

AT THE MAPLE GROVE

a screenplay by

CHRISTOPHER ZATTA

for a film about a night club

Final Production Draft
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King Fish Productions, LLC
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*"...somehow I got hooked. I got hooked
on movies being an expression.
A substitute for living!
And a good one..."*

-JOHN CASSAVETES

*"And though it may be just once in a lifetime,
I'd like to do good things..."*

-SAMMY DAVIS, JR.
'Once In A Lifetime'
sung live at The Cocoanut Grove

"It's show time, folks!"

-ROBERT ALAN AURTHUR & BOB FOSSE
from 'All That Jazz'

AT THE MAPLE GROVE:

CAST OF CHARACTERS

NATHANIEL HEATON (*goes by 'Heaton'*) (early 30's) -- A struggling writer/director who attends an acting class at The Actor's Conservatory, West. Creative and diligent, a bit of a dreamer and a romantic. In an estranged relationship with Rhian, but falls for Noelle.

BEN ZORN (30's) -- An actor from Heaton's acting class. Dedicated in his craft and his performing, but chooses to float through life personally and emotionally, even if at times to his own detriment. Winds up beginning a relationship with Rhian.

SEYMOUR HARMON (*sometimes goes by 'Sey' pronounced 'See'*) (60's) -- A former actor from Heaton's acting class. First to admit he's flawed, but never one to let go of his pride and persistence. Has a turbulent romantic history with Gena.

RHIAN JAGGER (*pronounced 'Ree-anne'*) (mid-20's) -- An actress in Heaton's acting class. Regimented in her professional life, a hopeless romantic in her personal. Stuck in an estranged relationship with Heaton, but falls for Ben.

THERESA HEATON (mid-20's) -- Nathaniel Heaton's younger sister. An actress based in N.Y., but moves to L.A. to be with her boyfriend. Hovering at rock bottom in both love and life.

GENA PIERCE (*pronounced 'Jen-uh'*) (50's) -- An actress in Heaton's acting class. Close friends with both Heaton and Theresa. Has a turbulent romantic history with Seymour.

NOELLE MARIE (early 20's) -- A spirited new acquaintance of Heaton's with a joie de vivre outlook. A volunteer at The Maple Grove Night Club.

WEAVER (40) -- An actor in Heaton's acting class. The emcee at The Maple Grove Night Club.

JOE ALBIE (30) -- An actor in Heaton's acting class. A regular at The Maple Grove.

DAPHNE FALLON (20's) -- An actress in Heaton's acting class. Works the box office at The Maple Grove.

KAREN KARINA (30) -- An actress in Heaton's acting class. A performer at The Maple Grove.

RUBAN (late 30's) -- An actor in Heaton's acting class. A performer at The Maple Grove.

MORT WOODWARD (late 20's) -- An actor in Heaton's acting class. A performer at The Maple Grove.

PAUL BELMONDO (mid-20's) -- An actor in Heaton's acting class. A waiter at The Maple Grove.

ALFRED BRIALY (30) -- An actor in Heaton's acting class. Bartender at The Maple Grove.

KRICKIT CICCONE (20's) -- A waitress at both a restaurant and at The Maple Grove.

CHARLIE (30's) -- Heaton's commercial agent.

JASON (early 30's) -- Theresa Heaton's boyfriend.

OLIVIA GIARD (20's) -- An actor in Heaton's acting class.

MACK (30's) -- Doorman at The Maple Grove Night Club.

CAREY (late 30's) -- Employee of Mr. Boyle's. Low-ranking gangster type.

FRED (50's) -- Employee of Mr. Boyle's. Low-ranking gangster type working with Carey.

BOYLE (late 70's) -- High-ranking gangster type looking to take over The Maple Grove.

PRODUCTION NOTE:

This is a screenplay for a film within a film and involves interweaving narratives. For the sake of clarity in the read, and for production purposes, these overlapping narratives are specified at the end of each scene heading as follows:

Real Time

signifies action that takes place in the real world of our characters

Heaton's Imagination

signifies action that takes place in Heaton's imagination

Heaton's Movie

signifies action that takes place within Heaton's movie

FADE IN:

1 **EXT. NONDESCRIPT BUILDING. DAY. REAL TIME.** 1

NATHANIEL HEATON (early 30's) walks the perimeter of an old building. Through a SERIES OF SHOTS we SEE him pace around back, pull at the handle of a locked service entrance door, run his hand over a crack in the wall by the front entrance.

NEW ANGLE ON Heaton as he looks up at the building.

FADE TO BLACK:

TITLE OVER
BLACK:

2 **AT THE MAPLE GROVE** 2

FADE UP IMMEDIATELY TO:

3 **EXT. BOYLE'S HOUSE. PATIO. DAY. HEATON'S IMAGINATION.** 3

SEYMOUR HARMON (60's) sits at a table across from BOYLE (late 70's). Seymour wears a tuxedo, with the jacket draped across his lap. A few gangster-types stand nearby in dark suits.

BOYLE
You've lost, Sey.

SEYMOUR
It's a temporary financial setback.

BOYLE
When was the last time you had more than twenty-five people in the audience? Even twenty.

SEYMOUR
(snaps, standing)
I'm not selling! I'm not closing down, and I'm not selling to you.

Seymour pulls his jacket on as he then exits to --

4 **EXT. BOYLE'S HOUSE. DAY. HEATON'S IMAGINATION.** 4

Seymour moves in an angry rush towards a town car. A DRIVER opens the door to the back seat and Seymour gets in.

TIME CUT TO:

5 **INT. TOWN CAR. CONTINUOUS. DAY. HEATON'S IMAGINATION.** 5

The car en route. Light from a setting sun beams through the windows on Seymour's face. He shields his eyes with his hand.

CUT TO:

6 **EXT. THE MAPLE GROVE. DAY. HEATON'S IMAGINATION.** 6

WIDE ANGLE as the town car parks in front of the same building Heaton looked at in SCENE 1. From this new angle we now SEE a large sign on it that reads "The Maple Grove Night Club." The door to the club opens. Out steps MACK (30's).

CLOSER ANGLE as Seymour exits the car and approaches Mack. Mack holds up a TALLY COUNTER and clicks it in demonstration.

MACK

Hi, Sey. I got a new ticker.

SEYMOUR

(completely uninterested)

That's great, Mack.

(noticing a blank spot on
the wall by the door)

Where's the poster? Should've been
up since last night.

Mack checks just inside the door.

MACK

I'm sorry.

SEYMOUR

Things're gonna pick up around
here, we gotta big show we gotta
advertise. Future of the club could
depend on you putting up a poster.

MACK

This the one?

By now he's found a poster. He unrolls it. It tears in half.

MACK (CONT'D)

(beat)

I can find another.

SEYMOUR

Please. Try to use one without a
rip through the middle.

Seymour heads inside the night club while Mack crumples the torn poster in his hands.

ABRUPT CUT TO:

7

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. DAY. REAL TIME.

7

Heaton sits on an examination table in a hospital room.

A DOCTOR (late 40's) stands across from him, looking over Heaton's paperwork; test results and x-rays.

DOCTOR

Have you experienced a panic attack before? The shortness of breath, dizziness, chest pains.

HEATON

No.

DOCTOR

Do you recall the last time that you might've passed out?

HEATON

Not since my sister and I were kids. How come?

DOCTOR

Based on our exam, I don't see anything physical to raise concern. Some results from the blood work will take a few days, but other than a bruised back and a mild fainting spell--

HEATON

No, I know what that feels like. What I felt--

DOCTOR

(writing on a small pad)
If any of the symptoms persist you can make another appointment.

The Doctor tears a page from the small pad.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

This is for the back pain.

CUT TO:

MUSIC -- PLAYING FROM A RECORD PLAYER

8 **INT. HEATON'S APARTMENT. NIGHT. REAL TIME.**

8

A SERIES OF SHOTS TRAVERSE THE EVENING:

CU ON a phonograph turntable spinning a record.

CU ON a cork screw opening a bottle of red wine.

CU ON vegetables cooking in a pan.

WIDE ANGLE ON Heaton and RHIAN JAGGER (mid-20's) eating at the kitchen table.

WIDE ANGLE ON Heaton at the sink washing dishes, while Rhian puts clean plates back into a kitchen cabinet.

WIDE ANGLE ON Heaton and Rhian on the couch watching TV.

DISSOLVE TO:

Heaton remains on the couch as Rhian heads to the bedroom.

DISSOLVE TO:

Heaton is still on the couch. We SEE in the bedroom in the BACKGROUND that Rhian now lays in bed reading. She then turns the bedside light off.

MUSIC OUT.

FADE TO BLACK -- FADE UP IMMEDIATELY TO:

9 **INT. CAFE BATHROOM. DAY. HEATON'S IMAGINATION.**

9

BEN ZORN (30's) stands at the sink in front of the mirror. He wears a disheveled black suit. A bloodied tissue stuffed up his nose. His hand bandaged with a blood-stained cloth.

He unwraps his hand to reveal bloody, scabbed knuckles. He sniffs the stained cloth, then tosses it in the trash.

BEN (PRE-LAP)

Le Croque Monsieur? That authentic?

WAITRESS (PRE-LAP)

Not sure. I hear it's good.

CLOSE ANGLE ON Ben as he pulls the tissue from his nose. He looks at himself in the mirror, then flashes a wide grin.

BEN (PRE-LAP)
You hear it's good?

CUT TO:

10

INT. CAFE. DAY. HEATON'S IMAGINATION.

10

MUSIC CONTINUES.

CLOSE ANGLE ON Ben's hands opening his wallet. It's empty.

WIDER ANGLE ON Ben at the cafe counter, stuffing his wallet back in his pocket. We SEE a series of old framed signed celebrity HEADSHOTS AND PHOTOS hanging on an adjacent wall.

Ben looks up at the WAITRESS, who is just OFF FRAME. He's clearly attracted to her.

BEN
(flirting)
You hear it's good? It's not a, uh, requirement for you to try everything? Cause I could write you up for insubordination.

WAITRESS (O.C.)
(laughs, amused)
You a lawyer? Dressed like that?

He looks at himself. Adjusts the tuck of his shirt. Smiles.

BEN
What? Look like I'm coming off a two-day bender and need to crash?

WAITRESS (O.C.)
A little bit.

BEN
Actually, I do a show down the street at the Maple Grove.

WAITRESS (O.C.)
Oh, you're a performer.

Ben nods, pointing to the framed head shots on the wall.

BEN
That's me there.

WAITRESS (O.C.)
The one on the left? Hey, yeah!
(then)
(MORE)

WAITRESS (O.C.) (CONT'D)
That picture must have been taken
awhile ago, huh?

BEN
(small laugh)
Anyway, you should come to a show.

WAITRESS (O.C.)
Definitely, my boyfriend would love
that.

BEN
(backing off, rejected)
Great. More the merrier.

MUSIC OUT.

CUT TO:

11 **EXT. SIDEWALK. DAY. HEATON'S IMAGINATION.** 11

Ben walks down the street eating his Croque Monsieur.

CHARLIE (PRE-LAP)
(on speaker phone)
I'm more than a little pissed. You
had a meeting for a directing job.

ABRUPT CUT TO:

12 **INT. HEATON'S CAR. DAY. REAL TIME.** 12

Heaton is stopped at a red light. He looks out the driver's
side window. We SEE a FILM CREW on the adjacent sidewalk,
loading equipment into a building. CHARLIE's voice comes
through on Heaton's speaker phone.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
(on speaker phone)
Why didn't you go to the meeting?

HEATON (V.O.)
(indifferent)
Something came up.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
(on speaker phone, sighs)
Look, I covered for you, okay? So
you lost the job but not face.

Heaton grabs a prescription pill bottle from the passenger seat, opens it, and pops two pills.

CUT TO:

13 **EXT. ACTING STUDIO. DAY. REAL TIME.** 13

Various cars drive passed the acting studio as Heaton enters the building.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
(on speaker phone)
But you've spent enough time
focusing on acting and writing...

CUT TO:

14 **INT. ACTING STUDIO. STAIRWELL. CONTINUOUS. REAL TIME.** 14

Heaton bounds up the stairs and rounds a hallway corner into the studio lobby.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(on speaker phone)
Now let's, you and I, let's get
together, okay, and talk about
getting you back on the wagon and
directing commercials again. Okay?

HEATON
Okay.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
(on speaker phone)
Okay, awesome. Be in touch.

WE HEAR A CLASSICAL PIECE OF MUSIC THAT CONTINUES UNDERNEATH:

15 **INT. ACTING STUDIO. DAY. REAL TIME.** 15

Heaton pours coffee into a mug by the kitchen counter. Behind him stands Ben Zorn, who is now dressed in jeans and a t-shirt, and MORT WOODWARD (late 20's).

BEN
Casting any commercials lately?

Heaton lets out a small laugh and shakes his head 'no'.

BEN (CONT'D)
Keep me in mind, huh?

HEATON
 (sincere)
 You're my go to, Ben.

CAMERA CARRIES Heaton as he's walking from the kitchen through the lobby of the studio, which is lined with seats and filled with acting students.

DAPHNE FALLON (20's) and RUBAN (late 30's) sit beside each other. Daphne has her sleeve rolled up, her eyes closed and her hand in Ruban's hands. Ruban gently glides his fingers up the underside of her arm.

DAPHNE
 Now.

RUBAN
 Not even close.

DAPHNE
 Now.

RUBAN
 I'm telling you, wait till you
 can't bear it anymore--

DAPHNE
 Now.

ANGLE ON KAREN KARINA (30), sitting astride the lap of ALFRED BRIALY (30). Alfred wears boxers and a white t-shirt.

KAREN
 Will you come do improv next time?

ALFRED
 (carping)
 Now I know you're playing as
 Weaver's wife and sitting on guys'
 faces when I'm not around, yeah,
 I'll be there.

KAREN
 But no, I'd want you to be there
 because you'd want to be there.

MORT
 (walking past)
 Two minutes!

PAUL (O.S.)
 I need five!

ALFRED

Shit, gotta finish getting ready.

He slides out from beneath Karen.

By now CAMERA CARRIES Heaton as he's continuing towards the stairs that lead to the theatre. He passes WEAVER (40) and OLIVIA GIARD (20's). Olivia holds a play in her hands. Weaver is dressed in a priest's outfit.

OLIVIA

This scene I'm doing is the worst scene in the world. My character is just an awful human being.

WEAVER

I think, I really do, I think if you put your thoughts of how you feel, about her, into her thoughts--

OLIVIA

I hate her.

WEAVER

Put that into her thoughts.

ANGLE ON Heaton, now approaching GENA PIERCE (40's), who sits in the back row of the theatre. She wears a nun outfit and flips through a day planner.

GENA

(seeing Heaton)

Hey, tomorrow night, your birthday dinner's at 8?

HEATON

(nods; then, joking)

If you go maybe I'll show up.

GENA

(smiles, writing in her planner)

I got an email from your sister yesterday.

HEATON

(almost to himself, a little hurt)

Did you? That's nice, I didn't.

GENA

(as she finishes writing)

Where's Rhian?

HEATON
 She came in early. She's putting a
 scene up today.

WIDER ANGLE to include PAUL BELMONDO (mid-20's) standing on a
 chair by the stage window, where he adjusts a curtain. He
 wears pajamas and a robe.

PAUL
 (having overheard)
 Rhian and Joe?
 (gestures to the window)
 They're out there.

As Heaton now approaches the window, Alfred enters the stage.

ALFRED
 (to Paul)
 Need a hand with anything?

PAUL
 Where you been? Set up the bed.

CLOSER ANGLE ON Heaton, who by now is peering out the window.

HEATON'S POV: Rhian and JOE ALBIE (30) on the sidewalk below.
 She's seductively playful. He is too. She pushes him. He
 grabs her.

ANGLE ON Heaton and Paul. Heaton watches Rhian for a beat.

HEATON
 So that's what her going looks
 like.

PAUL
 They're just doing a scene, man.

TIGHTER ANGLE looking down on Rhian and Joe, embracing now.

MUSIC OUT.

CUT TO:

NEW MUSIC -- PLAYING FROM A RECORD PLAYER

16

INT. HEATON'S APARTMENT. NIGHT. REAL TIME.

16

A SERIES OF SHOTS TRAVERSE THE EVENING:

CU ON a phonograph turntable spinning a record.

CU ON a cork screw opening a bottle of red wine.

CU ON pasta cooking in boiling water.

WIDE ANGLE ON Heaton and Rhian eating at the kitchen table.

WIDE ANGLE ON Heaton at the sink washing dishes, while Rhian puts clean plates back into a cabinet. We HEAR a phone ring from the bedroom. Rhian exits the kitchen to answer it.

NEW ANGLE ON Heaton still washing dishes, his back to Rhian as she then returns from the bedroom--

RHIAN

Joe got out of work early. We said we'd rehearse if that happened.

HEATON

You're heading out now?

CU ON Rhian. She looks at him for a beat.

RHIAN

Do you mind?

HEATON (O.C.)

No.

RHIAN

You're sure?

CU ON Heaton. Still not turning to face her.

HEATON

If you're going to go.

DISSOLVE TO:

ANGLE ON Rhian, heading back to the bedroom. She proceeds to change her clothes.

DISSOLVE TO:

WIDE ANGLE ON Rhian, passing Heaton as she walks through the apartment to the front door.

RHIAN

(sincere)

See you later. Not sure when.

He looks at her, noting her change of clothes. She exits.

Heaton then grabs his cell phone and dials. We HEAR it ring once and the other line picks up.

HEATON
 (into phone)
 Want to see a movie or something?

DISSOLVE TO:

17 **INT. HEATON'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. NIGHT. FLASHBACK.** 17

MUSIC CONTINUES THROUGH -- NOW PLAYING OVER:

Rhian lays on Heaton's bed. Heaton stands in the doorway. They exchange an easy, flirtatious back and forth MOS, both clearly happy. Heaton then climbs in bed with Rhian.

ABRUPT CUT TO:

18 **INT. MOVIE THEATRE. NIGHT. REAL TIME.** 18

Heaton sits alone in the theatre. The house lights are up.

Ben approaches and takes a seat, spilling popcorn on himself as he does. Heaton and Ben both crack up laughing.

BEN (V.O.)
 I know what your problem is.

MUSIC OUT.

JUMP CUT TO:

We HEAR nondescript dialogue from a MOVIE now playing in the theatre OFF FRAME. Heaton and Ben talk over its audio.

BEN
 When I look at you I see this open
 rib cage.

HEATON
 ...rib cage?

BEN
 You expose too much of yourself to
 people. Put your self out there. It
 leads to emotion, suspicion, hurt.
 Lies. Nothing good. I only do that
 shit when I'm in character. For a
 movie, a show, a play. It's not
 safe to do in real life. Right?

HEATON
 ...right.

BEN
Rhian's not a cheater. If she was,
who cares? Cheat with someone else.

Heaton lets out a laugh.

BEN (CONT'D)
(singing, in a joke chant)
Jai guru deva om. Jai guru deva om.

By now Heaton and Ben are both laughing.

HEATON
That's not how it goes.

MOVIEGOER (O.C.)
Can you be quiet, please?

BEN
Nothing's gonna change my world.

DISSOLVE TO:

NEW MUSIC, PLAYING ON A RADIO -- A MALT SHOP POP NUMBER.
SOMETHING LIKE THE EVERLY BROTHERS' ALL I HAVE TO DO IS DREAM

19

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE. SIDEWALK. NIGHT. REAL TIME.

19

Heaton and Ben part ways outside the theatre.

NEW ANGLE ON Heaton as he walks alone.

CAMERA MOVES with him as he nears a parked car. The MUSIC
we're HEARING plays from the car radio, through open windows.

Heaton stops near the car and listens for a beat.

HEATON'S POV: A YOUNG COUPLE makes out in the front seat.

CU ON Heaton, smiling at the sight of the Couple. He then
turns to continue walking -- but suddenly bumps into SOMEONE.

WIDER ANGLE now to include NOELLE MARIE (early 20's) standing
beside Heaton, having just been bumped into.

HEATON
Sorry.

NOELLE
Don't be.

ANGLE ON Noelle as she smiles at Heaton, attracted to him.

NOELLE (CONT'D)
 (shimmies to the music)
 It's a good song.

She turns and continues on her way down the sidewalk.

CU ON Heaton, smitten as he watches her.

FADE TO BLACK -- FADE UP IMMEDIATELY TO:

MUSIC CONTINUES THROUGH:

20

EXT. CAFE. DAY. HEATON'S IMAGINATION.

20

CAMERA SLOWLY PUSHES IN ON Noelle, sitting at a table outside a cafe, having finished her breakfast. She waves to an off screen WAITER.

NOELLE
 Check, please!

WIDER ANGLE to now SEE that Noelle sits alone among various empty tables along the sidewalk.

In the BACKGROUND we also SEE now that The Maple Grove is located directly ACROSS THE STREET. Seymour's town car is parked out front. Mack unrolls a POSTER, without it tearing.

Ben ENTERS FRAME to approach the club. In his suit again.

CLOSER ANGLE ON Ben as we HEAR a car honk. He turns at it.

BEN'S POV: An old Mercedes sits idle nearby. Behind the wheel is CAREY (30's). Another GENTLEMAN sits in the passenger seat. Carey gestures to Ben.

BACK ON Ben as he now starts towards the car.

WEAVER (PRE-LAP)
 It's nice you're getting Heaton
 back on stage. Should bring in a
 crowd, huh?

CUT TO:

21

INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. DAY. HEATON'S IMAGINATION.

21

Seymour walks from the front room of the club towards the stage, his attention focused on a sheet of paper in his hand that contains a list of names.

SEYMOUR
Ben goes up first.

WEAVER
(trailing Seymour)
Ben? He's not been in top shape,
Sey. If you're counting on Heaton
to get the audience back in here--

SEYMOUR
I want Ben first. He used to always
go first and was always good at it.

WEAVER
Alright.

SEYMOUR
Then we got Karen, Mort, put uh,
Rhian up after, I mean, before
Gena. Heaton. And Ruban is last.

By now Seymour is looking around the space of the night club.

SEYMOUR (CONT'D)
Where are the chairs?

WEAVER
I don't know. Alfred and Paul
aren't here yet, so...

SEYMOUR
Where is everybody?

WEAVER
Lighting crew's here. Course they
may as well bang their heads
against a wall if they'd hit a cue.

SEYMOUR
(growing agitated)
Everyone should be here getting
ready by now.

WEAVER
(jokes)
Look on the bright side. There's no
audience yet either.

CUT TO:

22 **EXT. CAFE. DAY. HEATON'S IMAGINATION.** 22

Noelle signs the bill to her breakfast and stands. CAMERA FOLLOWS HER as she runs energetically from the cafe, breezing behind Mack as he finishes putting up a second poster.

As Noelle heads inside the Maple Grove, we--

CUT TO:

23 **INT. CAREY'S CAR. DAY. HEATON'S IMAGINATION.** 23

The car remains idle at the curb. Carey at the wheel. Ben in back, behind the passenger seat. The other gentleman, FRED (50's), sits in the front beside Carey.

FRED

(in mid-conversation)

We pull up to the address he gave us. Fucking trailer.

CAREY

Where?

FRED

Outside Lindendale.

CAREY

The fuck out of here.

Carey and Fred bust up laughing. Ben just listens, not finding anything amusing.

FRED

We'd went up thinking it'd be the end for us. Turned out a one man operation in a fucking trailer.

CAREY

So what'd you do?

FRED

Torched the place. He was inside.

Carey and Fred laugh even harder.

FRED (CONT'D)

Shoulda heard him screaming.

(mimicing)

It's getting hot. Getting real hot.

BEN
 (over their laughter)
 Carey, what'd you want to ask me?
 (they don't hear him;
 then, louder--)
 I gotta get to work, Carey.

The laughing subsides.

BEN (CONT'D)
 What'd you want to ask me?

CAREY
 Don't want to ask anything, man. I
 want to collect.

Pause.

BEN
 I know I owe.

CAREY
 A lot this time. It's on paper.

Fred hands Ben a slip of paper. Ben doesn't take it, instead turning his gaze out the open car window.

BEN'S POV: Several people are arriving at The Maple Grove. As they begin to get out of their cars, we can SEE Rhian, Gena, Ruban, Mort, Karen, Alfred and Paul.

CAREY (O.C.) (CONT'D)
 It was a big fucking game you lost.
 You weren't playing with just me
 and the guys.

ANGLE BACK ON everyone in the car.

FRED
 High stakes, Ben.

CAREY
 It's been enough time. Time to pay
 up. These words aren't only coming
 from me anymore.

Fred hands Ben the slip of paper again.

WEAVER (PRE-LAP)
 Are you with the lighting crew?

CUT TO:

24

**INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. MAIN FLOOR. DAY. HEATON'S
IMAGINATION.**

24

Weaver stands by the bar, putting on a bow tie. Noelle walks along the edge of the stage.

NOELLE

I can be. If that's where I should
be.

RUBAN (O.C.)

Who's the new girl?

NEW ANGLE ON the main floor. Ruban approaches the stage, looking up at Noelle. Behind him Gena, Rhian, Karen, Alfred, Paul and Mort are all filing in to the club.

WEAVER

She's not with the lighting crew.

KAREN

Is she a singer or is she a dancer?

NOELLE

I'm a staff volunteer.

ANGLE ON Gena as she walks to the back room of the club.

NOELLE (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Mr. Harmon said he didn't have room
on the payroll for me yet.

ANGLE ON Mort as he proceeds to lay on a table and stretch.

MORT

It's about time we had a volunteer
in this place.

WIDE ANGLE ON everyone, including Alfred behind the bar.

RUBAN

(to Noelle)

Well, hello. I am Ruban. It's quite
admirable of you to volunteer.

ALFRED

Working for no pay isn't admirable.

Karen steps up to the bar, reaches across and kisses Alfred.

WEAVER

(jokes)

But it is show business.

CAMERA FOLLOWS Ben as he now enters. We can SEE Gena in the BACKGROUND, heading to the back room of the club.

RHIAN (O.C.)
 (to Noelle)
 What's your real name? Or do we
 just call you volunteer?

CU ON Noelle as a SPOT LIGHT suddenly illuminates her on the stage.

NEW ANGLE to include Weaver, turning to the lighting booth.

WEAVER
 (re: the light, facetious)
 Great, you found the 'on' switch!

ABRUPT CUT TO:

25

INT. OFFICE. DAY. REAL TIME.

25

ANGLE ON Heaton sitting across from a desk.

CHARLIE
 So what are we doing? I've got jobs
 popping like popcorn. Contrary to
 misperception, there's a lot of
 commercial space out there if
 you're good.

WIDER ANGLE to include Heaton's agent, CHARLIE (30's),
 sitting behind the desk.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
 People want you to do their
 commercials again. Why are you
 resisting?

HEATON
 I do have a film idea I've been
 thinking about.

CHARLIE
 What, that you'd write and direct?

HEATON
 (nods)
 It'd be a low-budget, independent--

CHARLIE
 No money in low-budget independent.

HEATON
I'm not concerned with money.

CHARLIE
Is it a comedy? Horror? Do you have someone famous to cast? Otherwise it's a negative. You won't get distribution. There's no incentive.

HEATON
My incentive is to tell a story that means something to me. About characters that I care about before it's too late.

CHARLIE
Too late?

HEATON
Before I die I'd like to put something of me out there.

CHARLIE
I'm a businessman. I make money. I make money when you make money. Low-budget independent fits not into the equation.
(beat, conciliatory)
You're not dying, okay? That's stupid. Unless you choose career suicide. Now I've got a lot of clients taking commercial jobs. I implore. Do what they are doing.

Pause.

HEATON
I assumed that'd be your response.

CUT TO:

MUSIC PLAYS UNDER THE ENTIRE FOLLOWING RESTAURANT SEQUENCE

26

INT. RESTAURANT. NIGHT. REAL TIME.

26

Heaton enters, nearly colliding with a waitress, KRICKIT CICCONE (20's), who carries a tray filled with glasses of water.

She and Heaton mirror step with one another, first left, then right; then finally succeed to part ways.

TIME CUT TO:

27

HEATON AND GENA SIT AT A LARGE TABLE. *REAL TIME.*

27

There is an EMPTY CHAIR between where Heaton and Gena sit.

GENA

What commercial are you working on?
 (he shakes his head 'no')
 Are you writing?

HEATON

(shakes his head again)
 Thinking about an idea for a film.
 But it's all in a fugue state in my
 head.

GENA

(jokes)
 Sounds dangerous.

By now Krickit is serving them glasses of water.

KRICKIT

(to Heaton, amused)
 We were going to the same table.

HEATON

Excuse me?

KRICKIT

You were trying to pass me and I
 was trying to pass you, but we were
 both going to the same table.

Pause. Heaton just looks at Krickit.

KRICKIT (CONT'D)

(nevermind)
 Decided what you'd like to eat?

As she pulls out her order pad, Heaton and Gena exchange an
 amused look regarding Krickit.

TIME CUT TO:

WIDER ANGLE ON the dinner table, from BEHIND Heaton. We SEE
 the entire group that is gathered now, including Olivia, Ben
 and Weaver. There are a couple other EMPTY SEATS, in addition
 to the one between Gena and Heaton.

WEAVER

(to Ben)
 Next public improv's tomorrow.

BEN
I'll try to make it.

WEAVER
If you can't, we're doing it almost every week now. No excuses.

RESTAURANT HOSTESS (O.C.)
Reservation?

THERESA (O.C.)
The Heaton party?

ANGLE ON Heaton and Gena, favoring Heaton as they both turn toward the restaurant door, seeing SOMEONE OFF SCREEN.

GENA
Theresa!

WEAVER (O.C.)
There she is!

ANGLE ON THERESA HEATON (mid-20's) and her boyfriend JASON (early 30's), as they approach the table.

WIDER ANGLE as everyone, except Heaton, stands and ad-libs hello's and hugs.

ANGLE ON Heaton, quietly watching everyone greet Theresa.

BACK ON Theresa. By now Gena has pulled her into a warm hug.

GENA
So good to see you again.

THERESA
You too. Doing okay?

GENA
Yeah...

WIDE ANGLE to include Jason, as Krickit approaches.

KRICKIT
(to Theresa and Jason)
Would you like to see menus?

THERESA
Oh, we're not eating.

JASON
(to Theresa, grinning)
We'll drink our meal, right babe?

Off Theresa's laugh at Jason's comment --

TIME CUT TO:

28 HEATON SITS WITH THERESA, GENA AND JASON. *REAL TIME.* 28

Heaton looks at Theresa with a bemused smile. OFF SCREEN we can HEAR various ad-libbed conversations from everyone else.

THERESA
(to Heaton, can't get a
read on him)
Hello.

HEATON
How'd we get to the point I find
out my sister's in town like this?

THERESA
Like what?

HEATON
Second-hand at my own birthday.

THERESA
(facetious)
I like that line. Use that one.

GENA
(to Heaton, happy)
It's called a birthday surprise.

HEATON
(small laugh)
Or a coincidence.
(gestures to Jason)
I bet she flew here for hot stuff.

Theresa mouths the words 'STOP IT' to Heaton. He grins.

GENA
Theresa, how long are you in L.A.?

THERESA
(looks to Jason)
Indefinitely?

HEATON
You'll need to find a job.

THERESA
(facetious, again)
Ya think?

HEATON
Be a struggling actor too, but--

GENA
I can get her a job with me.

THERESA
Done!

CLOSER ANGLE ON Theresa and Heaton. Theresa gestures to the empty chair still between Gena and Heaton.

THERESA (CONT'D)
Who's sitting there anyway?

GENA (O.C.)
Rhian's supposed to be.

THERESA
(to Heaton, pointedly)
Hey, yeah, where is she?

TIME CUT TO:

29 JASON AND OLIVIA. *REAL TIME.*

29

Jason now leans flirtatiously on Olivia's chair. He's obviously drunk. She's obviously attracted to him. They're in mid-conversation.

OLIVIA
(clarifying)
No, I'm Olivia. I told you that.
This story is about my roommate.

JASON
Get out. But it happened before or
after she moved in?

OLIVIA
You mean moved out?

JASON
(laughs)
Right! Moved out.

OLIVIA
(laughs too)
After.

By now CAMERA has DRIFTED RIGHT to include Theresa. She watches with frustration as Jason and Olivia flirt.

CAMERA CONTINUES TO DRIFT, SETTling ON Heaton and Theresa. He watches Theresa with sympathy, noting her glare at Jason.

Heaton then taps Theresa's hand. She looks at him, he quickly looks away, pretending it wasn't him. Theresa then taps Heaton's hand and looks away. Heaton moves to tap her hand again, she pulls it from his reach. He then squeezes her arm. She flinches. They both crack up laughing.

TIME CUT TO:

30 KRICKIT AND BEN, TO INCLUDE WEAVER. *REAL TIME.* 30

Krickit stands over Ben's shoulder.

BEN

I just want a coffee. It's all I want.

KRICKIT

What about the cake?

BEN

Why are you pushing this cake on me? I don't want cake.

KRICKIT

I realize you might not want it, but --

WEAVER

(interrupting, to Krickit)
Wait, wait, wait. Come here a sec.

CAMERA CARRIES Krickit as she crosses to Weaver, concerned--

KRICKIT

No one is ordering cake.

TIME CUT TO:

31 GENA AT THE BAR WITH A BARTENDER. *REAL TIME.* 31

A BARTENDER pours a glass of wine. Gena looks across the bar.

GENA'S POV: An ELDERLY COUPLE at a nearby table, sharing dessert, clearly on a date.

BACK ON Gena now, with a saddened gaze on the Elderly Couple. Heaton approaches. Gena turns to him, seeing he was watching her. She sticks her tongue out at him playfully. He smiles.

HEATON
 (gesturing nearby)
 Those gentlemen over there look
 single. I could be your wing man.

GENA
 (laughs; then, warm)
 I don't want you to be my wing man.

He takes Gena's hand. She lays her head on his shoulder.

TIME CUT TO:

32 THE ENTIRE GROUP AT THE TABLE. *REAL TIME.* 32

Weaver stands inebriated, addressing the group.

WEAVER
 Heaton, we're here gathered here
 today, tonight, to celebrate the
 anniversary of your birth. No one
 wants cake because everyone's too
 fucking concerned about their
 weight, but--
 (pulling out a lighter)
 Make a wish!

Ben holds up a lighter too, as well as Theresa and Jason.

THE GROUP
 Happy birthday!

Over the laughter and conversation at the table, we can HEAR:

CHARLIE (PRE-LAP)
 (on speaker phone)
 It's not personal, Heaton. It's
 just I can't serve you anymore.

CUT TO:

33 INT. HEATON'S APARTMENT. BATHROOM. NIGHT. *REAL TIME.* 33

Heaton stands in front of the sink. His hands over his ears.
 We HEAR his heart beating. It grows irregular, speeding up
 with intensity.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 (on speaker phone)
 You're better off with a smaller
 agency, someone who can really
 focus on you.
 (MORE)

CHARLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 And tell people this was your
 decision, to leave and part ways,
 okay? I'll go with that.

NEW ANGLE ON Heaton, his cell phone on the bathroom counter,
 the SPEAKER PHONE ON. Heaton pulls his hands from his ears.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 (on speaker phone)
 Look, I have to go. Okay, call me
 if you need anything--

Heaton hangs up the line.

FADE TO BLACK -- FADE UP IMMEDIATELY TO:

34

EXT. BAR. DAY. HEATON'S IMAGINATION.

34

Ben is carried outside by TWO BOUNCERS. They toss him across
 the sidewalk. He tries to get back in. They gut punch him.

NEW ANGLE ON Ben as he drops to his knees. We HEAR the
 Bouncers go back in the bar and close the door. We SEE a car
 roll up beside Ben.

BEN'S POV: Carey's old Mercedes. Carey leans out the window.

CAREY
 Heard you were playing in a game.

BEN (O.C.)
 I didn't meet the dress code.

CAREY
 (small laugh)
 Come on. Boyle wants to see you.

CUT TO:

35

EXT. BOYLE'S HOUSE. DAY. HEATON'S IMAGINATION.

35

WIDE ANGLE ON the house on the quiet suburban street. The
 same house Seymour exited in SCENE 2. Carey's old Mercedes
 pulls into the driveway.

CLOSER ANGLE ON Ben getting out of the car and approaching
 the house, along with Carey and Fred.

36

EXT. BOYLE'S HOUSE. PATIO. DAY. HEATON'S IMAGINATION.

36

Ben is escorted by Carey and Fred to the patio. Carey pulls a chair out from the table for him. Ben sits.

A beat passes. Then Boyle steps outside and approaches.

BEN

Mr. Boyle, as I told Carey, I'm good for the money--

BOYLE

(as he sits)

Don't worry, Bennie, that's why you're here. We have a solution.

BEN

We do?

BOYLE

The Maple Grove.

By now Fred has poured a glass of water for Ben. He hands it to him. Ben doesn't take it.

BEN

(to Boyle)

What about it?

BOYLE

You do know how Seymour came to acquire the club? What'd they call him... the man who never lost.

BEN

(so what)

Yeah. That was all years ago.

BOYLE

It was. Shouldn't have happened, but I respected the terms. It's how things are run. However, with Seymour now financially unable to maintain his venue, I want that club back.

BEN

What do you mean he's financially unable-- ?

NEW ANGLE ON Boyle. We can SEE now that in addition to Carey and Fred on the patio, there are several other MEN inside the house, sitting around a table playing a poker game.

BOYLE

You didn't know he was in the red?
 (off Ben's blank look)
 It's bad, Bennie. And I gave him an offer to purchase, but his... his pride got in the way. He's being a stick in the mud and I'd like you to take care of it for me. Tonight.

NEW ANGLE to include Ben.

BEN

I'm sorry, I still don't--

BOYLE

I want you to kill Seymour. And then your debt is paid.

Ben laughs, as if this were all a joke. He looks to Carey, then Fred. Both stone-faced. As Ben's laughter subsides...

PRE-LAP: We HEAR the SOUND of a record needle running at the end of the record, the SOUND GROWING LOUDER until--

ABRUPT CUT TO:

37 **INT. HEATON'S APARTMENT. RECORD PLAYER. NIGHT. REAL TIME.** 37

CU ON the phonograph turntable spinning a record. THE SOUND OF THE NEEDLE AT THE END OF THE RECORD CONTINUES.

Heaton's hands reach into frame. He flips the record and resets the needle. A NEW SONG plays.

WIDER ANGLE as Heaton now crosses to the dining table, filled with dirty dishes and empty Chinese food containers. Theresa sits at the table, somewhat more sober than when she arrived.

HEATON

Want anything else?

THERESA

You have more wine?

HEATON

Wine. Right.

He grabs the wine glasses from the table and goes to the kitchen, where he proceeds to open a new bottle.

HEATON (CONT'D)

So you and Jason. Still happening?

THERESA
That's a question?

HEATON
Not sure I see you guys lasting.

THERESA
And you know what it looks like to last.

HEATON
I know what it doesn't look like.

By now he's topped off her glass and filled his own.

THERESA
So should we put the TV on or something? What do we really talk about after eating?

Heaton leaves the bottle in the kitchen, bringing only the glasses to the table.

HEATON
(at a loss, small laugh)
I'm not really sure.

THERESA
(laughs too)
Me neither.

They clink their glasses in toast as Heaton sits.

Pause.

HEATON
Remember how Grandma'd take us to Christmas at Aunt Alice and Uncle Jim's? You and I'd run around all night laughing.

THERESA
(beat, recollecting)
We were happy.

HEATON
All the grown ups sat around telling stories of the old times. From when they were young, things they got up to.
(pause)
Then there was the year we weren't running around anymore, we were sitting with the adults.

(MORE)

HEATON (CONT'D)
 Stories were about when we were
 young. Things we'd got up to.

THERESA
 That depressed me. Then and now.

He looks at her. She downs the rest of the wine in her glass.

HEATON
 (surprised)
 Revisiting our lives? Remembering
 the laughs?

THERESA
 I wanted to keep having the times
 we were talking about. I didn't
 want to sit around remembering.
 That whole time I was screaming in
 my head--
 (shouting, angry)
 Why are we just sitting here
 talking! Let's do something! Let's
 do more! Let's keep doing more!
 (then, stands)
 But, you know. Potato, tomato.

TIGHTER ANGLE favoring Heaton as we see Theresa head into the
 kitchen and refill her wine glass.

HEATON
 I've been thinking about making a
 film. Something on my own. Honestly
 I can't stop thinking about it... I
 keep seeing the story play out.
Literally.

NEW ANGLE as he suddenly stands, growing energetic--

HEATON (CONT'D)
 Just now, before you got here, I'd
 got a call from my agent that he
 dropped me, cause I wouldn't do the
 commercials he was pressuring me to
 do. Then while you and I were
 eating, this new scene was
 unfolding in my head...

THERESA
 Your agent dropped you?

HEATON
 (continuing)
 ...a scene where these gangsters
 are pressuring a night club
 performer to carry out a murder.

THERESA
 Okay.

HEATON
 See it's a film about a night club.

FADE TO BLACK -- FADE UP IMMEDIATELY TO:

NOTE: THE FOLLOWING WILL BE A SERIES OF QUICK MOS SHOTS FROM
 VARIOUS MOMENTS WE'VE ALREADY SEEN PLAY OUT, AS WE BEGIN TO
 REALIZE SCENES HAVE BEEN PLAYING OUT IN HEATON'S IMAGINATION:

*FROM SCENE 6: Seymour's town car parks outside The Maple
 Grove as Mack opens the door to the club.*

*FROM SCENE 24: Weaver fixes his bow tie by the bar while he
 talks to Noelle.*

HEATON (V.O.)
 And I already have an idea of these
 characters for everyone. Ben...

FADE TO BLACK -- FADE UP IMMEDIATELY TO:

*FROM SCENE 23: Carey's old Mercedes sits idle with Carey
 behind the wheel, Fred in the passenger seat and Ben in back.*

HEATON (V.O.)
 Rhian...

FADE TO BLACK -- FADE UP IMMEDIATELY TO:

Rhian sits in the green room of the Maple Grove.

HEATON (V.O.)
 Gena...

FADE TO BLACK -- FADE UP IMMEDIATELY TO:

*FROM SCENE 24: Gena walks across the main floor of the night
 club while everyone talks with Noelle up on the stage.*

HEATON (V.O.)
 And you too...

RESUME: HEATON'S APARTMENT. NIGHT. REAL TIME.

Heaton and Theresa sit at the table. She smiles excitedly.

HEATON

I mean... it could be good.

THERESA

Natie. You don't need to convince me. Write it and make it. Just stop sitting around talking about it, okay?

HEATON

Yeah.

Theresa laughs with excitement and kicks Heaton's chair.

CUT TO:

38

EXT. NONDESCRIPT BUILDING. DAY. PRESENT. REAL TIME.

38

ABBAS (50's) stands outside the door to the building, pulling on the door knob. It doesn't budge.

ABBAS

Not the right one.

WIDER ANGLE to include Heaton as Abbas flips through a key ring crowded with keys.

We SEE now we're back outside the old building from SCENE 1, the location that has been serving as The Maple Grove in Heaton's movie, as he's been imagining it in his head. There are no show posters advertising performances, the area out front is devoid of people, and in place of a "The Maple Grove Night Club" sign is a yellow "Film Here" sign.

ABBAS (CONT'D)

Anyway, so yes, it has got electricity. It has got running water. A prime filming location.

HEATON

(nods, enthusiastic)

Yeah, a friend of mine shot a video here. It still has a stage, right?

Abbas nods. By now he has slid another key in the lock. He turns it.

ABBAS

Here we go.

CLOSER ANGLE ON Heaton and Abbas as the door opens. It's pitch black inside. Abbas hands Heaton a FLASH LIGHT.

ABBAS (CONT'D)
 It's got electricity the moment I
 have the deposit.

CAMERA FOLLOWS Heaton as he enters the darkened night club.

39 **INT. NONDESCRIPT BUILDING. CONTINUOUS. DAY. REAL TIME.** 39

Heaton walks onto the main floor. He turns on the flashlight.
 We SEE that the space is vacant and in disrepair. No tables,
 no chairs, no bar, no signage. Just an empty floor and stage.

CUT TO:

40 **EXT. PARK. DAY. REAL TIME.** 40

Heaton enters the park. We SEE several copies of a SCREENPLAY
 just inside his shoulder bag.

WIDER ANGLE on Heaton as we now SEE Heaton is approaching a
 CROWD. We recognize Ben, Gena, Weaver, Joe and Karen --
 they're putting on one of their PUBLIC IMPROVISATIONS for a
 group of SPECTATORS.

Off Heaton, approaching the actors, we--

CUT TO:

41 **EXT. SIDEWALK. NIGHT. REAL TIME.** 41

MUSIC CONTINUES PLAYING OVER:

Heaton and Noelle walk together and have a conversation MOS.
 Heaton carries a coffee. Noelle carries a copy of his script.
 They clearly share an easy back and forth.

NEW ANGLE as they arrive outside an apartment building and
 exchange MOS good-byes. Noelle heads into the building.

CU ON Heaton, watching her go. A smile on his face. He turns
 to leave. Then suddenly grimaces with pain. He puts his hand
 to his chest. Lets out an audible gasp.

TIGHT ON Heaton's coffee cup hitting the sidewalk, splashing
 on the curb. We SEE Heaton in the BACKGROUND as he stumbles
 into the street. Cars honk and swerve.

MUSIC OUT ABRUPTLY.

SMASH CUT TO:

42 **INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. DAY. REAL TIME.**

42

A TECH ANALYST observes a series of health monitors.

NEW ANGLE on Heaton running on a treadmill. Gym shorts, no shirt. Various ELECTRODES on his arms, legs and torso.

 HEATON (PRE-LAP)
I still have the tightness in my
chest. I think my heart...

CUT TO:

43 **INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. DAY. REAL TIME.**

43

Heaton sits on the examination table. He buttons his shirt. A band-aid covers a blood stained cotton ball on his forearm.

 HEATON (PRE-LAP)
...it feels like my heart is
beating funny sometimes.

JUMP CUT TO:

WIDER ANGLE to now include Heaton's Doctor sitting at her desk. She looks over the latest paperwork and test results.

 DOCTOR
 (reading off questions)
Is there a history of coronary
artery disease in your family?
Heart attack? High blood pressure?

 HEATON
I don't know.

 DOCTOR
Your parents?

 HEATON
I don't know. They died drunk in a
car accident.

 DOCTOR
Grandparents?

 HEATON
I don't know. Most died before I
was born. Except my mom's mom.

 DOCTOR
And she--?

HEATON
(shakes his head 'no')
Ovarian cancer.

DOCTOR
Do you drink, smoke or take
recreational drugs?

HEATON
Yes, sometimes, no.

DOCTOR
How regularly do you drink?

HEATON
(joking)
Isn't regular relative?

DOCTOR
(puts the paperwork aside)
All seriousness, Mr. Heaton, there
is potential cause for alarm now
that you're experiencing this heart
arrhythmia.

HEATON
There is cause for alarm?

DOCTOR
The results from the EKG aren't
conclusive. It still might be a
number of things, perhaps only
stress, or it might be an enlarged
heart.

Heaton lets out a laugh, disbelieving.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
I'd like you to meet with a
specialist to discuss more tests
and diagnose any potential heart
disease. A radiograph to be
certain, depending on the results a
cardiac catheterization. It's a
very common procedure.

HEATON
Common for who?

DOCTOR
(writing on a small pad)
In the meantime, this is for your
blood pressure.

THERESA (PRE-LAP)
Yes, I understand. Mmmhmm. Okay.

FADE TO BLACK -- FADE UP IMMEDIATELY TO:

44

**INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. BACK OFFICE. DAY. HEATON'S
IMAGINATION.**

44

Theresa sits at a desk with a phone to her ear. Seymour sits at another desk just opposite her. Gena enters the room.

THERESA
(into phone)
Good luck with the sale.

Theresa hangs up the phone and turns to Seymour.

THERESA (CONT'D)
Same story. And I've backtracked the numbers. Last year's invoices compared to this year, the place down street compared to this one up at Exit 9, compared to here, all looking the same.

SEYMOUR
You're not telling me anything I don't already know.
(then, to Gena)
Is everyone else here?

GENA
(nods)
Are you planning on having a conversation with them? Some kind of speech or announcement?

SEYMOUR
(standing up)
No.

GENA
You have to let them know the situation. If it's the last show--

SEYMOUR
It's not the last show. It's not their last and it's not yours.

GENA
It is mine, Seymour.

SEYMOUR

(crossing to her, taking
her hands affectionately)
Gena, honey, there's nothing to
worry about. The show, with Heaton,
it goes the way I know it'll go, we
get the audience back, nothing to
worry about.

GENA

You're really going to be stubborn
to the end.

Ben ENTERS, overhearing Gena's comment and noting the tension
between her and Seymour. He grins a shit eating grin.

SEYMOUR

(re: Ben's smile)
Now the cat who ate the canary.

BEN

(to Seymour, re: Gena)
I don't know what she's angry
about, but I'm on her side.

Ben holds up the sheet of paper containing the LINE-UP that
Seymour and Weaver worked out earlier.

SEYMOUR

What's wrong with the line-up?

BEN

I said nothing when you invited
Heaton back for a show. But give
him a full slot, and cut into ours--

SEYMOUR

I put you on there first.

BEN

Don't appease me, Sey. Heaton left
us in his dust, and we who remained
kept you above water. Now you bring
him back and shaft the loyal ones?

(to Theresa)

No offence.

SEYMOUR

(pushing past Ben to exit)
You have no clue how full of shit
you are.

GENA
Ease off, Seymour.

BEN
I know exactly how much shit
I'm filled with.

Seymour storms out of the back room. Ben trails after him.

We STAY ON Theresa and Gena for a beat.

THERESA
(then, re: Seymour)
In his defense, I don't want you to
go either.

Gena smiles warmly at Theresa.

CUT TO:

45

**INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. MAIN FLOOR. DAY. HEATON'S
IMAGINATION.**

45

Seymour has exited the office and moves through the club.

BEN (O.C.)
I'm not finished talking, Sey!

WIDER ANGLE to include Ben as he trails behind Seymour now.

SEYMOUR
Let me know when you are!

We SEE now the other performers and staff taking note of Seymour and Ben. We might notice that Krickit, the waitress from Heaton's birthday dinner, is here now as well.

We STAY ON Seymour and Ben as they move across the main floor, where Paul wipes table tops with a wet cloth.

SEYMOUR (CONT'D)
(glances at the tables;
then, to Paul)
There are still no chairs? How long
do I have to wait till we get some
goddamn chairs?!

TIGHTER ANGLE ON Ben grabbing Seymour by the arm. Seymour gets in his face.

BEN
I want my full time slot on stage.

SEYMOUR
I will knock your drum, you don't
let me go.

MACK

Before Seymour owned the place. And
after that it was Ben and Heaton
who did an act together.

JOE

Fuck I'd've given to see that.

DAPHNE

(shoots Joe a look; then
stamps out her cigarette)
I'm going back inside.

MACK

You okay?

DAPHNE

Yeah...

She heads into the Maple Grove.

JOE

(re: Daphne)
How's that going?

MACK

(shrugs, bashful)
I don't know.

JOE

Plunge, Mack. Take the plunge.

He hands Mack a cigarette. Mack doesn't take it.

JOE (CONT'D)

All the turmoil, and mark my words
there'll be turmoil, it's worth it.
(between drags)
She won't think so, but--

Ben storms outside the club, breezing between Joe and Mack.

BEN

(to Mack)
If I'm not back in a few I won't be
back at all.

JOE

Heya, Ben-- ?

Ben stops his march; turns back to Joe, suddenly discreet.

BEN

Hey Joe. I know an easy game at a bar. Lend me some? Fair share.

JOE

You got a show tonight. Wait till after you get paid.

MACK

Seymour pays him in advance.

Joe shakes his head; then, pulls out a thick money clip.

JOE

(handing Ben a few bills)
You already owe me, what, a hundred?

BEN

It was eighty, and I have more pressing matters.
(taking the cash)
Now I'll be able to pay you back.

CUT TO:

47

INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. DAY. HEATON'S IMAGINATION.

47

Seymour stands at the bar playing a game of cards with Ruban.

SEYMOUR

I don't know what's wrong with people. This is a place of happiness. Now everyone's angry.

Seymour looks at Ruban, who just smiles. Seymour smiles too.

SEYMOUR (CONT'D)

Never stop smiling, Ruban.

NEW ANGLE to include Alfred and Karen by the stage with Rhian. Paul approaches Alfred. He says something MOS. He points in the direction of the service entrance.

Seymour looks to where Paul is pointing.

SEYMOUR'S POV: A dolly full of chairs stands at the entrance to the club.

ANGLE BACK ON Seymour.

SEYMOUR (CONT'D)

Finally!

THERESA (PRE-LAP)
 (reading, as in "to live")
Live at the Maple Grove?

ABRUPT CUT TO:

48

INT. HEATON'S CAR. DAY. REAL TIME.

48

Heaton is at the wheel, Theresa in the passenger seat. She wears sunglasses, hand on her forehead in hangover pose as she looks at the cover of a screenplay.

HEATON
 (correcting, as in "to be
 alive")
Live at the Maple Grove.
 (then)
 Maybe I'll just call it "At The
 Maple Grove."

He grabs a pharmacy bag from the back seat, opens it and pulls out two prescription pill bottles, the one for pain, the other for blood pressure. He dry swallows a pill each.

THERESA
 (flipping through the
 pages)
 There are a lot of characters.

HEATON
 Yeah.

THERESA
 You named them all after the actors
 you want to have play them?

HEATON
 I wrote them with everyone in mind
 anyway.

THERESA
 Hmm, s' funny.

By now Heaton is putting the pills away. Theresa eyes them.

THERESA (CONT'D)
 The doctor said everything's okay?

HEATON
 (nods, lying)
 It was just stress.

THERESA
Why the pills?

HEATON
For the stress. And my back, it's
nothing to worry about.

THERESA
Alright...
(then, still looking
through the script)
Wait, you wrote in a relationship
between Seymour and Gena?

HEATON
(clarifying)
Not a happy relationship.

THERESA
(laughs, accusatory)
I see what you're doing.
(tossing the script to the
back seat)
There *is* something wrong with your
health. Not your heart, your head.

CUT TO:

49

EXT. BEACH. DAY. REAL TIME.

49

Seymour stands waist deep in the ocean, wearing khakis and an undershirt, a fishing rod in hand with the line reeled out.

HEATON (O.C.)
(calling out)
Hi, Seymour.

NEW ANGLE to include Heaton on the beach as Seymour turns around to see him.

SEYMOUR
Ha! Nathaniel Heaton, how are ya?

HEATON
Doing okay. Good to see you.

SEYMOUR
(beat)
Just going to stand there?

Heaton looks down at his pants. He then takes his shoes off and wades into the water.

TIGHTER ON Heaton, reaching Seymour.

HEATON
Everyday you do this, huh?

SEYMOUR
Being with nature calms me. Plus,
I need to eat.

He casts out a new line.

HEATON
I saw your picture up at the
studio, playing Archie Rice.

SEYMOUR
They haven't tossed that out with
the rest of the trash?

HEATON
(small laugh)
You left a mark with the roles you
played, Sey. Has the heart for
performing left you?

SEYMOUR
Life is performance, and my heart
still beats.
(beat, then--)
So tell me why you decided to pop
in. Are you the popping in sort?

HEATON
I'm going to make a film.

SEYMOUR
I see.

HEATON
You'd like the role I have in mind
for you.

SEYMOUR
Who am I in it?

HEATON
A night club owner. Years ago you
were a performer doing comedy at
clubs. You were also into poker,
you always won. You even won the
deed to this night club in a game,
from some small time gangster
types. But that part of the story
was years ago.

SEYMOUR
 (beat, considering)
 You have my interest.

HEATON
 (smiles; then, hesitant)
 I should say, though, I'd like Gena
 to be in it, too.

FADE TO BLACK -- FADE UP IMMEDIATELY TO:

50 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. GREEN ROOM. DAY. HEATON'S** 50
IMAGINATION.

Gena stands at her mirror station. She removes photos from the frame. One rips. She tears the rest of it in frustration.

NEW ANGLE to include Theresa nearby. Theresa then crosses to Gena, doing a little two-step as she does.

THERESA
 Want to get out of here and get a
 little drunk?

Gena looks at Theresa in the reflection of the mirror, offering a smile.

CUT TO:

51 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. DAY. HEATON'S IMAGINATION.** 51

Seymour stands behind the bar. He sees Gena and Theresa as they exit the green room.

SEYMOUR (PRE-LAP)
 Gena...

ABRUPT CUT TO:

52 **INT. RESTAURANT. DAY. REAL TIME.** 52

Heaton and Seymour sit across from one another at a booth.

SEYMOUR
 ...I never knew what shame felt
 like till after she and I were
 through.
 (beat; then, recollecting)
 And I'd never known anyone who
 could so lose herself in a role.

HEATON

Like you could.

SEYMOUR

She was better. She and I, we did a production of 'Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune.'

HEATON

I heard about those shows.

SEYMOUR

When we did it, we really fell in love. The real kind. And afterwards we always supported each other's work, you know, because it takes a toll. If you really lose yourself in a part, that can take a toll. We always had each other to help ease back to ourselves. We were two peas. It was something.

HEATON

Then why the hell did you leave?

SEYMOUR

She must have told you.

HEATON

What's your side?

SEYMOUR

(small laugh)

Right, every story has three sides, yours, mine and the truth. Not this one. Just one side, hers.

(beat; then, angered)

Still, she was the one who went and chose to take on the role of Medea. I asked her not to. Not to become the woman in that play. I knew I couldn't love that woman.

(beat)

Maybe I thought I'd already fell out of love.

(then)

Either way, I then fucked around, got caught, and walked out on her while she was still lost in the character. I abandoned her in that state, when she needed me. I abandoned my partner.

(beat)

(MORE)

SEYMOUR (CONT'D)
 Afterwards I was never any good. I
 was shit. So I retired.

Pause.

HEATON
 Will you read the script?

SEYMOUR
 You got a script?
 (Heaton nods, Seymour
 laughs & extends a hand)
 Gimme the script!

CUT TO:

53

INT. HEATON'S APARTMENT. NIGHT. REAL TIME.

53

Rhian sits on the couch, reading a copy of Heaton's
 screenplay. She has a glass of wine on the coffee table. We
 can see dirty dinner dishes in the sink.

The front door to the apartment opens. Heaton ENTERS.

HEATON
 (surprised to see Rhian)
 Did we have plans?

RHIAN
 No.

HEATON
 (relieved)
 Oh... sorry I missed dinner--

She holds up the script.

HEATON (CONT'D)
 Where'd you get that?

RHIAN
 Not from you. I didn't know you
 were going to make a film.

Heaton crosses to his bedroom.

HEATON
 I was planning to tell you.

ANGLE ON Heaton crossing to his desk. He tosses his shoulder
 bag on the chair. We SEE all around the desk area are piles
 of books and screenplays. Beside the computer we also SEE two
 misshapen stark WHITE MASKS.

HEATON (CONT'D)
We've been on such different
schedules.

RHIAN (O.C.)
I feel like you're avoiding me.

NEW ANGLE to include Rhian, the screenplay in her hand.

HEATON
Me...? No.

RHIAN
I had to hear about it from Karen
when she said you gave her a part.

HEATON
(searching through his
shoulder bag)
I have a part in it for you too.
(then, handing her one)
This one's your copy.

She takes the script from him and flips through it.

HEATON (CONT'D)
That's the latest draft.

RHIAN
I saw there was a character named
after me. The scene with the mom?

HEATON
It was all written for you. How I
understand you...

CU ON Heaton, hesitant as he watches Rhian for a beat; then--

HEATON (CONT'D)
I want to end things though.

CU ON Rhian, looking up from the script at Heaton. She
stifles emotion, eyes beginning to tear.

RHIAN
(nods, knowingly)
With us?

HEATON (O.C.)
(matter-of-fact)
We've both felt it for awhile now.

Rhian then glares at him, with sudden anger, tears drying.

RHIAN
Well great timing!

WIDER ANGLE ON Rhian as she throws both copies of the script at Heaton. She grabs her coat and bag, heads to the door.

HEATON
I still want you to do the film.

He runs after her.

HEATON (CONT'D)
(affectionately)
Do you still want to be in it?

RHIAN
(spins to face him)
Well, yes!

ANGLE ON Heaton as she then exits, slamming the door.

CAMERA FOLLOWS him as he goes to the window and looks out.

HEATON'S POV: Rhian stands on the sidewalk, her tears now uncontrollable.

BACK ON Heaton, watching her. He shakes his head.

HEATON
(to himself, with some
regret)
Shit. That's what her going looks
like.

CUT TO:

54 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. HAIR & MAKE-UP. DAY. REAL TIME.** 54

Rhian reads through the day's sides from Heaton's script as HAIR & MAKE-UP prep her for a scene. In the BACKGROUND we SEE various CREW MEMBERS at work, rigging lights, etc...

RHIAN (O.S.)
You know when you just know you're
going to get into a fight, and it's
better to not show up?

CUT TO:

55 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. STAGE. DAY. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 55

Rhian stretches her dance steps. Daphne leans on the stage.

DAPHNE
I didn't think you two would last.

RHIAN
(sarcastic)
Great. Now you tell me.

DAPHNE
I couldn't say it earlier.

KAREN
(approaching from the bar)
It's true. We're always telling
each other to tell each other if we
think a guy is a wrong fit, but
never introduce a guy until we've
already fallen for him.

RHIAN
I'm not in love with him though. I
was in lust, I wanted to move in
together. But there's nothing there
anymore.

By now Rhian has halted her dance rehearsal and taken a seat
on the edge of the stage.

RHIAN (CONT'D)
Have either of you been in love? I
mean really been in love?

KAREN
I'm in love all the time.

DAPHNE
(laughs)
That's called immature love.

RHIAN
And that's not what I mean.

KAREN
Well everybody falls in love.

RHIAN
My mother didn't. My mother never
loved my father.

DAPHNE
How do you know?

RHIAN
She told me. After they divorced.
She's never once been in love.

KAREN
 (having counted on her
 fingers by now)
 I've been in love eight times.

RHIAN
 Karen, that's not possible.

KAREN
 Why not?

DAPHNE
 (laughing)
 You'd be an emotional wreck.

KAREN
 (agreeing)
 Sometimes I am.

RHIAN
 (still on point)
 I'm serious. What if we never know
 what it's like?
 (points at Karen)
 You haven't really felt it.
 (points at Daphne)
You haven't felt it, right?
 (points at herself)
I haven't felt it. What if we never
 feel love?
 (beat; then, standing--)
 Can we talk about something else?

DAPHNE
 Let's go back to lust, it's more
 fun than love.

CLOSE ANGLE ON Rhian as Daphne and Karen laugh. Rhian flashes
 a small smile, amused by her friends.

ABRUPT CUT TO:

56

EXT. THE MAPLE GROVE. VIDEO VILLAGE. DAY. REAL TIME.

56

Heaton and his DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY (the DP) stand around
 a VIDEO MONITOR -- watching the scene that we were just
 watching with Rhian, Daphne and Karen.

KAREN
 (on video monitor)
 There's a difference between them?

Heaton's ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (1ST AD) approaches. Heaton spots him and they exchange a nod.

HEATON
 (then, to the DP, re: the
 scene on the monitor)
 Well, it is what it is.

DP
 What do you mean? You don't like
 it?

By now CAMERA is CARRYING Heaton and the 1st AD as they walk past various CREW MEMBERS at work.

1ST AD
 I reread your shot list, no way
 we'll get everything today. Unless
 you blow through the work. But we
 can fit the confrontation scene,
 Seymour and Ben in the bathroom, we
 can fit that day after tomorrow.

Heaton suddenly stops and looks down the street.

HEATON'S POV: The next block over, a large FILM CREW is set up with equipment and trucks parked along the road.

HEATON (O.C.)
 That's not us.

BACK ON Heaton and the 1st AD, looking at the film crew.

1ST AD
 No. That's a crew with money.

The 1st AD chuckles. Heaton continues on.

CUT TO:

57

EXT. THE MAPLE GROVE. STREET. DAY. REAL TIME.

57

CAMERA SLOWLY PULLS BACK from Seymour as he crosses the street to THE MAPLE GROVE SET. He breezes past Joe and Mack. CAMERA STAYS ON Joe and Mack as Seymour heads OFF FRAME.

While Joe and Mack casually converse, we SEE them rehearsing what is clearly a choreographed fist fight at quarter speed.

JOE
 I heard that guy there, Seymour? He
 never breaks character on set.

MACK

(nods, judging)

We shot a couple scenes already.
Gets kinda weird talking to him.

JOE

Nah, I like it. Letting reality
cross over to your imagination.

By now CAMERA has CONTINUED TO PULL BACK to include Gena and Ben, standing at the CRAFT SERVICES table. We can SEE Seymour walking past in the BACKGROUND.

Gena fixes a coffee, fumbling as she rips open sugar packets. Ben watches Seymour, then looks to Gena, noting her tension.

BEN

I don't know why he had to cast him
in the fucking first place.

GENA

I get why. Seymour's fantastic, he
should be in the movie. And I love
Heaton, I'll do anything for him.
But he could've written me and
Seymour different fucking
storylines--
(cutting herself short)

Heaton walks past in a hurry. Ben then trails after him.

BEN

Heaton, why the fuck did you cast
Seymour? You know how he hurt Gena.

HEATON

(not slowing)

I don't have time, Ben.

Heaton moves off, entering The Maple Grove. Ben looks back at Gena, tossing his hands up with frustration.

FADE TO BLACK -- FADE UP IMMEDIATELY TO:

58

EXT. THE MAPLE GROVE. DAY. HEATON'S MOVIE.

58

MATCHING THE ACTION FROM SCENE 46 -- Daphne stamps out her cigarette. Joe stands next to Mack.

CAMERA NOW FOLLOWS Daphne as she heads inside the club.

JOE
And I want to get back together.

RHIAN
You cheated on me.

HEATON (O.C.)
Cut!

RHIAN, MACK AND JOE TURN TO LOOK AT THE CAMERA.

TIME CUT TO:

61 CLOSE ANGLE ON RHIAN AND HEATON. *REAL TIME.*

61

Heaton stands intimately close with Rhian, a few feet away from the cast and crew. Rhian stares at him with animosity.

HEATON
I need to see you angrier.

RHIAN
Trust me, I'm angry.
(at you)

HEATON
You're not showing it. You've been bottling your emotion all day. It has to be boiling by now. The break-up with Joe, the betrayal and spite, all that needs to burst out.
(off her silent glare)
Don't play it reticent.

HEATON I need to see it. RHIAN Okay.

HEATON (CONT'D)
Good. And be physical too.
(to Joe, who is off frame)
It okay she lets you have it, Joe?

JOE (O.C.)
Definitely.

Heaton walks OFF FRAME. We HOLD ON Rhian as she watches him.

RHIAN'S POV: Heaton joins his 1st AD and CAMERA CREW. We SEE Ben standing nearby. Heaton then spots Noelle approaching. She waves to him. Heaton's face lights up with a smile.

1ST AD (PRE-LAP)
Roll sound!

SOUND RECORDER (PRE-LAP)
Speed!

1ST AD (PRE-LAP)
Camera!

CAMERA OPERATOR (PRE-LAP)
Rolling!

ANGLE ON RHIAN, staring at Heaton and Noelle. A mixture of hurt and anger now. She lets out an inadvertent, small sigh.

WIDE ANGLE ON Rhian as she walks back inside the night club. Ben watches her, then turns to Heaton with a mixture of disappointment and anger.

HEATON
Action!

TIME CUT TO:

62 WIDE ANGLE ON MACK AND JOE AS RHIAN EXITS THE NIGHT CLUB. 62
HEATON'S MOVIE.

Rhian storms up to Joe. Fuming now. She pushes him, both hands hard into his chest. Joe stumbles backwards and laughs.

RHIAN
What the hell are you doing here?!

JOE
T'see the show. It's a big show tonight.

RHIAN
Yeah? That's all?

JOE
And I want to get back together.

RHIAN
You cheated on me!

JOE
Can we talk about it? It was a mistake. You know I can't think straight sometimes.

RHIAN
What kind of an excuse is that?!

JOE
I'm sorry, baby. I want you back.

He moves to her. She shoves him hard again. He laughs again.

RHIAN

Too bad!

Joe grabs Rhian by the arm. She hits him. He recoils. Mack steps between them, laughing now too as he forces them apart.

MACK

(while laughing)

I'm thinking you should go, Joe.

JOE

(also still laughing)

I'm fighting for you, Rhian!

(to Mack, his laughter
growing)

I'll fight for her, Mack.

RHIAN

Go ahead then and waste your time!

HEATON (O.C.)

Cut! Let's go again.

63

RHIAN, MACK AND JOE TURN TO LOOK AT THE CAMERA. *REAL TIME.* 63

RHIAN

What now????!!!!

(pointing at Joe and Mack)

They were laughing the entire take!

Can you stop and think maybe your complaints about me aren't in my acting, maybe they're because you don't know how to direct me now that we're not fucking?! What'd I screw up this time?!

HEATON (O.C.)

Nothing. Nothing, Rhian. It was Joe and Mack laughing.

RHIAN

(calming down)

Oh.

We suddenly HEAR Ben laughing OFF SCREEN. Rhian laughs then too. Ben ENTERS FRAME, cracking up hysterical as he hugs her.

HEATON (O.C.)

Guys, Joe and Mack, it's not funny.

JOE 1ST AD (PRE-LAP)
I'm sorry. Roll sound!

MACK SOUND RECORDER (PRE-LAP)
Sorry, Heaton. Sorry, Rhian. Speed!

JOE 1ST AD (PRE-LAP)
Sorry, Rhian. You were Camera!
fantastic.

RHIAN CAMERA OPERATOR (PRE-LAP)
(feigning diva now) Rolling!
I know I was.

BEN
(to Heaton)
Hey, I thought you said you and her
hadn't been fucking already in like
forever?

Rhian lets out a laugh as she gives Ben a push.

HEATON (PRE-LAP)
Action!

TIME CUT TO:

64 JOE MOVES TO RHIAN. RHIAN SHOVES HIM AWAY. HEATON'S MOVIE. 64

RHIAN
Too bad!

Joe grabs Rhian by the arm. She hits him. Mack steps between them and forces them apart.

MACK
I'm thinking you should go, Joe.

JOE
I'm fighting for you, Rhian!
(to Mack)
I'll fight for her, Mack!

RHIAN
Go ahead then and waste your time!

She turns and marches back inside The Maple Grove.

NEW ANGLE ON Mack and Joe as they square off. They each roll up their sleeves. They take off their watches.

MACK
Look, Joe--

JOE
This is the turmoil, Mack! Fighting
for it is worth it!

MACK
Sure you want to go this way?

JOE
You say that like I should be the
worried one.
(Mack nods)

By now they're standing off against each other to spar.

JOE (CONT'D)
You're big, but I got iron will
behind me. Size don't matter--

Joe moves in on Mack. Mack throws a punch. It connects with
Joe's face. Joe crumples to the pavement.

ABRUPT CUT TO:

65 **INT. RESTAURANT. NIGHT. REAL TIME.**

65

Heaton and Noelle sit side-by-side at a table for four. No
one sits across from them. Heaton says something MOS to
Noelle, eliciting a mutual laugh.

TIME CUT TO:

66 HEATON AND NOELLE, THERESA AND JASON. REAL TIME.

66

Theresa and Jason now sit at the table, across from Heaton
and Noelle. Theresa is obviously drunk, Jason more so.

Krickit approaches.

KRICKIT
Your food will be out in just a few
moments. Can I get anyone anything
in the meantime?

JASON
Another martini.

HEATON
(pointing to Jason's
glass)
You still have half of one--

Jason picks the glass up and pours the remains of his drink onto the floor. Theresa laughs.

KRICKIT
(hurrying off)
I'll get some towels.

ANGLE ON Theresa and Jason.

JASON
(standing)
Gonna find the little boy's room.

WIDER ANGLE to include Heaton and Noelle as Jason walks off.

HEATON
(to Theresa, angry)
He's plastered.

THERESA
(shakes her head 'no')
He hasn't had anything to drink all day.

Krickit returns with a towel and proceeds to clean the floor.

HEATON
I think it's time you two spent some time apart.

THERESA
You're giving me advice?
(gestures to Noelle)
Like I'm the one who can't be alone.

NOELLE
(re: Heaton)
We're not together.

Theresa laughs.

HEATON
We're not. Noelle is in the movie.

THERESA
(to Noelle, condescending)
Ooh, he put you in his movie?

Heaton slams his palm down on the table. Noelle quickly places her hand down on top of his in restraint.

ANGLE ON Theresa, noting Heaton and Noelle's hands.

THERESA (CONT'D)
 (half-smiles)
 I thought you were going to lose
 control.

We SEE Krickit finish cleaning the floor and walk off.

Theresa sits back in her chair. She glares at Heaton and Noelle.

ANGLE ON everyone as Jason returns and sits back down.

JASON
 Where the fuck's my drink?

THERESA
 (beat)
 Jason. Maybe you shouldn't--

Jason turns to Theresa, swinging his hand as he does, smacking her in the face.

HEATON
 (snapping)
 That's it.

Heaton bolts from his chair. His legs hit the table as he stands. Glasses fall and spill. He grabs Jason by the shirt and pulls him from the table.

ANGLE ON Theresa and Noelle, favoring Theresa as they watch Heaton drag Jason from the restaurant. Theresa's hand is on the cheek that was hit. Her eyes well with tears. She stands from the table and moves to the BACK EXIT.

CUT TO:

67

INT. HEATON'S APARTMENT. NIGHT. REAL TIME.

67

CU ON Heaton's hands, filling two glasses with wine.

HEATON (O.C.)
 She's fine. She's fine. She'll call
 if she's not fine.

WIDER ANGLE as Heaton hands a glass to Noelle. He proceeds to pace the apartment with a nervous energy.

HEATON (CONT'D)
 That's when she always shows up.
 When something's wrong.

ANGLE ON Noelle as she watches Heaton pace.

NOELLE
 Maybe she just wants to connect
 with you.

HEATON (O.C.)
 She *is* connected with me.

NOELLE
 Maybe she doesn't feel it.

BACK ON Heaton.

HEATON
 (at a loss)
 I don't know. All I know is she's
 not with him right now. So... she's
 fine.

DISSOLVE TO:

MUSIC -- PLAYING FROM A RECORD PLAYER

68

INT. HEATON'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. NIGHT. REAL TIME.

68

OVERHEAD ANGLE ON Noelle, laying herself down on Heaton's bed. The bed is strewn with books and screenplays. She grabs a script. Flips through it.

NOELLE
 These aren't yours.
 (picking up another)
 You're reading them?

ANGLE ON Heaton, replacing an ink cartridge at his printer. He glances back at Noelle and the scripts.

HEATON
 I'm stealing inspiration from them.

WIDER ANGLE as Heaton crosses to the bed.

HEATON (CONT'D)
 The people who wrote those, made
 the films, the performances in
 them, they captured something...

By now he's kneeling on the floor at the bedside. Noelle is sitting up.

HEATON (CONT'D)
 ...an authenticity of life. They
 somehow got it up on the big
 screen. They did it.
 (MORE)

HEATON (CONT'D)
 They'll all live forever because
 they did. It's been my dream that I
 could.

Pause. She looks at him. He waits for a reply; finally --

NOELLE
 Easy peasy.

HEATON
 (smiles)
 Easy peasy? What's easy peasy look
 like, like this?

He wraps his arms around her waist and lifts her in the air.

TIGHTER ANGLE as they fall back on to the bed together,
 Heaton landing on top of Noelle, both of them laughing now.

THE MUSIC ENDS

Heaton looks to the record player.

ECU ON a record spinning on the phonograph turntable. The
 needle moves to the next track. A NEW SONG begins to play.

BACK ON Heaton and Noelle. He looks at her.

HEATON (CONT'D)
 (beat; then, pulls away)
 I need something else to drink. You
 want a drink?

NOELLE
 No thanks.

NEW ANGLE MOVING WITH Noelle as she then rolls off the bed.

She crosses to Heaton's desk and picks up one of the
 misshapen stark white masks. She holds it up to her face.

NOELLE (CONT'D)
 Nice mask.

She picks up the second mask. Heaton takes it from her.

NOELLE (CONT'D)
 Why do you have two?

HEATON
 (putting it on)
 Why wouldn't I?

NOELLE
 (laughs, putting her mask
 on)
 Uh huh, keep playing evasive.

WIDER ANGLE as she steps to him. He moves away. She moves closer. He side steps her.

NOELLE (CONT'D)
 (turns then, walking away
 from him)
 Fine, I'm bored.

Heaton watches her for a beat. He takes a step to her. Noelle then suddenly spins back around and rushes him. He runs away.

VARIOUS SHOTS throughout the apartment as Noelle playfully chases Heaton like cat and mouse. They leap on the couch. Circle the kitchen table. Dodge chairs.

CU ON the apartment door lock as it turns.

CU ON the door knob as it turns.

ANGLE ON the door as it opens. Theresa staggers in, obviously extremely drunk and an emotional wreck.

WIDE ANGLE ON Heaton and Noelle, turning to face Theresa in their misshapen stark white masks. Theresa stops in her tracks, startled at the sight of them; then--

THERESA
 Natie? ...I'm sorry.

MUSIC OUT.

CUT TO:

69

INT. HEATON'S APARTMENT. BATHROOM. NIGHT. REAL TIME.

69

Theresa hugs the toilet, crying as we HEAR her painfully retch into the bowl between sobs.

HEATON (O.C.)
 (reading)
 "On the pillow the embroidered
 flowers are fading. Fading that
 patient spider my grandmother..."

WIDER ANGLE to include Heaton, sitting in the bathtub beside Theresa, reading from a book of poetry by Robert Hass.

HEATON (CONT'D)

(still reading)

"...who made the best of losses,
bright quilts from rags, that are
every bird...

(laughing to himself)

"...Audubon ever killed in
America."

(then)

I always laugh at the end.

THERESA

...I'm dying...

HEATON

You're not dying.

THERESA

Yes. I am. I'm dying.

HEATON

(amused)

Remember when you had that stomach
virus? Kept screaming you were
dying then too.

THERESA

(pained)

Fuck you.

Theresa flushes the toilet and wipes her mouth. She turns and
sits against the wall; then--

THERESA (CONT'D)

(re: the poem)

Why would you read that?

HEATON

It makes me think of Grandma. If we
were the bright quilts she made
from rags. It's called
"Grandfather's Death" though, so
it's not the same, but...

THERESA

Now you're making me feel worse.

HEATON

(beat; then, tossing the
book aside)

Poetry isn't about cheering people
up. You watch a romantic comedy for
that. I don't have any of those.

Pause.

THERESA
I wish I'd been there.
(off Heaton's look,
clarifying)
When Grandma died.

HEATON
No you don't.

THERESA
(defensive)
Why say that? Why do you know?

HEATON
I was there.

THERESA
You never tell me about it.

HEATON
(beat, remembering)
She had her eyes open. I could see
she saw something. There was this
moment, right when she died, she
had this look in her eyes like... I
don't know, she saw where she was
going maybe? Or saw what everything
was about? Saw that she had a
successful life, I hope. She looked
like... all the pretense, role
playing, expectations, all that was
gone.

THERESA
(affirming)
It was a good look?

HEATON
Yeah. I mean, she lit up from the
inside. Like she was laughing.

Pause.

HEATON (CONT'D)
After seeing that, sometimes I get
scared it won't be the same for me.

CLOSE ANGLE ON Theresa, looking at Heaton.

DISSOLVE TO:

70 **INT. HEATON'S APARTMENT. NIGHT. REAL TIME.** 70

Theresa is asleep on the couch.

DISSOLVE TO:

71 **INT. HEATON'S CAR. NIGHT. REAL TIME.** 71

CHRISTMAS MUSIC -- PLAYING OFF SCREEN

CU ON side view mirror. Passing traffic and city lights streak across the mirror's reflection.

CUT TO:

72 **EXT. STREET. HEATON'S CAR. NIGHT. REAL TIME.** 72

CHRISTMAS MUSIC CONTINUES OVER:

Heaton helps Noelle out of his car and onto the sidewalk. She wears an evening dress and heels, he wears a suit. A flirtatious attitude is deepening between them.

JUMP CUT TO:

CAMERA TRACKS with Heaton and Noelle as they walk along the sidewalk. Noelle checks Heaton's wrist watch. She takes him by the hand and playfully picks up their pace.

JUMP CUT TO:

Heaton and Noelle walk past a FILM CREW set up with equipment and trucks along the road. Heaton stops and watches the Crew work. Noelle waits a beat for Heaton to move on. He doesn't. She then removes her shoes, hands them to Heaton, and takes off running in the direction they were heading. Heaton then runs after her in pursuit.

JUMP CUT TO:

NEW ANGLE ON Noelle as Heaton catches up. He wraps his arms around her. They both nearly fall over laughing. Noelle grabs Heaton's hand. They take off running together, arm-in-arm.

DISSOLVE TO:

73 **INT. ACTING STUDIO. NIGHT. REAL TIME.** 73

THE CHRISTMAS MUSIC NOW PLAYS ON SPEAKERS IN THE STUDIO

WIDE ANGLE of the studio. Christmas decorations everywhere. The place is packed. We SEE Gena, Seymour, Theresa, Krickit, Rhian, Ben, Joe, Mort, Ruban, Karen, Daphne, Mack, Weaver, Paul, Alfred, Olivia and MANY OTHER PARTY-GOERS.

ANGLE ON Seymour and Ben crossing paths. They stop in front of each other. Seymour steps aside to let Ben pass.

ANGLE ON Rhian blithely talking MOS with Daphne and Karen.

ANGLE ON Ben noticing Rhian talk with Daphne and Karen.

ANGLE ON Theresa sitting alone in the theatre seats, now visibly clean, sober and trying. Joe, Mort and Ruban sit nearby, all drinking and engaged in an MOS conversation.

ANGLE ON Seymour at the bar, chatting with a YOUNG WOMAN working as a bartender, as she pours him two glasses of wine.

ANGLE ON the 1st AD and PRODUCER of Heaton's film, ad-libbing about all the scenes and all the work they still need to complete for the movie.

ANGLE ON Gena in MOS conversation with Weaver. Weaver's eyes go wide as he sees SOMEONE approach OFF SCREEN behind Gena.

NEW ANGLE to include Seymour arriving beside Gena with his two glasses of wine. He offers her one.

ANGLE ON Theresa as she pours herself a glass from a fruit punch bowl. Krickit stands nearby watching.

KRICKIT

(re: the punch, awkward)
That's virgin... a virgin drink?

THERESA

Without alcohol?
(Krickit nods; Theresa smiles, amused by Krickit)
No alcohol.
(then)
My brother told me he put you in the movie too?

KRICKIT

(nods again, excitedly)
Mmhhmm. And he told me you broke up with that guy who hit you?

THERESA

(defensive)
Jason didn't--
(MORE)

THERESA (CONT'D)
 (stops herself; then--)
 Yeah... He and I are over.

ANGLE ON Ben and Rhian. Rhian is laughing from something Ben said, to the point her eyes water.

BEN
 (smiling, amused at Rhian)
 Glad it's funny, only it's not a
 joke. Took a year to grow back.

RHIAN
 (struggling to stifle her
 laughter)
 Okay, okay, I'll stop laughing.

Now Ben laughs, causing Rhian to crack up again too.

BEN
 I like seeing you happy, you know,
 after the whole Heaton debacle.

Rhian stops laughing. Ben doesn't notice just yet.

BEN (CONT'D)
 (looking out at the party,
 incensed)
 Still can't believe he cast
 Seymour. Heaton knew Gena'd get
 consumed by the character she was
 playing, and yet he puts her back
 in that relationship. I mean where
 the fuck does he get off exploiting
 his friends' vulnerabilities like
 that? It's unethical. Then he's got
 that new girl who, it looks like,
 he's moving on with from you--
 (finally noticing Rhian's
 look)
 Shouldn't've mentioned Heaton, huh?

RHIAN
 (nods, but still enjoying
 Ben's company)
 Let's not talk about him.

ANGLE ON Gena and Seymour. Gena is obviously unhappy to be near Seymour, he's obviously hat-in-hand.

GENA
 You're a real shit. I never get
 tired of saying that.

SEYMOUR
 (sincere)
 I know. I know. And I... I never
 told you I was sorry. I am sorry.
 (off Gena's silence,
 affectionate)
 I thought Heaton cleared it with
 you before he asked me to do his
 picture.

Pause.

GENA
 We should get together sometime.
 It'd be good for our characters.

SEYMOUR
 (smiles)
 We should. We will!

GENA
 You're still not forgiven, Sey.

TIME CUT TO:

74

INT. ACTING STUDIO. NIGHT. REAL TIME.

74

NEW MUSIC -- A SLOW SONG PLAYS ON THE STUDIO SPEAKERS

Heaton and Noelle enter from the stairwell. CAMERA CARRIES them through the crowded hall. Noelle rushes ahead. We STAY ON Heaton as he arrives near the stage, where Party-Goers dance. He watches everyone for a beat. He then winces and puts his hand to his chest.

CU ON Heaton's hand pressing against his chest.

CU ON Heaton's face, his expression pained.

ANGLE ON Theresa and Krickit sitting in the theatre seats, engaged in a lively MOS conversation.

ANGLE ON Gena dancing with Seymour.

75

INT. ACTING STUDIO. OFFICE. NIGHT. REAL TIME.

75

CU ON Ben & Rhian, pressed up against the office door, making out as they wantonly pull off each other's clothes.

CUT TO:

76

INT. ACTING STUDIO. DANCE FLOOR. NIGHT. REAL TIME.

76

Noelle pulls Heaton onto the dance floor with everyone.

TIGHTER ANGLE ON Heaton and Noelle dancing close together.

CARDIOLOGIST (V.O.)

Mr. Heaton? Are you ready?

HEATON (V.O.)

Sure.

CARDIOLOGIST (V.O.)

We start with a mild sedative.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE SOUNDS AND MUSIC OF THE PARTY FADE TO AN ECHO OVER:

77

INT. HOSPITAL OPERATING ROOM. DAY. REAL TIME.

77

MOZART'S CLARINET CONCERTO PLAYS OVER SPEAKERS

CU ON Heaton on an operating table. Sedated but conscious as he undergoes the cardiac catheterization procedure.

Around him we SEE GLIMPSES of the CARDIOLOGIST and VARIOUS NURSES; legs, feet, lower torsos. We'll HEAR TECHNICIANS intermittently read aloud off heart monitors OFF SCREEN.

CARDIOLOGIST (V.O.)

Then we inject a local anesthetic in the groin. From there the catheters pass through the main arteries to your heart blood vessels, where we inject a dye to see if there's any blockage. And we'll know right away what the situation is. If there is blockage or if one of the chambers is enlarged, we'll see it, and determine further medical treatment or surgery. But I'm optimistic, alright?

HEATON (V.O.)

(small laugh)

Alright.

CARDIOLOGIST (V.O.)

Now what music would you like us to play during the procedure?

MUSIC OUT.

FADE TO BLACK -- FADE UP IMMEDIATELY TO:

78

INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.

78

THE ECHO OF THE PARTY AUDIO NOW SLOWLY FADES OUT

Noelle stands alone on the main floor, watching the stage.

WEAVER (O.C.)

And you and your band know what
song you're starting with?

ANGLE ON the stage, where Weaver and Gena are mid-rehearsal.

GENA

Sure do.

WEAVER

Idiots in the lighting booth know?
Cause God knows they'll fuck up.

NEW ANGLE ON Noelle, to include Theresa and Krickit by the bar, putting on waist aprons. Noelle approaches them.

NOELLE

Can I help?

THERESA

Ever been a waitress?

Noelle shakes her head 'no'. Theresa hands her an apron.

THERESA (CONT'D)

You're one now.

WIDE ANGLE of the club. We SEE now that Mort, Ruban, Paul, Alfred, Rhian, Daphne and Karen are all scattered around the space as well. Heaton ENTERS.

RUBAN

(spotting Heaton first)
Nathaniel Heaton everybody!

Theresa turns excitedly to see him.

THERESA

Natie!

CLOSE ANGLE as she runs into his arms and they both hug.

HEATON
Hey there, long time no see.

The others in the club approach and ad-lib warm hello's.

ANGLE ON Noelle, watching from a distance. Weaver approaches.

WEAVER
(re: Heaton)
He was a main attraction here
awhile back. Took off when
opportunity knocked.

CUT TO:

79

INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. BACK OFFICE. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE. 79

Heaton stands by the door to the back office, peering out on the main floor. Theresa sorts paperwork at her desk.

HEATON
(mid-conversation)
Then Seymour's still Seymour?

THERESA
(nods, adding)
He'll be happy to see you. Really
used your name to promote the show.

HEATON
Don't set expectations too high.

THERESA
The crowd'll be ecstatic you're
back.

HEATON
(shakes his head)
I'm dried up. I haven't performed
in awhile. I don't get offers
anymore.
(beat)
I never should've left this place.

THERESA
Who cares about offers? People here
still want to see you.
(adds, with a smile)
Seymour's counting on it, that's
for sure. No pressure though.

Heaton shares the smile with her.

DAPHNE (O.C.)
 Ten minutes, people! Ten minutes
 till doors!

THERESA
 I better get out there.

She exits. We STAY ON Heaton as he moves into--

80 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. REAR HALL. CONTINUOUS. NIGHT.** 80
HEATON'S MOVIE.

Heaton spots Noelle, leaning against the wall just outside the office. He looks at her. She can't help smiling at him.

HEATON
 You overhear everything my sister
 and I just said?

NOELLE
 (nods, with a big smile)
 You're going to be fine.

He looks at her for a beat; then can't help smiling too.

MUSIC -- AN INSTRUMENTAL PIECE BEGINS AND CARRIES OVER:

ABRUPT CUT TO:

81 **INT. BEN'S APARTMENT. NIGHT. REAL TIME.** 81

Rhian and Ben are in bed together. Playfully wrestling, teasing, physical. They're obviously falling for each other.

JUMP CUT TO:

82 **CU ON RHIAN. DAY. REAL TIME.** 82

She is sitting up in the bed now. She stares off blankly for a beat, then suddenly smiles.

NEW ANGLE to include Ben asleep in the bed beside her. Rhian turns to gaze at him. Falling in love.

CUT TO:

83 **EXT. FARMER'S MARKET. DAY. REAL TIME.** 83

MUSIC CONTINUES OVER THE FOLLOWING SEQUENCE AS WELL:

Gena samples strawberries from a fruit stand at a CROWDED farmer's market.

CUT TO:

84 **EXT. SEYMOUR'S HOUSE. DAY. REAL TIME.** 84

Gena drives her car into Seymour's driveway.

JUMP CUT TO:

Gena approaches Seymour's front door with a shopping bag from the farmer's market in her hand. She rings the doorbell.

CUT TO:

85 **INT. SEYMOUR'S BEDROOM. DAY. REAL TIME.** 85

Seymour is asleep in bed with a YOUNG WOMAN (early 20's). We might recognize her from the Christmas Party. We HEAR the doorbell RING.

The Young Woman wakes at the sound. She looks at Seymour. He remains asleep. The bell RINGS again. The Young Woman tries to wake Seymour.

CUT TO:

86 **EXT. SEYMOUR'S HOUSE. DAY. REAL TIME.** 86

The door opens to reveal the Young Woman, dressed now in a man's robe. Gena's face drops.

MUSIC OUT.

YOUNG WOMAN
Can I help you?

GENA
I'm sorry. I was looking for Seymour--

YOUNG WOMAN
Yeah. He's not budging.

GENA
Oh? Okay.

Gena turns back to her car. Seymour then appears at the door, in his undershirt and boxers.

SEYMOUR
 Gena? What are you-- ?
 (remembering they had
 plans)
 Shit. Shit, I forgot we said today.

GENA
 Of course you did!

Gena doesn't slow her march to the driveway. Seymour follows.

SEYMOUR
 Gena! Gena, I'm sorry. Please! Give
 me-- Just hear me out!

By now she's in the car. She starts the engine and drives
 off.

CUT TO:

87 **INT. BEN'S CAR. DAY. REAL TIME.**

87

Ben drives. Rhian is in the passenger seat. A long awkward
 silent beat between them. Rhian is visibly upset.

RHIAN
 (acknowledging)
 You don't feel the same.

BEN
 Look... lust and love, hate and
 love. How does one become the
 other? I'm not saying we had a
 contract limiting us to just
 hooking up, but how do I respond? I
 was mad at Heaton for putting
 Seymour in the picture. You were
 mad at Heaton. You needed someone
 to sleep with so I played the
 rebound. You were a mercy fuck. I
 don't know... call it spite sex.

RHIAN
 Stop the car!

Ben pulls over. Rhian storms out. Ben watches her go.

BEN
 (to himself)
 The fuck... The fuck was that? Why
 fucking say that?

He suddenly moves to get out of the car. His seat belt pulls him back against the seat. He fights to get the seat belt off. He finally unbelts himself, then struggles with the car door. He gets it open -- but he still just sits there.

MUSIC OUT.

FADE TO BLACK -- FADE UP IMMEDIATELY TO:

88 **EXT. THE MAPLE GROVE. SIDE ALLEY. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 88

CU ON Ben pacing. He takes a drag on a cigarette.

WIDER ANGLE, we SEE now Ben is beside The Maple Grove. We can also SEE a HANDGUN tucked in his waistband.

CUT TO:

89 **EXT. THE MAPLE GROVE. CONTINUOUS. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 89

WIDE ANGLE ON the night club. We can SEE Ben standing around the corner. We can SEE a long line of PEOPLE queued up by the FRONT DOOR, including Joe.

TIGHTER ANGLE ON Seymour as he steps outside and looks at the crowd waiting to enter. Joe offers him a handshake.

SEYMOUR
(with excitement)
Lotta people.

CUT TO:

90 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 90

Seymour re-enters the club with energy. He turns to Mack.

SEYMOUR
Gather everybody up.

NEW ANGLE on Seymour as Heaton approaches him.

HEATON
Seymour!

Seymour turns to Heaton. They exchange a handshake that pulls into a hug.

SEYMOUR
Heaton. It's good to see you.
Please, join me with the group.

He gestures towards the back office.

CUT TO:

91 **EXT. THE MAPLE GROVE. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 91

WIDE ANGLE ON the expectant audience members, with Joe standing at the head of the line.

SEYMOUR (PRE-LAP)
Okay, gather 'round.

CUT TO:

92 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 92

WIDE ANGLE ON the club, empty now, but prepped for the show.

SEYMOUR (PRE-LAP)
Gather 'round, I said.

CUT TO:

93 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. BACK OFFICE. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 93

Seymour looks straight ahead. His gaze intense. His eyes scanning the room.

SEYMOUR
Events surrounding tonight's show
have been a little contentious.

SEYMOUR'S POV: Gathered around are Heaton, Gena, Theresa, Rhian, Noelle, Weaver, Ruban, Karen, Krickit, Daphne, Alfred, Paul, Mort and Mack. Some sit, some stand.

SEYMOUR (CONT'D)
Things are a little thrown
together. We've gotta lotta acts.
Changes. Tensions. Drama. Some
physical confrontation.

WIDER ANGLE ON everyone.

SEYMOUR (CONT'D)
And all that might be why I think
this is already my favorite show
we've ever done. All that is what a
real show is about. You understand?
The shitfest around every corner.
Constant turmoil.

(MORE)

We SETTLE ON Alfred, in the background behind the bar, as he mixes and serves drinks.

98 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. MAIN FLOOR. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 98

CAMERA DRIFTS from the BACK of the club TO THE STAGE, passing Noelle as she serves drinks. We MOVE BETWEEN all the tables, filled with people, either sitting, taking their seats, walking about, drinking and conversing. The place is full.

99 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. BACK OFFICE. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 99

SEYMOUR HAS JUST FINISHED DELIVERING HIS MONOLOGUE.

ECU ON Seymour, looking at the performers and staff members.

SEYMOUR

I want you to know I love you all.

(then, nods)

Okay.

WIDER ANGLE to include the entire group as Seymour breaks away and exits.

100 **EXT. THE MAPLE GROVE. OUTSIDE DOORWAY TO THE BACK OFFICE. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 100

Ben stamps out his cigarette while peering inside the office to see Seymour exit out the back hall. CAMERA CARRIES Ben as he then moves down the line of expectant audience members and ENTERS the club.

101 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 101

Ben sees Seymour enter the bathroom. Ben trails after him.

102 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. BATHROOM. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 102

WIDE ANGLE of the bathroom. We SEE Seymour's legs on the floor beside a toilet in a stall. We HEAR Seymour vomiting.

Ben enters and pulls the handgun. He then stops as Seymour retches again. We HEAR the toilet flush. Ben tucks the gun back in his waistband. Seymour exits the stall, stopping short when he sees Ben.

Pause.

BEN
 (gestures to the stall)
 Nerves?

Seymour nods, then crosses to the sink.

CLOSER ANGLE ON them both as Ben watches Seymour wash his hands and wipe his mouth; then--

BEN (CONT'D)
 (sincere)
 I'm sorry. About flying off the handle earlier. I didn't realize--

SEYMOUR
 What, you feel like we're still two peas because I still get sick before a show?

BEN
 (beat; then, confessing)
 I'm sick all the time, Sey.

SEYMOUR
 (nods, empathetic; then--)
 Difference between us still is I know how to make sure I don't lose.

CLOSER ANGLE ON Ben as he just glares back at Seymour for a beat; then, Seymour exits the bathroom.

CUT TO:

103 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. MAIN FLOOR. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 103

HEAVY MUSIC INTRO.

LIGHTS DIM to enshroud the audience in near darkness.

ANGLE ON the stage as LIGHTS STROBE and SMOKE emits from stage right and left. A LIVE BAND (horns, percussion, guitar) performs off stage/off screen. We HEAR the audience cheer and clap. Music BUILDS until finally Weaver takes the stage.

ANGLE ON the audience now applauding wildly.

BACK ON Weaver as he soaks it up.

WEAVER
 (over the applause)
 Welcome! Welcome! Welcome!

WIDE ANGLE to include Weaver and the audience.

WEAVER (CONT'D)

Tonight you will see talent. Drama.
Comedy. Story. Song and dance.
Sturm und Drang. Sexy ladies and
revelous men.

(the audience hoots)

Big dreams by dreamers performing
on stage for your entertainment.

(the audience hoots

louder; then--)

I had a dream once.

(the Audience cheers,
Weaver smiles knowingly)

I said I had a dream once! My name
in lights. Broadway. Tony.

(then)

But Broadway Tony turned out to be
a two-bit hustler and a pimp. Many
an innocent young girl was sorely
mistaken to audition for Broadway
Tony, I'll tell you.

Weaver sits on the edge of the stage. Rests his chin on his
hand forlornly.

WEAVER (CONT'D)

And now, well, I just don't know.
If you can't make it there, you
can't make it anywhere.

(the audience boos)

Days of dreaming are long gone.

(the audience boos louder)

The dream is dead!

AUDIENCE

Long live the dream!

WEAVER

(getting to his feet)

I said the dream is dead!

AUDIENCE

Long live the dream!

WEAVER

The dream is dead!

AUDIENCE

Long live the dream!

WEAVER

Well, alright then, you don't have
to scream.

(adds, smiling)

(MORE)

WEAVER (CONT'D)

Yes, you do.

(the audience cheers)

You're a beautiful audience, you are. I can't actually fucking see you because it's so dark out there, thank you lighting crew, but I can just tell you're all beautiful.

(then)

Up first. One of the greats!

(stops, correcting)

Wait, that was me. Up next, one of the other greats! Put your hands together for Mr. Ben Zorn!

As the audience claps and cheers, Ben takes the stage.

104 **BEN'S ROUTINE. HEATON'S MOVIE.**

104

Ben is distracted at first, off his game, but as the audience responds, he begins to nail his material. The audience is with him. He's high off it all. But then he sees--

BEN'S POV: Carey sits at a table in the audience. He laughs at Ben's jokes, raises a drink to him.

CUT TO:

105 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. GREEN ROOM. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 105

Rhian approaches her mirror station, where a bouquet of flowers has been placed. She checks the name on the card.

NEW ANGLE as Rhian throws the flowers in the trash. We can SEE now that Gena is in the room too, at her mirror station.

RHIAN

Does every guy always turn out a mistake?

GENA

Every now and then.

CUT TO:

106 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. STAGE. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.**

106

Ben concludes his performance.

ANGLE ON audience applauding. We SEE Carey clap and cheer.

ANGLE ON Ben, noting Carey's presence. Weaver steps on stage.

ANGLE ON Seymour, heading to the back room.

CUT TO:

107 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. GREEN ROOM. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 107

Seymour enters. His eyes scan the room, from Gena to Rhian.

SEYMOUR

Rhian. Time to get out there.

Rhian moves to the door. Seymour kisses her forehead.

SEYMOUR (CONT'D)

Knock 'em dead.

RHIAN

Count on it.

CLOSE ANGLE ON Gena, head lowered to the palm of her hand. We can SEE Seymour and Rhian in the BACKGROUND. Rhian exits.

SEYMOUR

(turning to Gena)

You're on deck, honey.

NEW ANGLE to include them both as Gena lifts her head and proceeds to check her hair and make-up in the mirror.

GENA

The house is packed. What you hoped for. Don't imagine you'll need to close the club.

SEYMOUR

Long as people keep coming back.

Pause.

GENA

You know the first time I ever performed on stage for an audience, at the Palace Theatre in Chicago? I was back-up, but still, it was my first. Know what I dreamt about after, when I went to bed?

SEYMOUR

The next show.

GENA
 (confessing)
 The last one. What it'd be like
 sharing my last show with an
 audience.

SEYMOUR
 (at a loss)
 Why are you hellbent on retiring? I
 don't want you to leave.

GENA
 (looks at Seymour for a
 beat; then--)
 I'm not in love with this place
 anymore. I have no heart for it.

Pause.

Seymour then crosses to Gena. He puts his hands on her face
 and kisses her. She kisses him back.

SEYMOUR
 You're more beautiful to me than
 ever.

Seymour exits the room. A beat passes; Gena drops her head
 back and lets out a deep groan.

CUT TO:

108 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. STAGE. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 108

**RHIAN'S ROUTINE -- Bob Fosse-style song and dance that stirs
 the audience into a frenzy.**

ANGLE ON Heaton and Joe, watching Rhian from the bar. They
 clap and cheer along with everyone.

ANGLE ON Ben. He gazes at Rhian, taken with her.

CUT TO:

109 **GENA'S ROUTINE. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 109

Gena takes the stage. She looks out at the audience for a
 beat. She's hesitant, excited.

GENA
(laughs nervously, then--)
Hi, everyone. Before I start, I
wanted to say...

ANGLE ON Seymour watching Gena.

GENA (O.C.) (CONT'D)
...tonight's my final performance.
And I couldn't be happier than I am
sharing it with you.

WIDE ANGLE ON Gena and the audience as audience members break
into affectionate applause.

GENA (CONT'D)
I'll remember this.

CLOSER ANGLE ON Gena, emotional at the audience response. She
lets out a quick, happy laugh and breaks into a song.

Gena performs. The Audience applauds, cheers and sings along.

CUT TO:

110 **ROUTINES BY KAREN & MORT, WITH WEAVER PLAYING HOST. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 110

VARIOUS SHOTS of the audience during the performances.

VARIOUS SHOTS of the staff at work during the performances.

111 **HEATON'S ROUTINE. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 111

**Heaton takes the stage. The crowd offers a standing ovation.
The loudest response yet. His performance is a highlight.
Audience participation flourishes.**

CAMERA SETTLES ON Noelle, standing beside Seymour.

SEYMOUR
You're enjoying yourself? Enjoying
the show?

NOELLE
It's a blast the crowd turned up.

SEYMOUR
They did. Turned up for Heaton.

NOELLE
Maybe he should come back and work here forever.

SEYMOUR
(smiles)
Maybe.
(then, shrugs)
Cause it's not like he's getting work anywhere else, right?

NOELLE
Cause maybe if he brings in a crowd like this all the time you won't have to close the club, right?

Seymour looks at Noelle. She smiles--

NOELLE (CONT'D)
And then maybe I could get hired full time.

Seymour cracks up laughing.

SEYMOUR
Maybe!

CUT TO:

We HEAR the DISTANT SOUND of Ruban's performance on stage.

112 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. BACK OFFICE. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 112

Ben leans against the closed door to the office.

BEN
I'm not doing it.

CAREY (O.C.)
Not doing what?

BEN
I can't fucking kill Seymour.

ANGLE ON Carey.

CAREY
Well, having said that, someone will have to go tonight.

BEN (O.C.)
Put in a word for me, Carey.

CAREY
That's what this is. I got Boyle to
give you this deal.

NEW ANGLE to include both Ben and Carey.

BEN
This isn't a deal. I want to find
another way to pay the money I owe--

CAREY
(snapping)
You can't! There is no other way,
Ben. I got you into that game. It's
on me now you're handled, and I
will handle it.

TIME CUT TO:

113 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. BACK OFFICE. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 113

Ben sits on a chair, slouched, elbows on his knees, a hand on
his head, the other holding the gun.

He straightens his posture. Lets out a long slow breath.

NEW ANGLE as the phone rings. Ben jumps at the noise,
startled by it. He laughs.

HEATON (O.C.)
Cut.

NEW ANGLE from behind Ben as Heaton ENTERS.

114 ALL SOUND FADES TO SILENCE. REAL TIME. 114

Heaton gestures "one minute" with his finger to Ben, as he
walks to the opposite side of the room.

CAMERA TURNS to FOLLOW Heaton, AGAIN we SEE Heaton's Camera
and the Production Crew that is making Heaton's movie. Heaton
peers at a video monitor. He speaks MOS with the DP.

ANGLE ON BEN, watching Heaton. He then looks to the door.

ANGLE from behind Ben as Noelle ENTERS. She glances at Ben,
closes the door to the back room, and crosses to stand by
Heaton and the Production Crew.

ANGLE ON Heaton walking up to Ben.

BEN

What are you thinking?

HEATON

If Ben has to do what he's going to do. Why he would do it.

(beat)

He has two choices. He must decide.

BEN

Kill Seymour or don't.

HEATON

(shakes his head 'no')

If Ben doesn't, Carey kills Ben. The choices are Seymour dies, along with his vision of The Maple Grove, or Ben dies.

BEN

Why the fuck wouldn't I choose for Seymour to die and me to live?

Pause.

HEATON

(thinking out loud)

You love this place, as much as Seymour. You're going to die anyway, we all do. And these people, Boyle and Carey, always telling you what you should do, when it goes against what you love. That's what makes you sick all the time. Having no control of where your life is going.

BEN

(going with it)

I take their assignment, kill Seymour, let them get the club... I'll just wind up owing them again, having them on me to do something else. They'll compromise me again. I'll've betrayed Seymour to buy another day under their thumb. But if I die, it'd be my choice.

HEATON

And Boyle can fuck himself.

Heaton and Ben share a small laugh; then, Ben nods--

BEN
Okay.

HEATON
Yeah?

BEN
Let's do it.

Heaton EXITS FRAME.

115 ALL SOUNDS RESUME. HEATON'S MOVIE. 115

CAMERA HOLDS ON Ben in CU. He's smiling.

WEAVER (PRE-LAP)
Alright, alright, alright. Everyone
get up here and say sayonara.

CUT TO:

116 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. STAGE. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 116

VARIOUS QUICK SHOTS:

ANGLE ON Weaver up on stage with his arms outstretched.

ANGLE ON Rhian, Mort and Ruban stepping out from back stage.

ANGLE ON Heaton, Gena and Karen approaching from the bar.

SETTLE ON Noelle and Seymour as Krickit approaches. We HEAR
the faint SOUND of a telephone ringing now.

KRICKIT
Hey, Sey? I think the phone is
ringing in back.

CUT TO:

117 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. BACK OFFICE. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 117

WIDE ANGLE on Ben. We NO LONGER SEE Heaton, Noelle or the
Production Crew. The door to the back room OPENS. Ben turns
to it. Seymour ENTERS.

CU ON Ben as he puts the gun in his own mouth.

CUT TO:

118 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. STAGE. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 118

With the cast of the Maple Grove on stage we HEAR a GUN SHOT RING OUT from the back room.

The audience is startled. Everyone turns at the sound. Some people stand. Some exit the club.

ANGLE ON Carey, Fred and his date Jackie as they leave. Mack pushes past them and heads to the back room.

ANGLE ON Weaver on stage with the Performers. He quickly signals the Band with finger snaps. The Band kicks into song.

WEAVER
(covering)
Some finale!

WIDE ANGLE ON the club. The audience turns back to the stage.

CLOSE ANGLE ON the stage. The Performers huddle together.

GENA
(sotto, to Weaver)
The hell was that?

WEAVER
(sotto, decisive)
Don't know, but put on a smile.
Let's not lose the audience to
pandemonium.

NEW ANGLE as WEAVER spins to the audience and proceeds to clap and dance to the music. The Performers all follow suit.

WIDE ANGLE ON the club. The audience hesitantly, but assuredly resumes its applause and cheers.

CUT TO:

119 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BACK OFFICE. NIGHT.** 119
HEATON'S MOVIE.

Seymour steps away from the back room in a state of shock. He slumps to the floor and begins to weep incessantly.

Mack enters frame and walks past Seymour.

ANGLE ON Mack entering the back office. In the BACKGROUND we SEE Ben dead on the floor. Gun in hand. A pool of blood flows from the back of his head. Blood splatter on the wall.

ANGLE ON Seymour as he cries at the sight of Ben. CAMERA DRIFTS BACK, through the hall and out onto--

120 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. MAIN FLOOR. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 120

CAMERA CONTINUES TO DRIFT BACK, across the main floor, through the audience as they still applaud the stage. We can SEE Seymour in the BACKGROUND, crying on the floor, the audience unaware of him.

CAMERA ARRIVES at the stage in a WIDE ANGLE on the night club and its cheering audience.

HEATON (O.C.)

Cut!

121 NEW ANGLE TO INCLUDE THE CAMERA AND CREW OF HEATON'S 121
MOVIE. REAL TIME.

1ST AD

That's a cut!

ANGLE ON Heaton sitting behind a monitor at VIDEO VILLAGE. Noelle sits beside him, Theresa sits behind him. He stands and CAMERA DRIFTS with him as he briefly speaks MOS with the DP. He moves on and briefly speaks MOS with his SOUND MIXER, then turns to the 1st AD with a nod.

1ST AD (CONT'D)

That's a wrap!

VARIOUS CREW MEMBERS

That's a wrap!

We HEAR a small applause from the Crew as they MOVE onto the set and proceed to wrap equipment.

122 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. BACK OFFICE. NIGHT. REAL TIME.** 122

MEDIUM ANGLE LOOKING DOWN ON Ben, still laying in a pool of fake blood and clutching the gun. His eyes are open now, looking around the room. We SEE feet and legs of CAST & CREW MEMBERS as they walk around him.

1ST A.D. (O.C.)

You're wrapped, Ben. You can get up.

BEN

(seeing Daphne nearby)
Daphne?

PROP MASTER (O.C.)

Heya, Ben, so I'll need that gun in your hand.

DAPHNE (O.C.)

Yeah, Ben?

PROP MASTER (O.C.)
If you could hand it over.

BEN
Rhian still around?

WARDROBE DESIGNER (O.C.)
I want to get that coat off
in case for reshoots, Ben.

DAPHNE (O.C.)
I don't know, go on and
check.

NEW ANGLE as Ben stands up and rushes from the room. The PROP MASTER, WARDROBE DESIGNER and a couple SET P.A.'s pursue him.

123

INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. NIGHT. REAL TIME.

123

Rhian talks MOS with Weaver and Mort by the stage. She turns at the SOUND of Ben approaching.

NEW ANGLE to include Ben crossing the main floor with the Prop Master, Wardrobe Designer and Set P.A.'s trailing him. Fake blood still all over his head and clothes. As he arrives in front of Rhian, the Prop Master grabs the gun from him. The Wardrobe Designer and P.A.'s peel the coat off him. Everyone then moves off, leaving Ben and Rhian alone.

RHIAN
That was a very dramatic entrance.

BEN
(nods)
I fucked up not chasing after you
when you got out of my car.

RHIAN
(beat; then, hurt)
You did.

CU ON Ben, looking at her earnestly.

BEN
Can we try that bit again? Please?

CU ON Rhian, looking at Ben, still moved by him.

WIDE ANGLE ON the set as Rhian takes Ben's hand and he kisses her. We SEE Heaton in the FOREGROUND watching. He smiles.

ANGLE ON Noelle and Theresa still at video village. Theresa leans forward to rest on the chair beside Noelle.

THERESA
(re: Heaton)
You're not going to hurt him?

NOELLE

Your brother? No, I'm not going to hurt him.

NOELLE & THERESA'S POV: Heaton walks the set now, shaking hands in thanks with the Crew Members.

THERESA (O.C.)

You really like him?

TIGHTER ANGLE ON Noelle and Theresa. Noelle turns to Theresa and smiles warmly.

NOELLE

I do.

ANGLE ON Gena at the bar. She stares off towards the back room and rear hall.

GENA'S POV: Seymour still sits on the floor, emotional, still coming out of character.

NEW ANGLE as Gena goes to him, bringing two chairs from one of the tables on the main floor. Gena helps Seymour up and onto a chair. She takes a seat beside him. He rests his head on her shoulder. She rests her head on his.

JOE (O.C.)

I kinda wish it was all real.

ANGLE ON Heaton and Joe.

HEATON

The Maple Grove?

JOE

Yeah, I want to keep seeing shows here. Seymour being a night club owner. Ben blowing out his brains.

(laughs, then)

I got caught up in it.

HEATON

(beat; feeling the same)

I wish I'd done it sooner.

DISSOLVE TO:

124

INT. NONDESCRIPT BUILDING. DAY. REAL TIME.

124

Abbas hands Heaton back his cash deposit. Heaton gives Abbas a handshake, then turns to exit. We SEE that the space of this nondescript building is once again vacant.

An empty floor and stage. Heaton's film crew has cleared out, along with all The Maple Grove set dressing, tables, chairs, etc...

DISSOLVE TO:

125 **EXT. NONDESCRIPT BUILDING. DAY. REAL TIME.** 125

Heaton exits and continues down the sidewalk OFF FRAME. Abbas then trails out, closes and locks the door to the building.

CUT TO:

126 **INT. MOVIE THEATRE. NIGHT. REAL TIME.** 126

Heaton stands in the aisle, looking up at the screen. A BEAM OF LIGHT shines from the projection booth above him.

The light suddenly cuts out.

PROJECTIONIST (O.S.)
We're all good up here, Heaton!

CLOSER ANGLE ON Heaton. His gaze still on the big screen.

CUT TO:

127 **EXT. MOVIE THEATRE. NIGHT. REAL TIME.** 127

CAMERA CARRIES Heaton as he walks away from the theatre.

WIDER ANGLE as we SEE now SEVERAL PEOPLE approaching him.

IN A SERIES OF SHOTS WE SEE THAT THIS GROUP OF PEOPLE INCLUDES THE ENTIRE CAST & CREW OF HEATON'S FILM, HIS FRIENDS, ASSOCIATES & THEIR SIGNIFICANT OTHERS & FRIENDS:

Ben and Rhian. Gena, Theresa and Krickit. Seymour. Joe, Paul, Alfred, Mort, Ruban, Daphne, Karen, Olivia, Carey, Fred, Mack, Charlie, Heaton's Doctor, Rhian's Mother, ETC...

VARIOUS SHOTS of everyone exchanging happy and excited ad-libbed hello's, handshakes and hugs as they pass Heaton and continue into the theatre.

ISOLATE AN MOS EXCHANGE BETWEEN HEATON, RHIAN AND BEN.

ISOLATE AN MOS EXCHANGE BETWEEN HEATON AND GENA.

ISOLATE AN MOS EXCHANGE BETWEEN HEATON AND SEYMOUR.

ISOLATE HEATON AND THERESA as she runs up to him. They hug tight for a long beat. She is clearly still clean and sober.

HEATON
When did you get in?

THERESA
Just landed. Couple hours ago.
(then, re: the theatre)
Aren't you going in?

HEATON
(shakes his head 'no')
I'm too nervous to watch it with an audience. I'll see you at the party?

She pulls him into another tight hug; then breaks away.

CLOSE ANGLE ON Heaton, watching everyone go inside the theatre. We HEAR a car horn honk. He turns to it.

HEATON'S POV: Noelle is in the driver's seat of Heaton's car, parked idle at the curb.

CUT TO:

128 **INT. HEATON'S CAR. NIGHT. REAL TIME.** 128

Heaton gets in the passenger seat. Noelle leans over and kisses him passionately.

NOELLE
Are you ready?

HEATON
Sure.

CUT TO:

129 **EXT. STREET. NIGHT. REAL TIME.** 129

Heaton's car makes its way through the traffic.

CUT TO:

130 **INT./EXT. HEATON'S CAR. NIGHT. REAL TIME.** 130

Noelle stops at an intersection. Heaton casually glances out the driver's side window.

HEATON'S POV: A FILM CREW is set up with a camera pointed at the car.

HEATON (O.C.)
I think we're in their shot.

Noelle looks out the window too; then smiles, playful--

NOELLE
You're right, we are.

ANGLE ON Heaton and Noelle. She lets out a small laugh and kisses him.

CU ON Heaton as Noelle pulls away from the kiss. He looks at her, enchanted. He's the image of complete happiness.

1ST AD (O.C.)
Roll sound!

SOUND RECORDER (O.C.)
Speed!

1ST AD (O.C.)
Camera!

CAMERA OPERATOR (O.C.)
Rolling!

DIRECTOR (O.C.)
Action!

CU ON the traffic light as it turns green.

ANGLE BACK ON Heaton and Noelle. The car moves forward.

NEW ANGLE ON Heaton, to include his passenger side window. He looks out the window as they enter the intersection.

We SEE an oncoming car driving directly towards him from the cross lane.

Heaton turns to Noelle. His eyes now alight. He breaks into a smile. At the moment of impact we--

CUT TO BLACK

FADE IN:

HEAVY MUSIC INTRO.

131 **EXT. THE MAPLE GROVE. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 131

MUSIC PLAYS OVER THE REST OF THE FILM

A crowd of people stand outside The Maple Grove. Joe lights a cigarette, then hands one to Mack.

The town car pulls up. Seymour gets out and heads inside the club. CAMERA PUSHES IN behind him to ENTER as well.

CUT TO:

132 **INT. THE MAPLE GROVE. NIGHT. HEATON'S MOVIE.** 132

VARIOUS SHOTS of performers and staff members: Rhian, Karen, Weaver, Mort, Ruban and Paul, Alfred, Theresa and Daphne.

VARIOUS SHOTS of activity in the club. The AUDIENCE takes their seats, orders and receives drinks. It's a packed house.

WEAVER (V.O.)
The dream is dead!

AUDIENCE (V.O.)
Long live the dream!

WE SETTLE ON Weaver, on stage--

WEAVER
I said the dream is dead!

AUDIENCE (O.C.)
Long live the dream!

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL WE'RE:

133 **INT. MOVIE THEATRE. NIGHT. REAL TIME.** 133

The images we've just seen of the packed show at The Maple Grove have been playing on the MOVIE SCREEN, the conclusion to Heaton's film.

ON THE SCREEN we SEE Weaver continue to rally the audience.

WEAVER
The dream is dead!

AUDIENCE
Long live the dream!

THE FILM ON SCREEN CUTS TO A NEW ANGLE ON Heaton stepping into the light on The Maple Grove stage, a microphone in hand. We HEAR the applause GROW LOUDER.

WHILE HEATON DELIVERS HIS MONOLOGUE WE WILL INTERCUT VARIOUS SHOTS OF PEOPLE IN THE MOVIE THEATRE, WATCHING HIM ON THE MOVIE SCREEN: ISOLATING BEN, RHIAN, GENA, SEYMOUR & THERESA.

HEATON

(on movie screen)

Thank you. Thank you for letting me back to perform on this stage.

Where I now know I belong. I'm not going anywhere ever again. From here on out, you ever want to see me, I'll be right here.

(the audience applauds louder)

So without further ado. Well, perhaps a little ado...

(small two-step dance, the audience laughs and cheers; then--)

Let's start the show!

CUT TO BLACK:

T H E E N D