

Passionfruit

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EXT. A SUBURB SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA, 2003 - DAWN

A refrigerated TRUCK drives through town until it reaches a SUPERMARKET. Near the market is a billboard for a fictional brand of Blood Orange Juice called BLOOD POSITIVE. It depicts a very fit couple, a uniquely-shaped bottle, and a headline that reads: ENERGY IS IN OUR BLOOD.

INT. SUPERMARKET, DELIVERY BAY

BOXES OF FRUIT are unloaded and stacked--well-known brands like Dole, Chiquita and Sunkist as well as boxes from a fictional company called GLOBAL GROVES.

Then ONE LONELY BOX is placed on the floor near the towering stacks. It too is from a fictional company. It reads: CLAYBORN CLASSICS. SINCE 1892.

INT. SUPERMARKET, PRODUCE SECTION

An EMPLOYEE pushes a CART with THE CLAYBORN BOX. He passes the apples, oranges and grapefruits--the pears, peaches, and plums--the lemons, limes, and pineapples--the berries, grapes and melons--and a LARGE DISPLAY of CHILLED BLOOD POSITIVE surrounded by BLOOD ORANGES with a sign that reads: "B" POSITIVE WITH THE ANTIOXIDANT SUPER JUICE.

He then arrives at an area for the low demand fruits: ginger root, star fruit, fig, rhubarb, persimmon, kumquat, pummelo, cherimoya, etc; each with a lone bin.

He places AN ODD-LOOKING FRUIT from the CLAYBORN BOX in its bin. It's shaped like an apple but has the skin of a mango with a bad rash. It's not attractive, but it fits right in with the other misfits. The price marker reads: CLAYBORN CLASSICS. \$1.89 EACH.

INT. REUBEN'S HOUSE, MASTER SUITE - MORNING

It's 7:00AM. The ALARM GOES OFF and wakes, REUBEN CLAYBORN (30's), alone in bed in expensive pajamas and sheets. He inhales then exhales slowly.

INT. REUBEN'S HOUSE, WALK-IN CLOSET

Reuben is DRESSED LIKE A BUSINESSMAN. He watches his expensive ties whirl around on a motorized rack. He stops it and considers several as if it will be his toughest decision today.

INT. RYAN'S HOUSE, MASTER SUITE

RYAN CLAYBORN (30s) is in a bedroom nearly identical to his brother Reuben's. He is also DRESSED LIKE A BUSINESSMAN as he reads THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER. The TV IS ON [news circa 2003, PRESIDENT BUSH LANDS ON THE CARRIER. HIS MISSION ACCOMPLISHED MOMENT.]

RYAN

Giamatti...

(explodes with joy)

Freakin' Giamatti!

INT. RYAN'S HOUSE, STAIRS

Ryan races down the stairs of his expensive bachelor pad clutching the magazine and screaming GIAMATTI!

EXT. RYAN'S HOUSE

Ryan exits screaming GIAMATTI! His GARAGE OPENS to reveal a RED VETTE and a BLACK BENZ. He fires up the VETTE. In a city like Los Angeles his home would be a very modest estate. But in this small agriculture town it's practically a castle.

He speeds down the driveway to a two-lane road, makes a right, spins the tires, accelerates about 40 YARDS then makes a sharp right into another driveway--REUBEN'S.

EXT. REUBEN'S HOUSE

Ryan parks. Reuben's house is IDENTICAL to his. We can see Ryan's house from Reuben's. They live that close to each other. He's still screaming GIAMATTI!

INT. REUBEN'S HOUSE, FOYER

Ryan charges into Reuben's expensive and identical bachelor pad. Waving the magazine, he races into the

KITCHEN

RYAN

Reuben! Hey, Roob!

Reuben is carefully pouring BLOOD POSITIVE JUICE into TWO GLASSES so they have AN EQUAL AMOUNT.

RYAN (cont'd)  
Paul Giamatti.

REUBEN  
Loved him in Goodfellas.

He clearly knows Giamatti but enjoys messing with Ryan.

RYAN  
That's Paul Sorvino. I'm talking  
about Paul Giamatti. Private Parts?  
Man on the Moon? Big Momma's House?  
He's becoming the go-to guy when you  
need an angry nebbish.

REUBEN  
What about him?

RYAN  
Remember I told you Paramount  
green-lit a thriller about  
a college professor whose wife  
leaves him after he has a  
disfiguring accident so he takes  
a job as a night watchman so no  
one will stare at his face, only  
he gets caught up in a terrorist  
plot and ends up saving the First  
Lady and they fall in love?

REUBEN  
The Night Watcher?

RYAN  
...Only now it's called Face of  
Justice. Remember who I said they  
should cast as the lead?

REUBEN  
Paul Giamatti?

RYAN  
Guess who they cast.

REUBEN  
Paul Giamatti?

Ryan smiles like a demented bobble head doll.

RYAN  
I called it again! I'm freakin'  
awesome at this.

REUBEN

Yes, it must be a real mind-teaser to predict Samuel L. Jackson is going to play a badass.

RYAN

Please, anyone with basic cable can tell you that. I'm talking about choices that go against type, comeback roles...the stuff you need a sixth sense to see. Paul Giamatti kicking terrorist ass? That takes vision. I'm telling you, I could do this for a living. I'm never wrong about lead roles.

REUBEN

Yes you are.

RYAN

Name one time.

REUBEN

You said David Caruso was a bad choice for CSI: Miami.

RYAN

And I was right.

REUBEN

It's a hit show.

RYAN

Have you seen the women on that show? Seriously, they should have cast John Turturro. Doesn't get enough work. Has real chops. He would do something with the part.

Reuben's humored him enough.

REUBEN

Drink your juice.

They drink.

RYAN

God I love this stuff.

REUBEN

I know. I don't know how they do it.

They finish the juice then walk into the

FOYER

RYAN  
(waving the magazine)  
You know I'm right about this.

Reuben grabs a BROCHURE from a table and hands it to Ryan.

REUBEN  
Here, Nostradamus. Predict this.

RYAN  
What was he in?

Ryan looks at the brochure. It's for A PRODUCE CONVENTION.

REUBEN  
...Goddamn Henry.

EXT. TWO-LANE ROAD

Ryan is in his RED VETTE. Reuben is in his WHITE VETTE. They carry on a conversation with their 2002 CELL PHONES.

RYAN  
I thought you told him no.

REUBEN  
I did. I said no conventions. They're too dangerous. He's becoming a real liability.

RYAN  
We should fire him.  
(a beat)  
Can we do that?

REUBEN  
Mother would never allow it. Henry's like family.

RYAN  
Yeah, well, we are family. And blood is thicker than Henry.

REUBEN  
Wait...we don't have to fire him. We can *retire* him. I hear big companies do it when they want to remove someone without alarming investors.

RYAN

I like it. So when are you going to do it?

He's clearly too chickenshit to do it and by Reuben's expression so is he.

EXT. DINER

The boys exit their Vettes. The cars stand out among the dusty pickups and old beaters.

A small pickup with a CHARLIE'S HARDWARE logo slows to a stop. Driving is LANNY, a wholesome beauty in her late 30's.

LANNY

Morning boys!

RYAN

Hey Lanny.

LANNY

Morning Reuben.

REUBEN

(uncomfortable)

...Lanny.

LANNY

I like your tie. Is it new?

He just nods. He wants this to end quickly. Ryan interjects.

RYAN

It's a Charvet. Pure silk.

LANNY

(to Reuben)

It makes you look taller.

Reuben only nods. It's awkward. Lanny gets the hint.

LANNY (cont'd)

Well, enjoy your breakfast.

She drives away. Ryan eyes Reuben with disappointment.

REUBEN

She's too small town.

RYAN  
Look around doofus. This isn't  
exactly Burbank.

(then)  
No one says you have to marry her.  
Just give her a taste of the Reuben  
sandwich.

Reuben glares.

RYAN (cont'd)  
Seriously Roob. You haven't been laid  
in forever. How are you going to  
produce an heir to the throne if  
you're not out there spreading your  
seed?

Reuben considers his brother's twisted logic.

INT. DINER

The boys enter. They stick out among the flannel and  
overalls. They take their usual seats at the counter. SHERRY  
(60) greets them with two cups of coffee.

SHERRY  
Good morning boys.

RYAN  
It is when we see you Sherry.

She smiles. He has a goofy charm. Ryan turns to the side.

RYAN (cont'd)  
Morning fellas.

A comfortable distance away sit FRANK (50), PHIL (45) and  
OFFICER MIKE (35). They reply with head nods and "Heys."

PHIL  
See the game last night?

RYAN  
Oh my god, I watched it on my  
seventy-two-inch flat screen! When he  
reached over the wall and made that  
catch? It was like I was there.  
Redunkulous.

PHIL  
(flatly)  
Yeah...redunkulous.



Sherry places two bowls of oatmeal in front of the boys.

REUBEN

Thanks Sherry. But could I just have half a grapefruit instead?

Everyone looks at Reuben like he said he's an alien.

RYAN

I'll eat his.

Ryan slides over the extra bowl.

RYAN (cont'd)

What gives?

REUBEN

Nothing. I just don't feel like oatmeal.

Sherry returns with the grapefruit. The boys TAP SPOONS. It's a mealtime toasting ritual they've performed so many times it's practically unconscious. They dig in.

ANDY the cook (55) approaches.

ANDY

Your mom stopped in earlier. She and Adele looked like they were ready to invade Iraq.

He, Phil, Frank and Officer Mike chuckle. Reuben and Ryan look a bit embarrassed.

ANDY (cont'd)

How come you didn't go hunting with her?

REUBEN

We can't all take the day off. Someone has to run the business.

ANDY

She said it's 'cause you're afraid of guns.

More chuckling.

RYAN

(manly)

As if...

EXT. WOODS

RUTH CLAYBORN (55) peers through the brush. She's a tough woman with fading, beauty pageant looks. She takes aim at a DEER. She shifts her wait and SNAPS a twig. The deer scampers away.

RUTH

(sotto)

Damn.

She scans for more deer. Winces. Slight intestinal discomfort. She looks down at her EMPTY THERMOSES and FOOD WRAPPERS. She looks around again. Backs up to a tree. LOWERS HER PANTS.

EXT. WOODS

Ruth's best friend ADELE (60) nervously tip toes through the brush. She sees the same DEER. She timidly raises her rifle. Closes her eyes. The deer LEAPS AWAY...

BANG!

The shot grazes the side of a tree. RUTH'S TREE.

RUTH (O.C.)

Oh Goddamn!

Adele freezes with fear.

ADELE

Ruth...?

INT. DINER

Sherry presents all the men with their checks.

REUBEN

We got theirs Sherry.

Ryan's look: We do?

The men are surprised but grateful. They offer thanks. Officer Mike passes them on his way out.

OFFICER MIKE

Thanks fellas. Next ticket's on me.

He exits. Through the window we see him reach his patrol car, get a radio call, PANIC and rush back inside.

OFFICER MIKE (cont'd)  
 (to Reuben and Ryan)  
 Boys...

INT. HOSPITAL, PRIVATE ROOM - LATER

Ruth is SUSPENDED IN THE AIR FACE DOWN, pointing toward the foot of the bed. Her WOUNDED ASS CHEEK is bandaged. The only thing actually on the bed is a PHONE.

The boys cautiously enter. Reuben has flowers. Ryan has a BALLOON that gets ENTANGLED IN THE CEILING FAN. It's ripped from his hand and DEFLATES. He recovers it then turns it to show her it says GET WELL. She doesn't look surprised by his mishap.

REUBEN  
 How are you doing Mother?

RUTH  
 I feel like a goddamn pinata. How does it look like I'm doing Reuben?

REUBEN  
 I knew hunting was a bad idea. Couldn't you take up something less fatal?

RUTH  
 I don't need a lecture from you. But for your information I'm giving it up. I had a rifle in my hands and good reason to shoot my dearest friend, and friends should never shoot friends in anger. Now I love you both and thank you for coming. So stop staring at me like two morticians and...

She shoos them away but they stand there like two kids afraid to ask for something.

RUTH (cont'd)  
 What?

REUBEN  
 It's about Henry.

RUTH  
 (genuinely concerned)  
 Did something happen to him?