

The Rebel

By

Paul Bezaire

Barrett D. Ford

Story by Paul Bezaire

WGA

PRE-CREDIT SEQUENCE:

FADE IN:

INT. OWEN'S HOME - NIGHT - PRESENT DAY -
TIGHT ON TV SCREEN

Pixels fill the screen. The image slowly becomes clearer: PAUL REVERE is riding to warn "The British are coming!"

OWEN (V.O.)

The way I see it, history is a huge collecting bin for acts of rebellion.

Pulling back slightly, it becomes clear we are watching a TV. The next image appears: it is ROSA PARKS, re-enacting her famous Montgomery, Alabama, act of defiance on a city bus in 1955.

OWEN (V.O.)

Paul Revere, Rosa Parks - they were normal people who rebelled against authority and stood up for what they believed in... (a chuckle) Well, in Rosa Parks' case, standing up meant sitting down - but in the *front* of the bus.

We continue pulling back. It's clear we're in a living room, and the TV is on. On the TV screen, Rosa Parks is taken from her bus seat and arrested by WHITE POLICEMEN as PASSENGERS watch

OWEN (V.O.)

Acts of rebellion are what made America, and they are what make America better, if you ask me.

We finish pulling back. We are in OWEN WILSON'S, 50s, living room. Owen is seated in an easy chair, watching The History Channel, which we see over his shoulder - we still can't see his face.

On the TV screen, we see, and faintly HEAR, REV. MARTIN LUTHER KING make his famous "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington in August, 1963

OWEN (V.O.)

Someone who made a career of defying authority - if you can call it that - was Martin Luther King, Jr.. He used the principles of civil disobedience to spotlight racial inequality.

INT. OWEN'S HOME - NIGHT - ANGLE ON OWEN

For the first time we see Owen. He is tall, reedy, and completely asleep. Beside him is a can of soda, the TV remote and a chessboard - WITH A GAME IN PROGRESS.

OWEN (V.O.)

Because of some of the things I've done, people have accused me of being a rebel... Or worse. (another chuckle)

On the TV screen, a 'Sham Wow' infomercial BLASTS suddenly. Owen is startled out of his sleep, nearly knocking over his soda, which he catches. He gets out of his chair and stretches

OWEN (V.O.)

I don't see myself as a rebel, really. More like a strategist... or a game master. Paul Revere, Rosa Parks and Dr. King? Call them heroes, call them rebels. Me? I just enjoy playing the game...

Owen turns off the TV, then the light. The room is plunged into darkness and Owen walks out of the room.

OWEN (V.O.)

Game playing has always been a

passion of mine...

SLOW DISSOLVE

CREDIT SEQUENCE

FADE IN:

INT. UNCLE BERT'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

An extreme CLOSE UP of UNCLE BERT's eyes.

UNCLE BERT, 40s, sits at the kitchen table, a chessboard lit from above directly before him

Bert's hand reaches for a CHESS PIECE - A PAWN

OWEN (V.O.)
(adult voice)

I learned to play chess from my Uncle Bert

Bert moves the pawn, holds onto it for a moment, then lets go. Another hand SHOOTS onto the board to make a move

BERT
(urgently, almost angrily)
Wait! What are you doing? What are you thinking?

Bert puts his hand out and stops the other one. We now see it is a REALLY SMALL hand

BERT
What have I told you? Listen to me.
You got to think out your moves!
Always think a few moves ahead.

Bert removes his hand

BERT (CONT'D)
Now make your move - but don't play like a child! You're wasting my time if you do...

CUT TO:

INT. UNCLE BERT'S KITCHEN - NIGHT - ANGLE ON OWEN

OWEN takes a deep breath, then reaches forward to make a move. As he moves into the light, WE SEE HE IS ONLY 10 YEARS OLD. He *is* a child

OWEN (V.O.)

Uncle Bert was a tough teacher, but I knew he loved me, even if he had a rough time showing it. And... there's something to be said about learning the game under pressure..

Bert reacts to Owens's move, visibly impressed

INT. UNCLE BERT'S KITCHEN - NIGHT - LATER

Bert is staring, perplexed. He looks at the board, then back at Owen. Owen looks expectantly at his uncle

OWEN (V.O.)

I checkmated my uncle after six months of playing. He still played with me after that, but he stopped giving me advice..

CUT TO:

INT. ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

STUDENTS are supposed to be studying. Owen sits doodling a tic-tac-toe; SISTER DARA, in full habit, passes behind and whacks his hand with a ruler. Nearby, ANNA, 10, winces as her friend is hit.

SISTER DARA

Mr. Wilson. How much do you expect to learn by playing games? Now study!

Sister Dara passes, and Owen makes a face. Anna smiles

EXT. ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC SCHOOL - DAY - PLAYGROUND

The STUDENTS enjoy recess on the playground behind the school. Owen has joined BOYS at a grassy area on the edge of the property. One boy produces a book of matches. The others react with a mixture of fear and

awe

MATCHES BOY

Wanna see something cool?

He lights a match and throws it into the dry grass, which begins to ignite. He quickly stomps it out.

The other BOYS react. A couple of them light matches, then step on them. Owen demurs, but the Matches Boy lights several matches at once and throws them, prompting the boys to leap to put out all the matches, but one catches a pile of grass and begins to spread.

EXT. ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC SCHOOL - DAY - PLAYGROUND

Across the playground, Anna sees the commotion, and watches Owen staying to try and put out the fire that Matches Boy - who is now long gone - started. She watches as Sister Dara races to the area with an old fire extinguisher and puts out the fire as Owen starts to leave.

EXT. ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC SCHOOL - DAY - PLAYGROUND -
ANGLE ON OWEN

SISTER DARA

(steel in her voice)

Remain where you are!

Impressively, Sister Dara makes short work of the grass fire, but her habit is soiled from the extinguisher and the smoke. The fire out, she turns to Owen

SISTER DARA

(grabbing Owen's ear)

This way.

Anna approaches. She exchanges looks with Owen

ANNA

Sister! Owen didn't start the fire.

Sister Dara will have none of it

SISTER DARA

Meddling in others' business, Anna,

displays the sin of pride.

Owen looks to Anna. Little help?

ANNA

But sister...

Sister Dara ignores her and practically tugs Owens' ear off as she leads him away.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC SCHOOL - DAY

The bell rings and liberated STUDENTS burst out of the school doors. Owen exits with less enthusiasm, carrying an envelope. Anna waits for him

ANNA

Hi Owen.

OWEN

Hi Anna.

ANNA

Sorry I couldn't help with Sister Dara...

OWEN

(good spirited)

It's OK. At least you tried. I don't think Sister Dara is willing to admit she could be wrong.

ANNA

If I ever become a nun, I will listen better than she did.

OWEN

(Laughing)

You a nun?

EXT. ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC SCHOOL - DAY - ANGLE ON ANNA AND OWEN

The two start to walk home. They don't hold hands or anything, but it's clear they're close - in a chaste way.

CUT TO:

EXT. OWEN'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY

Owen walks home from school, the envelope from his teacher in his hand

INT. OWEN'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY

Owen drops the note on the kitchen table and looks in the fridge.

OWEN'S MOM
(off screen)

Is that you Owen?

Owen looks at the envelope, then toward where his mom's voice came from. Uh-oh

INT. OWEN'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY

Owen's MOTHER enters. She is very pretty, but emanates a strong aura of authority.

MOTHER
(irked tone)

Why don't you answer me? It's very annoying.

Owen is quiet. He eats a cookie and drinks milk at the table. His eyes travel to the envelope at the same time as his mother's

His mother reaches for the envelope. Owen wishes he could make himself disappear, like a magician. His mother reads the note, then stares bullets at him

MOTHER (CONT'D)

A note from Sister. (waves it at him)
Owen, this is the third time this year. And... (she reads) what's this about a fire!?

Owen is quick to his own defense

OWEN
(earnestly)

I didn't do it! Some other boys had

matches, and...

His mom's having none of it; she waves her hand with the letter

MOTHER

This note from sister says you started a fire. Go to your room and think about what you've done!

Owen trudges off, muttering under his breath.

INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Confined to his room, he lies on his bed and tosses a baseball in the air, thinking

OWEN (V.O.)

Even though I was being punished for something I didn't do, in my room I *did* think about what it was I had done: I'd given in to authority without standing up for myself...

BAM! He lofts the ball too hard, and it hits the ceiling before dropping back to Owen

OWEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...and that's when I decided that no matter what, I'd always face authority head-on.

INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM - DAY - ANGLE ON OWEN'S FACE

Owen's look sets. 'The Rebel' is born

CUT TO:

INT. OWEN'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY - LATER

Owen and his mother sit and look at her new camera, fresh out of the box. She holds the manual

OWEN (V.O.)

Of course, in the early days, my facing authority head-on had its hazards...

MOTHER

Well, Owen, the manual says the camera is antistigmatic. We'll have to discover what that means...

One look at Owen and it's obvious he's thinking about it

OWEN

(thinking it out)

Well, anti- means not. And stigmatic? Like Jesus' stigmata? Or maybe astigmatism - when light rays won't focus...

He looks at his mother quizzically, as if it's a game

OWEN

(smiling)

Is it a camera that corrects for astigmatism?

His mother reads the manual. Initially her face is smiling, but as she reads, it darkens. When she finishes, she glares at Owen

MOTHER

(angrily)

You read this manual, didn't you?

Owen is surprised. And hurt

OWEN

No!

His mother doesn't believe him

MOTHER

I have repeatedly told you to stay out of my things!

Owen is stunned. He's being falsely accused

INT. OWEN'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen summons his resolve and looks at his mother

OWEN
(seriously)
I wasn't in your things. (softens) I
figured it out.

MOTHER
(angrily)
Figured it out. Well, then, I'm sure
you can *figure out* why you're being
sent to your room.

Owen's face sets. He rises to go to his room

OWEN
I didn't read your manual. And
sending me to my room doesn't make you
right.

He turns and leaves. His mother watches him, livid -
because she realizes he's correct.

CUT TO:

INT. ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC SCHOOL - DAY

Owen's CLASS is being instructed by FATHER JOSEPH,
40s, the priest of All Saints Church. Most of the
STUDENTS look bored, but Owen and nearby Anna are
rapt. Sister Dara hovers in the background

FATHER JOSEPH
...and so the 'stations of the cross'
tell us of Jesus' suffering for
mankind. He died for our sins, and we
must confess whenever we sin.

Father Joseph looks around the room, pausing for
emphasis.

FATHER JOSEPH
Unless YOU honor God and Jesus in your
lives every day, Jesus will have
sacrificed for nothing!

INT. ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC SCHOOL - DAY - LATER

Owen and Anna eat lunch together, discussing their earlier class

ANNA

I just get sad when I think of Jesus' suffering for us.

Owen's approach is more hands-on

OWEN

Well, I don't want to be bad - but I hope I get some GOOD sins to confess. Something impressive.

ANNA

(laughing)

Oh, Owen. You always want to keep everybody guessing!

CUT TO:

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY

Owen and his mother are dressed for church

His mother reaches in her purse and pulls out a quarter. With a near-magical flourish, she holds it out to Owen

MOTHER

Owen, this is for the collection plate at church. Can I trust you to contribute it for us?

Owen is delighted, and nods urgently

OWEN (V.O.)

It wasn't long before I had one of those 'good' sins to confess. But it wasn't intentional...

INT. ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

It's Sunday service. Owen sits squeezed between his mother and a HEAVYSET MAN. Owen plays with the quarter, eager to put it in the collection plate.

Owen's mother notices him playing with the quarter and chides him

MOTHER

(harsh whisper)

Owen! Put that away!

Obediently, Owen contorts and squeezes the coin into his pants pocket

INT. ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY - ANGLE ON COLLECTION PLATE

As the collection plate is passed, Owen tries to get the quarter out of his pocket, but the heavysset man next to him blocks Owen's access. As Owen struggles to retrieve the coin, the man PASSES the collection plate down the row. Owen's mom sees Owen produce the coin too late for the collection plate, and makes a face

INT. OWEN'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY

It is after church. Owen, his suit and tie loosened, does his best to explain

OWEN

I *didn't* steal the quarter. I *tried* to put it in the collection plate... But the man...

Owen's mom is distraught

MOTHER

Did you think you could get away for stealing... from the church?

Talk about guilt. Owen looks at his mother, resigned

INT. ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY - CONFSSIONAL

Owen is in the confessional. Through the screen in front of him, we see the outline of Father Joseph

OWEN (V.O.)

My mother had convinced me that failing to put the quarter in the

collection plate was the same as stealing, and I would have to confess it to the priest.

Owen is confessing. And confessing. And confessing...

INT. ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY -
CONFESSIONAL - ANGLE ON FATHER JOSEPH

Owen's over-the-top confession makes the priest raise an eyebrow

OWEN (V.O.)

I decided that stealing a quarter wasn't worth Father Joseph's time... So, I made up a story.

INT. ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY -
CONFESSIONAL - ANGLE ON OWEN

FATHER JOSEPH

And what did you do with the money you took from your mother's purse?

OWEN

(thinking quickly)

I spent it, Father. On... candy.

FATHER JOSEPH

(dubious)

You spent \$25 on candy?

Oops. Went too far. Owen reigns it in

OWEN

Not all of it. I bought comic books, too.

Father Joseph shakes his head. Whatever...

FATHER JOSEPH

Stealing is a mortal sin, my son. (he pauses) And so is lying. Please think about that. For your penance say twenty Hail Marys and ten Our Fathers...

Owen isn't sure what to make of that last part. Is he busted? He bluffs and plays it cool...

OWEN

Yes, Father. Thank you Father.

INT. ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY -
CONFESSIONAL - ANGLE ON FATHER JOSEPH

Father Joseph absolves Owen, still shaking his head in disbelief, and Owen exits the confessional

INT. ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY - OUTSIDE
CONFESSIONAL - ANGLE ON OWEN

Exiting the confessional, Owen spots Anna, who waits in line. Grinning, he gives her the high sign: I confessed a 'good' sin!

Anna smiles, then heads into confessional

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY - OUTSIDE
CONFESSIONAL - ANGLE ON ANNA

Anna exits the confessional - years have passed, and she's now 18. And beautiful.

It's Owen's turn to be waiting in line. He's also 18, having grown into a handsome young man. Anna passes him, smiling demurely and looking down. Owen smiles back, keenly observing her walk all the way to the exit

OWEN (V.O.)

It got so that even *I* had a hard time coming up with 'good' sins. It was like a game to me, but Father Joseph didn't always see it that way.

INT. ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY - CONFESSIONAL
- ANGLE ON FATHER JOSEPH

Father Joseph is older - and less tolerant of Owen's playfulness

FATHER JOSEPH

(sighing)

My son, I certainly think the news would have reported it if you had taken a helicopter for a joy ride..

INT. ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY -
CONFESSIONAL - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen makes a face. Father's right: that was a bit much

FATHER JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Owen, I want you to listen to me. You're a man now. You must put aside games and live as a mature Catholic.

OWEN

Mature Catholic, Father. Forgive me, but isn't that a contradiction in terms? Doesn't the church - or even God - want to treat us like children, to control us?

INT. ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY - CONFESSIONAL
- ANGLE ON FATHER JOSEPH

This is TOO honest - or introspective - for Father Joseph

FATHER JOSEPH

(reacts strongly)

Owen! Will you *always* thumb your nose at authority? Is everything a game to you?

INT. ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY -
CONFESSIONAL - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen knows he's gone too far. But he also believes what he said to the priest

OWEN

Sorry, Father.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

Owen and Anna walk home from church after confessing

OWEN

...and I think he realized it way before
I 'stole the helicopter.' Probably
when I said I never had impure
thoughts...

Anna looks at Owen and realizes he's flirting

ANNA

(laughing)

Oh, Owen - you still keep us all
guessing!

Owen grows serious. He turns to Anna

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY - ANGLE ON OWEN

OWEN

I don't want you to have to guess,
Anna.

She looks at him. Here it comes. Uh-oh

OWEN

I *like* you, Anna. I always have.
(smiles awkwardly - this is hard..)

OWEN (CONT'D)

We've always been friends. And I
think we could be closer...

He's really stuck his neck out. He looks tentatively
at Anna

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY - ANGLE ON ANNA

Anna pauses, then smiles. Owen's heartened

ANNA

Well, Owen. That's sort of what I was
talking to Father Joseph about in
confessional...

Owen suppresses a smile. Oh goody - *female improper*

thoughts!

ANNA (CONT'D)
About making a commitment.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY - ANGLE ON OWEN

Commitment? This is getting better and better...

OWEN
I don't mind commitment! We can even
get engaged if you want...

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY - ANGLE ON ANNA

Anna looks at expectant Owen. This is going to be hard

ANNA
(softly)
Owen, that's not the kind of
commitment I meant...

Owen looks at her with anticipation

ANNA (CONT'D)
I meant a commitment... (a beat) to God.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen looks at her. He blinks. His smile slowly fades

OWEN
(quizzically)
A commitment to God?

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY - ANGLE ON ANNA

ANNA
I've decided to take the vows, Owen.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Owen stops dead. He looks at Anna

OWEN
Vows? What vows?

She looks apologetically at Owen

ANNA

Nun's vows. I understand, Owen. It's difficult to accept. Even some of my family question my decision. But I've thought about it for a long time..

Owen is crestfallen, but doesn't want to disappoint his friend, so he hides it. He works up a weak smile

OWEN

Well, it's going to make my impure thoughts sorta weird..

Anna laughs despite herself. Then makes a face: yuck!

OWEN (V.O.)

It was just after high school graduation that Anna went off to the convent.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANNA'S HOME - DAY - DRIVEWAY

Anna's FAMILY mills around the family station wagon, which idles in the driveway

Anna and Owen stand off to one side

ANNA

I'm sure I'll have an opportunity to write you. I don't know how it works right now..

OWEN

Just let me know you're OK.

Anna touches Owen's face; she's already becoming nun-like

ANNA

I know you'll be OK. Just take it easy on authority..

She smiles, pats his face one last time, and joins her family in the car. Owen watches at the car backs out of the driveway and pulls away

EXT. ANNA'S HOME - DAY - DRIVEWAY - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen watches the car recede into the distance

OWEN (V.O.)

Anna was right about authority. I'd pretty much rebelled most of my young life. And now that the girl I liked the most was taken by the 'ultimate authority,' I decided I might as well keep playing the same game..

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

It is very early in the morning, and Owen is sleeping in his small apartment. Or trying to, because outside a trash truck is picking up trash, and the CLATTER of cans and TRUCK is loud.

Owen pokes out from the covers and looks, bleary-eyed, out the window.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAWN

Large, hulking GARBAGE MEN pick up trash cans and dump their contents into a trash truck, which compacts the new refuse.

OWEN (V.O.)

Have you ever considered going into a business you know nothing about? It's really not that uncommon. Hundreds of people, every day, are in fact totally unqualified for their jobs; some are called lawyers, some others are called politicians or bureaucrats. But this isn't about them. This is about me.

I had just turned twenty one years old when I got my first lesson about going into a business I knew nothing about.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Owen walks out his apartment building in a bathrobe, carrying a cup of coffee. He watches the trash men as they go about their work, even nodding to an ENORMOUS WORKER, who scowls back

OWEN (V.O.)

I decided that day to get into the business of collecting rubbish in my small community. I guess I must have been pretty naïve to think I could get away with it.

Owen looks across the street at a PRETTY WOMAN standing there. Still foggy from sleep, he nods in her direction. Much to his surprise, she WAVES

ANNA
(yelling)

Owen!

Owen peers at the woman. She has a suitcase

ANNA
Owen! It's me...

Owen peers again. Could it be? Anna?

Owen can't believe his eyes. He looks to the scowling garbage man

OWEN
(to scowling guy)
It's Anna!

Scowling garbage guy brightens: young love...

Owen pulls his ratty bathrobe around him and crosses the street to Anna. She beams to see him. She's *glowing*, actually...

CUT TO:

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Anna sips a cup of tea at the table with Owen

ANNA
(looking into her mug)
I enjoyed all your letters, Owen.
They brought me comfort.

Owen smiles

OWEN
I'm just glad you're... here. Back.
Back here...

Now it's Anna's turn to smile

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - DAY - ANGLE ON ANNA

Anna looks down again. She's radiant in the morning
light

ANNA
(quietly)
I didn't know if you'd want to see me.

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - DAY - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen's surprised to hear this

OWEN
What do you mean? You know I love you.
(he muses) *Sister Anna...*

Anna looks up and directly at Owen

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - DAY - ANGLE ON ANNA

ANNA
(quietly)
It's just Anna, now, Owen...

Owen reacts.

ANNA (CONT'D)
I've left the convent.

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - DAY - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen's features play out his thoughts: surprise,

confusion, concern... and optimism. He takes her hand

OWEN

Left? The convent?

Anna looks up, biting her lip. God, she's beautiful. She nods

OWEN (CONT'D)

That's great! (catches himself) I mean, that's...

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - DAY - ANGLE ON BOTH ANNA AND OWEN

Anna continues holding Owen's hand. She puts it on her heart

ANNA

It's alright, Owen. I needed to leave.

Owen smiles, but really he's focused on the fact that his hand is on her chest

ANNA (CONT'D)

I'll tell you about the convent, later. I'd rather catch up with you first...

Owen takes a breath. He gathers his thoughts...

OWEN

Well, you know, Anna, just this morning I was looking at these trash guys and thinkin' "I can play that game and win..."

Owen is silenced as Anna leans forward and plants a big kiss on him

CUT TO:

INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Owen and Anna lie tangled post-coitally in the sheets. They both radiate youthful love

INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM - DAY - BED - ANGLE ON OWEN

OWEN

Anna, I'll have to admit, I've dreamed of this for a long time. I even confessed thinking about it to Father.

INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM - DAY - BED - ANGLE ON ANNA

Anna reacts with an odd look. She rolls over and kisses Owen

ANNA

I really always *only* wanted to be with you, too, Owen. (she looks in his eyes) You know that, don't you?

INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM - DAY - ANGLE ON BOTH ANNA AND OWEN

ANNA (CONT'D)

Owen, there's something I need to tell you...

After what they *just* did, Owen can't figure out what she's got left to reveal

INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM - DAY - ANGLE ON ANNA

ANNA

Owen, I had to leave the convent.

Owen takes this in - but it's not registering: *had to?*

Anna takes a breath

ANNA (CONT'D)

Owen, I'm pregnant.

Owen does what any guy would do in this situation: he stares back incomprehendingly

OWEN

I don't get it. How do you know?

He looks at the mussed-up bed

OWEN (CONT'D)

I mean, we *just*...

Anna cuts him off

ANNA

No, Owen. Not us.

Oh. He gets it. Owen grows serious

OWEN

Who, then?

Anna's hand unconsciously trails to her tummy - where we notice, for the first time, a little BABY BULGE

ANNA

(hardens)

It was a priest. He heard my confessions of impure thoughts - of my high school boyfriend...

Owen looks at her and smiles in spite of himself

ANNA (CONT'D)

...and he offered to counsel me, privately. (she lets out a sigh) My sin was that I trusted him. And look where I am now.

INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM - DAY - ANGLE ON BOTH OWEN AND ANNA

Owen takes both of Anna's hands in his and hold her close. He can see she's in real pain

CUT TO:

INT. OWENS APARTMENT - DAY - KITCHEN

Owen, in jeans and a t-shirt but barefooted, cooks breakfast

OWEN

(at stove)
Everything feels better after you've
eaten. You haven't had Owen's
'breakfast dream' yet...

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - DAY - ANGLE ON FOOD ON STOVE

'Breakfast dream' indeed. More like 'breakfast
nightmare'...

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - DAY - ANGLE ON ANNA

Anna sits at the table, wearing one of Owen's long
work shirts. ONLY a work shirt. She *definitely* does
not look like a nun

ANNA
(troubled)
Thinking about an abortion feels
wrong - especially since the baby is
the child of a nun and a priest.

She looks at Owen. Tears stain her cheeks

ANNA (CONT'D)
(tries to smile)
How messed up is that? Huh?

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - DAY - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen hears the hurt in Anna's voice. He looks down
at his culinary effort, makes a face, then deposits
the whole pan in the sink. He moves to sit next to
Anna, and takes her hand

OWEN
(with sincerity)
I like to go out to eat, anyway.
(looks at her)

OWEN (CONT'D)
Anna, what we had today was all I've
ever wanted.

Anna looks to him. She's hurting - but still hot

OWEN (CONT'D)

You know I love you. I believe you love me.

Anna looks at him. Her eyes say 'yes'

OWEN (CONT'D)

And I think there isn't anybody who can tell us WE can't marry each other and have OUR baby.

Anna looks at Owen - forgive the expression - expectantly

OWEN

So, I guess there's one thing I need to ask you, Anna...

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - DAY - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen's face grows serious. He pats her hand, then:

OWEN

Anna - do you like Mexican food?

Anna is speechless. She had not expected *this*

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - DAY - ANGLE ON ANNA

ANNA

What?... What?... Mexican food?!

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - DAY - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen smiles broadly

OWEN

'Cause there's a great taco place right around the corner. We could get heuvos rancheros, whatever...

He continues to smile

OWEN (CONT'D)

And I figured after breakfast we could stop by city hall and get a marriage license.

Now it's his turn to share an expectant look

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - DAY - ANGLE ON ANNA

Anna simply could not look more beautiful. She stretches out her arms and envelopes Owen in a hug and a kiss

ANNA

(practically crying)

Oh, Owen, Yes. Yes!

OWEN

Wow. That's a relief.

Anna looks at him, uncertain

OWEN (CONT'D)

Well, I couldn't remember if you liked Mexican food. The next closest place is miles away.

Anna smiles, shakes her head and hugs him even harder

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Owen works out the paperwork for his trash-hauling business. Anna passes in the background, noticeably bigger

OWEN (V.O)

I threw myself into my new business venture, looking to make my mark in the trash-hauling game. (a beat, then) But some games are rigged..

CUTAWAY: INSURANCE BILL WITH HUGE TOTAL

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Owen reels at the figures he sees on the bill before him.

OWEN (V.O.)

I'll never forget opening my first

insurance bill; I asked myself, "Is this a bill, or a ransom note?" But even still, I was in the trash collection business; at least for a few short weeks.

EXT. OWEN'S NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Owen goes door-to-door-signing up CUSTOMERS. We see from his low-pressure sales technique he is appealing to their business sense.

OWEN (V.O.)

I spent some time soliciting customers and was able to cut down on the fees I would charge. I told my customers the fees they were currently being charged were outrageously high.

EXT. OWEN'S OLD GARBAGE TRUCK - MOVING - DAY

OWEN drives his truck to his clients' trash cans. Jumping out, he commences the hard work of picking up trash.

EXT. OWEN'S GARBAGE TRUCK - STATIONARY - DAY

Owen loads more trash, wiping his brow.

EXT. LOCAL DUMP ENTRANCE - DAY

Owen's garbage truck pulls up to the gatehouse of the dump.

OWEN (V.O.)

After a long day collecting trash, I drove to the dump, where I got my first big lesson concerning trash collections.

EXT. LOCAL DUMP ENTRANCE - DAY

Inside the gatehouse sits a heavy-set MAN in a dirty T-shirt

OWEN (V.O.)

I was met at the gate by the man who collected the dumping fees as customers drove up. I knew a driver from another established company, so I had a pretty good idea of what my fee should be. Although my pal and I talked about the collection business over beers, I had no idea what I was about to get myself into.

Owen smiles at the man in the T-shirt. The man looks back blankly.

T-SHIRT

That will be seventy five dollars.

OWEN

(surprised)

Seventy-five?! A-1 disposal only pays forty dollars for the same load

T-SHIRT

But YOU'RE not A-1 disposal.

EXT. LOCAL DUMP ENTRANCE - DAY - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen grumbles under his breath, and looks in his wallet - the extra amount has tapped him out. With a grimace, he pays and replaces his empty wallet.

OWEN (V.O.)

I got a real good lesson about how dirty the garbage business can be. It turns out many dumps are privately owned - so they can charge whatever they'd like as dumping fees.

EXT: LOCAL DUMP - DAY - OWEN'S GARBAGE TRUCK - STATIONARY

Owen, still grumbling, dumps his garbage load, getting dusty and even more smelly in the process.

OWEN (V.O.)

And high fees at these privately-owned dumps are often used to drive collectors like me out of business, leaving the business to "established" collectors. Besides

the normal smell of a dump, I could smell how much the whole collection business stinks.

I sold my truck and got out of the business real quick. But, at the same time, I developed a deep distrust for trash collectors.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY

It's morning, and Owen readies to leave for work, dressed in construction garb. Obviously older, Owen kisses Anna goodbye, as well as their infant son LARRY, then heads out the door

EXT. CAR - DRIVING - PRESENT DAY

Owen, coffee in hand, drives his black pick-up truck, parking near the curb in front of a CONSTRUCTION SITE, a 3-story building in the framing stage.

EXT. CAR - STOPPED - DAY - ANOTHER ANGLE

Owen gets out of his pick-up and walks into the building.

INT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY - LATER

Owen sits with a group of other WORKERS. All wear hard hats and tool belts.

BOB

What's up, Owen?

OWEN

Same old, same old.

WORKER #2

Got my level Bob?

BOB Hands Worker #2 his level just as the horn rings signaling the time to go to work.

MONTAGE OF MEN WORKING:

Men hammer framing into place.

A group of men unload plywood from a truck

A PLUMBING SUPPLY TRUCK pulls up as the men haul plywood.

EXT. FRONT OF BUILDING UNDER CONSTRUCTION - DAY

The plumbing supply truck parks next to Owen's truck and the DRIVER uses a winch and boom to unload a bright yellow fire hydrant. He sets the hydrant down on the sidewalk DIRECTLY NEXT TO OWEN'S TRUCK.

EXT. LUNCH WAGON - DAY - LATER

A lunch wagon pulls up and BLOWS its HORN. All the WORKERS file out of the building toward the lunch wagon.

EXT. LUNCH WAGON - DAY - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen is about to order when he notices a METER MAID next to his truck writing something in her pad. She stands beside her golf cart vehicle; Owen, curious, approaches.

OWEN

(To Meter Maid)

Hello. Is anything wrong?

METER MAID

Is this your vehicle?

OWEN

Sure is.

METER MAID

You are parked within fifteen feet of this fire hydrant in violation of the law.

EXT. TRUCK - PARKED - DAY - ANGLE ON HYDRANT

Owen smiles and tips the hydrant, showing her it is

not connected.

OWEN

Ah ha! Gotcha you this time. It's not even connected.

METER MAID

(officiously)

The law doesn't say it has to be connected. You are still parked next to it.

OWEN

(Smiling)

You can't be serious. Tell me you're not serious. This hydrant was just delivered to this site a couple of hours ago.

Other workers begin to gather around

BOB

What's happening Owen?

OWEN

(angrily)

This bit... (catches himself) The officer is giving me a parking ticket for being parked next to this hydrant.

WORKER #2

Does she know it's not even connected?

OWEN

Oh, she knows, but I think she hasn't filled her quota of stupid tickets for the day..

The workers snicker, prompting a reaction from the Meter Maid.

METER MAID

You guys better watch it or I'll call for backup and have you all arrested.

OWEN

(suspects an opportunity)
Go ahead and make your call. I dare
you.

The officer keeps writing and remains silent.
She finishes, then hands Owen the ticket, still
not saying anything. She then gets in her cart
to leave.

OWEN (CONT'D)
(Smiling sarcastically)
So long sweetie. See you in court.

As the meter maid drives off BOB turns to Owen.

BOB
What made you think she wouldn't call
for backup?

OWEN
Would you want to make a fool of
yourself in front of other officers
by giving a ticket for parking in
front a hydrant that wasn't even
connected?!

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The courtroom is filled with people. The JUDGE sits
in his black robe at the bench. The BAILIFF stands
at the front of the room. The judge looks over the
stack of files in front of him, nods to the COURT
CLERK, and finally calls the next case.

JUDGE
In the matter of Owen Wilson...

The Judge pauses, Owen stands

JUDGE (CONT'D)
This matter is dismissed, Mr. Wilson,
since the officer who issued the
ticket is not in court to testify.

Owen is surprised

OWEN

(loudly)

I object to the dismissal your honor.
I demand that my case be heard.

JUDGE

(taken aback)

I'm afraid I can't do that, sir. The
court needs the officer to testify as
to the facts of the case.

OWEN

I can do that your honor. I will
stipulate that I was parked right
next a fire hydrant.

JUDGE

You seem all too anxious to tell the
court your story. Please, tell me
what happened?

OWEN

Thank you your honor. I was parked
next to a fire hydrant on a
construction site. The city required
the builder to install one as a
condition to getting a building
permit. The hydrant was delivered
after I was already parked, and it
ended up right next to my truck. While
the meter maid was writing my ticket
I explained that is was not even
connected, but she said the law does
not require it to be connected.

JUDGE

(knowing smile)

Very interesting. Perhaps that's the
reason she is not in court today... She
didn't want to make a fool of herself
in front of me and all these people.
But I still need to dismiss this
citation

OWEN

(thinking quickly)

How about subpoenaing her to appear?

JUDGE

(smiles)

Thank you Mr. Wilson. But this matter
is dismissed.

Owen gets it and nods, then leaves the courtroom.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - SIDEWALK - DAY

As he approaches his truck Owen spots something under
his windshield. Reading it he recognizes it as a
parking ticket. Looking up he sees the no-parking
sign. Then he see the SAME METER MAID waving at him
as she drives away in her golf cart.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - SIDEWALK - DAY - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen reacts to the sight of the meter maid's
'victory,' and briefly moves to deliver the 'one
finger salute,' but thinks better of it. Shaking his
head and smiling in spite of himself, Owen climbs into
his truck.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY

OWEN (V.O.)

My bad experience in trash collection
seemed to follow me a few years later
when Anna and I moved to another city
and bought a house.

EXT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - ANOTHER ANGLE

OWEN (V.O.)

The city had a contract with a trash
collector to collect all the trash
and garbage from residential
locations.

EXT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - CLEANING GARAGE

Owen and Larry, now 7, work at cleaning his garage,

tossing junk in a large trash barrel.

OWEN (V.O.)

After cleaning up my garage, we filled a 30 gallon barrel and carried it to the curbside where it would be picked up.

EXT. OWEN'S HOME - EVENING

Owen wheels his garbage can to the curb

CUT TO:

Ext. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - CURBSIDE

Owen returns home, noting his garbage can is still full, while others on the street have been emptied.

OWEN (V.O.)

When I got home from work my trash was left uncollected.

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY

Owen, pacing, is on the phone to the city trash department

OWEN

My trash wasn't picked up today. Will you please send somebody back to pick it up

TRASH DEPT.

(on phone)

We received a report that your barrel weighed more than the fifty pound limit.

Exasperation plays across Owen's features.

INT. OWEN'S BATHROOM - DAY

Owen lugs the trash can into his bathroom, pushes aside kid's tub toys and checks the weight on his bathroom scale. What he sees clearly aggravates him.

OWEN (V.O.)

In all the years I lived at this location I had never seen a worker with a scale. I got my bathroom scale and discovered that the trash weighed exactly fifty and a half pounds.

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY

Owen is back on the phone with the city trash department

TRASH DEPT.

(on phone)

We'll have someone come back out to pick it up.

EXT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - ANGLE ON CURB

Owen waits at the curb beside his trash barrel as a trash truck approaches

OWEN (V.O.)

I decided to wait for him. The guy was huge.

Owen watches as a GIGANTIC TRASH WORKER lifts his full barrel as though it were empty and dumps it into the back of the garbage truck.

OWEN

So are you the guy who, just by lifting the barrel, could tell my trash was a measly half-pound overweight?

WORKER

Yeah... what about it?

OWEN

That's totally amazing. You clearly know all the rules.

The gigantic trash worker eyes Owen, unsure if he's being insulted.

WORKER

Oh, I know the rules all right...

Owen looks at the man and smiles, and it's obvious he's formulating a plan.

OWEN (V.O.)

This stirred up old feelings I had about trash collectors. I figured that if they want to be so damn particular about one half-pound I will play their game about rules and regulations. I would make *absolutely* sure they wouldn't have to lift trash can more than the 50 pound limit.

INT: OWEN'S HOME - DAY - OWEN ON THE PHONE

OWEN

(into phone)

How many trash cans can I have at the curb on collection day?

CITY

You may have as many as you need - but none can exceed the 50 pound limit.

Owen smiles. He knows his next move. He hangs up the phone

OWEN

(yelling to his son)

Larry! Want to help your dad with a little project?

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - ANGLE ON ANNA

Anna listens to this exchange and reacts with a look - what's Owen up to now?

CUT TO

EXT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - CURBSIDE

The curb is filled with trash containers of all sizes

OWEN (V.O.)

The following collection day, the trash collector saw 30 small trash cans by my curb. I had collected soup cans, coffee cans, baby food cans, and any other small cans from my neighbors. In each of these tiny "trash cans" I placed a few scraps of paper. I also had my regular trash container standing alongside.

EXT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - CURBSIDE - ANGLE ON TRASH WORKER

The gigantic worker looks at the motley collection of trash cans, then reads the sign placed nearby: "Please Do Not Take Trash Cans"

OWEN (V.O.)

I then placed a sign next to the small cans saying PLEASE DO NOT TAKE TRASH CANS.

The gigantic worker looks at the cans, the sign and the large trash can, then scratches his head.

OWEN (V.O.)

When I got home, the big container was empty but none of the paper was emptied from the 30 little cans. I immediately called the city and told them my trash containers were not emptied.

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - OWEN ON THE PHONE

As Larry watches, Owen continues his gambit

OWEN

I am still having trouble with the trash man. My cans weren't emptied... Again.

TRASH DEPT.

(on phone)

I'll get back you as soon as I find out why.

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - LATER

Owen's back on the phone with the Trash Dept.

OWEN (V.O.)

About 40 minutes later I got a call from the city telling me that I had *too many* containers.

Owen is smiling; he expected this

OWEN

But you told me there was no limit to how many I can have, as long as they were under the weight limit.

TRASH DEPT.

(on phone)

Let's be reasonable, Mr. Wilson. They can't stop to empty 30 containers at each stop.

OWEN

I'm not asking you to empty 30 trash containers at each stop... I am the only one with 30 trash containers.

Owen can barely keep himself from laughing out loud; there's an audible SIGH on the other end of the line

TRASH DEPT.

(on phone)

Very well, Mr. Wilson, we'll send someone shortly.

EXT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - LATER

The gigantic worker returns and empties each of Owen's small 'trash cans,' which look like thimbles in his giant hands. Finished, he looks up at Owen's house and sneers his disdain.

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - SAME TIME

Owen and Larry peer out the corner of the window and watch the gigantic worker climb back into his garbage truck. Releasing the drapes, Owen smiles to his son, who smiles back

OWEN (V.O.)

In a short time they were all emptied and my small containers were left clean. But Gigantor didn't seem to enjoy it.

CUT TO

INT: CITY COUNCIL MEETING - EVENING

The local CITY COUNCIL meets. As a proposed ordinance is read, several of the COUNCIL MEMBERS raise their hands to vote.

OWEN (V.O.)

At the next council meeting, the city changed the collection ordinance so a maximum of two containers can be put out at any given time.

EXT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - CURBSIDE

Owen's two garbage containers await the gigantic worker's not-so-delicate touch. He empties them, dropping them to the ground with a loud bang.

OWEN (V.O.)

So, every Tuesday, you could see our Mutt and Jeff standing tall alongside my curb waiting for the trash collector to come by. It didn't occur to me that my trash troubles might not be over...

EXT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - CURBSIDE

The garbage truck drives off, belching exhaust

OWEN (V.O.)

I guess some people move from city to city followed by unwanted relatives, unhappy lovers and unpaid bills. I moved, but I was just followed by the kind of bureaucratic idiocy that makes me want to rebel...

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY

It is morning, and Owen, a little older, sits and reads the morning paper. He rustles the pages, then makes a loud exclamation. Larry, now a teen, eats cereal

OWEN

Oh, for crying out loud!

LARRY

(looks up)

What is it, Dad?

OWEN

(with contempt)

Your dad's in the paper, son...

LARRY

(intrigued)

Really?

Owen holds up the local paper so his son can see the headline

OWEN

Don't get too excited, Larry...

Owen holds up the paper so Larry can see the headline

Cutaway: NEWSPAPER headline: "GADFLY SEEKS COUNCIL ROOST"

Owen buries himself in the article, his features darkening as he reads...

OWEN (V.O.)

I should have known I was asking for trouble when I considered running for city council. I'd already challenged the council on many occasions, to the point where the local paper dubbed me a "Gadfly."

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen shakes his head and reads the article

OWEN (V.O.)

I'll be honest - I didn't even know what a 'gadfly' was; I had to look it up. But I guessed it wasn't flattering, because of my reputation at council meetings...

CUT TO

INT. OWEN'S HOME - NIGHT

Uncle Bert, noticeably older, sits hunched over a chessboard. Opposite him, once again, is a child, but now it's Larry, 7. Owen passes by, startled for a moment at the image. After he leaves:

LARRY

(leaning in - a secret)
Grandpa Bert. Can you teach me to play as well as Dad?

Bert takes this in. Is he smiling? A chance to gain revenge on Owen?

BERT

(taps Larry's forehead)
You have to start by playing the game in your head.

Larry feels the tapping on his skull. He's practically sorry he asked... Then Bert stops

BERT

And you always play several moves ahead...

Bert looks at Larry. Larry looks back at Bert. Larry gets it - and nods

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - LIVING ROOM

Bert sits before the chessboard, his chin in his hands. Little Larry sits opposite, affecting an identical pose.

This time it's Anna who passes through the room and takes in the scene. She looks at Larry with mother's love. He looks up and waves

Bert looks sternly at Larry, who returns his focus to the game at hand. No time for sentiment

CUT TO:

INT. OWEN'S HOME - NIGHT

Owen sits at the dining room table and reads from a book of election law. He's reading about how to drop out of a race.

OWEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Little did I know that you can't simply pull out from a race. Once you file your nomination papers, you are in the race and nothing, not even death, can stop you from being on the ballot.

Owen, incredulous, reads the passage which says he can't drop out of the race, and shakes his head.

OWEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

So I contacted the local papers and announced my decision to end my campaign. In doing so, I hoped to keep people from donating to my campaign or, God forbid, *elect* me. What I hadn't counted on was a new California election campaign law called the Waxman-Dymally Campaign Disclosure Act.

Owen reads further, then turns the page. He can't believe what he reads next

OWEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

This disclosure act required any candidate running for public office

to report all campaign contributions
and expenses.

CUTAWAY: LONG AND SHORT CAMPAIGN REPORTING FORMS

Owen looks at the forms, back at the book, then
scratches his head in confusion

OWEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

There was a long form for reporting
money received or spent *over* \$500,
and a short form for filing amounts
received or spent *under* \$500.

Owen turns the page of the book, but doesn't find what
he's looking for. He thumbs through the forms, but
remains incredulous.

OWEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But there was no form at all for
someone who did not receive or spend
any money. And that's exactly what
I'd done: collected nothing and spent
nothing.

Owen closes the book, puts away the forms, rubs his
eyes and turns off the light - he's had enough, and
it's bedtime.

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY

Owen sits in the kitchen with his newspaper and
coffee. After a SIGH and a throat-clear, he reaches
for the phone and dials a number.

OWEN (into phone)

Good morning. My name is Owen Wilson
and I'm a candidate for city council;
is there someone there I can speak
with who knows about financial
reporting forms?

He listens, then writes down a name.

OWEN (into phone) (CONT'D)

Great. Mrs. Eaglebert, you say? Is

she available?

Owen is transferred. As he waits, he plays a game of tic-tac-toe with himself on a notepad until he's connected to his party.

OWEN (into phone) (CONT'D)
Hello, Mrs. Eaglebert? My name is
Owen Wilson and I'm...

Owen begins to explain his dilemma: there's no form for someone who neither collected nor spent campaign monies. But soon it's obvious he's getting nowhere fast, and he gets off the phone

OWEN (V.O.)

I learned the two forms were drafted by Jerry Brown, who was Secretary of State of California at the time. Since he failed to anticipate a candidate who neither accepted nor spent campaign funds, as a resourceful ex candidate, I decided to correct his oversight and devise my own form.

Owen pulls the notepad to him and begins writing. He's really getting into it

OWEN (V.O.)

My form stated it covered the time beginning with the file date and ending with the deadline to file my report. I declared under penalty of perjury I did not receive or spend any money on behalf of my candidacy.

Owen looks over his handiwork: looks good to him; he signs it with a flourish and puts it in an envelope, which he licks and seals.

OWEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I signed it and sent it to the registrar/recorder's office, confident that it would be accepted. I should have remembered I was

dealing with mindless bureaucracy..

CUT TO:

EXT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - ANGLE ON MAILBOX

The POSTMAN delivers mail to Owen's mailbox, including an official-looking envelope.

OWEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The registrar recorder sent back my homemade form, stating I had to use an official form.

Owen collects his mail, irked to see the letter from Mrs. Eaglebert of the registrar recorder's office. Jotting a quick note, he encloses it with the original form and RE-SEALS THE ENVELOPE.

OWEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I returned it with a statement that no *official* forms were available to report I didn't spend or receive any money... A few days later I received a phone call from Mrs. Eaglebert.

CUT TO:

INT. REGISTRAR RECORDER OFFICE - DAY - MRS. EAGLEBERT

State functionary Mrs. Eaglebert is on the phone with Owen. She appears to be someone whose entire life is steeped in bureaucracy - and mindless adherence to the rules. In short, she actually *looks* like a 'Mrs. Eaglebert'

MRS. EAGLEBERT

Your report is insufficient, Mr. Wilson. You must file official forms.

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY

OWEN

There aren't any official forms I can use, Mrs. Eaglebert.

MRS. EAGLEBERT

(on phone)

Use the short form, Mr. Wilson.

OWEN

Are you presuming to give me legal advice, Mrs. Eaglebert?

There's an exasperated SIGH on the other end of the line

OWEN (CONT'D)

Look, Mrs. Eaglebert, all I want to say is I haven't received or spent any campaign contributions because I've dropped out of the race, but neither of those forms allows me to do that.

MRS. EAGLEBERT

Mr. Wilson, you have to file one of those forms - if you don't, it's punishable by a fine of \$500 dollars and/or six months in jail.

Owen writes down the penalty on his notepad, then adds a big '?' question mark

OWEN (V.O.)

I wasn't getting through to her, so I simply re-sent my homemade form; she sent it back. This repeated itself a few times, but finally the fifth time the form wasn't returned.

Owen drafts another letter to Mrs. Eaglebert and puts it in an envelope

OWEN (V.O.)

I sent Mrs. Eaglebert stating she'd returned my form four times, but kept the last submission. She wrote back to say that California was not going to pay to return any more forms.

Owen reads Mrs. Eaglebert's letter and laughs. He files it away, glad to be done with the matter.

OWEN (V.O.)

I was relieved *that* was over, and resolved to stay as far away from politics as I could. But that was before I met the man who gave me a whole new taste for winning strategies - Assistant District Attorney Robert Sweet. He put the A-S-S in ASSistant District Attorney, let me tell you.

CUT TO:

INT. D.A.'S OFFICE - DAY - ANGLE ON ROBERT SWEET

Assistant District Attorney ROBERT SWEET, 40s, phones Owen. Despite his last name, the A.D.A. appears anything but sweet - if Mrs. Eaglebert looked like she breathed bureaucracy, A.D.A. Sweet looks like he thinks he invented the law.

SWEET

Hello, is this Owen Wilson?

OWEN (on phone)

Speaking.

Sweet sits back and puffs up; he's ready to rattle Owen's cage

SWEET

Mr. Wilson, my name is Robert Sweet; I am an Assistant District Attorney. I am calling you in my official capacity because you have failed to turn in your election funds disclosure forms.

INT: OWEN'S HOME - DAY

Hearing Sweet's tone and the reason for his call causes Owen to roll his eyes in disgust.

OWEN

Mr. Sweet, I...

SWEET (on phone)

Assistant District Attorney Sweet...

Owen rolls his eyes again - one of those...

OWEN

Mister Sweet, I filed my own form -
because I hadn't collected or spent
funds, and...

SWEET

(on phone)

Use the short form...

Owen looks away from the phone and up to the ceiling,
as if to say "give me strength"

OWEN (V.O.)

We went round and round on this point.
Sweet made six calls, trying to
convince me to file on the short form,
but I insisted there was nothing to
report. Eventually my patience
abandoned me and I told Sweet that
dealing with him was like jerking
off.

CUT TO:

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY

Owen barks the offending phrase into the phone and
hangs up, aggravated

INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Robert Sweet hears Owen's 'jerk off' comment and
reacts with a look at the phone handset, as if he can't
believe what he just heard. A scowl plays across his
face, and his jaw sets as he hangs up the phone.

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY

Owen hangs up the phone, looking pleased with himself
despite his agitation. Obviously the next move is
Sweet's.

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - ANOTHER ANGLE

Larry, passing by, hears Owen's angry phrase. Without thinking, he LAUGHS OUT LOUD.

Owen hears Larry through the open doorway.

OWEN
(to Larry)
Son, is that you?

Larry walks into the room, still grinning

LARRY
I'm sorry, dad, I wasn't
eavesdropping...

Owen takes in his son's face without expression;
then Owen's look turns into one of chagrin

OWEN
Of course not, Larry. Besides,
I think I said that loud enough
to offend the neighbors..

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - ANGLE ON OWEN

OWEN (CONT'D)
I wanted to apologize.

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - ANGLE ON LARRY

Larry's perplexed

LARRY
Apologize for what?

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - ANGLE ON OWEN

OWEN
You heard me on the phone. I
don't usually talk like that -
so I wanted to apologize to you.

Larry listens earnestly

OWEN (CONT'D)
Son, you know I like games - and
challenges.

LARRY
(volunteering)
Like chess!

OWEN
Exactly. (a beat) But games have
rules. And it's best to follow
them.

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - ANGLE ON LARRY

Larry is taking all this in

OWEN (CONT'D)
And one of those rules is 'state
your argument, but always be
civil.' I broke that rule...

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen muses about his 'jerk off' comment and
hides a smile only semi-successfully

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - ANGLE ON LARRY

Larry nods, also trying to avoid smiling. As he
turns to leave, he can't resist:

LARRY
Gotta say, though Dad, that what
I heard from your side of the
conversation?...

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen looks at Larry's departing figure

OWEN
What?

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - ANGLE ON LARRY

Larry is half out the door

LARRY
Not only did he sound like a

jerkoff, Dad - but a major
asshole as well...

Larry smirks as he leaves. Owen reacts to his
son's adult response, then nods his own silent
assent.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY

TWO GIANT DETECTIVES walk up to Owen's door and ring
the bell.

OWEN (V.O.)

Although it felt good to say that to
Sweet at the time, there was bound to
be price to pay. I just didn't realize
how much.

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY

Hearing the doorbell, Owen goes and opens the door.
The detectives practically fill the doorframe and
blot out the sunlight.

JOHNSON

Are you Owen Wilson?

OWEN

(warily)

Yes.

JOHNSON

I'm Larry Johnson and this is my
partner Neil Brogan. We're from the
District Attorneys' office. May we
come in?

OWEN

Of course.

The two enormous men enter Owen's living
room.

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - LIVING ROOM

JOHNSON

Mr. Wilson, we have a warrant for your arrest for violating the California Elections code. Please turn around and raise your hands above your head.

Owen complies with their request, and the men frisk him and read him his rights. From Owen's demeanor, he's not alarmed, but taking everything in.

OWEN (V.O.)

I was a bit nervous at first, because I had never been arrested before. They frisked me and read me my Miranda rights, and all the while never so much as cracked a smile.

Eventually the two detectives talk to Owen, offering advice.

OWEN (V.O.)

They suggested that I empty my pockets, and swap my boots for some slippers. They said it would be a lot easier on me that way when I got to jail.

Owen follows their advice, sliding on slippers as he talks on the phone.

CUT TO:

INT. LAW OFFICE - DAY - ANGLE ON ANNA

Anna works at her desk as a paralegal. The phone rings, and she picks it up. Hearing Owen's voice, her face brightens, but as he explains what's happening, she looks concerned, surprised, then she laughs

OWEN (V.O.)

They let me call Anna at her paralegal job. She laughed when I told her I was being arrested, and when I asked her to arrange for bail.

CUT TO:

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - LIVING ROOM

Owen, chagrined, speaks with Anna on the phone

INT. LAW OFFICE - DAY - ANGLE ON ANNA

ANNA

You'll be there for about five hours.
You can't get bailed out until you've
been booked in.

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - LIVING ROOM

His call finished, Owen is handcuffed and led to the
door

CUT TO:

INT. MEN'S JAIL - DAY

BOOKING MONTAGE

Owen gets a mug shot; front and profile as he holds
his booking number in front of him

Owen is fingerprinted. An OFFICER takes his fingers,
one by one, and inks and prints them. When done, he's
handed a paper towel to wipe off with

A wristband with a booking number is attached to
Owen's wrist

Taken to a large holding cell, Owen joins OTHER
PRISONERS in shedding all their clothes

GUARDS search the naked prisoners - *thoroughly*. Owen
observes a GUARD performing cavity searches, and
swallows hard when he realizes HE'S next...

INT. MEN'S JAIL - SHOWERS - DAY - ANTEROOM

Owen stands in a line of naked men waiting to use the
shower. Owen steps forward into the shower, under the
hot water.

As he rinses, a GUARD inside the room turns OFF the
hot water tap, leaving only COLD WATER. Owen YELPS
and leaps out of the stream. The guard, a born sadist,
CHORTLES.

INT. MEN'S JAIL - OUTSIDE SHOWERS - DAY

Owen is tossed a towel, using it to dry himself. Forced to walk one last corridor naked, Owen gets a blast of de-lousing powder before he's directed by another GUARD to his own cell, where a jail uniform awaits.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MEN'S JAIL - OWEN'S CELL - DAY - LATER

Owen sits on his thin jail bed. A GUARD calls out

GUARD

You made bail.

Owen rises and waits by the cell door

The Guard arrives, orders Owen to stand back, then opens the door and takes his arm

INT. MEN'S JAIL - RELEASE AREA - DAY

We can see from the light outside it's late afternoon. Anna waits as he exits the final set of jail doors. Oddly, he looks spiffed-up

ANNA

(laughing)

Did you get arrested, or go to a spa?

Owen displays his freshly-laundered clothes

OWEN

Freshly cleaned, at the taxpayer's expense. And all it cost *me* was my sense of pride... and dignity.

Anna smiles at his resilience - and ruffles his recently-combed hair

OWEN (V.O.)

Fortunately for me, Catholic school had done a great job of ridding me of pride, so I figure I got off cheap.

At least compared to Sweet - who abused his power by having me arrested - and was about to find out that some games have unwritten rules you break at your own peril...

EXT. ANNA'S CAR - DAY - MOVING

Anna drives out of the jail parking lot as Owen looks out the window, thinking

EXT. OWEN'S HOME - NIGHT

Owen and Anna exit the car and approach the door. It flings open, and Larry stands there, a big grin on his face; behind him, Bert stands silent.

LARRY

Hey Dad! Hi Mom. How was 'the big house,' Pop?

Anna smiles wanly. Owen just looks tired

OWEN

(shares a tired smile)
Nothing you'd want to experience, son...

Larry takes this in. Owen pats him on the shoulder as he holds the door open

Anna moves past into the house. She looks to Bert

ANNA

Thanks, Bert.

Bert offers a reassuring glance. No problem. Owen shares a look with Bert - not even a hint of a smile

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Owen shows up for his arraignment. The usual SEA OF HUMANITY is present. Rich. Poor. *Really poor.*

OWEN (V.O.)

My arraignment was just a few days later. To tell the truth, I couldn't wait for the chance to show Sweet for what he was: an obnoxious bully with a badge.

COURT CLERK

(reading from a clipboard)

The State of California versus Owen Wilson. Are the parties present?

Owen stands before the female JUDGE

OWEN

Owen Wilson, Judge

Sweet puffs up in front of the Judge

SWEET

Assistant District Attorney Robert Sweet, your honor...

The Judge recognizes Sweet's obsequious tone, but ignores it to address Owen

JUDGE

(to Owen)

Mr. Wilson, you are charged with (reads the brief) one count of violating the Waxman Dymally Campaign disclosure Act. How do you plead?

Owen looks the judge straight in the eye

OWEN

(firmly)

Not guilty, your Honor.

The judge raises an eyebrow; an elected judge, she knows of campaign reporting nonsense

JUDGE

Are you represented by counsel, Mr. Wilson?

OWEN

No Judge. I choose to represent myself.

The judge looks Owen over. His expression, his body language, his tone of voice all tell her one thing: this guy's serious

JUDGE

Mr. Wilson, I often find myself admonishing defendants against the policy of defending themselves in my courtroom.

Sweet smirks at Owen. Now you're in trouble..

Owen looks at the Judge. He's ready for a fight

The judge softens imperceptibly

JUDGE

But something tells me, Mr. Wilson, that you can handle yourself.

Owen sighs in relief, and even lets out a small smile

Sweet's smirk disappears

JUDGE

(CONT'D)

In fact, I suspect the State better keep on its toes around you, sir.
(Owen shuffles through documents)
You have made bail and lodged a plea; you are ordered to report to Department I on May 9th. (he bangs his gavel)

OWEN

(smiles)

Thank you, your honor. Thank you.

Owen gathers his papers and turns to leave

JUDGE

(to Owen)

And Mr. Wilson?

Owen turns back. Now what?

JUDGE

Good luck with your case..

Sweet takes this in - and winces

CUT TO:

INT. OWEN'S KITCHEN TABLE - NIGHT

Owen's hard at work in his 'legal mode.' He's re-reading the campaign laws as well as the California Penal Code, legal notebook at the ready.

OWEN (V.O.)

The key factor in this case was that the appropriate form simply didn't exist.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY - DEPARTMENT 10

OWEN (V.O.)

My court date arrived, so I reported to Department 10 for trial.

Owen walks into the courtroom and is met by the usual sight: a cross-section of HUMANITY.

Looking up at the bench, Owen is given pause: sitting as Judge in Department 10 is 'Big Red' Cromwell. And from the looks of things, Big Red had already built up some pressure

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY - DEPARTMENT 10 - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen's case is called by the CLERK

Owen stands before Judge Cromwell, who does not like non lawyers wasting his time. He reads Owen's file

Peering at Owen over the file, Judge Cromwell scowls

JUDGE CROMWELL

Mr. Wilson. (pause) Where is your attorney?

OWEN

I plan to represent myself, your honor.

'Big Red' treats the courtroom to a display of his scarlet visage and shakes his head

JUDGE CROMWELL

No sir. Not in my courtroom. You will NOT represent yourself. You will obtain representation and return to this courtroom (checks his schedule) next Friday at 9 AM.

Owen barely blinks. He'd anticipated something like this, and launches his next move...

OWEN

I can't afford an attorney.

'Big Red' grows one hue deeper; he sighs

JUDGE CROMWELL

The clerk will provide you with a financial statement to complete. Now please go away..

Owen does a take, then approaches the Court Clerk, who hands him the financial forms

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY - DEPARTMENT 10 - LATER

Owen submits his completed financial forms to Judge Cromwell

JUDGE CROMWELL

(looks up from form)

You can *more* than afford an attorney, Mr. Wilson.

Owen is impassive

OWEN

That's *your* opinion, Judge. I don't intend to spend a penny on this nonsense.

JUDGE CROMWELL

(can't believe this guy)
It's not *my opinion*, Mr. Wilson, it
is *the court's order*! Obtain
representation before you return to
my courtroom...

Judge Cromwell looks away as if to dismiss Owen, but
he's not moving

OWEN

(another move)

What are you telling me, Judge? Do you
think I'll find someone who will
represent me for free?

JUDGE CROMWELL

(now a deep shade of Burgundy)

I send people to jail all the time for
violating the court's orders.
(sarcastically) Why don't you test
me?

CUT TO:

INT. COUNTY LAW LIBRARY - DAY

Owen sits at a library table, a stack of law books
beside him.

OWEN (V.O.)

'Big Red''s order got me thinking, so
I went to the County Law Library where
I could find the legal ammunition I
needed to counter his move.

Owen reads something, making a note of it in his
customary legal pad

INT. COURTROOM - DAY - DEPARTMENT 10

Owen is back before Judge 'Big Red' Cromwell, who does
not look happy

JUDGE CROMWELL

Where is your attorney, Mr. Wilson?

OWEN

As I explained before, Judge: I can't
afford one.

Cromwell begins lighting up: pink, then red...

OWEN (CONT'D)

Furthermore, Judge, legal precedent establishes that the court cannot deny a mentally competent person the right to defend themselves.

BANG! Judge Cromwell interrupts him with his gavel

JUDGE CROMWELL

Fine! If that's all it takes, this court finds you mentally incompetent.

Owen reacts. He knows the Judge just committed a reversible error and no matter how this case turns out, it will surely be reversed by a higher court.

JUDGE CROMWELL

(patronizingly)

Mr. Wilson. Do you remember my order to obtain representation?

OWEN

I do, Judge.

JUDGE CROMWELL

So, can you offer a good reason why I should not find you guilty of violating the court's order - and have you placed in jail?!

'Big Red' is moving up the spectrum: crimson, scarlet... Owen's calmness seems to irritate the Judge

OWEN

I can, your honor. I believe the court would be abusing its discretion.

'Big Red' is ready to blow. He bangs his gavel

JUDGE CROMWELL

The court orders a public defender be assigned to defend Mr. Wilson. So ruled!

OWEN

But I don't want a public defender.

I wish to represent myself..

'Big Red,' now practically magenta, points to public defender ANDERSON, 30s, who is there for another case

JUDGE CROMWELL

(pointing)

Mister Anderson! You are appointed to represent Mr. Wilson.

Anderson looks up from his own CLIENT. Say what?

ANDERSON

(surprised)

I beg your pardon, your honor, but...

'Big Red,' practically incandescent, cuts him off

JUDGE CROMWELL

You have no choice in the matter. Now meet with your client in the hallway to discuss the case.

Owen and Anderson, both a bit stunned, look at each other and head to the exit. Anderson's client looks around, bewildered. Anderson shoots him a signal: 'thumbs up.' The client blinks

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY - HALLWAY

Owen and Anderson exit 'Big Red''s courtroom, Department 10

OWEN

(offers his hand)

Owen Wilson.

ANDERSON

(shakes his hand)

Walter Anderson. May I see your financial file?

Owen hands him the paperwork. Anderson scans it

ANDERSON

Owen, you don't qualify for public assistance. (pause) We have to tell Judge Cromwell this..

OWEN

(tentatively)
I don't know about that. You see, he's
pretty mad...

Anderson ignores Owen and walks back into the courtroom

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY - DEPARTMENT 10

Judge Cromwell looks up as Anderson re-enters the
courtroom just shortly after he'd exited it. This can't
be good

ANDERSON
Your honor, this man clearly does not
qualify for public assistance.

'Big Red' looks like his head is going to explode.
He bangs his gavel repeatedly

JUDGE CROMWELL
(sputtering mad)
I DO NOT WANT TO HEAR IT! There will
be a hearing after the trial to
determine Mr. Wilson's ability to
compensate the county for its
assistance.

'Big Red' stares bullets at Anderson and Owen

JUDGE CROMWELL (CONT'D)
This case is assigned to Judge
Nielson in Department 102. Now, both
of you: get out of here! (bangs gavel)

Owen and Anderson make another break for the exit.
Realizing he's abandoning his client for a second
time, Anderson does the only thing he can think of:
he looks at the man, smiles, and gives the same hollow
'thumbs-up' gesture before disappearing

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY - HALLWAY

Owen turns to Anderson

OWEN
Sorry about that. But since we're
stuck together, I'd like to direct
how the case will go.

Anderson is taken aback

ANDERSON

I can't allow that...

Owen turns as if to return into the courtroom

OWEN

Well, we'll just see what Judge
Cromwell says...

ANDERSON

(urgently)

Wait!

Anderson considers. He can't go through THAT again
with 'Big Red,' he's got cases before him

Owen pauses at the courtroom door

ANDERSON

(resigned)

OK. You direct the case. What did you
have in mind?

Owen smiles, then leans in conspiratorially

OWEN

A motion to dismiss on the grounds of
'selective prosecution.' Do you
think I'm the ONLY candidate who
didn't file the required paperwork?

Anderson considers this - and smiles

ANDERSON

Ah, I see where you're going with
this. I'll get started on the motion
when I'm back in my office.

Owen gathers his paperwork and shakes Anderson's hand.
Suddenly Anderson makes a face

OWEN

What's wrong?

ANDERSON

I just remembered... I've got to go back

in there.

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY - HALLWAY - ANGLE ON DOOR

Anderson looks at the courtroom door; seen through a small window in the door, Anderson's client looks out at him, appearing very, very alone

CUT TO:

INT. OWEN'S HOME - NIGHT

Owen eats dinner when the phone RINGS. He gets up and answers it

OWEN
(into phone)

Hello?

PHONE VOICE
Owen, it's Walt Anderson calling. Are you sitting down?

Standing at the phone, Owen looks back at his chair

OWEN
Well, I was, Walt, because it's dinner time. Then I had to get up to *answer the phone...*

Anderson gets it and cuts to the chase

ANDERSON
(through phone)
Your theory of selective prosecution is a winner.

Owen smiles and listens

ANDERSON (CONT'D)
(through phone)
I checked to see if there were other candidates who didn't file the financial reporting paperwork...

OWEN
...and you found a few, right?

The response is so loud Owen has to hold the phone

away

ANDERSON (CONT'D)
(through phone)
A FEW?! TRY SIXTEEN HUNDRED!!

Owen takes this in; he's thinking ahead

OWEN
That many?

ANDERSON (CONT'D)
(through phone)
I've got the names of all the people
who never filed or filed late. We'll
file for a dismissal.

Owen smiles and hangs up the phone, still thinking

CUT TO:

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY - DEPARTMENT 102

Owen and Anderson enter the courtroom. They look
around, and see JUDGE NIELSON, 50s, on the bench.

ANDERSON
(quietly, to Owen)
Judge Nielson. Good. He's fair.

Owen reacts to this. They continue scanning the room,
and both stop on A.D.A. Bob Sweet at the same time

ANDERSON (CONT'D)
Uh-oh.

After a beat, Owen adds

OWEN
Buckle up. This is going to get
interesting...

Sweet glares over at Owen. Anderson does his best to
disappear

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY - DEPARTMENT 102 - ANGLE ON
JUDGE

Judge Nielson reads the motion to dismiss

JUDGE NIELSON

(looks up)

I'm not going to allow this motion...

Owen and Anderson exchange looks - sounds like they're screwed

Sweet develops a Cheshire grin

JUDGE NIELSON (CONT'D)

Mr. Wilson seems to have enough going for him without worrying about this issue.

Owen and Anderson re-exchange looks - are they un-screwed?

Sweet loses his smile post-haste

JUDGE NIELSON (CONT'D)

(checks his schedule)

As luck would have it, I am available at 1 PM today to hear this case if you choose to proceed immediately.

The judge peers over his horn-rimmed glasses at Owen and Anderson. Anderson is freaked out, but Owen gets it.

Sweet watches everything with a look of disorientation

OWEN

May I confer with counsel, your honor?

Judge Nielson waves his assent

Owen turns around and hunches toward Anderson

OWEN

(quietly)

He'll hear the case today. We should seize the momentum.

ANDERSON

(wary)

No! We'll want a jury trial...

OWEN

We've got the advantage here, it's obvious. Let's go today. (looks around, sees Sweet watching) And Nielson could dismiss, but won't; he wants to hear this for some reason.

ANDERSON

(urgently, in a whisper)

No! We need to prepare...

OWEN

(interrupting, to Judge)

We'll be ready at 1 PM, your honor!

Judge Nielson nods. Anderson swallows. Sweet just looks confounded

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY - DEPARTMENT 102 - LATER

Judge Nielson holds court. Owen and his 'attorney,' Anderson, sit across from A.D.A. Sweet, who is questioning the state's witness, registrar-recorder functionary Mrs. Eaglebert

SWEET

So it is your testimony that Mr. Wilson failed to file a proper campaign financial disclosure report.

MRS. EAGLEBERT

Yes it is. My testimony, I mean.

Sweet relinquishes his witness with a 'she's all yours' arm gesture to Anderson

ANDERSON

Mrs. Eaglebert, can you tell me what you do with improper disclosure reports?

MRS. EAGLEBERT
Well, we return them, of course.

ANDERSON
You send them back to the candidate,
in other words?

MRS. EAGLEBERT
Yes.

ANDERSON
So you sent Mr. Wilson back his
so-called 'self-created form,'
right?

MRS. EAGLEBERT
(pleasantly)
That's right.

ANDERSON
How many times?

MRS. EAGLEBERT
How many times... what?

ANDERSON
How many times did you send Mr. Wilson
back his self-created form.

MRS. EAGLEBERT
Oh. Four times.

She looks at Owen sternly. You rascal! Owen smiles

ANDERSON
Thank you Mrs. Eaglebert. Just one
more question...

Here it comes

ANDERSON (CONT'D)
How many times did Mr. Wilson send in
his 'special' form?

She checks her notes and answers happily

MRS. EAGLEBERT

Five.

Owen smiles. Judge Nielson straightens up. A.D.A. Sweet looks ill. Only Mrs. Eaglebert remains blissfully ignorant

ANDERSON

Five times. And you returned it four times?

Even Mrs. Eaglebert has figured it out now

MRS. EAGLEBERT

Well, yes. But we weren't going to waste the taxpayer's money doing this forever - after all, we knew he'd just send it back.

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY - DEPARTMENT 102 - ANGLE ON OWEN

In violation of courtroom decorum, Owen rises and stands beside Anderson

OWEN

Mrs. Eaglebert, where did you take your mind-reading classes?!

Sweet shoots out of his chair

SWEET

(agitated)

Objection, your honor!

Judge Nielson shoots Owen a harsh look and bangs his gavel

JUDGE NIELSON

Sustained. Mr. Wilson, please allow counsel to examine the witness and refrain from doing so yourself.

Owen looks like a guilty Catholic schoolboy, but feels better when Judge Nielson lightens into a slight smile

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY - DEPARTMENT 102 - LATER

Owen is on the witness stand, being questioned by Anderson, who stands nearby

OWEN

I think it boils down to this: whoever created the campaign disclosure act forms goofed: they didn't anticipate a total of zero. That's it, pure and simple: somebody was shortsighted - and nobody wants to admit it.

ANDERSON

Thank you, Mr. Wilson

Anderson returns to his seat

JUDGE NIELSON

(to Sweet)

Your witness, Mr. Assistant District Attorney.

Judge Nielson sits back and waits for the show to start

Sweet takes a deep breath, and rises to question Owen

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY - DEPARTMENT 102

Sweet looks at Owen. Owen looks back

SWEET

Mr. Wilson, do you understand why you are here today? You, sir, are in violation of the Waxman-Dymally Campaign Disclosure Act. This is a serious matter.

Sweet looks at Owen, but is thrown to see Owen smiling back

SWEET (CONT'D)

Failure to file a campaign disclosure is punishable..

Owen plays his trump card, interrupting

OWEN

Really, that's why I'm here? I just assumed it was because I said that dealing with you was like jerking off

LAUGHS are stifled all over the COURTROOM

Sweet's face gets so red it makes 'Big Red's face look pale

SWEET

(shouting to the judge)

OBJECTION!!

Judge Nielson does everything he can to avoid smiling

JUDGE NIELSON

Sustained. (to Owen) Mr. Wilson, let's keep our comments on a higher level.

Pleased with himself, Owen nods as Sweet seethes

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY - DEPARTMENT 102 - LATER

Anderson, Owen and Sweet stand before Judge Nielson

JUDGE NIELSON

Mr. Wilson, I thank you for a very interesting case. And I wish I could find you guilty so that a higher court could take a look at this matter.

Anderson is sweating. Owen is on alert. Sweet's smiling

JUDGE NIELSON (CONT'D)

But Mr. Wilson's letters to the registrar-recorder - and his clever 'self-created form' bring up issues that point to bureaucratic mistakes, not intentional violation of campaign law.

Anderson is rallying. Owen's brightening. Sweet is

drooping

JUDGE NIELSON (CONT'D)

And we cannot ignore the fact that the registrar-recorder's office retained the last form Mr. Wilson sent in.

Anderson is smiling. Owen is smiling. Sweet isn't

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY - DEPARTMENT 102 - ANGLE ON JUDGE

JUDGE NIELSON (CONT'D)

In light of these facts, the defendant is found... not guilty.
(bangs the gavel)

Sweet practically sways on his feet

SWEET

(lamely)

But, your honor... The form wasn't correct...

The Judge starts to leave the bench, then turns and looks directly at Sweet

JUDGE NIELSON

Mr. Sweet, how many times do you have to hear 'zero' before you realize the amount was zero?! I don't care if he wrote it on the back of a Denny's menu - he was clear that he never had any money to disclose.

Grasping at straws, Sweet gains a sense of urgency

SWEET

Your honor... There is supposed to be a hearing to determine Mr. Wilson's ability to compensate the county for defending him!

Judge Nielson looks incredulously at Sweet, then at Owen, who appears eager for the fight

JUDGE NIELSON

Really, Mr. Sweet? Really? Take a
look at Mr. Wilson...

If Owen had a bit, he'd be champing at it

JUDGE NIELSON

I think you should cut your losses,
counselor.

Sweet looks down. Stick a fork in him, he's done.

Judge Nielson bangs his gavel and leaves the bench.

Owen and Anderson exchange handshakes and
back-slaps. Looking over at Sweet, Owen blows him a
kiss, and Sweet fumes and storms out of the courtroom

FADE OUT

SLOW DISSOLVE

EXT: CENTER CITY - DAY - 1955

Center City is a small town, with PEOPLE mowing their
lawns, driving to the store, living normal lives.

OWEN
(V.O.)

Center City was once a beautiful city
in the county of Los Angeles under the
control of county ordinances. I
remember it from years ago when I was
a boy; my grandfather built four
houses there.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: CENTER CITY - DAY - PRESENT

We hardly recognize the place. Center City is
completely developed. Prominent in our view is a
MOBILE HOME PARK.

OWEN (V.O.)

A few years ago, a group of men
decided to incorporate the town. See,

if they did that, they could control the town by adopting ordinances to suit themselves. They got a measure on the ballot, and won.

EXT. MOBILE HOME PARK - DAY

Owen's mobile home park is a throwback to the Center City of old: tended mini-lawns, NEIGHBORS chatting at streetside. A small GARBAGE TRUCK, driven by TOM WOODMAN, 40s, passes by and the neighbors wave.

OWEN
(V.O.)

Before Center City's incorporation, I built a mobile home park with streets designed to accept small garbage trucks. Tom Woodman had been my trash collector since the park was built.

EXT. MOBILE HOME PARK - DAY - ANOTHER ANGLE

Owen stands by the side of the road, talking to Tom as he works picking up trash.

CUT TO:

INT. CITY COUNCIL MEETING - NIGHT

The Center City council meets. Young MAYOR STUART BARKER, 30s, appears confused, as council members SHIPLEY, JACOBSEN, JOHNSON and BRADBURY look bored - but somehow shifty at the same time.

OWEN (V.O.)

Then the city decided to award a trash collection contract to Highjack disposal, a huge political contributor.

INT. CITY COUNCIL MEETING - NIGHT - ANOTHER ANGLE

BUSINESS OWNERS crowd the council chambers. CHATTER fills the room. The mayor calls the meeting to order

MAYOR BARKER
Kindly come to order...

EVERYONE, including the council members .

BARKER (CONT'D)

(shouting)

Will everybody please sit down!

People eventually take their seats.

A brief montage:

The SECRETARY calls the roll and reads the last meeting's minutes.

The Mayor discusses the agenda

Council members vote with varying degrees of interest

INT. CITY COUNCIL MEETING - NIGHT - LATER

MAYOR BARKER

The next item on the agenda is 'Shall the city award a contract to Hijack Disposal Service to pick up all the garbage and rubbish accumulating within the city limits?' The subject is now open for discussion. Do the council members wish to address this matter?

He looks at the council members; No council members wish to speak.

BARKER (CONT'D)

Does anyone in the audience wish to speak on this issue?

PEOPLE form a line behind the lectern.

INT. CITY COUNCIL MEETING - NIGHT - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen looks at his watch. It is 11:00 pm.. He rolls his eyes

INT. CITY COUNCIL MEETING - NIGHT - ANGLE ON LECTERN

A CITIZEN speaks at the lectern

STROMBERG

I'm Dick Stromberg and I live on Elm

Street. Is it true collection fees will nearly double with Hijack? What's wrong with our current collection service? I hope you will vote against Hijack.

INT. CITY COUNCIL MEETING - NIGHT - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen watches a LINE OF PEOPLE voice objections, noting defiant HAND WAVES, SHAKING HEADS and FOLDED ARMS. At 12:15 it is finally Owen's turn. He steps to the lectern. Council member Shipley WHISPERS SOMETHING to Barker.

Mayor Barker holds out his hand to Owen as if to say "stop!"

BARKER

Mr. Wilson, only city residents are entitled to speak on this matter. Will you please sit down?

OWEN

(knows his rights)

I'm fully entitled to speak on this matter. I don't live in the city but I own a business here.

Barker sighs and looks at his watch

BARKER

(relenting)

OK, but keep your comments short.

OWEN

I'll bet anyone in this room one thousand dollars that, regardless of objections, Hijack will win the contract. You're wasting our time..

The council members begin to look uneasy

OWEN (CONT'D)

Why not just admit that most of the council received campaign contributions from Hijack?

If the council members looked uneasy before, now they

look stricken

OWEN (CONT'D)

Let me predict the future (makes a 'magic' gesture) Shipley, Jacobson and you, Mr. Mayor, will vote FOR the contract. I can't be sure of Bradbury and Johnson. But you three are very predictable. Call for the vote so we can all go to bed.

The remaining AUDIENCE APPLAUDS, and it takes a while for the mayor to regain order

BARKER

Will the clerk please call the roll?

The CLERK calls the roll for a vote

CLERK

Mr. Shipley?

SHIPLEY

Yes.

CLERK

Mr. Bradbury?

BRADBURY

No.

CLERK

Mr. Johnson?

JOHNSON

No.

CLERK

Mayor Barker?

BARKER

Yes.

CLERK

Mr. Jacobson?

JACOBSON

Yes.

BARKER

The vote is three yes and two no. The contract is awarded to Hijack Disposal Service.

Barker pounds his gavel. Owen was absolutely right

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOBILE HOME PARK - DAY

A giant GARBAGE TRUCK with a 'Hijack!' logo on its side pulls into the mobile home park.

A pair of chatting NEIGHBORS see the truck belching exhaust and running across the edges of lawns as it does its rounds. They stop talking and just stare

CUTAWAY: THE MOBILE HOME PARK'S ASPHALT STREET IS DAMAGED

EXT. MOBILE HOME PARK - DAY

Owen oversees the construction of a trash area holding large dumpsters

OWEN (V.O.)

Sure enough, within six months there were problems with Hijack. Their huge trucks broke down the asphalt in my driveways. They were so big they couldn't get onto the small streets, so I had to set up a special trash area where the residents had to empty their trash.

EXT. MOBILE HOME PARK - DAY

It's a hot, sunny day. Another giant Hijack! Garbage truck pulls into the mobile home park and up to the trash area. The truck's tires leave tracks in the soft asphalt.

OWEN (V.O.)

It was 98 degrees outside and Hijack ignored my request to use a forklift to carry the trash containers out to the street.

EXT. MOBILE HOME PARK - DAY - LATER

Owen, along with the chatting neighbors, looks at the damaged roadway. *His* roadway.

OWEN (V.O.)

I called Hijack and insisted they use a smaller truck - *and* repair my roads. That's when the owner of Hijack began dodging my calls. So, I decided to play his game: I stopped paying his bills.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOBILE HOME PARK - DAY - SOME TIME LATER

It's clear time has passed. The trash area at the mobile home park is looking pretty full - and plenty smelly.

OWEN (V.O.)

After six months, Hijack finally sued me in the Municipal Court of California. My previous experience in court made me confident I could avoid having to hire an attorney.

INT. OWEN'S HOME - NIGHT

Owen sits at the kitchen table, poring over a law tome. Occasionally he makes notes in a legal pad, but mostly he reads. *Carefully*.

OWEN (V.O.)

I argued that Hijack Disposal never had a contract with me, so they couldn't sue me. They had a contract with the city that required the citizens to pay Hijack.

Owen finds a passage that really catches his interest;

he grabs the notepad and begins writing furiously

OWEN (V.O.)

I discovered since trash collection fees are imposed on *all* property, the fees are effectively a tax. So I requested a transfer to the Superior Court which handled all matters involving taxes.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUPERIOR COURTHOUSE - DAY

Owen leaves the courthouse looking pleased. The Score? Hijack 0, Owen 1

EXT. MOBILE HOME PARK - DAY

It's another sunny day. Trash is piling up, and so are flies and odors

OWEN (V.O.)

Hijack found themselves in a bind. They had a contract to pick up all the trash within the city. When I quit paying Hijack, the city came to their rescue and authorized them to quit picking up my trash.

EXT. MOBILE HOME PARK - DAY - LATER

Owen talks to Tom Woodman about the growing trash area. Business details settled, they shake hands

OWEN (V.O.)

The courts move slowly, but the trash and garbage really began pose a problem. At odds, I hired my former trash collector, Tom.

CUT TO:

INT. CITY COUNCIL MEETING - NIGHT

The City Council has just voted

MAYOR BARKER

(banging his gavel)
So passed: no garbage shall be
allowed to accumulate for a
period of more than 7 days
within city limits.

Barker looks directly at Owen, who sits in the
AUDIENCE

EXT. MOBILE HOME PARK - DAY - TRASH AREA

OWEN (V.O.)

The city also passed an emergency
ordinance making it unlawful for
anyone except Hijack to collect
garbage. If you violated this, it was
punishable by a \$500 fine and/or six
months in jail. Unfortunately, Tom
was out of business - again.

Owen stands by the garbage, stroking his chin in
thought. Suddenly one comes to him: a clever one. He
smiles, then wrinkles his nose and bats the air as
the smell wafts his way.

EXT. MOBILE HOME PARK - DAY - LATER

Owen stands by the trash area with L.A. Health
Inspector RAY STAFFORD. Ray eyes the garbage

OWEN (V.O.)

I had accumulated a lot of garbage so
I invited Ray Stafford, a friend at
the Los Angeles County Health
Department, to come by.

OWEN

Ray, the city stopped my garbage
collection services because I
refused to pay Hijack Disposal
Service their collection fees.

RAY

Why don't you pay?

OWEN

These streets weren't built to
accommodate large trucks like those

Hijack uses. Look how they damaged my roads.

Ray notes the ruts in the driveway. Owen makes his move

OWEN (CONT'D)

So, Ray, what are you going to do about all this trash? I think you should cite me for this.

Owen stops short of winking, but Ray knows where he's going with this

RAY

(officially)

How about if I give you an order to remove it forthwith?"

OWEN

Great. And if I don't comply?

RAY

It is a misdemeanor punishable by a \$500 fine and or six months in jail.

OWEN

(grinning)

So, if I don't remove it I will be in violation of the law?

RAY

That's right.

OWEN

And if I do remove it, I will also be in violation of the law because of the city council's emergency ordinance.

RAY

(laughing)

How are you going to get out of this one, Owen?

We can see Owen thinking out his next move

EXT. MOBILE HOME PARK - DAY

Owen, doing his best not to breathe, loads two large garbage cans with reeking garbage from the trash area

OWEN (V.O.)

At that point I realized that a criminal gets quicker justice than a law abiding citizen. If the only way to settle this thing was to force the city to prosecute me, I'd oblige them. It's what I call 'self-help.'

Owen wheels the garbage cans one at a time to his pickup truck on a hand dolly. After tossing the dolly in the back as well, he closes the back hatch and climbs in the driver's seat.

OWEN (V.O.)

I was looking forward to getting arrested. I believed no court would find me guilty - plus I could chastise the city for its behavior.

EXT. CITY HALL - DAY

It's a hot, sunny day. Owen drives up in front of the City Hall building and quickly loads one garbage can on his dolly, then wheels it toward the entrance.

INT. CITY HALL LOBBY - DAY

Owen wheels his dolly and its cargo into the lobby. At the receptionist desk sits MARJORIE BIDLER, 60s.

OWEN

(pleasantly)

Good morning, Marge.

MARJORIE

Hi Owen.

Marjorie looks at the dolly quizzically

MARJORIE (CONT'D)

What's up?

OWEN

(matter of factly)

I'm here to get arrested

Owen TIPS THE GARBAGE CAN ONTO THE FLOOR; smelly garbage is everywhere

OWEN (CONT'D)

Better call the City Manager

Surprised, Marjorie calls, eyeing the mess

Owen waits calmly for the CITY MANAGER. When he arrives, he takes one look at the mess and summons the SHERIFF from a nearby office.

INT. CITY HALL LOBBY - DAY - ANOTHER ANGLE

Owen stands with the City Manager and the Sheriff beside the smelly pile of garbage.

SHERIFF

What's going on here, Wilson? You know you just broke the law.

OWEN

(sarcastically)

Well, I suppose you had better do your job and arrest me, then...

The Sheriff exchanges looks with the City Manager. Say what?

Owen, upping the ante, extends his wrists for handcuffs

The Sheriff actually *takes a step back*. It's clear he's on guard, but doesn't know what Owen's up to

Seeing the Sheriff's response, the City Manager turns to Owen

CITY MANAGER

Look here, Wilson. I don't know what you're up to, but I'm going to overlook this matter this time. But don't do it again.

OWEN

What would happen if I did?

CITY MANAGER

I would have the sheriff arrest you for illegal dumping.

OWEN

Is that a promise?

CITY MANAGER

You can count on it.

OWEN

(smiling)

Great. Wait here.

Owen turns and leaves with his dolly. As he does, Marjorie shoots him a smile. She knows the score

The City Manager and Sheriff are still talking when Owen wheels another garbage can into the lobby. Stopping in front of them, he slowly, deliberately dumps the contents onto the lobby floor beside the other pile

OWEN (CONT'D)

There, I did it again. Now arrest me.
(waits) Go ahead.

The City Manager and the Sheriff exchange looks. Owen called their bluff. Both look down, unable to meet Owen's glare.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Look, I'm leaving now - I'll leave my trash cans here so you can pick up all this stuff. Call me when they're empty and I'll come back and get them. And if they're damaged, I'll sue the city!

Owen rolls to the exit with his dolly. Smiling Marjorie looks at the City Manager and Sheriff, who scratch their heads: what just happened?

CUT TO:

INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Owen arrives at the District Attorney's office.

OWEN (V.O.)

I got a call from the District Attorney's office, asking to meet.

INT. D.A.'S OFFICE - DAY - RECEPTION AREA

Owen walks up to a cute RECEPTIONIST

OWEN

Excuse me. I'm Owen Wilson. I
have a 3 PM meeting with the
D.A..

The receptionist reacts, both to Owen's name and
his appointment

RECEPTIONIST

The District Attorney was
called away on urgent business.
Could you wait for just a
minute, Mr. Wilson?

The receptionist gestures to nearby chairs. As
Owen sits, she grabs the phone and punches a
short extension

RECEPTIONIST

(urgent phone whisper)
The D.A.'s 3 PM is here.

The receptionist hangs up the phone, then looks
to Owen and flashes a big smile. Owen returns
it, confused

INT. D.A.'S OFFICE - DAY - RECEPTION AREA

A set of approaching FOOTSTEPS can be HEARD. A
throat clears, then, from behind Owen...

SWEET

Owen Wilson?

Owen's heard that voice before... He practically
shoots out of his chair and turns

OWEN

Mister Sweet?!

It IS A.D.A. Sweet. And he looks miserable to
be dealing with Owen again

SWEET
Assistant District Attorney
Sweet.

Owen grabs Sweet's hand and shakes it. He's legitimately happy to see his old nemesis.

OWEN
(pumping his hand)
It's good to see you, Mr. Sweet!
Now I'm sure we can straighten
this thing out!

Sweet pulls his hand back, wary of Owen's friendliness. He still remembers their last dance...

CUT TO:

INT. A.D.A. SWEET'S OFFICE - DAY

The men sit in Sweet's office. Sweet is all business, but Owen's going to have fun

SWEET
In the D.A.'s absence, I'll be
dealing with your case. Exactly why
did you want to get arrested, Mr.
Wilson?

OWEN
Someone needs to straighten this city
out. I'm being told I can't even
remove my own garbage from my own
property.

Sweet tries to 'lay down the law'

SWEET
It's against city ordinance to have
trash spilling onto the streets.
That's why we contracted with Hijack.

At the mention of Hijack, Owen stands up

OWEN
Sweet, I'd bet I know the law better

than you do by now. Let me do you a favor: come to my mobile home park at nine o'clock tomorrow morning, and you'll witness me removing all my garbage and taking it to the dump - in violation of the law. I'll give you the best case against me you ever had.

Sweet's eyes dart back and forth. Could it be *that* easy?

SWEET

There are serious consequences to breaking the law, sir.

At the door, Owen turns over his shoulder

OWEN

(smiles back)

So come in the morning and see me committing a crime.

Sweet is speechless

OWEN (CONT'D)

Don't disappoint me, Sweet. I'll be looking for you tomorrow morning.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOBILE HOME PARK - DAY

Owen and Tom Woodman load the smelly garbage into Tom's small garbage truck. Occasionally Owen looks at his watch, then scans the horizon

OWEN (V.O.)

But, Sweet did disappoint me. Tom showed up early the next morning and we loaded the garbage into his truck. I stopped him as he climbed into the cab.

OWEN

If you don't mind, Tom, I'll drive. I don't want you to get a ticket for illegally transporting trash over

the city streets.

INT. TOM'S GARBAGE TRUCK - DAY - MOVING

Owen drives to the dump, continually looking in the mirror to see if anyone from the city is following, but nobody is.

OWEN (V.O.)

Nobody followed me. In fact, it seemed like they'd given up on me now that I *wanted* to be arrested - but I still had some other moves left..

CUT TO:

INT. CITY COUNCIL MEETING - NIGHT

Same old, same old: the City Council chambers contains a rag-tag group of PEOPLE: residents, businesspeople, even newspaper reporter LARRY BRADLEY. OWEN sits off to the side beside friends AL and MARY MALOOF, 60s

OWEN (V.O.)

People couldn't wait to tell their problems with Hijack.

Mary fills Owen in on her experience with Hijack

OWEN (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

Mary owned an apartment building in the city, but Hijack's high fees had hurt her financially. When she couldn't afford to keep paying, the city kept her garbage collection running. When she told me that, I couldn't wait to confront the City Council.

INT. CITY COUNCIL MEETING - NIGHT

Owen is at the lectern, addressing the city council. The council members and the mayor barely conceal their disdain

OWEN

Can you explain why her garbage is still being picked up and mine isn't?

BARKER

(dripping with sarcasm)

Well, Mr. Wilson, I guess her garbage is different than yours.

OWEN

You know, Mr. Mayor, I was hoping you'd say just that. Please don't go anywhere.

With that, Owen dashes up the center aisle and out of the room; the mayor and council members look to each other.

INT. CITY COUNCIL MEETING - NIGHT - REAR OF ROOM

The doors Owen exited through swing back open as Owen pushes a GARBAGE CAN on his trusty dolly. He wheels it up in front of the council members and removes the lid with a flourish, like a waiter presenting a dish.

INT. CITY COUNCIL MEETING - ANGLE ON COUNCIL

The STINK hits everyone immediately

OWEN

Mr. Mayor? Esteemed council members? Would you care to tell me how my garbage differs from that you pick up for free?

The council members and the mayor sputter even as their eyes water. Mayor Barker bangs his gavel.

In the audience, Larry Bradley scribbles furiously into his reporter's notebook, taking it all in

OWEN (V.O.)

Needless to say, my invitation to compare garbage wasn't appreciated.

It got me more fans in the local press, but my garbage stayed where it was.

CUTAWAY: NEWSPAPER ARTICLE: "LOCAL MAN TALKS TRASH TO COUNCIL"

OWEN (V.O.)

And - the council later passed an ordinance banning large containers in chambers. Day late and a dollar short, if you ask me...

CUT TO:

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY

The doorbell RINGS, and Owen answers the door. A YOUNG MAN stands there.

YOUNG MAN

Are you Owen Wilson?

OWEN

(pleasantly)

One and the same.

The man hands Owen a summons. He's a process server

YOUNG MAN

Have a nice day.

The process server leaves. Owen looks at the summons: Hijack is suing

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - LATER

Owen works at his 'law desk,' aka kitchen table. A legal reference book is nearby. Owen writes in his ubiquitous yellow legal pad

OWEN (V.O.)

Since Hijack was suing me for non-payment, I filed a cross-complaint against them and the city for the damage Hijack did to my mobile home park's streets.

INT. AL & MARY MALOOF'S HOME - DAY

Owen sits on the couch with friends Mary and Al Maloof's living room and talks with them

OWEN (V.O.)

I included Mary and Al Maloof as cross complainants because Hijack was running roughshod over them, too.

CUT TO:

CUTAWAY: LEGAL NOTICE OF TAKING DEPOSITION

INT. OWEN'S HOME - NIGHT

Owen holds the notice. He is going to be deposed, along with Al and Mary.

OWEN

(on phone)

Yes, Al. I got the same notice. It just means they'll ask us questions on the record. Don't worry, it'll be fun. We'll carpool.

EXT. AL & MARY MALOOF'S CAR - DAY - MOVING

Owen rides with Al and Mary, heading to the District Attorney's office. They do NOT look intimidated

INT. D.A.'S OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Owen, Al and Mary sit in the conference room along with a female COURT REPORTER, there to take down what is said. A.D.A Robert Sweet walks in a moment later.

SWEET

(condescendingly)

Mr. Wilson, I would like you and Mr. Maloof to wait in the next room while I depose Mrs. Maloof.

Owen is surprised by this request. But he's not falling for it

OWEN

Why don't we do this correctly, Mr. Sweet? Identify yourself to the reporter so she can start a record. Then, make all the ridiculous demands you want.

The reporter starts the record as all identify themselves. On the record, Sweet again demands that Al and Owen exit

SWEET

(raises an eyebrow)

Mr. Wilson? Mr. Maloof?

Drake gestures for them to leave

OWEN

You can ask all you want, but I refuse to leave the room. I am my own attorney in this matter and, as such, I have a right to be present during all stages of these proceedings.

Sweet is silent. Mary and Al look at Owen, then back at each other. This guy's good

MARY

(stifling a smile)

I am my own attorney as well.

AL

Likewise, Mister Sweet.

Sweet glowers at their defiant responses. He tries again

SWEET

If you don't leave the room I am calling off the deposition and will apply to the court for sanctions.

OWEN

(eyes his notes)

Mr. Sweet, look up 2019g of the Code of Civil Procedure and 777 of the Evidence Code; you will find we are all entitled to be present as you

depose any of us.

SWEET

I don't need you to tell me how to practice law, Mr. Wilson. I am the attorney. You're not. This deposition is terminated.

Sweet picks up his material and departs the room. Owen looks at the court reporter and shakes his head

OWEN

(to court reporter)

I'd like a copy of that record, such as it is...

The court reporter smiles at Owen

COURT REPORTER

Of course. (she looks around, sees Sweet's gone) And you're right... He didn't have cause to terminate the deposition. I'm not an attorney either - but I do know that much.

Owen smiles back

CUT TO:

EXT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - ANGLE ON MAILBOX

An official-looking letter is put in Owen's mailbox

OWEN (V.O.)

About three weeks later, another Notice of Taking Depositions arrived. Obviously, Sweet had looked up the law and realized I was right.

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY

Owen is back at his kitchen 'law desk,' the ubiquitous yellow legal pad and legal by his side

OWEN (V.O.)

I'd learned you could file any request, or motion, with the Court

just long as it had a proper face page. What that means is that even a comic book could be filed. So I filed something called 'Motion that Sanctions be Paid before Depositions are Taken.'

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen is writing his motion. He is nearly gleeful

CUTAWAY: "MOTION THAT SANCTIONS BE PAID BEFORE DEPOSITIONS ARE TAKEN"

CUT TO:

INT. JUDGE RODIN'S COURTROOM - DAY

Owen appears before JUDGE RODIN. A.D.A. Sweet is there as well, as are cross-complainants Mary Maloof along with her husband Al, who sits in the gallery looking ill. Judge Rodin, appearing thoughtful, reads Owen's motion to himself

OWEN (V.O.)

All parties had to appear before Judge Rodin, who read my motion and prepared to rule. First, though, he asked Sweet where he went to law school.

SWEET

(snobbishly)

I was on the *Law Review* at Harvard, your honor.

Judge Rodin rolls his eyes - he's met Sweet's type before

JUDGE RODIN

Well, in that case, I suggest you review your *law*. It appears that Mr. Wilson understands the law better than you.

INT. JUDGE RODIN'S COURTROOM - DAY - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen stifles a smile and steals a glance at Sweet, who's steaming

JUDGE RODIN (CONT'D)

(to Owen)

Mr. Wilson, how do you justify these requested sanctions?

OWEN

Judge, I am an electrical contractor and businessman. I am asking for the cost of time taken off work plus the cost the deposition.

Judge Rodin barely blinks. BANG! goes the gavel

JUDGE RODIN

Sanctions for costs as requested to Mr. Wilson.

Sweet starts when the gavel banged. Now he's practically livid

The judge turns to Mary Maloof

JUDGE RODIN

(CONT'D)

Mrs. Maloof. How do you justify the sanctions in your motion?

Mary looks at Owen and smiles. *Her motion, indeed!*

MARY

Your honor, My husband and I are also in business and lost valuable time over this.

BANG!

JUDGE RODIN

OK. 100 dollars each to Mary and Al Maloof.

Sweet is aghast. So much for Harvard

INT. JUDGE RODIN'S COURTROOM - DAY - ANGLE ON JUDGE

Judge Rodin looks at the group before him

JUDGE RODIN

(sternly)

This is a courtroom, not some place
for your games and score-settling.
I'm imposing these sanctions for a
reason - so please don't try me and
return here with more squabbling.
Court is dismissed.

BANG! The gavel hammers down

CUT TO:

D.A'S OFFICE - DAY - CONFERENCE ROOM

Owen is in the process of deposing the CITY
MANAGER in the presence of A.D.A. Sweet, the
female court reporter, and Al and Mary Maloof.
All the questions posed to the manager get the
same response:

CITY MANAGER

I don't recall...

OWEN

That's the fourth question in a row
whose answer you 'don't recall.' Have
you taken any medication this morning
that would impair your memory?

CITY MANAGER

No.

OWEN

(probing)

Have you recently suffered a blow to
the head which would impair your
memory?

Sweet sputters. He's had enough

DRAKE

That's a stupid question. (to Owen)
I'm instructing my client not to
answer it.

Owen jumps up from his seat, slams his reference book shut and begins gathering his things. He signals to the Maloofs to do the same

OWEN

If that's how you want to play it, Sweet... We'll terminate the deposition here and return to Judge Rodin - but I seem to recall he wasn't too happy with your presence last time...

Sweet lets this sink in. Owen's right.

DRAKE

(to Owen, et al.)

Wait!

Sweet looks at the City Manager, resigned

DRAKE

Answer the question...

CUT TO:

INT. JUDGE RODIN'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Judge Rodin sits at his desk in front of Owen, the Maloofs, Sweet and the court reporter. He is reading the case before them

OWEN (V.O.)

After a while the case had racked up a number of motions and hearings, and Judge Rodin finally called for a conference in his chambers. The judge stated the case and all parties agreed that the facts were correct.

INT. JUDGE RODIN'S CHAMBERS - DAY - ANGLE ON JUDGE

JUDGE

Mr. Wilson, I commend your research. It indicates the city is best served by settling this case before throwing away even more time and money. If this case went to trial, it would cost the city many thousands of dollars - and

the city would lose.

Sweet swallows - hard

JUDGE RODIN

(reading)

I urge you to settle this based on precedent cited by Mr. Wilson. The court found that a municipality has a duty to remove, or cause to be removed, all garbage and trash within its corporate city limits.

He looks directly at Sweet

JUDGE RODIN (CONT'D)

What will it take to settle this?

Sweet, at a loss, looks expectantly to Owen. Owen looks around the room

OWEN

I have a suggestion.

A mixture of relief - and renewed anxiety - plays across Sweet's face

JUDGE RODIN

Go ahead, Mr. Wilson.

OWEN

I suggest everyone dismiss everything against everybody else.

Sweet reacts. What? He could kiss this man! Judge Rodin lifts an eyebrow

OWEN (CONT'D)

...With one condition.

Sweet's suddenly not in love anymore. Judge Rodin's intrigued

DRAKE

What condition?

OWEN

The city must agree that they will never stop anybody's collection service strictly on the basis of non-payment of collection fees.

JUDGE RODIN

Sounds fair to me. Generous, almost. Mr. Sweet?

Sweet gulps at the judge's "Mister" reference, but he can only nod feebly. Owen smiles. He wins. Check and mate.

BANG! goes the gavel. Owen looks at Sweet

OWEN

Thanks, Sweet. That was fun!

Sweet smolders as Owen gathers his things and exits whistling

CUT TO:

EXT. MOBILE HOME PARK - DAY - LATER

A Hijack! Garbage truck pulls out of Owen's mobile home park, belching smoke and littering as refuse flies off the top of the truck into the street. The CAMERA tilts up, showing the sprawl of Center City, circa today.

EXT. MOBILE HOME PARK - DAY - GARBAGE AREA

Owen rolls a trash container on his trusty dolly to the garbage area and dumps its contents

OWEN (V.O.)

To this day I never paid fees for garbage and trash collection. And Hijack never tried to collect from me. Seems there are some rules in the trash game, like the one they followed: 'play dirty,' but also - for the wise few, one that reminds you to: 'cut your losses.'

SLOW DISSOLVE

INT. OWEN'S HOME - NIGHT - LIVING ROOM

Owen sits in front of the chessboard opposite Larry, now a high school teen. Anna watches TV nearby.

OWEN (V.O.)

I don't mind when people accuse me of playing games. Because the way I see it, as long as you think ahead and stick to the rules, you'll come out a winner.

Owen deliberates his next move, his hand on his chess piece. Satisfied, he removes his hand

OWEN
(to Larry)

Check.

Anna listens over her shoulder

INT. OWEN'S HOME - NIGHT - LIVING ROOM - ANGLE ON CHESS BOARD

Larry's hand SHOOTS out to make a move

INT. OWEN'S HOME - NIGHT - LIVING ROOM - ANGLE ON OWEN

Owen smiles, patronizingly. Larry should have thought out his move...

INT. OWEN'S HOME - NIGHT - LIVING ROOM - ANGLE ON LARRY

Larry makes his move and looks up from the board slowly

LARRY
(grinning)

Checkmate

Owen starts. He looks at the board, then back at the teen. Damn - he's right

Owen's features reveal his conflicted feelings: irritation, surprise and finally... pride

OWEN
(shaking his head)
So. Beat the old man, huh?

LARRY
(still grinning)
Looks like it.

Anna takes this in - and smiles

Owen gathers up the chess pieces, then looks at Larry

OWEN
(hopefully)
Another game?

FADE TO BLACK

THE END