

HOLLYWOOD RESIDENTIAL

by
Adam Paul

CONTACT:

310-508-3767

Adam@realadampaul.com

TONY SPARKS, 39, host of HOLLYWOOD RESIDENTIAL, stands in front of a nice home in the Hollywood hills.

TONY

It's a beautiful day here in the Hollywood hills, where even the homes of the stars sometimes need to get a little work done. Hi, I'm Tony Sparks and along for the ride this season is Lisa Mann - hi Lisa.

LISA MANN, early 30's, enters the frame next to Tony

LISA

Hi Tony, it's great to be here. Today we'll start work on this season's first Project House owned by none other than '24's Carlos Bernard.

CUT TO still of Carlos from '24.'

BACK TO TONY AND LISA

TONY

Carlos and I are old buddies - started our acting careers together - so this is a particularly personal show for me - which is why I'll be building Carlos one of my 'Sparks Larks' - a special little creative touch that our homeowner knows nothing about and you at home get to try to figure out, as we build it! Plus, we're doing today's show in honor of the (bleep) Foundation, Carlos's charity!

They stand awkwardly for a minute, staring at the camera, until

LISA

Um. I'm sorry. I didn't know he was going off script. What's the (bleep) Foundation?

TONY

I know, I know -- I just... can we cut?

1 CONTINUED:

The show's producer, DON MERRIT - 30's to 40's, African-American - enters frame looking at his watch.

DON

What's the problem, Tony?

TONY

I'm not sure why she's part of the intro --

LISA

You're kidding, right?

TONY

Well, it's 'Hollywood Residential with Tony Sparks,' so I thought the intros this season were going to be mine --

LISA

It's just "Hollywood Residential."

TONY

AND THEN, Lisa takes us into the first segment --

Lisa WALKS OFF

DON

It's actually just "Hollywood Residential," Tony.

TONY

Again?

DON

And whatever the (bleep) Foundation is, you've got to clear it with Legal --

CUT TO:

2 EXT. PROJECT HOUSE, DAY

2

Tony and Lisa wait for the crew to set up for the next shot. Tony is on the phone with his ex-wife discussing how he'll bring her \$300 cash as her alimony payment because his check bounced. He is also trying to enlist CARRIE THE MAKE-UP GIRL to open his FOLDING CHAIR to no avail.

3 EXT. PROJECT HOUSE, LATER

3

Same set-up Lisa looks humorless

TONY

So I've got a 'Sparks Lark' for my
old friend Carlos.

LISA

(reluctantly reading her
lines)

Wow, Tony. What's your 'Sparks
Lark'?

TONY

Ah, ah, ah - the way we do it on
Hollywood Residential is we let the
folks at home try and *guess* what it
is. But, I'll give you a clue, Lis.
It's something --

LISA

(off script)

A craftsman-style table?

Off Tony we

CUT TO:

4 EXT. BERNARD HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

4

From the street, we see Tony nervously approach the front
door to Carlos Bernard's house. He's mic'd so we hear the
whole conversation, but all we see is from the street.

Tony rings the bell. Waits. He opens the door and enters
the house.

TONY

Hello? Anybody here? Carlos?

A dog starts barking ferociously. Then a VERY LOUD ALARM
sounds and every light in the house starts FLASHING ON AND
OFF.

TONY (cont'd)

Whoa! Whoa! Carlos?! Anybody?!!

There's a loud gunshot and the sound of crumbling drywall.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

TONY (cont'd)
 (to himself)
 Oh, God, he's got a gun, he's got a
 gun!

CARLOS
 Next one's in your head,
 motherfucker!

TONY
 No guns! No guns! It's me, Tony
 Sparks!!! From acting school!! No
 guns!

CUT TO:

5 EXT. BERNARD HOUSE - LATER

5

Carlos and Tony are standing awkwardly outside the house.

CARLOS
 I thought you were my brother.

TONY
 I get it. No worries.

CARLOS
 So acting school, huh? That was so
 long ago, man.

TONY
 I did that Ibsen scene you said you
 thought was really good --

CARLOS
 Uh-huh. So you can expand this
 deck?

TONY
 Absolutely. And the best part is,
 it won't cost you anything, cuz the
 show pays for it all, dude.

CARLOS
 And you'll patch those bullet
 holes?

TONY
 Uh. Of course, of course.

(CONTINUED)

CARLOS

You'll mention my charity on the show? I'm having a party for them, so I'd need the deck done by then.

TONY

No problem. It's my show, so --

CARLOS

You'll mention the (BLEEP) foundation?

TONY

I promise I'll mention the (BLEEP) foundation all over the show!

CARLOS

I'll call my publicist in the morning and have them set it up.

TONY

Awesome, Carlos! Thanks so much, man!

Awkward silence.

CARLOS

All right. I'm going back to bed, so...

TONY

Oh, right, right. Um. Hey, do you like your agent?

CARLOS

Do I like my --?

TONY

I just - I brought a picture and resume so you could see what I've been up to, and I thought if you could pass it on to your agents, that would --

CARLOS

Good night, Tommy.

Carlos closes the door. The lights go out.

Tony slides the picture under the door.

6

EXT. PROJECT HOUSE, PRESENT DAY.

6

The show's carpenter, PETE, 30'S, high strung, is examining the construction of Carlos's deck from below. Tony joins him.

TONY

So, with all things wood, we always bring along our trusted Master Carpenter, Pete Crowley. What do you think, Pete?

PETE

Well, we definitely got some dry rot happening here, not to mention termite damage.

TONY

This looks like a pressure treated pine, obviously, which is fairly common for decks. Would you recommend another type of lumber for a project like this?

PETE

Well, a PT pine or fir is just fine - as long as it's straight and free of knots.

TONY

What about Cypress or Cedar heartwood?

PETE

Naturally resistant to rot and insects, but quite a bit more expensive.

TONY

Is there a compromise?

PETE

Well, if you're looking for durability and low maintenance, a composite product like Trex is the way to go.

(Pete pronounces it COM-
pos-it)

TONY

You mean composite?
(he pronounces it com-POS-
it)

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

PETE
Um. No. Composite.

TONY
Huh. Well you say potato, right?

PETE
No. I'm pretty sure it's
composite.

TONY
Better get crackin', Pete.
Carlos's big party is tomorrow!

7 EXT. ATM ON STREET, DAY 7

Tony withdraws cash from an ATM. Maybe we see over his
shoulder that his receipt indicates he has no more money in
his account.

8 INT. SY'S HARDWARE, PRESENT DAY 8

CLOSE ON:

An old FRAMED PICTURE of Tony (maybe with a mullet or
mustache). The camera pans over to:

Tony and Lisa are being MADE-UP as they stand in a dusty,
over-stacked aisle of a mom-and-pop hardware store just
before the camera's roll.

LISA
I don't understand why we're not
getting this stuff at the House
Warehouse.

MAKE-UP
(doing Lisa)
Oh, I love it there. Close.

TONY
Because I like to kick it Old
School, that's why. Trust me, this
guy's got everything.

LISA
(taking something off the
shelf)
This V-belt is 30 years old.

(CONTINUED)

TONY

Only place in L.A. that sells 'em.

LISA

Everyone in America sells them.
Just newer. I could get one at 7-
11 next door.

TONY

I'm not getting lost at House
Warehouse, again.

CARRIE

You got *lost* in House Warehouse?

TONY

I have a condition. Acute Retail
Disorientation. A lot of people
have it.

The women stare at him in disbelief, then change the subject.

LISA

They're an amazing investment.
Their stock bought me my workshop.

MAKE-UP

I know. Right? We put in a pool --

TONY

Well, some of us invest -- you have
your own workshop?

DON (O.S.)

Ok, guys. Picture's up.

TONY

Carrie, I think I'm a little shiny,
could you --

Carrie walks off, ignoring Tony.

DON

And Action!

Tony and Lisa switch on their 'TV Faces.'

TONY

Ah, the independent Hardware Store.
Even in a big city like Hollywood,
there are still some gems like Sy's
Hardware here on Ivar Street. Hi,
Sy!

(CONTINUED)

Sy, elderly, a lifetime hardware freak, is maneuvered into frame. He's confused.

SY

Hello. How can I help you?

TONY

It's me, Sy. Tony Sparks. How's Helen?

A dreadful pause as Sy waters up. Tony doesn't get it.

TONY (cont'd)

I thought I'd see her at the register when we came in today. She playin' hooky?

SY

Helen's dead.

TONY

Oh. Geez.
(pause)
This is Lisa --

LISA

Sy, I'm so sorry --

SY

When I woke up that morning she was just lying there with her mouth open.

Another pause.

TONY

Uh. We thought we might pick up some --

SY

Her eyes were open, too.
(pause)
Wide open.

TONY

Um. Sy, today we're working on a deck project for TV's Carlos Bernard. We thought we'd come by and pick up some joist hangers and carriage bolts from you.

Sy snaps out of his trance and shouts to the back of the store:

(CONTINUED)

SY

Jose!!!

JOSE (O.S.)

Si, Sy?

SY

We got carriage bolts and joist hangers in stock?

JOSE (O.S.)

No. We can order 'em.

SY

(to Tony)

I'll have to order 'em up for you. Take three weeks.

TONY

Well, no, Sy. This project is time sensitive.

SY

Time what now?

DON

Cut! Tony, let's just get the stuff somewhere else.

TONY

Sy, is there another hardware store nearby?

LISA

(checking her Treo)

House Warehouse. 2.1 miles.

SY

(disappointed)

Oh. You're not gonna be buyin' anything here, then?

DON

All right guys, let's pack it up. Lis, you got directions from here on that thing?

LISA

Totally --

(CONTINUED)

TONY

No. No House Warehouse. We don't have time... Just -- just pack up the truck.

As the crew breaks down their lights and cameras, Tony looks around. He spots a shelf loaded with BOXES OF SCREWS and grabs 10 of them.

SY

Okey dokey, so that'll be \$18.73.

Tony takes the \$300 he withdrew earlier out of his wallet and puts it on the counter as Sy bags up the screws.

SY (cont'd)

Ok- oh, sir? This is too much...

TONY

It's ok, Sy. You keep that. Sorry about Helen.

Tony removes an elaborate set of drawings from a fancy architect's tube as Lisa looks on.

TONY

Isn't that cool looking?

LISA

I think this is smaller than the deck he already has...

TONY

No. The scale should be --
(realizing she's right)
Huh. Well, this is just something I scratched out late last night, so the measurements could be a little off.

Pete enters

PETE

These are all drywall screws and I still don't have any joist hangers for the deck.

TONY

(showing Pete the drawings)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

TONY (cont'd)

Hey, Pete, you can adjust these measurements so we have a bigger deck, right?

LISA

Or I could do it.

PETE

You're not going to have a deck until I have joist hangers and wood screws.

TONY

Just use the screws we got you from Sy's.

PETE

They're drywall screws, dude.

TONY

So? I've built decks for entire developments with only drywall screws.

We cut to a NEWSPAPER ARTICLE from the LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL with a headline that reads: "THREE MAIMED IN RESIDENTIAL DECK COLLAPSE - CONTRACTOR SOUGHT FOR QUESTIONING."

Back to scene:

PETE

(re: the plans)

Are you sure the joists should be this far apart?

TONY

I don't know, Pete, ok? I'm a big concept guy, you know that.

While Tony and Pete talk, Lisa searches through a TRASH CAN for a scrap of paper. She pulls out TONY'S HEADSHOT and begins re-sizing the drawings on the back of it.

TONY (cont'd)

And, honestly, I don't know why you're giving me a hard time, Pete.

PETE

What's that supposed to mean?

(CONTINUED)

TONY

Let's just say you're lucky to be
back this season...

PETE

Why? Did I --

Lisa finishes her drawing and shows it to Tony and Pete

LISA

I think this'll work.

Tony grabs the headshot looking only at the drawing on its
back. He has no idea it's his headshot.

TONY

Well, this is my same idea --

LISA

--expanded with correct
measurements.

TONY

Uh huh. Good. Good conversion,
Lis. Great.

Don steps in

DON

OK, we're ready, guys.

Pete starts to step out of frame when Tony grabs his arm.

TONY

Hey, Pete stay here for this shot.

PETE

Oh.

Tony rolls Lisa's drawing into the blueprints, then stuffs
them halfway into his architect's tube, then freezes.

DON

Action!

Camera's roll. Tony finishes pushing the roll of drawings
into the tube, then hands it to Pete

TONY

Here you go, Pete. These drawings
I did of the deck should be all you
need.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

Pete walks away confused. Tony moves over to a collection of boards and raw lumber.

TONY (cont'd)

So now I'm underway on this week's 'Sparks Lark' which Lisa already guessed is a beautiful craftsman style table. So I guess you folks at home will get to guess next week, ok?

LISA

And we're going to start ripping boards to assemble the legs, top and drawer.

Lisa pulls a board from the pile, sets it across the sawhorses and starts measuring and marking.

She grabs the CIRCULAR SAW

LISA (cont'd)

As always with a power tool, safety's first, so we 'goggle-up' and check our blade guard --

The camera ZOOMS-IN to Lisa carefully preparing

TONY

Wow. Ok, Lis, let's get a move-on here. Time's a wastin'.

LISA

We only have so much wood, so we want to make sure we 'measure twice and cut once' --

Tony grabs the saw from Lisa and guns the trigger.

TONY

BUT, with a project like this, so much depends on your gut instinct and sense of creativity. Trust it and just go with it!

He pulls the trigger on the saw, which immediately gets jammed then kicks the whole board off the sawhorses. The camera gets jostled and we

CUT TO:

10

EXT. PROJECT HOUSE, DAY - MOMENTS LATER

10

Things are clearly a little tense. Tony has a stack of very badly ripped wood in front of him on the floor. Lisa watches with a cup of coffee. Tony attempts to fit the wood together in a table-like way, but none of it is square.

Don comes into frame, squatting next to Tony and speaking to him in hushed tones.

DON

Tony, we need to make a decision here. I'm thinking we cut the Sparks Lark and just focus on the deck for this one.

TONY

I'm not cutting my Sparks Lark, Don.

Pete enters

PETE

Hey, can I just talk to somebody about this deck situation?

DON

Give us a minute, Pete, thanks.

Pete exits

DON (cont'd)

For the sake of time, Tony. I mean, Carlos is due back by 6 and this is all supposed to be done --

TONY

I'm not cutting my Sparks Lark!

Tony abruptly gets up and runs to his car - a terribly beaten up pick up truck. A cameraman follows behind, hopping into the back of the truck as Tony peels out.

11

INT. TARGET STORE, LATER

11

Tony races down the aisles as the camera follows from behind. He pushes past women with children and shopping carts, grabs a cart with stuff in it already, empties it and continues on.

Finally, he stops in the 'Home' section searching fervently for something...

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

A craftsman-style table in a box! He grabs it, running to the front of the store.

At the register, he grabs a can of an ENERGY DRINK to ring up.

CUT TO:

12 INT. PROJECT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

12

Things are manic now. Tony sits on the floor with all of the Target table pieces spread out in front of him. He's crazed, as he starts to assemble the table.

TONY

Here's the thing about home design:
it doesn't have to be expensive!
If you want to decorate your house
like the stars, sometimes all
you've gotta do is think creatively
- use your imagination! What the
hell is this, now?

He's handling a piece that doesn't look familiar to him at all.

SMASH CUT TO:

13 INT. PROJECT HOUSE, SAME

13

TONY

The other great thing about saving
a buck or two is these furniture
kits are all pre-cut and pre-
drilled with instructions even a
retard could figure out.

DON (O.C.)

No! Go again!

SMASH CUT TO:

14 INT. PROJECT HOUSE, SAME 14

TONY

The other great thing about saving
a buck or two is these furniture
kits have instructions even a child
could figure out!

SMASH CUT TO:

15 INT. PROJECT HOUSE, MONTAGE - SAME 15

Tony starts to furiously put the table together without
looking at the wordless instruction drawings. Each cut shows
the table closer to completion but just a little bit off.

Finally, the cuts stop at a nearly completed table, Tony is
finishing the drawer

TONY

It wouldn't be a table without a
drawer, right, Lisa?

LISA

Uh-huh.

He positions the drawer with a flourish and --

--it doesn't fit.

Pete enters.

PETE

Um. Tony?

TONY

NOT NOW, PETE!!!

Tony kicks over the table, which COMES COMPLETELY APART.

PETE

I just wanted you to know there's
no way in hell this deck is gonna
get built tonight, and if you want
to fire me you can suck it, cuz I
fuckin' quit.

He storms out, DON chases after him.

CARLOS enters, passing Don and Pete, carrying a large box in
a TARGET shopping bag.

(CONTINUED)

CARLOS
What the fuck is going on?

TONY
I'm not cutting the Sparks' Lark.

LISA
(to Carlos)
Hi.

A moment.

CARLOS
Hi.
(handing Tony the Target
bag.)
Hey, man. I got this table for the
party tomorrow. Could you clean
this shit up and put it together?
And I'd get started on that deck,
dude. It's getting dark.

CUT TO:

Tony stands in front of a window on the front deck of the house. He's exhausted. He finishes off a Red Bull and crushes the can.

Lights are on inside the house where we see Carlos loading a SHOTGUN.

TONY
Well, as is often the case in this
business, we're going a little over-
schedule. But not to worry! I've
got the whole thing under control
and we'll have my buddy Carlos's
deck done by sunrise!

Behind him, Carlos snaps the rifle closed and leaves the window frame. The lights on the deck go off, leaving Tony illuminated only by the interior lights.

TONY (cont'd)
Oh. Okay, cool! I'm gonna run
down to the truck and grab my
flashlight before I get down to
work, so we'll see you next time --

The interior lights go off. Tony's in the dark.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

TONY (cont'd)
-- on "Hollywood Residential."

UNDER CREDITS:

17 EXT. HOUSE WAREHOUSE PARKING LOT, NIGHT

17

Tony pulls up in his truck, and runs into the store.

INT. HOUSE WAREHOUSE, CONTINUOUS

Tony wanders the aisles, confused. He absently picks up something and carries it for a little bit before he sees something else and takes that. A TIMER appears in the corner of the screen as TIME PASSES until we see Tony in the GARDEN DEPT. slumped in a patio chair, fast asleep....

FULL NELSON

by

Adam Paul and Andy Bobrow

CONTACT:

Adam Paul

310-508-3767

Adam@dailydistraction.net

JAKE NELSON - 30's, desperate, sincere, tired - is talking to an off-camera interviewer. Jake wears a neck brace and sling.

Behind Jake is a large TAXIDERMIZED BOAR. On the wall hang an assortment of MOTIVATIONAL POSTERS of the kind normally found in corporate settings.

SUPER:

Jake Nelson, Promoter, Nelson Wrestling Alliance, Fresno, California.

JAKE

You know what they call wrestling, right?

OFF-SCREEN INTERVIEWER

What they 'call' it?

JAKE

"Sport of Kings"

SHELLY

(crossing through)

No.

JAKE

(to Shelley)

I'm sorry, are you being interviewed right now, Shelley?

(to interviewer)

I let her manage the office, she thinks she knows everything.

SHELLY (O.C.)

Bullshit you 'let me.'

JAKE

(to Interviewer)

Kind of a 'community service' thing. I'm pretty sure I can write her off.

SHELLY (O.C.)

The sport of kings is horse racing.

JAKE

Uh, tell that to the ninety plus people who ate it up when I dropped that phrase on them a couple weeks ago.

CUT TO:

2 INT. NAW ARENA, NIGHT. FLASHBACK

2

A roaring crowd at the end of a big wrestling event.

Jake stands in the center of the ring, dwarfed by the enormous KING COLE - 50's, sweaty, wearing a cheesy CROWN- and ERIK 'THE VIKING' THORVALDSEN - 30's, also enormous, also sweaty. A REFEREE pretends to officiate.

Jake speaks into a bullhorn.

JAKE

In the Sport of Kings only one can be crowned!! The king of the sport is the king. Of the sport of Kings. KING COLE!!!

Jake hands Cole the ornate CHAMPIONSHIP BELT. A pretty good response from the crowd.

JAKE (CONT'D)

(he can't help himself)
Sport of kings!

Crowd is not at all impressed by Jake's phrase as he is.

CUT BACK TO:

3 INT. JAKE'S OFFICE, DAY - INTERVIEW

3

JAKE

It's about branding, this business. It's about repetition. It's about marketing. That's really what I'm bringing to the game. Changing the game. Shaking things up a bit.

OFF-SCREEN INTERVIEWER

Tell me about the business. This was your father's company?

STILL-1 INSERT:

STILL-1

Ken Burns-esque shot of AN OLD POSTER advertising 'NELSON WRESTLING - FRESNO!' followed by shots of VINTAGE WRESTLERS - a fat man in coveralls with a bale of hay over his head; a luchadore holding a midget in a headlock; a 'Gorgeous George' type with golden hair and oiled skin.

JAKE (V.O.)

Yeah. Yep. This is the Nelson Alliance of Wrestling. Forty years strong. My father built it up from nothing. You know he always said, Every family needs a home and NAW will always be a home for the Wrestling Family. And it has been. Except he when he lost it to the government. Got it back, though. Had to Change it to a roller rink briefly, but then always back to wrestling. And after he died, it was passed on to me...

STILL-2 INSERT:

STILL-2

Stills with super:

-Jake's father - 'NATE NELSON (1942-2008)' - a dated black and white photograph of Jake's worried-looking father (standing next to a younger version of the man we'll get to know as RICK PEARL)

JAKE (CONT'D)

And someday, I will hand it down...

STILL-3 INSERT:

STILL-3

-Jake with more hair, looking completely DRUNK.

JAKE (CONT'D)

...to my son.

STILL-4 INSERT:

STILL-4

- Jake's 9 year-old son, KYLE ('Kyle Nelson'), skinny, pale, bored in front of a tv with a video game controller in his hand.

BACK TO SCENE

OFF-SCREEN INTERVIEWER

How old is Kyle?

JAKE

Nine. Eight. No, nine. Haven't seen him in a while, but we talk all the time.

4 INT. ARENA - FLASHBACK

4

Jake outside the ring in the middle of a phone call. A couple of wrestlers work out.

JAKE

Just put Kyle on, Janet, please... School? ... Yes, I know it's a school day, of course -- I couldn't pick up his other calls because I had a wrestler -- a business emergency - Look, just have him call me when he can. Yes, I promise I'll pick up!

Hangs up.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Bitch.

5 INT. JAKE'S OFFICE, DAY. SAME.

5

Back to scene. Jake holds up a picture of Kyle.

JAKE

But this is what he looked like... in this picture.

(recovering)

But this company is like a family here. And I'm like the father. I'm all about family.

SHELLY

Boxing is called The Sweet Science.

JAKE

What does science have to do with anything? That doesn't even make any sense. You're embarrassing yourself.

CUT TO:

6 OPENING CREDITS

6

CUT TO:

7 INT. JAKE'S OFFICE, DAY, INTERVIEW. 7

OFF-SCREEN INTERVIEWER
Could you tell us what happened
earlier this month?

JAKE
Sure. Yes. Glad you asked. Um,
you know, no matter what business
you're in, you're selling a
product.

CUT TO:

8 INT. JAKE'S OFFICE, DAY, CANDID FLASHBACK 8

Camera catches Jake talking on the phone. He holds a
promotional photo of KING COLE. A banner over the photo
says, 'FORMER IWF STAR!!!'

As Jake carries on a difficult conversation on the phone,
camera finds some other details on his desk:

A payment notice from a bank. A stack of bills. A note pad
as Jake scratches out dollar amounts, as if he's scraping
together money while talking to a creditor. Over this
action, we hear Jake's answer to the interviewer:

JAKE (V.O.)
And when I took over, I found
Nelson Wrestling the best product I
could. A superstar wrestler - the
business term is 'rainmaker.'

CUT TO:

9 INT. JAKE'S OFFICE, DAY, INTERVIEW 9

JAKE
Now, without bragging, I must say I
have a pretty sharp eye for talent.
Then we hit a bump in the road.
Which happens in business.

CUT TO:

10 INT. NAW ARENA, NIGHT. FLASHBACK 10

Continuing the previous action, Jake hands King his
championship belt, and King hoists it up. He then grabs his
chest and COLLAPSES TO THE MAT. Dead.

Jake and Erik stare at him on the ground.

JAKE

Uh oh.

CUT TO:

11 INT. NAW ARENA, KITCHEN - JUST AFTER COLE'S DEATH. 11

Jake walks with Shelley backstage, and through a black curtain into the kitchen area.

JAKE

Oh God, Oh God, Oh God. He was gonna cover the mortgage. How are we gonna keep this building with no star? Smurf and Gumper can't bring 'em in. How could he do this to me?!

SHELLY

Jake, get it together. Jesus, you're thinking about the money? Already?!

JAKE

Okay, Shelly, a man died. Tragedy. I get it. But he was an investment too. You get to pretend he was human because of your tits. I don't have that luxury.

SHELLY

Fuck you.

She storms off up the stairs.

JAKE

(calling out)
That was out of line. Take a buck out of the sexual harassment jar.
(then, to himself)
I don't have a star...

CUT TO:

12 INT. JAKE'S OFFICE, INTERVIEW. 12

OFF-SCREEN INTERVIEWER

Talk about Rick Pearl...

JAKE

I'm not talking about Rick Fucking Pearl.

OFF-SCREEN INTERVIEWER

He and your father worked together--

JAKE

Fuck you.

13 INSERT OF TV

13

RICK PEARL, 50's, slick, muscular, doing an interview. The IWF logo is behind him. He talks directly to camera.

PEARL (V.O.)

... There's two kinds of people in this world: Rick Pearl, and people who wanna *be* Rick Pearl. You wanna talk about toughness? You're looking at a guy who bit off his own finger to win a bet! Rick Pearl eats his competitors hearts so he can acquire their POWER!!!

CUT TO:

14 INT. JAKE'S OFFICE, INTERVIEW.

14

Jake watching the TV footage [footage not visible to camera], looking at his own PINKY FINGER.

BACK TO SCENE

JAKE

Pearl wouldn't exist without my dad. Pearl was my dad's protege. And then he stabbed him in the back. Every great talent my dad discovered, Pearl stole. There was The Bat Man...

STILL-6 INSERT

STILL-6

Photo (TO BE BUILT IN POST) of a guy in tights holding a baseball bat.

JAKE (CONT'D)

...Joe DogFace...

STILL-7 INSERT

STILL-7

Photo (TO BE BUILT IN POST) of Jo Jo the Dogfaced Boy in a wrestling outfit.

JAKE (CONT'D)

And you know what Pearl did with him? *Shaved* him!

STILL-8 INSERT

STILL-8

Photo (TO BE BUILT IN POST) of a handsome wrestler (someone famous).

JAKE (CONT'D)

Completely ruined the bit! Pearl took all the dignity out of the sport of kings.

CUT TO:

15

INT. NAW ARENA, DAY - LATER.

15

SMURF - 20's, overweight, happy-go-lucky, and GUMPER - 20's, tall, lanky, passionate, are in the ring, showing off their moves to Jake, who stands outside the ring looking up at them.

Gumper hits Smurf with BOWLING BALL, SLEDGEHAMMER, PLUMBER'S WRENCH, LEAD PIPE, etc.

Each time, Smurf just smiles and shakes it off.

SMURF

And I could keep going!

GUMPER

Seriously, Jake. I can hit him with anything. Dumb bells, engine parts....

SMURF

...Billiard balls, power tools...

GUMPER

Smurf's head needs to be written up. I'm calling the New England Journal of Medicine tomorrow...

JAKE

(a little bored)
What else you got?

Then, Gumper pulls out a TASER.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Hello.

NIKKI - 20's, tough, pretty - approaches.

NIKKI

Jake, can I have a minute?

JAKE

What's up, Nikki?

NIKKI

Who am I working with next week?

JAKE

Nik, You're a great girl wrestler. I have no other girl wrestlers, so your're off this card.

NIKKI

How bout I shove that card up your vagina??

JAKE

Sounds great.

Jake moves on.

CUT TO:

16 INT. JAKE'S OFFICE, CONTINUOUS.

16

Jake sits across his desk from CHACHIN, 30's,

JAKE

Chacin, thanks for coming in...

CHACHIN

You look good, Papi. You been working out?

JAKE

Let's just stick to business, ok? I need you to work next week.

CHACHIN

Really? This is a pleasant surprise. Every day I wait by the phone. But no Jakey on the phone...

JAKE

Well, you're tough to pair up. No one will get in the ring with you.

CHACHIN

They are all *cowards* - They fear Chachin!

JAKE

Well, they fear certain things *about* you....

CUT TO:

17 INT. NAW ARENA, NIGHT. FLASHBACK

17

Chachin wrestles Gumper in front of an audience. Chachin sandwiches Gumper to the mat, belly down.

SMURF

I didn't think we were gonna get down to the mat so soon...

CHACHIN

Oh, sorry.

They lie there for a beat.

SMURF

What - what is that? Do you have something in your pants?

CHACHIN

Don't be ridiculous...

SMURF

I'm kicking out and eye-raking ya, ready?

CHACHIN

(enjoying the moment)
Wait, wait, wait... shhh...shhhhh.

CUT TO:

18 INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - DAY

18

Jake and Chachin, as before.

CHACHIN

Your point?

JAKE
I'm putting you with Nikki.

CHACHIN
A woman?

JAKE
Yes.

CHACHIN
(disgusted)
She reminds me of my wife.

JAKE
Then you should have no problem
beating on her.

CHACHIN
(noticing the boar)
Why you have a boar in your office?

JAKE
Lucy? My dad wrestled her. He
asked for a bear, but he slurred
when he drank...

CHACHIN
She look ferocious.

JAKE
You know what? She was actually
really sweet. Used to sleep at the
foot of my bed.

Chachin thinks for a beat.

CHACHIN
So she was different inside then
the outside...

Jake stares at Chachin as he PREENS.

CUT TO

19 INT. NAW FRONT LOBBY, CONTINUOUS.

19

SHELLY
Jake, we gotta talk.

JAKE
Not now Shel, I'm in it.

SHELLY

What'd you do with the receipts
from the night King died?

JAKE

Who wants to know?

SHELLY

You've gotta give it to King's son
Dylan.

JAKE

No I don't.

Jake moves on to the men's room. Shelley follows.

SHELLY

King was a single dad. Dylan's
alone.

JAKE

It's a rough world. I'm gonna lose
this building if I don't catch up
on the mortgage.

SHELLY

You better put together a good card
for next week, then...

JAKE

What do you think I'm trying to
do??

SHELLY

You look like you're trying to pee.

JAKE

I'm trying to pee so I can think.
And you know what would help, Shel?
If you weren't making me give all
my money away.

SHELLY

Jake, it's the right thing to do.

JAKE

Absolutely not.

SHELLY

Explain it to Dylan yourself, then.
He's on his way over.

She exits.

JAKE

Dammit!

Off Jake's disgust we

CUT TO:

20

INT. NAW ARENA, THE NEXT DAY.

20

Jake and Shelly stand in the empty arena as DYLAN COLE - late teens, early 20's, scrawny, brooding awkward - approaches. Shelly holds a bouquet of flowers. Jake holds a paper bag close to his chest.

JAKE

(all smiles, arms open for
a hug, fake)

Dylan!!! Come here, buddy!

Dylan reaches them and stands his ground, leaving Jake hanging.

They sit down at a booth.

SHELLY

Dylan, we just wanted to say we're
so sorry for your loss. Your dad
was a real hero of mine.

She hands him the flowers.

Dylan notices her, BLUSHES, then puts on his 'tough' face.

DYLAN

Uh Huh.

Shelly nudges Jake.

JAKE

Yeah. And this is in no way an
admission of liability, ok?

He holds out the paper bag for Dylan.

Dylan just stares at it.

JAKE (CONT'D)

It's the box office take from the
night King Cole kicked -- passed
on... minus my expenses, of course.
And, really, that's all there is --
I mean I could use another 40 out
of there --

Shelley elbows Jake.

DYLAN

I don't want your money, Mr.
Nelson.

JAKE

Really? Great. So we're on the
same page.

SHELLY

Dylan, you should think about this--

JAKE

No, no. He doesn't want the money--

DYLAN

I want to wrestle.

JAKE

Huh?

DYLAN

I want to wrestle Erik the Viking.

They all stare at each other for a beat.

SHELLY

Oh, Dylan, no --

JAKE

I think that's a GREAT idea.

SHELLY

(sotto to Jake)

It's an AWFUL idea. He's not a
wrestler. Look at him.

(to Dylan)

How much do you weigh?

JAKE

(to Dylan)

Don't answer that.

Dylan pulls out an ASTHMA INHALER - takes a hit.

DYLAN

So is this thing a go or what?

SHELLY

Jesus Christ.

JAKE
Oh, it's a go.

ON JAKE

His gears start to turn.

CUT TO:

21 INT. BAR, DAY - THE NEXT DAY.

21

Jake and Erik at Erik's day job - bouncer at a dive bar.
During the day.

Erik's holding a FLYER announcing "MEMORIAL MATCH"

ERIK
No! There's no way, Jake. I'm
never wrestling again. I'm done.

JAKE
Why?

ERIK
Jake, I killed that poor kid's
father --

JAKE
No, he had a heart attack. That's
different.

ERIK
You never shoulda let him fight.

JAKE
NO, no, I will not accept blame for
this either, Erik. And you know
why?

ERIK
Why?

JAKE
Because it's not legally prudent.

ERIK
Jesus, Jake, where's your heart,
man?

JAKE

And, And. Because we *all* die. Ok?
And that's what's eating at you,
Erik. How long ago did your dad
die?

ERIK

About a year...

JAKE

What was the last thing you said to
him?

Erik tries to remember - this hits him.

ERIK

Go fuck yourself...

Beat.

JAKE

Wait. Me? Or is that what you
said to your dad?

ERIK

Both.

JAKE

Oh. Look, maybe - just maybe -
wrestling King's son might be a
chance to heal some old wounds?
Pass on a trade that you wish could
have been passed on to you? It's
really an act of closure and of
forgiveness. Forgiveness of
yourself...

Erik is near tears - he grabs Jake in a big BEAR HUG.

ERIK

Dude. You're so right...

JAKE

Ok, I'm having trouble breathing.

On Jake as his gears start turning...

ERIK

This is gonna be beautiful...

CUT TO:

22 INT. NAW ARENA, NIGHT. 22

The arena has been turned into a spectacle of death and revenge. A SIGN reads: 'VENGEANCE!' Cardboard coffins, black bunting.

CUT TO:

23 INT. NAW ARENA, SAME - BACKSTAGE 23

Erik is looking through a curtain at all the signage. He turns to Jake

ERIK

You've got to be kidding me, man.

JAKE

The coffin's too small, isn't it?

24 INT. NAW ARENA, SAME - IN THE RING. 24

NIKKI and CHACHIN are in the ring locked in a grapple. Chachin pulls her in close.

CHACHIN

Oooh, girl. Your ends are split!

NIKKI

I know! It's so dry here...

Flip to another hold.

CHACHIN

You should come over, let me do your color.

NIKKI

You do color?

CHACHIN

Like a professional.
(calling out a move)
Clothesline sweetie.

Chachin SWINGS Nikki into the ropes, then sticks his arm out as she gets clotheslined.

NIKKI

I'll come over Saturday.

CUT TO:

25 INT. NAW ARENA, KITCHEN AREA. 25

Erik and Dylan sit on folding chairs. Dylan seems nervous, putting on knee pads. Erik casually drinks a beer.

ERIK
Boy, I remember my first match...

DYLAN
Shut up, old man.

ERIK
That's exactly what I said.

Dylan is cowed.

ERIK (CONT'D)
Just remember to let me lead, I'll call out our moves. It's supposed to be fun. I'll take care of you.

DYLAN
Whatever.

ERIK
And *stay away from my knee.*

CUT TO:

26 INT. NWA ARENA, SAME 26

Fan interview. Rabid fan of Smurf or Gumper. Wrestling is his life.

MCKENZIE SINGS NATIONAL ANTHEM.

27 INT. NAW ARENA, SAME - IN THE RING - A LITTLE LATER 27

Now Smurf and Gumper are in the ring.

The wrestling is good. Smurf starts throwing RAW HAMBURGER MEAT at Gumper. The crowd roars.

Gumper grabs a TASER and shows it to the crowd. They scream.

While Smurf isn't looking, Gumper TASES Smurf in the neck.

The meat starts to SIZZLE AND COOK in Smurf's hands.

Gumper starts throwing the cooked meat at the crowd who LOVE IT.

CUT TO:

28 INT. NAW ARENA, KITCHEN AREA - SAME. 28

Jake stands with Dylan at the curtain looking out. Dylan is very nervous.

JAKE
You gonna be okay, there, Dylan?

DYLAN
I don't know what I'm doing...

JAKE
(not sure what to say)
Oh. Well. Um. Well what would your dad say?

DYLAN
Stop being such a pussy.

This hits Jake.

JAKE
Listen. Just... have fun.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
...From Fresno, California,
weighing in at 120 pounds, the heir
to the Cole throne, a Central
Californian Prince, ladies and
gentlemen, your very own...DYLAN
COOOOOOLE!!!!

JAKE
(to Dylan)
Go on, Kid, that's you.

Dylan prepares himself and opens the curtain to head out into the packed arena.

Jake watches him go out with something like fatherly pride...

Camera pans back to find Erik, still sitting in his chair with his beer. Jake grabs the beer and sends Erik off.

CUT TO:

29

INT. NAW ARENA, SAME - IN THE RING - MOMENTS LATER

29

Erik and Dylan - locked in a hold - Dylan is clearly resisting...

ERIK

Take it easy, kid. Let's just stick to the bit, ok?

Dylan STRUGGLES, trying to grab Erik's ears from behind.

Erik SPINS around and BEAR HUGS Dylan (as with Jake in the bar).

REVERSE

Dylan starts to WHEEZE as he looks around at the BANNERS and SIGNS screaming for blood. Erik's got an insane grip.

Erik's a little misty as he whispers in Dylan's ear:

ERIK (CONT'D)

It's OK, Dylan. It's OK to be mad.
I'm not gonna let you go, though.
I'm not ever gonna let you go!

Dylan struggles, finally PULLING BACK his foot and RAMMING it into Erik's KNEE.

Erik releases Dylan, DROPPING to the mat in agony.

The crowd goes wild at a 97 pound teenager dropping the giant 'murderer'.

Dylan climbs up onto the ropes and LEAPS...

SLO-MO

Dylan FLYING through the air.

Erik seeing him come at him, trying to CRAWL away

Jake, Shelly, Smurf and Gumper ringside, jaws open.

The Crowd - jaws open

BACK TO SPEED

Dylan LANDS on Erik, pinning him to the mat.

The REF isn't sure what to do.

REF
(to Erik)
Should I count it?

ERIK
(in agony)
Count it! Just get him off me!!!

RINGSIDE:

Where Jake, Gumper, Smurf and Shelley watch in amazement.

GUMPER
He's a natural...

SHELLY
(seeing it for the first
time)
He's *beautiful*...

JAKE
He's...*something*...

SMURF
You gonna go in there and name him
champ?

JAKE
(snapping out of it)
Yeah, yeah...

BACK INSIDE THE RING

Jake shouts through his bullhorn.

JAKE (CONT'D)
How bout our new...
(searching for a title as
he looks at scrawny
Dylan)
...super-featherweight CHAMPION!!!

The crowd roars. They start CHANTING, 'Vengeance,
vengeance!' A torch is burning in the back...

JAKE (CONT'D)
After the tragedy of his father's
demise in this very ring, young
Dylan Cole has brought glory to his
family name...

Jake looks worriedly at the crippled Erik curled up on the mat.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Crippling the man responsible for
his father's death!

DYLAN POV

The crowd is ravenous. The TASER lies on the apron of the ring.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Prince Cole has a new name, ladies
and gentlemen. HE. IS.
VENGEANCE!!!!

And with that, Dylan TASERS Jake.

CLOSE ON Jake as his eyes roll back and he falls out of frame.

BLACK. SOUND OUT.

In the black, the strains of the USC Marching Band's 'Tusk' fade up.

JAKE POV:

A sideways view of the CROWD outside the ring in a COMPLETE FRENZY.

ON DYLAN:

Standing, taking in the crowd's glee.

Jake rises to join him, eyes black, hair standing on end.

The two stand there - smiling.

30

INT. NAW ARENA, NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

30

The camera pulls back, back into the crowd to reveal:

ROCK PEARL'S HAND, hanging down by his side, his pinky finger missing. Camera pans up and widens to reveal the rest of Pearl. From behind, we see him lean over to an ASSISTANT standing next to him.

RICK PEARL
Get me that kid's number.

31 INT. NWA ARENA - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

31

Back in the ring, Jake and Dylan turn to each other in amazement

JAKE
Hit me again! We're gonna be rich!

JAKE POV

Dylan smiles as he PULLS BACK HIS FIST - then THROWS it right to camera.

BLACK.

THE INSPECTORS
EPISODE - 406
"COLLEGE BOMB MAKER"

Written by

Adam Paul

Story by

Dillon Morgan & Randall B. Smith

COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

INT. DOMICILE HALLWAY - DAY (DAY 3)

Amanda, Mitch (wearing a STRAW FEDORA at a jaunty angle) and Joel turn the corner to the reception area.

AMANDA

I might need to take back what I said about that hat.

MITCH

Why? I'm gonna try it out for a day or two --

They stop to see a college-age student, BEN (wiry, caffeinated, nervous), holding a small cardboard box in one hand and a series of WIRES and what appears to be a DETONATOR in the other.

BEN

(nervously)
Inspectors?

AMANDA

What have you got there?

All three eye the box and it's shifty owner.

BEN

I think I have a big problem.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

EXT. PUBLIC PARK - DAY (DAY 1)

TITLE OVER:
"Three Days Earlier"

BEN and another college-age student, JUSTIN (fratboy type, confident, intimidating), toss a football (poorly) to each other in the middle of a conversation they clearly don't want anyone else to hear...

BEN
...This doesn't sound like my kind
of job, Justin...

Justin smiles cockily, throwing the football a little too hard.

JUSTIN
I think it's exactly your kind of
job. You're a crook. So, you build
me what I need, or I start talking
about your hacking activity on
campus.

BEN
But a *bomb*?

JUSTIN
A package bomb. Small and simple.
Just enough to make a statement.

BEN
-- or kill someone.

Justin gets icy cold.

JUSTIN
That's none of your business, now,
is it Ben? What *is* your business:
two to five for cybercrime. Hacking
university servers to steal and
sell tests has made you a nice
little pile of cash. It'd be a
shame for it all to go away while
you're put away --

BEN
Ok, ok. I'll do it. Just keep your
mouth shut.

JUSTIN

That's better. You've got three days.

Justin starts to walk away.

BEN

You never would have passed Engineering 101 without me.

Justin returns, moving in close.

JUSTIN

I failed Engineering 101 because of your junk test, Ben. You owe me.

He rifles the football right at Ben's chest, knocking the wind out of him, before walking away.

Off Ben's concerned look we

CUT TO:

INT. UNIVERSITY GRIND - NIGHT (DAY 1)

On the coffeehouse stage, the curtain closes in front of a select audience comprised of a mix of teachers and students - and of course, VERONICA, AMANDA and a SLEEPING PRESTON (unnoticed by the gang).

NOAH, dressed in jodhpurs and wearing a beret and cravat steps on stage to APPLAUSE, jolting Preston awake.

NOAH

(nervously)

Thank you so much, everyone, for attending this dress rehearsal of my first play *Monsters of the Sahara!*

Preston reacts to the title by looking at Veronica, who shrugs.

NOAH (CONT'D)

So, this project is worth almost half the grade for my writing class. I invited you tonight because your honest feedback will really make the difference between a good grade and a great grade. SO: please give me any and all thoughts on what you saw tonight - unless, of course, you fell asleep through it!

Everyone laughs, especially Preston, who laughs loudest. Veronica and Amanda exchange bewildered looks.

INT. TECH SERVICE ROOM/DOMICILE HALLWAY - NEXT DAY (DAY 2)

Preston catches up to Amanda on her way to a meeting.

PRESTON

Hey, mom!

AMANDA

Oh, hey sweetie, not a lot of time to chat right now --

PRESTON

What'd you think of Noah's play last night?

AMANDA

Uh... It was cute? I guess. Can we talk about this later?

PRESTON

Just, real quick. What about notes? You know, for Noah to make it better, what kind of notes would you give him?

They stop.

AMANDA

Honey -- *notes*? I know you want your friend to do well, but I don't know about plays. I guess it was hard to hear sometimes, so maybe they could have been louder?

PRESTON

Oh, good one! So, like 'speak up'?

AMANDA

Sure. And sometimes it was too dark onstage, so maybe more... you know...lights?

PRESTON

See? You had thoughtful notes...

AMANDA

Hm. I guess after sleeping on it, I kind of *marinated* on it, you know?

PRESTON
Marinated... I like that.

He starts to wheel away.

AMANDA
 Well, wait. What did you think?

PRESTON
 Oh, you know. I'm still marinating
 on it.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

MITCH and Amanda are viewing a new tech demonstration from
 JOEL, who is handing them a pair of high-tech binoculars.

JOEL
 These are pretty sweet: Steiner
 military rangefinders. Class 1
 laser reads distance to 1600 yards.
 Great for measuring small and
 moving targets.

AMANDA
 (looking through them
 across the room)
 These are sweet.

Joel takes out a small BOX

JOEL
 Almost as sweet as *this*.

In the box is a small KEYFOB and tiny MICROPHONE, no bigger
 than a hairpin.

JOEL (CONT'D)
 Wireless mic and transmitter. No
 bulk. Microphone can clip to a
 lapel or even in your hair. Keyfob
 sends the signal to your receiver
 or smartphone. Virtually
 undetectable.

AMANDA
 So when we're looking for a
 confession...

MITCH
 ...undercover or using an
 informant...

JOEL
 ...This thing gets past any pat-
 down.

Mitch notices a straw FEDORA HAT on the table. Puts it on.

MITCH
 And this?

JOEL
 That holds a micro video camera in
 the hatband. Records to a chip sewn
 into the lining --

Mark angles his chin down and leans the hat brim very close
 to Amanda's face.

AMANDA
 (playing along)
 Hi mom!

JOEL
 --Which doesn't work yet.

AMANDA
 So... I'm just talking to Mitch's
 head?

JOEL
 Yup.

AMANDA
 (pivoting, admiring the
 hat)
 Hm. Sharp hat, partner. You should
 keep that look.

MITCH
 (sincerely flattered)
 Really? I never thought I was a hat
 guy...

He looks at his reflection in the conference room window,
 tips the hat like Sinatra, winks at himself.

INT. BEN'S BASEMENT - DAY 2

At a cluttered WORKBENCH, Ben nervously surveys the various
 components to the bomb he's been tasked to make: wire,
 circuit boards, etc.

Suddenly, Ben's phone BUZZES with a text, startling him.

MESSAGE ON BEN'S PHONE:

"Justin: Time's almost up. Deliver my package tomorrow."

BACK TO BEN

Worried and sweaty, Ben picks up a piece of wire and a soldering gun, but his hands are shaking. Then

BUZZ

"Justin: It's time to SEND."

Suddenly it hits Ben:

BEN
(to himself)
'Send' ... *Mail*.

Ben grabs a small cardboard box and fills it with the various (unassembled) materials. Then

RING

Ben stares at the incoming call - Justin. He lets it ring again, then picks it up.

BEN (CONT'D)
I'm working on it.

JUSTIN (O.S.)
Will it be ready tomorrow?

BEN
These things take time. I've gotta... test the circuitry.

JUSTIN
(chummy)
Hey, bro, I get it. You're a careful worker. I like that.
(then, sinister)
But if you don't show up tomorrow, I'll do more than turn you in. I'll turn you inside out.

CLICK.

Terrified, Ben gathers the box - and his resolve - before exiting with a click of the overhead light bulb chain.

INT. UNIVERSITY GRIND - NEXT DAY (DAY 3)

Preston wheels in just as Noah waves him over

NOAH
Hey Preston! Over here!

Preston obliges.

PRESTON
(awkwardly)
Hey, what's going on?

NOAH
I just haven't had a chance to talk
to you since the dress rehearsal.
What'd you think?

PRESTON
(stalling)
What'd I think? Oh, man, you
know... Noah, I mean, first of all:
I *know* how hard you've been working
on ... on...

NOAH
... *Monsters of the Sahara* --

PRESTON
(trying to say it
simultaneously)
Monsters of the Sahara exactly, so
I need to, you know, *marinate* on it
a little longer.

NOAH
'Marinate'? Like a steak?

PRESTON
YES. Exactly like that. Steak.

NOAH
Huh.

PRESTON
Because you deserve a quality
critique. Much like a... well-
marinated steak.

Noah takes in Preston for a tense beat.

NOAH
You know what, Preston?

PRESTON
(caught)
Oh, man, look --

NOAH

I'm so glad you said that!
Marinate!

PRESTON

You are?

NOAH

Yes! It's really important to me to ace this class, and I know you get that. But everyone else is just giving me softball compliments instead of giving me something to work on . It just feels like no one has the courage to be really honest with me.

PRESTON

Well, 'courage' is kind of a --

NOAH

Except you, Preston. I know you'll be straight with me about what you think. You marinate away.

Preston is stuck. Noah's faith in him is disarming.

PRESTON

You can count on me.
(barely checking his
watch)
Wow, I should scoot. Catch you
later?

Preston exits.

NOAH

(to himself)
Marinate!

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. AMANDA'S OFFICE - DAY

Amanda and Mitch sit across from Ben.

MITCH

Why would your buddy want *you* to make him a letter bomb?

BEN

Well, first, Justin's not a buddy. He's just a... business associate.

AMANDA

You mean the exam stealing business?

BEN

(sheepish)

Yeah... he threatened to out my 'activities' to the authorities if I didn't build him this bomb. And worse. Honestly, I'm scared.

Amanda and Mitch look skeptically at each other.

BEN (CONT'D)

Look. I've done some shady stuff. I'm not proud of it. But I've never wanted to hurt anyone. If he mails this thing - someone is going to get seriously injured. Maybe even killed. I can't live with that. So here I am. If that gets me in trouble, so be it.

AMANDA

(softening)

What's in the box, Ben?

BEN

The bomb components. Unassembled. I couldn't even begin to put it together...

AMANDA

You did the right thing by coming to us, Ben.

MITCH

I wonder if Joel could use these pieces to build a fake bomb?

BEN

W-why? I mean, can't you just grab Justin?

AMANDA

We'll grab him. With your help.

INT. JAMESTOWN UNIVERSITY, HALLWAY - LATER

Veronica is on her way to class as Preston catches up to her.

PRESTON

Oh, good, V! I've been looking all over for you --

VERONICA

Um -- are you sweating?

PRESTON

You're tough to track down -- Hey did you give Noah any notes on his play?

VERONICA

Yeah, I thought it was great!

PRESTON

Sure of course it was great, but what about, like, stuff for him to work on?

VERONICA

Oh, I don't know. I mean I guess it could've used more monsters. I mean the title *is* "Monsters of the Sahara."

PRESTON

(making a mental note)
More monsters... interesting.
Anything else?

VERONICA

Well, it was kinda long, in my opinion. And everyone talked too fast.

PRESTON

Fast talking and length. Got it.

VERONICA

Got what?

PRESTON

I... got... what you're talking about. Agreeing! I'm agreeing with your notes.

VERONICA

Ok... How about your notes?

Preston starts to wheel away

PRESTON

I'll tell you after I've marinated on them a little!

INT. TECH SERVICE ROOM - DAY

Mitch and Amanda watch as Joel explains the fake bomb they've asked him to make.

JOEL

So *this* is our dummy package bomb.

AMANDA

It's important our suspect can't tell the difference...

MITCH

... and that this thing doesn't hurt anyone.

JOEL

Hence the word 'dummy.'

Joel picks up the package and reveals a little of the bomb's 'guts'

JOEL (CONT'D)

First, any explosive material Ben brought us has been disabled and placed into evidence. This circuit-board is basically for show, but connects to a small power source to activate some indicator lights.

AMANDA

So it'll look right, but will it feel right?

JOEL

I've added some extra wiring for bulk and non-explosive items for weight. As far as our bad guy is concerned: this is the real deal.

Mitch finds the FEDORA on a shelf, then flips it onto his head, like he's been practicing this move at home.

MITCH

Then let's go out there and catch
us a bad guy.

He poses with his new look and winks at Amanda and Joel.

AMANDA

(to Joel)

This is your fault.

INT. UNIVERSITY GRIND - DAY

Preston and Noah at a table. Noah intently reads a page or two of typed notes as Preston looks on, hopefully.

NOAH

Hmmmm....

PRESTON

(vaguely positive)

Mm-hm.

NOAH

Ok...

PRESTON

...Right?

NOAH

Uh...

PRESTON

(to himself)

Uh-oh.

NOAH

So, you really think these notes
will help me ace this project?

PRESTON

Yes. I think.

NOAH

Well, you *have* been marinating on
it.

PRESTON

You have no idea.

NOAH

What's that?

PRESTON

Deep, deep marinating. I wanted your "steak" to be well-seasoned.

NOAH

I really appreciate it, because this professor is *tough*. I really need outside perspective like --
(re: Preston's notes)
-- *this*.

Noah eyes Preston who looks like he wants to say something.

NOAH (CONT'D)

What was that?

Not wanting to answer any more questions, Preston starts to wheel away.

PRESTON

Nothing. I hope the notes help. And if not, you know, just ignore them. Good luck with rehearsals!

Noah can smell something's going on. He looks at the notes one more time.

NOAH

I think this steak has some fat on it. [ALT: I think this steak is a little over-marinated.]

EXT. PUBLIC PARK / INT. SQUAD VAN - DAY (DAY 4)

Ben stands awkwardly alone in the same location he'd met Justin earlier. He wears a messenger bag.

Amanda and Mitch surveil from the van using the high-tech binoculars Joel showed them.

Justin approaches in running gear. Stops near Ben to stretch. He looks angry.

JUSTIN

You wanna tell me where you've been?

BEN

(defensive)
Building a bomb isn't like baking a cake, you know!

Justin's eyes get crazy as he gets real close to Ben

JUSTIN

You keep your voice. *Down.* Where's my package?

BEN

It's ready. How am I gonna know you won't turn me in?

JUSTIN

I guess you'll just have to trust me. Like I trusted you with that junk test you sold me. Now hand it over and we'll be even.

BEN

What's this about anyway?

JUSTIN

I already told you it's none of your business. But in a lot of ways it is your fault.

BEN

My fault?

JUSTIN

If I hadn't used your test, I'd have passed Engineering. If I'd passed Engineering, I'd be graduating this year. Professor wouldn't budge on my grade. So now its payback time.

IN THE VAN

Amanda takes notes as she listens in through headphones. Mitch watches via binoculars.

AMANDA

Engineering professor is the target...

BACK TO PARK

BEN

Justin, I don't think you want to do this --

JUSTIN

Suddenly you've got a conscience? Are you trying to foil my little plan, Ben?

Justin angrily pulls the messenger bag from Ben.

BEN

Careful!

JUSTIN

Did you even build me the real
thing??

Justin reaches into the bag and pulls out the PACKAGE BOMB.
He feels it, weighs it in his hand...

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Tell me how it works.

BEN

It's designed to explode when the
package is opened. It's powerful.

A beat as they eye each other. Ben sweats. Justin finally
smirks.

JUSTIN

I knew you'd come through, hacker.

As he slings the bag over his shoulder, Ben nervously looks
toward the van...

Justin catches Ben's nervous glance, then stares at him hard.

BEN

What?

Justin moves in close again, deadly serious.

Suddenly, he HUGS Ben, seemingly warmly.

JUSTIN

I'm sorry I underestimated you,
man.

Now it's clear Justin is patting Ben for a wire, holding
Ben's shoulder tightly.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Your secret's safe with me. For
now.

He walks away

BEN

So who are you mailing it to?

JUSTIN

(over his shoulder)
Who says I'm mailing it?

IN THE VAN

Amanda radios to the other Inspectors standing by

AMANDA

Suspect's received the package and
is on the move. In pursuit...

END OF ACT 2

ACT 3

INT. SQUAD VAN/EXT. TRAIN STATION - CONTINUOUS

Amanda and Mitch tailing Justin.

AMANDA

We've got nothing on this guy until
he mails that package bomb.

MITCH

If he mails it...

AMANDA

Just stay close!

Justin parks in front of a TRAIN STATION; Amanda and Mitch
park nearby and out of sight

Justin gets out, carrying his package through an entry marked
'TO ALL PLATFORMS.'

AMANDA (CONT'D)

(into her radio)

He's getting on a train. We have to
follow him.

Amanda and Mitch jump out and run through the same entry in
pursuit.

INT. UNIVERSITY GRIND - DAY

Preston and Veronica are studying together. Noah approaches.

NOAH

Preston! Those notes were amazing!
We had a rehearsal yesterday and
the cast *loved* all of them!

PRESTON

(pleasantly surprised)
Wow, really?

NOAH

Now it's louder, the stage is lit
up like Times Square, it's about
half as long and everyone is
talking super fast...
and there's more monsters! How
could I forget?

PRESTON

... Yeah, I was going to ask...

NOAH

Listen, we're having one more dress rehearsal before we open. I'd love for you guys to be there. You can see your notes come alive!

VERONICA

Of course! It'll be fun to see the changes.

Off of Preston's discomfort we

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

A mostly empty COMMUTER TRAIN CAR - except for Justin, sitting in front.

Behind him, Amanda and Mitch - still wearing his spy fedora - unobtrusively enter and take seats out of Justin's peripheral vision.

TWO MORE INSPECTORS in the car behind them take strategic seats, as well.

Justin takes out a MARKER and begins addressing the package.

When he finishes, Justin gets up with his package and walks toward the back of the car, passing Amanda and Mitch.

JUSTIN

(re: Mitch's hat)

Nice hat, grampy. Is there an old-guys-trying-to-look-cool convention happening in town?

He laughs at his dumb joke and keeps moving into the next car.

Mitch steals a glance across the aisle to a smirking Amanda.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - CONTINUOUS

Justin gets off the train with his package, unwittingly followed by our Inspectors.

EXT. STREET AND POST OFFICE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Justin enters the post office as the Inspectors take up positions outside the glass lobby doors.

INSPECTOR POV

[BINOCULARS?] Amanda and Mitch carefully watch Justin turn over the package bomb, pay for postage and pocket the receipt as he heads through the lobby.

OUTSIDE THE POST OFFICE

Amanda and Mitch are now directly in front of the lobby doors waiting for Justin as he exits the building.

JUSTIN
(recognizing Mitch from
the train)
Ha! We meet again, grampy!

Mitch shows Justin his BADGE.

MITCH
It's *Inspector* Grampy, sonny.

Mitch doesn't like the way that came out. Amanda steps in to save him from himself.

AMANDA
... and not even your real grampy
can help you now, Justin, because
you're under arrest.

[NOTE: SEE OTHER AGENT RETRIEVE PACKAGE BOMB FROM PO WINDOW?]

INT. UNIVERSITY GRIND - LATER

The final dress rehearsal is over. Most of the invited audience is getting up to leave, while Noah speaks to an IMPORTANT LOOKING ADULT.

Preston, Veronica and Amanda remain seated, a little stunned.

PRESTON
Well, that went bad.

AMANDA
It was certainly... different?

VERONICA
At least he listened to your notes,
right?

Noah approaches, grinning.

NOAH
Well? How'd you guys like it this
time?

PRESTON/AMANDA/VERONICA
OMG!/Amazing!/Sooooo Great!!

NOAH
Stop! Stop! Come ON, you guys!

They clam up.

NOAH (CONT'D)
Stop lying! You guys weren't really
watching last time, am I right?

No one can look Noah in the eye.

NOAH (CONT'D)
It's ok to be honest with me.
That's what constructive criticism
is, isn't it? If I want to get
better at directing and
storytelling I need *you* to be
honest.

PRESTON
I'm so sorry, man. I knew how
excited you were to show us your
play, but I stayed up studying the
night before and when the lights
went down in here, I just conked
out. I didn't tell you because I
didn't want to disappoint you.

NOAH
You guys are my family. We're
supposed to be honest with each
other no matter what. I can handle
being disappointed if it's the
truth. Because the more honest you
are, the better I become.

The gang gets it.

PRESTON
Was that your professor over there?

NOAH
Yeah... and she *loved* the changes!
So they're staying in the show!
What do you think?

A beat as they check in with each other, then

PRESTON/AMANDA/VERONICA
NO!/They're awful!/It's too
bright/Everyone's shouting!/Why so
many monsters??

END OF ACT 3

TAG

INT. AMANDA'S OFFICE - DAY

Amanda and Mitch sit across from Ben.

AMANDA

So, your business associate Justin is going away for a while. We couldn't have caught him without you.

BEN

I'm just glad no one got hurt.

MITCH

You did good. But we need to discuss your 'extracurricular activities.'

BEN

I'm done with that. I think Justin scared me straight.

AMANDA

Good. So let's make sure you're done for good.

BEN

What?

MITCH

The FBI has been working in concert with the private sector to reduce vulnerabilities like the ones you exploited at Jamestown. They're starting up a new cybercrime unit.

AMANDA

We thought you'd be the perfect liaison between division and the university to make sure their servers are more secure.

Mitch and Amanda get up to escort Ben out

MITCH

Congratulations on your new internship, Ben. You're going to tell them everything you know, how you did it, and help them fix it.

AMANDA

So that nothing like that happens again. Understand?

BEN

I do. It feels good to go legit.

Mitch puts on his fedora at a rakish angle

MITCH

It's worked well for us.

BEN

Since we're kinda colleagues now, can I be honest about something?

MITCH

I don't know about "colleagues," but sure.

BEN

You're not a hat guy.

FADE OUT.