

FRIENDSHIP

Written by  
Andrew DeYoung

1/10/2024

EXT. SUBURBS - MORNING

Cookie-cutter tract homes disappear into thick fog. The annoying ring of a CELLPHONE interrupts the stillness as a body emerges from the haze. This is CRAIG, 40's, in a loose suit the same BROWN color of the PACKAGE he's carrying.

CRAIG  
(answering)  
Craig Waterman. - Yes. Yes. I'm in  
the car now. I'm parking, actually.  
See you in two seconds. Bye.

He stops at a SPEED-BUMP and picks a piece of gunk off it. Then curves left toward a house with a Uhaul out front.

He approaches the front door which is in the process of being painted from brown to deep FOREST GREEN. He knocks on the dry part and the door swings open a little.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
(shouting through the  
crack)  
Yoohoo! Morning!

Craig peers in the house and finds only ominous darkness. He takes an unconscious step back.

The door WHIPS open revealing a modern Marlboro Man. This is Austin, 48. We follow his paint speckled clothes to his HAND-ROLLED CIGARETTE dangling from his lips and landing on his piercing eye-contact.

AUSTIN  
Howdy.

CRAIG  
(in a trance)  
H-Howdy.  
(looking at box)  
You Austin?

AUSTIN  
Guilty.

CRAIG  
The mailman screwed up.  
(handing him the package)  
I'm at the end of the block there.  
You can't see it through the fog.

AUSTIN  
The one with the For Sale sign?

CRAIG

Yup. I wish you bought our place  
instead. Same model as yours.

AUSTIN

Come inside for a yerba mate. I got  
the day off.

CRAIG

(backing away)

Thank you, but I got the day on.

He MIMES a GUN to his head.

AUSTIN

I didn't catch your name.

CRAIG

Craig Waterman. Universal Digital.

AUSTIN

(waving with the package  
like it weighs nothing)

Stay curious, Craig Waterman.

EXT. SUBURBS - NEXT

Craig fast-walks back into the fog as he suspiciously peeks  
back at Austin's house.

SUPERIMPOSE TITLE: FRIENDSHIP

CLOSE ON:

A coffee mug gets FILLED to it's absolute maximum.

INT. UNIVERSAL DIGITAL CORPORATE OFFICE - CONFERENCE ROOM

Craig walks slow as hell with his maxed-out cup. He's got a  
giant brown stain on his dress shirt. Coworkers pass him.

CRAIG

Full mug here, guys. Careful.

IAN, A slick bro in a suit, whips around him.

IAN

There's the java king. Fucking  
moron!

Craig forces a laugh then gently steps his way to a conference table where ten people wait on him. His Boss, Mr. Mendoza notices.

MR. MENDOZA  
Filled it to the top again?

CRAIG  
I'm a man of patterns.

A number is dialed on speaker phone. Beep.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
Hi, Craig Waterman and the team at Universal Digital are on.

PHONE  
Craig! Jim from Gamify Tech here. We're excited to work with the best.

CRAIG  
Thank-

PHONE  
Greg and Jim from Home Button Solutions here.

CRAIG  
Hi guys-

PHONE  
Craig, they make you Project Head already?

MR. MENDOZA  
(to phone)  
Kevin, you need to learn to keep your big mouth shut.

Mr. Mendoza winks at Craig as the beeps continue. A video on a BIG SCREEN starts to play prematurely. It showcases an APP that looks like a cross between CANDY CRUSH and your racist aunt's facebook page. Interns scramble to turn it off as...

PHONE  
Sam is on. Nick Palimento is on. Sheryl and the team are on. Saturn Solutions is on. Paul from Likes Inc here. Chad from Dopamine Unlimited. Etc etc. etc. etc.

Craig slowly tries to take a sip as the conference call becomes a deafening cacophony.

EXT. CRAIG'S HOME - DUSK

A FOR SALE sign stands tall in the yard of a middle class tract home that is the exact model as Austin's. In the driveway - TAMI, 40, could be a yoga instructor, fails to squeeze another PROFESSIONAL FLOWER ARRANGEMENT into her tiny KIA PRIDE. A Sticker on the door reads "Tami's Florals."

A HONDA S2000 in need of a wash pulls up and Craig hops out.

TAMI  
(frustrated)  
I have to get a bigger car!

CRAIG  
Let's sell the house first, Honey Bear.

TAMI  
I've had enou-

A REALTOR walks a COUPLE out of their home. Tami smiles big as Craig covers his coffee stain with his briefcase.

CRAIG  
Hi Barbara. Hi Gang. You didn't steal anything did you? I have some very expensive boxer-briefs in there. Just messing. The house has great bones, right? Sorry about my wife's stuff everywhere.

INT. HOME - NIGHT

Tami puts together an arrangement at the packed dining table she uses as her workspace. Again, she has ran out of space - A look of glassy-eyed PANIC comes over her. She sits, puts her hands on her chest and breathes. We notice a prominent tattoo on her wrist.

STEVEN, 16, Nu-Metal dork, rushes over from the microwave.

STEVEN  
There you go, Mom. Just breathe.

He puts his hand on her back and she nods and tries to keep it together. Craig, sitting in his worn recliner, looks up from his phone.

CRAIG  
There you go, Honey Bear.

Steven hands her a POMEGRANATE on the table and she slowly inhales the sweet scent. This grounds her as Craig goes back to his phone.

TAMI

(eyes still closed)

Oh! Craig, the new neighbor dropped these off. Austin?

(off his indifference)

He invited you for a beer at 8pm. I told him you'd go.

CRAIG

You don't know my schedule.

TAMI

(looking up)

You sit there every night. Could be nice to have a bud.

CRAIG

I have buds! Plus, I am this close to getting named Project Head.

They don't care. The phone rings. Steven answers.

STEVEN

Tami's Florals.

TAMI

Welcome him to the neighborhood.  
T.S.D.Y.

CRAIG

There's a new Marvel out. It's supposed to be nuts. Wanna?

TAMI

Um, well, friend, my ex-boyfriend Devon from college reached out to grab a drink tonight.

CRAIG

You ignored him, right?

TAMI

It's just a friendly catch up.  
We're adults.

Craig hates this. Steven hands his mom an order slip.

STEVEN

Two Luna Arrangement's for a 90th.  
Extra Lavender.

CRAIG

Stevie, your mom's abandoning the family. New Marvel tonight?

STEVEN

I already saw it. It's-

CRAIG

No spoilers! No spoilers!

(beat)

Ok. Everyone calm down. Let's get a booth at Spaghetti Freddy's.

STEVEN

I'm meeting up with people. Jared Pretieto and Brad Hargrove are gonna fight behind Target. Loser has to post a pic of their dad in the shower. Joke's on Jared though. Brad's dad died in Iraq.

TAMI

The new neighbor seems cool and familiar. Have we met him before?

CRAIG

(to Tami)

Honey Bear, c'mon, cancel with the clown and let's see Marvel. This one is actually supposed to be nuts.

Steven takes a huge plate of nachos out of the microwave and puts them on the table for him and his mom to share. They are clearly close.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Well?

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Craig walks with four miscellaneous beers in a case that holds six, brown new balances and an old tucked-in t-shirt.

He knocks on the freshly painted door which is now a deep forest green you can almost see your reflection in.

INT. AUSTIN'S HOME - LATER

A bowl of fresh Pomegranates sit in the center of the beautiful wooden table he sits at.

Craig looks around at the house which feels lived-in already - earth tones, books, a Native American blanket on the wall. How is this possible?

CRAIG

(stiff)

It's a nice neighborhood. Sad to leave it. There is a great Subway right around the corner.

We can see just a sliver of AUSTIN making a drink in the kitchen. Craig checks his watch.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

They bake the bread every morning so it's as fresh as it gets.

Austin comes from the kitchen with two beers FILLED RIGHT TO THE BRIM and garnished with an orange wedge. He sets it down effortlessly.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Whoa, right to the brim. Why do people stop short? Go to the top.

AUSTIN

It's more drink!

CRAIG (CONT'D)

It's more drink!

They both laugh. Craig is feeling calmer.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

I actually got those speed bumps put in on our street. It was freaking hell dealing with the city, but this neighborhood is no longer a racetrack.

AUSTIN

(raising his glass)

No kidding? Well, thank you!

Again, Austin's eye-contact is good.

CRAIG

What line of work are you in?

AUSTIN

I dabble in a few things, but I pay the criminals at the bank by covering weather for Channel Three.

CRAIG  
You're a Weatherman?!

AUSTIN  
Yeah, I do the evenings. Tonight's  
my night off.

CRAIG  
(a celebrity!)  
I thought you looked familiar.  
That's so cool.  
(Sips beer)  
Wow. You brew this one too?

AUSTIN  
(with a wink)  
Cheers. - What kind of work are  
you in?

CRAIG  
I do Program Management at  
Universal Digital Inc. Some of our  
clients are Facebook, Mountain Dew,  
big stuff like that. I specially  
work with clients looking to make  
their products more habit forming.  
Apps specifically.

AUSTIN  
Like how to get people addicted to  
a product?

Austin puts on a record. Jam-psych stuff. Nothing Craig  
knows, but the beer is kicking in and he nods along like he  
does.

CRAIG  
Habit-forming is the word we like  
to use. It's about hooking the  
consumer in a way that makes it as  
difficult as possible to not  
consume the product. It appeals to  
very primal aspects of the brain  
where if a person tries to detach  
themselves from the product they  
will feel such overwhelming  
displeasure that they will just  
continue using it.

AUSTIN  
Fucking Brutal.

CRAIG  
Yeah, it's fucking brutal.

AUSTIN  
 (leaning in)  
 I got a product you might like.

He brings out the box that Craig dropped off earlier, opens it slowly, reaches into a layer of white packing peanuts and takes out TEAR-SHAPED ROCK.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)  
 This is a four-hundred thousand  
 year old stone handaxe made by Homo  
 Erectus.

Craig holds it with both hands. We stay on his face as he moves from confusion to curiosity...

AUSTIN (CONT'D)  
 (slow for dramatic effect)  
 These were the first human objects  
 ever made - before huts, controlled  
 fire, even the Buddha. You're  
 holding the same tool some ancient  
 person held on an East African  
 savanna as they paused in awe to  
 watch the land swallow the burning  
 ball in the sky. He or she grips  
 that ax a little tighter, giving  
 them strength, as they catchup to  
 the six or seven people in their  
 foraging tribe and hope tonight's  
 moon protects them from all that  
 hides in the dark.

Craig, awestruck now, looks up revealing a BLOODY NOSE.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)  
 Whoa, buddy.

CRAIG  
 Oh gosh. I never get these. Many  
 apologies.

Austin hands him a soft paper towel. Craig nervously cleans blood off his face and the tool. It's on his shirt now too.

AUSTIN  
 (patting him on the back)  
 You're all good.

CRAIG  
 I should get going anyway. It's a  
 school night.

AUSTIN  
Let's go somewhere.

CRAIG  
(hesitating)  
It's a school ni-

EXT. ABANDONED SEWER - NIGHT

A 70's GMC CONVERTIBLE TRUCK skids to a stop by a locked fence in the middle of nowhere. Austin hops out with a backpack. Craig, in the passenger seat, wears one of Austin's Triathlon T-shirts - it's way too small.

CRAIG  
W-what's here?

Austin picks a lock on the fence and swings the gate open. He flips on a powerful flashlight and swings the beam to a large drainage pipe.

AUSTIN  
This way.

Austin confidently heads toward the pipe.

CRAIG  
We should go to Rick's Bar - they have like 72 beers and they come in funny shaped glasses. There's karaoke too. I don't sing, but there are people there with real talent. I can show off the shirt you let me borrow. Wait! There's a new Marvel out.

AUSTIN  
Quick before the pigs see us.

Craig cautiously run-walks to catch up.

INT. PIPE - NEXT

They carefully walk through the 8ft pipe trying to avoid the narrow stream of water trickling down the center. Craig uses his phone light to navigate. His pant cuffs are wet already.

CRAIG  
(giddy)  
Austin, I think this is illegal.

AUSTIN

This is the Aqueduct built in 1837.  
It connects to the whole city.

CRAIG

(surveying his pants)  
Well, Ocean View Dining is about to  
get even more of my money.

AUSTIN

Ocean what?

CRAIG

Ocean View Dining. The only brand  
of jeans that fit me right.

The pipe dead-ends, but continues six feet higher. Austin lifts himself up effortlessly. Craig tries and tries to lift himself up as sounds of struggle echo in the tunnel. It sucks. Austin lets down his hand and tries to lift Craig.

AUSTIN

Pull up...

CRAIG

I'm tryyyingdsrgds...

He makes it, barely, but his right SHOE doesn't.

AUSTIN

We'll get it on the way back.

CRAIG

I'm sorry I'm obese.

AUSTIN

C'mon.

He shines his light into the abyss of the pipe...

INT. CITY HALL BOILER ROOM

A beam of light pierces a dark boiler room as the two make their way through the labyrinth of pipes.

INT. CITY HALL LOBBY/HALLWAY

Austin leads Craig through a large hallway in city hall.

SOMETHING MOVES. Craig let's out a piercing SCREAM as he falls back.

CRAIG  
Someone's there!

Austin locks his light down a corridor as Craig ducks behind him. The culprit: a cutout of a man in a suit with text that reads "Re-Elect Nichols". Austin laughs. Craig does too - hiding the shame.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
Where the hell are we?

AUSTIN  
City Hall. C'mon.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

The city shimmers in the distance. They both sip beers. Craig is giddy as he takes a picture of the city - flash on.

CRAIG  
Holy cow, I can see our houses from way up here. This is so naughty. Can we get in trouble?

AUSTIN  
Big trouble, but only if you tell anyone.

CRAIG  
I am so good at keeping secrets. How did you find this place?

Austin looks at him like he's scanning for trust then he starts to WELL UP.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
Did I say something bad?

AUSTIN  
A very close buddy showed me this spot. He was a great freaking guy. You kinda remind me of him, actually. He really helped me become the man I am today.  
(solemn)  
A few years back he got sick and...

Austin comfortably let's tears fall. Craig avoids eye contact by looking for his house.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)  
I was scared of his pain...and stopped visiting him. I...

Austin stops to collect himself. He takes out a pouch and delicately removes cigarette materials. Craig is unnerved by the silence and tries to fill it.

CRAIG

Yeah. It's a great little neighborhood though. There is a awesome coffee shop nearby the hood. Coffee Bean. I like to go there on Saturdays and watch the high school girls use the apps I work on. My favorite part of coffee is the buzz.

Austin has laid out two rolling papers and sprinkles them with tobacco like a chef. The sounds are hypnotizing. GOOSEBUMPS ripple up the back of Craig's neck. A subtle MOAN escapes.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Sorry. You just gave me ASMR.

Austin lights the two cigs at once, handing one to Craig who fumbles it. He takes a drag and coughs really hard for way too long. Austin pats him on the back.

AUSTIN

Oh! My band is playing tomorrow. Bring Tami.

CRAIG

Your band?!

AUSTIN

It's gonna be a big show. Hopefully my boss doesn't try to make me work. I'm so over the nightly news. I wanna do mornings.

CRAIG

Then ask for mornings.  
(off Austin's reluctance)  
You just gotta ask. I asked for a hot dog machine at work.

AUSTIN

Did you get it?

CRAIG

My doc says I'm obese. So, you tell me.

Austin's wheels turn. Interesting.

AUSTIN  
You'll be on the list tomorrow,  
Rockstar.

CRAIG  
Thank you, Rockstar.

OMITTED

INT. LIVING ROOM - NEXT

Tami's completed BOUQUET sits wild, beautiful and alive on the dining table. Craig is moved by it - still high off his incredible night.

The door opens and Tami enters with leftovers smiling to herself - both surprised to see each other.

TAMI  
Oh. Honey Bear, how was your night?

CRAIG  
Ok. Did you have fun?

TAMI  
(downplaying)  
It was fine.

It's awkward for some reason. They both are buzzing.

TAMI (CONT'D)  
Who's shirt is that?

He looks down at it and gently feels the fabric.

CRAIG  
Austin's.

INT. THE PISTACHIO BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

Craig balances a beer, glass of wine and a giant plate of sloppy nachos through a crowd to where Tami stands.

TAMI  
Wow, honey. Was dinner not enough?

The house lights go down. Craig buries his anger at the nacho comment. The four-piece band comes out in the dark. They got a Rockabilly vibe - upright bass and everything. Austin, in a suit and tie, plugs in his guitar.

AUSTIN  
(into mic)  
Sorry for the tie. I just got off  
work. We're Mayor Nichols Sucks.

People cheer enthusiastically - FANS! He hits a dramatic chord. The drummer does a four-count and the band launches into a song that immediately rules. Craig is floored. He looks over to his wife who mirrors his awe.

Austin spots Craig in the crowd and WINKS. Craig gives him a late and odd wink back.

INT. THE PISTACHIO BAR AND GRILL - "BACK STAGE" - LATER  
Craig and Tami approach a sweaty Austin packing up gear.

AUSTIN  
Craig! You came!

CRAIG  
(joking he's deaf now)  
What?

Austin gives him a passionate hug.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
That was freaking awesome. I can't  
believe the band name. Wow.

AUSTIN  
It's true. The Mayor sucks.

TAMI  
I had a headache that went away as  
soon as you started playing.

A fit, attractive Brunette in her 40's enters with drinks and Nachos.

CRAIG  
Those are so good.

AUSTIN  
This is my wife, Bianca. This is  
Craig and Tami.

BIANCA  
Oh! Our new neighbors!

TAMI  
So nice to meet you.

AUSTIN

House warming at our place next Friday. Can you make it?

TAMI

Next Friday? Yes. Absolutely.

CRAIG

I'll have to check my calendar. JK!

AUSTIN

(to Tami)

Great guy, you got here. Craig, let me introduce you to the band.

INT. CRAIG'S OFFICE - DAY

Craig talks with his coworkers Ian and Stan. Behind him are a wall of awards.

CRAIG

We need to add something to make the users feel expressed or judged so they will come back over and over as you see here...

Craig holds up his phone displaying some utterly confounding candy-crush/facebook style APP. The screen changes to - INCOMING CALL.

IAN

"Austin Neighbor Weather Man" is calling.

Ian and Stan privately hide smirks.

CRAIG

Oops. Pardon.  
(answering)  
Hey, buddy!(listening) Um, Now?

EXT. FIELD - DAY

A vibrant orange Chanterelle MUSHROOM gets plucked and held up revealing Austin as Craig squints at the mushroom. They are in the middle of a wet field between a housing development and a CAR DEALERSHIP.

AUSTIN

Smooth Cap. Forked gills down the stipe.

(MORE)

AUSTIN (CONT'D)

Throw them on the grill with some  
butter. You got yourself a meal.  
(tearing it in half)  
Smell.

CRAIG

Apricots? Wow.  
(searching again)  
I can't stop thinking about your  
band. Amazing stuff.

AUSTIN

Thanks, bud. You play anything?

CRAIG

I always wanted to play drums.

AUSTIN

Get some and we'll jam. We'll play  
punk music or something. It's not  
how well you play, it's how  
passionate you are.

This really hits Craig. As excitement rises on his face he starts to LOWER out of frame. Wide now we reveal he's sinking in the mud, but doesn't know.

CRAIG

(shin deep)  
Wow. Ok. Drums. Cool. What color?  
Does that matter? Of course it  
does.  
(realizing)  
Help!

Austin easily pulls him back to solid ground. Craig plays it cool as he gets up.

AUSTIN

Looks like Ocean View Dining is  
getting more of your money.

CRAIG

Haha. Yeah. Their fall collection  
actually looks really good.  
(checking pockets)  
Shit. My phone. My phone!

Austin laughs as Craig frantically digs around the mud and grass for his phone.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Can you call it?

AUSTIN  
I don't have a phone.

CRAIG  
Are you insane?!

AUSTIN  
I'm looking at a free man right  
now.

Craig stops hunting and sits there deeply torn and out of breath. Austin looks off at something in the distance.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NEXT - DAY

They ogle a NEON YELLOW DODGE VIPER in a parking lot.

AUSTIN  
This is my dream car.

CRAIG  
I hope you get it one day.

AUSTIN  
It might happen soon. I took your  
advice.  
(off Craig's look)  
They gave me the morning news slot.

Brain hugs Craig as they laugh in celebration.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)  
If I buy this dumb car you will get  
the first ride. Promise. You're  
good luck.

CRAIG  
(giddy)  
We should ask the owner for a ride?

AUSTIN  
All you have to do is ask!

Craig smiles wide feeling really connected to Austin.

INT. DODGE VIPER - DUSK

The Viper roars down the street as Austin skids around a corner. Craig smiles ear to ear as he hangs on for dear life. Mushrooms spill out of a Ralphs bag at his muddy feet.

CRAIG (V.O.)  
Life could be like this.

BEGIN MONTAGE: There is an odd quality to this montage. It almost looks like a Beer or Levi's commercial.

INT. THE PISTACHIO - NIGHT - FANTASY

Austin introduces Craig to some friends - men in their 40s/50s, different vibes and ethnicities. They drink and laugh and make Craig feel comfortable.

CRAIG (V.O.)  
Another world is possible.

INT. THE PISTACHIO - STAGE - FANTASY

Austin plays guitar to a wild crowd. He whips to the drummer - CRAIG with THICKER HAIR. They rock out. Tami watches proudly from the crowd.

CRAIG (V.O.)  
One with creativity...

EXT. AUSTIN'S HOUSE - DAY - FANTASY

A woman screams. Craig runs into Austin's backyard to discover him unconscious on the ground. Bianca, feeling powerless, weeps.

CRAIG (V.O.)  
...and compassion.

Craig easily picks Austin up, like a parent would carry a sleeping toddler to bed, and rushes to the street.

CRAIG  
Stay with me buddy.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT - FANTASY

We are in a APOCALYPTIC future on Craig and Austin's dark block. Craig carries a bundle of wood as he approaches a communal bonfire by his speed bump. People pat him on the back, praising him.

CRAIG (V.O.)  
...and sharing.

AUSTIN  
 Civilization collapsed, but you  
 lead us into the future.  
 (a toast)  
 To Craig. This neighborhood would  
 be a racetrack without him!

The whole neighborhood cheers. Craig dumps the wood on the fire as he smiles big.

CRAIG (V.O.)  
 And now I can live it.

END MONTAGE.

INT. CRAIG'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Tami awakes to Craig shaking her.

TAMI  
 Craig?

CRAIG  
 Can I wake you up with a lick?

TAMI  
 Oh...okay...lock the door.

STEVEN (O.C.)  
 Something's burning!

He scurries away leaving her teased.

INT. CRAIG'S HOUSE - MORNING

Chanterelle mushrooms sizzle in a pan as the RAMONES blare. Tami enters as he takes biscuits out of the oven.

CRAIG  
 Honey Bear! I hope you like wild  
 mushrooms on toast.

TAMI  
 (concerned)  
 What did you do?

CRAIG  
 (he laughs)  
 Nothing. Just wanted to.  
 (off her confused look)  
 What?

TAMI

Be honest. What did you do?

CRAIG

Austin invited me to hang with some of his buddies tonight. I finally found my tribe, Tam.

TAMI

I'm glad you found some friends, honey, but what did you do?

Steven enters this abnormal morning.

STEVEN

(re: music)

You like this?

CRAIG

Yeah. This is punk! It's not how well you play, its how passionate.

On the table are some beautiful odd looking plants. Tami studies them.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

I went on a walk this morning. Picked you some flowers. The neighbors yelled at me so hard, but I don't care.

TAMI

(seriously, who is this guy)

Wow, honey. - Thank you.

CRAIG

Oh, the For Sale sign is gone. Maybe they are replacing it? I'll call them and find out. Don't you worry. T.S.D.Y, eh?

Steven takes a bite of a biscuit.

STEVEN

Shit, Dad! Tastes like McDonalds!

He grabs another and heads off to school. Tami lets her suspicion fade as she enjoys this rare moment. Craig smiles at her feeling totally alive.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DUSK

Craig eagerly walks over his speed bump with TWO EXPENSIVE SIX PACKS OF BEER, a nice sports jacket and his good New Balances.

He gets to Austin's door. We can hear a decent size group of loud men in there. He tries the door - it opens.

INT. AUSTIN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Craig hesitantly enters the kitchen and nods to a few guys who clearly go way back.

CRAIG

Howdy. I'm Craig. Austin invited me.

BUZZ

Hey, Craig! What you drinking?

Austin see's him from across the room and comes over.

AUSTIN

Yo! Fellas, this is my neighbor, Craig. He's the best!

GARRETT

To the new morning weatherman!

They cheer and roll back into convo's and inside jokes. Austin gets side tracked as Craig cracks a beer and leans against the counter unsure where to go.

EXT. HOUSE - BACKYARD - NEXT

A USA GOLD cigarette glows from a hardy drag. Craig tries to hold a cough in like an amateur then takes a swig of beer to settle.

GARRETT

I'm gonna grab another brew. Good talking, Chris.

CRAIG

Yeah, man. Yup. See ya in..

The sliding door closes. Craig is alone now and turns away from the house to hide a ton of anxiety.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

(whispers)

C'mon now. You're smart, you have a good job, and...and...there is nothing to be nervous about. Just be yourself, you freaking prince.

He puts out the cigarette, does a quick stretch then confidently turns back and WHACK - he walks right into the SLIDING GLASS DOOR. Everyone inside turns to look. A few beats pass as Craig holds his nose. No blood.

He puts a thick smile over his embarrassment and picks up his Coors that hit the ground - it didn't break.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Check it out. All good!

The door SHATTERS in a waterfall of shards. Holy shit. Everyone is in shock as the crash settles. Silence.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

So, how did you all meet?

Everyone erupts in laughter. A Hail Mary save.

INT. GARAGE - LATER

The guys are all sitting around in a rough circle. Craig admires some drums and amps pushed into a corner as he ices his GOOSE EGG. A new bud hands him a fresh beer.

GARRETT

Zed ran into me at the mall all stressed out. I was there buying a bra for my daughter. Size C. She's thirteen! I was spiraling. I see how men look at her. I'm scared.

ZED

I'm sorry you're going through that, Gar.

AUSTIN

Yeah, man. We are here for you anytime. Sheila is lucky to have a dad like you.

GARRETT

(emotional)

I totally understand now when I was young and girls' dads were pricks to me. I want to protect her, but I also don't want to smother her.

Garrett gets a pat on the back. Craig is floored. He's never seen men open up like this before.

ZED

That's tough man. It reminds me of...

Zed starts to SING. Laughter and excitement ripple through the guys. One starts to join in. Then another. This is a goddamn A CAPELLA GROUP. Craig is dumbfounded.

Austin takes a solo. The whole group closes with a long sustained note. Craig joins in totally off key as Austin shoots him a wink.

INT. AUSTIN'S HOUSE - LATER

Two guys SPAR with BOXING GLOVES and headgear as the others cheer. One dad loses.

AUSTIN

Who's next?

They point to Craig and Austin. He shakes his head, but is encouraged by the group. Austin throws him a wink.

GARRETT

My new favorite person! He really does look like Skinny Jerry.

CRAIG

Skinny Jerry?

AUSTIN

My friend who passed away. Great guy.

(to guys)

Yeah, right when I met Craigy I thought "Skinny Jerry is back!"

They all hoot and holler. A jovial feeling spreads through Craig as gloves and headgear get put on him. He squares up across from Austin.

ZED

C'mon sliding glass door killer.

BUZZ

Get him, big Craig!

AUSTIN

Watch the hair. It pays for all the beers you drank tonight.

CRAIG

Ok, watch the face. Some of us have phone calls with CEO'S tomorrow.

The joke LANDS and the fight starts. Some light playful body jabs get thrown then Austin lands a hardy punch on Craig's nose.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Time out. Time out. Body shots only, my man.

They start to spare again. Craig bounces around - He SLIPS as Austin throws a hook that tags Craig in the nose. He bends over. The fight stops. He checks for a bloody nose. Nothing.

AUSTIN

Sorry, bud. It was an accident.

Craig, clearly still in pain, gives a silent a thumbs up.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)

Craigy, take a beat. Someone take his spot.

Craig SUCKER PUNCHES Austin twice sending him limp to the concrete. Bottles crash.

CRAIG

Winner! I win!

Austin is glazed. Someone asks him where he's at. The mood is tense. Craig takes his gloves off.

ZED

Shit! I think he needs an ambulance.

CRAIG

No. He's good. He's solid.

(to Austin)

You good? You're good. Ya hit me twice in the beak. It really hurt. You'll be good. He'll be good. Am I bleeding?

Austin nods that he is ok.

GARRETT

(to Craig)

What the hell were you thinking,  
jackass?

Craig nervously smiles. Austin sits up. They take the headgear off him.

AUSTIN

Watch the hair! Watch the hair!

(smiling)

Ok, I think that's it for boxing  
tonight.

The guys throw Craig dirty looks. Austin sprints to the mirror to fix his hair. It's perfect. He calms down.

Craig can't help, but feel the overwhelming strangeness in the room. A nice joke will save the day.

He spots a bar of soap next to the garage sink.

CRAIG

Ok ok. Look. My punishment.

He puts the ENTIRE bar of soap into his mouth.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

(mouth full of soap)

Imma bhad boy.

He laughs, but no one else does. Then he chews it up and spits into the sink. He washes his mouth out with a swig of beer as he scans for laughs - nothing. Just disdain and confusion. JARED, 55, breaks the ice first...

JARED

Alright, I'm gonna head home.

BIG SAM

Me too.

AUSTIN

Yeah, lets call it.

The garage door opens. They start to get their stuff together, collect beer bottles, say goodbyes. Craig washes his mouth out again, but with water.

JAMES, 17, an easy and confident handsome skater kid with pink hair enters with a motorcycle helmet. Austin and him playfully rough house.

CRAIG

(to boy)

Hi. Craig Waterman. I live down the street.

He grabs the kid's phone and moves it up and down.

JAMES

(to Austin)

He shook my phone. (beat) What happened to the backdoor?

AUSTIN

It's fine. Just an accident.

JAMES

Did you get hit?

AUSTIN

Just a little boxing. You taking off? Check the fuel line. Love you. If you drink I will come pick you up. Ok?

Craig is stunned by the ease he has with his son. Friends say goodbye to Austin as they pass by Craig.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)

Alright, my man. You know how to get home?

CRAIG

Haha. I'll try.

(then)

Hey!

Austin turns. Craig dribbles a pretend basketball and takes a shot toward the hoop in the driveway.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

It's good!

Austin politely smiles then closes the garage door. Craig watches James ride off on a DIRT BIKE then waves to one of the guys driving away. The street gets quiet very fast as he walks over his speed bump back home under a cold moonless sky.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Craig sits in his office lost in thought as he looks down at a circle of coworkers laughing on a smoke break. He picks up his office phone and dials. It goes to Voicemail.

CRAIG

Austin! It's Craig from four hundred feet away. Calling from work, actually. Tami made some strong iced tea. I'm sailing, man. Wanna take a jug and hit golf balls later? Or head to the book store and pick up...

(looks at computer)

Sapiens: A Brief History Of Humankind by Yuval Noah Harari. It won the National Library of China's Wenjin Book Award which is super important. Don't all these experts make our life better?! Oh, I need to write you a check for that sliding door. Remember when I was like "how'd you all meet?" And everybody died laughing. Alright, bud. Call me at the office or home.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tami is doing her calming breathing exercises. The front door opens and she stiffens a little. Craig enters.

CRAIG

You ok?

She nods and opens her eyes.

TAMI

Honey, did you call the realtor about the sign?

Craig lights up seeing a BIG BOX in the living room. He takes Tami's florist scissors and tears it open revealing GREEN DRUMS.

TAMI (CONT'D)

Craig?

CRAIG

(half listening)

Yeah. Yeah. I have it all taken care of.

Tami peers into the box and she looks up with a smile.

TAMI

That's exciting, honey!

EXT. AUSTIN'S HOUSE - NEXT

Craig does a FUN KNOCK on the green door. After a moment Bianca answers with a smile that fades.

CRAIG

Evening. Is your worst half here?  
JK.

BIANCA

One moment.

Austin comes to the door in an OLD WORLD COSTUME.

CRAIG

Duuuuuude!  
(pointing to the box of  
drums sitting in a kids  
wagon)  
Check. It. Out!

AUSTIN

Wow. You got the expensive ones.

CRAIG

They match your guitar. Wanna jam?

Austin comes out and closes the door for privacy.

AUSTIN

Listen, Craig.  
(searching)  
I can't really hang with you.

CRAIG

All good. We can jam tomorrow. I  
got band name ideas.

AUSTIN

I don't want to continue this  
friendship at the moment.

CRAIG

Is that a band name idea?  
(off Austin's serious  
look)  
Is this cause of your window? I'll  
pay you back, bud.

AUSTIN

Friday was very strange for me and  
the guys.

CRAIG

I was over-served, there was cigar smoke in the air and folks talking about bra sizes. You get it!

AUSTIN

We had a few nice hangs, but I think it's best if we go our separate ways.

CRAIG

Y-y-you guys made me feel too free. Too accepted. That's it. People need rules or else they end up with a mouth full of soap.

Austin puts his hand on Craig's shoulder triggering his ASMR - goosebumps ripple up his neck. A moan escapes.

AUSTIN

I gotta get to this Renaissance Fair. Doing a segment for work. Much luck selling the house.

Austin closes the door leaving a blank Craig who turns and rolls the big box down the block. He really struggles to get the wagon over his speed bump.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

On a TV SCREEN is testing lab footage: A teen girl in a white room looks distraught.

JEN PEYSER

I feel awful. I can't go without it. I need to check it at least once every like fifteen minutes or that's all I think about. I just can't not do it. I feel awful. Can I have my phone back now?

The video pauses as Craig steps in front of the screen.

CRAIG

And that is the mobile stack integrated into the mapping process for peak emotional enmeshment.

MR. MENDOZA

That is why we he is the King Of Mobile retention. Our secret weapon.

Twelve corporate types around a conference table clap. Craig smiles big and proud. He seems fine.

JERRY THE CLIENT

Well, we are feeling close to signing with you all. Craig, can I get your cell if any follow up questions come up?

CRAIG

You know, I don't have a cell, but I'm here at the office whenever you need me.

(off Everyone's big laugh.)

It's true, actually. I'm more... unchained. Free to think of ideas without being bugged all day.

Everyone realizes that he's not joking now.

MR. MENDOZA

How 'bout that?

CRAIG

I'm here late all the time. You can get me. I'm a workaholic.

JERRY THE CLIENT

Like a vegetarian selling sausage, eh?

(off mega laughs)

Well, we'll try you at the office.

They all say their goodbyes until its just Mr. Mendoza and a few Coworkers left who all stare at down Craig.

MR. MENDOZA

We work in the phone business.

CRAIG

Yeah, but...

MR. MENDOZA

Go get a fucking phone!

EXT. BUSINESS PARK - NEXT - DAY

Craig briskly walks to his car trying to outpace the shame.

CRAIG  
(to himself)  
You don't need Austin and those  
idiots. Pretentious assholes. - You  
can create your own tribe. Another  
world is possible, baby! - You're a  
free man. You're a free man. You'r-

INT. VERIZON STORE - NEXT

A LOUD BEEP as TONY, a young male Verizon Employee with a  
PONY TAIL scans an item. The store feels soulless.

TONY  
Do you want to upgrade to the Hero  
Plan? It comes with one of these  
three cases.

Craig studies the display a little too long.

CRAIG  
What the hell. I'll do the Mars  
Rover one.

The Employee holds up his phone - SAME CASE.

TONY  
Twins!

Craig laughs. Feels a connection brewing. A few beats pass.

CRAIG  
Beer drinking time, right?

TONY  
Or something else.

CRAIG  
Is that bar across the plaza any  
good?

TONY  
Never been. Seen a few gnarly  
fights outside though.

CRAIG  
I might check it out. Wanna grab a  
sip of something later?

TONY  
I'm eighteen.

CRAIG  
 Teen girls look twenty-five and now  
 the guys too, huh?

A familiar voice draws his eye up to a tv in the corner.  
 Austin is doing the weather at a Shopping Center. He's  
 effortless. Fuck.

AUSTIN (ON TV)  
 My Producers told me the  
 Renaissance Fair was today. As you  
 can see I am the only one dressed  
 up out here today. A little fun  
 prank. Let's see the forecast...

TONY  
 Receipt in the bag?

CRAIG  
 (snapping back to reality)  
 I love a receipt in the bag.

Craig grabs his purchase and heads for the door.

TONY  
 Sir.  
 (Craig turns)  
 If you ever need something stronger  
 than a few drinks let me know.

Craig logs that info.

CRAIG  
 (to employee)  
 Stay Curious.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - ROOM A

A dozen couples sit in a circle. One woman is bald, another  
 has a wig. Tami sits and listens attentively. Craig is next  
 to her spacing out into his coffee.

MODERATOR  
 Who else would like to share?

Tami raises her hand.

TAMI  
 I'm Tami.

GROUP  
 Hi Tami.

TAMI

Hi. Things have been ok. Still hoping to move to a bigger house soon. It's one of our goals for T.S.D.Y - sorry, "Try Something Different Year." It's a thing on the internet. It's nice to have something to look forward to. - Um, I've been cancer free for twelve months, but all day I carry this terror that it will come back.

CRAIG

It's not coming back.

He puts his arm around her.

TAMI

I just have a lot of anxiety. I'm always bracing for impact, like a monster will break my door down any second. It's not healthy. Staying focused on my business helps. My friend Devon makes me laugh hard.

CRAIG

Devon?

TAMI

My ex. The firefighter.

Craig gives a serious nod.

TAMI (CONT'D)

That rekindled friendship has helped me a lot. A community is so important, but I still worry and worry. Will I see my son graduate? - Will I ever have an orgasm again?

(welling up)

I think that's it. Sorry it's not more exciting. This group is so helpful. Thank you.

MODERATOR

Craig, anything you want to share?

Tami looks to Craig. He's blank.

CRAIG

Cops have it harder than firefighters.

TAMI  
 (saving his bad joke)  
 Craig found a group of really great  
 friends. Sorry.

CRAIG  
 I did. Things are awesome. Tami  
 deserves a parade. I orgasm fine.  
 (no laughs) I'm proud of my wife.  
 She's so strong.

INT. CHANNEL THREE

Craig enters an open sound stage door and wanders the halls. If someone passes him he looks at his computer then inspects something close by like he's deep in thought.

The sound of the morning show theme song pulls Craig down the hall like a spell. He finds himself on the morning show set. REBECCA SPRINGS, 40's, the show's beloved host, finds her mark. Austin is moments away from doing the weather. He does a double-take when he notices Craig. It throws him off. 3-2-1 He's on....

REBECCA SPRINGS  
 And with us today is our newest  
 addition to the Rise 'N Shine  
 family. He's someone you probably  
 are already familiar with - Austin  
 our new meteorologist.

AUSTIN  
 (laughing)  
 Howdy folks, so happy to be her -  
 HERE! So happy to be here! Looks  
 like I need another cup of Java...

Craig watches as they banter. Austin seems a bit tense and nervous. They have him dressed like Ryan Seacrest. He launches into the weather. Craig sees the teleprompter and mouths along.

REBECCA SPRINGS  
 When we come back Austin will join  
 us as we talk with what some people  
 are calling a three year old Tiger  
 woods.

They go to commercial. Austin walks up to Craig.

AUSTIN  
 Hey man?

CRAIG

Encore! One more song! You crushed it up there.

(re: tv)

I love this commercial.

AUSTIN

How did you get in here?

CRAIG

I have a meeting. My company might do some work for you guys. Small world, eh?

AUSTIN

(suspicious)

Who's your meeting with?

CRAIG

Um, some guy. Who cares. Boring. How ya been, slugger?

A producer and intern comes over and starts dressing Austin in traditional golf attire - plaid jacket, hat, golf shoes.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

How much are these cameras? They are huge! I've never been on a movie set before. Are you wearing makeup? I won't tell your wife.

One of the MORNING HOSTS comes over.

REBECCA SPRINGS

What was up with that stumble?

AUSTIN

Yeah, sorry. New job jitters. It won't happen again.

REBECCA SPRINGS

It better not.

(noting Craig)

This your father?

An AD yells out "30 seconds!"

AUSTIN

My neighbor. I'm not sure why he's here.

(being escorted toward set)

Ok, Craig, I gotta...

CRAIG

(getting louder as Austin  
get's further away)

Yeah. Great seeing you. What are  
you doing after? I might go to  
Rick's Bar and get something called  
the Seal Team Six lunch. It's what  
the guys ate after they killed  
Osama. It's like 22,000 calories.  
It's a big ribeye, two fully loaded  
baked potato-

AUSTIN

(quickly coming back)

Craig, it's distracting that you're  
here. I need to focus.

The child golfer arrives. They introduce him to Austin who  
turns on the charm. Craig introduces himself to the kid.

CRAIG

(re: kid)

He looks like my dad. - Wanna  
cigarette? I bet you can smoke in  
here.

Austin is fully dressed like a old-time golfer now.

AUSTIN

(getting angrier)

I really have to focus. I'm under a  
ton of pressure. This job is way  
harder than nights! Please go!

He takes out his phone.

CRAIG

You have a phone?

AUSTIN

Of course I have a phone!

Austin is ushered on set by a producer. Craig watches with a  
big dumb confused smile.

CRAIG

You're gonna do great. Oh, I have a  
check for you. Or I can give it to  
you when we hang next.

AUSTIN

(coming close)

You know you really made things  
weird with all my buddies.

(MORE)

AUSTIN (CONT'D)  
 We haven't even talked since. Go  
 find your own friends, ok!  
 (whispers to producer)  
 Call security.

Craig sprints away.

EXT. BUSINESS PARK - DAY

A group of COWORKERS smoke together in the business park courtyard. Craig walks up and pulls out a cigarette.

CRAIG  
 Anyone need a light?

They are all already smoking. He listens to the small talk and tries to join in. There is much more "locker room" in these guys than in Austin's friends.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
 Anyone see the new Marvel?

MIKE  
 Yeah.

CRAIG  
 No spoilers.

IAN  
 We all went.

CRAIG  
 You ALL saw it together? Where's  
 the invite?

No one says anything.

STAN  
 We do a thing every Friday.

He blasts his cig hard to hide the rage.

CRAIG  
 How does your future Boss get in  
 the gang?

IAN  
 We'll put you on the emails.

MIKE  
 I gotta get back to it.

CRAIG

Well, let's start a club. Let's do beers at my house this Friday. Heck yeah. I'll stock the fridge. Boys night!

NATHAN

Can I bring my wife?

CRAIG

It's boys night.

STAN

(checking in with group)  
Yeah, if you stock the fridge.

CRAIG

I better go warn my wife that tomorrow things might get a little rowdy.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Craig and his COWORKERS all sit in a LOW ENERGY circle, smoking, drinking, nearly silent. A man's wife is there.

CRAIG

Please fellas, help yourselves to as many Bud Light Limes as you want. I usually brew my own beer, but Bud tonight.

IAN

I'll take a few home with me.

Quiet again. Now's the time to take things deeper.

CRAIG

You all ever go through a bad breakup?

STAN

You getting divorced? Congrats!

CRAIG

No. Just curious. We can't talk about certain stuff at work. How'd you all get over it?

MIKE

Whatever beer you're drinking I don't want.

The guys laugh.

IAN

He's like Thanos when he got the elixir and was all--

CRAIG

Ok, no Marvel spoilers. This is a spoiler free garage, friend. Thank you.

MIKE

That part when the ship came and the tesseract-

CRAIG

Guys, c'mon. Respect please. No spoilers. I want to go in fresh. Let's talk about something else. You all want to see something cool?

Craig walks over to a shelf and conveniently retrieves a wooden box. He slowly and dramatically opens the lid and pulls out a DAGGER.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

It's a sword from 1700's Europe.

Ian crudely snatches it.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Careful. It's expensive. Priceless, I mean. - Just imagine a knight holding that as he looks out at the enemy army approaching. His heart racing...

IAN

Why are you showing us this?

CRAIG

I collect things. All kinds of stuff. It's cool. Now just imagine the orange hue of the sunset as you head off..

The dagger its passed around.

MIKE

It's small.

CRAIG

It's normal size.

STAN  
 (smelling the sword.)  
 I think it's kinda cool.

CRAIG  
 Thanks, Stan. Hey, if anyone here  
 fucks up and makes a mistake, it's  
 cool. I believe in second chances.  
 (off blank looks)  
 Who wants to go on an adventure?

They don't know what he means.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
 There is this pipe...

MIKE  
 Those your wife's drums?

In the corner are his new drums arranged just so.

CRAIG  
 Funny. I already told you they're  
 my drums.

MIKE  
 They look like they've never been  
 hit.

CRAIG  
 They're new. I sold my old set.

IAN  
 Jam a bit, Coltrane.

CRAIG  
 No no. Don't wanna burst your ear  
 drums.

STAN  
 Give us a little. C'mon. Don't  
 hide.

They egg him on.

CRAIG  
 I'm not hiding. Ok. Ok! It is boys  
 night.

He takes a big swig of beer and gets behind the set.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
 Remember, it's not how well you  
 play but how passionate. Ready?  
 (MORE)

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
Does anyone play guitar or  
something? We can jam.

He gives himself a 5 count for some reason and launches into an extremely loud and ugly attempt at punk. It sounds like complete shit. A cymbal falls off the stand and he stops to pick it up. It falls on the wife.

NATHAN  
Hey, that's my wife.

CRAIG  
It wouldn't have hit your wife if  
you didn't bring her to boys night!

Craig rummages in a box a pulls out two pairs of boxing gloves. oh no...

MIKE  
He's like Hulk.

Craig snaps.

CRAIG  
OK. Get the fuck out. Get out. I  
said no spoilers!

MIKE  
We've only been here for forty  
minutes.

He pounds the garage door button. It slowly creaks open.

CRAIG  
Get the fuck out. All of you. I  
said NO spoilers. It's a spoiler  
free zone!

The deafening screech of garage door opens and makes it even more awkward. In the distance Austin is outside his own house with his son.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
(an idea!)  
Guys! I'm joking! I'm joking. Guys,  
I got you. You shoulda seen your  
look. Ian. Look at Ian! I wish I  
had a camera.

They are so confused.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
I'm just messing. It was humorous.  
I love hanging out with you guys.  
(MORE)

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Oh! Let me introduce you to my friend. He's right there. This guy is the best. C'mon. Grab beer and c'mon. I got you guys!

Craig leads the group like the Pied Piper of losers. They cautiously follow him down the street.

EXT. AUSTIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Austin is tuning up his son's dirt bike.

CRAIG

Buddy!

Austin looks up and is confused to find Craig leading ten men toward him.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

What's up, homie?

He hands him a beer.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Wanted to introduce you to some of my friends. Great guys. Talented guys.

Austin nods hello then says goodbye to his son. As he drives off Craig plugs his ears.

STAN

(to Austin)

Can I use your bathroom?

AUSTIN

What's wrong with his? Pipes clogged with Italian Herbs & Cheese?

Huge laughs from the group. Craig laughs a little too.

CRAIG

I just wanted to introduce you to my friends. Come join us. Oh, show these guys the old stinky rock you have.

(to friends)

Guys, you're gonna love this.

IAN

Oh shit, you're the weather guy!

It clicks for the group now. They're stoked. Austin couldn't be more charming.

CRAIG

I've been to the film set. It's so nice.

AUSTIN

Yeah, this guy broke into the studio.

CRAIG

I was invited.

AUSTIN

Security told me you took a bag of whole coffee beans and left.

CRAIG

Isn't that stuff free? According to a behind the scenes video from the set of The Fugitive most of the snacks on a film set are free. Somebody uploaded it to a pornography site as a joke, but I watched the whole thing.

IAN

Makes sense, we call him the Java Jester at work.

Everyone laughs.

CRAIG

What does that mean?

STAN

The Hunch Back of JavaLame. We love being random.

Everyone laughs.

CRAIG

You guys, I'm your future boss.

AUSTIN

You work with these guys?

CRAIG

They're my friends too. We go out every Friday.

STAN

Your hair is amazing. What do you do?

AUSTIN

Products, genetics, you know, IPA's.

They all laugh.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)

Ok, you can use my bathroom. Do you have to do a one or a two?

STAN

It's more of a three. I have to wash my feet and apply a cream.

AUSTIN

Never mind.

The guys laugh.

CRAIG

Let's hang inside. It's so cool in there. Austin has an old ugly rock. It's insane. Let's go!

AUSTIN

Sorry, fellas, lovely meeting you all, but I have to be up in the morning.

CRAIG

He does the morning show now.

AUSTIN

Yeah, it's a lot.

IAN

Do you officiate weddings?

AUSTIN

I have. I'm licensed.

CRAIG

A parrot married Tami and I. Anyone can do it.

AUSTIN

A priest?

CRAIG

No, a parrot. We eloped in San Diego and this ex-addict has a parrot that marries people. I wept. There's video. We can watch it in his house.

(aside to Austin)

So, you have a phone?

No one wants to proceed down this convo. Austin looks up at the night sky.

AUSTIN

Wow. Look at these stars tonight. The seeing is good. Look at that one there.

The guys all turn their heads to the heavens.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)

It's a rare night. Our ancestors used to stare at that constellation, the one that looks like a door, and think it was a gateway to the afterlife. Pretty wild to think my mom's mom had a mom who had a mom who had a...etc. You do that one hundred mom's back and those women looked at the same stars we're looking at now. They couldn't even fathom us and here we are. - Imagine one hundred mothers in the future.

Everyone is in awe. Tears roll down Stan's face.

CRAIG

That one looks like a shoe.

No one responds. Craig lights up a cig.

AUSTIN

Alright, fellas. I gotta be up so early it should be illegal. Lovely to meet you all.

They all say "nice to meet you."

AUSTIN (CONT'D)

Oh! Check this out.

He dribbles a pretend basketball around some of the guys and shoots toward the hoop. He throws his hands up like it was the game winning shot. The guys cheer. They love it!

AUSTIN (CONT'D)  
Stay curious, fellas.

EVERYONE EXCEPT CRAIG  
Stay curious!

He leaves and closes the garage. The guys start to wander back towards Craig's. It's quiet.

IAN  
That guy was so cool.

STAN  
Yeah, that guy's awesome.  
(tossing pretend ball)  
Go long.

CRAIG  
Fellas! That's my speed bump. Well,  
not mine, but I got it put in. They  
did a nice job. You guys, look.

IAN  
(to group)  
Rick's Bar?

The guys agree to go to Rick's.

CRAIG  
I love Rick's.

STAN  
You can't come. You kicked us out.

CRAIG  
That was a mess around. A simple  
yuck. C'mon.

STAN  
We'll see you at work.

It's quiet again. The guys disperse to their cars until it's just STAN walking behind Craig.

CRAIG  
Where you going?

STAN  
Can I use your restroom? Or  
bathtub? Any sink will do. - I need  
to wash my feet once an hour and  
apply a powder.

CRAIG

You had your chance to use my  
bathroom and you blew it.

STAN

My feet are gonna be so fucked  
tomorrow if I don't do it now.

Craig enters his garage and closes the screeching door on  
him. Craig turns and flinches - Nathan's wife is still there.

INT. HOME - DAY

We stare dead center on the psychedelic bud of a MOTH ORCHID.

TAMI

Stunning isn't it, Craigy.

Craig sits at the table lost in a drum lesson by a twelve  
year old on youtube. Steven enters and heads for the fridge.

TAMI (CONT'D)

Doesn't seeing this make you  
certain that some unknowable  
intelligence is behind all things?

He glances at it, but just sees a banal flower.

CRAIG

(half paying attention)  
Who told you that? Your firefighter  
boyfriend?

TAMI

Stop. You're standing on my  
shoelace.

STEVEN

(entering)  
Mom, you need anything before I  
bounce? Smoothie? Open-faced  
rueben?

TAMI

I'm good, Stevie.

CRAIG

Where you going? We should hang. I  
bought beans.

STEVEN

I'm going to the mall to take a  
shit.

Steven heads for the door.

CRAIG  
Let's go look at motorcycles.

STEVEN  
Motorcycles? What, are you  
straight?

CRAIG  
C'mon. Chill with Dad.

STEVEN  
People are waiting for me.

CRAIG  
Oh, look at Mr. Hollywood with all  
his friends. I'll drop you off.

STEVEN  
I'm ok.

CRAIG  
I'm not gonna let you become a  
school shooter! I'm not gonna be  
one of those Dads on the news like  
"I didn't see it coming." We're  
gonna connect!

Tami flinches.

INT. CRAPPY FIELD - AFTERNOON

A small brown unidentified mushroom gets picked. Craig is in  
a large FIELD at the edge of town. There is scattered trash,  
power lines overhead and a CANAL his son walks toward.

CRAIG  
Stevie. There's nothing over there.  
Look! (re: mushroom) Free food!  
Isn't it amazing?

STEVEN  
(walking back slowly)  
My friends are waiting for me.

CRAIG  
There's one. Grab it, Stevie.

Stevie picks up a mushroom like a dead rat by the tail.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Feel that? Ancient stuff right there. People have been doing that for hundreds of thousands of years. You don't get to say that everyday.

STEVEN

I say it every time I poop or pee.

CRAIG

Take a bite.

STEVEN

How do you know it's not poison?

Craig pops two in his mouth. He hides how much he hates the earthy taste.

CRAIG

See. Totally fine. I know all kinds of stuff. That's why we gotta hang. - Eat or you won't get that Scientific Calculator you want.

STEVEN

I needed that in seventh grade.

He tosses his shroom high in the air as Craig tries to catch it in his mouth, but it bonks his head and he SLIPS.

INT. SHOPPING CENTER - AFTERNOON

Craig and Steven sit on a bench with GIGANTIC SODAS. Both have bad eye-contact. Craig is looking PALE and SWEATY.

CRAIG

Wanna check out if Mervyn's has any new Ocean View Dining stuff?  
(re: son's denim)  
Are those OVD?

STEVEN

Stop.

CRAIG

C'mon. It's called hanging out. - You got any crushes?

STEVEN

Of course.

CRAIG  
 (not feeling well)  
 How's it going?

STEVEN  
 There's a group of girls at school  
 trying to see how many guys  
 virginity they can take.

CRAIG  
 High school girls trying to collect  
 guys virginity? Are they shaped  
 like pears?

STEVEN  
 Quite the opposite.

CRAIG  
 Wow. How you doing?

STEVEN  
 (dead and angry)  
 Absolutely fucking incredible.

Steven pulls out his phone. Craig digs deep. Time to connect.

CRAIG  
 Be nice to those girls. Women? I  
 guess they are still girls. Be nice  
 to them. Our society is...there  
 is..an unfair gender thing. Don't  
 call them the "B" word. Like ever.  
 You can call a guy friend that.  
 That essentially means "I love you"  
 to guy friends.  
 (burping)  
 Follow the rules. Rules keep people  
 safe. Reputation is everything,  
 Stevie. You gotta really watch what  
 you say and do. Even the littlest  
 joke can alter your whole life.  
 Even if it's so funny and no one  
 gets it. - So if you want a  
 motorcycle let me kn--

Craig suddenly RIPS the LID off his soda and THROWS UP into a  
 mostly full cup. What a mess.

STEVEN  
 (leaving)  
 I told you they were poisonous!

CRAIG

(weak)

Be respectful to those women. Those girls, Stevie.

Stevie blends into the crowd as a kiosk clerk calls security.

EXT. BUSINESS PARK - DAY

A STRONG RAIN pours down on CRAIG as he smokes a cig and runs to the office. His key card isn't working. He bangs on the glass.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

The SQUISH of wet shoes echo in the hall. Craig enters a conference where a dozen or so people wait. He's fucking soaked.

MR. MENDOZA

There he...  
(taking him in)  
Craig, Jesus.

CRAIG

My key card mysteriously stopped working.  
(he sits with a splat)  
How's everyone?

The guys from boys night try to hide smirks.

MR. MENDOZA

Do you want to change?

CRAIG

I'm fine. Been through worse.

He pulls a laptop out of a bag filled with water.

MR. MENDOZA

Ok. Well. We have a new client that I'm really excited about: Mayor Seth Nichols.

He clicks a remote and very DULL commercials of MAYOR SETH NICHOLS plays on a TV in the corner.

MR. MENDOZA (CONT'D)

He wants us to modernize his reelection campaign. Make it interactive.

(MORE)

MR. MENDOZA (CONT'D)

I know this is off center for us,  
but Craig, knock this out of the  
park and the Project Head position  
is yours.

CRAIG

(hesitating)

Oh. Ah. Ok. Great. I have the  
Raytheon thing I'm working on  
though.

MR. MENDOZA

Pause that. I need this to be a  
home run. Who do you want on your  
team...besides a towel?

Big laughs. Craig looks around - people avert his gaze.

CRAIG

I-I just have to say I know a  
client is a client, but the Mayor  
doesn't... he's a.. I mean look at  
the hypocrisy of... you know, he's  
at the root a guy who, who...

(giving up)

I'm excited to do this.

MR. MENDOZA

Who's on your team?

He scans the room again. People still look away.

CRAIG

I'll be a lone wolf on this one.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

Tami struggles to fit a few gorgeous bouquets in her KIA  
PRIDE as Craig pulls up.

TAMI

Honey, you're home?

CRAIG

I don't trust leaving my lunch in  
the work fridge.

TAMI

Can you help me load the car?

CRAIG

I gotta scarf lunch then get on a  
call about the Mayor thing.

He grabs bouquet which reveals a THICK ENVELOPE. He stares down at it - Austin's full name carefully handwritten by a stranger. A bright red wet drop hits the label. He looks up revealing a bloody nose.

TAMI

Craig!

CRAIG

Oopsie.

TAMI

I've never seen you get a bloody nose.

CRAIG

(helping her)

It's nothing. C'mon.

TAMI

Careful. Not sure they are going to fit. Careful!

CRAIG

(struggling)

I'm gonna make a fast lunch then I have a big call. Is the panini press still stuck to Steven's school project?

Tami wiggles in the driver seat - her face surrounded by flowers.

TAMI

Careful! That's for a 7th grader who got burned.

CRAIG

(not listening)

Yup. That's so sad.

TAMI

I'm sick of struggling. I need a bigger car. Are you listening?

CRAIG

Yeah. Good. I'm gonna make a fast lunch. Something with just bread and ham.

(checking watch)

Yeah, I don't have time for mayonnaise.

Craig waves bye to her as he enters his garage and closes the door, waits until he hears the car putter away then turns toward Austin's with the envelope.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

You got this, my man. You're not a Prince, you're a King. You have a great job and..and...He said you're good luck. You're good luck!

EXT. AUSTIN'S HOUSE - NEXT

Craig knocks on the green door. Nothing. Then rings the bell. Nothing. No one is home. He tries to door - locked.

He heads back to his house then stops to look at his watch then casually scans the neighborhood. The coast is clear - he fast walks to Austin's SIDE GATE and HOPS the fence with absolutely no grace.

EXT. SIDE YARD - NEXT

His hand is scraped. He picks himself up and swipes the dirt off.

CRAIG

Dang it.

Nervously, he slowly walks into...

EXT. BACKYARD - NEXT

He stops in front of the first window he comes upon. He tries it. Locked.

CRAIG

What are you doing, Craig? Go home.  
Make an open face Rueben and go to work.

Nope. He he keeps walking and finds a tarp over the window he smashes. He peels it back slowly.

INT. AUSTIN'S KITCHEN - NEXT

Craig cautiously step inside. He pauses to listen. It's so quiet. He hops down and tip toes around the house. It's filled with bright beautiful sun.

Craig tiptoes back to the kitchen and washes his scraped hand in the sink. He notices a few dirty dishes and begins to clean them gently and thoroughly, setting them carefully in the drying rack.

He pretends to greet guests at a party.

CRAIG

Welcome. Hey buddy! Beer? The recycling is over there.

He heads down the hallway and stops at a picture of James. He gives it the finger.

INT. HOME OFFICE

Craig sits at Austin's desk. The handaxe sits there on display. He slowly grabs, letting the sun hit the ancient object. He opens a few drawers.

CRAIG

Whoa.

He puts the handaxe down and reaches back in the closet, carefully taking out a HANDGUN. It's clearly his first time holding a real gun. He studies it closely.

A cell phone RINGS. He flinches. Oh! It's his phone.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

(answering)

Hey hey.

PHONE

Putting you through with the Mayor's Office.

(phone)

Gen's On. Jonna and Monkey See Inc. are on, Barry from DigiTonin...

CRAIG

Craig Waterman's on.

The cacophony begins.

PHONE

So, Craig, before we start I have to clear something up.

BIANCA (O.S.)

(sleepy)

Austin? Honey?

SHIT. He is NOT alone.

CRAIG  
(Austin impression)  
Howdy?

PHONE  
Hello?

CRAIG  
(into phone, but quieter)  
Hello hello.

PHONE  
Craig, is it true you don't have a  
cell phone?

BIANCA (O.S.)  
Someone rang the doorbell. Come  
snuggle! It's nap time.

He fast tip-toes out.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Craig RIPS THROUGH the plastic covering up the sliding door.

CRAIG  
(whispering)  
For a short time I didn't have a  
cell as an experiment.

EXT. SIDEYARD

He speed walks then realizes he's STILL holding the gun.  
Panicked, he tucks it into his waistband.

PHONE  
(laughter)  
You're a brave man.

CRAIG  
But now I have one. A really good  
one. So where do you all want to  
start?

EXT. FRONT YARD

He hops the fence, doesn't stick the landing and phone goes  
flying.

PHONE

Sorry, we lost you there. Sounded like you fell hoping a fence?

Light laughter on the line as he grabs it and fast walks.

CRAIG

Nope, didn't fall. But yeah, if we are talking big picture then we have to talk Gamification first. We need to make the Mayor more interactive.

He's breathing is labored as he scans for witnesses.

EXT. UNIVERSAL DIGITAL DUMPSTER - NIGHT

Craig wraps the gold gun in newspaper and tucks it behind a dumpster. He pauses and looks at A Real Estate Sign - HIS sign! He tucks the gun under some trash and leaves.

INT. OFFICE

Craig is lost deeeeeep in thought at work.

INT. HOME - NIGHT

Tami is busy cooking dinner. Jazz music blasts and she's referencing multiple cookbooks.

Craig enters and see's Tami is dressed up, red lipstick on.

TAMI

Craig? I tried calling you. I need you to run to the store.

CRAIG

I had a nuts day.

TAMI

(pissed)

The Austin and Bianca house warming is tonight. I need stuff.

CRAIG

(his face drops)

Oh yeah. That's tonight.

TAMI

I'm making a sweet and a savory dish.

(MORE)

TAMI (CONT'D)

Maybe I can just borrow some stuff from them. What's their number?

CRAIG

I'll call. I'll call. What do you need?

He dials some random numbers.

TAMI

(suspicious)

Brown sugar, vanilla extract and...

CRAIG

(on phone)

Yooooo. Bri! Whats up, dude!  
Excited to see you tonight. Tami is cooking up a storm, but--

(fake listening)

Oh. Ok. -- Diarrhea is a bastard. I got a bad case myself. Well, I hope she feels better soon. -- Ok. Bye, pal. - Oh, Love you too.

(hanging up)

Bianca has an insane flu.

TAMI

Oh, poor thing.

CRAIG

Yeah, they'll reschedule.

TAMI

Did Austin tell you he loves you?

CRAIG

Yeah. He's a weird dude. I'm kinda relieved, actually.

TAMI

Maybe I'll bring her some chicken broth.

CRAIG

Why? It'll just shoot right through her.

(off her look)

Austin said she might be contagious. I got a big week coming up with my pitch to the Mayor. If I get sick and can't do my job I could get fired. And how will we get a new house with no income?

(MORE)

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
Tami's Florals isn't exactly  
bringing in the cash your old job  
did.

The oven dings. Tami buries her disappointment as she takes  
an amazing casserole out of the oven.

TAMI  
Have you talked to the real estate  
people?

CRAIG  
Yeah, had a long convo. They are  
putting together a new list of  
buyers and getting us a new sign.  
Must have been naughty teens who  
took it.

She looks at all the food she has been making.

TAMI  
Let's invite some people over.

CRAIG  
Just us is good.

TAMI  
(fighting disappointment)  
Maybe Devon is free.

CRAIG  
Devon?

TAMI  
Do you ever listen?

She returns back to the food. Her lust for life deflated.  
Craig feels awful. Enough is enough.

CRAIG  
Turn the burners off. We're going  
on an adventure.

Off Tami's confused look...

EXT. ABANDONED SEWER - NIGHT

Craig pulls up to the drainage pipe. He pops out and turns on  
a flashlight on his phone.

TAMI  
What the hell is this?

CRAIG  
Adventure.

He shines the light into the endless darkness of the pipe and feels a wave of terror.

TAMI  
Absolutely not.

CRAIG  
(scared)  
T.S.D.Y.

INT. PIPE - NIGHT

They try their best to avoid the filthy water then come to a fork in the pipe.

CRAIG  
(feigning confidence)  
This way.

INT. DEEPER IN THE PIPE

They arrive at the part where Craig lost his shoe.

TAMI  
Who showed you this?

CRAIG  
Found it myself. C'mon.

TAMI  
Really. Did Austin show you this?

He gives Tami a boost up the ledge. She climbs to her feet and looks down at him.

TAMI (CONT'D)  
This is insane. Help me down.

CRAIG  
Christ almighty, will you give this a chance?! You're always complaining that we don't try new things. Well, here we are. You're healthy and here we are! Jesus! Walk a little farther. I'm right behind you.

She gives him an exhausted and angry look then disappears into the darkness. Her wheels turn.

She looks at him in a way we haven't seen before and disappears into the dark. Craig runs toward the ledge, jumps, and smashes his flashlight. He struggles and barely makes it up the ledge.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
 Dammit! Don't worry, honey. We are close.

He turns on the light on his phone and swings it around. Tami is nowhere to be found.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
 Honey Bear?  
 (panicking)  
 Sweet Honey Bear!!

He fast-walks deeper into the pitch black pipe.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
 (terrified)  
 Tami!?

He comes to a three way fork that heads in opposite directions. He doesn't recognize this.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
 Tami! Say something!

He dials 911 - no service. He listens - only running water...WAIT...was that a distant voice? He takes off down a pipe. The phone slips out. SPLASH. Craig drops to his knees frantically searching for it.

He takes out a lighter. The measly flame illuminating his terrified face.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
 (primal)  
 HONEY BEAR!

INT. HOME - LATER

Steven is at the dinner table playing a confounding FIRST PERSON SHOOTER/CANDY CRUSH game while talking on the house phone. His ugly guy friend is next to him eating realllllllly slow. Craig, pale and wet, enters shellshocked, but trying to hide it.

CRAIG  
 (casually)  
 I need to use the phone.

STEVEN  
 (not looking)  
 Yeah, let me finish...  
 (to the game)  
 I'm gonna kill that funcher!

Craig watches his screen for a second.

CRAIG  
 (re: friend)  
 What's he doing?

STEVEN  
 He's mindfully eating a Doritos  
 Gordita Crunch. Is Mom gonna finish  
 cooking?

CRAIG  
 She's not here.

STEVEN  
 Where is she?

CRAIG  
 I have to use the phone, big dawg.

The DOORBELL. Craig turns with suspicion. He walks over and answers revealing a tough COP, OFFICER WHITMER, with a K9. The dog BARKS a nasty one at him. Craig flinches.

OFFICER WHITMER  
 Sir, do you live here?

Craig notices Austin standing on the sidewalk.

CRAIG  
 (big smile)  
 Austin! How's the party, bud?

AUSTIN  
 (asshole)  
 We canceled cause someone broke in  
 so you tell me, bud!

CRAIG  
 (to cop)  
 What's up with him?

OFFICER WHITMER  
 Sir, are you the primary resident?

The K9 barks again.

CRAIG

Jesus. Yes. What is this about?

OFFICER WHITMER

We had a break-in down the street.  
The dog picked up a scent that lead  
us here.

CRAIG

Here? Like here, here? Shoot. Did  
the robber break-in? I have very  
valuable boxer-briefs.

AUSTIN

(walking up)

You break into my house, Craig?

CRAIG

No way! You're my good friend.

AUSTIN

You broke into my house, lunatic!  
You scared my wife!

OFFICER WHITMER

Austin, easy!

(to Craig)

Are you and..

(seeing the boys)

...your sons the only ones who live  
here?

CRAIG

No. My wife too.

OFFICER WHITMER

Was she here today?

Steven and his friend come to the door.

STEVEN

Yeah, she was here all day.

OFFICER WHITMER

Can we speak to her?

CRAIG

She's not here.

OFFICER WHITMER

Where is she?

CRAIG  
In the sewer.

CUT TO:

INT. PIPE - NIGHT

Police lift a K9 search dog onto the ledge where we last saw Tami. Craig is watching the chaos. DETECTIVE BELVIDERE, a large man, tries to make sense of it all.

CRAIG  
And then I went straight ahead.  
(quietly)  
I think.

DETECTIVE BELVIDERE  
These pipes go for miles in every direction. Have you done this before?

CRAIG  
I was trying to go to the old Power hotel. There is a way through the basement. Right?

We see Austin is there too.

AUSTIN  
Yes, but it's tricky. Why did you come here on your own?

OFFICER WHITMER  
(writing)  
Attempted trespassing.

CRAIG  
Not trespassing. Adventure. I was trying to make a fun night for my wife. We beat cancer.  
(to Austin)  
So how you been, my man? You're looking strong.

AUSTIN  
What the hell is wrong with you?!

CRAIG  
Me? Nothing. I'm good. She'll show up and everything will be normal very soon. You should come over and watch bloopers.

(MORE)

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
Sometimes the bloopers are better  
than the tv show or movie.

AUSTIN  
(to Cop)  
I know these pipes. Can I take the  
lead?

DETECTIVE BELVIDERE  
You know the pipes?

AUSTIN  
I do. I explore.

OFFICER WHITMER  
That's trespassing. Penal Code 602.

AUSTIN  
We have no time.  
(addressing everyone)  
I need everyone to meet me on the  
next level.

Craig watches Austin lead the group.

CRAIG  
(addressing everyone)  
I agree. We got to practice  
teamwork here! Austin is-

DETECTIVE BELVIDERE  
(to Officer Whitmer)  
Take him in.

Officer Whitmer goes to arrest Craig who backs away in a  
panic.

CRAIG  
What? No. I'm a program manager at  
Universal Digital Inc. Some of our  
top clients are Facebook, Mountain  
Dew. Stuff like that.

They handcuff him.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
(screaming)  
Austin showed me this! He picked  
the lock! We broke into City Hall!

INT. JAIL - HOLDING CELL

Craig sits with an angry Austin in a piss soaked cell. A few drunks having an bad night sit slumped in there with them. Detective Belvidere peers through the other side of the bars.

CRAIG

I haven't had my meal yet. I have a right to a meal. It could be a fast lunch. I'm easy! Austin, I'm down to split some stuff.

DETECTIVE BELVIDERE

We have our whole force on the case. We're going to find her if you're telling the truth.

CRAIG

I'm telling the truth.

DETECTIVE BELVIDERE

You'd be surprised how many husbands "lose" their wives. Cheaper than a divorce.  
(to Austin)  
Channel three?

AUSTIN

Yes, sir. I shouldn't be here.

DETECTIVE BELVIDERE

Big fan, but this isn't good, you guys.

The Detective walks away shaking his head.

CRAIG

What about my phone? It's got a Mars Rover case.  
(then trying to impress Austin)  
Never mind. I don't want a phone anymore.

Craig notices Austin is clearly angry.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Isn't this nuts? I feel like we're in a beer commercial.

AUSTIN

You moron. I could lose everything.

CRAIG  
You won't lose me.

AUSTIN  
(pissed)  
I want to. I'm dying to. You are  
ruining my life. You're a boy. A  
child. You broke into my house.

CRAIG  
Nuh-uh. But I will help you track  
down any stolen goods.

A curious cop, LIEUTENANT JAMES, pops his head in.

LIEUTENANT JAMES  
Oh wow, it is him!

Austin lays on the charm like a politician on the campaign  
trail.

AUSTIN  
Good evening, Rockstar. What's your  
name?

LIEUTENANT JAMES  
Jimmy. James. Lieutenant James.  
Sorry, I'm nerbiss. Nervous. Fuck.

AUSTIN  
I'm nervous too. We might be  
related. (he winks) Austin. Channel  
three. Thank you for your service  
lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT JAMES  
Would it be alright if I get a  
picture with you?

AUSTIN  
Of course.

LIEUTENANT JAMES  
Ok, be right back.

Austin drops the facade and turns back to Craig with a death  
stare.

AUSTIN  
This is literally the last thing I  
need. Do you have any idea how  
stressful the morning news is? No,  
you don't cause you're a boy in  
your grandfathers pants.

CRAIG

I'm a man. I have two email accounts. A person brings me lunch.

AUSTIN

If I lose my job cause of you...

CRAIG

You're not gonna lose it. You basically run the place.

AUSTIN

You have no idea how much pressure I'm under. It's cut-throat. They are so mean to me!

CRAIG

Go back to nights.

AUSTIN

I can't. They filled it. I'm stuck! And the station made me quit my band cause it was a "bad look."

CRAIG

No! You guys rock! My ears are still ringing from that show, man.

AUSTIN

Please get out of my life you small round boy!

Austin gets up and slips on piss. His perfect hair FALLS OFF revealing the top of his head to be completely BALD.

Craig screams.

Austin frantically puts the TOUPEE back on.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)

Is it straight? Is it fucking straight?!

CRAIG

(scared)

Yeah, man. Yeah. Yeah!

He checks his reflection in the piss puddle. Lieutenant James returns with two other cops.

LIEUTENANT JAMES

See, it's him!

Austin snaps right into politician-mode. He's almost Obama like. The cops open the door and take a picture with him.

LIEUTENANT JAMES (CONT'D)

Thanks. We'll take you in for questioning now.

Austin leaves without looking back. Craig watches them go. What the hell happened?

INT. HOME - MORNING

The house SUPER CLEAN. Craig enters confused.

CRAIG

Steven? Thanks for cleaning.

His son peeks out of his room. JEN PEYSER, a teen girl, is in his bed.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Hey buddy. Replaced your mother, I see. Just messing. Congrats.

STEVEN

Any news?

CRAIG

No. Everyone is looking. You going to school?

STEVEN

(are you insane?)  
My Mother is missing. Are you going to work?

CRAIG

Yeah.

STEVEN

You should be out there looking!

Steven slams the door rattling the dishes in the kitchen.

CRAIG

Treat that woman with respect, bud.  
That girl.

He looks over at Tami's work table. There is a half-finished bouquet waiting for her to come back and give it life. The phone rings.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
 Tami's Florals. -- Wow. I don't  
 think she's ever done a bar mitzvah  
 before. What's your info?

Craig looks for a pen only to come face to face with one of  
 Tami's ORCHID'S - The same kind she expressed awe and he  
 ignored. It's RADIANT now. He collapses taking the whole  
 phone base out of the wall with him, sobbing into the carpet.

INT. WORK - CRAIG OFFICE

Craig feverishly finishes the last touches on his pitch at  
 his desk. He looks awful. Mr. Mendoza steps in with concern  
 and sympathy.

MR. MENDOZA  
 Craig. I tried calling you.

CRAIG  
 Yeah, I don't have a phone again.  
 I'm sorry.

MR. MENDOZA  
 You can go home. You're going  
 through a lot.

CRAIG  
 This is where I want to be. It's a  
 big day. I'm fine. The cops put a  
 camera in the pipe. Technology will  
 find my wife. And people donated  
 coffee and donuts to the crews.  
 Lucky bunch! They're gonna find  
 her. It's a big day.

He reaches for a mug where there is no mug and plays it off  
 as a stretch.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
 Let's kick fucking ass.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

MAYOR SETH NICHOLS sits with his team at one end of the  
 table. Other coworkers are there.

MR. MENDOZA  
 (a little unsure)  
 And now I give the floor to our  
 main man, Craig Waterman.

CRAIG

Mr. Mayor. An honor to meet you.  
Thank you for doing everything you  
do for the city. I think we have a  
great campaign idea for you.

ON SCREEN: Mayor Seth = A Good Friend.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Let's get to the emotion. What we  
all want more than anything in the  
world are good relationships. So, I  
am proposing we frame Mayor Seth  
here not as a political figure, but  
as a friend. A friend you know on a  
first name basis. A friend that  
will always be there for you.

MAYOR

(smiling)  
A good friend.

CRAIG

Our campaign is a three-tiered  
system of making you everyone's  
friend. Digital applications will  
let people interact with their new  
friend: you! The trick with these  
things is ya gotta give people the  
illusion of self-expression. I  
mean, it's all these people got.

On SCREEN: Pics of the Mayor photoshopped into peoples'  
profile pictures.

Craig is actually doing a great job and Mayor Seth Nichols  
seems pleased. Mr. Mendoza cuts Craig short to end on a high  
note.

MR. MENDOZA

Well, that is something to build  
off of. Thank you, Craig.  
(motioning to Ian)  
I also asked Ian here to put  
together a second pitch.

Craig is caught by surprise and puts on an ever bigger smile  
as Ian hops up like a happy little prick.

IAN

(Standing)  
Thank you, Craig. I-

CRAIG

You know, I went home to a pretty quiet house this morning. The silence made me feel profoundly alone. But I know I'm not alone cause at least I have a friend in the Mayor.

People shift in their seats.

IAN

Piggy-backing off that. I want to flip this thing on its head. Mayor Seth Nichols: The Super Hero.

On SCREEN: A HIGH-OCTANE spec commercial of The Mayor as a SUPERHERO with a cape, gold documents, holding the hand of a boy. The Mayor smiles wide.

MAYOR

I look like a Marvel!

His team murmurs with excitement. Something churns inside Craig. He takes a massive swig of java.

MAYOR (CONT'D)

Want to know what this looks like? Another four years! Or is it six?

CRAIG

(standing)

Sorry. Wow. I just got hit with a moment of inspiration. How about this...Mayor Nichols: A coward pig fuck!

"Pig fuck" comes out with spit.

MR. MENDOZA

(standing)

His wife is missing.

CRAIG

You just care about yourself you sack of shit. You don't care about this city. I had to go to war for a speed bump!

He steps aggressively toward the Mayor as coworkers hold him back.

INT. CRAIG'S OFFICE - LATER

Craig watches the smokers from his window replay the meeting for people who weren't there. They mimic Craig lunging at the Mayor and the SCUFFLE that ensued after. The guy playing Craig hits the ground and he scatters change everywhere.

MR. MENDOZA (O.S.)

Craig.

Craig looks up to find a security guard and Mr. Mendoza waiting for him.

CRAIG

When can I come back?

MR. MENDOZA

You lunged at the Mayor.

CRAIG

I was joking.

The office phone rings. He answers out of habit.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Craig Waterman.

AUSTIN

Craig. It's Austin.

He automatically stands.

CRAIG

Heyyyyy man! (smiling) You have my work number?

AUSTIN

Craig, I just wanted to apologize. I over reacted, man. I was acting like a jerk yesterday. I'm so sorry about this Tami situation. I can't help but feel some sort of blame for this.

CRAIG

Naw. All is chill, homie. How was the rest of your night?

AUSTIN

Um, if there is anything more I can do, let me know.

He gets another call: CLOVIS POLICE DEPT.

CRAIG

Oh Hey, I just told the Mayor off.  
He came in and I told him off. I  
almost slugged him. He sucks,  
right?

AUSTIN

Um, yeah. - Also, last night is our  
secret, right? I could lose it all  
if that leaks out.

CRAIG

Yeah, man. Our secret.

AUSTIN

Good, man. Good. I trust you. Be  
well.

CRAIG

I trust you too.

Austin hangs up, but Craig doesn't. After a beat he hits the  
other line.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Hello?....

DETECTIVE

(on phone)

Craig, Detective Persons here. We  
found Tami.

INT. HOUSE - DUSK

Tami sits on the couch with a thousand yard stare. She's wet  
and filthy, wrapped in an EMERGENCY BLANKET. Steven brings  
her tea - he's been crying. There are cheap flower  
arrangements everywhere from relatives and friends. Craig  
shows the last Cop out then sits in the living room. It's  
very tense.

CRAIG

Did you see the For Sale sign is  
back? Exciting, eh?

She doesn't react. Time to cut the shit.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

I was trying to do something fun,  
honey. I wanted to give you an  
adventure - and you certainly got  
one...

TAMI  
You smell like smoke.

CRAIG  
You smell like the sewer.  
(trying to cover the  
silence)  
Oh my god. Did you see what the  
President said? That guy is nuts!

TAMI  
I need to get ready. People are  
stopping by.

She gets up and heads for the bedroom. Her crinkly emergency blanket is extraordinarily noisy, causing Craig to grimace and cover his ears as she leaves. She slams the door. It rattles the dishes in the cabinets.

CRAIG  
(to son)  
What people?

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The roar of FORTY PEOPLE fill their humble home. Craig stands against the wall like a stranger. He knows NOBODY there, but Tami knows everyone. How? A large man sits in his recliner laughing and rocking violently back and forth. A local NEWS CREW enters. Fuck.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

The dining table is covered with all kinds of goodies. Craig proceeds to pile his plate high and wide with mac n' cheese and a loaded baked potato. People are in his way, but he perseveres. Two women point at him and whisper. He feels judged.

INT. GARAGE - LATER

Craig sits in the garage behind his drum set using his snare as a table. The party roars inside. He take a bite then picks up his Dagger artifact and taps the cymbal. The door swings open.

PATTON  
Pardon me. Thought this was the  
shitter. Hey, you're the husband?

CRAIG  
 (mouth full)  
 Craig Waterman. Universal Digi-  
 Thanks for coming.

Patton stares Craig up and down. The man has a "Vietnam vet" hat and a shirt that also says "Vietnam vet."

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
 Bathroom is down the hall.

GUY  
 How's it feel?

CRAIG  
 To have Tam back? Great.  
 (off the awkwardness)  
 Hey, this is a seventeenth  
 century..

GUY  
 No, to ditch your wife.

CRAIG  
 I didn't ditch my...  
 (standing)  
 You're not allowed to use my  
 toilet!

The man doesn't flinch then after a beat disappears back into the house leaving Craig with his shame.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Craig, on a mission, zigzags to the center the room where he attempts to make a toast by tapping a beer bottle with a DRUM STICK. No one pays attention. He stands on a chair.

CRAIG  
 (hitting the bottle)  
 Excuse me.

No reaction.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
 (guttural)  
 Hey!  
 (people look, shocked. He  
 softens.)  
 Hey. Hi. Hi.  
 (MORE)

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Sorry to interrupt, but I wanted to give a speech for our guest of honor tonight, who happens to be my wife, Tami Waterman.

People clap. The chair tips, but he regains his balance.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Whoopsie. You know we went into the tunnel as an adventure - A living life to the fullest kinda thing. I know some of you think ordering desert at Spaghetti Freddy's is wild, but Tami and I do things differently. And this one got away from us, but here we are at the edge of life and the view is gorgeous. To Tami!

Tami looks at him with a soft smile. He's doing it! Then a male voice (deeper) from the other side of the room takes everyone's attention away.

DEVON (O.S.)

Since we are doing toasts.

It's a fit FIREFIGHTER in a tight blue tee-shirt with the name of his station on it. Everyone turns.

DEVON (CONT'D)

My heart is overflowing with relief that one of the brightest souls in this dark world is still with us. When she was lost I felt like a caveman who lost his fire. No pun intended.

People laugh. Even Craig, but then he remembers he's mad.

DEVON (CONT'D)

This is a special woman right here: a warrior, healer, a...

(he starts to choke up)

..Mother. - My crew and I were up all night looking for her. I'm so lucky she is safe.

HUGE applause. Tami looks like she is gazing at her favorite Orchid again.

DEVON (CONT'D)

I don't know who I would be without this woman. To Tami Pinto!

Everyone raises their glasses.

CRAIG

Tami Waterman! Waterman for sixteen years. My best friend. Piggybacking off that stranger. Um - Also, a toast to our son Steven who was so strong during this and I think lost his virginity recently.

He instantly regrets saying that.

DEVON

To new chapters!

Everyone toasts.

CRAIG

Who the hell is that guy? Does anyone know this guy? Get up high if you wanna speak. No one can see you.

AUSTIN (O.S.)

I have something to say.

The crowd splits revealing Austin. The news crew is shooting all this.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)

Hi, I'm Austin. Channel three.

Hoots and hollers.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)

I want to thank Devon and all the first responders that helped us find this amazing woman.

CRAIG

Hey, Aust. I'm up here. Wanna come up here? Everyone looks like ants. Who are any of these people?

Austin ignores him.

AUSTIN

Hold the ones you love close.  
(he grabs his wife's hand)  
We only got each other.

TAMI

Thank you everyone for coming. It's really so nice to be out.

(MORE)

TAMI (CONT'D)

Sorry, my voice is still a bit weak. And I've officially had too much wine, but I really love you all.

CRAIG

Ok this is becoming a bit of a free-for-all. If you wanna speak get on the chair. The line forms here by the dips and spreads.

(off blank looks)

You know what? Let's kick this up a notch and throw Tami... a PARADE! C'mon everyone!

Craig stumbles off the chair and high-knees through the crowd like a band leader.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Follow me, everyone! A parade for Tami!

EXT. CRAIG'S HOUSE - NEXT

Craig stands in his yard like an excited piper after blowing a few notes on his flute. The door remains closed. Not a soul follows and the party regains it's roar.

He sits on the grass, lights cigarette, and leans against the For Sale sign.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Craig wakes to find himself in an empty bed.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Craig enters groggy from bad sleep.

CRAIG

Tam?

Steven is on the couch eating a leftover bake potato with Jen Peyser who we saw in his bedroom.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Where's Mom?

Steven nods to the tv. We see Tami sitting with the LOCAL MORNING NEWS. Austin is there of course.

He watches them playfully do the weather together. Craig sits on the couch transfixed.

AUSTIN  
And Sun is...  
TAMI  
...on the way!

Austin GRACEFULLY points along the Doppler Radar edge of the passing storm. Goosebumps ripple down the back of Craig's neck - ASMR. An involuntary moan escapes.

STEVEN  
You just nut your OVD's?

CRAIG  
Mom's on TV, Stevie. Take a picture.

AUSTIN (ON TV)  
So that Storm's-a-leavin'!

Tami laughs hard - harder than we've seen her laugh.

REBECCA SPRINGS (ON TV)  
Thank you, Austin and Tami. Back with much more after this.

Commercial break.

CRAIG  
I love this commercial. Have you guys seen?

Steven packs up his school stuff.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
Wanna do something? Rick's Bar? I got the day off.

STEVEN  
It's 730am and we're sixteen.

CRAIG  
They got sarsaparilla. Oh! Let's go to the museum. They have a new exhibit about Native Americans. We really fucked them over I hear.  
(to girl)  
I don't believe we've met. Craig Waterman. Uni - Stevie's pa.

Jen Peyser nods a shy hello and Stevie gets up to leave.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Big guy, I want you to have my drums. I'm done with them. Use them or sell 'em to buy a dirt bike.

Stevie grabs a school project and heads for the door.

STEVEN

I'm gonna go shoot up the school now. I love you.

JEN PEYSER

Thanks for the baked potato.

Craig turns back on TV: Tami is about to teach Austin and the anchors how to arrange flowers.

TAMI

Look at the center of this one. Now doesn't that look like an artist made it.

AUSTIN

(totally present)  
Ohhh! I just got goosebumps.

INT. RICK'S BAR - AFTERNOON - PRESENT

Alone, Craig dials on a payphone in a back dimly lit hall.

CRAIG

Honey, hey. Me again. Just wondering where you're hat - at. I said "hat." I've had a few boots to drink. I, yeah, I miss ya. - There's a new restaurant called "Restaurant" that I hear is good. What a name, eh? I got us a reservation tonight under "Fudge." Craig and Tami Fudge. Haha. Ok. Call me at Rick's. Love you.

INT. RICK'S BAR - FRONT OF HOUSE

Craig returns to a tall BOOT-SHAPED glass filled with dark beer. The place is pretty empty outside of a few scattered barflies alone at the bottom of their own abyss. Is he one of them now?

INT. CRAIG'S HOUSE - DUSK

Tami enters with a face of studio makeup, high from the attention of local tv. Craig greets her dressed for what could be a wedding.

CRAIG

Hi Honey Bear. I was worried about you. Ready for dinner?

TAMI

I told you I had plans tonight.

CRAIG

You did?

TAMI

Maybe that was someone else.

CRAIG

Did you get my message? I got us a reservation.

She floats about the house. Craig is like a puppy at her heels.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Or we can order in. You had a good day?

TAMI

Amazzzing day.

CRAIG

I saw you talking to Austin and everyone on the idiot box.

She ends up on the kitchen and takes her pills with excitement.

TAMI

My heart is still racing. I met so many great people. Austin was so sweet.

CRAIG

You looked great. Still do. Oh! I'm gonna make biscuits tomorrow morning.

TAMI

Do you have perfume on?

CRAIG

I thought I was buying cologne.

Tami gets a call and she heads to the living room and sits.

TAMI

(lighting up)

Heyyy.

Craig follows and gently lands in his recliner. There are no lights on in the house and it's getting darker by the second.

TAMI (CONT'D)

Hahaha. - Like Alaska! Hahahaha.  
See you soon. -- Bye, hun.

CRAIG

Wrong number? Haha.

(beat)

We should leave soon.

TAMI

I'm getting dinner with the tv people. They are picking me up soon.

CRAIG

Room for one more?

TAMI

I didn't know you were free.

CRAIG

I'm always free! (calming down)  
Sorry, I've just been waiting around for you all day. (here comes a joke) You wouldn't be a big shot tv person if I never took you to do a cool thing!

Tami doesn't respond, but we can tell she just retreated further from him. He needs to dig down deep to try to connect.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. - I haven't been myself lately. Austin and I aren't friends anymore. It's messed me up.

Craig is backlit against the sliding glass doors as the last moments of light disappear. Tami reaches over and turns on a lamp and sits with her distant thoughts.

TAMI

I had a orgasm in the sewer system.

CRAIG

Oh? That's great, honey. That's amazing.

(on thin ice)

But how exactly?

She tries to put her glass down somewhere, but every surface is covered by flowers people sent. Her eyes close as her hands move to her chest - the trembling sensations of a panic attack are coming. Inhale. Exhale.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

You're okay.

She breathes. Calming herself. The silence makes Craig nervous.

Exhale. She softens back into her body. Her eyes open and avoid him completely.

TAMI

I was there in the dark and I realized something. I felt this release and "boom." My entire body vibrated. I haven't had a feeling like that since I was 5 rubbing on my dad's motorcycle seat.

CRAIG

All I got in the sewer was another lost phone and arrested.

TAMI

I'm so glad we didn't sell the house.

CRAIG

Yeah. It would be stressful to move right now.

TAMI

My mom never left my narcissist Dad. I won't make the same mistake.

Craig is stunned.

TAMI (CONT'D)

I'm moving into Devon's pool house until I find a place of my own.

CRAIG  
 Who? - Oh yeah.  
 (smirking)  
 But did you hear my message? I made  
 the reservation under "Fudge."

Her phone dings, she picks it up and walks to the bedroom  
 SLAMMING the door. The dishes in the kitchen rattle.

INT. VERIZON STORE - NIGHT

BEEP! - A new phone is scanned.

CRAIG  
 I'll do another Mars Rover case.

TONY  
 Great choice, sir. - Receipt in the  
 bag?

CRAIG  
 I love a receipt in the bag.

He looks up at the tv in the corner. It's off.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
 Um. (leaning in) I want something a  
 little stronger than Beer.  
 (off the teen's confused  
 look)  
 Last time I was here you offered me  
 something...stronger.

They lock eyes then Tony turns to another Employee.

TONY  
 Ramone. I'm on lunch.

He gestures for Craig to follow.

INT. VERIZON STORE - STORAGE ROOM - NEXT

They're alone in the small storage space.

TONY  
 My name is Tony, but when my hair's  
 down people call me T-boy.

CRAIG  
 People call me Craig Waterman.

TONY

What are you looking for?

CRAIG

I'm stuck. I'm about to lose everything. What do you have for someone who's at the bottom of a deep dark hole with no way out?

TONY

Weed, X, viagra, shrooms, adderall...

CRAIG

Do you have Eyishaqua?  
(off his confusion)  
Alishaba?

TONY

Ayahuasca?

CRAIG

Yes!!

TONY

No. - But I have Toad.

CRAIG

Is that an IPA?

The kid laughs as he reaches into a backpack and takes out a little tank. Inside is a wet Toad.

TONY

The Buffalo River Toad. You lick the psychedelic venom it excretes on its rear glands. She's similar to Ayahuasca, but the trip is much faster.

CRAIG

Will it heal my pain? Will it bring my wife back?

TONY

The medicine does what it wants.

CRAIG

How much for the frog?

TONY

The Toad? One-hundred.

CRAIG  
What do I feed it?

TONY  
One-hundred for a lick. I'm selling  
the fruit not the tree.

He gestures the frog toward Craig.

CRAIG  
Now?

Tony nods and Craig becomes increasingly nervous.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
I'm out of ideas, Tony. I got no  
gas in the tank. I just need help,  
man.

TONY  
(looking at watch)  
Well, I need a yes or a no.

Screw it. Craig pulls out cash and pays him. The teen puts  
down some folded cardboard boxes.

TONY (CONT'D)  
You're gonna lick and lay back  
here. It'll hit immediately. Your  
mind will disintegrate and your  
consciousness will expand to become  
all infinity. You will feel a pain  
unlike you have ever felt followed  
by a bliss that cannot be  
described. You will die and be  
reborn.  
(He undoes his ponytail)  
I'll turn the lights off for you  
and put on music.  
(checks watch)  
I'm gonna go get lunch cause it's  
my lunch break. Have a great  
journey. I love you.

SHAMANIC FLUTE plays from a YouTube video on T-boy's phone as  
he picks up the dripping amphibian from the tank and holds it  
toward Craig.

TONY (CONT'D)  
Just like ice cream on a hot summer  
day.

CRAIG  
Can you please just stay?

TONY

Sorry. I need to get some Rolo's  
and a Mountain Dew.  
(gestures with Toad)  
Time to touch God.

CRAIG

(scared)  
I love you, Toad Boy.

TONY

T-boy.

CRAIG

I love you, T-boy.

Craig, like ripping off a band-aide, licks the back of the frog and lays down in nervous anticipation. The kid puts the frog back in the tank and turns off the lights.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Hey.  
(off T-boy stopping at the  
door)  
I used to work with Mountain Dew.

T-boy gives him a caring nod and closes the door. Craig lays there in the dark. Nothing so far. He looks over at the Toad sitting in shallow water like an alien.

He turns to the CEILING and tries to relax. We slowly zoom in on the banality of a light fixture until the frame is completely dark.

Then, seamlessly, out of the darkness walks an awestruck Craig.

OLD MAN (O.S.)

What can I get ya, pal?

Craig continues walking into a...

INT. SUBWAY - DAY - HALLUCINATION

An OLD MAN SANDWICH ARTIST with a strange amount of energy smiles at Craig.

OLD MAN

What's for lunch today?

This is banal and familiar. Nothing psychedelic to be found.

CRAIG  
 (scanning menu)  
 Um, Black Forest Ham.

OLD MAN  
 Perfect choice. What kind of bread?

CRAIG  
 Italian herbs & cheese? Yeah,  
 Italian herbs & cheese.

OLD MAN  
 Footlong, right?  
 (off Craigs nod)  
 Your usual toppings? Footlong  
 pretzel on the side?

CRAIG  
 Yes, please.

He watches the Old Man prepare the bread. Closer now the old man LOOKS LIKE AUSTIN aged forty years. We see it, but Craig doesn't.

Some dinky video game sounds take his attention to a TEEN GIRL at a table playing some stupid fucking game on her phone. Craig has no reaction.

OLD MAN  
 Not toasted, right?

CRAIG  
 Let's be wild. Toast it.

OLD MAN  
 What's your favorite thing about  
 our sandwiches?

CRAIG  
 Definitely the taste.

OLD MAN  
 Me too!

They wait in odd silence as the bread toasts.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)  
 They bake the bread every morning  
 so it's as fresh as it gets.

CRAIG  
 That's what I heard!

OLD MAN  
Any plans for the day?

CRAIG  
Same 'ol stuf-

INT. VERIZON - STORAGE ROOM

The florescent lights come on as Craig's eyes open. T-boy stares down at him with a Rolo in his mouth.

TONY  
Welcome back, Chris.

CRAIG  
Is it over?

TONY  
Yeah. How long did your trip feel?  
Four, five months?

CRAIG  
That was like a minute. I went to  
Subway!

TONY  
The eatery? And what happened?

CRAIG  
I ordered.

TONY  
Did you get the answer you needed?

CRAIG  
I ORDERED A SANDWICH!

TONY  
(in awe)  
The Toad is mysterious.

Craig sits up and finds that he has PISSED his nice OVD'S.

INT. HOME - NIGHT

Craig stands wet with a towel around his waist having no idea what to do with himself. He lazily takes his new phone out of the packaging and turns it on. The first screen glows: "Hello, Welcome to your new life." A bolt of RAGE shoots through him as he SHATTERS the phone against the dresser.

He looks down at the mess and rights a picture that has fallen over - it's of a very happy TAMI, with a bouquet, posing in front of her KIA pointing to the 'TAMI'S FLORALS' sign on the car door. This must have been her first day in business.

We begin a MONTAGE similar to Act 1, but this feels like something out of Tree Of Life.

OMITTED

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAWN

Craig wakes up alone in bed. Most of the furniture has been moved out and there is a deep loneliness in the room, but he rises to start the day. Inhale.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NEXT

The living room is feeling empty and sparse. Tami's work area/dining room is completely cleaned out. There is just a folding table and his recliner.

CRAIG (V.O.)  
Life could be like this.

EXT. STREET

A parking ticket gets slid onto an icy windshield. We pan up to see Craig in a PARKING OFFICER'S uniform continue on his route. A man in the car starts aggressively honking!

CRAIG  
People need rules!

CRAIG (V.O.)  
Another world is possible.

INT. HOME - DAY

Craig gets his haircut by Steven. He finishes.

STEVEN

I have to dump. Last night I ate  
like it was my 50th wedding  
anniversary.

Craig looks in the mirror.

CRAIG

Nice work! Your turn.

Steven sits.

CRAIG (V.O.)

One with compassion.

INT. RICK'S BAR

Craig is sweating while he attempts to eat the Seal Team Six lunch by himself. He turns to a BAR FLY holding a disposable camera.

CRAIG

Take some mac and cheese. I'm not  
getting my picture on the wall  
today.

CRAIG (V.O.)

...and sharing.

OMITTED

INT. SPAGHETTI FREDDY'S - NIGHT

Steven is out to dinner with Craig.

STEVEN

You didn't tell them it was my  
birthday, did you?

CRAIG (V.O.)

And now we can live it.

CRAIG

Of course not.  
(turning to someone else)  
Did you?

We reveal Tami is at the table. She got a new haircut and is glowing. Time has clearly passed.

TAMI  
No, birthday boy.

STEVEN  
Good cause I hate that shit.  
(leaving)  
I'm gonna get an application. Two  
girlfriends is destroying me  
financially.

CRAIG  
Always respect them, bud!

There is an pregnant moment as he leaves. They let it be  
silent.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
You look amazing. Can I say that?  
Is that ok? You've put on good  
weight.

TAMI  
Thank you, hon...Craig.  
(beat)  
So, you getting out there?

CRAIG  
There? The new waterpark? Not yet.  
I have a rash.

TAMI  
Craig. Dating.

CRAIG  
Oh. No. Dating? No. No. Dating. No.

TAMI  
Didn't mean to pry.

CRAIG  
It's ok. I'm just...I realized I'm  
a...lone wolf. I'm good.  
(beat)  
I think I kinda figured it out.

Craig smiles. He puts parmesan on his pasta with an  
exaggerated confidence.

TAMI  
Wolves live in packs.

CRAIG  
How is Devon and the pool house?  
Oh, I saw him on the news.  
(MORE)

CRAIG (CONT'D)

He ate the full Seal Team Six lunch? Got his picture on the wall and everything! One day I'll get up there.

STEVEN

(sitting)

Did dad tell you we went hiking and he ate bad mushrooms again?

Someone bumps Tami's chair real hard.

CRAIG

Whoa. You ok?

TAMI

It's fine.

She tries to hide it, but we recognize the glassy-eyed panic start to set in. Craig simmers. He digs down deep.

CRAIG

Sir. - Sir!

It's a decent size fella a couple drinks in sitting with some equally intimidating guys.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

You bumped into my...into the young lady here.

(off the man's dead eyes)

Can you apologize?

The man stares him down.

SMALL JOHN

Did I?

CRAIG

You did, pal. She almost spilled her stuffed pepper on my limited edition trousers. Apologize, please.

It looks like Small John is not gonna back down.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

I have the confidence of someone who just bought a van.

Small John lets this one go and turns to Tami.

SMALL JOHN  
Apologies, Ma'am. Enjoy your  
peppers.

They return to dinner as Craig courses with adrenaline. He brings his drink to his lips, but his hand trembles from fear.

TAMI  
What do you mean you bought a van?

A bunch of waiters come over singing with a cake. They put a paper crown on Steven.

STEVEN  
(to his smiling parents)  
You motherfuckers! You absolute  
fuckers.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A TOWN & COUNTRY VAN with a big YELLOW bow turns onto the street and drives toward camera.

INT. TOWN & COUNTRY VAN - NIGHT

Tami drives as Steven flips through the radio.

TAMI  
Craig, this is too much.

CRAIG  
Hey, you need it. You deserve it. I got a pretty good deal cause there is a punk cd stuck in the player.

STEVEN  
Mom, wanna come in and watch a movie?

She looks to Craig. He smiles.

TAMI  
Sure, birthday boy.

They drive past Austin's house. A shiny new NEON YELLOW DODGE VIPER sits outside. Everyone stars at it as they pass.

TAMI (CONT'D)  
It's so fast.  
(off his confused look)  
(MORE)

TAMI (CONT'D)

I ran him into at the store. He gave me a ride.

STEVEN

That is so fucking pimp.

TAMI

Lots of cars on the street. Looks like they are having a party.

Craig lets all the feelings that rush to the surface wash through him in a long EXHALE. He turns his focus to Tami and Stevie and smiles. Maybe the Toad did something after all.

CRAIG

Good for him.

INT. CRAIG'S HOUSE - NIGHT

There is a dinky happy birthday banner up. Tami takes in the house. It's been a while. The family is feeling all kinds of things. Steven points to a brown package.

STEVEN

That came. Wrong address again.

Craig slowly takes it. Tami studies him. He looks back up, no bloody nose. It's just mail.

CRAIG

Run it over to him, bud. I will give your mom a tour.

STEVEN

(leaving)

There is a new Marvel we can rent.

CRAIG

That sounds nice.

Craig gets a cake out of the fridge. Tami looks around. It's strange, but they are trying their best.

TAMI

Craig, I can't believe you got that van. It is just so-

CRAIG

You should've got it a long time ago, Honey Bear. Sorry. Tami.

TAMI

You got the sign on it and everything? I feel strange accepting it, but I do need it.

CRAIG

Have you ever been to Paris?

TAMI

Paris?

CRAIG

Why didn't I ever take you to Paris? I should've taken you to Paris when I had the chance. I hope someone takes you. You deserve it. I wasted so much time. Doing what?

TAMI

I've been to Paris.  
(off his look)  
With Devin. Like six months ago.

There is some awkward silence.

TAMI (CONT'D)

Have you been working out?

CRAIG

I walk all day for my job. People scream at me. I don't care. You?

TAMI

Yes, feel my abs.

They take turns hitting each other in the abs and laughing. This feels really nice for both of them.

She nods with a soft smile. There is a feeling that maybe, just maybe, there is hope for them. Steven comes back.

CRAIG

Well, I forgot candles so I'm going to go get candles.

TAMI

(tossing keys)  
Take it for a spin?

CRAIG

It's nice to have you in the house.  
(to Steven)  
We'll do presents in five minutes, heartbreaker.

EXT. HOUSE - NEXT

He exits the home and stops to take in Austin's house. He shakes his head with a giggle. He looks up at the moon. She's a beauty.

The van backs up - on the side is a new professional sign reading "Tami's Florals." He drives off in the opposite direction. We hold on the peaceful empty street for a few moments. Music swells to signify a happy ending. What a journey this has been for Cra...

The sound of screeching tires. Oh no.

THE VAN comes SKIDDING back around the corner.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Craig, crazed, SPEEDS toward the neon yellow viper.

BOOM! The van hits Craig's SPEED BUMP at 90mph - ALL FOUR tires leave the ground then SLAM the pavement in a BLOOM of SPARKS and EAR-PIERCING NOISE. The van ends up on the sidewalk with the Viper behind him untouched.

He catches his breath while the radio plays a wobbling broken buzz.

The van makes a lurching U-turn, smoking now, and dies before he can park it properly. He gets out as a neighbor peeks behind a curtain. Craig throws a neighborly wave as he approaches..

EXT. AUSTIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Behind the deep green door are sounds of men laughing. Austin's friends. His friends! He tries the door - locked!

EXT. SIDE YARD

Here he comes. Over the fence and whoa...he lands on both feet.

He heads to the back...

INT. AUSTIN'S HOUSE - NEXT

Zed turns to see Craig and flinches. Craig opens the fridge.

CRAIG  
(holding two beers)  
Zed! We're just getting started and  
I already got my hands full.

BIG SAM  
This fucking cock.

Guys we haven't seen in a bit notice his presence. A hush  
falls over the room as a concerned Austin approaches.

CRAIG  
Hey, man. Been a minute.

AUSTIN  
(putting out cigarette)  
Craig. You can't just come in here.

CRAIG  
I know, but I just had to say  
congrats on the hot rod. It's kick  
ass. I'm sure you all already  
talked about it.

Austin walks up to him.

AUSTIN  
Let's catch-up out front.

CRAIG  
I got a new car too. Town &  
Country. Midnight Envy Green.  
Gently used.  
(reaching into pocket)  
I got a check here for you. For the  
window.

Craig bananas around Austin to go deeper into the house. He  
lands by some snacks and helps himself.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
How is everyone? Garrett. How's your  
busty daughter?  
(silence. then becoming  
self aware)  
Sorry, guys. I'll be out of your  
hair in a sec. I just want to  
apologize about how I acted last  
hang. I'm sorry Austin for popping  
you and for making it so "weird"  
the night ended early.  
(getting emotional)  
I think it's just been all the  
stress I've been dealing with.

AUSTIN

We appreciate that, Craig. Let me show you the hot rod.

Austin gestures for Craig to follow him to the door.

CRAIG

Is it cool if I stay? I apologized.

BUZZ

I think you should take off.

CRAIG

I did one "strange" thing and I'm toast? One thing and that's it?! You can't just throw me away. Maybe you're the bad ones!?- I know you're not, but now you can give me a second chance. Get to know me. Ask me questions.

Nothing. Silence. Austin takes a step toward him.

AUSTIN

Alright, let's go.

Craig reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out Austin's GUN - Everyone freezes. He keeps it casually at his side.

CRAIG

C'mon. Get to know me.

(off Austin noticing HIS gun)

Yes, this is your gun. I found it...I stole it...accidentally. I came to return it, but...c'mon, get to know me!

AUSTIN

So you did break into my house?!

CRAIG

Yes, but that's not what we are talking about. Get to know me. Ask me questions. I'm not just some diarrhea person. I have amazing would-you-rather's. Don't I, Aust?

AUSTIN

Would you rather's?

CRAIG

Yes! Would you rather do standup to only your dad or...or...I'm too stressed out to think! But I'm good at them. You'd know if you got to know me.

(points gun at group)

Get to know me. You.

BIG SAM

Favorite, um, food?

CRAIG

(drawing a blank)

Um...

(getting anxious)

I'm too nervous to think!

GARRETT

What do you do for a living?

CRAIG

I work as a traffic enforcement officer now, but I wanna get back in tech if anyone knows about something.

A man we don't recognize at all, JIMP, 50's, speaks up.

JIMP

Gay? Straight? I hate I said that. Give me a mulligan.

CRAIG

Are you new? You got a new guy?  
(pointing gun)  
What's your name, pal?

JIMP

Phillip Patton. I have two twin girls!

CRAIG

(sobering)

Stop. Guys, this is insane. I'm really sorry.

(beat)

I've never had a best friend. I don't think I've even had a close friend. I just never feel relaxed with people, but I felt relaxed with you guys. So...let's just...sing. C'mon. I'll start.

He launches into a version of "I Wanna Dance With Somebody." He points the gun around the room and everyone reluctantly sings Whitney Houston at gunpoint.

It quickly becomes an oddly beautiful rendition as if this song is in their rotation.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Wait. Stop. Stop. What version are we doing?!

AUSTIN LEAPS for the weapon. Craig swings the gun around. A SHOT! Austin dives. The guys duck for cover.

The chaos settles.

He moves up revealing the top of his head is BALD. Craig see's him scrambling to put on the toupee.

BANG! He fires into the ceiling. BANG! Another.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

EVERY STAY DOWN. DON'T MOVE. LOOK AT THE GROUND. I'M SERIOUS. I'M IN CHARGE. FUCK YOU GUYS! I'M IN CHARGE. GARRETT, KEEP YOUR BIG HEAD DOWN. ASSHOLES. RICH BABIES. I'M NOT SOME DIARRHEA MAN. YOU-

Austin is straightening the toupee back on now. He looks terrified. Craig, out of breath, winks at him. Austin settles.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Ok, It's a school night, fellas. I'm gonna head home.

The WHIRR and LIGHTS of approaching Sirens fill the room.

Fuck. Craig turns and SPRINTS for the back door and CRASH - glass shatters everywhere.

EXT. AUSTIN'S HOUSE - NEXT

The deep green door opens revealing Austin looking heroic with a barely-conscious Craig in his arms bathed in police light. A few of the guys follow them out. Craig smiles up at Austin lovingly and relaxed. Austin cringes as he...

Austin carries him past the cops and stands him up on the driveway. When he does this we see that Craig is no longer covered in blood, no longer bathed in police light. The garage door opens and the rest of the friends come out.

AUSTIN  
Good hanging, Craigy.

GARRETT  
Great to see you, man.

ZED  
See you at my place next Friday.

The other guys say goodbye. It's like they ALL are good friends. Austin laughs as he heads back into the garage.

CRAIG  
Killer hang, pal. Thank you.

AUSTIN  
Alright, my man. You know how to get home?

CRAIG  
Hahaha. I'll try.  
(then)  
Hey!  
(Austin turns)  
Love you, Rockstar!

AUSTIN  
Love you, Craigy!

The garage closes as Craig walks over his speed bump back home under a full moon.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE CAR - PRESENT

Craig is in the back of the police car covered in blood. He watches Austin and his friends together in the driveway.

They talk to cops, comfort each other and laugh that the insanity is over. This is something that will probably make them closer. Austin turns and throws him a subtle wink.

Craig smiles through big wet tears.

SUPERIMPOSE TITLE: FRIENDSHIP