

THE SLAP

Episode 1
HECTOR"

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THE SLAP - TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. CAR - NIGHT -

A man, HECTOR, kissing a young girl, around 18, who is in the passenger seat, while he is in the driver's seat. They fumble with buttons and zippers

NARRATOR

'In dreams', someone once said, 'lie responsibilities.' If that is the case, than Hector's dreams were of escape and a world in which having an affair with the baby-sitter was not a crime.

INT. HECTOR & AISHA'S BEDROOM - DAWN

The bedroom of a lovely Brooklyn Brownstone. Still has the Boho legitimacy of an as yet un-renovated place. It's warm and smart people live there; the books piled up, the art, etc, give us a sense that they are real people living real lives.

Angle on: A couple in bed, an attractive couple, even in sleep. Close together. HeCTOR is the man from the dream.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

At seven-fifteen on the morning of his fortieth birthday, Hector woke up after one such dream, and shifted his thinking to his wife, asleep next to him.

Hector is very handsome. His torso exposed, he takes care of himself, and is proud of it. AISHA, his wife, asleep beside him. She is beautiful, Indian, a few years younger than he.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

There could be no more promising start to this introduction to the first moments of middle age, than making love to her, he thought. Banishing his fantasy, and taking pleasure in the real thing. Of all the things he could do, this was best.

Angle on Hector: Looking at her. He looks down. He is hard. He grins. Shakes his head.

HECTOR

(a whisper)

Hey. Wake up. I'm forty.

(MORE)

HECTOR (cont'd)
 I'm a very potent and powerful forty.
 With potent and powerful needs.

She remains asleep. He kisses her gently on the cheek, not waking her. He touches her. Breathes for a moment.

HECTOR (CONT'D) (cont'd)
 (to Aisha, whispers)
 Be right back.

He gets up, his ripped body naked, and goes into the bathroom. We hear him peeing before we cut to:

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Hector staring in the mirror. He brushes his teeth.

HECTOR
 (to himself)
 Happy-ish birthday, pal.

He exits.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hector is astonished to find the bed empty. Aisha is gone. He hears the sounds of the radio from downstairs. NPR.

INT. KITCHEN, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE- DAY

Hector enters. Aisha, in sweats. MORNING EDITION on the radio. She is working already. Setting up a major culinary operation. Prep bowls of measured spices and chopped vegetable surround her. He tries to kiss her.

HECTOR
Why did you get out of bed?? Aisha!
 It's my birthday, it's bad luck not to
 fornicate like wild beavers in a pit.

AISHA
 (she laughs)
 I formication as much as you, Hector.
 BUT. We have people coming in a few
 hours.

HECTOR
 Let's cancel this thing. Let's just--

AISHA

I need you to do multiple tasks including making really sure that the Gods of Parnassus are not bringing two million *pounds* of humus and stuffed grape-leaves - it's *my* party for you.

HECTOR

(smiling.)

I will tell my parents not to bring food. Fine, yes, fine, what else?

AISHA

We need charcoal, and I need more icing. The case of wine at your cousins, ice...

*

HECTOR

In leu of sex -- Do we have any Valium?

AISHA

No, but you could pick some up at my office on your errands if you really feel you need it.

HECTOR

I can assure you, we both will.

As if to counterpoint that, the sounds of children arguing wafts in from upstairs. They grin. He laughs.

HECTOR (CONT'D) (cont'd)

We both might. I better shower and get going.

(dry)

So I have a perfect birthday.

INT. HALLWAY.

Hector at the top of the stairs.

ADAM (O.C.)

I said no!

MELISSA (O.C.)

You need to give me a turn.

INT. ADAM'S ROOM

Hector goes in. ADAM, (10, chubby and dorky), and MELSISSA (7, cute, tomboyish) are fighting over a video game. The room is a mess. The game involves space and ray guns. It is loud and dumb. Adam is eating potato chips.

HECTOR

What's going on here guys? We talked about this: To share is divine.

MELISSA

Adam won't let me play.

ADAM

She can't play, she's a baby.

MELISSA

I can so play.

ADAM

She called me a fat pig.

Melissa hits her brother, inflicting no damage. Adam gulps down chips.

HECTOR

Adam, what are you *eating*? *Tortilla* chips? Come ON! It's breakfast time, eat *breakfast* food!

(beat)

Can't you guys just go outside or something? It's a perfect summer day.

ADAM

...Whatever. Happy birthday.

He gets up and tromps off, a little troll. Melissa looks at Hector, accusingly.

MELISSA

Dad! I didn't want him to go, I wanted him to play with *me*!

Hector doesn't know what to say. He can't make anybody happy today. He walks away.

INT. BEDROOM.

Hector getting undressed to shower. Looks outside to the small back garden, where Adam stands, forlorn. He watches AISHA go to him, and give him a hug. He feels excluded from all things.

INT. LIVING ROOM, MANOLIS AND KOULA'S HOME - DAY

Hector's parents place. A brick row-house in Astoria, Queens. Your grandma's home but with Greek flair: gaudy 1970s furniture lovingly preserved for over 30 years, family portraits in gilt frames, a ceramic amphora with silk flowers sprouting out the top. Pictures of Hector, Aisha, and other family members.

MANOULIS, the bearded patriarch of the family, in his seventies, is carrying wrapped trays of food out of the kitchen, and onto the dining room table. Koula, his battle-axe wife follows with yet more food.

MANOULIS

We can't bring this much! They'll be angry! Hector just called!

KOULA

Relax, they love it when I cook, and besides, she may be a good doctor but she's not so great in the kitchen; this, we know.

MANOULIS

This is enough food here for the entire Trojan wars, woman. Enough!

KOULA

Stop. I'm almost done with the grape-leaves.

MANOULIS

Koula --

KOULA

Don't fight with me, you can't win, so don't even try.

INT. HARRY'S LOFT - DUMBO - BROOKLYN

A punching bag is set up in the giant open living room, and HARRY, Hector's cousin, is giving his fifteen year old son, ROCCO a boxing lesson, using the bag, while SANDI, his wife, is making breakfast, scrambling eggs and cooking bacon.

HARRY

Marco, come on, *hit first*, think later, you want to be a fighter, hit first, think later. Faster!

Sandi slightly winces at this. Sandi puts the food out.

SANDI

Breakfast. It'll get cold. Guys.

But Harry ignores this, though Marco glances wistfully over at the food being laid out.

HARRY

Keep going, come on! You can think about food later, believe me, my aunt will have brought a fucking ton of humus to Hector and Aisha's. Keep hitting the bag!

But Marco suddenly stops.

ROCCO

If you love fighting so much, dad,
maybe you should be the one punching
the bag.

HARRY

Gladly son.

Harry does so. ROCCO sits down, eating, looks at his mom.

MARCO

(whispering)
What's he so mad about?

Sandi picks up a piece of bacon and chews on it. She has no idea. They laugh, or rather giggle quietly, as HARRY continues to take out his frustrations on the bag.

INT. GARY & ROSIE'S WILLIAMSBURG WALK UP - DAY

GARY, a very smart hipster in his late thirties, bearded, letting himself go a bit, and ROSIE, his very beautiful hippy wife. Their son HUGO is building a house out of leggos. He wears pajama bottoms only.

GARY

No way to get out of this? *

ROSIE

I promised Aisha.
(to Hugo)
Come on, lets get you dressed, little man.

GARY

I can't stay home and work? I feel like when the Incredible Hulk begs people not to make him mad.

ROSIE

You don't mind Hector. Aisha.
(to Hugo)
Hey, we have to get ready. Come on.
You can build you castle later.

GARY

It's that goddamn Neanderthal cousin, the car dealer. Harry. He's always trying to pick a fight.

ROSIE

Just don't take the bait. Be like
Obama. He never takes the bait.

She gets up and tries to hustle Hugo into action.

ROSIE (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Come on, little man, chop-chop, let's
go?

GARY

My entire life is about being baited.
All I do is take the bait. I'm an
angry Gen Y hipster painter. Bait is
my raison'd'etra, babe.

And suddenly Hugo destroys his half built structure, with a
wild swipe of the hand. Leggos go flying.

HUGO

NO!

ROSIE

Darling, why did you DO that?
You were making such a nice
house!

HUGO

I don't want to go! I don't
want to go!

Gary sighs and sips his espresso.

GARY

You're a little young to be blase
about parties bud.

He gets down and picks up pieces of lego. The two of them get
down on their hands and knees, gathering leggos.

GARY (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Can't you have fun for a few years?
Someone has to.

NARRATOR

And thus, prophetically began a very
bad day, which would end up costing a
lot of so called grown ups almost
everything they had.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. FORT GREENE, BROOKLYN - DAY

A slight bounce in his step, Hector walks to his car -- the Volvo station wagon parked on the street.

EXT. FREE CLINIC, BACK ALLEY - DAY

The rear of a squat brick medical building. Hector parks in an illegal spot, blocking the alley. He looks troubled. Haunted. Unsure.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Hector knew. It was time to do what grown-ups do; end the disaster before the disaster became a disaster.

Runs into the back entrance of the clinic.

INT. FREE CLINIC - DAY

Behind the front desk is CONNIE (17, smooth milky skin, beautiful for her age despite the formless sweater she's wearing). She alphabetizes a stack of medical files. She smiles when she sees him.

HECTOR

Hey. Just picking something up, Valium...?

He goes into his wife's office. Opens a drawer, extracts a bottle of pills. Connie in the doorway, smiling shyly. Hector looks at her.

HECTOR (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Can we talk outside for a sec?

CONNIE

Yeah, no, it's quiet. I'd love a smoke.

EXT. CLINIC - MOMENTS LATER

Hector handing Connie a smoke, lighting one for each of them.

HECTOR

I've promised to give up. It's my resolution for having tuned forty.

They stare at each other. She tries to look sophisticated, smoking, mature. But --

CONNIE

(nervous)
What's up...?

HECTOR

(resolve failing)
We're having a party this afternoon,
and I thought you might like to come
by after work...?

CONNIE

(face lighting up)
Oh yes, yeah, wow, sure, we close at
two so...

They are interrupted by the BLAST of a car horn. Hector's Volvo blocking the alley.

HECTOR

Shit!
(to her)
Great okay. See you later.

He gets in the car, we can hear the OTHER DRIVER yell 'what the hell are you doing', muffled, a portent and good question.

INT. VOLVO - DAY

Looking pleased with himself, smoking. Then - He cringes.

FLASHBACK --

EXT. BROOKLYN - NIGHT

*Hector in his Volvo driving Connie home after baby sitting,
Miles playing -- the concerto de Arjunez.*

CONNIE

I love that music.

HECTOR

*Miles. Nobody comes close. Dreams,
darkness, escape, sorrow --*

*They pull up to Connie's apartment building. Fort Greene. Look
at each other, thick sexual tension in the air.*

HECTOR (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Aisha paid you, right?

Connie nods.

HECTOR (CONT'D) (cont'd)
*And you're baby sitting next weds,
 usual time?*

She smiles and leans over and kisses him. They look at each other. She gets out and runs up the stairs to her building. He watches.

INT CAR. MOVING SHOT.

HECTOR
 Oh god, you're such an ass-hole, why
 are you *such* an ass-hole.

He sighs, and keeps driving.

INT. LIVING ROOM, HARRY'S DUMBO LOFT - DAY

Harry drinking a beer with Harry.

HARRY
 You don't have to be so glum about it,
 forty is like twenty-five now, Jesus,
 cousin, smile.

Hector nods. Not convinced. Perturbed.

HARRY (CONT'D) (cont'd)
 A: You need to quit your stupid job in
 city planning and join some private
 development firm, I know a lotta guys
 who you could talk to. B: Get rich,
 have fun, stop thinking!
 (whispers)
 Have lots of women in case you don't
 get it!

HECTOR
 Jesus, Harry. Do I look like a
 fornicator to you?

HARRY
 No. You do not. That's the problem.

HECTOR
 (sighs)
 How much do I owe you for the wine?

A case of wine sits next to them. Harry laughs.

HARRY
 Happy birthday, its on me, and besides
 you could never afford this shit.
 (MORE)

HARRY (cont'd)
 It's like grown on a hillside in
 Umbria and fermented for two hundred
 years, I dunno.

HECTOR
 You mean it was a present and you're
 re-gifting it, right?

HARRY
 Capitalism never sleeps babe.

SANDI comes in.

SANDI
 Aisha called, Hector, she needs her
 ice and she knows you're just sitting
 here drinking beer and hanging out
 with Harry.

HARRY
 Jesus. She have a tracking device on
 you? This is exactly the problem;
 It's *aging* you. Before my very eyes.

He rises and picks up the case of wine. Winces slightly, a
 twinge in his back. Harry laughs.

HECTOR
 You're like a goddamn caveman, you do
 realize we're not in Greece on some
 island village where the men still
 think it's the sixth century, right?

Harry gives him the finger, wrestles the case of wine out of
 his cousin's hands and follows him out.

HARRY
 Let me carry it, Hector, you used to
 be tough. What's *happening* to you?

HECTOR
 Apparently I'm an under-sexed, under-
 achieving old bastard, leave me alone.

INT. KITCHEN, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Aisha frantically stirs a pan of vegetables roasting in the
 oven -- the meal somewhat behind. Talks over her shoulder:

AISHA
 Rosie, you have to care about the
 right pre-school, because all the
 decent elementary schools care.

ROSIE "helps" by rearranging the garnish on a dish. HHUGO clings to her dress.

ROSIE

I like having Hugo with me though. Plus, there's nothing he can learn in pre-school that I can't teach him at home.

AISHA

It's not about that. The admissions people like to see that he can fit in with other kids. Socializing --

Rosie's husband GARY (35, bit of a slob and self proclaimed agent-provocateur) finishes his beer at the kitchen table.

GARY

God, is there one moment in this country that isn't about getting ahead? I mean, the kid can't live like he's trying to get into some law firm!

Hector comes in with the case of wine.

AISHA

Wow. Finally. I was gonna call the missing persons division. Have fun with Harry?

He kisses her and slips her the valium. She grins at him.

AISHA (CONT'D) (cont'd)

(whispering)
Thank you my love.

HECTOR

Hey, y'all, wow, Hugo, the great Hugo is here!

Harry pats Hugo on the head, Hugo pulls away, with a whine. We clock that he's sort of -- something -- off.

ROSIE

Happy birthday.

She kisses him warmly on the cheek. They are fond of each other.

GARY

Hector, do you think my son has to start preparing for adult life now? This early?

HECTOR

It's never too soon to start losing
your soul, Gary.

AISHA

Wait. You forget the ice and the
charcoal and --?

HECTOR

I only have these two arms, babe,
they're in the car. Gonna get 'em now.

He looks at Gary -maybe he'd help? Gary takes a pullof beer.

GARY

I can't, I pulled my back building a
deck for this awful family- everyone
is a stock broker or something -

AISHA

(dry)

It must have been very hard for your
delicate sensibilities to be around
that.

INT. FOYER, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Hector looking up the stairs. He can hear the tell-tale sound
of -- yes -- computer gaming.

HECTOR

(yelling up)

Adam, could you come down here and
help me get some stuff out of the car.

The front door opens, without so much as a knock or a ring, and
MANOLIS and KOULA enter. And of course, they are Greeks
bearing gifts in the form of massive platters of food.

KOULA

Happy Birthday!

Hector takes in the feast, catches his dad's eye, his dad
shrugs; defeated. "You know your mom."

HECTOR

Thanks, mom.

KOULA

Just a little something, you don't
want grape leaves? What?

(in Greek)

*I am so proud of my Hector turning
forty, his beautiful family --*

Hector's divorced sister ELIZABETH and her two kids ANJELICA and NICK follow on, entering, loud greetings.

ELIZABETH
Happy birthday brother -- kids, wish
your uncle Happy Birthday.

There are roars of "Happy Birthday".

HECTOR
Thank you, thank you, Lizzie, kids.

They hug him, laughing, as ADAM comes down the stairs.

ADAM
Yo, guys, I got Evil Dead Two, come
on, wanna watch it, it's the
director's cut, blue ray.

The kids run after Adam, into the basement family room. Hector looks annoyed.

HECTOR
Adam. There's ice in the...
(quietly, Adam is gone)
Car. Okay, let's bring this stuff to
the kitchen.

We follow them return to the kitchen, their noise and talk a blur of familial excitement.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

The look on Aisha's face as this cornucopia arrives is priceless, knowing, amused, and pissed all at once.

KOULA
Well *darling* -- Whatever you don't eat
you can have tomorrow!

HECTOR
Tomorrow? We could eat until the
apocalypse.

Koula starts re-arranging the spread of food made by Aisha, moving Aisha's off the table to make room for her own.

KOULA
Let's just move some of this
away so--

ROSIE
(catching Aisha's eye)
Oh no, let's leave everything
as it is, and put some of yours
in the laundry room to make
room--

KOULA

Roise my darling, it's too dirty in there!

Aisha rolls her eyes, Hector leans in.

HECTOR

Aren't you SOOOO glad I got that valium now?

He picks up a plate of baklava and takes it into the pantry. She follows him in.

AISHA

Didn't you tell them!

HECTOR

(whispering)
YES but when has that mattered?

She looks at him, can't help smiling.

AISHA

One day I'll have trained you to stand up to them. But oh, wow, you are a *hard case*, baby.

He shrugs, she kisses him again. Slips him a valium, and herself one too. They swallow.

HECTOR

Everyone wants to train me. Why?
At least - Now we can glide through all of it on little puffy tranquilized clouds of peace and love.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Manolis with a beer, Elizabeth and her kids hanging out near Hector. Hector struggles with lighting the grill. Rubs his head in his hands.

KOULA (O.S.)

Look who I found!

Koula is leading a couple outside. ANOUK, (39, Williamsburg hip, confident and sexy) entering with her 25 year-old boyfriend JAMIE (all-American handsome with an indie-rock flair). Anjelica and Nick are awe struck by JAMIE.

ANJELICA

Oh my God I love your show! So much.

MANOLIS

Anouk, look at you, and you have a nice young man now? Finally! He is actor?

Anouks smiles and kisses Manolis. Anjelica fawns around Jamie.

ANJELICA

Do you mind, I just want one for my face-book, maybe two or three?

He shrugs. She takes pictures with her cell phone. Jamie smiles obligingly. Makes Nick take some of Jamie with her as she smiles widely and sneaks a kiss on the cheek.

HECTOR

So. Finally we meet him.

ANOUK

(wry)
I brought a guest star.

Koula joins in the star-adulation, goes up to Jamie.

KOULA

I watch your tv show every week. Are you going to marry the Oriental girl?

JAMIE

(sweet kid that he is.)
Thank you, thanks. You'll have to watch and see, right?

Hector comes over to Anouk, he adores her, kisses her.

ANOUK

(knowing.)
So. Any flare ups yet?

HECTOR

(quietly, grins)
Not so far, just a spanikopita skirmish, first shot fired by mom, Aisha holding the truce so far. Let's get you guys a drink...
(to Jamie)
And you must be Jamie. Hey man.

JAMIE

(a wide smile, hippy boy style)
Happy birthday. Yeah. Birthdays, man.

He nods knowingly. Proffers a nice bottle of champagne.
Elizabeth stares at Jamie, transfixed.

ELIZABETH

(desperate)

I'd love to talk to you, Jamie, about
a theatre company for the homeless I
want to start.

JAMIE

(smiling sweetly)

Oh sure.

Angle on: Gary and Rosie: Looking out the window. While
everyone fusses about Jamie, Anouk hands Hector a little baggie
of white powder.

ANOUK

Happy birthday dear Hector.

(a whisper)

We may be getting very very, very, old
but who says we can't still have fun?

Hector slips the baggy into his pocket. He grins at her.

HECTOR

Couldn't you have left off one 'very'.

(glances at Jamie)

So is this serious?

She shrugs. They walk inside the house, arm in arm.

ANOUK

So. I hear you're giving up smoking.

HECTOR

Yeah, so should you if you wanna keep
up with wonder-boy over there.

She gives him the finger. They are close friends, it's clear.

INT. BROWNSTONE - DAY

Hector putting another jazz album on the turntable. Harry and
his family arrive, Rocco and Sandi bearing presents and more
ice. Hugs. Dexter Gordon's *Tangerine* fills the air.

HARRY

(moans)

Oh Jesus, more of that goddamn
wailing? Please. Hey Anouk.

Anouk nods hello to Harry, who looks a little tense, kisses
Sandi and goes into the kitchen.

HECTOR

It's my birthday and Dexter Gordon
does not wail, so, want some beers?

They go into the dining room, where this feast is laid out.
It's a formidable spread.

HARRY

Did Aisha do all this?

HECTOR

(sheepish)
...Mom contributed a little.

HARRY

(approving)
That's right, no caterer could pull
this off. Only my aunt could.

HECTOR

Go outside, I'll bring you beers.

We hold on Hector's tortured/happy/ambivalent face.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Hector looks for more beer in the fridge. Rosie, Aisha, Anouk
and Gary talking, Jamie has joined them.

JAMIE

(to Rosie)
You must be Rosie. I've heard all
about you.

ROSIE

Well I didn't hear a *word* about you.

They all look at Anouk. She shrugs. Looks at her two
girlfriends.

ANOUK

I didn't want to throw him to you
piranhas for a while.

JAMIE

I can swim.

HECTOR

Where's the beer?

GARY

Yeah well. You and Anouk and Jamie
here took the last three, buddy.

HECTOR
More on the way.

He goes downstairs. As he opens the cellar door, we hear arguing yelling kids from down below.

INT. FAMILY ROOM, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

In the basement level of the house, the kids (Adam, Melissa, Anjelica, Nick and Hugo) argue over the TV. *Spongebob* is on. Rocco tries to change the channel.

ROCCO
Come on, the Yankee game is --

HUGO
I want it!

ADAM
No, let's watch the game --

Hugo's behavior is noticeably weird. Hector passes through. Turns a blind eye to what's going on.

INT. CELLAR, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

The back-room of the basement with a rear door leading out to the yard. Used for laundry, storage, an extra fridge, etc. Hector grabs another couple of six-packs out of the fridge. Hears fighting from the other room.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Hector is witness to really weird Hugo pre-tantrum behavior: loud moaning and rocking back and forth.

HECTOR
Just let him watch what he wants,
guys.

Rosie appears at the top of the stairs, looking angry.

ROSIE
What's going on down here?

She glares at everyone. Hugo is watching TV, sucking his thumb now.

HUGO
(looking up to mom)
They tried to take away *Sponge-bob*.

ROCCO
Because the game is -

ADAM
We just --

HECTOR
It's fine, crisis averted,
Rosie, really -

ROSIE
(to the other boys)
He's younger than you! Don't
bully him!

Silence. Hector catches Adam's eye 'let it go'. He heads up
stairs, past the glowering Rosie.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Hector putting beers in the fridge, hands them to all waiting
parties; Jamie, Anouk, and a very eager Gary. We hear the
RINGING of the doorbell, and follow him.

HECTOR
I'll get it!

INT. FOYER. HECTOR & AISHA'S BROWNSTONE.

Hector is too late: Aisha is letting in CONNIE and her friend
CHARLIE, a sweet looking 17 year old.

AISHA
Connie! Wow. What a surprise, hi
Charlie!

Aisha is clearly really surprised, not in a bad way, but -
surprised.

CONNIE
Oh yeah, Hector invited me, I brought
Charlie. Hi.

CHARLIE
Hey Hector, Connie invited me, is that
okay?

Hector wishes she hadn't but he manages a smile.

HECTOR
Of course. Sure.

AISHA
Go out back, everyone is out there,
there's sodas too, in the cooler.

The kids amble off, Aisha looks at Hector, and we're not sure
if she's going to chew him out or what.

AISHA (CONT'D) (cont'd)
I love it when you do thoughtful
things like that, it never even
occurred to me to invite her, I
thought she'd be bored by all these
people she doesn't know.

HECTOR
(shrugs)
Hey. A barbecue is a barbecue, right?

AISHA
Listen, if you can think of more
people to invite, by all means,
hon, 'cause we have food for another
hundred.

INT. BATHROOM, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Hector taps out some of the coke onto the sink counter. Cuts it
into two lines with a credit card. Rolls a dollar bill into a
tube. Looks at his reflection in the mirror. Oh boy. He's on a
tear.

Smiles at himself. Snorts the coke. It hits, he laughs.

INT. LIVING ROOM, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Hector returning to the party. His eyes wild. Ready for
anything.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. BACKYARD, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Alone, Connie leans on the deck railing. Her blond hair shimmering in the sun. Hector steps outside -- confident, gregarious, the drugs taking effect. He now has on sunglasses. The music has been changed up -- *Yo La Tengo* or something energetic.

HECTOR

You look like a beer would be welcome.

CONNIE

Really?

HECTOR

They're in the cellar. Where its cool and there are no revelers reveling to celebrate my incredible old-ness.

Connie bites her lip, unsure. Charlie runs up, snaps a photo of them with his camera.

CHARLIE

Get closer so I can get a better shot.

CONNIE

He's obsessed with photography.

Charlie buzzing around them - CLICK, CLICK, CLICK.

CHARLIE

Take off your movie star shades, dude!

Connie moves closer to Hector, allowing their bodies to touch. Hector obliges, removes sunglasses, eyes a-shine, puts his arm around her, electrified. CLICK, CLICK, CLICK.

CHARLIE (CONT'D) (cont'd)

No fake smiles, Hector, you're grinning like a crazy person. Just use your regular face.

HECTOR

I don't have one. All right, enough.
(sweetly)
Charlie. Come on, man. Go take pictures of everyone else, I really wanna remember every second of this amazing day.

Guileless, Charlie looks thrilled.

CHARLIE

Oh my God yeah, you got it Hector.

And Charlie is off, runs inside to pester other people.

CONNIE

Are you mad I brought him? I don't know anybody except you and Aisha. We were supposed to hang out and I didn't want to ditch him.

HECTOR

So what; is he your boyfriend?

CONNIE

Are you jealous?

HECTOR

No, just, you could do a lot better --

CONNIE

He's my best friend.

HECTOR

(going a mile a minute)
You have to be careful. I was best friends with the nerds too, and the "cool people" were really pretty mean about it. But you're sweet. And I always hated the cool people. Though I never admitted it.

CONNIE

Oh please, you're the coolest person I know, I mean. Come on.

Hector grins. They are a little closer together than is socially acceptable. Before he can respond, Koula sticks her head out the door.

KOULA

Hector! What are you doing out here?

HECTOR

Taking a moment to *relax*, do you know how much work it is to have a birthday party?

KOULA

YES, I gave you one every year for sixteen years. Come inside.

HECTOR

Mom, can't I just sit in the sun for one moment here? Please?

KOULA

No. I have your present in the kitchen.

HECTOR

What is it?

KOULA

You have to come find out.

She grabs her son's hand. Drags him inside. He looks at Connie.

INT. LIVING ROOM, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Koula, Manolis, Harry and Sandi gather around as Hector opens up an envelope. Connie at the rear of the group. Charlie photographing the moment. Closer towards the kitchen, Aisha, Rosie, Gary, Anouk and Jamie watch with less interest. The division between friends and family clear. Hector pulls out the online receipt for four tickets to Greece.

HECTOR

Oh wow. Wow.

KOULA

(wildly excited)

The whole family, all of us, going to Greece! Isn't that exciting?

Harry and his kids and Sandi, and Adam and Melissa cheering.

HECTOR

You can't afford this.

KOULA

This is for us as much as for you.

They hug, but Hector is clearly stunned. Koula is showering him with kisses, Manolis watching, beaming, but also clocking just how stunned Hector IS.

HECTOR

Aish!

Aisha comes over, a stunned Hector hands her the e-ticket.

AISHA

Guys, this is incredibly generous but I can't take two weeks off, my clinic duties, my partners -

KOULA

You never take time off work, I know you're a doctor but this is family, and you've never been to Greece! We can't change the tickets, we made a special deal!

(to Hector)

Tell her what a special time this is!

HECTOR

Let me see if we -- maybe we could get in touch with the airline, explain that Aisha is a doctor, and make it a week or ten days?

KOULA

Who goes that far for a week? The plane ride alone is a day --

AISHA

But Koula, really -- Hector -- can you explain to her -- really, we are so --

ANOUK

(whispers to Jamie)
Who books a goddamn trip for someone without first checking on the dates?

ELIZABETH

The whole family? I wasn't invited, we weren't.

KOULA

(snapping in Greek)

We took you and the kids last year, Aisha's never been, and Harry hasn't been in ten years, the kids don't know anything of the village -- of --

HECTOR

(loud)
Guys!

HARRY

I think its awesome and we are gonna have a killer time, right everybody, huh? The old country! The land of real tradition and --

Gary is drinking beer.

GARY

(to Rosie)

Why don't we have the kind of families that give us trips to ancient exotic lands? It's wildly unfair.

ROSIE
 Wildly.

HECTOR
 Can we please not turn this
 into -- on my birthday, let's
 not --

Manolis hears Gary's comment. Looks at the beer bottles on the table near Gary. All empty. Gary worries him. He steps into this conflagration.

MANOLIS
 (playing peacemaker)
 Look, everyone, everyone, calm
 down, this is a a good problem
 to have, we can work out the
 dates, it's no problem, Koula,
 relax, we'll sort it out later.
 Please, my daughter-in-law is a
 doctor, we have to take into
 account the --

KOULA
 (in Greek)
 But why is she --

Hector is trying to remove himself from the drama, looks over to Connie. She catches his eye. Hector is just about to walk over to her and Charlie when Manolis stops him and leans in.

MANOLIS
 (In Greek)
You got to manage your wife more.

HECTOR
 (smiling)
 Jesus, old man. Nobody's
 manages anyone in America.
 Don't you know that by now?

GARY
 (to Aisha, a stage
 whisper)
 Trade them in for two tickets
 to Iceland, don't tell them,
 just go soak in the hot natural
 pools...

MANOLIS (cont'd)
 I'm too old to know anything except
 how old I feel.
 (a whisper)
 Look, put the meat on, Gary's getting
 drunk on that sarcastic empty stomach.

They look at Gary, already on another beer.

MANOULIS
 I can tell he wants trouble.

EXT. BACKYARD, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Meat spits and sizzles on the hot grill. Agitated, Hector flips the chicken breasts with the tongs again and again. Aisha directs Jamie and Harry as they bring the dinning table out onto the deck.

AISHA

Watch the door frame on the left.

HECTOR

What are you doing?

AISHA

I thought we'd eat outside.

Jamie and Harry barely make it through the sliding glass door, and set the table down on the small deck. It's a snug fit.

HECTOR

It's going to be too tight, don't you think?

AISHA

It'll be fine. It's so nice out.

From the open window on the second floor we hear the kids shouting.

ADAM (O.C.)

Get off! It's not yours!

AISHA

Will you go see what your son is yelling about?

HECTOR

What about the meat?

AISHA

I'll keep an eye on it. Go.

(beat)

We REALLY can't go for two weeks, okay?

She kisses him, he sighs.

HECTOR

I know but can this day please end, so we can relax?

AISHA

That is my fondest wish, my dear.

HECTOR

Hey. Are we...?

AISHA

We're fine, we're more than fine --

HECTOR

...We are?

AISHA

Of course. We're just very busy and tired people with two kids and a houseful of agitated guests, is what we are.

INT. ADAM'S ROOM, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Rosie holds her son Hugo. Admonishes the other kids.

ROSIE

He doesn't know how to play. You have to teach him.

Hector walks in.

HECTOR

What's going on?

ADAM

He broke one of the Wii remotes!!

ROCCO

He just smashed it!

ROSIE

Well you're supposed to be gentle with him, you must have done something to upset him, guys, both of you, he's just a little boy -- you should both apologize to Hugo right now.

There is sulky silence at this proposal.

HECTOR

(to Rosie)
Hey, look --

ROSIE

No, Hugo's sweet, he never starts --

HUGO

(crying)
Boobies!

He is reaching up for his mom's breasts. Rosie breast feeds him in front of the other kids, who can not control their snickering. Hector stands there, numb and worn and taken aback in equal measure.

HECTOR

(desperate to end this.)
Adam, stop it. You've got to be nice to Hugo and share everything, okay?

Rosie nods, suckling her son.

ADAM
 But dad, if I broke something
 I'd have to apologize, and I'd
 also have to do chores to earn
 enough to replace it!

HECTOR
 Enough! God, why does this have
 to be such a production?

Hector unplugs the Wii and starts out the door with it.

HECTOR (cont'd)
 Find something else to do, guys, if
 this is so complicated, okay?

INT. FOYER, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Hector descends the steps with the Wii under his arm. Turns the corner and almost bumps straight into Charlie.

CHARLIE
 I've got pictures of everyone, like
 you asked. Do you want me to take
 shots of anything else? Like the cake?
 Or the set-up outside?

HECTOR
 (exhausted.)
 Yeah, why don't you do that. Shoot the
 cake. Shoot it in the head.

He brushes past and goes down the steps to the basement.

INT. CELLAR, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Hector bangs open the door and discovers Connie trying to twist off the top of a beer. She startles -- caught red-handed.

CONNIE
 You said I could have one, right?

Hector sets the Wii on top of a storage shelf. He grins.

HECTOR
 Of course, yeah, sure. It's a party.

He takes the bottle, opens it using the edge of a table, frat boy style.

HECTOR (cont'd)
 And. Party we must.

He hands it to her. There is a moment.

CONNIE
 Are you sad? You look a little.

HECTOR

I'm insanely happy. I don't feel
forty, I don't look it. I don't know
how it happened. I'm losing control of
the elements.

CONNIE

I thought things get easier when
you're older.

HECTOR

This is a lie they tell you to keep
you in line until its too late and
you're in deeper than you thought --

She once again, looks like a kid, her shy smile aglow.

CONNIE

Age-wise. I would say you're like
twenty-eight and a half, like, at the
most.

HECTOR

And a half?

CONNIE

You have one little half line right
here...

She touches his cheek, runs it down a small barely noticeable
crease. He breathes deeply.

CONNIE (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Adding a half to the twenty-eight.

HECTOR

(rueful)

At twenty-eight, I'd still be too old
for you.

She shakes her head. He leans into her and kisses her.

CONNIE

But you're not. No. Happy Birthday.

They kiss.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. CELLAR, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Hector and Connie kiss. He pulls away to look at her.

HECTOR

If you knew how beautiful you are
you'd be in *such* trouble.

CONNIE

Shut up.

HECTOR

No, it's true, God, un-sullied
kindness.

They kiss again. She pulls away, finally, looks at him.

HECTOR (cont'd)

I think we have to go back to the real
world. Up there.

He glances above them. He holds her hand for a moment. Studying it. She kisses his hand, and goes. He is left sitting there for a moment.

INT. KITCHEN, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

A massive spread laid out on the counter: juicy grilled chicken and lamb, spiced curry potato salad, glistening stuffed grape leaves, rice biryani, nan, yogurt sauces, fresh cut melons and pineapple, etc.

Aisha sets a final serving spoon in a bowl, just so, completing her masterpiece.

AISHA

Everyone gather around!

The guests comply. Aisha looks for Hector, who is making his way from the back.

AISHA (cont'd)

Hector, come on!

He hurries over, grinning at being ordered around.

AISHA (cont'd)

I just want to take a moment before we eat to say thank you for being here to celebrate my wonderful husband, who for twelve of his now forty years, has given me unimaginable happiness, two amazing children and another set of parents, which is something I never dreamed of when we met at college.

Koula and Manolis beam. There we go. Respect.

HECTOR

Actually, it's fourteen years, counting college dating and breakups.

Laughter as people remember the dramas.

HECTOR (cont'd)

(calling out)

No! I was the injured party, folks, she broke up with me and I didn't eat for two months! They took me off the swim team! I was in love, lovesick. Still am.

More laughter.

AISHA

Seriously -- For me, a birthday is a time to count blessings. In my work, I see how hard and fragile life can be, so I just want to thank my husband for standing beside me, always being a man, and such an honorable one.

Koula wipes away a tear of pride. Connie is looking at Hector, who looks away when he catches her stare.

AISHA (cont'd)

I love this man, and I--

ADAM

(what all are thinking)

Mom, please, stop talking, we're hungry!

More laughter. Koula thwacks her grandson on the shoulder.

KOULA

Listen to your mother.

But Aisha is smiling.

AISHA

(a gracious smile.)

No, he's right; so, without further
ado; dig in.

Hector steps back with Aisha, kisses her, and lets everyone go
before him; a perfect host even at his own birthday party.

EXT. BACKYARD, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Hector steps outside with his plate of food -- just the healthy
things. The table on the deck is already surrounded by the
other adults.

ELIZABETH

So Jamie, do they let you have input
on your story-lines?

JAMIE

Well, a little, but since my girl is
one of the head writers, I have
someone to whisper to if they've made
me take my clothes off one too many
times, or if I've discovered that yet
another girl I've kissed is *another*
half-sister.

SANDI

Well, I don't care how many siblings
you have, we can't miss it, every
Sunday night, we're glued to the set.
Even Harry, but he'd kill me if I
admitted it. He even cried when you
found your mom.

JAMIE

Which; my real or my second step-mom?

There is laughter, the laughter a star gets.

ANOUK

I did not write that episode, believe
me. God, if that show has anymore
unknown relatives popping up it'd be
enough to start their own country.

She puts her head down on the table at the thought.

SANDI

I would think that life of a TV writer
is sort of thrilling, living in an
alternate reality of constant drama.

There's just one extra seat right next to Connie. Charlie swoops in and takes it. Starts gorging himself on a lamb chop.

JAMIE

I keep telling her to quit and write her novel, I mean, this thing is gonna go another three seasons at least.

(to Anouk)

Baby, finish your book!

(to the others)

I mean, I've got the show and a movie coming out in the Fall, so things are great, she doesn't --

Hector glares at Charlie for a second. Eventually, sets his plate on the deck railing, leans back and observes Connie from a distance.

GARY

Anouk, I think Jamie is right, Christ -
- just stop squandering yourself on this un-watchable sea of warm piss, I remember what a great essayist you were, and now you write a show where the biggest problem is like 'the baby sitter was deported'.

ANOUK

I DID write that one. I am ashamed to say, and I know there's a place in Hell for me for that.

A little nervous laughter. But Sandi looks angrily at Gary and Rosie. And Harry shakes his head. Charlie whispers something to Connie and they giggle.

GARY

I mean, if it were steeped in irony, if it were a little bit self-mocking, if it made fun of itself, but it's so fucking serious about -- Douchy rich people - and they're supposed to be middle class? What? IS? That? I mean, do your bosses know it's porn?

On Hector -- watching Charlie whispering to Connie. He twitches, he wants her attention, really badly.

HARRY

(to Gary, pissed, tense)

Uh. Okay. So. Gary. And what have you ever done?

(MORE)

HARRY (cont'd)

I mean, I don't see your "art", your paintings, selling or hanging on the walls of The Whitney. I mean --

GARY

Yes, this is true, I am not prolific or even actually represented on the walls of any museums but at least I have a sense that my work is ambitiously uhm - subversive in a -

SANDI

(cutting him off)

And what's wrong with just being entertained? Right? It's not stupid or insulting, the show respects women and gays and -

On ADAM -- Coming up beside Hector.

ADAM

Dad, can I have the Wii back please?

HECTOR

God, Adam, you guys just want to mold in the dark like mushrooms, man, I said no. It's so great out.

ADAM

There's nothing to do out here, Dad!

Hector, frustrated, thinking of something to do, suddenly gets an idea. He goes over to Charlie, grabs him by the shoulder.

HECTOR

Charlie, I need you to help me out with something.

Charlie almost chokes on his bite of food.

CHARLIE

Me? Sure, what is it?

INT. CELLAR, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Hector rummages through a box of toys. Finds a wood bat and a soft baseball. Throw-down bases -- a set for kids.

EXT. BACKYARD, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

All the kids (Adam, Melissa, Rocco, Anjelica, Nick, Hugo) run around. Play, fight, sulk, etc.

Hector comes up the back steps into the yard. Tosses the baseball to Charlie who fumbles it.

HECTOR

Hey kids, listen up! Charlie's going to organize a baseball game for you.

He hands the bat to Charlie.

CHARLIE

I'm not really good at ball sports.

HECTOR

But you know how to play, right?

CHARLIE

I mean, sure. Don't you think the yard's a bit small?

HECTOR

It's fine. That's why we have this set.

He sets out the bases. Cheerful, determined, speedy. He starts walking back to the deck

CHARLIE

What if we break a window?

HECTOR

I'll pay for it. Besides, these balls are lightweight.

Hector walks up the steps to the deck. Grabs his plate of food from the railing. Looks for Connie who's no longer sitting at the table.

ON HECTOR:vvAs the argument continues. Gary has another beer open as soon as he finishes the one he's on.

GARY

I'm not going to defend my failures to you, okay? I would say that what I'm trying to do is harder than writing a fucking soap opera which is so utterly white that you're blinded whenever you turn it on --

HARRY

I hate to break it to you, but you're sorta pale, buddy, I just see guys like you, watching other people work really hard --

GARY

But carpentry is hard. I do that, I break my back, and then I paint, and I don't apologize for the crap I'm putting out in the world.

Hector finally sees Connie coming out of the house with a plate of fruit. They lock eyes.

HECTOR

(a whisper)

Can we please get away from this hipster bullshit, please, it's killing me.

She giggles and follows him away from the deck and down the steps.

GARY (O.C.)

I mean, whatever, I've had too many beers and I'm being rude and judgemental but -- I love Anouk and -

HARRY

Yup, you're right, you are rude. To everyone. And I have no idea why. What IS it, Gary? What is it that sets you off. Are you jealous of people when they seem sort of happy?

Gary reddens. Harry shrugs. Sandi puts her hand on Harry's arm, warning.

GARY

Maybe I am, yes. I know I am. Maybe I'm just wildly jealous of your perfect life, Harry; fixing Porsche's and importing parts and endlessly reducing things to --

ANOUK

(suddenly)

God, please, Jesus, can we leave it alone? Really.

She gets up and lights a smoke, away from the table.

EXT. BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

The kids are fighting over the baseball game. Charlie has his hands full trying to split the kids into teams. No one wants Hugo (the youngest).

CHARLIE

Its three strikes, okay, three and you're out. Right? Isn't it?

ROCCO

Yes. Three strikes. But he can't be on my team.

Angle on -- Hector and Connie on the steps leading down to the cellar, their backs towards the yard and baseball game.

CONNIE

This "selling-out" thing. All the adults I know are so obsessed with it. I don't even know what it means.

HECTOR

It means; 'have you followed your *dreams*, are you leading the life you *wanted* for yourself -- it means have you forgotten who you are, have you abandoned...everything you..."

He shrugs, a deep sigh, shakes his head. Thinks. She is staring at him. He shakes his head again.

HECTOR (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Have you abandoned your intentions, and made the kinds of hard chosen compromises that...

His eyes are slightly full.

CONNIE

I should have got you something for your birthday, I didn't know...

He leans close, puts his finger on her.

HECTOR

(whispers)
I want you.

He looks at her. Intense. She too, her face flushed.

ANGLE ON: The deck, things seem to be escalating.

GARY

No-- no -- I mean, I'm really interested, Harry. Tell me about the tribulations of repairing expensive European automobiles. I know the electricians on those old Jags suck, so that must be really challenging --

HARRY

This is because I refused to buy one of your paintings, right? Well, hell, fine, if it will shut you up, if it will make you feel a little better about yourself - Let me write you a check, bring one by, not too big.

More shouting from the kids. Hugo is on the verge of another tantrum. Hugo screams at Adam. Gary stands, wobbling a bit. Looks at Hugo.

GARY

(very mild, to Hugo)
Hugo, come on dude, what did we agree on? We were not going to sweat the small stuff, right?

Gary grimaces at the ineffectuality of this.

HARRY

Sports is not small stuff; it's entirely like life, so -

Lighting her cigarette and looking over the edge of the deck, Anouk sees Hector and Connie below flirting.

POV - ANOUK: Hector and Connie deep in conversation, her knee resting on his, leaning.

It TOTALLY grabs Anouk's attention. She is clocking it, big-time. She can sense what's going on here, even if it hasn't crossed the line yet.

Connie looks up guiltily, sees Anouk.

Hugo swings the bat erratically -- comes close to hitting Rocco --

ROCCO

No, you're out, man, you had three goes, you have to hand over the bat, it's not your turn anymore.

HUGO

No! No-no-no-no, NO!

Hugo swings in wide arcs, almost hitting Rocco across the face. From the deck, Harry stands up, runs down the deck steps.

He comes over to Hugo determined.

HARRY

Hugo, let go of the bat.

But Hugo now swings it wildly at HIM. At Harry. Harry grabs it anyway, stops it in its arc. Tosses it away. Picks up the kid, to look him in the eye.

HARRY (CONT'D) (cont'd)

You almost hit Rocco in the face.

Hugo kicks him. Very hard. Or as hard as a four-year-old can. And then it happens --

THE SLAP

YES. Harry has SLAPPED HUGO, slapped a child.

Slapped a child who is not even his own.

The broken taboos are piling up in this drunken mess of a barbecue.

HUGO sobs. Everything seems to stop for a moment. A long dead aired horrible infinite moment.

Then: On the deck, shocked reactions.

ELIZABETH

Harry --

Sandi is shaking, trembling, her tan turning ashen. She can't believe it.

On the cellar steps: Hector and Connie turn around to look. Confused by what's happened.

Gary roars down from the deck. Pandemonium breaks lose.

GARY

You sick, Greek bastard!

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. BACKYARD, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Hugo cries. Gary and Harry are at each others' throats.

GARY

I'll kill you, you're an animal!

HARRY

Your son was out of control! Did you not see him swinging the bat at my kid?

Gary shoves Harry.

GARY

Come on, try and slap me - see what happens.

Harry scoffs. He tries to deflect the shoves.

HARRY

No, let's not, you don't want to be pushing me.

Hector runs between the two men. Pushes them apart. Holding them apart, not easy.

HECTOR

Hey hey hey -- That's enough. Please. Please --

Aisha heads out of the house, as does Rosie.

ROSIE

What happened?

GARY

He slapped Hugo, that fucking monster -

Rosie now lunges at Harry as well. Hector is trying to keep everyone apart. Rosie picks up the sobbing Hugo. Points at Harry

ROSIE

(screaming)

That's abuse, that's abuse!

She is crying too and pushing and hitting Harry --

HARRY

I don't blame him, it's not his fault,
it's you two, two fake hippies, you
don't know how to bring up a kid --
(in Greek to Hector)
*These two fucking savages have a
fucking wild child on their hands --*

HECTOR

(to Aisha)
Get Rosie and Hugo in the house --
really -- now --

Aisha is so angry she does not know what to do -- she looks at her husband; we think she's going to fight him but he shakes his head --

HECTOR (cont'd)

Get them inside.

AISHA

(to Rosie)
Come on, let's go inside, I want to
make sure Hugo's okay.

HARRY

(in Greek)
*Of course he's okay, I didn't punch
the little shit, I'll save that for
this malaka.*

GARY

Say it in English, not in Greek, say
it in English.

HARRY

(to Hector)
I'll end this, I'm not gonna hit him,
because I don't want to cause you
anymore trouble but --

Gary comes at Harry again, full bore. Harry deflects him easily, and stands there open, shaking his head, looking at Hector.

HECTOR

Gary, please, please, I'm begging you,
go inside, go be with Hugo and Rosie,
please.

There is silence. Heavy breathing. Gary nods, starts inside. Sandi runs to him:

SANDI
 (crying)
 Please, I'm so sorry -- I'm
 so --

GARY
 That pig! What? Does he hit
 you too? Does he? Does he
 hit you too?

GARY
 (roaring)
 I want everybody's number, everybody!

He lumbers off. Koula comes to Hector.

KOULA
 (in passionate Greek)
*Your cousin wasn't wrong! It was the
 other one's fault.*

Hector looks at her -- 'Please, Please Stop, mom'.

KOULA (cont'd)
 Your cousin did nothing wrong --!

Manolis comes over, pulls her away.

MANOLIS
 (in Greek)
Stop, for God's sake, leave it!

Hector turns to Harry. There is a calming moment.

HECTOR
 Harry. You can't. You can't hit
 someone else's kid, man, you just --
 you *can't do it* -- it's so far outside
 the --

HARRY
The what? He was swinging that bat at
 my son, I had to get it away from him --
 -- and it wasn't much of a slap,
 really, and he deserved it --

Sandi is approaching, desperate.

HECTOR
 He may have deserved to be punished
 but not by you, not by you -- Jesus.
 What is wrong with you? Cousin,
 cousin, shit, man...

SANDI
 Harry, really, let's not do this, we
 should go, we should just go --
 (turns to Hector)
 I'm so sorry this happened, Hector --

HARRY

(snapping)

We don't need to apologize for
anything --

He's glaring again. On the edge. Hector closes his eyes, shakes his head.

HECTOR

Man. Look, she's right, cuz, you should -- it would be better if you just left. I mean --

(a small laugh of exhaustion)

I think the party's over. Don't you?

Harry looks at him. Takes a breath. He nods. Rocco standing nearby, is just looking at the ground. He's been crying.

HARRY

We'll go.

Hector starts inside. He climbs the stairs to the deck.

ANGLE ON: The deck. Adam is standing there. Lost.

He reaches up, and takes his father's hand.

A moment of grace. He's a little boy again. And Hector needs the touch as much as his son. We hold on them for a moment.

A moment more.

INT. LIVING ROOM, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Rosie and Aisha tend to Hugo who's still snuffling. Gary paces back and forth fuming. Rosie is still crying too, it's just a total mess. Drunk people, crying people, a crying kid, nothing is missing from this picture of "A Woman under the Influence" like chaos.

GARY

...Well what do you want to do about it!

ROSIE

The police - the police and all the witnesses - we get reports - from everyone here -

Hector steps inside, cautiously gauging the situation.

HECTOR

Hey.

All eyes turn to him and before he can say anything else, Harry, Sandi and Rocco walk in behind him.

HARRY

We're just walking through to leave.

It's a cross the gauntlet moment. Harry, Sandi and Rocco cutting through the house quickly and calmly as Gary blusters.

GARY

(yelling)

Yeah, leave but expect the cops,
because you are PAYING for this.

Rosie is crying in rage, and a sharp look passes from Aisha to Hector, as if to say "this is your fault."

EXT. FORT GREENE, BROOKLYN - DAY

Hector escorts Harry, Sandi and Rocco down the street to their Cadillac Escalade. Sandi looks grief stricken. Rocco, is unusually taciturn. They get in the car. Hector walks to the driver's side, to Harry.

HARRY

(to Hector)

That guy, you know, he'd been picking
a fight all day --

HECTOR

Harry. Stop. We're going to get
through this. Really. He's drunk, the
threats are the beer talking, mostly,
and Aisha will take care of Rosie.

HARRY

I mean, the cops? Really? Really?

HECTOR

Harry, if someone hit Rocco, I know
you man, wouldn't you be crazy mad
too? Wouldn't you do anything to
protect him?

HARRY

(in Greek)

*I'll tell you something cousin, if I
had a kid who acted like Hugo, I'd hit
him until he learned how to behave.*

Harry starts the engine. Hector, standing in the street, watches them drive away.

NARRATOR

Hector watched and suddenly there was not enough oxygen, and his future and his past seemed to him to mean nothing at all, and he had the sensation that he was a stranger, watching himself drown off a beach, a few hundred helpless yards from shore.

He suddenly clutches his chest, breathing heavily, as if he were having a heart attack. He tries to control it.

NARRATOR (cont'd)

He told himself that it will be okay, the feeling would pass. But it kept on bearing down on him. And he could not stop it.

Bends his knees, calms down. The coke, the booze, the emotional weight of this day bearing down on him like a ton of lead.

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. FORT GREENE, BROOKLYN - DAY

Hector kneeling in the street, catching his breath where we left him reeling. Finally he's okay, pulls himself back together. Sees something:

AN OLD LADY WITH A SHOPPING CART. Staring at him from right across the street.

OLD LADY

Are you okay? Do you need me to call an ambulance?

She is holding her cell-phone.

HECTOR

(gasping.)

No, I'm fine. I'm fine. Thank you. I am.

OLD LADY

You know, a glass of tea and a cookie always helps calm things down.

He nods. She goes on, after offering him a bright octogenarian smile, slowly walking down the street.

EXT. HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Connie comes outside to find Hector walking back up the steps. They have a quiet but hurried moment:

CONNIE

What kind of ass-hole --

HECTOR

Connie, we can't do this, we can't, it was a mistake, what happened -- what we've been doing --

CONNIE

I know, I know, I know, I agree --

They stare at each other - this thing has jerked them back into the real world.

HECTOR

I have a family -- it's my fault, I should never, ever have led you on and, I love Aisha

CONNIE
I love her too!

HECTOR
And we should never ever
talk about this in any way
ever --

CONNIE
I know. Hector. I know. I do too.
(beat, almost biting)
It's disgusting. What we've been
doing. It's so twisted.

His face registers something.

Regret and a little surprise. She looks at him, a bit of a
broken girl, and embarrassed, mad.

CONNIE (cont'd)
You're old and you look weird and I
don't know why you bothered inviting
me.

HECTOR
I'm so sorry. I am.

She stands there, nodding. Tears.

CONNIE
Can you get Charlie, we should leave,
okay?
(Imploring)
Please, Hector. I don't want to go
back inside right now...

INT. FOYER, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Charlie fidgets -- uncertain what to do. Looks relieved when
Hector walks through the front door. He runs over.

CHARLIE
Hector, I'm so, so sorry.

HECTOR
No, Jesus, Charlie, it wasn't your
fault, really.

CHARLIE
(in tears)
I just couldn't handle them, it was --

HECTOR
Listen, it's okay, there's nothing you
could have done, really, dude, look,
Connie's outside, waiting for you, you
guys just go home, okay?

Charlie nods, biting his lip.

INT. LIVING ROOM, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Anouk, Aisha, Gary, Jamie in conversation about what to do next.

ANOUK

Look, let me call a car service, okay,
and get you home, easily, you can't
take the subway, really --

GARY

We don't need a damn car service, God.

HECTOR

Let me drive you guys home, please.
Really, my car is right out front, it
would be so much easier, it would make
me feel a lot better --

ROSIE

I don't want anything from you right
now, Hector. I mean -- I saw you out
there -- Were you defending him? Your
cousin?

HECTOR

God no. Defending him? HOW?

Aisha looks at Hector. He just stands there. Rosie and Gary get up, Gary picks up sniffing Hugo.

ROSIE

We can get ourselves home, we have to
get Hugo where he feels safe. Right,
Hugo? Right? It's not safe here. Is
it?

He shakes his head. He starts suckling at his mother's breast again. It's not to be believed.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Poor little -- Hugo -- he's
traumatized --

GARY

We need to get home --

AISHA

Please call me; I need to know you got
home safely.

Rosie says nothing, starts out. Aisha follows. She is trying to do SOMETHING to make it better.

AISHA (cont'd)
I'm so terribly sorry, Rosie --

ANOUK
(quietly)
We'll follow you out.

She and Jamie rise. They all are heading to the foyer. She hugs Hector, no words. Just two sophisticated people who've seen some shit and done some drugs and have a history and are a little freaked out.

It's that kind of hug.

GARY
We really are going to press charges, Hector. Your cousin. He is through. He is done. He's going away for a very long time. Greek people may be allowed to do that but this is --
(outraged, growling)
We're not in fucking Greece --

Hector watches them all leave.

INT. KITCHEN, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Koula cleans dishes while Manolis dries. We can hear the front door slam closed behind Rosie, Gary, et al.

KOULA
What's the big deal? The brat deserved it.

ELIZABETH
No, this is very dangerous -- you don't hit my kids do you?

KOULA
(imperious)
Your kids are perfect, somehow, I don't know what you do!

HECTOR
You can't hit someone else's kid, God, any kid for that matter -- why do you think that's okay? I don't get you!

KOULA
Because if parents are not able to control their children, who will? Someone has to!

MANOLIS
Please, Koula, enough. I am
begging you.

KOULA
(in Greek)
What? What? We smacked the
kids around and they're
wonderful, they didn't
suffer from it, I see on
Dr. Phil show, it's child
abuse, all these years --
(back to English)
But in America there's no
discipline, there's no -
(searching for the
right word.)
-- organization --

Aisha returns, eyes ablaze.

AISHA
Did you defend him?

HECTOR
No -- God. No. He was wrong, one
hundred percent, dead wrong, no. I was
trying to get them out of here...

Hector looks stricken.

AISHA
Your cousin. He ruined it. This day,
all of it, everything.

HECTOR
What you did was so great -- you're so
busy -- you have so little time -- and
you're such a great wife and mom and I
love you, I really do and I'm so sorry
about this.

She is almost in tears. So is he. Hector goes to her, tries to
sooth her.

HECTOR (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Everything will calm down, everyone
will take a breath and it will just be
--

MANOLIS
(soothing)
Kids, it's going to be okay, really.
Everyone needs to rest.

AISHA

No, no, they really are going to call the cops, and I hope Harry goes to jail! I really do! That boy could be permanently trumatized. I'm sorry, I know he's your nephew and you practically raised him, but he has a horrible dangerous temper and --

She stops. What is she about to say.

AISHA (cont'd)

And it can not stand.

Hector sighs, and steps away. Manolis and Koula watching. Now what?

HECTOR

No. It can't. No.

(beat)

I'm gonna clean up the deck, okay?

EXT. BACKYARD, HECTOR AND AISHA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Hector steps through the open sliding glass door and onto the deck. Sees Adam, Melissa, and their cousins Anjelica and Nick still playing with the baseball and bat.

Hector watches as Adam teaches Melissa how to hit.

ADAM

No, you want to swing it so it's even with the ground.

She takes a swing with the bat.

MELISSA

Like this?

ADAM

Yeah, that's better.

Hector smiles at his son and daughter -- they're good kids. Walks down the steps into the yard. Adam turns towards him, expecting the worst.

ADAM (CONT'D) (cont'd)

We didn't do anything wrong, did we dad?

HECTOR

Oh Adam, not a thing wrong, pal, nothing. No, no! Please!

He gives Adam a hug and a kiss on the head.

HECTOR (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Want me to pitch for you guys?

He picks up a baseball.

HECTOR (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Let's use a real one, give it a real
turbo boosted, kick ass rocket to the
moon swing, hit it in the sweet spot,
send it up to the stars. To celebrate
life, like fireworks!

ADAM
Okay.

MELISSA
Can I go first?

HECTOR
Sure, sweetie. Stand back.

Hector takes the ball as Melissa backs up.

HECTOR (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Ready?

Melissa nods. Hector lightly tosses the ball underhand.

Melissa nails it. Pops the ball high, fast and long -- where it
SMASHES through the second story window of the brownstone.
Oops.

Broken glass pours down.

Melissa flushes bright red. Hector grimaces -- and is also a
little proud.

HECTOR (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Don't worry, it's all okay

From inside we can hear Aisha's muffled yell:

AISHA (O.C.)
Hector!

HECTOR
I hope.

NARRATOR (O.S.)

And standing there, looking up at the broken glass, Hector smiled - finally something on this, his fourteen-thousand-six hundred and ninth day of his life, matched what he was feeling inside. And so began Hector's middle years. And with his children looking up to him, he suddenly remembered Dante's Inferno.

HECTOR

"...In the middle of the journey of our life, I came to a dark wood where the straight way was lost..."

The kids look up at him, confused, as he bends down to pick up broken glass.

FADE TO BLACK.

END SHOW