COLLAGE

An Honors Thesis (Honrs 499)

by

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Characters:  Justin = The main character. Lives in the one bedroom house with Frank. Medium in height with an athletic build. Enjoys the college learning experience. His main goal is to discover his "inner self" and who he really is. Wishes to find a woman to share his life with. He has not declared a major.

Frank = Justin's roommate. Tall and skinny in build. Consumed with the vision of being an athlete. Fails to see himself as anything but an athlete. His main goal is to find glory in his life. Very quick tempered and tends to react physically to his problems. Works on the Daily News as a sports reporter. His major is health science.

Steven = A friend of Justin and Frank. Medium height and slender. Physically attractive. Enjoys the college experience. A ladies' man. His main goal is to meet as many women as possible. Lives life to the fullest. His major is marketing and sales.

Constance = Medium height for a female. Not stunning, but pretty. A reporter for the Daily News. Her main goal is to become a reporter for a newspaper. Her major is Journalism.

Setting: The action will take place in the living area of a one bedroom house near the campus of Ball State University. The kitchen area with a table is on the left of the stage. At the back of the stage on the left is the door to the bedroom with an "Air Justin" nerf hoop attached. In the center of the stage is a couch which faces a T.V. and stereo. On the back center wall of the stage is a mural of a swooping cardinal. On the right of the stage is the door to the outside of the house, which has a "Ball U" flag on it. Next to the door is a cardboard man which acts as a coat rack. The man is "Ed" from the Bartles' and James' commercials. Ed is wearing in a Ball State basketball jersey and has a red pom-pom on his head for hair. The ceiling of the entire living area is decorated with blinking red lights.
ACT ONE
ACT ONE
SCENE ONE

(It is the Spring of 1989. Justin is finishing painting the wall mural of the cardinal. U2's album "Rattle and Hum" is playing in the background and Justin is humming along.)

Justin: Just a little more red... and a little more white... Whalaa! Perfect. Well close to perfect, anyway.

(Frank and Steven enter, back from weight lifting.)

Frank: (funny) Justin honey, we're home.

(Steven sees the wall mural for the first time.)

Steven: (surprised) Shit! He did paint the wall.

Frank: He's been working on that damn painting nonstop for two days.

(Frank and Steven toss their coats on top of Ed. Frank picks up the nerf ball and begins shooting baskets.)

Steven: So what inspired you to do this, Justin?

Justin: When we beat Pittsburgh a vision came to me. It said "Justin, paint it and we will win the NCAA."

Steven: Obviously your vision lied to you.

Justin: Not necessarily. I didn't have it finished before the game. Who knows, if I would have been a little quicker in finishing we might have won.

(Frank stops shooting momentarily.)

Frank: (upset) Would you just shut up with your stupid vision story. It's dumb and I'm sick of hearing it. If you don't stop talking about it, I am going to write my next column on your stupid vision and I am going to blame you for the loss.

Justin: (sarcastic) Please spare me the piercing wounds of your sharp pen. Can't you see I've suffered?

Frank: (mad) Damn you Justin, quit screwing with me. I'm not
in a good mood. I especially don’t want to hear your stupid stories. If you don’t shut up, I am going to punch you.

Justin: (sarcastic) That won’t be necessary. I already feel a great guilt for the folly of my ways. Besides that, you would probably miss.

Steven: Yah, leave poor T.S. alone. He looks like he’s suffered enough already.

(T.S. is Justin’s nickname. Too Sweet or Too Sad, depending on the situation.)

Frank: (angry) Shut up! I was just being stupid. I’m not in a good mood.

Justin: (with an intellectual flair) We are perfectly aware that you were being stupid, Frank. In fact, I’m not sure it’s possible for you to be anything but stupid.

(Frank throws the nerf ball at Justin. Steven steps in to avoid an argument.)

Steven: (upbeat) Hey Frankola, why don’t I beat you in "Super Mario Bros?"

(Frank’s attention shifts to Steven.)

Frank: What? Oh, yah, o.k., I guess I’ll play ya. Set it up.

(Steven goes to set up the Nintendo on the T.V.. Justin and Frank sit on the couch.)

Justin: I’m sorry for upsetting you, Frank.

Frank: It pisses me off when you make shit up.

Justin: (funny) Well, how do you know I was making stuff up?

Frank: (angry) Ya see. You’re trying to do it again.

Justin: I know. I don’t know why I enjoy tormenting you. I guess it’s just a character flaw of mine.

Frank: (sighing) I’m just in a bad mood.
Justin: Why is it that you are in a bad mood, Frank?

(Steven is done setting the game up and sits in between Justin and Frank on the couch.)

Steven: He couldn't bench 275.

Frank: (mad) I could have benched 275! I was trying to use a different grip.

Steven: (explaining) All I said was that you were mad because you were not able to lift it. Seeing as how you didn’t lift it, I just assumed that you couldn’t.

Frank: (mad) You assumed wrong.

(Steven begins playing "Super Mario Bros..")

Justin: I don’t understand why it is that you get so upset. If you ask me, lifting weights is not really all that important.

Frank: (proud) It may not be important to you, but I’m going to be Mr. Ball State.

(Steven looks up from the T.V. screen.)

Steven: I told him he didn’t have the physic for it. What do you think, Justin?

Justin: Well, your probably right. From what I know it is better to be short and stocky. (to Frank) Wouldn’t you have to take steroids to compete nowadays?

Frank: (upset) First of all, you don’t know as much as you think. Besides that, steroids aren’t as bad for you as you think.

Justin: You’re not taking steroids are you?

Frank: No, I was just saying that so you would know.

(Steven looks up from the game.)

Steven: Hey, wake up Frankola. It’s your turn.
(Frank begins to play.)

Justin: Now, I'm not saying I know a lot about steroids, but aren't they supposed to give you a short temper?

Frank: (mad) If your talking to me wait till I'm finished.

Steven: I would say Frankola is displaying some warning signs. Wouldn't you, Justin?

(Frank throws the controller to the floor.)

Frank: (mad) Dammit, you made me get killed. I told you I'm not taking steroids.

Justin: I believe you, Frank. (pause) Now maybe if you had the slightest hint of muscle mass.

Frank: (mad) Shut up! I can whup your ass any day.

Steven: O.K., O.K., let's change the subject. How are your classes going T.S.?

(Steven picks up the controller and begins to play again.)

Justin: I am really enjoying them. The other day in my philosophy class.

(Frank interrupts)

Frank: Don't get him started about his stupid classes. He don't know what the fuck he's doing. He's always trying to tell me about some stupid theory.

Justin: What makes you so upset about my being interested in school, Frank? Just because I enjoy learning doesn't mean I'm weird.

Frank: Yah it does, ya weirdo. Ain't I right Steven.

(Steven puts the game on pause and looks up.)

Steven: Oh, I don't think he's a weirdo. Maybe a little bit strange. I kinda like my classes, but I just have other things that are more important.

Justin: Such as?
Steven: Meeting Girls! Ball State has one of the largest nursing and teaching programs around. There are about ten thousand girls that I still have to meet.

Frank: Hell, Justin ain’t interested in girls. He’s just interested in searching for the meaning of life. Ain’t that right, Justin?

Justin: I am interested in girls. I just haven’t found any who are interested in me.

Steven: That’s because you haven’t looked hard enough. Now believe it or not, some girls aren’t interested in me. But since I meet so many, I can always manage to find at least one who is free for the evening.

Justin: I am not interested in the type of girls you sleep with. I would rather wait and find one who had some morals.

Steven: Some of my girls have morals. They just forget them sometimes.

(Justin rises)

Justin: I have got to hit the head.

(Justin exists the room. Steven turns to Frank.)

Steven: We have got to get him laid.

Frank: No shit. I get sick of hearing all his philosophy moral bull crap.

Steven: Are you seeing anybody? Or are you to busy pumping yourself?

Frank: Actually I did see someone once.

Steven: Who was she? Was she hot?

Frank: It was Constance Thayer. You know, she’s a reporter for the Daily News.

Steven: Yah, I’ve seen her picture. How was she?

Frank: Well, We were at a party and she was kind of drunk. She knew me from seeing me around the paper, so we started
talking. One thing lead to another and. . .

Steven: You bopped her brains out.

Frank: Yah, kinda. She was kinda for it at the time. She was talking about how we could get married and shit. That worried me a little at the time, but when she woke up in the morning she was real pissed.

Steven: Have you seen her since?

Frank: I have kinda been avoiding her. (pause) I think she would want me to become serious or she might hate my guts.

Steven: Yah, you don’t want to mess with anybody who would want to get serious.

(Justin reenters the room. Steven begins playing the game again.)

Justin: Did I miss any great stories?

Frank: No.

(Steven looks up.)

Steven: Have you told Justin about your night of romance?

Frank: No, and I don’t want to. He’ll just tell me how defiled I am.

Justin: Well, if it’s about a one-night stand, I don’t need to hear it.

Steven: Then I guess you don’t need to hear it. (Steven looks back to the game) Whoops, I guess it’s your turn again Frank. Take it easy on the controller. (pause) So what’s so bad about one-night stands, T.S.?

(Frank begins to play.)

Justin: It’s just gross in a way. Aren’t you guys afraid of getting AIDS?

Steven: Well, I can’t speak for Frankola, but I always use a rubber.

Frank: Hell, I ain’t stupid. I use rubbers.
Justin: (To Steven) Are you mad that they don’t have condom machines in the dorms?

Steven: It would make things a lot easier sometimes. Although, I usually have enough stashed away to get me through the night.

Justin: Do you still like living in the dorms?

Steven: Hell yes. There are girls all over the place. When I lived off campus last year I had to go the grocery store to see a girl. You just can’t beat the girls per square inch that the dorms provide.

(Frank throws the controller to the floor again.)

Frank: (upset) Fuck this game. I am going to take a shower.

Steven: But, I am not done beating you yet.

Frank: Shut up.

(Frank leaves the room.)

Steven: What do you say T.S.? You ready to take on the master?

Justin: No, I am sick of video games. However, I will play you in horse on the nerf hoop if you want.

Steven: All right, but I’m shooting first.

(Justin and Steven begin shooting baskets)

Justin: I hit it, right here baby.

Steven: Step back Jackson. (Steven misses and notices the wall mural again) That really is a cool painting.

Justin: Thanks man.

Steven: You know, somebody really might want to take a picture of that for the paper. Maybe Frank could write an article about it.

Justin: No, I don’t think Frank would do that. He thinks the landlord is going to be mad that I did it.
Steven: Oh no. I think that the painting will increase the value of the house. I know I would be able to rent it for more than you guys are paying.

Justin: That could be, but we will just have to see.

Steven: Maybe Frank wouldn't do it, but maybe someone else. (pause to think) He was telling me he knew a girl at the paper. Maybe she could do a report on it.

Justin: I don't know, we will just have to wait and see.

(Justin picks the ball up and jumps over Steven and dunks it. The lights dim.)
ACT ONE
SCENE TWO

(It is a two weeks before the week of finals in the Spring of 1989. Ed now has a weight lifting belt draped around his neck. It is early Friday evening. Frank and Steven are sitting at the kitchen table playing quarters. Steven has just rolled a quarter off his nose and into the shot glass.)

Steven: Drink!

Frank: (upset) Slow down, you’re going too fast. (Frank takes a drink) If you don’t miss soon I’ll be too drunk to go with you tonight.

Steven: I know your limits, Frankola. I’ll take good care of you tonight.

(Steven bounces another quarter into the shot glass)

Frank: I hope so because this is the last weekend I can party until after finals.

(Frank drinks.)

Steven: Don’t worry about it. I have got you set up with the second hottest babe on campus.

Frank: I suppose your date is the hottest.

Steven: Exactly. (Steven lines up his shot) If I miss we can be done for the evening.

Frank: (whining) I want a chance to get you.

Steven: Do you want me to miss or not?

Frank: O.K. miss.

(Steven misses the shot glass.)

Steven: There, we’re done. When’s Justin getting home.

Frank: I don’t know, but he had better get here pretty soon because Constance is coming over to do that story tonight.

Steven: You’re not going to stick around for that?
Frank: Hell no. She doesn’t even know I live here.

Steven: How’s that?

Frank: I left an anonymous note in her mailbox about the painting and the room. I guess she talked with the editor and he O.K.’d it. A couple of nights ago she called and asked for Justin, so they set up an appointment.

Steven: She didn’t know it was you who answered?

Frank: I haven’t talked with her since that night I told you about.

(Justin enters.)

Steven: Hey, T.S.. Frank tells me you have a hot date lined up.

Justin: I believe you’ve been misinformed.

Frank: (explaining) He’s talking about the reporter who is coming over.

Justin: Oh, yes. Well, she should be here in a while. She sounded pretty nice on the phone, but I wouldn’t call it a date.

Steven: Make it a date! Ask her out. Better yet, get her in the sack tonight. (looking at Frank) Rumor has it that wouldn’t be too hard.

(Justin sits down at the table.)

Justin: Sorry guys, but I don’t see that happening.

Steven: Are you at least going to try?

Frank: I told him to have the "Hey, we want some pussy" song playing when she gets here.

Steven: That’s probably a bit to strong. However, the Rolling Stones "Let’s spend the night together" might be all right.

Justin: Cut it out guys. I am not going to be hitting on her.

Frank: It’s just as well. You wouldn’t know what to do if she
wanted you.

Steven: Don’t doubt my main man. T.S. can hold his own.

Justin: (surprised) Is that beer your drinking, Frank?

Frank: (protective) Yah, what about it?

Justin: I just thought that the future Mr. Ball State was only allowed to eat complex carbohydrates.

Frank: I’m giving myself a treat. I don’t have to get real serious until the summer. By next fall you’re not even going to recognize me.

Steven: So you’re really going to be a weight lifter, Frank?

Frank: (upset) A bodybuilder, ya asshole.

Steven: Sorry to confuse the two.

Frank: I am going to work at a health club this summer as an internship for health science. I am going to work out three times a day.

Steven: What are you doing this summer, T.S.?

Justin: I am going to work at a summer camp.

Frank: He’s going to teach kids how to find themselves even though he doesn’t have a clue as to who he is.

Justin: I am going to find myself. I just need time. At least I am not consumed with the ridiculous belief that I am superman.

Frank: (mad) Fuck off, you pussy. I know I’m a bodybuilder. That’s what I want to be and that’s who I am.

Steven: Hey, hey, now calm down you guys. Justin can search for himself and Frank can be superman. There is room enough in this one horse town for the both of you.

Justin: (upset) He just makes me mad when he says that I don’t know who I am.

Frank: Hell Justin, you don’t even have a major.
Steven: (surprised) You still don’t have a major?

Justin: Not really. (pause) Technically, I am still an Architecture major, but I dropped out of that at the beginning of the year.

Steven: Well, I guess you know what your doing.

Justin: I just want to make sure I prepare myself for a career that will allow me to fulfill all of my needs.

Frank: Just shut up with your needs and pick a major. You like all your classes anyway. I don’t know why you wouldn’t be happy just choosing anything.

Justin: It’s not that easy.

(Steven rises.)

Steven: I hate to break up this discussion, but were going to be late for the movie if we don’t leave.

(Frank gets up.)

Frank: Let me get my keys and we’ll be off.

Justin: See you guys later.

Steven: Good luck tonight, T.S.. Remember the Stones, it has never let me down.

Justin: I am not going to do something that stupid. See ya.

(Frank and Steven leave for the evening. Justin is sitting at the table by himself.)

Justin: (thinking aloud to himself) Rolling Stones, huh.

(Justin goes to the stereo and begins to mess with the C.D. player. He stands up and turns the ceiling lights on and the regular lighting off. He goes and sits on the couch. There is a knock on the door. Justin gets up and opens the door.)

Constance: Hi, I’m Constance Thayer from the Daily News. Are you Justin?

Justin: (excited) Yes Maam. Please, step inside.
(Constance steps into the house.)

Constance: This lighting is pretty neat.

Justin: I like it. I wanted you to get the full room experience. I can turn the regular lighting on now if you want.

Constance: Yah, that would probably be best to see the whole room.

(Justin turns the regular lights on and the ceiling lights off.)

Constance: Is there somewhere I can set my bag?

Justin: Yes, just set it next to Ed.

(Constance notices Ed.)

Constance: (laughing) Ha, where did you get him?

Justin: I found him in the trash can of a liquor store last year. When I saw him lying there helpless, I knew it was my role in life to rescue him.

Constance: You have him decorated nicely.

Justin: Yes, I bought the jersey and got the hair from one of the games. The weight lifting belt is my roommate’s.

Constance: Yah, who’s your roommate?

Justin: You probably know him. He works at the paper, Frank Sims.

Constance: (surprised and showing signs of irritation.) Frank Sims lives here?

Justin: Yes, do you not like him or something?

Constance: Has he said anything about me?

Justin: No, he told me he had never met you.

Constance: Are you sure? You’re not lying, are you?

Justin: I am not lying. (pause) Do you not like him?

Constance: No, I don’t like him and he does know me.
Justin: I asked if he knew you after you called, and he said that he didn’t.

Constance: (thinking aloud) I guess he was the one who put the note in my mailbox.

Justin: What note would that be?

Constance: The note that told me about your painting. (she begins to look around) Where is the painting anyway? There is a painting isn’t there?

Justin: (upbeat) Of course, there’s a painting. It is right over here.

(Justin leads the way to the center of the room. Constance sees the painting.)

Constance: (excited) Wow! That is impressive. I will have to get a picture of that.

(Constance goes to her bag to get her camera.)

Constance: Where is Frank?

Justin: He left for the evening.

Constance: It figures. He’s been avoiding me.

(Constance focuses the camera and takes a couple of pictures of the painting.)

Justin: Why is he doing that?

(Constance pauses and wonders how to answer.)

Constance: Oh, it’s just something for the paper. (pause) I am going to take a few pictures with the flash to make sure I get a good picture.

Justin: Whatever you think is best.

(Constance takes a couple more pictures.)

Justin: (pointing to the nerf hoop) Did you notice the "Air Justin" nerf hoop.
(Constance looks and notices it.)

Constance: No, I didn't. That is pretty neat. This whole room is pretty neat. Did you decorate all of it?

Justin: Yes, I have always liked designing and decorating things.

Constance: Are you an Art major?

Justin: No, I actually don't have a major yet. I used to be an Architecture major, but I found it to limiting in that I didn't have time to explore everything that I was interested in.

Constance: I'm a Journalism major and I find it limitless.

Justin: Are you making fun of me?

Constance: No, I'm sorry if it sounded that way. It's just that my major allows me to study a variety of courses and if I find something that interests me, I can do an article on it.

Justin: Is it safe to assume that I interest you?

Constance: Yah, I guess so. Actually, I was more interested in the room. But now that I am here, you are pretty interesting.

Justin: Why, thank you.

Constance: You're welcome. So if you don't have a major what are you considering?

Justin: I would like to teach and I like little kids. I just don't know if I would like dealing with kids all the time.

Constance: I think I would rather deal with kids all the time than have to deal with grown-ups.

Justin: I guess I never thought of it that way. Now that I think about it, I would probably rather work with kids than with grown-ups too.

Constance: Besides that, you would get summers off.

Justin: I know. I think that would be great. I am really
considering something like Art Ed. I would love to have the whole summer to go and wander the country.

(Justin notices that they are still standing.)

Justin: Would you like to sit down? (Justin glances at the couch)

Constance: Sure.

(Constance and Justin sit on the couch.)

Constance: When you’re wandering the country, where would you wander to?

Justin: Oh, everywhere. You know how some people want to go to other countries. Well I don’t. I would rather find out more about my own country. I love America and I want to see all of it.

Constance: I know what you mean. It’s like those Texas commercials. They say it’s a whole other country.

Justin: Yes, Texas would be sweet. I think that the whole country would be sweet. What really got me thinking about travelling the country was this guy who went to every baseball stadium one summer. It was in the U.S.A. Today.

Constance: Do you like baseball?

Justin: Yes, I like it. Actually, I like reading fictional stories about it more that really watching it. But I do like it. I think if I were going to travel across the country, I would have to have a theme like that guy who saw all the stadiums did.

Constance: Are you really going to do something like that?

Justin: I hope to some summer.

Constance: Why not this summer?

Justin: This summer I am working at a summer camp.

Constance: (surprised) Really? So am I. What camp are you working at?

Justin: Camp Sing-A-Long up in Columbia City.
Constance: (astonished) You’re kidding. I am working there also.

Justin: (excited) Wow, that’s great. I will now already know someone up there.

Constance: I know what you mean. I was also worried about not knowing anybody.

Justin: I am hoping to earn enough money this summer so that next summer I can go on my escapade. Although, I will also need a more reliable car.

Constance: What type of car do you have now?

Justin: A sixty seven Cutlass Supreme. It’s older than I am.

Constance: I think I saw it out front. Is it grey?

Justin: It’s titanium. (pause) In other words, yes it’s grey.

Constance: (gloomy) I don’t even have a car.

Justin: Really, how did you get here?

Constance: I walked. It’s not that bad, not having a car. Except when I want to go to Indy or something.

Justin: I would always have to have a car. I think a person’s car is an extension of himself. It provides freedom.

(Constance notices the entertainment system.)

Constance: That’s quite an entertainment system you have there.

Justin: Thanks, I spent my life savings on it. Do you want to listen to anything?

Constance: Yah, I would. (slight pause) What do you like to listen to?

Justin: I really like U2 and Love and Rockets.

Constance: I like U2, but I am more into top forty. I don’t think I have ever heard anything by Love and Rockets before.

Justin: Then you are in for a real treat.
(Justin hands Constance the remote control.)
Constance: Remote control even. I’m impressed.

Justin: Just hit the red button.

Constance: Like this?

(Constance hits the red button and the Rolling Stones "Let’s spend the night together" begins to play. Justin realizes he programmed that song in and jumps off the couch and shuts it off.)

Constance: (shocked) Did I do something wrong?

Justin: (breathing hard) No... no, it’s just I want you to hear Love and Rockets, so I am going to have to put their disk in.

Constance: (startled) You scared me the way you jumped up.

Justin: I’m sorry. I just got a little excited.

(Justin puts the disk in. "Mirror people" begins playing and he sits back down on the couch. Constance looks at her watch.)

Constance: (showing concern) Justin, I just looked at my watch and remembered that I have to meet a friend of mine in five minutes.

Justin: Do you want to call her?

Constance: No, I can be a little late, but I am going to have to leave. I’m sorry I have to rush off.

Justin: Do you have enough material for your story?

Constance: Yes, I think it will be in Monday’s paper.

(Constance gets up and puts her camera in her bag.)

Justin: (disappointed) I guess I will see you this summer.

(Justin gets up.)

Constance: Yah, I think it will be a lot of fun.

Justin: Constance, (slight pause to strike up courage) would you
like to go out with me sometime?

Constance:  (hesitant) Oh, I don’t know. I mean I’d like to, but with finals and all . . .

Justin:  (disappointed) Yes, I understand.

Constance:  (explaining) I just don’t want to start seeing someone so close to the end of the year.

Justin:  (with hope) But I am going to be seeing you over the summer.

Constance:  Well, I still don’t know.

Justin:  (compromising) Can I at least drive you to your friend’s place? We can talk about it on the way.

Constance:  All right, I guess that will be O.K.

Justin:  (excited) Excellent, this will be the ride of your life.

(As Justin and Constance leave the house together, Justin begins to put his arm around Constance. Constance sees this and looks at Justin. Justin jerks his arm back. Constance nods her head yes, and Justin puts his arm around her. The lights dim.)
ACT TWO
ACT TWO
SCENE ONE

(One year has passed and it is now the Spring of 1990. Ed is now dressed in a "Gold’s Gym" tank top and a headband. Justin is lying on the couch reading an art book about Manet. There is a knock at the door and Constance enters and sees Justin.)

Constance: Hi, Honey.

Justin: (sarcastic) Don’t bother to wait for me to answer the door.

Constance: I knew that you would be here and I knew you were the only one home.

Justin: How did you come to know all this?

(Justin sits up and Constance sits down on the couch next to him.)

Constance: (pause to think) I saw Frank down at the paper and he said that he was going to be at the gym until five.

Justin: He has practically been living there for the last month.

Constance: Yah, he told me that the contest was in two weeks. This week is supposed to be the hardest for lifting weights. After this week, he will be cutting weight and not lifting as much.

Justin: (surprised) Boy, you know more about what he is doing than I do.

Constance: (explaining) Like I said, I saw him at the paper. I guess I just know how to ask the right questions.

Justin: I guess that’s why you’re the reporter.

Constance: Are you going to go the contest?

Justin: Of course, Frank wants me to take pictures.

Constance: Yah, he said something about that.

Justin: To tell you the truth, I do not think that he has much of a chance.
Constance: Really? What makes you say that?

Justin: I just think that he is way too tall. I will admit that he has gotten a lot bigger and more developed, but he still looks kind of goofy to me.

Constance: I don’t think that Frank looks goofy.

(Justin gets up.)

Justin: I just developed some pictures he had me take of him posing. Let me get them and you can see what I mean.

(Justin goes into his room and gets the picture. Justin returns and sits back down next to Constance.)

Justin: Now he looks o.k. in some of the pictures, but sometimes he looks really weird.

Constance: Well, let me see for myself.

(Justin hands Constance the pictures.)

Justin: (pointing at the picture) See, look there, it looks like someone beat him with a crooked stick.

Constance: (laughing) He does look funny. Why is he so crooked?

Justin: I think he is flexing too hard or something. I really don’t know. Maybe he is just built crooked.

Constance: Have you shown these to Frank?

Justin: No, not yet. I am kind of afraid to. I think he will be really disappointed. He is under the impression that he is a lot bigger than he actually is.

Constance: You should talk to him and tell him not to get his hopes up.

Justin: I try. He just won’t hear it. He has convinced himself that he is Superman.

Constance: Let’s talk about someone other than Frank. So, what have you been up to?

Justin: I have just been reading.
Constance: You sure do a lot of reading for an Art major.

Justin: I like to read about the artists to find out what they were like. I like to see what influenced their work. The work means so much more if you know what inspired it.

Constance: If that’s what you say. I like to just look at it and take it for what it means to me.

Justin: That is what I am talking about. I want my artwork to have the same effect on the person looking at it as it has on me. I am hoping that I can raise my artwork to a higher level. A level where it is apparent to the casual observer of the deep passion and feeling that I have for my work. Hopefully, by fully understanding what influenced the great artists of the past and seeing how they conveyed that influence, I will be able to use their techniques and become a great artist in the future.

Constance: Well, I hope so, honey. But, doesn’t an artist have to actually do some piece of artwork in order that he may become great? Have you finished your painting for your class yet?

Justin: No, not yet. I am going to start painting very soon. I can feel some great inspiration approaching. I just don’t know what it is.

Constance: I hope that inspiration makes itself known soon. How are you going to pass your classes if you never do any work?

Justin: (upset) I am doing work. I am thinking my projects through completely so that I will have a complete and unified theme in my work. It takes a lot of time putting all of my thoughts together in my mind before I can begin.

(Constance grabs Justin’s hand.)

Constance: I’m sorry, Honey. I didn’t mean to upset you. I should know better. I have loved all of your work thus far and I know you will continue to do well. Let’s talk about what we are going to do this weekend.

Justin: I don’t know. Why do you always need to know what we are going to be doing so far in advance for anyway? I like to do things at the spur of the moment and be spontaneous.
Constance: You mean like driving all the way to Cincinnati at the spur of the moment to find out the zoo was closed.

Justin: (laughing) That may not have been one of my better ideas. However, if the zoo had been opened, it would have been fun.

Constance: Oh Justin, you’re so zany. I guess that is why I love you so much. (Constance hugs Justin) But, I do want to make plans for the weekend. I have commitments other than you, ya know?

Justin: Now that I think of it, it is probably a good idea to make plans. I had forgotten that I want to go to React-to-Art on Friday and I want you to come. I have a surprise.

Constance: (relieved) Good. I have Friday open. We can go to React-to-Art together. Did you decide to enter anything?

Justin: Yes, that is my surprise. I entered my "Alone" collage.

Constance: What one is that? I don’t remember it.

(Justin gets up and walks toward the bedroom.)

Justin: The reason you don’t remember it is because I just created it last night.

(Justin enters the bedroom and some rustling is heard.)

Constance: That’s typical. Let your homework slide to follow some impulse.

(Justin enters the room with a large framed piece of art.)

Justin: How do you like it?

Constance: (astonished) Justin, what did you do?

Justin: Well, I was feeling lonesome last Saturday night so I began to draw this puppy by itself in an alley.

Constance: (interrupting) I am sorry I couldn’t do something with you but I had visit my mom.

Justin: I know, that’s o.k.. (pause) So, I was thinking that it
looked pretty good and conveyed the feeling of loneliness, but something seemed to be missing. Then I started to listen and I could hear people yelling and carrying on next door. Then I began to think about how I was surrounded by people partying in the houses next to mine, yet I was still alone. So I started to cut up my photographs from our new year’s party and pasted them in the windows of the buildings that created the alley. Then I took a picture of a homeless person from a *Time* magazine and put him on top of the dog. Thus, I created my "Alone" collage. I was thinking of putting the man next to the dog, but then I figured he would no longer be alone.

(pause) So how do you like it?

Constance: It’s so sad.

Justin: Thank you. Being alone is pretty sad. I was trying to convey how I felt.

(Constance’s eyes begin to water.)

Constance: Gosh Justin, I feel terrible for not being here for you.

Justin: Don’t feel that way. It wasn’t your fault that you had to see your mom. It was more than just being physically alone that inspired me anyway. Sometimes I feel that I can’t communicate with anyone. Even when I am with you. I don’t know how to explain it, but something just isn’t coming out when we talk.

(Constance begins to cry. Justin sits down next to her and holds her.)

Constance: (whimpering) I am so sorry.

Justin: (comforting) It’s o.k., sweety. I don’t want you to feel bad. It is just a stupid collage. It isn’t about me. It is just about a universal feeling that everyone has at times. Come on Constance. I love you.

(Constance looks up to Justin.)

Constance: Are you mad at me? I will be more open with you, honey. Just give me a couple of weeks to get things together.
Justin: It’s not you, baby. I did not mean to imply that you cause me to feel alone. I was just trying to capture an emotion.

Constance: I’ll be better to you, honey. I promise.

Justin: O.K. sweety, it’s O.K.

(Frank bursts into the door.)

Frank: (excited and out of breath) Hey Justin! I just ran three miles in twenty minutes and thirteen seconds! And that’s after lifting.

(Frank catches his breath and hangs his weight lifting belt on Ed. Constance sits up and tries to get her composure. Frank sees that Constance has been crying and looks worried.)

Frank: (cautiously) What’s going on here?

Justin: Oh, Constance doesn’t like my collage.

(Constance gets up and goes to the bathroom.)

Frank: (confused) Is that all?

Justin: Apparently it hit a bad nerve with her and she thinks that I am upset with her.

Frank: (searching) Are you upset with her?

Justin: (emphatic) No, no! I am not upset at all.

Frank: (relieved) Well, that’s a woman for ya.

(Constance enters the room looking much better. Frank goes into the kitchen.)

Constance: I’m better now.

(Justin rises from the couch.)

Justin: I am sorry that I upset you, sweety. I did not mean to.

Constance: I know, it’s just that I have been under a lot of stress and I need to work things out.
Justin: All right, I understand.

Constance: Well, I have got to go now. I have to turn in an article at the paper.

Justin: All right. Are you sure you are O.K.?

Constance: I'm fine.

(Frank sees Constance kiss Justin goodbye. Constance leaves.)

Justin: (mimicking) Hey Frank! (serious) That running time sounds pretty good. (sarcastic) So are you going to be a track star now?

(Justin enters the kitchen.)

Frank: (mad) Dammit Justin, why can't you just quit fucking around and realize that I'm a bodybuilder.

(Frank takes a bite of baby food from the jar.)

Justin: Why do you have to eat that stuff. I suppose that is what bodybuilders eat?

Frank: (explaining) I'm on a strict diet. I can only have so much protein, so much fat, and so on. I need to maintain my diet so I'll peak at the contest. Baby food is very nutritious with very little fat. That's why I eat it.

Justin: (mimicking) I am going to make myself a pizza. It is very good and very filling and that is why I eat it.

Frank: Why do you have to make a joke out of everything that I do?

(Justin searches through the cupboard for pizza dough mix.)

Justin: Oh Frank, now don't get upset with me. I know you are trying your darndest to be a bodybuilder. If it were not so easy to rile you, I probably would not give you such a hard time. But it is easy to rile you. Therefore, I feel compelled to tell you that any decent runner can run three miles in less than eighteen minutes.

(Justin places the mix on the counter.)

Frank: Why are you always trying to bring me down, man. Shit
Justin, if I wanted to, I could crush you in a second.

Justin: I am too quick for you. You could never catch me.

(Justin looks for a pan and turns the oven on to preheat.)

Frank: I am not talking about beating the shit out of you. I could crush your whole ego if I wanted to.

Justin: And how, my friend, could you do that?

(Frank finishes his baby food and throws the empty jar away.)

Frank: Just drop it. If you wouldn’t give me so much shit all the time, I wouldn’t get so mad.

Justin: I realize that, Frank. I just don’t like to see you getting too cocky. Putting you down is the only way I know to keep you humble.

Frank: Hell, I don’t need to be cocky. Come tournament time, the whole earth will shake when I take the stage.

(Justin begins to mix the pizza dough mix up in a bowl.)

Justin: Come on Frank, I have seen your routine and it was not that great.

Frank: You said that you couldn’t tell how I looked because you were taking the pictures. If you didn’t have to look through that tiny lens, you would have seen how huge I am.

(Frank takes his sweatshirt off and throws it onto the couch.)

Justin: You may be right. I just don’t want you to get your hopes up.

Frank: When the hell are you going to develop those pictures, anyway?

Justin: (hesitating a second) I should be able to get them done pretty soon. There is a long waiting list to use the dark room.

(Frank goes into the living room and sits on the couch.)
Frank: Move your ass up on the list. I need to see those pictures so I know what I need to work on. The contest is only two weeks away.

Justin: I will get them done as fast as I can. (pause) When I do get them done, keep in mind that the camera doesn’t lie.

Frank: What the hell does that mean? You really don’t think I have a chance to win, do ya?

(Justin begins greasing the pan.)

Justin: There is always a chance, I just don’t think it is very likely. I mean some of the guys in the contest have been training for years. You yourself said some of them take steroids.

Frank: I think that I’ve got that covered.

(Justin looks up from the pan.)

Justin: (shocked) What did you just say?

Frank: Hell Justin, how could you not tell? Don’t I look bigger?

Justin: (disappointed) Oh Frank, all along you have said that you wanted to be natural. You said that you would never take steroids.

Frank: I didn’t think I would at first. They’re really not that bad. I don’t believe there are any terrible side effects.

Justin: I have just lost all respect for you. I cannot believe you could have done that to yourself.

Frank: It’s not that big of a deal. No one who takes them says they do any harm. Anyway, I have only been doing them for a couple of weeks. I should be peaking right at the tournament. After the tournament I can quit.

Justin: Quit until when? The next tournament?

Frank: We’ll see.

Justin: Frank, this has got to be just about the dumbest thing that you have ever done. What is so important to you about winning a bodybuilding contest that you would
pollute your body like that? I don’t care what your
ing lifting buddies say, there will be side effects to your
use of steroids. Hell Frank, even if there are no side
effects, don’t you feel as if you are cheating?

Frank:  (defensive) How can it be cheating if everyone does it?
How can someone who doesn’t use them compete?

(Justin, visibly upset, walks into the living room.)

Justin:  Just because others cheat is no reason for you to cheat.
That is what it is, Frank. Cheating! How can you have
any pride?

(Frank stands up.)

Frank:  (sticking up for himself) I have got pride. My pride is
the reason I am taking them. I couldn’t live with myself
if I didn’t do everything possible to win this contest.
I know you don’t understand, but this contest is the most
important thing that I have in my life.

Justin:  (facing Frank) You are right. I don’t understand why this
contest is so important to you.

(Justin turns his head from Frank and sighs. Justin then sits down
on the couch.)

Frank:  (explaining) I have never dedicated myself to anything.
I have put my life into this contest. Without this
contest, I have no reason to live. I want to be a success
in my life. Bodybuilding is the only thing that I enjoy.
What is my life worth if I can’t be a success at what I
enjoy? I don’t care about the side effects of steroids.
I care about the side effects of failure. I have to
succeed in this or I’m not worth anything.

Justin:  (after a pause) I guess I did not know that this contest
was that important to you. It is a good thing to dedicate
yourself to something and try to be successful; however,
you have gone too far.

Frank:  I haven’t gone any farther than anyone else has. Take your
artwork away and what have you got? You spend all of you
time thinking about painting, so I spend all of my time
lifting. If someone invents a new paint brush you use it.
Someone invented steroids, I use them. You think you’re
so special. You're no different from me.

Justin: There is a big difference between a paint brush and steroids. A new paint brush does not endanger my body. Besides that, take my art-work away and I would have Constance.

Frank: (mad) You are so damn stupid, it makes me sick. Constance is not the Miss Goody Goody that you think she is. Hell Justin, you are not even worth talking to. You think you know everything. You don't know shit.

(Frank stomps out of the house and slams the door. Justin walks after him to the door and stops. Justin pauses to think. He then turns and looks at Ed and shakes his head in disbelief.)
(It is now two weeks later. Ed is still dressed as a bodybuilder and is wearing a weight-lifting belt. Returning from the contest, Justin and Constance are entering the house. Frank is already home and in the bedroom.)

Justin: Well, we have made it back.

Constance: Is Frank here?

Justin: Yes, I think so. I saw his car out front and the bedroom door is closed.

Constance: I think you should say something to him.

Justin: He probably wants to be alone.

Constance: You should at least check on him.

(Justin goes to the bedroom door and knocks. Constance goes and sits at the kitchen table.)

Justin: Hey, Frank, are you in there?

(No response. Justin tries to open the door and it is locked.)

Justin: He is in there, Constance. He has the door locked and probably does not want disturbed.

Constance: O.K., then we won’t disturb him.

(Justin goes into the kitchen.)

Justin: Do you want anything to drink?

Constance: Do you have any juice?

(Justin opens the door to the refrigerator.)

Justin: Oh my, do we have juice. In fact we have better than juice. We have one deluxe, protein rich, cod, tuna, and V-8 milk-shake left in here.

Constance: I’ll just have apple juice, thank you.
Justin: Now at least, Frank can start to eat normal again?
Constance: It doesn't seem fair. He worked so hard. I think he should have at least got fifth place.

Constance takes a drink of her juice. Justin sits down at the table next to her.

Justin: Yes, he looked a lot better than I expected he would. With the oil and the lighting I think he looked great.

Constance: How upset do you think he will be?

Justin: I hope not too bad. Steven should be here in a minute. Maybe, he will be able to cheer him up.

Constance: If anyone could cheer him up, Steven could. Could you believe how loud he was yelling.

Constance finishes her glass of juice and sets the empty glass on the table.

Justin: I know, I was embarrassed to be sitting next to him. I think it helped the crowd get into the contest, though.

(Justin gets up and puts the glass in the sink.)

Constance: I didn't know what to expect. I thought that the whole production was really exiting.

Justin: I have got an idea that might cheer Frank up. How about we put one of the pictures I took of him in the paper?

Constance: I don't know if that would make him feel better or worse. I'll have to ask the photo editor if we can do that.

(There is a commotion outside and then a knock at the door. Justin goes and opens the door.)

Steven: Hey, Hey, the party has arrived!

Constance: It is about time. We need a party in here.

Justin: Frank is still in the bedroom. Why don't you see if you
can get him out here, Steven?

Steven: No problem. The love doctor managed to get Mrs. Ball State and the runner-up to agree to come over. They should be here in about ten minutes.

Constance: I don’t think you needed to do that.

Justin: I think that’s a good idea. Frank hasn’t been on a date in weeks.

(Steven walks over to the bedroom door and tries to coax Frank out.)

Justin: Leave it to Steven to work everything out.

Steven: (looking worried) Hey T.S., I can’t even get a response from him. Are you sure he’s in here?

(Justin goes to the door and bangs on it.)

Justin: Frank, come on out of there man.

(There is a slight pause and then Justin bangs on the door again.)

Justin: (beginning to panic) Frank, get out here, man.

(There is no response. Justin begins to kick the door.)

Constance: (scared) What’s going on? Is Frank all right?

(Justin kicks the door in and runs into the room.)

Justin: (screaming) Get in here and help me, Steven. Constance, call an ambulance.

(Steven enters the bedroom. Justin and Steven drag Frank out into the living room with Frank protesting.)

Constance: (scared) What’s going on?

Justin: (calm) Frank took some pills. You need to call an ambulance while we hold him here.

(Justin and Steven lie Frank on the couch and hold him there.)

Constance: (scared) Is he going to die?
Justin: I think he will be o.k.. I think he took sleeping pills. Whatever they were, he has already thrown up some of them.

Steven: His shrunken stomach must not have been able to hold them.

(Frank puts his head over the side of the couch and throws up. Constance calls an ambulance.)

Justin: That's it Frank, get it out of you.

Steven: What are you thinking, Frankola? You can't die. I got you a date.

Frank: (groggy) Fuck off, you dicks. Let go of me.

(Frank begins to struggle.)

Steven: Shit, he is strong.

Justin: Just hold him until the ambulance gets here. Constance, did you call?

Constance: (Calm) Yes, I told them he took some pills and he was throwing up. They said that he would probably be o.k. and they would be here in a couple of minutes.

(Frank continues to struggle.)

Justin: Frank, just calm down. You are going to be all right.

Frank: Fuck you. Get off me. I can't breathe.

(Justin and Steven pause for a moment to consider easing their resistance.)

Justin: Here he is trying to kill himself, worrying that he can't breathe.

(They ease their resistance. Frank breaks loose and starts hitting himself.)

Steven: (yelling) Quick, grab his arm. I got his legs.

(Justin tries to grab his arm and Frank rolls onto the floor.)

Justin: (panicked) Constance, get over here and help.
(Justin finally gets control of his arms.)

Constance: (frightened) What do I do?

Justin: The next time he gets loose, you have got to grab something.

Frank: (screaming) Let go of me!

Constance: Calm down Frank. Why are you doing this to us?

Frank: (starting to cry) Let me go. Please, let me go.

Steven: When is that ambulance supposed to get here?

Justin: Constance, go outside so the ambulance doesn’t miss us.

(Constance runs outside.)

Frank: (groggy and sobbing) Hey Steven, guess who I’ve been fucking.

Steven: Just shut up and calm down, Frank.

(Frank turns his head to face Steven.)

Frank: Steven, I’ve been fucking Constance every Saturday night for weeks.

(Justin looks to Steven to see his reaction.)

Steven: (avoiding looking at Justin) Shut up, Frank. You don’t know what your talking about.

(Frank turns to Justin.)

Frank: It’s true, Justin. You think your so cool putting me down all the time. (pause for breath) I’ve been putting it to your girl.

(Justin looks to Steven.)

Justin: (shocked and frightened) What’s he talking about?

Steven: T.S. man, I’m not real sure.

Justin: (angry) Do you know something about this, Steven?
Steven: (looking away) Man, I don’t know.

(An ambulance team rushes into the room and puts Frank on a stretcher. Justin and Steven back off. Constance also enters the room.)

Ambulance leader: (commanding) Someone has to come with us.

Constance: I’ll go.

Justin: Bull shit, if you think you’re going?

(Constance looks shocked and looks at Justin.)

Steven: I’ll go.

(Steven and the ambulance team leave the room.)

Constance: What’s going on, honey?

Justin: Frank said something, and I want to know if it’s true.

Constance: (shocked and frightened) What are you talking about?

Justin: Frank said that you two had been fucking every Saturday.

Constance: (beginning to cry) It wasn’t like that, honey.

Justin: What in the hell do you mean it wasn’t like that? I suppose you were making love, is that it? You weren’t fucking, you were making love. Is that it? My best friend and my girlfriend doing it behind my back.

Constance: (crying) No, it wasn’t like that. He said it would just be once. He said he would tell you if I didn’t do it.

Justin: (screaming and mad) Tell me what, you slut? It’s o.k. if it’s only once. Oh yah, you two thought you would just fuck once to see what it was like. Is that it?

Constance: (screaming and crying) No! Listen to me, Justin. We slept with each other before I met you and he said he would tell... .

Justin: (interrupting and mad) Once wasn’t enough, huh? You needed to get it twice. Oh no, we couldn’t tell Justin,
we’ll just do it again. (sarcastic) That sounds about right. What in the hell kind of fucked up logic is that?

Constance: (sobbing) I’m so, so sorry, honey. I was stupid. I was afraid to tell you. I know I was wrong. I wanted to stop, but... 

(Justin starts to pace the room in anger.)

Justin: Quit calling me honey. I can’t believe this is happening. I loved you. How could you possibly do this to me? Just please get out of here. I never want to see you again.

Constance: (sobbing) No, please let me stay. I’m sorry.

Justin: (with rising anger) Get out right now! I don’t want to see you.

Constance: (begging) Please, I need you.

Justin: (slow) Fuck off!

(Constance leaves the house crying. Justin paces the room mumbling to himself.)

Justin: (screaming) Why? (pause) What in the fuck happened tonight?

(Justin picks Ed up and throws him across the room. He chases after the cardboard man and stomps on it.)

Justin: Fuck you, Frank! Fuck you!

(Justin begins to whimper and hyperventilate. Justin goes to the couch and sits down. He begins to cry. Then he begins bawling. The lights dim.)
ACT THREE
ACT THREE
SCENE ONE

(It is late in the summer of 1990. The swooping cardinal that was on the wall has been replaced by a new mural. The new mural is an abstract painting of a man in pain. The figure is colored in shades of black and blue and appears to be melting. The figure is on his knees looking into the sky with his arms extended. Frank has his belongings packed, ready to move out. The action begins with Frank carrying a box toward the door just as Justin enters.)

Frank: Hey man, so you decided to come and help me move out.

(Frank rests the box on the head of the couch.)

Justin: I figured that since I may not ever see you again, I should at least show up to say goodbye.

Frank: Wow, you’re even talking to me.

Justin: I have had a chance to get over it.

(Frank sets the box on the ground and sits on the couch. Justin is walking around the room surveying.)

Frank: I was kinda hoping you would come. I feel kinda bad about all that’s happened.

Justin: (somewhat angry) Kinda bad? You ruined my life!

Frank: (explaining) I know that I dicked you over pretty good, but shit Justin, you had your head in the clouds. You should’ve saw it coming.

Justin: (avoiding the real subject) How could I have known that you were going to try to kill yourself?

Frank: You know I’m not talking about that. I’m talking about Constance. Couldn’t you tell she wanted me? It’s not like I planned the whole thing myself. I didn’t want to do that to you. It just happened.

Justin: (upset) Just stop it, Frank. I don’t want to talk about it. You two crushed me.

(Justin picks up the nerf ball and begins shooting baskets.)

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Frank: If you don’t face your problem, you’re never going to feel right about yourself.

(Frank gets up, and also starts to shoot.)

Frank: My therapist has helped me to look into my problems. She says that the only way that you can get through your pain is to vent it out and address the cause of it.

Justin: I tried to vent it out. It was too painful. I want to just bottle it up and forget it.

Frank: You will never be able to forget it. Come on Justin, don’t you hate me?

Justin: (angry) Yes, I hate you! How could I not hate you? I don’t see how you can live with yourself.

Frank: It’s hard. I don’t like what I’ve done to you. I don’t like what I’ve done to me. I wasn’t a very great guy last semester.

(Justin stops shooting.)

Justin: (sarcastic) Oh, don’t be so hard on yourself. You have done the worst thing one man can do to another. I was really hoping you were going to die that night, Frank. I even wanted to go and kill you myself.

(Frank stops shooting, as well.)

Frank: (explaining) It was hard for me too. You seem to be forgetting that I wanted to die that night, also. I needed help. You were too blind to see anything. You couldn’t help me. Hell, you couldn’t even help yourself. Why didn’t you notice?

Justin: I don’t know. (pause) I simply do not know. It seems so obvious now. I just wasn’t looking for anything. I never suspected that anything but good things would happen to me. I should have known that you were in trouble. I should have seen that you and Constance were together. I just didn’t. I never saw it coming.

(Justin goes and sits on the couch. Frank begins to shoot again.)

Frank: I guess all three of us were pretty stupid, huh?
Justin: I guess so. (pause) How did it happen? Who initiated it?

Frank: Ya really want to know?

Justin: I think so. I just want to get this whole mess out of my system. Like you said, vent it out.

Frank: Well, I don't know where to start. You do know that she and I knew each other before she met you, don't you?

Justin: Yes, I am now aware of that. However, had I known that before, I would have been more suspicious of you two. Why did you not ever tell me?

Frank: Once you got to liking her, I thought it would make you mad.

Justin: You should have told me.

Frank: Yah, I probably should've.

(Justin gets up and goes into the kitchen and opens the refrigerator.)

Justin: Well, are you going to tell me how it happened, or not?

Frank: I guess so. You do really want to know, don't ya?

Justin: (emphatic) Yes, now let's get on with it.

(Justin grabs the orange juice container from the refrigerator and slams the door shut.)

Frank: Well, one day she stopped by while I was working out. . .

Justin: (shocked) Don't tell me that you did it right here, in the house?

Frank: No, no, let me finish. Well, I was all pumped up and feeling kind of reckless so I asked her if she wanted to relive some old memories. She said something like "Oh no, we could never do that," but I could tell from the way she said it that she was considering it.

(Justin pours himself some orange juice and walks back into the living room.)
Justin: (interrupting) Maybe I shouldn’t hear this after all, at least not from you.

Frank: If that’s what you want. I don’t really want to be the one to tell ya, but who else could? If you want to know what happened, I can tell ya.

(Justin sits down on the couch.)

Justin: O.k., o.k., go on.

(Frank stops shooting and sits next to Justin on the couch.)

Frank: All right. So, one day we’re at the newspaper’s office alone together and she tells me that she does want to do it. Believe me, I was shocked. I mean I never thought she would do it. I only asked her half hoping she would tell you that I asked her so you would get mad.

Justin: (upset) So, you’re telling me that it was her idea?

Frank: Well kinda. Remember, I did initiate it originally.

Justin: (exhaling) Huh. (pause) The way she told it, you practically blackmailed her.

Frank: Well, I’ll get to that later. (pause) What happened was, now ya got to believe that I really didn’t feel right about it but, we decided to meet at the office on Saturday night and if we still wanted to do it, we would.

Justin: (exasperated) I must be an idiot. She told me her mother was sick and the only time she could visit her was on Saturday nights. God, I am stupid.

Frank: Man, just let me finish. You’re probably going to be real pissed at me by the time I finish and I want to get through this. (pause). So, we got there and decided to go through with it. So, we did it. We both felt terrible about it afterward and she said that she had to tell you. But, I said no way. I wanted to get you mad, but I didn’t want to get you that mad. I knew it would crush you, if you knew. So, I told her that if she told, I would tell you it was all her idea.

Justin: Well, if that’s what happened, why in the fuck did you two continue to do it?
(Frank stands up and starts to pace.)

Frank: I’m getting to that. Later in the week, after we did it she wrote me a note and asked me if I wanted to do it again. I swear she did.

Justin: (astonished) She what?

Frank: I was originally going to say no. I really was, then you and I had that big steroid argument and I got pissed and changed my mind. That’s when I decided to go ahead and do it again.

Justin: (astonished) I cannot believe it was her freaking idea? How can that be?

Frank: I swear it was. I wasn’t even going to do it again until we had that argument, I swear.

Justin: I guess I really don’t know her.

Frank: I had tried to tell you that, but you wouldn’t hear it.

Justin: Tell me this, how did you blackmail her if it was her idea?

Frank: Well, after that second time she really did want to stop.

Justin: (sarcastic) Yah, sure.

Frank: She did, only now I wanted to piss you off. So, I said we were going to keep doing it every Saturday until you found out.

Justin: (disappointed) Oh, Frank. (pause) I thought that you didn’t want me to find out.

Frank: Not at first, I didn’t. But I guess I changed my mind.

Justin: Then why did you not just tell me?

Frank: I don’t know, just let me finish. I’m almost done. I told her that I would show you the note she wrote unless she kept doing it.

(Justin gets up and starts to pace and Frank sits down.)
Justin: (slow) What a couple of jerks. (pause) (angry) Why did she want to do it the second time?

Frank: I don’t know, man. She didn’t say.

Justin: (angry) What in the hell kind of a reason did you have for doing this to me?

Frank: I was mad at you. I wanted to hurt you.

Justin: How could you do it?

Frank: I was messed up. In a way I wanted help. I wanted you to find out and beat the shit out of me. Straighten me out. I guess I didn’t care that you would get hurt.

Justin: (yelling) You sure didn’t care. You fucking dickhead. How is it that you came to be so fucked up? How, exactly did that happen?

(Frank stands in order to look Justin in the eye.)

Frank: (calm) It was a lot of things, Justin. I’m getting therapy. I’m getting better. I’m sorry I did it. I shouldn’t have tried to get you involved in my problems.

Justin: (yelling) You did more that just try. You got me involved. (pause) (calmer) You ruined me, Frank.

Frank: I know, man. I’m really sorry.

(Justin collapses on the couch.)

Justin: Life just sucks.

(Frank sits on the couch next to Justin.)

Frank: I know what you mean, but I can help you.

Justin: (angry) You do not have a clue as to what I mean. How, in the world, could you help me?

Frank: I’m not real sure, but I think I can.

Justin: You could never help me, Frank.

Frank: (angry) If you weren’t so stuck up. You think you can do
anything by yourself. If you would just get off your high horse for once. . . Other people can help you.

Justin: (angry) O.K. Frank, how can you help me?

Frank: I can share what I’ve learned from my therapy. I am learning to see positive things in life. How to get help from others when I need it.

Justin: (calm) Frank, I used to see only positive. (with rising anger) I was happy, until you freaking ruined me. Now you want to move on and talk about how great everything is, while I am stuck trying to deal with your disaster.

Frank: I know that what I did was wrong. You need to see that what happened may have been for the best.

Justin: How in the world can your ruining of my life be for the best?

Frank: I mean, Constance never was the girl that you thought she was. She was just as much a part of this thing as I was. If you didn’t find out what she was really like from me, you would have just found out later from someone else.

Justin: I don’t know. I guess maybe I did put her on a pedestal. (pause) How do I know that your not just making this up? How do I know that you didn’t just force her to have sex?

Frank: Come on Justin, I am trying to help you. I’ve told you the truth. I know that you must hate me, but I want to help you work this out. I want to be your friend.

Justin: I don’t know what to think. (pause) I don’t think I am ever going to be able to trust anyone again.

Frank: I’m sorry man. You have got to face what really happened and make yourself a better person for it. I know it’s hard to deal with, but I think it’s good that we are able to talk about it.

(Justin stands up and sighs.)

Justin: Yes Frank, for once you are probably right. However, I am going to have to come to terms with this by myself. Although, you have helped.
Frank: (positive) So, do you think we'll ever be friends again?

Justin: I really doubt it, Frank. It would be too hard.

Frank: Well, maybe in time.

(Frank stands up.)

Frank: I wish it hadn't happened, but hopefully we can overcome it and become better people.

Justin: I don't know if I like you being all hopeful.

Frank: It's the new me.

Justin: If nothing else, you seem to be o.k..

Frank: I'm feeling a lot better about myself. I mean not just my body, but my toatal self.

Justin: Well, I guess that I am glad to hear it.

(Frank stands.)

Frank: I guess I'll just finish packing up and then I'll be off.

Justin: Do you want me to help you with anything?

Frank: Yah man, could you carry that box next to the T.V. out to the car?

(Justin goes and picks up the box.)

Justin: You know Frank, I am starting to feel a lot better. I am glad that we talked.

Frank: It always helps to talk out your problems.

(Frank picks up the box.)

Justin: I guess I should thank you for that. When I decided to stop by, I thought that we might get into a big ole fight. I think things went pretty well, all things considered.

Frank: Thanks for saying that, Justin. I needed to see that you weren't decimated by what I did to you.
Justin: I should be all right.

Frank: Seeing that you are going to be all right will help me to get my life in order.

Justin: At least someone will have his life in order.

Frank: What are you going to do about the house? Are you going to have anyone move in for next year?

(Justin rests the box on the T.V..)

Justin: Yes, Steven is going to be moving in in the fall.

Frank: That sounds great. I'm glad you could find another roommate, especially someone ya know.

(Frank rests the box on the couch.)

Justin: Yes, it should be pretty cool. (pause) What are your plans for next year?

Frank: Remember that internship I was supposed to have this summer? Well, I asked if I could just start working full time and the manager said that it would be all right.

Justin: So, you are going to work in a fitness center.

Frank: Yah, it's something that I will enjoy doing.

Justin: I guess that sounds about right.

Frank: It's what's best for me right now. I still need to get straightened out a little, but I think I am headed in the right direction now. I don't need school to get where I want to go.

Justin: It is good to see that you are headed in right direction.

Frank: What about you? Are you going to finish up school this year?

Justin: I should. I don't really know what I am going to do with my degree, though. I may go to graduate school, maybe become a college professor and teach art.

Frank: That's probably your best bet. (pointing to the mural)
Unless you can paint a couple more of these. Hell, you may become a famous painter.

Justin: I don’t know if I can do anything like that again. I was truly inspired when I painted it.

Frank: I guess I kinda was your inspiration.

Justin: (sarcastic) Yes Frank, you and Constance both, bless your souls. You allowed me to feel emotions and senses that I didn’t even know I had.

Frank: (funny) See, I told ya things would work out for the best.

Justin: I guess in a way they did.

Frank: (hopeful) Well if ya think you’ll ever forgive me, you could come up and see me before school starts.

Justin: I might, Frank, but I am planning on doing some travelling.

Frank: Are you finally going to take that trip across America?

Justin: You got it.

Frank: That’s great. I think that will be good for you.

Justin: Why? You always thought that was a stupid idea.

Frank: I changed my mind. I think it would help you find what your looking for. I mean, I now know what you were talking about when you said you wanted to find yourself. It will be good for you to sort through your feelings.

Justin: Actually, I am on my way. I wanted to stop here first to say goodbye. I am glad I stopped by. It was really good to see you. If I hadn’t stopped by, I would have never been able to clear my mind. Too many things would have been left unanswered. Now, I think I will be able to move forward.

Frank: Yah, I would have felt guilty for the rest of my life. I mean, I’ll still feel guilty, but...

Justin: (interrupting) I know what you mean, Frank. Let’s get you packed and get you on to bigger and better things.
(Justin and Frank pick up their boxes and walk out the door. The lights dim.)
ACT THREE
SCENE TWO

(It is early Fall of 1990, and classes have just begun for the Fall semester. Steven has moved in. Justin and Steven are hooking up an extra pair of speakers and attaching them to the back wall. Steven is placing the second speaker on the wall. Justin is sitting on the floor untangling speaker wire.)

Steven: O.K. T.S., I am just about ready. How are you coming down there?

(Justin looks up from the mess of wire.)

Justin: (slightly irritated) This is a complete mess. Why don’t we just get some new wire?

Steven: T.S. my boy, there’s no need. That there is some of the finest wire on the face of the planet.

(Steven finishes attaching the second speaker to the wall and steps back to admire his handiwork.)

Justin: Why don’t you get your butt down here and help me untangle this fine wire.

(Steven looks down and sees the mess.)

Steven: (laughing) Ha! What the hell ya doing? Any two year old can untangle wire.

Justin: We better find ourselves a two year old, because I am about ready to quit messing with it.

Steven: I swear, what a mess. Your supposed to graduate from college?

(Steven gets down on the floor and begins to help.)

Justin: None of my classes have dealt with the fine art of untangling.

Steven: (funny) You could still sign up for some next semester.

(pause)

Justin: All right, I think I have made a break through.
(Justin and Steven stand up and unravel the wire.)

Steven: There you go buddy. (pause) So, what to you have cooking for tonight.

Justin: I'm not sure yet. I think that I will just paint or something.

Steven: Oh, come on man. You can do that all semester. Let's go get us some babes.

(Steven takes the wire and begins to plug it into the back of the stereo receiver.)

Justin: I don't think so. I'm not in the mood.

(Steven looks up from the stereo.)

Steven: Shit Justin, you're never in the mood. If you're gonna be living with me, you're gonna have to learn how to party.

(Justin stretches the wire to one of the speakers.)

Justin: How do you want me to do this?

(Steven finishes plugging the wire into the receiver and stands up.)

Steven: Do what? Oh, try and run as much of it against the wall as you can. We can tape it to the floor.

Justin: You want to run it along the ceiling instead?

Steven: Now there's an idea. Maybe you're not so worthless afterall.

(Justin measures off how much wire he will need.)

Justin: Why don't you go get some chairs from the kitchen.

(Steven gets two chairs.)

Steven: So, are we going babe hunting or not?

(Justin grabs one of the chairs and places it next to the speaker.)
Justin: I don't think so.

(Steven places the other chair next to the other speaker.)

Steven: Justin, you have to get out. It's time you got over Constance.

(Justin and Steven attach the wire to the speakers and begin to tape the wire to the ceiling.)

Justin: I am over her. I just don't want another girlfriend right now.

Steven: Now you're talking silly. Every guy wants to have a girlfriend. You're just afraid of getting hurt. Hell Justin, take it from me, that's just part of the game.

Justin: I realize that. I just don't think that I want to play.

Steven: You need to try to find another girlfriend. If you don't, you'll get desperate and when Constance wants to come back you'll take her back.

Justin: What makes you think that she will want to come back?

(Steven finishes taping the wire to the ceiling and puts his chair back into the kitchen.)

Steven: Damn, my neck hurts. (slight pause) Oh, I know she'll want back because it's a woman's nature. She had a good thing with you. You treated her great and you were too stupid to see she was messing around.

(Steven sits down on the couch.)

Justin: You really think she would try to come back?

Steven: Oh yah, especially now, at the beginning of a new year. Classes haven't really started up yet and she'll be feeling lonely.

Justin: Do you think that she was sleeping with other people the whole time we went out, I mean, besides Frank?

Steven: I don't know, probably not. Of the girls I know, she was actually pretty good. Maybe Frank was her only weakness. Whatever the case, we have got to get you someone else.
Unless... You don't want her back, do you?

(Justin finishes taping the wire and gets off the chair.)

Justin: No, I don't think I could ever do that. But I don't know. I thought I loved her.

Steven: Come on man, how could you allow her back after what she did.

(Justin sits down on the couch.)

Justin: I don't think I could let her back. But, if she had some type of reason. I just want to know why she did it. Frank I can sort of understand. He was messed up and all, but I don't understand why she did that to me.

Steven: She was just looking for some extracurricular action. That's pretty commonplace nowadays, ya know. I don't think I know anyone who sleeps with just one person anymore.

(Justin gets up and takes the chair into the kitchen.)

Justin: That's just in the crowd that you run around with. There are plenty of one-man girls around. I'm sure there are.

Steven: O.K. T.S., here's is what we'll do, we'll go out tonight and try to find some of these girls. Whaddaya say?

Justin: No, you can't go out and find these kind of girls. The kind of a girl that I'm looking for, you have to meet by accident. Like a chance meeting.

Steven: Justin, you have got some serious girl troubles. That is the lamest idea for finding girls that I have ever heard.

(Justin reenters the living room and walks to the stereo.)

Justin: Maybe, maybe not. You ready to try this out?

Steven: Let me have it. This is going to be sweet.

(Justin turns the stereo on and the Rolling Stones "Let's spend the night together" begins to play.)

Justin: (surprised) Did you have that in there on purpose?
Steven: No way T.S.. I think God is trying to tell you something about your lovelife.

(Steven gets up and walks to the new speakers.)

Justin: Are they working?

Steven: Hell yah, come check’em out.

(Justin walks back to the new speakers)

Justin: (excited) Hey, this is pretty cool.

Steven: Of course this is cool. You’re now living with Steven Supremo.

Justin: I’m going to get another CD. Something more my style.

Steven: Come on T.S., this is your new style.

(Justin goes into the bedroom. There is a knock at the door. Steven goes and opens the door.)

Steven: Well, hello my fine young lady. What brings you to my humble abode?

(Constance walks into the house.)

Constance: Hi Steven, I came to see if Justin was around.

Steven: So you want to see Justin. We were just talking about you.

Constance: Doggin on me, right?

Steven: Oh no young missy, Justin and I have nothing but the highest regards for you.

Constance: I don’t believe you. Is he here?

(Justin walks out of the bedroom.)

Steven: Lookyhere Justin, I went out and found you a woman.

(Justin looks and sees Constance. Justin tries not to smile but fails.)
Constance: Hi Justin.

Justin: Hi.

(Justin sets his CD on the couch, grabs the remote control and turns the stereo off.)

Constance: You sure don’t like that song, do you?

Steven: Well hey, I would love to stay and chat with you two, but I was just leaving. It was absolutely wonderful to see your lovely face again, Constance. Bye now.

Constance: Bye Steven.

(Steven leaves the house.)

Justin: Did you come to see me?

Constance: Of course I came to see you, silly.

Justin: I thought you might have been looking for Frank.

Constance: Oh Justin, you’re still holding a grudge.

Justin: (sarcastic) Oh no. Hold a grudge, against you, never.

Constance: Can we sit down?

Justin: Sure, go ahead.

(Constance sits down on the couch.)

Constance: Are you going to sit down?

Justin: I don’t know if I want to. I feel really uncomfortable with you here.

Constance: So do I, honey. Let’s sit down and talk.

(Justin sits down.)

Justin: (firm) Before we start, I do not want you calling me honey. It makes me feel weird.

Constance: I’m sorry... , Justin.
Justin: What did you come over for?

Constance: I wanted to see if we could work this out. I still love you, honey.

Justin: (upset) How can you say that? Where do you get off saying that you still love me?

Constance: Justin, I don’t know what my deal was last semester. I don’t know how I let it happen.

Justin: You have got to come up with a better response than that. You completely destroyed my life.

Constance: I tried to explain it to you. How come you never answered any of my letters?

Justin: I was gone most of the summer and I didn’t feel like wasting time writing to you.

Constance: When were you gone? I wrote you at least once a week.

Justin: I was at home for the beginning of the summer. I got your letters and I read them, but they were all the same. They didn’t explain anything.

Constance: I tried to explain, Justin. I didn’t know what you wanted to hear. If you would have just written back or called, I could have explained it better.

Justin: Well, I didn’t feel like it. I wanted to forget you and what happened. I just needed to get away from everything.

Constance: How did you get away from everything? What did you do?

Justin: Well, I went on my trip across America.

Constance: (surprised) Did you really? I didn’t think you would really do that.

Justin: (defensive) Well, I really did.

Constance: Did you like it? Did you have a good time?

Justin: It was not as great as I thought it would be.

Constance: Really, why not?
Justin: The primary reason for the trip was to see America, right. Well, after driving for a couple days I was too tired to drive at night. I had to spend the daytime driving. So, most of what I saw was the bumper of the car in front of me. Then, it was too dark to see anything at night.

Constance: You did get to see some things didn’t you?


Constance: Why a lot of Maine?

Justin: The plan was to get up to Maine, and then work my way through the U.S. from there. Well, once I got up there, I discovered how far away everything was. When you look at a map, you don’t realize how long it takes to get from one place to another.

Constance: I could have told you that it would take you a long time to get anywhere.

Justin: I wish you would have. I thought I would be cruising from place to place and having a great time. In order to see anything about the city I was in, I had to stay an extra day.

Constance: So you ended up staying in Maine for awhile?

Justin: Yes, after I got there, I lost all desire to drive. It was fun, though. It just wasn’t as great as I thought it would be.

Constance: Well, I’m glad that you got to take your adventure.

Justin: Yes, it helped me to clear my head.

Constance: Did you think about me?

Justin: Yes, a lot. In fact, I thought about just about everything there is to think about. If I ever go on a long trip again, I am taking a friend. I about drove myself crazy.

Constance: What did you think about when you thought about me?

Justin: I thought about what you meant to me. Mostly, what you
Constance: What can I do to make it up to you. I will do anything, just say it.

Justin: Constance, there is nothing that you can do. Some things you just can’t make up to someone. (pause) I loved you. I wanted there to be some reason that all this happened, so I could forgive you. But, you are not giving me any justifiable reason. I can’t forgive you.

Constance: (pleading) I was selfish. I was curious. Please, give me another chance. I promise that I will never be unfaithful again.

Justin: Constance, come on. You did it with my roommate. I could never trust you again.

Constance: Yes you can. I promise.

Justin: No, it would never work out. I would always feel you were cheating on me. You have no idea how awful it made me feel.

Constance: Justin, I know what I did was a terrible thing, but you have to understand that I’m not really that type of person.

Justin: That makes absolutely no sense. You did it. By definition you are that type of person.

Constance: No Justin, really, you and Frank are the only people that I have ever slept with.

Justin: You expect me to believe that?

Constance: It’s true, you two were the only ones.

Justin: O.K., so what? What does that matter?

Constance: I just wanted to see what it was like. I was curious. I didn’t know if I was doing it right.

Justin: That is no excuse. You had already done it with him before I met you. What did you need to do it again for?

Constance: I was drunk the first time Frank and I did it. I don’t
remember what happened.

Justin: (agitated) Constance, what is your point? I cannot see any reason for your doing it with him.

Constance: I just wanted to see what it was like. Since I had already done it with him once before, I figured it didn't matter if we would do it again. Only, by doing it again, would I be able to see what it was like with someone else.

Justin: Constance, you might as well be quiet. You are only maxing it sound worse.

Constance: Oh come on now, Justin. You can't tell me that you don't want to do it with other girls. Tell me honestly, if some good looking girl asked you if you wanted to do it, would you do it?

Justin: I don't know. If it were your roommate, I know I wouldn't.

Constance: Oh Justin, honestly. If a good looking girl really asked you? Frank really asked me. I said no at first, but I was curious. I was going to tell you about it. I didn't want to hide it from you.

Justin: But, you did hide it from me. If you would have come to me and told me you were considering it, we could have worked something out. Maybe date other people for awhile. You didn't do that, though. You did it behind my back. Hell, you did it with my roommate behind my back.

Constance: If someone asked you, would you have told me? Yah, you would if it were some ugly girl, but what if she were a babe? Would you have told me?

Justin: Yes, I would have told you.

Constance: (pleading) Justin, think about it. Would you really? (pause.)

Justin: It's hard to say. I guess I have never been in that situation.

Constance: Well, I'll tell you what you would have done. You
would have done the same thing as I did. Even if you won't admit it, you know you would.

Justin: Maybe Constance, but none of this ever happened to me. It happened to you and I don't think I can ever forgive you for it.

Constance: Please, give me chance. I have thought this through and I am willing to do anything I can to get you back. I know you don't believe me, but I will never do anything like that again.

Justin: How can you say that?

Constance: I know better now. I now know what the consequences are and I can be stronger.

Justin: How could you not have known the consequences before?

Constance: Justin, you just don't think about them. I mean they're the first thing that come to your mind, but they are also the first to go. I now know that, and can prevent myself from being weak again.

Justin: I just don't know, Constance. (pause) How do you know I won't turn around and do this to you?

Constance: I don't know. I will just hope that you are stronger than I am. I am willing to go through whatever I have to to get you back.

(pause.)

Justin: Constance, I did love you. In fact, I may still. But how could I ever trust you. When I think of you and Frank together, I want to throw up.

Constance: Please, Justin, just give me a chance.

Justin: No. ..I want to. .., but I just can't. I told myself that I wouldn't allow myself to let you back. I just can't.

Constance: (starting to cry) I don't want anyone but you, Justin. (slow) Please?.

Justin: Come on now baby, don't start crying.
Constance: (whimpering) If you just give me a chance, I promise I will make you love me again.

Justin: (resisting the temptation to hold her) Constance, please, you are making this really hard on me. I cannot allow myself to see you again.

Constance: Why?

Justin: You crushed me. It can never be the same again.

(Constance looks Justin in the eyes.)

Constance: (whimpering) Do you want me to leave?

(pause.)

Justin: Yes, I think that would be best.

Constance: (trying to regain her composure) O.K., I’ll leave, but I do love you, Justin.

(Constance rises from the couch.)

Justin: I’m sorry, but it has to be this way.

(pause)

Constance: Justin?

Justin: Yes?

Constance: (hopeful) Could you at least give me a ride home? I don’t have a car you know.

(Justin cracks a wide smile and pauses to think.)

Justin: I don’t know. I don’t think so.

Constance: Please, what could it hurt?

(pause.)

Justin: O.K., but just a ride home.

Constance: (happy) Thank you Justin, and I will be the best passenger of your life.
Justin smiles and goes into the bedroom to get his keys. Constance wipes the tears from her eyes and straightens herself up.

Justin: (from the bedroom) You know this is just a ride home, right?

Constance: (smiling) Of course, who said anything about anything but a ride home.

(Justin reenters the living room and sees Constance waiting by the door.)

Justin: All right, I’m ready.

Constance: Me too, I’m ready for the ride of my life.

(Justin laughs and walks toward the door. Justin stops, opens the door and looks at Constance. Constance looks at Justin. There is a slight pause. Justin drops the car keys and hugs Constance. Constance hugs Justin. The lights dim.)
THE END