

FADE IN:

INT. CAR - DAY

A car inches through bumper to bumper traffic, a parking lot of impatient weekenders attempting to escape the city. Beyond the rolled-down windows, a desert canyon.

WE HEAR multiple VOICEMAILS, overlapping with the passing scenery.

BEEP.

WOMAN (V.O.)
Hi, this is Sandra O'Connell of Misers, O'Connell and Dolt calling back regarding representation.

In the distance, a valley of WINDMILLS - hundreds of them - their spires turning excruciatingly slow.

WOMAN (V.O.)(CONT'D)
Unfortunately, your husband has already been in touch and as is our policy, we're unable to engage in litigation with you. Best of luck.

CLICK.

WE SEE the ENGINE LIGHT flashing on the dash, the TEMPERATURE GAGE reading a hot 109 degrees.

BEEP.

MAN (V.O.)
This is Dan at LA Family Law calling for Desmond O'Brien. I received your request, but we've already been in contact with David.

CLICK.

CLOSE ON DES, 30s, behind the wheel. Frustration mounts on her sleep deprived face - a pen inking a sneaky BLACK MARK around her mouth as it leaves her lips - to cross out the long list of potential LAW FIRMS on a notepad.

WOMAN (V.O.)
--Since California confidentiality laws prohibit us from engaging with same parties--

CLICK.

EXT. DOWNTOWN PALM SPRINGS - CONTINUOUS

The sun-flared view of main street casts a very California glow over the scene.

BEEP.

MAN (V.O.)
--We've already spoken to David and--

WOMAN (V.O.)
--Unfortunately we're unable to represent you at this time.

BEEP.

WOMAN (V.O.)
Desmond O'Brien. This is Avery Walker, your soon to be ex best friend. Where the hell are you?

WE SEE: A STATUE of SONNY BONO, whacky SCULPTURES, randomly placed on corners and at bus stops.

AVERY (V.O.)
I don't know if you're ghosting me or still recovering from your "suddenly single" party around the world, but call me back already.

WE PASS BY: A patio adorned with PRIDE FLAGS, a commingling of BEARS and their BEARDS, signs pointing towards THE MOVIE COLONY neighborhood.

AVERY (V.O.)
I WILL pull my bride card if you bail. I WILL come find you.

DES
I can't...

AVERY (V.O.)
You can do this.

AVERY
Please Des, you only get married once.
(beat)
Wait, that's not, I didn't--

Des abruptly ends the message, reluctantly CRANKS her wheel--

INT. THE BUCK SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Des drags a roller cart down the dollar store "PARTY FAVOR" aisle, grabs PLASTIC TIARA'S, SASHES, MARDI GRAS BEADS, inappropriate THINGERS and DOODADS.

She drops them down on the checkout counter, her face churning with anxiety as the CASHIER, 20s scans the items. He's says nothing of the blob.

CASHIER
Bride, or bridesmaid?

DES
(pointedly)
Unwilling participant.

He smirk-scoffs, continues to ring her through.

CASHIER
Ah OK, you're one of those...It's cool. Not everyone's cut out for that kind of commitment.

Excuse me!? She leans in, peers at his NAME TAG--

DES
Can I give you some advice, *Blaze Johnson* comma *Manager*? Never get married. Ever. Monogamy is a manmade construct. In reality, it's just not viable. Wandering dicks isn't some hereditary caveman right, or some badly coded carnal DNA. It's an excuse for supreme cowardice. And really, when you think about it, if 50% of marriages end in divorce, and 20-40% of those divorces are a result of infidelity, then what's the point of committing in the first place?

With an unaffected smile--

BLAZE
I actually believe in the constructs of marriage. I think it can work, if you want it to.

Off Des, utterly offended--

DES
Only if *both* people want it to.

She grabs her bags, readies to leave--

BLAZE
Alright, but you still gotta pay.

Des doubles back like a total asshole, slides her card through the reader. She steals a look at Blaze who watches her with a smug little smile.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

Would you maybe want to hang out sometime?

DES

No I do not wanna hang out sometime. Why would you even ask me that?

She lingers for an awkward beat, then--

DES (CONT'D)

Your name sounds like a pornstar's...

-- And she's out the door.

CUT TO:

PRE LAP: EXT. STREETS - CONTINUOUS

DES

Heeeeeeere I am...!

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

DON'T RAIN ON MY PARADE plays at max volume as Des drives.

DES

I'll march my band out. I will beat my drum--

She's in it, singing along as the AC begins to WHIR.

DES (CONT'D)

And if I'm fanned out, your turn at bat, sir, at least I didn't fake it hat, sir, I guess I didn't make it--

She ignores it as the dash LIGHTS UP with warning icons, the ENGINE TEMPERATURE ICON menacingly flashing RED.

DES (CONT'D)

Get ready for me, love 'Cause I'm a commer--

But even that's not going to kill her vibe - not the SCREECHING sounds coming from her car, or the SMOKE that's beginning to billow from the hood.

DES (CONT'D)

I simply gotta march, my heart's a drummer--

She takes a right, a GUARD BOOTH and BARRIER ARM in her sights leading to the gated GLASS STONE ESTATES community.

WE PULL BACK to see the full-view of our CAR - a weighed down PRIUS - sputtering towards the entrance. Des veers over to the side of the road, readies for the finale--

DES (CONT'D)

Nobody, no, nobody, is gonna rain on my paraaaaade!

-- Just as the car completely dies.

Through the WINDSHIELD, WE SEE Des release an inaudible scream. Beat. Composure.

She slinks out, shuffles towards the UNMANNED booth, clocks a SECURITY CAMERA MONITOR flipping between views of the entrance, a row of parked GOLF CARTS.

Into her phone:

DES (CONT'D)

Call Minnie Castevet.

No answer. She huffs back over to the car, straps on her overstuffed TRAVELLER'S BACKPACK. Des and takes the FOOTPATH through the unguarded pedestrian entry into--

EXT. GLASS STONE ESTATES - CONTINUOUS

The hot sun pounds on her, sweat further smudging the menacing BLACK BLOB, as she labors past the cookie-cutter midcentury homes.

The LAWNS are abnormally green, perfectly manicured - save for the DIRT DIVOTS, the curious stacks of discarded LEMON and LIME TREES.

A CAR takes up pace with Des, an older FEMALE DRIVER casting a nasty-ass glare.

FEMALE DRIVER

Is someone expecting you?

Des curtly smiles back--

DES

Yeah.

(beat)

My mother.

The woman's eyes squint with suspicion as she drives off. Des
- with an obnoxious wave and plastered smile--

DES (CONT'D)

Have a nice fucking day!

CUT TO:

TITLE: P.S.

EXT./INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A GOLF CART'S parked out front of the house, this abode
looking just like all the others, citrus tree holes and all.

Des pushes though the unlocked door; the interior's
completely bananas. It's hard to distinguish whether it's
kitsch-cool or just plain ugly.

DES

Hello?

No answer. She moves around the house--

DES (CONT'D)

Norma?

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

She drops her bag, takes in the BEAV and WEEN MOULD CASTS
that fill the room--

DES

The fuck?

A woman's LAUGH pulls her attention out into--

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

-- Where she sees a MAN, 60s lounging back in a pool chair,
completely naked. Nestled between his legs, the back of a
WOMAN'S greying head.

DES

Oh my god!

The Man jerks forward, scrambles to cover himself as the woman - NORMA, 60s, turns--

NORMA

Des! What the hell are you doing here?

Des struggles to respond, her gaze locked on the CLAY PLASTER CAST moulded over his junk--

DES

You knew I was coming!

The Man grabs a nearby towel--

NORMA

I thought you changed your mind.

Des averts her eyes.

DES

Why, exactly?

Norma, draped in a colorful kaftan, scrolls through her PHONE--

NORMA

This.

Des looks at an INSTA PHOTO, the CAPTION: #PALMSPRINGSPRETTY.

Above it, a pic of handsome DAVID, 30s, lovingly embracing a SUPER HIPSTER CHICK, early 20s: *the girl bares an uncanny resemblance to Des.*

DES

That's not me.

(beat)

That's her.

Norma turns the phone towards herself, zooms in--

NORMA

I could have sworn...Well he definitely has a type, doesn't he.

DES

Jesus Norma.

Des skulks back inside, Norma following behind.

NORMA
Just stop for a second.

She turns to her, expectant.

NORMA (CONT'D)
You got a little schmutz on your
face...

Des wipes her cheek; Norma mirrors. She wipes the other
cheek, misses it again. Norma licks her thumb--

NORMA (CONT'D)
Just let me do it.

Des darts away, grabs a rag from the fully stocked WET BAR.
She scrubs at it as the Man sheepishly reappears, clears his
throat with obvious want of their attention--

NORMA (CONT'D)
Oh, I'm sorry! This is my daughter
Desmond. She's just returned from,
Portugal?

DES
Spain.

NORMA
Right. This, is Walter. My lover.

With a shy smile, and a grossly misplaced Italian accent he
attempts to speak Spanish--

WALTER
Bienvenido a casa. Escuché que
España es hermosa en esta época del
año.

Off Desmond and Norma deadpan, silent --

WALTER (CONT'D)
What? Did I not say it right?

DES
(in Spanish- with a smile)
Your grasp of the Spanish language
is as underwhelming as that tiny
mould on your dick is.

Walter beams as Norma pokes behind the towel--

NORMA
(exuberantly)
Hard as a rock! A little tug and
that should pop right off.

As he lumbers away, Norma does her best "maternal."

NORMA (CONT'D)
I really wasn't expecting you. I
assumed you'd be by at some point,
but I saw that photo and I just
thought you changed your mind about
staying at the hotel with the girls
this weekend.
(beat)
And I guess, I was hoping that you
changed your mind about David too.

DES
What? After what he did? No.
Marriage, dead. Hopes and dreams,
dead. Divorce, alive and not going
well.
(beat)
And other than the fact that I'm
broke as fuck and more depressed
now than I was before I left, I'm
fine. I am totally fine.

NORMA
That reminds me.

She digs through her purse, pulls out a BUSINESS CARD--

NORMA (CONT'D)
They're hiring. Full-time,
salaried. None of that commission
only crap. Call her. *She* is
expecting you.

DES
"PS Realty. Give in to the desert."
I don't want work in real estate.
That was really David's thing, not
mine.

NORMA
I suggest you make it your thing.
You don't want to do it forever,
fine, but right now it could be an
opportunity to un-fuck yourself.

Des pockets the card just as THE DICK MOULD SUDDENLY APPEARS
IN FRONT OF HER FACE.

WALTER (O.S.)
Uh, what should I--

Walter - now dressed in a SECURITY GUARD UNIFORM - holds out the bulbous cast. Norma takes it from him--

NORMA
Oh Walter. He's beautiful.

He blushes, tentatively leans in to kiss Norma who swiftly offers him her cheek.

NORMA (CONT'D)
Walter, until recently, lived with his mother too.

WALTER
Not because I had to--

Off Des: cue death stare

WALTER (CONT'D)
-- I mean, I was happy to. I'd been saving up to get her into a seniors home here.

NORMA
Poor thing. Touch of the dementias.

Walter turns to Norma--

WALTER
I better get back to my post.

DES
Can I grab a ride? My car's at the gate.

NORMA
Why?

DES
You mean, aside from the fact that no one was there to let me in? It's dying. Like everything else in my life.

Norma gives her a squeeze--

NORMA
I've missed your dramatics.

Des's phone RINGS--

DES
(to Walter)
One sec?
(answers flatly)
Hello?

WOMAN (V.O.)
Desmond? This is Marcy Smithe at
Smithe Law returning your call--

DES
-- And you've already spoken to my
husband and can't take me on.

MARCY (V.O.)
We actually haven't spoken to him.

She moves through the house, into--

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Des closes the door behind her, eyes the ELITE BRIDAL GARMENT
BAG hanging on the back. She hits SPEAKER MODE:

DES
Oh. You must be the last firm in
the state he hasn't contacted.

MARCY (V.O.)
Sounds like things are contentious.

She unzips the bag, steals a quick look at the soft GREEN
dress.

DES
He left me, kicked me out of our
house, cut me off and filed for
divorce. Took me off the company
health insurance plan too. And I
know California is a no fault
state, but I feel inclined to share
that it's 100% his fault that his
dick ended up in--

MARCY (V.O.)
-- So no preup then?

Des zips the bag back up.

DES
Nope.

MARCY (V.O.)

Are you working?

DES

Not yet. I took some time off,
spent the last three months abroad -
eating too much and praying that
I'll love myself again.

(beat)

I was a realtor at David's
brokerage.

MARCY (V.O.)

OK. I would recommend getting
yourself steady and finding a job
as soon as possible. Judges like to
see that.

(beat)

Have there been any agreements made
in terms of attorney fees? That
obligation generally falls on the
petitioner.

DES

Well, he used to make me invoice
him for my half of our life
together, and then docked what I
owed from my commissions, so.

MARCY (V.O.)

Noted. We've got some work to do.

DES

You'll take me on then?

MARCY (V.O.)

Yes. But first we need to discuss
my retainer. My fee is five grand--

DES

Upfront?!

MARCY (V.O.)

Generally, but if you're unable to
do the whole payment at once, I
could do half right now, then the
rest in say, a week from today?

DES

(beat)

Yeah, yup. I can do that.

MARCY (V.O.)

Great. I'll have my office send
over the info. Talk soon.

The line goes dead. Des pulls up a BANKING APP on her phone,
groans at the BALANCE: \$3048.03

EXT. GLASS STONE ESTATES - CONTINUOUS

Des rides shotgun in the golf cart, spots a stoop housing a
gaudy GOLD PLATED GREAT DANE STATUE.

DES

Please hold!

She jumps out, takes a SELFIE - the dog in the background -
types the CAPTION: CHIC OR SHIT? She jumps back in, posts it
to INSTAGRAM as Walter carries on.

WE SEE more of the estate: The COMMUNAL POOL area, a diverse
group of RESIDENTS swimming and tanning. LANDSCAPERS digging
up more LIME and LEMON TREES...

DES (CONT'D)

What's that all about?

WALTER

Gardeners weren't cleaning their
tools between cuts, cross-
contaminated the Meyers.

DES

Desert inbreeding...sexy.

WE ZIP along the fenced-in PICKLEBALL COURT, a foursome of
lady retirees in the middle of an intense "dink-off," a
twenty-something total STUD coaching them from the sidelines.

A sudden THWACK against the side of the cart sees Walter
SLAMMING on the brakes, a BROWN LEMON rolling into the road.

WE SEE, the mean-leering WOMAN from earlier-- 70's, OUISER
BOUDREAUX reincarnate, dressed in PICKLEBALL ATTIRE -
threateningly gesticulating with her PADDLE.

WOMAN

Walter. What is the point of having
security if no one is there to
secure the property?

WALTER

Mrs. Obenmeyer--

MRS. OBENMEYER

I understand that "to serve and protect" isn't exactly the motto of a career desk cop, but surely you'd have enough pride to apply its meaning here.

WALTER

Won't happen again.

MRS. OBENMEYER

As head of the HOA, I have the power to replace you. Which I am *this close* to doing if you continue to suck at your job.

She's a real treat! Walter drives on as Mrs. O turns her glare to Des, silently admonishes.

EXT. GLASS STONE ESTATES - CONTINUOUS

Des sits in her car, cranks the engine to no avail. She dead.

WALTER

I can call someone, have them come out and take a look.

DES

How much is that gonna cost?

WALTER

Estimates are usually free. Parts and labor is where they get you.

DES

Great, well. If you don't mind?

He nods as Des begins to load up with whatever she can carry. Obviously struggling, Walter tosses her the cart KEYS.

DES (CONT'D)

(sincerely)

Thanks.

INT. DES'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sweating, winded, Des drops the last box on the floor. She peels off her t-shirt and makes a beeline for--

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

-- And walks straight into the pool. She sinks to the bottom, stays here until she can't hold her breath any longer.

When she rises, she finds Norma standing above her, two GIANT MARGARITA GLASSES at the ready, a plate of tooth-picked COCKTAIL WIENERS and OLIVES in her hand. She dips her legs in as Des perches up on the ledge.

NORMA

Redo? Trying a new concoction for our community mixer tonight.

Des concedes, clinks her glass with Norma's.

NORMA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about earlier.

Norma lovingly swoops the wet hair off of Des's face. She surrenders, closes her eyes, then--

NORMA (CONT'D)

The weight looks good on you.
(beat)
Are you sleep-eating again?

Off Des, gobsmacked.

NORMA (CONT'D)

I wouldn't blame you if you were. Although, after all that therapy I paid for, you'd think you would have learned to curb the impulse.

Des kicks off from the wall as Norma reminisces.

NORMA (CONT'D)

Your childhood nighttime adventures redefined Neighborhood Watch. People knocking and calling to say they'd seen you here, or they'd found you there - sleeping under a car or splayed out in a backyard - once in the middle of the road - jam and chocolate faced, looking like you were bleeding to death. Or you'd shit yourself.

Tiring, Des turns on her back, floats--

NORMA (CONT'D)

Of course I blame your father. It all started after he left, so I wouldn't be surprised if this divorce was stirring up some kind of unresolved daddy complex.

Unable to drown her out, Des calmly gets out of the pool; *she doesn't have the energy for this fight.*

INT. UBER CAR - NIGHT

Des sits in the backseat, looking her best, her bag of bachelorette treats in hand. The DRIVER turns to her--

DRIVER

Should I circle the block again, or...

DES

No. I just need a minute. Another one.

A few meditative breaths before she hops out and heads into--

INT. PS REALTY - CONTINUOUS

Des enters the small office, finds a WOMAN (70s), professionally eccentric eating a SANDWICH at her desk.

DES

Hi, sorry to interrupt. I know it's late, I was just hoping to--

The Woman waves her hands, ushers her in. Mouth full--

WOMAN

Come in, come in! How can I help?

DES

I'm Desmond O'Brien. Norma gave me your card, said you might be looking to bring on a new agent?

WOMAN

Of course, yes, hello!

The Woman stands, reaches out her hand--

RONNIE

Veronica Rhodes -- Ronnie, pleasure.

She looks Des up and down, takes in her party attire--

RONNIE (CONT'D)
You look just like your mother.
She's great isn't she?

DES
Yeah, she's a real trip.

Ronnie offers Des half her sandwich--

DES (CONT'D)
I'm fine, thanks. Have a dinner
thing--

Beat. Des reconsiders--

DES (CONT'D)
Actually, sure.

She takes a bite, continues.

RONNIE
So you've just moved to Palm
Springs?

DES
Apparently.
(beat)
I'd been focused on the LA market,
but PS is booming-- I actually have
some clients who might be
interested in revisiting buying
here. I know how stingy some agents
can be about sharing lists, but I'm
not like that. There's no buyers
market without a team of sellers,
am I right?

RONNIE
I like your style. I'm sure we're
not as competitive as you're used
to, and we work a little
differently here.

DES
Norma mentioned-- salaried?

RONNIE
That and, well truth is, I'm really
looking for a partner more than an
agent. I'm old. I'd like to see
this place land in good hands
before I'm dead.

DES

I see...

RONNIE

So what do you say? Will you join the team?

DES

Just like that? Don't you want, like proof that I can do this?

RONNIE

I'm eager to get someone started as soon as possible, and your mother spoke very highly of you.

DES

She did not.

RONNIE

She did.

She reaches out her hand--

RONNIE (CONT'D)

So how about it. Let's try each other on.

Off Des, full of smiles as we--

CUT TO:

INT. CLUB MISTY - NIGHT

The club is dark and lush, a throwback to '50's Hollywood.

Des finds her friends, five beautiful WOMEN who have the "got it together" look down. She's greeted with a SHRIEK from AVERY, 30s, conservatively pretty--

AVERY

You made it!

-- Is attacked with hugs, looks of pity, overlapping words of support.

THE WOMEN (VARIOUS)

Welcome back! / How're you holding up? / You deserve so much better / You're way prettier than her...

And so on. Des smile-brushes them off--

DES

I'm fine!

She sits next to Avery, notes her glow; *her happiness is completely impossible to hate*. Des pulls a "BRIDE" TIARA out of her bag, places it on Avery's head.

DES (CONT'D)

Tonight isn't about me.

She presents a PENIS SHAPED GLOW STICK with a twisted smile as the others raise their glasses. She CRACKS it, cocks her head, the moment suddenly clouded with disappointment--

DES (CONT'D)

Christ my mother ruins everything.

(beat, then--)

To the future Mrs. Walker-Chang!

They cheers their bride as a WAITER stops at the table, doles out menus. Des's face drops at the sight of the prices...

AVERY

Thank you so much for being here.
It means everything to me,
especially since you have, you
know, stuff going on. I couldn't do
this without you.

(beat)

I'm just so happy!

Fuck. She really is. Des straightens out Avery's tiara--

DES

What kind of MOH would I be if I
didn't show? Tonight's on me...

(beat...beat)

Whatever you want.

CUT TO:

A MONTAGE OF DEBAUCHERY, unfolding with the frenetic speed of a cocaine trip:

-- Drinks arriving to the table, BOTTLES OF WINE, GLASSES OF CHAMPAGNE

-- Dainty-plated DISHES, overpriced molecular gastronomy-inspired creations

-- More drinks, these one downed on the dance floor where the women dip and dap like wild things unleashed

-- Another club, dancing, the chemical glow of PEEN STICKS

-- Laughter, stumbling legs, unsteady stances, duck-faced selfies

-- ANOTHER CLUB, this one more "UNCE, UNCE, UNCE-Y..."

-- The women dominating A MEXICAN FOOD TRUCK, sour-creamed faced, double-fisting TACOS. As Des chows down, a SCREECH--

She turns to see Avery jump-hug EVAN CHANG, 30s. With him, his GROOMSBROS, including David. Des - in total shock - chucks her taco, frantically looks around for an out.

DES (CONT'D)
Goddamnit Avery!

She crawls "incognito style" over to a CACTI BUSH, ducks behind it, totally exposed. David curiously watches, takes a few amused steps towards her then stops, just as a TAP lands on her shoulder. She turns around to see--

BLAZE
Hey...you.

DES
Miracle pornstar!

He offers his hand; she flings herself into his arms.

DES (CONT'D)
Get me out of here.

With one saucy look back, she drags Blaze off with her as we--

CUT TO:

BLACK

Hazy light filters in through slits, the opening and closing of EYES. When they're fully opened, WE SEE the not quite dawn sky, PALM TREES towering overhead.

EXT. GLASS STONE ESTATES - POOL - DAY

We LAND ON Des, sort of awake, on a FLOATY.

She sits up with a jarring start, steadies herself on the wobbling inflatable. Her hands STICK to the plastic, a WHITE GOO covering her tips. Des pries them off, curiously smells her fingers.

Panic begins to take hold as realization sets in: she looks down at herself - barefoot and fully PAJAMA'D - at the giant GOLD DOG STATUE on the deck across from her. Des paddles toward it, pokes it; *it's really there.*

DES

Oh my fuck...

EXT. GLASS STONE ESTATES - CONTINUOUS

With surprising stealth, Des races against the rising sun, traipses through backyards, around poky succulents.

She spots Mrs. O - standing on her stoop in a night robe - KISSING the pickleball STUD.

NORMA'S SIDE YARD - CONTINUOUS

Des darts toward to the PATIO off her bedroom - her spastic MATRIX-LIKE maneuvers landing her RIGHT FOOT deep in a citrus tree hole.

She can see her BED - a near-empty BAG of MARSHMALLOWS - just feet away through the sliding glass door. She vaguely tries to free herself before she gives up, and passes out.

EXT. NORMA'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Walter pours coffee for Norma's guests EDWARD and his partner NEIL, 60s, visibly worked up.

NEIL

Can we look at the security footage?

WALTER

Uh well, we could - if we had any cameras beyond the entrance. Or a real-time feed and record system.

NEIL

Well fuck me proper. There goes the neighborhood.

EDWARD

Who was on duty last night?

Walter takes a seat behind Norma, his she-woman shield--

WALTER

Me, 'til midnight. Then Lois.

EDWARD

So, you work...10 AM to midnight -
14 hour shifts - seven days a week?
When do you sleep?

NORMA

Never, if I can help it.

*WINK WINK

NEIL

Walter. Excuse my math, but it's...
(he checks his phone)
10:22 now.

Walter waits for more, until he gets it. He LEAPS up, sprints
out of the backyard.

NORMA

He's a new soul.

NEIL

He's a fetus. Honestly Norma, I
don't know what you see in him.

Desmond, looking like she's waged a dump-truck war, appears--

DES

She preys on fragility. It's more
fun tearing them down once you've
built them up.

Norma chortles, a twinge of embarrassment, perhaps.

NORMA

Edward, Neil - this is my daughter,
Desmond. Or what's left of her.

Des pours herself a cup of coffee. Neil extends a hand, Des
MUG-TAPS back,

DES

What's up.

NORMA

What time did you get in?

DES

What time does the sun come up?

Des offers a wry smile, totally amused with her sassy self.

NORMA

Are you still drunk?

DES

Are YOU?

NORMA

My god Desmond, you're a mess.

DES

I'm not a mess. I'm sad. And there's a difference Norma.

NEIL

You want sad? Someone kidnapped our Horace...

DES

What's a Horace?

ED

Our Great Dane baby.

NEIL

Bless.

Norma leans in, softly--

NORMA

The statue on their porch.

Des chokes on her coffee.

NEIL

We memorialized him with gold-leafed love.

DES

You stuffed your dead dog?

EDWARD

Only his ashes. It's completely hollow otherwise.

It's all coming back to her, the looming bedside "stranger."

DES

Tragic...Who would do that?

EDWARD

That's what we want to know.

DES

Is that lady Mrs. O something boning the pickleball guy? I saw them being all icky with each other really early this morning.

(MORE)

DES (CONT'D)

(beat, considers)

Or maybe it was last night...

NEIL

That's old news. She pretends to keep it on the DL, but there's nothing private about their lessons.

DES

Well, is it possible...Maybe she saw something? Or someone. Hell, maybe she did it.

Ding ding ding!

NEIL

She has had it out for us since the HOA granted our request to display him.

Seed planted. She stokes her little fire more--

DES

She's all stank on Walter too. Imagine *she* stole it to make him look bad? Framed him so he'd get fired?

EDWARD

I would not put it past her.

DES

Well there you go.

She stands, moves for the door--

DES (CONT'D)

Mystery maybe solved.

INT. DES' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

She tosses the room upside down looking for her phone, anxiously waits for the charge to reboot it. When it powers on, she finds her home screen filled with MESSAGES, VOICEMAILS:

BEEP

AVERY (V.O.)

Oh my god Des, I'm so, so sorry. I had no idea they would just show up like that. Are you OK? What happened to you anyway?

DES

Good fucking question.

Des toggles over to INSTAGRAM, pulls up her selfie photo with Horace from earlier. She immediately DELETES it, sees that it's been SHARED multiple times. Double fuck.

AVERY (V.O.)

I know this weekend's bringing up a lot of shit for you but tonight's my rehearsal dinner and tomorrow is my wedding. My wedding!

She swipes back to her text messages, a curious MONIKER leading her to a chain of sent texts to: FIRE ROCKET.

AVERY (V.O.)

I need my best friend there.

CLICK.

An evidentiary timeline of PHOTOED events:

-- The girls on the town, partying

-- Avery, mascara-faced, matted hair, an "I just barfed" expression

-- a SELFIE of Des riding on Blaze's back...

AND THEN:

-- LEGS sticking up from a BUSH, Des LIMOBOING under the Glass Stone BARRIER ARM, JETÉ-ING through LAWN SPRINKLERS.

But that's it. No poolside escapades.

PRELAP:

BLAZE (V.O.)

Hi, this is Blaze. You know what to do.

BEEP

The golf cart flies up over the curb, screeches to a halt.

EXT./INT. THE BUCK SHOP - DAY

Des, on a no-fail mission storms the store, runs up and down the aisles. She calls FIRE ROCKET again--

BLAZE (V.O.)
Hi, this is Blaze. You know--

She hangs up, spots a SPEAKERPHONE on a wall. Over the PA--

DES
Ah, attention, bucker...oos. Paging
Blaze Johnson to cash register one,
Blaze to cash register one, *now*
please.

CASH REGISTER ONE

Des impatiently paces, all but tackles Blaze when he appears.

DES (CONT'D)
What the fuck happened last night?

He motions for her to lower her voice, pulls her OUTSIDE.

BLAZE
How're you feeling?

DES
Um, well Blaze. Not great. I'm
supremely hungover, that's for
sure. But what's still unclear to
me is A) how I got home, B) what
happened between us, and C) where
the fuck that dog came from.

BLAZE
A. I walked you. Mostly. You
crawled at one point.

Des stares back blankly.

DES
Was there a guard at the gate?

BLAZE
Yeah, but she was asleep. B. I just
dropped you at your place. And not
that I was looking for anything,
but you made it clear--

DES
-- No fookie for you.
(off Blaze)
Fucking. Nookie. Fookie. And C?

BLAZE
I'm not sure what you're talking
about.

DES
So you didn't see me do it then?

BLAZE
Do what?

DES
Steal that dog!

She sinks down, squats against the wall, head in hands.

DES (CONT'D)
I swear, I must've been a Nazi in
my past life because this is some
straight-up karma shit.

BLAZE
Sounds more like bad luck.

DES
Oh god, I hate myself.

BLAZE
Don't. You'll figure it out.

DES
What if I don't? What if I end up
stuck here, working at like, the
Buck Shop for the rest of my life?

BLAZE
...It's not that bad actually.

DES
Sorry--crap! You're just being
nice, when you so don't have to,
and all I'm being is a total
douche.

Blaze bends down to her--

BLAZE
It's fine. Look, I'm glad to see
you but--

DES

-- You don't need to say anything else. I 100% get it. I do not blame you for never wanting to see me again.

BLAZE

I was going to say that I have to get back into work. But if you wanna hang later, I'd be down.

DES

Why are being nice to me?

BLAZE

(grins)
I honestly have no idea.

EXT. PS STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Des zips along in the golf cart, totally oblivious to the long line of cars stuck behind her. She turns into--

EXT. GLASS STONE ESTATES - CONTINUOUS

The security booth is once again abandoned. Des parks, hides the KEYS in the VISOR, begins to hoof it back to Norma's.

Ahead, Edward and Neil's HOUSE, the two of them taking on a protective stance in front of Horace as Mrs. O berates.

Des listens in from behind a LANDSCAPER'S TRUCK--

MRS. O

If you think for one second I had anything to do with that thing--

NEIL

We just thought that maybe you saw something.

MRS. O

And why would you think that exactly?

NEIL

We heard you were up early, out and about this morning.

MRS. O

By whom?

Des's phone RINGS; she hits END but it's too late, cover blown. She straightens up, reveals herself--

MRS. O (CONT'D)
Where did you come from?

DES
What do you mean. I was out there--

She points to the "outside world."

DES (CONT'D)
And then I walked in here.

Mrs. O folds her arms, the gesture accentuating the EMERALD GOLD TENNIS BRACELET on her wrist.

MRS. O
It is supremely rude to spy on people.

DES
Couldn't agree with you more.

MRS. O
And absolutely vile to make false accusations.

DES
I would never...

Mrs. O leers at Des, squints her eyes with suspicion.

MRS. O
Walter wasn't at the gate just now, was he.
(to Ed and Neil)
You know, if you're going to go around pointing fingers, you should probably start with him.
(to Des - resolved)
Tell Walter to get it in while he can.

Des's phone RINGS again--

DES
Alright, will do. Um, I should probably get this.

She offers a sympathetic glance to the boys--

DES (CONT'D)
(to Mrs.O)
Beautiful bracelet by the way.

-- And hustles on. She turns her focus to her SCREEN, a WOMAN, 50s, professional, looks back at her--

MARCY
Desmond, hi. Marcy Smithe. Look, we've just been notified about a motion that's been filed against you, a non-compete clause?

DES
Right, that. Did I not mention it?

MARCY
No. The summons is for next Friday.

DES
That's real? I thought that date was just a suggestion.

MARCY
Desmond. This is all very real. And failure to comply could result in a judgement in his favor.

DES
Which means?

MARCY
He wins. You'll owe him. A percentage of every paycheck, your car, any assets - all go to him.

DES
No...

MARCY
Yes. I need those docs signed and sent over ASAP.
(beat)
Another thing. The clause extends beyond LA which means that until we figure this out, you're prohibited from working as a realtor anywhere within the state of California.

Des goes limp, totally numb.

MARCY (CONT'D)
Des? Did you hear me?

DES
I heard you.

INT. NORMA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Des finds her mother teaching two-left feet Walter how to Samba.

WALTER
Talked to my mechanic. Looks like
the battery's blown.

DES
Super. How much.

WALTER
2K for the part, a few hundred for
the work.

She pulls out her phone--

DES
Hey Siri, how much money can I make
selling my eggs?

NORMA
My god Desmond, that's ridiculous.
Your eggs are too old for that.

WALTER
Got you a PS local discount though,
if you can pay in cash.

DES
Thanks Walter, but you might want
to save your favors. I just talked
to Mrs. O and she real mad.

NORMA
Now what?

DES
Horace, but mostly because you're
here and not at the gate, again...

NORMA
That woman's all bark.

DES
Think she's biting this time.

WALTER
She can't have me fired, can she?

DES

I think her exact words were, "As head of the HOA, I WILL replace you."

Walter slumps down onto the couch, reality sinking in--

WALTER

Oh god, OH GOD. I need this job. My mother needs me to have this job. I can't afford her insurance without it.

Norma - barely fazed - moves to the credenza, pulls out a CHECK BOOK from her purse. She fills it in--

NORMA

Myra Obenmeyer is not the only woman who can afford to pay to play around here.

-- Proudly hands it over to Walter.

WALTER

Norma-- I can't. Not again.

NORMA

It's nothing.

A slight smile, humble gratitude as he takes it, then--

WALTER

I should get back.

NORMA

We'll keep working on those steps tonight.

Norma's all smiles as he shuffles out, until--

DES

What. The actual. Fuck. I'm looking into selling body parts and you cut *him* a check! Just like that? Classic dick before daughter move, Norma.

Norma is speechless as Des storms off.

INT./EXT. DES'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Des stands at the vanity, takes in her reflection. On the counter, a TOILETRY BAG.

Des dumps out her MAKEUP, a RING BOX spilling out with it. She holds on the WEDDING BAND and ENGAGEMENT RING, slips them on--

DES
(sotto)
For worse...

A KNOCK at the door. On the other side, Norma in an god awful HAWAIIAN-STYLE printed dress.

NORMA
Desmond? Can we talk?

Des pulls at the rings, stuck on her finger. She runs the tap, soaps up--

DES
What do you want to talk about,
Norma?

Frustrated, Des yanks at her finger--

DES (CONT'D)
That I just found out that my soon
to be ex husband is suing me over a
non-compete clause, which means, I
can't work? Or that not working
means I can't make money, WHICH
MEANS I can't afford my lawyer or
have a real fucking life again!

She pulls back the vanity MIRROR, rummages through PRODUCTS, lands on a tub of VASELINE. She smears it over her rings--

NORMA
Oh Desmond...
(beat)
You agreed to those terms, signed
that contract, didn't you?

Mind blown.

DES
A marriage is also a contract! Why
do you always choose *men* over me?

NORMA
I don't! I've always put you first.
(beat)
You can hate me all you want but I
will not take the blame for your
failed marriage. You need to take
responsibility for that.

Des gives up on the rings, the conversation.

DES
You're right, Norma. I ruin
everything, OK?

NORMA
(beat)
I hope you enjoy the party tonight.

DES
Uh huh, you too.

Des's eyes land on a BOTTLE of XANAX.

DES (CONT'D)
Goodnight Norma.

She pops of the CAP--

DES (CONT'D)
Hello blue skies.

EXT. NORMA'S SIDE YARD - NIGHT

Des - uncharacteristically calm - and Blaze pass a bottle of
booze between them. Her wedding rings bulge under her MASKING
TAPE wrapping. In the distance, a muted UKULELE echoes
throughout the grounds.

BLAZE
You really know how to rally, huh.

DES
I'm great at making bad decisions.

Beat. Des takes in the citrus tree divot--

DES (CONT'D)
I slept in that hole last night.

Des lays back on the grass, takes in the night sky.

DES (CONT'D)
What's your deal anyway.

BLAZE
My deal?

DES
Yeah. What's your story B.J.
(beat)
Oh, ha. BJ...

BLAZE

Um, well it's nothing special. I'm from Sacramento. Moved to LA for college, bailed out of college, been out here ever since.

DES

What did you study?

BLAZE

Promise not to laugh?

DES

No.

BLAZE

I was a musical theatre major, USC School of Dramatic Arts.

Des sits up, jaw-dropped, smiling.

DES

I want to make fun of you so bad but I can't because I actually love that very much.

(beat)

Why did you drop out?

BLAZE

Hated having to dissect and analyze every script, song and character. 50K a year to be told how to intellectualize my feelings, and then be graded on it? Took the fun out of it. So I left.

DES

I love that you're not even trying to be ironic right now.

(beat)

I wanted to be a triple threat. Except I couldn't dance. I have ridiculously short calves.

BLAZE

(beat)

Look pretty good to me.

Err...ready to turn the conversation.

DES

What do you know about selling jewelry around here?

BLAZE

Palm Desert has a bunch of high-end estate shops. I'm pretty sure they'll buy right on the spot if you have the certification papers.

DES

(biting)

Huh.

She steals a glance at her wrapped finger.

BLAZE

Or you could try Cathedral City. Pawn shop central.

There's a thought. Just then, a PING on her phone, a PHOTO of Avery and Evan cozy together, cheers-ing to their future: #REHEARSALDINNER.

Off Des, a noticeable cringe.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

All good?

DES

Probably not.

(beat)

You hungry?

EXT. AZURE HOTEL COURTYARD - NIGHT

FLOWERS, CANDLES and other pretty things adorn the IVIED walls and patio. Des and Blaze, underdressed and supremely out of place walk into a dinner in progress. At the head of the table, Avery and Evan, the rest of their bridal party; Des's eyes dart around, completely avoid David's.

Avery jumps up, moves to Des--

AVERY

I'm so glad you came.

-- Wraps her in a hug.

DES

Me too. And I hope you don't mind--

She gestures to Blaze.

AVERY

The more the merrier!

Avery pulls Des to the side.

AVERY (CONT'D)
You gonna be OK?

DES
Sure! Why wouldn't I be?

AVERY
Um, because other than last night
you and David haven't actually seen
each other in--

DES
-- Three months, eight days and
roughly five and a half hours.
Yeah, no, I'm good!

Des beams, joins Blaze at the table.

DAVID
Hey Des.

More avoidance.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(to Blaze)
Hi, I'm David.

DES
Don't talk to him!

David LAUGHS, his demeanor arrogantly detached, unmoved.

BLAZE
Blaze. What's up.

DAVID
Blaze? That a, family name?

BLAZE
Stage name actually. Kinda just
stuck after I gave up acting.

The SERVERS bring them their food, pour glasses of champagne.

DAVID
You and Des must have a lot in
common.

DES
Like what, failure?

DAVID
I meant, mutual interests.

DES
Uh huh, sure. So where's "Stacy?"

DAVID
Katie's at the hotel. Didn't think
it'd be appropriate to bring a
date.

DES
Big of you. Thinking about someone
other than your baloney pony for
once.

David chortles, his ego impenetrable.

DAVID
So Blaze, what do you do now?

Des protectively throws her arm around his shoulder--

DES
He manages a chain of multi-million
dollar businesses.

BLAZE
Actually, just one store. And we're
not that successful. You?

DAVID
I own a realty brokerage in LA.

BLAZE
Wow, that's impressive.

DAVID
It's not bad. I'm grateful for--

DES
-- The army of workhorses making
you rich?

DAVID
I was going to say the
opportunities that I've had.

DES
But not the people who helped make
it possible?

Hello tension. Blaze turns to Des, concerned--

BLAZE

Should we not have come here?

DES

Oh no, we're good! I'm so good.

Des throws back her drink, reaches across the table for the BOTTLE, knocks over a LIT CANDLE. Momentary chaos as a CENTERPIECE catches fire, as the guests quickly douse the flames.

AVERY

Everything OK down there?

DES

My bad! My bad!

Everyone settles, turn to their individual conversations until--

DES (CONT'D)

Did you actually file an injunction against me!

AVERY

Um, Des?

DES

You thought, hmm, maybe I'll just drive this knife a little deeper? I mean, so what if SHE built those lists! Built MY company! So what if I took 70% of her sales and fucked a better looking tighter version of her.

(beat, breaking)

YOU! You ruined everything! Not me.

AVERY

Desmond!

Avery - pissed beyond belief - abruptly stands--

AVERY (CONT'D)

The only thing ruined-- is MY FUCKING DINNER!

DES

Avery, I'm so--

AVERY

Sorry? You're always fucking sorry! You make everything about you!

(MORE)

AVERY (CONT'D)

(beat)

I think you should leave.

Blaze gently pulls at Des's arm; she rips it away.

DES

What? Are you serious? NO, no. I'll be good, I promise. I just, had a moment...please. Let me be here for you.

DAVID

You should probably just go.

DES

Oh really? Should I? Would that be convenient for you?

AVERY

For all of us! And don't bother coming tomorrow.

Stunned into submission, Des runs out of the courtyard. Blaze turns to the party--

BLAZE

(genuinely)

Well thanks for having us. Congratulations, by the way.

INT. BLAZE'S CAR - NIGHT

The car's parked just outside Glass Stone Estates.

DES

So, that was fun, huh.

BLAZE

Are you OK?

DES

Yeah. Avery will get over it. I'm sure she'll call to apologize, beg me to be there for her tomorrow.

Blaze carries on with caution--

BLAZE

What does she have to be sorry about?

DES

Are you kidding? She betrayed me by inviting him! She never should have put in me that position in the first place!

BLAZE

It's her wedding. And like she said, not really about you, you know?

DES

Oh OK, OK. I see. It's all my fault.

BLAZE

It kinda is. Des, I don't really know what that was all about, but I'm getting the feeling that if you're not happy, then no one else can be either.

DES

You know what, fuck this!

She storms out of the car--

DES (CONT'D)

You don't even know me!

Des slams the door, stalks off. Blaze jumps out--

BLAZE

Des, c'mon. Let me drive you home at least!

She doesn't turn back until the car's HEADLIGHTS disappear behind her.

She reaches the gate - the booth unmanned as always - a CEMENT BLOCKADE obstructing the footpath.

DES

FUCK!

Des tries to climb over it - around it - but no luck. Her eyes search wildly for a way in, land on the GOLF CART. She hops in, pulls the KEYS down from the visor. With eerie but determined focus, she reverses and drives head first, RIGHT THROUGH the barrier arm.

She speeds through the grounds, hits curbs, zooms over lawns until she crashes into the pickleball court FENCE.

The motor WHINES, fizzles out. Des shakes it off, cranks the key, but it won't turn over.

She steps out, takes on a stiff military stance. She clicks her heels, raises her arm in a NAZI SALUTE. A sad beat; she drops her arm--

DES (CONT'D)

Touché karma. To-mother-fucking
ché...

EXT. GLASS STONE ESTATES - COMMUNAL AREA - CONTINUOUS

The decor is a TIKI THEMED Polynesian nightmare, appropriation at its absolute worst.

Des watches the party - a CONGA LINE - from a distance, sees Mrs. O chatting it up, showing off her GOLD EMERALD BRACELET to the pickleball STUD. Edward and Neil dance together, Horace - LEI'D - nearby.

She saunters over, throws back a RED CUP of mystery juice.

NORMA

Did you see Walter when you came
in?

DES

Hello to you too, mother. My night
was great, thanks for asking!

NORMA

I'm worried. Haven't seen him,
can't get a hold of him.

DES

(to Mrs. O)

Yo lady! Did you have Walter fired
or what?

MRS. O

Well, I couldn't have him killed,
could I?

DES

There you have it!

Des struts right for the Stud. No time to react: she's got him on the dance floor, her hands locked in his. Des spins around in laughter-fueled circles, her gaze - her high - chasing the electric light-trails that zoom above her as we--

CUT TO:

INT. NORMA'S HOUSE - DAY

Des, on the couch, wakes to BRIGHT LIGHT as Norma peels back the curtains.

DES
I'm blind. I'm fucking blind!

NORMA
Desmond. Get up.

A wave of nausea as she sits up. She takes in the UNICORN ONESIE she's in, pulls a COCKTAIL WEINER out of her hair...

NORMA (CONT'D)
I still can't get a hold of Walter.

DES
Maybe Mrs. O killed him after all.

Off Norma--

DES (CONT'D)
So he's hiding out, blowing off some steam. Don't smother him.

NORMA
He never showed, didn't work last night either. And I just heard from the boys that someone broke through the front gate.

DES
Oh shit...

NORMA
Something is wrong, I know it. The whole community is losing it right now.

Norma paces, eventually sits down next to Des; she remembers her "bandaged" ring finger - jams it down into the cushions.

NORMA (CONT'D)
Desmond. We may not always agree on everything, but we trust each other, right? You know you can tell me anything.

DES
Right...OK, so, I um. I think--

NORMA
And I can tell you anything too.

Des nods, uncertain of where this is all going.

NORMA (CONT'D)

I called Walter's mother's nursing home. And she's not there.

DES

They move her or something?

NORMA

Yeah. To Desert Memorial Cemetery.
(beat)
Seven months ago. After she died.

As it all comes together--

DES

Oh shit! Walter's been playing you!

NORMA

A little less enthusiasm please.

DES

Sorry. What are you going to do?

NORMA

I'm going to wait, give him a chance to explain himself before I do anything.

DES

Yeah right, because this all sounds like one big misunderstanding.

NORMA

Please, Desmond! I already feel bad enough as it is. I can't believe I let this happen.

A bit of underhanded retribution--

DES

Well, Norma. For what it's worth, I'm glad to hear you're taking responsibility for your part in this.

Des swallows hard, covers up her mouth and runs into--

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

And barfs.

She flushes, leans back against the wall, THWACKS herself in the mouth with something heavy. Des rolls back the onesie sleeve to see: Mrs. O's EMERALD TENNIS BRACELET, dangling from her wrist. Des's face twists--

DES

What.

INT. DES'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Her room is turned upside down, her BEDDING - rogue COCKTAIL WIENERS - all over the floor.

DES

What...

EXT. NORMA'S SIDE YARD - CONTINUOUS

She finds the bottle of booze from the night before, lands on something SHINY poking out from loose soil in the lemon hole. A closer look reveals a STASH of JEWELRY. Des - wide-eyed - turns the NECKLACES and BRACELETS with trembling hands.

DES

Did I...no. I couldn't.

She stuffs it ALL back into the hollow. *Out of sight, out of mind?* But Des can't look away, can't stop the panic attack that's creeping in. Through gasps of breath--

DES (CONT'D)

Could I!?

WE HEAR the of WHIRL of SIRENS

DES (CONT'D)

I - am - so - freakin' - fucked.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF PILOT