

SCRIPT TITLE

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TITLE: "IT'S LIKE PAYING A HORSE TO WATCH YOUR DOG." JOHN MULANEY.

SUPERIMPOSE: PREP. Section 1: Breakup Haircut.

FADE IN:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

KEITH, mid 20s, disheveled, perpetually bored, sits at the teacher's desk and browses soft-core porn on his phone.

A STUDENT, high school age, precocious, but not terribly bright, sits in one of many student desks. They look at him insistently.

Keith browses a few more pictures before eventually looking up.

KEITH
You finish?

STUDENT
Yeah.

KEITH
Okay, let's see how you did.

Keith reaches for the answer key on his desk. He opens it to the proper page and looks down at the row of capital letters.

KEITH (CONT'D)
What did you get for the first one?

STUDENT
A

It's B.

KEITH
The second one?

STUDENT
C

A.

KEITH
The third one?

STUDENT
D

Wrong again.

Keith continues calling out answers, his face sagging with each until we

FADE TO:

EXT. TUTORING CENTER - DAY

The building, AP SAT Tutorial is in a shitty strip mall next to a cake shop. The parking lot is mostly empty, and Keith sits next to XAVIER, mid 20s, disturbingly neat, bright behind dull eyes, on the hood of a shitty car.

XAVIER

So there's gotta be a guy.

KEITH

I'm not sure what you mean.

XAVIER

Okay, I'll try again. You know the idea of a breakup haircut?

KEITH

Sure, like a girl gets dumped and the resultant emotional trauma causes her to chop off most of her hair.

Xavier stands up, excited.

XAVIER

Exactly, and so, someone has to be the breakup haircut guy.

KEITH

I see what you're saying, but I don't see why that matters.

Keith pulls out a carton of cigarettes, Camel Reds, and lights one.

XAVIER

You're not getting it. Think about what a dubious honor it must be to be that guy. It's gotta be a real pride and shame cocktail.

KEITH

I guess so.

XAVIER

Have you ever been one of those guys?

Keith considers this a moment.

KEITH

Yeah, with that crazy Chinese girl last semester.

XAVIER

Whoa there. That violates a few of your rules. You're the first one to call calling crazy chicks crazy, reductive, and even I know it's racist to call 'em Chinese.

KEITH

Well, she burnt me with a cigarette while we were having sex, and she actually was from Shanghai, so I think I'm good.

XAVIER

If you say so, I just want you to know this PC Police bullshit cuts both ways.

KEITH

I know what you think about it, Xavier.

FADE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Same kid. Same Keith. Same day.

KEITH

So it looks like you got every answer wrong.

The student rubs the back of their head.

STUDENT

Yeah.

KEITH

When did you say your test was again?

STUDENT

Tomorrow.

Keith's shoulders sag.

KEITH

Okay, well, you can't win 'em all. Let's go over it. The SAT is not really teaching you anything other than how to take the SAT, so let's go over some tricks. The first question is talking about line 25, so let's turn to it.

Keith and the student both turn back a couple of pages in their books.

Keith looks down at the book, it's written in unrecognizable characters.

KEITH (CONT'D)

Okay, so let's look at this sentence. It is in some pretty arcane language, so what did it mean to you?

The student cocks their head.

STUDENT

So it's pretty obviously about the rise of kangaroo courts that sprung up in early 20th century factory towns.

FADE TO:

EXT. TUTORING CENTER - DAY

Same parking lot. Keith and Xavier haven't moved. The cigarette is almost out. Xavier checks his watch.

XAVIER

You ever notice how all the kids look the same?

Keith ignores this.

KEITH

Tamika's late.

XAVIER

The kids are late too.

KEITH

Sure, but if Tamika were here, we could at least get out of the sun.

XAVIER
Yeah, but if Tamika were here, then
Tamika would be here.

Keith considers this.

KEITH
Fair enough. You want to rip bong
after this class?

XAVIER
I can't. I'm still hoping I hear
from Polytechnic Solutions.

KEITH
Again with this shit? You get no
internships every summer, and just
because one of them doesn't have
the decency to reject you in May,
you stay on the hook for another
month.

XAVIER
Well, I'm not going to plan for
failure.

KEITH
You sound like a marketing seminar.

XAVIER
I *am* a marketing seminar. I have to
go to like ten of these every
semester. It's how they teach
leadership, and synergy, and
whatever new buzzword is lining the
pockets of motivational speakers
this fiscal year. We can't all
spend our lives raging against the
machine.

KEITH
Neither can I, they don't pay you
for it.

XAVIER
They do if you're Abeo.

CUT TO:

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS

MONTAGE

ABEO, mid 20s, animated, regal stands in a group of protestors screaming. He wears a thin vest and beret.

He digs a hole in the desert. He still wears the vest and beret.

He poses for a picture, still in the vest and beret.

CUT TO:

EXT. TUTORING CENTER - DAY

KEITH

Yeah, because he's a social media whore.

XAVIER

As your social media manager, I have to tell you, that's not a great point.

Keith acknowledges this.

FADE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

And we back.

Keith looks back down at the nonsense on the page.

KEITH

Okay, so maybe you're missing the allegorical nature of the piece.

STUDENT

I don't think so. The Lovecraftian element comes through loud and clear.

The student pulls out a copy of *The Call of Cthulhu*.

STUDENT (CONT'D)

That was my favorite part, actually.

FADE TO:

EXT. TUTORING CENTER - DAY

XAVIER

So then why do you come back?

KEITH

AP-SAT Tutorial is like a high school girlfriend; easy to return to and helpful in pushing away my doubt that I can't do any better, no offense. How is Nicki, by the way?

XAVIER

She's fine, you ass.

KEITH

Are you guys still doing the open relationship thing.

XAVIER

Sort of.

KEITH

What does sort of mean?

XAVIER

Well like, we're together when we're together, but when we're not, we do our own thing.

KEITH

And how much of your own thing are you doing?

Xavier looks down.

XAVIER

Not as much as I'd like.

KEITH

Sounds great.

FADE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Last one.

Keith studies the page again.

KEITH
I can't figure out where you went wrong. Number twenty one says which of these is not a synonym for the word used on line 25. Do you not know what not means?

The student interrupts.

STUDENT
Oh, number twenty one.

KEITH
What are you talking about?

STUDENT
I started on the wrong question.

KEITH
Are you kidding? What was twenty two?

STUDENT
A

Correct.

KEITH
Twenty three?

STUDENT
C

Right again.

KEITH
Twenty four?

STUDENT
B.

You see where this is going.

Keith checks his phone. 1:50 PM.

He opens the calendar app and checks the days schedule. It reads "CLASS 12-2PM."

KEITH
Leave.

STUDENT
What?

KEITH
Go, we're done for the day.

The student smiles and picks up their things. They exit the classroom.

Keith slams his head on his desk.

FADE TO:

EXT. TUTORING CENTER - DAY

XAVIER
I feel like you're just building a really fast horse and buggy.

KEITH
What do you mean?

XAVIER
I respect the focus on identity politics, but it's really just rooting around in the same pool of post-structuralism that we've been in for the better part of a century, and if you ask me, that's retarded.

Keith opens his mouth to speak, but sees a car pull up and changes course.

KEITH
That's not Tamika's car.

XAVIER
No, he hired an assistant manager. Sarah. We went to high school with her.

SARAH, mid 20s, dressed conservatively, but fashionably steps out of the car.

Keith looks down at his shirt and tries to straighten it in vain.

SARAH
Hey Keith, Tom told me you'd be back this summer.

KEITH
Yeah, they don't pay you to rage against the machine, so here I am.

Xavier gives him a side eye. Sarah smiles.

SARAH

I get that. So, I've been wanting to ask you since I knew you were coming back...

Keith looks up expectantly.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Do you know Abeo? I saw that video of him on Vox last week, and I know you two go to school together, so...

Keith grimaces.

KEITH

Yeah, we've done a couple of protests together.

SARAH

You have to tell me what he's like. I retweet his shit, like, all the time.

Sarah walks over to the door and unlocks it.

Keith grits his teeth.

KEITH

Sure, we can definitely talk about the scene up North.

SARAH

Very cool. Well, I'll see you both inside. Xavier, paycheck's gonna be a little late.

Xavier nods. Sarah walks inside. Keith turns to Xavier.

KEITH

What happened to her? I once saw her wear a crop top to a funeral.

XAVIER

She's really embraced Islam since we left for college.

KEITH

Who converts to Islam this century? It doesn't seem like a particularly strategic move.

XAVIER

It also means no beer goggles, so
good luck.

Another car pulls up. The student from earlier gets out, book
under their arm.

XAVIER (CONT'D)

I think that's you. Welcome back.

FADE OUT.

TITLE: "SWIPER, NO SWIPING." - DORA THE EXPLORER

INT. KEITH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Che Guevara, Malcolm X and Bernie Sanders all stare down at
Keith, who is opening a file labeled "Alice XXX" in VLC media
player.

SUPERIMPOSE: PREP

Section 2: Cinderella

FADE IN:

EXT. KEITH'S HOUSE - DAY

Keith and Xavier sit on a patio. Keith smokes weed out of a
shitty little pipe.

XAVIER

Are you sure your parents aren't
going to be back?

KEITH

They don't get off work until 6,
stop worrying.

Keith blows smoke into Xavier's face. Xavier swats at it.

XAVIER

Watch it with that, man!

KEITH

Why, you're going to be smoking with me as soon as you get that rejection email.

XAVIER

Actually, I have an interview next week.

Keith looks up.

KEITH

No shit? Well, congratulations. Maybe you'll be a cog in this capitalist machine yet.

Keith takes an even larger hit and blows it into Xavier's face. Xavier, again, fans the smoke away.

KEITH (CONT'D)

(coughing)

So you know they made an Alice in Wonderland porno?

XAVIER

Yeah, so? That company online has one for every TV show on the air. They have one for Spongebob, somehow.

Xavier shudders.

KEITH

Sure, but this one was made back in the 70s. It's like a real movie. Sony released it. It made 90 million dollars.

XAVIER

How the fuck did that happen?

KEITH

They cut three minutes of the hard core stuff in order to get an R rating. It's pretty interesting.

XAVIER

You definitely have too much time on your hands.

KEITH

That's not all I have on my hands. I'm currently experiencing a gross amount of what makes me human.

XAVIER

Then why don't you get back on tinder? You said it was great in college.

KEITH

Operative words "in college." Have you ever used tinder?

XAVIER

Of course I have?

KEITH

Let me finish, in this town?

Xavier shrugs.

KEITH (CONT'D)

That's what I thought. Suburban Texas is a wasteland full of variations of the same few genres of cookie cutter asshole. I'm not really interested.

Xavier smiles at him.

XAVIER

Well, it's that or Cheshire cat vagina puns from the Carter administration.

KEITH

I finished Alice. Next up would be Flesh Gordon.

FADE TO:

INT. KEITH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Keith sits on his bed. He looks at his closed laptop. He looks at his phone right next to it. He looks at the laptop. The phone. Laptop. Phone.

He picks up the phone and opens Tinder.

The first profile reads "If you can't handle me at my worst, you don't deserve me at my best." - Marilyn Monroe

Keith's finger hovers over the red X. He looks at the photo. She's hot.

He swipes right.

Another profile comes up. This one reads "Jesus take the wheel. Not looking for a hookup." He looks at the picture.

He swipes right.

MONTAGE

Keith moves through a number of profiles, each a variation on the same theme, him swiping every one of them right.

END MONTAGE

Finally, he comes upon a profile that reads "Family. Jesus. Hunting. Netflix. Fishing. Starbucks. Mudding. Never leaving my home town. Marrying poorly. Buying a shotgun. Ending it all. 420 Friendly. Not looking for hookups."

He swipes it right and tosses the phone to the edge of the bed.

Keith gets under the covers and closes his eyes.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. KEITH'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Keith is awoken by a paper ball thrown in his face. His brother, COREY, late teens, dressed to the nines, puerile, stands in the doorway.

COREY

Time to get up. I'm driving you to work.

Keith gets up slowly. He remembers the night before. He grabs his phone.

A white flame appears in the notification bar.

Keith smiles.

He drags down the top bar: Three matches. Each is another variation of the types he saw earlier, but he opens chat with them anyway.

MONTAGE

Keith sends each of them variations of the same conversation.

He copy-pastes a joke. They send back "lol", a monkey with a hand over its face, and a gif of someone from a movie laughing respectively.

He then comments on each of their profiles, hunting, college major, and vaguely interesting shirt, respectively.

They each send their answer via the medium previously established.

Keith sends a message asking each out for coffee on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, respectively.

We then see each of the three women at coffee, talking inanely.

Keith feigns interest, but in each of the three dates, he gets progressively less able to do so.

FADE TO:

EXT. KEITH'S HOUSE - DAY

Keith and Corey now sit on the patio smoking weed. They pass the pipe between them.

KEITH

You live here. How do you stand tinder? These women are terrible.

COREY

The guys aren't much better. It's all cars, Jesus, Netflix, hunting, fishing. It's unbearable.

KEITH

I know the feeling. Plus, most of these girls live with their parents, so hooking up is a nonstarter. I'm done with Tinder, man.

Corey looks up from the pipe.

COREY

You're trying to use tinder for sex?

KEITH

Of course, what are you using it for?

COREY

Barter economy, mostly.

KEITH

What do you mean?

Corey counts on his fingers.

COREY

Buying drugs, selling portraits,
establishing business connections,
that sort of thing. I haven't had
to work in months besides tinder,
but the dating scene here is
abysmal.

KEITH

Then how are you supposed to find
someone to hang out with that you
don't think is complete garbage.

COREY

Most people are complete garbage.
The only thing unifying people on
tinder is that they all use tinder,
which if you think about it, almost
assures that they're at least
partially garbage.

KEITH

Fair enough.

COREY

Social media isn't a shortcut.
Maybe you should find someone in
your life that you actually do
like.

FADE TO:

INT. KEITH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Keith sits at the bed looking at his computer and cell phone
again.

CUT TO:

INT. TUTORING CENTER - DAY

FLASHBACK

Keith watches Sarah teach a kid through the window of the
class room.

CU on Sarah's face, intently focused on helping the child
learn.

CUT TO:

INT. KEITH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Keith reaches for his cell phone, but at the last minute grabs his laptop.

He logs onto google. He types in a porn site and finds the category menu. He selects Muslim.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN

SARAH (PRE-LAP)

I think we have to take a step back. We haven't even picked a place to go yet.

TITLE: "Talking to someone who's actually much dumber than you, but thinks they're way smarter is always super disorienting." - Max Landis via Twitter

XAVIER (PRE-LAP)

I don't know about that. I think we had already gone with McDonald's. It's a) national and b) the dollar menu is more versatile.

TITLE: PREP.

Section 3: The WEAPONIZED LOL

FADE IN:

EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

A kitschy piece of Americana. A *Blues Brothers* statue sits looking into the street. A fountain babbles softly.

XAVIER, SARAH, KEITH, and NICKI, Latina, and constantly cock-eyed sit at a table. Nicki holds onto Xavier a little too tightly.

KEITH

Sorry, but I have to side with Xavier. McDonalds just has a bigger menu than Whataburger.

SARAH

Fine, so what's the move?

XAVIER

I think you start with Hot and Spicy Chicken Sandwich. Pound for pound it's the most protein. Then you slather that in ranch and ketchup.

KEITH

So, we've abandoned the fries?

XAVIER

We're way past that. If we buy a sandwich, we don't need to get fries to get in the door, and you can get to the ketchup just as easily.

NICKI

Why don't you just run in, with like a bucket or something, and just start pumping ketchup?

The group turns to look at her.

SARAH

I think you're missing the point, Nicki. Crucial Decisions is a game about realistic responses to hard questions. So, think about it, if you had to survive as long as possible on two dollars, and you had to spend it at a fast food restaurant, we want to explore what you could do with that money.

XAVIER

And if Tamika doesn't pay us this week, it'll be Crucial Decision time real soon.

The group shares a small laugh.

KEITH

Yeah, you're definitely getting removed from the store one way or another... You might not even get your ketchup.

Nicki cracks a little bit. Xavier puts his arm around her.

XAVIER

The bucket's a good look, though. We do still have the tomato soup conundrum.

SARAH

Right, and a bucket is too conspicuous.

KEITH

But how big is too big? I figure you can make the sandwich completely disgusting with ketchup and ranch for calories, but if you want to take out ketchup so you can make tomato soup later, you need something bigger than the free water cup to mix it in.

XAVIER

What you're really asking here is what the maximum size dipping sauce cup you're allowed to bring from home is.

SARAH

Exactly.

KEITH

And I still say yogurt cup.

SARAH

And I still say 'where'd you get the yogurt cup?'

KEITH

Fiat the yogurt cup.

Nicki turns to Xavier while Sarah and Keith argue about the feasibility of the yogurt cup *fiat*.

NICKI

What's *fiat*?

XAVIER

It means 'let it be so'. Keith's basically saying that he just gets the yogurt cup.

NICKI (GROWING LOUDER)

How come the yogurt cup is *fiat*, but not the bucket?

This gets Keith and Sarah's attention.

SARAH (SOOTHINGLY)
 It's just a little more realistic.
 You could conceivably find a yogurt
 cup on the ground, so the real
 question becomes if you can fill it
 with ketchup discretely.

KEITH
 Definitely, have you seen some of
 the animals in this town?

Keith looks around him, then back at the table
 conspiratorily.

He doesn't get the approval he's looking for.

Nicki smiles darkly: she smells blood in the water.

NICKI (PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE)
 Well, I don't agree. I don't find
 it to be *realistic*.

Sarah notices what she's doing.

SARAH
 Uh... Ok, no yogurt cup then. Hey
 Nicki, don't we have to talk about
 the pool party tomorrow.

Nicki gives Keith a sidelong glance.

NICKI
 Okay, I could use a little dose of
 reality. See you later, Xavier.

Nicki and Sarah get up to leave.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Keith and Xavier amble down the road. Keith kicking a rock.

XAVIER
 Sorry about that.

KEITH
 What did I tell you, she can't do
 it.

XAVIER

I know. I know. Banter's just not as important for me as it is for you.

KEITH

Well it had better get important when she's throwing a wrench in my game here.

Keith punctuates this statement with a kick of the rock.

XAVIER

I don't know how to say I'm sorry any other way.

KEITH

Whatever, man.

A car drives by with two YOKELS in it. One tosses a beer can out of the window as the car speeds past. It misses the two.

YOKEL

I fucked your mom!

The car speeds off. The two keep walking.

KEITH

Are you fucking kidding me?

XAVIER

I think they got some beer on me.

KEITH

I fucking hate it here.

XAVIER

It's times like these when I'm actually willing to listen to your liberal screeds.

They arrive at Xavier's house. Keith's car is parked there.

KEITH

Ok, I gotta go to work. I'll see you.

CUT TO:

INT. TUTORING CENTER

Keith is teaching Student. A badly drawn world map is on the board.

KEITH
 So that's kind of an abridged
 history of colonialism. (*Beat*) What
 were we talking about again.

STUDENT
 Dangling modifiers.

KEITH
 Right, so you look at the word...

STUDENT
 Actually, your Africa time line is
 a little off. The Berlin conference
 was in 1884, and Ethiopia was never
 colonized.

Keith rubs the back of his head.

KEITH
 Right. Well, dismissed.

The student fast-walks out into the hallway. Sarah watches
 her go past. Keith walks out after.

SARAH
 Done poisoning America's youth?

KEITH
 For the moment. She's all yours.

SARAH
 Thanks. (*Calling down the hall*) Go
 wait for me in the other room, I'll
 be there in 5!

She turns back to Keith. She opens her mouth to speak, but
 gets a text message. She picks up her phone, reads the
 message and sighs.

KEITH
 What?

SARAH
 It's this guy. I started texting
 him about a week ago, and I can't
 stand him.

Keith tenses.

KEITH
 Yeah?

SARAH

He does this thing where he says something that he thinks is funny and puts a 'lol' after it.

KEITH

Like immediately after?

SARAH

No, in the same text!

KEITH

So it's like he's laughing at his own joke.

SARAH

Exactly! It's so annoying. It's such a weak move. Just tell me the joke, if I think it's funny, I'll laugh, but it's up to me.

TAMIKA (O.S.)

Who's teaching this student?

SARAH

I think that's for me. I gotta go.

Sarah goes down the hall and into the teacher's room. Tamika eyes Keith and moves toward him.

TAMIKA

Keith. I didn't think we'd see you this summer. I saw you on Twitter a couple of times and figured, this kid is gonna get Ferguson-ed.

KEITH

Is that a good thing or a bad thing.

Tamika shrugs.

KEITH (CONT'D)

And to think, I could be getting pepper sprayed right now.

TAMIKA

I want you to know, I respect what you kids are trying to do.

KEITH

Trying?

TAMIKA

You guys are like a little 60's.
It's really cute.

KEITH

That's pretty condescending.

TAMIKA

Well, it's pretty hard to take you guys seriously. You organize like a corporate entity, you infight constantly, and you don't exactly have MLK and Brother Malcolm and the wheel.

KEITH

I'll concede there are some problems in the movement.

TAMIKA

Problems, you've been co-opted from the second minute you were born. It's people like that Abeo clown from your school, profiting from this shit that I have a problem with.

Keith looks away.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)

But that's why I like you, you gotta come back and work. It's great. I believe you believe. No matter how ridiculous you come across.

KEITH

Thanks, Tamika.

TAMIKA

You're like Napoleon II. First as Tragedy; then as farce.

Keith looks at her quizzically.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)

Karl Marx. Learn your history, this *is* a tutoring center.

CUT TO:

EXT. TUTORING CENTER - NIGHT

Xavier sits in the driver's seat of the car, unmoving. The student walks past his car and waves. He waves back, weakly.

He receives a text message. He picks it up and the messages display on screen.

NICKI

I don't think I get along with your coworkers.

CUT TO:

INT. NICKI'S BEDROOM

Nicki lies on the bed on her stomach. She holds the phone out in front of her. She frowns.

XAVIER

I wouldn't say that. They just take a little getting used to.

SPLITSCREEN

Xavier clenches his teeth and cocks his head when he says this.

NICKI

Are you sure? I don't think Keith has ever liked me.

Nicki shifts impatiently for a response.

Xavier types carefully.

XAVIER

No.

Nicki looks more intently at the phone.

Xavier types something. Deletes it. Types again. Deletes it. Types a third time.

XAVIER (CONT'D)

He's just interested in Sarah, is all.

Nicki visibly relaxes.

NICKI

Well, why didn't he say something.
She and I are tight, I could
definitely hook that up.

Xavier hangs his head: What has he done?

XAVIER

I think we should let them figure
it out.

Nicki smiles, insistent.

NICKI

But remember how I set up my friend
Kimmy with your friend Derek.

Xavier does remember.

XAVIER

Yeah, and they only went on one
date.

NICKI

Sure, but that was on Derek. They
were a good match, he just screwed
that up.

Xavier goes to type, then rethinks it.

NICKI (CONT'D)

So are we still on for this
weekend? ;)

Xavier types quickly.

XAVIER

If you don't have anything else
going on.

Nicki's smile grows terser.

Xavier puts his phone in the passenger seat.

NICKI

Don't be like that. You remember
our agreement: Don't Ask. Don't
Tell. Lol. See you Saturday.

Nicki puts the phone down and heads for the bathroom.

Xavier picks up his phone, doesn't read the text, and puts on the closing song.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Xavier walks up to an office building. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a business card.

CU on the card from Xavier's POV. It reads "Polytechnic Solutions" and lists the address.

He flips the card over, and it reads "the view from nowhere sees nothing" - Author Unknown. This becomes the

TITLE

TITLE: Prep

Section 4: A Matter of Perspective

FADE TO:

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Xavier sits at a conference room table, visibly uncomfortable. A pen sits in the middle of the table.

XAVIER
Sell you this pen... alright. So,
oh, I know.

Xavier pulls a receipt out of his pocket.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
Write your name down on this piece
of paper.

A hand reaches across the table, grabs the receipt, and writes the name on it with a second pen.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
Well shit. Okay. So...

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

We see Xavier exit the office building from his POV. He walks past an empty reception desk and out into the lobby floor.

He reaches into his pocket and checks his texts. No new messages. The most recent is from Nicki, saying "Good luck. See you tonight."

He pockets the phone again.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

Xavier gets into his car.

Xavier drives down the road.

Xavier pulls into the tutoring center.

CUT TO:

INT. TUTORING CENTER

Student sits, looking up, expectantly at Xavier. He looks at the board, and mathematical equations and graphs are strewn about the board.

STUDENT

Are you okay?

XAVIER

Where were we?

STUDENT

Something about trigonometry.
Hypotenuses were definitely
involved.

Xavier looks down.

XAVIER

Sit tight. I'll be right back.

Xavier bolts out of the room into the

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Keith is leaning against a wall, checking his phone. He looks up when he hears Xavier exit the hallway.

KEITH

Hey. How was the big interview?

XAVIER

I don't want to talk about it.

KEITH

That bad, huh? Well, okay, we knew this was going to happen. Let's get wasted. Come over tonight, and you'll forget all about it.

Xavier pauses.

XAVIER

Yeah, I'll think about it.

Xavier moves past Keith and heads for the

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Xavier walks into a stall and dry heaves into the toilet. Then again.

After he's convinced nothing is going to come out, he exits the stall. He looks towards the mirror.

Just as we would get him looking at himself in the mirror, we change perspectives to see him from afar. He is hunched, defeated, dejected.

He takes a deep breath, when **BAM BAM BAM**, Tamika knocks at the door. Xavier turns his head, and we are back in his POV.

TAMIKA (O.S.)

Hey, what are you doing in there?
Get back out here and teach the student! I'm not paying you to lay about.

Xavier walks to the door and pushes it open. He comes face to face with Tamika.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)

Get back in there, you've got another hour before you can go.

Xavier nods and heads back toward the classroom. He looks around, and there is no sign of Keith.

CUT TO:

INT. KEITH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Keith and Xavier are sitting in chairs drinking whiskey. We are still from Xavier's POV.

KEITH

So, I've been thinking a lot about TV, right.

Xavier nods.

KEITH (CONT'D)

So, how much do you like Adult Swim?

Xavier puts his hand in frame and rotates his wrist, indicating 'meh'

KEITH (CONT'D)

I don't know, I'm a big fan, but it got me thinking. All of their stuff is parodies. Like *Venture Bros.* is about *Johnny Quest*, a bunch of their stuff is infomercials, *Space Ghost* is a talk show, *Eric Andre* is doing a riff on *Space Ghost*, a little.

Xavier looks down. His vision is starting to blur.

KEITH (CONT'D)

Right, so I was thinking that this is everything. Like the new Star Trek movies make jokes about Star Trek. Everything is deconstruction. Like we were raised by a generation raised on TV. TV is my grandmother, man, and that's super weird.

Xavier nods.

KEITH (CONT'D)

Is this not connecting with you?

Xavier hiccups.

KEITH (CONT'D)

Okay. Well, fine. Whatever, I told you the job was a nonstarter.

Xavier receives a text message. It's from Nicki. "Xavier, where are you?"

Xavier stands up to leave.

KEITH (CONT'D)
Are you going? Nicki, huh?

Xavier stumbles a little.

KEITH (CONT'D)
You're not driving, are you?

Xavier ignores him and walks toward the door.

KEITH (CONT'D)
Dude, I can't let you go, you don't seem okay to drive.

Xavier clenches his fists.

We move from his perspective to see both of them, Keith moving to block the door.

XAVIER
You're an asshole, Keith. You don't believe in me as a marketer, you don't like Nicki. Just because you're miserable doesn't mean the rest of us have to be.

Keith is struck by this.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
Zyxwvutsrqponmljkihgfedcba, can I go now?

Keith moves out of the way, and looks on as Xavier walks down the hall.

We return to Xavier's POV as he gets in his car. His vision is still a little blurry.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

Xavier starts his car, it takes two tries.

He drives very slowly and carefully down side streets.

He pulls into Nicki's driveway.

CUT TO:

INT. NICKI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Xavier sits on the bed, vision starting to stabilize. Nicki sits at the other end of the bed, looking at him.

NICKI
You don't look so good. Have you
been drinking?

Xavier shakes his head.

NICKI (CONT'D)
You smell like alcohol.

XAVIER
Keith.

NICKI
Oh, ok. Ready?

Xavier nods his head.

Nicki leans in to kiss him.

We leave Xavier's perspective as she pushes him back on to the bed.

Back in Xavier's POV, his eyes close more and more until his vision goes black.

We leave Xavier's perspective to see him asleep in bed.

CUT TO:

BLACKOUT

NICKI
Xavier? Xavier? Oh, god damn it!

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. KEITH'S BEDROOM - DAY

Keith sits in his bed, looking at his computer screen.

He is on Twitter, and Abeo has just received another sponsorship.

Keith checks his own awful twitter numbers and sighs.

He reaches under the bed and grabs a book. He cracks it open.

SUPERIMPOSE: PREP.

SUPERIMPOSE: "THERE IS A SPECTER HAUNTING THE FIFTH SECTION,

This turns into a

TITLE

TITLE: THE SPECTER OF CAPITALISM" - Karl Marx, paraphrased.

EXT. PATIO - DAY

Keith and Sarah sit on the patio, both smoking weed.

SARAH

Where are Xavier and Nicki?

KEITH

I have no idea. He flipped out on me last night, and I haven't heard from him since.

SARAH

Well, more for us.

Sarah takes a rip of the pipe. She exhales as she speaks.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You got anything to eat around here?

KEITH

I do, but isn't it Ramadan?

Sarah looks up: He's right.

SARAH

Oh, yeah. Shit.

KEITH

That's rough. Why the conversion?

Sarah considers this for a beat.

SARAH
It just makes sense, you know?

KEITH
Not even a little bit.

SARAH
Routine is a wonderful thing. It makes sure there's something still there when the rest of your life turns to shit.

Keith gives a sad smile.

KEITH
So your childhood dream wasn't being the assistant manager of AP-SAT tutorial?

SARAH
I'd rather be the assistant jizz-cleaner at a pornographic DVD store.

KEITH
I heard XXX video is hiring.

SARAH
Yeah, but it's only minimum wage. (beat) Why are you here, Keith?

KEITH
No choice.

SARAH
How? I saw you online, you know Abeo. I tell people about you all the time.

Keith smiles. Then frowns.

KEITH
I can't afford to stay up there. I don't have anywhere to live, and I don't have any other cash coming in.

SARAH
Can't you stay with someone up there.

Keith is silent. She has her answer.

SARAH (CONT'D)

What about you? You used to go to school in Austin.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Yeah, but my dad got laid off. I'm just trying to save enough money to finish my degree in town. If Tamika would ever pay me.

KEITH

Shit, that's rough.

SARAH

Sure, but I've been keeping myself distracted.

Sarah takes another hit, even though it isn't her turn. Keith allows this. She puts her hand on his leg.

SARAH (CONT'D)

What about you, any distractions?

KEITH

Actually,

Keith is struck by inspiration.

KEITH (CONT'D)

Sarah, when was the last time you got paid?

SARAH

I don't know, like three weeks ago.

KEITH

Exactly. Same here, and I know Xavier hasn't seen a check. We have to go on strike.

SARAH

Strike?

KEITH

Yes. I need a protest, you need a paycheck. Let's do it.

Sarah leans back in her chair and closes her eyes in contemplation.

Keith looks at her in desperate anticipation.

She sits up and opens her eyes, decision made.

SARAH
Ok, I'll do it.

KEITH
You get Xavier, I'll get everything
ready.

CU on Keith, determined in a way we haven't seen before.

MONTAGE

Keith gathers poster board and markers. He begins to make a sign.

Sarah calls Xavier. No answer.

Keith looks over a drawing of the tutoring center's parking lot. He analyzes choke points.

Sarah goes to Xavier's house, and calls up to his window. He pokes his head out.

Keith looks at a picture of Abeo and flips it off.

EXT. TUTORING CENTER - DAY

Keith and Sarah stand in the parking lot with three picket signs.

KEITH
Is he on his way?

SARAH
He said he was coming.

Xavier pulls up. He gets out of the car, Nicki behind him.

Keith looks at Nicki, about to say something, but thinks better of it.

KEITH
You ready?

XAVIER
I'm very aware this is a
transparent ploy for media
attention.

KEITH
Xavier, I...

XAVIER
So, I did call the local news.
We'll see if they show up.

Keith smiles.

KEITH
Circle up, gang.

They do. *That 70's Show*-esque circle ensues.

KEITH (CONT'D)
The name of the game here is
disruption. We're the only people
working today, and no one cancelled
any classes. Students are going to
show up soon, and they'll see our
picket line. Tamika will have no
choice but to meet our demands.

XAVIER
And what exactly are our demands?

Keith thinks about it. He hadn't gotten this far.

KEITH
Timely payment, mainly.

SARAH
And raises.

XAVIER
Sounds good to me.

Nicki looks around.

NICKI
I only see three picket signs.

KEITH
Well, I didn't know you were
coming.

NICKI
It's fine. Less for me to throw
away after we're finished.

Keith ignores this.

Nicki glares at him. Xavier looks at her: not happy with the
remark.

XAVIER
You can have mine.

She softens.

CUT TO:

EXT. TUTORING CENTER - LATER

The four are lined up in front of the door, ready to picket. Student walks up with a book under their arm.

KEITH
Okay, this is it.

The four hold up their signs and begin to chant.

ALL FOUR
Day's Work! Day's Pay!
Day's Work! Day's Pay!
Day's Work! Day's Pay!

The student bugs out and runs back the way they came.

KEITH
Nice, now we just have to do that every two hours for the rest of the day.

SARAH
Or until Tamika meets our demands. Someone did email those to her, right?

XAVIER
Done.

SARAH
Great.

EXT. TUTORING CENTER - LATER

The four sit in the parking lot, bored. The signs lay strewn about the pavement.

KEITH
So the news isn't coming, then?

XAVIER
I doubt it.

Tamika's car pulls into the parking lot. She gets out of her car and walks over to the four. She looms over them from a high angle.

TAMIKA
You mind telling me what the hell
is going on?

NICKI
We're on strike.

TAMIKA
And who the hell are you?

NICKI
I'm Nicki, Xavier's girlfriend.

Tamika's mouth twitches.

TAMIKA
Girlf... You brought your
girlfriend to your strike?

Xavier shrugs.

KEITH
We have a right to get paid. I
haven't received a check since I
got here.

Tamika turns to Keith.

TAMIKA
I should have known better. I saw
you online, and I knew you would be
trouble. You're insubordinate, and
not for any kind of reason. You're
like a child, and now you've gone
too far. You're fired.

Keith's face falls. Tamika reaches into her wallet and pulls
out a checkbook. She scribbles a check and hands it to him.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)
That's what I owe you, now get the
fuck off my property.

KEITH
Tamika, I think you should...

Tamika holds a hand up and he stops. He looks around for
support. He finds none.

TAMIKA
Anyone else want to go?

Sarah doesn't respond.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)
I didn't think so. You and Xavier
get back inside. And you...

She looks at Nicki.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)
You get out of here too.

NICKI
But Xavier drove me here.

TAMIKA
You think I give a damn.

Nicki and Keith get up to go. Keith gestures Nicki into his car.

Tamika watches them get in, and her gaze shifts to Sarah and Xavier. They get up and go back inside.

The sound of Keith's car is heard as we CU on the picket signs.

FADE OUT.

POST CREDITS

INT. CAR - DAY

Nicki and Keith sit in his car. Nicki smiles, but just a little.

KEITH
Not a word.

NICKI
Just one question. How did you see
this going?

Keith waits a moment before answering.

KEITH
I just thought that maybe respect
and solidarity weren't completely
abandoned in the workplace.

NICKI
Do you really think that's
realistic?

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

TITLE: PREP

Section 6: Experimental Section

Opening song begins.

SPLITSCREEN

Sarah stands at the front of a classroom in the tutoring center. She gives a thousand yard stare.

The student looks up to see what is wrong with her. She snaps back to attention and continues the lesson.

Xavier sits in his room and texts Nicki. He waits for a response, but none comes.

Nicki sits at a table in the restaurant with one of the rednecks from Section 3. She laughs and touches his arm.

Keith sits on his bed, illuminated only by the bluish glow of his computer screen.

END SPLITCREEN

INT. KEITH'S KITCHEN - DAY

Keith, clad only in his pajamas walks over to a kitchen counter.

He pours himself a bowl of fruity cereal with milk and a glass of orange juice in a series of quick cuts.

He sits at the table and takes a bite of cereal.

CUT TO:

INT. KEITH'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Keith hasn't moved since we last left him.

Three short **knocks** come from off-screen.

Keith turns to look, and it's Xavier. He gestures down toward the door handle.

Keith gets up and lets him in. He sits down across from Keith.

XAVIER
Damn, that was fucked up, man.

KEITH
You don't have to tell me.

XAVIER
Right, but she didn't have to be so cold about it.

KEITH
Was she cold? I really didn't notice over the *exactly zero support*. Or maybe that's just me being selfish again.

Xavier is quick with the response.

XAVIER
C'mon, man. You know it's not like that. Sarah needs that job and it's not like I have an internship to fall back on.

Keith clenches his teeth.

KEITH
You have no idea what it's like up there. Some kid just tweeted that Jeff Goldblum told him to go fuck himself. How am I supposed to compete with that?

XAVIER
It's not a competition.

KEITH
Yes it fucking is! And I'm losing. If I wanted to be good at anything, I should have started doing it ten years ago. Do you think we're getting jobs after this?

XAVIER
Well...

KEITH
You've never worked in your field, and I've never worked *anywhere*. We're going to end up back in this hellhole for the rest of our lives.

(MORE)

KEITH (CONT'D)

Do you have any idea how hard
that's going to be now that I know
there's a better world out there?

XAVIER

I don't know why you think that.
The world is kind of awful
everywhere, and you pretending that
it's just here isn't helping
anyone.

KEITH

I have no idea what I'm doing.

XAVIER

Hey, I'm just kind of doing stuff I
think an adult might do. I was only
ever good at one thing when I was a
kid, and now I'm not sure I'm even
very good at that. (*Beat*) Do you
remember that Halloween Party you
threw?

Keith smiles.

KEITH

Yeah, we had two days to plan the
whole thing, and we ended up with a
full house.

XAVIER

Remember Tommy Kahara broke your AC
system by head butting it.

KEITH

You tampered with it to look like
electrical control failure.

Now it's Xavier's turn to smile.

XAVIER

I just googled common air
conditioning problems and went from
there.

Xavier puts his hand on Keith's shoulder.

XAVIER (CONT'D)

Listen, man. I don't know what
you're going to do after this, but
I know you're going to land on your
feet.

Keith looks at him. Xavier's face falters: he's lying. Keith doesn't care and puts his arm on Xavier's.

KEITH

Thanks, man. You're a good friend.
So where's Nicki?

XAVIER

I'm not sure, but I'm not sure how
much I care either. I feel like I
carry a lot of her weight in group
conversations.

Keith lets out a small laugh.

KEITH

You know, I never noticed, but you
kinda do.

XAVIER

Well, I've got another shift in the
morning. See ya.

KEITH

Night, man.

Xavier leaves and Keith sits in the same position, but this time he's a little more contented.

CUT TO:

INT. TUTORING CENTER - DAY

Tamika sits in her office looking at the same soft-core porn
Keith was at the beginning of episode 1.

We hear three **knocks** at the door.

TAMIKA

I'm here.

She leisurely closes the tab and Keith enters the room.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)

You can't have your job back.

KEITH

I wouldn't want it even if I could.

TAMIKA

Then what do you want?

KEITH

To apologize. I'm not really sure what I'm doing these days.

TAMIKA

Well there's a surprise. Sit.

She gestures to the chair in front of the desk. Keith sits.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)

None of you do. I'm really worried that the public school system taught you that life comes in stages. You're in elementary school, and then middle school, and then high school, and then college, and then BAM, you're adults. It doesn't work like that. Life is really long, and you just keep doing things until you eventually stop.

KEITH

I don't think I'm beating levels in a video game.

TAMIKA

Sure, but I think a lot of you kids see the world as if it only goes up from here. Your life might, if you're lucky, but your body gets a little worse every year, except for the years when it gets a lot worse. You eventually reach your peak and then there's a long way down the after that.

KEITH

I know.

TAMIKA

I'm not sure you do, because instrumentalizing people is a really short-term way to think about life. Stepping on people gets you to the top of the mountain, but those people are rarely willing to help you slide back down.

KEITH

Who's that?

TAMIKA
That's me. Now get out of here, I
have shit to do.

Keith gets up to leave. In the

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He sees Sarah peeking her head out of a classroom.

KEITH
Hey.

Sarah comes all the way into the hall.

SARAH
Sorry.

KEITH
Don't apologize. It wasn't a great
idea.

SARAH
Even so... did I ever tell you why
I converted to Islam.

KEITH
No.

SARAH
I had just broken up with this guy,
and I got really drunk, and my
friend convinced me to shave my
head. The next day when I woke up,
it looked awful, so I wrapped my
head in a scarf I had lying around.
The way everyone treated me was
completely different. I could feel
this distance I hadn't felt before.
People gave me strange looks and I
wasn't used to it. So, I went to a
masjid, and no one was looking
anymore. I stayed and I fell in
love with it.

KEITH
You converted just like that?

SARAH

Well, I had to go through the process, say the shahada and all that stuff, but that's when I decided. And I'm not very good at it.

KEITH

I haven't noticed.

SARAH

You wouldn't. I fuck up a lot, but I'm trying and for the most part, people seem to get that.

Keith nods.

SARAH (CONT'D)

So what are you going to do for the rest of the summer?

KEITH

I've been thinking about volunteering.

SARAH

Yeah, like with some kind of BLM support organization?

KEITH

UNICEF, actually. I'm looking into doing some temp work for them.

Keith turns around and walks away.

FADE OUT.