

LORDS OF HOGTOWN

by

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FADE IN

OPENING TEASER VIDEO

JOHNNY WAGER, a youthful looking 37, the cock on the block. A sun-bleached out-of-place California boy stands casually in front of the camera.

WAGER

Here are some simple rules for
straight people visiting gay bars
during Pride.

Wager pours a shot of vodka into a glass of ice.

WAGER (CONT'D)

This is your favourite bar manager
from the Drunken Chicken

FLASHING SIGN: PRODUCT PLACEMENT

WAGER

Our resident Drag Queen is Miss
Hyacinth.

FLASH IMAGE:

HYACINTH(30s) six foot six-foot-five drag queen and don't call her a transsexual because she's not changing anything on this beautiful piece of flesh, sips her vodka and soda with ruby lips.

WAGER

Introduce yourself. Buy her a
drink. Just remember, she has
claws.

Wager fills the glass with soda water.

WAGER (CONT'D)

It's rude to bring a bunch of
straight people to a gay bar. If
you're going, bring some gay
friends. If you don't have any gay
friends then come make some. If
that idea offends you, maybe find
somewhere else to get wasted.
Bubba's Biker Bar is down the
street.

He sips his drink.

WAGER (CONT'D)

Straight dudes. Don't get offended if you're in a gay bar and some dude hits on you. What did you think was gonna happen? Take it as a fucking compliment.

(then)

Just follow these simple rules and have a good time! Remember it's Pride! Remember HASHTAG #thisisme

END TEASER

EXT. GTA - DAY

It's Pride Month in Toronto. The city pulsates with people and an abundance of gay rainbow paraphernalia.

Even the CN Tower is lit with Pride colours.

EXT. YONGE STREET - DAY

Crowds consist of biker dykes, leather men, trans, non-binary, and a kaleidoscope of Chers, Pinks, Beyonces and Marilyns--both Mansons and Monroes.

Patios are stuffed with people. Corporate sponsored floats go by, all vying to prove their progressiveness. Horse cops watch for trouble through mirrored lenses.

WAGER, now wearing a tight, rainbow hued T-shirt, strides through it all, on the prowl.

A BUZZ goes through the mass of people. LAUGHTER erupts followed by SQUEALS of mock fear.

The crowds part for a group of leather-clad bears carrying a balloon banner between them that reads PRIDE in rainbow flag colours.

Leading them is PYOTR, 20s, a dark-haired otter, bare-chested and smooth-skinned. Skin-tight, basket hugging jeans leave nothing to the imagination.

He holds a controller on a remote-controlled flying shark and is clearly looking for someone.

Pyotr's eyes light up when he spots Wager. He zeroes in on him. Neither of them notice...

CAFE

... a man (21) in a Toronto Police Fourth Class CONSTABLE's uniform watches Wager approach Pyotr. Below his hat his face is concealed behind shades and a desperate attempt at a mustache.

YONGE STREET

Wager leans down close enough to touch Pyotr's ear with his lips.

WAGER

It's my birthday. Buy you a drink?

Pyotr turns his head, his mouth now a hair's breath from Wager's. He has a faint Slavic accent

PYOTR

You are birthday boy. I buy you a drink.

WAGER

Let's say I agree. How about we find someplace more private to talk about that.

Pyotr possessively slides his arm around Wager and follows him down a side street. The shark follows them.

The crowd thins as they leave the boisterous crowds and the noise behind.

SIDE STREET

Wager takes them down an alley where a primer-coated Buick beater is parked in front of a door labeled Drunken Chicken.

Wager holds the door open while Pyotr maneuvers the shark inside.

INT. DRUNKEN CHICKEN OFFICE - DAY

Dingy back room of a typical bar, filled with cases and kegs of beer, several boxes of various liquors and assorted bar paraphernalia.

A small desk, with a computer. A corkboard covered in Post-It notes and old newspaper articles.

An old man, SID, (60s) the perpetually cranky bar owner, hunches over the keyboard, doing the books. He barely glances at Wager.

Does a doubletake on the shark, nosing around a stack of empties.

SID
You know the rules. The circus stays outside.

WAGER
Who's up front?

Sid looks Pyotr up and down. SIGHS.

SID
Tito didn't show. I, of course, called you but you weren't answering your phone.

All Wager's attention is on Pyotr. They eye fuck.

SID (CONT'D)
I had to call Barbara in. She was supposed to be going to her sister's today, so now BOTH my wife and my sister-in-law are pissed at me meaning I'm going to have to buy a better couch if I'm going to be spending more nights on it.

No one pays any attention to him.

PYOTR
It is his birthday!

SID
Well, then, that's okay. You're going to get laid, so we should all be happy and celebrate.

He eyes both Pyotr, who grins at him, and the shark.

WAGER
It's my thirty-seventh birthday?

SID
This makes it better how?

Wager shrugs.

WAGER
It's a new level of trauma. HASHTAG
#thisisme.

SID
You're in for a surprise when you
hit forty.

Wager looks down at Pyotr.

WAGER
What's your name, Shark boy?

PYOTR
Pyotr. Pyotr Kov--

SID
Get outta here.

PYOTR
Kovolchuk.

Sid only looks at Wager.

SID
I'll see you tonight at six--

WAGER
I know, not a second later.

SID
Surprise me. Come in early.
(looks at Pyotr)
That's not going to happen, is it?

He points at some papers beside him.

SID (CONT'D)
Some stuff you need to put on our
events page for July first. Don't
forget Facebook and that Titter-
Tok, whatever.

Without a word, Wager leads Pyotr into the front bar.

FRONT BAR

Small tables line one wall with Edison lamps over them. All the stools along the bar occupied. Nearly a dozen beer taps line up under the top shelf alcohols.

Heads swivel to observe Wager's appearance. Appreciative glances take in Pyotr.

The walls and ceiling are covered in kitsch. A banner hangs above the tables. 2S-L-G-T-B-Q-I-A+.

MICHAEL, (30s) a New Jersey ex-pat who worships Beyonce peers bleary-eyed at the banner.

MICHAEL

Wait a minute. I know 2S is Two-spirited--

A third HYACINTH, (30s) six foot six-foot-five drag queen and don't call her a transsexual because she's not changing anything on this beautiful piece of flesh, sips her vodka and soda with ruby lips.

Michael moves his lips while he counts on one hand.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

What's the I? And is the A Ally or Asexual?

HYACINTH

Assholes and Incels?

Michael snorts.

BARBARA

Asexual and Intersex.

Michael stands corrected.

MICHAEL

So asexual is like an incel?

HYACINTH

No, no, no. Asexuals don't want sex because of who they are. Incels can't get anyone to have sex with them because of who they are.

MICHAEL

And Intersex...

He breaks off, puzzled. Wager cuts in.

WAGER

Are people who fuck themselves.

BARBARA

RICHARD

What about gay incels? Wait, are there gay incels?

HYACINTH

Oh honey, some of you are just too ugly to fuck.

Behind the bar, an amused BARBARA, 50s, looks up from tidying up as she serves. She plunges two highball glasses into a tub full of ice, free pours shots of gin and tops them with soda.

WAGER

Let's find out what you like.

(to Barbara)

A mixed flight. I'll have a Lunatic Fringe.

Barbara pours the six samples and Wager's IPA. When she delivers the beers, Pyotr hands her a twenty.

She drops an envelope in front of Wager. He takes out a check. Setting it on the bar he uses his phone to deposit it.

Nodding at her he stuffs both in his jean pocket. He crumples the envelope up and leaning over the bar lobs it into a garbage bin nearly full of cups.

BARBARA

That thing makes a mess it's on your head.

It's not clear if she's looking at Pyotr or the shark bobbing dangerously close to a display of bar snacks.

WAGER

It's housetrained.

Wager raises his pint to Pyotr who has already downed one glass.

Pyotr smiles and if possible it makes him look even more incredibly beautiful. Wager's smite marks are deep. He sips and stares.

WAGER (CONT'D)

How 'bout we make like a tree.

Wager downs the rest of his beer in one gulp. Pyotr looks confused.

Wager stands and takes his hand.

WAGER (CONT'D)

We leave.

PYOTR
 (gets it)
 Ohhh.

HYACINTH
 Yo, Wager, my man. Happy b-day.

Several OTHERS mimic her.

OTHERS
 Happy b-day!

Pyotr stands behind Michael and Hyacinth. He leans closer to admire her blood red inch long acrylic nails.

His shark nudges her shoulder.

Wager's paying more attention to Pyotr than what Hyacinth is saying. The shark appears to nuzzle her bare neck.

Wager's eyes lock with Pyotr's. The shark follows his movement, smacking into Hyacinth again.

She turns around.

HYACINTH
 Listen, Mister, at least buy me a drink first--what the fuck--

WAGER
 Pyotr, put your toy away.

HYACINTH
 No, Pyotr, don't put your toy away.
 (mugs)
 Danger, Will Robinson.
 (to Wager)
 My, you still know how to find them.

WAGER
 It's a gift.

Pyotr maneuvers the shark away from the bar.

PYOTR
 We go?

WAGER
 You bet we go. Get you away from the real sharks.

The front door JANGLES as it's jerked open. A blast of raw sunlight blinds the room. Like bats in a flashlight beam everyone ducks away from the glare.

The silhouette of a uniformed man stops in the open door. He steps into the bar. The door closes, shutting off the light.

It's the Constable from earlier.

CONSTABLE

I'm looking for a Jonathon Wager.

Every eye in the bar swivels toward Wager. A soft OHHHH of expectancy goes through the crowd.

WAGER

Did you do this?

Hyacinth shakes her head.

HYACINTH

If I had I wouldn't be bringing him in for you.

WAGER

(to Constable)

The seventies called. They want the porn 'stache back.

(looks closer)

Otherwise not bad.

HYACINTH

Oh, honey. He's perfect. Even with the mustache.

(to Constable)

Your stage is right there, hon.

The Constable seems taken back. Before he can respond Hyacinth hurries to the jukebox and starts an appropriate stripper song. Music along the lines of Nelly - Hot in Herre.

She looks again.

HYACINTH (CONT'D)

Unless you brought your own.

She sways to the music. Her own bump and grind.

Everyone turns to look at the Constable. Waiting.

The Constable studies Wager, doing his best to ignore Hyacinth. Finally he removes his sunglasses.

They all stare at the newly revealed face.

MICHAEL
How'd they do that?

WAGER
Do what?

HYACINTH
Wow, he looks like you, Johnny.
Only hotter.

Hyacinth leans forward as though reaching for the holstered gun.

HYACINTH (CONT'D)
It looks so real. You have a permit
for that, big boy?
(points at Wager)
There's your birthday boy. What are
you waiting for? Time's money,
honey.

The Constable focuses on Wager. He spins around and stalks over to the juke box.

Before anyone can react, he jerks the plug out, stopping the song in mid beat.

Silence is so complete, a DRIPPING TAP seems loud.

CONSTABLE
Can I speak with you privately,
sir?

WAGER
Uh, sure. Come on to the back.

Wager squeezes Pyotr's shoulder.

WAGER (CONT'D)
Wait here.

As they heads toward the office a chorus of disappointment follows them.

MICHAEL
He gets a private show?

HYACINTH
Not fair! I want to speak to the
manager!

OFFICE

Sid chews on an unlit cigar. A creature feature like Creeping Terror plays on his monitor, the sound muted.

He doesn't look behind him.

SID
So you back at six?

Only then does he see the cop.

WAGER
Some alone time, Sid.

Sid looks from the Constable to Wager. He chews harder on the cigar.

SID
I know it's your birthday, but two
in one day?

Sid leaves, closing the door behind him.

Wager parks his ass on the edge of the desk, knocking the keyboard off onto Sid's chair. The movie plays silently behind him.

WAGER
How can I help you, officer?

CONSTABLE
This isn't police business.

Wager picks up the keyboard and gestures at him to sit. The Constable ignores him.

WAGER
Going to tell me what it is then?

CONSTABLE
My name is Mark Riley. My mother's
name was Jessica.

When he doesn't say anymore Wager frowns.

WAGER
Should that mean something?

Mark reaches into his pocket and pulls out a folded piece of slick paper. He unfolds it to show a page from a high school yearbook.

He hands it to Wager.

Wager stares at, puzzled as to what he's looking for.

He focuses in on the last picture on the page.

It's a mousy looking girl with glasses and freckles, a studious look on her plump face. Jessica Riley. Her caption reads: Most likely to go to Mars.

CONSTABLE/MARK

Turn it over.

On the other side is a collage of sports teams. Baseball. Bocce Ball. Soccer.

And a date: 2004

Recognition hits Wager.

WAGER

Hey, the Wolverines. I was the best defensive midfield that year...

(frowns)

Why tell me... this? I haven't seen any of them since I graduated.

MARK

She was my mother. She passed away last week.

WAGER

Wow, well... Sorry for your loss-

MARK

You're my father.

Wager straightens like an electric prod just went up his ass.

WAGER

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Where the hell did that come from?

MARK

She told me.

WAGER

Look around you. I came out in high school, twenty...

His voice trails off.

WAGER (CONT'D)

... years ago... Shit, any fooling around I did before wasn't serious.

MARK

You don't remember her?

WAGER

Heard she moved to Ottawa before
finals.

MARK

Her family moved to Etobicoke. She
never left Toronto.

WAGER

Well, fuck. She never said a word.

MARK

Are you sure about that?

Wager shakes his head. Panic blossoms.

FLASHBACK

Maplewood's high school soccer team storms the opposing
team's goal.

A muscular teen, (WAGER) a magnificent animal leaps for the
ball, while on the sidelines JESSICA RILEY watches with quiet
infatuation.

After the game, before Wager can leave the field, Jessica
confronts him. Hands clasped in front of her, she stops,
forcing Wager to stop, too.

JESSICA

I need to talk to you, Johnny.

WAGER

Sure. Let me hit the shower. We'll
talk later.

Wager catches the eye of an older man watching him. They
smile invitingly at each other. He barely glances at Jessica.

WAGER (CONT'D)

Sure, sure, babe.

He bolts toward the school, suddenly in a hurry.

Jessica stares after him.

JESSICA

Tonight!

FLASHBACK ENDS

Wager squeezes the arms of his chair.

WAGER

You gotta be kidding me. Did Hy put you up to this? That little queen can be such a bitch--

MARK

Kidding? Fuck you.

WAGER

How was I supposed to know? Christ, I was what, sixteen? It wasn't serious.

MARK

It was to her. And she was only fifteen.

WAGER

When did she tell you?

MARK

I grew up thinking you were this great man. Mom wouldn't say much about you, only that you died a hero in Afghanistan.

Mark glares at Wager, blame in his eyes.

WAGER

Wow. A war hero? She sure laid a whopper on you, didn't she--

Mark's fist catches Wager on the chin. His head snaps back and his head hits the back of his chair, slams into the computer desk and dumps Wager on the floor.

Stunned, Wager blinks up at Mark from the floor.

Mark stands over him, one hand hovering over his holstered Glock.

MARK

Say it again.

Wager wipes the blood off his mouth.

Silent, he climbs to his feet, using the chair to pull himself up. He keeps a wary eye on Mark.

WAGER

What are you here for? Father and son bonding? Kinda late, don't you think?

Mark takes a business card out of his pocket and throws it at Wager. It lands on the chair seat.

MARK

Be there tomorrow at eleven to find out.

He adds a hundred dollar bill to the card.

MARK (CONT'D)

There's more if you show up.

Mark spins around and strides out the door, leaving it open. He turns one more time.

MARK (CONT'D)

I shouldn't have hit you.

He leaves.

Wager picks up the card.

Branson & Gilbert Wills Lawyer & Estate planning

WAGER

HASHTAG #fuckme

FRONT BAR

Mark strides towards the exit. Everyone watches him. He pauses by Sid, handing him a business card.

He glances at Pyotr.

MARK

Really? He's old enough to be your father.

Wager exits the office, stuffing the money in his pocket. He goes straight to Pyotr, takes the young man's hand.

WAGER

Come on. He's not your problem.

He watches Mark stalk out.

Pyotr follows him back to the office, flying the shark ahead of him.

SID (O.S.)
Six o'clock!

INT. WAGER'S CAR - DAY

When they're alone in the car, Wager turns to Pyotr.

WAGER
Something you need to know before
this goes any further.

Pyotr leans toward Wager.

PYOTR
I know I want you.

WAGER
I want that too, but I have to tell
you upfront, I'm HIV positive.

Pyotr straightens up.

WAGER (CONT'D)
My viral load is undetectable. I
always use a condom and I can't
give it to you.

PYOTR
Are you certain?

Wager strokes Pyotr's face.

WAGER
Yes.

PYOTR
Can you still kiss me?

WAGER
Yes.

PYOTR
Good.

He grabs Wager and pulls him into an embrace, kissing him hard.

PYOTR (CONT'D)
Take me home!

EXT. CABBAGETOWN - DAY

A unique neighborhood in central Toronto. Streets lined with restored Victorian rowhouses.

EXT. YEN LANE - DAY

A public lane. A group of young teens, including BRICK, (16) lob a football back and forth in the middle of the street.

Wager slows his crappy Buick to crawl and the kids part to let him through. Brick throws the pigskin over the hood and HOOPER (14) Brick's brother, misses it.

Wager parks in front of a tiny garden suite that was once a two-car garage.

BRICK

Hey, Johnny. Mom wants you to come to dinner this Saturday. She's cookin' your favourite, ropa viejo.

CAP, (17) another brother, leans in Wager's open window. When he sees Pyotr, he nods. Does a doubletake when he spots the shark in the back seat.

CAP

Asere, que bola?

Without waiting for a response, Cap grins at Wager.

HOOPER

Mami, she just wants you to fix the toilet. It ain't stopped runnin' all week.

WAGER

Tell mami I'll be by tomorrow or the day after to take a look at it. No ropa needed.

The kids vanish down the street.

Wager leads Pyotr to the suite and unlocks the door.

YEN LANE

Cozy bachelor pad, with pine walls, a double bed under a rear window, and a love seat and reclining faux leather chair facing a fifty-five inch Smart TV.

A ring light on a tripod faces the love seat.

A tiny kitchenette is crowded by an oven, apartment-sized refrigerator and coffee pot. Wager dumps his shoes at the door and Pyotr follows suit.

Opening the fridge, Wager takes out a pair of beers, handing one to Pyotr. He gestures to the chairs.

WAGER

Grab a seat. You hungry?

Instead of taking the beer, Pyotr grabs the front of Wager's shirt and turning him around, pushes him toward the bed.

Wager barely has time to set the beers on the bedside table beside a bowl full of condoms before he lands on his back.

A hand comes out and seizes a condom.

PYOTR (O.S.)

You do not have to.

WAGER (O.S.)

Yes, I do.

EXT. BUSINESS CENTRE - DAY

Streetcars compete with buses, cars and pedestrians.

INT. WAGER'S CAR - DAY

Wager rolls through an indoor parking lot. He finds a spot between a Toyota and a Ferrari.

Nearly hits the Toyota while avoiding the more expensive car. He ends up parking crookedly.

He sports a bruise on his chin.

UNDERGROUND GARAGE

Wager gets some inquisitive looks as he strides toward the door leading out of the garage. His concession to dress is a clean Hawaiian shirt and a pair of black jeans with combat boots.

INT. HIGH RISE LOBBY - DAY

Inside the lobby he spots a directory and finds Branson & Gilbert Attorney on the twelfth floor.

He pauses in front of the elevator doors to inspect himself, smooths a hand over his naturally unruly hair and presses the up button.

GILBERT OFFICE

The RECEPTIONIST, (30s) professional, smartly dressed woman looks up from her phone when Wager enters. She sets the phone back in its cradle and studies the man in front of her.

RECEPTIONIST
May I help you?

WAGER
Sure hope so...
(looks at name plate)
... Mandy Price. I'm here to meet
Mark Riley. John Wager.

RECEPTIONIST
Mister Riley is in with Mister
Gilbert right now. Through that
door. They're expecting you.

She picks up the phone and presses a line.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
Mister Wager is here.

Wager heads toward the door.

GILBERT'S OFFICE

Corner office looks out over the Harbourfront. Plush carpet covers the room that is bigger than Wager's entire house. An ebony desk and sleek, leather chairs face each other across the desk.

Mark sits in one facing GILBERT, (50s), an urbane man in a Brooks Brothers. Mark stands with Gilbert. He wears a Ralph Lauren suit and silk tie.

MARK
Hello... John.

GILBERT
Mister Wager, please have a seat.

Wager drops into the leather swivel chair just vacated by Mark, closest to Gilbert.

WAGER
(points to Mark)
I know him. Who are you?

GILBERT
Phillip Gilbert, Mister Riley's
attorney and Executor of his
mother's will.

WAGER
What has any of that got to do with
me?

GILBERT
You're named in the will.

WAGER
How's that? I barely remember the
lady.

MARK
She remembered you.

WAGER
Hey, I can't help it if she never
told me she got kn--pregnant.

MARK
Can we get on with this?

Gilbert draws out a stack of papers.

GILBERT
Mister Riley is already familiar
with the central provisions, so
I'll only refer to the pertinent
ones.

WAGER
Sure, go ahead.

GILBERT
Ms Jessica Mary Riley left the bulk
of her estate to her son, of
course, but she also bequeathed the
sum of fifty-thousand dollars to
Jonathan David Wager on the
condition that her son, Mark David
Wager spend six-months from this
day getting to know his father.

Both Wager and Mark stare dumbfounded at the lawyer.

GILBERT (CONT'D)

Failure to do so on the part of Mister Riley will result in Mister Wager receiving the lump sum of one hundred dollars and a hundred thousand going to the Trevor Foundation in Mister Riley's name.

Confusion turns to a grin on Wager's face. It broadens at Mark's growing confusion.

MARK

Is that legal? I mean, force us to spend time together?

GILBERT

It's rock solid the way I wrote it. Of course, either one of you can reject the terms, and the moneys will be apportioned as laid out. Sorry, Mark. Your mother insisted. You know how she was. Once she decided on a course of action God himself couldn't move that woman.

Mark nods in troubled sadness.

GILBERT'S OFFICE

Back out in the reception area, Mandy is startled when the inner door bursts open and Mark and Wager exit.

Mark strides for the elevator.

Wager follows him, even pausing to wave at Mandy.

WAGER

See you, babe.

She smiles, liking what she sees.

HALLWAY

Wager catches Mark at the elevators. Mark refuses to even look at his father.

When the elevator opens both enter.

WAGER

Quite the surprise the old lady pulled, isn't it? I don't remember your mother being so manipulative.

(MORE)

WAGER (CONT'D)

(grins)

Or vindictive. She had solid brass balls.

Mark looks pointedly at Wager's bruise.

MARK

Unless you want more like that, I wouldn't talk about my mother that way.

Wager shrugs and doesn't look at Mark again.

WAGER

Guess your sorry only goes so far.

UNDERGROUND GARAGE

They both enter the garage and Wager hightails it to his car. He's startled when Mark stops too.

He presses a key ring and the Ferrari's lights flash and the door CLICKS open.

Wager's mouth falls open.

WAGER

Fuck me. That's yours?

MARK

(stiffly)

Mom's last gift to me.

WAGER

And you became a cop?

MARK

Mom didn't want me to join the armed forces so I joined the police Department.

WAGER

Wow, a rich millennial with a sense of duty.

MARK

We need to talk about this. How about lunch? I'm buying--

WAGER

What's to talk about? About the game your mother's playing from beyond?

MARK

I know my mom. This isn't like her.

WAGER

Fuck it, I'm done here.

INT. DRUNKEN CHICKEN - NIGHT

The bar is lit with rainbow colours and laser lights flashing a steady beat. MUSIC POUNDS out of the jukebox. From the latest techno hits to the golden oldies.

The dance floor is crowded. Poppers pass among the dancers. There's a lot of skin showing.

The crowd is younger. Hot bodies fill the bar to capacity and maybe beyond. It's a mix of gay and straight.

Wager bounces around behind the bar, expertly pouring shots, popping bottles and pouring draft beer.

Wager is shirtless except for a silver sequined vest with a matching bow tie. Plus a Clockwork Orange derby and black eyelashes on one eye.

A second bartender/barback in the same getup, TITO, (20s), deliberately flamboyant, carries drinks from the bar well to the tables.

Sid comes out of the back office and signals Tito.

SID

Take over. I need to talk to Johnny.

TITO

Kopacetic, boss.

Tito sets his tray at the end of the bar and goes behind it. He taps Wager on the shoulder and points at Sid.

Wager scowls but wipes his hands on a bar rag and stalks to the back.

OFFICE

Sid sits on the edge of the desk.

SID

Heard what happened. You doing okay?

WAGER

I'm here.

SID

That really your kid?

WAGER

Yeah the stork got the wrong address.

SID

A cop?

Wager rolls his eyes.

WAGER

I guess genes aren't everything.

SID

Is he?

Sid flipflops his hand.

WAGER

Gay?

Wager shrugs.

WAGER (CONT'D)

Tell you the truth, I don't know.

Sid pulls a cigar out and chomps on it.

SID

God help us if he is. I don't think Toronto can handle two of you.

Wager clearly not amused.

SID (CONT'D)

Just tell me this isn't going to mess you up.

WAGER

Why should it mess me up?

SID

Not everyday you find out you're a dad with a grown ass kid. At least you got no significant other to explain it to. I can't imagine trying to tell Barbara something like that. My dog house would be in Barstow.

WAGER

We done?

SID

Go back to work.

Wager goes back to work.

FRONT BAR

Back behind the bar, Wager sends Tito to his own station and goes back to slinging drinks.

Hyacinth and her crew of three make an entrance. She's dressed in her finest Pride party couture. She looks like a peacock in five-inch stilettos who fell into a vat of gold glitter.

Her massive blond wig adds another foot. Along with the others, they create a genuine rainbow.

A chant starts up with Hyacinth and the Entourage.

ENTOURAGE

We're here to par-tay!

Out on the dance floor, a partially clad LEATHERMAN wearing a pair of black leather chaps and no jeans underneath SHOUTS.

LEATHERMAN

What do we want?

ENTOURAGE

Fun.

LEATHERMAN

I can't hear you. What do we want?

ENTOURAGE

FUN!

An unidentified VOICE comes out of the writhing dance floor.

VOICE

To get laid!

Wager steps forward with two soda guns at the ready.

WAGER

Yes! And I'll meet you in the bathroom in five!

He swirls the soda guns around and fills two cocktails simultaneously.

The whole place roars and settles back for more serious drinking.

Hyacinth finally reaches Wager.

HYACINTH
A Pina colada.

The Entourage chorus.

ENTOURAGE
Same. Yes, please the same.

WAGER
Homegirl, you know I don't make
that shit during Pride.

To prove his point he waves at the customers clamoring for drinks three deep.

WAGER (CONT'D)
Make it easy on me.

HYACINTH
A vodka tonic, and spare the tonic.

OTHERS
Same!

WAGER
Don't I take care of my girls?

They all preen.

HYACINTH
Girlfriend, is it true that boy was
your son?

Wager looks around, sees everyone is listening and sighs.

WAGER
Yeah.

HYACINTH
That's ca-ray-cray. You really had
no idea?

WAGER
None.

HYACINTH

You excited? I'm excited. I've always wanted to have a baby.

WAGER

Right. Your biological clock is ticking. Besides, he ain't a baby now is he?

HYACINTH

No, he's one fine-ass hunk of a man
And if I was ten years younger
you'd be gettin' a new daughter-in-law!

(coyly)

So what fence does he sit on?

Wager pours a couple of drafts and hands them to a man waiting beside Hyacinth. He pockets the tip they hand him.

WAGER

Don't know. Don't care.

HYACINTH

Damn, boy. He could make you a grandfather. Grandpa Johnny. Your momma would be so proud.

WAGER

In what world? The bitch kicked me out when I was sixteen.

HYACINTH

Maybe if she'd known what a stud you were she wouldn't have.

WAGER

Fuck off, girlfriend.

EXT. LUXURY CONDO - NIGHT

Dusk settles and lights come on over the city. A 70+ story tower catches the last rays of the sun.

INT. MARK'S CONDO - NIGHT

An elegant room filled with expensive, but comfortable looking furniture. A massive window looks toward the sunset. SOFT MUSIC plays on invisible speakers.

Mark pours a glass of wine into a glass before carrying two into the living room. He hands one to ALEXIS, (20) a lean, athletic woman, easy-going and uncomplicated.

ALEXIS

Thanks. So when am I going to get to meet him?

MARK

I don't know if you'd want to.

ALEXIS

Come on. Mark. He's your father, of course I want to meet him.

Mark sips his wine and looks troubled.

MARK

That's what I thought when Mom first told me about him. Heck, who doesn't wonder about a father they've never seen.

He stares at his lap.

MARK (CONT'D)

I just wish she hadn't lied all those years.

Alexis moves closer and puts her hand on his knee.

ALEXIS

She just wanted to protect you.

MARK

What? She didn't want me to know she never meant anything to him. He doesn't even remember her!

ALEXIS

Yeah, that's rough.

She glances at the slim watch on her wrist.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

Come on, the shows starting soon.

Laughing, she tugs him to his feet.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

Maybe we can drop in on him after the show.

MARK

Not tonight, hon. I'm not ready to see him again.

ALEXIS

Soon, though.

MARK

Sure, soon.

INT. DRUNKEN CHICKEN - NIGHT

Hyacinth drinks her cocktail and chatters with her friends while Wager works the bar. He now sport a pink feather boa around his neck and a red lipstick smear on his cheek.

Both he and Tito lost the vests. Tito sports a pair of gold nipple rings. His nipples look abused.

Two straight women, (20s) DANI and RACHEL sit near Wager. Bothe are well into their cups.

DANI

Why are the good-looking ones always gay?

They both look longingly at both Wager and Tito.

RACHEL

It's so not fair.

DANI

Maybe he swings both ways?

Wager overhears, but ignores them. He returns to make Hyacinth another drink. She leans close.

HYACINTH

What's he like?

WAGER

Drink up, sweetheart. We're closing soon.

HYACINTH

Where's your little cutie from yesterday?

Wager shrugs as he cleans up his side of the bar. He finds a few more tips beside or under dirty glasses.

HYACINTH (CONT'D)

I hope you're not going to throw your son away like you do your tricks. He's family.

WAGER

Not my family.

HYACINTH

You don't know that yet. Maybe it's a chance to do things over.

WAGER

Why would I want to do that? What's wrong with my life?

Hyacinth pointedly looks around the bar where everyone is engaged in their own fun, while Wager stands alone among them with nothing but a handful of money and a cleaning rag.

HYACINTH

That really enough for you? Oh, honey.

WAGER

(mocking)

Oh, honey!

FRONT BAR

The bar is empty. Hyacinth is the last one out. Wager follows her to the door, his discarded feather boa curled up on the bar.

HYACINTH

How long have we known each other?

WAGER

Honey, it's after two am. I don't have the mental power to go down memory lane, even for you.

HYACINTH

In all the years I've known you you've been a lost boy. Maybe you ought to get to know this son of yours before you write him off. Didn't you ever want a second chance?

WAGER

Now you sound like my parole officer.

HYACINTH

The fact you have a parole officer
should be alarming enough.

WAGER

Hey, if I got to live my life
again, I'd make the same mistakes,
only sooner.

HYACINTH

And not get caught this time?

WAGER

That's a solid.

INT. WAGER'S CAR - NIGHT

Wager stays on main streets. Traffic is light enough that he
makes good time.

EXT. CABBAGETOWN - NIGHT

The streets are quiet. Traffic is almost nonexistent.

INT. WAGER'S CAR - NIGHT

As he passes the cemetery he grows aware of a faint glow in
the sky. He cranks his window open and takes a deep breath.
Frowns.

He punches the gas.

Before he reaches the next turn a firetruck roars past him,
SIREN CLAMORING and turns ahead of him.

WAGER

Fuck me.

Racing down Yen Lane he's met with chaos. Fire trucks choke
the narrow street. Hoses pour water onto the smouldering
remains of Wager's place and nearby properties.

Crowds of people, most clearly dragged out of bed, gather
around them.

Wager makes out Brick, Cap and Hooper huddled around LUCITA,
(40s) the boys' mother and Wager's landlord. It's obvious
they've been crying.

A Fire Inspector's vehicle pulls up behind Wager's car. Its
HORN RIPS through Wager's disbelief.

Brick spots Wager's car and bolts away from his family, pushing through bystanders and firemen alike. Someone shouts at him.

Brick reaches the car and tries to wrench the door open.

WAGER (CONT'D)

Whoa, whoa there, asere. What happened?

He gets the door open and climbs out, only to be locked in an unbreakable vice grip by the young teen.

BRICK

We thought you were dead, man. They wouldn't let us near the place and no one's gone inside and mama's ballin' her eyes out and WE THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD!

WAGER

I was at work. Why would I be home?

Wager finally manages to unlock Brick's octopus hold and sets the kid away from him. He grips the boy's shoulder.

By this time Lucita and her other two son's reach them. Lucita's eyes are red-rimmed and swollen.

LUCITA

Mi Dios, it is you, Johnny.

She pats his back awkwardly.

LUCITA (CONT'D)

I tried to tell them your car wasn't here but they had it in their head you were inside--

Wager grimaces.

WAGER

What happened, Luce? The fire--

LUCITA

Destroyed everything. I'm so sorry.

Wager looks at her intact Victorian.

WAGER

What?

A uniformed PLATOON CHIEF interrupts the group.

PLATOON CHIEF
Do you rent the building in the
rear of this property?

WAGER
Uh, yes? What's going on?

PLATOON CHIEF
Where are you coming from?

WAGER
I haven't been here all day.

LAPD OFFICER
Where were you earlier?

WAGER
I wasn't here. Someone want to tell
me what's going on?

PLATOON CHIEF
What time did you leave this
morning?

WAGER
After ten. What the hell is going
on?

PLATOON CHIEF
And you haven't been back since.
Were you alone?

Wager goes white.

WAGER
Someone was in the house? Pyotr!

He tries to push past the cop who restrains him.

PLATOON CHIEF
You can't go in there. It's
dangerous. It's also a crime scene.

WAGER
Crime scene?

LUCITA
They say it might have been arson.

A wary suspicion replaces Wager's distress.

WAGER
What's going on here?

PLATOON CHIEF

Someone will be investigating that.
Make yourself available for
questioning.

WAGER

Don't leave town? Somehow when the
cops say it, it's so much more
forceful.

LUCITA

If you can handle the sofa and the
kids getting up at seven, you're
welcome to stay the night.

WAGER

Seven?

LUCITA

They have camp.

INT. DRUNKEN CHICKEN OFFICE - DAY

Wager enters carrying a sub and a large soft drink. Sid looks
up at his entry.

SID

Jesus, man. You okay?

WAGER

You heard. Who else knows?

Sid shrugs.

SID

Your son came by. He was asking
when you'd be in.

WAGER

Can you avoid telling other people
my business?

SID

Even your family?

Wager smacks his drink down on top of a pile of beer cases.

WAGER

Fuck's sake. He didn't exist
yesterday. Family!

SID
Hey, it's not the worst thing to
have.

Wager gives him a 'really'? look.

SID (CONT'D)
The worst thing is hemorrhoids.
Trust me, family's a breeze after
you spend a month with those in
your ass.

WAGER
TMI, Sid. Is he still here?

SID
Don't think so.

FRONT BAR

Sid is wrong. When Wager leaves the Office with his lunch,
Mark is parked in the first barstool talking to Tito. He
spots Wager.

MARK
We need to talk.

Wager sits at a nearby table and eats his sub. Mark
relentlessly sits across from him.

MARK (CONT'D)
Can we talk privately?

Wager checks his phone.

WAGER
I've got twenty minutes till my
shift starts.

MARK
Let's grab a coffee next door.

INT. CAFE - DAY

After collecting two coffees, they take a table.

WAGER
So talk. Hold up. First, why did
you come back?

MARK

We're a long way from finished. Oh, and I'm sorry about the fire.

WAGER

What more is there to talk about? I was never a father to you. Why would you want one now?

MARK

Mom asked me to. It was her dying wish. I owe her. And... you're my father.

WAGER

You really think that means anything?

MARK

Gilbert did some background checking on you after mom passed. That's how I found your work.

Mark stares at the napkin in front of him. He moves it with restless fingers.

WAGER

What else did Gilbert tell you?

MARK

Your employment history for the last decade. And your legal troubles.

WAGER

Uh-huh.

Mark doesn't look up.

WAGER (CONT'D)

Jessica--your mother--never married? No brothers or sisters?

MARK

She was too busy raising a kid by herself.

WAGER

Oh, boo-hoo. I told you she kept you a secret.

MARK

Not as big as the ones you kept from her.

WAGER

I was still confused myself. Oh, and in case you're wondering, the 'legal troubles' were for possession of crack and a pipe. I got six months in the Taymal jail. I no longer indulge... At least not since they legalized the chronic.

MARK

What are you going to do now?

Wager pushes his empty cup away.

WAGER

Go home.

Mark frowns in confusion.

MARK

Where's that?

WAGER

Currently parked next door.

MARK

What do you want to do about my mother's proposal? You certainly could use the money.

WAGER

You that desperate not to lose two-hundred grand instead of only a C-note?

MARK

Maybe I want to know what my mother saw in you. I never knew my mother to be impulsive or rash. So what do you have that she thought was special enough to lie like she did. We were always honest with each other.

WAGER

That's easy. You don't have to hang around to find out.

MARK

Oh?

WAGER

Hormones. Your mother had 'em and so did I. And I was making a last ditch effort to prove I wasn't gay.

Wager leaves through the back door, leaving Mark dumbfounded.

EXT. YEN LANE - DAY

The cops and the firetrucks are gone. Lucita is in the yard taking photos of the Garden Suite's remains.

Wager approaches her.

WAGER

How are you doin', Luce?

She waves vaguely at the smart phone she's taking photos with.

LUCITA

I have to photograph it for the insurance. If it's arson like they say they might not cover it.

She begins weeping.

LUCITA (CONT'D)

My father built this place for my abuela when abuelito died.

Wager takes the phone from her and guides her through the gate to the main house.

EXT. LUCITA'S BACKYARD - DAY

Brick opens the door.

WAGER

You not in camp?

BRICK

We stayed home to help Mama.

WAGER

Then take her inside. Put her to bed. You have any booze in the house?

Brick makes a face.

BRICK

Gin.

WAGER

Give her some. Make her drink it.

BRICK

What are you going to do?

Wager holds up the phone.

WAGER

I'll finish this up and drop it off
when it's done.

BRICK

No, I mean where are you going to
stay?

WAGER

I still got that.

He looks at his car through the gate.

WAGER (CONT'D)

I can manage for a night or two.

Brick seems about to protest, then takes hold of his mother's
arm.

BRICK

Stay here, I'll be right back.

He leads Lucita, no longer crying but still dazed, into the
house. The screen door BANGS shut behind them.

CHILD (O.S.)

Senor, is the Lady going to be
okay?

Wager turns to find DAVY, (6) standing in the gateway. Wager
smiles at the tousle-headed boy.

WAGER

Sure she is, Davy. She's just sad
right now.

Davy scuffs his feet on the driveway.

CHILD/DAVY

Oh, good. My mama says everyone in
this house is going to burn in hell
forever--

WOMAN (O.S.)
David James Brockworth, get away
from there!

Both Davy and Wager look around to see an angry woman bearing down on them. She glares at Wager with death in her eyes.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
What have I told you about coming
over here.

She grabs Davy and hauls him away so fast, the boy loses a shoe. The woman ignores that and Davy's crying.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
(mutters)
... godless faggot.

WAGER
Christ, Lady, I'm not going to
touch your kids! He's not my type.

Lucita shows up in the doorway holding a tall glass with clear fizzy liquid in it. Brick appears behind her.

LUCITA
You know that won't help.

Wager shrugs. He retrieves the fallen shoe and tosses it to Brick.

WAGER
Go to bed. I got this.

YEN LANE

Wager gets in his car. Cap runs out carrying a large comforter. He shoves it through the open car window.

CAP
Just in case.

INT. DRUNKEN CHICKEN - NIGHT

Wager sees the last of the customers out and locks the front door. He turns the outside lights off and the inside ones on full.

Tito emerges from the bathroom, wearing a mask around his chin and gloves. He grimaces at Wager.

TITO
I've seen worse.

He exaggerates a shudder and proceeds to sprays the tables and chairs down with disinfectant.

Wager comes around from behind the bar with a wheeled bucket of steaming water.

Sid takes the canvas bag of cash and with a wave of his now lit cigar, leaves by the back room.

WAGER
You might as well go too. I'll finish up.

Tito snaps a salute and heads after Sid.

EXT. DRUNKEN CHICKEN - NIGHT

Wager secures the locks on the backdoor. He carries a baseball bat and two full trash bags. He tosses the trash in the dumpster beside his car and slams the lid shut.

He unlocks the car, but instead of getting in the front, he climbs into the back, rolls himself up in Brick's comforter and shuts his eyes.

Outside the CITY NIGHT SOUNDS close in on him.

INT. WAGER'S CAR - DAY

A SCRATCHING, CLICKING interrupts Wager's uneasy sleep. Startled, he grabs the baseball bat and jerks up. This throws his blanket off, revealing he's fully clothed.

A pair of pigeons stare back at him. Wager YELLS and the birds take off in an EXPLOSION of feathers and bird shit.

Wager charges out of the car but the flying rats are long gone. Grumbling under his breath, he tosses the blanket back in the car.

He grabs his lower back and winces.

Carrying the bat like he's ready to kill the first thing he sees, he enters the bar. As soon as the door closes, a pigeon returns to strut over the roof of the car.

INT. DRUNKEN CHICKEN BATHROOM - DAY

Wager cleans up, but with no razor, hairbrush or change of clothes he's not very successful.

OFFICE

Wager hunches over the keyboard, the webpage for Drunken Chicken open in draft. An animated gif of a drunken cartoon chicken swimming in a martini glass tops every page.

Reading from some notes Wager adds text and some Fourth of July graphics to a page labeled Upcoming!

A half empty bottle of cola sits beside the keyboard alongside an open bag of pretzels.

He save and closes the page, then shuts down the PC.

INT. WAGER'S CAR - DAY

Wager pulls up in front of The Village Pharmacy.

INT. THE VILLAGE PHARMACY - DAY

Posters for vaccines, STIs, HIV testing and condoms cover the walls.

BINTY, a colourful non-binary, (20s) approaches Wager with a welcoming smile.

BINTY

Sorry to hear about the fire. But
we've got you covered. Let me check
if it's ready.

WAGER

Thanks, Binty.

Binty strolls off. They return carrying a stapled bag of medication and hand it over the counter to Wager.

Wager grabs a package of condoms, pays and leaves.

EXT. THE VILLAGE PHARMACY - DAY

Wager pops the car door and sits. He opens the water, then rips the pill bag open. He sorts out and downs three tablets followed by a slug of water.

INT. WAGER'S CAR - DAY

After a second drink, he puts the bottle in the cup holder and starts the car.

The Buick coughs a couple of times but starts and he drives off.

EXT. YEN LANE - DAY

Wager parks in front of his burnt out home. Yellow hazard tape surrounds it.

EXT. LUCITA'S BACKYARD - DAY

Lucita comes out of her house wiping her hands on a T-towel.

Wager enters the yard carrying a Dollarama bag.

WAGER

Came to look at your toilet.

LUCITA

That's not necessary. It can wait.

WAGER

I got a favour to ask.

A little unsure, Lucita holds the towel in front of her.

WAGER (CONT'D)

I picked up some shampoo and stuff.
Could I grab a quick shower after I
check the toilet?

LUCITA

Oh, of course. Would you like a
coffee, too?

WAGER

Thanks.

LUCITA

Black, right?

INT. LUCITA'S BATHROOM - DAY

Wager flushes the toilet, satisfied when it runs silently.

He arranges his shower material and strips.

LUCITA'S KITCHEN

Lucita pours Wager's coffee as he enters the sun-filled kitchen toweling his hair dry.

WAGER

Thanks. Anything else I can do while I'm here?

LUCITA

Sorry we had to cancel this Saturday.

WAGER

No problem.

LUCITA

Where are you staying--

WAGER

Shit.

Mark's Ferrari blocks the lane. He approaches Wager's side of the car.

MARK

I wanted to see for myself.

WAGER

How'd you find me?

MARK

Your boss gave me your address.

Mark looks AT Lucita.

WAGER

This is--was--my landlady?

WAGER (CONT'D)

Constable Mark Riley.

Lucita looks between the two men.

WAGER (CONT'D)

My son.

LUCITA

Could he help you find a place then?

MARK

My offer still stands. At least until you can find a place of your own.

(to Lucita)

I've got a place downtown and I offered my hospitality.

WAGER

Fucked up cockamamie idea if you ask me.

MARK

(to Lucita)

He's still in shock. From a couple of things.

WAGER

Thanks for the offer, but I'll be fine on my own.

Mark looks like he wants to argue, shuts his mouth and gets in his car.

INT. DRUNKEN CHICKEN - NIGHT

As closing time approaches, the bar is not busy.

Tico approaches Wager as he mixes a drink for Hyacinth.

TICO

Can I kick it early? Dwayne wrangled me a DJ gig at the Nest.

WAGER

Sure. Clean up your area then go.

Tico does and ushers some people out with him when he leaves.

WAGER (CONT'D)

Last call, folks. It's the witching hour.

People trickle out, calling out the occasional GOODNIGHT. Hyacinth sips her vodka soda.

HYACINTH

Sid coming in to close?

WAGER

He had some family do tonight.

After locking the front door, Wager grabs a bottle of well vodka and pours himself a shot. He offers one to Hyacinth but she shakes her head and holds up her unfinished drink.

While Wager wipes down the bar, she removes her wig revealing a nearly hairless skull.

Wager gets morose..

WAGER (CONT'D)

Ya know I was offered a full-ride soccer scholarship my last year at Maplewood. I coulda been in California soaking up those sweet California boys.

HYACINTH

So why didn't you?

WAGER

Cause that year turned out to be my summer of love. I think I fucked pretty much everything that wasn't tied down.

He pours another drink and throws it back.

WAGER (CONT'D)

Course once that got out...

He goes to pour another drink. Hyacinth stops him, forces him to look at her.

WAGER (CONT'D)

So why did I do that? All I had to do was keep it in my pants that summer. God knows I'd been doing it since my first trick when I was thirteen.

HYACINTH

We all have a self-destructive streak. Me I should have been Ru Paul. I mean, look at me.

Not listening, Wager waves his hand like he's waving a wand.

WAGER

Poof. No more scholarship.

Hyacinth abandons her story.

HYACINTH

So this is your redemption arc.
Find out who your boy is. Except
for you, he's an orphan now. Maybe
you created something beautiful.

All this time Hyacinth has barely been drinking. She gathers
up her wig.

Wager peers drunkenly at Hyacinth.

WAGER

You coulda been a star. You got it,
girl.

HYACINTH

Oh fuck off.

Wager stares at her.

WAGER

Why don't we go back to your place
and fuck.

HYACINTH

Tempting as that offer is, honey,
mama has to catch her eight hours.
You need to go sleep it off, old
man.

WAGER

Not an old man. I can keep up with
the studs.

HYACINTH

Is that what you're trying to prove
with your little twink? Get over
yourself.

Hyacinth places her wig back in place and steps down from the
bar stool.

WAGER

I'm not taking words of advice from
an old queen.

HYACINTH

You don't take advice from anyone.
With your track record it's a
wonder you don't have a dozen bugs
crawling around in you.

Wager freezes.

WAGER

I have to finish cleaning up here.

He walks toward the front door. After locking up behind Hyacinth, he returns to cleaning.

INT. WAGER'S CAR - NIGHT

Wager tosses and turns in his car.

INT. EMERGENCY SHELTER FACILITIES - DAY

Wager follows ROBERT W, the daytime coordinator for the Emergency shelter, carrying his borrowed comforter and his black garbage bag of possessions.

They stop in front of a closed door.

Robert knocks and opens the door without waiting for someone to answer.

SHELTER ROOM

DALE, a dishevelled man, wearing a weeks worth of whiskers on his face and a plaid shirt that might have been new when Reagan was President bolts upright in bed.

When he sees Robert, he subsides back and tugs his blanket back up over his shoulders.

ROBERT

Dale, you know you can't lie around in bed all day. Weren't you supposed to be helping Mercedes in the kitchen?

DALE

Can't. Someone stole my socks.

Wager looks down at Dale's feet encased in ancient Adidas and no socks. Judging from the ring of dirt around his ankle he lost his socks years past.

Robert points to the empty bed.

ROBERT

That's yours for the next couple of days at least. After that, we'll evaluate your situation. You're working, you said?

Wager watches as Dale gets out of bed and almost robotically folds his blanket up and sets it on the bed.

WAGER

Yes, evenings.

ROBERT

Well, if you have time, there's a Food coalition next door that serves hot meals from five until eight.

WAGER

I should be fine, thanks.

DALE

Did you steal my socks?

ROBERT

No, Dale, this gentleman did not steal your socks. Why don't you and I go look for them down in the utility room?

Robert waits for Dale to join him.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Shower's down the hall to your right. We ask that residence run the water for no more than five minutes. Soap up, then rinse.

WAGER

Thanks.

ROBERT

If you need anything, don't hesitate to find one of us. We're always around somewhere.

WAGER

I'll do that. Thanks.

Wager goes through his personal affects to find his shower supplies.

INT. DRUNKEN CHICKEN - NIGHT

Wager's tiredness is showing in a tightness in his face and less spring in his step. He still manages to turn it on for the customers, only fading when he gets a break.

At the end of the night his change belt is stuffed with bills. He nurses a soda and lemon.

INT. SHELTER ROOM - NIGHT

Wager climbs into bed fully clothed. Except for his shoes and socks which he shoves under the blanket at the foot of the bed along with a small shopping bag.

Dale SNORTS and turns over. Wager barely dozes off before the other man SNORES, deep, GUTTURAL SOUNDS.

Wager rolls over and buries his head under the thin pillow. The SNORING gets worse.

INT. SHELTER ROOM - DAY

Wager is dragged awake by a SHOUT.

DALE

You took them! I saw you.

At Wager's dazed and stupefied look Dale rages.

DALE (CONT'D)

My socks!

WAGER

If it makes you feel any better,
someone took mine, too.

He shows off his bare feet, wiggling his toes.

DALE

I knew it. There's a thief!

Dale rushes out of the room.

Wager follows at a more leisurely pace, taking everything with him.

EXT. EMERGENCY SHELTER FACILITIES - DAY

Hair still damp from a shower and wearing a new shirt, climbs into his car.

INT. TIM HORTON'S - DAY

Wager chows down on a breakfast wrap and guzzles coffee. He has his phone open to apartment rentals, clicking on the occasional one.

INT. BANK FOYER - DAY

Wager deposits his cash tips at the ATM. A well-dressed woman enters the foyer and throws him a look of disgust. Wager makes a point of sniffing his armpits.

INT. DRUNKEN CHICKEN OFFICE - DAY

Wager sits in front of computer, a box of take-out in front of him and a cola. He's both working on the bar's social media page, and has an apartment rental site open.

Sid enters from the bar.

SID
Any luck finding a place?

WAGER
No.

He shuts down the apartment site and tries to concentrate on his writing.

SID
You want more hours, I think I can make it happen.

WAGER
Could you? That's swell, boss.

SID
Or not.

He tags an image of Hyacinth and a 'roided up bear getting down on the dance floor into the post. Tags them. He takes a deep breath.

WAGER
I'll take whatever you got.

Closing the site, he shuts the monitor off and stands.

WAGER (CONT'D)
Until I get new digs there won't be any new YouTube stuff to post.

(MORE)

WAGER (CONT'D)

Just so you know. It all went up in smoke.

SID

Do what you can with what you got.

Wager grabs his toiletry bag and uniform.

WAGER

I live my best life that way.

SID

What, no HASHTAG?

BATHROOM

Wager uses a mini-razor to clean his face of five-o'clock shadow. Touches up his chest.

Examining the bags under his eyes he frowns, before applying some concealer to the area.

The door opens and Michael enters. He steps up to the urinal and unzips.

MICHAEL

You in tonight?

Wager checks out his teeth.

WAGER

Yah.

MICHAEL

Sucks to be you.

He shakes, zips up and makes a show of washing his hands.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Toodles.

As he opens the door, someone pushes past him.

Wager is washing his hands when he looks up to see Pyotr in the mirror. He turns, hands dripping.

WAGER

Hey.

Pyotr presses against him and goes in for a deep kiss. Wager responds fiercely, no longer zoned out.

Pyotr GROWLS and pushes Wager's T-shirt up, exposing his nipples which Pyotr fastens onto.

He mutters something in a Slavic language.

Wager turns so Pyotr's back is to the sink. He lifts the shorter man and plants his ass on the wet edge.

After some heavy make-out, they break apart.

WAGER (CONT'D)

I have to get ready for work.

PYOTR

I will help you.

Wager steps away. Both of them are breathing heavy. Wager looks down at their erections pressed together.

WAGER

That is not helping.

He finishes removing the shirt and slides on the silver vest. The clip-on bow tie goes around his neck. All the while Pyotr touches and strokes him.

WAGER (CONT'D)

Cool it, tiger. I'm on the clock and you can't be here. My boss sees you, I'm shit-canned.

PYOTR

I will stay in here. No one will see me.

WAGER

No.

PYOTR

But--

WAGER

Go. Come back at closing.

Wager pauses before pulling his car keys out.

WAGER (CONT'D)

Come back to the car. I'll be out around three.

Pyotr GROANS, but at Wager's stern look he takes the keys.

PYOTR

I will come back.

FRONT BAR

Wager emerges from the bathroom. There's no sign of Pyotr.
He drops his stuff in the office and heads up to the bar.

VIDEO

Wager in front of his camera. Shirtless.

WAGER

Ladies, I love you. You're fun to have around, but you gotta face it, you're invisible in here. You're not Princess Patty tonight. Deal with it. You're still pretty and special, even though no one is buying you a drink and inviting you to the back room. No one wants to fuck you, so you're going to need to get the fuck over yourselves.

Wager fixes an ear ring to his ear.

WAGER (CONT'D)

And one thing I hear a lot is "You don't look gay." It's like, well, Patty, I am working in a gay bar. You figure it out.

END VIDEO

EXT. DRUNKEN CHICKEN REAR - NIGHT

Wager exits the bar to find no sign of Pyotr. After dumping the garbage he stalks into the alley, looks both ways. Returning to his car he retrieves a key from the wheel well and unlocks it.

As he climbs behind the wheel a patrol car rolls into view. The side spot comes on, pinning Wager in the open car door.

A HEAVYSET COP emerges from the passenger's side.

HEAVYSET COP

You Johnny Wager?

WAGER

Yes.

HEAVYSET COP
This is your vehicle?

WAGER
What's up, officer?

HEAVYSET COP
You know a Pyotr Kovalchuk?

WAGER
Did something happen?

HEAVYSET COP
We found him lurking down the alley
an hour after the bars closed. He
claimed he was waiting for you. You
gave him your car keys?

Wager glances at the back window but the spotlight blinds
him.

WAGER
Ah, yes.

The cop opens the back door, letting Pyotr out. He rushes to
Wager's side.

PYOTR
I was coming to meet you just like
you said.

The second cop, BRIAN, around Wager's age gets out of the
car. Wager nods at him.

WAGER
Brian, what's up?

BRIAN
Had some reports of prowlers.
That's why we picked up your friend
here.

WAGER
I can vouch for him. Most of the
time.

BRIAN
We'll be in the area the rest of
the night, keep an eye on things.

Wager grins and guides Pyotr around to the passenger's side.

WAGER
I feel safer already.

He salutes them both.

WAGER (CONT'D)
Stay safe.

The patrol car rolls off, the spotlight continues to probe the dark shadows.

INT. WAGER'S CAR - NIGHT

Wager slaps the wheel in frustration.

WAGER
Fuck it. I had plans for you tonight. Was gonna take you to the backroom.

PYOTR
We can still go. The polícia are gone.

WAGER
But they won't stay gone and if they come back and the car's still here...

PYOTR
They will throw us in gulag?

WAGER
What? No, but I could get my ass canned and I can't afford that right now. Let me drop you home.

PYOTR
No. I want to fuck.

WAGER
Yeah, and if wishes were horses we'd all be kings.

At Pyotr's confused look Wager adds.

WAGER (CONT'D)
Something my father would say when my mother was being a bitch. I heard it every night growing up.

He starts the car.

WAGER (CONT'D)
I'm taking you home.

INT. SHELTER ROOM - NIGHT

Dale's bed is empty when Wager enters. Like the night before, he crawls into bed fully clothed.

He barely shuts his eyes before Dale returns. Wager drags the pillow over his head when the snoring starts.

INT. WAGER'S CAR - DAY

Parked behind the Drunken Chicken, a bleary-eyed, exhausted Wager pulls out the card Mark gave him and calls.

WAGER

If that offer still stands, I'll
take it.

EXT. LUXURY CONDOS - DAY

Wager pulls up to the VALET stationed at the front entrance.

WAGER

Like I told the other guy, I'm here
to see Mark Riley.

VALET

Yes, sir. Someone will meet you
inside.

Wager grabs a garbage bag filled with his belongings and hand the car keys over.

INT. LUXURY CONDOS LOBBY - DAY

A massive, aerial sculpture fills the two story lobby, reflecting off the Italian marble floor.

Wagers sneakers SQUEAK as he crosses to the front desk.

A buff SECURITY GUARD greets him.

WAGER

John Wager here to see Mark Riley--

SECURITY GUARD

Yes, Mr. Riley told us to expect
you.

The Security Guard steps out from behind the desk.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

Let me carry that.

Wager hesitates, but it sounds less like an offer and more like a command, so he hands the bag over.

The Security Guard leads him over to a bank of elevators set to one side of the lobby. He uses a key fob to open the door.

They step inside. The doors whisper shut.

ELEVATOR

No way to tell how fast the elevator travels, but in no time, the doors slide open into Mark's living room.

Mark is there to meet it. The elevator doorframe has a mezuzah on it.

LIVING ROOM

He nods at the Security Guard and takes Wager's bag.

MARK

Thanks, Bill.

SECURITY GUARD

Sir.

The elevator door closes.

MARK

How about you freshen up before I give you the tour. Coffee's on.

Wager follows him into a room with a double bed, dresser and wall mounted TV.

WAGER'S ROOM

MARK

My room's on the third floor.

Mark sets the bag down on the bed.

MARK (CONT'D)

Bathroom's through there. Lights and blinds are on a timer. The control is on the nightstand or it responds to voice commands. "Lights on".

The overhead lights come on.

MARK (CONT'D)
 Kitchen's back the way you came,
 left of the elevator.

Mark spins around, leaves the room, shutting the door. Wager salutes his back.

WAGER
 Now I'm beginning to remember your
 mother.

Wager opens the trash bag, gazes at what's inside.

WAGER (CONT'D)
 I like it black, no sugar, thanks
 for asking.

Taking his toiletries out, he enters the bathroom. He stares at himself in the mirror.

WAGER (CONT'D)
 This is not going to work.

KITCHEN

The open concept first floor is kitchen, dining room and living room complete with gas fireplace.

In the kitchen, Mark has the door open to a coffee bar with a Breville Barista Express Impress espresso machine. Mark is a coffee nerd.

He's changed into cashmere loungewear. Wager, joins him in his second hand denim jeans and T-shirt.

An embedded tablet on the kitchen island is open to the current edition of a Toronto paper along with a cream and sugar service.

An unlit fireplace separates the kitchen from the living room and a massive wall-mounted TV.

WAGER
 You have a wife or just a maid?

MARK
 What?

Wager watches Mark approach carrying two steaming coffees.

WAGER

Hyacinth would tell you that everything about this place is gayer than a three dollar bill.

MARK

Who the heck is Hyacinth and what has it got to do with a three dollar bill and a homosexual?

WAGER

So no wife? Girlfriend?

MARK

I have girlfriends.

WAGER

Wouldn't want you falling that close to the tree, would we?

MARK

We didn't come here to talk about my sex life.

WAGER

No? I thought we came here to get to know each other. Though what your mother was thinking to arrange that is beyond me.

MARK

I imagine most things in a civilized society are.

Wager gives him a twisted smirk. He notices the mezuzah on the condo door.

WAGER

You're Jewish?

MARK

Mom was. Not really practicing. Like her parents weren't that orthodox.

WAGER

I don't remember her being Jewish.

MARK

I didn't think you remembered her at all.

WAGER

Yeah, well hanging around you is bringing back memories. Like she was a smart alecky know-it-all.

MARK

That's what you remember about her?

WAGER

She was smart.

(thinks)

But also shy. We had science class together. She helped me pass that year, probably the only time I did pass science. Biology, as I remember...

(considers)

Maybe that's why we...

Mark grimaces. Wager stops.

WAGER (CONT'D)

She was smart.

(shrugs)

Hey, we were teenagers. Smart or not, even she was stupid that way.

Mark's cell buzzes. He glances at the screen.

MARK

I have to take this. Hi, sweetheart. Yes, I--

He heads toward the living room. Wager watches him speak animatedly to his caller.

He returns.

WAGER

Girlfriend?

Mark ignores him.

MARK

There are two things my mother wasn't, and that's a liar or a fool. If she says you're my father, then God help me, it must be true. And if it means keeping you off the street, I'll do that too.

WAGER

(stiffly)

Thank you.

MARK

I could make some lunch.

WAGER

Why aren't you working? Didn't you say you were a cop?

MARK

I'm on bereavement leave. I return to work on Thursday.

They sit in uneasy silence. Wager watches a plane take off from the island airport.

WAGER

When did you decide to become a cop?

MARK

I wanted to join the Armed Forces when I was eighteen. Mom didn't want me ending up in some foreign war so she talked me out of it. Police officer seemed a close second.

WAGER

Not exactly a standard career choice for rich Gen Z.

MARK

(snorts)

Like I said, I had some insane idea of following in my father's footsteps.

WAGER

Your dead father. You wanted to be like that?

MARK

Eighteen, remember. Eighteen-year-olds can't die. You can't be that old that you don't remember that.

Wager stands. He carries his cup to the sink.

WAGER

I need some new threads for work.

Mark picks up a fob beside his cup.

MARK

You'll need this to get back in.
The front desk is manned twenty-
four-seven. You're in the system.

He hands it to Wager.

MARK (CONT'D)

I'll be out for a few hours. Dinner
is at seven. I'd appreciate you not
smoking on the property.

(awkward)

One other rule.

WAGER

No fuck buddies?

MARK

No guests.

WAGER

No smoking. Check. No guests.
Check. Is there a curfew?

MARK

My mother wasn't the only smart-
aleck.

Wager flashes a huge grin.

WAGER

See? We're finding things in common
already.

INT. DOWNTOWN MALL - DAY

Wager strolls the mall, stops in a clothing store.

INT. LUXURY CONDOS - DAY

Wager crosses the lobby to the elevator. He's greeted with a
nod from the uniformed concierge.

WAGER'S BEDROOM

Wager lies on the bed, shirt off, in stocking feet. The wall
mounted TV is on a streaming channel, a movie full of
explosions and impossibly fast cars plays.

The elevator DINGS open.

KITCHEN

Mark carries a takeout bag in and sets it on the counter. He removes two plates and grabs silverware.

He glances up when Wager comes downstairs in one of his new T-shirts.

Mark nods. He sets out several containers of Chinese food.

MARK
Glass of wine?

WAGER
Sure.

Mark opens a wine fridge.

MARK
Californian or New Zealand?

WAGER
Surprise me.

Mark abruptly shoves the wine he's holding back and reaches further in to the fridge.

He takes something out and marches over to the table where Wager is opening the boxes and serving himself.

It's a box of Chardonnay with the garish label proclaiming it to be the best.

Wager considers it.

WAGER (CONT'D)
Hey, I heard about this. Tastes like suntan lotion and regret.

Mark unscrews the cap.

MARK
Let's see if they're right.

Wager takes a sip.

WAGER
Not a wine connoisseur I take it?

Mark swirls the wine and pretends to savor the aroma.

MARK
I've learned to fake it from the best.

(MORE)

MARK (CONT'D)

I buy what they tell me is great wine and can talk at great length about depth and character.

Wager raises his glass in a toast. He drinks and sets it back down.

WAGER

Tell me about her.

MARK

Growing up, we were dirt poor. I didn't know it, I mean what have I got to measure it by? And it never occurred to me if my father was a veteran who died in combat why we weren't taken care of. We just lived in a ratty apartment in Etobicoke and bought Goodwill.

WAGER

Her parents?

MARK

Mom wouldn't talk about them. In retrospect I guess they disapproved of me ruining her life.

Wager looked around.

WAGER

Did she try offering them money?

He gets a dirty look for his comment.

WAGER (CONT'D)

How'd you go from Etobicoke to this?

MARK

Mom wanted to work from home. She taught herself coding and by the time I was in kindergarten she was doing it professionally. She started building apps almost as soon as iPhone came out. When I was sixteen she sold her most popular ones and suddenly, we were, like, rich.

WAGER

Surprised you didn't follow in her footsteps.

MARK

I never was that technically minded. I use the stuff, but create it?

He sighs pensively.

MARK (CONT'D)

When Covid hit, we thought we were safe. Mom was already something of a loner and she kept me at home as much as she could...

He looks up from his plate; his eyes haunted.

MARK (CONT'D)

She still managed to catch it. It messed with her heart. She was never the same. That's why I didn't push the military service. I needed to stay in TO so the police seemed a good choice.

Wager waits.

MARK (CONT'D)

I graduated on the twenty-second. She came to the ceremony... but that night she collapsed. In the hospital she told me about you, said she was sorry she lied to me. I guess she'd been in touch with Gilbert to find you...

He clenches his hand into a fist.

MARK (CONT'D)

She made me promise I'd talk to you. That she was wrong to lie about you.

Wager's face softens.

WAGER

What do you think?

MARK

I wish I never knew you existed if it meant she was still here!

WAGER

Sorry, kid. I wish she was here, too.

MARK

Why? You never cared about her.

WAGER

But I never wished her harm,
either. And if I'd known about
you...

MARK

You'd have made an honest woman of
her?

WAGER

Marrying her wouldn't have solved
her problems. Or mine.

MARK

Probably not.

WAGER

Trust me. It would have made things
worse.

INT. DRUNKEN CHICKEN - NIGHT

Wager and Barbara work a busy bar. Barbara clearly knows many
of the customers, crudely jokes and flirts with them.

The door swings open and Hyacinth walks in. Less flamboyant
than Pride night, she is still a formidable figure.

Trailing her is Pyotr. His face lights up when he sees Wager.

When Wager spots him he's equally pleased. He approaches the
pair.

PYOTR

Johnny! Miss Hyacinth told me what
happened. It is terrible.

HYACINTH

The boy's been asking about you
every minute of the day. I thought
you could use some cheering up.

Wager never takes his eyes off Pyotr.

WAGER

Mission accomplished.

He checks the clock on the register.

WAGER (CONT'D)
I'm here another two hours. You
going to hang around?

Pyotr smiles.

INT. WAGER'S CAR - NIGHT

Wager and Pyotr break apart, clearly aroused.

WAGER
Do you have a place?

PYOTR
No, I live at home.

WAGER
Damn. Guess I have the same
problem.

Pyotr leans in. Desperate. They kiss. Separate.

WAGER (CONT'D)
Give me your phone.

A puzzled Pyotr hands over his cell.

Wager types something in then hands the phone back.

WAGER (CONT'D)
My number for later. Want to go for
a ride?

INT. LUXURY CONDOS - NIGHT

Looking like the cat with a bowl of cream, Wager enters the
elevator.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Mark drinks coffee at the island. A bowl of yogurt topped
with fruit and granola sit half-eaten in front of him. He
watches the news on the tablet.

Wager enters.

MARK
Morning. There's coffee. You want
breakfast?

WAGER

Going to tell me it's the most important meal of the day?

MARK

I'm not your mother. I don't care what you eat. But I stocked the fridge and pantry last night. Take what you want.

Wager pours a coffee.

MARK (CONT'D)

I heard you come in this morning. I'm surprised you're up this early.

WAGER

You and me both. Not used to the new sheets, I guess.

MARK

Got any plans for today?

WAGER

Check out apartments.

MARK

Mom had some real estate holdings. Too bad she sold them off when she got sick or I might have been able to help. I still know what rents are like and how tight the market is if you're, ah, not...

WAGER

Rich? Living on a bartender's salary? I'll find something.

MARK

You can stay as long as you need to. I'm thinking of selling the place myself.

WAGER

Why?

MARK

Too many memories. I'd rather get a place that doesn't have any. Besides, it's too much for one person.

WAGER

Where would you go?

MARK

Haven't decided. Bridle Path maybe.
Rosedale.

He carries his empty dishes to the sink, rinses them and loads the dishwasher.

MARK (CONT'D)

Meanwhile, I have some meetings today so I'll be out of the house all afternoon. The laundry's beside your bedroom. There's a home gym and a sauna on the third floor. An office down the hall from your room. I thought we'd barbecue tonight if you're going to be home.

WAGER

Why don't you have a maid or butler to do all that shit.

MARK

Mom never like having strangers around.

(shrugs)

We got used to doing things ourselves.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

Wager shuts the door. He realizes the room is already untidy. The bed's not made and his new clothes are scattered around, on top of the dresser and bed.

A damp towel lies discarded on the bathroom floor.

WAGER

Sheesh. I need a maid.

He does a half-assed job of cleaning up. Clothes stuffed in random drawers, bed 'made' by throwing the top blanket over rumpled sheets.

EXT. PENTHOUSE TERRACE - DAY

Wager climbs a set of spiral stairs to the fourth floor terrace. Lounge chairs, a hot tub and full kitchen with barbecue.

Mark has two steaks in a marinade. He sets a bowl and a variety of vegetables in front of Wager.

MARK

Cut these up. They've been cleaned.

Wager chops everything into bite-sized pieces.

PENTHOUSE TERRACE

Mark puts the steaks on the sizzling hot barbecue and closes the lid while drinking a beer.

Wager tosses the salad.

PENTHOUSE TERRACE

Wager and Mark sit across from each other eating steaks and salad.

MARK

When did you start to realize you were gay?

WAGER

About the same time you realized you weren't.

MARK

Why would I--ah... never mind.

Mark finishes his steak. Picks up his beer.

MARK (CONT'D)

It's not hereditary.

WAGER

You know that for a fact? You might want to think about having kids if a gay kid would bother you.

MARK

When did you come out?

WAGER

It's not exactly a one step process. It's not like I made a big announcement on Facebook.

Mark nods as though he understands.

WAGER (CONT'D)

There was a gay-straight alliance club in school that met after hours. I showed up there one day. Word got around.

MARK

What about your parents?

Wager stabs the last tomato off his plate and pops it in his mouth.

WAGER

They got divorced when I was fourteen. When Mom found out she kicked me out. Went to church and prayed for my soul, I guess. My father blamed her. Easier that way.

Mark winces.

MARK

How old--

WAGER

Seventeen.

MARK

Where did you go?

WAGER

Couch surfed for a few months. Got a job at a Seven-Eleven. When I was eighteen I started making movies.

MARK

You were an actor? What were you in? Maybe I saw you--

Wager grins and shakes his head.

WAGER

I doubt it.

At Mark's growing awareness, Wager's grin deepens.

WAGER (CONT'D)

Hard Working was my first. I played a young, confused construction worker seduced by his boss.

(ponders)

Or Cowboy's Boy. In that one I got to stretch my acting chops. Had to learn how to ride a horse.

(MORE)

WAGER (CONT'D)

I played a young, confused but very horny rodeo cowboy seduced by his boss.

He sips his beer.

WAGER (CONT'D)

Wait, I nearly forgot about Drafted. That had a real solid social message in it about war. Plus, I got to play this two star general who seduced--

MARK

Enough. Your point's made.

WAGER

I thought it was a little unrealistic to make me a general at my age.

(considers)

Lieutenant, maybe. Or colonel.

MARK

No wonder my mother lied to me.

WAGER

Don't know what she might have heard about me. I lost contact with everyone I knew in high school. She didn't have anything to tell you.

Mark looks at the ceiling. Looks at his lap, then at Wager, collecting himself. He takes a deep breath.

MARK

You cook?

Wager is taken back by the question.

WAGER

I can feed myself.

MARK

You can cook tomorrow. I have to leave by six-thirty for Westhill.

WAGER

You're working in Scarberia? What's that, a thirty minute drive?

MARK

Lucky if it's an hour that time of day.

WAGER

You're not taking the Ferrari?

MARK

I'm taking Mom's car.

WAGER

Smart. I have to leave by five-forty-five, so dinner's early. What do you want?

MARK

You decide. I usually shop at the St. Lawrence market.

WAGER

Of course you do. I'm more of a No Frills guy.

MARK

Not surprising. You can buy wherever you want. The pantry should have everything you need for herbs and spices. I don't mind hot but not Ghost pepper hot and I do not like organ meats or asparagus.

WAGER

If you did, you wouldn't be getting them from me. You sure you don't want to make a list?

MARK

I'm assuming since you can take drink orders without screwing up you can handle buying a few groceries.

Mark stands and puts his dishes in the sink.

MARK (CONT'D)

There's garbage in that right bin. If the dishwasher's not full, leave it, otherwise the soap is under the sink. I'll be in my office.

He leaves Wager to clean up and carry the dirty dishes downstairs.

INT. DRUNKEN CHICKEN OFFICE - NIGHT

Wager does some work on the bar's website.

FRONT BAR

The bar is hopping.

Wager is startled when Pyotr shows up, without Hyacinth this time. He stands beside the last seat in Wager's side of the bar, occupied by a barely legal TWINK chatting up the man next to him.

WAGER
Wasn't expecting you.

PYOTR
Are you not happy to see me?

WAGER
No! Course not. What'll you have,
hon?

PYOTR
Something sweet!

WAGER
Like you?

PYOTR
Ha, of course.

WAGER
Okay. Screwdriver. They're twelve
bucks a pop.

Pyotr sets a twenty on the bar. When Wager reaches to take it, Pyotr grabs his hand and kisses it.

PYOTR
Keep change.

Wager smiles. He makes the drink with elaborate flare, which amuses Pyotr and the Twink.

TWINK
Oh, I want one!

Wager obliges then goes off to serve others.

Pyotr leans over to hiss in the Twink's ear.

PYOTR
Do not think you can have him. He
is mine!

The Twink eyes him with disdain.

TWINK

As if. Ow!

Pyotr's nails dig into the Twink's arm, drawing blood.

PYOTR

I will take your balls next.

The Twink stumbles off the stool and runs away, holding his arm. No one sees what happened.

FRONT BAR

The lights are up, the bar empty except for Wager, Pyotr and Tito.

While Tito wipes down the bar, Wager leads Pyotr into the Office.

EXT. DRUNKEN CHICKEN - NIGHT

Wager unlocks his car and puts Pyotr in the passenger's seat.

PYOTR

I help you clean up.

WAGER

Sorry, boss say no. You stay here,
I won't be long.

Pyotr is about to protest when Sid pulls up in a Caddy. Wager shuts the door and goes back inside the bar.

INT. DRUNKEN CHICKEN - NIGHT

Wager is busy cleaning when Sid comes out of the Office.

SID

That the same kid from the other
night?

WAGER

Yes.

SID

You know how I feel about customers
in the bar after hours.

WAGER

Which is why he's out in my car.

SID

Hmmm.

Wager noisily slams the dismantled soda gun into the soapy water, scrubbing it clean. He trades glances with Tito who gives him a knowing smirk.

EXT. DRUNKEN CHICKEN - NIGHT

The Caddy is gone. Wager comes out carrying the trash which he dumps in the dumpster.

He unlocks the car.

INT. WAGER'S CAR - NIGHT

Pyotr sits up like he'd been napping. He leans toward Wager and kisses him with more enthusiasm than Wager gives him in return.

PYOTR

I want you.

WAGER

Same here, kid. But this ain't the best place.

Pyotr keeps heaping attention on Wager who responds.

PYOTR

Let's go for drive.

Wager starts the car.

INT. WAGER'S BEDROOM - DAY

A groggy Wager opens his eyes and winces at the light pouring through the bedroom window. He rolls over and buries his head under the pillow.

His phone RINGS.

He fumbles for it and answers.

WAGER

Yes?

He listens a second.

WAGER (CONT'D)

Is this the call for the rapture?
No? Are there a horde of zombies
descending on us right now? Then
no, I don't have time to answer a
few questions.

He disconnects and glares at the phone. After a heavy sigh he throws the covers off and in nothing but his underwear heads for the bathroom.

KITCHEN

Barefoot and shirtless, with the top button of his jeans undone Wager makes himself coffee.

PENTHOUSE TERRACE

Wager carries the coffee outside and sits on a wicker chair facing. A clock on the outdoor range reads 11:34 am.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Wager pushes a cart along the meat counter. He picks up a package of ribs, stares at them a second before tossing them back.

He settles for a pair of skinless chicken breasts. Moves along to find a package of noodles that joins the chicken.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Wager preps the chicken with a dry rub and sticks it in the fridge. Drinks a beer as he climbs the stairs.

LUXURY CONDO GYM

An array of top of the line equipment fill the high-ceiling room. Weights, bikes, treadmills and a Bowflex meet Wager's astonished gaze.

He enters like a kid finding himself in a candy store.

KITCHEN

A freshly showered Wager in more new threads, sets about getting dinner ready. The chicken goes in an air fryer and the noodles into a pot of boiling water.

He sits at the kitchen table scanning apartment listings on the tablet. Another beer shares the table.

Mark enters. He nods at Wager, opens the fridge and takes out an orange juice.

Pouring a large glass and sits across from Wager.

MARK

Guess you're adapting.

At Wager's puzzled look he adds.

MARK (CONT'D)

Didn't see you when I left at ten.

WAGER

Hopefully you never will. Don't tell me you'll be doing the crack of dawn once you start working.

MARK

I probably will for a while. So what's for dinner?

Wager serves, switching over to juice himself.

INT. DRUNKEN CHICKEN - NIGHT

Same scene; different night.

Hyacinth and her crew are parked at one end of the bar. The dance floor is crowded. Music BLARES from the jukebox.

Wager's phone BUZZES.

He checks it, reads a text and responds, grinning.

WAGER

Last call, people. Drink 'em while you got 'em.

The bar empties out.

LATER

As inebriated and not so inebriated customers exit the bar, Pyotr pushes past everyone to enter.

WAGER

Good timing.

He leads Pyotr to the back. When he returns he and Tito set to cleaning.

LATER

Wager finishes counting up his tips. It's a good haul. Satisfied, he looks around. The bar top is clean and Tito is mopping the floor. He looks up at Wager.

TITO

Go on, I'll finish up.

Wager wastes no time ditching his uniform and throwing on his T-shirt. He ties up the last two stuffed garbage bags.

WAGER

Later.

INT. WAGER'S CAR - NIGHT

Pyotr almost lunges at Wager when he climbs in the car. Wager kisses him hard, then cranks the car on.

WAGER

We're living high tonight.

PYOTR

I do not understand.

EXT. LUXURY CONDO - NIGHT

As Wager hands the car over to the valet, Pyotr is wide-eyed with wonder.

PYOTR

This is new home?

WAGER

Temporary home.

INT. LUXURY CONDOS LOBBY - NIGHT

He leads Pyotr through the lobby to the elevator.

WAGER'S BEDROOM

Wager leads them in stocking feet into his room. Even though the house is empty, Wager closes the door.

Without taking his eyes off Pyotr, Wager strips off his T-shirt. Pyotr follows suit.

They embrace. Kiss deeply.

WAGER
Shower. Let's get you ready.

SHOWER

Soaped up and aroused, the two kiss while water flows over them.

LATER

Both half asleep. Wager presses against Pyotr's back. Pyotr twists his head around.

PYOTR
I love you, Johnny.

Wager is too gone to respond.

With a start, he jerks awake.

WAGER
You can't stay. I'm sorry.

Pyotr makes a face.

PYOTR
I want to wake up with you.

WAGER
I'd like that too, but house rules.
I'll drop you at home.

Ignoring his continued pouting, Wager throws on his clothes. Eventually, Pyotr does the same.

INT. WAGER'S CAR - NIGHT

Driving south on the nearly empty streets, Pyotr sulks. Finally, Wager pulls the car up to a rundown apartment building.

He puts the car in park.

WAGER

This isn't working, Pyotr. It looks like it's going to be a while before I can get my own place again. How about we cool it for now?

PYOTR

No. I love you.

WAGER

You can't be serious. We just met--

PYOTR

I don't care.

WAGER

You don't know anything about me.

PYOTR

I know what I need to know. Do not throw me away.

WAGER

I'm not--shit, this isn't supposed to be this hard. I can't take you back where we went tonight. It was a mistake and I'm sorry.

(sighs)

I'm off tomorrow, I'll be spending the day apartment hunting. We can talk when I'm back on Saturday.

Pyotr settles back in his seat. He's not happy, but he exits the car.

Wager drives away.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

The house is dark and appears empty. Wager tiptoes to his room in case he's not alone.

INT. WAGER'S BEDROOM - DAY

A CRASH from downstairs wakes Wager. He drags his stiff body out of bed, naked, and enters the bathroom.

SHOWER

Eyes closed, Wager leans against the tiled walls.

KITCHEN

Mark sits at the kitchen table putting a Band-Aid on a cut finger. He looks slightly unkempt, a far cry from his normally well-groomed self.

Wager helps himself to a coffee, notices Mark doesn't have one. He holds up a cup. At Mark's nod he pours one. Carries both to the table.

WAGER
What time you get in?

MARK
A little past four-thirty.

WAGER
First day rough?

Mark shrugs.

MARK
Just long.

WAGER
Back tonight?

MARK
Four on, three off. You?

WAGER
Off. Going to drive around a couple of likely areas, see about rentals.

MARK
Good luck.

WAGER
I can grab something for dinner.
I'm off so it won't be so early.

MARK
Yah, that works.

Mark takes his coffee and his phone and heads upstairs. Wager leaves him be.

INT. WAGER'S CAR - DAY

Wager cruises some neighborhoods with several two and three story walk-ups.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Wager talks to a landlord

He fills out some forms

A sign on an apartment building: Studio and one-bedroom
apartments Available

Talks to another landlord

More paperwork

Walks out of a Ralph's with a bag of groceries

END SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. PENTHOUSE TERRACE - DAY

Wager preps corn on the cob, Italian sausages and foil
wrapped potatoes.

Mark appears rubbing his damp hair dry. He pulls a bottled
water out of the fridge. Sprawls out on a lounge chair.

MARK

Any success?

Wager shrugs. Arranges the sausages and potatoes on the grill
and shuts the lid.

WAGER

Signed a couple of applications.
Guess I'll see.

MARK

Good luck.

Mark's cell buzzes. He listens; glances sharply at Wager.
Stands.

MARK (CONT'D)

Be right back.

He enters the elevator.

Wager arranges things on the barbecue.

The elevator HISSES open.

WAGER
It'll be about another ten--

PYOTR
Johnny! I came to see you.

Wager stands frozen, one hand holding a pair of tongs. He spins around.

Mark stands outside the elevator holding Pyotr's arm.

MARK
Look who showed up downstairs
looking for you.
(to Pyotr)
How did you find this place?

Nonplussed, Pyotr looks to Wager for help.

MARK (CONT'D)
After I asked you not to have
people in... my first night away
you brought him here?

He glares at Pyotr.

MARK (CONT'D)
He had no right to invite you to my
house.

He turns his cold gaze on Wager.

MARK (CONT'D)
I'm disappointed.

Pyotr stands by the elevator. Wager rolls his eyes.

WAGER
Go home, Pyotr.

PYOTR
I wait for you--

WAGER
No! Go home.

Pyotr raises his chin defiantly, but at Wager's look, he finally slinks off.

Wager and Mark face each other.

WAGER (CONT'D)
You're disappointed. Hashtag
#Imaginemy surprise.

MARK
I don't know why I thought I could
trust you.

WAGER
Now you know how your mother felt.
I don't understand why she thought
this was a good idea.

Wager turns off the barbecue.

WAGER (CONT'D)
Or why you went along with it. I'll
go pack and leave in the morning.

He leaves Mark and takes the spiral stairs.

WAGER'S BEDROOM - DAY

Packing consists of filling a garbage bag with his clothes.
He takes a second, smaller bag into the bathroom.

Wager lies on the bed watching TV.

WAGER'S BEDROOM

Wager dozes with the TV still playing in the background.

LATER

An undefined NOISE brings Wager jerking upright. As he
fumbles to turn on the lights a second SOUND (his name?)
follows the first. Frustrated he shouts.

WAGER
Lights on!

He grabs the cotton throw he'd used as a blanket to cover his
nakedness and opens the bedroom door.

WAGER (CONT'D)
Mark?

A MUFFLED GRUNT from downstairs is the only answer. then:

PYOTR

Johnny!

WAGER

Lights on--

The hall lights comes on, but before it does it's clear there's a light on upstairs.

Wager rushes to the stairs that lead to the third floor and the terrace. He takes them two at a time.

The third floor is dark. Light comes from the terrace. He continues up, racing out onto the rooftop.

Mark stands at the elevator, half in shadow. He looks dazed and out of it.

Behind him stands Pyotr, dressed as he had been earlier that day. Only now his face is grim and he's holding Mark's shoulder so tight his knuckles are white.

It takes Wager a moment to realize Pyotr clutches a thick handled knife, the blade pressed into Mark's back. His shirt is bloodstained.

WAGER (CONT'D)

Pyotr! What are you doing?

PYOTR

I came for you. You knew I would.

Wager clutches the blanket around him while he makes his careful way towards the pair.

WAGER

I told you we would talk. But not like this.

He holds up his hand as he approaches the two.

WAGER (CONT'D)

Give me the knife, Pyotr.

PYOTR

I love you! You're mine. He had no right--

WAGER

He didn't understand. But I do.

Pyotr shakes his head violently. He grabs Mark's shirt collar and drags the groggy man towards the stairs, circling Wager.

WAGER (CONT'D)

Pyotr!

He plunges after them.

WAGER (CONT'D)

Damnit.

On the dark third floor, Pyotr glares up at Wager following.

PYOTR

Stay there. I will take care of him. He cannot hurt us anymore.

Mark rouses, blinking the blood out of his eyes. He GROANS.

Pyotr jerks him forward. Mark stumbles.

WAGER

He's not hurting us now. Let him go, Pyotr!

PYOTR

No!

WAGER

What are you doing? Are you crazy, man? Christ, Pyotr, he's a cop!

PYOTR

We are meant to be together. I knew it the first time I saw you.

WAGER

He's my son.

WAGER (CONT'D)

NO!

WAGER (CONT'D)

PYOTR

I watched all your videos and read everything you write. I see your loneliness. I even know you are HIV positive and I don't care. I will become positive with you. We will be together, as we should be.

WAGER

How did you know I was positive?

PYOTR

I see you at the clinic. I volunteer there. But you never saw me.

WAGER

This can't be happening.

PYOTR

It is meant to be. I came to see you in your old place but you weren't there. I thought you were out with another man. That was wrong.

WAGER

What did you do, Pyotr?

PYOTR

I make you mine!

Pyotr, pulls the knife up, positioning it to plunge into Mark's back.

Wager lunges after them.

WAGER

Fuck that.

Pyotr uses Mark's body to hold Wager at bay. The blanket wrapped around Wager impedes him further.

Mark rouses at that moment, twisting free of Pyotr's grip. He throws them both off balance as Wager reaches to grab Pyotr's knife hand.

Wager is bumped by Mark, trips over the blanket and plunges down the curved stairs. He flips head over heels and lands at the bottom with a sharp crack to his head.

His body goes limp.

PYOTR

Johnny!

Pyotr charges for Wager. He and Mark collide and spin around.

With a shout, Pyotr kicks out, connecting with Mark's groin. Mark collapses, clutching his privates. Pyotr runs up stairs and the elevator opens and closes.

Mark recovers enough to reach an unmoving Wager. He begins chest compressions.

MARK
Come on. Breath.
(then)
Dad!

INT. PRIVATE HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Mark sat stiffly in a hard back chair facing the hospital bed where Wager lies unconscious. An IV is taped to his hand and a Finger Pulse oximeter is attached to his finger.

Through the open door normal HOSPITAL SOUNDS seem loud.

Mark's cell buzzes. He takes the call.

MARK
Riley. Yes?
(then)
Yes, I can be there.

He disconnects and after a brief glance at the bed, he leaves the room.

EXT. RUNDOWN APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The same building Wager dropped Pyotr off at. A patrol and an unmarked car sit in front of the building when Mark pulls up.

He is met at the door by a uniformed detective, LAFFERTY.

LAFFERTY
Constable Riley?

Lafferty holds the door for him. Mark slips past him.

INT. RUNDOWN APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The tiny lobby filled with mailboxes is strewn with graffiti. They climb to the second floor.

SECOND FLOOR

Outside an open apartment door, Lafferty pauses.

LAFFERTY
We need you to identify the man, if
you can.

MARK
Sure.

They enter a one room apartment. Every light in the place is on.

Mark freezes in the doorway. His eyes widen at what he sees.

The walls are covered with a variety of photos of Wager. Some clearly from online sites. Wager with a mic. Wager with an array of alcohol bottles pouring drinks. Wager with locals celebrities.

Others are amateur pictures captured on the street or in the Drunken Chicken from a cell phone. There's even one of Wager leaving Mark's building.

LAFFERTY

Do you recognize this man?

MARK

Yes. He's my father, John Wager.
This Pyotr guy must have been
stalking him...

Lafferty looks at something in a notebook.

LAFFERTY

Pyotr Kovolchuk, naturalized
citizen. Toronto resident since two
thousand and seventeen. One charge
of soliciting. Suspended sentence.

MARK

Has he been found?

LAFFERTY

There's a BOLO out for him. Any
idea where he might go?

Mark shakes his head, stops, then meets Lafferty's gaze.

MARK

No. If I'm not needed anymore, I'd
like to return to the hospital.

LAFFERTY

Of course. Ask your father if he
might know where Mister Kovolchuk
might show up.

MARK

I'll do that, sir.

EXT. RUNDOWN APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

As he trots towards his car, Mark pulls out his cell.

INT. PRIVATE HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Wager gasps and his eyes pop open.

Mark sits up from where he's been slouched over his phone. His gaze flashes on the monitors over Wager's head.

Their eyes meet.

Wager's voice is hoarse.

WAGER
Hey. What's up?

MARK
You're at Toronto General.

Wager looks around the single suite.

WAGER
I don't think I'm covered for this.

MARK
Don't worry about it.

A white-coated doctor, STUBENS, with the supercilious look of someone important sails into the room carrying a chart.

STUBEN
Ah, Mark, I'm happy to report all our tests on your father came back negative.

Stuben glances at Wager.

STUBEN (CONT'D)
Do I have your permission to discuss detail of your medical condition, Mister Wager?

WAGER
Uh, sure.

Stuben addresses Wager.

STUBEN
Your HIV status is unchanged from your last blood test.

(MORE)

STUBEN (CONT'D)

Your viral load remains undetectable and your CD4 lymphocyte count is four-eighty. So overall, your prospects are excellent. I'd like to keep you in for observation for another day. You got quite a nasty crack on the head. We have you scheduled for an MRI.

WAGER

A shot of Jagermeister would fix that up.

STUBEN

Sorry, Mister Wager. Alcohol is prohibited while there's any possibility of concussion.

WAGER

Of course it is.

MARK

You can drink another day. I talked to your boss. You're on sick leave for the next week if the doctor recommends it.

STUBEN

I do. With your compromised health it's better to stay on the safe side.

WAGER

I've never stayed on the safe side.

MARK

No kidding.

STUBEN

Well, if that's everything, I have other patients to see to.

Wager watches him leave. He sobers and turns to Mark.

WAGER

Are you okay?

Mark touches his back where the knife had cut him.

MARK

I'm good. Nothing vital was hit. A couple of stitches and a run of antibiotics.

(MORE)

MARK (CONT'D)

(unsure)

So, you're HIV positive? Does...
anyone know?

WAGER

I don't advertise. You heard the
doc. I can't pass it to anyone. But
it still freaks people out, so I
don't talk about it.

MARK

Oh. Okay. I'll keep your
confidence.

WAGER

Thanks. Pyotr?

MARK

The police have a BOLO out on him.
(at Wager's look)
Be On the Look Out. We have his
license and his residence is being
staked out. In fact I just came
from there.

WAGER

He had a car? I had the impression
he didn't.

MARK

I think you had a lot of wrong
impressions about the guy.

WAGER

Oh?

MARK

He had, ah, how do I say this...
quite a shrine to you set up. He's
obviously been watching you for a
while.

WAGER

Fuck me.

MARK

That does appear to have been his
goal. It also appears he may have
been responsible for the fire at
your place.

WAGER

That's what he meant. How?

MARK

His fingerprints were found on the remnants of the bottle he used. His were on file for soliciting charges earlier this year.

WAGER

That's it. I'm becoming a nun.

MARK

It's habit forming I hear.

Wager GROANS.

The door flies open and Hyacinth makes an ENTRANCE. She's wearing the latest drug-fueled extravaganza off the Milan runway.

HYACINTH

Homegirl, you would be so wasted in black and white.

She acts like she just noticed Mark.

HYACINTH (CONT'D)

Well aren't you a tall glass of meet me under the stars shining down on the Harbourfront.

Mark looks at Wager in desperation.

WAGER

Cool your jets, Hy.

Hyacinth drops the pose and hurries over to Wager's side.

HYACINTH

Ohmygod, mon cher, I heard about what that monster did to you. And to think I brought him to you. I might as well have gift-wrapped you for that horrible boy.

She dabs at her dry eyes.

HYACINTH (CONT'D)

Can you ever forgive me?

WAGER

How could I not?

HYACINTH

I'm to blame for this. I can usually spot the damaged ones, but this boy slipped right under my radar. He might have hurt you!

Hyacinth hugs Wager, crushing him to her padded chest.

Wager barks in pain.

She straightens so fast her clutch slaps Wager's chin.

HYACINTH (CONT'D)

See, he did! What did he do to you?
I'll kill him.

MARK

The police are looking for him.
They'll find him.

Hyacinth dismisses his words.

HYACINTH

Pshaww, no need for that.

MARK

Well, we're not going to let civilians go after this man. He's dangerous. I assure you, we'll--

Hyacinth preens.

HYACINTH

He's not lost.

WAGER

What did you do, Hyacinth?

HYACINTH

Nothing he didn't deserve. He showed up at the bar after pretty boy here called and told us to watch out for him. He wasn't expecting our little surprise.

WAGER

What did you do? So help me, god--

HYACINTH

Oh we didn't do anything to him, though he may have a teensy black eye from resisting our request that he was a bad boy.

(MORE)

HYACINTH (CONT'D)

(pauses)

There might be teeth missing too.

Mark gets agitated.

MARK

Where is he, lady, ma'am, Hyacinth?

HYACINTH

Oh, silly. He's in my car, just waiting for you.

MARK

Your--

Mark jerks his phone out and presses keys.

MARK (CONT'D)

Where's your car? Show me. He's probably half way to Detroit.

HYACINTH

Hardly.

She dangles a set of keys in her iridescent nails.

HYACINTH (CONT'D)

He's in the trunk of the blue Nissan. Snug as a bug in a handwoven Moroccan rug.

Mark grabs the keys and runs out, already on the phone with someone.

Hyacinth turns back to Wager with a gleam in her eyes.

HYACINTH (CONT'D)

I don't know whether I should hug you again or put you over my knee for scaring me like that.

WAGER

It was no big deal, baby. HASHTAG #notrauma.

HYACINTH

You're such a cunt. And for that you deserve a reward.

She grins and takes out a silver flask. When Wager takes it, she pulls out her phone.

HYACINTH (CONT'D)
Come on, say hi to your grateful fans.

She puts in a video call. The ENERGETIC SOUNDS of the Drunken Chicken filter out of the phone.

HYACINTH (CONT'D)
Hey, Tito. I'm with the man and he's got something to say to y'all.

TITO (O.S.)
Everybody shut up. It's Johnny!

Obligingly, Wager climbs out of bed. He tips the flask and lets the contents pour down his throat as Hyacinth films.

ENTIRE BAR (O.S.)
(chants)
Chug. Chug. Chug.

Without a word, he turns and flips the back of his cotton gown up to reveal his tight, tanned butt.

SCREAMS of delight come over the phone.

TITO (O.S.)
Turn around!

Wager starts to turn when Mark re-enters the room. Wager drops his gown, hides the flask and sinks onto the bed, affecting a look of pure innocence.

Mark only shakes his head. He looks at Hyacinth.

MARK
The police are going to want a statement from you.

HYACINTH
(blinks coyly)
I'm always willing to help an officer of the law. Can I give my statement to you?

He passes her a business card.

MARK
Ask for this guy. He'll take your report. Oh, and you can ask him about how to get your car back.

HYACINTH
My car--!?

MARK

It's now part of the investigation.
Oh, silly me. Didn't I tell you?

Hyacinth storms out of the room, on her phone, berating Tito who can be heard squawking in the background.

WAGER

Touché.

MARK

It's so nice when citizens want to help law enforcement in their duties.

WAGER

You really are your mother. She had a wicked sense of humor too. She didn't always show it, but when she did, watch your back.

MARK

Yeah? You'll have to tell me about them sometime.

Mark closes the door and sits in the leather bound chair beside the bed.

MARK (CONT'D)

You're welcome to keep staying at my place.

WAGER

You trust me now?

MARK

I trust even you learn from your mistakes.

WAGER

I do when I make a doozy.

MARK

If you're discharged tomorrow I'll come by to pick you up. Maybe I'll bring Alexis. She's been wanting to meet you.

WAGER

So there is a girlfriend. What are her intentions?

MARK

You'll have to ask her,

WAGER

(grins)

I'll do that. Hey, I'm really sorry about how everything turned out. I really wish I'd known. I don't know how things would have been, but I'd have liked to have tried.

Mark approaches the bed. He leans over and Wager wraps his arms around his son's shoulders.

MARK

Dad.

They hug tightly.

MARK (CONT'D)

So, tell me what my mother was like.

WAGER

She ever tell you about the time she brought a boxful of crickets to biology class and almost burned down the school?

MARK

No... My mother...? Tell me.

FADE OUT.