

SOUNDS LIKE ORANGE:
THE FALL AND RISE OF DONNIE MILLER

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1

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

1

A lovely, lived-in, middle-class suburban house.

Sounds of a HEATED DISCUSSION. The camera DESCENDS down a long hallway flecked with family photos and tchotchkes, eventually RESTING on a doorknob. It slowly TURNS and OPENS, and the eye of a LITTLE BLONDE GIRL (4) appears in the crack. BOOM DOWN to her bare feet timidly stepping out. The camera follows her feet out the door, down the hall and down the stairs. The VOICES grow as she approaches.

2

INT. LIVING ROOM - CIRCA 1985 - SAME

2

TWO COUPLES are playing charades. MARTIN (30s), on his feet, frantically gestures as his wife, ALICE (20s), watches in total confusion. He repeats himself, clearly frustrated, over and over again. The onlooking couple, ROBERT (30s) and SUZANNE (30s) enjoy the tension as it builds over the cacophony of voices.

ALICE

(to Martin)

For Christ's sake, you've done that a thousand times! That doesn't *mean* anything?!? Do something that makes *sense!!*

MARTIN

Oh come on!

ROBERT

NO SPEAKING!

SUZANNE

(to Robert)

Deep breaths. It's just a game!

MARTIN

It *makes sense* if you just *think* about it...

ALICE

I'll *think* about filing for divorce if--

LITTLE BLONDE GIRL (O.S.)

John Quincy Adams!

The room is stunned into silence. The four adults slowly turn to see the little blonde girl has joined the party.

LITTLE GIRL
 (timidly, wide-eyed)
 Can I play?

The adults are dumbfounded. How did she guess this? Martin smiles, filled with fatherly pride.

The camera PUSHES IN on the little girl's eyes... and to HER PUPIL until the shot becomes...

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

The cosmos (stock footage of deep space) underscored by an angelic, majestic soundtrack. The word "CHARADES" appears on-screen in bold letters with tremendous presence. A booming James Earl Jones-ian NARRATOR...

NARRATOR (O.S.)
 Charades. The ancient game of
 silent mimicry. Where physical
 language replaces the spoken word.
 To the unsophisticated, this art-
 form is mere cocktail party fodder.
 Only an elite few know the truth...

We DISSOLVE into a BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT.

3 INT. PREHISTORIC TIMES - CAVE - NIGHT 3

DISSOLVING out into a BONFIRE, pulling back and revealing enraptured CAVE-PEOPLE. Behind them, prehistoric artwork is smattered across the rock walls.

NARRATOR (O.S.)
 The desire to tell tales through
 physical gesture traces all the way
 back to the beginning of humankind.

A CAVEMAN is dancing about as the cave-people "ooh" and "aaahh" at him.

We PUSH IN on the caveman's hand POINTING to one of his fellow cave people, indicating they understood his "clue" as we transition to...

4 EXT. ANCIENT OLYMPIC GAMES - OLYMPIA - DAY 4

...PULLING OUT on a different hand POINTING in the same fashion. It belongs to an ANCIENT OLYMPIAN. He is charading aggressively, surrounded by other GREEK OLYMPIANS. He is shooting clues as his ANCIENT OLYMPIAN PARTNER successfully guesses.

NARRATOR (O.S.)

...and would go on to prominence during the first Ancient Greek Olympic Games. As participants not of Greek origin were forbidden to speak during the games, they used the imposed silences to their advantage. Their victories were an embarrassment to the Greeks and the events were ultimately disbanded.

We see the Olympians in front of the judges getting the "thumbs down."

The camera BOOMS DOWN to the ground...

5 EXT. THE RENAISSANCE - GRASSY KNOLL - DAY 5

BOOM UP to reveal a PAIR OF RENAISSANCE MEN, charading at a social function on a grassy knoll. DIGNITARIES and ONLOOKERS applauding the efforts with polite, dainty "golf claps."

NARRATOR (O.S.)

During the Renaissance, charades became a sociopolitical movement as well as an athletic event. Celebrated and revered in the times of Henry VII and Michelangelo...

One Renaissance Man tugs his ear in a "sounds like" gesture.

We PUSH IN to the ear as we transition to...

6 EXT. SALEM WITCH TRIALS - FIELDS - DAY 6

...PULLING OUT on a similar ear-tugging gesture by a YOUNG WOMAN. She is cavorting with OTHER YOUNG WOMEN. A group of ANGRY VILLAGERS arrive and takes them into custody against their will.

NARRATOR (O.S.)

...the sport soon turned highly controversial and even deadly. In Salem, Massachusetts, in the late 1600s, it was misconstrued as witchcraft...

INSERT CARD: A "historic" sketch(es) depicting witches being tortured and burnt at the stake.

NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 ...and very quickly became
 forbidden. It was cast into
 obscurity for 230 years, until a
 time in the United States when all
 things taboo were celebrated...

INT. PROHIBITION-ERA BAR - NIGHT

A FLAPPER prancing about on-stage in a smoky bar. The audience is cat-calling as she does a sexually-charged incarnation of charades. Gangsters are revelling in their ebullience as the liquor flows.

NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 During Prohibition, along with
 bootleg liquor and hot jazz,
 charades found a new home in the
 dens of scoundrels.

Suddenly POLICEMEN barge in, packing heat. The flapper puts her hands up in surrender, transitioning to...

INT. 1950S LIVING ROOM - DAY

A YOUNG BOY, in a cowboy hat with a drawstring, doing a similar "stick-em-up" charade in his living room. His Mad Men-esque family watches on, guessing and guffawing through their Lucky Strikes and scotch.

NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Charades resurfaced in the 1950s,
 when it evolved into the parlor
 game we commonly know today.

The FATHER of the family takes a deep drag of his cigarette as the camera PUSHES IN on the burning tip... transitioning into...

INT. 1950S BAR CELLAR - NIGHT

...PULLING OUT on the burning tip of a cigar, belonging to "BIG LOU" MOLANSKI. He is officiating what appears to be a hush-hush "Fight Club" version of charades. PLAYERS compete around him.

NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 But for one visionary man, once Al Capone's chauffeur, it became something else entirely. "Big Lou" Molanski arranged speakeasy tours for what would eventually become an organized league.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 That league would evolve into a
 federation. The World Charades
 Federation.

-INSERT STILL PHOTO: Fans cheering (circa 1960).

-INSERT STILL PHOTO: Charade competitor "Cheese" Williams
 (circa 1960)

NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 It was in the arenas of the WCF
 where athletes like "Cheese"
 Williams...

-INSERT STILL PHOTO: Charade Competitor "Dynamo" Tim
 Devereaux (circa 1970)

NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 The "Dynamo" Tim Devereaux...

-INSERT STILL PHOTO: Charade Competitor Annabelle Fünke
 (circa 1980)

NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 And the great lady of no words,
 Annabelle Fünke wrote the
 continuing lore of this mighty
 sport.

7 INT. PRESENT TIME - MODERN APARTMENT COCKTAIL PARTY - NIGHT 7

A modern-day charades party game. (For the time line of our
 movie, we are saying circa 2003.)

PULL OUT on a TWO WORDS gesture. A YOUNG MODERN GUY flashes
 the gestures and goes into his charade. OTHER PARTY-GOERS are
 using a board-game style card set for clues.

NARRATOR (O.S.)
 For most today, it exists as a
 "party game" performed on their own
 intimate stages...

FADE TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
 For some it is so much more...

A swelling "Chariots of Fire" meets "Rocky" theme.

INSERT TITLE CARD: "SOUNDS LIKE ORANGE: THE FALL AND RISE OF DONNIE MILLER"

BEGIN CREDIT SEQUENCE.

CUT TO BLACK.

ON A SMALL TELEVISION

A low-def broadcast recorded in English with Swedish subtitles. It has the pomp of the Super Bowl with the budget of local access television. We transition INTO THE BROADCAST.

8 INSERT WCF BROADCAST. 8

EXPLOSIONS! (with cheap video effect) into the WORLD CHARADES FEDERATION LOGO! Guitar rock swells.

9 INT. UPPSALA WAREHOUSE - COMMENTATORS' TABLE - NIGHT 9

The continuation of the broadcast...in real-time.

At "ringside" are our color commentators, welcoming us to the show. This independent sport is overtly low-budget, but that doesn't stop them from treating this like Wrestlemania.

Our commentators are grizzled former charades competitor SHANE BRENNAN (43) and buttoned-up charades historian LEE HAITH (40). A SWEDISH TRANSLATOR at a smaller table calls in his native tongue.

HAITH

Hälsningar from Uppsala! The World Charades Federation is coming to you live from the fourth largest city in Sweden! Here with me is one of the sport's premier competitors, the "Milwaukee Mongoose" himself, Shane Brennan.

BRENNAN

Thanks Lee. A pleasure to be here for such a spectacular event. What an exciting evening we have in store. I. Am. PUMPED. UP!

10 INT. DILAPIDATED DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 10

Lit by struggling fluorescent lights, a figure moves about in the dark. Shadow-boxing. Breathing heavy in title-match prep mode. It's DONNIE MILLER (25).

Less road-worn now than we will come to see later. He is laser-focused, ritualistic. Rapid movements chop through the air with a kung-fu "WHOOSH!"

HAITH (O.S.)

Tonight we'll see the Sultan of Sling himself, Donnie Miller, in action. His meteoric rise seems to have no limit.

He steps to the sink and splashes cold water vigorously on his face. One more look in the mirror, drinking it in.

HAITH (O.S.) (CONT'D)

He will be alongside his partner in and out of the ring, Cassandra Lange.

Donnie focuses on a small picture taped to the mirror. It's a WCF publicity photograph of him and Cassandra.

He reaches into his pocket and produces a ZIPPO LIGHTER engraved with a lightning bolt. He flicks it open and closed, stares deep into the flame, and takes long audible meditative breaths.

11 EXT. DONNIE'S DRESSING ROOM - SAME 11

ASVALD (30's), an uptight Swedish stagehand, stands sentinel at Donnie's door. ANNIKA EKBERGEN (20s), a breathtaking, buxom young Swedish girl, approaches.

ANNIKA

Please can I see Donnie. I am biggest fan. If I don't meet him I'll just die.

ASVALD

Mr. Miller must not be disturbed before his match.

ANNIKA

Annika is not *disturbance*. Let in me!

12 INT. DONNIE'S DRESSING ROOM - SAME 12

The commotion outside grows. Donnie's concentration withers. He opens one eye, frustrated. He flicks the zippo closed, puts it back in his pocket.

13

EXT. DONNIE'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

13

As Donnie pulls the door open abruptly.

DONNIE

ASVALD! What have I told you about
bothering me before a match?!?

Donnie finds himself chest to chest with Annika. He changes his tone.

ASVALD

I am sorry. You told me--

DONNIE

I *told* you. ALWAYS bother me before
a match. My fans are my life-force.

Asvald rolls his eyes and leaves them.

ANNIKA

(Swedish accent)

Donnie! Ohmigosh, I love you! Can I
get autograph please?

Annika turns and bends, hiking her skirt up for the signature. Donnie enjoys the view.

ANNIKA (CONT'D)

We took picture at show in Lingbo
last year. Do you remember?

DONNIE

Of course... I never forget a...
face.

ANNIKA

I dream to be in WCF like you.

DONNIE

Good for you. It's good to set
impossible goals. Builds character.

Donnie finishes the autograph...and takes an extra beat to enjoy Annika's backside before VERY SLOWLY letting her skirt down. She turns and faces him, pressing her ample bosom against him.

ANNIKA

If you could give some advice, it
would bring me to happy.

DONNIE

I like happy.

ANNIKA
 (very close)
 You want Annika happy don't you?

She begins to rub against him and kiss him.

DONNIE
 Wow. That's... that's happy... a
 few pointers couldn't hurt.

They fall slowly into the dressing room, the door closing behind them.

14 INT. UPPSALA WAREHOUSE - NIGHT 14

We see fans SCREAM IN SWEDISH into the broadcast cameras. There's not a lot of fans, but the ones in attendance are fervent.

15 INT. UPPSALA WAREHOUSE - COMMENTATORS' TABLE - NIGHT 15

Haith and Brennan continue their broadcast from the commentators' table.

BRENNAN
 Miller and Lange have quite a night ahead of them. The true test will be to see if Miller can contain his infamous ego.

HAITH
 Talk about a challenge! Tonight's broadcast brought to you by local hot-spot Restaurang Dagmar. Traditional food, cooked thoroughly. Mmmm, Restaurang Dagmar! Try the herring!

16 INT DONNIE'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 16

The door bursts open and CASSANDRA STORMS IN, catching Donnie and Annika red-handed and undressed. She's a sharp, gorgeous brunette and she means business. Donnie throws Annika off and covers up.

DONNIE
 (to Annika)
 Who are you?!? Where did you come from?!? I was sleeping!

CASSANDRA
What the fuck are you doing?!?

DONNIE
Cass, this isn't what it looks like.

CASSANDRA
It looks like you're boning some groupie behind my back!

DONNIE
OK, maybe it *is* what it looks like, but I can explain...

CASSANDRA
Is this going to be another excuse, like the one about the gypsies in Madagascar...?

DONNIE
...who tried to suffocate me with their pelvises! Yes. I'm standing by that. (to himself) Or is it pelvi? Pelvi-sees?

CASSANDRA
Save it, Donnie. We're through! As partners! As lovers!

DONNIE
Like you're really going to break up the greatest team in the history of the WCF.

CASSANDRA
Watch me.

DONNIE
You can't be serious!

CASSANDRA
I am tired of playing second fiddle to your monumental ego. You'd better bring your A game, Don, 'cause I'm not pulling any punches.

Cassandra storms out.

DONNIE
Shit. (Suddenly, to Annika) You want your shot at the "majors"?

ANNIKA

What?!?

DONNIE

I have a flawless record. I need a partner to compete NOW or it's an automatic loss for me!

ANNIKA

But I am not in league.

DONNIE

They pull strings for me all the time.

ANNIKA

But, Donnie! You only get one chance to debut in WCF. I lose tonight, I lose dream.

DONNIE

Hey. Donnie Miller's got your back.

ANNIKA

Then... yes, Donnie Miller, I accept offer!

17 INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER 17

Donnie and Annika running down the corridor, throwing themselves together to be "show ready."

18 INT. UPPSALA WAREHOUSE - BACK CORRIDOR - NIGHT 18

TIM DEVEREAUX (60s), a legend of the sport who is still living in his heyday. He's talking the ears off of a rapt group of CHARADES GROUPIES.

TIM

...Suddenly the room changed. Everything seemed to get quiet. Slow. The lights surged. Even the breeze in the room blew a little softer.

The groupies MURMUR in awe.

TIM (CONT'D)

(finishing the story)

We've all had good runs, sure, but the Sweet Spot is a seamless flow, like Zen.

(MORE)

TIM (CONT'D)
 When you hit it, you are
 unbeatable. Don't let anyone tell
 you the Sweet Spot is a fairy tale.
 Tell 'em you heard straight from
 the Dynamo.

Donnie and Annika make their way quickly down the corridor,
 passing the group. Tim takes notice and gives chase.

19 INT UPPSALA WAREHOUSE - CORRIDOR #2 - NIGHT

19

Tim catches up to Donnie and Annika as they make their way.

TIM
 Hey, Don! Wait up!

DONNIE
 Sorry, Dynamo. We have to be show
 ready in eight minutes.

TIM
 Just need a favor. (distracted,
 points to Annika) Who's this?

DONNIE
 Long story.

TIM
 Listen, I've made some bad calls
 lately and--and I'm a little short.

DONNIE
 Tim--

TIM
 The Mole's bustin' my balls.
 Please.

DONNIE
 You owe the Mole?!? Are you crazy?
 Even if I did gamble on charades,
 I'd never sign up for that. No
 thanks.

TIM
 Oh yeah? Well when you get your
 ticket punched, we'll see if the
 Dynamo's there to bail you out!

DONNIE

Ain't gonna happen, Tim. You're looking at the luckiest guy on the planet. Next time, play the penny slots. We gotta go.

Donnie and Annika leave Tim simmering.

20

INT. CORRIDOR - COMPETITOR ENTRANCE - NIGHT

20

Out of breath, Donnie and Annika land backstage where Asvald is stationed. From the other side of the curtain we can hear ARENA NOISE (fans, music, etc.)

ASVALD

Mr. Miller, is it really true?

DONNIE

Save it. This is my new partner... er...Hanukkah.

ANNIKA

Annika!

DONNIE

Close enough.

Asvald grabs a clipboard and dashes off to tell someone.

ANNIKA

Are you upset about Cassandra?

DONNIE

No time for broken hearts. I'm fired up. Here. Kiss this for luck.

Donnie fumbles with his pants.

ANNIKA

Excuse me?

He produces the zippo lighter.

ANNIKA (CONT'D)

Oh. That. Okay.

Annika takes the lighter. She goes to kiss it but is interrupted by a voice.

CASSANDRA (O.S.)

Superstitions are for amateurs.

Cassandra and her new partner, VINCE CARSON (30s), approach. He's Matthew McConaughey meets Tony Robbins. It's a Sharks/Jets stand-off... for Cassandra anyway.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

That good luck charm won't do shit against actual talent. (To Donnie) I see you brought the Swedish meatball.

DONNIE

Didn't leave me much choice, Cass.

VINCE

(makes an absurd gesture of elongation)

ANDRA. Cass-ANDRA. You should really respect her complete identity.

DONNIE

Who the fuck is this?!?

VINCE

(waving)

Namaste. Big fan, Donnie Miller. It's an honor. Vince Carson.

Vince goes for a strong handshake. Donnie stares at his hand as if he is holding shit.

DONNIE

(to Cassandra)

Didn't take much for you to find a replacement.

VINCE

A part of the newest charades sensation of Carson and Lange.

CASSANDRA

LANGE and Carson. You're really bringing this *child* into the ring against *me*? There's that trademark Donnie Miller ego! (To Annika) Told you he'd "have your back," right? Of course, you were ON your back at the time...

VINCE

(chortling)

So awkward.

DONNIE

(to Cass)

Your talking monkey seems so human.
What's the secret? Peanut butter on
his gums? Cattle prod up his ass?

VINCE

Wow. Anger has the floor. So
unhealthy. Have you considered the
healing power of a cleanse? Or
perhaps an aggressive colonic?

Asvald returns.

ASVALD

(to Donnie/Annika)

Step to your marks.

DONNIE

We're up. (To Vince) I'll miss you
most of all, Scarecrow. (To
Cassandra) Maybe you can use your
winnings to get him a brain.

Donnie and Annika head for the curtain.

21 INT. UPPSALA WAREHOUSE - COMMENTATORS' TABLE - NIGHT 21

Haith and Brennan, mid-broadcast. An unseen hand passes
Brennan a piece of paper. He reads it, then...

BRENNAN

Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm not sure
how to say this... I've been handed
an update here...

22 INT. YOUNG MARTY'S BEDROOM - MORNING - SAME 22

Across the world, in a teenaged girl's bedroom in California.

On the walls are fan posters of all things charades, mostly
Donnie Miller. One features him posing, three fingers along
his arm (three syllables) with the word THUNDERCLAP! We hear
COLOR-COMMENTARY from dull computer speakers. We see framed
photos and clippings featuring Donnie.

The little blonde girl, MARTY MCKEEVER, now 15 years old,
watches the tournament on her laptop. She's wearing the
trademark Donnie Miller T-shirt.

Long story short, she's a superfan.

BRENNAN (O.S.)

*The team of Miller and Lange has...
I can't believe what I'm reading
here, has... disbanded. It seems as
if Vince Carson and Cassandra Lange
are teaming up... AGAINST Donnie
Miller!*

MARTY

What?!?

Marty reaches for the volume and TURNS IT UP.

HAITH (O.S.)

*This is totally unprecedented. Stay
tuned for further updates.*

23

INT. CORRIDOR - COMPETITOR ENTRANCE - SAME

23

DONNIE

Here, put this on. It's show time.

Donnie tosses Annika a "THUNDERCLAP!" T-shirt. She enthusiastically puts it on. Donnie reaches into his pocket, patting for his lighter.

We can hear DONNIE'S ENTRY MUSIC - "THUNDERSTRUCK" by AC/DC blaring from behind the curtain.

DONNIE (CONT'D)

The lighter. Where is it?!?!

ANNIKA

I give back.

DONNIE

Shit! I can't go on without it!

ANNOUNCER

(in Swedish, subtitled)

Making his way to the ring, Donnie
Miller!

Donnie suddenly stifles his panic and flips a switch inside. Everything that's happened up until now is out of his head (or so he thinks). It's GAME TIME. Asvald signals them to hustle...

DONNIE

Forget it! Time to give the people
what they want!

24 INT. UPPSALA WAREHOUSE - COMPETITOR'S ENTRANCE 24

Donnie and Annika appear from behind the black curtain. The crowd EXPLODES as they enter the arena. Annika is starry-eyed at the waving klieg lights, confetti, and cheap pyrotechnics punctuating their arrival. A loud, overmodulated THUNDERCLAP SOUND EFFECT blares out of the arena speakers (Donnie's trademark). Donnie strikes a pose. He is a rock god.

DONNIE
THUNDERCLAPPPP!!!!

FANS
(chanting back)
THUNDERCLAPPPP!!!!

25 INT. YOUNG MARTY'S BEDROOM - MORNING - SAME 25

MARTY
THUNDERCLAPPPP!!!!

26 INT. UPPSALA WAREHOUSE - COMPETITOR'S ENTRANCE 26

Donnie and Annika make their way.

HAITH (O.S.)
Apparently the rumors are true,
ladies and gentlemen. The legendary
team of Miller and Lange is no
more.

BRENNAN (O.S.)
Who is this Annika Ekbergen kid?
Did someone get the license plate
from the turnip truck she fell off
of?

As they walk to the ring, Donnie CATCHES a pair of flung women's panties. He blows a kiss to the owner. A HOT SWEDISH WOMAN reciprocates. He smiles to Annika. Before she can roll her eyes... THWACK! A large pair of men's briefs SLAP her face. She peels them off in disgust. An OVERWEIGHT SWEDE makes the "call me" sign with his fingers. Annika hustles to catch up with Donnie.

The duo hits the competition ring, turning and awaiting the final team's arrival. Suddenly, INDUSTRIAL ROCK music blares. It's the entrance of...

Cassandra and Vince as they make their way down to the ring. Cassandra stares down Donnie and Annika with dagger-eyes.

HAITH (O.S.)

Here comes what could be the formidable new twosome of Lange and Carson.

BRENNAN

It's gonna to be one hell of a match!

27 INT. UPPSALA WAREHOUSE - COMPETITOR RING

27

The teams are assembled in the ring, game-faces on.

Hustling into the ring is Rudolph Molanski AKA THE MOLE. A little bit Michael Buffer, a little bit "Sons of Anarchy," he approaches the competitors. A REF approaches.

THE REF

Mr. Molanski, we can't change the line-up now!

THE MOLE

(to Cassandra)

What the fuck is this about?

CASSANDRA

Ask your superstar.

Vince comforts her. The Mole turns to Donnie.

DONNIE

I'll explain later. *Ah-lunka* is my new partner.

ANNIKA

Annika!

THE MOLE

You're bringin' a civilian in to compete in a championship match?!? Are you crazy?

DONNIE

C'mon, it's me. I can carry her with my pinkie finger.

THE MOLE

You'd better hope so. (To Annika) Good luck, kid.

REF
 (to the Mole)
 Sir, this is totally against
 regulations.

THE MOLE
 I make the rules here, pipsqueak.
 The match is on.

ANNIKA
 Tusen tack. (Subtitled: Thank You.)

THE MOLE
 (to Donnie, ominously)
 DO NOT fuck this up.

The Mole takes the stage. Donnie soberly acknowledges.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)
 (into the mic)
 WELLLLLLLCOME to the main event!!!!

The crowd CHEERS. As The Mole addresses the crowd, we can
 hear a SWEDISH TRANSLATOR off-camera.

Haith enters the ring with a microphone for an in-ring, pre-
 match interview. He approaches Donnie and Annika.

HAITH
 Donnie Miller. A monumental shake-
 up like this hasn't been seen since
 the Golden Box finals in Osaka '97.
 Are you ring-ready with this new,
 unseasoned partner?

DONNIE
 I only have one thing to say to
 that! THUNDERCLAP!

The crowd cheers.

Haith walks over to Cassandra and Vince.

HAITH
 Cassandra, how are you adjusting to
 this change?

CASSANDRA
 (her best Blanche DuBois)
 It's hard, Lee. I was in what I
thought was a committed, loving
 relationship. Then... when your
 partner, your confidant...
 (MORE)

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
casts you aside for a younger FAN
it's DEVASTATING.

Cassandra begins to weep outright.

DONNIE
That's not what happened!

CASSANDRA
(to Haith)
I'm heartbroken. We were going to
get married!

DONNIE
We were?

She falls onto Haith's shoulder.

The crowd suddenly TURNS ON DONNIE! What was once a chorus of
cheers becomes BOOS! We can see it has a PROFOUND affect on
Donnie. He's losing his fans!

DONNIE (CONT'D)
Wait! No! It's me!... THUNDERCLAP!!
THUNDER--

Debris hits Donnie as the crowd turns. He takes cover. Donnie
looks to Cassandra, only he can see her smirking back.

28 INT. YOUNG MARTY'S BEDROOM - MORNING - SAME 28

MARTY
SHE'S LYING!!!!

She looks around the room as if to tell someone. There is no
one. To herself, quietly...

MARTY (CONT'D)
She's lying.

29 INT. UPPSALA WAREHOUSE - COMMENTATORS' TABLE 29

Haith returns to the commentators' table.

HAITH
Apparently, the WCF has its very
own soap opera!

BRENNAN
I have NEVER seen anything like
that in the history of the sport!
(MORE)

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Miller's partnered up with a
rookie, and I see fins in the
distance. The waters are chummed.
Let's get underway!

30 INT. UPPSALA WAREHOUSE - COMPETITOR RING

30

CHARADES... but not like you have ever seen it before. Two teams at a time are paired up in the ring and competing. The "shooters" (people doing the charades) are on a raised platform with a clue box on a pedestal next to them. They draw a slip, charade and discard. The "callers" (or guessers) are standing a few feet in front of the shooters, shouting out answers. The charades here look far more dance-like and refined than we traditionally know them to be.

Cassandra is shooting, Vince is calling. He is firing off answers as they burn through clues.

VINCE

Lemon Meringue! Crossbow! Soul
Patch! "It was the best of times,
it was the worst of times!"

The points rack up.

Donnie and Annika are up next.

Annika shoots. Donnie gets several right very quickly and she throws "on the nose" gestures in quick succession.

DONNIE

Robot attack! Giant evil spiders!
Chartreuse!

HAITH (O.S.)

Miller's hittin' those on-the-
nosers!

31 INT. YOUNG MARTY'S BEDROOM - MORNING - SAME

31

BRENNAN (O.S.)

*A-game material, Lee. There's a
reason he's in the record books.
Speechless prejudice here tonight
in Uppsala.*

MARTY

YESSSSSS!

The buzzer SOUNDS. Donnie is cooling off. Cassandra crosses the ring in between heats. She approaches Donnie from behind to get past him. He whirls around, caught up in the moment. Cassandra DROPS to the ground as if she's been struck!

CASSANDRA

Ow!

The crowd goes FULLY AGAINST Donnie. The chorus of disapproval drowns out the room. More debris.

DONNIE

I didn't even touch her!

HAITH

I think Donnie Miller just struck Cassandra Lange! What a brazen lack of sportsmanship... and basic chivalry, Shane!

BRENNAN

Miller just took the express elevator from the penthouse to the outhouse.

Switch... Donnie is shooting, clearly affected. Annika keeps up, but barely.

ANNIKA

Meat Loaf! Uh... Dewey Decimal System! Err... Carbon Monoxide... NO... Capital Gains Tax!

Donnie goes for an elaborate "sounds like" charade. Annika is perplexed, briefly frozen. Donnie sees her hesitation and throws it again, frustrated.

ANNIKA (CONT'D)

Um... Sounds like... crap...wreath? Crap wreath?!? What is crap wreath?

The BUZZER buzzes! Time's up.

DONNIE

The GRAPES of WRATH. Crap. Wreath. Grapes. Wrath.

Donnie is shocked. How did she miss that? Annika looks concerned.

HAITH (O.S.)
 I can't believe what I'm seeing!
 Did the Sultan of Sling just throw
 a salty rhyme?

BRENNAN
 Bush-league mistake. Looks like
 Miller is circling the drain.

A SCOREBOARD racking up points for Donnie and Annika (they have 21). They are hot on Cassandra and Vince's trail for the lead (which is 24).

BRENNAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Lange and Carson need to do
 something here.

Cassandra steps into the ring and throws a fierce, distinctive charade (Insert Subtitle: "starfucker") at Annika. She thinks about it... reacts.

ANNIKA
 I am NOT fucker of stars!

THE MOLE
 Stop! Stop! Penalty! 10 points!
 Illegal signing!

Donnie lunges at Cassandra in anger. The Mole restrains him.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)
 Charging! 20 POINTS! (Under his
 breath) What are ya doin' Donnie?!?

Donnie backs down, steaming and glaring at a self-satisfied Cassandra. She heads back to her corner to cool off. Vince tosses her a towel.

From Cass and Vince's corner, we see Annika unsuccessfully calming an angry Donnie.

CASSANDRA
 We're gonna bulldoze right over him
 like a Sherman-fucking-tank.
 Scorched earth. I want him crushed.

She produces Donnie's lighter. Shows it to Vince.

VINCE
 What's that?

CASSANDRA
 His lucky charm.

VINCE
 (with admiration)
 Oooh. Personal rituals hold a lot
 of psychological sway. Vicious.

CASSANDRA
 He thinks this trinket is gonna get
 him the Sweet Spot.

VINCE
 Own that power chakra!

33 INT. YOUNG MARTY'S BEDROOM - MORNING - SAME

33

HAITH (O.S.)
*If Miller's going to hold a lead,
 he'd better revise the battle plan.*

BRENNAN (O.S.)
*Charging his opponent is gonna book
 him on the first bus outta Uppsala.*

YOUNG MARTY
 C'mon, Donnie! What is up with you
 tonight? Keep your cool!

MARTY'S MOTHER (O.S.)
 (from outside the room)
 Marty, it's two-thirty in the
 morning! Are you watching charades
 in there again!?

YOUNG MARTY
 (angrily)
 I'M DOING MY HOMEWORK! Stop spying
 on me!!!

34 INT. STOCKHOLM WAREHOUSE - NIGHT - SAME

34

Donnie in the corner with Annika, fraying at the seams. The crowd disapproval rains on Donnie as he pats for his lucky lighter.

ANNIKA
 What's wrong?

DONNIE
 She's playing us. She's hustling.

ANNIKA
 We're still down by 8.

A WHISTLE blows. Annika and Donnie step into the ring. Donnie subtly pats at his pockets again.

CASSANDRA
Lost something?

DONNIE
I know what you're trying to pull,
CASS!

VINCE (O.S.)
ANDRA!

Annika and Donnie take their place on stage, as do Cassandra and Vince. Annika gives Donnie a look of encouragement. It isn't working.

The scoreboard reads 6-14. 60 seconds on the timer. And GO.

Donnie tugs on his ear, furiously pantomiming. Annika can't read it. He frantically repeats. More BOOS. They're getting in his head. He tries to push through.

ANNIKA
What are you saying?!?

He looks at the scoreboard. Donnie and Annika have yet to get one!

Time slows down. Donnie sees Annika struggling. He can't help but feel like he has led a lamb to the slaughter. She looks helpless as he flails.

Donnie looks to the clock, 5 seconds, 4, 3, 2, 1, a BUZZER.

DONNIE
(angrily)
CANDY LOCK! CANDY LOCK! Sounds like
CANDY LOCK!

ANNIKA
Nothing rhymes with that!

35 INT. YOUNG MARTY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 35

Marty watches in dismay, tears welling in her eyes.

36 INT. STOCKHOLM WAREHOUSE - NIGHT - SAME 36

Scoreboard reads a final score of 6 for Donnie/Annika and 14 for Cassandra/Vince. Vince and Cassandra celebrate in each other's arms.

HAITH (O.S.)

What a massacre! A historical upset
for Lange and Carson! We just
witnessed the downfall of Donnie
Miller!

Donnie drops the clue. It floats to the ground in SLO-MO
landing with a punctuating BOOM. It reads: MOBY DICK.

ANNIKA

I thought you had Annika's
backside! You RUINED me!

Bursting into tears, she runs from the ring. Cassandra
delights in the aftermath.

The Mole enters the ring, pissed.

THE MOLE

Looks like the winner and NEW
CHAMPIONS are Cassandra Lange and
Vince Carson.

Cassandra and Vince revel. The crowd CHEERS!

Donnie stands in the ring a broken man.

Haith enters with a mic. He approaches Vince and Cassandra
for a post-mortem interview.

HAITH

What a night! It appears you have
effectively ended your former
partner's unstoppable winning
streak... and perhaps his career.

CASSANDRA

What can I say? This is what
happens when you let the toddlers
out of the kiddie pool.

37

INT. YOUNG MARTY'S BEDROOM - LATER

37

Close on her computer screen we see a headline on
charadesblog.com: "Donnie Miller Throws in the Towel."

Pull back to reveal Marty's room, bare. She has removed all
items of fandom. Reluctantly, she folds her Thunderclap T-
shirt and places this last item into a box, closes it and
slides it into her closet. She is heartbroken and sobbing.

38 INT. HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER 38

Donnie enters the hall from the dressing room in a huff. He has his gym bag and is shaken, furious. He hurries down the hall towards the exit, past Tim Devereaux. As he passes...

TIM

Candy Lock? What the hell happened out there?

Donnie doesn't respond, he just trudges onward.

39 EXT. UPPSALA WAREHOUSE - BACK ALLEY 39

Donnie shamefully emerges from an exit door, gym bag in hand.

From around the corner, he hears two WOMEN TALKING. He peers into an alley and sees Cassandra and Annika TOGETHER! Annika notices Donnie, gestures to Cassandra, who smiles wickedly.

ANNIKA

(heavy Boston accent)

CANNNDEEEE LAHHHK?!? That's the stupidest thing I ever heard. At least you're decent in the sack.

Annika waves a wad of cash and laughs. Donnie's been had. Before he can act on it, he is flanked by two large goons, TRIGGER and NUTSY. The girls disappear into the darkness.

DONNIE

Growth hormone conference in town?

Trigger PUNCHES Donnie in the gut. He goes down in a heap, sucking wind.

40 EXT. UPPSALA WAREHOUSE - SECOND BACK ALLEY 40

The goons drag Donnie into another alleyway. The Mole emerges from the shadows. They dump Donnie at his feet.

THE MOLE

Tough night in there, kid.

DONNIE

Pretty tough out here, too. No big deal.

THE MOLE

I'm afraid it's a very big deal.

DONNIE

It's one match. I can bounce back.
You know me. Luckiest guy on the
planet.

THE MOLE

Your luck just ran out my friend.
I had a lot riding on you tonight.
You lost the match. I lost fifty
grand.

DONNIE

You bet money on me?!?

THE MOLE

I warned you not to fuck up. I bet
on you. You lost. The 50Gs are on
you. (to the goons) Help him
understand.

Nutsy picks up Donnie from behind, holding his arms back.

TRIGGER

This is gonna hurt you more than
it's gonna hurt me.

Trigger throws a punch into THE CAMERA. CUT TO BLACK. We hear
A VICIOUS BEATING.

TITLE CARD: Los Angeles, California. Ten years later...

41 EXT. LOS ANGELES COURTYARD - DAY

41

On the steps of a courtyard in Los Angeles.

The Assistant Deputy Mayor of Los Angeles, JACOB FITZ (40s)
is speaking to a VERY small crowd of CONSTITUENTS. To his
left, we recognize Marty McKeever, now in her mid-twenties,
all grown up and working as Fitz's sign-language interpreter.

Marty is happy with her station in life... just happy enough.

We see a banner behind Fitz reading "Los Angeles Association
for Avocado Advocacy."

To his right is PEDRO (52), an avocado farmer who looks like
he just took a break from work to be here.

Fitz holds up an avocado as Hamlet would Yorick's skull.

JACOB FITZ

The avocado. Treasured by the native people of Latin America for 1,800 years, this remarkable fruit was once used as a sexual stimulant by the Aztecs.

Awkward discomfort by the listeners. "Did he just say that?"

JACOB FITZ (CONT'D)

In fact, the name itself comes from the Aztec word "ahuacatl" or "testicle."

The onlookers squirm. Marty struggles to do a modest re-interpretation of the inappropriate statement.

JACOB FITZ (CONT'D)

California embraced this delicacy in the early 1900s. Today, this little fruit with a big seed creates jobs, commerce... and guacamole. On behalf of all Los Angelenos, many thanks, or as avocado farmer Pedro here would say, "muchas gracias."

A few PATTERS of applause. The crowd disperses, as do Fitz and company. Pedro is left alone at the podium.

PEDRO

Que?

42

EXT. LOS ANGELES COURTYARD - SAME - MOMENTS LATER

42

Marty follows alongside Fitz, a walk-and-talk.

JACOB FITZ

(hammering gesture)
Ting ting ting! Nailed it.

MARTY

That was very...informative. There's so much I didn't know about avocados.

JACOB FITZ

Faboosh, Marts. Means so much to hear that my speeches move people... AND BONUS, scored Councilwoman Bulcock's digits! (He flashes a scrap of paper. Then, to OFFSCREEN) Barry! Pay up!

Fitz holds out his hand without breaking his gaze with Marty. An aide, BARRY, hands him a \$20 bill.

JACOB FITZ (CONT'D)
 Makin' a difference. It's what I do. (To BARRY) Shouldn't have tried to run with the big dogs! A-ruff ruff!

MARTY
 The way you inspire the community, you could really be Mayor someday.

JACOB FITZ
 Don't say that out loud! No thank you! That speech I just gave? My nephew wrote it. Except for the part about balls. Google.

MARTY
 I still feel like you're meant for greater things. You should find what you love and do it.

JACOB FITZ
 Until then, I'm happy to phone it in. Ya feel me? Sharing produce factoids with the deaf can't be YOUR life-long dream, right?

This hits Marty hard. She never looked at it that way. Jacob notices her reaction.

JACOB FITZ (CONT'D)
 What I mean is, you are an important cog in this machine. There's so much I could say about you now. (Beat, to his handlers) We should head over to the New Chatsworth Galleria. That ribbon's not gonna cut itself. Barry's driving. Let's hit Del Taco first. We have the big scissors in the van, right?

BARRY
 Taking care of it now, sir.

Jacob hustles off, leaving Marty to contemplate.

In the distance, we see AN AIDE (30s) struggling to navigate a LARGE PAIR OF SCISSORS into the back of Jacob's van.

43 EXT. PARK - LATER THAT DAY

43

A sunny day in the City of Angels. We are at a suburban park where families are picnicking, kids are playing.

DAVID SIMPSON sits on a park bench, constantly checking his smartphone. Growing impatient, he tries in vain to enjoy the nice day. He checks his phone again.

MARTY runs up to him, plopping onto the bench.

MARTY
Sorry I'm late. Speech ran long.

DAVID
We said 12:30.

MARTY
I came as soon as I could.

Marty is clearly flustered, upset. David sees this.

DAVID
I'll give ya a pass. Tough day?

MARTY
I can't do this much longer.

DAVID
A municipal job comes with a terrific benefits package.

MARTY
Maybe 10 people watched that silly avocado speech. This is *my life*?

DAVID
You are making a difference. For the hard of hearing. But also for our future together.

A MIME, minding his own business, is performing in the park. He gets a little too close for Marty's comfort. She shifts on the bench uncomfortably.

MARTY
Can we just get lunch?

DAVID
A quick one, yes. C'mon.

Marty lurches forward abruptly, visibly relieved to get away from the mime, who continues pulling an invisible rope. David has to catch up.

44 EXT. PARK - SAME

44

CLOSE-UP behind a pair of shuffling tattered bedroom slippers and black socks walking with purpose.

BOOM UP revealing the back of an equally-tattered, heavily-faded peach bathrobe. We see a large empty coffee can tucked under this person's arm. He approaches David and Marty.

DAVID

Not everyone can be a trailblazer.

It's DONNIE, unshaven, unkempt, and unsober with a dangling cigarette. Tipsy, he bumps shoulders with David.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Watch it, pal. How about using soap next time?

Donnie grumbles and keeps walking. Marty stops in her tracks, shaking off cobwebs. Then, wide-eyed.

MARTY

(under her breath)

Oh my GOD.

DAVID

What?

MARTY

Um... nothing. Just startled.

45 EXT. PARK - SAME

45

Donnie stops, peels the lid off and rests the can on the ground. Pulling down his boxers from under the robe, he sits atop the can and calmly flaps open a newspaper as he proceeds to defecate.

We pull back to reveal... DONNIE IS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PARK. People are aghast, covering children's eyes, frozen in their tracks. Donnie is unfazed. He winks and makes finger-guns at an ATTRACTIVE WOMAN who is stunned as she hustles by.

46 EXT. PARK - SAME

46

Back with David and Marty.

They hear a commotion behind them and turn to see the disgusted crowd.

47 EXT. PARK - SAME 47

TWO POLICEMEN approach Donnie. Their disapproving glares say everything. It takes Donnie a minute to comprehend.

DONNIE
 (to officers)
 Oh. Jeez! No smoking in the park.
 My bad. Thank you for your civil
 service. Dismissed.

He extinguishes the cigarette... and continues to defecate and read the paper. The cops look at one-another in disbelief.

48 EXT. PARK - SAME 48

DAVID
 Let's get out of here.

David takes Marty by the arm. She is frozen for a moment. It can't be. Reluctantly, she shakes it off and goes with David.

49 INT. POLICE STATION - MUGSHOT WALL - DAY 49

Donnie gets his picture taken, struggling to maintain his balance.

DONNIE
 My right to privacy was violated!

OFFICER (O.S.)
 Turn to the right please.

DONNIE
 You're very lucky. To be getting
 this photo op and all.

OFFICER
 I'm sure I am. Turn to the *right*.

He turns. A FLASH.

DONNIE
 People used to pay top dollar for
 pictures of me.

OFFICER (O.S.)
 Of course they did. Turn front.

That stings. Donnie turns, takes a picture.

He turns. A FLASH.

50 INT. MARTY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

50

It's later the same day.

David pours two glasses of wine and heads into the living room. Marty is on the couch. David hands her a glass and grabs the remote. He turns on the TV. The local news is on.

INSERT SHOT - TELEVISION

A NEWSCASTER and CO-ANCHOR launch from weather into the B-roll stories of the day.

NEWSCASTER

In other news, police arrested a transient in McAdams Park today.

DAVID

Tell Fitz to do something about the drug problem in this city. Let's see if "Housewives" is on.

MARTY

Leave it.

INSERT SHOT - DONNIE'S MUG SHOT

Marty sees the picture of Donnie. She takes the remote and turns up the volume. David sits, silently annoyed.

NEWSCASTER

News 10 has exclusive video of this vagrant, who refused to identify himself to police, being arrested after, get this, "defecating" in a coffee can.

CO-ANCHOR

Gives new meaning to "good to the last drop."

NEWSCASTER

This video may be disturbing to our more sensitive viewers.

51 INSERT SHOT - TELEVISION

51

Amateur video from someone's cell phone showing Donnie wriggling as one of the two cops takes him away.

The other has rubber gloves and is pekidly placing the can in a biohazard bag. It escapes his grasp and tumbles to the ground BURSTING OPEN. We hear ONLOOKERS MOANING in the background.

Donnie's mug shot fills the screen again.

52 INT. THE MOLE'S HOLE - BACK ROOM - NIGHT 52

The same broadcast, playing in a darkened back office, over the shoulder of a darkened silhouette. CIGAR SMOKE billows up. It's The Mole... and now he knows where Donnie's been all these years. Nutsy and Trigger are on a couch with their noses in their cell phones.

THE MOLE

I'll be a son of a bitch. (to
Trigger and Nutsy) Find him. NOW.

53 INT. MARTY'S APARTMENT - MARTY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 53

The door to the bathroom is ajar. We can hear David showering.

Marty is rifling through her closet. She finds a box... the same box she packed up ten years ago. She opens it and looks through all of her Donnie Miller paraphernalia.

DAVID

(from the shower)

And if we roll that over, we can
have a nice little nest egg put
aside for when it's time to buy.
Isn't that great? ...Marty?

Marty is distracted by her treasures.

She finds and unfurls the Donnie Miller T-shirt she wore as a child. We PUSH IN on Donnie's face, so young and on top of the world. David comes out wearing a robe and drying off.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Marty? Are you listening to me?

Marty, surprised, shoves the shirt back in the box and the box back in the closet.

MARTY

Huh? Yeah. Great.

DAVID

What are you doing?

MARTY
Just a little organizing.

He kisses her forehead.

DAVID
We'll attack that project this weekend. C'mon. Let's get ready for bed. I have an early morning.

They get into bed and turn off the lights. Marty lies with her back to David, eyes open.

MARTY
(under her breath)
Thunderclap.

DAVID
Marty, I said I have an early morning.

MARTY
Sorry. Goodnight.

David is silent. Marty lies awake.

54 INT. POLICE STATION - JAIL CELL AREA - DAY

54

Donnie sits in his robe and slippers, cooling his heels, keeping to himself.

He's sharing a cell with two other gentlemen, INMATE #1 (60s) and INMATE #2 (50s).

INMATE #1
(to Donnie)
Whatchoo in the cooler for, Ginger?

Donnie keeps to himself. Agitated.

INMATE #2
Guards say Ginger here was straight up poopin' in a coffee can in the middle of a park!

INMATE #1
What?!? What you doin' poopin' in a can? That's just crazy.

DONNIE
I'll show ya crazy...

Donnie gets up to back his words. He is interrupted by a JAIL GUARD...

JAIL GUARD
(to Donnie)
You have a visitor.

Donnie turns to see Marty. He has no idea who she is... but she's attractive and here to see him. Good enough.

INMATE #1
OOOOOHWEEEE! C'mere snowflake!
Gimme a piece of that vanilla-bean
ass.

INMATE #2
No way, that bitch is mine. C'mon
over here, sweet-tittays!

DONNIE
Ignore them. They're morons. Do I
know you???

MARTY
Hi... Donnie. I can't believe this.

DONNIE
My name's not Donnie.

MARTY
Sorry. Mr. Miller, of course--

DONNIE
I don't know any Donnie Miller.
You've got me mixed up with someone
else.

JAIL GUARD
Make it quick, Miller!

Donnie's busted.

MARTY
Donnie Miller. Born March 17th,
1979, to Norman and Audra Miller.
Recruited by the WCF at 17, the
youngest player in the history of
the league. Went undefeated until
your mysterious disappearance
following the Uppsala Championships
in 2004.

Donnie is stunned.

MARTY (CONT'D)

You may be a little rough around the edges, but I'd know you anywhere. I'm your biggest fan. Marty McKeever. Such an honor to finally meet...

DONNIE

(interrupting)

Now... I get it.

Marty is confused.

DONNIE (CONT'D)

You may have seen the news, but don't worry, they hosed me down when I came in. Clean as a whistle. (Whistles)

MARTY

Wait--

DONNIE

Not sure if they have conjugal rooms here, but if you bail me out, we could fuck around in your car.

MARTY

I am not having sex with you in my car!

DONNIE

So we'll get a cab. Spot me cab fare?

MARTY

You are seriously misunderstanding.

DONNIE

Ohhhh. (Beat) In that case, 8x10 glossies'll run you \$35. You provide the glossies and the Sharpie. Cash only.

MARTY

I am not here for sex or an autograph. I have a proposition.

DONNIE

A what position?

MARTY

I saw what happened in Sweden.

Donnie's face drops. He turns instantly cold and moves away from Marty.

MARTY (CONT'D)

I was watching when she... it was awful what Cassandra did to you.

DONNIE

I don't need your sympathy. I need you to leave. GUARD!!!

MARTY

Donnie. It's time for you to make a comeback! The sport needs you.

DONNIE

Nobody needs me. I got nothing.

MARTY

(a deep breath)
You have a *partner*.

A beat. Donnie looks puzzled, then it dawns on him what she is suggesting. He starts laughing, almost uncontrollably.

DONNIE

Go find a pigeon with a broken wing or a lost dog or something. Just get me out of here.

MARTY

Not until you agree to be my partner.

DONNIE

Even if I was gonna stage a comeback, which I'm *not*, what makes you think I'm gonna do it with you?

MARTY

California Penal Code 148b1.
Chapter 14.17. Section 344.

DONNIE

Huh?

MARTY

Public defecation is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of \$1,000 and/or six months in jail. Resisting arrest is also a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of \$1,000 and/or 1 year in jail.

(MORE)

MARTY (CONT'D)
 I'm betting you do not have \$2,000.
 I do. See where I am going with
 this?

He does. She has a point.

INMATE #2 (O.S.)
 I see where you are goin' with it,
 baby!

Marty gives him a wry, "checkmate" look.

55

INT. TRIGGER AND NUTSY'S CAR - SAME

55

Trigger and Nutsy sit in front of the police station, waiting for Donnie to emerge. Nutsy sits behind the wheel, while Trigger is absolutely making love to some very sloppy take out. With each SLURP, Nutsy grows visibly more irritated. Trigger begins loudly SUCKING the grease off his fingers. Trigger dives in for another monumental bite. Nutsy turns and stares at him in disgust.

TRIGGER
 (mouth full) What?

NUTSY
 Have a *little* dignity, would you?

TRIGGER
 Want some?

Nutsy is grossed out and turns back to the police station.

TRIGGER (CONT'D)
 I'm hypoglycemic.

NUTSY
 You're disgusting.

TRIGGER
 Your judgement is hurtful, you
 know.

Nutsy scoffs.

TRIGGER (CONT'D)
 Fine. I know *somebody* who won't be
 getting any of my shake.

In the distance, Donnie and Marty exit the police station.

NUTSY
 It's him.

56 EXT. POLICE STATION - SAME

56

Donnie and Marty in front of the police station.

MARTY

So, here's what I was thinking...

DONNIE

Does any part of this thinking
involve sex?

MARTY

No. It does not.

Donnie walks away.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Hey! We're partners. You promised!

DONNIE

(laughing)

I sure did. Thanks for springing
me.

MARTY

You owe me two thousand dollars!

DONNIE

(Over his shoulder,
walking away)

Get in line. I'm retired.

Marty disappointedly watches her former hero scuffle off
without looking back.

57 INT. TRIGGER AND NUTSY'S CAR - SAME

57

Trigger and Nutsy, running surveillance from across the
street, watch Donnie walk away. Nutsy starts the engine.

NUTSY

Let's go.

Trigger offers his shake.

TRIGGER

Ok, a teensy sip.

Nutsy ignores him and pulls away.

58 INT. DONNIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

58

A low-rent, single apartment in Los Angeles.

Donnie enters through his creaking door. Makeshift curtains blackout the windows. Trash, laundry, alcohol bottles and takeout boxes litter the room. On a table, mail and papers stamped "FINAL NOTICE" and "PAST DUE."

He CLICKS the light switch. Doesn't work, the bill hasn't been paid. He pulls the curtains apart to bring in some natural light, tripping through debris as he goes.

He brushes more trash off of his couch and plops down wearily with a glimmer of regret in how he treated Marty.

59 INT. MARTY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

59

The kitchen is abuzz with cooking activity. David is putting together the perfect dinner, a flurry of stirring and chopping. Marty enters the apartment, worn from the disappointing day.

MARTY

David--

DAVID

I let myself in. Get ready for the meal of your lifetime. Striped bass with a hint of lemon and mint, saffron rice and oven-roasted brussel sprouts. Here. Taste.

He spoon-feeds her a taste of the rice.

MARTY

(deflated)

Mmm... great.

DAVID

Or I could heat up some Hot Pockets.

MARTY

Sorry. Long day.

DAVID

What is it? Talk to me.

MARTY

(a beat)

Remember the guy in the park yesterday?

DAVID
Wha-- The pooping hobo?

MARTY
His name is Donnie Miller.

DAVID
You know him?!?

MARTY
He used to be the greatest professional charades player in the world.

DAVID
I'm sorry... I thought you said the greatest *professional charades* player in the world.

MARTY
It's a real thing. As a child, I dreamed of going pro myself. And Donnie Miller was my idol.

DAVID
This is the first time you've ever mentioned this.

MARTY
(blurting)
Well... I couldn't stand to see him like that, so... I bailed him out of jail.

DAVID
You what?!? How much?

MARTY
\$2,000.

DAVID
You spent two grand bailing out a homeless guy who shits in coffee cans?!?

MARTY
OK, when you put it like that, it sounds really bad...

DAVID
He's a deadbeat!

MARTY
Even more reason to help him out!

David sees that this argument is only going to get worse. He chooses to move on.

DAVID

It's fine... FINE. I guess your heart was in the right place. This dinner was supposed to be a celebration.

MARTY

A celebration?

DAVID

Looks like that promotion at work might come through. I'd be second only to Mr. Maloney and in line to take over when he retires.

MARTY

Oh, David, that's so wonderful!!!
(Beat) I should have talked to you first. I'm so sorry. You're right. We're in this together.

Marty reaches out to David and gives him a hug. David relaxes a touch. They share a moment. Then, earnestly...

DAVID

Listen, you have to leave this charades thing alone, OK? If Mr. Maloney gets wind of that nonsense, I'll be passed over in a heartbeat.

MARTY

It's not nonsense! Charades is the sport of kings.

DAVID

That's horse racing.

MARTY

Donnie was a hero and an inspiration to me!

DAVID

Hero? He took your money, he's back on the street. You helped him and he couldn't care less, am I right?

He has a point...

DAVID (CONT'D)

WE have a big future together.
Please. Forget about Donnie Miller.

Marty has no response. She cannot decide if he's right or if she is hurt by his words. He goes back to cooking.

Marty loses this battle. She sits at the set dining room table, takes a tall glass of pinot grigio, and swallows it down in one gulp. Sigh.

60 INT. MARTY'S APARTMENT - LIVING AREA - NIGHT 60

It's later in the evening. Marty is rummaging through the box of memorabilia. David is out cold on the couch. The TV is on.

She comes upon a monstrosity of a worn SCRAPBOOK with the name DONNIE MILLER emblazoned on the cover.

Marty starts thumbing through the book, smiling at the swell of memories. There are pictures of her in her youth, in various charades uniforms. We see articles, newspaper blurbs, and photos of Donnie throughout his career.

Marty closes the book, puts it back in the box and ponders her next move.

61 INT. HEI YA'S CHINESE RESTAURANT - BACK ENTRANCE - NIGHT 61

A Chinese restaurant in downtown Los Angeles.

Donnie enters, looking like he's trying to avoid detection. He slinks by an open office door. In it sits PRAKASH KHAN (40s, Indian descent), bookish and calm, studiously poring over his laptop. Donnie thinks he's made it scot-free. Prakash never looks up.

PRAKASH

Miller!

Busted.

DONNIE

Prakash, I know I'm late again. I'm sorry. My cat Stugots is sick and--

PRAKASH

Cats, they are like our children. Their pain is our pain. We feel for them, like family. Still, you must be overjoyed that he's so ill.

DONNIE

Huh?

PRAKASH

Two weeks ago you were late because your cat died. It's a miracle. Such blessings.

Busted again.

PRAKASH (CONT'D)

I am not without sympathy. I know from the news that you were indeed in jail last week. Dr. Phil says that actions like these are simply cries for help. Are you crying for help?

DONNIE

Just trying to make a living.

PRAKASH

Dr. Phil says that talking about your problems is sometimes the most important thing you can do. Please. I want you to know you can talk to me. This is a safe space.

DONNIE

Thanks Prakash.

PRAKASH

You are very welcome. And, Donnie?

DONNIE

Yes?

PRAKASH

If you are late again, I will crush your genitals in the trash compactor.

Donnie winces.

DONNIE

Did Dr. Phil say that?

62

INT. HEI YA'S CHINESE RESTAURANT - SINK AREA - NIGHT

62

Donnie puts on his hair net and dives into the dirty dishes. He is miserable, but it pays the bills.

Donnie approaches his apartment door, still wearing his work clothes and hairnet. He sees it's ajar. Pausing for a moment, he slowly opens the door. It's pitch black. Suddenly he is PULLED into the apartment by an unseen hand! He is slammed against the wall. He tries to wriggle free, but he is pinned.

SNICKT! A cigarette lighter illuminates The Mole. He steps into the shaft of light from the open door, silhouetted, puffing a cigar.

THE MOLE

You're a hard person to find, kid.

DONNIE

Mr. Molanski. I-I-I-

THE MOLE

You look like shit.

DONNIE

(still pinned)

Hey, have you lost weight?

THE MOLE

Always a bullshit artist.

He tosses the lighter to Donnie.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)

I think this belongs to you.

It's Donnie's lighter! He's speechless.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)

Saw you on the news. Feel good to be in the limelight again?

DONNIE

Well, you know what they say, any press is good press, right?

The Mole glances at Trigger, who tightens the grip on Donnie's neck, cinching his windpipe. Donnie is cut off. The Mole approaches Donnie. Trigger relaxes his grip.

THE MOLE

I am not a patient man. And waiting ten years to get paid tries my patience. \$50K... with interest... that's \$100,000.

DONNIE

Mr. Molanski, c'mon, where am I
supposed to get that kind of money?

THE MOLE

Not my problem. Get it. Soon.

He grabs a large bottle of cheap vodka from Donnie's kitchen counter and hurls it into the kitchen sink. It SHATTERS! He flicks his cigar in after it. Suddenly the sink BURSTS INTO FLAMES! The goons release Donnie on The Mole's signal and everyone exits. He rushes to the sink and turns on the water. The pipes knock and bang as water struggles to come from the faucet. Nothing.

DONNIE

C'mon! C'mon!

He grabs an extinguisher and puts the fire out. Stillness. He slinks down against the refrigerator door, holding his head.

FADE OUT.

We hear a LOUD, INTERMITTENT BUZZER.

FADE UP FROM BLACK.

64 INT. DONNIE'S APARTMENT - NEXT MORNING.

64

An apartment BUZZER rings.

Sleeping on the floor next to his couch is Donnie, in his underwear, still wearing his hairnet. An empty bottle of vodka is among the clutter. He slowly comes to life.

DONNIE

WHAT!?!?

Another BUZZ.

DONNIE (CONT'D)

NO MENUS! NO QUIERO CARTAS! (beat)
Alright! Alright! ALRIGHT!

He pulls off the hairnet, grabs a pair of pants from a pile, smells them and puts them on. He passes an old pizza box, considers it, and grabs a piece. Eating, he opens the door...

65 EXT. DONNIE'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

65

Donnie squints at the sunlight. It's Marty.

DONNIE

For someone who doesn't want to get me in the sack, you sure stalk with the best of 'em.

MARTY

What happened to your face?

DONNIE

(taking a bite of pizza)
Nothin'.

MARTY

About your comeback--

DONNIE

There's no comeback. I'm done slingin' signs.

He moves to shut the door. She blocks with her foot.

MARTY

You have a gift. Watching you play is like watching Rembrandt paint, or Hendrix play guitar, or Carrot Top with a trunk of props. Everyone has bad luck. But we don't all have what YOU have.

He goes to shut the door again.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Wait! There's a big event in a few weeks in downtown Los Angeles. You can't be happy living like this!

Donnie looks back at his squalor and then back at Marty with a "it's good enough for me" shrug.

MARTY (CONT'D)

We can train and we can win. The game needs you. Please.

DONNIE

Good luck.

He shuts the door. Marty is disappointed, but not dissuaded.

A high-end office building for Maloneycorp, a leading hedge-fund.

David is sitting at his desk, arduously pecking away at his computer. On his desk are the stereotypical clacking silver balls. A blemish catches his eye. He grabs a small cloth and meticulously cleans them like they're the royal jewels.

Unnoticed, his boss, MR. MALONEY (late 40s) is standing in his doorway admiring his work ethic.

MR. MALONEY

Glad to see you tending to your balls.

DAVID

Huh? I was just--

MR. MALONEY

I rub mine at least once a day.

Awkward.

MR. MALONEY (CONT'D)

Attention to detail. Organization. No nonsense. The mark of a Maloneycorp man.

DAVID

I was just finishing the cost analyses.

MR. MALONEY

Work ethic is important, but you have to stop and smell the roses. We need you around here, son.

David smiles. "Son." Maloney nods to a framed photo of a smiling David and Marty.

MR. MALONEY (CONT'D)

How is the little lady?

DAVID

Oh, she's fine, thank you.

MR. MALONEY

What's her name again?

DAVID

Marty.

MR. MALONEY

These are strange times, huh? Girls with guys names, wearing pants, getting jobs. But don't pay any attention to this old man. Listen.

(MORE)

MR. MALONEY (CONT'D)
 Millie's fixin' to do some
 entertaining on Saturday night.
 We'd like you to join us.

DAVID
 I'm honored, sir. We'll be there.

MR. MALONEY
 It is so nice to see two young
 people building a life based on
 solid, old-fashioned American
 traditions. Gives me hope.

David glances at the photo, worried that she'll never be the woman he wants her to be.

67 INT. LOS ANGELES GOVERNMENT OFFICES - JACOB FITZ'S OFFICE -67
 DAY

A typical government office in downtown Los Angeles.

Jacob is packing up his office. Marty enters, shocked.

MARTY
 You wanted to see me... what's
 happening?!?

JACOB FITZ
 LIFE is happening! You're talking
 to the *former* Assistant Deputy
 Mayor.

Marty looks on, stunned and confused. Jacob approaches her, bursting with enthusiasm.

MARTY
 You're resigning?

JACOB FITZ
 Don't worry. It's not the thing
 with the orphans. Dodged a bullet
 on that one, didn't we Barry?

Barry lets out a SOB from the corner.

JACOB FITZ (CONT'D)
 Poor Barry's been crying for an
 hour now. He's such a Nancy.

Marty's head is spinning.

JACOB FITZ (CONT'D)

I got the call. I'm shaking off the dust of this safe, easy life and I'm headed to D.C.

MARTY

Washington?

JACOB FITZ

I'm going to be a lobbyist for BIG TOBACCO. Flavor country, here I come!

MARTY

Oh.

JACOB FITZ

Exotic junkets, wining and dining. Not to mention all the free smokes I could want.

MARTY

But you don't smoke.

JACOB FITZ

Never too late to start! Point is, you were right. Do what you love and do it before it's too late.

Even though Jacob's pursuits are twisted, this resonates with Marty.

MARTY

Good luck, I guess.

Jacob gives her a huge, awkwardly long hug. Marty rolls with it. Jacob releases and grabs a large box of things and hands it to Marty.

MARTY (CONT'D)

What's this? Hey, this is my stuff!

JACOB FITZ

By the way, you're fired. Had to let the whole team go. On your way out, can you grab some of my stuff too? I don't want my herniated disk to see its shadow!

Marty, stunned, finds herself at a crossroads. Fitz leaves.

JACOB FITZ (CONT'D)
 Oh, and tell me your brand. I'll
 send you a few dozen cartons. (to
 the room) Smoke 'em if you got 'em!

68 INT. HEI YA'S CHINESE RESTAURANT - SINK AREA - DAY 68

Service people and wait-staff are rushing through. Amidst the chaos is Donnie in a hair net, washing dishes.

The dishes pile higher. Donnie struggles to keep up. He looks up. It's Marty, standing in the doorway. Marty locks eyes with him, not speaking and determined. She steps back, giving herself room. Suddenly, she makes air quotes. She holds up seven fingers and executes a quick, elaborate charade. He watches, speechless and impressed by her abilities.

DONNIE
 Whoa.

She's a natural-- a genius, even. She finishes and looks at Donnie expectantly.

DONNIE (CONT'D)
 "Revenge is a dish best served...

MARTY DONNIE
 Cold." Cold."

Donnie takes a long hard look at the dirty dishes, the chaos.

DONNIE (CONT'D)
 It won't be easy. I dunno...

MARTY
 There's a cash prize of \$50,000.

DONNIE
 (abruptly)
 I'm in!

Marty is elated. She shrieks for joy and gives Donnie a big hug, almost knocking him down.

MARTY
 When are you done with your shift?

DONNIE
 Right now!

Donnie pushes over a pile of dirty dishes. They land with a CRASH!

DONNIE (CONT'D)
Donnie Miller is back! THUNDERCLAP!

Prakash appears and starts screaming at Donnie.

PRAKASH
What are you doing, you crazy
bastard?!?

Donnie grabs Marty and they bolt from the restaurant.

69 EXT. PARK - MORNING - THE NEXT DAY

69

Donnie and Marty are in workout gear. It's time to train.

MARTY
We're gonna start easy with a nice
little jog.

DONNIE
We're not running unless someone is
chasing us.

Donnie lights a cigarette. Marty snatches it from his mouth.

MARTY
You've been pickling and poisoning
your innards for the last ten
years, and you have to be show-
ready in less than six weeks. Yes.
We're running.

Marty takes off.

MARTY (CONT'D)
It's only three miles.

DONNIE
In a row?!?

Donnie unenthusiastically follows.

70 EXT. PARK - LATER THAT DAY

70

Donnie lags behind Marty, heaving to catch his breath as Marty encourages him and runs in place. Not taking no for an answer, she needles him until they jog again. He buckles and BARFS on the side of the road.

71 EXT. SMOOTHIE BAR - DAY 71

Donnie takes out a cigarette as Marty exits the Smoothie bar. She takes the cigarette and throws it down, handing Donnie a plastic cup of green sludge. He chokes it down as Marty looks on in support. He gags and THROWS it all over the window of the establishment. Patrons inside recoil in horror.

72 EXT. PARK - DAY 72

Marty is holding Donnie's feet while he does sit-ups. When he rises to the seated position, Marty shouts a word to him. He has to sign it and do another sit-up.

73 INT. LIBRARY - DAY 73

A typical library in Los Angeles. Donnie and Marty stand next to a door marked "Reading Room."

MARTY

You've been away from the game a long time. We need an edge. One word. Research. The difference between prize money and a pat on the back is a matter of seconds.

DONNIE

Whatever, Poindexter. Did you even go to prom???

MARTY

Annabelle Günz was a nobody for years. She had form and style, but she couldn't break through. You know what made her a champion?

DONNIE

Lemme guess... Research?

MARTY

She read books, watched movies, she even studied the entire Encyclopedia Britannica set cover to cover.

DONNIE

Of course she did, have you ever seen her? She had a hare lip.

MARTY

She was unstoppable. She knew every
single clue. Her partner could
barely keep up.

She has a point. They enter the reading room.

74

INT. LIBRARY - READING ROOM - DAY

74

The room is populated with a handful of other people. A STERN LIBRARIAN looks on. Donnie sits at the table looking uncomfortable, but trying to blend. Marty comes over with a stack of books. They slam on the table and kick up a small cloud of dust.

MARTY

(handing him a book)
Start with this.

DONNIE

Which part.

MARTY

All of it.

DONNIE

Are you kidding?!?

LIBRARIAN (O.S.)

(hushed tones)
Quiet please!

The Librarian glares in their direction. Donnie opens the book like a petulant kid. Some time passes. Then, suddenly...

DONNIE

(whispering)
Charades is about skill. Gut
instinct. You can waste your time
on this bullshit. I'm outta here.

MARTY

If you leave now, I quit.

The librarian approaches, looking to settle the nonsense.

LIBRARIAN

What, may I ask, is the problem
here?

DONNIE
 (charading, subtitled)
 "You got in trouble." (Out loud) No
 problem at all.

LIBRARIAN
 If you do not respect the sanctity
 of our space I will have to ask you
 to leave.

MARTY
 (charading, subtitled)
 "Asshole." (Out loud) We're very
 sorry.

Marty sits and defiantly reads a book. Donnie turns and sits
 across from her. After a moment...

DONNIE
 (whispering)
 Marty.

She ignores him.

DONNIE (CONT'D)
 (whispering louder)
 Marty!

Again, she ignores him.

DONNIE (CONT'D)
 (Cautiously, through gritted teeth)
 MARTY!

She looks up. The librarian looks in their direction again.

MARTY
 (charading, subtitled)
 Am I wasting my time?

DONNIE
 (charading, subtitled)
 No. I'll work harder. Promise.

A STUDENT looks up and watches the spectacle of Donnie and
 Marty. He can't figure out what is going on.

DONNIE (CONT'D)
 (charading, subtitled)
 You offered me help when everyone
 else abandoned me. (Beat.
 Whispering.) I'm sorry. Really.

Marty considers.

DONNIE (CONT'D)
 (charading, subtitled)
 Is sleeping together still off the
 table?

MARTY
 (charading, subtitled)
 It was never on the table.

DONNIE
 (charading, subtitled)
 We could do it ON the table.

MARTY
 (speaking, loudly)
 I'm not having sex with you!!!

A chorus of "SHHHH!" Donnie gives Marty a look. She's been played! Donnie smiles victoriously.

75 INT. DONNIE'S APARTMENT - DAY 75

The door opens and Donnie and Marty stand in the doorway surveying the chaos that is Donnie's apartment. Marty approaches a pile of laundry, taking Donnie by the wrist. She scoops up and neatly folds the laundry and places it on a table, then looks at him as if to say "See? Easy."

Donnie looks at Marty differently. He sees something special in her. It's attractive.

76 EXT. PARK - DAY 76

Donnie and Marty jog together. Donnie's form has really improved and he keeps up effortlessly.

77 EXT. CLIFF - DAY 77

Donnie and Marty on top of a summit, views of Los Angeles below them. They do an elaborate movement sequence. They are in almost perfect sync as the sun sinks into the horizon.

78 EXT. CLIFF - DUSK - LATER 78

Donnie towels off, grabs some water. Marty sits on a rock and looks peacefully over the valley. Donnie approaches her, handing her a water bottle.

MARTY

You're working your tail off. I'm impressed.

DONNIE

Eye of the tiger and all that.

She regards him for a moment.

MARTY

I need to ask you a question. During all this training, you haven't thrown any "sounds like" clues.

DONNIE

That's not a question.

MARTY

Don. I'm serious. You know you can't play without them, yet you avoid them at all costs. Because of Uppsala?

He considers.

79 INT UPPSALA WAREHOUSE - TEN YEARS AGO.

79

FLASHBACK to the moment of the defeat. The crowd ECHOES and the images are blurry. In slow motion we see Donnie mouth "Candy Lock."

DONNIE (V.O.)

That moment is burnt into my brain. I've replayed it a thousand times. Cassandra set me up. I choked that night.

80 EXT. CLIFF - PRESENT DAY

80

DONNIE

I haven't been able to rhyme since.

MARTY

You'll get it back. It's just fear getting in your way.

DONNIE

I don't know.

MARTY

I wouldn't be here if I didn't believe it.

DONNIE

Thank you, Marty. Your faith in me means so much. I thought I'd never compete again.

MARTY

I know the feeling.

DONNIE

How'd you get into the game, anyway? You're a natural.

MARTY

My Dad. He was shooting when I called my first clue. "John Quincy Adams." I was four.

DONNIE

How the hell did you even know who that was?

MARTY

I didn't. The clue just spoke to me. I know it sounds nuts.

DONNIE

Not at all. My father got me into the game, too. He was the best traffic cop in the LAPD. Taught me everything he knew.

Donnie demonstrates some of the hand signals.

DONNIE (CONT'D)

He was so excited for me to follow in his footsteps. But my passion was charades. He was crushed.

MARTY

My father always encouraged me. He used to bring me here when I was a kid. We'd watch for shooting stars and make wishes. Of course, I always made the same wish: to compete in the WCF.

They share a moment.

MARTY (CONT'D)
I still can't believe I'm your partner. You were my hero.

DONNIE
(changing the subject)
Tell me about your boyfriend.

MARTY
David. He's a hedge-fund manager.

DONNIE
The high-rolling banker and the rising sports star? Sounds like you're really livin' the dream.

MARTY
Sure.

DONNIE
That's a ringing endorsement.

MARTY
David's wonderful, he just doesn't get charades. He thinks it's childish.

DONNIE
I've always felt like the people who really love us should encourage us to embrace our gifts.

MARTY
(struck)
Yeah.

For just a moment, they look at each other differently. Marty snaps out of it.

MARTY (CONT'D)
It's getting dark. C'mon.

Donnie gathers his things. Marty regards Donnie for a moment, then follows.

81 EXT. DONNIE'S APARTMENT

81

Marty pulls up in front of Donnie's apartment. Donnie gathers his things and exits the car.

MARTY
Goodnight. See you tomorrow.

DONNIE
Night. And thanks again. Really.

Marty smiles, touched, and pulls away. TWO HONKS.

Donnie approaches his door. He pulls out his keys, raises his head, and is face-to-face with a photo. It's a surveillance-style close-up of him and Marty training. The photo is held to the door by a knife through Marty's head. Scrawled across the photo are the words "Pay up."

82 INT. MARTY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

82

Marty enters briskly. David is waiting on the couch.

MARTY
Sorry I am late! The yoga instructor kept us way later than I expected.

DAVID
I tried to wait for you but I was famished. Sorry.

MARTY
Not a problem.

She gives him a peck on the cheek.

MARTY (CONT'D)
I'm gonna go freshen up.

INT MARTY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

Marty enters and closes the door behind her. She quietly celebrates to herself, with tears of joy welling up.

83 INT. DONNIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - THE NEXT NIGHT

83

Donnie sits on the edge of his bed, anxious, holding the photo from the door. A CAR HORN BLARES, two short bursts.

HORN again, one long burst. After a beat, his cell phone RINGS. It's Marty. He goes over to the window and pulls the shade. We can see her car from the window. He answers.

MARTY (O.S.)
We're gonna be late. What gives?

DONNIE

Look, Marty. I'm damaged goods. I don't want anything to happen to you.

MARTY

What are you talking about?!?

DONNIE

There's too much at stake--

She steps out of her car and throws a simple sign. "I believe in you." (Subtitled) Donnie smiles. Marty turns to go.

DONNIE (CONT'D)

Wait. I have to tell you--

MARTY

No time. C'mon. Let's go.

84

EXT. MOLE'S HOLE BAR ENTRANCE - NIGHT

84

A kinda dive-y, kinda biker bar in Victorville, California.

Marty's car pulls up. Donnie bursts out of the passenger side. Marty chases.

DONNIE

(elongated)

Frame. (Beat) The Queen.

MARTY

It doesn't rhyme.

DONNIE

"Time Machine." "FRAME THE QUEEN."
It rhymes. It *rhymes*. Doesn't it?

MARTY

You're psyching yourself out.
Breathe. We got this.

They approach the entrance.

DONNIE

The Qualifier is *here*? Let me see the flyer.

She hands it to him.

MARTY

What?

DONNIE

I was just expecting an arena or a warehouse or *something*. It's so... *small*.

They enter.

85

INT. MOLE'S HOLE BAR - NIGHT

85

Donnie and Marty enter. It's busy and loud, with a clientele that looks like a mash-up of a Hell's Angel biker and a figure skater. A pre-show warm-up rock band, PANTHERMIME plays on the performance stage. They are rocking HARD.

As they walk through, they pass Trigger and Nutsy sitting at a table with some mob-types. Donnie and Trigger make eye contact. Marty doesn't notice.

Pictures and trophies line the once prestigious walls. Marty is wide-eyed, like a kid in a candy store.

There's a long series of pictures, all featuring Cassandra and Vince in a similar pose. Each picture has a place, starting with UPPSALA, BEIJING, PARIS, ISTANBUL... then less exotic as time passes... BROOKLYN, ST. LOUIS, NUTLEY (New Jersey).

Standing at the end of the line of pictures, emulating their pose are the flesh-and-blood Cassandra and Vince. Donnie and Marty are startled.

CASSANDRA

Didn't think you'd have the balls to show up at one of these again.

DONNIE

Hello, Cass. (Before Vince can correct him) Andra. (to Marty) We should register.

CASSANDRA

(to Marty)

Wait a second, are you and "Dr. Seuss" here to compete? You know why we call him "Dr. Seuss," don't ya? HE CAN'T RHYME. He could not, would not in a box, he could not, would not with a fox.

Some of the immediate sycophantic crowd around them laughs.

MARTY

Uppsala is ancient history.

CASSANDRA
History has been known to repeat
itself.

Donnie goes nose to nose with Cassandra but thinks better of
it and says nothing. He takes Marty by the arm and starts to
walk away.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
Cat got your tongue? Or maybe
you're practicing for Venice Beach.

Donnie stops in his tracks, fuming. MURMURS from the crowd.

DONNIE
(turning)
Don't.

CASSANDRA
What? You don't want your little
friend to know about your time
walking against the wind?

MARTY
What is she talking about?

DONNIE
Nothing. Ignore her--

CASSANDRA
After I crushed him... Donnie was
forced to become one of the most
detestable bottom-feeding scum the
world has ever known.

MARTY
Not...

CASSANDRA
That's right, blondie... ol'
Thunderclap here became a street
mime.

The crowd GASPS. One person stifles a gag.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
Cross me again I'll send you right
back to that invisible box.

MARTY
(quietly)
A mime?!?!

DONNIE
I needed the work. Let's go
register.

Marty is unsure.

DONNIE (CONT'D)
I should have told you. Those days
are behind me. I swear.

Vince and Cassandra snort with laughter. Donnie glares at them, putting his arm around Marty and steering her towards registration. As they exit...

MARTY
I HATE mimes.

They approach a table and sign in. They return clipboards to the REGISTRATION ATTENDANT (35). The Mole appears behind them, catching them both off-guard.

THE MOLE
You have something for me?

DONNIE
I'm working on it.

THE MOLE
(close to Donnie)
You show up at a person's home,
it's customary to bring a gift.

He blows smoke in Donnie's face.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)
Work a little harder.

The Mole notices Marty.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)
Don't be rude, Don...

DONNIE
Marty McKeever, this is--

MARTY
(with enthusiasm)
Rudolph "The Mole" Molanski... the
pleasure's all mine.

THE MOLE
What's a nice kid like you doing
with a train wreck like this?

DONNIE
We're here to compete.

MOLE
No shit?!?

MARTY
That's right.

THE MOLE
(to Marty)
You have some brass balls, kid.
Cassandra and Vince are ruthless
competitors.

DONNIE
We'll be fine.

THE MOLE
You better be. 50-Gs only covers
the principal, not the interest.

The Mole walks away.

MARTY
What did that mean?

DONNIE
Nothing. Let's go.

86 INT. THE MOLE'S HOLE - STAGING AREA - NIGHT

86

There's an elevated stage with a bracketed chalkboard at the back. A pedestal with a clue box sits center stage. The event is about to begin.

THE MOLE takes the stage under spotlight. He takes the mic.

THE MOLE
Those of you that know me know that
my granddaddy started this sport.

He raises a shotglass.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)
Salud, "Big Lou!"

He throws back the shot, the crowd cheers.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)
He did it with nothin' but his
passion;
(MORE)

THE MOLE (CONT'D)

the simple love of silently making people guess clues on little pieces of paper. They said it would never catch on, but look what we have here! Five teams, one seat left for the big show in Los Angeles! You know the drill. 60 seconds on the clock and as many clues as you can guess. Good luck everyone!

87

INT. THE MOLE'S HOLE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

87

Marty and Donnie are getting ready. Marty is going over last-minute game strategy. Suddenly Donnie stops, hearing a voice from the past. Across the room, Tim Devereaux talks the ears off of a group of nonplussed stage hands.

TIM

...suddenly the room changed. Everything seemed to get quiet. Slow. The lights surged. Even the breeze in the room blew a little softer.

DONNIE

(under his breath)
I don't believe it.

MARTY

What?

Donnie turns to see Tim Devereaux. He has a walker and an oxygen mask. Donnie is aghast, but tries to cover it up.

TIM

So... don't let anyone tell you the Sweet Spot is a fairy tale. Tell 'em you heard straight from the Dynamo. Hey Miller!

DONNIE

Surprised to see you here, Dynamo.

TIM

(coughing)
You look good kid.

DONNIE

You... too.

TIM

Thanks.

Marty clears her throat.

DONNIE
Sorry. Marty McKeever--

MARTY
Mr. Devereaux... it's an honor!

TIM
Call me Dynamo.

Tim has a sudden, disturbing coughing fit ending in an impossible-to-ignore moment of phlegm. An awkward silence...

DONNIE
How ya been?

TIM
Never better. They said I was done, but I'm gonna make 'em eat their words. The Dynamo is back, baby!

DONNIE
It's good to see some things never change.

A beat.

DONNIE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry for not helping you back in Sweden. You know, with The Mole.

TIM
No problem! I should thank you. I bet on Cassandra and killed. Paid it off that night!

Ouch.

TIM (CONT'D)
What are you doing here?

MARTY
He's competing.

TIM
Competing?!? Here? Tonight?

DONNIE
Something like that...

TIM
 Sorry to shit on your strudel, but
 I'm gonna clean house tonight.
 All's fair, ya know...

Tim's partner, PATRICIA BISHOP (40s) approaches.

PATRICIA
 Tim, we're on.

TIM
 See ya on the battlefield, soldier.

Tim slowly ambles off. Donnie is uneasy.

88 INT. THE MOLE'S HOLE - STAGING AREA

88

The Mole is announcing from just offstage.

THE MOLE
 First up, Devereaux and Bishop!

The stage remains empty. Mic feedback.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)
 Devereaux and Bishop.

The stage is still empty... suddenly from off-stage is Tim, walking SLOWLY to center stage. The SQUEAK from the wheels of his walker and oxygen tank punctuate the awkward silence. Patricia follows.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)
 You two ready?

TIM
 I'm sorry, wha?

PATRICIA
 He's asking if you are ready.

TIM
 Wha?

THE MOLE
 Oh boy. Good luck you two! Get
 readdddy... SHOOT!

Tim pulls a clue. It takes him FOR-EVER to unfold it. He DROPS it and has to pick it up. There's an audible GROAN from the audience. He starts gesticulating. Patricia desperately guesses.

PATRICIA
 Starfish? Monsoon? Tandoori Oven? I
 don't know!

Tim stops, takes a hit of his oxygen tank, looks to the audience. He throws the clues down and SLOWLY wheels off stage, Patricia in tow.

89 INT. THE MOLE'S HOLE - BACKSTAGE 89

Tim wheels past Donnie... Donnie is stunned as Tim leaves.

MARTY
 C'mon, Donnie. Stay sharp.

DONNIE
 Right. Sharp. Got it.

90 INT. THE MOLE'S HOLE - STAGING AREA - NIGHT 90

SERIES OF SHOTS.

The next team, VASQUEZ and NANDO, on-stage. They score a respectable ELEVEN.

INSERT SHOT - Scoreboard reading the teams' names, we see an ELEVEN marked next to Vasquez and Nando. Beneath that we see Devereaux and Bishop with a ZERO.

The third team, HYUNG and CHASE, on-stage. They score a 21! They are THE team to beat!

INSERT SHOT - Scoreboard marking Hyung and Chase's score.

The fourth team, LEWIS and DORCHESTER, hit the stage. They score a FOURTEEN. They are out of the race.

INSERT SHOT - Scoreboard marking Lewis and Dorchester's score.

END SERIES.

91 INT. THE MOLE'S HOLE - BACKSTAGE 91

Donnie is flicking his lucky lighter open and closed, eyeing the scoreboard. Donnie notices Cassandra and Vince, front-seat spectators. Clearly a psyche-out. Marty notices too.

MARTY
 Just focus on me out there.

DONNIE

Okay.

92

INT. THE MOLE'S HOLE - STAGING AREA - NIGHT

92

THE MOLE

Quite an evening of gladiators!
Topping it off with the humble
return of the prodigal son! Donnie
Miller! And newcomer Marty
McKeever!

The crowd cheers, excited to see Donnie back. Donnie and Marty take the stage.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)

Alright you two. Good luck. You
gotta hit a 22 to get into the L.A.
Event. 60 seconds on the clock...

Marty looks at Donnie reassuringly. Donnie makes eye contact with Cassandra, who looks as if she is sizing up her next meal.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)

Get readdddy... SHOOT!

Donnie is shooting, Marty is calling. The first few clues land quick... looking good.

MARTY

Seashells! Bleeding heart liberals!
Scientific calculator!

The points are racking up... 14, 15, 16. The timer is at 30 seconds. Donnie pulls a slip, feeling brave, tries a "sounds like."

MARTY (CONT'D)

Sounds like rutabaga? Sounds like
martinizing? Sounds like
Masterpiece theatre?

All wrong... Donnie is stumbling. The clock is ticking down! Change of plan... Donnie pulls a straight-up charade.

MARTY (CONT'D)

The Diary of Anne Frank!

CORRECT! Back on track. Clock is ticking down. 15 seconds. They have 17 right. They need five more!

MARTY (CONT'D)
 Ringtail lemur! Bone marrow!
 Wuthering Heights!

Two to go! 7 seconds!

MARTY (CONT'D)
 Pearl Harbor!

Clock's ticking down... 4... 3... 2...

MARTY (CONT'D)
 Meatball sub!!!! Meatball sub!!!

THEY DID IT!

THE MOLE
 I'll be a son-of-a-bitch! Miller
 and McKeever are going to Los
 Angeles!

DONNIE
 (to Cass)
 Who's stuck in a box *now!!*

Donnie and Marty embrace. Cassandra looks on, sizing up the situation.

93

INT. THE MOLE'S HOLE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

93

Donnie and Marty hit the backstage area, still relishing their victory.

DONNIE
 Goddamn rhymes. Almost killed us
 out there.

MARTY
 Hey. Enjoy this! We WON.

DONNIE
 We did didn't we?

MARTY
 We should go celebrate--

Marty feels her cellphone vibrate. She reads the text.

MARTY (CONT'D)
 Shit. It's David.

DONNIE
 Invite him along.

MARTY

Sorry. I gotta go. Rain check?

DONNIE

No sweat. I'll grab a cab.

MARTY

Tomorrow we start PREPPING FOR LOS ANGELES!

Marty hugs him and dashes off. Donnie lingers.

94 INT. THE MOLE'S HOLE - BACKSTAGE - A FEW MOMENTS LATER - 94
NIGHT

Donnie gathers up his belongings and basks in his moment. The Mole approaches him.

DONNIE

I'll have your money, OK? Just--

THE MOLE

Donnie, Donnie, Donnie... I'm tough, but I'm not heartless. That was impressive. I'll give you until after the L.A. Tournament. (Close) But not one day more.

He walks away.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)

It's good to have you back.

95 EXT. ARENA - SAME 95

Donnie exits the stage door, heads for the street to hail a cab. Then, from behind him.

CASSANDRA (O.S.)

The Mole's right. That was impressive.

It's Cassandra.

DONNIE

What's your angle?

CASSANDRA

Can't a girl show a little admiration?

A cab pulls up.

DONNIE
 (skeptically)
 Thanks.

Donnie gets in and the cab pulls away. Cassandra's wheels are turning. Vince approaches. They watch the cab drive away.

96 INT. CAB - NIGHT 96

Donnie riding in the cab. Soaking in the events of the night.

97 INT. MARTY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 97

Marty quietly unlocks the door and slinks into the apartment, attempting stealth. She closes the door, it CLICKS LOUDLY. She twinges. Backing into the apartment, she knocks over an umbrella stand. It lands with a CLANG. The umbrella stand is as noisy to reset as it fell down. She fixes it and surveys the room. Hmmm, maybe she'll make it... She rounds the corner, David's there, he's been watching her the whole time. She SHRIEKS. David walks over to her. He opens his hands, revealing slips of paper. Charades clues. Uh-oh.

DAVID
 What are these?

MARTY
 Little... lists?

DAVID
 Are you asking or telling me?

MARTY
 Little lists.

David starts going through them.

DAVID
 "Root vegetables."

MARTY
 Shopping list.

DAVID
 "Machu Picchu."

MARTY
 Bucket list. Breathtaking in August, I'm told.

DAVID

Here's a good one. "Menage a
Trois."

MARTY

Now *that's* a to DO list. For your
birthday. There's this new girl at
yoga, she dresses business-smart--

DAVID

You've been *charading* behind my
back.

Marty's face says it all. He places the clues in Marty's
hand.

DAVID (CONT'D)

There's a pillow and blanket on the
couch. I need a night to cool off.

MARTY

David, please don't sleep on the
couch.

DAVID

I'm not.

MARTY

Oh.

David heads to bed without looking back.

MARTY (CONT'D)

But it's my apartment...

No response. Marty humbly climbs onto her own couch.

98 EXT. DONNIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

98

The cab pulls up at Donnie's house. He exits, pays the cabbie
and glides up to his apartment.

99 INT. DONNIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

99

Donnie enters the room, it's dark. He TRIPS over some of his
mess. He turns the lights on. He looks around the apartment.
How has he been living like this for so long?

He glances to the one small clean spot of his apartment. The
corner he and Marty cleaned together.

He picks up the things that have toppled over. One thing at a time. Accelerating. To the point where he is actually cleaning!

INSERT CLEANING MONTAGE...to play as if Rocky Balboa were doing a cleaning montage.

-Donnie bulldozes garbage across the living room floor and into a bin.

-Donnie windexes obscenely dirty windows.

-Donnie guts the fridge. Scraping the mold with a spatula.

-Donnie scrubs a hair-infested toilet. He dry-heaves.

END MONTAGE

Donnie admires his work, thinking about how impressed Marty will be.

There's a KNOCK at the door. Donnie opens the door... IT'S CASSANDRA! She is calm and very attractive. He's caught off-guard.

CASSANDRA

I come in peace. I know I have given you every reason to hate me.

DONNIE

You have. And I do.

CASSANDRA

I would like to bury the hatchet.

DONNIE

Into my forehead?

CASSANDRA

There was a time when it was good, Donnie. We were SO... GOOD. I want to feel that way again.

She approaches him, rubbing up on him.

DONNIE

Not interested.

Grinding into him. She feels "something."

CASSANDRA

I think you're a *little* interested.

DONNIE

I didn't say I wasn't conflicted.

CASSANDRA

Is it because of that dimwit blonde? I can keep a secret.

DONNIE

(pushes her away)

I don't mix business and pleasure.
YOU taught me that. Partners.
That's it.

CASSANDRA

Good thing we're no longer partners.

Cassandra charges and attacks Donnie, kissing him fiercely. He resists at first but gives in quickly. They thrash through the clean house, messing it up again, including Marty's stack of clean laundry. It's a full-on sex fight.

FADE TO BLACK.

100 EXT. DONNIE'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT MORNING 100

Marty pulls up in her car. She gathers her things, two coffees and a box of pastries. This is gonna be a good day, especially after how she left things with David last night.

101 INT. DONNIE'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY 101

Marty navigates, hands full, to Donnie's front door. She fumbles and finally negotiates everything properly... goes to knock. Before her hand can hit the door...

Cassandra OPENS THE DOOR like the cat that ate the canary.

CASSANDRA

Oh look, the B-team is here. It may take him a while to get goin'. He's a little worn out.

Cassandra is playing mind games... and it's working. Marty is disappointed... and a little jealous.

102 INT. DONNIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING 102

Donnie's naked and out cold. Marty walks in. She KICKS his bed.

MARTY
You slept with her!?!

Donnie wakes with a start. He's embarrassed.

DONNIE
She came over to clear the air.
(Picking up lingerie) Wearing *this*.

MARTY
All of our training. All the hard
work. You throw it away on a booty
call?!?! I can't believe you.

DONNIE
Marty!

She places the coffee and pastries down and heads out into
the living room and for the front door. Wrapping himself in
bedding, Donnie chases after her.

DONNIE (CONT'D)
C'mon wait!

103 EXT. DONNIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

103

She gets in her car and takes off. Donnie runs from the
building wrapped in sheets.

DONNIE
WAIT!!! Let me explain!

He throws down the bedding in frustration. Unfortunately,
he's naked... in the street.

DONNIE (CONT'D)
Marty come back!

He's yelling after her... but she's long gone. He's just
standing in the alley, yelling and naked. For an awkwardly
long time. An OLD WOMAN, onlooking, stares and shakes her
head.

104 INT. MARTY AND DAVID'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT DAY

104

Marty's alone in the apartment. She nurses a beer and thinks
about the disappointing events of the day.

105 INT. DONNIE'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT DAY 105

Donnie takes the pastries and coffees and throws them out. He tells himself it was a stupid idea anyway.

106 INT. MARTY'S CAR - NIGHT 106

Marty is driving and David is riding shotgun. Something about Marty is different. A spark has been quashed.

DAVID

Sorry about the other night. I was harsh.

MARTY

You were right.

DAVID

I figured you might not want to come tonight.

MARTY

You don't have to worry about the whole charades thing anymore. I'm done.

DAVID

I'm so glad to hear you say that. I couldn't believe you were taking that nonsense seriously.

We can see Marty's soul wanting to protest... but this is the "new" charades-free Marty. She's going to grin and bear it.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I mean a grown adult doing charades... FOR A LIVING?!? Mind-boggling.

MARTY

Yeah... mind-boggling.

107 INT. HEI YA'S CHINESE RESTAURANT - MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT 107

Prakash is at his desk listening to Chinese Rosetta Stone-esque language tapes, butchering as he recites.

PRAKASH

How are you today? *Ni Zenme yang?*

Donnie appears in the doorway, meekly, catching Prakash off-guard.

PRAKASH (CONT'D)

Oh. Donnie Miller is here! Have you come to break more of my things?

DONNIE

No, sir.

PRAKASH

Oh, it's "sir" now?

DONNIE

I know I embarrassed you in front of your customers. I apologize. I wanted to know... if there was any way... I could come back.

PRAKASH

Why should I even consider giving you your job back?

DONNIE

Because it's a shitty job that no one wants.

PRAKASH

It IS a shitty job and I can't get anybody for the price I was paying you. Get to work.

108 INT. MARTY'S CAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 108

Marty and David continuing their conversation...

DAVID

This promotion will be a game-changer for us. House in Malibu? Fancy parties? Ocean view? Done. Done. Done.

Marty nods. This is everything "old" Marty would hate.

109 INT. HEI YA'S CHINESE RESTAURANT - SINK AREA 109

Donnie steps into the sink area. Back to the grind. A huge stack of dirty dishes waits. A defeated sigh. He pulls out his hair-net.

110 INT. THE MALONEY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM 110

A beautiful, conservative house in Los Angeles.

The cocktail party is in full swing. There's a handful of people there. They drink wine, eat cheese, make small talk.

Marty turns on the faux charm even though she hates it. Millie and Mr. Maloney lead her and David around.

MILLIE

(to David)

Bill didn't tell me that your girlfriend was so pretty!

DAVID

I am a lucky guy.

MR. MALONEY

Marty, mind if I pull this big lug away for a few? The fellas need to talk shop.

MILLIE

(taking Marty's arm)

You boys go have your little meeting. We'll mingle.

MARTY

(forcing a smile)

Sounds great!

111 INT. HEI YA'S CHINESE RESTAURANT - SINK AREA - CONTINUOUS 111

Donnie is laboring away at the tower of dishes. He is making a hero's effort. Another stack comes in. More steam. Ugh.

112 INT. THE MALONEY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM AREA - NIGHT 112

Millie is working the room with Marty at her side. Marty is following her like a Stepford Wives robot, crostini and wine-charmed goblet in hand.

Millie glances over and sees a handful of PARTYGOERS. Seems like the party is starting to lose a little steam...

MILLIE

Let's spice things up! Who's up for a party game? Any ideas? Marty?

The crowd responds enthusiastically. Marty panics.

MARTY

Perhaps Pictionary?

MILLIE

Oh, come on!

MARTY

Gin Rummy?

MILLIE

It's not a retirement home. What could we play? Something exciting!

113 INT. MR. MALONEY'S HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

113

Mr. Maloney pours a glass of scotch for David and himself. David notices it's very good scotch. They settle in.

MR. MALONEY

You know I'm a straight shooter. Maloneycorp has a bright future and I need a new VP, someone visionary. Bonner is retiring and I'm looking at you. What'dya say?

DAVID

I'm honored! I can't thank you enough.

MR. MALONEY

Good man. To the future.

They clink glasses and sip.

114 INT. HEI YA'S CHINESE RESTAURANT - SINK AREA - CONTINUOUS 114

Donnie continues to scrub. Dishes piling in on him...

115 INT. MR. MALONEY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

115

Mr. Maloney and David enter the room. A rapt crowd has formed. As they break through, David is in UTTER SHOCK. Marty is in full-blown charades mode. She doesn't see David as she fluidly rips through motions. As she finishes, she sees David and abruptly ends. An enthusiastic PARTYGOER chimes in.

PARTYGOER

"That which does not kill us makes us stronger!" How did I guess that? (to Marty) You are a phenomenon!

The crowd ROARS. Millie is overjoyed.

MILLIE

Bill, you *must* come and see Marty play charades. She's amazing!

David is not happy with Marty.

DAVID

We need to go.

MILLIE

But the tapas!

116 INT. HEI YA'S CHINESE RESTAURANT - SINK AREA - CONTINUOUS 116

Donnie continues to drown in dishes, steam, and suds. In the background we can see Prakash walking back and forth wearing headphones, continuing to massacre the Chinese language.

PRAKASH

Let's go to the market. *Rang wo men qu schiang*. Let's go to the market. *Rang wo men qu schiang*.

Donnie struggles. This is NOT what he is supposed to be doing. It builds up in him... building... building...

DONNIE

I'm not meant to be here!

He takes off his apron and hairnet.

PRAKASH

Where do you think you're going?

DONNIE

To follow my destiny!

He looks at the tower of dishes, glances at Prakash.

PRAKASH

Don't you do it, Donnie Miller!

After a momentary standoff, he shrugs as if to say "no choice." He PUSHES THEM ALL DOWN!

DONNIE

THUNDERCLAP!!!!

PRAKASH

Son of a bitch!

DONNIE
 (as he runs out)
 I'll send you a check!

He bolts, leaving Prakash alone in the devastation, shaking his head.

117 EXT. MR. MALONEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

117

David turns and says good night to the Maloneys as Marty heads down the walk to the car. David jogs to catch up and pulls her arm to stop.

DAVID
 You told me you were done with charades!

MARTY
 Oh, David. Thank you.

David looks at her confused.

MARTY (CONT'D)
 You helped me see who I really am for the first time. I know you don't understand, but charades is what I am supposed to do.

DAVID
 But, I did everything right. I was going to propose as soon as I got the new office. We're on track for a perfect life.

MARTY
 Your perfect life. I am so sorry. You deserve someone who wants all of this.

She looks at him a moment.

MARTY (CONT'D)
 I have to go.

Marty dashes to her car and gets in. She has to find Donnie and get things back on track!

David is left alone in the street, defeated.

118 INT. MARTY'S CAR - NIGHT 118

Marty driving towards home to pick things up and figure her life out by the time she finds Donnie.

119 INT. DONNIE'S CAR - NIGHT 119

Donnie driving toward Marty. He's gotta fix this.

120 INT. MARTY'S APARTMENT - LIVING AREA - NIGHT 120

Marty enters and starts rummaging. She finds what she is looking for, grabs it, and heads for the door.

121 EXT. MARTY'S APARTMENT-- LATER THAT NIGHT 121

Marty leaves her apartment and heads for her car. She pulls away moments before Donnie pulls up. He makes a mad dash for Marty's apartment. He BUZZES AND BUZZES the doorbell, but nothing. Looks around... no car. He's flummoxed. Then suddenly he gets an idea and sprints back for his car.

122 EXT. CLIFF - LATER THAT NIGHT 122

Donnie comes bounding up the path. He is sweating and out of breath. He stops in his tracks when he sees Marty sitting alone, looking out over the illuminated valley and clear night sky.

123 EXT. CLIFF - SAME 123

Close on Marty as Donnie approaches gingerly from behind. He squats next to her. She stares straight ahead.

DONNIE

Thank God you're here. (beat) About Cassandra... I never should have-- she played me... again. I was dumb and weak. We can't give up now. This is so much bigger than the two of us, something magical. I was such a douche to you. You're the greatest thing that ever happened to me.

MARTY

I left David. Tonight.

DONNIE
Are you alright?

MARTY
I am. He was never going to
understand my dream and I could
never give it up.

DONNIE
You sure?

MARTY
It's something I should have
realized a long time ago.

DONNIE
(a beat)
I still can't rhyme.

MARTY
You will.

DONNIE
(touched)
So... are we a team again?

MARTY
You bet your ass we are.

She hugs him enthusiastically, then...

MARTY (CONT'D)
I stopped home before coming here.
I was hoping to show you this.

She unfurls her Donnie Miller T-shirt. He's deeply touched.
They share a moment. Then... a shooting star burns overhead.

DONNIE
Make a wish.

MARTY
Only one thing I'd wish for.

They high-five, interlocking fingers.

DONNIE/MARTY
(together)
THUNDERCLAP!!!!

124 EXT. LOS ANGELES WAREHOUSE - PARKING AREA - NIGHT 124

A downtown Los Angeles warehouse converted into a charades stadium, not unlike Uppsala, but noticeably not as grand. Still, spectators and combatants are excitedly trickling in. There's a buzz from within. It's as if we have come full circle.

Marty's car pulls up and parks. She and Donnie get out of the car with gym bags in tow, heading towards destiny.

125 INT. LOS ANGELES WAREHOUSE - COMPETITOR SIGN-IN - NIGHT 125

The inside of the venue is alive. It's immediately apparent that Cassandra truly has become top dog in this sport. Fans carry signs and wear Cassandra/Vince themed T-shirts.

Donnie and Marty enter, creating a buzz as people point and gawk. They head to a table with a sign marked COMPETITOR SIGN-IN.

Sitting at the table is the WCF liaison, MERLE BLUTKIN (20s). He is decked out head-to-toe in Cassandra superfan gear, almost to the point of cross-dressing.

DONNIE

Hi. I'm Don--

MERLE

I know who you are.

DONNIE

Okkkkay. We clinched the last seat at the qualifiers.

Merle stares blankly.

DONNIE (CONT'D)

We're here to sign in.

MERLE

Why? You won't win.

DONNIE

That's a matter of opinion.

MERLE

It's a matter of FACT. Have you seen the odds the bookies are making? 2000 to 1.

DONNIE

We'd just like to register, please.

MERLE

I mean... *Cassandra* is competing tonight. She is UN-STOPPA-BLE.

Donnie and Marty look at each other. This is getting creepy.

MERLE (CONT'D)

Her body speak is *mesmerizing*. When she shoots, victory is her *slave-*

DONNIE

Can we PLEASE have our registration forms?

MERLE

In Chicago, she played with a 103 degree fever and swept the competition. She was rushed to the hospital, but not before she *dominated!* Did ya know that?

DONNIE

Pretty please. With sugar on top.

MERLE

Once when she was signing autographs, I got close enough and she actually *touch*ed my *hand*. (Clutching his hand preciously) I got some of her sweat on me. (He smells his hand deeply)

MARTY

Listen you demented gnome, give us our forms or I will jam one of those *Cassandra* posters up your ass and light it on fire!

Donnie looks at her with surprise. Wow.

Merle sheepishly hands them the papers.

126 INT. LOS ANGELES WAREHOUSE - DONNIE'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 126

Donnie getting dressed for the big night. Wow, this is it. The moment of truth.

He pulls his lighter out of his pocket. Reflects.

The door opens behind him. A shadow darkens his doorway.

TRIGGER (O.S.)

How you feelin', Donnie?

Oh shit.

127 INT. LOS ANGELES WAREHOUSE - MARTY'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 127

Marty is doing the same. She takes a moment to soak it all in. She's made it! From her bag she pulls out one of the pictures of herself as an awkward teen charadist in her Donnie Miller shirt. She affixes it to the mirror.

In the mirror we see Nutsy over her shoulder. He startles her.

MARTY

You can't come in here!

128 INT. BOILER ROOM - NIGHT

128

Donnie is seated in a chair. Marty is forcefully thrown into the chair next to him. Nutsy joins Trigger and The Mole, who are standing before them.

MARTY

What's going on? What is this about? Mr. Molanski, I don't understand--

THE MOLE

(to Marty)

Allow me to enlighten you. Your partner here owes me a sizable sum of money, and I have gathered you both here to gently remind him that payment's due tomorrow.

DONNIE

I told you I'd get you your money. Just leave her--

THE MOLE

Damn right I'll get my money. (To Marty) Don here owes me for an old gambling debt.

MARTY

You gambled on charades?!?

DONNIE

I never gambled on charades!

THE MOLE

I gamble on charades. On the "legendary" Donnie Miller, back in Sweden ten years ago. You guys win tonight... have your comeback. I get paid no matter what. Then you just pay me the other \$50K in interest and we are as right as rain. You don't pay? Blondie here is responsible for the balance!

Nutsy fires up a blow torch, ominously approaches Marty.

DONNIE

Mr. Molanski, *I'm* good for it. This is crazy! You gotta--

THE MOLE

I waited ten years for this cash. I gave you an extension outta the kindness of my heart. You pay up tomorrow, or--

Nutsy is getting dangerously close to Marty.

DONNIE

Mr. Molanski, please!!!

MARTY

DONNIE!!!

THE MOLE

STOP! Stop! Back off. Who am I kidding?!? This isn't my style. Nutsy, put it away.

Nutsy drops the blow torch and is overcome with emotion, relieved. Trigger holds him tight, comforting him. Donnie and Marty share a confused look.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)

The last ten years hasn't exactly been good for charades. We're not turning them away at the door. I'm in trouble, Don. The sport's in trouble. We're leveraged up to our eyeballs. Tonight's prize money is all we got left.

MARTY

What?!?

THE MOLE

That's right, sweetheart. No more charades. The league'll go belly up. Dead as a fuckin' doornail, as it were. No legacy. No nuthin'. Professional charades will be a thing of the past.

It's the first time we are seeing The Mole come out from behind his persona. Donnie considers this, exchanges a concerned look with Marty.

DONNIE

The WCF is everything to me. I lost sight of that for a while, but Marty brought me back around. You'll get your money. You have my word.

THE MOLE

You mean that?

DONNIE

You bet your ass I do. Next time though... just ask for help.

THE MOLE

(to Marty)

Sorry. I have an image to uphold. Never let 'em see you sweat. We cool?

MARTY

(doing her best "mobster")
Fuggedaboutit...

THE MOLE

(grinning)

I love this kid. She's a keeper. Now git outta here! You got a match to win. And a legacy to save.

DONNIE

Yessir.

Donnie and Marty leave excitedly. Trigger is still comforting Nutsy.

THE MOLE

Oh for Christ sakes.

TRIGGER

He's very sensitive.

129 INT. ARENA HALLWAY - NIGHT

129

Donnie and Marty in the hallway, having just been released by The Mole.

MARTY

What are we gonna do? I don't have that kind of money!

DONNIE

I have an idea.

A passing superfan in a wild costume walks past. Donnie grabs her by the arm, stopping her.

DONNIE (CONT'D)

I'll pay you a hundred dollars for your costume. (to Marty) Give me a hundred dollars!

Marty fishes into her purse, not knowing where this is going. She hands him the money. They make the exchange. Donnie gives Marty the costume. She looks at him. "What the hell am I supposed to do with this?"

130 INT. LOS ANGELES WAREHOUSE - COMMENTATORS' TABLE - NIGHT 130

At "ringside" are our color commentators, welcoming us once again to the show.

HAITH

Coming atcha live from the city of broken dreams! The World Charades Federation is in Los Angeles! As always, I am joined by the "Milwaukee Mongoose," Shane Brennan.

BRENNAN

Lee, tonight is a watershed event in our sport. We witness the return of the charades journeyman, Donnie Miller, joined by newcomer and former fan, Marty McKeever. They face the Goliath that is Cassandra Lange and Vince Carson. There. Will. Be. Blood. Here. In. Los. Ange. Eles.

HAITH

(awkward)

In a reversal of fortune, it is
Cassandra Lange who is our champion
and Donnie Miller the underdog.
Once teammates, once lovers, now
combatants.

BRENNAN

I hope you're settled in for a
riveting night of charades. We
could see history tonight. Anything
could happen.

HAITH

Tonight we are brought to you by
"Angelo's Gentlemen's Club" in
beautiful Rancho Cucamonga. Mention
this ad for a half-price lap dance.
Monday nights only.

131 INT. LOS ANGELES WAREHOUSE - DONNIE'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 1

Donnie is just about ready. He holds the lighter, mid-ritual.
Suddenly, Cassandra walks in!

CASSANDRA

Dressing rooms are apparently very
symbolic for us. Endings and
beginnings.

DONNIE

I'll see you on stage.

CASSANDRA

You want something to really get
you up for the match, I can help.

DONNIE

Not interested.

CASSANDRA

C'mon... we've got a few minutes.
And, oopsie, I forgot to wear
panties!

132 INT. LOS ANGELES WAREHOUSE - OUTSIDE DONNIE'S DRESSING ROOM 2-
NIGHT - INTERCUT

Marty approaches, surprised to see Vince standing outside the
door, acting as a sentry. Vince stops her.

VINCE

Cassandra needs a second to talk to Donald.

MARTY

Step aside, meathead.

VINCE

Have I ever called you a name?
(Beat) The answer is no. That you would choose to just blindly start hurling insults at me is unkind.

Marty, being Marty, actually feels bad.

VINCE (CONT'D)

And on top of that, I'm a vegetarian.

133 INT. LOS ANGELES WAREHOUSE - DONNIE'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 3

Cass starts grinding up on Donnie.

DONNIE

Cut the crap. It's pathetic.

CASSANDRA

Pathetic?!? Pathetic is spending your career chasing the goddamn Sweet Spot. It's a fairy tale!

DONNIE

This is why we didn't work. You have no faith.

CASSANDRA

We didn't work because you're DONNIE FUCKING MILLER! Your ego has its own gravitational pull. There was never room for me. That's no team.

DONNIE

I don't have time for this shit, I have a match to win.

CASSANDRA

(ominously)

That's my arena out there. I'm gonna enjoy breaking you again. Because when it comes down to it, you can't rhyme! I took that from you.

Donnie is silent. What if she's right?

134 INT. LOS ANGELES WAREHOUSE - OUTSIDE DONNIE'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

MARTY

I'm sorry. I mean it. I just know what your partner is capable of and I am taking it out on you.

VINCE

If you mean awesomeness, then yes. She is capable of that.

MARTY

That's not a word, and no, that's not what I mean.

Suddenly, the door opens. Cassandra sees Marty and revels in "getting caught" the second time.

CASSANDRA

See you soon.

Cassandra blows her a kiss and leaves with Vince. Donnie exits the dressing room, concerned with what Marty will think.

DONNIE

Nothing happened. She tried, but I shut her down. You gotta believe me.

MARTY

It's okay. I do.

DONNIE

(he smiles)
Is it done?

MARTY

Done.

Marty hands Donnie a slip of paper. He tucks it in his pocket. They head to stage.

135 INT. LOS ANGELES WAREHOUSE - COMMENTATORS' TABLE - NIGHT 135

Our commentators with their useful exposition.

BRENNAN

Tonight is a standard sixteen-team, four-heat tournament. Half the teams are eliminated in each heat, until we're down to the finals.

HAITH

That's right, Shane. Teams have a sixty-second clock for as many clues as they can pull, shoot, and call.

136

INT. LOS ANGELES WAREHOUSE - CORRIDORS - NIGHT

136

Donnie and Marty make their way down the corridor. SLO-MO-ING it for all it is worth. They hit their places. We hear the MUSIC and the CROWD. This is it. The moment of truth.

MARTY

Before we go on stage, I want to tell you something.

DONNIE

Let me guess. This is the part where you tell me that through our training and now that you are officially single, you've discovered deep feelings for me. You want to promise me that win or lose, we will always be together. Then you pull in and we kiss a long, deep kiss, with tongues. In the background we will hear the faint swell of an electric guitar...

MARTY

No. I was going to say we literally can't afford to lose. So don't blow it.

DONNIE

(embarrassed)

Right. That was my second guess.

MARTY

I'm sure.

137

INT. LOS ANGELES WAREHOUSE - COMPETITOR RING

137

The crowd is in full-swing. It's a big night for this little misunderstood sport.

The Mole steps into the ring a la Michael Buffer. The crowd warmly acknowledges him. He soaks it in.

THE MOLE

Ladieeeeeeees and gentlemen! We have a very special night ahead of us. Grand prize of \$50,000. That's a lotta lettuce! I expect a good clean fight. C'mon down!

The arena starts to blare music as the teams make their way down. Each team has their entrance.

Cassandra and Vince enter. The fans love her and she thrives on it. As they make their way, a fervent MILLER FAN waves a Donnie sign a little too close to Cassandra. She grabs it and tears it to shreds. They arrive, ready for battle.

Last team to enter, Donnie and Marty! They come out to a "Chariots of Fire" inspired song (like the song from our opening credits). Donnie is not the rock star he once was. He's not looking for panty-tossers, he's looking for redemption.

Donnie and Marty enter the ring making occasional eye contact with Cassandra and Vince.

The 16 teams stand in the ring. The Mole is front and center.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)

Three eliminations and the finals. As always, a tie results in a "Golden Box" showdown. Alllllright, 60 seconds on the clock! Get readdddy... and SHOOT!

The 16 teams begin. It's a flurry of motion as competitors are charading in the ring four teams at a time. The competition is fierce. One UNFORTUNATE CHARADIST is charading so hard that he actually BREAKS HIS LEG! Medics carry him away SCREAMING as his leg hangs limply off to the side.

Cassandra and Vince are up. They burn through the first heat. Cassandra is calling, Vince is shooting.

CASSANDRA

Baby aspirin! Bonsai tree! Swiss Army knife! Cream of Chicken Soup! Tyrannosaurus Rex! Ballet slipper!

They easily make their way to the next round. They celebrate.

THE MOLE

See you in the next heat,
competitors.

Donnie and Marty hit the stage. Marty shoots, Donnie calls.

DONNIE

Kung Pao Chicken! Palm tree! 1968
Rolls Royce! Bar stool! Maui
sunset!

Donnie and Marty pull a victory as well.

THE MOLE

Well done! Advance to the next
round.

The remaining teams compete. 8 are in, 8 are out. End of the
first heat. The Mole RINGS a boxing ring BELL.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)

Good job competitors! When we come
back, we'll begin the eight-team
heat!

The teams disperse from the ring.

HAITH (O.S.)

Solid showing by Donnie Miller and
Marty McKeever out there. It
appears the prodigal son may very
well have returned!

BRENNAN (O.S.)

Agreed Brandon, but take note that
Cassandra Lange and Vince Carson
dominated that heat without even
raising their pulse rate.

138 INT. LOS ANGELES WAREHOUSE - LOCKERS/RESTROOM AREA - NIGHT 138

A dank men's room with graffiti and bad lighting. Donnie's at
the sink, pondering.

Donnie splashes his face with cold water. He closes his eyes.
He's trying to shake his rhyiming funk.

DONNIE

(to himself)

Soccer ball... sounds like "Platter
Mile." NO! Don Quixote... sounds
like "Man Key Lime Pie." NO!

(MORE)

DONNIE (CONT'D)
 Yankee Stadium... sounds like
 "Wedding Santa." FUCK!

He hears a FLUSH. He opens his eyes. Vince walks out of the stall. He's been there the whole time. Donnie had no idea and is caught off-guard.

VINCE
 Wow, it's worse than I thought.

DONNIE
 Back off, bottom-feeder.

VINCE
 You wanna talk about it? We're
 alone in here. A bared soul will
 stay within these walls.

Donnie GRABS Vince, slams him up against the wall.

VINCE (CONT'D)
 This is a scary way to open up.

DONNIE
 What's your deal?!?

VINCE
 A good long hug'll cure ya. Squeeze
 the rind until all the angry comes
 out.

Donnie releases him and storms out, leaving Vince disappointed.

VINCE (CONT'D)
 Okay, then. Rain check!

139 INT. LOS ANGELES WAREHOUSE - CORRIDORS - NIGHT

139

Marty's waiting for Donnie. He appears, still flummoxed and red-faced.

MARTY
 What's wrong?

DONNIE
 Nothing. Let's get back out there.

140

INT. LOS ANGELES WAREHOUSE - STAGING AREA - NIGHT

140

The remaining eight teams are now in the ring area. Up first are Donnie and Marty. Marty calls, Donnie shoots. It's less smooth than before. Donnie is distracted.

MARTY

Uh... Naked City? No... Baked Ziti!
Cruise ship... er... Cruise
Control! Horchata! Gefilte fish!
Lime, no, Lemon tree!

HAITH (O.S.)

Uh oh, Shane... looks like holes
are starting to show in the
Miller/McKeever team armor. Donnie
may have a little more cha-*rust*
then he originally let on.

BRENNAN (O.S.)

You know Cassandra Lange is looking
to sink her fangs right into that
weak spot. She has ice in her
veins.

HAITH (O.S.)

She'll slaughter as many gazelles
as it takes to be number one.

A shaky finish. Marty's concerned as the threads are starting to show. Cassandra and Vince hit the stage and burn through again. Cassandra shoots and Vince calls.

VINCE

Angora sweater! Fish and Chips!
Corpus Christi! Yellow Post-It
Note! Coral snake!

Vince and Cassandra dominate again! The remaining teams finish up.

THE MOLE

That's the end of the eight team
heat! Looks like the final four's
gonna be... Lange and Carson!
Rodriguez and Ochoa! Wu and Chen!
And...by a hair, Miller and
McKeever! We'll be back with the
four-way showdown!

141

INT. LOS ANGELES WAREHOUSE - COMMENTATORS' TABLE

141

Brennan and Haith break things down for us.

HAITH

We are down to our final four teams. Shane, what's the battlefield look like out there?

BRENNAN

Brandon, if you asked me that question before the last heat, I would have suggested some hot underdog action by Donnie Miller and his partner Marty McKeever. That last match was a whole different batch of tea leaves. Look for a Lange/Carson victory, as expected.

HAITH

Miller is smelling like Sweden. He better pull it together. Let's go back to The Mole.

142

INT. LOS ANGELES WAREHOUSE - STAGING AREA

142

Back to the action. The Mole is on the mic. The four teams are in the ring. The crowd is going wild.

THE MOLE

Let's get the final four underway!

The first two teams compete. Rodriguez and Ochoa score a 23, Wu and Chen get a 25. Cassandra and Vince are up... again crushing it. Cassandra calls Vince shoots.

CASSANDRA

Five-layer lasagna! For Whom the Bell Tolls! Helicopter co-pilot! Mexican free-tailed bat! Tailored Italian suit!

Cassandra and Vince score a 39. The crowd goes ballistic!

HAITH (O.S.)

What an effort from Lange and Carson! Breaking the record in a fourth heat match! The record was 33, recorded in 1988 by the team of Wendell and Sims. Look out!

BRENNAN (O.S.)

Sheer charade brutality.

Donnie and Marty are up. They are feeling all the eyes in the room. Marty shoots, Donnie calls. The buzzer BUZZES.

DONNIE

Heartbreak Hotel! T-bone steak with
a side of potatoes! Irish bagpipes!
No? Uh... uh... Scottish bagpipes!
Stalactites... no... Stalagmites!

Donnie seems to be getting caught up. Marty starts throwing
"sounds like" clues...

DONNIE (CONT'D)

Sounds like petticoat? No... sounds
like puddle can? No... sounds like
party horn? I can't...

Marty changes up...

DONNIE (CONT'D)

Colonel Penal... NO! Penal Colony!

The clock is ticking down... Donnie and Marty have a score of
24. They need at least 26 to beat second place and face off
against Cassandra and Vince. Donnie's struggling.

DONNIE (CONT'D)

Uhhh... uhhh.... Molecular Biology!

Score is 25. They need one more! Clock is ticking down
10...9...8...7...

DONNIE (CONT'D)

American cheese? American flag?
Argh!

...6...5...4...3...

DONNIE (CONT'D)

The AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM!

He got it! At the BUZZER! They are in the finals! The crowd
is loving this, and Marty is excited... until she sees
Donnie, who is all but spent at this point.

BRENNAN (O.S.)

Miller pulling it out at the
buzzer! Unfortunately, they have to
get past Lange and Carson in the
finals.

HAITH (O.S.)

It may just be impossible for
Miller and McKeever. Let's get back
to the Mole.

THE MOLE

Ladies and gentlemen we have your
final combatants. Defending
champions Cassandra Lange and Vince
Carson!

The crowd cheers... but a little less than before. Hmmm, is
there a turn in the tide? Cassandra soaks up the attention.
It is her lifeforce. Vince flexes, bouncing his pectorals.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)

Their opponents... the newcomer...
hailing from Southern California...
Marty McKeever!

Bigger crowd reaction for Marty. She waves. Charades royalty
in the making.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)

And of course, the phoenix rising
from the ashes... straight outta
retirement... DON-NIE MILLER!

Biggest crowd reaction. It gives Donnie some renewed humility
and determination. Cassandra hates this.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)

Sixty seconds on the clock. As much
as you can call and shoot in a
minute.

Cassandra grabs the Mole's mic.

CASSANDRA

I'd like to dedicate our next win
to Donnie and Marty.
Congratulations on your upcoming
second retirement. I hear they're a
couple mimes short on the Santa
Monica pier!

THE MOLE

I don't care how many tournaments
you've won. NO ONE... touches my
mic. We clear?

CASSANDRA

Yes sir.

Marty laughs at Cassandra for having been put in her place.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

You got something to say,
Goldilocks?

Marty tugs her ear and does a fast and intricate charade of driving a truck and kicking a field goal.

VINCE
(guessing)
Sounds like... trucking punt?

A collective GASP.

Cassandra's eyes widen and she throws a sign more elaborate than the last.

MARTY
(guessing)
Sounds like birdie witch? I'll show
your fat ass who's a dirty bitch!!

The gloves are off. The crowd BELLOWS. The girls lunge at each other as the Mole steps in to break it up.

THE MOLE
ENOUGH! Next one of you that steps
out of line is ejected. Back to
your corners!

Stepping away from the chaos, Donnie grabs Marty and pulls her aside.

DONNIE
You're playing right into her
hands. This is how she wins.

MARTY
I have her right where I want her.

They reset, putting their game faces on, trying to focus.

MARTY (CONT'D)
I am not becoming a fucking mime!

THE MOLE
If we can all keep our claws in,
let's get back to the match.
Defending champs go first. Carson
calls. Lange shoots.

Cassandra and Vince begin. Clues are a little tougher now and the match seems more labored.

VINCE
Often on the Mountain in the Old
Oak's Shadow! The 2005 Minnesota
Vikings! Rockabilly, the Devil's
Music!

Winded, Cassandra and Vince get 15 points. That was actually a challenge.

THE MOLE

How about that? Miller and McKeever, you're up. McKeever, you call. Miller shoots.

Clock starts...

MARTY

Standing rib roast! Rainfall in New Jersey! La Cosa Nostra! The Rime of the Ancient Mariner! German limericks!

Donnie takes a moment, feeling brave. Suddenly HE TUGS HIS EAR! IT'S A "SOUNDS LIKE" CLUE!!! This is a big moment punctuated by music.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Sounds like... sounds like Go Cannonbomb... O' TANNENBAUM!

BUZZ! THE SCORE IS TIED!!! 15-15. The crowd goes wild!

HAITH (O.S.)

It's a tie! Donnie pulled a SOUNDS LIKE for the tie! They said he was done for good, but it looks like he's back, folks! Donnie Miller is back!

Donnie and Marty celebrate and embrace. Cassandra curses under her breath.

THE MOLE

This is one of our proudest traditions. As you all know, in our sport, there's only one way to break a tie. (Blowing a kiss to the sky) This one's for you, Pappy. Bring out... THE GOLDEN BOX!

MURMURS ripple through the crowd. Eager patrons force their way to stage-front. The Golden Box is brought forward in full majesty. It's the Ark of the Covenant of the charades world. Trigger and Nutsy usher it in. They both produce keys. The Mole produces a third. The three insert the keys into the three locks on the box and turn simultaneously. A faint mist emanates from inside followed by the sound of a VACUUM SEAL.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)

I admire you for what you are about to attempt. Many have tried and failed. These are the hardest clues the game has ever known. Few have EVER guessed a clue from that unholy box. As you know, draw from the Golden box and lose... and you walk away from the sport FOR-EVER.

Donnie and Marty and Cassandra and Vince convene in the ring for the big showdown. The Golden Box is front and center.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)

Defending champions first. Who shoots, who calls?

CASSANDRA

I'll shoot. Vince calls it.

VINCE

We got this.

CASSANDRA

Damn right we do!

Cassandra and Vince assume the position. Clock starts. Cassandra pulls the first clue. It's not as rapid-fire as before. It's more labored.

VINCE

Uh... uh... Caramelized Onions!
Uh... the Peloponnesian War!

The crowd is in awe.

VINCE (CONT'D)

Uh... sixteen sunflowers in a meadow in Montana! Uh... The Atomic Number of Tungsten is 74! Uh... uh...

BUZZ! TIME'S UP!

Cassandra and Vince score 4 points. The two of them look worked over. This has proven to be their greatest challenge and they are showing every bit of it.

CASSANDRA

(to Donnie)
You don't have a prayer.

DONNIE

(to Cassandra)

I can't believe I slept with you again. After we destroy you guys I'm going home and soaking in a tub of penicillin.

VINCE

(to Cassandra)

You performed COITUS... with him?

DONNIE

(to Vince)

Don't worry, dipshit. It was just to fuck with my head. She's all yours. Aren't you lucky?

VINCE

(to Donnie)

After everything we intimately shared alone in the Men's room. Wasn't that meaningful to you at all?

Marty gives a look to Donnie.

DONNIE

Not what it sounds like.

VINCE

(to Cassandra)

And you! What about psyche-outs and mind-games? You had to resort to... COITUS?!?

CASSANDRA

Jesus, stop saying that. Nobody calls it that.

THE MOLE

Enough! Who shoots? Who calls?

DONNIE

Marty shoo--

MARTY

Donnie shoots.

Pulling her aside.

DONNIE

What?!? Are you crazy? I can't shoot this round!!

MARTY

You have to.

DONNIE

It's the *golden box*!!

MARTY

Donnie, I would not have sought you out and gone on this crazy ride if I didn't believe in you. You're a champion. You HAVE to do this.

It's Donnie's "hero's moment." Marty's words give him strength. She believes in him. He cannot let her down. He looks into the crowd, he sees fans cheering him. She's right.

DONNIE

(to the Mole)

I'll shoot.

THE MOLE

This is for all the cabbage, boys and girls. McKeever's calling and Miller shoots.

The Mole pulls his mic down for a sec and leans in to Donnie.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)

Make it count, Don.

He takes out the lighter to rub it for a little luck. Marty takes it from him and throws it into the crowd. We hear a distant CLANK and "OW!"

DONNIE

What are you doing?!?

MARTY

You are all you need.

He nods and steps up to the shoot position. He breathes deeply, shaking the energy from his fingers. Exhaling, he looks to Marty, who gives him a reassuring nod. He nods back.

Time slows down. Sounds are echoed, amplified. Donnie closes his eyes. The stadium lights surge. We can hear Donnie's pulse... it slows to a calm. Something is strange in his demeanor, his gait. He soaks in it for a beat. A stillness washes over him. He floats his hand over the Golden Box.

THE MOLE

(back on mic)

Get readdddy... SHOOT!

As The Mole utters these words, something strange happens in the room. The lights surge. Time slows down. A light breeze begins to blow. The camera finds the grinning face of The Mole and proceeds to Vince, Marty, people in the crowd. The camera finds a stunned Tim Devereaux backstage, who removes the oxygen mask from his face.

TIM

The Sweet Spot!

The last face the camera finds is Cassandra.

CASSANDRA

Fuck.

Suddenly, time picks up and Donnie's eyes explode open with a kinetic energy we have never seen. A fluidity in movement begins. His moves are rapid, yet graceful. A flurry of signs, matrix-like, flows from Donnie. As Marty nails the clues, he incorporates a grab of the next hint into the movement.

MARTY

The Rain in Spain Falls Mainly on
the Plane! Urban decay! Electrons
moving outside of a nucleus! Dead
languages! The Anthropic Principle!
Two eggs over easy with room
temperature orange juice and burnt
toast! Vericose veins! Bulldog's
hair follicle! Twenty-year-old
single barrel Scotch! Burnt Sienna
crayon! Coriander! Cuttlefish! E
Pluribus Unum! Idaho baked potato!
Sri Lanka! Intergalactic asteroids!

Donnie pulls one more clue. He looks over to Marty and smiles. He looks dead into Cassandra's eyes and smiles... wickedly so. She looks as if a cannon is being aimed at her.

Donnie moves into an absolute blur of motion. This is the knockout punch of it all!

He throws one last graceful, yet simple sign, a book...

MARTY (CONT'D)

BOOK TITLE! Hollow Earth: The Long
And Curious History Of Imagining
Strange Lands, Fantastical
Creatures, Advanced Civilizations
And Marvelous Machines Below The
Earth's Surface.

THE MOLE

TIME! WINNER!

The crowd erupts as The Mole comes onto stage with a silver briefcase, beaming with pride. He hands the case to Donnie. Cassandra is absolutely losing it! She looks to Vince!

VINCE

Your Chi is rancid.

He walks away. She rolls her eyes. Marty approaches her.

MARTY

I guess this is what happens when
you let the toddlers out of the
kiddie pool...

The fans start to enter the ring to join the celebration. They brush by Cassandra as if she is a stranger. They circle Donnie and Marty, who are celebrating their big win in the ring.

HAITH (O.S.)

Wow! What a victory! McKeever and
Miller decimate Lange and Carson 17-
4!!! A "Golden Box" record! We have
witnessed the stuff of legend in
the city of angels.

Donnie embraces Marty, joy exuding out of both of them. The Mole goes up to Donnie and embraces him.

THE MOLE

Welcome back to the top, kid! We
missed ya!

Donnie hands The Mole a ticket stub.

THE MOLE (CONT'D)

What's this?

DONNIE

It's a claim ticket. Before the
match, I had Marty place a wager
that we would take the match.
There's my debt, and then some. Ten
Years. With interest. You can
always bet on Donnie Miller.

The Mole gives Donnie a huge hug, then takes Donnie's and Marty's hand and raises it in VICTORY! The crowd goes wild.

MARTY

The Sweet Spot. You did it! How?!?

DONNIE

I thought I needed that silly lighter. Then I realized something. It was YOU. Your faith in me. You were what I needed to believe. I can't thank you enough. I don't know if I can ever repay you.

MARTY

I'm sure I can think of something.

Marty rushes in and KISSES Donnie. Long and passionate. The crowd eats it up. Somewhere, we hear an ELECTRIC GUITAR RIFF.

MARTY (CONT'D)

(intimately)

Thunderclap.

Merle has come to ringside and is the only Cassandra fan left in the room.

MERLE

No! (chanting & clapping)
Cassandra! Cassandra! Cassandra!
C'mon!

He sees that absolutely nobody is bringing up the chant.

VINCE (O.S.)

She's not worthy of your worship,
brother.

Merle turns to see Vince and is caught off-guard. *Is he talking to me???* He's enraptured.

MERLE

Hell-lo there.

Donnie and Marty break. The crowd roars. They throw their hands up one last time in victory.

143

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE - DAY

143

TWO CO-WORKERS of David's are in a cubicle watching the video, rapt. David approaches, now the number two at Maloneycorp. The co-workers attempt to hide it, but David stops them in time to watch Donnie and Marty kiss. He swells as if he's truly happy for her...

DAVID

God, I hate charades.

144 INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME 144

A TEENAGER surfing the net, clicks with curiosity and is instantly sucked in. She calls her BOYFRIEND over, and he watches with growing interest. He takes out his smartphone and shares the video.

A montage begins, the "sweet spot" clip has gone viral and is quickly becoming a social media phenomenon. Various shots of people watching, sharing.

145 EXT. ARENA - DAY 145

Donnie and Marty, now celebrities at the peak of fame and fortune, exit the stage door to a horde of adoring fans. They share a moment and then magnanimously greet their public. We return to the documentary style from the opening of the film.

NARRATOR(V.O.)

Donnie Miller and Marty McKeever went on to reign supreme in the World Charades Federation. Together they ushered in a new golden era in competitive charades, reigning as the undisputed Queen and King of Sling.

146 INT. HEI YA'S CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY 146

Prakash being interviewed by the WCF in the restaurant.

PRAKASH

I like to think it was here he honed his abilities. Of course, I was always generous, giving him all of the shifts he wanted. It was the least I could do to support his dream. In fact, I just got this in the mail the other day.

Prakash pulls a check for \$5,000 from his pocket. It's from Donnie. In the memo section it says "Thunderclap!"

PRAKASH (CONT'D)

See that. (Pointing to the memo)
That's a little joke we shared. (To himself) Thunderclap.

147 EXT. MOLE'S HOLE - RENOVATED - DAY

147

The Mole looks different. Times are good again and he's dressed to match. The camera PULLS BACK to reveal Donnie and Marty on either side of him and a large red ribbon hanging in front of them. A GLEAMING neon sign above them reads "The Mole's Hole."

JACOB FITZ (O.S.)

Marty!

Marty whirls to see Jacob Fitz! He's smoking a cigarette and looking like smoking has already taken a toll on him.

MARTY

(hugging Jacob)

Hi! What are you doing here?

JACOB FITZ

I came to congratulate you on following your dreams... and to bring you these.

Barry appears beside Jacob... holding the large pair of ribbon-cutting scissors.

JACOB FITZ (CONT'D)

Looks like you could use 'em...

Holding the large pair of scissors, together Donnie, Marty and The Mole cut the ribbon. Flashbulbs and the voices of eager press erupt.

NARRATOR

The WCF gained the tremendous prestige it long deserved. Charades was restored to its rightful place among the world's proudest athletic traditions.

148 INT. OLYMPIC ARENA - DAY

148

Donnie and Marty sharing the center platform at an Olympic medal ceremony, gold medals around their necks, waving to the arena of adoring fans. Flashbulbs and flowers fly.

CUT TO BLACK. END CREDITS.

149 EXT. VENICE BEACH SIDEWALK - DAY - OVER END CREDITS 149

A typical day in Venice Beach. We see Cassandra in full mime make-up. A bucket for tips at her feet. This is her purgatory.

People walk by as she does all of the typical tricks... in a box, pulling a rope, etc.

A SMOKER walks by, tosses his cigarette butt in Cassandra's bucket.

CASSANDRA
Does this look like a fucking
ashtray?!? Asshole!!

She fishes out her meager tips, defeated.

In the background we see an advertisement billboard for the World Charades Federation featuring champions Donnie Miller and Marty McKeever. The camera zooms in on the billboard as we...

FADE TO BLACK.

-END