

The Derby County Derby 4th Draft

By

Sam Fishell, Matthew Hays, Alex Jacobs, & Brendan Scannell

ACT I

Scene 1

"Opening"

Stage is black. Lights slowly rise, casting a faint pre-dawn atmosphere. We might hear soft sounds of insects, or the steady current of a babbling brook.

GRANDERSON enters. He explores the stage a bit. He's just walking -- minding his own business.

He notices the audience and chuckles to himself.

GRANDERSON

Oh hey. Didn't see you there.

(He takes a deep breath)

You feel that? The cool morning air. The hard ground on your bare feet. Birds singin' the morning's song.

Breathe it in. Come on. I'll wait.

(He waits for a moment)

This, ladies and gentlemen, is Derby County. The grass is a little bit greener in these parts, and the sun shines a little bit brighter. It's a good place full of good people, who ain't afraid to dance 'til dawn or borrow some buttermilk from a neighbor. I guess you could say life is simpler here. Quieter. That is, except for one day out of the year. The day of the Derby County Derby. You know Christmas? Easter?

Columbus Day? Well, you put 'em all together, and you might get something close to the revelry and jubilation of racing day. The day of all days. People walk with a spring in their step...

YONI enters. Goes through the same basic paces as Granderson.

GRANDERSON (CONT'D)

...and with a song in their heart. And when you see one of the townspeople? You greet 'em with a big ol' smile and a hearty...

(addressing Yoni)

...hey brother!

YONI

Hey brother!

(He notices the audience and chuckles to himself)

Oh hey. Didn't see you there.

(He takes a deep breath)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

YONI (cont'd)

You feel that? The cool morning air. Hard ground just right up there on your bare feet. Birds singin' a morning song...

GRANDERSON

Yoni, I already said all that.

YONI

How 'bout the buttermilk? You tell 'em how we like to borrow buttermilk from each other, all casual-like?

GRANDERSON

'Course I did.

YONI

What about the derby? You tell 'em about that?

GRANDERSON

I'm literally in the process of doin' that.

YONI

It's a big deal. Even bigger than Columbus Day.

GRANDERSON

Yoni, come on now.

(he takes a moment to think)

I lost my train of thought...

LEWIS enters.

LEWIS

Hey brothers!

GRANDERSON AND YONI

Hey brother.

Lewis notices the audience.

LEWIS

Oh hey. Didn't see you there.

(He takes a deep breath)

You know what's even bigger than Columbus Day?

GRANDERSON

Aw, to hell with you. I'm already telling 'em about the Derby.

LEWIS

But what about--

(CONTINUED)

GRANDERSON

And I already told 'em about the buttermilk.

LEWIS

Oh. Hm. Well--

GRANDERSON

Will you zip your lips? I've already told 'em everything!

LEWIS

You-- you told 'em I'm sterile?

GRANDERSON

Well, no, I reckon I didn't tell 'em that, because that has little to no bearing on this story.

LEWIS

Well. Alright then.

(to the audience)

In Greek, "sterile" means "warrior."

GRANDERSON

Now that simply ain't true.

LEWIS

Really? What am I thinking of?

YONI

You're thinkin' of Mordecai in Hebrew.

LEWIS

I reckon you're right.

YONI

I know I'm right. I'm a student of the Jewish faith.

HOWARD enters, holding a six-pack.

HOWARD

Hey brothers!

ALL

Hey brother.

GRANDERSON

Now, Howard, before you start walkin' around with your head down only to peek up and acknowledge the audience as if you didn't know they were there in the first place, I'ma tell you: that's pretty worn territory at this point.

HOWARD

(noticing the audience)
Oh hey. Didn't see you there.
(he takes a deep breath)
Lewis is sterile.

LEWIS

Hey!

GRANDERSON

Alright. We're done with all this now. These people were nice enough to join us on a Friday night and we gotta give 'em the proper information so that they aren't lost when the story starts.

YONI

Alright, then. Here's what you need to know. It's the day before the Derby County Derby. Jockeys from around the world have gathered here for their shot at the grand prize.

LEWIS

Now abettin' man always wants to know the odds, so I'ma tell you that Knox and Jackie Vandersleuth are the favorites. This year, they hired a new hotshot jockey - Angelo - to make sure that their winning legacy remains untouched.

HOWARD

The longshot? Well, that's Ponyman. Real salt of the earth. He's fallen onto some tough times recently, and he needs the prize money because his son...well, you'll find out soon enough.

GRANDERSON

The time? The day before the race. The year? 2009. Remember, things are a lot different in 2009. FaceTime? That meant sayin' hey to your neighbor's face. The TV Show *Bones* was only four years old. And the President was a young upstart named Bay-rick Oh-bu-ma. Is that how you pronounce it? Only time will tell. So sit back, relax...

Howard cracks a beer from his six pack.

GRANDERSON (cont'd)

...and enjoy. This is the Derby County Derby.

LIGHTS DOWN.

Scene 2"Angelo's Press Conference"

ANGELO - dark sunglasses, thousand dollar suit, deliberately unkempt hair - sits behind a row of microphones. MARY sits by his side. Press conference. Filled with reporters.

REPORTERS

Angelo! Angelo!

Angelo lights a cigarette. He points.

ANGELO

You.

REPORTER 1

Angelo! You're the hottest thing in racing right now. Some have called you the Mick Jagger of horse-jockeys. Why race for the Vandersleuth family?

ANGELO

Why? Why does a bird flap its wings, you know? Why does the jazz-man tap his toes to the beat? I'm a hoof and harness man. I go where the world needs me.

REPORTER 2

Angelo, what have you done to prepare for the derby? Have you gotten a feel for the track?

ANGELO

Yeah, I've felt the track. Feels like dirt.

The reporters chuckle. Angelo smirks.

REPORTER 3

Angelo, what goes through your mind before a big race like this one?

ANGELO

I try to keep my mind as open as possible. I call my best friend, John. Ya know, John Stamos? And he always tells me the same thing: get your freak on, buddy. So last night, Mary and I engaged in some boundary-pushing, avante garde lovemaking. 2 bodies, 3 hours, 1 porcelain bidet.

MARY

Angelo...

(CONTINUED)

REPORTER 1

My question is actually for Mary. Ms. Vandersleuth, when your parents hired Angelo to race for them in the derby, did you have any idea that a romance would follow?

MARY

Not really. When Angelo showed up, he looked at me and said "you're my girlfriend now." And...you don't say no to Angelo.

ANGELO

No you don't.

REPORTER 1

Mary, do you care to elaborate on that? Are you saying you didn't have a choice?

MARY

No...no. It was my choice. My parents love him. I love him. The whole world loves him. I mean, how can you not? Look at him.

Angele slowly wipes hair off his brow, then gives a combination kiss-wink.

REPORTER 4

Angele!

ANGELO

Yes?

REPORTER 4

(nervous)

You're-- um-- you're the hottest thing in racing right now.

ANGELO

Somebody already said that.

REPORTER 4

Sorry. I'm just really nervous.

ANGELO

Don't worry, baby. Take your time.

REPORTER 4

It's just-- I mean-- you could have any woman you want. I mean, you're like...I don't know, you're like a Roman general, but soft? And so...oh my god, I think I forgot how to breathe...

(CONTINUED)

ANGELO

Just suck in some air, blow it back out.

REPORTER 4

Ugh, of course! You're so smart. Smart and handsome.

ANGELO

What's your question?

REPORTER 4

Gahhhhwill you sign my butt?

ANGELO

Sure thing, honey. But you'll have to wait in line behind this one.

He gestures to Mary. She looks confused.

MARY

Haha...what Angelo means to say is--

REPORTER 2

Angelo, I'm sure you're aware that you'll be racing against Kotter Bourbon. Nobody's seen him for a while, but in his prime he was one of the greatest jockeys of all time. Are you worried?

ANGELO

I've only been worried once in my life. And I didn't care for it.

REPORTER 2

Do you care to elaborate?

ANGELO

Oh wait, did you say worried? I thought you said "to Colonial Williamsburg." I've only been to Colonial Williamsburg once in my life. It's full of dust and relics...kind of like Kotter Bourbon. I know he's been gone for a while, but Angelo's gonna be the one to say "welcome back, Kotter."

Everyone laughs.

ANGELO (cont'd)

Why is that funny?

LIGHTS DOWN.

Scene 3"Kotter's Comeback"

Ponyman stands in front of a trailer door. He pounds on the door. He waits a second. Exasperated he checks the time on his phone and then continues knocking

PONYMAN

Hello? Hello? It's me, Ponyman. Kotter? Is this Kotter Bourbon's residence?

He continues knocking.

KOTTER

(from within)

Marcia? Get the shit out of here dammit. I don't you owe a cent you fucking whore.

PONYMAN

Kotter open the door. It's Ponyman.

KOTTER

Who the fuck!? Listen if you're from the IRS you can contact my attorney. His name is Kingfish Jackson and his office is in the backroom of the Texaco station off exit 13.

PONYMAN

No, Kotter it's not the IRS. I'm Ponyman...we spoke yesterday on the phone. I'm from Derby County, I drove out to meet with you.

KOTTER

Derby County? Oh shit no. I told you cunts, that girl said she was 18. Plus it was in fucking February, have you ever heard of a statute of limitations?

PONYMAN

I'm just here to talk about--

KOTTER

No you had your say now it's my turn. You can contact my attorney Kingfish Jackson, he's in the backroom of the Texaco--.

PONYMAN

I'm here about the Derby!

Beat.

(CONTINUED)

KOTTER

What?

PONYMAN

I want you to ride for me in the derby.

Kotter cracks the door open and peers out. He is shirtless and pouring sweat. The top of his mustache has cocaine residue on it.

KOTTER

Oh yeah. You. Well I got bad news for ya. I ain't gonna ride in the derby.

PONYMAN

What? But you said on the phone--

KOTTER

Look when we talked on the phone I was tripping on a pretty hefty dose of moon rocks...

PONYMAN

What are moon rocks?

KOTTER

I don't know...now if you'll kindly vacate the premises I've got shit to take care of.

He exits and walks out of the trailer. He's holding a tiny harness and a tiny saddle. He lays on the ground and starts stretching.

PONYMAN

But Kotter, this is your chance to be a star again. To break back into the racing world--

KOTTER

I never left the racing world dammit. I've gotta race later today.

PONYMAN

Then why don't you just hear me out? Don't you want another shot at the derby? You haven't been there since 1982 Kotter. And the accident, with Blue Eyed Baby, it wasn't your fault

Kotter leaps to his feet and pulls out a switchblade which he holds to Ponyman's throat.

KOTTER

You shut your goddamn mouth about that horse.

(beat, Kotter relents and lets him go)

I do race. But I don't fucking ride horses anymore...I ride greyhounds.

PONYMAN

Like...you train greyhounds?

KOTTER

Goddamn it did I stutter? I said I fucking ride greyhounds. I'm done with horses. Horses always let you down. So you can take your derby and shove it up your ass.

Kotter turns to leave. He makes it to the door when he hears a faint voice say:

PONYBOY

Papa?

KOTTER

Who the hell is that?

Ponyboy enters holding a pillow.

PONYBOY

Papa, I'm hungry.

PONYMAN

Ok Ponyboy. Go back to the car. There's some peanut butter in the glove compartment.

PONYBOY

Is that him papa? Is he THE Kotter Bourbon?

PONYMAN

He is son, he is indeed.

Ponyboy rushes up to Kotter and shakes his hand.

PONYBOY

Oh Mr. Bourbon I've heard so much about you. I watched some of your old races and you're just about the best jockey there ever was. I can't believe you're gonna ride for us! Your gonna ride my Peachblossom. Oh he'll love you! And just wait till you meet him, you'll love him too. Everybody loves peachblossom, he's the most kind and wise horse in the whole world. And I just know the two of you will win together. And then we'll have enough money to pay for my treatment--

PONYMAN

That's enough Ponyboy.

KOTTER

What'd he say?

PONYMAN

Nothing. Let's go to the car, son.

They start to walk away.

KOTTER

Wait! Go on, boy.

PONYBOY

Well when you win, we'll finally have enough money to pay for my treatment so that I won't die. Ya see, I've got something called a terminable illness, Mr. Bourbon. And papa says we don't have enough money to pay for it. That's why he got you to run in this race. Because you're the best jockey ever and we're sure to win. And when we do I'll be saved.

Kotter slowly walks up to Ponyboy and crouches on one knee.

KOTTER

How old are you boy?

PONYBOY

7, Mr. Bourbon.

KOTTER

7, huh? Well boy. You're mighty strong for 7 years old, and you're lucky that you got a pop that loves you. When I was your age, my pappy used to stand over my bed while I was sleepin' and drop nickels in my mouth. One by one, 'til I had a full dollar in my throat. And I'd ask "why, daddy, why?" and he'd just smile and whisper "you'll thank me later, Nickel Belly." But I never got the chance to, 'cause he ran off on me. Well I ain't runnin' off on you, boy. You ain't gonna die! We're going to win this motherfucking race! You got a deal Mr. Ponyman!

Ponyman and Kotter shake.

PONYMAN

Thank you Mr. Bourbon. Thank you so much.

KOTTER

Now where's your horse? The derby is, after all, tomorrow.

PONYMAN

It's our family horse, Peachblossom. He's in the stables at the track. And could I just be the first to say...Welcome Back, Kotter!

KOTTER

Don't you ever fucking say that again.

LIGHT DOWN.

Scene 4

"Training Session"

The Vandersleuths stand trackside. They are watching Angelo and Mighty White (who are invisible to the audience) train.

KNOX

Alright Mighty White! Whooooo-eee. What a rush.

JACKIE

Control yourself, Knox. The track's running slow. Angelo really let him go in the back stretch and I don't want him pulling shit like that until race day.

MARY

He's beautiful Mom!

JACKIE

He's a good looking horse. But this ain't a beauty pageant and Angelo can't be so reckless. That horse is a real prima donna and he can't be overworked.

KNOX

Jackie-Sweetie, don't you think you're maybe being a teeny bit hard on him?

MARY

Mom, I can talk to Angelo if you want. See if he'll take it easy on Mighty.

KNOX

No, no sugarplum. You're his fiancee, your mother's his trainer.

JACKIE

Your job is to look presentable at the derby...speaking of which, your head is barren! Put a hat on it!

Mary storms off.

JACKIE (cont'd)

I don't know if Mary's ready to take over the family business, Globo-Sleuth Pharmaceuticals Incorporated. I don't know if she's ready to do that tomorrow.

KNOX

I think our little sugar-pumpkin can do anything she sets her mind to. I'm more worried about Angelo.

JACKIE

He's young and brash, I'll give you that. He may not think about the feelings of others, that's well documented. He's got underlying mommy issues, but so do you.

KNOX

Right, and--

JACKIE

And he's dabbled in devil worship and has been known to headbutt hotel maids, but when in Rome. And sure, he once tried to perform a citizen's arrest on a hooker for smoking indoors, but he's a health nut.

KNOX

Yes, so what I'm saying is--

JACKIE

He may have a nationwide ban at Chuckie Cheese, but that kid deserved it. He may have tried to kill Larry King, but come on, who's gonna miss Larry King?

KNOX

Are you done?

JACKIE

Either way, it won't matter. I brought a little insurance back from your laboratory.

KNOX

What are you talking about?

Jackie pulls out a vial.

KNOX (cont'd)

Is that...demorphine?

JACKIE

You bet, sugartits.

KNOX

But...the compound is unstable! It's never made it out of clinical trials! Sure, there are benefits, but it's still a highly dangerous drug.

JACKIE

It kills pain. Induces euphoria. No cramps, no muscle discomfort, no fatigue. The pride of Vandersleuth Pharmaceuticals coursing through Mighty White's veins.

KNOX

But we don't know enough! We don't know about the downside...

JACKIE

Our horse will be able to run for days without feeling tired. There's no need to hold this horse back at all. Ray Charles could be riding him for all I care.

KNOX

But Ray Charles is--

JACKIE

Dead, I know. My point is even a dead man could be his jockey, he won't need anyone's guidance but his own.

KNOX

Well I was gonna go with blind.

JACKIE

Huh?

KNOX

I mean Ray Charles was blind.

JACKIE

(chuckles)

Yeah, right. Ray Charles was blind. Like a blind man would need to wear sunglasses. They can't see.

KNOX

No Jackie, Ray Charles was definitely blind.

JACKIE

He was a piano player Knox. Who ever heard of a blind piano player? Use some sense. We can't be beat.

KNOX

I guess the Vandersleuth Family Motto prevails yet again.

JACKIE

(half-whisper)

Say it...

KNOX

What?

JACKIE

(in the throes of passion)

Tell me the fucking motto.

Knox and Jackie are facing each other, inches apart.

(CONTINUED)

KNOX

(slow and kind of clunky)

"When you have a lot of money. No matter what obstacles are put in your place. Even obstacles that would be insurmountable to people without a lot of money. You will be able to use your money to overcome whatever that obstacle may be and beat poor people."

They start to make out. Mary approaches with drinks in hand.

MARY

Uh, hello!?

The Vandersleuths break apart. Kotter, Ponyman and Ponyboy enter. Kotter is mid-speech, clearly enjoying his story.

KOTTER

So I says, well I sure as shit don't have two dicks, so I can't promise satisfaction, but the fact that you're a chick with two twat holes don't bother me in the least bit.

Kotter laughs alot.

PONYMAN

Again, Mr. Bourbon. I hate to repeat myself, but I wish we could save this conversation for a time when my boy wasn't around.

JACKIE

Well look who the cat drug in.

KNOX

(holding back laughter)

Is that? It can't be...

JACKIE

Honey, I may need to get my eyes checked, but that looks like whatever's left of the jockey formerly known as The Kotter Bourbon.

KNOX

Accompanied by what looks to be a couple of Okies. California's that way guys!

He points to the direction of California and laughs.

KNOX (cont'd)

Right Jackie?

(CONTINUED)

PONYMAN

Excuse me?

KOTTER

Ignore them. They're just a coupla' bullies.

JACKIE

Oh come on now, Kotter. We're just playing around. I guess we haven't met. I'm Jackie Vandersleuth.

She extends her hand to Ponyman who hesitantly returns the handshake.

PONYMAN

Ponyman. I think I've heard of you.

KNOX

Well that's not surprising in the least. I'm Knox Vandersleuth the fourth, CEO of Globo-Sleuth Pharmaceuticals.

JACKIE

We own Mighty White.

KNOX

What business brings you to the track.

PONYMAN

I'm the owner of Peachblossom.

JACKIE

(smirks)

Peachblossom. I hear you're workin with 90 to 1 odds. And how charming, you chose Kotter as your jockey. A surefire way to victory. It's great to see you out and about Kotter. Last I heard you were in prison.

KOTTER

Now that was a bunk charge goddamnit. And if you wanna slander my name you're gonna hear from my attorney. His name is Kingfish Jackson and you can find him off Exit 13 in the backroom of the Texaco station.

JACKIE

I'm sure we'll hear from him soon. It was nice to meet you folks. Now we've got some business to attend to in the stables.

KNOX

Come on, Tinker Tailor!

MARY

I'll be by in a sec.

Jackie and Knox Exit. But before Jackie does...

JACKIE

Oh and one more thing, Welcome back Kotter.

She leaves

KOTTER

Goddamnit. I'm gonna work out my demons on the track.

Kotter leaves.

MARY

I'm sorry about them. I'm Mary. It's very nice to meet you.

Mary shakes Ponyman's hand.

PONYMAN

Ponyman.

MARY

Awww, and who's this little guy?

PONYMAN

This is my boy. Come on ponyboy, don't be shy. Say hello to the nice lady.

PONYBOY

She's sooo pretty daddy.

Mary laughs and blushes, Ponyman smiles.

PONYMAN

She is pretty, ain't she? Come on now boy.

PONYBOY

Hi pretty lady.

They shake hands

MARY

Hello there, I'm Mary. What's your name?

PONYBOY

Ponyboy.

MARY

And how old are you?

PONYBOY

I'm 7. How old are you?

PONYMAN

Now, son, that's not polite to ask...

MARY

No it's ok. I'm 28.

PONYBOY

Wow that's old. I'm not gonna ever be that old.

PONYMAN

Son, not now.

MARY

Well sure you are lil' guy.

PONYBOY

No. I have something called a terminable illness. I'm not gonna live very much longer.

PONYMAN

Come on now son. We don't need to bother the nice lady.

MARY

(clearly moved)

Oh my god. I can't--

(collects herself)

Well, you're a strong little boy. And I don't care what the doctors say, you're going to beat this thing.

PONYMAN

That's what we've been praying for.

MARY

And the important thing is you've got a Mommy and a Daddy who love you very much.

PONYBOY

No.

MARY

Well come now. I can tell your Daddy loves you very much and I can't imagine your mommy doesn't.

PONYBOY

Mommy's dead.

MARY

Oh my gosh. I'm so sorry.

(turns to Ponyman)

I didn't mean to bring anything up. God, I'm so sorry.

PONYMAN

It's ok. It's been years now. You didn't know any better. Now come on Ponyboy. Let's leave the nice lady alone.

Ponyboy runs up to her and gives her a hug.

PONYBOY

I wish I had a new mommy. And if I did I wish she was as nice and pretty as you.

Mary is so moved. So fucking goddamned touched.

PONYMAN

Come on boy. It was nice meeting you Miss Vandersleuth.

MARY

Please, call me Mary.

PONYMAN

Alright then. I hope to see you around Mary.

MARY

I'm sure we will.

LIGHTS DOWN.

Scene 5

"Benson Hedges Intro"

Benson Hedges is asleep in his bed. He's tucked in tight, but we can see a large nighty on his head.

His alarm clock rings, and we hear the faint sounds of the radio.

JASON POPSWORTH

(from radio)

It's 7:00 o'clock in the morning. Time to rise and shine, Derby County. The day of the derby is upon us...

Benson Hedges jerks forward in his bed. His eyes widen.

BENSON HEDGES

It's Derby Day! It's Derby day!

He jumps out of bed. In addition to the nighty, he's wearing a pinstriped, seersucker suit.

BENSON HEDGES (cont'd)

It's Derby Day! Hanley! Oh, Hanley!

HANLEY enters with a cup of tea and a bag of donnettes.

HANLEY

Coming, sir.

BENSON HEDGES

Oh, Hanley, there's no time for tea and donnettes. It's Derby Day!

He eyes the tea.

BENSON HEDGES (cont'd)

Maybe just a splash of tea.

(he takes a sip of tea)

And maybe splash of donnette.

He absolutely annihilates two donnettes at the same time. White powder all over his mouth.

HANLEY

Very good, sir.

BENSON HEDGES

I'm just so excited, Hanley! It's the grandest day of the year! And I, Benson Hedges, get to lead the people of Derby County in celebration!

HANLEY

Would you like me to draw you a bath, sir?

BENSON HEDGES

A bath? A bath?! I haven't been able to bathe in months! Anytime I try to hop in the tub, I just get so excited about the derby that I hop right back out. Then I tend to lose my balance and slip, causing me to slide around the bathroom for...

(he chuckles)

...several minutes. It's quite silly. Bring me my ribbon-cutting scissors, Hanley!

HANLEY

Certainly, sir.

Hanley hands him his scissors.

Benson feels the scissors in his hand. He closes his eyes and smiles.

BENSON HEDGES

I have a riddle for you, Hanley. I'm very fond of riddles.

HANLEY

What's that, sir?

BENSON HEDGES

What walks on four legs as a child, four legs as an adult, and four legs in its old age.

HANLEY

A...four-legged man, sir?

BENSON HEDGES

Why a horse, of course!
(a bit of shock)
Oh my, a rhyme!
(creeping joy)
Oh my, it's time!

HANLEY

Time for what, sir?

BENSON HEDGES

The sun is out, I feel its ray/ The horse is out, I hear its neigh/ We must begin with no delay/ The song that starts each Derby Day!

TRANSITION INTO SONG...

Scene 6

"Derby Song"

Benson hedges walks out to the entrance of the derby.

BENSON

Hello there! Haha! So many smilin' faces at my track today. If you're a returning patron, welcome back. If you've never been to the Derby County Derby befo, we will become fast friends. We are a family oriented place, we are. Haha!

He sings. A slower, semi-spoken version of the verses that will come.

BENSON (cont'd)

*My name is Benson Hedges/
I'm the owner of the track/
If you enjoy your time with us/
I hope you hurrrby back! /*

*My grampy built this track/ With money from his nudy
bar/ With balls, some cash, and luck, he said/
believe me you'll go far/*

*But look at me a' rambling!/
haha! step right up, go in!/
See the world of horsey glory/
magic, love, and sin/*

He claps his hands. The music speeds up.

Jay Edga enters.

JAY EDGA

Money for a bet? Money for a bet?

Vandersleuths enter.

JAY EDGA (cont'd)

Mrs. Vandersleuth. Surely you could spare a coin or two?

JACKIE

This place is going to the dogs. Mary, don't make eye-contact.

MARY

Yes mother.

They walk past.

JAY EDGA

*They may have rolled their eyes/
But ol' J. Edga don't care none/
I'm just a simple beggar boy/
With shingles and the runs/*

*I'm hoping that my luck will change/
So I can leave this place/
But every track of any note/
needs a homeless vagrant!/*

He pauses.

JAY EDGA (cont'd)

Wait, what word was I rhyming with?

*He wanders away. Hustle bustle hustle bustle!
Maybeleen enters with Maybelle in tow.*

MAYBELEEN

Come on Maybelle, you gotta keep up. These bibles
aren't gonna hand out themselves!

MAYBELLE

It's these heels mama. Why can't I wear my Sketchers?

MAYBELEEN

Cause we're catching husbands, not poor 'twens. Now
smile.

*She does. Half-heartedly. Maybelleen and Maybelle
sings to the crowd.*

MAYBELEEN/MAYBELLE

*You get a bible and/ you get a hat/
bible, hat, bible, hat hat/*

Everyone stops and sings.

ALL

*There's no day like the derby!/ There's no derby like
the Derby County Derby!/ Make sure your bets are
sturdy!/ Derby, Flerby, Blerby, Derby!/*

They run around and sing it again!

ALL (cont'd)

*There's no day like the derby!/ There's no derby like
the Derby County Derby!/ Make sure your bets are
sturdy!/ Derby, Flerby, Blerby, Derby!/*

Vamp! Enter Ponyboy and Ponyman.

PONYBOY

Wowee daddy!

PONYMAN

Hurry up now son!

PONYBOY

There are so many people!

PONYMAN

Don't let go of my hand.

*They stop as the hustle and bustle swirls around
them. Mary and Jackie run into them.*

PONYMAN

Excuse us.

JACKIE

Out of the way!

PONYBOY
My foot!

MARY
I'm so sorry!

PONYBOY
Dad!

PONYMAN
Son!

MARY
Mom!

JACKIE
Girl!

They all stop and sing to the audience.

PONYMAN (cont'd)

*Please my God, hear my prayer/ and answer from above/
He's just a little baby, God/ Save this boy I love! /*

JACKIE

*No one here can stop us with
demorphine on our side,
In just a few short hours
On toward victory we ride!*

MARY

*Is this the kind of life I want
or does it not feel right?
I'm pampered, pulled, and prodded
but inside I want to fight!*

PONYBOY

*It's just how I imagined
lying in my little bed,
I know there really is a god,
who doesn't want me dead!*

Enter Maybelle and Maybelleen, they sing!

MAYBELEEN/MAYBELLE

*You get a bible and you get a hat
bible, hat, bible, hat hat!*

build. Hustle. Chorus!

ALL

*There's no day like the derby! There's no derby like
the Derby County Derby! Make sure your bets are sturdy!
Derby, Flerby, Blerby, Derby!*

Bridge. Angelo enters. Dirty rap.

ANGELO

*It's Angelo bitches, I don't give a motherfuck/
 Got the ladies takin' turns, just lickin' my butt/
 Cleanin' out fuckers like I'm motherfuckin' Drain-O/
 Doin' drive-by's with my motherfucker Stamos/
 When I say Anj, you say 'elo/*

Kotter enters.

KOTTER

'Elo, Angelo.

ANGELO

Kotter! You disrupted my crazy-sexy rap flow.

KOTTER

I don't give a shit.

ANGELO

Ciao Kotter. See you at the starting line.

*Angelo leaves. Kotter in reflection. he touches
 the ground and sniffs it. He sings like Jean Val
 Jean. Breathy. Strong.*

KOTTER

*Hello, my muse, Hello old friend/ I raw-dogged a girl
 in those stables/ Hello, old love, is this the end?
 For that little boy's sake, I'll win/ I'll
 Wiiiiliiiiiiiiin/*

*Chorus returns. During this people can riff and
 sing their moments.*

*Maybeleen runs by, building energy. The crowd
 loves it. She gets a t-shirt launcher and stuffs
 it with pamphlets! She unleashes them over the
 audience. They say God is Good!*

MAYBELEEN/MAYBELLE

*You get a bible and/ you get a hat/
 bible, hat, bible, hat hat/*

ALL

*There's no day like the derby!/
 There's no derby like the Derby County Derby! /
 Make sure your bets are sturdy!/
 Derby, Flerby, Blerby, Derby! /*

*There's no day like the derby!/ There's no derby like
 the Derby County Derby!/ Make sure your bets are
 sturdy!/ Derby, Flerby, Blerby, Derby! /*

Climactic stance. Fireworks. A woman emerges from the shadows and sings the end of National Anthem starting at "o say does that star spangled". The audience is encouraged to stand up and sing it. Lights out.

Scene 7

"Horsin' Around"

The set of a morning talk show. Two chairs are occupied by the hosts - ALLISON KNOWLES and JASON POPSWORTH - who are eternally chipper and overly enthusiastic. There's a vacant seat across from them for guests.

A sign reads "Horsin' Around!" behind them. There's a graphic that depicts a horse pulling a fire alarm. The horse's face seems to ask, "ain't I a stinker?"

Cheesy music leads them in.

JASON POPSWORTH

Welcome back to "Horsin' Around," Derby County's premiere talk show about horses, horseracing, and everything in between. For those of you who are just joining us, I'm Jason Popsworth.

ALLISON KNOWLES

And I'm Allison Knowles. It's 7:15am. Slightly cloudy outside, but hey, we've still got a lot of light here in the studio, right Jason?

JASON POPSWORTH

That's right Allison!

They both laugh.

JASON POPSWORTH (cont'd)

We've got some exciting guests on track...
(he takes a moment to chuckle to himself)

That's good. Whoever wrote that, that's good. Jim? Was that you? Hey, you're getting a raise, buddy...on track for you today. But first, a funny thing happened on the way to work today.

ALLISON KNOWLES

Oh yeah?

JASON POPSWORTH

I was driving to work, blasting some Buble, and what do I see? A horse!

ALLISON KNOWLES

No!

JASON POPSWORTH

I swear to God! And there was a little boy standing behind him. And I thought to myself: why did the boy stand behind the horse?

ALLISON KNOWLES

I just don't know. Why, Jason?

JASON POPSWORTH

Well...I guess he thought he *might get a kick out of it.*

They both laugh.

ALLISON KNOWLES

You! You are a rascal.

JASON POPSWORTH

Hey, we're just horsin' around!

ALLISON KNOWLES

Yes we are. Now let's send it over to our trackside correspondent Brian Goggins. Brian, what kind of conditions can we expect for the race today?

Lights up on BRIAN GOOGINS, holding a microphone.

BRIAN GOOGINS

(laughing)

I'm sorry. He might get a kick out of it? You're the king, Jason. As for the race today, sources tell me that the dirt is firm and the track is running fast. So for any of you Top Gun fans, it looks like these horses are gonna have "the need...the need for speed."

He laughs heartily to himself.

Allison and Jason glare at him angrily.

Lights down on Brian mid-laugh.

JASON POPSWORTH

Thank you, Brian. And hey, maybe next time keep the editorializing to a minimum? We're professionals here. Sorry about that, folks.

ALLISON KNOWLES

Now, our first guest is Dr. Randolph Miller - known as "The Horse Doctor" - who's here to help us go inside the mind of a horse on raceday. So let's check to see if the doctor is in...

(She laughs. She just can't help it.)

Jim, was that you again? Really? Wow, you're just on fire this morning. Keep 'em coming. Let's see if the doctor is in... Doctor Miller?

Intro music plays as Dr. Miller enters. He sits down on the empty chair.

JASON POPSWORTH

Thank you for joining us, Doctor.

DR. MILLER

Thanks for having me.

ALLISON KNOWLES

Now, Doctor, you graduated from Johns Hopkins, and you've been a leading researcher in equine psychology. What can you tell us?

DR. MILLER

Well, horses are a lot like humans. They need food and water, and they respond well to love.

JASON POPSWORTH

I see. So you've studied horses for a while now, correct?

DR. MILLER

My whole life, yes.

JASON POPSWORTH

So then, I was hoping you could tell me Dr. Miller...what's a horse's favorite band?

ALLISON KNOWLES

Uh-oh!

DR. MILLER

I'm sorry?

JASON POPSWORTH

Simple question, doctor. When a horse listens to music--

ALLISON KNOWLES

Here he goes!

JASON POPSWORTH

--what does he like to listen to?

DR. MILLER

Well, actually, research has shown that horses actually do respond to auditory stimu--

JASON POPSWORTH

Hall and Oates.

ALLISON KNOWLES

There it is!

They both laugh uproariously.

JASON POPSWORTH

(still laughing)

I'm sorry...I'm sorry...

ALLISON KNOWLES

(laughing)

Oh yes!

Lights up on Brian.

BRIAN GOGGINS

(also laughing)

Bam! Bam bam!

Lights down on Brian.

DR. MILLER

I guess I don't...fully understand what's happening.

ALLISON KNOWLES

Thank for you joining us, Dr. Miller.

DR. MILLER

That's it?

JASON POPSWORTH

Not exactly. Would you mind standing up?

DR. MILLER

Okay.

He stands up.

JASON POPSWORTH

Now turn around.

He does. His pants are covered in a yellowish substance.

(CONTINUED)

JASON POPSWORTH (cont'd)

Uh-oh, Dr. Miller. Looks like you've been sitting in...

JASON AND ALLISON
Butterscotch!

They both laugh.

Dr. Miller leaves as he tries to wipe the butterscotch off his pants.

ALLISON KNOWLES
What a smart guy.

JASON POPSWORTH
Good sport, too.

Beat.

ALLISON KNOWLES
We'll be right back.

LIGHTS DOWN.

Scene 8

"Hat Ladies"

MAYBELEEN, a middle-aged Southern mom, and MAYBELLE - early teens - are walking through the grandstands. Maybeleen wears a massive hat.

MAYBELEEN
Maybelle! Keep up!

MAYBELLE
Momma, I hate wearing these high heels. Why can't I just wear my Sketchers?

MAYBELEEN
Maybelle, there's a social contract you sign as a young woman at your first derby. The only people who wear Sketchers are boy scouts and Patty Mayonnaise. Now, the first order of business is gettin' you the right hat.

Cheryl and Peg enter. Huge hats.

MAYBELEEN
Cheryl, Peg!

(CONTINUED)

CHERYL/PEG
Maybeleen. Hiiiiiiiiii.

MAYBELEEN
How are you?

CHERYL
Working hard and hardly working!

MAYBELEEN
Peg! You look amazing.

PEG
It's a sushi-only diet.

MAYBELEEN
You remember my daughter, Maybelle? She's gettin' her first Derby Hat!

CHERYL
Oh, how excitin'! I remember my first hat! Are you nervous?

MAYBELLE
Well, not really...

PEG
Don't worry, I was nervous too. When I was your age, I spent hours tryin' to find a hat cavernous enough to fit my teased-out 80's glam hair into it. I was a regular Farrah Fawcett.

CHERYL
Rest in peace. It's 2009...she just died!

Peg and Cheryl are uncomfortably close to Maybelle.

PEG
What kinda color are you thinkin' for your hat, Maybelle?

MAYBELLE
Somethin' sensible maybe? Like brown or camouflage...

CHERYL
Pink! I knew it!

MAYBELEEN
(tearing up)
I just can't believe my little baby Maybelle's old enough to put a hat on it. Next thing you know, some man is gonna put a ring on it!

PEG

I met my husband the moment I stepped out of the hat store. It was so funny. It was so, so funny. Picture this, okay? I had just put my hat on, literally seconds ago. And Dale - y'all know Dale?

MAYBELEEN

Of course!

CHERYL

Yeah!

PEG

Dale comes up to me and goes, 'scuse me? Do you work here? But I didn't!

They all laugh.

CHERYL

That's so funny!

MAYBELEEN

Oh my god! Isn't that funny, Maybelle?

MAYBELLE

Not particularly...

CHERYL

My hat found me. It fell from the top shelf, hit me on the noggin', next I know I'm wakin up in the hospital to the doctor sayin' "you've been in a coma for eight years." I lost so much weight!

MAYBELLE

That sounds horrifying!

MAYBELEEN

(cutting her off)

Well, we best be skedaddlin'. We got a lady to make!

LIGHTS DOWN.

Scene 9

"PEACHBLOSSOM"

*Peachblossom eats some hay out of a barrel.
Ponyboy brushes his mane in long, smooth strokes*

PEACHBLOSSOM

Neigh, neigh.

PONYBOY
Better?

PEACHBLOSSOM
Neigh.

PONYBOY
Of course I don't mind Peachblossom. There's nutthin I'd rather do than make your coat as sleek as an angel's hair. An angel like mama.

PEACHBLOSSOM
Neigh.

PONYBOY
And if you don't win...well that's okay. I'll know you tried your hardest.

PEACHBLOSSOM
Neigh.

PONYBOY
Papa is always asking why I hang around you so much and I say "it's because I love him and he loves me." Like that. When you love something you just know it. Don't need no explaining. It's silly, but I kinda feel like you're the only one I can talk to. Just wish you could talk back sometimes.

PEACHBLOSSOM
Neigh.

Peachblossom gives Ponyboys neck a nuzzle.

PONYBOY
Thank you, PB. I needed that.

PEACHBLOSSOM
Neigh?

PONYBOY
But I'm too young to ride you! And after how mom died, racing in the biggest race of all... 'Sides, I'm only seven. Nobody aged seven ever won nothing except for maybe Star Search.

PEACHBLOSSOM
Neigh. Neigh. Neigh.

PONYBOY
You know I don't sing, silly.

PEACHBLOSSOM
Niegh!

Peachblossom persists.

PONYBOY

Alright, I guess I know one that my mama used to sing me. When I was in the trundle bed pulled out from under my parent's bed, my mama would stroke my hair real soft. And sing.

He clears his throat. He sings earnestly an original song.

PONYBOY (cont'd)

If you love someone, sing it! If you love yourself, Belt it!

Belt your love, to the highest high. If you love someone, sing it! If you love yourself, Belt it...

He trails off sadly.

Jay Edga enters.

JAY EDGA

Did I hear a sorrowful song?

PONYBOY

Yes, sir. Sorry if I disturbed you.

JAY EDGA

Don't be sorry. With a voice like that, you could be on star search!

PONYBOY

Really?

JAY EDGA

Jay Edga.

extends his hand.

PONYBOY

I'm Ponyboy, sir.

JAY EDGA

Now I know what you're thinking! Jay Edga?! Like Jay Edgar Hoover?

PONYBOY

Um.

JAY EDGA
Well Hooooovers (who-vers) that?

PONYBOY
I don't know.

JAY EDGA
Not a histry buff are ya kid?

PONYBOY
Are you a historian?

JAY EDGA
No, I'm a magician!

PONYBOY
A magician? Can you make my illness disappear?

JAY EDGA
Did I say magician? I meant homeless.

PONYBOY
Oh.

JAY EDGA
Whovers this fella?

PONYBOY
Peachblossom. Or PB as I call him.

JAY EDGA
Hellow PB. If you put us together, you get PB and Jay!
Edga. PB and Jay Edga. Well I better be going, but if
you ever wanna see me again, just sing a sorrowful
song.

Jay edga twiddles away.

PEACHBLOSSOM
Neigh.

PONYBOY
I don't know.

PEACHBLOSSOM
Neigh.

Nuzzle.

PONYBOY
I love you Peachblossom. I do.

PEACHBLOSSOM

I love you too, Ponyboy.

PONYBOY

What? Peachblossom?!

PEACHBLOSSOM

Neigh. Neigh.

Peachblossom returns to the hay and eats.

PONYBOY

Oh. Silly me.

*He looks around selfconsioucly. Smiles to himself.
He returns to his brush.*

PEACHBLOSSOM

Neigh.

BLACKOUT.

Scene 10

"Horse Doctor"

*DR. MILLER, wearing a white coat and stethoscope,
sits in her office. She examines an x-ray. Knox
Vandersleuth enters.*

KNOX

Dr. Miller?

DR. MILLER

Mr. Vandersleuth. How may I assist you today?

KNOX

I don't mean to be a bother, but I believe one of my
mares -- Peppersticks -- is sick, and I don't want him
infecting Mighty White on race day. I think maybe he
has a cold?

DR. MILLER

(joyful)

Hey, who's the doctor here? I'd be happy to take a look
at him.

KNOX

That's mighty decent of you. And hey--

DR. MILLER

Hay? Hay is for horses. Trust me. I'm a horse doctor.
Where's the pony?

(CONTINUED)

KNOX

He's waiting in the lobby.

DR. MILLER

Alright, just hang tight for a second. I'll give him the once-over.

KNOX

Thank you, doctor.

Dr. Miller exits stage left. Silence for a moment, and then the deafening sound of a shotgun blast. Knox screams. Dr. Miller returns holding a double-barrel shotgun.

DR. MILLER

Well, I think I figured out the problem...

KNOX

Oh my God! What was that?!

DR. MILLER

What was what?

KNOX

Did you just....*shoot Peppersticks?*

DR. MILLER

No. I diagnosed Peppersticks, and then I prescribed him 50 cc's of double-barreled medicine. So yeah, my secretary will bill you on your way out. Her desk is down the hall, past your dead horse, and to the right.

KNOX

You're going to hear from my wife about this!

Knox exits.

JENNA enters.

JENNA

Dr. Miller?

DR. MILLER

Lemme guess. Sick horse?

JENNA

Not really. Just figured it was time for a check-up. Pony Shalhoub's never been better, as far as I can tell.

DR. MILLER

I'll go check him out.

Dr. Miller grabs her shotgun and moves to leave.

JENNA

What are you doing?

DR. MILLER

Trust me. This is just a precaution.

JENNA

I'd still prefer it if you left the gun here.

DR. MILLER

Fine. I guess I'll just leave my stethoscope here too.

JENNA

I mean, if you say so...

DR. MILLER

Whatever.

Dr. Miller sets her shotgun down and leaves. A few seconds later, a loud blast of gunfire. She returns holding another shotgun.

DR. MILLER (cont'd)

Well. Do you want the good news or the bad news?

JENNA

The good news.

DR. MILLER

The good news is your horse is dead. The bad news is that I missed when I tried to shoot him, so I had to strangle him instead.

JENNA

You're an animal!

DR. MILLER

No. Horses are animals. I'm...just a woman. Am I a hero? That's not really for me to say. That's for you to say.

Dr. Miller waits for Jenna to say that. She doesn't. She exits. On her way out, ROSIE sprints into the office.

ROSIE

Dr. Miller! Dr. Miller! I need your help! Something's wrong! My horse isn't breathing! She needs CPR or she'll die!

DR. MILLER
Not today, damnit!

Dr. Miller runs offstage.

DR. MILLER (O.S.)
You aren't gonna die on me!

BLAST!

DR. MILLER (O.S.) (cont'd)
Breathe, you fucking mare!

BLAST!

DR. MILLER (O.S.) (cont'd)
Live!

BLAST!

DR. MILLER (O.S.) (cont'd)
Live!

BLAST!

DR. MILLER (O.S.)
Live!

BLAST!

BLAST!

BLAST!

Dr. Miller returns, sweaty and resolute.

ROSIE
Wh-- what happened?

DR. MILLER
He made it.

ROSIE
Really?

DR. MILLER
To heaven. She made it to heaven. She's dead.

BLACKOUT.

Scene 11"Mary & Ponyman"

Mary sits by the pond. Soft lighting. Reflective, almost spell-like.

Ponyman enters.

He notices Mary, who continues staring out towards the lake. She's oblivious of her new company.

Ponyman, now pretty close behind her, decides to announce himself.

PONYMAN

Hey.

Mary is startled.

MARY

Ah!

PONYMAN

Sorry! I didn't mean to scare you. It's Mary, right?

MARY

Yeah. Ponyman?

PONYMAN

Yes ma'am.

A pause. Neither of them really know how to continue.

PONYMAN (cont'd)

I see you've discovered my Ponderin' Pond.

MARY

Your what?

PONYMAN

My Ponderin' Pond.

(he gestures outwards)

I come here to think sometimes. I look out over the water, and it's like...all of my problems are insignificant, ya know?

MARY

I love the water.

(CONTINUED)

PONYMAN

Is that why you came out here?

MARY

I just...needed to get away.

Pause.

PONYMAN

Where's your fiancé?

MARY

Angelo? He's napping in a hot tub. It helps him prepare for races.

PONYMAN

My boy's sleeping too, curled up next to Peachblossom.

MARY

Aw, that's sweet.

Mary smiles at Ponyman.

MARY (cont'd)

I'm sure your wife is very happy.

Beat.

PONYMAN

Well, as I said before, my wife is...in a better place.

MARY

A Red Lobster?

PONYMAN

Uh, it's a little farther north.

He gestures to heaven.

MARY

Oh, right! God, I'm so sorry.

PONYMAN

No need to be sorry. I know that right now, she's looking down and smiling.

Beat.

MARY

I should go.

PONYMAN

No, stay! Please. I enjoy the company.
(a little bit flirtatious)

Although, hey, I don't even know if we should be talking to each other. We are rivals, after all.

MARY

Heh. Montagues and Capulets.

PONYMAN

Coke and Pepsi.

MARY

Sharks and Jets.

PONYMAN

Criminals and law-yers.

Beat.

MARY

What?

PONYMAN

Law-yers.

MARY

Are you saying liars?

PONYMAN

No, law-yers.

MARY

Law...yours? Like your law?

PONYMAN

Law-yers! Law-yers!

MARY

Oh. Wow, that's not how you say that.

Beat.

I'm not like them, you know.

PONYMAN

Like who?

MARY

My parents. I know we're related and everything, but I just feel different. I don't want wealth, or fame, or really large hats. I don't want what they want.

PONYMAN

What do you want?

MARY

It's stupid...

PONYMAN

Come on. Nothing's stupid when you're out by the Ponderin' Pond.

MARY

I guess...well, what I've always wanted to be is...

(a deep breath)

A mixed martial art champion.

PONYMAN

Like a UFC fighter?

MARY

Yeah! They have such power...such control. There's no pageantry. No privilege. When you're in that ring, it's just you and your opponent, equal under the eyes of God. I know my parents would never go for it. They come from a different world. But in between all our galas, and the ribbon-cuttings, and the yacht socials...I sneak away and practice my Jiu-Jitsu.

(beat)

I guess that does sound kinda stupid when I say it out loud.

PONYMAN

Hey...naw. Naww. Stupid? What? Naw.

MARY

I'm embarrassed.

PONYMAN

Don't be. Really. I think it's great. I think you should be whatever you want to be.

MARY

Really?

PONYMAN

Yeah.

They're sitting very close together. This is the moment. They're about to kiss.

ANGELO's offstage voice pierces the silence.

ANGELO (O.S.)
Mary! Hey Mary!

MARY
Uh-oh...

ANGELO (O.S.)
I woke up! Can you cook me eggs? Also, I see a spider.
I need you to kill it for me. It's really big.

MARY
I better go...

Mary turns to leave. She stops.

MARY (cont'd)
Hey...Ponyman?

PONYMAN
Yeah?

MARY
Thanks.

She leaves.

Scene 12

"Little Mole Rat"

Knox and Jackie onstage, examining Mighty White.

JACKIE
I've never seen anything like it. Mighty White simply has no will to race. I think Angelo ran him too hard.

KNOX
Well I don't want to take him to that Horse Doctor, so I took the liberty of calling in a specialist. Have you ever heard of...Little Mole Rat?

JACKIE
No...

KNOX
He's a Native American horse whisperer. He works with problem horses. He's pretty expensive, so I had to spend all of my allowance to book him.

Little Mole Rat emerges from the shadows. He is dressed in traditional Native American garb. His voice is booming and demands respect.

LITTLE MOLE RAT
HOW!!!

JACKIE AND KNOX
How!

LITTLE MOLE RAT

My name is Little Mole Rat. I am told your horse is underperforming. This is not a physical or emotional problem. It is an issue of spiritual emptiness. My people have lived side by side with horses for generations. It is said, that the first member of the Cocktaw line was a horse named Chikawa. Chikawa sired our people and then ascended into the heavens. I will channel his spirit with your horse. Now please leave me.

JACKIE
Alone? But--

LITTLE MOLE RAT
Enough.

The Vandersleuths leave.

Little Mole Rat pulls out a beer and cracks it open.

LITTLE MOLE RAT
(Boston accent)
Alright now that that's over with let's get down to brass tacks, you stupid goddamn animal. That back there was a load of horse shit. I'm a fucking South Boston born and bred, motherfucking horse shouter. I'm gonna wear you down you Beacon Hill son-of-a-bitch, so buckle up 'cause I will beat you harder than Derek Jeter beats his cock to kiddie porn. Now what I see in front of me is a fucking decrepit bag of bones with no will to win. How to rectify this situation? Well for starters, you're a goddamn horse. All you do is run, eat, and shit. So what, you're too sad to run? Oh, woe is me you goddamn quadrapede.

Knox Vandersleuth opens the door.

KNOX
Hey! Sorry to interrupt Mr. Mole Rat. We were gonna order some take-out. Do you want some Chow-Mein?

LITTLE MOLE RAT
Mr. Vandersleuth! Please do not interrupt me as I navigate through the torrid waters of the spiritual world.

KNOX

Oh, sorry...

He starts to leave.

LITTLE MOLE RAT

But a Cocktaw never refuses an offering from his fellow man. Chow-Mein would sit well with the ancestors.

KNOX

Great! Sorry.

Knox exits.

LITTLE MOLE RAT

Hey, horse, I'm not fucking around here, alright? You ever heard of the Boston Tea Party? Well we're gonna have our own party, except instead of throwing tea into the ocean, I'm gonna throw my disgusting balls into your little horse mouth. You ready, horse? You ready to make like a Jeter and suck a townie's ballsac?

He starts to unzip his pants.

Jackie enters.

JACKIE

Hey, quick follow-up. So the Chow-Mein comes with a side...any interest in eggrolls?

LITTLE MOLE RAT

Mr. Vandersleuth, you cannot keep interrupting the sacred communion between man and beast. Any nourishment will suffice. Now leave!

JACKIE

Cool, cool.

Knox leaves.

LITTLE MOLE RAT

Holy shit! You still aren't gettin the picture are you? So you're depressed, huh? Do you think I give a shit about your feelings? When I was seven my mother kicked me out of the house for crying out loud. And since then I have never showed any emotion but anger. Because to do anything else would open myself to honest self-reflection. Don't think about your lack of self-worth. Forget that your brother is a successful investment banker. And for God's sake, bury that memory of the time that Derek Jeter poked the ever-loving shit out of your sister and then went yard against the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LITTLE MOLE RAT (cont'd)

Sox, hitting a blast so profoundly wicked that it sailed all the way to Southie, colliding with my exposed cock and ruining my manhood.

Knox enters.

KNOX

UH! I forgot to ask about nut alergies-

LITTLE MOLE RAT

Knox, Leave us!!

Little Mole Rat turns towards Knox in frustration and Mighty White kicks him in the back of the head. He shouts wildly in pain.

LITTLE MOLE RAT (cont'd)

HOLY SHIT!

He staggers to his feet as the Jackie and Knox run in.

JACKIE

What happened?!?

LITTLE MOLE RAT

Your fucking horse kicked me...and has shown that he is ready. He has conquered his demons and will surely conquer the competition on the track. My work here is done. Now, uh, I would like...um, could you just get a dog bag with the chow-mein and one million dollars in unmarked bills.

LIGHTS.

Scene 13

"Kotter's Fadder"

Kotter sits at a bar.

There's a woman sitting next to him. Kotter addresses the bartender.

KOTTER

Barkkeep...what kind of Sasparilla you got?

BARKEEP

Sioux City.

KOTTER

That'll do nicely.

Kotter turns to the woman next to him.

KOTTER (cont'd)

Did you ever hear the one about Rosie O'Donnell's cooch?

The woman turns away.

KOTTER (cont'd)

Fuck it.

The door slams open. FADDER walks up to the bar.

FADDER

Y'all got any Sioux City sasparilla? And hey, did you ever hear the joke about Rosie O'Donnell's Poonannie?

Kotter violently jerks his head towards the man.

KOTTER

Dad?!

FADDER

Dad? Ain't nobody called me dad since I walked out on my son. The name's Fadder. Fadder Bourbon.

KOTTER

Dad, it's me! I'm the son you walked out on!

FADDER

Is...is that you? Jacky-boy?

KOTTER

No, it's Kotter!

Beat.

FADDER

Woah, shit! Heyyyy dude...what's going on?

KOTTER

Well, for starters, I've been living without a father for forty years. In between then and now I've been a drunk, a coward, and a jockey. Everytime I walk my belly jingles on account of all the nickles you dropped in there while I was sleepin'.

FADDER

Hey, I forgot about that! Ol' Nickel Belly! How's that workin' out for ya?

KOTTER

It's hard, Dad. I make so much noise when I walk...I can't go to the theater or Wimbledon. Well, that, and my ongoing feud with the Williams sisters. They know what they *didn't do!* But I've spent my whole life askin' myself one simple question: why'd you walk out on me?

FADDER

You wanna know the truth? The *real* truth?

KOTTER

More than anything in the world, dad.

FADDER

I'm a secret agent. I had to abandon you for your own protection. Got word from headquarters that the Ruskies were plannin an attack on our trailer as retribution for how many of them I slaughtered with my bare hands in the name of freedom. I had to leave, and cut off all communicado, and take all the money from under the mattress in order to make sure you were safe. But I always knew I'd come back for ya. So...here I am! In this bar. Lookin' my son dead in the eye and sayin'...I'm proud of you.

KOTTER

(tearful)
Welcome back, Fadder!

They hug.

FADDER

Now waddaya say? You wanna go on a bender with your old man?

KOTTER

Well, I've got a race later today...

FADDER

Oh, come on now! What's more important than reconnecting with your long-lost father?

KOTTER

Well...alright!

He turns to the barkeeper. Fadder disappears.

KOTTER

Two shots of Rebel Yell! One for me, and one for my old man.

BARKEEPER

Who are you talking about?

KOTTER

What do you mean? My old man, sitting right next to me.

He gestures to the chair that had been occupied by Fadder.

BARKEEPER

Sir, you been talking to yourself for the last half hour. Ain't nobody there.

KOTTER

You better get those eyes checked, bartender.

(Pause. He turns to the empty chair.)

Good one, dad!

(Pause.)

Wait, what's that? You want me to meet your new girlfriend? Well bring her in!

(Pause.)

Lena Dunham! It's a pleasure to meet you Ms. Dunham.

(He pretends to shake an invisible hand)

Wow, it's so crazy that my long-lost dad is dating my long-time idol.

(Pause.)

You're right, dad. I don't need horses to validate myself. Now let's all drink moonshine and ride dune-buggies.

Kotter exits.

BARKEEPER

Looks like Kotter Bourbon ain't racin' today.

BLACKOUT.

Scene 14

"Demorphine"

Angelo is laying on the ground, shirtless, eyes closed. He presses his face to the grass. Breathes deeply. Gets on all fours and tentatively paws the ground like a timid horse.

ANGELO

Discovery. Mystery. Oats.

Mary enters.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

There you are! I've been looking everywhere--

ANGELO

Not now Mary! I'm meditating.

MARY

Okay.

Angelo continues pawing the ground and making horse noises.

ANGELO

What does it mean to be a horse?

MARY

What?

ANGELO

Is it the thrill of victory? The security of a mother's mane? The taste of a sugared cube?

MARY

Maybe it's the desire to be free, and the knowledge that you're always going to be trapped.

ANGELO

Baby, they're horses! You think they *prance around* on their *hoofs* being all "ohh, give me liberty or give me death. Me. A horse." Come on, Mary.

MARY

It's just...I think I understand horses, you know? I don't think they grow up wanting to win races. They just know that they don't want to get whipped. Maybe they have dreams. Maybe they wanna run through an open field or, I dunno, become a mixed-martial artist or something...

ANGELO

Oh, alright. I get it.

(He clearly doesn't)

You tryna to get freaked?

MARY

Are you on drugs?

ANGELO

Drugs? Drugs, Mary? Uh, lemme think for a second...yeah, I'm on drugs, Mary. God. It helps me relax. Expands my mind.

He pulls out a vial of liquid.

ANGELO (cont'd)

It's called demorphine. I stole it from your dad's lab.
It makes all the pain go away. But you probably
wouldn't like it.

MARY

How do you know?

ANGELO

Baby, come on. Trust me. I'm a famous jockey.

MARY

I wanna try it, Angelo. I can handle it.

ANGELO

Okay. But I have to warn you. Things could get weird.

MARY

Just give it to me.

Angele hands the vial to Mary. She starts pouring it into her mouth.

ANGELO

Wait! You're only supposed to take a drop!

MARY

Whatever.

ANGELO

Now things are definitely gonna get weird.

Angele's last word echoes with authority.

ANGELO

Weird. Weird. Weird. Weird...

As it echoes, lights shift. Mary looks beyond the audience, eyes wide.

MATTHEW enters, dressed as a baby, holding a rattle.

MATTHEW

Aloha, señorita.

MARY

Who are you?

MATTHEW

It's me. Matthew McConaghey dressed as a baby.

MARY

Why-- why are you here?

MATTHEW

You just took a lot of drugs. I'm here to act as a spiritual guide for your trip. Think of me as your own personal shaman. I'll protect you when you need-- oh man, what was that?

(Matthew looks at his rattle)

Heh, it was just my rattle. Sometimes it startles me. I guess I'm just a baby who doesn't know any better.

(He pulls out a baby bottle. It's red.)

You want some sangria?

MARY

Sure!

She drinks.

MATTHEW

Drink up, Mary Vandersleuth. Let my home-made sangria course through your veins.

MARY

Oh wow...I feel so...

The sound of a GONG! A group of MIXED MARTIAL ARTISTS enter mid-spar. A cross between fighting and elegant dancing.

MIXED MARTIAL ARTIST 1

Good spar! Good spar!

(Notices Mary)

Oh, Master Sensei Mary! Welcome back!

MIXED MARTIAL ARTIST 2

We've missed you!

MIXED MARTIAL ARTIST 3

Come spar with us, Master Sensei Mary!

Mary joins them. An elegant waltz centered around Mary.

MARY

(mid-waltz, to McConaghey)

What's going on, Baby McConaghey?

MATTHEW

This is your future, should you so choose.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

This feels so right!

The Mixed Martial Artists start to exit.

MIXED MARTIAL ARTISTS

(echo-y)

Come spar with us Mary! Come spar...come spar...come spar...

They're gone.

MARY

Where are they going?

MATTHEW

You're at a crossroads, Mary, and that is but one path you can take. Cue the niños.

A bunch of KIDS enter. They look like Angelo.

KIDS

(alternating lines)

Mom! Mom! Cook us eggs! Take us to Colonial Williamsburg! Where's our Godfather, John Stamos?

MARY

Who are you? What are your names?

KIDS

(alternating lines)

Angela! Angelina! D'Angelo!

Suddenly, the sound of THUNDER. All is quiet.

MATTHEW

Uh-oh. In the words of John Fogerty, I feel a bad moon rising. Trouble's on the way. Wahhh. Wahhh. I need my mom. I need Mama-ghey.

He exits, singing the rest of "Bad Moon Rising."

MARY

Don't leave!

A large, demonic horse enters. Bathed in red light.

The horse speaks in Angelo's voice.

HORSE-ANGELO

C'mere, wife. Let's freak.

A frantic chase. "He Lives in You (Reprise)" from the Lion King begins playing exactly at the 2:49 mark, starting at the drum and flute breakdown.

MARY

No! Help! This isn't what I want!

At EXACTLY the 3:05 mark -- "he lives in you" -- Ponyman enters, triumphant and bare-chested, and scissor-kicks the horse's neck.

PONYMAN

Get out of here, Horse-Angelo!

MARY

Ponyman!

The mixed-martial artists return with ribbons. They do a ribbon dance.

A few others enter with horse-masks around their waists.

PONYMAN

Mary, I love you. All your dreams can come true!

MARY

You saved me!

Matthew enters.

MATTHEW

No, Mary, you saved yourself.

Ponyman, Mary, and Matthew do a three-way dance with the ribboners prancing around them.

The song ends as Ponyman and Mary kiss.

MATTHEW (cont'd)

Aw yeah.

LIGHTS DOWN.

INTERMISSION.

ACT 2Scene 1"Fuckers 2"

GRANDERSON, YONI, LEWIS, and HOWARD are onstage.

GRANDERSON

Oh hey! How was your break? Didja check your phone?

YONI

Go to the john?

LEWIS

Didja tweet something nice about the good times you're havin'?

HOWARD

Or, did ya find yourself feeling...confused. Perhaps angry.

YONI

Because, ya know, you spent money on this thing.

LEWIS

Maybe you're thinkin' about askin' for it back.

GRANDERSON

Or maybe you're thinkin', "was that the song from the Lion King? How'd they get the rights to that?"

HOWARD

Well, I'll tell ya...we didn't. Shhhhhh.

YONI

Alright, let's recap. The race is right around the corner.

LEWIS

Mighty White is feeling stronger than ever, and seems destined to bring another victory to the Vandersleuths.

GRANDERSON

Meanwhile, nobody's heard from Kotter Bourbon, and Ponyman's starting to panic.

HOWARD

And Mary's still trying to process her life-altering drug experience.

(CONTINUED)

YONI

Aw, hell, y'all don't wanna hear us blab anymore. You wanna see how this all shakes out!

LIGHTS DOWN.

Scene 2

"Horsin' Around 2"

*Lights up on Allison and Jason in the studio.
They're laughing.*

JASON POPSWORTH

Man, what a fun commercial.

ALLISON KNOWLES

All that polar bear wanted was a bottle of Coke! Even though his home is melting.

JASON POPSWORTH

Heck, I didn't even know polar bears liked soft drinks!

They chuckle.

ALLISON

Welcome back to Horsin' Around. It's 4:00pm, and we're in hour nine of our broadcast. Now, let's send it back over to Brian Goggins for another trackside update. Brian, what's the latest?

Lights up on Brian.

BRIAN GOOGINS

Well, Allison, things are pretty much the same over here. Firm track, running fast. So I guess if these horses had to pick a favorite Keanu Reeves/Sandra Bullock film, it would be...*Speed*.

He laughs.

JASON POPSWORTH

(crossly)

Why's that, Brian?

BRIAN GOOGINS

Well-- well because--

ALLISON KNOWLES

Why wouldn't horses pick *The Lake House*? It also has Keanu Reeves and Sandra Bullock.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN GOGGINS

Um-- I guess--

JASON POPSWORTH

Maybe do some research next time, Brian. Horses love
The Lake House.

BRIAN GOGGINS

But the point was that--

Lights down on Brian mid-sentence.

JASON POPSWORTH

(serious, grave)

Once again, we deeply, sincerely apologize for anybody who was offended by Brian's commentary. Especially any children who may have been watching. Please forgive us.

ALLISON KNOWLES

Alright, let's not waste anymore time. We're off to the races...

(Allison can't help but explode with laughter)

Wow. Jim? You *again*? Excuse my language, but what the fuck are you doing not writing for the *Arsenio* show? Seriously. I'm just...I'm just speechless.

She tries to say something, but no words come out.

JASON POPSWORTH

We're off to the races with our next guess. Really excited about this one. She's a reclusive writer who hasn't granted a televised interview in fifty years, but she's agreed to come on our show today to do some Horsin' Around. Please welcome the author of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee.

HARPER LEE enters. She's old and incredibly frail. She sits.

ALLISON KNOWLES

Wow, Ms. Lee, what an honor.

HARPER LEE

Thank you, Allison. Big fan. Happy to be horsin' around.

JASON POPSWORTH

So, Ms. Lee, you wrote *To Kill A Mockingbird*, correct?

HARPER LEE
Haha, that's right.

JASON POPSWORTH
Then I guess my first question is...a man rode his horse to town on Friday--

ALLISON KNOWLES
Uh-oh!

JASON POPSWORTH
--and the next day he rode back...on *Friday*--

ALLISON KNOWLES
Strap in, folks!

JASON POPSWORTH
Harper Lee...how is this possible?

HARPER LEE
Well--

JASON POPSWORTH
THE HORSE WAS NAMED FRIDAY!

Unbelievably raucous laughter. Almost manic.

ALLISON KNOWLES
(basically shouting)
No! Holy God, that's the funniest fucking thing in the goddamn universe.

HARPER LEE
(laughing, really enjoying herself)
Oh my! How delightful!

Lights up on Brian.

BRIAN GOGGINS
AHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

Lights down on Brian.

HARPER LEE
Looks like Brian's having a good time. He's a regular Scout Finch.

They all laugh.

HARPER LEE (cont'd)
From the book I wrote!

JASON POPSWORTH

Ms. Lee, would you mind standing up?

She does.

JASON POPSWORTH (cont'd)

And could you turn around?

She does. Her pants are clean.

JASON POPSWORTH (cont'd)

Hmm...now, Ms. Lee, would you mind looking *inside* your pants?

She looks. Her face is jubilant. We hear buzzing.

JASON POPSWORTH (cont'd)

That's right! We put...

JASON AND ALLISON

Bees in there!

Harper Lee is absolutely delighted. She waves and leaves.

ALLISON KNOWLES

Harper Lee, everybody.

JASON POPSWORTH

She's still got it.

ALLISON KNOWLES

Brian, whaddaya have for us?

BRIAN GOGGINS

Still firm, still fast. Hey, I've got a good one though. Given these *fast* conditions...okay, *fast* conditions...which recreational drug am I addicted to?

Jason and Allison stare blankly.

BRIAN GOGGINS (cont'd)

Heroin.

He doesn't laugh, because this isn't a joke. In fact, he seems kind of shocked that he accidentally said this out loud.

Allison and Jason stare in open-mouth shock.

LIGHTS DOWN.

Scene 3"Bobby Romance"

Ponyman sits at the derby bar. A three-piece lounge band plays in the back. They finish up a smooth number - one of those bands where there are clearly multiple instruments, but the dominant sound comes from a soft electric keyboard.

The lead singer - BOBBY ROMANCE - sings the final notes of an unknown song.

Ponyman claps, drunk.

BOBBY ROMANCE

Thank you, thank you. I'm Bobby Romance. Hope you guys have had fun tonight.

PONYMAN

Bravo! Bravo!

BOBBY ROMANCE

Looks like we have a fan. Alright!

PONYMAN

Something about the way your voice sounds...it's like you're singing just for me.

BOBBY ROMANCE

It looks I am singing just for you.

He's right. There's nobody else in the bar.

BOBBY ROMANCE (cont'd)

Anyway, that's our set! Goodnight everybody, and be sure to tip your bartender...

PONYMAN

One more song! One more song!

BOBBY ROMANCE

I'm sorry, but that's all the time...

PONYMAN

Oh, come on. I've had a rough day...a real rough day. My jockey disappeared and there's nobody who knows Peachblossom well enough to ride him. I watched my wife die, and now I gotta watch my boy die.

Ponyman chokes up.

(CONTINUED)

PONYMAN (cont'd)

I need a song that'll ease my troubles. Do you know "Belt Your Love to the Highest High?" My wife used to sing it.

BOBBY ROMANCE

I'm afraid I don't. But if you're looking for a song to ease the pain, I think I've got just the tune. A diamond in the rough from the golden age. When radio was king.

He mutters to his band. They all nod in agreement.

BOBBY ROMANCE (cont'd)

(to his band)

In the key of F.

A long, meandering introduction. What follows is about thirty seconds of the smoothest, loudest version of Hoobastank's "The Reason" imaginable:

(singing)

I'm not a perfect person, there's many things I wish I didn't do, but I continue learning, I never meant to do those things to you, and so I have to say before I go...that I just want you to know. I've found a reason for me...to change who I used to be...

PONYMAN

(cutting him off)

I'm sorry, I'm sorry. That sounds awful.

BOBBY ROMANCE

What do you mean?

PONYMAN

I mean, come on. Was that Hoobastank?

BOBBY ROMANCE

Uh, yeah. That was some Hoobastank. You got a problem with that, guy?

PONYMAN

It's just...I mean, this isn't a Bar Mitzvah in 2003. I'm not a 13 year-old trying to disguise his first erection. I'm a grown man with real problems. And I just want you to play a song that makes me feel...something.

BOBBY ROMANCE

I'm sorry. I guess...I took a risk with that Hoobastank song. I thought the mood was right. I don't know. Okay, we'll try again.

(CONTINUED)

He mutters to his band. They all nod in agreement.

BOBBY ROMANCE (cont'd)
(to his band)
In the key of A.

*Another long, keyboard-y, smooth as fuck intro.
Then, the first ten seconds of Hoobastank's
"Crawling in the Dark."*

PONYMAN
Nope.

BOBBY ROMANCE
Oh, okay, what's wrong with that one?

PONYMAN
Correct me if I'm wrong...and, honestly, I'm not sure
how I even know this...but is that another, more
obscure Hoobastank song?

BOBBY ROMANCE
I wouldn't say it's more obscure. It reached number 68
on the Billboard Hot 100...

PONYMAN
Just answer my question.

BOBBY ROMANCE
Yes.

PONYMAN
Do you guys know any songs that aren't by Hoobastank?

Bobby looks confused.

BOBBY ROMANCE
I mean, I guess. But it's like...what's the point, you
know? Everytime our band takes the stage, we're signing
a contract with the audience to provide the grooviest,
loungiest version of all your favorite Hooba classics.
It's in our blood...hell, it's in our name.

PONYMAN
What's your band's name?

BOBBY ROMANCE
Bobby Romance & the Stankers.

PONYMAN
Please. I'm begging you. I will literally give you a
hundred dollars to play a song that isn't by
Hoobastank. If it weren't for the song selection, you
guys would actually be pretty good.

(CONTINUED)

BOBBY ROMANCE

Well stank you. Stank you very much.

PONYMAN

Please.

BOBBY ROMANCE

Okay. Okay.

He consults with his band. They nod in agreement.

BOBBY ROMANCE (cont'd)

(to his band)

In the key of D.

He starts singing the opening lines of "Hey Jude." After a few lines, it abruptly morphs into "The Reason."

PONYMAN

Jesus everloving tittyfucking Christ! I don't need you to tell me about "the reason for me"...the reason's my boy.

(A moment of revelation)

Wait a minute. That's it! Who knows Peachblossom better than Ponyboy? Ponyboy has to race!

Ponyman runs up to Bobby Romance and puts some cash in his tip jar.

PONYMAN (cont'd)

Thank you! Thank you thank you thank you!

Ponyman leaves.

Bobby pockets the money.

BOBBY ROMANCE

No...stank you.

LIGHTS DOWN.

Scene 4

"Hat Ladies 2"

A hat rack. Assorted hats. Maybelle and Maybaleen peruse.

MAYBALEEN

For my first derby, my mother bought me the most stunning little dress and even asked the modiste to take it up two inches.

(CONTINUED)

MAYBELLE

But mama! I like cargo shorts! They got deep pockets to hold my woodworkin' tools!

MAYBALEEN

(dismissive)

Sure, honey. Look at all these hats!

MAYBELLE

Mama, look at the prices though.

MAYBALEEN

Shush you. There is no such thing as an overpriced hat.

MAYBELLE (FINISHING WITH HER)

-an overpriced hat. I know.

MAYBALEEN

Which one do you want? OoOooOoooOoo, Maybelle! Looky!

Maybaleen selects a yellow wide brimmed hat with a pink bow.

MAYBELLE

Actually mama, I was thinking -

MAYBALEEN

This one would go great with your hair once you get them highlights, honey.

MAYBELLE

You know I want to keep it mulch brown.

MAYBALEEN

Now babycakes, there's no such thing as a pretty brunette.

MAYBELLE

-a pretty brunette. I know, but I'm tired of being ogled by the boys at school, mama.

MAYBALEEN

Nobody is goggling you, sugar. Not until you put *this* one on!

A larger hat. Bright red. Bigger than the other one.

MAYBELLE

Mama, that's too flashy. What about this one?

An earthy newsboy hat. Small and simple.

MAYBALEEN

That thing? Everybody gonna think my girl is a-

MAYBELLE

Lesbo?

MAYBALEEN

I was gonna say news boy. Now look at this one. It's got a veil that will protect your pearly whites skin from-.

MAYBELLE

kissing other girls?

MAYBALEEN

The sun. And this-

MAYBELLE

Mama, you're not listening to me.

MAYBALEEN

Of course I am Cinnamon Bun. Oh, this one has a bow!

MAYBELLE

I'm a lesbian.

MAYBALEEN

And this one has a pocket for your tampax, Maybelle.

MAYBELLE

I would prefer if you called me by my nickname.

MAYBALEEN

(reading the label)

And this one was designed by the Queen of Latifah.
Isn't that nice, Maybelle?

MAYBELLE

Don't call me Maybelle! It's just Bill. Not May, or honey, or sugar. Bill.

MAYBALEEN

What about-

MAYBELLE

(serious acting)

PLEASE! PLEASE STOP!

Pause

MAYBELLE (SERIOUS ACTING)

Mama, I love you. I love spending the day just the two of us out here. But mama, I gotta be me. And I love
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAYBELLE (SERIOUS ACTING) (cont'd)

ladies. I love them. I don't read Cosmo for the articles. I read it for pictures. And I'm gonna be this way for the rest of my life and I know it might be hard, but I am still your daughter. Your Bill. Your lesbian Bill. And one day I'm gonna wear a white dress and walk down the aisle with a woman wearing another white dress or a snazzy little tuxedo or some progressive mixture of the two. And she is gonna have a Florence and the Machine tatoo. And I want you there mama. Cause I love you. I love you.

MAYBALEEN

I love you too. I love you too, May-- I mean, Bill. You pick out whatever hat you want.

Maybelle puts on the newsboy hat.

MAYBELLE

The hat picks the lady.

MAYBALEEN

Let's go.

They walk out of the store. A woman wearing a Florence + the Machine shirt approaches Maybelle.

WOMAN

Hey...do you work here?

A moment. They kiss, discovering each other for the first time.

LIGHTS DOWN.

Scene 5

"Jay Benson - Edga Hedges"

Benson Hedges shakes his head.

BENSON HEDGES

O, Hanley! I love Derby day, but in just a few hours it will be over. I'm feeling rather melancholic.

HANLEY

Beauty is impermanent, sir.

Benson sings sorrowfully as Hanley watches on.

BENSON HEDGES

*There's no day like the derby,
There's no derby like the Derby County Derby*

(CONTINUED)

Jay Edga enters.

JAY EDGA

What's that me hears with me ears?

BENSON HEDGES

*Make sure your bets are sturdy
Derby Flerby Gerby Nerby*

JAY EDGA

That sorrowful song you're singin', sir? Shouldn't it be a joyful one?

BENSON HEDGES

I've always had a taste for sorrowful songs, I suppose.

JAY EDGA

Me also.

HANLEY

Mr. Hedges, should I send this street urchin away?

JAY EDGA

By golly, you're the one and only Benson J. Hedges.

BENSON HEDGES

Please, call me Benson, Mr...

JAY EDGA

Jay Edga.

HANLEY

Mr. Edga, if you wouldn't mind-

BENSON HEDGES

No no Hanley it's alright. Get my luxury box ready, will you?

HANLEY

Yes sir.

Hanley leaves.

JAY EDGA

Boy o' boy, Benson. You must be one rich, happy fella with a big family.

BENSON HEDGES

Actually, I never knew my real parents. I was adopted by the Hedges.

JAY EDGA

That's a shame that is. See, I never knew me parents either. I was found on the steps of Harrod's when I was a baby, with only a bindle full of nappies and donnettes to me name. And one half of a locket...

BENSON HEDGES

That's funny, I was found on the steps of a country club with a half a locket. Then the Hedges took me in...

JAY EDGA

Kinda like the plot of my favorite movie...

TOGETHER

Jeepers Creepers...2.

BENSON HEDGES

My birth-fathers' name was...

TOGETHER

Bert Humblemuffin.

JAY EDGA

Now that may be a shot in the dark, but my biggest fear is...

TOGETHER

Having my organs harvested by blood-thirsty, non-Union pirates!

BENSON HEDGES

The locket!

TOGETHER

1...2...3...

Benson pulls out one half of a heart-shaped locket. Jay Edga pulls out one half of a particularly large frisbee.

BENSON HEDGES

Oh.

JAY EDGA

I guess I'm just poor ol' Jay Edga.

BENSON HEDGES

And I'm just fabulously rich Benson Hedges.

JAY EDGA

Best be goin', I suppose.

Jay Edga moves to leave.

BENSON HEDGES

Wait. How would you like to ride for me in the Derby?

JAY EDGA

Ohhhh hoor--

LIGHTS DOWN.

Scene 6

"The Truth"

PONYBOY sits by the stables, picking mindlessly at grass. He looks forlorn.

PONYMAN approaches cautiously.

PONYMAN

Hey buddy.

PONYBOY

Hey.

PONYMAN

I've been looking everywhere for ya. The race is about to start.

PONYBOY

I know.

PONYMAN

Look, I know we weren't expecting this. But you gotta be brave, okay? Nobody else can ride that horse. And without the money...well...

PONYBOY

Dad, I'm scared.

PONYMAN

There's nothing to be scared of! It doesn't matter if you lose, you know? It's just important that you try.

PONYBOY

I'm not scared of losing. It's just...I don't want to end up like Mom.

PONYMAN

Mom?

PONYBOY

Yeah, I know she died from getting kicked off a horse in the biggest race of all.

PONYMAN looks at his son. Observes his pain. Sighs deeply.

PONYMAN

Son, it's time you learned the truth. You deserve to know the truth.

PONYBOY

What truth?

PONYMAN

Your mother didn't die from getting kicked off a horse.

PONYBOY

She didn't? H- how'd she die?

PONYMAN

Ponyboy, your mother died of...auto-erotic asphyxiation.

PONYBOY

Auto-erotic...like a car?

PONYMAN

No son. It's when you choke yourself while masturbating.

PONYBOY

Wh- what?

PONYMAN

Well, Ponyboy, masturbating is something that adults do to...make themselves feel good inside. And, sometimes, when you choke yourself while you're doing it, it makes you feel even better. But it can be dangerous.

PONYBOY

But how can--

PONYMAN

I came home from work early one day to surprise your mother. I had a bouquet of roses. I walked up the stairs but...something wasn't right. Everything was still. I opened the door and I saw your mother. There she was...a snakeskin belt wrapped around her neck, her body in a full wet suit, a *King of Queens* re-run playing on the TV.

PONYBOY

Okay, I get it--

PONYMAN

At first, I didn't put two and two together. I thought, "oh, mom's just wearing a wetsuit and playing around with neck-belts, that looks fun." So I started looking around for another wetsuit, but I couldn't find one, so I put on my tuxedo and I said "hey, honey, I'm wearing a *drysuit*." It was a really good joke, but your mother didn't laugh. And that's when I knew...

PONYBOY

Why are you telling me this?

PONYMAN

Because you've gotta be a man now, boy! Your mother took the coward's way out. It's easy to try to cut off all the oxygen and diddle away your problems. But it takes a man to conquer fear. To face adversity. To beat the odds. And you...you're the bravest boy I know.

PONYBOY

Thanks, Dad.

They hug.

PONYMAN

Here. I want you to have something.

PONYBOY

What?

PONYMAN

Your mother's lucky belt.

He pulls out a snake-skin belt.

Scene 7

"Horsin' Around 3"

Lights up on Jason and Allison.

JASON POPSWORTH

Welcome back to Horsin' Around.

ALLISON KNOWLES

We hope you've had fun with us over the last ten hours.

JASON POPSWORTH

We're just about done here today, as we kick it over to Marla McGraw for your derby coverage. We'd like to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JASON POPSWORTH (cont'd)

thank our guests Dr. Miller, Harper Lee, Rob Lowe, DMX, and William "Refrigerator" Perry.

ALLISON KNOWLES

Thanks for letting us harness your energy...Jim! You! I just wanna go up into the production booth and get naked with you! Good joke, buddy!

JASON POPSWORTH

Jim, we've just been falling out of our chairs with laughter all day. And speaking of falling...

ALLISON KNOWLES

Ohhhh man--

JASON POPSWORTH

...what did the horse say...

ALLISON KNOWLES

--ohhh wow--

JASON POPSWORTH

...when it slipped and fell?

ALLISON KNOWLES

--Jesus Christ, tell me--

JASON POPSWORTH

I've fallen. And I can't. Giddy-up.

An atomic explosion of laughter. This time, it really is just screaming.

JASON POPSWORTH (cont'd)

YESSIR! YESSIR!

ALLISON KNOWLES

BIG DADDY DONE MADE THE JOKE!

Lights up on Brian. He's injects himself with heroin. He's 40% yelling, 60% crying.

Lights down on Brian.

JASON POPSWORTH

Well, that's all the time we have today.

ALLISON KNOWLES

Now, we'll send it over to Marla McGraw! For all of us here at Horsin' Around, I say...good night and good luck.

LIGHTS DOWN.

Scene 8"The Race"

Five racers stand at the starting gate. They straddle their horses, meaning that they straddle the pole end of those fake horses with a stuffed-animal horsehead at the front.

These racers are: PONYBOY, ANGELO, JAY EDGA, and two anonymous riders. The anonymous riders should be played by members of the crew - they will not speak.

The scene should happen as quickly and efficiently as possible, with focus on various characters signaled by a light shift or another simple device. Pacing is key.

MARLA MCGRAW (V.O.)

And we are mere seconds away from the start of the Derby County Derby. The riders are in position it looks like they're ready to go!

Lights up on Ponyboy.

PONYBOY

Alright, Peachblossom. Here we are. Don't be nervous, boy. I'll love you no matter what. If we don't win, then I'll see you up at that big race in the sky, okay?

Lights up on Angelo. His eyes are closed.

ANGELO

I am a God. I am a horse-racing deity. John Stamos is on my speed dial. Losing is not an option. You ready to be a winner, Mighty White? You are? Good. Because winners take drugs.

Angele pulls out a syringe and injects Mighty White with demorphine.

Lights up on J. Edga.

J EDGA

Oh boy! Looks like things are finally looking up for ol' Jay Edga. Benson gave me a horse, and if I win I'll have enough money for a proper house and some strappin' clothes. Horse, you need a name. What about, I don't know...J. Edga's Hopeful Funtime Yacht Party. I've got a really good feeling about this!

Lights up on the grandstand. Ponyman is off to the side. Mary and Jackie are together nearby.

(CONTINUED)

PONYMAN

Come on, Ponyboy! I believe in you!

JACKIE

Let's go, Mighty White!

MARY

Where's dad?

JACKIE

He doesn't like to watch races. He says it makes him too nervous, like a bitch. But we're gonna win regardless. I injected Mighty with demorphine a few minutes ago. The maximum amount that a horse can take without going absolutely buckwild. Mary, cheer for your fiancee.

MARY

Something's not right! Mighty White seems awful agitated.

Lights up on Angelo. The horse is bucking wildly.

ANGELO

Hey. Hey! What has gotten into you? As soon as this race is over, I'm gonna beat you so hard.

PONYBOY

Maybe if you just whispered something nice in his ear, Mr. Angelo...

ANGELO

Shut your diseased lips.

Lights up on J. Edga.

J EDGA

Yep! Finally, ol' J Edga's luck is gonna change! I'm gonna move to Hollywood and be in the movin' pictures!

MARLA MCGRAW (V.O.)

Here we go. The starter pistol is in the air. Tension so thick you could cut it with a knife.

PONYMAN

Wait! Ponyboy! You forgot your mother's lucky belt!

He holds up the snakeskin belt. Ponyboy looks at it, but it's too late.

The BLAST of a pistol.

MARLA MCGRAW (V.O.)
And we're off!

The racers lurch out of the starting gate. Their faces should be very intense, but they aren't moving very fast. Sort of a light trot. Throbbing music underscores. Possibly strobe lights. Anything that heightens the drama.

Angelo out front, J Edga and the others tied for second, Ponyboy in last.

MARLA MCGRAW (V.O.) (cont'd)
And Mighty White's off to an early lead! Skyblazer, Jay Edga's Hopeful Fun Time Yacht Party, and Who's Your Uncle battling for second. Way behind is Peachblossom as we go into the turn.

The racers all run out the front door of Shanley.

MARY
Can you see what's happening?

JACKIE
I don't need to see, I can feel victory in my ladyloins.

MARLA MCGRAW (V.O.)
Who's Your Uncle makes the turn and...the horse goes down! It seems like the horse broke its leg! The derby's horse doctor has run onto the track to take a look, and...

The sound of a shotgun blast.

MARLA MCGRAW (V.O.) (cont'd)
...looks like that's the end of Who's Your Uncle!

The riders re-enter Shanley through the back door. Angelo in front, J. Edga behind, stagehand in third, Ponyboy in last.

PONYBOY
Peachblossom, I know you're scared. And I know these horses are bigger and stronger than you. But you need to go faster, okay bud?

J EDGA
Oh, boy! I'm almost in first! Pretty good for a little beggar boy with no formal racing experience, I'd say!

ANGELO

Come on, Mighty White! Faster! Faster!

He viciously whips Mighty White.

MARY

Angelo, stop it! You can't whip him like that! He'll get upset!

JACKIE

Calm down, Mary. He knows what he's doing.

ANGELO

Jesse.

(whip!)

From Full House.

(whip!)

Is on.

(whip!)

My motherfucking.

(whip!)

SPEED DIAL!

*The last whip sends Mighty White into an all-out frenzy.**A thunderous neigh echoes through the grandstands.**Mighty White starts bucking wildly, meaning that the actor playing Angelo forces his horse to move erratically.*

MARLA MCGRAW (V.O.)

Uh-oh! Something is wrong with Mighty White! He's thrashing around. It looks like he's foaming at the mouth as the horses move back into the blind spot.

Racers leave Shanley.

MARLA MCGRAW (V.O.) (cont'd)

Pretty big oversight on our part, having entire sections of the race that only I can see.

Kotter runs up to Ponyman in the grandstand.

KOTTER

What'd I miss?

PONYMAN

Kotter?! I thought you were dead!

KOTTER

Dead? Shit naw. I went on a wild bender with my old man. Then we decided to get clean, so we checked into rehab, and now we're here. It's been a crazy forty-five minutes.

PONYMAN

Your dad came back?

KOTTER

Oh, shit, where are my manners? Dad, this is Ponyman.
(he gestures to nothing)

Now, be nice dad.

(Kotter laughs)

Hey, that's funny! You should tweet that, Lena Dunham.

PONYMAN

Kotter, something's wrong out there. I think Ponyboy's in danger.

MARLA MCGRAW (V.O.)

Mighty White is absolutely manic. Angelo has completely lost control! Skyblazer tries to pass and...Mighty White headbutts Skyblazer! He bit off his ear! Down goes Skyblazer!

MARY

Mom! Make it stop!

JACKIE

Stop? We're winning.

MARY

But Mighty White's going crazy!

JACKIE

This is what victory tastes like, honey. It tastes like another horse's ear.

MARLA MCGRAW (V.O.)

And the horse doctor is going to have a look at Skyblazer. He's applying some gauze to the ear, and...

BLAST!

MARLA MCGRAW (V.O.) (cont'd)

Unbelievable! Mighty White shot the doctor! Mighty White doubled back, grabbed the gun with his mouth, and shot the horse doctor!

KOTTER

It should've been me out there. I left you high and dry. And now that horse is out there going buckwild and there's nothing I can do.

(CONTINUED)

PONYMAN

If only he had the belt...

MARLA MCGRAW (V.O.)

And here they come! Only three racers left!

The racers re-enter Shanley. Mighty White out in front, with Angelo hanging on for dear life. J. Edga and Ponyboy close behind.

PONYBOY

Peachblossom! I'm scared!

J. EDGA

Oh yowza! This is a well excitin' race, I'd say! My heart's beatin' a mile a minute, and I think I like it!

ANGELO

What is wrong with you, Mighty? Heel!

(whip)

Heel!

(whip)

HEEL!

MIGHTY WHITE

(echo-y, commanding)

I heel for no man.

ANGELO

...Mighty?

There's a moment of open-mouthed silence, interrupted by:

J. EDGA

Ay! I reckon that horse bloke just talked! Ay horse, me and you could go on the road. I'm gonna be in pictures y'know, and...

Mighty White attacks J. Edga.

J. EDGA (cont'd)

...OH BLIMEY! FREAGAGHHAGHHHHHHHHH!

J. Edga collapses to the ground.

MARLA MCGRAW (V.O.)

And Mighty White is eating that jockey's face! He's really just getting all up in that face, chewing it straight off the bone! Oh, what a sad day for horse racing!

KOTTER

Oh my God! Ponyboy, get outta there! Stop the race!
That's gotta be against the rules!

MARLA MCGRAW (V.O.)

I'm now getting word that...yes, there's nothing in the
rules that says a horse can't eat another jockey's
face.

Benson enters.

BENSON

What'd I miss? Oh. Oh God. Well, that's the derby for
ya! Walk it off, J. Edga!

PONYMAN

That's it! I'm going out there!

KOTTER

You got a death wish? Let me. You got your son, and I
seen the way you been lookin' at that Mary girl. This
is my time. This is the thing they'll remember me for.

He grabs the belt from Ponyman. He turns around.

KOTTER (cont'd)

I guess it's my turn to run out on you dad.

(he mimes getting restrained)

Let me go, dad! I know you're trying to restrain me
'cause you love me so much, but I gotta go! Lena
Dunham, graduate from Oberlin and write my story.
Call it *Girls*.

(they mime making out)

PONYMAN

Go!

*Kotter hops over the grandstand barrier and onto
the track.*

MARLA MCGRAW (V.O.)

And...what's this? It looks like somebody is running
onto the track. Is that-- yes, it's Kotter Bourbon,
stepping foot on the track for the first time in over a
decade! Welcome back, Kotter!

PONYBOY

Kotter! What are you doing here?

KOTTER

Take this!

He tosses the belt to Ponyboy. He catches it.

(CONTINUED)

PONYBOY

My mom's belt!

KOTTER

I did it! Dad, I'm comin' ba--

Mighty White suddenly, violently, viciously murders Kotter. Kotter slumps to the ground. There is simply no doubt that he's dead.

PONYBOY

KOTTER!

PONYMAN

Go, Ponyboy! Run for your life!

They exit Shanley. The horses are neck and neck as they leave.

Knox enters, out of breath.

KNOX

What'd I miss?

MARY

Someone needs to stop him!

KNOX

Maybe she's right, Jackie.

JACKIE

He's one lap away from winning!

MARY

There are more important things than winning, Mom!

JACKIE

Like what? Money?

MARY

No...like love! And following your dreams!

(a moment of realization)

McConaghey was right. I know what I have to do.

MARLA MCGRAW (V.O.)

And it looks like Ponyboy is...yes, he's using a belt to choke Mighty White. I think he's trying to slow him down!

The horses enter. Ponyboy is desperately clinging to the belt, firmly wrapped around Mighty White's neck. Mighty bucks wildly.

ANGELO

Kid! Let go!

MARLA MCGRAW (V.O.)

Mighty White is in a vicegrip as they come into the homestretch, barely ahead of Peachblossom! The little boy is hanging on for dear life! Mighty White looks angry, but he can't move his head.

Slow motion. Strobe lights. Smoke machine. Extra drama.

An operatic rendition of "Belt Your Love To the Highest High" provides the soundtrack.

Mighty White and Peachblossom fighting for first place.

Mary jumps the barrier. She launches herself towards Mighty White, perhaps aided by a trampoline. She aims a technically-sound Jiu-Jitsu scissor kick at Mighty White's throat.

Direct hit. With a gutwrenching roar, Mighty White collapses to the ground. Angelo catapults off.

The force of the blow sends Ponyboy hurtling off Peachblossom as well. Bodies everywhere.

Lights revert to normal.

Mary stands over Mighty White, triumphantly holding a foot over Mighty's head.

PONYBOY

(crawling, dazed)

What-- what happened?

MARY

Go, Ponyboy! Get on Peachblossom and don't look back.

ANGELO

Mary! What are you doing? You're supposed to be helping me. I'm your fiancee!

MARY

We're through, Angelo. You're a thoroughly horrible person. Now ride, Ponyboy!

PONYBOY

Okay!

He remounts Peachblossom and limps towards the finish line.

MARLA MCGRAW (V.O.)

Unbelievable! Thanks to a well-timed, technically-sound Jiu Jitsu scissor-kick there's only one rider left! And it's PEACHBLOSSOM!

PONYMAN

Go! Go Ponyboy!

Ponyboy gallops to the finish line.

MARLA MCGRAW (V.O.)

Peachblossom wins! It's all over!

Ponyman rushes to his son. They share a tearful, triumphant hug.

PONYMAN

You did it, son! I'm so proud of you!

PONYBOY

I did it! I did it!

Mary runs over.

MARY

Ponyboy! Congratulations!

(she hugs him)

Are you alright?

PONYBOY

Never been better!

PONYMAN

Mary! You were amazing. The jump, and the kick, and-- you were so brave-- I mean, you really have a future in Jiu-Jitsu, and--

Mary grabs Ponyman and kisses him.

PONYMAN (cont'd)

Oh my.

PONYBOY

Wow! You guys kissed! Does that mean you guys are gonna get married?

MARY

Aw, that's really sweet of you, but I don't think your mom would be too happy about that.

Ponyboy and Ponyman stare at her.

MARY (cont'd)

Oh my God! Right! Your mom-- right! I have such a weird little block with that.

Ponyboy looks at Kotter's lifeless body.

PONYBOY

Dad? Is Kotter...with mom now?

PONYMAN

Well--

MARY

No, honey. Kotter's dead.

Beat.

MARY (cont'd)

I did it again! Unbelievable.

Jackie and Knox come over, with Angelo in tow.

KNOX

Mary! Are you alright?

JACKIE

Get away from those pieces of low-life scum.

MARY

No.

ANGELO

Babe, come on. Let's go home and freak each other and forget this whole thing ever happened.

MARY

I'm staying. I'm staying with Ponyman.

JACKIE

You're making a big mistake Mary. If you stay with him, you aren't getting another cent from us! You're cut off!

MARY

I have something more important than money.

(She grabs Ponyman by the waist)

Love.

Mary and Ponyman kiss again.

Ponyboy hugs Peachblossom.

LIGHTS DOWN.

Scene 9"Wedding/Funeral"

Wedding set-up. Ponyman and Mary stand side-by-side, dressed in suit and wedding gown.

Benson Hedges officiates.

BENSON

We are gathered here today to celebrate the union of Ponyman and Mary...and to mourn the loss of Kotter Bourbon.

They all glance down. They're standing over a mound of dirt. There's a headstone that reads RIP Kotter.

BENSON

As we all know, weddings require something old, something new, something borrowed, and something blue. Luckily, we have all four. Something old: Harper Lee. I see you! Oh, Harper Lee, that is *inappropriate* given the occasion. Something new: my marriage license. Something borrowed: most of the clothes I'm wearing. And something blue: the eyes of a young-bearer named Ponyboy. Ponyboy, you may present the ring.

Ponyboy walks down the aisle holding a ring, except he's played by a different actor. Someone way taller and way bigger, preferably.

BENSON

Ponyboy! Look at how big you are!

PONYBOY

No more illness for me! I'm big and strong now!

BENSON

Wow, yeah, I guess you are. You may present the ring, Ponyboy.

PONYBOY

Uh-oh...

BENSON

What?

PONYBOY

I think I accidentally crushed the ring with my huge muscles.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

That's okay, Ponyboy. We don't care about money or possessions. We're *in love*.

BENSON

Which brings me to my final riddle. What causes a sudden increase in heartrate and a feeling of euphoria but *isn't* demorphine.

PONYMAN

Is it, uh, love?

BENSON

Correct! You may kiss the bride.

They kiss. It's beautiful and everybody claps.

PONYBOY

Catch me, new mommy!

Ponyboy launches himself onto Mary, who collapses under his weight.

LIGHTS DOWN.

END OF PLAY.

.