

WHEN PIGS FLY

By

Terry Luke Podnar

and

Ed Learner

podhipro@gmail.com

FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM - HOUSE - INDEPENDENCE, OHIO - NIGHT

Inside a modest home, GORDON TINKLER (20s) and a FEMALE FRIEND (20s), both partially nude, are on the floor having sex in front of a live television.

Scattered about the living room are wine glasses, an empty bottle of MD-20/20 and cartons of fast food.

A SPECIAL BULLETIN interrupts the show on TV -- a NEWSCASTER (40s) appears. Gordon and his Female Friend are oblivious.

NEWSCASTER

(on TV)

With the elections around the corner and an unprecedented surge in unemployment, the President shocked the nation by announcing his new revolutionary employment program. The program would send millions of the unemployed to work on farms to earn their benefits, and the farmers would receive their labor in place of subsidies. President Mann explains --

The screen switches to PRESIDENT MANN (70s), classic blowhard with a combover.

Gordon lifts his head up long enough to salute the President.

PRESIDENT

It's a two-pronged attack: number one, it eliminates farm subsidies; number two, it reduces unemployment to zero. It's a win-win situation.

As the President speaks, Gordon's undulating butt slowly emerges from the bottom of the television screen until his butt completely obscures the President.

PRESIDENT

The farmers will receive labor at zero cost, and the unemployed will proudly receive their unemployment benefits in exchange for their work. I have dubbed the program --
OPERATION: SODBUSTER.

The screen returns to the Newscaster.

NEWSCASTER

The plan has already drawn criticism
from the farming community--

The front door abruptly SWINGS open, revealing Gordon's
parents, CHUCK (50s) and KAREN (50s). Karen's surprised when
she sees Gordon and Female Friend engaging in sex --

KAREN

Oh my, Gordon, I didn't know you had
a girlfriend.

The Female Friend jumps back in shock and grabs an empty
hamburger carton to cover her breasts like a bra. Karen steps
to her, hand out to shake --

KAREN

I'm Karen, Gordon's mother.

The bewildered Female looks at Chuck, who's furious. She JUMPS
UP and DASHES to the bathroom, SLAMMING the door behind her.

KAREN

That was rude.

She leans down and kisses Gordon on the head while he sits
naked on the living room floor.

Karen HUMS to herself obliviously as she exits. Gordon
nonchalantly puts his clothes on. Chuck seethes.

GORDON

Thanks, Dad, way to blow it for me.

CHUCK

How many times have I told you not to
fuck your girlfriends in our living
room?

GORDON

Aww, man, you know I'm not good at
math.

Chuck's patience is about to snap.

GORDON

I'm a man now, Dad, I should be able
to bring a girl to my own house.

CHUCK

This is not your house. This is my
house. And there's a big difference
between bringing a girl to my house
and fucking her in my living room.

Chuck points to a sign posted on the wall that reads, "NO FUCKING IN THE LIVING ROOM".

CHUCK

You wanna make the rules, you finish college.

Gordon seems displeased before a fake smile crosses his face.

GORDON

Yeah, about that, remember how I said that college isn't really my thing? Seems like my professors agreed.

CHUCK

Are you telling me you flunked out of college?

GORDON

I prefer the term "laid off".

CHUCK

You can't get laid off from college. You get laid off from a job.

GORDON

Funny you should mention that too...

CHUCK

You've got to be kidding?!

GORDON

What? It was a dead-end job anyway. No chance for advancement.

CHUCK

It was supposed to pay for your classes so you could get a degree and a job that wasn't a dead end!

Gordon acts surprised. Chuck crosses his arms and stares.

CHUCK

And what do you think you're going to do now?

GORDON

I have to do something positive, something other people might be ashamed of...

Gordon plops himself onto the couch, spreading his arms out across the top of the cushions, and sees himself as the smartest man in the world.

GORDON
I'm signing up for unemployment.

CHUCK
No, no, not happening. You're not gonna sit on your ass while everyone else supports you.

GORDON
What? You expect me to work the rest of my life?

Gordon rests his feet on the table.

CHUCK
You've been fucking in my living room, stuffing your face with my food, planting your ass down on my couch all day long. If I gotta work a rotten job five days a week, you gotta work a rotten job five days a week.

GORDON
(confused)
But why would I need to work when I got everything I need right here--

Chuck grabs Gordon by the collar and pulls him nose-to-nose.

CHUCK
Start looking for a job tomorrow, or you're gonna be sleeping under a bridge. Capiche?

GORDON
(grimacing)
Okay, okay, you don't have to use profanity.

Chuck SHOVES Gordon back to the couch as he storms off.

When Chuck disappears, Gordon flips him off. On the other side of the wall, Chuck is flipping off Gordon.

Karen comes in, sets a tray of cookies and a glass of milk on the coffee table, pats his head, and leaves.

KAREN
Thought you and your nice girlfriend could use a little snack.

Gordon ponders, then a sly smile crosses his face... he picks up a cookie --

GORDON
 (to himself)
 He said I just gotta look for a
 job... Sure... I can do that...

He retires to his bedroom, passing the bathroom door --

FEMALE FRIEND (O.S.)
 (through door)
 Can I come out now?

INT. LOBBY - BUSINESS DISTRICT - DAY

On a main street lined by various businesses, Gordon enters a revolving door. When he reaches the spot that opens to the lobby, he addresses the RECEPTIONIST without entering --

GORDON
 Hey! You don't have any work for me,
 do you?

RECEPTIONIST
 Uh, I guess not--

And he's out of the revolving door onto the street.

EXT. WOOD PRODUCTS STORE - BUSINESS DISTRICT - DAY

Gordon notices a sign outside a business: "WOOD PRODUCTS. HELP WANTED. NO SMOKING. NO LOITERING". A PASSERBY walks past him, smoking a cigarette. Gordon stops him --

GORDON
 Hey, can I bum a smoke?

PASSERBY
 Uh, sure, here.

The Passerby hands him the cigarette he had nearly finished. Gordon seems a little peeved, but takes it and goes inside.

INT. WOOD PRODUCTS STORE - DAY

Gordon enters and scans the store. Lumber and wood products everywhere. GRINDING and SAWING noises ECHO from the back -- Gordon cringes at the sound of hard work.

There are no customers or workers to be seen until an elderly PROPRIETOR (70s) greets Gordon.

PROPRIETOR
Yes, young man, may I help you?

GORDON
Yeah, old man, who's the boss of this place?

PROPRIETOR
That would be me. Is there something I can do for you?

GORDON
You don't need any help around here, do you?

PROPRIETOR
Why, yes, I've been looking for a worker. You looking to start today?

Gordon is caught off guard -- not how he hoped it would go.

GORDON
Maybe... if the price is right.

PROPRIETOR
How about seventeen-fifty an hour?

GORDON
How about twenty-five an hour?

While the Proprietor thinks a moment, Gordon sucks on the nub of his cigarette and blows smoke in the Proprietor's face.

PROPRIETOR
(coughs)
Alright, twenty-five dollars an hour it is.

The Proprietor extends his right hand to seal the deal. Gordon looks apprehensive...

GORDON
With a two-hour lunch break, four thirty-minute coffee breaks, and smoke breaks whenever I need one.

The Proprietor drops his hand.

PROPRIETOR
On the same day?

GORDON
You want me to walk? 'Cause I'll fucking walk right now.

PROPRIETOR

You drive a hard bargain, but I haven't seen tenacity in a young man in a long time. I like it. You've got a deal. But you can't smoke inside.

Gordon's face beams with delight at this condition --

GORDON

That's a deal-breaker. Sorry, I wo--

PROPRIETOR

Alright, you can smoke in the bathroom. Just don't tell anyone.

Gordon's amazed by the Proprietor's tolerance.

PROPRIETOR

It's hard, painstaking work, but it's good, honest labor you can be proud of. Let me show you...

The Proprietor turns his back to show Gordon. When he looks over his shoulder for Gordon, he has vanished, the front door swinging shut.

PROPRIETOR

Darn it, maybe I was too hard on him.

At the same moment the door closes, it opens, and a YOUNG MAN (20s) wearing a stained T-shirt and tattered shorts enters --

INT. LIVING ROOM - HOUSE - INDEPENDENCE, OHIO - DAY

Gordon enters holding papers in his hand. He's startled by his father standing at the door like a security guard --

CHUCK

You already found a job?

GORDON

No such luck, Pops, it's a real "cement" jungle out there.

CHUCK

Concrete jungle, idiot. And you've been gone for...

(checks watch)

... exactly 53 minutes.

GORDON

I tried, but I couldn't find a job matching my skills.

CHUCK
Skills? What? Sitting around
scratching your balls?

GORDON
(fake)
Ha-Ha. Good one, Dad.

CHUCK
Did you try fast food places? You're
good at eating.

GORDON
Flipping burgers? Get real Dad. You
know I have carpal tunnel.
(then)
But I did take some initiative.

Gordon hands Chuck the papers.

CHUCK
It's about time.

Chuck reads the cover page, "UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE".

CHUCK
You signed up for unemployment!?

GORDON
Should get me by for a year or two.

Chuck watches Gordon saunter to the fridge and opens it.
Chuck's face turns red. He RUNS to the fridge, SLAMS the door.

CHUCK
Your cocky, do-nothing, go-with-the-
flow attitude won't get you anywhere
in life! Unemployment won't teach you
about surviving the real world.

GORDON
Well, they approved me, so I guess
I've already gotten pretty far!

They get nose-to-nose, neither giving an inch. They're about
to come to blows until they are interrupted by the TV --

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
We are sorry to interrupt your
regularly scheduled program. A new
development is just in from
Washington. Marvin Pierce reports.

They turn to the TV, where reporter MARVIN PIERCE (30s) stands in front of the White House.

MARVIN PIERCE

An overwhelming majority in the Senate has passed "Operation: Sodbuster." Even though the President has been applauded around the country, not everyone's happy in the land of "good 'n plenty". Susan Windward reports --

SUSAN WINDWARD (30s) stands in front of a group of FARMERS on the steps of a town hall.

SUSAN WINDWARD

(to camera)

I am speaking with a group of angry farmers in Sac City, Iowa. They represent the sentiment of farming communities across the nation.

(to farmers)

How do you feel about losing your subsidies and will now receive the labor from government workers?

ANGRY FARMER #1

Those creeps in Washington have got a lot of nerve pawnin' off those lazy parasites on us.

ANGRY FARMER #2

The American way's being jeopardized. Just pay us for overproducin' crops and let the unemployed get paid for doing nothin'. That's the way it's always been, and God dang it, that's the way it should be.

ON GORDON AND CHUCK

Gordon looks deflated. Chuck snickers, then erupts in laughter. Gordon shoots him an evil eye.

CHUCK

So my son's gonna be a farmer.

A thought strikes Gordon. He DARTS out the door.

INT. WOOD PRODUCTS STORE - BUSINESS DISTRICT - DAY

Gordon BURSTS into the wood store and approaches the Proprietor, out of breath.

GORDON

Hey, I'm glad you're here. I guess I'll take that job you offered me.

PROPRIETOR

I'm sorry, but that position was filled.

GORDON

What? How? I left this place like, a minute ago?

The Proprietor points to the Young Man who came in right after Gordon left, relaxing in a chair, smoking a cigarette, playing games on his cell phone. Without looking over --

YOUNG MAN

Hey. Old Dude. Go get me more cigarettes.

The Proprietor nods his head, heads toward the door, looks back at Gordon --

PROPRIETOR

You'll have to excuse me, but I don't want to make him angry.

Gordon's dumbfounded. The Young Man notices him.

YOUNG MAN

Better stop eyeballing me, or I'll fucking bust 'em out of your head.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - INDEPENDENCE, OHIO - DAY

Gordon's parents watch Gordon loading his Nissan with baggage.

CHUCK

Don't blow it, Son, the farmers can report you, and you could lose your pay. And you can't quit because there's no more unemployment.

Karen hands Gordon an envelope, kisses him on the cheek.

KAREN

Here's your government expense money. Now, don't lose it.

GORDON

Mom, can you keep an eye on Dad? He looks grief-stricken. He may take the easy way out.

Chuck steps up to Gordon, shakes his hand, pretends to laugh.

CHUCK

That's funny. Ha. Ha. That farmer's gonna love your sense of humor.

GORDON

You don't think I can handle it, do you? I can do it if I want to. Don't go judging the cover of this book, because the inside's full of ideas.

CHUCK

And I know it's full of blank pages. I hope there's nothing in it about coming back here. This place is off limits to you. It's sink or swim now.

GORDON

Be careful, I know how to swim. You don't know what else I'm capable of.

Chuck opens the door on the driver's side for Gordon.

CHUCK

I know what you're full of.

GORDON

Go ahead, laugh, wait and see...

Gordon jumps in and pulls away as Chuck blows off his remark.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - WHITE HOUSE - DAY

The President holds a pointer and stands in front of five CABINET MEMBERS (50s) seated around a table on which a map of the United States lies.

The Cabinet Members stare incredulously at two politically incorrect FIGURINES situated on the map.

PRESIDENT

(points to figurine)

The farmers are located here.

The Farmer Figurine depicts a farmer with overalls, a wide-brimmed hat and a piece of straw in his mouth. The location on the map is marked, "THE STICKS".

PRESIDENT

(points to figurine)

The unemployed are located here.

The Unemployed Figurine depicts a round shape lying on a couch. The location on the map is marked, "HIGH CRIME AREA".

The President pushes the Unemployed Figurine from the "High Crime Area" into the area marked, "The Sticks".

PRESIDENT

No one's guessed the real beauty of this program -- we get the sponges off our hands, and we don't have to pay the farmers anymore.

The number one kiss ass Member, GILLIAN (40s), observes --

GILLIAN

And we lower crime in the cities. But what about the farmworkers doing these jobs now? The ones getting paid by the farmers?

The President pushes an IMMIGRANT FIGURINE, dressed in a sombrero and poncho, from "The Sticks" across the border to the area marked, "MEXICO".

PRESIDENT

We'll just send them home.

GILLIAN

This is ingenious, sir.

PRESIDENT

Isn't it?

BENSON (50s), the discerning Member of the Cabinet, acts coy --

BENSON

Sir, may I ask who designed the figures?

PRESIDENT

Me. I needed to accurately reflect people's sentiments in today's world.

The Members roll their collective eyes, except Gillian.

SERIES OF SHOTS - GORDON'S NISSAN ON THE HIGHWAY

- Gordon passes a sign that reads, "ENTERING KENTUCKY -- DON'T SAY YOU WEREN'T WARNED".

- His car enters another state underneath a sign reading, "ENTERING INDIANA -- WHY?"

- His car passes an overhead sign reading, "WELCOME TO IOWA -- WHERE CORN WAS INVENTED".

EXT. GORDON'S CAR (MOVING) - FISHCREEK, IOWA - NIGHT

Gordon passes by a sign reading, "FISHCREEK TOWNSHIP". He pulls into a gas station in the middle of fields of corn.

INT. GAS STATION - FISHCREEK - NIGHT

A group of farmers talks until Gordon enters. They all turn and stare at him. Gordon nervously scans the group.

GORDON

What's this, the city morgue?

Gordon chuckles at his own joke, but everyone else stares coldly. Only a single muffled COUGH punctuates the joke. An ATTENDANT (20s) wearing a gas station uniform speaks up.

ATTENDANT

You probably want directions to a farm, dontcha?

GORDON

How'd you know?

ATTENDANT

You're only about the hundredth person who came in here wantin' 'em.

An older patron, nicknamed OLD GEEZER (80s), rises to his feet.

OLD GEEZER

You need help boy?

GORDON

That would be great.

The Farmers object to Old Geezer helping him --

FARMERS

No! Old Geezer, no!

OLD GEEZER

Dontcha know where to turn?

GORDON

No.

The Farmers talk over each other, YELLING at Old Geezer --

The footsteps and the whistling come closer and closer, until a SHADOWY FIGURE emerges from the dark and steps into a dim pool of light -- it's FARMER BELL (60s).

The whistling noise comes from the exaggerated hairs protruding from Bell's nose as he breathes in and out.

FARMER BELL
You must be *Tinkler*.

GORDON
That's me.

FARMER BELL
Is that a nickname 'cause you piss your pants all the time?

GORDON
That's my actual name. Gordon Tinkler.

Gordon extends his right hand to shake. Farmer Bell does not reciprocate.

FARMER BELL
Where're your papers?

Gordon pulls the papers from his jacket pocket. When Farmer Bell reaches for the papers, Gordon grabs his hand and shakes it. Gordon laughs snidely.

Farmer Bell's facial expression turns to stone as he squeezes and proceeds to crush Gordon's hand.

FARMER BELL
I don't like jokes, especially on me.

Farmer Bell snatches the papers from Gordon. He leads Gordon to the house.

FARMER BELL
Follow me, Tinkler. My name's Bell--

Farmer Bell notices Gordon isn't carrying his luggage.

FARMER BELL
Where the hell's your gear?

Gordon scampers back to his car to retrieve his bags.

FARMER BELL
You think we have a bellhop working here? Better not mention that or the God damn government'll send me one.

INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Farmer Bell enters the house and leads Gordon straight down the steps to the --

GORDON
What? Aren't you gonna make me sleep
in the barn? Heh, heh.

FARMER BELL
Barn's already at maximum occupancy.
You sleep here, Tinkler.

INT. BASEMENT - FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

The basement is dark, dank, and creepy-looking with piles of junk and trash strewn haphazardly about.

Gordon stares beyond disbelief at his sleeping quarters.

GORDON
I'd rather sleep in the barn.
(then)
Where's the bed?

FARMER BELL
This ain't a damn hotel, Tinkler. You
brought a sleeping bag. Use it.

GORDON
I'm not gonna sleep on the floor.
Bugs and rats are probably crawling
all over this shit.

FARMER BELL
Hey! I don't know where you come
from, boy, but here, we don't keep
bugs and rats in the house. We leave
'em outside with the rest of the
critters. I know you city folk are
used to keepin' 'em indoors, but we
don't do that here.

GORDON
But look how filthy it is.

FARMER BELL
Glad you mentioned it -- that'll be
your first official duty: cleanin'
your quarters.

Farmer Bell grabs a broom and hands it to Gordon.

GORDON
A broom? I'll need a bulldozer.

Bell heads up the steps.

FARMER BELL
You sure are a whiny little fella.

Gordon sighs, steps through the impossible pile of trash, and sweeps halfheartedly.

His work is interrupted by the WEIRD GUY (20s), who stops at the bottom of the steps with a bundle in his arms.

WEIRD GUY
Whew! This place stinks.

GORDON
It smells like it looks.

The Weird Guy hands him the bundle.

WEIRD GUY
Old McDonald told me to take this to you.

GORDON
What is it?

WEIRD GUY
Government issue air mattress.

Weird Guy scans the basement --

WEIRD GUY
I didn't know this place had a dungeon.

GORDON
You must be another government worker. My name's Gordon Tink--

WEIRD GUY
Don't even bother. I'm getting out of here before you clean up this shit.

Weird Guy heads up the steps. He shivers as if the basement gives him the willies. He passes JAMIE (20s) coming down. Jamie says "Hi" to the Weird Guy, but he just waves him off.

JAMIE
(to Gordon)
How'd you get the basement?

GORDON
I'm not sure yet. Are you another
government worker?

JAMIE
My dad owns the farm. I'm Jamie.

GORDON
Gordon.

JAMIE
The other workers went to the local
bar. I'm headed there. Want a ride?

Gordon looks down at the piles of trash up to his knees --

GORDON
Guess this mess'll still be here when
I get back.

Jamie climbs the stairs. Gordon opens one of his suitcases. He
places his digital clock on a stack of old newspapers --

INT. THE ROYALE CHATEAU - NIGHT

Jamie and Gordon enter and look around the packed bar. Music
BLARES. A banner hangs from the ceiling: "WELCOME GOVERNMENT
FARMWORKERS," and below it, "WE DON'T THINK YOU'RE LOSERS."

A monotone voice ECHOES over a squeaky sound system --

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
There's one hour left for our
delicious drink specials. And we hope
you remember us for your spirituous
beverage needs after a backbreaking
day of work under the scorching sun.

Jamie orders a beer while Gordon checks the surroundings.

JAMIE
You see that guy over there?

Jamie points to CRISPY (50s), a long-haired man sitting at a
table, who appears to be talking to someone.

JAMIE
That's Crispy, a local legend. You'll
be working with him tomorrow. He's
another government farmworker.

Crispy wears clothes from the sixties: a headband, a tie-dyed
shirt, a vest with patches protesting the Vietnam War...

His voice is audible as it fights with the BLASTING sixties rock music on a portable transistor radio on the table --

CRISPY

The sixties, man, were the most romantic time in the history of the country, a great period to protest... and a great period to get laid.

Gordon watches Crispy chuckle to himself while the people seated in front of him leave, revealing Crispy's been talking to himself, alone at the table.

GORDON

Is that guy all right?

JAMIE

Come on, I'll introduce you to him.

Jamie leads a reluctant Gordon until an aloof JENNIFER (20s) passes in front of them, catching Gordon's eye. She ignores Gordon and turns toward Jamie.

JENNIFER

What is this place, a doofus convention?

Gordon gawks at her, in awe.

GORDON

I'm... Gordon.

JENNIFER

Who cares.

GORDON

I... I'm just... I want t--

JENNIFER

See what I mean, Jamie?

She sashays away from them.

JAMIE

That's Jennifer. She works at our farm too. Don't get your hopes up.

GORDON

I don't give up that easily. I know her type, she'll break down.

JAMIE

Were you not just here when she treated you like shit?

GORDON
That's a facade, Jamie. She hasn't
seen the last of Gordon Tinkler.

Jamie leads Gordon through the crowd toward Crispy.

GORDON
Any other girls working on your farm?

JAMIE
My sister Marla. She's over there.

Jamie points to MARLA (20s), a tomboy, arm wrestling a
MUSCULAR MAN (20s). She pins his arm to the table.

Marla notices Gordon staring at her and curls her index finger
to come over, which scares Gordon. He quickly looks away and
follows Jamie.

JAMIE
Hey Crispy, Gordon's gonna work on
the farm with us.

GORDON
I guess you would say it's "far out".

CRISPY
No, man, it's "farm out".

Crispy BUSTS OUT laughing, then rises from his chair, wraps
his arms around, and hugs an uncomfortable Gordon.

CRISPY
Welcome to the commune, man.

GORDON
The commune?

CRISPY
You know, man, the "farm". In the
sixties, we called them communes.
It'll be great, man, getting back to
my roots...
(then)
But right now, man, we get it on.

Crispy WHISTLES LOUDLY to the bartender, and everyone gets
excited when they see what's happening. Gordon's befuddled.

CRISPY
I said, LET'S GET IT ONNNNNNN!

Crispy's challenge ignites the LOCAL CROWD. They YELL AND
SCREAM as they converge to Crispy's table.

Gordon becomes increasingly nervous, turns to Jamie --

GORDON
What is happening?

JAMIE
You've got to get it on.

Jamie slaps his back. Gordon sees Crispy staring wickedly at him, rolling up his sleeves, cracking his knuckles. Gordon appears panicky. The Locals chant --

LOCALS
CRISPY. CRISPY. CRISPY.

A SERVER (20s) squeezes through the Locals. She sets two pitchers of beer and two empty mugs in front of them.

Gordon's relieved to find out it's just a chugging contest.

LOCALS
CHUG IT. CHUG IT. CHUG IT.

Under the pressure, Gordon psyches himself up. He slaps himself in the face on each side a few times. Stretches his mouth. Goes into a trance. Jaime plays referee --

JAMIE
Remember the rules, no butting mugs.
If one of you passes out, the other
must go to a neutral corner of the
table... The loser pays for the beer.

GORDON
Wait, what? Pay for the beer? I
didn't even want to do this!

CRISPY
Enough formalities, let's get it on!

A loud bell RINGS (o.s.). To Gordon's amazement, Crispy gulps down a whole mug of beer. He steels himself and does the same.

LATER

Six empty pitchers sit in front of the contestants. They SLAM down their mugs simultaneously. Dead even. However, Crispy's almost ready to fall off his chair.

GORDON
(slurring)
You had e-enough-ole-man?

Gordon scoots his chair closer to taunt Crispy. As Crispy weaves toward Gordon to say something, he violently PUKES all over Gordon's chest and lap.

The crowd ROARS in laughter. Gordon JUMPS up in disgust.

JAMIE
Alright, Crispy, pay up.

Crispy laughs heartily, vomit dripping from his mouth --

CRISPY
Bess... two... ou-outta three?

More OUTBURSTS of laughter before Crispy pulls money out of his pocket and drops half the bills to the floor.

Gordon stares down at his soiled clothes. He's incensed --

GORDON
L-Look at this sh-shit! I'm f-fucking covered!

Gordon is fuming before the Locals pat Gordon on the back, commending him on his drinking clinic.

His disgust and annoyance fade as he's suddenly the most popular guy in the bar --

INT. BASEMENT - BELL'S FARM - NIGHT

Emerging from the darkness, Jamie maneuvers a load in a wheelbarrow down a set of steps. Inside the wheelbarrow, an unconscious Gordon lies, arms and legs dangling.

About halfway down, he dumps Gordon down the steps to the concrete floor. He rolls to a stop at his digital clock, which reads: "FOUR A.M."

PRE-LAP: A rooster CROWS.

INT. BELL'S BEDROOM - FARMHOUSE - DAY

Farmer Bell immediately awakens and SNAPS UP TO A SITTING POSITION in bed like Dracula waking from his coffin.

INT. BASEMENT - FARMHOUSE - DAY

Farmer Bell sneaks down the steps to Gordon's "bedroom". He sees Gordon's motionless silhouette in the same position on the concrete next to his clock. It now reads, "5:32 A.M."

FARMER BELL
 (to himself)
 This is the time of day that
 separates men from boys.
 (to Gordon)
 Sleeping Beauty... Time to get up.

Gordon does not budge. Bell picks up an empty paper bag from the trash pile, blows it up, and POPS it next to Gordon's ear. Gordon's eyes squint, clearly in a world of pain.

FARMER BELL
 Get your ass up, Tinkler! Time for
 breakfast.

GORDON
 I'm not... hungry...

FARMER BELL
 Nonsense. You can't do a good day's
 work without a hearty breakfast.
 Upstairs in ten. And change your
 clothes. They reek.
 (leaving)
 Don't make me come back and getcha.

Gordon slowly sits upright, hair in a funky sleep spike. He smells his clothes. Cringes. Strips them off --

INT. DINING ROOM - FARMHOUSE - DAY

At a long breakfast table covered by breakfast foods, Farmer Bell and his dutiful wife, EMILIA (60s), head the table.

Jamie, Marla, and several government farmworkers, including Crispy, Jennifer and the Weird Guy, look annoyed at having to wait for Gordon.

Gordon finally arrives and finds a chair. He looks like death, hair still in a funky sleep spike.

FARMER BELL
 What took ya so long, fluffin' your
 hair?

The others suppress their laughter. Gordon remains quiet and starts to dish up. Jennifer SLAPS his hand, admonishing him.

FARMER BELL
 Tinkler, what's wrong with you? I
 haven't even said grace yet and
 you're already helping yourself to
 seconds. You some kind of atheist?

Gordon mindlessly puts the food back on the serving dishes.

Farmer Bell bows his head.

FARMER BELL

Lord, give me strength with this group, for your sake, I'm gonna need it. Everyone but the atheist thanks you for this good food.

EMILIA

Amen.

Everyone dishes up and passes the plates around. Gordon puts a few things on his dish, but as he watches everyone's mouths devouring food, he looks sick to his stomach.

FARMER BELL

What's wrong, Tinkler? Too early in the morning for ya? You've got to learn to go to bed at a decent hour. You can't go roamin' around like an alley cat in heat.

Gordon looks to Crispy, who's eating voraciously. Bits of food hang out of his mouth -- Gordon BOLTS out holding his mouth.

FARMER BELL

That boy don't have any table manners at all.

EXT. BELL'S FARM - DAY

In front of the farm, a large group of farmworkers gathers around Farmer Bell as he pulls out a piece of paper. Ignoring Bell while he talks, Gordon ogles Jennifer.

FARMER BELL

I know most of you aren't cut out for farmin', but I'd like to think that some of you might take a likin' to it and stick with it.

(scoops some dirt)

This might look like dirt to you, but I see this as part of my soul.

Crispy, who's smoking a joint, snickers.

FARMER BELL

What are you laughin' at? Just because you're smokin' a fancy cigarette doesn't give you the right to be disrespectful.

CRISPY
Hey man, make love, not war.

FARMER BELL
Watch your filthy hippy mouth.

Bell turns to Jennifer, who's standing next to him.

FARMER BELL
Jennifer, do ya like vegetables?

JENNIFER
I'm a vegetarian.

FARMER BELL
Good, because you're gonna pick a whole bunch of 'em today.

JENNIFER
Like at the farmer's market? I can do that.

FARMER BELL
Out of the ground, Missy.

Jennifer's appalled by the notion.

FARMER BELL
Hippy, you're gonna help bale hay.

He tosses Crispy a pair of gloves.

CRISPY
Looks like "the man" has taken over the commune.

FARMER BELL
This ain't a commune, it's a farm.
(to Gordon)
Tinkler, you're gonna feed the cows.
All you have to do is fill the trough with grain and whistle for the cows.
So simple, even you can do it.

GORDON
Whistle?

FARMER BELL
I'm sure you've kissed a lot of asses in your life, but if ya can't pucker your lips, a whistle's by the trough.

Gordon puckers his lips after Bell turns his back to him --

EXT. COW'S FEEDING AREA - BELL'S FARM - DAY

Gordon enters a huge shelter with a long trough. He notices he's by himself. No cows, no farmhands.

He dips a plastic bucket into a drum filled with grain and spreads it in the trough.

When Gordon finishes, he searches for the cows, carrying the bucket. He WHISTLES. He sees nothing but a vast wasteland.

He whistles for the cows again. Still, no cows. He whistles LOUDER. The cows are nowhere in sight.

After Gordon turns his back, unbeknownst to him, the cows emerge directly behind him STAMPEDING AT FULL THROTTLE --

By the time he hears the HOOVES BEATING the ground, he turns around and sees the cows -- His face shows utter terror --

The cows KNOCK Gordon to the ground and TRAMPLE him. He SCREAMS in pain, "OOF, OWW, OHH, AHHH..."

He manages to roll out from under the speeding cows, who cool their hooves when they reach the trough.

Gordon holds his back, picking himself up. The cows leave imprinted hoof-prints and dirt on his clothes.

GORDON

You bunch of fuckers.

Farmer Bell passes by, notices the bucket is torn to shreds.

FARMER BELL

I'm deductin' that from your pay.

Dejected and hurting, Gordon staggers to a bale of straw and lies down on his back.

He closes his eyes for a moment, but is rudely interrupted by a DOUBLE VISION of Marla standing over him, holding a pitchfork to his throat.

MARLA

There's no place for loafers on this farm, Tinkler. You ain't gonna collect checks for sittin' on your ass no more. Now go help Crispy bale hay.

Gordon lifts himself up as Marla disappears behind a building. He spots Crispy in the distance in the garden, stooping over some sort of plant. Gordon limps toward him.

EXT. GARDEN - BELL'S FARM - DAY

Crispy's stooped over a plant as Gordon approaches him. Gordon rubs his forehead, still smarting from the trampling. He notices what Crispy is planting --

GORDON

Do they grow marijuana here?

CRISPY

Naw, man, I brought 'em from my pad. There's plenty of sunshine and fresh air. They'll dig it here.

GORDON

You're supposed to be baling hay.

CRISPY

There aren't any farm dudes to help, and I'm not busting my hump for the man.

GORDON

The man is a colossal asshole. I'd like to know what crawled up his--

Out of nowhere, a hand CLASPS Gordon's shoulder --

FARMER BELL (O.S.)

Why are you two doin' sissy stuff?

Gordon WHIRLS around to see it's Farmer Bell.

GORDON

Oh, I--um--I thought you wanted us to plant vegetables.

FARMER BELL

Ya think you're gonna lollygag on my watch? I'll make one phone call, and you'll lose your jobs. Both'a ya. No jobs, no money, no government titty.

CRISPY

That's blackmail, man.

FARMER BELL

Look Hippy, that's the way it works around here. Love it or leave it.

CRISPY

I knew I should have split to Canada when this employment shit broke out.

FARMER BELL
 You haven't seen shit yet. Go clean
 up the manure in the barn, and if ya
 can't eat off it, I'll make the call.

They reluctantly obey, GRUMBLING as they go. Bell stays behind
 and observes Crispy's plants.

FARMER BELL
 Hmm, tobaccoe.

INT. FARM FIELD - BELL'S FARM - DAY

Gordon and Crispy are surrounded by barns. They're bewildered.

CRISPY
 You'd think the man would have given
 us a compass to find the barn.

Gordon sees Jennifer passing by. She's struggling to push an
 overflowing load of vegetables in a wheelbarrow.

GORDON
 (leaving)
 Let's take five, Crispy.

CRISPY
 Time for a smoke break anyway.

Gordon hurries to catch up to Jennifer.

GORDON
 Need help?

Jennifer can barely push the wheelbarrow. She stops and looks
 annoyed when she sees it's Gordon.

JENNIFER
 I can manage.

She pushes the wheelbarrow again, and vegetables spill out.
 Gordon picks them up and puts them back in the wheelbarrow as
 he tags along.

GORDON
 My name's Gordon--

JENNIFER
 I know. I saw you last night.

GORDON
 I didn't think you noticed me.

JENNIFER
How could I not? Center of attention.

GORDON
Thanks. I don't usually like to show off, but I had to get acquainted with the people around here.

JENNIFER
It wasn't a compliment.

GORDON
Oh... Where are you from?

JENNIFER
Why don't you figure it out?

GORDON
You seem like you belong in a big city, like a model or something. You don't fit in with these hill people.

JENNIFER
I was born and raised here--

GORDON
They're really good people here. This is the heart of America.

Jennifer climbs the steps of the farmhouse porch with Gordon following close behind.

GORDON
You have any plans tonight?

JENNIFER
What makes you think I look so pathetic that you can ask me out?

Gordon's crushed by her brutal answer.

GORDON
Uh... I... I thought...

Before he responds, Bell puts his hand on Gordon's shoulder.

FARMER BELL
Boy, I swear you're gonna make me have to pull out my whip and crack you one on the ass. Now git to work!

Gordon wiggles himself free, then slinks back toward Crispy, still stung by Jennifer's rejection.

Jennifer watches Gordon leave. Her sympathetic expression belies her demeanor.

EXT. PORCH - FARMHOUSE - EVENING

Golden streams of the sinking sun radiate on the group of farmworkers milling around outside the farmhouse.

A dejected Gordon sits on the steps. Jamie exits the house and taps Gordon on the shoulder.

JAMIE

You up for going to the "Chateau" again? The staff was asking for you.

GORDON

Tell them they'll have to laugh at some other idiot.

JAMIE

Dad told me to stay away from you anyway -- "not farmer material".

Jamie moves on, snickering.

GORDON

Great, I lost my only friend here.

Gordon watches Jennifer emerge from the farmhouse and pass by him. Still hurt by her rebuff, Gordon averts his doleful eyes when Jennifer notices him.

She appears guilty. Deliberates. Turns and approaches him.

JENNIFER

What are you doing? Anything?

His eyes light up.

GORDON

No... I... was just...

JENNIFER

Come on, I'm going for a walk.

GORDON

Really?

JENNIFER

You can come with me, but don't get any ideas. Don't even talk.

GORDON
I'll be a perfect gentleman.

She heads to the woods and Gordon follows.

EXT. WOODLAND AREA - EVENING

They enter the woods with the farmhouse in the distance. They don't speak for a while as they follow a meandering path with many forks in the woods.

JENNIFER
Where are you from?

GORDON
I thought you didn't want me to talk.

JENNIFER
I guess it'll be hard to avoid.

GORDON
I'll keep my sentences short. Ohio.

JENNIFER
That's a long way from here. You look homesick.

GORDON
Homesick? Not really.

JENNIFER
It's probably just your resting face.

He swallows the insult.

GORDON
You planning to stay here long?

JENNIFER
Possibly. The place doesn't matter, I only care about the people.

GORDON
What about the zombies we're living with now?

JENNIFER
I really don't mind you guys.

They're oblivious the path has become gloomier.

JENNIFER

I can see the Farmer treats you guys like shit. Have you tried calling the complaints department?

GORDON

With who? The union rep?
(scoffing)
Last thing I need is to lose this job. I can't afford to cause any problems.

Jennifer appears moved by his honesty. Gordon misses it due to being confused by their surroundings.

GORDON

I'm sure glad you live around here. I have no idea where we are.

She stops, scans the unfamiliar woods, startled.

JENNIFER

I'm not from around here.

GORDON

This isn't the best time to be screwing around.

JENNIFER

I'm from Philadelphia.

GORDON

Weren't you born and raised here?

JENNIFER

I was just being a bitch. You really don't know the way back?

Gordon begins to panic --

GORDON

How would I know the way back? The only thing I was watching was you.

JENNIFER

Okay, that line might have worked if it weren't so scary out here. So stop watching my ass and look for a landmark.

She scans the surroundings to see something familiar they may have passed. He does the same as they keep walking.

GORDON
Can I ask you something? How can
someone like you be unemployed?

JENNIFER
Like me?

GORDON
You're smart, pretty, strong--

JENNIFER
What? Smart, pretty, strong girls
can't do a man's job?

GORDON
No, I just meant--

JENNIFER
I worked for a steel mill that went
bankrupt. Well, you know the job
market. Had to go on unemployment...
Let's just start figuring a way back--

SNAAAPPP -- the sound of wood BREAKING freezes them.

GORDON
What was that?

Another SNAAAPPP and RUSTLING emanate from the bushes.

Gordon steps in front of Jennifer in protect mode. He eases
her behind a large tree trunk and steps toward the bushes.

GORDON
You wanna play games? Let's play.

Gordon looks back to see Jennifer completely hidden, except
for her butt protruding from behind the tree. He can't help
but stare at it. A NOISE alerts him. He turns to face --

A MASSIVE BLACK BEAR REARING BACK ON ITS HIND LEGS, ROARING IN
GORDON'S FACE.

Gordon SCREAMS, JERKS BACK, STUMBLES, gets to his feet and
SCRAMBLES to Jennifer -- she's nowhere to be found.

GORDON
Jennifer! Jennifer!

JENNIFER (O.S.)
Stop screaming!

Gordon looks up and sees Jennifer sitting on a limb above him.

JENNIFER

You'll antagonize the bear. Get up here.

He quickly and clumsily CLIMBS up to the limb, managing to reach her just before the bear settles underneath the tree.

The bear sniffs, turns around and around, plops down on its ass and starts scratching its back along the trunk.

EXT. BUSHES - WOODLAND AREA - NIGHT

Behind the bushes, a large cage rests on a trailer, hidden by trees and bushes in the shadows. Two PERPETRATORS (30s) can barely refrain from laughing while speaking into a phone --

PERPETRATOR #1

(into phone)

It worked. They're gonna need a new pair of shorts.

INT. LIVING ROOM - FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Farmer Bell is on the other end of the phone.

FARMER BELL

(into phone)

Dontcha mean "two new pairs" of shorts? Watch your grammar.

EXT. TREE - WOODLAND AREA - NIGHT

Up in the tree, Jennifer and Gordon sit side-by-side.

JENNIFER

I have to admit that was pretty brave, Gordo. Putting yourself in danger to save me. I like that.

Trying to be modest, a half-smile grows on Gordon's face.

GORDON

Well, I didn't know there was gonna be a bear there. Mighta left your ass in the tree if I knew.

She sees his smirk and NUDGES him with her shoulder -- but it's a little too hard, and he almost FALLS off the branch.

She GRABS him, saving him from falling. The bear looks up, grunts, but stays put.

JENNIFER
 You don't think anything through, do you? You just do it.

Gordon tries to answer, but becomes confused.

JENNIFER
 I mean... You don't do something just because it makes you look cool or uncool. You don't care how you look. You can look like a complete ass, but you'll do it anyway.
 (off his look)
 That was a compliment this time.

GORDON
 Uh... thank you?

Awkward silence.

JENNIFER
 I've got an idea. If I climb up far enough, I should be able to see the farmhouse. Help me out.

Jennifer gets to her feet. Gordon helps her climb by gently holding her waist. They share a long beat of eye contact before Jennifer climbs up to a higher limb.

GORDON
 Be careful.

She notices Gordon looks at her with concern.

JENNIFER
 I can see the farmhouse.

Before climbing down, she sees the Bear get up and plod away.

JENNIFER
 Hey. The bear's leaving.

EXT. BUSHES - WOODLAND AREA - NIGHT

The Bear passes through the bushes and approaches the Perpetrators. They pat the Bear on its back. The Bear goes into the cage after they entice the Bear with treats.

EXT. TREE - WOODLAND AREA - NIGHT

Jennifer climbs down with Gordon's help. As she slides down through Gordon's arms, he keeps his arms around her.

GORDON
See? Smart. Pretty. Strong.

She smiles.

JENNIFER
Smooth--

The limb they're on BREAKS. Gordon FALLS AND CRASHES to the ground. Jennifer lands on top of him. Gordon WRITHES in pain --

GORDON
You... okay?

JENNIFER
Yeah. Had something soft to land on.

This time, Jennifer helps Gordon to his feet. He grimaces and looks to the sky --

GORDON
God, please quit testing me -- Two hours sleep last night, projectile vomiting at breakfast, ran over by stampeding cows, a fucking bear almost killing me -- Please make my worst first day of work ever go away and never repeat itself.

Jennifer laughs. He looks offended.

GORDON
And she laughs at me.

But he sees a spark in her eye.

GORDON
Are you maybe feeling sorry for me?
Just a little?

Gordon moves closer to Jennifer.

JENNIFER
This is not a sex-out-of-sympathy moment. Learn how to read the room.

GORDON
But I used my body as a shield for you. That's not even worth a... kiss?

She's touched by his unexpected charm, but pushes him away --

JENNIFER
The bear might come back. Let's go.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - BELL'S FARM - NIGHT

Gordon and Jennifer approach the farmhouse.

GORDON
I guess I'll see you in the A.M.,
unless you, um, want to--

JENNIFER
I've had enough excitement for one
evening, Gordon. Good night.

They enter the farmhouse. She heads upstairs, and Gordon heads downstairs --

INT. BASEMENT - FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Gordon descends the steps to his bedroom. When he reaches the bottom, he's stunned -- the basement's FLOODED.

His possessions are underwater -- his air mattress is drifting -- trash is floating -- clothes are soaked -- flowing water GURGLES.

His clock shows "10:35 PM", but the numbers are distorted by being underwater. A furious Gordon STOMPS back upstairs.

EXT. PORCH - FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Farmer Bell is smoking a pipe and Emilia is crocheting as they sway in rocking chairs, enjoying the serenity of the night. Gordon BURSTS open the screen door, ending the serenity.

FARMER BELL
Beautiful night, eh, Tinkler?

GORDON
If you like tsunamis. Have you taken
a look in the basement lately?

FARMER BELL
Nope. I don't believe in snooping
around people's private spaces.

GORDON
Well, there's an olympic-sized
swimming pool there now.

FARMER BELL
It does get wet now and then. Didn't
I tell you?

(MORE)

FARMER BELL (cont'd)
 It must have slipped my mind. I guess
 I owe you an apology. I'm sorry.

EMILIA
 (to Farmer Bell)
 That's what I love about you, you're
 not too big a man to say you're
 sorry.

Gordon simply glares at them. STORMS back into the farmhouse.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Gordon STOMPS up the stairway to a hallway. Stops at the first door, which is ajar.

GORDON
 Jennifer?

Gordon opens the door wider to reveal the Weird Guy on his knees, praying, and he's stark naked. Gordon closes the door as he does the sign of the cross.

GORDON
 Sorry.

INT. WEIRD GUY'S ROOM - NIGHT

The Weird Guy continues his prayer --

WEIRD GUY
 Please God, get me out of this hole.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Gordon moves on to the next doorway and knocks.

JENNIFER (O.S.)
 What?

Gordon opens the door to reveal Jennifer, half-dressed. She covers herself with a shirt.

JENNIFER
 DUDE! In what world does 'What' mean
 to open the door and barge into my
 room?! I already said good night.

She waits for him to leave. But he only stammers --

GORDON
 Uh, my room's underwear... uh, I mean
 underwater. I was wondering, uh, can
 I sleep here tonight?

She answers by slamming the door in his face. Gordon sulks.

GORDON
 Jeez.

A hand GRABS Gordon's shoulder. He WHIPS around to see --

CRISPY
 Hey dude, I couldn't help overhearing
 you. You can crash at my pad.

GORDON
 That's okay, Crispy, I don't want to
 impose...

CRISPY
 I insist, man. We've got to stick
 together, you and me.
 (clasps his hands)
 Like monoliths, man.

GORDON
 I'd rather be a monolith with her.

Crispy leads Gordon down the hallway to his room.

CRISPY
 Welcome to the 21st century, man. No
 more free love. Sorry.

Crispy's door is a row of long, dangling beads covering the
 doorway. Crispy pulls Gordon inside --

INT. CRISPY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gordon squints through smoky haze and sniffs a strong odor.
 Posters of sixties rock bands, anti-Vietnam War propaganda,
 and peace signs hang on the walls.

Sixties rock music CRACKLES on an ancient record player.

CRISPY
 You can take the bed.

GORDON
 Um...

Crispy points to an army blanket and uncovered pillow lying on the hard, wooden floor -- There is no bed.

GORDON
I really hate putting you out like this.

CRISPY
You'd do the same for me, man.

Gordon takes in the Vietnam posters.

GORDON
Wasn't Vietnam like... 50 years ago? Shouldn't you be like, 80 or something? You don't look that old.

He turns to see Crispy take off his long-haired wig, revealing a bald head.

CRISPY
You busted me, man. I was just a little kid in the sixties. I picked up the lingo from my older bros.

Crispy hangs the wig on a dummy head with a Nixon mask --

EXT. BELL'S FARM - DAY

At sunrise, Farmer Bell stands in front of the workers, instructing them on their daily chores.

FARMER BELL
Jennifer, you're milkin' cows today.

JENNIFER
I don't know how to work one of those... uh... milking things.

FARMER BELL
The machines are all busted. You'll have to do it by hand.

The thought of using her hands disgusts her --

JENNIFER
I am not milking cows by hand.

FARMER BELL
Listen, Missy, that "women's lib" crap doesn't wash around here.

JENNIFER
 "Women's lib"?

FARMER BELL
 Any eight-year-old can do it. So can you.

(turns to Gordon and Crispy)
 And that leaves you two the only job left, and I'm afraid it's not a very pleasant one.

GORDON
 (whispers to Crispy)
 What could be worse than shoveling shit?

FARMER BELL
 The sewer needs unclogged. Tools are in the tool shed.

CRISPY
 (whispers to Gordon)
 He just named that tune, man.

Bell walks off. Gordon looks to Jennifer.

GORDON
 You wanna trade?

JENNIFER
 Yanking on cow-breasts or digging in human waste? I think I'll stick with mine. Good luck.

She puts on a fake smile and leaves.

GORDON
 My whole life is shit.

CRISPY
 Literally. Let's vamoose, dude.

EXT. DRIVEWAY/DITCH - BELL'S FARM - DAY

Gordon and Crispy hop in the Farmer's old, rickety truck and drive to the end of a long drive where it meets the road.

After they exit the truck, Gordon studies the length of the ditch in front of the farm. He surveys the nearby end of the ditch to the far end. Something makes him curious.

Crispy follows him into the ditch. Gordon spots it --

Gordon examines an exposed pipe sticking out. The pipe's dry.

GORDON
You see this pipe?

CRISPY
It's drier than a Kentucky township.

Gordon drags a confused Crispy to the truck and drives to the far end of the ditch.

They park on the road, head to the ditch, where Gordon finds another exposed pipe sticking out.

Gordon examines the end of the pipe and sees it's leaking at the seams.

GORDON
Now, look at this pipe.

CRISPY
Stuffed up like a nose full of snot.

Gordon cringes, but goes on --

GORDON
The broken pipe has to be located somewhere between the length of this ditch. If we take half the ditch's distance and dig up the pipe, we can figure out which side the broken pipe is on. We'll keep halving the distance until we find the sucker.

CRISPY
You're a regular Einstein, man.

GORDON
I didn't sleep through all my classes.

The two men proceed to shovel in search of the broken pipe. Eventually -- CLUNK -- Gordon's shovel hits the broken pipe.

They look at each other and celebrate as if they struck gold. They jubilantly RUN to the truck and take off down the road.

EXT. TRUCK (MOVING) - FISHCREEK - DAY

Gordon drives the truck through the downtown area. The truck passes a tarnished sign reading, "FISHCREEK DOWNTOWN DISTRICT - HOME OF THE 2012 WATERMELON SEED SPITTING STATE CHAMPIONS".

The truck pulls into a parking space in front of Fishcreek Hardware. The men DRAG the broken pipe from the bed of the truck into the hardware store.

EXT. DITCH - BELL'S FARM - DAY

Crispy and Gordon DRAG the new pipe across the bed of the truck. They carry it to the hole they dug and drop it in.

GORDON

Let's show Bell we can do something right.

CRISPY

Right on.

INT. WINDOW - FARMHOUSE - DAY

Farmer Bell watches the two through his binoculars. He speaks to a local farmer, JAKE (30s), on a landline.

FARMER BELL

(into phone)

You boys ready?

EXT. TRUCK - WOODLAND AREA - DAY

Parked down the road from Bell's farm, a large septic tank truck has a long hose attached. The other end of the hose leads into the ditch. Jake holds a lever on the truck.

JAKE

(into phone)

Just give us the word.

EXT. DITCH - DAY

Crispy and Gordon maneuver the new pipe into position.

FARMER BELL (V.O.)

Let it flow.

EXT. TRUCK - WOODLAND AREA - DAY

Jake pushes the lever down. The hose shakes and expands. JAKE'S ASSISTANT (30s) holds the hose steady inside an uncovered pipe in the ditch.

EXT. DITCH - DAY

Crispy and Gordon try to align the new pipe. They disregard the RUMBLING SOUND...

CRISPY
Man, I'm pooped--

SLOOSH! The sewage SQUIRTS through the pipe connection and SPRAYS AND SPLASHES IN ALL DIRECTIONS.

Gordon tries to block the surge with his hands, but it's useless --

CRISPY
Holy Mary Mother of--

The sewage SHOOTS Crispy squarely in the mouth.

INT. WINDOW - FARMHOUSE - DAY

Farmer Bell watches and chuckles at the two men.

FARMER BELL
Eat shit, Hippy.

EXT. DITCH - DAY

The two men fight desperately to complete the fit, but the force of the waste defeats them.

They give up, step back, and watch the pressure of the waste subside, leaving them completely drenched from head to toe.

CRISPY
I take back the Einstein compliment --

INT. LIVING ROOM - FARMHOUSE - DAY

Gordon STORMS into the farmhouse. Farmer Bell is sitting in a chair, nonchalantly watching Gordon from behind a newspaper.

The headline in the newspaper reads, "PRESIDENT CLAIMS OPERATION SODBUSTER OFF TO ROUSING START".

Gordon goes directly to Bell, leaving a trail of sewage.

GORDON
I'm gonna make a phone call using
your phone. Do you know why?
(MORE)

GORDON (cont'd)
 Because my fucking cell phone is now
 a piece of shit!

Gordon STOMPS to the landline phone and pulls out a piece of paper from his wallet. He squints to read the smeared words "COMPLAINTS DEPT" and a phone number. Dials the number --

GORDON
 (into phone)
 Complaints Department?! Yeah! I want
 out of here! I'm working for a
 fucking lunatic! I got stomped on by
 stampeding cows, been up to my knees
 in manure, and now I'm covered in
 shit! I want out of here!

INTERCUT with

INT. OFFICE - COMPLAINTS DEPARTMENT - DAY

The federal agent who takes the complaint is a man named MOE (80s). He enunciates every syllable and moves in slow motion.

MOE
 Do you wish to file a complaint?

GORDON
 That's what I just said, you dick!

MOE
 My name is Moe, not Dick. Now, I must
 have your name and your valid
 identification number.

GORDON
 My name is Gordon. Tinkler. And my ID
 number is 55118-D.

MOE
 Gordon... like my favorite superhero,
 Flash Gordon. What is your first
 name?

GORDON
 That is my first name! Gordon!

MOE
 Oh. And your last name?

GORDON
 Tinkler. T-I-N-K-L-E-R.

MOE
And your identification number?

GORDON
5-5-1-1-8-D!

Bell laughs to himself, overhearing Gordon's frustration.

MOE
Now, what is the nature of your complaint?

GORDON
This farmer is trying to kill me!

MOE
Oh yes, you called the right place. Killing is a violation of our rules and is not permitted under our policy. Allow me to file your complaint in our system... Our investigators will look into it in...

Drip. Drip. Drip...

MOE
(checking computer)
... about three years.

GORDON
Three fucking years? The program just started!

MOE
You are correct, sir. It started on the 14th of June of this year.

GORDON
How can you already be backed up for three years!?

MOE
We've had a lot of complaints... I strongly urge you not to quit your job until after the investiga--

Gordon SLAMS the phone down. He finds Bell staring at him.

FARMER BELL
What's the matter, Tinkler? Don't you like it around here? Have you ever considered that you might be hurtin' someone's feelings?

Gordon glares at Bell while sewage drips to the floor.

FARMER BELL

I'll tell you what. Since you've had such a long day, clean up that trail of crap you tracked in, and you can knock off the rest of the day.

Bell exits the room. Gordon observes his own footprints leading from the door to the telephone. Next to it is a clock. It shows 4:45.

Gordon trembles in shit-covered anger. He makes another call --

Karen answers, mid-giggle. Gordon hears ROCK MUSIC BLARING and people LAUGHING in the background.

KAREN (V.O.)

(slurring)

Who is this?

GORDON

(into phone)

Mom, what's going on there? Are you already drinking?

KAREN (V.O.)

It's five o'clock somewhere.

GORDON

It's me, Gordon.

KAREN (V.O.)

Gordon! How are you honey? Are you having the best time making jam and milking sheep or whatever?

GORDON

What the hell's going on over there?

KAREN (V.O.)

Oh, your dad's been in such a good mood. We've been partying like it's the eighties.

GORDON

Fantastic. Well, listen, I don't think it's gonna work out here...

KAREN (V.O.)

Oh no, honey, what's wron--

CHUCK (V.O.)
 (in b.g.)
 Give me that.
 (into phone)
 Why are you interrupting our fun?

GORDON
 Listen, Dad, I took what you said to heart. I did. I gave it my best shot. It just isn't working out, OK?

Chuck BURSTS with contemptuous LAUGHTER, DISTORTING the sound.

GORDON
 Maybe I could swing back home and get back on the job hunt...

CHUCK (V.O.)
 You don't get it, do you, son? I'm not bailing you out anymore. This is it. Your last chance saloon. You make this work, or you can live in the backseat of that shitty Nissan for all I care, 'cause you sure as hell aren't coming back here.
 (calling)
 Hey, Karen, do we still have more margarita mix--

The line goes dead.

Gordon's face drops. He braces his back against the wall and slides down to the floor. He coils into a fetal position. He sees a pair of feet stepping in front of him.

CRISPY (O.S.)
 I've been there before, Gordon.

Gordon looks up to Crispy's sympathetic face in new clothing.

GORDON
 I'm gonna rot at this farm, Crispy.

Crispy sits next to him.

CRISPY
 You'll find a way out of this, and you'll be better for the experience.

GORDON
 It's the Bell experience that pisses me off. If it weren't for his Gestapo methods...

CRISPY

Don't worry, Gordon, you'll make it.

PRE-LAP: An off-key dinner bell RINGS OUT.

INT. DINING ROOM - FARMHOUSE - DAY

The usual group is seated around the table, eating corn on the cob. Farmer Bell has kernels around his mouth, on the hairs protruding from his nose, and in his hair...

Gordon's still seething from the earlier incident.

GORDON

I haven't seen you around lately,
Jamie. Where have you been?

JAMIE

Brush-hogging the back quarter of the
property.

GORDON

I'm not an experienced farmer, but a
brush-hog seems to make cutting weeds
easier than doing it by hand.

Before Jamie can respond, Bell notices Gordon's suspicion. He looks shifty-eyed and spits corn when he interjects --

FARMER BELL

You're right, Tinkler, you don't know
nothin' about farmin'.

CRISPY

Incoming shrapnel--

Gordon wipes the corn off his shirt and glares at Bell.

FARMER BELL

The brush-hog's broke, like all our
equipment. You can thank the damn
government for cuttin' our subsidies.

GORDON

(steaming)

Are they all broken? At the same
time? What a coincidence--

PLOP! Farmer Bell drops his bare cob of corn on his plate.

FARMER BELL

Okay, let's get the next meal ready.

Emilia brings a huge bowl to the table. Jamie and Marla scrape the remnants of everyone's plates into the bowl.

GORDON
Slop for the hogs?

FARMER BELL
Wrong again, Tinkler. It's for the workers in the barn. No subsidies. Food's scarce. Gotta make do.

The farmworkers cringe. Bell pours gravy over the leftovers.

FARMER BELL
Now it's "Farmer's Stew".

Bell stirs the gravy and the leftovers into a pile of mushy slop with a large spoon.

EMILIA
And it has all four food groups.

Gordon can't contain his anger any longer. He EXPLODES. JUMPS UP. The force KNOCKS over the chair --

GORDON
That's it! You can't feed that shit to the farmworkers after spending all day in the sun! You're killing them with these insane chores!

All eyes fall on Gordon.

Emilia's face collapses, she cries, and runs into the kitchen.

Jamie and Marla are nonplussed with their mouths agape.

Jennifer admires Gordon with newfound respect, grinning.

The Weird Guy's chair is empty.

Crispy stands with Gordon, interlocking arms with him --

CRISPY
I'm with you, Big Daddy!

Farmer Bell, face frozen, deliberates until the commotion settles down. He points to the Farmer's Stew.

FARMER BELL
Eat it, Tinkler.

Gordon refuses by adamantly shaking his head.

FARMER BELL
I said eat it, Tinkler.

GORDON
You eat it, Bell.

FARMER BELL
Everyone out, except the farmworkers.

Gordon, Crispy and Jennifer stay behind.

FARMER BELL
Okay, Big Daddy, I've got a special chore for you and your disciple in the mornin'. Call it a coincidence, but tomorrow might be the hottest day of the summer. Wouldn't want to make you work in the sun, so I'll put ya in the barn, stackin' bales of hay.

GORDON
Baling's the toughest job on the farm! We'll roast in the barn!

FARMER BELL
You'll do what you're told.

CRISPY
I protest.

FARMER BELL
So will I, to the government, if you don't do it. Don't worry, I'll be right by your side, supervisin'.

They cower.

FARMER BELL
And as far as you, Missy, a new sign needs erectin' by the road...

JENNIFER
I don't know how to work one of those, um, spinny digger things.

FARMER BELL
Then it's your lucky day. We call it a shovel.

JENNIFER
(turns to Gordon)
Look what you got me into.

INT. WEIRD GUY'S BEDROOM - FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

The Weird Guy sits on his bed with a piece of chalk in his hand. Above his bed, marks on the wall indicate the passage of time. He adds another mark for one more day.

EXT. BUILDINGS - BELL'S FARM - DAY

The morning sun bears down on the bewildered Gordon and Crispy, wandering aimlessly among various buildings, searching for the barn. They wipe the sweat off their brows.

GORDON

Did Bell even tell us which barn we're supposed to work in?

CRISPY

Cookie-cutter barns, man, it's like finding a needle in a haystack.

Gordon spots a huge building at the end.

GORDON

Maybe it's this big one.

They bitterly approach the barn expecting another hard day.

INT. HUGE BUILDING - BELL'S FARM - DAY

When Gordon slides open the door, he's floored by the sight: New tractors, conveyors, wagons, and other farm equipment sitting idle. Crispy peeks over his shoulder.

GORDON

You see what I see?

CRISPY

Why'd he say the machinery needs to be fixed? Looks new to me.

GORDON

Bell's hiding it in this barn.

CRISPY

I'm about to flip my wig, man.

GORDON

He's trying to break us so we quit, Crispy. We'll lose our unemployment, and we'll end up with nothing.

CRISPY
That's not cool.

GORDON
No, not cool. Now, we have evidence.
And Federal Agents are gonna need to
see this.

INT. TOWN HALL - FISHCREEK - DAY

In a large hall, a bombastic speaker, ARLEN (60s), addresses a GROUP OF FARMERS from a podium, including Farmer Bell.

ARLEN
You all have a right to be proud. Our
plan to force these so-called
farmworkers to quit is paying off.
We'll bring those leeches to their
knees and send them back from whence
they came. Then they'll have no
choice but to give us our subsidies.

The Group CHEERS the words of Arlen.

ARLEN
I understand that over 300,000
complaints were filed nationwide in
just one week.

The Group cheers again. A scary farmer with an eye patch, PERCY (40s), raises his hand.

ARLEN
The floor recognizes Percy.

Percy stands up in dramatic fashion, as if he were the toughest guy in the world.

PERCY
Wouldn't it be faster if we...
(looks around)
... just kill a few of 'em.

A MURMUR can be heard throughout the Group. An EXCITED FARMER (50s), next to him, jumps up --

EXCITED FARMER
I second it!

The Group grows louder over the suggestion.

ARLEN

(bangs gavel)

Please, useful suggestions only. We have to stay the course. The sooner the farmworkers quit, the sooner things go back to the way they were.

The Farmers rise to their feet, cheering the spokesperson. Bell offers Arlen a sly nod --

INT. BARN - BELL'S FARM - DAY

Farmer Bell smiles, sitting and watching Crispy lifting and loading bales of hay off a hay wagon onto Gordon's back.

Gordon trudges up a flight of stairs to the hay loft, where he stacks the bales before he drags himself down to the wagon to be loaded again.

EXT. BARN - BELL'S FARM - DAY

Inconspicuously hiding outside the barn is a federal agent, OWEN PRATT (40s), who dons glasses, a dark suit, and a tie.

He pulls out his laptop and scrolls through various farms until he finds, "BELL FARM, FISHCREEK, IOWA".

Owen peeks through the barn window and observes Crispy and Gordon's workload and conditions. Takes photos.

Owen enters in his laptop: "WORKING CONDITIONS: INHUMANE, INTOLERABLE, TYRANNICAL". Satisfied, Owen slips away.

MONTAGE:

-- On ANOTHER FARM, Owen sneaks into a barn with a sign reading, "GOVERNMENT WORKERS LIVING QUARTERS".

He enters to find animal pens converted into bedrooms for the workers. He comes to the last pen and finds a sheep inside. Owen takes photos.

-- On ANOTHER FARM, Owen notices half-full bathtubs against a makeshift partition in the outdoors. Above it, he sees a sign marked "MEN'S RESTROOM". He takes more photos.

He types in his laptop: "LIVING CONDITIONS: UNSANITARY, DEPLORABLE, BARBARIC"...

EXT. BARN - BELL'S FARM - DAY

Before sunset, Gordon and Crispy approach a spigot with a hose. They're soaked by sweat and covered by hay.

Crispy grabs the hose as Gordon picks hay off his face. At point-blank range, Crispy sprays Gordon in his face.

CRISPY

Let me give you a helping hand, dude.

He hands the hose to Gordon. As Crispy heads back to the farmhouse, Gordon sprays him in the back of the head.

Gordon pauses when he hears a SCREAM of frustration by the roadside -- he notices Jennifer struggling to dig a hole in the impenetrable grass --

With all her weight into it, she jumps on the shovel blade with both feet before toppling backwards to the ground.

Gordon grimaces, then, for the first time all day, the tiniest hint of a smile curls his lip -- An epiphany.

EXT. DIGGING SITE - BELL'S FARM - DAY

Jennifer continues her battle with the earth, grunting, brow wet with sweat--

She JUMPS at a sudden ROARING SOUND (o.s.), turns to see --

A BACKHOE CAREENING down the hill, a defiant, freshly clothed Gordon at the wheel.

JENNIFER

What the hell...

GORDON

I brought you a "real" shovel.

Gordon backs the tractor up so the backhoe's claw is in position to dig.

JENNIFER

Where... How?

GORDON

Compliments of Farmer Bell. Consider this an apology for coming into your room that night.

JENNIFER

It's dramatic, I'll give you that.

GORDON
So where's this hole going?

She points to a hacked-at spot in the grass.

Gordon moves the levers, unearthing a clod of dirt nowhere near the right spot.

GORDON
Just a sec, hold on to your shorts.

He attacks the backhoe control with no idea of what he's doing. The arm and bucket SWING wildly in front of Jennifer's head, who DUCKS out of the way.

GORDON
Oops, sorry.

Gordon accidentally uproots a small sapling that sticks in the prongs of the bucket.

Jennifer shakes her head, chuckles.

He uses the controls to wobble the arm left and right, eventually dislodging it with a resounding THUMP.

JENNIFER
You're such a moron. You know that?

GORDON
What? You think you can do better?

He reaches a hand out to her and helps her up into the cabin.

The two share the seat and operate as a team, with one controlling the arm and the other the bucket.

They fall into delirious fits of giggling as the backhoe judders around wildly, eventually finding their rhythm and finally digging a messy hole in the grassy edge.

Gordon CHEERS, and in doing so accidentally nudges one of the joysticks, sending the arm plunging downward onto Bell's new sign -- CRRRRACK -- it SPLINTERS into two pieces.

He and Jennifer share an 'oh shit' look, then BURST INTO LAUGHTER.

A charged beat emerges between them as their laughter dies down. A spark kindles a feeling between them, then--

FARMER BELL
TINKLER!

Gordon and Jennifer turn to see Bell STORMING down the trail toward them. They both hop off the tractor.

FARMER BELL

Just what in the goddamn grand larceny do you think you're doing?

GORDON

Digging the best damn hole on the farm.

(re the backhoe)

Miracle right? Given they were all supposed to be busted. Guess the Lord works in mysterious ways.

Bell looks down at the splintered sign and uprooted sapling. He turns to Jennifer, bottling his rage.

FARMER BELL

You get yourself to the shed. Some heifers are needin' milked.

JENNIFER

That's disgusting.

FARMER BELL

What're you gonna drink in the mornin'? Now, git goin'.

JENNIFER

I'm gone.

When she's out of earshot, Gordon and Bell share a fiery stare at each other.

GORDON

I know what you're doing, Bell. Trying to break us so you can get your subsidies back.

FARMER BELL

You're full of shit, Tinkler.

GORDON

And your barn's full of working machines.

Bell's jaw clenches, irked by Gordon's discovery. He restrains himself, forces a smile, leans in close --

FARMER BELL

Two can play at this game, Tinkler, and you never struck me as a winner.

Bell walks away, getting in the last word over his shoulder --

FARMER BELL
Fix the damn sign.

INT. CRISPY'S ROOM - BELL'S FARM - EVENING

Gordon paces back and forth, furious. Crispy's stoned eyes follow his path.

GORDON
Three fucking years. Just for an investigation...

CRISPY
You're making me dizzy.

GORDON
Am I expected to sing the blues while I'm toiling on the chain gang?

CRISPY
Man, you're harshing my vibe. You gotta find that inner peace, instead of dragging everybody down with you.

GORDON
We should drag the farmworkers down, down to the barn to see with their own eyes. They need to know what's going on. We have nothing to lose...

CRISPY
That's not what I meant...

Gordon hurries out of the room. Crispy shrugs, follows him.

EXT. BARN - BELL'S FARM - NIGHT

An exhausted gaggle of farmworkers trudges toward the huge barn, MURMURING to themselves. Gordon stands at the door.

GORDON
Listen, I know you're all tired, but Bell's been lying to us, telling us there's no usable machinery. When in fact, he's hiding this --

He SLIDES open the door of the barn, revealing--

NOTHING. A solitary chicken pecks at the concrete floor in the wide open space.

FARMWORKER
A secret chicken!

WEIRD GUY
The perfect hiding place.

Gordon looks on in horror.

GORDON
It was full of equipment, I swear!

The exhausted farmworkers scowl at him.

FARMWORKER #2
Good one, asshole.

FARMWORKER #3
I'm supposed to be up in four
hours pulling carrots.

GORDON
It's true! Tell them Crispy --

CRISPY
Gordon's right. Brothers. Sisters.
There's some hairy shit going down.

Gordon looks over a sea of unconvinced faces.

CRISPY
Open your eyes, man. We're in the
middle of a fucking conspiracy. They
wanna grind us down into power--

GORDON
No, Crispy, no, get a grip--

CRISPY
Don't let the media syringe fill your
veins full of bullshit to keep your
minds closed. We're all pawns here,
letting Bell move us around on his
chessboard--

FARMWORKER
Well, I'm gonna move myself back to
bed since you cleared everything up.

FARMWORKER #2
Bell's an asshole, but we don't give
a shit about your personal vendetta.

The farmworkers GRUMBLE about Gordon as they walk back to
their quarters.

FARMWORKER #3

We just want our checks, dude. Stop fucking it up.

GORDON

It was in here. He moved it all out!

He spots Jamie among them.

GORDON

Jamie, pal, you know what's really going on. Stuck here all your life. You know this isn't fair.

JAMIE

Not cool, Gordo. Lying about my dad.

Gordon turns to Jennifer. His desperate eyes plead with her to say something. She sighs --

JENNIFER

You did help me dig a hole with some kind of tractor. But I don't know where you got it.

The farmworkers continue the exodus.

FARMWORKER

Compelling testimony from a pothead and his girlfriend.

Gordon stares in exasperation at Crispy and Jennifer.

CRISPY

Hey man, I tried opening their minds. Can't help it if they're squares.

Gordon watches Crispy wander off to the farmhouse, then sees Bell watching him through a window. Bell taunts him with a "thumbs-up".

Gordon slumps to the ground.

JENNIFER (O.S.)

So that went well.

Gordon looks up. Jennifer stayed behind.

GORDON

You could only say, "I don't know where he got the tractor"?

JENNIFER

That's the truth. Do you want me to lie for you?

A morose beat.

GORDON

No.

(then)

Bell must have moved the equipment in the night. I should have kept my big mouth shut about the machinery.

JENNIFER

There goes your evidence.

GORDON

I'm not done yet.

A long downbeat pause is palpable.

JENNIFER

Thanks for your help. It was fun.

Her words lift his mood a bit. He forces a smile.

GORDON

Could use a little more of that.

JENNIFER

Hm?

GORDON

Fun.

JENNIFER

What's next, a joyride on a combine?

GORDON

I might be done with heavy machinery. Maybe a movie.

JENNIFER

It'll take your mind off things.

She turns to leave, then --

GORDON

Crispy says there's a great who-dun-it at the local drive-in.

Jennifer takes a seat on the ground next to him.

JENNIFER

Look, I appreciate what you did today. It was the first time I've enjoyed myself since I've been here. But I don't want to get your hopes up when I know there won't be any kind of future for us.

GORDON

I'm asking you to go to a movie, not for your hand in marriage.

His odd charm makes her almost laugh.

JENNIFER

Can't you take anything seriously?

GORDON

Yeah. Serious things. And I'm seriously cool being with you.

JENNIFER

(sighs)

You remember reading Peter Pan when you were a kid? You remind me of him. Have you ever heard of the Peter Pan syndrome?

GORDON

Think my prof skipped over that one.

JENNIFER

Your reply shows my point exactly. Peter Pan was a boy who never grew up. And I'm not a woman who'll wait for a man to do so.

GORDON

Okay, maybe I'm on the lax side.

JENNIFER

Meaning irresponsible.

(then)

It's fun hanging out with you, and you're a decent-looking guy, but--

It finally dawns on him--

GORDON

You still think I'm a doofus.

Jennifer appears surprised.

JENNIFER
You remember me saying that?

GORDON
Things that hurt you stick with you.

JENNIFER
I never thought it would have
bothered you.

GORDON
It did.

JENNIFER
I shouldn't have said it.

Gordon looks down as if the world came to an end.

GORDON
Well, I think you're cool. You're the
only thing I look forward to in this
hellhole.

Gordon gets on his feet and moves to leave.

GORDON
Guess I'll go grow up.

Jennifer looks ashamed of herself as he walks away.

JENNIFER
Gordon. I'm not proud of how I
treated you. If the offer's still out
there, I want to go with you --

INT. GORDON'S CAR - DRIVE-IN - NIGHT

Gordon pulls his Nissan into a parking spot in the last row.

JENNIFER
Aren't we a little far from the
screen?

Gordon fumbles underneath the seat in search of something. He
yanks out a bottle of wine.

GORDON
I figured we could be a little more
discreet while enjoying this.

She takes it and examines the label.

JENNIFER

I didn't know they made wine in Iowa.
Are we going to chug it from the
bottle?

GORDON

I'm not completely incompetent.

He retrieves a corkscrew and two jelly jars.

JENNIFER

Quaint.

Jennifer notices Gordon struggling with the corkscrew and takes the bottle from Gordon, twists it off.

They relax and sip the wine as the movie starts.

TWO PICKUP TRUCKS disrupt their romantic evening when they park next to Gordon's Nissan, one on each side.

Gordon and Jennifer become highly aware of them.

Two FARMERS (20s) file out of the pickup on Gordon's side, and two OTHER FARMERS (20s) exit their truck on Jennifer's side.

By Gordon's expression, he seems to recognize them from the gas station where he asked for directions. The Farmers lean into the car's open windows.

FARMER #1

How's the movie?

GORDON

The plot's a little cliched.

Gordon furtively locks the doors. On Jennifer's side, Farmer #2 sticks his head through the window.

FARMER #2

You sure are cute.

He smiles broadly, revealing yellow, rotting teeth.

On Gordon's side, Farmer #1 SNATCHES the bottle of wine --

FARMER #1

You don't mind, do ya?

GORDON

No. Have all of it.

Gordon THROWS his jar of wine into the eyes of Farmer #1, which forces him to recoil. Gordon shifts the car into high gear and PEELS-OUT.

On Jennifer's side, Farmer #2's head is stuck in the window. He keeps up by running along the side of the car.

The speaker cord SNAPS, and the speaker drops into Jennifer's lap. She instinctively grabs the speaker and SMASHES it into the face of Farmer #2. He drops to the ground.

EXT. DRIVE-IN - NIGHT

The Farmers RUSH to their trucks as Gordon SPEEDS through the drive-in and FLIES OUT the exit, kicking up dust behind him.

Left behind, Farmer #2 sits upright on the ground, crying like a baby, displaying his missing front teeth.

INT. GORDON'S CAR (MOVING) - COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Gordon checks his rear-view mirror to see the pickups chasing them. Jennifer's frightened after gawking at the pursuers.

JENNIFER

Those guys came directly to us.

GORDON

I saw them at the gas station on the first day I came here. Bell knows I'm on to him. He's trying to scare me.

JENNIFER

I don't get it. Why is he doing this?

Gordon looks back to see the farmers' trucks gaining on them.

GORDON

Bell's trying to get his subsidies back, and I don't think he's the only one. The Farmers might be in this together. They're desperate.

JENNIFER

So Bell isn't just a colossal asshole...

GORDON

Oh, he's a colossal asshole, but he's an asshole with a plan.

(off her)

(MORE)

GORDON (cont'd)

There's a three-year waiting list of complaints, which means we're not the only farmworkers being mistreated.

Gordon takes a sharp corner, shuts his lights off and deftly sneaks the car into a hidden dirt road.

The two trucks in pursuit ZOOM by the dirt road. Gordon and Jennifer both breathe a sigh of relief.

GORDON

Are you alright?

She nods her head. Her shaking subsides.

GORDON

Am I reading the room wrong now if I bring up that old theory that when people are in danger, they become closer to each other?

JENNIFER

Your room reading skills are wrong again, but I admit that was pretty impressive *Fast and Furious* driving, and standing up to bullies.

A thought strikes Gordon --

GORDON

That's it...

JENNIFER

What?

GORDON

Stand up against the bullies.
(then)
Stick together. All of us. We'll unite, like the farmers -- We'll form a union!

Even though Jennifer displays an admiration, she is leery --

JENNIFER

You might have lost some credibility.

GORDON

I didn't serve any. Now, the farmworkers have something "real" to support. I'll win them back.

JENNIFER

You?

GORDON
Well, it doesn't have to be me.

JENNIFER
I mean... that's the first time I've heard you say something, uh, like you're not a teenager... It's kinda, sexy.

Gordon absorbs her compliment, and a small smile forms. She reaches over and takes his hand. This gives him a shot of confidence.

GORDON
Hm, Gordon Tinkler. Union leader --

INT. CRISPY'S BEDROOM - FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Gordon paces back and forth, amped. Crispy looks at him from the edge of his bed, incredulous --

CRISPY
A fucking union? That's wild, man.

GORDON
The farmers won't stop treating us like crap until we fight back.

Crispy admires his intensity.

CRISPY
Hell yeah, bro. Sticking it to the man. How ya gonna pull off the gig?

GORDON
Me? I don't know, I've never done it before...

CRISPY
Look, dude, I've seen the worst dweebs ever to start a union. I'm sure you can do just as badly.

Gordon turns and stares seriously at Crispy, exuding an air of confidence --

GORDON
You're right, I'm not the worst. I know I can do it.

CRISPY
(pumps his fist)
Right on, man!

GORDON
And you can be my Vice President.

CRISPY
Cool. But I won't be a figurehead.

Crispy rises and gives "skin", a low-five, to a confused Gordon.

CRISPY
Damn, man. Look at all this mojo you got. All you needed was a little "Tang Tang".

GORDON
Wasn't like that. I didn't get any Tang Tang, and I didn't expect it.

CRISPY
Oh, I got ya, man. Bummed out, eh?

GORDON
No -- honestly, it was the best night I've had with Jennifer. She still has her guard up, but she's not blowing me off like before.

CRISPY
C'est la vie, man.

Crispy turns off the light and ponders the universe. Gordon appears determined and sure of himself.

GORDON
All I need now is to find a way to spread the message. And fast --

INT. DEPARTMENT OFFICE - WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

Owen Pratt delivers his report to Secretary of Agriculture CARRUTHERS (60s).

OWEN PRATT
... and the farmers are doling out the most difficult and humiliating jobs imaginable. They're forcing the farmworkers to perform all the labor manually instead of using their automated equipment. I witnessed this with my own two eyes, and I wept--

CARRUTHERS

All right, all right, cut the cornball shit.

(then)

The President doesn't want to drop the program because of the upcoming election, and he doesn't want to punish the farmers since he might lose their vote...

OWEN PRATT

Sir, under the present conditions, the workers won't last another week. One of my agents heard some rumblings of a possible... union.

CARRUTHERS

(scoffs)

Sodbusters forming a union? They're a group of lazy assholes sucking the government dry their whole lives. Yeah, good luck with that.

(then)

Still, if the fake news hears of it, they'll have a field day. We'd better do something to shut them up.

Carruthers leans back in his chair, thinks for a moment.

CARRUTHERS

Something real Americana.

(jumps up)

I know. We'll throw them a barbecue!

OWEN PRATT

Sir, with all due respect, that idea fucking sucks. It's just a band-aid.

CARRUTHERS

Sure it's a band-aid. This whole country's held together by band-aids.

(sits down)

Yes, we'll throw them a barbecue, make 'em feel like heroes... Plan it for the Fourth of July!

(leans back)

Make sure there's plenty of booze --

EXT. PICNIC GROUNDS - FISHCREEK - NIGHT

An empty bottle of cheap vodka rolls off a picnic table and FALLS below the feet of Crispy and Jennifer, who anxiously wait for Gordon while observing the expansive barbecue.

Above them, a banner hangs, reading: "A REWARD FOR THE GOVERNMENT FARMWORKERS -- A JOB WELL DONE -- THE GOVERNMENT THANKS YOU" with an image of Uncle Sam pointing.

Bottles of hard liquor, empty, half-full, and some tipped over, rest on rows of picnic tables.

Farmworkers are in random forms of inebriation: Some laugh hysterically, some are passed out, and others gaze at the sky.

Pigs on spits have been stripped clean except for their heads.

Gordon finally arrives and joins Crispy and Jennifer. Gordon appears anxious. He fidgets with his notes and a megaphone.

JENNIFER

Gordon, where have you been?

GORDON

I wanted to wait until the perfect moment to talk to them.

CRISPY

I think you waited too long, man. They're wasted.

Gordon drops his notes. Jennifer helps him pick them up.

JENNIFER

Are you okay?

GORDON

I... I'm nervous. I threw up when I had to give a speech in college.

As they set up, a DRUNK MAN passes out in front of them.

CRISPY

Hurry up and rap with these dudes, man, they're dropping like flies.

Gordon steps up on the top of a picnic table with the megaphone in hand. His voice cracks.

GORDON

(into megaphone)

E-Excuse me... everyone. Excuse me. M-May I have your a-attention?

No one responds. They continue to shout, laugh and drink. Gordon, frustrated, thinks for a moment.

GORDON
 (into megaphone)
 H-Hey! Those farmers ar-are a great
 bunch of g-guys, aren't they?

Everyone immediately focuses on Gordon. The talking, laughing and music come to a halt. Silence.

HECKLER #1 manages to stand --

HECKLER #1
 (to the crowd)
 Who's that fucker?

GORDON
 The fucker's name... I-I mean, my
 name is Gordon Tinkler. I'd like to
 say a few words before you leave.

HECKLER #2 sits upright.

HECKLER #2
 Why don't you just leave?

Gordon scans the crowd and finally finds his inner strength. Then a can of beer PELTS him in the head, splashing his face.

GORDON
 Thank you for the beer. I'd like to
 take this moment to thank the farmers
 for being so kind and understanding
 for allowing us to work for them.

Jennifer and Crispy are both in shock. The farmworkers BOO demonstratively and SCREAM profanities at Gordon.

CRISPY
 (to Jennifer)
 Man, he's dying up there.

Jennifer looks worried for Gordon.

The chorus of boos and profanity GROWS to a deafening level. Gordon smiles.

GORDON
 Now that's how I thought you'd feel
 after five weeks of HARD LABOR we've
 been forced to do!

The profanity and boos subside. He's actually piqued their interest now... Gordon looks at Jennifer, and she nods.

GORDON

The farmers are trying to force us to quit so they can get their subsidies back. And what will we get? A one-way ticket back to our hometowns... with no pay!

The crowd begins to CHEER.

GORDON

The farmers have joined together. So why don't we join together? We've got to stick together and fight for our dignity and our safety! We've got to be like--

(looks to Crispy)
a monolith!

CRISPY

(teary-eyed)
I wrote that part.

Jennifer and Crispy join the cheering as it becomes louder. Gordon's speech awakens those who were unconscious. They rise to their feet.

GORDON

WE MUST FORM A UNION, a union of sad sacks who will take back our rights to be treated like human beings!

The crowd ROARS to a crescendo.

CRISPY

(to Jennifer)
The little bastard's kinda inspiring.

Her eyes sparkle.

JENNIFER

(to herself)
Yeah, very inspiring.

Crispy grabs a few other workers and leads them onto the stage. Crispy gets them to hoist Gordon up and onto their shoulders as if he were a hero.

GORDON

Don't go to work tomorrow! We'll meet back here and organize. AND WE WILL WIN!

Gordon looks to Jennifer and smiles. Jennifer lets out a "WHOOOP WHOOOP" unexpectedly, surprising even herself. Crispy thrusts his fist into the air as a sign of power and unity.

EXT. GOVERNMENT FARMWORKERS' CAMPSITE - DAY

The farmworkers have set up a camp in the countryside. The area is congested with pitched tents, sleeping bags, and workers bumping into each other as they set up the camp.

The original banner at the barbecue has been altered to read: "FARMWORKERS UNITED CARE COALITION - NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS."

Crispy, in full 'Nam gear, has set up a mimeograph machine to print his underground newspaper, *Notes from Underground*. The first headline reads, "THE REVOLUTION BEGINS!".

A CNN VAN pulls into the camp, but the logo looks odd, almost like it's been scrawled in marker...

The CNN REPORTER (20s), disheveled, rumpled suit, no tie, climbs out of the van, leaving the door open as he preps.

The crew pulls out the beat-up, ancient equipment in a sloth-like speed. Gordon approaches the CNN Reporter.

GORDON

Wow, CNN, national news.

CNN REPORTER

No. CORN NEWS IN A NUTSHELL. Local.

Abruptly, a MODERN VAN ZOOMS into the camp. As it passes the local CNN van, it CLIPS the open door, sending it FLYING.

The modern van has a satellite dish on its roof and "BNN - BROADCAST NATIONAL NEWS" imprinted on its side panels.

The BNN team piles out in orderly fashion. They quickly unload their new and high-tech equipment from the van and set up in the blink of an eye.

The BNN national news reporter, JONATHAN MINORS (30s), debonair, sharply dressed, LEAPS out of the van, primps. He pushes his way through the local team.

JONATHAN MINORS

Watch out kids, first team's here.

In an instant, the BNN national team's ready to broadcast while the CNN local team is still untangling their wires.

Jonathan Minors's demeanor changes 180 degrees when the cameras roll --

JONATHAN MINORS

This is Jonathan Minors standing in the government workers' camp outside the sleepy farm community of Fishcreek, Iowa. The farmworkers have awakened this rural community, and the nation, by walking off their jobs due to unfair treatment...

Minors stops the CAMERAPERSON (50s), looks at his reflection in the camera lens, then turns to his best side. Action --

JONATHAN MINORS

This marks the first rebellion against the President's Employment Program. We spoke to several of the government workers...

Off Camera, the Reporter's crew has grabbed Jennifer and herded her to the Reporter's side --

JONATHAN MINORS

The President announced today that he's issued an executive order to freeze your benefits. How long can the workers hold out?

Jennifer, like a deer in headlights, stutters a bit --

JENNIFER

Th-The b-ben-nefits?

She side-eyes Gordon, who's watching nearby. He points to her, then imitates a stranglehold on his neck to imply she's choking. She nods, turns back to the camera --

JENNIFER

W-we don't have benefits, unless you think sleeping in dirty barn stalls and eating pig slop on our non-existent lunch breaks are benefits.

Gordon gives her a thumbs-up.

JENNIFER

We have very limited funds, but a few labor unions have sympathized with our cause and promised to help us.

JONATHAN MINORS

What happens if the government
doesn't intervene?

JENNIFER

I don't believe our government's a
cabinet of cold-hearted suits, do
you?

Cut. Minors looks to his other side, where Crispy is shoved on
camera, his underground newspaper in hand --

JONATHAN MINORS

Workers have set up an underground
newspaper to spread the news to other
farmworkers throughout the nation. It
is headed by a man known as Crispy.
Crispy, how much longer can the
workers live like this?

CRISPY

When you're living for a cause, man,
you don't worry 'bout gettin' poison
ivy all over your ass from taking a
shit in the woods.

Minors cringes. Crispy grabs the mic and leans in --

CRISPY

It's organic living, man. Instead of
protesting the fucking 'Nam War,
we're protesting fucking Operation
Sodbuster. It's us against them all
over again.

Minors frantically motions the Cameraperson to cut.

CRISPY

But don't worry, man, we're gonna
make it.

(steps to camera)

And when we do, we're gonna get to
the real truth of that fucking Iran-
Contra deal, too. Call me Ollie Nor--

Crispy is yanked off camera. Gordon rolls his eyes and shakes
his head as Jennifer joins him to watch Crispy's debacle.

JONATHAN MINORS

Farmworkers have responded loudly by
forming a union named "FARM-WORKERS
UNITED CARE COALITION". The union is
spearheaded by Gordon Tinkler, a
passionate rights activist...

Gordon has a baffled expression.

GORDON
Am I a rights activist?

He processes this, and it energizes him --

GORDON
I'm a fucking rights activist.

Jennifer looks at him admiringly.

BNN alters the angle. Minors stands in front of several tents.

JONATHAN MINORS
It is difficult to say what the
outcome of this conflict will be. All
that is certain is the farmworkers
are fed up with the injustices.

While the reporter speaks, four feet slowly emerge from the opening of a tent -- A pair of legs is inside another pair of legs, engaging in intercourse, unbeknownst to Minors.

JONATHAN MINORS
They feel they are innocent victims
of a feud between the government and
the farmers.

The sex grows intense. The tent collapses. The participants aren't discouraged, however, as they continue.

JONATHAN MINORS
These are proud and noble people.
They are putting it all on the line
for what they believe is right.
(then)
I'm Jonathan Minors for BNN.

Gordon smiles, absorbing the energy of his movement.

INT. LIVING ROOM - INDEPENDENCE, OHIO - EVENING

Gordon's parents, Chuck and Karen, watch the delayed news broadcast on the sofa. Chuck takes a swig of a can of beer.

JONATHAN MINORS (V.O.)
... The union is spearheaded by
Gordon Tinkler, a passionate rights
activist--

Chuck SPITS out his beer, SPRAYING it in Karen's face.

EXT. GOVERNMENT FARMWORKERS' CAMPSITE - EVENING

The farmworkers gather around a portable TV to watch the newscast. Crispy eagerly awaits his interview.

CRISPY

In the sixties, we couldn't
manipulate the media. They were part
of the problem, but I've learned,
man. I've got it down now.

The Crispy's interview appears on the screen:

JONATHAN MINORS

How much longer can the workers live
like this?

CRISPY

When you're living for a cause, man,
you don't worry 'bout gettin' poison
ivy all over--

BNN cuts Crispy's interview short and switches back to Jonathan Minors in a different area of the camp.

CRISPY

What the fuck?

JONATHAN MINORS

Unfortunately, the camp has become
infiltrated with outside agitators
like this man.

CRISPY

Outside agitators? You guys are the
outside agitators --

EXT. LIVING ROOM - INDEPENDENCE, OHIO - EVENING

A distraught Chuck continues to watch the news on TV while a calm Karen wipes beer from her face.

CHUCK

What station is this?

KAREN

BNN.

CHUCK

It can't be. It's fake news. Since
when did BNN report fake news?

KAREN

You're in denial, Chuck. It's real news. Gordon is the union leader.

CHUCK

It's impossible... I'm telling you... he... he's always been a follower... a do-nothing... a...

KAREN

Just be happy about what he's doing for once in your life. You've always been too hard on him.

CHUCK

Maybe he's an imposter... a clone... maybe an alien took over Gordon's body... You know, one of those pods.

Karen shakes her head and walks out.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

- Government farmworkers throw down their pitchforks, shovels, and other farm tools and walk out.
- Disgusted farm workers exit corn fields in droves.
- Farmers watch gleefully.
- Gordon makes an impassioned speech using animated gestures to a huge crowd with Jennifer by his side. She leads the cheers while they glance at each other.
- A pitchfork has a glove on the end of the handle with only the middle finger sticking out.

NATIONAL NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

Thousands of government farmworkers have followed the Fishcreek example by refusing to work under the present conditions. Their major problem: the lack of funds. Experts predict they can last only a few more days.

INT. OFFICE - DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - NIGHT

Carruthers nervously watches the news broadcast by himself.

CARRUTHERS

Give them one free barbecue and they want to rule the world.

The telephone on his desk RINGS. He picks up.

CARRUTHERS
Carruthers... Yes, Mr. President,
I've been watching...

INT. OVAL OFFICE - WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

The irked President is on the other end of the call --

PRESIDENT
Carruthers, this program is in your
department. You better fix it. It's
been spiraling for two weeks now, and
I have a re-election coming up.

EXT. GOVERNMENT FARMWORKERS' CAMPSITE - DAY

The Weird Guy sits in front of his tent. On the side of his tent, the words "DAYS IN THE HOLE" are scrawled at the top. Below it, the marks represent the number of days.

He dips his finger in mud and adds another mark, making it an even thirty.

RADIO NEWSCAST (V.O.)
The White House has been frustrated
by the fortitude and organization of
the Fishcreek headquarters. They have
lasted much longer than the President
anticipated.

EXT. GOVERNMENT WORKER VEHICLES - WORKER CAMPS - DAY

The farmworkers deliver underground newspapers to various camps throughout the nation in their own vehicles.

RADIO NEWSCAST (V.O.)
Similar to the workers' dire need for
money, the farmers will soon face a
dire need for labor to harvest their
crops.

EXT. GOVERNMENT FARMWORKERS' CAMPSITE - DAY

Gordon, Jennifer, Crispy, and the Weird Guy gather around a fire, listening to the newscast. Crispy's frying crickets on the campfire.

WEIRD GUY

I can't live like this much longer.
Why don't we just do the wise thing
and give up? I'm hungry.

Crispy sticks the crickets with a fork.

CRISPY

You can scarf down some of these
dudes.

GORDON

We can't give up now. The one thing
we have going for us is that we have
nothing to lose, but the farmers do.

JENNIFER

I'd like to hear the plan, Gordon --

INT. TOWN HALL - FISHCREEK - DAY

A packed meeting takes place in the hall. Arlen stands behind
the podium.

ARLEN

Well, boys, we got what we wanted,
all right, but they held out for so
long, we've got a bunch of vegetables
and no one to harvest 'em.

FARMER #1

And the government's doing nothing.

Farmer #2 jumps up.

FARMER #2

What about the national exposure
they're getting on TV? I can't even
watch cartoons in the morning without
them interruptin' every five minutes.

MURMURS of discontent start to grow.

FARMER #3

Damn, I miss my subsidies.

Percy stands, pitchfork in hand.

PERCY

We've done it your way, now let's do
it my way... Won't be any evidence if
ya feed 'em to the hogs.

EXCITED FARMER
I say we vote on it!

The crowd becomes loud.

ARLEN
(bangs gavel)
Let's get a hold of ourselves. We've got a hard decision to make: Play hardball with the farmworkers and lose all our crops. Or act like we didn't sabotage this program, and simply give in to them.

FARMER #1
If we give in, we can save our crops, and maybe our farms.

The CHATTER among the farmers grows strident until Farmer Bell stands up. The farmers stop talking, deferring to Bell.

FARMER BELL
Would Toby Keith give in? Personally, the thought of it makes me puke...

The farmers CHEER Bell's succinct statement until the doors of the town hall SWING open. Owen Pratt BURSTS into the hall. Two AGENTS (30s), dressed identically, follow him.

With the door open, SCREAMING reporters, LONG-WINDED podcasters, and FLASHING cameras can be seen outside the hall. The farmers look warily at Owen and the Agents.

ARLEN
What is the meaning of disruptin' our meeting? You're not from FEMA, are you?

Owen pushes his badge in front of ARLEN. It reads, "DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - USDA CHOICE".

OWEN PRATT
No. Department of Agriculture.

ARLEN
Thank God.

OWEN PRATT
The Secretary of Agriculture is sending Agents to each farm community to straighten out this mess.

ARLEN

What do you want us to do? Those lazy bums don't want to work. How can you blame us?

OWEN PRATT

Don't bullshit the bullshitters. The farmers have done everything to ensure this program fails.

(pulls out documents)

Problem one: The government workers have been abused, and now they're refusing to work until it's resolved.

Some of the farmers hang their heads in shame. Other farmers shake their heads in denial.

OWEN PRATT (V.O.)

Problem two: The farmers don't have anyone to harvest their crops without the workers.

The farmers look at each other, pointing fingers.

OWEN PRATT (V.O.)

Problem three: The government could face an economic catastrophe if the crops spoil.

In the corner, Percy is sharpening his pitchfork.

OWEN PRATT

To fix these problems, we're negotiating a plan between the Farmers Union and the Farmworkers United Care Coalition. The crops will be harvested by the workers -- but under humane working conditions.

ARLEN

What about after the harvest?

OWEN PRATT

The unions can resume negotiations in good faith.

Arlen can barely contain his excitement.

ARLEN

Sounds like a fair deal to me, but we have to be democratic and vote on it.

(to farmers)

All in favor?

The farmers unanimously vote in favor.

ARLEN

(to Owen)

You've got our support for the good of the country. Don't ever let it be said the farmers of Fishcreek aren't patriotic.

OWEN PRATT

Excuse me for being so abrupt. We must get to many other communities to agree to this arrangement.

The Agents leave.

ARLEN

Hot damn. We've really got them parasites over a barrel now. After harvesting our crops, they won't have any bargaining power. And we'll look real good, like we're dealing in good faith. We'll ruin them and this employment program after all.

MONTAGE:

- Farmworkers return to the fields at various farms.
- The strenuous chores are well performed by the farmworkers.
- They harvest corn using combines.
- Bale hay with the use of conveyors.
- Load crates of vegetables into trucks.
- Trucks haul the vegetables away from the farms.

EXT. BELL FARM - DAY

Gordon, Jennifer, Crispy, and others finish loading a truck. Farmer Bell pats the truck on its side.

FARMER BELL

That's it. Last load. Take 'er to the market.

The truck pulls away as the farmworkers leave.

FARMER BELL

Hey, Tinkler.

Gordon turns to see Bell motioning over. Gordon joins him.

FARMER BELL

Tinkler, I have to give credit where credit's due. I didn't think you had it in ya, you know, startin' a union and all. I thought you were gonna tuck your tail 'tween you legs and quit. But you hung in there and put up a good fight.

Bell extends his hand to Gordon to shake. Gordon glances at his hand but does not shake it.

GORDON

You ain't seen nothing yet.

Bell looks confused at the gleam in Gordon's eyes. Before he can react, Gordon walks off and does not look back.

FARMER BELL

Now don't go gettin' a big head over this... And watch your grammar!

EXT. DISTRIBUTION TERMINALS/WAREHOUSES - IOWA - DAY

Farm trucks pull into stations marked "PRODUCE DISTRIBUTION TERMINALS", where the crops are being moved to semi-trucks.

Beneath the logos on the terminal and semi-trucks, the words read: "TRUCKERS UNION OF AMERICA".

Semi-truck drivers reach out to the farmworkers, giving them fist bumps, revealing the same logo on their jackets.

The semis pull out and haul the vegetables across the country.

HOWEVER, instead of delivering them as usual, the semis pull into warehouses at truck stops. They park among other trucks, hiding the trucks and their contents.

Huge metal warehouse doors WHIRL shut electronically, each CLICKING into place in quick succession.

Truck roller doors close shut on trailers full of crops --

PRE-LAP: The sound of roller doors shutting -- CLANG, CLANG, CLANG...

EXT. GOVERNMENT FARMWORKERS' CAMPSITE - DAY

A group of Workers, including Crispy, Jennifer, and Gordon, relax around the campfire when Gordon's cell phone RINGS.

Gordon answers.

GORDON
Hello... Yeah...
(listening)
Are you sure? Okay, keep me posted.

He ends the call. Looks to the group, who all seem to be holding their breath.

GORDON
We secured all the crops!

EVERYONE GOES WILD WITH EXCITEMENT AT THE NEWS!

INT. OFFICE - DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - DAY

Carruthers, phone to his face --

CARRUTHERS
(into phone)
They stole all the crops?!

INT. TOWN HALL - FISHCREEK - DAY

Arlen listens, drops his phone --

ARLEN
They fucking stole our crops!

EXT. GOVERNMENT FARMWORKERS' CAMPSITE - DAY

The Government Workers act like they won the World Series -- They JUMP UP AND DOWN, WHOOP, HIGH-FIVE each other in celebration of the news -- except Jennifer.

CRISPY
I need a joint, man, like super big
and super bad, not that legal
recreational crap.

Gordon walks to a truck, lifts a stack of newspapers, and plops them at the feet of the farmworkers.

GORDON
Our demands are listed in the newspaper. We're distributing them to the other workers right now.

The Workers snatch the newspapers and read the demands. Gordon approaches Jennifer as the others dance and yell around them.

GORDON
You're not celebrating.

JENNIFER
A little preoccupied.

GORDON
I noticed. What's going on?

JENNIFER
I have some problems to deal with.

GORDON
Am I one of those "problems"?

JENNIFER
Yes.

He reacts like he expected her to say no. They lock eyes and act as if they're in their own world among the celebration.

GORDON
I'm afraid to ask.

JENNIFER
I'm not on board with stealing the farmers' crops. We weren't told.

GORDON
There was no other way to stop them from mistreating us after they had the crops in their hands. We needed a bargaining chip.

JENNIFER
It's still stealing. I'm not a thief.

GORDON
It's not really stealing.

JENNIFER
It is to me.

They hold a look for a long, silent beat. Suddenly, Crispy pops in between them. He slaps Gordon's back --

CRISPY

Sorry to interrupt before you two start making out, but your ride's here, boss man. Gotta hit the road.

Crispy leaves and runs toward a Ford Focus.

GORDON

I have to go to Washington... You know, to negotiate our deal... I hate leaving it like this.

JENNIFER

Good luck, Tinkler.

She kisses him on the cheek.

GORDON

You gonna be here when I get back?

JENNIFER

Can't promise you anything.

A frustrated Gordon nods his head. A disheartened Jennifer watches Gordon glumly walk to the Focus.

INT. LIVING ROOM - INDEPENDENCE, OHIO - DAY

Karen walks into the room and sits next to Chuck, who's watching the story unfolding on TV --

NEWSCASTER

It appears the government workers have stolen all the vegetables they harvested...

KAREN

Stolen?

CHUCK

I knew that kid would turn to a life of crime, I just knew it.

KAREN

Well... considering how the farmers treated the workers, he must have thought it was justified.

CHUCK

Don't you stick up for that thief. He finally had to do a little work for once, and before he could learn how to be a man, he started stealing!

KAREN
Oh, bah, Chuck. There's an entire
workforce there, not just Gordon.

CHUCK
I knew it was too good to be true...

INSERT - CHUCK PROCESSES A MEMORY --

GORDON (V.O.)
Go ahead, laugh, wait and see...

BACK TO SCENE

Chuck's eyes go wide.

CHUCK
The little freeloader had this
planned all along. And here I go
bragging about the kid to my boss
while he's the ringleader of the
heist of the century!

KAREN
You raised him.

CHUCK
Oh, he was a momma's boy before I had
a crack at him --

INT. OFFICE - DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - DAY

Carruthers reads the paper with the headlines reading,
"PRESIDENT SAYS HE WON'T NEGOTIATE WITH TERRORISTS."

His ASSISTANT (30s) enters his office.

CARRUTHERS
Did we find the crops?

ASSISTANT
No. But we did receive this.

The Assistant hands him a telegram. It reads:

"IF YOU EVER WANT TO SEE YOUR VEGGIES AGAIN, MEET ME AT THE
CORNER OF 13TH AND SEWARD AT MIDNIGHT. COME ALONE. NO GUNS."

Carruthers sits back in his chair, perplexed.

ASSISTANT
Should we inform the President?

CARRUTHERS

No. No. Don't mention this to him.
I'll handle this myself.

EXT. CORNER OF 13TH AND SEWARD - NIGHT

Carruthers nervously waits in a dark, creepy alley. He looks at his watch. It reads 12:35 AM.

CLANG! SCREECH! He JUMPS. Frightened. He sees a rat tearing apart a cat over food, knocking over the garbage can.

The alleyway becomes quiet until an EERIE WHISPER emanates from under a stairway --

GORDON (O.S.)

Don't turn around, Carruthers. I'm glad to see no one followed you.

Gordon steps from the shadows behind Carruthers' back.

CARRUTHERS

What do you want? Who are you?

GORDON

Farmworkers United Care Coalition is more organized than you thought, eh?

CARRUTHERS

You assholes are in a lot of trouble.

GORDON

You're the one who's in a lot of trouble. If you don't agree to our terms, we'll destroy the vegetables. Or worse, we'll let them spoil and foul up the air. You don't want to contend with the EPA, do you?

CARRUTHERS

No! Not that! What do I need to do?

GORDON

That's better. Here are our terms.

Gordon tosses the newspaper in front of Carruthers.

GORDON

We want to negotiate with the farmers and the government in good faith. Then, we want President Hee-Haw to pardon us on national TV. All of us. You've got until tomorrow night.

CARRUTHERS
 Tomorrow night? All of this requires
 sweeping changes. It'll take months.
 You don't know what you're asking.

GORDON
 Oh, I know what I'm asking. To be
 treated fairly, without lies, without
 harassment.

CARRUTHERS
 (laughs)
 In America?

GORDON
 Stop laughing. You seem to forget
 who's holding the vegetables.

CARRUTHERS
 How do I know the vegetables are in
 good condition?

GORDON
 I knew you'd ask.

Gordon rolls an ear of corn to the feet of Carruthers. He
 picks it up, examines it.

CARRUTHERS
 An ear... in perfect condition.

GORDON
 Tomorrow. Midnight. Or that's the
 last perfect one America will see.

And with that, Gordon disappears.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Carruthers stands before the President, showing him the ear.

CARRUTHERS
 If they destroy those crops, the
 country's economy would suffer
 greatly, and every farmer would be
 ruined. And that comes down on you.

PRESIDENT
 No shit.

Carruthers stews as President Mann ponders the crisis.

PRESIDENT
What do the farmers say?

INT. TOWN HALL - FISHCREEK - DAY

The farmers gather in the town hall. Arlen stands at the podium, attempting to control his emotions.

The MUMBLING among the farmers grows louder until Farmer Bell stands up. The farmers SHUSH each other.

FARMER BELL
What worries me is that lunatic we elected to govern this good nation. Ya have to worry about a guy who started this radical employment shit in the first place. The guy's about as mentally prepared for this crisis as a worm in a pond full of fish.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - WHITE HOUSE - DAY

The President's Cabinet gathers around the President as he sits at his desk.

PRESIDENT
There's a time when every great president must make a decision that affects the entire nation...

GILLIAN
And what is your decision, sir?

They all wait with great anticipation --

PRESIDENT
I don't know!

The President collapses his head into his folded arms on his desk, breaking down crying.

BENSON
You've got to do something, Mr. President. The union leader, Gordon Tinkler, is fast becoming known as the CHAMPION OF THE COMMON MAN.

PRESIDENT
(lifts head)
You've got to be kidding me?! Did you see that pipsqueak? I know what I'd like to do to that cocky leader...

BEGIN FANTASY SEQUENCE:

The President, standing in a karate stance, faces off against Gordon, who is posing in a boxing stance in the Oval Office.

They circle around each other -- the president LANDS a weak karate chop to Gordon's shoulder.

GORDON

Owww.

Gordon THROWS a haymaker, KNOCKING the President down. He ROLLS on the floor, then JUMPS back to his feet.

GORDON

You're not so tough without your secret service, are you?

PRESIDENT

Let's see how tough you are.

A switchblade POPS out of the President's shoe. He lifts his leg with the knife-shoe and waves it at Gordon --

Gordon steps back, appearing concerned --

The President SWISHES the knife-shoe at his head -- Gordon deftly DUCKS unscathed, then TACKLES the President.

They ROLL across a table -- CRASHING to the floor -- WRESTLING on carpet. Gordon STICKS the President in a headlock.

The President BREAKS free, combover askew, returns to his feet. He TURNS around and sees a painting of President Reagan.

He REACHES for the painting, then stops when he notices a painting of President Carter next to it. He JERKS Carter off the wall and SMASHES it over Gordon's head.

The President makes a MAD DASH to a hutch. He opens the doors to display a stack of White House fine china.

PRESIDENT

Finally, a use for these.

He FLINGS the plates at Gordon, who DODGES them.

Gordon TWISTS the presidential seal off the podium and uses it as a shield. The plates SHATTER against the shield.

As Gordon peeks over the presidential seal, a jagged plate SLICES OPEN GORDON'S NECK. He falls fatally to the floor.

The President raises his arms in victory --

BACK TO SCENE

The President SNAPS BACK to the present situation.

PRESIDENT

I am not giving up on my employment program! Send out the National Guard! Round up that bunch of misfits and start with that so-called national headquarters in Fishcreek.

The Cabinet Members are in shock.

GILLIAN

But sir, the consequences--

PRESIDENT

Fuck the consequences! Who's running this country? Some snotty-nosed, left-wing radicals?

BENSON

But what about the crops, sir?

PRESIDENT

Let them try to hold the vegetables hostage. After we capture those tents they call a union, we can hit them with all kinds of federal offenses. They're not the only ones who can play the game of blackmail.

MONTAGE:

- NATIONAL GUARDSMEN put on their uniforms.
- Guardsmen load into helicopters.
- Guardsmen drive trucks through cities and towns.

EXT. JEEP (MOVING) - PASTURE - DAY

A Guardsman jeep leads other jeeps traveling at a dangerously high speed in a pasture.

INT. JEEP (MOVING) - DAY

The COMMANDER, riding on the passenger side, is trying to speak on a communicator. Every time the driver hits a bump, the communicator SMASHES into the Commander's mouth.

COMMANDER

Roger, OUCH! We're closing in on Fishcreek now, OOF! We'll proceed directly to their camp, OWWW!

The Commander, whose lips are bleeding, turns to the DRIVER.

COMMANDER

Will you get the hell out of this pasture and back on the road?

REVEAL

The Jeep's SPEEDING in a pasture, even though a main road runs parallel to their path.

EXT. GOVERNMENT FARMWORKERS' CAMPSITE - DAY

The campsite's serene. Farmworkers perform their daily duties.

Crispy sits under a tree, admiring an LSD stamp before popping it into his mouth. He hears the SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS MARCHING IN UNISON in the distance. He lets the march take him for a ride.

CRISPY

Groovy sound, man, take me away...

At the camp, the Ford Focus arrives and Gordon steps out. He's greeted by union members but wants to search for Jennifer.

He FIGHTS through the crowded camp, SEARCHING, SCANNING, ASKING others her whereabouts to no avail. Gordon thinks she's gone and somberly sits. Then he spots her. He HURRIES to her --

GORDON

I thought a lot about what you said--

JENNIFER

Gordon... I... What is that?

She's distracted by a cloud of dust kicked up on the horizon --

ON CRISPY

Crispy sees the dust as well. The National Guard emerge over a hill, coming into his view --

CRISPY

I better cool it. A flashback to Kent State? Bad trip, man.

Crispy STUMBLES up to his feet. SQUINTS at the troops. Realizes it was no flashback. YELLS to alert the others --

CRISPY
HEY! THE FUZZ, MAN! THEY FOUND US!

ON GORDON AND JENNIFER

Farmworkers react to Crispy's shouting as the camp becomes utter chaos. The workers RUN in all directions -- Gordon and Jennifer freeze at the sight of the Guardsmen.

GORDON
Damn it.

He SPRINTS to a CB radio. Grabs the communicator --

GORDON
We're under attack! Proceed with our backup plan. Head out now! They're closing in!

SERIES OF SHOTS:

-- The parked semi-trucks carrying vegetables take off from the warehouses at truck stops around the country.

-- Vegetables fall out of the backs of trucks as the SPEEDING trucks VEER onto roads.

-- Trucks RUMBLE through cities and towns.

BACK TO SCENE

The Guardsmen MARCH into view, revealing that there are only six of them. The farmworkers freeze in their tracks, confused. They wait and look for more Guardsmen. None comes.

GORDON
There are only six of you?

GUARDSMAN
We've been spread out pretty thin...

COMMANDER
That's all we'll need for your rinky-dink revolt.

Crispy rushes in from the trees with a brick in his hand --

CRISPY
What are you waiting for? I used to take down six myself before lunch --

Crispy rears back to throw the brick. A GUARDSMAN #2 cowers and SHRIEKS in a high-pitched voice, then --

GUARDSMAN #2
I'm just a plumber.

Crispy lets it fly -- but it hits one of the farmworkers in the back of the head. She collapses to the ground.

CRISPY
(to farmworker)
Sorry, lady.
(to Guardsmen)
YOU'LL NEVER TAKE US ALIVE!

WEIRD GUY
(glares at Crispy)
When pigs fly!

The Weird Guy pulls out a white handkerchief tied to a stick and waves it like a flag. He raises his hands to surrender.

As the Guardsmen round up the workers without a struggle, Gordon watches the capture unfolding before his eyes.

GORDON
Hope the trucks can make their drops.

JENNIFER
What are you talking about?

GORDON
I was just about to tell you our backup plan.

She waits anxiously.

GORDON
We're delivering every last piece of the harvest to the poor.

Jennifer's stunned for a moment.

JENNIFER
Gordon... I... love...

GORDON
You love me?

JENNIFER
I love your backup plan.

GORDON
(embarrassed)
Oh, right. Yeah. Of course. I had a feeling you might.

Gordon scans the chaotic scene as workers are arrested. He faces Jennifer. Guardsmen walk up to them and pull their hands behind their backs and cuffed --

GORDON
I have a feeling we're going to jail.
I'm sorry.

JENNIFER
We knew what might happen.

GORDON
We tried, that's all we could do.

An awkward beat occurs as the guardsmen jostle them around.

JENNIFER
When you left, I couldn't focus on anything because I was worried about you. Not that something bad was going to happen in Washington. Not about the deal. Then it struck me. I would miss you. It would hurt me too much if you didn't come back. And I didn't feel very good about that. I didn't want you in Washington. I wanted you here with me.

Jennifer leans in to give Gordon the most passionate kiss of her life. He closes his eyes and their lips close in --

Gordon kisses air, then hears a COMMOTION. He opens his eyes to see Jennifer struggling to hold herself in place, inches away from the kiss, as the Guardsmen pull her away.

Gordon is pulled back the other way. The Guardsmen move them to the other workers, who have been forced into a circle. The Guardsmen wrap yellow police tape around the group.

EXT. TRUCKS - CITY - DAY

The government workers' trucks enter impoverished areas of the city. Citizens surround the trucks as farmworkers give away the vegetables.

One HOMELESS PERSON (40s) is handed a crate. He is ecstatic until he reads "TURNIPS" on the side of the crate.

HOMELESS PERSON
Oh shit.

He drops the crate as if it's poison.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - WHITE HOUSE - DAY

The President sits at his desk, stunned. Secretary Carruthers stands in front of him.

PRESIDENT
They just... gave away the
vegetables?

CARRUTHERS
Yes, sir, they didn't destroy them,
they gave them away to the poor.

PRESIDENT
Figures. Riffraff always sticks
together. Where were all those trucks
hiding?

CARRUTHERS
Truck stops, Sir.

The President pushes a button on his intercom --

PRESIDENT
(into intercom)
Fire the Transportation Secretary.

CARRUTHERS
There is some good news, Mr.
President. We've captured a million
farmworkers.

PRESIDENT
What the hell am I going to do with a
million prisoners?

CARRUTHERS
As you said, sir, prosecute them.

PRESIDENT
You're taking my words out of
context...

The door swings open, and Gillian leans in.

CABINET MEMBER #1
I'm sorry to intrude, sir, but I
thought you might want to know that
we've been receiving non-stop
reactions since the government
workers gave away the vegetables.

PRESIDENT
And?

GILLIAN

It's overwhelmingly in favor of the farmworkers. You also might want to know what the polls are saying.

PRESIDENT

I don't care what the pollocks are saying.

GILLIAN

The opinion polls, sir.

PRESIDENT

Oh.

He looks to Carruthers, Gillian --

PRESIDENT

Nobody heard me say that.

GILLIAN

Over 70% of the country supports the farmworkers. Social Media is calling them the "modern-day Robin Hoods".

The President gets up pensively, walks to a window, gazes out, and deliberates on the situation.

PRESIDENT

Alright. Release the workers and give them one year's probation. And pull the plug on Operation Sodbuster. Give the farmers their subsidies back and reinstate unemployment benefits.

(then)

Seems my program was ahead of its time.

GILLIAN

It was too revolutionary, sir.

PRESIDENT

Yes, I know. Sometimes I have to stop and remember that I am too brilliant for this world to understand. It's a heavy weight to bear.

(then)

Oh, make sure you mail all those checks a month late.

CARRUTHERS

Sir, who will replace the government workers on the farms now?

He turns to Carruthers.

PRESIDENT
You know the answer.

EXT. MEXICAN BORDER - DAY

A horde of Immigrants makes a mad DASH across the Mexican/U.S. border while the border guards look the other way. A sign above the crossing reads, "LEAVING MEXICO AND ENTERING THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA."

INT. LIVING ROOM - INDEPENDENCE, OHIO - DAY

Chuck drapes a banner across the room, reading "WELCOME HOME GORDON - OUR HERO", while holding his phone.

Karen sits on the sofa and reads the news on an iPad. The headline reads, "RIGHTS ACTIVIST GORDON TINKLER OUTWITS THE GOVERNMENT AND FARMERS".

Chuck puts the finishing touches on the banner --

CHUCK
(into phone)
We'd really love for you to come home. Your mother and I miss you.

INTERCUT with

EXT. GOVERNMENT FARMWORKERS' CAMPSITE - DAY

Gordon holds his phone as he and Jennifer pack up their belongings.

GORDON
(to Chuck)
I'm not sure what I'm going to do.

Chuck tears down the "NO FUCKING IN THE LIVING ROOM" sign.

CHUCK
I've got big plans for you, Son, I'm even building a special wing just for you. No rules. You can bring girls over anytime. You can use our living room, too. It won't bother us.

Chuck winks at a SMUG AGENT (40s), dressed in a suit and tie. In front of him, a contract from the "SPITFIRE AGENCY" sits on a table.

SMUG AGENT

Ask him if he signed with another agent. Someone has to handle his affairs.

CHUCK

Son, I know it's all new to you, but has anyone approached you--

GORDON

Dad, I haven't even packed yet. And I'm not coming home.

CHUCK

What? Why?

GORDON

I'm not really that "guy-who-lives-in-his-parents'-basement" anymore.

CHUCK

But I'm building you a wing--

Jennifer SHOUTS at Gordon's phone --

JENNIFER

HE'S MOVING TO PHILADELPHIA!

Gordon's stunned. He looks at Jennifer and smiles --

GORDON

(to Chuck)

I... I guess I'm moving to Philadelphia.

CHUCK

Philly? How could you? Independence is your home--

GORDON

You heard Jennifer. I've got to go.

Gordon disconnects the phone and walks over to Jennifer.

GORDON

Are you serious? You want me to come with you to Philadelphia?

JENNIFER

I think the birthplace of American democracy would be an appropriate city for you to start a new chapter in your life.

She moves to him, wraps her arms around his sides to his back, and is inches away from his lips --

JENNIFER

And I figured I'd take a chance on you. After all, as you said too many times, we have nothing to lose.

Gordon delivers a kiss that buckles her knees. They stare into each other's eyes after their kiss subsides.

With their arms still wrapped around each other, they watch the farmworkers gather their things and say their goodbyes.

Crispy dismantles his printing press after printing his last edition. The headline reads, "AMNESTY DECLARED!" He sees them watching him.

CRISPY

In the sixties, we fought just as hard for the same ideals, but we lost. It hurt, man, it hurt bad. But this time, we beat the establishment. This time, we won--

They are interrupted by the Weird Guy, now dressed in a suit and hat and carrying a suitcase. He's beaming --

WEIRD GUY

Unemployment train, here I come.

He drops the suitcase and puts his hands on Gordon and Jennifer's shoulders.

WEIRD GUY

Do you know what I'm gonna do the second I get my first check for doing nothing? Eat at McDonald's for a month straight and sleep all day.

(then)

God bless America!

The Weird Guy grabs his suitcase and scampers off. Something distracts Gordon as if he's seen a ghost.

JENNIFER

What's wrong?

She turns to see what Gordon is staring at: Farmer Bell, standing and glaring at Gordon.

JENNIFER

Why's he here?

GORDON

Wait here.

Gordon cautiously approaches Bell.

Bell remains emotionless with his resting scowl on his face. They come face-to-face.

GORDON

What do you want?

FARMER BELL

Just came to say, well played,
Tinkler, well played. I
underestimated you.

Bell extends his hand for Gordon to shake. This time, Gordon shakes Bell's hand, and as they release, Bell pulls an envelope out of his pocket and slaps it in Gordon's hand.

FARMER BELL

And you've been served, Tinkler. The
Farmers' Union is suing you for
everything you've got or will get.
See you in court.

Bell laughs heartily as he trots off. Jennifer walks up.

JENNIFER

A leopard never changes its spots.

GORDON

They definitely do not.

Gordon smiles and sighs. Then a gleam in his eye forms as he watches Crispy and a WOMAN, both nude, running into a field holding hands.

CRISPY

(LOUD ECHOING)

Free love is back too, man!

INT. DINING ROOM - BELL'S FARMHOUSE - DAY

Farmer Bell sits at the table and opens an envelope. He pulls out a letter and reads it with great interest.

Tears begin to STREAM down his face -- It's a SUBSIDY CHECK from the Federal Government.

FARMER BELL

God bless America.

INT. GORDON'S CAR (MOVING) - HIGHWAY - DAY

Traveling in Gordon's Nissan, Gordon drives while Jennifer enjoys the scenery from the passenger seat. They notice Crispy's 60s Mustang parked alongside the highway.

Gordon pulls in behind the car. Crispy's not inside. Jennifer points at Crispy hitchhiking farther down the highway. Gordon drives up to him.

GORDON

What happened to your car?

CRISPY

I don't know, man, I think it's time for the Mustang boneyard.

JENNIFER

Do you need a ride?

CRISPY

No thanks, man. I'm looking for a place called the promised land, where you can be as high as you want to be. I'm gonna find the real America. It's out there, man, waiting for a dude like me to discover it.

GORDON

Well, if you find yourself near Philly, look us up, Vice President.

CRISPY

Will do, Mr. President, First Lady.

Crispy gives a peace sign as the car pulls away. Gordon responds in kind.

JENNIFER

Think he's gonna be okay?

Gordon gives Jennifer a serious look.

GORDON

Don't worry, man, he's gonna make it.

Jennifer smirks, he returns it. They take the corner and head down the road to Philadelphia.

FADE OUT

THE END