Humor Me

"It's time for your next act..."

Brent Piaskoski
EXT. WIT’S END COMEDY CLUB – THURSDAY NIGHT (ESTABLISHING)

Wit’s End is a comedy club in Framingham, Massachusetts. It sits in a strip mall between a nail salon and a GNC. AC/DC’s Thunderstruck spills out into the half-full parking lot. The digital marquee announces the week’s line-up: Howie Wagman, Ely Busgang, Eddie Slade. The LED sign flickers ominously.

INT. THE CLUB – NIGHT

Inside the club, Thunderstruck plays over the sound system.

We see quick shots of the sparse audience scattered across this club: a STAGETTE committed to getting drunk way too early, an OFFICE PARTY where no one is in danger of sleeping together, and FIRST DATES where they probably will.

INT. THE CLUB – SOUND BOOTH

At the back, in the sound booth, watching is KIM SLADE, 40. Kim’s the manager. She’d rather be your friend than boss, but she’s good at both. She’s funny, blunt, sexy and playful.

EDDIE SLADE, 45, steps inside the booth. He’s the club’s emcee and Kim’s husband. He’s a chubby, likable-enough loser, with a slight edge. A home town “hero” with the fame of a local weatherman who never made it in a big market.

They bop to the music, like they have a thousand times before and sing out with Angus Young.

KIM/EDDIE
Thunder! Thunder!

Kim plays with the soundboard, never looking at Eddie.

KIM
When you get out of the shower, know how I can tell if you’ve masturbated?

EDDIE
(wary)
I’m wet?

KIM
You bring your cell in with you to watch porn. Tonight you left it on our bed.
(to music)
Thunder!
Kim holds up Eddie’s cell. He sighs in relief.

EDDIE
Jesus, Kimmy, I thought I lost it.

KIM
Too bad you didn’t jerk off tonight, I’d have missed this text from the lovely...
(off phone)
Hannah?

EDDIE
(playing dumb)
Hannah? Hannah? Oh, Hannah! She was a caterer from the club’s anniversary party last week. She wants to do stand-up. I said if she had questions to text me.

KIM
What question was she asking when she sent a photo of her huge, naked boobs?

Eddie sees the tit-pic on his phone. He winces.

EDDIE
"Should I be a prop comic?"
(then)
I can explain --

KIM
Don’t. All I want from you tonight is what I want every night: not to do anything so stupid you shut us down, you gross dirt bag.
(into the mic, cheerfully)
Welcome to Wit’s End Comedy Club. Celebrating 15 years of broken trust and making you laugh. Now, put your hands together for your emcee... Framingham’s favorite funnyman -- Eddie Slade.

INT. THE CLUB – STAGE

Eddie bounds up on the stage into the spotlight. He’s home.

EDDIE
Thanks for coming out on a Thursday night. How many of you are just here because your Groupon was expiring?
(cheers from the crowd)
I’ve had a bad day, folks. My wife just found a photo of some chick’s hooters on my cell. I told her it was a selfie.
(MORE)
EDDIE (CONT'D)
Now I gotta wax my chest and get a butterfly tattoo by the next time she sees me with my shirt off.

SONYA REDDY, 22, pokes her head into the booth. She’s free-spirited, quirky, and sick of well-meaning racists asking where she’s from. She gives Sonya a sympathetic look.

SONYA
That true?

KIM
Afraid so.

SONYA
Talk about too soon.

KIM
That’s my husband. His first 9/11 joke only had one plane.

INT. THE BAR

ROBERT HAYWARD, 32, fills drink orders. He’s sarcastic, and playful. He hates giving bartender advice - even though he’s damn good at it.

CLAIRE STUBINSKI, 30, approaches. She’s cool, optimistic and almost as confident as she pretended to be in college.

CLAIRE
(teasingly)
Robert, one of the girls at the stagette table wants to know if you’re siiiiiingle.

ROBERT
I hope it’s the one who’s on her fifth Crème de menthe shooter. That’s how I like my women - liquored up and sticky!

ELY “BUZZY” BUSGANG, 27, the nerdy, unofficial house comic sits at the end of the bar. He reads off a recipe card.

BUZZY
Hey, is this funny? “Things weren’t easy for me as a boy. I was beat up because I was Jewish... So, I left Hebrew school.”

CLAIRE
A little anti-Semitic, Buzzy.

BUZZY
But I’m a Jew! Old school circumcision.
Buzzy points at his crotch as Sonya runs in, bursting to tell the Kim-Eddie news.

SONYA
You guys are so not gonna believe it. Kim just found a titty-pic on Eddie’s cell, and now he’s doing jokes about it.

ROBERT
Eddie - doing new jokes? You’re right, I don’t believe it.

SONYA
It’s not funny. It’s the worst thing ever!

Claire and Robert give Sonya disbelieving looks.

SONYA (cont’d)
I was gonna ask Kim if I could do weekend sets. Now she’ll be all mad and say no.

CLAIRE
Phew. For a second I thought this was somehow not going to be about you.

Sonya jokingly gives Claire the finger.

SONYA
I deserve weekends. I was checking out Howie Wagman on YouTube – he’s been doing the same closer for so long, in one video he had a perm and puka shells.

BUZZY
Ah! The sumo wrestler bit. The first time I saw it I was 19. Didn’t stop laughing until I was 22.

(off Sonya’s look)
But now? Now I find it sexist and sophomoric. A sumo wrestler getting orally pleasured? Not for me.

SONYA
Should I ask Kim for weekends even though she just found out Eddie cheated on her?

BUZZY
Yes, you should. You have one of the funniest minds on the comedy scene. And I’d say that even if we weren’t...

(makes classic finger through hole gesture)
Although, I’m very glad we are.
SONYA
I fucking love you.

She gives Buzzy a big kiss and exits. Claire looks at Buzzy.

CLAIRE
You know you just sent her into the lion’s den, right?

ROBERT
Could be awhile before...
(finger through the hole)
...this happens again.

Buzzy slumps back onto his stool.

INT. THE STAGE

Eddie continues on stage. He’s doing... well, okay.

EDDIE
I’m not saying her breasts are fake, but they said they wanted to be my friend then stabbed me in the back. Seriously, her breasts are so fake, CNN called them news! Okay, that joke was lame.

FRANCIS (O.S.)
The word lame is offensive!

EDDIE
Okay then! That joke was ‘disabled’.

Eddie spots FRANCIS HARPER, 35. He has a waxed moustache, foppish suit and is in a wheelchair. Eddie backs off.

EDDIE (cont'd)
Oops. Didn’t see your situation, buddy.
Thanks for coming out.
(to crowd)
Know what’s funny, folks?

FRANCIS
Not you.

EDDIE
To spice up our sex life, my wife wanted to see Fifty Shades of Grey. So I showed her my underwear.

FRANCIS
What a current joke. What’s next? Gone With the Wind?
EDDIE
Sex is important, right? I mean, any guy who tells you it isn’t, is either lying... or just finished having sex.

FRANCIS
If humor’s the best medicine, you’re the placebo.

More people are laughing now at Francis than Eddie.

EDDIE
Pal, you wanna be a stand-up? Then stand up. I may suck at comedy, but I’m good at walking. Look at me, Ma! Look at me!

Eddie tap dances. He ends with a windmill, and STARK SILENCE. Long beat. Francis slowly wheels away. The squeak of his wheels is the only sound we hear.

INT. THE OFFICE
Kim is on the phone in her cluttered office.

KIM
We’ll see you Saturday night... I’m also excited about the possibility. Bye, now.

Kim hangs up as Sonya marches in.

SONYA
(blurting out)
Hey, Kimmy, I know this may not be the best time to ask, but we’re both here, so why not. Can I open this weekend? I’ve worked out my stuff at other gigs --

KIM
You’re not ready for weekends.

SONYA
I am too. I’m funny.

KIM
You’re very funny, Sonya, but your act doesn’t build, it just... ends. Maybe that’s cool in indie rooms, but in the clubs you need a closer. Watch Howie Wagman’s - it’s one of the best.

SONYA
It’s two-minutes of some sumo dude getting a blow-job!
KIM
Which is longer than any guy’s lasted when I gave one.

Sonya snort-laughed in surprise.

SONYA
Oh my God, did you just say that?

KIM
See? Blow job jokes - funny. How’s this? If it’s okay with Howie, I’ll give you 10 minutes tonight. You kill it - we might put you on this weekend.

SONYA
Awesomeness. Thanks! Oh, and I got tons of dick pics on my phone from exes. I can send you some to make Eddie jealous.

KIM
As tempting as that sounds, I’m going to say no. But I’ll look at a couple later for kicks.

Sonya exits. Kim goes back to doing paperwork.

INT. THE BAR - NIGHT

Claire leans on the bar as she watches Robert pour.

CLaire
Oh my God, last Friday’s 15th anniversary party! Man, was I drunk.

ROBERT
You weren’t that drunk.

CLaire
Uhm, then why’d I call in sick on Saturday. Hungover! Because Friday I was hammered. Can’t remember a thing. Nothing. Which is very uncharacteristic.

JOE (O.S.)
There’s my girl.

Claire spins around to see OFFICER JOE KOENIG, 36. Handsome, shiny, bland, innocuous.

CLaire
Joey! What are you doing here?

Joe hands Claire a cup of take-out coffee.
JOE
Bringing my gal her favorite cup of coffee.

CLAIRE
Aw. Look, Robbie, I got my favorite joe from my favorite Joe.

From a shelf behind the bar, Robert hands Claire a Cheshire Cat mug. Claire transfers the takeout coffee into it.

ROBERT
What’s that? Three weeks in a row with the favorite coffee, Joe? It’s a good thing Claire doesn’t work in a place that serves their own--
(spots coffee pot on bar)
Oh, my God! Where did that come from?

JOE
Difference is the coffee I bring Claire is single source. Although, I do see the humor in what you were going for.

ROBERT
Do you though? Really? ’Cause it was pretty friggin' funny.

Robert turns and wipes down the bar.

JOE
So, Claire-bear, I got four days off after tonight. We should go up to my cabin. We could hunt one day, you could go into town and shop the next.

CLAIRE
Do cabins have Wi-Fi?

JOE
Not this one. Think about it, and I’ll see you after work?

CLAIRE
You certainly will, Officer Hot-bod.

Joe exits. Claire picks up her coffee and looks at Robert.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
That sounds horrible. Maybe he’ll go Cheney on me and shoot me in the face so I have an excuse to go home.
ROBERT
If it helps, I was going to ask if you wanted to see the Sox play on Tuesday.

CLAIRE
Against my Tigers?! I’m going to miss Miguel Cabrera! No! That doesn’t help!

Frustrated, Claire storms out. Robert goes back to pouring.

INT. THE FOYER

Kim exits her office to see Francis coming out of the bathroom. She runs over to help him manage the door.

KIM
How you enjoying the show, sir?

FRANCIS
So far, not at all. I may be ‘crippled’ but not with laughter. And, as a man who is disabled, I can make that joke.

KIM
Oh, shit. You’re Francis Harper from The Daily News.

FRANCIS
I also do ‘Wake Up, Framingham’ Friday mornings at 5:00.

KIM
If my husband offended you, let me offer you my apologies.

FRANCIS
You’re the wife? Let me offer you my apologies.

Kim has a wonderful fake laugh. She uses it now.

KIM
You’re funny! You should be a comedian.

FRANCIS
I hear that all the time (then)
Better finish reviewing the show. Your husband may mock my disability, but nothing can take away my dignity!

Francis wheels back toward the club. His chair has toilet paper stuck on the wheel. Round and round it goes. Kim toys with taking it off, then decides to let things be.
INT. THE BAR

Robert cleans up. Sonya takes a break at the bar. HOWIE WAGMAN, 38, the headliner, enters. He’s slow, sloppy and his dad-bod’s morphed into a fat bod.

HOWIE
Hey, minimum-wage earners, good to be back, not really but, let’s pretend --

SONYA
Howie, could I do a set before you?

HOWIE
Sure. If I get to serve a few of your tables first! In other words, nope.
(to Robert)
Give me the Ray Romano cheese bread, The Jerk Chicken Wings, Bernie Mac and Cheese, and a piece of Carrot Top Cake.

ROBERT
Sorry. New policy. You’re only allowed one pun-named item per night.

HOWIE
Since when?

ROBERT
Since you ate five slices of Louis C Cheesecake. Which we’ve discontinued, by the way.

INT. THE CLUB - NIGHT

Eddie works the crowd. He sees Claire clearing a table.

EDDIE
That’s Claire. She has a doctorate. What was the name of your paper?

CL quire
Alice’s Vacillation between Childhood and Adolescence in ‘Alice in Wonderland’.

EDDIE
Don’t worry, on your bill, she’ll write ‘thanks’ and draw a happy face. And give her your business card, she’ll enter it in our draw. First prize is two tickets to a show featuring me!

FRANCIS
What’s second prize? Four tickets?
EDDIE
You’re back? I thought you rolled home.
What a perfect time to bring up your next act. Please welcome a guy who hangs out here more than I do, Ely ‘Buzzy’ Busgang.

Buzzy walks on stage. Eddie exits. Buzzy looks at the crowd.

BUZZY
Why is it tough guys always want to know what your problems is? They’re always, “You got a problem? What’s your problem?” They always wanna know your problem, but have no interest in helping you solve it.

INT. THE KITCHEN
Claire approaches Sonya – who’s picking up food at the pass.

CLAIRE
I need to talk to you, but you have to promise to keep it a secret.

SONYA
I can keep a secret.

CLAIRE
You told everybody I farted at yoga.

SONYA
Dude, it went on for 12 seconds. The world had to know.

CLAIRE
How’s your sex life with Buzzy?

SONYA
Amazing. Why is that a secret?

CLAIRE
That’s not the secret... Wait, amazing?

SONYA
Why wouldn’t it be?

CLAIRE
Because... well, it’s Buzzy.

SONYA
The Buzz-man gets the job done. Oh, man! Does Joe suck at sex?

CLAIRE
No! He’s great. Forget I said anything.
SONYA
Uh-unh. A girl can't start talking about her sex life and then leave.

CLAIRE
Really? Because look at me, Claire Stubinkski, not talking about her sex life and leaving.

SONYA
Small penis, right?!

CLAIRE
Wrong! Nice and normal penis! Not too big, not too small. He’s got the baby bear of penises.

SONYA
That sounds like it would chafe.

Kim walks up to the pass. She points to a burger and fries.

KIM
Who’s the Bill Burr-ger for?

SONYA
Eddie.

Kim grabs it and takes a huge bite.

CLAIRE
We’re mad at Eddie too!

Kim hands the burger to Claire. She takes a revenge bite.

KIM
The guy in the wheelchair’s from the Daily News. Tonight he puts out his Best Bets for the weekend, and we need to be on it. Give him the best service ever.

Claire and Sonya have to give a thumbs up because they’re both devouring Eddie’s meal.

KIM (cont’d)
What were you talking about?

SONYA
Claire’s boyfriend has a baby bear penis.

CLAIRE
He does not! The thing is, even though Joe’s solid in the bedroom, he’s lacking in one area. You know...
Claire raises her eyebrows, gestures awkwardly, smiles.

KIM
Going down on you. Just say it, Claire. You're not at grandma's!

SONYA
That's a big thing to be bad at. It's like having a kitten that's not cute.

CLaire
It's sad. He'll be down there forever, finally look up, and it's like he's saying, "Anything, do you feel anything?"

SONYA
And you're like, "Well, I feel a little cleaner!"

The women laugh hysterically. Then, Kim looks at Claire.

KIM
Claire, if Joe's not doing it right, tell him. Better yet, make him do it until he gets good or he gets lockjaw.

Kim takes the remainder of the burger and fries and exits.

CLaire
So, is Buzzy good at it?

SONYA
Staggering! The boy's tongue is like a restaurant pager.

Sonya makes a pager humming sound. Claire cringes at this.

CLaire
Here's the thing, if Joe can ask Siri where Tom Brady lives, why can't he ask Siri to find his girlfriend's damn clitoris? (pronounces it CLI-tor-is)

SONYA
It's clitoris. (pronounces it cli-TOR-is)

CLaire
Really? Wow. I've been saying it wrong my entire life.

INT. THE BAR - CONTINUOUS

Claire and Sonya are giggling when they enter the bar.
They should've taught us how to say it in sixth grade when they took us girls to another room to watch that “special” film.

Sonya snort-laughs as she places Howie’s food down.

It just doesn’t look like a meal unless there are two other meals beside it.

Claire sees Robert, curiously watching her.

What’s so funny?

Nothing. Waitress humor.

Claire runs over to Sonya. They whisper between each other.

I already forgot which way to say it.

Cli-TOR-is. Rhymes with ‘hit OR miss’.

Which is appropriate, considering how often Joe finds it.

This sends Claire and Sonya back into hysterics. Robert’s interest is piqued.

Kim takes the last bite of her Bill Burr-ger. Eddie enters.

Aha! I knew you took my supper!

You sexted to our caterer and I ate your food. I'll let you know when we're even.

I didn’t ask her to send that picture. It was non-consensual. If anything, I'm the victim here... Too far?

I was thinking, you know that corporate gig you got me Saturday?
EDDIE (CONT'D)
They gave me a suite. You should come with. We’ll make it a romantic weekend.

KIM
I need to be here. See if “Hannah’s” free. You can take naked Instagram photos. Use the Walden filter. It makes white trash look whiter.

EDDIE
You're being ridiculous... they don't allow nudity on Instagram.

Kim shakes her head and gets up from her desk.

KIM
You can't stop making jokes, can you? Just don't make any more about the man in the wheelchair.

EDDIE
Dickbag Professor X?

KIM
That Dickbag is Francis Harper.

EDDIE
New phone, who dat?

KIM
The arts critic. Him making us his Best Bet is the difference between a sold out Saturday show and us asking the audience to sit up close to look like a crowd.

EDDIE
Got it. Not one more joke about wheelchair guy, I swear. Besides, it’s not like he can stand up for himself.

An exasperated Kim exits. Eddie calls out.

EDDIE (cont'd)
C’mon, you gotta give me that one!
(nothing, then, sighing)
I’m screwed.

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

INT. THE FOYER

Robert lurks around the door of the women’s bathroom. Sonya exits. Robert steps out in front of her, startling her.

SONYA
AAAHH! Rob! You scared me. Thank God I just peed or I would’ve just peed.

ROBERT
What were you and Claire laughing about?
And you can act like you’re not gonna tell me, but we both know you will.

SONYA
Ughhh, you’re right. I’m so gonna tell you! I’d suck as a spy.
(then)
Answer one thing first: how many times does a guy need to have sex before he’s awesome at it?

ROBERT
If you ask the guy, 5. If you ask the woman, 105 and all with her. Now talk.

Sonya looks around, then leans in to spill the beans.

INT. THE BAR

Eddie's at the bar. Howie eats a sandwich. There's another on a plate. Egg salad spills out of the bread and splats on Howie's arm. He licks it off. Eddie shudders. Robert returns.

EDDIE
Finally. Pour me a drink.

ROBERT
One shot of regret coming up.

Robert pours Eddie his bourbon. Francis wheels into the bar area. Eddie apprehensively turns to him.

EDDIE
Can I help you there, buddy?

FRANCIS
I texted some friends to meet me. Just seeing if they arrived.

EDDIE
That must mean you’re enjoying the show?
FRANCIS
Now that you’re off, yes.

EDDIE
Yep. I am one unfunny, able-ist bastard.

FRANCIS
(eyeing Howie’s food)
Those look good. I’m so hungry I could eat my foot. It’s not like I need it.

Eddie grabs the plate from a stunned Howie.

EDDIE
Have a sandwich on the house, pal.

Francis takes the plate and bites into the sandwich. He chews as he talks.

FRANCIS
Ever wonder what came first, the chicken or the egg salad sandwich?

EDDIE
Funny guy. Funny guy.

FRANCIS
Don’t even think of stealing it.

Francis exits. Kim enters just in time to see him exit.

KIM
Why was he here? What happened?

HOWIE
Eddie gave away my sandwich to Timmy from South Park. “TIMMEH!”

Kim looks out to make sure Francis didn’t hear this.

KIM
Howie, you can’t make jokes like that. We respect diversity here. Unless you’re old like Eddie, then go for it.

EDDIE
Hey!

KIM
Wait. Sandwiches? We don’t serve sandwiches! I wanted to, but couldn’t think of any comedian puns.
ROBERT
The Adam Sand-wich-ler?

KIM
Ah, it was sitting right there!
(to Howie)
Where’d you get that?

HOWIE
(greedily chewing)
Staff-room fridge.

KIM
Those are leftovers from our party.

Howie stops chewing. He spits a mouthful out.

HOWIE
Which was today at 6:00, right?

ROBERT
Last Friday, and they didn’t taste fresh then.

KIM
For Chrissake, Eddie! Francis Harper is now eating food poisoning on rye.

EDDIE
Do wheelchair people call it the runs or maybe just ‘the wheels’?

KIM
Enough! Buzzy’s almost off. Get back out there and be nice!

Kim and Eddie exit. Robert sees Howie studying his sandwich, sniffing it as he contemplates another bite.

ROBERT
Nope.

EXT. FOYER

Sonya waits in the foyer, pacing and pissed. Buzzy exits from the comedy club and sees Sonya.

BUZZY
You didn’t watch my set?

SONYA
Why are you so awesome at sex?
BUZZY
A: Thank you and B: what the hell?

SONYA
I was telling Claire how good you were and she was like, “really?”

BUZZY
Sonya, how I perform in bed is personal. That’s why I don’t put it on my résumé. That and because I don’t know if it’s a hobby or special interest. That’s funny. Should I do that --

SONYA
Shh. At first I’m like, who cares what Claire thinks, I got me a boy who’s good at what’s good. Then I thought about it, and it bugged me. So I talked to Robert --

BUZZY
Of course you did.

SONYA
You said you’d hardly been with anyone before me. For a sex newbie, you sure know your way around a vag!

Kim exits from her office into the foyer.

KIM
Buzzy, you’re smart. How long does it take egg salad to go bad?

BUZZY
To me, it goes bad the exact moment it becomes egg salad, but to the health board five days - assuming proper refrigeration.

KIM
(counting backwards)
Friday, Saturday Sunday, Monday, Tuesday... Dammit!

SONYA
Kim, I asked Howie if I could do a set and he said no. Can you ask him?

KIM
Sonya, I love you, but I will drop-kick you if you don’t get back to your tables!
Sonya rolls her eyes then heads back to the main room. She calls out to Buzzy.

SONYA
We are not done here!

BUZZY
(to Kim)
I gotta go, but I’ll be right back.

KIM
I don’t care.

As Buzzy exits out the front door, Kim hears the BEEPING of a van. She looks out to the parking lot. Her face deflates. She drops her head — leaning it on the exit door in defeat.

INT. - THE BAR

Robert cuts limes. Howie drinks Pepto-Bismol from the bottle. Claire walks up and sips coffee from her Cheshire Cat cup.

ROBERT
What are you and Joe doing after work?

CLAIRE
Grabbing a bite.

ROBERT
You gonna eat in or... eat out?

CLAIRE
Out, I think.

ROBERT
Cool. Oh, I’ve been trying to think of this word and it won’t come to me.

CLAIRE
Ask me. I know lots of words. In high school my nickname was Thesaurus-Rex.

ROBERT
No it wasn’t.

CLAIRE
Well, it should’ve been. What’s the word?

ROBERT
It’s when somebody shows a lack of skill or aptitude... Ooh, it’s right on the tip of my tongue.

Robert smiles. Claire gets it, just as Sonya enters.
CLAIRE
You have a big mouth.

SONYA
No! No, no, no! This is on you for having such hard secrets to keep.

ROBERT
Don’t blame Sonya. We’re adults here. And don’t worry, Joe will get better. Just don’t rub it in his face.

Sonya punches Robert hard on the shoulder as Kim enters.

KIM
Howie, are you okay with disabled people?

HOWIE
No. But I’m ashamed of it. Why?

KIM
The audience is now full of them.

HOWIE
I can deal. I’ll bump up my closer. They like blow jobs, right? Shit, what if they don’t because they can’t feel anything? I’m gonna suck. Augh, the irony!

INT. THE STAGE

Eddie looks out into the audience. Francis and 10 PATRONS who are DISABLED stare back. Breaking the silence is BREATHING.

EDDIE
People are saying that Idris Elba could be the next James Bond. I can see his first movie – *Dr. Oh No You Didn’t.*

ROBOTIC VOICE (V.O.)
Racist.

EDDIE
Anyone go to the Women’s March? It was great until 100,000 women realized they were all wearing the same hat.

ANGRY DISABLED WOMAN
Hashtag timesup!

Eddie looks to the back. He sees Kim pointing to Howie.
EDDIE
F*ck it. Put your hands together for your headliner -- Howie Wagman.

Weak APPLAUSE-- a nauseous Howie hits the stage.

HOWIE
Hi, everyone. I joined a gym, and that’s the joke right there. People say to try swimming to lose weight. Thing is, there’s never a two-hour period where I haven’t just eaten.

Kim watches from the sound booth as Howie struggles.

KIM
(into mic/over P.A system)
Do the blow job bit, already!

BACK ON STAGE:

HOWIE
Well, that was subtle.
(them)
You know who gets tons of sex? Jocks. Football, hockey, soccer, but what about sumo wrestlers?

This gets a laugh. Howie eases into this bit like a pair of hacky bedroom slippers.

HOWIE (cont'd)
They’re athletes, they got groupies, right? With that in mind, my impression of a sumo wrestler getting head.

Howie mimes a sumo wrestler’s stance. He slaps his legs, stomps his feet, throws the salt. We realize the “deed” is now happening. As the sumo wrestler gets close to his end, Howie puffs up his face, then his body. LAUGHTER, APPLAUSE. Howie lets out a cry.

HOWIE (cont'd)
ARRRRRRRRRRH!

SQUISHY FARTING SOUND-- The bad egg salad has won.

ROBOTIC VOICE (V.O.)
Ha-ha-ha.

Kim watches, stunned at what she just witnessed.

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

INT. THE BAR

Eddie, Robert, Claire and Sonya are at the bar. Kim races in.

KIM
I wish I was speaking metaphorically, but our headliner just crapped his pants. Claire, out on the floor. Next round’s on the house. Robert, pour like you’ve never poured before. Eddie, back on stage --

EDDIE
But they hate my guts!

KIM
And that’s why you’re bringing up Sonya.
(to Sonya)
You up for this?

SONYA
Nah, I'm not feeling it, right now.
(then)
I'm kidding! I'm kidding! Thank you!

Sonya jumps for joy as everyone else does as Kim ordered.

INT. THE STAGE

Eddie lumbers back on the now empty stage. The audience is still shocked. Eddie waves his hand to dissipate the smell.

EDDIE
Talk about shitting where you work.
What’s the heaviest thing in the world?
Poop! Even Superman can’t hold it.

This gets a tepid response.

FRANCIS
Bring back the defecating man. At least he was funny while he stunk up the stage.

EDDIE
All right, that one wasn't bad. Anyway, you may recognize your next act from when she rolled her eyes at you earlier tonight, please welcome... Sonya Reddy.

Sonya practically leaps on stage.
SONYA
What’s up, world? This is my impression
of that older woman in your fitness class
who is shocked but thrilled when the
instructor high-fives her.

Sonya does this odd, specific impression. It gets a laugh.

SONYA (cont’d)
Who am I kidding, I don’t work out. Only
time I run is when somebody barfs near
me. Then I’m a fucking antelope!

INT. THE BAR
Claire walks up to Robert.

CLAIRES
Three Harpoons and a gin and tonic.
(then, seething)
You know what bugs me? You know what
sticks in my craw?

ROBERT
That you’re the only person under 80 who
has a craw?

CLAIRES
It’s not that you know that about Joe.
It’s that this is how you’ll define him.
Not that he’s sweet, kind, he loves me,
and I miss him when he’s not around.

ROBERT
You didn’t miss him last Friday.

CLAIRES
Oh. You wanna go there? Fine! It was a
party, I was drunk! We had a one-night
stand. Meaning it lasts one night. What
Joe and I have is real, and our sex will
get good. It’ll get amazing.

ROBERT
What’s bugging you isn’t the sex. It’s
the coffee.

CLAIRES
The coffee from Cool Beans? Why would
that bug me? No, you know what, forget
it. I don’t care what you think.

ROBERT
Fine.
Claire starts to exit. She pauses, then returns.

**CLAIRE**

Why does Joe bringing me coffee from *Cool Beans* bug me?

**ROBERT**

Because he doesn’t know you like drinking it from your favorite cup.

**CLAIRE**

What?

**ROBERT**

Your Cheshire Cat cup. The cup that warms your hands as you clutch it, and holds the perfect amount of brew so you just finish it before it gets too cold. The cup you take home every Saturday so, and this is a guess, you can drink from it while you're wearing a cozy bathrobe and doing the Sunday crossword.

**CLAIRE**

Why would I be mad at that?

**ROBERT**

Because you can teach a guy how to be better in bed, but you can’t teach him to be the kind of man who knows a woman has a favorite cup.

**CLAIRE**

You pretend telling me this is doing me a favor. But you’re glad it makes me sad. And the word for that is schadenfreude.

**ROBERT**

Wow. Your nickname should’ve been Thesaurus-Rex.

Claire takes her tray of drinks and exits. Robert watches her go, feeling like a jerk.

**INT. THE CLUB - SOUND BOOTH**

Kim watches from the sound booth, making small adjustments to Sonya’s sound levels. Laughter is heard. Eddie enters.

**EDDIE**

She’s not doing too bad. Sonya.
KIM
Just so you know, I don’t blame you, I blame An Officer and a Gentleman.

Eddie fiddles with the levels. He gives Kim a look.

KIM (cont'd)
Richard Gere was my first crush. I was ten. My sister and I watched that movie so many times we wore out the tape. That’s what I thought love was. A gorgeous man carrying a less gorgeous woman off to happiness. I guess I expected every man to be my Zack Mayo.

EDDIE
10-year-old Kim got it wrong. You are Richard Gere. The hero. Always.

KIM
And you’re who... Debra Winger?

EDDIE
Nah. I’m that dumb friend who claps at the end as Debra Winger’s carried away.
(then)
We got a good thing here. Kimmy. You and me, emcee and manager, husband and wife.

Kim looks at Eddie for a couple beats.

KIM
I’m thinking of selling.

EDDIE
Selling what? Your soul? Out? Tupperware?

KIM
The club to Guffaws. Their franchising person’s coming Saturday. I’d still manage, we’d just be part of a chain.

EDDIE
Were you even gonna ask me?

KIM
No, I was going to tell you. It’s my club, Ed.

EDDIE
Sure, your parents’ money opened it, but I was the one who did every morning show. Every newspaper interview, charity event. You may own the club but I built it.

(MORE)
EDDIE (CONT’D)
(realizing)
Is that why you got me that corporate
gig, you didn’t want me here on Saturday?

KIM
Guffaws knows you. They wanted to see who
else we had. If I sell, they’re fine with
you being emcee, most weekends.

Kim exits, leaving Eddie behind. Eddie tears up.

EDDIE
Why couldn’t she just be cheating on me?

INT. THE STAGE

Sonya is having her best set ever.

SONYA
I’m watching baseball with my boyfriend
and a picture of J.D. Martinez come up. I
go, “Oooh, he’s hot! And single.” My
boyfriend’s like, “a ‘single’ is what he
hit last bat”. I’m pretty sure he made
that up so I won’t stalk J.D. Martinez.

The audience laughs. At the back of the room, Buzzy enters.
He has his knapsack. He’s thrilled to see Sonya on stage.

SONYA (cont’d)
Oh, and my fella is great at sex. Thank.
God. I had one boyfriend. Horrible. For
sake of this joke we’ll call him...
Travis Dorrance of 924 Learned Street.
The only way the guy could please me in
bed was by leaving. I’m like, dude, if
you can’t make me come, ask Siri! “Siri,
find my girlfriend’s clitoris.”
(as Siri)
“Finding girlfriend’s Ford Taurus.”
(guy’s voice)
“No, clitoris!”
(as Siri)
“Hillary Clinton is sore at us.”
(her voice)
This one time, he’s, let’s call it,
eating at the “Y”, and nothing is
happening. It was like trying to itch a
scratch with a sponge. An hour in, he
looks up all puppy-eyed and goes,
“Anything? Do you feel anything?” I’m
like, “Well... I feel a little cleaner”.

KIM
The girl got her closer.

INT. THE FOYER

An excited Sonya and Buzzy exit into the foyer.

BUZZY
You were amazing!

SONYA
I know! I heard me!

(then)
How many women have you been with?

BUZZY
You really have to work on your segues. And you know, I've never asked you how many guys you've been with.

SONYA
You could. Because there's been a few.

BUZZY
I'm sure there has.

SONYA
What's that supposed to mean?

BUZZY
Nothing.

SONYA
I lost my virginity at 15.

BUZZY
I was 22.

SONYA
Liar.

BUZZY
Losing your virginity at 22 isn't something guys lie about. It was with Janice Goldman after a debating competition. But trust me, that night there was no deliberation. Then I didn't have sex until I was 25, and only 4 times. This brings us to my last girl before you, with whom I had sex 8 times.

SONYA
"With whom"! Wait, eight times? Oh, babe.
BUZZY
So, before you, not only could I count the number of partners I'd had, I could count the number of times I'd had sex.

SONYA
How did you get so good then?

From his knapsack Buzzy dumps out a big pile of books and DVDs. Sonya reads the titles.

SONYA (cont'd)
How to Give Her Absolute Pleasure. The Great American Sex Diet. She Comes First... you have weird porn.

BUZZY
When you're a 27-year-old who's had sex 13 times and you know you'll be spending the night with the most beautiful woman in the world, you'll do whatever it takes to get invited back for a second, third, or as of last night - forty-second time.

SONYA
You ran back to your apartment, brought all this here to show me?

BUZZY
I like my romantic gestures bathed in sadness.

Sonya kisses Buzzy hard. He kisses her harder back.

INT. THE STAGE - NIGHT
Eddie talks to the audience. He knows Kim is at the back and he addresses her as much as the crowd.

EDDIE
Guy walks into a doctor's office and asks about his test results. Doctor says, "I got good news and bad news. The bad news is you have cancer, and not any cancer, you have a rare cancer that'll eat you from the inside, every breath will be like you're swallowing fire. You will leak blood from your mouth, eyes, nose and anus. The man says, "Dear Lord! What the hell's the good news?" Doctor says, "Did you see the hot receptionist out front? I'm banging her."

The audience laughs. So does Kim.
EDDIE (cont'd)
Now, you all laughed at a man dying of cancer. Who cares? He was made up, but how about if you told that joke and found out the person you said it to had cancer? Wouldn’t it be nice if you could look at him and say, “I’m sorry”.

Eddie looks to Francis. Francis does a slow, sarcastic clap.

FRANCIS
Nice try, but people who are disabled won’t tolerate being made fun of.

EDDIE
Then ‘people who are disabled’ shouldn’t be dicks. I didn’t make fun of you because of your legs, I made fun of you because you were obnoxious. In comedy, you’re supposed to punch up, not down. I punched sideways.

FRANCIS
(stares at Eddie, then)
Fair enough. You’ve earned my Best Bet.

Eddie smiles to Kim. A loud, sickening rumbling is heard.

FRANCIS (cont'd)
That’s not good. Was there something wrong with that sandwich?

EDDIE
Not if you ate it last week.

FRANCIS
I need to use the facilities. Pronto.

Francis tries to escape but is blocked in by the wheelchairs.

FRANCIS (cont'd)
Move your wheelchairs, you dumb cripples!

Kim rushes up to Francis, bends over and picks him up out of his chair. Carrying Francis, like Zack Mayo carried Paula Pokrifki, she struts past Eddie, who proudly claps for her.

KIM
Gimme a hand, you moron!

EDDIE
Right! Gotchya!
(to crowd)

(MORE)
EDDIE (CONT'D)
I’ve been great, he’s gotta go, good night.

Eddie bolts off the stage and follows Kim.

INT. THE MEN’S ROOM – MOMENTS LATER

Kim, still cradling Francis, enters the men’s room. Eddie’s right behind her. Kim looks down at Francis.

KIM
This may not be the best timing, but are we going to be your Best Bet?

FRANCIS
You poisoned me!

Eddie watches as hope drains from his wife’s face. He steps forward, opening the stall door.

EDDIE
Look, we’re about to launch our Funniest Person with a Day Job contest. It’d be great to have you onboard. We can co-host – just make us your Best Bet.

KIM
People do say you should be a comedian.

FRANCIS
It has been a dream, but father used to say comedians were the village idiots of the world... It’s a deal. Now put me on the fucking toilet!

Kim hands Francis to Eddie. Eddie closes the door. There’s a fumbling of pants, a placing of Francis on the toilet, then an ugly sounding poop. Eddie stumbles out, a waft of stench following him. It hits Kim. Kim high-kicks the door shut.

KIM
Wheelchair Jimmy’s trying to kill us.

FRANCIS (O.C.)
FYI. Wheelchair Jimmy became Drake.

INT. THE BAR – NIGHT

Robert and Claire close up. There is an icy silence between them. After a few beats, Claire finally speaks.

CLAUDE
Here’s what I don’t get. Of everyone here, you’re the only one who’s happy.

(MORE)
CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Everybody keeps showing up, waiting for something that’s never coming. Everyone but you. What do you want, Robbie?

Robbie looks at Claire for a beat. Then...

ROBERT
You.

They stare at each other. What now?

JOE (O.S.)
Hey, Claire-bear!

There stands Officer Joe. Damn, he looks good in a uniform.

CLAIRE
Hey, you. Put away any bad guys tonight?

JOE
Same shift, different pile. So! You decide about our hunting trip?

ROBERT
(whistling softly)
Take me out to the ball game,
Take me out with the crowd.

Claire looks at Robert, knowing what he’s doing, then at Joe. Robert continues to whistle *Take Me Out to the Ball Game*.

CLAIRE
Yeah. Let’s do it. Sounds fun.

JOE
Wicked. Make sure you bring bug repellant. The horseflies are so big you can ride them.

Claire turns to Robert. She smiles and gives him her cup.

CLAIRE
Keep this safe for me, will you?

Claire exits with Joe. Robert takes her mug, wipes it and carefully puts it behind the bar. He begins to softly sing.

ROBERT
Let me root, root, root for the home team. If they don’t win it’s a shame...

EXT. WIT'S END COMEDY CLUB
Eddie sits on the hood of his car. Kim approaches.
EDDIE
It’s out!

KIM
Hannah’s new boob shots?

EDDIE
You really can’t let things go.

KIM
It happened two hours ago!

Eddie holds up his cell so Kim can read it.

KIM (cont’d)
“My Best Bet for comedy show is Wit’s End. It’s a line-up so funny you may poop yourself. I’d give this show a standing ovation... if I could.”

Eddie hops off the hood to follow Kim as she goes to her car.

EDDIE
Just so you know, I am sorry. I only texted with Hannah because she found me funny. Lots of LOLs, happy faces. When people find me funny, I flirt.

KIM
I remember. We saw Austin Powers on what... date three, and afterward I said you were funnier than Mike Myers.

EDDIE
And I flirted my way into your bed for the first time. “Do I make you horny, baby?” I mean, sure it might be a little hack now but that was years ago.

(then)
So... where do we go from here?

KIM
I go home, you go to the comedy condo. You can have one of the spare rooms, then I guess we’ll... see.

EDDIE
Don’t do this. Don’t sell the club, don’t leave me. I’m a 45-year-old man. What am I supposed to do?

Kim thinks about this, then...
KIM
What you always do. Make jokes about it.

Kim gets in her car and drives off, leaving Eddie to stand alone beneath the LED digital marquee that flashes his name.

The marquee flickers, then turns to black.

END OF ACT THREE