A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting

By

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Dedication

I dedicate my MFA to the two people I love most in the world. My beloved daughter Mia and my soulmate and husband Byron.
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Abstract

PENDEJO IN LOVE

By

Regina Ramirez-Macdonald

Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting

Pendejo in Love is a romantic comedy centered around Allen Stevens a man trapped by OCD. While in a coma, after a minor car accident, Allen dreams his destiny lies with a local coffee house barista named Isabel. When Allen awakes from his coma he's determined to make the life he dreamt a reality. First thing he must do is end his loveless marriage with his cheating wife Karen. Next he must convince Isabel, a woman he's only talked to once, that he is her destiny. No small feat for a man with OCD. Through his journey Allen learns anything worth having doesn't come easy. He finds the courage to create his own destiny and discovers friendships can come from the unlikeliest places. Allowing himself to break free from his “safe” existence Allen ultimately finds love and friendship but most importantly he finds himself.
"PENDEJO IN LOVE"

FADE IN:

INT. STEVENS' BATHROOM - MORNING

We're tight on ALLEN STEVENS (40) a man obsessed with flossing. When tooth debris flecks the mirror he plucks a kleenex to blot it away. Mirror pristine, flossing complete, soiled kleenex dropped into the toilet, he sets the lid down. Stopping at the door, he looks back checking off a metal check list; mirror, vanity clean, lid down.

FLUSH

PULLING BACK from the vanity reveals feminine items as a continuation of the same neat and orderly presentation.

INT. STEVENS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Allen's ritual of selecting clothes screams OCD; crisp collared shirt, khaki slacks with sharp crease and appropriate belt.

A row of glass jars containing neatly stacked pennies, lots and lots of pennies dominates one side of the dresser. From a change purse, Allen extracts pennies adding them to the collection. That done, he cleans up with hand sanitizer.

Moving around the bedroom, he collects scattered feminine items; blouse, shoes, underwear tossing them into a specific wicker hamper (divided by clothes type) hidden inside the extremely well organized closet, slides the door closed. Again a moment to reconfirm the door's closed.

On the night stand is an older WEDDING PICTURE introducing a younger KAREN (wife) along side a younger Allen.

The king sized is empty and almost a showroom display. Allen takes a moment to square the SATIN SHAM around the box spring and rearrange THE TRIO OF THROW PILLOWS along the headboard: circular pattern in the center, a geometric on each side in a straight line.

Allen exits.

INT. STEVENS' LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Resembling a model home; Stickley furniture, beautiful window treatments, nothing personal.

Opening the blinds, Allen allows in the morning sun to spill in revealing KAREN (in the flesh), wearing raggedy sweats sprawled across the sofa, sleeping, one leg hung over the back.

ALLEN

(Flat)

It's morning.
Karen ignores him. Scooping up the remote, he turns off the television (no sound) that's been running all night. Deposits the remote in it's designated place.

He moves on with his routine. She doesn't move.

In the ADJACENT KITCHEN, he opens up the COFFEE CAKE CUP organizer surveying the choices.

\[
\text{ALLEN (CONT'D)} \\
(over his shoulder)  \\
\text{Do you have a preference this morning?}
\]

His back to her as he asks the question, she MIMICS him (not in a nice way). Glaring off in disgust, she doesn't answer.

He waits. Nothing. Like it's part of their morning routine, he makes a choice for her.

\[
\text{ALLEN (CONT'D)} \\
\text{Morning Blend it is.}
\]

Drops in the cake cup, starts the Keurig, takes down a clean mug and places it in position. The coffee process complete, he cleans the area with a baby wipe then tosses the wipe and used cake cup in respective trash receptacles for each specific purpose.

Back in the living room, he sets the cup on the table near Karen. She hasn't moved. He picks up one of the comforters covering her and starts folding it.

She rolls over and glares at him.

\[
\text{KAREN}  \\
\text{I can do that.}
\]

\[
\text{ALLEN}  \\
\text{You're going to be late for work again.}
\]

Breaks the glare and grabs the mug.

\[
\text{KAREN}  \\
\text{Why don't you have coffee here? (sarcasm)}  \\
\text{Wouldn't that save like $7 a day?}
\]

\[
\text{ALLEN}  \\
\text{You know I have a routine.}
\]

\[
\text{KAREN}  \\
\text{Boy do I.}
\]

\[
\text{ALLEN}  \\
\text{What?}
\]
KAREN
Nothing.
   (then)
I need money.

ALLEN
What happened to your paycheck?

KAREN
Payroll's behind. I need a couple a' hundred.

ALLEN
It's like that every week.

KAREN
Ted says things will get better.

ALLEN
You like working with this Ted guy?

KAREN
Why do you care?

ALLEN
Just wondering. Look, I'll deposit the money when I get to work.

He gathers up his briefcase and tries to kiss her on the head. She dodges him.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
See ya.

Heads for the garage, the door closes behind him. Karen still hasn't moved.

KAREN
(eye roll)
Thought he'd never leave.

She sips her coffee.

EXT. STEVENS' GARAGE - MORNING

Garage door rolls up revealing two expensive vehicles, one black, one charcoal. Discovering a spot a on the polished concrete floor, Allen scowls.

ALLEN
(to himself)
She never listens.

Tearing off a paper towel from a wall mounted roll, he grabs a spray bottle and kneels to blot the spot. Task completed, he replaces the spray bottle, disposes of the soiled towel and washes his hands (again).
INT. ALLEN’S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Settled behind the wheel, Allen turns the ignition, fastens his seat belt and checks the rear view.

ALLEN’S POV

EXT. NEIGHBOR’S HOUSE - MORNING

A FRANTIC FATHER and CALM MOTHER tries to herd an UNHAPPY TEEN, a WHINING GRADE-SCHOOLER and an ESCAPING TODDLER into a mini van.

FRANTIC FATHER
(chasing the toddler)
Hey! Come back here!

UNHAPPY TEEN
Dad! I'm gonna be late. You know I can't be late.

WHINING GRADE-SCHOOLER
Daaaad! Why can't I stay home? I don't wanna go to school today...

Carrying the crying toddler, Dad barks an order. Mother watches in amusement from the lawn. It's his turn to take the kids to school.

FRANTIC FATHER
Everybody in the van. Now!

Real Life. Once the kids are loaded, the smiling mother leans in to kiss the departing dad. When he turns she gives him a goose and he jumps. Good times. She waves good bye as the van pulls away.

INT. ALLEN’S CAR - MORNING

Fascinated, Allen appears envious then adjusts the rear view to check his teeth. That done, he shifts into reverse.

EXT. STEVENS’ HOUSE - MORNING

Allen drives away from the excellent example of Prairie Home design.

INT. HOMEMGROWN COFFEE JOINT - BEHIND THE COUNTER - DAY

Cross between Cheers and Starbucks, a bustling joint full of hipsters coffee lovers.

A little frantic, ISABEL SANCHEZ (30s-Latina) gently pushes through the crowd, stumbling twice along the way. There are giant fresh cut sunflowers sticking out of her PUMPKIN backpack. MINDY (20s) goth/pierced, the manager waits. NAMETAGS.

Over the exchange, Isabel clumsily pulls personal items from the pumpkin backpack.
MINDY
Late for work much?

ISABEL
I'm cultivating a reputation for being on time without actually being on time.

MINDY
You're never this early when you're late, usually much later.

ISABEL
(the flowers)
I saw these on the way. Just felt they'd give the place some light.

MINDY
Nobody's open yet. Did you steal them?

ISABEL
No. I saw them in a yard and used a nail file.

MINDY
If they're in someone's yard, that's stealing.

ISABEL
Oh no.
(starts looking around)
Where's that vase?

MINDY
You should be more careful.

Isabel smiles.

ISABEL
(quoting)
"If you have an impulse to do something you're not sure is right, go ahead and do it. Take a chance. Chances are, if you don't you'll regret it"

MINDY
(making a guess)
Che Guevarra?

ISABEL
Harpo Marx.
Vase in hand, Isabel arranges the sunflowers.

**EXT. CITY STREET - DAY**

Parking at the curb, Allen sees JED, a grimy homeless man. We know he's Jed because he's holding a sign: I'M JED - SPARE CHANGE?

Considering his options, Allen looks for an alternate spot then relents. Exiting his car, Allen conspicuously looks AWAY from Jed.

**JED**

Spare change?

**ALLEN**

Sorry, not today.

Allen keeps walking, spots a penny on the sidewalk. Unable to help himself, he pulls out the change purse and deposits the penny. Then inadvertently makes eye contact with Jed. An awkward smile, pocket hand sanitizer, escape.

**INT. HOMEGROWN COFFEE JOINT - DAY**

Sunflowers arranged, Isabel places the vase. Mindy's at the register.

**MINDY**

(impressed)

Very nice.

**ISABEL**

Thanks.

Isabel heads for the espresso machine.

**INT. HOMEGROWN COFFEE JOINT - CONTINUOUS**

Joining other patrons in line, Allen's behind an IPHONE GUY (20's) engrossed in his hand held device. Unable to resist, Allen peers over the guy's shoulder.

**POV - ALLEN - IPHONE SCREEN**

First a GRAPHIC: "Ask Abuelita" then ABUELITA, an elderly Mexican woman with tiny specs and unibrow speaks into the camera. Listening through EAR BUDS, Iphone Guy laughs at the scene.

Allen leans closer, he can't hear it.

Becoming aware of Allen's intrusion, Iphone Guy turns an annoyed glance in Allen's direction, unplugs the buds. Now everyone can hear. Embarrassed, Allen nonetheless listens.

**IPHONE SCREEN**
A MONKEY PUPPET wearing RED, WHITE AND GREEN vest - CHANGO CONSEJERO reads questions to Abuelita.

CHANGO CONSEJERO
Abuelita, we have a question from Seymour in the valley.

ABUELITA
(to camera)
Seymour.
(to Chango Consejero)
It's a funny name.

CHANGO CONSEJERO
My girlfriend and I have been together for 5 years but our relationship has lost it's spark. Should I move on?

ABUELITA
Gracias, Chango Consejero. You look different today. Did you go to the groomer?

CHANGO CONSEJERO
Si, Abuelita. A nice lady gave me a bath.

ABUELITA
Excellente.

Exaggerated unibrow moves then back to the camera.

ABUELITA (CONT'D)
Ahora, Seymour. We have a saying: "Ponte low huaraches antes de meterte en la huizachera".

Iphone guy (Caucasian) laughs even more. Allen's confused.

IPHONE SCREEN

ABUELITA (CONT'D)
Your muchacha has ya moved on and you are asking pendejo questions. No seas pendejo!

More laughs.

CLOSE SHOT - ALLEN

ALLEN
I don't get it.
IPHONE GUY
She said to put on your sandals before walking into the thorn patch.

ALLEN
You understand Spanish?

IPHONE GUY
No.

ALLEN
You understand this?

IPHONE GUY
Yes.

ALLEN
And the last part?

IPHONE GUY
(meaning you)
"Don't be an asshole".

ALLEN
Right.

Allen nods, the line moves and Iphone Guy's gone. Allen steps up to Mindy's register

MINDY
Morning. The usual?

ALLEN
Yes please.

Allen pays and moves on.

Seeing The VASE OF SUNFLOWERS, he's fixated on the asymmetry of flower placement and impulsively makes adjustments. Turning around, he sees the cup labeled "Allen" being picked up by Isabel. She glances up and they make eye contact.

She smiles. He smiles. There's a spark.

Staring intently as Isabel prepares the beverage, Allen follows her to the service bar where she slides on a heat sleeve, calls out his name and...

ISABEL
Allen...

...trips.

ALLEN
Whoa. You okay?
ISABEL
No worries. You should see me on
the dance floor.
(nods)
Like the flowers?

ALLEN
I was just, you know evening them
out...a little.

ISABEL
(appraisal)
Good job.

A pleasant moment until Allen sips the coffee. It's awful. He tries to hide it.

ISABEL (CONT'D)
Is it okay?

ALLEN
(covering)
Great. It's great.

ISABEL
You sure?

ALLEN
Oh yeah. I'm sure.

He takes another sip doing his best to smile through the bitterness.

ISABEL
Glad you like it, Allen.

ALLEN
(awkward)
I gotta go...
(eyes her nametag)
Isabel.

Walking out, Allen runs into Iphone Guy again, who's still annoyed.

He mouths "Pendejo" as Allen exits.

INT. ALLEN'S CAR - DAY

Avoiding the latte in the cup holder, Allen taps the hands free when the phone RINGS-
READ OUT "OFFICE".

ALLEN
Yes...
JENNA (O.S.)
Mr. Williams is asking for you.

ALLEN
What it's about?

JENNA (O.S.)
The Morris account. Somebody died
and they've discovered something.

ALLEN
Pulling in. I'll be up in five
minutes.
(eyes the stinker)
Can you get some me decent coffee,
please?

EXT. DOWNTOWN PARKING STRUCTURE - DAY

Easing into the MONTHLY LANE, Allen drives past a BANKSY TYPE graffiti poster of
ABUÉLITA IN OBAMA COLORS - the word PENDEJO across the bottom. Lowering
the windows, he tosses the latte into a trash bin.

INT. WILLIAMS & ASSOC AGENCY - RECEPTION - DAY

Passing through glass doors, Allen's met by FULTON WILLIAMS (50s) his boss. Walk
and talk.

FULTON
You're late.

ALLEN
Good morning, Fulton. The Morris
account?

FULTON
The old man died last night.

ALLEN
Very sorry. Were you friends?

FULTON
(are you crazy?)
No.

ALLEN
(leading)
Something's wrong...?

FULTON
Federal law requires firms like Morris
Securities maintain minimum reserves..
ALLEN
No reserves?

FULTON
None at all.

They pass through another set of doors.

INT. WILLIAMS & ASSOC AGENCY - ALLEN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Coming up behind them JENNA (20's-from the phone call) Allen's assistant, enters carrying in a coffee set up. She follows Allen to his desk; orderly, modern, same WEDDING PICTURE of him and Karen we saw on the night stand.

ALLEN
(the coffee)
Bless you.

JENNA
I sensed your desperation.

FULTON
Miss your usual routine this morning?

ALLEN
Kind of.

Jenna steps aside allowing Allen his OCD thing.

JENNA
I'll be at my desk if you need me.

ALLEN
Thanks, Jenna.

She exits. Allen savors a large coffee to his liking. He smiles.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
Morris Securities? How do we "campaign" this one?

FULTON
Lynchberg Holdings, they own Morris. The pitch will be to quarantine Morris from all things Lynchberg.

ALLEN
Who's on my team?

RAUL (O.S.)
You mean me?
Not noticed before, RAUL SUAREZ (40s) a man with the mannerisms of Bette Davis sits on the contemporary leather sofa. From his facial expression, Allen's not happy to see him.

ALLEN
Raul.

RAUL
Hey amigo. You could cut plywood with the crease on those slacks.

ALLEN
Great to see you.
(to Fulton)
A word?

Allen pulls Fulton back through the doors. Raul could care less, stands and starts pouring himself a coffee.

INT. WILLIAMS & ASSOC AGENCY - RECEPTION - DAY

ALLEN
Raul Suarez, really?

FULTON
Too homoy?

ALLEN
What? No.

FULTON
Too Mexican?

ALLEN
Noooo.

FULTON
What then?

ALLEN
We clash.

FULTON
I don't care if you two sword fight. You two are the team.

ALLEN
I don't think so.

FULTON
You know Allen, you play it too safe. Ever wondered why you don't have any equity?
ALLEN
Your ex-wives won't go for it?

FULTON
You mean the board of directors?

ALLEN
Your ex-wives.

FULTON
Close Lynchberg and I can sway the vote. You'll get a stake.

Fulton extends his hand. Allen takes it.

ALLEN
Lynchberg's that important.

FULTON
Extremely.

ALLEN
It's a deal.

FULTON
Gotta go for it, Allen.

ALLEN
Like jumping in front of a moving car? Or dating my assistant? Or... Assistants?

Fulton shoots a glance in Jenna's direction.

FULTON
No, I wouldn't do that.
(re: Raul)
You two need to work together. The board likes him.

ALLEN
Really?

FULTON
There's a demographic wave sweeping this country. He's part of it and he's good.
(beat)
Make it work.

ALLEN
Is that a threat?
FULTON
No threat. Okay maybe a little.
Just focus on this instead of clean
hands or your goddamn penny
collection.

They head back to Allen's office.

INT. WILLIAMS & ASSOC AGENCY - ALLEN'S OFFICE

ALLEN
I'll it in mind...

Entering, Allen BUMPS into Raul who turns with a large cup. Coffee spills over the front
of Allen's clothes.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
Holy shit!!!

RAUL
Dios Mio. Allen, those impeccable
slacks will be ruined.

They glare at each other. Maybe it wasn't an accident.

FULTON
Jesus. You look like you shit
yourself.

ALLEN
Helps a lot.
(beat)
I'll go home, change and be back in
twenty minutes.
(to Raul)
Don't touch my things.

Allen exits. Fulton starts to laugh.

INT. STEVENS' BEDROOM - DAY

Rushing into the empty bedroom, Allen tears off his clothes, adds new pennies to the jars,
more hand sanitizer.

The closet door is ajar. He closes it.

The sham crocked. He squares it.

The throw pillows are OUT OF ORDER. He rearranges them AGAIN.

Things feel kinda weird. He hesitates then moves on.
INT. STEVENS' BATHROOM - DAY

Allen's in clean clothes.

He checks is hair in the mirror. Looks good. Then...

He notices the toilet seat UP, urine dribble along the otherwise spotless rim and A LARGE BLACK PUBIC HAIR.

He stares...

...puts the lid down then, spinning around, he grabs a pile of toilet paper, lifts the lid, cleans the rim completely, flushes the paper and closes the lid again.

Washes his hands. Stares at his mirrored reflection.

INT. ALLEN'S CAR - DAY

Racing back to work, Allen drives while punching redial on his cell. No hands free. The other end rings.

    KAREN
    (on the phone)
    Hi. You've reached Karen Stevens.
    I'm sorry I missed your...

He cuts it off and redials. Rings again.

    KAREN (CONT'D)
    (on the phone)
    Hi. You've reached Karen Stevens.
    I'm sorry I missed your call. Please leave a detailed message.

Beep.

    ALLEN
    Hi...Karen. It's me. Listen...is there something going on?...

Redialing again, he looks up just in time to see a CITY BUS STOPPED in front of him.

SMACK - THE AIRBAG DEPLOYS

Fade In:

EXT. STREET - DAY

The sun shines brightly as a PARAMEDIC with the name JOHNNY on his breast pocket tends to a scratch on Allen's head. The charcoal sedan's being hoisted up by a SHINY NEW TOW TRUCK.
JOHNNY THE PARAMEDIC
You'll be fine, Mr. Stevens.

ALLEN
Thanks Johnny.

The impeccable TOW TRUCK DRIVER with the name FRED on "his" breast pocket approaches.

FRED THE TOW TRUCK DRIVER
Where to?

ALLEN
Can you take me home, Fred?

FRED THE TOW TRUCK DRIVER
Of course, Mr. Stevens.

EXT. STEVENS' HOUSE - LATER
Allen watches as Fred lowers the car at a straight angle in the driveway.

FRED THE TOW TRUCK DRIVER
Anything else, Mr. Stevens?

ALLEN
No thanks, Fred. What do I owe you?

FRED THE TOW TRUCK DRIVER
Not a thing, Mr. Stevens.

A tip of the hat and Fred's gone. Allen enters the house.

INT. STEVENS' LIVING ROOM - DAY
Walking through the room, Allen hears NOISES coming from the bedroom.

INT. STEVENS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS
He enters to find Karen in the throes of mad passionate love with TOM MACKENZIE (30s). Tom's wearing starched pajamas accented by a plaid vest. Karen's wearing an unwrinkled Victoria Secrets nightie. She has every hair in place. They stop mid thrust locking eyes with Allen.

ALLEN
(hello)
Tom.

TOM
(catching his breath)
Allen.
Karen.

KAREN
Allen. You're home unexpectedly.

ALLEN
I was in a car accident.

TOM/KAREN
That's too bad.

ALLEN
We should get a divorce.

Karen remains pinned under Tom.

KAREN
Okay.

ALLEN
Take as long as you need.

KAREN
Thanks.

TOM
Thanks.

ALLEN
Bye.

ALLEN
Bye.

TOM/KAREN
Bye.

Allen exits.

INT. HOMEGROWN COFFEE JOINT - DAY

Seated at a table, Allen sips a steaming latte from a porcelain cup. An IPAD on the unoccupied table beside him LIGHTS up.

IPAD SCREEN
Abuelita appears. She looks toward Allen.

ABUElITA
(ON SCREEN)
Hey muchachó.

Allen looks around.
ABUELITA (CONT'D)
(ON SCREEN)
Right here. Your Abuelita is talking to you.

He sees the screen.

ALLEN
You can see me?

ABUELITA
(ON SCREEN)
No seas pendejo.

ALLEN
This is weird.

ABUELITA
(ON SCREEN)
Did you bring your huaraches?

ALLEN
My what?

ABUELITA
(ON SCREEN)
Huaraches. Huaraches. Come on cavroncito! Open your eyes.

ALLEN
Sandals in the thorn patch again. I get it.

ABUELITA
(ON SCREEN)
Exactamente.

ALLEN
It’s a metaphor. You don’t mean literal sandals. You mean am I prepared?

ABUELITA
(ON SCREEN)
I am happy you’re not a pendejo.

Her eyebrow moves up and down.

ABUELITA (CONT'D)
(ON SCREEN)
So are you?
ALLEN
Am I what?

PLANETITA
(ON SCREEN)
Ready for your new life?

Allen's attention is diverted by the approach of Isabel carrying a steaming latte. Allen stands and she stops. Big smiles.

ISABEL
You know how to arrange flowers.

ALLEN
Good symmetry is important.

ISABEL
Yup.

ALLEN
(signals the empty chair)
Would you like to join me?

They sit.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
Isabel's a pretty name. Makes me think of Christopher Columbus.

ISABEL
That was Queen Isabella.

ALLEN
You're right.

Groomed and well dressed, Jed passes the table carrying his sign.

ISABEL
That's a nice shirt, Jed.

JED
Thanks, Allen got it for me.

ALLEN
I did?

JED
(to Isabel)
He's a kidder.

Rolling with it, Allen laughs.
Jed exits.

ISABEL
That's great you take care of your friends.

ALLEN
I don't think we're friends.

Pulling a sugar packet from the dispenser, Isabel wets the rim of her cup then coats it with sugar like a lemon drop cocktail. Allen's mesmerized.

ISABEL
It's how my grandmother always did it.

ALLEN
Sweetness in every sip.

ISABEL
That's what she would say. Only in Spanish.

ALLEN
I only know one thing in Spanish. Ponte los huaraches antes de meterte en la huizachera.

Isabel bursts out laughing.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
It's a metaphor.

ISABEL
I know. Where'd you learn that?

ALLEN
From an abuelita who takes questions from a monkey...

ISABEL
(weird)
Okay...

ALLEN
...the monkey wears a vest.

She's trying to stifle a laugh.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
I'm serious. Nicely tailored.

She can't hold it back.
ALLEN (CONT'D)
Good quality.

ISABEL
You're funny.

ALLEN
You have an amazing smile.

They have a moment.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
Shall we go?

ISABEL
(she's hooked)
Yes.

INT. ELEGANT RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Dressed to kill, Allen and Isabel follow a tuxedoed MAITRE'D through the crowd to a ringside table next to the BAND PLAYING MUSIC. They settle in.

ISABEL
This is nice. You come here often?

ALLEN
No.
(he admires her)
You look breathtaking.

ISABEL
Thank you.

ALLEN
I'll never forget the first time I saw you.

ISABEL
I remember you too. You were using hand sanitizer.

ALLEN
I have a problem.

ISABEL
I like a man who appreciates cleanliness.

ALLEN
Then I'm the man for you.
(them)
Would you like to dance?
ISABEL
Love to.

As he leads her like a princess onto the floor, they cross paths with Fulton (black tie) and a gorgeous young woman, JUNE long flowing hair and killer body. Allen stops.

ALLEN
Fulton. Come here often?

FULTON
Only when I’m starting a new relationship.
(re: June)
This is June.

ALLEN
June. I’m Allen.

JUNE
Hi Allen.

ALLEN
This is Isabel.

Smiles all around but nothing’s said.

Fulton sweeps away June leaving Allen to walk Isabel onto the dance floor as the other DANCERS part. No one gets close to them. Staring longingly into each other's eyes they dance.

ISABEL
I don’t really know anything about you.

ALLEN
What’s to know?

Unfazed, she expertly spins with him leading until...AN ENORMOUS FIREWORKS DISPLAY fills the night sky.

They stop to admire the lights and colors. Both caught up in the moment, Allen takes her into his arms and kisses her. She responds fully.

Then. He spots a PENNY and picks it up.

When he stands back up, all the DANCERS are now closing in and look like THRILLER ZOMBIES.

Allen's freaked out. When he turns toward Isabel, she too has become a THRILLER ZOMBIE.
ISABEL
(zombie voice)
I don’t really know how to dance.

ALLEN
This is going to be such a mess...

ISABEL
That's life.

Her words ECHO Off as the zombies close in to feast and he's on the menu.

EVERYTHING FALLS INTO BLACKNESS.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Head bandaged, Allen wakes to see Karen standing over him.

KAREN
(sweetly)
Allen, darling.

He stares at her blankly.

ALLEN
What are you doing here?

KAREN
(confused)
What?

ALLEN
Where's Isabel?

KAREN
Isabel?

He reaches up feeling the bandage.

KAREN (CONT'D)
You were in a car accident.
(beat)
You've been in a coma.

ALLEN
I was trying to call you. Where's Tom MacKenzie?

Her jaw drops.
KAREN
What?

ALLEN
You and Tom?

KAREN
What are you talking about?

ALLEN
I walked in on you two having sex.

KAREN
No you didn't.
(then trying to remember)
No. No you didn't.

ALLEN
Yes I did. And we got divorced.

KAREN
We're not divorced.

ALLEN
Of course we are.

KAREN
No we're not.
(nearing hysteric)
And you never walked in on Tom and me.

ALLEN
But you're having sex with him, right?

KAREN
(stammers)
O-O-Of course not. You've been in a coma.

(beat)
You don't know what you're saying.

He swings his legs around.

ALLEN
Listen Karen. I don't love you and you don't love me. We don't have kids. We don't even have a dog. Why are we together?

KAREN
How can you talk like this?
ALLEN
You have Tom.

KAREN
Why do you keep talking about Tom?
He's married with a family and obligations...lots of obligations.

Allen tries to stand, steadies himself.

ALLEN
How long have I been in a coma?

KAREN
Five days.

This sinks in.

ALLEN
Can you give me a ride?

He starts getting dressed.

INT. KAREN'S CAR - DAY
Karen at the wheel, Allen shotgun, they ease to a stop in front of Homegrown. Head still bandaged, Allen is nevertheless OCD clean and organized.

KAREN
(confused)
You want coffee?

ALLEN
(leave me here)
Thanks for the ride.

KAREN
Are you serious?

ALLEN
It's okay, I've got my huaraches.

KAREN
Your what?

Opening the door, he starts getting out of the car.

KAREN (CONT'D)
Allen, you're scaring me.

ALLEN
Listen, Karen I thought about it.
You keep the house.
KAREN

What?

ALLEN

I know it was my design and I made sure every detail was perfect but, I'm moving on.

He exits.

EXT. HOMEGROWN COFFEE JOINT - DAY


JED

Spare change?

ALLEN

Nope, new life.

Now Jed has the WTF stare.

Once again, Allen sees a loose penny on the sidewalk. He tries to walk past it, can't. Comes back, retrieves it bracing himself against the wall. Hand sanitizer, then enters.

INT. KAREN’S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Through the windows, Karen sees Allen approach Isabel behind the empty counter. (No other customers) Karen's look of bewilderment evolves into growing rage.

KAREN

(hiss)

Isabel.

She drives away.

INT. HOMEGROWN COFFEE JOINT - DAY

At the counter, Isabel's studying Allen's head.

ISABEL

Are you sure you're okay, Mr....?

ALLEN

Allen. You know me, I'm here everyday.

ISABEL

(a coffee)

Can I get you something?

ALLEN

What ever you'd like to make.
ISABEL
(oh boy!)
Wanna try my experimental pumpkin spice latte?

ALLEN
Absolutely.

Watching him teeter slightly, Isabel directs Allen to sit.

ISABEL
Sir...

ALLEN
Allen.

ISABEL
(points)
Allen, do me a favor and take a seat against that wall. I'll bring your latte to you.

Following her line of pointing, he does as directed.

ALLEN
Thanks.

Taking a seat, he watches Isabel work. Mindy approaches her. Trying not to stare at Allen, the women whisper to each other.

MINDY
He's extra creepy today.

ISABEL
Seems kinda lost to me.

MINDY
You love strays.

When Mindy tries to steal a glance at Allen, she sees him looking at her, an awkward smile before turning away.

MINDY (CONT'D)
I'm calling the police.

ISABEL
Don't do that. He'll be okay.

MINDY
(eyeing the latte)
You're going to poison him?
ISABEL

Very funny.

The latte finished, Isabel heads over to Allen. She hands it to him.

ISABEL (CONT'D)
I'm working new twist on an old favorite. I hope you like it.

ALLEN
I'm sure I will.
(motions to the chair beside him)
Can you sit down for a minute?

ISABEL
Just for a minute, I'm leaving soon.

She sits. A pause, more smiles.

ISABEL (CONT'D)
(the latte)
Try it.

Enchanted with her, Allen brings the latte to his lips for a moment of blissful flavor. He sips.

And he CHOKES, really chokes, like heimlech chokes. As he leans forward, Isabel starts pounding him on the back. She pounds so hard, he falls forward into spilled coffee, getting dirty and HURTING his wrist.

ALLEN
(gasping for breath)
Holy shit!

ISABEL
Oh my God! I'm sorry.

With him still choking, she brings him to his feet and actually starts the heimlech. Once. Twice. The third time he burps out a painful gush of air then resumes breathing.

ALLEN
(owww)
I think I broke my wrist.

ISABEL
Come on.
(to Mindy)
I'll see you tomorrow.

Still holding him up, she leads Allen toward the back. Minor moment of shock for Mindy.
EXT. HOMEGROWN COFFEE JOINT PARKING LOT - DAY

At her car, Isabel opens the door revealing a MESS; loose dry dog food, old bills, not homeless filth but real disorganized clutter. A OCD nightmare for Allen. He freezes at the sight, holding his injured wrist, his pants soiled yet again by spilled coffee.

   ALLEN
   Oh my God.

   ISABEL
   (meaning the car)
   Don't worry. You can't hurt anything.

Brushing away the dog food, she clears a spot in the passenger seat then pushes him in.

INT. ISABEL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Nearing panic at sitting in the mess, Allen looks on in terror as Isabel gets behind the wheel.

   ISABEL
   Hang on.

EXT. HOMEGROWN COFFEE JOINT PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

She whips the car into reverse then slams into drive. With his one good hand, Allen hangs on...for dear life.

INT. ISABEL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Driving like a bat out of hell, she's calm. He's not.

   ISABEL
   What happened to your head?

   ALLEN
   I was in a car accident.
   (and)
   I was in a coma.

   ISABEL
   Oh.

   ALLEN
   I wish I was in a coma now.

They speed on.

INT. E.R. - DAY

Removing the bandage, DR. SATURWALA (40's - Indian) pokes around at Allen's head. Allen's arm in a sling.
Off to one side, Isabel's talking into her cell. Allen's more intent on who Isabel's talking to then the doctor's poking. The doctor hits a tender spot.

**ALLEN**

Owww.

**DR. SATURWALA**

Please, hold still Mr. Stevens. Did both these injuries occur in the same incident?

**ALLEN**

(still distracted)

No. Owww.

**DR. SATURWALA**

That would make sense. The cranial bruising is fading and I would say any further concussive danger has past.

**ISABEL**

(into the cell)

...okay. I love you.

She hangs up, comes closer. The doctor brings her into the conversation.

**DR. SATURWALA**

Mrs. Stevens...

**ALLEN/ISABEL**

(gets their attention)

What?

**ISABEL**

I'm not his wife.

**ALLEN**

This is my... (looks to her for confirmation) Friend.

All settled.

**DR. SATURWALA**

Either way, Mr. Stevens has suffered a mild sprain to his wrist, nothing serious. However, he should not operate a motor vehicle.

She looks at Allen.
ISABEL
Do you own a car?

ALLEN
It was damaged in the accident, the other accident...before...

DR. SATURWALA
Then all is good. Have a good evening.

The doctor takes off.

ISABEL
Your pants are ruined.

ALLEN
Yeah.
  (fishing)
Were you talking to your husband or something?

ISABEL

ALLEN
Oh. Great,
  (apology?)
Sorry.

ISABEL
My father said to bring you home. He does the cooking. Are you hungry?

ALLEN
(very happy)
I don't want to impose, but yes I'm hungry.

He's in.

ISABEL
We better go.

ALLEN
You mean, ride in your car again?

An expression of terror as she leads him away.
EXT. SANCHEZ HOME - DAY

On two wheels, Isabel turns into the spacious driveway of rambling ranch style with heavy Mexican influences.

Beside other vehicles, there are FIVE ELEGANT BLACK FOOD TRUCKS with TACOS24 stenciled on the side in hot pink nosed toward the street, ready for the next work day. Past the trucks is a WHITE TRUCK showing age, a relic.

After catching his breath, Allen registers the trucks. Isabel answers before he asks.

   ISABEL
     My family's in the food service business.

   ALLEN
     Oh.

He opens the door to be met enthusiastically by a PACK OF SMALL DOGS, the inside dogs. They jump all over him, licking the dried stains on his pants.

Isabel comes around the car.

   ISABEL
     Hello, my babies.

They adore her and she fauns over them.

   ALLEN
     You really like dogs.

   ISABEL
     I love them.

Then he sees the CHAIN-LINK DOG RUN at the head of the driveway with maybe SIX MORE LARGE DOGS. They're raising hell, they're so happy to see their mistress.

   ALLEN
     Do you run a kennel?

   ISABEL
     That's funny. The city made me get a kennel license.

She blows them kisses.

A BARKING riot.

On the porch, they're met by BELLA (14yr old smaller version of Isabel) they kiss.

   BELLA
     Hola mommy.
ISABEL
Hola mi hija.

BELLA
(eyeing Allen)
Bringing home a stray?

ISABEL
No seas asi. This is my friend Allen. Allen this is my daughter, Bella.

Taken aback, Allen stammers.

ALLEN
You have a daughter.
(recovers)
She's as beautiful as her mother.

BELLA
(to her mother)
He's smooth.

They head inside. Bella picks up on Allen's attraction to her mother right off the bat.

INT. SANCHEZ HOME - KITCHEN/DINING AREA - DAY

Passing from the tiled entry, Isabel and Bella lead Allen into the dining room; stout wooden table and chairs set for a large dinner, colorful, classy - UNA CASA MEXICANA.

Coming from the kitchen (something from a high end eatery), WILFREDO SANCHEZ (60's) approaches wiping his hands on a towel hanging from his belt.

WILFREDO
(extending an elbow)
Mr. Stevens, welcome to our home.

Awkward elbow shake.

ALLEN
(last name?)
Thank you for the invite, Mr...

ISABEL
Sanchez, our last name is Sanchez.

WILFREDO
Please call me Wilfredo.

ALLEN
Allen.

INEZ SANCHEZ (60's) enters. She kisses Isabel.
INEZ
You're late.

WILFREDO
This is my wife, Inez.

Her greeting, not as jovial as Wilfredo.

ALLEN
Mrs. Sanchez.

INEZ
(no first name for you)
Welcome to our home.

Her eyebrows raise at the sight of Allen's clothes. The dogs still love them. They won't leave Allen alone.

ISABEL
(RE: the pants)
Allen fell into some of my research and development.

WILFREDO
(excited)
Really. What was it?

ISABEL
Trying a variation of a pumpkin spice latte.

BELLA
Always with the pumpkins.

ISABEL
I'm very simple.

WILFREDO
(to Allen)
How'd you like it?

ALLEN
Ahhh.

ISABEL
He nearly choked to death.

WILFREDO
(to Isabel)
What do you think was wrong?
ISABEL
Maybe too much cayenne, ginger and cilantro.

WILFREDO
Cilantro, in a sweet beverage?

ISABEL
Like salty caramel.

Wilfredo thinks about it.

BELLA
Are we going to eat soon? I'm hungry.

INEZ
(to Isabel)
You should find some clean clothes for your guest.

ISABEL
My God. You're right.

Shooing away the dogs, Isabel leads Allen back toward the entry.

INT. SANchez HOME - ENTRY - DAY

She shows him the hallway bathroom.

ISABEL
You can change in here. What's your waist?

ALLEN
34.

ISABEL
The same as my husband. I'll bring you some clean pants.

ALLEN
(crushed)
Husband?

She's gone.

INT. SANchez HOME - BATHROOM - DAY

With his one functional hand, Allen works to get out of the dirty clothes and into the clean ones. Blue jeans and work shirt, not his style.

The bathroom wall is a shrine of FRAMED PHOTOS mixed with the occasional crucifix: ISABEL AND A MALE from young kids through adolescence to adult.
First assumption being, this is Isabel's husband.

INT. SANCHEZ HOME - ENTRY - CONTINUOUS

Surrounded by the indoor dogs, Isabel speaks to him through the closed door.

INTERCUT BETWEEN THE TWO

    ISABEL
    Do you need any help?

    ALLEN
    No, no. I got this.
    (eye the photos)
    Very nice of your husband to let me use his clothes.

    ISABEL
    He doesn't need them any more.

    ALLEN
    Why?

    ISABEL
    He's dead.

It's like he got the best news ever, but has to act sad.

    ALLEN
    I'm sorry.

    ISABEL
    It's okay. He died in a hiking accident.
    (then)
    He fell off a burro in the Grand Canyon.

    ALLEN
    Oh.

Good news?

INT. SANCHEZ HOME - ENTRY - CONTINUOUS

Allen exits, Isabel eyes the high-waters.

    ISABEL
    Nice fit, Roberto was shorter than you.
ALLEN  
So you knew your husband since you were small?

ISABEL  
You mean those photos? My mother put those up. That's Manny. We've known each other our whole lives.

There's the RUMBLE of an approaching muscle car outside. Isabel looks up.

ISABEL (CONT'D)  
That's Manny. He's later than I am.

She heads outside and Bella enters eyeing short pant leg length.

BELLA  
You like my mom?

ALLEN  
(stammering)  
S-s-she's very nice. Yes.

BELLA  
I thought so.

ALLEN  
(curious)  
Manny's a cousin or something?

BELLA  
(shakes her head)  
Fiancee.

Dumbstruck, Allen stares out the open door to see Isabel leap into MANNY'S (30's buff) arms.

CUT TO:

INT. SANCHEZ HOME - KITCHEN/DINING AREA - EVENING

Mid meal, Wilfredo and Inez at opposite ends, Allen on one side next to Bella, Isabel and Manny on the other. Allen's crushed but trying to be strong. Inez talks while Manny's waiting for his turn, Wilfredo enjoys his meal, Isabel and Bella steel glances at each other then at Allen, who's studying the design in the Talavera stoneware.

INEZ  
...I always felt Isabel and Manny were destined to be together. I knew when Beto died...  
(crosses herself)  
It was God's way of bringing these two together.
ISABEL
Mom!!

BELLA
Wow. I'm not offended at all.

INEZ
We should accept God's will.
(to Manny)
Manny, remember that time Isabel fell out of the tree and you carried her home in your arms.

He busts out a flex. Impressive.

MANNY
Great guns. Even as a kid.

Isabel slaps his bicep-a hint to lower it.

INEZ
You help many people become fit.

MANNY
...oh yeah. I had one client who was a real challenge. I had to devise a specific plan for him to shed the weight, in a healthy manner of course. I know what I'm doing.

INEZ
Claro.

Bella's not impressed with Manny. She watches Allen.

As Manny speaks, the group of INSIDE DOGS keep rotating around the legs of Manny's chair from Wilfredo to Isabel for scraps-tiny toenails clicking across the wood floor.

MANNY
Months of a healthy diet, high protein, low carbs. No Mexican food, of course.

WILFREDO
(polite)
Of course.

The table spread is pura comida Mexicana.

MANNY
All about portion control. He trained with me three times a week.
WILFREDO
(still polite)
Three times.

MANNY
I knew how far I could push him and
I pushed him hard. I was a
taskmaster.

INEZ
You're very dedicated.

MANNY
After six months he lost over 100
pounds.
(to Isabel)
Wait until you see what I can do for
you.

ISABEL
You don't like what I got?

MANNY
(stammer)
It's cool. But you know...

But?

MANNY
All good.

On the spot, Manny takes a giant mouthful of carne asada to buy some time. Bella
interjects.

BELLA
(to Allen)
What do you do, Allen?

ALLEN
Advertising.

BELLA
Like what?

ALLEN
Commercials, promotions, campaigns
to sell products. Finding solutions.

MANNY
People pay you for that?
ALLEN
Yes. You get a track record, clients come to you.

ISABEL
(to Manny)
Like clients coming to you.

ALLEN
Maybe.
(to Manny)
You probably work off referrals. You're a gym employee or a private contractor. We try to implement every avenue in an integrated approach to get the message out.

MANNY
"Integrated". You don't sound like a copy boy.

ALLEN
Creative VP.

MANNY
Must pull down real money.

ISABEL
(to Manny)
Don't be rude?

MANNY
Just asking.

ISABEL
He's my guest.

ALLEN
It's okay.
(answering the question)
Salary's relative. A Wall Street Broker couldn't live on what I make.

MANNY
Some people have rich relatives.
(to himself)
Like I will soon.

He kisses Isabel who pulls away. Inez thinks he's hilarious. She stands.

INEZ
Wilfredo, time for desert.
ALLEN
Mr. and Mrs. Sanchez, this was a delicious meal. Thank you. Sorry I didn't eat more.

WILFREDO
(standing up)
You're very welcome, we'll pack a plate for you to take home. All the dishes were original recipes from either myself or Isabel.

Allen nods to Isabel.

MANNY
My girl can cook.

ISABEL
Actually I can't. Papa can. He knows how to take my strange ideas and turn them into something special.

WILFREDO
Mi hija, you're too modest.

BELLA
(to Allen)
She can't cook. Abuelo's the master in the kitchen.

WILFREDO
Actually this kitchen's more for show. I do most of my cooking outside in the truck. Old habits.

ALLEN
Oh.

Wilfredo comes back with slices of tres leches cake He sets one in front of Allen.

WILFREDO
One of Isabel's ideas.

ISABEL
Don't worry. You won't choke on it.

Allen tastes.

ALLEN
This is delicious.

WILFREDO
Every success comes from failures.
Everyone's got cake except Manny.

MANNY
(to Allen)
I gotta be careful, you know.

BELLA
(to Wilfredo)
Is this the one we're using for my Quinceanera?

WILFREDO
If you like.
(to Isabel)
Your mixing of the cinnamon and ginger came out perfectly.

ISABEL
(to Allen)
Papa makes his own sweetened condensed milk, nothing canned.

WILFREDO
(to Allen)
Never.
(to Isabel)
Good enough for Bella's Quinceanera?

ISABEL
Has my vote.

WILFREDO
(to Inez)
Mi amor, your feelings?

INEZ
Very nice, not too sweet.
(to Manny)
You should try some.

MANNY
(dying)
I can't.

WILFREDO
(to Bella)
If it's what you want, then this is it.

BELLA
I love it.
(to Allen)
Do you know what a Quinceanera is?
ALLEN
Your fifteenth birthday party.

ISABEL
Something like that, but a little more.

ALLEN
A big deal.

WILFREDO
It’s when a girl blossoms into womanhood.

BELLA
You should come.

WILFREDO
You should.

Inez chokes on her cake.

ISABEL
That’s a great idea.

Manny doesn’t think so.

MANNY
You married? You can bring your wife...or husband.

Oh fuck.

ALLEN
I’m getting a divorce.

Manny's happy, Inez's happy, Isabel's hard to read, Wilfredo breaks the moment.

WILFREDO
Then you’ll come alone. You’re still invited.

Looking at Allen, then Manny - Bella comes to life with an idea.

BELLA
Why don't you help plan it?

ALLEN
Excuse me?

BELLA
My Quinceanera.

(MORE)
BELLA (CONT'D)
You're in advertising. You must have connections.

ISABEL
Bella, what are you doing?

BELLA
We're only going to do this once. Let's do it right.

ISABEL
This is rude.

ALLEN
(he's in)
Let me help.

ISABEL
We couldn't impose.

MANNY
Bad idea. You don't even know what it's about.

ALLEN
Bella's right. I have connections. Not only can I get you the best but I'll save you money.

MANNY
(to himself)
No prob, bro. They got the money.

ISABEL
(to Allen)
I don't think so.

ALLEN
Isabel, please let me help.

BELLA
Mom, why not?

ALLEN
Please.

His pleading smile is met with Isabel's stern gaze.

CUT TO:
INT. WILFREDO'S CAR - NIGHT

Wilfredo driving, Allen's shotgun holding a foil covered plate. Bella's in the back seat plugged into her Ipad.

WILFREDO
Don't take it too hard. My daughter can be very stubborn.

ALLEN
I understand.

WILFREDO
Don't give up. She's not far in the planning process considering how close it is.

ALLEN
How far's not very far?

WILFREDO
The coffee house takes up a lot of her time.

ALLEN
Working shifts?

WILFREDO
(smiling)
It's a family business. She's a partner.

ALLEN
I didn't mean to imply.

WILFREDO
No offense.

Allen's attention is drawn to Bella laughing at something on the Ipad.

It's ASK ABUELITA complete with CHANGO CONSEJERO. Bella looks up pulling the pods from her ears.

BELLA
You know who this is?

ALLEN
I know she talks to a monkey.

Pulling out the sound cord, Bella fingers the volume up.
...and that is why you are able to eat with your feet.

I like to eat with my feet.

Un gran talento por un monito como tu.

Do you have any counsel for Patty in Echo Park?

Patty, una chica I presume, must take the path that has chosen her. "Al que ha de ser charro, del cielo le cae el sombrero".

Wilfredo's amused.

Mide muchacha, do not fight the good that comes to you. That would be muy pendejo.

The monkey vigorously nods into the camera.

ABUELITA (CONT'D)

No seas pendejo.

That may not be proper language with a guest in the car.

You mean pendejo?

Bella giggles as she turns down the sound.

You know what it means?

I have an idea.
WILFREDO
Did you understand the dicho?

ALLEN
Something about a hat.

WILFREDO
The literal translation is "If you're a cowboy, a hat falls from the heavens"

ALLEN
(and?..)
Meaning...

WILFREDO
You can't walk away from your destiny.

Allen - an understanding smile.

EXT. STEVENS' HOUSE - NIGHT
Wilfredo comes to a stop.

INT. WILFREDO'S CAR - NIGHT

ALLEN
Appreciate the ride. I could have gotten a cab.

WILFREDO
And we would have missed the opportunity to visit.
(to the back seat)
Right, Bella?

BELLA
Por supresto.
(to Allen)
Don't give up. Make plans.

ALLEN
It will be spectacular.

Big smiles - ad lib "good nights"

EXT. STEVENS' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS
Trying the key in the lock, Allen can't get the door open.

He rings the bell. Again,
ALLEN (calling)
Karen.

The porch light comes on then the door opens on a chain, Karen looks out.

KAREN
What?

ALLEN
I can't get in.

KAREN
I had the locks changed.

ALLEN
Why?

KAREN
You don't live here anymore.

ALLEN (searching)
I need clothes.

KAREN
In the trash.

Looking at the garage, Allen sees his clothes thrown into a heap.

She looks down at the covered plate in his hand.

KAREN (CONT'D)
Your girlfriend send you home with leftovers?

She slams the door.

KAREN (CONT'D)
(yelling through the door)
I also got a restraining order.

ALLEN
Fabulous.

CUT TO:

INT. SANCHEZ HOME - ENTRY - NIGHT

As the rumble of Manny's muscle car fades off, Isabel enters, shutting the front door. Inez approaches.
INEZ
I thought you lovebirds were going out.

ISABEL
I'm tired. Besides I need to help Bella with some homework as soon as she's back.

INEZ
I can help Bella.

ISABEL
I should help her. I'm her mother.

INEZ
Of course.
(beat)
This stray you brought home tonight...

ISABEL
Allen?

INEZ
Him. Very odd fellow. What do you know about him?

ISABEL
A regular at Homegrown.

INEZ
That's all you know? I don't like him. You can't trust a gringo with blue eyes.

ISABEL
I think his eyes are sorta of blue-green. Mami, he's a nice guy, a little awkward is all.

INEZ
Mi hija, I just wish you happiness. You know this. Manny will make you happy.

ISABEL
Yes, Mami.

She kisses her mother and Isabel moves on.
INT. WILLIAMS & ASSOC AGENCY - ALLEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Sound asleep on the couch, Allen's eyes slowly flutter sensing someone else in the room, staring at him.

Raul's leaning in CLOSE to Allen's face. WTF!

    ALLEN
        (jolted)
        Jesus!!

    RAUL
        Pobrecito, that lumber jack outfit
        doesn't suit you.

    ALLEN
        What are you doing here?

    RAUL
        Excellent question. I work late.
        I'm very dedicated. What are YOU
        doing here?

    ALLEN
        Sleeping on the couch. What time is
        it?

    RAUL
        A little after one.

    ALLEN
        AM?

    RAUL
        (looking at the window)
        It's dark out.

    ALLEN
        Anyone else here?

    RAUL
        Just you and me.

Stiff from lying on the couch, Allen tries to get out the kinks while Raul eyes the damaged wrist.

    RAUL (CONT'D)
        How do you get into a coma by hurting
        your wrist?

    ALLEN
        Different accident.
RAUL
You woke up, got into ANOTHER accident and your wife won't let you come home?

ALLEN
...and froze the bank accounts and credit cards.
   (then)
I can't believe I'm talking to you about my problems.

RAUL
No one else here, compadre. You have no where to stay? Really?

ALLEN
Really.

RAUL
And no money.

ALLEN
Six dollars.

RAUL
(pointing)
What's in the garbage bag?

ALLEN
My clothes.

RAUL
You can stay at my place tonight.

ALLEN
You know...I'm okay here.

RAUL
Why are you afraid? You don't like me.

ALLEN
It's not that.

RAUL
What?

ALLEN
I'm fine here...
A devilish smile from Raul as Allen takes a step backwards.

CUT TO:

INT. RAUL'S CAR - NIGHT

A spotless two-tone Fiat, everything an OCD dream. Garbage bag on his lap, Allen's feeling more at ease with Raul's careful driving. Raul smiles.

INT. RAUL'S LOFT - NIGHT

Enter into an equally spotless and well appointed "modern" living space. Taking it all in, Allen's at home.

RAUL
The guest room has a bath. I keep fresh toiletries for unplanned guests.
  (walks past)
  Let me get them for you.

ALLEN
Thanks.

Alone, Allen admires the polished cement floors and elegant wall hangings. It's a model loft, not dissimilar from Allen's home.

Raul returns with plastic zip bag filled with the promised toiletries.

RAUL
Your room's this way.

Now Allen's getting creeped out. Clutching his bag of clothes, he follows his host.

When they hit the hallway, Raul points one direction then reaches for the garbage bag.

RAUL (CONT'D)
Allow me.

ALLEN
It's all I have.

RAUL
There are pajamas in the room. They'll fit. Anything in that bag isn't fit to wear. You are my guest and I can't have that.

Leery, Allen hands over the bag.

RAUL (CONT'D)
Good night.

Bag in hand, Raul heads off in the opposite direction. Slowly Allen walks to "his" room.
INT. GUEST ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Cautiously entering, Allen sees the bedroom is just as impeccable as the living room. It's like HE designed it.

INT. GUEST ROOM-BATHROOM – CONTINUOUS

Feeling more at ease, Allen unpacks the "care package" in neat OCD style on the marble counter top.

Looking at his reflection in the mirror, he starts to floss then an expression of horror takes over.

    ALLEN
    (I can't be)
    Am I gay?

CUT TO:

INT. RAUL'S LOFT-KITCHEN AREA – MORNING

Looking all OCD, Allen enters to find Raul, looking equally all OCD, cutting fruit and making coffee.

    RAUL
    Sleep well?

    ALLEN
    (uncomfortable)
    Not really.

    RAUL
    (indicates counter)
    Sit.

Allen sits, Raul places a cup of coffee before him.

    ALLEN
    (never again)
    No thanks.

    RAUL
    You are welcome to stay here as long as you need.

    ALLEN
    There's an IRA Karen didn't know about. I'll tap into it today.

    RAUL
    Then the split is for sure?
ALLEN
I had to be in a coma to see it.

RAUL
You can't fight destiny.

ALLEN
(strangely familiar)
Apparently not.

RAUL
I'm prying but...Help me understand. You and your wife are splitting up because you were in a coma?

ALLEN
I dreamed about a girl.

RAUL
A real girl?

ALLEN
(nodding)
I went and found her. That's when I hurt my wrist.

RAUL
I see. She hurt you?

ALLEN
She did.

He pushes the coffee further away.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
It was an accident.

RAUL
Of course. So that's the end of that.

ALLEN
She took me home to meet her parents, and her daughter.

RAUL
Husband?

ALLEN
Dead.

RAUL
Convenient.
ALLEN
There's a fiancee.

RAUL
End of the dream?

ALLEN
Maybe not. The dad and daughter want me to help plan a Quinceanera.

RAUL
A Quinceanera? The girl of your dreams does not want your help?

ALLEN
No.

RAUL
And your occupation is what?

ALLEN
(light bulb)
I'll make a killer pitch and win her over.

RAUL
Her name?

ALLEN
Isabel.

RAUL
(sarcastic)
A nice Irish girl? What's the father's name who likes you so much?

ALLEN
Wilfredo Sanchez.

The name means something to Raul. He walks to a cabinet of well organized magazines. Pulls out an old LOS ANGELES MAGAZINE laying it on the counter.

Wilfredo's picture with shots of his FOOD TRUCKS grace the cover over a banner "EL REY OF THE FOOD TRUCKS". Allen's eyes, big as saucers.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
That's him.

RAUL
Ever planned a big event?
ALLEN
(shaking his head)
Always a first time.

RAUL
My last relationship, Chris, was an event planner. We worked together often.

ALLEN
You're Mexican. You know about these things. You'll help me.

RAUL
I'll help because I'm a romantic, and I'm Mexican.
(then)
Is the fiancee nice?

ALLEN
No.

RAUL
There you are.

ALLEN
We'll put together the pitch, make the presentation and close the deal. That's what we do.

RAUL
That's what we do.

As they stand to leave, Allen takes note of their similar appearance.

RAUL (CONT'D)
What?

ALLEN
(I can't be gay)
Nothing.

They exit.

INT. WILLIAMS & ASSOC AGENCY - FULTON'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY
Allen approaches MAVIS (hot) Fulton's assistant seated at her desk. She's clearly pissed.

ALLEN
Morning Mavis. Fulton available?
MAVIS
You mean the dick?

ALLEN
Excuse me?

MAVIS
He's in there. Go on in.

Perplexed, Allen opens the outer door.

INT. WILLIAMS & ASSOC AGENCY - FULTON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A beautiful space, awards, pictures of celebrities, Fulton lounging (hiding) behind his desk. Looking up as Allen enters, he's surprised.

ALLEN
(explaining)
Mavis told me to come in.

FULTON
Shut to door.

Allen shuts it. Fulton stands to make sure the door's closed.

FULTON (CONT'D)
She's having a small clash with the board of directors.

ALLEN
Your ex-wives?

FULTON
Share holders.

ALLEN
The women you divorced who took equity shares.

FULTON
And why not? This agency is a going concern. Can you imagine if I take it public? You'll appreciate that fact when you have your own equity.

Allen moves on.

ALLEN
On the Morris/Lynchburg account, I need a little time.

FULTON
You and Raul are getting along great?
ALLEN
We're good.

FULTON
We've got some time before the full investigation gets any traction. Besides I know your life's in the shitter right now.

Puts his arm around Allen.

ALLEN
Right. Thanks for that.

FULTON
Listen, I've been there a couple of times. Maybe not in a coma, but some woman wanting to pick your bones clean.

ALLEN
Great.

(the pitch)
Lynchburg's not responsible for Morris stealing.

FULTON
That's right.

ALLEN
Even though they took their cut.

FULTON
Exactly.

ALLEN
Raise Lynchburg's value.

FULTON
You got it.

Mavis talks over the INTERCOM

MAVIS (O.S.)
Hey you piece of shit, the board's on line one.

Fulton looks to Allen.

FULTON
Tell her I wasn't here when you came in.
They stare at each other.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

INT. WILLIAMS & ASSOC AGENCY - ALLEN'S OFFICE - DAY

As Allen and Raul run through Quinceanera options, Fulton enters. Suddenly every monitor reflects graphics relative to the THE MORRIS PITCH.

Happy with the things, Fulton pats them on the back and exits.

Soon as he's gone, WORK on the monitors shift back to a Quinceanera.

INSERT: ALLEN'S PHONE

TEXT MESSAGE

"What are your colors?"

BELLA'S PHONE "HOT pink and White - without embarrassing the boys"

INT. WILLIAMS & ASSOC AGENCY - ALLEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Allen shows the TEXT to Raul. They nod. "Oh yeah".

SERIES OF SHOTS

Wardrobe choices-formal gowns, court gowns, tuxedos. Raul has strong opinions. Allen follows his lead.

Tiara choices.

Doll choices.

Venue choices. Allen has strong opinions, Raul backs off.

Food choices. Wilfredo will handle.

Band choices.

DJ choices.

Allen and Raul work well as a team, big smile on Allen's face.

END MONTAGE:

INT. RAUL'S CAR - DAY

Raul drives with Allen focused on work.
RAUL
Fulton keeps bothering me about the Morris account. What do you want me to tell him?

ALLEN
Tell him to ask me.

RAUL
It's just, I don't want you to jeopardize your job. I know he's made you promises.

ALLEN
There are some who'd rather you have my job.

RAUL
For less money. I think they're prejudiced.

ALLEN
Probably.

(beat)
Want my job?

RAUL
I like you Allen. I don't know.

ALLEN
Fair enough. I like you too. Let's go close this deal first.

INT. HOMEGROWN COFFEE JOINT - DAY

With an afternoon crush of coffee consumers, Isabel turns to address the "next customer in line" - it's Allen and Raul carrying an Ipad.

ALLEN
We need five minutes.

She looks to Mindy, who gives her a nod.

ISABEL
(against the wall)
Over here.

They regroup to the same place Allen fell into the pumpkin spice latte. She sits while Raul displays the Ipad.
(intro)
My colleague, Raul Suarez. He has four older sisters.

RAUL
Very experienced. Four very distinct Quinceaneras.

GRAPHICS ILLUSTRATE THE COMMENTARY

ALLEN
San Sebastian. Bella told me it's your church of choice.

ISABEL
You've been talking to her?

ALLEN
Texting. Floral displays of Bella's colors.

ISABEL
She told you that too.

RAUL
Claro que si.

ALLEN
Father Joseph celebrates mass. Bella, you, her grandparents and court stand in witness.

(then)
The dresses for the damas, classy, but not overdone. The tuxes for the chambelanes, tailored hot pink vests that don't look...

RAUL
Too gay.

ALLEN
Bella's gown, flowing taffeta and lace, white with hot pink ribbons. We can have her fitted and ready to go over a weekend.

RAUL
We have a tailor.

They have Isabel's undivided attention.
ALLEN
The venue, Charro Hall close to the church. The court walks, a procession. Spectators stop and admire. Bella has her own parade. She'll be a princess.

Isabel's attention moves to Allen, her expression softening. Raul catches the exchange.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
The tiara, a custom design, already Bella approved. Something she'll keep forever. And...

He produces a gift wrapped package, handing it to Isabel. She opens it.

Her face lights up at the sight of A DOLL WEARING THE EXACT REPLICA OF GOWN AND TIARA.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
La ultima muneca. The last doll she'll have as a child.

Isabel stands to embrace Allen, holding him a little longer than necessary. Allen doesn't resist. Raul sees the connection.

ISABEL
The doll's a little creepy but sooo sweet.

ALLEN
Too much?

Wiping away tears, she hugs Raul then hugs Allen AGAIN.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
We got the job?

ISABEL
Of course. It will be beautiful.

While she's recomposing herself, Allen and Raul pivot from congratulations to both seeing a flower arrangement up high that's out of balance. Suddenly it's driving them both crazy.

ALLEN (to Isabel)
Do you have a step ladder?

ISABEL
(What?)
In the back.

Picking up on the object of their obsession, she slips away.
ISABEL (CONT'D)

I'll get it.

Now there's a silent competition between the men to see who will rearrange the flowers first. A second before they were the best of friends, now they're locked in OCD combat.

Isabel returns with the step ladder. Cutting off Raul, Allen grabs it away. This pisses Isabel off. As the men angle to get there first, Isabel interjects.

    ISABEL (CONT'D)
    My shop. My flowers.

Grabbing the ladder, she loses her balance falling into Allen. The two tumble into a LARGE COFFEE BEAN DISPLAY.

INT. E.R. - CONTINUOUS

Seated on the exam table, Allen leans back as Dr. Saturwala shines a light into his pupil. Isabel and Raul, to one side like dogs who peed on the carpet.

    DR. SATURWALA
    Mr. Stevens, you seem to fall quite often.

    ALLEN
    I had help.

The doctor looks to Isabel and Raul.

    ISABEL
    He grabbed the ladder out of my hand.

    RAUL
    It was rude.

    ALLEN
    Only rude because, I got it before you.

    DR. SATURWALA
    (to Isabel)
    And you are not Mr. Stevens' wife or girlfriend?

    ALLEN/ISABEL
    (sadly)
    No.

Doctor looks to Raul.

    DR. SATURWALA
    Are you his friend?
Allen scowls. "What does that mean?"

ALLEN
We work together.

RAUL
Sure. Friends.

DR. SATURWALA
I see. You two will however see that Mr. Stevens abstains from operating a motor vehicle.

They both nod.

DR. SATURWALA (CONT'D)
(to Allen)
Mr. Stevens, I prescribe more caution in your life. Your body can only sustain some much abuse.

Allen smiles in acknowledgement.

DR. SATURWALA (CONT'D)
Good day.

Doctor exits.

RAUL
(to Isabel)
He's living with me so he can ride with me.

Raul exits. Isabel approaches Allen. He winces when she touches the tender spots on his head.

ISABEL
I'm sorry. I thought you were being foolish.

ALLEN
I was. Ow.

ISABEL
You're going to do a wonderful job with Bella's Quinceanera.

ALLEN
Thanks.

He looks into her eyes and she reciprocates. He leans in to kiss her and she responds. It's a great moment, then...
She jerks back.

ISABEL
What are we doing?

ALLEN
Giving in to the moment.

ISABEL
I'm engaged to...

ALLEN
(helps)
Manny?

ISABEL
Him. We're getting married.

ALLEN
When?

ISABEL
I don't know. Later.

ALLEN
Maybe life has other plans for you.

Raul re-enters.

RAUL
Okay amigo. I have the car at the door...

He picks up on the tension. A big smile.

RAUL (CONT'D)
(pointing outside)
Dios mio, I can wait...

ISABEL
(flustered)
I have to go.

She exits.

ALLEN
(sarcasm)
Good timing.

RAUL
You have some work to do to close that deal.
ALLEN
It's not a deal.

RAUL
It's worth the risk. You go all in.
Hay que riesgar la vida para vivirla.

ALLEN
What are you? My fairy godmother?

RAUL
I'm telling you the truth. You love this girl and she loves you.

ALLEN
Think she loves me?

RAUL
Absolutely.

ALLEN
It's complicated.

RAUL
Life is.

A pause, then Allen slides off the table.

ALLEN
At least your car is clean.

Allen uses Raul as balance as they exit.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

EXT. SAN SEBASTIAN CHAPEL - DAY

Led by an enthusiastic Bella, Isabel, Allen and Raul walk toward the church.

It's a festive mood but Isabel's actions deliberately deter any hope of romance, a little awkward.

Allen's distracted stealing forlorn glances in her direction. Raul punches him in the arm.

ALLEN
Ow!

INT. SAN SEBASTIAN CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS

Meeting FATHER JOSEPH, the planning party gets a run down of the service.

More forlorn looks toward Isabel. Bella punches him in the other arm.
INT. CHARRO HALL - DAY

In his unmistakable style, Raul demonstrates where the D.J. will be; where food will be served and where dancing will take place.

END MONTAGE:

Allen's still distracted. As Isabel takes a closer look at the surroundings, Bella and Raul both punch Allen in each arm.

    ALLEN
    Shit!  I was in a coma you know!

Now he's pissed but they have his attention. Bella softens, smiles and gives Allen a giant hug of appreciation. A wonderful moment.

    BELLA
    This is more than I could have imagined.

    ALLEN
    (touched)
    I'm glad.

As Bella backs away, Isabel reaches to shake Allen's hand.

    ISABEL
    (formal)
    I want to thank you.

Then she gives up falling into a hug. This time she doesn't knock Allen over.

    ISABEL (CONT'D)
    It's beautiful.

There's a connection between them and the hug lasts maybe a little too long. Bella sees it's mutual.

All smiles, then Isabel abruptly breaks away taking Bella with her.

    RAUL
    You closed the deal but you didn't close THE DEAL, compadre.

HOLD ON Allen watching the ladies leave, wanting more.
INT. OLDER TACO 24 FOOD TRUCK - NIGHT

Wrapped in an apron, Wilfredo goes about doing the prep work for a large banquet. Ensconced in the glow of his safe work environment, he sees Allen step into the open doorway.

WILFREDO
Allen. How nice of you to stop by. Bella's very excited with all your preparations.

ALLEN
You're working out here?

WILFREDO
This is my original truck. I'm nostalgic. My wife leaves me alone and I'm out of everyone's way.

ALLEN
(looking toward the house)
They're in the house?

WILFREDO
Bella, her mother and grandmother are going through all the wardrobe choices, make up...you understand. (motion) Come aboard.

Allen steps in.

ALLEN
Can I help with something?

WILFREDO
Did you come to see me?

ALLEN
(again looking at the house) Just wanted to see how things are going.

Wilfredo smiles, then gives Allen an apron.

WILFREDO
You can chop jalepanos.

ALLEN
Okay.
He's set up.

WILFREDO
Just don't touch your eyes.

ALLEN
You don't do this with a machine?

WILFREDO
I like to remove the seeds by hand. It also gives me time to reflect.

Allen starts to work.

ALLEN
Taco24. 24 types of tacos. Your trucks are a big deal. I had no idea.

WILFREDO
Oh yes, quite the following. Isabel harnessed the power of social media so people could follow the truck they like best.

ALLEN
Each truck has a dedicated chef and each chef is a relative?

WILFREDO
Of course. Family. They use our recipes and they field test Isabel's experiments. We rotate them in and out.

ALLEN
Was her husband part of the business?

WILFREDO
Beto? A very nice boy, good to my daughter and a loving father to Bella but not terribly responsible. He was part of the family business but could never pass up the opportunity to travel. Travel anywhere in the world mind you.

ALLEN
Frustrating?

WILFREDO
Not at all.

(MORE)
WILFREDO (CONT'D)
He made my daughter happy. I could see it. So he made me happy.

ALLEN
She deserves happiness.

WILFREDO
I agree. What do you have in mind?

ALLEN
I don't know what you mean?

EXT. SANCHEZ HOME - NIGHT

The RUMBLE of Manny's muscle car eases up beside the curb. He doesn't get out, he HONKS.

Surrounded by the "inside dogs", Isabel comes out of the house, the dogs stop at the porch.

INT. OLDER TACO 24 FOOD TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Allen wipes his eyes. Big mistake.

ALLEN
Ow, ow, ow, ow.

Calmly, Wilfredo leads him to the sink allowing Allen to flush his eyes.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
It burns.

WILFREDO
A real eye opener.

Feeling some relief, Allen wipes his face with a paper towel. Then, through enflamed eyes, looks around as if seeing for the first time.

He sees Isabel let herself in the car and Manny PEELS OUT.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN SEBASTIAN CHAPEL-SIDE ENTRANCE - DAY

Poised and confident, Allen wears a new suit looking presidential. THE LIMO carrying Bella and her family pulls up. He's there to greet them.

Other cars carrying THE COURT pull up as the participants regroup for the PROCESSIONAL.

Dressed for the event, Wilfredo exits the limo, then helps Inez out. Next Isabel exits and finally Bella, dressed like Cinderella going to the ball.
ALLEN
Wilfredo. The big day.

Hugs.

WILFREDO
The preparations are perfect.

ALLEN
I'm glad you're pleased.

Allen leans in to kiss Inez's cheek. She's NOT having it. They bob and weave a bit before Allen gives up.

INEZ
(all you get)
Very nice.

They move on as Bella approaches.

BELLA
Like a dream come true.

ALLEN
For me, it IS a dream come true.

Big smiles and she kisses his cheek then wipes away the lipstick. A tender moment before she steps away for her mother.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
(to Isabel)
Hi.

ISABEL
Hi. I know we're late.

ALLEN
See what I did for you?

Looking past him, she sees a PUMPKIN DISPLAY, a Hallmark card brought to life. It effects her.

ISABEL
Oh my God.

ALLEN
I thought mom needed something special as well.

She stands silently taking in the display.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
I need to talk to you.
MANNY (O.S.)
Mi Amor, they're waiting for us.

Stepping up, Manny gently takes Isabel by the arm. He shoots daggers at Allen.

ALLEN
(Greetings)
Manny.

More daggers. As Isabel breaks away, she takes the silk handkerchief from Allen's breast pocket to dry her eyes and keeps it.

ISABEL
Thank you, Allen.

Allen watches as Manny leads her away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SAN SEBASTIAN CHAPEL - DAY

Everyone in their places, Bella kneeling at the alter flanked by her grandparents, Isabel and her court. Father Joseph leads mass.

FATHER JOSEPH
We have come together to celebrate
the fifteenth birthday of dear Bella.
As we join her and her family in her
joy, we join her also in her
gratitude. Let us listen to the
word of God:

BELLA
(of note cards)
The word of the Lord came to me thus:
Before I formed you...

Her reading continues as we shift to:

ANGLE ON ALLEN

He's fixated on Isabel's profile.

Edging his way past the other seated congregants, Raul makes a space for himself beside Allen. Raul's wearing a dark suit similar to Allen's with hot pink silk tie and coordinated puffy silk kerchief billowing from the breast pocket.

They TALK/WHISPER.

ALLEN
Where have you been?
RAUL
Preparing the hall with Chris.

ALLEN
Chris came?

RAUL
Of course.

ALLEN
But this is...you know a religious event.

RAUL
And we are both Catholic. What's the problem?

ANGLE ON BELLA

BELLA
(finishing)
To root up and to tear down, to
destroy and to demolish, to build
and to plant. The Word of the Lord

ANGLE ON ALLEN/RAUL

ALLEN/RAUL
(chant)
Thanks be to God.

The service continues.

RAUL
Don't you want everything to be perfect?

ALLEN
Of course.

He looks over at Isabel.

ANGLE ON ISABEL

Completely caught in the moment, she does not return the look.

ANGLE ON ALLEN/RAUL

RAUL
Oh compadre, you have some things working against you.
ALLEN
I'm going to tell her I love her.

RAUL
What about the mother?

They look at Inez.

ANGLE ON INEZ/WILFREDO

Seeing Allen looking her way, she scowls then quickly flips the bird while trying to keep it concealed.

ANGLE ON ALLEN/RAUL

ALLEN
Might be a problem.
(then)
At least, Wilfredo likes me.

ANGLE ON INEZ/WILFREDO

As Inez looks away, Wilfredo picks up on the gesture and looks back at Allen. He smiles.

ANGLE ON ALLEN/RAUL

ALLEN (CONT'D)
See.

RAUL
And the fiancee.

ANGLE ON MANNY

Already locked on Allen. Daggers turning to flamethrowers.

ANGLE ON ALLEN/RAUL

ALLEN
(oh shit)
He's a problem.

They continue as Father Joseph heads into the LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST.

FATHER JOSEPH (O.S.)
Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation...

Their discussion is continuously interrupted by the mass.

ALLEN
You got into this because you're a romantic.
RAUL
I must also be honest with you, amigo.

ALLEN
I have to tell her my feelings.

FATHER JOSEPH (O.S.)
...It will become for us the bread of life.

ALLEN/RAUL
(chant)
Blessed be God for ever.

RAUL
Why now?

ALLEN
Now's the time.

RAUL
She'll find out that Mr. Mas Macho is a mistake soon enough.

ALLEN
I already know...

RAUL
You already know what?

ALLEN
...he's a mistake.

FATHER JOSEPH (V.O.)
...It will become our spiritual drink.

ALLEN/RAUL
(chant)
Blessed be God for ever.

RAUL
So you're going to tell her how to live her life? Maybe you're the mistake.

ALLEN
It's what I dreamed.

They stand.

RAUL
Well, excuuuse me.

(MORE)
RAUL (CONT'D)
You dreamed she was your true love. Then the rest of the world HAS to get on board. Is that it?

ALLEN
Who's side are you on?

FATHER JOSEPH (O.S.)
...that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

ALLEN/RAUL
(chant-pissed)
May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his Church.

RAUL
I didn't know you were Catholic.

ALLEN
I'm not. I memorized the mass.

RAUL
Should impress the mother.

ANGLE ON INEZ
She scowls again.

ANGLE ON ALLEN/RAUL

ALLEN
I doubt it.

Father Joseph finishes his prayer.

ALLEN/RAUL
Amen.

They sit down.

RAUL
You're right. She doesn't want you.

ALLEN
You mean the mother?

RAUL
Yes, I mean the mother.
ALLEN
How do you know?

RAUL
You told me. And, I have eyes.

ALLEN
But, Inez has to know my intentions are sincere.

RAUL
You're married.

ALLEN
(goddamnit)
I filed for divorce.

FATHER JOSEPH (O.S.)
...The Lord be with you.

ALLEN/RAUL
And also with you.

Now they kneel.

RAUL
A dream doesn't make it all right in the world.

ALLEN
I think I know what's right for me.

RAUL
And?

ALLEN
Isabel's right for me.

ALLEN/RAUL
Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory...

ALLEN
I thought you believed in following your destiny.

At this point AN OLD WOMAN with thick glasses besides Allen leans in.

OLD WOMAN
Shhhhh...
RAUL
Dios mio. She looks like my grandmother.

HOLD ON Allen with his perplexed expression looking between the old lady and Raul.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHARRO HALL - DAY

Joyfully, Wilfredo serves up food to participates. MUSIC PLAYS while people sigue-way from church to party mode.

The Chambelanes are distributing laminated badges of a smiling "ABUELITA". Laughter among the boys and then in unison:

CHAMBELANES
No seas pendejo!

More laughter between the boys and girls. Wilfredo is slightly disgruntled by such language.

When not glaring at Allen, Manny puts on his most handsome face to talk up A GORGEOUS BLONDE WOMAN.

Standing to one side, Allen watches as Mindy and Isabel push Bella through the clutch of wellwishers until Bella's joined by her COURT (her peers).

The kids are having fun.

The MUSIC STOPS, Raul scoops up a mic.

RAUL
First we want to say how happy we are for nuestra princessa, Bella. Felicidades.

Applause. All attention on Bella. As Raul speaks a FULL-ON MARIACHI BAND with brass and strings ambles in.

RAUL (CONT'D)
The first gift we have for Bella is Isabel, her mother singing a traditional Mexican song.

After getting a "good luck" nudge from Mindy, Isabel takes the mic as the Mariachis assemble. She looks to them for a COUNT and...

They take off in: LA CIGARRA. The distinctive intro leading up to the lyrics.

Allen watches. Mic in hand, Isabel takes a deep breath.
ISABEL
(singing)
Ya no me cantes cigarra. Que acabe tu sonsonete. Que tu canto aquí en el alma. Como un punal se me mete. Sabiendo que cuando cantas. Preganando vas tu muerte.

The chord change, Allen, Raul, Wilfredo, Inez, Manny and Bella are spellbound.

ISABEL (CONT'D)
(singing)

As she launches into the vocal bridge, Allen is more convinced than ever their love is true.

ISABEL (CONT'D)
(singing)

Allen is busting with pride at seeing Isabel sing.

ISABEL (CONT'D)
(singing)

A BIG FINISH and the crowd goes wild. Isabel nails it.

In the glow of success, the first person she approaches is Allen.

LOUD APPLAUSE

DJ comes in with HOUSE MUSIC and the kids start dancing.

ANGLE ON ALLEN AND ISABEL

ALLEN
You were fantastic!

ISABEL
This is wonderful. You've done so much.
ALLEN
It's because I love you Isabel. I love you with all my heart. I love you until the end of time.

Even though the REST OF THE PARTY continues

ISABEL
Why are you saying that?

ALLEN
Because it's true.

ANGLE ON RAUL AND WILFREDO
Watching the interaction between Allen and Isabel.

ANGLE ON ALLEN AND ISABEL

ISABEL
You can't do this...

ALLEN
But I have to...

At THAT MOMENT, Manny steps up to Allen PUNCHING him square in the FACE. Allen goes down.

CUT TO:

INT. E.R. - DAY

This time flanked by Wilfredo and Raul, Allen's again being examined by Dr. Saturwala.

DR. SATURWALA
Mr. Stevens, we are seeing quite a lot of you. Your female friend was unable to come along this time?

ALLEN
She had to stay at her daughter's Quinceanera.

DR. SATURWALA
Did she hit you?

RAUL
(helping out)
It was her fiancee.

DR. SATURWALA
I see. I can understand that.
ALLEN

Guess so.

DR. SATURWALA
I have met your "co-worker" but now we have someone new.

WILFREDO
I'm his female friend's father.

DR. SATURWALA
Of course.

RAUL
Allen and I are still co-workers.

DR. SATURWALA
But not friends?

RAUL
I don't know anymore.

ALLEN
(to the doctor)
How long do I need to be here?

DR. SATURWALA
Excellent question. In view of the fact that you are here so often, perhaps it would be better for you to stay here.

Allen stares at the doctor.

EXT. E.R. - NIGHT

Icepack on his eye, Allen stands with Raul and Wilfredo.

ALLEN
I need to talk to Isabel.

WILFREDO
Now is not the time to see her.

ALLEN
You're against me now?

WILFREDO
Allen, I'm not against anyone. I love my daughter and wish her to be happy. I see she's happy with you but she's also conflicted. It's not something you can push.
RAUL
I think your suegro has a point.
Give her some room.

ALLEN
Jesus! You guys are no help. I
need to talk to her.

Wilfredo leans in.

WILFREDO
Solo el que carga el cajon sabe lo
que pesa el muerto.

Raul's eyes bug.

WILFREDO (CONT'D)
Only Isabel knows her own mind and
we must trust her to make the right
choice.

Placing his hand on Allen's shoulder, he shows his support then smiles and leaves.

RAUL
Do you understand what he said?

ALLEN
Sounds like something you would say
or...the internet lady, Abuelita.

Raul has an uncomfortable smile as Allen studies him.

EXT. HOMEGROWN COFFEE JOINT - DAY
Jed stands outside with his "SPARE CHANGE" sign.

INT. HOMEGROWN COFFEE JOINT - CONTINUOUS
Again plowing through the morning crush, Isabel makes her way to Mindy. Isabel starts
uploading her backpack

MINDY
If you were ever on time I'd have a
heart attack.

ISABEL
I have a legit excuse this time.

MINDY
Guess so. It was good party. Other
than the violence.

Isabel brings out the Quinceanera doll.
MINDY (CONT'D)
Why are you carrying that?

ISABEL
I don't know.

MINDY
Oh my God. You're falling for the creepy guy.

Isabel looks at the doll a moment the returns it to her backpack.

ISABEL
(resolute)
No. That's not going to happen.

Getting back into the flow, they part to different stations in the store.

Her NAMETAG on, Isabel meets the next customer in line.

ISABEL (CONT'D)
How can I help you?

It's Karen.

KAREN
You can leave my husband alone, Isabel.

A tense moment.

INT. WILLIAMS & ASSOC AGENCY - ALLEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Black eye in full bloom, Allen slumps behind his desk. On the DESK TOP MONITOR he sees a viral video of Abuelita highlighted.

He clicks the icon.

COMPUTER SCREEN

Clip starts mid-stream, Abuelita seated as usual, Chango Consejero leaning against her.

ABUELITA
...So you see mi monoito amigito, cuando uno se tira los huesos you can't be sure where they will land.

CHANGO CONSEJERO
Life is a gamble?

ABUELITA
Exacto. Therefore we risk our life to fully live our life.
Allen's eyes bug in a WTF expression.

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR Fulton walks in. Allen stops the clip.

FULTON
(looking at the eye)
Jesus! Who hit you?

ALLEN
Doesn't matter. Have you seen Raul?

FULTON
What? No. Listen Allen, we need to talk. I know your life's a mess, but I need the old Allen back.

ALLEN
You mean the guy who doesn't take a chance. I take chances, Fulton, a shit ton of them.

FULTON
Calm down. You're not yourself.

ALLEN
I've never been more myself.

As Jenna does her best to block his way, Manny enters carrying two bulging garbage bags.

JENNA
I'm sorry sir, you have to wait at reception.

MANNY
I don't think so.

Before anyone can stop him, Manny dumps a pile of destroyed pumpkins in the middle of the office.

JENNA
Oh my.

FULTON
What the hell?

Manny menacingly leans into Allen.

MANNY
(gritted teeth)
Stay away from my woman.
ALLEN
(not giving)
She's not your woman yet.

JENNA
I'll call security.

The macho eye lock still going.

ALLEN
It's alright Jenna. He's leaving.

Manny blinks. He exits. Morning coffee in hand, Raul enters.

RAUL
Senor Musculos paid a visit.

FULTON
(to Allen)
What is the meaning of all this?

ALLEN
(to Raul)
You're the Mexican Granny, pendejo.

RAUL
(like a girl)
Nooooo.

Allen's cell rings.

PHONE: BELLA

He snatches it up.

ALLEN
What it is?

An expression of "not good", he looks at Raul.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
I need a ride.

INT. RAUL'S CAR - DAY

RAUL
Why should I have to tell you everything I do?

ALLEN
We live together.
RAUL
Dios mio! You sound like a possessive lover.

ALLEN
Shut the hell up. Jesus! Can't you go any faster? You drive like an abuelita.

RAUL
What's the hurry?

ALLEN
Karen went to see Isabel?

RAUL
You're not yet ex-wife. Is she some kind of a puta or something?

ALLEN
Oh yeah. She's a puta.

EXT. SANCHEZ HOME - DAY

As soon as the tiny Fiat comes to a halt, Allen's out. When he crosses the driveway, the "outside dogs" react viciously. It's like he's a complete stranger.

Undeterred, he gets to the door where he's met by Bella.

BELLA
I don't think there's anything you can do.

ALLEN
I've got to explain.

Surrounded by the "inside dogs" Isabel edges Bella out the door.

ISABEL
(to Bella)
Go to your room.

Bella and Allen exchange a look of "shit" to each other and she leaves.

ALLEN
Isabel...

The "inside dogs" growl at Allen, showing no interest in licking his pants.

ISABEL
Listen, Mr. Stevens. You've been very nice to our family but you should know I'm not a homewrecker.
ALLEN
Of course you're not. You don't understand. Karen and I had a house we both lived in.
  (gestures at her house)
It wasn't a home.

ISABEL
She says I'm responsible for your divorce.

ALLEN
That's just not true. You're responsible for the greatest joy I've ever felt in my life. It's complicated but we can work it out.

INEZ (O.S.)
Mi hija...

Looking past Isabel, Allen can see Inez in the hall.

INT. SANCHEZ HOME - ENTRY - CONTINUOUS

INEZ
  (to Isabel)
It's not proper.

When Isabel turns back to Allen, Inez FLIPS him off.

EXT. SANCHEZ HOME - CONTINUOUS

Heavy with sadness, Isabel begins pushing the door shut.

ISABEL
You need to go...And not come back.

Slowly, the door closes. Allen's alone on the porch. The "outside dogs" start back up. They hate him.

Clad in apron, Wilfredo steps down from the OLD TACO 24 truck to quiet them. The dogs stop.

As Allen retreats across the driveway, he and Wilfredo make eye contact.

With a "nothing to be done" shrug, Wilfredo climbs back into the truck.

HOLD ON Allen. He's crushed. Looking down, he sees a single penny laying in the driveway. He walks away leaving it behind.

INT. SANCHEZ HOME - ENTRY - CONTINUOUS

As both women watch Allen walk away, Isabel tears up and Inez hugs her.
INEZ
Oh mi hija. It's better this way.

ISABEL
I know.

As Isabel lays her head on her mother's shoulder, Inez considers what's best for her daughter.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WILLIAMS & ASSOC AGENCY - ALLEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Black eye faded, a listless Allen sits behind his desk. In full presentation mode, Raul enters.

RAUL
Compadre, today is not the day for low energy. Fulton thinks we've been working hard on this presentation so you have to go sell something.

ALLEN
You know, Raul. Maybe we should just tell Fulton we're going in there with nothing. You like honesty. Don't you?

RAUL
We have a presentation.

ALLEN
We have a lie. We're going in there to sell the client a lie to cover up another lie. Where does that get you?

RAUL
Dios mio.

ALLEN
More lying.

Jenna sticks her head in.

JENNA
Mr. Williams is ready for you.

Allen stands, then marches out with a very nervous Raul in tow.

INT. WILLIAMS & ASSOC AGENCY - RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

Allen "in charge" mode.
INT. WILLIAMS & ASSOC AGENCY—CONFERENCE ROOM — CONTINUOUS

Pushing through the double glass doors, Fulton presents Allen and Raul to CEO - HAMILTON PHIPPS along with two other men and a woman—very conservative.

FULTON

Lady,
(only one woman)
And gentlemen, I'm sure you remember
Allen Stevens, our Creative Vice
President. He's provided so many
successful campaigns in the past...

Phipps and company start to stand, Allen breezes past throwing up a single graphic and charges into his pitch. Awkwardly, everyone settles back down.

THE GRAPHIC: LYNCHBERG HOLDINGS, owner of multiple companies including MORRIS SECURITIES way down in the corner.

An expression of dread, Raul stands to one side.

ALLEN

Lynchberg Holdings. You guys are a big deal.
(points at Morris)
Morris Securities,
(shrug)
They were a big deal in the late 80's. THAT'S why Lynchberg bought em. Now, no one cares.
(points at Lynchberg)
But you guys are all about the American Dream, the American Way of Life, Free Enterprise, Capitalism with a capital K.

Fulton can see Phipps and company are loving it.

ALLEN (CONT'D)

A big part of Free Enterprise,
Capitalism and the American Way of Life is "We want to be left alone". Don't tell us how to run our business. Right?

They love it.

ALLEN (CONT'D)

In the case of Old Man Morris,
Lynchberg did just that. Lynchberg not only preached the American way of life. They lived it everyday. (MORE)
ALLEN (CONT'D)
Lynchberg left Morris Securities alone.

Now slightly confused.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
Morris was delivering great returns and provided everyone, including Lynchberg solid documentation that all was good in the hood. How would you know it was a Ponzi scheme or the old man was squandering reserves on hookers and blow?

Really confused.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
What does Lynchberg care. Lynchberg upheld its ideals. America! Tell everyone the truth. Be honest, not kind of honest, not conveniently honest but COMPLETELY HONEST - TRANSPARENT. Throw Morris under the bus. Hell, he's dead anyway.

Shocked silence.

INT. WILLIAMS & ASSOC AGENCY - ALLEN'S OFFICE - DAY
A somber Fulton stands over Allen, seated at his desk while Raul stays out of "firing" range.

FULTON
Take a leave of absence or wait for the board of directors to convene.

ALLEN
Fired?

FULTON
You don't work here.

ALLEN
(exhausted)
Stake in the company?

Fulton frowns, turns to Raul.

FULTON
How could you let this happen? (meaning Allen)
He's lost his mind.
A weak smile from Raul. Fulton exits.

ALLEN
What pearls of wisdom would my Mexican grandmother offer up now?

RAUL
Tenga fe.

ALLEN
Meaning?

RAUL
Have a little faith...

Allen bursts out laughing until in steps: Karen who looks great!

ALLEN
Oh my God! The puta's here.

KAREN
What's that mean?

RAUL
You don't want to know.

She looks at Raul, then ignores him.

KAREN
(to Allen)
I wanted to tell you face to face, I signed the divorce papers this morning.

ALLEN
Really?

KAREN
I need to be free.

ALLEN
Karen, you're hardly free. Ted going to make an honest mistress of you?

KAREN
I met someone else. Phillip.

ALLEN
At least you're not denying Ted.

KAREN
Phillip is my everything.

(MORE)
KAREN (CONT'D)
Destiny brought us together. We're just meant to be.

ALLEN
Destiny huh?

KAREN
Phillip's loaded and wants nothing to do with the house, so...

She drops a set of keys on the desk.

KAREN (CONT'D)
I took a few things.

ALLEN
Wonderful news except I have no means to maintain the place. I just got fired.

KAREN
Doesn't matter. I filed a quick claim on it. It's all yours. (big smile)

Ciao.

A spin on her heel to leave. Allen calls after her. She turns.

ALLEN
Karen, you're not such a puta after all. Best of luck to you.

A smile and she exits. Allen picks up the keys, looks to Raul.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
I need a ride.

Raul slumps.

EXT. STEVENS' HOUSE - DAY

The Fiat at the curb, Allen and Raul try the key. It works.

INT. STEVENS' LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Light filters in showing the room's striped bare.

ALLEN
What do you know. The puta took everything.
RAUL
That's a very bad word.

ALLEN
You used it first.

RAUL
She's very bad.

ALLEN
Doesn't matter.

He moves on.

INT. STEVENS' BEDROOM – CONTINUOUS

Equally bare save a few items, such as Allen's penny collection. No longer neatly stacked, but spilled on the floor. They look down at the mess.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOMEGROWN COFFEE JOINT – DAY

Standing in his usual spot, Jed holds his "Spare Change" sign.

Pulling a fully loaded canvas laundry bag from the back of the Fiat, Allen lugs it over to Jed and sets it down.

JED
What's that?

ALLEN
(points at the sign)
Spare change.

As Jed examines the sack, Allen walks up to the coffee house window.

ALLEN'S P.O.V.

Mindy's behind the counter. No Isabel.

Allen's heart aches.

RAUL (O.S.)
Hey compadre, I need to pick up Chris from work.

Allen walks back to the car.

ALLEN
I finally get to meet Chris?
RAUL

Vamanos.

Allen's in the car and they drive off.

EXT. HOOTER'S - DAY

The Fiat comes to a stop.

INT. RAUL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Allen's confused.

ALLEN

What are we doing here?

RAUL

Picking up Chris.

EXT. HOOTER'S - CONTINUOUS

The GORGEOUS BLONDE (in street clothes) we saw Manny talking to at the Quinceanera walks out to the car.

INT. RAUL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS


RAUL

Compadre, would you mind riding in back. Her legs are longer than yours.

Everyone shifts around, Allen cramped in the back, Chris shotgun.

CHRIS

Hello, my darling.

RAUL

Mi amor.

They're very affectionate. Allen's still in shock. Raul eases into traffic.

RAUL (CONT'D)

Querida, this is Allen. You hear me talk about him.

Chris has a distinctive voice.

CHRIS

Hi there. We almost met at the Quinceanera but that douche bag Manny punched you.
ALLEN
(still shocked)
You're the voice of the monkey.

CHRIS
(surprised—to Raul)
You told him?

RAUL
I did not. He's very smart. At least he thinks he's smart.

ALLEN
And you're a woman.

CHRIS
I do a good job sounding like a boy monkey, don't I.
(does the voice)
Di me Abuelita. Do you love me more than all the other monkeys?

RAUL
Por supresto.

They get all kissy again.

ALLEN
And you know Manny?

CHRIS
Know him? He would not let up at the Quinceanera. "Gimme your number, Gimme your number" Tried to kiss me. Not my type.

More kisses up front. They're sloppy.

ALLEN
You met him at the Quinceanera?

CHRIS
Oh no. He trains at the Mega Gym around the corner. Some of the girls know him.

ALLEN
Know him?

CHRIS
He's a talker. Talks about how things are going to get better fast for him.
ALLEN
Is he a nice guy?

CHRIS
Like I said, not my type. Raulito doesn't like him.

They kiss again.

RAUL
You see, compadre I am your friend.

ALLEN
So he's straight with Isabel?

CHRIS
You mean will he cheat? Couldn't say. He's not like my Raoulito.

RAUL
Who wouldn't be. You are la maxima de belleza.
(to Allen)
Maybe he's not a bad man, just a "normal" man.

ALLEN
Isabel deserves more than "normal".

Allen pulls out his cell.

RAUL
Compadre, what are you doing?

ALLEN
Calling her.

He gets her VOICE MAIL. Tries again. Same thing.

INT. SANCHEZ HOME - KITCHEN/DINING AREA - DAY

Her unattended phone vibrating on the table top, Manny sees ALLEN as the incoming call. He shuts off the phone.

He snarls at one of the "inside dogs", then kicks it away.

Carrying an overnight bag, Isabel enters. Surrounded by the inside dogs picking up on her anxiety, they yelp and beg for attention. She can't focus.

Manny yells over the noise. Yap, Yap, Yap.
MANNY
Why you so worried? We're doing the right thing.

ISABEL
What?

MANNY
I said we're doing the right thing.

She shakes her head, still can't hear him. Leading her outside, he gets the door shut without any dogs escaping.

Inez steps into the room as the door closes. She's not happy.

EXT. SANCHEZ HOME - CONTINUOUS

He holds Isabel by the shoulders, looking as romantic as he can.

MANNY
I'm telling you we're doing the right thing. By tonight we'll be Mr. and Mrs. The rest will work itself out.

ISABEL
It's what my mother always wanted.

MANNY
Listen to your mother. Trust me, my darling.

ISABEL
Okay. Let's go to Vegas.

A gentle kiss and they head for Manny's car. Now the "outside dogs" start protesting. Loudly.

Watching from the window, Inez is joined by Bella. They appear sad.

INT. RAUL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Allen's still trying to get Isabel to pick up.

ALLEN
Nothing.

RAUL
She's a very smart woman, Allen. You must trust her.

CHRIS
And she has a beautiful voice.
I'll try Bella.

INT. BELLA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Her cell lights up: ALLEN.

Her grandmother, seated next to her. They hold each other. Bella lifts the cell to her ear.

BELLA
You're too late.

INT. RAUL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Phone at his ear, Allen starts yelling at Raul.

ALLEN
Jesus Christ! We gotta get to Isabel's house.

RAUL
Allen...

ALLEN
Come on. Drive fast like the hot blooded heterosexual Mexican you are.

Suddenly Raul's focused.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The FIAT takes off like a rocket ship.

INT. MANNY'S CAR - DAY

As Isabel stares out the window, Manny produces a pill bottle.

MANNY
Listen, mi amor. We need to have fun tonight and you not having sleep will be bad for that. We're starting a new life together.

She sees the pills.

ISABEL
Ambien?

MANNY
Take one or break it in half. You need to sleep on the way.

(MORE)
MANNY (CONT'D)
In three or four hours you wake, we get married then celebrate all night. I know after-hours places that are off the hook. It'll cost some but we can afford it.

ISABEL
What about sleep for you?

MANNY
Are you kidding? I'm getting hitched to my dream girl. I'm not going to sleep for a month.

This makes her smile. She takes a pill washing it down with some water.

EXT. SANCHEZ HOME - DAY
Screeching to a halt, the Fiat doors open and Allen has to unfold himself from the backseat. At the sound of the outside dogs barking, Wilfredo sticks his head out of the food truck. Followed by Raul and Chris, Allen runs up as Wilfredo descends from the truck wiping his hands.

ALLEN
(desperate)
Did Isabel leave?

Wilfredo sees Raul and Chris.

WILFREDO
Hola, amigo.

Hugs Raul.

RAUL
Cunado.

Wilfredo moves to Chris, kissing her on each cheek.

WILFREDO
Welcome, Chris.

ALLEN
You know her?

WILFREDO
Raul's sweetheart. Sure I do.

ALLEN
How long have you known her?
WILFREDO
Since the Quinceanera.

RAUL
(to Allen)
You were very distracted amigo.

CHRIS
And then incapacitated.

INEZ (O.S.)
Raul, Chris.

Inez and Bella join the group. More hugs and kisses for Raul and Chris.

ALLEN
You all know Chris?

INEZ
Of course.

BELLA
(to Allen)
You weren't there for her dancing.

RAUL
Chris is an amazing dancer.

ALLEN
What about Isabel?

BELLA
She left with Manny.

ALLEN
When's she coming back?

BELLA
I don't know.

ALLEN
Where'd she go?

Bella looks to Inez who turns to the anxious Allen. Inez knows.

CUT TO:

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Having finished filling the tank on his car, Manny looks over lovingly at Isabel who's asleep in the front seat.

Life's good. He gets in on the driver's side and pulls away.
INT. OLDER TACO 24 FOOD TRUCK – DAY

Wilfredo behind the wheel, Allen’s shot gun. We can see Inez and Raul on one side of the back of the truck, Bella and Chris on the other.

With ground to make up, the truck’s flying along the interstate, forcing the people in the back to have to hang on.

RAUL AND INEZ

RAUL
I wasn’t sure you were going to tell him about Las Vegas.

INEZ
I still think he’s weird.

RAUL
You got that right.

CHRIS AND BELLA

CHRIS
Think your mother loves Manny?

BELLA
She doesn't want to disappoint.

CHRIS
Can I just say I don't like Manny. He's a player.

BELLA
Oh yeah. He may care for my mom but I think he likes the idea of her taking care of him more.

CHRIS
You're pretty smart for a fifteen year old.

ALLEN AND WILFREDO

WILFREDO
Watch your feet.

There’s a covered stainless steel tray of food in the floor well. Allen’s got to hold up his feet.

ALLEN
What it is?
WILFREDO
Sauerkraut tacos. Isabel was trying a German/Mexican fusion.

ALLEN
How'd it work out?

WILFREDO
Not good.

The lid slides off the food tray giving them both a whiff of the contents. NOT GOOD.

RAUL AND INEZ

INEZ
(meaning Chris)
Your guera seems like a nice girl.

RAUL
Oh yes. She sees her life as a telenovela.

INEZ
You're the dashing hero.

RAUL
Claro que sí.

CHRIS AND BELLA

BELLA
You in love with Raul?

CHRIS
There's no one else like him.

BELLA
Great in the sack, am I right?

Chris scowls.

BELLA (CONT'D)
Saw it on TV.

ALLEN AND WILFREDO

Allen points.

ALLEN
Up there.

WILFREDO
I see it.
EXT. INTERSTATE - DAY

As the food truck advances, Manny's car is in sight.

INT. OLDER TACO 24 FOOD TRUCK - DAY

Wilfredo sounds the horn. THE BRIDGE OF LA CUCARACHA.

INT. MANNY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Cut off from the outside world, Isabel sleeps soundly as Manny drives.

INT. OLDER TACO 24 FOOD TRUCK - DAY

ALLEN

If you get up alongside on the driver's side I can get their attention.

WILFREDO

I can block him with that line of cars.

INT. MANNY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Catching sight of the APPROACHING food truck in his rear view, Manny's not happy. He looks over at the sleeping Isabel.

EXT. INTERSTATE - CONTINUOUS

The food truck comes up parallel with Manny's muscle car.

INT. OLDER TACO 24 FOOD TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Hanging onto his seat, Allen makes eye contact with Manny.

ALLEN

Pull over.

Manny shakes his head "no".

ALLEN (CONT'D)

Come on man. Pull over. You're done.

Steely eyed, Manny shakes his head "no". Allen can see Isabel sleeping in the passenger seat.

ALLEN (CONT'D)

What the hell??? You drugged her?

No other options available, Allen starts lobbing the stinky German/Mexican fusion tacos onto Manny's windshield.
INT. MANNY'S CAR – CONTINUOUS

Manny's not happy to see his ride desecrated. Isabel doesn't stir.

When he looks back at the food truck he sees INEZ sticking her head into the cab. Has Manny lost his biggest ally?

INT. OLDER TACO 24 FOOD TRUCK – CONTINUOUS

All the tacos expended, Allen makes a choice.

ALLEN

Fuck it!

He JUMPS from the food truck onto Manny's hood, clinging for dear life.

INT. MANNY'S CAR – CONTINUOUS

The thump of Allen landing on the hood wakes Isabel. Manny PULLS OFF to the shoulder.

INT. OLDER TACO 24 FOOD TRUCK – CONTINUOUS

RAUL

Dios mio, he's one crazy gringo.

CHRIS AND BELL

BELLA

Life will never be boring with this guy.

Wilfredo PULLS OFF.

INT. MANNY'S CAR – CONTINUOUS

ISABEL

Allen?

(to Manny)

What's going on? Did you run him down?

Manny asks her a direct question.

MANNY

Are you in love with him?

A pause before she answers.

ISABEL

Yes!!!
MANNY
  (gallant)
  Then go to him.

She's out of the car to check on him.

INT. E.R. - DAY

Both wrists bandaged, his left ankle in a compression cast, Allen's being examined by Dr. Saturwala in the curtained off area. No one else is present.

  DR. SATURWALA
  As I have said before Mr. Stevens, you are a fortunate man. A person jumping onto an automobile traveling at 70 MPH...

  ALLEN
  More like 50, maybe even 40.

  DR. SATURWALA
  Nevertheless, the physical toll would normally be much higher.

  ALLEN
  I don't plan on coming back.

  DR. SATURWALA
  That would be most welcome.
    (beat)
    Of course, you will need assistance during your convalescence. You're here alone?

  ISABEL (O.S.)
  We're here.

Pulling the curtain to one side, Isabel reveals herself, Bella, Wilfredo, Inez, Raul and Chris.

  DR. SATURWALA
  The young lady who is NOT Mr. Stevens' wife.

  ISABEL
  I'm his girl friend.

Let THAT sink in.

The group moves closer to Allen. Isabel placing her hand on Allen's shoulder.

  DR. SATURWALA
  Excellent. You must take good care of him.
ISABEL
I will.

DR. SATURWALA
(looking at the group)
Some of you I've had the pleasure of meeting. Others, not.

The Doctor hands a set of crutches to Raul.

DR. SATURWALA (CONT'D)
He'll need these for a couple of weeks.

RAUL
Dio mio. They're so bland.
(to Chris and Bella)
We should paint them, no?

BELLA/CHRIS
Yes!

Allen's cell rings. He fumbles to pick it up.

ALLEN
(to the room)
Excuse me.
(into the phone)
Yes?

INT. WILLIAMS & ASSOC AGENCY - FULTON'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

The SAME YOUNG LADY who was with Fulton in ALLEN'S COMA sits at Mavis' desk, only instead of long hair and glamours she's mousey short-haired, glasses and frumpy.

JUNE/MAY
Mr. Stevens. I have Mr. Williams calling.

INTERCUT BETWEEN ALLEN AND MAY

ALLEN
What happened to Mavis?

JUNE/MAY
She's no longer with the company.

ALLEN
Is your name June?

JUNE/MAY
(puzzled)
It's May.
ALLEN

Close.

JUNE/MAY

I'll connect you.

INT. WILLIAMS & ASSOC AGENCY - FULTON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

TELEVISION SCREEN

A BANNER identifying HAMILTON PHIPPS, CEO OF LYNCHBERG HOLDINGS.

PHIPPS

...Lynchberg Holdings is all about the American Dream, the American way of life, Free Enterprise, Capitalism with a capital K...

A CRAWL ACROSS the screen declares Lychberg stock trading UP.

Muting the television, Fulton picks up the phone, June/May walks in.

FULTON

Allen. You get hit by a car or something?

INTERCUT BETWEEN ALLEN AND FULTON

ALLEN

Jumped on one.

FULTON

(confused)

What?

(then)

Anyway, your pitch for Lynchberg was magic. They love you.

ALLEN

I don't work there anymore. What about Raul?

FULTON

I offered him the job and the little beaner faggot turned me down. Can you believe it?

Looking at Raul, who's chatting with Chris, Inez and Bella Allen's face hardens.
ALLEN
(pissed)
Don't ever use those types of derogatory terms about my friend again, ever.

FULTON
Hey? Easy man...

Allen hangs up.

INT. WILLIAMS & ASSOC AGENCY - FULTON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Shocked, Fulton stares at the phone then looks to June/May.

FULTON
The bastard hung up on me!

EXT. SANCHEZ HOME - DAY

Food truck back in the driveway, Raul's Fiat's behind it. Isabel swings into the drive.

As they pull Allen from the car, Wilfredo exits the food truck carrying serving trays into the house.

WILFREDO
I knew you would be late.

ISABEL
Expect nothing less.

As Allen limps toward the house, he's met by Raul.

RAUL
I brought your clothes, slacks with the impeccable crease.

ALLEN
Talked to Fulton, why didn't you take the job?

RAUL
(in Abuelita voice)
No seas pendejo.

ALLEN
I know an attorney you can use to secure the license of your abuelita character. If you like I thought we'd put together a pitch reel and see where it goes.
RAUL
Would we be partners?

ALLEN
I hope so.

Big smile from Raul.

RAUL
Excellente.

As they all move into the house the inside dogs come to greet them.

INT. SANCHEZ HOME - KITCHEN/DINING AREA - DAY

BEGIN MONTAGE:


DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SANCHEZ HOME - KITCHEN/DINING AREA - EVENING

The meal wears down. Inez starts picking up plates. Bella helps.

END MONTAGE:

DISSOLVE TO:

Everyone else scattered, Allen joins Isabel at the island counter in the kitchen. She brings out TWO MUGS of fresh coffee.

ISABEL
Don't worry. It's just coffee.

Taking a sugar packet, Isabel wets the rim of her cup then coats it with sugar like a lemon drop cocktail. Allen watches intently.

ALLEN
It's how your grandmother always did it.

Isabel smiles.

ISABEL
Dulzura en cada sorbito.

They tap mugs and sip.

DISSOLVE TO:
INT. SANCHEZ HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Empty coffee mugs sitting on the end table beside a worn leather sofa. Allen gently strokes Isabel's hair as she sleeps. She wakes looking up, radiantly happy to see him.

    ALLEN
    Good sleep?

    ISABEL
    I dreamed we had a little girl and named her Mia.

    ALLEN
    Mia was my grandmother's name.

    ISABEL
    I know.

A moment of peaceful bliss.

    FADE OUT: