

STUART FRANKFURT'S MIDDLE LIFE

INT. OFFICE - DAY

A large, generic office filled with cubicles teeming with WORKERS, among them STUART FRANKFURT (39), average build, average looks, average everything. Standing supportively next to Stuart are OWEN (32), blonde and good-looking, dressed in jeans and a button-up shirt, and JIM (40), distinctively middle-aged and wearing a nice suit.

They are all gathered around MARCUS OBERMAN'S (40) cubicle.

PETE

Congratulations, Marcus. Great job.

ANDY

A promotion after just one year?
Wow.

MARCUS

Thank you, thank you.

JUDY

You really deserve it.

STUART

Yeah, great--

MARCUS

Hey, Stuart, sorry it wasn't you,
man. Maybe next time.

Everyone seems to remember Stuart.

STUART

Oh, no problem. I've already got a
window cubicle, what mo--

ANDY

Hey, did you get a plaque, Marcus?

Attention shifts back to Marcus and his plaque and Stuart eases away from the group. Owen and Jim follow him to the elevator.

JIM

Sorry, buddy. It should have been you.

STUART

Oh, it's no problem. We can't all work on the tenth floor.

OWEN

Hey, it's better than the mail room, right?

They arrive at the elevator and Owen pushes the down arrow just as Jim pushes the up.

JIM

Stop doing that! You're going down - take the stairs!

OWEN

If you didn't want to travel to the tenth floor, you shouldn't have worked so hard.

JIM

Someone has to pay for cello lessons.

OWEN

Hey, let's skip out and get a beer. We'll celebrate anyway.

STUART

No, that's okay. I'll stay here and help Marcus polish his plaque. Or play Solitaire.

The elevator arrives and both Owen and Jim step in.

OWEN

Why are you in here? We're going down.

JIM
It's going up.

The doors close on their bickering and Stuart walks back to his desk.

INT. OFFICE - DAY - LATER

The CLOCK on the wall ticks to 5:46. The office is empty except for the CLEANING CREW that is finishing up, and...

Stuart, sitting at his window cubicle. He looks out the 5th floor window at the business park and highway. On the far side of the highway is a sprawling CASINO.

Suddenly the lights go out. The cleaning crew is done.

STUART
Hey guys! Richard! Hey! I'm still here.

RICH, head cleaner, pauses with his crew and spots Stewart over the sea of cubicles.

STUART (CONT'D)
I'm coming, ten seconds.

He hangs up the phone, turns off his computer and grabs his satchel before hurrying to the elevator and jabbing the down arrow. The numbers above the elevator run from one to ten and slowly count down.

RICH
Sorry, Seamus. Didn't see you there.

The elevator arrives on the 5th floor and Stuart steps in.

STUART
It's Stuart.

The elevator doors close on Rich's uncomprehending face.

EXT. OFFICE PARKING LOT - DAY

A hot summer day. Stuart hurries out of the nondescript ten-story building and across the massive parking lot, nearly deserted. He heads for a beat-up old minivan standing alone in the center of the lot. His cell phone RINGS. He pats his pockets, checks the outside compartment of his satchel, can't find the phone.

STUART

Crap.

Focused on the search, he's nearly hit by a bright red PORSCHE that shoots through the lot.

STUART (CONT'D)

Hey! HEY!

The Porsche barely slows but the driver does stick out a hand to wave an apology.

PORSCHE DRIVER

Sorry! Didn't see you!

STUART

Yeah.

He finds his phone.

STUART (CONT'D)

(on phone)

Becca.

BECCA (O.S.)

(on phone)

Hey hon, we're out of milk. Do you mind--

STUART

(on phone)

I just got hit by a car!

BECCA (O.S.)

(on phone)

What? Are you alright? Do you need an ambulance?

STUART

(on phone)

I- I- No, I'm okay. I didn't, I mean, it was close, I just, like, inches...

Beat.

BECCA (O.S.)

(on phone)

So you didn't get hit by a car?

STUART

(on phone)

No.

BECCA (O.S.)

(on phone)

We need milk. Can you pick up some on your way home, please?

STUART

(on phone)

I'll be a little late. Big meeting at work.

BECCA (O.S.)

(on phone)

I thought you were outside.

STUART

(on phone)

Yeah, I am, I just came out to get something. So I'll be late. But I'll bring the milk.

Another beat.

BECCA (O.S.)
(on phone)
Okay. Bye.

Stuart hangs up. Looks around.

INT. CASINO - DAY

Stuart enters the bustling casino. Occupied slot machines flash and beep and every shiny surface reflects every other shiny surface. Stuart moves through unnoticed, taking it all in.

He takes an empty seat at a BLACKJACK TABLE. There are seven other people playing. Stuart sits next to FRANK, a middle-aged man who looks like he spends a lot of time in casinos.

STUART
Deal me in!

Everyone ignores him, but the DEALER gives him a card.

STUART (CONT'D)
I've never really played before. Is
this a good one?

No reaction.

When people bet, Stuart bets. He follows their lead. They're here to play, not talk.

INT. CASINO - NIGHT

Stuart's still at the blackjack table. Frank's still there. Stuart's tie is loosened and the top two buttons are undone. He's somehow managed to amass a large pile of chips.

The dealer deals.

STUART

Make it a good one! I need this.
Need it.

FRANK

You've already got a lot.

STUART

I've got a lot of problems.

Waits for a laugh, but none come.

STUART (CONT'D)

I've got two kids and another one
on the way.

No interest.

STUART (CONT'D)

And I'm pretty sure my wife's
having an affair with the pool boy.

Frank flicks him a glance.

STUART (CONT'D)

It's twins, actually. Two.

Someone else looks at him.

STUART (CONT'D)

Two plus two. Four... and we just
found out there's a fifth. So we're
having quintts.

Now people are listening. Plus the pot is really big.

FRANK

The pool boy's quintts?

STUART

Could be. And he's Jamaican.

FRANK
That's messed up.

People are listening now.

STUART
Yeah. My life is cra-zy.

Next hand.

STUART (CONT'D)
You know what? All in.

FRANK
This isn't poker.

Stuart pushes all his chips across.

FRANK (CONT'D)
You sure about this?

STUART
Double or nothing, right? Well I'll
need double this to feed my seven
kids.

People are really looking.

The dealer shrugs and gives Stuart a card. He glances at it.

STUART (CONT'D)
Hit me.

Next card.

STUART (CONT'D)
Hit me.

Next card.

STUART (CONT'D)
Hit me. Stay.

Stuart turns over his cards. He's at twenty.

People whistle. They're riveted and Stuart's revelling in the attention.

The dealer turns over her card. A seven. Next card: Four. Two. Eight. Twenty-one. Everyone GROANS and the crowd disperses. Frank stands.

FRANK

Better luck next time, dude.

He's gone before Stuart can respond. He's alone again. He rises and makes his way out, unnoticed.

EXT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - NIGHT

Stuart pulls up the drive of a tidy suburban home with a neat front yard and a street full of similar homes. He shuts off the van, opens the door and gets one leg out before remembering.

STUART

The milk.

He gets back in the van.

EXT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER

Stuart pulls up the drive again. This time he has the milk in hand when he gets out and heads up to the front door.

INT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - FRONT HALL - NIGHT

Stuart enters. WILL (4) sits on the staircase.

STUART

Hey Will.

WILL

Hi Stuart.

Becca, noticeably pregnant, enters. She is blonde and plump, clad in shorts and a t-shirt and obviously tired.

BECCA

Hi honey.

STUART

Got the milk.

BECCA

Would you mind driving Will home?

STUART

Where are our own kids?

BECCA

In bed.

(looking at Will)

The stealth ninjas broke a lamp while being stealthy, then tried to blame it on the baby.

STUART

The one in your stomach?

BECCA

Uh-huh.

STUART

Come *on*, Will!

Will shrugs and the two leave.

INT. STUART'S MINIVAN - NIGHT

Will sits in the back seat. He has perpetually tangled hair and looks like a troublemaker. But right now he looks sad.

STUART

Oh, Will. It's not that bad.

WILL

She said I can't come back for one week.

STUART

Do you know how long that is?

WILL

Long.

STUART

It's not as long as a cucumber.

WILL

What?

STUART

It's not even as long as a banana.

WILL

Is it as long as a hotdog?

STUART

Nope.

WILL

A green bean?

STUART

That's it exactly. It's as long as a green bean.

WILL

She said we were lying.

STUART

Well... you were.

WILL

I know.

STUART

You have to be smart about it,
Will. You can't lie about something
she knows isn't true. What good is
that?

WILL

It's no good!

STUART

Exactly. So next time you're going
to lie, use your brain first.

WILL

Got it.

They pull up to Will's house.

STUART

And keep that advice to yourself.

Will zips his lips before he hops out of the van and runs
inside. Stuart watches until he gets in safely before pulling
away.

INT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Stuart enters the cluttered, homey kitchen where Becca
empties the dishwasher. Though Stuart's in his work clothes,
he removes his pants so he's in his boxers.

Becca doesn't look at him as she works.

BECCA

Thanks, honey.

STUART

No problem.

BECCA

You hungry?

Stuart unbuttons his shirt as he heads to the patio doors and pulls them open.

STUART

I think I'll go for a swim.

BECCA

Maybe take a bath instead.

Stuart steps outside. A patio light switches on. Becca cocks her head, waiting.

STUART (O.S.)

What the hell?!

He returns, shocked and disgusted.

BECCA

Neighbour's dog drowned. I didn't have time to call somebody. Who do you call for that?

Stuart stares at her until she cracks a smile.

BECCA (CONT'D)

I think it's some kind of algae.

STUART

Let's get someone in here to take care of it.

BECCA

Sure. Call them. They're in the Yellow Pages under "Free." Next to "New Sheds," "Roof Repair" and "Drafty Windows."

STUART

Maybe I will have dinner.

BECCA

In the microwave.

Stuart removes a plastic wrap-covered plate of food and sits down to eat. There are several unopened newspapers on the table and he flips one open to read.

BECCA (CONT'D)

School bake sale went well today.
We sold out of Rocky Road squares.

Stuart grunts to show he's listening.

BECCA (CONT'D)

Louise Carter made that banana
cream pie you like.

STUART

(interested)

Oh yeah?

BECCA

It was delicious, so she sold out.
And then Sharon - Will's mom? - she
came over to ask if we'd watch Will
tonight and I wanted to say no, but
then I remembered the last time we
asked her to watch Matt and Jules
and how they let their birds out
and one got electrocuted...

Stuart mouths the words as Becca talks, alternating mouthfuls of food with the turning of pages.

BECCA (CONT'D)

...so anyway, now that we've sent
him home you bet she'll harbour a
grudge.

STUART

Oh yeah.

Finished eating, he pushes his plate away, ready to go. Becca puts a piece of banana cream pie in front of him.

BECCA
Got you something.

STUART
Hey, thanks.

Becca pats him on the shoulder as she exits. Stuart retrieves the newspaper and eats.

INT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - KIDS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Stuart tiptoes into the darkened bedroom where four-year-old twins MATT and JULES sleep. Matt wears a karate uniform and Jules is in a bikini. Stuart raises a brow but kisses first Jules on the forehead, then Matt. As he adjusts Matt's blanket, Matt suddenly kicks him in the face.

MATT
Stealth ninja!

Stuart stumbles back, covering his eye, and glares at Matt, who is fast asleep.

STUART
(whispering)
Ow! Shoot! Matt!

Matt doesn't move, an angel in repose. Stuart retreats.

INT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - STUART'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Stuart, now in his pajamas, turns on the ceiling fan before getting into bed. He has a serious black eye.

Becca enters with a bag of frozen berries.

BECCA
This is all we had. Sorry, honey. I told you they were stealthy.

They go to bed, Stuart holding the bag of berries to his eye.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Stuart sits miserably at his desk. When a coworker passes by, he turns so his black eye is not visible. Just as he thinks he's safe, he turns to see ANDY, the worker in the neighbouring cubicle, peering over the partition.

ANDY

What happened to your eye, Stuart?

Other heads pop over the cubicle wall, including Marcus, straining to see. Stuart tries to cover his face, then gives up.

STUART

Nothing. It's not exciting. Just an accident.

MARCUS

Your wife beat you up?

STUART

No.

The heads disappear, except for Andy and Marcus.

ANDY

Did it happen at the casino? I thought I saw you last night.

STUART

Uh, yeah.

MARCUS

You? At a casino? How'd that turn out?

STUART

Fine.

Marcus and Andy give up and disappear. Until:

STUART (CONT'D)
Great, actually.

Andy pops back up.

ANDY
You won?

STUART
Oh yeah. Big time.

Marcus returns along with a dozen other faces.

MARCUS
How much?

STUART
I won... a car.

ANDY
What?

STUART
A red Porsche.

MARCUS
They don't even have car prizes.

People exchange looks.

STUART
I didn't win it, exactly, by the usual means.

MARCUS
So you don't have a Porsche?

STUART
I have a red Porsche.

ANDY
So how'd you get it?

STUART

I bet this guy at my table. He was out of chips so I let him bet his car. And then I got four aces--

Shocked reactions.

STUART (CONT'D)

Which crushed him, since he had... three kings, but a deal's a deal.

MARCUS

So he just gave you his car?

STUART

Basically.

People start to move away.

STUART (CONT'D)

After the fight.

People return.

STUART (CONT'D)

That's how I got this black eye. Out in the parking lot he was like, Come on, man, let me keep my car. But I said, a deal's a deal, you know? If you'd have won I'd have given you my... kidney.

ANDY

He needed a kidney?

STUART

No, no, he just... wanted one.

People are disgusted.

STUART (CONT'D)

Right. So he hit me, just sucker punched me, and then I hit him back and we were rolling around and then at the end of the night I drove home in his Porsche.

Coworkers ooh and ahh appreciatively. Comments of *Sick kidney lover*. Marcus looks a little bitter.

MARCUS

Let's get back to work.

Stuart watches his audience leave.

INT. OFFICE - DAY - LATER

Stuart pulls out his brown paper bag and removes a carefully made sandwich, a yogurt, and a cupcake. He arranges the food on his desk and takes a bite of the sandwich.

OWEN (O.S.)

What's this about a Porsche?

Stuart, mouth full, looks up as Owen and Jim arrive. They're each pushing a chair that also holds their lunch: Owen has take-out and Jim has a high-end lunch bag. They join Stuart at his desk.

JIM

Why'd we have to hear about this through the grapevine?

OWEN

By the time it got to me I thought you got a new porch. I was like, Why'd he get a new porch? His porch is fine.

JIM

Your porch is fine.

STUART

Thank you.

Stuart eats while Owen and Jim wait. Finally:

OWEN

Dude. The Porsche.

Stuart shrugs through a mouthful of food.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Why didn't you tell us?

When it's obvious they're not going to drop it, Stuart sighs.

STUART

I didn't want to embarrass you. I know how sensitive you are about your bicycle.

OWEN

Ha.

JIM

So you won it in a fight?

STUART

That's right.

JIM

I didn't see it when I got in.

STUART

You were probably here first.

OWEN

I didn't see it when I got here, and I was definitely late.

STUART

Yeah, well, I didn't park near the bike rack.

Jim laughs.

Judy passes by and smiles at Owen.

OWEN

Hey Judy.

JUDY

Hey Owen.

They all watch her go.

JIM

You going to see her again?

OWEN

Nah.

STUART

Man, stop dating women on my floor.

JIM

And my floor.

OWEN

But these are the best floors.
Well, Jim's is.

JIM

I do have the best floor.

STUART

You're married.

JIM

I meant my penthouse view.

STUART

Uh-huh.

OWEN

How is the Stepford wife?

JIM

Would you not call her that?

STUART

How'd Maximillian do in the
spelling bee?

JIM

He won.

Stuart and Owen exchange looks.

STUART

How'd Phoebe do at her cello
recital?

JIM

She won. It wasn't even a
competition. Like, it wasn't an
actual competition. They just gave
her a medal.

OWEN

Wow. That's really... neat.

JIM

They're freaks.

STUART

Oh, totally.

The meals are finished.

OWEN

Let's go see this Porsche.

Owen and Jim rise. Stuart remains seated.

STUART

Ah, no. No. I have a lot of work to
do. So we can't see it.

OWEN

It'll take like, five minutes.

STUART

Sorry. Too busy.

They peer at his desk.

JIM

Really?

STUART

Yes, really.

OWEN

Well after work, then.

STUART

It doesn't have room for your bike.

OWEN

My bike is compact.

He and Jim head off.

JIM

Five o'clock, Frankfurt!

STUART

Okay!

INT. OFFICE - DAY - LATER

The clock on the wall ticks to 4:48.

Stuart sits stiffly at his desk. The computer is turned off. He holds his satchel. He takes a deep breath and casually stands, sidling toward the elevator. A couple of people glance at him.

He stands tensely before the elevator, jabbing the button quietly.

Ten. Nine. Eight. Seven.

Tapping his toes.

Six.

Stuart frowns. Turns. The entire office is crowded behind him.

JUDY

Are we going to see the Porsche
now?

STUART

Ah, no, I--

The elevator doors glide open and Owen and Jim are inside.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Stuart crammed in tightly with the office workers, among them Marcus, Owen and Jim. His expression is pure panic.

EXT. OFFICE PARKING LOT - DAY

Stuart leads the way as the workers, including Jim and Owen, spill into the vast, crowded lot.

PETE

Where is it?

OWEN

He parks in the center, over here.

They follow Owen through the sea of cars. Stuart is swept along, gaze darting around frantically. He clenches his keys.

MARCUS

So where is this thing, Stuart?

Stuart opens his mouth to respond, looking desperate.

Then a GASP from the crowd, followed by more surprised exclamations. *Wow! It's beautiful! For real this time!*

Owen and Jim glance at Stuart and push through, parting the crowd to reveal a gleaming red Porsche.

JIM

Stu, man, is this it?

Stuart nods.

OWEN

It's beautiful!

Everyone lingers expectantly. Marcus stares at Stuart suspiciously.

MARCUS

Are you going to get in?

STUART

Yeah. In a minute.

MARCUS

What's the hold up?

Owen and Jim look at Stuart. In fact, everyone is looking at Stuart, who holds the keys in his hand.

STUART

No hold up. Just... enjoying the view.

They wait as Stuart slowly approaches like a death row convict on his way to the gas chamber. With the keys near the lock he glances over his shoulder: the crowd is still there. Marcus looks smug, Jim and Owen look uncomfortable.

Stuart swallows and pushes the key into the lock. It slides in. He blinks. Turns the key. The door opens.

More than a few surprised intakes of breath.

Stuart smiles over his shoulder at the crowd, swinging the door open and gingerly placing his bag inside.

STUART (CONT'D)

Okay! There you go. Show's over.

But they're still not moving so he gets in. Fits comfortably in the seat. It's a beautiful car but he can't possibly enjoy it.

STUART (CONT'D)

Goodbye!

No one leaves.

He stares at the waiting ignition and eventually puts the key in. Closes his eyes and turns the key. The car purrs as it starts.

Stuart's eyes fly open. He stares in shock for a moment. Looks outside. Jim and Owen grin proudly. Marcus looks disbelieving.

Stuart grins at them and puts the car in gear, carefully reversing out of the spot and waving as he creeps out of the lot, eyes darting left and right for any sign of an irate owner.

He pulls into traffic, the group still watching as he drives away.

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

Stuart white knuckles the steering wheel as he drives extremely slowly down the road. He takes the first right and, out of sight of the office, pulls into a strip mall parking lot and parks.

STUART

I just stole a car.

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

Stuart grabs his satchel and jumps out of the Porsche, locking the door before dashing through the lot and squeezing through a row of hedges.

EXT. OFFICE PARKING LOT - DAY

Stuart emerges from the hedges onto the far side of the lot, a good 500 yards from the office building. He darts through the cars and back to the empty space where the Porsche was, looking around frantically.

STUART

Where's the van? What the frick?

He looks around, keeping low so as not to be spotted from the building, then, glancing at his watch and seeing that it's quitting time, gives up and runs all the way back to the Porsche.

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

Stuart drops back into the driver's seat and frantically digs in the glove box until he finds the driver's registration. Unfolds it.

STUART

Oh gosh. I am so sorry. I'm
sorry...

(reading)

"Stuart Frankfurt?" Heck!

He looks under the visor and pulls out a parking pass stamped with S. FRANKFURT. His jaw drops.

STUART (CONT'D)

What is going on?

A sudden knock on the window nearly gives him a heart attack. Stuart jumps in his seat and turns, ready to apologize, when he sees Owen and Jim peering in.

OWEN
(through window)
What's up?

He points to the mall, a small pub on one end.

OWEN (CONT'D)
Let's get a drink.

INT. PUB - DAY

Stuart, Owen and Jim sit around a small table, a beer and wings in front of each. Owen checks out the few women in the bar, mostly suburban twenty-somethings, tight jeans and tank tops.

JIM
I gotta tell you, Stu, it was a bit
of a relief when you got in the
car.

STUART
What do you mean?

Jim and Owen exchange a look.

JIM
Well... I thought maybe you weren't
being completely truthful.

STUART
What?

OWEN
Oh come on, don't look so
surprised. What about the time you
told us you played major league
soccer?

JIM

Or that you had a back tattoo?

STUART

Those were jokes!

Jim and Owen share another look.

JIM

Okay. Well, anyway, it's a nice car.

OWEN

Oh! What about the time you said you had your pilot's license but really you'd never even been on a plane?

STUART

The Porsche thing is real!
Obviously! I drove it here, didn't I?

JIM

Yeah, you did. And you looked good doing it.

OWEN

Yeah, really good. Did you see the looks those girls gave us when we came in?

STUART

What? No.

He looks around. A couple of girls, too young to contemplate, give them seductive looks.

STUART (CONT'D)

Wow. I don't know the last time a woman looked at me like that.

JIM

Me either.

They don't know what to do about it, so while Owen smiles winningly at the ladies, Jim and Stuart hunker down over their wings.

EXT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - DAY

Becca sits on the front porch watching Matt and Jules as they run through the sprinkler on the front lawn, squealing like maniacs.

Stuart pulls up in his Porsche, parks and gets out, faltering when he sees Becca's stare.

He waves to the kids, who screech back but don't pause, and slowly climbs the steps to the house.

Becca doesn't stand.

BECCA

Hi Stuart.

STUART

Hi Becca.

BECCA

Good day?

STUART

Yes.

BECCA

It's almost seven.

STUART

I know, sorry. I got caught up.

BECCA

Another meeting?

STUART

Sort of.

Silence.

STUART (CONT'D)

Well I guess I'll go in--

BECCA

What's with the car, Stuart?

STUART

I won it.

BECCA

You won a Jaguar?

STUART

It's a Porsche.

BECCA

Well that makes more sense.

STUART

I won it at the casino. From this guy.

BECCA

Why were you at the casino?

STUART

I just felt like going.

BECCA

I felt like taking a nap today, but I didn't.

STUART

You could take one now.

BECCA

You smell like beer.

STUART

I had a drink! What's with the third degree?

BECCA

You didn't win a car, Stuart, so where'd you really get it?

STUART

Why would you say that?

He stares at her. She stares back. She's going to win and they both know it.

STUART (CONT'D)

Jim gave it to me.

BECCA

What? Why?

STUART

Because. He and Stepford are maybe splitting up and he's trying to unclutter his life.

BECCA

It's about time.

STUART

What do you mean?

BECCA

She's unbearable.

STUART

Oh yeah, she's terrible. And he thinks she's having an affair.

BECCA

Really?

STUART

Yeah.

BECCA
Who would sleep with her?

STUART
Owen.

They're both surprised by this news.

BECCA
His best friend's wife?

STUART
I know. It's sick.

BECCA
Wow.

STUART
I'm going to go inside and grab
some dinner.

He's almost inside when:

BECCA
Why would you say you won the car
if Jim gave it to you?

STUART
That's what I told the people at
work. They wouldn't stop asking
about the black eye and I didn't
want to tell them that my kid
kicked me in the face. It's
embarrassing.

A beat.

BECCA
Dinner's in the microwave.

STUART
Thanks.

Stuart goes inside. Becca stares at the Porsche.

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

A perfect summer day. Stuart cruises around, classic rock music blaring, sun glinting off the hood. Lots of admiring, envious stares from men and women of all ages. Stuart's loving it. Even shares a knowing nod with a fellow Porsche owner.

The more he drives, the faster he goes. Faster and faster until the ride is interrupted by the shrill cry of a police SIREN.

IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR: A police car pulls up close behind the Porsche.

STUART

Shoot.

He pulls over and waits.

The police cruiser parks behind and after a moment OFFICER MORRISSEY, short, wiry, and female, gets out and strides up to the Porsche.

MORRISSEY

Afternoon, sir.

STUART

Hello officer.

MORRISSEY

License and registration.

Stuart hands them both over.

STUART

Was I going too fast?

MORRISSEY

You were.

Morrissey makes a note on her pad, writing a ticket. Stuart chews on his lower lip.

STUART

It's my wife.

MORRISSEY

Where?

The car is obviously empty.

STUART

She's pregnant. And she's in the hospital.

MORRISSEY

You having a baby?

STUART

Quintuplets.

MORRISSEY

Today?

STUART

No, that's the issue. She's not due for another four months but she called me and she's at the hospital. I never speed but I'm trying to get there quickly today... just in case.

Morrissey has stopped writing.

MORRISSEY

She at the University Hospital?

STUART

Y...yes.

MORRISSEY

Alright. I'll escort you.

Stuart was not expecting this...

STUART

Thanks.

Morrissey returns to her cruiser, pulls in front of Stuart, and turns on the siren.

Stuart swallows nervously but has no choice but to follow.

EXT. UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL - DAY

Morrissey, followed closely by Stuart, pulls into the lot. They park and climb out.

STUART

Thank you. Thank you so much,
officer. I really appreciate it.

MORRISSEY

I'm here to help.

STUART

Well you really did. So thank you.

Waits for Morrissey to leave, but Morrissey's not budging.

MORRISSEY

Better get in there, don't you
think?

STUART

Oh yeah! Yeah, of course.

Stuart turns and starts walking, Morrissey right beside him.

STUART (CONT'D)

You don't have to escort me inside.
I'm sure you have better things to
do.

MORRISSEY

Nope.

STUART

Right.

INT. UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL - RECEPTION - DAY

Stuart and Morrissey approach. NURSE SHARPE, African American, stern, looks up from the desk.

NURSE SHARPE

Can I help you?

Stuart looks heavenward. His nervousness works well for this situation - he looks like a concerned husband.

STUART

My name is Stuart Frankfurt. I believe my wife is here.

Nurse Sharpe punches at the keyboard and frowns.

NURSE SHARPE

You said Frankfurt?

STUART

Yes.

NURSE SHARPE

Huh.

Morrissey looks at Stuart. Stuart looks away.

STUART

I-I'm sure she said this hospital. Maybe it was a false alarm. Maybe she went home. I'll just call her--

NURSE SHARPE

Rebecca Frankfurt?

Stuart looks at her, stunned.

STUART

She's here?

NURSE SHARPE

Room 311.

Stuart races down the hall, Morrissey hot on his heels.

INT. HOSPITAL - ELEVATOR - DAY

Stuart and Morrissey ride up in silence. Stuart shoots Morrissey a weird look.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM 311 - DAY

Stuart rushes into the small, tidy room where Becca lies in a bed, a DOCTOR next to her. She looks fatigued but otherwise unharmed.

BECCA

Stuart!

STUART

Becca! You're really here? Are you okay?

Becca glances at the doctor who smiles sympathetically.

STUART (CONT'D)

What is it? What's going on?

BECCA

I just started feeling really strange earlier. I didn't want to overreact, but when I couldn't reach you I finally just came here.

STUART

Is everything alright? Are you
alright? The baby?

BECCA

Babies.

STUART

What?

BECCA

We're having quintts.

Stuart's jaw drops. He looks over his shoulder. Morrissey
paces outside, not listening.

STUART

What?

BECCA

I'm as shocked as you are. It
explains why I'm so huge.

STUART

You're not--

Becca slowly climbs out of bed. She is huge. Much bigger than
she was yesterday.

STUART (CONT'D)

Oh my God!

DOCTOR

It's a big surprise, but I'm sure
you'll find it to be an even bigger
blessing.

Stuart scowls at him.

STUART

Thanks.

DOCTOR

Otherwise, Becca, you're doing well. Lots of rest, regular check-ups with your ob-gyn, and you'll be fine.

BECCA

Thanks, doctor.

DOCTOR

No problem.

The doctor leaves. When they're alone Becca turns to Stuart.

BECCA

Why is there a policewoman outside the door?

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Stuart and Becca hover outside the Porsche. Stuart opens the door, looks at Becca's huge belly, then reaches in to adjust the seat. It'll be tight, no matter what he does.

Becca slowly levers herself inside. The seat belt doesn't even fit.

BECCA

Great call on the Porsche.

Stuart closes her door then goes around and gets in the driver's seat and starts up the car.

He winces a split second before Morrissey turns on her siren and escorts them home.

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

Stuart and Becca trail Morrissey.

STUART

So...

BECCA

What are we going to do?

STUART

I'm sure she'll get a call about a crime or something, peel off.

BECCA

Not about your police escort, Stuart, about these babies. What are we going to do with five more kids? Where will we put them? How will we feed them?

STUART

Let's keep one, donate the other four.

BECCA

Okay.

STUART

What about your aunt? The one that came when the twins were born?

BECCA

Aunt Maureen? I thought you hated her.

STUART

Oh yeah.

BECCA

I won't be able to go back to work, but we can't afford for me not to.

STUART

We'll think of something. It'll be okay.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Stuart, Owen and Jim eat lunch at Stuart's desk.

STUART

My life is over.

OWEN

How will you tell them apart?

JIM

Are you going to hire somebody?
Somebodies?

STUART

We'll have to. But we can't afford
it.

Judy and Andy stop by.

JUDY

Hey Stuart. Heard about the quints.
Congratulations.

STUART

Oh thanks, Judy. Yeah, we're really
excited.

ANDY

You'll probably be famous. Maybe
you could have a TV show.

More workers gather.

STUART

Oh, I don't think so.

ANDY

Do you have any names picked out?

STUART

We did, but now I'm not so sure. I
mean, Becca--

Heads swivel towards the elevator as Marcus dashes in, button-up shirt torn and tattered, claw marks and a big grin on his face.

MARCUS

Guys! Guys! I just wrestled a hawk
and won!

Everyone, even Owen and Jim, are impressed.

OWEN

What? Where?

MARCUS

On the sidewalk, isn't that crazy?
This hot woman was walking her
little dog down the road and this
hawk just swoops down, out of
nowhere, and snatches it! I was
right there so of course I grab the
leash and wrangle the dog but the
hawk starts to attack me so I grab
it - and that thing is tough, man,
razor sharp talons - and we just
battle it out. I mean, cars
stopped, this chick is screaming...
Amazing. I mean, when do you see
that happen?

STUART

Never.

ANDY

That's insane!

JIM

Wish we could have seen this!

Stuart rolls his eyes.

STUART

(mutters)

Come on. It's not like he stopped a bank robbery.

MARCUS

What's that, Stuart?

STUART

Nothing, Marcus. Great story.

MARCUS

It's not like I stopped a bank robbery? I'm sorry, did you stop a bank robbery and I just forgot about it?

Everyone's looking at Stuart.

STUART

Ah, yeah, I did, Marcus. I just don't like to brag.

A beat, like everyone is frozen. Then they unfreeze.

ANDY

Oh man, I can't believe that slipped my mind!

JUDY

When was that? Last year, right?

OWEN

My buddy, the hero!

JIM

The way you just jumped in there and wrestled the gun away from that guy...

Stuart looks at them like they're crazy.

Marcus glares at him.

OWEN

Do you still have the bullet,
buddy?

Stuart not sure if this is a joke.

STUART

I have to go.

EXT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - DAY

A news van is parked along the curb. Reporter NAVID VIRK, 30, sleek suit, white teeth, even a little mascara, and his CAMERAMAN are camped in the front yard. They turn when Stuart pulls up the drive in the Porsche.

Stuart stares, perplexed, as he climbs out of the car. He looks at the house then back at the news crew.

STUART

Is everything okay?

Instead of answering, Navid turns to face the camera.

NAVID

(to camera)

Good afternoon and thank you for joining us. I'm Navid Virk for Channel 7 News. For those of you who don't remember, it was one year ago today that Stuart Frankfurt risked his life to save more than a dozen others when the bank he was in was held up in what could have been the most vicious crime in our city's history. How do you feel, Stuart?

The camera pans to Stuart who is standing by uncertainly. Navid thrusts a microphone into his face.

STUART

Ah...

NAVID

(to camera)

If you recall, folks, Stuart was shot in the leg by infamous bank robber Rusty Malone, the dangerous man who robbed eleven banks in eleven days before being taken down by our very own hometown hero.

Stuart touches his leg.

NAVID (CONT'D)

(to camera)

Today we are also happy to report that Stuart and his wife of fifteen years have just learned that they are expecting quintuplets.

Stuart blinks.

NAVID (CONT'D)

Congratulations, Stuart! Did you ever imagine after making the news last year that you'd be in the headlines again so soon?

STUART

Ah, definitely not.

NAVID

How does it feel to be a hero?

STUART

It's great to be recognized.

NAVID

Tell us about your Porsche, Stuart. Was it a gift from the grateful folks at the bank?

STUART

Oh, no, no... We... I... We
inherited some money. A relative
passed and left us a little.

NAVID

A fitting ride for a young hero.
How will you fit the quints inside?

STUART

One at a time?

Navid laughs too long and too loud.

NAVID

(to camera)

And that's him, folks, Middleton
legend Stuart Frankfurt, father of
two, soon-to-be father of seven.
Thank you, Stuart.

They shake hands.

STUART

Thank you, Navid.

NAVID

(extremely sincerely)

No, thank you.

STUART

Okay. You're welcome.

He waves awkwardly as he enters his house.

INT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - FRONT HALL - DAY

Stuart enters, a little overwhelmed by it all. Matt and Jules
sit on the stairs, both in karate uniforms.

STUART

Hey ninjas, what's up?

MATT
Mom's still crying.

STUART
"Still?"

JULES
Uh-huh.

Stuart heads down the hall.

INT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Stuart finds Becca tearfully poring over a photo album.

STUART
Becca, what's wrong?

Becca looks at him in disbelief.

BECCA
What's wrong? What's wrong?

STUART
Is it the babies? The news crews?

BECCA
Aunt Maureen died, Stuart! How can you ask me what's wrong? It's obvious what's wrong!

STUART
She... died?

BECCA
Why are you acting like this is the first time you're hearing this news? You were thrilled about the inheritance!

STUART

I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I... I don't know what's wrong with me. That's terrible news.

BECCA

I thought I was doing okay, but now with the babies... she won't be here to help... she'll never be here...

Stuart hugs Becca, stares over her shoulder, horrified. He also notices something on the refrigerator door: hanging alongside the children's artwork is a NEWSPAPER CLIPPING proclaiming *Stuart Frankfurt, Hometown Hero!* It's an article detailing how he thwarted the bank robbery.

STUART

Maureen's not dead!

Becca pulls away.

BECCA

What?

STUART

She's not dead! It was a mix-up at the hospital. Happens all the time. Maureen's fine. No inheritance. Let's try calling her!

Becca watches in horror as he picks up the phone and dials. She swats the receiver out of his hands.

BECCA

What is the matter with you? Are you sick? Why would you say that?

MATT

Is Aunt Maureen a zombie?

JULES

Is that why she came back to life?

Becca shoots Stuart a murderous look.

BECCA

Daddy's just being silly, guys.
He's sad Aunt Maureen died, but he
can't bring her back to life. She's
not a zombie.

JULES

Is she a ghost?

BECCA

No. Stuart.

Stuart torn. But finally:

STUART

No. She's dead, guys. But she died
very peacefully.

Becca looking at him weirdly, the kids confused, Stuart
feeling sick.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Stuart, Becca, Matt and Jules, all dressed in black, stand
with dozens of other mourners at Aunt Maureen's graveside as
the MINISTER drones on. Everyone's bawling and Stuart is
mortified.

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

A loud KNOCK.

The door opens. Stuart, in his mourning suit, is on one side,
Owen on the other.

OWEN

Stuart! What's up, buddy? Come in.

Stuart enters and takes a seat on the couch. Owen disappears for a minute then returns with two beers, handing one to Stuart and taking the seat opposite him.

Owen's apartment is a typical bachelor pad, designed for function and not much else. If he's taken out the trash - or put anything in the trash - recently, it doesn't show. There are piles of newspapers, pizza boxes, and a beer can pyramid in one corner. A large flat screen TV is mounted on one wall with the image paused.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Just watching you on the news.

STUART

That's really... exaggerated.

Owen presses play and they watch the replay of the dramatic bank surveillance footage where Stuart throws himself on a gun-wielding robber.

Stuart just stares, stunned.

OWEN

You're too modest, man.

Silence.

Beat.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Want to go sit on the balcony?

EXT. OWEN'S BALCONY - DAY

Stuart and Owen sit in silence. Owen's apartment is on the twelfth floor and overlooks a small courtyard and pool with a few sunbathers lying around it.

OWEN

Watch this.

Without looking he tosses his half-full can of beer off balcony.

STUART

What the hell?

He peers over the edge just in time to see the can splash in the middle of the pool and startle the few pool-goers. Stuart jerks his head back in.

POOL-GOER 1

Who keeps doing that?!

Owen and Stuart huddle on the balcony, laughing like fools.

OWEN

You do it.

STUART

What? No, they'll see.

Owen stares at him.

Stuart wavers, he definitely wants to, but...

He tosses the can over his head and off the balcony.

They wait.

POOL-GOERS

Ahh! What the hell?

Owen and Stuart peer through the bars. The can landed on the patio and exploded. Pool-goers wipe beer off themselves.

Owen and Stuart laugh hysterically.

Beat.

OWEN

Let's go to the pool.

EXT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - POOL - DAY

The now-deserted pool area, one beer can floating in the water, the other smashed on the patio.

Owen and Stuart, clad in brightly coloured trunks and carrying towels and fresh cans of beer, arrive and settle into cheap lounge chairs.

They lie back and drink beer contentedly.

STUART

It's hot.

OWEN

So hot.

Beat.

They set their beer down, leap up and cannon ball into the pool. Owen fetches the beer can and tosses it out to join the other one.

STUART

Man, it's nice to do this.

OWEN

Why don't you swim in your own pool?

STUART

Neighbour's dog drow-- Neighbour's dog swam in there, so now it's dirty.

They float around aimlessly.

STUART (CONT'D)

Hey, have you ever told a lie - just a little one - and then had it come true?

OWEN

I don't know. Why?

STUART

Just wondering.

OWEN

That would be sweet. Hey Stuart, I have a blow-up doll that's also a housekeeper and she comes to life every night.

Stuart laughs.

STUART

Yeah, me-- No.

MOLLY

Hey boys.

Stuart and Owen look up to see residents MOLLY and SANDRA emerge from the building. They're average-looking girls dressed in small bikinis and they perch on the lawn chairs next to the guys'.

SANDRA

Which one of you owns that Porsche out front?

STUART

That would be me.

SANDRA

That's hot.

STUART

Thank you.

OWEN

Pass me my beer, would you?

Molly picks up the beer, drinks half, then wades in and hands Owen the can.

MOLLY

Sure.

Sandra waits for an invitation from Stuart.

Stuart hesitates then slowly sinks under water.

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is pitch black. Moonlight shines through the open balcony doors.

Stuart, lying prone on the couch, blinks as he wakes up. Beer cans, towels and two discarded bikinis surround the couch. He takes it all in then sits up sharply.

STUART

No! No...

He looks around more thoroughly. He's alone. But the door to Owen's bedroom is closed and a faint creaking noise comes from behind it.

Stuart finds his watch and squints at the digital display:
5:38am.

STUART (CONT'D)

Shoot.

He starts scrambling for his clothes.

INT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - STUART'S BEDROOM - DAY

Stuart creeps into the dim bedroom.

The bedside light flips on.

Becca sits in bed, waiting.

STUART

Hey.

BECCA

Morning.

STUART

I'm sorry. I lost track of time.

BECCA

Where were you?

Stuart hesitates.

STUART

Owen's.

Becca only nods.

STUART (CONT'D)

I'm going to take a shower.

He drops his clothes where he stands and heads into the adjoining bathroom, closing the door. After a moment the shower starts to run.

Becca climbs out of bed slowly, making her way to Stuart's discarded clothing. It's an effort to pick them up but she does, dropping them in the hamper. But before she puts the last item in, his shirt, she sniffs it.

INT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Becca stands at the stove, making dinner.

Matt, Jules and Will sit at the table and colour. Matt and Jules wear karate uniforms, Will wears a black suit and sunglasses.

STUART (O.S.)

Hello!

None of the kids move.

MATT AND JULES

Hi daddy!

Stuart enters and sets his satchel on the table.

STUART

I'm home.

Becca turns to greet him. She wears an incredible amount of inartfully applied makeup and her hair sticks out from her head, half Medusa, half afro.

Stuart freezes, trying to match Becca's straight face.

BECCA

Hello, honey. I had a makeover.

STUART

You look very beautiful.

He kisses her cheek, then licks his lips.

Becca tries not to laugh.

JULES

We did it, daddy! It was a ninja attack.

STUART

You are some of the best ninjas around. And you, Will, are you... the leader?

WILL

I'm Neo. From *The Matrix*.

STUART

Oh right. Of course.

BECCA

It's time for Neo to go home now.
Do you mind giving him a ride?

STUART

Sure. Get your shoes on, Neo.

Will dashes out of the room.

STUART (CONT'D)

Did Neo's mom lose her license
again?

He follows Will down the hall.

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

Stuart and Will ride side-by-side. Will's loving the
experience and keeps peering over and under his shades.

WILL

Stuart, did you know you're going
to have five more kids?

STUART

I did know that, Will.

Will holds up two fingers on his left hand, and five on his
right.

WILL

That's seven children.

STUART

That's a lot, buddy.

WILL

Did you really think Becca looked
beautiful?

STUART

You know, Will, sometimes you have
to tell little lies so you don't
hurt people's feelings.

WILL

Just don't get caught.

STUART

Well, actually, you shouldn't really lie, not big lies, because--

WILL

But you said--

STUART

I know what I said. But don't do that. Try not to tell lies if you can help it.

WILL

You are going to have seven kids.

STUART

I heard.

WILL

They are not going to fit in this car.

INT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - KIDS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Stuart and Becca finish putting the kids to bed. They head for the door and turn off the light.

BECCA

Sleep tight.

STUART

Don't let the bedbugs bight.

They leave.

INT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Stuart and Becca enter and start to tidy up the kitchen.

STUART

How long do you think this ninja
thing will last?

Becca shrugs.

STUART (CONT'D)

This guy at work said he wrestled a
hawk.

BECCA

Crazy.

STUART

Marcus Oberman. You met him at the
Christmas party. Thought he was a
jerk.

BECCA

Right.

STUART

Hey, what's wrong?

BECCA

Are you cheating on me?

STUART

What?

BECCA

You heard me.

STUART

Yes, Becca. I have a hot date next
Friday.

(realizing, then extra
loud)

I am not having an affair!

(normal voice)

Are you crazy?

BECCA

You tell me, Stuart. You've come home late three times in the past week, smelling like beer, once with lipstick on your shirt.

STUART

What? Becca, that's nothing like me, I--

BECCA

Really? What about the "Hometown Hero" who couldn't quite handle fame last year, Stuart? Who wanted to "test the waters?"

Stuart's shocked.

STUART

I did? I mean, no, I didn't!

BECCA

Don't lie to me!

STUART

Becca, I'm not lying, I'm just... I mean, I went out those times because I... I was bored.

BECCA

What?

STUART

My life is boring, Becca, I was just trying to liven things up.

BECCA

Boring?

STUART

Oh come on, don't act like you haven't noticed. Everything about me is average!

(MORE)

STUART (CONT'D)

My height, my looks, my job. I mean, I'm middle management in a mid-sized building. Hell, we live in a town called Middleton!

BECCA

Middling? Your life is middling?

STUART

Yes! Exactly. I have nothing going for me, nothing to look forward to and I'm tired of it!

BECCA

There's nothing going for you? You have nothing good in your life? Just all this dead weight holding you back from your big dreams and aspirations?

STUART

Becca, I just want something more.

BECCA

Three years ago you wanted a pool. We got one. You wanted this house. We bought it. You wanted kids, you wanted me... You get what you want, Stuart, and then you are never happy with it.

Stuart shrugs.

BECCA (CONT'D)

Maybe you should go somewhere where you will be happy.

STUART

That's not what I meant.

BECCA

I meant it.

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Stuart and Owen sit on the couch, drink beer and play video games. There's a sleeping bag and pillow on one end of the couch.

STUART

You're lucky you're not married,
man.

OWEN

No need to tell me that.

STUART

I've been married for fifteen
years.

OWEN

That's a long time.

STUART

Did you know Becca was my first
girlfriend?

OWEN

I did not.

STUART

She's the only woman I've ever been
with.

(beat)

She was a cheerleader.

OWEN

No way!

STUART

Well, an alternate.

OWEN

Were you on the football team?

STUART

No. But I wanted to be.

OWEN

Cool.

STUART

For our honeymoon I wanted to go to Thailand. You know where we went?

OWEN

Tell me.

STUART

Disneyland.

OWEN

That sounds like fun.

STUART

Yeah. I guess it was.

Owen plays the game with one hand as he drains his beer.

OWEN

More beer?

Stuart looks at the clock. Nearly 3am.

STUART

Okay.

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

Stuart and Jim drive with the windows down, music blasting. They shout their conversation.

JIM

I can't believe you two are roommates now!

STUART

I know! It's awesome! No rules!

JIM

I can't wait to play knife darts!

STUART

Get your protective headgear ready!

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

A dartboard hangs on the wall with several deep gashes in the drywall beside it. A steak knife flies in and pierces the edge.

STUART

Seven!

Stuart, Owen and Jim, clad in bicycle helmets and ski goggles, play knife darts in their boxers. Beer and pizza sit on the coffee table.

JIM

My turn.

Jim whips a knife at the board but it slips out of his hand and instead sails backwards off the balcony.

STUART

Shoot!

The three dash out onto the balcony, skidding to a stop as ENRAGED SHOUTS rise up from the pool area. They hunker down and listen. Owen peers through the bars.

OWEN

No fatalities.

JIM

We have got to be more careful.

They retreat inside.

STUART
We'll close the door.

They close the balcony door.

OWEN
Okay. My turn.

Owen whips a knife at the dartboard, missing completely and lodging his knife in the door.

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NEW DAY

Stuart, returning from work, enters and looks around warily. Owen's bedroom door is closed and someone is sobbing inside.

STUART
What the...?

Stuart approaches the closed door and knocks gently.

STUART (CONT'D)
Owen? Hey, buddy. It's Stuart. Is everything okay? Do you want some company?

The crying stops.

Beat.

The door opens to reveal a beautiful and scantily-clad woman, VICKI. Her mascara is smudged and she holds a soggy tissue.

VICKI
Company is hardly a problem for him! That lying bastard!

She dashes to the balcony and Stuart chases after her.

STUART
No! Don't jump!

She gives him a withering look.

VICKI

As if. He's not worth it.
Cheating... awful...

She wants to hate him but just can't.

Stuart looks over the balcony to see Owen cavorting in the pool with yet another beautiful woman. Jim sits on a lounge chair in swim trunks, looking out of place.

OWEN

Stuart! Come down! Hi Vicki!

VICKI

You bastard!

She picks up a metal folding chair and hurls it over the edge.

Stuart leaps away.

STUART

Okay. Okay, you know what? I think
I'll give you some space and...

But Vicki isn't listening. She's throwing everything within reach off the balcony as Stuart makes his escape.

INT. THEATRE - NIGHT

The theatre is packed with couples, mainly teens. Stuart squeezes into the back corner and tries to watch, but it's awful. He falls asleep.

INT. THEATRE - NIGHT - LATER

Someone SCREAMS and Stuart jolts awake. The other viewers stare at the screen, riveted, but Stuart has no idea what's going on.

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Stuart enters the dark apartment. More creaking noises from Owen's bedroom.

OWEN (O.S.)

Vicki! Vicki!

Stuart sighs. The room's a mess. Clothes and beer cans, pizza boxes and garbage litter the couch. He pushes the debris aside, lays out the sleeping bag and gets in. He stares at the ceiling.

STUART

I'm a billionaire. I have a blow-up doll that's also a housekeeper. I'm a professional whale rider. I have a harem. I'm king of the world.

INT. OFFICE - ELEVATOR - DAY

Stuart steps into the elevator, looking haggard.

JIM (O.S.)

Hold the door!

Stuart holds the door and Jim darts in.

JIM (CONT'D)

Morning, buddy. No offense, but you look like crap.

STUART

Thanks.

JIM

Too much partying?

STUART

Not for Owen, apparently.

JIM

Ah.

STUART

I'm too old for this.

JIM

Why not go home?

STUART

I can't. I told Becca I wasn't happy and if anything, I'm worse.

JIM

You can come stay with me if you like.

STUART

Really?

JIM

Well, I'd have to check with Stepford. Stephanie! Stephanie!

STUART

Thanks.

They arrive at Stuart's floor and he steps out.

JIM

I'll let you know.

INT. JIM'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A formal dining room with an elegantly set table. Jim's wife STEPHANIE, 35, thin and immaculately dressed, sets down plates in front of two equally well-dressed children, MAXIMILLIAN, 9, and PHOEBE, 7.

Jim and Stuart enter. Stuart starts to loosen his tie but Jim elbows him.

JIM

Leave it.

Stephanie smiles at them and comes over to kiss Jim on the cheek.

STEPHANIE

Welcome home, honey. Hello Stuart.
Nice to see you.

STUART

Hi Stephanie. Maximillian. Phoebe.

MAXIMILLIAN AND PHOEBE

Good evening, Mr. Frankfurt.

STEPHANIE

Have a seat. You're right on time.

JIM

Wouldn't dare be late.

Stephanie's smile could kill but she turns on a kitten-heeled foot and strides out of the room.

Jim and Stuart take seats.

STUART

You guys have gotten big since the last time I saw you. I heard you're a great cello player, Phoebe.

PHOEBE

Would you like me to play you a song?

No.

STUART

Maybe later.

Stephanie returns with two plates, so well-composed they could be works of art.

JIM
Thanks, Steph.

STEPHANIE
Stephanie.

Jim swallows.

They eat in strange, awkward silence. When Stuart accidentally scrapes his knife along his plate the entire family stares at him as though he had killed their pet.

STUART
I'm sorry.

INT. JIM'S HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Stephanie leads Stuart into the guest bedroom, Jim trailing behind. Stuart sets his duffle bag on the bed, then, seeing Stephanie's tight expression, hastily moves it to the floor. She smiles at him.

STEPHANIE
Is there anything else you need?

STUART
No, I think this will do.

Her smile is strained.

STUART (CONT'D)
I mean, it's perfect. The most perfect room ever.

STEPHANIE
It's alright. Good night, Stuart.

STUART
Good night, Steph...anie.

He looks at Jim who shrugs helplessly and follows his wife out of the room.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Stuart sits at his desk, staring but seeing nothing.

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

Stuart drives aimlessly.

EXT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - DAY

Stuart drives by his house, but nobody is home.

INT. JIM'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Another tense dinner. The family and Stuart eat silently.

Stephanie clears her throat. Jim looks at her. She has an "I'm waiting" look on her face.

Jim looks at Stuart. Stuart shrugs.

Jim looks at the kids. They look like they're waiting for something. Jim looks desperate.

JIM

Dinner is outstanding.

Stephanie cocks her head. That's not it.

JIM (CONT'D)

Is it... our anniversary?

STEPHANIE

No. Children?

PHOEBE

We gave her a makeover!

Stuart and Jim look at Stephanie in surprise. She looks exactly the same.

JIM

W-wow! You look beautiful!

STEPHANIE

Thank you.

Stuart just stares at the kids. Who are these freaks?

PHOEBE

Would you like a makeover, Stuart?

STUART

Oh... no.

He eats quickly.

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

Stuart and Jim drive home.

JIM

Is it just me or is this summer the worst one ever?

STUART

It's not you.

JIM

I don't know if you've noticed, but things between Stephanie and I have been a little strained.

STUART

Really?

JIM

I can't quite put my finger on it.

Stuart's pretty sure he could.

STUART

Hmm.

JIM

And Friday night dinners are formal, so tonight should be really tense.

Stuart's eyes widen in horror.

JIM (CONT'D)

What is it?

STUART

I forgot!

JIM

Forgot what?

STUART

I... have a date tonight!

JIM

What? With who?

STUART

With a beautiful woman.

JIM

Really?

STUART

Yes. We're going to Francisco's.

JIM

Francisco's? You'll never get a table.

STUART

I have a reservation.

JIM

Does Becca know?

STUART

Of course not.

JIM

I don't know, man, are you sure
this is a good idea?

They pull up to Jim's enormous brick house. Stephanie is waiting on the front step.

STUART

I think it's... preferable.

INT. FRANCISCO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

An elegant fine dining restaurant. The servers are older, thin men dressed in black with long white aprons. The MAÎTRE D' is old enough to be Stuart's grandfather.

There is a long line of people waiting to get in and the Maître d' shoots Stuart curious looks as he continues to linger.

Finally the line is gone and Stuart is now loitering conspicuously.

MAÎTRE D'

Excuse me, sir, can I help you?

STUART

Ah...

MAÎTRE D'

Do you have a reservation?

STUART

Yes.

MAÎTRE D'

Your name?

STUART

Frankfurt. Stuart Frankfurt.

The Maître d' frowns and scans the reservations book.

MAÎTRE D'

Ah, yes. Eight o'clock. Your table
is ready, sir. Follow me.

Stuart's brows raise but he follows the Maître d' through the
maze of tightly packed candlelit tables to a small table for
two, both seats empty.

MAÎTRE D' (CONT'D)

Are you expecting someone?

STUART

I think so.

MAÎTRE D'

Certainly.

Stuart sits and the Maître d' disappears.

Stuart waits awkwardly. A SERVER appears and fills his glass
with water.

Stuart glances at his watch, looks at the couples around him,
all wealthy, all absorbed in their conversations.

ANNIE

Hi Stuart.

Stuart jolts in his seat and looks up to see ANNIE, 47,
gangly but confident, dressed in a little black dress and sky-
high heels. She has red lipstick and dark eye make-up.

STUART

Hello.

She waits and only when the Server reappears to pull out her
chair does Stuart realize that he was meant to do that.

They stare at each other.

ANNIE

You look nice.

STUART

You look very beautiful.

Does she? She's a seven at her best, which is now.

ANNIE

Thank you.

More awkward silence.

The server approaches with a bottle of wine.

SERVER

House red?

ANNIE

Yes, please.

The server fills their glasses and leaves. Stuart and Annie sip their wine.

STUART

This is funny.

ANNIE

Isn't it?

STUART

How we came to be here.

ANNIE

Hilarious.

STUART

It's quite a story.

ANNIE

Oh, definitely.

STUART

When we met... through a friend...
and then...

Annie nods encouragingly.

STUART (CONT'D)
Here we are. Stuart and...

ANNIE
Annie.

Annie clinks his glass.

STUART
How long have we known each other
now, Annie?

ANNIE
Does it matter?

STUART
It's been a short... long time.

Annie just keeps nodding.

The server returns.

SERVER
Are you ready to order?

The menus lie untouched.

ANNIE
I'll have the foie gras to start,
followed by the duck confit,
mushrooms on the side.

SERVER
Certainly. And for you, sir?

Stuart stares at Annie then hastily opens his own menu,
ordering the first thing he sees.

STUART
The turnip velouté and scallops.

SERVER

Excellent. More wine?

Stuart drains his glass.

STUART

Yes.

The server refills their glasses and leaves.

STUART (CONT'D)

Level with me, Annie. How did we
get here? Why are we here?

ANNIE

I got a cab here, Stuart. As for
why... I suppose you know the
answer.

STUART

But I don't know.

ANNIE

Or not.

STUART

What does that even mean?

ANNIE

If you don't know why you're here,
why did you come?

STUART

Something's not right. I don't know
you. I didn't have a reservation. I
don't even know what turnip velouté
is. This has to be a joke.

ANNIE

Life is a joke, Stuart. And
humanity is the laughing stock of
the cosmos.

STUART

What?

ANNIE

Or not.

STUART

Oh God.

ANNIE

Why are you so unhappy, Stuart?
You're in a wonderful restaurant
with a beautiful woman - what more
could you want?

STUART

The truth! I lied about you. I made
you up and then you came. I said I
had a Porsche and one appeared.
Things are happening to me that I
don't understand and I can't enjoy
them.

ANNIE

That is strange.

STUART

I know!

ANNIE

How long has this been going on?

STUART

A few weeks? A month? Just one
morning this Porsche turns up.

ANNIE

Why do you think that was?

STUART

Because I said I had a Porsche. And
then everyone wanted to see it and
there it was!

ANNIE

Well where did you say you got it?

STUART

I said I won it. The night before I went to the casino and...

ANNIE

And you won a Porsche. Mystery solved!

STUART

No, that's just it! I didn't win a Porsche. I didn't win anything. I went double or nothing. And I lost.

ANNIE

That's a decent metaphor, isn't it?

STUART

What?

ANNIE

Your inability to appreciate the cards you held led you to wish for more - or, in this case, lie about it - and ultimately you wound up with nothing.

STUART

I-- That--

ANNIE

I think I know what your problem is.

STUART

What?

ANNIE

Karma.

STUART

Oh come on. That stuff is for
killers and thieves. I didn't do
anything to deserve this. My life
wasn't so wonderful that--

ANNIE

Look at that cake.

Stuart's confused but he follows Annie's gaze to the next
table and the piece of cake being served. It's more a work of
art than food.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Looks amazing, right?

STUART

Yes.

ANNIE

It's not. They sell it at Food
Mart. \$9.99 for the whole thing.

STUART

I don't get it.

ANNIE

It's all a matter of perception,
Stuart. If you think the cake is
special, then it's special. And if
you think it's not, then it's not.

Stuart drinks his wine much too quickly. The food arrives and
the glasses are refilled.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

You worried that strangers didn't
see you, Stuart, but what about the
people who do see you? Do you
really see them?

STUART

Who are you?

ANNIE

You called me, remember?

STUART

Not really!

ANNIE

Oh well. This foie gras is amazing.
I could eat it for breakfast. They
get it from this farm in Montreal
where the ducks are only fed maple
syrup.

Stuart looks bewildered.

INT. FRANCISCO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT - LATER

The last of the dishes are cleared.

Annie and Stuart stare at each other. Annie hasn't wilted at all, but Stuart looks as though he's run a marathon.

The Server places the cheque in front of him and when Stuart looks at it he nearly dies. He pulls out his wallet, selects a credit card and hands it over.

ANNIE

This evening has been wonderful.

STUART

Yes. Wonderful.

ANNIE

Where to from here?

STUART

Where?

Annie smiles and nods.

The Server returns with the credit card. Stuart waits to hear that it's been rejected.

SERVER

Thank you, sir. Have a wonderful evening.

STUART

Thank you.

Stuart and Annie stand and leave the restaurant.

EXT. FRANCISCO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Stuart and Annie linger on the empty sidewalk. Annie is completely at ease but Stuart is a jittery mess.

STUART

Did you need a ride?

ANNIE

Where would you like to go?

STUART

No-nowhere. I need to go home. To my friend's home. I just...

Annie flags down a passing cab. It pulls up to the curb and Annie opens the door.

ANNIE

Last chance.

STUART

No thanks.

ANNIE

It's five hundred for the evening, regardless.

STUART

What?

ANNIE

Five hundred.

Polite but firm. Not her first time.

STUART

Five hundred dollars? You're a prostitute? Is this a joke?

ANNIE

Life's a joke, Stuart, but this is business. Five hundred or I'll make a phone call.

STUART

What? To who?

ANNIE

To whom.

STUART

This is crazy. I don't have five hundred dollars.

Annie nods at the ATM behind them and Stuart makes his way over in a daze, inserts his card and withdraws \$500, returning and handing it to Annie.

ANNIE

I had a wonderful time.

STUART

I'll bet.

Annie kisses him on the cheek, leaving a red lipstick print.

ANNIE

Have a good life, Stuart.

She gets in the cab and is gone.

INT. JIM'S HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Morning sunlight streams in through the window and splashes across Stuart's sleeping face.

He winces and covers his head with a pillow. He's fully dressed, lying on top of the covers spread eagle.

INT. JIM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Stephanie, dressed to the nines under her apron, even wearing shoes, bakes a pie. There's a tray of muffins cooling on the counter and next to that a platter of cookies.

Stuart enters.

STUART

Good morning.

Stephanie glances at the clock.

STEPHANIE

Good afternoon, Stuart.

Stuart looks out the window to see that the sun is indeed high in the sky. The backyard is sprawling and perfectly manicured, backing into a forest that wouldn't dare intrude.

STUART

Smells good in here.

STEPHANIE

I've been baking.

STUART

I see.

Pause.

STUART (CONT'D)

Is there any-- I mean, do you mind,
do you have any coffee?

STEPHANIE

Of course.

There's a French press on the counter with freshly brewed coffee just waiting to be poured.

STUART

Of course. Thank you.

Stephanie pours him a cup and Stuart accepts gratefully.

STUART (CONT'D)

What time do you wake up?

STEPHANIE

Six o'clock.

STUART

I wondered how you got it all done.

STEPHANIE

All what?

He gestures to the baked goods, the room, the yard, the entire house.

STUART

All of it, everything. It's all so perfect all the time. That can't be easy.

Stephanie avoids his gaze.

STEPHANIE

Nobody's perfect.

STUART

I think there are a lot of people who would say that you are.

STEPHANIE

There's not usually anyone here during the day to see this.

She gestures to herself as though she's a mess.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

The kids are either at school or synchronized swimming or Vietnamese class or cello lessons or puppeteering, and Jim's working or golfing or running errands.

STUART

Should I go?

Stephanie glances into the backyard.

STEPHANIE

No, of course not. You're a guest. Stay as long as you like. Have a cookie.

Stuart takes one and takes a bite.

STUART

Delicious. See, I knew it would be perfect.

STEPHANIE

There's no such thing as perfect. And I apologize for your stay.

STUART

What?

STEPHANIE

I won't deny that things here have been tense. It's not easy, running a household and keeping up appearances. Sometimes people make mistakes.

STUART

I hadn't noticed any.

STEPHANIE

This house is too big.

STUART

Oh--

STEPHANIE

I lose one of the kids in here at
least twice a week. Usually Phoebe.
That's why she's so... odd.

STUART

She's delightful.

Suddenly they both jump. Owen has appeared at the window.
Stephanie looks from Owen to Stuart and back. Stuart looks
from Owen to Stephanie and back. And gets it.

Owen looks stricken but he comes in through the back door and
the three stand awkwardly in the kitchen.

Stuart looks at the half-eaten cookie in his hand like he
wants to throw up.

STEPHANIE

Owen! What a surprise.

OWEN

Surprise, Stephanie. And Stuart.

STEPHANIE

What are you doing here?

OWEN

Um, is Jim home?

STEPHANIE

No. He's at his golf lesson.

STUART

He always golfs on Saturdays.

OWEN

That's right. I forgot.

Stephanie looks sick. Owen looks caught. Stuart looks between them.

JIM

Hi Owen.

The three whirl around to see Jim standing at the entrance to the dining room. He's wearing a purple plaid shirt and matching golf shorts and socks. No shoes.

OWEN

Hey Jim. I was just looking for you.

JIM

Really.

OWEN

Yes.

JIM

Here I am.

STEPHANIE

Stuart's here.

JIM

Hi Stuart.

STUART

Hi Jim.

Jim knows exactly what's going on. It's why he's home.

STEPHANIE

Your lesson doesn't end for another hour.

JIM

I came home early.

OWEN

Do you want to play video games at
my place?

JIM

I don't think so.

Pause.

OWEN

I guess I'll go then.

JIM

Good.

Owen hesitates then hastily exits the same way he came in.
They watch through the window as he races through the
manicured lawn and disappears into the forest.

STUART

I think I'll go for a walk.

JIM

No, stay.

STEPHANIE

Jim...

JIM

How long?

STEPHANIE

How long what?

JIM

Don't lie to me!

Stephanie near tears.

STEPHANIE

I don't-- I don't know what--

JIM

He's my best friend!

STUART

It's not what you think.

Jim seems to remember he's there.

JIM

What?

STUART

I asked him to come over. I thought the three of us could hang out. I forgot about your lesson. It's my fault.

Jim looks at Stephanie. Looks at Stuart.

STEPHANIE

It's true.

JIM

Why didn't he use the front door?

An incredibly long pause.

STUART

He wanted to scare Stephanie.

JIM

Did he?

STEPHANIE

Yes.

Jim looks between them for a moment, then turns and walks out.

Stuart and Stephanie avoid each other's gaze, then Stuart leaves, too.

EXT. BUSY STREET - DAY

A typical suburban street on a sunny day. Strip malls and car dealerships, four lanes of busy traffic.

Stuart walks as though in a trance.

He stops, spots something ahead: Food Mart.

INT. FOOD MART - DAY

Stuart enters and makes a beeline for the bakery. The store is packed with suburban shoppers and he navigates his way through carts and screaming children.

Stuart studies the baked goods. Cookies and muffins and pies and cakes. Bagels, bread, pitas. Row upon row upon row.

And then he sees it.

The cake from the restaurant, \$9.99 as promised. He takes one and returns to the front, waiting in line to pay.

When it's nearly his turn, Stuart hears something and stiffens.

ANNIE

...so good with a little salt and
butter. Just pop it in the barbecue
and it's like summer in your mouth.
I love corn!

Stuart turns to see Annie, clad in a Food Mart smock, working the register a few lanes over. She doesn't see him and he quickly turns back around so she never does.

The cashier rings Stuart's cake through.

CASHIER

Nine ninety-nine.

STUART

I'm sorry, I changed my mind.

Stuart leaves the store, careful to keep his face averted.

EXT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - DAY

Stuart pulls up in his Porsche. Matt and Jules run through the sprinkler in the front yard. Becca is nowhere to be seen.

MATT AND JULES

Daddy!

They rush over to hug Stuart, leaving him with wet splotches on his pants and shirt.

STUART

Hi guys! How have you been?

JULES

Where did you go?

STUART

I went to visit my friend.

MATT

Did you get your shit together?

STUART

What?

JULES

That's what mommy said you were doing.

STUART

Then that's exactly what I did. Is mom inside?

They nod and Stuart enters the house.

INT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - FRONT HALL - DAY

Stuart enters the silent house.

STUART

Becca? Bex?

No answer. He heads upstairs.

INT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - STUART'S BEDROOM - DAY

The room is empty.

Stuart peers in.

STUART

Becca?

INT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Stuart enters the empty kitchen.

STUART

Bec--

He freezes, seeing something outside the patio doors.

STUART (CONT'D)

Becca?

Through the patio doors Stuart watches Becca talking to a shirtless sun god (ANDRE, 27), dark skin gleaming in the afternoon sun as though it's been oiled. When the sun god smiles his white teeth sparkle. Becca touches his arm, throws back her head and laughs.

Stuart's jaw drops in horror.

EXT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - POOL AREA - DAY

Stuart steps out onto the patio.

Becca and the sun god are mid-laugh.

STUART

Becca?

Becca stops laughing when she hears her name, turns and sees Stuart, dropping her arm from Andre's bulging bicep.

BECCA

Stuart.

STUART

Hi.

Her blonde hair glows like a halo in the afternoon sun. She's wearing shorts and a straining tank top and looks great.

BECCA

Hi Stuart. Um, Andre, this is my husband Stuart. Stuart, this is Andre. I hired him to take care of the pool.

Now that Stuart notices, the pool is actually looking pretty good.

Andre steps forward to extend a strong, manly hand, neatly enfolding Stuart's own pasty white fingers. Stuart stares at their grip.

ANDRE

Nice to meet you, Stuart. You have a lovely wife.

He has a Jamaican accent. He is sex personified.

Stuart takes his hand back.

STUART

Thank you, Andre.

ANDRE

Your pool should be as good as new inside of a week. Just a small bacterial problem. Nothing I can't fix.

STUART

Super.

Becca watches him oddly.

BECCA

I'll let you get back to work,
Andre. Stuart, let's go inside.

Stuart follows Becca inside, darting one last look over his shoulder at Andre's perfect manly form.

INT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Stuart and Becca face each other.

STUART

Who the hell is he?

BECCA

You were complaining about the pool being a mess so I hired somebody.

STUART

A Jamaican sun god?

BECCA

Yes, a Jamaican sun god.

She looks outside at Andre and Stuart scowls.

BECCA (CONT'D)

What are you doing here, Stuart?

STUART

I want to come home.

BECCA

Why? What changed?

STUART

My perspective--

Matt and Jules choose that moment to dash in from outside, skidding into the kitchen on wet feet.

STUART (CONT'D)

Whoa! Careful, ninjas, slippery when wet.

JULES

When can we go in the pool?

BECCA

When Andre's finished fixing it.

MATT

I like Andre.

JULES

Me too.

STUART

Everybody likes Andre.

INT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - KIDS' BEDROOM - DAY

A new day.

Matt, Jules and Will sit in a circle on the floor. Matt has a towel tied around his neck, Jules is wearing every piece of jewelry in existence and a Burger King crown, and Will is in his black suit and shades.

Stuart passes by then pauses to peer in.

STUART

Hi guys.

KIDS

Hi.

Stuart enters and goes directly to the window overlooking the backyard. He peers down at Becca and Andre, talking poolside.

JULES

Daddy!

STUART

Sorry, honey, what?

Jules holds up five fingers.

JULES

I asked you three times!

STUART

What did you ask me?

JULES

Do you want to play with us?

Stuart glances outside one last time before joining them on the floor.

STUART

Ah, sure. What are we playing?

MATT

Dress-up.

STUART

What happened to the ninjas?

They shrug like they couldn't care less about ninjas.

MATT

I'm a superhero. I save lives.

JULES

I'm a princess. I'm beautiful.

WILL

I'm still Neo.

MATT

Who are you, daddy?

STUART

Um, I... am... an account manager.

The kids exchange unimpressed looks.

JULES

Okay, fine.

Will speaks on an imaginary phone.

WILL

(on imaginary phone)

Uh-huh. Okay. Where? Got it.

They're on the way.

(to room)

Team, there's a fire and a kidnapping and a tidal wave at the school.

Matt stands and adjusts his towel/cape.

MATT

Tell them I'm coming.

WILL

I did.

JULES

I'll only go if there will be photographers.

WILL

There will be.

They look at Stuart.

STUART

I will be here, managing the
accounts.

The kids look at one another.

WILL

Okay, fine.

The kids race to one side of the room to fight crime and
natural disaster.

Stuart crawls back to the window and peers out.

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

Stuart drives Will home.

WILL

Why do you look so worried?

STUART

Do I look worried?

He's practically grimacing.

WILL

Yep.

STUART

I don't know why. Everything's
fine. Everything is going to be
fine.

WILL

I guess so.

STUART

Will, it's important to tell the
truth.

WILL

What?

STUART

You should always tell the truth. I gave you some bad advice earlier, when I said to lie or just lie a little bit. You shouldn't lie. Just tell the truth. It's better that way.

Will tips down his sunglasses and looks at Stuart over the top.

WILL

Where is this coming from, Stuart?

STUART

Well Will, I don't know if you've noticed, but I've been in some trouble lately.

WILL

I've noticed.

STUART

And it's because of lying. I have been telling a lot lies, to a lot of people, and I shouldn't have done that.

WILL

Did you lie to me?

STUART

No, I don't think so. But I lied to Becca and my friends and the maître d' at the restaurant, and even a police officer.

Will's jaw drops.

WILL

What did you lie about?

STUART

Pretty much everything. From this
Porsche to babies to reservations.
I even said I was a billionaire
whale rider.

WILL

But those things are true! Only not
the last part.

STUART

Well...

WILL

Who'd you tell you were a
billionaire whale rider?

STUART

You know, I don't think I told
anybody. I was alone when I said
that.

WILL

Huh.

They drive in silence until they reach Will's house.

WILL (CONT'D)

Well, Stuart, it seems like you can
lie to everybody...

STUART

I--

WILL

...except yourself.

Will hops out.

WILL (CONT'D)

See you tomorrow.

Stuart waves as he watches Will go, just a little bit stunned by the concept.

INT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - KIDS' BEDROOM - DAY

Stuart peeks in. Matt and Jules sit on the floor, colouring.

STUART

Hey guys.

JULES

Daddy! Why are you always coming in here?

Stuart beelines it for the window and looks out.

STUART

No reason.

Stuart's POV: Through the window Becca trails Andre across the patio and into the tiny shed in the corner of the backyard.

Stuart takes a deep breath and looks away.

MATT

What are you looking at?

STUART

Nothing. It's nothing.

He looks back out the window.

Stuart's POV: The shed starts rocking rhythmically back and forth.

Stuart's jaw drops.

STUART (CONT'D)
Excuse me, please.

He dashes from the room.

EXT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - POOL AREA - DAY

Stuart leaps through the patio doors, runs past the pool, across the grass and uses his shoulder to bang through the shed door.

INT. FRANKFURT SHED - DAY

The shed is dim and dusty. Sunlight streams in through the now-open door, highlighting Becca and Andre. Andre is using a crow bar to adjust one side of the shed and Becca is holding the wall steady.

ANDRE
...unsteady when I was fetching the
pool supplies, really unsafe for
the kids--

They both jump as Stuart barges in.

STUART
STOP!

BECCA
Stuart! What the hell are you
doing?

Andre looks between the couple, bewildered.

INT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - STUART'S BEDROOM - DAY

Stuart and Becca face off.

BECCA

How dare you just barge back into our lives because you're ready to be a part of this family again! You humiliated me and you embarrassed yourself!

STUART

Becca, I thought--

BECCA

I'm not interested in what you thought, Stuart! Actually, that's a lie. I'm dying to know what you think. Why you think it's okay to come home in a Porsche and spend weeks away from your family, to drive around with a mysterious police escort and tell the kids that Aunt Maureen's a zombie.

STUART

I didn't--

(off her furious look)

Okay. I did. I did all that stuff. And I'm sorry.

BECCA

Oh. Then in that case, everything's okay.

STUART

Becca...

BECCA

Why, Stuart? Just tell me why.

STUART

I'm a liar.

BECCA

Uh-huh.

STUART

And lately... lately I think my
lies have been coming true.

BECCA

Really.

STUART

Like the Porsche. I told people at
work I won it and then they wanted
to see it and we went outside and I
thought they would see the van and
laugh at me and then... there was a
Porsche.

BECCA

So you stole it?

STUART

No! I mean, yes... I don't know.
When I put the key in, it worked.
And my name was on the
registration.

BECCA

Uh-huh.

STUART

And then the day you were at the
hospital I was speeding and got
pulled over so I said I was
speeding because you were in the
hospital even though you weren't in
the hospital but when we got to the
hospital you actually were there.

BECCA

Uh-huh.

STUART

And-and then I was at work and people were so interested to hear about the quints and I was telling them then Marcus Oberman walks in with his story about wrestling a hawk and suddenly I'm saying how I stopped a bank robbery and then they all seem to remember it happening even though I never stopped a bank robbery, Becca!

BECCA

Yes, Stuart, you did. I saw the footage.

STUART

But I didn't. And when you said I wanted to "test the waters" after, I don't remember any of that happening. And then the news people asked me about the Porsche and I said we inherited money and then I came inside and you told me Maureen died--

BECCA

My mother called and told us Maureen died, Stuart. Days before your stupid zombie story.

STUART

Becca, I swear I didn't know. But I realized that everything I lied about was coming true so I tried to say that it wasn't true, that she wasn't dead, and then the kids overheard and you said she was dead and I couldn't keep saying otherwise so I had to say she was dead--

BECCA

Are you trying to say I made her be dead?

STUART

No! No, but then... I also said that Owen was having an affair with Jim's wife and then they were having an affair and Jim knew about it. Then I said I had a date and I went to the restaurant and this woman shows up and she's a prostitute and I had to pay her five hundred dollars.

Becca's especially unimpressed with this.

BECCA

You poor thing.

STUART

And Becca, Andre, I made him up, too. I told people that you were having an affair with our Jamaican pool boy and--

BECCA

What is the matter with you?

STUART

I don't know.

BECCA

When was the last time you told me the truth?

STUART

I'm telling you the truth now. Everything I lie about comes true.

BECCA

Really? If everything you lie about comes true, why don't we live in a palace? Why don't you ride to work on a tiger? Why aren't you a professional whale rider?

STUART

I can't lie to myself, Becca. I thought I wanted something more but I don't. I want this.

BECCA

How lucky for us.

STUART

Becca, please. Andre. Don't sleep with him.

Becca's face contorts. Can't tell if she's laughing or crying, then she's doing both. Hysterically. She can barely speak. Stuart watches helplessly.

BECCA

Sleep with him? Are you kidding?

STUART

Are you?

BECCA

Yes, Stuart, of course I am! Of course the Jamaican sun god goes home each night and fantasizes about me, four-hundred-pound Becca Frankfurt.

STUART

I think he might--

BECCA

Look at me, Stuart! My hair is a disaster. My skin is a mess.

(MORE)

BECCA (CONT'D)

My ankles are the size of my neck
and I could crush a bison. My
husband left me and... and... Who
would want me?

She storms into the bathroom and slams and locks the door.
Stuart stares after her, shocked. Slowly he approaches the
door and presses his hand against it.

STUART

Becca, who would want you? Who
wouldn't want you? You're the most
beautiful woman in the world. I
would give up everything for you.

No sound from the bathroom.

Stuart sinks to the floor, cheek pressed to the door.

STUART (CONT'D)

That's the truth.

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

The Porsche squeals into the lot and parks. Stuart, Matt and
Jules pile out.

INT. JEWELERY STORE - DAY

Stuart, Matt and Jules peruse the cases of jewelery as the
SALESPERSON looks on. Displays of diamond, silver, gold:
they're looking for something perfect.

Stuart points to a pair of beautiful, simple diamond
earrings.

STUART

What about those? Do you think mom
would like those?

JULES
Yes. Yes, definitely.

MATT
Oh yeah.

Stuart gestures to the Salesperson.

STUART
We'll take them.

SALESPERSON
Certainly.

The Salesperson carefully removes the earrings and closes the velvet box. He goes to the register and rings up the purchase.

SALESPERSON (CONT'D)
That will be--

Stuart's already thrusting the credit card at him.

STUART
It doesn't matter.

The Salesperson takes the card and swipes it. They wait.
Then:

SALESPERSON
I'm sorry, sir. Your card has been declined.

STUART
What? Try it again, please.

They try again.

SALESPERSON
Still declined, I'm afraid.

Stuart stares at the card.

Turns slowly and looks outside.

The Porsche is gone. The minivan is in its place.

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

Stuart, Jules and Matt exit the store empty-handed. They approach the van. Matt and Jules act like it's never been anything but a minivan.

INT. MINIVAN - DAY

Stuart, Matt and Jules drive home. Stuart's in a daze.

They pass through an intersection on a green light and a speeding car cuts through, veering sharply in front to avoid them.

Stuart slams on the brakes and the horn, terrified.

He sits still for a moment.

MATT

Daddy, I don't think that guy saw
you.

A moment while it sinks in.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. FRANKFURT HOUSE - POOL AREA - DAY

A few days later.

Stuart barbecues hotdogs while Becca lounges on a chair and the kids play in the now-pristine pool.

Suddenly there's a loud SPLASH and the kids SCREAM.

Stuart whirls around to see a huge ST. BERNARD frolicking in the pool.

No one's really afraid but Stuart gets a running start and dives into the pool. He swims after the confused dog while the kids cheer him on.

Becca applauds as Stuart finally pushes the huge dog to the stairs and out of the pool.

JULES

Yay daddy!

BECCA

Good job, honey.

Stuart stands there dripping wet.

STUART

The McAfees have really got to get a fence. Okay. Who wants hotdogs?

MATT AND JULES

I do!

STUART

Have a seat. I'll bring them over.

Matt and Jules sit side-by-side on a swing seat.

Becca and Stuart plate up their hotdogs and Stuart brings them over, returning to the barbecue where Becca is polishing off one ungarnished hotdog and preparing another.

STUART (CONT'D)

Wow.

BECCA

What? I'm eating for six.

Stuart shocked.

STUART

What?

Becca stares at him.

STUART (CONT'D)

What are you doing standing up? Go sit down. I'll bring the food to you, pretty lady.

When Becca's back is turned, Stuart's eyes widen in shock.

Becca takes her seat on the lounge chair and Stuart brings her a plate of hotdogs before taking his own hotdog to the swing seat where Matt and Jules eat. He wiggles in between them, pushing them sideways, making them laugh.

STUART (CONT'D)

Excuse me, please, excuse me, I'm trying to sit here.

JULES

Daddy, you're squashing us!

STUART

Excuse me, I need to sit down.

He finally settles in, squeezed right in the middle, right where he belongs.

THE END