

WALK THE LINE: THE REDUCED SCRIPT

FADE IN:

INT. PRISON

JOAQUIN PHOENIX stares at a saw, an object that obviously bears profound meaning.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARKANSAS

YOUNG JOAQUIN PHOENIX walks around, and HIS MEAN AND FOUL-MOUTHED FATHER hates him.

ROBERT PATRICK

I don't love my son Joaquin Phoenix, for some Goddamned mysterious reasons that won't be revealed in this movie.

YOUNG JOAQUIN PHOENIX

Well at least I have my sweet brother Lucas Till to play with.

He sings songs with LUCAS. Then LUCAS dies from a saw accident, not too surprisingly.

ROBERT PATRICK

Now I will hate you forever, Joaquin. Go away and rot in hell.

YOUNG JOAQUIN PHOENIX

How tragic! See? My childhood misfortune has justified the future me being an utter asshole!

He grows up and runs away from the countryside. Eventually, he marries rich girl GINNIFER GOODWIN for random reasons and proceeds to have kids.

JOAQUIN PHOENIX

I love singing religious country songs. Since I have failed to be the breadwinner in my family by pursuing a salesman career due to my sheer incompetence, I will naturally resort to singing.

He rehearses and immediately succeeds in selling his IRRITATING COUNTRY MUSIC SUNG IN HIS WACKY VOICE. Then he becomes FAMOUS within months.

AUDIENCE

Wow, that was quick and effective. They've covered the first 23 years of Johnny Cash's life - from childhood to career success - in a matter of minutes. If the movie continues at this pace I will probably be done with it in half an hour.

DIRECTOR JAMES MANGOLD

Actually, this is only this movie's beginning. Now up with the repetitive!

INT. TEXAS - SOME MUSIC HALL

JOAQUIN PHOENIX suddenly meets with REESE WITHERSPOON in a comical chance encounter.

AUDIENCE

Hold on; that's June Carter, his real-life future wife! So Johnny marries June because he has cheated on his current wife?

JOAQUIN PHOENIX

(talking to GINNIFER on phone)
Honey, my concert was a huge success. You must congratulate me, otherwise you will be very sorry.

GINNIFER GOODWIN (O.S.)

Er, right, whatever. Listen, you picked a bad time to call me. Our kids are now screaming in a ridiculously high-pitched voice and that's drastically shortening my life span. Perhaps you should take some responsibility when it comes to children rearing.

JOAQUIN PHOENIX

I'm so frustrated! See? It is this kind of indifferent attitude towards me fulfilling my enormous ego that prompts me to cheat on my wife!

Unsatisfied with his wife, JOAQUIN PHOENIX begins to seduce REESE WITHERSPOON.

INT. SOME OTHER PLACE

REESE WITHERSPOON'S CHEEKBONES
I can't love you, Joaquin. I'm a
good little legally redhead once
wounded by this irresponsible man
whom I loved. Now I'm afraid of
giving my heart away.

JOAQUIN PHOENIX
Cut off the cliché! I've heard this
sentence for so many times that I
know NO ONE can take it THAT
seriously.

REESE WITHERSPOON'S CHEEKBONES
Actually you are right. But I will
still reject you, in order to be
likable.

JOAQUIN PHOENIX, REESE WITHERSPOON and a number of DRUNKARD
COUNTRY MUSIC ARTISTS travel around the country to give
concerts and make money. This makes JOAQUIN really want to
cheat on GINNIFER.

INT. SOME OTHER PLACE

JOAQUIN PHOENIX
Let's have sex.

REESE WITHERSPOON'S CHEEKBONES
No. I'm afraid of love and plus you
do have a wife.

JOAQUIN PHOENIX
Then let's kiss.

REESE WITHERSPOON'S CHEEKBONES
Sure.

They DO. But JOAQUIN is greedy and wants more. When REESE
declines, he becomes wistful and annoyed.

INT. CALIFORNIA

JOAQUIN PHOENIX
I've moved my house to California,
like every prestigious artist has.
That means my wife should worship
me and I am justified in forcing
her to listen to me bitching about
my wild sex life.

GINNIFER GOODWIN

Shut up. As your faithful wife, I don't want to hear about other women's attempts to lure you into sex.

JOAQUIN PHOENIX

How infuriating and despicable! And this is why I must cheat on her!

INT. SOME OTHER PLACE IN THE U.S.

JOAQUIN PHOENIX

Let's have sex.

REESE WITHERSPOON'S CHEEKBONES

No.

(pause)

Okay. I have suddenly changed my mind for no good reason.

They wake up together in REESE' hotel room and tease each other in a tedious and annoyingly childish fashion for at least 20 minutes. This is meant to be ROMANTIC.

REESE WITHERSPOON'S CHEEKBONES (CONT'D)

(giggling like a moron)

Joaquin, you naughty dog, you. Your wife will be really angry.

JOAQUIN PHOENIX

(smirking like an asshole)

She won't know a thing. Unless I tell her, that is.

REESE WITHERSPOON'S CHEEKBONES

(giggling like a moron)

Then what about the drug? Are you going to tell her that as well?

JOAQUIN PHOENIX

(smirking like an asshole)

No; but I will tell the FBI.

INT. SOME BORDER BETWEEN TWO STATES

THE FBI

You are under arrest, Mr. Phoenix, for illegally carrying drugs from a state to another state.

JOAQUIN PHOENIX
 But I'm Joaquin Phoenix. You should
 worship me.

THE FBI
 Whatever.

JOAQUIN PHOENIX goes to jail. But too soon he's bailed out.
 His singing career partially ruined, he retreats and goes
 home.

INT. CALIFORNIA

GINNIFER GOODWIN
 For months you haven't given me a
 single phone call. Now you come
 home only because you've been
 arrested.

JOAQUIN PHOENIX
 How dare you complain?! I will now
 tell you everything that you don't
 want to know: I'VE BEEN CHEATING ON
 YOU! HA HA HA!

GINNIFER GOODWIN
 Stop saying that!

JOAQUIN PHOENIX
 I'm fuckin' saying it! And I'm
 fuckin' gonna tell everybody that
 I've been fuckin' cheating on you!
 Then I'll fuckin' hang Reese
 Witherspoon's pictures all over the
 place nosily at 6:30 on Monday
 morning! Then I will fuckin'
 physically abuse you right in front
 of my kids -

GINNIFER GOODWIN
 That's enough. I'm leaving and I'll
 take the kids.

AUDIENCE
 Damn right you should've done that
 earlier.

JOAQUIN PHOENIX
 (heartbroken and pathetic)
 Oh no! What a heartbreaking
 surprise! You audience REALLY
 should sympathize me!

Astonished and dispirited, JOAQUIN decides to rot in hell, like what his father has told him to do. Luckily, our good ol' REESE WITHERSPOON arrives to save the day.

JOAQUIN PHOENIX (CONT'D)
 (heartbroken and pathetic,
 sobbing)
 I just realize that I'm a
 desperately unlikable asshole,
 Reese.

REESE WITHERSPOON'S CHEEKBONES
 Nah, you are just a big pussy. And
 that's curable. I will help you.

She DOES. Within 10 seconds JOAQUIN becomes FAMOUS and WELL-LOVED again.

CUT BACK TO PRESENT:

INT. PRISON

JOAQUIN PHOENIX
 No, I haven't married Reese
 Witherspoon. Yet.

JOAQUIN PHOENIX sings for veteran prisoners and displays empathy towards them, because he himself had been a prisoner for less than three days.

END

INT. JOAQUIN PHOENIX' TOUR BUS

JOAQUIN PHOENIX
 Marry me.

REESE WITHERSPOON'S CHEEKBONES
 No.

JOAQUIN PHOENIX
 Oh c'mon baby...

REESE WITHERSPOON'S CHEEKBONES
 Rot in hell.

END

INT. SOME CONCERT HALL - ON STAGE

JOAQUIN PHOENIX
Marry me.

REESE WITHERSPOON'S CHEEKBONES
No.

JOAQUIN PHOENIX
Why not?

REESE WITHERSPOON'S CHEEKBONES
I'm just your friend. And I don't
want to trap myself under your big
fat shadow.

JOAQUIN PHOENIX
Don't you see that you are already
under my big fat shadow? Since the
time you began to help me you've
been sinking yourself into my
career and now that you have sunk
so deep, without my presence your
soundtracks won't sell.

REESE WITHERSPOON'S CHEEKBONES
Shit. Then let's get married.

END

EXT. CALIFORNIA

JOAQUIN PHOENIX behaves like a good father and even teaches
ROBERT PATRICK how to be a good grandfather. This is
MEANINGFUL because JOAQUIN was an ASSHOLE and now, after he
has married REESE, he suddenly ISN'T.

END

OFFENSIVE TEXT EPILOGUE WITH CHEESY
COUNTRY MUSIC

So JOAQUIN and REESE go on and live
happily ever after, except for the
time when he also cheats on REESE
in the future. Despite that, in
light of JOAQUIN and REESE' MOVING
LOVE STORY, every man who has seen
this movie should therefore learn
to WALK THE LINE (i.e. to divorce
his current wife and marry his
secret TRUELOVE).

END