

Rusty

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. DECAYING CITY STREET - FACTORY TOWN, MICHIGAN - DAY.

8 year old Billy Thompson is fleeing from neighborhood bullies. He scales a fence, and runs into the backyard of an old decrepit house. His pursuers stand at the fence. A rough collie, reminiscent of Lassie tears around the corner barking. Billy thinks the dog is coming at him and is frightened, but the dog runs to the fence instead.

BULLY #1

Alright let's bail. My mom has those pizza bagels at her house anyway. Billy Thompson, you coward, you can't hide behind your mutt forever. Go back to the poor side of town why don'tcha?

BILLY

(Yelling as his would be attackers depart.)
This is Factory Town! It's all the poor side of town!

Billy turns his attention to the dog.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Hey there pal. You really saved my butt. No tags huh? You don't have a home?

Dog barks the affirmative.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Awe, boy you can come home with me. It gets cold out here at night. I think I'll name you Rusty. I've always wanted a dog named Rusty. Mom says that's the color of the water that comes from our taps.

EXT. PUBLIC BASKETBALL COURT - DAY.

Billy is standing there with Rusty. He's holding a basketball.

BILLY

Damn, boy, you can't slam dunk, and you couldn't even play football. I thought you dogs were supposed to be able to do tricks.

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

You're not like the dog in those movies at all. Can you at least play piano like that dog Beethoven?

ESTABLISHING SHOT OF THE THOMPSON'S NEIGHBOURHOOD. LATE AFTERNOON.

The deteriorating neighborhood, with rusted out cars on a lot of the lawns, is much like every other neighborhood in Factory Town.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON.

Roger, the family patriarch, arrives home after a long day at the factory. His wife Jane is busying herself with various domestic activities. Roger takes a seat at the kitchen table.

JANE

How was work today, hon.

ROGER

Not great. Carl told Ted that the company is thinking about outsourcing all of our jobs to China, and Carl is on the union. Can you believe Wang Motors would do such a thing?

JANE

(Brings her husband a beer and starts rubbing his shoulders.)

I'm as shocked as you are babe, but these are just rumors right now. Try not to get too worked up.

ROGER

It's not just me, though. Without that factory, this whole town is gonna go to crap.

BRIEFLY CUT TO EXT. SHOT OF NEIGHBORHOOD.

Billy enters with Rusty.

BILLY

Mom and dad meet Rusty. He's my new dog.

JANE

I guess you named him after... everything..

ROGER

What the hell...I mean heck are you talking about?

BILLY

Nice save dad. Didn't catch it at all.

ROGER

Son, you can't just bring a strange dog into this house.

BILLY

Dad he saved me from these bullies.

ROGER

I don't care if he can do our taxes. He's not staying.

BILLY

But dad...

JANE

Billy...why don't you and Rusty go play in the backyard while dad and I have a little chat?

BILLY

Ok...

Billy and Rusty exit.

JANE

C'mon the dog rescued him, and it does look like Lassie.

ROGER

I don't care if he can do our taxes...

JANE

That's really your go to isn't it.

ROGER

I could be losing my job. We can't afford another mouth to feed around here.

JANE

He's just a lonely kid. Unless we give him a little brother or sister...

Roger walks to the door opens it and shouts outside to his son.

ROGER
Hey Bill, you want a little brother
or sister?

BILLY O.S.
God no!

Roger closes door and returns to kitchen table.

ROGER
I rest my case.

Jane grabs her husband a beer and starts rubbing his shoulders while he drinks it.

JANE
C'mon Rog a boy needs a pet.

ROGER
You know that might be some other
little boy's missing dog.

JANE
Yeah. I thought about that too.
We'll put up some flyers, and if he
belongs to someone else, I'm sure
it will break Billy's heart, but we
will cross that bridge when we get
there.

ROGER
Crap..

JANE
What?

ROGER
He can keep the dog, but if it so
much as takes a dump on the carpet,
he's outta here.

JANE
Well...if we went by that rule, we'd
have to get rid of Billy too.

Both laugh.

ROGER
Go tell our son about his new dog.
You know you want to.

Jane excitedly heads to the door and opens it.

JANE

Billy! Come in here for a minute.

Billy and Rusty re-enter.

BILLY

Yes mom?

JANE

Your father and I have decided you can keep Rusty.

BILLY

Oh boy! I promise to feed him, and take care of him and walk him..

ROGER

Hold your horses kid. We gotta put some flyers out, and if anybody claims him..

BILLY

I understand dad.

JANE

Now it's been quite a day around here. Get some of that bottled water from the basement, and we will heat it up for your bath. You're a filthy little boy.

BILLY

Ok. Hey mom?

JANE

Yes Billy?

BILLY

When do you think we can use the tap water again?

JANE

Well last month our esteemed President came here and pretended to taste the water. Said it was fine. So I'm guessing real soon.

BILLY

That makes me so mad I'm esteemed.

JANE

Yeah son, I don't think your using that word properly, but get moving. We need to clean you up before supper.

BILLY

Ok mom. Hey Rusty I'll show you the basement. It's haunted.

Billy and Rusty exit.

ROGER

(shouting after them.)
Our basement isn't haunted!

JANE

We did a good thing today. Look how happy he is. Usually after being picked on by those other kids, he just comes home and sulks in his bedroom.

ROGER

I know babe. Say what's for supper?

JANE

My famous tuna casserole, of course.

ROGER

We don't have any of that dog food around here yet do we?

Jane nudges Roger. They both laugh.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

Roger goes to retrieve his slippers from the closet and notices they are all torn up.

ROGER

Billy! Get in here! Now!

Jane enters from the kitchen.

JANE

Roger, what could be so important? You could've woken the dead.

Billy and Rusty come down stairs.

BILLY

Yes dad. Am I in trouble?

ROGER

No, but your little buddy is. I said if that mutt caused even the slightest problem, he'd be out.

BILLY

What did he do? He's been with me all night.

Roger picks up slippers.

ROGER

How do you explain these then?

BILLY

Oh... those I did that. I'll just go to bed without dessert as punishment.

ROGER

Yes. You will, but only because you expect me to believe something so stupid. You must not think much of your old man. We will deal with this in the morning.

Billy and Rusty retreat back up the stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Billy is on the bed next to Rusty. Billy is chewing on a slipper.

BILLY

Stupid dad. He doesn't know anything anyway.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - MORNING

Billy is eating cereal when his mother enters carrying a stack of papers.

JANE

It wasn't easy, but I was able to talk your father down. You're on thin ice with this dog. Tread lightly.

BILLY

Ok mom.

JANE

Now I need you to spread these flyers all over the neighborhood, including the gas station down the street. Don't think I won't check up on you either.

BILLY

Yes, mom.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY.

Billy and Rusty walking down the street. Billy drops all the flyers into a garbage can.

BILLY

Alright, watcha wanna do?

Rusty Barks.

BILLY (CONT'D)

That does sound like fun.

INT. CONDEMNED HOUSE - DAY.

Billy and Rusty are exploring one of the many abandoned houses in town.

BILLY

Ok Rusty we have to be careful. The last time I was in one of these places the toilet fell through the floor. It was actually pretty cool. Hey neat, these guys had a fireplace. We've never had that.

Billy picks up some letters that we're not entirely burned. Scrapes the soot off.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Looks like these guys were trying to burn some letters. I can still make some of them out. First notice, second notice, third notice, foreclosure. Hey lucky these guys never got to five closure eh?

Silence.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Yeah I don't get it either.

Billy tucks foreclosure notice into his back pocket. Creaking is heard both look up to see a toilet crash through the ceiling.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Awesome! See I told you boy.

Rusty and Billy go to inspect the toilet.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Ew. Gross they didn't even flush.

Rusty sticks his head in the toilet. You can hear his greedy tongue lapping something up.

BILLY (CONT'D)
(Pulling Rusty back)
Ew! Don't do that boy, but it probably tastes better than mom's tuna casserole.

INT. WANG MOTORS FACTORY - DAY.

Roger is alone in the break room, sipping his coffee. His coworker Carl enters.

CARL
Roger, I need to talk to you for a second.

ROGER
What's going on?

CARL
Keep it hush hush. We don't need management finding out, but the union is having a strike vote tonight. You should be there.

ROGER
So let me get this straight. We're supposed to demonstrate our value to the company by not working at all? Sounds like a solid plan.

CARL
Listen smart ass. We can't let the company walk all over us.

(MORE)

CARL (CONT'D)
 You're not one of those guys who
 would cross a picket line are you?

ROGER
 No, I'm just a guy who's got a
 family to feed, a job he wants to
 keep.

CARL
 Don't be a traitor man. Don't
 be..a..a scab.

ROGER
 Don't be a...a... canker sore. Get
 outta my face will ya?

CARL
 I'm leaving but I better see you on
 the picket line or else..

Carl leaves.

EXT. PARK - DAY.

Billy throws a stick for Rusty to fetch.

BILLY
 C'mon boy go get it.

Rusty runs off and returns with a rubber boot.

BILLY (CONT'D)
 (Examining boot)
 No boy. This isn't it. This isn't a
 stick. It's a rubber
 boot...apparently with a foot still
 inside it. Ewww!

Billy tosses boot aside.

BILLY (CONT'D)
 Try again boy.

Rusty runs off and eventually returns with a harmonica.

BILLY (CONT'D)
 (Examining Harmonica)
 No boy. This isn't it either. Try
 again.

Rusty runs off yet again.

BILLY (CONT'D)
 Although...I wonder...

Billy starts blowing on the harmonica, and ends up playing a lowdown dirty bluesy solo.

BILLY (CONT'D)
 Wow! I didn't know I could do that!

Billy pockets harmonica as Rusty returns with a human infant in his mouth.

BILLY (CONT'D)
 (Frantically waving Rusty
 off.)
 No boy! Not that take that back!
 Bad dog!

Rusty runs off and Billy takes a paranoid glance around the park.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

Jane is preparing supper when Rusty runs into the kitchen barking his head off.

JANE
 Woah! Boy! Settle down. What's
 going on is Billy trapped in a well
 or something? Ha! I love that bit,
 but seriously where is that kid?

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE OF WELL - DAY.

INT. INSIDE WELL - DAY.

BILLY
 When's that darn dog gonna get back
 here with mom? It's getting cold
 down here.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY BATHROOM - NIGHT.

CLOSE UP OF RUSTY'S FACE.

JANE O.S.

Where did you come from boy? What's your story?

Orchestral music swells. Scratching record sound.

JANE O.S. (CONT'D)

I can't read your thoughts buddy. I have no idea what memories are in your head. I'm not some canine mind reader.

SHOT WIDENS TO REVEAL RUSTY IN THE BATH TUB.

Jane is attempting to bathe him, bottled water in hand.

JANE

Your fur seems to be all matted. What the hell is this?

Jane pulls at a wad of chewing gum tangled in Rusty's fur.

JANE (CONT'D)

Billy! Get your butt up here now!

Billy comes running into the bathroom.

BILLY

Mom. What's going on? I swear that car was like that when I found it.

JANE

What are you talking about? What's this business about a car?

BILLY

Oh... nothing. What seems to be the problem officer?

JANE

I'm not dropping this car thing, but we have a more immediate situation to deal with. Why is there chewing gum and god knows what else stuck to your dog?

BILLY

Well there was no garbage can around, and you say I shouldn't litter.

JANE

I do appreciate you listening to me, but your dog is not a trash can. Bathing isn't enough. We gotta shave him too. Get the trimmers.

Billy returns with the trimmers and hands them to Jane.

Shot of the bottom of the tub. Buzzing sounds can be heard as dog hair and various objects fall off of rusty. An oil can falls off the dog.

JANE O.S.

What's that? Quaker state?

A pair of pink handcuffs falls next.

JANE O.S. (CONT'D)

What the...

Next voodoo dolls of Jane and Roger with pins stuck in strategic places fall into the tub.

BILLY O.S.

I'm pretty sure some of this stuff isn't mine.

EXT. OUTSIDE WANG MOTORS FACTORY— DAY.

SUPER: DAY ONE

Roger is attempting to cross the picket line to enter the factory. The strikers are pelting him with eggs.

DISSOLVE TO:

SUPER: DAY TWO

Roger again attempting to cross the picket line. This time being pelted with tomatoes.

DISSOLVE TO:

SUPER: DAY THREE

Roger crossing picket line. Once again being pelted with eggs.

ROGER

You bastards used eggs already!

Roger is hit in the head and knocked out by a cement block.

DISSOLVE TO:

SUPER: DAY FOUR

An older woman who looks suspiciously like Roger is attempting to sneak across the picket line.

STRIKER O.S.
Hey that's clearly Thompson
disguised as an old lady! Get him!

The old Woman is pelted with bricks as Roger runs by.

ROGER
Thanks ma! I owe you one!

INT. K-9 OBEDIENCE SCHOOL - DAY

Jane is talking to the instructor with Billy and Rusty beside her.

JANE
You see, I just can't get him to
behave no matter what I do.

CUT TO:

SLOW PAN OF A ROW OF DOGS.

The dogs all have treats on their noses. Billy is revealed to be in the middle.

BILLY
Wait, how did I end up here? I'll
be damned if I don't want that
treat though.

INT. FANCY DOG SHOW - DAY.

Billy is on a leash being led through an obstacle course by Jane.

BILLY
Ok. Now I know this joke has gone
too far.

INT. MANAGERS OFFICE, WANG MOTORS - DAY.

Roger enters his boss, Mr. Fineman's office.

ROGER
You wanted to see me sir?

MR. FINEMAN
Ah, yes. Roger take a seat.

ROGER
(Sitting down.)
What seems to be the problem sir?

MR. FINEMAN
Quite the contrary, Thompson. I just wanted to let you know that your loyalty to the company hasn't gone unnoticed, and we would like to recognize that.

ROGER
Recognize it how?

MR. FINEMAN
Like I just did. Don't you have some work to do? Like all the work. You're the only one that showed up.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY.

Jane is sitting at the table reading Cosmo when Rusty enters with a small barrel around his neck.

JANE
Rusty? What's this boy? I thought only St. Bernards did that. I suppose you wouldn't mind if I sampled a bit.

Jane walks over to rusty, removes the barrel and takes a sip. She starts gagging and runs to the sink to spit it out.

JANE (CONT'D)
What kind of swill is this?!
Drano?! Bad dog! Bad dog!

Rusty scampers away.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY.

Billy is bored during class. The voices of the teacher and the other students are muffled as he hears scratching on the window. He looks over, surprised to see Rusty outside the window with a stick in his mouth.

BILLY
 (Whispering and shaking
 his head.)
 No boy. I can't. Get lost.

TEACHER O.S.
 Billy, is there a problem?

BILLY
 No Sir.

More scratching. Billy looks over and sees the word wuss written on the dog breath fogged over window. Rusty is gone.

BILLY (CONT'D)
 What the...?

TEACHER O.S.
 Perhaps Billy would like to answer
 the question. If he's been paying
 attention that is.

BILLY
 Uh...yeah...Johnny would have 5 apples
 left if he gave Gary 4.

TEACHER O.S.
 That's great, but this is social
 studies, not math.

BILLY
 Uh...ok...then Napoleon would have 5
 apples.

The class erupts in laughter.

EXT. RUNDOWN OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT.

It's raining hard outside.

INT. OFFICE IN SAID BUILDING - NIGHT.

A gorgeous leggy blonde woman in a revealing dress enters a Private Investigators office.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR
So you must be my 8 o'clock. What's
your name toots.

WOMAN
You can call me Theresa.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR VO
I knew she was trouble, but she was
the kind of trouble I'd like to get
into.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR
How about some hooch?

Private Investigator pours himself some Jack Daniels.

WOMAN
No thanks. Don't touch the stuff
myself.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR VO
I knew there was a reason not to
trust this broad.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR
Suit yourself. Personally, I don't
know how anybody gets through a
Tuesday without it.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR VO
She made me very suspicious, but
she had gams from here to Saturday.

Voice switches to Billy's

BILLY VO
Wait. I don't even know if I like
girls yet. They might be kinda
icky.

The scene changes to daylight. The sun pouring through the
window. The Private Investigator is Billy. The Jack Daniels
is apple juice. Theresa is actually Rusty in a blonde wig.

INT. RUNDOWN OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

BILLY
This is fun boy. A whole office
building to ourselves. I hope the
economy never recovers!

Gets up from the desk and runs out of the office. Rusty follows. Billy runs through an area with several empty cubicles and enters another office with Rusty in tow, and sits behind another desk.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Hey boy! Come here! I've got another idea! Mr. Rusty, I'm afraid I'm going to have to fire you. Some of the other employees have been complaining that you lick your crotch in the break room.

EXT. THOMPSON'S BACKYARD - DAY.

Billy and Rusty are playing in the back yard. Billy is dressed like a cowboy, complete with toy guns. Rusty is wearing an Indian headdress. Jane enters.

JANE

Hey what are you two up to? Not getting into too much trouble, I hope.

BILLY

Nah, ma. We're just playing cowboys and....

Billy catches Jane glaring at him.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Uh...cowboys and other cowboys I guess.

Billy replaces Rusty's headdress with a cowboy hat.

BILLY (CONT'D)

(Sighs.)

When did life stop being fun?

JANE

Hey and I'm not too crazy about the guns either.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - NIGHT.

Roger enters covered in shit. Jane is washing dishes.

JANE

(Catching a whiff.)

Oh god. What is that?

ROGER

Oh nothing crazy. They decided to launch used diapers today. Had a whole catapult situation that was actually kind of impressive.

JANE

Rog. This is too much. You don't have to keep...

ROGER

It's nothing a few bottles of Evian won't take care of. Excuse me.

Roger heads upstairs.

JANE

Jeez, wait til he finds out we can't afford Evian.

Billy and Rusty enter.

BILLY

Mom can we please sleep out in the backyard tonight? I already set up the tent and everything.

Roger can be heard sobbing loudly from the shower upstairs.

JANE

Yeah. That might actually be for the best.

BILLY

What's wrong with dad? Is he crying for the same reason you do 4 days a month?

JANE

Uh...no that's something I'll tell you about when you're a bit older. You boys go on now. I'll bring some snacks later.

Boy and dog exit.

EXT. THOMPSON'S BACKYARD - NIGHT.

Billy and Rusty enter from the house.

BILLY

Between you and me buddy, no wonder she doesn't wanna talk about it.

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)
Some of the stuff I've seen in the
bathroom garbage makes me think she
might be dying.

INT. INSIDE TENT - LATER THAT EVENING.

Billy and Rusty are huddled up. Billy is reading comic books
by flashlight.

BILLY
Rusty, you should see these old
Spider-Man comics my dad gave me.

Rusty barks.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Yeah, I'm getting to that. He was
just a dude that got bitten by a
radioactive spider and got
superpowers.

Rusty barks.

BILLY (CONT'D)
I've tried, but do you know how
hard it is to find a radioactive
spider. I've let myself get bitten
by all kinds of spiders. Big hairy
ones too. Mom's had to take me to
the E.R. 4 times, and still
nothing. I wonder how easy it is to
become Batman.

Rusty barks.

BILLY (CONT'D)
His parents were what?! What are
you suggesting boy?

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - NIGHT.

Jane is staring out the window at her son and dog. Roger
comes down cleaned up.

ROGER
What's going on out there?

JANE
The boys are camping out for the
night. Babe you don't have to keep
doing this.

ROGER

Doing what?

JANE

You know. Going to that damn factory everyday. Not getting any respect. Coming home covered in God knows what.

ROGER

And we pay the mortgage and feed ourselves how? As long as I have a job to go to, I gotta keep going, and I'd appreciate your support. End of discussion.

JANE

Yeah...but...

ROGER

I said end of discussion. Maybe those two shouldn't be out there. You never know what could happen.

JANE

I'm sure Billy is just trying to read comic books to Rusty. What's the worst that could happen? Don't be paranoid. We're just a few feet away.

ROGER

Yeah. You're right. Just been a bad day. My head's all screwed up. Why don't we go watch the news or something? Come sit with me.

JANE

Ok hon.

Roger and Jane kiss then exit the kitchen.

CU OF KITCHEN WINDOW.

Outside lightning can be seen striking a tree, which immediately falls on top of the tent.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY.

Jane enters with Rusty. Billy is anxiously awaiting her return.

BILLY
What's going on Mom?! Is Rusty ok?

JANE
I'm afraid Rusty is sick.

BILLY
I knew this moment would come.

Billy exits the frame and returns Cocking a shotgun.

BILLY (CONT'D)
(tearfully)
Cmon boy. You and I need to go
outside. Billy will make it all
better.

JANE
Holy... where did you get that from?
And so fast. I just need to put eye
drops in twice a day. You little
psycho. You and I are gonna have a
talk about your after school
activities Mr.

BILLY
(attempting to exit.)
Ok I'll have my gal call yours to
set something up.

Jane pulls Billy back by the back of his shirt.

JANE
I mean now. Sit your butt down.

Billy complies and takes a seat at the kitchen table.

EXT. OUTSIDE WANG MOTORS FACTORY - DAY.

Roger arrives to find the factory gates locked and none of
the strikers around.

ROGER
What's going on here?

Roger examines lock and rattles the gate.

ROGER (CONT'D)
This can't be happening. I was
loyal! All my friends hated me! And
this is how it ends?!

A piece of paper falls of the gate and falls to the ground.
It just reads: You're screwed.

ROGER (CONT'D)
That's about the size of it I
guess.

Roger hears the hiss of a burning fuse and turns around, and
sees a watermelon behind him.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Hey nice try but you missed buddy.

Notices firecracker in watermelon.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Oh...crap...

The watermelon explodes. Chunks rain down on Roger.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Hey it's over! Didn't you
notice none of your
buddies were here?

MALE VOICE O.S.
Yeah it did seem weird. Sorry!

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY.

Jane is cleaning watermelon gunk off Rogers face as he sits
at the kitchen table.

JANE
Would it have killed you to have
asked them for a bit of cantaloupe?

ROGER
Yeah laugh it up. See how hard
you're laughing when we're on the
street. I lost my job and you're
taking shots.

JANE
I was just trying to lighten the
mood.

ROGER
You know we're gonna lose this
place right?

Before Jane can respond Billy and Rusty enter.

BILLY

Watcha guys talking about?

ROGER

You might as well tell him, Jane.
No sense hiding it.

BILLY

Tell me what? Hiding what?

JANE

Uh... that we're having iced cream
and chocolate cake for supper.

BILLY

Why would you hide that?! This is
so awesome! Is it my birthday?!

JANE

Son, it depresses me no end that
you don't know that it is not.
Where's that head of yours
sometimes? Now you and Rusty should
run along and play for a bit.

BILLY

Ok. I know I never say this, but
please let me know the second
supper is ready.

JANE

Alright now it's starting to tick
me off a bit. Scram for a bit
please.

Billy and Rusty exit. Roger is shooting Jane an incredulous
look.

JANE (CONT'D)

What?! I can't tell an 8 year old
boy that he's losing his home until
it's an absolute certainty.

ROGER

Yeah, you always did know how to
handle these things better than I
ever did.

Billy and Rusty re-enter. Billy pulls the letter out of his
pocket.

BILLY

Hey mom, I have a question.

JANE

Now's not really a good..

BILLY

What does foreclosure mean?

Roger buries his head in his hands.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Awe dad. Don't be down. It's cake
and iced cream night. I know
what'll cheer you up.

Billy pulls out his harmonica.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I call it foreclosure blues.
Whatever that is.

Billy starts blowing a bluesy stomp more down and dirty than
the previous one.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Roger goes to put his shoes on, just to notice someone took a
steaming dump in them.

ROGER

Dammit! There's crap in my shoe.
That dog...I mean I hope it was the
dog. A lot of corn.. Rusty! Get in
here!

RUSTY COMES RUNNING DOWNSTAIRS.

ROGER

Wanna go for a ride boy. I betcha
do c'mon.

Roger puts on an older pair of shoes with holes in them.
Roger and Rusty exit.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - NIGHT.

Roger pulls over by the side of a rural road. Gets out and
opens the passenger door. Rusty doesn't move.

ROGER

Don't make this tough boy. Time to
go.

Rusty hops out of the truck and climbs down into the ditch.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Godspeed.

Roger climbs into the truck and drives off. Rusty sits staring down the road. In the distance Roger's truck turns around and heads back in Rusty's direction. Window open.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Sorry boy, still homeless. Just had to turn around.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

Roger arrives home. Jane is on the phone. Roger can hear Billy crying and screaming upstairs.

JANE
If you hear of anything let me know.

ROGER
What's going on here?

JANE
Your son is distraught because his dog is missing. Where have you been?

ROGER
Uh...I was reading to the orphans.

JANE
(approaching Roger)
What?

ROGER
I mean I went to get milk.

JANE
You're not holding Milk.

ROGER
Uh... there was a shortage...of...cows. You haven't heard about the cow shortage? Been all over the news.

JANE
No shortage of bull anyway. Speaking of which I found your shoes. Surprising amount of corn for a dog.

ROGER

I did it. It's very European, all the kids are talking about it.

JANE

(Grabbing Roger by the collar.)

If I find out you had anything to do with devastating your own son, I will..

Jane whispers inaudibly into Roger's ear. Roger begins to blush his jaw drops. Jane goes upstairs to comfort her son.

ROGER

Good lord, I haven't heard language like that since I was in the Navy.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - MORNING

Billy is poking at his breakfast. Jane is concerned. Roger enters with the newspaper.

ROGER

You know with the price of soybeans..

JANE

Look at your son he can't even eat.

ROGER

I love you baby, but you're food is inedible.

JANE

Hey! He loves my banana chocolate chip pancakes. Talk to your son.

Roger goes over to the table and puts his arm around Billy.

BILLY

(Sobbing)

Where were you dad. You were supposed to take care of him?

ROGER

I thought he was with you guys.

JANE

Yeah we always take the dog to parent teacher night.

ROGER

Listen. You're my little man ok.
You're tough. You can do this.
Daddy has to go look for a job, or
we will all be eating what's left
of Rusty's food.

Billy sobs even harder.

JANE

(Slapping flyers into his
hand.)

You're dad also has a dog to find,
unless he wants to sleep in the
yard.

ROGER

Well, when you put it like that..

Roger goes in for a kiss. Jane coldly gives him her cheek.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Alright I'm off. I'll be home to my
loving family later.

Roger exits.

JANE

(shouting after him)

Don't ditch the flyers like Billy
did. I'll know. I know everything!

EXT. CITY STREET - MORNING

Roger ditches the flyers in a garbage can.

ROGER

(mocking Jane's voice.)

He's not eating. Yeah he's sad he
doesn't need diarrhea on top of it.
You know some guys just go out for
a pack of smokes and never come
back. Must be pure bliss. Being
with a different broad every night
in a different town...

Roger pauses like he's seriously considering it.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Nah. She'd track me down anyway.
She's a bloodhound.

Roger passes by a coffee shop with a help wanted sign. He enters.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

Roger enters. Walking past many of the patrons. He walks up to the owner behind the counter.

ROGER
(offering his hand)
Hi sir. I'd like to interview for
the job you advertised.

OWNER
(shaking Roger's hand.)
Wait. I recognize you.

CUSTOMER 1
Yeah! He's that guy who wouldn't
stand on the picket line!

CUSTOMER 2
What you did is shameful sir!

CUSTOMER 3
Real scumbag. If this man is hired,
I will refuse to dine in your
establishment.

ROGER
Can't get a more glowing
endorsement than that. I will show
myself out.

As roger exits he is pelted with various food items and coffee.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Hey! That's hot!

CUSTOMER 4
So are the fires of hell where you
belong.

CUSTOMER 5
That's for abandoning your kids
dog.

ROGER
How could you possibly know that?!

EXT. CITY STREET - MORNING

Roger exits coffee shop an old woman approaches him.

OLD WOMAN
Sir, are you alright?

ROGER
Yes. I'm fine thank you.

OLD WOMAN
Wait. I know you...

ROGER
Listen...

The old Woman spits in Roger's eye and kicks him in the balls. Roger collapses on the sidewalk in defeat.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - NIGHT.

Roger enters. Beaten black and blue and covered in God knows what. Jane, hearing him enter, enters from the living room.

JANE
I was going to ask you to take out the garbage but it looks like you smeared it all over yourself instead. What the hell happened to you?

ROGER
Oh you know the usual. Everywhere I went everyone assaulted me with various produce. A nun pushed me down the stairs while a cop looked the other way, and that was all before noon. As for your next question, no I have no idea where the damn dog is.

EXT. BEHIND ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT.

Rusty and his date are both staring at a plate of spaghetti for an extended amount of time. Not wanting anything to do with it.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND MCDONALD'S - NIGHT.

Rusty and his date are greedily devouring cheeseburgers off the ground.

INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

A dejected Billy, wearing a dress, is staring out his open window.

BILLY

I wonder where you are tonight boy.
I miss you like crazy. Playing
dress up with Mom's dresses just
isn't the same without you.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND MCDONALD'S - NIGHT.

Rusty looks up from his meal and starts howling.

INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Billy hears the howling, and reciprocates himself.

BILLY

Is that you boy? Are we howling at
the same moon?

Both continue howling.

EXT. THOMPSON FAMILY HOME - DAY.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY LIVING ROOM - DAY.

CLOSEUP OF JANE AND ROGER'S FACES.

ROGER

So what do you think? Do you think
he'll fall for it?

JANE

Don't be ridiculous not only does
it not look at all like Rusty, that
dog is clearly a poodle.

SHOT WIDENS TO REVEAL THAT JANE AND ROGER HAVE BEEN STARING AT A POODLE THE WHOLE TIME.

ROGER

I think we could pull it off.
You've seen the boy's grades right?

JANE

(Briefly considers.)
No...no that's just stupid. Get that thing out of here before he sees it.

ROGER

Ok. The old guy down the block probably wants it back anyway.

Roger exits and Billy comes running down the stairs.

BILLY

I saw dad with Rusty. Rusty's back!
Where is he?!

JANE

Well at least I know we won't have to pay for college.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Rusty is walking down the street when he is approached by an elegantly dressed man.

ELEGANTLY DRESSED MAN

It's your lucky day dog. I'm recreating Steinbeck's Travels With Charley, and you simply must be my Charley! How does that sound boy? A steak in every town? A swim in every lake?

Subtitles appear below Rusty. When he barks.

IT'S WIDELY KNOWN THAT ASPECTS OF THAT BOOK WERE FICTIONALIZED.

Rusty turns and walks away from the gentleman.

EXT. THOMPSON FAMILY HOME - DAY.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - MORNING.

Roger is eating breakfast and listening to the radio.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

... And that's right we are giving a thousand billion million dollars to the 9th caller, if they can tell us the winner of the 1978 World Series.

ROGER

Holy crap! I know that, and that's the exact amount of dough we need!

Roger rushes over to the phone, frantically dialling. The screen splits. First half Roger. Second half radio announcer,

RADIO ANNOUNCER

...and we have our 9th caller. You're on the air what's your name?

ROGER

Roger. Long time caller. First time listener.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

Roger, you stand to win a million quadrillion dollars if you can tell us who won the 1978 World Series.

ROGER

I know that it's...

Split screen disappears as the phone goes dead.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Guess I should've paid that.

Power goes out.

ROGER (CONT'D)

...and that.

EXT. THOMPSON FAMILY HOME - DAY.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY.

Jane enters carrying a bag of groceries. Roger is drinking a beer. In the kitchen he looks like someone beat the shit out of him all bruised and bloody.

JANE

Out job hunting again I see.

ROGER

I was a supermarket cashier for 15 minutes before they figured out who I was.

JANE

And they did that to you?

ROGER

No I did it to myself.

JANE

Listen baby I know the job search has been hard, but no reason to beat yourself up.

ROGER

No the boys in the deli said they would dunk my head in the toilet after big Lou used it, if I didn't slam my head through both the glass doors in the dairy section. Trust me I made the right choice.

JANE

Well..at least you got the lights turned on that's something.

ROGER

Phone too.

JANE

How, we're broke?

ROGER

I went down there and gave them a lecture about the meaning of being a true American. About not giving up on loyal customers, your neighbours, your friends, when the chips are down.

JANE

No really how did you do it?

ROGER

I wept like a little girl who had her teddy bear stolen, and I may have stolen this teddy bear from an actual little girl.

Roger produces a teddy bear from behind his back. Jane glares at him.

ROGER (CONT'D)
What?! I needed a win.

INT. ARCADE - DAY.

Billy is playing a game. Jane is waiting impatiently.

JANE
Alright kiddo enough of this. We're supposed to be looking for your dog remember. He wasn't in the bowling alley, and he's not here.

Rusty can be seen wandering around in the background.

BILLY
One more game please.

JANE
In the car now!

BILLY
Ok. But I still think he could be at the Ice cream shop.

Both exit.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Rusty is walking by a bank, when a burglar comes running out holding bags with dollar signs on them.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE LINEUP ROOM - DAY.

Rusty is standing with officers, suspects on the other side of the glass.

OFFICER
So do you see the robber?

Rusty barks a few times.

OFFICER TWO
What's he saying?

OFFICER

He says he didn't see anything.
He's a dog not a rat.

EXT. BY THE RIVER - DAY.

Officer from the previous scene pulls patrol car over, exits and runs into nearby trees.

OFFICER

Jeez I've never had to piss so bad
in my life. My back teeth aren't
floating, they're drowning!

While the officer is otherwise occupied, Rusty shows up and jumps in the car. The car, sirens blasting rolls into the river. Officer comes running back.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

Jeez, the guys back at the station
aren't going to believe this
happened...again.

Rusty is seen swimming away from the sinking police car.

INT. BILLY'S SCHOOL - DAY.

Billy is standing in the hall by the lockers. Rusty walks by in a beret. Billy nudges his classmate.

BILLY

That French foreign exchange
student is a real looker eh. Ooh La
La!

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Rusty walks by a Chinese restaurant with the owner outside smoking. Rusty quickly runs across the street.

RESTAURANT OWNER

Come here boy. Wanna go for a car
ride? You can sit on the furniture.

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY.

Billy is standing in front of a sign that says engine retarder breaks prohibited. Rusty rolls by in the back of a truck neither notice the other.

BILLY

How come I'm having so much trouble
finding this dog?!

CAMERA TILTS UP AND ZOOMS IN ON SIGN SO ONLY THE WORD RETARD
IS VISIBLE.

MONTAGE

Roger is seen searching for various jobs and being
recognized.

-Outside bar - he sees help wanted sign

- Inside bar - the bartender is seen throwing Roger across
the bar top crashing through shattered mug after mug.

A sketchy looking guy is watching the action from a dimly lit
corner.

- Outside Bowling alley - he sees now hiring sign.

- Inside bowling alley - The employees are seen throwing
Roger down the lane. He knocks down all the pins. Employees
high five.

Sketchy guy looking on again.

- Inside gas station - Roger is showing the manager his
resume.

- Outside gas station - The owner is seen pouring gas on
Roger and lighting him aflame.

Sketchy dude once again enjoying the view.

- Dumpster in Alley - An angry mob tosses Roger inside.
Sketchy dude looks on.

END MONTAGE

Sketchy dude approaches dumpster.

SKETCHY DUDE

Hey man it looks like you can
really take a beating, and the
whole town hates you.

ROGER

Yeah don't rub it in.

SKETCHY DUDE

I mean...the bowling alley...the gas station...I'm in awe. I don't know how you survived the hardware store. They put you through a wood chipper!

ROGER

Yeah buddy, I get it. Is there a point to any of this?

SKETCHY DUDE

Would you be interested in making some easy cash?

ROGER

Yeah but what does that have to do with...

SKETCHY DUDE

(Hands Roger business card)

Just take my card. Come to this address on Monday morning. I'll tell you all about it.

ROGER

Ok..but..

Roger is interrupted by the sound of a truck backing up.

ROGER (CONT'D)

What's that? Oh no it's not...

The truck picks up the dumpster and empties it. Roger, his limbs flailing, screams like a little school girl as he falls into the back of the truck.

SKETCHY DUDE

There goes a real American hero.

EXT. OUTSIDE OLD WAREHOUSE - DAY.

A long line snakes it's way around the block. Rusty and Billy can be seen in different parts of the line. Both, once again, unaware of the other.

INT. INSIDE OLD WAREHOUSE - DAY.

A camera crew and Television personality, Chuck Brogan, are getting set up. There's a dunk tank in the corner of the room, and a vast selection of baseball bats, hammers etc...

CHUCK BROGAN
 (Getting make up put on.
 Holding scripts.
 Surrounded by various
 producers etc..)

Make sure you get a shot of those
 boards with nails on them just to
 your left. I think that line there
 is unnecessary. It's very
 redundant. Have them take it out.

PRODUCER
 Yes sir.

Producer scurries off.

Off to the side, Roger is nervously pacing back and forth
 while the sketchy dude is trying to calm him.

ROGER
 What have I gotten myself into? I
 don't know if I can do this.

SKETCHY DUDE
 Relax. It's just a tv show man.

ROGER
 A national television show! I feel
 sick...I'm going to look so stupid..

SKETCHY DUDE
 Just relax. They heard what we're
 doing here. They're excited to talk
 to you. Forget the cameras are
 there. Just talk to Chuck and make
 sure to be yourself. Your the
 underdog. Everyone's rooting for
 you.

ROGER
 You seem to know a lot about this.
 Were you ever on tv?

SKETCHY DUDE
 Just some consumer alert crap on
 channel 5.

ROGER
 Wait...what did..

Roger is interrupted by a production assistant holding a clip
 board and wearing a headset.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
They're ready for you Mr. Thompson.

SKETCHY DUDE
(Patting Roger's back.)
C'mon you got this.

ROGER
What's the name of this show again?

SKETCHY DUDE
Don't worry about it.

Roger and Chuck are seated. Lights come on so bright Roger is temporarily blinded.

DIRECTOR
3,2,1...and we're live.

CHUCK BROGAN
Welcome to another addition of
America's Biggest Losers!

Roger shoots a nasty glare at Sketchy Dude off camera, who shrugs back at him.

CHUCK BROGAN (CONT'D)
Where each week we profile another
piece of subhuman scum.

ROGER
Cmon dude...

CHUCK BROGAN
This weeks guest Roger Thompson, is
perhaps the lowliest spectacle
we've encountered yet.

ROGER
Why am I taking this abuse?

CHUCK BROGAN
Because being degraded and taking
abuse seems to be your specialty,
Mr. Thompson. Tell our audience
what reason a man could have for
subjecting himself to such torture.

ROGER
In this country, there seems to be
fewer and fewer opportunities each
day for a man to take care of his
family. I saw a chance and I
grabbed it.

(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)

You never know when the next thing is going to come down the line.

CHUCK BROGAN

Until recently you were an autoworker correct?

ROGER

That's correct. The company shut the factory down, and a lot of good people are out of work now.

CHUCK BROGAN

Yes, and I understand you had the chance to take a stand with your union brothers and sisters, but instead you chose to be a coward and a traitor.

Those assembled start to boo.

CHUCK BROGAN (CONT'D)

Yes, let it all out. Show Benedict Arnold here what you think of him.

ROGER

Hey! Hey! I had to keep working to feed my family.

CHUCK BROGAN

Is that how you justify your reprehensible actions? You still lost your job, and the whole town hates you because you have no backbone. Was it all worth it?

ROGER

Given the chance to do it again, and keep the lights on. Yeah, I'd do it without hesitation.

The incensed crowd boos angrily.

CHUCK BROGAN

Well, I think it's pretty obvious how the town feels about your choice, which leads us to your newest endeavour. Just when you think a real piece of garbage like you couldn't degrade himself any further, you go and turn yourself into the whole town's punching bag.

(MORE)

CHUCK BROGAN (CONT'D)
 I'm sure all our viewers would like
 to know why a piece of dog crap
 like you would do such a thing?

ROGER
 I can't even leave the house
 without men, women and children
 alike assaulting me. If it's going
 to happen anyway, I might as well
 make some money off it.

CHUCK BROGAN
 So, instead of making amends for
 your despicable behaviour. You've
 chosen to profit off of the rage
 you fueled. Anything you'd like to
 say to the people here with us
 today, and the ones watching at
 home?

ROGER
 Bring. It. On.

CHUCK BROGAN
 That seems like a perfect Setup for
 a little demonstration. What do you
 folks think?

Crowd goes nuts. Roger walks toward dunk tank. As his back is
 turned, Chuck gestures for the crowd to be quiet, then grabs
 a chair and smashes it over unsuspecting Roger's back.

CHUCK BROGAN (CONT'D)
 C'mon everyone! Kick him well he's
 down!

The audience then mobs Roger in a flurry of kicks and
 punches.

CU: TV SCREEN.

Roger can be seen on t.v. getting his ass kicked.

Camera widens to reveal the t.v. is above the counter in a
 convenience store. 2 women in line are watching the action.
 Rusty can be seen wandering around the store.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY.

WOMAN #1
 Jeez, what a jackass!

WOMAN #2

It must be so embarrassing for his family.

Jane walks up behind the women with her arms full of items. Milk etc..

WOMAN #1

Oh sorry... Jane we didn't mean...

JANE

No, it's okay I agree 100%.

The clerk returns behind the counter and spots Rusty, pointing his finger at him.

CLERK

Hey you! What did I say about you coming in here?!

All three women drop their items and scurry off.

INT. PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO - DAY.

Rusty is sitting on the floor, under the lights, and in front of a white backdrop. The photographer buzzes around him.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Just amazing. A real natural. Now show me that pouty face. There's steak on the table but none for you!

Rusty does nothing.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)

Such a pro! And you say you've never modelled before?! Look at the camera like it's a bone you want.

Rusty does nothing.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)

Absolute perfection! You are my muse!

INT. ART GALLERY - DAY.

A puzzled Billy enters the art gallery. The walls are covered in pictures of Rusty. He happens upon a lively conversation between some patrons.

PATRON #1

...Says the dog is his new muse.
Really makes love to the camera he
says.

PATRON #2

Makes love to the lighting guys leg
more like it.

The two Patrons and several of their companions burst into laughter. Billy is laughing the loudest. So loud in fact that the rest of the assembled group stops laughing and starts glaring at him.

BILLY

Uh...I have no idea what making love
is...probably a long shot, but this
isn't the abandoned Chuck E. Cheese
I heard about is it?

INT. INSIDE OLD WAREHOUSE - DAY

Roger is sitting in the dunk tank. A line of eager customers await.

ROGER

Hey I don't think this is water.

SKETCHY DUDE

It's not. It's sulphuric acid like
you asked for at the meeting last
night.

A kid hands the sketchy dude \$5 and is handed 3 balls.

ROGER

I didn't ask for..

Kid dunks roger. Roger shrieks in pain O.C. Two underlings approach.

UNDERLING

Actually sir that was Frank's idea.

SKETCHY DUDE

Frankie! Coming through again. I
really should pay you more.

Frank does a mock bowing gesture. Sketchy dude punches him in the stomach. Frank doubles over.

SKETCHY DUDE (CONT'D)

Nobody likes a show off Frank.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY BASEMENT - DAY

Roger walks down the stairs to a fridge where he grabs a couple bottles of water. When his back is turned he hears a ghostly wail. Roger, startled, turns around and drops the bottles of water.

ROGER

Jeez this place really is haunted.

Roger recognizes the spirit as his father.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Dad! You made me drop the water.
Now the floor's wet.

GHOST/DAD

Just like your bed until you were
14.

ROGER

You lecturing me about urinary
incontinence? That's rich. What are
you doing down here, all see
through and stuff?

GHOST/DAD

I'm here to warn you about the
wicked path you've chosen. How much
must you debase yourself? Destroy
our family name? I'm embarrassed
for people up here to know you're
my son.

ROGER

Up where?

GHOST/DAD

Heaven son.

ROGER

Wow. I really thought you'd end up
someplace a lot hotter.

GHOST/DAD

Yeah sure. Speak ill of the dead. I
guess I should expect as much of
you.

ROGER

Alright cut the ghost dad crap. I
know for a fact you're not dead. I
just saw you half an hour ago.

GHOST/DAD

Yeah...well I died fifteen minutes ago...a heart attack...caused by deep shame.

ROGER

(Taking cell out of pocket)

Let's just see about that.

GHOST/DAD

No! Son don't bother your mother she's busy...uh...grieving...and peeling potatoes..

ROGER

(dialling phone)

In that case, I won't keep her long. Hey ma is dad there?

ROGER'S MOTHER O.S.

Walter, your son wants to talk to you.

GHOST/DAD

Tell him I'm not here.

Roger grabs a couple more bottles of water and starts heading back upstairs.

ROGER

Ok pops. Totally believable.

GHOST/DAD O.C.

Edna, didn't I tell you not to interrupt me?! That I was doing a thing?!

ROGERS MOTHER O.S.

Calm down. We just changed that diaper an hour ago.

Roger gets to the top of the stairs and closes the door behind him. Barking is heard O.S.

GHOST/DAD O.S.

Why's Billy's dog here again?!

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY.

Roger enters with water. Jane is standing by the counter waiting.

ROGER

Here's that water you asked for.
There's not much left.

JANE

Speaking of which, I need to go to
the grocery store.

ROGER

Yeah and I need to go to the
bathroom. Why are you telling me?

JANE

Because groceries cost money. You
got paid didn't you?

ROGER

Oh...yeah...of course. I just left it
upstairs. Be right back.

Roger hastily exits. Jane stands tapping her fingers on the counter. Roger goes flying by the kitchen window. Screaming all the way. Jane looks over and notices him get up and brush his self off. When he notices her stare, he takes off like a jackrabbit.

INT. INSIDE OLD WAREHOUSE - DAY.

Roger enters the warehouse, sees the Sketchy Dude and his assorted cronies playing poker.

SKETCHY DUDE

Hey Roger didn't expect you in
today.

ROGER

Yeah... I'm sure it's all a
misunderstanding, but I haven't
been paid yet.

Roger turns around distracted by the sound of glass breaking. When he turns back around he sees the building is completely empty. He catches himself mid swing.

ROGER (CONT'D)

What do you guys think that was? It
looks like someone took a...crap...I'm
so screwed.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY.

Roger enters, shoulders slumped. Jane is ironing clothes.

JANE

You got that grocery money? We're very low on supplies.

ROGER

Well...uh...you...see...

JANE

You didn't get paid! How do you not get paid?! Be the town's punching bag, bring great shame to your family, get paid. Easy as 1 2 3.

ROGER

I don't know...they pulled some Houdini crap.

JANE

This is just great.

Jane peels a 20 out of her wallet.

JANE (CONT'D)

I feel really bad about that hon. You should get paid.

Jane throws the money on the floor.

ROGER

(Bending over to pick up cash. His back to Jane.)
We don't have any money and you're literally throwing it around.

Jane sneaks up behind Roger, and starts beating him with the ironing board.

JANE

How does that feel? Getting beat up for money? That's what you wanted isn't it?

Roger groans in pain O.S. Jane puts down the ironing board and grabs the iron instead. Presses down on an unseen Roger. His flesh can be heard sizzling as he shrieks in pain O.S.

JANE (CONT'D)

Here your shirt looks all wrinkly. You have to dress for success.

Jane spits on Roger.

JANE (CONT'D)

Clean yourself up. You disgust me.

Jane exits to living room.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY.

Rusty is standing by a flat bed truck. Another very pregnant dog walks up to him. Rusty jumps up on the flat bed, barks twice, and the truck drives away leaving the pregnant dog in the dust.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Billy is in a pew.

BILLY

Are you there God? It's me Billy.
Do you even exist? I overheard dad
telling mom he's not so sure
anymore. I guess people doubt you
during hard times eh? I have
something I'd like to ask of you.
If you exist can you give me a
sign?

Billy looks around the church. Nothing happens.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Hmmm..let's try this. If you don't
exist, give me a sign.

Light shines in through the stained glass windows. The church organ starts playing by itself as an invisible choir starts singing Amazing Grace. A dove flies across the room.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Now I'm really confused. If you
don't exist, how did you show me
those signs? Screw this. I'm outta
here. I was just going to ask for
my dog back.

Billy exits. As the church doors are heard closing, Rusty emerges from the confessional booth.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - MORNING

Roger enters the kitchen dressed like a construction worker, hard hat and all.

JANE

What's with the get up? I always
thought you needed a helmet.

ROGER

Yeah. Laugh it up. I got a job doing construction over in Industryville.

JANE

The only thing you've ever constructed is a phoney resume. What construction experience do you have?

ROGER

I spent my life CONSTRUCTING cars. Cars are like little metal houses.
(Tapping hard hat)
Think on that.

JANE

(Removing hard hat)
You know, I think I was wrong earlier. It might be too late for this to do any good.

INT. MELONS RESTAURANT, INDUSTRYVILLE - DAY.

Roger enters a hooters knockoff called Melons. The place is full. All the waitresses are wearing short shorts and tight t shirts that say Melons.

ROGER

Sorry I'm late girls. Bad traffic. I'll just go in the back and get changed.

Roger goes into the back room. The front door opens Billy walks in.

BILLY

Woah! What is this place?!

WAITRESS 1

You probably shouldn't be in here little boy.

BILLY

I'm sorry. It's just that, I hid on the floor in the back of my dad's car so I could follow him here and look for my dog while my dad works. He's smart. He definitely could've made it out here. I thought my dad was working construction, but then he came in here.

WAITRESS 1

Oh I see...why don't you have a seat
for a minute. What's your name?

BILLY

(Sitting down on a
barstool.)

My name's Billy.

Billy takes out a picture of him and Rusty.

BILLY (CONT'D)

See this is my dog, Rusty. Have you
seen him?

A bunch more waitresses gather around and look at the
picture. None have seen the dog.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Shoot. It was worth a shot anyway.

WAITRESS 2

Look at this little boy. He's so
precious. Couldn't you just eat him
up?

Waitress 3 comes up to Billy, pours ketchup on his hand and
licks it off.

WAITRESS 3

Could use a little salt, but yeah
pretty good.

Roger comes out wearing the company uniform. Customers are
whistling and pinching his ass.

ROGER

Billy?! What the hell are you doing
here?!

BILLY

I hid in the car so I could follow
you here to look for Rusty.

ROGER

Wait? So you were there the whole
time?

BILLY

Yeah. I saw you cry for 20 minutes
straight. Big heaving sobs...

ROGER

Ok...ok..that's enough. Well I don't have time to take you home, and your mother can't know anything about any of this..

BILLY

Relax. Mom thinks I still go to school.

ROGER

Ok... good we got that covered.

BILLY

So what are you guys building here? Place looks built to me.

ROGER

Son, this isn't a construction site. I work at this restaurant, because due to a sexual discrimination lawsuit, they have to hire men now. It's the only job I could get. Speaking of which, I have to get to work. What am I gonna do with you?

WAITRESS 4

There's enough of us to take turns watching him. I'm sure we can find something for him to do.

ROGER

Thanks, you girls are lifesavers. Roger hurries off.

DISSOLVE TO:

MELONS RESTAURANT - LATER THAT DAY.

It's the end of Roger's shift. Billy is behind the bar mixing drinks. The waitresses are congregated around him.

ROGER

What's going on?! You have my kid making drinks?!

WAITRESS 2

Yeah, and he's a natural. Best damn martini I've ever had.

Roger sits down.

ROGER

Ok in that case I'll have a cosmopolitan.

Billy and all the girls stare at Roger.

ROGER (CONT'D)

What?! I got hooked on them in the Navy. Where I did big strong man stuff.

EXT. THOMPSON FAMILY HOME - MORNING

A flatbed truck pulls up in front of the house. Rusty hops off the back. Truck drives away.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - MORNING.

Billy and Jane are in the kitchen eating breakfast. Billy is just kinda poking at his food.

JANE

What's wrong hon?

BILLY

I just really miss Rusty. I wish he was here.

Rusty enters the kitchen to thunderous studio audience applause. So long and loud, Billy and Jane have to wait to say their next lines. Billy rushes to his dog.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Rusty!

Billy looks skyward.

BILLY (CONT'D)

You really like to keep me guessing. Don't ya big guy?

JANE

Wait? That stuff actually works? I wish it would rain money.

Silence as she waits a moment. Nothing happens.

JANE (CONT'D)

Damn. Maybe we only get one wish.

Jane exits kitchen to the living room.

EXT. THOMPSON'S BACKYARD - MORNING

Money starts raining down from the sky, unbeknownst to our characters.

EXT. ACROSS THE STREET FROM THOMPSON HOME - DAY.

A rundown old house is shown. With mail and newspapers piled up. Grass way overgrown. Generally unkempt appearance.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY LIVING ROOM - DAY.

Roger is staring out the window with a cup of coffee in his hand. Billy and Rusty approach.

BILLY
Watcha looking at dad?

ROGER
Old man Mayweather's place. He's really not keeping it up.

Jane enters from kitchen.

JANE
What's everyone staring at?

ROGER
Old man Mayweather's place. It's getting disgusting. Newspapers piled up. Grass hasn't been cut in ages, and when you get close to the house, there's this really putrid stench. It's attracting flies. Just gross...you know if you're going to own a home...

JANE
Billy, why don't you take Rusty and go play for a bit?

BILLY
Outside?

JANE
No...no.. upstairs.

BILLY
O.k.

Billy and Rusty exit up the stairs.

ROGER

Why'd you send them away so quick?

JANE

Honey, there is definitely something wrong over there.

ROGER

You think he just abandoned the place? Happens a lot around here.

JANE

Yes, yes it does...but I think what we have over there is a man who's been dead a very long time.

ROGER

No way! I gotta go check this out!

JANE

(Grabbing Roger)

No! You are not going over there. We need to call the police.

ROGER

(mopey, head down)

Bummer, you're no fun.

EXT. OUTSIDE OLD MAN MAYWEATHER'S HOUSE - DAY.

Billy and Rusty are walking down the street when they see a girl about Billy's age, Allison, bringing boxes into the house.

BILLY

So you're moving into the old man's house?

ALLISON

Yeah, he was my grandfather. My mother inherited this place.

BILLY

Yeah..sorry to hear about that. I can't believe he tripped while showering with his rope, ended up hanging by the shower rod. What a fluke eh?

ALLISON

I don't think... never mind...My name is Allison by the way.

BILLY

Hi I'm Billy. This is my dog Rusty.

ALLISON

Nice to meet you, Billy and Rusty. I should get going. I promised I would help my mom get the dead old man smell out of the house.

BILLY

Yeah. It was quite the scene. My dad and I snuck a peek under the sheet while the paramedics turned away for a minute. We blew chunks for 3 days.

ALLISON

Yeah, I heard it was quite gruesome. I heard the maggots were eating his eyeballs.

Billy looks like he's going to lose his lunch, but he reels it back in. A cat comes running out of the house and pounces on Rusty's back. Rusty frantically tries to remove the cat.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Oh, that's my cat, peaches. I see her and Rusty are playing together already.

BILLY

Yeah..best of friends..

ALLISON

I gotta go Billy, but you're cute. Why don't you show me around the neighborhood sometime?

BILLY

(Blushing)

Uh...yeah... sure...

ALLISON

Ok. See ya then.

Allison enters the house. Billy turns his attention to Rusty and Peaches.

BILLY

Hey Peaches! Leave him alone! Get off there!

EXT. THOMPSON'S BACKYARD - EARLY EVENING.

Billy enters the backyard, and sees Peaches sitting by the bottom of a tree.

BILLY
Peaches? What are you doing here?
Where's Rusty?

Billy hears barking from up above, looks up and sees Rusty up in the tree.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Rusty! Afraid of a little cat. I'm
really embarrassed of you.

Peaches turns around and hisses at Billy.

CUT TO:

EXT. UP IN TREE - EARLY EVENING.

Billy and Rusty are sitting on a branch.

BILLY
So how about this weather?

A sudden downpour drenches the boys.

BILLY (CONT'D)
At least it can't get any worse.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING.

Roger is watching t.v. Jane enters from the kitchen.

JANE
Have you seen Billy? He's usually
home by now.

ROGER
No, but he better get home soon.
They're calling for watermelon
sized hail.

JANE
(Looking out the window)
Watermelon sized hail?! That's
ridiculous. Don't you realize
global warming is destroying the
earth and screwing with weather
patterns? People just don't care.

ROGER

Yeah, it really ticks me off.

JANE

Hey why is your car still running?
You've been home for hours.

ROGER

That way it's nice and toasty in
the morning.

EXT. ON TOP OF WATER TOWER - DAY.

Billy and Allison are standing on top of the water tower.

ALLISON

I see why you like it up here. You
really can see everything.

BILLY

Yeah it's a nice spot. Can I ask
you something?

ALLISON

Sure.

BILLY

Where's your dad? How come he's not
in the picture?

ALLISON

Mom says he's in Tampa with his
secretary.

BILLY

Really? What kind of work are they
doing there?

ALLISON

Oh...I bet she's taking his dic...
tation.

Allison starts laughing followed by Billy.

BILLY

I have no idea why we're laughing.

ALLISON

Oh..Billy you're so naive.

BILLY

Does that mean slow? Because I'm
tired of being called that.

ALLISON

No it means innocent and sweet. I like that.

Allison kisses Billy on the cheek. He's so shocked by it that he stumbles around comically before falling off the water tower entirely.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Billy no!

BILLY

(Screaming all the way down)

WORTH IT!!

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY.

Roger is sitting at the table reading a newspaper. Billy enters the kitchen in a hurry.

ROGER

Son, where are you off to in such a hurry?

BILLY

Allison and I are meeting at the batting cage. I'm already late.

ROGER

Ah, this Allison I've been hearing so much about. Come here for a second. I think it's time for the talk.

Billy doesn't move.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Ok, I'll come over there.

Roger goes over to Billy.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Son, if you're going to be running around with this girl, you need to use protection.

BILLY

You mean like a helmet?

ROGER

No...that's not what I mean...

BILLY
Like a face mask?

ROGER
No..not that either...I mean more
like for your downstairs parts. See
when a man loves a woman...how do I
explain this?

BILLY
You mean like a cup?

ROGER
Yes! That's the word I was looking
for. I got all that stuff
downstairs. Go grab it before you
go.

Billy exits to the basement.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Whew! That was easier than I
thought it would be.

EXT. THOMPSON FAMILY HOME - DAY.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY LIVING ROOM - DAY.

Roger is sitting on the couch watching t.v. Jane enters with
a laundry basket.

JANE
Where's Billy? I don't know if that
kid only wears the one pair of
underwear or what. Skid marked to
hell.

ROGER
Oh. He's upstairs with that girl
Allison. They're playing doctor.

JANE
What?! And you just let them?!

Jane runs up stairs.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BILLY'S BEDROOM - DAY.

Jane opens Billy's door a crack, just to see Billy sitting on
a chair and Allison sitting on his bed, both fully clothed.

BILLY

It looks like both your cholesterol and blood pressure are through the roof. You're going to have to make some changes.

A relieved Jane quietly closes the door and walks away.

INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM - DAY.

Still Allison bed, Billy chair.

BILLY

Alright Allison, let's get those clothes off.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY.

Rusty is seen chasing peaches up the street. Moment of silence, empty street. Peaches is seen chasing Rusty down the street. Rusty lets out a cowardly little whimper.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

Billy and Jane are standing with the door open, trying to get Rusty to budge. Roger enters from kitchen.

ROGER

What's going on here? Shouldn't Billy be in bed?

BILLY

Trying to get Rusty to go outside and take a whiz, but he won't go because Peaches is out there.

ROGER

Now I've heard enough. What kind of dog is afraid of a little kitty? He should really be ashamed of himself.

They hear a thump and look to find Peaches clinging to the window like one of those suction cup Garfields. Roger is so afraid he runs away.

ROGER (CONT'D)

(Running)

Sweet lord! Get rid of that thing!

JANE

C'mon Billy let's see if we can get
Rusty to go out in the backyard.

Jane, Billy and Rusty exit to the kitchen. They pass Roger curled up in a corner of the living room. He's rocking back and forth and sucking his thumb.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSEUP OF ROGER ROCKING BACK AND FORTH AND SUCKING HIS
THUMB.

THOMPSON FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

Some time has passed. Entire scene is a closeup of Roger.

BILLY O.S.

Mom is dad going to be ok?

JANE O.S.

Yeah, it'll just take some time.

BILLY O.S.

Yeah, but it's been three days.

JANE O.S.

...and somehow that's not the
record. He was spooked by an owl
once and was in a coma for 2
months. It's time for bed son.
Cover up your father.

A blanket is seen being draped on top of Roger, covering him
head to toe as he rocks back and forth underneath.

BILLY O.S.

Mom, why's dad such a wuss?

INT. KITCHEN IN ALLISON'S HOUSE - DAY.

Billy and Allison are eating pieces from a cake shaped like a
torso on the kitchen table.

BILLY

Wow! I can't believe your mom is
cake!

ALLISON
 Don't you watch that tv show?
 Everyone you've ever known could be
 cake.

BILLY
 No...

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE:

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Billy and Roger are seated at the table. Jane has her head bent in front of Billy. There are lit candles sticking out of her head.

JANE
 Happy Birthday! Blowout the candles
 and make a wish.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY LIVING ROOM - DAY.

Billy and Roger are seated on the couch watching tv. All of a sudden Roger bites off a couple of his fingers to reveal cake underneath.

ROGER
 Vanilla! I specifically asked for
 chocolate.

END OF FLASHBACK SEQUENCE.

RETURN TO SCENE.

INT. KITCHEN IN ALLISON'S HOUSE - DAY

BILLY
 Wow! That is mind blowing! How did
 you know? What was your first clue?

ALLISON
 All of her periods were icing
 sugar.

BILLY
 I already regret asking.

ALLISON

I know it sounds weird, but once a month we had the best cinnamon rolls. You want another piece?

BILLY

Sure.

Allison cuts into the cake. The cake let's out a blood curdling scream.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Does she scream every time?

ALLISON

Yeah, but you get used to it. Eat up. I still have her head in the freezer.

BILLY

Allison?

ALLISON

Yeah?

BILLY

Are you cake?

ALLISON

No, but I'm half muffin on my dad's side, and I had an aunt who turned out to be pizza.

BILLY

That's crazy. Do you have any ice cream to go with your mom?

INT. MELONS RESTAURANT, INDUSTRYVILLE - DAY

Roger is standing in front of all the female employees holding a clipboard. Everyone involved is wearing the usual Melons garb.

ROGER

So Agatha I have you closing on Sunday, and I see Ethel booked Tuesday off, so Bertha I'm going to slot you in there. You know I've been wondering why such young women have such ancient sounding names. Seems strange to me.

An elderly woman enters behind Roger. She is also dressed in the traditional Melons garb.

ELDERLY WOMAN

You know what seems strange to me
Thompson? Why the hell are you
pretending to be a manager?

An embarrassed Roger sits with the rest of the employees.

ROGER

Sorry Dakota Montana. I guess I got
carried away.

ELDERLY WOMAN

That's Mrs. Dakota Montana to you
Thompson.

EXT. THOMPSON FAMILY HOME FRONT LAWN - DAY.

A fresh blanket of snow covers the lawn. One by one names are revealed written in urine. First "Billy", then "Rusty" and then "Allison" is written in elegant cursive, the eyes dotted with hearts.

INT. ROGERS TRUCK - DAY.

Roger is driving along the icy street, when he notices something shiny.

ROGER

Is that... no way it couldn't be... I
think that's a dime.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Roger skids to a halt and jumps out of his truck, and picks the object off the ground.

ROGER

Oh...it's just foil...no harm no..

Roger is interrupted by an avalanche of skidding vehicles, including his own, running him over. After a few he stands up.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Whew! That was close.

Roger is immediately bulldozed by several more vehicles.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE - DAY.

Billy and Allison are walking on the frozen lake.

BILLY

Are you sure this ice is strong
enough?

ALLISON

Of course. Relax. Look at the
circus going on here.

Shot widens to reveal a carnival taking place on the ice.
Games, Ferris wheel etc... Even a monster truck roaring across
the ice complete with squealing kids in the back.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Now, keep up. Come win me a teddy
bear.

Allison runs off, leaving Billy staring after her in
lovestruck awe. Soon he hears the ice around him begin to
crack. Only the ice in his immediate vicinity is affected.

BILLY

(Looking down)

Holy word my parents won't allow me
to say!

With that Billy falls through the ice.

EXT. DIFFERENT SPOT ALONG FROZEN LAKE - DAY.

Two men are ice fishing.

ICE FISHER 1

Come ice fishing you said. It'll be
fun you said. Yeah I'm sitting here
freezing my ass off, not catching
anything, having the time of my
life.

Something big starts tugging on his line. He struggles to
reel it in.

ICE FISHER 1 (CONT'D)

Help me out here. This sucker is
huge.

Ice Fisher 2 helps Ice Fisher 1 reel it in. Billy pops out of
the hole in the ice, flopping like a fish.

ICE FISHER 2

Nah. Throw it back there's not enough meat on this one.

EXT. OUTSIDE UNKNOWN RESIDENCE - DAY.

Billy dumps the last bit of snow off his shovel into a pile almost as tall as him. Rusty looks on.

BILLY

Whew boy! Took all day, but we got it done. I mean I got it done. You weren't much help.

Mr. Henderson, Billy's client, approaches them.

MR. HENDERSON

So you must be the boy I hired to clear my driveway.

BILLY

Yes, sir, Mr. Henderson. I took on the extra work so I could afford to get my girlfriend a nice Christmas present.

MR. HENDERSON

I didn't ask for your life story kid. You did do a nice job though.

BILLY

Thanks, sir.

MR. HENDERSON

The only problem is that my house is across the street. I have no idea who lives here.

Mr. Henderson gestures across the street.

CUT TO: AN UN-SHOVELLED HOUSE ACROSS THE STREET. THE PROPERTY IS COVERED WITH SEVERAL FEET OF SNOW.

Billy looks at Mr. Henderson's house then back at the job he just did. He collapses to his knees and begins sobbing uncontrollably.

EXT. OUTSIDE UNKNOWN RESIDENCE - DAY.

Billy dumps the last bit of snow onto a pile almost as tall as him. Rusty looks on.

BILLY

Whew boy! Took all day but we got it done. I mean I got it done you weren't much help. It sure was nice of dad to offer me a few bucks to clear our own driveway. I know I can't screw that up.

Roger approaches.

ROGER

Nice job, son.

BILLY

Thanks dad.

ROGER

The only problem is our house is across the street. I have no idea who lives here. You better put all this snow back where you found it, before people get suspicious.

Roger gestures across the street.

CUT TO: THE UN-SHOVELLED THOMPSON HOUSE ACROSS THE STREET. THE PROPERTY IS COVERED WITH SEVERAL FEET OF SNOW.

Billy looks at his own house, then back at the job he just did. He collapses to his knees and begins sobbing uncontrollably.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY.

Billy and Allison are standing in front of the kitchen sink.

BILLY

Wanna see a cool trick?

ALLISON

Sure.

Billy turns the tap on then holds a lighter under the stream, causing the water to burst into flames.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Uh..oh..

All of a sudden the sink, Billy and Allison are all sprayed with foam from behind. Shot widens to reveal Jane standing there with a fire extinguisher.

JANE

Billy! What did I say about doing that?!

BILLY

Only on Tuesdays and Thursdays after 3 but no later than 5.

Jane sprays Billy even more.

JANE

No, I said never smart ass.

ALLISON

(Holding her stomach)

Mrs. Thompson, I'm not feeling so good. I didn't know we weren't supposed to drink that water.

JANE

Oh no hon...

Jane is interrupted by flames shooting out of Allison's ass. Jane rushes to spray Allison down.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Roger is watching t.v. Jane enters with the Mail.

JANE

Watcha watching?

ROGER

Channel 5 news. They're finally tearing down that abandoned seniors home.

TV ANNOUNCER #1 O.S.

Marty, they are using a Vinzner 4000 wrecking ball, or as she's affectionately known, the home wrecker.

TV ANNOUNCER #2 O.S.

Yes of course, if you missed an opportunity to see this baby in action, you'd be cheating yourself.

TV ANNOUNCER #1 O.S.

The air is pregnant with expectation.

TV ANNOUNCER #2 O.S.
Pregnant with expectation?! Jack,
are you back on the bottle again?

TV ANNOUNCER #1 O.S.
I've seen it used that way. Read a
book once in awhile.

JANE
There's a weird letter here.

Roger leaps off the couch.

ROGER
Don't open it! Could be Anthrax!

JANE
Don't be ridiculous. It's not
Anthrax...I mean...it's probably not
Anthrax...

Jane hands Roger the letter.

JANE (CONT'D)
I just remembered I opened the last
one.

ROGER
Oh, but I insist...

Roger shoves the envelope into Jane's hand. Jane shoves the
envelope back into Roger's hand.

JANE
No...no...fair's fair. I mean I'd love
to open it, but you know rules are
rules.

ROGER
I dare you to open it if you're not
too scared.

JANE
Why don't you open it, big shot?

ROGER
Because I'm too scared.

Billy enters, tears the envelope out of Roger's hand.

BILLY
What's the big deal about opening a
letter? I'll do it.

ROGER

Wait!

Roger grabs Jane. They run into the kitchen.

BILLY

(Tearing open envelope)

Man I swear the second I turn
eighteen, I'm out of this house.

Billy studies the letter in front of him. Roger peaks around
the corner from the kitchen.

ROGER

Can we come out now son?

BILLY

Yes, all clear.

Jane and Roger re-enter the living room.

ROGER

Whew! I really thought you were
gonna get a face full, there. Bye
bye Billy...

BILLY

As per usual dad, I have no idea
what the hell you're talking about.
It's one of those cool ones where
the letters are cut out of
magazines, like on tv!

JANE

What?! Gimme that.

Jane rips the letter out of Billy's hand. Billy is still
holding the envelope.

JANE (CONT'D)

It says. If you ever want to see
your dog again, bring \$20 worth of
Mew Sensations cat treats to
Raymond park at midnight. Leave
them on the bench next to the
fountain. Mew Sensations cat
treats: Any other cat treat will
make your cat hate you. Jeez, a
little aggressive.

(MORE)

JANE (CONT'D)

Now wait, I've seen a lot of ridiculous things lately, but are we really supposed to believe, that a cat could cut out all of these letters out and glue them to the page, let alone send it? I mean even this poorly written farce wouldn't want to insult our intelligence that much, would they?

Silence as Billy and Roger stare at Jane.

JANE (CONT'D)

(Mumbling under her breath.)

Yeah...the cat wrote the damn letter...

BILLY

(Looking into envelope.)

There's pictures in here too.

Billy takes out the photos and studies them.

BILLY (CONT'D)

My god! The cigarettes she's got him smoking aren't his brand at all. Now she's just being cruel.

Roger turns his attention back to the tv just in time to see the announcers on screen.

CLOSEUP OF TV SCREEN

BOTH ANNOUNCERS IN UNISON

Roger Thompson you are a cuckold.

Roger Thompson you are a cuckold.

Roger grabs the remote.

ROGER

I swear, I understand the news less and less everyday. Are there any cartoons on?

EXT. SNOW COVERED STREET OUTSIDE OLD AUTO FACTORY - DAY.

Billy and Allison are walking down the street. The factory is still belching smoke into the sky.

ALLISON
This town stinks.

BILLY
Yeah. I know not a lot to do since everything's closed town.

ALLISON.
No I mean this town stinks. It has a smell. You have to know what I'm talking about.

BILLY
Oh yeah you get used to the smell after awhile. A lot of towns stink. Not as bad as Houston, Texas. Or Brooks, Alberta Canada.

ALLISON
My mom and I drove through Brooks once. The smell made me throw up in my mouth.

BILLY
The smell of progress baby.

ALLISON
Is this the auto factory that closed down. The one your dad worked at?

BILLY
Yeah they closed down, but they let us keep all this cool smoke. So it's not so bad.

ALLISON
It's really a sad indictment on the current state of corporate America.

BILLY
Yeah a real what you said... an..uh..enticement of uh... Connecticut, America. I'm as outraged as you are! My dad said that this expert guy Bob Greensplat...

ALLISON
Oh. Don't get me started on Bob Greensplat. So dreamy...

BILLY

Agreed. My dad says he must get so much poon. Whatever that means.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Well, anyway, he said that we're for sure in a recession. Could even be heading for another Great Depression. Whatever that means.

ALLISON

Doesn't matter Astronomers say the earth will most likely be hit with a comet the size of Rhode Island in 3 days.

BILLY

Cool!

ALLISON

No. Something really stinks.

BILLY

Yeah. We covered that already honey pie.

ALLISON

No. I mean something even worse than usual.

BILLY

Jeez. That smell is way worse. What the hell would that be.

ALLISON

I think it's your dad.

BILLY

Very funny Allison, at least I got a dad.

ALLISON

No, Billy I see your father running towards us.

BILLY

The stench seems to be getting worse.

Roger Comes running by.

ROGER

I got sprayed by a skunk, then fell into a pile of manure!

Roger falls into an open manhole.

BILLY

They really shouldn't have that here.

They approach a mountain of broken glass.

ALLISON

This probably shouldn't be here either.

BILLY

Neither should that pile of razor blades next to the poisonous reptile store.

EXT. SNOWY BACK ALLEY - DAY.

An old couple, Mom and Pop, are eating out of a dumpster.

POP

Pass me more gravy dear.

MOM

I don't think this is gravy. I don't think gravy is supposed to have legs.

Billy approaches.

BILLY

Mom! Pop! I went by the shop. It wasn't there anymore. Did someone steal it?!

POP

No Billy, that Walmart put us out of business. They sell everything we sell but cheaper. We couldn't compete.

BILLY

Yeah, Walmart is pretty great. I'll let you folks enjoy your meal.

Billy exits momentarily then re-enters the frame.

BILLY (CONT'D)

...and they hire old folks like you to greet people when they walk in the store. Ain't that great?

Billy exits again.

CUT TO:

INT. STORE - DAY.

Billy enters. A man is pouring gasoline on the floor.

BILLY

Excuse me wasn't this a jewellery store?

STORE OWNER

Yes it was until that Walmart undersold me. I can't compete with those prices.

BILLY

You're right. Man people keep telling me how great that place is. Thanks!

Billy exits as quickly as he arrived.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER STORE - DAY.

Billy enters and sees a chair and a man with a rope wrapped around his neck. He's holding a sign that says Walmart and there's an arrow drawn underneath that points in the direction of Walmart.

CUT TO:

WALMART - DAY.

Billy enters and is greeted by the elderly greeter.

ELDERLY GREETER

Welcome to Walmart.

BILLY

Well you guys certainly come highly recommended!

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY LIVING ROOM - DAY.

Billy comes down the stairs. Jane is on the couch watching tv.

BILLY

Mom, I just saw dad fall off the roof and land on a rake, and now he's perfectly fine.

JANE

Big deal. That kinda stuff happens all the time.

BILLY

Yeah I know that's the thing..

Roger enters from the kitchen.

ROGER

Hey, do you know where that inflatable snowman is?

JANE

If it's not in the basement, it'll be in the attic.

ROGER

(Going upstairs)
Thanks.

JANE

What were you saying hon?

BILLY

Mom?

JANE

Yes dear?

BILLY

Is dad immortal?

Jane starts laughing.

JANE

Immortal, no. Immoral...well that's a different discussion. Son no one is immortal, especially not your father. Your father really could die at anytime...or me, or even you kiddo. Why you could get hit by a bus or even get shot. Every time you leave the house, you take your life into your hands. Feel better son?

BILLY

Yeah...thanks..

An oven timer goes off.

JANE
 (Heading into kitchen)
 Alright! Who wants cookies?!

After Jane exits, Billy is startled by the sound of a gun shot and sirens.

INT. MALL - DAY.

Most stores in the mall are closed. Billy and Allison are seen in a long line of children waiting to see Santa.

DISSOLVE TO: BILLY SITTING ON SANTA'S LAP.

Santa takes a big slug of whiskey. His suit is stained and torn.

SANTA
 Ho!Ho!Ho! Merry Christmas! Young man, what would you like from Santa Claus?

BILLY
 Could we start with a drier place to sit?

DISSOLVE TO: ALLISON SITTING ON SANTA'S LAP.

SANTA
 What would you like for Christmas little lady?

ALLISON
 How about an end to this oppressive patriarchy?

Santa points to a sign at the front of the line that reads: No Feminist B.S. Allowed.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
 Crap! I'll take a pony then.

Santa points out a sign right below the other sign that reads: Out of Ponies.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
 Dammit!

SANTA
 You should've gotten here earlier. I gave that last girl 2.

Santa belches. Allison is disgusted by his breath.

ALLISON

Dude, you really need to sober up.

SANTA

Hey, don't judge me. The Easter
Bunny is addicted to meth.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

The doorbell rings. Jane comes from the kitchen to answer.
Outside stands a bunch of Carollers.

CAROLLERS IN UNISON

O come all ye faithful, joyful and
triumphant.

Billy and Rusty come down stairs to join Jane by the open
door.

CAROLLERS IN UNISON (CONT'D)

O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.

Roger enters from the kitchen.

ROGER

What's all this racket? I hate all
these Christmas songs on all the
time. Let's try to find another
station.

Roger mimics turning the radio dial.

BILLY

Dad, I don't think that's how it
works.

Static and then:

DEEP VOICED CAROLLER

95.9 The Bear!

O.S. Bear growl

DEEP VOICED CAROLLER (CONT'D)

San Francisco's best rock! Today's
hits and yesterday's favorites!

JANE

San Francisco?!

ROGER

Oh, yeah, you'd be surprised what you can pick up on a clear night.

EXT. OUTSIDE WALMART - DAY.

Roger is at the front of a crowd of people waiting for the doors to open.

CROWD MEMBER #1

How many of the hot new toy do you think they'll even have?

CROWD MEMBER #2

Hard to say. I really need it though. This is our first Christmas since my wife passed away, and my daughter and I aren't getting along that well. I just need to make things right.

CROWD MEMBER #1

I understand man. My family was homeless for six months. We just recently got back on our feet again. I need to show my son that things are ok. He's still afraid it's going to happen again.

CROWD MEMBER #3

I get what you guys are saying. I made some bad choices. Ended up doing 5-7 for robbery. My ex wife was so ashamed, she wouldn't even bring the kids to see me. I'm going straight though now. I just need a couple hot new toys to make them look at me like they used to before I screwed everything up.

(Addressing Roger)

What about you buddy? What's your story?

ROGER

I lost my job when the auto plant closed down. Ever since I've had to do a series of increasingly degrading things to keep the lights on. My family has no respect for me anymore. I just know if I got my kid the hot new toy, maybe I could show them that I'm worth something again.

CROWD MEMBER #1
 We all understand each other here.
 No judgement only compassion,
 because...

CROWD MEMBER #4 O.S.
 Look! The doors are opening!

The frenzied mob rushes for the doors, trampling Roger in the process.

ANNOUNCER O.S.
 This moment is brought to you by
 rampant consumerism. Rampant
 consumerism: make your family love
 you again!

INT. ALLISON'S HOUSE - DAY.

Allison is touching up her hair, getting all prettied up, when Billy rings the doorbell.

ALLISON
 Come in.

Billy enters, holding a package.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
 Oh... hi Billy..

BILLY
 I haven't seen you in awhile. I
 just dropped by to give you your
 Christmas gift.

Allison hesitantly takes the package and opens it.

BILLY (CONT'D)
 Earrings. Walmart. Top of the line.

ALLISON
 Billy, that's really nice, but I
 can't accept these...

BILLY
 Why...I don't understand..

ALLISON
 The reason you haven't seen me is
 because I've been avoiding you.

BILLY
 What did I do?

ALLISON

Nothing Billy. There's just there's someone else...

BILLY

What?! Who?!

ALLISON

It's Johnathan Meyer.

BILLY

Johnathan Meyer?! That guy is way older than us.

ALLISON

Don't be ridiculous. He's just really mature for his age.

BILLY

He has a full beard and rides a motorcycle to school.

ALLISON

Billy, don't be jealous just because Johnathan is way cooler than you. Plus look what he got me.

Allison turns around. When she turns back she has a giant diamond on her finger. It's so massive she can barely hold her hand up.

BILLY

Holy crap! Last time I saw one that big it was made out of candy. Is it...

ALLISON

No, it's not candy.

BILLY

Damn...

They both hear a motorcycle revving up outside. Followed by a honking horn.

ALLISON

Looks like he's here. Right on time. I have to go. Please take the earrings back.

BILLY

No. I got those for you. You can keep them.

ALLISON
 (Putting earrings in.)
 While they are pretty. Maybe
 Johnathan will like them.

Horn honks again O.S.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
 I gotta go he doesn't like to be
 kept waiting.

Allison hugs a dumbstruck Billy and leaves. A gobsmacked
 Billy just stands there for a moment.

ALLISON O.S.
 Billy! Get outta my house!

Billy snaps out of his stupor, and hurriedly complies.

EXT. THOMPSON'S BACKYARD - DAY.

Billy and Rusty are standing in the backyard. Billy has a
 list on a clipboard. He's trying to lure peaches into a pet
 crate.

BILLY
 (shaking cat treats)
 Now we will try Mew Sensations cat
 treats, but she's very smart. I
 don't expect her to...

Billy is interrupted by Peaches rushing into the crate. Billy
 quickly closes the crate.

BILLY (CONT'D)
 Guess we shoulda tried that earlier
 then, huh? But now what am I
 supposed to do with:

Pictures of items are flashed onscreen as they are listed.

BILLY (CONT'D)
 A tenor saxophone, the original
 first draft of the constitution,
 the complete works of William
 Shakespeare, the 1978 New England
 Patriots, a Golden Girls reunion...

4 urns are pictured, each with the name of a main character
 on it.

BILLY (CONT'D)

The head of Ben Affleck, and he was still using it at the time. I mean kinda...

Rusty wanders off.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Wait, boy there's more. A 1975 phone book for the city of Newark, Delaware not New Jersey, An authentic William Shatner hairpiece, an underripe cantaloupe...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY.

Billy and Rusty are seen dropping the cat crate off in front of the Chinese Restaurant and trying to runaway before being detected.

RESTAURANT OWNER

(Exiting Restaurant)

Hey #4 with side of fried rice...I mean dog...come back here!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THOMPSON FAMILY HOME - CHRISTMAS MORNING.

The roof is a haphazard mix of decorations of the inflatable and flashing light variety.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY LIVING ROOM - CHRISTMAS MORNING.

Roger and Jane are waiting in the living room with mugs of hot chocolate. The Christmas tree in the corner, littered with presents, is really just a scaled down version of the roof decoration wise.

JANE

Billy! Come down, have some hot chocolate and open your presents! Poor guy hasn't been the same since Allison ditched him.

ROGER

The loss of one's first love is a real tragedy. The loss of one's marriage however...

Jane elbows Roger in the ribs.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Just joking love bug.

Billy comes down stairs.

BILLY
Can we skip Christmas this year?
What's the point when existence is
bleak and meaningless?

ROGER
Jeez, kid, dark stuff. I wish we
had something to lighten the mood
around here.

UNCLE GOMER O.S.
Help! Help!

ROGER
Why who could that be?

BILLY
Sounds like Uncle Gomer to me.

ROGER
(finger on chin as if
contemplating)
You know, you just might be right.

UNCLE GOMER O.S.
Help! I'm stuck in the chimney!

BILLY
Uncle Gomer, you fat bastard, why
are you stuck in our chimney?

The family breaks into laughter at this.

UNCLE GOMER O.S.
Some fat bearded guy in red told me
there's free cookies for people who
enter this way.

BILLY
They're homemade this year.

UNCLE GOMER O.S.
Uh...no thanks...I'm good.

The whole family bursts into laughter again.

ROGER
It's just good to see you laughing
again.

BILLY
Why not? That's just good clean
American family friendly comedy.

ROGER
Yes, very wholesome indeed.

Family continues laughing.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY LIVING ROOM - CHRISTMAS MORNING.

The family is seated around the Christmas tree. Wrapping
paper and assorted family gifts scattered everywhere.

BILLY
I love it all, guys, especially the
hot new toy, but did you guys
notice how low on socks and
underwear I am?

Family bursts into laughter.

ROGER
(putting his arm around
his family.)
Now do you understand the true
meaning of Christmas, young man?

BILLY
Yeah, it's all about buying stuff.

ROGER
It sure is son.

Family bursts into laughter again.

EXT. THOMPSON FAMILY HOME - DAY

SUPER: "6 Months Later"

BILLY O.S.
Rusty? Rusty? Where are you boy?

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

Jane enters the kitchen carrying groceries. Roger is seated at the table, drinking coffee and reading a newspaper.

JANE
 (Setting groceries down on
 counter.)
 Where's Billy?

ROGER
 Outside looking for that dog.

JANE
 Good. We need to talk.

ROGER
 What's going on?

CUT TO:

EXT. THOMPSON'S BACKYARD - DAY

Billy is calling for Rusty.

BILLY
 Rusty? Come here boy.

CUT TO: RUSTY RUNNING FULL SPEED, FOAMING AT THE MOUTH.

CUT TO:

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

JANE
 I'm pregnant.

CUT TO: RUSTY GETTING CLOSER.

BILLY O.S.
 Where were you boy? Playing with
 your friend Mr. Foamy Squirrel?

CUT TO:

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

ROGER
 Really? I don't even remember the
 last time we...

JANE

Hold on. There's a pretty good
chance it's not yours.

CUT TO:

EXT. THOMPSON'S BACKYARD - DAY

Rusty runs into Billy's waiting arms.

CUT TO:

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY.

ROGER

Wha? Who?...

CUT TO:

EXT. THOMPSON'S BACKYARD - DAY.

Rusty has Billy pinned on the ground, snarling, foam dripping
from his exposed teeth.

CUT TO:

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

JANE

Well it could've been the client I
have on Monday mornings, or the one
on Wednesday Afternoons, or one of
the two guys I meet simultaneously
on Friday's or...

ROGER

What the...

CUT TO :

EXT. THOMPSON'S BACKYARD - DAY.

C.U. OF RUSTY, BLOOD DRIPPING FROM HIS MOUTH

BILLY O.S.

Fuuuuckk!!!

Rusty's head briefly disappears from frame. When his head returns to frame, Billy's mangled bloody face is hanging from the dog's jaw.

FADE OUT.

