

BEN
SIDE 1

SCENE 6

What are the sounds? Is it the neighborhood sounds, only processed? Or is it construction sounds because they are knocking down the house a few blocks over?

The lights come up. KENNY and BEN are sitting on the front steps of BEN's house. BEN has a light cast on his ankle and shin. It is afternoon. They are each drinking a beer, like a Budweiser. They are quiet for a couple of seconds.

start

KENNY Well, whatever new job I get they're gonna garnish the paychecks.

BEN Have you ever thought of sitting down with a credit specialist?

KENNY I thought I was sitting down with a credit specialist.

BEN And how much do those specialists usually cost? When you pay full price? *(silence for a moment)* I'm not asking for a lot of money. I just need to place some value on my time. Services cost money. If you offer something for free, it is seen as having less value. My book told me this.

KENNY How is twenty-five dollars going to make a difference to you right now?

BEN It's the principle. I've got to stick by my principles. (*they both take a sip of beer*) It's not a lot of money.

KENNY Let's see, we'll see. I've got a court case I'm waiting on in Arkansas. It's gonna save us, if it comes through.

BEN In Arkansas?

KENNY I slipped and fell in a supermarket a few years ago.

That's how I hurt my back. That's why I have to wear the weight-lifting belt. The belt that cost me my job.

BEN Right.

KENNY When I get that settlement, I'll give you your twenty-five dollars and you can give me more "advice."

BEN All right. (*a few seconds*) Are you supposed to be drinking that?

KENNY One is okay.

They sip.

KENNY So are you ready to start taking "real" clients?

BEN I better. I have one more month of severance pay.

KENNY One more month and you'll be just like me.

BEN I guess so, yeah.

KENNY Bruh-thaaaz. (*BEN and KENNY clink beer cans*)

KENNY How much you want to bet they're gonna call us any minute. Ah! There's snakes! There's roaches!

BEN I don't know that their cell phones work out there.

KENNY "Come out here! It's dark!" And you know what, we're not gonna go.

BEN Well—

KENNY No really, they're out there in nature, sitting in the

menstrual hut, eating crickets, whatever, that's what they want, and we have to honor that. We have to let the women be women.

BEN They better not come back wanting to burn that . . . that . . .

KENNY Sage stick.

BEN Yeah! I went to a wedding once where they did that. So weird.

KENNY That stuff stinks.

BEN Wearing feathers and a deerskin skirt. (*they both laugh*)

KENNY So whaddaya say, brothah? Boys' night out. There's Dan's Place and Déjà Vu and Temptations and Barely Legal.

BEN I don't know—really?

KENNY I've only been to Dan's Place and Déjà Vu. Déjà Vu is upscale, but Dan's Place is traaa-shel!

BEN I mean really, I should work.

KENNY Work? It's Saturday. Our wives are away—

BEN I know, but maybe—

KENNY We're just embracing our human nature, man—

BEN But Kenny, those clubs are expensive.

KENNY We're just relaxing after a hard week's work.

BEN The drinks alone are like nine bucks. And it's usually a three-drink minimum. It adds up, and then what?

KENNY Aw, man. Aw, man is that what this is about? You think it's irresponsible? For us to have a night out? For *me* to have a night out?

BEN No, I didn't say that. It's just . . . it's just one night . . . if we take a step back for a second—

KENNY Oh god, that fucking book!

BEN I have . . . I have a vision for my life, Kenny.

KENNY So do I, douche bag.

BEN Hey, hey, hey. This is coming out wrong. I mean I don't even know how . . . can we . . . can we just drink, please?

KENNY Hmph. (*both men take a sip*) You're a good man, Ben.

BEN I don't know.

KENNY No really, you are.

BEN In a parallel universe I'm a good man.

KENNY I'm an asshole.

BEN No you're not.

KENNY I'm like, "You too good for yellow mustard!?" right in the middle of the store.

BEN You're under a lot of stress.

KENNY I'm an asshole, and it's too late for me.

BEN *doesn't know what to say. The two men sip their beers.*

BEN I think this might be against the law.

KENNY What?

BEN Drinking beers in the front yard.

KENNY You own your house, right?

BEN Of course. Well, I mean the bank owns it—

KENNY Shit then, private property. You gotta hang on to that house, Ben.

BEN Of course.

KENNY Don't let anyone take it from you.

BEN No, no, we're fine. I mean we haven't even dipped into our savings and I don't think we'll have to. We're not . . . we're not anywhere near that yet.

KENNY Hang on to that house. That's what my grandfather always used to say to my dad.

BEN And did he hang on to it?

KENNY *doesn't say anything. It is obvious his dad did NOT hang on to the house.*

Silence. Sound of the suburbs. Kids in the distance on bikes. A plane overhead. The compressors for several central air-conditioning units. Hovering a little closer than usual, pressing in.

BEN *contemplates boys' night out.*

BEN I mean I've got this leg.

KENNY I bet it could get you a sympathy lap dance.

BEN I don't know.

KENNY I'll drive.

BEN It's just such a hassle to go anywhere.

KENNY We deserve it, Ben.

A few moments of silence, where they sit and watch and sip. Then BEN finishes his beer and crushes his can.

BEN All right, let's do it.

KENNY Serious!

BEN Yeah, you decide where we're going and you have to drive. Except I've been to Dan's too, and it really is too skankified, so not there.

KENNY You've been?

BEN Sure for an um bachelor party.

KENNY Yeah right.

BEN So maybe one rung up the ladder. (*he looks down the street*)

SHARON Of course it did! Things can happen. You can just do them. You have to just do them. If you don't, then the world just stays the same.

Music. MARY busts a chair on the cement patio. Music. Music. Is BEN going to be mad?

BEN Whoooooo—hoooooo!

Another mad round of dancing. On chairs, with each other. Nothing really sexual, just mad dancing. At some point BEN breaks another chair.

BEN I hate these fucking chairs! Who wants a chair that you can break with one hand?

MARY They were on clearance from Patio Depot.

BEN Fuck Patio Depot!

They cheer and dance. SHARON starts piling up the wood from the chairs. KENNY downs another beer. MARY starts a chant.

MARY I'm feeling, I'm feeling, I'm feeling . . .

(KENNY joins her)

KENNY and MARY I'm feeling I'm feeling I'm feeling I'm feeling.

KENNY Take it, Mary!

MARY I'm feeling electricity, electricity running through my arms and legs—

KENNY Yeah!

MARY It's in my blood, the electricity is in my blood!

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BEN SIDE 2

SHARON That's good!

KENNY I'm feeling, I'm feeling, I'm feeling—

MARY Yes, Kenny?

KENNY I'm feeling like my whole body is filled up with some kind of sweet air, strawberry air, and strawberry shortcake air—

MARY Whoool!

KENNY And it's making me feel like I can do fucking anything!

MARY Waaaaahhhhh!

KENNY Look at me!

BEN I'm feeling, I'm feeling . . . *(KENNY joins him)*

KENNY and BEN I'm feeling, I'm feeling, I'm feeling . . .

BEN I'm feeling like telling the truth!

KENNY Yeah!

MARY Tell it! Tell it! Tell it tell it tell it!

SHARON *breaks another chair and keeps piling wood.*

BEN Should I?

MARY Tell it baby tell it!

MARY and KENNY Tell it baby tell it!

SHARON We're here for you! We'll catch you! It's a truth fall, a trust fall!

Does SHARON get BEN to stand on a chair?

BEN I'm feeling it!

MARY Say it!

BEN *(still in party chant mode)* All right!

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I have no website! I said there ain't no website!
I have no website, I have no business cards, I have
no plan, I got nothing! Nothing nothing nothing!

KENNY Yeah-ah, yeah-ah, yeah-ah yeah-ah yeah-ah!

MARY What?

KENNY is *dancing around*.

BEN After seven whole weeks.

I've got nothing!

Nothing to show!

Nothing to show show show!

MARY What, did your computer crash or something?

BEN No. I just. I think I don't want to, Mary.

MARY You don't want to?

BEN I mean I've got a domain name. A domain name that I
own. On the Internet. But I don't think I want to run
a financial planning business.

end MARY Well, what do you want to do?

KENNY Ben's got nothing! Ben's got nothing!

SHARON *joins in. MARY and BEN are still, looking at each other.*

KENNY and SHARON Ben's got nothing! Ben's got nothing!

Ben's got nothing!

MARY No!

SHARON and KENNY Ben's got nothing!

MARY NOOO!

MARY *kind of runs at BEN, to hit him. SHARON and KENNY
catch her.*

SHARON No no no, Mary. It's a beautiful thing, Mary!
Do you know what just happened? Do you realize
what just happened? A beautiful thing has hap-
pened!

Ben just admitted he's at zero.

And guess what, Mary?

When you are at zero, anything can happen.

It's like total possibility.

BEN Yeah, Mary.

SHARON He's like a tennis player with his knees bent, poised
to jump in any direction.

It's a beautiful thing, Mary.

BEN Yeah, Mary.

MARY But what are we going to do?

A moment. Then SHARON.

SHARON We are going to start a fire.

BEN Huh?

KENNY Really?

SHARON Yeah, just like we used to do in Plano.

KENNY Yeah, but that was Texas.

SHARON Yes, but it's such a beautiful thing.

KENNY True dat.

SHARON It's a ritual, a healing ritual for Mary and Ben. Their
clearance patio furniture will go up into the air, like
a flower petal on the wind. And then you will be at
zero, together.

MARY Um.

SHARON *couple dances with MARY.*