

REGENERADE 1:2

Written by

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PILOT
"A Fresh Start"

FADE IN:

INT. ROCK CLUB VENUE, OAKLAND, CA - NIGHT - (YEAR 2000)

Soundtrack Music: Live Rock

LAUREN (21) and her female FRIEND are caught in the packed crowd just beneath the stage at a rock concert. It's loud, it's chaotic, it's sweaty and people are crowd surfing. The band members on stage are ramping it up as they're finishing their set, all wild and frenzied and bare chested. After a blaring inferno of sound the lead singer shouts; "Oakland! We fucki'n love you! We'll be back!" He drops his mic on the floor and the band members leave the stage.

Most people in the crowd begin to push backwards but a few try to remain close to the stage, shouting, hoping for an encore. Lauren clasps the hand of her friend and urges her to push forward with her towards the side of the stage where a roadie (BRIAN) has already begun to gather up the instruments. As they reach the barricade Lauren begins to shout to the roadie on stage as loud as she can.

LAUREN
BRIAN!!!! BRIAN!!!!

The roadie BRIAN finally looks up, holding a guitar in his hand. When his eyes land on Lauren he lights up with recognition and he moves to the edge of the stage.

BRIAN
Lauren!!! What are you doing here!?

LAUREN
(Shouting)
I'm at Berkeley now! How are you?!

Brian just points to the very side of the stage where a security guard is positioned and Lauren and her friend move towards him as Brian squats down to talk to the security guard who nods. Lauren and her friend are allowed to enter the stage and Lauren gives Brian a long hug.

BRIAN
It's good to see you! I wondered where you'd disappeared? You wanna go backstage?

LAUREN
Hell yeah! But I'm with this guy...
(Beginning to scan the crowd)

BRIAN

They don't want dudes back there,
sorry...

FRIEND

(To Lauren)

You can find him later! Let's go
backstage!

LAUREN

(with some hesitation, but
excited)

OK...Let's do it!

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. BACKSTAGE AREA, ROCK VENUE, OAKLAND, CA - NIGHT - LATER

Lauren and her female friend are squished in close with band members, crew and a lot of fans, mostly girls, on some couches backstage, beers in hand. There's a lot of liquor on the table and a cloud of thick smoke fills the air. Lauren's friend sits next to the lead singer who's grinning contently with three other girls on his other side, all competing for his attention. Lauren sits next to the BASS PLAYER and they're trying to have a conversation through the noise.

LAUREN

(To the bass player)

You remember that gig you played at
the Old Seattle Brewery like three
years ago..?

Bass player is trying to recall.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

The Psycho Sharks were opening for
you!? And Dave smashed his guitar?!
It looked like a Stratocaster...

BASS PLAYER

Yeah yeah yeah!!! That was fucki'n
sick! You were there?

LAUREN

I was! I was even backstage! I've
talked to you before...

BASS PLAYER

(Amused, slightly
embarrassed)

Did we just talk or...?

LAUREN

(Giggling)

Totally! Just talked! I was going out with the Psycho Sharks' singer...

BASS PLAYER

What the fuck?! You were Chad's girlfriend?! What the fuck happened to him...

LAUREN

He moved to the mid-west somewhere, I think he's some kind of sales rep, I'm pretty sure he's got a kid and everything...

The Bass Player is laughing hard.

BASS PLAYER

Poor guy! Must have cut his hair and removed all those brow piercings...I mean he was a fucki'n loony, like always climbing shit and throwing himself into the crowd...

LAUREN

I thought he was gonna kill himself like, a million times, fucki'n adrenalin junkie...

BASS PLAYER

Listen, we're gonna head back to our hotel in a little while, I think you should come with us...

Lauren hesitates but smiles, then she hears someone calling her name.

BRIAN

Lauren!

(Comes up to her and leans in towards her)

Your boyfriend is hassling security and they won't let him through, you better go out and talk to him...

The Bass Player quickly turns the other way to talk to someone else the second he hears the word "boyfriend" and Lauren gets up and tries to get her friend's attention.

LAUREN
(To her friend)
I'M LEAVING!

Lauren's friend just waves at her indicating *It's OK, I'm staying*

Lauren walks back across the stage and sees her boyfriend MITCH (age 25) standing at the barricade, arguing with the bouncer;

MITCH
(Upset)
I need to know if she's back there!!!

LAUREN
Mitch! I'm here!

Mitch looks up at her, steps back from the bouncer and raises his arms, gesturing; *there you are! Where the hell have you been!?!*

Lauren approaches Mitch with an apologetic expression and tries to put her hand on his arm but he shrugs it off.

LAUREN
I really didn't think you were still here...my phone's dead and...

MITCH
(Angry)
I've been running around this place looking for you!!! I was fucki'n worried sick about you!!!

LAUREN
Mitch, I'm so, so sorry...

MITCH
Yeah. Whatever Lauren. I'm going home now.
(Turning on his heel and walking quickly towards the exit)

Lauren hurries and follows behind him.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. MITCH VAN BUREEN'S APARTMENT IN NORTH BERKELEY, CA -
LATE NIGHT (YEAR 2000)

Mitch and Lauren come through the door of Mitch's apartment. Lauren sits down on the bed. She unlaces her Doc Martens and looks at Mitch, he turns away from her and walks over to the couch while unbuttoning his RL Polo shirt.

LAUREN
(Pleading)
Mitch please. Please. I'm so, so
sorry this happened. Can you just
say something...

MITCH
I think it's better if we talk
tomorrow.

Mitch folds his shirt and lies down on the couch, pulling up a blanket over himself.

LAUREN
So...you decide when we'll talk?
And you're punishing me...?

Mitch looks very annoyed, but also sad.

MITCH
(Sits up again)
All right. Fine. I'm starting to
doubt we're on the same page,
especially maturity-wise...

LAUREN
(Interrupting)
Uhh, you're so "MATURE" now huh!?
Try "SQUARE"! Try "CONFORMIST"! Try
"REPRESSED", Try...

MITCH
(interrupting, very angry)
Shut the FUCK UP!! You're drunk!

Lauren goes quiet and looks stunned, and confused. She stares at Mitch and then she puts her head in her hands. After awhile she says;

LAUREN
You're right. I am acting weird.
I'm so fucki'n lost right now.

Lauren gets up and moves across the floor and kneels down by Mitch on the couch. Mitch's look is softening, just a tiny bit.

LAUREN
We're from different planets...
(Mitch and Lauren both nod
slightly, in agreement)
But even if we don't understand
each other, we should respect each
other...
(Whispering, with
emphasis)
I apologize...

Mitch's angry face is gone, but he looks even more sad.

MITCH
You're great Lauren. I know you
are. But...I can't see...

LAUREN
...a future for us?

Mitch doesn't answer.

LAUREN
We probably don't really fit each
other....it's not like I can't see
that...

Lauren pauses, looks down for awhile, then looks up at Mitch.

LAUREN
Whatever happens now...I want you
to know...I think you're a great
guy Mitch Van Bureen...

Lauren reaches out for his hand and he takes it. They lock eyes and both look emotional. Lauren climbs up on the couch next to Mitch and puts her arms around him. Mitch leans his head on hers and closes his eyes, he then turns his face towards her and they begin to kiss, an intense, desperate kissing. Lauren pulls her top over her head and Mitch lays her down on the couch. They eagerly undress each other and within a few seconds, he's inside of her.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. MITCH VAN BUREEN'S APARTMENT IN NORTH BERKELEY, CA -
NEXT MORNING (YEAR 2000)

Mitch and Lauren lie entangled on the couch, they're sleeping heavily. The phone (landline) starts to ring. It keeps ringing for a long time before Mitch finally moves and gets up to grab the phone.

MITCH
(Tired, slurring)
Yes...?

LIZ
(O.C)
Hi....is this Mitch?

MITCH
Yes. Who's this?

LIZ
(Insecure, distressed)
I'm Lauren's sister...Liz...is
Lauren there?

MITCH
She is...she's sleeping...

Lauren opens her eyes and says;

LAUREN
(dazed)
Who's that...?

Mitch hands the phone to her.

MITCH
It's your sister.

Lauren looks concerned and sits up suddenly as the grabs the phone.

LAUREN
Liz?!

There's a moment of silence before Liz replies;

LIZ
(Breathing heavily)
Mom.....
(begins to sob)

LAUREN
(panting, looking
terrified)
What?! Liz!!!

LIZ
(crying)
She's gone....it happened so
fast....

Lauren drops the phone on the floor and falls down like she's losing control of her limbs, and she just cries out;

LAUREN
(With deep, guttural
sounds)
Noooo...NOOOOO...NOOOO...NOOOOO..
..NOOOOOOOO!!!!

Mitch falls down on his knees next to Lauren and puts a hand on her back while he picks up the phone with his other hand.

MITCH
(To Liz)
What's happened? Is her mother...?

LIZ
(Hoarse, strained voice)
She died during the night...

MITCH
(Gasping)
Oh my God! I'm so sorry!

Mitch leans over Lauren and tries to hold her while she continues to moan in complete shock, repeating "No" over and over.

MITCH
(To Liz)
She's in shock here...

LIZ
Take care of her please, have her
call me when she calms down...

MITCH
I will. OK...

Mitch ends the call and wraps his arms around Lauren who's curled up on the floor, still repeating "No, No, No" in complete agony.

Mitch and Lauren stay on the floor and Lauren keeps crying out, primal sounds of devastation. In between the crying and moaning she keeps on repeating the "No No No", endlessly. Mitch just holds her, and he doesn't let go. After some time Lauren quiets down a little bit and she whispers, hoarsely;

LAUREN
Don't leave me Mitch! Please don't
leave me...

Mitch caresses and kisses her head.

MITCH

I won't. I'll stay with you. I'll
be here OK? I'll stay with you.

Lauren remains curled up on the floor in something that resembles a yoga "child's pose".

CUT TO:

INT. FOUNTAIN HEALTH GYM, LA, - AFTERNOON - 22 YEARS LATER,
PRESENT DAY

Soundtrack Music:

Lauren (43) is in a child's yoga pose on the floor during a yoga class at her gym. Natural light is flowing in from the big side windows.

Lauren (and the class) switches positions to:

- Shoulder stand
- Fish pose
- Bow position

(Superimposed TITLE: Regenerate)

As Lauren settles into the Warrior position, the two women on each side of her does the same. Lauren, LIZ and SKYLAR all look straight ahead with focus and determination.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. FOUNTAIN HEALTH CLUB GYM, SAUNA - LATER

Soundtrack music:

Lauren, LIZ (48) and SKYLAR (41) enter the sauna at the Health Club wearing white towels. As they enter, the two women occupying the sauna get up and exit and as they do so, Skylar and Lauren discreetly fist pumps behind their backs as to say; *Yes! They're leaving* and the three women slump down on the benches, having the sauna to themselves. Skylar immediately drops her towel and seats herself in a lotus position. Lauren lets her towel drop to only cover her lower half, but Liz keeps her towel wrapped around her.

SKYLAR

(To Lauren, playful smile)
I've been wanting to touch your ass
for a long time. You think you'd
let me?

Lauren bursts out laughing.

LAUREN

Why you wanna do that?!

SKYLAR

Why are you strutting around with
those perfectly shaped buns of
steel if Mitch is the only one who
gets to touch them? I mean...I just
want to know what they feel like...

Lauren's laughter fades. She exchanges a quick glance with
her sister Liz.

LAUREN

I'll let you touch my ass when I've
put my tights on again, OK?

(Pausing, looking down)
You'd be the only one with that
privilege...

SKYLAR

(concerned)
Seriously...? No ass-touching...?

LAUREN

Nothing.

SKYLAR

How long.....?

LAUREN

A year...something like that...

Skylar looks at Lauren, now very serious.

SKYLAR

I had no idea it was that bad...
So...you're not only living
apart...temporarily..are you...?

LAUREN

(interrupting)
I really don't know.
(Shakes her head, sighs)
(MORE)

LAUREN (CONT'D)

Last time he came home I tried to talk to him but he gets....y'know, angry...

Lauren looks at Liz again who gives her an empathic nod, and Lauren continues;

LAUREN

The real problem now is that I've stopped caring, that I don't give a fuck anymore...

Both Liz and Skylar fixes Lauren with their eyes and Lauren admits;

LAUREN

OK. OK. I guess I care. I dunno...I've...shut down...

SKYLAR

The "shut-down-mode" is bad. You realize that right?

Skylar looks at Liz.

SKYLAR

(to Liz)

Liz. It's bad right? She can't go on like this?

LIZ

(Looking at Lauren)

I agree. It's killing you softly sis.

Lauren begins fidgeting with her hair, re-tying her ponytail, looking a bit distressed.

LAUREN

I...just don't know what to do...

SKYLAR

What do you want? Explain to me what you want.

LAUREN

Ohhh. I'm not sure. But I don't want this....non-marriage...

SKYLAR

Then do SOMETHING. Put things to the test. Get to the bottom of it. When he gets back tonight. Find out if it's still there.

LAUREN
Like the...?

SKYLAR
The flame babe. The fucki'n FLAME.
And not only in body...in spirit
too y'know...

LAUREN
He's
so...disconnected...disengaged...ha
rd to reach...

SKYLAR
He's met someone?

Lauren just shrugs.

LAUREN
Maybe. Possibly...
(Looking at her sister
Liz)
...Likely?

LAUREN
(looking at Skylar)
Yes. I've asked him. He denies it.
I'm not gonna play detective. I'm
so beyond that.

SKYLAR
(looks sad)
Lauren, baby...you're not that kind
of woman...

LAUREN
What woman?

SKYLAR
Who just...waits? Accepts?
Pretends?

LAUREN
(upset, ignited)
Fuck NO!

Lauren looks shaken, like it's dawning on her.

LAUREN
You're right. I get it. I need to
find out what the deal is...between
us. He's not gonna do it. I have to
do it.

Liz and Skylar just look at Lauren with serious and empathic faces. Lauren wipes the sweat off her forehead and bolts up from the bench.

LAUREN

I'm done.

She exits the sauna. Liz and Skylar exchange a glance, then they get up and exit too.

CUT TO:

INT. FOUNTAIN HEALTH CLUB GYM, RECEPTION DESK - LATER

Lauren, Liz and Skylar walk up to the reception desk at the gym where AIDAN (21) is manning the reception. The three women look serious and a bit sullen as they look at Aidan and lean on the desk.

LAUREN

We have some complaints.

AIDAN

(blank, disengaged)

Oh, you do?

LAUREN

Uh-huh. The sauna is too warm. And the showers are too wet.

AIDAN

Right. Anything else?

LIZ

The gravitational pull is too strong in here.

AIDAN

Mmmm.

SKYLAR

I also find that the density of pheromone-particles is too high, which is disrupting.

AIDAN

(even tone,
expressionless)

You want a compensation in the form of a reduced membership fee?

The women are nodding.

AIDAN

Well you're shit outta luck on that one. Suck it ladies. I'll give you free samples of sublingual vitamin B12 tabs. Here you go.

(Placing three tiny sachets in front of them on the desk)

Have a wonderful day y'all.

The women look dead serious with just a hint of playfulness as they rip open the sachets in one synchronized motion and place the tabs on their tongues.

SKYLAR

How long before they start to kick in?

AIDAN

When you realize that the customer is always wrong, you know they're working. It's like a truth serum basically.

Before they turn to leave Lauren says to Aidan;

LAUREN

Dad's coming home at like seven, remember? You'll be home by then?

AIDAN

I will mom.

Lauren gives Aidan a warm smile and blows him a kiss, and the three women head for the exit.

CUT TO:

INT. THE ALTMAN FAMILY HOME, WEST SEATTLE, KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON, (YEAR 2000)

Soundtrack music:

Lauren is sitting in the kitchen in the house where she grew up. She is wearing a black formal dress and her hair is tied up in a bun. People are moving in and out of the kitchen wearing funeral attire. Her sister Liz and her boyfriend Mitch sit close to her at the kitchen table, talking to each other. Lauren is staring straight ahead, with an empty expression, her mind is somewhere else. Lauren fixes her eyes on the kitchen counter and stove while she hears the (muffled) ongoing conversation between Liz and Mitch. She's having a flashback to a moment years earlier.

INTERCUT (Flashback vision)

-- Lauren (14) and her mother ELAINE are standing at the kitchen counter.

LIZ

(O.S)

Yeah, I've applied for a transfer,
the J.D program at Berkeley is very
similar...

-- Elaine is showing Lauren how to braid strips of pie dough.

MITCH

(O.S)

So are you aiming for the corporate
field or...?

LIZ

(O.S)

Most likely family law...

-- Lauren watches attentively and then takes over. As she's leaning over the pie and focuses, her mother moves behind her and ties up her hair with an elastic hair band.

LIZ

(O.C)

Where are you going?

MITCH

(O.C)

My first choice is London Business
School...

-- Elaine keeps caressing Lauren's hair affectionately and Lauren smiles and puts her hand on top of her mother's hand resting on her shoulder.

LIZ

(O.C)

Well those courses in new
technology should give you an
enormous advantage...

END INTERCUT

Lauren's eyes well up and she suddenly gets up from her chair and leaves the kitchen.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. THE ALTMAN FAMILY HOME, PARENTS BEDROOM, WEST SEATTLE -
LATE AFTERNOON, (YEAR 2000) - MOMENTS LATER

Liz opens the door to her parents' bedroom upstairs. She scans the room and is about to close the door again when she registers that Lauren is standing inside her mother's closet. She walks up to the closet and finds Lauren standing there, with her face buried in her mother's clothes. Liz studies Lauren for a few seconds but Lauren does not move. Then Liz puts a hand on her shoulder and Lauren turns around and falls into her arms.

LAUREN
(sobbing)
I don't want to forget her
smell....

LIZ
I know... We'll pick out some
clothes and we'll save them, OK?

Lauren lets go of Liz and goes to lie down on her parents' bed, Liz follows and lies down beside her. They lie there looking at each other, their faces filled with sadness.

LAUREN
Why wasn't I here? I'll never, ever
forgive myself...

LIZ
We didn't know...We all thought
we'd have more time...

LAUREN
I should have been here with you...
(Her crying intensifies)

LIZ
(caressing Lauren's cheek)
She wanted you to stay in Berkeley,
she was so proud of you baby-sis.

Lauren just keeps her eyes closed and tears roll down her cheeks, wetting her mother's pillow.

LIZ
Mitch seems like a really nice
guy....

LAUREN
(smiling faintly)
Yeah...he is...

LIZ
Very different from..Chad...and
those other guys...

LAUREN
I thought I'd sample a different
flavor y'know...he's more your type
though...

LIZ
I dunno. Mom would say he's too
much of a "looker"...

Lauren smiles and nods.

LIZ
You're in love with him?

Lauren's smile fades.

LAUREN
In love...?
(Fixes her sad eyes on the
bedroom window)
I can't be in love now...my soul
is...black...there's just
....darkness...emptiness. I can't
really feel...anything...

Liz caresses her sister's hair.

LIZ
Did you see that counsellor?

LAUREN
I did. I'm not going back though. I
just want...
(Voice cracking up)
You.....
(Crying uncontrollably)

Liz leans over her sister and wraps her arms around her.

LIZ
I'll be there next term. We'll be
together again. You and me baby-
sis.

Lauren clings to Liz, sobbing. Liz holds her for a awhile and
then she sits up and wipes Laurens tears and streaks of
mascara with her hands.

LIZ

We better go back down again. Poor Mitch is left down there with Ucle Bob trying to get advice from him on Nasdaq trading.

Liz stands up and holds our her hand.

LIZ

C'mon. We can do this. I'll get you a Baileys on ice. Huh? C'mon.

Lauren slowly gets on her feet and Liz puts her arm around her to coax her to follow her downstairs.

CUT TO:

INT. THE VAN BUREEN HOME, ENCINO, CA, KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING
- PRESENT DAY

Lauren is unpacking groceries, filling the fridge and laying other items on the kitchen counter. She's still in her yoga outfit and she looks happy. Her phone rings. It's Mitch. She answers it immediately.

LAUREN

Hi honey!

MITCH

(O.C)

Hi Lauren.

LAUREN

You...should be mid-air now...?

MITCH

I'm gonna be late. Got caught up with a closure. I'll be home at nine thirty instead.

LAUREN

(disappointed)

Oh. I had dinner planned, told Aidan to stay home...

MITCH

(a bit annoyed)

It's not like I can help it.
(pause) So...I'll see you later OK.

LAUREN

OK...

(Realizing Mitch already
hung up on her, staring
at her phone)

Lauren stands still, she keeps her phone in her hands but just stares into space. After a few seconds she snaps back to reality and mumbles to herself;

LAUREN

Ahh fuck it!

Lauren begins to scroll on her phone and turns on a Marshall speaker in the kitchen. RATM's "Killing in the Name" blasts out from the speaker on maximum volume. Lauren continues to sort through the groceries while she nods her head to the beat and sings along. She unpacks a couple of lobsters, rinses them, places them on a board and grabs a big chef's knife. As she's stabbing the lobsters with the knife to split them in half she starts screaming out the lyrics aggressively, at the top of her lungs;

"Fuck you, I won't do what you tell me.

Fuck you, I won't do what you tell me.

Fuck you, I won't do what you tell me.

MOTHERFUCKER!!!"

She turns around from the counter and screams as she is startled to a point of a mild heart attack. Aidan and JOSH (22) are standing there, watching her, both grinning with amusement. Lauren quickly grabs her phone and pauses the loud music, then she just collapses face-down on the kitchen counter, hiding her face with her arms, in complete embarrassment.

AIDAN

What are you doing mom? Releasing
your aggression?

Lauren keeps her head on the counter, shielded by her arms.

LAUREN

(muffled, covering her
face)

You're early...

AIDAN

(walking up to the
lobsters)

Stabbing innocent lobsters are we?

Josh walks up to Lauren and puts his hand on her back.

JOSH
You're OK Lauren?

LAUREN
Mmm hmmm.

JOSH
RATM therapy is healthy. I do it
all the time.

Lauren peers up at Josh, she smiles and blushes.

LAUREN
Works best without an audience.

JOSH
(smiling warmly)
You just made my day.

LAUREN
(standing straight again)
Happy to entertain you. You want to
be fed too?

AIDAN
Yes please Mamacita. And you could
"pop open a bubbly" for us. We come
bearing good news.

Lauren just stares at Aidan and Josh with anticipation.

JOSH
I was accepted to UCSD Med School
today.

Lauren's face lights up and she moves towards Josh with her palm in the air. They hi-five and embrace and Josh lifts her slightly off the floor as she's hanging with her arms around his neck. When he lets her go there's a hint of embarrassment registering in Lauren's face.

LAUREN
I'm so proud of you! Both of you!
You're gonna be friggi'n DOCTORS!

JOSH
Aidan is. We'll see about me...

LAUREN
Oh Josh! Of course you are.

JOSH
(interrupting)
One thing at a time...

LAUREN
All right. All right.

JUMP CUT TO:

I/E.MONTAGE - THE VAN BUREEN HOUSE, KITCHEN - EVENING -
MOMENTS LATER

Soundtrack: background music

A champagne cork shoots up from a bottle held by Aidan, some champagne spills over from the bottle and Aidan quickly pours three glasses placed on the kitchen island.

Aidan, Lauren and Josh each take a glass and clink them together before all taking a long sip. Aidan pats Josh's back and Lauren smiles warmly at him.

--

Aidan is sitting at the kitchen island with his champagne glass while Josh and Lauren are at the counter preparing food, talking, joking, laughing....flirting?

Aidan is observing his friend and his mother, listening to their conversation and banter.

LAUREN
(to Josh, while opening a
brown paper bag)
Look at these babies! Came all the
way from Bavaria!

Josh picks up a very fat white asparagus and studies it.

JOSH
(knowingly, in a fake
German accent)
This is nicht the achtung
baby...it's the würost...

LAUREN
(breaking into hysterical
laughter)
Most phallic vegetable ever!!!
(Bending over with
giggles)

JOSH
(mock serious)
Prime produce like this should be
handled with care...

Lauren tries to contain herself but bursts out laughing again when she picks up the asparagus.

Aidan is rolling his eyes and begins to look slightly annoyed. He starts to look at his phone.

--

Josh and Lauren are by the stove. Josh is whisking into a saucepan while Lauren is slowly pouring melted butter into it.

LAUREN
Keep whisking, hard. Don't stop!

JOSH
I'm whippi'n it! Whippi'n it real
good!

LAUREN
It's comi'n, see? We want it
thicker...keep goi'n, goi'n...

Aidan keeps observing them but he's beginning to look a little bored, and left out.

--

Lauren and Josh are now standing by the big stainless steel barbeque outside on the patio. Lauren is just standing by the side of the grill, sipping her champagne and talking while Josh is grilling the lobsters, turning them and glazing them.

LAUREN
(contemplative, serious)
But as long as people are unaware
of any alternatives they're going
along with it...

JOSH
Totally. There's really nothing
there to challenge the dominant
ideology on this...

LAUREN
(a bit fired up)
God yes. The agenda is like
completely skewed.
(MORE)

LAUREN (CONT'D)

What people don't realize is that
it will have an impact on them
sooner or later...

--

Aidan is still sitting inside, scrolling on his phone. He's checking his father Mitch's social media account. Mitch's posts are mainly advertising high-end properties that are listed at the Van Bureen Real Estate Brokerage in San Francisco. A few recent posts are more private. Almost all of them are views of the Golden Gate at sunset with captions such as "Great evening run" "This view never gets old". Aidan's brow is furrowed. Why is his dad spending his evenings around Crissy Field when he lives in Bayside Village?

Lauren and Josh are back at the kitchen counter plating food and chatting.

JOSH

(to Lauren)

Are we stacking here? Sauce as a
base or like, doused?

LAUREN

I'll give you full creativity.
Should we pair this with a Riesling
or a Gewürtztraminer?

JOSH

Uuuh. Tough choice. What have you
got?

LAUREN

I'll show you.

Aidan is now immersed in his father's posts. He keeps going back and checking all his social media activity during the last months. Every single "like" or comment he checks, a myriad of profiles. Aidan keeps checking, although he doesn't know what he's looking for. In the background, Josh and Lauren keep talking, "playing restaurant".

JOSH

(Yelling, to Lauren)

Where's the starch!?

LAUREN

(by the deep fryer)

3 out on the fries!

JOSH

We need to run these now, they're gonna be dead plates!

Aidan has found a profile that keeps him lingering. Ashley Davis. Early-mid 30's. Blonde. Attractive. Marketing, account executive and analyst. Fitness freak. Socialite. Apparently from Woodside. Aidan keeps looking at a picture of her posted 8 days earlier. She's posing in runner's tights and a baseball cap at the Wave Organ. The sun is low. Aidan switches back to his dad's account. Mitch has posted a picture of himself at the exact same spot, at the exact same time. Who was the photographer? Mitch's post has 62 "likes" one of them is Ashley Davis. Aidan puts his phone down. He looks tired and sad, leaning his head in his hand. Suddenly Lauren stands next to him, putting her arm around him and giving him a quick peck on the cheek.

LAUREN

Don't despair! Dinner's ready now.
C'mon baby boy, let's eat!

Aidan gives her a sad smile, gets up and follows her.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE, FLIGHT FROM SFO-BUR - EVENING

Mitch is seated in a aisle seat on a packed flight bound for LA. He looks tired but restless. He discreetly glances at the male couple sitting next to him. They're leaning on each other, holding hands. Mitch pulls out the in-flight magazine from the pocket in front of him and he starts to turn the pages absentmindedly. His eyes land on an advertisement for the London Business School. He keeps staring at the ad but then closes the magazine decisively and puts it back in the seat pocket. He leans his head back and closes his eyes. He has memories of -

CUT TO:

INT. MITCH VAN BUREEN'S APARTMENT IN NORTH BERKELEY, CA -
EVENING, (YEAR 2000)

Mitch opens the door to his apartment. It's pitch black so he switches on the light. He's carrying a take-out pizza carton. As he's moving further inside the apartment he's startled as he realizes Lauren is lying in his bed. She's awake.

MITCH

Oh, you're here. Were you sleeping?

LAUREN
(switching on the bedside
lamp)
No. Where have you been? I've tried
calling...

MITCH
I went to The Cheesetable with
Scott and Ryan, didn't realize my
phone went dead...I brought you a
double cheese with basil.
(Extending the carton
towards her)

LAUREN
(Sitting up in bed,
smiling faintly)
Thanks....

Mitch sits down on the bed next to Lauren and studies her. He
looks serious, and a bit sad.

Lauren opens the carton, takes a slice and bites into it.

MITCH
Did you go to class today?

Lauren just shakes her head. Mitch keeps looking at her.

LAUREN
I didn't feel well...and I'm
failing Lit Theory anyway...

Lauren chews slowly and looks sad and apprehensive, she wants
to say something but she's hesitating. When she opens her
mouth, Mitch starts speaking first;

MITCH
(Excited)
Me and Scott got accepted to the
LBS exchange program, we're going
to London!

Mitch is smiling, but also looks a bit guilty.

Lauren's face falls. She looks shattered. She puts her pizza
to the side and gives Mitch a hug while saying;

LAUREN
Congratulations. I know you really
wanted to...

MITCH
(enthusiastic)
They have the best strategy courses
in the world...
(Seeing Lauren's sad face)
You knew from the start I had this
planned...

Lauren swallows and looks down then she looks up at Mitch
with tears in her eyes, looking scared.

LAUREN
I think I'm pregnant.

Mitch's eyes go wide. Horror registers in his face and he
shoots up from the bed.

MITCH
(With disbelief)
Nooo.

He keeps staring at her.

MITCH
Please tell me you're joking.

LAUREN
You know how I kinda passed out
this weekend? Well, today I've felt
so faint and nauseous like all day
and I went down to the pharmacy on
Henry Street, and I asked this kind
lady there if she could recommend
something and she told me to buy a
pregnancy test and...

Lauren reaches out for three pregnancy test sticks lying on
the bedside table and holds them out towards Mitch who kind
of recoils.

LAUREN
(voice breaking)
They look positive....see? There
are two lines on them...

Mitch seems to be forcing himself to look at the tests. He
can see the lines on them.

MITCH
You're on the pill?!

LAUREN
(crying)
I've been so messed up...I must
have forgotten to take them...

Mitch's hands fling up to his temples and he spins around,
away from her.

MITCH
FUUUUUCK!!!!

Mitch remains turned away from her and he seems to be
catching his breath, then he turns back to her and sits down
on the bed next to her. They look at each other with fear and
sadness. Mitch puts his hand on Lauren's arm.

MITCH
I'm sorry...

Lauren leans forward and flings her arms around Mitch.

LAUREN
(sobbing)
I'm sorry too! I'm sorry...

Mitch pulls away and looks at her, gravely.

MITCH
This must be...so early...you had
your period like...
(He's trying to recall)

LAUREN
Yeah, like after Easter...

MITCH
You can get an appointment
tomorrow. I'll go with you.

Lauren stares at him with confusion.

MITCH
I think you'll be able to have it
done really soon, it won't be that
big of a deal...

LAUREN
What? An abortion?

Mitch's face registers horror again.

MITCH
Yes....

Lauren just shakes her head a little and falls down on the bed, curling up in a fetal position.

MITCH
(caressing her arm)
Lauren? I mean...you realize
anything else is...

LAUREN
(almost whispering)
I don't think I could do that...I'm
not sure...

Lauren looks at Mitch who keeps staring at her with disbelief and panic in his eyes.

LAUREN
I mean...You should go to London.
I'll just...move back home...I
dunno. You should just go on with
your life and...

MITCH
(interrupting)
And what? Forget that I have a kid
somewhere?

LAUREN
I guess...?

Mitch gets up from the bed and walks towards the door.

LAUREN
(sounding weak,
vulnerable)
Where are you going?

MITCH
Out. To get some air.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE MITCH VAN BUREEN'S APARTMENT ON THE STREET,
NORTH BERKELEY, CA - EVENING - MOMENTS LATER (YEAR 2000)

Mitch rushes out of the small apartment building. He looks stirred, flustered. He halts on the sidewalk and looks left, then right. He begins to walk swiftly in one direction, then halts, spins around, walks in the opposite direction. Suddenly he stops again. He pulls his hands through his hair and he just sits right down on the curb, like his legs go weak and can't support him. He just sits there, resting his head in his arms, breathing heavily.

A MAN who walks by on the sidewalk slows down and looks at Mitch, unsure if he should check on him, but after registering his Tommy Hilfiger chinos and Ralph Lauren shirt the man walks up to Mitch and leans down towards him.

MAN

Are you OK there?

Mitch slowly looks up at the man as if awakened from a dream.

MITCH

Yeah....no...yeah...I'm OK....

(Waving his hand at the
man)

Thank you....

Suddenly Lauren appears behind the man on the sidewalk.

LAUREN

(to the man)

I'm his girlfriend...

MAN

Oh, OK then...

(swiftly walking away)

Lauren puts her hand on Mitch's shoulder but he remains still, on the ground, resting his head in his hands. She sits down beside him on the curb, and they sit there quietly without touching.

LAUREN

Mitch...seriously...like, I
wouldn't blame you if you
just...y'know...moved on.

Mitch just shakes his head.

LAUREN

I want us to be honest...you've
been ready to move on for some
time...

MITCH

(Sighs)

It doesn't work like that. At least
not in my world. And my world was
just turned upside down.

LAUREN

So is mine....

Mitch just keeps shaking his head.

MITCH
 Whatever you want from
 me...whatever you need...I can't
 give it to you...now.

Mitch gets up from the curb.

MITCH
 I'm sorry. I have to go for a walk.

As Lauren also stands up he adds;

MITCH
 Alone.

Lauren just watches Mitch as he turns away from her and continues to walk down the sidewalk, without looking back. She remains frozen, watching him disappear around the corner at the intersection. Then she walks back into the apartment.

CUT TO:

I/E. THE VAN BUREEN HOUSE, ENCINO, CA, GARDEN PATIO - EVENING
 (PRESENT DAY)

Soundtrack Music:

Lauren, Aidan and Josh are sitting in the outdoor sofas. They're drinking, talking, laughing, playing music. Lauren is high spirited, animated, a bit tipsy.

LAUREN
 (loudly, overriding the
 music)
 This baseline is a complete rip-
 off! It's a steal!

Aidan and Josh look at her blankly.

LAUREN
 You can't hear it?
 (No response)
 Gaaahhh! Can't believe the Stones
 are not suing them! This is "Under
 my thumb"! Listen!

Lauren switches the song and plays "under my thumb" to prove her point.

JOSH
 That IS a rip-off! For sure. You
 know your Rock'n'Roll Lauren!

LAUREN
(grinning)
My brain is chock-full of useless
trivia.

AIDAN
That's true.

LAUREN
Pathetic. It's like "gimme Sauces
200", "Nordic Noir 600", "Grunge
Rock 800", trying to impress two
med-students! Jeeez.

JOSH
I'm not a med student yet...

LAUREN
What's up with the negative
thoughts Josh?

Josh suddenly looks troubled and a bit sad.

LAUREN
Sorry...I didn't mean it like
that...

JOSH
It's OK. But it's not a given for
me that it's actually gonna happen
y'know. The finance bit is far from
resolved, for starters...

There's a moment of silence.

LAUREN
Maybe I can help...somehow...
(Thinking hard)

JOSH
(stern, yet polite)
No Lauren. Thank you, but a
definite no.
(Trying to sound up-beat)
Tonight we're just celebrating the
fact that I GOT IN!
(High-fiving Aidan)
It would never have happened
without this fucki'n mega-brain
right here!

Aidan is shaking his head.

JOSH

No! It's the truth! Your mom needs to hear this bro.

(Smiling warmly)

I wouldn't have made it this far without you. Never.

(Looking sincere,
emotional)

You're more than a buddy, more than a study-buddy, you're...a fucki'n academic Kahuna, whippi'n my ass when I really needed it...

Josh gives Aidan a hug.

LAUREN

Aaaawww. This mother's heart is just overflowing with pride!

AIDAN

(rising up from the sofa)

This is getting sappy...

LAUREN

Where are you going?

AIDAN

(mock annoyance)

Take a leak.

LAUREN

Get us refills while you're at it...

AIDAN

(While walking towards the house)

We need to take off soon mom...

LAUREN

(to Josh)

Oh yeah, when does the concert start?

JOSH

Around ten. You should come with us!

LAUREN

No. Thanks.

(Laughing)

That would drive Aidan nuts!

JOSH
(smiling)
So what?! You'd love this band!

LAUREN
I'm sure I would, but it's not
happening. Not tonight.

Lauren and Josh go quiet. The mood has changed. Josh locks eyes with Lauren and there's suddenly a tangible sense of attraction in the air. Lauren's unable to hold his gaze, she looks down and she shivers, which he notices.

JOSH
(intimately, softly)
You're cold?

LAUREN
Mmm, it's chilly...

Josh takes off his flannel shirt, takes a quick sniff at it, and passes it to Lauren.

Lauren hesitates slightly but accepts it.

LAUREN
(putting on his shirt)
Thanks...

Lauren wraps the shirt around her and curls up on the sofa, leaning her head back.

LAUREN
(cautiously)
If you change your mind
about...like, if you need...

JOSH
I won't.
(Smiling, then thinking)
Thing is...I'll be honest here...

LAUREN
I like honest.

JOSH
I know.
Well...it's not only the lack of a
trustfund that's the problem...

Josh exhales and pulls his hand through his long hair.

JOSH

Getting into Stanford Med School
was...really not that hard for
Aidan...

LAUREN

Well...no. The boy has photographic
memory. And he's so friggin
smart...it makes me think there
must have been a mix up at the
hospital when he was born. Then
again, The Van Bureens are
doctors...

JOSH

And the Kendalls are not.

LAUREN

Yeah but Josh...

JOSH

(interrupting)

No. I know what you're gonna say,
but...don't...

LAUREN

OK. I won't. I'm not qualified to
give advice anyway. But if you
wanna just...talk. I'm here y'know.

JOSH

(Relaxed smile)

Or...make a sauce...

LAUREN

Yeah...or stab some "innocent
lobsters"...

JOSH

...or to handle the asparagus...

Josh is grinning and reaches for the guitar lying beside him.

JOSH

I want you to sing "Black".

LAUREN

Nooo...Aidan's the singer, not me.

JOSH

Remember we had that little sesh
when we were here for the
Superbowl? I want to hear you sing
it again...

Lauren hesitates and shakes her head a little, but smiles shyly.

Josh puts the guitar in her lap. Lauren puts her fingers around the neck of it but gazes towards the house before she tentatively strums the first chord. She pauses and looks at Josh.

JOSH

Please.

Lauren begins to play and sing. She sings softly, with a smooth, deep and melodic timbre. Josh rests his head on his arm and holds her with his gaze.

LAUREN

(singing)

"Sheets of empty canvas, untouched
sheets of clay...lay spread out
before me, as his body once
did...."

Lauren's looking over Josh's shoulder and suddenly stops singing as she sees Aidan coming back out accompanied by Mitch, realizing what took Aidan so long. Mitch comes up to Josh and extends his hand.

MITCH

Hi Josh, heard the good news!
Congratulations. Well done.

JOSH

(Shaking his hand)
Thanks Mitch.

MITCH

Aidan says you're heading out...

AIDAN

Yeah, Josh we should get going...

JOSH

(standing up)
Right...
(turning to Lauren)
Thanks for...everything...
(Bending forward to hug
her)

LAUREN

(silently)
My pleasure....

Josh turns to leave and follows Aidan who's already a few steps ahead. Josh turns his head and locks eyes with Lauren one last time as he walks away.

LAUREN
(to Mitch)
Hi there.

Mitch remains standing.

MITCH
(Dryly)
Having a little party here?

LAUREN
(furrowed brow)
What do mean?

MITCH
Every time I come home I find you
drinking with our son and his
friends.

LAUREN
Drinking?! Is that what you see?
I'm fortunate to spend time with
him. Something that you don't do a
whole lot of.

MITCH
For fuck's sake. Don't gimme that.

LAUREN
This is the second time you come
home in three months!

Mitch just gives her a dismissive wave and turns to leave.

LAUREN
Seriously Mitch! Don't walk out on
me. We need to talk.

MITCH
I'm exhausted. I'm going to bed.
(continuing to walk away)

LAUREN
(almost yelling)
I've saved dinner for you...

MITCH
Ate at the airport.
Good night.

Lauren watches him walk into the house. She looks hurt, and disappointed. Suddenly she realizes that she's still wearing Josh's shirt. She pulls at it and exclaims;

LAUREN

Shit!

She reaches for her phone on the table and quickly types a text.

Lauren now looks sad. She gathers up all bottles and glasses on the table and walks inside.

CUT TO:

INT. COBRA CLUB ROCK VENUE, LA - LATE NIGHT - LATER

Aidan is standing, beer in hand, at bar table in a very crowded back patio behind a rock club venue. He's observing Josh who's chatting with a GIRL, close by. She's giving Josh a cigarette and lights it for him, and he's trying to give her a \$5 bill but she refuses to accept it. Josh gives her a thankful nod and a smile and returns to Aidan.

AIDAN

When are you gonna kick your filthy habit? Before or after your residency at the lung clinic?

JOSH

Ha! You're mistaking me for a smoker, when I'm merely someone enjoying an occasional cigarette, from time to time.

AIDAN

Whatever. She's still eyeing you. She'll come over here. I'll give her two minutes. Tops.

JOSH

Opening act way better than the headline, right?

AIDAN

Fuck yes. Would have been great if we wouldn't have missed more than half of their set. But you'd rather stay with Lauren...

JOSH

(laughing)

Awww, you sound jealous!

AIDAN

Get your own mom or something...
(under his breath, looking
over Josh's shoulder)
Uhh, here we go...

The GIRL who gave Josh the cigarette comes over to them.
She's smiling and touching Josh's arm. When he turns to her
she says;

GIRL

Hiii...sorry, I just want to ask
where you got this T-shirt?
(Touching his "Temple of
the Dog" band T-shirt
with her fingertips)

JOSH

Oh, this one (looking down on
it)...yeah, I honestly don't know.
My girlfriend gave it to me.
(smiling politely)

Disappointment registers in the girl's face but she tries to
hide it.

GIRL

Oh! OK, that's cool.

After a split second of awkwardness, the girl goes back to
her friends.

AIDAN

(to Josh)
Francesca didn't give it to you did
she?

JOSH

Uh-huh. I bought it on e-bay.

Aidan gives Josh a wry smile.

AIDAN

What does Fran think of you moving
back to SD?

Josh shrugs and takes another drag on his cigarette.

JOSH

The odds of that happening are
pretty slim...

AIDAN

Aww c'mon Josh. You're not a quitter! The money issues can be...fixed..

JOSH

(interrupting)

Aidan, I know. But it's going to take so much more than money to take me all the way to an MD. I'm not just out of money. I'm out of motivation. I'm not feeling it anymore.

AIDAN

Well I'm not "feeling it" either, it's not like it's my "calling", I've just failed to come up with anything else, so I keep following my grandparents' plan...

JOSH

Yeah. And I'd do the same thing if I were you. If I had the money and half your brain...if my grandparents "had a plan" for me, I wouldn't wait around to be "inspired" or some shit. I'd just get the fucki'n degree y'know...

Josh stubs his cigarette, rubs his temple and looks thoughtful. And drunk.

JOSH

You know what's been driving me up to this point? The fuel I've been burning to get here? It's revenge.

Aidan is nodding and listening.

JOSH

I was gonna show my drunk-ass-loser of a father and my psychopath stepfather that they hadn't destroyed me, that they were wrong about me. I wanted to make them sorry that they left me and abused me. I was gonna be the son they wish they had but could never get back!

(Pausing for air)

Know what I mean?

Aidan looks serious (and drunk) and keeps nodding empathically.

JOSH

Well...you don't know what I mean do you...I mean...you have a dad, who gives a shit about you, who wants to support you...

AIDAN

He's not like he's the perfect dad you think he is...

JOSH

Of course he's not, but he never left you, or treated you like shit...

AIDAN

There's so much more to him than what meets the eye. Believe me.

JOSH

OK. I hear you. Well...for me, I'm running out of fuel, which, in a way, is a good thing, because I'm not as angry as I used to be. I'm mellowing y'know. And, I'm realizing I need to do my own thing. But I havn't figured out what I really want cause I've been so busy living up to ...expectations that I WISHED they'd had on me but that they never had...arrrrrghhh...fuck! I'm not making any sense!

AIDAN

(hooking his arm around Josh)

Ahhh! Come here bro. Just...let it out.

Josh is patting Aidan's back, leaning on him.

JOSH

You've got it all bro. A fucki'n trustfund, synapses firing at the highest level,
(Rubbing Aidan's head)
And like...a real family...

AIDAN
(Dryly)
I'm one lucky son-of-bitch.

JOSH
(Grinning)
I wouldn't call her that.

AIDAN
Stay the fuck away from my mother.

JOSH
(laughing, amused)
You're so cute when you get wound
up!

CUT TO:

INT. THE VAN BUREEN HOME, ENCINO, CA, LAUREN'S BEDROOM - LATE
NIGHT

Lauren's coming out of her bathroom. She's wearing a tight tank-top and panties and she's rubbing lavender-lotion on her hands. She climbs into her bed and checks her phone on the bedside table. There's a message from a number not saved as a contact. It reads;

"Guess I'll have to come back soon to get my shirt *smiley* thanks for everything" *red heart*

Lauren smiles. She saves the number as "Josh" and puts the phone back on the bedside table. Then she leans forward and grabs his flannel shirt lying at the foot end. She holds it to her face and smells it with her eyes closed. Suddenly she kind of snaps back to reality, exhales and tosses the shirt back to the foot end and switches off her bedside lamp.

CUT TO:

INT. THE VAN BUREEN HOME, ENCINO, CA, KITCHEN - MORNING -
(PRESENT DAY)

Lauren is sitting at the kitchen table writing on her laptop when Mitch walks in, wearing compression tights, shorts and a t-shirt.

LAUREN
(looking up from her
computer, smiling)
Good morning! Sleep well?

MITCH

Good enough, thanks. Aidan not up?

LAUREN

He had a late night...

MITCH

(reaching for a mug and
the coffee pot)

I'll give him 10 minutes. I'm going
with him to Fountain Health, he
starts at 10.

LAUREN

Oh, good. You want eggs?

MITCH

Sure...

Lauren gets up and starts to pull out things from the fridge.

LAUREN

I just saw that you have a listing
in Ashbury Heights!

MITCH

(Disengaged)

Hmm yeah, that one...

LAUREN

It looked perfect! You remember how
we used to fantasize about living
there?

MITCH

Mmm. Well I really don't have time
to deal with these things yet.
It'll have to wait...

LAUREN

You've been in SF for 6 months
already, and Aidan's gonna head up
to Stanford soon enough...my job
can be done from there...I just
want to get started...with the
whole...process...

MITCH

And I'm telling you it's too early
cause I'm completely swamped.

(MORE)

MITCH (CONT'D)

I'm still working day and night up there, getting our share of the market, trying to recruit top-end agents and to secure new listings...

LAUREN

I know! But I'll do the work. You know that. How many houses have we bought and sold? How many times have we moved?! I know how to do this shit.

Lauren starts to whisk the eggs in a bowl and puts a pan on the stove. Mitch keeps standing, leaning his back on the counter, arms crossed, looking lost in thought.

Lauren suddenly stops whisking and looks at Mitch.

LAUREN

If you don't want us to continue to live together, now is a good time to say so.

MITCH

(annoyed)

You always do this Lauren!

Lauren gives Mitch a gesture as if asking *what?!*

MITCH

Giving me some guilt trip when I can't do a full 180 as fast as you want me to...

Lauren looks doubtful but says nothing.

MITCH

It's not like you've craved my company or anything...I thought you were happy here, in your own little world...

LAUREN

(upset)

In my "LITTLE WORLD"?!

MITCH

Like when we had the Launch Party back in November...

LAUREN
(interrupting)
I had the final deadline for
Verdict S5! I'm actually a writer
now! On top of everything else! I
get paid to write!

MITCH
(Sarcastic)
That must be fulfilling Lauren. To
be able to realize your
professional dream. It's a luxury
not to be taken for granted.

Lauren says nothing, she just looks at Mitch with sadness.

MITCH
(Eyes diverting away)
You really don't want to be there
for me. Not for corporate events,
not for...anything...And forgive me
if I'm starting to get used to it.

Lauren walks up to Mitch and touches his arm. Mitch doesn't
move but meets her eye, his expression softening just
slightly.

LAUREN
This is why I want to move up to
SF, I want us to...reconnect...

MITCH
You don't want to be left here once
Aidan leaves, that's what I think.

Lauren keeps looking at him, now with a vulnerable
expression.

MITCH
You want to be close to him. And
you'd like to share a house with me
in Ashbury Heights. But you'd
rather not sleep in my bed. Right?

LAUREN
Oh...Mitch.
(Her eyes soft, sad)
How am I to know if you want me to?

Lauren is standing right in front of Mitch, holding his gaze.
He uncrosses his arms and allows Lauren to hold his hand.
There's a tension between them, both of them uncertain of how
to act, hesitating to make a move, then Lauren puts her hand
on his chest and lets it travel up to his neck.

It triggers an almost explosive reaction from Mitch who forcefully pulls her close to him and kisses her, and Lauren wraps her arms around his neck and presses up against him. They kiss with intensity, urgency and they both start to tug at each other's clothes as they breathe heavily. Suddenly Lauren pushes herself away from Mitch as she sees Aidan come in. She looks at Aidan just as his startled face registers a mix of surprise, disgust and embarrassment.

AIDAN
(with slight repulsion)
Awww my God...
(He turns on his heel to
walk away)

LAUREN
No! Come back! I'm making eggs and
toast!

AIDAN
(Already out of the room)
Don't have time for that mom.

Mitch quickly downs his coffee and gives Lauren a stiff smile. He turns but then freezes and decides to give Lauren a peck on the cheek, somewhat awkwardly. He mumbles;

MITCH
See you later...

Mitch follows Aidan and Lauren is left alone in the kitchen, looking puzzled and breathless. She absentmindedly smooths her hair with her hands and stares at the kitchen entryway. Then she seems to snap back and turns to continue her egg-whisking.

CUT TO:

INT. L'ANGOLO RESTAURANT, DINING ROOM AND KITCHEN, LA -
EVENING (PRESENT DAY)

Josh is waiting tables at L'Angolo. He's taking orders at a large table, collecting the menus from the guests. He's repeating some of the orders back to them to make sure he's getting it right.

JOSH
(To the guest)
That's a medium-rare tenderloin,
sauce on the side...
(Looking at another guest)
(MORE)

JOSH (CONT'D)

Extra veg, no fries...and I'll be
bringing you your drinks right
away, OK?

Josh is smiling at the guests and turns to walk away carrying
the menus when he is stopped by the Maître d'.

MAÎTRE D'

You're switching stations with Ana.
(Seeing Josh's questioning
look)

You need to wax table 2. Owners and
family just arrived. Your
girlfriend's in the party...

JOSH

(surprised, concerned)
I didn't know they were coming
in...?

MAÎTRE D'

They weren't booked, I had to do a
brutal turn & burn to accommodate
them...

JOSH

OK. I'll take them. They got menus?
(Maître d' nods)

Josh walks up to the large table where the restaurant owner
GIUSEPPE is seated with Josh's girlfriend FRANCESCA, her dad
LUCA, among several other family members. Josh kind of braces
himself and speaks up to break through the chatter.

JOSH

Good evening folks. How are we
doing here?

LUCA

(loud, self-assertive)
Jason! Good to see you!
(extending his big hand to
shake Josh's)

FRANCESCA

(embarrassed)
Dad!!! It's JOSH!!!

LUCA

(as Josh shakes his hand)
Apologies! Josh! How are you son?

JOSH

Very well, thank you sir.

Josh takes a step towards Francesca and gives her a quick peck on the cheek. She's beaming.

LUCA
Francesca tells us you're going to
med school?!

JOSH
Well, yeah...

LUCA
Congratulations! Good to hear
you're not planning on waiting
tables here forever huh?!
(Gesturing towards his
brother Giuseppe)

JOSH
No, but I am tonight, so I'm happy
to take your orders if you're
ready?
(Looking around the table)
As you can see we have two
specials..

LUCA
(interrupting)
Why is there no Veal Piccata on the
menu?!
(shouting to his brother
across the table)
Giuseppe! Why no piccata!?

Giuseppe just shrugs indifferently. Luca turns to Josh again.

LUCA
Why take something like that off
the menu?! Everybody LOVES piccata,
no?!

JOSH
I will ask the kitchen if they can
make the piccata, if that's what
you'd like to have?

LUCA'S WIFE
Nooo!!! He can't have piccata!!!
Luca!! Your cholesterol!!!

GIUSEPPE
(shouting to Josh)
Give us four bottles of Nebbiolo
Josh!

LUCA'S WIFE
He'll have the fish! The halibut!

Josh is just nodding in all directions, trying to keep up.

LUCA
Nooo! Shush! I want ravioli! OK
Josh?!

GIUSEPPE
Me too! Make them bring out a bowl
of freshly grated PR, and white
truffle oil!

GIUSEPPE'S WIFE
Excuse me! Can I have the Halibut?!
Sauce on the side.

LUCA
(gesturing with his arms)
Why don't you sit down with us
Josh?! We'd like to get to know you
better...

JOSH
(trying to remain calm and
polite)
Thank you Mr. Cappellano. First I
need to make sure you get your
drinks and that they're firing
everything in the kitchen. I'll be
right back.

Josh walks away promptly and when he reaches the wine
cabinets at the back of the restaurant he realizes Francesca
has followed him there.

FRANCESCA
(Smiling, eyes glowing,
touching his arm)
Hi....

Josh smiles and glances over her shoulder before he quickly
cups his hand behind her head and kisses her.

JOSH
Didn't know you were coming...

FRANCESCA
Neither did I. Dad just said he
wants you to come to dinner at our
house, maybe you can get next
Sunday off...

Josh turns and starts to efficiently look through the wine cabinet, pulling out bottles to check the vintage.

JOSH

OK...that's nice. Doubt I'll be able to change shifts with such short notice...

FRANCESCA

It would mean a lot to me if you did...the fact that they want you to come...

JOSH

Well they've waited almost a year to invite me, so perhaps they can wait another few weeks...

FRANCESCA

But Josh you know...

JOSH

(interrupting)

And perhaps by then your dad would have actually learned my name...

FRANCESCA

Oh, don't take it personally, he's got early-onset dementia...

JOSH

But he did remember that I've been accepted to med school...

FRANCESCA

(a bit wounded)

They're beginning to realize that we're serious, and they want to welcome you into our family...y'know the big crazy OTT stereotypical family...the one you actually told me you were jealous of...

JOSH

(smiling warmly)

I need to get them their wine before they start to have second thoughts all right?

Josh and Francesca walk back to the table with the wine. Francesca sits down and Josh skillfully opens the bottles with his wine key and pours a taste for Giuseppe who just motions for him to pour him a full glass.

As Josh continues to pour wine for the other family members around the table Luca observes him closely and asks him loudly;

LUCA

So is your father also a doctor
Josh?

Josh tenses up a little bit, only noticeable to Francesca.

JOSH

(Smiling politely)
No. He's not.

FRANCESCA

Why didn't you ask him if his
MOTHER is a doctor? Huh Dad?

LUCA

Oh, is she?!

JOSH

No.

LUCA

See this is what you're gonna have
to put up with!
(Smiling and motioning at
his daughter)
Our little "principessa", always
demanding equality!

Josh just smiles stiffly. Francesca looks sullen.

LUCA

Two years of graduate school!
Studying...these ideas that defy
the laws of nature!!! Huh!?!
Pazzia!

(Looking at Giuseppe for
countenance, gesturing
with one hand)

Women are wasting all this energy,
fighting for things they don't
really want, and all this
"equality" is actually harming
women. And it's making everybody
insecure! The man's role is to
provide and protect! And women are
designed to have babies. As long as
there's mutual respect there is no
problem.

Francesca is rolling her eyes and putting her head in her hands while Luca looks at Josh who's pouring the last glass.

LUCA

You see what I mean, right Josh?

JOSH

Absolutely sir. That's why it's so important that women have equal rights and opportunities when the men disrespectfully leave them to raise their children on their own, like my mother had to do.

(Looking around the table
and smiling politely)

You need anything else right now?

GIUSEPPE

Ask the kitchen if they have some pickled artichokes will you?

(turning to his wife)

My digestion is completely shot...

JOSH

Will do.

Josh exchanges a glance with Francesca and hurries back to the kitchen where there's energetic activity. It's noisy, hot and crowded.

JOSH

(to the head chef)

How're we doi'n on table 2?

HEAD CHEF

They're coming in 5.

JOSH

Giuseppe wants pickled artichokes,
we've got them?

A junior cook runs to the pantry. Josh meets the eye of NATE who's at the grill.

NATE

(almost yelling)

Heard you're serving your in-laws
out there!

(grinning)

Josh shakes his head.

JOSH

I need a smoke Nate. Can we have one?

NATE

We're in the weeds here. Later bro.
(Glancing back at Josh
from the grill, a bit
concerned)
You're OK there?

JOSH

Yeah. Unless you can give me a fast-acting Xanax, I'm gonna have to be.

Josh grabs the bowl of pickled artichokes and returns to the dining room.

CUT TO:

INT. THE VAN BUREEN HOME, ENCINO, CA, - EVENING (PRESENT DAY)

Aidan comes through the front door wearing his "Fountain Health" t-shirt. He notices Mitch's carry-on suitcase sitting in the hallway. He walks into the kitchen and sees oven trays and dishes with food on the counter and he greedily puts some in his mouth. He notices that the doors leading out to the patio are open and as he's approaching them he can hear his mother laughing. As he walks outside he sees Lauren snuggled up against Mitch on the outdoor sofa. As they realize he's there they pull apart and sit up straight but both look happy and relaxed, in fact, his mother is beaming and flashing him a wide smile.

LAUREN

Hiii baby boy! So glad you're here!
Dad's about to take off...
(Looking at Mitch)
In what? Ten minutes?

Mitch glances at his watch.

MITCH

Yeah, I'll order an Über now.
(Grabbing his phone on the
table)

LAUREN

I was hoping you'd get back before
daddy left.
(Seeing Aidan's
questioning look)
(MORE)

LAUREN (CONT'D)

Can you sit down with us for a couple of minutes?

Aidan sits down and looks at his parents, waiting for Lauren to continue. She glances sideways at Mitch who's finishing the taxi request on his phone.

LAUREN

(Excited)

Your dad and I have made the decision to put the house on the market.

Mitch just meets Aidan's eyes and nods to confirm.

LAUREN

So...we're gonna start looking for a new place in SF, quite soon.

Lauren awaits a reaction from Aidan but is not really getting one, his expression is blank.

Mitch puts his phone down and continues;

MITCH

We're taking the leap. Going back to the roots. So that the umbilical chord doesn't have to be stretched quite so far...

(Grinning)

LAUREN

Ha ha! Just when you thought you could escape your mommy! She's coming after you!

AIDAN

OK...

Lauren looks a bit perplexed.

LAUREN

"OK"? Is that all you've got? Does this feel weird to you? You're gonna miss the house...?

AIDAN

I don't care about this house. It's all good.

MITCH

See Lauren, he doesn't care. No need to project any feelings on him.

Mitch checks his phone and stands up.

MITCH

(To Aidan)

Let's try to book a court and get a game in next time I come home huh?

AIDAN

Sounds good Dad.

(Meets Mitch in a short embrace)

Lauren stands up and gives Mitch a hug and he kisses her on the cheek but she gives him a look as in; *you can do better* and he also gives her a kiss on the lips. Mitch walks into the house and Lauren sits back down and turns to Aidan. Aidan keeps staring at the door where his dad just disappeared and seems to be lost in thought.

LAUREN

Aidan...what are you thinking...?

AIDAN

Honestly?

LAUREN

I like honest. So yes, honestly.

AIDAN

I actually thought you and Dad were like...splitting up...

Lauren looks down and nods slowly.

LAUREN

Right. Yeah....we've been in a bit of a slump...for some time...but since we've been apart, I feel like we've both got a new perspective...started to miss each other y'know...

(Smiling)

This is what we need! A fresh start!

AIDAN

A new house...?

LAUREN

Yeah....

(Growing insecure)

Your dad and I do love each other, and I have a feeling that things can only get better now...

Aidan just looks at her with a faint smile, his eyes showing sadness and empathy.

LAUREN
(Emotional)
We're still a family Aidan, even if
you're like...flying out of my
nest.

Aidan remains quiet but leans forward to give her a hug.
Lauren looks cloud nine happy and like she doesn't want to
let him go.

LAUREN
(When Aidan pulls away)
You want mama bear to fix you a
plate little cub?

AIDAN
Yes please. And a beer for the
little bear.

LAUREN
(Getting up)
You've got it. Free-range chicken
with home-made pesto...

AIDAN
Yum.

Aidan is left looking deeply thoughtful. He puts his head in his hands and pulls his hands through his hair. He's in agony and is contemplating something. Suddenly he pulls out his phone from his pocket and he looks at a search hit. It's the contact card for Market Analyst Ashley Davis at the Cole & McKinnick Marketing Strategy Consulting Agency. The profile photo shows a young woman with ash blonde hair and very white teeth. Her smile is both professional, yet alluring. She looks clever. Energetic. Well bred. High maintenance. Underneath is her cell phone number. Aidan mutters to himself;

AIDAN
Ah...fuck it!

And then he calls her. After two signals she picks up.

ASHLEY DAVIS
(O.C)
Yes?

AIDAN

Hi! I'm Rob calling from FedEx. I'm on my way with documents for Mitchell Van Bureen that needs to be signed and returned to the sender. Is he there now?

ASHLEY DAVIS

He's not, but he'll be home in...about two...two and a half hours...

AIDAN

He'll be home at 9?

ASHLEY DAVIS

Definitely. If his flight is not delayed or anything...

AIDAN

(Interrupting)

I'll call ahead to make sure. Thank you.

(Hangs up)

Aidan slams the phone down on the couch beside him and cries out;

AIDAN

The FUCKER!!!

CUT TO:

I/E. MONTAGE - ASHLEY DAVIS' APARTMENT, SF / AIRPORT TAXI, LA / L'ANGOLO RESTAURANT, LA / THE VAN BUREEN HOME, ENCINO, CA, GARDEN/POOL - EARLY EVENING (PRESENT DAY)

Soundtrack music:

Josh sits down at the table at the L'Angolo Restaurant, between Francesca and her father Luca. Luca is grinning and raising his glass to make a toast with Josh. They drink, and Luca is patting Josh's back, quite forcefully. Underneath the table, Francesca reaches out for Josh's hand. He holds her hand, and glances at her sideways. He's smiling, but there's a hint of helplessness in his eyes.

Ashley Davis is sitting at her dining table in her San Francisco apartment. She's working on her laptop and she's calling someone. That someone does not pick up. Ashley frowns and puts her phone down. She closes the window on her computer and opens up her photos. Photos of Mitch fills the screen.

Mitch at the board walk, Mitch on Muir Beach, Mitch in her bed. She suddenly closes the lid on her laptop and begins to pace the room.

Mitch is in the back of a taxi on his way to the airport. He's getting an incoming call from "Ashley Davis" but he's muting it. Instead he's typing a text for "Lauren", it reads; "just spoke to the sellers and they're showing us the Ashbury Heights house on Friday, can you come up?" *red heart*

Lauren is sitting on a sunbed by the pool. Right beside her, her phone lights up with a message from Mitch. Lauren sees it and she looks furious as she flips the phone so that she can't see the screen. She turns her head back to look at Aidan who's sitting opposite her on the other sunbed. Lauren's expression shows a mix of shock, devastation and disbelief. She reaches out for Aidan's hand and he takes it as she puts her other hand up to her face and tears well up in her eyes. She shakes her head and looks like she's having an inner conversation with herself and then tears begin to stream down her face. She puts her other hand on top of Aidan's hand and she looks down on their hands. Suddenly she retracts her left hand, looks at the diamond ring she's wearing, and in one swift motion, pulls it off her finger and forcefully throws it in the pool. They both stare at the surface of the water for a moment before Lauren looks back at Aidan and smiles through her tears. Lauren stands up and turns to walk back to the house. Aidan gets up and follows her and puts his arm around her shoulders. Lauren puts her arm around his waist and leans on her son, much taller than her. They walk inside the house together.

FADE OUT.