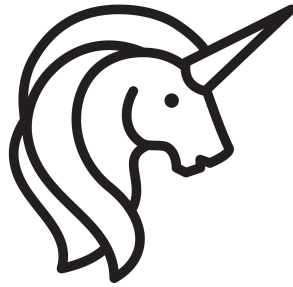


DISTANCING SOCIALLY

Written by

Chris Blake

Blue Draft 05/26/20
Pink Draft 08/12/20
Yellow Draft 08/20/20
Green Draft 08/23/20



As these are unprecedented times, this script does not follow a traditional narrative but instead bears a resemblance to an anthology. Composed of a series of short vignettes that share a telecommunications application as a common thread, the script focuses on loosely connected human interactions taking place virtually across a world in lockdown.

**All characters in this film are seen only via
videotelephony (webcam, FaceTime, etc.)**

D I S T A N C I N G S O C I A L L Y

MUSIC CUE: YESTERDAY

MAIN TITLES/OPEN ON:

-- A birds-eye-view of downtown Los Angeles at night.
-- It dissolves into a lively New York City skyline.
-- Now, we're floating over Singapore. Daytime.
-- Singapore dissolves into a bustling London.
-- Another dissolve transports us to a Philly skyline at night.

As TITLES filter in, it becomes clear this montage of aerial landscapes is someone's desktop screensaver.

Everything is peaceful.

Then --

CLICK.

We're staring at a desktop with a NEWS ARTICLE pulled up. The headline:

"Lockdown restrictions expanded. The novel coronavirus has infected millions worldwide."

A SIGH.

The mouse CLICKS open another tab.

INT. DJ SATUR8'S STUDIO, YOUTUBE - DAY

It's a video. The source of the music. A guy wearing a DJ MASK plays at SMALL KEYBOARD inside his quaint home studio. The logo on the video say's DJ SATUR8.

The music ends. He leans into MIC.

DJ SATUR8

(slow, smooth voice)

A new one from the arsenal. I call it Yesterday. Wrote it in my sleep last night while dreaming about all the things I'm gonna do when I, and all of you fine fellow hunker-downers, are once again free to frolic the streets -- unencumbered by evil pathogens. Once again, I'm DJ SATUR8, live streaming new music to tickle your ears, hold your hands, and make love to your hearts as we sequester together.

The mouse CLICKS pause on the video, then opens another tab.

It opens **ANNA'S (29)** instagram feed.

Anna radiates power and perfection like a living, breathing black and white photo of Christy Turlington straight out of the nineties.

Scroll the feed, then mouse CLICKS play on a video:

INT. ANNA'S LIVING ROOM, INSTAGRAM - DAY

Anna speaks to us.

ANNA

(sighs)

I never know how to start these things. I hate it when people start their videos with --

(mimics bubbly gir)

Hi, everyone! Or, *Hi, Guys!* My feed is full of videos and captions reminding me I'm in quarantine. As if we need reminding. Everyone is talking about what they're doing in lockdown and I'm thinking who the fuck cares? Right? Like, I'm thinking about what I'm gonna do when this is all over. You know? I miss going to like, Elton John, concerts. I've never actually been to an Elton concert but I miss the feeling of feeling like I'm missing out on something.

(beat)

You know what else I miss?
Monogamy.

(MORE)

ANNA (CONT'D)

At least, then you're not having sex because you don't want to. Anyway. Stay safe everyone, cause like --

(mimics bubbly girl)

We're all in this together!

Anna blows a facetious kiss. The video ends.

The mouse CLICKS a heart. Adding one more buried "like" among thousands.

The mouse scrolls down to find another video:

INT. KATIE'S LIVING ROOM, INSTAGRAM - DAY

KATIE (29), a bubbly influencer, speaks to us in the manner Katie just satirized.

KATIE

Hi, everyone! I just wanted to give a shout out to everyone who is staying home and safe from the virus. I know these are tough times, but we can and will get through it! Don't lose hope. Don't lose faith. We're all in this together.

Katie blows a kiss. The video ends .

The mouse CLICKS a heart on that one too.

The video is minimized to reveal a slightly cluttered desktop. The desktop background is a PICTURE OF A GROUP OF FRIENDS, smiling, all in close quarters. Different times.

A notification appears in the top right corner of the screen:

"Dad calling."

CLICKS decline.

Pulls up iMessage and texts NOEL:

"You were suppose to call 10 mins ago."

Noel sends back the middle finger emoji, followed by:

"Sorry. Autocorrect. Meant to say call me."

iMessage is minimized.

The mouse then moves and CLICKS a desktop icon called ALICORN.

INT. BEN'S BEDROOM, WEBCAM - DAY

A video chat window pops up to reveal, **BEN (32)**, staring into his webcam.

Ben leans closely into the camera, notices a wrinkle under his eyes.

BEN
(sotto)
What the fuck is that.

Leans back out.

Ben sighs.

He DIALS Noel.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. NOEL'S LIVING ROOM, WEBCAM - DAY

NOEL (49) answers.

NOEL
(to someone offscreen)
I'm not changing another toilet seat during this entire pandemic! So clean it up!
(to Ben)
Ben. Do not have children. It's just never a good idea.

Noel is surrounded by CHIP BAGS, SODA CANS, left over DISHES. He's wearing boxers and a T-shirt, with a blazer thrown over it -- you know, to look nice.

BEN
I'll keep that in mind. I got Carol's text the other night, but I think I forgot to respond. She doing good? Kids doing good?

NOEL
They're great. Carol is great. Everyone's great. You know what isn't great though? My ass.
(MORE)

NOEL (CONT'D)

If another one of my damn kids draws a princess, or ninja, or power dino ranger monkey with markers on my toilet seat... I swear to god I hate the internet. It's all prank videos teaching children how to destroy their parents.

NOEL'S WIFE

(from another room)

Do not take the lord's name in vain!

NOEL

(to wife)

I was just praying, honey!

(to Ben, softer)

She's out for blood.

(checks over shoulder)

My son, this morning, he does this thing -- I wake him up in the morning and he pretends to be asleep. I pull the sheets down and he gives me the finger. I laugh cause it's funny. It's our thing. This morning, Carol walks in just in time to see it, and who gets in trouble? Me! What did I do? How am I the one to get chastised?

BEN

(laughs)

I take it lockdown has been rough.

NOEL

Rough? My nine year old son recently became obsessed with his penis. Like it wasn't there all along. He's been running around the house with his pants down. His mother "me too'd" him yesterday. And I have princesses coming out of my ass, Ben. Is that rough enough for you? Other than that I can't complain.

NOEL'S WIFE

(from another room)

And that's enough cursing!

NOEL
 (to wife)
 Honey, you know I have to use curse
 words when I exclaim.

Noel sighs.

NOEL (CONT'D)
 But enough about how fantastic my
 life is. What's up with you? How's
 your dad?

BEN
 Fine, I guess. I don't know.
 Haven't had much to connect lately.
 (Noel doesn't buy it)
 It's tough to see him--you know--
 like he is.
 (deflecting)
 Did you get a chance to read the
 script?

NOEL
 I did. Yeah.
 (thumbing through script)
 Listen, I didn't really understand
 the uh...
 (looking for a specific
 part)
 Well, any of it.

Noel tosses the script aside.

BEN
 (incredulous)
 You didn't understand any of it? I
 find that hard to believe. What's
 the, come on, what's the problem?
 Honestly.

NOEL
 Honesty? You want honesty?

BEN
 I think I'm entitled to it.

NOEL
 Don't. Don't do the A Few Good Men
 thing.

BEN
 I'm not.

NOEL

You were.

BEN

I felt really good about this draft. What doesn't work?

NOEL

What doesn't work? Well, for starters it's supposed to be a World War One Epic and you've turned it into a romantic comedy that takes place over Zoom.

BEN

So, it's a love story. Rom-Com's are coming back.

NOEL

The studio has a very specific audience in mind and--

BEN

And it's written for that audience. Is this because I made it diverse?

NOEL

Diverse? You've got a time traveling Douglas McArthur that you've also turned into a female character.

BEN

And?

NOEL

(relenting)

Look. Your argument is not with me. I'm for it.

BEN

Then I ask again, what doesn't work?

NOEL

Really? You're gonna make me say it? Okay. It's too diverse. Too many females. Too many diverse characters. And there aren't enough diverse actors out there, yet, I'm saying yet--that can command the kind of box office return--

BEN
That's bullshit and you know it.

NOEL'S WIFE
(from another room)
Noel Pendergrass!

NOEL
(to wife)
That was Ben's smut, darling. Not mine.
(to Ben)
Look, I'm just the messenger. I'm on your side.

BEN
No, you're the producer--

NOEL
Yeah, and I won't be if I send them this script. You know how this works by now. They hire me. They tell me what they want. I make sure they get that.

BEN
I get that. But you came to me for my--"creative vision"--but what you really want is a paint by numbers script.

NOEL
Yes. Because that's what they're paying you to do. Ben. I love you. The studio loves you. But now I'm gonna do the tough love thing.

BEN
No.

NOEL
The way I see it, you have two options. You wanna be the Sundance kid and go back to making movies for a half a million dollars--forfeiting most of your paycheck to make sure you can afford your vision--fine. You can do that. Do that and you can write whatever the hell you want whenever the hell you want. And I'll applaud you for it. Or, option two--you can do this one their way.

(MORE)

NOEL (CONT'D)

Build off your momentum, then--
maybe--maybe--they'll do one for
you.

Ben sighs. Gets up and paces.

NOEL (CONT'D)

(beat)

Humor me for a minute. Maybe I'm
wrong about this--but...Anna left.
And that sucks. I get it. But also,
that was two years ago--

Ben sits back down.

BEN

Anna? This doesn't have anything to
do with Anna. I'm over, Anna. This
is about progress. And it was one
year nine months ago. Not that it
matters. I just want the timeline
to be accurate.

NOEL

If you're actually over Anna, then
yeah, this is progress.

Ben sighs. Momentarily relenting.

BEN

I'm kind of interested in someone
else.

NOEL

Kind of?

BEN

Am--I am--interested in someone
else.

NOEL

What?! No GeeDee way. Who the eff
is it?

BEN

Not sure I'm ready to go there.

NOEL

Come on. Don't be stupid. I've been
quarantined with my kids for
months. Obviously, you're going to
tell me.

BEN

(beat)
Katie.

NOEL

Katie!
(scoffs)
Like, as in, Katie-Katie?

BEN

Yeah. Katie-Katie. So, what?

NOEL

So, what?

Noel just laughs.

BEN

Is that funny?

NOEL

It's hilarious. You totally have an effin' shot.

BEN

Really? Cause after that ridiculous laugh you just did that response feels a little "effin'" contrived.

NOEL

Hey. Okay, potty mouth. I'm just saying you should call her. I mean what the H?

BEN

And say what? Hey Katie, it's Ben, the guy you called Brian all night at Rachel's barbecue last year. You wouldn't be interested in starting a relationship in the middle of pandemic would you?

NOEL

Relationship? That's bold. Let's calm down. And wow. You're bad at this. I'm just saying, she's probably home and not surrounded by a bunch of hot dudes like usual. *Probably. I'm saying probably.*

BEN

Is this your idea of a pep talk?

NOEL
It's a pandemic pep talk.

BEN
It's bad.

A notification appears in the top right corner of the screen:
"Andy calling."

NOEL
Oh, shhh...i....t.

BEN
Um. Andy's calling?

NOEL
(panicky and squeaky)
Yeah. Shoot. Crap. Okay. Okay. It's fine. It's all good. Andy's calling.

BEN
As in, Andy from the studio?

NOEL
As in Andy who financed the whole GeeDee effin movie, Andy! Sorry.
(deep breath)
Hold on, I'm gonna merge the calls. Don't mention the script.

BEN
He's gonna ask.

NOEL
Just--don't talk about the--just let me do the talking.

BEN
Fine.

Another screen pops up. Sometimes we see all three of them at once. Sometimes one at a time.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. ANDY'S KITCHEN, FACETIME - DAY

ANDY (54) is cooking in his kitchen. He has his phone propped up.

NOEL

Andy! I was about to call you.

ANDY

Cut the shit, Noel. When is my script going to be finished?

NOEL

Did you also notice Ben is on the line? Say hello, Ben.

BEN

Hey, Andy. How are you?

ANDY

I'd be a lot better if I knew when my script was going to be done. It's been three months.

BEN

To be fair, three months for a script is a quick turnaround.

ANDY

It was a quick turnaround when we all had lives to live. Now, we don't. We're all stuck home and time is irrelevant.

NOEL

Yeah. About that--

ANDY

Also, if the people that delivered my groceries would get the green Avocados. You know? I don't like the ripe ones as much. I've taken to cooking lately. And the green avocados are just better.

Awkward beat. Andy sips something from a spoon. Nods in approval.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Right?

NOEL

Absolutely. Go green.

BEN

Definitely.

Andy picks up his phone and walks through his house.

ANDY

Listen. Guys. I know it's tough for everyone right now.

(MORE)

ANDY (CONT'D)

In light of that, today, I want to be your pal, Andy. Not asshole, Andy. But asshole Andy needs to see a script. Or, he's going to get very upset. Ben, are we close?

Awkward beat.

<p>BEN</p> <p>Um. We're close. A few minor tweaks. Couple revisions. Not a complete overhaul.</p>	<p>NOEL</p> <p>Almost there. A little polishing up. All it needs. Little things. Nothing major.</p>
---	---

Andy walks outside. Flips his screen around to show his neighborhood. It's a sunny day.

ANDY

Would you look at this beautiful day. Can't even enjoy it.
(flips screen back)

I wanna go ride my bike. I have a nice blue bike. But Jackie won't let me leave the house without gloves and a mask. And I don't look good in gloves.

c

BEN

Yes. No. What?

ANDY

Do you know the budget for this film?

BEN

I do. And I understand. But I think audiences today are more adept than they're given credit for.

ANDY

And, Noel, you feel this way, too?

NOEL

Honestly, I think it's a little ironic--and funny--that three white guys are having this conversation right now. Ha ha.
(beat)

I think--maybe--there's truth behind what Ben is saying. Sir.

ANDY

I really thought you were the team
for this movie.

SMOKE ALARM sounds through Andy's end.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Ah, damn! My avocados.

Andy hangs up. Leaving Ben and Noel on the line.

Noel exhales dramatically and MOTORBOATS his lips.

BEN

It could've been worse.

NOEL

Sure. He could've fired us right
then instead of over email tomorrow
morning. This has been great. I'm
gonna go smoke whatever pot I have
left, assuming my wife hasn't found
it, and then google the address to
the closest soup kitchen.

BEN

That seems a little dramatic.

NOEL

Unemployment is dramatic, Ben. Very
dramatic.

BEN

He hasn't fired us yet. We did the
right thing.

NOEL

Yes. Because if history's taught us
anything, it's that people doing
the right thing never end up on the
gallows.

BEN

I'll send him the script. Maybe,
he'll change his mind. It's worth a
shot.

Noel sighs.

NOEL

Sure. Why not. I have to go. Pretty
sure I just heard one of my kids
destroy something expensive. We'll
talk soon.

Noel clicks off, leaving Ben staring at himself in his webcam.

BEN
 (to himself)
 Hope you know what you're doing ass-wipe.

After a few beats, a NOTIFICATION appears at the top right corner of Ben's screen:

"Mi Cha started a live video! Watch it before it ends."

EXT. MI CHA'S NEIGHBORHOOD, INSTAGRAM LIVE - DAY

MI CHA (33) walks around her neighborhood and chats to her followers. Mi Cha is a sharp tongued influencer and blogger, known mostly for her savage wit.

MI CHA
 I'm feeling an exceptional amount of angst. An exceptional amount. That's why I'm walking. Getting exercise. Which, as you all know, is unusual--because I'm Asian. And tiny. And I don't want to get any smaller.

People are joining the live stream at the bottom. Some are commenting. Some are "smashing them hearts."

MI CHA (CONT'D)
 Look, I know lockdown has changed everything for everybody. And, yeah, I'm furloughed and shit sucks. But I want to talk about some other real shit right now--isolation has killed dating. KILLED. At least, like, in person dating. Which means we're all horny and lonely AF. But instead of sex and drinking in shitty bars, we're swiping like mad and starting up long distance romances with people who live one suburb away. What the fuck is that?
 (beat)
 I've been getting a lot of questions on the blog lately about isolationships--and are they legit... Full disclosure...
 (MORE)

MI CHA (CONT'D)

I'm in like two isolationships right now, and that shit goes from zero to a hundred in intensity. I'm talking texting 24-7, video chatting before bed and hour long phone calls. It's all very Romeo and Juliet. Star-crossed lovers separated by State laws, which demand you remain isolated for the foreseeable future. Sounds romantic--except your text messages are mostly like "I wish I could touch your junk."

Some asshole driving by --

ASSHOLE (O.S.)

Go back to China and take your virus with you, bitch!

MI CHA

(to driver)

I'm from Detroit, fuck face!

(doesn't miss a beat)

I know what you're thinking. If you're horny, just watch porn. I do. And yes, I stay in the Asian category. But back to the point--with an isolationship, you're behaving like you're a couple after like, DAY ONE...except without the sex. And no sex means... fighting. By like day nine. To be fair, the circumstances encourage it - sexual frustration? Check. Boredom? Check. General existentialism leading to mood swings? Fucking check.

(beat)

So, is an isolationship legit? My answer is maybe. I think any relationship is a product of its context.

(beat)

But who knows? Maybe some rad relationships will be borne out of lockdown. I mean the positive--and negative--is that there's plenty of time to get to know each other before bonetown. Because there's literally nothing to talk about except feelings. Anyway... Hit me up on the blog.

(MORE)

MI CHA (CONT'D)

I'm curious as to how you're all coping with your government mandated celibacy. Mi Cha, out.

Once the video ends, it's minimized and we're staring at another video window -- only now, we're somewhere else --

INT. A ROOM, SOMEONE'S SELF-TAPE AUDITION - DAY

A young guy, **SEAN (30)**, is performing a monologue for his audition. It's awful. The words he's saying are so right, but the way he's saying them is so wrong.

SEAN

It's only been-- fuck...
 (searching for line)
 hours and I already can't remember--
 (sotto)
 My lines.
 (checks sides)
 What life was like before you. I mean--
 (starts yelling to emphasize?)
 MAYBE THAT'S SOME ROMANTIC CRAP,
 BUT IT'S CRAZY TO ME TO THINK OF YOU--
 (forgot line)
 Shit. Fuck. Sorry.
 (checks sides)
 as this girl, with a completely different life, and a completely different story than my own...
 (starts crying emphatically)
 Do you even realize how many things had to happen exactly right for us to have met? DO YOU!? I mean if one thing had been different, we could've spent the rest of our lives...
 (long beat)
 never knowing...
 (even longer beat)
 the other... .. existed.

He stares into the camera, a snotty mess.

The video is paused, then minimized.

INT. ELLA'S FLAT, WEBCAM - DAY

ELLA (34) is sitting at her desk with a "what the fuck just happened?" expression.

Ella is a beautiful, cynical casting director. Her desk is covered in headshots and script sides.

ELLA
(sotto)
Why? Just, why?

She start shuffling some of the headshots, then she receives a CALL from CHLOE.

She sighs, then answers.

INTERCUT WITH:**INT. CHLOE'S FLAT, FACETIME - DAY**

CHLOE (30) is on the other side of the chat. Chloe's demeanor hints high maintenance--the good kind whereas she knows what she deserves-- but Chloe has seen better days. Her hair looks like a bird's nest and she's hungover.

ELLA
Hey.

CHLOE
It's over. I know Tom is having an affair.

ELLA
I'm good. Thanks. How are you?

CHLOE
So great.

ELLA
Are we still talking about this? I thought you already knew he was having an affair.

CHLOE
Now I know that I know. And I am right about what I know.

ELLA
And what do you know?

CHLOE
That Tom is having an affair.

ELLA

I meant why do you think that?

CHLOE

Because he's being weird.

ELLA

(sarcasm)

Oh, then you have all the evidence you need.

CHLOE

He got fired. We can't pay bills. He doesn't want me to call my dad to help us. He refuses to even consider New York as an alternative. And every time I bring it up he gets this weird distant look in his eyes. I'm sorry, Ella. I'm making everything about me. How are the auditions coming for the new movie? What kind of movie is it?

ELLA

An unrealistic romantic comedy. And the auditions are mostly terrible. Listen--Chloe--we both know I'm not going to sit here and give you a sugar coated reach around about how it's all going to be fine. Like seven out of ten marriages end in divorce.

CHLOE

This is helping. I'm so glad I called.

ELLA

Wait. Hold on. There's a but--and the but is I think you might be overreacting.

CHLOE

How?

ELLA

You have a hunch. That's all.

CHLOE

So you don't think he's cheating on me?

ELLA

No I think he's probably having an affair.

Chloe looks deflated. Ella notices and tries to think of something positive to say.

ELLA (CONT'D)

But, maybe I'm wrong.

(beat)

Has he told the big lie yet?

CHLOE

The big lie? I've caught him in a few lies here and there but--

ELLA

No. Not little white lies. I'm not even talking about inconsistencies. I'm talking about THE LIE. The lie that just doesn't add up. It comes out of left field.

CHLOE

Like what?

ELLA

I don't know. You'll know it when you hear it. It'll be one of those lies that changes the dynamic. Something that probably makes you feel shitty about being suspicious while it buys him more time to figure shit out. That's the big lie. When that happens, then you know for sure.

Beat.

CHLOE

(hopeful)

Nothing like that has happened. Is that what happened with you and Nick?

ELLA

Nick was the big lie. The entire relationship. One huge mother of a lie. But if that hasn't happened with Tom then--who knows--maybe it will work out. And for you, I really hope it does, Chloe.

Chloe smiles.

CHLOE

I should let you get back to work.
Thanks for doing the talk with me
again.

ELLA

I read somewhere that's what
friends are for.

They exchange a smile.

SMASHCUT TO:

PROMO VIDEO.

A slightly melodramatic score. White screen.

SUPERIMPOSE: Alicorn (al· i· corn) - a winged unicorn.

Followed by snippets of various types of people smiling,
laughing, waving at each other, saying good morning and good
night-- all via webcam.

Finally, two people kiss. Then --

A simulated texting screen types:

"Helping the world stay together, apart."

Fades to white. Then, an ALICORN logo fades in, followed by a
tagline underneath:

"Because You Deserve Wings.
(Virtually, of course.)"

BLACK.

But only for a second. Someone picks their camera up and
adjusts themselves into frame.

INT. DJ SATUR8'S STUDIO, YOUTUBE - DAY

DJ SATUR8 in his studio. Guitar in hand.

DJ SATUR8

My apologies fellow hunker-downers.
We were experiencing some technical
difficulties. But thanks to a
mythical creature named Love Bunny,
we have been restored. So, sit
back, relax, and allow us to once
again pacify your quarantine
anxieties with a little romance.

(MORE)

DJ SATUR8 (CONT'D)
A ballad I like to call, Secret
Fornicator.

MUSIC CUE: SECRET FORNICATOR

It's surprisingly beautiful. Moving. Nothing as the name would suggest.

Then, the video is minimized to a smaller box, and suddenly we're looking at another desktop. The mouse toggles the volume on the video and lowers it to background level.

The mouse CLICKS open a WORD DOC.

The Title is, "LEXI'S QUARANTINE POETRY." The cursor blinks...

Finally, Lexi types, "The rain is"

The cursor blinks...

And blinks...

And BLINKS.... Then, BACKSPACE until the page is blank again.

Then, Lexi types:

"Fuck quarantine."

A CALL RINGS in and kills the silence. A pretty face by the name NONNY.

INT. LEXI'S BATHROOM, WEBCAM - DAY

LEXI (32) answers. She's lying in an empty tub, fully clothed, hood over her head, air pods in, with a full WINE GLASS in hand.

LEXI
(not convincing)
Hey!

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. NONNY'S BEDROOM, FACETIME - DAY

NONNY (33), mixed, cappuccino complexion, is curled up in her bed.

NONNY
Hey! Uh oh.

LEXI

What?

NONNY

You're in the bathtub with your clothes on and your air pods in.

LEXI

No I'm not.

NONNY

I can clearly see you are.

LEXI

I disagree.

NONNY

Kids are giving you a hard time, huh?

LEXI

No. Why would you think that?

NONNY

No reason. Except that you've barricaded yourself in the bathroom drinking wine in the middle of the day.

LEXI

Incorrect. This--
(wine glass)
Is grape juice.

NONNY

(incredulous)
Really?

LEXI

Really. Because I don't drink wine while I'm watching our children. And also because they're in the kitchen. Where the wine is.

NONNY

(chuckles)
How's the writing coming along?

LEXI

(not)
So good.
(sips juice)
Just managed to finish one actually.

NONNY

Really?

LEXI

Yeah. Right after I stopped our four year old from peeing off the balcony and onto our neighbor's succulents below.

NONNY

Uh-uh. Stop. That didn't happen.

LEXI

Oh it happened. And that was somewhere between the spaghetti-o massacre of 2020 and my favorite, when I told him to go put a bandaid on, and he covered his entire body with my maxi pads and came out of the bathroom saying look mommy, I found your boo-boo pads.

Nonny can't help but stifle laughter.

Lexi can't help but laugh at her own misery either.

NONNY

I'm sorry, bae. I know this is tough. I hate that I can't be there.

LEXI

Stop. Don't apologize. This is what I signed up for. Kind of. How are you?

NONNY

Good. Tired. Lonely without you.

LEXI

Is lonely code for horny?

NONNY

A thousand percent. Yes.

They laugh.

LEXI

Why aren't you at the hospital? I thought you were working today.

NONNY

I just finished a 36 hour shift.
They let me off tonight for some
much needed rest.

LEXI

Ugh. I know you're exhausted. And
here I am bitching about my
inability to control our four year
old. I don't know how you do it.

Shrugs.

NONNY

Thanks for being understanding.

LEXI

What do you mean?

NONNY

You know-- Me taking on more at the
hospital--even though it means we
can't be together much right now.
You're basically raising our kids
without me. We've been here three
months and we've been apart for
most of the last two.

LEXI

Are you kidding? Come on. For
better or worse. Right? And you're
our fucking hero, by the way.

NONNY

(smile)

Thanks.

(beat, laughs)

For real though. Our kid straight
up took a piss off the balcony?

LEXI

Took aim and fired. And this once I
can appreciate quarantine because I
don't have to feel bad about not
going downstairs to tell them their
plants are dead because our son
drowned them in urine.

They laugh.

NONNY

Damn, I miss you. And the little
things. Like movies. Dinner.

LEXI
 (beat)
 Okay. Let's do it.

NONNY
 Do what?

LEXI
 Dinner and a movie.

NONNY
 How we gonna do that?

LEXI
 I got a few new tricks in my arsenal. If there's one thing this mom can do, it's get our children to bed incredibly fucking early.

NONNY
 Is that so?
 (playful sexy voice)
 How early we talking?

LEXI
 (playful sexy voice)
 Oh. Like before sunset early.

NONNY
 Damn, I like a woman with skills.

LEXI
 Are you calling me a milf?

Nonny sets up her phone. She glides her hand down her pants.

LEXI (CONT'D)
 Ohh. I like where this is going.

Lexi begins to reciprocate, but then --

Lexi gets another call. Call id says Jodi, under a photo of a guy in an American flag bandana.

LEXI (CONT'D)
 Shit.

NONNY
 What?

LEXI
 My brother is calling. His face came up on my screen.

NONNY

Oh. Gross.

Lexi merges the call.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. JODI'S GARAGE, FACETIME - DAY

LEXI

What, Jodi?

JODI (34) is a redneck. There's a large METAL BUCKET full of water behind him, a car battery attached to the bucket, and a lawn chair inside the bucket. Behind the bucket is an odd looking machine.

JODI

Sis. I have a serious question.
Sup, Nonny.

NONNY

Hi, Jodi.

LEXI

This isn't really a good time.

Beat.

JODI

Why not?

LEXI

Is that your question?

JODI

No. I got bigger fish to fry.

LEXI

God, I hate that expression.

NONNY

Is that like a thing in Alabama?

JODI

Fried fish? What in the hell kind of question is-- you know what-- doesn't matter. Lexi. Nonny. Brace yourselves.

LEXI

For what?

JODI
I have figured out... the space
time continuum.

Jodi steps aside to reveal the contraption behind him.

LEXI
What are we lookin' at?

NONNY
Didn't Einstein already do that?

JODI
Yeah. But. I figured out the next
part. Because we got all these
dimensions, see-- you know what,
it's complicated to explain.

NONNY
(sarcasm)
Well--I am a doctor, so...

JODI
Yeah, but you ain't a scientist.

LEXI
Neither are you, Jodi.

Lexi gets out of the tub.

JODI
You think the guy that built the
first space ship was already an
astronaut? Can't be an astronaut
with out a space ship.

NONNY
Do you mean a space shuttle? And
I'm not sure how that applies.

JODI
Semantics. To get to the point...

LEXI
(offscreen)
Yes. What is the point, Jodi?

JODI
I figured out time travel.

Lexi takes her laptop and sneaks into her bedroom.

LEXI
How do we share the same DNA.

JODI

I know. I know it sounds crazy. But this next part will make it come together for you. All I need is a special tool. Which brings me to my original question. Can you, being in New York where shit is, get me... a flux capacitor?

Beat. Awkward silence.

Nonny chuckles, causing Lexi to crack up, too.

JODI (CONT'D)

Okay. Hold on. Let me get Glenn on this.

Jodi dials Glenn. It RINGS.

NONNY

(satire)

Who knows, babe? Maybe it really works.

Lexi snickers.

JODI

Of course it works.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. GLENN'S KITCHEN, WEBCAM - DAY

GLENN (35) answers. Handsome as hell. CHEWS a wad of tobacco.

GLENN

Jodiiii! What's up?

(realizing)

Oh, we got a whole group on here. Lexi, is that you?

LEXI

Hey, Glenn.

GLENN

How you been? You still datin' that cute mixed chick?

NONNY

You mean me? The other person, and only "mixed chick" also on this call with you?

GLENN

Oh, yeah. Shit. I see ya now. How you doin'?

JODI

Glenn, focus. I was trying to explain to them the importance of the flux capacitor. But they ain't gettin it. Just--could you just tell it to 'em like you told me.

GLENN

Sure. It's pretty simple really. We need the flux capacitor 'cause it only needs 1.21 gigawatts of electrical power to operate. Which can easily be done using a compact weapons-grade plutonium-239 nuclear fission reactor. When the energy pulses through the flux capacitor, it creates a massive flow of energy that does two things. One, it converts the positive energy into negative energy. And two, it opens a wormhole accessible at exactly 88mph. Long story short, the flux capacitor makes time travel possible.

JODI

Boom.

Beat.

LEXI

(sighs)

And... is there a DeLorean on stand by?

JODI

What does that mean?

NONNY

It means your buddy just explained how the time machine works in the movie Back To The Future.

GLENN

Yeah. Exactly.

JODI

What? This was from a movie?

GLENN

I mean the source material had to come from somewhere.

JODI

But you didn't tell me it was from a movie! Why in the hell would you think somethin' like that would work?

GLENN

Because. It worked. In the movie.

NONNY

Damn.

LEXI

What?

NONNY

My phone is about to die. Let me find my charger and I--

Screen goes black, leaving Lexi on the line with Jodi and Glenn.

LEXI

(sotto)

Awesome.

Awkward beat.

GLENN

I feel like we're nearin' the end of this interaction. And I feel awkward because I do not know what to say.

JODI

(sighs)

Ain't that a first. Just hang up already.

GLENN

Yep. You'll let me know about the flux capacitor, though, right?

JODI

It ain't even a real--it's from a damn movie.

GLENN

So? We're still gonna try it though right?

JODI
Of course we're still gonna try it.

GLENN
Alright, then... Lexi.

LEXI
Glenn.

GLENN
Always a pleasure.

LEXI
Bye.

Glenn clicks off. It's just Jodi and Lexi.

JODI
Sorry I screwed up your call.

LEXI
It's fine. How's momma?

JODI
She's good. Puttering around. Still
pissed at you for moving to New
York. But she ain't happy if she
ain't got somethin' to be pissed
about.

LEXI
(chuckles)
Yeah. I know that's true. Tell her
I love her?

JODI
You know I will. I miss ya.

LEXI
Yeah. Me, too.

JODI
Alright. I'm gonna get. I'll see
ya, string bean.

LEXI
(smiles)
Bye.

They exchange a smile and click off.

Lexi sighs.

Minimizes the chat window. Clicks DJ SATUR8, who is now playing a SAXOPHONE. She toggles the volume up slightly.

Opens Instagram. Scrolls feed. A few pics down, we come across the video of Anna.

The mouse CLICKS the "LIKES" section and scrolls down the list of people that have liked the photo.

Ben's name is near the top. The mouse hovers over Ben's name, then opens his profile. Scrolls through a few photos.

We linger, then --

MARCUS (O.S.)
Are you still there?

The mouse exits Instagram, leaving us staring at another video window -- only now, we're somewhere else, and it's Anna (from earlier) staring back at us.

INT. ANNA'S LIVING ROOM, WEBCAM - DAY

ANNA
(frustrated)
Yes. I'm still here.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. MARCUS' LIVING ROOM, WEBCAM - DAY

MARCUS (33), handsome African American, is on the other side.

MARCUS
Are you going to answer me?

ANNA
I said I'm here!

MARCUS
Not that question. The question before that one. Do you still want to get divorced?

ANNA
What the fuck do you think?

MARCUS
What is that supposed to mean?

MARCUS
Yesterday.

ANNA
Dude.

MARCUS
I know. I know.

An alarm goes off on Marcus' phone.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
(re: alarm, sighs)
That's my cue.

ANNA
The bat signal.

MARCUS
Commish needs black Batman at his
day job.

ANNA
Go save the world.

They share a laugh.

MARCUS
(waves)
Bye, Anna.

SMASH CUT TO:

A PROMO VIDEO.

A WHITE SCREEN.

An animated ALICORN (unicorn with wings) is in the middle of the screen. It speaks to us in calm cool voice.

ALICORN
Hey. Things are weird out there
right now. Am I right?

Oh, just FYI: **Matthew McConaughey** is voicing the Alicorn. Not sure why but he is.

ALICORN (CONT'D)
Miss your mom? Your dad? Boyfriend.
Girlfriend. That's cool. No shame
in it. Everything is gonna be
alright, alright, alright. That's
why I'm here.

The Alicorn blinks and moves its eyes around, then looks back at us.

ALICORN (CONT'D)

(spreads its wings)

Look at these guys. Hmm. I bet you're wondering if I can fly. I can. I can also provide you with the magical face to face communication you've been missing. Don't let your lockdown be a prison sentence. Call your folks. Or other people. And do it in HD. Or, with subtitles if you want. Don't be afraid to get weird with it. Life is a series of commas, not periods. So lets fly away together.

The Alicorn flies away.

Then, an ALICORN LOGO fades in, followed by a tagline underneath:

"Because Matthew McCalicorn Says You Deserve Wings.
(Virtually, of course.)"

A SKIP VIDEO option appears at the right. A mouse hovers over it and CLICKS.

INT. DJ SATUR8'S STUDIO, YOUTUBE - DAY

DJ SATUR8 sits motionless in front of the camera.

Beat.

DJ SATUR8

Hello my loyal legions. I feel we've already been through so much together. For instance, an outbreak. That outbreak became an epidemic. Which then became a pandemic. And, now, quarantine. That is a lot for one lifetime, let alone a few months.

(beat)

An acquaintance of mine told me the difference between an epidemic and a pandemic is that a pandemic has a passport. It made me laugh at the time. It is less funny to me now, however.

(MORE)

DJ SATUR8 (CONT'D)

But I did feel inspired to write something new as I thought of our unending aptitude to transcend as a species. I've already recorded it through this small keyboard. I intend to simply press play and listen with you--so that my senses may also be titillated. Stay inspired, friends. Remain hopeful. I call this one, The Joke That Roman Told Me.

MUSIC CUE: THE JOKE THAT ROMAN TOLD ME

It's hopeful. Sounds like something from the opening credits of a Woody Allen movie.

DJ SATUR8 nods his head/mask to the groove.

A mouse moves over the video, turns the volume down, then minimizes the video.

We're looking at a new desktop. The ALICORN icon is CLICKED and brings up a new video window.

INT. PAUL'S LIVING ROOM, WEBCAM - EVENING

PAUL (32) is staring back at us. Paul is an aspiring actor with that dorky cute charisma that says he just might "make it."

He chuckles to himself, then scrolls through his contacts and DIALS someone.

INTERCUT WITH:**INT. MI CHA'S HOUSE, FACETIME - DAY**

Mi Cha has just got back to her house and is walking in the door.

MI CHA

I signed off like three hours ago. You can't possibly have something to bitch about already.

PAUL

I have plenty to bitch about but I think you handle that well enough for the both of us.

MI CHA

Best compliment of my day. Didn't you owe me a phone call?

PAUL

That's why I'm calling.

MI CHA

How was the audition the other day?

Mi Cha enters her kitchen, props the phone up and POURS herself a GLASS of WHISKEY.

PAUL

Fine. Actually it was awful. But the next one will be better--are you drinking whiskey?

MI CHA

No. I'm pouring whiskey. Now I'm drinking whiskey.

She takes a drink.

PAUL

It's 2pm.

MI CHA

I'm sorry. Do you not also live on Earth? Where sex has become obsolete and time no longer has any meaning. Or is that just me?

PAUL

(chuckles)

Forgive me for not having resolved to punish my liver for--

MI CHA

Don't even bother finishing that sentence. This is whiskey. Not bitch juice. Last time we went out drinking together I came home to a bedroom that was doing 180s and you had mild indigestion from all the sugar in your hard lemonade.

PAUL

It tastes better.

Mi Cha air jerks at the camera.

MI CHA
What's with you and-- was it
Melanie?

PAUL
Nothing. Notta. Done.

Mi Cha goes to her living room and sits on the couch.

MI CHA
Already? She was cute.

PAUL
She was cute. But she also had my
face printed on one of her pillows
by our second date.

MI CHA
Yikes.

PAUL
Quarantine kind of swooped in and
saved me from that shit show.

MI CHA
You'll find someone else. That's
what I'm supposed to say right?

PAUL
Maybe. I don't think I'm ready for
one of your "isolationshps."

MI CHA
Sure you are. You hopeless
romantics are always cocked and
loaded.

PAUL
That sounded kind of sexual.

MI CHA
It was.

PAUL
I don't know. What I had with Grace
was real, you know? I'm just
waiting for a spark. I guess.

MI CHA
A spark? What is this a Ken Kwapis
movie? You and Grace broke up
months ago. Time to move on, Paul.
The whole world is in lockdown.
Like everyone is at home. Bored.

(MORE)

MI CHA (CONT'D)

Lonely. You should be having all the guilt free consensual sexting you can have right now. And when this shit is over we'll go out consensual sexing together. Well, we won't be sexing each other. To be clear.

PAUL

Thanks for clearing that up.

MI CHA

Look, a love connection is a nice thought. But this is the real world. Or, we've all died and gone to hell. Either way, this is an opportunity for you ease your way back into the dating world.

PAUL

Maybe you're right.

MI CHA

Of course I'm right. Just make sure you brush up on some of them Mi Cha Quick Tips For Millennialships on the blog. I think you'll find last Thursday's article particularly interesting.

PAUL

The one about how to talk your girlfriend into a three way?

MI CHA

So you do read the blog.

PAUL

How would that help me at this stage?

MI CHA

Lay it on the table at the beginning. Make sure they're open minded.

PAUL

I'm not sure that's good advice.

MI CHA

I wouldn't be where I am if I gave anything BUT good advice.

PAUL

Tell me again--how many times have you gone three way?

MI CHA

This isn't about me and I don't need a third for me to eat box if I like the box.

PAUL

(chuckles)

I'll make a mental note of your suggestion.

MI CHA

I should go. Remember the two isolationships I mentioned? I have to have an unsavory conversation with number two.

PAUL

Which one is that?

MI CHA

The one that keeps trying to use last Thursday's article to talk me into a three way.

PAUL

An interesting turn of events.

MI CHA

Relax, Judge Judy. The three way is with his step-sister.

PAUL

Eww.

MI CHA

I mean I'm kind of into it. But you have to draw the line somewhere.

PAUL

Oh, so that's where you draw the line?

MI CHA

I have a lot of lines, Paul. And I draw them often. Like right now--
(pretends to draw a line)
Like--this is the end of the line.

PAUL

Right here?

MI CHA
 Right here.
 (draws again)
 End of the line. End of this
 conversation.

PAUL
 (laughs)
 Later.

Mi Cha signs off, leaving us with Paul.

He chuckles to himself.

Paul reopens the DJ Satur8 video, which is still playing.

He presses pause, then minimizes the video. But once the video is minimized, we're somewhere else--

INT. KELLY'S KITCHEN, WEBCAM - DAY

KELLY (65) stares back at us. He's worn and creased, but maintains his colorful physiognomy. He's startled when he sees himself in the video box.

KELLY
 (southern)
 Well...shit...is that what I look
 like to other people? Oh, I don't
 know about this, Peggy.

Kelly reaches across the table and grabs a FRAMED PHOTO. He holds the picture up in front of the webcam. The picture is of a smiling WOMAN (60s).

KELLY (CONT'D)
 Do you see? I look old. I don't
 look this old in person.
 (to picture)
 What is that supposed to mean?
 (beat)
 Because the pink shirt makes my
 eyes look bluer. Yes it does. It
 does not wash me out. Agree to
 disagree.

He sets the photo down and looks at himself in the video box. He occasionally cuts his eyes over to the photo.

KELLY (CONT'D)
 (sighs)
 Fine! Just-- fine then.

He gets up and walks out of view, leaving us staring at an empty kitchen.

A few beats later--

KELLY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Are you satisfied? Is this better?

He comes back with a blue shirt on and sits at the computer, checking himself out.

KELLY (CONT'D)
Okay. Shit. You were right. This does look better.

He dials DYLAN.

It RINGS.

And RINGS.

No answer.

Kelly sighs.

KELLY (CONT'D)
That makes four times this week.
(to picture)
Of course, I'll keep trying. Shit.
What's got into you today?

Kelly looks over the Alicorn chat platform. A SUPPORT button with a phone icon is at the top right corner.

KELLY (CONT'D)
Because I don't know what it does!
(beat)
I need support for what?
(beat)
Now you're just being mean. Fine.
You win. As usual.

Kelly CLICKS the support button.

It DIALS support.

It RINGS, then another box pops up and says, "Connecting you to one of our trained Unicorns here to help!"

KELLY (CONT'D)
(to picture)
A Unicorn. No, it doesn't mean something sexual. Because this isn't that kind of service.

INT. MARCUS' OFFICE, WEBCAM - DAY

Marcus (from earlier) answers. He's put on a nice polo, and he his background is a virtual office.

MARCUS

Thank you for contacting the Alicorn support team. My name is Marcus--

GLENN (O.S.)

Marcus will you please tell Jodi he's being a real prick right now.

MARCUS

Glenn?

JODI (O.S.)

I said don't call me a prick.

INTERCUT WITH:**INT. JODI'S GARAGE/GLENN'S HOUSE, WEBCAM - DAY**

MARCUS

Jodi. Guys, I told you--you can't call me at work with this--whatever this is.

JODI

You mean solving the space time continuum? Sorry to inconvenience you with this time sensitive situation. We're only tryin' to save the world here.

GLENN

Yeah. And we didn't call you at work. We called the Alicorn support line so you could support us with our problem.

MARCUS

This is the technical support line for people needing help with our platform.

JODI

Well, we technically need your help.

(MORE)

JODI (CONT'D)

And possibly your support--
financially--because apparently
flux capacitors AREN'T REAL and I
think things are gonna get real
expensive.

GLENN

They are real. I keep tryin' to
tell you. Marcus, tell him.

Marcus sighs.

JODI

Okay. Say they are real. It ain't
like we can run down to tractor
supply and find one sittin' in the
poultry and live stock.

GLENN

You don't look for it in that
department dumbass.

JODI

Dumb--oh--it's dumbass now.
Alright. Friendship off.

GLENN

Fine.

JODI

Fine.

Marcus can't help but laugh to himself. Beat.

MARCUS

Have you checked Amazon Prime?

Beat. Jodi and Glenn perk up.

JODI

They sell that kind of thing?

MARCUS

Could be there in as little as two
hours.

GLENN

What do you--I mean in your
professional opinion--what do you
think somethin' like that might set
us back?

MARCUS

(playful)

In my professional opinion, you guys are douchebags.

GLENN

See, now, I can't tell if you're professionally insulting us or just reminiscin' about high school.

JODI

Jodi and the Douchebags could've been huge if we could've found a drummer.

MARCUS

So much regret over that band name.

GLENN

It was edgy. Like the music.

MARCUS

(laughs)

Tell you what, I'll look into the flux capacitor. In the meantime, you two kiss and make up and don't call me at work again. Deal?

Jodi and Glenn consider.

JODI

I reckon I could overlook his infidelities.

MARCUS

That's not what--infidelities--okay. Glenn?

GLENN

Alright. Deal.

MARCUS

Good. I'm going to hang up now.

GLENN

Love ya, Marcus!

JODI

Douchebags forever!

MARCUS

(sotto)

Oh my god.

Marcus hangs up and within seconds receives another call.
He collects his thoughts, then answers.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. KELLY'S KITCHEN, WEBCAM - DAY

Kelly is right where we left him.

MARCUS

Thank you for contacting the
Alicorn support team. My name is
Marcus. Who do I have the pleasure
of speaking with today?

KELLY

Marcus?

MARCUS

Your name is Marcus, too?

KELLY

What the hell are you talking
about? My name is Kelly.

MARCUS

Oh. Kelly. It's nice to meet you.
How can I assist you today?

KELLY

(noticing virtual
background)
What in the hell is wrong with your
head?

MARCUS

I'm sorry?

KELLY

You got a weird dark blob around
your head.

MARCUS

Oh. It's my virtual background.

KELLY

Virtual what?

MARCUS

See?
(turns it off)
(MORE)

MARCUS (CONT'D)

We're working from home during the pandemic, but we use an office as our virtual background because it makes our callers feel more comfortable.

KELLY

Not me. I hate it.

MARCUS

Would you prefer a beach background?

Marcus changes it to the beach.

KELLY

Oh, shit. Look Peggy.
Teleportation.

(leans in close)

How are you doing that?

MARCUS

It's one of our many options. You can do it too.

KELLY

Get out. I can?

MARCUS

Just go to your settings.

KELLY

Settings. Okay.

MARCUS

And then find where--

Before Marcus can finish Kelly hits a face distortion filter and suddenly has a forehead the size of Texas.

KELLY

OH shit! What's happening to me?

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Just close out your settings, Kelly.

KELLY (CONT'D)

I can't look like this.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Kelly--

Kelly clicks something else and now has an hourglass shaped head.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Ah, hell. Now look.

(to Peggy)

I know it's worse than before.

MARCUS
Kelly. Kelly. Just click out--

KELLY
What?

MARCUS
Just click out of your settings.

He does. Back to normal.

KELLY
(sigh of relief)
Shit.

Kelly feels his face to make sure it's normal.

MARCUS
(smiling)
See? Back to normal.

KELLY
That was some scary shit. I thought
my particles were getting
entangled.

Marcus chuckles.

MARCUS
Back to reality. How can I help you
today, Kelly?

KELLY
(still recalibrating)
My son. Dylan. He's on your
program. He had me put this thing
on the computer so we could talk to
each other face to face. But I
can't get him on here.

MARCUS
I'm sorry about that, Kelly. The
Alicorn platform is still
technically in Beta, but the
company decided to launch early to
give people more options to connect
with their friends and families.

KELLY
Where is Beta? Say's here you're
located in Los Angeles.

MARCUS

Um--Yeah. Sorry. Beta is just a fancy way of saying we haven't worked out all the glitches.

KELLY

Well, there ain't no need to get fancy. Hopefully other folks using your program are having better luck than we are connecting to their family. Your face is the first one we've seen.

MARCUS

I understand, sir. I'll get to the bottom of this for you. With what exactly are you having issues?

KELLY

I told you we can't get Dylan on the computer. Our son. He's on your program. I've tried four times this week.

MARCUS

Yes sir. What is happening when you try to connect with your son?

KELLY

It just keeps ringing. And then it stops ringing and says he's unavailable.

MARCUS

Wait. So, he just isn't answering. There isn't anything actually wrong with the software?

KELLY

I don't see how that would be true. Everyone is home because of the quarantine. But it keeps saying he's unavailable.

MARCUS

Maybe he just stepped away from the computer.

Beat.

KELLY

(considers)

Maybe you're right, Marcus the Unicorn. I don't know. We've tried four times this week.

MARCUS

Sorry, Kelly. We? Is there someone else on the line with you?

Kelly takes the framed photo and shows Marcus.

KELLY

Me and my wife, Peggy. But she's in a mood today--on the account that we can't get Dylan on this video chat--so you best just deal with me.

Marcus considers the situation.

MARCUS

How long has it been since you spoke with, Dylan?

KELLY

About a month. We figured we would hear from him more because of the lockdown and all that going on--I talk more with Brenda at the drugstore. She gives me my diabetes prescriptions.

(to Peggy)

I told you she does not have eyes for me. Now, just cool your jets woman.

Marcus chuckles to himself. Beat.

MARCUS

(sensing the loneliness)

You know, Kelly--you might be right. Like I said, the platform still has some glitches that need worked out. Let's see if we can't figure out what might be going on. What do you say?

KELLY

Well, that's why I called, Marcus the Unicorn.

MARCUS

(laughs)

You can just call me, Marcus.

KELLY

Okay, Marcus.

MARCUS

Tell you what--I'm going to see if I can figure out what might be wrong over here on my end. In the mean time, why don't you tell me a little more about Peggy--and Brenda from the drugstore.

KELLY

(gasp)

Ohhh...that's a dangerous line you're asking me to walk, Marcus. But, I'll do it--it's a very dramatic situation.

An ALERT goes off on Kelly's phone. Kelly picks it up.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Speaking of drama. That's my doorbell camera. I have my food delivered now. And I watch the delivery people on my phone. Isn't that cool?

Kelly shows Marcus the video and we're--

EXT. KELLY'S HOME, RING DOOR BELL - DAY

TOM (32) places a BAG OF FOOD on the porch. He wears gloves and a mask.

MARCUS (V.O.)

Gotta love technology.

KELLY (V.O.)

Other than the Forensic Files marathon this weekend, watching the delivery people to make sure they follow protocol has kept me entertained.

MARCUS (V.O.)

What is protocol?

Tom heads back to his car.

KELLY (V.O.)
 Making sure they don't touch my
 shit, Marcus. I don't want to die
 sitting at home. If I wanted to
 catch the virus I'd be out
 gallivanting around.

Marcus laughs.

Tom gets in his car and shuts the door.

INT. TOM'S CAR, FACETIME - DAY

Tom gets in the car and removes his masks and gloves.

CHLOE (O.S.)
 (from phone)
 How much did you make from that
 one?

TOM
 (sighs)
 Eight.

Toms switches gears and drives.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CHLOE'S FLAT, FACETIME - DAY

Chloe is in her living room. A little more put together than
 she was earlier.

CHLOE
 (sighs)
 Hardly seems worth the trip.

TOM
 Have to keep rent paid somehow,
 Chloe.

CHLOE
 Just let me call my father.

TOM
 No. We can't can keep leaning on
 your father.

CHLOE
 Tom this is ridiculous. You just
 made eight dollars.
 (MORE)

CHLOE (CONT'D)

That still leaves us six hundred short--not including last months--which we still owe.

TOM

I know that. You don't think I know that?

CHLOE

See? This is what I'm talking about. Why are we doing this when we know New York is an option--

TOM

Here we go. Everything is back to New York.

CHLOE

Yes! We have family there.

TOM

You have family there.

CHLOE

What's that supposed to mean?

TOM

Come on, Chloe. Your family has never accepted me. And why would they? I don't come from money. I didn't go to Dartmouth--god forbid--and considering I just lost the one job I was ever fucking good at--you can add unemployed to daddy's list of reasons I'm not good enough for you.

CHLOE

That's not fair. My father loves you. And I've told you a million times--all it takes is a phone call. Even if it's just temporary.

TOM

No. I'm not mooching off my wife's parents.

CHLOE

It's not mooching. You'd be working for it. You think you're the only person who lost their job because of all of this? I hate to break it to you honey but you're not that special.

TOM
(sighs)
I'm over this conversation.

CHLOE
What's really going on? Does this
have something to do with those
phone calls you keep getting?
'Cause you act weird after each of
them.
(beat)
Are you having an affair?

Tom pulls over.

TOM
Am I having an affair?

CHLOE
Yeah, that's what I asked.

TOM
(beat)
No.

CHLOE
You are.

TOM
Of course I'm not.

CHLOE
Do you not love me anymore?

TOM
Of course I love you.

CHLOE
Then what the fuck?

Tom sighs.

TOM
I'm sterile. Chloe.

CHLOE
What?

TOM
I'm sorry.

CHLOE
No. You're perfectly healthy. We
just haven't been lucky yet--

TOM

No. I'm--I saw a doctor. Couple of months ago. I just had a gut feeling that the problem was me...and I was right.

This hits Chloe like a freight train... the big lie?

CHLOE

Why didn't you just tell me that?

TOM

I didn't know how to tell you. I know how much you want a baby. I just...feel so guilty.

CHLOE

(skeptical)

I--I just need a to sit with this for a few minutes.

TOM

Yeah. I get it. I'm gonna make a few more runs. I'll call you in a while?

Chloe wipes some tears.

CHLOE

Okay. Yeah.

TOM

Bye.

Chloe hangs up.

We move to Tom's dash cam. He sits there a moment, then dials someone else on the phone.

We move back to Tom's phone as--

INT. BEN'S HOME OFFICE, WEBCAM - DAY

Ben--same Ben from earlier--answers.

BEN

Hey.

TOM

Hey. You got a minute? I need to talk to someone. I'm--I'm suffering, man.

BEN

Of course. Whatever you tell me stays between us.

TOM

I'm contemplating leaving my wife for another woman.

Beat.

BEN

Um. Wow. Shit.

TOM

But I can't seem to--tell her. Every time I try it just--it doesn't come out.

BEN

Yeah, well, I imagine it's not the easiest thing to do. But I have to ask, why? Chloe seems great.

TOM

She is great. And the crazy thing is, I can't see a future with this other woman. And whether I like to admit it or not, there's security--financially--with my wife's family.

BEN

Yeah, but if you don't love her--

TOM

I'm not saying I don't love her. I just don't feel it in the way that I do for this other woman. I told her I was sterile.

BEN

You're sterile?

TOM

No. I was trying to find a way to tell her the truth, but I panicked and said the other thing.

BEN

Wow, you just dropped the big lie.

TOM

Big lie?

Tom's screen cuts out.

TOM (CONT'D)

Damn. I've got shitty service through her. What big lie?

BEN

The big lie. Everyone knows about the big lie. It's the lie that changes the dynamic of everything. It's so obvious.

TOM

What are you saying? That she's gonna figure it out?

BEN

I don't know. Maybe. Probably.

Tom's picture comes back. He looks ashamed.

TOM

I just haven't--felt--with Chloe in a while. It's all fucked.

(sighs)

You're divorced. Was it like this? I mean did you ever--

BEN

Have an affair? No. Anna and I--our relationship wasn't like that.

TOM

Well, what was it like? I could use some advice.

BEN

(sighs)

I don't know. I think it's oversimplifying to say we grew apart, but maybe it's true. We loved each other. Just not enough.

TOM

So, you're saying I shouldn't leave Chloe?

Beat.

BEN

I love you like a brother. That's not changing. But I've known you since we're twelve years old--and you've always been a coward when it comes to doing the hard thing.

TOM

Harsh. But okay. You mean telling her the truth.

BEN

No. I mean working it out with your wife. She left family and stability in New York to come here. And for what? To do what? Other than because she wanted to be with you-- and you weren't willing to move to New York.

TOM

Because I had a job. Friends. A home.

BEN

All things you could have in New York. But you know that. Charisma and talent has never been something you're lacking.

TOM

Fuck you. You think I'm scared?

BEN

I know you are. And this other woman--she's just another opportunity for you to run away from your problems.

TOM

You wanna talk about being scared? You're the biggest chicken shit of all. How long you been in love with Katie from a distance? Way before Anna came into the picture.

BEN

That's different.

TOM

Is it? Good ol' self-righteous, Ben. Always quick to stand on your high horse and do the right thing. But when it comes to love you're just as fucked up as the rest of us. You settled for Anna because it was convenient. And she deserved better, she knew it, so she left.

BEN
 You think Chloe doesn't deserve
 better than this? Prick.

TOM
 Okay. I called you 'cause I needed
 a friend--if I wanted to talk to a
 judgmental asshole I would've
 called my father-in-law.

Tom hangs up.

We stay with Ben.

BEN
 (sighs)
 Fuck.

Ben gathers himself.

He receives another call from "Dad." He Declines.

He opens Instagram. A PHOTO of Katie is at the top of the
 feed. With a SIGH, he scrolls down the feed, directly under
 Katie's photo is a PHOTO of Anna.

He considers, then minimizes Instagram and goes to his
 contact list.

He scrolls to Anna. He dials.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. ANNA'S BEDROOM, WEBCAM - DAY

Anna answers.

ANNA
 Dude. Tell me you're not infected
 and shit.

BEN
 Virus free. And, mostly shit free.

ANNA
 Good. I was thinking about you the
 other day, and I was gonna call but
 then I just didn't for some reason.

BEN
 Yeah. I've been meaning to call for
 a while--to see how you were in all
 of this.

ANNA

I'm good. Doing good. How are you?
How's the movie business?

BEN

Still waiting on my Golden God
Almost Famous moment. You?

ANNA

Same. Just watching the world
change at a distance. So, what's
up?

Beat.

BEN

I just--I had this weird
conversation with Tom, and it kind
of brought up some stuff.

ANNA

Uh-oh.

BEN

Nothing weird. Just--I don't know--
I think we both know what happened--
with us, right--It felt so black
and white when everything was
happening. It was clear.

ANNA

Sometimes. Other times it was
difficult to articulate.

BEN

But I mean, bottom line, we just
stopped working. We worked for a
while, and then we didn't work
anymore.

ANNA

There were a lot more layers to it--
I don't think it was as simple as
not being in love anymore.

BEN

But it was both of us. Not just me.
Right?

ANNA

Of course. We were so young when we
got together--I was like nineteen
or twenty.

(MORE)

ANNA (CONT'D)

Young enough to feel older than we were and make irrational decisions. We were very different people--not in a they're so different it's cute kind of way, but like an incompatibly different shit is fucked kind of way.

BEN

We were compatible in some ways...

ANNA

(coy)

What ways?

BEN

Come on. You know.

ANNA

(she does)

Do I? I don't--

Ben raises his eyebrows.

ANNA (CONT'D)

(re: eyebrows)

What is that? What does that mean?

BEN

Come on. Congenial. Simpatico. Carnal.

ANNA

(smirks)

Jesus. Okay. We had good sex.

BEN

Just good?

ANNA

(laughs)

What do you want me to say? Your penis fit my vagina like a glove? Is that better?

BEN

Let me check with my ego.

(looks down at his crotch)

Yep. We can accept that. I mean, we did have to google what happens when it's too big to fit.

ANNA

That's not how it happened. We were curious if other people had that problem. We didn't have that problem.

BEN

(they didn't)
I think we did.

ANNA

(laughs)
Christ.

Beat.

BEN

I liked your different.

ANNA

I know. I liked your different, too. But sometimes different is too different.

ANNA (CONT'D)

(beat)
What did Tom say exactly to bring all this up? Are he and Chloe having issues again?

BEN

Unfortunately. Things are looking grim.

ANNA

I'm sure they'll work it out. They always do.

BEN

I don't know. It's not a good situation. I'm not sure Tom deserves for it to be worked out.

Anna chuckles to herself.

BEN (CONT'D)

What? What was that suggestive laugh?

ANNA

When the character of a man is not clear to you, look at his friends.

BEN

What is that supposed to mean? Am I being insulted.

ANNA

(laughs)

It's not an insult. It's just, this is the different -- We see the world completely different from one another. Who are we to decide who does or doesn't deserve happiness?

BEN

I think if that person is being a dick--then maybe he doesn't.

ANNA

(laughs)

You see everything as black and white. Right or wrong. Good or bad. It's like you're trying to collect points for doing everything right.

BEN

What's wrong with being a good person?

ANNA

Nothing. Obviously. But good people are flawed, too. Even you.

BEN

You think I have flaws? Fuck. We are different.

Anna chuckles. Beat.

BEN (CONT'D)

(smiles)

I often wonder how different life would be had I not approached you in that coffee shop ten years ago.

ANNA

You're kidding. I approached you, dude.

BEN

What? No you didn't.

ANNA

Are you joking? You don't remember this choice pick up line?

(MORE)

ANNA (CONT'D)

Hey--sorry to bother you, but I was sitting at this table earlier and I think I left my jacket here.

BEN

Shit! It was you.

(beat)

We never did find that jacket did we?

ANNA

Wanna know a secret?

(whispers)

There was no jacket.

BEN

(gasps)

Wow. That's some sleeper agent shit. Then, I took you to that little matinee--

ANNA

Yes! That cute one that used to be off Blackburn.

BEN

I miss that place--what did we see?

ANNA

"It's classified. I could tell you, but then I'd have to kill you."

BEN

Top Gun. That's right.

ANNA

(laughs)

See?

BEN

Damn. I really thought it was me.

ANNA

You were a chicken shit.

BEN

Must be one of those "flaws" you were talking about. Honesty, was clearly never one of yours.

ANNA

Hey man. We agreed on brutal honesty from the very beginning.

BEN
I think you added "brutal."

ANNA
I do miss your bullshit.

BEN
And I miss your mood swings.

They share a laugh.

ANNA
Don't get sick and die during this
shit, please.

BEN
Likewise.
(long beat)
Almost feels like closure.

ANNA
Almost.

Beat.

BEN
(smiles)
"You can be my wingman anytime."

Beat.

ANNA
(smiles)
"Bullshit. You can be mine."

They share a smile.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Now it feels like closure.

BEN
Yeah. I'll see you around?

ANNA
You better.

BEN
(smiling)
Bye.

Anna waves. Ben hangs up.

We stay with Anna as she sits with her thoughts.

She looks at herself in the video window. She begins to tear up, as one does at the end of a good chapter.

Anna wipes her tears and gathers herself. She scrolls her contacts and DIALS someone.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. LEXI'S LIVING ROOM, WEBCAM - DAY

Lexi answers. She's dressed, relaxing on the couch, the laptop obviously resting in her lap.

LEXI
(smiling)
Afternoon sunshine.

ANNA
Hey, Lex. You're in a good mood.

LEXI
Nap time.

ANNA
Ah.

LEXI
What's up? You good? You look like you've been crying.

ANNA
I'm good. I was just having a moment.

LEXI
I've had a few of those lately. Bipolar related?

ANNA
Ex-husband related.

LEXI
Oh, shit. What happened?

ANNA
Nothing. We just had that talk. You know, our Annie Hall ending I suppose.

LEXI
Ah. The wistful coda.

ANNA
 Something like that.

Beat.

LEXI
 You still love him. You know that,
 right?

ANNA
 I do. But, just because two people
 love each other doesn't mean it's a
 good idea for them to be together,
 or that they should be together.

LEXI
 Fortunately, you're still young and
 have plenty of time to jump back
 into the dating world where
 everything is marred by neurosis
 and bad sex.

ANNA
 Can't wait. How's the poetry
 coming?

LEXI
 Eh. How's the music?

ANNA
 Eh. I play a lot. And it's
 palliative and usually keeps the
 hypomanic and depressive episodes
 at bay. But the writing, not so
 much.

(beat)

I've been doing some photography.
 Mostly analog in black and white.
 There's something satisfying about
 having to wait for the film roll to
 process before you can see what you
 shot.

(smiles)

I sound like my dad at Christmas.
 "The idea of waiting for something
 makes it more exciting!"

LEXI
 He'd shit a brick if he knew he was
 quoting Andy Warhol.

They laugh.

LEXI (CONT'D)

How is Pastor Craig anyway?

ANNA

Good. Talked with him yesterday.
They're doing their services online
for now.

LEXI

That's good. People need something
to believe in right now.

ANNA

Yeah.

(laughs)

Remember when I brought you home
for the first time?

LEXI

Oh god. That was unique.

ANNA

Dad, this is my girlfriend.
(mimics Pastor Craig)
Now, when you say girlfriend...

LEXI

(mimics Pastor Craig)
Don't they pray down there in
Alabama or wherever you're from?
(they laugh, beat)
So weird to think we used to be an
"item."

ANNA

An item? We were the headline for
the church gossip column--I mean,
"church newsletter"--for months.

LEXI

I always felt guilty they kept us
at the top of the prayer list for
like that whole summer over that
guy with cancer.

ANNA

(smiles)

God, I miss you. How's New York?
How's Nonny?

LEXI

New York is not very New Yorkish
right now. Nonny is good.

(MORE)

LEXI (CONT'D)

I mean 36-hour shifts are kind of her new normal right now. So, she's quarantined from me and the kids a lot. Which is tough. But we're finding ways to make time for each other. Trying to anyway.

ANNA

This has to end at some point though, right? I keep thinking I'm going to wake up and everything is going to be normal.

LEXI

We'll get back to normal. A different normal, but normal. And I suspect you'll have your relationship status changed back to it's complicated in no time.

ANNA

She's choosy not a floozy.

They share a laugh.

LEXI

And the music will come to you. Maybe you need a muse.

ANNA

(smirks)

That used to be, Ben.

LEXI

Maybe it still is. Maybe stop searching for closure and be grateful for the goodbye.

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)

Mommy?

LEXI

Shit. One of them is awake.

ANNA

Tell Nonny and the kids I said, hi.

LEXI

I will. Let's chat again soon. Next week?

ANNA

Definitely.

They smiles and wave goodbye.

Lexi hangs up, leaving us with Anna. No tears this time. Just a glimmer of hope in her expression, or perhaps an idea forming.

SMASH CUT TO:

PROMO VIDEO.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Hey, you.

-- A motion portrait of an attractive, smiling young woman in an urban setting.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Yes. You. Remember when the world looked like this?

-- A cartoon marker drawing of planet earth spinning.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

When finding love was... less complicated?

-- A retro style red pixel heart animation flickers in.

-- An animated drawing of a vintage alarm clock running.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And finding the time to manage your love life, or lack thereof, was your biggest fear? And sex didn't look like this...

-- The hands of a woman unzipping her pants to reveal a hypnotic spiral.

-- A confused pug tilts its head.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

We understand. But don't fret.

-- A shocked abstract cartoon person with a drop of sweat.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

I said DON'T fret! Because your mythical telecommunication friends are on a valiant quest to help.

-- A pixel art style unicorn with rainbows shooting out behind it darts across the screen several times.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

We may be apart. But, with Alicorn,
we're apart together. Yeah, you're
mind just went --

-- A young woman blows a bubble with her bubblegum and POP!

NARRATOR (V.O.)

So let us help you take your
quarantined love life from this...

-- A hypnotic spiral.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

To this.

-- Fireworks.

-- A woman dancing excitedly in the kitchen.

Fade to white. Then, an ALICORN logo fades in, followed by a
tagline underneath:

"Because Your Sex Life Deserves Wings Too.
(Virtually, of course.)"

FADE TO BLACK.

Beat.

DJ SATUR8'S LOGO fades in.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DJ SATUR8'S STUDIO, YOUTUBE - DAY

We're staring at a black background. Two turntables and a
small mixer in front. The hint of a vinyl collection to the
right.

Eventually, DJ Satur8 walks into frame and goes behind the
turntables.

Places a pair of HEADPHONES over ears.

Looks directly into camera.

DJ SATUR8

Hello friends. I have missed you.
To all my fellow isolaters...
(MORE)

DJ SATUR8 (CONT'D)

I hope with the entirety of my heart, even in the rarely visited crevices where my afflictions hibernate, that you are finding this time of segregation a mystical process of unity.

(beat)

Many of you have inquired about my choice to remain behind this...veil...of sorts...on account my show advocates connection. I do not wish to impress upon any of my whimsical disciples that I am about some prearranged swankiness. My intentions were--and are--to fill the air with music. To fill your world with the harmonic connection between all living things--so that you may simply take as much as you require.

(beat)

However, as this is of some dubiety, I shall adhere to your requests. On my next show, I will remove my mask and greet you face to face. But for now, I want us to swim in the sounds of infatuation. Sway in a frenzy of poetic delight. And wander aimlessly together in a trancelike dissociation. I call this next four minutes of smooth jazz, "Oh... it's on tonight."

DJ Satur8 works the turntables.

MUSIC CUE: OH... IT'S ON TONIGHT

A few measures in, the video is minimized and we're staring at a desktop background.

A SIGH.

ANDY (O.S.)

(to himself)

DJ Satur8 you smooth talking bastard.

The mouse CLICKS the ALICORN icon on the desktop.

INT. ANDY'S HOME OFFICE, WEBCAM - LATE DAY

Andy is staring back at us.

An EMAIL notification from Ben appears in the top corner of the screen.

Andy CLICKS it.

The email takes over the screen. We read it:

"Andy,

Sorry for the blindsides this morning. I'm not trying to be a champion for on-screen diversity here. It's simply built into the heart of this story. And yes, it's a love story. I think we could all use one right now. Just take a look at the script and get back to me. Or, let me know if I'm fired.

- Ben"

Andy sighs and CLICKS the email attachment.

The script opens, and Andy scrolls briefly.

ANDY (O.S.)

A hundred and eighty-four pages?
Damn it, Ben.

Andy minimizes the email and brings us back to the video window.

He considers a moment, then scrolls his contacts and DIALS.

It RINGS.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. NONNY'S VANITY, FACETIME - LATE DAY

Nonny answers. She's doing her make up.

NONNY

Hey, dad.

ANDY

Hey, honey. Just calling to check in. You doing good?

NONNY

Doing good.

ANDY
You look tired.

NONNY
Thanks.

ANDY
I meant that as a compliment. Means
you're not lazy.

NONNY
Speaking of--it's a nice change not
seeing you sitting on the couch.

ANDY
Ouch. That couch is an Arthur
Moreau. It's addicting. An
admittedly an expensive habit.

NONNY
Glad to see you're trying to quit.
(beat)
How's home?

ANDY
Sunny. How's craplyn--sorry,
Brooklyn?

NONNY
That's alright, I know you frontin'
cause you miss me.

ANDY
Don't be ridiculous.

NONNY
How's momma?

ANDY
She's good. Running a tight ship.
She won't let me go outside.

NONNY
She won't let you, or you don't
want to cause your ego don't like
how you look in a mask and gloves.

ANDY
Stop. You're being disgusting.

Nonny laughs.

ANDY (CONT'D)

What is with the make up? You going out or something?

NONNY

Kind of. Not really.

ANDY

That's cryptic. What's his name?

NONNY

His?

ANDY

(sarcasm)

I'm just saying. I know how boys are. Only want one thing. Girls develop faster so your emotions are more advanced.

NONNY

Hilarious.

ANDY

Relax, I'm joking. How is Lexi?

NONNY

She's good. It's tough not being together much right now, but that day will come.

ANDY

That's what she said...

Nonny smirks.

ANDY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry your father has not matured beyond making everything into a sexual innuendo. I'm seeing someone about it. Well, I will. When people can see people again.

NONNY

Well, gettin' help is the first step.

Nonny finishes her make up. Andy notices.

ANDY

You look beautiful, honey.

NONNY

Thanks, dad.

ANDY
I'm proud of you.

Nonny smiles.

NONNY
Can I call you tomorrow?

ANDY
Of course. Well, actually, better
call your mother. She gets jealous.

Nonny laughs.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Love you, honey.

NONNY
Love you. And do me a favor...

ANDY
What is that?

NONNY
Get some sun.

ANDY
Ugh. You sound like your mom now.

Nonny smiles and blows Andy a kiss.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Bye, honey.

Nonny hangs up, leaving us with Andy.

Andy stares at himself in the video box, perhaps doing some
soul searching. Maybe not--

ANDY (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Why do my eyes look so puffy?

He leans in for a closer look.

ANDY (CONT'D)
(smiles)
It's the lighting. Ha.
(beat)
Okay.

He scrolls contacts and DIALS Ella.

It RINGS.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. ELLA'S FLAT, WEBCAM - LATE DAY

Ella answers. She looks burned out from a long day of not so great auditions.

ELLA

Andy.

ANDY

Ella, bo-bella. Talk to me. How's the audition process coming along?

ELLA

It's going. I have one left for the day.

ANDY

Yeah? Any luck?

ELLA

Um...I'll send a few recommends over tonight.

Andy squints incredulously.

ANDY

I'm sensing some indifference.

ELLA

No. It's good. It's fine.

ANDY

Ella...

Beat.

ELLA

Okay. It's shit, Andy. It's been a long week. Doing auditions this way--one at a time--over the computer. It's just lengthy and repetitive and honestly--it's all becoming a blur. I can't tell anymore if someone is good, or terrible, and if I have to listen to the "King Kong ain't got shit on me" monologue one more time today I'm going to come unglued.

ANDY

(nods)

Denzel. It's a good piece.

ELLA

Yes. It is. When it is done with passion. And introspection. And-- and vulnerability. But nine times out of ten it's misinterpreted as anger. And I spend all day being shouted at. It's great.

Andy chuckles.

ANDY

It does seem odd that you're being shouted at--they do realize we're casting for a romantic film, right?

She shrugs.

ANDY (CONT'D)

This week has been the auditions for--the male role?

ELLA

Yes. The auditions for Mia don't start until next week.

ANDY

Do me a favor, will ya--and--let's keep it under the radar--but let's cast a little wider net with the auditions for Mia. Ethnically.

ELLA

A wider--ethnical net.

ANDY

Yeah--just--wider. You know. Less--

ELLA

White?

Ella smiles.

ANDY

(smiles)

Can you do that for me?

ELLA

Yes. That's--that's a big step.

ANDY
Well, I'm not a racist.

ELLA
I meant for the studio.

ANDY
Oh. Right. Yeah. Well, the "studio"
doesn't know just yet.

ELLA
Ooh. Scandalous.

Another call RINGS in on Ella's side.

ELLA (CONT'D)
Here's my last audition for the
day.

ANDY
Do it. Keep up the good work. We'll
talk soon.

ELLA
Bye, Andy.

Andy hangs up.

Ella lets the call ring a bit longer as she shuffles some papers around on her desk. She takes a deep breath and answers.

ELLA (CONT'D)
Hello.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. PAUL'S LIVING ROOM, WEBCAM - EVENING

Paul, a little disheveled, is on the other side.

PAUL
Hey. Hi.

ELLA
Paul?

PAUL
Yes. Yep.

ELLA

Hi, Paul. I'm Ella. I'm handling the casting at this point in production.

PAUL

Hi, Ella. Good to meet you. Well, through a screen anyway.

ELLA

Yeah. You know, lockdown.

PAUL

I get it.

ELLA

But we figure, it's similar to a self-tape, so...

PAUL

Definitely. No. I'm into it.

ELLA

(faking enthusiasm)

Great. So, let's just jump right into it. And we can just start with your--(sigh)--monologue.

PAUL

Right. Here's the thing. I don't have--well, I don't know much about the role. Or, the project.

ELLA

You don't have anything prepared?

PAUL

No. It's not what it looks like though. I actually just found out about the audition like ten minutes ago.

ELLA

You've been scheduled for over a week.

PAUL

I realize this looks unprofessional and doesn't bode well for my chances of getting the part--whatever it is--but I'm sort of in between representation right now.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

And my agent--well, actually it's my friend's agent who's kind of sending me projects as a favor--and sometimes things tend to slip through the cracks when it comes to projects pertaining to me.

Beat.

ELLA

So, your agent, that's not your agent, forgot to tell you about the project until ten minutes ago.

PAUL

Yes.

ELLA

You don't have the sides or anything?

PAUL

Unfortunately, no. I know it's a romantic film and the audition is for the love interest. That's about it.

ELLA

(sighs)

Well, Paul--I'm not sure there's much I can do for you at this point.

PAUL

Wait--just--I don't have a monologue--but hold on a second.

Ella is annoyed. Paul walks out of sight, but returns shortly with an ENVELOPE.

ELLA

I don't understand. You're checking your mail in the middle of your audition?

PAUL

Not exactly. I don't have a romantic monologue prepared--but maybe this can work. I wrote this letter for my ex--months ago--at this point I think it's time to accept that I'm probably never going to send it.

Paul starts to open the letter.

ELLA

You're going to read a letter. That you wrote for your ex. For your audition.

PAUL

It's all I've got.

Beat.

ELLA

Okay.

PAUL

Okay.

Paul takes a deep breath and unfolds the LETTER.

Ella looks prepared for another disaster, but --

Every word, every inflection, each facial expression, bleeds passion. Introspection. And vulnerability.

PAUL (CONT'D)

March 10, 2020. Dear Grace. I don't want to take up much of your time. I know once you've made up your mind there's no changing it. What happened? We were everything. Had the rest of our lives together. What the fuck happened? Sorry. I know you hate it when I say fuck. I know life is strange. People get together because they're the same or because they're different, and then split with them for exactly the same reasons. I guess that's what I'm to assume here. I counted up the days we were together. I know that's a weird thing to do. People do weird things when we're sad, I guess. Two years. Nine months. One thousand days. Exactly one thousand. I'm hurt. I'm pissed. Not knowing what could've been. A thousand nights isn't enough for me. Maybe it was enough for you. I'll always wish for one more. Paul.

As Paul reads through the letter, a completely unprepared Ella is enchanted. Her cynicism dissipated.

Paul folds the letter. Obviously affected, but holds it together well.

Ella's brow is furrowed as she deciphers emotions.

Beat.

ELLA

You wrote that for your ex?

PAUL

(nods)

Yeah. We split a few months back. It's been a hell of a year so far. Trying to move on--well--it's difficult when you're socially distancing.

ELLA

(small laugh)

Tell me about it.

PAUL

Yeah? Did you just go through a break up, too?

ELLA

Um. Divorce. A year ago.

PAUL

Sorry to hear that.

She shrugs.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Gracie...She--um--she bought me these amazing tickets to see Sting.

(Ella smiles)

Great seats. I mean right there. I could touch his guitar if he leaned forward. Anyway, about halfway through the show there was an intermission. And that's where she did it.

ELLA

Wait, she broke up with you *at* the concert?

(Paul nods)

That might be the saddest shortest break up story I've ever heard. At a Sting show? That's cold.

PAUL

(nods)

I'm sure she'd say it was her way of letting me down easy. You know, give the dog his favorite treats before you have to put him down.

ELLA

You're the dog in this scenario?

PAUL

(smiles)

Yeah, I guess so. I was the devoted Yorkshire Terrier that had to be rehomed for some reasons she didn't bother to mention.

Ella compresses a laugh.

PAUL (CONT'D)

What?

ELLA

A Yorkie?

PAUL

Yeah. Why? What's wrong with Yorkies?

ELLA

Nothing. It's just funny to me. I feel like most guys would compare themselves to a much bigger-- fiercer dog.

PAUL

(laughs)

Eh. Macho men are out. Cute, feisty, loving companions who are also suitable for apartment living are in.

Ella laughs.

ELLA

So did you leave the concert?

PAUL

Hell, no. I wasn't missing Sting. She left though. And some strange guy that smelled like old socks sat next to me after that.

ELLA

And the letter--was that
handwritten?

PAUL

Yeah. It felt more romantic.

ELLA

(sarcasm)

Typewriter guy, huh.

PAUL

(chuckles)

I do prefer to write my
desperations with inherently more
romantic devices so I feel more
poised. Basically, an only slightly
less attractive Colin Firth in Love
Actually.

ELLA

A criminally underrated film.

PAUL

Richard Curtis gets a bad rap for
writing romanticized characters,
but I appreciate it.

ELLA

Well, for what it's worth, no one
has ever written me a handwritten
letter.

PAUL

I'm not sure it counts if you don't
send it.

ELLA

(small smile)

Ironically, Sting is my favorite
artist.

PAUL

No kidding?

ELLA

Yeah. My dad loved Sting. When I
was little I would fall asleep on
my his chest listening to Ten
Summoner's Tales.

PAUL
 Amazing album. God. I--uh--have a couple of his guitar picks from the show.

ELLA
 Nice. I have a signed shirt from his Brand New Day tour.

PAUL
 I have all of his CD's. And most of his cassettes.

ELLA
 I have all his vinyl.

PAUL
 Shut up. Even Love At First Sting?

ELLA
 (squints incredulously)
 Love At First Sting was a Scorpions record... But you know that.

PAUL
 Touché.

They exchange a smile. Beat.

Ella, sensing she's let the conversation go on too long, tries to shift back to a professional demeanor.

ELLA
 (clears throat)
 Anyway. So, listen. Paul. Surprisingly, your audition went very well.

PAUL
 Oh. Thanks. I appreciate that. Why did you get divorced?

ELLA
 (surprised)
 Um.

PAUL
 Sorry. That's unprofessional.
 (beat)
 (MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

It's just--I don't know--I know you're the casting director and I'm the actor--those are the labels--but can't we--at least for a while--just be two people having a conversation?

Ella smiles, perhaps a blush hidden beneath it. Considers for a beat.

ELLA

He was an asshole.

PAUL

Is that what you're telling you're boss about me, or--

ELLA

Ha. No, you asked why I was divorced. The easiest way to put it was that he was an asshole.

PAUL

I feel like that's the short version. What's the medium version?

ELLA

Medium version?

PAUL

Yeah. Longer than the short version but shorter than the long version.

ELLA

(sarcasm)

Ohh, you want the abridged version of my break up story so you can use it for your next audition. I see.

PAUL

You caught me. I should go.

(they share a laugh)

Seriously, though. He couldn't have always been an asshole. You had to have some good moments along the way, right?

Ella is reluctant to open up at first, but once she starts, it just organically spills out.

ELLA

You know--I've thought about it a lot. I was young and naive.

(MORE)

ELLA (CONT'D)

And I think at the beginning I overlooked a lot of things I shouldn't have because I had idealized who he was and our relationship. Ultimately, he wanted things out of life. And I wanted things out of life. But he didn't want me to want those things because they didn't align with his own idealized version of our relationship. But the assholery-- that I can trace back to the beginning. At our wedding, he got a "work" call right before our first dance.

PAUL

Stop it.

ELLA

It happened. The song started, I went out onto the dance floor--in front of everyone--and he had gone outside. I just stood there. It was... embarrassing.

PAUL

Wow. That sounds more dickish than assholeish.

ELLA

Live and learn.

PAUL

Agreed. The best thing about break ups are the souvenirs. The little things we take with us when we move on. Memories. Good and bad. And the scars, too. So maybe next time we love better and don't make all the same fuck ups.

ELLA

I've spent most of the last year feeling like a fuck up. You would think *not* marrying an asshole would be common sense.

PAUL

I wouldn't be too hard on yourself. Assholes are very common among human beings.

ELLA
(laughs)
Is this an anatomy lesson now?

PAUL
More like an anatomy pep talk from
one fuck up to another.

ELLA
I appreciate that.

PAUL
And we're all guilty of idealizing
and romanticizing. I don't think
it's such a bad thing.

ELLA
No?

PAUL
I'm doing it right now.

Ella smiles.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Richard Curtis knows what's up.

ELLA
I'll give you, Love Actually. But I
usually don't get into those
movies. I think they're misleading
and love in the real world doesn't
look like it does in the movies.

PAUL
Who says?

ELLA
The facts.

PAUL
Have you seen the world today?
We're in the midst of a global
pandemic, and until it happened I'd
only seen it in the movies. Maybe
I'm a romantic, but I think it's
okay to believe that a love like
the movies could exist in that same
world.

Ella smiles.

ELLA
Well, maybe you're right.

PAUL

(beat)

Oh, I forgot to tell you what the P.S. to my letter said.

ELLA

What did it say?

PAUL

Just that, you know, King Kong ain't got shit on me.

ELLA

Stop!!

They share a laugh.

A countdown notification appears at the corner of Paul's screen.

PAUL

Damn.

ELLA

What?

PAUL

Apparently I'm out of time on this call. It says I have two minutes.

ELLA

Yeah. You have to pay for the service to have longer calls.

PAUL

(sighs)

Well. Wish I'd known that. This was good conversation.

ELLA

Yeah. I enjoyed it. Good conversation is in short supply these days.

PAUL

(smiles)

Isn't it? FYI, I badly want to ask you to reserve more of your time for me in the future--but I also feel like this is exactly what it needed to be.

ELLA
I feel the same way. But let's not
ruin it by--

PAUL
Don't say romanticizing.

ELLA (CONT'D)
Romanticizing.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Ugh... I thought I'd converted you.

ELLA
(laughs)
Almost.

PAUL
(smiles)
Well, I only have twenty seconds.
So, it might be too late. If this
is the end, then this is how you
will forever remain in my head.

ELLA
What do you mean?

Paul chuckles. He reaches out of frame and takes a pen and paper.

He writes something, then holds it up for Ella to see. It reads, "DEAR ELLA, TO ME YOU ARE PERFECT" -- Love Actually style.

PAUL
Now you can't say that no one has
ever written you a handwritten
letter.

They exchange a smile. Ella's expression can't hide the romanticizing now.

Paul waves and his video box goes black, leaving us with Ella.

Ella is still smiling, processing the emotions, the conversation, the goodbye.

ELLA
(pleasantly surprised)
Well, fuck.

A few beats later she CLICKS exit and everything goes--

BLACK.

NOEL (V.O.)
I'm telling you I can't see
anything. What's with this GD
P.O.S. Effin' robot overlords are
taking over--

BEN (V.O.)
It's in sleep mode.

NOEL (V.O.)
What?

BEN (V.O.)
Hit sleep mode.

INT. NOEL'S LIVING ROOM/BEN'S LIVING ROOM, WEBCAM - NIGHT

Split screen.

NOEL
Oh. That is very interesting.

BEN
You look exactly the same as when
we spoke earlier.

NOEL
I appreciate that. You however have
aged horribly. You should be using
eye cream regularly.

BEN
Noted. Thank you... for that
hurtful observation.

NOEL
I bring a lot of perks to this
friendship table.

BEN
Your house is--calm?

NOEL
Kids are in bed.

BEN
Ah. Bet you're loving that.

NOEL
Actually I find it horribly
depressing.

BEN

I don't follow.

NOEL

The quiet reminds me of my own mortality. I'm terrified of getting old. Being alone with my thoughts. The thought of me being at a point in my life where my kids are gone living their own lives and I'm left with all the memories of toilet seat art. Blanket forts. Family movie nights where we spend the whole night watching iTunes trailers instead of an actual movie because we can't agree on anything.

BEN

That was weirdly touching, yet somehow depressing. Your advice to me has always been--

(mimics Noel)

"whatever you do don't have kids."

NOEL

And I stand by that. Having kids is a horrible, beautiful, wonderful nightmare. You'll never feel more love, more fear, more joy, more hope. All you ever do is think about your kids. And you love them and resent them for it at the same time. Look, they stress me the eff out. But the best part of everyday is when I get to tuck them into bed and kiss their obnoxious little faces and they say, I love you, daddy. But the worst is thinking about the future. What do I do when they're gone. What if they don't come home for Christmases. What if they don't call.

Ben nods. His expression softens.

NOEL (CONT'D)

You good?

BEN

Yeah. Fine. Just thinking.

NOEL

Sorry to go on that tangent. I actually called because I wanted to tell you--I think you did the right thing earlier. With the script. You're a real stand up guy. You're an a-hole. But a stand up a-hole.

BEN

(chuckles)

You didn't quite sing that tune earlier.

NOEL

So, I'm an a-hole, too. What do you want from me?

BEN

(laughs)

That we both agree on.

(beat)

I spoke with Anna today.

NOEL

Dude. What are you doing? You're poking the bear.

BEN

The bear?

NOEL

The emotional grief bear in the pit of despair you only recently crawled out of.

BEN

It wasn't like that. It was just a conversation.

NOEL

If you say so.

Beat.

BEN

I do have another call I need to make tonight.

NOEL

(sighs)

Okay. I don't wanna know. I'm gonna go shower and try to get this Dorito smell out.

(MORE)

NOEL (CONT'D)

But look-- whatever happens with the script, I'm with you. Unless, of course, you get fired and I don't. Then you're on your own.

BEN

(laughs)

That makes me feel much better. Thanks, Noel.

NOEL

(smiles)

We'll talk soon?

BEN

Yeah. See ya.

Ben considers.

FADE TO BLACK.

Beat.

DJ SATUR8'S LOGO fades in.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. A LIVING ROOM, WEBCAM - NIGHT

DJ Satur8's DJ MASK is sitting on top of a piano. No one is at the piano.

Finally, **KINA (29)** walks into frame and sits at the piano.

KINA

Surprise. DJ Satur8 is a woman!

(smiles)

I use a plugin to change the pitch of my voice. I'm sure that creates a lot of questions. Why wear a mask? Why pretend to have a manly voice? I don't want to dive too deep into all of it, but the short version is that I wanted DJ Satur8 to be more of a symbol. A symbol in which we could all find something to like or connect to. Something bigger than myself. Maybe that worked. Maybe it didn't. My actual name is Kina.

(MORE)

KINA (CONT'D)

And since this is kind of a special situation, and most of you are seeing my face for the first time, I'd like to have that same opportunity. I want to see your faces. So, in the link below you'll find an Alicorn link where you can join this live stream and for the first time we can be face to face. That link is now live.

Video boxes fill the screen one by one until it completely takes over.

Back to Kina--

KINA (CONT'D)

(smiling)

Wow. Hi. This is pretty cool.

(beat)

Thank you to all of you who have been with DJ Satur8 since the beginning. I hope that I've provided a little light for you in these dark days. Being human is hard. But there are beautiful things, too, and one beautiful thing about being human is our ability to connect. Together or apart. And tonight, since we're face to face, I'd like to do something different. Tonight, I'd like to play a song for you as myself. As Kina. This is a song I wrote a long time ago. I wanted to write something new for this, but sometimes the perfect melody has already been pieced together. Sometimes the right words have already been written. And sometimes we all just need a little reminder.

Kina smiles and begins to play.

MUSIC CUE: KINA'S SONG

We stay with Kina for a few beats.

As the music continues we--

INT. LEXI'S HOUSE/NONNY'S HOUSE, WEBCAM - NIGHT - MOS

Lexi and Nonny are having a virtual dinner date. They each have their own take out in front of them, a glass of wine, and a movie on the TV casting shadows over their faces.

INT. MI CHA'S HOUSE, INSTAGRAM LIVE - NIGHT

Mi Cha is dumping one of her isolationship boyfriends.

MI CHA

I just think it's time we end this.

SOON TO BE EX-BOYFRIEND (O.S.)

Is this because I asked you to do a three way with my sister?

MI CHA

That did play a factor in my decision. Yes.

BACK TO KINA FOR A BEAT.

Then --

INT. JODI'S GARAGE/GLEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT - MOS

Split screen. Jodi opens a package with a gift note that he shows Glenn:

"Go save the world. Douchebags forever! -- Marcus"

Jodi and Glenn are giddy as hell.

Jodi removes some BUBBLE RAP and a BLUE GLOW lights up his face. Jodi and Glenn are mesmerized.

INT. BEN'S HOME OFFICE, WEBCAM - NIGHT

Ben DIALS someone.

INTERCUT WITH:**INT. KELLY'S KITCHEN, WEBCAM - NIGHT**

Kelly answers.

KELLY

Dylan Benjamin Davis. Where the hell have you been?

BEN
(smiles)
Hey dad.

KELLY
I had a conversation with a unicorn
today trying to get ahold of you.

BEN
You're going to have to explain
that one.

INT. TOM'S CAR, FACETIME - NIGHT

Tom has been crying. He DIALS.

INT. CHLOE'S FLAT, FACETIME - NIGHT

Chloe answers.

CHLOE
Tom?

TOM
Hey. We need to talk.

CHLOE
Yeah. We do.

Chloe reveals a SUITCASE.

We go **MOS** as Tom sorts it out in his head.

BACK TO KINA.

Then, on her screen, we ZOOM into one of the hundreds of
video boxes.

INT. ANNA'S BEDROOM, WEBCAM - NIGHT - MOS

Anna is sitting in front of her computer. Her guitar rests on
her bed behind her. Notebooks and loose papers are scattered
over the bed. She's been writing.

INT. MARCUS' OFFICE, WEBCAM - NIGHT

Marcus is shutting down. He's still in a video window.

Marcus looks at himself in the video box. He takes his phone
out of his pocket and calls someone.

MARCUS
(into phone)
Hey, mom.

INT. ANDY'S HOME OFFICE, WEBCAM - NIGHT - MOS

Andy is watching the live stream. On the other side of his desktop is Ben's script. He scrolls down and starts to read.

INT. NOEL'S LIVING ROOM, WEBCAM - NIGHT

As Noel watches the livestream, his DAUGHTER crawls up next to him on the couch. He smiles and holds her close.

INT. PAUL'S LIVING ROOM, WEBCAM - NIGHT - MOS

Paul sits in front of his computer looking at the note he wrote Ella.

INT. ELLA'S FLAT, WEBCAM - NIGHT - MOS

Ella is watching the livestream. She picks something up from her desk and looks at it. We can see that it's Paul's HEADSHOT. She smiles. Romanticizing.

FADE TO:

THE SCREENSAVER MONTAGE OF CITY SCAPES IN REVERSE.

- The Philly skyline at night.
- A bustling London at night.
- Floating over Singapore at night.
- A lively New York City skyline at night.
- A birds-eye-view of downtown Los Angeles at night.

FADE TO BLACK.