MARLEY & ME

by

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Based on the book by John Grogan

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1 **BLACK**

Some microphone feedback followed by:

SEBASTIAN (V.O.)
Okay, here we go... everybody watching?

Our screen goes WHITE as a POWERPOINT PRESENTATION BEGINS...

SEBASTIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I'd like to tell you all a little love story...

But the images on screen are GRITTY, JOURNALISTIC PHOTOS OF PEOPLE RIOTING IN THE STREETS OF SOME COUNTRY.

SEBASTIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Whoops... wrong file...

LAUGHTER O.S. and we begin PULLING BACK TO REVEAL:

A RECEPTION HALL (BEGIN CREDITS) - DAY

The lights are dim. We're looking at a blank, pull-down movie screen in a darkened ballroom.

SEBASTIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Hang on, I got this--

Someone O.S. starts CLINKING a fork against a wine glass. Is joined by others, and then we HEAR calls of "Kiss! Kiss!"

ON A BRIDE AND GROOM

In silhouette, <u>seen from behind</u>, sitting at the main table, lit only by the votives sprinkled along the table: JOHN GROGAN and his bride of two hours, JENNY. In response to the crowd, they kiss.

Standing right by them is SEBASTIAN -- tall, good looking, rugged type --John's best man.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
Alright, now I'm ready--

And now, on THE PORTABLE SCREEN, Sebastian'S MONTAGE BEGINS:

John with his Mom in front of the college dorm, etc.

SEBASTIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Here's John, first week of college.
Nice hair, right?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: 1

SEBASTIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You think that feathering's easy? Not true. Takes a very well practiced wrist action...

CHUCKLES from the crowd.

SEBASTIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'm just saying...

SEVERAL PHOTOS OF JOHN

Throughout college...

SEBASTIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Was John a star athlete?

A shot of him fumbling a frisbee,

SEBASTIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Umm, no. Was he a ladies man?

With mid-eighties hair, bad glasses.

SEBASTIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You tell me.
(then)
What he was, was *John*, and we loved him for it.

2 **INT. DORM ROOM - DAY (HOME VIDEO)** 2

Taken by Sebastian. John is passed out in bed after an all-nighter. Sebastian turns the camera on himself, holds up a Sharpie pen, smiles.

SEBASTIAN (O.S.)
And he was always looked after by his guardian angel and best friend.

3 **EXT. CAMPUS - DAY (HOME VIDEO)** 3

John walking down the quad, with "DUMBASS" written on his forehead. People passing him are smirking.

JOHN
(to CAMERA, which is Sebastian)
People are staring at me - is my fly down?

SEBASTIAN
No, no, it's cool.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: 3

JOHN
All right, enough with the -
(as he gets another giggle)
- all right, what? What are you looking at?

SEBASTIAN
Oh, wait, there's something on your forehead.

John brushes it.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
You got it. Leaf or something.

JOHN
(dubious)
A leaf. On my forehead.

SEBASTIAN
Yeah, it musta had some sap on it.

They pass a cluster of CO EDS who laugh at John.

SEBASTIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
And then there's Jenny.

4 **PHOTOS OF JENNY** 4

Looking, indeed, very cool, very put together.

SEBASTIAN (O.S.)
Studious, hard-working, quiet.

PHOTOS OF A WILDER JENNY

In short-shorts, wet T-shirt, throwing water balloons at a frat house. Standing on an empty keg of beer, rolling it like it's a log.

SEBASTIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Well, okay, sometimes not so quiet.

VIDEO OF JENNY

Ordering a bunch of guys around, telling who to go where, as the camera ZOOMS OUT, we see they're playing touch football - except she tackles. Hard. And then does a little victory dance over the fallen. Jenny's the captain, in charge...

4 CONTINUED: 4

SEBASTIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Okay, maybe a little high-spirited, maybe voted Miss Kegger once or twice too often on Fraternity Row, but a good girl underneath it all. How could they not fall in love?

TWO PHOTOS JUXTAPOSED

One of John "flexing" beside a lake, another of Jenny screaming at a football game with a beer in her hand.

SEBASTIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Now, in any decent love story, you gotta have the great first meeting.

5 **INT. CAR - MOVING - DAY (VIDEO FOOTAGE)** 5

Sebastian is obviously the passenger shooting John, who's driving.

SEBASTIAN
(on tape)
All right, I'm zooming in. Whoa. Not a flosser.

JOHN
Turn it off.

And as he REACHES for it - WHAM! He hits another car! The camera goes flying. Fumbles. SCREAMS. YELLS.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ!

SEBASTIAN
They're okay! They're getting out.

Sebastian manages to right the CAMERA and unsteadily films John getting out of the car, heading towards the car he hit. The passenger door opens and Jenny comes out. She's covered in frosting and the remains of a birthday cake which she was carrying in her lap. The damaged car is full of balloons.

JENNY
Are you a complete idiot?!

SEBASTIAN (O.S.)
And so one of the truly great love affairs of the late eighties began.

In the home video, Jenny advances on John, hurls the rest of the cake at him, starts flailing at him with her hands.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: 5

The driver of the car, another co-ed, gets out and yells at CAMERA (Sebastian).

SEBASTIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Brought together by their love of fast cars, spirited debate, and Baskin-Robbins Dreamy Drizzle Ice Cream cake.

6 **DIFFERENT PHOTOS NOW** 6

John and Jenny both at typewriters.

SEBASTIAN (O.S.)
From there, they went on to work together at the school newspaper.

SHOT OF JENNY IN THE NEWSPAPER OFFICE

Shot of Jenny standing at the head of a table full of reporters.

SEBASTIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Although, technically, they didn't work <u>together</u> so much as John worked for Jenny who was the editor of said paper...

SHOT OF JENNY AND JOHN KISSING

In her office, through the semi-closed Venetian blinds.

SEBASTIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Let's just say there were some flagrant workplace violations.

7 **EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY (HOME VIDEO)** 7

John and Jenny, both in cap and gowns, drinking from plastic champagne glasses. John displays the top of his cap to CAMERA: the words "NEED JOB" are spelled out in white adhesive tape.

SEBASTIAN (O.S.)
The point is their love grew, blah blah blah... And that love continues tonight.

8 **INT. RECEPTION ROOM - DAY** 8

The wedding GUESTS APPLAUD, the lights come up, and Sebastian concludes his toast.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: 8

SEBASTIAN (O.S.)
And now, please join me in raising a glass to my future neighbors down in Florida, and to the dawn of both a marriage and a brilliant journalistic team, the new Woodward and Bernstein, this time with sex. Bad sex, probably, but - anyway: to John and Jenny Grogan.

AND NOW PUSH IN ON JOHN AND JENNY

He's not so much the geek anymore. She's had an effect on him. They kiss as the guests break into applause.

DISSOLVE TO:

9

9 **SNOW FALLING**

PULL BACK TO REVEAL we're looking out a window.

JENNY (O.S.)
Mmmmmm. That feels so good.

CONTINUE PULLING BACK TO REVEAL...

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - NIGHT

The two of them sit on the edge of the bathtub, soaking their sore feet. Jenny's still in her wedding dress, bunched up so as not to get it wet. John has got the pant legs of his tux rolled up.

Jenny takes a swig from a bottle of champagne, passes it to John. He looks at her.

JOHN
How do I get you?

JENNY
What?

JOHN
I'm serious. In what world does a guy like me get someone like you?

JENNY
Are you kidding?
(leans on him)
You're part of the plan.

JOHN
The plan.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

JENNY
Step one. Meet an incredibly sweet, smart, sexy guy.

JOHN
Done. Step two?

JENNY
Marry him.

JOHN
Check. Step three?

She smiles, puts her face right up to his...

JENNY
Now that one's a surprise...

They kiss and as we push past them, into the snowy window, we END CREDITS and...

DISSOLVE TO:

10 **EXT. FORT LAUDERDALE STREET - DAY** 10

A HEAT MIRAGE. A battered Toyota Tercel comes over a rise. We follow the car through town, get our bearings...

SUPER: "1990"

11 **INT. CAR - DAY** 11

Jenny driving. John clutching his portfolio on his lap. She cuts a look at him.

JENNY
You okay?

JOHN
Oh yeah.

12 **EXT. FORT LAUDERDALE SUN-SENTINEL NEWSPAPER BUILDING - DAY** 12

As Jenny pulls up out front of the building.

INT. CAR - SAME

She turns to John.

JENNY
You know you got this.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: 12

JOHN
I know, I got it.

JENNY
Who are you?

JOHN
I'm John Grogan.

JENNY
Wrong. You're John Friggin Grogan who's about to get a job.

She leans over and gives him a big, long kiss.

JOHN
Um, okay, see now I don't wanna get out of the car.

JENNY
John--

JOHN
I really just wanna sit here and make out with you.

JENNY
--Get out of the car.

He nods, starts to get out, then pauses.

JOHN
Who am I again?
(quickly)
Kidding.

13 **EXT. FORT LAUDERDALE SUN-SENTINEL NEWSPAPER BUILDING - DAY** 13

As John crosses his fingers, waves and enters the building...

ARNIE (V.O.)
Sebastian says you won some award?

14 **INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE – DAY (1990)** 14

ARNIE KLEIN -- fifties, never smiles, flowered shirts -- the editor of the Sun-Sentinel of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, is flipping through John's portfolio.

JOHN
Yes, sir, I got a Mitchy.
(off Arnie's look)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

JOHN (CONT'D)
Like a Pulitzer, but for western Michigan.

ARNIE
A Mitchy. Mm-hmm. So, tell me, why did you want to leave the estimable –
(he flips to a story, reads the heading)
– Kalamazoo Gazette?

JOHN
Well, as you know, Sebastian and I were in college together, and he was always talking about South Florida... mostly about the women of South Florida, but anyway, after my wife and I got married we thought it might be nice to come down here--

ARNIE
For the women?

JOHN
Uh, no-- for the... the... uh...

ARNIE
For the work?

JOHN
Yes. That.

ARNIE
Your wife's Jenny Havens, right?

JOHN
Well, Jenny Grogan now--

ARNIE
She take the job at the Post?

JOHN
Yeah--

ARNIE
I tried to get her over <u>here</u>.

JOHN
Oh--

ARNIE
Damn fine writer.
(then)
(MORE)

14 CONTINUED: (2)

ARNIE (CONT'D)
What's the matter, the Post didn't want you?

JOHN
Well, she does features. I'm more a straight news writer. This is a better paper for that.

ARNIE
Straight news writer, huh. Meaning you think you're a reporter?

JOHN
Meaning I know I am.

ARNIE
And the six other sweaty-palmed college grads I'm interviewing today, you think you're better than them?

JOHN
No, sir. In fact, I'm pretty sure I'm not. But I do know that I always seem to surprise myself. Ten years ago, I was doing bong hits and playing Donkey Kong, never dreamed I'd get into college. But I did, and I graduated with honors. Two years ago, my buddies told me that the most Jenny Havens would ever say to me was, *You're sweet, but I don't like you in that way.* But she did like me in that way-- and my buddies can suck it because I married her. I certainly never thought I'd win some award with a dumbass name--

ARNIE
(pointing)
The "Mitchy."

JOHN
(pointing back)
Exactly sir. But I surprised myself and I won it. And if you give me the chance, I'm pretty sure I'll surprise you, too.

Arnie considers him a moment.

ARNIE
That's quite a speech, son. You rehearse that, or come up with it on the fly?

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (3) 14

JOHN
Elevator, on the way up.
(then)
How'd I do?

Arnie just looks back at him.

15 **INT. PARKED CAR - DAY** 15

Jenny is writing in her NOTEBOOK when we see John crossing the street through the passenger window. She looks at him. Afraid to ask.

JENNY
So?

JOHN
He's got me on a little thing they like to call... *Desert Storm*--

JENNY
YOU GOT THE JOB!

She gets out of the car and the two embrace right there on the street. She takes out her notebook, crosses something off on her "list."

JENNY (CONT'D)
Okay... "Jobs." Done.

JOHN
So what's next? Lunch?

JENNY
(kisses him)
House.

16 **EXT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD - DAY** 16

A HORN HONKING as a car goes by on the Dixie Highway in the b.g. We tilt down to a very mixed neighborhood, to a modest house, THE SOUND OF A TV BROADCAST OVER...

17 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL – KITCHEN – DAY** 17

News footage of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on television. John and Jenny sit at the table reading a different newspapers. He glances at her...

JOHN
You like the quote about the speed bumps?

17 CONTINUED:

JENNY
(looks)
"If they save even one life--''

JOHN
--"it would be worth it. And with that, Janet Dickerson's mother's eyes filled with tears."
(then)
That one just felt exactly right, y'know?

JENNY
Yeah, no, it's good. What happened to the Desert Storm piece?

JOHN
That's it. The injured girl's dad's in Kuwait. What, that's not in there?

JENNY
(looks at the article)
Uhhhh... they must've cut it... And they kinda misspelled your name. John Gorgan...

JOHN
What-- you're kidding--

He reaches for the paper, but she holds it away.

JENNY
Forget it. It's good, John. It's got facts, some color. It's a solid piece.

JOHN
Thanks. I'm almost done with yours. This idea of voting machines sounds really efficient--

JENNY
Well, except on the other page I talk about what could happen--

He goes back to reading. She sips her coffee.

JOHN
Oh, it continues...

An awkward moment as he now searches for the new page, has to fold back the paper. No escaping the fact that her article is longer and more important than his. She finally gets up...

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (2) 17

JENNY
You know what? The rest is just okay, really pretty boring...

JOHN
No, no, I'm enjoying it...

He tortures himself and keeps reading. She moves to the sink, starts to rinse out her cup...

JOHN (CONT'D)
Wow, they really gave you a lot of space, didn't they?

She sets the cup on the counter, looks at the WILTED PLANT on the sill.

JENNY
Damn. I killed another one. How am I ever going to take care of a kid, I can't even keep a plant alive?

John looks up from the paper. "Kid?" She comes gives him a kiss.

JENNY (CONT'D)
I'll see you later, Mr. Gorgan.

She heads out, leaving John staring terrified at the plant.

SEBASTIAN (V.O.)
A kid, huh...

18 **EXT. SUN-SENTINEL OFFICE - DAY** 18

Sebastian and John fill up at the coffee pot, start to move through the office throughout...

SEBASTIAN
Well, what'd you expect? You <u>bought a house</u>, man. A house with a <u>spare room</u>...

JOHN
What's wrong with a spare room?

SEBASTIAN
It's <u>empty</u>, John. That's what's wrong with it. And you know what else is empty? Her <u>womb</u>.

18 CONTINUED:

JOHN
I'm starting to worry that we're already at Step Six.

SEBASTIAN
What?

JOHN
You know Jenny, she's got her whole life organized and planned out...

Sebastian smiles at a secretary, turns back to John.

SEBASTIAN
You want my advice? Get her a puppy.

JOHN
A puppy.

SEBASTIAN
Something other than <u>you</u> she has to take care of.
(points at him)
You have a kid, you're a <u>dad</u>. You're not <u>you</u> anymore. You have a dog, you're a <u>master</u>. You're still a guy. With a life.

JOHN
And a dog...

SEBASTIAN
Whatever, man. You're still free. You've stopped the clock.

JOHN
What clock?

SEBASTIAN
Okay... you know in movies when there's, like, a bomb and it's ticking down, ten seconds left, and there's some guy with a wire cutter going, "red wire... blue wire... which one do I cut?" And the guy finally just makes a wild-assed guess and SNIP. Silence. The world is saved.

JOHN
Okay... is the bomb strapped to a dog... because I'm not sure I'm following--

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: (2) 18

SEBASTIAN
John, you buy this dog, you're saving your world. Because that ticking you hear, is not a bomb, it's her biological clock.

John looks back at him.

JOHN
Huh.

ARNIE (O.S.)
Sebastian!

They both turn as Arnie sticks his head out of his office.

ARNIE (CONT'D)
Your travel's approved. Get outta here.

SEBASTIAN
In motion.

JOHN
Where you going?

SEBASTIAN
Colombia. I got a guy down there, says he can put me next to Pablo Escobar-- I'm doing this piece, I follow a single coca leaf from Colombia, to the streets of Miami.

JOHN
Yeah, you and I once talked about doing something like that. We were gonna call it, "From Plant to Pusher." Remember?

SEBASTIAN
Not really.

ARNIE
Hey-- Gorgan--
(John looks)
--there was another fire at the county dump. Some kinda methane leak.

JOHN
Actually, it's Grogan--

ARNIE
I want two paragraphs for the blotter.

18 CONTINUED: (3) 18

John nods, looks off at Sebastian who now sits down at his cluttered desk, pulls a DUFFLE BAG from under his desk. John watches with envy as Sebastian starts stuffing cameras, recorders, a bowie knife, into the duffle...

JOHN
So uh, what kind of puppy?

Sebastian looks up at him.

JOHN (CONT'D)
To, y'know, cut the wire.

SEBASTIAN
Get her a lab. They're supposed to be just like little kids. But easier to train.

19 **EXT. DOG BREEDER'S HOUSE - MORNING** 19

As John and Jenny get out of the car. She looks at the house.

JENNY
This isn't the ihop...

JOHN
A little surprise first...

20 **INT. DOG BREEDER'S HOUSE - DAY** 20

John is leading Jenny, her eyes closed, through a house towards the kitchen. LORI, 55, leathery and smoking, is going in front.

LORI
Sorry about the smell.

JENNY
When can I look?

JOHN
Just hang on...

Lori opens a door to a laundry room.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Okay. Now.

Jenny opens her eyes and sees a utility room. Nine yellow yipping Lab puppies tumble out of a cardboard box towards John and Jenny.

20 CONTINUED:

JOHN (CONT'D)
Happy Birthday.

JENNY
Oh my God... they're adorable...
(then)
Wait a minute, my birthday's a month from now.

LORI
That's okay, they can't leave for another three weeks anyway.

JENNY
John, we never even talked about this.

JOHN
You're right. Let's go.

He's kidding. And besides, Jenny's already on the floor, letting the puppies climb all over her.

JENNY
Look at you guys...

LORI
I got papers on the mom and the dad, so you can register these.

JOHN
Is the father here too?

LORI
(hesitating briefly)
Oh, yeah, somewhere. Anyway, girls are $400, boys are $375. Except this little guy here.

She points to one male puppy, who is clearly the goofiest and most excited.

LORI (CONT'D)
You can have him for $325.

JENNY
How sweet. He's on clearance...

LORI
Well, he's a little too stocky for the breed, so he probably won't show.

JENNY
He's so sweet...

20 CONTINUED: (2) 20

JOHN
He likes you.

JENNY
John, I don't know if I'm ready for a puppy--

LORI
You have to wait three weeks for the litter to get weaned, before you can bring 'em home anyway.

JOHN
Plenty of time to get ready.

JENNY
I won't even be here. I'm gonna be with my sister then...

JOHN
No problem. I can take him. Be good bonding time. Get him all trained in time for you to come home.

A chuckle from Lori.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Let's give 'em all the scare test.

LORI
(stops chuckling)
The what?

JOHN
I hear the best dog in the litter is the one who doesn't spook easily. They turn out to be the most people-centered.

LORI
(slightly worried)
Uh, how are you gonna--

John turns away, and then suddenly turns back with a loud step and a "BOO"! All of the puppies scatter. Lily barks. But Clearance Puppy just leaps onto his shoes, his tail wagging.

LORI (CONT'D)
Well, that's your guy.

John scoops him up. Clearance Puppy licks his face. John hands him to Jenny. She lets him lick her face...

20 CONTINUED: (3) 20

JENNY
I would've picked you anyway--

JOHN
Meant to be.

He watches her cuddle the puppy and knows he's done the right thing.

21 **EXT. LORI'S HOUSE – DAY** 21

Lori waves goodbye, check in her hand, as John and Jenny walk to the car. Jenny carries a Polaroid of Clearance Puppy.

JENNY
You really sure about this? I mean, a puppy's a lot of work.

JOHN
How hard could it be?

We hear A COMMOTION is coming from the woods, something crashing through the brush, breathing heavily. They both freeze as the sound comes their way.

JENNY
What's that?

Just then they are nearly knocked off their feet by a huge, rampaging Labrador, soaking wet, covered with mud and burrs. It circles them, barking WILDLY, a crazed look in its eye. It jumps up on John, muddies his shirt, then barrels past Lori into the house, knocking over a chair on the porch as it goes. A beat.

JOHN
I think we just met the dad.

22 **EXT. AIRPORT - DAY** 22

John kissing Jenny good-bye. They finally part...

JENNY
Call me as soon as you get him home. Oh, hey, we need a name.

JOHN
How 'bout I just call him "Clearance Puppy" until you get back. I only hope he doesn't say his first word without you.

23 **EXT. LORI'S HOUSE – NIGHT** 23

John steps out of his car and the puppy, now twice the size he was three weeks ago, bounds over to him. A harried Lori follows, a rope leash and instruction sheet in hand.

JOHN
Whoa! He got big... This is the right one, right?

LORI
You should see him pack away the puppy chow.

JOHN
So, what if I run into any problems?

LORI
(backing away)
Oh. Sure, call me. All sales are final, though. Not just for him. I tell that to everyone.
(quickly)
You want help getting him in the car?

JOHN
No, that's okay, I'll just...

John opens the door, indicates that Marley should jump in. Instead, the puppy runs around the car, barking, jumping up on the bumpers. John finally catches him, lifts him up, puts him on the front passenger seat atop some towels.

JOHN (CONT'D)
There we go.
(turns)
Well, anyway, thanks for--

But Lori's already inside her house, the door closed.

24 **INT. JOHN'S CAR - NIGHT** 24

John and the puppy on the drive home. The puppy atop a pile of towels. John looks at him.

JOHN
Hey... guy.

The dog just stares at him quizzically. Uncomfortable alone with the dog, John turns on the radio. BOB MARLEY plays and the puppy THUMPS HIS TAIL.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: 24

JOHN (CONT'D)
You like Bob Marley?

The dog THUMPS HIS TAIL AGAIN. John turns up the music. THUMP. THUMP. THUMP faster this time.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Good boy--
(trying it out)
Bob?
(nothing, then)
Marley.

THUMP THUMP THUMP.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Marley. Okay-- Marley. Cool.

But now the pup starts wriggling towards John, John tries to put him back...

JOHN (CONT'D)
No-- stay boy... stay.
(the dog crawls into his lap)
Okay, not really safe, bud--

Marley gets stuck with half his body draped over the console. He remains like this, his tail thumping... John gives up.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Alright, fine, but just this time.

THUMP. THUMP.

25 **EXT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD - NIGHT** 25

John pulls up in the driveway and opens the door. The dog jumps out.

JOHN
This is our house...

The dog immediately pees on the ground.

JOHN (CONT'D)
And now it's yours.

26 **INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT** 26

As John crouches down, shows him his bowls...

JOHN
This one's water. This one's food.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: 26

Marley starts pawing the food bag.

JOHN (CONT'D)
C'mon, man, you've already had kibble and half a seat belt.
(moment, relents)
All right. Special treat. But just today...

He opens the bag and Marley tackles it. Several cupfuls spill onto the floor. John goes to the pantry to get the dustpan and brush. When he returns, he finds Marley has eaten the food in the bowl AND every last scrap of spilled food. And now he's squatting to pee again...

JOHN (CONT'D)
No, no, no!

He picks up the puppy and rushes him outside.

27 **EXT. 345 CHURCHILL - BACKYARD - NIGHT** 27

As John sets him down on the ground, steps back.

JOHN
Okay, <u>now</u>. Pee.

He motions with his zipper.

JOHN (CONT'D)
C'mon, man, do your thing.
(Marley just stares)
Alright, I'm gonna show you this one time...

From behind, we see John peeing.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Except you gotta lift your leg.
(lifts his leg)
See, this is how you guys do it...

Marley looks at him, squats and pees...

JOHN (CONT'D)
Or you could do it like that. Just not in front of other guy dogs.

28 **INT. JENNY'S SISTER'S HOUSE - NIGHT** 28

Jenny's on the phone. Her young NIECE and NEPHEW wait for her, a board game on the floor between them. She motions that she'll just be a second...

28 CONTINUED: 28

JENNY
Marley. I like that...

29 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL – NIGHT** 29

John's on the phone, talking to Jenny as he follows Marley around the room, trying to keep shoes and socks and cords out of his mouth...

JOHN
Are you sure? Because it can be temporary...

INTERCUTTING: JOHN & JENNY

JENNY
No, it's good.
(then)
He must be exhausted.

JOHN
Oh, yeah, he's pooped.

Marley lets out a SQUEAK as he tugs at a couch cushion...

JENNY
(hears it)
Oh, he sounds so sweet!

JOHN
Yeah...
(snapping his fingers at the dog, shaking his head "no")
He's very cute. Just like a little kid only furrier.

JENNY
Put the phone by his ear...

John chases after the dog who burrows under the couch, his tail sticking out so that John can't get him...

JOHN
Uh, okay, he's listening.

John just holds the phone awkwardly as Jenny coos baby talk.

JENNY
(into the phone)
Hey, Marley! Who's my good boy?!
Mommy can't wait to meet you...

29 CONTINUED: 29

JOHN
Anyway, don't worry, he's doing great. Like he's lived here his whole life. All eight weeks of it. And you know what else? I think he's going to be pretty easy to train. I mean, he's curious which means he's smart, right?

JENNY
Of course he is. I can't wait to see him.

JOHN
Just him?

JENNY
Jealous?

JOHN
I'm not the one sleeping in a box.

JENNY
I love you. I'll see you Friday.

30 **INT. GARAGE - NIGHT** 30

John, dressed to go out, is setting down Marley in his wooden box on the garage floor.

JOHN
I'll see you in the morning, okay?

Marley looks at him with a heartbreaking expression. John hesitates.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Aw, come on, don't. You'll be fine, alright. And tomorrow, we're gonna tear it up. I'm thinking kibble, park, chew toy, the whole nine yards. Okay? We good?

Marley doesn't look so good, looks kind of sad. John turns and gets out of there.

31 **EXT. DRIVEWAY – NIGHT** 31

John gets into his car. He can hear WHIMPERING.

JOHN
Big day tomorrow! Rest up, pal!

He listens a beat; Marley quiets down. He gets in his car.

32 **INT. BAR – NIGHT** 32

Journalist hang out. John and Sebastian at the bar. Many know Sebastian, he's constantly nodding at people throughout:

SEBASTIAN
So I'm there in this cave, right? Blindfolded. And I can feel the machine guns, there's like nine of 'em around me... and they tie me to a chair and then Escobar comes in and says--
are you ready?
(Spanish accent)
I read your piece on Kadahfi, And I think you captured his narcissism just right.
(laughs)
Can you believe that?

JOHN
Some of it.

SEBASTIAN
Man, I wish you could've been there.

JOHN
Yeah, but then I wouldn't have been able to do the piece on the water main break at the library. That would have sucked.

SEBASTIAN
(hand on John's shoulder)
Your time will come, *amigo*.

JOHN
I'll drink to that--

They toast with their beers, Sebastian clocks John looking at his watch.

SEBASTIAN
You gotta be somewhere?

JOHN
Oh. No, it's the puppy. It's his first night alone--

SEBASTIAN
You got a <u>dog</u>?

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED: 32

JOHN
Marley. A little lab. Like you said. Remember? The bomb...

SEBASTIAN
Oh, right. Smart move. You'll see.
(slaps him on the back)
You've just preserved your quiet way of life for at least another two years.

33 **EXT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD – NIGHT** 33

John pulls up, gets out of his car. Halfway down the block, we see a POLICE CAR, lights flashing, two OFFICERS talking to a COUPLE. Another NEIGHBOR, in his robe, stands in the street watching...

NEIGHBOR
Millers got robbed again.
(then, turns to John)
And that mutt of yours hasn't shut up since you left.

John looks towards the garage where we hear WHIMPERING.

34 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD - GARAGE - NIGHT** 34

The door opens and the puppy gets excited--

JOHN
No no... I just wanted you to know I'm back.

The puppy whimpers and he goes over to him, reaches into the box and pets him...

JOHN (CONT'D)
Buddy, you really gotta chill, okay? Yeah, I know, good to see you, too. But I'm just inside the house, I'll see you in the morning. Big day tomorrow. Get some sleep.

35 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL - KITCHEN - NIGHT** 35

John gulps orange juice from the bottle. Leaves a quarter-inch, puts it back in the fridge. And now we hear BARKING from the Garage.

36 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL - BATHROOM - NIGHT** 36

Water running. John swallows some preventative aspirin, picks some nachos off his shirt. He turns off the water. And we hear WAILING and KEENING coming from the garage.

37 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL - BEDROOM - NIGHT** 37

John has his head buried under the pillows AS THE WAILING AND KEENING GO ON. AND ON. AND ON. Finally, John can't take it anymore. He sits up, pulls earplugs out of his ears.

38 **INT. GARAGE - NIGHT** 38

As the light comes on and Marley's head appears over the top of the box. John sighs, comes over and scoops him up...

39 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL - BEDROOM - NIGHT** 39

John gets Marley settled in the box, now by the side of the bed.

JOHN
Just this one time.

John climbs into bed, shuts off the light. Marley whimpers and John rolls onto his stomach, reaches into the box and strokes his back, the puppy lays down, still whimpers...

JOHN (CONT'D)
Oh, come on...
(then)
Hey. Remember this?
(half drunk, sings badly)
One love, One heart...
(Marley quiets)
Let's get together and feel alright...

John nods off, one arm hanging over the side of the bed into the box, his hand resting on Marley's back as the puppy now snoozes peacefully and we then...

FADE OUT.

AN ALARM CLOCK SOUNDS.

40 **FADE IN: CLOSE-UP OF MARLEY'S FACE** 40

Tail rising in the b.g., wagging.

REVEAL: BEDROOM - MORNING

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: 40

As John opens his eyes to see Marley snuggled up against his face. Marley's eyes looking into his. John reaches over the puppy and shuts off the alarm.

JOHN
She comes home today.

Hung over, he sits up, looks around the messy room, half due to John's bachelor housekeeping habits, half due to Marley. Not only has everything has been chewed, but some time during the night Marley discovered how much fun toilet paper is.

JOHN (CONT'D)
We should probably clean up.

41 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL - DAY** 41

John vacuums, struggles to empty the bag, puts a broken vase in the trash, does the dishes, etc. Marley follows him, tail wreaking havoc, knocking over everything that isn't nailed down. John picks up the HUGE CHEW TOY he'd just bought and examines it as Marley runs into the bathroom...

JOHN
Huh.

It's already completely gnawed up. John looks at Marley who emerges dragging a roll of toilet paper, rams right into the screen door, bounces back.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Marley, it's a screen, you're not gonna get through--

Meanwhile, Marley backs up a few steps, gets a head of steam, then rams into it again, this time goes right through it.

JOHN (CONT'D)
--there.

42 **INT. BATHROOM - LATER** 42

John gets drenched as he gives Marley a bath.

43 **INT. GARAGE - DAY** 43

John drags Marley into the garage.

JOHN
I'll be back in an hour. Be good.

44 **EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY** 44

A bit of THUNDER as John comes out with a bag of groceries and a bunch of flowers. He gets to the car just as the rain hits.

45 **EXT. AIRPORT - DAY** 45

As John and Jenny kiss outside the terminal. She holds a stuffed "Pluto."

JENNY
How's my puppy?

JOHN
I'm okay. A little tired, but otherwise--

She nudges him. He gives her another kiss.

JOHN (CONT'D)
He's waiting for you.

46 **EXT. 345 CHURCHILL - DRIVEWAY - DAY** 46

John and Jenny get out of the car. We hear WHIMPERING in the garage.

JENNY
Marley!

She takes off for the side door of the garage.

47 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL - GARAGE - DAY** 47

They open the door and freeze.

JENNY
Oh my God.

It's a mess. It's almost incredible that it's all due to a single puppy. The box is in shreds; so are the blankets. A puddle of urine on the floor. A large piece of dry wall has been chewed off near the big garage door. The garbage cans are overturned. Marley is whimpering in the corner.

JOHN
Wow. Okay, this is not how I left it.

JENNY
How long has he been in here?

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED: 47

JOHN
An hour, at the most.
(looks around, then)
Jeez... he ate drywall. That's just not right.

JENNY
(she picks him up)
Look. He's shaking--

Another bit of THUNDER and the puppy whimpers louder.

JENNY (CONT'D)
Does thunder scare you, Mister? Hm?

He licks her face, snuggles into her. She gives him the Pluto stuffed animal. She hugs him....

JENNY (CONT'D)
Look at us.

She looks up at John and smiles. He returns the smile. Mission accomplished.

48 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD - DAY** 48

As Marley bursts out of the back bedroom with one of Jenny's bras in his mouth.

JENNY
Marley, no!

Jenny chases him into the kitchen, past John who holds up the newspaper...

JOHN
He gave me an extra paragraph...

Marley bursts through the back screen door...

49 **EXT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD - BACKYARD - DAY** 49

A seemingly continuous shot, except that it's now A SIX MONTH OLD MARLEY who comes through the screen into the backyard now clutching a set of curtains in his mouth, still attached to the rod, and it's now JOHN who stumbles through the broken wire mesh to chase after him...

JOHN
Marley, no!

John chases him across the backyard. Marley goes under the fence and John starts to go over into...

50 **EXT. THE NEIGHBOR'S BACKYARD - DAY** 50

And now it's a NINE MONTH OLD MARLEY who comes up from under the fence clutching a THANKSGIVING TURKEY in his mouth. And now it's Jenny AND John who go over the fence chasing him...

JOHN
Marley, no!

They wave to the NEIGHBOR standing on his patio watching.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Hi, Tom-- Sorry...

JENNY
Happy Thanksgiving...

Marley goes through a hedge and out onto...

51 **EXT. STREET - DAY** 51

Where Marley emerges into FRAME a FULL GROWN DOG, rapidly pulling Jenny by the leash along the intercoastal waterway. We track with him until a WOMAN WALKING A POODLE IS NOW IN FRAME and Marley gets the two women entangled as he starts humping the smaller dog...

JENNY
Marley, no!

52 **INT. SUN-SENTINEL - ARNIE'S OFFICE - DAY** 52

John sits across from Arnie. He looks thrown:

JOHN
I don't understand, why me?

ARNIE
I'm in a bind, John.

JOHN
But I'm a reporter, not a columnist.

ARNIE
It's a step up.

JOHN
Yeah, but it's a step away from what I wanna do.

ARNIE
It's also better pay, you set your own hours, pick your own topics...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: 52

ARNIE (CONT'D)
and it's only temporary, just until I find someone permanent.

JOHN
What happened to Jerry?

ARNIE
You may have noticed that in every other column, he went on about The Pie Palace?

JOHN
I really haven't read his--

ARNIE
Turns out he's been getting free meals in exchange for mentioning the joint. It's also why he became such a fat ass.

John nods. Oh.

ARNIE (CONT'D)
Anyway, it's twice a week. And like I said, it's only until I can find someone else to replace him. Then you're back on, uh... whatever beat you were on.

53 **EXT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD - DAY** 53

John pulls up, gets out of the car. His neighbors, The 17-year-old GIRL -- short blue hair, pierced eyebrow -- and her MOM -- in a nurses uniform -- unload groceries from the car.

GIRL
Your dog's funny.

JOHN
(pauses)
Uh, thanks.

GIRL
He tried to eat one of our tires.

JOHN
Yeah, well, dogs need rubber. Little known fact, helps the digestive tract...

GIRL
Right. Along with the occasional black Converse high top which I'd still love to get back by the way.

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED: 53

JOHN
I'll do what I can.

GIRL
'Preciate that.

54 **INT. KITCHEN - DAY** 54

John sits at the table scribbling on a legal pad. He tears off the sheet and crumples it up, throws it across the room. Marley bounds into the room, Jenny behind him, sweating.

JENNY
I think he dislocated my shoulder. He doesn't heel-- hell, he doesn't even walk, he sprints, and I had to pull him off three dogs...

JOHN
Poodle?

JENNY
Yeah, among others. There was a Yorkie, a Dalmatian and a bichon frise that may never be right again.
(sees the legal pad)
What're you doing?

JOHN
Arnie gave me a column.

JENNY
You're kidding? Congratulations!

JOHN
Oh, yeah, it's a big honor. I get to write about zoning laws and yard sales.

JENNY
I bet you make something out of it.

JOHN
It's only temporary until he finds someone else. I'm just trying to get something down for Tuesday.

She gives him a kiss, starts out of the room

JENNY
You'll think of something. And John, I'm serious abut Marley. He wreaks havoc everywhere he goes. We gotta do something...

55 **EXT. PARK – DAY** 55

MS. KORNBLUT, weathered and stern, is studying John. Behind John, eight puppies and their owners are chatting before the class begins.

MS. KORNBLUT
Incorrigible? I don't believe in that. All dogs want to learn. But they can't when their owners are weak-willed.

JOHN
I'm very strong-willed.

MS. KORNBLUT
And where is your animal?

JOHN
He's over there. With my wife. He was a little excited. He usually needs a little time to calm down.

Ms. Kornblut looks at Jenny as she struggles up with Marley.

MS. KORNBLUT
I see. He calls the shots. Which of you will be the trainer?

JENNY
We thought we both would, since we want him to listen to both of us at home –

MS. KORNBLUT
A dog can only answer to one master. Which one of you has the most natural authority in your own relationship?

JOHN
(beat)
I'll watch.

MS. KORNBLUT
I thought so. We begin.

56 **EXT. PARK - LATER** 56

As Ms. Kornblut gestures, demonstrates the command:

MS. KORNBLUT
Sit!

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED: 56

The students order their dogs to sit, and most of them do. The ones that don't require only a little effort to get the idea. Whereas:

Jenny orders Marley to sit; instead Marley jumps up on her and puts his paws on her shoulders. She presses his butt to the ground, and he rolls over for a belly rub. She tries to tug him into place and he grabs the leash in his teeth, shaking it playfully.

MS. KORNBLUT (CONT'D)
That, class, is an example of a dog that has been foolishly allowed to believe he is the alpha male of his pack. And therefore he cannot be a happy animal.

JOHN
(from the sidelines)
Yeah, he looks really bummed.

Kornblut hears him, death stares John.

MS. KORNBLUT
You. Joker. Rotate in.

John looks at Jenny who shrugs, holds up the leash for him to take.

57 **CUT TO: A HEAVY CHOKE CHAIN** 57

As Ms. Kornblut demonstrates on her wrist.

MS. KORNBLUT
The choke chain. When your animal walks properly by your side, there'll be slack. If he pulls, it tightens around his neck like a noose and loosens as soon as he stops pulling.

JOHN
Does it hurt them?

MS. KORNBLUT
Well, it's not called a hug chain. But they learn to like it. Go on, collar your dogs.

Everyone else quickly, easily gets the choke chain around their dogs' necks. Of course. Meanwhile:

John kneels down and struggles to put it around Marley's neck. Marley, liking its shiny jingling, tries to eat it.

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED: 57

Much tussling, and John finally gets it around Marley's neck - but Marley still manages to grab it in his teeth.

JOHN
He likes it.

MS. KORNBLUT
That's because he's eating it... Get it out of his mouth. Class? Give your dogs the sit command.

All the dogs sit; John forces Marley's butt down.

MS. KORNBLUT (CONT'D)
The leash is held in two places. Loop around your right hand, left hand at waist level. Dog always on your left, of course.

JOHN
That means us, pal.

He rearranges Marley so he's on John's left.

MS. KORNBLUT
Now, when you give the heel command, step off with your left foot - I don't want to see any right foot first steppers - and walk. If your dog gets ahead, administer a correction by forcefully bring your left hand down and towards the right, and he'll respond. Shall we? One, two, three - now!

Just as the dogs and owners prepare to step off, Marley lurches ahead of the pack...

JOHN
Marley, heel!

Marley takes off like a fighter jet, dragging John behind.

MS. KORNBLUT
Correct him!

John gives a mighty yank on the leash. Marley coughs, hesitates. John loosens the leash - and Marley explodes forward again. John yanks, Marley stops, John releases, Marley explodes forward.

57 CONTINUED: (2) 57

MS. KORNBLUT (CONT'D)
Rein in that dog! All right, everyone, line up again. Demonstration. Mr. Grogan? Pay attention.

She takes the leash from John and efficiently guides him into line with the other dogs.

MS. KORNBLUT (CONT'D)
It's a simple question of confidence in one's own authority. Shall I demonstrate a simple walk?

JOHN
Be my guest.

MS. KORNBLUT
Class? Even an unruly dog wants to obey his leader. Marley? Heel.

And she steps off confidently - but Marley is a bit more confident than she is. He lunges, she pulls, he falls back on his hind legs, then barrels up and lurches forward.

Ms. Kornblut half-stumbles, half rockets across the park. She manages to turn Marley around, and the whole process begins again as they make their way back to the line. Her face is flushed with embarrassment, anger, and exertion, but Marley, jowls frothing, is having a ball. It's like a walking tug-of-war.

With difficulty, Ms. Kornblut manages to return Marley to John, but not before, as a coup-de-grace, he starts humping her leg enthusiastically. She struggles, he knocks her down, and then he buries his face in her crotch and humps her knee.

John and Jenny rush over. John restrains Marley; Jenny helps up Mrs. Kornblut. She's livid.

MS. KORNBLUT (CONT'D)
That's it! He's out!

JOHN
He usually just does this with poodles.
(looking at her bad perm)
Maybe it's the hair.

MS. KORNBLUT
He's a bad influence on the others. Leg-humping is a virus. Once it takes hold in a group – he has to go!

58 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD - DAY** 58

As they follow Marley back into the house.

JOHN
Well, that was fun.
(to the dog)
Congratulations, Marley. You flunked obedience school.

JENNY
You know, John, there is something else we can do--

JOHN
(looks at her)
No, no, I'm not doing that to him.

JENNY
It's painless. And he'll be a lot more comfortable. It'll calm him down.

JOHN
Yeah, you know why he'll be calmer? Because he'll have nothing to look forward to.

JENNY
What're you talking about? There are plenty of other things that'll make him happy--

JOHN
That's where you're wrong. Trust me, Jen: I know. I'm a guy. And yeah, lots of things make us happy, but the only thing we <u>really</u> look forward to is sex. Runner up: the <u>possibility</u> of sex.

JENNY
Oh, Please. Every book says he'll live longer--

JOHN
It'll just feel longer.

JENNY
John, he's out of control. It's the right thing to do.

John sighs, looks at Marley who's now humping the stuffed "goofy" that Jenny gave him as a puppy.

59 **INT. JENNY'S CAR - DAY** 59

Jenny at the wheel. John in the passenger seat. Marley in the back, his front paws balanced on the center console.

JOHN
It won't be so bad, buddy. You'll see. Sex is overrated.

Marley looks at him.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Okay, I'm lying, and I think you know that... so maybe the best thing is to just not talk about it.

Jenny cuts him a look. He lowers his voice.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Poor son-of-a-bitch.

A guilty John cracks the window just a bit and Marley begins listing to starboard, leaning against John to catch a whiff of the outdoor smells. Marley crawls onto John's lap...

JOHN (CONT'D)
Oh, okay, you wanna sit up here...

Marley now jams his nose into the small opening, snorting to catch the fresh air

JOHN (CONT'D)
Least I can do.

John lowers the window and Marley gets his whole snout out.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Here you go...

John lowers the window again and now Marley sticks his whole head out, ears flapping behind him, tongue hanging out like he's drunk.

JOHN (CONT'D)
He's so happy. He has no idea what's about to happen to him.

Jenny looks over as Marley hooks his paws over the half open window so that his neck and upper shoulders now hang out of the car.

JENNY
He's making me nervous.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: 59

JOHN
He's fine. He just wants a little fresh--

Suddenly Marley slides his front legs out the window until his front armpits are resting on the glass.

JENNY
John, grab him!

Before John can do anything, Marley is off his lap and scrambling out the window of the moving car.

JOHN
He's onto our evil plan, and he's making a break for it!

But now his butt is up in the air, his hind legs clawing for a foothold...

60 **EXT. INTERCOASTAL WATERWAY BRIDGE - SAME** 60

As Jenny slows down in heavy traffic, John lunges out the window after Marley, grabs the end of his tail with one hand so that Marley dangles upside down, outside the car, by his tail... He trots along the pavement with his front paws...

61 **INT. CAR - SAME** 61

Jenny gets the car stopped, HORNS HONKING BEHIND THEM.

JOHN
Uh, little help here...

John's stuck. He can't pull the dog back in the window and he can't open the door. He can't let go as angry drivers behind them are now starting to swerve around them. John hangs on for dear life...

JENNY
I got him!

62 **EXT. BRIDGE - SAME** 62

As Jenny puts on the flashers and gets out of the car, runs around to the passenger side... a group of cars drive slowly by in the other direction, all watching and laughing...

JOHN
(shouting)
What are you looking at?! He's losing his balls today! Cut the guy some slack!

63 **INT. SUN-SENTINAL OFFICE - DAY** 63

John sits at his desk, tries to write a column. Sebastian, in a flak jacket, pauses at his desk...

SEBASTIAN
Strip mall get approved?

JOHN
Riveting planning commission vote. Knuckle-biter. 8 to 1.

SEBASTIAN
You up for a beer?

JOHN
Can't, I gotta finish the column. Maybe tomorrow?

SEBASTIAN
Can't, I'll be in L.A. Part of that drug piece I'm doing--

JOHN
Right. Another time then.

John watches him move off, a secretary giving Sebastian a big smile as he passes. John sits there another moment, looks at his desk. A photo of him and Jenny. One of Marley with a flip flop in his mouth.

John chuckles to himself, then deletes the column, starts typing a new one.

64 **INT. ARNIE'S OFFICE - LATER** 64

John sits anxiously across from Arnie who sits at his desk reading. The editor's expression is grim as he looks up at John.

JOHN
I'm really sorry, I'll go back and do the zoning piece--

ARNIE
The hell you sorry for? It's hilarious.

John sits back down, looks at Arnie. See, the thing is, Arnie's <u>face</u> doesn't say "hilarious," but...

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED: 64

ARNIE (CONT'D)
I loved it. Getting kicked out of obedience school, the humping, the "Great Escape," all of it. Hysterical.

Again, Arnie's face remains dead serious as he passes the paper back to John.

ARNIE (CONT'D)
Run it. As is.

JOHN
Thank you, sir.

John starts out of the office.

ARNIE
Hey, Gorgan...
(then)
Tell him not to feel bad. Sooner or later, we all lose our balls.

JOHN
I'll be sure to pass that on.

65 **EXT. CUBAN RESTAURANT - PATIO - NIGHT** 65

Live music, a sexy vibe. John and Jenny sit outside in the hot Florida night. Dinner over, John raises his glass...

JOHN
To two years.

JENNY
That was fast.

JOHN
Good, though, right?

JENNY
Really good.

He lifts out of his chair and kisses her, a long one.

JOHN
So. What's next?

JENNY
I was thinking desert.

JOHN
No, I mean on your list.

65 CONTINUED:

JENNY
My list?

JOHN
Remember, when we first got married, you had this whole checklist, with like the game plan.

JENNY
Right...

JOHN
So what came next?

JENNY
Let's see... a new car maybe?

JOHN
We can do that. What was after that?

JENNY
(beat)
You sure you wanna know?

JOHN
Yeah.

JENNY
Well, it was between a new roof and a baby.

He studies her for a long moment, then...

JOHN
I can probably live with a few leaks.

JENNY
Really? Because a leak can turn into something bigger... and that can be a big responsibility.

JOHN
I know.

JENNY
I was just thinking that we might want everything fixed before we went to the next step.

JOHN
Well, we've already fixed Marley. Literally.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (2) 65

JENNY
You're serious about this?

JOHN
I think so.

JENNY
And you know we're not talking about an actual roof here.

JOHN
Yeah, I got that.

She looks back at him, finally nods. They are. Then...

JENNY
Okay. Maybe, instead of trying to have a baby, we should stop trying to not have one.

JOHN
If I'm following you correctly -- and I think I am -- this is the part where we go home and get it on, right?

JENNY
Bingo.

66 **INT. BEDROOM - DAY** 66

As Jenny pushes John back onto the bed, starts kissing him. Things getting hot and heavy quickly. As they kiss...

JENNY
Honey?

JOHN
Yeah...

JENNY
Did you eat some kibble?

JOHN
What?

And now they part and we see MARLEY'S HUGE FACE RESTING ON THE SIDE OF THE BED, watching, panting up a storm.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Marley-- get out of here!

66 CONTINUED:

JENNY
It's fine, he's a dog, he doesn't know what he's looking at.

JOHN
Oh, he knows, and trust me, he resents the hell out of me right now. Go on, Marley! Get out!

But Marley jumps up on the bed, tries to climb on both of them--

JENNY
Marley!

And now they both start laughing as the dog tries to lick their faces...

67 **INT. ARNIE'S OFFICE - DAY** 67

Silence. Arnie reads John's column, his face dead serious.

ARNIE
This is even funnier than the last one.

JOHN
Thank you, sir.

ARNIE
You're good, Gorgan. And not just the dog stuff. The piece on the women of Boca last week. What'd you call them?

JOHN
Boccahontis.

ARNIE
Hilarious.

John nods, starts for the door...

ARNIE (CONT'D)
Is it true what you wrote? You and the wife are trying to have a kid?

JOHN
Well, we're not really trying.

ARNIE
How's that work?

JOHN
Excuse me?

67 CONTINUED: 67

ARNIE
Are you having sex?

JOHN
Yes.

ARNIE
With the intention of getting pregnant?

JOHN
I guess.

ARNIE
Congratulations. You're trying.

John just stands there. Arnie looks back at him.

ARNIE (CONT'D)
I assume you've thought this through?

JOHN
Yeah, I mean...
(then)
...yeah.

68 **INT. SUN-SENTINAL OFFICE - DAY** 68

John walks out of the office, pensive, sits down at his desk. His PHONE RINGS.

JOHN
Grogan.

69 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD - SAME** 69

Jenny on the phone, looking at a dry erase calendar.

JENNY
I just thought I'd let you know that I'm ovulating.

INTERCUTTING: JOHN & JENNY

JOHN
Oh.

JENNY
Just in case you wanted to come home.

JOHN
Oh.

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: 69

JENNY
Like right now.

70 **INT. ELEVATOR - DAY** 70

In the f.g., stands a harried thirty-something FATHER with a screaming INFANT in a Bjorn. John stands just behind the father who bounces in place trying unsuccessfully to soothe the baby.

GIRL'S VOICE
Daddy!

And now, another KID, 4-year-old girl, jumps up in and out of frame...

GIRL
I wanna push the button!

FATHER
Daddy can't lift you right now--

GIRL
(jumps up again)
You said I could push the button!

FATHER
Alright, okay, I'll just--

He tries to pick her up without leaning over...

GIRL
Ow! You're hurting me!

FATHER
Okay, you know what? Never mind, no button!

A very uncomfortable John now steps forward...

JOHN
You want me to give her a hand?

FATHER
Oh-- would you mind?

John lifts the girl up to the panel. She runs her hands, from top to button, down the panel, pressing every single button.

FATHER (CONT'D)
Sarah! Goddammit--

70 CONTINUED: 70

And now the little girl starts bawling in concert with the baby, while a trapped John backs up into the corner.

71 **EXT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD - DAY** 71

John gets out of the car. The young Girl next door gives him a wave as she starts down the sidewalk with her boyfriend.

JOHN
Hi.

GIRL
Hi.

John watches the young couple go, arms around each other.

72 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD - DAY** 72

John enters and is greeted as usual by Marley who jumps on him.

JOHN
Hey, boy.
(looks around)
Jenny?

JENNY
Out in a sec!

John stands there, Marley looking at him.

JOHN
(to the dog)
So. This is us not trying.

The bathroom door opens and Jenny walks out in a tiny, silky two-piece thing...

JENNY
Hey, Sailor.

She walks into the bedroom. John looks back at Marley as he follows her into the bedroom.

JOHN
Catch you later, buddy.

And closes the door on the dog.

73 **INT. BAR - NIGHT** 73

John and Sebastian sit at the bar...

73 CONTINUED: 73

SEBASTIAN
So the puppy wasn't enough?

JOHN
Well, technically, we're not trying. But you know Jenny.

SEBASTIAN
But things are good right now, just as they are, right?

JOHN
Yeah, things are really good.

SEBASTIAN
So why change it up with a kid? I mean, have you already forgotten my little cautionary tale...

JOHN
The bomb, right?

SEBASTIAN
Yes. The bomb. And just so we're clear, the countdown sequence has been reactivated. By <u>you</u>.

JOHN
Well, it's been a few months and nothing's happened. Which actually makes me wonder if--

BARTENDER
Mr. Grogan?

The BARTENDER sets a PHONE down in front of John.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Phone call. I loved that thing you did on your dog watching you and your wife have sex? Really funny stuff...

JOHN
(embarrassed)
Thanks...

BARTENDER
Seriously, man, your stuff is classic.

JOHN
Well, it's just temporary, but thanks.

John cuts a look at Sebastian, picks up the phone.

73 CONTINUED: (2) 73

JOHN (CONT'D)
Hello.

JENNY (PHONE)
I just wanted to let you know that there's a naked blonde in your bed.

JOHN
Oh. Why don't you two get started and I'll be there as soon as I can.

JENNY
Very funny. Can you come home? I'll make it worth your while.

JOHN
Oh. Alright then. I'll see what I can do.

He hangs up. Looks at Sebastian.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Uh, I'm sorry, man, but I gotta jam. I forgot, I had this thing, I gotta deal with--

SEBASTIAN
She's calling you home, isn't she?

JOHN
Yeah. See you later.

John starts out of the bar. Sebastian calls after him...

SEBASTIAN
Tick tick tick!

74 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL – NIGHT** 74

Romantic Music on the stereo. John comes in, wearily, absently pets Marley. He goes into the bedroom. The bathroom door is open. John sits down on the bed.

JOHN
You know, this baby thing. I been thinking maybe we should take a break. You know? Obviously, it's not happening. Maybe that's nature's way of saying it's not good timing.

No sound from Jenny. He struggles on.

74 CONTINUED: 74

JOHN (CONT'D)
Maybe this is a sign that we're not ready for this. I mean, have we really thought this through? Because--

He looks up to see Jenny at the bathroom door. From behind her back she brings out a home pregnancy test strip.

JENNY
I'm pregnant.

JOHN
(PAUSE, then)
Great. Wow, that's... great.

JENNY
But you just said –

JOHN
Yeah, no, I mean-- okay, this is definitely awkward now, but...

JENNY
You wanna start over?

JOHN
Can I?

JENNY
By all means.

JOHN
Thank you. Okay, well... I gotta be honest, I'm a little panicked.

JENNY
Are you panicking because I'm pregnant... or because you're afraid I'm going to hit you?

JOHN
Both. It's a twofer thing.

JENNY
Are you scared?

JOHN
No. No. Not at all.
(then, looks at her)
Yeah, yeah I'm pretty scared.

74 CONTINUED: (2) 74

JENNY
(sits down next to him)
Me, too. But we're gonna be okay.
(then)
Look at me...

He looks at her. She smiles at him.

JENNY (CONT'D)
We're gonna be okay.

JOHN
(beat)
I believe you.

He looks at her stomach, kisses her there...

75 **INT. ARNIE'S OFFICE - DAY** 75

As John hands Arnie his latest column...

JOHN
That's probably the last one about Marley for a while. But in about nine months, I'm gonna have a new subject, might be just as fun. Jenny's pregnant.

ARNIE
(flat)
I'm very happy for you. Have you bought her a present?

JOHN
What?

ARNIE
A gift, John. She's carrying a child. Your child. Don't you think that's worth something?

JOHN
Uhhh....

ARNIE
You don't wanna make the mistake I did. Listen to me. There's gonna come a time, she's fat, she's nauseous, her ankles are swollen, and she's gonna look at you, and this is what that look will mean: "You bastard. You did this to me. You dick, you ruined me." But then...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: 75

ARNIE (CONT'D)
she's gonna remember that little ring, bracelet, anklet, whatever, that you bought her, and she's gonna feel better. Understand?

JOHN
Yeah.
(indicates the door)
Can I just--

ARNIE
Go ahead. There's a jeweler on the corner. Mention my name.

76 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD - NIGHT** 76

Lit with candles. Jenny and John on the couch. She removes a beautiful gold necklace from a box and holds it up...

JENNY
Oh, John, it's beautiful...

She sets it down on the coffee table, then moves close to him.

JENNY (CONT'D)
Thank you...

She kisses him.

JOHN
I was just thinking about you when I walked by the store and saw it in the window...

JENNY
That is so sweet.

JOHN
Put it on...

She turns back to the coffee table and looks around...

JENNY
Where'd it go? It was right here.

JOHN
You just put it down. It can't have just disappeared--

And then he stops. Looks off. So does Jenny...

76 CONTINUED: 76

JENNY
Oh God...

Marley stands a few feet away, looking strangely gleeful. A glint of Gold in the moonlight dangles from his mouth. They both get up, start to move towards him...

JENNY (CONT'D)
Hey, boy. Come here. Look what I got for you.

JOHN
We don't want any trouble...

JENNY
Yeah, here's a little something--

She reaches into her pocket for an (imaginary) treat. Marley looks at her. Is this a trick? He considers. Then he moves closer. John tiptoes up behind him, ever so slowly.

JENNY (CONT'D)
I just want to give you a treat and a big kiss. That's a boy...

Inch by inch, Marley approaches her. But then, behind Marley, John knocks against a table. Marley freezes.

JOHN
He made me! Go!

Jenny lurches for Marley, going for his collar, and John leaps at him from behind. Marley skitters away. Ah, a game! He wags his tail, prances, sticks his rear in the air and his puts his head to the ground. John feints, tries to maneuver Marley back into Jenny.

Jenny finally grabs him from behind. John pries open his mouth. Nothing. He reaches inside, looks up at Jenny.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Uh-oh.

77 **EXT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD - BACKYARD - MORNING** 77

John grimaces in the morning sun as he watches Marley poop. He takes a hose and squirts at the deposit until it runs into the lawn. Nothing.

JENNY (O.S.)
Dr. Jay's sending over a laxative.

77 CONTINUED: 77

JOHN
Yay.

78 **EXT. 345 CHURCHILL – BACKYARD – DAY** 78

John hoses through Marley's huge orange iridescent poops.

JOHN
Man, you gotta lay off the mangoes.
(a sigh)
You know, years ago, when I pictured my life, somehow standing in my backyard hosing down dog crap in search of my bride's swallowed and recycled ass-kissing gift just didn't spring to mind.
(suddenly excited)
Aha! Jackpot!

79 **INT. KITCHEN – DAY** 79

Carefully, Jenny lifts the shiny necklace out of a glass filled with bleach.

JENNY
I think it's shinier than before. Amazing.

JOHN
Yeah. He did us a favor. And I only threw up eight times.

JENNY
My hero.

80 **INT. OB/GYN OFFICE – EXAMINING ROOM – DAY** 80

The NURSE arranges the gown on Jenny.

NURSE
How's that crazy dog of yours?
(smiles at John)
I'm a big fan.

JOHN
Thank you.

NURSE
The heartbeat'll be very fast, like a little train. That's normal.

80 CONTINUED:

JOHN
Is it too soon to tell the sex? Not that I care. He can be any sex he wants. Male, female, we don't care. Unambiguous genitalia, if we had our druthers, but whatever...

NURSE
Shhhhh... hang on...

She listens for a moment with a little microphone hooked up to a speaker. Nothing.

NURSE (CONT'D)
Sometimes you can't hear it, depending on how the baby is lying. You're ten weeks, right?

JENNY
Next Monday, yes.

NURSE
Might be a little early for that. Let's go right to the sonogram. Did you bring your blank tape?

JOHN
(waving it, smiling)
Ready to roll.

NURSE
Let's get a good picture first. It'll be on the monitor there.

The Nurse begins running the instrument around Jenny's stomach. John and Jenny peer at the computer screen.

NURSE (CONT'D)
(neutral)
Hmmm. This one doesn't seem to be picking up anything. Excuse me, I'll be just a minute...

She leaves. Jenny and John smile at each other, but inside each of them, a small pinpoint of fear starts to expand. We wait for a few moments. A pressured silence. And then...

DR. SHERMAN comes in, followed by the nurse, smiles down at Jenny.

DR. SHERMAN
Hi, guys. Let's have a look at your baby, shall we?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

80 CONTINUED: (2)

DR. SHERMAN (CONT'D)
(he takes the instrument)
All right, there we go. Good. Now, look over there. Much better resolution, right?

Jenny and John, holding hands, look at the computer screen. They see a sac, which, with a click of the mouse, Dr. Sherman expands and expands. But it's empty. Jenny tries to smile.

JENNY
Is there anything in there?

DR. SHERMAN
Not what you'd expect to see at ten weeks.

JENNY
Not quite ten weeks.

Dr. Sherman looks at them directly. Kindly:

DR. SHERMAN
Jenny, I'm sorry, but there's no heartbeat.

John and Jenny are still, silent.

DR. SHERMAN (CONT'D)
One in six pregnancies ends this way. It just happens sometimes, that's all. I'm very sorry. But you're young and healthy and in a couple of months, you can try again.
(then)
Why don't you come by my office on your way out and we can talk some more.

He exits. John is still holding the blank videotape. He tries to hide it from Jenny. He leaves. Jenny and John look at each other.

JENNY
How could this happen? What'd I do wrong?

JOHN
You didn't do anything--

JENNY
I must have. Otherwise, how could I lose it?

80 CONTINUED: (3) 80

JOHN
Jenny, it's not something you have any control over. It's like the doctor said, it just happens--

JENNY
Not to me... I did something wrong. I know it... I did something wrong. I'm sorry, John...

JOHN
Don't say that--

JENNY
But I am-- I'm sorry--

JOHN
I don't need sorry. You didn't do anything!

She turns away and begins to cry. John just sits there, staring at the videotape in his hands.

Outside in the hall, the door to another examining room opens and they hear a couple laughing, talking excitedly.

Jenny and John look away from each other, their pain made even worse.

81 **INT. CAR – DAY (MOVING)** 81

John is driving Jenny home.

JOHN
In a couple of months, we can try again. Okay?

Jenny just looks out the window.

82 **EXT. 345 CHURCHILL – KITCHEN - DAY** 82

John helps Jenny through the kitchen door. Marley follows them, circles them wildly, then stops, puzzled, as he looks at them. Jenny goes into the living room; Marley follows her.

JOHN
You want some tea?
(no answer)
Hey, you know what I was thinking? We still have those tickets from your parents for the honeymoon in Ireland. We can finally do that.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED: 82

JOHN (CONT'D)
Take some time off. It'll be fun, clear our heads, right?
(no response)
Jenny?

No answer. He goes into the living room and stops cold:

JOHN'S POV - JENNY & MARLEY

Jenny sits on the couch. Marley stands at her feet, with his shoulders between her knees, his big head resting in her lap. His tail hangs flat between his legs. His eyes are turned up at her, and he whimpers softly.

Jenny strokes his head a few times and then, with no warning, buries her face in the thick fur of his neck and begins sobbing. They stay like that for a moment, Marley statue-still, Jenny clutching him to her like an oversized doll.

John stands there, watching Marley take care of her. No words, just being there. A lesson here. Her head down, Jenny raises one arm up towards John and John goes to the couch and wraps his arms around both of them. We then...

FADE OUT.

DEBBY (V.O.)
Oh. He's... big.

83 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD – LIVING ROOM - DAY** 83

With difficulty, John holds back Marley to protect DEBBY -- 19, glasses, bookish, the house sitter -- from his affection.

JOHN
Yeah. Close to a hundred pounds.
(re: the leash struggle)
He just wants to say hi. He won't hurt you. Just stand still and be calm. You're a dog person, right?

DEBBY
Well, actually -

JOHN
- Ready?

DEBBY
Okay?

John releases Marley who springs on Debby, knocking her back.

83 CONTINUED: 83

DEBBY (CONT'D)
I'm okay! I'm okay!

JOHN
He's not supposed to do that. You have to knee him. Anyway, it won't happen the whole time. Just maybe when you come home.
(handing her a binder)
This is everything you need to know.

84 **EXT. 345 CHURCHILL – DAY** 84

John and Jenny lug their suitcases across the front lawn to the car, Marley running around them. Debby's glancing through the binder.

JENNY'S VOICE
Debby. Welcome to our home! Marley is a spirited dog who loves interaction. We've never left him before but we're sure he'll behave just as he does when we're at home.

They kiss him goodbye. Get in the cab and go. Debby runs to Marley, grabs his leash and struggles with all her might to hold on to Marley.

85 **INT. AIRPLANE – DAY** 85

Coach. But this is 1991, and the planes fly half-full. John reads about Ireland in the guide book. Jenny sees a woman with a child. She smiles. No tears.

JENNY'S VOICE
There are just a few things about Marley you need to know. He eats three times a day. If he looks starved, feed him again. Of course all this food has to go somewhere.

86 **EXT. 345 CHURCHILL – BACKYARD – DAY** 86

Debby looks at the piles of orange poop everywhere.

JENNY'S VOICE
Use the red shovel and the blue bucket. Watch your step. Don't worry about the color. He likes mangoes.

87 **EXT. IRISH COUNTRYSIDE – DAY** 87

John and Jenny enjoy the scenery. Sheep in the road surround their car. Jenny leans out, laughing, and takes a picture.

JENNY'S VOICE
Marley's ears get a lot of wax buildup. Once or twice while we're gone, please use cotton balls and the blue ear-cleaning stuff to clean them out. Wear old clothes and try not to breathe.

88 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL – KITCHEN – NIGHT** 88

Debby is throwing up in her mouth a little as she cleans Marley's ears. Marley loves it.

JENNY'S VOICE
Marley is an excellent watchdog. And in this neighborhood, that's a good thing. You can rest easy at night, knowing he's on the job.

89 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL – BEDROOM – NIGHT** 89

Debby, ears plugged, shades over her eyes, weeps in frustration as Marley HOWLS at the moon.

90 **EXT. IRISH TOWN – NIGHT** 90

John and Jenny stop at a bed-and-breakfast for the night. It's raining softly.

JENNY'S VOICE
Thunderstorms are his weak point. Well, one of his weak points. You can give him sedatives if you think a storm is arriving. He doesn't like them, so push them down into his throat as far as they go.

91 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL – NIGHT** 91

Marley is tearing through the house, terrified. Debby is chasing him with a bottle of tranquilizers.

92 **INT. IRISH B & B - NIGHT** 92

An Irish widow, MRS. BUTTERLY, leads them to their room.

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED: 92

JOHN'S VOICE
We do not allow Marley to get up on any piece of furniture, chew on anything except his toys, drink out of the toilet – keep the lid closed and the brick on the lid –

93 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL – BATHROOM – NIGHT** 93

Debby is showering – and then starts SCREAMING. Marley has stuck his head through the shower curtain and is licking the water. Debby splashes water at him to make him go away. Marley, thinking she's playing, scrambles into the tub with her. She grabs the curtain, and it pops off the curtain rings one by one as in "Psycho."

JOHN'S VOICE
– actually, you might want to keep the bathroom door closed in general.

94 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL - NIGHT** 94

Debby has run out of the bathroom, a towel hastily wrapped around her. Marley chases her. He leaps – and returns to earth with the towel in his mouth. Debby SCREAMS.

95 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL - NIGHT** 95

Debby is standing on a coffee table, nude, swatting at an unseen Marley with a bunch of tall artificial flowers.

JOHN'S VOICE
Other than that, enjoy him! Thanks so much. Love, Jenny and John.

96 **INT. IRISH BEDROOM – NIGHT** 96

Four walls, four different floral wallpapers. Twin beds. Above one, the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Above the other, the Sacred Heart of Mary. Crucifixes everywhere you look, and a HUGE framed picture of Pope John XXIII.

MRS. BUTTERLY
And if you need anything during the night, I'm right next door. The blankets are wool. Good heat in them.

JENNY
Oh, they're electric?

MRS. BUTTERLY
No, not in this house. My brother died in a fire, God rest him.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED: 96

MRS. BUTTERLY (CONT'D)
In this room, actually. It's been re-papered. Good night. God bless.

Jenny sits on the bed. The CREAKING is terrible.

JENNY
Look, I know we haven't had sex since... you know. But there's no way we're breaking the streak tonight.

JOHN
No kidding. 'Cause it's not just God watching. God, his mother...
(indicating next door)
...and apparently his best friend.

97 **INT. IRISH BEDROOM - LATER** 97

They are in separate beds, staring at the crucifix.

JOHN
It's July, but I think I can see my breath.

JENNY
I can't feel my toes.

John gets out of his bed and into Jenny's. Much SQUEAKING.

JENNY (CONT'D)
My God. Shhh.

JOHN
It's not the mattress. It's the shrieks of over-sexed souls in hell.

JENNY
You wanna join them?

He looks at her.

JOHN
Are you sure, because we don't have to...

JENNY
I can't help myself. Knowing it hasn't happened in this house in 50 years is a turn-on.

They roll into each others' arms, the bed squeaking.

97 CONTINUED: 97

JOHN
Maybe she's deaf...

98 **INT. IRISH B & B - DAY** 98

The next morning. John and Jenny, looking flushed and relaxed, and slightly abashed, come downstairs. Mrs. Butterly looks at them sourly. So do the other guests.

JENNY
(to John)
They heard us.

JOHN
No...

He jumps as Mrs. Butterly slams the teapot on the table.

MRS. BUTTERLY
Tea?
(looks him in the eye)
I'm off to Mass.

Mrs. Butterly leaves. John and Jenny look at the other guests. They smile bravely.

JOHN
Wow. Any of you hear her bed squeaking last night? I hope she hits confession before Mass, that's all I can say.

99 **INT. ANOTHER B & B - DAY** 99

Another widow, another room, another collection of religious artifacts. John smiles.

100 **INT. A THIRD B & B - NIGHT** 100

Jenny sits on the bed, smiles at the NOISE, starts taking off her shoes. John ushers the Owner out of the room.

101 **EXT. CHURCHILL ROAD – DAY** 101

John and Jenny pull into the driveway. They see Debby, the house sitter, on the front steps with her bag packed. She's tired-looking, beat. She reaches for a pair of crutches.

John gets out of his car, a smile on his face.

JOHN
Hey, Debby. So how was--

—Debby hurls the binder of instructions at him.

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED: 101

DEBBY
There were eleven thunderstorms while you were away. Eleven! And you were right. He doesn't <u>like</u> thunderstorms!

JENNY
Okay, yeah, wow. Eleven, huh? That is a lot.

DEBBY
And those goddamned dog tranquilizers don't work!

JOHN
Did you give him four at a time?

DEBBY
I mean on humans!

She hobbles to the car, tries to get in with her crutches. They frustrate her and she ends up beating the ground with them until she throws them down. She's losing it.

DEBBY (CONT'D)
(as she gets in the car)
And just so you know, I <u>am</u> a dog person. But that's not a dog! That's evil with a dog face! That's also humping your leg! Lose my number!!

And she gets into her car and guns it, splintering the crutches as she peels out. John and Jenny, watch her go, turn and look at the front door. Marley's face in the little square window at the top, peeking out at them.

102 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD - DAY** 102

A THUNDERSTORM outside. John sits at his desk, tries to work while Marley walks in circles. John looks at him...

JOHN
It's only thunder...

John goes back to work. We hear more THUNDER, and Marley starts howling, knocks over a floor lamp... John looks off towards the bedroom...

JOHN (CONT'D)
Jenny?! Can you help me out here? I got twenty minutes to file this column!

We follow John as he gets up from his desk, heads towards the back bedroom...

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED: 102

JOHN (CONT'D)
Jenny?

We follow him into the room, an anxious Marley close at his heels. She's not here, he turns around just as she steps out of the bathroom, smiling...

JENNY
Luck of the Irish...

She holds up a pregnancy test with a clear BLUE line, her exuberant face lit up by a FLASH OF LIGHTNING. John goes to hug her, as Marley HOWLS in the b.g., we then...

FADE OUT.

SUPER: "Nine Months Later."

103 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL - BEDROOM - NIGHT** 103

John and Jenny are asleep. Marley goes through his nighttime routine:

He chews through a sock. He drinks out of the toilet. He works on chewing through the plastic dog food tub. Another night and he'll be in. He chases a fly.

Finally he goes to his bed on the floor of the bedroom. He settles himself down to sleep. He yawns, he scratches, he closes his eyes. He snores. And then –

He wakes up, suddenly alert. He looks over at Jenny. He gets up, sits by her side of the bed, and waits.

Suddenly Jenny sits up, rests a hand on her stomach.

JENNY
Whoa--

She catches her breath, leans over to John.

JENNY (CONT'D)
John. John, wake up.

JOHN
What?

JENNY
I think it's time.

104 **INT. BEDROOM – NIGHT** 104

Jenny has finished dressing. Suddenly she yelps in pain, doubles over. John takes her in his arms.

JOHN
It's okay.

JENNY
Ow!

Suddenly, A GROWL. They turn to see Marley glaring at John.

JOHN
It's okay. I'm not hurting her.

Jenny MOANS again and now Marley's eyes narrow. He takes a step towards John.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Please don't scream, honey. He'll kill me.

JENNY
You put the car seat in this weekend, right? They won't let us take the baby home without the car seat installed.

JOHN
Like I'd forget that.

105 **INT. LIVING ROOM – NIGHT** 105

Panicking, John is struggling to get the car seat he forgot out of the box. He starts beating at the Styrofoam. Marley barks excitedly. John gets an idea, hands him one end of the box.

JOHN
Come on, Marley. Help me out here. Do what you do best...

Unsure, Marley licks the box.

JOHN (CONT'D)
No, don't lick it, <u>eat</u> it! Destroy it! You can chew through <u>drywall</u>, man! I know you can do this!

Marley catches on. He starts shredding the box.

106 **INT. GARAGE – NIGHT** 106

John hurls a suitcase and the partially-assembled, partially-destroyed car seat into the back seat. He yells:

JOHN
Car seat's in!

107 **EXT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD – NIGHT** 107

Jenny is tottering down the walk as John pulls out of the garage, gets her into the passenger seat.

108 **INT. CAR – NIGHT (STATIONARY)** 108

JOHN
Ready?

JENNY
Yeah. You?

Marley barks from the back seat. They both turn and look at him. What's <u>he</u> doing here?

109 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD – NIGHT** 109

John opens the front door, drags Marley in. John gives him a GIANT BONE-SHAPED CHEW TOY...

JOHN
Okay. Here... <u>Stay</u>. Be good. Please, God. No storms. <u>Stay</u>.

110 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD - MORNING** 110

The chew toy now almost completely gone. Marley sleeps beside it as we hear A KEY IN THE LOCK and he gets to his feet, greets John as he comes through the door.

JOHN
Hey, boy.

111 **EXT. BACKYARD - MORNING** 111

As John let's Marley out.

112 **INT. KITCHEN - MORNING** 112

As John sets down a bowl of food, crouches down as Marley starts to eat.

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED: 112

JOHN
Here's the thing: in a couple of hours, we're gonna bring the baby home. And you'd be doing me a really big favor if you didn't freak out.
(stands, sighs)
I'm gonna try and do the same thing.

113 **OMITTED** 113 *

114 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD - MORNING** 114 *

As the sun now streams in through the front windows down onto * Marley, who is sound asleep. We hear A CAR DOOR CLOSE and he * raises his head...

A moment later, THE FRONT DOOR OPENS and John comes in and Marley greets him, jumps up on his chest.

JOHN
Hey, boy... let's go outside...

115 **EXT. BACKYARD - MORNING** 115

As Marley relieves himself, John yawning in the b.g.

116 **INT. BEDROOM - MORNING** 116

As Jenny unpacks her suitcase. Marley bounds into the room and greets her.

JENNY
Hello, Marley...

She crouches down, gives him a kiss, rubs his back. And that's when we hear a small, birdlike chirp and the dog freezes. *Where'd that come from?*

We hear the coo again and this time Marley lifts one paw in the air like a bird dog, and points in the direction of the car seat that we now see sitting on the bed...

JOHN
You know what I think would be a bummer? If he ate the baby...

116 CONTINUED: 116

She moves to the car seat and turns it around so that now we see the baby for the first time. She smiles at Marley...

JENNY
This is Patrick, Marley.

Jenny unbuckles Patrick from the car seat and crouches down beside Marley and lets the dog sniff the baby's toes, then up his legs, finally his diaper which puts Marley into a Pampers stupor, the Holy Grail of aromas and Marley's eyes glaze...

JENNY (CONT'D)
See, he's not gonna hurt him.

JOHN
No, but I'm gonna have to put a lock on the diaper pail.

117 **EXT. 345 CHURCHILL - DAY** 117

Garbage day, and the trash piled outside the Grogan house testifies to the change inside. Empty cartons of diapers, the packaging from a crib, a stroller, the car seats, the Pack'n'Play...

118 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL - DAY** 118

Jenny tries to watch the baby, now crawling around on the floor and file her column over the phone at the same time.

JENNY
I have the quote right here--

Patrick crawls over Marley, who's supremely patient as Patrick takes a fistful of his eye.

JENNY (CONT'D)
Well, have legal call them again and get a release for it. They told me it was on the record-- Marley-- Patrick, that's his eye-- No, not you, Karla, just get the release. I'll call you back.
(hangs up)
Be gentle, Patrick!

Jenny leans back in her chair, rubs her face. Then...

JENNY (CONT'D)
(gets up)
Laundry.

119 **EXT. PARK - DAY** 119

John sits on a bench, Marley at his feet reading "What to Expect in the First Year." He takes a breath, looks up, watches a COUPLE make out on a blanket.

120 **INT. KITCHEN - MORNING** 120

The baby in his high chair. Jenny sets a few cheerios on the tray. Patrick picks them up and drops them, we follow them down...

THE FLOOR

To where Marley waits, eagerly vacuuming up the cereal. It continues to RAIN CHEERIOS and we then BOOM BACK UP and see that Patrick is now eight months old, laughing as he throws the cereal onto the floor...

121 **EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT** 121

John stands there letting Marley out. He looks back at the house, watches Jenny through the window as she sets Patrick down in his crib, shuts the light out.

122 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL - NIGHT** 122

They're both working at their desks. Jenny looks up from her computer.

JENNY
I need to go in tomorrow for a few hours, see my editor. Think you can watch the baby for me?

JOHN
Sure.

John looks around the room. The place is a disaster area.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Remember us?

JENNY
You mean, those younger, skinnier better looking people? Yeah, I think I remember them. Vaguely.

JOHN
Well, I miss them.

He turns back to his work. She looks at him, sets her pad aside, comes up behind him, puts her arms around him.

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED: 122

JENNY
They're still here.

He looks up at their reflection in the window, not so sure.

123 **INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT** 123

John and Jenny now asleep on opposite sides of the bed. On the floor beside John, Marley lifts his head and GROWLS. We then hear a piercing SCREAM coming from outside. The dog is already out of the room.

John sits up, immediately starts to get out of bed...

JOHN
Marley--

JENNY
Honey, don't go out there.

JOHN
Stay here. Call the police.

124 **INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME** 124

Marley's at the door growling as John, in his boxer shorts, grabs the dog by the choke chain and opens the door. We hear another SCREAM coming from a couple houses down and Marley breaks through the screen, pulling John with him...

125 **EXT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD - SAME** 125

As other lights come on, NEIGHBORS start to come out onto the street. John runs to where we see THE TEENAGE GIRL NEXT DOOR bent over, sobbing, in her driveway beside her car, driver's door still open. John lets go of Marley and hurries to her.

GIRL
He said not to scream or he'd stab me,
but I screamed...

And John sees the blood on her shirt. He takes hold of her.

JOHN
Okay okay okay, I've got you...
(then)
Where's your mom?

GIRL
At work...

JOHN
Jenny'll call her...

125 CONTINUED: 125

Marley sniffs at the ground, growling more and more intensely. We hear SHOUTING, "He went that way" as several neighbors take off running. Marley lifts his head and he, too, bolts into the night--

JOHN (CONT'D)
Marley! NO!

But he's gone and John has to stay with the girl. We hear SIRENS as she slides down the car and sits down on the ground. John sits down beside her, holding onto her....

JOHN (CONT'D)
All this time we've been living here, I never got your name.

GIRL
Lisa.

JOHN
Well, you're gonna be alright, Lisa, the police are on the way...

John looks off, wondering where Marley is...

126 **EXT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD - LATER** 126

A crime scene. Jenny, clutching the baby, stands on the porch watching as an AMBULANCE pulls away. John, now in shorts and a T-shirt, comes jogging up the walk.

JOHN
I can't find him anywhere.

JENNY
Maybe we should get in the car, drive around.

JOHN
I'll get the keys...

John's coming into the house when a police cruiser pulls to the curb in front of the house. A POLICEMAN gets out of the driver's side, then opens the back and leads Marley out. He bounds up the walk to the two of them who greet him.....

JENNY
Marley!

JOHN
Where were you?

126 CONTINUED: 126

OFFICER
We found him outside the 76 station on Radford. He had the guy cornered in the men's room.

JENNY
So you caught the guy?

OFFICER
No--
(indicates Marley)
He caught the guy. He also gnawed the barrel of my shotgun, and ate half my radio mic.

They look at Marley wagging his tail, panting.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
Anyway, the neighbors all said he belonged here, but none of them wanted to drive him, so...

JOHN
Thanks for bringing him home.

OFFICER
Helluva dog.

John nods as The Officer heads back to his car. Jenny crouches down and gives Marley a big hug and a back rub...

JENNY
My hero.

127 **EXT. BOCA RATON HOUSE - DAY** 127

An upscale, newer money neighborhood. An OPEN HOUSE sign out front. John pulls up. He opens the door, holds up a hand to Marley who sits in the back--

JOHN
Stay.

--and starts to unhook Patrick from his car seat. Marley bolts out of the car and heads straight for the house...

JOHN (CONT'D)
Marley!

128 **INT. BOCA RATON HOUSE - DAY** 128

A REALTOR is showing a COUPLE around the large, empty, new house. She points out the designer kitchen that looks out onto the patio and pool, a huge yellow lab now leaping in.

A moment later, we see John, clutching Patrick, enter the backyard, try to haul Marley out of the pool. He gives up, heads for the house, opens the back door and peers inside.

JOHN
Hi.

The Realtor smiles awkwardly at him.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Can I see a set-up, please?

REALTOR
Certainly.
(looks at the baby)
First home?

JOHN
No, we live up in West Palm, over on Churchill?

REALTOR
Ooooh. Well, I think you'd find this neighborhood to be quite a pleasant change.

And now Marley bolts past him into the house, tracking wet footprints all over the floor, jumps up onto the REALTOR.

REALTOR (CONT'D)
Oh... my... hello...

JOHN
Hey, who's dog is <u>that</u>?

129 **INT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD - DAY** 129

John enters, carrying Patrick, supplies to fix the screen.

JOHN
Jenny?

A wet Marley bounds into the house, heads for the back. John follows.

130 **INT. BATHROOM - SAME** 130

Jenny is crouched on the floor when John appears in the doorway.

JOHN
Hey. You alright?

She stands up, smiles the best she can.

JENNY
I'm fine. Where you guys been?

JOHN
I wanna show you something.

JENNY
What?

JOHN
(hands her the set up)
A house.
(before she can react)
It's a little pricey, but I think we can do it.

JENNY
John, I know we've talked about it, but I'm not sure this is the right time.

JOHN
And when would the right time be, Jen? After one of us gets stabbed in the driveway?

JENNY
John--

JOHN
C'mon, honey, we're cramped in here. This was supposed to be our three-year house, remember?

JENNY
I know, but we can't afford to buy a new one.

JOHN
Sure, we can. With both our salaries--

JENNY
Yeah, about that... I don't think I'm gonna be able to keep working.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

130 CONTINUED: 130

JENNY (CONT'D)
(then)
I'm pregnant.

JOHN
What? Are you sure?

She steps away, revealing the counter where FOUR PREGNANCY TESTS are lined up, all with the same result: Positive.

JENNY
Very.

131 **INT. SUN-SENTINAL OFFICE - DAY** 131

John sits with Sebastian at his desk.

SEBASTIAN
Already? I mean, how old's the one you got?

JOHN
About eight months.

SEBASTIAN
Jesus. Haven't you heard of birth control?

JOHN
Yeah, well, sometimes it doesn't work. You know what else doesn't work? The one about how "A dog will stop your wife's biological clock."

SEBASTIAN
Hey, I'm not the one, keeps getting her pregnant.

John gives him a look, sees Arnie heading into his office, takes a breath and gets to his feet.

JOHN
Wish me luck.

SEBASTIAN
I'm sure he'll give you the raise.

JOHN
How do you know?

SEBASTIAN
He always gives <u>me</u> one.

John just shakes his head, starts for Arnie's office.

132 **INT. ARNIE'S OFFICE - DAY** 132

John sits across from Arnie.

ARNIE
Why should I do this, why are you worth it?

JOHN
Because I'm doing a good job?

ARNIE
Are you asking me?

JOHN
Well, since I took over, the column has doubled in readership...

ARNIE
So you <u>are</u> doing a good job.

JOHN
Yes, sir.

ARNIE
So why not make it permanent?

JOHN
You mean, like forever?

ARNIE
That's what the word "forever" means. Yes.
(then)
John, you know how many yo yo's in the other room would kill to have their own column? You took a piece of crap About Towner and turned it into something fresh.
(sits back)
I hate to break it to you, son, but you're a good columnist.

JOHN
I just had this idea about myself, you know, that I was a reporter.

ARNIE
Yeah, well sometimes life comes up with a better idea. Tell you what. You make it a daily column and I'll <u>double</u> your salary. How's that?

133 **EXT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD - DAY** 133

A MOVING VAN is parked out front. Marley runs back and forth as the MOVERS load up the truck, John and and a very pregnant Jenny supervising. John sees LISA, the girl next door, as she comes out of her house. She walks over to him.

JOHN
Hey, Lisa.

LISA
Hi.
(then)
You're leaving.

JOHN
Yeah.

LISA
Well, I don't blame you. I just thought I'd come over and say--

But Marley comes running over and she crouches down to greet him. She hugs him a while...

LISA (CONT'D)
I'm gonna miss you.

John watches as she holds on to him a bit longer, thanking him as well. John turns away, starts back for the van to give her a moment. She stands up.

LISA (CONT'D)
Where you moving to?

JOHN
Boca.

LISA
Huh.

JOHN
Huh... what?

LISA
Nothing. I just... never pictured, you know, a guy like you moving to Boca.

JOHN
A guy like me?

LISA
Yeah, you know, young, cool, whatever.

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED: 133

JOHN
So you think I'm young and cool. And you're not just saying that because I saved your life?

LISA
Actually, a paramedic named Josh saved my life.

JOHN
Right. Well, take care, Lisa. Oh, wait--

He reaches into a moving box, pulls out a chewed-up black Converse.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I believe this belongs to you.

LISA
Thanks. I'll have to chew up the other one to make it match.
(extends her hand)
Have fun down there.

JOHN
Yeah. It's gonna be great.

134 **EXT. BOCA RATON HOUSE - NIGHT** 134

Still beautiful, but now we hear the sound of a BABY WAILING OVER...

135 **INT. BOCA RATON HOUSE - NIGHT** 135

This is the elegant kitchen we saw, bare and uninhabited, several scenes ago. Now it's full of the clutter of the Grogans' life. The new baby, CONOR is screaming. We follow Jenny through the new house as she tries to soothe him.

JENNY
Shhh, honey. Come on.

John follows now...

JOHN
Is he wet?

JENNY
No. And I can't get a burp out of him. I think it's colic.

135 CONTINUED: 135

JOHN
Want me to drive him?

JENNY
We can't do that every night.

From the other room, we HEAR Patrick CRYING, "Mommy!"

JENNY (CONT'D)
Oh, Jesus.

JOHN
I'll do the washer.

136 **INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT** 136

John sitting on the washer with his WAILING BABY. Not fun. John looks to where Marley lies in the corner, watching.

JOHN
Any ideas?

137 **INT. KITCHEN - DAY** 137

John is opening the cupboards, getting cereal and yogurt into a bowl for Patrick. Jenny enters with a fussing Conor on her shoulder...

JENNY
Can you take him? I just need a minute to myself.

John takes the baby and instantly Conor starts crying louder.

JOHN
Happens every time.

JENNY
You just need to spend more time with him.

138 **INT. CONOR'S BEDROOM - DAY** 138

John puts Conor on the changing table, unbuttons his onesie, checks his diaper. It's wet; he starts changing him. Conor cries throughout. Jenny enters.

JENNY
It's okay, I'll do it.

138 CONTINUED: 138

JOHN
I'm doing it! It's fine! You tell me to spend more time with him, I do it, and then you take over because I'm not doing it right.

JENNY
I don't want you changing him when you're mad.

JOHN
I'm not mad!

He hears himself, lets her change the baby. She takes him, sits down with him in a rocking chair, tries to nurse him...

JENNY
Conor, come on... Conor, please...

She finally stops trying, rocks the chair, looks helplessly at John.

JENNY (CONT'D)
I don't know what's wrong with me. Mothers are supposed to be able to give their baby everything.

JOHN
He's just colicky, Jen. He'll grow out of it.

JENNY
Okay, here's an idea, you stay here and I'll go to work while he grows out of it.

He holds up his hands, what does he say to that. She looks up at him a moment.

JENNY (CONT'D)
I'm just tired, alright? Go on.

She then resumes trying to nurse the baby. He walks out of the room. She rocks back and forth, looks up with a dark expression as she hears his CAR START.

ARNIE (V.O.)
It's post partum depression...

139 **INT. SUN-SENTINAL OFFICE - DAY** 139

John sits on a stool in front of a portable SCREEN while a pretty female PHOTOGRAPHER adjusts her lights. Arnie sits nearby on a desk watching the portrait...

ARNIE
Her hormones are all on tilt and she's depressed. It happens. After my fourth kid was born, I'd wake up, find my wife just staring at me with a mallet in her hand. I thought she was gonna kill me in my sleep. I still do...
(then)
Did you get her the gift?

JOHN
Yeah.

ARNIE
Huh. That usually works.

Arnie gets off the desk, says to the Photographer:

ARNIE (CONT'D)
Alright, Janice, make him look pretty. The man's an official columnist now.

Arnie moves off and the photographer looks up from her camera and smiles at John. He smiles back. She keeps smiling... so does he... she finally indicates his hair...

PHOTOGRAPHER
You have a Barney sticker in your--

JOHN
Oh-- thanks.

He rakes his fingers through his hair, grabs the offending sticker, looks at her...

JOHN (CONT'D)
I must look like hell... I don't think I've had a full night sleep in two months.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Stress?

(CONTINUED)

139 CONTINUED: 139

JOHN
Kids. I got one with colic, and another, can't make it through the night without coming into my room every two hours.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Well, I think you're holding up great. You look cute.

JOHN
Really?

PHOTOGRAPHER
Yeah, like a cute, exhausted Dad. It's adorable.

John just nods stupidly, the dagger so deep in his heart, he'll never reach it. She smiles at him.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)
You certainly look a lot better than Jerry ever looked. I tried to get him to take a new picture, but he liked the one they took the day he started the column, nineteen years ago.

JOHN
Nineteen years, huh...

And just when he thought one dagger was brutal enough, his expression goes really pensive. And on that look, we see a FLASH as she takes his picture and go right to:

140 **EXT. BOCA RATON HOUSE - NIGHT** 140

John pulls into his driveway, turns off the car and just sits there.

141 **INT. JOHN'S CAR - SAME** 141

As John looks at the house... the windows all lit up. Inside Jenny moves about with the baby over her shoulder as Patrick chases Marley around the room. John sits in the car, unable to move, just watching the chaos in the window.

Marley jumps up against the glass, stands on his hind legs, paws to the window and looks out. He barks and now Jenny comes up behind him, hauls him off the window and now sees John sitting in the car. She gives him a look that says "What're you doing? Get in here!"

John quickly gets out of the car...

142 **INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT** 142

John and Jenny eat dinner in exhausted silence. Patrick throws his food on the floor where a happy Marley waits. Conor starts crying O.S. and Jenny gets up like a robot.

JOHN
I'll get him.

John leaves the room. Jenny sits there.

143 **INT. JOHN & JENNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT** 143

John and Jenny are in bed asleep. Patrick comes into their room.

PATRICK
Mommy?

Jenny wakes up on autopilot.

JENNY
Okay, honey, let's go back to bed.

She leads him out of the room. And a second later Conor starts crying. John lies there a moment, then gets up.

144 **INT. CONOR'S ROOM - NIGHT** 144

Through the doorway, Jenny, her back to us, gently bounces Conor on her shoulder. John moves into FRAME...

JOHN
Jen, you okay?

REVERSE - ON JENNY

She's crying, her back to John who's now in the b.g. A moment, then...

JENNY
I'm fine.

145 **INT. KITCHEN - MORNING** 145

John comes into the kitchen just as Jenny takes a chewed copy of "Good-night, Moon" from Marley's mouth...

JENNY
You ruined it! Bad dog!

She leaves the room and John looks at the dog.

(CONTINUED)

145 CONTINUED: 145

JOHN
You just had to eat the book? What, have you got some kind of death wish? I'm telling you, you better chill, or she'll kill you. Right after she kills me.

146 **EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY** 146

As Jenny loads up the back of the car with bags of groceries. Patrick, sitting in the cart, looks off and points--

PATRICK
Look!

Jenny turns and sees A BUS, with John's picture on the side, an advertisement for his column. She watches it pass.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
Daddy!

JENNY
Uh-huh. I see him.

And she goes back to loading the car.

147 **INT. BOCA RATON HOUSE - CONOR'S ROOM - DAY** 147

As Jenny gently sets a sleeping Conor in his crib. She quietly backs out of the room and shuts the door.

148 **INT. HALLWAY - SAME** 148

As she peers in on Patrick, also napping in his room.

149 **INT. JOHN & JENNY'S BEDROOM - DAY** 149

As Jenny comes in, Marley following and sits down heavily on the bed. She looks at Marley as he lays down beside the bed.

JENNY
Stay.

She now lays down and closes her eyes. A moment of peace.

And then, somewhere in the distance we hear a faint BEEP BEEP BEEP as some truck backs up. Marley lifts his head, perks up his ears and listens. Please don't bark, dog. Please don't bark. BEEP BEEP- And Marley BARKS, bolts out of the room...

Jenny opens her eyes with a start as Marley runs barking through the house, we hear something CRASH and break O.S.

149 CONTINUED: 149

And now Conor's crying.

150 **INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY** 150

As Marley jumps up against the window and peers out. Jenny comes into the room, sees a lamp on its side, a cushion torn open where Marley now stands. she grabs him by the collar--

JENNY
Why do you do this?! Why do you wreck everything! Why?!

She hauls her hand back to hit him, but hesitates, and just shoves him away from her and storms into the other room for Conor.

151 **EXT. BOCA RATON HOUSE - EVENING** 151

As John pulls up, gets out of his car. We hear Marley barking in the garage.

152 **INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING** 152

As John comes in, sees Jenny sitting there on the couch.

JOHN
Why's Marley out in the--

JENNY
I want that dog out of here.

JOHN
Okay. I'll take him out.

She looks up at him.

JENNY
I want you to get him out of here and keep him out of here.

JOHN
What'd he do--

JENNY
I mean it, John. I want him gone. I want him gone for good.

153 **INT. SUN-SENTINEL OFFICES - DAY** 153

A sad John posts a "DOG FOR SALE" sign. A CO-WORKER sees the sign and smiles.

(CONTINUED)

153 CONTINUED:

CO-WORKER
That the dog in your column? Obedience school? Necklace in the poop? Good luck.

John watches the guy walk off, scribbles a new sign and puts it up. This one reads "FREE DOG TO GOOD HOME." Sebastian comes up to John.

SEBASTIAN
You giving up the dog? I thought you loved that thing.

JOHN
Jenny wants him out.

SEBASTIAN
That's harsh, man.

JOHN
I don't know what else to do. She's really unhappy. Maybe the dog is just one too many things.

SEBASTIAN
They're all unhappy. Trust me. Well... who knows? Maybe you'll get lucky and nobody'll want him.

John just nods, thinks about that. Sebastian glances around, then takes John aside.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
Listen, there's something I gotta tell you.
(then)
I'm leaving the paper.

JOHN
What?

SEBASTIAN
I just gave Arnie my notice.

John looks over at Arnie's office, the door's closed.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
He's not too happy about it. He called me an ungrateful quizzling and threw a stapler at me.

JOHN
You going over to the Post?

(CONTINUED)

153 CONTINUED: (2) 153

SEBASTIAN
I'm going to New York.

Sebastian smiles. John doesn't move.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
The Gray Lady came courting last week.
(then)
I'm talking about the New York Times, buddy--

JOHN
I know who you're talking about.

SEBASTIAN
You don't seem happy for me.

JOHN
I am. I'm just in shock. I mean, I'm in Florida because of you. Woodward and Bernstein. Remember? That was the idea.

SEBASTIAN
Yeah, that was the idea before you decided to be the Andy Rooney of South Florida.

JOHN
I didn't *decide* to be anything--

SEBASTIAN
Exactly.

Boom. That hurts John. They stand there a moment, considering each other, then.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
Look, man, you're happy doing your thing and I'm not trying to piss on that. I mean it, you're good at it. I just wanted you to be the first to know. That's all.

154 **EXT. LORI'S HOUSE - DAY** 154

The house where John and Jenny bought Marley. Lori, the breeder, looks at Marley, sitting in the front seat, shakes her head sadly.

155

155 **EXT. PARK - DAY**

As John posts some more flyers around the park. He drops a flyer and Marley, walking beside him, starts to eat it...

JOHN
Smart boy.

156

156 **EXT. FARM - DAY**

"BROWARD COUNTY DOG RESCUE." A refuge for dogs. John fills out a form...

JOHN
Yeah, uh... Monday, then. Give us the weekend.

EMPLOYEE
Up to you.

John looks at the dogs in the back, all of them trying to get his attention.

157

157 **INT. SUN-SENTINAL OFFICE - DAY**

John is working at his desk when Arnie drops a few stacks of letters down.

ARNIE
These are all responses to the column you wrote last week.

John thinks a moment...

ARNIE (CONT'D)
One where you said you may have to give the dog away.

JOHN
(looks at the letters)
Oh. I assume they all want me to keep him.

ARNIE
No. They're all saying they'd take him.

Arnie moves on and John stares at the letters.

158

158 **EXT. BACKYARD - DUSK**

John walks around the yard picking up Marley's various toys, putting them into a box.

(CONTINUED)

158 CONTINUED:

Marley follows, jumping up, trying to get the toys back out of the box. John grabs a frisbee, looks at the dog.

JOHN
You can't lose any more of these, okay? Because they're not gonna keep getting you more, and I won't be there to look for them...

He looks at Marley standing there wagging his tail.

JOHN (CONT'D)
You're gonna be fine, alright. I'll just be different. Maybe it'll be better, nobody poking your eyes, yanking your tail. Who knows? Could be better.

159

159 **INT. KITCHEN - SAME**

Jenny's been watching. She stands there thoughtfully as John puts the frisbee in the box and resumes the hunt for the rest of Marley's stuff, the dog following him.

160

160 **INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Jenny's sitting on the bed waiting as John comes in.

JOHN
He's all packed up. Patrick will want to say good-bye, but Conor's too young to--

JENNY
You can't do this.

JOHN
What do you mean? Three days ago, you were pretty clear--

JENNY
I know, but you can't do it. I won't let you. You can't give away Marley.

JOHN
Okay, wait. I'm lost. You told me you didn't want him around. What's happened?

JENNY
The fact that you would have done something like that, for me, that you love me that much...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

160 CONTINUED:

JENNY (CONT'D)
well, that blows me away. And we're not doing this. It was wrong of me to ask.

He comes over and sits down beside her.

JOHN
Maybe not, maybe Marley is one thing too many.

JENNY
I got overwhelmed, John. I mean, no one tells you how hard it's gonna be.

JOHN
Which part?

JENNY
All of it. Marriage. Being a parent. It's the hardest thing in the world and no one prepares you for that. No one tells you how much you have to give up.
(then)
I gave up so much of what makes me <u>me</u>. But I'm not allowed to say that. People think you're a bad person if you say that. But it's how I feel sometimes, and I need you to know that.

JOHN
I'm sorry--

JENNY
It's not your fault. It's just something I have to figure out. But Marley going, that won't fix anything.

JOHN
(nods, then)
Okay.

JENNY
(beat)
Okay.

She kisses him on the cheek, then gets up and goes into the bathroom. He sits on the edge of the bed, staring down the hall...

HIS POV - MARLEY

At the end of the hall, panting, oblivious to how they've both just been spared.

161 **EXT. MIZNER PLAZA - DAY** 161

John and Jenny and Marley and the two boys stroll. Feels good to be out as a family again. Marley wants to greet all the Boca mini-dogs as they are being walked or carried by their owners. Jenny leans up against John.

JOHN
I made reservations at Sunny's.
Thought we could all sit outside.

JENNY
Sounds perfect.
(takes his arm)
Thank you.

162 **EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE - DAY** 162

They are seated at an outside table, shaded by a large round umbrella. John hooks Marley's leash to two of the table legs as a waiter brings drinks. Jenny holds up her beer.

JENNY
To a perfect day with my boys.

BEHIND THEM

A blonde Boca Trophy Wife, with a poodle on a jeweled leash, shrieks excitedly as she meets up with another woman, same type, with another small fluffy dog. The little dogs yip.

CAMERA BOOMS DOWN to underneath the table to Marley who has spotted the poodles and is now locked and loaded.

ON JOHN AND JENNY

As suddenly their table suddenly leaps away from them and starts moving down the sidewalk, crashing into other tables, banging into waiters with trays, making a terrible NOISE as it scrapes over the faux Italian paving stones.

The four Grogans sit facing each other across, their drinks suddenly in their laps.

Marley is pulling the table, like a dog with a sled, towards the now-terrified small dogs. He is chugging forward with every ounce of rippling muscle he has.

JENNY (CONT'D)
Marley!

John hurries after the dog; Jenny stays with the boys.

(CONTINUED)

162 CONTINUED:

As Marley-with-table approaches the small dogs, they break free of their leashes and run. Several innocent bystanders are knocked off their feet.

There's a florist kiosk in the center of the plaza; Marley-and-table take out most of the merchandise.

Security guards look around wildly. It's pandemonium, but Marley is in heaven. He makes a circuit of the entire plaza, one poor poodle runs for her life.

Finally, back where Marley started, the terrified toy poodle leaps into Jenny's arms. Marley tries to brake -

JOHN
Marley, no!

- and suddenly, he is jerked back. John has tackled the table Marley's dragging. Marley YELPS and lands on his back, then quickly rights himself, tail wagging, the happiest dog in the world.

Everyone surrounding them on the plaza has frozen silent. They all stare at Marley and the Grogans. The poodle jumps out of her arms and runs to its distraught owner. Jenny's head is in her hands, her shoulders heaving...

JOHN (CONT'D)
Jen, you okay?
(no answer)
Jenny?

And she slowly looks up, LAUGHING UNCONTROLLABLY, her whole body racking, tears in her eyes. Her LAUGHTER BECOMES--

--A BABY CRYING and we now go to...

163 **INT. DELIVERY ROOM - DAY** 163

As a NEWBORN BABY is placed on Jenny's chest...

JENNY
Boys, say hello to Colleen...

We PULL BACK TO REVEAL: Patrick, now six and Conor four, standing beside the bed with John. They all crowd around "mom" as the NURSE now takes a picture. On the FLASH, we...

164 **EXT. BOCA RATON HOUSE - DAY** 164

John and the boys plant flowers in front of the house while Marley, chained to a post, lies in the shade, head up like a Sphynx, the baby, Colleen in a portable bassinet beside him. Jenny comes outside with some sodas for the boys...

JENNY
John, telephone.

CONOR
Mom, look what we did!

165 **INT. BOCA RATON HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME** 165

As John comes inside and picks up the phone.

JOHN
Hello?

166 **EXT. BOCA RATON HOUSE - DAY** 166

As John comes back out of the house, looking stunned.

JENNY
Who was on the phone?

JOHN
Philadelphia Inquirer.

She looks at him.

JOHN (CONT'D)
They're offering me a job.
(then)
As a reporter. I guess the editor was down here on vacation, read my stuff.

JENNY
What'd you say?

JOHN
I said thank you very much, but I'm happy where I am. I mean, it's a big change, Florida to Pennsylvania.

JENNY
Yes, it is.

JOHN
Anyway.

John smiles at her, then goes to his sons...

(CONTINUED)

166 CONTINUED:

JOHN (CONT'D)
C'mon, guys, back to work...

She watches as he kneels down beside the boys, resumes digging alongside them.

167

167 **INT. ARNIE'S OFFICE - DAY**

John reads through a stack of letters...

JOHN
Well, that's part of the job. To get reader response.

ARNIE
You notice any recurring themes there?

JOHN
Yeah. We've got a lot of cranks in Broward County.

ARNIE
Yeah. Including <u>you</u> the last couple months.
(he flips through some)
"...if he doesn't like it here, he should move"... "more whining from your resident malcontent"... "is there anything good about Florida according to Mr. Grogan?"

JOHN
Arnie, I'm a commentator. We've got issues here. Over-crowding, crime, immigration tensions, runaway development -

ARNIE
Florida hasn't soured, John. You have.
(then)
What's wrong?

JOHN
I don't know. Maybe it's turning 40 next week, or maybe...

ARNIE
Maybe what?

JOHN
Maybe I'm sick of my column. I don't really think I'm all that interesting.

(CONTINUED)

167 CONTINUED: 167

ARNIE
Are you kidding? You're the comic voice of South Florida's middle class. You're a national treasure. Well, a regional treasure. Municipal treasure, for sure. You're just a little burned out. Why don't you take a couple weeks off? Consider it my birthday present.

168 **EXT. BOCA HOUSE - NIGHT** 168

John pulls into the driveway, gets out.

169 **INT. BOCA HOUSE - NIGHT** 169

John opens the door. He flicks on the lights and 100 people shout "Surprise!" There are banners hung from the ceiling, reading "HAPPY 40TH."

Jenny is standing there, holding Colleen. Conor, aged 5 and Patrick age 7 run to their father.

JENNY
Happy birthday, honey!

And he kisses Jenny. Hugs the kids. Jenny watches him as he shakes hands, hugs their friends, disoriented, distracted.

170 **INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT** 170

John comes in a closes the door. Marley's in here. He sits up, greets John. John pets the dog, takes a deep breath...

JOHN
Forty. Jesus Christ...

He looks at Marley a moment, then...

JOHN (CONT'D)
Hey, buddy, you and me are the same age.
(looks at Marley's face)
You got more grey hair than me, though...
(then)
Mind if I just hang here for a minute?

And sits on the floor, his back against the washing machine.

171 **INT. BOCA RATON HOUSE - LATER** 171

As Jenny brings in a cake with 40 candles on it. John tries not to be too taken aback by the blaze.

(CONTINUED)

171 CONTINUED: 171

JOHN
Okay, who wants to help me here? Kids? Marley, you too.

Jenny squats down with the cake, and John and his kids start to blow out the candles.

JOHN (CONT'D)
One, two -

And then Marley jumps the gun, takes a huge bite of the cake, lit candles and all.

JOHN (CONT'D)
- three.

172 **EXT. BOCA HOUSE - POOL - NIGHT** 172

The guests have gone. John sits in a lounge chair, holding out a fork so that Marley can lick the cake off of it. Most of the floating lights have gone out. Jenny comes out.

JENNY
Okay, tell the truth, were you really surprised?

JOHN
Yeah. Thanks, Jen.

She sits down on his lap...

JENNY
You want your present?

JOHN
Is it what you gave me last year? Because that was real nice--

She hands him an envelope.

JENNY
Happy Birthday.

He opens it, pulls out an AIRLINE TICKET.

JOHN
A plane ticket?

JENNY
To Philadelphia. So you can talk to the editor of the Inquirer.

172 CONTINUED:

JOHN
That was months ago--

JENNY
I called the editor last week. They'd still like to meet you.

JOHN
Jenny, I couldn't do that, uproot us. We've got our friends, the schools...

JENNY
First of all, you don't even have the job yet, it's just an interview. Second of all, you don't have that many friends.

JOHN
Thank you. What I was trying to say, is that our life is here.

JENNY
Baby, I got news for you, our life is wherever we are. And you're not happy here anymore, doing that column. You're restless, John. I feel it. I feel it when you read Sebastian's articles every day. And I feel it when you sit out in the driveway an extra five minutes before you come in.
(then)
Maybe it's time for a change.

JOHN
I'm forty, Jen. Seems kinda late for that.

JENNY
Not so late.

She stands up in the dark, lifts her dress over her head.

JOHN
What're you doing?

JENNY
We're not old, John. We can still surprise ourselves.

He sits there stunned as she now dives into the pool. She surfaces and smiles at him.

(CONTINUED)

172 CONTINUED: (2) 172

JENNY (CONT'D)
Hey. You want your other birthday present or not?

John can't get out of his clothes fast enough. He leaps into the pool and swims over to her, kisses her.

JENNY (CONT'D)
We're not old.

And then we hear ANOTHER splash.

JOHN
Uh-oh...

And a moment later Marley's head goes bobbing by.

173 **INT. SUN-SENTINAL OFFICE - DAY** 173

As John packs up his desk. Arnie sticks his head out of his office.

ARNIE
Hey, Gorgan.

John smiles to himself, walks over.

ARNIE (CONT'D)
I just wanted to say good luck up there.

JOHN
Thank you, sir.

ARNIE
Also, there's a good chance that every piece of advice I ever gave you, may in fact be total crap.

JOHN
I appreciate it just the same.

They stand there a moment, awkward. Then...

ARNIE
This would be where a mushier guy would tell you he's proud of you, give you a hug, and send you on your way.

JOHN
Really glad you're not that guy, sir.

Arnie nods, goes back into his office and shuts the door.

174 **INT. AIRPLANE - DAY (ON THE TARMAC)** 174

The Grogans are in the back of the plane.

JOHN
Look. There's Marley!

THROUGH THE WINDOW they can see Marley's crate arriving at the plane on a luggage truck. Marley is asleep, heavily drugged. Conor starts banging on the window.

CONOR
Hey, Marley! We're up here!

PATRICK
He can't hear you with the engine going.

JOHN
(aside to Jenny)
Not to mention the tranquilizers. I think he's already reached his cruising altitude.

175 **INT. PLANE - LATER** 175

The engines ROAR up and the stewardess begins her pre-flight safety demonstration. John watches her, smiling, relieved they made it this far, when he freezes.

A MUFFLED MOAN is coming from beneath his feet. Clearly it's Marley. Passengers near them frown.

PASSENGER
Is that a dog?

JOHN
Maybe, I don't know.

PATRICK
Marley's sad. Marley's our dog. He's with the suitcases.

John smiles weakly at the Passenger.

JOHN
What an imagination, huh?
(mouthing it:)
We don't have a dog.

He makes the crazy sign with his finger, gesturing at Patrick. The MOANING gets worse. John just smiles tightly.

176 **EXT. PENNSYLVANIA COUNTRY ROAD - DAY** 176

Fall foliage. Beautiful, picture-perfect countryside. The Grogan family car winds along the roads. Marley has his head out the window, tongue wagging...

177 **EXT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE - DAY** 177

A two-story country house, no neighbors visible. Trees, land, woodpile, the whole country living thing. The Grogans pile out of the car, look at the house. Marley takes off running...

JOHN
Marley!

Marley jumps into a pile of leaves, scatters them everywhere, rolls over onto his back and knocks over a rake, which falls and breaks a basement window.

JOHN (CONT'D)
And... we're home.

178 **INT. PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER - DAY** 178

As John is introduced to fellow staff and reporters, most of them at least ten years younger than he is. He's shown his desk. John sits down at his cubicle, stares out the window at the city. His EDITOR, black, John's age, approaches with a much younger REPORTER...

EDITOR
Hey, John. Settling in okay?

JOHN
I'm fine, thanks.

EDITOR
Good. I want you to meet Billy...

He indicates the twenty-something guy beside him. John and Billy shake hands.

EDITOR (CONT'D)
Billy's gonna show you the ropes.

BILLY
You're the Florida guy, right? The dog columns...

JOHN
Well, some of them were, but--

(CONTINUED)

178 CONTINUED: 178

BILLY
Cute stuff. C'mon, I'll show you around.

179 **EXT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY** 179

January. John wakes up. Marley is whimpering at him.

JOHN
What?

And then Conor and Patrick burst into the room.

PATRICK
It's here!

180 **EXT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE - DAY** 180

White everywhere. The family and Marley trudge into the snow, unused to their boots and snowsuits. Marley jumps around, barks like he's a puppy again.

181 **EXT. HILL - DAY** 181

The kids slide down the hill in a toboggan. John is at the bottom to catch them. Up at the house, Jenny calls...

JENNY
Okay, time for lunch!

JOHN
I'll bring this in. Go on up.

The kids and Marley head up to the house. John drags the toboggan up the hill. He pauses at the top and looks down at the toboggan run. He gets on the toboggan.

JENNY
Honey, what're you doing?

JOHN
I can't remember the last time I rode on a toboggan...

JENNY
Exactly.

He starts sliding down the hill. Marley runs for him as he builds up speed...

JOHN
Marley, no!

181 CONTINUED: 181

But Marley jumps onto John's lap as they get going...

ON THE TOBOGGAN

Flying down the hill. Marley is much heavier than the kids, and they sail past the place where the kids stopped, through the woods, barely missing trees and low-hanging branches, towards:

JENNY
John! The creek!

The toboggan bumps over the crest of a small hill and sails through the air, landing with a crash on the iced-over creek. John and Marley tumble into a snow bank on the opposite side.

A moment. But then Marley jumps up and wriggles in delight. John painfully unfolds himself, checks for injuries. Marley comes up and romps with him.

JOHN
Hey... wanna do it again?

JENNY
John!

182 **INT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE - NIGHT** 182

John shuts off all of the lights, heads upstairs. We follow him up the stairs. He stops near the top, peers through the bannister into...

183 **PATRICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT** 183

From the low angle of the stairs, Patrick lies on his side, sleeping. And then we see Marley's head rise and reveal itself as Marley lifts it to look at John standing there. He'd been laying there on the bed behind Patrick. He looks at John, knows he's not supposed to be there, but...

JOHN
That's alright, pal. I won't tell.
(then)
We kicked ass down that hill, didn't we?

John smiles at him and continues up to bed.

184 **EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - AFTERNOON** 184

Early Spring. The snow has melted. Marley, still as a statue, sits at the side of the road, waiting. Suddenly, he stands up and starts to wag his tail.

(CONTINUED)

184 CONTINUED: 184

A moment later, a yellow dot appears on the horizon. As it gets closer, Marley gets more and more excited as we now see that the dot is a SCHOOL BUS. It pulls to a stop beside Marley. Conor and Patrick get off and are greeted by Marley.

PATRICK
Hey, boy.

We HOLD WIDE ON THEIR BACKS as the boys start up the road towards home, Marley bounding between them, nipping at Patrick's backpack.

185 **EXT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE - DUSK** 185

John pulls up as the boys now throw a football back and forth while Marley leaps into the air, trying to intercept it. John gets out of the car, claps his hands, holds them up...

JOHN
Hit me, I'm open!

Patrick throws the ball to John who catches it, mocks stiff-arms his way to the front steps with the boys now hanging off him as he gives the play-by-play...

JOHN (CONT'D)
My God, look at Grogan-- two three-hundred pound linemen literally hanging off him, but he won't be denied!

And now Marley jumps on them.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Ohhh, out of nowhere, a brutal hit from the Strong Safety and the unthinkable happens... GROGAN GOES DOWN...

And he collapses with the boys at the foot of the steps, Marley all over them, licking whatever faces he can get. Colleen comes out the front door, stands at the top of the steps...

COLLEEN
Mommy says dinner and take off your shoes.

JOHN
Alright... c'mon guys...

They all get up, start up the steps. Marley follows, takes one step when his hind legs buckle. John looks back at him.

(CONTINUED)

185 CONTINUED: 185

JOHN (CONT'D)
You okay, boy? C'mon...

Marley tries the second step and again his legs give out. He looks up at them...

CONOR
What's wrong with him, Daddy?

PATRICK
(quickly)
Nothing's wrong. He's just tired. Right, Dad?

John sees the way Patrick is looking at him, knows he's protecting his little brother.

JOHN
That's right. Football just took it out of him. C'mon, let's give him a hand.

And now the three of them go to Marley, help him up the stairs.

186 **INT. PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER - EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY** 186

John sits across from the editor.

JOHN
Too much color.

EDITOR
Yeah, I mean, don't get me wrong, it's a good piece, but... you're reporting now, John. I want you to tell the story, I don't want you to be in the story--

JOHN
I'm pretty sure I don't mention myself--

EDITOR
The point is, I still <u>feel</u> you in there.

John sits there, thinking about that.

EDITOR (CONT'D)
All I'm saying is: less you, more facts.

187 **INT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE - NIGHT** 187

Marley snores on the floor while John, Jenny and the kids all watch a movie together. Suddenly, they all take a whiff, then wince at once...

CONOR
Marley!

They all begin waving their hands in front of their faces.

JENNY
I think someone needs to go out.

JOHN
(gets up)
Come on, boy...

Marley gets to his feet, follows John to the front door.

188 **EXT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE - NIGHT** 188

Rain falls as John opens the door and Marley trots outside.

189 **INT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE - SAME** 189

As John comes back into the room a moment...

JOHN
It's pouring out there...

He grabs his slicker and heads back out...

190 **EXT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE - SAME** 190

As John returns, steps outside, but Marley is nowhere to be seen. John, claps his hand and whistles...

JOHN
Marley!

Now Jenny appears in the front door.

JENNY
What's wrong?

JOHN
He's not coming.

JENNY
Marley!

John starts off into the dark...

(CONTINUED)

190 CONTINUED: 190

JOHN
He can't be too far...

191 **EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT** 191

As John trudges through the rain looking for the dog.

192 **EXT. BARNS - NIGHT** 192

Jenny looks in the barn, the garage...

193 **EXT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT** 193

John comes into the kitchen – without Marley. She looks at him with concern... he start out of the room.

JOHN
He'll show up.

194 **INT. UPSTAIRS - BOYS BEDROOM - NIGHT** 194

John is tucking the boys in.

JOHN
He's just out exploring. You know how much he likes the woods.

PATRICK
Bobby says dogs, when they're going to die, they go away to do it. That's what his beagle did.

JOHN
And that's true... for <u>beagles</u>. But not labs like Marley. He's just out there making trouble somewhere. Don't worry...

195 **INT. BEDROOM – NIGHT** 195

John's on the phone to neighbors...

JOHN
Okay. Well, if you see him... thanks.

He hangs up, goes to the window.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I'm gonna get in the car, maybe drive over to--
(he sees something)
Jenny.

196 **EXT. FRONT LAWN - NIGHT** 196

John and Jenny run to a tree at the edge of the property.

Marley lies on the ground, in a hollow, hidden from view from the hill above. His belly is swollen, his face drawn. It's clear he's very ill.

JOHN
It's okay, boy, it's okay...

197 **INT. VETERINARY TREATMENT ROOM - NIGHT** 197

John stands with DR. PLATT, a female vet. Marley lies on the floor in a dog bed, an IV is going into his paw.

DR. PLATT
He's on an IV for fluids and a sedative.

JOHN
So what happened?

DR. PLATT
His stomach twisted. He ate or drank something quickly, took in a lot of air and his stomach flipped. I got a tube down which let out some of the gas. I <u>think</u> I untwisted it.

JOHN
So he's okay...

DR. PLATT
For now. But once this happens, it almost always happens again. And if it does, there's not gonna be anything I can do. He's too old for that kind of surgery.

JOHN
What if it doesn't happen again?

DR. PLATT
More than likely, it will.

JOHN
But what if it doesn't?

DR. PLATT
I just think you should prepare yourself that he might not make it through the night.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

197 CONTINUED: 197

DR. PLATT (CONT'D)
(then)
Maybe one percent of dogs ever survive this--

JOHN
One percent? What's that number based on?

DR. PLATT
Mr. Grogan--

JOHN
I'll tell you what it's based on: regular dogs.
(getting worked up)
Lady, we are so far from "regular", you have no idea.
(indicates Marley)
My guy here... He once ate an entire answering machine, and digested it. Then went back and ate the phone for dessert. So don't give me numbers like "one percent," because you don't know him. But I do, and I'll see him in the morning.

We TRACK WITH JOHN as he storms out of the exam room, walks down the hall, goes through waiting room, then he PASSES US as he goes out into the dark parking lot, walks to his car and stops.

We stay BEHIND HIM as he leans with one hand on his car, and doesn't move.

198 **INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT** 198

Jenny's sitting at the table looking through a thick album when John comes in. She looks up at him expectantly.

JOHN
We're just gonna have to wait and see. If he makes it through the night, I think we'll be alright.

He notices the album.

JOHN (CONT'D)
What're you looking at?

JENNY
Your old columns. He's in a lot of 'em.

198 CONTINUED: 198

John rotates the album for a better look.

JOHN
You saved these?

JENNY
Every one.

He looks up at her.

JENNY (CONT'D)
Even on the crappiest day, when the boys were driving me nuts and the laundry wasn't done and a hundred other things were hard, I knew I had this.
(taps the book)
Five minutes of you. Sometimes they were funny and sometimes they were sad, or silly or whatever, but they were all you. And for those five minutes, you made me feel better.

She gets up, comes over to him, leans down and kisses his head. Then, as she starts out...

JENNY (CONT'D)
You should read them. They're pretty great.

199 **EXT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE - DAWN** 199

The sun just coming up. We hear A PHONE RING OVER.

200 **INT. KITCHEN - SAME** 200

As John, his head on the table, asleep, pops up at the sound of the ring and grabs the phone.

JOHN
Hello?
(listens, then)
Alright. Thank you.

He hangs up, sees Jenny now standing in the doorway, tying her robe, looking at him anxiously.

JOHN (CONT'D)
He's coming home.

201 **EXT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE – EVENING** 201

As John pulls up. He gets out of the SUV, walks around and opens the back window and now Marley sits up into view.

(CONTINUED)

201 CONTINUED: 201

COLLEEN (O.S.)
Marley's back!

John opens the tail gate just as the kids come rushing onto the porch, Marley's tail wagging as he's lifted out of the car and set on the ground, the kids now surrounding him...

202 **INT. SEBASTIAN'S APARTMENT - NEW YORK CITY - DAY** 202

Loft. Downtown. Full of unpacked boxes. A mattress on the floor. Expensive electronics sit atop their cartons. John follows Sebastian on a "tour."

JOHN
Nice place. How long you been here?

SEBASTIAN
Two years, little more.

Sebastian sees John looking at all of the unpacked boxes.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
I'm in and out of town so much I really haven't had a chance to settle in. I hired a decorator, but she and I got into a thing and it got messy--

JOHN
Right.

SEBASTIAN
Beer?

JOHN
I can't, I still got one more interview to do.

Sebastian opens the fridge revealing nothing but beer and a hunk of Parmesan.

SEBASTIAN
What's the piece again?

JOHN
U.N.

SEBASTIAN
Right, you told me that. So you're down in Philly now, huh?

JOHN
Just outside. More space for the kids.

202 CONTINUED: 202

SEBASTIAN
Whatta you got, five now?

JOHN
Three. Here's a picture of everybody....

John pulls a photo from his wallet, hands it to Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN
(nods)
Jenny's holding up.

JOHN
(ignores the callowness)
Yeah, she's great. And that's Colleen our youngest...

SEBASTIAN
What's with the ladybug get-up?

JOHN
(smiling at the memory)
Oh, yeah, that's a funny story. She had done this pageant at her preschool two weeks before, but she didn't wanna take off the costume, plus Marley went ballistic for the antenna which is why it looks like he's trying to eat her head.

SEBASTIAN
(flat)
Yeah, that <u>is</u> funny.
(returns the photo)
So I was thinking later on maybe Thai? There's this new place in the Meat Packing District. How's that sound? Be just like old times.

John stands there a moment, feeling the distance between them.

JOHN
Uh, well, actually I'm headed back home later today.

SEBASTIAN
Oh.

JOHN
In fact, I should probably get going...

(CONTINUED)

202 CONTINUED: (2) 202

SEBASTIAN
Alright.
(awkward Man-pat hug)
Good seeing you, man.

JOHN
For sure.

SEBASTIAN
(walking him out)
Oh, hey, be sure to check out the Delegates Lounge at the U.N... Great Mojitos, really hot interpreters.

JOHN
Thanks for the tip.

And John goes out the door. Sebastian takes out his blackberry, dials...

SEBASTIAN
Hey, it's Sea-bass. What're you up to tonight?
(then)
Oh. No, that's cool. Another time then.

He hangs up, stands there in the middle of his big, empty apartment a moment. He then dials another number.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
Hey, it's Sea-bass. What's going on?

203 **EXT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE - DAY** 203

As a cab pulls away and John carries his suitcase up onto the porch.

204 **INT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE - DAY** 204

John enters the house, sets down his suitcase.

JOHN
Hello? Anybody home?

He sees a note ("PICKING UP THE KIDS. J"), and peers into:

THE KITCHEN

Where Marley is up on his hind legs, eating something off the counter. John puts his keys down, but Marley doesn't react. John sneaks up behind him. Marley keeps eating the grilled cheese sandwich off the plate...

(CONTINUED)

204 CONTINUED: 204

JOHN (CONT'D)
Marley? Hey, boy.

Marley looks up briefly as if he heard something, but then returns to eating. John is right behind him. John reaches out and touches Marley, and Marley jumps, totally guilty. Then he turns and greets John.

JOHN (CONT'D)
What's the matter, boy? You didn't hear me? Huh?

He looks at the dog a moment, thoughtful, then...

JOHN (CONT'D)
Let's go for a walk.

205 **EXT. HILL - DAY** 205

As John walks Marley off leash up a hill. At one point, John has to stop and wait for Marley to catch up.

JOHN
Come on, boy, just a little further to the top...

Marley comes up, panting, eyes wet and happy. John looks at him, can see how tired he is.

JOHN (CONT'D)
You know what, this is a good spot right here.

John looks out at the valley below, settles down onto the damp earth beside Marley.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Let's just sit for a while.

The two of them sit there, looking out at the beautiful countryside below. John strokes Marley for a moment. Looks at the grey hair, the tired eyes that now look back at him.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Hey. So... you're gonna tell me, right? When it's time? Because I don't wanna make that decision on my own. So you just let me know when you're ready, okay?

Marley rests his chin on John's arm.

205 CONTINUED: 205

JOHN (CONT'D)
Okay.

206 **INT. UPPER HALLWAY - NIGHT** 206

Jenny is at the top of the stairs.

JENNY
Marley?
(turns to John)
Have you seen him?

JOHN
He's not up here.

207 **INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT** 207

John and Jenny find Marley lying peacefully in front of the a dying fire.

JOHN
I guess I could move his bed down here.

John sits down beside Marley.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Man. He's always slept with us. Now he can't even make it upstairs.

JENNY
He looks pretty comfortable to me.
(then)
I'll go get his bed.

JOHN
Hey Jen? Why don't you grab a blanket for me, too.

She nods, starts back up the stairs. John grabs a pillow from the couch and lays down beside Marley.

JOHN (CONT'D)
This is a good spot. I may never sleep upstairs again.

JENNY (O.S.)
Hey. Scooch over.

He looks up and see that Jenny's brought a blanket. She lies down with them. John puts his arm around them both. Marley's tail begins gently pounding the floor.

207 CONTINUED: 207

JENNY (CONT'D)
Just like old times.

THUMP. THUMP.

208 **INT. PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER - DAY** 208

John sits across from his editor.

JOHN
It'd be twice a week. Six hundred words.

EDITOR
And what's the subject?

JOHN
Everyday stuff. The stuff we all go through. But funnier.

EDITOR
I don't get it. I thought you came here to be a reporter.

JOHN
I did, but I think we both know that isn't me. I'm a columnist. A good one.

A SECRETARY sticks her head in the office...

SECRETARY
John-- your wife's on the phone. She says it's important...

JOHN
I'll be right there.
(to the editor)
Think about it.

209 **INT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE - DAY** 209

Jenny on the phone, looking out into the backyard.

JENNY
I can't get him back inside. He's lying out there in cold... and he won't move...

210 **EXT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE - DAY** 210

Late afternoon. John's car pulls up.

211 **INT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE – DINING ROOM - DAY** 211

Jenny and Patrick are sitting on the floor. Marley is lying on the dining room floor, breathing heavily.

JENNY
Patrick came home and we got him here. Dr. Platt said if he's comfortable, leave him here for a while and see. But he's no better.

John kneels down by Marley, who looks at him but doesn't wag his tail or lick his hand. He runs his hand over his coat - then over his stomach, the dog flinches.

JOHN
I'm taking him in.

The kids all come into the room, Colleen carrying a stuffed sheep.

COLLEEN
Is he sick again?

JOHN
Yeah, he is, honey. But I'm going to take him to the hospital and they'll try to make him better.

Conor bends down, nuzzles Marley's face.

CONOR
Get better, Mar.

COLLEEN
You can take Lamby, okay?
(she puts the stuffed animal next to him)
But don't chew her other ear off.

Patrick leans down, hugs Marley tightly and whispers right in his ear:

PATRICK
Goodbye.

When he looks up at his father, John can see that Patrick's crying, that he knows what the other two don't.

212 **EXT. VET'S - NIGHT** 212

John lifts Marley out of the car. Marley seems a little more alert.

(CONTINUED)

212 CONTINUED: 212

JOHN
You wanna walk?

He sets him down gingerly. Hesitantly, Marley walks over to the tree that countless dogs have peed on, sniffs it, then looks around. John looks around, too. It's a crisp spring night in Pennsylvania. Takes a breath...

JOHN (CONT'D)
Nice night, huh?

Marley looks around, then looks at John. There's something in his expression. John nods, knows what he's saying.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Okay, boy.
(as Marley moves close)
Okay.

John, his heart breaking, bends down to carry Marley up the front steps of the clinic.

213 **INT. VET WAITING ROOM - LATER** 213

John stands as Dr. Platt comes out...

DR. PLATT
I did everything that worked before. But no luck. There's still surgery, but he's--

JOHN
--not strong enough.

DR. PLATT
There's blood in his stomach. The lining might be compromised. I don't know what we'll find if we go in there anyway.

JOHN
Can you give me a minute? I need to... I need to call my wife.

214 **EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT** 214

John's on his cell phone...

JOHN
(into phone)
It's me. It's the stomach thing again. Nothing's working. They could do surgery, but...

215 **INT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE – KITCHEN - NIGHT** 215

Jenny listens to John on the phone.

JENNY
I know.

Jenny nods as tears come. They stay on the phone, quiet, just being with each other. Finally:

JENNY (CONT'D)
I love you, John.

216 **EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT** 216

JOHN
(into phone)
I love you.

217 **INT. EXAMINING ROOM – NIGHT** 217

John enters. Marley is on the table, zonked out. Dr. Platt has put a blanket on the cold metal table so Marley is warm.

DR. PLATT
I'll give you some time.

She goes. John stares down at Marley. Takes the stuffed lamb out of his pocket, places it under a paw. When John puts a hand on his flank, Marley's eyes flutter open. His tail THUMPS gently.

JOHN
Hey, buddy.

He pets Marley's head, runs his hands all over Marley's body. His coat, still shedding. His tail. He takes up each paw, each ear, remembering and memorizing at the same time. He leans down, puts his nose on Marley's neck and breathes him in. Then he goes around, squats down so he's on Marley's level. He looks into Marley's eyes.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Listen, you know all that stuff we always said about you? What a total pain you are? The world's worst dog? Well, don't you believe it. Don't believe it for a minute. You loved us, every day, no matter what. And that's a pretty amazing thing.
(he leans in)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

217 CONTINUED: 217

JOHN (CONT'D)
Look, I don't know where you're going from here, but you remember this: You're a great dog, Marley. You are a great dog.

218 **INT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT** 218

In the BEDROOM, Jenny sits on the bed, the phone in her hand, waiting, we BEGIN PULLING AWAY DOWN THE HALLWAY.

219 **INT. CLINIC - NIGHT** 219

Dr. Platt is in the room now. John, his hand on one of Marley's paws, kneels on the ground, looking at Marley, Marley lays on the table, looking right back at him.

DR. PLATT
He won't feel a thing. He'll just slip away. Are you ready?

JOHN
(looking at Marley)
We're ready.

Dr. Platt inserts the needle into the I.V. and presses the plunger.

220 **INT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE - NIGHT** 220

As a pajama-clad Patrick slips a tape into the VCR...

221 **INT. CLINIC - NIGHT** 221

As we now HOLD ON MARLEY'S EYES, slowly beginning to close.

222 **INT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT** 222

As Jenny sits vigil by the phone, we CONTINUE PULLING BACK.

223 **INT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE - NIGHT** 223

As Patrick sits alone in the dark living room, his face illuminated by the TV, as he watches SILENT IMAGES from Grogan family home videos:

TWO-YEAR-OLD PATRICK rides on Marley's back through the house at 345 Churchill, young Marley's tail knocking over everything within range, toddler and dog both joyous.

224 **INT. CLINIC - NIGHT** 224

As Marley's eyes finally close. The CAMERA drifts to John's hand, stroking Marley's side. Dr. Platt listens to Marley's heart and says:

DR. PLATT
He's gone.

FROM ABOVE, the dog on the table, the doctor discreetly going to the side, and John laying his head next to Marley and putting his arms around him as we now...

225 **EXT. PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE - DAY** 225

As the five Grogans walk across the property. Colleen sits on John's shoulders. They reach a clearing where we see a small grave has been dug. John sets Colleen down...

COLLEEN
He's wrapped in his blanket...

JOHN
So he'll be warm.

JENNY
You guys want to read your letters?

COLLEEN
Mine is a picture. Of me and Marley. And grasshoppers. And ice cream. Mommy wrote what I said. "Dear Marley. I will never forget you, forever." And those are kisses.

JOHN
It's beautiful, honey. He'll like it. Drop it in. Conor?

Conor reads his piece of paper.

CONOR
"Dear Marley. I loved you all my life. I hope you like heaven and that there's lots to chew on. Your brother, Conor Richard Grogan."

John puts his hand on Conor's shoulder as Conor drops in the letter into the grave.

JENNY
Patrick? Do you want to say anything?

(CONTINUED)

225 CONTINUED: 225

PATRICK
He knows.

JENNY
I'd like to give him something.

Jenny reaches behind her neck and unclasps the gold necklace John gave Jenny when she first got pregnant.

JENNY (CONT'D)
This little necklace has been on quite a journey.

John smiles at her, remembering. So much shared history.

JOHN
Your dad gave this to me to celebrate the beginning of our family. But you know what? Our family had already begun.

She looks into the grave, gently sets the necklace atop the blanket, lets her hand rest there a moment, then stands up.

JENNY
Good-bye, Clearance Puppy.

DISSOLVE TO:

226 **EXT. GRAVE SITE - LATER** 226

John puts few big stones on top of the tamped-down earth. He sits on his haunches beside the grave, looks up at the house across the yard. ...

JOHN'S POV - THE HOUSE

All lit up. We see the kids sitting by the fire while Jenny moves about the kitchen getting dinner ready.

John sits there watching them. Watching his family. The family that both he and Marley grew up in.

He gives the fresh dirt a final, loving pat and then, as the last bit of sun goes down, he stands up, and heads for home.

FADE OUT