

1 EXT. STREET -- DAWN 1

A bright, early summer morning. Scraps of orange light bounce from the high fresh leaves of oak trees and filter through to a peaceful street below. Birds chatter in their predictable way.

A few fragments of red plexiglass lying on the road seem out of place -- alien jagged edges in a soft world.

Simon and Garfunkel's "America" begins to play.

We follow the red pieces and discover a trail of debris. Larger red and white fragments, pieces of glass, twisted scraps of metal.

It's the aftermath of a car wreck. A pretty nasty one too. A hissing sound, which was hardly audible earlier, must be the death knells of a ruined engine, puking coolant and oil onto the grassy median.

The driver lies on the hood, ejected from the windshield. He is face-down in a pool of blood.

2 EXT. EXIT RAMP OF HIGHWAY -- DAY 2

"America" continues to play softly

ANDY, slightly chubby and in his 20s, sits on the hood of his 2001 Crown Victoria, which is parked off to the side of a highway exit ramp. A nearby sign reads "Terminal B" and points forward.

Andy takes out his phone, glances at it, climbs into his massive boat of a vehicle, and drives up the ramp.

3 EXT. NEWARK AIRPORT ARRIVALS -- DAY 3

From a distant vantage point, we see Andy's car pull up to the arrivals section of the airport. IAN, skinny and also in his 20s, climbs in and they take off.

4 EXT. NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE -- DAY 4

"America" reaches a climax as the blue Crown Vic speeds down the elevated section of the NJ Turnpike. From a great distance, the car is almost lost in the vast sea of traffic.

We hear the line "Counting the cars on the New Jersey Turnpike / They've all come to..."

Ian reaches over and turns off the car stereo. He pulls his hand away from the dark plastic quickly, as if it is unpleasant to the touch.

(CONTINUED)

ANDY

What? Oh c'mon!

Ian stares forward, unflinching. He makes no response.

ANDY(CONT'D)

C'mon that's the worst part to...
We're on the fucking turnpike...

IAN

Andy, how many times have you
played this song...

ANDY

Because we're there! He says it!

IAN

Every time. Every time we come
back from the airport.

The way in which the two speak so quickly, and interrupt each other so often, belies a deep familiarity. But at least right now, that familiarity doesn't seem to be the same thing as friendship. Andy, at least, sounds partially jovial.

ANDY

You have no respect -- no respect
for tradition! Oh c'mon, say it
with me. *Tradition!*

Andy takes on a deep base tone, and does his best impression of Tevye from *Fiddler on the Roof*.

IAN

Jeezus, the cheese Andy.
Sometimes... sometimes it's just...

ANDY

You know I'm all about cheese.

IAN

OK fine. Never mind. Put it back
on.

ANDY

No, actually I don't think I can
now. You've violated the sacred
rules of tradition, and I am
devastated.

Andy's tone is still fairly sarcastic, but his passenger seems unwilling to play along. Ian stares, stone-faced, at North Jersey laid out before him.

(CONTINUED)

ANDY

Jeez. Welcome home. Ya douche.

Titus Andronicus' "Ecce Homo" blasts out it's raucous opening. The punk tune is a far cry from the soothing harmonies of Simon and Garfunkel. As the yearning screams of Patrick Stickles drive onward, we see an extended montage of Andy and Ian driving home, and we glimpse the hapless diorama that is their section of New Jersey.

A lot of pavement lies dominated by tall saw-grass, while industry rises in the background. A web of highway exits have tangled themselves into an impossible concrete maze. Andy's car zooms across the Parkway. An old man smokes a cigar outside a restaurant. etc. etc.

5

EXT. BROAD STREET -- DAY

5

The car swerves violently into an open spot on the shop-lined thoroughfare of broad street. Scarcely before the he's even stopped, Andy vaults out, and runs across the street, into a dingy storefront. The tacky awning reads "Bloomfield's Best" and depicts a sentient bagel, smiling and gesturing wildly with his unnatural appendages. "Ecce Homo" continues to play.

Andy hops back into the car with a brown paper bag, it looks heavy. He pulls out a plain bagel, and begins to chow down in an alarming way. He uses not just his mouth, but his hands to rip the white bread-flesh of the bagel, devouring half of it in mere seconds. Ian stares at the grotesque display from the passenger seat. When the savage feast has reached a fever pitch he interjects.

IAN

Could you take me home?

Ian has broken the spell. Andy stops eating and the raging music halts abruptly.

ANDY

(muffled by bagel)

Mmmhmms?

IAN

I'm tired. I want to see my family.

Andy looks surprised. He hoists the bagel sack into the air, and his eyebrows raise inquisitively.

(CONTINUED)

ANDY
muuh mhoont mhaant?

IAN
No. Just take me home.

6 EXT. IAN'S STREET -- DAY

6

Ian exits the car, and begins to walk up to his front door. Again Andy gestures to the bagel sack.

ANDY
You sure you don't want one? Save
it for later?

Ian pretends not to hear. He is already humping his luggage over the threshold of his unassuming yellow house.

IAN
I'll see you around, Andy.

ANDY
C'mon man, you know you want one.
How long has it been?

Ian pauses, but still makes no response. He closes the front door and enters the comforting low-light gloom of his house.

7 INT. IAN'S HOUSE --MORNING

7

Ian rises from deep slumber, and proceeds to do pretty much nothing. A note on the fridge is clear about the day's instructions. It reads "Car still in shop." And underneath, "Return tupperware to Turianos."

Ian ignores it, makes deviled eggs, watches TV, plays some video games, and takes a nap on the couch. It is a subdued montage of laziness.

Lids and plastic containers clatter jarringly onto Ian's couched form.

IAN'S MOM
Look at you, how long have you been
up?

It sounds more like an accusation than a question.

IAN'S MOM (CONT'D)
What was the one thing I asked you
to do today?

(CONTINUED)

Ian has scarcely moved since the initial impact. A blue lid still obscures part of his face.

IAN

Hi momma.

IAN'S MOM

Get your butt off the couch and give these back to Nick's parents.

IAN

Momma, can you take them, please? I'll do something else. I'll go get the car from the shop.

IAN'S MOM

Not until Wednesday you won't.

Ian rises and moans in desperation. Plastic storage containers clatter to the floor.

IAN

Can you please do me a favor and take them? It would mean a lot to me.

IAN'S MOM

Don't try to wiggle out of this one. Did you know your friend Andy goes down to see them all the time? You owe them a visit.

8

EXT. TURIANO HOUSE -- DAY

8

The house is huge, and separated from the road by a long immaculate lawn. The distance seems to stretch even further, as Ian takes ginger steps towards the entrance. When he finally reaches the stately oak door, he bends down, and sets a bundle of tupperware on the welcome mat. He maintains his low crouch and carefully attempts to back away.

From his low angle, a swish of curtains catches Ian's eye, and stops his movement instantly. Grinning at the window is the mug of Andy.

ANDY

Look who it is!

Ian is frozen, caught in the act.

(CONTINUED)

ANDY(CONT'D)

Hey guys, look who decided to show
his face!

Ian resigns himself to his fate. He rises to his full height, and enters the house. From a distance, we hear a chorus of "Ayyyyy"s, and through the frame of the door, we can see hugs and greetings given by a middle aged man and woman with enthusiasm. Ian's acceptance seems halfhearted. The door finally shuts.

Andy and Nick exit the same door, a while later.

ANDY

OK your ride comes with one
condition.

IAN

Don't try...

But Andy is already running to the driveway, and banking around the corner of a massive hedge. Flip flops in hand, he tears out of sight. Ian stands still, looking predictably exasperated.

From the around the bulk of the hedge, Andy's car cruises slowly into view. He isn't stopping.

ANDY

I'm not stopping.

IAN

Don't you do this.

ANDY

How far is it to your house? It's
gotta be a 20 minute walk.

A twinge of a smile brighten's Ian's scowl.

IAN

You ran over my foot last time.

The words are scarcely out of his lips when he breaks into a sprint -- Chasing the rolling blue sedan down the gentle slope of the Turiano's long driveway.

From inside the car, we see Ian pull even. Andy chuckles.

ANDY

You're running out of driveway.

(CONTINUED)

Ian is too focused to talk. With a great heave he throws open the passenger door, and vaults himself into the squeaky pleather of the seat.

ANDY

Ahh, very nice. Judges give you an 8.

IAN

(panting)

You ass.

But there is a smile that has sprung up on Ian's countenance -- the first full one we've seen from him. It's the kind of smile that takes a couple seconds of conscious face contortion to get rid of.

IAN

Just an 8?

ANDY

Hey, 8 is not bad. Especially when you're out of practice.

Silence for a brief moment.

IAN

They seem to be doing pretty well.

Andy glances over at Ian. He actually seems a little bit serious.

ANDY

Yeah, they're alright. As good as they can be maybe.

IAN

You go over there a lot?

Andy shrugs, and hangs a speedy left through a busy intersection.

ANDY

Yeah, from time to time. You know how it is around here.

IAN

You're going the wrong way.

Andy smiles mischievously.

ANDY

I've got a couple of errands to cover first.

9 EXT. ANDY'S PORCH DAY

9

The two friends walk up to Andy's nice suburban home. What follows is a rapid-fire whirlwind interaction. Andy seems totally at home, but Ian mostly stands apart from the swiftly moving tide.

IAN

Just take me home after, alright?

ANDY

Oh please. You ain't got shit to do. Besides, this'll only take a second.

10 INT. ANDY'S HOUSE -- DAY

10

They enter the house. Immediately the dog starts barking.

IAN

Hi Friar! Oh hey I missed you too!

ANDY

Hey mom! Look who I've got!

SUZANNE

Oh hey boys. AHH, Ian!

As Suzanne fusses over Ian, Andy bolts up the stairs, two at a time.

SUZANNE

(yelling up the stairs)

Andy, how was work?

Andy's words are accompanied by crashing and banging, the sounds of rummaging through a messy room.

ANDY

Good, Good! Not nearly as bad as yesterday. I think the boss likes me actually.

SUZANNE

Great! You'll be moving up soon enough.

Andy rushes down the stairs and plants a running kiss on his mom's cheek.

(CONTINUED)

ANDY

Whatever you're cooking smells wonderful and I regret that I cannot be here to eat it.

SUZANNE

Oh that's alright sweetie. You two go have fun!

Andy begins shepherding Ian out the door

ANDY

Oh and also I might be spending the night at Christi's.

SUZANNE

OK bye hon! Just remember 6 tomorrow for your father's birthday dinner!

Andy and Ian are already out of the house and loading into the car.

IAN

Wait you're still dating Christi?

ANDY

What, No! We broke up like 6 months ago.

Andy pulls a pretty big bag of weed out of his waistband and lobs it into the trunk.

ANDY(CONT'D)

You were an excellent distraction.

IAN

Damn, Andy.

ANDY

Oh, that's not gonna be nearly enough. We're having a party.

11 INT. LUCY'S APARTMENT -- DUSK

11

Andy's car sits out front of a boxy red-brick apartment complex somewhere in Bloomfield.

Ian raises his eyebrows, and backs slightly away at the sudden offering of an enormous blunt. It comes from Lucy, a shaggy sweatshirt-ed kid, probably about the same age as Nick and Ian.

(CONTINUED)

IAN

Uhh, I actually have to go home
after this. I don't want my mom
to, uhh smell me.

Lucy is totally unfazed by Ian's words. The rolled offering
remains outstretched. Some ash falls down onto her
surprisingly neat coffee table.

LUCY

It's cool if you don't smoke. You
didn't smoke in high school, right?

Before Ian has a chance to respond Andy comes in from the
kitchen and interjects.

ANDY

Lucy, you didn't smoke in high
school either. And neither did I.
And yet...

Lucy doesn't answer directly in response to Andy, rather she
grunts, and finally turns away from Ian.

LUCY

You got a plan for tonight, I can
tell.

ANDY

Lucy, when do I not have a plan?
It's Thursday night, do i look like
some kind of amature to you?

LUCY

Nick's house?

Her words are technically phrased like a question, but Lucy
knows exactly what is going down. Andy nods in
confirmation. Ian looks immediately uncomfortable.

ANDY

(to Ian)

It's not nearly as weird as you
would think.

Ian glances wordlessly at Andy, mouth slightly ajar.

ANDY

(to Ian)

Don't worry, Nick's parents are
fine with it. They're gonna be out
tonight anyway.

(CONTINUED)

IAN
(sputtering)
Do you guys... do this often?

LUCY
It's a special occasion kinda thing

ANDY
A special occasion like, say, Ian's
triumphant return!

Ian begins to form indignant words, but Andy has anticipated this, he counters before Ian can protest.

ANDY(CONT'D)
C'mon Ian, for old time's sake.
For Nick!

Ian's brow furrows, and he retracts himself into his chair, his arms crossed. Before he can form words, a commotion erupts from the general direction of Lucy. She has risen, ramrod straight from the couch. Her red eyes are peeled yet she gazes only at the wall.

LUCY
Tell me you already went to Bottle
King.

ANDY
Chill Lucy We can still make it,
it's only...

LUCY
It's 9:45

ANDY
Oh my sweet Christ

12 EXT. LUCY'S APARTMENT -- NIGH

12

Andy, Ian, Lucy, and Greg scamper out the door and through the front lawn, their movements imbued with an ultimate sense of urgency. They sprint towards Andy's car, but the hulking thing has been blocked in the driveway by another vehicle, parked just behind it.

ANDY
SHIT. Lucy, who's car is this? we
gotta get them to move...

The situation devolves into chaos. Andy and Lucy begin to argue about the car that's blocking. While emits cries of genuine anguish.

(CONTINUED)

GREG
 AUUUUGH. WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF
 TIME.

Ian is the only silent one. His back straightens, and he cracks a smile of sly resolve.

IAN
 C'mon!

Ian has hardly barked this guttural command when he takes off running down the block -- he is a fleet footed hermes, sprinting unbridled, towards the promise of tons of alcohol.

The others turn swing their heads in response to Ian's utterance, but he is already on his noble mission. With a chorus of whoops and hollers, mostly from Greg, the other three give pursuit.

13 EXT. BOTTLE KING -- NIGHT 13

All four tear into the Bottle king parking lot. Falling over each other, they squeeze through the still-open door.

14 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET -- NIGHT 14

The four walk silently down the dark street, their booty in hand. Bottles of liquor clink against each other in white bags. Cardboard cases of beer heave and creak in time to their soft steps

15 INT. TURIANO HOUSE -- NIGHT 15

The party is in full swing. It's not some all-out wrecking-ball rave, with destruction and trash everywhere. Instead the vibe is more subdued. It's an amiable gathering, with a heavy focus on getting fucked up. Most people seem to know each other, and they sit in circles, drinking and smoking.

Some dance in Nick's immaculate kitchen.

Andy drinks directly from a bottle of rum with piercing determination. He offers it to Ian, who hesitates for a second, and takes a pull.

Ian is talking to a Karen, a young woman about his age. They must know each other from a long time ago because they seems to hit it off.

Later, Andy is incredibly intoxicated, slurring his words and gesturing with the rum bottle, which is more than half empty.

(CONTINUED)

Karen whispers something in Ian's ear and the two leave the circle and head upstairs. They let out a few drunken giggles.

Ian and Karen come across a dark room on the second floor of the house. Karen pokes her head in and turns the light on.

KAREN

What about in here?

IAN

Let's find somewhere else, this used to be...

Ian trails off when he glances at the now illuminated space. It is intensely messy, and undoubtedly lived in. The bed is unmade, and the floor is littered with clothes. A computer is switched on in the corner, downloading some movie or other.

Shocked by the mess, Ian steps into the space, all traces of drunkenness gone.

IAN

Has someone been in here?

He begins to poke around in the sea of stuff, cautiously at first, and then at a more frantic pace.

KAREN

Was this Nick's room? C'mon we can find somewhere else...

Ian has fixated on a set of pictures, taped to the wall. One of them includes Ian, Andy and a third kid, with dark hair. Another is of Andy and two middle aged adults. The adults look a lot like Nick's parents, the Turianos, who Ian glimpsed through the window just that morning. Ian picks this photo from the wall and looks hard at the room around him.

Without speaking to Karen, Ian exits the room. As we follow him down the stairs and through the party, his pace quickens to an urgent jog. He is brushing past people, searching for something.

He rounds a corner and finds it. Andy hardly knows what hits him, as Ian lowers his shoulder hard into the poor drunken fool's solar plexus. They both topple to the ground, but Ian isn't finished. He grunts as his arm wraps around Andy's back and repeatedly punches him in the gut. Through Ian's grunts and Andy's moans, we hear a voice of frightening rage.

(CONTINUED)

IAN

Why are you living in his room
Andy?

ANDY

Uhhhh guhhhhh.

IAN

You little fucking scumbag. You
know what his parents have been
through?

ANDY

They wanted me to...

IAN

And you smoke weed all day and
trash their house?

Some of the surrounding party goers finally pry the two
apart.

IAN

You leech! You fucking scumbag!

An onlooker gives Ian a drink, the way one would offer food
to a starving man. Ian accepts.

FADE TO BLACK

16

INT. NICK'S HOUSE -- DAY

16

Andy peels his face off the sticky kitchen floor. The house
is not a terrible mess, but crushed cans and empty bottles
litter the furniture. Laboriously, Andy rises, and stumbles
through the house to the door. He passes a sleeping body,
entombed in the couch.

Andy steps into the bright light of midday. When his eyes
adjust, he comes across Greg, lying on his back in the front
yard.

ANDY

Did Ian...

GREG

Yeah he left...
(yawns)
a while ago.

Andy curses to himself, and shuffles off in the general
direction of his car.

17 EXT. STREET -- DAY

17

It's the same street from the opening scene. Birds still chirp, sunlight still filters down, and the wrecked husk of the car still smokes and steams in its death throes. The driver is still laid out on the hood, a pool of blood obscuring his face. But his dark hair does look a little familiar.

As we swing around the wreck in a large circle, Ian comes into view. He is standing on the curb, staring intently at the spot of carnage. We continue to rotate in a sweeping circle, now towards Ian, and the wreck leaves the field of view. Now we are behind Ian, and the crash has disappeared. In it's place is only an ordinary street.

As Ian looks on, Andy pulls his large car into the space that the violent wreck occupied only moments before. Andy looks unnaturally serious.

ANDY

C'mon, we should probably talk.

18 INT. DINER DAY

18

Ian and Andy sit in a window booth in an uncrowded diner. Andy is without any of his usual animated boisterousness. He looks genuinely concerned, and seems to search for something to say.

ANDY

I know that... all that... was probably a lot to take in.

IAN

Well I'll admit I was surprised...

Ian chuckles at his understatement. He does seem to be in more of an upbeat mood though. He looks Andy directly in the eye, even though Andy's gaze tends to shift shyly downward.

IAN (CONT'D)

...and I'm sorry. I guess we're both just doing the best we can with this.

Andy looks up from his paper placement with one eyebrow raised in confusion. But Ian is on a roll, and he doesn't interrupt.

(CONTINUED)

IAN (CONT'D)

But I shouldn't have let his death
take away, well from being home.
I'm sorry I haven't been back Andy.

ANDY

I... I didn't think you would take
it this well.

IAN

Well it's a little creepy I guess,
but I see no reason to overreact...

ANDY

I don't know... Don't know how I
could tell them...

As we see Andy's lips mouth the words "tell them" we are violently transported to the dark, drunken world of last night's party. Andy's face is squashed against the floor, and our canted angle of view suggests that we are on the floor near him. Andy utters in a slurred whisper.

ANDY

I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I never told
them. I took the note. I never
told you. I'm sorry.

We are back in the diner. It's lights seem blinding and sterile. Ian's tone is a thousand pounds of steel anvils

IAN

What are you talking about?

Andy's eyes widen, reflecting the cold light.

ANDY

Uhh, I dunno, what are you talking
about?

Ian unceremoniously leaves. Andy's many loudmouthed pleadings fall on deaf ears, as Ian walks calmly away.

"More Perfect Union" by Titus Andronicus begins to play. The low droning bassoons and lilting tone accompany the surreal sequence that follows, as Ian stumbles across town in a sort of manic stupor.

19 EXT. STREET -- DAY 19

It's the spot where the car crash occurred. Ian stares at the landscape, and searches around.

20 INT. MECHANICS SHOP -- DAY 20

Wordlessly, Ian converses with a mechanic. He gestures and points, and the mechanic seems to understand. The man leads Ian out back.

More Perfect Union continues to play.

21 EXT. STREET -- DAY 21

Ian's actions imply investigation. He examines the spot of impact and kneels, staring at the place where the car jumped the curb.

22 EXT. MECHANICS YARD -- DAY 22

Ian comes upon the carcass of the wrecked car. Devoid of corpse or blood, it could be any other rusting vehicle.

23 EXT PARK DAY 23

A More Perfect Union abruptly stops

Ian sits, straight-faced, on a bench. His shoulders show a slight sag, and he doesn't turn his head, even when Andy slides up next to him.

IAN

So it was suicide huh?

Andy says nothing. He hides his head in shame.

IAN (CONT'D)

The people that took his car, they said he probably didn't even hit the brakes.

Crushing silence. Ian doesn't even seem that upset, his words convey only numbness.

IAN (CONT'D)

You know why he did it?

ANDY

His note didn't say much. He was just sick, I guess.

(CONTINUED)

IAN

And that's how you hid it from his parents? You took the note when you found him?

Without waiting for an answer, Ian gets up to leave. Unlike at the diner, there is finality and purpose here.

ANDY

Ian, don't go.

Ian stops walking away, but he doesn't turn around.

IAN

No more of this. No more hiding from this. You've got to tell his parents.

ANDY

Yeah, OK, no more hiding. So don't you hide from this either. Don't run away!

Andy gets up from the bench to follow. He takes a tattered note out of his pocket. Ian turns to him, and aggressively closes the gap between them.

IAN

You gotta fix this Andy. You fucked this whole thing right up.

Limply, Andy gestures with the torn paper.

IAN (CONT'D)

What, get that outta here! That's on you Andy.

Ian turns to walk away, but reconsiders, and returns briefly to Andy, who is rooted to the same spot.

IAN

Gimme your car keys.

ANDY

What...

IAN

Give them to me.

Andy acquiesces quietly, without protest.

(CONTINUED)

IAN

Yeah that's right. You're walking home. Because you suck.

Ian turns again to leave. In true desperation, Andy calls.

ANDY

Don't leave.

Ian's shoulders rise up and down, perhaps with a deep sigh. When he turns to face Andy, his face is sharp, but not unforgiving.

IAN

I'll be back. I just have to, clear my head for a few weeks. You... you gotta fix all this while I'm gone.

Ian walks a few paces towards Andy's car.

IAN (CONT'D)

But yeah I'll be back. You can't get a good bagel up by school.

- 24 INT. CAR -- DAY 24
- The ending part of Titus Andronicus' Ecce Homo plays once again.
- At the wheel of Andy's car, Ian speeds down suburban roads.
- 25 EXT. NICK'S HOUSE -- DAY 25
- Andy walks past the massive house with his hands in his pockets, he glances up, but continues on.
- 26 EXT. ANDY'S HOUSE -- DUSK 26
- Andy walks up to his own house, and sees his massive car parked carelessly on the front lawn. He sits on the hood, and stares at the tattered paper which he now holds in his hands.
- 27 INT. TRAIN -- DUSK 27
- The sun is setting through the grubby window of a train as it chugs through the urban wilderness of Jersey. Watching the sunset is Ian, who sits eating a fresh bagel. There is a brown paper bag in his lap.