

THE BURG

Ep. 101

"Pilot"

(Like Some Michael Moore Shit...)

Written by

Jack Cherry

"Jack, I swear... just, sometimes- seriously,  
your "Gen-Z" are the most self-entitled,  
unreliable, mentally sick little shits  
that this country has ever seen..."

"...y'know, a hundred years ago we used to  
shoot each other over, like, beans... right?"

"Do you disagree with me..?"

"No, I just thought that was worth saying."

A conversation at Easter brunch.

A black screen.

Over it, a violent tapping and squeaking of metal. Then...

INT. CHECK-UP ROOM - WILLIAMSBURG, VA - DAY

A Nike sneaker taps the foot-rest to an examination table.

Coating the surrounding walls are educational posters on kid's health and various Spider-Man "Get well!" signs.

...what'd you expect from a typical pediatrician's office?

**DING DING**

A text message illuminates a phone over the background photo of a young woman smiling on a hike. The text? From "Malik:"

*Calling Producer to set. Need you on set, Jack.*

A finger swipes it away, getting a better look at the background pic. We hold on it for a while, almost lost in it... that's 'cause he is: **JACK** (21, in need of a shave).

**KNOCK KNOCK**

Suddenly, the door swings open. Jack puts his phone away as a short and corny man enters: DR NORRIS (50s, pediatrician).

DR. NORRIS

Hey, Hey Mr. Hollywood! Long time, buddy! How ya doing?!

He closes the door behind him. Jack awkwardly smiles:

JACK

Hi... yeah- um, good. Fine.

Jack goes for a handshake. Norris already has his stethoscope to Jack's chest.

DR. NORRIS

That okay? Breathe.

JACK (CONT'D)

Oh. That's, um... yep.

Jack breathes.

DR. NORRIS (CONT'D)

How's school? Still makin...

(slight pause)

You're doing the whole movie thing, right? I didn't make that up?

Jack hesitates.

JACK  
 (badly hiding)  
 Yeah. Yeah, it's uh- y'know?

DR. NORRIS  
 Hm... I get it. But, guess what?  
 You're young. Got time to figure it  
 all out. "Best years of your life,"  
 y'know? How're the folks?

JACK  
 They're... great. Yeah, they're--

DR. NORRIS  
 Woah! A little fast at the pulse  
 there, buddy. Getting a shot today?

Jack gives him a cross look. Norris smirks, beginning other  
 tests: temperature, ear-check, all that shit...

DR. NORRIS (CONT'D)  
 Kidding. So! What's the problem?  
 What brings you in?

Jack's leg taps faster on the foot-rest. More squeaking.

JACK  
 Right. I- mmm- I'll just- okay. I'm  
 having a *thing* with my... peeing?

Beat. Norris stops mid check-up.

DR. NORRIS  
 Okay. "Thing" as in pain, or-?

JACK  
 No! No, not any pain.

DR. NORRIS  
 Any bleeding?

JACK  
 No, no, no, no-  
 (slight pause)  
 I'm... I'm just peeing... a lot.

Pause. Norris looks him up and down. He smirks and takes a  
 seat in a nearby chair.

DR. NORRIS  
 You wanna elaborate on that, bud?

JACK  
 ...you sure?

DR. NORRIS  
(chuckling)  
Well, yeah.

Jack sighs. He begins:

JACK  
(increasingly neurotic)  
Right. Um- it started when I left school- I left school by the way. Sorry. I didn't mean to lie. But, I think I feel a need to always... mmm. And now I can't let myself sleep over it? Like even the littlest urge down there? Don't wanna piss myself in the night, SO, not gettin down with that on the mind! Game over! No sleep! Fuck me! So, I try to let it out. I push. I... clench, right? But then... one, two drops? Like a vanilla extract drop thing, right? THAT'S IT! And even then my body keeps telling me to pee, pee, pee- happens all day. And then- and then sometimes I even dribble more after, like, a good pee! So I look up the average pee cycle on this one site... okay, it was TikTok- but it was from a doctor! I'm getting nervous and, um, that just got me thinking that maybe my body's telling me something? Maybe there's a problem?  
(pause)  
Does that make sense?

Beat. This is where Jack is right now.

Dr. Norris only stares. He's quiet. Then...

DR. NORRIS  
Right... so, what do you assume your body's "telling you?"

JACK  
Constant peeing is a symptom to a lot of- well on WebMD it is. But... okay- prostate cancer?

DR. NORRIS  
Prostate cancer.

JACK

Yes.

DR. NORRIS

How old are you now, Jack?

Ignoring the childish posters from before:

JACK

Twenty-one.

(awkward pause)

I took a pee test when I came in--

DR. NORRIS

Right. Jack?

He crosses his arms.

DR. NORRIS (CONT'D)

Can I ask you an odd question?

JACK

Was the test good?

DR. NORRIS

Yeah, it was fine. But... what made you leave school, exactly?

Beat. Jack is quiet. He unknowingly pulls his sleeves down to his hands, but they're already unrolled.

JACK

That important?

Norris stands, a friendly smile on his face.

DR. NORRIS

Nope. Perfectly fine. Listen, I'm gonna check something for ya...

He hands Jack a pen and paper from a nearby desk.

DR. NORRIS (CONT'D)

...but could you fill this out for me? It's short, so.

He quickly makes his way to the door...

DR. NORRIS (CONT'D)

See you in a bit, buddy.

...and leaves.

**DING DING**

Another text. Still from Malik. Jack reads:

*Calling Producer to set! Yeet the fuck over here, please?*

Jack sighs and reads Dr. Norris' paper, a survey. He reads each question:

*Do you have difficulty sleeping? **Never - Sometimes - Often***

*...tendency to worry about health? **Never - Sometimes - Often***

*...difficult to focus? **Never - Sometimes - Often***

*...often feel lonely? **Never - Sometimes - Often***

Then, finally:

*...experience with suicidal-?*

Jack crumples the page, tossing it to a trash bin. He misses.

INT. HALL - CONTINUOUS

Jack peeks into the halls of the doctor's office: no sign of Norris. He speed walks to the nearest exit and...

EXT. DOCTORS OFFICE - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

...into his car, a blue Honda Accord. Jack lets out the largest sigh. He holds his chest. It thumps loudly. He begins to breathe heavier than usual. He feels winded.

JACK  
(to himself)  
What the fuck..?

**DING DING**

Another text from Malik: "???"

Jack tosses his phone to the side, ignoring it and turning back to the drivers window where...

**KNOCK KNOCK**

...Dr. Norris stands, scaring the shit out of Jack.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Jesus-! Fuck- sorry!

He rolls down the window. Norris leans in with a gentle grin.

DR. NORRIS  
Whatcha doin'?

JACK  
I'm- I'm sorry. I double booked  
myself for a... thing. I have to  
help someone with, um... yeah.

DR. NORRIS  
You okay?

JACK  
(hesitant)  
M-hm.

DR. NORRIS  
(slight pause)  
You sure?

JACK  
Yeah.

DR. NORRIS  
Called your folks. I asked about...  
(not going there)  
...y'know, 2,000 people die a year  
from driving with panic attacks.

JACK  
Okay... cool.

Pause. They just look at each other.

JACK (CONT'D)  
I'm not having a panic attack.

DR. NORRIS  
Y'sure?

JACK  
(with a smile)  
I'm not having a panic attack.  
So... I'm fine. Can I go?

Norris stares at him, still with a semi-smirk.

DR. NORRIS  
I put a prescription in for xanax.  
Your choice, but it'll be ready by  
end of the--

JACK  
(still smiling)  
I'm fine.



DR. NORRIS

Jack.

JACK

(smile cracking)

I'm great. "Best years of my  
life..." right?

Dr. Norris loses his smirk. He moves away from the car as Jack drives off.

I/E. CAR - STOPLIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

The car halts at a red light. Jack leans back, covers his face and groans. He bumps his head on the steering wheel.

**DING DING**

A final text from Malik: "WHERE THE FUCK R U?"

Just as Jack reads the text, we hear something: a sudden "clomp, clomp, clomp..." like the sound you'd hear from a horse drawn carriage...

... 'cause there is one, crossing the intersection right in front of Jack on a green-light. A man in colonial garb steers at the front. A pack of tourists sit in the rear, waving.

Jack watches, but there's nothing weird about it. Not to him, especially not in a place like this...

...where Jack (literally) is.

JACK

(sighing)

...right.

The horse drawn carriage passes and brings us into the...

OPENING TITLES: **THE BURG**

Then...

Another black screen.

TITLE: A Malik Domingo Film

Shitty, synth-orchestral music rises over the dark screen and into...

## I/E. MONTAGE

...a pixilated, flapping US flag... then a drone shot of rolling plains... then into a montage of footage from iconic events in US History: the moon-landing, Obama's inauguration, JFK, etc. Watermarks still attached to all. Over this:

MALIK (V.O.)

We a nation... we a people... we the people. A mantra to the coined linguistic that the earth's youngest society dominated the ears of a globalized world with. "We... the... people." But who are "those people?" Who do we consider "those people?" Where, for "those people," did it all start?

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG - DOG STREET - DAY

A plop of horse shit smacks on to the pavement of Colonial Williamsburg's (a.k.a. CW's) Duke of Gloucester street.

TITLE: Williamsburg, VA

Another horse carriage rolls through the shit and proudly tracks it into the streets of CW's downtown.

EXT. COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG - MONTAGE

The narration continues over varied clips of CW's day-to-day:

- a small fife & drum corp marching through a nearby field.
- kids watching a blacksmith crafting the barrel of a musket.
- a jazz guitarist playing on a corner for change.
- a homeless man in a straw hat calling tourists homosexuals and witches on the corner across.
- two women in bonnets and colonial dresses leaving a Lululemon- shaped to look like a brick, colonial home - giggling with Starbucks coffees in their hands.

And, again...

- horse shit... horse shit and carriages everywhere.

MALIK (V.O.)

Off the shallow coasts of the James, hidden in the labyrinth of Virginian oak, what would you find? Deer... moonshiners... a fern? Try a make-shift Disneyland for the most discerning tourist. The hub of America's dawning birth, right at the center of the historical triangle: Colonial Williamsburg. "What drew this energy," I wondered? To relive a glowing beginning to an American frontier-?

Suddenly, another voice over the montage:

JACK (V.O.)

Fuck. I don't think I'm speeding sound-

MALIK (V.O.)

Bruh, it's a VO, it's literally the one thing you have to rec-!

EXT. STREET - COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG - DAY

We sharply cut to iPhone footage on the CW streets, panning across a long field filled with tourists, watching colonial interpreters present a show. It's peaceful, when...

...Jack appears suddenly in frame. He's on his phone.

MALIK (O.S.)

Jack!

He looks up.

JACK

Caught a Pokémon- oh, fu-

EXT. STREET - COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG - DAY

Still in the footage, Jack now sits on a log, fronting the CW Armory. He stares off in the distance. It's a little sad.

MALIK (O.S.)

(to the tune of "Under the Bridge")

*Sometimes I feel like I don't have a partner. Sometimes I feel like my only friend. And I listened to too much Green Day in High School--*

Jack notices him:

JACK  
 (calling to him)  
 Did you delete enough photos so we  
 have space on your phone to shoot?

MALIK  
 Huh-?! Wait. Oh fuck, you're ri-

EXT. STREET - COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG - MOMENTS LATER

The camera fumbles as a stranger waits patiently in frame to be interviewed: a middle-aged white man coated in Tommy Bahama.

MALIK (O.S.)  
 What're you-? Stop getting so close  
 to his face-!

JACK (O.S.)  
 You wanted your close ups to be  
 "personal."

MALIK (O.S.)  
 Yeah, I wanna see into his soul,  
 not face fuck his nose like a COVID  
 test-

JACK (O.S.)  
 Wait, watch this.

Jack slowly pushes the camera uncomfortably close to the man's face.

JACK (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 It's the Kubrick zoom.

MALIK (O.S.)  
 Can you stop- wait. Actually that  
 looks kinda cool.

JACK (O.S.)  
 Ready. Ready.

The camera sharply tilts crookedly, still close on the face.

JACK (CONT'D)  
 Dutch angle! Banger. Art-

MALIK  
 Give the camera to Brian, please?

WE CUT: We're now in the actual interview with the same tourist, he still waits patiently.

MALIK (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Having a fun time here? What made you come out?

TOURIST GUY  
Yeah! Great! We come from Fredericksburg, but we got folks--

MALIK (O.S.)  
Family? Family heritage important to you? Made you visit?

TOURIST GUY  
I... I guess? Sure--?

MALIK (O.S.)  
Did y'all used to own slaves?

Long, uncomfortable silence. The tourist is still, even his face, his eyes hidden under sports sunglasses. Then...

TOURIST GUY  
I.... I, um....

MALIK (O.S.)  
Is that an "I" as in "you," or an "aye" as in, like... "yargh, yeah--"

TOURIST GUY  
Kid, what the fu-?

EXT. STREET - COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG - LATER

A hard cut to another interview: a white lady, no older than 35. She holds a baby with a sun hat on.

TOURIST LADY  
(confident)  
Oh, no. It's not something my family would... no! Not in our line. Absolutely not!

MALIK  
Where are you from?

TOURIST LADY  
Georgia

MALIK

Fun.

(pause)

Would you bet on it?

TOURIST LADY

Would I bet-? Um...

She doubles down on her confidence.

TOURIST LADY (CONT'D)

-yeah! Sure, I would. All in!

MALIK

Would you... would you bet your  
baby on it?

Her jaw drops. She stares at Malik in silence. Then...

MALIK (CONT'D)

So not... not like "all" in...

EXT. GARDEN - COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG - LATER

Another interview, now with a young actress in colonial garb picking flowers with a handful of others. She speaks with a very historically inaccurate Virginian accent:

MALIK

You've lived on the grounds for..?

COLONIAL ACTRESS

Oh! Generations, darling! My  
father's father's father founded  
the Bucneer plantation at the first  
colonies of Jamestown?

MALIK

He has you pick flowers?

COLONIAL ACTRESS

Me and the gals here. Just little  
thing for the supper table-

MALIK

Who's she?

We see Malik's hand enter frame, pointing towards a black actress just a little in the background. This is **MONIKA** (22). Monika immediately clocks his point.

COLONIAL ACTRESS

Oh, her? That's um... um...

MONIKA  
 (helping)  
 "Minnie."

COLONIAL ACTRESS  
 That's Minnie.

MALIK  
 She lives on the grounds?

The actress grows nervous by Malik's questions. Monika stands in the background, catching on to what he's up to.

COLONIAL ACTRESS  
 Well... I- of course-

MALIK  
 She works well for your father?

COLONIAL ACTRESS  
 I- I- I mean-

MALIK  
 If she were to do something wrong,  
 how would your "daddy--?"

Monika finally cuts in, out of character and calling to behind the camera:

MONIKA  
 Jack, who's that?

Silence. A subtle shake from the camera.

MONIKA (CONT'D)  
 Jack...? Jack, I can see you!

EXT. GARDEN - COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG - OFF-CAMERA

Out of the footage, revealing our "crew," **MALIK** (21, the director) stands at the camera's side. To his right, holding a rather complex rig for an iPhone, **BRIAN** (17).

Jack sits on a barrel behind them, half-assedly holding up a boom-mic in one hand as he scrolls through instagram in the other... that or tinder.

MONIKA  
 Fuck- Jack!

He snaps to...

JACK  
Hm?! What- What's up, Mon?

MONIKA  
Yeah, hi. Great to see you, too.  
Who the fuck is that?

JACK  
Monika? Malik. Malik-?

Malik sticks his hand out. Jack returns to his phone.

MALIK  
How ya doing? I'm-

She swats the hand away. Jack, still staring at his phone:

JACK  
He's a friend, Mon. Don't be a  
buzzard.

MONIKA  
The fuck did you just say?

MALIK  
It's, like, a 30s film slang thing.  
Kinda works as our language  
sometimes.

JACK  
Don't ask. It's going to annoy you.

MONIKA  
Do you care?

JACK  
"If I gave it any thought, I  
probably would."

MALIK  
(thinking)  
Is that "Philadelphia Story?"

JACK  
Literally "Casablanca," bro.

MALIK  
(to himself)  
Fuck me, I knew that. Shit.

MONIKA  
You could also say "slay" like a  
normal, cringey idiot your age.



JACK  
 "Your age?" You're, like, a year  
 above me.

MONIKA  
 I'm a lot of things above you.

JACK  
 How's that bank account "townie?"

MONIKA  
 (chuckling)  
 Oh, fuuuck you- y'know what? That  
 ate, that was good.

Jack smirks and flicks her off, still staring at his phone.

Malik tries to politely introduce himself again:

MALIK  
 We're roommates at film school. I'm  
 taking the semester off to-

MONIKA  
 No, no. He doesn't go to school  
 anymore.

JACK  
 I get to say it, Mon. You don't.

MONIKA  
 And I get looked in the eye, when I  
 tell my friend he's being a cancer  
 on my day! Now, I love you, you  
 cute lil' dropout, but please put  
 the phone down and look at me?

He does and looks to her with a sarcastic smile.

JACK  
 How are you, Mon?

This is our trio.

BRIAN  
 ...I'm Brian, by the way.

MONIKA  
 Why is there a child here?

EXT. FIELD - COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG - DAY

Jack drops down from one of the many trees along the Governor's Palace greens: a giant field. He looks up in the tree, making sure he tucked something safely.

MALIK (O.S.)

(rambling)

--BUT, to... to analyze how heritage and historical pride root to the largest systemic errors of America? Like, on real, historic grounds of it's colonization..?!

Meanwhile, Monika, Malik, and Brian sit in the grass ways away. Brian polishes the iPhone lens as Malik babbles to Mon, taking hits from a blue vape as she half listens:

MALIK (CONT'D)

Bruh, c'mon! Shangri-La liberal film thesis for fuck sakes! Then we talk about it. Like- like debunk those things, y'know? Talk about... segregation... xenophobia- OR, or-like, classism, sexism, racism...

Malik counts them off with his fingers in Monika's face.

MONIKA

Right, I know the "isms." But, what is your thesis?

MALIK

That! Like some Michael Moore shit, but, like... in a far less interesting place! It's golden!

Malik gives a strong "TA-DA!" finish... with no effect on Mon.

MALIK (CONT'D)

You don't like it. I see you don't like it. Do you know Michael Moore?

MONIKA

I know you said some buzz words and waved your hands like a muppet.

MALIK

Look, for the thesis to work, I think calling things out here-

MONIKA

"Calling things out?" Gaslighting white people to admit their great, great grandfuck owned slaves? Genius! Only... oop, right, they probably did. Y'think they'll admit to that? I got ancestry.com. Watch!  
 (to Jack)  
 Jack! Over-under on your family's-?

JACK

(still on the phone)  
 Busy!

MONIKA

See.

Brian leans in, having been listening this whole time:

BRIAN

I used it once. 2/7s Czech. Splash of Jamaican. It does feel validating at times.

They ignore him.

MALIK

Yes, "call things out!" It's bold, y'know? I need bold. Docs are outdated, so-

MONIKA

That's not true.

MALIK

It's so true! Break down my job, for real: A human lens to the beauty of contemporary reality-

MONIKA

Not a job.

MALIK

Now compare it to any toe-head TikTok and tell me: what's the difference?! Genuinely! They are the "documentarians" now. I gotta make bigger moves-!

MONIKA

There's a murder documentary on Netflix every week.

MALIK

Those are low-form docs. They're airport novels. They don't count.

MONIKA

Oh. So you're a snob.

MALIK

(a little hurt)

Well, on what I know of you, you're kind of a dick, so... touché?

MONIKA

Bitch, fuck you! You don't know me!

MALIK

I- what-?! You outed me first! I thought we were bantering!

MONIKA

JACK! I don't- I don't have time for him today, I-!

Monika looks over to Jack, now a little farther from the tree but still staring at his phone. She stops mid sentence at the sight of...

A middle-aged man in a colonial blacksmith costume passing by. He hops in the tree just as Jack did before and pulls a draw-string bag out from a trunk. He removes a Tupperware container inside. It's full of weed...

Jack has yet to look at him, still staring at his phone.

The blacksmith cracks open the Tupperware, sniffs it, smirks and pulls out his phone.

**DING DING**

As the blacksmith walks off with the bag, Jack, without even looking at him, gives a little salute and...

JACK

Thank you!

Monika's jaw drops. Jack finally looks up to her.

JACK (CONT'D)

What?

She points to the tree. Jack looks at it, then back to her.

JACK (CONT'D)  
 It... it's, like, a spruce..?  
 (slight pause)  
 ...we wrapping lunch?

EXT. DOG STREET - INTERVIEW

We're back in an interview. Malik, now on camera with a mic in his hand, stands below a large, horse-drawn carriage. He speaks with the driver, a young white person with dyed blue and green hair under a hat, dressed in full colonial regalia:

MALIK  
 So, what is your... "impression"  
 of... me?

Pause. The driver's confused, but very mellow about it.

CARRIAGE DRIVER  
 What do you mean?

MALIK  
 I mean, like...

Malik gives a presenting gesture of "I mean, look at me."

CARRIAGE DRIVER  
 Y'mean, like, what kinda vibe you  
 give? Like, solid fit, I guess...

Malik gives him a confused look. He's quiet.

CARRIAGE DRIVER (CONT'D)  
 (he gets it)  
 Ohhh! You mean like... you-? Nah,  
 man, it's not like that. We have,  
 like, a whole Black History  
 Foundation that does, like,  
 beautiful interpretation work for  
 stuff like this, but-

MALIK  
 Okay, what's up? Where's the voice?

The carriage driver pulls out a dab pen and hits it.

CARRIAGE DRIVER  
 Hm..?

MALIK  
 Where's the whole... stories of how  
 he killed red-coats and snorted  
 indigenous tobacco. Like, c'mon-!

CARRIAGE DRIVER

Yeah, so I'm a psych major at the college. But, I mean if y'want to talk with the foundation, I could-

MALIK

(frustrated)

What? No, I don't care about that! I'm-!

CARRIAGE DRIVER

"Dont care?" Yooo. Okay. It's giving "problematic" now, but-

MALIK

You get to call me problematic? Dressed like that.

CARRIAGE DRIVER

He/they pronouns, bro... get fucked.

They take another hit from the dab pen. Malik's speechless.

EXT. DOG STREET - SAME TIME

Meanwhile, Jack and Monika stand off to the side, watching the shoot as they continue to talk:

JACK

Film financing's a "make ends meet" process, Mon. "Texas Chainsaw" did it with porn back in the day.

MONIKA

So we invented "gofundme," and then "onlyfans" when that got boring. Is that plan b?

Jack sighs.

MONIKA (CONT'D)

Out of school for three months and already vibing at rock bottom. Wow.

JACK

Delivering's not dealing. We addressed that in high school.

MONIKA

And now we're readdressing it in our 20s. We've come so far, bum!

JACK  
Y'know what? As a friend, you can  
get so mean sometimes.

MONIKA  
But I'm right.

JACK  
But I'm your friend and it hurts.

MONIKA  
But I'm right.

JACK  
Well, when you're finally wrong,  
have fun with that down the line.

MONIKA  
Much obliged.

Pause. They smile, look back to the interview, then...

MONIKA (CONT'D)  
Why're you actually doing it, Jack?

Beat. Jack sighs.

MONIKA (CONT'D)  
Yeahhh, it's not over, bitch. Talk.

JACK  
(still hesitant)  
I'm... funding. For a, um... new  
plan. So... yeah.

She gives him a look.

JACK (CONT'D)  
New life plan- yes, my life, Mon.  
I'm starting over.

MONIKA  
So you're... paying for a new film  
school? Moving to a city-?

JACK  
I mean restarting here.

He gestures out, to "the Burg."

JACK (CONT'D)  
It's expensive to start a new life.  
Settle down? My own place. A condo?  
(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

Build a business? Work 'till I'm  
comfy. Retire. Start a family-

Monika gives him a stunned look.

JACK (CONT'D)

What?

She grabs Jack by the collar, tugging him away from the  
interview.

JACK (CONT'D)

Okay, the shirts old? It can rip.

MONIKA

What're you saying?

Jack swats her hand off and gives her a gentle smile.

JACK

Film school didn't work, okay? I  
failed. It's whatever, but that's-

MONIKA

You didn't "fail-"

JACK

I failed! That's fine! I'm okay  
now. Life won't be as big as I'd  
thought, but here..? I settle down  
in peace-? I don't know. It's nice.

MONIKA

You're 21.

JACK

So?

MONIKA

You're 21.

JACK

What's your point?

MONIKA

You're 21.

JACK

Not a point.

She smacks him in the back of the head.

JACK (CONT'D)

And neither's that! Fuuuck off! Ow!



MONIKA

"SETTLE DOWN?!" Y'looking to tap out with me? Get stuck here?!

JACK

People our age settle down early all the time! You did.

Monika, offended, smacks Jack harder in the head again.

JACK (CONT'D)

God! What the fu-?! I'm serious!

MONIKA

You're in a very serious spot, I see that. You're not being serious.

JACK

For real?

MONIKA

I refuse to take it that way. Y'know what is real? Same voices from the same faces, using the same lazy nicknames, from the same stupid greetings, day-to-day until you reach the breaking point of despising the sound of your own name! That's real! How's that sound to you?

JACK

I don't know, familial?

MONIKA

It's repetitive.

JACK

You say "repetitive," I'll say "normal." Boom. Glass half full.

Monika now grandly gestures out to "the Burg."

MONIKA

LOOK AT THIS PLACE! None of this shit is normal! And wait till you get jaded by it, it comes quickly.

JACK

Jaded at 22? Using your logic, isn't that a little oxymoronic?

MONIKA

For a burn, isn't that a little over articulate?

JACK

Forgive me for trying to sound like an intellect- like you, Mon.

MONIKA

Is that to compensate for a life plan that makes no fucking sense?

JACK

I-! I'm being sincere, Mon. Okay? Tone it. It's a valid plan.

MONIKA

Yeah, get hitched before you know how to do a fuckin tax return? Great "plan," bestie.

JACK

Well, cash in hand and a date in...  
(checks his phone)  
...45 minutes? The plan's going smooth as jake. So... boop.

He flicks her off. She's unfazed.

MONIKA

What date?

Malik approaches. Brian follows with a white bag in his hand.

MALIK

Yeah, wait. What date?

JACK

It'll be, like, an hour. You're fine- I thought you were filming.

BRIAN

They rode off. I think They liked me. Gave me a bag of cashews-

MALIK

Buddy! Producer?! Hello?! We're fucking shooting-!

MONIKA

With who..?

Jack tries to ignore her.

MONIKA (CONT'D)  
Jack! Future bride... um...?

JACK  
...Taylor.

Slight pause. Mon then gives a very judging laugh.

MONIKA  
I'm dead. HA! You messy, little  
shit... wow.

Malik cringes.

MALIK  
Wha-? What's that mean?

MONIKA  
(ignoring Malik)  
She's a business major at the  
college now, by the way. Don't care  
how much of a crush y'all had.  
Don't care how many quick fucks  
y'all got out of each other. She  
may seem easy to you- no fuckin way  
she magically goes Gen-Z Brady  
Bunch at your request. That's low.

Jack snaps for real.

JACK  
I'm not- stop shitting on my plan!  
Could you, maybe, try believing  
that it's actually helping me?!

MONIKA  
Fuck that. It's not you.

JACK  
What's that supposed to mean?

She points at Malik and Brian with the camera.

MONIKA  
That is you. That's the plan- the  
"Jack plan." Only one that makes  
sense. Why else would you agree to  
help this one's convoluted thing-  
whatever the hell it's about!

MALIK  
(to himself)  
Fuckin... c'mon...

Beat.

JACK

Welp, real world sucks. Plans change. I'm different, Mon. I need to be. Sorry, not sorry.

MONIKA

Yeah? Well. Tag y'in then. Cuz this sucks to watch.

She smacks him in the back of the head and begins to leave.

JACK

What does that mean-?

MONIKA

Nothing. Inside joke. I gotta go. Got a thing.

She gestures to the time. As she leaves...

JACK

Mon, look--

MONIKA

Don't do that.

JACK

Don't do what?

MONIKA

You sound very clear! Don't make me play that game where I gotta guess if my friend's an incel, or if he's just sad and white. I'll pass.

JACK

I don't feel sad.

MONIKA

Nope, you are sad. Have fun with that down the line.

She leaves, flicking him off as she departs. Suddenly, a colonial actor passes her.

COLONIAL ACTRESS

Hey, Mon!

Monika immediately snaps to Jack and points at the passing actor, giving a face of "see!" She leaves.

Jack watches her go, her words ringing in his ear as he ignores Malik...

MALIK

Well... since I only have my "producer" for a fraction of my time today, maybe we should get started with the time we... Jack?

Jack doesn't respond. He's lost in thought. He glances at his phone for the time. He gets hypnotized by something else: his background screen... that same girl from before.

MALIK (CONT'D)

Jack..? Bro. Ja--!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. AROMAS COFFEEHOUSE - LATER

TAYLOR

--Jack!

Jack snaps to. He's at the counter of a nearby, CW coffee shop: "Aromas," an ex-high school watering hole. TAYLOR (22) stands next to him, wearing a baggy William & Mary crewneck.

JACK

Sorry. What?

Taylor points to the person behind the counter, still waiting to take his order.

JACK (CONT'D)

Oh! Prince George Mint Mocha. With almond milk.

TAYLOR

Don't change, do you? Can't commit?

JACK

What..?

TAYLOR

Can't just commit to oat milk?

JACK

Got stock on oat milk or something?

TAYLOR

No. Just... better for the environment, I heard.

JACK

Oh, I just suck then. I'll own that.

TAYLOR

It's true... and almond milk is like the ultimate mid, neutral. Just pick dairy or... like, why?

JACK

You said it saved the environment, now it feels more about me.

TAYLOR

It does save the environment. I was bringing up another good point.

JACK

Deep point... for oat milk.

TAYLOR

It's fun overcomplicating you. We can talk like that, date or not?

JACK

Oh... it's a date! We're not dancing around that to just figure it out later? You admit it?

TAYLOR

No... you just did.

JACK

Wooooow... gaslit over oat milk... that's... that's perfect.

TAYLOR

It is better for the environment.

JACK

There's lots of things better for the environment. Get rid of your phone, it'd do wonders for the environment.

TAYLOR

Try getting rid of yours.

It's in Jack's hand.

JACK

Didn't hear? I have changed a bit. I'm, like, the biggest hypocrite now. Fuck the ozone layer.

He smiles and flaunts his phone. Taylor giggles as it opens to his background automatically. The picture of the girl returns. Taylor sees. She knows her. Without thinking, she...

TAYLOR

Hey... how's your family?

This throws Jack. He gives her a fake, confused look.

BARISTA

Guys?

They snap their attention to the barista... still waiting.

BARISTA (CONT'D)

We doing the almond milk thing, or-fuckin what?

JACK

Shit. Sorry!

INT. OFFICE - LATER

Mon sits across a large oak desk. Behind it, MARVIN: manager with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. He's accompanied by two associates, LISA and KEN. All in nice work polos.

MARVIN

Do you like anticipation? I think we'll make you sit in anticipation.

MONIKA

I... uhm... okay-

We see Golf championship trophies and family photos on the walls behind them. It's a bit much...

MARVIN

You got it.

MONIKA

Really?

LISA

Yes.

MONIKA

Oh... oh my god!

KEN

50 grand scholarship, taxes already deducted. Full-ride, any state university of your choice.

MONIKA

Wow.... Shit- sorry! This is just really- that's really big. Jesus.

MARVIN

Congratulations, Monika.

Eyes still wide, Monika gathers herself. Back to business:

MONIKA

So- so when I start applying this season...?

MARVIN

Full amount, all yours.

Monika sighs in relief.

MONIKA

Okay, well... um... I already have an app going for UVA so that's- wow -cool. Is- is that all, or...?

LISA

Well...

MARVIN

I-! I got this, Lise.

(to Monika)

Um... with everything you've contributed to us, Monika, it really is just as simple that.

MONIKA

Right, but what was..?

Monika points to Lisa, hushed in the corner.

MARVIN

Yes, the CW Foundation would just like a little statement from you. Potential publishing in the paper? Optics-sake, y'know? That's all.

MONIKA

What kind of statement?

MARVIN

Just a story. Your story. The rise. Ambition stuff. You're fight with struggle- y'know?

Beat. Mon hopes this isn't going where she thinks. Her wall is up.



MONIKA

...right. No. What does that mean?

MARVIN

Um... I mean, home life? I know it's not easy, Monika. Grove area is a little... "out there," right?

MONIKA

It's 3 miles that way- my home life is fine. I don't really understand.

MARVIN

Well, 2 jobs on you, Monika. That's uncommon and tough for someone your age. Being so young.

MONIKA

It's over the average of people my age, actually.

MARVIN

Mom never home. Working overtime, too?

MONIKA

Scared of a parent with a job?

MARVIN

Dad, out and gone?

MONIKA

I heard that's the gig when it came to the military.

MARVIN

Rough neighborhood.

MONIKA

We had a graduation BBQ the other day. It was actually quite nice.

MARVIN

Your mom goes to AA, right..? I know you've had to leave afternoons early to give her rides.

Beat. That stings, Mon. She hides her anger, but...

MONIKA

Yeah... y'got me. I just thought going to those was a good thing. Means your progressing forward.

(MORE)

MONIKA (CONT'D)

Not regressing on some golf course,  
calling it "me time."

Ken chuckles at that in the back. Marvin shoots him a look.

MONIKA (CONT'D)

Okay, let me clear this up. Are you  
telling me that if I take this  
money, CWF wants me to talk to the  
Gazette to tell them I essentially  
come from the movie "Precious?"

MARVIN

I... I haven't really seen- is that  
a movie-? I- I don't really know--

MONIKA

Right. Thank you for your time.  
I'll get back to work.

Monika stands, storms out of the office and slams the door.

KEN

I mean, objectively "Precious" is a  
good movie-

MARVIN

Not a fuckin word, Ken.

INT. HALL - CONTINUOUS

Monika stops herself outside the door, still fuming in anger.  
She tries to calm herself, leaning her head on a nearby wall.

Then, all of a sudden, unexpectedly so... she cries. It's not  
a pretty cry, more an honest one. She covers her mouth to  
muffle out the sobs. She's not used to this. We hold on this  
for a while as she tries catch her breath, but it's hard. All  
she can do is walk away fast, hoping no one can see her.

This is where Monika is right now.

TAYLOR (PRE-LAP)

(giggling)

Oh, I so knew you had a crush. Even  
before any of our... yeah.

INT. AROMAS COFFEEHOUSE - DAY

Jack and Taylor sit across an outdoor table. Tourists and colonial actors walk around despite the area being more contemporary. The two, with their history, are very playful.

JACK

It was more dynamic than that.

TAYLOR

Trading "stupid" with "dynamic" so we look smarter is... a choice. Do remember we were 17 and you're not, like, a discreet person... at all.

JACK

You're saying I can't lie?

TAYLOR

Can you?

JACK

Oh god, no.

TAYLOR

I'm aware, you're sus as hell.

Jack gives her a smirking look of "the fuck does that mean?"

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Dance class.

Jacks jaw drops, he remembers. She takes sip of her coffee.

JACK

Oh fuck- HA! What- what about it?

TAYLOR

What do you mean-?! Jack, you're a movie guy! Tap class?

JACK

I had a Fred Astaire crush and I wanted to build my calves.

TAYLOR

Stop.

JACK

No really, he did have nice calves.

TAYLOR

Who was the only one from our school taking it?

Taylor points at herself as Jack sips his coffee, smirking.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

You weren't that bad. You keep up with it? The tap, not the... being obsessed with me.

JACK

What about you?

TAYLOR

What about me?

JACK

Why didn't you keep up with it?

Taylor hesitates, but laughs it off.

TAYLOR

Since when was William & Mary a prestigious arts college?

JACK

Could've gone to one. You stayed.

TAYLOR

I mean... as I saw it, like, two a year get to leave here and be "artists." One a musician and one-

JACK

You're saying I..?

TAYLOR

That I don't play the flute? Yes. So you jacked my spot. Dick...

Jack pretends a chuckle. That did kind of sting.

JACK

(revealing)

Well, um... I mean, you should know-

TAYLOR

I'm kidding. I wasn't serious about it. That's all.

JACK

But you were good at it.

TAYLOR

I'm 22, competently intelligent, in college, and workshoping my self-worth, so...

(MORE)

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

I've learned I'm good at a lot of things. I even learned "Business major" isn't a degree per-say. It's giving more... broad-strokes symbol to any employer that, one, I'm smart as fuck- slay- and, two, I party like a bashful little libra, therefore, I'm SO much fun to be around. Now hire me or... mmmm!

Jack chuckles.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

At least that's the plan. I leave the exciting adventures to you. I'll cheer from whatever cubicle bank internship I get when I'm... 26? Then a job. Then whistleblow the bank for insider trading, making enough money to retire, then...

JACK

Settle down? Family... stuff?

TAYLOR

Some day.

Pause. She smiles and giggles it off.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

So, yeah, solid plan. But...  
(giggling to herself)  
...god, fuck internships. They're-ugh- cringe. Employment paradoxes, y'know? Whatever...

Jack smiles at her. Looking her up and down... it really is no wonder he had a crush on her.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

How's school for you?

Beat.

JACK

It's... y'know?

TAYLOR

No.

JACK

It's good. I'm just being... weird.

It's awkward. He's still a bad liar.

TAYLOR

Right.

EXT. DOG STREET - LATER

Monika continues down Duke of Gloucester street, walking slow by a row of colonial houses. She stares at the ground, lost in thought as people pass, most being her co-workers.

CW EMPLOYEE #1

Hey, Monika.

Even the actors, some still in character, say hello:

COLONIAL ACTRESS #1

Hey, Mon!

COLONIAL ACTOR #1

Afternoon, Mon.

**BUZZ**

She ignores them and pulls out her phone from her costume.

COLONIAL ACTOR #2

Sup, Mon.

A text, her mom:

*"Let me know how it went as soon as you can! I'll buy a cake for tonight! Get in late. I love you!"*

Mon is still. Another person passes:

COLONIAL ACTRESS #2

Hey, Mon!

Monika texts back:

*Went great! I love you, too.*

COLONIAL ACTRESS #3

Hi, Monika.

Just before she sends the message, she stares at it. Meanwhile:

COLONIAL ACTOR #3

G'day, Mon!

CW EMPLOYEE #2

Hey, Mon!

Mon's lip trembles and her breath is static,

Then, suddenly...

CW TOUR GUIDE

Oh, hey Mon--

**BAM**

She punches the side of a wooden cabin. So sudden that it jolts a pair of tourists with the guide nearby.

MONIKA

(to herself)

Shit! Ow- fuck!

(to the tourists)

Sorry. I'm sorry.

The group moves from Monika. She closes her phone and grips onto her hand, stinging and bleeding a bit at the knuckle.

Monika sighs, a little flutter in her breath from holding back a cry, when, in the distance...

TOURIST LADY

You're a little shit, kid! I'm so sick of your generation, I swear-!

A young woman and her boyfriend, rocking an Eagles cap & Busch Gardens tee combo, storm off from Malik & Brian. The boyfriend flips them off.

MALIK

You're an ally!

The boyfriend stops, as if he's about to charge at them.

MALIK (CONT'D)

Ope-! Shit.

The girlfriend stops him as they finally leave, passing Monika. Monika watches Malik and sighs. She charges at him.

MONIKA

Hey!

Malik doesn't notice at first.

MONIKA (CONT'D)

Hey! Hey, roommate!

He jolts around, finally seeing her.

MALIK

Oh! Hi. It's Malik, I thought I-

MONIKA

Yeah, you're gonna be here for,  
like, 3 months. I don't care.

MALIK

Heard. Heard. That makes a lot of-  
(re: her hand)  
-okay, you're bleeding.

MONIKA

I was wrong. Be bold. You wanna get  
your voice heard with whatever this  
thing is that your making? Kick the  
back of their knees and make them.  
Why not?!

MALIK

(puzzled in thought)  
Right... right, valid... but, okay,  
like- if you don't mind -with what  
I actually "tell them," and- and,  
like, organizing what I want to say-  
like, "my point," right--?

MONIKA

Mm-mm. No, no, no. No matter the  
point! Get them to listen and say  
anything... it's more than most  
people can accomplish in the world  
right now, so...

MALIK

Cool... right.

MONIKA

Also don't worry about this place.  
Call 'em out! Tell 'em to eat shit  
and die. That's bold! Fuck 'em. Be  
bold.

Malik nods. He's eating this up. He's thinking.

MALIK

You're good at that. I like it.

MONIKA

(hearing herself)  
Sure...  
(beat)  
(MORE)



MONIKA (CONT'D)

Yeah, I don't know what "that" was. Weird. Cringe. I guess, take from that what you will. Bye.

Mon turns to leave.

MALIK

Y'know... Jack's gone, so there is a producer spot I could consider vacant if--

MONIKA

Bye!

BRIAN

Bye, Mon.

MONIKA

Go to school, you don't know him.

BRIAN

Free block.

She rolls her eyes and takes off. Malik doesn't notice. What she's said is stuck with him, when...

A large plop of horse shit smacks next to a nearby tour group! A girl jumps and screams from it, catching Malik's attention. The tour-guide's megaphone rings in his ears:

TOUR-GUIDE

(deathly monotone)

This way we enter the "Jefferson House." Please, follow me...

Malik begins to make a plan, when...

BRIAN

Wanna talk with the homeless god guy? He tried to pee on me once.

MALIK

You got, like, a last name, or...?

TOUR-GUIDE (PRE-LAP)

To your right people... your right.

INT. HOUSE - COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG - MOMENTS LATER

A group of tourists and families round the halls of a colonial home. Malik and Brian lurk around the back.

The group rounds into a small bed chamber. We hear a voice:

JEFFERSON (O.S.)

Come round... come round... little ones especially. Be not afraid of dust-mites by the curtains. Martha had the place specially pampered.

Malik enters, finding himself in what was the old study of Thomas Jefferson, featuring:

JEFFERSON (CONT'D)

Is that all? Yes? Welcome...

An actor playing him in the corner. The crowd applauds.

JEFFERSON (CONT'D)

I suppose this is a show then, of some sort... I know not what I did to deserve such exuberant applause, but I humbly thank the masses for it. Ladies & Gentlemen, the name is Thomas Jefferson. How are you fairing today, friends?

CROWD

(half-assed)

Good.

JEFFERSON

Oh... we must enter this land with more committed exuberance, yes?

CROWD

Yes.

Brian fiddles with the camera, wiping the lens down. Malik's hand slowly rises the lens up.

In his other hand he's holding the white paper bag, now with hidden contents. Whatever it is, it's drooping.

JEFFERSON

Surely we enter this conversation, this confab, this testimony with the same exhilaration as we do this new "American" experiment, yes?

Malik presses record. Brian looks to him and his bag.

JEFFERSON (CONT'D)

So again, I will say... good day.

CROWD

(with effort)

Good day!

MALIK  
 (to himself)  
 Think bolder...

JEFFERSON  
 That's it! Wonderful weather. A  
 Virginian summer's end, I'm sure  
 you have no complaints at all.

The sweating group giggles.

JEFFERSON (CONT'D)  
 No complaints? Well then--

Malik's hand shoots up at the back of the crowd.

MALIK  
 I have a complaint.

BRIAN  
 (to himself)  
 Oh, no.

EXT. AROMAS COFFEEHOUSE - SAME TIME

Jack, sips at the foam left in his coffee. Taylor stares him down from across the table. She smiles, but she's thinking.

JACK  
 I love those last bits of foam. You  
 sip on it for the last 30 minutes  
 to fill the awkward silences.

TAYLOR  
 I'm sorry about earlier. Bringing  
 up your family out of the blue. How  
 are they?

Beat. Jack goes quiet. He sips the foam on his coffee again.

JACK  
 See.  
 (he chuckles)  
 ...my parents-? They- they're fine.

TAYLOR  
 Bet they're happy to have you back  
 from school for a couple days.

JACK  
 ...M-hm.

Pause. Jack non-jokingly tries for the foam again, when...

TAYLOR  
Jack. What happened?

Another pause. Jack smiles.

JACK  
You suck.

TAYLOR  
I'm astounding. What's going on?

Beat.

JACK  
I'm not at school anymore. I left.  
I've been here for three months.  
Sorry about lying.

Taylor leans in.

TAYLOR  
Jack, I'm sorry. What... what  
happened? Why-?

JACK  
It's not a whole... thing. Just  
learned that sometimes paths aren't  
right, so... move on. It sucks, but-

TAYLOR  
Right...

JACK  
I mean I still sort of- like, my  
old roommate is staying with me for-

TAYLOR  
Did something actually happen?

Jack pulls his sleeves to his wrist again, just as he did at  
the doctors office.

JACK  
I don't know what that means.

TAYLOR  
Don't lie again.

JACK  
That's not a lie, I wasn't trying-

TAYLOR  
No, it's just... I can't believe  
that you'd fail out, or... "paths  
aren't right-?" You're quitting?

JACK  
I'm starting new.

TAYLOR  
Fuck that. Start over.

JACK  
That's the same thing as "starting  
new."

TAYLOR  
When you're right back here? No  
it's not.

JACK  
You're here.

TAYLOR  
That's different. I'm at school.

JACK  
Cuz people who go to college in  
their home town actually end up  
leaving. They're basically fucking  
"townies."

TAYLOR  
Okay... tone.

Jack sighs.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)  
Jack. This may be a date, but we've  
been friends for how long?

Beat. Jack hesitates again. Then...

JACK  
It did start great... We'd talk  
golden-age history. Use films from  
the 20s to show basic mechanics.  
Shot on BL. They did that on Evil  
Dead, so- awesome, by the way.

TAYLOR  
(smiling)  
Nerd.

JACK  
It's pretentious. Sorry.

TAYLOR  
Jack, stop.

JACK  
(moving on)  
Class went on. And um... they wanted us to get a little "deeper" y'know? A professor said: "anything on that screen I want no less than a reconciliation between the 'mind of you now' and the 'mind before.'" So, yeah, um... I don't know what that means. Even now. I tried... with my work, I tried to, but...

He shakes his head.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Wasn't enough. So, then, um... I started thinking about my sister.

TAYLOR  
Okay, we don't have to-

JACK  
I really did think she was it. Talking about her. But... guess it wasn't much of a "reconciliation." They were sure vocal about it. So things got bad, and I guess that just pushed me a bit too- um-

He pushes his sleeves to his hands again. Taylor notices.

JACK (CONT'D)  
(beat)  
--look, things happen. Made myself some promises to keep. And my folks brought me home. So, I'm good!  
(quietly making a "shocking" music effect)  
*Bum, bum, bum...* the end.

He looks up at Taylor. She's stunned.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Don't say sorry, it'll make me feel weird.

TAYLOR  
That's tough.

JACK

You're not a bad person if not, so don't.

TAYLOR

Whats the plan now?

Beat. Jack stares at her. He feels something, his foot tapping again.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

It's okay to not have one. We're young. There's time to--

JACK

I have one. I'm good.

TAYLOR

Yeah?

JACK

Yeah. Um... uh... look, I...  
(letting it out)  
I'm gonna settle down. Here. Home. I'll restart. Um... I'll work. I'm delivering again for some cash. Get a place for myself. Start a family. Retire one day. That's the- that's- yeah... that's it. A new life here.

Pause.

TAYLOR

Like a... like a Levitt-Town sort of thing?

Jack cringes.

JACK

Okay... what does that mean?

TAYLOR

(chuckles)

It just sounds kinda like you found a checklist from the boomer gen. So now it's like your bible.

Jack's quiet. Taylor notices

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

I- I'm sorry. That sounded condescending, I'm-

JACK

You think asking for shit like that is stupid?

TAYLOR

No. I think it's more a standard. It's not a plan, though.

JACK

Can be, for some.

TAYLOR

Life's more complex than that, you of all people know. "Work hard? Now house? Now family? Now die?" Especially today? It's not life.

JACK

I know having a family in itself is pretty complex.

TAYLOR

Therefore nobody in our generation with the right mind should be doing that at the moment.

JACK

Yet they still do.

TAYLOR

And when you see that person who's convinced they want that, point 'em out so I can stick a 30 ft tape measurer between us.

Pause. Jack gives her a hurt look.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

That was mean. Fuck! Look, I'm just mad. Like, really? Quitting. Dude-

JACK

Taylor, it's not quitting. It's, like, more re-organizing-

TAYLOR

At 21? No responsibility. No excuse to not. Fuck me, Jack, but that's quitting!

JACK

Maybe In, like, a capitalistic "success only matters in life" way-



TAYLOR

Excuse me to think you can be successful at your passion! Also don't pull that "boo capitalism" BS on me. Even in agreement you know it's the most annoying shit to hear out of anyone below 35. Jesus.

Jack shuts down. Trying to retreat.

JACK

Fine. You're right. I'm sorry...

TAYLOR

What would your sister say?

Beat.

JACK

Did you really think that was appropriate to just... ask?

TAYLOR

No. But you'd hear it and not joke.  
(slight pause)  
It's okay to be a little lost right-

JACK

I'm not lost. I'm fine.

TAYLOR

So what do you call all this?  
Dealing again? I heard that, right?

JACK

"Delivering." I'm not slinging on a street corner, Tay. I drop off Tupperware to golf resorts.

TAYLOR

You did that in high school.

JACK

I went on coffee dates in high school. I do things full circle.

TAYLOR

But there's a difference between coffee dates and bumming around for the rest of your twenties, Jack.

Jack doesn't know how to respond.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

We are young. That's a fact. So we do have the luxury of time to-

JACK

Yep. I'm tired of that now.

TAYLOR

(confused)

Of what?

JACK

I'm really tired of hearing that: "you're young, you've got so much time-" fuckin... please. It feels like every Gen-Xers nice way of telling young people to "fuck off-" like a 20-year-old's never resonated with a Woody Allen movie before? Come on!

TAYLOR

Is that really the best reference to use-?

JACK

Fuck you! Thank you for actually listening by the way!

Beat.

TAYLOR

Jack, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that about...

She sighs.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

JACK

My hands are sticky.

TAYLOR

What?

JACK

From the... foam. I'm gonna wash them.

He stands.

TAYLOR

Jack, if you're not-? I mean we can talk-

JACK

I'm fine. Never been better. Sorry.

Taylor stares at him.

JACK (CONT'D)

I'll be back.

Jack exits into the coffee shop. Taylor sighs.

INT. AROMAS COFFEEHOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jack closes the door behind him and takes a deep breath. He puts his hand on his chest as he feels a twinge, possibly a pain. He ignores it, moving to the sink. He turns on the faucet, but just before he puts his hands under he looks to the toilet...

...he has to pee.

He stands over the bowl, unzips his pants and tries, but...

...nothing.

JACK

(almost singing)

Come oooooonnn... it's theeeerre,  
y'know you want to.... mmmmmmm.

He sighs. He pushes again.

JACK (CONT'D)

(pitiful)

C'mon, dude. Please.

Still nothing.

JACK (CONT'D)

(to himself)

This is- you're so fucking stupid-

Just then, a little comes out. He sees.

JACK (CONT'D)

(to himself)

...really? That's how you... I  
cannot fuckin believe you-

A little more.

JACK (CONT'D)  
 (to himself)  
 You're such a fucking- I swear to  
 god. You just fucked it. Idiot. You  
 had it and you- god dammit...

A little more of a stream.

JACK (CONT'D)  
 STOP! Ohhhhhh that is... mmmm! That  
 is so WRONG!!!

Jack hits a nearby towel dispenser, backing away from the  
 toilet. He pulls up his pants and returns to the sink.

He puts his hand on his chest again. His heart thumps, like a  
 drum right under his skin. He winces, looking at himself in  
 the mirror.

He looks to his phone, the background photo again.

JACK (CONT'D)  
 (sighing)  
 Oh god.

His breath is heavy. Is he about to have a...?

JACK (CONT'D)  
 What the f-?

Just then:

**DING DING**

Jack's phone lights up with a text message, covering the  
 background photo. From BRIAN:

PRODUCER TO SET! I REPEAT, PRODUCER TO SET! NEED YOU!

Jack washes his hands and bolts...

EXT. AROMAS COFFEEHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

...out the far side of the coffeehouse, just out of Taylor's  
 view. Jack watches her from afar, hiding behind a group of  
 costumed employees while she stares at her phone. He flees...

EXT. DOG STREET - CONTINUOUS

Jack speed walks out the modern market-square, passing the  
 town shops, vendors, coffee spots, and designer-wear stores.

His hand holds to his chest once in a while as he tries to catch his breath. He looks back for Taylor a few times.

We follow him like this, noticing as the farther he travels down DOG street, the more colonial his surroundings become and, oddly, the calmer he gets.

He passes everything: the courthouse, the armory, a whole marching parade of soldiers with muskets, canons firing for a group of tourists, then... finally, governors palace, again.

Jack takes a breath. He's finally calmed down. He's still in his head, unable to notice Monika noticing him nearby.

She sees the look on his face, beginning to approach, when...

THOMAS JEFFERSON  
YOU RAT-FUCKING-BASTARD!

The friendly Thomas Jefferson actor we'd seen before, now with an odd, brown splotch on his face, has Malik wrapped by the waist. He tackles him out of the "Jefferson House."

Members from the tour group race outside with their phones out. The tour-guide struggles to pull them apart in the dirt. Brian finally exits with his camera.

JEFFERSON	MALIK
I'LL FUCKIN KILL YOU-!!	GET OFF-! BRIAN! BRIAN! KEEP ROLLING! SHOOT IT!!

Monika and Jack race to them, pushing through the crowd. They manage to break through and help the tour-guide tear the two apart. They both stumble to their feet.

MONIKA  
The hell is going on?!

JEFFERSON  
I'm gonna kill that little prick!

MONIKA  
Okay... we can use a few more words than that-

MALIK  
He attacked me!

JEFFERSON  
He called me a rapist, and- and a racist, and then my- my wife-!

MALIK

Oh, calm the fuck down Daniel Day  
Lewis! I was calling Jefferson--

JEFFERSON

Do I look like Jefferson, you  
stupid motherfucker?!

MALIK

Oh, breaking character-! Guess,  
what?! Strasberg rang me the other  
day to call you a FUCKIN HACK!

Jefferson tries charging again, Jack pushes him back.

JACK

Woooooah, woah, woah, woah..!

As Jack pushes, in his closeness to Jefferson's face, he  
finally smells it. He gets a strong whiff and pushes him off.

JACK (CONT'D)

(disgusted)

WOAHH-! The fuck is that on your-?!

JEFFERSON

HE THREW HORSE SHIT IN MY FACE!

Pause. Everyone looks at Malik. He's quiet.

MALIK

See... like... visually, I thought  
the symbolism would be powerful.  
Young black man fighting... Brian,  
right-?

Malik turns for Brian's approval. Brian's gone, running off  
in the distance with the camera. Malik watches him flee.

He turns around.

MALIK (CONT'D)

Y'know... when Errol Morris made  
"The Thin Blue Line," it--

**BAM!**

Jefferson, now free, socks Malik in the face. Malik falls to  
the ground unconscious. The crowd goes wild.

EXT. SENTARA E.R. - AFTERNOON

Monika, now in her street clothes and hitting her vape, sits on a bench just outside the hospital's exit. Jack, uncomfortably still, sits a little away from her. A nurse passes by:

NURSE 1

Welcome home, Jack! Hey, Monika!

Mon fake smiles. She looks to her phone, drafting out a new email:

*"Dear CWF,*

*I'd like to apologize for my behavior today, and if still available, I'd would be more than happy to write--"*

She can't believe she's actually typing this down. She deletes the draft and, instead, rewrites:

*"Dear CWF,*

*I like where I come from. The downfall of your institution lives rent-free in my brain."*

She smirks at her words. She considers sending it, when...

**BUZZ BUZZ**

A phone call from her mother. She lets it ring.

Meanwhile, Jack stares at his phone as well, at the photo of the girl again as his background. Monika sees it. She smiles.

MONIKA

Your sister always looked really pretty in that pic... I thought.

Jack looks at her, his eyes wide. His breath is still heavy from before, but he keeps his mouth shut tight. When...

**DING DING**

A text:

*"Your prescription is ready,"* from a bot number... sitting right under three missed calls from Taylor. His phone buzzes as she calls him yet again. He closes the screen quickly.

Jack swallows slowly, his chest tight and his breath heavily moving through his nose now. Heavy enough for Mon to notice:

MONIKA (CONT'D)

Jack-?

Without addressing her, he stands and walks to his car quickly. Almost speed walking.

MONIKA (CONT'D)

(to herself)

What the hell..?

Jack gets in his car and drives off.

Monika only watches when, appearing right behind her with a bandage on his forehead and a swollen eye:

MALIK

Where's Brian-?

MONIKA

Jesus!

(sighing)

Took a shift at Chick-fil-a.

He sits next to Monika. He's silent. Another nurse passes:

NURSE 2

Hey, Monika.

MALIK

The other guy-? Is he hurt, or-?

MONIKA

Nope.

(slight pause)

He got fired.

Malik guiltily hangs his head. Mon hits her vape.

MONIKA (CONT'D)

Where are you from? I never asked.

Malik perks up. Another nurse:

NURSE 3

Hey, Mon.

MALIK

L.A.- do you work here too, or--?

MONIKA

Where? Cuz if you say some 90210 shit like Santa Monica, I swear-



MALIK

Malibu.

Beat. Monika sighs, hanging her head into her hands.

MONIKA

Awesome...

(pause)

Can I ask you something?

MALIK

Sure.

MONIKA

(really asking)

Logically speaking... how can you say what's wrong with a place- my home -knowing nothing about it?

MALIK

It's not just about this place.

It's... um...

(he admits)

I don't know. I don't know what it's about. Don't think I ever did.

MONIKA

Yeah... hmm...

MALIK

Look, I just wanted to speak to something. "Art," y'know? I'm not really good at it: speaking. Even socially. Bit of a culture shock going to art school and seeing not everyone speaks only in film quotes, too. Definitely makes you feel void of any character. Plagiarizing your whole personality on the works of other people who'll never know your name. It sucks. When I think on it, kinda makes me hate that the whole film thing is the life that I want.

MONIKA

You could just... not. Pretty easy.

MALIK

You say that like it's much of a choice. Why else would it feel so personal when you start to think you have no idea what the fuck you're doing?

Monika looks at him differently.

This is where Malik is right now.

MALIK (CONT'D)

Especially with no one to share  
that feeling with. Well, maybe  
except for one person...

Monika nods, catching on to who he's referring to.

MALIK (CONT'D)

I hoped, coming here, that if I  
were to do it- speak -it'd be for  
something good. With a purpose.  
Important. Or at the very least,  
honest. But, I'm sorry, I didn't  
mean to--

Suddenly, Monika stands.

MONIKA

Come with me.

EXT. ROUTE 60 - AFTERNOON

Malik sits shotgun of Monika's rusted Jeep. Monika guns it  
down route 60. We watch nice neighborhoods, golf-courses, and  
even the Bush Gardens amusement park fly by.

We then notice as the trees start to get dense and the  
neighborhoods begin to look less "flashy."

EXT. SUBSIDIZED NEIGHBORHOOD - AFTERNOON

Monika pulls into the parking lot of a subsidized housing  
complex, a group of condos from the 80s that never renovated.

Small groups of kids run by, just getting out of the school  
down the street. Families sit on porches, playing cards or  
finishing packs of cigarettes nearby.

MALIK

Where are we?

Monika turns off the Jeep and hops out. Malik follows.

As they walk past a row of houses, we see one old woman on a  
porch in the distance.

OLD LADY

Hey Moni! Afternoon, honey!

Monika smiles and waves. This is her neighborhood.

She walks to one of the center homes and knocks on the door.

It swings open. A tall, middle-aged man walks out with a little boy holding tightly to his leg. It's the Thomas Jefferson actor from before. His actual name: ROBBIE.

He and Malik make eye contact. Malik leaps behind Monika.

ROBBIE  
Woah... woah... okay, no-!

MONIKA  
'Sup, Robbie.

<p>ROBBIE The hell'd you bring him here for, Mon?! (to Malik) You fucking with me, bud? You won! Just leave me with my-</p>	<p>MONIKA (CONT'D) No, no, no, no. Robbie, listen, okay--?</p>
---	--

MONIKA (CONT'D)  
He's here to apologize.

This is news to Malik. Monika pushes him in front.

MONIKA (CONT'D)  
And, look, I'm just as guilty in  
this, so... we wanted to make it up  
to you with some news.

Malik looks at her, still out of the loop.

MONIKA (CONT'D)  
Malik's from L.A. He's making a big  
documentary about life in "The  
Burg." Jack and I are his co-  
producers. Malik's gonna dig into  
the honest bullshit that goes on  
here. Show some of the great stuff  
too. "Like a Micheal Moore movie."

She and Malik lock eyes. He smiles.

ROBBIE  
Who's Michael Moore-?

MONIKA  
I don't care- BUT, if any good, it  
could do better on the Burg's  
behalf so... kinda yours.

Malik finally steps up.

MALIK

I- I thought maybe you, your neighbors, and uh...  
 (re: Robbie's kid)  
 ...your family, would be great focus points. Talk about your life here and, y'know, film it?

Beat. Robbie takes a moment to consider.

MALIK (CONT'D)

Look, I'm really sorry that I got you fired. I wish I could-

ROBBIE

Save it.

Pause.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)

Our strike collapsed last month, so... not like the pay was gonna get better anyway...  
 (pause)  
 ...truce?

Robbie extends his hand. He and Malik shake. They smile.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)

Talk it over a drink?

Malik enters Robbie's home. Just as Monika begins to follow:

**BUZZ**

Her phone again, a message from Jack. A location marker, followed by the buzz of a phone call... it's Taylor.

EXT. BEACH - COLONIAL PARKWAY - DUSK

The sun is just about to set over the James River. Jack sits on a damp log. He looks at a CVS bottle in his hand: the Xanax. His sleeves are now rolled up, revealing the scars healed on his wrists. He runs his fingers over them.

His phone sits in the sand nearby, now with 5 missed calls from Taylor and 2 from his parents, even a text from his mom:

*Honey, please call me! Where are you??*

He puts his hand to his chest one more time as he looks out to the water. Then, just like that... he let's it out.

He finally has a panic attack. We hold on this, we're still. It goes on for a while. It's uncomfortable. It's long winded. It's ugly. But, it's the most honest thing he's done all day.

As Jack sobs, a hand appears on his shoulder. He jolts.

JACK  
(sobbing)  
Wait-! No, no, no, no...

That hand backs off. It's Monika. Malik stands behind her. Jack sobs a second more, his whole body tight. Then...

JACK (CONT'D)  
Okay... okay, now please?

Monika embraces Jack. Malik does a little from behind as well. Jack lets the rest out before he begins to calm down.

MALIK  
I'm guessing it's a bad time to tell him he has to split his job.

MONIKA  
Okay, social cues?

Jack giggles.

JACK  
He's defusing, Mon. He's really good at it.

MALIK  
You know that's right. Boom.

Slight pause. They knuckle bump. Then...

JACK  
You suck at hugs though.

MALIK  
Fuckin- this was a nice moment. Y'know what? Job rescinded, can't afford you. Sorry.

JACK  
(giggling)  
Then we'll dip in our marketing budget. We're covered, so...

Jack pulls his phone from the ground.

MALIK

What're you talking about?

He pulls something up: viral Tiktoks of Malik getting decked by Thomas Jefferson. Thousands of likes on each of them.

MALIK (CONT'D)

Get the fuck outta here! No way...

Malik hops on the log, now glued to Jack's phone. Monika smiles and sits next to Jack as well.

They look to the river, pink and purple from the sky's reflection.

JACK

So what did I hear about "co-producing?"

MONIKA

What did I hear about dine and dashing aromas cafe?

Beat. Jack sinks his head guiltily.

MONIKA (CONT'D)

Used a movie reference to tell a guy to fuck off today, so...

JACK

Been hanging with me for too long?

MONIKA

I actually wanted that dramatic build up, but, y'know, it's fine.

JACK

What movie?

MONIKA

"Precious."

JACK & MALIK

Ooh...

JACK

You wanna talk about it?

MONIKA

Do you?

Beat. They smile to each other, both too tired to explain anymore for themselves. Then...

JACK

Hey, Mon, when you didn't leave for college with all the other bandwagons... were you afraid?

MONIKA

Afraid of what?

JACK

Being stuck. That first big step into that fun, fruitful life everyone loved to hype up so goddamn much... came and went. Now you're here. Just stuck.

Mon doesn't answer.

JACK (CONT'D)

My sister always said she'd never be caught dead here when the time came. Jokes on her I guess. She'd say "here's where youth came to hopelessly drown in monotony."

He looks to the sunset.

JACK (CONT'D)

I don't know about all that, but...

MONIKA

What about you?

JACK

...I am drowning. Really, really fuckin bad. And it is all my fault.  
(beat)  
...you were right. I'm a bum.

MONIKA

I wasn't- you're not a bum-

JACK

I tried to shotgun wedding my life in a day on a weed budget, just call me a bum.

MONIKA

You're a bum.

JACK

Mmmm-hm.

Monika gives a small chuckle. Jack smiles as well.

JACK (CONT'D)

I did realize one thing though.  
I... I think there's just one thing  
I don't want to be before I die.

MONIKA

What's that?

JACK

Hopeless... but I guess for that  
not to happen is only up to me, hm?

Mon smiles and rests her head on Jack's shoulder.

JACK (CONT'D)

That and not die bored as shit.

MONIKA

Okay, well, maybe you are in the  
wrong place.

They laugh and watch as the sun finally falls for the day.

END OF SHOW.