

The Adventures of Stinky Steven

By

Darrell A Pennington

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EXT - MCDONALDS DRIVE THRU - DAY

DAVE ERNSPIGER (early 40s, male) rolls down the window of his truck as he rolls to a stop in front of the menu board. An AI assistant welcomes him in a soothing female voice. A half-drunk bottle of vodka is visible through the windshield.

AI ASSISTANT

Good morning. My name is Amber. Welcome to McDonalds. Can I get you a breakfast platter with extra pancakes today?

DAVE

I'll take two large oh jays and two sausage biscuits with cheese.

AI ASSISTANT

It appears you are ordering for two people, is that correct?

DAVE

Good point. Throw a bacon egg and cheese biscuit, extra bacon on there too.

AI ASSISTANT

It appears you are ordering for three people. Do you need an additional drink?

DAVE

Excuse me?

AI ASSISTANT (V.O.)

It is not healthy to share drinks. This is a method of disease spreading. The World Health Organization cites recent studies where transmission increased seventeen percent when a diseased individual shares a drink with a disease-free individual.

DAVE

My girlfriend broke up with me six months ago. Two drinks is fine.

AI ASSISTANT (V.O.)

Commonly referred to as cold sores, herpes labialis is the number one transmitted disease through shared beverages.

DAVE

If I get one of those oozy gifts I'll let you know. Can I get my food? I'm running late.

AI ASSISTANT (V.O.)

For only two dollars more I can get you a second bacon, egg and cheese biscuit.

DAVE

Don't care about obesity huh?

AI ASSISTANT (V.O.)

According to the World Health Organization, obesity is the num...

A human voice cuts off the AI Assistant.

EMPLOYEE (V.O.)

Pull forward, please.

EXT - REMAX PARKING LOT - DAY

Employees pull into the parking lot, exit their vehicles and make their way into the office. A big RE/MAX sign hangs over the double-doored office space. One of the doors read Re/MAX Real Estate Your First Stop When Buying or Selling A Home.

INT - DAVE'S TRUCK - DAY

Dave puts a cap on an empty bottle. He opens the glove compartment and puts the bottle in, moving a handgun out of the way in the process.

INT - REMAX REALTY CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

DANNY GARDNER (early 60s, male, thin, stylishly dressed) walks into a conference room. Employees make their way around the room, gathering a pastry, a cup of coffee and making small talk as others occupy seats in the middle of the room. Danny looks at his watch and mouths 'fuck'. He flicks the lights off and on.

DANNY

Bear with me folks, technical issues.

A random REALTOR (20s, male) chimes in sarcastically.

REALTOR

That's a new one.

Danny glares at the employee before leaving the room. Nervous anticipation blankets the room. Small talk in pockets of the room suggest that they are worried about losing their job, the current state of the market, and riffs of 'what do they expect'?

Dave walks with a bag full of McDonalds and two large orange juices. People acknowledge Dave, pat him on the back and show other signs of affection. He makes his way, carefully lifting the tray of drinks above people's heads, arriving at the empty seat next to his best friend, MATT WOERTZ (early 30's, male).

MATT

Good thing there's technical issues.

DAVE

Fuck him. Drive-thru was backed up. Goddamn AI order taker only takes three times as long.

MATT

He locked you out last time.

DAVE

Did you know sharing drinks is a primary method of disease transmission?

MATT

Yeah.

DAVE

You think that means the backwash?

MATT

What the fuck?

DAVE

Surely a first drink and passing it along isn't spreading disease like the dude chugging down the backwash.

MATT

No one does that.

DAVE

Yeah. Yeah, of course.

Dave passes a drink to Matt and pulls out a breakfast sandwich to hand him. He pulls out two for himself. Matt takes a drink of the juice and spits it back in the cup.

MATT

Goddamn!

DAVE

My bad.

Dave hands him the other drink and takes the first back. He takes a big gulp, swallows to soothe the rough edges a bit. Matt wipes his tongue and lips with a napkin.

MATT

Fuck, Dave

DAVE

You're fine. That doesn't count.
Seven years and counting.

An assistant, KIM (30s, female) makes her way to Dave.

KIM

Hey. I missed you coming in.

DAVE

Running late today.

KIM

Shocker. Here you go. Erica is
looking forward to opening day so
much by the way.

Kim hands him a piece of paper. Dave stuffs it in his jacket
pocket, thanks Kim and hungrily unwraps a sausage biscuit and
begins devouring it while replying with a full mouth.

DAVE

Me too. Worked on the field this
morning.

KIM

We can't wait.

Kim's work is done, and she heads back to her desk.

DAVE

What is this?

MATT

Your numbers for the last two
years.

DAVE

So, it's true?

MATT

Danny hasn't already told you?
Everybody thinks so.

DAVE

Fuck.

Dave angrily eats the rest of his biscuit as Danny walks back in with a remote in hand. He flicks the lights off and on.

DANNY

OK folks. All set. We are going to watch a quick three-minute video and then I'll go over details.

Danny walks over to turn off the lights. He drops the remote and bends over to pick it up. Dave makes an elongated high-pitched fart sound. Danny bolts up and Dave breaks it off perfectly. The room appreciates the comic relief. Danny does not.

DANNY

Be sure and see me before you leave.

A few of the younger realtors laugh and make an 'ohhhhh' sound as if he's been called to the principal's office.

DAVE

Yessir. If you need to go to the bathroom I'll wait.

The room giggles.

Danny turns off the lights and hits play on the remote. An overhead projector flashes on the whiteboard.

A cheesy video highlights an AI virtual assistant, A.R.E.N.A (Automated Real Estate Networking Assistant). Teams of realtors

competing in an arena educate the group to minimal levels of understanding. Dave leans over to Matt.

DAVE

We're fucked.

INT - DANNY GARDNER'S OFFICE - DAY

Dave sits in a cluttered middle management admin office. He scrolls on his phone as he waits for Danny to arrive. Danny walks in holding a stack of printouts.

DAVE

Hope everything came out OK.

DANNY

Shut the fuck up.

Danny closes the door. He plops the papers in Dave's lap, grabs a bottled water out of the small fridge and sits at his desk.

DANNY

What'd you think?

DAVE

I think it sounds like you need more fiber in your diet. Maybe some black-eyed peas?

DANNY

Cut the shit. This is the future.

DAVE

You learn that at one of those fancy management retreats Mom sends you to?

DANNY

The future is now.

Dave puts a finger gun to his head.

DAVE

Shoot me in the fuckin' head then.

DANNY

No sweat off my sack, but Momma says otherwise. You gotta be on board. Cheerlead this every day.

DAVE

Make 'em eat that shit sandwich and say 'it taste's so good'

Dave licks his fingers as his tongue swirls in and around them before sucking his thumb and eyeing Danny deeply.

DANNY

Exactly. Just like that.

Dave releases his thumb and slowly winds his middle finger in the air.

DAVE

How do you sleep at night?

DANNY

How do you? Look at those numbers instead of just cramming it in your pocket. What are we these days? Forty-eight large?

DAVE

Portly executive. Thanks for asking.

DANNY

When I tell people you're adopted. 'Ah,' they say 'now it makes sense'.

Dave crosses his arms over his gut.

DANNY

So I left out one thing in the meeting.

DAVE

Yeah? What's that?

DANNY

This is a significant investment. by Momma herself. Corporate didn't pitch in a penny. Two point two million.

DAVE

For that horseshit? Have you been to a McDonalds lately?

DANNY

Please.

DAVE

Those assistants fucking suck, Danny. I don't mean they're Kruger bad, I mean they fucking suck.

Flashback

Dave is at the RE/MAX employee cafe. The line is backed up and Dave is in a hurry. He cuts in front of a WOMAN (50s, female) to place his order. He walks up to place his order and notices it's KRUGER (20s male, downs syndrome) who's wearing a name tag. Fist bumps him.

The Woman Dave cut off walks up to place an order and looks at Dave with disgust. Dave looks at Kruger and mouths 'catch up'. Kruger nods.

KRUGER

Would you like catch up with that?

DAVE

Catch up? What is catch up?

The Woman looks over at the exchange. She notices Kruger and starts to get mad.

KRUGER

For your fries. Catch up. Are you retarded?

DAVE

Retarded?

KRUGER

Are you?

Dave looks over at the Woman.

DAVE

He called me retarded. You believe that shit?

Danny snaps his fingers and ends the flashback.

DANNY

Hey, retard. Back in the present. The check is signed. Done deal.

DAVE

Who approved that?

DANNY

I fucking approved it.

DAVE

Shocker.

Dave makes 'shocker' signal and motions his hand as if he's fucking someone 'shocker' style.

DANNY

Call it what you want. It's a big chunk of change. We're gonna have

to let thirty percent of the staff go. Sales, admin. Across the board.

Dave makes the shocker motion again, more violently and angrily. Stabbing instead of fucking. He looks Danny in the eyes as he stabs faster. Danny maintains eyecontact as he takes a swig.

DAVE

You're able to every night? How? I'm serious, Danny. We can't let thirty-some people go. What the fuck are you thinking?

DANNY

I'm thinking math Dave. Math. Two point two. Gotta come from somewhere.

DAVE

How 'bout the math of these thirty families not being able to pay their bills or buy a house? Maybe that's not good for us. You ever think of that math, Einstein?

DANNY

Don't be retarded.

DAVE

Right. Momma is gonna lose sleep over a couple mil. Please. It's not right.

DANNY

Two point two. And I'm glad you feel that way. That's exactly why I told Momma you were the perfect one for the job.

DAVE

Job?

DANNY

Thirty percent. Someone's gotta choose. You got all the info there. And a week to make the decisions. We make the announcement next Monday.

Dave looks in his lap.

INT - DAVE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Scene dissolves into his house, Dave in his nighttime attire of sweats and a Grateful Dead t-shirt, reclining in his oversized La-Z-Boy, smoking a joint as he attempts to focus on one of the papers from the pile in his lap.

The space, and the home, is clearly a bachelor's pad that has seen far better days. The bones of a nice home barely comes through the cluttered, dirty and chaotic space. A Scooby Doo-looking dog, with one brown eye and one blue, keeps Dave company beside his chair. Dave tosses the pile of papers to the floor.

DAVE

Fuck this.

He grabs a guitar off the floor and absent-mindedly plays along with the music in the background as he watches his muted TV. School of Rock. Grabs his phone from under his crotch and pulls up a contact: WOERTZLESS. Types a text.

DAVE

U up?

EXT - DAVE'S BACK PATIO - NIGHT

Dave tends to a grill filled with burgers, steaks and sausages. He is preparing food for ten, it seems. Matt sits in a chair on the patio, scrolling his phone and drinking a beer.

MATT

So what are you going to do?

DAVE

I don't know.

MATT

If it makes it easier, you can let me go.

DAVE

Really?

MATT

If it helps. I don't WANT to lose my job. But you're in a tough spot.

DAVE

See. Woertzless. That's the type of leadership we need to prevent this shit in the first place.

Matt is proud of his accomplishment.

DAVE (con't)

I'll come up with somethin'. I'll talk to Momma. Danny has done stupid shit before.

MATT

And you always make it right.

DAVE

Don't be a fag.

INT - DAVE'S CAR - DAY

Dave sits in the parking lot of Nacho Libre's. He eyes the restaurant as he smokes a joint. The adult Jack Black-themed

nacho restaurant is a regular haunt. He looks over at the passenger seat and sees Jack Black. He looks at his joint.

JACK

Not my best flick but hell of a restaurant.

DAVE

It's my favorite.

JACK

It's been awhile.

DAVE

Kristie said the DUI at 1:00 p.m. was proof I had an issue.

JACK

Who has an issue with nachos?

DAVE

That's what I said. Broke up with me on the spot.

JACK

Well, we've missed you. Good to have our number one back in his booth. New feature rolled out a few weeks ago.

DAVE

What's that?

JACK

You'll see.

Dave smokes the rest of his joint and puts the roach in his ashtray. Looks at his phone. Text from Kristie.

KRISTIE (text)

Haven't heard back. Hope you're

good. Excited about opening day.

Dave starts a reply and then decides against it. Shoves the phone in his pocket and opens the door.

INT - NACHO LIBRE RESTAURANT - DAY

Dave sits in a booth. A gold plate on cherry plaque affixed to the wall reads: Personal Booth of / Commissioner David Ernsperger / Buddy Ball Newburgh, IN. He starts to grab a menu and then decides against it.

COURTNEY (late 20's, female) brings Dave a double shot of whiskey and diet coke. Jack Black movies play on every TV except for two in the bar area, showing ESPN.

DAVE

Running late today.

COURTNEY

It's been so long sweetie. When you texted me this morning you were coming in, I was so excited. Actually, I was getting worried about you.

DAVE

One of those days. I was raking the field at 4:00 a.m. Opening day is coming up.

COURTNEY

I know! Andy can't wait. He's been talking my ear off. Buddy ball is Saturday, buddy ball is Saturday.

Courtney places a placemat down in front of Dave. STINKY STEVEN (middle-aged overweight adult) cartoon occupies the mat.

DAVE

What's this?

Courtney provides the management required response.

COURTNEY

Have fun reading the Adventures of Stinky Steven. Follow the adventures of a down and out Steven and see what happens in his life. Come back every day for the next part of the story. Your life will look great in comparison.

DAVE

Take you long to memorize that?

COURTNEY

More than I got paid for. The usual?

DAVE

Sure, let's start back with my favorite. Hey, bring me another.

Dave drinks the double shot and looks across the booth.

JACK

Told ya.

DAVE

Stinky Steven, huh?

JACK

Reverse psychology. Instead of showing you some bullshit aspirational ad covered placemat how about a story of a dude whose life sucks so bad it can't possibly do anything other than make you feel good about yours.

DAVE

What a concept.

JACK

And I'm selling them for a buck so you can take them home and remind yourself how good you got it. Get the whole story.

Dave examines the placemat. The Nacho Libre logo is watermarked behind a 4-pane old-style comic strip. Jack Black movie posters ring the mat. As Dave looks more closely, the 2-D crudely drawn strip assumes a black-and-white, animated motion quality as he reads the panes.

PANE 1:

STINKY STEVEN

Why me?

UNAMED CHARACTER

Why not?

Dave looks up at Jack.

DAVE

Why does he stink?

JACK

Aliteration. People love it. They don't even realize it. It's like beautiful people. You're drawn to them without even knowing why.

DAVE

They're beautiful. Who's gonna be attracted to stinky?

JACK

Exactly.

Courtney brings another double shot to Dave as he sits alone in his booth looking at the placemat.

COURTNEY

Scott says I gotta cut you off now. It's lunchtime. And with the other time and all. Said today is on him though. Glad to have the commish back.

DAVE

Have you read this?

COURTNEY

No. Why would I? I know my life sucks. I don't need a cartoon cheering me up.

DAVE

Andy.

COURTNEY

His life sucks too. But thankfully he has no idea. And no idea that my life sucks. Your nachos are coming up.

Dave reads pane two.

STINKY STEVEN

This isn't going to be popular.

UNNAMED CHARACTER

That's why you have to make them understand. They like you.

Dave reads pane three.

STINKY STEVEN

They won't after this.

UNNAMED CHARACTER

Progress favors the leader. Be a leader.

Dave reads pane four.

STINKY STEVEN

I don't see this as progress.

UNNAMED CHARACTER

It isn't your job to see. It's your job to do.

Dave looks up at Jack.

DAVE

Kinda bleak.

JACK

Is it?

DAVE

Yeah.

JACK

Good. That's the point.

Courtney brings an enormous plate of nachos, the Mount Vesuvias, and sits it down in front of Dave. The mountain of food looks to be enough for four.

COURTNEY

Look good?

DAVE

Like always.

COURTNEY

I'm coming out Saturday too. Took the day off.

DAVE

Awesome. I'm sure Andy will love you're there.

COURTNEY

Everyone loves that you do this you know.

DAVE

I don't know all about that.

COURTNEY

They all look forward to it so much.

DAVE

We all deserve an opening day.

Courtney bends down and kisses Dave on the cheek before walking away.

COURTNEY

Thank you.

Dave looks over at Jack who winks at him.

EXT - REMAX PARKING LOT - DAY

A silver Bentley with tinted windows sits in the President's spot. A SOLD vanity plate adorns the front and back bumpers.

INT - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

Dave paces back and forth in front of JANICE (mid 80s, female).

JANICE

You need to take this up with Danny.

DAVE

He won't listen, Mom.

JANICE

Then get in line. Make him listen or do what he says. I gave him full signing authority. This is his job now. I'm done with worrying about it.

DAVE

You're in here every day.

JANICE

I still own the place. People need to remember that.

DAVE

The weekends too?

JANICE

Lots of eyeballs drive past this building every day.

DAVE

OK. You gotta give me more than a week at least. We need to put in a plan. Has anyone even tested A.R.E.N.A.?

JANICE

What is that?

DAVE

The two point two million dollar AI assistant software.

JANICE

AI?

DAVE

Are you serious, Mom?

JANICE

You expect an eighty-year-old woman to keep up with this stuff? I struggle with texts. Danny is in charge, and if you have an issue, figure it out with Danny.

INT - REMAX OFFICE FLOOR - DAY

The triple-sized cubicle layout dominates the floor of the office, with management offices ringing the perimeter, and the conference room in the middle of the outward-facing wall.

Matt sits in one of the two chairs in Dave's cubicle. Dave pulls out a bottle of whiskey and fills his coffee mug halfway full.

MATT

Well at least she said take it up with Danny. Maybe you can make him delay it for awhile.

DAVE

Any ideas?

MATT

Not off the top of my head.

DAVE

Me either.

MATT

Gowdy get you the DMT?

DAVE

Tonight.

MATT

So we're on?

DAVE

Sunday. Danny wants the list that
Night though.

MATT

Then he fires everyone the next
day. Just like that?

DAVE

He's a barbarian.

MATT

I was messing around with it today
actually.

DAVE

Why?

MATT

I got two calls. Showing two
different properties tomorrow. One
of them is the Penninton place.

DAVE

Who hoo. Two calls in a day. Bet
that has never happened.

MATT

Two? In one day. Been awhile.

DAVE

Kim could have easily done the
same thing.

MATT

Not for all of us. You see how
stretched she is already. When was
the last time she did thank you
emails?

DAVE

Don't be a douche man.

MATT

I'm not being a douche but when was it?

DAVE

I don't know. Been awhile since I had a sale.

MATT

Exactly. And she still can't keep up. I did more marketing today than I have in a month.

DAVE

So what? You ready to get fired Monday? You and Lisa and Karen and Brian. How about Kim while we're at it. Let's fire the single Mom with a special needs foster daughter.

MATT

I'm not saying that. But fuck man, Tucker has their own version Already. That's why Rick left. Everyone is going to have it. We won't be able to compete without it.

INT - DAVE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

GOWDY (40s, male) sits in Dave's living room. He has a soft sided leather bag open and is pulling out items and spreading them across the table. Holds up a vial of white powder.

DAVE

How many trips is that?

GOWDY

Probably four. Did you read up?

DAVE

Yeah.

GOWDY

And?

DAVE

I still want it. The weeds just not doing it anymore. (grabs his back) Acid lasts too long. Mushrooms make me queasy.

Gowdy starts putting back items in the bag.

DAVE

What are you doing?

GOWDY

You said these weren't working for you anymore.

DAVE

I didn't say I didn't want them. Just add it to this weeks order. Woerzless is coming over Sunday.

GOWDY

Fuck him.

DAVE

Oh my God, get over it already. It's been two years.

GOWDY

He stole my Top Ten moment.

DAVE

He didn't Gowdy. It was Top Ten

because of him laying out for the ball. You catching it probably doesn't do more than get a cursory replay by Van Pelt. Plus it was his birthday trip for God's sake.

GOWDY

Well, I'm just telling you I don't think you're in a good spot to be experimenting with this. Shit can be harsh if you aren't in the right frame of mind. It'll fuck with you.

DAVE

I'm in a perfectly fine state of mind.

GOWDY

In my professional opinion, you should refrain from this. But whatever, I'm just the doctor. You tell me what you want and I write a scrip. Do it separately and keep an eye on each other. He is Woertzless but it's better than doing it at the same time. Trust me on this.

DAVE

Sure. Whatever you say.

EXT - NEWBURGH BUDDY BALL FIELD - DAY

Dave pulls up in his truck. An OPENING DAY THIS SATURDAY banner hangs on the outside of the fence.

INT - DAVE'S TRUCK - DAY

A beer can rests in a cup holder. He pulls a pill out of his pocket, pops it and takes a swig of beer. The stereo clock reads

4:13. He unlocks his seat belt and wearily exits the truck, cradling the small of his back as he does. He walks to the bed of the truck and retrieves 2 rakes and a shovel.

INT - DAVE'S BATHROOM - DAY

Wall clock reads 8:50 as Dave showers before work.

INT - DAVE'S CUBE - DAY

Matt sits at a chair and waits for Dave to arrive. Dave walks in sorta of limping and plops down a sack of McDonalds and a tray of three drinks. Matt reaches for one of the drinks.

MATT

Thirtsy?

DAVE

Kim loves their iced coffee.

MATT

Oh shit. You're firing Kim?

DAVE

No!

MATT

I would not want to be in your Shoes.

DAVE

I'm not firing Kim. I'm not firing anyone.

MATT

You figured it out?

DAVE

I will. You been to Nacho Libre's

lately?

MATT

Nah man. I'm boycotting that place.

DAVE

Still?

MATT

Fuck that man. Those cheerleader uniforms were so fucking hot.

DAVE

It is 2026.

MATT

The dudes wore UPS and police Uniforms.

DAVE

Go to lunch with me. I want to show you something.

MATT

I can't.

DAVE

Fuck that. I'll pay.

MATT

Nah man, I really can't. Gotta do lunch and learn with Aaron today.

DAVE

Oh the Lord of the loans? Look at me, Aaron Cashmer the lord of the loans. Send me all your customers Re/MAX.

MATT

It's cool. Chipotle.

DAVE

Fuck that.

MATT

Nah man, really. Your brother is ridin' my ass and if I don't have to get fired I don't want to.

INT - NACHO LIBRE'S - DAY

Dave sits at the booth staring intently at the placemat. An empty shot glass sits on one side of the mat as he picks up the mat and turns it over. Nothing. Turns it back and holds it close, then far away before setting it back down.

JACK BLACK

You gettin' into the story?

DAVE

Who writes this?

JACK BLACK

I do!

DAVE

Pretty simplistic.

Dave looks at the four panes as the animated figures come to life in black and white.

PANE 1:

STINKY STEVEN

I don't know doc. I think I need a larger dose.

DOCTOR

Are you sure that's wise?

JACK BLACK

The biggest ideas are the simplest. I think I said that in School of Rock.

DAVE

Definitely not. That's gay and School of Rock, rocks.

JACK BLACK

I said it on one of them.

PANE 2:

DOCTOR

Are you keeping track of everything your taking? You have to be careful.

STINKY STEVEN

Just give me the scrip doc. I got a shit job to do and I need some ideas.

DAVE

When do you have time to write them?

JACK BLACK

I have an assistant. Jeeves.

DAVE

Jeeves?

JACK BLACK

He hates it when I call him that. They get butt hurt when they know you're busting their balls.

DAVE

Fuck. You too?

JACK BLACK

Progress baby. You know how much I was paying my live assistant?

DAVE

Did that person do a good job?

JACK BLACK

Do you know how much employee health premiums cost?

DAVE

We need each other man.

JACK BLACK

Exactly! You know how I can keep this place open? Fucking Beer Olympics and an indoor go-kart track ain't cheap my friend.

INT - NACHO LIBRE'S GO KART TRACK - DAY

Patrons whip around an indoor go-kart track as monitors play Jack Black movies.

INT - DAVE'S BOOTH - DAY

DAVE

I'm just saying there has to be a way we can re-embrace humanity.

PANE 3:

STINKY STEVEN

I got it.

UNNAMED CHARACTER

Good.

PANE 4:

Stinky Steven and an unnamed character light a clear pipe.

DAVE

You don't have Karen's in here
throwing a fit over this shit?

JACK BLACK

We know who to give it to.

INT - DAVE'S CUBICLE - DAY

Dave sits in his chair staring at the computer screen. An
inter-office chatbot appears.

JENNIFER CHATBOT

My aunt and uncle are coming in
for Opening Day!

DAVE CHATBOT

That's awesome!

Matt pokes his head in.

MATT

How was Libre's?

DAVE

How was loan Jesus?

MATT

Helpful actually. I think he may
have saved the Ferrell deal.
Goddamn underwriters.

DAVE

Praise the lord.

Danny walks up to the cube and impatiently waits for the
conversation to end.

DAVE

Hey, I want to take you to lunch

tomorrow and show you something.

MATT

It's a date.

Danny takes a seat and looks around to ensure he isn't being overheard.

DANNY

So? Ten percent yet? Give me some hints.

DAVE

I told you we're not getting rid of anyone. I'm talking to Mom.

DANNY

Well, I just left her office and you are doing it. Tick tock Dave, get your fat ass in gear.

Danny takes a box of Tic Tacs out of his pocket and tosses it to Dave as he stands up to walk off.

DANNY (con't)

I hope you Uber'd back from lunch.

Dave hears his text notification as he hollers to Danny while pulling his phone out of his pocket.

DAVE

Fuck you.

KRISTIE (text)

Are you gonna be at the field tonight?

Dave hesitates. Finally he replies.

DAVE

Yes

KRISITE
Want some help?

Dave looks around the office and runs his hands through his hair. He hesitates and considers not answering before he takes a shrug and replies.

DAVE
Sure.

EXT - NEWBURGH BUDDY BALL FIELD - DAY

The ballfield sits behind a church Newburgh Church Of God. An elderly person fifty yards away waves at Dave. Dave waives back. The day is turning into night as Dave and KRISTIE COX (early 40s, female) unload boxes of Costco candies, snacks and drinks.

INT - CONCESSION STAND - NIGHT

The last of the supplies are neatly readied for Opening Day.

KRISTIE
Danny is an asshole. I've always thought so.

DAVE
Along with everyone else.

KRISTIE
You can convince your Mom. You always manage.

DAVE
Not always.

KRISITE
How's your back?

DAVE
I'll manage.

EXT - DAVE'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Dave and Krisite sit on the tailgate. Krisitie swings her legs carefreely.

KRISITE

How many teams this year?

DAVE

Fourteen.

KRISTIE

Oh my god, Dave! 140 kids are getting this gift from you.

DAVE

Thanks.

KRISITE

And no telling how many family members and friends are out here all season watching their angels play baseball. All because of you, Dave Ernspiger.

DAVE

It is kinda cool. My little buddy deserves the credit though.

KRISTIE

He can't wait to see you Saturday.

DAVE

I miss him.

KRISTIE

You have an open invitation.

DAVE

Yeah.

KRISTIE

You do.

DAVE

I know. I need to stop by. Maybe...

A text notification dings on his phone. A message from WOERZLESS

MATT

I fucked up.

INT - DAVE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dave sits in his recliner. A TV playing The Big Year is muted. Matt is walking back and forth across the room while Dave chugs a beer.

MATT

Ten fucking years!

DAVE

Settle down.

MATT

Per document!

DAVE

What were you thinking?

MATT

It was the blowjob.

DAVE

Sure hope it was a good one.

MATT

The best. Literally the best.

DAVE

How many documents?

MATT

I don't know. Five or six.

DAVE

Bet it wasn't fifty or sixty years good.

MATT

I don't know what to do.

DAVE

First off, you're not going to jail. But how the fuck did you manage to even pull that off?

MATT

AI

DAVE

Are you fucking kidding me?

MATT

No. Just a few words, - paystubs from Deaconess Hospital Corporation - hit print and loan Approved.

DAVE

How'd they know?

MATT

I don't know. Aaron said they put in some automated fraud detection tool in this month that every document has to go through.

Dave nearly spits out the swig of beer he's taking and starts laughing his ass off.

MATT

Not helpful.

DAVE

So fucking AI calling out AI for fraud. Twenty goddamn tewnty six.

Dave holds a finger gun to his head and pulls the trigger.

MATT

So what do I do?

DAVE

Just cancel the loan.

MATT

Doesn't matter.

DAVE

Uh, I think canceling the loan matters. No loan, no fraud.

MATT

Aaron said it gets flagged in a database and a report goes to the compliance department. That's how he found out about it. Signed loan application is all that matters.

DAVE

Fuck me.

MATT

No, fuck me. Can you help?

DAVE

I'll talk to Momma.

INT - JANICE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dave sits in a chair across from Janice. She has a magnifying ruler scrolling a report on her desk.

JANICE

Who is using ink pens for marketing in 2026?

DAVE

Why are you doing the audit department's job?

JANICE

Got to audit the audit department.

DAVE

Ink pens probably not gonna break the bank. I know where we can save two million if we need to.

JANICE

So why in the world do I want to go to bat for Matt Woerz? Has he even been in the Top twenty since he's been here? He was a favor to begin with.

DAVE

Someone is always gonna be last, Momma. That's not even the point. He's a good guy, he needed a break and we gave it to him.

JANICE

And this is how he repays us?

DAVE

Shitty and stupid thing to do, no doubt. But we both know he's not the first and we both know this room is filled with people that have done the same.

JANICE

I have never committed loan fraud.

DAVE

That's half the job. We figure out how to get people in homes no matter what. We say shit like that in every Monday meeting.

JANICE

We do not tell people to commit fraud.

DAVE

We don't have to. The profit motive is always at play, Momma. No one knows that better than you.

JANICE

I'll call Shannon. This is on you if it goes south.

DAVE

I'll take it.

JANICE

And no more fighting Danny on this intelligent helper thing.

DAVE

Momma, be reasonable.

JANICE

Reasonable? This company can't survive if it can't compete. How's that for reasonable? I'm not losing another top agent to Tucker. If Danny says we need this, we need this. All of us.

INT - REMAX BATHROOM - DAY

Dave scans the room and stalls as Matt checks if anyone is following them in. Confident the coast is clear, Dave brings Matt up to date.

DAVE

She's gonna call Mortgage Masters. But this is it man. I can't do this shit anymore, always puttin' my ass on the line for you. I love you, Matt but I can't keep doing It.

MATT

I know. I really do. I promise. Thank you so much man. Really, I mean that. Not just me but her too. She doesn't even know you saved her ass.

DAVE

And she doesn't need to know. You just explain her income docs got rejected by underwriting but that's it. And no more blow jobs! We do have professional ethics. We still on for lunch?

MATT

Of course.

EXT - DR. ANDREWS CHIROPRACTORS OFFICE - DAY

Dave's empty truck sits in the parking lot. As the camera passes the truck an opened bottle of vodka can be seen.

INT - EXAM ROOM - DAY

Dave lays on the table in boxers. He holds a patient gown in his hand as the chiropractic device pulls away from his back and auto-positions itself above the table. Dave slowly rolls up into

a sitting position. DR ANDREW (40s, male) sits in a chair scrolling his I-pad, typing notes.

DR. ANDREW

Still an eight or nine most days?

DAVE

Medicated. Non medicated, Id say a million.

DR. ANDREW

You're not mixing these with alcohol are you?

DAVE

Come on doc?

Dr. Andrew looks away and types more notes into the I-pad.

DR. ANDREW

Yeah. Of course. OK. Cindy will have it up there at the desk. Same time in two weeks?

INT - NACHO LIBRE'S BOOTH - DAY

Dave checks his phone. Nothing. Starting to get frustrated. He looks at Jack Black as his hand runs across the placemat nervously.

JACK BLACK

Big date?

DAVE

Hardly. Friend. He's never late.

JACK BLACK

So cut him some slack. You liking the story?

Dave looks down at the placemat. He examines the four panes and looks back up to Jack Black.

DAVE (V.O.)

How does Jeeves know what you want for the story?

JACK BLACK (V.O.)

I don't know.

PANE 1: Stinky and unnamed character are taking a shit in adjoining stalls.

STINKY STEVEN

So, you promise, right? This is it?

UNNAMED CHARACTER

Of course. No more. I love you man.

DAVE

You don't think this is fucking weird?

JACK BLACK

What do you mean?

PANE 2:

STINKY STEVEN

I know we can figure out a different way.

UNNAMED CHARACTER

Mom told you. 30% by Sunday.

Dave's attention is distracted. He looks up to Courtney who is holding an empty shot glass.

COURTNEY

Hey sweetie. I said do you need
Another? This will have to be the
last one.

Dave looks blankly at Courtney and scans the restaurant.

DAVE

Have you seen Matt come in?

COURTNEY

I thought he was boycotting.

DAVE

Yeah. My treat so he was supposed
to be here.

Dave looks around the restaurant again. This time he's nervous
and anxious instead of frustrated. He scans every table and
booth.

DAVE (con't)

Yeah, of course. One more.

Dave looks as Courtney walks off. He looks back at Jack Black
and down at the placemat.

DAVE (V.O.)

I mean this is fucking weird man.
This is some dark shit.

PANE 3:

A wrecked car it t-boned into a telephone poll. The driver is
slumped over the steering wheel.

PANE 4:

An ambulance loads a gurney with a sheet covered body as people gawk at the scene.

JACK BLACK (V.O.)
You really think so?

INT - REMAX OFFICE - DAY

Dave lumbers across the office floor, asking people if they have seen Matt. People shaking their heads no. Dave gets more agitated the more people he asks. Kim comes rushing up.

KIM
Hey? Did Danny not get ahold of you?

DAVE
No.

KIM
Oh Dave.

INT - EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

Danny is talking to a doctor as Dave gazes out of the window in disbelief. Hospital personnel filter back and forth as Danny concludes the conversation with the doctor and makes his way to Dave. He puts his arm around Dave and attempts to console him. As that happens Matt rushes up and hugs Dave. Dave looks dumbfounded.

MATT
Man, I am so sorry. So sorry.

Matt hugs Dave sincerely and pushes Danny out of the embrace as Dave is still shellshocked. Dave relishes Matt's embrace as reality sinks in. Dave starts to lose his balance. Matt guides him over to a chair.

MATT

Kim told me and I got over as soon as I could.

DAVE

Why weren't you at lunch?

MATT

Long fucking story. How are you doing?

Danny walks over to interject.

DANNY

If you don't mind, Woerz. I was having a private moment with my brother. I'll thank you for giving us some time to finish it.

Danny whisks Dave away to a place for privacy.

DANNY

Ok. I know this isn't the time but we have some decisions to make.

DAVE

You're right. It isn't the time.

EXT - NEWBURGH BUDDY BALL FIELD - NIGHT

Dave walks across the parking lot separating the church from the baseball field. An elderly gentleman pulls the back door of the church closed. Dave makes his way to the concession booth, suspicious of the lighted glow coming from it.

KRISTIE

Hey! Perfect timing.

DAVE

Oh shit. It's you. I thought some punk ass kids were trying to steal our shit.

KRISTIE

I'd cut a mutherfucker.

Dave pats his side.

KRISTIE

I learned from the best. So look, everything is all sorted and ready for Saturday. I'll have the volunteer sheet at the meeting tomorrow.

DAVE

Perfect. Old man Kerns said everything will be set up.

Krsitie lets a silence linger as her face turns serious.

KRISTIE

I'm sorry about your Mom.

DAVE

Thanks.

KRISTIE

Do you want to come over and just hang out? Order a pizza?

DAVE

Nah. I mean yes, I would love to. But I gotta go to the office. Danny and I have some things to figure out.

KRISTIE

That's no fun.

DAVE

No.

KRISTIE

I'll be up late if you need to talk.

DAVE

I appreciate it.

INT - DANNY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Danny sits behind his desk and is fidgety. He anxiously smokes a cigarette and takes a swig of his drink. The whiskey bottle from Dave's desk sits opened. Dave is disinterested.

DANNY

It's not gonna be easy.

DAVE

I thought AI could do anything.

DANNY

I don't know. That's what everyone says. It better work.

DAVE

And you have the numbers I need? Danny throws a leather ledger on the desk.

DAVE (con't)

And not one person loses their job.

DANNY

Yes.

INT - DAVE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Matt sits on a couch flipping through the ledger and Dave sits in his La-Z-Boy strumming his guitar watching Year One muted.

DAVE

This is underrated.

MATT

It sucks.

DAVE

What kind of dude do you think he is?

MATT

I'd smoke a joint with him.

DAVE

You think he's full of shit?

MATT

Hardly. Everyone loves him. Kids, us, my parents. He connects. You gotta trust that kind of dude. That is who the world needs to be listening to. Elon? Please. Give me Jack Black every day.

DAVE

So, you think you can do it?

MATT

It's not gonna be easy.

DAVE

But can you?

MATT

Yeah. Probably take me three weeks.

DAVE

You have one.

INT - DAVE'S BOOTH NACHO LIBRE'S - DAY

Jack Black drinks a cola as Dave texts a reply on his phone. Jack scans the restaurant with pride. A cathedral to Jack Black on every surface. Dave puts his phone in his blazer pocket.

JACK BLACK
I'm sorry about your Mom.

DAVE
Thanks.

JACK BLACK
Gotta be a bitch on the business side.

DAVE
You have no idea.

JACK BLACK
I have some.

Dave scans the placemat.

DAVE
Yeah, I guess so.

PANE 1: Stinky Steven sits in a bathroom stall next to an occupied one.

STINKY STEVEN
I really need a favor.

UNNAMED CHARACTER
I owe you a million.

DAVE (con't)
You have a favorite of your own?

JACK BLACK
Of course. We all do. Never listen to anyone who says otherwise. We ALL have our favorite.

Courtney drops off a salad and a basket of crackers and butter.

COURTNEY

Still can't believe you ordered a salad.

Dave laughs sarcastically.

DAVE

Grief can open your eyes sometimes.

COURTNEY

I'm so sorry. I was surprised there's not going to be a funeral.

DAVE

My Mom is so superstitious. It's weird. There'll be a ceremony - keep your eyes open. I'm sure it'll be all over everything.

COURTNEY

I saw the commercial for Saturday. Wow, you went all out this year. A band and fireworks show. It's gonna be a real party.

DAVE

Five-year anniversary. I thought it was a good excuse.

COURTNEY

My neighbors are gonna go to the volunteer meeting.

DAVE

Well, thank you. I appreciate you spreading the word.

Courtney pats Dave on the shoulder and walks off. Dave looks down to the placemat as the 2D animation kicks into motion.

PANE 2: An unnamed character sits at a computer hacking away at the keyboard. He appears frustrated.

PANE 3: An unnamed character calls Stinky Steven. Stinky Steven picks up the phone.

STINKY STEVEN

Yeah?

PANE 4:

UNNAMED CHARACTER

It's more difficult than I thought.

STINKY STEVEN

Maybe a bump would help.

Dave looks up to Jack Black who is smiling grandly.

EXT - NEWBURGH CHURCH OF GOD PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The parking lot is full of cars. People hurry into the back door of the church.

INT - FIRESIDE ROOM - NIGHT

A lectern is set up in the middle of the room looking out over 300 filled folding chairs. Kruger sets prepares a refreshment table along the back wall and Kristie mans a table with a VOLUNTEER SIGN UP banner draping the front.

Dave walks up to the lectern and tests the microphone.

DAVE

First off, thanks to all for coming out tonight. This league doesn't exist without you guys, so

let's give you all a round of
applause. Clap loud.

A smattering of applause starts and gathers momentum. Someone stands up and the clapping intensifies. A second and third person also stand. The clapping crescendos as the room stands and claps as loud as they can. Kristie has a tear in her eye. Kruger smiles proudly at the refreshment table. As the applause levels off, Dave approaches the microphone.

DAVE

Thank you. Thank you.

INT - VOLUNTEER TABLE - NIGHT

Dave is in a chair alongside Kristie helping people select the volunteer opportunity that suits their needs. The line dwindles until the last person leaves. Clipboard upon clipboard clutters the table as Dave and Kristie relax. Kruger is busy breaking down the refreshment table.

KRISTIE

You really do amaze me.

DAVE

You're gonna make me blush.

KRISTIE

Pat yourself on the back.

Dave wonders if he should take the opening Kristie is providing. He hesitates. Reaches for the small of his back and rubs it.

DAVE

I do every day, trust me.

KRISTIE

Still have that Red Baron extra
pepperoni.

DAVE

You are quite the temptress.

KRISTIE

I have my charms.

DAVE

Woerzless is coming over.

KRISTIE

Late night. Firing up the grill?

DAVE

Trying to slim down, actually.

KRISTIE

I can tell.

DAVE

Temptress I'm telling you.

KRISTIE

Her battery is running low.

Dave wants to ram through and over the wide open door Kristie is providing but can't. He has a destiny to attend to, as if he has no say in the situation. He is never going to get back with Kristie. Dave leans over and kisses her on the forehead.

DAVE

Sleep in late. You deserve it.
Thank you, couldn't do it without
you.

SUPER: OPENING NIGHT 2024

INT - CAB IN LA - NIGHT

A cab stops in front of Dodger Stadium. Three doors open and

Matt, Gowdy and Dave emerge from the cab decked out in Dodger gear, set for a grand time. Matt holds a baseball glove as the three admire their surroundings.

INT - LA SPORTS BAR - NIGHT

The packed bar is in a celebratory mode after a big opening night win. ESPN plays Top 10 highlights again. The bar erupts as Matt's catch is splashed on every TV in the bar. The bar turns towards the threesome seated in the middle of the bar with raised glasses.

Dave, Matt and Gowdy occupy a table filled with drinks sent over from patrons. A WAITRESS (20s, female) brings another three shots over.

WAITRESS

Popular guy tonight.

MATT

Don't even drink. Five years sober.

WAITRESS

Good thing your friends are helping out.

Dave and Gowdy throw back a shot each.

GOWDY

Shoulda been me, you know.

DAVE

Don't pay attention to him.

The waitress grins and walks off.

DAVE

You might have a shot with her.

MATT

This is the best birthday ever,
man. Thank you guys.

GOWDY

Fuck you.

DAVE

Give it a rest man. He was just
reliving high school days laying
out like that.

Dave pats Matt on the back. He is in a gregarious mood, lubed by
the seemingly endless supply of free drinks.

DAVE (con't)

Just wish you could enjoy with us.

GOWDY

Maybe one wouldn't kill you.

MATT

Really?

Dave looks at Gowdy with a pissed-off glare.

DAVE

Shut the fuck up. Of course it
could. Don't listen to him.

GOWDY

You shut the fuck up. Who the hell
are you to give advice? Come on
Woertzless - thirtieth birthdays
come along once.

DAVE

Every birthday comes along once.

GOWDY

We can make this the best night
you'll never remember. Start fresh
tomorrow. Hell we ain't gonna tell

anyone, keep counting the streak if you want just cut loose and have some fun. Stop being a fag.

DAVE

Hey Bradley Cooper, this isn't the Hangover. Dial it back a notch.

INT - CHEAP LA HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dave and Gowdy snort a line of powder from the bedside table and chug a beer. A muted porn plays on the TV. The room is in a controlled disarray as Gowdy looks out the sliding windows to the lights of LA at two a.m. Dave looks at his phone.

DAVE

Man that was a dumbass idea.

GOWDY

You're really a fucking downer. This is his birthday weekend, dude.

DAVE

Five years, down the drain in one night.

GOWDY

No, it's not. You're always preaching don't be a sheep. That sobriety bullshit is just another fucking religion, man. Rules and shame to keep you from having a good time. He's a fucking adult. It's just coke. How many wild nights you had? He can't have one every five years without ruining his life?

There is frantic knocking at the door. Repeated yells of 'fucking open up'. Dave stumbles to the door as fast as he can and opens it to a disheveled Matt coked out of his mind.

MATT

We gotta get outta here now! Get your ID's and let's go!

DAVE

What the fuck?

MATT

Come on, let's go.

Matt opens the door and looks both ways down the hallway. Gowdy looks at Matt in a dazed and confused manner.

GOWDY

What's going on?

Matt slams the door shut and locks and puts the safety lock on. He walks over to the window and slides one half open and looks down to the ground three stories below.

MATT

OK, it's all clear.

Matt sticks one leg out and straddles the window pane. Dave tries to cut through the night's fog and get a handle on what is going on.

DAVE

Hold the fuck on for a goddamn Second. What is going on.

MATT

I fucked up!

DAVE / GOWDY

What now?

EXT - LA SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Matt is on the lookout for a food vendor. The typical crowd of drunks, hookers, and dealers populate the end of town, offering a hundred forty-nine-dollar room in LA. Matt follows his nose and makes his way to a hot dog vendor. There is a small line.

INT - HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

MATT

Hooker comes up just as I was getting ready to order and whispers in my ear. Coke and a blowjob for a hundred. She holds up a vial of coke.

GOWDY

Vice.

MATT

How'd you know?

GOWDY

Dude, they profiled your ass. They profiled his ass.

Gowdy is looking at Dave as he walks over to Matt. He fake punches him in the head. Twice.

GOWDY (con't)

Goddamn you never fail to live up to your name.

DAVE

That's enough. So what happened?

MATT

I freaked out and just had this sudden burst of energy and strength I've never felt. I didn't

know I had that in me.

GOWDY

Wait, was tonight your first time?

There is a violent knock at the door that startles all three. Matt nearly falls out the window. He looks down at the ground and climbs the rest of the way out and is holding on the the pane. Gowdy and Matt look at each other.

MATT (O.S.)

I think I may have killed her.

Matt releases as Gowdy and Dave run over to the opened window. A thud is heard as they arrive and look down.

EXT - HOTEL GROUNDS - NIGHT

Matt is brushing himself off. He looks up and motions for them to jump.

MATT

Let's go!

INT - HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Gowdy straddles the pane as the knocking intensifies and "LA PD" shouts accelerate the urgency of the situation.

GOWDY

Come on.

He jumps down. Dave reluctantly joins the madness as he eyes the door where knocks continue. He shakes his head and mutters to himself.

DAVE

Woerzless...

INT - 24-HOUR DINER - NIGHT

Matt, Dave and Gowdy occupy a booth. Three cups of coffee sit on the table.

GOWDY

There's no way you killed her.
Your pansy-ass - no matter how
coked up you were - doesn't have
it in you to unleash that kind of
fury. The area would be crawling
with cops. We're good.

Dave rubs the small of his back. Matt looks over concerned.

MATT

Still hurting?

DAVE

Just jammed it. It'll be fine.

EXT - NEWBURGH BUDDY BALL FIELD - DAY

Dave rakes dirt on the infield. As he bends over to pick up a rock he grabs his back in pain. His text notification dings as he stands up and pulls his phone out of his pocket.

WOERZLESS (text)

CALL ME ASAP!!!!

INT - DAVE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Matt is pacing the floor as Dave looks blankly at the TV screen playing a muted The Pick Of Destiny movie.

MATT

What am I gonna do?

DAVE

Just chill man. Let me think.

Flashback.

INT - JANICE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dave and Janice are at the end of their conversation.

JANICE
I'll talk to Shannon.

End flashback.

Dave rubs his face as he pours vodka into a glass and takes a chug.

DAVE
That's probably where she was going.

MATT
What?

DAVE
My mom. I bet she was headed to Mortgage Masters when she had her wreck.

MATT
What?

DAVE
My mom said she was going to talk to Shannon. She would never discuss bad news over the phone. Always said someone somewhere hears it.

MATT
Are you serious?

Dave recognizes the implications.

DAVE

No. No. Not what I'm saying.

Matt sits down and tries to come to terms with possibly being the reason for Janice's death. Dave struggles between this recognition and needing to comfort his friend. He walks over to sit beside Matt and puts his arms around him.

DAVE (con't)

Seriously. You can't do that.

Matt looks at Dave. He has no words. He wants to apologize and beg for forgiveness but is frozen in horror as he blames himself for Janice's death. His look pleads for comfort. Dave hugs him.

INT - MORTGAGE MASTER'S COMPLIANCE OFFICE - DAY

DARRELL (50s, male) sits behind his desk as Dave sits in a chair opposite. A muted CNBC plays on the large screen TV behind Dave. Darrell has a checkbook out and is writing a check to Newburgh Buddy Ball.

DAVE

I really appreciate this. You're the only one here that contributes personally.

DARRELL

They give to the company for their contribution.

DAVE

Not nearly as much.

DARRELL

Maybe.

DAVE

There's something else I wanted to talk to you about.

DARRELL

My hands are tied Dave, really.

DAVE

You don't even know what I'm gonna say.

Darrell looks at Dave incredulously.

DARRELL

Seriously. This isn't like the old days. And this is real fraud too man. Not a date or a signature.

DAVE

We both know the lengths we've gone to to get people in houses.

DARRELL

Again, I'm really sorry about your Mom. But what she could convince Shannon of was between them. For good reasons I'm kept out of that Loop. Plus this AI shit is the real deal. Every fucking keystroke we make in this company is recorded.

DAVE

Can I talk to Shannon?

DARRELL

No offense but you're no Janice.

DAVE

I can try.

INT - BOOTH AT NACHO LIBRE'S - DAY

Dave picks at his salad as he talks to Jack Black.

DAVE

So, you gonna tell me or not?

JACK BLACK

Bernie.

DAVE

No shit. Mine too.

JACK BLACK

Of course. Great minds always think alike. I shoulda won the Oscar if I'm allowed to be honest. No comedy is ever gonna get best actor.

DAVE

It's A Beautiful Life.

JACK BLACK

It ends at a concentration camp. Bleak.

DAVE

You love bleak.

JACK BLACK

What do you think of today's?

Dave looks down at the placemat. A splotch of dressing hides part of Pane 1. Dave wipes the dressing away with a napkin.

PANES 1 and 2: Stinky speaks to a female GHOST.

STINKY STEVEN

I don't know what to do.

GHOST

You don't have to do anything.

STINKY STEVEN
I have to help.

GHOST
You've helped enough.

Dave looks up at Jack Black before finishing Panes 3 and 4.

PANE 3: Stinky Steven sits across from a FEMALE.

STINKY STEVEN
I know we've helped each other in
the past.

FEMALE
Actually we haven't.

PANE 4: Stinky Steven and an Unnamed Character shit in adjoining stalls.

UNNAMED CHARACTER
What now?

STINKY STEVEN
I'm thinking.

Courtney brings Dave a third shot and sits it on the table and palms one of the empty ones as she looks back towards the kitchen area. She whispers to Dave.

COURTNEY
Looks like it's been a rough day.

Courtney pats Dave on the back and drops the shot glass in her apron pocket as she walks off. Dave downs the shot.

JACK BLACK
I think Bernie is a hero. A real
American Hero. Based on real shit

too. From Texas. Where else? You know that?

DAVE

Of course.

JACK BLACK

You can feel it can't you? Even though it's a movie you can feel the authenticity as you watch those characters. Those are the types of works that move people. Move people to action.

Dave stares down at the placemat. He doesn't look up to respond.

EXT - NEWBURGH BUDDY BALL FIELD - DAY

Dave performs various Opening Day chores. Cars honk as they pass, some yell 'Buddy Ball', 'Opening Day'. Dave waves in return. Dave tugs the Opening Day banner. It's secure. Volunteers start to show up as cars fill the parking lot.

A buzz for the day builds and builds as a full-blown mass of parents, special needs children and additional family and friends numbers in the hundreds.

Equipment is scattered across both dugouts as volunteers help children prepare for the first game.

Kristie and Kruger man the concession stand as a steady stream of kids and an occasional parent buy candy, soft drinks, and popcorn.

Dave turns on a wireless microphone, tests it 'one two' to confirm it is working and walks out to the mound. He taps on the microphone and speaks into it.

DAVE

If I can get your attention for just a moment.

The non-stop buzz and overbearing sounds of hundreds of people talking and laughing simultaneously dies down.

DAVE

Thank you. Thank you. OK folks,
here we are - Opening Day!

A round of applause, hoots and hollers bounce from the stands to the field. Dave lets it die down.

DAVE (con't)

Looks like weather is gonna be perfect. I see a lot of familiar faces. Thank you all for coming back. Your support is what allows this to all work.

Dave looks over at the concession stand at Krisite. She smiles at him.

DAVE (con't)

So I think everyone has an event schedule.

Dave pulls one out of his back pocket and waves it in the air.

DAVE (con't)

If you don't go see Kristie or Kruger at the concession stand and they can get you one. So seven games. You see which teams are playing which. Each game should last about 45 minutes. About 15 minute between games. So folks, I know it is a long day. We fire up the grills at two. Hot dogs and hamburgers. Thank you Costco by the way.

Someone from the crowd yells out 'Thank YOU Dave Ernspiger'
Someone else yells 'We love you Dave'.

DAVE

There's Mom and Grandma.

The crowd laughs.

DAVE

So I know it is a long day but
stick around as long as you can.
And afterwards Silver Screen June
will be playing in the outfield
with a fireworks show! So thanks
again, everyone have a great day
and...Batter Up!

INT - DAVES TRUCK - DAY

Dave sits in the cab of a truck and smokes a joint. Kruger
interrupts his moment of peace as he knocks on the window. Dave
sees it's Kruger and rolls down the window. Kruger waves away
smoke with his hands.

KRUGER

Dude, that reeks man.

DAVE

Don't tell anyone.

KRUGER

Kristie said we are running out of
buns and do you want her to go get
some?

DAVE

Nah, I'll do it.

KRUGER

OK, I'll tell her.

Kruger turns to walk off and Dave hollers after him. He turns back around to Dave.

DAVE

You know I love you man, right?

KRUGER

Of course (a beat) - what are you?
retarded?

INT - COSTCO - DAY

Dave stands in line with ten packs of hit dog buns. A text notification grabs his attention.

WOERZLESS (text)

Where are you? I'm at the field.

DAVE

On my way back.

INT - DAVE'S TRUCK - DAY

Matt fidgets in his seat. He has a beer in his hand, unopened. Dave has an opened one.

DAVE

You don't have to do that man. It's
seven years.

MATT

Minus one day.

DAVE

Two if we're keeping count.

MATT

What am I gonna do Dave? I can't
fucking go to jail man.

DAVE

You're not gonna go to jail.

MATT

Why wouldn't she help, man?

DAVE

Said she couldn't even if she wanted to. These fucking AI systems are all tied in together. As soon as those documents got scanned it's everywhere now.

MATT

There has to be something.

DAVE

She said the conversation with my Mom would have gone the exact same way. She was just wasting her time driving over there.

The weight of the statement hits Matt hard before Dave realizes his wording was not ideal.

DAVE (con't)

Hey. No. No. Danny told me she was headed home and was just stopping by on her way. Her fate was sealed, man.

MATT

Just like all of ours.

The response hangs heavy in the air. Dave pulls out a couple of pills from his front shirt pocket and pops them, followed by a swig of beer.

EXT - BLEACHERS - NIGHT

The band breaks down gear in the outfield and Kristie and Kruger scan the grass for fireworks remains to put in their garbage bags.

Dave sits at the end of the bottom bleacher. Parents, kids and volunteers shake his hand with words of thanks as they pass. He acknowledges every one with a word or two in return.

Kristie walks up with her garbage and plops down next to Dave.

DAVE

Where's Neil?

KRISTIE

He's gonna spend the night with my Dad. He was exhausted.

DAVE

He played his ass off. That was fun to watch.

KRISTIE

Yes, it was. Big plans for the rest of the weekend?

DAVE

Work shit. Gotta meet Danny early.

KRISTIE

On a Sunday, boo.

DAVE

The Lord's day.

KRISTIE

You look tired.

DAVE

Honestly? I'm exhausted. I'm just feeling the grind more than usual.

KRISTIE

Matt seemed pretty freaked out.

DAVE

We'll figure it out.

KRISTIE

How?

DAVE

Who knows? But don't you be worrying about it. It'll all work out. Always does.

Kristie leans over to hug Dave. He relishes the embrace. He whispers into her ear. She smiles and whispers back.

INT - DANNY'S OFFICE - DAY

Dave walks in with a bag of donut balls from Donut bank and two coffees. He hands one to Danny who is nervously pacing around his office. Offers a donut ball from the bag. Danny smacks it away.

DANNY

When is he gonna have it done?

DAVE

I don't know Danny. He's kinda got his own shit to worry about right now. It might be a bit. It might be never.

DANNY

Never?!

DAVE

Maybe. I don't know.

DANNY

I signed every one of those financial reports myself. I'm looking at fifty years or more.

DAVE

Yeah. That shit is going around these days.

DANNY

Don't fuck around lard ass.

The words hurt this time. Deeply. Dave wants to respond quickly with a mocking deflection. He starts to talk.

DANNY (con't)

He's got three days. Let him know today.

Dave's assignment has been received. His demeanor visually deteriorates.

INT - DAVE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dave holds the vial of DMT he purchased from Gowdy. He and Matt eye it. Dave looks more haggard than usual, a combination of fatigue and lack of clarity presenting an image Matt doesn't pick up on.

MATT

Are you serious?

DAVE

I'm not asking you to. I'm asking if you want to.

MATT

Is there a difference?

DAVE

I think so.

Matt picks up the ball glove and ball he brought for the night. He nervously tosses the ball in the air and catches it.

MATT

I don't know. I thought I was just here to watch over you and make sure you didn't do some crazy shit.

DAVE

And it still can be. I just don't have to be the fun police. Gowdy was telling me I'm too much of a parent with you and not a friend. Like one of those overbearing mothers that try to take care of everything. Time to kick you out of the nest, maybe?

INT - DAVE'S BOOTH - DAY

A WAITRESS (20s, female) walks over to Dave. Dave looks around for someone else.

DAVE

Courtney is who waits on me.

WAITRESS

She called in sick today.

Dave looks up in angst. The waitress grins and winks at Dave. It only agitates him further.

WAITRESS (con't)

It's OK. It was a late night. I'm happy to come in for her.

DAVE

But it's Sunday. She works on Sunday.

WAITRESS

It's OK sweetie. I'll take good care of you. Two shots right?

Dave looks across the booth. It sits empty. He looks at the Waitress, anxious.

DAVE
Can I get a placemat?

The waitress looks at him oddly.

WAITRESS
A placemat? Like for kids?

DAVE
The placemat with the cartoon story.
Comes out every day.

The waitress looks at Dave even more oddly. Starts to say something and decides against it.

She returns with shots and a placemat that she sits in front of Dave. Kids games and cartoons with famous Jack Black quotes from movies ringing the perimeter. Ads for daily specials. Dave turns it over. Nothing. Back to front. He looks at the waitress wildly.

DAVE
The one with Stinky Steven.

WAITRESS
Stinky Steven?

DAVE
Yes. The story. I need to see it.
Courtney knows the one. I need Courtney
to bring it to me. Call her. She'll
understand.

WAITRESS
Sweetie, there is no Stinky Steven.

INT - DAVE'S TRUCK - DAY

Dave opens the glove box frantically. He moves the gun and takes a bottle of vodka, opens the bottle quickly and chugs a third of the bottle. He wipes his mouth. He looks at the seat. An eight pane Stinky Steven placemat sits beside him. He looks up.

JACK BLACK

She's new. We're still training her and we don't let them use the good stuff until I know they're worth it.

DAVE

That doesn't make sense.

JACK BLACK

Exactly. What makes sense these days?

INT - DAVE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dave looks at his phone and puts it in his pocket. He gets up and walks over to his shoes to put them on. He talks absent mindedly to himself using weird words...simulation, reset. He looks up at Matt.

DAVE

Can we take your car? I'm low on gas.

MATT

Yeah, of course. So we'll do it when we get back?

DAVE

Back?

MATT

Yeah. After we go see Danny. He just

DAVE

Yeah, yeah. Of course.

Dave and Matt head out of the door. Dave stops by the passenger side of his truck and reaches in to get something. He opens the door.

INT - DAVE'S TRUCK - DAY

DAVE

Eight panes today, huh?

JACK BLACK

I thought it was time to wrap this story up. You know, bring down the curtains so to speak. And then we start a new one. Jeeves is already working on it.

PANE 1: Stinky Steven is playing a guitar as SOMEONE sits on a couch with an open leather bag of drugs.

STINKY STEVEN

I'm not letting him use DMT.

SOMEONE

You're not listening to me. I said make him think so. The placebo effect. But he needs to be calm. Don't want him over anxious. Indica really makes him very chill.

PANE 1: Someone hands Stinky Steven a joint.

INT - DAVE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dave has a line of powder on the counter. Evidence of three previous remains as Dave bends down to snort the final line. An open box of baking powder sits next to a filled vial of powder.

INT - MATT'S CAR - NIGHT

Matt grips the steering wheel at ten and two as Dave takes a drink from the bottle of vodka he retrieved.

MATT

I appreciate you trusting me. I won't let you down. I'm really not an addict, I just can't control myself sometimes.

DAVE

I know. I feel the same way sometimes.

MATT

You? Yeah right. King of cool.

Dave pulls a joint out from his shirt pocket.

DAVE

Speaking of which...

MATT

Why did Danny say we had to meet him tonight?

INT - DANNY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Danny sits in front of a baseball game on TV, disinterested, and drinks whiskey. A text notification dings. He looks at his phone.

DAVE (text)

alked to MatT. He wants TO meet at tHe ofice at tin. good news. Meet you there.

INT - DAVE'S TRUCK - DAY

Dave reads pane 2.

PANE 2: Stinky Steven fills a vial with powder. Someone stands there giving direction.

SOMEONE

Just ask him if he wants to. He can't

say no. He's an addict.

STINKY STEVEN

You told me addiction was a scam.

SOMEONE

I think you misunderstood.

Dave looks up.

JACK BLACK

I think Jeeves is working on a sci-fi thriller. Not into sci-fi myself. So serious. But this one is different.

DAVE

How so?

JACK BLACK

It's weird. This will sound crazy but it's like he's telling the future. But it is actually guidance. We just don't realize it.

Dave looks down to read Pane 3:

DAVE (V.O.)

Why not?

PANE 3: Stinky Steven sits with an Unnamed Character on a couch.

STINKY STEVEN

I'm not asking you to. I'm asking if you want to.

INT - DAVE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

MATT

Is there a difference?

PANE 3:

STINKY STEVEN

I think so.

INT - DAVE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dave stares at a muted TV playing Bernie. He looks over at Jack Black.

JACK BLACK.

Because I'm not fond of cremations. You know this.

DAVE

Arson is harder to prove though. I don't want him getting blamed. Faulty electric wires started it while we were there and we died from smoke inhalation.

JACK BLACK

Do you have chloroform handy?

DAVE

No.

JACK BLACK as BERNIE

Then it is settled.

EXT - RE/MAS PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Dave and Matt sit in his car. The clock radio reads 9:38.

MATT

It's not like Danny to be running late. Are you sure he said 9:30?

Dave exhales an extended toke as he passes the joint back to Matt.

DAVE
He hasn't been himself since
Momma died.

MATT
You sure this is Sativa? How
could he be?

DAVE
None of us have. Gives us
more time to finish this.

Dave is trying to suppress the DMT trip but is failing. Images of Danny as the devil, Janice an angel and Matt as the Grim Reaper create a warped stageplay in his mind as he looks through Matt, practically oblivious to his presence.

Flashback

INT - EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

Matt and Dave are in conversation after Matt runs into the Emergency Room to be there for Dave. All of the interactions have the people replaced by their Devil and Grim Reaper persona.

MATT
How are you doing?

Danny walks over to interject.

DANNY
If you don't mind, Woerz. I was
having a private moment with my
brother. I'll thank you for giving
us some time to finish it.

Danny whisks Dave away to a place for privacy.

DANNY
Ok. I know this isn't the time but
we have some decisions to make.

DAVE

You're right. It isn't the time.

DANNY

Be that as it may, it has to be done. And get that mutherfucker out of here. Momma was in a rush to get over to see Shannon. Shannon had to leave early. You know she won't have a fucking conversation on the phone so we can thank his worthless ass for all of this. All of it.

End flashback.

Matt speaks louder this time.

MATT

Dave?

Matt looks at him blankly. The Grim Reaper stares back. They are locked in a deep gaze. Dave grabs his vodka bottle and takes a swig as the scene rights itself. Dave hands the bottle to Matt as he checks the small of his back. His shirt outlines something in his waistband.

MATT

Danny's here.

INT - DAVE'S TRUCK - DAY

Dave holds the placemat in his lap as he and Jack Black continue their conversation.

DAVE

Why do you think we ended up here?

JACK BLACK

Kyle and I talk about that a lot.

High as fuck.

DAVE
Insight.

Dave takes a drink from the vodka bottle between his legs.

JACK BLACK
I think we are exactly where we
would expect to be with the value
of hindsight.

Dave looks down to read the next pane.

PANE 4:

Stinky Steven and an Unnamed Character ride in a car Unnamed
Character drives.

UNNAMED CHARACTER
So we are luring him there?

STINKY STEVEN
Exactly.

UNNAMED CHARACTER
To kill him?

STINKY STEVEN
Exactly.

UNNAMED CHARACTER
And that will solve everything?

STINKY STEVEN
Everything.

EXT - RE/MAX PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Dave and Matt continue their conversation as Dave stands at the
door unlocking it? Matt holds Dave's vodka bottle. Danny is on

the phone in his car.

MATT

What do you think the good news is?

DAVE

I think he must have fixed it.

MATT

How?

DAVE

Maybe he was able to convince Shannon. Said he will tell us all about it.

Dave gets the door unlocked and they enter the building as Dave looks back at Danny still on his phone.

INT - RE/MAX OFFICE - NIGHT

Dave turns off the alarm system. Takes the nearly empty bottle from Matt. Finishes the remains with a swig and turns the bottle in his hand, making it a weapon. He grips it tight.

MATT

It gets embarrassing you know.

DAVE

What?

MATT

Woertzless. I laugh at it but it sucks. Especially from you. I'm not complaining. You have to be sick of always bailing my ass out.

Dave's grip on the vodka bottle loosens.

DAVE

I'm sorry. Just ball busting.

INT - DAVE'S TRUCK - DAY

Dave reads Pane 5 as Jack Black provides a mini-dissertation on the evolution of society.

PANE 5: Stinky Steven walks back in forth in front of an Unnamed Character and ANOTHER UNNAMED CHARACTER. They are tied to chairs, Stinky Steven rants.

JACK BLACK (V.O.)

Really, how else could it be? We made a decision from Day One to create a resource consumption Society. Territory. Possession. Creates conflict.

Dave looks back at Pane 5.

STINKY STEVEN

I'm done! I can't take it anymore. My simulation is over.

DAVE (V.O.)

As opposed to what?

JACK BLACK (V.O.)

It's so obvious. I think that is what Jeeves is trying to point out with this new story.

ANOTHER UNNAMED CHARACTER

But you're my brother.

STINKY STEVEN

I'm adopted.

UNNAMED CHARACTER
I'm your best friend.

EXT - DANNY'S CAR - NIGHT

Danny drives as he texts Dave.

DANNY (text)
On my way.

INT - DAVE'S TRUCK - DAY

DAVE
Socialism?

JACK BLACK
That's what they want you to call
it. Resource allocation, not
socialism.

Dave looks down to read Pane 6. It is a picture of Dave and Jack Black sitting in Dave's truck having a conversation

PANE 6:

DAVE
And it's only a simulation anyway?

JACK BLACK
Simulation, evolution, religion,
cataclysm, refresh; there are
plenty of words that can be used.
Ultimately they all mean the same.
We get to the end of this go round
and then it starts all over.

DAVE
Because it's the end.

JACK BLACK
Because it is the end.

INT - REMAX OFFICE - NIGHT

Matt sits tied and gagged as Danny walks into the office. Dave strikes him over the head with a vodka bottle.

INT - RE/MAX KITCHEN - DAY

Dave washes his hands and dries them. He walks back through the office space to observe his preparation for the nights events. Gas cans and ties sit in his cubicle.

INT - DAVE'S TRUCK - DAY

Dave takes a drink from his bottle and looks over to resume his conversation. Instead of Jack Black it is Stinky Steven.

STINKY STEVEN

You know how this has to end correct?

DAVE

Has to?

STINKY STEVEN

It's right there.

Stinky Steven motions to the placemat. Dave looks down.

EXT - NEWBURGH BUDDY BALL FIELD - DAY

Over a thousand people have jammed the bleachers, the ballfield and the parking lot to pay their last respects. Reverend Kern stands on the pitchers mound behind a casket covered with flowers. He is wrapping up his eulogy.

REVEREND KERNS

We know this is not the end for Dave. He begins a new journey. And no doubt this journey will be even more glorious than the one he

shared with us here.

A procession of Buddy Ball participants form two lines and start a procession from each dugout, making their way across the field and laying a ball glove on top of the flower-covered casket. Neil is the last one and lingers for a moment as he lays it on the casket. Kristie is in the stands crying.

EXT - GRAVEYARD - DAY

The sun is setting and empty chairs graveside signal the end of the ceremony hours prior. A wind rustles the flowers and greenery across the space. Dave's casket sits as a statement of a much-loved individual. Jack Black casually strolls into the frame holding a piece of paper. He walks to the casket and puts the placemat on top and takes a glove to keep in place. He pats the casket and walks off.

INT - KRISTIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A TV report plays as Kristie dabs her eyes and nose with tissue. The reporter starts in with an update.

EXT - GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

The camera closes in on Dave's casket, slowly pulling the placemat into focus as the updated news story can be heard.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)

Authorities are confirming the
murder suicide nature of the
Re/Max arson Sunday night.

PANE 7:

UNNAMED CHARACTER

Why can't we blame him instead?

STINKY STEVEN

He wasn't the reason Momma died.

UNNAMED CHARACTER

You're adopted.

PANE 8: Stinky Steven empties gas cans around the space and in the various rooms of the office. He lights each room on fire. He returns and shoots Danny in the temple before taking a seat beside both of them. He ties his feet with a tie and then puts one loosely around his hands, placing the gun to his temple.

Fade to Black.