

THE FRIEND ZONE

Written By

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FADE IN:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY

The city is really animated.

EXT. RIVERSIDE DRIVE APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

People walk past the building and the doorman.

INT. THE FIFTH FLOOR - DAY

The number/letter combination on the door is Five F.

INT. JAKE'S BEDROOM - DAY

ROD SPERLING, 48, stands in the center of the set as he holds a lit cigarette in his left hand and he breaks the fourth wall.

ROD

Good day. Come with me on a journey. A journey, not through sight or sound but of the soul. It's a journey that deals with matters of the heart. That's right...relationships. The story you are about to see is a story of a man who has been unsuccessful in relationships ever since he was fifteen. He is in his thirties now and still has not found his special someone. Come with me as we enter...

A BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: "The Friend Zone".

ROD (V.O.)

..."The Friend Zone".

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. JAKE'S BEDROOM - DAY

The digital clock has the eleven o' clock hour on it. PULL BACK TO REVEAL JAKE PETERSON, 39, a young African American male, who is asleep on his stomach underneath his covers. He turns on his back and finally he slowly wakes up feeling like he has just woke up from a twenty year nap.

ROD (V.O.)

This is Jake Peterson. A young man who will soon be going through a miasma known to mankind as the single life, which he has lived for twenty-four years. And within that miasma, his psyche will experience a dark, well known world filled with isolation, depression and bouts of antisocial behavior.

(Jon stretches)

His heart has experienced a darkness that only loving another can heal, but there is one particular kind of love that Jake has not yet experienced...the self love that will allow him to love others and that special someone.

Jake takes the covers off of his body and as he gets out of his bed, he grunts and stretches and finally, he goes into his living room.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jake walks over to his couch and takes a seat on it.

A series of KNOCKS are heard on his apartment door. Jake rolls his eyes, gets up from his seat on the couch and walks over to the door. As he OPENS it, he sees:

FRAN TAYLOR

A sexy Latina, 39, and she is Jake's friend and she stands out in the hall with a grin on her face as she comes face to face with him.

FRAN

Hello, Jake.

JAKE

Hello, Fran. Come on in.

Fran enters the apartment and walks behind the couch and Jake CLOSES the door and he walks over to Fran.

JAKE (CONT'D)

What brings you here?

FRAN

Can't I come over to visit a best friend?

ROD (V.O.)

Meet Fran Taylor, best friend of Jake since they were kids. Jake has had an insane crush on Fran for some time and he has admitted his love for her on numerous occasions, but Fran has not reciprocated Jake's affections because her love has gone to someone else.

JAKE

I guess so. How are you this morning?

FRAN

I am doing fine. How are you?

JAKE

I am fine, but I am bored. Really bored. It is Saturday and I have nothing to do and nowhere to go.

Fran knows where this conversation is going, but she tries not to give in to it. She rolls her eyes and goes into the conversation she didn't want to go into.

FRAN

All right, Jake. Out with it. You are still upset with me going out with Paul Mitchell, aren't you.

JAKE

To be honest with you, yes, I am. I don't see how you could go out with someone who you have known for three weeks instead of going out with me. Someone you have known since kindergarten!

Jake walks away from Fran toward the kitchen in disgust and Fran follows him as she talks.

FRAN

All right. Say that you and I started dating. What would have happened if something went wrong and we broke up?

Jake turns toward Fran and looks at her in angered silence. A dramatic pause is between the both of them and then, Fran nods her head as an answer to Jake's silence.

FRAN (CONT'D)

Exactly. Exactly. You got it. You don't know. If we went out together and heaven forbid, we broke up, we might have become bitter enemies.

FRAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(re: Jake listens to Fran with an angry look)

That is why I kept you as a friend, because if we dated, it would have ruined the friendship.

FRAN (CONT'D)

I like you, Jake. I really do, but I only like you as a friend.

JAKE

Do you know how many times I have heard "I like you only as a friend" from the girls that I knew who I would have liked to date?

(he holds up ten fingers)

Multiply these man fingers by one hundred.

JAKE (CONT'D)

(re: Fran as she listens to Jake with a little understanding)

That's right. I have been hearing that "I like you only as a friend" crap from so many girls since high school. I couldn't even get a date to the senior prom.

Jake and Fran look at each other as Jake continues to speak.

JAKE (CONT'D)

And now, when I swallow my pride and asked you out, you turn me down and date Paul Mitchell...and you tell me the exact same thing so many other girls before you have said.

(scoffs)

Maybe I should remain single. I mean, I have been that way for twenty-four years.

As Jake walks back into the living room, Fran follows him as she speaks.

FRAN

Don't think that way, Jake. It isn't so bad being single.

(they take their seats on the couch)

Being single is just as good as being in a relationship.

JAKE

What do you mean?

FRAN

Well, people who have been single for a long period of time just haven't found their special someone yet.

JAKE

That is wonderful philosophy coming from someone who is dating Paul Mitchell after three weeks of meeting him.

Fran swerves her eyes to the left and her head follows, because she hasn't been completely honest with Jake about her boyfriend.

FRAN

Uh, yeah. About that. Jake, I haven't been totally honest with you about how Paul and I got together.

As Fran faces Jake:

JAKE

What do you mean?

FRAN

I mean...Paul asked me out right after you did.

Jake is shocked at this bit of information and at the same time, he is upset about the small amount of time Fran was asked out.

JAKE

I don't believe this! And you turned me down and agreed to go out with him?

(he chuckles)

(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

This is so fuckin' amazing.

(he stops chuckling and he is serious)

Well, you do realize that things will change now that you are dating Paul. We won't talk on the phone as much, we won't be able to go to the movies and basically, we won't be good friends like we used to be. You'll be doing all of that with Paul. Tell me again how you didn't want to ruin the friendship.

FRAN

It won't be like that and besides, I will call you and we will hang out. I promise.

JAKE

Yeah, right. You say that, but I don't believe you.

Fran gets up from her seat and walks over to the apartment door.

FRAN

(faces Jake)

You'll see. I will call you and we will hang out. You'll see.

She OPENS the door, leaves Jake's apartment and CLOSES the door behind her.

Jake is still on the couch and he is still upset because he doesn't think that Fran will be the friend that she said she was going to be now that she is dating. He sadly sighs.

PAN LEFT TO Rod as he stands in the middle of the room with a lit cigarette in his left hand and breaks the fourth wall.

ROD

As you have just witnessed, Jake and Fran have just had their first disagreement...but three questions have arisen. One: Was there any truth to what Jake said about Fran's relationship? Two: Will Fran keep her promise to Jake no that she is dating Paul Mitchell? And three: What will become of Jake and Fran's friendship now that Fran is dating and Jake has been put in the friend zone?

PAN RIGHT and Jake is still on the couch with a frown on his face. He lets out another sad sigh.

EXT. THE CITY STREETS - DAY

Jake, fully dressed, walks down the street.

ROD (V.O.)

Later that day, Jake decided to get dressed and go out for a walk and as he walks, he bumps into another friend he has known since kindergarten.

Jake runs into CHRIS THOMPSON, 39, an African American male, who is another friend of Jake's. As they give each other a high five:

JAKE

Hey, Chris!

CHRIS

Hey, Jake!

(re: Jake)

How are you doing today?

JAKE

I'm doing all right, but I am just a little unhappy because I just had a little argument with Fran.

CHRIS

What was the argument about?

JAKE

You know I have had a crush on her since our junior year in high school, right?

CHRIS

How could I forget?

JAKE

She told me that she is going out with a guy named Paul Mitchell.

CHRIS

Paul Mitchell?

JAKE

Yeah. She came to visit me and told me that she knew him for only three weeks and told me she is dating him. Can you believe it? And she is afraid to date me, because she didn't want to ruin our friendship.

CHRIS

That's great! Aren't you happy for her?

JAKE

Yes and no. Yes, I am happy she is dating and no I am not happy because she put me in the friend zone.

CHRIS

So, she put you in the friend zone. You know, it could have been worse. She could have told you that she doesn't want to be friends anymore.

Jake thinks about what Chris had said and he gives Chris the old "I see what you mean" look.

JAKE

I understand...but I just hate being put in the friend zone.

CHRIS

I know what you mean. It's not fun, but it beats not being a friend anymore.

JAKE

(re: Chris)

You're right...but I know I won't hear from her now that she is dating Paul.

CHRIS

You don't know that for sure.

JAKE

I do know that for sure. I have been down that road for a long time. I speak from experience.

CHRIS

I'm sure you will hear from her; even if she is dating Paul.

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I mean, you and I have been friends since kindergarten and we hang out and talk and go places.

JAKE

Yeah, you're right...but I wish I could do those things with a girl. Don't get me wrong. I really enjoy hanging out with you, but I wish I had a girlfriend.

CHRIS

If it will make you feel better, I wish I had a girlfriend, too. It sucks being single.

JAKE

Who are you telling?

CHRIS

I hate to cut the conversation short, but I have to go. I am going to visit my aunt and grandmother.

JAKE

Okay. Give me a call later on.

CHRIS

You know I will.  
(he smiles and gives Jake  
a peace sign)  
Peace, my brother.

JAKE

(he smiles and gives Chris  
a peace sign)  
Likewise, my brother.

As Chris leaves, Jake watches him as he walks down the street and disappears into the crowd on the sidewalk and then, Jake continues his walk.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. THE FIFTH FLOOR - DAY

Rod stands in the middle of the hall and breaks the fourth wall while he holds another lit cigarette in between his fingers of his left hand.

ROD

It's fifteen minutes past the hour  
and Jake has completed his outing  
and is returning home. Little does  
he know that his worst nightmare is  
about to come true.

The BELL RINGS ONCE and the ELEVATOR DOORS SLIDE OPEN, Jake exits the elevator and walks toward his apartment door. He reaches into his jeans pocket, takes out his keys, puts it in the lock in the doorknob and unlocks his door.

As he takes the key out of the doorknob:

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jake OPENS the door, walks inside and CLOSES and LOCKS the door behind him. He walks over to his couch and sits on it. He tosses his keys on the coffee table in front of him.

As he sits silently, he decides to give Fran a call. So, he takes his cell phone out of his jeans pocket, dials Fran's number and puts the phone on his ear.

EXT. THE GREENWICH VILLAGE APARTMENT HOUSE - DAY

People walk past the building and the doorman and TRAFFIC SOUNDS are heard throughout the area of the city.

INT. PAUL MITCHELL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Fran and PAUL MITCHELL, 39, a Caucasian male, sit on the couch and make out and laugh as they do so.

As Fran's CELL PHONE RINGS, Paul stops kissing Fran.

PAUL

Is that your cell phone?

FRAN

Yes, it is.

PAUL

Aren't you going to answer it?

FRAN

No. I'll let it go to voicemail.

PAUL

Are you sure?

FRAN

Yes, I'm sure. Now, kiss me.

Paul goes back to doing just that. As the cell phone continues ringing:

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jake, who still has his cell phone in his hand and on his ear, listens to Fran's ringing phone and he hears her voice on her voicemail recording.

FRAN (O.C.)

(phone-voiced)

*Hello. This is Fran Taylor. I am not available right now, but if you leave your name and number and a brief message, I will get back to you as soon as possible. Thank you and have a nice day.*

As the BEEP on the other line is heard, Jake takes the phone off his ear, hangs it up via pressing a button and he puts the cell phone on the coffee table in front of him.

Jake sits back in his seat on the couch and lets out a deep sigh.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Jake has his laptop computer on his lap and he is on the internet.

SUPER: "Five minutes later"

THE COMPUTER SCREEN

On the screen, Jake's Facebook page is seen. He is checking it out.

Jake stares at the screen and he decides to check out Fran's page. When he finds it, he is shocked to see:

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN

Fran's Facebook page is seen. A photo of Fran and Paul kissing is also seen.

BACK TO JAKE

He looks at the photo with silent anger. He has a "What the fuck is she doing with him?" look on his face.

He logs out of Facebook and sets his laptop on the couch and he puts his face in his hands.

JAKE  
Ah, shit. I knew this would happen.  
I just knew it. Why me?

As he takes his hands off his face, he starts hearing Fran's voice in his mind.

FRAN (V.O.)  
I will call you and we will hang  
out. You'll see.

The words: "You'll see" ECHO.

FRAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
I like you, Jake. I really do, but  
I like you only as a friend.

The words: "Only as a friend" ECHO.

JAKE  
(sighs unhappily)  
Son of a bitch!

Jake takes his keys off the coffee table, puts them in his pants pocket, stands up and he walks toward his apartment door, OPENS it, LOCKS the lock on the doorknob and CLOSES it behind him.

EXT. A SEEDY BAR - DAY

People walk past the bar and TRAFFIC is heard throughout the city.

INT. THE BAR - DAY

The bar has a few people in it. Jake enters the bar and takes a seat on the stool at the bar feeling really unhappy.

The BARTENDER, 50, a plus-sized Caucasian woman with tattoos on her arms, walks over to him and she looks at him.

BARTENDER  
What would you like, handsome?

JAKE  
A beer.

BARTENDER  
One beer comin' up. Oh, would that  
be glass or bottle?

JAKE  
Bottle, please.

BARTENDER  
Comin' right up.

She goes and gets Jake's drink order as he looks all around  
the bar.

SERIES OF SHOTS - COUPLES IN THE BAR

-- A couple at a table having a bottle of beer.

-- Another couple at a table having a bottle of beer.

-- A couple at a pool table shooting pool.

BACK AT THE BAR

Jake turns around and the bartender comes back with an opened  
bottle of beer and a napkin. She puts the napkin on the bar  
in front of Jake and sets the bottle of beer on the napkin.

JAKE  
Thanks.

BARTENDER  
Not to sound like I'm pryin' into  
your business, but what brings you  
here?

JAKE  
(he picks up his beer)  
I have been put in the friend zone  
by a girl I have known since  
kindergarten. I asked her out and  
she said if she went out with me,  
it would ruin our friendship.

As he takes a sip of his beer:

BARTENDER  
Wow! She must have been one hell of  
a young woman.

JAKE  
She is. And you wanna know the sad  
part? She went out with a guy after  
three weeks of knowing him.

BARTENDER  
You're shittin' me. Three weeks?

JAKE  
Yep. Three weeks. And now that she is dating this guy, I won't hear from her anymore.

BARTENDER  
I know what you mean, dear. I have been single since high school and I haven't found a decent guy since. Now, I am here in this bar seein' and hearin' so many couples come in here talkin' about their love lives. I hate that.

JAKE  
Me too. Single people just can't get a break.

BARTENDER  
Who are you tellin'? I have been single for thirty years.

JAKE  
I've been single for twenty four years.

BARTENDER  
Damn! That is crazy! Don't worry, sweetie. You'll find a woman someday.

JAKE  
Thanks...and I'm sure you'll find a man someday.

BARTENDER  
I sure hope so. I'm not gettin' any younger.

As the bartender leaves Jake alone with his beer, Jake takes another sip and looks among the tables and sees:

FRAN AND PAUL ENTERING THE BAR!

BACK TO JAKE

At this point, he is a little shocked and a little upset. He thinks about getting up and starting a bar fight, but instead, he just sits down and enjoys his beer.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE BAR - DAY

Jake continues to look toward Fran and Paul, who sit at one of the many tables.

SUPER: Fifteen minutes and three beers later"

Jake finishes his third, and final, beer and the bartender comes over to him.

JAKE  
(to the bartender)  
How much for the three beers?

BARTENDER  
Six bucks. Bottles are two bucks each.

Jake reaches into his pants pocket and takes out a ten dollar bill and hands it to the bartender.

JAKE  
Keep the change.

BARTENDER  
(smiles as she gently takes the money from Jake)  
Gee, thanks.

Jake hops off the stool he was sitting on and walks over to the exit completely ignoring Fran and Paul.

FRAN  
Jake? Is that you?

Jake turns to Fran in a slow manner and he frowns as he faces her and Paul. As he walks to their table:

JAKE  
Yes, it's me.

FRAN  
What are you doing here?

JAKE  
I was just having a few drinks.  
What are you doing here?

FRAN  
I'm here with Paul and we are here to have a few drinks.

PAUL  
Hey, Jake. How's it going, man?

Jake looks toward Paul and he is deep in thought.

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE

Jake snatches Paul out of his seat, stands him up, PUNCHES him across the face three times, PUNCHES him in the stomach once and picks up an empty beer glass and BREAKS it over Paul's head.

As Paul passes out onto the floor:

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE

Jake continues to look toward Paul and:

JAKE  
(to Paul)  
It's going great.  
(to Fran)  
Well...I will see you soon. Enjoy  
your day.

Then, Jake leaves the couple's table and the bar.

EXT. THE BAR - DAY

Jake stands in front of the bar and he lets out an unhappy sigh. As he walks home, he bumps into Chris again.

CHRIS  
Hey, Jake. We meet again.

JAKE  
Yes, indeed.

CHRIS  
How's it going?

JAKE  
Not good. I ran into Fran again and she was with Paul.

CHRIS  
Oh shit. What a kick in the balls.

JAKE  
Yeah. So, I left the bar and I am going home.

CHRIS  
Mind if I join you?

JAKE  
No. I don't mind at all. Let's go.

The two friends walk together.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - DAY

The door OPENS and Jake and Chris enter the apartment. As Chris walks ahead, Jake CLOSES the door and locks it and he joins Chris in the middle of the room.

SUPER: "Later that day"

JAKE  
How did it go at your grandmother's house, Chris?

CHRIS  
It went pretty well. She had made some chocolate chip cookies when I got there. They were delicious.

JAKE  
Man, I wish I could have been there.

A series of KNOCKS on Jake's apartment door is heard. Jake walks over to the door and OPENS it. He is surprised to see:

FRAN!

She stands out in the hall.

BACK TO JAKE

He is shocked to see her in the hall. He invites her inside and she walks past him and into the apartment. As Jake CLOSES the door:

Fran looks toward Chris and vice versa.

FRAN  
Hello, Chris.

CHRIS  
Hello, Fran. How are you doing?

FRAN  
I'm doing fine. How are you?

CHRIS  
I'm doing fine myself. I just came to Jake's after visiting my grandmother.

JAKE  
What brings you here, Fran?

FRAN  
(turns to Jake)  
I'm here to hang out with you.

JAKE  
What made you come to that decision?

FRAN  
Actually, it was more of a "who" than a "what".

JAKE  
All right. Who made you come to that decision?

FRAN  
Paul told me to come see you and hang out with you.

At this point, Jake is shocked. He looks toward Chris with the same face. Chris looks back at Jake, also with a shocked look.

BACK TO FRAN AND JAKE

They look back at each other.

JAKE  
Let me get this straight: Paul told you to come and hang out with me?

FRAN  
Yes. You looked pretty upset when you left the bar and I felt pretty bad that you felt bad.  
(re: Jake)  
So, Paul and I had a talk and we agreed that I should spend some time with you and hang out.

JAKE

Wow. I'm cool with that. Is it okay if Chris joins us?

FRAN

Why not? He's been our friend since kindergarten.

JAKE

Cool! Where do you want to go?

FRAN

Hmmm. Let's go to the movies.

JAKE

Cool! How do you feel about that, Chris?

CHRIS

I feel great and I am glad that you two are back on speaking terms.

FRAN/JAKE

So are we.

Then, Chris walks over to Fran and Jake as they give each other a hug and Chris puts a comforting hand on their backs as they hug.

PAN LEFT and Rod stands in the middle of the room with a lit cigarette in his left hand as he breaks the fourth wall.

ROD

And so ends our story. The two friends, who were on opposite sides of the relationship table, have remained friends and they continued to be an important part of each other's lives. As the three friends went to the movies, Jake and Chris have found their true loves and the two boys and Fran decided to go out on a triple date and all three of them have found their loves and their friendships in..."The Friend Zone".

FADE TO BLACK.

END CREDITS ROLL.

FADE OUT.

