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My Roommate is a Hitman

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MY ROOMMATE IS A HITMAN

Three Sitcom Episodes

"PILOT"/"CANINE CONNECTIONS"/"PRESSURE COOKER"

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree

Master of Fine Arts

in

Creative Writing and Writing for the Performing Arts

by

Allen Andrew Ivers

June 2012

Thesis Committee:
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Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside
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I want to thank my family for being so supportive through this process.

And, of course, to my girlfriend Lyn Stephenson for dealing with my mania, my frustration and my reclusive tendencies. I am so lucky to know you.
ACT 1

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A knife glides through vegetables. The diced bits slide into a frying pan. Eggs SLOP into the mix, stirred together by fork.

TOBY, 28, a lanky man with a puppy dog face, mixes his stir fry from muscle memory. He hums a tune to himself as he washes a dish with one hand.

This is a large house, but cramped by the clutter and mismatched furniture. TVs are everywhere, most of them on. Electric cables line the floors like tripwires.

A bachelor pad.

The front door opens, and the THUNDERING STEPS of ACE, 29, a giant of a man with a even larger presence. He carries a crate full of mail.

ACE
Make some for me.

TOBY
I’m sorry you weren’t schooled in the necessary skills to feed yourself.

ACE
Me too, Toby. Make some for me.

Ace sets down at the table, rifling through the letters.

ACE (CONT’D)
I need the rent check today.

TOBY
Isn’t that due at the end of the month?

ACE
And today is...

TOBY
The end of the month?
ACE
(announcer voice)
Tell him what he’s won, Johnny.

Toby takes some milk from the fridge, taking a swig from the bottle-- and coughing out CHUNKS OF CHEESE.

ACE (CONT’D)
Oh, I need the car. Gonna widen my job hunt to... what the Hell--?

TOBY
Are we making cottage cheese?

ACE
Gargle some saltwater, right now.

Toby exits with the milk. Ace lifts a RED ENVELOPE. And another. And another.

ACE (CONT’D)
My student loan bills are starting to resemble wallpaper.

TOBY
Did you pay the utilities, Ace?

The phone rings, Ace answers.

ACE
(in Russian accent)
Hello?

VOICE
(on phone)
Don’t hang up on me, Ace. Where’s Toby?

Ace hangs up the phone.

TOBY
Who was that?

ACE
Wrong number!

Toby comes back, bearing the milk and lighter fluid. Ace raises a letter.

ACE (CONT’D)
For you.
Toby grabs it, rips it open. Freezes.

ACE (CONT’D)
What is it? The restaurant? Did you get the job?

TOBY
(reading)
We regret to... Overqualified?

ACE
(forcing optimism)
You’d be too good at flipping burgers. They want to keep it a level playing field.

TOBY
I went to-- Ace, I have a Master’s Degree in Culinary Arts!

ACE
And the place that dunks chicken in a tub of boiling oil respects that.

Toby chokes for a moment, then recovers.

TOBY
I know what we have to do.

ACE
What’s that?

TOBY
Don’t worry, it’s under control.

EXT. PATIO – CONTINUOUS

Toby steps out onto the patio, Ace in lockstep.

ACE
You gonna get a loan?

TOBY
No.

ACE
You gonna sue somebody?
TOBY
I’m going to win the money gambling.

Ace stares at him, his heart falling into his shoes.

ACE
Okay, I understand, Toby. You can’t find work, we’re buried in debt, and you drank expired milk. But you’re still stupid.

TOBY
Duly noted.

EXT. BACK YARD – MOMENTS LATER

A series of chairs encircle a small hole has been dug in the ground, where many things have been burned before. A pile of wood lies nearby.

Toby tosses the disgusting milk into it, and sprays it with lighter fluid. Ace stands nearby, judgemental stare.

ACE
Gambling is going to end with you standing on a street corner in a miniskirt, and one day someone you know is gonna stop, wave you over, and it will be very awkward for everyone.

TOBY
And what do you suggest?

ACE
What I usually do: Call home in a panic.

Toby twitches, but hides it.

TOBY
Yeah well, I try to avoid talking to the people that yell loudly.

ACE
It’s a good policy. How ’bout we get roommates? Somebody on the internet needs a place to stay.
TOBY
Try paying our utilities.

ACE
Maybe we’ll get lucky, get a--.

TOBY
There is no luck! There is only skill, good sir! And that skill that presents to us good fortune.

Toby flicks a match at the milk, and a massive FIREBALL ERUPTS! Ace and Toby jump back.

Then they both start to gag.

ACE
God- That reeks!

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY
Toby pushes a cart, loading up groceries. Ace follows along, taking items out of the cart and pocketing them.

ACE
Gambling doesn’t fix our problem.

TOBY
Neither do roommates. They’ll be here for a few months, see the conditions and request hazard pay.

ACE
Well, there’s a whole batch of ‘em coming over right now.

TOBY
How much would this save us?

ACE
Depends on how much we could force them to take on. Roommates is the best option, it’s the safest, and possibly lucrative.

Ace and Toby swoop towards the checkout counter, Ace trying to shove a carton of milk into his jacket.

ACE (CONT’D)
There are times I am simply genius.
TOBY
Have you paid the utility bill?

ACE
Nope. See ya outside.

Toby gets in line to find his cart empty except for a box of beer. Ace marches out the door, trying not to look obvious.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ace and Toby sit on the couch, Ace sipping from the carton of milk. Toby scribbles on a clipboard.

TOBY
And where do you work?

Sitting on the coffee table, a FRAZZLED WOMAN.

FRAZZLED WOMAN
At the local animal shelter. I clean the cages of the kitties and the puppies.

ACE
You like it?

She leans in, as if to share top secret information.

FRAZZLED WOMAN
They use needles. On the kitties.

Ace and Toby nod, in mock understanding.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Toby scribbles on his clipboard, while Ace snacks on a bagel.

TOBY
Have you had roommates before?

A BALD MAN, tattooed and full of hate, just stares back at them. Ace nods to himself, a frozen smile on his face.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Ace chews on bacon. Toby scribbles on his clipboard-- he’s drawing a ‘Ninja Cat.’
TOBY
You go to school around here?

A FRAT BRO nods, a dumb smile on his face.

FRAT BRO
Yeah, the CC. Folks pay the fees, and I just get to drink and party.

Toby sits forward, interested by this man’s line of logic.

FRAT BRO (CONT’D)
Don’t get me wrong, some cool stuff in the classes and all, but the ladies... you know what I’m saying?

Ace and Toby share a victory smile.

ACE
That’s all the questions we got for ya. Got any for us?

FRAT BRO
Yeah... you got any meth?

Toby glares at Ace. Then back at the Bro.

TOBY
No... I really don’t.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

Toby marches for his car. Ace jumps in his way.

ACE
One more, let’s just see one more.

TOBY
Good! I wanted to get stabbed tonight!

ACE
That-- he wasn’t that bad.

TOBY
(pointing)
He wanted to sell us his liver!

A GRIZZLED MAN carrying a trash bag of soda cans marches out the front door and across the yard.
ACE
He had a good price.

TOBY
Dammit, Ace! We are out of options! It’s over, kaput! The roommates are lunatics, you’re drunk and lazy, and I can’t get a job dropping chicken tenders in scalding oil! I am done! We’re gonna go to a casino, win the rent money at Blackjack and be done with this!

INT. CAR - DAY

Ace pulls the parking break and switches off the car. He turns to Toby, who has a massive black eye.

ACE
Yeah, they don’t like you there.

END ACT 1
INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ace brings Toby an ice-pack, while reading from a paper.

ACE
This says cold will bring the swelling down--

TOBY
I know how to treat blunt force trauma. You got any liquor?

ACE
Didn’t you drink enough last night?

TOBY
I need to treat my extensive shame.

Ace’s cell phone rings!

TOBY (CONT’D)
That’ll be the landlord. Get me a gun so I can shoot myself.

ACE
It’s not the landlord, calm down.

TOBY
My father calls to express his total disapproval!

ACE
It’s a woman, you moron!

TOBY
I can’t live on the streets!

ACE
Shut up!
(into phone)
Hello?

EXT. STREET - SAME TIME

BECCA, 29, a harsh woman who would win an Army beauty contest, holds a cellphone to her ear.
BECCA
Hi, name’s Becca. I’m calling about the room you have to rent?

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY
Ace covers the phone with his hand, turning to Toby.

ACE
Another roommate call, girl. Sexy voice too.

Toby gets up, goes into the kitchen. Ace turns to the phone.

ACE (CONT’D)
(into phone)
Thanks for calling-- what was your name again?

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. STREET - SAME TIME

BECCA
Becca, as in Rebecca. Saw your flier, looks like a good match.

The picture on the flier is grainy, dirty and looks like someone spilled something on it.

ACE
We’re interviewing people today, so if you want to stop by, we can show you the place. See what you think.

Behind Ace, Toby DUCT-TAPES the icepack to his head. He’s doing quite poorly at it.

BECCA
Was gonna live with my friend, Shane. That alright?

ACE
(to himself)
Of course she does.

BECCA
What was that?
ACE
(through his teeth)
Sure, bring him over! We’d love to meet him.

BECCA
Great, be there at four.

ACE
Sounds good.

Ace hangs up, smiling. He turns to see Toby wearing the ice pack-- DUCTTAPED over his eyes like a blindfold.

ACE (CONT’D)
What in God’s name made you think that would be a good idea?

TOBY
I got tired of holding it.

The LIGHTS GO OUT!

TOBY (CONT’D)
What was that noise?

ACE
Okay... I may have forgot to pay the utility bill.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

A dark bathroom lit by flashlights and candles.

Ace spins the knobs on the sink, only hearing an odd gurgling in the pipes. Toby slowly peels the duct-tape off his head.

ACE
You don’t get it-- she sounded sane!

TOBY
Yes, because I’m trusting your judgment on women.

ACE
There’s nothing wrong with my judgment.
Toby rips off the last piece of duct-tape, and forcing through the obvious pain, continues his train of thought.

Toby
Ace... the last woman that came through that door, you thought was the housekeeper.

Ace
She was wearing an apron!

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

More candles litter the space, as Toby goes for the door. Ace follows after him.

Toby
We should open some windows before you burn this place down.

Ace
You need to stay, help me fix this.

Toby
I am fixing this, Ace.

Ace
Toby--

Toby
Don’t worry about it.

Ace
You know, when you say that: it’s usually cause for panic!

Toby smiles, closes the front door.

EXT. PHARMACY - DAY

An empty parking lot. But cheers and shouts can be heard.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

A crowd of men sit around a particle-board table, rolling dice. Money and coins are laid on a marked board, each over different numbers-- a CRAPS GAME.
Toby stands a good distance away. He takes a breath and approaches—STOPPED by a hand to his chest.

OSWALD, 30s, stands with crossed arms. Pudgy and classy, in that stereotype of a drunk.

SHELLY, 30s, a petite little blonde woman, wearing a bowler hat and sunglasses, stands at his back.

They both speak with mild London accents.

OSWALD
What have we here?

SHELLY
Little man wants to join the game, does he?

OSWALD
His money’s good as any other, Shelly. You got money, kid?

TOBY
Hi. I’m Toby.

OSWALD
(repeating)
You got money, kid?

Toby stares at him, trying to hide his abject terror.

TOBY
No.

OSWALD
Then walk on.

SHELLY
Hold that thought, Oswald. Maybe we could work something out.

TOBY
Maybe we could, maybe we could.

Shelly thumps Toby on the shoulder. Hard, but playful.

SHELLY
You’re a cute one! Maybe I front you a grand, you play for a bit, pay me back before you leave?
OSWALD
Shelly, is that such a good idea?

SHELLY
It’s my money, I do with it what I like.

TOBY
Yeah!

Awkward silence, as Oswald and Shelly glare at him. He swallows hard.

Shelly pulls a STACK OF POKER CHIPS out of one pocket, hands it to Toby. His eyes glow.

SHELLY
(fishing for name)
Good luck to ya, Mr...

TOBY
Toby...

SHELLY
Toby. Enjoy the game.

Oswald and Shelly part, leaving Toby to stare at the game.

DICE BOUNCE across the particle-board table.

EXT. PORCH – DAY

A knock at the door.

The room is cleaner, but still dark and candlelit. Ace trudges forward, far too eager.

He gets up, and opens it to reveal Becca-- her camo jacket is unbuttoned to reveal a surprisingly attractive undershirt. It’s a grungy look, but suits her.

BECCA
You know the closed windows and blinds make this place look like a drug den.

ACE
You get right to the point.
BECCA
What’s with the candles? No power?

ACE
We have power, that’s just a...
(bullshitting)
Seance.

BECCA
Cool. Shane!

Ace looks toward the street.

SHANE, 28, an eclectic young man with a ‘do not care’ attitude, is examining the neighbor’s car and brushing his teeth.

BECCA (CONT’D)
That’s not yours. Get over here!

Shane jogs over. Becca gives Ace a proud smile, but Ace can’t decide to be scared or laugh.

BECCA (CONT’D)
Shane’s into that kinda thing.

ACE
What kinda thing?

Becca and Shane push past into the apartment.

INT. LIVING ROOM – DAY

Shane swoops into the room, examining all the candles and smelling the air. Becca waits, smirking at Ace.

SHANE
Interesting set-up. Red candle should be over there-- while you’re on that, you should have a number divisible by three. You need two more, make it twelve. And more importantly, you need people. Is anybody else here? Don’t answer that, of course no one is. Which means this isn’t a seance. What do you use candles for-- light! Of course, you use them for... Light. Why didn’t you just open a window?
Shane stares at Ace. Ace stares right back.

ACE
You’re brushing your teeth.

SHANE
I like to be clean.

Becca is on her phone.

BECCA
Could ya swing that? You’re the best, Terry.

Becca hangs up. And all the LIGHTS TURN ON.

BECCA (CONT’D)
Hey, how ‘bout that?

ACE
How did you do that?

BECCA
I know a guy.

ACE
Is he Jesus?!

Becca snuffs candles with her fingers, flops on the couch.

BECCA
God, this place stinks! It’s awesome!

ACE
You like the smell?

BECCA
I just got out of the Army. Once, just once, I want to be messy.

ACE
(re: Shane)
And what’s his story?

BECCA
Do we have time for that?

Ace shakes his head, turns to find Shane still staring.
ACE
Alright, could you... stop...

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY
Toby tries to jump the fence, trips and falls to the ground.

TOBY
Ow...

He pulls himself up and starts to run, scampering behind bushes and trees. He makes his way to the house, looking--

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME
Toby SLAMS into the glass door to the backyard. Shane and Becca jump. Ace bites his tongue and opens the door.

ACE
I swear to God, I’m gonna put a piece of Duct tape on it so you--

TOBY
I’m dead!

ACE
Good to know, thanks for sharing. Toby, this is--

TOBY
No, you don’t get it! I’m dead, they’re gonna kill me.

Becca sits up, far too interested in this.

BECCA
Who is?

TOBY
Who-- THE HELL-- are you?!

BECCA
Becca. This is Shane. We live here now. What’s going on?

Toby looks to Ace for confirmation. Ace is entirely too pleased with himself.
EXT. ALLEY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The dice roll, and poker chips slide across the pavement. Hundreds, thousands of dollars.

Shelly and Oswald look on as the dice rolls again and again. Things are not going well, as the DEALER takes all the bets on table.

    DEALER
    Craps! Next shooter!

The dice fall to Toby’s hands. His hair is wet, his heart racing, everyone looks at him.

Shelly looms over him. She whispers something...

INT. LIVING ROOM - PRESENT

Everyone stares at Toby, wide-eyed and shocked. But Shane nods with a smile.

    SHANE
    Nice...

EXT. ALLEY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Toby raises dice, ready to roll. His hands shaking, drops of sweat falling off his hands.

He raises his closed fist and lets the dice roll...

Shelly and Oswald take his money, loom over him laughing.

INT. LIVING ROOM - PRESENT

Ace stands up, shaking his head.

    ACE
    Okay, that can’t possibly be how--

    TOBY
    Details! They are coming for me.

    BECCA
    How did you escape?
TOBY
What?

BECCA
How did you get away?

EXT. ALLEY - DAY (FLASHBACK)
Toby stares wide-eyed at the board. The other gamblers glare at him. Shelly and Oswald mutter in disapproval.

Toby leers at Shelly, trying to listen--

SHELLY
(mouthed)
...kill...

In a flourish, Toby flips the particle board table, sending chips and money everywhere. Gamblers lunge for their cash. Knives and guns are drawn.

Toby climbs over the mess and runs, leaping a fence.

Shelly and Oswald look at each other.

OSWALD
What was that all about?

SHELLY
I don’t know! Don’t look at me.

OSWALD
He was your little pet!

INT. LIVING ROOM - PRESENT
Toby paces to and fro, as Becca hands him glasses of water. Shane and Ace go over paperwork.

BECCA
Yeah, that was a little overkill.

TOBY
How do we have power?

BECCA
I know a guy.
Toby
That sounds ominous.

Becca
It’s really not, but I like the sound of it.

Ace is deep in negotiation with Shane.

Ace
You’d both be taking the back room, making you responsible for about a thousand five hundred a month--

Shane
Where do you get that number?

Ace
It’s a large room.

Becca
Is it the Ballroom?

Toby breathes into a bag, which Becca snatches away from him. Ace looks to his papers, where Shane is staring at him.

Ace
Seriously, I need you to stop that.

Toby
(hysterics)
Can I get something? Anything? I need to--

Ace
What do you want? What do you think I have?

Becca
Can I see the room?

Ace looks at her, unable to come up with an answer.

Int. Garage - Day

Ace opens the door. Becca and Shane ease into the room.

The garage has been converted into a ‘master’ bedroom, with a giant bed, a large couch, and posters on the walls.
TOBY
Welcome to the Sex Pit.

BECCA
Are you serious?

Ace nods. Becca looks at the bed. And jumps into it.

ACE
Those sheets haven’t been washed--

BECCA
(smells them)
These are clean.

Shane tries to lift the couch, as if exercising.

SHANE
I like it.

BECCA
I’ll make ya a deal, Ace. Leave the furniture, we’ll pay whatever.

ACE
Done.

Toby ducks behind some empty boxes.

TOBY
Maybe I can hide in here.

SHANE
I can still see you.

TOBY
Yes, but Shelly and Oswald British won’t necessarily be looking over here!

BECCA
Okay, that’s a losing strategy.

ACE
Relax, they don’t know where we live.

Ace goes for the door--

SHELLEY and OSWALD are standing there.
OSWALD
Well... that was awkward.

END ACT 2
INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Toby taps his fingers on the table. Ace and Becca sit across the table from Shelly and Oswald. Shane stands at the counter, making a sandwich.

OSWALD
This was all a misunderstanding, see?

SHELLY
We don’t want to kill the boy.

TOBY
You don’t?

SHELLY
No! We’re not monsters! We’re British.

OSWALD
Technically, Shelly... I’m British. You just have an accent.

SHELLY
I am British! Just as much as you! I got a green card, don’t I?!

OSWALD
You were born in Canada. That is a logistical fact that you can’t get away from.

ACE
(interjecting)
Hello, excuse me?

SHELLY
Limey bastard.

OSWALD
Okay, now you’re just insulting the English language.

BECCA
Idiot twins!

They both stop, glaring at Becca.

OSWALD
Our mother used to call us that.
SHELLY
She was blind.

TOBY
What do you... want to do to me?

SHELLY
Well, I was thinking we beat it out of you with a billy club. Money comes out like a piñata.

OSWALD
But we couldn’t find a billy club.

SHELLY
So I found this mallet.

Shelly slaps a wooden mallet onto the table with a BANG!

OSWALD
Or you could just pay us the one thousand that you owe us.

ACE
(at Toby)
One thousand dollars?!

TOBY
I panicked!

SHANE
(to Oswald)
Is that a shark’s tooth?

Oswald lifts his necklace-- a large serrated tooth.

OSWALD
It is. You are the first person to correctly identify it.

SHELLY
I knew what it was.

SHANE
Hang it over your bed tonight.

Oswald stares at Shane. Ace coughs, refocusing attention.

ACE
We don’t have a thousand dollars.
OSWALD
(not listening)
Why do I have to-- why should I
have to do that?

Shane grabs a knife and bread, cutting some slices off.

Shelly turns a disturbed Oswald back to the table.

ACE
Maybe we can reach an agreement, a
payment plan or--

OSWALD
We were... we were kind of hoping
to get the money back. Now.

BECCA
Well, that’s not happening so--

Toby notices Shane’s failing attempts at a sandwich.

TOBY
Shane, you gotta... gotta cut it--

Toby gets up, and fusses with Shane over the knife.

SHANE
I know what I’m doing!

TOBY
Clearly, you don’t!

SHANE
I’m a grown man!

TOBY
Meat sack! Watch my hands.

Shane watches as Toby deftly wields the knife, cutting slices
of fresh bread and laying peanut butter and jam.

TOBY (CONT’D)
(gesturing with knife)
You are not a grown man if you
cannot feed yourself! Good general
rule.

Toby finally notices everyone’s stares.
SHELLY
He’s good with a knife.

TOBY
Fifty grand in culinary school, Shelly! I am the best man you’ll ever meet with a frying pan, spices and EVERY kind of knife. And that fried chicken place had no idea! I would’ve rocked their world!

OSWALD
Excellent! I know what you can do for us!

TOBY
What?

OSWALD
We can give you a job!

ACE
We’re listening, get to the good part.

SHELLY
You’ll kill people. You know, for us. Not like a murderer, but professionally. With standards.

Everyone stares.

ACE
What?

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT
Toby sinks into a chair, holding a beer against his head.

TOBY
They want me to kill people?

Becca and Ace set up a fire in the pit. Shane holds the lighter oil, a little too happy about it.

ACE
Don’t think about it. You’re not doing it.
SHANE
You guys burn things!

ACE
Yes, we do. Toby, look at me.
(waving)
Toby! We’ll find another way.

TOBY
Really? Rent check to the landlord, utilities, student loans-- basic human hunger! And just for kicks, I owe money to a pair of wannabe British crimelords who want me to become a hitman!

BECCA
You’d be a good one.

Toby eyes Shane, an irritated curiosity.

BECCA(CONT’D)
I’m serious. You’re tiny, unassuming-- no one picks you out of a crowd. With a little training, might be good work for ya. We should actually think about this.

ACE
Where exactly are you from that you think this is a good idea.

BECCA
I’m wearing combat fatigues.

TOBY
Fine. You be the hitman!

Ace lights a few pieces of kindling, setting them in the pit.

ACE
Give that a few--

SHANE
Fire!

Ace jumps back as Shane sprays the lighter fluid into the pit, releasing a huge fireball.

Ace looks at Shane, terrified.
BECCA
That was cool.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Toby sits on the couch, a cell phone to his ear.

TOBY
It would just be for the month. No, Dad... I’m sorry I...
(something bad)
Yes, I know... I know.
(silence)
Hello? Hello?

Toby hangs up, pockets the phone.

ACE (O.S.)
Why don’t we think about it?

Toby looks up to see Ace, two beers in his hand. He sits next to Toby, handing him a fresh beer.

ACE (CONT’D)
I mean seriously now, let’s think about it.

TOBY
About professional murder?

ACE
Yeah. Why not?

TOBY
Well, it’s wrong.

ACE
Says who?

TOBY
My Dad just disowned me.

Silence.

TOBY (CONT’D)
I wasted time, money... his doctor told him to stop eating red meat his blood pressure was so high. Apparently, that’s my fault.
Ace sits down next to Toby, who’s reliving that phone call.

TOBY (CONT’D)
He said it was all a ‘mistake.’

Ace takes Toby’s nearly empty beer, chugs the last of it.

ACE
You’re too smart, Toby. Too smart to be a cook, too smart to work in fast food, and way too smart for your dad’s fragile ego. Look at what’s in front of you. You have the chance to feed yourself, and feed yourself good. It’s more than I can say. You’re overqualified, man. Maybe you should look at something you are seriously not qualified for.

Ace is gaining energy and fighting off his drunk slurring.

ACE (CONT’D)
Think about it... no debt, no bills... more money than you or I have ever seen. Who knows where you’d get to go, places you’d see, people you’d meet... and then kill. And the strippers. We could get strippers! We won’t need roommates--

TOBY
They’re staying.

ACE
Good. I like them.

TOBY
You’d have to get Becca a stripper.

ACE
I’ll think about it.

Toby sits up, smiles.

TOBY
Ace?

ACE
(fake formal)
Yes, Tobias?
TOBY
You want to be a hitman?

Pause.

ACE
No. No, that’s gonna be you. I’m just the support structure.

TOBY
Okay. Just thought I’d ask.

Ace gives Toby a good natured push.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Blank walls with the barest of furniture. Ace, Toby, Becca and Shane sit, awkward tensions in their bodies.

Oswald and Shelly sit in comfortable suits.

TOBY
How exactly... would this work?

ACE
Would it be everybody? Just him?

SHANE
We don’t have the equipment, the resources, the training-- logistics alone would be a nightmare.

BECCA
Do we get costumes?

TOBY
No-- No! We don’t get costumes.

ACE
I’m not wearing-- I’m comfortable the way I am.

SHANE
What kind of leather?

ACE
Don’t answer that! No leather! No!
BECCA
Just saying, a little bit. Kinda sexy.

Oswald and Shelly nod, murmuring agreement.

ACE
No, no... Shelly. Do we have to wear leather? Shelly?

Shelly and Oswald shrug.

SHELLY
You’re gonna be professional murderers. Who cares about looking good?

Blank stares.

SHANE
I do.

ACE
Shut up, Shane.

END ACT 3
TAG

EXT. BACK YARD - NIGHT

The fire blazes and crackles, while Shane sleeps in a chair. Ace and Becca sit up, nursing their drinks.

BECCA
So the electric company owed me a favor, and voila.

ACE
Never thought I’d meet someone who actually saved Christmas.

BECCA
Not many opportunities to.

ACE
So... are you and Shane?

BECCA
No. He’s just fun to have around.

ACE
Fun as in...

BECCA
No.

Awkward.

ACE
So that would mean you’re...

BECCA
(back off)
Full of murderous intent.

ACE
Gotcha.

She looks at him, checks him out. He looks at her, and she jerks away before being caught. He checks her out, she almost catches him.

They drink.

END EPISODE
“CANINE CONNECTIONS”
INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ace and Toby sit on the floor, leaning on the coffee table. They toss a rubber ball at the wall, bouncing to each other.

Shane saunters into the room, carrying a vase and a big stuffed bear. He grabs a box of salt.

ACE
Gotta give it more bounce. Go off the floor.

Toby bounces the ball. It lands gently in Ace’s hands.

TOBY
You lose too much energy. One bounce, that’s what you need.

SHANE
What are you doing?

ACE
We’re playing Battleship. What are you doing?

SHANE
I’m making a replica Buddha shrine, with western Pagan influences, and Egyptian ideology.

TOBY
You can just... do that?

SHANE
You want to join me?

TOBY
I’m not entirely sure how.

SHANE
You’d do well to have some kind of spirituality in your life.

ACE
I worship the TiVo. Does that count?

Shane sets down his tools, squats next to the guys.
SHANE
This game’s changed since I was a kid.

ACE
You were a kid? Shane, I always thought you congealed in a gutter somewhere.

SHANE
Common misconception. Actually, my parents had sex.

Becca sidles into the room.

BECCA
We got the call.

TOBY
We’re playing Battleship-- why does no one respect the Battleship?

BECCA
Where’s the battleships?

ACE
If you have to ask, you had no childhood.

Becca raises the paper in her hand.

BECCA
Oswald and Shelly. They got a job for us.

ACE
Fantastic. What’s the job?

BECCA
You’re gonna hate it.

TOBY
Becca, we’re semi-professional assassins. Odds are, I’m not gonna like the job. Who do I kill?

BECCA
A puppy.

Silence.
TOBY
I’ve been hired to kill a dog?

BECCA
An eight-month old Husky Labrador mix, with green eyes. He enjoys frisbee and eats ping-pong balls.

TOBY
Why did you tell me all that?

BECCA
I don’t think we should do it.

ACE
Becca, we may not have a choice. Last time we stood up to Oswald and Shelly, they brought a mallet.

SHANE
You’ve got the power of Buddha on your side.

Shane holds out the giant teddy bear. Toby stares at it. It’s giant happy eyes.

Staring back at him.

TOBY
I’m not okay with about eight different parts of this. Let’s go see the British.

Ace hurls the ball at the wall, and it bounces hard into Toby’s crotch! Toby curls in pain.

ACE
I sunk your battleship!

END TEASER
INT. OSWALD’S OFFICE - DAY

The featureless office has added a bit of color. They’ve hung a rug over the window.

Oswald and Shelly sit behind the desk, with Toby and Ace sitting across from them.

SHELLY
What precisely is the problem you’re having?

TOBY
Shelly, I think the problem is obvious. It’s a dog.

OSWALD
What, you think all dogs go to Heaven?

SHELLY
You’re just mad ‘cause you’re allergic.

OSWALD
I told you, I was coughing because of the cocaine!

Ace waves, trying to get Oswald and Shelly to focus.

ACE
Okay, I think our point is-- why kill the dog and not the owner?

SHELLY
We don’t wanna kill the owner. We like him.

TOBY
But you’re perfectly okay with paying us to kill his dog?

OSWALD
That just about sums it up.

ACE
Who is this guy?
OSWALD
Oh, he’s a... a very good friend. Very good friend.

ACE
He supplies your coke, doesn’t he?

SHELLY
(nods)
And he’s not a very friendly type. We’d like to teach him some respect.

OSWALD
Some British table manners, if you will.

SHELLY
So we send the boy a message.

ACE
By killing his dog?

OSWALD
That’s what you do over here, isn’t it? You want to get in touch with somebody, you--

TOBY
(snapping)
Pick up the phone! This is not new technology!

Ace stands, nudges Toby to follow.

ACE
We’ll take the job.

TOBY
No, we won’t! They will learn how to use the corded device sitting right here on this desk!

Oswald hefts his mallet, SLAPS it onto the table.

TOBY (CONT’D)
I’d love to do this for you.
INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Toby bursts through the door, Ace in tow. Shane is washing a dish while Becca smokes from a hooka pipe.

TOBY
I’m not killing the dog.

ACE
That’s fine, but they’re gonna collect the fillings from your teeth.

TOBY
People do bad things. Dogs are--

ACE
Oh, for crying out loud! Dogs do all kinds of bad things. They’re filthy, they’re loud, they’re--

BECCA
You just described yourself.

TOBY
(re: Becca)
What the hell are you doing?

BECCA
Shane has some cool toys.

ACE
Are you high right now?

BECCA
Should I be?

Toby turns to Shane, pointing at Becca’s set-up?

TOBY
This is your spirituality, and Buddha and western Egyptian-ness?

SHANE
Hey. You’re killing a dog.

TOBY
I’m not killing the dog!
ACE
You have to kill the dog. Dogs are evil.

TOBY
You’re a cat person, aren’t you?

Shane takes Toby by the hand, sits him down next to the pipe. He hands him a hose.

SHANE
I want you to do something for me.

TOBY
Am I about to be ruffied?

SHANE
Take a deep breath of the pipe.

BECCA
(giddy)
Seriously. Do it.

Toby cautiously sucks on the hose-- his eyes go wide.

SHANE
Now hold a happy thought in your head. Something from childhood, like ice cream or first snow.

Toby closes his eyes to think...

SHANE (CONT’D)
This is called Spiritual Honing. Gets you in touch with your surroundings, nature itself.

ACE
Oh, for the love of-- can we just let him kill the dog?

Shane shushes Ace. Becca laughs silently. When Toby opens his eyes-- he sees the giant bear over Shane’s shoulder.

Staring.

Toby stands up and leaves. Becca hops up and follows him.

SHANE
(to Ace)
When you were playing Battleship...
ACE
The Battleship is our nuts.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY
Toby huddles on his bed. Becca stands in the doorway.

BECCA
Let me give you a piece of advice.

TOBY
You’re high.

BECCA
It’s tobacco, chicken wuss. Not ecstasy.

Becca plops onto the side of the bed.

BECCA (CONT’D)
I don’t like it. You don’t like it. Ace kinda likes it. The dog’s gotta die.

TOBY
It doesn’t have to.

BECCA
It’s owned by a coke dealer, and there’s a contract out on its fluffy head. Something tells me home life ain’t so stable.

TOBY
What do we do then?

BECCA
Well... you could always trick yourself into killing it.

TOBY
Trick myself?

BECCA
What do you hate about dogs?

Toby thinks hard.

TOBY
They’re adorable.
BECCA
Yeah, but they drool on you. And tackle you. And they bark in the middle of the night. Neighbor’s dog?

TOBY
Three AM, barks at a squirrel for half an hour.

BECCA
Exactly. Dogs are pests.

TOBY
No, they’re not.

BECCA
No, they’re not. But it was a worth a shot.

TOBY
You think Ace is enjoying this?

BECCA
Ace enjoys a lot of things that puzzle me. Like iced tea and ketchup.

TOBY
He doesn’t drink them together. You know that, right?

BECCA
Ace ain’t a bad guy. He’ll do what you ask him to do.

TOBY
Let him kill the dog.

BECCA
Yeah, he’s not gonna do that.

EXT. PARK - DAY

A GANGBANGER, dressed in torn jeans and a wife-beater, holds the leash on a fluffy black-furred puppy. The puppy tugs on the leash, eager to run off.

A black van idles in the parking lot.
INT. BLACK VAN - DAY

Ace leans back from the driver seat.

ACE
I can see the dog. Operation Puppy Punch is in effect.

Becca sits in the back as Toby pulls on a black jacket.

BECCA
Remember, in and out. Wait for the dog to be alone.

TOBY
Just like we practiced.

BECCA
And Toby. That dog ate your graham crackers.

TOBY
What?

BECCA
Just trying to motivate you. Kill that dog.

TOBY
My graham crackers? I’m not twelve.

ACE
It’s the baby face.

Toby pulls a ski mask down, shakes his head.

TOBY
Let’s do this fast.

EXT. PARK - DAY

The van rolls into motion, moving towards the Gangbanger and his adorable dog. The sliding door opens.

Toby steps out, marches straight for them.

The gangbanger unhitches the dog from his leash, waves him toward the park.
But the dog takes off into the parking lot, straight for Toby. Toby stops as the dog slides to a stop in front of him. Tail wagging, eyes wide, big ears...

INT. BLACK VAN - DAY

Becca sits forward in the van, leaning by Ace.

ACE
What’s he waiting for?

EXT. PARK - DAY

Toby looks down at the dog. It licks his hand.

Can’t do it.

He leans down and scoops the dog into his arms.

GANGBANGER
Hey!

Toby looks up, seeing the Gangbanger pointing at the obvious man in a ski mask holding a dog.

Toby takes off at a run, the gangbanger in pursuit.

INT. BLACK VAN - DAY

Becca clambers into the back, as Ace shifts the van in gear.

ACE
Oh, very bad! Very bad!

Becca slides the door open.

Toby dives inside, dog safely in his arms.

TOBY
Go! Go! Go!

EXT. PARK - DAY

The van peels out of the parking lot, and tears down the road. The gangbanger slides to a stop at the driveway.
INT. BLACK VAN - DAY

Toby huddles in the back of the van, the puppy in his arms. It cranes its neck up and licks his cheek.

Ace tries to settle himself in the front seat.

ACE
Did we just take that dog hostage?

END ACT 1
ACT 2

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The puppy sits on the coffee table, a BLIND FOLD wrapped around its head. Shane sits nearby it, watching. Becca and Ace cluster around Toby, hissing questions at him.

ACE
What made this a good idea?

TOBY
I don’t know, I couldn’t kill him!

BECCA
So you took the dog hostage?!

TOBY
Why are we whispering?

ACE
Because we’re mad at you!

SHANE
Dogs can hear sounds as high as sixty thousand hertz and as quiet as a cupboard being opened. It is often called the dog’s second most important sense, behind smell.

ACE
You are a walking Encyclopedia.

SHANE
I’m just saying, blindfolding it does pretty much nothing.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

The dog now has EARMUFFS on, shaped like turtle shells.

BECCA
You were supposed to kill it!

TOBY
You look at that face and then-- what did you expect me to do?
Something violent involving piano wire!

Shane sits down next to the puppy, starts petting it. The dog smiles, nuzzles his hand.

TOBY
I will kill people, that I can do, but the puppy is out of bounds!

ACE
You’re gonna have to, and it’ll be messy, so you’re gonna do it outside.

The dog gets up and moves for the door.

ACE (CONT’D)
Wait, where’s he going?

It wanders blindly and wanders out the open back door.

SHANE
Well, that’s nice.

TOBY
Can we restart this day?

ACE
Why? You want to get hit in the nuts again?

EXT. FRONT YARD – DAY

Becca and Ace stand in the driveway, opposite Oswald and Shelly. Shane plays with the puppy in the yard.

OSWALD
No. No. This is entirely unacceptable.

BECCA
Message was sent. He no longer has the dog.

SHELLY
Yes, but we were hoping there’d be a tad more blood involved.
ACE
Don’t get me wrong, I’m on board with that. But just because the puppy is alive doesn’t mean the damage isn’t felt.

OSWALD
Your services were contracted to insure that the miniature beast died a brutal death in a public place. This...

Oswald and Shelly watch as Shane lets the puppy ‘tackle’ him.

ACE
Yeah, gotcha. So what do we do?

BECCA
I’ve got it! I need a phone number.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY
Ace and Becca stand proud, having just explained the glorious plan. Toby, Shane and the puppy stare back.

TOBY
We’re sure that would work?

ACE
Toby... you know what would work for sure?

TOBY
What?

ACE
Killing the dog! Since we’re not doing that, we’ve got this.

SHANE
Walter won’t help you.

BECCA
Shane, you can’t name the dog.

SHANE
Why not?
ACE
Because we’re not keeping the dog!
When we’re done, it goes to the pound.

The dog flops onto the ground.

TOBY
See? Now you’re just scaring him.

ACE
He’ll get adopted, it’ll be fine.

SHANE
Roughly sixty four percent of all shelter animals are euthanized.

ACE
See? Those are coin toss odds.

TOBY
Not even close.

ACE
What exactly do you...

Ace stops, seeing the puppy chewing on a shoe.

ACE (CONT’D)
He’s eating my shoe. Toby--

TOBY
I see it.

The dog flops flat on the ground again. When Ace stands, Shane flops on the ground next to the dog.

ACE
Not funny, Shane. Get up.
    (beat)
Get up, Shane.

SHANE
I stand in solidarity with my spiritual brethren.

ACE
You worship random objects. That doesn’t mean you can talk to the dog.
SHANE
   It’s not talking. Not really.

Becca pushes Shane with her foot. He refuses to move. She
nudges the dog, and he slides across the floor.

BECCA
   We could mop the floor with Shane’s
   head.

TOBY
   This is the not even the weirdest
   part of my day.

INT. RENTAL AGENCY PARKING LOT – NIGHT

Used cars with company logos. A small office.

The Gangbanger struts out of the office with purpose, pulling
up his baggy pants. He raises his keys, and a bland family
mid-size sedan BEEPS back at him.

A nearby pay phone RINGS.

He stops, looks at it. He walks over, carefully observing.

GANGBANGER
   This is how slasher movies start.

He lifts the receiver.

INT. CAR – DAY

Toby sits in a car, with Oswald and Shelly in the backseat.
Out the rear view window, Toby can see the gang banger. She
cups a cell phone to her ear.

TOBY
   (deep voice)
   You know why I’m calling.

OSWALD
   What is that? Is that your Orson
   Welles impression?

SHELLY
   Let him work.
OSWALD
Orson Welles didn’t sound like that at all.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY
The Gangbanger looks around, phone to ear.

GANGBANGER
You’re the guy who has my dog.

TOBY (O.S.)
(filtered)
He didn’t like you. Asked us to take him away.

GANGBANGER
Let me tell you something. You’re about to have a very bad day.

INT. CAR - SAME TIME
Toby listens to the tirade, surprised at the vigor.

GANGBANGER (O.S.)
(filtered)
I know you were you sleep!

TOBY
You don’t know where I sleep.

GANGBANGER (O.S.)
(filtered)
Forty Seven Baker street. I am going to feed you to a meat grinder, mother--

Toby holds the phone away from his ear. His eyes are wide, panic. Only muffled sounds can be heard from the phone.

OSWALD
I sense bad news.

TOBY
We’re at the rental company. Oh my God, that’s the rental company. That’s where we are! Oh my God!
SHELLY
That van you rented for the kidnapping... did you happen to register it with your actual address on it?

OSWALD
You’re really bad at this.

TOBY
There is a learning curve!

Toby cups the phone to listen for more. Oswald pops open a bag of chips.

TOBY (CONT’D)
What’s a fleshlight?

END ACT 2
INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The puppy sits on the couch. On the coffee table, Shane sits with a hooka pipe in his mouth and the giant stuffed bear at his side. He meditates in an unrecognizable fashion.

SHANE
You have to understand...
connection... focus.

Toby bursts through the front door.

TOBY
I’m a dead man.

SHANE
You say that all the time.

TOBY
No, this time, I am toast. That gang banger-- he’s coming here!

SHANE
For his dog?

TOBY
That’s one of the things on his to-do list, yeah.

SHANE
You’re a hitman so....

TOBY
(angry whining)
“But we like the owner! We like the owner!”

Toby marches into the other room. Shane gives the dog a look.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Becca sips a beer while Ace shovels ash out of the fire pit.

BECCA
I’m just saying, Battleship is played with a board and a grid--
ACE
It’s not actually Battleship.
That’s just what we call it.

Toby runs up to the pair.

TOBY
Guys, we have a problem shaped like
an angry gang-banger.

ACE
We have a different problem--
Shane!

Becca and Toby look up to see the dog racing through the yard
and jumping over the fence.

Shane comes out, holding the still-smoking hooka.

SHANE
The guy wants his dog. Now we don’t
have the dog.

TOBY
Great, so now we can tell the gang
banger that not only did we steal
his dog, but now we’ve lost it?!

SHANE
(pointing at Ace)
Hey. He was gonna euthanize it.

ACE
Not personally!

Becca grabs Ace and shoves him toward the fence.

BECCA
Get the dog. We’ll handle the gang
banger.

ACE
How?

BECCA
Don’t question me. I’ve been
drinking.

Ace shakes his head, dashes for the fence. He labors himself
over the fence, and with one last heave-- makes it over.
TOBY
(to himself)
Slow, complete breaths.

BECCA
Toby, I need to know. How long do we have?

GANGBANGER (O.S.)
Where are you?!

BECCA
Not very long.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Ace slows his jog, comes to a stop. He catches his breath, looking around the street.

ACE
Where the hell... did you go?

He turns, and there it is. The puppy stares back at him, like an Old West stand off.

ACE (CONT’D)
There. Get over here.

Ace makes a move and the dog jerks. They both freeze, waiting for the other to move. Like a game of Tag.

ACE (CONT’D)
Not now.

Ace moves again and the dog jerks again. It gets low, wagging its tail.

Playtime.

ACE (CONT’D)
I catch you, I’m gonna sell you to a nice Korean family. You hear me?

The dog BARKS.

ACE (CONT’D)
I know it’s racist.

Ace pauses, thinking. What the...
He cocks his head. And the dog does the same.

ACE (CONT’D)

No way.

Ace takes a slow couple of steps, and the dog lets him get closer. He stops, a few feet away.

He kneels down to the dog. And closes his eyes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The gang banger has Toby pinned against a wall, knife in his free hand. Becca and Shane stand nearby.

TOBY
If you could ease up on the choking thing just a bit--

GANGBANGER
Shut up!

BECCA
Calm the hell down-- the dog ain’t here, alright?!

The gang banger glares death at Beca.

GANGBANGER
You lost Walter?!

SHANE
I told you his name was Walter!

GANGBANGER
How did you know?

SHANE
I communed with him and he told me his name. Buddha told me how.

The banger looks to the giant stuffed bear on the couch. Shane smiles, pleased with himself.

The banger grabs the bear and heads for the door.

SHANE (CONT’D)
What.... What are you doing?
EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Shane’s heart sinks into his chest, as the giant bear goes up in flames. The fire pit CRACKLES as it consumes the giant thing. Toby and Becca watch its beady little eyes glow.

SHANE
You killed Buddha. Why would you kill Buddha?

The banger smirks at his handiwork.

GANGBANGER
Ready to tell me where my dog is?

TOBY
You’re a delightful person. Remind me to send you a ‘thank you’ card.

GANGBANGER
I’m not gonna ask again.

ACE (O.S)
Wow!

Ace steps out onto the patio, the dog trotting behind him.

ACE (CONT’D)
You are... really ugly.

GANGBANGER
Walter! Come here boy.

The dog cowers behind Ace.

ACE
Sorry. He don’t like you so much.

GANGBANGER
Oh really?

ACE
He been peeing on the carpet?

GANGBANGER
What?

ACE
Has the dog. Been peeing. On the carpet?
The gang banger leers at Ace. So do Toby and Becca.

Everyone’s lost.

ACE (CONT’D)
You take him to all those dog parks, get him all neat and groomed, all that stuff. Turns out he’s very anti-social. You’ve been stressing him out.

GANGBANGER
How do you know all that?

Ace glances at the fire pit and the burning bear. Shane whimpers, reaching gently towards the fire.

ACE
One word. Buddha.

The gang banger raises an eyebrow. Ace shrugs.

GANGBANGER
To hell with you people.

The gang banger raises his knife to Toby’s throat.

Shelly runs in from the side yard, holding a cricket bat and her face peppered with WHITE POWDER. Oswald chases after her, trying to corral her.

SHELLY
Hold your Mustang horses, Jeremy! You’re not laying a finger on him, see?!

OSWALD
You are not a 1920’s gangster. Now give me the bat.

SHELLY
Not until Jeremy backs the hell off!

Toby and Becca look at each other. Then to the banger.

TOBY
(mouthing)
Jeremy?
BECCA
   (mouthing)
Really?

Shane pokes at the ashes of ‘Buddha’ with a stick.

SHANE
You used to be so beautiful.

GANGBANGER
This ain’t none of your business, British.

SHELLY
The six inches of Bowie knife to little Toby’s throat makes it my business! My business!

OSWALD
Please, everyone. She is very high, and needs to be taken quite seriously.

TOBY
Maybe we can talk this out with slightly less knife--

GANGBANGER
   (to Toby)
Screw you!

BECCA
This’ll end well.

Shane clutches a fistful of ashes.

SHANE
   (whispered)
He murdered you!

GANGBANGER
They stole my dog!

ACE
Stole him? Really?
   (to dog)
Walter, go home. Go on.

The dog lays down on Ace’s feet.
ACE (CONT’D)
What dog you talking about, boss?

GANGBANGER
I will cut him!

BECCA
What is this? 1996?

OSWALD
Everyone needs to cool off just a little--

The puppy BARKS! The banger looks away--

Toby slams his head back into the banger, and breaks free. He rolls to one side.

Coked-up Shelly charges into battle, Braveheart style. She tackles the gang banger to the ground, screaming in his face.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Shane holds an icepack to his head. Ace places a band-aid over Oswald’s eye. Becca chats on the phone. Shelly puts her hand on Toby’s thigh. He is far too scared to remove it.

OSWALD
Okay, that was possibly the worst way that could have happened.

SHANE
Is Walter gonna be okay?

OSWALD
Well, I’m not entirely certain that— Ow!

ACE
You could do this yourself!

Becca hangs up.

BECCA
Okay. The gangbanger--

SHELLY
Jeremy.
BECCA
‘Jeremy’ has agreed to let the dog stay with us. He’s gonna let us be, we let him be, kapish?

ACE
You believe him?

BECCA
I don’t believe my own mother, Ace. He’ll be back. Comically large knife in hand.

TOBY
Can a knife be ‘comically’ large?

BECCA
(chuckling)
Oh Toby... memories.

SHANE
We get to keep the dog?

Becca looks at Ace, waiting for a denial.

He simply smiles.

BECCA
I guess so.

Toby is now supremely uncomfortable with Shelly’s fondling.

TOBY
(escape)
Who wants to play Battleship?

ACE
Sure!

TOBY
Excellent. Let’s go into the other room and--

Toby tries to get up, but Shelly holds him down. Repeated attempts lead to the same result.

TOBY (CONT’D)
Somebody help.

END OF ACT 3
EXT. PARK – DAY

Ace sits on a bench with ‘Walter’ the puppy. They look out towards the people in the park.

Especially the ladies out jogging.

ACE
(to Walter)
That was the deal. Don’t back out on me now.

The dog whimpers.

ACE (CONT’D)
Oh, I get it, it’s not fun for you. But you know that treats are waiting back at the house, and there will be plenty of pets and belly rubs to be had.

The dog perks up, still cautious but interested.

ACE (CONT’D)
We had a moment. We had a deal. Don’t puss out on me now. Are you a cat? Are you?

The puppy stands up, almost petulant.

ACE (CONT’D)
I didn’t think so. Now let’s do this.

Two very hot WOMEN jog by, smiling at him. Seeing the puppy they stop. Walter gives a dog smile, lolling tongue and floppy ears.

JOGGING WOMAN 1
Aww, he’s adorable. What’s his name?

Ace tries to hide his dirty old man smirk.

ACE
That’s Walter.

END EPISODE
“PRESSURE COOKER”
INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Ace duct-tapes beer cans together, one on top of the other. The staff stands about as tall as he is.

Becca pushes through the front door, arms full of groceries.

BECCA
Little help here.

ACE
Oh, now she wants my help.
(Random whining)

BECCA
Did you make a walking stick out of beer cans?

ACE
It is a wizard’s staff, thank you very much.

BECCA
And public school takes an arrow to the knee.

Becca drops the groceries on the table. Cans of food, veggies, and a massive turkey. Ace raises an eyebrow at Becca, holding a can.

ACE
Cole slaw?

BECCA
I don’t know what goes in a turkey.

ACE
It’s meat. You cook it. Done.

Becca grabs a knife and honing steel, sharpens the blade.

BECCA
Remember. Toby doesn’t see this.

ACE
Toby is a actual breathing chef. He doesn’t believe I want to operate an oven, let alone know how to.
Toby saunters into the living room, reading something.

ACE (CONT’D)  
Hey, Toby. We got a turkey.

TOBY  
(without looking up)  
Liar.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Becca and Ace follow Toby into the room. Ace props himself on his beer can ‘staff’.

BECCA  
What’re you reading?

TOBY  
After-action reports for the butterfly gig. Did you know we caused something like thirty thousand dollars in damages?

ACE  
This is our problem how?

TOBY  
I’m just saying, the foot-long butterfly was not cheap. That a beer staff?

ACE  
Surprisingly stable. Mail’s on the couch.

Toby grabs the mail, sifts through it.

Shane sidles up to Ace. He’s wearing footie pajamas.

SHANE  
Operation Turkey Day still a go?

ACE  
Do you ever wear normal clothes?

SHANE  
This is my space suit. I’m going to space.
ACE
If you strap rockets to your shoes,
I will pay you real people money.

Toby turns around, gripping a letter in his hands.

BECCA
What is it? Another anonymous death threat?

Toby raises it up-- a CHECK.

TOBY
No, but my estranged father is trying to pay me to stop calling.

Awkward silence.

ACE
How much is it?

Becca kicks the beer staff, breaking it in half. One end dangles by the duct tape.

ACE (CONT’D)
(squeaky)
Why?

END TEASER
INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ace and Shane sit at the kitchen table, eying the open envelope: ‘Daniel Mencher’.

ACE
I can’t believe his Dad did that.

Becca tries to worm the turkey out of its plastic packaging.

SHANE
I don’t understand what the problem is.

ACE
Toby has a... screwy relationship with Mom and Pop.

SHANE
And free money turns him into a psychedelic bridge troll?

ACE
Last time they spoke, Dad kinda banished him. There’s gonna be some injured pride in there somewhere. Toby’s been trying to reconnect...

Becca gives up on the plastic, drawing a knife.

BECCA
Not our problem. Ace, could you help me with this?

ACE
You bought it, you own it.

SHANE
That is a very large bird.

BECCA
Could we not talk so loud about the thing?

Ace stands up, with a sigh.
ACE
Shane: Distract Toby-- get him out of the house, pick up his mood, something-- While I help Becca with the comically large bird.

SHANE
Sure thing.

BECCA
Shane. Don’t tell him about the turkey.

SHANE
Why?

ACE
Drive-by holiday, that’s why. Off you go.

Shane exits. Ace look at Becca.

ACE (CONT’D)
You owe me a beer staff.

She rolls her eyes.

INT. TOBY’S ROOM – DAY

The glow of Toby’s computer. He taps away at the keyboard. Shane knocks on the door.

SHANE
Whatcha doin’?

TOBY
Nothin’. Just work.

SHANE
Oh... Like assassin work?

TOBY
Since when has the resident pacifist been interested in my-- The internet is awful!

Toby smacks his monitor. Shane leers at the disturbed man.

SHANE
What did it do?
TOBY
I’m trying to find information on Esteban Correia.

SHANE
That’s just an impressive name.

TOBY
We’re talking actually impressive, Shane. This isn’t Guinness book stuff.

SHANE
Well, I found the world’s oldest man quite fascinating. He smells like cumin.

Toby turns to look at Shane. Something’s off. Toby’s eyes are just a little too open for comfort. Serial killer look.

TOBY
You met the world’s oldest man?

SHANE
Yeah, few years back. Great guy. Lousy gambler.

TOBY
I need to meet this man.

Shane stares. Toby is deadly serious. Soap opera serious.

SHANE
There is something really strange about you today.

INT. KITCHEN – DAY

Becca reads from a box of instant potatoes. Ace ties an apron around his waist: it reads “Kiss Me, Or I’ll Kill You.”

BECCA
Okay, I need all of the butter.

ACE
We’re not doing instant potatoes. This is Thanksgiving. We go fancy.

Ace heaves a bag of really old potatoes onto the counter. They’re wrinkly, sprouting roots, but otherwise edible. Ish.
BECCA
You know how to do this?

ACE
Saw it in a movie once.

Ace grabs a potato, raises a TENNIS RACQUET.

Ace SLAMS the racquet onto the potato-- and the racquet strings SNAP, the fossilized potato punching clean through.

BECCA
Get me the butter, we’re doing it my way.

ACE
No! This is Thanksgiving!

He grabs another wrinkled potato, throws it in the microwave. He punches a random number, and the microwave HUMS.

ACE (CONT’D)
I did this all the time in college. Insto-presto baked potato.

FUMP! The microwave jumps! Ace and Becca restart their hearts.

ACE (CONT’D)
Okay, it exploded. Give me another.

BECCA
No! This is Thanksgiving. An excuse to eat a lot of bad things. That’s all. No antics, no tennis racquets, and no personal injury. Bad people eating bad food. That’s it.

The idea hits them both at the same time.

ACE
You know what’s really bad for us?

BECCA
Pie.

ACE
See? This is why I like you. This, right here.
INT. SEX PIT - DAY

Toby works at a cork board. Pins in pictures, red strings stretching between the pins like a spiderweb.

A conspiracy theorist’s wet dream.

Shane looks at it with a cocked head.

SHANE
It looks like a Love Knot.

TOBY
Do you know where Esteban Correia is?

SHANE
Why would I?

TOBY
Then I need you to be quiet. My focus cannot be split for any period longer than five seconds.

Shane raises an eyebrow.

SHANE
I recognize this.

Toby dramatically shushes Shane. Shane doesn’t listen.

SHANE (CONT’D)
You’re trying to impress someone. Who is he?

TOBY
(sarcasm, manic)
His name is Kyle and he lives under the East Side bridge and you have to speak very quietly before he shuts you up forever!

Shane doesn’t even flinch. Toby turns back to the board.

SHANE
Seriously, you need to take a relaxing stroll, breath in the Autumn air, and forget everything your father ever said.
TOBY
How did this get to be about my Father?

Shane pulls the CHECK off the corkboard, a STRING connecting it to the other points on the board.

SHANE
Come outside with me. There’s a squirrel I’d like you to meet.

TOBY
(ignoring)
I can’t. I have work. Can’t put it off.

SHANE
Esteban Correia?

TOBY
Drug runner from Mexico. Specializes in being invisible.

SHANE
In some cultures, eating your enemy’s brain grants you their wisdom and power.

TOBY
Eat his brain, become invisible?

SHANE
It tastes like curry.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Becca and Ace are staring at the oven. The oven light is on.

THROUGH OVEN WINDOW: The pink flesh of the raw turkey, in a roasting pan. Just sitting there.

BECCA
Well, this is boring.

ACE
I got an idea.
INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Becca strings a power cord to an already full surge protector... which is plugged into a surge protector, which is plugged into-- God, that’s a fire hazard.

BECCA
Ace, don’t break it!

Ace tries to wedge the turkey into a pressure cooker.

ACE
I know what I’m doing.

Ace lifts the lid, punches the turkey a few times.

BECCA
Rocky, stop beating up my dinner.

ACE
Give me a knife.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

A chunk of turkey sizzles in a frying pan.

Ace slaps the cooked meat between bread, settles down next to Becca. They stare at the pressure cooker.

The flesh of the bird mashed up against the glass lid.

A quiet moment as they both figure something out.

ACE
You know what we forgot to do?

BECCA
Take the guts out of the bird?

ACE
We forgot to take the guts out of the bird.

INT. SEX PIT - DAY

Shane tapes cardboard boxes together. He’s building something. Toby writes on a white board. He idly plays with a gun in his free hand.
SHANE
You have your own room to work in.

TOBY
I need the room to move around, to think, to wrap my head around this. What are you doing over there?

SHANE
I am creating a new space program, thank you very much.

TOBY
You’re building a cardboard spaceship?

Shane slides into the ‘ship’. It barely fits him, and only covers his shoulders, like a helmet.

SHANE
Ground control to Major Tom.

Toby goes back to his scrawl. Shane pokes his head out of the box, leering at Toby’s work.

SHANE (CONT’D)
How do you find that which is invisible?

TOBY
Usually by running into it on accident in the middle of the street. Maybe, maybe I just need heat-vision, so I can--

Toby slams his head against the wall, trying to knock thoughts loose of the cobwebs in his mind. He regrets it.

SHANE
Don’t fight the wall. The wall will win.

TOBY
I have to find something that can’t be found! I have to kill something that can’t be found!

SHANE
You need to relax a little, man. Take off your shoes and really walk around. You know what I mean?
TOBY
Shouldn’t you be devising some kind of religious mash-up right now?

SHANE
You know what you need to do?

TOBY
Take all of the poisons and die happy?

SHANE
I was gonna say Disneyland.

Toby whirls around, rushes over to Shane. Toby gestures with the gun, Shane wincing with every move.

TOBY
Why are you trying to distract me from my very important things?

SHANE
Something about a turkey. Please stop with the waving of the thing.

TOBY
Let me guess. We worship the turkey?

SHANE
You need to take a break.

TOBY
And let Esteban Correia kill himself?

SHANE
That would be convenient. You killing him today?

TOBY
No, today is where I stand in front of a cork board looking frantic and confused. There are days in this job that are just boring, you know, boring preparation days. Days we prepare. For the jobs. So today there is... no, there’s no killing, today I’m just--
SHANE
Take your shoes off and sit down. What are these?

Shane lifts a small bag of white pills out of Toby’s dangling shirt pocket.

TOBY
Caffeine pills. They help me stay awake. And focused. Mostly awake, with a little bit of focused. Nice blend. You want one?

SHANE
...yeah.

Shane opens the bag, takes out one pill. Toby grabs a handful, eats them fast. Shane’s eyes go wide.

Toby sniffs, scratching his crotch with a gun.

END ACT 1
INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Becca slides the plastic bag full of guts out of the turkey, slapping them onto a cutting board. Ace stares on, trying to keep his stomach from revolting.

ACE
We cooked plastic. That’s not gonna be a problem?

BECCA

Ace turns-- Shane is standing right next to him.

SHANE
So Toby is, much like a hyperactive Ocelot would, taking caffeine pills and possibly other likeable substances.

ACE
I’m gonna have to come back to that sentence at some point with a couple of serious questions, but in the meantime: WHAT?

Becca sighs, ready to skip ahead.

BECCA
He’s just working his ass off on this Correia thing, isn’t he?

The back door slides open, Shelly and Oswald sauntering in.

OSWALD
Did you get him? Are we done?

ACE
No, it’s cool, just walk into my house.

SHELLY
I thought we were friends.

BECCA
I thought I changed all the locks.
Oswald slaps a broken door knob onto the table.

OSWALD
You did. What smells so good?

SHANE
Poultry, ten pounds, one twenty degrees Fahrenheit.
(beat)
And Rosemary.

Shelly sniffs the air, testing Shane’s statement.

INT. SEX PIT - DAY

Toby has gone Beautiful Mind-- frazzled hair, eyes red, sketching incoherent images onto the wall.

Shane, Shelly and Oswald ease their way into the room.

SHELLY
Hey Toby...

OSWALD
They tell us you’re having some collective anxiety issues.

Toby spins around, setting his crazy eyes on them.

TOBY
Did you know that bologna is one of the many smuggled materials into the United States?

SHELLY
I love riddles!

TOBY
No, no no, Shelly, this is real. People are smuggling bologna, sausage-- This is a real thing. Sausage smuggling. And you know the worst part?

SHANE
(giggling)
The ‘wurst’ part.

OSWALD
What’s the worst part?
Toby stares at Oswald for a long moment.

    TOBY
    What are you talking about?

    OSWALD
    I was talking to you. You started a thought, I was waiting for you--

    TOBY
    I can’t have distractions right now, Oswald. So you, you beautiful man, get yourself gone from here!

Shelly turns to Shane.

    SHELLY
    (suggestive)
    Do you think he needs...

    SHANE
    Needs what?

    SHELLY
    That’s good enough for me.

Oswald looks at the board, sees the writing.

    OSWALD
    What is ‘ball-ahg-nah?’

Shelly sidles up to Toby.

    SHELLY
    (pick-up)
    What’re you doing?

    TOBY
    (fast)
    What you pay me to do. Why, do you need me to do something else? Got something more important? I’ll take something more important.
    (MORE)
TOBY (CONT'D)
I could really use a boost right now, something to take the edge off, some kind of thing to drive my focus onto-- I’m really kinda distracted right now, so I’m sorry if that makes me seem cold, I’m just really busy right now and I don’t want to screw this up so I have to keep in the zone, ‘kay?

Even Shelly is crepped out now.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Ace works at a soup can. Becca examines a plastic bag of white pills.

BECCA
I don’t know where he got this. This is concentrated stuff.

Ace struggles with the soup can, prying with a butterknife.

ACE
You can buy caffeine pills over the counter.

BECCA
Not at three hundred milligrams you can’t.

Ace leers at her.

ACE
Is that bad?

BECCA
About two grams of it can kill you.

ACE
So he’s sailing right now?

BECCA
He should be dead right now.

The butter knife breaks, and Ace stares at the handle.

Becca grabs the can, and grabs the pull tab-- POPPING it off.
ACE
I think this is what shame feels like.

SHELLY
What did you do?

ACE
What?

SHELLY
You broke him.

BECCA
Yeah, you see our problem--

SHELLY
I don’t know what you did, but you have to fix it, because you broke him.

OSWALD
She is taking this very seriously.

SHANE
(concerned)
Her face is really red.

ACE
She just needs some food. Shelly--

Shelly strides up to Becca.

SHELLY
This is your fault!

Becca doesn’t respond. Just glares right back.

And Shelly backs down.

BECCA
That’s what I thought.

Shane’s eyes bug out— the way Becca’s holding the caffeine... the pills slip out of the bag and DROP into the gravy.

He hides a giggle.
OSWALD
Let’s everyone take a single solid breath-- and that smells amazing. What are you cooking?

ACE
Okay, we get it, you’re British, but you have access to mass media.

OSWALD
What does that have to do with the turkey in the pot?

SHANE
They’re preparing to eat and give thanks, in that order.

OSWALD
Eat and give thanks--
(gets it)
Thanksgiving! Oh, that thing! But where are all the natives?

ACE
We killed them all. It’s not something we’re proud of.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

A knife slams into the wood. Then another. Another.

Toby stands a few yards away, hurling a stack of knives one by one at the fence. Is he drawing a circle?

A NEIGHBOR walks by on the other side with his groceries.

NEIGHBOR
Happy Thanksgiving, Toby!

TOBY
(muttered)
Happy Thanksgiving, George.

NEIGHBOR
Stay in school.

Ace comes out, marches straight for Toby.

ACE
Hey, buddy.
TOBY
Not now. I’m sketching.

ACE
Pointillism. I get it.

TOBY
I wasn’t telling a joke, Ace. You don’t have to defuse me with humor—why don’t you ever take me seriously?

Ace leans away from the verbal assault.

ACE
Toby, can you settle down for like five seconds?

TOBY
You got three seconds.

ACE
That’ll do. We need you to stop taking those caffeine--

Toby can’t sit still, bouncing on his toes.

ACE (CONT’D)
(snapping)
Sit still, right now.

Toby stops moving, standing in front of Ace. Twitching.

ACE (CONT’D)
You need to get your head out of this Correia thing.

TOBY
It’s not about Correia.

ACE
I know that, you know that, so why are we still doing this?

TOBY
Shelly and Oswald want me to--

ACE
What if I told you Shelly and Oswald called off the hit?
TOBY
I’d call you a liar.

ACE
(calling inside)
Shelly?

SHELLY (O.S.)
(from inside)
We’re calling off the hit!

TOBY
She’s lying too.

Toby goes back to his knife throwing. Ace considers this next moment carefully.

ACE
Okay then.

Ace grabs Toby from behind, puts Toby into a sleeper hold. Toby struggles, flailing like an inflatable boxing toy.

ACE (CONT’D)
Shh, shh, it’s okay. Let it happen.

Becca and Shane watch from the window.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Becca and Shane are clustered by the window. Shelly and Oswald sample the grubby looking potatoes.

SHANE
Should we call someone?

BECCA
(amused)
Why?

OSWALD
That... that smells like fire.

Smoke rises from the pressure cooker.

END ACT 2
INT. SEX PIT - DAY

A blackened turkey sits on a greasy platter, next to pasty potatoes, and slimy food of unrecognizable nature. Oswald and Shelly pile food onto their plates.

Ace, Shane and Becca stare at them from a safe distance.

OSWALD
I don’t know why you’re all avoiding this.

SHELLY
This is what sex tastes like!

SHANE
Crunchy?

Shelly ladles some gravy over Oswald’s turkey.

SHELLY
That’s the good stuff.

ACE
She’s eating a fossil.

BECCA
Don’t take the bait, Ace.

ACE
(to Shelly)
You’re gonna hurt yourself.

Shelly bites the turkey leg-- something CRUNCHES, but it’s not the food.

BECCA
What are we gonna do about Toby?

ACE
We gotta sober him up.

SHANE
We’ve got liquor, sleeping pills, electrotherapy--

ACE
We’re not electrocuting Toby.
Toby is duct-taped to a wall, like a cocoon.

TOBY
I’m gonna kill you, Ace, and it won’t even be my fault.

ACE
How much electricity would it be?

A KNOCK at the front door.

EXT. FRONT DOOR – DAY

A UPS GUY stands with a box. Ace, Becca and Shane stare at the name on the box.

UPS GUY
I need you to sign for--

ACE
I need you to take it away.

UPS GUY
This is the correct address.

BECCA
And somebody told you wrong.

UPS GUY
I was told to bring a special delivery to Tobias Mencher.

ACE
The last guy who did that sent him into a hyperactive tilt-a-whirl, so no thank you.

UPS GUY
I deliver packages. That’s all.

BECCA
Okay, are you FedEx or somebody’s carrier pigeon?

UPS GUY
(grinding teeth)
I’m wearing brown.
ACE
Okay, girl scout Brownie, whatever said package is-- it’s yours, enjoy the contents. Now go away.

UPS GUY
Is it a bomb?

Long pause.

ACE
Yes.

The UPS guy takes his clipboard back. Ace and Becca look to see Shane taking the box.

SHANE
You two are just rude.

Shane wanders into the house.

Ace and Becca look at each other-- race after Shane.

UPS Guy glares at the open door.

UPS GUY
One of these days... they’ll know your name.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Shan fusses with the box as Oswald and Shelly heaves the cocooned Toby off the wall, carrying him into the other room, gibbering.

Ace stops in his tracks, eyeing the Brits.

ACE
Where are you taking him?

Oswald turns to hear that, slamming Toby’s head into a wall.

OSWALD
He was being belligerent.

ACE
So are you.

Oswald shrugs, and the Brits hauls Toby away.
Shane pulls the tape off the box, Ace and Becca.

ACE (CONT’D)
Are you a lunatic? Have you lost your mind?

SHANE
Why? Did you find it?

Shelly turns back, slamming Toby into the wall again.

SHELLY
I’ve got a spare.

BECCA
(ignoring Shelly)
Toby’s gonna go mental! You’ve got to get rid of it.

Shane raises the mail label.

SHANE
Is that you? Is that you?

Ace and Becca shake their heads.

Oswald and Shelly re-enter, dusting off their hands. There is visible clouds of dust as they do.

SHANE (CONT’D)
Hume says that what goes up must come down.

ACE
What does that have to do with-- who the Hell is Hume?

OSWALD
Read a book.

ACE
No!

SHANE
Toby has to face his father or face eternal itching in the darker place.

Shelly swallows hard, looking at her crotch.
SHELLY
That sounds awful.

SHANE
It’s a real thing.

BECCA
No, it’s not.
(beat)
But we get your point. Running from this is what got Toby where he is.

SHANE
Eternal itching...

ACE
Shane, please tell me you’re a nice person every day because you think there’s a dark room where everything itches forever and always.

SHANE
(duh)
Why are you nice?

ACE
I’m not.

Becca stoops over the box.

BECCA
What was in the box?

Shane dumps the box out on the table, clutches the cardboard.

SHANE
I don’t care. I have a new module for my spaceship.

Shane runs off with the box.

Becca lifts a letter, pulls out a picture. Glares at it.

ACE
I’m impressed anyone’s still sending mail the long way.

OSWALD
You know what we do in the UK?
ACE
What?

OSWALD
I don’t know, I don’t care! Turkey!

Oswald dives in, taking big bites of a GRAVY LACED DRUMSTICK.

ACE
You okay, Oswald?

Oswald curls around the drumstick, a defensive wild animal.

Shelly nibbles on the burnt stuffing.

SHELLY
(crying)
It’s just so delicious.

BECCA
That son of a bitch.

Everyone turns to Becca. She brandishes the picture.

IN PICTURE: A large family around a massive table, uncles and aunts, cousins and friends, all eyeing a plump golden turkey.

In small words: MENCHER FAMILY HOLIDAYS

ACE
Well, that is a proverbial ‘screw you’ if I ever saw one.

BECCA
I’m burning this.

ACE
He needs to see it.

BECCA
So he can cry like a seven year old girl?

ACE
Yes, because that would be hilarious!

BECCA
You’re a terrible friend.
Anger is the only thing that’ll keep that kid alive right now. They don’t want him around. He needs to see that.

This is the last thing he needs to see right now!

Without even looking, Ace points toward a mysteriously shirtless Oswald, burying his face in mashed potatoes.

No, that is the last thing he needs to see. Oswald put your shirt on!

You’re not the boss of me! I’m the boss of me! And I get to have pie!

I’m not arguing with you!

This is arguing! We’re arguing right now! You’re trying to oppress me. Shelly, are you seeing this?

What’s wrong with you?

Paranoia beams from Oswald’s eyes. The same look Toby had.

Wrong with me?! What’s wrong with your tits?! They’re lopsided and small and...

Kay, this just got way weird.

(crossed arms)
I’m your sister.

The sister with weird tits!
(to Ace)
Stop staring at my face!
Oswald slurps gravy off a wooden spoon. Ace and Becca stare.

ACE
...Where are the caffeine pills?

Becca searches, lifts a GRAVY-GOOPY plastic bag from a pot.

ACE (CONT’D)
Oh good.

INT. SEX PIT - DAY
Tape marks all over him, Toby stares at the board, the lines and the sketches. And the check from his father.

Shane tapes the small box onto his ‘space ship.’

SHANE
You should cash it. Money is money, and it buys us beer.

TOBY
I’m not taking that man’s money.

SHANE
Think of it as stealing. That’ll make you feel better. That and a low-grade opiate. Although, you probably have one already.

Toby looks at a picture: a silhouette with a question mark? The picture is labeled ESTEBAN CORREIA.

He blinks and the name reads: GO TO SLEEP.

Toby takes the check down, tears it up.

SHANE (CONT’D)
That was half the funding for SHASA!

Toby reads the badly scrawling label on Shane’s boxes.

TOBY
Well, “Shane’s Aeronautics and Space Administration” just got poorer.
SHANE
How am I gonna afford rocket fuel now? You gonna tell me? Because I tell you, Gehenna is a tough place to get a refinery permit for.

Toby freezes. He saw another label. On the little box that Shane just taped on—DANIEL MENCHER.

TOBY
Where did you get that?

INT. KITCHEN — DAY

Becca empties a trash can, places underneath Ace’s hands. He’s got the pictures in one hand, a lighter in the other.

The pictures won’t seem to light.

ACE
What are these made of, titanium?!

BECCA
No, you just suck.

Toby rushes in, slaps the lighter from Ace’s hands.

It sails into the side of Oswald’s head. Oswald fumes, glaring toward Toby.

TOBY
What are you doing?!

ACE
Manipulating you from a safe distance!

TOBY
You don’t get to do that!

ACE
I’ve always done that!

TOBY
Who are you?!

OSWALD (O.S.)
I deserve an apology!
TOBY
(ignoring Oswald)
What are you, some kind of supervillain?!

ACE
I would be an awful supervillain.

BECCA
It’s true.

ACE
Wow. Thanks for the back-up.

BECCA
I broke your beer can staff. I can say what I want.

TOBY
Give me the picture!

Ace tears the picture in half, tosses it over his shoulder. Toby is speechless.

ACE
They’re not your family anymore! They’ve made that clear. You’re the only one still fighting. Your father is never going to like you. He might respect you, acknowledge you, maybe even listen to you. But he is never going to like you. The sooner you accept that, the sooner I can have a peaceful Thanksgiving with you crazy people.

Toby’s face falters, weakens. He looks at his feet. Ace waits for something, anything. Becca stands in shock.

Everyone is spent.

TOBY
They’re my family, Ace.

ACE
So am I.

Toby bites his tongue, genuinely touched.

Finally...
TOBY
Can I burn the pictures?

ACE
(smiling)
Bring the lighter fluid.

Toby turns to get--

Oswald sucker-punches Toby in the jaw. Toby crumples. Bloodshot eyes loom over Toby

OSWALD
I hold dominion over you! I am a diesel operated God-Machine! Now say you’re sorry, like a big boy.

TOBY
Ow!

Ace stares at the supercharged Oswald. The Brit is shaking.

Shelly eases into the room, yawning from food coma. She cocks her head to one side, studying Toby’s fallen position.

SHELLY
He’s limber.

INT. ACE’S CAR – NIGHT

Toby looks out at a nearby house. Ace looks at him from the driver seat. A long moment passes. Ace smiles approval.

ACE
You sure you wanna do this?

Toby takes a deep breath. Pushing the weight off.

EXT. RICH HOUSE – NIGHT

A beautiful house in a beautiful neighborhood, hundreds of thousands of dollars in cars in the driveway alone. Landscaping and architecture like a painting.

Toby strides up the steps, stopping at the ornate wooden door. It seems twice as tall as him.

He knocks. A soft ECHO from inside. Toby holds his breath.
Nothing happens.

He turns to leave-- the DOOR OPENS.

DANIEL MENCHER, 50s, in the richest cargo shorts and a stylish Hawaiian shirt. He’s squat, fat, and commanding-- Caligula meets Beer God.

DANIEL
Toby?

Toby wrestles with his mind, opens his mouth...

TOBY
(censored)
F*** you.

Daniel’s eyes go wide. Toby’s too. They stare at each other. Before Toby smiles.

END ACT 3
INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Bones, scraps, dirty dishes. The remnants of Thanksgiving scattered all around. Shelly lies unconscious on the floor, next to a turkey leg.

Oswald sips at a glass of water, shaking as he comes down.

Shane sits in the cardboard spaceship, footie pajamas and all.

SHANE
Caffeine is a rough mistress.
Abusive, powerful.
(beat)
What was it like?

OSWALD
(pained)
It was like the sun was powering my brain. I was the sun. I was all powerful.

Shane scribbles notes.

Becca and Ace struggles to finish beers. They set them down and grab duct tape.

BECCA
What’s the point of this?

ACE
There isn’t a point. It’s just awesome.

BECCA
Is there a record?

An epiphany hits Ace.

ACE
(drunk-speak)
We should break the record!

Toby cleans the carving knife, watching the others. Seeing them together. On Thanksgiving.
TOBY
We should do this every year...

END EPISODE