennsylvania, is that it?

JACKIE

I was in prison for 26 months, and I had this little picture of Veronica and I only looked at it if I was sure there was no other motherfuckers around because motherfuckers would like to borrow your photos and shit to jerk off to.

RALPH D

That's, I mean, yeah -- that never happened to me. I never did a bid. Just, you know, visiting you every month.

JACKIE

I was thinking this morning about how special it was when I had the private time to take out her photo and just look at it. It was, it was special, bro.

RALPH D

Look, why don't we just cut to the chase here: you were locked up, me and Veronica started seeing each other -

JACKIE

Seeing each other?!

RALPH D

We were intimate, okay? We were intimate, and it was wrong, and, fuck man, I didn't plan it, but, I mean, sometimes shit happens, and --

JACKIE

-- Yeah, man. Cuz, when I was just looking at her photo up in the joint, I would like kiss it sometimes, and meanwhile, while I was doing that --

RALPH D

I was fucking her. Yes. Okay? I fucked your girlfriend. I fucked her in my car, I fucked her in a motel one time, I fucked her in your bed last week. I don't know what to tell you --

JACKIE

You're my friend!

RALPH D

I'm your sponsor

JACKIE

Your girl baked me cookies!

RALPH D

Yeah, and your girl sucked my dick? Okay?! You wanna try and kick my ass, go ahead. You wanna send over your friend Chi Chi or whoever to come take my face off, what the fuck am I supposed to do about it? I'm not a fuckin' perfect person, bro, and I never claimed to be. All I am is a guy who hasn't gotten high or had a drink in 15 years! Everything else, I claim no responsibility for. That's it.

JACKIE

But that's not how you acted --

RALPH D.

I acted how I acted, bro.

JACKIE

Don't call me fuckin' bro --

RALPH D.

You're the one put the crown on my head, not me! I'm just a fuckin' guy just like you're just a fuckin' guy. No fuckin' Halo! Just a guy trying to stay sober! And if you want what I have, I'll show you how I got it. But that is **it!** You're upset that me and Veronica fell in love, I don't blame you. But if you didn't want that to happen, then you should've gotten a real job instead of dealing weed and blow out of your fuckin' apartment and getting caught, and leaving her alone for fuckin' wolves like me!

JACKIE

She don't love you, motherfucker. We both know who she love!

RALPH D

Yeah, she loves you so much I used to fuck her in the ass till my dick fell off and then she'd bring it back to life with her fucking tongue -- that's how much she fuckin loves you!

**Jackie picks up a chair and hurls it towards Ralph as he advances and tackles him to the ground. They roll around exchanging punches. Ralph gets on top and punches Jackie in the eye. Jackie gets back on top, picks up an end table and smashes it over Ralph's forehead. They fight till near exhaustion. Finally, Ralph retrieves the gun and pistol whips Jackie once, twice --**

RALPH D (cont'd)  
You had enough?!

JACKIE  
Fuck you!

RALPH D  
You had enough?!

JACKIE  
Fuck you!

**Jackie starts to cry. Ralph gets up off him and collapses into a corner. Both look like they've had more than enough.**

RALPH D  
She...She... she's an addict, man. She's a fuckin' addict. She may love you more than she loves me, she may not love me at all, she actually doesn't love me at all, she doesn't even fuckin' like me, but she's an addict, man, so she can never really fuckin' love you either until she makes a choice to. And they ain't never gonna really happen till she puts down those substances -- and that's a fuckin' fact.

**Jackie gingerly rises to his feet**

JACKIE  
You don't know shit. Me and Veronica been "Me & Veronica" off and on from since the 8th grade.

RALPH D  
Yeah, and you been running around on her since the 8th grade too. You fucked that fuckin' dumb AA sponsor bitch last month! Why would you do that?

JACKIE  
...I don't know. I, I --

RALPH D  
I'll tell you why. Because it doesn't really fuckin' matter. You got a thing, she had a hole, and so you rubbed up on each other for a couple of hours because IT FELT GOOD! Who the fuck cares, and why should anyone -- anyone -- have to live by some stupid rules that make no sense because the fact is were all gonna die anyway. I mean, who the fuck really cares? I fuckin' love my wife -- I think she's fuckin' great -- you wanna fuck her? Please. Do me a fuckin' favor. Just keep it to yourself. And leave when I get home cuz I like hanging out with her. I like that time we have together. I mean, you were in prison looking at a photo, I was in a Motel 6 looking at the real thing, and the fact is that in that moment, we were both happy. I was happy. You were happy. Fact. So, in a world of heartache and confusion -- what's so wrong with that?

JACKIE

You don't really believe that.

RALPH D.

Don't tell me what I believe or don't believe -- what the hell do you know anyway?

JACKIE

I know that's a lot of bullshit. I know that ain't no way to live.

RALPH D.

Well show me another way that don't hurt like a motherfucker, and I'll follow you to Nirvana with some chicken curry in my back pocket and a lotus leaf up my ass crack! I'm a grown man making my way in the world the best I can, and you are too -- so wipe the peach fuzz off your face and start acting like it!

JACKIE

I coulda fucked your wife the other night!

RALPH D

Shit, I coulda fucked your girl the other day -- and I did! Don't cry to me like you some kinda evolved motherfucker. You don't want someone running up on your girl, start treating her like a Queen -- not the court jester. Get a job.

JACKIE

I got a job!

RALPH D.

Get a second one then. Go to meetings. Get a mortgage. Do something with your life. Buy your girl a refrigerator that makes crushed ice. Grow the fuck up! I know this shit's hard, I know I fucked your girl, but this is good knowledge I'm giving you here, make use of it, make it work for you, no point killing the messenger if you're not even gonna absorb the fuckin message --

JACKIE

I'm feeling, um, I'm feeling an incredible urge to fuckin' kill you now, so, uh, uh, uh -- I'm a go.

RALPH D.

I'm sorry I fucked your girl. Okay? I'm really sorry. It was-- it was something that I should have avoided.

JACKIE

Avoided?

RALPH D.

Yeah.

JACKIE

Then why would you do it?

RALPH D

Why?.....Because I could. Okay?

JACKIE

Meaning what?

RALPH D.

Meaning because I thought you would never know. And meaning because I truly believe that at the end of the day, it doesn't really matter. That's why. Okay. And because she's fuckin' hot. I tip my hat. Your girl is fucking fierce. In every way. I had to play it close to the vest as your sponsor, but as a man, shit -- I could see why you shot that Motherfuckers hat-- even though it was me. And my hat. But for real, Jackkie, it's just something that happened for a while, and I thought you'd never know.

JACKIE

Nah.... Hah...I don't think someone fucks their friend's girl cuz they don't want them to know. I was your friend. You wanted me to know.

RALPH D.

Jackie, let me tell you this one true thing and we could go our separate ways, and I'm gonna be conservative about this right here: Anybody you meet before the age of, say, 25? That's your friend. Anyone after that? That's just an associate. Someone to pass the time. Someone who meets maybe one or two specific needs. But friend? Shit. Friends are at the playground. And adult life, sober life, **real** life-- it's nothing like a playground. And if that sounds tough, that's because it is. It's called the real world. And it largely fucking sucks. So if you got one friend when you die, then you got something most people never have.

JACKIE

Yeah, man, I thought I had one.

RALPH D

It's not too late. I mean, I don't think I should sponsor you any more, but friends? I mean, we could try? Like after some time passes. I'd like that. Actually, fuck it bro, I would like that very much. I like you. And I'm sorry. You know?

JACKIE

Yeah. Um, I, uh, I actually do believe your sorry.

RALPH D

It's just, a lot a shit in my past. You know? Old stuff? Trust stiff? You know. I'm doing another 6th step on it right now -- you know how that goes.

(MORE)

RALPH D (cont'd)

Sometimes the truth is ugly, but what the fuck can we do? We gotta face it, deal with it, so we can turn the page. Right?

JACKIE

Yeah bro. Right.

RALPH D.

So...So we cool? I mean, in the future, after a while. We cool?

JACKIE

Your --whaddyacallit-- your world view? It ain't mine. And the day it is, that's the day I shoot myself in the head. I didn't get clean to live like that. I don't pass on the Heinekens and 8-balls and the hydro so I can live some empty shit like that. That's you. It ain't me.

RALPH D.

Cuz you're naive --

JACKIE

Nah, man, cuz I'm **me**. Your baggage ain't my problem, bro. Share about it at a meeting, I might lissen. Cry about it to me right now? It's a fuckin' joke.

RALPH D.

Okay....She ain't comin' back though, bro, that much I know. That ship has sailed. And it ain't cuz of me, it's cuz of you. You fucked around on her, not me. You comported yourself around her like a fuckin' child, got yourself locked up, and proved to her time and time again that you couldn't be counted on as a man. You did that. Not me. The truth is you're just as fucked up as me and then some -- the only difference is that I can handle my business and you can't. So make no mistake: you're fucked up and wrong and weak and you live like a little sewer rat. And that's just the truth. And, now, what I'm trying to say --

JACKIE

Nah, man. This is what I'm trying to say: don't take the fact that I didn't kill you today as evidence that I won't do it some time in the future. And that aint me talkin' shit. That's me being me. You think you know me? Nobody knows nobody and you definitely don't know me at all. So you better hope I stay clean. Okay? 449 that.... You were a good sponsor. "Keep Coming Back".

**Jackie spits on the carpet. Exits**

**SCENE 3: JULIO'S APARTMENT -- A FEW NIGHT'S LATER**

VERONICA  
Is he doing okay?

COUSIN JULIO  
No.

VERONICA  
Is he sleeping?

COUSIN JULIO  
No

VERONICA  
Drinking? Getting high?

COUSIN JULIO  
No

VERONICA  
Well, that's good.

COUSIN JULIO  
To tell you the truth, I'm not so sure.

VERONICA  
What about his court case?

COUSIN JULIO  
Today I think. He doesn't talk about it.

VERONICA  
Oh.

COUSIN JULIO  
He said he tried to see you. A few times.

VERONICA  
He tried. Yeah.

COUSIN JULIO  
Would you care for some more tea?

VERONICA  
No, Julio. Thanks.

COUSIN JULIO  
Some bisquits?

VERONICA  
No. I'm gonna go.

Okay, mija  
COUSIN JULIO

Thanks for the loan  
VERONICA

You're family. You'll never it pay it back. So let's not call it a loan  
COUSIN JULIO

Okay. Thank you.  
VERONICA

For nothing.  
COUSIN JULIO

You won't tell Jackie that I'm leaving?  
VERONICA

No  
COUSIN JULIO

Or where I'm going?  
VERONICA

You have my word  
COUSIN JULIO

I think a change of scenery, you know?  
VERONICA

Yes.  
COUSIN JULIO

My moms is excited.  
VERONICA

That's great.  
COUSIN JULIO

Yeah, we never really, well, it'll be good.  
VERONICA

Yes. Postcard me, okay?  
COUSIN JULIO

I will.  
VERONICA

Very good.  
COUSIN JULIO

Look after him  
VERONICA

COUSIN JULIO  
You don't have to ask.

VERONICA  
Good bye

COUSIN JULIO  
Go with God.

VERONICA  
You're not gonna tell him nothin'?

COUSIN JULIO  
If I did, would it matter?

VERONICA  
No. It wouldn't.

COUSIN JULIO  
Then mums the word.

VERONICA  
I just.....nevermind.

COUSIN JULIO  
Do you, girl. Do you.

VERONICA  
I'm gonna try.

COUSIN JULIO  
Okay then.

VERONICA  
I didn't start this shit.

COUSIN JULIO  
I know

VERONICA  
I just.... I gotta go.

COUSIN JULIO  
Rehab sounds exciting.

VERONICA  
I didn't say I was going to rehab, I said I was thinking about it.

COUSIN JULIO  
If you want to, you will.

VERONICA  
Maybe. I mean, yeah. I might.... Hey, say goodbye to Marisol for me.

COUSIN JULIO  
I will.

VERONICA  
Where she at?

COUSIN JULIO  
Oh. She's at a conference.

VERONICA  
She's been going to a lot of conferences lately.

COUSIN JULIO  
Yes. It's a busy time.

VERONICA  
You okay?

COUSIN JULIO  
(putting a good face on it)  
Ay, me? Couldn't be better.

VERONICA  
Aaaight. Well, give Marisol my regards.

COUSIN JULIO  
I will. You know how it is. "Relationships".

VERONICA  
I know.

COUSIN JULIO  
Ebb and flow

VERONICA  
Right. Stay good. Thank you mucho.

**Veronica kisses Julio's cheek and exits**

**End of scene**

**SCENE 4: JACKIE AND VERONICA'S APARTMENT. A WEEK LATER.**

**Jackie enters the apartment**

JACKIE  
Oh..... you're here.

VERONICA  
I was just leaving.

JACKIE  
Want me to come back when you're gone?

VERONICA  
No. Dass okay.

JACKIE  
I just came to get --

VERONICA  
-- Your box of shit. I know. It's in the bedroom.

JACKIE  
Oh.

**Jackie goes to the bedroom, gets the  
box. Comes back out.**

JACKIE  
Okay then.

VERONICA  
Okay then.

JACKIE  
....I'll see you later

VERONICA  
No you won't

JACKIE  
Right. I guess I won't.

VERONICA  
What do you mean "you guess"?

JACKIE  
Just talking.

VERONICA  
Oh... Good luck with your ass then

JACKIE  
Yeah. You too.

Okay then  
 VERONICA  
 JACKIE  
 I'll be at Julio's if, like, bills an shit.  
 VERONICA  
 I thought you were staying with Ralph.  
 JACKIE  
 Nah. Not no more.  
 VERONICA  
 Why? What happened.  
 JACKIE  
 Nothing. I didn't like the couch.  
 VERONICA  
 Okay.  
 JACKIE  
 Okay.  
 VERONICA  
 How'd your court case go?  
 JACKIE  
 Oh, the thing with the hat an shit -- it went okay. I pleaded  
 down. Got 45 days.  
 VERONICA  
 Suspended sentence?  
 JACKIE  
 No. I gotta go back upstate next week. They dropped the gun  
 shit, but with the parole violation, I'll prolly do, like, 3  
 months.  
 VERONICA  
 Oh. Well. Good luck with that.  
 JACKIE  
 I ain't worried.  
 VERONICA  
 Good.  
 JACKIE  
 I don't sleep at night. Like at all. Do you sleep?  
 VERONICA  
 Not so much, but I got pills for that.

JACKIE

Oh... But when you take the pills, do you sleep then?

VERONICA

I don't care if I ever sleep again, okay?

JACKIE

Me neither.

VERONICA

I gotta go.

JACKIE

Stay.

VERONICA

For what?

JACKIE

I been lissening to The Commodores, like all the time, Veronica.

VERONICA

So?

JACKIE

I brought the cassette. You remember?

VERONICA

I really gotta go.

JACKIE

Remember how your step father, he didn't allow no black music in the house, so your sister Mylene, she would put the Commodores record in the Tony Orlando sleeve, so when he heard it, he thought The Commodores were Puerto Ricans?

VERONICA

I think he knew but was just frontin'

JACKIE

Oh, cuz I thought he really didn't know

VERONICA

Anyway. Bye. I gotta go.

JACKIE

.....Okay

VERONICA

Like right now. I gotta go right now.

JACKIE

Okay.

VERONICA

So, you wanna get out so I can get out?

JACKIE

Yeah. Yeah sure.

VERONICA

Take care of yourself upstate.

JACKIE

Maybe I'll see you when I get back.

VERONICA

I'm moving

JACKIE

To where?

VERONICA

A undisclosed location.

JACKIE

Oh.... Well maybe I'll see you anyway

VERONICA

See me how?

JACKIE

If I wanna see you, I'm gonna see you.

VERONICA

Oh yeah?

JACKIE

Dass right.

VERONICA

.....Look in the box.

JACKIE

What's in there?

VERONICA

When you get home. When you get home, look in it.

**She kisses him. They kiss**

JACKIE

If I had gotten you, say, a fridge that made crushed ice -- you think it could have been different?

VERONICA

No.

JACKIE  
Cuz I could still do that.

VERONICA  
I like my shit room tempature.

JACKIE  
I knew that.

VERONICA  
Don't drop the soap, okay?

JACKIE  
Yeah. Okay. Veronica --

VERONICA  
Not now. Not now, Jackie.

JACKIE  
Veronica?

VERONICA  
I'm late for work

JACKIE  
I don't care about it.

VERONICA  
About what?

JACKIE  
All of it.

VERONICA  
All of what?

JACKIE  
All of it, Veronica. I don't care about it. I don't care about it.

VERONICA  
I don't know what you're talking about.

JACKIE  
I don't care about any of it. I don't care.

VERONICA  
You're speaking fortune cookie, Jackie.

JACKIE  
I'm speakin my heart, Veronica. I'm saying put the blame on me.

VERONICA

Who said the blame's not on you?

JACKIE

Veronica. I don't care about it. I did wrong. I did weakness. I did fear. You did too. But I don't care. None of that shit means anything. It ain't real. This is. So, I don't care about that --

**Pause**

VERONICA

...Well, I do.

JACKIE

Veronica --

VERONICA

It broken.

JACKIE

But Veronica

VERONICA

It's broke.

JACKIE

We can fix it.

VERONICA

No

JACKIE

Please, Veronica. Anything. Anything. Anything.

VERONICA

Take care, Jackie.

JACKIE

Veronica--

VERONICA

Not. Now. Not. Now.

**Jackie exits. Veronica collapses a little, then goes to the bathroom. Jackie re-enters. He takes out an old cassette tape from his back pocket, and puts it in the boom box on the kitchen table.**

The Commodores, "Still" plays. The tape is worn and scratchy and the sound is maybe a little warped or underwater sounding. Jackie stands by the doorway. Veronica exits the bathroom. She sees Jackie. She stops. From across the room they stare at each other. The song plays. They stare. Neither one moves. The song keeps playing. Their eyes are locked on one. They just stare. And stare. As the lights fade.

End of play.