

**BRAVE MEN**

**RUN IN**

**MY FAMILY**

# I drank too much last night

## THIS IMAGE IS

AN ESTABLISHING SHOT. IN THE CENTRE IS A SUBURBAN POOL, ROYAL BLUE, SURROUNDED BY CUPIDS AND CLAW-FOOTED POTS. THESE WILL BE THE MAIN THEMES OF DESIRE AND FOLIAGE. WE TRACK THROUGH A SCREEN OF TREES: NED ENTERS LEFT, BAREFOOT, AND DIVES INTO CLEAR WATER; A HAND AND A GLASS OF GIN APPEARS (A SECONDARY THEME). IT'S THE USUAL SUNDAY AFTERNOON AFTER THE USUAL SATURDAY NIGHT. WHICH MEANS: EVERYBODY DRANK TOO MUCH BUT NOBODY HAS CHANGED. HELEN AND DON AND PEGGY AND STU, LYING AROUND, CATCHING PLANES. ONCE THEY HAD NICE NEW PINK LUNGS; NOW THEY ARE HONEYBUNCH AND SPORT AND SON OF A GUN, RELAXED AND NOT FLIRTING. ON THE TERRACE NED IS QUOTING SOLOMON AND SEEING IMAGINARY SUNSETS. SOMEONE FORGETS TO GET THE SUITS OFF THE LINE. EVERYBODY HATES COLUMBUS. THE PROTAGONIST PLOTS HIS ROUTE — POOL BY POOL — AND TURNS RIGHT: EXIT THE KING.

# the best filter money can buy

THIS IMAGE IS A PORTRAIT OF AN UPPER-MIDDLE-CLASS TRAGEDY.

REMINDING US TO BE NICE TO OUR NEIGHBOURS — NO MATTER WHAT LIBERTIES THEY

TAKE WITH BETTY WHEN WE AREN'T AROUND. NEVER MIND IF THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE SKY —

THE COLOUR OF STRIPED UMBRELLAS, OR A KIND OF GREEN CITY ON A SHIP. AT THAT TIME OF YEAR WE WERE ALWAYS SAILING,

THOUGH NOT PARTICULARLY FAR. HERE ONE HAS EVERYTHING ONE WANTS, ALL THE LINT AND LUXURY OPTIONALS. AND ONE CAN ALWAYS FILTER OUT THE SOLID MATTER, THE 99.99.99%. WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE: I WAS CRAZY ABOUT YOU, GRANDMA. WITH YOUR LONG MEMORIES OF LAST YEAR. BETTY, IN CERULEAN SUIT, GAZES AT NED; NED GAZES AT THE POOL. TRYING TO REMEMBER WHERE HE PUT IT. CUE HOWIE, RIDING IN ON HIS RIDE-ON MOWER, TOP OF ITS CLASS. (OCCASIONALLY IT LOOKS LIKE A SHIP.) HERE IS A MAN WHO KNOWS HOW TO STEER AND CUT GRASS. FULLY DRESSED. ON REFLECTION, WE WOULD TRAVEL MORE BUT CAN'T BEAR TO LEAVE THE MOWER. MEANWHILE, ACROSS THE ROAD IS THE HOLIDAY WE'VE ALWAYS DREAMED. IT'S OPEN FOR BUSINESS, AND VACANT AS USUAL. IN THE PARKING LOT THERE ARE BOYS. ALL OVER THE PLACE. NED DEPARTS THROUGH THE WATER AND EMERGES WHERE HE'S NOT WANTED. YOU NEVER CALLED, SAYS THE WOMAN, AND NOW MY SON IS DEAD.

always looking for a babysitter

THERE ARE  
BUOYS IN THIS IMAGE. AND A LITTLE RED JAGUAR (OUT OF TIME).  
YOU USED TO DRIVE IT, BACK WHEN YOU WERE VERY ORIGINAL. THESE DAYS  
THE KIDS ARE PLAYING DOMINOES ON THE STEREO, WHICH IS NOT HIKING  
EXACTLY. THEIR PARENTS ARE AWAY. THE GIRLS HAVE GROWN INTO BIGGER  
GIRLS WHO WEAR BIKINIS AND LAUGH. THEY RECOGNISE YOU BY YOUR  
ARCTIC EYES, AND THE WAY YOU SWIG A COKE — LIKE AN EXPLORER GOING  
HOME. OH, JULIE. THE PLANTS IN THE CORNER LIVE A LITTLE, AND  
THERE'S A RIVER ALL THE WAY: IF YOU'LL COME WITH ME, YOU'RE  
HIRED. TAKE MY HAND, THERE'S A SIGN ON THE WALL —  
DON'T BOTHER TRYING TO READ IT. WHEN ELLEN AND  
AGGIE ARE PLAYING TENNIS, YOU DON'T  
DALLY.

# here's to sugar on the strawberries

THIS IMAGE DEPICTS A SWIMMING POOL ON A BRIGHT SUNNY DAY. THE POOL TAKES UP MOST OF THE FRAME, WITH A GEORGIAN REVIVAL AND TREES IN THE BACKGROUND, TALL PALMS PEEKING THROUGH. THE POOL IS BORDERED BY HOLLYHOCKS AND RIDGED CONCRETE TO SOAK UP SHALLOW SOCIAL INTERACTIONS. THE WATER IS SYBARITIC BLUE WITH FAINT RIPPLES GENERATED BY ROGER, WHO STARTED DRINKING AT BRUNCH AND IS ASLEEP ON AN INFLATABLE LIFESAVER. THERE IS A BAR TO THE SIDE. NED ORDERS DOM PÉRIGNON FOR THE BABYSITTER. SHE SIPS QUICKLY AND TELLS HIM ABOUT BOYS DRINKING OUT OF HER SLIPPER. HE LISTENS INTENTLY, TAKES ONE SIP AND DOES NOT TOUCH THE REST OF HIS DRINK. IN CONTRAST TO THE WATER IN THE FOREGROUND, THERE IS A SURGICAL INCISION IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF THE KIDNEYS LIKE A RUST STREAK ON A WALL. MEN AND WOMEN ACT ACCORDING TO THE SCREENPLAY, EYEING HER UP AND DOWN, DISAPPROVING, AMUSED. THE AUTHOR OF THE STORY, WHO IS PADDING HIS PART, HAS BEEN CROPPED OUT OF THE SCENE. TWO FIGURES ALSO DO NOT APPEAR IN THE IMAGE: THE FIRECRACKER NEW GUY AND LUCINDA. A WARNING SIGN SAYS WE ARE IN SHALLOW WATER, SO 'NO DIVING'. THE WAIST HAS BEEN MANHANDLED, THE SLIPPERS TOSSED AWAY. THE REFLECTION OF THEIR POISED BODIES FORMS A 'W' BEFORE THEY PLUNGE INTO THE CHURNING WATER.

# friends are not deductible

THIS IMAGE IS PORTAGING. THE DRIVEWAY IS A DIVING BOARD. NED MUST BE BACK ON HIS FEET, DESPITE HOBBLING. A TRACE OF A LONE PERSON WITH A REAL SENSE OF PERSONAL WORTH. HE'LL OPEN HIS OWN DOOR AND DELIVER THE PAPER. HE'LL EVEN TALK TO THE DRIVER. HE RESENTS THE DRIVER'S SENSE OF PERSONAL WORTH. IT CASTS A SHADOW ON HIS SHOW. BELOW THE UMBRELLA FRAME: CROCKERY, FILOFAX, TELEPHONE, PAPERWORK. THE HALLORAN'S OBSERVE NED'S ENTRANCE, PEELING BACK THE FRENCH BLUE VENEER OF HIS TRUNKS. THEY SUCTION UP HIS BROKEN PROMISES AND BAD DECISIONS AND SEND THEM TO THE POOL FILTER. NEWS JUST IN: NEIGHBOURS ARE BUSINESS ASSOCIATES AND NAKED NEGOTIATIONS MAKE LIFE AMUSING. ASH TREES ARE LAST TO GET THEIR LEAVES, FIRST TO LOSE THEM IN THE FALL. THE MAP AND MEMORY ARE FLAWED, STRIPPED BACK AND STYLELESS. NED IMPLORES TO BE PUT DOWN. SCRATCHED FROM THE LIST. THE SALESMAN IS DYING. HE RAISES HIS TRUNKS ABOVE HIS HEAD, A FLAG OF SURRENDER.

THE SOUNDTRACK TO THIS IMAGE IS A BLONDE CHILD PLAYING A RECORDER. HE IS A JUNIOR NAMED AFTER A FATHER, SELLING LEMONADE UNDER A TREE. DEPENDING ON HIS MOTHER FOR INFORMATION. THIS IS THE PART WHERE THE WHOLE PROJECT IS RUINED ON ACCOUNT OF SOME MISSING WATER. THE LIFEGUARD IS ALSO MISSING FROM HIS CHAIR — IN LOVE WITH THE MANICURIST, BUT NOT ON THE TEAM. OUR HERO IS A CAPTAIN AND A COACH: THE TRUTH IS THAT LIFE IS MAKE BELIEVE AND BEING FREE. AT THIS STAGE IN THE JOURNEY THE LANES ARE STRAIGHT; THE LAPS ARE POSITIVELY OLYMPIC. BACKSTROKE, BREASTROKE, YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN. WHEN YOU'RE YOUR OWN MAN YOU CAN RELAX, REACH, AND FOLLOW THROUGH. IF THE CHILD IS JUMPING ON THE BOARD, HE MUST BE GETTING IDEAS ABOUT ENDINGS. IF THE MAN GOES BACK, HE MUST BE THINKING: IT'S GETTING LATE. AND THAT'S WHAT COUNTS.

**you've crashed in, now crash out**

**FOR THIS IMAGE,**

**THE PHOTOGRAPHER — A FRUSTRATED FILM DIRECTOR  
LIKE EVERYONE ELSE — PEERS OVER A FENCE. NO ONE IS SWIMMING IN  
THE FILM, THE STORY, OR ED'S POOL. AN ENDLESS REPLICATION OF ITSELF. THE  
OPHTHALMOLOGIST, THE VETERINARIAN, THE REAL-ESTATE DEALER, AND THE DENTIST ARE  
HERE. ALL THE BRASS. THIS PARTY HAS EVERYTHING: DRINKS, CAVIAR, ICE SCULPTURE, 30,000  
POUNDS OF STRUCTURAL ALUMINIUM AND CLEAR PLASTIC. BUT NOT A SWIMSUIT IN SIGHT. A FIGURE  
CRASHES INTO HIS SAPPHIRE REFLECTION. NED APPEARS, UNINVITED, FROM NOWHERE. A  
DISTINGUISHED GATE-CRASHER WITH BAD CREDIT. SOMETHING ABOUT THE WAGON IS OFF. A  
WHITE ELEPHANT. THE UNSEEING AND UNSEEN. THE AUTOPSY AND PROPHECY. THE  
WORLD WAS MADE AND LOST AGAIN. WHITE GEESE RUN OUT OF SHOT. A FROG  
JUMPS FROM A PUDDLE. THE WORLD, SO GENEROUSLY  
SUPPLIED WITH WATER.**



## a cab in the rain, a woman into bed

THIS IS AN IMAGE OF TWO ACTORS ACTING. ONE IS SHIRLEY WHO IS JANICE (WHO USED TO BE BARBARA) ON A YELLOW CHAISE LONGUE. SHE IS LOOKING SENSATIONAL AND SMOKING. THE OTHER IS A LITTLE CONFUSED THIS AFTERNOON, BUT STILL A SUBURBAN STUD WITH THOSE BABY BLUES. NOT TAKING 'CLOSED' OR 'NO SWIMMING' FOR AN ANSWER. NED WHO IS BURT IS FIXING A DRINK, HE IS RUBBING IN ALL THE TANNING OIL AND TALKING ABOUT THAT CASTLE IN IRELAND — THE REAL ONE, FALLING HEAD-FIRST INTO THE MOAT. ROUND AND ROUND THEY GO. RATING THE PAST ON A 10-POINT SCALE. REMEMBER NEW YORK AND TORONTO AND TINKLING SNOW? NOTHING SAYS SHE 'LOVED IT' LIKE 'YOU BASTARD' AND 'LEAVE ME ALONE'. HE SHIVERS, HE ASKS: 'HOW CAN I SWIM IN A SWEATER?' A VERY GOOD QUESTION. THE DOOR SLAMS, THE DAY CLOUDS. WE COULD ALL RAISE OUR FISTS AND FLOAT FACE-DOWN, BUT LUCINDA — WHO IS PLAYED BY NO ONE (SHE ALSO 'LOVED IT') — IS WAITING. ANYWAY, THE POINT IS I COULD MAKE YOU A BEAUTIFUL SPLINT. AND WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF TABASCO.

# they thought you were a great big joke

THE SUBJECT PLEADS TO GET INTO THIS IMAGE. THE FRAME IS IRREGULAR. NED TRIES TO CONVINCe THEM HE IS NOT ALL PERSONS BUT THE LAKE MAKES NO EXCEPTIONS. THE CARETAKER LOOKS UP FROM THE PAPER — THE DAUGHTERS' NAMES ARE NOT IN THERE — AND DISREGARDS THE SUBJECT. THE FEET ARE ATTACHED TO THE BODY AS CARCASSES. GLAUCOUS RIPPLES SUGGEST A HUMAN PRESENCE BUT THE WORKERS ARE NOT DISTRACTED BY THE SUBMERGED SUBJECT. THERE IS A STRONG STREAM WARNING FOR THE LUCINDA RIVER AND THE TORRENTIAL HEADWATERS OF CONNECTICUT DECADENCE. WATER ON THE LENS AND CHLORINE STINGS THE EYES. A LOW-ANGLE SECTION OF A STEP LADDER LEADS TO TWO YEARS AND THIRD BASE. HEARTS OF PALM. HEARTS OF ARTICHOKE. HEARTS OF THIS, HEARTS OF THAT. OUT OF FRAME, NED'S GIRLS LAUGH AT THE EMPTY JOKE. TOWARDS THE TOP OF THE IMAGE, A ROCKFACE. NED'S DEGRADED FRAME CASTS A SHADOW AS HE CLAWS OUT OF THE ARENA. TWO COLUMNS CAST SHADOWS OF RUIN ON THE SCENE. HOTSHOT. SHOWBOAT. BLACKOUT.

[theme from *the swimmer* (reprise) (*send for me in summer*)]

[MAN PANTING]

[THUNDER CRASHING]

[GATE RATTLING] [GATE RATTLING] [GATE RATTLING]

[GATE CREAKING] -- BAD EDIT -- [GATE CREAKING]

[THUNDER CRASHING] [THUNDER ROLLING]

[RAIN DRUMMING]

[EIGHT THWACKS OF A TENNIS BALL] [WOMEN LAUGHING]

[THUNDER CRASHING] [THUNDER CRASHING]

[RAIN BEATING] [WIND HOWLING]

[THUNDER CRASHING] [SIX GUSTS OF WIND]

[EIGHT BLOWS ON THE DOOR]

[DOOR HANDLE JIGGLING] [FIST POUNDING ON THE DOOR]

[WIND PEALING] [WIND PEALING] [MAN WAILING]

[MUFFLED RAIN] [DOOR HANDLE JIGGLING] [MUFFLED WAILING]

[MUFFLED THUNDER] [MUFFLED POUNDING]

[DOOR HANDLE] [DOOR] [RAIN]

# notes and sources

The title is from *Brave Men Run In My Family*, a number of paintings with the same title and subject (made between 1983 and 1996), by Edward Ruscha.

The shapes of the pools follow those in the photo book *Nine Swimming Pools and a Broken Glass* (1968) by Edward Ruscha.

The part titles, except for the last, are from dialogue in *The Swimmer* (1968), by Eleanor Perry and Frank Perry. The last part title is from the soundtrack of *The Swimmer*, by Marvin Hamlisch.

Other phrases throughout are from the following sources:

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