

CHEECHAKO

"Pilot"

Written by

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EXT. DETROIT - DAY

Super: Late Fall 1958

Montage of Detroit icons of that period and locations with a final view of a suburban brick and mortar hospital.

EXT. HOTEL PARKING LOT - DAY

Nurse PAULA Porter, late 30s, has arrived for work. Sits in her car smoking and staring at the hospital. Taps her fingers on the steering wheel.

PAULA

Twenty more. Twenty.

Takes last drag, and steps out of the car. Crushes the cigarette on the pavement and head to work.

INT. HOSPITAL LOCKER ROOM - DAY

CINDY, 30s, is closing her locker. Cindy is upbeat. Perky.

CINDY

Morning. Ready for a new week of doc's I wouldn't want to treat me?

PAULA

Smiles.

Hey there. Sure. Why not. Need a moment.

CINDY

You okay?

PAULA

Yeah. Just thinkin'.

CINDY

What ever it is, I sure it can wait. See you on the floor.

PAULA

Yeah. One more cigarette first.

EXT. ANCHORAGE, ALASKA - NIGHT

Super: Anchorage, Alaska

Anchorage with its waterfront and surrounding wilderness in early winter. White. Stark. Its buildings are non-descript and utilitarian.

Sounds of wind and the crunch of freezing snow as BILL Egan, (52) approaches a diner.

INT. ANCHORAGE DINER - MOMENTS LATER

The diner is busy and loud, but gets more subdued as the patrons recognized Bill when he enters.

The patrons break out in applause. Bill waves his hat and mouths "Thank you" to the crowd. He removes his winter coat as he approaches his luncheon meeting.

Clock on the wall is at eight o'clock.

He acknowledges the diner cook and owner ED, 40s, at the kitchen's pass thru window, and his hostess/server wife MARTHA, 40s. Everyone knows everyone. Bill shakes hands with ANDY Koresh, 40s.

BILL
Morning, Councilman.

ANDY
Senator.

Martha is at table side as the men sit down. She's already pouring Bill a cup of coffee.

BILL
Where's our third?

ANDY
He's on his way..

THOMAS Rawlings, 30s, enters.

ANDY (CONT'D)
There he is..

Andy stands up. Bill does not and drinks his coffee.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Bill, this is Thomas Rawlings.
Tom's..

BILL
I recognize Tom. Car lot on the north side.

THOMAS

Senator Egan. Soon to be First Governor...

BILL

Not yet, but thank you.

THOMAS

It would be the right thing given all your work for our statehood.

BILL

I appreciate the words.

THOMAS

Our first governor should be a native Alaskan.

Andy gives Thomas a two hand signal to slow down as he looks at Bill.

ANDY

As you and I discussed our state needs people.

BILL

Voters. The right voters.

ANDY

Tom has an idea for both, but we need support of the new state government. Those who would have the authority, and it wouldn't cost our state a dime. Thing is, those people need to start arriving next spring.

Bill nods at Thomas with palms open with a "tell me more" gesture.

BILL

Thomas...

THOMAS

We have like an Oklahoma land rush. Well, in our case, an Alaska land rush promoting us as the "*Last Frontier.*"

BILL

A land rush?

ANDY

Land grants.

BILL
For?

THOMAS
Farming.

BILL
Slight smile and chuckle.

ANDY
What's expensive in Alaska?

BILL
Everything.

ANDY
But, if we could get people to build themselves a community, a farming community that could locally produce food for Anchorage...

BILL
And you Thomas? What's your part of this "land rush?"

THOMAS
Well, definitely not farming.

More smiles and chuckles from Bill and Andy.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
I'm in the transportation business. Not the transport business. We are short on capital equipment. Getting cars, trucks, and construction equipment shipped up here...

BILL
And?

THOMAS
I get investors to fund our purchasing this and other pieces of heavy equipment. Say close to where they're made. We buy 'em. Have the homesteaders drive or haul them up here at a share of investors and homesteaders expense. Then we sell them.

ANDY

They'll all be living close to each other, so they will buy a few of these items for themselves. Their own Co-op sort of speak.

BILL

What land did you have in mind?

THOMAS

Detroit.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Paula opens her locker, hangs up her purse and jacket, and takes out and puts on her name badge.

JANICE, 20s, walks up to the other side of Paula's door. Janice stops and stares at Paula, and Paula becomes aware of Janice's presence. Paula SLAMS her locker door. Janice reaches for Paula's shoulder.

JANICE

I just can't stop thinking about you.

Paula takes a step back and responds softly but firm.

PAULA

I prefer that you did. Just stop this!

She keeps moving toward Paula.

JANICE

I just can't. You're the most attractive woman....

Paula puts both hands up. Janice touches her. Paula keeps stepping back.

PAULA

You make my skin crawl.

JANICE

Well, that's a start. There are other things I can make your skin do.

PAULA

I'm late.

Paula turns and walks out around a corner. Janice loud enough that she can be heard.

JANICE
I'm a very good time.

Paula gets around the corner, she stops and leans against the wall. She's shaking. She reaches into the uniform pocket. She pulls out a pill and swallows it.

INT. NURSES STATION - DAY

CINDY
What's wrong?

PAULA
Janice made another pass at me.

CINDY
Shit! Again? Was this the thing you needed a moment to deal with?

PAULA
No. I just feelin' a little off lately.

Paula points to the already prepared script cart.

PAULA (CONT'D)
Thanks for helping.

CINDY
What are you going to do? This is what, the third time?

PAULA
I've lost count. She gives me the creeps.

Cindy tries to comfort her and puts her hand on Paula's shoulder.

CINDY
You might want to take a stronger approach.

She tries to be lighthearted.

CINDY (CONT'D)
Well, you are a damn beautiful woman.

PAULA

Sarcastic

Well if you say it's so, it must be true.

They both laugh as Cindy pushes her cart to make her rounds. Paula looks at her round sheet and finishes preparing the script cups on her cart.

Janice appears and intentionally brushes Paula with her body as she walks by. Paula grabs both ends her cart and closes her eyes. She takes a deep breath. She takes one pill from a cup and puts it in her pocket. She moves on.

INT. PORTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

STAN Porter, 39, is sleeping in a dark bedroom. Footsteps from hallway bathroom is heard. Paula stops at the bedroom doorway. Her uniform nurse profile is outlined by the hallway light. She looks at Stan.

PAULA

Deep breathe and sighs.
Forever.

INT. PORTER BASEMENT - NIGHT

Paula comes downstairs with basket of dirty laundry. Turns on light. Walks to washer. Pulls one of Stan's white dress shirts. It has black ring on the collar. She dilutes water with bleach. She scrubs the collar with the mixture. Puts it in the washer with the other whites.

PAULA

Sighs
Forever.

Turns on the machine and goes back upstairs.

INT. PORTER KITCHEN - NIGHT

Paula gathers her purse and sits at the table. She pulls a cigarette and lighter from the purse and starts to light up, when her son NICK, 18, shuffles into the kitchen. She puts the cigarette back in the purse.

PAULA

Good morning, sweetheart.

NICK

Sleepy mumbling.

Morning.

She stands up as he sits. She gets him a bowl, spoon, milk, and cereal. He takes it from there.

PAULA
Running late. See you tonight. Love
you.

NICK
'kay.

She starts to leave, then comes back to the table. She takes a couple dollars out of her purse and places them in front of Nick.

PAULA
Love you.

NICK
Love you.

INT/EXT - PORTER DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Paula starts the car. Returns to the cigarette she wanted moments ago. Closes her eyes. Takes a long drag, and exhales slowly.

PAULA
Eighteen. Shit. I was never
Eighteen.

EXT. MICHIGAN FACTORY TOWN - DAY

One foundry town.

INT/EXT. POLICE CAR - MORNING

Sergeant BOBBY Scott, 40s, sits in his patrol car watching the factory workers coming to work. STAN Porter pulls into the designated parking area for management.

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - DAY

Stan stands on the floor with maintenance mechanic CAMERON Edward, late 20s. They are looking at a blueprint.

Cameron is nodding to Stan as the lunch whistle blows. They shake hands and part.

Stan walks off the floor. Cameron picks up a bag lunch and walks to where other animated workers are having lunch. He sits next to EDDIE, 30s.

EDDIE

Sarcastic but upbeat.

How's Mr. Porter today?

CAMERON

Nonchalant.

Didn't ask. Don't care. Needed help on some calibrations.

EDDIE

What do you think of him?

CAMERON

I don't. He solved a problem on the line. That's it.

EDDIE

He's the Lampkin new hire?.

CAMERON

Yeah. They're all the same. Nothin' else to say. But, he's nobody's boss here.

EDDIE

So you say. Comin' to the hall Saturday?

CAMERON

Not sure.

EDDIE

Emphatic

You need to be there, man. It's coming. We need to be ready. You need to be ready. It will spread, and that ol' man will shut us out early, and have scabs lined up before we can support our brothers in Detroit.

CAMERON

Don't cha worry. That ol' man loves his money too much to shut us out until you union boys shut down his lines. I hate strikes. It don't change nothin'.

EDDIE

Solidarity man. Solidarity.

CAMERON

Only thing solid is your head.

BOTH

Laugh.

They settle in to eat their cold lunches.

EXT/INT. FOUNDRY TOWN DINER - DAY

Stan walks across the street from the factory to a diner. He enters and sits at the counter. Waitress DARLENE, 20s, average appearance, is behind the counter. She has a deep bruise on her forearm.

DARLENE

Stan. The wifey forgot to pack the lunch pail today?

STAN

No, not today. Paula leaves before I do. Just want a hot meal.

DARLENE

Really? She works too?

STAN

Yeah, a nurse.

Darlene holds up a coffee pot. Stan nods yes.

STAN (CONT'D)

Please.

DARLENE

Nods towards Stan's office as she pours coffee.

You settled in over there yet?

Stan notices the bruise on her arm. He takes a long look at the cook and FRANK, 30s, through a pass-thru opening to the kitchen.

STAN

Pretty much. Not much different from the old one. Just another foundry. But not having to go into the city.

He notices Frank paying attention to their conversation from the pass-thru window. The two men exchange looks. Stan comments without looking at Darlene.

STAN (CONT'D)

Cuts my drive by an hour.

DARLENE

I hear that.

STAN

I'll just have the meatloaf, please.

DARLENE

Right away.

She turns to her husband.

DARLENE (CONT'D)

Meat and mash.

She moves to another customer at the counter.

INT. NURSES STATION - DAY

Paula is making her rounds of med distribution. She sees Janice's back to her in the corridor. She puts her head down and picks up a little speed as she reaches Janice. Paula elbows her HARD in the shoulder and keeps on moving.

Janice omits a groan as the force is enough to spin her face into the wall. Janice's nose bleeds. She touches her nose and looks at the blood and licks it.

JANICE

Too bad bitch.

INT. DETROIT CITY AIRPORT - DAY

Thomas is in a phone booth making a call as he looks at a crumpled up paper.

THOMAS

George Cavanagh, please. Thomas Rawlins. Yes, Alaska guy.

Pause

THOMAS (CONT'D)

George. Hello. Tom Rawlins. Yes. Just arrived... St. Clair Shores? No, but I'll find a hotel nearby. I'm getting a rental car now. I'll call you from the hotel tonight. Great. Me too.

EXT/INT. FOUNDRY TOWN DINER - DAY

Cop Bobby Scott parks his patrol car in front and enters the diner.

EXT/INT. FOUNDRY TOWN DINER - DAY

Cop Bobby Scott enters the lightly occupied diner and sits next to Stan.

DARLENE

Bobbie, have you met Stan yet? He's the new plant engineer for Lampkin.

BOBBY

Stan.

He looks at Bobbie's last name badge and sleeve chevron.

STAN

Sergeant Scott.

BOBBY

Where's home?

STAN

We're renting near Mt Clemens.

BOBBY

Veteran?

Stan looks back at chef Frank, who's watching.

STAN

Yes.

BOBBY
Me too. Korea. How 'bout you.

STAN
Burma.

BOBBY
Burma? Never heard of Burma. Where
the hell is that?

Turns his head away from Bobby and gets up to leave.

STAN
What comes after Hell.

Pause

Darlene, check please.

He puts money on the counter to cover the meal and tip, and
walks out.

STAN (CONT'D)
Sergeant.

Pause

Sergeant Bobbie looks at Darlene.

BOBBY
What's with him?

DARLENE
What's with you?

INT. NURSES STATION - DAY

Paula is reviewing charts as Cindy approaches the station.

CINDY
Fifteen more minutes..

PAULA
Yeah. Then we get to go home to our
second job.

CINDY

Chuckles

Ah, being a mother to a teen.
There's always drama.

PAULA

Well, that's almost over for you too.

CINDY

At lease the first one. But I don't think it will ever be "over" for either of us.

PAULA

No, Nicky will always be my baby. Only seven more months and graduation.

CINDY

You're lucky. You didn't have a girls. That's been a whole different situation, ya know?

PAULA

Only by your stories.

CINDY

Does he know what he wants to do?

PAULA

Not really. Both Nick and I talk about it. Mostly the possibility of college. His dad doesn't think he needs to go to college. He thinks enlistment is the option. Teaching him something on the government's dime.

CINDY

Good God! That must be quite the conversation around the dinner table.

PAULA

There is no more conversation...on that.

CINDY

College. That's expensive. How you going to swing that Stan is only focus on a new house?

PAULA

I've always worked. A waitress before this. I've always figured something out.

FLASHBACK

INT. BANK - DAY

Younger Paula, late 20's, enters bank. She gets a deposit slip from a kiosk. There's a Christmas Club promotion piece on the kiosk. Paula steps up to bank teller, MARTHA, 30'S.

MARTHA
Hi, Mrs. Porter.

PAULA
Martha.

Paula pulls two paychecks out of purse and some cash.

PAULA (CONT'D)
I like to make the regular deposit,
and open a savings account with
cash.

MARTHA
Okay. We'd be happy to add the new
account for Stan and you.

PAULA
Not my husband. My own...
Christmas Club account.

MARTHA
Oh, I see.

PAULA
On second thought. We'll just
deposit the paychecks. Thanks.

END OF FLASHBACK

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - DAY

Paul and Cindy are walking to their cars. Paula stops to light a cigarette.

CINDY
Any more with Janice today?

PAULA
No.

CINDY
That's good.

PAULA

Yeah. Saw her. Just that look, you know. No talk. But I'm sure she got the message this time.

Cindy smiles with a soft chuckle.

CINDY

Work isn't the place for that kind of shit, anyway. I don't get it. Yeeech! I think they're just unhappy. We've got great guys, families. A good life.

PAULA

Yeah. I just don't know. I should be grateful where Stan and I are in our lives.

CINDY

From what you've told me, you've got what most women want. He sounds like an unselfish man. And stable.

PAULA

I keep telling myself that. And all that's gone on with us. I just can't explain it. Here I am, 36. I should be happy. Very happy. I'm just feeling so...blue. Maybe it's knowing my Nicky will be leaving soon. Then what?

CINDY

Maybe you need a break. Stay home.

PAULA

Good God, no! Work is gratifying. *I* need the money. Nicky needs the money for college.

CINDY

I don't know what to tell you. You two seem to have it made. Anyway, I've got to scoot and make dinner for the family.

PAULA

Yeah, that *other* job.

They laugh and hug good-bye.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Paula gets in her car. Lights up another cigarette and just sits there thinking. Inhales. Exhales.

PAULA

Then what? What most women want.
This great life.

EXT. FACTORY TOWN DINER - DAY

The workforce is leaving the factory. Cameron leaves the worker entrance and walks over to the diner.

Officer Bobbie Scott is watching from his patrol car.

INT. FACTORY TOWN DINER - DAY

Cameron enters.

DARLENE

Cam.

CAMERON

Darlene

DARLENE

It's not Friday.

CAMERON

Nothing gets by you. It's been a long day, and I don't feel like what's in the freezer. Got any meatloaf left?

DARLENE

I'll check.

Darlene goes to the pass-thru window where Frank has been watching.

FRANK

Yeah, we have some left.

Darlene walks back to Cameron.

DARLENE

Yes, you want the platter?

CAMERON

Please.

Darlene writes the order and passes it to Frank. She returns to her end of day counter duties working her way back to Cameron. Frank continues to watch her as he prepares the order.

DARLENE

You got plans for the weekend?

CAMERON

Not much. High School football game tomorrow tonight.

Cameron notices her forearm bruise and points to it.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

That still hurt?

DARLENE

What? Not much. Little tender still.

CAMERON

That must of been some drawer.

Cameron looks at Frank puts the meal in the pass-thru opening.

FRANK

Order up!

Darlene gets the bag and checks out the meal. It is mostly mashed potatoes and half a serving of the meatloaf. She gives her husband a look, and he gives her a look.

FRANK (CONT'D)

What?

DARLENE

You know what.

She goes into the kitchen. Cameron is watching.

FRANK (O.C.)

What are you doing?

DARLENE (O.C.)

Giving him his full order.

Sound of physical confrontation from the kitchen and Darlene suppresses a gasp.

DARLENE (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Don't you dare! Not here!

She comes out, and Cameron is standing at the door. Her eyes are watering. She gives him his meal.

DARLENE (CONT'D)

We're closing soon, so there's a little extra in there for you.

Cameron gives her cash for the meal and puts a some cash in her apron pocket. As he walks he stops. Looks back at Frank through the pass through. As he steps out side, he hears voices raised and china breaking.

INT. PORTER KITCHEN TABLE - NIGHT

Paula and Stan are at the table which is set for three. They are holding hands and finishing a prayer. She cuts him a slice of meatloaf and puts it on his plate.

PAULA

Did you meet anybody new today?

STAN

I met a local cop at the diner. A sergeant Scott.

PAULA

Was he nice?

STAN

We didn't get to nice. Just started asking questions.

PAULA

I get it. You've never been much of a talker. Anyway, you are the fresh face in town. Local folks want some details about the new guy.

STAN

Yeah, probably should have given...

Sound of a door opening.

PAULA

Nicky?

NICK (O.C.)

Yeah!

STAN
Come on. The meatloaf is getting cold.

Nick enters the kitchen.

NICK
Man, I'm starving.

STAN
Boy, you don't know what starving is.

PAULA
Stan, please.

NICK
It's okay, mom. I've heard the dandelion story a million times.

STAN
And you'll keep hearing it.

Family soft laughter.

STAN (CONT'D)
How was practice?

NICK
No contact. Game tomorrow night.

PAULA
Do you think you'll get in?

NICK
If I do, it won't be much. Jonas would have to break a leg or something.

STAN
He *is* very fast.

NICK
Coach call him Jo Nasty Quick.

More soft laughter.

INT. NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING OFFICE - DAY

It is loud with people on the phone and typing as they speak.
AD CLERK, 40s, female, addresses him at the counter.

AD CLERK

Can I help you?

THOMAS

Yes ma'am. My name is Thomas Rawlins. I'd like to place an ad for this weekend.

AD CLERK

Can't do tomorrow. Let me check for Sunday. What do you have?

Thomas pulls a piece of paper from his briefcase and hands it to the clerk. She reads it.

AD CLERK (CONT'D)

Free land in Alaska, huh?

THOMAS

Yes.

AD CLERK

If you want to have a seat, I'll see about space for Sunday.

Thomas sits on a chair across from the counter. Ad Clerk walks to the back of the office. She makes two calls. While she's on the second call, CATHY, 30s, enters the waiting area.

CATHY

Mr. Rawlins?

THOMAS

Yes.

CATHY

Good morning. I'm Cathy Chatham. I'm a feature writer for the paper. I got a call that you are offering free land in Alaska for homesteading.

THOMAS

Yes. That is correct.

AD CLERK

Excuse me.

CATHY

Go ahead.

AD CLERK

I'm so sorry. We can't get your ad set up for Sunday. We could run it next weekend, and you could take some space in the classified section this weekend for 99 cents.

THOMAS

That's the rate?

AD CLERK

For the weekend. It's a promotion.

THOMAS

Done!

CATHY

Tell you what, Mr. Rawlins. If you can come upstairs and give us an exclusive here in Detroit for the weekend, maybe we can help you out on your primary ad rate and graphics.

Ad Clerk nods yes to Cathy.

THOMAS

Really?

CATHY

Really. Let's go upstairs.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Stan and Paula are walking to the high school football bleachers to watch their son's team.

STAN

I'm going to miss this.

PAULA

This part of it, yeah.

STAN

What's the other part?

PAULA

I swear Stanley Porter. Sometimes you have a brick for brains. You don't see what's right in front of you.

STAN

What?

PAULA

The stuff you're not involved in; PTA, making sure Nicky gets to all of his events, being nice with mothers I really don't like.

STAN

C'mon. I was there for his Boy Scouts, little league..

PAULA

We both were.

STAN

We're his parents. *It's what we do.* A small family focused on our child. It's not the time for this, again. Let's go find a place to sit and hope Nicky gets in.

PAULA

You're right. You go ahead and find a seat. I need a cigarette.

EXT. BLEACHERS - NIGHT

Stan is walking on the lower aisle of the bleachers and sees Cameron coming from the other side with family and friends. They acknowledge each other, and Stan walks towards to meet him. They shake hands.

STAN

Haven't seen you here before.

Cameron points to a woman going up the stairs.

CAMERON

My sister's son. Thought I'd come see him play tonight.. You have a son on the team?

Stan points to Nick warming up on the field. Paula sees Stan talking to Cameron and heads up another aisle to find a place to sit.

STAN

Yeah, Nick. Plays halfback, but not much. Plays behind a fantastic player. Kid named Jonas....

CAMERON
My nephew! Jonas Cleary.

STAN
Jo Nasty Quick?

Both men chuckle and smile.

CAMERON
Yeah, we're really proud of him.
Even got a couple of colleges
looking at him.

STAN
Colleges. Wow.

Stan looks around and sees Paula has already found a place to sit. She waves at Stan.

STAN (CONT'D)
That's great. Oops. My wife has
already found our seats.

He points to her, waves, and shows one minute with his hand.

STAN (CONT'D)
Let's get a win. See ya,

CAMERON
Yea man, see ya.

They part and head to their respective black and white section of the same bleachers.

EXT. BLEACHERS - NIGHT

Paula is sitting next to FOOTBALL DAD, 30's, and FOOTBALL MOM, 30's. Football Dad is listening to the wives conversation and watching Stan.

FOOTBALL MOM
Paula, who was that man your
husband was talking?

PAULA
I don't know.

FOOTBALL MOM
He's new. I haven't seen him
before.

Disapproving tone from Football Dad.

FOOTBALL DAD
Seems your husband knows him.

Paula gives Football Dad a look.

PAULA
So it would seem.

Stan is making his way to sit next to Paula.

PAULA (CONT'D)
Hon, who was that man you were
speaking to?

STAN
Cameron from work. Turns out he's
Jonas' uncle.

PAULA
Really? What a small world.

Football Mom comments to Football Dad loud enough that both
Paula and Stan hear it.

FOOTBALL MOM
Clearly not small enough.

PAULA
What's that supposed to mean?

FOOTBALL DAD
It means just because we have a few
niggers on our team doesn't mean
you have to socialize with 'em.

Paula stands up. Stan stands up and puts his hand on his
wife's shoulder to sit.

Pause

STAN
You can apologize to my wife.

FOOTBALL DAD
For what?

STAN
I don't know where to begin.

FOOTBALL DAD
Well, Mr. Do Gooder. Ain't no
apology coming from me to a nigger
lover.

Pause

STAN

Paula, you need to get behind me.

PAULA

You really doing this?

STAN

Paula. Do it.

Paula slides over and then stands up. The surrounding people take note that something is about to go down.

STAN (CONT'D)

When you say "ain't no", that sounds like yes.

FOOTBALL DAD

What?

STAN

Double negative. Like, ain't you had no schoolin'?

Paula giggles.

STAN (CONT'D)

You're really saying you went to school. But from what I've just heard, not much took.

Paula giggles some more, leans over and smiles at Football Mom.

FOOTBALL MOM

Daddy, let's just quiet down.

To his wife.

FOOTBALL DAD

You shut up!

A gasp from the surrounding people. Paula makes an "oh-oh" face but doesn't speak.

FOOTBALL DAD (CONT'D)

Look, nigger lover. If it wasn't for the game, I'd kick your ass right now.

Stan looks at the scoreboard which is counting the minutes before kickoff.

STAN
Well, we still have ten minutes
before kickoff.

Stan points to an area behind the bleachers.

FOOTBALL DAD
You're an asshole! I only need
five.

The two men work their way down the bleachers to the area behind the bleachers. People in the bleachers are repositioning themselves to watch the impending fight.

EXT. BLEACHERS - MOMENTS LATER

Stan and Football Dad are facing each other.

FOOTBALL DAD
Well, nigger lover...

STAN
Well, little man. Let's see that
acorn you got for a dick.

Football Dad charges, and Stan sidesteps and catches the man off-balance with a right cross. He falls and rolls over. He gets up. People start to gather around the two men.

EXT. BLEACHERS - CONTINUOUS

STAN
Still waiting...

Football Dad takes his hand and catches Stan with the other hand in the jaw.

FOOTBALL DAD
Not finished.....

EXT. BLEACHERS - NIGHT

Two police officers break through the spectators surrounding the men. Bobbie Scott and POLICE OFFICER 2, 30s, arrive and break up the fight. Each officer has one of the combatants by the arm: Bobbie with Stan, and PO2 with Football Dad.

BOBBIE SCOTT

I don't know what started this. I can guess. But right now, I don't really care.

FOOTBALL DAD

He insulted my wife....

PO2 elbows Football Dad in the ribs.

POLICE OFFICER 2

Shut up. We're still talking.

He looks up at the people in the bleachers.

BOBBIE SCOTT

Does anyone wish to press charges against either one of these boys.

Smattering of chuckles from the bleachers.

FOOTBALL DAD

I want....

Another elbow to his rib from PO2.

POLICE OFFICER 2

Shut up. We're still talking.

BOBBIE SCOTT

Okay, hearing nothing. We all would like to see a football game.

Looks at bleachers?

Right?

BLEACHER CROWD

Yeah!

POLICE OFFICER 2

If we have another disturbance from either of you tonight, or any other night, it will be more than a night in a holding cell. Got it?

STAN

Yes.

FOOTBALL DAD

Yeah.

Stan shakes Bobbie's hand.

STAN

Thanks.

BOBBIE SCOTT

Go on. They're kicking off.

Stan looks up at the bleachers. Paula is standing next to Cameron at the top of the bleacher railing. She is smiling.

INT. PORTER KITCHEN TABLE - NIGHT

Paula is tending Stan's cuts and bruises from the fight. There's medicine and a whiskey bottle on the table. Stan is holding a glass with ice and whiskey to his forehead. Paula's is on the table.

PAULA

Cindy is right.

STAN

About?

PAULA

You're a good man.

STAN

Were you surprised?

PAULA

About?

STAN

Tonight.

PAULA

No. Not really.

She kisses him on the cheek.

STAN

I thought we were headed for an argument.

PAULA

Shh....not tonight.

STAN

I wonder what will happen to Nicky at school now?

PAULA

Don't worry about our son. Stop thinking. You can't do that tomorrow.

She unzips his fly and reaches inside his pants.

PAULA (CONT'D)
How's this feeling?

He swallows his drink.

STAN
Like recovery.

EXT. DETROIT MUSEUM OF ART - DAY

Paula and Nick arrive at the front entrance of the museum. Paula has a box camera with her. She stops a passer-by to have them take a picture of them in front of a replica of Rodin's "The Thinker." They enter the museum.

Paula and Nick enter the atrium enveloped by the fresco of Sergio Garcia and men working on automobile assembly lines.

PAULA
Let's sit.

INT. DETROIT MUSEUM OF ART - DAY

Perspectives of the frescos as the talk.

PAULA
I'm going to miss this.

NICK
Miss what?

PAULA
Our little trips like this.

NICK
We'll still do this.

PAULA
Probably not after you graduate. I hope so, but your life will...

NICK
Will what?

PAULA
What to do see in Garcia's fresco?

NICK
Men working.

PAULA
Like your dad?

NICK
Yeah, like dad.

PAULA
Did you know I use to do work like
that in a factory?

NICK
Really? When?

PAULA
When you dad was in the war. You
were just a baby.

NICK
So, when dad came back, you didn't
have to work there anymore?

PAULA
Sort of. More like women were no
wanted or accepted for that kind of
work anymore.

NICK
That was a good thing, right?

PAULA
Not for mothers whose husbands
didn't come home.

She stands. Nick stands. She puts her hand on his shoulder.

PAULA (CONTINUED) (CONT'D)
I've always loved this place. I
envy the artists' perspectives and
the creativity in their worlds.

NICK
Like this mural?

PAULA
These frescos? More like a
compromise. An artist's style
blended into his patron's wishes.

NICK
What's the compromise?

PAULA

Like your father and me, some artists have lived, and some still do, with little food on the table. They "sacrifice" for their art, but some also figure out how to do what they love, and get paid for it.

NICK

And food on his table.

She hugs him.

PAULA

Sometimes a whole banquet. Let's see what's new.

EXT. CAR LOT - DAY

Thomas is meeting with GEORGE, 40's. George has the list in his hand.

GEORGE

This is quite a list. I thought you just wanted cars.

THOMAS

I do. But I need these vehicles that will bring more of a premium in Anchorage. Four-wheel drive, two tractor trailer rigs, back hoes....

GEORGE

Caterpillar equipment?

THOMAS

I wish. Used, maybe. A small dozer. Yeah, backhoes, drilling accessories.

GEORGE

Anything else?

THOMAS

I can't give you quantities now, but the check marks are must haves. The have to be in place, or reserved to by late February. I need someone who can find and secure them on a schedule that works for my investors.

GEORGE

Why not now?

THOMAS

I need to find people who are committed to the migration. People licensed to drive and know how to operate the rigs and equipment. Might even have to train them.

GEORGE

When does that start?

THOMAS

Next Saturday. Why don't you come?

GEORGE

We good on my fee?

THOMAS

You good on our terms, conditions, and deliverables?

George puts out his hand and shakes with Thomas.

GEORGE

Why not? Sales are sales.

INT. PORTER KITCHEN TABLE - DAY

Stan and Paula are sharing the morning paper. She is looking at the real estate section. Stan has the sports section. Paula is circling open house listings.

PAULA

I'm thinking this is a terrible time to look for a house.

Stan looking at his paper without looking at Paula.

STAN

You'd think this would be a good time. Most people have already made their moves before the school year started.

PAULA

Exactly. We haven't. Well, these three open houses are the only ones within fifteen miles of our work.

STAN

30 minute drive, max.

PAULA
Maybe we should revisit some of the
new subdivisions out west.

Stan lowers the paper.

STAN
Eighteen thousand dollars is a lot
of money for a house.

PAULA
We thought the house in Redford
Township was expensive.

STAN
We need an extra bedroom as before.

PAULA
I don't want to do that anymore.

STAN
Do what?

PAULA
Having you brother or sister
dropping in for an extended stay.

INT. PORTER KITCHEN TABLE - DAY

Paula looks down at the feature section of the paper on the table. She sees the *article about Alaska on the top fold of section*. She picks it up to read.

PAULA
So, you still want to do these open
houses this afternoon?

STAN
Yeah. We need to find some place
where *you* will be happy.

She puts the paper down, but leaves a finger on the story.

PAULA
I'm happy.

STAN
Really? It's hard to tell lately.

INT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

Thomas is the only one at the bar. The BARTENDER, 20s, is on the phone with his back to Thomas. He is at the other end of the bar.

He whispers into the phone.

BARTENDER

It's Sunday. What to you think is going on? No one 'cept this guy from Alaska. Been here all week. Yeah. Bored. Probably.

He hangs up and walks towards Thomas.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

Another, Thomas?

THOMAS

Sure.

Bartender preps Thomas' next drink as they talk.

BARTENDER

Did you go somewhere today?

THOMAS

Belle Isle. Just watched the ships sail by. I didn't realize...they're so long!

BARTENDER

Great day to do that. Indian Summer.

Chuckles.

THOMAS

In Alaska, we only have two seasons.

BARTENDER

Two?

THOMAS

Winter and not winter.

BARTENDER

Right now?

THOMAS

Winter.

SANDY, 20s, enters the bar and makes eye contact with the bartender. He nods towards Thomas.

BARTENDER
Damn. October.

Sandy settles up to the bar. One stool away from Thomas.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Evening. What will you have?

SANDY
Manhattan.

THOMAS
Haven't been there either. Hi,
Thomas.

She smiles and fondles her necklace. Thomas signals to the bartender to put her drink on his tab.

SANDY
Sandy. Thank you. Where you from?

THOMAS
Anchorage, Alaska.

SANDY
Really?

THOMAS
Really.

She points at the stool between them.

SANDY
Do you mind?

THOMAS
Please.

She looks at the bartender. He serves her drink and retreats to the other end of the bar. Sandy puts her hand on Thomas's shoulder as she changes her seat.

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nick is on his bed. Paula softly knocks on his door. Nick's bedroom is of a 18-year-old. Some Detroit sports icon posters.

NICK
Come in.

PAULA

Nicky.

NICK

Yea?

PAULA

I just wanted to talk to you about tomorrow, and what happened last Friday night with your father.

NICK

Don't worry, mom. It'll be all right.

PAULA

I'm just concerned.

NICK

I already talked to dad about it.

PAULA

Well honey, your dad sees things, in this case ironically, in black and white. Life isn't.

NICK

Mom, I'm sure everyone is going to talk about what their parents told them. It won't change things between us at school.

PAULA

Oh, my Nicky. Don't be surprised if things get different or difficult.

NICK

What's the point?

PAULA

Growing up, your grandparents came from Belgium. People outside our French neighborhood in Detroit called us "frogs," Not in a pleasant way. It was difficult. Not as difficult as it is for Jonas's family. Anyway, last Friday your dad made a hard and very public decision. Not for him, but the right one.

(MORE)

PAULA (CONT'D)
I'm just saying, like your dad, you
will have to make a decision about
the people around you. Sometimes it
will have unforeseen consequences.

NICK
Don't worry.

PAULA
That's what moms do.

NICK
Night mom. Love you.

PAULA
Love you.

She leaves and he lays in bed staring at the ceiling.

INT. FOUNDRY FLOOR - DAY

Stan walks onto the floor and looks at his watch. He's looks
for Cameron and sees him at the lunch table with the other
workers. As he approaches, the men at the table stand up.

STAN
Cameron.

CAMERON
Mr. Porter

STAN
Stan.

CAMERON
Mr. Porter.

STAN
Gotta moment?

CAMERON
Yea.

Cameron turns to Eddie.

CAMERON (CONT'D)
See ya after work?

EDDIE
Daddy D's.

They walk back to Stan's office.

INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - DAY

Paula and Cindy are having lunch.

CINDY
Wish I'd been there.

PAULA
It was kind of funny, actually.
These middle-aged boys rolling
around in the dirt like they knew
what they were doing.

CINDY
You must have been proud.

PAULA
Yeah, but it also felt like
something had changed.

CINDY
What changed? It's just how it is.

PAULA
I don't know. Like if things
weren't different before. Change.
Look, I have a big favor to ask.

CINDY
Sure.

PAULA
I want to go to a meeting next
Sunday afternoon. Without Stan
knowing.

CINDY
What's going on?

PAULA
Nothing like that.

She takes a deep breath.

PAULA (CONT'D)
It's just a meeting about something
I want to learn about. Stan would
be very upset if he found out about
it.

CINDY
If it's something bad, I don't
think I want to be part of it.
Anyway, we're both off on Sunday.

PAULA

He needs to think I'm at work.
Covering for you for whatever
reason. Like Jennifer's sick or
something. You can even come with
me.

CINDY

Even better. We can "cover for
each other." Where is it?

PAULA

St. Clair Shores.

CINDY

Not that far. I'll just tell Dale
we're going shopping.

PAULA

That's even better.

INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

Elwood, 40's is getting a haircut by BARBER 1, 40s. Another barber is giving Stan a haircut. Another male PATRON 1, 40s is waiting. New patron JIMMY, 20s, walks in during the conversation.

BARBER 1

All well and good Elwood. But I'd
rather have a picture of you
crawlin' out of an igloo.

GROUP

Laughter

ELWOOD

Well, there's that. You know what
my biggest fear would be?

PATRON 1

Having to speak Eskimo?

ELWOOD

No. Having to have Agnes cut my
hair.

GROUP

More laughter

Jimmy enters.

BARBER 1

Jimmy. Have a seat. 'Bout 15 minutes. Jimmy, you know anything about Alaska.

JIMMY

A little.

ELWOOD

Really?

JIMMY

Yeah. That's where the Air Force sent me. The land of the midnight sun.

ELWOOD

What for?

JIMMY

Building the DEW line.

STAN

Fuckin' commies.

ELWOOD

What's it like?

JIMMY

Above the Artic Circle? Imagine living in your ice box for six months. The wind always blows. And no one opens the door. Why are you guys asking?

STAN

Sounds like the U.P., where I grew up.

BARBER 1

Elwood here's telling us of a meeting where a real Alaskan is in town promoting free land to homesteaders.

JIMMY

Really? You smart guys probably never have heard of the expression "Cheechako"?

PATRON 1

Cheek-a-what?

JIMMY

Chee-cha-ko. It's an Alaskan term for any unwelcome outsider. It's not a compliment. Like you'd say "nigger lover" .

ELWOOD

Many negroes in Alaska?

JIMMY

Not many.

PATRON 1

There's a plus, eh Elwood? For your "Last Frontier."

ELWOOD

That's what the ad said. The last frontier in America. The land of the midnight sun.

STAN

And the land of the noontime moon.

Laughter.

JIMMY

That *is* true. But it has some of the most magnificent country you'll ever see. Everything is big. The bears, the fish, the mountains, moose. Everything. It *is* breath-taking.

ELWOOD

How about a beer after this?

JIMMY

Sure. Where's this meeting?

STAN

Free land. What's the catch?

EXT/INT, PORTER HOME - NIGHT

Nick is arriving home from school. He is walking slowly, and stops. He has a black eye..

NICK

Deep breathe and sigh as he enters the house.

INT. PORTER KITCHEN TABLE - NIGHT

Stan and Paula are about to sit down to dinner and hear Nick enters the house.

PAULA
Nicky?

NICK (O.C.)
Yeah.

Nick enters the kitchen. He's disheveled with the beginning the black eye. The shocked parents and rush to his side.

PAULA (CONT'D)
Nicky!

STAN
What happened?

NICK
You both were right happened.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Thomas is on the phone with Andy Koresh in his office.

Transition

THOMAS
Great! We've received over 200 phone inquiries, and 47 confirmed reservations for Sunday.

ANDY
Not bad for two bucks.

THOMAS
For last week. The newspaper article didn't hurt either.

ANDY
We're looking forward to hearing how many of them might be for real.

THOMAS
We have another weekend for the next presentation and then back on the plane home.

ANDY
Yeah, about that.

THOMAS

What?

ANDY

While you have some time down there, drive around to other towns that we can get more stories written. That seems to be more effective.

THOMAS

I agree.

ANDY

And one more thing.

THOMAS

That is?

ANDY

We would like you to buy one of the four wheelers on the list and drive it back. Sort of preparing them a guide and roadmap. You know, their personal Kit Carson.

THOMAS

But I already have an airplane ticket home.

ANDY

You can use it later.

THOMAS

It's fucking winter already!

ANDY

Even better. No distractions.

THOMAS

I'm sure they'll be people in the group who can navigate a map.

ANDY

Who did you think was leading the expedition? You are! Look, if these people think or even have the means to stay at hotels along the way, they will not make it anyway.

THOMAS

But...

ANDY

You find them suggested campsites and shit! We... You! Have to present to these people we want them to become real tough as shit Alaskans!

THOMAS

But...

ANDY

Thomas, shut the fuck up! Your ass is mine now you dumb fuck! This isn't a request!

Andy hangs up. Thomas takes a deep breath.

THOMAS

Shit!

EXT/INT. HOTEL PARKING LOT - DAY

Paula and Cindy arrive at the hotel. Paula is in her nursing uniform. She lights up a cigarette when she gets out of the car. Her hands are shaking.

CINDY

Damn, Paula. This isn't like a first date.

PAULA

Sure feels like it.

CINDY

You sure you want to go in there?

PAULA

I can't remember the last time I've been so excited besides when I found out I was pregnant.

CINDY

Friend, you have lost it.

PAULA

I'll let you know after the presentation.

CINDY

He's definitely not going to like this.

Paula stops. Turns around and takes a couple steps back to the car.

PAULA
Shit, I'll figure it out. He'll
come around.

She turns back, and walks aggressively to the hotel.

CINDY
Really? Ever see him *really* mad?

PAULA
Yes. But never at me.

Paula put out the cigarette and walks to the hotel. Cindy shakes her head as they enter the hotel.

CINDY
I usually don't have bad feeling
about things, but this time, B-A-D,
bad.

INT. HOTEL MEETING ROOM - DAY

Thomas is welcoming attendees while the Motel Manager is directing those who made reservations to the front rows of the room. Thomas greets Paula and Cindy, Elwood and Agnes, Jimmy, and George Cavanaugh. Sandy arrives with NED, 30s, and JOYCE, 20s, a red-haired version of Sandy.

THOMAS
Hello, Welcome. If you've made a
reservation, you can sign up at
this table? If not, please sign up
at the table where Mr. Johannsen is
standing.

Sandy walks in with her friends.

SANDY
Thomas.

THOMAS

Uncomfortable

Sandy!

SANDY
These are my friends Ned and Joyce.
I told them about your project.

NED

Yes. I said to Joyce we should really go and hear about this.

JOYCE

Is there still gold in Alaska?

THOMAS

In spots. Can you please sign in over at the other table. Sorry. I need to get started. Nice to see you again, Sandy.

SANDY

Flirting.

Thomas.

Thomas walks to the front of the room. There's a screen and both a film and slide projector.

THOMAS

Good afternoon. My name again is Thomas Rawlins of Anchorage, Alaska. Thank you all for coming and having an interest in our country's soon to be 49th state. America's Last Frontier.

GROUP

Applause.

The room goes dark and Thomas begins a short promotional film.

INT. PORTER KITCHEN TABLE - NIGHT

Paula walks through the door in her uniform. Stan is sitting at the table. A single light is on. The two books on Alaska and the newspaper advertisement are on the table along with several beer bottles. His eyes are bloodshot.

STAN

When were you going to tell me, or when were you going to ask?

PAULA

I was doing research.

He points to her uniform.

STAN

Is that part of your "research?"

PAULA

I knew you would initially say no to going to the presentation.

STAN

God damn right I'd say no!

PAULA

You don't understand.

STAN

No! Clearly, you don't understand. I lived that life up north! A shack. Three brothers. Two sisters. No heat. No food. A fucking outhouse. More snow. A lot of fucking snow.

PAULA

I think it's about time for a different life for us.

STAN

A different life? I LIKE *this* life!

He waves the advertisement in the air, and gestures about the rental house they're in.

STAN (CONT'D)

This is more than I could have imagined 15 years ago. Hell, before we met we had nothing! I've worked. I provide.

PAULA

Don't go there.

STAN

What do you mean don't go there?

PAULA

You didn't get here by yourself. You've always had a very selective memory, buddy.

STAN

What do you mean?

PAULA

We got married for more reasons than being in love. We wanted out of our family situations. I wanted a child. You went to war. I got lucky twice.

(MORE)

PAULA (CONT'D)

I had Nicky, and you survived and came home. I knew you might not, and I was okay at the prospect of being a widow the rest of my life. *And you knew that too!*

STAN

Your point is?

PAULA

I have *always* been a bread winner!

Long pause. Stan stands up, grabs the Alaska paper, and takes a step towards Paula.

STAN

We're NOT doing this! YOU'RE not doing this!

Paula steps towards Stan.

PAULA

I'm NOT asking your permission!

FADE OUT.