



FINGER PAINTING

with Kent Finger

Written by

Stephen Hatcher

&

Breon Halling

+1 416.768.0710
contact@kentfinger.com
www.kentfinger.com

EXT. WJBS - AFTERNOON

The sun shines down on a half-empty parking lot. Among the assorted sedans and hatchbacks is a beat-up old junker decorated with stickers: "IT'S A CANVAS NOT A CAN'TVAS" and the obviously handwritten "MY OTHER CAR IS A PORSCHE OIL PAINTS".

Abutting the lot is a squat, nondescript building. A sign out front reads "WJBS STUDIOS: WE PUT THE U IN COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING" followed by a crudely-drawn cock and balls.

INT. WJBS - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

At the end of a dimly lit hallway, a red ON AIR light flickers like a candle above a closed door. Taped to the door is a handwritten note: "FINGER PAINTING WITH KENT FINGER".

INT. WJBS - "FINGER PAINTING" SET - AFTERNOON

Black painted walls surround a small, raised stage amid lights, cameras, and other outdated equipment. On the far walls hangs a single painting, "The Birthday Bear's Wish". It depicts a lone bear wearing a party hat blowing out a candle on a birthday cake.

Director/cameraman RED (late 30s) leans against his camera as he fights off sleep.

On stage, KENT FINGER (mid-30s) -- pronounced "fin-ger" -- is hard at work. He's a wiry man with curly hair, horn-rimmed glasses, and a big moustache. He holds a well-used brush and palette in his hands. On the easel before him is a nearly complete painting of a bulldog caught in the act of tearing up a flower bed.

As he paints, Kent speaks in a calm, soothing voice.

KENT

Now let's just take a whisper of titanium white and add a glint to his eyes. Something that says 'I know I'm a scamp, but darn it, I've gotta be me.'

INT. DOTTIE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

DOTTIE (late 70s) watches Kent on her old TV and paints along with him. Her walls are adorned with dozens of paintings she's made watching Kent's show; they're all pretty bad. Her attempt at the bulldog shows no improvement.

KENT (ON TV)

Bulldogs are magical creatures, aren't they? Did you know that they're almost never birthed naturally? It's true! Their heads are too darn big for momma's birth canal.

INT. FRAT HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

THREE STONERS (early 20s) sit on a dirty couch in a filthy room watching Kent and smoking from a BONG. The douchiest one, THE CHAD, is wearing tear-away pants and a sleeveless golf shirt with a popped collar. On his shoulder is a TATTOO OF A BULLDOG lifting weights. He takes a PULL from the bong.

KENT (ON TV)

Maybe someday soon we'll be able to make a new type of bulldog so those mommas can have their little ones all on their own. One with a giant, stretchy vagina.

The Chad COUGHS. He turns to his roommates; they're staring at his tattoo choking back laughter.

THE CHAD

Nobody say a fucking word.

INT. DON AND COCO'S HOUSE - SOLARIUM - MOMENTS LATER

In a plant-filled sunroom a naked hippy couple, DON and COCO (late 30s) -- looking every bit like John and Yoko -- stand hand-in-hand painting along with Kent playing on a small TV.

KENT (ON TV)

Until then, though, we people will have to help those little pups come into this crazy world of ours. Think about that! What an amazing responsibility! I hope we're up to it, mankind!

Don DROPS his brush. He crouches deeply to pick it up, leaving nothing to the imagination. Coco catches a glimpse and WINCES, barely hiding her revulsion.

INT. WJBS - "FINGER PAINTING" SET - MOMENTS LATER

Into the darkened studio sneaks LILY CLAIRMONT (30s), bookish and pretty, carrying a shoulder bag. Kent wraps up.

KENT

That's all the time we have for this week, but before we say goodbye I wanted to mention that this was a special one for us, our 900th show!

Lily CLAPS SOFTLY and Red snaps awake. Seeing Lily, he straightens and flattens his hair with a wet palm.

KENT (CONT'D)

A big thanks to each and every one of you for taking this magical journey with me. And here's to 900 more! Until next time, I'm Kent Finger saying I hope you learned a lot. I know I sure did.

He smiles into the camera unblinking.

RED

Aaaaaaaand... we're clear.

Kent descends from the stage as Red reaches over and pulls a switch on the console. The studio lights TURN ON with a THUNK.

KENT

Great show, Red!

RED

Yup, another turd in the bowl. Good job, Finger.

Kent rolls his eyes and grins as if he were in on a long running joke. Red looks confused before clueing in.

RED (CONT'D)

Shit. Good job, "Finjer". My mistake.

KENT

Your 900th mistake? I don't think so, you clown. You're having fun with me!

Red shrugs and EXITS through the stage door. Kent turns to Lily.

KENT (CONT'D)

Lily! To what do I owe the pleasure?

Lily grins as she approaches him, one hand securely on her handbag.

LILY
Happy 900th show!

Out of her bag she pulls a limp helium balloon adorned with the message "Happy Bat Mitzvah Rachel!"

LILY (CONT'D)
There's not much of a party budget
so I bought it second-hand.

Kent takes the balloon and admires it.

KENT
It's wonderful. I bet Rachel had a
magical transition into womanhood.

She blushes just as Red hurries back into the studio.

RED
Emergency meeting. Everyone in the
break room. Now.

Kent grins and winks knowingly.

KENT
What's that? An emergency meeting?
That's a bit of a surprise,
wouldn't you say, Red?

He winks again.

RED
Why are you winking?
(to Lily)
Why is he winking?

LILY
It's not what you think, Kent. I
don't know what it is but it's not
that.

Kent winks for a third time and taps his nose before heading out the door. Red just blinks and looks confused. Lily puts a hand on his forearm and grins.

LILY (CONT'D)
He's something else, isn't he?

She follows Kent out. Red stares at the spot on his shirt where Lily touched him. Then, making sure he's alone, he lifts his forearm to his face, INHALES DEEPLY, and SIGHS.

INT. WJBS - BREAK ROOM - AFTERNOON

The small break room is as out-of-date as the rest of the station. The cheap tables and chairs have been pushed to the side to make space for the meeting. A podium has been placed by the vending machine.

The station's crew and show hosts are crowded around, talking in hushed tones. Among the on-air personalities are LEN "MOOCH" MOOCHILINI (40s), with a style firmly rooted in the first Gulf War; SATANYA (20s), a cross between the Bride of Frankenstein and a high-priced whore; and MIDNITE VULTURE (30s), a Don Cornelius clone. A sense of unease fills the room.

MOOCH

So what's this about? Did that
raccoon in the ceiling finally die?

ROB (O.S.)

No. But I'll be sure to get on that.

Seemingly out of nowhere, ROB LOWE (late 40s) appears at the podium. He's impeccably groomed but otherwise looks nothing like his famous namesake.

MOOCH

(visibly startled)
How'd you do that?

Rob clears his throat and addresses the now-silent crowd.

ROB

Good afternoon. I'm going to cut
right to the chase: WJBS has been
sold. It's now a division of
Hypercom Global Mediatainment.

GASPS and MURMURS from the stunned crowd. Satanya lets out a wicked damsel-in-distress SHRIEK.

Kent suddenly bursts through the door with Lily and Red at his heels.

KENT

SURPRISE!

He's greeted with a sea of concerned faces. Rob GLARES. Lily takes Kent's arm and they join the crowd.

ROB

As I was saying, this station has
been sold and I've been sent here
from corporate.

(MORE)

ROB (CONT'D)

Allow me to introduce myself: I'm Rob Lowe, the new director of operations.

Kent raises his hand.

ROB (CONT'D)

Yes?

KENT

Are you really him?

ROB

Right. Let's get this out of the way. I am not legendary Hollywood actor Rob Lowe.

MIDNITE VULTURE

You sure about that, Clyde?

MOOCH

You've got the same name.

Satanya GASPS.

SATANYA

He does have the same name. The exact same!

ROB

(annoyed)

I am not, nor am I in any way related to, Rob Lowe the famous actor. All right?

KENT

Maybe you have amnesia.

Rob is momentarily at a loss for words.

ROB

Moving on. I know this must come as a shock to many of you, but I've carefully read the report summaries and this station has been hemorrhaging cash for years.

SATANYA

But what about our pledge drives? What about Community Day?

ROB

According to your records, last year's Community Day actually cost money.

MOOCH

I told you we shouldn't have hired Roxette, bro! They cost a fortune!

KENT

There's no need to play the blame game, Mooch. And let's not forget the joyride they took us on.

The crowd murmurs in agreement. Mooch concedes.

ROB

As I was saying, this is a business and we need to get our books into the black. As such, I'll be reviewing all of our spending so expect to see me on set tomorrow. I want to see first hand where the money goes. Good day.

Rob exits. A cold silence hovers.

SATANYA

We're all going to be fired! I can't go back to teaching at Vassar! I just can't!

MOOCH

I've seen it before, man. Suits swoop in all nippin' and slashin' and the next thing you know robots are doin' your job. Allentown!

As panic begins to take hold, only Kent remains calm. He steps to the podium and speaks.

KENT

Calm down! Hey people, calm down!

The group quiets and gives Kent their attention.

KENT (CONT'D)

No one's going to lose their job. You know why? Because we're a family, and families stick together. Think of all the great families there have been: the Rockefellers, the Kennedys, the Mansons.

LILY

The Manson Family were murderers.

KENT

Right.

(beat)

But when they were separated, who did they kill? No one, that's who.

MIDNITE VULTURE

Squeaky Fromme did try to kill Gerald Ford, Clyde.

MOOCH

I get it. You're sayin' we should murder Rob Lowe.

KENT

Let's forget about murder for now. Mr. Lowe'll see that we're a family and he'll understand that we can't be broken up. We're WJBS, aren't we? You're darn tootin' we are. Darn tootin'.

The group's not convinced but the panic ebbs. They shuffle to the exit leaving Kent and Lily alone. A sudden realization hits Lily and she rushes to the door to stop the exodus.

LILY

Wait, everyone! We have that... thing. Remember?

SATANYA

Another time, honey.

MIDNITE VULTURE

Sorry, kitty, I don't have much party in me.

Lily finds herself alone with Kent. She faces him. He shoots her a huge smile.

KENT

What have we got on tap?

INT. WJBS - LOADING DOCK - EVENING

Lily swings open the door. A couple of folding tables full of food and drinks line a wall under a hand-painted banner reading "Happy 900th Kent". A few more of Rachel's Bat Mitzvah balloons round out the decorations. Kent is speechless.

LILY
Surprise!

INT. WJBS - LOADING DOCK - LATER

A content Kent pushes his plate aside. Lily sips a drink.

LILY
Did you mean what you said earlier?
How no one was losing their job,
how we're a family, all that?

KENT
Sure, absolutely.

LILY
That's really good to hear. I'm a
bit scared by the changes. Who
knows what's going to happen?

KENT
You've got nothing to worry about.
Mr. Lowe will take one look at what
we're all working so hard on and
he'll jump right on board, another
sailor on our crazy ship of fools.

LILY
You certainly know how to calm a
girl down.

KENT
I've got a way with men, too.

She laughs, but the double entendre is lost on him.

LILY
I'm glad we talked. Sometimes it's
easier to be scared or angry or
worried, but you see the best in
everything. You really are one of
the good ones.

Kent blushes. Their eyes meet and the gaze lingers.

LILY (CONT'D)
Kent, do you believe in fate?
Do you believe that some things are
meant to be, no matter how hard
they may seem, or how long it may
take?

KENT

Sure. Like death. Everybody dies,
even little babies.

LILY

That's a little darker than I was
thinking, but--

KENT

Or one of those genetic conditions.
Maybe your fate is to go blind or
lose your mind and forget everyone
you ever loved.

LILY

Again, pretty dark, but... ugh, I'm
so bad at this. I've been trying
forever to tell you something but I
can never find the words, so I made
you something. To show you.

She picks up the present she gave him earlier from the table
and puts it in his hands.

KENT

Your gift! Let's have a look-see,
shall we?

Lily bites her lip nervously as Kent is about to rip open the
gift, when Red appears.

RED

Room for one more?

KENT

Come on in, partner. The water's
fine! I was just about to open this
gift from Lily.

She quickly stops him. The private moment has passed.

LILY

Actually, it's getting late. Let's
do it another time.

KENT

Come on! Really?

She puts a hand on the gift. Her eyes implore him to wait.

KENT (CONT'D)

All right, you tease, I'll play
along. But don't think I'm going to
forget about this.

(MORE)

KENT (CONT'D)

Now what say we all get some shut
eye and blow Mr. Lowe's socks right
back to Hollywoodland tomorrow?

Red and Lily share skeptical smiles. Kent beams.

INT. WJBS - "TALKIN' ENGINES" SET - MORNING

Tools of all sorts line the walls of the workshop-like
"Talkin' Engines with Mooch" set. Rob enters holding a
notebook in his hand, ready to take stock of the station's
properties.

The camera rolls as Mooch, wearing long-sleeved coveralls,
cautiously approaches an OUTBOARD MOTOR sidelong on the
workbench. Red urges him to get a move on.

Wincing, Mooch gingerly puts a screwdriver to the engine's
inner working. It suddenly ROARS TO LIFE and CATCHES MOOCH'S
SLEEVE. Red rushes on to the set to help. Both men tumble to
the ground as Mooch's sleeve is TORN OFF AT THE SHOULDER.

Mooch stands, revealing that BOTH OF HIS SLEEVES have now
been lost to this evil machine. Red restrains him as he tries
to kick the engine.

Shaking his head, Rob scribbles in his notebook and leaves.

INT. WJBS - "FRIGHT CLUB" SET - DAY

Satanya's set has a "house-of-horrors-on-the-cheap" theme:
every piece of decor is something bought from a dollar store
in October. She sits on an old chaise longue and cradles a
plastic skull. *

SATANYA

Join me, my ghouls, as we plunge
heart-first into tonight's
scaryifying creature feature: G.I.
Dracula! Be sure to leave a light
on!

She leans back and lets out her SIGNATURE WITCH CACKLE. As
she does her dress pops open revealing a TIGER-STRIPED BRA
along with her ample cleavage. Cameraman Red motions to alert
her but Rob stops him and watches as she laughs, oblivious.

INT. WJBS - "24-CARAT BLACK" SET - DAY

Another show, another set: "MIDNITE VULTURE'S 24-CARAT
BLACK".

Midnite Vulture is seated on a purple sofa making out with TWO WOMEN (20s) simultaneously while a SEXY FUNK SONG blares. A THIRD WOMAN (30s) dances solo beside a fern. They all seem oblivious to the fact they're being filmed.

Shaking his head, Rob SCRIBBLES in his notebook and leaves.

INT. WJBS - "FOR THE LOVE OF CRAFTS" SET - DAY

A tastefully-decorated set. Big letters on the back wall read "FOR THE LOVE OF CRAFTS" Seated in a big comfy chair, Lily presents her latest piece, a knit tea cosy.

LILY

The tea cosy is a great way to keep your kettle warm. Or if you're not into tea parties, it makes a stylish hat for a cat, small dog, or house elf.

She GIGGLES AWKWARDLY at her own joke. This wakes up Rob, who's fallen asleep on a nearby director's chair. Yawning and shaking his head, he SCRIBBLES in his notebook and leaves.

INT. WJBS - "FINGER PAINTING" SET - DAY

Rob enters the set of Finger Painting. Kent puts the finishing touches on a painting of a kangaroo with a kitten in its pouch. He signs it with a smile.

KENT

Until next time, I'm Kent Finger saying I hope you learned a lot. I know I sure did.

Rob's seen enough -- shaking his head, he SCRIBBLES a final note and leaves.

INT. WJBS - BREAK ROOM - AFTERNOON

The mood is high, the gathered staff confident they've done their best. Rob enters, his grim demeanor chilling everyone but Kent.

ROB

When I was eight, my beloved Yorkie Trixster turned on my family and tore my mother to shreds.

(MORE)

ROB (CONT'D)

It took a dozen rounds from my father's rifle to stop him and it cost him four fingers. It was the worst day of my life. Until now.

Kent stops smiling.

ROB (CONT'D)

Each time I thought I'd hit bottom, the next one would come along and make the previous effort look like a Malaysian sex holiday. Honest to god, it was worse than being fucked in the ass by... what's something awful to be ass-fucked by?

KENT

Salad tongs!

MOOCH

A bowling pin!

MIDNITE VULTURE

A wooden leg!

SATANYA

(quietly)

Your uncle.

A silence falls across the room. Everyone avoids eye contact with Satanya.

ROB

Let's forget the metaphors.

LILY

That was a simile.

ROB

Forget those, too!

KENT

Mr. Lowe, we might not have rocked your socks today, but give us another chance and you'll see what a wonderful thing we've got going here at WJBS.

ROB

There are going to be some massive changes around here and just to prove that I mean business, one of you is losing your job right now.

(MORE)

ROB (CONT'D)

I can't decide which of you dogs to put down so you're going to draw straws.

Rob retrieves a FISTFUL OF STRAWS from a pocket and displays them, making the short straw visible. He shuffles and levels them then presents his clutched hand. The staff wordlessly form a line and each take a straw. Only Satanya is spared. When it's her turn, Rob takes a full-length straw and slides it between her boobs. She GIGGLES and skips off.

Kent's turn arrives. He draws and he's safe. Lily follows him and draws. She tries to hide her straw from view but Kent catches a glimpse. She's drawn the short one! Her face is awash in fear. The rest of the hosts draw theirs. Finally--

ROB (CONT'D)

So which one of you morlocks is taking a hike?

Lily's about to step forward when--

KENT

(spitting out shredded plastic)

Me.

SALIVA drips down his chin as he holds up the tiny straw that he's OBVIOUSLY CHEWED OFF. Rob neither notices nor cares.

KENT (CONT'D)

I drew the shortest straw.

Everyone GASPS. Kent continues to SPIT.

ROB

And now you can draw unemployment checks. Let this be a lesson to the rest of you. I'd better see a 180 from everyone tomorrow or someone else'll be joining Finger here.

KENT

It's pronounced "Finjer".

Rob exits briskly leaving behind a SOMBER SILENCE. The other hosts look at Kent awkwardly. He tries to smile.

KENT (CONT'D)

I'm going to talk to him and sort this out. He's new here. That can be awfully hard. I'm sure he's just blowing off steam.

MIDNITE VULTURE

If that's what you think just happened, Clyde, I'll have what you're smoking. Unless it's crack. I've seen too many brothers disappear down that rabbit hole.

For the first time, a crack appears in Kent's optimistic veneer.

INT. WJBS - ROB'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Rob sits at his desk smoking a cigar and reading an issue of 'KERRANG!' while HARDCORE PORNOGRAPHY plays on his computer.

The door flies open and in runs Kent.

KENT

I'll save you, Mr. Lowe!

Rob quickly TURNS OFF his computer.

ROB

(annoyed)

Jesus, Finger, don't you knock?

KENT

Oh. I heard moaning and... I guess you're not in danger.

He takes a deep breath and readies himself before continuing.

KENT (CONT'D)

We here at WJBS like to think of ourselves as one big family, and I think if you give me another chance--

ROB

I don't care what you think. You're fired. End of story.

The door flies open again and in runs Lily.

LILY

Kent! Stop. I can't let you go through with this.

ROB

Jesus, don't any of you knock?

LILY

Kent didn't draw the shortest straw, I did. He cheated for me.

ROB
 You expect me to believe he got
 fired for you? No one's that nice
 or that stupid, sweetheart.

LILY
 Kent is!

Kent stares at his shoes, embarrassed.

ROB
 So is that how it is, Finger?

Rob stands and walks up to Kent.

ROB (CONT'D)
 I've known guys like you. You
 convince people that you're some
 selfless white knight, but you're
 kidding yourself.
 (tapping Kent's chest)
 Deep down you're just as greedy and
 horny and nasty as the rest of us.
 At least we're honest about it.

Kent gives him a sympathetic look.

KENT
 You're wrong, Mr. Lowe, and I'm
 truly sorry if that's what you
 believe.

ROB
 Don't be sorry for me, you're the
 one who's out of a job. You have
 until Friday to get your stuff out
 of here. And if you want to shoot a
 last show I'd suggest you find a
 budget because you're getting
 nothing from me. Now get out of my
 office.

Kent and Lily exit without a word. The door SLAMS behind them.

INT. WJBS - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Lily's face is awash with panic and confusion.

LILY
 This isn't right. I can't let you
 do this for me.

KENT

You won't change my mind, Lily.
 What Mr. Lowe did back there was
 wrong and I'm making sure no one
 else gets hurt. It could happen a
 million times and I'd always do the
 same thing. That's just how I am.
 You know that. Now if you'll excuse
 me, I need to get supplies for my
 big finale.

He exits the building before she can respond.

INT. ART SUPPLY STORE - EVENING

A DISAFFECTED CLERK (late teens) rings up Kent's art
 supplies. The register reads \$249.60.

KENT

I can't afford that, it's more than
 my rent!

DISAFFECTED CLERK

(shrugging)
 Then try the Dollar Store or
 something. God.

EXT. DOLLAR STORE - LATER

Kent exits THE DOLLAR STORE empty-handed, his head hanging
 low.

EXT. CANADIAN DOLLAR STORE - LATER

Kent exits THE CANADIAN DOLLAR STORE empty-handed, his head
 hanging low.

EXT. PESO STORE - LATER

Kent exits THE PESO STORE empty-handed, his head, topped with
 a TINY SOMBRERO, hanging low.

EXT. NORTH KOREAN DOLLAR STORE - NIGHT

Kent cautiously wanders through the bad part of town. SKETCHY-
 LOOKING PEOPLE conduct sketchy-looking business in a nearby
 alley. A COUPLE OF WINOS sit on concrete steps drinking out
 of paper bags. A FLAMING CAR TIRE rolls down the middle of
 the deserted street.

Kent SHIVERS and glances in a dirty shop window. A faded old sign proclaims "WHY YES, WE DO SELL OIL PAINTS. CHEAP!" Beside it is another sign, scrawled in KOREAN.

Intrigued, Kent enters the store.

INT. NORTH KOREAN DOLLAR STORE - MOMENTS LATER

The dim, dusty shop is packed wall-to-wall with antiques, junk, and antique junk. Kent enters carefully, trying not to break anything.

From out of the darkness comes A HEAVILY-ACCENTED VOICE--

YONG (O.C.)
Come closer, my son. I've been
expecting for you.

Peering into the darkness Kent makes out a shadowy figure at the back of the store. He gulps and cautiously approaches. As he does, the figure steps into the light. It's YONG (60s) looking every bit the MARTIAL ARTS SENSEI: a long, wispy FU-MANCHU moustache, flowing silken robes.

Kent GASPS.

YONG (CONT'D)
(annoyed)
You no pizza man! What you want?
You buy something!

KENT
I... I saw the sign in your window.

Yong eyes Kent suspiciously.

YONG
You with government? ATF? You cop?
You have to say if you cop!

KENT
What? No! I'm just looking for oil
paints!

YONG
(relieved)
Oh, *that* sign. Yes, Yong got
paints. Yong got just what you
need.

Yong LAUGHS OMINOUSLY before disappearing into the back room and returning with a BATTERED OLD ARMY FOOTLOCKER.

He places it on the counter with a THUD and BLOWS OFF A LAYER OF DUST revealing KOREAN WRITING.

Yong unfastens the locks and cracks open the lid, revealing a large assortment of unused OIL PAINT TUBES.

KENT
They're beautiful!

Kent reaches for them but Yong SLAMS THE FOOTLOCKER SHUT.

YONG
Be warned: some gifts come at a
terrible cost.

KENT
But the sign says they're cheap.

YONG
No! Metaphoric cost! Non-
metaphorically the paints are ten
dollar.

KENT
I'll take 'em!

YONG
But I no yet tell you terrible
cost! It has been said that art is
a window into the soul. Are you
prepared to peer into yours?

Kent roots around in his pockets, oblivious to Yong's warning. He pulls out some crumpled bills and put them on the counter, pushing them towards Yong.

KENT
Ten dollars! Here you go.

Yong sighs.

YONG
You need receipt?

KENT
For the metaphor?

YONG
Get out.

Kent picks up the footlocker and heads for the exit.

INT. WJBS - "FINGER PAINTING" SET - MORNING

Kent enters the studio a final time carrying the battered old footlocker and crosses to his set where Red offers him a solemn nod. He stands before "The Birthday Bear's Wish" and smiles sadly.

KENT

I guess this is it, Mr. Birthday.

Rob enters the studio, a smarmy smile on his face.

ROB

Enjoy your last episode, Finger.

KENT

It's "Finjer", actually. But thanks! We've got a special-- Oh. That was sarcasm, wasn't it.

Rob rolls his eyes and takes a seat beside Red.

Kent drags the locker over to the easel and psyches up. Red counts him in.

RED

In five... four... three..

Red silently finishes the countdown. The "ON AIR" LIGHT FLICKERS TO LIFE and Kent shoots a smile at the camera.

KENT

Good day, fellow artists. Before we begin I have an announcement.

INT. DOTTIE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Dottie sits at her canvas, paint brush at the ready.

KENT (ON TV)

This will be the last episode of Finger Painting with Kent Finger.

Dottie KICKS over her easel in anger.

INT. FRAT HOUSE - MORNING

The stoners are staring in horror at the TV. The Chad drops a burning joint in his lap.

KENT (ON TV)

Although our travels together may be over, I know it's not the end of your journey as an artist.

The Chad doesn't notice his tear-aways CATCH FIRE.

INT. DON AND COCO'S HOUSE - SOLARIUM - MORNING

Don, naked and weeping, puts a comforting arm around Coco, also naked (but not weeping). She leans her head on his shoulder.

KENT (ON TV)

If I've taught you anything then you're welcome. And thank you for everything you've taught me.

Don gingerly reaches to squeeze her boob but she SLAPS HIS HAND aside. He SNIFFS loudly.

INT. WJBS - "FINGER PAINTING" SET - MORNING

Kent wipes his eyes and takes a breath.

KENT

But enough bad news. Who feels like painting?

Kent opens a few tubes of the new surplus paint. An OVERPOWERING ODOR hits him immediately. He COUGHS, SNEEZES, COUGHS AGAIN. Red GRIMACES. Rob COVERS HIS NOSE.

KENT (CONT'D)

Why don't we see if can find ourselves a little kitty-cat friend to brighten the day. First let's mix up a wash of...

(reads paint tube labels)

Upheaval white and motherland blue.

Kent starts to sweat as the fumes begin to affect him.

KENT (CONT'D)

That's right, get that paint all mixed up. Now we take our fan brush and lay down a lovely blue sky.

Kent loses his train of thought and takes a long pause before shaking off the cobwebs and continuing.

KENT (CONT'D)
 Now we'll use some proletariat
 brown and a little salamander
 orange... here comes kitty now...

He loads his palette with more paint and takes a long sniff from his brush as he removes his shirt.

KENT (CONT'D)
 Boy, it's hot in here today! Kitty
 looks a little lonely, doesn't he?
 He needs a friend. What do you say
 we give him a second head?

Kent continues to paint, swaying drunkenly and talking to himself rather than the audience.

KENT (CONT'D)
 And now lets add some wings, maybe
 a horn. And this kitty's a boy, so
 let's give him...
 (quietly)
 A wang!

Kent begins to giggle.

KENT (CONT'D)
 Let's put it right here. Heck,
 let's give him another one. And
 since this kitty is two kitties,
 let's add some girl stuff, too.

Kent stops painting and cocks an ear to the canvas.

KENT (CONT'D)
 Can you keep a secret, kitty? I got
 fired! I don't know what I'm going
 to do! What's that? You're hungry?

Kent rubs paint on his chest and breast feeds the painting. Red makes a move to stop the recording, but Rob stops him. He's enjoying this.

KENT (CONT'D)
 I'm a failure, kitty, a joke. I
 have no wife, no kids, even my dog
 left me for the neighbor! But I had
 this show and I was happy. Until
 some smooth-talking jackass waltzed
 in from La-La Land and took it all
 away!

Rob happily points himself out to Red as the culprit. Lily sneaks in to the studio.

KENT (CONT'D)

I try to be good, I try to be kind,
and what does it get me? What does
it god damned get me?

Kent stops and stares at the painting, listening intently. He sneers and sways unsteadily.

KENT (CONT'D)

Of course I asked for my job back,
you stupid cat! I practically
begged him but do you think he
heard me? Course not. Because cunts
don't have fucking ears and he is a
cunt! CUNT! CUNT! CUNT!

Rob and Red are frozen, jaws agape. Lily rushes to the stage as Kent GOES RIGID AND COLLAPSES. The station's TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES card appears on a nearby monitor.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Kent blinks awake, confused by his surroundings. He's lying in a HOSPITAL BED, a concerned Lily by his side.

LILY

Oh, thank god. I was so worried.

KENT

(hoarsely)
What happened? Where am I?

LILY

You're in the hospital. You've had
an accident but the doctors say
you'll be all right.

KENT

I... I remember being on set and...
(it hits him)
Oh, gosh. What have I done?

LILY

Shh. You need your rest. We'll talk
about it later. I'm just glad
you're okay.

She squeezes his hand and leaves. Kent stares up at the ceiling, trying to process things.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

Kent wakes up in the dimly lit room. He looks at the phone by his bedside; the message light is flashing. He presses the button and the messages play aloud.

ROB (V.O.)
This is Mr. Lowe. Call me.

KENT
Oh, boy. I bet that's not an invitation to Bob Evans.

BEEP.

ROB (V.O.)
Finger, it's Mr. Lowe. Call me back when you get this.

BEEP.

ROB (V.O.)
Hi, Kent. This is Rob Lowe from the station. We need to talk. Call me ASAP.

BEEP.

ROB (V.O.)
Kent, baby, it's Rob. Long time, no speak. I'd love to have a bit of a jaw-wag with you so gimme a ringy-ding, buddy!

As Kent tries to process this, the door FLIES OPEN, flooding the room with light. He shields his eyes as three twenty-something SCENESTERS walk in: DAX, VIOLA, and RAND. All three are dressed in their usual style, hobo chic by way of some 1980's dystopian future, like Daryl Hannah in *'Blade Runner'*.

Rand holds a briefcase in one hand and a cellphone in the other. He offers the phone to Kent.

INGRID (V.O.)
Am I speaking with Mr. Kent Finger, the television show host?

KENT
It's pronounced "Finjer". And if this is the FCC, I'm sorry about my language. I come from a long line of merchant marines and--

INGRID (V.O.)

I'm sure I don't care. My name is Ingrid de Graaf and I purchased the painting from your most recent episode. I would very much like you to be present when I unveil it tomorrow evening. Perhaps we could meet beforehand, over dinner? I always like to better acquaint myself with artists responsible for works in my collection.

KENT

Sorry, did you say you bought my painting?

INGRID (V.O.)

9 PM, at Fetch Supper Club?

KENT

I don't know where that is.

INGRID (V.O.)

I'll send a car.

KENT

Also I don't know what a supper club is.

Beat.

INGRID (V.O.)

Please pass the phone back to my assistant.

Kent does so. Rand listens to Ingrid for a moment before hanging up. He passes the briefcase to Kent and the scenesters leave.

Kent puts the briefcase on a nearby table and opens it. His eyes GO WIDE. Inside are stacks and stacks of hundred dollar bills. The phone RINGS and Kent braces himself, expecting another shock.

KENT

Hello?

ROB (V.O.)

Kent! There you are! I really need to talk to you, pal. What do you say?

KENT

Sure, I guess. When?

ROB (V.O.)
How about now?

A rock STRIKES THE WINDOW. Kent climbs out of bed and looks out the window just as another rock hits the glass in front of his face. Cracks SPIDERWEB across the pane. Rob waves from the sidewalk below.

ROB (V.O.)
My bad! Come on down! I'm not
paying for parking.

Kent hangs up and leaves the room, taking the briefcase with him.

INT. STRIP CLUB - AFTERNOON

Kent, still in his johnny shirt, sits with Rob in a booth at a high-class strip club. Dancers and wait staff wave familiarly to Rob as they walk by. Kent's nervous, clearly out of his element.

ROB
So what do you think?

KENT
(wrinkling his nose)
This place has a weird smell.

Rob takes a deep breath.

ROB
Drink it in. That's the sweet,
sweet smell of pussy and broken
dreams.

Kent takes a deep breath and COUGHS.

KENT
It smells like low tide.

Rob sweeps his arm across the room.

ROB
So what do you think? Is this hot
or is this hot?

KENT
I'm not really comfortable here. It
doesn't feel right to leer at these
ladies.

ROB

They're pros. They'd be insulted if you didn't leer! Let's just have a couple of drinks and if you still want to leave after that I'll drive you home myself.

KENT

I guess that's all right.

Rob nods at a nearby waitress who hurries over with six shots of bourbon. He hands her a hundred dollar bill.

ROB

Keep 'em coming, gorgeous.

He slaps her on the ass as she walks off, then passes a shot to Kent and takes one for himself.

Kent hesitates but Rob smiles at him and he relaxes. They down the shot together and immediately start on a second one. Kent CHOKES and COUGHS after each shot but manages to keep everything down. He leans back in the booth, the liquor already making a warm hole in his mind.

ROB (CONT'D)

You're probably wondering why I wanted to meet with you. It's simple. I want to be part of the Kent Finger business.

KENT

I don't have a business. You fired me.

ROB

(scoffs)

What? No, that was just a test to see if you had what it takes. And let me tell you, pal, you passed. Congrats!

Rob quickly leads Kent into downing another shot and waves for more. Kent slouches lower, already past his limit.

ROB (CONT'D)

So what do you say? I'll be your manager; run your daily affairs, deal with money. All the boring stuff. You just focus on making great art.

KENT

And my show?

ROB
You want it, you got it.

Kent considers things as more shots arrive.

KENT
Aw, heck. Let's do it! Welcome to
Team Finger!

They toast and drink.

ROB
Fantastic. I just need a few
signatures to make it official.

Rob looks through his briefcase while a now-drunk Kent scans the room with a new appreciation for the naked women. He points to one of the strippers.

KENT
Look! It's just like one of those
weird bald cats!

Rob lays out a stack of paper on the table and hands Kent a pen.

ROB
Sign here. And here. Here. Initial
here, here, here. Oh, and here.

Kent blindly follows the instructions.

ROB (CONT'D)
That's that! I'm going to make you
a very rich man, Finger.

KENT
You know what? I think I already
am. A lady called and said she
bought a painting. She gave me a
briefcase full of money, like a
drug deal!

ROB
You don't say? What a surprise! She
didn't call me or the station or
anything. Just leave it with me.
I'll take care of that for you,
minus the standard manager
commission, of course.

KENT
Sound good, manager!

ROB
Say, what say we get ourselves a couple of face dances. To celebrate.

KENT
What's a face dance?

ROB
It's like a lap dance but with your face. It's also an album by The Who.

KENT
Such wisdom! What managing you'll do!

Rob whistles and two buxom young women, PEACHES and ANGEL (early 20s), approach.

ROB
I'll take the one on the left. The other might be my daughter.

Angel starts dancing for Rob. A drunken Kent wobbles to his feet to greet Peaches. He takes her hand and bows deeply. She pushes him back to into the booth and throws a leg up over his shoulder. Kent points directly between her legs.

KENT
Another one! Say, do you think this is a kind of female pattern bald--

Kent's voice is muffled by Peaches's crotch.

INT. WJBS - BREAK ROOM - MORNING

Kent is the center of attention as Mooch, Midnite Vulture, and Satanya welcome him back.

KENT
--Every last one, just like those weird bald cats.

Lily enters excitedly. She stops short of hugging him.

LILY
Kent! So it's true? You got your job back?

KENT
Yep! Finger Painting is back on the air!

LILY
(skeptical)
But why the change of heart?

KENT
Mr. Lowe didn't say but we all know
the answer. He saw our family
separated and it tore him up inside.

No one buys this but they let Kent have his moment.

KENT (CONT'D)
And get this: Mr. Lowe is my
manager now!

LILY
He's your what?

KENT
I know! Boy, yesterday sure was
crazy! First the blackout, then I
sold a painting for fifty thousand
dollars, then Mr. Lowe took me
dancing and--

MOOCH
What the christ? Did you say fifty
grand?

KENT
Yeah! Can you believe it?

MOOCH
No. I absolutely, one hundred
percent cannot.

KENT
It's like a dream, isn't it? Some
crazy kids just showed up at my
door and handed me a case of money!

LILY
Wait. Did you sell your painting
before or after you took on Rob
Lowe as manager?

MOOCH
I can't be the only one having a
hard time with this, can I? Fifty
large for birds having a bubble
bath or whatever the hell?

KENT

Was that what it was? I don't remember it at all, my brain was all kablooey.

MIDNITE VULTURE

Finger, I think your marbles are rattled.

LILY

Kent, listen--

They're interrupted by an incessant CAR HORN BLEATING from outside. Kent opens a curtain revealing a white stretch limousine. Rand and Viola mill about impatiently while Dax lays on the horn. They each wear more ridiculous variations of their outfits from yesterday. Viola, in particular, is carrying a katana.

MOOCH

I'm having a stroke. This is a stroke-induced hallucination.

KENT

Looks like my ride is here. I'm going to meet the buyer at a supper club! I checked on the internet; that's what white people call restaurants now.

LILY

Kent -- about the painting, it's not what you think.

The honking is too much; they can barely hear each other.

KENT

Sorry, I really have to go. See you later.

Kent runs to the car giddily like an excited eight year old. He gets in the back seat and the limo peels off.

MOOCH

He's in for a hell of a surprise.

MIDNITE VULTURE

You see that chick with the sword? I'd say he's also in for a hell of a blowjob.

Lily isn't listening. She's watching the limo drive away, a look of concern on her face.

INT. LIMOUSINE - EVENING

As Dax, Viola, and Rand occupy themselves with their phones, Kent hangs his head out the window like a puppy as the sights and sounds of the Big City overwhelm him.

INT. FETCH SUPPER CLUB - EVENING

Kent, his hair whipped wild by the wind, sits in the city's trendiest restaurant. He reads the menu as he waits.

KENT

That must be a typo. "Peanuts," maybe? That sounds like a thing. "Tiger peanuts". Maybe I'll have that.

A beautiful and exotic woman, INGRID DE GRAAF (mid-30s), approaches the table.

INGRID

Mr. Finger.

KENT

In the khakis! You must be Ingrid!
How do you do.

Ingrid stands motionless for a second before subtly glancing at the chair in front of her. Kent struggles to his feet and pulls it out before taking his own seat again. Ingrid says nothing, content for now just to study Kent, who looks around awkwardly for a moment before--

KENT (CONT'D)

So... You sure know how to pick 'em! This is the fanciest place I've ever seen. I bet all the rich and powerful people eat here. Like Judge Judy. Or Gandalf.

A WAITER arrives and immediately fills their glasses with wine and prepares to take their order.

INGRID

Do you need a moment?

He picks up the menu and reads it quickly.

KENT

Go ahead. I'll just be a sec.

INGRID

I'll have the carrier pigeon.

KENT
Aren't those extinct?

INGRID
Only to the poor.

KENT
(unsure)
I guess I'll have the lemon-stuffed kangaroo pouch.

The waiter takes their menus and exits.

KENT (CONT'D)
So hey, thanks for buying my painting! I'll be honest, they usually go for a lot less. You must really like art!

INGRID
Have you not heard of me? I suppose I shouldn't be surprised; you and I come from quite different worlds. I'm a collector and gallery owner with a reputation for finding and nurturing up-and-coming talent. I've personally discovered such visionaries as André Gaston, Lindstrom Dwyer, and the great del Bosque.

Kent nods, but has no idea who she's talking about.

INGRID (CONT'D)
My associates watch your program as a source of amusement so I've seen what it is you do. Calling you a hack would almost be a compliment. But your program yesterday was different. I feel like the real you was revealed.

KENT
Uh-huh.

INGRID
I caught a glimpse of something. A demon trapped inside a soft and fading middle-aged nobody. It was the closest thing to brilliance I've seen in years.

The waiter returns with the food. Kent gets a steaming slab of brown-grey meat surrounded by halved lemons.

Ingrid watches as he dives in with knife and fork. He has a great deal of trouble: lemon juice and grease splash about.

INGRID (CONT'D)

How is your dinner?

KENT

I gotta be honest, I messed up. I thought lemons were the orange things.

INGRID

I hope I don't offend you, Mr. Finger, but I find you very peculiar. Like some sort of talking ape.

KENT

A talking ape? I'm going to paint the heck out of that, let me tell you! Speaking of which, what was the painting you bought? There was this weird odor on set yesterday so things are a little blackout-y.

INGRID

You don't recall? Well, then. I look forward to you meeting your inner self at the gallery tonight.

KENT

An art gallery? There really is a first time for everything.

Ingrid smiles, having warmed up to her new ingenue. Kent pushes his plate aside having given up trying to eat.

KENT (CONT'D)

I should have ordered the tiger peanuts.

INT. INGRID'S ART GALLERY - MAIN HALL - NIGHT

Ingrid leads an overwhelmed Kent through a large, crowded art gallery. Artists and appreciators mill about, sipping champagne and discussing the art that fills the room.

INGRID

Welcome, Mr. Finger, to the world of real art.

A sketchy-looking homeless man, SQUID (early 20s), roots through a nearby TRASH CAN.

He spies Ingrid and approaches her chewing on a MELON RIND.
They kiss each other on the cheeks.

INGRID (CONT'D)

Squid, darling, you know Mr. Kent
Finger.

(to Kent)

Squid is one of my associates. He
watches your show to laugh at you.

KENT

It's always nice to meet fans.
They're the reason I do what I do.

SQUID

Spare some change, brother?

Kent rummages through his pockets and produces a handful of
loose change and some gum wrappers. Squid takes everything.

SQUID (CONT'D)

Solid, man, solid. I gotta tell
you, your show is hilarious. You're
a really terrible artist.

KENT

Thanks for the feedback. I'm
working hard every day to improve
and I hope you'll take that journey
with me.

Squid BURSTS INTO LAUGHTER.

SQUID

You're even better in person.

(to Ingrid)

And what about you, darling?

He shakes his begging can.

INGRID

Not quite yet, I'm afraid.

SQUID

You'll crack one of these days.

He spies a man in a tuxedo and top hat entering.

SQUID (CONT'D)

I gotta jet. Catch you later!

Squid hurries over to man in the top hat and shakes his can.

KENT

That poor boy. The street can be a
cruel mattress.

INGRID

Oh, he's not homeless. He's
spending the year as a vagrant.
It's a performance piece.

KENT

Oh. Oh! Oh? Boy, did I read that
wrong. Should I apologize to him?
Or get my change back?

INGRID

Only if you want a refund. You just
bought art, Mr. Finger. Presumably
the first real art purchase of your
life. Personally, I have yet to be
convinced of the work's value. But
come. Let me show you around.

MONTAGE

They tour the gallery taking in the art -- paintings,
sculptures, installations -- each new piece adding to Kent's
confusion.

END MONTAGE

They stop in front of a colorful ABSTRACT PAINTING adorned
with DOLL HEADS and TWINE.

KENT

I just don't get it. Like this.
It's not a duck. It's not a bear.
I'm actually kind of scared of it.

INGRID

You are a very curious man, Mr.
Finger.

KENT

Oh no, not at all. Sure, I dabbled
a bit in college but these days I'm
straight as a ruler.

Ingrid smiles.

INGRID

Come. Let me now show you what lurks
in the dark recesses of your mind.

She takes his hand and leads him through the crowd.

INT. INGRID'S ART GALLERY - DAIS - MOMENTS LATER

A cloth-covered painting hangs on the wall behind a podium on a low dais. Ingrid takes the mic and an uneasy Kent stands to the side.

INGRID

Good evening, everyone.

The assembled crowd grows silent.

INGRID (CONT'D)

Adding a new piece to my collection is not a task I undertake lightly, so I'm sure many of you were surprised by my most recent acquisition.

All eyes on Kent. He straightens up and waves, doing both things awkwardly.

INGRID (CONT'D)

Kent Finger has for years hosted a banal, insipid public television program.

A loud, single-voiced BOO rings out.

INGRID (CONT'D)

Yesterday, however, something happened. Something wonderful. Mr. Finger cast aside the shackles of county fairs and hotel lobbies and unleashed his inner self, his true self. And oh! What a demon it was. Without further ado, ladies and gentlemen, I present "Cunt".

She nods to Kent and motions to the painting. He blinks a few times before pulling off the sheet and revealing his horrific painting.

GASPS through the audience. Kent's eyes go WIDE.

INGRID (CONT'D)

Would the artist like to say a few words?

Kent's frozen. Ingrid nods to an ASSISTANT who gives him a shove. Kent stumbles to the podium, EYES LOCKED on painting.

Kent leans into the mic and lets slip a PRIMAL SCREAM before FLEEING into a nearby broom closet and SLAMMING the door behind him.

In the crowd a slow CLAP begins. It quickly picks up and soon the audience is CHEERING. Ingrid takes the mic.

INGRID (CONT'D)

Thank you for coming. Please enjoy
the rest of your evening.

As the crowd disperses, Ingrid approaches the closet. From within she hears a LOW, MISERABLE SOB. She lightly presses her hand to the door before rejoining the party.

INT. INGRID'S ART GALLERY - MAIN HALL - LATER

The lights are out and the last guest is gone. Kent cracks the closet door and, confident he's alone, tiptoes up to his painting brandishing a broom.

A light flicks on behind him as Ingrid appears.

INGRID

And what do you intend to do now,
Mr. Finger? Sweep it to death?

KENT

It's a nightmare! It shouldn't
exist!

INGRID

It's not a nightmare. It's your
real self, elevated for the first
time from the soul-crushing depths
of mediocrity.

KENT

You're a very nice lady and you're
whip-smart but you've got the wrong
fella! This painting is a mistake.
This isn't me.

INGRID

How can you be sure?

Kent pauses, confused. Ingrid sighs and rummages through her purse.

INGRID (CONT'D)

Come with me.

They head toward the rest room.

INT. INGRID'S ART GALLERY - MAIN HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Kent STARES INTENSELY at his painting.

KENT
(whispering)
I see it now.

The tip of his nose is COVERED IN COCAINE. He turns to Ingrid. His eyes are wild, electric.

KENT (CONT'D)
I see everything!

He BOUNDS frantically around the room, flitting from piece to piece.

KENT (CONT'D)
I CAN SEE BEHIND THE SUN!

Kent picks Ingrid up and slings her over his shoulder as he rushes to the door. He makes a final HOWL before escaping into the night. Ingrid LAUGHS as they depart.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Wind rushes through Kent's hair as he surfs on top of a limousine on a busy downtown street. The ANNOYED LIMO DRIVER honks, signaling the light has turned green. Kent clumsily climbs back down through the sunroof.

EXT. SKYSCRAPER ROOF - NIGHT

A rooftop party. Kent and other PARTY-GOERS bounce up and down on a trampoline dangerously close to the building's edge. Ingrid watches from the bar, sipping wine.

One of the jumpers overshoots and disappears off the side of the building. No one seems to notice.

INT. UPSCALE GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

Kent deftly fences with A MIDGET. He briefly strikes a pose as Ingrid takes a picture.

The midget stabs him in the crotch.

INT. UPSCALE CLOTHING STORE - NIGHT

Kent steps out the dressing room wearing a stylish black turtleneck shirt and white pants. Ingrid shakes her head and points out the growing bloodstain on his crotch.

INT. UPSCALE CLOTHING STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Kent steps out of the dressing room wearing a stylish black turtleneck and a pair of NANTUCKET REDS. Ingrid nods.

EXT. HELICOPTER - NIGHT

Kent vigorously rubs his gums as he and Ingrid take a helicopter tour of the city.

KENT
(yelling)
I'm just going to throw up for a sec.

He suddenly opens the door and leans out. EMERGENCY LIGHTS FLASH and SIREN BLARES from the cockpit as the HELICOPTER PILOT struggles with the controls.

EXT. DOCK - MOMENTS LATER

The dazed pilot is sitting in the back of an ambulance in an emergency blanket.

A soaking wet Kent is revived by a PARAMEDIC with a DEFIBRILLATOR. He gets up, newly energized, and takes Ingrid by the hand. They run off together.

Behind them, a crashed helicopter burns in shallow water.

INT. INGRID'S LOFT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Kent wakes up next to Ingrid in her lavish silk-swaddled bed. She looks divine, hair and makeup somehow expertly styled. He looks like a pile of hairy garbage. His head throbs.

KENT
Ugh, what happened? I remember the gallery, the trampoline... Were there swans?

INGRID
Yes. At dawn we attended *la guerre des cygnes*.

KENT
 (struggling with French)
 La gar duh...

INGRID
La guerre des cygnes. It's like a
 cockfight but with swans.

KENT
 Right.
 (beat)
 And a cockfight's probably not what
 I picture in my head?

Ingrid runs her hand through his ample chest hair.

INGRID
 You're so wonderfully simple. It's
 like I've snatched you out of the
 timestream before your clan could
 discover stone tools.

KENT
 Is that a Doctor Who thing?

Ingrid shakes her head, amused.

KENT (CONT'D)
 Last night was amazing, Ingrid, the
 bits I can remember, at least.
 Thank you.

INGRID
 Thank yourself. It was your own
 genius you freed from its prison.

KENT
 You really think that painting is
 the real me?

She kisses him passionately in response, then disappears
 under the sheets. Kent's eyes go WIDE.

INT. WJBS - "FINGER PAINTING" SET - DAY

Red mills about while Rob sits in a director chair. He checks
 his watch impatiently. An anxious Lily waits nearby.

The studio door opens and in walks Ingrid and her scenester
 assistants, Dax, Viola, and Rand. Dax carries Kent's locker.
 Kent follows unsteadily, clearly regretting last night's
 excess.

Rob bolts over to them, practically knocking Lily over.

ROB

You're late, Finger! That's time that could be better spent making me money. Us. Making us money.

Kent opens his mouth to apologize but Ingrid cuts him off.

INGRID

Time means nothing to the creative soul.

ROB

It means a lot to the capitalist soul, Frenchie. And just who the fuck are you?

INGRID

Firstly, I'm Dutch. And secondly, I'm the one who bought "Cunt".

Kent winces at that word, as do Red and Lily in the background.

ROB

Ms. de Graaf! I apologize, I didn't recognize you; photos don't do you justice. This is an honor. It's rare that I get to meet a true patron of the arts.

INGRID

I can't imagine why.

She turns to Kent, completely rebuffing Rob.

INGRID (CONT'D)

It's your time again, Kent. Set your inner fire alight! Prove to everyone that you're no fluke. Make the world spread her legs and fill her with your beauty. Am I clear?

KENT

At first but then I kind of lost you.

INGRID

Go be an artist.

Kent nods. He's nervous, unsure. He takes the locker, hops up on stage, and begins to prepare his equipment. Lily, visibly relieved, comes to his side.

LILY

Oh, you're okay! I was so worried. I kept calling your place but there's was no answer. Did you get lost again?

KENT

Better than that! I had one of the best nights of my life!

Rob grunts to get their attention and points to his watch.

KENT (CONT'D)

I'll tell you about it later.

LILY

Sure. Dinner at my place? Say, 7:00?

KENT

I'll be there with bells on.

Lily nods and leaves. Kent signals that he's ready. The overheads TURN OFF, the SPOTS TURN ON, and Red counts him in.

RED

In five. Four. Three.

He silently finishes the countdown. Kent looks into the camera.

KENT

Welcome back to Finger Painting. I'm your host, Kent Finger and I know what you're thinking: wasn't this show cancelled? Well it was. But I'm pleased to say we're back, thanks in part to the efforts of Ingrid de Graaf, an art lover and my friend. Come on out, Ingrid.

He motions for her. He motions again, more vigorously. Ingrid stays puts. Kent turns back to the camera.

KENT (CONT'D)

You'll just have to take my word that she's a real person. Now let's get cracking! What's say we do a painting about friendship? Between birds. And bees. At school. Together. That sounds nice.

Rob looks about nervously. Ingrid watches with cool confidence.

As Kent loads up his brush, the paint fumes hits him like a punch. He gags but manages to keep everything down. And so it begins.

He sniffs the brush deeply; once, twice, thrice. His eyes widen.

The lights in the room grow BRIGHTER and BRIGHTER and BRIGHTER as a HIGH-PITCHED RINGING fills his ears, growing LOUDER and LOUDER and LOUDER until--

FADE TO:

INT. WJBS - "FINGER PAINTING" SET - MOMENTS LATER

Covering his mouth against the fumes, Rob stands over Kent unsure of what to do. Kent, covered in paint, has knocked the canvas to the ground and is dry humping it; his hips buck but he's otherwise unconscious.

Behind them, Red starts up a floor fan and opens wide the studio doors. A nearby telephone begins RINGING INCESSANTLY as Lily rushes onto the set.

LILY

Kent! Oh my God!

ROB

Somebody answer that damned phone!

Mooch picks up the handset as Lily tries to help Kent up but his thrusting hips make it difficult. Rob finally lends a hand.

A shocked Mooch walks forward, clutching the phone.

MOOCH

This guy wants to buy Kent's painting. For eighty grand.

Rob drops Kent who slams to the floor, taking Lily with him. Ingrid approaches, smiling broadly.

INGRID

You beautiful, primitive monster! I knew you had it in you.

Kent, face-down but conscious, gives an unsteady thumbs up. Rob cries tears of joy. Lily picks herself up and regards the scene with concern.

INT. LILY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The house is warm and inviting, handicrafts decorating every nook and cranny. Lily lights some candles and flits about, nervously arranging and rearranging things.

A KNOCK at the door.

INT. LILY'S HOUSE - FRONT HALL - NIGHT

Lily opens the door. It's Kent, his hair flecked through with paint. He smiles, revealing traces of paint still on his teeth.

LILY

Glad you could make it. Come on in.

She guides him to the dining room.

INT. LILY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

They sit at the dining table. A lovely flower arrangement is flanked by two candles.

She pours him some water.

LILY

How's your head?

KENT

Right as rain! I don't remember all that much about the day but that's pretty normal.

LILY

That's not normal at all! I think the paint might be affecting your brain.

KENT

I doubt the North Korean government would produce something that wasn't rigorously safety tested.

LILY

If you say so.

She has a sip of water and continues nervously.

LILY (CONT'D)

Dinner should just be a few minutes.

(MORE)

LILY (CONT'D)

I've made something special,
something I've been wanting to make
for you for a very long time.

KENT

I'm sure it'll be great. Everything
has been lately! The world is going
my way. Ingrid thinks I'm a genius.
She called me an idiom savant.
That's a kind of genius.

LILY

About her...

KENT

You'd love her! She's into arts and
crafts like you and she's super
smart and pretty. Also like you.

Lily blushes in spite of herself.

LILY

But she's from a different world and
you're not yourself around her. She
brings out something bad in you.

KENT

Only if you think money and
limousines and respect are bad. I'm
still me, Lily, but this is my
chance to make something of myself.
I can't pass it up. For the first
time in my life I'm being
appreciated.

A tinny rendition of "BABY ELEPHANT WALK" sounds from Kent's
phone.

LILY

(quietly)

I appreciate you.

Kent nods but he's not listening, he's reading the display.
He gestures at the phone apologetically. Lily shrugs and he
answers.

KENT

(on phone)

Ingrid! I was just talking about
you... Right now?... Wow. That's
seaplane money. Hold on a sec.

(to Lily)

Can we do this another time?

(MORE)

KENT (CONT'D)

Ingrid's got a big client that wants to see me right away. We're talking seaplane money.

Lily tries to hide her disappointment with a weak smile.

LILY

You do what you think is best.

KENT

Gee, thanks!

(on phone)

Okay, we're on. But I'm not sure where I'm going... Oh, really?

A short HONK from outside. Kent looks out the window and spies a WAITING LIMO.

KENT (CONT'D)

(on phone)

You're a regular Lady Gandalf!

He hangs up and puts his phone on the table as he gets his coat on.

KENT (CONT'D)

I'll make it up to you. Pinky swear! And don't worry, I know what I'm doing. Wish me luck!

Kent exits, leaving Lily alone with her thoughts.

She is interrupted by Kent's phone ringing. She grabs it and rushes to the window but the limo is already gone.

Just then she notices smoke coming from the kitchen.

INT. LILY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lily rushes to the oven and removes a pan. COUGHING, she waves away the smoke from a charred, erotic cake: a man and a woman doing it doggy-style.

She glumly puts gumdrop nipples on the ruined cake.

LILY

Good luck.

INT. INGRID'S LOFT - NIGHT

Ingrid is admiring a van Gogh painting as Kent enters.

KENT

Sorry I'm late. I was starving so I had the driver stop at White Castle and we had to go back a few times. Their burgers are so small!

He approaches her. She hands him a glass of wine.

INGRID

Inspiring, isn't it? Van Gogh's "A Pair of Boots". A steal at 1.2 million.

Kent coughs on his drink.

KENT

That's a lot for a worn-out pair of shoes. Maybe that's why he went crazy.

INGRID

When I was a child in Amsterdam my father was the janitor at the van Gogh museum. He was not a well man so my mother and I often helped. It was grueling work, scraping gum off the floors, emptying garbage bins, disposing of prophylactics.

KENT

There were a lot of those?

INGRID

More than you can imagine. As I worked a truth became clear to me: in life, van Gogh was a failure, an outcast. He was never rewarded for his genius. And these gawking tourists were the exact sort of people who shunned him. I decided then to find others like him and raise them to the high posts they so deserved.

She turns to Kent.

INGRID (CONT'D)

And that led me to you.

KENT

That's really amazing. Listen, before the thing do you think we could hit the White Castle again? Seriously, those things are tiny.

INGRID

Don't speak. Everything you say is terrible. Now come. Before we leave let us fuck like wild animals.

KENT

Okay.

INGRID

(shushing Kent)

What did I just say?

Kent looks apologetic as Ingrid leads him to her bed.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A dimly-lit, cavernous room, at once both formally appointed and dingy like a long-forgotten plantation house. PARTY-GOERS and WAITSTAFF alike are dressed in ANIMAL COSTUMES, ranging from painted faces to full-body suits. Most have opted for simplicity: Plastic animal masks and formal wear. The combination is awkward and unsettling -- *Animal Farm* meets *Eyes Wide Shut*.

BANNERS around the room play up the human barnyard theme: "MEAT IS MURDER", "YOU ARE WHO YOU EAT", and "SOME ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS".

QUEEN BITCH (mid-20s), the world's biggest pop star, performs on stage dressed as a very SLUTTY SHEPHERDESS, complete with CROOK.

Kent, Ingrid, Dax, Viola, and Rand enter. Kent shivers.

KENT

You guys feel that terror too, right? Like in your bones?

INGRID

There's no need for concern. HH Bismarck likes for his parties to have a theme, however banal.

KENT

HH Bismarck? The industrialist-fighter pilot-movie producer-playboy? Didn't he die in the sixties?

INGRID

Briefly, yes, for tax purposes. Mr. Bismarck has requested a portrait.

KENT

I've never done a portrait before.
Maybe he'd prefer an animal
painting. Like a mouse, or a dog.
Or a different kind of dog?

INGRID

Nonsense. Come. He does not like
being kept waiting.

Ingrid leads Kent through a door, leaving the scenesters to
their own devices.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Kent follows Ingrid down a long, dark corridor. They stop
before a wooden door. Ingrid PRESSES A BUZZER on a nearby
security panel and hands Kent a plastic bag.

INGRID

Put this on.

Kent opens the bag and produces a HAZMAT SUIT. He begins
putting it on as a WITHERED VOICE comes from the intercom.

HH (V.O.)

(over speaker, filtered)
What's the password?

INGRID

'I'll grind his bones to make my
bread'.

HH (V.O.)

(over speaker, filtered)
Glad you could make it, Ms. de
Graaf. You have the boy?

INGRID

I do.

HH (V.O.)

(over speaker, filtered)
Is he wearing the suit?

Kent looks ready for World War 3.

INGRID

He is.

HH (V.O.)

(over speaker, filtered)
Send him in.

METALLIC THUDS from the other side of the door as LOCKS OPEN and FALL TO THE GROUND. Kent walks forward and turns to face Ingrid.

KENT
(terrified)
What was that about bones?

She gently waves goodbye and CLOSES THE DOOR on him.

INT. HH BISMARCK'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Darkness creeps in from all sides. A single naked bulb hangs directly above head of HH BISMARCK (early 100s) who sits in the center of the room on a wooden chair. He wears a flowing white robe and his long white hair hangs in a limpl horseshoe around his liver-spotted scalp. An old television on a nearby stand shows footage from security cameras positioned around the party.

Kent GASPS, his breath visible in the cold room.

KENT
Gandalf?

HH
Don't move.

A MAN IN A RADIATION SUIT steps out the darkness. He carries what looks like a large DIRT DEVIL. BEEPS and FLASHING LIGHTS begin as he runs it all across Kent's body. Satisfied, he nods to HH and disappears back into the shadow.

HH (CONT'D)
I hope you weren't planning on having children. Now, to business: Ingrid tells me you're special. Is that so?

KENT
No, sir. I'm a regular Plain Jane.

HH
Oh? Is she a liar then? Or is it you who is trying to deceive me, Mr. Finger?

KENT
No. No. I don't even... It's "Finjer" actually. And no, I--

HH laughs wheezily.

HH

Relax, boy. Kids today... When I was your age I wouldn't have been frightened by an old man in hiding. I would have drank his whiskey, fucked his wife, and raised his kids to hate their real daddy.

(suspicious)

Is that why you're here? Do you intend me harm?

Kent sweats and shakes his head emphatically "no".

HH (CONT'D)

Of course not. After all, I don't exist. And you can't hurt a ghost.

HH giggles then begins grunting and snorting like a bull. Kent shuts his eyes tightly doing his best not to look. The noise soon subsides and HH continues.

HH (CONT'D)

At the end of the day that's all we are; ghosts hiding in flesh. But flesh fails, ghosts fade. Art, though, art is forever. That's what I want from you, boy. I want you to make me eternal. Can you do that?

Kent nods.

HH (CONT'D)

Excellent. I like you, Mr. Finger. You remind me of a son I once stole.

HH reaches below his robes and retrieves a glass jar. Inside are small dark balls, like rabbit pellets. He ROLLS IT toward Kent.

HH (CONT'D)

Now be a good boy and bring my stool to the man outside.

With trembling hands Kent grabs the jar and bolts for the door like a child fleeing a haunted house. Behind him HH Bismarck CACKLES with delight.

HH (CONT'D)

Run, baby rabbit! Run!

INT. WAREHOUSE - CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Suit half torn off, Kent bursts through door holding the jar in one outstretched hand. He sobs frantically.

KENT

A dracula just gave me his poop!

INT. WAREHOUSE - ON STAGE - NIGHT

Kent and Ingrid re-join the party. Queen Bitch sits at a piano surrounded by HUNDREDS OF CANDLES.

QUEEN BITCH

We're gathered here to honor the memory of HH Bismarck on what would've been his 107th birthday. And tonight we have a special treat in store: a live painting of Mr. Bismarck by the great Kent Finger!

POLITE APPLAUSE as Kent stumbles on to stage and sits down at a waiting easel. Queen Bitch begins to PLAY THE PIANO sharply, erratically, echoing Kent's nervousness. As he prepares the paint from his Korean footlocker Kent scans the crowd. He sees a beautiful woman in an evening gown with "PIG" scrawled in lipstick on her face. A fat man in a childish dog costume blows him a kiss. Kent spies one of Bismarck's security cameras in a corner of the ceiling.

The fumes take hold and Kent's eyes glaze; he begins to paint like a man possessed. Queen Bitch STEPS UP THE MUSIC and the two artists are swept into a feedback loop. The audience responds, too, dancing and swaying. The sounds swell and twirl and ebb, building to an ORGASMIC CRESCENDO when--

Kent suddenly STANDS. The room goes DEAD QUIET.

KENT

How's this, you dusty old fuck?

He spins the painting around to face the camera. It's a *van Gogh*-style portrait of HH Bismarck: vibrant colors, bold strokes. At the top of the canvas are the words "SHIT HEAD" in big, messy red letters with an arrow pointing to Bismarck.

The CROWD GOES CRAZY WITH APPLAUSE. The band rejoins Queen Bitch and they begin PLAYING. From the wings of the stage Ingrid nods at Kent, who downs an entire bottle of champagne. The party kicks into high gear.

INT. LILY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Lily's fallen asleep at the dining room table beside an EMPTY BOTTLE OF WINE and the charred erotic cake.

A KNOCK at the front door wakes her with a start.

INT. LILY'S HOUSE - FRONT HALL - MOMENTS LATER

She opens the door. Rob bursts in, shoving his way into the living room. Lily follows.

INT. LILY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rob looks around.

ROB

Where's Finger? I know he's here,
I've tracked his phone!

LILY

He forgot it when he left. That was
hours ago.

ROB

Left? For where?
(noticing the sexy cake)
Sexy cake.

Lily blushes and tries to cover up the cake. He stops her, never taking his eyes from the cake.

ROB (CONT'D)

Did you make this? With your hands?
Is this from your brain?

Lily nods sheepishly as Rob looks back and forth between the cake and her face.

ROB (CONT'D)

(turning on the charm)
You look tired. Why don't you sit
on the couch and I'll make you a
cup of tea. How does that sound?

LILY

That... sounds nice. Thank you, Mr.
Lowe.

ROB

Call me Rob.

INT. WAREHOUSE - MORNING

The morning sun streams in through a grimy window. Kent awakes with a GROAN on a bale of hay. His hair is matted, his clothes filthy and soaking wet.

Opening his bloodshot eyes he SCREAMS: he's face-to-face with a creepy HORSE HEAD MASK. He turns away and SCREAMS EVEN LOUDER -- he's facing another HORSE HEAD MASK. Panicked, he scrambles away, tripping over a THIRD HORSE HEAD MASK.

He looks around. The room is littered with abandoned MASKS and COSTUMES. From behind him comes Ingrid's voice--

INGRID (O.S.)
Good morning. The car is waiting.

Kent turns. Ingrid's standing at the door, looking immaculate. She exits. Kent follows, stealing one last glance at the security camera. It WHIRS and ZOOMS IN as Kent hurries out of the room, SLAMMING the door shut behind him.

EXT. WJBS - MORNING

The crudely drawn cock and balls graffiti is now more detailed.

INT. WJBS - HALLWAY / UNUSED STUDIO - MORNING

Lily arrives and passes the door to an unused studio. It's slightly ajar. Peering in, she see Dax BARKING ORDERS at a couple of STUDIO CARPENTERS who are busy building a new set. She frowns and walks on to the "Finger Painting" set.

INT. WJBS - "FINGER PAINTING" SET - MORNING

Lily enters and sees Red in a corner speaking with Squid. In another corner are Mooch, Midnite Vulture, and Satanya.

Ingrid struts in through the side door followed by a sickly-looking Kent; she's on her phone and he's barely standing, still wet and still drunk.

INGRID
(on phone)
Of course. I wouldn't expect anything less.
(to Kent)
How would you like your own volcano?

Mooch overhears this and rushes over.

MOOCH

Don't do it, Finger. My brother had one and--

He backs off.

MOOCH (CONT'D)

Whoa, bro! You smell like a Cambodian jail.

Kent give Mooch a vacant stare through skewed sunglasses. Rob enters and rushes over to them.

ROB

Great to see you, partner. I've got your friends all set up.

KENT

Huh?

INGRID

Some of my associates expressed interest in the television format so I arranged it with Mr. Lowe. I'm sure you don't mind.

Kent is barely listening. He simply shrugs.

MOOCH

(to Rob)

You can't give these clowns air time. The schedule's already full!

Midnite Vulture and Satanya join Mooch. Rob addresses the three of them.

ROB

The schedule's being shuffled. This affects all of your shows.

(to Satanya, winks)

Except yours, sweetheart.

Satanya GIGGLES.

MIDNITE VULTURE

I'll shuffle your cracker ass!

Midnite Vulture STEPS UP but Mooch HOLDS HIM BACK.

MOOCH
 He ain't worth it, Midnite.
 (off Midnite Vulture's
 dirty look)
 Vulture. Midnite Vulture.

The three of them leave. Lily approaches Rob.

LILY
 What's going on?

ROB
 Kent's got some friends who are
 going to inject a bit of class into
 this dump. Don't worry. Your show
 will be fine. Probably.

Lily shakes her head and turns to Kent. She inhales sharply at seeing his sorry state -- and Ingrid's arm draped around him.

Kent perks up a bit when he sees her.

LILY
 Can you explain this?

KENT
 Oh, hey Lily. This is my friend
 Ingrid. Thanks again for letting me
 out of dinner. I made a ton of
 money. I also met a dracula. I do
 not recommend that.

LILY
 That's all right. Mr. Lowe -- I
 mean, Rob -- kept me company.

Kent is clearly surprised by the news. Lily sees she's got his attention and presses on.

LILY (CONT'D)
 In fact, we're doing it again
 tonight.

She snatches Rob's arm.

LILY (CONT'D)
 Isn't that right, Rob?

ROB
 If you could get a chicken and a
 duck to do what that cake did I'll
 pay your rent for the year, babe.

Lily OVER-ZEALOUSLY GIGGLES at the joke.

LILY

Oh, Rob! You sure know how to make
a girl happy!

She exits. Rob smiles and winks at Kent.

ROB

That's the key to women, my friend.
Swoop in when they're hurt and
depressed, say what they want to
hear, and you'll be eating sex food
for the rest of your days. I'm not
actually going to pay her rent.

Ingrid rolls her eyes. Kent looks queasy.

ROB (CONT'D)

Now, come on! Times wasting. Let's
go make some money.

Rob ushers Kent on to set where his footlocker awaits. Red
mans the camera and signals to Kent to begin. Kent composes
himself as best he can.

KENT

Good morning and welcome back to
Finger Painting. I'm your host--

Lily returns and gives Rob a cup of coffee, making sure Kent
sees. Rob WHISPERS something in her ear and she GIGGLES. Kent
starts dry-heaving.

KENT (CONT'D)

Kent--
(retch)
Finger. Today we're going--
(retch)
Excuse me.

He covers his mouth. He winces and his eyes tear up as his
cheeks suddenly SWELL. He forces himself to SWALLOW.

KENT (CONT'D)

(breathing heavily)
Today we've got a special guest
host. Welcome, Squid.

Kent grabs his footlocker and RUSHES OUT of the studio,
passing Rob.

ROB

Where the hell do you think you're going? You've got a show to host!

At Red's silent urging, a stunned Squid takes his place in front of the camera.

SQUID

(nervous, voice breaking)
Hola, amigos. Who feels like making something special?

INT. WJBS - MEN'S ROOM - MORNING

Kent locks the door, opens his footlocker, and uncaps a tube of paint. He takes a DEEP WHIFF and FALLS FACE-FIRST into the toilet.

INT. WJBS - "FINGER PAINTING" SET - MORNING

Squid has found his groove. He puts the finishing touches on a surprisingly sober rendition of an old homeless man panhandling. He's adding a few coins to the begging cup.

SQUID

What do you say we finish this right? Let's give him some hope. 'Cause there's one thing we all need, brothers and sisters, and that's hope.

Kent STORMS on to set, his head soaking wet, his eyes wild. He GRABS the paintbrush from Squid and pushes him away. Kent draws a SWASTIKA on the panhandler's forehead and signs the painting.

RED

Uh, cut? Yeah. Cut.

He turns off the camera as the sound of RINGING PHONES fills the WJBS building.

From outside the set comes a SHRIEK OF DELIGHT. Rob runs in, sniffing, rubbing his nose.

ROB

(to Kent)
 You! You are a goddamn genius! We are so fucking rich.

Rob puts his arm around Lily who WINCES but doesn't move away. Squid just shrugs and walks off as the brush falls from Kent's hand, a string of drools dangling from his lips.

INT. LUXURY APARTMENT BUILDING - FOYER - DAY

Ingrid leads Kent through the black and silver trim of a luxury apartment building lobby. They wait at the elevator.

KENT

You want me to live here?

INGRID

You're an international sensation.
You should be among your own kind.

INT. LUXURY APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

The elevator door SLIDES OPEN with a DING. Kent and Ingrid step out into a tastefully-decorated hallway.

KENT

I don't know. I've never lived in a city before. And what about my job?

INGRID

If you're referring to your program, let Squid handle it. Your job is to be an artist.

INT. KENT'S LUXURY APARTMENT - DAY

The door swings open to reveal a massive, sun-flooded apartment. All of Kent's misgivings immediately fade.

KENT

It's like I've died and gone to Falcon Crest.

INGRID

Welcome home, Mr. Finger.

They kiss before the massive window overlooking the city. Kent's star has ascended.

INT. LATE NIGHT TALK SHOW - NIGHT

Kent, wearing a fur coat and carrying a falcon-headed cane, is seated on an overstuffed couch, being interviewed.

TALK SHOW HOST

(to audience)

How hot is Kent Finger, ladies and gentlemen? So hot they've actually made him the fifth Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle.

The host holds up a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle figure for the camera. The toy is in Kent's image, complete with his signature moustache and glasses.

KENT

Isn't it great? Did you know the other turtles were named after artists? Seriously, look it up.

INT. WJBS - "FINGER PAINTING" SET - DAY

The set has been completely transformed and now resembles a CHIC BOHEMIAN LOFT. Kent reclines on a CHAISE LONGUE playing a game on his mobile. Behind him, The Birthday Bear painting lies forgotten in a dark corner. *

As the camera rolls, Squid finishes up another painting. Kent walks over and signs it. The phones begin to ring.

INT. WJBS - BREAK ROOM - DAY

Lily enters the break room carrying her lunch. She's startled to find the room has been transformed into an impromptu studio. Viola and Dax are being filmed adding glitter and dryer lint to an amorphous clay sculpture. Lily sighs and settles down on the crowded floor among the lighting equipment to eat her lunch, defeated.

INT. FETCH SUPPER CLUB - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Kent and Ingrid, surrounded by his entourage -- the scenesters and a growing assortment of models, musicians, and other bon vivants -- sit before a spread fit for a king.

Kent's messily eating lobster as RUSSELL CROWE approaches.

RUSSELL CROWE

Mr. Finger, I just wanted you to know that I'm a huge fan.

Dax whispers in Kent's ear. Kent turns to Russell Crowe.

KENT

You should get a haircut and shave those sideburns. You look like a fucking asshole.

The table erupts in laughter. Kent relishes their approval and laughs with them. Russell Crowe rushes away touching his non-existent sideburns, a single tear escaping his eye.

INT. LILY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Amid BOXES OF ROB'S BELONGINGS, Lily watches the news, a glass of wine in her hand. Footage of a censored Kent, naked save for A NATIVE AMERICAN HEADDRESS, appears on the screen above the words "KENT TOUCH THIS". He can be seen briefly doing a RAIN DANCE while tossing MONEY from his hands before being tackled by police. *

Behind Lily, Rob is hanging a Frank Frazetta-style painting of a huge-breasted barbarian woman riding a polar bear. He notices what Lily is watching--

ROB

Told you no one was that nice.

Lily GULPS down her wine and pours another. As Rob tries to straighten his painting, a photo of Kent and Lily is knocked off the wall, SHATTERING ON THE GROUND.

No one seems to notice.

EXT. RED CARPET MOVIE PREMIER - NIGHT

A glitzy movie premier for the film DÉJÀ VU 2: DÉJÀ VU. Ingrid is the definition of glamor and elegance while Kent is a werewolf in an ill-fitting tux. They walk the red carpet amid paparazzi and adoring fans.

Kent approaches a BUSTY YOUNG WOMAN (early 20s) SCREAMING his name and signs her cleavage.

KENT

There you go, baby. Now you're worth something.

INT. LILY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Grunting and groaning, Rob watches himself in a *Mötley Crüe*-branded mirror. He's in bed on top of Lily. Bored and unsatisfied, she focuses on the TV where Kent can be seen hosting *Saturday Night Live*.

KENT (ON TV)
 We've got a great show tonight.
 Klitoruss is here! Stick around.

INT. ACADEMY AWARDS CEREMONY - ON STAGE - NIGHT

Kent stands on stage at the Academy Awards. He's holding an Oscar statuette and an envelope.

KENT
 And the Oscar goes to...

He tosses the envelope aside without reading it.

KENT (CONT'D)
 Me!

He throws his arms up in victory. The crowd explodes into APPLAUSE and begins CHANTING HIS NAME. Kent has reached the top of the mountain.

INT. KENT'S CITY APARTMENT - DAY

Kent stands before a blank canvas, palette and brush at the ready. He opens his footlocker only to discover his paint tubes are EMPTY.

Ingrid steps out of the bedroom. Kent SLAMS the footlocker closed.

INGRID
 I trust your new piece will be ready for the Winter charity Gala? The year's biggest event deserves the year's biggest showing.

KENT
 Yup. You betcha. No problem. Just warming up!

He LAUGHS NERVOUSLY.

INGRID
 You are truly an enigma, Mr. Finger.

She kisses him on the cheek and leaves the apartment. Kent picks up the phone.

KENT
 (on phone)
 Bring the car around. I need to run an errand.

INT. NORTH KOREAN DOLLAR STORE - DAY

Kent enters the tiny shop and approaches Yong, who stands behind the counter smoking a pipe.

KENT

Another locker of your cheapest paints, if you please.

YONG

No more! All gone. You got last and only batch.

KENT

Can't you just order more?

YONG

Oh, sure. Yong just call up year 1952. Get next day delivery. These not regular paints. They special. Window into soul.

KENT

They were a window into money and power and the kind of sex healthy minds couldn't conceive! Come on, I need them!

YONG

Do you? Tell me: if window not reveal what's on other side, what does it reveal?

Kent thinks hard on this and suddenly panic grips him.

KENT

Did you make me a dracula? How many of you can there be?

He whips a bulb of garlic from his pocket, hitting Yong right in the forehead. Yong rubs the spot with annoyance.

YONG

Ow! That prick move! Where that even come from?

KENT

I stopped at the grocery store on the way here. Look, this is important. Can you help me or not?

YONG

Maybe paints help. But maybe no paints is also help, hmm?

KENT

I'm tired of your Star Wars Yoga talk. I don't need you or your stupid paints. I'm Kent Finger, dammit, and you can't spell 'art' without 'Finger'.

Kent storms out of the shop.

YONG

And you can't spell 'paint' without 'pain'.

He picks up the garlic and considers it, then grabs a sign from the window and scribbles on it. He puts it back where it was now reading "WHY YES, WE DO SELL GARLIC. CHEAP!"

INT. LIMOUSINE - MOMENTS LATER

Kent stares pensively out the window as the limo takes him home. He spies Lily on the sidewalk lugging a HEAVY DUFFLE BAG behind her. She's SOAKED TO THE BONE.

KENT

Pull over!

Kent rolls the window down and YELLS to Lily through the POURING RAIN.

KENT (CONT'D)

Need a lift?

INT. LIMOUSINE - LATER

Kent and Lily are crowded into the back of limo. Her GIANT DUFFLE BAG occupies most of the available space.

LILY

I'm glad you saw me. That thing weighs a ton when it's wet.

She slaps the bag. Water splashes everywhere.

LILY (CONT'D)

I've been volunteering at the animal shelter knitting sweaters for those weird bald cats. Rob has the car. He was supposed to drive me but...

She trails off for a moment.

LILY (CONT'D)

It's great to see you! It's been forever. You're really on top of the world these days.

KENT

And how! It looks like Ingrid was right about me all along!

Lily nods expectantly. Kent just blinks.

LILY

Things with me are good. Well, good enough. I mean, I can't say that everything's turned out the way I'd pictured. I've always thought that the universe was holding onto something special for me. Now I'm starting to think that's not going to happen.

KENT

You never know. Look at all the great stuff the universe did for me.

LILY

Maybe I just need to be happy with what I've got. Or maybe it's too much, too fast. After Community Day we'll all have a chance to catch our breath and find our footing.

KENT

Oh, right! Community Day.

Lily looks at him with some urgency.

LILY

You're coming right? You'll be there?

Kent considers this for a moment. He shrugs.

KENT

Yeah, sure. We're a family, aren't we? And what do families do?

LILY

Stick together.

They share a smile. Lily suddenly notices where they are.

LILY (CONT'D)
 (to the driver)
 Oh! This is my stop!

She turns to Kent as the limo pulls up to the curb.

LILY (CONT'D)
 I guess I'll see you around.

She pauses, hoping for a reply. Kent gazes out the window, his mind already elsewhere. Lily gives up and exits, struggling with the duffle bag.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - MAIN HALL - DAY

Community Day is in full swing. The WJBS hosts and crew mingle with FANS and SUPPORTERS in the modest hall. A ROXETTE COVER BAND, Roxelle, provides entertainment from a small stage. Moving like one of those inflatable tube man things, Don and Coco DANCE SPASTICALLY to the music on the otherwise empty dance floor. Squid sits at the Finger Painting booth signing autographs. A tin can on the table reads "Every little bit helps. Bless you."

Without warning, the hall doors SWING OPEN and the room floods with sneering, mocking scenesters. Kent appears last wearing a panda-skin stole, the poor beast's terrified face still visible. He SNIFFS LOUDLY, RUBS HIS GUMS, and saunters over to joins Squid at the autograph booth. Lily approaches, pleased to see him.

LILY
 I was worried you weren't going to make it.

KENT
 (disinterested)
 Wouldn't have missed it. Next!

The next person in line, The Chad, lays a book down on the table. It's a coffee table book about Kent called "STICKY FINGERS" by Haruki Murakami. The Chad's eyes are bloodshot. He's very high.

KENT (CONT'D)
 Name?

THE CHAD
 The Chad. Like Chad, but with a "the". I love your show, man.

Kent signs the book and passes it back.

KENT

Uh-uh, great. That'll be ten thousand dollars.

THE CHAD

What?

Lily overhears.

LILY

What are you talking about?

KENT

It's my standard signing fee. For my time, wear and tear on my wrist, that sort of thing.

THE CHAD

But I don't have ten grand, brah.

KENT

Oh, uh... well, then...

Kent takes the book and tries to rip out the signed page but ends up destroying most of it. He passes the remains back to the Chad.

KENT (CONT'D)

I'm sorry we couldn't do business, Chet. Thanks for watching!

The Chad walks off, head hanging low.

LILY

Can I talk to you in private?

Lily leads him away. They pass Dax, Viola, and Rand pointing and laughing at an overweight fan messily eating ice cream.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Lily and Kent face each other in the busy bathroom hallway.

LILY

What the hell was that? There's no signing fee. It's free!

KENT

I didn't understand it at first either, but that's how the art world works. If I give it away, it's devalued.

LILY
Where's this coming from?

A TOILET FLUSHES and Rob exits the men's room, drying his hands with a paper towel. Lily turns to him.

LILY (CONT'D)
Rob, Kent just tried to charge someone ten thousand dollars for his autograph.

ROB
Standard signing fee. That's how the art world works.
(to Kent)
Good job, Finger. Where's my cut?

LILY
Unbelievable!

She storms off.

ROB
I'd say it's her time of the month, but it sure wasn't two hours ago. When I plowed her.

Kent didn't need to hear that. He walks off.

ROB (CONT'D)
(shouting after Kent)
Thatta boy, worker bee. Go make daddy some honey.

He winks at A COUPLE OF WOMEN in a nearby bathroom line.

ROB (CONT'D)
Buzz, buzz, ladies.

They don't hide their disgust.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - MAIN HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Kent rejoins Squid at the autograph booth. Behind them Dax, Viola, and Rand jump on stage and take the instruments from the band. They begin to play TERRIBLE PUNK ROCK. It's awful. Some people cover their ears, other head for the exit.

Dottie, Finger Painting's oldest fan, approaches Kent with a gentle smile. She holds a painting to her chest.

DOTTIE

My name is Dottie West, Mr. Finger.
I've been watching your show since
day one. I've never missed a single
episode, not even when my Bernard
passed. I tuned in and painted
right along. It helped me cope.

ATTENDEES start to leave en masse. Lily storms on stage and
yells at Viola, who's singing. Viola just points and laughs
like a high school bitch.

DOTTIE (CONT'D)

Painting's my favorite hobby and I
have you to thank for it.

KENT

That's very sweet.

DOTTIE

And after all these years I thought
I'd learned everything I could from
you. But recently you taught me
something new.

She shows him her painting. It's a poor rendition of a monkey
in an inflatable pool enjoying the sun. Across the top of the
painting the word "CUNT" has been scrawled in red paint.

DOTTIE (CONT'D)

You taught me you're an arrogant,
self-centered prick.

Kent's speechless. Dottie tosses her canvas at him. On stage,
Lily manages to wrestle the mic away from Viola. Rand and Dax
throw down their instruments and the trio leave the stage.

DOTTIE (CONT'D)

Drop dead, asshole.

Dottie turns to Squid and drops some coins in his tin can.

DOTTIE (CONT'D)

But you, you're such a nice boy. I
look forward to your next show.

Dottie leaves as a furious Lily UNLEASHES HELL into the mic.
She's staring directly at Kent.

LILY

Do you see what's happening? You
brought these terrible people here
and they're ruining everything!

Rob runs onto the stage to stop Lily but she pushes him back.

LILY (CONT'D)

This isn't you! The Kent I know is good and kind! The Kent I know fishes with a suction cup so he doesn't hurt anything!

Kent's cheeks redden as people have a chuckle at his expense.

LILY (CONT'D)

The Kent I know would feel sorry for someone like you. You always said that we were a family, and that families stick together. Or was that just a lie?

SILENCE. No one moves, no one breathes. All eyes on Kent. He's humiliated, furious, and on the spot...

KENT

I don't need this. Let's go!

He FLIPS OVER the table and heads for the exit, his entourage in tow. The gathered crowd BOO and HISS and PELT them with food. Kent turns before exiting and gives everyone the finger.

KENT (CONT'D)

Kiss my ass!

He SLAMS the door shut behind him. Lily drops the mic and runs offstage, her eyes welling with tears. Rob addresses the remaining crowd.

ROB

You idiots just chased off the only one here worth a dime! Show's over. Anyone still here in five minutes is getting charged with trespassing.

Rob storms off.

INT. KENT'S LUXURY APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kent stands before a blank canvas. The months of hard living and the humiliations of Community Day have taken their toll; he looks like he was raised and then eaten by wolves. Kent pulls a tube of paint out of a plastic Walmart bag. He opens it and INHALES DEEPLY.

Nothing. His eyes don't cross, he doesn't tip over.

He tries again, taking such a deep sniff the paint SHOOTS UP HIS NOSE. He CHOKES and COUGHS and spits it out.

He stares at the canvas with fury, trying to find the darkness inside. Brandishing his brush like a knife, HE LASHES OUT at the canvas, hoping to ignite his madness. But his flailing strokes slowly become more measured, more deliberate. Calm descends on him and he begins to paint...

INT. INGRID'S ART GALLERY - MAIN HALL - NIGHT

Light snow falls as the charity gala event of the season gets into full swing.

Elegantly dressed celebrities, socialites, and wealthy benefactors mill about, sipping cocktails and admiring art. Waiters in tuxedos and white gloves carry silver trays of champagne and appetizers.

INT. INGRID'S ART GALLERY - DAIS - MOMENTS LATER

Ingrid leads Kent to a podium on the stage and addresses the crowd. Behind them a covered painting hangs on the wall.

INGRID

Thank you all for coming to the Winter Charity Gala. With your help, we've managed to raise over five million dollars to fight hunger, and not like last year's unfortunate mix-up, Hungary.

The crowd CHEERS.

INGRID (CONT'D)

Never has this gala been so well attended as it is tonight. And I think I know why...

She smiles at Kent. He gives her a big, happy wave.

INGRID (CONT'D)

Tonight we unveil the latest piece by Kent Finger. He's has been working on this one in secrecy. No one's seen it. Not even me. Without further ado, I present...

(checks her notes)

"Good Enemies, Better Friends".

Ingrid pulls off the cloth revealing Kent's newest painting. It's a dog listening to cat's heart with a stethoscope.

GASPS followed by STUNNED SILENCE.

INGRID (CONT'D)
 (flustered, to Kent)
 Is this some kind of joke?

KENT
 I was having trouble with the art
 you all like so I did some of the
 art I like. But it's okay. I put
 something shocking in it for you
 guys.

He points out a small pile of dog poop in the corner of the
 piece. He scans the crowd and can see their disapproval.

KENT (CONT'D)
 I know this isn't what you expected.
 To be honest, I'm a little surprised
 myself. But mostly I'm relieved.
 This is the real Kent Finger. I've
 been trying really hard to be who
 you want me to be, but there's no
 darkness in me. I'm happy. But I'm
 not naive, I know the world can be
 cruel. But it can be beautiful, too.
 I don't know why you'd want the bee
 when you can have the honey. With
 each new painting I make a choice: I
 can bring ugliness into the world or
 I can bring joy. I know what I
 choose. Who's with me?

The stunned audience considers Kent's speech before a BOO
 breaks the tension. ANOTHER FOLLOWS, and quickly the entire
 crowd has turned on Kent. He reels in surprise.

Red-faced, Ingrid turns to him and hisses.

INGRID
 Get off my stage and get out of my
 gallery!

Wounded, Kent slinks off stage. Ingrid quickly goes into
 damage control mode. She addresses the crowd once more.

INGRID (CONT'D)
 Ladies and gentlemen, I assure you
 I had no idea. But I promised art
 and art I shall deliver. Allow me
 to introduce the new name on
 everyone's lips, Squid!

A surprised Squid takes the stage to warm applause. Kent is shocked.

SQUID

'Sup. I don't really have anything prepared. It's funny the places we find ourselves. Not too long ago I was just another dude lost in the cracks of society--

Kent climbs back on to the stage.

KENT

Oh, come on! You're not a bum!
(to audience)
He's not a bum. He just tells everyone he's homeless as a stupid performance art piece.

SQUID

I am homeless, Kent. I've been on the streets since I was a teenager. I've always loved art but knew I wouldn't be accepted in this world so I came up with the idea of posing as an artist posing as a homeless man.

Ingrid GASPS. This is true art! She opens her pocketbook and quickly writes Squid a cheque. HIS EYES BULGE when he sees the amount. The audience explodes into CHEERS and APPLAUSE. A defeated Kent wanders away unnoticed.

INT. KENT'S LUXURY APARTMENT - MORNING

Kent sleeps with a newspaper draped over his face. The headline reads "BROKEN FINGER: SUPERSTAR IS SUPER-AWFUL".

A KNOCK on the door rouses him. He's dishevelled; his hair is a tangled mess, his beard, long and unkempt. Stepping over empty liquor bottles, Kent opens the door to find Dax, Viola, and Rand. He's pleasantly surprised.

KENT

Hey gang! Great to see you. C'mon in!

They don't budge. Dax hands Kent an envelope.

KENT (CONT'D)

What's this?

Kent opens the envelope and reads the letter within. The color drains from his face.

KENT (CONT'D)

Ingrid's kicking me out? She can't do that!

DAX

She holds the deed to this property. You are nothing but a serf, subject to Her Ladyship's rule. And she wants you gone. Today.

KENT

But feudalism's been abolished for centuries! Besides, I've already paid my rent.

RAND

Yes, about that. It seems your cheque has bounced.

KENT

That's impossible! I'm rich!

RAND

Your bank doesn't seem to think so.

KENT

Guys, please. This is my home. Can you talk to her for me? Please?

Dax, Viola, and Rand pause to consider their former idol's request. Viola give Kent the once-over and grimaces.

VIOLA

Ciao, Finger.

The trio walk off, leaving Kent alone in the hallway.

KENT

(quietly)
It's pronounced "Finjer".

INT. WJBS - ROB'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Rob's on the phone when Kent BARGES IN carrying his possessions in a MASSIVELY-OVERSTUFFED BUNDLE. Odds and ends poke out from every angle, including salad tongs, a bowling pin, and a wooden leg.

ROB

Let me call you back.

He hangs up.

KENT

What's going on? I got evicted this morning, my bank accounts are empty, and my cars were repossessed. I had to hitchhike here, and I didn't have any cash or grass! I think you know what that means! Where's my money?

ROB

You mean my money? Or didn't you read the fine print?

Rob tosses Kent a copy of the contract.

ROB (CONT'D)

You signed all your profits over to me and I've been giving you an allowance. A pretty good one at that. But now you're a liability so I've turned off the taps.

KENT

You can't do this!

ROB

Of course I can. It's legally binding.

Kent shoulders sag; he knows he can't win.

KENT

At least let me host my show again. I'll even work for my old salary!

Rob scoffs.

ROB

Are you crazy? Squid's doing a better job than you ever did. The audience loves him. You're on your own, Finger.

Rob picks up the phone and dials, ignoring Kent.

ROB (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Sorry about that... Nah, it was no one.

EXT. LILY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Carrying the bag over his shoulder, Kent trudges through a snowstorm to Lily's house. His wild hair and beard collect the billowing snow.

EXT. LILY'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

Kent takes a deep breath, lifts his hand to knock, then stops as he spies her silhouette moving through the frosted bay window. "HELLO, IT'S ME" by Todd Rundgren starts up as he searches for the courage.

KENT

(singing)

Hello, it's me.
I've thought about us for a long,
long time.
Maybe I think too much but
something's wrong.
There's something here that doesn't
last too long.
Maybe I shouldn't think of you as
mine.

INT. LILY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lily sitting down on the couch in front of a roaring fire. She's half-way through her second bottle of wine.

She picks up her cellphone and presses the screen. A goofy picture of Kent appears above a button labelled "Call". She debates pressing it; she's also trying to summon the courage.

LILY

(singing)

Seeing you,
Or seeing anything as much as I do
you,
I take for granted that you're
always there.
I take for granted that you just
don't care.
Sometimes I can't help seeing all
the way through.

I/E. LILY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kent and Lily, worlds apart but a few feet away, continue singing.

KENT
 (singing)
 It's important to me,
 That you know you are free
 'Cause I never want to make
 you change for me.

LILY
 (singing)
 It's important to me,
 That you know you are free
 'Cause I never want to make
 you change for me.

EXT. LILY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Unable to face Lily, Kent wanders off into the snowstorm.

KENT
 (singing)
 Think of me.
 You know that I'd be with you if I
 could.
 I'll come around to see you once in
 a while,
 Or if I ever need a reason to
 smile.
 And spend the night if you think I
 should.

He reaches the street and gives one last, furtive look at Lily's cheerful house. Suddenly, his phone RINGS.

INT. LILY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lily downs the glass of wine and is startled to hear "BABY ELEPHANT WALK" playing softly outside. She looks at her phone -- she's accidentally dialed Kent.

She RUSHES to the front door.

EXT. LILY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kent fumbles through his snow-covered coat and turns off his phone. The front door flies open and he sees Lily searching for him in the falling snow.

KENT
 (quietly)
 Good-bye.

INT. LILY'S HOUSE - FRONT HALL - NIGHT

Through the open door Lily catches a brief glimpse of snow-covered Kent. She GASPS.

LILY
Gandalf?

EXT. PERIPHERAL PARK - NIGHT

A friendly sign in the parking lot reads "WELCOME TO PERIPHERAL PARK - PLEASE NO CRUISING TILL MIDNIGHT".

Kent wanders through the blizzard to a bench and sits. He reaches into his bundle to find something to shelter him and finds the big, misshapen gift that Lily gave him.

KENT
Lily's gift!

He rips it open revealing a big thick quilt. His heart breaks to see it.

KENT (CONT'D)
You always know just what I need,
Lily.

He lies down on the bench and pulls the blanket over him.

EXT. PERIPHERAL PARK - MORNING

The bench is completely buried in snow. Only Kent's boots are visible.

A HOMELESSNESS ACTIVIST approaches and shakes some of the snow from Kent. He helps Kent to his feet and leads him towards a van labeled "MEDIocre SHEPHERD HOMELESS SHELTER". Kent trudges along automatically.

INT. MEDIocre SHEPHERD HOMELESS SHELTER - DAY

Kent sits on a cot wrapped in Lily's blanket. The room is filled with other men whose luck has run out. He looks around and sees tragedy everywhere.

From across the room Squid enters and finds his own cot. He gives Kent a friendly wave. Kent lies down, covers his head and tries to sleep.

INT. MEDIocre SHEPHERD HOMELESS SHELTER - DAY

Kent waits his turn in the soup line with OTHER HOBOS. On a nearby wall hangs a sign reading "NO SHOES, NO SHIRT, NO PROBLEM".

The Chad ladles a bowl of soup and is about to pass it to Kent when he suddenly realizes who he's serving.

THE CHAD

Mr. F? It's me! The Chad. Did the man stick you with community service, too?

Kent doesn't reply.

THE CHAD (CONT'D)

Duh, what am I saying? You're mister nice guy. You're probably here all helping out and shit. Yo, these pieces of garbage are lucky to have a class-act like you around, Mr. F.

(to the hobo behind Kent)

Yeah, that's right. You know what you are.

The hobo shrugs in agreement. The Chad turns back to Kent.

THE CHAD (CONT'D)

Even on the shittiest days you always made me smile. The show ain't the same without you. For reals.

KENT

Right. See you around, The Chet.

Kent takes the bowl and shuffles back to his cot. His soup goes cold as he considers what The Chad said. He scans the room again, finding sadness in every corner -- until he spies a bird in a window. He reaches into his coat and pulls out a ratty scrap of paper and the nub of a pencil and sketches the bird. A smile begins to grow beneath his beard.

INT. MEDIOCRE SHEPHERD HOMELESS SHELTER - DAY

Kent sits on his cot, still wrapped in his blanket, drawing furiously on loose scraps of paper. A homeless man wanders by, steals a glance at Kent's work, and drops a quarter at Kent's feet.

INT. MEDIOCRE SHEPHERD HOMELESS SHELTER - DAY

Kent, his beard shaggier than ever, sits on his cot filling pages of a book with paintings. Beside him is a cheap set of children's water color paints and brushes. An OLD HOMELESS MAN man wanders by. He stops to look at Kent's handiwork.

OLD HOMELESS MAN
I wish I could paint like that.

KENT
It's easy! Watch. I take my fan
brush and load it with some apple
red...

INT. MEDIOCRE SHEPHERD HOMELESS SHELTER - DAY

Kent, beard and hair now Sasquatch-like, stands before a
SMALL GROUP OF HOBOS at an cheap easel. The men all have
raggedy supplies of their own and are following Kent's lesson
intently.

KENT
Now use a little cobalt blue. Not a
lot, just a whisper.

INT. MEDIOCRE SHEPHERD HOMELESS SHELTER - DAY

Kent's cleaned up. He's still wearing a ponytail and a bushy
beard but they're well-groomed. His eyes are bright, happy.

He's now teaching OVER A DOZEN HOBOS AND SHELTER WORKERS.

KENT
That's all the time we've got
today. I hope you've learned a lot.
I know I sure did. See you guys
next week.

As they leave, his students shake his hand and thank him for
another great lesson. Kent smiles and sighs. He's content.

The last remaining student approaches him. It's The Chad.

KENT (CONT'D)
What can I do for you, The Chad?

THE CHAD
I wanted to show you something. I
swiped it from some homo at school
dressed like a wizard or something.
You'd fuckin' ace this!

He shows Kent a flyer. Kent looks at the page and SCREAMS
MELODRAMATICALLY. He scrambles back and falls on his ass. The
Chad helps him up. Kent regains his composure.

THE CHAD (CONT'D)
The fuck, Mr. F?

KENT

Sorry. That flyer stirred up some memories best left forgotten.

THE CHAD

But check out the prize. Imagine what you could do with that kind of lettuce!

KENT

I'm not interested.

THE CHAD

(visibly angering)

But someone with your talent should be rolling in it, not here with these sacks of human filth.

The Chad glances at a nearby HOBO. The hobo shrugs in agreement again.

KENT

I'm fine, the Chad. I'm where I belong.

THE CHAD

Just think about it. Please?

The Chad gives Kent the flyer and leaves. Kent tucks it into his pocket and starts another painting.

EXT. MEDIOCRE SHEPHERD HOMELESS SHELTER - EVENING

Kent carefully carries bags of garbage to the curb, gingerly keeping the bags at arms length. LILY walks toward him on the side walk. She spies him and does a double take.

LILY

Kent?

Startled, Kent drops the trash bags. NEEDLES and FILTH spill onto the sidewalk, but mostly needles.

KENT

Lily!

LILY

My god, it is you! It's been so long. You look great. You really do. Wow.

KENT

Thanks! I feel great. Better than ever, really.

LILY

What are you doing here? Aren't you still living in the city?

KENT

Actually, I sort of live right here. In the shelter. It's nicer than it looks, and it's kind of fun. It's like a dorm in a super-hopeless college. How's everything with you?

LILY

Good. Good. I've been--

(beat)

Actually, that's not true. Things aren't good at all.

KENT

Oh, no... I, uh... Did you want to talk about it?

Lily hesitates. Kent gives her a sympathetic look.

LILY

Yeah, I would like that.

KENT

Come on. I know a place.

Kent offers her an arm and together they walk down the sidewalk.

INT. MEDIOCRE SHEPHERD HOMELESS SHELTER - MOMENTS LATER

Kent and Lily sit side-by-side on his cot. The other men at the shelter leer at her in an uncomfortable silence. Kent earnestly waits for her to speak.

LILY

I think I know a better place.

INT. RED LOBSTER - NIGHT

Kent and Lily sit in an otherwise empty Red Lobster franchise. They tie their plastic lobster bibs around their necks as a waiter delivers platters of lobster.

As they talk they noisily eat the lobsters. Shells crack, juices fly and meat is slurped with abandon. They both attack the food with their bare hands seemingly oblivious to the cuts and tears from the shells. As they feast they have to raise their voices louder and louder to be heard over the sloppy din.

KENT

So what's going on? How are things between you and... Mr. Lowe?

LILY

Oh, god. He was the biggest mistake of my life.

Kent hides a smile and sucks on a claw.

LILY (CONT'D)

He told me what happened between you two. He was so proud of himself. I was furious. I stormed out and spent the night at my mom's. I came home the next day to find him in bed with two women.

KENT

At the same time? How does that even work? Wouldn't he have to have more than one...

Kent points to his lap. Lily give him a look but ignores him.

LILY

I threw him out, but things got worse. He started spending all of his time managing artists. He slashed our budgets and gave shows to any crony of his that wanted one. Ratings were worse than ever. Then he quit before corporate could fire him. Now the station's up for sale and if a buyer isn't found soon, they're going to gut it and sell it for parts.

KENT

I'm sure someone's interested. Cable access is awfully popular these days.

LILY

It's all corporations now, Kent.
The new owners will be the same as
the old ones. They'll just send
another Rob Lowe to run things.

KENT

Another Rob Lowe? That makes three
so far! When will it end?

LILY

They only care about the bottom
line, not the people. I don't want
to live the rest of my life being
bought and sold. I just want to
share my crafts with the world.

Lily sighs then licks up thick rivers of lobster paste while
Kent's deep in thought.

KENT

How much is it being sold for?

LILY

They wouldn't be able to get much
more than the value of the
broadcasting license. Around
\$25,000, I think. Why?

Kent stands up.

KENT

I have a plan. Get the gang
together and meet me at The Twig
and Berries at nine.

He hurries towards the door.

LILY

Where are you going?

He holds in his hand the flyer from The Chad. It reads "25th
ANNUAL HH BISMARCK MEMORIAL ART COMPETITION -- FIRST PRIZE
\$25,000".

KENT

To see a ghost.

INT. BISMARCK BUILDING - LOBBY - NIGHT

Kent enters the lobby of a skyscraper carrying a LARGE ORANGE
JULIUS. The space is clean, ultra-minimalist. Raised letters
on the wall read "BISMARCK BUILDING".

A handsome, immaculately-dressed RECEPTIONIST (20s) sits rigidly at a stainless steel desk. A Bluetooth receiver is in his ear.

BISMARCK RECEPTIONIST
The soup kitchen closed in 1985.
Don't you people have special codes
or something?

KENT
I'd like to enter the HH Bismarck
Memorial Art Competition, please.

BISMARCK RECEPTIONIST
Oh. The deadline's already passed.

KENT
I know, but I thought maybe if I
asked Mr. Bismarck, he could--

BISMARCK RECEPTIONIST
(defensive)
I don't know what you've heard but
I assure you that HH Bismarck is
100% dead and has been for a while.
(beat)
Say, you look familiar. Aren't you--

The receptionist's earpiece BEEPS. He listens carefully as a nearby security camera WHIRS and ZOOMS IN on Kent.

BISMARCK RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
(into earpiece)
Right away, sir.
(to Kent)
Take the last elevator on the
right. It's waiting for you.

INT. HH BISMARCK'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

The elevator door slides open and a confused Kent finds himself in the same cavernous room as before. In the center of the room, under the same naked bulb, Bismarck sits in an ancient, FLUID-FILLED BASIN. Kent GULPS.

HH
Baby rabbit.

KENT
Oh, dear god.

HH beckons Kent to approach. Kent walks slowly toward the tub, stopping fifteen feet away. An odd scent catches his attention and Kent sniffs the air.

KENT (CONT'D)
It smells like pickles.

HH
My secret recipe for keeping Old Nick at bay. Is that why you've come? To be rejuvenated? You look worse than I do, boy.

Kent presents the contest flyer.

KENT
I want to enter your competition.

HH
You've missed the deadline.

KENT
I was hoping for a favor, your honor, sir.

HH
And so the sheep asks the shepherd for one night with the rod, eh?

KENT
This contest could mean everything to me. I just want a chance.

The tub BUBBLES AND FROTHS as HH considers Kent's request.

HH
As you wish, baby rabbit. I will ensure you a place among the contestants. But that is all.

KENT
Oh, thank you so much!

Overcome with relief, Kent run forward with outstretched arms but TRIPS, SPILLING HIS DRINK into the basin. Bismarck HOWLS IN AGONY as the FLUID STEAMS and TURNS AN ANGRY RED.

KENT (CONT'D)
Oh, god! Your pickle juice! I'm so sorry!

Four ATTENDANTS IN BIOHAZARD SUITS appear from the darkness. Two carry vats of fluid which they pour into the basin as the other two carry Kent out by his armpits. Bismarck's CRIES OF PAIN transform into LAUGHTER as Kent is removed.

HH

Nice try, baby rabbit! Nice try!

INT. TWIG AND BERRIES PUB - NIGHT

A warm and cosy neighbourhood pub. Lily sits at a large central table with Mooch, Midnite Vulture, and Red. Satanya, wearing a slinky black dress, sits down.

SATANYA

Sorry I'm late. Night court was packed.

MOOCH

Now will you tell us why you've called us all together?

Lily nods and stands up. She's nervous.

LILY

As you all know, things are bad, and they're getting worse. It's time we stood up and took action.

She looks down at the table.

LILY (CONT'D)

You can come out now.

From under the table comes A LOUD BUMP. The table rolls and sways as Kent emerges beside Lily.

KENT

Hi, guys.

Everyone but Red gets up to leave.

LILY

Wait! Please. Just hear him out.

Red slides his chair up beside Lily. A bit too close.

RED

Yeah! Everyone listen to Lily.

Everyone stays put. For now. Red almost caresses Lily's shoulders.

KENT

I know you hate me and I don't blame you. I was selfish and vain and a grade-A jerk and I'm sorry. I can't change the past, but with your help I can change the future. I know how to save the station.

(beat)

We buy it.

MIDNITE VULTURE

You gotta lay off the rock, Clyde.

MOOCH

With what money? Or did you forget you're a homeless bum?

KENT

We each have savings and credit or some way to borrow. If we add it all up--

SATANYA

We still won't have enough.

KENT

You're right. But there's this.

He holds up the art competition flyer.

KENT (CONT'D)

I'm going to enter and I'm going to win. Then we can pool our money and buy the station for ourselves. Working at WJBS was the best thing that ever happened to me. We once had something magical. And we can have it again but only if we work together. As a family. So what do you say?

No one responds. He looks at each of them pleadingly, but they avoid his gaze. They don't believe him.

Suddenly there is another BUMP under the table. Rob Lowe emerges beside Satanya.

KENT (CONT'D)

How did you--? Were we under there together? How did I not notice?

ROB

I'm always two steps ahead of you, Finger, because you're a fool.

(MORE)

ROB (CONT'D)

You're all fools. You're not going to win that art contest and you're not going to buy that stupid station. Oh, no. You'll all be out of work soon enough.

Satanya accidentally spills a drink on her chest. While rubbing the stain, her dress pops open revealing a LEOPARD PRINT BRA along with her ample cleavage. Rob smiles, Lily rolls her eyes.

ROB (CONT'D)

Though some of you might find a soft place to land.

LILY

Why the hell do you even care what we do?

ROB

I thought we'd already established this. I'm an asshole.

Lily trembles with fury.

LILY

Listen to me, you shit. Kent's going to win that contest and we're going buy the station and then we're going to fuck you up the ass with a barbed-wire baseball bat!

The room falls into a STUNNED SILENCE. Rob is unaffected.

ROB

Here's some free advice from a winner to a bunch of losers: quit while you're behind.

He heads to the door.

ROB (CONT'D)

(quietly, to himself)

A barbed-wire baseball bat. That's what I was thinking of.

The mood at the table turns to vengeance as he exits.

MOOCH

Fuck that guy. I'm in. Whatever you need, Kent.

MIDNITE VULTURE

Hell yes I'm in. This revolution
will be televised.

SATANYA

I can't believe I gave that prick a
handy. I'm in.

RED

And my axe!

No one gets the joke.

KENT

Fantastic. I won't let you down. I
promise. Now if you'll excuse me, I
have a lot of work ahead of me.

(to Lily)

Have a good time tonight. You
deserve it.

He leaves.

INT. MEDIOCRE SHEPHERD HOMELESS SHELTER - NIGHT

Kent sits on his cot sketching in a book. He finishes a
picture, considers it, then tears out the page and throws it
on a nearby mound of crumbled paper.

Lily watches him work before finally speaking.

LILY

Having trouble?

Smiling, Kent clears space on his bed. Lily takes a seat.

KENT

I need to figure out the perfect
subject for the painting. Something
special. It'll come. How was your
night?

LILY

Satanya got drunk and made out with
the bathroom mirror, and Red is all
kinds of creepy. But it was nice. I
needed that.

Kent smiles and puts down his sketchbook. They share an easy
silence.

LILY (CONT'D)

I was thinking. It might be easier for you to paint if you had some privacy. And I do have an extra room.

KENT

Gosh, that's awfully sweet but this is my home now. This is where I belong.

A WEATHER-BEATEN HOBO (late 40s) stumbles in holding a DAIRY QUEEN BLIZZARD. He pulls the spoon from the treat revealing a SHARPENED SHIV and descends on a YOUNGER HOBO (20s), STABBING HIM over and over and over.

Lily and Kent watch in mute horror.

Beat.

KENT (CONT'D)

Let me just get my stuff.

INT. LILY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Lily's at the kitchen table knitting and reading the newspaper. Kent enters wearing a fluffy bathrobe.

LILY

Morning, sleepyhead.

Kent squints at a clock.

KENT

Is that really the time? I've got to get started! I need to get paints and brushes and--

She puts a cup of coffee in his hand.

LILY

Relax. It's all taken care of.

She leads Kent into the living room.

INT. LILY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

The sun shines in through a big bay window. In the center of the room stands an easel on a drop-cloth and a wide variety of brushes and paints. Half a dozen empty canvases lean against the wall.

LILY

Note the ample ventilation and non-toxic, domestically-made paints.
Welcome back, Kent Finger.

Kent picks up a brush and smiles. It's time to get to work.

INT. LILY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kent finishes a painting of two monkeys in sailor outfits swinging from a tree. Lily nods her approval. Kent shakes his head and tosses it to the floor. Lily hands him a blank canvas.

INT. LILY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Lily cuts Kent's hair and shaves his beard even as he continues to paint. He finishes a painting of a butterfly on a kitten's head. Lily nods her approval. Kent shakes his head and tosses it out the window. Lily hands him a blank canvas.

INT. LILY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Kent finishes a painting of a horse riding a roller coaster. Lily nods her approval. Kent shakes his head and sets it on fire. Lily quickly zaps it with a fire extinguisher and hands Kent a blank canvas. He sighs.

KENT

Something's not right. I can't find my mojo.

Lily is hit by a sudden thought.

LILY

I know just what you need.

INT. FRAT HOUSE - DAY

The Chad sits on the couch smoking from a bong. On his laptop he's watching a WEBCAST of Finger Painting, live from Lily's living room.

KENT (ON SCREEN)

Next we take some burnt umber and a whole lot of white...

INT. DOTTIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Dottie's GRANDSON (16) hooks up a set-top box to her TV. He turns it on and loads up the Finger Painting WEBCAST.

KENT (ON SCREEN)
 Now let's give grampa bear a fluffy
 beard, like white cotton candy...

Dottie NODS, satisfied that the old Kent has returned.

EXT. DON AND COCO'S HOUSE - DAY

Coca loads her luggage into the back of a small hatchback. Its license plate reads "TH3 L00K". In the driver's seat sits THE GUITARIST FROM ROXELLE (40s).

Don stands in the doorway, CRYING and HUGGING an iPad to his chest. Kent's WEBCAST streams on the device.

Coco gets in the car, flips him the bird, and drives off.

INT. INGRID'S ART GALLERY - MAIN HALL - DAY

Ingrid is supervising as WORKERS hang new paintings when her phone BEEPS, signaling a NEW EMAIL.

FROM: <UNKNOWN>
 SUBJECT: Baby rabbit

Thought you might want to see this.

She TAPS the link and Kent's WEBCAST appears.

KENT (ON SCREEN)
 --and of course, she needs a pretty
 ribbon on her tail so load up--

A SMILE escapes the corner of her mouth. Ingrid catches herself, turns off her phone, and gets back to work.

INT. LILY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lily sits at her laptop, adjusting the webcam so Kent remains in focus. Kent looks at her and their eyes lock, as if seeing each other for the first time. They share a smile.

INT. LILY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lily takes off her jacket as she enters. The room is dark. Kent is not at his easel.

LILY
Kent? I'm home! Kent?

He calls to her from the back porch.

KENT (O.S.)
I'm out here.

She exits.

EXT. LILY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The night is still and the full moon hangs high and bright. Lily joins Kent on the porch.

LILY
Why aren't you working? Are you finished?

KENT
Not just yet. There's something I want to show you first.

Kent motions to the sky.

KENT (CONT'D)
Look how bright the moon is, Lily. But if the sun were to rise right now, it would completely disappear.

LILY
It's almost midnight, Kent.

KENT
Hear me out. Before everything happened I was like the moon. But then Ingrid and her world came along and they shone like the sun. I was overwhelmed.

Kent takes Lily's hand.

KENT (CONT'D)
But I wasn't gone. When the sun set the moon, the real me, was still there, bright and clear and the same as it ever was, back where it belongs.

LILY

But the sun's always going to be there. In fact, it'll eventually go red giant, consuming both the earth and the moon.

KENT

Yes, but the moon -- the tides are controlled by the moon, and also there is the menstrual cycle which is like... Wow. We're really bad at this, aren't we?

Lily bites her lip and takes a deep breath.

LILY

Now it's my turn to show you something.

INT. LILY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lily swings open her closet doors revealing dozens of pieces she's created to show her love for Kent. Dolls and dioramas and sweaters depict them in various sexual situations.

KENT

Mother of god.

LILY

I'm not good with words, either. I've been making these things for you for years to show you how I feel, but somehow something always got in our way. The one time I did give you something you didn't respond.

KENT

Give me something? What did you give me?

LILY

The quilt.

Kent gives her a confused look then exits. He quickly returns bearing the well-worn quilt she gave him. He holds it up.

LILY (CONT'D)

Unfold it all the way.

Kent opens the quilt completely and gasps: the other side is a collage of Kama Sutra-like positions. He studies it.

KENT

This is... Wow. Holy. I think that
one is me, and that one is you...
who's this other person?

LILY

The devil.

He turns to her. Lust smolders. They kiss passionately and fumble their way to the bed.

Through the window, Yong peers in with a nod and a smile.

YONG

(quietly)

Your journey of discovery is now
complete, Kent Finger.

(beat)

Ooh, that's hot. Yeah. Yong like.

PASSING POLICE SIRENS send him ducking into the bushes.

INT. LILY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Kent, in his underpants, stares at the painting on the easel. He's holding some clean brushes. Lily stands in the doorway wearing just a shirt.

LILY

It's wonderful.

KENT

You think? I shouldn't draw a wang
on it or anything? It needs to be
perfect.

LILY

It is perfect. It's the real you.
Now come back to bed. We still have
a bit of time before the contest.

She winks. Kent nods and goes to put down the brushes.

LILY (CONT'D)

Bring them with you.

Lily walks off toward the bedroom.

EXT. CONVENTION CENTER - NIGHT

A busy convention center. A sign out front reads "TODAY: 25th ANNUAL HH BISMARCK FINE ART COMPETITION;

TOMORROW: LORD OF THE RINGERS - AN ALL-DRAG TOLKEIN REVUE". A crude cock and balls has been drawn on this sign, too.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER - LOBBY - NIGHT

Kent and Lily stand in line waiting to register. Kent looks awkward in a cheap suit and tie while Lily is smartly dressed.

KENT

Oh, gosh. I think I'm going to be sick. Just look at our competition!

He points to the art hanging on the wall: framed prints of classic paintings from da Vinci, Picasso, and Matisse.

A hand claps Kent on the shoulder. It's Squid.

SQUID

Amigos! Great seeing you again!

KENT

(irked)

Squid? Don't you have a show to host?

SQUID

Nah, I got a guy doing it for me these days. You know how it is.

Kent concedes. He does.

SQUID (CONT'D)

I'm here for the contest. My manager told me more awards would be good for something or whatever.

Out of nowhere comes Rob, smiling like a cobra. Kent and Lily are visibly startled.

KENT

How do you do that?

ROB

I see you've met my client. He doesn't need the fame and he certainly doesn't need the money but winning this contest is the most important move of his career. Isn't that right?

SQUID

Sure, why not?

Kent grits his teeth.

KENT

I hate to disappoint the both of you but I am going to win. Not you.

ROB

Riiiiight. I can totally picture the judges choosing a washed-up homeless slob over the darling of the art world. That sort of thing happens all the time.

KENT

(to Lily)

It does?

Lily slowly shakes her head no.

ROB

I'd wish you luck but we all know I wouldn't mean it.

LILY

Kent doesn't need luck. He's got something even better. Heart.

She kisses Kent. Rob looks jealous and turns to walk off.

SQUID

Good for you guys! I always thought there was something going on there.

ROB

Come on, dammit!

He pulls Squid away.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER - MAIN HALL - NIGHT

Kent fidgets beside his covered easel. Lily straightens his tie as he casts quick glances at his competitors.

KENT

Have you seen the judges? Where are the judges? They should be judging!

LILY

Relax, Kent. Take a deep breath and calm down. You can do this.

Kent inhales deeply and closes his eyes.

He exhales, opens his eyes and is startled to see the three judges approaching.

KENT
Oh, god! Gandalf!

Gandalf -- or at least a dead ringer -- is indeed one of the judges. He's flanked by Stanislav (late 60s) and Ingrid.

KENT (CONT'D)
Oh, god! Ingrid!

The judges stand before him. Ingrid makes no acknowledgement of their past.

INGRID
Good day. Please unveil your piece.

KENT
Can I declare a mistrial? Is that a thing?

INGRID
Your piece, Mr. Finger.

Kent sags. He pulls back the cloth revealing his painting: it's Birthday Bear, only this time he's not alone. He's surrounded by other bears, each one a member of the WJBS crew: Mooch, Satanya, Midnite Vulture, and the rest of the staff are all there in bear form. To Birthday Bear's right sits Lily Bear. She's holding his hand.

Gandalf and Stanislav make notes. Rob appears behind them grinning evilly. Ingrid looks on unimpressed.

INGRID (CONT'D)
Is there anything you'd like to say about your entry?

KENT
It's called "Family" and I think it speaks for itself.

INGRID
Thank you for your time.

Gandalf bangs his walking staff and the judges leave.

LILY
(lying)
I think that went okay.

The judges make their way to Squid's entry. Fans and reporters surround him.

The piece is suddenly unveiled, resulting in an eruption of GASPS and APPLAUSE and CAMERA FLASHES. Kent SIGHS and his shoulders sag; it's over.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER - MAIN HALL - LATER

Kent sits on the floor eating canapés. His tie has been loosened and hangs limply around his neck. His mood is dark. Lily, seated beside him, holding his hand.

KENT

I've failed, Lily. I can't compete with Squid. All I'm good for now is eating these delicious little appetizer things.

Kent swallows and COUGHS HEAVILY as a canapé goes down the wrong way. He doesn't even bother looking up as Ingrid takes the stage. The assembled audience grows quiet.

INGRID

We're here tonight to bestow upon one artist a most prestigious award. It was no small task to even qualify to be here so I extend my congratulations to you all.

The audience CLAPS.

INGRID (CONT'D)

However, there must be a winner. My fellow judges and I have carefully deliberated and reached a decision. Our choice might come as a bit of a surprise, particularly to those familiar with the artist's unconventional entry onto the public stage, let alone my personal history with the contestant.

Kent stands up. A glimmer of hope in his eye. He squeezes Lily's hand tight.

INGRID (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, the winner of the 38th Annual HH Bismarck Fine Art Competition is... Squid!

The audience APPLAUDS and CHEERS. An elated Squid takes the stage and accepts a plaque and an oversized novelty cheque. A devastated Kent shuffles towards the nearest exit with Lily. Rob cuts them off.

ROB
 Congrats on the win, Finger. Oh,
 wait. You lost.

LILY
 (to Kent)
 Ignore him. Let's just go home.
 We'll get the money some other way.

Ingrid approaches Kent.

INGRID
 May I have a word with you? In
 private?

KENT
 (to Lily)
 I'll just be a minute.

Lily nods. Kent and Ingrid exit onto the street, closing the door behind them.

EXT. CONVENTION CENTER - NIGHT

Kent and Ingrid stand on the sidewalk.

KENT
 Go ahead, Ingrid. Rub it in.

INGRID
 I'm not here to gloat, Kent. That
 night at the gallery, you hurt me.
 I made you the most famous artist
 in the world. I made you rich. I
 made you my lover. And instead of
 taking those things and learning
 and growing, you humiliated me in
 front of my peers.

KENT
 I'm really sorry. I didn't mean to
 do any of that. I swear.

INGRID
 I know. But that's not why you lost
 tonight.

She takes his hands and looks him in the eyes.

INGRID (CONT'D)
 You lost tonight because Squid's
 piece was better. Great art should
 always be recognized as such.
 (MORE)

INGRID (CONT'D)

You weren't cheated, you lost fair and square.

Kent nods.

KENT

I understand.

INGRID

Good. I wanted to you to know that you didn't lose out of spite. And neither does this come from charity--

She reaches out and opens the door to the main hall. Rob and Lily spill out -- they've been eavesdropping.

INGRID (CONT'D)

(to Kent)

I would like to buy your painting.

KENT

What do you mean?

INGRID

"Family". Is it for sale?

KENT

I thought you didn't like it. Or like me. How I am.

INGRID

I thought art could be defined by what it excluded but you showed me another way. Your work is crude, derivative, and lacks depth. But it makes people happy. And not just your painting--

She gestures up and down Kent.

INGRID (CONT'D)

But all this, too. Emotion is the true soul of art and you innately understand that. You always have. So I'm in. I want to be in the Finger Painting business.

ROB

You can't be serious! He's a hack!

INGRID

Would twenty-five thousand suffice?

Kent and Lily's jaws drop.

ROB

For the love of god, no! He's a loser!

INGRID

Loser, Mr. Lowe? This loser has made thousands of dollars tonight. While you end it unemployed.

ROB

What?

Ingrid calls through the open door.

INGRID

Squid? It's time.

Squid joins them. He turns to Rob.

SQUID

You're fired, bro.

ROB

You can't fire me!

INGRID

Of course he can. Squid is my client now.

ROB

So I bring you up, I make you, and you throw me in the trash? Well have I got some news for you, sunshine. You should really read contracts before you sign.

INGRID

I might say the same to you. I heard what you did to Mr. Finger so when you offered Squid your services I asked him to let me read the documents. I made some slight changes. You read it before you signed, right?

Ingrid hands the stunned Rob a copy of the contract. He leafs through it, face ashen.

ROB

This can't be! I'm ruined!

INGRID

Kent is above revenge but I'm not.
And I think you'll find I'm quite
good at it.

ROB

You bitch. You haven't heard the
last of Rob Lowe!

He storms off. Lily gives Kent a big hug and a kiss.

INGRID

So do you have any grand plans for
your newfound wealth?

Kent and Lily share a smile as bright and hopeful as new
parents.

EXT. CONVENTION CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Rob stalks towards his car. He's reaching for his keys when
he's TACKLED by TWO POLICE OFFICERS (30s).

ROB

What the--

POLICE OFFICER #1

He's resisting!

The first police officer pulls out a stun gun and ZAPS Rob a
few times. Rob quickly goes limp.

TWO MORE POLICE OFFICERS (30s) approach the car, guns at the
ready. They cautiously POP OPEN THE TRUNK and are met with a
STASH OF KOREAN WAR WEAPONRY.

POLICE OFFICER #2

That anonymous tipster was right: a
trunk-load of unlicensed museum-
quality display firearms.

(to the dazed Rob)

Looks like you'll be doing hard
time. Performing community service.

As they put him in handcuffs, Rob sees Yong watching from
behind a nearby parked car. He's approached by the scenesters
and accepts a BRIEFCASE FULL OF MONEY.

Rob struggles and begins to speak but the police ZAP him into
submission.

EXT. WJBS - DAY

A sign on the wall proudly proclaims "UNDER OLD MANAGEMENT".

The cock and balls has been painted over leaving an obvious paint outline of a cock and balls. But hey, they tried.

KENT (V.O.)

That looks like all the time we
have for today but before we go I
want to leave you with a thought.

INT. WJBS - "TALKIN' ENGINES" SET - DAY

Mooch stand at his workbench with an outboard before him. He psyches himself up and reaches for it, but suddenly stops and rolls his sleeves up. Red nods in approval.

KENT (V.O.)

A wise man once told me that art is
a window into the soul.

INT. WJBS - "FRIGHT CLUB" SET - DAY

Lying on her chaise longue, Satanya leans back as if to laugh but CATCHES HERSELF. She adjusts her dress, making sure her boobs are well in place, before finishing her CACKLE. *

KENT (V.O.)

But it's more than that. It gives
us a way to show not just who we
are, but also who we choose to be.

INT. WJBS - "24-CARAT BLACK" SET - DAY

Midnite Vulture stands in front of a chalkboard LITTERED with MATHEMATICAL EQUATIONS and DIAGRAMS. He's lecturing, pointing at various parts with a stick. Three women sit at desks WRITING VIGOROUSLY in their notebooks.

KENT (V.O.)

And that's important because there
are some choices we can't ever
make. We can't choose where we're
born and we can't choose what we
look like.

INT. WJBS - "LOVE CRAFTS" SET - DAY

Lily, her hair down and looking prettier than ever, sits on stage talking to the camera. She's smiling and laughing and holding a knitting bag in her lap. The sign behind her now reads simply "LOVE CRAFTS".

KENT (V.O.)

Most importantly, we can't choose our families. But I got lucky. They chose me.

With a devious smile she presents her latest piece, a knit dick cosy. Her cat promptly attacks it.

INT. WJBS - "FINGER PAINTING" SET - DAY

The set is back to normal. The Birthday Bear painting hangs with pride behind Kent who stands at his easel.

KENT

Until next time, I'm Kent Finger saying I hope you learned a lot. I know I sure did.

The camera's red light TURNS OFF and Kent walks off stage.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. WJBS - EVENING

Making sure no one's watching, Rob Lowe quickly SPRAY PAINTS a crude cock and balls on the WJBS wall. He LAUGHS, admiring his work, but is cut short by the sound of someone CLEARING THEIR THROAT.

A COMMUNITY SERVICE GUARD, wearing mirror shades and waving his baton stares at Rob. Rob, dressed in a BRIGHT ORANGE JUMPSUIT, bows his head, grabs a roller brush and starts to cover up his graffito.

FADE TO BLACK.