

Cecilia's Birthday Cake

an original screenplay by

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FADE IN:

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX ROOFTOP - DUSK

Three friends sit in lawn chairs around a make-shift fire constructed in a garbage pail on the rooftop of an apartment building. It is an exceptionally warm fall evening and the city is bustling beneath them. Empty beer cans are strewn about. CECILIA, a raven-haired and fairly attractive 22 year-old, takes a drag of her cigarette. She is wearing a party hat held on by an elastic band around her head. Her two friends, CHARLIE and OWEN, have been arguing, as usual, about the inane.

CHARLIE

(to Cecilia)

Hey... what ultimately convinced him to make the move was his own poor judgment.

CECILIA

(to Charlie)

So, you're telling me that you didn't encourage it at all. He would have done it anyway?

CHARLIE

(to Cecilia)

That's what I'm saying.

(to Owen)

Pass me a beer.

CECILIA

(to Owen)

Ow, don't pass him a beer... and would you have done it anyway?

Owen shakes his head.

CHARLIE

Ow, do pass me a beer... and yes you would have.

OWEN

We're out of beer.

(beat)

And I think I know what I would have done.

CHARLIE

(grandiose)

We are out of beer! We're out of beer. There's only one solution: someone's got to go get us more beer from the fridge.

Charlie looks over at Owen, expectantly.

CECILIA
Don't do it, Owen.

CHARLIE
(imitating Cecilia)
Stay out of it, Cici.

OWEN
I'll get the beer... but because I
want beer.

Owen gets up and makes his way over towards the roof entrance into the building. He pulls on the door and realizes it's locked.

OWEN (CONT'D)
Who's got the keys?

CHARLIE
(to Owen)
I gave them to you.

OWEN
And I gave them to Cecilia.

CECILIA
(to Charlie)
And I put them in your jacket.

CHARLIE
And I left my jacket inside.

The three of them simultaneously realize they are locked on the roof of the building.

CECILIA
Well, shit.

CHARLIE
(to Owen)
I hope you didn't have any plans
later.

Charlie smiles.

Owen becomes instantly agitated and throws his phone towards Charlie. The phone misses entirely and is launched off the roof.

OWEN
Fuck!
(to Charlie)
You did this on purpose.

Owen is enraged.

CHARLIE
(defensively)
I didn't do anything.

Owen begins to move closer to Charlie. Charlie, physically the much bigger person, takes a few steps back.

CECILIA
Owen?

OWEN
I can't believe you. I honestly
can't believe you.

CHARLIE
(to Owen)
You're sure you want to do this?
You really want to do this?

OWEN
Yup.

Owen takes a swing at Charlie and makes contact with his lower jaw. Charlie stumbles backwards but remains on his feet.

CECILIA
Owen, stop it!

OWEN
Fuck you, Charlie!

Owen is backing Charlie dangerously close to the edge of the rooftop.

CHARLIE
Owen, dude, calm down.

Owen takes another swing at Charlie. This time he makes full contact. Charlie hits the ground and stays down. Owen walks away furiously while shaking out his fist. Cecilia stands in the middle of them, completely distraught.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - 12 HOURS EARLIER

Charlie and Owen stand in line waiting to order coffee. They both have book-bags over their shoulders.

OWEN
(to Charlie)
So if you pick up the cake, I can
grab the gift.
(MORE)

OWEN (CONT'D)
 (to coffee barista)
 Medium with milk please.

CHARLIE
 (to Owen)
 How about I get the gift, you get
 the cake?
 (to coffee barista)
 Large black.

OWEN
 But I won't be able to get to the
 bakery until way later after my class.
 Like sixish. It doesn't make sense
 for me...

Charlie says nothing, but eyes Owen suspiciously as they
 wait for their drinks.

OWEN (CONT'D)
 What?

CHARLIE
 Nothing. Nothing at all.
 (condescendingly)
 Why don't you get the gift, if that's
 what you really want.

OWEN
 Look, it's not a big deal for me.
 If you really want to you can get it--

CHARLIE
 --great, I'll pick it up after Ancient
 Civ. I know exactly what to get,
 too.

Owen clearly is irritated by this, but masks his frustration
 as the barista hands them their coffees. Charlie thanks the
 barista flirtatiously, and the two walk out of the cafe with
 their drinks.

EXT. CAMPUS GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

OWEN
 Why are you always flirting with the
 coffee shop girl? You have a
 girlfriend, you know.

CHARLIE
 First of all, her name is "Sandy,"
 not "coffeeshop girl."
 (MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(sarcastically)

And second, I actually forgot I had a girlfriend, but thanks so much for reminding me.

OWEN

Whatever.

CHARLIE

Wow, what's eating you today? You've been an top-notch asshole since you woke up this morning.

OWEN

(hesitantly)

I saw Dierdra yesterday.

Charlie stops in his tracks.

CHARLIE

What? Oh, no, no, no. This is bad.

OWEN

Don't worry. Things are different now.

CHARLIE

Yeah, I've heard that before.

Charlie looks at his watch.

Look I gotta get going. We have to discuss this later. Lunch?

OWEN

I'll meet you outside the U.C. after class.

CHARLIE

Sounds good.

Charlie begins to walk away.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Don't forget the cake!

INT. LECTURE HALL - LATER

Charlie walks into a to class already in session. He takes a seat next to Cecilia, who is diligently taking notes.

CHARLIE

(whispering)

Thanks for saving me a spot, Cici.

CECILIA

I didn't.

Charlie pulls out his notebook and begins copying the notes out of Cecilia's binder.

CHARLIE

Did you hear about Dierdra?

Cecilia turns to Charlie and stops taking notes.

CECILIA

What about Dierdra?

CHARLIE

Apparently she's back.

CECILIA

Back in what way? How is she back?

CHARLIE

Don't know. Just that she's back.

(beat)

Owen saw her yesterday.

CECILIA

(shocked)

No!

Cecilia's last comment was too loud. The professor at the front of the class turns around to express his displeasure. Cecilia and Charlie return to taking notes in silence for a moment.

CECILIA (CONT'D)

(whispering again)

Why didn't he tell us?

CHARLIE

Probably because he knew what the reaction would be.

CECILIA

Well, what do we do?

CHARLIE

I'm meeting him for lunch. I'll get the scoop.

CECILIA

I'll join.

CHARLIE

It's probably better if you don't.

Cecilia nods in understanding.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
You're still good for tonight, right?

CECILIA
You know, you guys don't have to do anything.

CHARLIE
Just shut up and be there by seven.

EXT. UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY CENTRE - DAY

Owen is standing outside the University Community Centre on a concrete patio. Charlie is late as usual. The atmosphere is noisy and vibrant. Students are walking in all directions. OWEN finally spots Charlie through the crowd. Charlie walks over nonchalantly.

CHARLIE
Hey buddy. Have you been waiting long?

OWEN
(sarcastically)
Only 20 minutes.

CHARLIE
(oblivious)
Sweet. Let's head to Dear John's. I'm starving.

The two start walking towards the campus restaurant.

OWEN
How was Civ?

CHARLIE
Ugh, Cohen assigns way too much reading. I don't know about you but--

Charlie loses his concentration and trails off. He is looking off into the distance, and what he sees disturbs him.

OWEN
--but you don't like finishing your thoughts?

CHARLIE
Uh, Owen, I don't want to freak you out, but it's Dierdra. She's over there by the picnic tables.

OWEN
 (nervously)
 Er, shit. Did she see you?

CHARLIE.
 I don't know. She's with a group of
 people.
 (beat)
 She's looking good too, Owen. You
 better be careful.

OWEN
 Don't worry about me.

CHARLIE
 Let's go over there and say 'hi'.

Charlie starts walking in her direction.

OWEN
 No! Are you crazy? Get back here!

But Charlie has made up his mind and strides confidently toward the picnic tables. Dierdra is a gorgeous head-cheerleader type, with long blonde hair in a ponytail. Sitting with a few friends, she is packing her things and getting ready to leave. Charlie walks right up to her and the other girls at the table eye him curiously.

CHARLIE
 (to Dierdra)
 Hey, don't leave on my account.

DIERDRA
 (with mock sincerity)
 Charlie, what a pleasant surprise.
 I'd actually love to stay and chat,
 but I have class and unlike you I
 actually intend on graduating.
 (to Owen)
 See you tonight, Ow?

Dierdra smiles at Owen and then slings her bag over her shoulder and walks away with her friends. Owen is wearing a guilty expression as he looks at Charlie. Charlie is wide-eyed and dumbfounded.

CHARLIE
 Tonight? Ow?

EXT. CAMPUS - LATER

Charlie is walking through campus talking on the phone with Cecilia.

CHARLIE
(on the phone)
It's worse than we thought.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPUS - CONTINUOUS

Cecilia is also walking through campus talking on the phone with Charlie.

CECILIA
(on the phone)
How bad?

CHARLIE
It's bad... he's seeing her tonight.

CECILIA
I thought my thing was tonight?

CHARLIE
He's seeing her after... or before...
or during.
(beat)
He wasn't really just giving it up
because she was standing right there.

CECILIA
Shut up! You saw her!? How'd she
look?

CHARLIE
Good.
(beat)
Too good.

CECILIA
He doesn't stand a chance.

CHARLIE
We're in desperate times, here. You
know what you've got to do.

CECILIA
I'll try my best.

Cecilia and Charlie both hang up their phones.

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY - LATER

Owen is sitting at a private cubicle in the library quietly reading a text book. Cecilia shows up out of nowhere and pulls up a chair beside him.

CECILIA

Boo.

OWEN

(confused)

Hey? What's going on?

CECILIA

I heard about tonight.

OWEN

(nervous)

What do you mean?

CECILIA

Tonight's plans... birthday, cake,
rooftop, beer. Charlie told me all
of it.

Owen is both relieved that she wasn't talking about Dierdra
and frustrated all at the same time.

OWEN

Why would he tell you?

CECILIA

Because I threatened to boycott if I
didn't know what was going on. So
he told me. And I'm not boycotting.

OWEN

That's good. Birthday parties don't
work so well without birthday girls.

Cecilia turns up her charm a little bit, becomes more
flirtatious, and puts her arm on the back of his chair.

CECILIA

Actually, I just wanted to thank
you.

OWEN

Thank me?

CECILIA

For planning it all. God knows
Charlie didn't help you.

OWEN

He bought the propane.

CECILIA

And I'm betting you thought of
everything else.

Owen blushes.

CECILIA (CONT'D)

That's it. Just wanted to say thanks.

Cecilia stands up and kisses him on the forehead.

CECILIA (CONT'D)

So... thanks. And I'll see you tonight.

Cecilia walks off, leaving Owen somewhat dumbfounded.

INT. CHARLIE AND OWEN'S APARTMENT - LATER

Charlie is back at the apartment that he and Owen share. It's a typical college guy's apartment littered with empty PBR cans and opened pizza boxes crusted with cheese. Charlie is sitting on a moldering couch and attempting to clear some garbage off the coffee table to wrap Cecilia's gift. Simultaneously he holds a cellphone to his ear and is talking with his girlfriend about the party later that night. He is also trying to light a sizable bong. He seems to be having a hard time managing all these tasks.

CHARLIE

(on phone)

Hey babe. We'll be at the bar by midnight. Make sure to bring the girls. Do you still have that single friend? You know, the...

(delicately)

...kind of chunky one?

Charlie moves the phone away from his ear suddenly. He tries to get a word in to his clearly not-too-happy girlfriend.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

OK, OK, yeah, yeah, I know she's a nice girl. Listen, this is for Owen. I need to get him laid pronto.

(beat)

Because you-know-who is back in the picture.

(beat)

I know, pure evil, exactly. So bring your fat desperate friends, OK?

Charlie unrolls the wrapping paper and pulls a present he bought out of the bag. It's a pair of fuzzy slippers shaped like Pikachu. He continues to chat on the phone.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Oh, me and Owen went in on a gift together. I got her some fuzzy Pikachu slippers. They're pretty kick ass.

(beat)

Well, I also--

Charlie pauses dramatically and reaches into the bag to reveal an obscenely large dildo.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

--got her a dildo. I figure if she doesn't like the slippers, she can go fuck herself.

Charlie's girlfriend clearly reacts to this, and he finds this hilarious.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(laughing)

Yes, I am. I gotta go. Don't forget the fat girls.

INT. BAKERY - LATER

Owen is in a bakery near the campus. We get a cake's-eye-view of Owen's face as it slowly passes by the the selections under the counter. Finally his eyes light up and he presses a finger to the glass.

OWEN

That one.

The young girl behind the counter slides the cake out of the cabinet. It's bright pink with white frosting. She turns to Owen.

BAKERY GIRL

Did you want anything written on it?

Owen bites his lip and thinks hard.

OWEN

Yeah. Can you make it say "happy birthday, Cecilia"?

He pauses to reconsider.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Cici. "Happy birthday, Cici".

The girl begins jotting this down, then suddenly...

OWEN (CONT'D)
No! Cecilia. I was right the first
time. "Happy birthday, Cecilia".

The girl scribbles out what she had previously written.

OWEN (CONT'D)
Which one sounds better to you?

BAKERY GIRL
I'm sure she'll be happy with either.
My boyfriend doesn't even bother
with cakes or presents anymore.

OWEN
Oh, she's not...

Owen considers correcting the girl, but opts against it.

OWEN (CONT'D)
You're right. She will be happy
with either. I'll stick with
"Cecilia."

Owen smiles, pleased with his choice.

INT. OWEN AND CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Owen walks in with bags over his shoulders and a box from
the bakery in his hands. Charlie is busy rummaging around
the refrigerator as Owen enters the kitchen.

OWEN
I got the cake.

CHARLIE
(grinning)
And I got the gifts.

OWEN
Do I want to know?

CHARLIE
One's fuzzy...
(beat)
...and one's a dildo.

OWEN
You're disgusting.

Owen nudges Charlie out of the way so he can get the cake
into the fridge.

OWEN (CONT'D)
I got my own gift anyway.

Owen drops his bags in the hallway and opens up the closet. He begins to pull out collapsible lawn chairs.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Do you have the keys to the roof?
I'm going to throw another chair up
there.

Charlie reaches into his pocket and throws Owen the keys across the room.

CHARLIE

Why would we need another chair,
Owen?

OWEN

I invited Dierdra.

Charlie spits out his coffee in an obvious and exaggerated manner.

CHARLIE

(mockingly)
I'm surprised.
(beat)
I thought you might not want her to
come.

OWEN

(quickly)
I want her to come.

Owen walks over to the couches and sits down. He pauses for a moment and turns back to Charlie.

OWEN (CONT'D)

What are the reasons I might not
want her to come?

CHARLIE

I don't know, I just thought you
might have been looking at other
options.
(beat)
It seemed like you really wanted to
pick up that cake today and all.

OWEN

I didn't want...
(refocusing)
Cecilia?

Charlie continues to play right into Owen's doubts.

CHARLIE
I thought I'd noticed some stuff.

OWEN
What kind of stuff?

CHARLIE
Glances.

OWEN
She was sending glances?

CHARLIE
I think you've both been sending
glances.

Owen contemplates this information.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Listen, all I'm saying is that if it
were me... and I had Veronica all
lined up and ready to go.
(beat)
I wouldn't want Betty knocking at
the door.

Owen turns and stares out the window, truly confused.

INT. OWEN AND CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - OWEN'S BEDROOM -
CONTINUOUS

Owen walks into his bedroom. He picks up his present for
Dierdra which is already wrapped, he considers it for a moment
and decides to pick up his phone.

INT. DIERDRA'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Dierdra's bedroom is meticulously arranged and really, really
pink. She is neatly folding tee-shirts, and seems impressed
with her efforts once she finishes the pile. She is about
to move a basket of laundry when she is interrupted by the
sound of the phone. She picks it up.

DIERDRA
Hello?
(beat)
(surprised)
Oh, hi Owen.

Owen is speaking quietly into his cellphone so Charlie can't
hear.

OWEN
Uh, hi. How's it going?

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION:

DIERDRA

Ugh, I'm still procrastinating from studying. I'm looking forward to tonight.

OWEN

Yeah, so about tonight...

DIERDRA

Oh, no... You're not canceling on me are you?

OWEN

No, it's just that the plans have changed. Somewhat. We're not doing the rooftop party anymore.

DIERDRA

Oh? Why not?

OWEN

Uh, Cecilia broke her arm.

Owen immediately regrets coming up with this preposterous lie.

DIERDRA

Oh. Well, I hope she feels better.

OWEN

Yeah, yeah, she's fine. Can I meet you later though? I can come over to your place.

Owen is not sure how this is going to go over. Dierdra lets Owen sweat a little bit before answering.

DIERDRA

That sounds fine, Owen.

OWEN

Really? Are you sure that's OK?

DIERDRA

That's OK. It'll give me a chance to clean up this pigsty.

Dierdra looks at her spotless bedroom with disdain.

DIERDRA (CONT'D)

I'll be up late tonight, so you can come by whenever.

OWEN

I'm sure your place is spotless.
I'll see you later, OK?

DIERDRA

OK, Owen.

Owen breathes a sigh of relief.

INT. OWEN AND CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Charlie is consuming a monster-sized sandwich by the window.
He turns to see Owen coming out of his bedroom and smiles.

CHARLIE

So, is she coming?

OWEN

Actually, I er, ended it with her.

CHARLIE

(incredulously)
Really?

OWEN

Yeah, we just don't have anything in
common.

CHARLIE

I hope you didn't do it on my account.

OWEN

No, of course not.

CHARLIE

She's a nice girl that Dierdra.

OWEN

Yeah, right. Look, I'm going to
finish taking the rest of this stuff
upstairs. You wanna help me once
you're finished making love to that
sandwich?

CHARLIE

Sure thing, chief.

Owen leaves the apartment with some folding chairs under his
arm. Charlie finishes chewing and picks up his cell phone
and dials a number.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Hello, Dierdra?

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX ROOFTOP - HOURS LATER

Charlie, Owen, and Cecilia sit around the garbage pail fire on the rooftop, moments before the fight is about to break out.

CECILIA

(to Charlie)

So, you actually did it? You finally broke it off?

OWEN

(shitfaced)

Well, yeah. You gotta do what you gotta do.

Charlie shakes his head behind Owen's head to indicate that this is far from the truth. Cecilia figures this out, but keeps asking Owen questions.

CECILIA

So why'd you do it?

OWEN

Why don't you ask Charlie boy?

CHARLIE

(to Cecilia)

Hey, what ultimately convinced him to make the move was his own poor judgment.

CECILIA

(to Charlie)

So, you're telling me that you didn't encourage it at all. He would have done it anyway?

CHARLIE

(to Cecilia)

That's what I'm saying.

CUT TO:

Owen pulls on the rooftop door and realizes that they are locked up there.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(knowingly)

I hope you didn't have any plans later.

CUT TO:

Owen is backing Charlie dangerously close to the edge of the rooftop.

OWEN

I can't believe you. I honestly
can't believe you.

CHARLIE

(to Owen)

You're sure you want to do this?
You really want to do this?

Owen takes a swing at Charlie and makes full contact. Charlie hits the ground and stays down.

CECILIA

Stop it! Stop hitting him!

(softer)

It's my fault the keys are downstairs.

Owen walks over to Cecilia. He has calmed down, but is exhausted.

OWEN

Why are you guys doing this?

CECILIA

She's not good for you, Ow.

OWEN

Who are you and Charlie to decide
that?

CECILIA

Friends?

OWEN

I really doubt that after today.

Owen and Cecilia sit in silence for a moment. Charlie is still laying on the floor on the other side of the rooftop.

Owen looks down and notices the gift he had bought for Cecilia. He picks it up and considers it, much in the same way he did earlier.

OWEN (CONT'D)

I got you something.

Owen hands Cecilia the gift. Cecilia opens the gift and pulls out two concert tickets. Cecilia looks incredibly pained.

CECILIA
(genuinely)
Wow. Thank you.

OWEN
You can take Charlie. You deserve
each other.

Charlie's cell phone starts ringing loudly. Owen walks over to the folding chair and picks it up. It's Dierdra. Owen answers the call, confused.

OWEN (CONT'D)
Hello?
(beat)
No, it's Owen. I lost my phone.

Owen looks at Cecilia with sadness and disappointment. Cecilia, holding onto the tickets he gave her, returns the sad look.

Owen, decisively, walks away to talk with Dierdra.

OWEN (CONT'D)
(walking off-screen)
Yeah, I can talk.

FADE OUT