

CUT

"Don't Go Into The Pilot Light"

Written by

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ACT ONE

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

EXTREME CLOSE UP: COFFIN

SLOWLY PULL BACK. It's a dark afternoon. A PRIEST (50'S) stands behind the coffin. Continue to pull back to reveal a CROWD of people sitting in rows of chairs, many dressed in black, some dressed in marine uniform.

To the side of the coffin is a picture of PHIL URMICH (56), a now deceased former marine; the cause of this funeral.

PRIEST

We gather here today to celebrate the life of Phil Urmich. I personally knew him threw his work with Urban Eating, the government organization which employs ex-convicts. He was a true friend, and will be dearly missed...

His voice fades as we pull into:

INT. RECEPTION AREA - CONTINUOUS

The room is empty, yet CHAOTIC CLAMORING can be heard nearby as the priest's voice disappears entirely.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The camera stops, as we land in a anarchic kitchen. Machines are running amuck, open ingredients are spilled over, and the EMPLOYEES only seem to be at each other's throats.

KATHARINE BURRESS (30's) enters, furious at GEORGE ILLES (30'S) Who's too busy grilling to pay attention--

KATHY

You human piss bag!

GEORGE

What's the matter with you?

KATHY

You took my soufflés out of the oven early!

GEORGE

I had to, my chicken needs a while
to cook and I needed a rack.

KATHY

Where is it now?

GEORGE

In the freezer.

KATHY

WHY?

GEORGE

I don't know, they were your
soufflés to keep track of in the
first place--

KATHY

Screw your chicken, we have
four other trays already! We
don't need any more!

GEORGE (CONT'D)

My chicken's perfect! No one
was gonna eat your soufflés
anyway! They're at a funeral,
they want chicken!

ISAAC REED (Mid 20's) enters. He's lengthy and clearly mixed
with some odd number of nationalities. His struggle to
effectively understand others keeps him on his toes socially.

Having caught wind of the argument, Isaac tries to break the
tension.

ISAAC

Ladies, you're both moderately
pretty. What's the problem?

KATHY

George put my soufflés in the
freezer.

ISAAC

(Can't believe his ears)
What? Okay, Kathy, go get your
souffle out of the freezer, and
remember your peaceful words.
George, I'm 28 and I have chronic
chest pain. Make life a little
easier for me, would you?

ISAAC (CONT'D)

(To rest of kitchen)
What else is new?

JENNIFER WALKER (60's) enters, a short business woman who cares for her work while she tries to control the people around her.

JENNIFER

(To Isaac)

Is everyone still alive back here?

ISAAC

For now, but ask me in a few minutes and the story could be different.

(To staff)

Hey everybody, stop whatever work you're pretending to do. We're gonna have a quick meeting.

The STAFF all gathers around, somewhere less than a dozen people, all of them somewhat grimy and tired. Each of them has a colorful logo with "Urban Eating" written on it, sewn into their uniforms.

JENNIFER

Well, I know these are probably hard times for you all, but I wanted to thank you for volunteering your time.

KATHY

Wait, we're not getting paid?

JENNIFER

No, I assumed that Isaac told you; he volunteered you all to work Phil's funeral.

They all look at Isaac. ELENA REICHART (Early 30's) is present, and thoroughly upset. Though sharp-minded and admirably competent, she can't help but feel mouthy--

ELENA

Why would you do that?

ISAAC

Because we're under a spotlight right now, and I don't think any of us deserve to lose our jobs. I just wanted to make sure we made a good impression

A beat. Then, suddenly--

ELENA

Bullcrap! Tell the truth!

ISAAC

Honestly? Eighty-five percent of you are entirely incompetent and would be fired in a heartbeat if it were up to me! I was just trying to cover my own back! Is that so bad?

ELENA

Yes!

GEORGE

What about the other twenty-five percent?

ISAAC

Oh my--the other twenty-five percent of you are stupid!

MARC MERRICELLI (Late 30's) Stands in the group. He's fairly hefty and somewhat unkempt, but carries a kind lighthearted disposition. He speaks to Jennifer--

MARC

So, about getting paid, would a glass of peanut boudoir change anything?

He slides a glass of Pinot noir across the table...

JENNIFER

I don't know whether you should be arrested for bribing a government official or for misuse of government property.

MARC

Okay.

He slides the glass back towards himself. Jennifer notices that the nearby Pinot noir bottle is more than half empty.

JENNIFER

Did you use all of that in the food?

MARC

I admire a woman who can ask the tough questions.

He removes the glass from the table all together, placing it elsewhere.

JENNIFER

It's just one, really.

Marc discreetly takes the glass and sips it.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Nonetheless, Isaac's right: You need to make a good impression. A lot of people want this to fail, so bring your best.

ANNIE BAUTISTA (20's) stands next to Isaac. She's a capable young Western Asian woman with perfectionist behaviors and a clear concern for others. She whispers to Isaac

ANNIE

I thought this was our best.

ISAAC

Shh.

ELENA

Who's gonna make the decision?

JENNIFER

Someone who wants you to fail. I gotta go.

(To Isaac)

Good luck.

She walks out.

ISAAC

Well on that note, we need George and Marc setup. Annie, I need you in the reception area to organize everything they bring in. Everyone else: try and look alive; after all you're not in the casket. Good?

They nod.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Good.

They break. The camera follows Marc and George out to--

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

They take tables and boxes of utensils, etc. out of the truck.

MARC

Jennifer's crazy.

GEORGE

You say that like she's the only one.

MARC

I don't mind crazy people, I mind crazy people with power.

GEORGE

So you gotta job set up if this tanks?

MARC

I know I'm not gonna get a job with four years for assault on my record,

They walk into--

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

MARC

...so I've started thinking about which crime to commit so I can go back to jail. So far I'm considering running on the White House lawn and flashing the president, or raising a pack of wolves.

They walk into--

INT. RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

GEORGE

Bro, that's not illegal.

MARC

Then my next day off is gonna be very interesting...

We pan over to the open doorway, and push into--

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - CONTINUOUS

A LITTLE BOY (4) and LITTLE GIRL (4) are seated next to each other. The girl begins to stick out her tongue, trying to touch her own nose.

LITTLE BOY

Can you touch your nose?

LITTLE GIRL

Nope.

LITTLE BOY

I bet I can.

He maneuvers his tongue out, towards his own nose, then lands in on the tip of the girl's nose. She giggles, covering her face with her hands.

He continues to aimlessly point his tongue at the sky, until a RAINDROP suddenly falls on it.

We leave them and return to--

INT. RECEPTION AREA - CONTINUOUS

Annie is inside with Marc and George. Marc closes the doors.

Annie notices a raindrop hit a window. She becomes alarmed, and walks into--

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

She walks up to Isaac, who is busy cleaning.

ANNIE

How do you like bad news?

ISAAC

Far, far, away.

ANNIE

It's raining.

ISAAC

That's not funny.

ANNIE

I'm not lying.

ISAAC

That's not funny.

ANNIE

What do you want me to say?

ISAAC

That you're making this up!

ANNIE

I would argue with you, but the weather would make it a pretty short conversation.

ISAAC

Don't tease me.

ANNIE

I don't have to, God's already doing it.

ISAAC

I know your kidding, but that sounds on par with the rest of my life.

ANNIE

What do you need me to do?

ISAAC

Go to the reception entrance and start greeting.

(Yelling to staff)

Okay, we have a change of plans, I need--

He looks at Elena, then Kathy, both of whom appear to be displeasing choices.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Someone who is better at socializing.

(To Annie)

You should probably just grab Marc.

She walk off.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Go kill 'em!

(A beat. Then, realizing after she's gone)

Figuratively!

(To Kathy)

I should probably go make sure.

KATHY

(Over)

Yep.

She takes over his station, Isaac goes to yell out to Annie:

ISAAC

Forget what I said!

ANNIE

(Over)

You got it!

Isaac returns, murmuring--

ISAAC

Little eager.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. RECEPTION AREA - CONTINUOUS

Marc and Annie walk towards reception area doorway. They wait to greet the incoming funeral attendees.

MARC

You're not, proud or anything, are you?

ANNIE

I'm not whorish.

MARC

No, I know--wait, you're not? Well then why do you have bruises on your neck?

ANNIE

Those are burn marks from when I was eight.

MARC

Oh, I'm--stupid.

He looks away, disconcerted. Annie tries to inconspicuously pull up the collar of her chef coat to cover her neck. Liar.

ANNIE

Why'd you ask?

MARC

Just wondering. Never sure what people would do, or allow to be done to them in order to keep their jobs. I just wanna make sure that when I lose mine, it won't be because I couldn't squeeze into a C cup.

ANNIE

I don't think that's ever been the reason for anything. Ever.

Marc laughs, slightly relieved of embarrassment.

MARC

I don't know when you'll figure it out, but you're not the kind of person that's easy to forget. That's concerning in a job where almost everyone's disposable.

Annie's silent. The tone is apparent. She snaps out of it as the doors fly open. People begin flooding through. Marc and Annie briefly greet those coming in. Jennifer enters, Annie leaves Marc alone to follow her.

ANNIE
(concerned)
Hey, Jennifer.

JENNIFER
Is everything all right?

ANNIE
Yeah, minus the dead guy,
everything's fine. It just seems
that everyone's worrying about this
whole job situation and I was
wondering if I should be too.

JENNIFER
Dear, you should be a lot of things
for this job, but worried isn't one
of them.

Marc walks up, joining the conversation.

ANNIE
That was quick.

MARC
Yeah, I started high-fiving some of
them to save time, but I think that
may have undercut the tone of the
funeral.

JENNIFER
Marc!

MARC
I told one short Mexican woman to
jump high for it and then everyone
felt the need to stop shaking
hands.
(Half a beat)
I mean how was I supposed to know
she was a senator?

Jennifer glances over Marc's shoulder, and sees a very
offended MEXICAN WOMAN.

JENNIFER
That was the secretary of
agriculture!

MARC

Well tomato farmer, tomahto farmer.

JENNIFER

What were you thinking?

MARC

That's her job!

JENNIFER

(To Annie)

This is your competition.

ANNIE

I feel better.

JENNIFER

Yeah.

(To Marc)

Now I don't know what inspired you
to this level of idiocy--

Marc holds up his hand to inject his point of view, but we see his palm, strawberry red from his aggressive high-fiving.

MARC

I'm--

JENNIFER

(re: idiocy)

But you better stop it. If you get
fired, no one else will hire you.

MARC

I know that.

JENNIFER

Then you should know that you'll
probably end up back in jail.

MARC

Yes!

JENNIFER

At a U.S.Pen.

MARC

Pen? As in Penitentiary?

JENNIFER

No, as in Pennsylvania, our
beautiful Keystone state. Yes as in
penitentiary!

MARC

Why didn't you say that I could go to a pen if things didn't work out?

JENNIFER

You mean why didn't I tell you your actions have consequences? I'm sorry, I assumed you learned that sometime before you dropped out of kindergarten!

She takes a breath to cool herself down.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Look: cuts are being made left and right, and I don't know what may come next, so you are in charge of ensuring your own future. Can you do that?

We see the stress emerge in Marc's eyes

MARC

(a half beat, then,
candidly)

No!

We leave their conversation and pan across the room to find Isaac talking to the priest--

ISAAC

Well, do you think there is anything you can do?

PRIEST

About the rain? No, I'm afraid that's out of my control.

ISAAC

Don't you have some sort of procedure for things like this?

PRIEST

Yes, we come inside.

ISAAC

I just need more time.

PRIEST

So did Mr. Urmich.

ISAAC

Wow,
(aside)

(MORE)

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Really playing that card, aren't we?

PRIEST

What?

ISAAC

This isn't going to take long, I just can't handle these people.

PRIEST

(gesturing to those attending funeral)

They seem perfectly fine, I'm sure they'll understand.

ISAAC

Not those people,
(gesturing to staff)
It's those people. I thought I was relatively happy, borderline sociable, but it's 12:07 and I've thought about killing five out of my nine employees.

PRIEST

You're rehabilitated convicts, correct?

ISAAC

Yes, the thing is--

Elena breezes by with large silverware and unknowingly sharply grazes Isaac's arm.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Mother!

PRIEST

(Correcting)

Father.

ISAAC

Geez.
(Re: the thing is)
We just haven't got the swing of things and we need more time.

PRIEST

I agree. I'll see what I can do.

ISAAC

Thank you.

The priest begins to walk off, but stops, turning to Isaac--

PRIEST

Do yourself a favor, come to
confession...and communion...and--
eh, I'll just get you a pamphlet.

They depart. Isaac walks towards the kitchen, but is stopped
by ERIC ANDELMAN (Early 30's) A tall, wiry man with ambition,
but lacking in confidence.

ERIC

Hey, sorry to bother you, but do
you know when the food will be
ready? My guy's starving.

ISAAC

I'm sorry. The food should be ready
in just a few minutes, but I'm sure
I can find your son something to
snack on while he waits.

ERIC

Oh, no. It's not my son, it's my
boss. I probably should've said "my
man".

(Then, realizing)

Nope, that probably wouldn't have
been great either.

ISAAC

That's okay.

Eric looks away from Isaac to break the awkwardness, and
glances across the room. His eye lingers for a moment, until
he returns to Isaac--

ERIC

Can I be straight with you?

ISAAC

As long as your man's all right
with it.

ERIC

My boss is Ron Haener. He wants to
get re-elected to congress, and he
needs a strong platform. Right now
he has plenty of reasons to openly
oppose the Urban Eating Program.
And unless you prove him wrong,
he's got a plenty of satirical
phrases prepped for attack ads.

ISAAC

Like what?

ERIC

(Thinking, listing)

Brothel sprouts, Heinous Amos, Home
Slice--

ISAAC

No, I meant reasons to oppose Urban
Eating.

ERIC

Well everyone loved Urban Eating in
concept, but now people are
starting to lose their jobs, and
the program's starting to sound
like something that was a great
idea with terrible execution. Like
the south, or outdoor showers.

ISAAC

Fantastic.

Isaac looks down, taking the news like a blow to the stomach.
He looks up to Eric curiously--

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Home slice?

ERIC

I think it's supposed to be Pizza
delivered by the slice to people's
homes.

ISAAC

Oh.

The camera leaves them and pans across the room to find
Jennifer. She walks over to RON HAENER, (50's) a passionate,
slightly jaded first-term congressman running for re-
election. Ron shakes hands with several YOUNG SOLDIERS as
Jennifer approaches--

JENNIFER

You have a sec, Ron?

RON

(To soldiers)

Excuse me, gentlemen.

He and Jennifer move away from the soldiers to speak
privately.

RON (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

JENNIFER

Nothing. Why would something have to be wrong?

RON

Oh, I don't know. The sky's blue, grass is green. Any number of reasons, really.

JENNIFER

Nothing is wrong.

RON

Then why are you keeping me?

JENNIFER

From the combat Ken Dolls? I think you've already got their vote.

RON

I know, but I need voters in their age bracket. People that make fewer racial slurs, have unrealistic ambitions--

JENNIFER

And no political knowledge.

RON

Yes! That's my demographic!

JENNIFER

Then why are you de-funding my people? They're almost harmless!

RON

They're also the easiest way to waste money since getting liposuction in the winter.

JENNIFER

They're getting you more votes in a day than they are losing you in a year.

RON

You know that's not true.

JENNIFER

No, I don't.

RON

Yet we're still talking like either of us is going to change our minds.

JENNIFER

Ron.

RON

Jennifer, face it. You don't have a chance and I clearly don't have enough of a conscience to stop this. For what it's worth, it's only a little personal.

JENNIFER

Adorable.

RON

Yeah, I know.

(Half beat)

Hey, I gotta run to the restroom, do me a favor and keep the boys company.

JENNIFER

They're monolith sized Beach Boys, what would I have to say to them?

RON

Tell them about the seventies. To them, the thought of the U.S. losing a war is as fictional as greek mythology. It'll be fun.

The camera follows Ron into--

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He bumps into Annie as he walks down the hall.

ANNIE

Sorry about that, sir.

RON

Don't worry about it.

ANNIE

Can I help you with anything?

RON

No, I'm fine, thank you. I'm just headed to the restroom.

He gestures to the nearest door.

ANNIE
Sir, that's a utility closet.

RON
Then I hope they don't mind a mess.

He laughs, meaning to end the encounter. The two ineptly shuffle past each other. We follow Annie into--

INT. RECEPTION AREA - CONTINUOUS

She sees Elena as she walks out of the kitchen. Elena looks over Annie's shoulder and notices Ron walking down the hall.

ELENA
Hey, did you just talk to Ron?

ANNIE
Who, him? I guess. Why?

ELENA
What did he say?

ANNIE
He said he was going to the bathroom, and that was about it.

ELENA
Did he seem happy or upset?

ANNIE
I assume he'll feel relieved.

ELENA
Did he...notice you?

ANNIE
No, we just talked, he left--

ELENA
No, *notice* you. Wink at you, feel the need to cross his legs in the middle of talking or show the slightest feeling of attraction.

ANNIE
You mean flirt with him? I can't do that!

ELENA

Well you could've, but you missed that chance.

ANNIE

He's fifty and our boss!

ELENA

For now! But if you consider it, it wouldn't take much--

ANNIE

No! What's wrong with you? You're sounding like Marc!

ELENA

(Over)
Harsh.

ANNIE

You make me feel like I'm doing something wrong when people aren't attracted to me.

ELENA

We just need you, okay. But I get it.

Annie takes a beat, taking it in.

ANNIE

But why didn't he? I'm nice enough. I'm definitely young enough.

ELENA

No. No, don't do this to yourself. You always read into things too much.

Isaac walks in on the conversation.

ISAAC

What's happening? Why are you both here talking?

ELENA

Annie's upset because Ron didn't seem attracted to her.

ISAAC

(To Annie)
Did you flirt with him?

ANNIE

No.

ISAAC

Then what's the problem?

ANNIE

I guess I just thought that with
with someone like him I wouldn't
have to try.

ISAAC

That's ridiculous; I mean, you look-

-

Isaac stumbles on his words. Elena's face lights up in
instigation as she sees Isaac at a brief loss.

ELENA

She looks like what?

ISAAC

Nothing. She doesn't look like
anything.

ANNIE

(Offended)

Thank you.

ELENA

(To Isaac)

I thought you were asexual.

ISAAC

I am not asexual, I am
experimenting with being alone!

ELENA

For your whole life?

ISAAC

I'm very committed.

(Re: to Annie)

Your looks are not important, your
work is. So please, just take every
other problem you have and hide
them as far away as possible.

Elena and Annie walk off screen. Simultaneously, Kathy leads
several staff members in emerging from the kitchen with trays
of food.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Yes! Perfect!

He briskly glides over to Kathy, pleased to catch a break--

ISAAC (CONT'D)

You guys finished quicker than expected. How many health codes did you have to break?

KATHY

None that I know of.

ISAAC

Do you know any?

KATHY

No. I'm still not sure if the five second rule is a law.

ISAAC

I can live with that.

We see Marc in the background, searching around the room. Isaac notices.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

What are you looking for?

MARC

Oh, it's nothing. But on a separate note, I did hear you mention something "hiding". Would you happen to have been talking about a small boy, about
(gesturing obscurely)
yea big?

Isaac comes in closer, speaking cautiously.

ISAAC

Did you lose a kid?

MARC

It's not like he ever belonged to me or anything. But yes, he's gone.

ISAAC

Marc, this is the second catering I've been to, and somehow the second time this has happened.

MARC

I know!

ISAAC

Then how is that possible?

MARC

I don't know. Kids just have a certain charm. I can't resist 'em.

ISAAC

Please never repeat that.

MARC

I know he's somewhere.

ISAAC

So do I, but his parents don't and they're the ones we have to be worried about.

MARC

Well I don't see them looking for him, and maybe that's the real problem.

ISAAC

You can get a little more preachy once there *isn't* a lost child.

MARC

I don't know where he went. You know this *isn't* my fault.

ISAAC

No I do not.

MARC

(Over)

And that his parent's will try to press charges.

ISAAC

It's fine. You won't go to jail for some blunt-witted misadventure. What am I saying? That's exactly why you'd go to jail.

MARC

That's what I'm saying! I can't be left alone in tense situations like this!

ISAAC

So naturally, it was best to involve a child.

MARC

Look, you're making a lot of sense right now and I don't have time for that. Can I just please go back to looking for him?

ISAAC

Find the kid if you can, but please, multitask.

MARC

Yeah, of course. I'm like a multitool, And not just because I'm from Switzerland and am not allowed in airports.

Marc walks off, assisting the rest of the staff. Isaac notices Eric entering the hallway from outside. Isaac, fairly pleased with himself, goes over to Eric--

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

ISAAC

Hey, the food's almost ready. You can tell your boss if you want.

ERIC

Sure, sounds great.

Eric walks past Isaac.

ISAAC

What?

ERIC

I didn't say anything.

ISAAC

Oh, sorry. I thought I just--

Eric notices Isaac's chef coat stuck on the handle of the closet door.

ERIC

You got a little--

He points to his uniform.

ISAAC

Oh, thanks.

Isaac tries to tear his chef coat from the handle. Eric assists him from behind.

The two tear the door open, and Ron and Jennifer spill out of the doorway, both only partially clothed.

ISAAC (CONT'D) ERIC
Aaagh! Please no! Just--aggh! Oh! No! No! No!

JENNIFER
It's okay--

ERIC
NO!

Eric kicks the door shut.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Eric and Isaac are both in shock. Isaac takes a large breath in disbelief, and leans his back against the closet door.

ERIC

What was that? I mean biologically speaking.

ISAAC

You still think this job isn't beneath you?

ERIC

You know, I'm starting to reconsider.

ISAAC

Aren't we all?

A half beat.

ERIC

Are you going to let them out?

ISAAC

No, I am going to wait three minutes and then address. That way I'll seem like I care without actually having to. Best of both worlds, really.

ERIC

And that works?

ISAAC

First time I did it, it turned out a woman was giving birth. That actually got progressively worse as time went on. Let's hope it goes better this time...

JENNIFER (O.S.)

Isaac. Open the door. You have no reason to be afraid.

ISAAC

I have at least two reasons to be afraid until you button your blouse.

JENNIFER (O.S.)
I think the button might have
fallen out there.

Isaac opens the door. Jennifer comes out, Ron reluctantly follows.

ISAAC
Come, one and all. It's okay,
everyone's ashamed here, sir.

They slug along through the hallway, Isaac opens the door leading into the kitchen for those accompanying him.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
After you.

RON
Thank you.

ISAAC
No kidding.

Isaac follows them into--

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A few employees still remain sporadically spread throughout the kitchen.

ISAAC
Hey guys, would you mind giving us
a sec? I can help--

The employees drop everything, walking out almost instantly.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Did not have to tell them twice.
Master negotiator.

A beat. Ron's clearly discomfited by the blunt awkwardness of the situation.

RON
So.

ISAAC
Ron Haener, correct?

RON
As fate would have it.

Ron reaches out to shake Isaac's hand. Isaac declines via a scrunched facial expression. Ron rescinds his hand.

ISAAC

I know you don't want this to be a story.

RON

Yes, exactly. It doesn't need to be a story. It was a dumb mistake and I couldn't regret it more. And I really think we would all be better off if we didn't mention this to anybody. While I can't guarantee your job, I'm sure you can be taken care of.

ISAAC

Is that what you think any of this is about? Money?

RON

No. I--

ISAAC

(Over)

I am not selling out to some first-term congressman who can't keep it in his pants long enough to get re-elected!

JENNIFER

Isaac!

ISAAC

I know, I regretted it as soon as I said it. Now it's just flashing in my head like strobe lights.

(Back to Ron)

But the point is, I don't want the money. And it's not because I'm already rich; I'm not. It's because it's not worth it.

RON

I know you need it. Just let me help you.

ISAAC

No, see, you're right, I am broke: My landlord thinks I'm paying him in weed, but really, it's just oregano and basil!

(MORE)

ISAAC (CONT'D)

The only reason he doesn't notice the difference is because he's eighty-seven and lost his sense of taste! My kitchen sink is four feet away from my toilet. I literally crap where I eat! And yes; sometimes simultaneously.

They all groan in displeasure.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Exactly! And just the other day, I woke up, and I meant to hit my alarm clock, but my hand reached out too far and I broke a window. Killed a pigeon. I think it might have been a mentally disabled pigeon, because it had no idea what was happening the whole time. Five minutes, he just laid there on the window sill like it's business as usual. Then he died! Blood all over my pillow. Point being, if money were important, I would've just started dealing. It's not like I don't know people.

Isaac breathes heavily for a beat or so.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

This isn't some "story".

RON

Eric, could you take Jennifer and check on the food?

ERIC

Sure.

Eric and Jennifer leave the kitchen.

ISAAC

Cornering me won't--

RON

Calm your horses. Or whatever it is you use to smuggle drugs. I just want to talk.

(Beat)

I used to be like you. Young, thin, Hispanic. I even joined the military when I was about your age. Had a Sergeant by the name of Millford.

(MORE)

RON (CONT'D)

He was the type of croak you just wanted to watch die. Dirty old bigot who couldn't stand anybody who wasn't of his own creed.

ISAAC

What was his creed?

RON

Ugly. And one day, he came into my quarters; tore me a new one for no reason in particular. With no reason beyond the look on my face, he picked me up, threw me out into the mud. That wasn't what bothered me. It was that he did all that because the Giants lost the night before, and he had money on the game. And I didn't wanna be somewhere where your life could be ruined by someone who made a bad bet.

ISAAC

That's rough.

RON

That, and I knew the Giant's main pitcher threw worse than a quadriplegic.

(Half beat)

So I figured I'd leave. By law of nature, he thought otherwise. June fourth, nineteen-ninety. I officially received dishonorable discharge for striking a superior. Right upside the head. Not gonna lie, it felt good. But I couldn't find a job after that.

ISAAC

Sure, but it's not news to me that the path to success is long.

RON

Forget the path to success. The path to the moral high ground is barbaric. Jobs get tougher, the woman only get older, and more judgemental of your performance. But it's somehow worth it.

They remain in silence over a beat or two, until we hear a sneeze off-screen.

Isaac and Ron look around, unsure. They search for the source of the sound until they find the little boy from earlier, hiding underneath a counter. His face looks sticky, with wet bits of flour around his mouth.

RON (CONT'D)

Oh my...

(then, to Isaac)

Today's not your day, is it?

Isaac pulls him out from under the counter.

ISAAC

What were you doing under there?

Are you all right?

The boy nods his head.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Do you not speak?

LITTLE BOY

I can talk.

ISAAC

(Earnestly)

Then I'm gonna need you not to do that until you get home. Okay, can you do that?

The boy nods again. Accompanied by Ron, Isaac carries the little boy into--

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He sets the boy down to walk on his own. The enter into--

INT. RECEPTION AREA - CONTINUOUS

Isaac guides the boy with his hand. Marc becomes instantaneously exuberant at the sight of the child.

MARC

Merry Christmas, Charlie Brown!

Where were you buddy?

The boy shrugs.

MARC (CONT'D)

Gosh, he smells like sugar. Are we sure he wasn't better off without my supervision?

ISAAC

No. Now, come one, get him back to his mom. We've got work to do.

They cross off-screen. We pan over to Eric and Jennifer, the latter of whom is seated, thoughtfully staring at a picture of Phil Urmich (the deceased), placed next to his coffin. Eric sits down next to her.

ERIC

How's it going?

JENNIFER

(Still staring at picture)
Well, you know. It's a funeral.

ERIC

Yeah, but I mean other than that.

JENNIFER

What else am I really supposed to think about? Where else is my head supposed to be when I'm sitting spit's distance from a coffin? I'm just sitting here with nothing else to look at but "it". Him. That's it; my whole line of sight; just three hundred and sixty degrees of death.

ERIC

Oh. I'm sorry.
(then)
Do you act this way at funerals most the time?

JENNIFER

No, I just think I have a habit of screwing people.

ERIC

I think they have a pill for that.

JENNIFER

No, I meant to a friend.

A beat.

ERIC

I'm sorry about what I did earlier.

Jennifer shakes her head.

JENNIFER

Me too.

ERIC

Yeah.

JENNIFER

I hope you don't have that image
burned into your head.

ERIC

No, I don't.

Eric blinks repeatedly, remembering the event vividly.

JENNIFER

Good. Truth be told, I kept my eyes
closed too.

They share a laugh. Jennifer touches Eric's arm comfortingly,
but he flinches instinctively, akin to a recently abused dog.

From their conversation we pan across the room to Isaac and
the staff, walking over one another to set everything in
place. Annie is working next to Isaac.

ANNIE

You talked to Ron.

ISAAC

Yeah, we spoke briefly. He seemed
to like me I guess.

ANNIE

What?

ISAAC

Well yes, on occasion people like
me.

ANNIE

But those occasions usually involve
alcohol or severely poor judgement.

ISAAC

What's got you so upset?

ANNIE

I just talked to him and there was
nothing. No banter; and only joke
he made was toilet humor.

ISAAC

The most unsavory of icebreakers.

ANNIE

Isaac--I can't. I don't know how you do it. He just liked you.

ISAAC

I know. I don't know, maybe he's like me. I know we're both a little rough around the edges.

ANNIE

...and the sides, and the middle. Really just personalities made of sandpaper.

ISAAC

Thanks.

ANNIE

I'm sorry. Marc mentioned earlier that my looks gets me whatever I want. It's like, first I'm told that I'm amazing, then I can barely avoid being stampeded by Ron while he's on his way to the bathroom.

ISAAC

Annie, I'll be blunt: people like your face. They can't resist it.

(Half a beat)

It's everything you say afterwards that makes them reconsider.

ANNIE

That was nice at one point.

ISAAC

Your problem isn't that your unappealing. It's that you work too hard. You worked too hard with Ron, you worked too hard with this. As much as that's needed, you just need to learn to be satisfied.

Isaac and Annie finish preparing their last tray of food,.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

And we are done. Great!

GEORGE

We're done too.

ISAAC

Fantastic!

Isaac Speaks for all the employees to hear:

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Now all we have to do--

He glances by one of the trays and notices a small puddle of spilled sauce on the table.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
I'll be right back. I'll grab a few extra rags just in case that happens again.

Isaac praises his staff as he praises them briefly. Starting with random staffers--

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Great job. Great job.
(To Marc)
Commit fewer felonies.
(To Kathy)
Smile more.

She's clearly not amused.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Or don't.
(To staffers)
Great job. I'll be right back.

We follow him into--

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

He enters into the kitchen, walking towards the back of the room for rags. We hear a CELLPHONE VIBRATION off-screen. Isaacs stops near the location of the phone to look for rags.

The device appears several years old; a unisex colored flip-phone.

He finds the rags and takes a small number of them in his hands. As he is grabbing them, he notices the phone, about to fall off of the counter.

He catches it before it falls, and ineptly fumbles with it in his greasy fingers as he places it back on the counter.

ISAAC
Who left their phone here?

He sees that he has dropped a few rags on the floor. He grunts as he crunches down to pick them up.

As he leans down, a voice-mail message plays on the phone's speaker:

CALLER (V.O.)

Ay I ain't heard nothin' from you since yesterday. I dunno if you still held up with that kitchen gig or somethin', but the buyer said he needs the drop to happen today.

Isaac stands up, baffled by what he's hearing...

CALLER (V.O.)

He's packin' serious money, yo. He ain't the kinda dude you wanna let go. Anyway, call me back, yo.

Shocked, Isaac closes the flip-phone, leaving it in on the counter.

He walks away from the phone slowly, in incredulity. He suddenly stops, remembering--

ISAAC

Oh!

He runs back to the phone, takes a rag, and wipes down the phone compulsively; scrubbing his fingerprints off like there's no tomorrow.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Whew.

He walks away from the phone. With a fractionally lesser burdened weight on his shoulders, he follow him up to the doorway. He looks at those attending the funeral, then at his co-workers.

BLACK SCREEN.

CARD: **"The Previous Was Unfortunately Based on True Events."**

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW