

Marital Arts

written by

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EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD ROAD - DAY

A mail-carrier walks down the road of a row of semi-dilapidated houses with fading and chipped paint, unkempt lawns, and mailboxes with faded numbers. He passes a hanging-by-a-thread street sign that reads MAPLELEAF DRIVE.

The mail-carrier stops in front of a house with a booger-green door. He puts mail into the mailbox. Faint, indistinct YELLING can be heard coming from the house. The mail-carrier shakes his head and walks away.

EXT. PRICE HOUSEHOLD - DAY

The yelling intensifies as the distance to the front door closes in. Just under the yelling sounds are soft sounds of 80s pop-synth. The music comes from a small basement window.

As focus moves to the window, leaving the front door behind, the yelling fades and the music gets louder.

Finally, all we are left with is the music as we go through the small basement window into the basement.

INT. PRICE BASEMENT - DAY

80s pop-synth blasts.

ENTER THE DRAGON plays on a television.

On an old couch sits VICTOR PRICE, 9, his clothes too clean and unwrinkled for his age, staring at a piece of paper on a coffee table.

As he taps a pen on the table, pondering, the words DEAR LISA are visible at the top of the page in the neatest handwriting ever written.

A lightbulb goes off in Victor's head and he puts pen to paper and writes the word "I" on the first line.

A blur circles around Victor and the coffee table. This is MAXX PRICE, 13, shirtless, pantsless. Just boxers.

Maxx gives zero fucks as he emulates Bruce Lee's karate moves from the television.

Victor, tapping his pen and staring at the word "I", puts his pen down, gets up off the couch, and trudges to the door.

Maxx perks his head up, hearing the faint yelling from beyond the door. He tornadoes his way between the door and Victor and executes a chop and high-kick surprisingly well.

MAXX

Hi-yah! Practice with me!

VICTOR

I want a seltzer.

Victor goes for the basement door handle but Maxx kicks his hand away. Victor recoils and rubs his wrist.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

That's my writing hand! I'm gonna tell mom!

MAXX

I'd be more worried about impressing Lee over Lisa.

VICTOR

I don't care.

MAXX

You'd be good if you tried.

Maxx pushes Victor and circles around him. Victor takes a defensive pose and tracks Maxx. Victor dodges Maxx's jabs.

MAXX (CONT'D)

You're pretty good at not getting hit. Now if you could focus on--

THWAP!

A fist punches Maxx's eye, stopping him dead in his tracks. Maxx is dazed. Then his face turns into a smile.

MAXX (CONT'D)

Awesome hit!

Maxx puts up a high five for Victor. Victor goes to slap it and Maxx uses this moment of vulnerability to sweep kick Victor on his ass.

MAXX (CONT'D)

Too slow!

Three loud knocks bang against the basement door. A man's deep and threatening voice speaks from the other side.

MAN (O.S.)

Dinner. Now.

Maxx puts on his clothes in a hurry. Victor helps. The two run out the basement door. Victor's letter is left behind.

INT. PRICE DINING ROOM - EVENING

Cloud-like mashed potatoes, steaming bread rolls, glistening rib-eye steaks, and a pitcher of iced tea ornament a long, cherry wood dining room table.

MARTHA, 40s, apron and apprehension on, sits at one end of the table while JOSEPH, 40s, stern and weathered face, sits at the other end. Maxx and Victor sit across from each other on either side of the table.

Victor tries to cover his steak completely in mashed potatoes before eating it, unaware that Martha and Maxx both stare at Joseph in silence, waiting.

Joseph stabs his steak with his fork, then takes his knife and saws the meat, back and forth. He takes the piece of meat to his eyes, inspects it.

JOSEPH

This looks medium-rare.

MARTHA

I thought that's how you liked it.

JOSEPH

It is.

Maxx gulps. Victor still plays with his food. Joseph puts the bite of food into his mouth.

He chews.

Once.

Twice.

Puts his fork down. Spits out the meat. Slides his chair back as he looks at Martha.

MARTHA

Maxx, take Victor to karate, now.

Maxx gets up out of his seat, goes around the table one way towards Victor. Joseph goes around the table the other way towards Martha. Maxx picks Victor up by the elbow.

MAXX

Come on.

VICTOR  
What's wrong?

MAXX  
Nothing. It's cool. It's totally cool.

Maxx drags Victor out of the dining room. Joseph reaches Martha in her seat.

VICTOR (O.S.)  
I didn't get to finish my letter!

Joseph raises his hand.

JOSEPH  
How do you fuck up a rib-eye?

MARTHA  
The same way you fuck up a marriage. Too much heat or not enough.

Joseph cocks his hand back.

MARTHA (CONT'D)  
Get it in while you can, Joseph.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

Maxx pushes Victor out the front door. He looks behind him.

The sound of a SMACK!

Maxx runs out the front door and slams it.

EXT. SUBURBAN SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Maxx pedals a LIGHTNING-BOLT-PAINTED BIKE while Victor stands on pegs and holds Maxx's shoulders.

VICTOR  
Can we please go back home? I didn't even practice.

MAXX  
You'll be fine.

VICTOR  
My clothes are gonna get messed up.

MAXX  
That's why they invented washing  
machines.

Victor sighs.

VICTOR  
I really need to finish that  
letter.

MAXX  
You barely started it.

VICTOR  
Lisa needs to know how I feel!

MAXX  
You're not gonna give it to her.

VICTOR  
I could.

MAXX  
Sure, yah scaredy cat.

Victor pulls Maxx's ears.

MAXX (CONT'D)  
Ow! Let go!

Maxx loses control of the bike and the two get flung in a  
dirty roadside ditch. Victor looks at his soiled clothes in  
shock.

VICTOR  
This dirt may never come out!

Victor lunges at Maxx. Maxx uses Victor's momentum against  
him and dodges while Victor falls on the ground. Victor gets  
up and goes after Maxx again.

MAXX  
Chill.

VICTOR  
You chill!

Victor swings at Maxx and misses. Maxx gets a hold of  
Victor's arms and squeezes Victor tight so he can't move.  
Victor squirms his way out and brings Maxx to the ground.

MAXX  
We have to get to Lee.

The two tussle in the dirt.

VICTOR  
I want to go home.

Victor frantically claws at Maxx as Maxx bats him away.

MAXX  
Mom and Dad are fighting.

Victor stops tussling. Maxx gets up and lifts Victor up too.

VICTOR  
How do you know?

MAXX  
I just do. Come on.

Maxx gets back on the bike. Victor takes his position on the pegs again.

VICTOR  
Don't Mom and Dad love each other?

Maxx stares out into the distance. Pedals faster.

MAXX  
Not as much as you love, Lisa. Yah  
sick sap.

Victor smiles up at the stars. The brothers bike onward into the night.

EXT. LEE BRUCE'S KARATE STUDIO - NIGHT

A strip mall full of closed stores with their lights off.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Maxx taps his knuckles on an all-glass storefront. Above the glass, the words LEE BRUCE'S KARATE STUDIO are crappily painted in neon colors on the building. Victor paces back and forth behind him.

VICTOR  
He's closed!

TAP! TAP! TAP!

Maxx taps even louder. A light flicks on towards the back of the studio and a door opens. Out walks LEE BRUCE, 60s, frizzy white-haired fro, a smile, and a cup of tea in hand.

As he gets closer to the door, his great fitness shape becomes apparent. He unlocks the door and looks at the boys as he sips his tea.

LEE  
We scheduled for a lesson today?

MAXX  
(Pointed tone)  
We need one.

Lee looks at Maxx and nods.

LEE  
I see. Well come on in. I've got a fun one for yah tonight.

INT. LEE BRUCE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

A line of six boards resting on cement blocks are against opposite sides of the studio walls. Maxx and Victor each face a line of boards, their backs to each other across the room.

Lee finishes chiseling the word "All" in a PIECE OF POLISHED WOOD at a side work table as he addresses the boys.

LEE  
This shall be a race of brute force. Whoever chops all the boards in half first wins. But the loser must still break all of his boards.

Lee looks to Maxx and winks. Maxx nods. Lee brings a whistle to his lips.

LEE (CONT'D)  
Ready? Go!

Maxx chops his way through his six boards with ease while Victor stays stuck on his first one. Maxx ends up near Lee. They both watch Victor with amusement.

Wham!

Victor brings his hand down on the board. Nothing.

Wham!

Victor tries again with no effect. Frustrated, Victor hops on the board and starts jumping up and down on it but it still won't break.

MAXX  
Did you give him different wood?

LEE  
I wish I could say I did.

Maxx laughs.

LEE (CONT'D)  
Victor still in the dark?

MAXX  
Barely. It's getting bad. Thanks  
for opening up.

LEE  
Day or night.

The two look over to Victor. He takes the first board off the cement blocks and slams it on the floor. It finally breaks.

Maxx watches Lee chisel more into the piece of polished wood.

MAXX  
What's the world record for most  
boards broken with a single chop?

LEE  
Fourteen.

Victor moves on to the second board, grabs it, and hits the ground with it.

MAXX  
I'm gonna break that record some  
day.

LEE  
I have no doubt.

Victor moves on to the third board.

LEE (CONT'D)  
You'll be there for him.

MAXX  
Always.

Victor throws the board across the room. It almost hits Lee's work table.

LEE  
You've got a little extra fire in  
you these days, Victor.

Victor, red-faced and sweating, shrugs his shoulders.

VICTOR  
Yeah. I think I'm in love.

INT. PRICE BASEMENT - NIGHT

A full handwritten page lies on the coffee table. Victor sits on the couch, staring at it. He puts his pen to the bottom of the page.

He writes the word LOVE. Puts pen down. Shakes his head in embarrassment. Lifts his pen back up and turns the word "LOVE" into "WEAR GLOVES". He signs his name to it, dissatisfied.

Victor folds the letter into thirds precisely and deliberately. Puts it in his pocket.

Maxx tiptoes up behind him.

MAXX  
Boo!

Victor jumps.

VICTOR  
Ahhh! Jerk!

MAXX  
Family meeting.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

A nightlight casts a low light on Martha, Maxx, and Victor. Martha holds the boys close to her, tears streaming down her face. Everyone speaks in hushed tones.

MARTHA  
We're going to play a little game tomorrow.

VICTOR  
Why are you crying? Games are fun.

MAXX  
If you win.

VICTOR  
Mom always wins games.

Martha chuckles through her tears. She holds Maxx and Victor out at a distance.

MARTHA

Tomorrow, we're all going to be on the same team. But you can't tell Daddy.

VICTOR

Why not?

MARTHA

Because the game is to see how long we can keep the game a secret.

VICTOR

I don't get it.

MAXX

I'll show you how to play tomorrow.

MARTHA

(to Victor)

Listen to your brother.

VICTOR

Ok, Mom.

Victor hugs Martha. Maxx hangs back but Martha pulls him in for a triple hug.

EXT. ABANDONED TRAIN CAR - WOODS - DAY

In the middle of beautiful foliage lies a medium-sized red train car.

INT. ABANDONED TRAIN CAR - DAY

Maxx practices karate moves. Victor, wearing two backpacks, clutches his letter and stares at it.

VICTOR

Your backpack is heavy and I have a letter to give!

Maxx stops what he's doing and spins to Victor.

MAXX

You're not gonna give it to her.

VICTOR

Am too!

MAXX

Wanna make a bet?

VICTOR  
A million dollars.

MAXX  
Deal.

Maxx and Victor spit into their separate hands and shake on it.

VICTOR  
Race yah to the bus stop!

Victor throws Maxx's bag on the ground and runs out of the train car.

MAXX  
You got a head start!

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

Victor runs to the corner and touches the curb with his foot. Maxx catches up and jumps on the curb.

VICTOR  
You lose.

Two girls, both 11, approach the corner. One has shimmering red-hair and neon-pink shoelaces. The other has black lipstick, a mohawk, and a several piercings on each ear.

Victor fondles the letter in his back pocket that has LISA written on its envelope as he walks towards the girls.

VICTOR (CONT'D)  
Hey Lisa.

Victor passes by the red-head girl and gets in the face of the goth girl, LISA.

LISA  
Can I help you?

VICTOR  
Um.

Victor caresses the envelope in his back pocket. He looks at Maxx, who clutches his backpack straps.

VICTOR (CONT'D)  
I.

Victor grabs the envelope, about to pull it out of his pocket.

BEEP! BEEP!

A bus pulls up.

LISA

Weirdo.

Lisa and the other girl run up to the door and get on. Maxx approaches Victor.

MAXX

You owe me a million dollars.

VICTOR

Whatever.

Maxx and Victor walk to the bus doors.

MAXX

Remember the game tonight. Mom said you have to listen to me.

VICTOR

Yeah, but not right now.

Victor sticks out his tongue. Maxx punches his shoulder.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Ow!

As Victor and Maxx get on the bus, the doors close. Through the windows, the letter to Lisa remains in Victor's back pocket.

INT. PRICE DINING ROOM - DAY

Martha carries in a plate of asparagus towards the dining room table. Joseph sits at the head of the table reading a paper.

Behind Joseph, Maxx tiptoes carrying a large suitcase. He makes a "follow me" motion with his left hand.

Victor cautiously emerges, carrying a guitar case.

Joseph shifts in his chair. He looks like he's about to turn around. Martha tilts the plate of asparagus so a few pieces drop on the table.

MARTHA

Oh my.

Joseph's attention turns towards the table. He sees the dropped asparagus.

JOSEPH

You should pay attention more.

Maxx and Victor creep out of the dining room. Martha smiles as she picks up the asparagus and puts it back on the plate.

MARTHA

You're right. Let me check on the turkey.

JOSEPH

Now there's an idea.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Martha slinks into the kitchen and towards the oven. Checks in the little window. The turkey is almost black.

MARTHA

(shouts)

Almost ready.

Martha turns around and sees Maxx and Victor waiting quietly by a side door, resting on the suitcases. She gives them a thumbs up, then takes off her apron and throws it on the floor.

Martha ever-so-carefully opens the side door without making a noise, ushers the boys out and follows them, shutting the door behind her.

Outside the window of the side door, Martha, Victor, and Maxx pile into a mid 90s Volkswagen.

Smoke fills the kitchen. A smoke alarm goes off.

JOSEPH (O.S.)

Martha?!

INT. VOLKSWAGEN - DAY

Martha drives while Maxx reads a karate magazine in the front passenger seat. Victor sits in the back seat staring out the window. Next to him are two suitcases.

VICTOR

I don't get this game.

MARTHA  
Your brother will explain all the  
rules to you when you're older.

VICTOR  
How old?

Maxx looks up from his karate magazine, turns to Victor.

MAXX  
When you know what a vulva is, I'll  
tell you.

VICTOR  
I know a Volvo's a car, dummy.

Maxx smiles at Martha. She gives him a wink as she pulls into  
Lee Bruce's karate studio parking lot.

EXT. LEE BRUCE'S KARATE STUDIO - DAY

Lee waits outside the front door, sipping out of an OLIVE  
GREEN TEA MUG, as the Volkswagen parks crookedly in a spot.

Martha, Maxx, and Victor pop out.

LEE  
Hey boys!

VICTOR  
Hey Lee!

Lee gives Martha a knowing look.

LEE  
I'll be ready for them inside.

MARTHA  
Thanks Lee. For everything.

Lee bows his head and goes inside his studio. Martha huddles  
Maxx and Victor in close and hugs them.

MARTHA (CONT'D)  
Have a great karate lesson.

VICTOR  
Too tight, Mom!

Martha lets go and kisses both boys on the head.

MARTHA  
 Promise me you'll look out for each  
 other.

Maxx puts his arm around Victor.

MAXX  
 We promise.

VICTOR  
 Promise.

MARTHA  
 I love you.

VICTOR  
 Love you!

Victor kisses his mom and runs inside, leaving Maxx.

MAXX  
 When are you coming back?

MARTHA  
 After you hear my songs on the  
 radio.

Maxx hugs Martha one last time. Walks inside. Martha goes  
 back in her car.

INT. VOLKSWAGEN - DAY

Martha watches through her car window and through the front  
 glass window of the karate studio as Maxx and Victor tussle  
 and laugh.

Victor kicks Maxx's ass when Maxx's back is turned. Maxx  
 gives Victor a nipple twist.

Martha simultaneously laughs and cries as she starts the  
 engine, her suitcase and guitar case in the back seat.

INT. LEE BRUCE'S STUDIO - DAY

Lee steps in front of Maxx, who has Victor in a headlock.

LEE  
 (whispering)  
 Enough.

MAXX  
 It's cool. It's totally cool

Maxx releases Victor. They separate immediately.

LEE

Always remember that no matter if you decide to do good or evil, all of your actions will be remembered within these walls long after you're gone.

MAXX

What if we're outside?

LEE

These walls will still remember.

VICTOR

I don't get it.

Lee walks to a door, opens it, walks through, and leaves the door open. Victor and Maxx look at each other before racing each other to the door.

INT. LEE BRUCE'S ROOM - DAY

Maxx and Victor enter a barely furnished room. It has a mattress on the floor, a sink, stove, refrigerator and a table with three chairs around it.

A tiny window overlooks the outside.

Lee finishes pouring tea into one of three OLIVE GREEN MUGS on the table.

VICTOR

Yes! I love those mugs.

MAXX

I think they're ugly.

LEE

Sit.

The boys sit with Lee.

LEE (CONT'D)

We share this tea and form a sacred bond of brotherhood.

MAXX

Victor and me are already brothers.

VICTOR  
 (to Lee)  
 You're too old to be our brother.

LEE  
 You're ruining the bit.

MAXX  
 Sorry.

Lee raises his mug. Victor and Maxx follow suit.

LEE  
 As we clink our mugs together, let  
 the walls remember our vow to never  
 abandon each other no matter what  
 happens in this life.

Victor excitedly clinks Lee's mug then Maxx's mug.

LEE (CONT'D)  
 No. Slow and together. 1, 2, 3.

None of them notice the little girl, MEREDITH, peeking at them through the window from outside, as they bring their mugs in and clink them.

INSERT TITLE CARD: 20 YEARS LATER

INT. PRICE & COOPER ACCOUNTING - VICTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A white wall displays eleven plaques, each reading "Accountant of the Year" followed by the name Victor Price.

VICTOR PRICE, 30s, a tad doughy, PRESSED SUIT without a hint of a wrinkle, rifles through a stack of stapled packets.

He grabs a packet, marks it up with his pencil, puts it down.

He opens his desk drawer. There's a sealed envelope with AMBER written on it in pristine handwriting. He closes the desk drawer.

He grabs a packet, marks it up with his pencil, puts it down.

He opens the desk drawer again. Stares at envelope. Grabs it and puts it in his suit jacket and closes the drawer.

Grabs a packet, marks-- Victor stops. He takes out the staple in the packet corner and then re-staples it.

He brings the packet close to his face and examines it.

INT. PRICE & COOPER ACCOUNTING - AMBER'S OFFICE - DAY

AMBER COOPER, 30s, sits at a pristinely clean and organized desk. Victor walks in and puts down the packet on her desk.

VICTOR  
I'm off my game. Look at this  
ridiculousness.

Amber flips through the packet pages.

AMBER  
What are you talking about? Your  
math looks perfect.

Victor grabs the packet. Holds the corner of the packet in Amber's face.

VICTOR  
Look how I stapled it.

C/U on the staple. It sits at a diagonal in the top left corner of the packet.

AMBER  
It's going to be ok, Victor.

Amber grabs the packet from his hand. Grabs her stapler remover. Meticulously removes the staple. Throws it away. Puts the stapler remover down. Grabs the stapler. Staples the corner. Hands it to Victor, whose hand is in his suit jacket.

He takes it out to grab the packet from Amber.

VICTOR  
Thanks.

AMBER  
Any time.

Victor puts his hands together in thanks.

INT. VICTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Victor warily sits back into his chair. Loosens his tie and sighs. He takes the letter from his suit jacket pocket and puts it back in his desk.

He looks at the freshly-stapled packet.

He crumples it up in frustration and throws it in the trash.

C/U trash: The crumpled packet lands on top of a ripped up birthday card. It's signed "Love, Maxx."

EXT. COUNTY FAIR OUTDOOR STAGE AREA - DAY

HAY-BALE BENCHES

A dozen scattered people, including a family of two, sit on hay-bale benches and face a tiny stage barely suitable for an elementary school play.

STAGE

MAXX PRICE, 30s, wears a karate uniform loosely held together by a black belt. It intentionally exposes his ripped body. He stands under a shittily-designed banner of him karate kicking in mid-air in front of an explosion.

On the top of the banner giant letters read MAXX POWER!

Elsewhere on the stage are fifteen boards stacked on top of two cement blocks. MELVIN, 50s, black tie and cummerbund, stands with a clipboard looking at the stack of boards.

Maxx wears a head-set microphone. Every time he speaks his voice comes out of fuzzy speakers.

MAXX

Today I'm going to attempt to break  
the world record for amount of  
boards broken with a single chop.

Maxx points to Melvin.

MAXX (CONT'D)

Guinness Book of Records came out  
to mark the occasion. Everybody say  
hi to our judge, Melvin!

HAY-BALE BENCHES

The crowd looks around at each other and collectively shrug.

CROWD

(Unenthusiastically)  
Hi, Melvin.

STAGE

Maxx shakes his head, disappointed. He clicks his tongue, tsk, tsk, tsk, into the microphone.

MAXX

Let me hear you scream it! Give your voices some...MAXX POWER! The loudest one gets to volunteer on stage!

HAY-BALE BENCHES

No one looks motivated. Except for one little boy, ROBERT, 7, whose eyes light up as he jumps up and down. His mother and father sit behind him, both on their smartphones.

ROBERT

(Screaming)

Hi Melvin! Hi Melvin! Hi Melvin!

STAGE

Maxx points an intense finger right at Robert in the crowd.

MAXX

Come on up here, little man!

Robert runs up on stage. Maxx offers him a high five. Robert high-kicks it.

MAXX (CONT'D)

That's the spirit! What's your name?

ROBERT

Robert.

MAXX

Nice to meet you, Robert. Wanna help Melvin mark this world-record breaking moment?

Robert jumps up and down in glee.

MAXX (CONT'D)

Go stand next to him near to make sure I don't cheat.

Robert stands next to Melvin who turns his nose up at the young boy.

HAY-BALE BENCHES

Robert's parents move closer to the stage and record their son with their smartphones. They shuffle in front of each other for the better camera angle.

STAGE

Maxx goes to the stack of boards.

MAXX (CONT'D)  
Ok, Robert and Melvin. Are you ready?

Melvin raises his eyebrows. Robert gives a thumbs up with one hand as he itches his nose with the other.

MAXX (CONT'D)  
Perfect. Now you're going to count to three, and on three, I'm going to chop these fifteen boards in half. Count us off, Robert.

ROBERT  
One.

Maxx takes position. Robert wiggles his nose.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
Two.

Maxx breathes in. Robert tilts his head back, about to sneeze.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
Three!

Maxx brings down his hand in a powerful downward motion as Robert sneezes right into Maxx's hand's path.

Maxx's chop cracks Robert's nose. Blood pours out. Robert screams.

Robert's mother stops filming and rushes the stage.

ROBERT'S MOM  
My baby!

Robert's father stays where he is and continues to film with his smart phone. He chokes down a chuckle.

Maxx bends down to Robert.

MAXX  
It's cool. It's totally cool.

Robert's mother pushes Maxx away and embraces Robert.

ROBERT'S MOM  
We're suing your ass!

MAXX  
Please don't?

A security guard carries Maxx off-stage.

EXT. FAIRGROUND THOROUGHFARE - DAY

The security guard escorts Maxx through the crowd.

MAXX (CONT'D)  
I obviously didn't mean it.

SECURITY GUARD  
I don't care, man. I'm just doing my job.

MAXX  
So am I! Where are you taking me?

SECURITY GUARD  
Gotta hold you until the cops come.

MAXX  
The cops? Is that necessary?

Maxx breaks free and takes a defensive stance. The security guard looks at him, almost bored.

SECURITY GUARD  
Please, man. I got thirty minutes left on my shift and then my girlfriend said she may have sex with me tonight. Take it easy.

MAXX  
I'm not being man-handled by the likes of you.

The security guard sighs and almost reluctantly takes out his taser and tasers Maxx in the neck. Maxx drops to the ground immediately. The guard secures his taser. Yawns.

SECURITY GUARD  
I'm sorry.

EXT. VICTOR'S HOUSE - DAY

A two-story Colonial. Front lawn perfectly manicured. A flagpole with an American flag raised and billowing in the wind.

Sprinklers pop up and go off. They are designed in a perfect grid so that every part of the lawn gets watered with zero overlap. Only from above does one notice that the grid is unmistakably phallic.

INT. VICTOR'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Victor sits on the edge of a burgundy leather sofa, hunched over a coffee table. A TV remote is perfectly aligned with the corner of the coffee table.

Across from Victor on a large-screen TV, Dr. Phil plays.

DR. PHIL ON TV  
 You can't really learn to love  
 Sally until you learn to love  
 yourself.

Victor lifts his head up and points to the TV.

VICTOR  
 Well said, Dr. McGraw, well said.

Victor stares at the letter addressed to AMBER that sits on his coffee table.

Mozart's 41st symphony interrupts his gaze. Victor takes out his flip-phone and puts it to his ear.

VICTOR (CONT'D)  
 Hello?

Victor listens as we hear Dr. Phil.

DR. PHIL ON TV  
 If you love Sally, show her, don't  
 tell her. What's a musical group  
 Sally likes that you don't?

Victor hangs up his phone. He shuts Dr. Phil off and puts the remote down, askew of the corner edge of the coffee table.

Victor stares down at the remote's imperfect placement, apathetic.

EXT. COUNTY FAIR POP-UP TENT - DAY

A police car parks next to a pop-up tent on the grass. Maxx sits next to the security guard, on his phone.

Officer HERNANDEZ, 30s and donning a take-no-shit grin, approaches Maxx, her hand on her knight stick.

HERNANDEZ

Am I going to have to beat your ass  
this time?

MAXX

No, Officer Hernandez.

Maxx stands up, puts his arms behind his back, and offers his wrists to her. She cuffs him and throws him in the back of the squad car.

MAXX (CONT'D)

(To Security Guard)

Hey man, if she doesn't bone you  
tonight, it's her loss.

The security guard looks up from his phone and smiles.

SECURITY GUARD

Thanks.

Hernandez slams the back door, gets in the driver's seat, and drives away.

INT. COP CAR - DAY

Hernandez looks in her rearview mirror at Maxx.

HERNANDEZ

Do you fuck up this much on  
purpose?

MAXX

It's only to see you, Hernandez.

HERNANDEZ

Watch it. You want sexual  
harassment slapped on?

MAXX

I'd like something slapped.

Hernandez slams the gas and jerks the cop car into a deserted alleyway.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

Hernandez gets out of the car, slams her door, opens the back door to Maxx, and sticks her head in.

HERNANDEZ  
You think you can fuck with me,  
Price?

Maxx raises his eyebrows at Hernandez.

INT. COP CAR - BACK SEAT - DAY

Hernandez, pants pulled down, rides Maxx, whose hands are still handcuffed behind him. They both pant heavily.

HERNANDEZ  
We have to stop doing this.

MAXX  
Why?

HERNANDEZ  
Because it's illegal.

MAXX  
That just makes me cum harder.

Hernandez moans.

HERNANDEZ  
This is the last. Time.

Bonnie Tyler's "I Need A Hero" plays loudly.

MAXX  
Oh shit, that's my phone. It's in  
my left pocket.

Hernandez continues to ride Maxx as she takes out his phone and shows it to him. Maxx's eyebrow goes up.

MAXX (CONT'D)  
I have to take this.

Hernandez accepts the call and puts it to Maxx's ear as she continues to ride him. She tries her best to keep quiet. It's hard for her. Maxx struggles to keep his voice composed through the call.

MAXX (CONT'D)  
Hello?

Hernandez rides Maxx furiously. She's close to orgasming.

MAXX (CONT'D)  
What?

Maxx is having trouble reconciling whatever is happening on the phone with getting the pounding of a lifetime.

MAXX (CONT'D)

Are you sure?

Maxx makes an "O face".

MAXX (CONT'D)

I need to go.

Hernandez hits "END CALL" and drops the phone as she orgasms loudly while at the same moment Maxx bursts into tears.

HERNANDEZ

Are you ok?

MAXX

My karate teacher just died.

HERNANDEZ

I'm so sor-

Maxx convulses.

HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

Did you just cum inside me?

Maxx looks up at Hernandez through his tears.

MAXX

Sorry.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Victor saunters past headstones, his head down. He notices a miniscule piece of lint on his suit sleeve and picks it off, accusatory.

He approaches a crowd gathered around a casket and keeps a calculated distance in the back. A woman stands next to him. Victor shuffles inches away from her for fear of her touching his PRESSED SUIT.

In front of the casket, MEREDITH, 30s, addresses the crowd.

MEREDITH

My father was the purest soul I knew. One minute he would be teaching karate, many times for free...

Victor pulls his jacket down tight so that any hint of a wrinkle disappears, though there were none to begin with.

BLECHHHHHHHHHHHH!

A cascade of hot, textured liquid splashes against the back of Victor's neck and drips down the front of his suit jacket. Victor looks down, struggling to process what it is.

He looks back up and notices the entire crowd, including Meredith, have gone silent and stare at him.

Victor turns around and faces Maxx, wiping the vomit from his mouth but really just smearing it around, holding a bottle of tequila in his other hand. Maxx, surprised, smiles.

MAXX

Little brother! You got fat.

Horror hits Victor. He rips his suit jacket off and throws it on the ground.

MAXX (CONT'D)

Don't worry, it's cool. It's totally cool.

He grabs a kerchief from his pocket and wipes Maxx's vomit from his neck and throws that on the ground too.

Maxx notices everyone staring at them.

MAXX (CONT'D)

Hey everybody! Thank you for coming. Lee Bruce was a pretty fucking cool dude, wasn't he? He took me and my brother Victor here in when we had no one else.

Maxx embraces Victor who quickly tries to brush Maxx off.

MAXX (CONT'D)

One of the only good ones left and now he's gone.

Maxx takes a swig of tequila, goes up to the casket, climbs on top of it, and cuddles it, belly down. Maxx bawls as he lifts his head.

MAXX (CONT'D)

Don't you have anything to say, Victor?

Victor smiles nervously.

VICTOR  
 (to crowd)  
 My sincerest apologies. On every  
 possible level.  
 (to Maxx)  
 Let's go.

Maxx takes a swig of tequila then pours the rest on the casket.

MAXX  
 Sleep well, old friend.

Maxx slides off the casket, stumbles to Victor, tries to hold his shoulder for support. Victor jerks away.

VICTOR  
 Please don't touch me.

Victor leaves with Maxx trailing. Meredith, at the head of the casket, shouts at them.

MEREDITH  
 You're not the Price brothers, are you?

Victor and Maxx both stop and turn around. Maxx bows.

MAXX  
 The one and only.

Maxx's bow gets too low and he falls to the ground. Meredith walks through the crowd, passes Maxx, and looks to Victor.

MEREDITH  
 My father left something for you two.

VICTOR  
 I didn't know Lee had a daughter.

MEREDITH  
 Yeah, well, it seemed like he didn't, half the time.

Maxx burps, vomits a little in his mouth, swallows it. Meredith shakes her head.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)  
 Yet he always came through for the karate kids.

VICTOR  
 What did he leave us?

MEREDITH  
Meet me at his studio. Seven  
tonight. I'll show you.

Meredith points to Victor's pile of pukey clothes on the ground.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)  
Don't forget to take that.

As she walks back up to the casket, she trips over a now-snooring Maxx.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)  
(to Victor)  
And make sure your brother sobers  
up by tonight. Or at least stays  
alive.

Victor shakes Maxx on the ground. Maxx wakes up.

VICTOR  
You owe me a jacket.