

Rati
The Pilot: Internet & Apples

(Scene opens to dark room. A door along the opposite wall opens and a shaft of light appears. A woman leans in and runs her hand on the wall)

Rati

Yeah...OK. The light switch is (triumphantly)...here!

(The room floods with light as fluorescent tubes on the ceiling flicker to life. The room is empty, painted yellow. There is an exercise bar bolted at waist height along the wall. The woman steps in. She is a beautiful Indian woman, early twenties with a dancer's physique)

Rati

Come in! This is where the magic happens. Well, going to happen. I mean...we just closed on the mortgage, just left the bank...

(Man steps in. He is attractive & fit. He is dressed in a tailored suit.)

Mark

Jeezz, Rati. Your babbling . But I don't blame you for being excited. We own an....empty room.

Rati

It isn't just this room. There's a bunch of other empty rooms.

Mark

And the closets. And the bathroom...and it has one of those toilet brushes with a holder. We scored!

Rati

But, this room - this the Dance Studio. This is where the magic happens!

Mark

(Incredulously)"....where the magic happens"? And - I swear - your eyes are freaking twinkling! What happened to my crotchety friend Rati Ver-...oh, I'll never be able to pronounce it. This is like a Disney remake of *Invasion of the Bod Snatchers* . Where is my beloved Rati - Andy Rooney as a young Indian Woman?

Rati

OK. There's another Andy Rooney joke. I'm honestly not sure who he is. I almost googled him last night. But, the day that I google to get a joke is the day I admit something very horrible about myself.

(Mark takes Rati by the shoulders, looks in her eyes and smiles.)

Mark

She's back. No I don't mean to dismiss what just happened. This is huge. Your Dance Studio! Talk about "Rocky Mountain High": I was wondering if you dropped by *Ye Olde Pot Shoppe* this morning and bought something..

Rati

My money is no good with Nick and Amy. I'm like their daughter. The kid they adopted while on some Peace Corps flash back. But, yeah, legal weed is a definite upside to living in Denver. That and the "grandeur of the Mountains" thing.

Mark

Anyway, this is room is a nice dance studio.

Rati

What do you know about dance studios?

Mark

Lots. I'm a fag.

Rati

Hey! You can't say that!

Mark

You can say it if you are one. It's like a black person being able to say.....

Rati

(Playfully) Shut up!

Mark

You might be allowed to say it. I'm mean I'd have to review the bylaws.

Rati

(Fakes choking up with emotion) You mean...we have...bylaws? Am I behind in my dues?

Mark

I'd have to google it. We live in amazing times: everything is on the internet.

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Rati

God created the internet so I can find easy ways to waste time...

Mark

Yeah, it is god's greatest creation. Well, the internet and apples.

(A man leans in from the hallway and raps on the wall gently, smiling. He is of average looks. His suit is clearly ill-fitting)

Dan

Hi, guys!

Mark & Rati

Hi Dan! Come in!

Dan

This is great! Rati, I'm so happy for you.

(He leans in to kiss Rati on the lips. She looks nervous and confused. He readjusts and kisses her on the cheek.)

Dan

Sorry....

Rati

(Playfully) Shut up!

(Dan looks to the floor...clearly embarrassed, Perhaps taking Rati's remark literally. Rati smiles kindly at him and kisses him on the cheek.)

Dan

I'm sorry for trying to kiss you. That was gross. I guess - given the festive occasion - I was feeling European. Ole.

(Rati places a hand on a shoulder of Mark and Dan)

Rati

I'm so glad that you are both here. You both made today possible. A big part of realizing my dreams...

(Freeze scene. A woman - with a southern accent - does a voice over.)

Jaime

Oh, hell no girl! You aren't blowing past Dan trying to kiss you! We ARE going to linger on that detail.

(Scene dissolves to a well-appointed, tasteful, living room. Rati is sitting on a couch with a beautiful blond who looks like actress Jaime Pressley - 20 something. Her name is also Jaime. A living room table is in front of them. On the table are two longneck beer bottles - one in front of each woman. A bong is in the center of the table. Next to it is a small bowl that is holding what appears to be marijuana.)

Rati

It wasn't anything. You know Dan. He is the sweetest. He just can't get the hang of social convention.

Jaime

Yeah, he reminds me of a slightly older Anthony Carradine from *Revenge of the Nerds*. You know, the more mature one....without the annoying laugh. Gawd, that laugh practically made my ears bleed...

Rati

Not Anthony *Carradine* - *Anthony Edwards*. And, a bonus factoid: he played Dr. Green on ER.

Jaime

No, his last name was *Carradine*. (With faux frustration) Arrrrrgh! (taking smart phone out of pocket) IMDB duel?

Rati

(pulls out her smartphone) IMDB duel!

Rati & Jaime

(In unison) One...Two...Three

(Both manipulate phones)

Jaime

Damn! (places phone on table). Well, I'm simply going have to sooth my wounded pride. (Reaches over table and picks up bong. she puts a bit of pot in the bowl. She picks up a lighter and positions it to take a hit.)

Rati

This stuff is real creeper weed...

Jaime

Yeah, this will do me. (She smokes the hit).

Rati

(As Jaime smokes the bong) Like I said, it was innocent. Dan felt that my closing on the Dance Studio merited a kiss. It was a festive occasion - European. Ole! (snaps her fingers like a flamenco dancer)

Jaime

(Sets bong on table. Holds a hand up to indicate that she has something to say. Exhales smoke after a moment.) Yeah, sweetie, I know that it was innocent. If Dan suddenly became a masher, he would lose his "lovable puppy dog" status. That would set in motion a series of perceptual recalibrations that ultimately would force me to rethink the nature of existence.

Rati

(Drawn out in dramatic fashion) *D-a-m-n!* You've had enough. I hate to be a bitch but I'm cutting you off. I'm mean you have to walk home. I don't want to get a phone call telling me that you got lost in that one block trek. (Rati picks up bong with one hand and wags her index finger with the other. Expression of faux disapproval. She sets it back at center of table.)

Jaime

Innocent, sure. But whenever an adult male leans in kiss a woman on the mouth, who he never dated, it must be discussed. Was his mouth slightly open? Could you see the tip of his tongue? Spill, girl.

Rati

Did Dan try to french me? You're a pod person! Can you imagine Dan ever frenching any girl? I don't want to get crass...

Jaime

Too late.

Rati

No, he just felt that is was appropriate. Dan is the sweetest, really. Maybe, not socially - the opposite of inept? - he's not socially ept, I would trust him with my life. No Bull.

Jaime

"Socially ept"? Cut yourself off, girl! (Rati nods. She pantomimes scissors with two fingers). Good, I don't want you to get lost on the trek to the fridge. What's the deal with Mark?

Rati

Mark is gay. It is absurd. There's no possibility.

Jaime

I know. But this is me. (Rati nods.) I know you better than you know yourself.

Rati

(With sudden display of vindication) I know that is a common expression but it is bull. (Resigned) But, yeah. You are my doppelganger .

Jaime

Really? A moment ago you were tangled up in this "Inept vs. Ept" web but you just smoothly roll out "doppelganger"?

Rati

It can't happen. But personality-wise, he is perfect. (Rati interlaces the fingers of her hands.) We fit. It is a perfect fit. I mean...it is like I'm taking to...(Rati takes a deep breath and exhales. Buries head in hands.) Sometimes I wish that I could make him straight.

Jaime

Oh, hell no, girl! Did I just find out that my best friend - since our first day of our freshman year - is a brown Michelle Bachmann? You can't manipulate another person's sexuality. News flash, sexual orientation is not a choice. I didn't decide to be straight. I did not pick "straight" after reading some brochures or attending a seminar. Nope, my sex drive just popped out of my genetics' Easy Bake Oven.

Rati

Jeez, was that your *The Young Turks* audition speech, Ms. Progressive? I said Wish, girl, W-I-S-H. I devoted my life to dance. Don't you think I'm not cool with gay guys? I mean the musicals that I choreographed? My version of "Born this way"?

Jaime

I love that. It's why god created the internet!

Rati

Apples and the Internet. After the "Born this Way" shoot, I'll always doublecheck the sign on the door before going into "head". Mark...damn, he's fine....is perfect except for one little thing....

Jaime

It isn't little: he's gay.

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Rati

Well, I'll never know if it's big or little since he's gay.

Jaime

(hold hand up for a "high five"): Damn, girl.....

Rati

(thinks a moment): Yeah, OK. (slap Jaime's hand) That wasn't bad. (wistfully) I wouldn't care.

Rati

Then there's Dan.....

Jaime

Really, Dan?

Rati

Yeah, Dan...He's the hat trick. (Raises her hand, seeing that Jaime is about to ask.) It's sports term in hockey or horse racing or baseball...(playfully)Shut up....

Jaime

I didn't say anything.....

Rati

(Reaches out and puts hand on Jaime's shoulder) You were going to, sweetie...

Jaime

I think we're getting off-track. You said Dan is a "hat trick" What do you mean?

Rati

He is sweet, decent, financially solvent. You never see all three in one guy. Remember, Frank?

Jamie

Yeah, he was a nice guy. You made it to the 3 date limit. Why did you break it off?

Rati

Well, he was sweet: he was decent. But, he was broke...and I mean constantly! I was fine going dutch...

Jamie

On the third date? Bull....

Rati

I'm not materialistic. But, Frank hit me up for money. A twenty.

Jaime

What did he need it for?

Rati

His part of the dutch date.

Jaime

OK, he was short...

Rati

He mentioned it when the waiter put the check down....

Jaime

Yeah, he was a dog. Dan is financially stable (pause as she recalls other two words) sweet and decent?
(Rati nods head) Isn't Sweet and decent the same?

Rati

Oh, hell, no. If a guy is only sweet, he just want to get the twenty from you - no intention of repaying. If he's decent, he won't play those games.

Jaime

The problem with Dan?

Rati

He's a decent guy but no chemistry: emotional, social and definitely sexual.

Jaime

Speaking of Dan's lack of social skill: Once - when he didn't think anyone was looking - I saw him pick his nose, ball it and flick it.

Rati

Gross. But if he was camping or something. You know...in the wild.

Jaime

He was in your living room. It was the night that we saw *Wolf of Wall Street*.

Rati

(Agitated) Are you kidding me? That was weeks ago!

Jaime

It was one little booger ball. It didn't infect your house with the plague. Besides, it's a little anecdote that is hard to organically work into a conversation.

Rati

We're talking about it now.

Jaime

Yeah, because we are talking about how you & Dan don't jibe socially. See? Organic! Seriously, when else is a "in"? Like when you suggested Taco Bell for lunch today? (exaggerated version of herself) "Hey! that reminds me of a story...."

Rati

Bitch. No, you know that I'm "BS"ing you. You are my girl! You are "The Crap".

Jaime

(Confused) I'm crap?

Rati

An example of "organically" steering the conversation - and this one is taking a turn - Mark, Dan & I were talking about dirty words and you came up....

Jaime

Of course...

Rati

Another example how conversation take turns. We started out talking about profanity. I ended up going on about how you where my best friend. Anyway, where did I leave off? Oh, yeah. I was telling Dan & Mark about how grateful I was that they where silent partners on my Dance Studio and co-signed for me.

(Scene dissolves. It is replaced with Mark, Dan & Rati in the Dance Studio. They are at the point before the scene with Rati & Jaime.)

Dan

I'm sorry for trying to kiss you. That was gross. I guess - given the festive occasion - I was feeling European. Ole.

(Rati places a hand on a shoulder of Mark and Dan)

Rati

I'm so glad that you are both here. You both made today possible. A big part of realizing my dreams. I mean if you guys weren't silent partners on this - and co-signers on the mortgage - we wouldn't be standing here now.

Mark

Hey don't sell yourself short. You did amazing raising money through *Kickstarter*. You were able to do that with the following that you developed with those YouTube clips. Your choreography for that off-broadway play *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes* was amazing.

Dan

You know the play was a powerful statement about environmentalism....

(Jaime & Rati do a voice over: this is conversation in Rati's apartment. As they talk, Rati, Mark & Dan - in the Dance Studio - look around with confused expressions.)

Jaime

I can't believe that Dan takes that play seriously. I mean, your choreography was amazing but the play was nuts...

Rati

I know...seriously... profound meaning? The guy who wrote it elevated "magic mushrooms" to food-group status! So, anyway....

Jaime

So much for being cut off (there is the percolating sound of smoking a bong.)

(Rati, Mark and Dan snap back into the scene and continue as if nothing happened.)

Dan

...of course some say that it is a statement of feminism....

Mark

Well, the choreography was amazing. I love your version of *Born This Way*. You know that you have an IMDB page.

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Rati

Sure, but I'm in the "See Rank" category.

Mark

But, you will move into the "Top 5000" and then the "Top 500"...yes, you will get your own number. There's no stopping you!

Dan

(trying to do Darth Vader, he talks in a wheezy voice that is nothing like it) Rati, It is your destiny!" (sheepishly) That's from one of the *Star Trek* movies.

Rati

(Smiles sweetly) *Star Wars....The Empire Strikes Back*. Damn, I wish Jaime was here. She couldn't get out of work at the bank. I can't tell you how much her support meant to me. She's The Best, The Shi...

Mark

Uh-uh. You know how I feel about language. I know that I'm a jerk about it....

Rati

Yeah, no "S" or "F" bombs. I mean you're not a prude: I don't get it.

Mark

It isn't prudishness. It is about having standards of decorum & discipline. Seriously, a half million words in the English language and we can't stay away from seven?

Rati

Jaime is the best. She's "The Crap".

Mark

Lovely.

Rati

We met the first day that I was at college. We became fast friends. Women always talk about "BFF's". But, that is bull. People drift apart but not me and Jaime. She has been this beautiful constant in my life. I love her.

(Freeze frame. As Jaime starts talking scene dissolves to living room. Both are sitting on the couch, Both - especially Jaime - are visibly moved.)

Jaime

Damn, girl...(leans over and kisses Rati on the cheek). I feel the same way. It's easy to talk about a "Best Friend Forever" but you are the real deal.

(Rati opens her mouth to reply but is cut off by a knock on the door.)

Rati

That should be our pizza. We got the one with the cheese in the crust. Tell me that isn't catering to the stoner demo! You forget about the cheese and when you bite into the crust get a "high surprise".

(Rati walks to door and opens it. Dan & Mark walks in. Mark walks to the bong and begins filling a bowl.)

Rati

Perfect timing! We ordered pizza!

Jaime

You know, Mark. We were talking about your theory regarding language & discipline. If self-discipline is important why do you smoke weed?

Mark

Well, I'm a complex guy (smokes hit)

Dan

Jaime, Rati was telling us how your crap. Um, wait, I mean...

Jaime

It's cool, sweetie, I know what you mean...

(Close-up of Rati. She is not talking. The final line is her thinking.)

Rati

Today was a real high light of my life. You know, we are fortunate living where we do. No third world ...crap. Life does give us everything we need. Internet and Apples.

(Fade to black)

THE END