

F.M.I  
"THE KAREN"

Written by

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Draft completion date:  
07.04.2025

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FADE IN:

EXT. LONDON - NIGHT

The city is buzzing. Blurs of neon lights, cab horns, late-night chatter - London's electric pulse in full effect.

SUPER: LONDON, 2009.

DING.

INT. HOTEL - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

An elevator door slides open. In steps DAVE SLOANE (mid-20s, mixed-race, smart-casual, script under arm, all charm with a flicker of self-doubt).

He adjusts his glasses. His eyes drift. Nerves creeping in.

LIFT CONCIERGE (O.S.)  
Which floor, sir?

Dave snaps out of his trance. The LIFT CONCIERGE (50s, crisp uniform, peak British decorum) awaits, polite smile locked in.

DAVE SLOANE  
Oh- sorry  
(grins)  
World of my own. Penthouse, please.

BUZZZ. His flip phone goes off. Dave fumbles through his faux-suede jacket.

INT. DUNGY APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

JACK NASH (early 20s, topknot, Geordie, dressing gown over boxers) perches on a counter, munching Pot Noodle, phone wedged on his shoulder.

JACK NASH  
Daveeeey. Just to remind you I got  
company tonight.

INT. ELEVATOR

Dave glances awkwardly at the concierge, then turns away, whispering.

DAVE SLOANE

Don't panic, I won't be staggering  
in on you again, I'm in London. I  
got that meeting tonight.

JACK NASH (O.S.)

That meeting?! That tonight? Oh--  
(signal breaks)  
- and then --  
(static)  
- Would be doing me a massive  
favour.

DAVE SLOANE

What? Look signals bad, I'll call  
you after.

Dead line.

Dave pockets his phone, notices the concierge's tight-lipped  
expression.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)

What? Can't take a call in a lift  
now?

INT. HOTEL - PENTHOUSE HALLWAY

The elevator dings. Doors open to a lavish corridor. Dave  
steps out.

Behind him-

LIFT CONCIERGE

(coughs)  
Wanker.

Dave freezes. Turns back. The concierge smiles and waves as  
the doors slide shut.

LIFT CONCIERGE (CONT'D)

Have a lovely evening sir.

DAVE SLOANE

(to self)  
Did he just-

Shakes it off. Walks down the hallway, clocking the crusty  
80s wallpaper and overcompensating artwork.

He stops at a pair of oversized double doors. Breathes deep.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)  
(to self)  
Let's go, you beautiful bastard.  
Showtime.

He knocks. Firm. Confident.

CRASH! A clatter inside. Angry footsteps. The door yanks open.

THE PRODUCER (40s, American, sweaty, bathrobe barely holding on) peers out, annoyed and slightly cross-eyed.

THE PRODUCER  
You knockin' like the damn feds.  
What the fuck?

Dave steps back, palms up.

DAVE SLOANE  
Whoa! Sorry. I'm just amped to meet  
you sir, I love your shit.

The Producer squints, takes him in.

THE PRODUCER  
And who the fuck are you supposed  
to be?

DAVE SLOANE  
Dave Sloane. Marcus Dredapedes from  
the Stargazer Management team sent  
me?

Beat.

THE PRODUCER  
Ooooh, yeah, right.  
(warms, extends arms)  
Well, come on in baby!

The door swings open. The Producer's robe... opens a little too.

DAVE SLOANE  
Look, if now is a bad time, I could  
re-arrange?

THE PRODUCER  
Nah, come on in man, you here now,  
lets jam!

He throws a meaty arm around Dave, pulling him in.

INT. PENTHOUSE - LOUNGE - LATER

Roaring fireplace. Opulent, tacky. Dave sits opposite the Producer, who clutches the script like it's holy.

He's red-faced, dripping sweat, clearly riding a high.

THE PRODUCER

This--this is gold. I'd be an idiot  
not to buy in. I know four guys at  
Warner--maybe Sony. We could blow  
this up.

Coughs.

Dave nods, wide-eyed.

THE PRODUCER (CONT'D)

Tomorrow. We sign

coughs harder

He hacks into his hand, wheezing.

DAVE SLOANE

You okay? I'll grab some water.

Dave rushes to the minibar, pouring from a crystal pitcher, eyes gleaming.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)

This is it. This is actually it.  
Goodbye London, hello--

Behind him: the Producer rises. Something shifts. He sheds the robe.

Predator mode.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)

- Hollywood.

Dave turns. Freezes.

The water glass drops.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)

(yells)  
What the actual fuck?!

The Producer smirks, full creep.

THE PRODUCER

Tonight Dave, you scratch my back.

Time slows. Dave processes a thousand thoughts in half a second.

His face drops. He exhales, bitter.

DAVE SLOANE  
Fuck... my... life.

SMASH TO BLACK:

TITLE CARD: F.M.L

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

BANG. BANG. BANG. BOOM.

Dave Sloane (now 40s, dry wit, permanently tired) bolts awake like he's been electrocuted. His eyes, bloodshot. His soul, absent.

The wall-mounted TV SHAKES with the pounding. Framed family photos vibrate like they're in a minor earthquake.

SUPER: PRESENT DAY

DAVE SLOANE  
(mutters)  
New neighbors. Fantastic.

He groans, rolls over—and FREEZES.

Standing in the doorway is JUNIOR SLOANE (9, mixed-race, inquisitive, born to troll), holding up his phone... recording.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)  
Junior, are you seriously filming me right now?

JUNIOR  
It's for school. Don't worry about it.

DAVE SLOANE  
Your school project is spying on your dad while he sleeps?

JUNIOR  
It's about documenting "real life."  
This is so real.

Dave props himself up, back cracking like an old sofa spring. He spots the note on the pillow beside him.

DAVE SLOANE  
(grimacing)  
My back's killing me.

JUNIOR  
Yeah, but when isn't it?

Dave snorts. Junior plops down next to him, affectionate now

Dave stretches but YELPS in pain, grabbing his back. Junior lowers the phone.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)  
Mummy left you a surprise.

Dave opens the note. A big red heart with kid-and-mom scribbles inside:

"5 YEARS CANCER FREE – CONGRATULATIONS! LOVE, L & J xx"

Dave melts. A rare, genuine smile.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)  
We worked on it last night whilst you were out with Grandad.

DAVE SLOANE  
Well thank you, this is amazing!  
Did you both have a good night?

JUNIOR  
We had a sneaky McFlurry and watched a movie, it was awesome, I stayed up till, like 11. Adult levels of fun, know what I mean?

DAVE SLOANE  
(chuckles)  
Yeah, I do. You little party animal. What next? Cigars and Strip clubs?

JUNIOR  
(chilike confusion)  
What's a strip club?

DAVE SLOANE  
(alarmed)  
Place you go to get your walls stripped mate.

Dave ruffles his hair. Junior shakes him off, suddenly serious.

JUNIOR  
So... did you think about it?

DAVE SLOANE  
(half blindly putting on  
glasses)  
Think about what?

JUNIOR  
The plushies! For Gorilla Tag! You  
said—and I quote—  
(mimics Dave)  
"I'll think about it."

DAVE SLOANE  
We're seriously having this  
conversation before I have a chance  
to have a coffee?

Junior groans dramatically and storms off.

JUNIOR (O.S.)  
Fine. Guess dreams do die in this  
house.

DAVE SLOANE  
(shouting after him)  
And a good morning to you too  
sunshine!

INT. DAVE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING.

Lizzy Franklin (30s, goth-adjacent cool mom, stylish as hell)  
flips pancakes with military precision. Junior is mid-stack  
at the breakfast bar.

Dave wanders in, half-dead, holding his mug like it's  
morphine.

He kisses Lizzy on the temple.

DAVE SLOANE  
Good morning, Miss Franklin. You  
look like you moonlight in a  
vampire band.

LIZZY  
Good morning to you too, Mr. 5-  
Years-Free. Congrats.



DAVE SLOANE

Thanks. Did I look this tired last night?

LIZZY

No. Last night you just looked... broken.

DAVE SLOANE

Ah, right. Yeah a night out with your dad does that.

He pours coffee like it's a holy ritual.

LIZZY

He's picking you up today. Don't forget.

DAVE SLOANE

One o'clock. Radio station. Got it tattooed on my soul.

Junior finishes a bite of pancake and beams.

JUNIOR

Mummy, these pancakes are divine.

Both Lizzy and Dave chuckle.

LIZZY

You're welcome little man.

She kisses Junior on the head and picks up her bag, keys, phone and lanyard of cards.

LIZZY (CONT'D)

Right, I'm off.

She kisses Dave on the cheek and leaves.

LIZZY (CONT'D)

You both have a great day! Love you both. Congratulations Mr. Sloane!

The front door closes.

Dave chuckles, steals a piece off Junior's plate.

JUNIOR

Hey, that was mine!

DAVE SLOANE  
Was. Past tense. It has moved on.  
So now, you've finished how about  
those teeth and clothes?

Junior sighs, jumps off his stool, then surprise-HUGS Dave.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)  
Woah! What's this for?

JUNIOR  
Just felt like it. Love you old  
man.

Dave processes that. His heart twinges.

DAVE SLOANE  
Well... I love you too, man. Thanks  
for the card.

Dave rinses his cup out in the sink.

JUNIOR  
Daddy?

Dave, washing dishes at the sink, pauses, back turned to Junior.

DAVE SLOANE  
Yes little buddy?

JUNIOR  
So, you given any thought to that  
loan yet?

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - MORNING.

A narrow residential street, lined with trees. Birds chirp.  
It's a beautiful morning.

Dave walks with a slight limp, aided by a cane. Beside him,  
Junior, neatly dressed in a school uniform, tie slightly  
loose, keeps pace.

Dave hides his discomfort behind dark aviators and forced  
bravado.

JUNIOR  
So... I was thinking of signing up  
for acting classes.

Dave slows, grimaces like he just bit into a lemon.

DAVE SLOANE  
Acting? You wanna act?

JUNIOR  
Well, not exactly. I wanna start a  
YouTube channel.

DAVE SLOANE  
You don't need acting classes for  
that, mate. Just a ring light and  
an inflated ego.

JUNIOR  
Yeah, but can you at least think  
about it?

DAVE SLOANE  
(sighs)  
I'll give it some thought... but,  
honestly, that world's full of  
terrible people.

JUNIOR  
Is that why you don't do anything  
with your stories?

DAVE SLOANE  
(confused)  
What do you mean?

JUNIOR  
The ones in your computer folder...  
"Unfulfilled Dreams." I didn't read  
them. Just saw the name and played  
Geometry Dash instead.

DAVE SLOANE  
(caught off guard)  
Right. That... is a long story, for  
a totally other time my man. But  
also, stop snooping.

JUNIOR  
Sorry dad, I was just curious.

DAVE SLOANE  
(smirks)  
There's nothing wrong with a bit of  
curiosity mate, anyway, what's on  
for you today?

JUNIOR

Math, science... something else. I dunno. What about you?

DAVE SLOANE

Big day. Package delivery, visit your Uncle Jack, hospital appointment. Might even fit in a float in your pool.

JUNIOR

How come's you get to do that, when mummy's at work all day?

Dave stops. Looks at Junior, deadpan.

DAVE SLOANE

Dude!

(points to leg)

I got cancer. Besides, I work.

JUNIOR

Yeah, but you're over it. You said so. Also, I heard you tell Mum that writing jokes for Uncle Jack's radio show is a joke in itself.

DAVE SLOANE

(stunned)

You need to stop eavesdropping mate.

JUNIOR

Well, you're not exactly quiet.

DAVE SLOANE

(scoffs)

Touché.

They continue walking when suddenly -- JOANNE (30s, high-maintenance but low-effort, vape pen permanently attached to her face) pushes a stroller while glued to her phone. She drifts too close for comfort.

Dave clocks her, exhales sharply.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)

(mutters)

Here we go.

EXT. PRIMARY SCHOOL - MORNING.

They reach the school gates. A few kids trickle in. Dave kneels (with effort) and adjusts Junior's tie.

DAVE SLOANE  
So, you have an epic day my main  
man.

He holds out a fist for a bump. Junior completely ignores it and walks away

JUNIOR  
Yeah you too, dad.

At the gate, Junior turns, sees Dave still watching, and waves him off, exasperated.

DAVE SLOANE  
(to self)  
Say no more then...  
(yells)  
Don't forget your mum's picking you  
up! I got a doctors appointment!  
(yells louder)  
LOVE YOU, BUDDY!

Junior sighs, mortified. Keeps walking, head down.

Dave scoffs, shakes his head, amused.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)  
(mutters)  
Okay, cool, I'll go fuck myself  
then.

A loud, disapproving COUGH behind him. DAVE already knows who it is. He turns -- it's Joanne, glaring, pushing her stroller back and forth, puffing a thick, fruity vape cloud in his direction.

JOANNE  
What is wrong with you Dave  
Sloane?!

DAVE SLOANE  
And a good morning to you, Joanne.

She blows another cloud at him. Dave lowers his sunglasses, makes direct eye contact.

Joanne coughs a little, Dave leans back avoiding the spit.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)  
You know... it's probably that pen  
giving you that cough. You should  
get it checked out, sounds rough.

JOANNE  
Shouldn't be using that language  
around kids.

Dave looks around, except for her, him and the stroller there  
is no one else.

DAVE SLOANE  
What are you talking about? There's  
no-one here and I was quietly  
talking to myself. Besides...

Dave glances into the stroller. Inside a TODDLER, fully  
immersed on a phone, annoying music plays LOUD.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)  
I can't imagine, that This little  
dude heard anything.

JOANNE  
She's a girl.

TODDLER (O.S.)  
(exclaims)  
Fuck

Dave's eyes widen, both he and Joanne look down into the  
chair.

TODDLER (CONT'D)  
Fuck myself.

DAVE SLOANE  
Oh, well, uh... Could of heard it  
anywhere!

Dave shrugs, he strolls off whistling a cheerful tune, Joanne  
left seething.

CUT TO:

EXT. DAVE'S HOUSE - DAY.

A DELIVERY WOMAN (short, bubbly, early 20s) bounces up the  
front step, stops dead at a sign:

"NO STUPID PEOPLE BEYOND THIS POINT."

She smirks. Knocks.

Dave opens the door mid-stretch.

DELIVERY WOMAN  
Morning! Got a parcel for you. I'd  
step closer but—  
(laughs)  
Apparently, I'm not smart enough.

DAVE SLOANE  
It's really more of a vibe check.

He snatches the package, gives it a sniff.

DELIVERY WOMAN  
Uh... everything okay?

DAVE SLOANE  
Say, humour me here? You know what  
you're delivering?

DELIVERY WOMAN  
Not a clue. I just grab 'n' go. No  
peeks, no perks.

DAVE SLOANE  
So you don't know you're a proud  
carrier of medical weed?

DELIVERY WOMAN  
(stunned)  
I'm delivering what now?

DAVE SLOANE  
Medicinal!  
(cheesy jazz hands)  
Reefer madness, baby.

She's frozen. He shrugs.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)  
Not your buzz? That's okay. You're  
not the one whose spine sings like  
a dial-up modem.

He SLAMS the door.

EXT. DAVE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The Delivery Woman stomps off, already on the phone.

DELIVERY WOMAN

(into phone)

I'm getting £12.21 an hour to  
deliver weed! Are you kidding me? I  
want a rise!

INT. DAVE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY.

Dave drops the box like it's gold. He's surrounded by Funko Pops, vintage comics, and movie posters like The Thing and Die Hard.

He taps his keyboard. A script title glows:

"IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS"  
Completion Date: 31.08.2025

He smirks proudly... but his eyes drift to a dusty desktop folder:

"UNFULFILLED DREAMS"

BOOM BOOM BOOM — deep bass THUMPS shake the walls. Funkos wobble like bobbleheads.

DAVE SLOANE

(to self)

New neighbors with bass and no  
taste. Truly, I'm living the dream.

He scoops up the package and exits.

INT. DAVE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN.

Dave's phone buzzes on the counter. CALLER ID: LIZZY  
A photo of Dave, Lizzy, and their toddler making faces lights the screen.

DAVE SLOANE

(sweetly)

Hey Babe! What's poppin' in Lizzy  
Town?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. LIZZY'S OFFICE - DAY

Lizzy ypes furiously in a glass-walled office. A family photo sits by her monitor.



LIZZY

Did you teach a toddler to say fuck  
this morning?

DAVE SLOANE

(awkward laugh)

That's um... subject to  
interpretation.

LIZZY

Dave.

DAVE SLOANE

Look, Joanne Simmons was up my arse  
again. I muttered it! Quietly!  
Possibly near the kid. Who has  
great hearing, apparently.

Lizzy pinches the bridge of her nose.

LIZZY

You can't swear outside the school.  
I've told you. So many times. Like  
a swearing calendar.

DAVE SLOANE

And I don't! Usually. But this  
morning was different. That woman  
can hear a mouthed fuck like it's  
broadcast in Dolby surround.

ANDREA (40s, polished, kind) pokes her head in, hears Dave.

DAVE SLOANE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

-- AND DON'T EVEN START ON THAT  
FUCKING VAPE PEN.

Andrea backs out. Wide-eyed.

LIZZY

She filed a complaint with the  
headmaster. Who then called me.

Dave drops his head into his hand.

DAVE SLOANE

(mouthes)

Fuck!

(into phone)

Okay, how do I fix this?

LIZZY (O.S.)

Conflict resolution meeting. 3 p.m.  
With a mediator.

Dave clenches his jaw. He exhales sharply.

DAVE SLOANE  
Conflict?! I swore. She got  
offended. I'll apologise. But let's  
not pretend Simmons isn't a high-  
functioning cunt here!

Lizzy's eyes widen.

LIZZY  
She's the P.T.A head, Dave.

DAVE SLOANE (O.S.)  
(gritted teeth)  
Right. I'll be charming as fuck.

LIZZY  
Dave.

DAVE SLOANE  
Sorry- Charming as... hell.

LIZZY  
Thank you. Love you I gotta run.

DAVE SLOANE  
I love you too!

He hangs up. A beat.

He raises the phone like he's about to HULK SMASH it.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)  
FUUU--

CUT TO:

INT. LIZZY'S OFFICE - DAY

Lizzy drops her phone, massages her temples.

Andrea re-enters, coffee in hand.

ANDREA  
Everything okay?

LIZZY  
Dave. School. Usual circus.

ANDREA  
Then it's officially coffee  
o'clock.

LIZZY  
Pour it directly into my soul.

INT. LIZZY'S OFFICE - BREAK ROOM - LATER

Lizzy and Andrea at a cramped coffee table. Lizzy clutches her cup like it's therapy.

LIZZY  
It's not just the school stuff.  
He's been distant again. Same time  
every year.

ANDREA  
Have you actually asked him about  
it?

LIZZY  
Yeah, he says "I'm fine." Which is  
code for definitely not fine.

ANDREA  
Men treat "I'm fine" like it's  
garlic for feelings. And how are  
you?

LIZZY  
I'm good. I'm happy. We're solid.  
(pause)  
... But?

ANDREA  
Uh-huh. There it is.

LIZZY  
I just feel all over the place  
lately. Like I'm juggling flaming  
chainsaws while smiling for a  
family photo.

ANDREA  
And have you told him that? Or are  
we still in the mind-reading phase?

LIZZY  
I don't want to stress him. It's  
not us. It's just... life stuff.

ANDREA  
Have you told him about the  
promotion?

LIZZY

No, not yet. It's that time of year. He gets in his head. It's like rubbing caviar on someone's Pot Noodle.

ANDREA

Lizzy, he loves you and he will be proud of you. But please, let's not use that analogy again, it's plain gross.

GLYN (30s, smug) swaggers in, holding a coffee like it owes him rent.

GLYN

Ladies. Am I interrupting deep emotional growth?

ANDREA

Yes. And yet, here you are.

GLYN

You'll thank me. Behold.

He plops his phone on the table. A flashy sports car gleams on screen.

GLYN (CONT'D)

My next ride. End-of-year bonus, baby.

ANDREA

Wow. Zero to midlife crisis in five seconds.

GLYN

Hey! This beast's got power. Lizzy, what do you think?

LIZZY

It's shiny. It has wheels. You'll look great crying in it.

GLYN

Once it arrives, you're getting a ride. Top down, wind in your hair...

LIZZY

I lead a busy life, Glyn. Maybe next never.

She and Andrea exchange a look. Disgust meets amusement.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. RADIO STATION - CAFETERIA - DAY

Dave Sloane sits in a booth, lost in thought, swirling a cup of black coffee. The cafeteria is quiet, a retro 50s vibe, walls lined with glowing posters promoting radio shows. One particularly gaudy poster features JACK NASH (mid-30s, rock 'n' roll energy, regrettable top knot) striking a ridiculous pose for "TALKIN' TRASH WITH JACK NASH."

A warm, teasing voice snaps Dave from his daze.

JACK NASH (O.S.)

What's eating your sour ass today?

Jack (now late 30's) slides into the booth across from him, all easy charm and smirking concern.

DAVE SLOANE

Just one of them days. It'll pass.

JACK NASH

Nothing to do with your little run-in with Queen of the Karens, Joanne Simmons?

DAVE SLOANE

How did you hear about that?

JACK NASH

Dude, we live in a small town, news travels and news is my business.

DAVE SLOANE

Ah yeah, that reminds me --

Dave pulls a folder from his satchel and slides it across the table.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)

Your show notes for today.

Jack flips through them, chuckling.

JACK NASH

Where do you come up with this stuff?

DAVE SLOANE  
Being blackballed and surviving  
cancer gives you a funny outlook on  
things I guess.

Dave takes another sip of coffee.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)  
Speaking of which, Junior's been  
asking why I don't put my scripts  
out there.

JACK NASH  
And what did you tell him?

DAVE SLOANE  
(shrugs)  
I just kind of brushed over it.  
What do you expect me to tell him,  
Jack?

JACK NASH  
The only guy I know who blew a  
million dollar deal, by not blowing  
for a million dollar deal, how  
could you not tell him the truth?

DAVE SLOANE  
(irritated)  
What the fuck is wrong with you?  
The kid's like 9, I tell him about  
that and then it's the never-ending  
story of awkward questions.

JACK NASH  
Still sounds like it's weighing on  
you.

DAVE SLOANE  
(sighs)  
It is. I think it's all the "new  
chapter talk" I keep getting. But  
now I've beaten cancer what do I  
really do Jack? Writing for  
community radio wasn't my career  
goal.  
(beat)  
No offense.

JACK NASH  
Wow, say what you feel Dave.

Dave gives him a guilty look.

JACK NASH (CONT'D)  
Relax, I'm kidding. I'm just glad I  
have you. But jokes aside... you  
remember Alan Jeffries?

DAVE SLOANE  
Alan, yeah I remember him. I heard  
he got some camera and equipment  
and was making documentaries now.

JACK NASH  
(laughing)  
He wants to rent the downstairs  
space for a studio. He asked if I  
was still in touch with you.

DAVE SLOANE  
Meh. I'm out of touch, out of date,  
and he wouldn't touch me with a  
barge pole.

Jack pauses, leans in.

JACK NASH  
It's a different age bro --  
(taps notes)  
-- You've kept my ass afloat for  
five years with this talent.

DAVE SLOANE  
Now, who's trying to suck a dick?

JACK NASH  
Ah whey man!

They both smirk.

DAVE SLOANE  
Listen, I appreciate it. I do. But  
that world is behind me.  
(shakes off the  
negativity)  
Ignore me. I'm just being a twat.

JACK NASH  
(laughs)  
When aren't you?

DAVE SLOANE  
Hey asshole, not cool!

Dave checks his watch.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)

Shit. I gotta go. Mr. F is picking me up for the hospital.

JACK NASH

And how's good ol' Mr. F?

DAVE SLOANE

Crushing it. We went out last night he scored five numbers. Guys like a white Snoop Dogg. Which is fucked cause I can't tell Lizzy and she's worrying about him being lonely.

JACK NASH

Think he'd offer me some life advice?

DAVE SLOANE

Sure. First tip: lose the top knot. You look like you're auditioning for a hipster Manson Family reboot.

Dave stands and slings his satchel over his shoulder.

JACK NASH

Good luck, my dude! Try not to get inappropriately touched by the doctor!

DAVE SLOANE

(stunned)

Seriously? You're making jokes about inappropriate touching when I literally got blackballed for almost being inappropriately touched?

(shakes head)

Dick move my friend, dick move!

JACK NASH

I love you really man!

DAVE SLOANE

Yeah, I love you too. Dick.

Dave flips him the bird as he exits. Jack just smirks and sips his coffee, flipping through his script notes.

EXT. RADIO STATION - CAR PARK - DAY.

Dave steps out of the SIDE DOOR of the steel-framed, glass-windowed community centre.



A massive, slightly tattered banner advertises: "GBZ RADIO."

As Dave reaches the curb, he bumps shoulders with another man—sharp suit, polished shoes, and his back to us. Dave turns back.

DAVE SLOANE  
I'm so sorr--

Dave's jaw drops. His eyes widen in disbelief.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)  
--- A- Alan?

Alan smirks, nods. He waits a beat before responding.

ALAN  
Dave Sloane. I'm glad to see you.  
How the devil are you?

DAVE SLOANE  
(smiles)  
I'm good, *I'm good*--

Alan eyes Dave's cane.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)  
Well, I'm good minus some cancer,  
but hey, five years free today. The  
cane is the price you pay.  
(beat)  
Jack mentioned you were coming!

ALAN  
Yeah, I'm in the process of  
starting my own production company.

DAVE SLOANE  
Small country town? Bit out the rat  
race?

ALAN  
It is, but land's cheaper out here,  
and Hollywood hasn't bulldozed over  
it yet, like down South.

DAVE SLOANE  
Fair point.  
(beat, then)  
Wow, look at you - came a long way  
since all that stunt work.

ALAN  
Fewer broken bones behind the  
camera.

DAVE SLOANE  
(nods)  
I can believe that.

ALAN  
So, other than --  
(nods to leg)  
-- What are you up to? I heard you  
wrote a film and was about to make  
the big leagues.

DAVE SLOANE  
(laughs)  
Ahh, whole other life ago. These  
days I'm a family man. Had a...  
situation with a contract.

ALAN  
(curious)  
I did hear a story--

DAVE SLOANE  
(cuts in)  
It's probably half true.

ALAN  
Ah, that's a real shame, your stuff  
was always top notch. I got to ask  
though mate, do you miss it?

Dave takes a beat. Smiles. Shrugs.

DAVE SLOANE  
Can't miss what you didn't have,  
right?  
(laughs)  
Though, my hard drive says  
otherwise.

Alan laughs, checks his watch.

ALAN  
Damn, I got to run. Meeting Jack,  
then some investors at four.

Alan reaches into his jacket, hands Dave a business card.

ALAN (CONT'D)

If you ever want to pick up where  
you left off, give me a call. I  
could use a good writer.

Dave takes the card, considering it.

DAVE SLOANE

Wow -- Thanks Alan, I will bare  
that in mind.

They shake hands. Alan walks off. A WHITE VOLKSWAGEN TOUAREG  
pulls up next to Dave, honking gently.

CUT TO:

INT. VOLKSWAGON TOUREG - DAY - MOVING.

Dave sits in the passenger seat, staring at Alan's card.  
Classic rock hums softly from the radio.

Behind the wheel, MR. F (60's, retired, Rock N' Roller), in  
transition lenses, taps his fingers to the beat.

MR. F

I appreciate your discretion about  
our night out last night.

DAVE SLOANE

Yeah. Right. Don't mention it. So,  
you went home with --  
(pauses for though)  
Rachel was it? Any followup with  
that?

MR. F

Oh, I don't think so, She cooked me  
breakfast this morning and it was  
burnt. Bit of a deal breaker that.

DAVE SLOANE

Hmm, I mean it could of been worse,  
I had one girlfriend, years before  
Lizzy, She left me taxi fare on the  
unit along with a performance  
review --  
(beat)  
-- It was not a great review.

MR. F

(chuckles)  
Well, thanks again.

DAVE SLOANE

Please, you're her father. It's your business, but if I were you, I would talk to her about things, she is worried you're getting lonely.

MR. F

I will, I will, I just don't want her to think I'm some playboy type.

DAVE SLOANE

Does it matter? You're both adults, she just wants to see you happy.

A brief, awkward silence. Only the radio plays.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)

Sorry, I'm just tired. Weird, weird morning. Incident at the school, then I bumped into an old film friend Alan. He's setting up a production studio below the radio station. Offered me a job.

MR. F

Hey, that sounds great. You were only saying last night how you felt like you missed your chance.

DAVE SLOANE

It's indie. No real money in it. But Alan and I made films back in college. Terrible films. But fun.  
(beat)  
It's funny how things change.

MR. F

Yeah, they do. So if you don't mind me being forward now, stop being a pussy and chase your dream.

Dave slowly turns to him, stunned.

DAVE SLOANE

As if you just called me a pussy!

MR. F

Well, if the shoe fits...

DAVE SLOANE

Then you're the left foot.

MR. F

Touché.

DAVE SLOANE

I don't know. Maybe you're right.

(sighs)

Oh, Speaking of careers. Junior now wants to act.

MR. F

And Lizzy.

DAVE SLOANE

(dry)

She hasn't mentioned anything about wanting to act.

MR. F

No!

DAVE SLOANE

(smirking)

I know what you mean. We haven't had much of a chance to chat. He dropped it on me this morning before school.

MR. F

It's a different time now. Safer industry. It's not your situation.

DAVE SLOANE

Yeah, I know and I know I'm over thinking it.

(sighs)

Anyway, look I got to say thanks for the ride to the hospital.

MR. F

Don't mention it.

DAVE SLOANE

Ah, I know but you've been great throughout this whole cancer shit.

MR. F

And you... and Lizzy.. And Junior have been great since Maggie passed.

DAVE SLOANE

(sighs)

Just know that when I do sort my shit out, I promise I'll put us back to even Stevens.

Mr. F suddenly SLAMS on the brakes. Tires SCREECH. Both men lurch forward. Mr. F leans out the window, shouting:

MR. F  
What the hell is wrong with you!  
Absolute bellend!

He exhales sharply, calms himself, and drives on.

MR. F (CONT'D)  
Sorry idiot drivers.

Dave, eyes wide, nods slowly.

DAVE SLOANE  
Oh - it's okay - I'm alright.  
(beat, uneasy)  
But, you did miss that turn back there.

MR. F  
Ah shit, my bad.

Mr. F YANKS the wheel. Dave's face contorts in horror as we hear HONKING HORNS and SCREAMING TIRES.

CUT TO:

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY.

A CLOCK TICKS LOUDLY. The room is painfully bland-beige walls, sad posters about hygiene, a coffee table stacked with outdated magazines so old they might be historical artifacts. DAVE SLOANE (late 40s, perpetually unimpressed) sits, staring at the clock, then his wristwatch, then the clock again.

DAVE SLOANE  
(to self)  
Nope, right time.

He exhales dramatically.

DR. KENSBURY (early 30s, effortlessly smug, clipboard in hand) strolls in from the hallway. He spots TRICIA (early 20s, enthusiastic but already regretting this job) at the reception desk, typing away.

DR. KENSBURY  
Oh. Hey! You're new aren't you?

TRICIA  
Yea, I started last Wednesday.

DR. KENSBURY

Ah, well, I was off all week. Had a thing down in Devon—surfing, kiteboarding, bit of paddle yoga—nothing like it, I tell you.

(flirtacious)

So, how you finding it here?

TRICIA

Ah yeah it's great, the staff here are great--

Dave watches, jaw tightening.

TRICIA (CONT'D)

-- Some of us are off into Leeds this weekend, you should totally join us.

DR. KENSBURY

I might just have to do that. I'm Mike by the way and you are?

TRICIA

I'm --

DAVE SLOANE (O.S.)

(cuts in)

-- ABOUT TO TELL YOU YOUR ONE O  
CLOCK IS RIGHT HERE!!

Dr. Kensbury turns to see Dave, grinning and waving sarcastically.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)

Hello there.

Dr. Kensbury exhales through his nose, then turns back to Tricia, polite smile engaged.

DR. KENSBURY

Excuse me for a minute, I have some paperwork to sort out.

He walks off. Dave stares, incredulous.

DAVE SLOANE

(to self)

Are you fucking kidding me?

INT. DR. KENSBURY'S OFFICE - DAY.

Dave sits across from Dr. Kensbury, who is now in "Doctor Mode"—professional, friendly, but a little too pleased with himself. He studies an X-ray.

DR. KENSBURY  
So, Dave. Five years cancer-free.  
How do you feel?

DAVE SLOANE  
Well, if I said 100 percent, I'd be lying. But hey, I survived. I get to watch my kid grow up. For that, I'd walk through hell and back.

DR. KENSBURY  
What's next for you then, Dave?

Dave blinks. The question throws him.

DAVE SLOANE  
Uh... One step at a time I guess,  
Mike!

Silence. A shift in the air. Dr. Kensbury clears his throat.

DR. KENSBURY  
*It's actually, Dr. Kensbury.*

Beat.

DAVE SLOANE  
Really? After five years, I'm still at Dr. Kensbury? The girl who started Wednesday gets Mike, but I get formality?

Dave stands, incredulous.

DR. KENSBURY  
Well -- erm --

DAVE SLOANE  
(interjects)  
don't worry about it. After today, I never have to see you again. Tomorrow's a new day, fresh start—  
(shrugs)  
—you know, all that awkward positive shit you churn out.

Dave opens the door, half-exits, then turns dramatically.



DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)  
Farewell... MIKE!

Exit Dave. Dr. Kensbury exhales, defeated.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRIMARY SCHOOL - DAY.

A white Touareg SCREECHES to a halt outside the school. The passenger door FLIES open, and DAVE SLOANE tumbles out like a man escaping a carjacking. He straightens himself, taps his pockets to make sure he's still got his keys, wallet, and dignity, then looks back into the car.

DAVE SLOANE  
Thanks, Mr.F! Absolute pleasure as  
always.

The car PEELS OFF before Dave even shuts the door properly. He LIMPS toward the school gates with his cane, wincing at every rushed step.

INT. SCHOOL RECEPTION - DAY.

A brightly colored war zone of children's artwork. DAVE enters, spotting LIZZY already seated, arms crossed, face set to "I hate you right now."

DAVE SLOANE  
Lizzy, my love, I am so sorry. It's  
been one thing after another, and  
then the doc kept me waiting an  
extra half hour.

He attempts a charming smile, fails miserably.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)  
Oh, and just so you know—your dad  
nearly killed me. Cut across two  
lanes of traffic. You might wanna  
get him an eye test before he  
starts auditioning for Fast &  
Furious: Geriatric Drift. But we  
had some friendly banter along the  
way.

LIZZY  
I appreciate that Dave. I know it's  
been tough for him since Maggie  
died.

DAVE SLOANE  
(under breath)  
Trust me it hasn't been that  
tough...

LIZZY  
What did you say?

DAVE SLOANE  
Nothing! Just, uh—if he needs  
company, I heard your mum's single  
and ready to mingle.

LIZZY  
Absolutely not. I survived that  
circus once, never again.

They share a laugh. Dave takes Lizzy's hand, kisses the back  
of it.

DAVE SLOANE  
Look, I really am sorry. I got  
steaks and beer to make up for  
this. And I heard rumors of cake?

MISS CLAY (late 20s, quirky, too calm for a primary school)  
ENTERS, greeting them with a practiced smile.

MISS. CLAY  
Mr. Sloane. Miss. Franklin. Thank  
you for coming in.

DAVE SLOANE  
Didn't really have a choice here  
did we?

Lizzy ELBOWS him in the ribs.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)  
Opf -- ouch -- Sorry, it's been a  
day!

He follows Lizzy and Miss Clay, but stops, noticing a PTA  
sign-up sheet. He raises an eyebrow before jogging to catch  
up.

INT. HEADMASTERS OFFICE - DAY.

Dave and Lizzy sit across from Miss Clay.

MISS. CLAY

Junior is a fantastic student.  
Polite, curious, tells the most...  
fascinating stories about home.

Dave and Lizzy exchange a worried glance.

MISS. CLAY (CONT'D)

Oh, nothing bad. Just seems like  
you both lead very... eventful lives.

DAVE SLOANE

You don't know the half of it.  
Anyway, before Simmons gets here--  
(deep breath)  
-It was a misunderstanding. She was  
in my space, I muttered under my  
breath, shouldn't have done it, and  
I am very sorry.

MISS. CLAY

We just don't want the children  
picking up bad habits.

DAVE SLOANE

Totally get it. But have you seen  
the parents outside? They're  
vaping, swearing, basically holding  
a UFC pre-show at the gates.

MISS. CLAY

And we do address that in our  
school newsletter.

DAVE SLOANE

And how's that working out? 'Cause  
I still see them out there,  
dropping F-bombs like confetti.

A KNOCK at the door. Enter JOANNE, clutching her purse like  
an Oscar-winning victim. She sits, sandwiching Lizzy in the  
middle. Then, without hesitation, she pulls out a VAPE PEN,  
takes a deep pull, and exhales a thick cloud of purple-tinted  
smoke.

Dave stares at Joanne, his eye-brow twitches he can't believe  
it.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)

(mouthes)

Are you serious?

MISS. CLAY (O.S.)  
 I can appreciate incidents do  
 happen and we try to fix them where  
 we can.

Joanne exhales a thick cloud of purple, tinted smoke, it  
 fills the room, only irritating Dave further.

DAVE SLOANE (mouthing) <i>What the fuck?!</i>	MISS. CLAY (O.S.) (CONT'D) ... So I believe Mr. Sloane you have something to say to Miss. Simmons here?!
---	---

Miss. Clay notices Dave's attention has left the meeting.

MISS. CLAY (CONT'D)  
 Mr. Sloane?

Dave snaps to, he turns to Miss. Clay offering a sorry look.

DAVE SLOANE  
 Yeah, yeah, listening. Just  
 distracted by the human fog machine  
 over here.

LIZZY  
 Dave!!!

JOANNE  
 (sobbing)  
 I-- I-- I don't want to sound like  
 the controversial mum here--

DAVE SLOANE  
 Trust me, you probably won't!

MISS. CLAY  
 Mr. Sloane. Miss Simmons. Could we?

JOANNE  
 (sobs)  
 Since... Covid... This has helped  
 me deal -- with my anxiety!

DAVE SLOANE  
 Oh, come on. If I start toking up  
 on my medical cannabis, are we  
 calling it even?

MISS. CLAY  
 Mr. Sloane, please if you could  
 just --

JOANNE  
 (teary eyed)  
 WHAT?! NO! You're personally  
 attacking me here.

MISS. CLAY.  
 Mr. Sloane, if we could all  
 take a deep breath here?!

DAVE SLOANE  
 I'm personally attacking you?  
 Like you attack my personal  
 space in a morning?

JOANNE  
 What morning?

DAVE SLOANE  
 EVERY FUCKING MORNING YOU PLEB! Oh,  
 don't think I don't see you  
 tailgating me as I walk with my  
 cane.

MISS. CLAY  
 Mr. Sloane, Ms. Simmons,  
 Please

JOANNE  
 I have no idea what you're  
 talking about!

Joanne takes another exaggerated vape hit, hands trembling.

DAVE SLOANE  
 You know what "Karen?" Let's see  
 what you think of this!

He whips out his G-PEN, takes a drag, exhales. The office  
 fills with even thicker smoke. Everyone, except Dave, starts  
 COUGHING.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)  
 Yeah not nice is it?  
 (calmer)  
 Well this stuff is nice, but you  
 get what I mean, right?!

MISS. CLAY.  
 MR. SLOANE!!!

DAVE SLOANE  
 Ah Relax!  
 (coughs)  
 I have a medical license.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CAR - MOVING.

Lizzy drives, her grip on the wheel a little too tight. Dave stares out the window, arms crossed, chewing on the inside of his cheek. The tension is thick enough to grill a steak on. Junior leans forward, his little head popping into the front seat area like a meerkat sensing danger.

JUNIOR

This is weird, why are you guys quiet?

Lizzy catches his eyes in the rearview mirror, forcing a smile like a hostage trying to signal distress.

LIZZY

It's been a long day darling and we're just tired.

Dave lets out a scoff that sounds suspiciously like a sarcastic laugh.

DAVE SLOANE

Oh, we're tired are we?

He twists in his seat, turning to Junior.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)

Oh no, buddy, Mummy is tired. Daddy? Daddy is FED. UP.

JUNIOR

(concerned)

Why what's up?

DAVE SLOANE

Asshole parents mate. asshole parents.

LIZZY

(through gritted teeth)

Did you really have to join in with her though, Dave?

Dave tilts his head, pretending to think it over like it's a deep philosophical question.

DAVE SLOANE

Hmm. No, maybe I didn't. But I was making a point. Too many people play the "since Covid" card. It's been, what, half a decade?

LIZZY

Dave, that's not the point! People are still struggling.

DAVE SLOANE

But do they have it? No, they don't, besides if I was her I'd be more worried about the popcorn lung she'll get from the pen --

He pauses, processing his own statement, then chuckles to himself.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)

I'm not disagreeing with you, but I mean, really, using anxiety as an excuse to fog up a parent-teacher meeting like we're at a Coldplay concert?

LIZZY

Regardless, you're now barred from school grounds.

DAVE SLOANE

(scoffs)

Don't -- Don't say it like that.

LIZZY

Like what? Like it's true?

DAVE SLOANE

No, like it makes me sound like some kind of creep.

JUNIOR

(stunned)

You're barred from the school dad?

DAVE SLOANE

(sheepishly)

It's complicated, mate. But yes--

(mumbles)

- I am technically banned from the school.

JUNIOR

Damn, what do I have to do to get so lucky?

DAVE SLOANE

Hey! That education is the most important thing you'll get. Don't be a smart ass, it doesn't suit.

JUNIOR

Sorry. I'm just excited and you guys aren't smiling.

LIZZY

Why you excited little dude?

JUNIOR

Cause of the acting classes! I can't wait, I'm making a video when I get home.

Dave and Lizzy exchange a look--both dreading the conversation that must follow. Neither wants to crush Junior's dreams.

LIZZY

Me and daddy need to talk it over, though, so please don't get your hopes up.

DAVE SLOANE

Yeah we nee--  
(eyes widen)  
-- What in the actual fuck?

EXT. STREET/ DAVE'S HOUSE - DAY

Lizzy's car creeps forward. Up ahead, a massive moving lorry is blocking Dave's driveway. The logo on the side reads "THE BIG VAN RENTAL INC."

Dave gets out, cane in hand, approaching the lorry. He peeks into the cab. Empty. As he turns, a mountain of a man, MICK, exits the house next door.

DAVE SLOANE

Hey, what's going on? You can't just park here.

MICK

Look, mate, I'm moving in. Give me an hour, I'll move it.

DAVE SLOANE

Or--and hear me out--you move it now? So I can get into my actual house?

MICK

Can't you park down the street? I'll be done soon.

Dave lets out a slow, exaggerated laugh.



DAVE SLOANE

Ohhh, see, that's funny because I  
HAVE A DRIVEWAY. Like you. And  
YOURS is empty. What a coincidence!

MICK

I told you, I'm unloading. Just  
chill out.

DAVE SLOANE

(in disbelief)

Did you just tell me to chill out?  
You're blocking my house! I have a  
cane, mate, I need access to my  
drive!

MICK

Yeah, I noticed the cane. It's why  
I didn't lamp you the second you  
stepped on my drive.

DAVE SLOANE

(taken aback)

Whoa, okay, let's dial down the  
aggression, yeah? My Mrs and kid  
are right there.

Lizzy watches from the car, chewing her lip nervously.  
Junior, on the other hand, has his phone out, recording.

MICK

Limp away now, while you still can.

Dave bites his bottom lip, fuming. He WANTS to fight back,  
but his audience holds him back.

DAVE SLOANE

Alright. Sure. I'll let you have  
this one. But just know—

Dave turns away, then spins back dramatically.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)

Not over!

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Dave gets back in, seething. Lizzy smirks.

LIZZY

Well, he seems lovely.

DAVE SLOANE  
I'll sort this. I promise. But  
yeah, can you park down the street,  
well, park home later.

JUNIOR  
Should of kicked his ass daddy.

DAVE SLOANE  
Dude! Really?

CUT TO:

EXT. DAVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

A quiet suburban street, lit by streetlights and the warm glow from inside Dave's house. Lizzy's car is parked in the driveway.

From inside, the rhythmic sound of a knife CHOPPING a cutting board—

INT. DAVE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING.

Dave dices peppers with the confidence of a man who's watched way too many cooking shows. Music plays from an ALEXA speaker. Dave throws in a little dance move—smooth, kind of.

Lizzy enters, heads straight for the fridge, grabs a beer, pops the top, and takes a swig.

DAVE SLOANE  
That kind of day huh?

LIZZY  
I've had worse. But, I've  
definitely had better.

She offers him the bottle. Dave backs up like it's a loaded weapon.

DAVE SLOANE  
C'mon, you know this brother  
doesn't joke and toké!!

LIZZY smirks. Dave leans in, kisses her, but clocks something off.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)  
Is everything okay?... You seem a  
little distant.

LIZZY

(smirks)

It's nothing. Just—you hit five years today.

DAVE SLOANE

Yeah. Feels good. Oh, which reminds me. Have I got a story for you about the doctors office later.

LIZZY

You're also a massive ass. But, I love you Dave Sloane.

Dave scoops her into an exaggerated bear hug.

DAVE SLOANE

Can't argue with that. Love you too, Miss Franklin. And I'm sorry about the PTA thing, but Joanne is a tyrant.

LIZZY

She is. And she's also the head of the PTA.

DAVE SLOANE

Exactly! She could do good, but instead, she's running it like Jabba the Hutt!

(sighs)

I'll fix it. Tomorrow. I promise.

LIZZY

Would be great. I don't wanna tell people you're banned from school property—it gives off a weird vibe.

DAVE SLOANE

You're telling me. Oh, speaking of weird vibes—Junior. Acting school?

LIZZY

Yeah. Didn't wanna dump it on you today. But it starts in a week.

DAVE SLOANE

A week huh --

Dave stares at the ceiling. He knows he's about to regret this.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)

(sighs)

Fine. He can go. BUT—and I do mean  
BUT—the second I see anything off,  
he's out.

Junior appears in the doorway, feigning casual.

JUNIOR

So is that a yes then?

DAVE SLOANE

(chuckles)

Next time, I'll discuss things with  
your mother from space.

Junior WHOOPS, rushes in, grabs both parents into a tight  
hug.

JUNIOR

Thank you guys.

DAVE SLOANE

Yeah, you're welcome. Dinner's  
going to be in half an hour, okay?

JUNIOR

Cool. Can I go on my phone until  
then?

DAVE SLOANE

Yeah, I guess. But no social media.

JUNIOR

Yeah, yeah, I know.

He snatches his phone and SPRINTS upstairs

DAVE SLOANE

Would you believe the attitude on  
that kid?

LIZZY

I wonder where he get's that from?

DAVE SLOANE

HEY! You check your tone there  
missy before I check it for you!

Lizzy punches his arm.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)

Ouch! Hey, not cool! That is elder  
abuse you know.

LIZZY  
 (in mock seriousness)  
 Oh it is? Someone call the cops  
 then!

She sips her beer, then her expression shifts—genuine concern.

LIZZY (CONT'D)  
 Dave, really though, are you okay?  
 And I don't mean "fine" you've been  
 a bit off.

DAVE SLOANE  
 Am I okay?  
 (sighs)  
 Lizzy, I don't keep things from  
 you. Your dad, he's crushing it on  
 these nights out.

LIZZY  
 (recoils)  
 Eugh, I don't need to know that!

DAVE SLOANE  
 No, I know, but also I don't need  
 to watch it happen, which I do. He  
 asked me not to tell you as he  
 doesn't want you thinking less of  
 him!

Lizzy pauses, she's taken back.

LIZZY  
 I- I honestly, don't care, I just  
 want him to be happy.

DAVE SLOANE  
 That's what I said, THANK YOU!  
 (beat)  
 OH, I bumped into an old friend  
 today.

Lizzy starts prepping a salad.

LIZZY  
 Ah yeah and who was that?

DAVE SLOANE  
 Guy from my college days, Alan  
 Greene, he's opening a production  
 studio under the radio station.

LIZZY  
(impressed)  
That's pretty cool.

DAVE SLOANE  
Yeah, he's an actor who starred in  
a few of my college films.

LIZZY  
And we've never seen these  
masterpieces because...?

DAVE SLOANE  
Because they were a CRIME. Anyway,  
Alan's opening a production studio.  
Gave me his card. He's looking for  
a staff writer.

Lizzy stops chopping. Turns, beaming.

LIZZY  
WHAT?! Dave that's awesome.

DAVE SLOANE  
Eh. I dunno.

LIZZY  
What do you mean you don't know?

Dave turns back to Lizzy, he shrugs, he's still unsure.

DAVE SLOANE  
Everyone knows my story. It's like  
an urban legend. Plus, I'm rusty.  
Out of touch. Introverted.  
Outspoken. Blackballed, mostly that  
last one.

Lizzy steps up, GRABS his collar, pulls him in.

LIZZY  
And in a perfect position to tell a  
story people actually relate to.

She kisses him.

LIZZY (CONT'D)  
Call him, Dave Sloane. For once,  
take the shot.

Dave hesitates. Then—his PHONE RINGS. He checks the screen  
and answers.

DAVE SLOANE

What's up, shouldn't you be on a date or something?

INT. RADIO STATION/ DAVE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jack paces outside a recording studio. He checks his surroundings, phone to his ear, speaking with urgency.

JACK NASH

Please tell me you're watching the news right now?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. DAVE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

DAVE SLOANE

No, I'm having a tender moment with Lizzy, well, I was trying to at least.

Lizzy shoots him a look.

JACK NASH

Yeah well, put the smoochy-smoochy on hold and go turn on your T.V!

DAVE SLOANE

Jesus Jack, this better be good.

Dave enters THE LIVING ROOM, he grabs the remote off the coffee table, turns on the TV. The volume is muted, but a NEWS REPORT flashes across the screen: MOVIE AND MUSIC MOGUL DARIUS BLAKE ARRESTED.

Dave's mouth drops open.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)

Get the fuck out of here!

JACK NASH

That's him right, the one that "y'know"?

DAVE SLOANE

Yeah, that's him.

JACK NASH

So what does that mean for you?

DAVE SLOANE

Nothing man, that shit is ancient history. History I wouldn't care for. But, good. About time. I hope in prison he's the pie. Anyway. I gotta go.

Dave hangs up. JUNIOR, 10, sharp for his age, stands in the doorway.

JUNIOR

What's that all about dad?

DAVE SLOANE

That man on the news there. He's the reason your dad here doesn't get his movies made.

JUNIOR

Damn!

DAVE SLOANE

I know right -- Hang on weren't you upstairs?

JUNIOR

Yeah, but I needed my charger.

Junior grabs his charger, heads back up.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)

So, if that guys a crook. Doesn't that mean, he doesn't have a say anymore?

DAVE SLOANE

That's what usually happens.

Dave processes this. Something shifts in his expression.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Lizzy stirs a pot. Dave enters, still dazed.

LIZZY

What was that all about then?

DAVE SLOANE

The producer who's name we don't speak. He's just been arrested in L.A.



LIZZY

Woah.

DAVE SLOANE

I know right Karma has timing I'll give it that.

LIZZY

Did you call Alan?

DAVE SLOANE

Maybe I'll do it tomorrow.

Lizzy stops, eyes narrowing.

LIZZY

ARE YOU KIDDING ME? The universe has just served you the biggest second chance sign and you're going to think about it tomorrow? Stop being a pussy Dave!

DAVE SLOANE

A pussy? Really? You just straight up going to call me a pussy? Your dad did the same fucking thing earlier.

She grins cheekily.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)

(laughs)

Well, when you put it like that!

Lizzy's phone VIBRATES. She checks it, groans.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)

What now?

LIZZY

The schools P.T.A App, they're looking for new members.

DAVE SLOANE

Yeah.. I saw that.

A wicked thought hits Dave like a light bulb switching on.

LIZZY

(curious)

What's that --- wait, I know that look!

DAVE SLOANE  
You know what; I might run for the  
P.T.A!

LIZZY  
(alarmed)  
Dave. No.

DAVE SLOANE  
Perfect, I'll go make nice with the  
head tomorrow, get the ban unturned  
and get that "Karen" off the  
committee!

LIZZY  
Oh Dave. C'mon, this is Juniors  
school.

Dave takes a drag from his G-pen, savoring the moment.

DAVE SLOANE  
Exactly and that crazy crank makes  
it a misery. Didn't you just tell  
me to "do something"

LIZZY  
And what about Alan?

DAVE SLOANE  
I'll give him a call tomorrow, I  
promise!

LIZZY  
Promise me on Junior!

Dave blanches.

DAVE SLOANE  
Woah, I mean that's a bit fucked  
up, don't you think?

Lizzy glares at Dave, he knows he's lost this one.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)  
Fine!

He grabs his phone, heads for the door.

DAVE SLOAN (O.S.)  
Love you!

Lizzy shakes her head, smirks.

LIZZY  
Love you too. Dave!

Dave stops he turns around to Lizzy, his brow raised.

LIZZY (CONT'D)  
I- I got promoted at work. I run a  
small department now.

Dave's mouth drops open, but his shock turns to a smile.

DAVE SLOANE  
WOW, that is fantastic!

Dave rushes up to her they embrace and kiss.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)  
I am proud of you Franklin, I  
really fucking am!

LIZZY  
Good. Now go make your phone call.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING.

Dave swaggers into the room like a man with a plan. He spins dramatically and crashes into his beloved recliner, groaning with satisfaction. He fishes a business card from his pocket and rests it on his belly like it's a golden ticket.

With a deep breath, he punches the recline button on the chair. As the chair sloooowly tilts back, he dials the number on the card.

The line connects. Dave pinches the bridge of his nose, already regretting this.

DAVE SLOANE  
Hey Alan? It's Dave; Dave Sloane.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. ALAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alan, shirtless, lounging in bed under dim lighting. His phone rests on his shoulder as he answers.

ALAN  
 (over phone)  
 Dave! My man! Glad you called.  
 What's up?

DAVE SLOANE  
 (awkward, hesitant)  
 So... you mentioned meeting up?  
 Writing something?

Alan perks up instantly, practically vibrating with enthusiasm.

ALAN  
 (elated)  
 Yes, mate! Absolutely! I'm buzzing  
 for it. But uh... tonight's not  
 great. New missus, you know how it  
 is.  
 (beat)  
 Busy week coming up, got investors  
 to schmooze. How's two weeks Friday  
 at 2 PM?

Dave sits up, eyes wide. This is real. This is happening.

DAVE SLOANE  
 (suppressing giddy  
 excitement)  
 Two weeks Friday. Yeah. Yeah, I can  
 do that. Looking forward to it.

ALAN (O.S.)  
 Top stuff. Oh and you have some  
 samples?

DAVE SLOANE  
 (confidently... then less  
 so)  
 Oh yeah, I have samples.

ALAN (O.S.)  
 Brilliant. Bring those, plus the  
 relevant pitch decks, and we'll  
 talk.

Dave's confident grin flickers. The what now?

DAVE SLOANE  
 Oh - yeah, sure, sure. I got all  
 that.

ALAN JEFFRIES  
 So, we making a movie?

Dave opens his mouth. Closes it. Opens it again. Then—

DAVE SLOANE  
Are we making a movie? --  
(scoffs exhilarated)  
-- You bet your ass we are!

Alan chuckles and hangs up. He tosses the phone onto his bedside table as a soft light glows from the other side of the room.

JOANNE(O.S.)  
Who was that?

Alan turns to see JOANNE, draped in sexy lingerie, lying seductively on the bed. Alan shrugs.

ALAN  
Old filmmaking mate. Used to be  
something back in the day.

Joanne raises an eyebrow, playfully tracing a finger down his chest.

JOANNE  
You going to keep me waiting then?

Alan smirks. He reaches over and flicks off the bedside lamp.

BLACKOUT.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dave slowly lowers his phone onto the arm of his chair. His euphoric grin fades into a frown.

DAVE SLOANE  
(sudden realization)  
What the fuck is a pitch deck?

From the sofa, JUNIOR, doesn't even look up from his phone.

JUNIOR  
It's like a power point  
presentation. Y'know, you tell  
people what you have and where you  
want things to go. I can help you  
with that!

Dave blinks. Stares.

DAVE SLOANE  
How do you know all that?

Junior finally glances up, shaking his head in pity.

JUNIOR  
Daddy. Please, I make stop motion  
movies and I watch YouTube.  
Sometimes you pick things up!

He hops off the couch, strolling out of the room like a man  
who's seen too much.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)  
Gotta keep up old man, gotta keep  
up! But good for you though. I'm  
proud.

Dave watches him go, utterly dumbfounded. He exhales sharply.

DAVE SLOANE  
(smirks)  
yes!

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Joanne pushes a stroller with one hand and clutches a vape  
pen in the other, puffing out a dramatic cloud of smoke. She  
walks like someone deep in thought – or an episode of Real  
Housewives: Suburbia.

Something up ahead catches her eye.

She slows, squints. Stops.

A telegraph pole. Taped to it:

"MAKE AUGUSTINES GREAT AGAIN - VOTE DAVE SLOANE FOR P.T.A."

Her jaw drops.

Joanne snatches the poster, crumples it into a tight ball and  
shoves it in her hoodie pocket like it insulted her  
personally.

EXT. SCHOOL GATES.

Dave exits the school beside MISS CLAY – pleasant,  
professional, and holding a bouquet of flowers.

Dave, also holding flowers, is freshly shaved, oddly charming, and dressed like he's running for local office (which... he might be).

DAVE SLOANE

Again, I really am sorry. That news about the producer just-threw me and my cancer anniversary. Won't happen again. Promise.

MISS. CLAY

Well, Mr. Sloane, I understand.  
(smiles)  
And I forgive you.

They approach Joanne, who looks like she's been preparing for this moment all morning.

DAVE SLOANE

Ah! Joanne. Perfect timing. I wanted to apologise. Yesterday... I was a total-  
(beat, searching)  
Not-very-nice-person.

He offers the flowers.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)

These are just a small token. From the better side of me.

Joanne blinks - surprised, confused, annoyed - the holy trinity of mum-rage.

Dave goes in for a hug. She doesn't move.

He leans close to her ear.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)

(whispers)  
Because when I'm on the P.T.A...  
We're really gonna have some fun.

He pulls back, beaming.

DAVE SLOANE (CONT'D)

Now, if you'll excuse me - I've got a story to write.

He walks off, whistling a jaunty, almost cartoonishly chipper tune.

Joanne glares after him. She glances down at the bouquet...

She turns the wrapping – revealing yet another campaign poster taped to it.

Dave's grinning face stares back at her like a smug political sticker.

JOANNE  
(mutters)  
Fuck... My... Life.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END.