

STALLED

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A van moving along a dark highway approaches a sign: "Erie 198 miles." Someone has painted an extra "e" on the sign so it actually reads "Eerie".

INT. VAN (MOVING) - NIGHT

An exhausted white man (DICK) in his mid 40s looks over at the sign, then glances down at his dashboard where the fuel gauge needle is just above E.

He proceeds for a few more seconds, passing the bloated carcass of a dead deer sprawled out on the berm. A lighted billboard appears in the distance.

Dick closes in on the billboard. It's an ad for a 24-hour full-service gas station and comfort food restaurant right off the next exit five miles ahead.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The van zooms past the sign. A small animal bolts into the highway from the inky blackness. Dick swerves to avoid it but runs it over instead, issuing a dull THUMP.

DICK (O.C.)

Damn.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Dick pulls into the Gas Station situated in the middle of a huge asphalt lot a few hundred feet from the Restaurant. He parks his van next to a gas pump.

A gaunt, dirty, 20-something gas attendant (CLETUS) with picket-fence teeth, one who could pass for a meth addict or an escapee from Auschwitz, laconically sidles up to the van.

Dick rolls down his window and addresses Cletus.

DICK

Fill it up with regular.

He immediately rolls up the window.

Cletus presses a button on the pump for ultra premium, shoves in the gas nozzle and locks the trigger.

While the gas flows, he wipes the windshield of the van with an oily rag that leaves a residue of opaque streaks.

Dick rolls the window back down and pokes his head out.

DICK (CONT'D)
Hey, uh, that's not necessary.
Really, you don't have to--

Oblivious, Cletus shuffles around to the passenger side and continues to wipe the windshield with the oily rag, leaving more streaks that refract the light into a blurry rainbow.

DICK (CONT'D)
(Mumbles)
Fucking moron.

While he waits, Dick consults a creased road map then swats away several annoying moths with it that have entered through the open window.

He watches an ambulance - its lights flashing - drive slowly out of the lot, apparently in no hurry.

A CLICK indicates the tank is full. Cletus stuffs the rag into his back pocket and walks around the back of the van.

Cletus's POV: the license plate number.

Cletus removes the nozzle and jams it back into the pump. He accepts a credit card from Dick.

C.U. of the name on the card: Dick Bagg.

Cletus smirks.

Using an old fashioned credit card imprinter, he runs the handle back and forth across Dick's card, then hands over the paper receipt and the card.

Cletus plucks a pen perched atop his ear and hands it to Dick who signs the receipt. Dick notices writing on the pen.

C.U. of the pen: "Attorney Jim Primo: Lost a limb? Ring up Jim! 81 GOT STUMP"

Dick returns the pen and the receipt to Cletus. It's only now that he notices the hair grease that the pen has imparted on his fingers.

Disgusted, he wipes his fingers on a napkin.

Dick starts his van, and as he puts the vehicle into gear, Cletus calls out, pointing to the Restaurant in the near distance.

CLETUS
If you're hungry, Mr. Baggs, try the
Chicken Goonya. Favorite of every
truck driver what comes here.
Sincerely, my man. You'll see why.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Dick grabs a paper bag sitting on the passenger seat, peers inside and sees nothing but crumpled wrappers, ketchup packets, and a few flaccid fries.

DICK
Thanks for the recommendation, um--

Dick glances at the Attendant's nametag.

DICK (CONT'D)
--Cletus. I might just give it a
try.

CLETUS
No problem, Mr. Baggs.
(smirking)
Or is it Dick?

DICK
Uh, well--

Dick rolls up the window and drives off toward the Restaurant.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Dick pulls into a parking space close to the front of the Restaurant which bears little resemblance to the sparkling photo on the billboard. It's darker and bleaker. A flickering neon sign advertising Iron City Beer reads "Iron y Beer".

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Dick dons a sweater, then pushes a button on the dashboard.

As a door on the side of the van slides open, he reaches for an object behind him.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Dick, sitting in a wheelchair atop a hydraulic lift gate, slowly descends to the cracked pavement. His legs are missing above the knees.

Once settled, he rolls off the lift gate and presses a button on his key fob. The lift gate retracts, and the door slides closed.

With a newspaper on his lap, Dick rolls over cracks and bumps to the entrance of the Restaurant where he reads a hand-written sign with a typo: "Today's Specail - Chicken Goonya served with rice 'n beans."

He proceeds to the door but a step impedes his progress.

Dick struggles to make it past the step only to be confronted by another, taller step. After surmounting the next step, Dick arrives at the door. A WAITER holds the door open.

DICK

Thank you.

(Peaved)

Y'know, the ADA has been in place since 1990.

The Waiter seems confused.

DICK (CONT'D)

The Americans with Disabilities Act? Of 1990. Like 30 years ago.

WAITER

Oh, that.

(beat)

We hardly ever get any cripples comin' here.

Scowling at being referred to as a "cripple", Dick rolls himself into the Restaurant.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The Waiter directs Dick to a table that doesn't quite accommodate his wheelchair, keeping him at a distance. Salt, pepper, ketchup and the like are barely within reach.

The Waiter hands Dick a giant menu. Dick opens the menu, but before he can check out the choices, the Waiter interjects.

WAITER

Can I suggest the Chicken Goonya,
sir? Comes with beans 'n rice.

DICK

The sign said it comes with rice 'n
beans.

Observing the confused look on the Waiter's face, and
concluding he is probably too stupid to get the lame comment,
Dick moves on.

DICK (CONT'D)

Never mind.

(beat)

That's the second recommendation
I've gotten for it in the past five
minutes. What's in it?

WAITER

Well, beans 'n rice, for sure. And
chicken.

(beat)

And the special goonya sauce, of
course. Wouldn't be Chicken Goonya
without the special goonya sauce,
right?

Dick hesitates, looking over the menu again. The Waiter
presses on with the recommendation.

WAITER (CONT'D)

I'm not sure what's in it. But
it's really good.

DICK

Goonya sauce? I've never heard of
it. I've traveled a bit. Some
exotic places, actually. And I've
never heard of it. Is it a local
delicacy?

WAITER

I think so. I don't know why it's
called goonya. Maybe some Indian
thing.

(beat)

I should probably ask the cook.

Fatigued by his recent experiences with the local talent,
Dick snaps the menu shut decisively and hands it back to the
Waiter.

DICK
You've convinced me, um--

Dick glances at the Waiter's nametag which has "Boy" scrawled on it.

DICK (CONT'D)
--Boy?
(beat)
I'll try it. It better be good.

WAITER
Just the other day, a customer told me it's to die for. Those were his exact words. He was blind - couldn't see, y'know.
(beat)
I figured his taste was better than the average person, since he was short a sense. Overall, y'know.

DICK
Could be a fact, Boy.

The Waiter departs with the menu.

Dick scopes the Restaurant which is fairly large but occupied by no more than a dozen eccentric-looking patrons who will be recognizable later: a burly TRUCK DRIVER drinking shots and beers with a younger long-haired HIPPIE; a rap aficionado with a boom box, a NERD typing on a laptop, a couple of GOTH GIRLS, etc.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT (LATER)

Dick chomps on some slimy-looking Chicken Goonya while he reads an article in the center pages of his newspaper; the front page blares a bizarre headline: "THEY WON'T STAY DEAD".

He slurps another forkful of the meal, and for a moment the rice on his plate appears to writhe on the plate like a pile of maggots.

He recoils, drops his fork and quickly looks around the Restaurant for a patron who might confirm his observation. No one seems to notice. When he looks again at the plate, the maggots he thought he saw have returned to being rice. Dick hesitantly returns to eating from his now normal-looking plate of rice.

Dick finishes off his plate of Chicken Goonya, sits back and wipes his mouth, sated.

He gulps soda and gets back into the newspaper just as his stomach begins emitting an ominous GROWL.

Suddenly panicked, fearing the specter of imminent and explosive defecation, Dick rolls his wheelchair urgently toward the nearest Restaurant employee, the Waiter.

DICK
(Agitated)
Where's the restroom!

The Waiter points to a hallway around the corner of the bar.

WAITER
Right over there, sir.

Dick rolls quickly through the Restroom door.

INT. RESTROOM - NIGHT

Inside the Restroom, Dick discovers that his wheelchair doesn't fit into the stall. Another ADA violation. Dick does a quick 180 and rolls back to confront the Waiter.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

DICK
I can't fit. The stalls... They--

WAITER
--Like I tol' ya, man: we don't get many cripples comin' here.

DICK
Is there some other place I can go?

WAITER
There's an old motel in the back that has a bathroom. It's closed now. The motel, that is. Been for years, but it has a lot of shitters. I know one of 'em is pretty wide.

DICK
Take me there. Now!

WAITER
I gotta get the key.

DICK
Get the key!

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The Waiter leads the way out of the Restaurant toward the MOTEL. Dick follows closely behind, rolling vigorously, arms pushing full tilt. In the near-pitch darkness, the pair arrives at a bumpy pathway.

Trying to be helpful, the Waiter commandeers the handles of Dick's wheelchair in a clumsy attempt to steer it along the pathway.

DICK
(Forcefully)
I'm OK. I can handle it.

The Waiter ignores him, and continues to steer the wheelchair hard, bouncing Dick all along the way.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

From his grimace, it's evident Dick fears the imminent evacuation of his bowels - all in the presence of a nitwit Waiter no less; the kind of jerk who would take great pleasure in retelling the risible fecal disaster to all his co-workers, and to the regular loser diners who relish hearing about the suffering of others.

Finally, Dick reaches the entrance of the Motel, a low-slung decrepit building fronted by overgrown hedges and out-of-control vines. The Waiter unlocks the door, and using a brick, props it open.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

The Motel is pitch dark. The Waiter paws around the wall, searching for the light switch.

DICK
Please, hurry!

The lights come on, flickering incessantly. A few startled, squeaking rats scatter and run out along a wall.

The treasured BATHROOM is down a winding hall.

WAITER
I'm pretty sure you go down this hallway, make your second right, or maybe third. Then a left after the potted tree. The deader looking one. I think--

DICK
--Ok, Ok. I got it.

Dick rolls off down the Hallway.

WAITER
(Calling out)
There might be a couple steps along
the way.

INT. MOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Dick rushes down the Hallway, makes a right then doubles back when it turns out to be a dead end. He releases a loud wet fart. He gives himself a pep talk.

DICK
C'mon, c'mon. You can make it,
Dick.

He arrives at a pair of dimly lit dead trees in pots. He concludes the second tree seems more dead than its mate.

Dick makes a left past the second tree down another hallway, encountering three steps.

DICK (CONT'D)
Fuuuuck!

Dick backs up, then speeds toward the steps, flying across them all like Evel Knievel. He lands a perfect ten, then rolls quickly to the Bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Dick enters the dark, dank Bathroom. The SOUND of a barely-perceptible GROAN unnoticed by Dick. He flicks on the lights.

Several dented putty-colored stalls scratched and spray-painted with graffiti line the wall across from a stretch of dirty sinks. Litter and puddles of treacly fluids defile the floor. At the near end sits a floor polishing machine positioned in front of a stall.

It's clear the Bathroom hasn't been serviced in a long time.

Dick spots a Stall at the far end - the sole stall sporting a handicap insignia on its door. A boner has been drawn on the stylized handicapped character on the insignia.

Dick opens the stall door and wheels into it.

INT. STALL - NIGHT

Once inside the Stall, Dick slams the door causing the handle to fall off onto the floor. Not in a position to assess the situation at this moment, Dick urgently drops trou and hoists himself off the wheelchair onto the bowl. His truncated legs dangle.

The wheelchair folds up and tips over onto the filthy floor.

Safely on the bowl, Dick winces a moment then expresses the face of post-defecation ecstasy: eyes closed, a faint smile of relief, gentle exhalation.

Relaxing satisfied on the bowl fully evacuated, Dick kills some recovery time by reading from his newspaper.

Just then, the SOUND of a DRUNK entering the Bathroom from O.C. Dick observes the shadows of the shuffling feet of the guy from beneath the Stall door. The shadows get closer until the Drunk's feet are visible.

The Drunk violently shakes Dick's locked stall door.

DICK
It's occupied!

The guy continues to shake the door, then steps back. Frustrated, he bellows at the locked stall like the thoroughly drunk fucker he is.

DRUNK (O.S.)
You ain't got no right to hog that
stall! I gotta go!

DICK
Move on to another stall! There's
a bunch of 'em.

DRUNK (O.S.)
I don't have to prove I am
creative! All my pictures are
confused!

With that, the Drunk vomits all over the floor right in front of the Stall. The rancid puke oozes under the Stall door, making its chunky way toward the tips of Dick's legs. In a panic, Dick pulls his useless legs away from the nauseating mess.

Dick tosses a section of the newspaper onto the floor to stanch the flow of vomit before it reaches his pant legs.

Unfortunately, he's not quick enough to protect his wheelchair from defilement.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

A moment later, the Drunk barfs once again. More puke streams in under the Stall door. The SOUND of Dick shuffling about as he tries mightily to manage the disgusting effluence.

At last, the Drunk stumbles out of the Bathroom. The SOUND of the door closing.

DICK (O.S.)
Motherfucker.

INT. STALL - NIGHT

Dick reaches for the toilet paper dispenser to discover every man's worst toilet nightmare: an empty core. He pulls out the core in the expectation of a full backup roll, but alas the backup is also an empty core.

DICK
(Mumbling)
What a fucking night.

Resigned to the absence of toilet paper, Dick balls up a page of his newspaper, wipes his ass with it and tosses it into the toilet. He rips up another page and finishes wiping. He tosses in that page too, and flushes the full toilet - which promptly backs up and overflows treacly brown effluence.

In his disabled state, Dick isn't nimble enough to prevent the soaking of his pants. Nor can he save his wheelchair which lies folded on the floor.

Once the flow from the toilet ceases, Dick pats down his clothing with the last remaining piece of the newspaper - with little meaningful success.

As he attends to his soaked pant legs, Dick hears people O.C. enter the Bathroom. Dick spies two men through the slit between the stall door and the support beam. They might be the Truck Driver and the Hippie he noticed in the Restaurant earlier. Dick hears the SOUNDS of clothing rustling and a zipper pulled down.

HIPPIE (O.S.)
Oh my god! That's enormous. It's
more than my mouth can hold.

TRUCK DRIVER (O.S.)
That's why they invented throat.

Dick hears the SOUND of the Hippie slurping and gagging, and the Truck Driver moaning.

TRUCK DRIVER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Stand up and pull 'em down.

HIPPIE (O.S.)
I can't do that. You're too big.

TRUCK DRIVER (O.S.)
Bend over, Nancy.

HIPPIE (O.S.)
Just let me suck you off. Please!

Dick hears the Truck Driver scuffling with the Hippie.

HIPPIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Please! No!

The Hippie lets out a horrid SCFREAM, followed by audible expressions of pain in sync with the rhythmic GRUNTS of the Truck Driver.

After a moment, Dick hears the whimpering Hippie waddle out the Bathroom door. Glancing down Dick spots a small puddle of blood on the floor. He GASPS, then quickly covers his mouth.

TRUCK DRIVER (O.S.)
Hey now. Somebody in there spying
on me? You like cock?

Silence.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

The Truck Driver hikes up his pants. He steps through the puddle of blood, smearing it with his foot and leaving boot marks.

TRUCK DRIVER
Come on out of there, bud, and I'll
show you what I got. Maybe you can
take it better than that scrawny
queen.

The Truck Driver shakes the door but he can't open it. Dick hears the SOUND of footsteps moving from the stall door to the side of the Stall.

TRUCK DRIVER (CONT'D)
You want some of this meat?

INT. STALL - NIGHT

Dick recoils at the unexpected intrusion of a bloody penis poking through a glory hole drilled through the wall of his Stall.

DICK
Get that thing away from me!

TRUCK DRIVER (O.S.)
(Laughing)
I see. Not your cup a tea.

DICK
You wanna lose that limb, Jim?

The Truck Driver retracts his penis and walks out the Bathroom.

Dick takes a moment to regain his composure. He pulls on his wet pants and rights his messy wheelchair. As he hoists himself onto the chair, the wheels slip sideways in the slime, throwing Dick to the floor.

Dick paws about the wet, fetid floor attempting to get back on the toilet.

Suddenly, someone O.C. pulls the wheelchair out from under the stall.

DICK (CONT'D)
Hey!

Stunned, Dick reaches for the stall door but alas the handle has been broken off. He picks up the severed handle and tries over and over in vain to reattach it.

Flummoxed and out of breath, Dick struggles to get back on the toilet. Once settled, he pulls out his cell phone and dials 911.

The lights flicker and shut off for a moment, and during that time of twilight he briefly sees what looks to be a demonic face leering at him from inside the toilet.

DICK (CONT'D)
Ack!

Stunned, Dick drops his phone into the toilet. Panic ensues.

DICK (CONT'D)

No!

The lights flicker back on revealing that the demon's face was nothing more than a crumpled newspaper that bears a passing resemblance to the demon - like the way an amorphous cloud can appear to be a horse.

Dick isn't completely convinced he imagined the face.

Resigned to the inevitable grim task ahead, Dick removes his sweater, slowly rolls up his sleeve, maneuvers onto the floor, holds a deep breath and reluctantly reaches into the toilet to retrieve his submerged cell phone.

As he reaches deeper into the nether regions of the toilet, something pulls on Dick's arm. Or maybe it's siphoning suction. He struggles but the force is too powerful.

Dick's face is now partially submerged in the brackish toilet water. He spits out a mouthful of brown goo as he struggles to catch a breath.

Abruptly, the force recedes, allowing Dick to extract his hand - which holds not a cell phone but a wad of wet newspaper. The clogged toilet flushes down. Dick angrily throws the wad of wet paper into the door of his Stall.

The paper hangs on the door for a moment, then falls to the floor with a SPLAT.

A seriously agitated Dick beats wildly on the door.

DICK (CONT'D)

(Screaming)

Help! Help! Anyone! Help me!

Silence.

DICK (CONT'D)

(Screaming)

Can anyone out there hear me!?

A soft, raspy voice responds. It's ARTHUR, another prisoner confined to a stall at the far end of the row of shitters.

Arthur is mid-40s, Black, blind, and obviously in a physically weakened state.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

I can hear you. But I can't help you.

Dick slips off the toilet and peers underneath the stall - a space of just mere inches - into the adjoining stall. He spots two legs with pants pushed down around the ankles.

Dick calls out to his next-stall neighbor.

DICK
Hey there! Listen up! Can you go
out and pry open my door? I'm
locked in.

Dick bangs vigorously on the shared Stall wall.

DICK (CONT'D)
Hey! Please!

ARTHUR (O.S.)
Don't bother asking. He's... was
deaf. Now I'm pretty sure he's
dead. I haven't heard a word or a
sound from him in two days.

Dick reaches under the stall and shakes one of the legs which causes a corpse to fall to the floor.

DICK
Oh shit!

Dick quickly hoists himself back onto the toilet. Taking a moment to compose himself, Dick calls out to his fellow stall inmate.

DICK (CONT'D)
Who are you? What's going on?

ARTHUR (O.S.)
I'm nobody. Just a victim like you
who's stuck in a stall.
(beat)
It's been three days - I think.

DICK
Three days?

ARTHUR (O.S.)
I'm locked in and can't figure a
way out. And I'm pretty sure
someone is playing head games with
me. I swear I heard a wild animal
growling at me from inside the
toilet last night.
(beat)
Makes no sense, but neither does my
imprisonment in this toilet.

INT. STALL #2 - NIGHT

ARTHUR

I'm not sure how much longer I can last.

(beat)

I was so thirsty I had to drink from the toilet. That was tough.

DICK (O.S.)

Jesus. That's ridiculous.

ARTHUR

You think that's ridiculous: I also ate the cardboard toilet paper core.

DICK (O.S.)

Fuck, there's no way I'm eating a toilet paper core. Or drinking from the toilet. Not on purpose, anyway. Shit.

(beat)

And I'm certainly not staying in this shithole for another three hours, let alone three days. Fuck that.

ARTHUR

That's the same thing I told myself three days ago.

INT. STALL - NIGHT

ARTHUR (O.S.)

Of course I could be wrong about the timeframe. It's hard to gauge the days and nights when you're blind.

DICK

You're blind? How the hell did you wind up in here? I mean--

INT. STALL #2 - NIGHT

ARTHUR

--Well, being a chump didn't hurt.

(beat)

I answered an ad for a job with a company that catered to disabled people. Supposedly.

(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

(beat)

A dude with the company arranged to meet me at the restaurant here for an interview.

DICK (O.S.)

An interview? At this fucking dump?

ARTHUR

Yeah. What do I know? I just want to work, and they pitched a good story. Accommodations, benefits, cool work that I could do as a blind man.

INT. STALL - NIGHT

DICK

Oh yeah? Like what? Cold calling imbeciles to warn them that the warranty on a car they don't own is about to expire?

Dick chuckles a bit too long.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

Thanks for the vote of confidence, man.

(beat)

No, it wasn't cold calling. I was gonna help people navigate Social Security disability applications. And other government bullshit. Something I know quite a bit about.

DICK

I didn't mean--

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Arthur sits alone, tapping his fingers on the tabletop. The same people who were present when Dick entered dine at various tables. The Waiter brings Arthur a plate of Chicken Goonya. He stuffs a forkful into his mouth.

ARTHUR (V.O.)

--Makes no difference. The dude never showed. I sat at a table alone for an hour, waiting like an asshole.

END FLASHBACK

INT. STALL - NIGHT

DICK

How did you get to the restaurant?
I don't imagine you drove yourself.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

An Uber guy brought me. All paid
for by the phantom recruiter.

(beat)

I wouldn't be a prisoner in this
shitter if I hadn't eaten that
goddamned Chicken Goonya. I was
about to call a cab when my bowels
nearly exploded. I barely made it
here in time.

(beat)

Well, truth be told, I actually
sprayed all over the walls. Didn't
quite make the seal - seal the
deal, if you understand my meaning.

DICK

Oh, shit.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

Exactly.

DICK

I'm a captive in this stall because
my wheelchair didn't fit in the
stall back in the restaurant
bathroom.

(beat)

Why didn't you go in the restaurant
instead of coming out to this
abandoned motel toilet?

ARTHUR (O.S.)

There's a bathroom in the
restaurant? Never knew that. No
one told me. Now, I'm even more
pissed off.

(beat)

Fuck. Now I wish I'd just shit my
pants right then and there in the
restaurant. Dump a galleon of raw
sewage on their floor.

(beat)

Serve 'em right.

DICK

A galleon, huh. That's a whole lot. You sure it wasn't more like a schooner's worth of do-do?

ARTHUR (O.S.)

Galleons, schooners, liters, hectares - who fucking cares? I just wish I would've defiled their floor when I had the chance.

DICK

I get it. Kinda like that airline passenger who dropped a deuce on the food cart.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

I heard about that.

DICK

Talk about making a statement.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

Is that for real?

DICK

Hell, yeah. The dude was some big time company exec. He was seriously wasted, so they cut him off from the booze.

(beat)

He lost his shit.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

Literally.

INT. STALL #2 - NIGHT

Arthur chuckles at the visual. O.C. the muffled SOUND of a snicker that goes unnoticed by the men in the stalls.

DICK (O.S.)

Tell me, how did you know dead guy was deaf? I mean how did you two communicate? Obviously he couldn't read your lips.

ARTHUR

As soon as I finished shitting my brains out, he called out to me. He sounded like a wounded animal. He was hard to understand--

DICK (O.S.)
 --Wait, if he couldn't hear, how
 did he know you were there?

ARTHUR
 Apparently, he was gifted at
 detecting foul odors.

DICK (O.S.)
 Impressive.

ARTHUR
 Although, for all I know he might
 have thought a rhino with diarrhea
 had come into the bathroom.
 (beat)
 Anyway, I felt sorry for assaulting
 his exquisite sense of smell.

DICK (O.S.)
 As you should.

ARTHUR
 I just said I did.
 (beat)
 Anyway, I found it kinda funny that
 my rancid bowel movement could have
 such a profound effect on him.

DICK (O.S.)
 You realize, that might have been
 his final olfactory experience
 before going to the grave. Poor
 fucker.

ARTHUR
 I wouldn't feel too sorry for him.
 (beat)
 Regardless, he recounted how he got
 into his predicament, which is
 pretty much the same as you and me:
 ate a bowl of goonya, wound up on a
 bowl of porcelain.

INT. STALL - NIGHT

DICK
 Clever. You've obviously had a lot
 of free time.
 (beat)
 So, if this guy was deaf, how did
 you communicate with him?

ARTHUR (O.S.)
He suggested using Morse Code.

DICK
Morse code? Seriously? You know
Morse Code? Dits and dahs and all
that ancient shit?

ARTHUR (O.S.)
Yep. You never know when you'll be
locked in a shitter next to a deaf
dude with no other way to
communicate.

DICK
That's amazing. Two guys who know
Morse Code stuck in the same
bathroom. I bet there are small
cities where there aren't two guys
who know Morse Code.
(beat)
I'm sensing a pattern here. But
what's it all about?

INT. STALL #2 - NIGHT

ARTHUR
It's gotta be some evil plot. I
mean, punking customers this way
doesn't seem worth so much effort.
And so much cruelty.

DICK (O.S.)
Well, so far, each victim we know
of has - uh, had - a disability.
(beat)
You can't see. Dead guy here
couldn't hear. And in case you
didn't figure it out, I'm a
paraplegic.

ARTHUR
Well, you already told me your
wheelchair didn't fit in the stall.
So that's one clue. And you did
seem to have a trifle bit of
trouble maneuvering around in
there.
(beat)
I thought maybe you got tangled up
in a roll of toilet paper.
(beat)
Funny.

INT. STALL - NIGHT

Dick takes this remark as an insult to his capabilities.

DICK
You think that's funny!?
Motherfuckers stole my wheelchair!

In response, Arthur reacts to what he perceives as a challenge as to which of the two men suffers the greater disability.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
Calm down.
(beat)
At least you can see.

DICK
Oh, fuck you!

ARTHUR (O.S.)
Why did you say "fuck you"?

DICK
Forget it.

INT. STALL #2 - NIGHT

ARTHUR
Ah, you think your disability is
more severe than mine, don't you.

DICK (O.S.)
I don't want to talk about it.

ARTHUR
I can walk around and you can't. I
can piss in a urinal and you gotta
do it in a bag.

DICK (O.S.)
I said, I don't want to talk about
it. And I don't piss in a bag, for
your information.

ARTHUR
Well, I bet you drove yourself to
this fucking dump. And read the
menu yourself with your own eyes.

DICK (O.S.)
I said, I don't want-- I didn't
read the menu.

(MORE)

DICK (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I jumped right on the Chicken
Goonya.
(beat)
That waiter was pretty insistent.
(beat)
Fucker.

INT. STALL - NIGHT

Dick looks down at his feet.

DICK
I bet he's in on the plot.
(beat)
Bastard.
(beat)
Did you know his name is "Boy"?
(beat)
No, I guess you wouldn't.
(beat)
What kind of name is "Boy" anyway?
He wasn't even black.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
Are you suggesting "Boy" is an okay
name for a Black man?

DICK
No. Shit. That didn't come out
right. I just mean that I can't
figure out why a guy of any color
persuasion would go by the name of
"Boy".
(beat)
Unless he was the actual Culture
Club dude, which this moron
certainly was not.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
I asked for his name. He said,
"Boy" and told me it's short for
Beauregard.

DICK
Then he should go by "Beau".
B-E-A-U. Not "Boy". What a jerk.
(beat)
And I still say he's in on the
plot.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
Could be. He pushed that Chicken
Goonya special pretty hard on me,
too.
(beat)
Maybe we each have another
disability: being too gullible.

DICK
Look, I didn't want to debate you
over which one of us got the bigger
shaft up the ass. We both got
boned. Are there times when I
would trade my wheelchair for a
blind man's cane? I suppose so.
Maybe you think the opposite.
Either way, we both suffer a burden
that most people can never
understand.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
Totally agree.
(beat)
I forgive you.

DICK
What? I don't want your
forgiveness. I'm sorry I said
"fuck you," but I don't want your
forgiveness. Or any other
platitudes from you.

INT. STALL #2 - NIGHT

ARTHUR
OK. Cool off. Consider it
dropped.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Rats scurry along the wall. One runs under the Stall. Dick
SCREAMS. Scuffling noises O.C.

DICK (O.S.)
Shit! Get away. Goddamned rat,
get the fuck away from me.

The rat runs out from under the Stall.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
Are you OK?

DICK (O.S.)
I think so. Damn, I hope that rat
isn't rabid.

INT. STALL #2 - NIGHT

ARTHUR
Did it bite you?

DICK (O.S.)
I don't think so.
(beat)
Damn, that fucker was big. It
could feed us both for two days.

ARTHUR
Stop it. Let's talk about
something else.

DICK (O.S.)
Agree. Go ahead.

ARTHUR
Well, first: what's your name?

DICK
Um, it's not important.

ARTHUR
It is if we're gonna be
communicating for the time being.
I'd like to know to whom I am
speaking.

DICK
What's your name?

ARTHUR
Arthur. Arthur Joseph.

DICK
What's your last name?

ARTHUR
It's Arthur Joseph. Period.

DICK
Oh. OK, Mr. Period.

ARTHUR
Hardee har har. And you are?

DICK

Dick Bagg.

(beat)

Don't say it. Don't even stifle a snicker. I'm not in the mood.

ARTHUR

Damn. How'd you survive grade school?

DICK

It wasn't easy, that I can tell you. I was on the losing side of fisticuffs quite often. And forget about the endless prank calls.

(Affecting a snippy tone)

"Can I talk to your brother, Garbage?"

(beat)

"Are you related to Harry Bagg?"

ARTHUR

Funny in a juvenile way. But your parents asked for it.

DICK

"Hey dickbag - why haven't you killed yourself?"

ARTHUR

Damn. Well, that's not funny.

(beat)

So, why not go by Rich or Rick, or something less provocative?

DICK

Because my given name is plain old Dick, not Richard - or any variant thereof.

ARTHUR

Dickie?

DICK

Nope. I'm just a Dick. My birth certificate clearly states: Bagg comma Dick.

ARTHUR

You must hate your parents.

DICK

Well, you can't hate your parents
for sticking you with a burden
until years down the road you're
old enough to know they've insulted
you.

(beat)

By then, your parents are split up
and out of the picture. And
hopefully dead, for all I cared.

ARTHUR

Shit. That's sad.

DICK

Sadness is a passive disease. I
won't have it.

(beat)

Being Dick Bagg was a heavy burden
I suffered through until one day I
just decided to embrace it.

(beat)

Fuck passive. Dick Bagg is the
name I got stuck with? A name I
didn't ask for? OK, fuck it. I
accept it. I'm Dick Bagg. The
Dick Bagg! The one and only
fucking Dick Bagg.

(beat)

Any and all of you who think you
can own me because you think my
name is funny can blow me. You can
all go eat shit - or Chicken Goonya
for all I care. That's my
position. Final answer, Regis.

ARTHUR

I get it. And I respect it, Dick.
Truly. Like the boy named Sue.

DICK

I'm so glad you approve, Art.

ARTHUR

Arthur.

(beat)

Now all that baggage is out of the
way, don't you want to know how I
became blind?

(beat)

Don't you want to tell me how you
became a cripple?

INT. STALL - NIGHT

DICK

OK, before we go any further - I am not a cripple. I reject that term. And forget "gimp." To me "gimp" is the same as "nigger".

INT. STALL #2 - NIGHT

ARTHUR

The N-word, huh? That's pretty repulsive, don't you think?

DICK (O.S.)

No worse than "gimp".

ARTHUR

You mean, the G-word?

DICK (O.S.)

Ok--

ARTHUR

--How would you compare "cripple" to "nigger"?

DICK (O.S.)

Well, "cripple" isn't as bad. But I would put "cripple" right up there with "porch monkey", or "spear chucker".

ARTHUR

"Spear chucker"? What does that even mean? Who's chucking spears?

INT. STALL - NIGHT

DICK

Look, I'm agreeing with you. These slurs are all bad. I'm simply saying that to me "gimp" equals "nigger". The N-word, OK? I hate 'em both.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

You must really dislike "Pulp Fiction".

A brief pause.

DICK

Now that you mention it, I actually do like that movie.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

Me too.

(beat)

Anyway, I say, "screw the conventions". We are what we decide we are, right?

DICK

OK, OK, but let's not get too deep into the PC weeds either.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

Yes. Let's not.

(beat)

So, tell me, finally, how did you become "differently abled"?

DICK

Really? Oh, fuck it. I was--

Suddenly, the SOUND of someone entering the Bathroom O.C.
The two prisoners clam up.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

A husky GUARD pushes a wheelbarrow to Stall #3 adjacent to Dick's Stall. Wearing thick, rubber gloves, the Guard unlocks the door and drags out the body of the DEAF MAN. He hoists the corpse into the wheelbarrow, closes the stall door, and rolls the wheelbarrow toward the Bathroom exit.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Some rats run along the walls of the Bathroom. One licks at the crusty puddle of blood left behind by the Truck Driver.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

You awake?

DICK (O.S.)

Yeah. I had the weirdest dream.
It was like I had been trapped in this stall before. I dreamt I crawled under the door and got stuck. A guard held the leashes of two big, barking Dobermans.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
 Jeez. I hope that's not a
 premonition. I'm scared shitless
 of vicious dogs.
 (beat)
 What the hell do you think is going
 on?

DICK (O.S.)
 It feels like we're being tested.
 Tortured. Why?
 (beat)
 I wish I knew. But if it's a test,
 your deaf friend didn't pass it.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
 Clearly not. And he wasn't my
 friend.

INT. STALL #3 - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Looking haggard, a thirty-something, Hispanic Deaf Man speaks out in a manner that indicates he's never been able to hear since birth. His vocal cadence and pronunciation are distinct from that of a hearing-abled person.

DEAF MAN
 Can you crawl under the stall and
 help me out of here?

ARTHUR (O.S.)
 (In Morse Code, subtitled)
 Negative. Not enough space.

DEAF MAN
 What is this all about? Why?

ARTHUR
 (In Morse Code, subtitled)
 I wish I knew.

DEAF MAN
 You can't see. I can't hear. That
 can't be a coincidence.

ARTHUR
 (In Morse Code, subtitled)
 Probably not.

DEAF MAN
 This has to be punishment for our
 crimes.

ARTHUR
 (In Morse Code, subtitled)
 What crimes?

DEAF MAN
 I don't want to say out loud.
 (In Morse Code, subtitled)
 They must know I'm a pedophile.
 That's why I'm being held here.
 (In English)
 What bad thing did you do?

ARTHUR
 I didn't do anything. I'm not a
 crim--
 (In Morse Code, subtitled)
 Nothing. I'm not a criminal.

DEAF MAN
 I'm not a criminal either. I just
 love differently than others.

ARTHUR
 You molested children, dude.
 Pedophilia is a crime in everyone's
 book.
 (beat)
 Shit.

Arthur starts to tap out his response in Morse Code, then
 gives it up.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
 (In Morse Code, subtitled)
 You molested--
 (In English)
 --Ah, fuck it.

Lengthy silence.

DEAF MAN
 To hell with it. I knew one day
 they would make me pay. Fuck them
 all.
 (beat)
 And fuck you too!

END FLASHBACK.

INT. STALL #2 - DAY

ARTHUR
So, you were saying...

DICK (O.S.)
I was saying... what?

ARTHUR
Before we were interrupted.

INT. STALL - DAY

DICK
Huh? Oh, yeah. How I became, uh,
dis--

ARTHUR (O.S.)
--Differently abled--

DICK
--The way I am!

ARTHUR (O.S.)
Yeah. That's it.

DICK
Thank you.
(beat)
I remember it like it was tomorrow.
(beat)
The tenth of August of two thousand
and nine in the Arghandab River
Valley.
(beat)
That would be in beautiful, lush
Afghanistan. "A hot and dusty day
full of unknowns," according to
some douchebag reporter on the
scene.

ARTHUR
1st Battalion, 17th Infantry,
right?

DICK
Very good. You're military?

INT. STALL #2 - DAY

ARTHUR
Gulf War, 51st ESB.
(beat)
Expeditionary Signal Battalion.

DICK (O.S.)
I know what ESB is. Are you gonna
tell me you were blinded in the
signal corps? How's that possible?
(beat)
Were you, like, "blinded by
science"?

ARTHUR
In a way, yes. Me and another guy
were trying to rig up an emergency
patch for a broken power source
using a bunch of truck batteries.
(beat)
The whole setup exploded, of
course. Talk about acid rain.

DICK (O.S.)
No good deed goes unpunished, as
someone once said.

ARTHUR
Neither one of us ever took a
course in electrical engineering,
obviously. Now I wish I'd known
the difference between connecting
batteries in serial and in
parallel.

DICK (O.S.)
You should have asked me.

ARTHUR
Next time.
(beat)
Can I assume you were blasted by an
IED, or some other medieval weapon
on that hot and dusty day full of
unknowns?

INT. STALL - DAY

DICK
Very logical, Mr. Spock.
(beat)
(MORE)

DICK (CONT'D)

Y'know, I was the great-grandson, grandson and nephew of military men. My father too, if my uncle wasn't lying about him.

(beat)

I had decided on serving a life-long career in the military. I saw it as a kind of destiny. Then in a flash, an IED shredded my legs.

(beat)

I was tops in line to be the adjutant to a high-flying lieutenant general. But the Taliban interrupted all that when they blew off my foot.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

And just when you got it in the door.

DICK

(Chuckling)

Good one. Although it sounds familiar.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Simultaneously with Dick's chucking response is the SOUND of a stifled laugh O.C. over what seems to be a tinny intercom.

DICK (O.S.)

(Quietly)

Shhh. You know what I think?

ARTHUR (O.S.)

(Quietly)

Yep.

DICK (O.S.)

(Quietly)

Gotta keep the atter-chay ight-lay. Until we figure out a way... you know.

Arthur taps on his wall.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

(In Morse Code)

... --- ...

DICK (O.S.)

Hell, even I know that one.

The muffled SOUND of vicious dogs barking O.C.

INT. - STALL #2 - DAY

Arthur responds belatedly.

ARTHUR

So, how about those Mets?

DICK (O.S.)

Hah! I'd be a Pirates fan if I
cared a whit about baseball. Lost
all interest after the strike.
That was a wake-up call for me as a
teenager.

ARTHUR

Disillusioned, huh? Who'd a thunk
greedy professional ballplayers
making millions would pull such a
stunt?

DICK

Yeah, I know. Naïve.

(beat)

The only sport I follow now - if
you can call it that - is golf.

ARTHUR

Is that right? I used to be a
pretty good golfer until I lost my
eyes. Like a lot of young guys, I
got into the game after Tiger Woods
set the world on fire.

DICK

A credit to his race.

ARTHUR

Say what?

DICK

I'm joking.

Silence.

DICK (CONT'D)

Seriously, I'm joking.

ARTHUR

I used to think golf was a bullshit past-time for country clubbers and redundant middle managers to waste time on.

(beat)

Funny how attitudes change.

DICK (O.S.)

That's a fact.

ARTHUR

After I went blind, I tried to play with a guide but it didn't work out. So many whiffs and duffs. Golf is hard enough when you can see, let alone doing it sightless.

DICK (O.S.)

Well, I can appreciate that. I worked my ass off in high school chipping, and putting all afternoon. And driving balls until my hands bled. I got myself down to an 8 handicap. And just when I thought I owned the game, I acquired an actual handicap.

ARTHUR

The inability to play golf is one of the biggest disappointments of losing my eyesight.

(beat)

Yeah, I can't drive around anymore, but I never liked driving that much anyway. And there's always Uber.

(beat)

I like to read, too, but audiobooks are perfectly fine. I lost interest in TV, and how many movies about robots and comic book heroes can you watch? So no big loss there.

(beat)

Yeah, I miss golf. Stupid, I suppose, but it's true.

INT. STALL - DAY

DICK

It's not stupid to me.

A long pause.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
I think I'm gonna die tonight.

DICK
What? No. Don't say that.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
Man was not meant to live by
cardboard alone. Or something like
that. It's over. I'm starving.
(beat)
These bastards won - and it bothers
me that I still don't have any idea
what the game was all about.

DICK
Neither do I, but don't give up.
Sustenance is all around us, I
think. If we indulge our
imagination.
(beat)
Indulge your imagination.

FADE OUT.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

A loud BANG. Followed by the SOUNDS O.C. of Dick shuffling
about inside his Stall.

INT. STALL #2 - DAY

Startled, Arthur awakens, albeit groggily. He rubs his dirty
hands over open sores on his arms. He touches his face which
is sweaty and pimply. He runs his fingers through his greasy
hair, then sniffs them to his disgust.

ARTHUR
What are you doing?

INT. STALL - DAY

Sweating, Dick beats down with his shoe in pursuit of a rat
he has hemmed in with his sweater. After several whacks,
Dick successfully pummels the rat to death.

DICK
It's not what you think.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
What do you think I think?

DICK
That I'm whacking it.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
If that's how you whack it, I'd
hate to see how you lick stamps.

DICK
Huh?

ARTHUR (O.S.)
I hope you're pounding a nice juicy
steak for me.

DICK
Not far off, kimosabe. I just
wasted a rat. Uh, I mean, a great
source of protein. An exotic
delicacy. A plump--

ARTHUR (O.S.)
--Say what?

DICK
Look, you're suffering from
malnutrition. I'm pretty damned
hungry myself. Under the
circumstances we find ourselves in,
it's imperative that you eat
something first and not croak.

INT. STALL #2 - DAY

ARTHUR
So you think you're doing me a
solid by offering me a dead rat to
eat? I thought you were becoming
my friend.

DICK (O.S.)
Wait, I--

ARTHUR
--Besides, I'm not suffering from
malnutrition; it's called
starvation. There's a difference,
you know.

(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I could eat Kennedy Fried Chicken three times a day - with fries drenched in that tzatziki semen sauce - and still suffer from malnutrition.

DICK (O.S.)

Ok, whatever. I'm not a food guy.

(beat)

Semen sauce?

A long pause.

INT. STALL - DAY

DICK

Just eat it, before you starve to death. I need you and your legs to stay alive for the both of us.

(Quietly)

We need to figure out a plan to get us both out of here. But we gotta do it without such-and-such hearing it?

Dick stuffs the rat carcass into an empty cardboard toilet paper core.

DICK (CONT'D)

Get ready. I'm gonna slide the food over to you that I stuffed inside a toilet paper core.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

I can't do it.

(beat)

I mean I'm sure I can snatch the toilet paper core, but I'll never get a piece of, uh, rat down. Not even a bite. All that fur, and guts. Ugh. I'm gonna puke just thinking about it.

DICK

I get it. But you gotta maintain.

(beat)

Listen, let me doll it up for you.

(beat)

I'll do my best to filet it so you don't have to deal with entrails, and fur and such. How's that sound?

Silence.

DICK (CONT'D)
I'll take that as a resounding
"yes".

Dick gingerly picks up the rat carcass and inspects it for a moment. He looks around his environs for some tool that might be usable for fileting the body. He tries the edge of the toilet paper dispenser to no avail. Dick retrieves his car keys from his pocket.

Suddenly, an idea. He looks at the key fob, focusing on the panic button. Dick presses down on it, holding it down as if that will make the alarm louder.

EXT. - RESTAURANT - DAY

A tow truck drives out of the parking lot with Dick's van which, out of range of the key fob transmission, produces no alarm.

INT.- STALL - DAY (LATER)

Dick sits still, listening for the sound of an anti-theft alarm. After a moment, realizing his gambit failed, he tries carving the rat with a key. That also proves unsatisfactory.

Next Dick takes off his belt and sizes up the utility of the buckle as a cutting device. After scraping the rat body with the buckle, he realizes it too is not a viable option.

Still, he gazes at the belt for a bit longer as if contemplating another use for it.

He puts the belt around his neck and pulls it tight before removing it.

Finally, Dick turns his attention to the toilet tank cover.

He lifts off the cover and drops it to the ground causing it to shatter into a bunch of sharp, pointy porcelain shards.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
What are you doing?

DICK
Fixing dinner, honey.

With one particularly pointy piece of porcelain Dick scrapes the fur from the rat body, and extrudes the viscera. He cuts the meat into small pieces.

DICK (CONT'D)
 Y'know, this rat doesn't look all that bad. Certainly smells better than Chicken Goonya. I'll tell you what - maybe I'll eat a piece myself first. Think of me as your royal food tester.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
 That's mighty white of you.

DICK
 I'd take that as an insult if I thought you were Black.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
 I appreciate what you're trying to do for me, but eating a rat... I can't do that.

DICK
 You want to starve? Want to be the next corpse wheeled out of here like deaf guy - never knowing what the game was? Why it all happened?

ARTHUR (O.S.)
 Of course not. But eating a rat--

DICK
 --Man up! It's just a--
 (beat)
 --Tell you what: I'm feeling a bit famished myself, truth be told.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
 Stop! You don't have to. I'm not royalty; not by a long shot. You don't have to be my food taster.
 (beat)
 I don't want you to be my food taster.
 (beat)
 Are you listening?

With a look of trepidation, Dick tosses a chunk of rat into his mouth, chomps feverishly, and gulps the whole mess down.

For a moment, he looks like he might vomit, but with calm, rhythmic Lamaze-type breathing, he gets past the urge to retch.

ARTHUR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Did you eat it?

DICK
(Gagging)
Tastes... like... chicken.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
Every weird food tastes like
chicken.

DICK
True, but when you think about it,
maybe it's chicken and every weird
food that tastes like rat.

Dick stuffs the rest of the filleted rat meat inside a toilet
paper core.

DICK (CONT'D)
OK, I'm gonna slide this cardboard
core stuffed with the food down to
you. Get ready for it.

INT. STALL #2 - DAY

Arthur hunches down on the floor like a hockey goalie, ready
to pounce on the core.

ARTHUR
I guess I'm as ready as any guy
with no eyes can be in this
situation.

INT. STALL - DAY

Dick shoves the toilet paper core down to Arthur. As Arthur
kneels on the wet floor, the core strikes him on his leg and
bounces out of the stall by an arm's length. Dick grimaces
at the less-than-desirable outcome.

Arthur (O.S.)
Shit. Where'd it go?

DICK
No big deal. I can see it.
(beat)
Listen to me: It's just a bit
outside your stall. Just reach
straight out. You should be able
to grab it.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Arthur's hand protrudes out from under his stall. The stuffed toilet paper core rests near the power cord of the floor polisher. The dangerously frayed cord is plugged in.

Arthur paws around, bumping the cord and moving his hand perilously close to the frayed section.

DICK (O.S.)
It's just to your left.

Arthur reaches to the right.

DICK (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Your other left!

Arthur latches onto the frayed wire. A bright spark FLASHES and Arthur goes down.

INT. STALL - DAY

DICK
What happened? Are you OK?

Other than the faint SOUND of something sizzling, silence.

DICK (CONT'D)
What the hell is going on? Say something!

More silence.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

DICK (O.S.)
Fuuuuuck!
(beat)
OK, you motherfuckers. Enough with this shit. It's gone on way too long. Not funny anymore.
(beat)
Come out of your hiding place, you cowards! Let me out of this stall right fucking now!

INT. STALL - DAY

As seen from above, a sheet of paper spirals slowly from the ceiling into the Stall, landing at Dick's feet. He retrieves the paper and reads its contents.

DICK'S POV of the paper: "You haven't earned it yet".

Dick shakes his head, folds the paper and stuffs it into his pocket.

FADE OUT.

INT. STALL - NIGHT

Dick snoozes on the toilet, drool running down his chin.

He's snapped out of his slumber by the abrupt SHRIEK from Arthur who has suddenly recovered from the electric shock.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
Whoa! What's happ... oh fuck.
Where... Shit... I'm, still...
this fucking stall.

DICK
Jesus Christ!

ARTHUR (O.S.)
No, it's just me.

DICK
You're alive! Risen from the dead!
And in less than three days. Thank
god.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
Are you thanking god because you
care about me, or because I'm still
around to help you get out of here?

DICK
To help us get out of here. Right?
We gotta work together. I can't
run out of here, and if you escaped
your stall, you'd just bang into
the wall or stumble down a flight
of stairs and break your neck.
(beat)
But, yeah, uh, I care about you.
(beat)
How do you feel?

INT. STALL #2 - DAY

ARTHUR

Strangely, the electric shock seems to have shorted some of my circuits. Calmed me down. I don't care anymore.

DICK (O.S.)

You're obviously suffering from a fried brain. And a case of malnutrition.

ARTHUR

Starvation.

DICK (O.S.)

Even better.

(beat)

Look. I mean listen. The toilet paper core I sent your way - the one stuffed with tender, delicious meat of *rattus norvegicus* is still sitting just outside your stall.

(beat)

Reach out carefully. To your left; to your one and only left. Do you understand?

ARTHUR

Yes, I understand.

Arthur paws around a bit, grasps the toilet paper core, and gingerly brings it into his stall. He's unaware the meat is teeming with ants.

Sitting on the toilet Arthur extrudes a piece of the finely filleted rat carcass.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I still don't think I can do it.
And I'm pretty sure rat isn't
Kosher. Or Halal for that matter.

DICK (O.S.)

Well, I've never seen it served on a bagel with cream cheese, but it's really not that bad. It's not that much worse than an MRE.

Arthur sniffs the meat and shrugs.

ARTHUR

It doesn't smell too bad.

DICK (O.S.)
Ok. That's a good sign, right?
And you can't see it, so you can't
tell that it's visually disgusting.

ARTHUR
C'mon, man.

DICK (O.S.)
Pretend it's a tiny piece of really
rare venison.

ARTHUR
Keep talking.

INT. STALL - DAY

DICK
I get it that you may not be able
to eat it in the conventional way.
It is kinda tough and stringy.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
Oh, man.

DICK
Do you remember some time ago that
airplane crash in the Andes
Mountains? A bunch of the
survivors ended up cannibalizing
dead passengers to survive. It's
gruesome, I know. But it was that
or die.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
Yeah, I remember that. 1970s.
Rugby team, as I recall.

DICK
Soccer.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
No, I'm pretty sure it was a rugby
team on board that plane.

DICK
Whatever. Who fucking cares? Do
they even play rugby in the Andes?

ARTHUR (O.S.)
No. Nor soccer, for that matter.

Dick shakes his head.

DICK

Forget all that.

(beat)

The survivors had no way to cook, uh, y'know, or bake the flesh, um, so they swallowed little bits of it with water. They melted snow to make water. Genius, right? Who knew you can make water by melting snow?

(beat)

Anyway, the whole experience for them was kinda like taking a pill. Simple. No taste. Fast. Maybe you can do it that way.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

I don't have any water.

DICK

Um, you're sitting on a couple gallons of it right now. I mean, it's mostly water, right?

ARTHUR

Uh, right.

INT. - STALL #2 - DAY

Arthur removes a small piece of rat flesh from the core and holds it between his index finger and thumb as though it was a piece of, well, rat flesh. He gets off the toilet and kneels in front of it. He crosses himself. Arthur cups some toilet water with his free hand and in one swift motion, places the ant-covered morsel into his mouth, slams some water behind it, and swallows hard. He gags.

ARTHUR

(In Arabic with subtitles)

Oh my god, that was horrible!

DICK (O.S.)

You speak Arabic?

Arthur gags some more.

ARTHUR

Give me a minute.

Arthur wipes some beads of sweat from his brow.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Oh, man - I think there mighta been
insects crawling on that meat.

DICK (O.S.)
Look on the upside: extra protein.
(beat)
So, you speak Arabic?

Arthur BURPS loudly.

ARTHUR
Yeah.

INT. STALL - DAY

DICK
That's good. Really good. Where
did you learn--

ARTHUR (O.S.)
--I had months of intensive Arabic
language training before I deployed
with the signal corps. I'm
essentially fluent.

(beat)
Hasn't come in too handy lately.
No one I know speaks it, and if I
ever toss off a phrase or two,
people look at me like I might be
wearing a suicide vest.

(beat)
What about you? What's your skill
level?

DICK
I would say a solid 2: limited
working proficiency. But if you
include profanities, probably
closer to a 3.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
Think about it. What are the
chances two guys stuck in a
shithouse stall would both speak
Arabic? Unless we were in Yemen,
where I suppose it's a common
occurrence.

DICK
Slim at best.
(In Arabic with subtitles)
(MORE)

DICK (CONT'D)
But, I think we've found a way to
make an escape plan without anyone
knowing.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
(In Arabic with subtitles)
What's your idea?

DICK
(In Arabic with subtitles)
I have to trick them into opening
the stall door for me. Come up
with some kind of ruse. Fake my
death, maybe.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
And then what?
(In Arabic with subtitles)
Just waltz out the door?

DICK
(In Arabic with subtitles)
I have to figure a way to disable -
or, y'know - kill our jailer. At
this point, I'm so ready.

INT. STALL #2 - DAY

ARTHUR
I second that emotion.

DICK (O.S.)
(In Arabic with subtitles)
Once I'm out I'll spring you - if I
can.

ARTHUR
What do you mean, "if I can"? You
gotta help--

DICK (O.S.)
(In Arabic with subtitles)
--Stop! No English!

ARTHUR
(In Arabic with subtitles)
Sorry. But you can't leave me
here. Please, I'm begging you.

INT. STALL - DAY

DICK
 OK. Quit begging. It's beneath
 you.
 (In Arabic with subtitles)
 I'll get you out. Somehow.
 (beat)
 I can't run. You can't see. Our
 plan - whatever it turns out to be -
 only works if we both get out of
 our stalls together.

INT. STALL #2 - DAY

ARTHUR
 (In Arabic with subtitles)
 Get out of our stalls together.
 Alive.

FADE OUT.

INT. STALL - NIGHT

Dick snoozes on the toilet. A rat lurks about his feet.

INT. STALL #2 - NIGHT

Arthur lies on the floor asleep, curled around the bowl.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

A young Black man, HIP-HOP strides into the Bathroom, a boom-box on his shoulder playing loud rap music. He enters unoccupied Stall #3 and slams the door hard.

INT. STALL #3 - NIGHT

He sets the boom-box on the lid of the toilet tank, pulls down his pants and squats on the toilet. He BLASTS a fart.

INT. STALL - NIGHT

The noises from Stall #3 waken Dick.

DICK
 Hey! Hey there!
 (beat)
 (MORE)

DICK (CONT'D)
Turn that thing down!
(beat)
What are you doing here?

HIP-HOP (O.S.)
Say what?

DICK
(Loudly)
Turn down the music, man.

Hip-Hop lowers the volume on the boom-box.

HIP-HOP (O.S.)
OK. Happy now? What the fuck do
you want?

DICK
Why are you here? How did you get
here?

INT. STALL #3 - NIGHT

HIP-HOP
Why am I here? Uh, maybe because I
gotta take a shit? Why are you
here? Looking for a cock in the
ass?

DICK (O.S.)
No, believe me. Not at all. I've
been held prisoner in this stall
for more than two days.

HIP-HOP
What the fuck are you talking
about?

DICK (O.S.)
Me and another guy in the stall at
the end have been locked in this
bathroom for days. I have no idea
what the reason is, or who's behind
it.

HIP-HOP
Oh, for fuck's sake--

INT. STALL - NIGHT

DICK

--It's true.

(beat)

Do you have a disability? Are you retarded, maybe?

HIP-HOP (O.S.)

Listen, motherfucker, I'm perfectly normal. Just dropping a deuce, if that's any concern of yours.

(beat)

Maybe you're retarded and nobody told you.

DICK

Did you eat the Chicken Goonya?

HIP-HOP (O.S.)

Fuck no. That shit looked nasty. I saw some bitch feeding that crap to a dude with no arms.

(beat)

Disgusting.

INT. STALL #2 - NIGHT

ARTHUR

A dude with no arms?

HIP-HOP (O.S.)

Who the fuck is that?

INT. STALL - NIGHT

DICK

My fellow prisoner. I'm serious. We're locked in here.

(beat)

So, you have no disability. And you didn't eat Chicken Goonya.

HIP-HOP (O.S.)

You catch on fast for a retard.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

Stop with the R-word!

DICK

I wonder: are you their next
prisoner, or will they just let you
go.

HIP-HOP (O.S.)

I'll let you know as soon as I wipe
my ass.

INT. STALL #3 - NIGHT

The SOUND of paper rubbing flesh, followed by the SOUND of a
toilet flushing. Hip-Hop jacks the volume of the boom-box.

DICK (O.S.)

Why did you come out here instead
of shitting in the restaurant
bathroom?

HIP-HOP

Some asshole ate too much of that
chicken shit and blew chunk all
over the floor. I think the EPA is
on it's way.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Hip-Hop exits Stall #3.

HIP-HOP

Well, I guess they just let me go.
Enjoy the evening.

DICK (O.S.)

Wait! Please! Help me get out of
here.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

Don't go!

HIP-HOP

I don't know what kinda scam you
perverts are running, but I ain't
hanging around long enough to find
out.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

It's not a scam. I'm begging.
Just give my door a yank. Maybe
you can break the lock open.

HIP-HOP
And then what? Give you a yank?
Go fuck yourself, nigga.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
Nigga? How do you know I'm black?

Hip-Hop is about to answer when Dick interrupts him.

DICK (O.S.)
You're black? Why didn't you tell
me?

INT. STALL #2 - NIGHT

ARTHUR
I didn't think it was necessary.
Besides, why didn't you tell me
you're black?

DICK (O.S.)
Because I'm not black!

ARTHUR
OK, then, why didn't you tell me
you're white?

DICK (O.S.)
Because it's obvious.

ARTHUR
Oh, but it's not obvious I'm black.
That's fucked up.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Hip-Hop washes his hands in the sink.

HIP-HOP
I'm gonna let you newlyweds sort
this out.

He dries his hands and heads to the exit.

DICK (O.S.)
Don't leave! Get help! Please!

HIP-HOP
You haven't earned it yet.

Hip-Hop tosses a paper towel into the trash can and exits.

INT. STALL - NIGHT

Dick reaches into his pocket.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
What the hell does that mean?

DICK
Hang on, bro.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
So it's 'bro' now?

Dick extracts the piece of paper that had fallen from the ceiling earlier.

DICK
Black soul man?
(beat)
What do you want from me? I should have been more attentive to the patois. I apologize.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
Forget it. It's not important.

DICK
A piece of paper fell into my stall from out of nowhere a day or two ago. I can't remember.

ARTHUR
What did it say?

DICK
Someone wrote "You haven't earned it yet". Exactly what that jive-ass just told us.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
More reason to suspect a conspiracy.

DICK
I don't really need any more proof of a conspiracy.
(In Arabic with subtitles)
I think this paper offers a clue on getting out of here. We have to take some bold action to prove to these sadists we're worthy of being released.

(beat)

(MORE)

DICK (CONT'D)
Maybe they expect one of us to turn
against the other to get out.

INT. STALL #2 - NIGHT

ARTHUR
(In Arabic with subtitles)
Damn, I hope that's not the case.
We gotta help each other, not go
rogue. Right?

A moment of uncomfortable silence.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Right?

DICK (O.S.)
Yeah. Makes sense.

ARTHUR
You're not convincing me.

INT. STALL - NIGHT

Dick crumples the piece of paper.

DICK
(In Arabic with subtitles)
We have to go medieval on these
fuckers. They want us to "earn"
our way out of this shit situation?
Well, I'm ready to go for it.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

In deep darkness, a couple rats lick from a puddle under a
sink. The SOUND of Arthur's snoring O.C.

Suddenly, the lights come on, scattering a large pod of
cockroaches to the edges of the bathroom. Loud, headbanging
music blares.

DICK (O.S.)
(Screaming)
Fuck you! Fuck all of you!

The lights start to flicker rapidly, creating a stroboscopic
effect. A man dressed in a HAZMAT suit enters carrying a
tray with two plates of food. It's more Chicken Goonya.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
What's that smell?

DICK (O.S.)
Oh fuck! Not Chicken Goonya!

HAZMAT GUY
Excellent nose my crippled friend.

HAZMAT GUY slides a plate of Chicken Goonya under Arthur's stall door, then one under Dick's stall. The SOUND of Dick grunting O.C.

HAZMAT GUY (CONT'D)
Chow down, ladies.

Dick pushes the plate of food back out of the stall, a large pile of shit freshly deposited upon it.

DICK (O.S.)
You chow down, ya fucking dirtbag!

Grossed out, Hazmat Guy steps back.

HAZMAT GUY
Goddamn animal!

DICK (O.S.)
I am not a cripple. Remember that while you chomp on my stool.

Hazmat Guy marches to a cabinet, extracts a bottle of bleach, marches back to the Stall door and splashes the bleach liberally onto the defiled plate and into the Stall.

INT. STALL - NIGHT

The bleach flows under the Stall door, soaking Dick's sweater. Dick purposely sops up as much of the bleach into his sweater as he can.

HAZMAT GUY (O.S.)
Go ahead and starve like your deaf buddy, motherfucker. Fuck if I care.

The SOUND of Hazmat Guy stomping out of the Bathroom, followed by a SLAM of the door. The volume of the headbanging music increases as does the frequency of the stroboscopic lights.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
(yelling)
I'm not quite sure what you did to
piss him off, but I have a pretty
good idea.

DICK
(yelling)
That stinky, huh?

ARTHUR (O.S.)
(yelling)
Downright foul. Like the sewer
backed up.
(beat)
No wonder he hosed it down.

DICK
(yelling, In Arabic with
subtitles)
He didn't hose it down. He
splashed bleach onto the floor. I
sopped it up. Tomorrow morning we
make our move.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Over the cacophony, Dick screams at his invisible captors.

DICK (O.S.)
(yelling)
Fuck it! I'm done! You hear me
you fucking cretins? I'm sincerely
done with this fucked up game! Not
gonna take another night of this
torture! See you in hell!

INT. STALL - NIGHT

Dick grasps a sharp piece of pointy porcelain, slowly running
his thumb along an edge, assessing its sharpness.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

The noise and flickering lights from the prior evening have
terminated. All quiet now. Sunlight breaks through the
single, tiny, barred window. An upturned plate of uneaten
Chicken Goonya sits outside of Stall #2.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
You awake?

DICK (O.S.)
 (Softly, In Arabic with
 subtitles)
 Yes. But I'm gonna stay silent.
 You keep asking for me, though. I
 won't respond.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
 What are--

DICK (O.S.)
 (Softly, but firmly, In
 Arabic with subtitles))
 --Shut up. I'm gonna fake my own
 hanging. Just play along, OK? I
 want them to think I'm dead.

INT. STALL #2 - DAY

ARTHUR
 You awake?

Silence.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
 Are you OK?

A longer silence, interrupted momentarily by the SOUND of
 Dick choking O.C.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
 Can you hear me?
 (beat)
 Say something. Knock on the wall
 if you can hear me.

Silence.

FADE OUT.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Arthur calls out loudly.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
 Hey! You bastards! I know you're
 listening. I think the guy in the
 other stall is dead.
 (beat)
 Get in here!
 (beat)
 I heard him choking yesterday.
 (MORE)

ARTHUR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
He hasn't uttered a word since.
(beat)
That was more than twelve hours
ago. Not a goddamned sound.
(beat)
Of course, you already know that,
don't you.

A long silence other than the drip-drip of a leaky faucet.

ARTHUR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Are you gonna do something about
it? You killed him, you evil
fucks. The least you can do is
take him out of here. Show him a
modicum of respect.
(beat)
And while you're in here, kill me
too. Just show some compassion. I
can't take anymore.

INT. STALL #2 - NIGHT

Arthur fidgets with the toilet handle. He alternately rubs his temples and nervously spins the empty toilet paper holder.

Finally, the SOUND of footsteps O.C.

INT. STALL - NIGHT

Perking up as the footsteps get closer, Dick urinates onto his bleach-soaked sweater. He recoils from the pungent odor.

Dick hurriedly fastens his belt around his neck and flops the tail end of the belt loosely over a coat hanger, creating the illusion of self-strangulation.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

The Guard enters the Bathroom pushing a wheelbarrow.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
About time, you sick fuck!

GUARD
Shut up, Ray Charles. I'll deal
with you in a minute.

The Guard parks the wheelbarrow by the Stall door and inserts a key into the lock.

After trying the key a few times to no avail, he produces a tool and vigorously jimmies the door, but still fails to open it.

GUARD (CONT'D)
Goddamned handle.

The Guard leaves the Bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

The Guard returns with a sawzall tool, plugs it into a socket and proceeds to cut into the reluctant stall latch, which after a moment, he severs successfully. The Guard places the sawzall on the floor and opens the door.

Dick appears to the Guard to be dead, lashed by the neck by the belt to the coat hanger. The Guard wags his head in thinly veiled amusement at the dead Dick - another failed captive - and moves casually into the Stall.

INT. STALL - NIGHT

As the Guard hovers over him preparing to lift his "dead" body, Dick lunges forward and forces the bleach-and-ammonic-urine soaked sweater into his face. He grips the head of the struggling Guard and forces it tightly into the porous noxious sweater.

The Guard flails and gags as he huffs the poisonous phosgene chemical reaction.

The Guard swings his arms wildly, mostly punching the walls of the stall. Slowly, the swings decrease in intensity. The Guard goes limp. Dick pushes the unconscious Guard out the door, letting him fall to the Bathroom floor. The Guard's eyes are bloodshot and his reddened face peels from chemical burns.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
(In Arabic with subtitles)
What's happening?

DICK
(In Arabic with subtitles)
The fucker is unconscious. For now.
(beat)
Be ready to get out of here.

Dick reaches behind the toilet and retrieves a sharp, pointy piece of broken porcelain. Then he hops off the bowl and crawls out the Stall.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Dick climbs onto the back of the prone Guard. Suddenly, GUARD #2 rushes into the Bathroom from another entrance O.C. on a mission to thwart the ensuing prison break.

Guard #2 grabs Dick by the shoulder, rolling him off the back of the unconscious Guard. With one swift move, Dick stabs Guard #2 in the chest with the porcelain shard. Guard #2 falls back onto the floor, grabbing his chest, leaking blood from his mouth.

INT. STALL #2 - NIGHT

Arthur stands erect, his ear close to the crack between the stall wall and the door.

ARTHUR

What's going on out there.

DICK (O.S.)

Just killing bad guys. You ready to go?

Arthur tucks in his shirt.

ARTHUR

Hell yeah!

(beat)

Wait. Go where? I don't know how to get out of here.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Dick climbs back onto the Guard who begins to rouse.

DICK

I do. But I can't run. Any ideas?

Dick picks up the sawzall sitting next to the Guard. He squeezes the trigger which activates the reciprocating blade.

The SOUND of the active sawzall jolts the Guard into a heightened state of consciousness.

Unaware that Dick lies atop him, the Guard haltingly works to right himself. Before he can make any headway, Dick applies the sawzall blade against the Guard's neck.

DICK (CONT'D)

Uh uh uh. Be still, unless you
want me to cut off your ugly head.

Dick pulses the sawzall next to the Guard's ear.

GUARD

Get the fuck off me, cripple.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

Man, you shouldn't have called him
that.

Dick pulses the sawzall again, this time drawing blood from the side of the Guard's head.

DICK

Listen, asshole. I've actually
witnessed a beheading in Iraq.

(beat)

Unpleasant, but like with anything
else, a person can become numb to
horrors with time.

GUARD

Hold on a min--

DICK

--I've never done it myself, but
after these past couple of days, I
think I could pull it off. I even
heard of a lawyer - Jim Primo - who
might take your case.

(beat)

Although I'm not sure a head is
considered a limb.

GUARD

Just relax a--

Guard #2 gurgles and wheezes O.C.

DICK

--You hear that? That's the sound
of your buddy selling the Buick.

(beat)

Now, start crawling to the stall at
the end.

GUARD

You won't get away. They'll stop you.

DICK

Why? Because we haven't earned it?

The Guard replies as if the answer is obvious.

GUARD

Well, yeah.

DICK

That's what I figured.

(beat)

Start crawling!

The Guard does the marine crawl with Dick perched on his back down to Stall #2. Upon arrival, Dick decamps from the Guard's back, still commanding the sawzall. Dick addresses the Guard.

DICK (CONT'D)

Sit still. Unless you want to lose a body part.

Dick pulses the sawzall to intimidate the Guard.

Although the sawzall blade is no longer pressed against his neck, the Guard raises his hands and feigns submission.

GUARD

I'll be cool.

Dick crawls with the sawzall in hand toward Stall #2. With his back to the Guard, Dick positions the sawzall to cut into the latch. Just then, the Guard lunges at Dick.

The two men struggle for control of the sawzall. Dick pulls the trigger pulsing the blade close to the Guard's neck. But as a larger man with the use of his legs, the Guard turns the tables, relieving Dick of his tool. As this is going on, Arthur reaches out from under his stall door.

Just as the Guard brings the sawzall blade close to Dick's face, Arthur ZAPS the Guard with the frayed floor polisher cord.

GUARD (CONT'D)

Auuughh!

The Guard writhes and falls flat on his face.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
Please tell me I electrocuted the
right person.

DICK
Perfect aim. Are you sure you're
really blind?

ARTHUR
Yep, I'm sure. Blind as a bat.
(beat)
You sounded like Superman out
there. Are you sure you're really
crip-- um.
(beat)
Get me out of here!

Dick maneuvers back to the door of Stall #2 and finishes
cutting through the latch with the sawzall. Arthur rushes
out and reaches about the air in front of him, grasping at
air.

DICK
I'm down here.

Arthur kneels and embraces Dick, then recoils.

ARTHUR
Oh my god. You smell awful.

DICK
Like a chemical accident?

ARTHUR
More like a vomit and shit
sandwich.

DICK
Great. Thanks.

ARTHUR
How do I look?

DICK
Honestly, like you should be dead.
(beat)
And like the best vision I've ever
seen. Let's get the fuck out of
here, ASAP!

ARTHUR
What do we do?

DICK

You're the legs, I'm the eyes. Do you think you can carry me piggyback style?

ARTHUR

I don't know. I lost a lot of weight these past fucked up days.

DICK

So did I. I probably weigh the same as a backpack.

(beat)

You can do it. I'll direct you out of this hellhole. You just run as fast as you can where I tell you to. When we get to the restaurant, we'll bolt this hellhole in my van. It has a full tank of gas.

ARTHUR

I can't wait.

Dick climbs onto Arthur's back.

DICK

OK. I'm just gonna call out simple commands. Left, right. Straight, stop. Faster, slower. Back up--

ARTHUR

--Do we have time for this?

DICK

Sorry. Walk ahead about five paces then turn right and jog like your life depends on it.

Arthur walks the five paces and turns left.

DICK (CONT'D)

Your other right!

ARTHUR

Damn, I'm sorry. Just really nervous... and scared.

The SOUND of running footsteps coming from the other entrance to the Bathroom.

DICK

And obviously dyslectic!

(beat)

Right face and start running!

The pair head out the door.

INT. MOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

The two men work their way down the winding Motel Hallway, occasionally bumping into the walls.

DICK
You're doing great. Get ready to
cut a left.

A gunshot RINGS out. It's Hazmat Guy shooting.

ARTHUR
Shit! They're shooting at us!

DICK
Left! Now!

Arthur makes a smooth move to the left. Up ahead are the pair of dead potted trees.

Another gun shot rings out, chipping the wall near the men.

Arthur picks up the pace.

DICK (CONT'D)
OK. Get ready to slow down and
make a quick right.

Arthur reduces to a trot.

DICK (CONT'D)
OK, stop. Turn right and walk
until I tell you to stop. Then
crouch down. We have to ditch this
fucker shooting at us.

Arthur complies.

DICK (CONT'D)
Stop. Shut up and crouch.

Arthur crouches down behind the potted tree. Hazmat Guy rushes past the tree. He's followed by a running/stumbling Guard, fresh from recovering from electric shock.

After a moment, Hazmat Guy and the Guard vanish into the darkness of the hallway.

ARTHUR
What's going on!

DICK
I think we ditched them.

HAZMAT GUY (O.C.)
Give up you fools while you still
can. I'll sincerely shoot both of
you if you don't show yourselves
right fucking now!

Another gunshot rings out in the distance.

DICK
Ignore that jerk. Stay focused.
(beat)
I'm pretty sure there's a set of
steps around here that lead to the
motel exit.
(beat)
Get up! Let's move.

Arthur stands up and proceeds out from behind the potted
trees with Dick on his back. Dick locates the steps that he
had previously vaulted over on his way to his prison stall.

Arthur runs up the steps, and continues down the hallway
around a few more obstacles, eventually arriving at the Motel
exit.

DICK (CONT'D)
We're here! The exit. Reach out
for the handle. It's right in
front of you. Give it a push.

Arthur gropes around, landing his hands on the door handle.
He gives the handle a push, but it won't open. He gives the
handle a couple more shoves but the door resists.

ARTHUR
It must be locked. Now what do we
do?

Dick looks around the environs, eventually spotting the brick
that the Waiter had used to prop open the door earlier.

DICK
Bend down. Let me off. There's a
brick here.

Arthur complies, and Dick crawls to retrieve the brick. He
flings it into the glass door, but it bounces off. He
recovers the brick and tries again to no avail.

ARTHUR
Give it to me.

Dick retrieves the brick once again and places it into Arthur's outstretched hand.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Where's my target?

DICK
One O'clock.

Arthur adjusts his stance, winds up, and fires the brick into the glass door, shattering it into a million pieces.

DICK (CONT'D)
Fuck yeah! Great arm, man.
(beat)
Bend down. I'm climbing back on.

Dick hoists himself onto Arthur's back.

ARTHUR
Can we get through the broken
glass?

Dick assesses the situation. The opening is tight, and it's surrounded by sharp shards of plate glass.

DICK
I don't know. Looks tight. And
sharp.

ARTHUR
Maybe we should go through
separately.

DICK
Hold on. Step forward a smidge.

Arthur moves closer to the door. Dick spots a set of keys hanging in the lock on the other side.

ECU of the keys: a tag with the phrase: "You earned it"

Dick doesn't notice the tag.

DICK (CONT'D)
Fucking A! Looks like that asshole
waiter... Boy--

ARTHUR
--Beauregard.

DICK
Right. Beau-retard--

ARTHUR
--Just tell me.

DICK
He left the keys in the lock.

Dick reaches through the broken glass, turns the key, and opens the door. The pair rush out of the Motel.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

They proceed down the broken asphalt path to the entrance of the Restaurant where they step gingerly into darkness.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The Restaurant is very dark, but the vague outlines of people inside are barely discernable - just not to Dick.

DICK
Looks like the place is closed.
It's completely dark. I can't see
a fucking thing.

ARTHUR
I thought it was a 24-hours-a-day
joint. I wonder why it's shut
down.

DICK
Maybe the EPA came here for real.

Dick produces his car keys.

DICK (CONT'D)
I'm gonna start the van. When the
lights come on I'll be able to
guide us out of here.

Dick presses a button on the van key fob. Nothing happens.
He tries a couple more times.

DICK (CONT'D)
What the fuck. Where's my van?

ARTHUR
Maybe they towed it away. Why
would they leave it in the lot for
us to escape in?

Arthur shuffles about the floor.

DICK

There must be a phone around
somewhere. We gotta call law
enforcement.

ARTHUR

Think! We're the victims of an
elaborate plot to fuck us over.
There's no way any phone here is
gonna work.

DICK

Yeah, I have to agree.

Dick scans the dark environs.

DICK (CONT'D)

There's a bar across the room. I
got an idea.

(beat)

Turn left and head ten paces.

Arthur follows the directions, shuffling hesitantly to avoid
stumbling, or banging into tables.

INT. RESTAURANT/BAR - NIGHT

Still hanging on to Arthur's back, Dick paws about the bar,
coming across a dish containing boxes of branded matches.

C.U. on the matchbox: "Try our famous Chicken Goonya!"

DICK

Never again.

ARTHUR

Huh?

DICK

Nothing.

Dick plucks a match from a box.

ARTHUR

What's the plan, White Soul Man?

DICK

I'm gonna set this place on fire.

ARTHUR

Wait! What!?

DICK

That should attract the attention of authorities who aren't part of the conspiracy. With luck they'll come to the rescue in time.

ARTHUR

So, you're gonna burn the place down? With us in it? That's your plan?

DICK

You want someone to rescue us or not? We can't call anybody. We can't outrun these motherfuckers. They're gonna show up any second, bearing arms.

ARTHUR

You're right. Maybe we can find a safe corner to ride it out - at least for a little while.

(beat)

Do it.

Dick lights a match and uses flame's luminescence to scan the bottles on the shelf. The match burns out; he strikes another. This time he spots a bottle of high-proof Everclear.

DICK

Can you believe they serve grain alcohol in this dump?

ARTHUR

Sure. It makes a great Cosmopolitan.

DICK

If you're Bill Cosby.

Dick splashes the contents of the Everclear onto the top of the bar. He tosses some paper napkins and wooden tooth picks into the puddle.

DICK (CONT'D)

Step back. This may get hot.

Arthur moves back a few feet from the bar.

ARTHUR

Are we too close?

DICK
By my calculations--

ARTHUR
--You made calculations?

DICK
Um, not officially. Basically,
when I drop the match, you squat
down. The flame should shoot
toward the ceiling.
(beat)
And we'll dodge incineration.
(beat)
For a little while. I think.

ARTHUR
Y'know, I was ready to die in that
fucking stall. Now, I want to
live.

DICK
Me too. Get ready to squat.

Still holding the empty bottle of Everclear by the neck, Dick
lights a match and tosses it into the puddle of 190 proof
accelerant. A huge WHOOSH of flames brushes the men back.

The ceiling tiles above the bar ignite. The flames
illuminate the Truck Driver who bears a fire extinguisher.
He dowses the flames with a foamy fire-retardant. Acrid
smoke permeates the room, further obscuring the limited
vision inside the Restaurant.

Dick smashes the empty bottle of Everclear across the edge of
the bar, resulting in a jagged weapon. He darts his head
back and forth trying to locate the interloper.

DICK (CONT'D)
Stand down, or I'll cut you up,
bitch!

TRUCK DRIVER
Be cool, Dick. Everything's
copacetic.

The flames subside and the lights in the Restaurant rise.
The SOUND of applause. The men are stunned frozen.

All the people who had been in the Restaurant the day Dick
and Arthur first arrived clap enthusiastically. They wear
formal attire, and include among others the Hippie, Hip-Hop,
the Truck Driver, Cletus and the Waiter.

The CHAIRMAN of a consortium consisting of the people in the Restaurant approaches the men.

CHAIRMAN
Gentlemen, you have earned it.
Congratulations.

The applause increases as the confused men take stock of the bizarre situation.

Winded, Hazmat Guy jogs through the entrance pointing his weapon at the ceiling, followed by the weary Guard; the Hippie waves them off.

With Hazmat Guy and the Guard gone, the Hippie presents a brand new wheelchair to Dick.

HIPPIE
I'm honored to present you with
this.

After Dick defiantly wriggles his ass into the wheelchair - flicking the finger to the Hippie - he rolls up close to the Chairman and addresses him sternly.

DICK
You have a lot of explaining to do
my friend.

ARTHUR
Damn right. What the hell is going
on?
(beat)
And what did we earn?

CHAIRMAN
Great question--

DICK
--I got a better question: why
shouldn't we press charges against
you fuckers for kidnapping and
torture? And for intentional
poisoning by Chicken Goonya?
(beat)
To be followed up by a massive
trillion dollar lawsuit on top of
all that? Huh?
(beat)
Because that's gonna be my next
move.

CHAIRMAN

You should do all of that, Dick.
And why cap it at a trillion?

(beat)

Any reasonable person would try -
assuming they could escape our evil
clutches.

People in the Restaurant laugh lightly. The men look
quizzical.

CHAIRMAN (CONT'D)

No offense, Dick, but Arthur asked
the better question. "What did you
earn"?

(beat)

But before I go on, please allow me
to introduce myself.

DICK

Let me guess. You're a man of
wealth and taste.

CHAIRMAN

Well, that's true, but I'm also
Chairman of a secretive, select
consortium dedicated to financing
experimental - and frankly, radical
- medical research and development.

(beat)

Everyone here tonight is an
investor.

Dick points at Cletus, whose teeth are perfect now that he no
longer wears the prosthetic picket teeth from his time at the
gas pump.

DICK

Wait. Are you telling me that
hillbilly is an investor? What did
he invest? A bushel of corn cobs?

CHAIRMAN

Cletus comes from very old money.
And he hides his Yale pedigree very
well when called upon.

DICK

Shit.

ARTHUR

I presume the torture you put us through these past days was meant as a test. Something to do with your radical medical research?

CHAIRMAN

I'll explain it all in short order. But first, we have to get you two cleaned up.

DICK

Good idea. I'm sure I smell like a rancid combo of shit, puke, chlorine, piss, blood, sweat and tears.

ARTHUR

I can confirm that, bud. You reek of so many bodily fluids.

DICK

Fuck.

CHAIRMAN

After we get you cleaned up and into new clothes, we'll bring you back for dinner.

(beat)

You men must be famished. We've set up a really nice spread catered by a nearby five star restaurant.

WAITER

And no, Chicken Goonya is not on the menu this evening.

ARTHUR

What about rat?

WAITER

Maybe. Dick showed us some culinary possibilities.

DICK

Just take us to the showers.

(beat)

Um, they will be legitimate showers, right?

The Hippie takes Arthur by the arm and leads Dick and him to the promised clean-up.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT (LATER)

Dressed in formal wear like the others, Dick and Arthur sit at a long table covered in white linens and set up with expensive china, silverware and crystal.

Uniformed SERVERS bring food to the table. One Server explains to Arthur what's on his plate, and where the silverware is located. He guides Arthur's hand to the glass of wine in front of him.

Dick starts in on his food, eating rather voraciously.

The Chairman, who sits between the men, addresses them.

CHAIRMAN

We're not focused on preventing or curing stubborn diseases. The world is already awash in dozens of pharmaceutical companies doing just that. Whatever disease - real or imagined - they decide to tackle is driven by the profit motive, of course.

TRUCK DRIVER

We have our money behind innovations designed to reverse the effects of debilitating accidents and congenital defects. Seeking no profit - just the thrill of making it happen.

ARTHUR

Reverse the effects?

TRUCK DRIVER

That's right--

DICK

--Wait a minute. I remember that voice. You're the guy who raped some dude. Then you stuck your, y'know, into that hole--

TRUCK DRIVER

--Just a ruse. What you heard was some inartful scuffling between my colleague and me. What you saw through the hole was, um, a big carrot dipped in some kind of red corn-syrup concoction.

DICK

Fuck.

ARTHUR

What do you mean when you say
"reverse the effects"?

CLETUS

Basically, we strive to return the
injured person to their original
and proper functionality. That
means no prostheses, no gadgets, no
evidence of repair.

CHAIRMAN

A complete renewal.

DICK

How can you do that?

CHAIRMAN

No one said we could. Yet.

(beat)

But the R&D has been promising.
Computer models indicate high
likelihood of success. Experiments
on animals have yielded solid
enough results that we're ready to
try out the techniques on humans.

ARTHUR

Are you saying that we
(Quotes with fingers)
"earned" the right to be your
guinea pigs?

CHAIRMAN

We've already completed several
successful experiments on guinea
pigs, so we don't feel the need to
continue that line of
investigation.

HIP-HOP

You shouldn't look at this as a
chance to be a guinea pig. It's
way bigger than that.

CHAIRMAN

Yes, way bigger.

(beat)

The financial burden involved with
what we're trying to do is
astronomical.

HIP-HOP

But, to be clear: we have no interest in recovering any expenses from you.

CHAIRMAN

That's right. We're committed to investing 100 percent into this endeavor, and we seek no monetary gain. Yet, we've deemed it necessary to cull the field of candidates down to the truly worthy. Two actually.

DICK

By torturing us?

CHAIRMAN

Essentially, yes. We want to bestow the gift of disability reversal only to those with the greatest will to survive. The ones driven to collaborate and prevail selflessly in the face of horrific adversity.

ARTHUR

I get it. Survival of the least lamest.

(beat)

You say we won. But what about the other victims who didn't cut it?

CHAIRMAN

I wouldn't call them victims, Arthur. We erased the memories of those who didn't cut it. They go on their way oblivious to their time in the stalls. Some time later, we transfer a tidy compensatory sum into their bank accounts. Bitcoins, usually.

DICK

That's very, very fucked up. Not only were my friend and I tortured and humiliated, and forced to eat rat, for god's sake, but we had to fight for our lives. Or was all that commotion staged like the cock in the gloryhole?

(beat)

(MORE)

DICK (CONT'D)

Because I'm pretty sure I stabbed that guard in the heart. And Arthur electrocuted the other one.

CHAIRMAN

No, those attacks were not staged. The guards - mercenaries, really - were hired to monitor you, and directed to prevent you from escaping. They're not in our consortium. Just expendable help.

HIP-HOP

It was your clever ruse, Dick, and Arthur's electric shock that brought you to this point.

ARTHUR

You made us murderers! What the fuck!

CHAIRMAN

Well, anything you did was clearly in self-defense, Arthur. The guards knew what they signed up for.

ARTHUR

Yeah, but--

CHAIRMAN

--And I've been informed that both gentlemen are recovering nicely in the mobile unit parked out behind the motel. The same unit we use to care for all our candidates. Those who need care, that is.

HIPPIE

The guard you stabbed, Dick, had prepared with a Kevlar vest - that's how much he respected you.

(beat)

And the other guard, Arthur, was hit with a strong but not lethal level of current. You survived it - so did he.

DICK

But it could have ended up badly for any one of us. That sawzall was the real deal. I was sincerely ready to slice off that guy's head.

(beat)

(MORE)

DICK (CONT'D)

And I'm pretty sure I fucked him up
with the bleach and piss attack.

TRUCK DRIVER

That was genius. Creating phosgene
on the fly.

CHAIRMAN

I agree. That was unexpected
genius. Just one more reason why
you made the cut.

(beat)

But getting back to your point--

(beat)

-- uh, what was your point, Dick?

DICK

I'm saying, regardless of how the
whole escapade turned out - dead or
alive - you and your consortium in
the end are just a bunch of
ruthless nihilists.

TRUCK DRIVER

Nihilists? No. Our methods are
unorthodox; no argument there. And
cruel. But we stand for something
important.

(beat)

Besides, who would appreciate
cruelty as a device of motivation
more than you two? Men who fought
in bloody wars and paid the price
of losing a physical ability.

(beat)

The question now is: do you want to
reap the rewards?

ARTHUR

What if we tell you to go to hell,
Herr Chairman?

CHAIRMAN

Well, you'd disappoint us, Arthur.

(beat)

And we'd be inclined to give you
and Dick the opportunity to
experience what hell is truly like
so you could tell us all about it
before we get there.

(beat)

(MORE)

CHAIRMAN (CONT'D)

Frankly, I'm a bit surprised, Arthur, that you're questioning whether it's moral under these relatively benign circumstances to get your sight back. Or that you, Dick, are wobbly - sorry - about getting out of that wheelchair for good.

TRUCK DRIVER

We have other candidates on deck ready to be put to the test. If you don't want to work with us, we just might put you two studs back into your stalls to compete with the new meat.

CLETUS

After a memory erasure, of course. We wouldn't want to unfairly tilt the playing field in your favor.

The Truck Driver adds with a sly grin.

TRUCK DRIVER

Maybe we'll even introduce the Dobermans next time. How does that sound?

DICK

Dobermans?

The Chairman stares daggers at the Truck Driver who looks down chastened.

CHAIRMAN

Look, you brave men are in line to benefit from a tremendous opportunity. A monumental life-altering gift - if our work is successful, as I'm confident it will be.

DICK

Dobermans? I remember Dobermans. Did you put me through this torture before? Erase my memory, lock me in that same fucking stall, and force me to do it all over again?

An awkward silence during which time the members of the consortium look around at one another.

DICK (CONT'D)
Well? Did you!?

CHAIRMAN
The answer is, yes, Dick. We did.

DICK
You motherfuckers!

CHAIRMAN
You performed so well - until the very end of it, Dick. You managed to escape the stall quite impressively, but you left behind your fellow stall mate. A blind guy you could have easily freed. Some of us considered that a disqualification. But, since you and he showed such promise we all agreed you should be given a second chance. Compassion, insight, ingenuity--

ARTHUR
--Wait a min--

DICK
--What else did you do to me that I can't remember? Will dreams of your torture haunt me in the future?

CHAIRMAN
It's really better you don't know the details.

ARTHUR
Was it me that Dick left behind?

CHAIRMAN
As I said--

DICK
(Angrily)
--Your methods are despicable and reckless! You talk about reversing disabilities while hauling out disabled people in wheelbarrows who died because of your culling techniques--

CLETUS
--The only subject who ever died was the deaf man.

DICK

Big fucking deal! Maybe you think a disabled person is better off dead.

(beat)

As I said before: that's very, very fucked up.

CHAIRMAN

We're sorry you feel that way. We honestly want to help you and Arthur regain your abilities and enable you to live out the rest of your lives as you deserve.

(beat)

But if--

DICK

--Listen. I want to believe you and your story about curing disabilities. I've fantasized about such things for years.

(beat)

What you've done to us could be the ultimate punking of all time - but you don't seem like the types to waste your time on such puerile bullshit. At this point - I'm inclined to believe you. But you better never fuck with Arthur and me again.

(beat)

Now, where do I sign up?

TRUCK DRIVER

Bravo!

CHAIRMAN

Arthur?

ARTHUR

You owe me big time; making me go through your evil process twice. Including a betrayal.

(beat)

What if I said I demand a huge monetary award from you rich bitches in lieu of your unproven treatment?

CHAIRMAN

Hmmm. We never anticipated that request, although I suppose we should have.

(MORE)

CHAIRMAN (CONT'D)

We always thought someone in your debilitated condition would gladly accept the offer to see again.

CLETUS

Arthur has a point. He earned the opportunity to regain his sight. But, you could argue he earned the right to some monetary equivalent of that outcome.

WAITER

That's not why we invest in this project - to compensate people we put through the wringer. What's the matter with you?

Dick addresses Arthur.

DICK

C'mon, Art. Think.

ARTHUR

Fuck you. And it's Arthur!

(beat)

You left me to rot in that stall. How could you?

DICK

I honestly don't remember doing that. These pricks are probably perpetrating another mind game on us right now. Some BS test of our loyalty to each other.

ARTHUR

Good try--

DICK

--Here and now, let me affirm, in front of these illustrious investors, that I'm now and will always be your loyal friend and companion.

(beat)

We've been through hell together, Arthur. If I abandoned you in the past... well I'd be disgusted with myself. But assuming these fuckers are telling the truth, then something good changed in round two. Right?

CHAIRMAN

I can attest to that, Dick. You've changed for the better.

(To Arthur)

Arthur, don't be too harsh on Dick. It was our mistake to reveal you two went through the treatment before. For that I apologize on behalf of the entire consortium.

(beat)

In the end, Dick came through for the both of you.

Dick wraps his arm around Arthur's shoulder.

DICK

Once I get my legs back, I'm gonna need a golf partner whose ass I can kick every weekend.

ARTHUR

Yeah, I but could use the payout money.

DICK

Haven't you been paying attention? You're not getting any money. It boils down to this: new eyes, or cold calling nitwits about car warranties.

CLETUS

Or round three in the stall. C'mon, Arthur, take our offer.

ARTHUR

Be forewarned, Bagg. If I get my sight back, you'll rue the day you teed it up against me.

(To the Chairman)

Screw it. I'm in too.

The consortium investors applaud once again. The Chairman raises his glass in a toast.

CHAIRMAN

To our first successful reversal. I know it will be epic.

(beat)

And a toast to Dick Bagg and Arthur Joseph for entrusting their care to us in this venture.

People around the table clink glasses. Eating and conversation resume. Servers come and go with ever more trays of gourmet food and fine wine. A small JAZZ BAND plays non-intrusive music.

After a moment, Dick stops eating and addresses the Chairman.

DICK
Tell me something, Mr. Chairman.

Arthur leans into the conversation.

DICK (CONT'D)
Why did the deaf guy have to die?
Why didn't you just erase his
memory and let him go?

The Chairman looks into Dick's eyes, tilts his head slightly, and purses his lips before answering.

CHAIRMAN
Ask Arthur.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY

INSERT TITLE CARD: FIVE MONTHS LATER

Dick and Arthur, dressed like unwitting caricatures of country club duffers, step out of a golf cart. Completely rehabilitated, both men walk to the tee-box free of any mechanical aid or prosthetic device.

Dick flips a tee into the air. It lands on the ground, pointing to Arthur.

ARTHUR
Looks like I got the honors.

DICK
Show us the way, Black soul man.

ARTHUR
My pleasure, Bagg comma Dick.

DICK
Just hit the fucking ball.

Arthur tees up a ball and makes his address.

EXT. FAIRWAY - DAY

On the tee, 30 yards in the distance, Arthur drives the ball solidly where it flies O.C.

FADE OUT.

THE END