

SPEED RELATIONSHIP-ING

written by

Art Vandelay

FADE IN:

INT. CAB - DAY

The passenger door opens and ADAM CRAFT, 30's, dark eyes, penetrating stare, scowls as he settles into the back seat.

ADAM

For the record, I'm doing this
against my will.

The driver, ZAINE LEWIS, 40's, dyed blonde hair, manic energy, leans back with a huge grin on his face.

ZAINE

Ba-zing-a! Hi, I'm Zaine and that's
my catchphrase!

ADAM

Okay, nope. I'm out. Fuck this--

Adam tries to open the door. Locked.

ZAINE

Your sister warned me you were a
live one.

ADAM

(yanking door)
Let me out. I will shatter this
window if I have to!

ZAINE

Lemme do my spiel real quick, if
you don't like what you hear,
you're free to go. But you will
lose your deposit.

Adam stops resisting.

ADAM

It's her money and you have ten
seconds.

ZAINE

Number one, forget everything you
know about speed dating.

ADAM

The only thing I know is that it's
moronic and I'm never forgetting
that.

ZAINE

Number two, realize this isn't speed dating at all. This is *speed relationship-ing*... in a cab!

Adam just stares a moment, then takes out his cell phone.

ADAM

I'm calling the cops.

ZAINE

Um, if you'd give me a moment to--

Adam puts the phone on speaker and holds it up to show he is in fact dialing 9-1-1. It starts ringing.

ZAINE

(talking fast)

Third and finally, get ready for the experience of a lifetime as I take you through an entire relationship, while we drive, all before you get to your destination. Sounds cool, huh?

DISPATCHER (V.O.)

911. What is your emergency?

ADAM

Hi, I'm trapped in a cab with a deranged sociopath. He's forcing me to participate in his sick, demented dating service--

DISPATCHER (V.O.)

You mean speed relationship-ing?

ADAM

...What?

DISPATCHER (V.O.)

Zaine is a miracle worker. You should really give it a try. Don't be a wimp!

ZAINE

That's Meredith. She met her husband right here in this very cab. I have her on call so to speak as my last line of defense.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)

Zaine! Ba-zing-a!

ZAINE

Ba-zing-a!

Adam hangs up the phone in shock. The cab doors unlock.

ZAINE

Okay, decision time. You staying or leaving? Up to you.

ADAM

(still stunned)
I think I'm in hell.

ZAINE

I'm gonna take that as a yes. Time to meet your date!

Zaine slams on the gas and they peel out into the street.

INT. CAB - LATER

The cab screeches to a halt and the other passenger door opens to reveal -- ANNA SWARTZ, 30's, black nails and green hair this week, attractive despite every effort to the contrary.

Her FRIEND, 40's, struggles to get her in the car.

ANNA

No-- I'm not doing it--

FRIEND

You promised--

The friend manages to get her inside, slams the door shut.

Zaine takes off at high speed, cranes his neck back once they're in the clear.

ZAINE

Hey Anna, I'm Zaine!

ANNA

Choke on a diseased cow dick.

ZAINE

Alrighty, we're starting stage one, which is first date... aaaand go!

Zaine yanks up a thick metal divider separating driver and passengers, disappears from sight completely.

Adam and Anna sit in awkward silence for a long beat.

ADAM
So, how'd you get roped into this?

ANNA
Look, we don't have to talk. They
can't make us.

ADAM
Fine with me.

More uncomfortable silence.

ANNA
Fuck. It's worse if we don't talk.
Small talk only. Nothing personal.

ADAM
Um... what do you do for a living?

Anna just glares.

ADAM
Okay, well, I'm a teacher. K-12.

No response.

ADAM
I hate kids though.

ANNA
(tiny smile)
You hate kids?

ADAM
They're loud and they smell bad.
It's basically like taking care of
a room full of monkeys. One time a
kid actually shat in his hand and
threw his feces across the room.
He'll probably grow up to be
President some day.

ANNA
Why do it if you hate it?

ADAM
I'm a firm believer that everything
humans do is in their own self-
interest. I'm trying hard to avoid
that. I despise every moment of my
work and derive zero pleasure from
it. That's real charity.

ANNA

That's probably the dumbest thing
I've ever heard... but you're right
about the self-serving part.

ADAM

Thank you.

ANNA

Why do people always have to spew
their joy and happiness over
everyone else?

ADAM

Cuz they're insecure and secretly
terrified it won't last.

ANNA

(smiles)

Yeah.

The metal divider comes down. Zaine pops his head back.

ZAINE

Time's up! Moving to stage two...
candlelit dinner!

He hurls a table cloth into the backseat. Then two unlit
candles. Turns back around just in time to avoid drifting
into the oncoming lane.

ZAINE

Ba-zing-a!

The divider slams back up.

ADAM

Did he forget his meds or take too
many?

ANNA

We could light these candles and
stick them in his gas tank.

ADAM

So you have a habit of blowing up
vehicles?

ANNA

I did burn down a building once.
But it was abandoned.

ADAM

Okay, how bout this, I'll give you the rundown of my tragic past if you do yours, then we'll choose a winner.

ANNA

I said nothing personal.

She clams up instantly, turns and stares out the window.

ADAM

Fine, but I'm saying mine so I win by default... I was nine and my parents were taking me to a play. Kind of like in Batman. We got carjacked, these two guys, and my parents didn't get out fast enough, so they shot them both. Tossed them out, then drove off with me in the backseat. We got like ten miles before they realized I was there, then dropped me off at a gas station. Unlike Batman I didn't put on a cape and start fighting crime afterwards. I just got really depressed and had to spend a week at Grovewood Psychiatric.

ANNA

(mumbled)

Grovewood has decent food.

They both stare out their respective windows a moment.

ANNA

If my dad died I'd have a party and dance on his grave.

ADAM

Am I invited?

She looks at him, very seriously considers the request.

ANNA

Yes.

SHONK! The divider drops, Zaine sticks his head in.

ZAINE

Doin' great folks! Moving to stage three... first kiss! Ba-zing-a!

ADAM

Wait, what?

And he's gone. Barry Manilow blares over the speakers.

ANNA

Touch me and you die.

ADAM

Don't flatter yourself. I won't deny I've had sex in weirder situations, but never sober.

ANNA

Oh so now it's sex.

ADAM

Full of yourself much?

ANNA

So what's the weirdest place you've ever done it?

ADAM

Well, the grossest was probably the cafeteria floor where I work. Something about the smell of sloppy joe's and sweat stays with you.

ANNA

Please tell me you didn't bang a student.

ADAM

You have a sick mind.

ANNA

(re: Zaine)

You know he's probably beating off in the front seat right now.

ADAM

You have a very sick mind.

ANNA

Sick minds think alike.

Adam laughs. She does too. The cab swerves and Anna's flung across into him.

The vehicle rights itself but they're still pressed together.

ADAM

Think he did that on purpose.

Neither of them moves.

ADAM
We should probably separate.

Anna leans in as he does and their lips meet. It's over in an instant yet lingers in their eyes.

ZAINE
(reappearing)
That was beeeeeaaaaautiful! Next stage... marriage!

Zaine rips open his jacket to reveal a white clerical collar.

ADAM
Oh Christ.

ZAINE
Adam, do you take Anna Swartz to be your lawfully wedded wife?

ADAM
Marriage is a disease plaguing the human race.

ZAINE
That's a "maybe" for Adam.

ANNA
I'm gonna vomit.

ZAINE
Okay, two "maybes". Work with me!

ADAM
You can't put random head cases in a car and expect results.

ANNA
(dark)
I'm not a head case.

ADAM
(eye roll)
Right. You're the picture of mental health.

ANNA
Least I'm not the one spending his entire life punishing himself cuz he was the one left alive.

ADAM

Oh, yeah, you've got me all figured out.

ANNA

It's not difficult. You won't stop blathering about every detail.

ADAM

Your dad abused you and you hate yourself because of it. Not exactly an enigma.

ANNA

Fuck you!!!

Zaine slams his fist down against the steering wheel.

ZAINE

No, no, no, NO! I'm trying so hard and you won't cooperate. It's supposed to be a happy cab. We're all supposed to be happy!

He glares at them, his earlier frivolity replaced by glowering menace.

ADAM

Uh, alright man...

The cab speeds up, slices through traffic and straight through a red light.

ZAINE

You have no idea the effort I've put in. And you're ruining it! We're going to the special stage.

ADAM

Zaine. Slow down.

ZAINE

It's a stage I just thought of and it's where I drive this car into a freakin' wall.

ANNA

(worried)

That's not funny.

Up ahead: the intersection ends and gives way to a solid brick wall. Zaine's foot goes flat against the accelerator.

Closes the gap almost instantaneously.

ZAINE

You made me do this!

ADAM

Oh shit oh shit--

Nothing they can do. Time slows. They lock hands. Look at each other with the knowledge this is the end as the wall rears up in the car's windshield--

ANNA/ADAM

I love you.

Impact. A ripping sound. The windshield goes black. Then it's clear as day and the cab screeches to a halt in the middle of a long, slim alley.

Anna and Adam stare ahead in stunned silence a moment. Then slowly turn towards the back windshield:

See the entrance of the alleyway. Torn paper covered in little brick designs hangs from the edges. Anna's friend appears, standing there, as does Adam's sister. They wave.

Anna and Adam turn back around, still in a daze. Zaine is looking at them, huge grin on his face, as he says

ZAINE

Ba-zing--

Anna punches him in the nose with a solid right jab.

ZAINE

(holds bloody nose)

Awwwhhh!

Adam looks at Anna. She looks at him.

ADAM

Well... what do we do now?

ANNA

I think there's a park nearby.
Wanna go throw rocks at ducks?

ADAM

You read my mind.

They climb out together and the door slams shut as we...

FADE TO BLACK.