

The Swedish Beaver

an Igor Nando pastry mystery

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INT. HILARITIES COMEDY CLUB – NIGHT

Music: Solitary Man by Neil Diamond.

We see the brightly lit top-half of an empty microphone stand against an out-of-focus brick backdrop. A Man, holding and speaking into a microphone, walks past the stand, in and then out of frame. Two seconds later the Man walks past the stand again, only from the opposite direction. A few seconds later he walks by for a third time and the camera follows him. The stand-up comedian is Igor Nando, a thin, dark-haired man in his late thirties. He wears a black slightly rumpled suit over a white shirt, with a dark tie knotted tightly at his collar. He sweats from the bright stage lights. Performing his stand-up act is as routine for him as buying groceries is for regular people. He paces the stage casually as he tells a joke. Suddenly, center stage, he freezes. He has lost the punchline of a joke he was in the middle of telling. He holds his breath. His eyes dart around the room. (We hear none of his act or dialogue: the music is over everything.)

In slow motion we track across the front row of small circular tables. Table One: an attractive, middle-aged Woman has a pained expression on her face as she watches Nando; her bored Husband drinks his beer and tosses a handful of Beer Nuts in his mouth.

Having remembered and delivered the punchline, Nando leans out at the audience with his eyebrows raised as if to say, “Can you believe that?” He waits for the audience to laugh.

Table Two: a Fat Man leans back in his chair and, head cocked to the side, stares up at Nando like a dog being shown a card trick; his petite, red-headed Wife gazes at Nando with the blankness of someone beyond caring about anything.

Nando attempts to quickly click the microphone back into its stand but his hands fumble and he drops the mic. Luckily, he catches the cord before the mic smacks the floor. The second time he securely snaps the microphone into the stand. Hands free, he removes a small stack of three by five inch notecards from his inner suit coat pocket.

Table Three: Two Female Executives converse with each other as if Nando was not even performing. The Blonde speaks rapidly as the Brunette nods and sucks down a Tito’s and soda through a slim red stirrer straw. Then the Blonde stops talking and they reverse roles.

Nando holds up a notecard and uses his handwritten notes to tell a joke.

Table Four: Two Single Men in relaxed suits look up at Nando with plastered, lips-together smiles. Nine empty Coors Light bottles rest on their table.

With one quick arm swoop, Nando tries to casually snatch the microphone off its stand. He knocks the mic to the floor and drops his notecards. The mic hits the stage and registers a loud, ear-piercing feedback screech that makes everyone in the room scrunch up their faces.

At the rear bar (still in slow motion) Male head after head turns and looks across the room to Nando: some squint, others appear confused, one man is noticeably peeved, but most bear the obvious expression: this guy is awful.

Nando quickly picks up the microphone and notecards from the floor. He forcefully clicks the mic into the stand, flips to a new notecard, and tells another joke. He pauses and waits for the laughs.

The entire room stares up at him in silence.

He thanks the audience, waves, and exits stage left. About to step into a wall, he remembers he is supposed to leave stage right, so he turns and walks that direction. The music fades out. The sound of pity-applause carries him offstage.

Nando walks across the room to the side of the bar. The Bartender has his drink waiting for him: Canadian Club, neat.

INT. HILARITIES COMEDY CLUB BAR.

Nando downs the drink and places the highball glass back on the bar.
The moment Nando's glass touches the bar, the Bartender pours him another.

BARTENDER

Tough crowd.

Nando downs the second drink.

NANDO

Always is.

The Bartender takes Nando's glass. Two half-drunk Regulars sitting at the bar turn to Nando.

REGULAR #1

Good set, Igor.

Nando loosens his tie and unbuttons his top button. He pulls out a pack of American Spirit Mediums and lights a cigarette with his Statue of Liberty lighter.
The Bartender places a new drink down for Igor: C.C. and ginger.

REGULAR #2

Some of your best stuff.

NANDO

Yeah...(takes a sip) Thanks...

Drink in hand, Nando slowly walks away; his mind is preoccupied.

REGULAR #1
About as funny as a heart attack.

Regular #2 and the Bartender laugh.

INT. HILARITIES COMEDY CLUB. BOOTH.

Nando sits at a booth in a separate empty dining room, far away from the stage. He has his highball, a cassette Walkman, a small saucer serving as an ashtray, and a dozen notecards with jokes written in indecipherable scrawl all laid out on the table. He wears headphones and listens to a cassette tape on the Walkman. The label on the tape reads: Nando, Tape 497. It appears he is following along with the notecards.

A Young Woman walks up to Nando's table and stands before him. His nose buried in notecards, Nando doesn't notice her.

YOUNG WOMAN
Mister Nando...

Her words are silent because it is Nando's point of view: we hear his routine, from the beginning, as he listens to himself and tries to follow along. His routine is not good.

YOUNG WOMAN
Mister Nando...Mister Nando...

The Young Woman knocks on the table. Nando looks up at her and pulls down his headphones.

YOUNG WOMAN
(hearing her words aloud for the first time)
Mister Nando...

NANDO
Yes?

YOUNG WOMAN
May I?

NANDO
Please.

The Young Woman sits down across from him. She is a petite blonde about twenty-five years old but she looks younger. She dresses with casual elegance: a yellow sundress, sandals, and a trendy weave purse. As they say too infrequently nowadays, she is made of all natural materials.

No botox or boob jobs here. Her schoolgirl face looks exhausted and there's an urgency in her voice that she tries to keep from showing. She has recently cried.

NANDO

I get the strange feeling that I know you, but I'm sorry, I can't remember exactly where...

YOUNG WOMAN

Penelope Krueger.

She puts out her delicate white hand: no nail polish with short, trimmed nails. Nando squeezes her hand warmly.

NANDO

Penelope Krueger...

PENELOPE

You helped my father, Doctor Krueger, about five years ago? Do you remember him?

NANDO

You're going to have to give me more than that.

PENELOPE

It was about a cake...

Nando thinks.

NANDO

The cake collector.

PENELOPE

You remember?

NANDO

It's hard to forget a case about a cake.

PENELOPE

My father is missing, Mister Nando.

NANDO

Igor. What do you mean missing, Miss Krueger?

PENELOPE

Penny. My father—

Penelope's eyes tear up and she appears about to burst into sobs.

NANDO

Here.

Nando hands her a napkin. She takes it and blows her nose, a much louder noise than Nando was expecting.

NANDO

What happened?

PENELOPE

My father disappeared. He was in Vienna, for research. I don't know what, I never showed any interest in cakes. But then yesterday this arrived...

She opens up a small white box. Inside is a round Italian coffeecake. A big black M insignia covers the top of the coffeecake with a piped white icing message written across it:

Need Help,
See Nando

NANDO

(dumbstruck)

Hun.

PENELOPE

It has an L.A. postmark on it.

NANDO

So he's in town?

PENELOPE

I think so. I don't know. I'm just following the cake, Mister Nando.

NANDO

Igor.

PENELOPE

Can you please help me find my father? (she almost breaks down again)

NANDO

If you don't mind my asking, Penny, what do you do?

PENELOPE

I'm an actress.

NANDO

Of course you are. Anything I would know?

PENELOPE

You've probably seen my Rejuvum commercial.

Nando thinks...

PENELOPE

I'm in a swing; I walk down the street; I look at myself in the mirror.

NANDO

Yes! And you play with a puppy.

PENELOPE

Those dogs peed on me.

NANDO

That's where I've seen you. Is there anything else you can tell me?

PENELOPE

No. I'm afraid that's all I know.

NANDO

So find your dad.

PENELOPE

Please, Mister Nando.

NANDO

Igor. It's a thousand dollars a day, plus expenses.

PENELOPE

Okay.

Nando stands and puts out his hand. She stands and shakes it but she is suddenly light headed. Nando supports her.

NANDO

When was the last time you ate?

PENELOPE

It's been a while.

NANDO

All the stress. Come on. I'll take you home.

PENELOPE

No. Mister Nando—Igor. I'm fine. Really.

NANDO

I know you are. I just want to make sure you get home all right. For my own peace of mind. Otherwise, I'll get no sleep tonight, and I'm a wolverine if I don't get my beauty rest. Okay?

PENELOPE

Okay, Mister Na---Igor. Thank you.

She takes Nando's arm, they turn, and walk away.

[SHOULD NANDO KNOW PENNY SO IT GETS MOVING
QUICKER?]

[SHOULD THEY GO GET FOOD? AND RUN INTO THE COPS?]

EXT. PENELOPE'S HOLLYWOOD BUNGALOW – NIGHT

Seen from the front windshield, Penelope and Nando exit his car. She walks around the front of the hood and begins talking as Nando walks with her away from his car and we see that it is a tan 1975 Volvo 245DL Estate (station wagon).

Nando follows Penelope up her front walk. He carries the cake box.

Penelope waves to an Old Woman who sits at her window watching them. Nando reluctantly waves to the smiling old lady.

PENELOPE

That's Misses McChrystal.

NANDO

Of course it is.

INT. PENELOPE'S BUNGALOW, LIVING ROOM – CONT.

Penelope unlocks the front door, walks inside, and flicks on the lights: it is a simple, tastefully decorated living room, lots of light-blues and pastels.

PENELOPE

See. Everything's fine. But I do appreciate—

Nando walks straight across the living room to the kitchen and turns on the light. He places the cake down on the kitchen table. Then he crosses to the bedroom, turns on the light, and looks inside. Then he moves to the bathroom and clicks on the light.

PENELOPE

Satisfied?

Nando returns. They stand on opposite sides of the living room in silence.

NANDO

What's your number so I can get in touch with you?

PENELOPE

(thumbing her iPhone)

I'll send it to you.

NANDO

I don't do that.

He holds up his ancient flip cell phone. She picks up a notepad off the end table and writes her number on a piece of her father's stationary. She crosses the room, rips off the page, and hands it to Nando. He holds the paper, then looks down and reads it: Penny 818-656-3232. In the upper lefthand corner of the stationery is Doctor Krueger's name and address:

Dr. Wolfgang Krueger
120 Maple Grove Avenue
Santa Monica, CA 90404
818-348-9171

NANDO

Good. I'll let you know what I know when I
know it.

PENELOPE

Thank you, Igor.

She hugs Nando. He stoops and hugs her small frame. They pull out of the hug, he looks down at her, she looks up at him. She moves closer and slowly stands on her tiptoes. Nando's head descends as she lifts up and they kiss. After about four seconds she pulls out of the kiss.

PENELOPE

(bashfully)

I'm sorry. It was just...

NANDO
Yes...Well...I should get going?

PENELOPE
Yes. Talk tomorrow.

NANDO
Right. Get some rest.

Nando pauses at the open front door and looks at her a brief moment. Her face looks more young, beautiful, and vulnerable than it ever has.

PENELOPE
Good night.

NANDO
Yes. Good night.

She shuts the door as he turns away. Nando pauses on the doorstep. He turns back, looks at the door, puts his fist up as if he is going to knock, then stops himself. Then he lowers his shoulder, takes two steps back and acts like he is going to bust down the door, but again he stops himself. He freezes in thought, turns right, and sees Mrs. McChrystal smiling and waving to him. He waves back, turns, and leaves.

EXT. NANDO'S BUNGALOW – NIGHT

Establishing shot: all lights are off except the flicker of a television set.

INT. NANDO'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM – LATE NIGHT

A drained glass of C.C. and ginger rests on a coffee table. Nando lies on his couch watching television, still dressed in shirt, jacket, and loose tie, even his dress shoes remain on. A cigarette dangles from his mouth through barely open eyes.

Nando passed out cold. A small ashtray balanced on his chest holds two dozen cigarette butts.

On the TV screen appears Penelope critiquing her face in a bathroom mirror. She seems unwell: anxious, nauseous, depressed.

A Female Voice (V.O.)

Are you a woman between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five? Do you use birth control pills? Do you experience anxiety? Nausea? Depression?

Penelope looks through the mirror's reflection at the camera and nods Yes.

Female Voice (V.O.)

Now there's hope...Rejuvum.

As sunrise breaks, Penelope powerwalks down a sidewalk.

Female Voice (V.O.)

Rejuvum has been shown in clinical studies to reduce the anxiety, nausea, and depression associated with birth control pills.

In a swing, Penelope swings higher and higher.

Female Voice (V.O.)

So start living again and ask your doctor today about Rejuvum.

Penelope holds two golden retriever puppies. She smiles and laughs as the puppies lick her face.

Female Voice (V.O.)(really fast)

Possible side effects include itchy skin, bloating, swollen glands, blindness, kidney failure, explosive diarrhea.

Rejuvum should not be taken by women who are pregnant or are nursing.

As the fast disclaimer plays we close-up on Penelope's and the puppies' faces. (Not part of the commercial) First, her face fades out—

Female Voice (V.O.)(fading out)

Rejuvum. Start living today...

Then the two puppies look at the camera and they too fade to black.

INT. NANDO'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM – MORNING

Fade in: In the same position as the two puppies' faces, two fat, dopey, mustached mugs look down at the camera. The Men appear early thirties and tired. They continue to gape down, slack jawed at Nando.

Nando's head tilts back, his mouth wide open as he sleeps on the couch. His eyes flutter and then slowly open.

He sees the two fat faces peering down at him and jumps in fright, sending cigarette butts and ash all over himself.

NANDO

Aw, shit.

WALTER

Sleeping beauty.

NANDO

Man...What are you doing in my house?

Nando sits up, brushes the ash off himself, and lights a smoke.

WALTER

Excellent question. Benny,

Remote control in hand, Walter clicks the television off.

BENNY

Hey! I was watching that.

Benny sits on Nando's couch. Walter and Benny dress in slacks, cheap tweed sportcoats, and even cheaper ties.

Igor stands and walks to the bathroom to pee.

WALTER

What'd you do last night, Nando?

Nando's apartment is a grand homage to bachelordom: simple, mismatched furniture; cheap paintings and posters; and random items—above the TV a framed picture and golf scorecard signed by Jackie Gleason, a beautiful marble Warner Bros. cartoon characters chess set on an end table, an old Schwinn bicycle in a corner, a ukulele on a shelf, an astroturf practice putting track in a corner, and various putters and golf balls scattered around the room.

Igor smokes and pees, he's got a lot of ginger ale to release.

NANDO

Walter, what me and your father have is a beautiful natural thing.

WALTER

Is Penelope Krueger a part of that?

NANDO

What?

BENNY

(loud)

Penelope Krueger!

NANDO

I don't think they heard you in The Valley.

Nando exits the bathroom and crosses to his kitchen.

WALTER

Oh, come off it, man. We know you know her.

NANDO

(from the kitchen)
Know who?

BENNY
Penelope—

WALTER
Why do you always have to be such an asshole?

Walter smacks Benny on the back of the head to get him up.

NANDO
You guys want sunnyside or scrambled?

Nando cracks an egg and drops the yoke in a pan on the stove. Walter enters the kitchen followed by Benny.

WALTER
I've got orders. From you know who.

NANDO
Benny, be a dear, call up the Chief and see how he wants his eggs!

WALTER
Come on. We gotta go.

Walter grabs Nando's arm.

NANDO
Ah, shit, Walter!

Nando shakes Walter's hand off his bicep. Then he pulls off the towel around his neck and throws it at Walter.

NANDO
It's too early for this shit.

Benny enters the kitchen on his cellphone.

BENNY
(to Nando)
Sunny.

Walter and Nando stop and look at Benny.

BENNY

What?

INT. NANDO'S KITCHEN – MORNING

Walter and Benny scarf down eggs, bacon, toast, hash browns, and drink coffee and orange juice. Nando wears a pink kimono—his cooking kimono—and stands leaning over the counter eating. He smokes as he eats. A tin of cookies sits on the counter.

NANDO

(holding out the pot)

More coffee, Walter?

WALTER

(feeling much better having eaten)

Just a smidge.

Nando pours coffee into Walter's mug. From the brown coffee we cut to:

EXT. WALTER'S & BENNY'S UNMARKED POLICE CRUISER – LATE MORNING

Walter drives a dark brown 1995 Ford Crown Victoria; Benny sits in the passenger seat; Nando sits perched center in the backseat. They all lift up portable plastic Disneyland coffee mugs and take drinks. Nando's has a picture of Donald Duck. Walter's: Goofy. Benny's: Pluto. They all lower the mugs at the same time.

BENNY

Thanks for the mug.

NANDO

You're welcome, Benny.

Nando smirks and pulls a drag off his cigarette.

INT. POLICE STATION – NOONTIME

Smoking a cigarette and flanked by Walter and Benny, Nando enters through the police station's front doors. He walks up to the tall wooden front desk and dings the bell twice. A half-eaten slice of chocolate cake with white frosting sits on a paper plate with a white plastic fork sticking out the top. Unprofessionally, the front desk is presently unmanned; the presiding Police Officer is using the bathroom.

NANDO

Nando. Checking in. My bags are in the brown piece of shit out front. Please have a bellhop take care with the golf clubs. They're antiques.

A Loud Voice shouts from inside an office.

CHIEF
Kozlowski! Dombrowski!

Chief O'Donnell enters. He is a small, scrappy Irishman in his sixties. He wears a wrinkled white shirt with a wrinkled tie and dark slacks and gnaws on an unlit cigar.

CHIEF
How does it take...(he inspects his watch) Three
and a half fucking hours to go pick up this
asshole?

WALTER
Traffic was really bad—

CHIEF
Traffic? Bullshit.

NANDO
It's entirely my fault. I wanted to be
freshly showered and powdered for you. Lilac.

CHIEF
There's no smoking in here, wiseass.

NANDO
What is that, a Swisher Sweet?

CHIEF
My cigar don't count.

INT. POLICE STATION, INTERROGATION ROOM – CONT.

The Chief enters an interrogation room. It looks like every other police interrogation room ever used. Nando follows him inside.

NANDO
No picture? I was hoping I could get a new
headshot out of this.

CHIEF
You'll get your picture. Sit down.

Walter pushes Nando into a folding chair. There is, of course, a small table in front of him. Nando waves to the two-way mirror on the wall. The Chief pulls down a blind over the two-way mirror.

INT. BEHIND THE MIRROR – CONT.

A beautiful blond Woman stands next to a beefy Cop. With the blind down they cannot see inside the interrogation room.

WOMAN
(with Swedish accent)
What is he doing?

COP
Uh, I don't know, Ma'am. But the chief is a pro. He himself underwent torturous interrogation from the Vietcong.

WOMAN
Hmm...

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM – CONT.

NANDO
They won't be able to see us slowdance.

CHIEF
What do you know about this girl?

Chief puts a picture of Penelope down on the table. It is a headshot lifted from her bungalow.

NANDO
You know what I know. Are we going to go through this?

CHIEF
You saw her last night.

NANDO
You know all this.

CHIEF
Well...Where is it?

NANDO
Where's what?

CHIEF

Where's the beaver?

NANDO

You mean the girl?

CHIEF

No. The beaver.

NANDO

What beaver?

CHIEF

You know what beaver.

NANDO

Jerry Mathers?

CHIEF

The beaver!

NANDO

What are you talking about?

CHIEF

The beaver, asshole!

NANDO

What beaver?

CHIEF

You know what beaver, shithead!

NANDO

What beaver?

CHIEF

THE BEAVER, YOU MOTHERFUCKER!

He grabs Nando by the neck and pushes him up against the wall.

NANDO

Who's on first?

Chief releases Nando and realizes he went too far. Long pause. Nando lights a smoke. Chief lets it go.

CHIEF

Where's the girl?

NANDO

I don't know what you're talking about.

CHIEF

Her apartment was trashed. An old lady, a Misses McChrystal, saw you, then she saw two men leave with Miss Krueger—

NANDO

Penny—

CHIEF

Throw her into a white van, and drive away.
You were the last one seen with her. I've gotta go use the john.

Chief moves to exit.

NANDO

Chief...What's the beaver?

Chief stops, turns back, looks at Nando, and chuckles.

CHIEF

You know something, Nando? You're a real jackass.

Chief slams the door after himself. The door flies open and Chief grabs the cigarette out of Nando's mouth and throws it on the floor. Chief exits as fast as he returned.

Nando admires his empty cigarette pack and then stares ahead with a tired, determined look.

INT. POLICE STATION, A JAIL CELL – MORNING

An African-American Cop holds a paper plate with a slice of chocolate cake with white frosting. As he walks down a hallway, turns left, and approaches a row of jail cells, he takes bites of the cake with a white plastic fork. He shakes his head and rolls his eyes as he hears:

NANDO

...And who is this hamburger helper actually helping? Does hamburger really need help? It's fine by itself. Cheeseburger Macaroni. Are these two foods that we

really need to combine? Have you ever seen Hamburger Helper Cheesburger Macaroni? It looks the same going in as it does coming out.

A good-looking Young Man lies on the cell's top bunk. He smokes a cigarette, looks down and forces a pity laugh at Nando's jokes coming from the bottom bunk, where he also smokes.

COP

Conner.

The Young Man looks worn out but wears exhaustion like someone accustomed to long, hard nights. Conner ignores the Cop and remains focused on Nando.

NANDO

And when did we start putting Ranch in everything? Are you aware of this? Have you seen this phenomena? Go to the supermarket. [FIX THIS JOKE]

COP

Conner!

NANDO

Select any food, at random...Wheat Thins. Ranch-flavored Wheat Thins. Turkey breast. Ranch-flavored turkey breast. Popsicles. Ranch-flavored popsicles. Coffee. Ranch-flavored coffee. [FIX]

COP

Conner!!

CONNER
(vicious)

What?!

COP

Your lawyer's here. Put out those cigarettes.
There's no smoking in here.

The Cop carefully balances his cake on the paper plate as he unlocks and opens the jail cell. Conner jumps down from the top bunk. He is small but in good shape. He wears jeans, a t-shirt, and cowboy boots. He carries himself like James Dean. He is hungover.

CONNER

Funny shit, man.

Conner flicks his cigarette in the toilet bowl.

NANDO

Thanks.

COP

You too, Nando. Come on.

NANDO

Let me cancel my interior decorator.

Conner bursts out laughing. Nando throws his cigarette at the toilet and misses. He walks over, picks up the butt, and drops it in the bowl.

INT. POLICE STATION, FRONT DESK – CONT.

Conner runs up and gives his uptight, Jewish lawyer a big bear hug. Nando walks straight to the front desk and his Ziplock bag with his personal effects is waiting for him: wallet, Mickey Mouse keychain, chapstick, scraps of paper, notecards, golf tees, etc. The bored Cop at the front desk eats cake as he hands Nando the Ziplock bag.

CONNER

Lowenstein, you crazy bastard. (he kisses him)

Where would I be without you?

Lowenstein is late forties, dressed in an expensive three-piece suit.

LOWENSTEIN

(nervous)

I don't know, sir.

CONNER

I'll tell you. Dead. That's where I'd be. Pushing up daisies with my dick.

Conner laughs and ruffles Lowenstein's hair. Nando deposits his Ziplock items into different pockets.

CONNER

I want you to meet somebody. May I present Igor Nando: stand-up comedian by day, private eye by night.

Nando shakes Lowenstein's clammy hand.

NANDO

Exactly. Just reverse it. Nice to meet you.

Nando spots the Chief leaving an office.

NANDO

Chiefee! O'Donnell! Thanks for the rest. I slept like a bear.

Holding his Ziplock bag, Nando walks up to him. Chief remains stern. Conner and Lowenstein retrieve Conner's possessions from the front desk Cop.

NANDO

Okay, I took my medicine. You win. Now what's the deal? Where's Miss Krueger—Penny?

CHIEF

(serious)

Look Nando, we found a girl's body last night. Executed. Bullet to the back of the head. Not a good death. An ugly death.

NANDO

Is it her?

CHIEF

Small blond actress. You know how many of those we got out here? We don't know yet but it could be.

NANDO

Shit.

CHIEF

What? No comeback? No zinger? Sarcasm?

Nando's face is serious. Chief walks away.

NANDO

What about the beaver?

Chief slams shut his door.

CONNER

Hey Igor, man! You need a ride?

LOWENSTEIN

(whispering)

We really don't have time—who knows
where the man lives—he could be from the
valley for all we know—

CONNER
Oh, chill out, Sid. Igor?

NANDO
Yeah...That'd be great...Thanks.

EXT. POLICE STATION, SIDE ENTRANCE – MORNING

A black limousine pulls up to a non-descript side entrance. The Driver, a large Italian-American man, runs around and opens the back door. A group of paparazzi stationed at the front entrance notice the limo and start taking pictures as they run to the automobile.

The Police Station's side door opens. Lowenstein walks out and squints at the bright sunlight. He sees the running photographers and quickly ushers his client inside the limousine.

As Brad Conner walks to the limo, he notices the sprinting paparazzi—shutters clicking away—he waves and gives them a smile before he ducks inside to the safety of tinted glass. Nando follows Conner and dives inside right before the photographers reach the limo. Lowenstein closes and locks the doors, and the Driver slowly pulls away.

INT. LIMOUSINE – CONT.

CONNER
(shouted to Driver)
Rocco! How's it going?

ROCCO
Very good, sir. Thank you.

Conner pulls a silver cigarette case out of a side compartment, clicks it open, and offers the smokes to Nando.

CONNER
Igor, here you go.

NANDO
Thanks.

Nando pulls out a butt. Monogrammed on the side of the cigarette are the letters: BMC. Conner searches for a lighter.

NANDO

M?

CONNER

Macauley. Ah. Thanks.

Nando uses his trusty Statue of Liberty lighter to fire up their smokes.

LOWENSTEIN

You're really not supposed to smoke in here.

CONNER

Correct me if I'm wrong, but don't I own this limo.

LOWENSTEIN

Yes you do.

CONNER

Igor, feel free to smoke the seatcovers if you want.

NANDO

Haven't tried that one.

The limousine turns onto the highway. A few shots of the limousine driving.

CONNER (V.O.)

So let me get this straight, that girl you were telling me about is dead?

Igor reads the front page of the L.A. Times. He flips to the Metro section, page B2. Below the fold at the bottom left is a story about missing Penelope Krueger and the body found. Title: Body May Be Abducted Actress.

NANDO

It appears that way.

Conner thinks.

CONNER

Did you kill her?

Nando looks at Conner.

CONNER

Sorry. I've been reading too many serial killer scripts lately.

On the side seat lies a pile of two dozen scripts. Conner looks at Lowenstein; the lawyer looks away.

The limousine drives through a leafy suburban area.

NANDO (V.O.)

No. I didn't kill her, but the fact that she's dead makes no sense.

CONNER (V.O.)

You think she's alive?

NANDO (V.O.)

I don't know...I've got to clear my head.

Back inside the limo.

ROCCO

Is this it, sir?

Nando looks out the window.

NANDO

Yes. You've got it.

CONNER

This is your home?

NANDO

No. It's my office, actually.

Nando opens the door and climbs out of the limo.

NANDO

Thanks for the ride.

He and Conner shake hands through the open door.

CONNER

No problem. And I'm going to come see you.
Hilarities, right?

NANDO

Yep. Sunday, Tuesday, and Friday. [Every Sunday]

CONNER

Cool.

NANDO

And I'll be on the lookout for your next blockbuster.

CONNER

You and me both.

Nando shuts the car door, turns and walks towards the Clubhouse of a Driving Range.

EXT. UPSHAW'S DRIVING RANGE – MIDDAY

Nando walks past the front sign:

Upshaw's Driving Range
Open Dawn to Dusk

The Clubhouse is a simple, medium-sized wood building. Built within the last five years, it looks fairly new. Flowers line the outside perimeter and the parking lot is paved and smooth. It is a nice driving range, as far as driving ranges go.

Nando enters the front door.

INT. UPSHAW'S CLUBHOUSE – CONT.

The Times tucked under his arm and smoking a cigarette, Nando walks inside the Clubhouse. Stan, an African-American man in his late forties, stands behind the counter shoveling plastic yellow buckets full of range balls. He wears a Polo shirt, khaki shorts, white sneakers, and an old Dodgers cap.

STAN

Arriving in style, I see.

NANDO

(mind elsewhere)

What's that? Oh, yeah. Brad Conner gave me a ride.

STAN

That's funny 'cause Jane Robbins drove me home last night.

NANDO

What's that? Oh, yeah. That's funny.

STAN

You look terrible.

NANDO

Yeah, probably.

Nando takes off his suit coat and hangs it over a canvas golf bag that contains an old set of Walter Hagen irons and woods from the 1970's. They look like antiques or simply decoration. Given recent golfing technology no one of sound mind would use the ancient clubs. Nando pulls the wooden driver from the bag and takes a small bucket of balls off the counter.

EXT. ON THE RANGE – CONT.

Still smoking, wooden driver in one hand, yellow bucket of balls in the other, Nando walks over to the grass section and stands behind a skinny fifteen-year-old African-American Boy who pounds drives out past three hundred yards. He dresses in a t-shirt, khaki shorts, golf shoes, and a Nike cap. His clothes and shoes are faded, dirty, and scuffed up. But his golf bag and clubs look brand new. He is a good looking young man with a bright, white smile. With each swing his titanium driver makes a ding sound.

Nando drops his yellow bucket down and the golf balls spill out on the grass. He pulls a handful of white tees from his pant pocket, tosses them to the ground, tees up a ball, sets himself, and, cigarette still stuck in the side of his mouth, takes a big swing at the golf ball.

The clubhead makes a dull whack, a noticeably different sound from the pings and dings of the metal and titanium drivers. Nando shields his eyes from the sun and watches the ball sail out past the two hundred yard sign. The Boy, upon hearing the whack, stops his club at the top of his backswing, smiles, and says, over his shoulder:

BOY

Mister Nando.

Nando whacks another ball.

NANDO

Hey, Billy.

BILLY

Are you ever going to join the rest of us in the twenty-first century?

NANDO

When they make a titanium driver that sounds like this...

He whacks another.

NANDO
...Ah...It's like the ocean...

Billy laughs.

BILLY
Man, you're crazy.

NANDO
Probably.

Billy launches a drive: perfect form, perfect swing, perfect result.

Nando pauses, smokes, and watches Billy set up for another powerful swing. Casually, Nando says:

NANDO
Hey, Billy...Now, do you inhale or exhale on
your backswing?

A large cheeky grin slowly builds over Billy's face, as if this is a normal game they play. Then the smile fades, Billy's eyes narrow, and he drills the golf ball straight and long.

Nando smiles and lights another smoke.

INT. UPSHAW'S CLUBHOUSE – FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER

Driver and empty bucket in hand, and still smoking, Nando walks back inside the Clubhouse.

STAN
(from under the counter searching for a golf ball he dropped)
Feel better?

NANDO
Always.

Nando returns the wooden driver to its Walter Hagen brothers. Then he puts his suit coat back on, slings the canvas golf bag over his shoulder, and marches across the room and through a wooden door into his office. He leaves the door open, leans the golf clubs against his desk, and falls into his swivel-chair. Nando's office looks like a fifteen-year-old boy's bedroom: there is crap all over the place. The main furniture is a wooden desk and swivel-chair, an old couch, a coffee table, an easy chair, three more sturdy wooden chairs, and a small television that sits atop one of the many shelves in the room full of books, clothes, sports memorabilia, tins, Tupperware, an old muffler. A spare car tire rests in the corner.

NANDO

Any mail?

Nando presses the play button on his answering machine.

STAN

Yeah. You got some bills. Looks like a phone bill.

Answering Machine: You have five new messages. First message. Received Wednesday at eleven fourteen A.M....

NANDO

Un hun.

STAN

And some doofus keeps sending you notes about rent.

Stan smiles to himself, waiting for Nando's reply. Nando looks at a small pile of yellow Post-It notes on his desk, each dated and with only one word written on them: RENT! Each note adds another exclamation point.

A Machine: Hello. My name is Michelle and I'm calling because you have been chosen—

Nando presses the delete button and the answering machine moves on to the next message.

Answering Machine: Message deleted. Second new message. Received Wednesday at three sixteen P.M....

NANDO

Okay. I got it.

Stan laughs to himself.

NANDO

Anything else?

Man's Voice: Hello. My name is Bill, calling for an Ee-gor Nan-do? Well Mr. Nan-do I have a special offer—

Nando presses delete again.

Answering Machine: Message deleted. Third new message. Received Wednesday at six thirty-six P.M....

Stan enters Nando's office carrying a white box. Nando is under his desk looking for a cigarette he dropped.

STAN
A box.

NANDO
(from under desk)
A box?

STAN
Yeah. A box.

NANDO
Well what's in it?

STAN
I think it's a cake.

NANDO
(his head pops up with cigarette in his mouth)
A cake?

A Machine: the squeal of a fax machine trying to connect is heard. It is a loud, high piercing screech.

Nando presses the delete button as he stands.

Answering machine: Message deleted. Fourth new message. Received Wednesday at eight thirty-eight P.M....

Stan places the box on the desk; he pulls a Swiss army knife from his back pocket and cuts open the box. Nando opens the lid.

A Woman's Voice (his Mother): Hi, Igor. It's me. If you could give me a call when you have a second—

Nando presses the delete button.

Answering Machine: Message deleted. Fifth new message. Received Thursday at nine forty-nine A.M....

Written in white icing atop a simple square brown hazelnut cake (like a letter) is:

Mr. Nando:
Please contact me.

Re: Dr. Krueger.
Sincerely Yours,
Marvin Pepperidge

STAN
Who is Marvin Pepperidge?

Answering Machine: Good morning, Mr. Nando. This is Warren from Mr. Pepperidge's office...

Stan and Nando, both surprised by the perfect timing, look at each other.

EXT. INSIDE NANDO'S VOLVO – AFTERNOON

Warren's Message continues (V.O.):...If you could contact us at your earliest convenience we would appreciate it. We do hope that you received the hazelnut torte, and that it was enjoyed. The number is 818-225-3626. Or simply 818-CAKEMAN. Look forward to hearing from you. Good day.

Nando smokes and wears dark sunglasses as he drives. He looks in his rearview mirror and sees Walter and Benny following him in their brown Crown Victoria. Walter drives; Benny looks at Nando through binoculars. Nando smiles.

EXT. PEPPERIDGE PALACE – AFTERNOON

Nando drives through the Hollywood Hills. He sings to himself as he references a small scrap of paper he holds up that has the Pepperidge address. He sees a Guard House with the word Pepperidge written on the front in ornate calligraphy, so Nando pulls up to it. A Young Guard wearing a dress shirt, slacks, and a far too friendly smile greets Nando. Nando rolls down his window.

GUARD
Yes, sir...

NANDO
Yeah, I'll have two double cheeseburgers, a small coke, and an apple pie.

The Guard blinks his entire face.

NANDO
Nando. Igor Nando.

GUARD
Welcome, Mister Nando. Mister Pepperidge is expecting you.

A tall wrought iron gate with a big P center splits open. Nando follows the driveway up a hill. The tree-lined drive blocks sight of the house.

NANDO
(singing to himself)
L.A.'s fine, the sun shines most of the time,
and the feeling is laid back.
Palm trees grow, and rents are low...

As the Volvo crests a rise the trees open up and Nando peers over his sunglasses up at an enormous white Greco-Roman house commanding the top of a hill.

NANDO
(to himself)
Xanadu...

As Nando's station wagon follows the long drive up the hill he slows to admire various cake and pastry sculptures that line the drive (in place of the trees): there are bronze cakes the size of humans; Labrador-sized copper cakes; tiny marble cakes; elephant-sized granite cakes. The cakes grow in size and scope the closer to the mansion.

From high above the house (helicopter shot) Nando's station wagon climbs the cake-lined driveway next to a grass front lawn the size of a football field. The mow lines have been cut in the design of a three-tiered cake.

Nando's Volvo drives up under the arch at the side door. An abstract cake fountain trickles water out the top that cascades down the layers.

A Valet runs up to Nando's window.

VALET
Welcome, Mister Nando.

The Valet opens Nando's door for him.

NANDO
Two coats of wax ought to be fine, lubricate the chassis,
change out the spark plugs, and give it a good ionized
rustproofing while you're at it.

VALET
Um...Uh...Okay?

A large side door opens and a small middle-aged Man in a sharp little suit walks out.

WARREN

I'm Warren, Mr. Pepperidge's personal liaison.

NANDO

Good to meet you, Warren.

Nando shakes Warren's hand.

WARREN

Thank you for coming on such short notice.

NANDO

Oh, well, I just had to cancel my Botox appointment. No big deal.

WARREN

I am sorry for the inconvenience.

Warren leads Nando around the side of the house and then along a stone path to the back of the house.

NANDO

Oh, that's all right. My butt wrinkles can wait another day.

WARREN

(confused)

I see...

NANDO

So this is all big pastry money?

WARREN

Mr. Pepperidge has been fortunate to accrue a certain amount of fiscal success, yes.

As they turn the corner and emerge from the shrubberies, they hear a Male Voice shout, "Pull!" Then silence for a couple seconds. Then a gunshot and a dull splat.

Once around back, Nando squints at three young men—triplets—(Lonny, Ronny, Donny) who stand in the middle of the sun drenched back lawn. Donny places a small cake in Ronny's Jai Alai Cesta. Then Donny backs away and picks up a pair of binoculars off a long rectangular oak table that is filled with baked goods: cakes, pastries, danishes, donuts, bagels, etc. Lonny raises his rifle to his shoulder and shouts, "Pull!" Ronny swings the Cesta, sending the small cake high into the air. Lonny's rifle follows it, he fires, and then the cake explodes with another dull splat.

WARREN

(trying to ignore the boys and keep Nando walking)
Masters Lonny, Ronny, and Donny enjoy their afternoon exercise.

NANDO

I guess you don't have a frisbee lying around?

WARREN

Mr. Pepperidge likes to encourage his sons' creativity in
whatever form it should...

Warren and Nando look to the lawn. "Pull!" Two second pause. Gunshot: dull splat.

Warren pushes open a set of French doors. When Warren's not looking Nando tosses his cigarette in the bushes. Once Nando is inside Warren quickly closes the doors, cutting off "Pull—"

WARREN

Right this way.

Through the French door windows, up in the blue sky, a cake explodes.

INT. PEPPERIDGE PALACE – CONT.

Warren leads Nando through one of many living rooms in the house. All about the room, on mahogany tables and oak shelves, are elaborate cakes under glass coverings. There must be twelve cakes in this room alone. After another cake-filled living room and a small hallway, Warren opens a pair of oak double doors and takes Nando into a room that appears to be a sunroom/greenhouse/office. The entire room is glass like a greenhouse, but instead of plants there are cakes: big cakes, small cakes, short cakes, tall cakes. A large oak desk is at the far end with a small white mountain on top of it that looks like cocaine. A highback leather chair is turned around, its back to Warren and Nando. Warren leads Nando down the center of the room past the cakes on both sides of them.

WARREN

Mister Pepperidge, may I present—

The chair spins around and Marvin Pepperidge appears. He waves, then snaps his fingers twice for Warren to stop. Pepperidge is on the telephone. He is a small Jewish man in his late forties with a perfect tan. He dresses comfortably in slacks, sandals, and a Hawaiian shirt. He also wears lots of gold jewelry and, of course, has a bad case of a Napoleon Complex.

PEPPERIDGE

(into phone)

I'm telling you, Jefe, the stuff is not pure...No...It stinks...

Pepperidge licks his thumb, sticks it in the mountain, then puts the thumb in his mouth and rubs it all around inside, over his gums. Then he carefully tastes and swallows.

PEPPERIDGE

No. It's got no kick...Here (he waves Warren over, Warren sticks his thumb in and then tastes it)...I'm not saying it's your fault...(Warren shakes his head No solemnly) See, Warren agrees with me. It's not bad, it's just not Great! Here, I've got a guest here with no bias whatsoever...

Pepperidge motions for Nando to try it.

Nando puts a pinky down in the mountain and then takes a taste.

NANDO

Sugar.

PEPPERIDGE

But is it the best sugar you've ever tasted?

NANDO

(playing along)

No. Of course. Absolutely not.

PEPPERIDGE

(into phone)

See. He said it tastes fine. Just fine...Well get on it, Jefe. I want the Best shit! Magnifico!

He hangs up and sits down. Then shakes his head in wonder.

PEPPERIDGE

Columbians...I swear these sugar cartels are going to be the death of me. But, they do produce the best product.

NANDO

This is quite a pastry palace you've got here.

PEPPERIDGE

This room we're in is climate controlled so the cakes, you see, can sit out and breathe freely.

Nando moves to fire up a smoke.

PEPPERIDGE

Oh, no, Mister Nando. Please.

Nando puts the cigarette and lighter away.

PEPPERIDGE

As I said in my cakeogram, this concerns Doctor Krueger.

NANDO

Okay.

PEPPERIDGE

He was sent to Vienna to pick up a cake for me and bring it back here. But the cake and the good doctor, as you can see, never arrived.

NANDO

I see...

PEPPERIDGE

It appears that he has taken it upon himself to steal from me.

NANDO

What about Penelope?

PEPPERIDGE

Unfortunate that she was made a part of this mess, but that, it seems, was her father's fault.

NANDO

What do you want from me?

PEPPERIDGE

Simple as pie really. Find Krueger. Get me my cake. And if it turns out Krueger was not in the wrong, and there are other parties involved, then I want to know that too. But! And I stress the but, I think he stole my cake.

NANDO

Why?

PEPPERIDGE

Greed, Mister Nando. Greed. It's as simple as that. He got greedy and wanted the whole cake for himself.

NANDO

What's so special about this cake?

PEPPERIDGE
You know the Sacher Torte?

Nando shakes his head No.

PEPPERIDGE
This is a one of a kind cake. They don't make 'em like this anymore.

NANDO
How do you know he's in town?

PEPPERIDGE
He sent his daughter a cakeogram, didn't he, Mister Nando?

NANDO
And how do you know that?

PEPPERIDGE
I've found that the boys in blue enjoy a good cake. Usually the bigger the better.

NANDO
And that's how you knew Krueger knew me...

Pepperidge's phone rings.

PEPPERIDGE
Excuse me.

He answers it.

PEPPERIDGE
(into phone)
Pepperidge...Slow down, Pablo...I talked to Jefe earlier.
Hold on...(to Nando) I'm sorry, but I have to take this.
Warren!

Warren enters quickly.

PEPPERIDGE
(to Nando)
Look forward to working with you.
(to Warren)

Make sure he gets a chocolate-raspberry torte. It's my signature cake.

NANDO
Oh, no, that won't be—

PEPPERIDGE
It's delicious. You'll love it.

NANDO
I don't really eat—

WARREN
Yes sir.

PEPPERIDGE
(into phone)
Pablo, relax, baby, breathe...

Nando follows Warren. He is on the other side of the room when it hits him.

NANDO
(turning back)
Oh. Mister Pepperidge, what—

PEPPERIDGE
(into phone) No. Hold on. (to Nando) What?

NANDO
The cake. What's it look like?

PEPPERIDGE
A beaver. A beautiful little pink beaver. Good luck. (into phone) Pablo? You're taking all this way too personally...

Warren leads Nando out of Pepperidge's office and back into a living room. Nando fires up a smoke the moment he leaves Pepperidge's room.

INT. A LIVING ROOM IN THE PEPPERIDGE PALACE – CONT.

Warren hands Nando a white cake box. Nando's cigarette dangles from his mouth. Warren opens the lid and shows Nando the cake: a round chocolate torte. The top design is a large white P with Marvin Pepperidge's signature written in icing across it.

EXT. PEPPERIDGE FRONT GATE – CONT.

Nando drives out of the Pepperidge front gate and onto the street. He turns left and notices Walter's and Benny's brown Crown Victoria parked on the street. He drives slowly past them. Walter and Benny try to hide behind newspapers and sunglasses but it is obscenely obvious that they are cops. Nando pulls his Volvo in front of their car and parks. Then he picks up the cake box, gets out of the station wagon, and walks over to Walter's window. Walter hides behind his newspaper and attempts to roll up his window but with the car turned off the power windows do not work. Benny hides behind the Business Section.

NANDO

Here you go.

Through the open window he hands Walter the cake box.

WALTER

What's this?

NANDO

Chocolate raspberry torte.

Nando pulls one small plate out of each side suitcoat pocket and hands one to Benny and the other plate to Walter. Nando pulls silverware out of his pockets and gives them each a fork. Benny opens the box.

BENNY

Smells fantastic.

Nando hands them each a silk napkin. Nando fires up a smoke.

NANDO

Well...

They cut off large slices onto the plates and take a bite.

WALTER

Mmm, wow.

BENNY

Really good. You want some?

NANDO

(walking away, over his shoulder)

No thanks. Cake hurts my teeth.

Walter and Benny devour their slices of torte and don't notice right away that Igor has gotten in his station wagon and is driving away.

EXT. DR. WOLFGANG KRUEGER'S HOUSE – LATE AFTERNOON

Nando's Volvo drives slowly down a leafy Santa Monica street. He holds up Penelope's note and reads the upper lefthand portion with Dr. Krueger's name and address. He stops in front of a medium-sized blue house with yellow police tape strung around it.

Nando walks up the drive, ducks under the police tape, and continues along the side of the house. He tries to see in the side windows but the sun glare makes it difficult.

AN OLD WOMAN'S VOICE

What are you doing?

NANDO

Jesus! Lady, you scared the hell out of me.

An Old Lady sits at her side kitchen window in the house next door and looks down at Nando.

OLD LADY

Who are you? You don't look like police.

NANDO

I'm a private--

OLD LADY

You're a private dick, aren't you?

NANDO

Been a while since anyone called me that.

OLD LADY

My Alby was a P.I. back in the fifties and sixties. He dressed just like you.

Nando bashfully tugs on his lapels.

OLD LADY

Here.

She raises her screen and tosses out a keychain with a key.

OLD LADY

Those'll get you in so you don't have to break anything.

NANDO

Works for me.

INT. KRUEGER'S HOUSE – CONT.

Nando unlocks the backdoor and walks inside. He finds himself in the kitchen: all the cupboards are open, there is garbage on the floor, the place smells of rotten eggs.

The living room has been completely ransacked and obviously not by the police. Even the large glass display cabinet that housed twelve cakes has been jimmied open and the cakes splattered around the room. The only objects untouched are three framed photographs on the mantel: one of Krueger and Penelope; another a high school portrait of Penelope; and a third of Krueger standing next to the “largest cake in the world” in St. Paul, Minnesota.

NANDO

Big cake.

Nando removes the picture of the two Kruegers and pockets it.

EXT. NANDO'S APARTMENT – DUSK

Nando walks up to his front door. He carries a paper grocery bag and smokes a cigarette. He pulls out his keys (Mickey Mouse keychain) and moves to put the key in the keyhole but he notices his front door is open. Nando pushes it open and walks inside.

INT. NANDO'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM – CONT.

His apartment is ransacked. He stands there a moment, holding his grocery bag, smoking, panning across his destroyed living room.

Plates crash in the kitchen. Suddenly, two large Men emerge—one from the kitchen, the other from the bedroom. They are dressed in black Adidas jumpsuits; they wear babushkas on their heads, and dark sunglasses over their eyes. They walk straight at Nando. Nando doesn't move. He stands holding his grocery bag.

NANDO

Guys, all I got are hot dogs, buns,

Nando holds up the package of hotdog buns.

The large Thugs walk straight at Nando, large smiles slowly growing the closer they get. One pulls a rolling pin out from behind his leg where he has been holding it discreetly hidden on their approach.

NANDO

And ice cream--

Right after Nando's “cream” the Thug swings the rolling pin and hits Nando on the side of the head. The grocery bag falls straight to the floor. Nando falls to the side but before he hits the

floor a Thug catches him and tosses Nando's limp body on the couch. The Thug that hit Nando stomps out the cigarette that flew to the hardwood floor from the blow. The other Thug rummages through Nando's groceries: it is indeed only hot dogs, buns, and ice cream, which the Thugs take and leave the rest.

The camera slowly zooms in on Nando's face, mouth open, zonked out on the couch.

NANDO DREAM SEQUENCE #1

Nando stands onstage at Hilarities performing his stand-up act. He is really cooking: comfortable and confident. Suddenly his eyes grow wide as a cake nails him in the face. At a table sits Marvin Pepperidge laughing. Lonny, Ronny, and Donny sit around him armed with cakes. They throw the cakes and, one on top of another, they hit Nando in the face and chest. On the opposite side of the room, arms cocked with cake, sit Chief O'Donnell, Walter, and Benny. Nando sees them. Chief gnaws on his cigar, his eyes flare, and he lets fire. The cake hits Nando in the crotch. Walter and Benny throw their cakes; one after another they hit Nando in the face. Nando falls against the back brick wall and tries to wipe his eyes clean. At another table Conner has his arm around the Old Lady. They look at each other, then at Nando, and throw their cakes. Nando is nailed by both. Then Conner and the Old Lady kiss. Nando is disgusted. Now curled up on the floor against the back wall, Nando sees Penelope and Dr. Krueger at a table, arms cocked with cake. Nando pleads, "Please, no more." Dr. Krueger smirks and fires his cake. It splats Nando in the face. Penelope stands, walks onstage, looks down at Nando with her cake cocked. Nando pleads. She smirks; her face turns determined, scornful. Nando begs and grimaces. Penelope's eyes narrow and she throws the cake directly at the camera. Blackout.

INT. NANDO'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM – 5 A.M.

Nando wakes with a start. He winces from the rolling pin to the temple and gingerly puts his hand to his head.

Nando sits halfway up, pulls out his cigarettes and lights one. He smokes as he pans the room, left to right. He sees his grocery bag torn apart: hotdogs and buns strewn about. On the center of the coffee table is a cake. He sits up and looks at it.

It is some sort of Russian pastry-cake. Written in dark piped icing atop it is:
We Have Girl

A tiny Russian flag of the former Soviet Union (blood red with the star, hammer, sickle) is stuck in the cake above the words.

Nando picks up the flag, smokes and thinks a moment.

INT. NANDO'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM – 20 MINUTES LATER

Nando rubs out the words atop the pastry-cake and tosses aside the U.S.S.R. flag.

Shaved, showered, and dressed in new underwear, socks, and shirt—but he wears the same rumpled dark suit as before. He leaves his apartment holding the cake up like a waiter carrying a tray.

EXT. NANDO'S STREET – CONT. (Dawn)

Nando walks outside and looks across the street: Walter's and Benny's Crown Victoria is parked behind his station wagon. He quietly approaches their car. Inside Walter and Benny are asleep: their heads back against the headrests, their mouths open, they have chocolate all around their mouths. The empty cake box rests between them.

Nando tiptoes over and gently places the Russian pastry-cake in the center of the hood. Then Nando quietly gets into his car, puts it in neutral and lets the Volvo roll down the hill before he turns the ignition, shifts to drive, and turns right.

Walter and Benny stir but fall back into a deep slumber.

EXT. POST OFFICE – SUNRISE

Nando's station wagon parked outside a post office. He walks up to the glass double doors, looks inside, then knocks. After a short wait a Man appears.

MAN

Nando?

NANDO

Hey, Dave.

Dave unlocks the door.

DAVE

What are you doing here?

INT. POST OFFICE – CONT.

Dave is dressed in his postal employee uniform. He is a meek man, but good-hearted through and through and self-loathingly sick of working at the post office.

As they talk Dave leads Nando to a large rear sorting room.

NANDO

I need to use one of my get-out-of-jail-free cards.

DAVE

I haven't seen you at league.

NANDO

I need a favor.

DAVE

Again? You know this is illegal, right? I could lose my job.

NANDO

You hate your job.

Dave thinks for a long time.

DAVE

Write down the name and address.

INT. POST OFFICE – TEN MINUTES LATER

Nando fiddles with an old postage meter, typing in various amounts: .33, .45, .69. Then he presses the button and the stickers shoot out with the amount printed in red ink. Nando stuffs the stickers in his suitcoat pockets. He notices a cardboard box full of books of stamps (the American Flag ones). He grabs a handful of books and stuffs them in his suit coat pocket as Dave returns carrying a plastic mail bin.

DAVE

Everything we have.

He places the bin on a table.

NANDO

Ah, great.

Nando flips through the mail: electric bill, phone bill, cable bill, J. Crew catalog, free Florida vacation offer, gas bill, Pottery Barn catalog, etc. After lifting out all the mail Nando discovers, on the bottom, a white box about the size of a cake. Nando removes the white box from the bin and puts it down on a table.

NANDO

Blade?

Dave pulls out a post office issued box cutter from his hip holster.

DAVE

Move.

With three quick swipes, Dave cuts open the box. Nando is impressed.

NANDO

Thank you.

Nando flips open the lid. They look inside. There is another round Italian coffeecake with the big black M and written in white icing atop it is:

Happy Birthday, Igor!

DAVE

I guess it's for you.

NANDO

Could be another Igor.

Dave shoots an incredulous look at Nando. Nando lifts up the cake.

DAVE

What's it mean?

NANDO

I don't...

Nando sees the label underneath:

Marconi's Bakery
70 Sunflower Drive
Santa Monica, CA 90404
818-656-3441

Slow zoom on the Marconi label.

EXT. NANDO DRIVING – EARLY MORNING

As Nando drives amid the harsh, early morning sunshine, his end of a phone conversation is heard.

NANDO (V.O.)

The name's Nando...That's right. N-A-N-D-O. How soon
can I pick that up?

Intercut: shots of Dave and his fellow postal workers eating the coffeecake and drinking coffee. They comment on how delicious it is.

Nando's station wagon drives down a nice, shop-lined street.

INT. MARCONI'S BAKERY – MORNING

Nando walks up to the bakery: it is a small family owned and operated sidewalk cafe/bakery. Outside, on the sidewalk, are four small circular tables with two chairs each. Two of the tables

are occupied by Actor-types sipping coffee. Inside are six more tables. An Old Man and Old Woman sit at one table and drink cappuccinos and eat coffeecake. Two Blonde Women sip coffee at another table. And two Gay Men drink lattes and eat croissants at the third table. Nando walks up to the counter/display case and waits in line; he is third. He looks at the cakes, pastries, cookies, muffins in the cases.

Nando reaches the front of the line. A plump Italian-American Woman in her fifties smiles warmly at him.

WOMAN
What can I get you?

NANDO
I ordered a cake. Nando.

WOMAN
(turns around and shouts to back)
Frank! Nando!

FRANK (O.C.)
Couple minutes!

WOMAN
Would you like a coffee or a cappuccino while you wait?

NANDO
Cup of Joe's fine, thanks.

WOMAN
Medium?

NANDO
That'll do.

The Woman pours Nando a cup of coffee in a styrofoam cup.

WOMAN
Cream or Sugar?

NANDO
Yes.

WOMAN
Both?

NANDO
Sure.

WOMAN
How many sugars?

NANDO
Surprise me.

She quickly scoops three spoonfulls of sugar into the cup, pours in some half/half, stirs it, and then gives it to Nando.

WOMAN
Let's see: tiramisu, medium coffee...
Thirty-seven forty-six.

NANDO
Thirty-seven dollars!

WOMAN
Tiramisu's five-fifty a slice. The cake's a steal.

Nando hands her two twenty dollar bills.

WOMAN
Out of forty...Two fifty-four's your change.
It'll be just a minute—Can I help you?

NANDO
Yeah, thanks.

Nando sits at a corner table. An L.A. Times lays on a chair; he picks it up and looks at the front page. The main headline is: Crawford Peace Talks Fail.
Sub-headline: Bush Urges Putt-Putt Golf to Save Summit. [AM I SETTING IT DURING BUSH?]

Without looking, Nando sips his coffee. It is blisteringly hot and surprises the hell out of him.

Luckily, a Young Man brings him a glass of water pronto. Nando grabs the glass and gulps down the water.

NANDO
Thanks.

YOUNG MAN
She always keeps the coffee pot at four thousand

degrees.

NANDO

My fault. I should have sipped before I gulped.

WOMAN

Sonny!

The Young Man shrugs his shoulders and walks to the back.

Nando returns to reading the L.A. Times. He doesn't notice the story but below the fold, bottom right, on the front page is a small black and white photograph of King Olof, the king of Sweden, along with the story: Swedish King Visits L.A.

Lost in the paper, out of habit, Nando lights a cigarette. After two puffs Sonny walks up with a white cake box.

SONNY

Tiramisu? Nando...

Nando raises his right hand. Sonny puts down the box.

SONNY

Here you go. You can't smoke in here.

NANDO

Listen, Sonny, could you cut these strings
off this thing for me? I'll never get them off.

Fast and casual, as if something he does fifty times a day, Sonny pulls a switchblade out of his back pocket and flicks the blade open as he throws it up in the air. The knife spins three times in front of Nando's face. Nando's eyes grow into big white dinner plates. Then Sonny's hand catches the handle and with three quick sweeps of the blade he cuts off all the thin blue string tied tightly around the box. As fast as it appeared Sonny closes the blade and returns the knife to his back pocket.

NANDO

Very efficient.

WOMAN

(like a volcano trying not to blow)

Sonny!

Sonny walks over to his Ma. She slaps him on the back of the head.

WOMAN

What're you doin'?

SONNY

What? The guy wanted his cake open.

WOMAN

So use a pair of scissors like a normal person.

Meanwhile, Nando has picked up his cake box, coffee, and Times and, with a cigarette stuck in his mouth, he walks out of Marconi's as a Yuppy Guy enters.

NANDO

Ask to see the knife throwing.

YUPPY GUY

What?

EXT. MARCONI'S SIDEWALK – CONT.

But Nando keeps walking without looking back. Out the door and down the sidewalk to his Volvo he goes.

NANDO

(singing to himself)

L.A.'s fine, the sun shines most of the time...

And the feeling is laid back...

Nando drops all his stuff on the hood of his station wagon. He flips open the cake box and looks inside. It is a Tiramisu: a large, round white-topped cake. Written in chocolate shavings atop the cake is:

Tonight's The Night

For Laughs!

Nando takes a pensive drink of his coffee as he looks down at the cake. Unfortunately, he has already forgotten that the coffee is still extremely hot.

He spits the coffee out on the sidewalk, pauses a couple seconds, and lights up a new smoke.

EXT. NANDO'S CAR/HIGHWAY – CONT.

It is rush hour, something Nando is unaccustomed to getting stuck in, especially in the morning. The traffic is at a dead stop. Nando smokes a cigarette and reads the L.A. Times Sports Page. He notices the car in front of him has moved fifteen feet, so he shifts from park to drive and crawls up the short distance. He returns the car to park and goes back to reading the Sports Section and smoking. Sitting on his passenger seat is the rest of the newspaper. The Arts Section is on top and shows a picture of a big cake with the headline:

On Your Mark...

Get Set...
Bake!

EXT. UPSHAW'S DRIVING RANGE – ONE HOUR LATER

Nando's station wagon pulls in the parking lot. He sees Walter and Benny sitting in their car eating the Russian pastry-cake, drinking coffee and waiting for him. As Nando gets out of the Volvo and walks around to the passenger side, Walter and Benny exit their car and walk up to Nando. Walter carries his coffee in one hand and a piece of the pastry-cake in the other; Benny holds a coffee and the rest of the pastry-cake.

Nando removes the white cake box from the passenger seat and deposits it in Walter's hands.

NANDO
Now you can each have your own.

Walter opens the cake box and sees the tiramisu. Again, the words have been rubbed out.

Nando grabs the L.A. Times and heads to the Clubhouse. Walter and Benny follow him like two golden retriever puppies. Nando spots Stan off to the side of the building working on a flower bed. Nando waves. Stan waves back. Walter and Benny wave. Stan waves back and laughs to himself.

INT. UPSHAW'S CLUBHOUSE – CONT.

Nando walks straight to his office without looking back. Walter and Benny follow him inside.

BENNY
So, Igor, you know anything about the beaver?

IGOR
Benny, you'll be the first to know.

Nando plays his Answering Machine: You have no new messages.

NANDO
I'm going to hit some balls. If you guys want you can stay in here. There's—

Benny discovers the TV remote on Nando's desk and turns on the set. CNN appears on the screen. Benny flips to the Cartoon channel and sits down on the couch. Walter sits in a chair.

Nando slings his canvas golf bag over his shoulder, opens the door to the outside, and exits his office as Benny and Walter laugh through mouthfuls of cake.

EXT. ON THE RANGE – LATE MORNING

Nando whacks a drive off a rubber tee. He stands in the roofed astroturf section of the range. The golf ball slices badly. He hits another drive. Again, a big slice. A tall, tan Blonde Woman dressed in a tight, hooded light blue jumpsuit walks behind Nando. Her looks are supermodel quality; she carries herself like an athlete. At first glance she looks like someone from the future. In her hands is a seven iron. She speaks with a Swedish accent and is the woman from behind the two-way mirror in the interrogation room.

WOMAN

(with Swedish accent)

You are late with your hips.

NANDO

(addressing the ball to hit another and not looking at her)

I'll tell you, if I could do it all over again, I'd be a professional golfer.

He starts his backswing.

WOMAN

You don't enjoy sleuthing, Mister Nando?

Nando slices another one, turns and looks at her. She balances the seven iron across her shoulders and the back of her neck and rests her wrists on each end of the club. It is an athletic, sexy way to stand, at least for her. Her striking beauty catches Nando off guard and for a moment he is stunned speechless. The Woman walks up to him and puts out her hand.

WOMAN

My name is Filippa, Mr. Nando. It means lover of horses.

Nando shakes her hand but is totally confused and still a bit stunned.

NANDO

Why's that?

FILIPPA

(pulling him closer as they shake)
Because I love to ride.

Their faces are inches apart. Then she breaks it off and walks past Nando.

FILIPPA

My employer wishes to meet you.

She sets up on his mat and hits a perfect shot: perfect form, perfect swing, perfect result. The golf ball bounces once and hits the one hundred fifty yard sign.

NANDO

I don't suppose you're gonna tell me who?

FILIPPA

He likes surprises.

The two large tan, muscular versions of Bjorn Borg bookend Nando and smile with bright white teeth.

INT. THE BEVERLY WILSHIRE HOTEL – ELEVEN A.M.

Two large double doors open. In Gold lettering, the left door reads: The Beverly Wilshire. The right door reads: The Presidential Suite.

Filippa leads Nando inside; the Bjorn Borgs stand on each side of Nando, slightly behind him. Two Attendants close the doors after them.

NANDO

This is where I stayed when my place had bedbugs.

The room is a large living room. In one corner is a white grand piano. A Man quietly plays a Beethoven sonata. In another corner is a sitting area with couches and a coffee table. To Nando's left, near the windows that overlook Los Angeles, is a small dining table for six. Also near the windows are more couches and chairs that overlook Hollywood.

A small Man greets Filippa; they kiss three times on the cheeks. Nando fires up a smoke.

FREDERIK

I'm afraid you cannot smoke in here.

The hotel has very strict—

PIANO MAN

It's okay, Frederik.

FREDERIK

Very good, your highness.

The Piano Man walks across the room to Frederik and Nando. He is Nando's height but more muscular and in better shape. He is tan and has dark gray hair that used to be blonde; he keeps it slicked back and the hair looks rich and healthy. He is dressed in an impeccable dark gray double-breasted suit with a white shirt and a blue tie. His black shoes cost more than Nando's car. He is fifty-five years old and has a slight Swedish accent.

FREDERIK

Mr. Nando, may I present his royal highness,
King Olof.

Nando chokes on his drag and coughs. The King extends his hand, his gold cuff-link shines. Nando has a quick coughing fit then moves his cigarette to his left hand and shakes hands with the King. Nando tries to hide his cigarette but there is nowhere to put it out and nothing to do with it. He holds it off to the side, behind his back.

KING OLOF

Thank you for coming, Mister Nando.

NANDO

Of course, your highness...

Nando is totally thrown for a loop. He tries to act cool but is a bad actor.

KING OLOF

May I?

NANDO

You may. Of course.

Nando opens his pack and the King pinches a cigarette out. Frederik is one step ahead and ready with a lighter. He lights the King's smoke.

The King exhales the smoke with great satisfaction.

INT. THE BEVERLY WILSHIRE, A SMOKY LIBRARY – CONT.

KING OLOF

Drink okay, Mister Nando?

NANDO

Fine. Great. I've never had four hundred year old Swedish scotch before.

By now Nando has relaxed around the King. Nando sits in a cushy leather chair. The King moves from the corner bar to the couch beside Nando. Books on rosewood shelves surround them on all sides in the ultra-conservative library.

Nando's cigarettes and lighter sit on the coffee table. They both drink and smoke. The King is putting on a CD.

KING OLOF

You like ABBA, Mister Nando?

NANDO

ABBA? I suppose they're all right...
Under the right circumstances...Prescription
drugs.

KING OLOF

I don't either. That's the first thing most
Americans think of when you mention Sweden.
Why is that?

NANDO

Ignorance, I suppose.

KING OLOF

I hate ABBA. Fucking hate them.

NANDO

Bastards.

King Olof crosses and sits on a couch. [WHAT MUSIC PLAYS?]

KING OLOF

You probably know by now why I contacted you.

NANDO

I assume it has something to do with cake.

KING OLOF

Yes, Mister Nando. The Swedish Beaver.

NANDO

Swedish Beaver?

KING OLOF

Yes. Why?

NANDO

I just didn't know it was Swedish.

KING OLOF

But you know of it?

NANDO

I'm a little hazy on details.

KING OLOF

Allow me to explain our situation.

NANDO

By all means.

KING OLOF

We have an international incident on our hands. Last week my daughter and I visited St. Petersburg, accompanied by our namesake Beaver as it was travelling with us to Los Angeles. While there, someone broke into our suite and stole the beaver. Valhalla, our Swedish intelligence agency, believes it was a Russian group, possibly mafia, who stole the beaver. In place of the beaver these communist cake thieves left this:

King Olof removes a Polaroid from his inner suit coat pocket. The photograph shows a pastry-cake with the words We Have Beaver written in dark icing atop it and a small U.S.S.R. flag. It is hard to tell but the cake looks similar to the one Nando received.

NANDO

Doctor Krueger?

KING OLOF

Yes. Doctor Krueger. The renowned cakeologist. We simply don't know.

NANDO

You've offered a reward?

KING OLOF

Not publicly. But privately I'm willing to pay for the beaver's safe return.

NANDO

How much money are we talking?

KING OLOF

Two million dollars.

NANDO

For a cake?

KING OLOF

It's more than just a cake, Mister Nando.

NANDO

It is?

KING OLOF

My grandfather, King Gustav IV, commissioned the cake's creation to celebrate the birth of my aunt, the late Princess Greta.

NANDO

That's the reason why the Communists want it?

KING OLOF

Not entirely. There's two reasons. First, the cake's creator, Ramalov, was a Russian brought to Sweden by King Gustav to be his personal pastry chef. Therefore, the Russians feel the cake belongs to them. Second, it is the most delicious chocolate cake ever baked. In letters, guests described the beaver as the most incredible morsel to ever touch their tongues. These were dignitaries. Royalty. People who had tasted the Sacher Torte, Dobos Torte, the Esterhazy Cream Torte, and Black Forest Cake. Kaiser Wilhelm II said the Swedish Beaver changed the very way he saw life. I quote from his memoirs:

King Olof removes a small piece of paper from his breast pocket and puts on a pair of stylish glasses.

KING OLOF

I view my adult life in very obvious terms: there was my life before the Swedish Beaver and my life after. Better than sex, sport, even love. Second in greatness only to my time spent with Mahatma Gandhi, but a close second.

NANDO

That's some cake.

KING OLOF

It is a Swedish national treasure and belongs in Stockholm, its place of birth. I never should have allowed its transport.

NANDO

Why did you?

KING OLOF

I begrudgingly allowed for the beaver to be the centerpiece of the National Cake-Off.

King Olof hands Nando a white brochure for the 94th Great National Cake-Off. A picture of a small pink beaver is on the cover.

NANDO

Pink?

KING OLOF

That's the protective outer shell. The actual beaver is dark—it's a chocolate cake.

NANDO

I'm a little confused, your highness. If Kaiser Wilhelm and his friends ate the beaver, how does it still exist?

KING OLOF

Ramalov baked many beavers for the celebration. And they were all eaten. It was afterward that King Gustav asked him to preserve a beaver for posterity, so a final beaver was baked and sealed in a protective pink covering.

NANDO

And you want me to--

KING OLOF

Find my beaver. I know you have history with Doctor Krueger and that his daughter visited you.

NANDO

Penelope.

KING OLOF

Convince Krueger, if he has it, to return the beaver to me. Either way, I will compensate you handsomely. Frederik!

Frederik enters immediately as if he has been listening at the door.

FREDERIK

Your highness.

KING OLOF

Good luck, Mister Nando.

Frederik pulls Nando away. Nando stops in the doorway. He turns back.

NANDO

Why are you in L.A.?—I mean, other than the—
(he holds up the brochure) Cake-Off.

KING OLOF

My daughter, Princess Pippi, is looking at
schools.

NANDO

For college?

KING OLOF

UCLA. USC. AFI. She wants to be a film director.

NANDO

Oh. Good for her.

KING OLOF

I suppose. To me it all seems quite...trivial...

Frderik pulls Nando away. King Olof takes a drag and exhales with great seriousness.

EXT. THE BEVERLY WILSHIRE, FRONT – CONT.

Nando walks out of the Wilshire's front double doors and lights a smoke. Chief O'Donnell, Walter, and Benny walk up to him.

CHIEF

(big, phony grin)

Nando...

NANDO

Chief...I was beginning to think you didn't care.

Walter slaps handcuffs on Nando.

CHIEF

The body wasn't Miss Krueger.

NANDO

Took you long enough.

CHIEF

And how did you know that?

NANDO
A Russian coffeeecake told me.

CHIEF
What's that, one of your bits? Part of your act?

NANDO
No. The truth.

CHIEF
The truth is you're a waste of a good
liver.

Walter pulls Nando away.

NANDO
(to Benny)
Sorry. No cake.

Chief O'Donnell walks inside the Beverly Wilshire.

INT. POLICE STATION, SAME JAIL CELL – EARLY AFTERNOON

As earlier, the African-American Cop walks around the corner and approaches the jail cell. In his hands is a paper plate and another slice of the chocolate cake. A series of sharp ticks come from the cell.

Nando sits with his back against the cell bars. He skips a golf ball off the concrete floor, off the cinderblock wall, and then catches it in his hands. A cigarette hangs from Nando's mouth.

COP
All right, Nando. Let's go.

NANDO
It's your world, boss.

COP
Put out that cigarette. There's no smoking. You
know the rules.

Nando stands up and tosses his cigarette at the toilet. This time it is a direct hit.

INT. POLICE STATION, HALLWAY – CONT.

The Cop eats cake as he walks Nando down a hallway. When they turn a corner the Chief stands there. He grabs and holds Nando by the arm and takes over escorting Nando to the front desk.

CHIEF
What's in your hand?

Nando holds up the golf ball.

NANDO
I bet you're a Titleist man.

The Chief snatches the golf ball and throws it off into the police station's offices/desks/common area without looking or caring. Nando's face follows the ball. The golf ball bounces off a desk and lands—splat—in a piece of cake.

CHIEF
You're a lucky son of a bitch.

NANDO
I like to think it's good karma.

They have reached the big front desk. Chief spins Nando so he faces him.

CHIEF
I'll tell you one thing. You better hope you find
that beaver, 'cause if you don't your
wisecrackin' ass is mine, and I'll tell you one
thing—

NANDO
What's that?

CHIEF
I won't think twice about shovin' a three wood
so far up your butt that you'll be shittin' golf balls for a
week.

The Chief walks away. Nando's Ziplock bag is waiting for him. He pulls it open and begins re-pocketing his wallet, keys, chapstick, golf tees, notecards, scraps of paper, etc.

NANDO
You really have the mind of a poet. Might've missed your calling.

Chief flicks him off as he walks away.

Nando turns around and the three Pepperidge Boys—Lonny, Ronny, Donny—rise from a bench. They fold their arms. Nando smirks and fires up a smoke.

INT. PEPPERIDGE PALACE – AFTERNOON

Two large glass double doors are pushed open by Ronny and Donny. Then Lonny follows, and finally Nando, smoking a cigarette.

PEPPERIDGE

Nando!

From across the room Marvin Pepperidge playfully greets Nando. Pepperidge, with Warren beside him, stands at the far end of a long wooden banquet table that is filled with cakes of varying size and shape. Two more slightly shorter tables run parallel on each side of the main table. They also have cakes on them. The only chair in the room is Marvin's throne at the head of the main table, which is where he stands. The room's walls are white tiles with windows high up and skylights in the roof. The tiles make the room feel like a vault or being five thousand leagues underwater. The room, in fact, used to be Pepperidge's indoor swimming pool. With Ronny and Donny on each side of him and Lonny directly behind him, Nando makes the long walk across the room.

PEPPERIDGE

How do you like my Caketeria?

Sound bounces off the tiles and creates a cavernous echo.

NANDO

Swell.

PEPPERIDGE

As you can probably tell, this used to be my indoor pool that we never used. Having the I.M. Pei-designed outdoor pool that we do—you know he did the Louvre?

NANDO

Oh, yes. He did some work on my bathroom in the early nineties.

PEPPERIDGE

So, I had this room converted to my own personal caketeria. Pretty cool, right?

NANDO

If cake's your thing, sure.

PEPPERIDGE

Thank you, Warren. Lonny, Ronny, Donny, that'll be all.

Warren ushers Lonny, Ronny, and Donny out of the room. The Boys start hitting each other.

PEPPERIDGE
You like cake, Nando?

Pepperidge walks along the table; Nando follows.

NANDO
To look at or eat?

PEPPERIDGE
To eat of course. That's the whole point of cake.

NANDO
No. I don't mind looking at them.

Pepperidge stops.

PEPPERIDGE
I love cake. I love to eat it, smell it, touch it, feel it. And even look at it, yes. You might say it's a compulsion, an obsession.

NANDO
I would.

He faces Nando.

PEPPERIDGE
Unfortunately, my sons don't share my passion. They have no passion in fact. None at all. They're nimrods really.

NANDO
Oh, I don't know. They seem pretty creative to me.

Pepperidge snaps out of his reverie.

PEPPERIDGE
You're a hard man to find.

Pepperidge walks along the table again.

NANDO
You should've seen me the years I was invisible.

PEPPERIDGE

What news do you have for me? Where's my beaver?

NANDO

You mean the Swedish beaver?

Pepperidge stops walking and smiles, although Nando can't see it.

PEPPERIDGE

Ah, somebody's been doing their research.

NANDO

Had a nice chat with King Olof about his beaver. He informed me it was a Swedish beaver, which caught me by surprise because here I was thinking it was a Jewish beaver.

Pepperidge laughs and faces Nando.

PEPPERIDGE

Do you have the beaver?

NANDO

Maybe. Who knows? I was thinking about trading it with some Russians I know for a mail-order bride. Something small and blonde.

PEPPERIDGE

I don't believe we've talked compensation.
Your finder's fee...

With his finger, Pepperidge writes 200,000 on a cake. He smiles at Nando.

NANDO

Double it and I'll think about it.

PEPPERIDGE

Then we have a deal?

NANDO

I'll let you know when I have the beaver.

Nando turns and walks toward the door.

PEPPERIDGE

Warren!

Warren enters quickly, as if he has been listening on the other side of the door.

PEPPERIDGE

Show Mister Nando out. And make sure his cake is fresh. Salmonella can be a silent killer.

Nando turns around and smirks at Pepperidge.

EXT. UPSHAW'S DRIVING RANGE – AFTERNOON

A white van screeches to a halt in the parking lot. The side door slides open and Ronny and Donny playfully push Nando out. They laugh like idiots. Lonny guffaws from the driver's seat. They really are morons. Ronny tosses Nando his white cake box and Nando catches it.

Nando turns and walks toward the Clubhouse. The white van peels out of the parking lot, the Pepperidge Boys holler and laugh stupidly. As they pull away Donny slides the side door shut. The van fishtails a moment, then takes off.

NANDO

(to himself)

They make the three stooges look like Nobel laureates.

Cake box in hand, Nando walks up to the Clubhouse.

INT. NANDO'S OFFICE – AFTERNOON

Nando opens his office door and walks inside. After two steps he stops. Benny is fast asleep on the couch. He has crumbs on his chest and half the empty cake box on his lap. Walter is asleep in an old easy chair. The cake box lid is in his lap. The television is turned on.

Nando smiles. He slams the door.

Nothing happens. The two Polish bears barely stir. Nando walks to his desk and puts the cake box down. As he searches his desk for a pair of scissors, a knife, anything sharp, he plays his answering machine.

Answering Machine: You have two new messages. First message. Received Friday at eight forty-seven A.M....

A Woman's Voice (His Mother): Hi, Igor. It's me. Just calling to see if you got the cookies I sent you.

Igor puts his finger on the delete button, then takes it away.

Mother (cont.): I left a message yesterday but I don't know if

you got it. Okay. That's all. Call me and let me know when you have a minute. Oh, I saw an article in this months Reader's Digest about stand-up comedians and how to break into the business. I thought you might find it interesting. Let me know if you want me to send it to you. Okay. That's all. Love you.

As Nando's Mother's message plays, Nando searches through all the drawers in his desk for something sharp. Then he checks shelves behind him. He checks a filing cabinet. He checks his golf bag. Nothing.

Answering Machine: Second new message. Received today at eleven seventeen A.M....

Second message: Hello, Mister Nando. My name is Joseph Entenmann. If you could give me a call at your earliest convenience I'd appreciate it. It is about Doctor Krueger and the Swedish Beaver. My number is 818-676-8956. Thank you.

During the Entenmann message Nando grabs his golf shoes from off a shelf and tries using the metal spikes to cut the tight thin strings on the cake box. He is, of course, unsuccessful. He gives up and scrambles to find a pen and piece of paper to write down Entenmann's phone number. He finds a pen on the floor and writes the number on top of the cake box.

Nando pauses a moment, breathes deeply, and thinks. He lights a cigarette and takes a drag. He pauses: thinks. He looks down at the cake box, pulls out his Statue of Liberty lighter and burns the string apart, quite easily actually.

Nando opens the cake box: it is another round chocolate cake. He picks up the box, walks over to Walter, and holds the cake under his nose. The Polish bear stirs. Then Nando walks over and puts the cake under Benny's nose. This bear also stirs. Walter wakes slowly. Then Benny also wakes up. Nando places the cake on the coffee table between them. He rips off the lid and carries it to his desk.

WALTER
(sleepily)

Nando?

NANDO
Morning, sunshine.

Nando dials Entenmann's phone number.

BENNY
(confused)

Igor?

WALTER
Where've you been?

NANDO
At a caketeria.

BENNY
A what?—Ooo, cake.

NANDO
Dig in. (into phone) Hello, Mister Entenmann. This is Igor Nando. I received your message. I'd be interested in meeting with you. Please call me back at 818-574-9834. Thank you. Have a...delicious day?

Walter and Benny both pull the knives and forks Nando gave them out of their sportcoat pockets and start eating the cake.

Nando returns the phone to its cradle and looks up at Walter and Benny. The cops are stuffing their faces.

BENNY
(through mouthful, without looking up)
You have any milk?

Incredulous look from Nando.

EXT. ON THE RANGE – AFTERNOON

Nando, on the grass section, hits a seven iron. The shot slices badly. The cordless phone is tucked in his back pant pocket.

NANDO
(to himself)
Hips...hips...

As he sets himself to hit another, with the customary wiggle and target check, he looks to the right and sees the two large Russian Thugs in babushkas and dark sunglasses walking straight at him.

NANDO
Oh, shit.

They smile big goofy grins as they reach Nando. Nando, holding his seven iron, backpedals slowly and moves down the hitting area but also at a diagonal so he walks out onto the range.

NANDO

Listen, did either of you, when you were rearranging my apartment, happen to find a set of keys? I never found them and thought you might have seen them. No?

The Russians smile and continue a deliberate march at Nando.

NANDO

You'd really be helping me out.

In a feeble attempt at self-defense, Nando swings the seven iron out in front of the Russian thugs. One Thug snatches the shaft mid-swing out of Nando's hands and breaks the shaft over his knee.

NANDO

Hey! That's an antique!

Nando slips on a range ball and falls to the grass. The Russians bend over to grab him.

NANDO

Walter! Benny!

Suddenly two golf balls, one right after the other, nail the Russian Thugs on the back of the head. The Russians pause a moment, dazed. Then they both fall face first on opposite sides of Nando, out cold. Nando sits stunned for a moment, then he stands, shades his eyes from the afternoon sun, and squints back at the Clubhouse. Still on the grass section but nearest the Clubhouse, the two Bjorn Borgs stand holding irons with huge smiles on their faces. They wave to Nando.

Nando looks down at the unconscious Thugs then slowly raises his right arm and waves back.

The phone rings. Nando pulls it out of his back pant pocket, dusts it off, and answers the call.

NANDO

(into phone)

Hello?...Mr. Entenmann...Good to hear from
you too.

Nando walks back to the Clubhouse.

Nando reaches the Bjorn Borgs. He returns the phone to his back pant pocket.

NANDO

Thanks for the...(he motions out there). How did you do
that?

The Bjorn Borgs shrug and smile.

NANDO

You guys must play a lot.

They shrug and smile.

NANDO
Where's Filippa?

They shrug and smile.

NANDO
You have no idea what I'm saying, do you?

Shrug and smile.

NANDO
Ignorance is bliss...

INT. NANDO'S OFFICE – AFTERNOON

Nando enters his office. Benny and Walter, holding plates full of cake, follow him inside.

NANDO
I want you to take those two guys in.

WALTER
(through mouthful)
Okay.

BENNY
(through mouthful)
Okay.

NANDO
Tell the Chief they're involved in the Penelope Krueger kidnapping. All right?

WALTER
(through mouthful)
Kidnapping.

BENNY
(through mouthful)
Penelope.

WALTER
How are we going to get them in the car? They're huge.

NANDO

The Swedes'll help you. Just nod and smile. They're big teddy bears.

BENNY

Where are you going?

NANDO

I've got to go see somebody.

WALTER

But we're supposed to follow you.

NANDO

I will tell you where I'm going. Then after you take them in you can meet me there.

WALTER

But how do we know—

NANDO

You don't, Walter. Here.

Nando hands him the 94th Great National Cake-Off brochure with the pink beaver on the front. Walter's and Benny's confused, chocolate and custard covered faces look up. Nando puts his hands on their shoulders.

NANDO

Trust me. You guys are going to love this.

INT. NATIONAL CAKE-OFF MONTAGE – LATE AFTERNOON

Music: Crunchy Granola Suite by Neil Diamond.

In a Convention Center lobby Nando walks past a twelve foot tall, six-tiered cake. He stops at the elevated landing entrance and looks up at a big banner: Welcome to the 94th Great National Cake-Off! Below Nando are four rows for visitors to walk through and sample the free cake creations at each bakery's booth. At the far end of the long, long room is a stage for the finals.

Nando pulls a drag off his cigarette and pans across the scene. It is a strange, mildly exciting picture. He descends the stairs.

Nando struts through the convention center admiring all the wild cake creations: large cakes, small cakes, short cakes, tall cakes. There are bakeries from across the United States represented. The big ones: Duncan Hines, Pillsbury, Sara Lee, Betty Crocker, Pepperidge Farm. The

mediums: Baker's, Dolly Madison, Entenmann's. The small ones: Awrey's, Fragapane's, Mazzone's, Mama's Bakery, Wojtila Bakery, Aunt Clara's Cakes, Pearl's Pastries, Goldie's, Big Jim's Baked Goods (...and many more). Not all of the bakeries in attendance will be competing. Many are at the convention simply for publicity. Behind the booths men and women, mostly women, sift flour, break open and separate eggs, knead dough, add sugar, whisk egg whites, or melt chocolate. Ovens ignite and buzz. Egg-timers ding. Eyes check watches. Alarms beep. Pot-holdered hands pull cakes out of ovens to oohs and ahs from the visiting crowds. Hands unclip springform pans and remove cakes; a candy thermometer sits in a pot of boiling sugar syrup; a rolling pin rolls sugar paste over a cake; hands squeeze icing out of nylon pastry bags; a palette knife smooths custard over the top of a cake; a sifter dusts a cake with confectioner's sugar; piped icing designs are created on the tops of cakes. Women offer Nando slices of cake; he refuses their pieces and moves on. (All the quick cake-making shots are intercut with Nando's inquisitive face as he walks through the convention center.) Finally, Nando sees the Entenmann Booth and starts for it, but he is stopped in front of the Duncan Hines Booth by a Young Man wearing a Free Sample t-shirt and baseball cap. He holds out a tray of little bite-size pieces of cake with toothpicks stuck out of them. In his other hand he pushes a toothpick sample at Nando.

Music fades out.

INT. NATIONAL CAKE-OFF – CONT.

FREE SAMPLE BOY
Duncan Hines new peanut butter explosion cake?

Nando looks at the tray and grimaces. He brings his cigarette up from his side and takes a drag.

FREE SAMPLE BOY
You can't smoke in here. Not near the cakes.

NANDO
Oh, sorry.

Nando puts his cigarette out in one of the little cakes on the Boy's tray. Then Nando turns and walks to the Entenmann booth.

FREE SAMPLE BOY
Hey!

INT. CAKE-OFF, ENTENMANN BOOTH – CONT.

Behind the counter Nando sees three plump middle-aged Women hard at work putting together three different cake creations: an Orange and Chocolate Layer Cake, a Mango and Passion Fruit Cheesecake, and a Hazelnut Macaroon Cake. The homely Women wear unflattering cotton dresses with white aprons over top and hair nets on their heads.

NANDO

Excuse me, ladies...

Focused and frantic, the Women are timing themselves and pay Nando little attention. They wear friendly nametags, though: Doris, Lois, Maude.

NANDO

I'm looking for a Joseph Entenmann.

They ignore Nando and continue working.

ENTENMANN

Mister Nando!

A Man appears from behind a light blue curtain and walks up to Nando. He is around seventy years old, small, but with a big belly and white hair. He is dressed in a gray suit. He smiles warmly, all pink cheeks.

ENTENMANN

Come. Right this way. We can talk in back.

Entenmann flips up the hinged door on the countertop and Nando walks through. Entenmann takes a few steps, his back to Nando, then he spins on a dime and faces Nando.

ENTENMANN

I'm sorry. Would you like some cake? We have chocolate tortes, sponge cakes, fruit cakes, butter cakes, coffeecakes, cheesecakes—

NANDO

No. Thank you.

ENTENMANN

Flans, tarts, meringues, nut cakes, rum cakes—

NANDO

I could go for a drink.

ENTENMANN

Ah, sugar is sweet but liquor is quicker. (he puts his finger to his mouth) Shhhh. (he motions for Nando to follow)

Entenmann leads Nando behind the light blue curtain. Because the curtain is actually two curtains, Nando becomes stuck. After a moment's flailing, he spins out of the curtains and ends up in the new room with high light blue curtains on all four sides and the ceiling. It feels like an Arabian tent. Two backup ovens rest in a corner in case a main oven breaks down. In the comfortable room there is a leather couch, an easy chair, a coffee table, an end table, and a

cabinet with a record player on top. Entenmann walks over and puts on a record: something by a crooner, Sinatra perhaps. Then he plops down in the easy chair and turns to a three-tiered cake on the end table. He flips open the top of the cake, sticks his chubby hand in, and pulls out a bottle of Dewar's. He places the bottle down on the coffee table, then he sticks his arm back inside the cake and his arm becomes stuck. Nando helps extricate him. Entenmann's hand emerges with two highball glasses. He puts them down on the coffee table next to the Dewar's.

NANDO

Can I buy that cake?

ENTENMANN

Now the best part.

Entenmann pulls out the bottom layer of the cake. It is a plastic drawer, an icebox, filled with wedges of ice. He takes a handful and puts the ice in Nando's glass. Then he fills his own glass. Finally, he pours their drinks and they take long, savory gulps. Pause.

NANDO

Your baking ladies are a focused bunch.

ENTENMANN

For twenty-seven years my daughters have competed in this fine competition.

NANDO

You must be very proud.

ENTENMANN

They've won the silver medal four times and three bronzes but...

NANDO

No gold.

ENTENMANN

Their mother before them competed twenty-two times and never won once. God rest her soul.

Entenmann performs the sign of the cross. Nando attempts a halfhearted version.

ENTENMANN

Forty-nine years with no win. Me the only man in the house. Will drive a man insane... (pause) So when Doctor Krueger approached me about the Beaver, I agreed to give it a shot... But now this mess... (pause, sip) Well, I have a

chance to set it straight and by God that's what I'm going to do, which is why I called you. Find the beaver and return it to its rightful owner, the King. No recipe is worth all the pain and anger this little creature has caused. It's only a cake after all.

NANDO

What recipe?

ENTENMANN

The beaver's recipe.

NANDO

Oh. So you can discover the recipe simply from the cake.

ENTENMANN

What? The recipe inside the cake.

NANDO

There's a recipe inside the beaver?

ENTENMANN

Yes! The beaver's recipe is inside the beaver. In its stomach. You thought the cake was what everyone's after? Ha! I'm sure by now that chocolate cake tastes like chalk. Even if it is encased in pink frosting. You thought it was the cake...

Entenmann laughs and laughs.

NANDO

I've never baked so much as a Pop-Tart. I spend my time dealing with people, not pastries.

ENTENMANN

Whew...I haven't laughed that hard in a long time.

NANDO

How do you know the recipe's still inside the beaver?

ENTENMANN

We won't know for certain 'til we crack it open.

Nando smokes and thinks.

INT. CAKE-OFF, GOLDIE'S BOOTH – TEN MINUTES LATER

Nando leans at the counter of a mousy Old Man's booth. His rusty sign reads: Goldie's. The Old Man is ancient: dressed in cowboy boots, jeans, a flannel shirt, and a dusty cowboy hat. He wears large sunglasses, the kind a blind person might wear. He sits in an old wooden rocking chair and holds his cane in his lap. Some of his boring cakes sit out on the counter for visitors to sample. Aside from Nando, no one bothers with Goldie.

GOLDIE

I've been baking cakes since before your mammy and
pappy were even put in the oven.

NANDO

The Swedish Beaver?

GOLDIE

Great white whale. The Holy Grail. La Tarta Grande.

NANDO

Can you tell me about it?

GOLDIE

If you give me one of them fine Injun cigarettes you keep
tucked inside that smoky suit coat of yours.

Nando hands him a smoke and goes to light it for him but the old man has already struck a match to the bottom of his cowboy boot and lights his own. Nando lights up a smoke and sits down in a folding chair. Goldie sticks his cane up in the air, hooks the canvas canopy rolled up at the top of his booth, and pulls it down. The flaps fall and cover the front of the booth, causing total darkness inside. Goldie strikes another match on his boot bottom and lights a kerosene lamp. Nando's wide-eyed face appears. Goldie takes a drag and removes his sunglasses. His eyes are dark brown, verging on red, and his blank stare is a little terrifying. He begins:

GOLDIE

Turn of the century, nineteenth rollin' over to the twentieth,
mind you, King Gustav IV was king of Sweden.

King Gustav IV, a tan mid-thirties man, waves to a crowd as if on a carriage in a parade.
When the King smiles his buck teeth show.

GOLDIE (V.O.)

And this was back when bein' king of Sweden
meant somethin'.

Magically, the King is covered in gold jewelry and has two beautiful blondes on his arms.

He imported the finest pastry chef in all of Europe, the Russia, Ramalov.

We track alongside a train stopped in a station. Passengers exit the cars. Most everyone appears happy—hugging and kissing family members. A stern-looking Man in his thirties appears on the steps of a car. He has long brown hair, a long brown beard, and wild blue eyes. He is dressed in a brown frock and carries a small brown bag.

The mad pastry monk.

Ramalov splits a Young Couple mid-kiss.

But a true arteest.

Ramalov opens his bag and, without looking at the couple, tosses them a small cake. The Young Man catches it. Atop the cake is written: Ramalov Was Here. The baffled Young Couple watch as Ramalov walks away from them.

Spring of ought-four, Queen Bo-tilda, gives the King a new daughter, Greta.

A very pregnant, very tan Young Woman in a four-post bed pushes and pushes until the doctor pulls out a perfectly tan Newborn.

To celebrate the occasion, he invites kaisers and athletes, prime ministers and poets, presidents and opera singers.

A tiny Tan Man in a spiffy suit enters the office of Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II. He is not allowed in there. But he produces a small letter with King Gustav IV written in cursive atop it and hands it to the Kaiser. Wilhelm is intrigued.

The same tiny Tan Man walks onstage at a packed opera house and interrupts a large fat Woman singing an aria. She is angry, then he hands her the letter with King Gustav IV written on it. She hugs the little man, shoving his head into her bosom.

Aside from bein' a man of religion, the sciences, and philosophhee,

The King makes the sign of the cross, then a Bunsen burner with a test tube and some red liquid boiling appears to his left. It disappears and a glass of water half-filled appears to his right. The King ponders the glass.

he was a man, for whatever reason, obsessed with beavers.

The King in bed late at night. His Wife asleep next to him. He has a small lamp turned to low and reads secretly from a book: Beavers, Our Furry Friends.

He made hurting the little creatures punishable
by death;

The King shrugs as he walks past a firing squad that kills three Scared Men wearing beaver-skin hats.

he built beaver sanctuaries where he'd go watch
them build their dams;

The King stands on a precipice overlooking a beaver dam. He applauds and nods. His advisors join his applause.

the man even kept beavers as pets in his palaces.

A beaver crawls along a marble floor, utterly confused. Four other beavers join him and they follow the King's feet down a hallway. Then the King sits at the head of his banquet table. He pats his lap twice and a beaver leaps up into it. He pets the creature and smiles a big grin.

The man was a downright coot for beavers.

All his guests at the banquet table look at him confused.

The problem was left to their own devices,
these aquatic engineers would cut down anything they found...

Like buzzsaws, four beavers chop off the legs of an ornate chair.

The Queen's bed collapses with her in it. She screams.

The front of a huge white grand piano falls to the marble floor. The keys shoot in all different jagged directions.

and build little damn dams...

A small pile of sawed off legs sits in the middle of a living room.

Everywhere...

The King stands in the middle of a room and looks, with great consternation, at the room: all the couches, chairs, tables, are without legs and all the legs are piled in the middle of the room.

Well, soon the King realized that pretty soon he
wouldn't have anywhere to park his own keester.

So he returned his favorite furry companions to the wild.

The King stands in a field with tears running down his face and waves to an enormous mob of beavers as they scurry away from him and are about to disappear into the woods. The beavers turn back, stand up, and wave to the King. The King stands crying and waving.

NANDO

Get to the cake.

GOLDIE

All right.

We track through one of the King's palace's marble hallways.

GOLDIE (V.O.)

So the big party rolls around, and because King Gustav is himself enamored with all things Teddy Roosevelt,

We turn into a ballroom that is decorated like something out of Bonanza.

he decides on a wild west theme, and calls it:

We track across the busy room to a banner hung at the entrance that reads:

The Rootin' Tootin' Rough Riders Gala for Greta!

NANDO (V.O.)

Is any of this true?

GOLDIE (V.O.)

Check yer history books.

We track through Ramalov's kitchen.

So in honor of his recently removed beloved beavers

All the kitchen workers are dressed like cowboys, except Ramalov who wears his same brown frock and scowl.

Ramalov concocts special beaver chocolate cakes

Ramalov puts the finishing touches on one of the dozens of little brown beavers laid out on his baking table.

All the beavers are placed on the many dinner tables for the guests. Ramalov peeks through a doorway and watches.

Ramalov removes a flask and takes a long drink. He stares at the guests through his crack in the doorway.

So, needless to say, the beavers are a huge suck-cess.

Guests shake hands, hug each other, and comment on the cake with big shows of affection. They all laugh uproariously.

Everyone loves them and in no time at all, they're all gobbled up.

Shots of empty beaver plates on tables.

Ramalov is tickled pink.

A tiny smile forms at the edge of Ramalov's mouth. The rest of his face remains stoic.

Well, word spreads of the beaver from dignitary to vice chancellor

Men in suits stand up and talk on the phone, nodding and laughing to each other.

from baker to baker.

Men in baker's hats talk on the phone, nodding and laughing to each other.

Kaiser Wilhelm raves, he calls it—

The Kaiser's laughing face freezes.

NANDO (V.O.)

Right. I know about the Kaiser. What's next?

GOLDIE (V.O.)

Hold yer horses. So, the King decrees that no Swedish Beaver is ever to be baked again.

The King stands at a high pulpit and holds up a document that reads in big letters: The Swedish Beaver shall hereby...

The document is posted to a big church door and Townsfolk gather to read the decree.

Because it was such a suck-cess, the King wants everyone to remember it for that night and so, remember his daughter, Greta.

A tan Baby dressed in a little cowgirl outfit lies in a crib and smiles and giggles.

But, secretly,

We track in on Ramalov's kitchen. A single candle burns in the darkness.

Ramalov bakes one more beaver.

Ramalov pulls the beaver out of an oven.

And places the recipe inside.

Ramalov writes on a scrap of paper.

Then he encases the beaver in a thick, hard
frosting

Ramalov paints on a pink frosting over the beaver.

and hides it away.

Ramalov, torch in hand, hides the beaver within a water jug in the catacombs.

Then he destroys his original recipe so not even he
knows it.

Ramalov eats the paper. It's not an enjoyable taste or experience. He swallows. The frame
freezes.

NANDO (V.O.)

Then how did anyone even know it existed?

GOLDIE (V.O.)

Will ya hold yer horses, I'm gettin' to it.

An old Ramalov, looking exactly the same except all his hair is white, lies in a bed.

On his deathbed in 1957, Ramalov tells his grandson, who
in turn makes a promise not to reveal the secret to anyone.

A Young Boy, about ten years old, nods earnestly to his grandfather. Ramalov lunges forward
and grabs the boy by the throat. The Boy's eyes grow wide. Ramalov's eyes grow wide.
Ramalov falls back against the pillow and is dead.

We return inside Goldie's booth to the lamplight.

GOLDIE

But when the cake turned up six months ago

in another one a them Swedish palaces, and still in one piece no less, the grandson came forward and told the new king, this here King Olof, all about it.

NANDO

What would that recipe be worth?

GOLDIE

You mean in dollars and cents?

Nando nods.

GOLDIE

You gotta reckon the Sacher Torte worth maybe five, ten million? The Swedish Beaver'd be at least ten times that, maybe more. Why you got one, Sonny?

NANDO

Fifty million?

GOLDIE

A long lost recipe like that's priceless. And it makes a purty good yarn if I do say so myself. Everybody loves chocolate cake. 'Specially the best dang chocolate cake ever baked. Wouldn't you wanna try that?

Nando's pensive face takes a drag.

INT. CAKE-OFF – CONT.

Nando walks down a row. He sees Walter and Benny, backs to him, at a booth. Abruptly, Filippa appears next to him.

NANDO

Jesus!

FILIPPA

You need a bodyguard.

NANDO

I've got two.

FILIPPA

What? Them?

NANDO

If anyone attacks me, they eat them.

FILIPPA

You must sleep soundly.

NANDO

Not really. Would you like to find out?

FILIPPA

You are a funny man, Mister Nando.

NANDO

That's what no one tells me.

FILIPPA

Find the beaver.

Filippa starts to walk away; Nando follows.

NANDO

You know, I've been thinking of half-leasing an Appaloosa.

FILIPPA

I only ride Swedish Warm-Bloods.

NANDO

Oh, yeah. English or Western?

Filippa stops and faces him. She moves closer.

FILIPPA

Bareback. Always bareback.

With a dramatic turn, she walks away. Nando watches her for a moment then walks up to Walter and Benny.

Walter and Benny turn around with plates full of cake. They have woeful looks on their faces and bandages on the sides of their heads.

NANDO

What happened to you guys?

The Cops looks at each other and then at Nando.

WALTER & BENNY
(muffled by mouthfuls)

Russians.

EXT. NANDO'S APARTMENT – SUNSET

Holding a paper grocery bag and smoking a cigarette, Nando walks up to his front door.

NANDO
(singing to himself, in the rhythm of The Rolling Stones'
You Can't Always Get What You Want)
You can't have your cake and eat it too...
You can't have your cake and eat it too...
You can't have your cake and eat it too...

Nando unlocks the front door and enters.

INT. NANDO'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM – CONT.

NANDO
But if you try sometimes, you just might find,
You just might—Whoah!

Two sets of hands grab Nando and push him across the room.

NANDO
Hey! There's eggs in here!

They deposit Nando on the couch and take his grocery bag. Nando sees that it is the two Russians.

NANDO
Could you at least put the O.J. away? I'm not getting my
daily allotment of vitamin C and it's killing my
complexion. Look how pale I am.

Across the room, in the shadows, a reading light clicks on, revealing a fat, bald, greasy Russian Man in a very expensive suit seated in an easy chair.

RUSSIAN
(with Russian accent)
Mister Nando...

NANDO
Scary Russian man...

RUSSIAN

My name is Vladimir Vassily Ignatyevich Prozorov. But for our purposes you may call me Bob.

NANDO

And you may call me Betty. Do they have names or are they just Thing One and Thing Two?

BOB

Igor. Are you Russian?

NANDO

Igor Macauley Nando. Half German, half Irish, half Guatemalan.

BOB

You don't look Guatemalan.

NANDO

It's a small half.

BOB

You're a resourceful man.

NANDO

(fires up a smoke)

Flattery will get you everywhere, Bob.

BOB

So, where is it?

NANDO

The beaver? I don't have it.

BOB

But you can get it.

NANDO

Where's Penny?

BOB

Safe.

NANDO

How'd Krueger swindle you out of the beaver?

BOB

We had an unfortunate accident.

He looks at the Thugs, they look away from his gaze.

NANDO

Why the beaver?

BOB

It belongs to Mother Russia.

NANDO

It's also worth a lot of rubles.

BOB

Contact us when you have it. Until then,

Bob snaps his fingers. Thug one places another pastry-cake, like the one Nando received earlier, down on the coffee table. In dark icing a phone number is written atop it, along with a small U.S.S.R. flag.

BOB

Long live Ramalov.

Bob stands. Nando stands. Bob walks over to him and shakes his hand. Bob squeezes Nando's hand tighter and tighter, not letting go. Nando winces in pain. Bob releases his grip.

The Russians leave. Nando rubs his hand and looks at the cake on his coffee table.

INT. HILARITIES COMEDY CLUB – NIGHT

Nando stands on stage performing his stand-up act to a crowded Friday night audience. He flexes his hand open and closed a few times.

NANDO

(mid-act)

...And cake. What's the deal with cake? Have you ever heard the expression, can't have your cake and eat it too?
(slower, forced) You can't have your cake and eat it too...Why don't they just say don't eat the cake?!

Nando holds and waits for the laugh. A couple people laugh. A few more laugh out of pity. One Man, off to Nando's right, laughs heartily with obvious enjoyment. The rest of the place ignore Nando or stare up at him like he was a jackass.

NANDO

I mean, what is cake? It's eggs, sugar, flour, butter, milk, chocolate and strawberries or coffee or macadamia nuts. That's all it is. Yet we revere the cake. We worship the cake. Forget about everything else. You could be out of work, without a car, a girl, even a roof over your head, but as long as you've got cake, it's fine. You could be naked in a snowdrift, but if you've got cake, hey, everything is okay. You have cake to eat, life suddenly has meaning. (he pauses) Everything is okay. You've got cake.

The audience reacts same as before.

NANDO
(pacing, thinking)

Cake, cake, cake...(he pulls out a notecard)
Birthday cake, anniversary cake, wedding cake.
Funeral cake. Pretty soon we won't even pay in
bills anymore, it'll just be cake. Cake...

Same reactions.

NANDO

Cake will be used as...the main source...of
currency...and...and...Thank you. You've been a
great crowd. Good night.

Nando exits the stage left then realizes he must go right. Dull claps and boos carry him offstage. Once off, he walks straight to the bathroom and splashes water on his face. His hands shake.

He returns to the main room and sees the Pepperidge Boys drinking heavily at the bar. Walter and Benny stand at the bar's opposite end nursing ginger ales. They still wear their bandages. The Bjorn Borgs sit in a corner table smiling and drinking milk. They have milk mustaches. Nando scans the audience. A new Comic performs and he is funny. Nando sees the Man who laughed at his jokes. He is dressed like a burn-out: wears a hemp pullover, dirty jeans, old sneakers, a Dodgers cap, and has long hair—a mullet. He also wears thick glasses. The man is medium height with a small gut and a tan face. It is Dr. Wolfgang Krueger.

Nando walks by him, pretends to drop a cigarette and speaks into Krueger's back.

NANDO

The Volvo station wagon in front.

Nando discreetly drops his car keys and Krueger discreetly palms them. Nando walks up to the Bjorn Borgs. They are all milky smiles. Nando smiles back as he passes them. Then Nando walks up to the Cops.

The Bartender places Nando's drink in front of him on the bar: C.C., neat.

Nando downs his drink. The Bartender pours him another.

NANDO
You two look like shit.

Out of the corner of his eye Nando watches Dr. Krueger exit.

NANDO
Take my booth. I gotta hit the john. I'll be right back.

WALTER
(worn out)
Okay.

BENNY
Sounds good.

Walter and Benny head for Nando's booth.

Nando walks up to the Pepperidge Boys. They are doing shots of Jagermeister and are obviously shitcanned.

DONNY
That really sucked balls.

LONNY
You suck ass.

RONNY
You suck.

NANDO
Useful feedback, thank you. I'm close to getting what
your daddy wants but you see those two guys over
there...

LONNY
The milk drinkers?

NANDO
Yeah. They've been following me.

RONNY
Who are they?

NANDO
Russians.

DONNY
They're what?

NANDO
Russian.

LONNY
They look like fags.

NANDO
Russ--

RONNY
What's that?

NANDO
Oh, Jesus. They said they could kick your asses.

ALL 3
Who did?

NANDO
They did.

RONNY
They said what?

NANDO
They said you guys were pussies.

DONNY
Who said that?

NANDO
(pointing)
They did.

The Bjorn Borgs smile and wave.

LONNY
Motherfuckers.

The three Pepperidge Boys take off toward the Bjorn Borgs. In the melee, Nando downs his drink, exits, and ends up in the parking lot.

EXT. HILARITIES PARKING LOT – CONT.

Nando runs to his station wagon, opens the door and hops in. He turns the key, Krueger sits up, and they take off.

KRUEGER
(with German accent)
Are we clear?

NANDO
I think so.

Krueger takes off his cap, fake hair and glasses. He is a small man in his mid fifties with a young face, short dark gray hair that naturally swoops back, and a small pot belly. He is known to smile a lot and is full of energy. There's a professorial air about his personality and he has the body of a former mountaineer who in recent years has let himself go. There's a distinct wildness in his eyes, the kind found in people who enjoy risk. Eccentric, sure. But also tough. He is after all the Indiana Jones of cakeologists. He speaks with a German accent.

KRUEGER
How did you let them get my Penny? I sent her to you because I figured you'd keep her safe.

NANDO
How was I to know you stole from the Russian mafia!

KRUEGER
Desperate times.

NANDO
So you used Pepperidge to get to Saint Petersburg.

KRUEGER
Pepperidge? I wasn't working for Pepperidge.

NANDO
That's not what he claims.

KRUEGER
That's just because he wants the beaver.
Entenmann sent me to Russia in hopes that the beaver might change his daughters' luck.

NANDO

But you had no intention of handing the beaver over to Entenmann. You were going to keep it for yourself, weren't you?

Krueger looks down at his lap.

NANDO

It's true. Isn't it?

KRUEGER

It's what I've searched for all my whole life. Ever since I was a young boy in Eggenburg, I dreamed of that ubeertorte. But my Penny...Whoever wants the beaver can have it. At the end of the day it's only a cake. It's eggs and sugar. My daughter's flesh and blood.

Shot of Nando: he looks at Dr. Krueger's weary face and thinks.

INT. MARCONI'S BAKERY – NIGHT

Krueger unlocks the glass front door to Marconi's Bakery. He and Nando enter.

Krueger and Nando walk past the front counter and into the back room. Krueger flicks on the light switch.

Krueger holds up a coffee pot and offers Nando coffee. Nando shrugs No, then picks up a cup and Krueger pours him some coffee. They add sugar, cream, and stir their coffees.

Krueger's hands open a breadbasket and he removes something covered in wax paper.

The wax paper is unwrapped revealing the pink beaver.

Krueger and Nando quickly wrap the beaver back up.

Krueger and Nando exit the bakery, coffees in hand.

Nando opens the rear hatch on his station wagon.

Nando pulls a set of golf clubs close to him. He removes a seven iron from the bag: the iron is only half a club, cut in half at the shaft's midpoint, allowing for a secret compartment in the bottom of the golf bag.

Nando and Krueger hide the beaver in the golf bag's false bottom.

Nando slams his trunk closed.

Nando and Krueger get in the station wagon and close their doors at the same time.

The station wagon drives away.

EXT. A GOLF GREEN – NIGHT

A putter strikes a golf ball. The ball rolls and rolls and comes to a stop on the edge of the hole.

NANDO

Oh, come on! One more roll. How is that possible?

Krueger grips a driver tightly in his hands and waits. Nando's golf bag stands next to him.

Headlights approach on the road. A Mercedes pulls into the parking lot next to the green and kills its lights. Nando's station wagon is parked on the fairway in front of the green, its headlights on so Nando can putt.

Two dark figures approach the green. Nando sinks an eight foot putt.

BOB

Igor.

NANDO

Bob.

BOB

Doctor Krueger.

KRUEGER

Bob?

BOB

Beaver?

NANDO

Girl?

Nando sinks another eight foot putt.

BOB

Dyevochka!

A car door clicks open. A dark figure runs toward the green. Once in the light everyone sees Penelope Krueger. Bob snatches her wrist before she can run to Dr. Krueger.

Nando smiles, walks over to his golf bag, opens the hidden compartment, and removes the beaver. It is wrapped in wax paper. Nando approaches Bob.

He unwraps the beaver's head and shows it to Bob.

Bob releases her wrist; she runs to her father. They hug.

BOB

Now...the beaver.

Krueger slings the golf bag over his shoulder and he and Penelope run to Nando's Volvo, throw the clubs in the back, and get in. Bob and the two Thugs walk straight at Nando.

NANDO

Easy fellas...

Nando slowly places the beaver down on the green. Then he slowly backs away. Finally, he turns and runs to his station wagon, starts it, and takes off in reverse down the fairway.

Bob picks up the beaver and laughs. The two Thugs laugh. Bob abruptly stops laughing. The two Thugs keep laughing and then realize he has stopped so they stop. Bob glares at them. The Thugs look away.

The Russians' Mercedes pulls out of the parking lot.

Another Car emerges from the darkness behind the Pro Shop and follows them.

INT. POLICE STATION – NIGHT

Nando, Krueger, and Penelope enter the police station. The Chief is at the front desk talking to Walter and Benny.

NANDO

Chief!

BENNY

Igor!

CHIEF

Nando. The King's looking for you.

NANDO

Yeah, I figured. Chief, this is Penelope Krueger and Doctor Wolfgang Krueger.

CHIEF

The girl.

NANDO

Listen, Chief—

CHIEF

Use my office.

NANDO

All right. Can you—

CHIEF

I'll take care of them.

NANDO

Thanks.

INT. POLICE STATION, CHIEF'S OFFICE – CONT.

NANDO (on phone)

Stan, it's me. Where are you?

He writes on a piece of paper.

Un hun...Yeah...Just stay there and wait...

Yeah...Call me if anything changes...

Yeah...

Nando looks at the number on the Chief's phone.

818-224-7171.

He hangs up and dials another number.

Yes? King Olof, please...It's Igor Nando...

Yes, Igor Nando...(long pause, he fires up a smoke) Your majesty...Oh, I'm okay. How are you?...That's good. I know where your beaver is...Yes...Send the cavalry to—

INT. POLICE STATION – CONT.

Nando bursts out of the Chief's office and walks to the front desk.

NANDO

Okay, Chief, you're going to want to send your men here. And I need someone to man your phone.

He hands the Chief a note.

CHIEF

What is this?

NANDO

The address.

KRUEGER

I think we're going to stay here tonight. Just in case.

NANDO

Good idea. It's safe. I think.

KRUEGER

Right. Listen, Mister Nando, I wanted to—

NANDO

Hold that thought. I'll be right back.

Nando steps outside the police station's front doors and fires up a smoke. He lets out a long exhale. The Pepperidge Boys turn the corner next to Nando and appear in front of him. They are a mess: they look like they've had the shit kicked out them.

NANDO

Dudes. I got a keg back at my place.

Donny head butts Nando.

INT. PEPPERIDGE PALACE, CAKETERIA – LATE NIGHT

Nando holds the side of his head as he enters the Caketeria.

NANDO

(to himself)

Same exact spot. What are the chances?

Lonny, Ronny, and Donny, as before, surround him. Instead of standing on the far side of the room, Pepperidge stands on the opposite side, in front of the short end of the center banquet table, nearest his sons and Nando. Angled around Pepperidge and at Nando and the Boys are two rectangular tables. On each table are two three-layered generic wedding cakes.

PEPPERIDGE

Nando.

NANDO

I take back what I said about your sons. You're right, they're morons.

Ronny moves to hit Nando.

PEPPERIDGE

Donny!

RONNY

I'm Ronny.

PEPPERIDGE

Whatever. Sit down.

The Boys push Nando into a chair, making him the point of the rectangular tables' arrow.

PEPPERIDGE

Where's my beaver?

NANDO

I don't have it.

PEPPERIDGE

As I speak Doctor Krueger and his daughter are resting comfortably at the police station. I'm told they arrived there in your station wagon. Now...Where is my beaver?

NANDO

I'm telling you. I don't have it.

PEPPERIDGE

You might not have it. But you know where it is.

Pepperidge motions to his sons. The Brothers set another generic wedding cake in Nando's lap. It almost obstructs his view of Pepperidge.

NANDO

Ah, thank you. I was looking for that.

PEPPERIDGE

You know, Nando, baking accidents happen all

the time. All the time. Wrong temperature.
Wrong eggs. Too much flour. Not enough sugar.
Too high in the oven. Too low in the oven. Too long in the
oven...And you know what happens to cakes when they
spend too much time in the oven, under pressure, under the
pressure cooker?

NANDO

What's that?

Pepperidge presses a button like a car's keyless entry. One of the generic cakes explodes!

PEPPERIDGE

Unfortunate things happen.

Pepperidge walks slowly at Nando. He presses the button again: another cake explodes!

PEPPERIDGE

And there's nothing you can do about it.

Another cake explodes!

PEPPERIDGE

Except hope you're not near the cake.

The last cake explodes!

Pepperidge stands in front of Nando and stares at him, his finger on the button. Nando doesn't back down from the staring contest. Pepperidge walks up to Nando, bends over and puts his finger in the cake. He then puts his entire hand in the cake, takes a handful, and stuffs it in Nando's mouth. Nando keeps staring at him. Pepperidge points a finger at Nando.

PEPPERIDGE

You've got until noon tomorrow to get me my
beaver.

Pepperidge's finger touches the tip of Nando's nose, leaving a dot of frosting. Nando stares up at Pepperidge. Pepperidge exits. Nando spits out the cake.

EXT. NANDO'S APARTMENT – LATE, LATE NIGHT

A white van pulls in front of Nando's bungalow; the side door slides open. Ronny and Donny throw Nando out on the curb. The van peels away, the door slides shut, and the Boys' cackles trail like the exhaust from the muffler. Nando sits up. He has cake all over his face, shirt, and suit. Nando trips up to his front door. He unlocks the front door and walks inside.

INT. NANDO'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM – CONT.

He pauses a moment in the center of the living room. Then he walks over to his answering machine and presses the play button. Nando returns to standing in the middle of the room, exhausted, knowing if he lays down he will fall asleep.

Answering Machine: You have one new message. First message. Received Saturday at three fifty-five A.M.... [AREN'T ALL THE OTHER MESSAGES AT HIS OFFICE? KING WOULDN'T CALL HIM – FREDERIK MAYBE]

KING OLOF'S VOICE

Mister Nando? King Olof. Everything worked out just as you said and we have recovered the beaver.

Nando raises his arms feebly in jubilation. His face remains exhausted.

KING OLOF'S VOICE

If you could call us at your earliest convenience so I can arrange to thank you in person, that would be wonderful. It is three forty-seven right now. Thank you again.

Nando falls face forward onto his couch and falls asleep before his head even hits the pillow.

NANDO DREAM SEQUENCE #2

Nando stands onstage performing his stand-up act to thunderous applause. Nando bows and smiles to the audience. Suddenly his face turns panic-stricken. He looks out into the audience and sees it is all beavers with big, sinister smiles smacking their tails against the backs of their chairs. Nando is terrified. A cake hits Nando's face. Every beaver in the audience holds up a cake, arm cocked, ready to throw the pastry at Nando. One after another, they throw their cakes at Nando. Nando is pelted with cake after cake until he is nothing more than a sobbing pile of frosting and chocolate, melting under the hot lights. The beavers laugh wildly, high-fiving each other and smacking their tails on the chairs. The smacking builds to a painful volume as Nando fights drowning in a vat of liquid cake until:

INT. NANDO'S LIVING ROOM – DAWN

Nando's frosting covered face wakes up with a start. He blinks his eyes for a few seconds, then leans forward on the couch. He slowly pans right and sees Joseph Entenmann sitting in an easy chair beside him eating a pastry-cake. It doesn't surprise or scare Nando at all.

ENTENMANN

Kuchen, Mister Nando?

Entenmann holds out a piece of pastry-cake. The rest of the cake sits in his lap.

NANDO

No thanks. (he lights a smoke) That stuff'll kill you.

ENTENMANN

Today is the big day. The day my daughters work all year for.

Entenmann sobs.

NANDO

Well maybe they'll win this year. Who knows?

ENTENMANN

They've been trying to win the Cake-Off for twenty-seven years. Twenty-seven years!

NANDO

Maybe with a little luck...fewer turnovers... more strikeouts...less bogeys...

ENTENMANN

You joke, Mister Nando.

He removes a handkerchief and blows his nose loudly.

NANDO

Mister Entenmann. Joe. I don't have the beaver. The king of Sweden does. Was that here when you got here?

Nando points to the cake on Entenmann's lap. It looks like the cakes he received from the Russian communists.

ENTENMANN

No. I brought it. Maybe you could speak to him, on my behalf—

NANDO

What is that, Russian?

ENTENMANN

Russian? No. Heavens no. Kranzkuchen. It's Austrian. Traditional Viennese cake. This is my

grandmother's original recipe. It's delicious. Try some.

Entenmann holds out a piece.

NANDO
That's a Viennese—an Austrian cake?

ENTENMANN
Yes. Try some...

NANDO
Oh, shit! Shit! Goddamnit!

ENTENMANN
What is it?

Nando finds his phone and dials.

ENTENMANN
Igor, what is it?

NANDO
Give me the Chief...It's Nando. Igor Nando...
Chief! Where are they?...Krueger and Penny...
Shit!

Nando runs out of his apartment. Mr. Entenmann stands and holds his Kranzkuchen. Nando runs back inside.

NANDO
I need your car.

INT. THE BEVERLY WILSHIRE, THE PRESIDENTIAL SUITE – MORNING

Nando bursts through the double doors of the Presidential Suite. Entenmann follows him inside, huffing and puffing. King Olof sits at the table in his robe and slippers having his morning breakfast. It is a large smorgasbord. His daughter, Pippi, sits next to him filming their breakfast with a digital videocamera. She is a thin redhead in her early twenties and not tan at all but white as a ghost.

KING OLOF
Mister Nando? So very good to see you. Are you all right?

NANDO

Yes, your highness. Where's the beaver?

KING OLOF

It's right over there. On the piano.

Nando walks directly to the beaver atop the white grand piano. He picks up the animal, examines it for a brief second, then smashes it on the floor. Entenmann screams like a little old lady whose bijon frise has just been killed.

KING OLOF

Nando!

Frederik gasps. Pippi zooms in on Nando's face for his reaction.

Nando picks through the remains and pulls out a small piece of paper.

NANDO

It's a fake. Read this. I can't read Swedish.

Nando hands the note to Pippi. She films the scrap of paper as she reads it.

PIPRI

This isn't Swedish. It's German.

KING OLOF

German?

PIPRI

I think it says Devil's Food Cake, Papa.

Pippi hands the paper to her Father. He reads it.

KING OLOF

Devil's Food Cake?

ENTENMANN

Devil's Food Cake?

Nando turns and looks across the room at the Bjorn Borgs. They have bed head and look sleepy but when they see Nando they smile the same as they always do.
Nando smirks.

EXT. PEPPERIDGE PALACE – MORNING

Nando's station wagon drives up under the arch at the side door. Nando exits the Volvo and crosses straight for the side door. Warren walks up to Nando and attempts to stop him. As the

Bjorn Borgs climb out of the station wagon's middle doors, Nando, uncustomarily, punches Warren out cold. The surprised Bjorn Borgs look at Nando.

NANDO
I'm really sick of this cake bullshit.

The Bjorn Borgs smile.

INT. PEPPERIDGE PALACE – CONT.

Nando and the Bjorn Borgs enter the side door. They walk through the foyer and into a living room. The two Russian Thugs walk out of separate doorways and straight at Nando.

NANDO
I'll let you guys handle this one.

The Bjorn Borgs walk up to the Thugs and with three quick punches and a final spin kick each, in perfect choreographed unison, they knock the Thugs out cold; the Russians fall straight into large cakes and stick in them.

NANDO
Can I adopt you?

The Bjorn Borgs smile.

INT. PEPPERIDGE'S OFFICE – CONT.

The Bjorn Borgs open the double doors for Nando as he enters Pepperidge's office. Standing in the room are Pepperidge, Bob, Krueger, Penelope, and the Three Boys. In place of the mountain of sugar is the Swedish Beaver.

NANDO
(to Bjorn Borgs) Thank you, boys. (to all) Good morning, everyone. I think we all know each other. Oh, I'm sorry. For those of you that don't know, this is Svenbjorn and this is Stenbjorn. They're Swedish.

PEPPERIDGE
Very funny, Nando. Boys...

Pepperidge motions for his Sons to take care of the Bjorn Borgs. Lonny, Ronny, and Donny, recalling the beating they took the night before, shake their heads "No" vehemently.

PEPPERIDGE
Boys!?

His Sons refuse.

PEPPERIDGE

Let's go!...All right. Fine. Fine. Out! Out! Get outta here!

His Sons run out of the room.

PEPPERIDGE

Morons.

NANDO

Unfortunately.

PEPPERIDGE

(with a smirk)

You know what, Nando? I actually liked you. You were a funny guy.

Pepperidge pulls a .44 Magnum from his top desk drawer (the first gun the entire time, discounting the Boys' playful skeet shooting) and aims it at Nando.

NANDO

Marv,

He fires up a smoke and then walks straight at Pepperidge.

You of all people should know, you can't have your cake...and eat it too.

The Swedish SWAT team descends on the outside of the room, swinging down the windows on ropes. They are all perfectly tan and have the Swedish flag insignia on their chests and helmets. Other SWAT members enter from the doors and aim their assault rifles at Pepperidge.

Nando smiles a huge grin. He turns and looks at Svenbjorn and Stenbjorn. They smile big grins. And finally, all members of the Swedish SWAT team smile big grins.

Slow zoom in on the Swedish Beaver on the desk, which turns to:

INT. 94th GREAT NATIONAL CAKE-OFF, FINALS MONTAGE – AFTERNOON

Music: Walk on Water by Neil Diamond

Onstage at the Cake-Off, King Olof smiles and holds up the beaver. The audience stands and applauds enthusiastically. Each with a hand on the same knife, King Olof and Princess Pippi together cut open the beaver and smile at each other. The King splits the beaver open, pulls out

the recipe, and hands it to Joseph Entenmann. Entenmann accepts the piece of paper, tears well up in his eyes, and he hugs King Olof.

With determined faces, Doris, Lois, and Maude look down at the recipe on their baking table. They raise their heads, look at each other, and nod. Then they break out of frame.

We track slowly in front of the Daughters' faces. Doris stares straight ahead, her eyes narrow as she ties a white headband around her forehead. Lois employs the same focused stare as she uses a pastry brush to apply chocolate to her half-camouflaged face. And Maude also glares ahead as her hand lifts a palette knife up to her face and cuts her cheek.

Fat, feminine hands break open eggs and separate them into a mixing bowl. Another pair of fat hands sift flour into a mixing bowl. A third set of fat hands stirs a pot of melting chocolate. A crowd of amazed faces leans at the Entenmann booth, following the Daughters' every move. A stick and a half of butter and a cup of sugar are dumped in a mixing bowl. The eggs are added to the bowl. The sifted flour is added. The melted chocolate is poured in. With a big wooden spoon the mixture is whipped. The mixture is poured into three beaver-size pans. The three little beavers are pushed into the center of three ovens. Hands turn the dials to 350 degrees; the timers are set for forty seven minutes. The daughters huddle together, synchronize their Pillsbury Dough Boy watches and wait. The crowd leans further forward. Entenmann takes a swig from his Dewar's bottle. King Olof and Nando smoke. Pippi films: she zooms in on the digital timer as it descends, 6, 5, 4—the Entenmann Daughters breathe heavily—3, 2, 1—the Alarm beeps, their watches beep. The Daughters swing open the ovens and with pot-holdered hands pull the beavers out. They set the creatures on their baking table to cool. The brown rodents look okay. The crowd sighs. Entenmann sighs. The Daughters pour chocolate icing over the beavers. On separate plates, the hardened beavers are carried to the stage and placed on a table in front of five seated judges. We track across the table as each Judge brings a fork with a piece of the beaver to their mouths and tastes. Then we track back the opposite direction as they chew. The standing crowd looks on with baited breath. Fingers crossed, the Daughters hold each other. Entenmann takes a swig of Dewar's. King Olof and Nando smoke. Pippi films: she follows the judges as they hand a white envelope down the table line. She zooms in on the envelope as it is held at a Man's side while he walks to a podium. As the envelope is handed to the Man at the podium, we pull back out and see that the Judge/Announcer is a snooty middle-aged man with a thin, little mustache. The crowd below the stage leans forward in anticipation. The half-eaten beavers sit on a side table. The Announcer slowly opens the envelope. The Daughters squeeze each other. Entenmann holds his breath. King Olof and Nando take slow drags. The Announcer opens the folded paper and arches an eyebrow. Quick shots all over the room of everyone holding their breath (except King Olof and Nando). The Announcer puts his mouth to the microphone and mouths: Entenmann, The Swedish Beaver. The crowd screams with happiness. The Daughters scream, hug each other, and then burst into tears. Entenmann stands stunned. The Announcer smirks sarcastically. The Five Judges lean back and laugh uproariously until one Old Man falls off his chair. King Olof and Nando shake hands. The Judges place gold medals around the Daughters' necks. The crowd cheers; the daughters jump up and down with excitement. Pippi zooms in on the table of half-eaten beavers.

INT. CAKE-OFF, ENTENMANN BOOTH – SHORTLY THEREAFTER

A large gathering—Entenmann, his Daughters, the Judges, King Olof, Pippi, Nando, the Bjorn Borgs, Chief O'Donnell, Walter, Benny, Stan, Billy, and Goldie—stand in front of the Entenmann booth. Everyone has a plate, fork, and a piece of beaver. Everyone except Nando. He smokes a cigarette. Everyone attempts to convince him to try a piece but he refuses. Finally, Filippa glides in front of everyone and walks to Nando. She carries a plate with a cigarette-shaped cake atop it. She forks off a bite and, staring into Nando's eyes, feeds it to him. All conversations stop and everyone looks at Nando, waiting while he chews for his reaction. Nando tastes for a long time as the music slowly fades away.

NANDO

It's not bad.

Everyone applauds. During the applause:

NANDO (to Filippa)

This doesn't mean I'm gonna quit smoking.

FILIPPA (smirks)

Shut up and kiss me.

Nando and Filippa kiss.

Off to the side, King Olof, eating his piece of beaver, turns to Doris.

KING OLOF

I don't see what's so great about it. It tastes okay.

DORIS

Give it an hour. It's chock full of weed.

Surprised look from King Olof mid-bite.

BLACKOUT