

LESS THAN ZERO

Episode 101

"Disappear Here"

Written by

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Based on "Less Than Zero" by Bret Easton Ellis

OVER BLACK we hear the OMINOUS HISS OF AIR RECYCLING, MUFFLED DRUNK CONVOS, the ROAR of a JET ENGINE: then we SMASH TO --

INT. FIRST-CLASS CABIN - JET - DAY (D1)

CLAY. He's cute but not hunky, 19, and PASSED-OUT. He's wearing a white button-down with the top two buttons open, A gray argyle sweater vest, blue blazer, jeans -- but all we notice now is DROOL at the corner of his lolling mouth. We hear an anesthetic *BING-BONG*, and then, from overhead --

PILOT (O.S.)
Good afternoon. We're about to
begin our descent into Los Angeles.

-- and then the twinkly, opening notes of "I'll Be Home For Christmas" as recorded by Cristy Lane in 1983 begin to play as the Pilot's VOICE continues to drone on in the b.g. --

PILOT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
If you look to your right, you'll
be able to see smoke to the north
in the mountains, that's those wild-
fires you've been hearing about...

-- Clay's eyes struggle open and WE SMASH TO A TITLE CARD --

LESS THAN ZERO

-- and then, just before the lyric starts, we SMASH BACK TO --

EXT. LOS ANGELES - DAY (D1)

-- A JET'S-EYE POV descending over Inglewood, Los Angeles --

CRISTY LANE (V.O.)
(singing)
*I'll be home for Christmas. You can
plan on me. Please have snow...*

...and then we see LAX up ahead, long before the Gateway Pylon Project: no towers, no novocaine lights, just dry, gold, palm-flecked grid, then the 405, then RUNWAY.

CRISTY LANE (V.O.)
(singing)
*...and mistletoe, and presents on
the tree.*

CLOSE ON THE FRONT WHEEL, TOUCHING DOWN. Chyron: **1983.**

EXT. TARMAC - LAX - DAY (D1)

Clay descends the stairs, his BLAZER and OVERCOAT folded over his arm, looking a bit vulnerable, squinting in the sun.

CRISTY LANE
(singing)
*Christmas Eve will find me where
the love light gleams...*

INT. TERMINAL - LAX - DAY (D1)

Clay walks through the terminal, decorated for Christmas, against the tide of VACATIONERS headed for their gates. He's looking at them a bit like he's Martin Guerre -- and he is.

CRISTY LANE (V.O.)
(singing)
I'll be home for Christmas...

Clay notices SOMETHING, looks askance. REVEAL: a HUGE ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE NEW TRUMP TOWER, with TRUMP in front of the building, looking down at camera, scowling "masterfully."

CRISTY LANE (V.O.)
(singing)
...if only in my dreams.

CLAY steps onto the escalator, gives Trump'S image a look of healthy doubt and descends. OFF TRUMP: SCOWLING MASTERFULLY --

EXT. BAGGAGE CLAIM TERMINAL - LAX - DAY (D1)

-- THE SONG DROPS ABRUPTLY OUT as Clay steps out the door into the loud, Haskell Wexler-style, sun-flared world of LAX, a hungover person's nightmare. He crosses traffic and then lands with his DUFFEL at the SECOND PICKUP CURB and squints again in the sun, looking only slightly more awake, until a CONVERTIBLE approaches with the Go-Go's "We Got The Beat" blasting. Clay puts on a smile for **BLAIR, 19: pretty, sexy but not slutty, smart but not intellectual**. She pulls up.

BLAIR
Hey, handsome.

Clay gives her a discomfited smile, tosses his BAG in back --

CLAY
You look different.

-- and gets in the car beside her and shuts the door.

BLAIR

It's been four months.

She gives him a QUICK KISS. He accepts it a bit awkwardly and recoils a little. She clocks this, looks down at him --

BLAIR (CONT'D)

What happened to you...?

-- and he follows her gaze down to his MUD-FLECKED JEANS.

CLAY

New Hampshire.

BLAIR

Welcome back.

She offers SUNGLASSES. He takes them, puts them on in an unintentionally ceremonial way, like he's donning the 3D glasses he'll need for a monster movie, and sinks down into his seat, pure LA passenger. Blair hits the gas. OFF CLAY --

I/E. BLAIR'S CAR/405 FREEWAY - DAY (D1)

Blair heedlessly swerves into BUSY TRAFFIC on the 405 with Clay playing it cool beside her. "Our Lips Are Sealed" is now blasting on her car stereo, adding to the noise of the wind.

BLAIR

Everyone's so afraid to merge.

CLAY

What...?

BLAIR

People are afraid to merge on freeways in Los Angeles!

She swerves into the fast lane, barely avoiding an accident.

CLAY

Can't imagine why!

Blair laughs. "THE NEW WORLD" BY X TAKES OVER AS SCORE, FILLING OUR EARS AS CAMERA RISES BEHIND BLAIR'S CAR AS IT SPEEDS AWAY, AND WE TAKE IN BOTH SIDES OF THE PACKED 405 WITH SMOKE FROM WILDFIRES VISIBLE IN THE HILLS UP AHEAD --

I/E. BLAIR'S CAR/1983 LOS ANGELES - DAY (D1)

-- CREDITS ROLL as Clay takes in an L-A we haven't seen in years. Cressidas, Maximas, Camaros.

Billboards for Eddie Money, Bullock's, Cher, Michael Jackson's *Thriller*. A NUTJOB hoists a sign: THE END IS NEAR. It's ALL amateurishly glitzy, impersonal, sun-bleached, merciless, CHRISTMASY. Clay watches it all with a jaundiced eye from behind his SUNGLASSES. After the last credit rolls --

I/E. BLAIR'S CAR/SUNSET AND CRESCENT HEIGHTS - DAY (D1)

-- Blair's pulls up, stops at a RED LIGHT, catching Clay up.

BLAIR

Buckley's been closed for a week since the fires started. My party's tonight. What else can I tell you?
(then, to Clay)
I'm pretty sure Muriel's anorexic.

Clay clocks: ON THE CORNER, FLOWERS; a makeshift monument.

CLAY

What's that...?

BLAIR

(sickened)
Ugh. Some poor kid got strangled; tortured up in Laurel Canyon. They dumped him there, I guess, dead.

CLAY

Jesus. When...?

BLAIR

Couple weeks ago. They still haven't found who did it. Whoever it was just kicked him out of the car right there and kept driving.

Clay narrows his eyes at the flowers from behind his shades and takes in breath. All the exigencies of LA coming back.

BLAIR (CONT'D)

Wanna come home with me? My dad and Jared won't be back 'til tonight.

CLAY

(still looking at flowers)
Who's Jared...?

BLAIR

His new boyfriend.

Clay shifts uneasily in his seat; takes too long to answer. Blair realizes he's not eager to fuck right now and covers.

BLAIR (CONT'D)
Or if you have to get home...

CLAY
Yeah, I should probably go home.

ON CLAY, realizing he's left Blair feeling unwanted. BEAT.
CLAY sees the LIGHT CHANGE and sees Blair's preoccupied.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Not gettin' any greener.

Blair shakes off the weird moment, looks at the light.

BLAIR
Sorry.

-- and peels out. OFF BLAIR -- PIQUED --

EXT. CLAY'S MOM'S HOUSE - DAY (D1)

Blair pulls up to the GATE; stops; doesn't kill the engine.
Her manner is more brusque. She's fine to drop him off now.

BLAIR
Here ya go, stranger.

CLAY
Thanks.

Clay kisses her quickly, she accepts it in much the same way
he accepted hers earlier. He gets out, grabs his bag, SLAM --

BLAIR
Are you coming tonight...?

CLAY
Wouldn't miss it.

They trade a BRIEF LOOK; time and distance HAS taken a toll.

BLAIR
It's good you came home, Clay.
(a gentle stab)
You look pale.

She drives away. OFF CLAY -- GUILTY, YES, BUT ALSO RELIEVED --

INT. CLAY'S MOM'S HOUSE - FOYER - DAY (D1)

-- Clay enters, sniffs, smells something strong, looks ahead of him through the house and sees A HUGE FAKE CHRISTMAS TREE, obviously decorated by decorators. Shuts the front door.

CLAY
Anybody home...?

No response.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Thank fucking God.

He sees an AEROSOL CAN OF PINE SCENT. Picks it up. Sprays it. Smells it. YUP. He sets down the SPRAY CAN and wanders into --

INT. CLAY'S MOM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - SECONDS LATER (D1)

-- he sees, ON THE TABLE, a POSTMARKED CARD ENVELOPE which is addressed to him, and a handwritten note: JULIAN called. OFF CLAY as he SMILES -- AS CREEPY MINIMALIST SCORE RISES --

INT. CLAY'S MOM'S HOUSE - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY (D1)

MOVING LIKE A KUBRICKIAN GHOST, WE FOLLOW Clay (ENVELOPE in hand, BAG in the other) as he moves deeper into the house, up the stairs up to the hallway. We follow as he walks past and looks at FAMILY PICTURES and SOME EMPTY LIGHTER SPACES ON THE WALLS where pictures once were (no Dad); he comes to a DOOR in the highest farthest reaches of the house, a teen boy's aerie with a stolen SLOW CHILDREN AT PLAY ROAD SIGN on it. He sees it, loathes it a bit, opens the door and enters --

INT. CLAY'S ROOM - DAY (D1)

-- a perfect recreation of an '82 L-A high school senior's room. He throws his bag down. On the white walls are posters for *The Shining*, *Purple Rain*; LP's stacked in MILK CRATES; a flyer from a Human Sexual Response show at the Troubadour. He drops his bag, tosses the ENVELOPE on the bed, goes to his desk, opens the drawer, looks for SOMETHING, finds it gone --

CLAY
Shit.

-- and then goes to the LANDLINE PHONE by the head of the bed, dials, waits: RING -- RING -- RING -- as he waits for answer, he looks at A BULLETIN BOARD, upon which there are FLYERS FOR ROCK SHOWS and PHOTOS, one of which shows Blair and **JULIAN WELLS** with Clay on GRADUATION DAY in SUITS AND MORTARBOARDS. As the sound of WAVES CRASHING begin to seep in, and Clay's focus tightens on JULIAN, PUSH IN ON CLAY --

EXT. EL MATADOR BEACH - DAWN (FLASHBACK)

Clay and Julian, both in suits, no ties, both worn ragged by a long night, sit on the beach, sharing a JOINT, laughing.

JULIAN

That just always freaked me out how they swallowed the ocean, all with those big bellies, lined up, I was, like, "Get that book away from me!"

CLAY

I thought that was the cool part.

JULIAN

You would.

CLAY

What does that mean...?

JULIAN

Nothing, just -- you would.

Julian laughs and takes a big hit, then hands it over.

CLAY

So what are you gonna do, Julian?

JULIAN

When?

CLAY

This summer. This fall.

JULIAN

I don't know. Surf...?

Julian and Clay trade a look and BURST OUT LAUGHING.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

LEARN to surf...? Fuck off.

Clay hands the joint to Julian.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

I heard the other day, Clay,
there's gonna be a wave one day,
Clay, when the Big One hits, it's
gonna roll in a hundred feet high
and take out the whole city, dude,
all of LA, the whole valley all the
way to Riverside and the undertow's
gonna pull it ALL into the ocean,
rip it right off the bedrock.

(off Clay's look)

The coast's gonna be up in Big
Bear. Where we're sitting will be
the bottom of the fucking ocean.

CLAY

You should come with me to Camden.

JULIAN

College...? No fucking way!

CLAY

They accepted you.

JULIAN

I don't accept them! I don't accept
any of it, dude, the whole system.

CLAY

(amused, playing along)
What do you accept...?

JULIAN

Me! You. Freedom. Life. No.
(off Clay's look)
What?

CLAY

I just wish you'd come with me.

JULIAN

(beat; a fatalistic laugh)
I'd miss the wave.

Julian sucks the last from the joint, burns his fingers, then
tosses it away. OFF CLAY, RESIGNED, THEN WE SMASH BACK TO --

INT. CLAY'S ROOM - DAY (D1)

-- where Clay is still waiting for someone to answer. RING.
Getting no answer, he finally hangs up, walks to his desk,
upon which is A PILE OF COMIC BOOKS with a NOTE on them that
says, in the same handwriting, "Do you still want these?"

He considers keeping them, then slides them off into the trash, swivels around with a sense of choreography and flops on the bed, takes up the ENVELOPE and opens it. He takes out AN INVITATION TO BLAIR'S PARTY. It says, "FUCK CHRISTMAS!" He opens it, reads the handwritten note: "Let's fuck Christmas together." He grimaces at this: suddenly feeling like more of a dick for not going to her house. Ah well. Too late.

He tosses it aside and then looks as if caught, but by whom? He looks up at: ELVIS COSTELLO, in his promo poster for the album *TRUST*. He and Elvis trade a look. Then, with a buzz of static impatience -- *Where to go? What to do? Where body how?* -- he rises and goes to the window, looks through the blinds at: PALM TREES bending in the HIGH WIND. ON CLAY, DAUNTED, as we prelap the metronomic vamp of "Jennifer" by Eurythmics --

EXT. MULHOLLAND DRIVE - NIGHT (N1)

-- Clay speeds his convertible Mazda RX-7 along the curves, speeding above the luminous grid of the valley far below. The STRONG WIND whips the treetops like the wind in "Blow Up."

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT (N1)

Clay pulls up to a mansion decorated blue for Chanukah. His stereo plays "Saved By Zero," by The Fixx. Out walks **DANIEL, 19**, in SUNGLASSES and LEATHER GLOVES. He gets in the car.

CLAY

Why are you wearing gloves?

DANIEL

I don't want to spend the whole night explaining my scars.

CLAY

Gloves are weirder than scars.

DANIEL

Will your dealer be at this thing?

CLAY

Probably, yeah.

DANIEL

Good.

Daniel turns up the music without asking for permission and Clay peels out. OFF THE RX-7, FROM THE BACK, SPEEDING AWAY --

EXT. BLAIR'S HOUSE - NIGHT (N1)

Establishing. CARS LINE THE STREET. LOUD MUSIC FROM WITHIN.

EXT. BLAIR'S FRONT DOOR - NIGHT (N1)

Clay watches Daniel pick at his gloves, near his wrists.

CLAY

What are you doing?

DANIEL

They keep sticking to the wires.

CLAY

Wires...?

DANIEL

The stitches. The cloth inside the gloves keeps catching on the wires.

Clay detachedly watches Daniel struggle with his gloves until the door SWINGS open revealing Blair, looking FABULOUS in a black leather jacket and matching pants. She's BAREFOOT.

BLAIR

(to Clay)

Hey, gorgeous.

She sees Daniel. MILD NEEDLE SCRATCH, but she smiles through.

BLAIR (CONT'D)

Well, who's this...?

CLAY

Daniel, Blair. Blair, Daniel.

BLAIR

Merry Christmas.

DANIEL

You too. Thanks for having me.

Blair gives Clay a look: "Why exactly did you bring him...?"

CLAY

He goes to Camden. He's here for the break at his cousin's in B-H.

BLAIR

Oh, well, come on in, come on in.
(glancing at the dark)

(MORE)

BLAIR (CONT'D)

The coyotes have been snatching up
all the cats around here lately.

The boys walk in past her --

DANIEL

Seriously...?

BLAIR

Yeah, apparently they've come down
to get away from the fires.

-- after Daniel's by, Blair shuts the door, pulls Clay close:

BLAIR (CONT'D)

(whispers, re: Daniel)
Why is he wearing gloves...?

CLAY

Don't ask.

BLAIR

(hugging his arm)
Interesting.

CLAY

Julian here yet...?

BLAIR

No, but Trent's looking for you.

CLAY

(sarcastic and flat)
Trent. Terrific.

Clay moves into the party. OFF BLAIR -- as the subtlest of
disenchanted looks passes like a cloud over her face and then
gives way to a HOSTESS SMILE PERFECT FOR PUBLIC CONSUMPTION --

INT. BLAIR'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (N1)

As "Christmas Wrapping" by The Waitresses blasts as source,
Clay, Daniel, and Blair walk up to **TRENT, 20, a hunky male
model, a friend of Clay's**, wearing A RED/GREEN PLAID SCARF.

TRENT

Hey, Clay, my man!

CLAY

Trent!

TRENT

How are ya, babes?

CLAY

Great.

(intro'ing Daniel)

Trent, Daniel. Daniel, Trent.

Trent offers Daniel his hand. Daniel shakes it gently and releases, not wanting to trouble his stitches any further.

TRENT

(to Daniel)

Where do you go to school?

DANIEL

Camden, with Clay. How about you?

TRENT

UCLA. Or as the Orientals round here like to call it, U-C-R-A.

Trent does his best impression of Mickey Rooney in "Breakfast At Tiffany's." Daniel nods, coolly amused. Clay watches this.

BLAIR

And I go to the University of Spoiled Children.

DANIEL

What's that...?

TRENT

U-S-C.

BLAIR

JEW-S-C!

Blair and Trent both laugh. Clay witnesses this repartee like someone in a country where they don't remember the language. The DOORBELL RINGS again. Blair, as she heads to the door --

BLAIR (CONT'D)

Tell me if the punch is okay!

DANIEL

(to Clay, needing it)

I'll get the punch.

(then, to Trent)

You want some, Trent...?

TRENT

No, thanks.

Daniel goes, leaving Clay with Trent. Trent looks at him --

TRENT (CONT'D)
You look pale, Clay.

CLAY
I've heard.

-- and then reaches in his pocket and hands Clay a CARD.

CLAY (CONT'D)
What's this...?

TRENT
A tanning salon.

CLAY
Thanks.

TRENT
Yeah. It's not artificial lighting
or anything, you don't have to rub
Vitamin E all over your bod, it's
this thing is called an uva bath --

CLAY
(frowns; knows it's wrong)
Uva...?

TRENT
Yeah, uva. They dye your skin.

LOUD SINGING rises up and Clay turns his head to see: **THREE PRETTY USC BOYS** by the Christmas tree singing along with the chorus of "Christmas Wrapping." A **FOURTH ONE, NOT SINGING -- GRIFFIN** -- gives Clay a look, a little nod of the head. Clay tries to figure out HOW he knows him until Trent grabs Clay by the shoulder and wrenches him back into the conversation --

TRENT (CONT'D)
I'm telling you, Clay, it works.

CLAY
What, how what works...?

TRENT
The uva bath! The CARD, dude!

CLAY
Oh. Yeah. Uva. Of course.

Clay looks down at the card: SANTA MONICA TANNING SALON.

CLAY (CONT'D)
(acting interested)
They dye your skin.

TRENT

Right.

CLAY

I'll check it out. Thanks.

Clay pockets the card.

TRENT

But don't tell anyone I go.

CLAY

Where...?

TRENT

The uva place! Don't tell!

CLAY

Oh, yeah. No. Don't worry.

TRENT

Keep it between us.

CLAY

Totally.

TRENT

Cool.

Daniel returns with PUNCH, gives a CUP to Clay, who DOWNS IT.

CLAY

(to Trent)

Do you know if Julian's coming...?

TRENT

No. I hope he does, though, soon, I need some coke, dude, bad.

DANIEL

(to Clay)

Is Julian your dealer?

CLAY

No, just a friend.

TRENT

Julian's MY dealer.

CLAY

He's dealing full-time now?

TRENT

When he fuckin' shows up, yeah.

DANIEL
Long as somebody's got one.

TRENT
I know, right?
(then)
Nice gloves.

DANIEL
Thanks.

ON CLAY, as it sinks in: Julian's a FULL-TIME DEALER NOW.

INT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN BLAIR'S HOUSE - NIGHT (N1)

As **ALANA, 19, Blair's dark-haired, hot mess, slutty friend,** leads the boys through the party, she performs for Daniel.

ALANA
I'm serious, Clay. Unless it rains tomorrow, Buckley's gonna be toast.

CLAY
Let it burn.

ALANA
Clay. You're such a beastly.

The guys trade a look re: Alana's trying-too-hard vocab.

CLAY
(to Alana)
Blair said Muriel's anorexic...?

ALANA
She's not. She's just thin.

CLAY
Blair seemed pretty worried.

ALANA
Blair's a really sweet person,
that's why you're so lucky, Clay,
to have her. She's the last one.

They step outside --

EXT. BLAIR'S HOUSE - POOL - NIGHT (N1)

-- and Alana spins and focuses fully on Daniel.

ALANA
YOU look just like David Bowie.

DANIEL
Thanks.

ALANA
Tell me you're left-handed.

DANIEL
Afraid not.

CLAY
Alana likes left-handed guys.

ALANA
Who look like David Bowie.

CLAY
And live in the Colony.

ALANA
Clay is a total beastly.

DANIEL
I know. He's a beastly. Totally.

Alana giggles at Daniel's mockery of her and teeters a bit.

CLAY
(to Alana, a joke)
Have you had any punch...?

ALANA
Darling, I AM the punch.

Then Alana notices something, rolls her eyes, BUZZ-KILLED --

ALANA (CONT'D)
Oh GOD.

Clay turns. CLAY'S POV: **A TANNED MAN IN HIS 50'S** with his arm around a **BEAUTIFUL MUSCULAR BOY-TOY**. BACK WITH OUR GROUP --

DANIEL
Is that your dealer...?

CLAY
(annoyed by Daniel)
No, would you relax about the --

DANIEL
-- it was just a question --

CLAY

-- it's Blair's dad and...

ALANA

...Jared. Her Dad's new boyfriend.
(after a look at Dad)
I mean he's going to Death Valley
next week on location for a MONTH,
why he can't wait until then...?

CLAY

(trying to segue)
It's a party.

Alana turns back and looks at Clay.

ALANA

Whadja get Blair for Christmas?

It's clear from Clay's look he hasn't gotten Blair anything.

CLAY

A surprise.

ALANA

It better be good. You've been an
absolute beasty, Clay, a BEASTY!

Over Clay's shoulder, Alana sees someone and WAVES, SHOUTS --

ALANA (CONT'D)

-- CLIFF!
(to Clay)
Cliff's here. I gotta go.
(to Daniel, coquettish)
LOVE those gloves, by the way.

DANIEL

Yeah, you too.

Alana bounces off into the party.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Who the fuck was she...?

CLAY

Alana. Blair's best friend.
(then)
Those gloves are really working out
for you. Never woulda guessed.

DANIEL

Can we leave...?

(off Clay's hesitation)

I really wanna find some coke.

Clay narrows his eyes, about to make the call to leave or not leave, and sees: BLAIR PLAYING HOSTESS. ON CLAY: APPRECIATING HER IN A MELANCHOLY WAY, but then there's a CRASH! Clay's gaze pivots to: TRENT AND THE USC BOYS, they've knocked over the tree! LAUGHTER! MAYHEM! Blair rushes into the fray to help. OFF CLAY -- this all just became a little too much to get in the middle of -- "Avalon" by Roxy Music starts --

I/E. CLAY'S CAR/SUNSET PLAZA - NIGHT (N1)

FROM BEHIND THE CAR, echoing the hallway shot from the house: Clay and Daniel wade through HEAVY TRAFFIC. IN THE CAR: they drive in BORED SILENCE. Daniel is seething with ANTSINESS.

DANIEL

Where does this Rip guy hang...?

CLAY

Sometimes he's at the Polo.

They trade a look. Daniel wants to try. Clay concedes, a bit wearily, shoots his arm out the window and makes a U-TURN --

INT. POLO LOUNGE - NIGHT (N1)

Clay and Daniel drink at the bar. Both wearing SUNGLASSES. It's clear from the vibe they haven't found Rip. Or anything.

DANIEL

Maybe call what's his name.

CLAY

Who...?

DANIEL

Julian.

Clay doesn't want to call Julian under those auspices.

CLAY

No.

(after a beat)

I wouldn't even know where to call to find him, anyway. Not this late.

BEAT. Clay drinks his drink. Daniel's countenance darkens.

DANIEL
I want to go back.

CLAY
Where...?

VERY LONG PAUSE. Clay watches Daniel and slowly becomes a little unnerved by how long Daniel is being silent. Finally Daniel finishes his drink, pushes his sunglasses up --

DANIEL
I don't know. Just back.

OFF CLAY -- as "Sugar Hiccup" by Cocteau Twins plays --

EXT. INTERSTITIAL SHOTS OF LA - NIGHT (N1)

Time passing in ghostly fashion, the camera a restless and malevolent spirit, moving over the face of the sparkly city.

EXT. BLAIR'S HOUSE - NIGHT (N1)

ALL THE CARS ARE GONE. It's LATE. Blair calls out --

BLAIR
Smoky...? Smoky...?

-- finds NO CAT -- SHIT -- then reluctantly shuts the door.

INT. BLAIR'S FOYER - NIGHT (N1)

Blair calls out again.

BLAIR
Smoky...?

INT. BLAIR'S HOUSE - NIGHT (N1)

Inside, she wanders through the party wreckage.

BLAIR
Smoky...? Smoky...?

Finding no cat, she wanders out to --

EXT. POOL - BLAIR'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS (N1)

-- where she sees: Dad and Jared making out in the pool. She debates whether to interrupt, then does so with annoyance.

BLAIR

Dad, have you seen Smoky...?

DAD

Not recently, kiddo.

BEAT. Blair, seen from DAD'S POOL POV, goes inside and slides the door shut, calls out again for Smoky. REVERSE ON BLAIR'S DAD, watching his daughter vanish up the circular stairs.

JARED

(cynically amused)

Who's "Smoky"? Her boyfriend...?

DAD

No, he's her cat.

Jared reaches out with a finger to pull Dad's attention back to him, but Blair's Dad reflexively slaps Jared's hand away.

DAD (CONT'D)

Don't do that.

An ugly note in their relationship sounds: BONG.

JARED

(not sorry at all)

Sorry.

Jared climbs out of the pool, NAKED, and goes to the bar cart, pours a drink. OFF DAD -- CAUGHT BETWEEN WORLDS --

INT. UPSTAIRS - BLAIR'S HOUSE - NIGHT (N1)

FROM BEHIND (AS WITH CLAY) we follow Blair on her mission, looking for Smoky. She walks past a DEN where her mother is drugged, staring at a Soloflex commercial on TV.

BLAIR

Mom, have you seen Smoky...?

Her mother's bleary eyes vaguely see her --

BLAIR'S MOM

No, why...?

BLAIR

(with an eyeroll)

No reason, just --

-- and Blair walks out, mumbling to herself --

BLAIR (CONT'D)
-- just trying to run the fucking
family and keep the cat alive.
(after a beat, teenager-y)
No big deal.

She goes into --

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - BLAIR'S HOUSE - NIGHT (N1)

-- walks past THE PERFECTLY-MADE FOUR-POSTER BED, smacks
around for Smoky in the downy piles of comforter, calls out --

BLAIR
Smoky...?

-- and enters the BATHROOM --

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - BLAIR'S HOUSE - NIGHT (N1)

-- where she opens the medicine cabinet, finds her mother's
TRANQUILIZERS, shakes out two, takes them both and puts the
vial away, shuts the cabinet, runs water, scoops, swallows --

INT. BLAIR'S BEDROOM - BLAIR'S HOUSE - NIGHT (N1)

-- and walks in and finds Alana on her bed, staring up.

ALANA
(moaning theatrically)
WHY, Blair, why do we DO this...?

BLAIR
Have you seen Smoky?

ALANA
No, and I better not, either.
(after a deep breath)
Remember in 9th grade when he
scratched my nose...? I coulda been
a model if it wasn't for that cat.

BLAIR
I bet someone let him out. Shit.

ALANA
Can I stay over? If my parents see
me like this, they'll send me back
to Hazelden. I can't do that again.
(getting no answer)
Can I or not, Blair?

BLAIR

Yeah, stay over, whatever!

Blair flops onto the bed, still worried about Smoky. BEAT.

ALANA

I blew Cliff.

BLAIR

Who's Cliff...?

ALANA

That friend of Julian's...?

(after a beat, turns)

Where's Clay...?

BLAIR

He left.

ALANA

Are you guys on or off or what?

BLAIR

Ask Clay. I have no idea.

ALANA

Does he know about Warren...?

BLAIR

I haven't told him.

ALANA

Maybe Warren did...?

BLAIR

I don't think so.

ALANA

I mean, weren't they friends once?

BLAIR

They don't talk anymore.

BEAT.

ALANA

Whatever. You guys will get back together. You always do. It's fate.

BEAT. Blair hops off the bed, looks under it for the cat. He's not there. She gets back onto the bed, lays back. UGH.

ALANA (CONT'D)
(after a beat, fading)
Muriel checked into Cedars.

BLAIR
Who told you that...?

ALANA
Cliff.

Alana PASSES OUT. OFF BLAIR: WORRIED: as "Thriller" kicks in.

INT. CLAY'S ROOM - NIGHT (N1)

The DIGITAL ALARM CLOCK reads 3:40 AM. Clay is on his bed, being bored by Michael Jackson's *Thriller* video. After a few moments, he MUTES the TV with the remote, grabs the phone and dials. It RINGS. And then A SLEEPY MAN answers.

MAN (O.S.)
(sleepy)
Hello...?

Before Clay can overcome the guilt of calling so late --

MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(intensely)
Whoever you are, stop calling this house or I'm calling the police.

CLAY
Mr. Wells, it's Clay.

MR. WELLS (O.S.)
Oh. Clay. Sorry. Are you the one who's been calling and calling --

CLAY
No, I just called once, at five.

MR. WELLS (O.S.)
Oh.
(after a beat)
Goddamn phone won't stop ringing.

CLAY
Is Julian home, Mr. Wells?

MR. WELLS (O.S.)
No.

CLAY
Oh. Well, sorry, then.

MR. WELLS

Julian doesn't really stay here at the house much anymore, Clay.

CLAY

Where's he living...?

MR. WELLS (O.S.)

Clay, I have no idea.

BEAT. It lands on Clay that his friend's life has changed.

CLAY

When I find him, do you want me to tell him to give you a call...?

(getting no response)

Mr. Wells...?

MR. WELLS (O.S.)

Good night, Clay.

CLAY

'Night.

CLICK. Clay looks at the silent TV: MJ's A ZOMBIE. OFF CLAY --

INT. SCANDIA - DAY (D2)

The classic Sunset Blvd restaurant. The RICH AND FAMOUS eat Scandinavian food as "Deck The Halls" by Mannheim Steamroller plays over speakers. Clay and his MOTHER sit opposite each other, both in SUNGLASSES. She reaches for her wine with a shaky hand and finds the glass empty. Clay looks at his own hands: TREMBLING. Mom touches her bleached hair vaguely.

MOTHER

(with a forced sparkle)

What do you want for Christmas?

CLAY

Nothing.

She reaches for her wine glass again. Still empty. Clay raises a HAND, beckons the waiter. A formally dressed **WAITER (handsome, young)** arrives with A BOTTLE OF WHITE. His mother sizes him up subtly as he fill her glass. Once he goes --

CLAY (CONT'D)

What do YOU want, Mom?

Mom sips her wine, unable to hide how much she needs it.

MOTHER
Just to have a nice Christmas.
(after a beat, suddenly)
You look unhappy, Clay.

CLAY
I'm not.

MOTHER
(more quietly)
You LOOK unhappy.

CLAY
You do too.

She nervously arranges her hair again. Clay is sadly amused.

MOTHER
Have you and your Dad made plans?

CLAY
To what?

MOTHER
I don't know, do something --

CLAY
-- no --

MOTHER
-- together --

CLAY
-- like what, Mom, Disneyland?

MOTHER
No, not Disneyland.

CLAY
We haven't made any plans.

MOTHER
But you're going to see him, right?

Clay takes off his sunglasses, looks at her.

CLAY
Yeah, I'm sure at some point, why?

MOTHER
Okay, well, will you remind him
that I need a check for December?

BEAT. Being put in this position is new for Clay. And weird.

CLAY

Do I have to...?

MOTHER

No. You don't HAVE to. It would just make it easier for me, that's all. Easier than me begging him.

BEAT. Clay puts his SUNGLASSES back on. His Mom "brightens."

MOTHER (CONT'D)

How was Blair's party...?

CLAY

Fine.

MOTHER

How many people were there?

CLAY

Forty. Fifty.

MOTHER

What time did you leave?

CLAY

I don't remember.

MOTHER

One...? Two...?

CLAY

Earlier. Midnight, maybe.

MOTHER

Oh.

CLAY

It wasn't very good.

MOTHER

Why...?

CLAY

I dunno. It just wasn't.

MOTHER

Are you two still a couple?

(after a beat)

I always thought you two were so perfect together, you and Blair.

CLAY

Mom, I gotta go.

He rises.

MOTHER
You haven't even eaten.

CLAY
I'm not hungry. And Trent and I are gonna try and track down Julian.

MOTHER
(with fond concern)
Oh, how is Julian doing...?

CLAY
I dunno. I haven't seen him yet.

MOTHER
He didn't come to Blair's party?

CLAY
No.

MOTHER
He called.

CLAY
Yeah. I know. I got the note.

Clay looks down at his Mom and feels bad about leaving her.

CLAY (CONT'D)
(a concession)
I'll remind Dad about the check.

MOTHER
Thank you.

Clay gives her a quick smile and goes. She drains her wine as "Always Something There To Remind Me" by Naked Eyes PRELAPS --

INT. WESTWOOD ARCADE - DAY (D2)

-- THE SONG PLAYS AS SOURCE over a cacophony of electronic noises. Alien bleeps. Roaring cars. Gunshots. **TWO YOUNG BOYS** play a SHOOTING GAME. They hold plastic weapons and rat-a-tat at MONSTERS ONSCREEN. ON CLAY, watching them nostalgically. Then Trent zips up out of the darkness, TENSE AND FRUSTRATED.

TRENT
Where the fucking FUCK...?

CLAY
(a little embarrassed)
...what?

TRENT
"Fucking fuck." It just means fuck.
But like emphasized. Fucking FUCK.

CLAY
He's not here...?

TRENT
No.

CLAY
You told him two o'clock...?

TRENT
Yeah, two o'clock, one gram.

CLAY
Maybe he thought two grams at one.

TRENT
Julian doesn't think, Clay.
(off Clay's look)
I don't know what he does now,
besides deal and, you know...

CLAY
...what?

TRENT
(backing off telling)
Haven't you talked to him?

CLAY
I haven't talked to Julian since I
left for school. He called once at
my dorm and left a message for me,
I called, he never called back.

TRENT
Well, he's not like he was.

CLAY
What's the problem?

TRENT
Creeping fuckupitude.

BEAT. Clay looks around at the YOUNG BOYS playing videogames.

CLAY
(sotto voce)
Does he sell to these kids...?

TRENT
Not today.
(then)
Let's get outta here. I'm starving.

Trent heads off. Clay looks at the BOYS again, his mind filling with memories of him and Julian. A **SECURITY GUARD** walks by and looks at Clay as if he's a bad element. OFF CLAY
-- REALIZING HE SHOULD GET OUTTA THERE --

EXT. FATBURGER - DAY (D2)

"Crimson and Clover" by Joan Jett and the Blackhearts is on the jukebox. A **SAD-FACED ASIAN GIRL** takes orders at the counter. A SECURITY GUARD leans against a yellow wall. A stringy-haired GUY IN A RED SHIRT lip-syncs along to Joan Jett. Trent and Clay sit together. Trent devours a burger. Clay watches. Clay still hasn't touched his own burger.

CLAY
You weren't kidding.

TRENT
I'm fasting.

CLAY
Why?

TRENT
For an *International Male* shoot. I need my abs to pop, like, POP.

CLAY
(a little skeeved)
International Male...?

TRENT
Yeah. I don't like the magazine. My agent told them no nude stuff, just like Speedos and stuff like that.

CLAY
You have an actual modeling agent?

TRENT
Yeah. Two. One for print, one for theatrical. Which is, like, movies.
(after a bite, mouth full)
But I don't do any nude stuff.
(MORE)

TRENT (CONT'D)
(seeing Clay's burger)
Are you gonna eat that?

CLAY
Be my guest.

He slides it to Trent, who picks up the top bun and looks.

TRENT
No chili. You can't eat a Fatburger
without chili, what the fuck, dude?

Trent picks up the BURGER --

TRENT (CONT'D)
You've been in New Hampshire too
long, Clay. No fucking chili...?

-- and ambles up to the front as Clay watches him go --

TRENT (CONT'D)
(to the girl)
Can I get some chili on this?

-- Clay watches Trent negotiating at the counter, then --

BOY'S VOICE (O.S.)
Clay?

Clay turns back to the table and there's a 10-year-old boy in an intermural-league soccer shirt; it's **YOUNG JULIAN**. (Note: the original Tommy James song is now playing in the past.)

CLAY (O.S.)
(surprised, soft)
Julian?

Young Julian cups his hands to sound like a CB radio.

YOUNG JULIAN
Come in Clay? Are you there? Over?

Now we reverse and see **YOUNG CLAY**, also cute, less mischievous than Julian, more scared. He laughs, then cups his own hands to make a radio sound.

YOUNG CLAY
Ah, ten-four, good buddy I am here.
I just temporarily lost reception.
Are you there, Julian...? Over.

YOUNG JULIAN
I am here. Over.

YOUNG CLAY
Where? Over.

YOUNG JULIAN
Over here, over.

YOUNG CLAY
(starting to giggle)
Over over.

YOUNG JULIAN
(laughing)
Over underpants over.

YOUNG CLAY
(laughing harder)
Over your head over.

YOUNG JULIAN
Under the table, underpants!

Young Clay laughs. Happy? Yes, happy. But then we SMASH BACK TO: the Joan Jett version, Clay is sitting alone, while Trent can be heard arguing for his chili up front. OFF CLAY --

NEWSCASTER VOICE (PRE-LAP)
...raped and then mutilated.

INT. CLAY'S MOM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT (N2)

Clay's mother watches the news on TV as **GISELE and KAY, his sisters, 12 and 14**, watch the news on TV. ON THE TV SCREEN --

NEWSCASTER
No one has come forward yet to identify the body, or that of the teen found at the foot of Laurel Canyon, but authorities say they believe the deaths are related...

IN A WIDER SHOT, IN THE KITCHEN: the girls shout over the TV.

KAY
Can we get a Galaga? Mom, for Christmas can we get a Galaga?

MOTHER
(re: the newscast)
Shush, Gisele, I'm trying to hear.

KAY
I'm Kay.

CLAY
And I'm leaving.

And there's CLAY coming down the stairs, dressed to go out. He gives his sisters a CODED LOOK. He's not telling on them.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Whoever went in my room while I was away at school, stay the fuck out.

GISELE
Your room stinks like a jock strap.

KAY
(to Gisele)
How do you know what a jock strap smells like, Gisele, unless you've stuck your big nose in one...?

MOTHER
Have you heard from your Dad yet?

CLAY
No! I'll tell him when I see him!

MOTHER
(acting like a good Mom)
Be careful!

Clay leaves.

GISELE
Mom, can we get a Galaga or not?

Clay's mother is focused on the screen, where a PICTURE OF THE MURDERED BOY'S FACE is featured. She looks TRAGIC/LOST --

GISELE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Mom?

MOTHER
(exploding all at once)
Would you two please be QUIET?

-- OFF THE GIRLS' SHOCK -- and then WE SMASH CUT TO --

INT. BACK ROOM AT THE EDGE - NIGHT (N2)

A NIGHTCLUB. BLAIR leans against a wall, watching the people dance to "Leave Me Alone" by New Order. All hold DRINKS.

BLAIR
Anyone feel like dancing?

A WIDER SHOT reveals Blair is between Clay and Daniel.

DANIEL

I'll dance.

Blair registers that, then looks to Clay.

CLAY

No thanks.

Blair looks at Clay, considers him.

CLAY (CONT'D)

(off her look)

What...?

BLAIR

Why won't you dance?

CLAY

I don't feel like dancing.

BLAIR

Do you do ANYTHING anymore...?

Clay knows this is blowback from not fucking her yet.

CLAY

Did I ever?

BLAIR

Yeah. You danced.

DANIEL

I'll dance.

BLAIR

Thanks.

(ignoring Daniel, to Clay)

So we don't dance anymore.

CLAY

Apparently not.

Blair's DISAPPOINTED. Trent appears from out of the crowd.

TRENT

Has he shown up yet...?

CLAY

Trent, Julian's not here.

TRENT

Fucking fucking FUCKER.

CLAY

Let's just go, man, come on.

TRENT

No, just, wait a minute. I've found him sometimes here. Here.

Trent extends a Daffy Duck Pez dispenser to Clay --

CLAY

Pez...?

-- and pops it open, revealing a CAPSULE.

CLAY (CONT'D)

What is it?

TRENT

Just take it.

CLAY

What is it...?!

TRENT

A LUDE, dude! Just take it!
(off Clay's reticence)
You're not in New Hampshire anymore, Dorothy. This is L-A.

Clay takes it from him. Trent offers one to Blair. She takes it and puts it on her tongue. Clay dumps his into his jacket and looks at Blair. She looks at him. DRINKS. SWALLOWS. Like a dare, an indictment of Clay's unwillingness to merge.

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

Is that Muriel?

BLAIR

Muriel's at Cedars, Trent.

CLAY

And Trent, that girl's black!

TRENT

Oh... you're right. Shit.

CLAY

And not a girl.

They look. It's **A BLACK BOY**. Trent chuckles at his dumbness.

TRENT

And not exactly anorexic.

CLAY

But he is wearing a dress.
(after a beat)
Ten points for accuracy.

OFF THE BLACK BOY IN THE DRESS, watching them watching him --

EXT. STREET NEAR THE EDGE - NIGHT (N2)

Blair, Trent and Clay watch Daniel, who's VERY DRUNK, fold himself clumsily into his Dad's Porsche 911 and start it.

BLAIR

Is he too drunk to drive...?

CLAY

(affectionately)
You're too drunk to drive.

Daniel peels out and **KA-CHUNKS** over a curb. Clay winces.

BLAIR

What if he dies, you guys...?

TRENT

If it's his night to go, Blair,
there's nothing we can do about it.
(then, to Clay)
Later.

CLAY

Later.

Trent walks off. Blair, FUCKED UP, FATALISTIC, looks at Clay.

BLAIR

Well, did we have fun...?

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS STREET/ BLAIR'S HOUSE - NIGHT (N2)

Clay pulls up and stops. Looks at Blair's house. Blair sits there, trying to wipe a HANDSTAMP off. She's SUPER-FUCKED UP.

BLAIR

This shit never comes off.

CLAY

Yeah. It's a real problem.

BLAIR

It IS.

After a BEAT, she gives up. Sits there. Then looks at Clay.

CLAY

...what?

BLAIR

You never called me. All fall.

CLAY

You didn't call me, either.

BLAIR

I didn't think you wanted me to.

He looks at her, trying to muster sympathy, feeling little. But he knows that he doesn't want more drama, so he says --

CLAY

I'm sorry.

BEAT. Willing to accept that in her drunken state, she looks at him in a simmering way. KISSES him. She tries to make it passionate. Clay, feeling awkward about it, pulls back --

CLAY (CONT'D)

I've gotta go. My Mom's making me go Christmas shopping tomorrow.

Blair gives up, sits back. BEAT. Sees HIS HANDS on the wheel.

BLAIR

Your hands are red.

BEAT. She peels one of his hands off the wheel and puts it between her legs. He looks at her. There's something intimate between them. RAW, SLIGHTLY UNPLEASANT, BUT REAL. She grinds herself against his hand and closes her eyes. OFF CLAY --

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS - DAY (D3)

A QUICK MONTAGE OF ESTABLISHING SHOTS. EXCESS. SUNSHINE.

I./E. CLAY'S MOTHER'S CAR/RODEO DRIVE - DAY (D3)

Clay's mother drives, wearing SUNGLASSES. Clay sits beside her, wearing SUNGLASSES. In the back, Clay's sisters, wearing SUNGLASSES and holding PRESENTS. A SONG plays on the radio.

KAY

Do you think Dad will get us a Galaga for Christmas...? Mom...?

MOTHER
What is this Galaga?

GISELE
A Galaga!

MOTHER
What IS it, Gisele?

CLAY
A video game.

MOTHER
Don't you guys have Atari...?

KAY
Atari's cheap.

GISELE
Katie Trotta's getting a Galaga.

MOTHER
Your brother will ask your Dad.

Clay clocks yet another reminder about his Mom's check. UGH.

KAY
Where will it go...?

MOTHER
In Clay's room, I suppose...?

CLAY
No.

KAY
He always locks the door, Mom!

GISELE
(teasing, a dare)
Yeah, why do you lock it, Clay?

KAY
Afraid we'll steal your magazines?

CLAY
I lock my door because you both
have a habit of stealing my coke
every time I leave it open.

The GIRLS look at each other -- UH OH -- then agree to cover.

GISELE
That's bullshit.

KAY

Yeah.

GISELE

We can get our own cocaine.

MOTHER

(treating it like a joke)
You kids are crazy.

A LOUD SONG comes on the radio.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

What IS this music...?

CLAY

(joking)
"Teenage Enema Nurses in Bondage."

MOTHER

(to the girls in back)
Do we have to listen to this?

GISELE

Yes, turn it up, turn it up!

Mom doesn't. Kay flops over the seat and turns it up and flops into the back seat. Clay looks at his Mom. OFF CLAY --

DR. SOPHY (O.S.)

So what's it like to be home?

INT. SMALL WESTWOOD PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - DAY (D3)

Clay is in sunglasses, smoking a CLOVE CIGARETTE, talking to **DR. SOPHY, a well-dressed dandy wearing shoes with no socks.**

DR. SOPHY

This is the first time you've been home since your parents separated.
(off Clay's smoky exhale)
Any dreams...? Feelings coming up?

CLAY

One dream, maybe. Kinda weird.

DR. SOPHY

That's why we're here.

Clay takes a drag. Says nothing. Sophy looks at him, probing.

DR. SOPHY (CONT'D)

Do you want to tell me about it?

CLAY

I'm trapped in glass box at the bottom of the ocean. In the, like, Marianas Trench. Way deep down.

DR. SOPHY

Water is emotion. Go on.

CLAY

If I break it, there's no way I'd ever be able to swim to the top. If I stay in it, I'll suffocate.

FOR A BEAT, Clay stops. This is a REAL DREAM. But then he CATCHES HIMSELF, having shown too much. Takes a drag from his cigarette, and goes on, but now with an edge of performance.

CLAY (CONT'D)

But that's not the real problem.

DR. SOPHY

What's the real problem, Clay?

CLAY

There's nowhere to shit. And I just came from a chili cook-off. The All-National Firehouse Chili Cook-off.

BEAT. Sophy realizes Clay's joking now. He grows STERN.

DR. SOPHY

Why do you still come see me, Clay?

CLAY

Because my Mom makes me.

DR. SOPHY

And why do you think she does that?

Clay takes a DEEP DRAG off the clove --

CLAY

Because I keep trying to fuck her?

-- then exhales. ON SOPHY: FRUSTRATED. OFF CLAY: SMILING --

EXT. DU-PAR'S AT THE FARMER'S MARKET - DAY (D3)

Establishing.

INT. DU-PAR'S AT THE FARMER'S MARKET - DAY (D3)

Clay waits alone, still in SUNGLASSES. "Islands In The Stream" by Kenny Rogers and Dolly Parton plays from above. Clay watches a **CRAZY GUY** in a Universal Studios t-shirt two booths away. The crazy guy suddenly looks straight at Clay.

CRAZY GUY

Faggot.

Clay looks away. The Guy FEINTS all at once, as if he's going to leap and attack. Clay STARTLES. The Guy LAUGHS. Before it goes further, Blair, Alana and **KIM (19, heroin chic)** walk up. Clay rises, relieved. He KISSES Blair hi, which she notices.

CLAY

Let's get out of here.

ALANA

I want fries.

CLAY

I need to work on my tan.

Because Clay kissed her, Blair takes his side.

BLAIR

He's not wrong. Come on. We can get some at the Belgian Waffle place.

They head out. Clay looks back at the Guy as they leave. The Guy is still staring at him, CHALLENGING. OFF CLAY: RATTLED --

EXT. THE FARMER'S MARKET - DAY (D3)

The girls walk and talk down the long corridor of food stands. Alana's got FRIES. Blair has an arm in Clay's. They look like a couple for the first time since he landed.

BLAIR

I'm visiting Muriel tomorrow.

KIM

Say hi for me.

BLAIR

You can come if you want.

KIM

No. Hospitals are bad news.

BLAIR

Why?

Kim lights a CIGARETTE --

KIM
They make people sick. Germs.

-- and takes a deep drag.

ALANA
Are you coming to Kim's, Clay?

CLAY
When is this party...?

KIM
Tonight.

Before Clay can answer, Alana claps a hand to her forehead.

ALANA
I don't know who to bring! Oh, God!
I don't know who the fuck to bring!
(after a beat)
I just realized.

BLAIR
Bring Cliff.

KIM
I'm going with Cliff.

BLAIR
Oh, that's right.

ALANA
Well, if you're going with Cliff,
Kim, I'll go with Warren.

KIM
(to Blair)
Blair's going with Warren.

BLAIR
No I'm not.

KIM
Aren't you going out with Warren?

BLAIR
We fucked. We're not "going out."

Clay clocks this, but says nothing. Trades a look with Blair.

ALANA
Then I'll bring Warren.

BLAIR
And I'll bring Clay.

CLAY
(to Alana)
I guess I'll be there.

Blair smiles at Clay. *All better, right?* OFF CLAY -- SURE --

EXT. CLAY'S MOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT (N3)

Establishing.

INT. CLAY'S ROOM - CLAY'S MOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT (N3)

Clay is on his bed, laying on his back, holding the PHOTO of himself, Julian and Blair, focused on BLAIR this time. As the memory rises, WE PUSH IN ON CLAY and then SMASH CUT TO --

I/E. BLAIR'S CAR/LAX TERMINAL - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Blair pulls up and stops. The top is up. Clay is in the passenger seat. They both look QUIET and SAD. BEAT. BEAT.

BLAIR
I hate this.

CLAY
It's gonna be okay.

BLAIR
You keep saying that.
(after a beat)
Why are you leaving?

CLAY
To go to college. Like a person.

BLAIR
Yeah, but why back east? You promised me you weren't gonna go to school back east. Why can't you stay here like the rest of us...?

CLAY
It's just four months, Blair.

BLAIR
You want to break up.

CLAY

No, I don't.

BLAIR

It seems like you do.

CLAY

I don't want to break up.

BLAIR

Yes you do, you just want it to happen over the phone. Or not even happen, have it just...you know...

CLAY

I don't want to break up, Blair.

BLAIR

Then don't go.

SMASH BACK TO --

INT. CLAY'S ROOM - CLAY'S MOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT (N3)

Clay's still looking at the photo. Then he hears **BEEP BEEP** --

EXT. CLAY'S MOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT (N3)

Clay hurries outside to find Trent in his car, wearing a TIE.

TRENT

Grab a tie, Ponyboy.

CLAY

A tie...? Why...?

TRENT

Because Trentie says.

OFF CLAY -- WHY THE FUCK WOULD HE HAVE TO WEAR A TIE? --

INT. SANTO PIETRO'S - NIGHT (N3)

Clay and Trent, both in TIES now, sit at a small two-top: white tablecloth. Trent stabs at Pasta Primavera with a fork.

TRENT

Guy comes home all the time smelling like gasoline. But he doesn't work at a gas station.

CLAY

That doesn't make him an arsonist.

TRENT

But the fires started right when he moved in, Clay. Seven houses and four cars in four months.

(then, noticing)

Do you ever eat, dude...?

CLAY

Who are you, my grandmother?

A **WAITRESS** walks past and Trent shoots his arm out in front of her waist, stopping her in her tracks, looks up at her.

TRENT

Another martini. Spectacularly dry.

She nods, **BORED BY HIM**, and walks away.

TRENT (CONT'D)

(oblivious to her scorn)

She's new.

OFF CLAY -- HELPLESSLY CHARMED BY TRENT'S IDIOCY --

INT. SANTO PIETRO'S - FOYER - LATER THAT NIGHT (N3)

Clay and Trent walk towards the exit of the restaurant.

TRENT

Is Rip gonna be at Kim's, ya think?

CLAY

I hope so.

TRENT

Me too. I'm giving up on Julian, man. Dude's not worth the trouble.

They pass a MIRROR. Trent sees their reflections and stops.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Wait.

Trent stares and stares until Clay gets **CONCERNED**.

CLAY

What?

TRENT

You were right. This is a bad idea.

Trent starts undoing his tie. Clay undoes his, too, as "Do You Really Want To Hurt Me?" by Culture Club PRELAPS --

INT. KIM'S HOUSE - NIGHT (N3)

Unlike Blair's party, this one's messier, cheaper, more punk, more dangerous-seeming. While Trent periscopes for Julian at Clay's side, **CLIFF, 19, a high school friend**, talks to Clay.

CLIFF

She was in film class and just passed out. Fell out of her chair. Face hit the floor, like, CRACK.

CLAY

Is she gonna be okay?

CLIFF

What's okay...? She's Muriel.

But Clay's attention is caught by **A HANDSOME GUY (late 20's.)** He's a bit older than this crowd, very attractive, bobbing to the music a little. Clay clocks him with INTRIGUE/INTEREST.

CLIFF (CONT'D)

How long are you back for?

The Handsome Guy drifts into the crowd, searching, it seems. Clay loses him in the crowd and then turns back to Pierce.

CLAY

What?

CLIFF

How long are you back?

CLAY

A month. Sorry I haven't called.

CLIFF

Clay, until Kim told me you were gonna be here tonight, I forgot you were gone. It's not a problem.

OUCH. That actually stings Clay a little --

CLAY

Cool.

-- then --

A VOICE (O.S.)

CLAY!

-- Clay turns and sees **JULIAN (19, charming but ragged)**, coked-up, speeding but in control, glad-handing, making a movie-star entrance, but heading for Clay. He lands at Clay.

JULIAN
You're back!

CLAY
Yeah.

Before Julian can answer, Trent elbows into the conversation.

TRENT
-- FINALLY, Julian Wells, the invisible man! Leaves me standing with my cock in my hand twice!

JULIAN
Trent, I've been extremely busy.

TRENT
I should make an example out of you right here in front of everyone.

JULIAN
By HOW...? By doing WHAT, really?

TRENT
It's just really irresponsible.

JULIAN
Says the centerfold.

TRENT
I don't do nude stuff.

JULIAN
(joking, cynical)
No, neither do I. Here ya go.

Julian reaches into his pocket --

JULIAN (CONT'D)
TRENT. DARLING. I'm sorry. It's entirely my fault. ALL my fault.

TRENT
Yeah, I KNOW.

JULIAN
Can you EVER forgive me...?

-- and he slips a BAGGIE OF COKE into Trent's hand.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
(with a dismissive wink)
Let's assume you can.

Julian turns to Clay; pulls him in as Trent checks the bag.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
(to Clay)
Promise me you won't leave without
us catching up, PROMISE ME, okay?

CLAY
You got it.

Julian wanders off. Clay hears Blair *singing* behind him --

BLAIR
(singing)
*Do you really want to hurt me? Do
you really want to make me cry?*

-- but sees: JULIAN JOIN THE HANDSOME GUY. They seem to know each other. HUH. Then Blair grabs him from behind and spins him around. She's DRUNK and holding a JERRY MAGNIN BOX.

BLAIR (CONT'D)
Merry Christmas, you fox.

She holds out the box to him.

CLAY
(re: the box)
What is it...?

BLAIR
Open it up. Open it, open it!

Not feeling comfortable about opening a present in this situation, he does so anyway. It's A PLAID CASHMERE SCARF.

CLAY
(underwhelmed)
A scarf. Wow. Thank you.

BLAIR
For those snowy New England walks
while you contemplate your novels.

CLAY
Oh, yeah, my novels. Thank you.

BLAIR
Try it on. Let's see if it fits.

CLAY
Scarves kinda naturally FIT.

She pulls it carelessly from the box --

BLAIR
Just try it ON, I wanna see how it
looks, don't be such a SCROOGE!

-- tosses the BOX on a table and wraps the SCARF around his
neck, getting close to his face with hers. Their eyes meet.

CLAY
You're kinda super-drunk.

BLAIR
And you're not. I'm gonna fix that,
too. I'm gonna fix everything.

She kisses him and then stands back, looks at the scarf.

BLAIR (CONT'D)
Perfect!

He turns around to see Julian but Blair pulls him back.

BLAIR (CONT'D)
Listen, Clay, honeybunny...

CLAY
...honeybunny?

She wraps her arms around him. She is, indeed, VERY DRUNK.

BLAIR
...I just want to have a good time
while you're back, you know that?

CLAY
Okay.

BLAIR
Maybe you were right not to call.
Maybe, maybe we did need a break.

CLAY
Okay.

BLAIR
But we can still have a good time,
right? We can still have some fun.

CLAY
(a little empty)
Sure, yeah, we can have a blast.

BLAIR
Good. Good. Then I'm happy.
(after a long sigh)
I'm gonna get you a BIG DRINK.

She strides away. Clay's face falls and he loosens the scarf. He turns to look for Julian but there's **RIP (20's, chiseled, powerful)**, Clay's dealer, in Parachute clothes. Rip SMILES.

RIP
Clay, how the fuck have you BEEN?

INT. KIM'S HOUSE - NEARLY EMPTY CARPETED ROOM - NIGHT (N3)

Rip and Clay enter, shut the door. ONE BED. A CHAIR. Through the door, we can hear "Career Opportunities" by The Clash.

RIP
The girl Alana's been after me all night. Should I fuck her or not...?

CLAY
(doubts it's possible)
If such a thing is possible, sure.
(after a look around)
What's with this room...?

Rip pulls A COKE-DUSTY POCKET MIRROR out of his coat.

RIP
Kim's parents are moving.

CLAY
Moving where...?

RIP
I dunno. That's what she said. Her mom and her husband bought a place.
(re: the mirror)
Here, hold this, dude.

He hands Clay the mirror --

RIP (CONT'D)
If you ask me --

-- and pulls out A LARGE BAGGIE OF COCAINE.

RIP (CONT'D)
-- looks kinda like she's been
shooting pornos in here. Doesn't it
look like a porno set in here...?

Clay looks around.

CLAY
I guess it does, kinda, yeah.

RIP
Wouldn't mind seeing THAT.

INT. KIM'S HOUSE - BAR TABLE - NIGHT (N3)

Blair pushes through the crowd and gets to the table and messily ladles some punch into a cup. She's wasted. She's being watched by a handsome guy across the table --

WARREN (O.C.)
Hey, Blair.

BLAIR
Oh, hey, Warren, long time no see.

-- who, yes, turns out to be **WARREN (19, preppie, lacrosse)**.

WARREN
Clay's back.

BLAIR
Yeah.

WARREN
Cool.

And then ALANA walks up, kisses Warren, looks to Blair.

ALANA
(to Blair)
So how's it going...?

INT. KIM'S HOUSE - NEARLY EMPTY CARPETED ROOM - NIGHT (N3)

Rip pours COKE out onto the MIRROR --

RIP
Thanks for returning my calls.

-- and starts cutting it with a RAZORBLADE.

CLAY
When did you call...?

RIP
(he never called)
Doesn't matter.

Rip hands Clay a rolled-up bill and gestures to the lines.

RIP (CONT'D)
Whadja take out East...?

CLAY
Coke, mostly. Nembutals.

RIP
No, man. CLASSES. Come on.

CLAY
Oh. Like, an arts course and a
writing course, a music course --

RIP
Music...?

CLAY
Yeah.

RIP
You actually write music...?

CLAY
A little, now, I guess, yeah.

RIP
Are you going back?
(off Clay's look)
I've got some amazing lyrics. Write
some music. We'll make millions.

CLAY
Maybe.

Clay does a LINE. Then RECOVERS. Then --

CLAY (CONT'D)
Who's the guy out there...?

RIP
Which one...?

CLAY
I saw Julian talking to him...?

RIP

OH, him.

Rip doesn't say more, but instead does a LINE himself --

CLAY

Is he Kim's new stepdad...?

RIP

I don't think so. Maybe.

CLAY

Do you know who I'm talking about?

Rip snorts the line, changing the subject, wipes his nose --

RIP

You gotta go back, Clay.

-- and then offers Clay THE LAST LINE. Clay is CONFUSED.

CLAY

Where...?

RIP

To school. Seriously. You stick around here, it's like the tar pits, man. People disappear.

(re: the coke)

Go. That's all you.

Clay does the line. Tips his head back. Rip hands over A SMALL BAGGIE. Clay pockets it, fumbles for money, recovering.

RIP (CONT'D)

Nope. Christmas present.

Rip heads for the closed door as Clay tries to follow up.

CLAY

Is he, like, WITH Julian...?

RIP

Who knows? Listen, you've got to come over before you leave. I got this *Temple of Doom* bootleg, it cost me four hundred bucks.

(after a beat)

Have you seen it yet...?

CLAY

No, but --

RIP
Come over and see it before you go.
(after a beat)
Deal...?

Clay, PLANNING ON FOLLOWING UP WITH RIP THEN, lets it go.

CLAY
Deal.

Rip exits in a hurry. OFF CLAY: SUSPICIOUS/CONCERNED --

PRINCE
(singing)
Dearly beloved...

INT. KIM'S HOUSE - NIGHT (N3)

As the spoken overture to "Let's Go Crazy" by Prince plays --

PRINCE (V.O.)
*We are gathered here today to get
through this thing called 'Life.'*

-- Clay re-enters the party in a coke-fueled glow, looking for Julian. It's a turned-up reality, EVER-SO SLIGHTLY SHAKY, and sounds rise and are sucked away. Two GIRLS sidle up.

GIRLS
Hey, remember us? From the Roxy?

CLAY
I spent a lot of nights at the Roxy.

He pushes past them. Just within earshot, as he moves on.

GIRLS (O.C.)
(with the sound morphed)
Call us anyway!

PRINCE (V.O.)
*Electric word, Life, that means
forever, and that's a mighty long
time but I'm here to tell ya,
there's something else -*

Alana comes rushing towards him, tries to talk to him --

ALANA
Clay, your creepo friend Rip won't stop bothering me, will you do something about it, please...?

-- but Clay doesn't stop, leaving her behind in his wake.

PRINCE (V.O.)
The Afterworld.

As the autoharp is strummed, Clay scans the party, looking for Julian. CLAY'S POV: ALL THE FACES AND HEADS, BOBBING --

PRINCE (V.O.)
*A world of never-ending happiness.
You can always see the sun, day or
night.*

ON CLAY: CONCERNED THAT HE CAN'T SEE JULIAN ANYWHERE --

PRINCE (V.O.)
*So when you call up that shrink in
Beverly Hills, you know the one,
Doctor Everything'll Be Alright...*

GRIFFIN (O.S.)
Hey, you were at Blair's, right?

Clay turns and sees **GRIFFIN**, that beautiful USC boy from Blair's, walking up with A BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE and A GLASS.

CLAY
Yeah, who -- who are you?

GRIFFIN
Griffin.

CLAY
Clay. Hey.

Clay absently shakes hands and looks around for Julian.

GRIFFIN
Who're you looking for...?

CLAY
Julian.

GRIFFIN
Oh, Julian left.

Clay looks around. Doesn't see the Handsome Guy. It lands on Clay: they left together. FUCK. Griffin gives him the BOTTLE.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)
Don't feel bad. The girl I came
with left with the Japanese guy in
the English Beat shirt and white
pants and you know who he is...?
(MORE)

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)
 (a pathetic fact)
 Kim's hairdresser!

 CLAY
Wild.

Clay guzzles quite a bit of the champagne then looks across the room and sees BLAIR across the way, still talking with Alana and Warren. Their eyes meet. Blair makes a face at him. He smiles. She turns away. Clay hands the bottle to Griffin.

 GRIFFIN
You're Blair's boyfriend, right?

 CLAY
We used to go out.

 GRIFFIN
I thought you still did.

 CLAY
Maybe. I don't know.

Griffin takes a BIG SLUG and hands it back.

 GRIFFIN
She talks about you a lot.

UGH. A wave of GUILT lands on him, guilt he's eager to dump.

 CLAY
How do you know her...?

 GRIFFIN
I go to USC.

 CLAY
Ah. Of course.

 GRIFFIN
I really like your scarf.

 CLAY
Thanks.

 GRIFFIN
Listen...

Griffin hands the BOTTLE back to Clay.

 GRIFFIN (CONT'D)
Do you wanna go to my house...? My
parents are in Rome for Christmas.

Clay glances at Blair. She's still in rapt conversation.

CLAY

Sure, why not...?

Clay and Griffin move to the door and exit. OFF BLAIR, seeing Clay leave, as "Wish you Were Here" by Pink Floyd rises --

I/E. CLAY'S CAR/WILSHIRE IN WESTWOOD - NIGHT (N3)

-- Clay drives. Griffin's beside him, feeling like everything is clicking. As for Clay, he just seems intent on doing this, whatever it is, with willful, self-inflicted numbness.

EXT. WESTWOOD HIGH-RISE - NIGHT (N3)

Establishing.

INT. LIVING ROOM - WESTWOOD HIGH-RISE - NIGHT (N3)

Griffin smokes the last of a JOINT as he monologues -- "Wish you Were Here" is playing on his home stereo as source now.

GRIFFIN

I mean, my uncle said, "At this point, you can't afford not to have an MBA." It's not like it's gonna hurt me when I'm managing bands to know that shit, whatever it is.

-- and then he reaches across the coffee table to where Clay is sitting on the floor, looking BORED. Clay takes a hit --

CLAY

It's late.

-- and hands it back to Griffin, who takes one last hit --

GRIFFIN

It's not even early. This is LA, man, not New Hampshire. Party on.

-- and snuffs it out. Then he stands up and in just a few seconds, strips down to absolute zero. Clay grimaces at him as if to say, "Nicely done, but weird." Griffin walks over to Clay. Clay looks up at Griffin's naked crotch and laughs.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)

What's so funny?

CLAY
You don't have a tan line.

GRIFFIN
Why would I...?

Clay, settling into the LA of it all, laughs and says --

CLAY
No reason, I guess.

-- and looks up at Griffin. They lock eyes. ENERGY SHIFT.
It's clear this is about to become sexual. OFF CLAY --

I/E. CLAY'S CAR/SUNSET BOULEVARD - BEFORE DAWN (D4)

-- Clay speeds EAST as the instrumental intro to "Vienna" by Ultravox plays. ON CLAY'S FACE, we see he's still steeped in whatever he just did. Eager to forget. THE MUSIC CONTINUES --

EXT. BLAIR'S HOUSE - BEFORE DAWN (D4)

-- as a CAR pulls up. Warren is driving. Blair's in the passenger seat. Alana's in the middle, passed out. IN THE CAR, Blair and Warren exchange a loaded look.

BLAIR
Thanks for the ride.

WARREN
Anytime.

Blair gets out, shuts the door. Warren drives off. OFF BLAIR.

I/E. CLAY'S CAR/SUNSET BLVD. - BEFORE DAWN (D4)

Clay is driving, feeling a little better now, sitting up a little straighter anyway. Less hungover. The VOCAL KICKS IN --

ULTRAVOX (V.O.)
(singing)
We walked in the cold air --
freezing breath on the windowpane,
lying and waiting --

-- as he glides along the mostly empty streets -- through Beverly Hills and then he crosses Doheny, Holloway --

EXT. MALIBU BEACHSIDE MANSION - BEFORE DAWN (D4)

ON A SET OF SLIDING GLASS DOORS, REFLECTING THE OCEAN. Then we see a SHADOW behind the reflection, the door opens and out steps JULIAN, in just underwear, holding a JOINT. He shuts the door behind him, lights up, takes a hit and looks at: THE OCEAN. OFF JULIAN, GETTING HIGH, STILL WAITING FOR THE WAVE --

ULTRAVOX (V.O.)
*-- man in the dark in the picture
frame so mystic and soulful --*

I/E. CLAY'S CAR/SUNSET BLVD. - BEFORE DAWN (D4)

-- Clay courses through Sunset Plaza and West Hollywood until he hits a RED LIGHT at La Cienega. Looks up and to his RIGHT. He sees **SOMETHING, but we don't see it.** But ON CLAY'S FACE we see he's CHILLED, unsure what it means, or why it's there.

ULTRAVOX (V.O.)
*-- voice reaching out and the
piercing cry, it stays with you
until --*

He reaches into his jacket and pulls out the LUDE Trent gave him and takes it, swallowing it dry, as if girding himself for a difficult journey ahead. The light turns GREEN --

ULTRAVOX (V.O.)
*The feeling is gone, only you and
I, it means nothing to me --*

-- and he turns RIGHT. WE TURN WITH HIM TO SEE HIM DESCEND DOWN THE HILL INTO THE ILLUMINATED GRID OF HOLLYWOOD BELOW --

ULTRAVOX (V.O.)
*-- this means nothing to me, oh,
Vienna...*

-- WE PULL UP TO TAKE IN WHAT CLAY SAW: A BLACK BILLBOARD WITH HUGE WHITE WORDS, IN THE SAME FONT AS OUR TITLE CARD --

DISAPPEAR HERE

-- as Clay's tail lights vanish, the DRUMS KICK IN --

END OF PILOT