SLEEPLESS IN SAN ANGELO
By Larry Postel
FADE IN:

INT. MASTER BATHROOM – NIGHT

CU on a bathroom mirror where we see the face of JOSH ROBBINS (30's) as he adjusts a full face CPAP mask. If one didn't know better, they'd think Josh was wearing a "Bane" supervillain Halloween mask (from Batman).

Held in place by elastic straps, the mask obscures all of Josh's facial features except his eyes. Even his ears are pinned flat to the side of his head by the straps. At the nose of the mask is a connection for an air hose.

Pull back to reveal that the only thing Josh wears (aside from his mask) is a pair of very tighty whities (underwear).

As he continues to adjust the mask, Josh glances at a photo in a CPAP manual on the bathroom counter. He deeply inhales and exhales as he tweaks the mask's position, checking its seams to ensure there are no air leaks.

When Josh is finally satisfied with the mask's position, he playfully scowls in the mirror as he mutters to himself a la "Bane"

JOSH
(deep, muffled)
"No one cared who I was...until I put on the mask!"

INT. MASTER BEDROOM – MOMENTS LATER

Wearing his mask, Josh exits the bathroom and enters the adjacent bedroom. His wife RACHEL (same age) lies in bed under covers playing a game on her iPhone. She's so focused on the game that she doesn't notice Josh. Until...

JOSH
 stil muffled
Whadya think?

Rachel looks up to see Josh standing there wearing his mask and tighty whities. She bursts out laughing.

RACHEL
I think you look like the teacher from the Black Lagoon.

Even though almost all of Josh's face is covered, we can still make out a smirk. Everything Josh says continues to be slightly muffled by his mask.
JOSH
Hey, you think I like wearing this thing?! I'm only doing it 'cause Dr. Agarwal said the sleep apnea could cause me a heart attack.

(pause)
Besides, it'll stop me from snoring.

RACHEL
Then by all means...keep it on.

(grins)
At least one of us will get a good night's sleep.

Josh smirks again.

Rachel aims her iPhone camera at Josh.

JOSH
What the hell?!

RACHEL
Come on...just one shot. For Ellen.

JOSH
NO...no shots! For anyone!!

RACHEL
All right...all right...

(mutters)
Mr. Sensitive.

She goes back to her game as Josh goes over to his side of the bed. A CPAP machine with three foot air hose rests on his nightstand.

Josh climbs into bed. He grabs the air hose and connects it to his mask. He takes a deep breath...

His eyes suddenly open wide. Even more muffled now...

JOSH
It's working. I feel the air!

Rachel places her iPhone on her nightstand.

RACHEL
(dissmissively)
Great. Let's get some sleep now.

She turns off the light on her nightstand and rolls over in the opposite direction.
Josh turns off his light, too. With the air hose running from the CPAP machine to his mask, he lies on his back and carefully gets into position. Stiff as a board, he looks like he's on a torture rack.

Hold on a digital clock on the nightstand next to the CPAP machine. It reads: 11:25pm.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - LATER

The clock now reads: 12:30am.

Josh lies in bed in the same position with eyes wide open. He glances over at Rachel. She's sound asleep. Ironically, she's loudly snoring.

Josh gives her a nudge. No response. Another, more aggressive nudge.

JOSH
Psst...Rachel. Wake up.

She finally opens her weary eyes.

RACHEL
Wha...what is it?

JOSH
I can't sleep.

RACHEL
Neither can I...with you shaking me like that!

JOSH
I'm sorry, but I can't fall asleep... (points at mask) ...with this thing.

RACHEL
So take it off.

JOSH
I can't. You know what Dr. Agarwal said. This sleep apnea is serious stuff.

Rachel is clearly exasperated.

RACHEL
Josh, just try it again tomorrow night. You've lived this long without it. One more night's not gonna kill ya.
Josh defiantly shakes his head.

JOSH
Are you kidding?! I can't give up. You think I'd tell my students to quit if they couldn't do something right the first time?

RACHEL
Whatever. I'm going back to sleep.

JOSH
Thanks a lot, Rachel. And just so you know, you snore, too. Maybe you should also get checked for sleep apnea.

She ignores him and rolls back over.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - LATER

The digital clock now reads: 1:20am.

Josh still lies in bed wide awake. Rachel's back to snoring.

After a moment, Josh unbuckles the straps of his mask and takes it off. He gets out of bed.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM

Josh opens the medicine cabinet. Inside are several vials of prescription pills. He scans the labels until he finds the one he wants. He grabs it and reads the label.

INSERT: The prescription is in Rachel's name. It's for Lambien (a fictional Ambien knock-off). The label on back reads: "Warning: This medication may cause complex behaviors while not fully awake."

Josh hesitates a moment. He shrugs, then opens the vial and takes one of the pills, washing it down with a cup of water.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - LATER

The digital clock now reads: 2:30am.

Josh is back in bed, soundly sleeping with mask attached. Suddenly, his eyes open wide. He has a distant, strange look about him, as if he's under hypnosis.

Wearing his CPAP mask, he climbs out of bed without detaching the hose, but the hose pulls right out of the machine. In his dazed state, Josh doesn't notice. He sleepwalks out of the room.
EXT. ROBBINS HOUSE/STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Still wearing only his tighty whities and CPAP mask, with the air hose dangling in front of him like an elephant's trunk, Josh dazedly heads down the sidewalk. Being that it's very early morning, the streets are empty.

EXT. HOUSE

TWO HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS (wearing pajamas) have sneaked out of a house and are sharing a cigarette on the front porch.

  GIRL 1
  You have plans yet for Spring Break?

  GIRL 2
  (glum)
  My parents want to take us to see the Grand Canyon.

  GIRL 1

  GIRL 2
  I'd be down with that.

Suddenly, Girl 1 sees something O.S. and a shocked look registers on her face.

  GIRL 1
  What the fuck?!

  GIRL 2
  Huh?

Girl 1 points at whatever she's looking at. When Girl 2 sees it, the same shocked look overcomes her.

Their POV: A strange man, wearing tighty whities and some sort of weird mask with hose dangling from it, ambles aimlessly down the sidewalk.

  GIRL 1
  Fucking perv!

  GIRL 2
  Let's get outta here!

They put out the cigarette and rush back inside the house.
EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - SLIGHTLY LATER

A 24/7 convenience store (with or without gas station). The only car parked in front is an old beat-up thing that apparently belongs to the sole employee on duty.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE

The CASHIER/CLERK, early 20's, stoner-type, leans on the counter. He takes a fat hit on a vape pen as he reads a sci-fi comic book.

The front door opens and he looks up. Standing there is a strange man in a strange mask and tighty whities. Coincidentally, the visitor resembles the creature on the front cover of the cashier's comic book (trunk and all).

The flabbergasted cashier's eyes pop out of his head. He glances at the front of his comic book and back at Josh, who just stands there gazing at him.

Being that the cashier is blazed, he's in a deep state of paranoia.

CASHIER
Wha...what do ya want?!

No response. Josh just stares blankly back at him.

CASHIER (CONT'D)
You want food? Is that it?!

He grabs some Slim Jims (or something similar) from a box on the counter and tosses them at Josh. Still no response.

CASHIER (CONT'D)
What...no food? You want money? Is that it?! Here, we got plenty...

He opens the cash register and starts to frantically toss bills of different denominations at Josh.

CASHIER (CONT'D)
Here, take it all...

He keeps tossing bills at Josh, who just stands there staring at him.

INT. ROBBINS' KITCHEN - MORNING

Dressed for work, Rachel sits at the kitchen table. As she drinks a cup of coffee, she watches the local news on a TV on the counter. At the moment, a METEOROLOGIST delivers the weather report.
JOSH (O.S.)
Morning, sunshine!

Rachel looks up to see Josh standing there. Also dressed for work, with satchel slung over his shoulder, he appears bright and refreshed. He goes over and gives Rachel a big kiss.

RACHEL
Wow, aren't you chippy today? What gives?

JOSH
I don't know...I guess that CPAP machine really works. I had the best night's sleep I can remember!

Pleased, Rachel nods at the coffee machine.

RACHEL
How 'bout some coffee?

JOSH
Sorry, no time. We have a staff meeting this morning. I'll grab a cup at school.

He gives her another kiss.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Love you, baby.

RACHEL
Love you, too.

He leaves. Rachel turns back to the TV.

ON TV: The weather report is abruptly interrupted by a NEWS ANCHOR with breaking news...

NEWS ANCHOR
This just in...
(pause)
Two high school girls reported seeing a half naked masked man early this morning...in the St. Rita area.

Rachel appears alarmed.

RACHEL
St. Rita?!
NEWS ANCHOR
Apparently, the same man also robbed a local convenience store at approximately 2:45am.
(pause)
The convenience store camera captured this image of the man, who is wanted by police...

The footage reveals the convenience store door opening -- and a strange man with mask and tighty whities entering.

On Rachel: Her jaw hits the floor as she sees and immediately recognizes Josh.

RACHEL
OH, MY GOD!!!

The footage continues with the cashier first tossing the Slim Jims -- and then emptying his cash register and tossing bills at Josh.

NEWS ANCHOR
If you recognize this man, please contact the San Angelo police department immediately at...

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rachel rushes into the room. She immediately looks over at the CPAP machine, with the hose running to the bed and continuing under the sheet on Josh's side.

Rachel pulls back the sheet and a horrified expression overcomes her.

Her POV: The CPAP mask is still attached to the hose. And underneath the mask are dozens and dozens of bills of different denominations.

Just then, Rachel's phone RINGS. She glances at the caller ID and a puzzled expression registers on her face. Nevertheless, she answers it.

RACHEL
(into phone)
Hello.

MALE (V.O.)
(with a thick Eastern-Indian accent)
Is Mr. Robbins there?
RACHEL
This is his wife. May I help you?

MALE (V.O.)
Oh, I am sorry. I accidentally dialed his emergency contact number. This is Dr. Agarwal... from the Sleep Apnea Center.

RACHEL
Yes, Dr. Agarwal. May I help you?

MALE (V.O.)
I was just calling to see how his first night with the CPAP went.

Rachel glances over at the bed with the CPAP mask and money strewn all over. After a moment...

RACHEL
Well, Dr. Agarwal, I guess you could say that he slept right through it.

MALE (V.O.)
Ah, excellent. As I like to say: "A night without sleep is like a cupcake without frosting."

RACHEL
Yes, right. Thank you, Dr. Agarwal.

She ends the call and lets out with a deep sigh. Hold on the CPAP mask as we:

FADE OUT