

PUNCH-UP

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. RESTAURANT 1 - EVENING

"What Would You Do?" by Joel Corry, David Guetta & Bryson Tiller (or similar) begins, loudly at first.

The hip LA restaurant is crowded, overflowing in various directions. SPIKE, a person who looks a lot like Ike Barinholtz, is sitting outside at table under flowered scaffolding with GINGER, an attractive but over-primped woman in her late 30s. People are chatting all around them. Ginger, in particular, seems to be enjoying herself. But she's not the only one there having a good time, it's a happy place.

GINGER

(Over the noise)

All I can say is, this conversation honestly doesn't even make any sense to me?

(Laughing,
drinking, smiling)

You know so many famous people.
Maybe I can be your muse.

SPIKE

(Lifting his glass)

I only got one muse, baby.

GINGER

(Laughing
nervously)

Oh...

SPIKE

I'm kidding. I barely even drink.
I mean, alcoholically.

GINGER

Right.

SPIKE

But you were saying you just came out here?

GINGER

Yeah, three years ago, with Soumya. It's crazy. We used to go to college together if you can believe it. In the 1990s. She said

(MORE)

GINGER (cont'd)

you would

SPIKE

(Distracted)

What? Who? I was barely doing anything back then, late 90s, after the show. Now that was a rough time.

(Britney voice)

Oh baby, oh baby

(Coughing roughly)

That's when I was almost in that Yeardley Smith movie that never happened.

GINGER

It was more mostly the early 2000s actually. Soumya, though? My friend, silly. You met with the weather girls show? She's McCabe's executive assistant? The reason we're here, she set us up.

SPIKE

Oh right. Duh. On the phone. With the voice. We don't do assistant names with like that.

(Smiling)

Thanks for DMing back. She was right. She said you were fun.

GINGER

I don't know why she would say that, she was always the fun one...

(Looking over his
should)

Is that Halle Berry?

SPIKE

(Nonchalantly with
a glance)

Ah year, probably

(Reaching across
the table)

Let me try another of those banana chips.

Spike reaches across the table and notices her breasts, which are either funny or sexy or both.

SPIKE

Who's your favorite person to see a movie with? Soumya? Yourself? I mean, mine would be Telly, but I also love a movie date still, honestly.

GINGER

My mom actually.

SPIKE

(Delighted)

Your mom! Do you watch sexy stuff with her. That's always awkward isn't it, I'm not sure I could do that

{HALLE BERRY}, the great actress, comes over to the table with a TALL HALLE FRIEND and SHORT HALLE FRIEND and interrupts. If it can't be her, then someone similar. But let's write Halle here.

{HALLE BERRY}

(Angry)

You are Spike Merriman? Aren't you? I knew it. I had looked you up, and I don't forget a dumb face.

(To her friends)

This is the guy, the script fuckhead with The Carriage Held.

SPIKE

(To Ginger)

Ginger... Halle Berry. Halle, Ginger. I'm not sure we've meet.

{HALLE BERRY}

This man fucked me, Ginger.

SPIKE

Did I?

{HALLE BERRY}

Not like that. Eww. As if.

SPIKE

That's what I thought. No P in V, no D in anywhere. Nothing. Though would be my pleasure.

Halle Berry spits, almost viscerally, in Spike's direction.

SPIKE

(Dodging spit)

Jesus, Halle, I know we've long
been endemic stage but that's
pretty gross. Contagion?

{HALLE BERRY}

That was my mother's favorite
poem: because I could not for
death/he kindly stopped for me/the
carriage held but for ourselves...

(Coming out of
reverie)

It was the reason I did the damn
movie.

SPIKE

It was a job, Halle. They hired me
to do it.

{HALLE BERRY}

He gave the line to Justin Bieber.
In a fake beard.

SPIKE

Oh right, he was in it. The
janitor. Apparently he said he
could grow a beard.

Halle spits directly on his plate, the goop landing directly
on the remnants of an oxtail marmalade spread across a crust
of bread.

Halle is beside herself, and her friends try to project that
they can understand why.

{HALLE BERRY}

This has got to be the most
ridiculous thing I've heard ever.
This smartass. Fucking with me
like this?

SPIKE

I'm not fucking with you, Halle. I
love you. Ginger loves you, I'm
sure.

Ginger, her hand limply holding her cellphone, nods slowly.

{HALLE BERRY}

(Looking up)

I mean, I swear.

Halle clears her throat.

SPIKE

A third time? You know, I think that's bad luck actually.

(As she pauses,
with his hand
outreached)

Listen, listen listen. I'm gonna tell you something. No hidden messages, just straight-talk: You tested a lot better without those scenes. They even did a profit on the movie, you know, the real numbers. People did not dislike The Carriage Held, Halle! You were great. You're doing great. I mean, look at you.

{HALLE BERRY}

The reviews were good.

SPIKE

Your reviews were good.

{HALLE BERRY}

It's true. You're a piece of shit, though. I just want you to know that. Been waiting since like 2012 to tell you. And you look like an even bigger piece of shit than I imagined in person. Maybe you've gotten shittier, I don't know.

(To Ginger)

Lady, we don't know each other from two keys on a piano, but I just want that to be clear, woman to woman, that this man...

SPIKE

Has no dick.

{HALLE BERRY}

What?

SPIKE

This man. Has no dick. From Ghostbusters. The movie. The first one.

{HALLE BERRY}

(Finished)

See now, I need to get myself a drink. Good luck with this

(MORE)

{HALLE BERRY} (cont'd)
 script-butchered doofus, who
 needs line-readings from a woman
 like me to bail him out with his
 little cheap-ass nothing jokes. I
 am throwing away these throwaways,
 let's find Charles, girls.

Halle Berry, Tall Halle Friend and Short Halle Friend walk
 away, looking for Charles.

SPIKE
 (Calling meekly
 out to them)
 I just was saying I have no dick,
 Halle... like to apologize jeez...
 Bill Murray!
 (To self)
 I'm sure it was better with less
 of her, she knows it too.

GINGER
 (Fairly dumbstruck
 still)
 Wow. I do love her, though. Did
 you see she was talking to me?

SPIKE
 I mean, yeah, she's good, no
 doubt. Obv-iously. Just not sure
 what's she written.

WAITER, a waiter who will be played by the same actor
 throughout this movie with changing facial hair, looks, hair
 color/styles and jewelry (and uniforms, clearly), comes over
 carrying two drinks on a tray.

WAITER
 Another red, and another glass of
 glenmorangie 12 for the mister.
 And the chef wanted me to let you
 know, it'll just be a few more
 minutes with your meals.
 (Looking over)
 Was that Halle Berry by the way?

GINGER
 It was!

WAITER
 I just think she's delicious.

SPIKE
 (To self, lifting
 glass to lips)
 Forgive me father for not getting
 the 18 when she said I should.
 (Licking lips, to
 self)
 Halle Berry, who knew?

"Two Princes" by the Spin Doctors (or similar) begins. The camera tilts up to the sky, a dog flies through the air.

FADE TO WHITE

EXT. TITLE MONTAGE - CONTINUOUS

"Two Princes" (or similar) continues

Montage of

Social media postings of:

- dog (TELLY)
- and old woman (PENNY)
- Spike/Spike jokes

Images of Spike getting ready for the night:

- shaving in the shower
- putting on deodorant while pooping
- tossing overdue bills in a drawer
- trying on shirts, some of which are too small or brash
- et cetera

FADE TO WHITE

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

"The Girl from Ipanema" the version by Frank Sinatra & Antonio Carlos Jobim (or similar) begins.

Ginger is lying naked in bed, covered by silky sheets, with a daybreak sunbeam falling right over her nipple. So you can't really see it. It's a fairly modest apartment, with a few signifiers of interest in cinema. Ginger is clearly past her prime, though not as far as Spike.

Spike, his large body what it is, has gotten out of bed. He picks up a card from the desk. It's a nursing ID for a hospital. He puts it down.

His ass is out.

He looks out the window, a distant gaze. A bird flies away. He begins to put on his pants. A soft muffled bleep of a text goes off in his pocket.

GINGER
(Stirring)
Leaving so soon?

SPIKE
Ah, you know I left my dog at home. I should get back. I want to get back. You'd want to get back. Want to see another picture?
(Climbing back in bed)
You know him from Insta.

He shows her a picture of Telly with Penny.

GINGER
(Looking at phone)
... and last night. Awww. He is cute.

SPIKE
Smart too. I like my dogs like my woman, too fucking smart for my own good.

She looks back at him blankly.

SPIKE
I have to give my neighbor Penny, that's her of course, like a hundred or two on top if I don't make it home. Even though she doesn't have much else to do, no matter what she claims about too many suitors. But I texted her last night, so it was definitely ok.

GINGER
(Rising with the sheet clutched to her chest)
Are you sure that I can't make you breakfast or maybe some coffee? Can give you a to-go cup.

SPIKE
So long as you don't spill it in my lap.

GINGER
 (Not really
 getting it)
 You're so funny.

SPIKE
 Coffee sounds great.

Ginger moves to her kitchen, suddenly dressed in sexy shorts and shirt. Spike looks at himself in the mirror.

GINGER
 (From the other
 room)
 How do you like it?

SPIKE
 (Calling back)
 Light, no sugar. But really light.
 Facing-friendly from its side,
 light, but also literally getting
 all the roles, not just the good
 ones.

(Responding to
 muffled 'what?')
 A real lot of milk. Make it look
 like Arianna.

(Taking a
 cigarette from a
 pack on a table
 and stepping to a
 small balcony)
 Big cup if you have one actually
 too. Do you mind if I take a
 cigarette, I've been vaping
 recently.

(With half his
 body out the door)
 I miss it, though. But someone bet
 me I couldn't quit.

FADE TO WHITE

EXT. HIGHWAY - MORNING

"Super Sex" by Morphine (or similar) begins.

Spike walks out of an apartment building onto a mostly empty street. As he walks, he takes a puff on a blue disposable vape pen.

He gets into a Tesla Model X, and pulls out of the spot,

barely clearly the bumper in front of him.

He is flying down the highway. It is a California highway. It goes over and around other highways, but also by the cliffs and beach. The geography does not need to any make sense. Trust me. It looks pretty and sunny, but there's also a bit of gritty, hazy, and graffiti. You know what I mean. Oxford comma shit.

The music pauses. An omnipresent ringtone starts; the music picks back up while the ringtone goes on, but both more softly. Spike answers the phone as if answering the call of a higher power that he doesn't fear.

SPIKE

(Leaning slightly
to his right)

Alex?

ALEX (V.O.)

(Using a female
voice because
it's a woman)

Spike? It's Alex from the agency.

SPIKE

Hi. How it's going? I'm in the car, but it's fine, I'm just heading home.

ALEX (V.O.)

Just wanted to check in, Spike. As you know, we're probably about locked in with the streaming repackage with Olympus Media, and just wanted to make sure you'd gotten a chance to think things over...

SPIKE

Kind of ridiculous, but I guess I get it. I'm supposed to get it?

ALEX (V.O.)

The studios are scrambling with the writers with all of the streaming you know. Need to rejigger things, to reflect new realities. There's a lot of demand but also a lot of supply, it's a supply and demand thing. A new world, you're not in Kansas anymore.

SPIKE

I mean, not everyone made Whispers of the Traitor into a phenomenon. Phenomenon, Alex.

ALEX (V.O.)

Obviously, Spike. Joaquin and Ellen should still be thanking you for that.

SPIKE

And Olympus. And we all made some bars off Summit at Mars, I'll tell you that.

ALEX (V.O.)

I'm still amazed you killed off Barkin and it worked in Whispers, by the way.

SPIKE

That's why they got the Oscars and the nominations too. It's all built on that. All of it. On my lines.

ALEX (V.O.)

I know that. But life's not fair. I was supposed to be the next Topanga, Spike, you know that.

SPIKE

So what are we looking at at this point?

ALEX (V.O.)

It's going to be the bundled per-stream rate we were talking about and the three pilots for \$20,000 each.

SPIKE

That's like what I was making at tables punching up Two If By Boat with Bobby Lee and Jim Norton.

ALEX (V.O.)

I'm just the messenger, man. Think about it like I'm you're Hermès. It's good they're still looking to hook up with the new shows.

SPIKE

My handbag?

ALEX (V.O.)

No I mean li You know
that's what I was saying with
David Spa

(Returning for
silence)

Actually hold on, let me get this.
It's another call.

SPIKE

No shit.

"DDU-DU DDU-DU" by Blackpink (or similar) begins

CUT TO

Spike pulls the car into the parking lot of a beach.

He puts the car into idle, dramatically. Out of the window,
he watches {a man pull down his pants and a woman whip off
her bikini top.} The scene then rewinds 30 seconds and only
normal things happen.

ALEX (V.O.)

(Coming back from
other line voice)

Actually, it's Jonah from the
studio, let me put him on. He
wants to talk if you have the time
now.

SPIKE

All right. You want me to talk
with him? I mean, I thought that's
what I paid you for, but sure,
let's be charming.

JONAH (V.O.)

(Clearer than Alex)

Hello. Spike?

SPIKE

Jonah. Babe. Bud. Buster. What's
going on? Haven't seen you since
AJ's suite at that game, you been
good?

JONAH (V.O.)

Great. Spike. Alex said she was
talking with you...

ALEX (V.O.)

Good timing, Jonah. We were just celebrating the hits, Whispers, Summit... Didn't even mention Sweat Shop, I know you loved that...

JONAH (V.O.)

Ah yeah, you know it. Classic. But it's good and bad, good and bad timing. Spike, here's the situation. We've been asked to take another look at things around here with the consolidation. I'm getting pinched, Jerry getting pinched, Herschel, Charles, all of us. Really looking to trim the fat, squeeze the most we can out of things. Like I said, not my choice. And I'll level with you I only got like three 'Get Out of Jail Free' chips to use and I can't use one on you, I got Night and JJ that I got to look out for, you know what they've done for me.

SPIKE

It's not my fault Joaquin didn't want to do Queens Confidential.

ALEX (V.O.)

In the grand scheme of things...

JONAH (V.O.)

If I could tear all it down and go back to the way it was, I would folks. I swear I would. But I've got a division to run in late capitalism here.

ALEX (V.O.)

Well, I'm glad I'm sitting down, Jonah, because this is not coming up on any of my info streams, so little taken aback with my client here. What are we talking about exactly?

JONAH (V.O.)

Based on what I got here, I think what we were talking about before was a per-stream rate, I'm going to go into the details, but a general per-stream rate we thought

(MORE)

JONAH (cont'd)

would be around \$700 a month. And now that would be more like... let me see, just need to... forty, monthly. Would be around forty monthly, but obviously with a good amount of volatility around that.

SPIKE

\$40 a month? Seriously? I'm glad I parked.

JONAH (V.O.)

Well, consider it. What I've been doing with people. Really consider it. Probably around two subscribers, wholesale, what you're worth. All in, adding everything up in the Olympus catalog, what you're adding in subscribers for the service. Or \$40. Versus if we didn't have you in the background on a few things. Pretty generous if you think about it.

ALEX (V.O.)

They're good movies Jonah.

JONAH (V.O.)

They are. They are. This is what I got to work with.

(After beat)

That's why we also are going to want you to go over all three series, not just the pilots.

A dog is chasing a frisbee into the ocean, his owners splashing after him.

SPIKE

That's great Jonah. Glad you recognized the need.

JONAH (V.O.)

But that's at the \$20,000 for each. Eight to twelve episodes, whatever they're doing these days.

ALEX (V.O.)

For each episode?

SPIKE

I think he means for each series.
Are you kidding me, Jonah? We made
bank on Summit at Mars?

JONAH (V.O.)

And nobody wants to watch it
anymore because it doesn't make
any sense. It never made any
sense, and you certainly didn't
help with that. And I know you
like to bring up The Carriage
Held, but it was still mid. But
look, this is not just you, it's
everyone and everything, what do
you people are doing with their
time these days? Cherishing your
little flourishes that never made
any sense?

Spike noticing someone outside, rolls down his window
further to lean out and gestures them over. The DRUG-DEALER
sticks his head in the window.

SPIKE

(Holding his
finger up)

No, I'm hear you, Jonah, but
what's the bottom line, honestly?
That's really the best you can do?
You're not going to fucking work
with me?

Spike fumbles with his phone and car screen, muting himself
and turning down the volumes and briefly starting the
windshield wipers.

SPIKE

(To guy, with
phone droning)

What you got, something harder
than weed... ok, give me \$80 of
that, that's fine.

The Drug Dealer steps back a foot to sort the drugs and fix
himself out.

JONAH (V.O.)

(Unaware)

You have 2479 followers on
Twitter, Spike. If you were still
doing bangers, it'd be in the
hundreds of thousands.

SPIKE
 (Unmuting self and
 re-muting after)
 I'm tweeting now, Jonah.

Spike exchanges money for the drugs.

JONAH (V.O.)
 (Rambling at
 increasing volume)
 ... so if there was something I
 could do, I'd try to see if I
 could do it. But this is where
 we're at for now.

SPIKE
 No, it's ok, I get it. But look,
 let us get back to you.

ALEX (V.O.)
 We need the lawyers to look at the
 paperwork anyway.

JONAH (V.O.)
 Of course. And look, I loved what
 you did with Whisper of Traitor...

SPIKE
 Ironic.

ALEX (V.O.)
 (At the same time)
 We all did and let's see where
 things go from here, Jonah. You
 clearly know what we're thinking.
 You're in the driver's seat, but
 you know who Spike is.

JONAH (V.O.)
 I tell you, I appreciate that, I
 really appreciate it. I am most
 definitely keeping that in mind.
 Bye Spike.

SPIKE
 Bye Jonah.

ALEX (V.O.)
 Bye Jonah.
 (Pause)
 Bye Spike.

SPIKE
 (Out of control)
 AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
 (Collectively self)
 Bye Alex.

The people at the beach seem happy.

CUT TO

INT. KYLE'S HOME - DAY

"Dreamland" by the Upsetters (or something similar) begins

Spike's car pulls into the driveway of a beautiful California house in the hills. He walks in, and the house is really beautiful too. There's a lot of pictures and paintings of KYLE PITH, an incredibly handsome man, at various ages, all over the house. He appears to now be around 50 by their progression.

There are an array of fish in a large, gorgeous illuminated fish tank. Spike watches them for a second. Some are in schools and some are swimming through things. A kind of weird-looking bigger fish swims toward a cute little small one.

Spike steps further into the house and see STONER, a really laid-back scruffy white guy in his 30s.

SPIKE
 Hey, is Kyle here?

STONER
 Kyle, Kyle who?

SPIKE
 Kyle, Kyle Pith whose house this is?

STONER
 (Like he was teasing but he wasn't)
 Ahhhhhh... I think he was outside in the back?

Spike wander over to glass door to backyard, see KYLE PITH in his beautiful backyard, talking to some YARD WORKERS. Kyle seems passionate about the subject. The flowers are pretty.

STONER

(Calling over)

I think he's just talking with the flower guy. Flower flower, not weed flower. Unless it's the pool guy. He stopped trying to grow weed, he's terrible at it.

Spike wanders back to the living room, where the Stoner is sitting with ANOTHER STONER, and the OTHER STONER, who is black, unless that is offensive.

SPIKE

Not pool table guy?

STONER

(Looking up)

What? Hey, you want some? He should be back in a bit, he usually just like to talks to them for a bit. We were gonna get high and watch some cat videos until he needs to go the dentist.

ANOTHER STONER

I have an appointment at three.

STONER

I think that was Kyle's plan but I didn't ask him.

(Catching Spike's eyes looking at the honey bear)

Don't worry, robert evans, we're not smoking out of that, Kyle just brought it out.

WHITE SMOKE FILLS
THE SCREEN

"Mr. Brown" by Bob Marley (or similar) begins.

Time has passed. It's unclear how much. They are all giggly.

Another stoner does a dance where he holds his left arm up in a crook and wiggles his hips a bit, and that certainly makes everyone laugh.

Spike is linking his phone to the TV. Kyle has joined them. He is holding his honey bear bong.

SPIKE

Hold on, hold on, hold on. I'm
going to get this.

Videos of Telly play on the big screen and {improvisation of
reactions}.

KYLE

(Grinning, eyes a
little too wide,
bit of a tweaker)

That is really amazing, man,
you're always telling me to get a
dog and I don't know, these dawgs
are kinda like my dogs, and I'm
not sure I'm responsible enough,
but I really do want to...

SPIKE

I get that and encourage it.
You've got the life here, but why
not add to it?

KYLE

It's a lot of responsibility
though?

SPIKE

Oh yeah. Like a whole other person
to look after and shop for and...

STONER

What?

SPIKE

Yo. What time is it?

ANOTHER STONER

It's not three, is it?

SPIKE

Shut up, no seriously. I forgot I
gotta meet some people for lunch
at Sicily.

ANOTHER STONER

The island?

STONER

It's the Todd English restaurant,
ryan dunn.

SPIKE

Actually, it's Todd Simpson, he won Top Chef.

ANOTHER STONER

Where? In England?

OTHER STONER

No, he's from England.

SPIKE

I think that's true actually. But that's not important right now. The point is, I need to get going.

KYLE

It's been real, man. Real in the sense that this is not a script. This is life. American life.

SPIKE

... dude!

KYLE

What?

SPIKE

The check?

KYLE

What check?

SPIKE

That's why I'm here, you were supposed to give me a check. For your cousin's wedding shit...

KYLE

Fuuuuck. You're right. Hold on, let me get a check. Or do you want some bitcoin or something? Do any of you dudes know how to give him those?

SPIKE

Nah, it's cool, check would be great. Just need a little right now for the kids, if you know what I mean.

KYLE

I don't really.

SPIKE

That's ok.

Kyle gets up and writes a check. Period. (He adds a period at end of signature.)

SPIKE

Really appreciate it. Do I need to wait a few days to cash it or anything or...

As we zoom in on the period, "Wrote for Luck" by Happy Mondays (or similar) begins.

KYLE

Wait? Nah, no problema, hermano, no problema. Not even sure why they made you front it, just good seeing you... I was glad you could come too, remember how crazy things when we were hanging with that Galifianakis movie, the serious one where he was a hearse driver?

SPIKE

Dead Serious yeah man, it was great, I love your cousin, no problem here at all. Dinero di no problema.

(Leaving)

Later later

CUT TO

INT. RESTAURANT 2 - AFTERNOON

"Wrote for Luck" by Happy Mondays (or similar) continues.

Spike pulls up to a traffic light, where he lightly and then more forcefully slaps his own face. He checks his phone and watch.

Across from him, he sees a GOOD-LOOKING WOMAN sitting in the driver's seat of a hot car. She leans back and a GOOD-LOOKING MAN leans forward. Spike does single-hand finger guns to them.

He pulls up to a parking spot in front of the restaurant and hops out and to his meeting.

Entering the restaurant, the waiter points him to the back and he navigates his way through the paths through the tables. He does a bit of Pac-Man. Maybe there is a famous person like DREW BARRYMORE there, just eating their lunch.

Spike eventually comes to the table with KEN THE PRODUCER, a suave Indian man with an eye patch, SUNDJATA, a beautiful black woman, MARIA, a beautiful Hispanic woman, and MISSY, a beautiful trans white woman. And MR GARBER, an older, almost albino, white man.

KEN THE PRODUCER

Spike! You made it.

SPIKE

I stopped by Kyle's. He's got his whole mini-coachella going on.

KEN THE PRODUCER

Oh I know.

(Laughs)

Do you know everyone? Sundjata, Maria, Missy, and Mr. Ronald Garber.

MARIA

We love Mr Garber

MISSY

Platonically.

SUNDJATA

Like we're shadows on his wall. El oh el. You write?

SPIKE

I do punch-up stuff.

KEN THE PRODUCER

Spike, everyone. As promised.

MARIA

That's great. You know Jordan Peele used to do stupid comedy stuff for a long time?

MISSY

He just kept plugging away.

KEN THE PRODUCER

Ha.

SPIKE

No, I've done stuff. Whisper of the Traitor, all the way back to Bumper Cars, if you remember that. I worked with Jordan, I used to be on TV.

SUNDJATA

Writing has been going better for you?

SPIKE

Well, until recently.

MARIA

Don't end up dead in a pool.

MR GARBER

I told you, it doesn't work like that.

SUNDJATA

So you've been around for a while... did you work with Harvey, we were talking about Harvey...

SPIKE

(Errmmmmm noises)

SUNDJATA

Tell me he didn't work for Harvey.

KEN THE PRODUCER

Oscar-nominated.

MISSY

Fuck.

KEN THE PRODUCER

Early one too.

SUNDJATA

Yeah?

KEN THE PRODUCER

Yeah.

SUNDJATA

Fuck.

Waiter arrives with food. There are a lot of different beautiful lunch dishes.

WAITER

Who had the veal?

They begin eating. Ken the Producer indicates that Waiter should bring Spike food as well.

{Improvised light chatter as they continue eating}

Waiter brings another plate for Spike. He begins eating.

SPIKE

(Quietly)

He was funny. Harvey. Sorry, I mean Harvey Weinstein. But you know, yeah, fuck. I agree.

(Making face)

Who doesn't agree.

(Begins to eat as a plate is brought to him)

I think he was into weird anime shit too. Unless that was Bob. Or someone else, I don't know, we were all fucking so wasted back then, amirite?

(Laughing)

But I agree on that too. Don't sexualize fourteen-year-olds, even if they're fictional.

(Continuing to eat)

It was just a little rewrite work, a couple of lines, like I said, I was fucked up, not sure how good it could be.

The rest of the table is looking at him.

SPIKE

The veal is good, though.

MISSY

I thought so the last time we came here.

SUNDJATA

It had the rosemary that time. Too much rosemary everywhere these days.

Ken starts reaching into Spike's jacket and pant pockets.

SPIKE

(Taken aback)

I'm a bit taken aback here, Ken.

KEN THE PRODUCER

You were at Kyle's before. Did you bring me any party treats. You show up late, that's the least you can do.

SPIKE

I didn't, I'm sorry.

KEN THE PRODUCER

(Pulling out
baggie from beach)

Then what's this? The walls of your city has fallen.

SPIKE

It's nothing.

KEN THE PRODUCER

(Pouring out a
little powder
onto his hand and
inhaling it)

It doesn't look like nothing to me, Spike.

SPIKE

I'm not even su...

KEN THE PRODUCER

Woo! Check, please.

"Trigger Cut" by Pavement (or similar) begins

As Ken the Producer stands up, his thighs bump the table wildly and needs to seat right back down and his soup follows into his lap.

KEN THE PRODUCER

(Shouting)

Holy shit, my dick.

(Standing back up
and pulling down
my pants)

It's on fire, on my cock, fire
ass, fuck, fuck cock.

(Pulling down his
underwear and
pissing all over
the place)

(MORE)

KEN THE PRODUCER (cont'd)
 Does it look ok? Does my junk look
 ok?

Everyone is aghast. The piss is still coming.

KEN THE PRODUCER
 (Deathly seriously)
 Seriously does it look ok? Tell me
 it looks normal still? Ah, that's
 helping.

MR GARBER
 (To no one in
 particular)
 I've never actually seen it.

SPIKE
 (Leaning in)
 It looks like there's still a
 reason you're a very driven man...
 but pretty normal. Can we say it's
 normal everyone?

MISSY
 (Handing Ken the
 Producer a glass
 of ice water)
 Here

KEN THE PRODUCER
 (Putting his penis
 in the glass)
 Thank you.

The scene rewinds back to the "Woo!" and starts again. Just a little of the soup spills into his lap, enough for him to curse, but to barely feel it, and stand back up patting himself with a purple cloth table napkin. A few other patrons are startled or appear perturbed.

Their group heads back through the restaurant to the exit, the old cellular phone game of Snake being something that some people might remember.

MR GARBER
 (Trying to keep up
 with Ken the
 Producer)
 Are you sure don't want to get a
 change of pants, Ken? We can wait.

MARIA
 (To Sundjata)
 That was fairly crazy.

SUNDJATA
 I bet they've never seen anything
 like that in here.

MARIA
 I bet you're right.

SUNDJATA
 It was a lot, right?

MARIA
 I think so.

Spike look at his phone. There are missed calls and texts,
 but he doesn't unlock the device to see them.

MARIA
 Where are we even going next? Are
 we going swimming? It's probably
 nice enough if there's a heated
 pool.

SUNDJATA
 I have class tonight.

Ken the Producer and Mr Garber have stopped by the entrance
 to table with the HOSTESS and ANOTHER GROUP OF GUESTS.
 Sundjata and Maria are joining them.

Missy and Spike continue outside.

Things seem crisp, it's the middle of the day. Spike raises
 his arm for 10 seconds, squints and blinks his eyes. He does
 swipe open his phone.

MISSY
 (At nearly the
 same moment)
 Do you have any children?

SPIKE
 My baby girl dog and my baby girl
 daughter.
 (Turning phone)
 Check him out with my neighbor
 from before actually...

Ken steps past them. Into traffic. Right in front of an SUV moving along at a pretty fast clip. He bounces off, then skips across the blacktop like a stone on a still lake.

Everyone stares at him on the ground.

He raises a thumb.

Spike waits a beat, and then looks up and down the street. He waits another beat and looks back to see a crowd starting to gather around Ken the Producer in the middle of the road.

SPIKE
(To no one in
particular)
Listen, tell Ken I hope he's ok,
but I really need to get going
because I also need to get to...

Approaching sirens mix with the sound of swelling Pavement.

Spike shrugs and heads off.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. HIGHWAY - DAY

"Sister Golden Hair" by America (or similar) begins.

His car emerges from a tunnel. Spike is driving again.

The sky is so blue.

Spike again notices he has a missed call and even a voice-mail message.

MOLLY (V.O.)
(Tinny and huffy)
Hey. It's Molly. Just checking
that you remembered about today.
I'll see you in a few hours. I
hope. Don't screw it up again,
Spike. And listen, we can talk
about what you owe us, but don't
even worry about it, it's fine, we
mean it. Anyway, hopefully you see
later. Bye.

When he pushes down on the gas, the gray road moves by fast.

He sees SPIKETTE at the wheel next to him, who looks just the same as him, but a woman version. He passes their car in the left lane. Then, they pass him.

He pretends to shift gears, checks his negative bank balance on the app, sticks his head out the window.

The wind is whipping through his car.

It runs out of batteries. He pulls off slowly to the side of the highway.

Spike looks at his phone. It is also out of batteries.

SPIKE
(Looking upward)
I get it

"Under the Bridge" but Gym Class Heroes version (or similar) begins.

Spike gets out of car and starts walking down the highway.

CUT TO

He walks up and down all the highways, basically. He throws in a little shuffle, like someone who is losing it. (He's lost it.)

He starts talking to himself as he walks.

SPIKE
(Muttering to
himself)
An a-aron. Or a a-aron?

He steps over some things. And ducks under other things.

He passes a skate park, with BOY AND GIRL SKATERS. He borrows a board and does an ollie, then a kick flip, before tripping and falling while walking to hand the board back. He dusts himself off and moves on.

As he steps away, the sight of a school grounds, with soccer fields, emerges in the distance. He points himself in that direction.

"Neon Moon" by Brooks & Dunn (or similar) begins

He checks his phone again, for no reason. It's still no lightening battery. He looks in his wallet, it's mostly empty. There is a black Subway card.

He puts one foot forward in front of the other, kicking up a little puff of dust if you look close.

CUT TO

EXT. SOCCER FIELDS - DAY

"Neon Moon" by Brooks & Dunn (or similar) continues

Spike picks up a crude flier littering the ground. It announces an upcoming performance of Queens Confidential by the high school drama club.

Spike walks up the knoll, his feet crunching the grass. The paper falls paper to the ground.

He passes the first person he's seen in a while, someone who looks like the Waiter. But he also sees beyond him a sea of colorful fields and fields of children and parents.

SPIKE

(Muttering to
himself)

Oi, what's this about?

WAITER

(Passing by)

Did you just say oi?

SPIKE

Don't worry about it. And I know what this is about, I'm supposed to be here, I'm just a little late. Actually what time is it?

WAITER

(Looking at his
phone)

Three fifty-two.

SPIKE

Not even late, yet.

CUT TO

Spike wanders into the soccer fields, coming upon MOLLY, a middle-aged woman in put-together clothes.

MOLLY

Have you had a look at yourself lately?

SPIKE

Have any of us, really? But, no. I have seen a mirror recently. Had some car issues.

MOLLY

Well you made it, they're just getting started. She'll be amazed.

SPIKE

(Waiving)

Hey Ele

Spike sees ELE, a little girl playing soccer.

ELE

Hi Dad!

ANOTHER PLAYER slams her little body into Ele's, who flops (unintentionally) to the ground with an audible thud. She picks herself.

SPIKE

Just pay attention!

(After the ref turns)

And don't let her fuck with you too much.

A big man, HUNTER GATO, the producer, walks up.

HUNTER GATO

Spike...

HUNTER GATO

Hunter. Wasn't sure you'd be here.

MOLLY

No one was sure you'd be here, Spike.

SPIKE

You wanted to talk about the money? Well, how about this, there's some money I'll get you. But there won't be a lot of other money. So I don't have anything to talk about on that front.

MOLLY

I said I don't want to talk about the money, babe. It doesn't matter. It just doesn't matter anymore.

HUNTER GATO

Look, Spike, you're good, we know that. I hit for average a lot better, but you've got the power, you'll smack something soon.

SPIKE

Thanks, Hunter.

HUNTER GATO

You wanna come work for Gato Productions? Do some trailer work?

SPIKE

That's ok. I was talking to Ken Argawal earlier... he's... having some issues... but we may do something...

Crowd cheering interrupts everyone's train of thought.

HUNTER GATO

(Shouting)

There you go, Ele, baby!

SPIKE

Hey Hunter...

HUNTER GATO

What Spike?

SPIKE

(Jumping at him
with a rock in
his hand)

Yaaaaaarggh

Spike proceeds to cave in Hunter's head with the rock.

Then, the scene rewinds.

HUNTER GATO

There you go, Ele, baby!

SPIKE

(Toward field)

Love you honey!

WIPE

Spike is clasping a charging brick that is attached to his phone.

When it powers on, the whole screen vibrates.

Ele walks over, giddy.

ELE

Daddy!

SPIKE

(Hugging her)

You did great, hon.

ELE

Mom said you probably wouldn't make it. Can you come to us to the pizza place, Mom said she would ask you?

SPIKE

(Looking at Molly)

I can't anyway, sweetie. I have to meet some people for dinner actually, for work.

(Passing the charging brick back to a bearded dad, most likely played by me)

But do me a favor honey, get the pineapple-onion slice.

ELE

Everyone hates the Hawaiian!

SPIKE

But you like it, and that's what's important.

ELE

(Making a frowning face)

No one will eat my ham.

SPIKE

Listen I'm gonna tell you something, straight-up, no tricks: Don't worry about the ham. The pig's dead, he's not coming back to life.

ELE

Dad!

{Improvise pig jokes until she starts laughing so much that when he adds a quick tickle, she adds a squeal and snort.}

CUT TO

INT. INSIDE A STRANGER'S SEDAN - EVENING

"Turn It Up" by Busta Rhymes (or similar) begins as a chubby dark black hand pulls away from the radio controls in a sedan with some good mileage on it. LAGUNAH THE DRIVER, a currently quiet heavysset Nigerian woman with delightfully pretty cheeks, like a young Patience Ozokwor, is at the wheel, paying attention to the road.

SPIKE

It's like a totally separate compartment up there, huh?

LAG THE DRIVER

Totally. Closed if you want to fog.

SPIKE

(Holding out vape pen)

Nah, that's ok. Thanks. I think this thing died three hours ago.

Spike opens the window and throw the vape pen out. It somehow skips into a gutter.

The lights in the signs and traffic lights on the side of the street are standing out much more now as the sun sets in LA.

SPIKE

You know, what a lot of people don't know about writing... I'm a writer, by the way... what a lot of people don't know about writing is that it's very little typing. As a ratio. Much more thinking. Especially if you do what I do. I do most of my work in the shower.

LAG THE DRIVER

Sure. Like Elon.

SPIKE

The thing is, it's always happening but you're not always getting paid for it. So that's a problem. And everybody's doing it these days.

LAG THE DRIVER

My niece, she makes many videos about silly men. She wears the hijab. At hijab,hottee with an e, e. She is hawt too.

SPIKE

Right. Like a lot of people are funny.

LAG THE DRIVER

(Swinging wheel)

You mind if we stop for burger? I forgot was here. Line short.

A () chain looms. The car cuts through traffic and bumps over the lip of the parking lot.

SPIKE

Sure... I mean, going to dinner in two hours, but whatever you feel like, I'll get something. Lunch got a little weird.

(After a beat)

Whatcha say your name was again?

LAG THE DRIVER

Lagunah, like in Lagos. Lagunah Akingbade. But friends call me in Lag. We know is funny.

SPIKE

Because you're slow at video games? Am I lagging right now?

LAG THE DRIVER

No. Because Lag, L-A-G, opposite of Gal, G-A-L.

(She does a body wave)

Gal Gadot.

SPIKE

Oh? Oh. Oh I get. That's good...

Another car parked near the entrance has music playing with a bunch of DUDES just hanging. That music takes over, "The Break Down People" by the People Under the Stairs (or similar) begins.

SPIKE

You don't wear a hajib like around, though?

LAG THE DRIVER

(Exhaling smoke out the window and opening front compartment window)

Hell's no. Never have. Hit this? Fake weed but not fugazi. You'll like.

SPIKE

(Taking the vape pen)

Sure.

Spike inhales and exhales smoke, and watches the Dudes.

SPIKE

(Noticing a man outside taking out his wallet on the way in to get food)

Get me a shake too, can you? I got a little bit of cash. This doesn't pay that well, does it?

LAG THE DRIVER

Oh no. Hell's no to that as well. My parents not happy. This is joke, to them. But it's good for now.

The dudes keep goofing. One does the arm wave thing.

WAITER

(From menu speaker)

Hi... welcome to () how can I help you?

FADE TO BLACK

INT. HIGH-END CHAIN STORE ON A FANCY LA STREET - EVENING

"Swervin'" by Boogie Wit da Hoodie (or similar) begins.

Spike looks over folded piles of clothes and racks, smiles at other folks.

He tries on a shirt: First two are terrible, but third one works. It's a nice salmon pink.

He checks his wrinkled jacket pocket and a white powder comes out on his finger. He sniffs it off the best he can and wipes his nose.

He peaks out the curtain, checks his phone, and unzips his zipper. He lets the curtain fall closed. He begins masturbation. (This may be too much.)

CUT TO

Spike sets out onto the street and smiles. His phone vibrates. He pulls it up.

SPIKE

(Over-enunciating)

Hey phone. Send text to Penny.
Say, sorry again, losing mind a
bit, last thing, owe you big.

The phone repeats, mostly.

Spike keeps walking down street, past advertising for movies. He sees a HOMELESS GUY curled in a doorway. He gives him a hearty head nod.

A handsome black man in great clothes is coming down the street. He might be a little gay. It's Jonah, from the studio.

SPIKE

Jonah?

JONAH

Spike! I'd recognize that voice
anywhere.

SPIKE

I didn't know I had a distinctive
voice.

JONAH

Straight up though, listen: That
thing we talked about yesterday,
that wasn't my choice. I actually
(MORE)

JONAH (cont'd)

cried during The Carriage Held. It was mid but I cried. It was better than should've been.

SPIKE

Halle was great. I loved her in {The Flintstones, or something equivalent for whatever actor we get, if for some reason Halle Berry is busy} honestly.

JONAH

So I'll see what I can do. But you know it doesn't matter. Soon as I figure a way to do good things we'll be gobbled up by something bigger and they'll kick me to the curb. Or Malibu at least. Ha.

SPIKE

Ha. Can I punch you?

JONAH

What?

SPIKE

I'm joking.

JONAH

Ha. But I gotta go now, I'm meeting some people. Just know that I promise to keep my eyes open. Really looking forward to seeing what you got on those new series too, by the way. Maybe they're just one or mortgage payments, but that's better than none. Say hi to Alex for me.

Before Spike can respond, Jonah was begun looking at his phone and walking away.

Spike looks down at his own phone and shakes his head, but not in a defeated way. He resumes walking in the other direction.

CUT TO

INT. RESTAURANT 3 - MOMENTS LATER

"Birthday" (Justin Robertson 12" Mix) by the Sugarcubes (or similar) begins.

It's a mix of friendly folks, both FUNNY MEN and FUNNY WOMEN.

SPIKE

Am I late, or am I just really
really early until we meet again,
though?

(Pauses, Fozzy the
Bear-style)

Aah?

{Improvising: Greetings}

WAITER

Can I get you something to drink?

SPIKE

Just a water. And scotch-wise,
what you got?

WAITER

{Ad lib a few scotch names, feel
free to suggest rye or something
else... name a favorite}

SPIKE

{Picks opposite of what he
recommends}

Some of the others order more drinks, such as {improvised
choices.}

SPIKE

(To waiter as he
turns to leave)

You got any kids?

Others chuckle.

WAITER

Me?

SPIKE

Pets?

KYLE

I have a Cavapoo.

SPIKE
 (Showing)
 They're great, right? Dogs...

WAITER
 (Nodding, confused)
 Oh yeah.

SPIKE
 They say you can't teach an old
 dog new tricks, but that's just
 because the dog doesn't feel like
 learning them anymore, not because
 you can't. Just gotta say, hey
 Telly, open your eyes.

WAITER
 His name is Gerard.

SPIKE
 Awesome, man, just awesome.

The waiter leaves and the music swells. As Spike is looking
 around, "Subterranean Melody" by Stan Killian (or similar)
 begins.

SPIKE
 You know what... I'll put it out
 there... I'm broke if any of you
 have any work for me. Not sure if
 anyone has anything? Not even sure
 if my card's gonna work but it's
 been swiping.

{Improvising: "Buddy we're broke too"-type stuff.}

SPIKE
 I guess it's true what they say...

{Improvising: "Come out with us more"-type stuff.}

SPIKE
 Nah, you guys know. I'm not
 listening.

Waiter brings over more drinks, such as {improvised.}

CUT TO

EXT. OUTSIDE RESTAURANT 3 - LATER

Spike is back outside the restaurant, clearly a little tipsy.

"Learning to Fly" by Tom Petty (or similar) begins.

A sedan pulls up to the curb. As the glare and reflection on the dash window shift, it turns out to be Lag.

Spike looks around and hops in.

The sedan pulls away.

FADE TO WHITE

INT. INSIDE A STRANGER'S SEDAN - MOMENTS LATER

They drive off laughing.

SPIKE
 (Mostly hidden by
 music)
 Whatever you feel like Lag
 Akingbade.

They weave through traffic, the saturation of the colors are so bright.

They pass a strip club: Neon Moons. It has a big happy bright sign.

SPIKE
 (Loudly, pointing
 out the window)
 I've been there.

LAG THE DRIVER
 Yes?

SPIKE
 It was nice but.

LAG THE DRIVER
 It was nice but what?

SPIKE
 No, it was nice butt.

LAG THE DRIVER
 Oh
 (Out of the window
 to some Red Hats
 (MORE))

LAG THE DRIVER (cont'd)
 getting out of a
 shiny pick-up in
 the parking lot)
 Fuck Trump

SPIKE
 Agreed

The sedan switches lanes and accelerates.

CUT TO

INT. CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Lag the Driver and Spike go to a club, somewhere with a pink hue and aping fanciness, but not really not shelf in anyway.

Spike drink shots with a bunch of COLLEGE DUDES AND CHICKS. She puffs on her vape pen, conspicuously inconspicuously.

Spikes shows some the College Dudes and Chicks his phone (and presumably...)

They both get out on the dance floor. After a while, they put their hands up while they dance.

The Waiter is there. He's dancing too. They're laughing, but he's dancing too.

The Other Stoner also turns up.

A FIERCE BLONDE and FIERCE BURNETTE dance up to Spike but he does a funny dance instead of engaging. They don't really mind.

They all have a good time at the club.

CUT TO

EXT. QUIET STREET NEAR THE BEACH - NIGHT

"Welcome Back to Rockville" by REM (or similar) begins.

The sedan pulls up in front of a nice little house on a quiet street near the beach. It's late and dark, but SOMEONE is stirring somewhere several houses down, getting out of a car and slamming a door. It's otherwise silent apart from the sounds of waves.

SPIKE

Thanks again. That was fun. Again, whatever the credit card company will give you is yours. We'll hang out again?

LAG THE DRIVER

Sure. But I don't do magic...

Spike is puzzled before he gets it. She cracks a smile back.

SPIKE

Aaaa aaa aaaa... You... You want to come in and meet Telly?

LAG THE DRIVER

It's late, Spike. Go home. Be by yourself. And your dog.

She pulls away. Spike finally walks the small path to his door.

INT. SPIKE'S LITTLE HOUSE ON THE BEACH - NIGHT

Spike opens the door.

Telly runs to him, nails on his paws clattering across the floor. Spike drops his phone as the dog jumps into his arms and starts licking his face.

SPIKE

Fuck it, though, right? I hope Penny's feed you enough.

He finds a note on the kitchen counter, in an older woman's looping handwriting, and picks it up.

PENNY (V.O.)

(Saying the words
on the note)

I did your dishes, you fucking slob. Penny.

Spikes climbs up the stairs and Telly clops up after him. Spikes slumps into his bed; Telly sniffs his discard pants and then climbs up to curl up the next to him. The camera zooms out through the window to the beach outside.

CUT TO

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

"Sour Candy" by Lady Gaga & Blackpink (or similar) begins.

It is a California beach, with the sand and the water.

The credit roll with the waves.

The beaches turns darker and darker until fading to black.

It blinks back on and it's the middle of the day, full sunlight. ATTRACTIVE PEOPLE are out and having a good time.

Until it fades to black again.

Eventually as credits continue to roll, "Under the Bridge" but the Rockabye Baby version (or similar) begins.

The credits continue.

The last credit words are: No calves were slaughtered during the filming of this movie.

FADE OUT

FADE OUT.