

INT. FITTS HOUSE - RICKY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ricky enters, wet from the pouring rain, and crosses to his bureau, pulling the wad of CASH out of his pocket as he goes.

COLONEL (O.C.)  
Where'd you get that?

Ricky turns, startled.

His POV: The Colonel steps out of the shadows.

Ricky takes a step back.

RICKY  
From my job.

COLONEL  
Don't lie to me.  
(beat)  
I saw you with him.

RICKY  
(incredulous)  
You were watching me?

COLONEL  
What did he make you do?

RICKY  
(laughs)  
Dad, you don't really think... me and Mr.  
Burnham?

COLONEL  
(furious)  
Don't you laugh at me!  
(then)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

84.

CONTINUED:

COLONEL (CONT'D)  
I will not sit back and watch my only son  
become a cocksucker!

RICKY  
Jesus, what is with you--

The Colonel BACKHANDS Ricky so hard it sends the boy sprawling.

COLONEL  
I swear to God, I will throw you out of  
this house and never look at you again.

RICKY  
(taken aback)

You mean that?

COLONEL

Damn straight I do. I'd rather you were dead than be a fucking faggot.

A beat. Ricky suddenly smiles. He gets up.

RICKY

You're right. I suck dick for money.

COLONEL

Boy--

RICKY

Two thousand dollars. I'm that good.

COLONEL

Get out.

RICKY

And you should see me fuck. I'm the best piece of ass in three states.

COLONEL

(explodes)

Get out!! I don't ever want to see you again!!

Ricky eyes the Colonel. He's finally discovered a way to break free from his father, and he can't believe it was this simple.

RICKY

What a sad old man you are.

COLONEL

(a whisper)

Get out.

**AMERICAN BEAUTY (2)**

INT. FITTS HOUSE - RICKY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ricky enters, followed by Lester.

RICKY

Can you hold this for a sec?

LESTER

Sure.

He gives the URINE SPECIMEN to Lester, then locks the door.

RICKY

I don't think my dad would try to come in when somebody else is here, but you never know.

Ricky crosses to a bureau and opens a DRAWER. He takes clothing out and piles it on his bed.

LESTER

(re: urine sample)

What is this?

(CONTINUED)

46.

CONTINUED:

RICKY

Urine. I have to take a drug test every six months to make sure I'm clean.

LESTER

Are you kidding? You just smoked with me last night.

RICKY

It's not mine. One of my clients is a nurse in a pediatrician's office. I cut her a deal, she keeps me in clean piss.

Lester picks up a CD case from a shelf and examines it.

LESTER

You like Pink Floyd?

RICKY

I like a lot of music.

LESTER

Man, I haven't listened to this album in years.

He shakes his head, then puts the CD case down. Ricky, having emptied the drawer, now removes a FALSE BOTTOM, revealing rows of MARIJUANA, tightly packed in ZIP-LOC BAGS.

RICKY  
How much do you want?

LESTER  
  
I don't know, it's been a while. How much is an ounce?

RICKY  
(indicates bag)  
Well, this is totally decent, and it's three hundred.

LESTER  
Wow.

RICKY  
(indicates another bag)  
But this shit is top of the line. It's called G-13. Genetically engineered by the U.S. Government. Extremely potent. But a completely mellow high, no paranoia.

(CONTINUED)

47.

CONTINUED: (2)

LESTER  
Is that what we smoked last night?

RICKY  
This is all I ever smoke.

LESTER  
How much?

RICKY  
Two grand.

LESTER  
Jesus. Things have changed since 1973.

RICKY  
You don't have to pay now. I know you're good for it.

A beat.

LESTER

Thanks.

RICKY

(hands him a bag)

There's a card in there with my beeper number, call me anytime day or night. And I only accept cash.

LESTER

(looks around room)

Well, now I know how you can afford all this equipment. When I was your age, I flipped burgers all summer just to be able to buy an eight track.

RICKY

That sucks.

LESTER

No actually, it was great. All I did was party and get laid.

(smiles)

I had my whole life ahead of me...

RICKY

My dad thinks I pay for all this with catering jobs.

(off Lester's look)

Never underestimate the power of denial.

Lester smiles. This kid's cool.

**AMERICAN BEAUTY (3)**

INT. BRAD'S OFFICE - DAY

Brad is seated behind his desk, reading a document. Lester sits across from him, smiling.

BRAD

(reads)

"...my job consists of basically masking my contempt for the assholes in charge, and, at least once a day, retiring to the men's room so I can jerk off, while I fantasize about a life that doesn't so closely resemble hell."

(looks up at Lester)

Well, you obviously have no interest in saving yourself.

LESTER

(laughs)

Brad, for fourteen years I've been a whore for the advertising industry. The only way I could save myself now is if I start firebombing.

BRAD

Whatever. Management wants you gone by the end of the day.

LESTER

Well, just what sort of severance package is "management" prepared to offer me?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

50.

CONTINUED:

LESTER (CONT'D)

Considering the information I have about our editorial director buying pussy with company money.

A beat.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Which I'm sure would interest the I.R.S., since it technically constitutes fraud. And I'm sure that some of our advertisers and rival publications might like to know about it as well. Not to mention, Craig's wife.

Brad sighs.