

MALL-TV

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Light seeps through the gap at the bottom of the bedroom door. An alarm clock flashes 12:00 on the nightstand, providing the only other source of illumination in an otherwise pitch black room.

HARRIS -- late 20s, fit but not toned -- lies in bed face down, bed sheets covering most of him. The only evidence of life from his corpse-like body is the loud snoring.

A muffled phone rings to the chorus of "Wu Tang Clan Ain't Nothing To Fuck With." The phone completes one call cycle and goes silent. Harris continues to snore.

The phone starts ringing again and Harris groans in anguish, eyes still shut, mouth contorting as he recognizes the unbrushed taste in his mouth. He reaches beneath the pillow and pulls out the ringing phone.

INSERT - THE PHONE

The screen reads "Incoming Call - Max"

BACK TO SCENE

Harris hits the ignore call button. He closes his eyes. The phone now alerts him of an incoming text message.

INSERT - THE PHONE

The text message screen reads (from Max) "Where the fuck are you???"

BACK TO SCENE

HARRIS

Fuck.

Harris slowly sits up. Muffled conversation can be heard from beyond the bedroom door. He laboringly slides out of bed and makes his way to the adjoining bathroom, revealing that he's wearing only a t-shirt, naked from the waist down.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Harris attempts to flick the light switch on to no avail. He flicks the switch on/off a few more times and the lights still don't turn on.

He lifts the toilet seat and begins to urinate, eyes closed, the sound of inaccuracy echoing throughout the room.

He moves to the sink, staring at himself in the mirror.

HARRIS

Fuck.

He turns the faucet on but no water comes out.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

The fuck?

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Harris attempts to feel around the bed for his pants, but doesn't find them.

HARRIS

Fuck me.

He walks towards the bedroom door, pausing to try and decipher the voices on the other side. They are female, and lively.

He goes to turn the door handle.

INT. STUDIO LIVING ROOM SET - DAY

CAROL -- 60s, white haired grandmotherly type, dressed from head to toe in denim -- is seated next to JAYNELLE -- 40s, full figured curvy African American woman, also in a denim ensemble -- on a couch in what appears to be a large well lit McMansion living room. They are positioned half facing each other while also acknowledging an audience watching them. Jaynelle holds up a denim garment.

JAYNELLE

(RE: Garment)

Oh Carol, will you just look at the embroidery on these pockets?

Carol reaches out to feel it.

CAROL

Oh my, simply exquisite. So much detail.

JAYNELLE

And you will not believe the low low price on today's diamond denim deal. For only --

The door at the back of the room swings open. Carol and Jaynelle turn to look behind them as Harris emerges, shielding his eyes from the bright studio lights with one hand, the other pulling down the bottom of his t-shirt to hide his genitals.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

GARY -- late 40s -- stands in front of a wall of television monitors, wearing a headset microphone. Featured prominently on the monitors is the studio living room set below, Carol and Jaynelle's "Denim Divas" program being interrupted by Harris walking in.

GARY

What the fuck?! Cut to break. Cut to break!

MAX -- early 30s, scrawny hipster with patchy facial hair, and glasses -- sits on the bench behind Gary and sheepishly hides his face behind his hands.

GARY (CONT'D)

That motherfucker.

Gary continues to angrily mumble as he storms out of the control room. The audio engineer hits some buttons on the control board in front of him.

AUDIO ENGINEER

(to himself)  
and rolling audio.

He hits button to play a cheesy sitcom-like audio sting.

INSERT - STUDIO MONITOR

The monitor shows the breaking down of the "Denim Divas" program. Random CREW MEMBERS enter the frame. Carol gingerly gets up off the couch and slowly walks off screen. Jaynelle still stares at Harris, looking up and down his half naked body in longing curiosity.

The on screen graphics show MALL-TV network logo, the "Denim Divas" show logo, and today's Diamond Denim Deal product description and pricing.

INT. HANNA'S OFFICE - DAY

HANNA -- mid 20s, her Ann Taylor executive style attire a bit of a reach for a woman her age -- stands imposingly behind her desk.

Her office is enveloped in glass on three sides, one wall dedicated to monitors airing the MALL-TV channel, some miscellaneous studio feeds, and some business news networks.

Harris sits facing her, now clothed in baggy women's jeans.

HANNA

For fuck's sake Har, can you imagine if that hadn't been a rehearsal?

Harris shifts uncomfortably in the chair, still trying to block out the severe hangover.

HANNA (CONT'D)

On top of all of the other shit I'm dealing with now I have to smooth things over with Gary and the ladies.

HARRIS

Jay will cool things over with the other two. She still kinda has a thing for --

HANNA

Stop. This shit's getting old. You're old. Do you enjoy getting bitched at by your kid sister?

HARRIS

I... I --

HANNA

Because I sure as shit don't like it. It's embarrassing.

Hanna pauses, then comes around from behind the desk to sit on the arm of Harris' chair.

HANNA (CONT'D)

Aren't you getting tired of this Harris Reynolds fuck boy party persona?

HARRIS

Last night I would have said no. This morning I'm reconsidering.

HANNA

Afternoon. It's the afternoon.

Hanna moves back behind her desk.

HANNA (CONT'D)

Neither of us expected to be in  
this position, at least not yet.  
But here we are. He wanted us to do  
this together.

Hanna looks off to a framed magazine cover featuring their  
father on the wall.

INSERT - THE MAGAZINE

The magazine reads "Fortune: Harrison J. Reynolds, Bringing  
the shopping mall to your living room."

BACK TO SCENE

HANNA (CONT'D)

But I feel like I'm all alone here.  
And it sucks.

Hanna's office intercom buzzes.

HANNA'S ASSISTANT (V.O.)

(filtered)

Your two o'clock is here.

Harris looks out the office window to see UNION REP #1 --  
50s, male -- and UNION REP #2 -- 40s, female -- seated on a  
couch.

HANNA

(into intercom)

Ok. Please set them up in the  
conference room and see if they  
want coffee or anything. I'll be in  
in a few minutes.

Hangs up.

HARRIS

I don't remember seeing a union  
meeting on the schedule.

Hanna turns her attention to her computer, typing in short  
bursts. Harris gets to his feet.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

I'll take care of things with the  
crew.

HANNA

And Gary.

HARRIS  
 Alright, and Gary.

Hanna types away as Harris makes his way to the door. She stops.

HANNA  
 Hey.

Harris stops at the door and turns around.

HANNA (CONT'D)  
 Happy birthday you old fuck!

Harris smiles.

INT. MALL-TV CORPORATE HQ CORRIDORS - DAY

Harris walks down the hall, still visibly uncomfortable from the bright sunlight enveloping the corridor. Max, his assistant, approaches with a notepad in one hand and a clean set of clothes in the other.

MAX  
 Thought you could use these.

Max hands him the clothes. They continue walking down the hallway.

HARRIS  
 Please tell me you've cleared my schedule for the day.

MAX  
 Not completely. I rescheduled everything except new intern orientation, which you have in --

Checks watch.

MAX (CONT'D)  
 -- thirty-four minutes ago.

HARRIS  
 Was there no one else?

MAX  
 Every other senior staff member was busy, you know, running the company.

Max lets out a big yawn.

HARRIS

How could you possibly be tired?  
You bailed on us last night.

MAX

Well one of us has abdicated any  
sense of personal responsibility  
and growth as a human being. The  
other has a newborn at home.

HARRIS

So I take it he's still not making  
it through the night.

MAX

No. Christy's on early shift this  
week so I'm on overnight kid duty.  
Six times he woke up screaming last  
night. Six. The last, at four  
o'clock.

Max grabs Harris' arm to stop them from walking, and he turns  
to him face to face.

MAX (CONT'D)

He's screaming non-stop, so I reach  
down into the cradle and pick him  
up.

INT. MAX'S SON'S NURSERY - NIGHT

Max picks up his screaming child and rocks him in his arms.

MAX (V.O.)

I stand there, rocking him in my  
arms, and then he just stops.

(beat)

He looks up at me, eyes open wide,  
and he smiles.

(beat)

Then he starts laughing. And I just  
watch this infant child laughing.  
This beautiful, perfect life I  
helped create.

The baby looks up at Max with wide eyes, giggling.

MAX (V.O.)

And I think to myself... You  
motherfucker. You fucking laugh at  
me?



INT. MALL-TV CORPORATE HQ CORRIDORS - DAY

HARRIS

Wow man, truly a Hallmark moment there.

They resume their walking.

MAX

Look, just give 'em a little rah rah speech, do the quick tour, then you can hole up in your office and let your internal organs collapse in on themselves.

Harris briefly gags, holding back the urge to vomit.

MAX (CONT'D)

Oh hey, almost forgot. Happy birthday!

HARRIS

Don't remind me.

INT. MALL-TV ATRIUM - DAY

An immense winding staircase acts as the centerpiece of the expansive cylindrical MALL-TV atrium. Video monitors adorn the perimeter walls, playing back footage of the decades of MALL-TV programming. Harris stands on the bottom landing of the stairs, facing 30 or so COLLEGE-AGED MEN AND WOMEN looking up at him from ground level.

HARRIS

Good afternoon everyone. My name is Harris Reynolds. It's my pleasure to be your guide in welcoming you all to the MALL-TV family.

Polite applause.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

Forty-three years ago, my father --

Harris motions to his father's portrait on the wall. The wall's blank, nothing on it. The interns look confused. Harris realizes his mistake, then swings around to point at the opposite wall that actually houses his father's portrait.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

-- my father had his light bulb moment when he thought "how can I go shopping at the mall, but never leave the comfort of my couch?"

(beat)

Mall plus television was his answer. MALL-TV. And those letter also happen to represent our core values.

A banner unfurls behind Harris.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

M, merchandising. A, accommodation. L, low-cost. L, love. T, television. And V, vision.

(beat)

These are the core values we hope to bestow upon you, the next generation of the MALL-TV team that will carry us into the future.

INT. MALL-TV CORPORATE HQ CORRIDORS - DAY

Harris leads the group of young men and women on a tour of the MALL-TV building. The tour spans a long dimly lit walkway that is elevated above the studios, visible below through glass panels.

HARRIS

Fifteen thousand employees. Thirty-five thousand square feet of production facilities rivaling anything in Hollywood. Marketing reach across fifty-eight countries in four continents. Just a decade ago MALL-TV was the number one television network in revenue worldwide.

INTERN #1

Where do we rank now?

HARRIS

Well that's harder to determine these days with the spread of competitors and multi-platform media. As well as --

INTERN #1

Top ten?

HARRIS

Again, I don't want to put an actual number to it. But you will all learn soon enough how we're positioned in the marketplace and the challenges we face moving forward. Now let's continue the tour.

The group continues their trek down the walkway. Various CREW MEMBERS attend to the sets below, moving studio equipment around, DESIGNERS changing the decor.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

Right now we're passing through our model home studio. This is our most recognizable set as it's the backdrop for our biggest shows. Joan At Home, Shelly McDoogie's Pantsuit Power Hour, Wigs Unlimited, the Denim Divas. It's also our largest set and completely modular, with two fully furnished bedroom and bathroom sets attached on both ends.

(beat)

Up ahead you're going to see our kitchen demo set.

INT. MALL-TV KITCHEN DEMO SET - DAY

GAYLE -- 30s, a perky suburban mom type -- stands next to ALEX -- 30s, male, a rough looking 30s -- behind a counter in a faux country home kitchen, shiny unused cookware adorning the walls between hand-painted signs featuring cutesy and punny phrases like "happiness is homemade" or "don't be afraid to take whisks." There is a small live STUDIO AUDIENCE on hand.

Alex motions to an appliance in front of them, steam pouring out of its sides.

ALEX

And the beauty here Gayle is in just thirty-seven minutes --

Alex opens the contraption and large plumes of steam emerge.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Perfectly cooked falafel.

Audience oohs and ahhs. He pulls a falafel ball out of the device and hands to Gayle. She takes a bite.

GAYLE  
 (choking down a mouth full of food)  
 Mmmm. Oh this is just fantastic.  
 Just like my mom used to make us  
 growing up.

Alex, with another falafel in hand, breaks it in two to show the camera.

ALEX  
 Just look at this texture.

GAYLE  
 Absolutely amazing.

Playing it up to the camera and audience, Gayle quickly points to Alex.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
 (exuberantly)  
 Hot diggity daaaaaaang!

ALEX  
 (jokingly)  
 Hey, that's my line!

Small audience erupts in laughter and applause. Alex lets it die down before continuing.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
 We haven't even gotten to the best part. If you order the Frycolator Fast and Easy Falafel Iron today I'm going to throw in two autographed copies of my cookbook.

INSERT - COOKBOOK

The cookbook cover reads "Cooking with Sparks!" with a picture of an overly enthusiastic Alex in a chef's toque.

BACK TO SCENE

ALEX (CONT'D)  
 And you'll automatically be entered to win a chance to have me come to your home on Thanksgiving and cook you dinner.

Audience oohs and claps.

INT. MALL-TV CORPORATE HQ CORRIDORS - DAY

Harris and the group of interns look down on the live cooking show taking place below.

HARRIS  
(motioning to Alex on set below)  
Anyone recognize that guy?

Slight mumbling between the interns.

HARRIS (CONT'D)  
Really? No one?

Harris falls back in this sheepish form we just saw from Gayle, pointing to an invisible person next to him.

HARRIS (CONT'D)  
(exuberantly)  
Hot diggity daaaaaaang!

Awkward silence from the intern group.

HARRIS (CONT'D)  
Alex Sparks? Famed adorable 90s  
child sitcom actor? Number one hit  
single on the Japanese pop charts?  
Short-lived multi-million dollar  
youth fashion line? His agent  
famously broke up his parent's  
marriage. First by having an affair  
with his mother, precipitating a  
nasty public divorce, then dumping  
her a few years later to go off and  
elope with his father?

The interns perk up at that last line.

HARRIS (CONT'D)  
(to himself)  
Huh, thought you would have at  
least seen re-runs.  
(beat)  
Ok, up ahead you're going to--

An intern who has gotten ahead of the group hovers over the glass panels looking down on the next tour stop.

INTERN #2  
Oh my god it's DiDi!

The rest of the interns rush past Harris, almost knocking him over, in an attempt to press up against the glass. There is giddiness heard through the group.

Down below sits DIDI (pronounced dee-dee) KLEPENDORFF -- 19, but the clothes, makeup, and presence say 29 -- in a director's chair off to the side of the fashion set, small dog in her lap, looking at her phone.

HARRIS

It's apparent most of you are familiar with our newest partner.

INT. STUDIO A

DiDi types away on her phone as producers and other crew members scramble around to get the shoot ready. A stylist awkwardly tries to apply makeup to DiDi, but is stifled by DiDi's reluctance to look away from her phone.

HARRIS (V.O.)

DiDi of course parlayed her fame as a wunderkind toy un-boxer on youtube to becoming the face of a billion dollar toy, makeup, fashion empire and is probably the biggest influencer out there today.

DiDi glances up at the group above. Muffled screams are heard through the glass. DiDi goes back to typing on her phone.

INT. MALL-TV CORPORATE HQ CORRIDORS - DAY

HARRIS

In the fifteen seconds or so it took me to tell you that, she literally just banked two hundred thousand dollars.

Interns attempt to take selfies, with DiDi positioned in the frame, through the glass above.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

Alright, alright, let's move on.

The interns struggle to avert their gaze from DiDi below, and gradually peel off the glass as the group continues on down the walkway.

INT. MALL-TV BACKSTAGE CORRIDORS - DAY

Harris walks the group through a brightly lit, vast corridor of large doors labeled STUDIO A, B, C, SETS, PROPS.

EMPLOYEES walk past the tour group with a sense or purpose, as if they weren't there. Harris walks backwards, addressing the group in front of him.

HARRIS

We're now walking through the central nervous system of our production facility. All studio access happens down here, sets are built, painted and installed down here. The prop warehouse --

DAVE

Hold up Har,

DAVE -- 50s, burly and balding, business casual dress, 2 phones attached to his belt -- holds his hand up to block Harris from walking into him. The group stops in their place. A forklift slowly crosses their path hauling a pallet full of boxes of assorted sizes. Harris turns around to Dave.

HARRIS

Oh, hey Dave.

Harris turns back to the group.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

Everybody, this is Dave Mittlegrove.

Dave waves politely to the crowd.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

He heads up our broadcast engineering department. He essentially makes sure we are on air twenty-four seven, three sixty-five a year. For those of you who will be working on the production side of things, I have only this advice. Don't fuck with Dave.

Dave gives a slightly annoyed and embarrassed look to Harris as the forklift clears and he waves the group through. The group begins to continue down the hallway. Harris holds for a moment to speak to Dave.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

I don't remember any big installs on the schedule for today.

Dave is still directing forklifts and other workers with his hands.

DAVE

You read the schedule?

(beat)

I don't know, your sister moved some shit around. Cut this, accelerated that. I just know we're behind.

HARRIS

Well I'll let you get to it then.

Harris starts to walk away to head back to leading the group.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

Trivia tonight?

DAVE

If we're not stuck here overtiming it.

Harris nods approval and turns back toward the group.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Oh Har, caught the Denim rehearsal.  
(big belly laugh)  
Classic.

INT. MALL-TV CALL CENTER - DAY

Harris and group enter a massive room housing seemingly endless rows of plain long desks/benches, with headset clad EMPLOYEES sitting almost shoulder to shoulder in front of computer monitors, fielding phone calls.

HARRIS

This is the call center. Year after year we redefine customer service benchmarks in the retail industry, and it's all thanks to our hardworking staff you see here.

Harris guides the tour through the rows of employees fielding calls as he continues to talk.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

We field over a million customer calls every year, from all over the world, each one just as important as the other.



INT. MALL-TV CALL CENTER/CORNER DESK - DAY

While answering calls, a bored-looking CUSTOMER SERVICE REP scrolls through Instagram on her computer, currently looking through DiDi Klependorff's feed.

CUSTOMER SERVICE REP  
(into headset)  
Good afternoon, thanks for calling us here at Mall-TV. How can I help you today?

ELDERLY FEMALE (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
I wanted to ask about that dress Lisa was wearing today.

CUSTOMER SERVICE REP  
(into headset)  
Oh yes, I think I know the one you're talking about. Even though that wasn't a featured design on this show, if you really liked that piece then you be glad to know it'll be featured --

ELDERLY FEMALE (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
You need to tell her to cover up. Too chesty today. We don't need to see none of that.

CUSTOMER SERVICE REP  
(into headset)  
Ok, I'll see if I --

ELDERLY FEMALE (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
A whore. She looked like a whore.

INT. MALL-TV CALL CENTER - DAY

Harris walks the group past the last row of employees.

HARRIS  
The largest contingent of our customers is still very landline dependent so that's why these traditional call centers are so vital.

Harris gathers the group together in an open space at the end of the room and a large set of double doors.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

So this is the part of the tour where I leave you to break out to your individual departmental concentrations, where you'll be introduced to the people you'll be working the most closely with during your time here.

(beat)

I hope to see you all again at 5:30 in the atrium for the intern welcome reception. Hors d'oeuvres and a live musical performance from the breakout star of the Christian boy-band supergroup "Duderonomy" and MALL-TV brand ambassador, Danny Sunday.

The interns applaud lightly as they start to filter off in groups and are lead away through the doors by other STAFF MEMBERS. Harris politely acknowledges the interns as they walk by him. As the last of them walk by, Max approaches, a notebook in one hand, a large bottle of gatorade in the other.

MAX

See, that wasn't so bad. Here.

Max attempts to hand Harris the gatorade.

HARRIS

Hold on.

Harris continues to politely wave goodbye to the interns. The door then shuts behind the last of them. Harris immediately turns to the recycling receptacle next to him and buries his head in it. He vomits loudly.

MAX

There, there.

Max pats him on the back. Harris' vomiting continues to a comical length.

INT. HARRIS' OFFICE - DAY

Harris' office is far less grandiose than Hanna's in scale. Less glass, one television monitor on the wall tuned to ESPN (muted), and a phone and laptop on the desk. The rest of the space is occupied by movie memorabilia.

Movie posters from Jaws, Raiders of the Lost Ark, A Clockwork Orange, and Blade Runner hang on the walls along with a replica Light Saber encased in glass. A red Swingline stapler sits on his desk next to a replica Iron Man arc reactor. A life-size replica of The Predator stands ominously in the corner.

Max watches patiently as Harris sits behind his desk, gulping down 32oz of gatorade without coming up for air. He slams the empty bottle down on the desk.

HARRIS

Ahh. Ok, now where were we?

Harris picks up the phone and hits a few digits. Max looks on amused.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Hey D.

DENISE (V.O.)

(filtered)

Oh, hey Har. We was just watchin' the denim rehearsal playback. You better hope no one here youtubes that shit.

HARRIS

I need a favor.

DENISE (V.O.)

(filtered)

Whatcha need?

HARRIS

A list of all production related shipments received in the past few days, and any associated work order numbers.

DENISE (V.O.)

(filtered)

Uh sure. Yeah, I can get that to you.

HARRIS

Thanks, you're the best. Trivia tonight?

DENISE (V.O.)

(filtered)

You know it.

Harris hangs up the phone and looks diligently at the laptop in front of him. Max looks on in slight state of shock.

MAX

You're actually going to do work today?

Harris types away.

HARRIS

Either I'm going crazy or there's some covert shit going on here with the schedule.

MAX

You read the schedule?

HARRIS

Why is everyone so incredulous?

MAX

Well there's this widely held perception of you that you don't really do anything here. So I think the incredulity speaks for itself. I mean, I'd say it's a misconception, but then I'd be lying. And that's not what you pay me for.

HARRIS

What do I pay you for?

MAX

Honesty boss.

Harris smirks and continues to type. He glances up and looks over Max's shoulder, through the glass window looking out to the open office floor. Off in the distance a man wearing a trench coat and hat occupies a private small conference room. Harris notices the man, then starts typing again.

HARRIS

Who's the fifties era beat reporter?

Max looks back.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Thinking no one's watching, the man in the trench coat picks his nose, looks at the result, then eats it.

MAX (V.O)  
Oh fuck. He's still here?

HARRIS (V.O.)  
Who?

INT. HARRIS' OFFICE - DAY

MAX  
He showed up this morning to deliver you some envelope. But he wouldn't just leave it. Said he had to deliver it in person.

HARRIS  
Am I being served papers or something?

MAX  
Don't think so. Not the vibe I got. Wait, are you expecting to be served papers?

HARRIS  
I don't think so.

MAX  
Completely forgot about him with the Denim ordeal this morning, then the interns --

HARRIS  
The Denim ordeal. That what we're calling it?

MAX  
I was kind of partial to the Denim fucktastrophe.  
(beat)  
So, what do you want me to do with him?

HARRIS  
Bring him in I guess.

MAX  
Really?

HARRIS  
Sure, I'm feeling productive.

Max leaves the room as Harris clicks through some emails. He sees the email from Denise with the information he requested attached. He opens it and starts to read through some spreadsheets. Max returns with the man in the trench coat.

MAX  
Harris, this is --

BAXTER  
Baxter St. John.

Harris immediately pauses, a look of dread overcoming him.

BAXTER (CONT'D)  
Mr. Reynolds I've got something for  
you.

Baxter slowly reaches into his coat and pulls out an envelope.

BAXTER (CONT'D)  
I'm from --

HARRIS  
Western Union.

MAX  
What the hell is happening?

Harris takes the envelope from Baxter's hand. He looks at it intently.

HARRIS  
Max, will you please see Bax -- no,  
I'm sorry, what's your real name?

BAXTER  
Frank.

HARRIS  
Will you see Frank gets a MALL-TV  
gift basket on the way out?

MAX  
Uh, sure.

Max walks Baxter/Frank out the door to the reception area. Harris looks at the sealed envelope in his hands. Max reenters the office.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Seriously, what the fuck is  
happening?

HARRIS  
(to himself)  
He really did it.

MAX  
Did what? Who?  
(beat)  
Dude?

HARRIS  
In third grade I was on this Back to the Future kick. My dad got me the trilogy on VHS. Practically wore those tapes out. I thought it'd be cool to write a letter to my future self, when I would be 30 years old.

MAX  
Uh, cool?

HARRIS  
I wanted it delivered just like the Back to the Future movies. I remember my dad going through the motions of having me send it through this fake Western Union desk. It was all bullshit but I loved every minute of it. The attendant's name, Baxter St. John.  
(beat)  
He actually did it through.

MAX  
Wait, so you wrote that letter 21 years ago, to yourself now?

HARRIS  
Basically.

MAX  
Can we read it?

HARRIS  
Fuck no. It's --

Max rips the envelope out of Harris' hand and tears it open. He begins to read.

MAX  
Dear Harry, if my calculations are correct you'll receive this on your thirtieth birthday.

(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)

(beat)

Holy shit were you committed to the part.

Harris buries his face in his hands.

MAX (CONT'D)

I know you must be busy directing movies, and hanging out with your wife Britney Spears and your seven kids and eleven puppies. Are you still allergic to cats? Do you still like Pokemon?

Max eyes the rest of the letter.

MAX (CONT'D)

Holy shit, it just goes on and on asking if you still like dumb 90s shit.

Harris rips the letter out of Max's hands.

HARRIS

I was nine.

MAX

Oh this is fantastic.

Max bursts out of the office in hysterics.

HARRIS

Tell anyone and you're fired.

(beat)

Fired!

Max continues down the hall. Harris slumps back in his chair, looking longingly at the letter. He contemplates it for a moment, then crumbles it up and tosses it in the trash can across the room. He takes a deep breath, rubs his eyes, then gets back to looking at the open spreadsheets on his laptop.

Scrolling through a seemingly endless list of random entries, he pauses on a line item reading "ARV SOLUTIONS Inc. - \$47,000." His eyes perk to attention. He opens a web browser and searches "ARV Solutions" which takes him to the homepage of the Allied Robotic Video homepage.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

Oh fuck!



INT. HANNA'S OFFICE RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Harris walks briskly towards Hanna's office with laptop in hand. Hanna is inside meeting with three CHINESE BUSINESSMEN. The RECEPTIONIST outside tries to impede his progress.

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Reynolds, she's in a meeting.

Harris brushes past her.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Mr. Reyno --

Harris forcefully swings open the office doors.

INT. HANNA'S OFFICE

Hanna sits behind her desk, the Chinese businessmen seated in chairs across from her. They are all startled by Harris' entrance.

HARRIS

How many?!

HANNA

What the fuck Harris? I'm meeting with --

HARRIS

How --

Harris angrily hurls his laptop at the wall. But instead of smashing against the wall, it flies right through an open window down to the courtyard below.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

...many?!

The room falls silent.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

(pantomiming)

That, uh, was supposed to go differently.

The businessmen give him a quizzical look.

HANNA

(in Chinese)

Would you please excuse my ignorant brother? This will not take long.

Hanna ushers the businessmen out of her office.

HANNA (CONT'D)

Please treat yourself to whatever you like in the cafeteria and I will rejoin you shortly.

She closes the doors behind her.

HANNA (CONT'D)

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, what in the ever loving fuck is wrong with you?

HARRIS

How many sis?

Hanna exhibits a look of recognition regarding the subject of Harris' question. She takes a deep breath then sits down behind her desk.

HANNA

How?

HARRIS

The unscheduled meeting with the union reps earlier, then I ran into Dave downstairs loading the new robotic gear in.

HANNA

But the union meeting was scheduled.

HARRIS

Fine, I just got lucky with that one.

(beat)

So how many?

HANNA

I don't know.

HARRIS

Ballpark?

HANNA

Substantial.

HARRIS

Fuck, are things that bad?

HANNA

Yes. No. I don't know. It's complicated.

(beat)

Ok, here --

Hanna makes an X with her forearms.

HANNA (CONT'D)

See this? It's a graph of the trend lines of our company. This arm, (wiggling right arm) from my elbow going up to my fingers represents the average age of our viewer.

(beat)

And this arm, (wiggling left arm) from my fingers going down to my elbow represents the age of cable subscribers.

HARRIS

So where are we now?

Hanna looks at him confused, then motions to the intersection of her arms.

HANNA

The X. The fucking intersection, trending down. I thought that was clear.

(beat)

Christ, I thought you'd be tipped off by that hail mary we threw, signing that second rate Kardashian, or Jenner, or whatever surname is more famous these days.

Harris slumps down, dejected.

HARRIS

So what are we going to do?

HANNA

We? Oh Har, it's a little fucking late for we.

(beat)

Look, we have a few irons in the fire and the board is confident we'll all get a good return on any buyout.

Harris looks up at his sister annoyed. He remains speechless.

HANNA (CONT'D)

All I ask is you just keep quiet for the time being. I know you're the company's drinking buddy, but we just don't know yet the scope of the layoffs and the impact on each department.

Harris recognizes his sister's plea, still in disbelief of the dire news.

HANNA (CONT'D)

I'm trusting you on this one Har.

INT. STUDIO C - DAY

A large evenly lit white cyc wall fills one corner of the studio. A couch sits in the middle of the floor, the former centerpiece of a video shoot just wrapped. Several crew members, SCOTT -- 40s male, greying goatee and a beer drinker's body -- and ANDREA -- early 20s female, neon highlighted hair tied back, ripped jeans, flannel shirt, and wearing a Harry Potter deathly hallows pendant around her neck -- and TY -- late 20s African American male, wearing baggy khakis and Allen Iverson throwback jersey -- are breaking down equipment positioned around the couch while simultaneously immersed in lively debate. Another crew member ADAM -- mid 20s male -- sits at a desk off in the distance watching videos on a computer. Harris and Max both sit down on the couch in unison.

MAX

So how fucked are we?

HARRIS

Depends on what you mean by we.

MAX

Seriously, who's --

HARRIS

-- Don't know exactly. Substantial was the word.

Max sinks down in the couch dejected.

MAX

(to himself)

Fuck me.

HARRIS

Us. Fuck us.

Harris give Max a reassuring nod.

HARRIS (CONT'D)  
Shit, I don't know. We'll think of something.

MAX  
Your optimism is baffling.

The crew members' debate around them rages on, distracting Harris from Max.

HARRIS  
What's the topic today?

MAX  
Top five Pixar movies.  
(beat)  
Well that's how it started. It's devolved into some nonsense about the believability of anthropomorphic cars.

Scott wraps cable around his arm while arguing his point.

SCOTT  
I'm telling you, it makes no fucking sense. Where are the humans?

TY  
There are none. The cars are the (air-quotes) "humans."

SCOTT  
So are there baby cars? How do they reproduce? Are they sexual? Do they fuck?

HARRIS  
(to Max)  
Oh, Lightning McQueen fucks!

Andrea puts lights and stands back in their cases.

ANDREA  
Maybe it's meant to be our world, but the cars became sentient and killed all of the humans, then took over the planet.

TY  
Dude, it's rated G.

SCOTT

Bullshit. They don't have hands,  
opposable thumbs. They can't  
maintain that kind of upkeep.

TY

Har, please talk some sense here.

HARRIS

Scotty makes some good points.

Adam continues to watch videos on the computer off in the corner.

ADAM

(to himself)

Holy shit!

Harris briefly acknowledges Adam's exclamation and turns back to the debate.

SCOTT

Not to mention, what does this  
supposed universe says about free  
will versus predestination?

Ty shakes his head.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Can a sentient street sweeper do  
anything in life other than just  
clean streets? A back hoe can only  
get a job digging holes?

(beat)

And let's talk about where boats  
and planes fit in this world.

MAX

Let's not.

TY

It's called suspension of  
disbelief, which should be pretty  
fucking easy to accept in a Doc  
Hollywood rip-off featuring cartoon  
cars for kids.

ADAM (O.S.)

(to himself)

Whoah!

SCOTT

Nope. Suspension of disbelief goes  
only so far.

ADAM (O.S.)  
(to himself)  
Oh shit!

Harris turns his attention back to Adam.

HARRIS  
What are you watching?

Adam remains entranced by the video. Harris walks over and looks over his shoulder.

HARRIS (CONT'D)  
What is this?

INSERT - COMPUTER

A highly stylized and violent action movie plays on a webpage. The film's PROTAGONIST is engaged in close knife combat with two assailants. The assailants appear to have the upper hand. All of a sudden the actor launches into an acrobatic move where he grabs one assailant by the hair, pulling his face into the knife blade held by his other hand, while simultaneously performing a roundhouse kick, where a knife attached to his boot slices the throat of the other assailant. Blood sprays from the heads of both lifeless bodies with comedic excess.

BACK TO SCENE

TY  
Fuck, that was dope!

Ty has taken the place behind Adam's other shoulder. Max, Andrea, and Scott then join the group.

ADAM  
A fucking thirteen year old made this.

TY  
The fuck outta here.

MAX  
No way.

ADAM  
Yep. An iPhone and Adobe subscription.  
(beat)  
Got his uncle's karate dojo to supply the actors.

INSERT - COMPUTER

The protagonist holds his dying PARTNER in his arms. Blood from his severely injured eyes rolls down his face. Where the film excels in action and style, it severely lacks in acting.

PARTNER

Is it over?

PROTAGONIST

Yes, I got them. The cartel will never bother this city again.

PARTNER

You did it.

PROTAGONIST

No, we did it.

Partner coughs up blood.

PROTAGONIST (CONT'D)

Don't you die on me now. You're two days from retirement. You're gonna open that bar you always dreamed about. That was the plan.

PARTNER

(coughs)

No.

(coughs)

This was always the plan.

Tears stream down the protagonist's cheeks.

PARTNER (CONT'D)

I see them.

PROTAGONIST

(bad fake crying)

Who? They stabbed both of your eyes out.

PARTNER

My dead wife and kids.

(coughs)

I see them again.

PROTAGONIST

Go to them.

(bad fake crying)

Go.

His partner's head goes limp as one last gargle of blood is heard.



Protagonist's crying intensifies and he waves his hand over his dead partner's eyes to close them in cliched action movie fashion, but it doesn't do anything since the eyes were already severely mangled from being stabbed. Protagonist looks towards the sky and screams.

PROTAGONIST (CONT'D)

Damn you god, why!?

BACK TO SCENE

MAX

So the writing and acting are kind of suspect, but that action sequence --

ADAM

Yeah, and check this shit out.

INSERT - COMPUTER

Adam scrolls the webpage up to reveal the article headline.

"13 year old's short film 'Knife Cops' goes viral. Signs Netflix development deal."

BACK TO SCENE

ANDREA

Does that say four million dollars?

SCOTT

Fuck my life.

TY

Get a load of mister suspension of disbelief now.

HARRIS

(to himself)

That's it.

MAX

What did you say?

HARRIS

That. That's what we're going to do.

MAX

Do what?

HARRIS

We're gonna make a movie.

INT. PUB - NIGHT

The pub is moderately crowded. Music plays while the TRIVIA HOST speaks over the PA system. Harris, Max, Scott, Andrea, Ty, Adam, and DENISE -- mid 30s female -- all sit at a round table littered with half empty pitchers and pint glasses.

TRIVIA HOST (O.S.)

Ok, that's the end of round one.  
Please bring up your answer sheets.

ADAM

We good?

The group collectively nods. Adam picks up a small sheet of paper from the table and walks toward the DJ. Max turns to Harris.

MAX

So let's go over this again.  
(beat)  
The future of the company is in question.

HARRIS

Yes.

MAX

All of our jobs are in jeopardy.

HARRIS

Yes.

MAX

And you think we should make a movie?

HARRIS

Yes.

MAX

Why?

HARRIS

You all saw that kid's film today.  
Yes, it was a bit gratuitous with the violence and the nudity.

ANDREA

Yeah, who the fuck are this kid's parents?

HARRIS

But with a few grand and little more than a phone and a computer, he fucking made something. And now he's on the fast track to banging starlets and burying his face in mountains of coke by the time he's sixteen.

The group looks on confused.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

Look, I'm just saying the kid shot his shot. Why don't we shoot ours?

MAX

Fuck man, that letter really got to you.

HARRIS

Maybe.

TY

What letter?

HARRIS

How many of you got into this business because you wanted to help sell denim vests and cable knit sweaters to a bunch of octogenarians?

Scott raises his hand.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

Fuck you. Seriously.

Adam returns to the table with the answer sheet.

ADAM

Nine out of ten. We missed --

HARRIS

-- Adam, you got your MFA, right?

ADAM

Yeah, you knew that.

HARRIS

Why?

ADAM

Why what?

HARRIS

Why did you get it? Spend all that money? What was the point?

ADAM

I don't know. I liked film studies. Thought I'd make movies somed --

HARRIS

-- Fucking right. But you haven't. None of you have.

(beat)

And I haven't either. But what if we did?

The collective look of the group has slowly morphed from confusion to intrigue. Harris picks up one of the fuller pitchers and tops off everyone's glass.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

Look what that little sociopath created with limited resources.

(beat)

We have access to world class studio space, top of the line production gear, a set shop, props department, post production suites, make up artists, a stable of B-list celebrities.

SCOTT

B?

HARRIS

A stable of former B-list celebrities.

(beat)

But six months from now, we may not have anything.

The group is silent, sneaking glances at each other to try and gauge one another's opinion. Harris raises his pint.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

So what do you say?

The group hesitates to commit as Harris' pint hangs in the air awkwardly. Another glass then goes up.

MAX

Motherfucker, you know you'll fall flat on your face without me.

Harris smiles. Three more glasses enter the fray.

ADAM

In.

ANDREA

Me too.

DENISE

Of course Har.

Ty lifts his glass up.

TY

Shit, this has disaster written all over it. Of course I'm in.

The group turns their attention to Scott.

SCOTT

Can I direct?

The group just stares him down.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Fine, fine. But I want an above the line credit.

Scott adds his raised glass to the group.

HARRIS

To taking our shot.

The group taps the bottom of their pints on the table, chugs the beer, then inverts the empty glass and slams it on the table.

ADAM, ANDREA, DENISE, TY, SCOTT

(in close unison)

To taking our shot.

Max takes longer to finish and slam his glass down.

MAX

(burping)

To taking our shot.

Dave walks up to the table, takes off his jacket and sits down in an empty seat.

DAVE

Shit, did I miss the first round already? What else did I miss?

The group looks around at each other.

TRIVIA HOST (O.S.)

Ok everyone, get your answer sheets ready. We're going to start round two.