

THE GUPPY

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EXT. STREET - DAY

A SPORTSBOOK promotion sparkles high on a billboard.

SUPER: LAUGHLIN, NEVADA - 2025

BELOW, a BEATER races through an intersection... Brakes screech... A door slams.

IAN (20s) sprints through the intersection clutching a folder as resumes flap free from his loose grip... He zigs left, zags right and stops--staring down CASINO DRIVE...

He squints down at his DUMBPHONE.

ON DUMBPHONE SCREEN: MAP - IAN'S LOCATION lags in the RIVER.

Ian shakes his head clapping the dumbphone into his pocket...

The highway mirage warps neon signs lining CASINO DRIVE.

Ian catches himself stroking his eyebrow and grimaces...

He sprints the opposite direction.

EXT. DOLLAR GENERAL - CONTINUOUS

Ian exits, untucking his shirt, eyes on his dumbphone then books it down the street.

INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Wire headphones connect Ian to a community computer as he attends a ZOOM MEETING.

Each square frames the face of a YOUNG MAN, 117 in total.

Ian lowers his mouth out of frame and sucks in a ZIN POUCH...

He pops back up flashing a meek smile, unmuting his screen and giving a thumbs up...

He scribbles on a piece of paper: "GAMBAN".

INT. HAILEE'S APARTMENT (KITCHEN) - CONTINUOUS

Ian grabs his coffee from the microwave and sits in front of a PINK LAPTOP... He taps the keys... It's LOCKED.

He looks up to a kiss from his girlfriend, HAILEE (30s, vivacious), and she unlocks HER laptop for Ian.

LAPTOP SCREEN: N.U.I. - UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Hailee gives Ian her iPhone and returns to her GIRLFRIENDS, posing sexy with suitcases under a HAPPY BIRTHDAY banner...

Ian snaps their photo as the front door opens behind him...

All attention swings to CARLYE (friend) who immediately gyrates, fanning a DIAMOND RING glinting on her hand...

The girls rush Carlye, fawning over her engagement.

In the background, Ian picks at his eyebrow, watching Hailee as she lifts Carlye's wrist, gazing at the ring with *THAT LOOK*.

Hailee shoots *THAT LOOK* at Ian... Then a scolding head-shake.

Ian stops picking his eyebrow, flips to a chipper demeanor.

INT. HAILEE'S APARTMENT (BEDROOM) - NIGHT

Ian's dumbphone charges on the desk...

Hailee sleeps cozy with a vape in her hand as a muted TV flashes on her face.

Ian fidgets next to her furiously keying the Pink Laptop on his lap, then scribbling on a notepad.

LAPTOP SCREEN: "SALLIE MAE" - "LOAN BALANCE: -\$62,000"

Ian fixates back on the laptop screen, clicking through tab after tab, then scribbling on a notepad:

LAPTOP SCREEN: US BANK - NEVADA U.I. - COINBASE

Ian picks his eyebrow, then scribbles on the notepad.

LAPTOP SCREEN: U.S. NAVY BENEFITS - DOORDASH - UBER

Ian scribbles on the notepad...

LAPTOP SCREEN: ODDJOBS - FEETFINDERS.com

Ian catches himself, picking his eyebrow and slaps his hand.

LAPTOP SCREEN: - ONLYFANS - BIO-LIFE PLASMA

Ian's reflection wrinkles with frustration, chucks the pen.

He crumbles the notepad. Hailee rolls over.

Ian freezes, marveling her precious face... His tongue brushes his teeth... He picks his eyebrow...

He sighs back to the laptop... Finger hovering over the keys.

LAPTOP SCREEN: JEWELRY STORE WEBSITE: \$3,699" - \$2,699 - \$6,499" - \$3,999

Ian's anxiety jiggles the screen. His reflection eats a ZYN.

LAPTOP SCREEN: New Tab... ZILLOW - FOR SALE-

3BD, 2BA: \$407,299 - 2BD, 1BA: \$389,777 - CONDO: \$198,099 - CONDO: \$203,399... CONDO - CONDO - CONDO

Ian slams the laptop closed, deflating into pillows...

He steals the vape out of Hailee's hand and hits it.

As he returns it, the TV catches his eye-

Ian RECOILS, scours the bed. Raises the remote-DARKNESS, switching the TV off...

BEAT.

The TV blinks on and Ian's silhouette clings to the screen...

His bug-eyes molest the screen as he fingers his EYEBROW...

He PLUCKS OUT a hair.

His primal face turns, to the bed landing on his dumbphone... Then to Hailee... He tilts his head.

Ian rummages around the TV stand finding a wallet-

He pulls out HAILEE'S DRIVER'S LICENSE.

Ian disappears into the shadows, revealing the TV-

TV SCREEN: GAMBLING AD: NEW PROMO - NO SWEAT, up to \$5,000!

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: GUPPY

SUPER: 7 DAYS LATER...

INT. HAILEE'S APARTMENT - DAY

KNOCKING pounds the front door...

The apartment looks ransacked as the KNOCKING continues...

The kitchen no longer has a microwave...

An OLD-FASHIONED RINGTONE blares from the bedroom...

-BEDROOM-

Inside, the MATTRESS, TV and DESK are all GONE...

Ian's dumbphone RINGS on the floor, charging in the same place it was a week ago...

A FACETIME sounds back in the LIVING ROOM...

The Pink Laptop lights up under the table-the screen CRACKED.

The Pink Laptop closes shut.

EXT. FRONT DOOR (HAILEE'S APARTMENT) - CONTINUOUS

OUTSIDE, Hailee seethes, clutching her suitcase. Her arms cross as she hears the lock jimmy from inside. The door opens-

Ian, completely disheveled, one of his EYEBROWS SWELLS RED... His dead eyes perk on his girlfriend.

IAN

BABE! I hit. I fucking hi-.

EXT. HAILEE'S APARTMENT (FRONT DOOR) - MOMENTS LATER

Ian cradles his possessions in a laundry basket as the door slams in his face... He turns around. The door opens again-

Ian's DUMBPHONE flies out and lands in his laundry basket.

-STREET-

Ian dumps the laundry basket in his car (beater), looks back-

Then pulls the PINK LAPTOP and hides it under his shirt.

EXT. BLOOD PLASMA DONATION CENTER - DAY

SUPER: 7 DAYS LATER...

The sound of slot machines DING...

A SPORTSBOOK AD hangs in bright colors above a drab BLOOD PLASMA donation center...

At street level, 4 BLUE COLLAR WORKERS (different uniforms) sit at a bus stop—tap, tap, tapping on their phones, hypnotized by the SLOT MACHINE NOISE.

Ian bolts out of the Plasma Center, pressing a cotton ball to his arm... After a few steps the wooziness stumbles him.

EXT. PHARMACY PARKING LOT (DRIVE-THRU) - CONTINUOUS

In the DRIVE-THRU, Ian's car rocks under the carport.

The drive-thru window pops open and Ian lurches from the driver's window, grabbing a brown paper bag.

Ian speeds off, wrapping around the building and parking next to a truck.

INT. IAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Ian rolls down his window to a MAN (sketchy).

Ian pulls a PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE from the brown paper bag and shakes it like a maraca.

The MAN smiles, raising a wad of CASH.

EXT. PAWN SHOP - CONTINUOUS

The Beater double-parks... The trunk pops.

Ian cradles a lamp with no shade, a DVD box set, a desktop, all of it piled on winter clothing.

He lumbers into the pawn shop leaving the trunk open.

BEAT.

Ian exits the pawn shop, lugging his junk back outside, red-faced and cursing out the pawn shop owner inside.

The lamp falls to the ground as Ian stuff the shit back into the trunk.

He speeds off, leaving the lamp and revealing a DIFFERENT GAMBLING AD pasted on the street corner.

EXT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Ian jaywalks the street, texting on his dumbphone, which charges from a portable charger tucked into his back pocket.

ON DUMBPHONE SCREEN:

IAN TEXT: For unemployment but I
put it back on the charger.

IAN TEXT: And babe, don't say that.
I promise, it's a lock...
Everything's gonna change.

He flips to another message chain from an UNKNOWN NUMBER.

ON DUMBPHONE SCREEN:

IAN TEXT: 18?! I can get 12% at the
fucking pawn shop bro

Ian waits for a response... Then panics.

IAN TEXT: 18s fine. Next Tuesday...

IAN TEXT: You ridin? Shit's a loc-.

Ian pauses mid-text as the door to his building opens and the
MAILMAN walks out.

INT. APARTMENT (MAILROOM) - CONTINUOUS

Ian's mailbox hangs open as he rips through his mail.

He separates an ENVELOPE and stuffs the other letters back
into the box... He shreds the envelope-

INSERT: PERSONAL CHECK- "\$4,000"

INSERT: NOTE-

"Ian,
Call me when you leave the lot.
Don't get one with catalytic
converting-thingy. Tell Hailee hi.
Love you - Mom."

EXT. BANK PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

The Beater rocks with all four doors open as A GUY (middle-
aged) wiggles out from the backseat.

Ian packs a Zyn and sucks.

The Man points to the car. Ian nods. The Man pops the hood.

He backs away and crosses his arms... He tilts his head-

Ian erupts, insistently shaking his head. He pleads with the Man, talking with his hands.... The Man doesn't budge.

Ian walks away, then swings back, picking his EYEBROW...

He kicks the ground and shakes The Man's hand.

EXT. BANK (PARKING LOT) - CONTINUOUS

The Man drives Ian's car out of the parking lot as a MOTHER and DAUGHTER approach the bank up a short staircase...

Ian bulldozes between them, counting CASH.

The Mother protests, but Ian is unreachable, completely consumed...

INT. IAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ian's studio is more like a storage closet: looks torn apart as an orchestra of ALARMS RING at once.

Grease gunks a double stovetop. An unrefrigerated chicken sits in the plastic, stabbed with a knife...

In the bathroom, the open toilet holds dark yellow pee...

ON THE BED, Ian sleeps in the same outfit as yesterday, unbothered by the noise...

TINY HAIRS lay astray around him...

A new alarm blares and Ian's dumbphone lights up...

His BRUISED HAND smacks the alarms SILENT, then goes limp.

A WHITEBOARD sways on the wall, crammed with bad handwriting-

Black marker: CALL BACK, Dad, grandma, Frace, Novak

Green marker: SALLIE MAE, deferred or defaulted?

Blue marker: OWES, Ev (\$500) Kassis (\$600), Fats(~~\$2000~~ \$750)

The other side: sports betting slang, "Chalk", "Dogs", "EV".

Then Five PARLAYS, all crossed out in angry red scribbles.

Except a 16-LEG PARLAY... Three hits down. Thirteen to go.

Potential payout: \$1,070,145.50.

The whiteboard tilts and tilts, CRASHES to the floor.
 Ian wakes and GAGS... GAGS and GAGS then spits out a Zyn.
 He pats the bed looking for a fix... He pops in 2 Zyns.
 Ian clicks his dumphone, playing his VOICEMAILS on speaker-

MOM (V.O)
 Honey. Did you get my note. It's
 pink and-.

Ian clicks and the voice cuts.

DAD (V.O)
 Ian. I've been texting you. What's
 with the job? The shampoo factory
 is hire-.

Ian clicks and the voice cuts.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)
 Message deleted... Next message.

SPORTSBOOK REP. (V.O)
 Hi, Hailee. This is Olivia calling
 again from DraftKings Sportsbook...
 Sorry for all the messages this
 morning. Just want to explain our
 withdraw protocol-.

Ian eyes shoot to the whiteboard-

The 16-LEG PARLAY. 3 HITS...

Alive, Ian scrambles to the PINK LAPTOP.

LAPTOP SCREEN: SAFARI - DRAFTKINGS SPORTSBOOK - "Welcome,
 HAILEE MECLEARY..."

Ian's mouth drops as a GREEN glow lights his eyes...

ALL 16 LEGS of the parlay shine GREEN on the screen.

LAPTOP SCREEN: \$1000 at +107799... BANKROLL: \$1,078,990.00

Ian's dead, downtrodden demeanor resurrects into EUPHORIA,
 mutating him into SOMEONE NEW...

He rips the laptop from its charger and holds it like a
 football, dashing around the apartment and beating his chest.

EXT. APARTMENT/STREET - CONTINUOUS

A WOMAN beelines towards Ian's apartment passing another GAMBLING AD on a city bus...

The door swings open FOR HER. Big smile as she moves inside.

Ian exits in a chic outfit, groomed beard, product holding his hair with a shine. He no longer zips down the street but strolls like he owns the sidewalk.

Ian winks at strangers-

Waves at drivers sitting at red lights-

Goofs with little kids passing him in the street-

His confidence catches stares from onlookers as he jigs down the street, bopping around a corner.

EXT. CAR RENTAL AGENCY - CONTINUOUS

Rock'n'Roll blasts from a new CADILLAC as Ian revs out of the parking lot and rips into the street...

INT. JEWELRY STORE - CONTINUOUS

A closet's-worth of shopping bags surround Ian in the lounge, the pink laptop at his side as he peels off the protective screen of a NEW SMARTPHONE.

LAPTOP SCREEN: GMAIL - "Hi, Hailee" - DRAFTKINGS SPORTSBOOK - VERIFY NEW-LOGIN LOCATION.

Ian shuts the laptop and holds *THAT LOOK* over the smartphone and starts tap, tap, tapping...

A JEWELER approaches with a swank gift bag.

JEWELER

Mr. Taylor... Her friends are gonna hate you!

Ian doesn't look up, lost in obsession... He finally grins, laying the smartphone on his lap.

IAN

What?

SMARTPHONE SCREEN: an endless stream of ACTIVE BETS, ALL PARLAYS wagered between \$10K-\$50K with payouts over 7-digits.

INT. CADILLAC - CONTINUOUS

Ian parks on Hailee's street and spits a Zyn out the window as his smartphone dings twice...

His face sours, raising his phone... His eyes glow RED.

SMARTPHONE SCREEN: DRAFTKINGS - "YOUR PARLAY BET... LOST"

Ian pinches his EYEBROW, but realizes his compulsion and refrains from plucking...

IAN

Pussies.

EXT. HAILEE'S APARTMENT (FRONT DOOR) - DAY

A NEW MACBOOK, MICROWAVE and PURPLE MATTRESS pile at the door as Ian arranges the shopping bags on Hailee's doorstep.

He knocks, concealing a bouquet behind his back...

Hailee opens the door, stunned. She doesn't speak but her eyes have questions...

IAN (O.S.)

Everything changed.

Hailee steps aside and let's Ian inside.

INT. HAILEE'S APARTMENT (LIVING ROOM) - CONTINUOUS

Ian mounts Hailee's new TV as she dashes ogles at her gifts.

IAN

Intentional action. Just like you said! And look, completely evolved. Let's celebrate.

HAILEE

This isn't celebration?

IAN

No, honey! This is just Tuesday morning.

That answer worries Hailee... Ian joins her on the couch.

IAN (CONT'D)

I'm kidding... But I got plans now. A whole thing.

Ian's premeditation raises Hailee's eyebrows.

HAILEE
Can I guess?

IAN
3 guess but only because I'm in
love with you...

HAILEE
Are we... going camping?

IAN
Mmm, nope.

HAILEE
Riding a train to Alaska?

IAN
Close...

Ian leans in for a kiss... But Hailee playfully holds up a
finger.

HAILEE
Are you zyning?

Ian swallows and shakes, no.

HAILEE (CONT'D)
Something to do with matcha?

IAN
Strike 3, baby.

Ian's smartphone dings and he forgets all about the kiss...

HAILEE
As long as we're landlocked. I told
you about that time on Lake Mohave?

SILENCE...

Ian's glued to his smartphone.

HAILEE (CONT'D)
...Babe?

Ian snaps out of it and collects his keys off the table.

IAN
Fuck Lake Mohave, babe! We'll drain
the bitch!

HAILEE
You're leaving?

IAN
I got strings to pull, people to
schmooze... You'll see.

Ian gives Hailee a peck and leaves, eyes zeroed on his phone.

SMARTPHONE SCREEN:

IAN TEXT: Deal me for \$500.

HAILEE (O.S.)
I love you!

The door slams.

INT. CADILLAC - CONTINUOUS

A SPORTSBOOK AD promises a deposit match up to \$1500, while the Cadillac rocks on its shocks at a red light.

IAN (O.S.)
C'mon. C'mon. C'mon.

LAPTOP SCREEN: A BASEBALL GAME... Bottom of the 9th.

ANNOUNCER (O.S)
And this one's going to the bullpen
after this...

Ian slams the laptop shut.

IAN
CUNT! Why you betting baseball,
asshole?

Ian TWEEZES his EYEBROW and fits a third ZYN in his mouth.

SMARTPHONE SCREEN: GEO-LOCATION BUFFERING - LIVE BET - PLACED

Outside, the traffic light flashes green...

SMARTPHONE SCREEN: ACTIVE BETS... BANKROLL: \$802,500...

The car behind him BEEPS and Ian swings his head out window.

IAN (CONT'D)
Hey, fuck yourself, lady!
(to himself)
Bet you're an A's fan... *Cunt.*

Ian whips into a crosswalk, forcing a pedestrian to jump.

EXT. FRIEND'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A GAMBLING AD runs on a TV as Ian and his DEGENERATE FRIENDS (20s) play poker. The current hand stalls as Ian boasts about the 16-leg parlay, reenacting the ups and downs of the rush.

His friends watch with hungry eyes, getting high on his story and chortling between slugs of Miller High Life...

Finally, Ian lowers into his seat. His friends lean closer...

Ian tosses his smartphone on the table and his friends pounce, fighting over who sees first.

SPAZZ (20s, balding) grabs the phone as the DANNY (20s) and BURGER (20s, acne) vie for position over Spazz's shoulder to see the screen.

Their pettiness flips to shock, mostly jealousy.

SPAZZ

No. Fucking. Way. You lucky fuck!

DANNY

Fuck. Those meetings *work*, huh?

The phone changes hands to-

BURGER (20s) picking his face acne as jaw hangs.

BURGER

And this is the kid who says he doesn't have money for beer?

IAN

It's called cash poor, cunt... And you missed a few.

Burger scowls then keeps picking his face...

NIKITA (30s, suave) finishes his whiskey and burps.

NIKITA

I'm surprised they paid you, son. My cousin. He hit a 5-leg for six figs that weekend down in Miami? And boom. FanDuel claims *suspicious activity*. Refuses to cash him. Locks him out of his account.

(MORE)

NIKITA (CONT'D)

For his safety, they said. Had to take em to court!

SPAZZ

No shit. They only lock out profitable players. Your account's in good standing after a few bets? You're a fuckin' fish. A guppy.

DANNY

Ian only got paid out, cause they know he's givin' it right back!

The Degenerates burst into laughter as Ian shakes them off.

IAN

Good one, pussy.

BURGER

Ian what's good? Let me ride with you today.

IAN

Ride a dick. I got nothing today.

DEGENERATES

Bullshit!

DANNY

(amused)

Listen to this fuck!

DANNY (CONT'D)

(sarcastic)

Burger, c'mon. Only a fish would keep betting after a hit like that. Look at Ian, *transformed!* He's no *fish*... He's a FAT FUCKING WHALE!

The room explodes and Ian raises his voice.

IAN

...*Shark*, you mean?

Laughter booms again.

IAN (CONT'D)

No grind today, boys. Today is the future.

SPAZZ

If she takes you back.

NIKITA

Everyone relapses. Especially with a casino in your pocket.

DANNY

Probably thought she was dating a crack head...

Ian punches Danny in the arm. Danny punches him back.

IAN

Don't you guys share a RubMaps account? Fuckin' incels... She sees this ring and her friends are gonna hate me.

Laughter booms again and the game on TV returns from commercial...

NIKITA

Fuck off... We all share it.

In his lap, Ian's phone BUZZES. He looks down to a RED GLOW.

SMARTPHONE SCREEN:

DRAFTKINGS NOTIFICATION: YOUR PARLAY BET... LOST...

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INT/EXT. CADILLAC - CONTINUOUS

Hailee pauses as Ian holds open the Cadillac for her.

IAN

A loaner! Just until the beater's fixed... Look in the cupholder.

Ian's smartphone DINGS TWICE as Hailee slides INSIDE the car, finding a coffee cup in the cupholder.

HAILEE

Babe... Tell me that's a matcha?!

Ian doesn't answer, slamming the door...

Hailee flinches. She grabs the matcha, sips and... GAGS. She opens the lid-

BLACK COFFEE swishes inside the cup.

Hailee shoots a look at Ian, pacing as he rubs his EYEBROW...

SMARTPHONE SCREEN:

DRAFTKINGS NOTIFICATION: YOUR PARLAY BET... LOST...

DRAFTKINGS NOTIFICATION: YOUR PARLAY BET... LOST...

INT. STEAK HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Under the table, a napkin cover's Hailee's lap... Ian's lies on the floor as his smartphone charges between in his lap.

Above, Ian's steak sits untouched on his plate...

Hailee finishes her last bite, reaches for her wine glass as it quakes under the shaking table...

HAILEE

So why did we order all this
food?

Ian squints toward the bar, trying to make out a basketball game showing on the on the TVs

IAN

We're celebrating. Redemption's
rare.

Hailee's raises an eyebrow.

IAN (CONT'D)

Look. Everyone relapses. Especially now. They put a fucking casino in everybody's pocket! I know your Dad drinks but a drunk doesn't think, 'if I could just get drunk once, wasted one more time, then my liver will heal".

Hailee scoffs taking the comment as a jab.

Ian's eyes drops to his lap, then back to Hailee.

IAN (CONT'D)

Hon, can you make sure it's plugged
in... It's not...

A pause... Hailee wiggles the block in the outlet.

IAN (CONT'D)

Thanks, babe. Look. every addict has a rock bottom and losing you was way below that. Like this is who I would be forever unless I change, take different risks.

(MORE)

IAN (CONT'D)

Or I'd be that asshole who lost his life on his phone.

Hailee doesn't react, just listens...

IAN (CONT'D)

No one's saying I'm cured. But something in me changed. I woke up and stopped thinking like a fish. It's like putting that clear shit on your fingernails. I woke up and no longer wanted to bite. I know it was a problem. But calling it an addiction was just another crutch. A reason to explain my limp.

Concerned, Hailee shifts in her seat.

HAILEE

That's no...

IAN

Not what I meant... I mean I no longer have anything to blame.

Hailee takes a drink of water.

HAILEE

And how about group? Didn't you say your friend Kenny relapsed after his daughter was born?

Ian's phone powers on and the light catches his attention.

IAN

...Yeah. He did but...

Hailee clocks the smartphone's nonstop vibrating.

Absent, Ian rises from his seat.

IAN (CONT'D)

Kenny's a fish, babe. Sorry, I gotta pee again.

HAILEE

That's like the 5th time.

It's not a joke, but Ian laughs and rushes a kiss.

IAN

Right? ...Here. In case he comes.

Ian lays his credit card on the table and speed-walks away.

INT. RESTAURANT (BATHROOM) - CONTINUOUS

RED-FACED, Ian quietly rages around the bathroom...

He catches himself in the mirror and his eyes give a silent reprimand... He spits on his reflection.

IAN
DON'T.

His phone DINGS just as there's a knock on the door.

IAN (CONT'D)
I'm tryna shit!

HAILEE (O.S.)
...Babe?

Ian flips clam, collecting his phone, flushing the toilet and running the sink.

SMARTPHONE SCREEN: DRAFTKINGS... BANKROLL: **\$325,500**

Ian opens the door and Hailee stands with her arms crossed... Ian lays his hands on his stomach...

IAN
GERD, babe... C'mon. We're still
live.

INT. CADILLAC - CONTINUOUS

On CASINO DRIVE, the Cadillac idles at a red light as Ian shields his phone behind his leg, eyeballing a WNBA GAME...

IAN
Fuck magic. Magicians are liars.

HAILEE
Is it... A hot air balloon?

IAN
No.

Ian beeps, swerves and speeds through a yellow light.

HAILEE
Is it-.

IAN
How bout you wait 10 minutes?

Ian's agitation stiffens Hailee's face as she pulls her hand from his lap.

HAILEE

Why do you have to yuck my yums?

Hailee looks over for an answer but Ian's fidgeting with his eyes down...

IAN

You're right! I'll stop. Hey! I'll drop you up front so you don't have to walk, huh?

Vexed, Hailee shrugs.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

The Cadillac parks crooked, rocking like it has hydraulics...

A light glows in the driver's side window. Ian's muffled cheers crescendo into a pause... A GASP...

The Cadillac jolts into furious shaking.

EXT. CASINO DRIVE - CONTINUOUS

ON a bench, Hailee eyes the time on her phone, slouches...

A grimaces as she tilts her sunglasses low...

Ian jaywalks across the freeway, yelling at honking drivers.

He zips down the sidewalk and reaches Hailee, SWEATING...

IAN

I ran! Didn't want... You ready?

Hailee throws her arms out and Ian leads the way.

EXT. RIVERWALK - CONTINUOUS

Hailee's hand hangs LIMP as Ian pulls her toward the RIVERWALK.

SMARTPHONE SCREEN: DRAFTKINGS SPORTSBOOK - GEO BUFFERING...

A loud exhale as Ian spins, looking behind at the casino behind Hailee...

HAILEE

She does, but she said Danny's been in his head about it lately. Something about his genes... His dad was, or still is a cokehead.

IAN

Is he still rich?

HAILEE

What?

IAN

Coke's not even addictive. I only know Cokeheads with amex cards and-

Ian's phone DINGS. He jerks away, accidentally stomping Hailee's foot.

HAILEE

Ow, fuck!

IAN

Sorry... Wrong way.

Ian leaves Hailee, glaring through the back of his head.

SMARTPHONE SCREEN: GEOLOCATION CONFIRMED... BET PLACED...

EXT. PUBLIC BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ian's eyebrow is noticeably THIN as he plucks another hair.

He slurps blood from his chewed fingernails, pacing outside the bathroom, sweating the final moments of the WNBA GAME...

A WHISTLE blows and Ian goes MANIC, stalking his smartphone around the riverwalk murmuring nonsense...

IAN

C'mon bitch! You and me! Fucking sharks! SHARKS! Sharp-toothed, jagged-eyed, blood thirsty! ...Give it to her. Give it to her. GIVE IT TO HER! Bang that! Bang it...

Ian's tirade freezes TOURISTS. Some hold their open mouths-

A FATHER steers his children away-

A WOMAN open-carries and fingers the pistol on her hip-

Ian freezes pinching his eyebrow... CHEERING erupts as-

Ian EXPLODES, gyrating through the crowd, dropping his phone.

The screen goes BLACK.

Ian jigs around the riverwalk in his own world...

He circles back, pointing down at the smartphone.

IAN (CONT'D)

BLOOD, baby girl! BLOOD! You taste
that?! HUH? LIKE FUCKING PENNIES!

Ian scoops the smartphone and unlocks it-

SMARTPHONE SCREEN: DRAFTKINGS SPORTSBOOK - "Hi, Hailee" -

BANKROLL, \$85,000... OPEN BETS...

IAN (CONT'D)

C'mon, c'mon. Fucking clear.

HAILEE (O.S.)

Who's baby girl?

Ian turns to tears welling in Hailee's eyes.

HAILEE (CONT'D)

Who were you screaming at?

Ian chuckles at the miscommunication.

IAN

N-n-no. Babe. I was watching the
game. The game! KK Williams? The
girls were playin'.

HAILEE

You were gambling?

Like it's nothing...

IAN

No! It's fantasy basketball! I told
you about the new fantasy where
each team picks a WNBA player and
babe I was down 4.42 points and
this chick, KK. KK Williams. Cold
all half, then? Last play. Six
seconds. KK. She catches, jabs,
spin and SPLASH! GAME! Babe that's
a 13 point swing! 13! I'm gonna
win! And! She hit her over. Just
saying.

Ian and Hailee lock eyes...

Hailee's fill with tears and flees.

Ian gives chase.

IAN (CONT'D)

Hail, wait! ...Hail, the surprise!
Please, please, just wait! HAILEE!

He turns onto CASINO DRIVE and passes a SPORTS BAR.

Ian cuts her off, panting, perplexed at the *miscommunication*.

IAN (CONT'D)

Babe! You're not listening! Listen!
I know I haven't been completely
present. I'm sorry! This is how I
get when I... orchestrate! My plan!
The plan. A *huge day* for me, *for*
us! Just wait! C'mon... Please...
We're gonna be late for the boat.

Hailee flinches away.

HAILEE

Boat?!

IAN

The boat! I booked us a boat!

Hailee can't believe it. Her voice cracks with heartbreak.

HAILEE

You're unbelievable! How fucking
selfish! Forget all the lying all
day. What do you mean *us?* Nothing
about today had anything to do with
us!

Ian can't believe it...

HAILEE (CONT'D)

But the saddest thing... You used
to know all my details. You used to
surprise me. Not with what you
could buy but with how you showed
love.

IAN

And I'm about to show you!

Hailee scoffs and turns to leave but Ian grabs her wrist.

IAN (CONT'D)

HAILEE!

Ian lowers to one knee, pulling a velvet box from his pocket.

More tourists stop and stare. A woman audibly awes...

But Hailee doesn't have *THAT LOOK*... Instead she's mortified ping-ponging all the stares stabbing her and Ian.

Hailee's holds her mouth as Ian opens the box to a gaudy BLUE ENGAGEMENT RING, almost the size of a dinner-plate...

IAN (CONT'D)

How 'bout it? C'mon. Let's get married... Look at this ring. Look how sick it looks! They had the Marcus cut or whatever...

CHEERS boom at the SPORTS BAR, seizing Ian's attention, giving him *THAT LOOK*.

Hailee watches Ian buckle to addiction.

BAR PATRON (O.S.)

KK WILLIAMS, who?!

Ian's ears perk. He claps the velvet box back into his pocket and beelines to the a GROUP OF GUYS outside the Sports Bar.

IAN

Did you say KK Wil-.

Ian stops dead... His eyes balloon at-

The WNBA GAME on the TVs...

Ian fingers his eyebrow...

IAN (CONT'D)

The fuck? What the fuck? This game was over! I hit! I fucking hit! KK!

GUY 1

Foot was on the line.

Ian bobs with hysteria, facing The Guys with homicidal eyes.

GUY 2

They just said. She hit that 3, but her *foot was on the line*... Game went to overtime.

The words sound like a different language to Ian...

He digs into his pocket, dropping his smartphone to the sidewalk.

He drops to his knees, pounds in his passcode with one hand-
PICK, PICK, PICKING at his enflamed eyebrow with the other...

A light glows on his tweaking eyes-

Ian chucks his phone, sliding it across the sidewalk...

SMARTPHONE SCREEN: BANKROLL: \$85,000...

Ian stares despondent, banging his head on a wall behind him.

His fingers take long, slow plucks at his eyebrow...

From a distance, Hailee's still frozen with dismay. She wants to run but her heart forces her to shuffle to Ian's aid.

HAILEE

...Ian. Whatever happened, it's
okay. We'll figure it out. C'mon.

Suddenly, Ian's head raises and cocks with EPIPHANY.

Laughter mixes with indistinct muttering as Ian repeats the same gibberish over and over...

HAILEE (CONT'D)

What are you saying? Stop it!

Crazed, Ian springs to his feet. His eyes stab Hailee with contempt.

IAN

You... You don't you fucking get
it, do you?

HAILEE

What? What are you say-.

IAN

You wanna care? You wanna help?
Then I need you to start GETTING
IT! Can't you see that I'm DOWN.
DOWN! DOWN! DOWN! Fucking down! A
BAD FUCKIN' BEAT! But, think! A *bad*
beat? Do you know what that means?
Do you? It means I *shoulda hit!*
BASICALLY *did* hit! Hit 9 times
outta fucking 10, but it's double
digits today BABY! HAHAHA! I was
smelling blood! *BLOOD!* What?

(MORE)

IAN (CONT'D)
 You think that sends me swimming?
 Me? A bad beat scares the FISH!
 ...STINKY! ...SCALY!
 (sucks cheeks)
 Fat! Fucking! Fish! And I'm no
 fish! I'm a FUCKING SHARK!

Hailee's steps back, horrified.

Ian hears his phone DINGS, collects it from the street.

IAN (CONT'D)
 Of fucking course! Now you wanna
 offer me a PARLAY BOOST!

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

A light glows through the tint of the Cadillac's driver's seat window...

The Cadillac reverses, clipping another car and speeding off.

EXT. FREEWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Cadillac races past a sign for LAS VEGAS.

INT. CADILLAC - CONTINUOUS

Ian SCREAMS incoherently at his smartphone.

IAN
 I own the ocean! I am the sea! The
 ocean obeys no moon while I swim!
 ...You hear me, HONG-YU?

SMARTPHONE SCREEN: A PING-PONG match with CHINESE SUBTITLES.

LAPTOP SCREEN: DRAFTKINGS SPORTSBOOK... BANKROLL: \$0.00.

The passing streetlights show Ian's bare, bleeding EYEBROW.

Ian barely glances at the road, berating the ping-pong player.

IAN (CONT'D)
 I smell BLOOD! SMELL IT! Feed me,
 Hong-Yu! Feed me! I NEED IT, HONG-
 YU! NEED IT! NEED!

The Cadillac revs.

IAN (CONT'D)
 ...I AM THE OCEAN. NO MOON WHILE
 I'M STILL SWIMMING... ME, Hong-Yu!
 ME! ME! FEED ME! FEED-

Ian's eyes BALLOON at his smartphone...

EXT. FREEWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Cadillac RAMS into the highway median.

It flips over and rolls through lanes of traffic, clipping other cars and causing a PILE-UP...

A DIFFERENT GAMBLING AD oversees the freeway as traffic lines behind broken glass and wrecked cars littering 3 lanes...

The Cadillac sways UPSIDE DOWN...

INT. CADILLAC - NIGHT

Ian hangs, bloodied and unconscious with only ONE EYEBROW.

LAPTOP SCREEN: DRAFTKINGS... BANKROLL: \$1,777,500.

The smartphone DINGS and Ian comes to.

He finds his smartphone in the mess and unlocks it-

GREEN LIGHT GLOWS on Ian's face as he pants with wild eyes.

Another DING and the GREEN GLOW turns RED...

SMARTPHONE SCREEN: *ACCOUNT LOCKED* -

"DUE TO SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY" - "FOR YOUR SAFETY"

Ian's soul-sick face flashes in the reflection...

A SHRIEK...

END.