

THE MATTHEW EFFECT

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EXT. AMBASSADOR BRIDGE - DAY

If I Ruled the World by Nas and Lauren Hill.

Curtains opening on a stage, revealing dozens of cars waiting on the Ambassador Bridge at the Canada/US border from overhead. Slow pull into AMBROSE ROWAN KENDRICK (Black, 45 years old) sitting in his car waiting to get to the U.S. border.

Ambrose arrives to the BORDER PATROL OFFICER. He hands over his passport and green card.

The BP officer points at his sunglasses. Ambrose is at first confused, then understands to take his sunglasses off and put on his seeing glasses.

AMBROSE

Sorry. It's a bright day today. I'm certain that every year the sun is getting brighter and at some point the sun's luminosity will be so intense that everyone's eyes will just spontaneously combust and that will be the real apocalyptic wasteland. Not A.I., not nukes, but that horrifying bright star in the sky. The remaining survivors will all be blind and have to live in underground caves. We should be more scared of the sun.

BP OFFICER

Uh huh. Citizenship?

AMBROSE

Canadian.

BP OFFICER

Where do you live?

AMBROSE

Lima, Ohio.

BP OFFICER

Reason for visiting Canada?

AMBROSE

Well, I cheated on my ex-wife. And I ran away in shame to live with my parents.

BP OFFICER
(not phased)
Uh huh.

AMBROSE
But now I am ready to come back
home.

BP OFFICER
How long were you visiting?

AMBROSE
I spent a month in the mental ward.
A month hating myself and the rest
of time hating my dad. So five
months.

BP OFFICER
You shouldn't hate your father.

AMBROSE
Excuse me?

BP OFFICER
You shouldn't hate your father. You
don't know how much longer you will
have to spend time with him.

Ambrose squints.

BP OFFICER (CONT'D)
Carrying hate in your heart is a
heavy burden, my Canadian friend. A
heavy burden.

AMBROSE
What a relief I'm entering such a
level-headed, non-divisive and
rational nation.

BP OFFICER
Anything to declare?

AMBROSE
I haven't busted a nut with anyone
in over 18 months.

BP OFFICER
Any tobacco or firearms to declare?

AMBROSE
I'll save \$8 on a pack. I'll wait
until I cross.

BP OFFICER
A pack of ammo?

AMBROSE
Have Marlboros become that
dangerous?

BP OFFICER
My body is as pure as the country I
protect. I wouldn't know.

Ambrose nods confusingly.

BP OFFICER (CONT'D)
Any cannabis or other illicit
substances?

AMBROSE
Not yet!

The Border Patrol Officer hands Ambrose a gun from his booth.

BP OFFICER
Here is your mandatory .22mm.

AMBROSE
Oh. Oh, okay. No one is
compensating here. What do I do
with this?

BP OFFICER
It's a free country.

A pause.

AMBROSE
That's fair.

BP OFFICER
(handing over ID)
Welcome home.

Ambrose drives away wide eyed.

AMBROSE
(to us while driving)
There is nothing more tedious than
immigration. Imaginary lines we've
created to sew division and
tribalism. Yet here I am, a person
of color, an immigrant, an atheist
with a slight tinge of anarchist
trappings on my way back to small
town Ohio.

(MORE)

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

I know some of you are asking "why?" Why are you going back to the town that broke you? The best way to explain why is through a little joke I know revolving around my Jamaican heritage: A man once worked with a very musically talented Jamaican who, after years of auditions for various instruments, got a gig in the local orchestra playing the triangle-not his first choice. One day the Jamaican came in super stressed. The man asked "What's up...can't handle the pressure of performing on stage?" The Jamaican replied, "Y'ave no idea mon, me responsible fi every ting."

Ambrose smirks to himself as he drives away down I-75 south.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

YouTube. A mouse arrow Clicks on Ambrose's video titled "A NEW CHAPTER."

An ad plays first.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

A MAN in full white Ku Klux Klan garbs enters the front door of a pristine house. He feigns surprise at us.

KKK MAN

Oh, hello! You caught me with my hood up!

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

KKK Man enters a lavish kitchen. He casually removes his hood and immediately puts on a red cap that says "FAITHBREAKERS" on it with the US Flag embroidered on the back.

KKK MAN

After a long day of voter intimidation, cross burnings and being an internet tough guy, sometimes I don't have enough time to prepare dinner...

KKK Man disrobes to full nakedness with a tiny bar covering over his crotch area. He strolls over to the counter where below the waist is now covered.

KKK MAN (CONT'D)
But Soul Eater Soul Food prep kit
makes cooking dinner easy,
affordable and delicious.

KKK Man puts on a t-shirt with a confederate flag and "WHITE T-SHIRTS ONLY" stamped on it.

KKK MAN (CONT'D)
Soul Eater Soul Food prep kit is
perfect for all self-hating bigots
who envy people of color but love
their food, entertainers and
athletes.

CAPTION: DELICIOUS MEALS IN UNDER 30 MINUTES

KKK Man's hand models different "soul food" meals, fried chicken, collard greens, cornbread, macaroni and cheese, etc.

KKK MAN (CONT'D)
You can create all these
mouthwatering meals in under 30
minutes without the guilt of having
to actually be around them!
(whispers)
And avoid the hassle of having to
order a meal from someone who,
y'know...don't speak English.

CAPTION: THE FRESHEST INGREDIENTS

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

KKK Man and his ALL-AMERICAN FAMILY are sitting around the dinner table, laughing and enjoying their food.

KKK MAN (V.O.)
Enjoy meal time with your family
with the top rated meal kit for the
culturally inept.

SOUL EATER MEAL KIT LOGO

YOUNG SON
(to us)
I am embarrassed to be his child.

CAPTION: 100% WHITE GUILT FREE

From the window where KKK Man sits, a large BLACK MAN looms, staring into the home.

BLACK MAN
YOUR SOUL IS MINE, BOY!

The Black Man laughs maniacally.

AMBROSE VIDEO - YOUTUBE CHANNEL

A little over 99,000 subscribers.

INT. AMBROSE'S PODCAST STUDIO - DAY

Ambrose looks at us from YouTube footage.

AMBROSE
So, I'm just gonna be real with all
of you from the jump. Um...

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

A set of unsigned divorce papers on a dining table. A pen, pills and a bottle of wine.

BACK TO AMBROSE

AMBROSE
Effective immediately this is a
solo channel. I won't dive into
details but...

BACK TO DINING ROOM

A vape pen casually enters a mouth, who billows out smoke.

BACK TO AMBROSE

AMBROSE
...Essentially. Life happens.
People fuck up.

BACK TO DINING ROOM

A hand picks up the pen. He begins to sign.

Signature: LOSER

BACK TO AMBROSE

AMBROSE

I am not sure what her plans are
moving forward...

BACK TO DINING ROOM

Ambrose's Eyes

Signature: CHEATER

BACK TO AMBROSE

AMBROSE

...if she plans to start her own
channel or what...I wish her the best
of luck...

BACK TO DINING ROOM

Ambrose's Eyes

Signature: SINNER

It is crosses out. LIAR is written in its place.

BACK TO AMBROSE

AMBROSE

But everything here is going to be
the same, we will still do movie
reviews, show reactions, pro
wrestling thoughts, everything here
will keep its same format.

BACK TO TABLE

Hand tapping on pills. Ambrose rolls the pill bottle over his
forehead.

BACK TO AMBROSE

AMBROSE

I guess...now that I'm on my own I'll be a little more frequent on social media. Even though I'll be honest. Right now I don't really feel like it.

BACK TO DINING ROOM

Ambrose drinks the wine straight from the bottle.

BACK TO AMBROSE

AMBROSE

But, new chapters and all that shit. Anyway, the channel is still on its way to 100,000 subscribers so if you are one of the 70% of those who watch and haven't subscribed, I know you're here, I know you like what we are doing, just smash that subscribe button and help us reach that milestone. Thank you all so so much for your support, you have no idea how much I appreciate and have appreciated all the kind words and episode suggestions. I know the community here is really cool and I look forward to taking this next new step together.

Ambrose hits stop on his camera, his smile melting instantly. He sits with his head in his hands. He attempts to breathe, then looks out at us.

EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND - DAY

A fairly empty baseball diamond near a middle school.

CAPTION:

"WINDSOR, ONTARIO

1983"

Present-Day Ambrose steps on the mound with a pitcher's glove. He prepares to pitch.

AMBROSE

So, two significant events happened to me as a kid.

FIVE-YEAR-OLD AMBROSE sits behind home plate with a catcher's glove in his hand, but with no other protective gear.

Present-Day Ambrose pitches the ball over home plate.

A baseball bat is swung, hitting the baseball. When the bat swings back - WHACK - it collides with 5 Y.O. Ambrose's forehead. 5 Y.O. Ambrose flies backwards like he was shot with a double-barrel shotgun.

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL SOCCER FIELD - DAY

CAPTION:

"BRAMPTON, ONTARIO

OCTOBER 28, 1989

(one week after my birthday)"

Several MIDDLE SCHOOL CHILDREN are playing a pick-up game of soccer. Adjacent to the field is an asphalt 400-meter track. The children hurl instructions of play at each other as it is a competitive game. Some children are very talented despite their age, handling the ball with ease.

One child kicks the ball straight for the goalpost.

Out of nowhere, ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD AMBROSE'S head enters the frame in an attempt to deflect the ball with his head.

11 Y.O. Ambrose is knocked so hard by the velocity of the ball that he backflips while soaring back. As Ambrose lands, the back of his head crashes on the asphalt track. CRACK.

BLACK

Present-Day Ambrose enters the black frame as if wandering onto a stage. A fainting couch floats to the center. Ambrose lies on it as if he is speaking to a therapist.

AMBROSE

I have concluded these events are the reason for everything wrong with the ol' noodle. I'm bipolar, I have ADHD, I'm anxious as fuck and my depression has culminated in a plethora of suicide...

(MORE)

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

...attempts...which I'm not that good at either, but each time I feel a little more grateful because I am getting better at it. My entire family and my ex-wife...a clinical therapist herself, is 100% convinced my father is depressed and I just happened to get his sad genes.

INT. CAR - DAY

CAPTION: TORONTO, 1990

It is winter. AMBROSE'S PARENTS are in the front of a car, his DAD (Black, 38) driving and his MOM (Black, 35) in the passenger seat. In the back is YOUNG AMBROSE (11), seated in the middle is his youngest sister, ALENA (6) and on the other end is his older sister, SERENA (14). They are all dressed in their Sunday best.

AMBROSE (V.O.)

For as long as I can remember, my dad hated living in Canada. Hated it. Expressed as much seemingly weekly. You would think it would not make sense for a Jamaican to stay in such a cold country if he hated it so much, but hey.

DAD

Me nuh know wah mek me come here.
It too cold!

MOM

You say this every week.

SERENA

Every week.

ALENA

Every. Goddamn. Week.

DAD

It true!

All the children sigh from the back.

ALENA

(to us)

He was such a dick to me, we didn't let him in to see the birth of my twins.

SERENA

(to us)

I started working in the office for his garage when I was 17. He never showed any gratitude. So I quit and we now barely speak.

YOUNG AMBROSE

When we would get on him for rarely saying he loved any of us he would say...

DAD

Wah mek me need fi sey it? Yuh shud know.

MOM

It's three words. Is your jaw so exhausted that you can't say three words?

DAD

Eere's tree word: Mek me drive.

Everyone rolls their eyes.

MOM

You're a miserable old goat.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD AMBROSE is using an old smith corona word processor, furiously typing away.

TYPED:

"My writing was EVERYTHING to me..."

A knock from the door.

YOUNG AMBROSE

(almost in a trance)

Yeah.

Mom enters with food. She puts it down on the table where AMBROSE is typing.

MOM

My love, you need to eat.

YOUNG AMBROSE

Okay.

MOM

Are you listening to me?

YOUNG AMBROSE

Yeah. Eat. Cool.

Mom shakes her head.

TYPED:

"I didn't realize that I was basically suffering from mania my entire time in high school..."

MOM

But what did we know about mental health? In Jamaica if someone had issues, we just called them "mad" and put them in a ward. No one helped them. There was not enough education yet.

YOUNG AMBROSE

I know.

MOM

And we didn't know what to do with you. Sometime during middle school, you would bounce between being very angry and crying a lot. You locked yourself up away from us to write. We all thought you were just...sensitive and ambitious.

YOUNG AMBROSE

...I didn't cry a lot.

MOM

You cried every time the Blue Jays lost a game. You were about to cry before Joe Carter came up to bat in the World Series.

ON TELEVISION

Joe Carter's World Series-winning home run in 1993.

MOM

Actually, you still cried. But they were tears of joy, my love!

Young Ambrose sighs.

INT. STAGE - DAY

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD AMBROSE is on stage with a group of students. They all hold scripts in their hands. He is pacing.

YOUNG AMBROSE
No, no, no, no, NO. THIS IS
HORRIBLE. YOU'RE ALL HORRIBLE.

STUDENT 1 (FEMALE)
We're all 16.

STUDENT 2 (MALE)
I'm 17. I was held back.

YOUNG AMBROSE
And I cast you as my lead? Did my
brain take a vacation in the
Bermuda triangle?
(to Student 2)
You. You're fired.

STUDENT 2
Whatever. You really only got rid
of me to get closer to another cast
member anyway.

YOUNG AMBROSE
(shifty eyes)
...No I didn't! We are not engaging
in a narrative where 90% of my life
decisions were made by my dick.

AMBROSE'S PANTS
You sure about that?

INT. DRAMA ROOM DRESSING ROOM - DAY

16 Y.O. Ambrose and a 16-Year-Old female DRAMA STUDENT are making out. Young Ambrose's hand is up her skirt.

YOUNG AMBROSE
(to us)
Okay, sure. Theater made me a
little popular at school and yeah,
I took some advantage of that.

Young Ambrose tries and fails to sound convincingly "masculine".

YOUNG AMBROSE (CONT'D)
(to Drama Student)
Oh, yeah, does that feel good?

DRAMA STUDENT
(deadpan)
Oh, yes. Yes. Oh my god.

Drama Student rolls her eyes.

YOUNG AMBROSE
Cut me some slack. I didn't start
watching porn for educational
purposes till I was 19.

MOM (O.S.)
AMBROSE!

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

6 Y.O. AMBROSE is caught in a blanket "tent" with a 6 YEAR OLD GIRL on Mom's bed.

Mom is absolutely horrified.

SIX-YEAR-OLD AMBROSE
I played "house" and "doctor" at a
young age. I thought I was good at
it, but imagine living with
Pentecostals.

Whip pan to Mom.

MOM
The first commandment with a
promise is to honor thy mother and
thy father.

Whip pan back to the bed. It is now 16-Year-Old Ambrose.

YOUNG AMBROSE
That was used against us.

Ambrose's sisters enter the frame.

ALL
A LOT.

YOUNG ALENA
Jesus.

MOM
Don't take the lords name in vain!

Young Alena motions "see?"

INT. AMBROSE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ambrose wakes up and turns on his lamp on the side table.

A slew of pills land in Ambrose's hand.

Ambrose pops the pills in his mouth.

INT. NEWS STATION - DAY

Slow push in from behind Ambrose who is putting his wireless mic on. JONATHAN (50, Caucasian), the news anchor sits opposite him in the newsroom under a flurry of lights.

JONATHAN

Hey, don't kill the messenger, but from up top. Last week, you said a movie "sucked" and someone called the station to complain...

AMBROSE

Okay.

JONATHAN

So, could you...avoid the word?

AMBROSE

What word?

JONATHAN

Just think of a workaround.

AMBROSE

For "sucks"?

JONATHAN

Yeah, for "sucks". If you could...

AMBROSE

Are you fucking kidding me?

JONATHAN

Hey, hot mics.

AMBROSE

Yeah, that...that I can understand you just scolding me for dropping an f-bomb, but "sucks"? What if I'm reviewing a vampire movie?

JONATHAN

Hey man, that's just...

AMBROSE

From up top.

JONATHAN

From up top. Yeah. Hey, look between you and me I think people around here are way too sensitive, it's like, "woke". What is "woke"? Everyone is "woke" now and no one knows what that word even means. Do you know where woke came from?

The PRODUCTION ASSISTANT approaches.

ASSISTANT

Hey, can you test the mic out?

AMBROSE

Um, yeah, I—

JONATHAN

It was originally associated with Black Americans fighting racism...

AMBROSE

Testing. Testing...

JONATHAN

...There's an article all the way back in a 1942 volume of Negro Digest where the term was used in an article about labor unions...

ASSISTANT

Thanks. Three minutes.

Ambrose gives a thumbs up.

JONATHAN

...The New York Times, twenty years later had an article titled "If You're Woke You Dig It"...

AMBROSE

...Yeah. I. I know this...

ASSISTANT

Sorry could you speak into the mic again?

JONATHAN

...Martin Luther King preached
about being awake in the face of
racial injustice...

AMBROSE

Yeah. Can you hear me...?

JONATHAN

...Erikah Badu sang about being
woke. Have you heard that song?

AMBROSE

...Can you hear me?

JONATHAN

I just heard it for the first time
last week and I have it on repeat
with all my 90s hip hop...

ASSISTANT

We're good.

AMBROSE

Erikah Badu isn't hip hop, dude.

JONATHAN

...Man, hip hop isn't as good as it
was in the 90s. Biggie and Tupac. I
mean what happened to them sucked,
but I mean it had to have been a
bummer for you, you must have
looked up to them like how others
look at Robert Frost...

AMBROSE

I'm partial to Gordon Lightfoot.

JONATHAN

...But now there's like. Drake.
(realization)
Oh man, he's from Toronto too. Is
that...annoying?

ASSISTANT

Sorry---

AMBROSE

CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?

ASSISTANT

Perfect! Sixty seconds.

JONATHAN

Like that has to be like when
Nickleback got popular oh my GOD
they were EVERYWHERE.

AMBROSE

I...I like Drake.

A pause.

JONATHAN

...Really?

ASSISTANT

Ten seconds.

Everyone postures for the camera. Jonathan looks disappointed. Ambrose is puzzled.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

Three. Two. One.

Assistant points to Jonathan.

JONATHAN

Hi and welcome back we got Ambrose Kendrick with us and he just watched the latest blockbuster film...I know what I thought about it and I'm always right! Let's hear what our local critic thought about it.

AMBROSE

"Impressions" is the latest fever-dream explosion from the, uh...ARTHOUSE studio A24 and let me tell you right up front this is a movie that wont be for everyone. The film stars Peyton List and Finn Wolfhard as a pair of star-crossed lovers addicted to their social media presence and go on a cross-country spree of madness as the film demonstrates the seductive lure of fame and what people... will do in the 21st century to obtain it. The film starts out like a Bonnie and Clyde for the digital age and then somewhere around the end of the first act, because it is A24, the film loses its mind and ventures into existential territory that is unexpected and welcome.

(MORE)

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

I know the in thing is to gush over everything the indie studio puts out, regardless of whether the film makes sense or not, but "Impressions" is a contemporary story that expresses the nihilism Gen Z has developed born from humanity's penchant for cruelty and injustice. This is a gorgeous film to look at - there is no doubt that there are experts behind the camera. Just be forewarned, your enjoyment of "Impressions" will depend on just how far into the depths and depravity of the human condition you are willing to endure. Lucky for me, I have endured the meaningless all my life. I give this 4 BROS out of 5.

JONATHAN

Wow. That's not the movie I saw. AT ALL.

Ambrose sits in his seat, incredulous. Stunned.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

Once more, another astounding review from our resident critic. I can't wait for next week's offering.

JONATHAN

Yes, especially looking forward to Plastic Man.

JONATHAN

(through a grin)

I was just making small talk.

AMBROSE

(sighing)

Oh.

JONATHAN

We'll be back in a few!

(to AMBROSE)

Welcome—

INT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Ambrose stands at the side entrance to a house when the door opens revealing SYLVIA KENDRICK (44, Caucasian), Ambrose's ex-wife.

SYLVIA
...back!

Ambrose nods.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
Come in!

Ambrose enters. They hug. A moment of awkward silence.

AMBROSE'S PANTS
Be careful over here!

SYLVIA
So how are you? You look good.

AMBROSE
Stop lying. I have this gut now.
Fucking Crohn's. I'm good though.
You look great.

SYLVIA
Thanks. Ever since the surgery I
can barely eat anything.

AMBROSE
That must suck.

SYLVIA
You have no idea.

Sylvia leads Ambrose into the

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

SYLVIA
So, I saw you signed the divorce
papers. Thank you for that.

AMBROSE
Sure. Where are my boys?

Ambrose meows. A pair of cats appear.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)
Lucio and Dario! How are you guys?
Aw...

Ambrose pets the purring cats.

SYLVIA

I have to tell you, I can't stand
cleaning the litterbox.

AMBROSE

I hated it too, but I did it.

SYLVIA

I know. I know.

Ambrose raises his eyes and glances out.

In the corner of the living room is a video podcast set up
with lights, camera and sound equipment.

AMBROSE'S PANTS

Aw, fuck.

SYLVIA

Sorry if the place is a bit of a
mess. I have to pick up a little.
Someone is coming over later. He's
an engineer originally from Ghana.
He seems. I don't know. Everyone
just wants sex. I hate dating. I
hope he's just nice.

AMBROSE

So, what's this?

SYLVIA

Huh?

Ambrose points out at the set up.

AMBROSE

You got a pretty wild set up here.

SYLVIA

Oh, this? Yeah. I got Pete to help
me.

AMBROSE

Pete? Huh.

SYLVIA

Yeah. Pete. Honestly, I'm as
shocked as you are.

AMBROSE

Doesn't seem like a Pete thing to
do.

Sylvia shrugs.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)
So. You are. You are...

SYLVIA
Well....I'm already out there you
know....

AMBROSE
Yeah, cool. Start your own
channel...

SYLVIA
Yeah. I'm actually going to shoot
my first video tomorrow.

AMBROSE
Oh. So. What are you gonna talk
about?

SYLVIA
Tomorrow? Or...?

AMBROSE
Tomorrow, in general...

SYLVIA
Well people loved the movie reviews
we did together so I'm gonna do
some of those...

AMBROSE
Okay your own movie reviews...

SYLVIA
I mean, I have to let people know
why I have my own channel...

AMBROSE
Sure. Are you...?

SYLVIA
Gonna? I mean...I feel like I have
the right to say what happened.

AMBROSE
I mean. You don't want to keep our
personal lives...

SYLVIA
It's my channel, Ambrose.

AMBROSE

...Personal? What are you really
doing...?

SYLVIA

I don't understand the question.

AMBROSE

Did you watch the last video I
posted?

SYLVIA

No, I'm not really inclined to
follow what you do anymore.

AMBROSE

That's fair, but I did post
something. I kept it respectful and
just said I wish you luck in
whatever you do...

SYLVIA

That was nice of you.

AMBROSE

If you go on some rant about the
affair all its gonna do...

SYLVIA

What, Ambrose? It's going to
undermine you? Are you afraid I
will take subscribers from you?

AMBROSE

I just don't think we need to feed
into some...public narrative
that...forces people to choose
between us.

SYLVIA

People are going to choose what
they want no matter what. But I
like doing videos and I'm gonna
keep doing them if that's okay with
you.

Ambrose lowers his eyes. He shrugs.

AMBROSE

I said I would support you.

SYLVIA

Do you mean that?

Ambrose nods.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Would you be my best friend and
maybe help me shoot a couple
videos?

AMBROSE

Um...

SYLVIA

Just so I can get used to all the
equipment. It's all fancy and
techno-fuckery and you know I'm not
good with that shit.

AMBROSE

You don't think that's weird?

SYLVIA

What?

AMBROSE

Me...I mean, we are doing our own
thing now. You don't see me asking
you to help me with my shit.

SYLVIA

You don't need me. You're smart.
So, you can help me.

AMBROSE

Wow. Okay.

SYLVIA

So, you'll help me? You sort of owe
me.

Ambrose takes a deep breath.

AMBROSE

Lemme think about it.

Ambrose makes his way to the side entrance and exits to

EXT. SIDE PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Ambrose opens the door and steps on the porch. He lights up a cigarette and billows smoke.

AMBROSE

If you haven't figured it out
that's the wife...ex-wife. Fuck.
(MORE)

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

What am I doing? Things haven't always been this weird. I mean, there's been weirdness.

INT. BARBERSHOP - DAY

Ambrose is sitting in a barber's chair getting his head shaved by KORY (45, African-American.) The scene is lively with others around Ambrose getting their hair cut and hip hop playing in the background.

A couple of the other barbers, SHAD (35, African-American) and DAYVONE (30, African-American) are engaged in a conversation while they work.

SHAD

Man, Latesha came home last night. Freaked out. She was invited to a "family movie night" with her friend and her dad proceeded to switch on "Gone with the Wind".

Some of the older patrons shake their heads.

DAYVONE

"Gone with the Wind"?

KORY

Ambrose, you got the word on this.

AMBROSE

Yeah, the movie is almost 100 years old.

SHAD

And all about that southern white pride bullshit.

DAYVONE

Word?

SHAD

Latesha came back shook. She was all, "why'd they slap that one slave because she can't deliver a baby? She's not a doctor. It's not her fault!"

DAYVONE

I'm tired of all that struggle shit.

DAYVONE'S CLIENT
(in the chair)
Right?

SHAD
If I catch those parents that
showed that shit, bet, it's hands
on sight.

KORY
(to Ambrose)
What you think of all this? You the
movie man.

AMBROSE
(after an awkward pause)
...It's my wife's favorite film.

Uncomfortable silence. Buzzing of razors.

ON TV:

GONE WITH THE WIND

Prissy gets slapped by Scarlett O'Hara.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ambrose and Sylvia are cuddling on the couch watching said
film.

SYLVIA
Oh lord that Prissy, she never
learns.

Ambrose sighs staring dead eyed at the television.

INT. AMBROSE'S HOUSE - DAY

Pills land in Ambrose's hand.

Ambrose pops them in his mouth.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Sylvia, followed by Ambrose carrying a ridiculously huge gift
basket enters the scene. He struggles to keep a handle on it,
crackling the cellophane wrapping.

It is a very lively wedding reception. There is a table of
hors d'oeuvres and another where gifts are placed.

Various clusters of people are scattered across the bar.

SYLVIA
Thank you for coming to this with
me.

SPLIT SCREEN: Ambrose's heart beating. It is beating a little quicker than normal as Ambrose attempts to balance himself.

AMBROSE
Why wouldn't I?
(chuckles)
They're my friends too.

Ambrose takes a deep breath. Heart slows. He continues to grapple with the gift basket.

SYLVIA
Well, you don't have to feel
ashamed. I'm sure everyone loves
you.

Ambrose finally wrestles the gift basket onto the bar, annoyed.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
WHAT THE FUCK?

A bohemian-styled WOMAN approaches and hugs both Ambrose and Sylvia disturbingly close together. This is PARKER (54, Caucasian).

PARKER
This is a picture I thought I would
never see again!

AMBROSE
It's a limited engagement.

PARKER
Engagement? Are you...?

AMBROSE AND SYLVIA
NO.

Parker releases them. Everyone has an uncomfortable chuckle.

SYLVIA
It was a wonderful wedding! Tina
looked ABORBZ.

PARKER
Didn't she?

AMBROSE

Yeah, it was a great wedding.

SYLVIA

It was certainly better than ours.
We got married at the courthouse.
You didn't even have a best man.

PICTURE OF AMBROSE, SYLVIA, JUDGE AND TWO RANDOM WOMEN INSIDE A COURTHOUSE.

The Women in the picture begin talking.

WOMAN 1

I work for a special effects
company that creates hentai porn.

WOMAN 2

I secretly wish my husband was
Asian.

Everyone freezes back into their original photograph poses.

BACK TO BAR

PARKER

Now I can count on you kids to
behave yourselves? I just want to
put it out there so we are on the
same page.

AMBROSE

I would say we are.
(To SYLVIA)
Right?

SYLVIA

VODKA TIME!

Sylvia heads straight for the bartender. Ambrose's heart
beats a little faster.

AT THE BAR - LATER

Ambrose sits at the bar surrounded by FRIENDS, all white. He
sips on a can of non-alcoholic beer and sneers.

FRIEND 1

Ambrose it's nice to have you back.

AMBROSE

Thank you, sir. Happy to be back.

Ambrose and Sylvia, who is at the other side of the room, drink in hand, lock eyes briefly and smirk at each other.

FRIEND 2

How is the family in Canada? You said they're in Windsor?

AMBROSE

My parents, yeah.

FRIEND 3

(whisper)

Hey, buddy. We all go through a rough patch. Take it from me, it took eight marriages to realize I can't be tied down.

FRIEND 4

It's not uncommon nowadays for people to move back to their parents.

AMBROSE

I'm just happy to have my own place again.

FRIEND 1

As long as your parents don't do like I did when Melissa came back for a spell after her divorce and accidentally catch you...

BANGING ON THE DOOR

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

CAPTION: TURN OF THE CENTURY

BANGING ON THE DOOR

A 22-YEAR-OLD AMBROSE and a YOUNG WOMAN, both naked, raise themselves from beneath the sheets of his bed.

MOM (O.S.)

Ambrose! You coming to church with us?

Ambrose and the Young Woman silently chuckle to themselves.

22 Y.O. AMBROSE
(feigning illness)
Oh man, mom. I don't feel well. I'm tired. I think I'm gonna stay in.

There is a pause.

MOM (O.S.)
Are you alone in there?

22 Y.O. AMBROSE
(shocked)
Huh?

MOM (O.S.)
(after another pause)
Okay, my love. I hope you feel better.

22 Y.O. Ambrose and the young woman lock eyes uncomfortably.

Whip pan to Present-Day Ambrose and Friends in the bedroom all observing casually with drinks in hand.

Ambrose sips his non-alcoholic beer. He balks at the taste. Eyes shift.

AMBROSE
Yeah, I never put my parents through that.

FRIEND 2
I wonder what's more traumatizing... parents catching their kids or kids catching their parents?

FRIEND 1
It's all trauma.

Everyone nods.

BANGING FROM THE BAR

BACK AT THE BAR

Sylvia bangs her hand against the bar. She holds her glass up.

SYLVIA
I'm drunk!

AMBROSE
I can see that.

SYLVIA
But I'm not done!

Heart beating faster. Ambrose slouches against the bar.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
You sure you okay?

Ambrose forces a smile.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
Good!
(holds glass up)
Barwench! Another lemonade vodka
for me and my friend...me!

As Sylvia receives another drink, the sounds of the bar begin to echo for Ambrose. His vision is a little distorted.

AMBROSE
I'm going to the bathroom.

Sylvia smacks Ambrose on the back hard.

SYLVIA
(pretending to be E.T.)
I'll. Be. Right. Here!

Sylvia pokes Ambrose on the nose.

Ambrose nods before threading through the crowd, blinking hard, sweating and slightly wobbly.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ambrose enters, locks the door and opens the faucet. He splashes cold water on his face.

His reflection in the mounted mirror on the wall reveals his heart, beating very fast.

The bathroom seems larger than it actually is.

Ambrose puts his head in his hand and breathes deeply. It sounds like being underwater. After a few breaths, the environment normalizes. After a few beats, Ambrose exits.

BACK TO BAR

Ambrose approaches the bar, where a very animated Sylvia seems to hold the attention of a cluster of people.

SYLVIA
...I love Ambrose! I won't fuck
him...

Ambrose sighs. Heart beating fast.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
But he's my best friend!

PARKER
That's good!

Ambrose approaches the bar, absolutely embarrassed with wide eyes at a drunken Sylvia, who wraps her arm around him. TINA, Parker's Sister (the bride), is also at the bar.

SYLVIA
(swaying with Ambrose)
I haven't forgotten what he did! I
will NEVER forget. But nothing says
we can't still be friends.

TINA
But you're so cute together! Have
you thought about getting back-?

ALL
NO.

SYLVIA
(pounding on the bar)
Never! Ever, ever!

Sylvia drunkenly kisses Ambrose on the cheek.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
I'll say this...I will never look at
a white penis ever again!

PARKER
Okay, nothing to see here people!

Ambrose sighs. He and Parker locks eyes as the crowd disperses. Sylvia is disappointed.

SYLVIA
Hey where y'all going?
(gulps her drink)
Bun'cha racists.

EXT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sylvia holds Ambrose's hand and allows him to guide her to the door of her home.

SYLVIA

I got a little rowdy tonight,
didn't I?

AMBROSE

A little.

SYLVIA

I was only speaking my truth!

AMBROSE

Your truth's final form is the
shape of a grey goose.

They enter the house.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ambrose leads Sylvia into her bedroom where she immediately collapses on the bed.

AMBROSE

You gonna be okay?

Sylvia sighs.

SYLVIA

I wish I could ask you to stay. But
I hate so much what you did. I hate
it so much. I hate her so much. I
should hate you.

AMBROSE

Oh, I felt the love tonight.

SYLVIA

I DO love you. I will always love
you. I just can't live with you.

AMBROSE

Well, this will be a night to
remember, right up there with my
last colonoscopy. Sleep well, sweet
princess.

Sylvia waves goodbye from the bed. Ambrose exits.

INT. AMBROSE'S CAR - NIGHT

Ambrose is driving.

It is dark as Ambrose drives down a narrow street. He notices a black pickup truck on his side of the road by a blueish house with a large University of Michigan flag flapping on a flagpole attached to the house. He slows, then maneuvers around. Ambrose shakes his head.

Ambrose passes the truck. As he reaches a stop sign a little ahead, BANG. A flash from the rear-view mirror.

The sounds of tires peeling. Ambrose freezes. He drives off.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT.

An empty road. Ambrose's car stops at a stop light.

Ambrose is wide eyed. He is breathing heavily.

AMBROSE
(at us)
That wasn't what I thought it was.
Did you see that too?

LOUD hip hop music blasting. The black pickup truck appears beside Ambrose. It slows, ominous. The windows are heavily tinted. The engine hums.

Ambrose does not make eye contact with the truck.

The light turns green.

Ambrose is almost in a trance.

The truck revs LOUDLY, startling Ambrose, who peels away from the scene.

Ambrose continues to look in his rear-view mirror. The truck is still behind him.

Ambrose signals to turn. He does.

The truck follows from the side mirror. It appears behind him, the headlights so high and bright that it is blinding from the rear-view mirror.

Ambrose grips the steering wheel. He arrives to an intersection. He makes a sudden turn.

Ambrose looks back. The road behind is clear. He exhales.

INT. AMBROSE'S HOME - NIGHT

Ambrose darts inside his house and quickly locks his door. He darts to the window and looks out.

The streets are generally empty.

Ambrose puts his head in his hands and slides down the wall, exhausted.

INT. AMBROSE'S HOUSE - DAY

Pills land in Ambrose's hand.

Ambrose pops them in his mouth.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

ON COMPUTER SCREEN:

AMBROSE'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL

97,829 SUBSCRIBERS

Ambrose sighs.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN:

In the YouTube search bar, "SYLVIA RANTS"

A thumbnail titled "WHAT HAPPENED" appears. It is clicked on.

Sylvia is seated at her podcast setup.

SYLVIA

So, you know me, I'm not one to mince words. Ambrose and I are no longer together. This is where you will catch me to talk about movies and...just shoot the shit. Anyway, yes, the rumors are true, he cheated on me. But I'm not mad at him anymore...

COMMENTS

"Cheating bastard..."

"We have your back, SYLVIA!"

"I immediately unsubscribed from Ambrose's channel."

"You were the reason I watched anyway."

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Well, I'm mad at him when I have to mow the lawn. I hate that bitch he slept with. I can't look at anything purple again. I made sure her family got a flash drive of all the videos they did together. Filthy shit...

Ambrose stops the video.

BUZZ

Ambrose answers his phone on speaker. On the other end is TANYA CARROLL (49, female)

TANYA (O.S.)
WHAT THE FUCK.

AMBROSE
I assume you saw Sylvia's video.

TANYA (O.S.)
What. The. Fuck?

AMBROSE
I know, dude.

TANYA (O.S.)
Whatthefuck!!!

AMBROSE
Man, I got more pressing matters.

TANYA (O.S.)
You got more pressing matters than her making fun of the first time you got a kidney-stone?

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

CAPTION:

VAN WERT, OHIO

2010

Ambrose, doubled over in pain limps inside the ER lobby of a small-town hospital.

As a NURSE approaches him, he falls to his knees in a very overdramatic way.

From behind, hysterical laughter from Sylvia echoes in the hallway.

BACK TO AMBROSE

AMBROSE

Wow, that actually kinda hurts.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Ambrose and Tanya (Caucasian) sit across from each other. Tanya has a stunned expression on her face.

TANYA

Are you fucking serious? You think...?

AMBROSE

Shhhh!

TANYA

(whispers)

You think you saw someone get shot?

Ambrose nods.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Holy shit.

AMBROSE

I mean...I'm not 100% certain.
Maybe it was a really loud. And bright. Firecracker.

TANYA

Maybe it was a flare gun!

AMBROSE

Aren't they usually red?

TANYA

Are they?

AMBROSE

Fuck me, man. I've never fired one.
If I'm ever shipwrecked I'll be an amuse bouche for a kracken.

TANYA

Who would fire a flare gun in the
streets anyway?

AMBROSE

Are you refuting your own theory?

TANYA

I have the right to think my own
theories are dumb.

AMBROSE

I spent the entire night looking
out my window.

TANYA

That's intense. You gonna rat them
out?

AMBROSE

Why would you word it that way?

TANYA

I mean, that's what you would be
doing.

AMBROSE

I would think I would be doing my
duty as a concerned citizen.

TANYA

What if you're wrong? And what if
that person is black and they get
falsely arrested or killed by the
police and it starts a riot?

AMBROSE

What?!

TANYA

It would be like "Do the Right
Thing". Except in Lima. Now I think
you SHOULD narc them out.

AMBROSE

We aren't starting a goddamn riot.
This is serious.

TANYA

Did they get a good look at you?
Because if they saw your face, if I
was in your Converses, I'd skip
town.

AMBROSE

I. Don't think? I need to do that.

TANYA

You're not even sure.

AMBROSE

You're right.

TANYA

Wait! I got an idea.

INT. TANYA'S SUV - DAY

Tanya is driving her SUV down the same street Ambrose believed he witnessed a crime. Ambrose is in the passenger seat, completely sunken and out of view.

TANYA

What are you doing?

AMBROSE

I don't want anyone to see me!

TANYA

We're passing a house where you think people allegedly got shot. Anyone that could finger you is probably dead.

The SUV passes by an old blueish house with a large University of Michigan flag that Ambrose points out.

AMBROSE

That's it.

Tanya slows.

TANYA

You sure?

AMBROSE

It's hard to forget the house with the big Michigan flag.

TANYA

(gasps)

Do you think...?

AMBROSE

I mean we ARE in Ohio.

TANYA

It doesn't look like anything happened. No police tape. The house doesn't look like it was shot up at all. I think you're in the clear, my man.

Ambrose exhales and slowly rises in his seat. Across the street is the black pickup truck.

AMBROSE

Shit!

Ambrose slinks down.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

Why didn't you tell me there was a black pickup across the street?

TANYA

There's a black pickup across the street?

Tanya pumps the breaks and looks off.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Huh. Look at that. How do you know that's the same truck?

AMBROSE

I never forget a truck.

TANYA

In the dark?

AMBROSE

Yep.

TANYA

From your rear-view mirror?

AMBROSE

Yes.

TANYA

You would make one hell of a terrible witness. Remind me to make sure you're not at my murder.

AMBROSE

I'm serious. That's the one.

TANYA

Well, what do you wanna do?

AMBROSE

Get the fuck outta here! You wanna
make friends with "Menace II
Society"?

TANYA

Okay! Jesus. You're dating
yourself.

Tanya drives off. Ambrose sits up.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Oh, shit!

AMBROSE

What?

In the rear-view mirror is the black pickup.

TANYA

That pickup is following us!

AMBROSE

(at us)

WHAT?

TANYA

What the fuck, man?

Tanya peels away.

The SUV speeds down the street.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Are they gone? ARE THEY GONE?

Ambrose looks behind. The truck is not there. He exhales.

AMBROSE

Yeah...

Ambrose looks ahead. The light is red and traffic is coming
from opposite directions.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

LOOK OUT!

The SUV barely escapes an accident, with vehicles barely
missing each other on the road.

Ambrose looks at Tanya incredulously.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

Oh my god, dude are you high?

Tanya pauses.

TANYA
Uh...

AMBROSE
(at us)
What a fucking time to be alive.

TANYA
Who are you talking to?

AMBROSE
Just drive.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

Ambrose sits on a couch as a THERAPIST takes notes.

AMBROSE
...So, I'm convinced that I'm being stalked by some unknown entity. I haven't slept in three days. My blood pressure goes haywire when I see a black pickup...I feel like the cosmos is chasing after me for my mistakes. Have you ever seen that horror movie "The Car"?

THERAPIST
I'm not familiar.

AMBROSE
That shit scared me as a kid. A 1971 Lincoln Continental Mark III terrorizes a small town. No one can see inside the car or see its driver.

THERAPIST
But this vehicle you believe is stalking you has not shown up at your home?

AMBROSE
Yet.

THERAPIST
We spoke about you seeing the worst in everything. Change your thinking.

AMBROSE

(inhaling)

Okay. I am grateful that this
murderous truck has not shown up at
my home.

THERAPIST

Have you considered the possibility
that all you are experiencing is
paranoia and coincidence?

AMBROSE

I've considered it. It's different
trying to think straight when you
think Christine's cousin is chasing
after you.

THERAPIST

Christine?

AMBROSE

The movie about a possessed 1958
Plymouth Fury? Stephen King
adaptation? Awesome John Carpenter
goodness?

The Therapist shakes her head.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

I've clearly dated myself.

THERAPIST

What you believe you experienced
also happened immediately after a
very awkward evening with your ex-
wife. I have said it time and
again, I still believe you need to
give yourself space from her. As
long as you're tethered to her the
way you currently are, you will
be unable to truly move on and
become your own independent
individual. You still cling onto
her personal values as if they are
still your values as her husband.
But you are not that anymore.

Ambrose nods.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

I want to hear you say it.

AMBROSE

I am not her husband anymore. I am
my own person.

THERAPIST

Do you believe that?

AMBROSE

I'm halfway there.

THERAPIST

You will get there. Just keep
working on yourself. Keep
journaling. You said you signed up
on a dating site? How is that
going?

AMBROSE

Even thinking about dating again
gives me heartburn. I feel so
shallow. I'm only interested in
women who are attractive. Which is
then a double-edged sword because
then I wonder if people on the
other side look at me the same way
and it makes me feel ugly because,
well I'm not exactly Arnold
Schwarzenegger in his prime. I'm
not even Steve Urkel in his prime.
Ugh, I've dated myself again.

THERAPIST

Positive thinking, Ambrose.

AMBROSE

Okay. I have...traits that makes me
a desirable person. Sure. I swear
if I had one wish, one real fucking
wish, I would want to go back and
talk to my younger self and
just...tell him not to do a lot of
the things I did and to just learn
to love himself.

THERAPIST

Maybe you can turn this into a new
story. A divorced movie critic is
stalked by an unseen entity while
trying to find true love.

Ambrose nods.

AMBROSE

Yeah, that wouldn't be a bad idea.

THERAPIST

You can use that to get a lot of honesty off your chest. Just make sure you give me story credit.

Ambrose glances at us.

INT. AMBROSE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

BUZZ. Ambrose is tossing and turning in bed. BUZZ.

He stirs. He picks up his phone from his side table.

ON PHONE SCREEN:

3:45AM: DATING APP NOTIFICATION

SOMEONE LIKES YOU!

Ambrose slowly sits up.

ON PHONE SCREEN:

A picture of an attractive brunette.

RACHEL, 43

Ambrose holds his phone up at us.

AMBROSE

What do you think?

Ambrose has a small burping spell. He glances back at the phone and shrugs.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

Fuck it.

Ambrose taps his phone and covers himself under his sheets. More burping.

INT. AMBROSE'S HOUSE - DAY

Pills land in Ambrose's hand.

He pops them all in his mouth.

INT. TV STATION - DAY

Ambrose and Jonathan are putting their wireless mics on.

JONATHAN

I find my mind wandering to really inane questions...like why was he called the LONE ranger when Tonto was always with him? How do we live in a world where black white supremacists exist? Why didn't more black men stand up when the most common saying way back when was that women like their men tall, DARK and handsome? I mean, aren't they basically describing 80% of the NBA? Why wasn't there more of an uproar from neo-nazis?

Ambrose squints.

AMBROSE

Are you one of those weirdos who think combining halves of the Confederate and U.S. flags make sense?

ASSISTANT

On air in 5...4...3...2...

Assistant points to Jonathan.

JONATHAN

Welcome back! It's time for our weekly movie review and we have Ambrose Kendrick with us. Give us a breakdown of the film you saw this week.

Ambrose is about to open his mouth.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

The barbershop scene has been transported below a large cinema screen. Projected on the screen are various clips detailing the history of black cinema from blackface to "Mammies" and picaninnies to Uncle Reemus, black actors playing pimps, prostitutes, drug dealers and junkies, "hood" movies, black thrillers and middle-class dramas.

Ambrose sits on Kory's chair getting his hair cut. Everyone has black coverings except Ambrose's, whose is white. The scene is still lively with barbers interacting with their clients and boys and girls sweeping fallen hair away. Hip hop plays in the background stereo.

KORY

So, what's good, Ambrose?

AMBROSE

Not much, man. Doing my reviews.
Just living.

KORY

Right, right.

AMBROSE

I gotta date tonight so I gotta get
lined up.

KORY

Look at'chu! Good for you, man.

AMBROSE

Thanks. I'm hella nervous. I've
been on a steady diet of Tums.

Buzzing from the electric razor. A PATRON and Ambrose lock
eyes uncomfortably.

Ambrose seems to be the only one who knows where he is and
attempts to look up at the screen.

Kory forces his head still.

KORY

Keep still, please.

A pause. The rest of the conversation happens with Ambrose
only moving his eyes.

SHAD

Hey man. Why didn't you like
"Reactions of a Black Family"?

AMBROSE

(eyes searching for Shad)
Sorry?

SHAD

"Reactions of a Black Family". I
watched your review and I disagree.
I thought it was very uplifting.

AMBROSE

I'm surprised anyone was awake to
watch me. I'm glad you enjoyed it.

SHAD

Wha'chu got against Jerome Myers anyway? A black billionaire filmmaker got you jealous? You always got something to say about all his movies.

AMBROSE

...No. um. I don't feel that way at all. His movies just don't do it for me. It's nothing personal.

SHAD

Well, I take it personally when I see a brother tearing others down.

AMBROSE

I'm not tearing anyone down. I have my own preferences, just like any other moviegoer.

SHAD

And I bet if that movie was made by some white dude--

AMBROSE

Nope. We're not doing this. I'm not giving a free pass to any old filmmaker because we share the same skin color. If the movie is good its good. If it's bad its bad. That's it.

SHAD

And you get to decide what is good?

AMBROSE

No I. Never said that.

(to Kory)

Is this really happening?

KORY

Hey, I liked the movie too.

AMBROSE

That's how we doin' it?

KORY

Hey, man we welcome all sorts of discourse in here. This building is a democracy of thought.

AMBROSE

Shouldn't we ask more of some of our black filmmakers, especially those who have the resources to push stories and narratives that aren't just cheap black thrillers you find on BET at 2 in the morning or generic dramadies that vilify middle class black men? Jordan Peele, Ryan Coogler and Ava DuVernay prove that we can tell fuller stories outside the stereotypes of us others - and even we have fed into for years. I don't go to church. Soul food for me is ox tail, rice and peas. We as a people aren't a monolith...We all like different things.

INT. BARBERSHOP - DAY

Everyone is back to their places in the normal barbershop.

SHAD

What's it like looking at us little people from the soapbox you're on?

AMBROSE

Sorry, I get defensive when my "blackness", whatever that is...is called into question just because I have a differing opinion on certain things that are considered "black institutions" or act in a way that run contrary to what we have decided is "black". Maybe someone can't sing or dance or they're not athletic or they listen to heavy metal...

(motioning to Dayvone)
...don't think I didn't hear you bumping Judas Priest.

DAYVONE

"Breaking the Law" is absolute fire, movie man.

SHAD

I just thought the movie was more nuanced than you give it credit for.

AMBROSE

It had a scene where a dude was
gulping air from an empty glass and
eating off an empty plate right on
camera!

SHAD

You pointed out that was an extra.
Only you would notice something
like that.

AMBROSE

Yeah, me, the script supervisor,
editor, and DIRECTOR.

SHAD

I don't see you making any movies.

AMBROSE

I did make a movie. It was shit so
I'm an expert on what not to do.

Everyone, except Ambrose has a decent chuckle.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Ambrose sits at the bar with a half glass of soda. CASSIDY (25, female), the bartender approaches and holds up a spray tap.

CASSIDY

Top off your Pepsi?

AMBROSE

Thank you ma'am.

CASSIDY

I'm only called that in my dungeon.

AMBROSE

I don't know how to answer that in
a way that doesn't look like I'm
flirting with you.

CASSIDY

Then keep that to yourself!

Ambrose nods.

A WOMAN enters the bar, recognizes Ambrose and approaches.
Ambrose waves. This is RACHEL.

RACHEL

Ambrose?

AMBROSE

The one and only. I assume you're
Rachel?

They shake hands.

RACHEL

That's me! Nice to meet you.

AMBROSE

Same. What's your poison?

RACHEL

G&T.

Ambrose waves Cassidy down.

AMBROSE

A Gin and Tonic for my new friend,
here.

Rachel places her cell phone on the bar.

RACHEL

Thank you.

AMBROSE

It's all good. So, Rachel...

BUZZ. Rachel's cell phone goes off. She picks it up, quickly
glances at it and places it back on the bar. Ambrose squints.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

...What's your day job?

RACHEL

Oh, I work in HR...

BUZZ.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

...for an HR company.

Rachel glances at her phone. Puts it down.

AMBROSE

Cool. I'm in...

BUZZ

AMBROSE (CONT'D)
...media.

Rachel glances at her phone. Puts it down.

RACHEL
Media? Like you're on TV?

Cassidy returns with Rachel's drink.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Thank you.

AMBROSE
I have a YouTube channel. I'm
actually the movie critic for WLIO.

BUZZ.

RACHEL
Oh, really?

Rachel looks at her phone. Puts it down.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
When are you on?

AMBROSE
Every Friday...

BUZZ.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)
...at 6:25am. Sorry, don't you have
a silence feature on that?

Rachel looks at her phone. Puts it down.

RACHEL
I actually keep it on vibrate in
case of emergencies.

AMBROSE
Are those all emergencies?

BUZZ. Rachel looks at her phone. Puts it down.

RACHEL
No.

Ambrose slouches. Rachel silently sips her drink.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
6:25 is too early for me.

AMBROSE
That's the word--

BUZZ.

Ambrose puts his hands up. He pauses.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)
Oh, wait. That's me.

Ambrose takes his phone from his back pocket and glances at it. Rachel sits back.

RACHEL
(annoyed)
Really?

Ambrose purses his lips.

ON PHONE SCREEN:

From an "UNKNOWN" number, a picture of the black pickup truck in Ambrose's driveway.

Ambrose sighs.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Is that an emergency?

AMBROSE
(staring into his phone)
I don't know what this is. But I
think I'm gonna die soon.

RACHEL
(with widened eyes)
Oh-kay. Hey, you don't have to
worry about paying for my drink. It
was great meeting you...Good luck
on...uh. Life?

AMBROSE
Oh. Oh, yeah. Okay.

Rachel proceeds to make her way to the other end of the bar.

RACHEL (O.S.)
I hope you don't die soon.

Ambrose is not paying attention to his environment.

AMBROSE
Yeah. Thanks.

Cassidy arrives.

CASSIDY
If he dies, he dies.

Ambrose slowly raises his head at Cassidy.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
Rocky 4. It's one of the most profound lines in movie history. In five words, one villain explains the inevitability of life. If he dies...If YOU die, you die. That's it.

Ambrose puts his phone back in his pocket. Pulls out his credit card.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
It's just a Pepsi, and you sorta crashed and burned over here, so forget it.

Ambrose nods. Puts his card away.

AMBROSE
Thanks.

Cassidy suddenly grabs a hold of Ambrose's hand.

CASSIDY
I mean it, forget it all. Forget everything you know!

Ambrose is unable to escape Cassidy's grip.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
So, stop being a little bitch and stop being scared of the inevitable.

Cassidy lets go, sending Ambrose back into a set of chairs. He nearly topples over.

RACHEL (O.S., ANNOYED)
Oh my god.

Ambrose straightens himself up.

CASSIDY
(tonal shift)
Hey you okay there, buddy?

Ambrose looks around the bar. A few patrons are staring at him. He is confused. A big blink brings Ambrose back to solid ground.

AMBROSE
Yeah. Yeah. I'm good.
(to the patrons)
I'm okay! I didn't even drink.
Everything is fine!

Ambrose arrives at the exit.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)
Everything is A-fucking-skittles.
We're good. Good.

Ambrose exits, leaving some of the patrons confused.

INT. AMBROSE'S CAR - NIGHT

Ambrose is driving down his street slowly. He is wide eyed.

The headlights reveal nothing out of the ordinary ahead.

EXT. AMBROSE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ambrose's car parks in his driveway. Ambrose suddenly bursts out, sprints to his door and enters as quickly as possible.

From the front window, Ambrose sticks his head out, observing the world outside.

INT. AMBROSE'S HOUSE - DAY

Pills land in Ambrose's hand.

He pops them all in his mouth.

INT. AMBROSE'S OFFICE - DAY

ON COMPUTER SCREEN:

YOUTUBE SUBSCRIBERS: 95,444

Ambrose, who from the circles around his eyes has had trouble sleeping, sits in front of us to speak. He has a vape pen that he inhales on and billows smoke out.

AMBROSE

Let's talk about paranoia. I have been a perpetual pothead since I was 15. Thirty years of weed-induced paranoia intertwined with my very real paranoias of death, living as a black man and understanding there are people out there who want me dead just for who I am...but that's self-induced paranoia, because there aren't any hate groups directly targeting ME. But I still feel paranoid in my skin everywhere. Around white people I feel paranoid about being abrasive and being perceived as an "angry black man", and around other black people I am paranoid that I don't have their trust or that I'm too detached from the culture and I don't want to be but...I always feel weird. I guess I feel weird all the time. But that's a rant. I think I'm being followed. Or watched. I know how that sounds. And posting this is not going to help. I shouldn't do this but I am prone to doing stupid things when I am--

Ambrose stops himself and pauses the recording. He looks out.

Ambrose closes his eyes and rubs his temples.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

(pleading)

No, no, no. This is not happening, Ambrose. You know what this is. You need a distraction.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

From beyond the slightly ajar door is the sounds of women sexually pleasuring themselves from a computer screen. Ambrose is masturbating.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST OFFICE - DAY

Ambrose is sitting across from his PSYCHIATRIST (50, male, Caucasian) in a very sterilized office.

PSYCHIATRIST

So, you believe you're spiraling
into mania?

AMBROSE

I dunno what else is happening. I'm
still barely sleeping. I think I'm
being stalked.

PSYCHIATRIST

How long have you believed this?

AMBROSE

Everything started like a couple
weeks ago.

Ambrose sits up and digs for his phone.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

Actually...Funny you should ask...

Ambrose pulls out his phone and begins scrolling through it.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

I need your help explaining this to
me...

Ambrose continues to scroll.

PSYCHIATRIST

What are you searching for?

Ambrose takes a deep breath.

AMBROSE

I got a text...

PSYCHIATRIST

From?

AMBROSE

I swear it was here. I don't
remember deleting it...there
wouldn't be a reason for me to...It
was basically a confirmation that
this person...people...whatever
knows where I live.

PSYCHIATRIST

Are you hearing voices again?

AMBROSE

(growing agitated)

No.

(MORE)

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

No, seriously I'm not...I swear I
had it!
(to us)
You saw it, right?

PSYCHIATRIST

Who are you talking to?

Ambrose pauses. He eyes the Psychiatrist.

AMBROSE

Would it be entirely possible that I exist in a universe where I am the test subject of higher beings for them to better understand the human condition? Like...maybe I'm a robot or a clone or a clone of a clone or a clone of a robot or a robot clone and the choices I make in my life are being studied and analyzed. Like maybe I'm living some alien nightmare cocktail of "Groundhog Day" and "The Truman Show" and I can't escape it until I rectify one or two major choices I made in my life. Or maybe my existence represents the futility of man. Life is ten miles of bad road and then you reach a dead end.

The Psychiatrist holds a blank, petrified look on his face.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

I'm joking! I'm joking!
(chuckles, eyes shifting
to us and back)
I don't believe any of that AT ALL.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Ambrose stirs from a completely different bedroom than the one he has been sleeping in. In an instant, he rises out of bed and turns the light on.

On the walls is various wall art. The bedroom is cramped and untidy. A sole TV stands on top of a dresser across from the bed.

Ambrose is wide-eyed.

AMBROSE

What the...?

MOM (O.S.)
Ambrose!

Ambrose eyes around the room, back against the door, absolutely confused.

MOM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
AMBROSE!

AMBROSE
(confused)
Yeah, Mom?

MOM (O.S.)
I have breakfast ready, my love.
Come up.

Ambrose slowly rises his eyes at us.

INT. AMBROSE'S PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY

Ambrose slowly walks up the stairs, suspicious.

Ambrose's Dad (75) is strumming on an electric guitar. Ambrose's Mom (72) is washing dishes. She looks over her shoulder and notices Ambrose.

MOM
Hello, my love. There's some salt
fish and dumplings on the stove.
The kettle is still hot. Make
yourself some tea.

Slowly, Ambrose approaches the

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Where Ambrose takes a plate and helps himself to breakfast. He takes it to the

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

And sits at the dining table. Mom is conversing with Dad.

MOM

...She said the biggest snake she's ever seen in Africa was that she was going to school one morning, a group of them and when they looked and she said a lot of people had cows and chickens and everything were disappearing and they were searching for this...they know it was a snake but they couldn't find him.

Ambrose, eating, is surveying his surroundings.

MOM (CONT'D)

And this one morning this thing blocked the road how big he was. She said neither cars nor truck no nothing could climb over him. How do you think they killed it? You think they shoot him up? He was so big he couldn't move fast. She said he couldn't move so fast because he was so big. She said they set up that they turned the machete upside down and set it where he would crawl over, because the underbelly is really soft. And she said everybody went home with lots of meat that day--

AMBROSE

(fed up)

Okay, what's going on?

MOM

My love?

Ambrose's eyes dart around the room.

AMBROSE

I shouldn't be here. I left this place.

MOM

Ambrose, are you okay?

Ambrose rises to his feet as Mom approaches him.

AMBROSE

Whoa! Wait. Wait! How did I get here?

Ambrose is breathing deeply.

DAD

Do you need to go to the hospital?

AMBROSE

I should be in Lima.

MOM

Ambrose. You're home. You've been home....

AMBROSE

No....

MOM

...You went to Lima for a job interview last week but you're home with us in Windsor.

AMBROSE

No.

Ambrose rushes to the front door.

MOM

My love, where are you--?

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Ambrose emerges from the house. He scurries down the driveway. He looks down one side of the road.

He looks down the other.

The black pickup is right there and revs up, scaring Ambrose, who screams in horror.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Ambrose is sprinting down the street with the black pickup behind him.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Ambrose arrives to a cemetery, where some children are at play, skipping around headstones. Ambrose is exhausted, gasping for air.

The pickup arrives and pauses at the cemetery entrance.

Ambrose, sweating is aware that there seems to be an invisible barrier between him and the truck.

AMBROSE
What do you want from me?

The pickup revs.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)
WHAT DO YOU WANT--?

The pickup squeals and drives into the cemetery, directly at Ambrose, ramming into him.

INT. AMBROSE'S BEDROOM (LIMA) - NIGHT

Ambrose sits up in a cold sweat, screaming in terror. He picks up his phone from the side table. It lights up.

It is 12:30am.

Ambrose sighs.

AMBROSE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Just from beyond his bed are the sounds of a woman performing fellatio from a computer screen.

Ambrose is masturbating.

INT. AMBROSE'S HOUSE - DAY

Pills land in Ambrose's hand.

He pops them all in his mouth.

EXT. HIKING TRAIL PARKING LOT - DAY

Tanya is in her SUV flipping through her phone.

Ambrose pulls up in his car. He exits with a jug of water. He is wearing sunglasses.

Tanya exits her SUV with a container of water as well and meets Ambrose. She purses her lips at him.

TANYA
Dude, you look two steps away from
being embalmed. You sure you up for
this?

Ambrose pulls a vape pen from his pocket, inhales and billows smoke.

AMBROSE

I'm up, right? See what I did there?

TANYA

Jesus. Let's go.

EXT. HIKING TRAIL - DAY

Tanya is walking at a good pace through a trail full of foliage and green life. Ambrose is behind, trying to keep up.

Tanya pauses.

TANYA

You gonna make it, amigo? This is what insomnia will do to you.

AMBROSE

You don't wanna know what I've been doing with my spare time.

AMBROSE'S PANTS

I'm fucking raw!

AMBROSE

I had a nightmare. I was back in my parents basement in Windsor. No job. No prospects. No YouTube channel. I ran out and that goddamn pickup was there and it chased me and ran me down in a cemetery. Fuck, man.

TANYA

That sounds intense. What do you think the significance of the pickup is?

Ambrose approaches Tanya with a confused look on his face.

AMBROSE

What do you mean "what is the significance"? The pickup? The same one that nearly killed us?

TANYA

Do you have a receipt?

Tanya starts walking. Ambrose follows.

AMBROSE

A receipt?

TANYA

From a restaurant or Walmart or something that proves we were together that day.

Tanya stops and pulls her phone out. She points it at a random piece of fallen bark and takes a picture.

AMBROSE

We met at Vibe Coffeehouse. You called me after seeing Sylvia's video.

TANYA

Doesn't ring a bell. Oh, wait! She made fun of your kidneystone incident. But yeah everything else is a blank.

AMBROSE

How stoned were you?

TANYA

Honestly, I probably won't remember we were here tomorrow.

Ambrose takes a puff from his vape pen.

TANYA (CONT'D)

But, please. Don't let hypocrisy get in the way of anything.

BUZZ

Ambrose pulls out his phone.

AMBROSE

Huh. I got a message from someone on Rumble.

Tanya approaches to look at Ambrose's phone.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

She wants to meet me.

TANYA

She's cute. I'm not a lesbian so I wouldn't, but if I was, she wouldn't be walking for a week.

They start walking again.

AMBROSE

I'm not sure I'm looking for just a good lay. I have Pornhub for that. I need a connection.

TANYA

Well, you said since the divorce you set yourself on a path to discover self love. Sounds like you're taking that pretty literally. But you should go for it.

AMBROSE

Yeah?

TANYA

Yeah, fuck it. After Jake and I split, I just decided it was time to have fun. Just have a good time and whatever happens, happens. Buddy, lemme tell you if there's anyone who needs a "good time", it's you.

AMBROSE

I'm just terrified of rejection, y'know?

TANYA

Who isn't?

AMBROSE

People who have never been rejected.

TANYA

I would think those people would be the most scared of being rejected because it's an unknown they don't want to face.

AMBROSE

I guess it can go either way.

TANYA

Isn't that life? It can either foster whole galaxies or go south to the pits of hell. It's all about choices, my man. Choices.

Tanya stops at another piece of dead bark and takes a picture.

AMBROSE

What are you doing anyway?

TANYA

I'm putting together a new mixed media collage where I intersperse bark with x-ray pics of my teeth. I'm calling it "More Bark Than Bite".

Ambrose rolls his eyes. He begins to forge ahead and notices hovering right above him a boom mic. He quizzically glances up at it. Pokes at it a few times.

AMBROSE

You see this?

Ambrose turns to Tanya. She rises.

TANYA

What?

When Ambrose turns back, the mic is gone. He sighs.

AMBROSE

Do you ever feel like the universe is fucking with you? Like specifically targeting you?

Tanya catches up with Ambrose.

TANYA

Get me a solid sativa and I'll join you in your level of paranoia.

Tanya passes Ambrose on the trail. He glances at us suspiciously before heading off.

INT. AMBROSE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ambrose is seated on the toilet (the lid is down.) He is staring out blankly at the wall ahead of him. The circles around his eyes are dark.

Ambrose rises and reviews his reflection in the mirror.

AMBROSE

You are a good person. You have a lot to offer. You are attractive, smart and capable. You are not cracking up. You are not cracking up.

(MORE)

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

(to us, through the
reflection)

I'm not cracking up, right? You see
me? I'm not just...talking to air.
You all exist. You HAVE to exist.
With all your happy lives. All your
sad lives. You exist or I wouldn't.
Right?

(holds head)

What is happening to me?

INT. BAR - NIGHT

The bar is hosting just a few of its regulars as it is a slow night.

A WOMAN (Caucasian, raven haired, 39) with a black leather jacket hung on the back of her stool is seated, drinking a bourbon.

Ambrose enters, a little disheveled, slightly gasping for air and makes his way to the bar beside the woman.

CASSIDY

Ambrose! Pepsi for you?

The Woman perks up. She examines Ambrose, who doesn't notice.

AMBROSE

Thanks.

WOMAN

You're Ambrose Kendrick.

AMBROSE

Yeah.

(recognition)

Oh, hey!

Ambrose extends his hand out. The Woman shakes it. Ambrose receives his drink.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

You must be Liz. Sorry I'm a couple minutes late - please don't take that as me being the stereotypical black person who runs on "colored people time". I usually try to arrive thirty minutes before most appointments. If I have to meet someone at a certain time I start
(MORE)

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

to panic if I'm five minutes behind and I get word diarrhea when I'm in public because I am so anxious and I've honestly been having a bit of...I dunno a mid-life existential crisis right now where I think I am really starting to question not just my mortality but my reality and my place in the world and I completely understand if I'm absolutely blowing it by just...I just can't keep my fucking mouth shut and overshare every aspect of my life like anyone gives a damn. You are not my therapist. Sorry.

A beat.

WOMAN

My name is Bayley.

Ambrose slumps.

AMBROSE

Shit.

AMBROSE'S PANTS

Shit.

BAYLEY

It sounds like you got a lot going on.

Ambrose nods. Sips on his Pepsi. He rises.

AMBROSE

Well, I've embarrassed myself. Obviously, I'm waiting for someone else. Again, sorry.

BAYLEY

No, it's okay. I just wanted to say I like your YouTube channel.

AMBROSE

Oh. Wow. Well, yeah. Thanks, Bayley?

BAYLEY

Yes.

AMBROSE

Bayley, yeah. Thank you.

BAYLEY

You just seem very passionate about movies. And REALLY passionate about professional wrestling.

AMBROSE

That I am.

BAYLEY

Well, I hope your date goes well.

AMBROSE

Thanks. Take care.

Ambrose approaches a table and sits.

BAR - LATER

Bayley approaches a sullen Ambrose, who is casually flipping through his phone.

BAYLEY

It looks like your date is running on "colored people time".

AMBROSE

Ha. Yeah.

BAYLEY

Well in her absence, how about we play a game?

AMBROSE

Those questions usually lead to someone ending up in a "Saw" trap.

BAYLEY

I suppose it's a little role-playing? Which I normally don't do with people I just meet.

AMBROSE

I'm regretting this already.

BAYLEY

I will, for one night only, act as your official fill in date for the night.

AMBROSE

Oh, no. I don't need a pity date from anyone.

BAYLEY

I don't pity you. Well. I mean I guess I sorta do, but it's not from a place of...like I don't PITIY you, I just feel bad that you got stood up. I'm more sympathetic to your circumstances.

AMBROSE

That sounds less condescending.

BAYLEY

Hey we are both here, on our own, in glorious technicolor. Fuck it, have a drink with me and enjoy life. When was the last time you did that?

AMBROSE

That feels like a trick question.

BAYLEY

Do you like to karaoke?

Ambrose's eyes lights up. A halo of light surrounds his head.

AMBROSE

I live for karaoke.

BAYLEY

I'm gonna meet my friends at the karaoke bar if you wanna join.

AMBROSE

No, I don't want to impose.

BAYLEY

What am I saying? No, you're coming with me. Tonight you find out what it's like to join a cult.

CASSIDY

(from nowhere)

You better go!

Cassidy is suddenly by Ambrose's table.

AMBROSE

My god, do you eavesdrop on all my conversations?

CASSIDY

I mean, your guardian angel has to know where you are at all times.

AMBROSE

Huh?

CASSIDY

Oh no I said the quiet part loud.

Cassidy slinks away.

AMBROSE

Yeah, you're right. Fuck it, let's go.

BAYLEY

Let's fucking go!

EXT. KARAOKE BAR - NIGHT

Ambrose's car parks at the front of the bar.

INT. KARAOKE BAR - NIGHT

Ambrose and Bayley enter a dive bar with low lighting and a karaoke set up in the back corner, where a small group of individuals with drinks convene.

One female individual is on stage singing.

Ambrose and Bayley arrive to the group. They all greet her.

BAYLEY

Party people in the house, this is my new friend, Ambrose, who hosts a YouTube channel that I actually check out from time to time.

AMBROSE

Please don't make me blush. I mean, you wouldn't be able to see it, but still.

As Bayley introduces everyone, they identify themselves.

BAYLEY

This is my group, on drums, Funky Earl, on bass guitar, Sweet Sally, on rhythm guitar, Dalton Dollars, and on stage is lead guitar and vocalist, Rose Garden.

AMBROSE

You guys are a legit band?

EARL
I wouldn't say we're "legit".

BAYLEY
We play at Chemistry tomorrow
night. We are just passing through
for the next couple of days.

AMBROSE
Oh, righteous. Maybe I'll stop by.

DALTON
If you're Bayley's new friend, it's
expected you attend.

SALLY
She doesn't take no for an answer.

AMBROSE
That's not problematic behavior at
all!

EARL
(handing Bayley a glass)
I already got your bourbon ready.

BAYLEY
Thank you my dear!

Rose notices Bayley and waves, who waves back.

ROSE
Our lead vocalist is here! Get up
here, Bayley and sing us a remedy!

GROUP
REMEDY! REMEDY! REMEDY!

Bayley, drink in hand, approaches the stage and is handed the microphone.

Ambrose approaches the bar, where there are a few people scattered across it.

Bayley goes to the Karaoke host and whispers something to him, who nods. Bayley arrives to center stage.

BAYLEY
What the fuck is up, y'all? My name
is Bayley Broke, lead vocalist of
Dirty Laundry out of Dayton, Ohio.
This next P.
(MORE)

BAYLEY (CONT'D)

Diddy is dedicated to my bestie,
Sally, who convinced me to join
this ragtag group of anarchists by
singing this for my audition.
Salut!

Everyone raises their glass.

GROUP

Salut!

Bayley begins a searing rendition of "Creep" by Radiohead.

Ambrose approaches the stage with a Pepsi in hand,
mesmerized.

As Bayley sings the first chorus, she points at Ambrose and
motions for him to join her on stage.

At first, Ambrose relents, but Bayley's group pushes him on
stage. The Karaoke Host hands Ambrose a mic.

Ambrose is shy singing the second verse on his own. Bayley
comes in to help.

They gaze into each other's eyes as they sing the bridge
together.

They finally trade lines at the end of the song.

Applause from all. Bayley smiles, slightly stunned.

BAYLEY

Still questioning your reality?

AMBROSE

Always, but this is a good
distraction.

KARAOKE BAR - LATER

Earl and Dalton are on stage singing having a drunken good
time.

Ambrose and Bayley are sitting together at a table.

BAYLEY

So, what was so special about this
date that stood you up?

AMBROSE

You want the truth?

BAYLEY

Shouldn't that be the foundation of all relationships?

AMBROSE

You're moving a little fast there. Buy me a drink, first.

BAYLEY

(pointing at Ambrose's Pepsi)

Unfortunately, you don't drink.

AMBROSE

Touché. Okay. The truth. I was five...

BAYLEY

Sharing childhood trauma should be around the third date...

AMBROSE

You keep insinuating that you're gonna end up liking me.

The scene turns into sketch lines from a comic book.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

CAPTION: 1983

The scene is animated in the style of the old 1960s Spider-Man cartoons.

5-YEAR-OLD AMBROSE sits in front of the television.

ON TV:

"Wonder Woman" from the 1970's plays. Various moments of Lynda Carter in action during the show.

5-Year-Old Ambrose, entranced, has hearts in his eyes.

BACK TO BAR

AMBROSE

So that was the awakening of "my type" and...

(motions at phone)

...she fit that.

BAYLEY

Huh. Being compared to goddamn
Wonder Woman. I'm nervous that you
put women on a pedestal.

AMBROSE

Oh, no. No pedestals. Sex is no
longer an Olympic sport in my
household, that's how much I avoid
them.

Someone taps Ambrose on the shoulder.

Ambrose turns and standing above him is LYNDA CARTER.

LYNDA CARTER

Excuse me, but I couldn't help but
overhear you.

Ambrose is stunned.

AMBROSE

Holy sh--

Lynda Carter slaps the hell out of Ambrose.

LYNDA CARTER

You're a pervert and using my
likeness as an excuse for your
fantasies is beyond disgusting.

Lynda Carter exits in a huff. Ambrose rubs his cheek, trying
to figure out what just happened. Bayley raises an eyebrow.

AMBROSE

I guess everyone's past eventually
catches up with them.

DALTON (O.S.)

WONDER WOMAN, I LOVE YOU!

EXT. KARAOKE BAR - NIGHT

Ambrose and Bayley are smoking cigarettes by Ambrose's car.

BAYLEY

You'll be there tomorrow? I'm not
afraid to use my copy of the book
of the dead.

AMBROSE

Nothing will stop me.

BAYLEY

What do you say? Righteous?

AMBROSE

You gonna be okay heading to the hotel?

BAYLEY

Yeah, I'm on a water diet for the rest of the night.

AMBROSE

Cool. I'm glad I got stood up.

Ambrose puts out his cigarette.

BAYLEY

Me too.

Ambrose gets in his car and starts it.

BAYLEY (CONT'D)

Until we meet again!

Ambrose drives off.

INT. AMBROSE'S CAR - NIGHT

Ambrose is driving. He stops at a light.

A familiar REVVING UP is heard.

Ambrose sighs. He looks beside him.

On the left is the black pickup.

Ambrose stares at it.

The passenger door lowers a couple of inches. Large billows of marijuana smoke escapes. It is still too dark to be able to see inside. LOUD Hip hop blasts from the truck.

The light turns green. Ambrose drives off.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Ambrose's car parks at the front of a convenience store at a gas station.

INT. AMBROSE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Ambrose is breathing heavily. He glances at the rear-view mirror. Only cars that are getting gas is in the reflection.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Ambrose enters the convenience store, suspicious of everyone inside.

He grabs a bag of jerky and a bottle of orange juice. Ambrose approaches the cash register and places his items on the counter.

Ambrose looks out.

The pickup is parked at one of the gas pumps.

Ambrose is wide eyed.

AMBROSE
(to Attendant)
Hey, can you do me a favor?

ATTENDANT
Okay.

AMBROSE
Do you see a black pickup truck at
one of the pumps?

The Attendant squints at Ambrose.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)
Just humor me. Please.

The Attendant looks out.

ATTENDANT
Yeah, at pump six. This is \$7.50.

Ambrose pays with cash, relieved.

AMBROSE
I thought I wasn't being stalked
and it was all in my head! Thank
you!

Ambrose exits. The Attendant is confused.

EXT. GAS STATION - CONT

Ambrose exits the convenience store, not taking his eyes off the pickup.

He enters his car, starts it and drives off.

EXT. AMBROSE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ambrose's car parks in the driveway.

INT. AMBROSE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Ambrose shuts the car off. He goes to open the door, but he's stuck, as if he is constrained by the barriers of the frame.

AMBROSE

The fuck?

Ambrose rams his shoulder into the frame repeatedly.

He then realizes he is constrained by the top of the frame.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

What is--?

Ambrose spins around in his car, within the frame, unable to escape.

Ambrose yells in panic.

BACK TO OUTSIDE AMBROSE'S HOUSE

Ambrose spills and rolls out of his car, onto the grass.

He rises. Dusts himself off and casually enters his home.

INT. AMBROSE'S HOUSE - DAY

Pills land in Ambrose's hand.

He pops them all in his mouth.

INT. CHEMISTRY - NIGHT

Inside Chemistry is an intimate stage set up where hosts of a rowdy mix of punk rockers and music fans gather.

Ambrose enters with a non-alcoholic beer. MILES (50, male), the owner of Chemistry, approaches and extends a hand.

MILES
Ambrose! Hey...

They greet.

AMBROSE
What's up dude?

MILES
Good, good. Good to see you! How you doing? We missed you at free comic book day. It was our best attended

The opening notes of a band tuning up.

AMBROSE
I'm really happy for you.

MILES
So you gonna get back in a suit?
Cosplay for Kids misses you.

AMBROSE
I'm still recovering from the last event...

INT. CELINA LIBRARY - DAY

People cosplaying as various superheroes. They are posing for pictures with children, some also dressed up as their favorite superheroes.

Among the adult cosplayers, stands Black Panther, being lively and taking pictures.

A pair of OLD LADIES (Caucasian) with a pair of young children enters the scene. They complement all the cosplayers on their outfits, periodically stopping to take pictures with other cosplayers.

They arrive to Black Panther.

LADY 1
Oh, look at this!

LADY 2
And we have Black Panther!
(to children)
Isn't he your favorite?
(MORE)

LADY 2 (CONT'D)

Now let me make sure. Is that a
black man under there?

Black Panther initially hesitates to remove his mask, but does, revealing himself to be Ambrose. He wears an awkward smile.

LADY 2 (CONT'D)

Oh good!
(to children)
Do you want to take a picture with
Black Panther?

KIDS

YES!

Ambrose puts his mask back on. The children huddle around him for a quick picture.

LADY 2

Oh, thank you!

LADY 1

And keep up the good work!

They all depart. A FEMALE COSPLAYER dressed as Wonder Woman enters.

COSPLAYER

What would she have said if you
were white?

A pause.

AMBROSE

(under mask)

I. Really don't know.

BACK TO CHEMISTRY

Guitars cut through all conversation in the room.

MILES

Well, have a good time. Let's catch
back up.

Ambrose nods. Miles exits.

Ambrose eyes the stage where Bayley, guitar in hand, plucks some strings and approaches the mic. The rest of the band is on stage, ready to play.

BAYLEY
LIMA, OHIO.

The crowd starts to buzz.

BAYLEY (CONT'D)
We are Dirty Laundry. We're gonna play some songs for you. Some of them suck, some of them are good, but you're gonna listen anyway...so you can kiss our asses?

Ambrose smirks.

BAYLEY (CONT'D)
Let's do this.
(to band)
1-2-3-4...

Dirty Laundry erupts in heavy, angry chords.

The crowd closest to the stage begin dancing.

Ambrose moves closer to get a better view. He is impressed.

CHEMISTRY - LATER

It is intermission. Ambrose is at the front of the stage. Bayley sees him and waves. She hops off the stage.

BAYLEY
You made it!

AMBROSE
I was told you would put a hex on me if I didn't.

BAYLEY
Very true.

AMBROSE
You guys are fucking awesome.

BAYLEY
Swank ya, berry mucho. Cancer stick?

AMBROSE
Sounds good to me!

INT. CHEMISTRY - CONTINUOUS

Ambrose and Bayley are exiting the building. The door opens and Ambrose almost arrives nose to nose with TARA (38, female, Caucasian). There is an awkward pause before they dart their eyes away from each other and they go their separate ways.

Bayley squints at this as she exits.

EXT. CHEMISTRY PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Ambrose darts his way through the parking lot. Bayley tries to keep up.

BAYLEY
Hey! Hey! Slow the fuck down!

Ambrose slows so Bayley can catch up.

BAYLEY (CONT'D)
What was that back there?

AMBROSE
Uh...

A male VOICE booms in the background.

VOICE (O.S.)
HEY.

Ambrose sighs. Bayley glances over her shoulder.

JOE (40, male, Caucasian), Tara's husband storms toward Ambrose with Tara attempting to hold him back.

TARA
Just stop. You promised you...

Ambrose puts his hands up in surrender.

JOE
You got some goddamn nerve showing
your face out here.

AMBROSE
I got no beef with you, man.

JOE
No BEEF?!?!

Joe shoves Ambrose who steps back. Bayley and Tara stand between them.

BAYLEY

Okay we don't need this tonight...

JOE

Do you know what he did?

BAYLEY

I think it's becoming clear.

JOE

And you want to be seen with this
piece of shit?

TARA

Please control yourself...

Suddenly, Joe breaks out of Tara's grasp and slugs Ambrose who stumbles to the ground.

TARA (CONT'D)

No!

BAYLEY

Whoa!

Bayley helps Ambrose struggle to get to his feet.

Immediately, Joe cracks another shot at Ambrose who instantly collapses.

Bayley pushes Joe back. A crowd from the entrance of Chemistry has emerged with phones out, recording the incident.

BAYLEY (CONT'D)

Get the fuck back!

JOE

You have nothing else to say to me?

TARA

Okay that's enough!

Ambrose, bleeding from the mouth is panting. Bayley rushes to him.

AMBROSE

It's okay. It's okay. I deserved
that.

Ambrose gets to his feet, wobbly.

JOE

You're a fucking coward!

Ambrose wobbles his way to his car. Tara pushes Joe into the building. Ambrose leans against his car

MILES (O.S.)
Do we need to call the police over
here?

Ambrose raises a hand.

AMBROSE
Nope. The main event is over. First
round knockout. Honestly, I feel
kind of free...I should buy him a
drink.

Ambrose lights up a cigarette. He is bleeding from his lip.

BAYLEY
You. Are a fucking wreck.

AMBROSE
Do I look good at least?

Bayley lights up a cigarette of her own.

BAYLEY
So...you cheated on your wife with
her?

Ambrose blows smoke. His eyes lower.

AMBROSE
I tried to warn you. I am not a
good person.

Bayley's eyes Ambrose.

BAYLEY
I have zero tolerance for
infidelity. My dad cheated on my
mom a lot. It ruined our family and
inspired me to do what I do.

Ambrose nods.

AMBROSE
I understand.

BAYLEY
And I was going to be okay with us
connecting on social media to keep
in touch.

Ambrose finishes his cigarette. He pulls his keys out.
Ambrose smirks at Bayley.

AMBROSE

It was good hanging out. Go back in
and have a good time.

BAYLEY

You'll be okay to drive home?

AMBROSE

Yeah.

Bayley begins towards the building. She stops and turns.

BAYLEY

I'm sure you're a good person,
Ambrose. Maybe you just make shitty
choices. See ya around.

Bayley enters the building. Ambrose enters his car.

INT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sylvia opens the door to reveal Ambrose, with a nice shiner
developing over his eye along with his busted lip.

SYLVIA

Oh my god, what happened to you?

Ambrose enters.

AMBROSE

Take one guess.

SYLVIA

You saw her?

AMBROSE

Just long enough to not see Joe's
punches coming from fucking
Alabama.

Sylvia sighs.

SYLVIA

C'mon...

INT. SYLVIA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ambrose is leaning against the sink with an ice pack over his
bruised eye.

Sylvia is tending to Ambrose's lip with a wet washcloth.

SYLVIA
He really slugged you.

Ambrose nods.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
I gotta be honest...I am sort of
relieved.

AMBROSE
Yes, I deserved it.

SYLVIA
No, I'm happy that everything is
out of everyone's system now.

Sylvia and Ambrose are close.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
If I was there, I would have joined
in, just to kick Tara's ass.

AMBROSE
I know.

SYLVIA
I hate her so fucking much.

Ambrose begins to sob.

AMBROSE
Sylvia...I'm so sorry. Every day
without you haunts me. I am so
sorry for doing what I did. I am so
sorry for cheating on you. God, I
don't know what is happening to me.
I think I'm losing it.

Sylvia embraces Ambrose.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)
I miss you...I miss the cats. I
miss my home. I miss cuddling
you...I wish...

Ambrose raises his eyes to Sylvia. They kiss. Gently at
first.

Sylvia pulls away.

SYLVIA
No. We can't.

Ambrose is crying.

AMBROSE
I need you...

SYLVIA
I know. I need you too...

They kiss again. A little more passionately. They rise together, in each other's embrace.

INT. SYLVIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ambrose and Sylvia are kissing each other and taking each other's clothes off. They arrive in bed together, running their finger's on skin, kissing and panting.

SYLVIA
Give it to me...

Ambrose searches under the sheets.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
...please...

Ambrose, on top of Sylvia, penetrates her. She gasps, clawing her fingers on Ambrose's back.

Ambrose grunts as he thrusts himself inside Sylvia, who moans.

AMBROSE
Fuck you're wet...

Sylvia groans.

SYLVIA
(grunting)
Fuck me harder!

Ambrose and Sylvia are moaning together. Ambrose's muscles are tightening up.

AMBROSE
God, I'm cumming...

SYLVIA
Cum inside me. Do it!

Ambrose grunts loudly and thrusts hard inside Sylvia a few more times before collapsing on top of her. They are both panting.

Ambrose turns over off of Sylvia and lays on his back on the bed.

Both are still panting. Ambrose turns to Sylvia to touch her. She retreats.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
Don't touch me!

Sylvia sits up and begins crying.

AMBROSE
Sylvia...

Sylvia doubles over in her bed.

SYLVIA
I think I'm gonna be sick...

Sylvia, naked - rushes out of the bedroom. A few moments later, the sounds of Sylvia vomiting in a toilet can be heard.

The vomiting lasts long enough for Ambrose to sit up and get dressed slowly and silently.

Ambrose somberly exits the bedroom while Sylvia continues to throw up.

EXT. AMBROSE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ambrose's car parks in his driveway. He steps out. Pauses.

Ambrose spins around.

On the street parked by Ambrose's house is a black pickup.

Ambrose shakes his head.

AMBROSE
No, fuck this...

Ambrose darts to his trunk, opens it and pulls out a tire iron. He immediately proceeds to the truck.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)
You wanna fuck with me?

Ambrose swings the tire iron on the windshield, cracking it.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)
WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Ambrose cracks the windshield some more before moving to the driver's side and smashing the window there.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)
YOU THINK I'M AFRAID OF YOU?

MAN (O.S.)
HEY WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING?

A MAN (50's) rushes out from the neighbor's house and approaches Ambrose, who swings the tire iron at him.

AMBROSE
Get back! Why are you stalking me?

MAN
What the fuck are you talking about? I hope you plan to pay for this?

AMBROSE
Why are you following me???

The red and blue flashing lights from a police squad car illuminates the scene. The Man backs off to make way for the two POLICE OFFICERS who quickly exit, both with their hands on their holsters.

POLICE OFFICER 1
Sir, please drop your weapon and show us your hands!

Ambrose blinks. He glances down at the tire iron in his hands. He sobs, drops the tire iron and falls to his knees with his head in his hands.

The Police Officers immediately wrestle Ambrose to the ground hard, putting his hands behind his back and handcuffing him.

Ambrose yells in terror.

INT. MENTAL WARD - DAY

A white, sanitized floor within a hospital.

Patients are scattered, some watching a bolted television against the wall, some coloring within coloring books. A couple are playing chess. Some are on bolted phones against the wall. Others are speaking with Aides. Some are simply walking around the hallways.

All wear the same light blue scrubs and grip socks.

At a corner table, seated and writing furiously in a journal is Ambrose.

An AIDE approaches.

AIDE
Ambrose, you have a visitor.

Ambrose nods.

Ambrose's Dad emerges. Ambrose lowers his eyes and closes his journal.

AMBROSE
Hey.

DAD
Yeah.

Silence.

AMBROSE
You can sit, you know?

Dad does just that. Neither makes eye contact.

DAD
Yuh okay inna here?

Ambrose nods.

DAD (CONT'D)
Dem treating yuh well--?

AMBROSE
What do you want?

Dad sits back.

DAD
Me come tuh see me son who 'urting.

AMBROSE
Are you just figuring this out now?
Did Mom guilt you into coming here?

Dad shakes his head "no".

DAD
Me juss want tuh see me son...my son...
(sobbing)
Wah me did do wrong? Wah me did do
wrong dat mek you hate me suh much?

AMBROSE

I...I don't hate you.

DAD

Memba me tek yuh to Kitchener fi
get yuh writing award? Yuh mada did
sick an couldn't come. Afta yuh
pley everyone stan' up. Me did so
proud of yuh. Prouda dan me could
eva be an' me juss tank God fi yuh.

Ambrose sighs. Dad takes his hand.

DAD (CONT'D)

Yuh c'yan duh anyting. Yuh tink is
too late fi yuh. See me? Me pick up
guitar wen me olda dan yuh now. Me
practice every day...A likkle at a
time but me stay wid it. Me get a
likkle betta every day. It tek
practice. Me say to luk to god an'
it sup'm yuh don' do an' me learn
to step back an' let yuh be yuh own
man. Me know yuh an Sylvia 'ave
bin un'appy fi a lang time. Me wish
we cud chat 'bout it. Me nuh
perfect. Nuh-bady perfect inna di
eyes of de lord. But we cud chat.
We neva talk. It mek me tink sup'm
happen tuh yuh inna yuh mind an' it
fi me fault.

AMBROSE

You were so detached from all of
us. It wasn't about you not being
there while you were out providing
- we all understood that. But even
when you were home you were an
unapproachable alien. I'm 45 years
old and you wanna know the truth?
I'm terrified of you. I see you as
more of a...drill sergeant than my
father. I see how other people have
a relationship with their fathers
and they're so happy, but for as
long as I've known you - you've
been so goddamn miserable ninety
percent of the time it was futile
for a little boy to think he could
approach someone so...monstrous.

DAD

Yuh tink me a monster?

AMBROSE

Honestly, dad...I dunno what anyone is anymore.

DAD

Yuh haffi live life fi yuh. Luk at yuhself inna di mirra an sey yuh luv yuh.

Ambrose sits back.

DAD (CONT'D)

Yuh try fi tek yuh life tree time. Yuh know 'ow dat mek me feel? Yuh know 'ow dat wud kill me? Yuh a me ongle son. Me nuh care dat yuh 'aven't mek it yet fi yuh movies. It nah too late, Ambrose. But yuh muss luv yuhself. Yuh muss forgive yuhself.

AMBROSE

It's hard, Dad. I did the worst thing imaginable.

DAD

De worss ting imaginable wud be eff yuh kill Sylvia but yuh didn't.

AMBROSE

It doesn't matter.

DAD

It does my son. It mattas an' suh do yuh.

Ambrose trembles in his seat. He tries to fight back tears.

DAD (CONT'D)

I love you. Me nah say it lots, me know you know. Me know I know it inna me heart 'dat me love you an' me wan' you fi get betta an' beat 'dis.

Ambrose smirks. Nods.

AMBROSE

I love you too, Dad.

INT. WARD (PSYCH OFFICE) - DAY

Ambrose sits in a narrow office with one desk and two chairs. The WARD PSYCHIATRIST enters with a clipboard full of notes.

PSYCHIATRIST
Hello, Ambrose.

AMBROSE
Hey, Doc.

PSYCHIATRIST
How are we today?

AMBROSE
That's a trick question. There is no "we", but I'm doing great.

PSYCHIATRIST
Excellent. How has your sleep been?

AMBROSE
I've been sleeping well and I've been social with everyone. Honestly, everyone has been really cool. It's made things a lot easier.

PSYCHIATRIST
I am very happy to hear that. Very happy. How do you feel about being discharged today?

AMBROSE
That makes me feel outstanding.

PSYCHIATRIST
Perfect. So, what we'll do is get your discharge papers together for you to sign.

EXT. STREET - DAY

From a distance is Ambrose, jogging.

PSYCHIATRIST (V.O.)
How would you describe your appetite and eating habits?

AMBROSE (V.O.)
I've been eating well. I'm eating until I'm full and not overdoing it.

(MORE)

AMBROSE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I'm making sure I'm aware when I want to "stress eat" and try to find a healthier outlet.

PSYCHIATRIST (V.O.)

During the past couple of months you've been here, have you been bothered by low feelings, stress, or sadness?

Ambrose gets closer.

AMBROSE (V.O.)

I mean, obviously when I got here I was at the bottom. It was a helluva time, but I feel pretty good now.

PSYCHIATRIST (V.O.)

Have you had little pleasure or interest in activities you usually enjoy?

AMBROSE (V.O.)

No, I've been writing furiously...like I haven't had an outpouring like this in decades. It's been intense, but a good intense.

Ambrose, jogging, is moving closer still.

PSYCHIATRIST (V.O.)

What about control? How often during your stay that you have you felt as though your moods, or your life, were under your control?

AMBROSE (V.O.)

Honestly, being put under a routine doesn't exactly make me feel like I am in total control of my life, but I think being placed in an environment that has a strict regiment allowed me to think about that question.

PSYCHIATRIST (V.O.)

Explain.

AMBROSE (V.O.)

I think all my life I have tried to have some semblance of control over my life. I've kept things very close to my chest.

(MORE)

AMBROSE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I fail to open myself up because I have a fear of losing control of the person I have always seen in the mirror for thirty years. I believed my view of the world was the only one and I didn't want to allow any other worldviews, even from my own race - so I shut myself off and insulated myself from pretty much everything, down to my spiritual beliefs and values. I just didn't want to be placed in a situation where I was forced to change.

Ambrose stops jogging, his shirt drenched in sweat. Ambrose downs a bottle of water.

Ambrose immediately vomits.

EXT. HIKING TRAIL - DAY

Ambrose and Tanya are on a trail together, enjoying the hike. Ambrose has lost a few pounds.

AMBROSE (V.O.)

I think I got into a situation with Sylvia where I believed subconsciously she was trying to fundamentally change the essence of who I believe I am, and instead of confronting that head on, I made all sorts of excuses and retreated into weed and allowed my dick to, ha, dictate my decisions.

Ambrose and Tanya arrive at a summit and stare out at the forest below.

INT. BARBERSHOP - DAY

Ambrose is sitting in the barber chair as Kory shaves his head.

AMBROSE (V.O.)

The more control I tried to stubbornly exert over my life, the more it slipped.

(MORE)

AMBROSE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I tried to lord over my life like I was my own fascist tyrant and I made some very bad choices that I think I made to prove that I am some lone island that can make it on his own. But no one survives alone. And I think in order to live in some form of socio-political harmonious unspoken worldview most of us have, which is people are inherently good and have a capacity for good, that we need to understand there is a contract we all agree to when we are born, and that is there is a certain degree of our lives that just will be out of our control because the will of humanity deems it so.

INT. AMBROSE'S OFFICE - DAY

Ambrose sits at his desk, typing away on his laptop.

ON LAPTOP SCREEN:

"EXT. AMBASSADOR BRIDGE - DAY

IF I RULED THE WORLD BY NAS AND LAUREN HILL."

Ambrose continues to type.

AMBROSE (V.O.)

Now, that is not a bad thing, actually, quite the opposite. In this melee of chaos where 8 billion lives make all levies of choices that directly and indirectly affects all of humanity, we see art, and science and the rights of our fellow man progress. And even if I don't have control over the outside world, I do have control over the choices I can make, like if I want to exercise or not. To eat better. To smoke weed less. To be more social. To make sure I take my meds and see my therapist.

INT. AMBROSE'S CAR - DAY

Ambrose is driving down the street.

AMBROSE (V.O.)

I have enough control to believe that I am someone who is unique and has a voice and is not afraid to speak up when he feels the need to. So, I acknowledge that I don't have total control over my life, but honestly, given the person who is behind the wheel, with my condition - being able to just control the confines of my own universe is a win.

Ambrose slows at the blue house with a University of Michigan flag. There are children playing. Ambrose nods and drives off.

INT. AMBROSE'S HOUSE - DAY

ON AMBROSE'S LAPTOP SCREEN:

YOUTUBE CHANNEL

100,005 Subscribers

INT. MEIJER GROCERY STORE - DAY

Ambrose, with a shopping cart, is picking fruit out of the produce section.

A PRODUCE ASSISTANT (40, Black) approaches.

PRODUCE ASSISTANT
Movie man!

AMBROSE
What's good?

They greet each other with a fist bump.

PRODUCE ASSISTANT
Living the dream.

AMBROSE
I hear ya.

PRODUCE ASSISTANT
It's good to see you back. Good looking out.

AMBROSE
Thanks, man. Have a good one.

MEIJER GROCERY STORE - LATER

Ambrose is at the meat section, inspecting prices.

Sylvia approaches with a shopping cart of her own.

SYLVIA

Hey.

Ambrose raises his eyes.

AMBROSE

Hey! How are you?

SYLVIA

Okay. I didn't know you were out.

AMBROSE

Yeah. For a couple of weeks, now.

Sylvia folds her arms.

SYLVIA

Oh, really?

AMBROSE

Yeah.

Sylvia eyes Ambrose.

SYLVIA

You've lost some weight.

AMBROSE

Yeah. I've been trying to be
healthier.

SYLVIA

Good for you.

Sylvia smiles.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

I guess that means you've moved on
from me.

AMBROSE

I'll never move on from you. You'll
always be the most important person
in my life, Sylvia.

SYLVIA

Same.

AMBROSE

I want us to be friends. I think in time, we can be friends. But I am working on loving myself. I know you understand.

Sylvia motions to Ambrose. She takes his hand.

SYLVIA

I am very proud of you. Things haven't been easy for us, have they?

AMBROSE

No. But we had a lot of good times.

SYLVIA

We did.

Ambrose grips the handle of the shopping cart. Sylvia eyes this.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

I guess I better let you go.

AMBROSE

Yeah.

SYLVIA

I'll see you around.

AMBROSE

(nodding)

Yeah. Say hi to the boys for me.

SYLVIA

I will. Love you.

AMBROSE

Love you too.

With that, Sylvia maneuvers her cart around Ambrose and disappears with the rest of the shoppers in the store.

Ambrose looks on for a moment, then heads off in the opposite direction.

INT. AMBROSE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Ambrose has just finished putting groceries away in his kitchen.

BUZZ

Ambrose pulls his phone from his pocket.

ON PHONE SCREEN:

FROM BAYLEY

A handheld video of Ambrose and Bayley singing at the karaoke bar. Below the video is an instant message.

"Memories...This may have attracted some attention to your channel. Ready for round 2? I believe everyone should be given a chance to show they can change"

Ambrose smirks.

ON PHONE SCREEN:

FROM AMBROSE

"Anywhere, anytime"

Ambrose puts his phone back in his pocket.

EXT. AMBROSE'S HOUSE - DAY

The trunk for Ambrose's car is open.

Ambrose exits his house and immediately freezes.

The black pickup sits beside Ambrose's car in the driveway.

Ambrose sheepishly eyes at the pickup. He approaches his car and closes the trunk, never taking his eyes off the pickup.

Ambrose surveys around the pickup. The windows are so dark that Ambrose can only see his own reflection, which he glances at.

The passenger side door props open on its own. Ambrose cocks his head. He slowly approaches.

Ambrose opens the door further, enters and closes the door.

INT. STAGE - DAY

A theater stage. A spotlight on an empty area where Ambrose emerges. Quietly, he observes the environment.

A spotlight from the opposite end of the stage that illuminates a MOTHER with her newborn, crying BABY in a hospital bed.

Ambrose squints. He approaches and realizes that he is separated from the mother by plexiglass.

Ambrose is able to decipher that the Mother is his own Mom, age 28. She is cooing the baby.

Ambrose watches on.

Ambrose's Mom slowly raises her eyes at us with the newborn in her arms. She smiles.

AMBROSE'S MOM

Well, what do you want to tell him,
my love?

Ambrose's Mom continues to lovingly rock her baby.

FADE OUT.