

FLAKED

by

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EXT. ADO - MORNING

A long-lens shot (sun-flare streaked) of an eclectic bunch of people as they mill about in an alley and smoke cigarettes.

Off to the side, CHIP (early 40s, laid back, wise and cool) entertains KARA (mid 20s, surfer girl).

We arrive as Chip charms her with ad-lib dialogue (the whole show should feel very naturalistic) and whatever he says makes her giggle.

Then he leans in and whispers in her ear. She laughs again, and locks eyes, clearly smitten.

Then she backs off and blows a kiss good-bye...

THE COOLER (O.S.)

Hey, man.

Chip turns to see a red-haired individual in a white guayabera and green visor.

He rides up on his beach cruiser, a dog in the front basket and another following behind on a leash...

CHIP

Cooler, what are you doing up at this time? It's almost eleven.

THE COOLER

Yeah, I had to get down to the print store, and run off a hundred of these.

He hands Chip a hand-drawn flier for an open-mic night at the VENICE TOWNHOUSE.

Its main graphic is of a fat man bent over in the fart position... and the gas that comes out spells LAUGHING GAS.

CHIP

Still doing that, huh...?

THE COOLER

Now more than ever.

CHIP

So what, like twice a month?

THE COOLER

A lot of girls come to the show,
and you know what they say -- if
you can make a girl laugh, then you
can make her go to bed with you.

CHIP

Or, in your case, if you can make a
girl go to bed with you, then you
can make her laugh.

THE COOLER

So is that a "yes" for tomorrow
night...?

CHIP

Uh, yeah...

He sees TOPHER (28), a well-dressed man across the street,
take-away coffee in hand.

THE COOLER

Come on, I need you there to laugh.

CHIP

No, I'll be there, cooler. Sorry,
I just have to...

He goes to intercept Topher, and the cooler calls out --

THE COOLER

Oh, and I need to talk to you about
Dennis.

Chip half-turns to follow up on this, but then opts to catch
Topher as he chirps open a late model MASERATI.

CHIP

I thought that was you in back.
How you doing...?

TOPHER

Yeah, all good. I just been busy.
You know, out of town.

He climbs into the car, anxious to go. Chip holds the door.

CHIP

I saw you get out of there before
the end. Anything you want to talk
about...?

TOPHER

Uh, no. No, I just had to get --

CHIP

Coffee?

He nods to the take-away coffee and Topher smiles -- busted.

TOPHER

Yeah. That's the next addiction on my list.

CHIP

You just need to hang in there, and keep an eye on the balance. Don't want to end up all lifestyle and no life.

This really hits home for Topher...

TOPHER

No, I will.
(impressed)
Did you just come up with that?

CHIP

Oh, man. Stuff like that just comes out of my mouth all the time. I don't even know I'm doing it.
(a beat)
Seriously, though, if you need to reach out...

TOPHER

You have a cell phone now...?

CHIP

Well, no. I don't. But you know where to find me.
(a beat)
Sorry, that sounded kind of sinister --

TOPHER

A little bit. Plus I actually don't know where to find you.

CHIP

Yeah, you do. You know my shop...? That's me.

TOPHER

Oh, right. Yeah, yeah, you make...

CHIP

Stools. You passed it a million times.

(MORE)

CHIP (CONT'D)

It's deliberately understated. I can always find you... Sorry, that was even worse. I'll see you next time, yeah...?

TOPHER

(resigned)

Yeah, you will.

Chip closes the door, and Topher fires up the engine, and heads off up the street...

And passes a GRAY HONDA parked on the corner. Chip notices this and frowns in mild confusion...

A beat, then Chip feels a pair of dogs (PINOT and GILES) around his ankles --

CHIP

Hey, Dennis.

And then a moment later, DENNIS (early 40s, blond, even more Venice than Chip) steps into shot.

DENNIS

You good to go...?

TITLES OVER --

Close on a faded pair of Vans as they peddle lazily. In time to the music [FIREWATER/ DJANGO DJANGO], we JUMP CUT to --

A wider shot of Chip on his old beach cruiser as he cycles down Abbot Kinney (screen left to right). The light is like an endless magic hour of brilliant, hazy crimson and gold.

Another jump cut (in time to the music) sees Chip ride across old tram lines and signal "hello" to a local hipster.

Although he's more mature than the type of cool dude normally seen on this kind of bicycle, Chip obviously belongs here.

Another jump cut and we see Chip ride in front of GOLD'S GYM, then YAS, then the Gehry binoculars...

Each jump cut sees Chip on his beach cruiser, going L to R, through a different part of Venice --

Along the boardwalk, down Electric, over the canals, past a LIQUOR store, past the paddle-tennis courts, ADO, AXE, INTELLIGENTSIA, etc.

He greets or salutes all walks of life: hipsters, hoboes, tattoo freaks, surfers, stoned old hippies, restaurateurs, even lawyers.

Now and again, we'll see a girl (different each time) riding on his handlebars, on his lap, on his back, etc.

Music builds as Chip pulls up outside the alley right next to GJELINA TO GO, and greets the cooler and Dennis.

TITLE SEQUENCE ENDS and we already want to be Chip's friend.

EXT. ABBOT KINNEY - DAY

At first, Chip and Dennis are too far in the distance for us to make out...

DENNIS

So her name is London, and words just can't describe her, man. You ever get that feeling, like this is *the one*...?

CHIP

All the time.

DENNIS

Well, yeah. Me, too. But this is *the one*. She is so beautiful, and she's got the most amazing body.

CHIP

I love that look.

DENNIS

But it's this *je ne sais quoi* kind of artistic intelligence about her that... really pulls you in, man. It's like a tractor beam. You know what I mean...?

CHIP

She's smarter than you are.

They come into view, Dennis struggling to control his dogs.

DENNIS

You mean, like a genius...? No, that's not what I meant. It's like... if you looked in a mirror but on the other side there was this beautiful woman --

CHIP
Might be a window.

DENNIS
No, it's definitely a mirror,
because she is like my perfect
counterpart.

CHIP
But if she is exactly like you,
wouldn't that make her at least
fifteen years too old...?

DENNIS
Oh, no. She is young, but not like
young. Not like all the surfer
girls you get around here.

They cross the street.

CHIP
You know, Kara is more than just a
surfer girl --

DENNIS
Oh, dude. I know. That's not what
I was saying at all. I know she's
got depth. I think Kara's awesome.
And you know I think that too,
because... Why do you think I felt
so betrayed when you stole her from
me?

CHIP
Whoa. Stole her?! I didn't
"steal" her. It makes me sad to
even think that you think that I
did... And I thought you said you
were cool.

DENNIS
I am. I'm super-cool. And I'm
very glad that you and Kara are
serious --

CHIP
We are.

DENNIS (CONT'D)
-- because I know you like to
swoop in the minute you find
out I like someone.

CHIP (CONT'D)
See, when you use a word like
"swoop" it doesn't feel like you
are super-cool with it.

DENNIS
I don't mean it in a
pejorative sense.

CHIP (CONT'D)
I didn't swoop.

CHIP (CONT'D)
And it wasn't because you liked her
either. I liked her. I still do
like her. I just told you: we're
serious.

DENNIS
So then I don't have a problem.
I'm happy for you.

They stop outside a nameless store front: in the window,
nothing but a three-legged stool.

CHIP
Thank you.

He wants to let it go, but can't...

CHIP (CONT'D)
And, by the way, if it seems like I
swooped, then it's only because you
move at such a slow, almost
geological pace. You know, it's
kind of hard to tell the difference
between you when you're into
someone and you when you're doing
nothing.

DENNIS
I was not doing nothing. I was
clearly in the research phase.
Why'd you think I bought all that
surfboard wax...?

CHIP
I honestly still have no idea.

Chip finds his keys as a MOTORIZED SKATEBOARD whirs past.

MOTORIZED SKATEBOARD (O.S.)
What's up, guys?

CHIP & DENNIS
Hey, man.

This is automatic. They don't even turn around.

CHIP

Dennis, you know that if you did have a problem then I would back off in an instant.

DENNIS

I know, man, thank you. Although now it doesn't sound like you two are serious.

CHIP

No, we are. It's just... I'm also serious about us. It felt like I lost your trust back there for like a split-second, and I want you to know that what we have, this deep subatomic level connection, it's more important than some girl...

(off look, changes course)

... that I also have a deep subatomic level connection with.

DENNIS

No, I hear you. This friendship, it saves my life. Honestly, I value it so much that I would never... describe it in those pseudo-scientific terms you just did.

CHIP

And I appreciate that, thank you.

He unlocks the door.

DENNIS

I just really like London and I don't want it to turn into another Kara.

(a beat)

Or Elodie.

Chip opens the door and heads in.

CHIP

You mean that French girl...? I didn't know you liked her. Man, I took a bullet for you there...

INT. FURNITURE STORE - CONTINUOUS

Dennis comes in after Chip and lies down on the sofa, one of only a handful of items FOR SALE in the store.

[The others are: a standard lamp, a credenza, a pair of identical armchairs and a cigarette stand.]

CHIP

So: amazing body, *je ne sais quoi*, tractor beam... What other intel' do you have? I take it you ran a little background.

DENNIS

I haven't turned up much. Only that she works at Gjelina and she's looking for a place in the 4th and Rose area.

He digs a bunch of little strips of paper out of his pocket. Apartment-for-rent ads.

Chip takes a look...

CHIP

Wait, these say Washington Blvd.

DENNIS

I know, these are the apartments I don't want her to look at. I tore them off so she doesn't go too far south. I'm trying to herd her into the Abbot Kinney triangle. I actually think she'll like it better here.

CHIP

Sure. You know, you should just go up to her and say that.

DENNIS

And come across as a creep...? No.

CHIP

No, this is better.

Suddenly, the dogs explode into a fury of barks and snarls because a man in a suit (GRANGER) has just come in.

Dennis grabs hold of the leashes and fights to restrain the dogs as the poor man recoils in fear.

DENNIS

It's okay, man. They're very friendly.

CHIP
 (to Granger)
 You're getting that, right?

DENNIS
 (to the dogs)
 Sit! Heel! GILES!

He gets the dogs under a semblance of control.

GRANGER
 I'm sorry, I didn't realize anyone
 was going to be here.

CHIP
 No, no. I'm here. Most of the
 time. By about eleven. And
 afternoons. Come on in. I'm Chip,
 this is my store. And Dennis... a
 local herdsman.

GRANGER
 I just need to look around. I'll
 only be a minute.

CHIP
 Take your time.

Granger takes out an iPad. Chip turns back to Dennis and they exchange a look...

They look back as Granger looks around the store, but not really at the pieces of furniture.

He stops in front of the the stool in the window, and taps on his iPad...

CHIP (CONT'D)
 Yeah, I'm not sure you'll find that
 piece on the internet. It's kind
 of rare. It's called a Stühl.
 Runner-up in the 2006 So-Cal Design
 Awards.

GRANGER
 (totally disinterested)
 Uh, great.
 (a beat)
 It's not as big as I thought.

CHIP
 Well, then it wouldn't be a stool.
 It'd be more like a side-table.
 (MORE)

CHIP (CONT'D)
(almost to himself)
That's actually not a bad idea.

GRANGER
No, I mean this place.

He steps past Chip and starts to climb the ladder-stairs.

CHIP
Hey, bud, that's not actually part
of the store. That's just my
office.

GRANGER
Oh, right. So this is the
mezzanine.
(consults iPad)
How do I access the second floor
studio apartment?

CHIP
Oh, that's easy. You don't.

GRANGER
Well, I kinda have to if I'm gonna
do this appraisal today.

CHIP
What appraisal is that?

GRANGER
Of the building.

DENNIS
This building...?

GRANGER
Yeah.

CHIP
(a laugh)
Well, I don't know who it was asked
you to come down here, but there's
obviously been a mis --

GRANGER
Jerry.

CHIP
Jerry asked you to come down here?!

GRANGER
Right, and do an appraisal.

CHIP
Of this building?

GRANGER
Of this building.

CHIP
Today?

GRANGER
I'm sorry, am I not being clear--

DENNIS
(to Chip)
Jerry didn't mention this to you?

CHIP
(lying)
Well... I knew about the appraisal
plan. I just didn't expect Jerry
to get his shit together, you know,
so fast like that. And actually
put the appraisal plan into action.
I mean, that is... I'm impressed.
Yeah, good for you, Jerry.
(a beat)
Did he say why he was doing it?

GRANGER
Selling it, I guess. He didn't
tell you...?

CHIP
What is it with you guys? Of
course he told me. I wanted to
know if he told you.

GRANGER
No, he didn't.

CHIP
Thank you.

GRANGER
So I'm gonna need to see that
studio apartment.

CHIP
Yeah, man. You have a job to do.
What are you standing around here
for? It's up those stairs there,
at the back of the workshop.

He opens the door at the back of the store and points Granger in the right direction.

Chip calls out --

CHIP (CONT'D)
Jerry and I, we really appreciate
you coming all the way out here
today.

GRANGER (O.S.)
It's no problem. My office is two
blocks from here.

Chip comes back to Dennis (who is a little shell-shocked).

DENNIS
Jerry wants to sell the building?

CHIP
Oh, I doubt it.

DENNIS
Better find out.

CHIP
I guess so.

EXT. CHIP'S HOUSE - NOT LONG AFTER

A ramshackle craftsman's cottage. We hear sexual noises...

INT. CHIP'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Close on a school photograph of a plump eight-year-old kid, blond-haired and innocent.

On the bed, Chip and Kara (the surfer girl from the opening) engage in sexual intercourse.

Each time she looks up from her various positions and angles, she catches sight of a different picture on the walls --

They are all framed photographs of a fat eight-year-old boy in familiar poses --

Playing baseball, blowing out candles on a birthday cake, naked on a beach, etc.

INT. CHIP'S BEDROOM - NOT LONG AFTER

Chip dozes. Kara rests her head on his chest...

KARA

Is it not weird for you to make out in front of an eight-year-old Dennis...? I find it kind of distracting.

CHIP

You get used to it.

KARA

Seriously, you never thought to take the pictures down...?

CHIP

Yeah, sure. I thought about it. But it didn't feel right. I mean, this is his mom's house, and she loves her Dennis... That is, she did until he was, like, fourteen.

We look at the pictures again and see that they stop abruptly after Dennis becomes an adolescent.

KARA

What happened...?

CHIP

He started dating. She stopped. Depends who you talk to. All I know for sure is that it's complicated. And sad. I mean, she's real sick. He needs to make his peace now before it's too late.

Kara climbs out of bed and heads for the bathroom.

KARA

So do you want to grab a bite to eat, or...?

CHIP

Yeah, no. We could do that.

We hear the shower start up.

INT. CHIP'S KITCHEN - NOT LONG AFTER

Dennis sits on the couch and reads a thousand page book called THE LIFE OF FRIDA KAHLO.

Chip enters frame.

CHIP
Frida Kahlo...?

DENNIS
Uh, yeah. London's a big fan. You know, that girl I mentioned earlier.

CHIP
I didn't realize you'd spoken to her.
(a beat; off reaction)
Did you speak to her...?

DENNIS
Uh-huh.
(then)
Good question. I, uh, no. I mean, technically, she actually spoke to this dude on the next table but one to me, and I kind of interjected... Basically, she went to a costume party as Frida Kahlo and got her leg caught in, like, the spokes of a bike and hurt her leg.

CHIP
(nods)
Thus the research. I see that you're almost done there.

He gestures to the book that Dennis is all of ten pages into.

DENNIS
It's actually quite fascinating. And do you know what's ironic...? Is that the real Frida Kahlo in real life also hurt her leg in an accident. Impacted her whole life.

CHIP
Huh. I didn't know that. I mean, maybe I did know that... That was her? Of course it was, right. Hurt a limb.

DENNIS
Her leg.

CHIP

Yup. Screwed up her life. So it looks like you got all the ammo you need.

DENNIS

I don't know about that. I don't want to sound like the dude that's only read the first chapter of a thousand page biography.

CHIP

Of course.

(a beat)

You don't think this lays you open to accusations of avoidance, or a lack of courage...?

DENNIS

No, I don't.

(a beat)

So how did it go with Jerry...?

CHIP

I decided not to go. I don't want to put that thought in his head, you know, about selling the building.

DENNIS

Oh, I think it's already in there.

CHIP

Maybe you're right.

Kara comes out of the bedroom (as she puts on her top).
Dennis sits up, tense, a little awkward.

DENNIS

Oh, hey. Kara. I didn't know that was you in there.

KARA

No...? Who did you think it was?

DENNIS

I thought it was a recording. You know... He was watching something. No, I knew it was you. Maybe I didn't think it was him...? I actually didn't give it a lot of thought. Uh, to be honest, I only caught the last ten minutes.

Kara looks at Chip, unsure what to make of this.

CHIP

Okay, listen. I don't want it to be weird between us --

DENNIS

What are you talking about...?
It's not weird.

KARA

Chip told me that you liked me.

DENNIS

What?! That's...
(to Chip)
What did you do that for?

CHIP

I didn't. I mean, not exactly.
She'd already kind of picked up on it. I just put it into words.

KARA

It's totally not a problem for me.
I'm flattered.

CHIP

Right, yeah. Me too.

DENNIS

What are you flattered for?

CHIP

You know what I mean. It's not a problem for me either.

A beat, then Dennis' cell phone rings.

DENNIS

Well, it's definitely weird now.
(checks caller ID)
I have to take this.

He opens the door into the back yard and heads out. A beat, then Kara turns to Chip...

KARA

You're still good for tomorrow night, right...? It's my one year.

CHIP

Yeah, yeah. Your cake. I'll be there. Wait, that's tomorrow night...?

KARA

Yeah, is that a problem? You said you'd be there.

CHIP

No, no, I will be. I just... wanted to make absolutely sure. I'll definitely be there.

Dennis comes back in -- and it looks like bad news.

DENNIS

That was the hospital.

CHIP

Your mom...?

DENNIS

Yeah.

CHIP

Dennis, I'm sorry.

He embraces his friend. Solemn and heartfelt.

DENNIS

She's not dead. She verbally assaulted a male nurse.

CHIP

I know, man. But it felt like you needed this.

A beat, then he releases Dennis...

DENNIS

I have to go up there now.

CHIP

That's brutal.

DENNIS

She's kind of a trigger for me.

CHIP

I know. I'd love to come with, but I can't --

DENNIS

You have to go see Jerry.

CHIP

That's right.

KARA

I thought we were going to grab a bite to eat.

CHIP

That's right, I forgot where we landed on that. But this Jerry thing, it's super-important and I have to do it now, or... Sorry, I'll call you next week.

KARA

But tomorrow night, right...? It's my one year. My cake...?

CHIP

Of course. I'll see you tomorrow night, but the next time I'll call you is next week.

He heads out the door. Pinot and Giles leap out of nowhere and bark ferociously --

Chip jumps, keeps on going. Kara and Dennis are left alone.

DENNIS

Happy birthday, for tomorrow night.

KARA

Right, yeah, thank you.

DENNIS

I'll probably be there too.

(then)

As a friend.

KARA

As opposed to...?

DENNIS

Uh, enemy...? I don't know.

(flares up)

I can't believe he told you that!

EXT. ABBOT KINNEY - NOT LONG AFTER

Chip comes around the corner and passes the glazed front of a restaurant then suddenly leaps back --

Pressed against the glass is the "funny" face of the cooler, who beckons Chip inside.

Chip hesitates, looks up at the sign that says GJELINA...

He points to an imaginary watch on his wrist and signals that he's got to go, etc.

But the cooler insists.

Chip looks up and down the street to check the coast is clear then reluctantly enters.

INT. GJELINA - CONTINUOUS

Head down, Chip slips into a chair -- his back to the room. The cooler doesn't pick up on his behavior...

THE COOLER

Oh, man. Have you seen the new girl they got in here?

CHIP

Uh, no. I haven't.

THE COOLER

London, her name is. Not working today though. Been here a couple of hours and I haven't spotted her.

News that London isn't here means Chip can relax.

THE COOLER (CONT'D)

I tell you, she is my idea of the perfect wife. We would be so happy together for like fifteen years.

CHIP

What are you talking about, fifteen years?

THE COOLER

Oh, it wouldn't last longer than that.

CHIP

So even your fantasy of a perfect wife ends in divorce...?

THE COOLER

Oh, yeah. But it would be real amicable.

CHIP

So, this morning, you said you needed to talk to me about Dennis?

THE COOLER

Yeah, man. He is out of control. He is a menace to society.

CHIP

This is in reference to...?

THE COOLER

He didn't tell you? I'm not surprised. He killed again.

CHIP

Who, Dennis...?

THE COOLER

Pinot.

CHIP

His dog? Wait, I thought Giles was the killer.

THE COOLER

No, Giles is the docile one. Unless Pinot loses it, in which case they both become homicidal.

CHIP

Wait, homicidal? You mean Pinot killed a person.

THE COOLER

No, a squirrel.

CHIP

A squirrel...?

He clearly doesn't think this is a big deal.

THE COOLER

Yeah, man. He went nuts in the dog park and just... got it in its jaws and rag-dolled it to death. And the time before that it was a cat.

CHIP

But he didn't kill the cat.

THE COOLER

Scared it half to death though.
Escalation, man. It's like when a
peeper turns into a flasher turns
into a groper turns into a...
What's the next one...?

CHIP

I don't know, a stand-up...?

Hold on the cooler as it looks as though he's taken offence,
but then...

THE COOLER

You know, that's actually kind of
funny. I could use that in my act.

CHIP

Yeah, you know what else you could
use in your act...? An act.

THE COOLER

I wouldn't be able to say the dog
killed the squirrel though. Not
sure audiences will like that. But
then again it did happen, and
nothing's funnier than the truth.

CHIP

Well, yes, but only if the truth is
funny.

WAITRESS (O.S.)

Can I get you boys anything else?

The cooler looks up and freezes, a dumb smile on his face.
Chip turns and sees --

LONDON (26): she is everything Dennis said she was, and more.
Chip stalls.

But then London clocks Chip and starts, surprised, but also
frightened...

She forgets the tray in her hands and it tips -- and a couple
of plates fall off.

They clatter to the floor and we see that her foot is in a
lightweight cast.

For a long second Chip and London lock eyes --

It's not flirtation or recognition but it is definitely a
strange kind of connection.

They snap out of it, and she stoops to clear up the debris.

LONDON

Oh my god, I don't know what happened there.

THE COOLER

Didn't land on your foot, did it?

LONDON

(flustered)
No, I'm fine.

THE COOLER

She hurt her leg at a costume party.

(to London)

That was a fun night, huh...?

LONDON

Not for me.

THE COOLER

Oh, yeah. Right! Because you hurt...

(he laughs)

What was the name of that girl you went as -- the big eyebrows?

LONDON

Frida Kahlo.

She stands, and takes a quick look at Chip then turns to go. He sort of mutters...

CHIP

That's ironic.

THE COOLER

What is...?

London turns back, interested. Chip is caught in the headlights, not sure what to say...

CHIP

Well, that she went to a costume party as Frida Kahlo and hurt her leg in an accident... just like the real Frida Kahlo in real life.

A beat, then London heads back to the kitchen and almost collides into another waitress.

The cooler looks from this back to Chip -- stunned and obviously impressed.

THE COOLER

Whoa. What the hell just happened there?

CHIP

Nothing. What do you mean?

THE COOLER

Nothing?! No, bro. That was something. Do you know her?!

CHIP

No, I've never seen her before.

THE COOLER

Well, you two connected.

CHIP

We did not.

THE COOLER

Chip, she got like an electric shock when she saw you. And then she dropped all those plates. And then you said that ironic line that I didn't understand.

He makes the sound of an explosion. Chip stands, suddenly anxious to get out of there.

CHIP

Cooler, she just dropped a plate. Don't read too much into it. I have to go.

He can't help but scan the restaurant for London -- and he sees her!

THE COOLER

You have to talk to Dennis.

CHIP

(snaps)

Nothing happened! I didn't even say anything to her.

A beat, then...

THE COOLER

About the dog, man. You have to talk to Dennis about the dog.

CHIP
Right, yeah. Sorry, I will.

THE COOLER
(penny drops)
Oh, wait. So does Dennis like her too...? Man, tell me this is not going to be another Kara or Elodie. Or what was the name of that Ecuadorian...?

CHIP
(realizing)
Is that why he was learning that flute thing...?

He shakes his head and exits.

INT. BASEMENT - NOT LONG AFTER

Close on Chip as he leans against the wall at the back and looks kind of troubled...

MAN (O.S.)
... always another bar to close,
always another party to gatecrash,
always another excuse not to do
what I needed to do...

INT. STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Chip runs up the fire stairs and pushes open the door --

EXT. BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Chip comes out and takes in a deep breath. He looks around but no-one's there...

EXT. WALK STREET - NIGHT

We look through a windshield (from inside a car) as Chip rides out of a walk street, crosses the road in front of us, and then heads down another walk street --

A siren is put on and we inch forward...

Chip, a little way down the walk street, reacts to the siren and stops his beach cruiser. He turns to see a police patrol car roll into shot (at the mouth of the walk street).

A spotlight shines in his face, and he holds up his hand to shield his eyes. He mutters...

CHIP

Come on, man.

We can't make out the police officer just yet as he stays in the car. He talks through a megaphone.

POLICE OFFICER

Please step out of the vehicle.

CHIP

Uh, I can't really... I can step off it...?

He does so.

POLICE OFFICER

Step away from the vehicle.

(Chip obeys)

All right, now turn around, that's it. Stop. On the ground.

CHIP

What...?

POLICE OFFICER

On all fours, now. And raise that ass in the air, invitingly.

He kills the spot and climbs out of the car.

CHIP

You know, George. You might want to check. I'm not sure the Miranda rights go like that.

GEORGE (the police officer) approaches: 50s, tough and overweight, the kind of cop BRIAN DENNEHY was invented for.

GEORGE

You must be sweating this Jerry stuff, huh? And by sweating I mean fully avoiding it.

CHIP

Wow, so it's true what they say. There are no secrets in Venice.

GEORGE

It's a policeman's dream. Everybody talks.

CHIP

I'll have you know that I was heading there now.

GEORGE

Uh-huh.

CHIP

Give me a break, man.

GEORGE

I'll do better than that, I'll give you a ride.

CHIP

I'm good on my bike.

GEORGE

Actually, you're not. You don't have a light.

CHIP

So you're gonna what...? Arrest me?

GEORGE

Just get in, dude.

INT. PATROL CAR - MOVING - NOT LONG AFTER

George drives. Chip sits in the back (behind the grill).

GEORGE

I get it, Chip. I do. I mean, you been in that store since day one, am I right...? Jerry, he really helped you out, after the accident, after you and his daughter... separated. That place is where you put yourself back together. It's where you got sober. And I bet you feel pissed, huh...? Betrayed. That he's selling up.

CHIP

If that is what he's doing.

George lets this go.

GEORGE

I bet you feel scared too. I mean, you'll have to get a job and everything.

(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

How do you think packing bags at Whole Foods is going to sit with the image...?

CHIP

(defensive)

I could get a job. I have skills.

GEORGE

I got another take on this.

(a beat)

Want to hear it?

CHIP

I guess.

GEORGE

This is a good thing. That place, it's the last link to the past for you, and it's time you got out of there. That's the old life, the one you need to leave behind. You know, it's time you told the world, fuck that. I look forwards now.

Right on cue, Chip sees the GRAY HONDA from before in the rearview mirror...

INT. PATROL CAR - NOT LONG AFTER

George pulls up in front of a run-down crafastman's cottage. A rusted sculpture of a chameleon stands in the unkempt front yard and a ton of wind-chimes hang on the porch...

CHIP

I can't do this.

GEORGE

Come on, man. It's never as bad as you think it's gonna be.

CHIP

No, I mean I can't do this -- open the door.

GEORGE

Oh, right, yeah. I have to let you out.

EXT. PATROL CAR - MOMENTS LATER

George opens the door for Chip to climb out and then George takes the beach cruiser out of the trunk...

GEORGE
Just don't listen to his bullshit.
Jerry wrote the book on bullshit.

CHIP
At least, he says he did.

He's distracted. He can see the GRAY HONDA up the street...

GEORGE
You got a problem...?

CHIP
Uh, no. That is, I don't think so.
It's just I think I've seen that
car before.

GEORGE
You mean the Honda...?

CHIP
Yeah. Have you noticed it...?

GEORGE
Have I noticed a silver Honda
sedan...? Sort of mid-size...? No
distinguishing features...? No, I
haven't. I obviously haven't been
paying enough attention. But if
you want, I can run the license
plates for you.

CHIP
Yeah...?

GEORGE
No. Come on, get and do it.

He eases Chip in the direction of the front door, then climbs back into his patrol car.

Chip reaches the front door then turns back to George who makes a "you can do this" gesture and then heads off...

Chip waits for the patrol car to roll out of sight, then takes a deep breath and rings the doorbell.

Wind-chimes are heard within...

INT. JERRY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

We hear (but do not see) an old stoner (JERRY) shuffle to the door and then open it...

No-one is there. Chip is long gone.

EXT. ELECTRIC AVENUE - THE NEXT DAY

Chip coasts on his beach cruiser, Dennis on his longboard. They have paddle tennis bats.

CHIP

How did it go at the hospital...?

DENNIS

Not good.

CHIP

Did you talk to her...?

DENNIS

Not the right time.

CHIP

Dennis, come on. You can wait a lifetime for the right time.

DENNIS

No, but this really wasn't it. She'd been sedated and strapped down and she was really very adamant that she had invented the pyramids.

CHIP

You felt like you might not get through to her, huh...?

DENNIS

Yeah, I did.

CHIP

Still good to talk to her, though. And just get it out there into the ether. Trust me, I've been there, and it helps.

DENNIS

No, that sounds awesome. What did he say...?

CHIP

Who?

DENNIS

Jerry.

(off look)

When you said "trust me, I've been there" I assumed you were talking about Jerry.

CHIP

Oh, no. I mean, I have been there. Yesterday, in fact, at his house. And I rang on his doorbell, and I waited on his porch. It's like... he's Osama Bin Laden or something.

DENNIS

Uh-huh. But they did find Osama Bin Laden.

CHIP

I guess.

DENNIS

No, they did. And they killed him.

CHIP

Yeah, and that gives me hope.

They laugh at this.

DENNIS

Zero Dark Thirty.

They laugh again -- a private in-joke just between friends. Several paces later...

Dennis turns right, and Chip makes to go left.

CHIP

What are you doing...? It's this way to paddle.

DENNIS

I just want to see if London's working today.

CHIP

Okay, I'll see you down there.

DENNIS

No, you need to come with.

CHIP

I do...?

DENNIS

Yeah, to feed me the Frida Kahlo line.

CHIP

Oh, right. You're doing that...

DENNIS

You don't think it's a good idea?

CHIP

She's probably heard it before.

DENNIS

What, the leg...?

CHIP

It's kind of lame.

DENNIS

Yeah, maybe you're right.

They come to Gjelina and Dennis peers through the window...

CHIP

You know, Dennis, I'm surprised you don't know the work schedule of all the girls at Gjelina.

DENNIS

What kind of a creep do you take me for...? If I want to know who's working, I just peer through the window like everybody else.

Chip looks in too -- for a like a second.

CHIP

No, doesn't look like she's there.

DENNIS

Give it a minute, man. You have to see her.

CHIP

Actually, I probably have. I mean, if she works at Gjelina. I come here all the time.

DENNIS

But she's only been here the last three days.

CHIP

Oh, right. So then maybe I haven't seen her.

Dennis turns back to the window and looks again for London...

DENNIS

It looks like she's not in today.

CHIP

That's too bad. Come on, let's go.

He turns to go, desperate to get out of there, but walks right into --

THE COOLER

Freeze...

He points a staple-gun at Chip like it's a real gun.

THE COOLER (CONT'D)

Or I'll fill you so full of tiny holes, you'll think you're a...

He searches in vain for a *bon mot*...

CHIP

Anything...?

THE COOLER

No, sorry.

(lowers staple-gun)

See, I'm not good when I try to be funny.

DENNIS

Like on stage, you mean...?

THE COOLER

All my best jokes happen by mistake.

This makes Chip and Dennis laugh.

CHIP

I think that was one right there.

THE COOLER

So what are you girls doing,
peering through the window to see
if London's working...?

DENNIS

No.

Chip tries to signal to the cooler that Dennis doesn't want
to talk about this.

THE COOLER

Why don't you just go in...?

DENNIS

(to Chip)

What do you think...?

CHIP

We have to play paddle, remember.
And it's going to be hard to make a
good impression if cooler's there.

(to the cooler)

No offence.

DENNIS

Yeah, you might be right.

CHIP

I am. Come on, let's go.

(to the cooler)

I'll see you later, cooler.

He leads Dennis off and we track the pair as they walk down
the street...

Chip lets out a sigh of relief just as the cooler rides into
frame on his beach cruiser --

THE COOLER

So did Chip tell you he saw London
yesterday...?

DENNIS

What?!

(to Chip)

You saw London?

CHIP

Did I...?

THE COOLER

Yeah, man. Yesterday.

CHIP
 (to the cooler)
That was London?!

DENNIS
 You didn't tell me you went to
 Gjelina.

CHIP
 I didn't. Not to see London.
 Really?! That was the girl you
 told me about...?

THE COOLER
 He like gave her this electric
 shock --

CHIP
 Cooler, please.
 (to Dennis)
 I didn't even talk to her, if that
 was her, which I don't think it
 was, because --

LONDON (O.S.)
 Hello, again.

They all stop and stare at London for a beat (and the cooler
 keeps on staring for a long time)...

DENNIS
 Yes, hello, again.

London looks confused. Dennis explains --

DENNIS (CONT'D)
 I was at the next table but one...
 We, you talked about Frida Kahlo.
 (to Chip)
 This is London.
 (to London)
 That's right, isn't it...? London.

She nods.

CHIP
 Yeah, no. I think we did meet.
 Was it yesterday afternoon...?

LONDON
 It was.

CHIP
 This is Dennis.

Dennis opens his mouth in horror. Did he just introduce me?!
Finally, the cooler snaps out of his trance --

THE COOLER

And you know me.

He hands her a LAUGHING GAS flier, and she looks confused.

LONDON

No, I don't. What's this?

DENNIS

(takes it from her)

It's nothing. Important. He's
nothing. Important. I see the
leg's better.

LONDON

Yes, it is, thank you.

CHIP

Well, it was nice to see you again.

(to Dennis)

Come on, man.

He tugs at Dennis but he resists, and says to London...

DENNIS

Kind of ironic though.

LONDON

Yeah...?

A little confused, she looks to Chip, but he can't watch...

DENNIS

I mean, going to a costume party as
Frida Kahlo...

LONDON

Uh-huh, and then I hurt my leg in
an accident.

DENNIS

Yeah.

London smiles, not sure if this is a game they are playing or
she is playing...

LONDON

So what, did you two boys read the
same book on Frida Kahlo...?

A beat as Dennis figures out what's going on...

DENNIS

Oh, no. I actually read it. It was me who told Chip --

CHIP

Reminded me, actually.

It's suddenly tense, and London feels this.

LONDON

Right, well. Have a good game.

She motions to the paddle tennis bats, then off she goes. Dennis turns to Chip and looks monumentally pissed.

Words to describe his sense of anger and betrayal fail to materialize...

THE COOLER

I think she likes me.

EXT. PADDLE TENNIS COURTS - THE NEXT DAY

Close on Dennis as he hits the shit out of a couple of shots, obviously still furious after last night.

On the other side of the net, Chip takes evasive action as the balls rocket past.

And the odd one sails high over the chain-link fence...

It's hot -- no surprise there -- and they work up a sweat as the battle intensifies.

Finally, they collapse in a heap against the chain-link fence and take glugs out of bottled water.

They catch their breath and stare out at the water as the sun streaks through the marine layer creating an almost dream like light...

CHIP

(states obvious)

Still pissed at me, huh...?

(off look)

I don't blame you. I'm still pissed at me too. That was out of line. I don't know what I was doing.

(MORE)

CHIP (CONT'D)

I went in there to see cooler, and then I turned around and she was there, and then I heard this voice, and it said "that's ironic" and then I was like, I recognize that voice, that's mine. And then I had to explain what I meant and... it was just awful, man. I'm glad you weren't there to see it. You know, she was exactly as you described her -- amazing body, *je ne sais quoi*, tractor beam... It just pulled me in, man.

DENNIS

So you do like her?!

CHIP

No, man! Haven't you listened to a word I've said?!

DENNIS

It sounded like you like her.

CHIP

I don't.

(a beat)

Unless you don't either in which case I'd like to know the statute of limitations --

Dennis hits a ball hard at Chip and it ricochets over the chain-link fence.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Ow! That was a joke!

DENNIS

You owe me an apology.

CHIP

What did you think that was...?!
You owe me four weeks!

DENNIS

How's that?

CHIP

How long it would have taken you to read that book and then find the right moment to talk to her and casually drop in the line about Frida Kahlo. I introduced you, man.

DENNIS

Right! You introduced me. So what does that make me, second prize?!

CHIP

No, that makes you the guy... who knows me.

Dennis pounds another ball into Chip --

CHIP (CONT'D)

Argh! That makes you a month ahead of schedule! Who knows what might have happened in that time? Cooler might have gotten in there... Okay, not cooler, that weakens the argument, but you take the point.

DENNIS

The point is, you made me look ridiculous.

CHIP

I know, man. You're right. And I'm sorry.

(a beat)

It was definitely you though who she said "hello again" to.

DENNIS

Yeah...?

CHIP

Dude.

DENNIS

I thought that too, but there was a lot going on. I couldn't be sure.

(a beat)

You're definitely not into her?

CHIP

No. I'm into Kara. Remember.

DENNIS

Are you ready to go again...?

Chip smiles -- friends again -- and heads for the other side of the net to start a new set.

CHIP

So do you want to come see the cooler tonight...? I said I'd go.

DENNIS

Is that before or after you give Kara her cake...?

CHIP

Uh, after, I guess.

DENNIS

Because that's a big deal for her, you know that. I mean, you remember what that's like, the one year anniversary, when you're still kind of fragile, and vulnerable. That's when you need to be able to rely on --

CHIP

Dennis, I said I'd be there. And I will be. All right...?

A moment of tension, then...

DENNIS

Sorry, man. It's none of my business.

CHIP

No, you're right. It's all this Jerry stuff, it's got me turned upside-down.

DENNIS

You still haven't done that yet?

CHIP

I was just going.

He wasn't. He was actually just about to serve, but he does now head off the court...

EXT. JERRY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Chip leans his beach cruiser against a rusted sculpture, then walks up the steps to the porch.

He rings a wind-chime doorbell and waits...

INT. JERRY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

A door opens to reveal Chip, who nods in acknowledgement, then enters.

He follows a figure into the dark depths of his chaotic abode. Basically, this is what Chip's place will look like in thirty or so years time.

Chip is careful to scratch his head and tilt it to the side so that his eyes can avoid a framed photograph on the wall --

It's of Chip ten or so years ago and a woman in her late 20s. The figure sits at a beach-hut bar and Chip settles next to him.

JERRY (70s) is a crotchety old stoner in beat-up flip-flops, a big hat and a faded T-shirt that says SAVENICE.

JERRY

Whoa, you just woke me up from a really intense dream.

CHIP

Sorry, man. I, uh --

JERRY

No. No, you did me a favour. It was kind of...

CHIP

JERRY (CONT'D)

Intense?

Real.

JERRY (CONT'D)

But like real.

CHIP

Yeah...? Listen, I --

JERRY

I was in here and I was, uh, looking for something.

A beat, then he kind of starts to look around, a little suspicious...

CHIP

What is it...?

JERRY

You know, now that I think about it, I haven't seen my chameleon in a while.

He checks under a couple of cushions, stoops down to look under a sofa...

CHIP

Uh, all right. Well, when did you last see it...?

JERRY

I think I saw him blending in over there by the toaster.

Chip taps down the area near the toaster.

CHIP

Right, well. He's not here now. Listen, uh, do you know anything about... do you have something you want to tell me?

JERRY

Whoa! If I just had a dream I was doing exactly this, how do I know I'm not still in the dream...?

CHIP

Uh, you're not, Jerry. I promise, I just rode over here --

Jerry holds up a hand to stop Chip.

JERRY

Good enough for me.

CHIP

How's that...?

JERRY

Because no-one ever makes a promise in a dream.

(a beat)

What did you want to talk to me about...?

CHIP

Uh, well, I kinda figured you had something you maybe wanted to say to me.

JERRY

Did I?

CHIP

Well, I got a visit at the store yesterday from your appraiser.

JERRY

Wait, someone came to the store to do an appraisal?

CHIP

Yeah, an appraiser!

JERRY
 (impressed)
 That's fast. They do a great job.

CHIP
 So it's true...?

Jerry slumps into a deep sofa and lights a joint.

JERRY
 What do you want to know?

CHIP
 Are you selling the building?

Jerry studies the joint in his fingers.

JERRY
 I don't know.

CHIP
 What the hell does that mean?

JERRY
 Just that. I don't know anything.
 The only thing I know, in this
 moment, is that I'm talking to you.
 The past is past, nothing we can do
 about it. And the future? Forget
 it, man. It doesn't even exist
 yet.

CHIP
 Uh-huh.

Chip tries a different tack.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 So then, in this moment, are you
 selling the building...?

JERRY
 Look, Chip. We, you and me, we see
 above all the BS out there.
 There's literally like... like --

He lays his hand flat out --

JERRY (CONT'D)
 -- the baseline truth. Reality.
 And then there's like these layers
 of bullshit on top of that --

He slides his other hand over the first hand --

JERRY (CONT'D)

-- that just sits there, like one of those villages where like, mud has come in and overrun the town. But guys like you and me... it's like we got special glasses, like 3D glasses that see through all the... the...

CHIP

Mud.

JERRY

Yeah, that see through all the mud.

CHIP

I need that store, Jerry. It's what I do. It's... I built myself... That store is me.

JERRY

No, man. You are you. No matter where you are. And that's the great thing. You should be excited to find that out. It's great news.

Chip doesn't move.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Look, Chip... I could tell you a bunch of bullshit about selling the building and cashing out, whatever... But you'd see right through it because you got your glasses on... and that would make me a liar. And I respect us both too much for that. We're partners, Chip. It's gonna be okay.

CHIP

Jerry, please don't do this. I can't be sure I'd know what to do if I lost the store.

JERRY

How can you be sure of anything...?

EXT. JERRY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Jerry sees Chip to the door.

CHIP

Uh, let me ask you this, Jerry.
What are you asking for the
building...?

JERRY

Chip, come on.

CHIP

No, you come on. This is important
to me. What are you asking for the
building?

JERRY

Four million dollars.

CHIP

Cash...?

JERRY

I'll take a cheque. What does it
matter to you?

CHIP

Well, four million is a little more
than I wanted to spend.

JERRY

Chip, you don't have four million
dollars.

CHIP

You don't know that.

JERRY

Uh, no. But I have a hunch. You'd
have to sell a lot of stools to
even get close to that --

CHIP

I do side tables now too, so --

JERRY

-- I'm not saying this to be an
asshole, but I could give you ten
years and you'd still be nowhere
near four million dollars.

A beat.

CHIP

So you're telling me I've got ten
years?

JERRY

No. I'm telling you that you don't
have four million dollars.

Chip takes a step away, dramatically, and looks to the stars.
He turns back to Jerry and in a low whisper:

CHIP

I may not have four million dollars
today.

Jerry waits.

JERRY

Yeah?

CHIP

That's it. I was finished.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

A respectable SOCCER MOM and a BODY PIERCINGS FREAK give Kara
a store-bought cake, a lone candle on top of it...

Dennis sits in the audience, and looks around for Chip --

EXT. ROSE AVE. - NIGHT

Chip, kind of depressed, rides past a LAUNDROMAT and catches
sight of...

He slows down and loops back to take a look in the window and
sees London in there.

He gazes at her for just a second, then makes to go, but she
looks up and sees Chip and taps on the glass.

Chip, busted, gives a wave (and mutters under his breath).

CHIP

Shit.

London comes out.

LONDON

What are you doing out here?

CHIP

Nothing, I was just... It's a
friend's birthday, kind of.

LONDON
Kind of...?

CHIP
Not her real birthday, but...
She's been sober for one year.

LONDON
And are you sober...?

CHIP
Uh, yeah. I am... ten years.
(a beat)
I'd better go.

LONDON
Right.

CHIP
I'll see you in the neighborhood.

LONDON
No, you won't. Not this one. Not
after tonight. Rent's too
expensive.

CHIP
Tell me about it.
(a beat)
Well, it was nice to have met you.

She nods, and Chip cycles off into the night...

EXT. BUILDING - NOT LONG AFTER

Chip rides up on his cruiser and dumps it against a wall.

INT. STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Chip runs downstairs.

INT. BASEMENT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chip bursts in but Kara's not here -- just an OLD MAN
stacking chairs.

EXT. FUNKY COTTAGE - NOT LONG AFTER

Chip rides up and dumps his cruiser on the lawn then skips up
the porch and knocks on the door.

A beat, then Kara opens, takes one look at Chip and then goes to close the door.

But he jams his foot in there.

CHIP

Kara, I'm sorry. I had to take care of this thing. You see, Jerry, my partner, and landlord, he's selling the building and I --

KARA

It's okay.

CHIP

It is...?

KARA

Yeah, I get it now, why you're not supposed to start a relationship in the first year. In case that person lets you down at a really important time.

CHIP

I have an idea: let's got to another meeting.

KARA

No, I don't want to. Not with you.

CHIP

Come on, we can pick up a cake on the way. I can give it to you. It's more cake. It's actually better like this.

KARA

Night, Chip.

She makes to close the door again. He grabs hold of it.

CHIP

Kara, please. People like you and me, it's like we see above the crap that sits --

He lays his hand out flat --

CHIP (CONT'D)

-- like a layer of fog that has come over a town --

He lays his other hand over it and lets go of the door in the process, which is when Kara finally closes it.

Chip is left outside. A beat, then he climbs on his cruiser and heads off.

INT. VENICE TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

The cooler is on stage in front of a small crowd.

THE COOLER

Man, it really is a dog eat squirrel world out there. Literally, right out there, like two alleys over. 'Cause that's where this friend, he's got this dog, and it killed a squirrel. I'm not lying.

Blank faces. Dennis is in the audience -- and he's livid.

EXT. PACIFIC AVE. - NOT LONG AFTER

Chip cuts down a side alley.

EXT. VENICE TOWNHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Chip slows to a stop and talks to a MUSTACHIOED MAN OUTSIDE.

CHIP

Hey, man. Did the cooler go on yet?

MUSTACHIOED MAN OUTSIDE

Yeah, he just came off.

CHIP

Shit. Was he funny...?

MUSTACHIOED MAN OUTSIDE

He was to me, but not on purpose.

CHIP

Yeah, by mistake. That's his signature.

He turns his bike around and heads back the way he came...

INT. CHIP'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Chip comes in and paces up and down until he's calm again. He goes to the back door and opens it and calls out --

CHIP
Dennis? DENNIS! Are you out here?
(no answer)
Dennis?!

A beat, then he crosses the back yard to the GUEST HOUSE and opens the door.

INT. GUEST HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Chip comes in. No-one's home. He wades through a chaos of boxes and odds and ends to a sort of utility room.

He puts on a light, and we see CASES OF WINE stacked in here, floor to ceiling.

Chip carefully picks his way to the back of the room, deliberately slides two cases off the top of a third to find a case that's meant to look closed, but with the way he slips the top flap up, it clearly has already been opened.

He pulls out a bottle, empty. Then tries a second bottle, also empty... and then a third --

It's half empty. (Or half full, depending on your disposition.)

Chip stares at it for a moment.

EXT. CHIP'S BACK YARD - NIGHT

Cheap twinkle lights are on as Chip eases into an old cane rocker and looks up at the stars.

He keeps looking skyward as he raises a full glass of wine up against his open mouth and, slowly, takes a deep pull...

FADE TO BLACK.

We hear BICYCLE WHEELS turn and PEDALS and then the sound of BRAKES --

EXT. SIDE STREET - NIGHT

Chip, on his beach cruiser, comes to a stop. He's kind of agitated...

CHIP

Uh, yeah, listen. This is so stupid I didn't mention it earlier but I have a studio apartment right above my store on Abbot Kinney, and it's just sitting there empty...

He's talking to London, who's unlocking her bike that's parked outside GJELINA, and we --

SMASH CUT TO:

Fast, upbeat music -- GLAD GIRLS (GUIDED BY VOICES) -- and the title card:

FLAKED

THE END.