19 PERCENT

WRITTEN BY DARREN J SEELEY
FADE IN:

INT. REFRIGERATOR - DAY

The door opens. PENNY (40s) peers inside, scans around the shelves. Frowns.

JEWEL (17) sneaks beside her.

    JEWEL
    Stinks.

PENNY
    You need something in here?

Jewel grabs a box of donuts.

INT. PENNY'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jewel goes over to the counter, pops open the box.

    JEWEL
    Yuck.

Picks up a nutty.

    JEWEL
    Meh.

Penny takes off the lid of the milk. Cringes.

She puts it back, panics.

Jewel lifts up another donut. A white sugar. Powder fluff gets over her fingers.

    PENNY
    Oh. My. God.

Jewel enjoys the donut.

    PENNY
    The turkey. The turkey. Please not the turkey.

Penny closes the door, opens the freezer side.

    PENNY
Oh. My. God.

Penny rushes to the back of the fridge. Jewel turns, shuts the freezer door.

PENNY
Unplugged! Who unplugged the refrigerator!

JEWEL
If you turn off your appliances for at least fifteen minutes a day you can save three dollars on the power bill.

PENNY
What?

JEWEL
Up to three dollars.

PENNY
You unplugged the - Thanksgiving morning. You unplugged-why in God's name?

JEWEL
Didn't unplug it this morning. Unplugged it yesterday. Besides, light came on.

PENNY
Emergency battery. But that's beside the - oh my God what am I going to do?

MINUTES LATER

A mushy pumpkin pie falls into a trashcan.

Penny pitches a spoiled turkey.

JEWEL
Read the other day how nineteen percent of all food not eaten at the dinner table winds up in landfills and becomes methane gas.

PENNY
Now's not the time.

JEWEL
Contributes to global warming.

PENNY
Jewel?

JEWEL
Yeah, mom?

Penny gives her the evil eye.

HALLWAY

JAKE (12) decked out in his Miami Dolphins bathrobe, yawns as he strolls on. He passes by a bedroom door with varied environmental causes, groups and slogans taped on it.

Jewel storms toward him. Jake spurts to life.

JAKE
Good morning

JEWEL
Close it.

JAKE
Something wrong?

JEWEL
Shut up, twerp.

JAKE
Nice going.

KITCHEN- MINUTES LATER

Jake observes the donut box, frowns. Selects the nutty.

Penny, across the table from him, head down in her arms, like a school kid having a quiet time out.

Jake takes a huge bite.

JAKE
Want to talk about it? You're gonna anyway.

PENNY
Don't talk with your mouth full.

Jake rolls the food in his mouth. Swallows it down.

Penny slaps one hand up and down on the table.

PENNY
What am I going to do, what am I going to do!

JAKE
We can always get more donuts.

Penny's head pops up.

PENNY
Stuffing! Please tell me I have stuffing or instant potatoes!

She darts away from the table. Searches for items O.S.

Jake downs a cup of juice. Gargles it. Swishes. Swallows.

PENNY (O.S.)
Thank you God!

JAKE
Thank God for stuffing and potatoes.

PENNY (O.S.)
Sliced beets! Four cans of sliced beets! Thank you, sweet Lord!

Jake gulfs down the rest of the donut.

Penny moves things around in a cupboard O.S.

PENNY (O.S.)
We're in business!
JAKE
(mouth full)
What you find?

She shows him her joy.

A generic can of green beans.

Jake gulps.

INT. TAYLOR'S OFFICE - DAY

SUPER: 24 HOURS AGO

TAYLOR (late 20s) headset, dress shirt and loud tie, does boxing moves in the comfort of his own office.

CLIENT
(on intercom)
I don’t know, Taylor. I don’t want to make any snap-

TAYLOR
Would I mess with you? No! Jam you up? No! Who’s the numero uno guy who’s going to help you out?

CLIENT
You have. But-

TAYLOR
Who’s the ace in the deck, got that right. Who’s gotten you out of tight spots?

CLIENT
Well. Your company has-

TAYLOR
Right! You call us. You call me. Why? Because we get results! I get results! I wanna hear it, Stewart!

CLIENT
You’re the man, Taylor!
TAYLOR
It's your birthday!

CLIENT
You are the man!

TAYLOR
Top notch hopscotch bread and butter! You know what tomorrow is?

CLIENT
Yes!

TAYLOR
Gobble! Gobble! You got something extra to be thankful for!

MAIN FLOOR
Taylor stands silent in front of his office, surrounded by fellow employees. He studies each face. His face jollies up.

TAYLOR
It's gone through!

Celebration! Everyone claps, cheers.

TAYLOR
Party at my place to-night!

A CO-WORKER (30s) gives a thumbs up.

CO-WORKER
You are the man!

INT. TAYLOR'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM - MORNING
All over the floor, crowded on every table: Bottles of gin and beer. Some empty. Some spilled over.
Stains on a carpet.
Soda crackers and potato chips.
The drunk CO-WORKER passed out, upside down on the couch. Shirt out, pants on. No shoes. One right sock.

The other sock- in the fish tank.

The catfish ignores it.

A cell phone rings. Sounds of a marching band.

TAYLOR'S RIGHT HAND rises from somewhere below O.S.

Scrambles around the edge of a table. Knocks over beer bottles.

Finally- fingers find the cell phone. Yanks phone away.

TAYLOR (O.S.)
Yeah. I'm sitting down.

Sits up in a jiffy. His hair messy. Wrinkled clothes with a mustard stain, loose tie.

TAYLOR
Calm down, calm down. Not the end of the world.

YOLANDA (20s) stretches, broods up beside Taylor. Her makeup smeared, hair partially covers her face. A few buttons on her blouse undone, just enough for cleavage.

YOLANDA
Who's calling you this early?

Taylor cups his phone.

TAYLOR
My sister.

YOLANDA
(hung over)
Hi, sister!

TAYLOR
Hey, hey, you mind?
(back on phone)
Just a friend, co-worker.
Yolanda. You met her once.

Taylor notices the cleavage out of the corner of his eye.
TAYLOR
What? No, no, no. Not here. I can't-

Sighs. Looks at his watch. Upside down. Takes it off and puts it on right.

TAYLOR
Yes, I'm sorry I didn't go on the Bahamas cruise with mom and dad. I had work, and they wanted you to go anyway.

Yolanda finds a bottle, checks it. Finishes it off.

TAYLOR
No, that's alright. I'll call him. We'll work something out. You know me. It's under control.

Frowns.

TAYLOR
Four hours. I understand. Bye.
(to Yolanda)
Hey, I really could use some help with-

Yolanda passes out.

TAYLOR
Okay. Scratch that.

Dials a number.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT.TV ROOM - MORNING

Macy's parade on TV.

A bowl of popcorn on a dinner tray in front of

NICK (late 30s) who picks up his cell phone on the first buzz.
INTERCUT

TAYLOR
You are the man!

NICK
Taylor?

TAYLOR
That's right, Nick! Listen up! I'm in the zone, man. I'm in the zone. The Battle Zone, the Twilight Zone.

NICK
Okay. You're in the zone.

TAYLOR
The end zone! And I need my pass to score the winning play! You with me!?

NICK
I think so.

TAYLOR
Penny called. Turkey spoiled, milk turned to cottage cheese and you don't want to know what happened to the squash!

NICK
So why is that a problem? People just bring something.

TAYLOR
No, my man! The food's all bad and it stinks up the place. Her kids are wearing clothespins on their noses and she's breaking out the gas masks! We got to have it somewhere else!

NICK
Your folks are on the cruise in the Bahamas. How about your place?
TAYLOR
No, just as bad, maybe worse.
That leaves y-o-u and an i-o-u.
So it has to be you!

NICK
My apartment?

TAYLOR
That's right!

NICK
Couldn't we just call up a good restaurant, be done with it?

TAYLOR
Everything's booked!

NICK
Did you check? Doesn't have to be anything fancy.

TAYLOR
No! That is not an acceptable answer!

NICK
I'm just saying you know.
Doesn't hurt to look.

TAYLOR
Well, yeah, if you go to Pizza Shack or Taco Macho or something! But it's Turkey Day, people want bird! They don't want pizza, they don't want enchiladas! They want greens! They want potatoes! They want to pass the pepper, pass the salt, they want to eat bird!!

NICK
Mo Po Tofu.

TAYLOR
What did you just say?

NICK
I can make Mo Po Tofu.
TAYLOR
Mo Po Tofu? What the -

NICK
I can make that.

TAYLOR
You are cooking a dumb bird!
It's not open for discussion.
It isn't a debate. We can do this, Nick! Because we can! You can!

NICK
Because I'm the cook. Anything else?

TAYLOR
Well, yeah. Now that you mention it...

EXT. TAYLOR'S HOUSE - MORNING

Taylor, hair slicked back. Changed dress shirt. Loud tie.

Opens the door.

Comes out with Nick. They support a passed out Yolanda to the car.

NICK
Girlfriend?

TAYLOR
Only if she remembers.

They plop her in the backseat next to two paper bags and the bombed CO-WORKER.

NICK
That's all, right? Nobody in the closet, nobody in the attic?

TAYLOR
That's all.
Nick looks the two over.

NICK
Maybe we should have called a
cab or Dial-A- Ride or someone.

TAYLOR
Gene lives a few miles from
here, drop him off first, then
Yolanda.

NICK
I'm just saying, you know.
Don't want them to hurl
breakfast in my backseat.

TAYLOR
These are good people. Don't
worry about it.

Pats him on the back.

TAYLOR
It's cool.

INT. NICK'S CAR - DAY

Taylor fiddles with the radio, finds a song he likes and
nods his head.

TAYLOR
Bob with me, Nick.

NICK
Right.

TAYLOR
Because we are in the zone.

EXT. GENE'S HOUSE - DAY

Peaceful suburban neighborhood.

Taylor lifts Co-Worker Gene. Once on the front yard,
Gene falls down on the grass. Taylor swears under his
breath, helps him up.
GENE'S WIFE (40s) bolts out of the house with a raised fist, shouts of rage, and a hockey stick.

GENE'S WIFE
Stupid!

She takes a swing at Taylor, misses.

GENE'S WIFE
Some nerve!

Taylor drops Gene and retreats.

Bolts into Nick's car.

GENE'S WIFE
Thanksgiving morning!

Once in, Nick reverses the car. Gene's wife taps the hood of the car with the hockey stick.

INT. NICK'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Nick floors it.

Taylor bursts in chuckles.

TAYLOR
In the zone!

NICK
What was that?

TAYLOR
Gene's a good guy, but his wife- a firecracker with a lit fuse twenty-four seven!

NICK
Aren't you Gene's boss?

TAYLOR
No. What gave you that idea? I just said I work with him. Thank God it's Thanksgiving!

NICK
Yeah.
Nick slows down.

TAYLOR
No, I mean thank God, because if it wasn't the holiday, we wouldn't get out alive.

NICK
Before we get there, does Yolanda have any psycho ex-boyfriends?

TAYLOR
No. But she did date a lawyer once.

NICK
Right.

TAYLOR
Not a nice guy. Buries his enemies in paperwork.

NICK
How do you know that?

Finally, Taylor sits up straight.

TAYLOR
I'm one of them.

Gets back in the song, sings along. Nick switches stations.

TAYLOR
What? You don't like that song?

NICK
Love the song. Just don't want to hear you butcher it.

TAYLOR
Man, that's cold.

NICK
All I'm interested in is doing our business, getting things done.
TAYLOR
Right. But that doesn't mean-

YOLANDA
What are you all doing?

Taylor cranes his neck back.

TAYLOR
Hey, how you feeling?

YOLANDA
How do I look?

TAYLOR
Well, I-

YOLANDA
I'm crap-faced on Thanksgiving morning. How the hell do you think I'm feeling?

TAYLOR
We'll get you home. This here is my sister's boyfriend, Nick. Nick, Yolanda.

NICK
Nice to meet you. Happy Thanksgiving.

YOLANDA
Whatever. So, Taylor, what's the haps?

TAYLOR
My place is a bar, my sister's place is a sty. Folks in the Bahamas drinking rum.

YOLANDA
And?

TAYLOR
Having dinner at Nick's.

NICK
My place.
YOLANDA
I know who you are already, okay? So, this is short notice. Why not just call a reservation, eat out?

Nick glances over to Taylor.

NICK
Game's on at 12:30.

Taylor smiles.

YOLANDA
Your place. Don't you need to fix the place up, dust, vacuum, clean?

NICK
Before I picked up Taylor, I gave Penny the key.

TAYLOR
You did what?

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Penny surveys the apartment.

PENNY
Oh dear Lord.

Jewel frowns at the sight of a table lamp with a regular light bulb.

JEWEL
What kind of man doesn't use energy saver light bulbs?

Jake, in his Miami Dolphins jersey, hops on over to the TV room.

PENNY
Wait a minute, Jacob. Nick doesn't have any video games.

JAKE
He's got TV. Good enough.
PENNY
Hey, you guys have never been over here, don't mess with stuff.

JAKE
I'm only turning on a TV. I'm not blowing it up.

PENNY
Don't get smart. We got work to do.

JAKE
Didn't you just say we won't mess with stuff?

PENNY
Cleaning up a little bit is not the same thing. Nick's doing this for us on short notice. We can give him a hand.

JEWEL
Good thing he's not a slob. But some of these magazines can be recycled. Oh-My-God! Did you know about this, mom!?

She holds up the magazine. It's NASCAR related.

JEWEL
He supports Global Warming!

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

A modern day maze of doom for any man.

Nick and Taylor review the battlefield. The place is packed. Lines of people as far as the eye can see.

Yolanda creeps up with a shopping cart.

YOLANDA
I can help.
NICK
Don't have the time. You can wait in the car.

YOLANDA
I can shop for myself, can't I?

TAYLOR
It's a guy thing.

YOLANDA
Guy thing?

TAYLOR
Yeah. See, we know what we want, what we're looking for. We find those things. We get out of here, everyone else eats our plume of dust.

NICK
Well said.

TAYLOR
Only way to say it.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jewel disgusted.

An assortment of cleaning products in front of her.

Jake puzzled.

Jake shrugs, grabs one of the polishes and a roll of paper towels.

JEWEL
Paper towels. Did you know that paper towels kills a hundred trees a month? And the waste of them contributes to fifty percent of landfills?

JAKE
That's an exaggeration. It's not even close I think.
JEWEL
Paper towels should be outlawed. Over half of people's garbage on a week to week basis is mostly paper towels and old food.

JAKE
Like I care.

JEWEL
You better care! These cleaning agents also contribute to the destruction of the Ozone layer!

JAKE
Put a cork back in the bottle.

INT. GROCERY STORE. FROZEN MEAT AISLE - DAY

Two WOMEN (both 40s) play tug of war with a frozen turkey.

Nick finds one frozen turkey in the freezer. Only one left. He picks it up, puts it in the cart.

A CRAZY WOMAN (40s) springs up and spits a can of pepper spray at him. As he blocks the blast, the Crazy Woman snatches the turkey.

She tucks it under her arm, and like a running back, goes deep in the crowded outfield. She's halfway to produce when someone unseen in the crowd grabs it from her.

Hands raise, hold the turkey up high. People jump up for it.

Taylor springs up like an NBA player, and steals it.

WOMEN grab his shirt, tie.

YOLANDA
Over here! Over here!

Taylor can't make her out, she's somewhere in the mosh pit.
CRAZY WOMAN
Nowhere to go! Nowhere to run!

DESPERATE HOUSEWIFE (30s) waves an accusing finger.

DESPERATE HOUSEWIFE
Give it up, pretty boy!

ELDERY WOMAN raises her lethal umbrella.

ELDERY WOMAN
I'll teach you some manners!

TAYLOR
Well, me and my friends are going to make it out of here with this the potatoes, AND his Mo Po Tofu AND one other thing!

DESPERATE HOUSEWIFE
What's that?

TAYLOR
I'm the man!

Eldery Woman swings. Misses. Taylor backs up.

TAYLOR
Strike one!

ELDERY WOMAN
Have respect for your elders!

TAYLOR
I got this! Nick! Get your Tofu! Yolanda! Potatoes and greens!

Somewhere in the rock concert, Nick and Yolanda nod and hustle to various points of the store.

CRAZY WOMAN
You ain't got a prayer!

TAYLOR
Back up, baby! I am in the zone!

DESPERATE HOUSEWIFE
Give it up!
TAYLOR
We are going to cook the fowl.

The crowd closes in. It looks hopeless.

DESPERATE HOUSEWIFE
You are going to get whipped!

TAYLOR
Well then give me your pumpkin pie, honey bunny!

As he laughs, he hiccups. Coughs.

A look of fear covers his face.

Too late.

The women scream, get far away from Taylor...as he drops the turkey on the floor.

Yesterday's booze and today's breakfast all over the floor.

Pea soup surrounds the frozen turkey.

SHORT TIME LATER

Shopping carts full but no shoppers. Baskets of goods abandoned.

Musak plays.

CHECKOUT LANE

The CASHIER (18) cringes as she rings up the frozen turkey. It's cleaned off, but Nick, Yolanda and Taylor look like they been through World War III.

It seems they have the place to themselves.

NICK
Paper, please.
INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - DAY

The apartment: spotless.

Penny and Jewel smile as Nick, Yolanda and Taylor enter with groceries. Smiles turn to frowns. Frowns to disgust.

    TAYLOR
    Not one word.

Walks off towards Nick's bathroom.

    PENNY
    What happened?

    NICK
    We got a turkey! And I got my tofu!

    JEWEL
    You mean the Tofu flavored like turkey.

    NICK
    No, there's turkey, there's my tofu.

    JEWEL
    What's the point? Either you're going vegan or you're not.

    NICK
    Whatever. Long story. But we are good to go. This is Yolanda, Taylor's friend. And I am ready to get cooking, so I thank everyone for helping me tidy up, but now, make way.

    PENNY
    Can I help with anything?

    TAYLOR
    (off)
    Hey, Nick-

    NICK
    Yes.
JEWEL
You didn't even ask what he wants.

YOLANDA
He already knows.

BEDROOM
Taylor stands before Nick's open closet of clothes.

LAUNDRY ROOM
Taylor's hands dump the dirty shirt and tie in the washing machine. Turns a knob to warm water.

TV ROOM
Taylor, now in near identical white dress shirt and a solid red tie, plops himself on the couch next to Jake.
Confused.
Jake catches on.

JAKE
What?

TAYLOR
Nothing. Forget it.

JAKE
You didn't toss up in Nick's car did you?

TAYLOR
No.

JAKE
Where did you hurl? Not on the turkey.

TAYLOR
Yeah. But we got another turkey. It's good.

JAKE
You smell like beer.
TAYLOR
It's cologne.

JAKE
Sure. If you say so.

TAYLOR
Detroit Lions and Chicago Bears. Who plays at four?

JAKE
Dallas and Baltimore.

TAYLOR
That's right. Dallas and Baltimore. Miami does not play against Dallas or Detroit. But there you are, Miami Dolphins jersey. I know you like that team, for whatever reason. It's alright. But...you know...

JAKE
No. I don't know what you mean.

TAYLOR
They aren't playing.

Jake: clueless.

TAYLOR
It's just...you know. Right?

JAKE
Right?

TAYLOR
Forget it.

JAKE
You didn't really blast on the turkey, did you?

TAYLOR
You watch the parade?

JAKE
Macy's?
TAYLOR
No other.

JAKE
Nope. Stop trying to change the subject.

NICK'S KITCHEN
Nick puts the turkey in the oven. Sets a timer.
Dumps the contents of a can of spinach into a bowl.
Penny watches him as he makes Mo Po Tofu.

DINNER TABLE
Plates and silverware set out.
Everyone but Nick seated at the table.
Nick comes over, places a plate full of hot turkey next to a cup of gravy.
Right next to Mo Po Tofu.

NICK
Hot and ready!

TAYLOR
In the Zone!

NICK
And bad to the bone. Okay, what's everybody thankful for, then, we'll give thanks to God, bless the food. Clockwise.

YOLANDA
Thanks for inviting me, letting me help you guys.

NICK
I was wrong. Couldn't have done it without you.

YOLANDA
I don't know...
NICK
You were a help.

TAYLOR
Thankful for family and friends. And the deal we closed yesterday. Thankful that after a wild night, everyone got home safe. Thanks to Nick for letting me borrow a shirt and using his washer and dryer. Next in line.

JAKE
Dolphins! Video games! Next!

JEWEL
I want to thank Greenpeace, PETA, the ACLU and all those who are with all my causes, and to those who don't go green may they burn in a special place in eternal hell for what they do to our mother Earth.

Silence for a few moments.

PENNY
Okay, I would like to thank Nick for making such a great dinner on short notice, having us over. He's the best. I would like to thank God for a good day.

NICK
Thank everyone for coming. It was a crazy morning, but we made it. That said, Thank the Lord for of you.

A stare from Jewel.

NICK
And The Green Earth.

Jewel smiles.
PENNY
Now everyone hold hands, and let's bless the food.

Once everyone does so-

PENNY
Thank you God for today, may you bless this food for we are about to eat, bless the hands that helped prepare it. May it nourish us to our good in Jesus' name, Amen.

NICK
Dig in!

JAKE
Pass the Tofu and potatoes please.

PENNY
One at a time.

JAKE
I just don't want the green beans.

PENNY
Yeah, I know.

JAKE
Besides, Taylor already blessed the turkey at the store.

Penny stops shy of taking a bit of the turkey.

JEWEL
Yeah, and before that? The bird had to suffer a horrible fate. Someone took the poor think, snaps its neck and takes an axe and whops its head off! How would you like something like that happening to your dog or cat?

PENNY
Hey.
JEWEL
Well, how would you like to eat your own dog? Raise it up just to kill it for doggie bacon?

NICK
No one is forcing you to eat the turkey.

JEWEL
It's an ultimate waste. You'll just wind up throwing half of the dead bird out.

PENNY
Jewel—shut up and eat.

JEWEL
I will not be silent! Animals have rights too!

TAYLOR
Does a turkey vote?

JEWEL
Does a dog?

TAYLOR
We are not eating a dog. We are not eating a cat. We aren't having chilled monkey brains. It is a turkey.

JEWEL
A turkey you tossed on.

TAYLOR
That was a different turkey.

JEWEL
It was still a turkey. A turkey that died horribly, a turkey that will never be served. In the dumpster. Where it rots.

PENNY
I apologize, Nick.
NICK
It's alright. I know what this is. I should have seen - Jewel, I'm not replacing your father. I can't fill his shoes. I just started seeing your mother. You're in my place, you feel uncomfortable. I understand.

JEWEL
You do?

NICK
Yes. The bird is cooked. If you don't want to eat the bird, you don't eat the bird. I'm not going to eat it. But it's not going to waste. Have the tofu.

JEWEL
It's the idea.

NICK
Be glad I didn't choose duck.

Jewel shrugs, takes some tofu.

PENNY
Any other interesting discussions?

Nick opens a bottle of wine and pours.

NICK
Sure. I'd rather have a toast before we all lose our minds.

_raises his glass.

NICK
Just the same. To everyone's mental health!

FADE OUT