

GO ON

"Pilot"

Written by

Scott Silveri

Writer's Draft
January 17, 2012

"GO ON" GROUP PARTICIPANTS:

RYAN KING (40): The new guy. Just lost his wife, not dealing with it. Cocky, quick with a joke. A Michael J. Fox energy.

LAUREN SCHNEIDER (40): The group leader. A Lauren Graham-type. Wound tightly but manages to keep her cool. Usually.

OWEN (22): Young, awkward and, before Ryan's entrance, a non-participant. Think Jay Baruchel.

ANNE (50): Recently widowed woman, not interested in all the stages of grief. Anger and anger alone is working for her. Think Susie Essman.

YOLANDA (30): A Mercury-in-retrograde-announcing bummer, and sycophant to group leader, Lauren. Here because parents are getting a divorce. Now. When she's 30. Think Kristen Wiig.

DON (40): Working-class Don went bankrupt and his wife took the kids and left. Beaten-down, bitter and dry. Our "Norm." Think "The Office"'s Craig Robinson.

JILL (50): A giver, a dedicated stay-at-home mom, whose youngest just left the nest, leaving her a little lost. Think my mom, like, now.

CYRUS (25): College football star, a lock for the pros, who suffered a career ending injury weeks before graduation. He deals with it way, way too well for others' tastes.

GEORGE (70s): A lovely older man with a ridiculous list of health and life issues.

MR. K (60s): He's creepy. A reminder that just because you're going through something worthy of sympathy, it doesn't mean you're someone people want to sit next to.

FAUSTA (60s): Understands English, but doesn't speak it so well.

SONIA (50): She lost her cat and can't quite understand why the others here don't care.

DANNY (25): A war veteran who came home to his wife had had a child with another man. Fitting for someone with his background, he's never really explored his feelings this way, and is charmingly into this chance to do so.

JACK: A salesman who's been aged out. Wearing a too-cool suit and sporting awful jet-black dyed hair, Jack is clearly in his 60's, but swears he's twenty years younger.

COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

INT. K-WIN OFFICES (STEVEN'S OFFICE) - DAY

Ryan King (a boyish 40) bursts in, full of energy. He's met by his boss, STEVEN (40s, athletic), and dowdy IRIS from H.R.

RYAN

I'm back. And better than ever.

STEVEN

Ryan. How are you, buddy?

RYAN

Better than ever. And back. Don't think I could have made that any clearer.

He hugs Steven.

STEVEN

I'm surprised you called. You're supposed to be gone another month.

RYAN

No need. What a trip! I zip-lined down a rainforest canopy, I surfed, swam with dolphins. And that laid-back vibe! The place changed me. I, myself, still don't care for the guy, but after that week, I feel I could talk to someone who knows someone who likes Jimmy Buffett.

(then)

Ooh, I almost forgot. I brought you something.

He digs in his bag and holds something up to Steven's face.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Look familiar?

STEVEN

It's a shell.

RYAN

It's you. I was SCUBA diving -- I did that too -- I'm about to surface, two breaths in my tank and I see this on the ocean floor. Something about it said, "Steven".

(MORE)

RYAN (CONT'D)

It captured your spirit. There I was, thousands of miles away, in this intense, beautiful moment and you were there. "I'm gonna get that shell and bring it to my friend," I said. "That's how much he means to me."

He hands Steven the shell. Then we hear O.C. SOBBING. Iris is breaking down.

RYAN (CONT'D)

(to Iris)

You want one? I have a hundred, I bought it in the airport gift shop.

IRIS

I'm sorry, you're just clearly in so much pain.

RYAN

What? I'm great.

(to Steven)

And so ready to get back to work.

STEVEN

You're not great. How could you be? It's been just a month.

RYAN

Of SCUBA diving, of zip-lining... and did I mention the dolphins?

STEVEN

What about Janie?

(gently)

You remember Janie, right?

A beat.

RYAN

Sure, about yea high, completed me? Doesn't come around much anymore?

STEVEN

Your wife died, Ryan. Out of nowhere. You're not okay, how could you be? You haven't dealt with it at all.

Ryan shakes his head.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Okay, I know you want to come back, and I miss you, the station misses you, but there's something you have to do first. Iris has put together a list of people you can talk to.

RYAN

Therapy? No. It's not in my blood. I go see a shrink, my dad will roll in his grave. At least I think he's dead. We didn't talk about that kind of stuff. It's very personal.

(then)

Look, I'm not gonna lie, I have my bad days, that's why I'm here. This where I feel like myself. This is what I need.

STEVEN

I want you back too. When you're ready. Choose anyone on the list, go to ten sessions.

RYAN

(beat)

You asking as my friend or my boss?

STEVEN

I'm asking as your friend and telling you as your boss. It's not a discussion.

He holds out the packet. Beat. Pissed, Ryan grabs it.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Be open. You might get something out of it.

Ryan turns to go, then crosses back and grabs something: the little, pink Steven shell. Ryan studies it.

RYAN

Funny. It doesn't look all that much like you anymore.

Ryan pockets the shell and exits.

INT. CARRIE'S AREA - MOMENTS LATER

A small anteroom. Ryan's assistant, CARRIE (20s, quirky; think Mary-Lynn Rajskub) sits behind a desk. Ryan blows in.

RYAN

Okay, remember when I had you do my traffic school online for me?

CARRIE

(looks around, nervous)

No. That would have been fraud.

RYAN

Well, I have some more nonsense you need to help me deal with.

He dumps the packet in front of her.

CARRIE

Nice to see you, by the way.

RYAN

That's it? No, "I'm sorry"? No "heyyyyy"? Bless you.

CARRIE

(off packet)

What is this? Therapy?

RYAN

Ten sessions, I have to do. I have to get this stupid sheet signed. Ten hours talking about my feelings. So you know what I need?

CARRIE

Feelings?

RYAN

Check out those places, find the easiest one.

(scoffs)

Therapy. You want to help me? Put me on the air, give me some callers, some athletes, let me make them yell at each other! It's bad enough my wife died. You gotta take away the thing I love to do? It's like, "Little Timmy, sorry Grandma's dead. Now we're going to take away all your toys."

CARRIE

There are groups in here. Do that.

(off his look)

You wouldn't have to say anything, there are a dozen other people.

RYAN

(beat, considers)

You're right. Other people love to talk. I wouldn't be able to get a word in if I tried. It's perfect!

(kisses her)

This is like when you did jury duty for me, which also didn't happen!

CARRIE

Here's one: "Gone too Soon", a group for the widowed under fifty --

RYAN

Oof! Downer.

CARRIE

So, you want one of the "fun" ones in this pile? Perhaps a group on how to make balloon animals?

(looks)

Okay. This one seems... lighter. "Transitions: a Group for Mindful Life Change and Renewal."

RYAN

("struggling")

Too much... psychobabble... can't... breathe...

(then)

Insufferable. Pass.

CARRIE

Too bad. All the other ones are ninety minutes, this one's sixty --

RYAN

(immediately)

"Transitions," it is!

(then)

Done! Call, get me a reservation or whatever. A nice table, nothing too close to the kitchen.

(heads out, then)

Ooh, maybe I'll sit in the back and listen to something. Fill this up.

He tosses her his iPod.

CARRIE

With what?

Ryan just laughs, "What else?"

CARRIE (CONT'D)
You've heard them all a million
times.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER (HALLWAY) - DAYS LATER

Ryan bops down the hall. He tucks a wire and adjusts the headphones that are already in his ears.

WE HEAR ONLY WHAT HE HEARS: a podcast of Ryan King's favorite radio personality...

RYAN (ON RADIO)
Welcome back to the Ryan King show,
I am your host, Ryan King with a
reminder that this is a "no B.S.
zone." It's not tolerated. Except
for me just calling it "B.S.,"
which, let's face it, is kinda B.S.-
y. Still with me is Celtics star,
Kevin Garnett. K.G., thanks for
sticking around.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER (MEETING ROOM) - MOMENTS LATER

Ryan enters to find a group of MEN and WOMEN, aged TWENTY TO SIXTY. A true melting pot. Ryan joins their circle. As he does, people offer Ryan words of welcome. He nods politely, not hearing. We don't hear either.

RYAN (ON RADIO)
Kev, you're the man. Fourteen-time
All-Star, World Champion, so here's
the question: Who's the ugliest guy
you've ever played with?

As Ryan continues to enjoy the show, others **RISE AND CROSS AWAY**. They OPEN A CLOSET and REMOVE ELABORATE COSTUMES.

KEVIN GARNETT (ON RADIO)
Aw, come on, Ryan. You're just
trying to get me in trouble.

RYAN (ON RADIO)
I want the top five, in order. Not
including Sam Cassell. Too easy.

Ryan realizes he's alone. He turns around to see the group now **OUTFITTED in MEDIEVAL GARB. WEAPONS AND ALL**. They start to FIGHT, some odd STAGE COMBAT.

Ryan removes his earplugs, clears his throat.

RYAN (CONT'D)
The, uh... "Transitions" group?

A COSTUMED MAN points across the hall.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Thank you, my lord.

INT. GROUP ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Another GROUP, a DOZEN MEN AND WOMEN of ALL AGES, all walks of life. Ryan enters to find people making chit-chat. He's approached by a GOOD-LOOKING WOMAN of fifty. This is JILL.

JILL
Hi, there. Welcome.

RYAN
Hi. Is this the group for, uh...

JILL
Life change.

RYAN
(smiles)
Life change, right. So is it
mainly people who just won the
lottery or...?

A GRUFF MAN (40) gets a call on his cell. This is DON.

DON
(into phone)
Yeah? ... Uh huh. ... Okay.

Skittish YOLANDA (30) approaches him.

YOLANDA
Really not supposed to --
(mimes phone)
Sorry. Lauren's rules? Sorry.
Lauren. Not me. Lauren.

DON
(hangs up)
Everyone, that was Lauren.

Yolanda is pulled up. She checks her phone.

A SLIGHTLY CREEPY MAN approaches Ryan and stares at him.
This is MR. K.

DON (CONT'D)
She's sorry, she's in traffic and
will be here soon. She encourages
us to start without her.

People grab seats around a circle. As they do:

YOLANDA
(very relieved)
Okay. She called me. It was just
turned off. Because of the rule.

Ryan grabs a chair outside the circle. Mr. K sits close by.

DON
Well, okay, how does she start?
(searching)
To live is to change... we shall
emerge like a butterfly... then she
says a poem. Let's go.

Feisty ANNE (45) pipes up.

ANNE
(flat)
That was really moving.

DON
Well, she has candles. You want me
to make it nice? Get me candles.

To Ryan, outside the circle:

JILL
Care to join us?

RYAN
Oh, I'm good here. I'm just
observing. Thanks.

YOLANDA
Lauren says you have to sit in the
circle. Lauren says --

From GEORGE, elderly, blind:

GEORGE
He seems comfortable.

Ryan motions, "so-so." Mr. K has moved closer.

RYAN

(whispers)

Why do I think your "life change"
involves wearing a suit of other
peoples' skin?

Mr. K smiles.

GEORGE

Let's dive in. Who'd like to
start? To my left?

He turns to OWEN (20). He just stares back, blank.

DON

It's the kid, George. He's not
gonna say anything.

ANNE

I'll start.
(big sigh)
I'm not sleeping. It's coming up
on five months since Al's gone ---
(without turning)
Stop taking notes. Now.

Yolanda puts down her pen.

ANNE (CONT'D)

I miss his snore. I hated that
snore. But I can't bring myself to
sleep in our bed. Five months on
the couch. My kids think I'm nuts.

SONIA

Hey, be happy you have family. I
wish I did.

DON

And be happy you have a bed. The
bank took mine. Did you know they
did that? Beds? Seemed mean.

Ryan perks up. The competition piques his interest.

ANNE

Oh, you lost money. You can always
get that back. Not like me.

DON

Not just money. My wife, my kid,
my fish. Saltwater, all purple and
bright.

YOLANDA

Guys, stop. You know Lauren says we shouldn't compare like this.

RYAN

(can't help himself)
No, don't stop!

They all turn to the new guy.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Sorry, it's just... that's the fun part. Of course we're gonna compete. We're humans, it's kind of our thing. Whether it's sports, beauty pageants, chili cook-offs... We want to know who's the best.

YOLANDA

Not about this kind of thing.

RYAN

Epecially about this kind of thing! Are you kidding? Have you ever sat with the old people --
(to George)
-- no offense -- at Thanksgiving? Have you ever heard a country song? There's a sick joy in knowing, "My bad thing squishes yours like a grape." Be honest. When you sit here, listening to someone else go on about their problems, a big part of you's thinking, "You think that's bad? Oh, baby, wait 'til you hear my thing." Am I right?

People look at each other, gauging reactions.

DON

Listen, new guy, I don't know who you are. But yes.

RYAN

So who wins? Everyone here's dealing with something. Whose thing is the worst?

They look around, sizing each other up.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Do you really not know?
(hops up)
Oh, we gotta figure this out.

ANNE
What are you doing?

GEORGE
We're gonna crown someone. If you
were weight lifters, you'd lift
stuff. If you were runners, you'd
race. You're sad! Let's see who's
saddest!

He crosses, counting heads as he goes.

YOLANDA
I really don't think Laur--

RYAN
Oh, screw what Laura says.

Ryan turns quickly and finds himself nose-to-nose with gentle
giant, war vet, DANNY (25).

DANNY
It's Lauren. And she's been
instrumental in my healing journey.

RYAN
(immediate 180)
Because she's a great, great woman,
worthy of respect, and I won't have
people talk about her that way.

Danny backs off. Ryan reaches a blackboard. He draws an
NCAA TOURNAMENT-STYLE BRACKET SYSTEM.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Here are the brackets. You've all
made it to the tournament.
Congratulations.
(with mounting intensity)
Now you're gonna go head to head,
you get five seconds to tell me
your sob story. Make it sound as
bad as you can. We go a few
rounds, crown a winner, and we know
once and for all: who's number one?
Who rules the land? Are you in?

People aren't sure. The silent Owen raises his hand.

OWEN
We could call it "March Sadness".

RYAN
That's exactly what we're gonna
call it! I love this guy!
(to Owen)
You man the board.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Okay, we have an odd number of
people. Anyone okay to sit out?

MR. K
I can. I like to watch.

RYAN
I'm sure you do.

BEGIN MONTAGE. High-energy music plays.

Ryan sits. IN QUICK CUTS, pairs take turns telling their
stories. At the board, Owen writes down the results. First
up, Jill faces off against Don.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Five seconds. Go!

DON
I lost everything I had on a
restaurant whose concept I still
cannot articulate.

Ryan nods, points to Jill.

JILL
Our youngest just moved off. We're
empty nesters now. I'm trying to
figure out who I am.

RYAN
So his thing's worse?

JILL
I wouldn't say tha--

RYAN
Then sell it!

He counts down from five on his fingers.

JILL
(scrambles)
Last week was my birthday! None of
them called! Sometimes I dig out
their baby clothes and smell them!

RYAN
Very vivid! You're moving on!

JILL
Oh, my. That feels good.

NEXT UP: Anne faces off with Sonia.

RYAN
Five seconds!

ANNE
(flustered)
Uhh... my husband... I came home
from work and his car was there --

RYAN
Two seconds.

ANNE
And I called for him and I --

RYAN
Time!

ANNE
He died! He was dead! Heart
exploded! The fat bastard!

RYAN
Sorry, you've been disqualified.
Clock-management is key, people.
(to Sonia)
Yours to lose.

Anne sees where this is going...

ANNE
Oh no. I can't lose to this.

RYAN
Three seconds...

SONIA
My... cat died.

RYAN

(beat)

On a technicality, dead cat beats
dead husband! Our first upset!

NEXT UP: George faces off against JACK (60s).

GEORGE

Arthritis. Diabetes. Angina...

NEXT, big, athletic CYRUS (25) faces off against Yolanda.

CYRUS

My thing's an adjustment, but I've
got nothing to complain about. I
mean, I played ball, got injured --

RYAN

Wait, did you say your name was Cy?

CYRUS

Yes, sir.

RYAN

(jaw drops)

Cy Matthews? From USC? You were
the best PAC-12 receiver in twenty
years. You were going to the pros!
You were gonna be huge!

CYRUS

Know what, I'm better than huge,
I'm blessed. I've got my family --

RYAN

(can't bear to listen)

Aw, and I'd heard you were nice
about it. That makes it so much
worse!

Ryan curls up in a ball, pained. Yolanda pipes in.

YOLANDA

So, I'll say my thing?

RYAN

(head in hands, moans)

It doesn't matter. His is worse,
sit down.

BACK TO George.

GEORGE
A stroke, three heart attacks...

NEXT UP, Danny vs. FAUSTA (60s). Now people want to win.

DANNY
-- I came back from deployment and
there was my wife with the baby.

RYAN
What's wrong with that?

DANNY
I'd been gone for ten months.

RYAN
(does the math)
Got it.
(to Fausta)
Ma'am?

FAUSTA
(with deep emotion)
Mi marido enfermaba y volvió al
hospital y el y mi hijo fueron
devueltos para mi país!

RYAN
(no idea what she said)
Wow. Someone who's gonna get less
out of this group than I am.

BACK TO George.

GEORGE
Gallstones. Colitis --

RYAN
(interrupts)
Maybe just list the diseases you
don't have.

NEXT ROUND: Fausta and Cyrus face off. Fausta's just gone.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Okay, if Don's Spanish is good --
and I have no reason to believe it
is -- that's a heartbreaking story.
(to Cyrus)
I think you're out.

CYRUS

Hey, I had fun while it lasted.

RYAN

Stop being nice. Stop it.

A LATER ROUND. Ryan stands. He's really getting into it now. It's George vs. Sonia. George finishes up...

GEORGE

My house burned down. I lost a toe. They put me in a home...

RYAN

Two rounds and the fact that he's blind doesn't even come up. How do you beat that?

(to Sonia)

I'm sorry. Your Cinderella story ends here.

(to George)

You're moving on!

George pumps his fist.

Finally, it's down to Fausta and George. Both have spoken. Ryan holds up Fausta's hand.

RYAN (CONT'D)

We have a winner!

Ryan spots an empty box of donuts. He places it on Fausta's head like a crown.

FAUSTA

Yes! Yes!

(in George's face)

I no care you problem! I am queen!

I win! You lose!

All eyes are now on the door, where stands an ATTRACTIVE and shocked WOMAN. Ryan is caught. A tense beat, then:

RYAN

Lauren, is it? I have a sheet I'm gonna need you to sign.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. GROUP ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The group is seated in a circle, once again calm, thanks to Lauren (40). Think Lauren Graham. She's wound tightly but manages to keep her cool. Usually. Lauren lights the last of her dozen candles, an opening ritual for the meeting.

LAUREN
(super-calm voice)
We honor change of all kinds here.
The blessings, the challenges...

Her lighter dies. She tries not to lose her shit as she continues, futilely pressing the button again and again.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
These flames, beautiful, powerful.
Ever-changing --
(furious whisper)
Light. Light. Dammit. Light.

Another candle altogether flickers and dies.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
Seriously? Come on!

She tosses the lighter aside. There's a tense beat.

GEORGE
(whispers, lost)
What's going on?

LAUREN
Sorry, I'm still trying to process
what I witnessed when I arrived.

RYAN
Yeah, I should apologize for that.
It was wrong. Fun, definitely.
But wrong. Apparently.

LAUREN
We try not to compare experiences
here. Why would we have that rule?

YOLANDA
Because to do so would suggest that
one person's experience is more or
less valid than another's.

LAUREN
Thank you, Yolanda. And Fausta,
anytime you want to take that off --

Fausta removes her crown. Lauren turns to Ryan.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
Can you appreciate that, Ryan? Why
we would have that rule?

RYAN
(beat)
Sure.

LAUREN
Thank you, Ryan. I honor that.

RYAN
Thanks. And thanks for saying my
name so much. It's weird but nice.

She produces a stack of papers and passes them down.

LAUREN
I'd like to offer you some material
to look over when you have time.

The healthy-sized pile reaches Ryan.

RYAN
Wow. If I'd known a wife dying
meant so much reading, I wouldn't
have married a 109-year-old.

He laughs. Lauren gives him a sad smile.

LAUREN
It's important to laugh. It's also
important to cry, to dance, to sing --

YOLANDA
To swim.

LAUREN
Less so.
(re: papers)
There are some rules in there.
Guidelines, ways to keep our time
together positive, affirming.
They'll hopefully encourage you to
open up and share of yourself.

(MORE)

LAUREN (CONT'D)
You'll get out of this group only
as much as you're willing to put
in.

Chastised, Ryan gives a polite nod. Then he subtly SLIPS HIS
HAND INTO HIS POCKET. Lauren turns her focus to the others.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
Now, let's talk about this week.
When last we met, Jill was --

We again hear what Ryan hears: **his podcast kicks back in.**

KEVIN GARNETT (ON RADIO)
... I mean there are those who'd
say that I'm not the most beautiful
man who's ever taken the court.

RYAN (ON RADIO)
That's insanity, K.G. In fact, I'd
guess whatever planet you're from,
you're the best looking one there.

Lauren goes on. Ryan nods along with whatever's being said.

CUT TO:

"A WEEK IN THE LIFE" MONTAGE

UNDER MUSIC, we follow members of the group as they go about
their week, each on his or her own:

Ryan, headphones in, jogs on the street. Fast.

Don in a pet store. He stares longingly into a tank, at an
awesome, purple fish.

Anne lays flowers at her husband's grave. A quiet moment,
then she starts berating the ground.

Ryan plays a friend in a heated game of racquetball.

Fausta, at home alone, looks at a framed photo of her family.
She hangs her donut box "crown" on the photo and smiles.

Ryan cleans his house obsessively. Keeping busy. Very busy.

Jill in her kitchen. She makes a peanut butter and jelly
sandwich, cuts off the crusts, and throws it in the garbage.

Anne, calmed, kisses her hand, then touches the gravestone.
She has one more angry outburst, then leaves.

INT. RYAN'S HOUSE (BEDROOM) - NIGHT

It's the end of the night. Ryan walks to the bed, but can't bring himself to get in.

INT. RYAN'S HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - MOMENTS LATER

He settles in on the couch. He's miserable.

END MONTAGE.

INT. GROUP ROOM - DAYS LATER

Pairs sit together around the room. Lauren walks around, instructing. She passes George with Danny, others...

LAUREN

There's a wide variety of experience here. Today, I'd like to explore our commonality. Now that you're paired up, I'd like you to...

As she continues, we ANGLE ON Ryan with the closed-off Owen. They stare at each other, an uneasy silence. Ryan leans in.

RYAN

(whispers, chiding)
Please, Owen, she's talking. Let someone else get a word in.

Owen just continues to stare.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Look, I'm just here to get my thing signed. I'm not gonna talk about this stuff either. So if you want to speak, don't be afraid I'm gonna make you go deep.

Lauren approaches, finishing her instruction.

LAUREN

Great, everyone. Let's get to it.
(to Ryan)
Did you have time to look over the rules I shared with you last week?

RYAN

(technically true)
I did have time to do that, yes.

She smiles and crosses off, leaving the two guys. Beat.

OWEN
(tentative)
What do you want to talk about?

We PAN ACROSS the room. Pairs are deep in discussion.

Jill sits with Mr. K. She's being polite, but she's uncomfortable.

JILL
Um, Mr. K, no one else seems to be holding hands.

He doesn't let go. He just smiles.

Meanwhile, Anne sits with upbeat Cyrus.

CYRUS
One door closes, another opens.
Say I had made it to the NFL. I wouldn't have met you great people.

ANNE
You're a f*****g idiot, you know that?

BACK TO the guys. Ryan wipes away tears of laughter. They watch the end of a video on the phone cupped in his hand.

RYAN
Anything with a pet and a toilet I find very funny. Is it just me?

OWEN
(smiles)
It is just you, yes.

RYAN
Okay, don't get us in trouble. Keep it sad.

OWEN
(takes out phone)
Here's my favorite. You know how you can type any address into Google and see a picture? This special camera car drives around, photographing every street.

For appearances, Ryan puts a hand on Owen's arm.

RYAN
(with gravity)
I understand.

OWEN
Well, sometimes when people see the car coming, they do weird stuff, and those pictures are permanently on the Google site. Check it out.

INSERT SHOT: a well-circulated internet image of two men in SCUBA gear, chasing the car, pitchforks over their heads.

OWEN (CONT'D)
Two weirdos in Norway. They were sitting there in SCUBA suits I guess. They chased the thing down with pitchforks or whatever.

RYAN
That's genius.

OWEN
My brother sent me that. It was, like, the day before his accident.
(beat)
My big brother. Skiing. He's in a coma. But his brain's just gone.

Ryan's at a loss. Does he ask more? A beat, then:

RYAN
(fumbles with phone)
I've got some other stuff. Pretty funny...

OWEN
Yeah, yeah.

INT. GROUP ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

The group is back around the circle.

LAUREN
With the time that's left, I'd like to hear from some of you.
(looks around)
Ryan? What were your three words?

RYAN
Excuse me?

LAUREN
Your three words. The exercise.

RYAN
(no idea)
My three.

LAUREN
With Owen.

RYAN
Our three. Right. About the thing
you told us to... make them about.
Okay. Okay.
(“here goes nothing”)
Well, the first word -- it’s me and
Owen, so it’s obvious what that’s
gonna be. I’m not gonna waste your
time with that one. The second
word, that might surprise you.
It’s “pineapple.” I’d rather not
say why. The third --

CYRUS
What are you talking about?

RYAN
(immediately)
I have no idea. Thank you for
stopping me.
(to Lauren)
I didn’t hear the assignment.

Lauren lets out a frustrated sigh.

LAUREN
Ryan, do you respect what we’re
doing here?

RYAN
You know. I mean... sure.
(off her look)
It doesn’t matter what I think.

LAUREN
But it does. It’s a safe space.
Please. Tell us your thoughts.

RYAN
You’re really gonna make me?
(sighs, then)
Okay, I think this is all kinda...
dumb.

(MORE)

RYAN (CONT'D)

The talking, the wallowing, it's pointless. It's worse. It's bad. It keeps you from getting on with your life. Look, the Boston Red Sox hadn't won a championship in eighty-six years. People spent their whole lives obsessing over the last season, moaning about a curse. By 2004 they figured it out. They didn't need to wallow, they needed to hire Theo Epstein and take a bunch of steroids and win!

(to others)

You guys should go do something. Anne, you're a cool and very angry lady. Does all the talking help? Why not try boxing? When's the last time you hit someone?

ANNE

(wistful)

It's been a while.

RYAN

Jill, you talk about all the time you have now. Is the group helping you figure out how to use it?

JILL

Don let me do a bunch of his laundry for him. That was nice.

RYAN

Danny, you got screwed over. You're a great-looking guy. When's the last time you had sex with a woman?

MR. K

(to Danny, too interested)

And was she by any chance black?

RYAN

(quickly)

Don't help me. Just don't.

(then)

I'm just saying... go do something.

A beat. Lauren smiles.

LAUREN
And with that, we should all go do something. Our session is over. See you next week. Be well.

INT. GROUP ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

People disperse. A contrite Ryan approaches Lauren.

RYAN
Listen, I'm sorry if --

LAUREN
Please don't apologize. I appreciate your candor.

RYAN
Okay. Great.

He holds out his sheet to be signed. Beat.

LAUREN
I'm afraid I can't sign that.

RYAN
Excuse me?

LAUREN
Well, this document says you're to participate in ten sessions. I can't in good conscience say you participated in any real way today.

She smiles. Beat.

RYAN
(playful)
Ah, I see. Gotta show me who's boss. Little mad I challenged you.

LAUREN
No, I'm mad because --
(catches self)
I am not mad. I just wish you'd let me give you the help you need. Maybe next week.

She exits.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - MOMENTS LATER (DAY)

Lauren walks to her car. Ryan catches up to her.

RYAN

Please. Sign my sheet. I need to get back to work.

LAUREN

I see your needs differently. "You must get it out. Grief must be witnessed to be healed." Elizabeth Kubler-Ross.

RYAN

Here's a quote: "Sign my thing."

LAUREN

There is something growing inside you, Ryan. If you don't handle it, it will come out. Probably violently, and at the worst time. You will, quite simply, explode. "Suppressed grief suffocates, it rages within the breast, and is forced to multiply its strength." Ovid. Sorry, that's two quotes right on top of each other, but they're really good quotes!

RYAN

Look, I'm sure you know your stuff. You're, what, a licensed therapist? Even so --

LAUREN

I'm not, actually.

RYAN

(thrown)

Oh. Okay, fine. But you're qualified for the work. You've suffered through some big life change yourself...

LAUREN

My personal experience is really not the issue.

RYAN

(beat)

Huh. So, no?

Lauren reaches her car.

LAUREN
I have places to be. I'll see you
next week.

INT. LAUREN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Lauren gets in. So does Ryan.

LAUREN
Excuse me.

RYAN
What exactly qualifies you to tell
anyone anything?

LAUREN
(getting defensive)
I have expertise. I've been
involved in outreach and self-
realization for almost a decade.

RYAN
Wow. That sentence sounds almost
as meaningless as, "Transitions: a
Group for Mindful Life Change and
Renewal of the Journey Cycle to --"

LAUREN
Stop adding things!
(then)
I have led groups, helped thousands
of people. In a well-renowned
international outreach program!

RYAN
(smells a rat)
Called...?
(off her non-response)
Lauren?

She doesn't meet his glance. She mumbles.

RYAN (CONT'D)
What?

LAUREN
(small)
Weight. Watchers.

He stares at her for a beat. Then he notices something at
his feet in the car. He picks it up. It's a scale.

RYAN

Seriously?

(then)

So this is the person who's going to tell me how to get through my loss. You have no training and the only thing you, yourself, have ever lost is thirty pounds!

LAUREN

(snaps)

Forty pounds! And I kept it off!

(then)

And I helped other people do it too. They flew me places to give talks; I was consulted when the points system changed. "No points for fruit"? That was me! But I wanted to spread my wings, to help all kinds of people. Now I do. I read people, I know what they need.

(losing it)

I'm great with people! I have a gift!

RYAN

Yeah, you've done wonders with the kid with the brother in a coma.

(off her confused look)

The kid. With the brother in the ski accident.

Lauren is taken aback.

LAUREN

Owen? He talked to you about that? He's been coming for two months, he hasn't said a thing.

RYAN

Huh. Has he lost any weight?

LAUREN

He reached out to you, Ryan. Be a part of this group. Participate. You can heal yourself, and you can help a boy who really needs it. Would you consider that, Ryan? Would you please consider that?

A beat. He takes it all in.

RYAN

(re: glove compartment)
If I open this right now, will I
find a candy bar?

LAUREN

How can you be so sure it won't
help? You haven't tried, you
haven't said anything. I don't
know your wife's name, how you lost
her, how you met --

Ryan's at the end of his rope.

RYAN

Look, you need me to talk? Fine!
(heated)
I met her when I was nine, she was
six. My best friend, Paul, great
kid, had like, ten Stormtroopers,
she was his kid sister. A real
pest. I changed schools, I didn't
see her for ten years. Junior year
of college, I get a call. "Hey,
it's Paul's sister." Great. I've
gotta meet this pain in the ass for
coffee. I do.
(looks off, reliving it)
Oh, my God.
(beat)
She's the only girl I ever loved.
And she's gone.

LAUREN

(beat)
I'm so sorry.

RYAN

Look, I'm sure what you do is right
for some people, but what I need is
to get back to my life. Sign my
thing. Say I did the ten sessions.
(beat)
I believe you want to help.
Please. Help.

Beat. She holds out her hand. Ryan hands her the paper.
She signs and hands it back.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Thank you.

He gets out of the car. A smile spreads across his face.

RYAN (CONT'D)
I have to apologize. My little
story? You can't read people as
well as you think.

LAUREN
Excuse me?
(realizing)
You didn't... make that up?

RYAN
I did.
(points)
"Paul's" is the name of the auto
body place across the street. A
little Keyser Söze for you.

Lauren can't believe it. She starts her engine.

RYAN (CONT'D)
I did you a favor. You don't want
a guy who'd do that in your group.

LAUREN
Wow. That's -- Take care, Ryan.

She pulls away. As she goes...

RYAN
Be happy, you were right! Talking
helped!

And we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. K-WIN OFFICES (BULLPEN) - DAYS LATER (DAY)

Ryan cruises through the place, wearing a huge grin. Carrie follows. CO-WORKERS offer high-fives and cherry hellos.

RYAN

Whatever you told them, it worked.

CARRIE

I just said you didn't want to talk about it. Everyone got it.
(notices)
Except her. Turn.

Ryan looks up, then ducks down a hallway, dodging Iris from H.R. Iris chokes down a sob as he passes.

INT. K-WIN OFFICES (STEVEN'S OFFICE) - MOMENTS LATER

Steven is on his phone when Ryan bursts in. He slaps the signed sheet on the desk. And something else.

STEVEN

Ryan.

RYAN

Greatest thing I ever did, changed my life, I'm a new man. Love you.

Ryan leaves. Steven picks up the sheet Ryan left. And the "Steven shell".

INT. K-WIN OFFICES (HALLWAY) - MOMENTS LATER

A sign reads, "STUDIO C". A red "ON AIR" SIGN is lit.

INT. K-WIN STUDIO - SAME TIME

We're mid-broadcast. Ryan's behind the mic, back where he belongs. With him is Baltimore Ravens linebacker, RAY LEWIS.

RYAN

When we return, more with Ray Lewis. Can you stick around, Ray?

RAY LEWIS

So long as you don't ask me to tell you which of my teammates are ugly.

RYAN

Great. When we return, Ray Lewis will discuss which of his teammates he finds most attractive.

Heavy metal bumper music plays in the studio, then the commercials. An ENGINEER behind glass gives a thumbs-up.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Perfect, right? Just one problem: why's the chair so high? Who filled in for me? The kid from "Modern Family"?

(then)

Great segment, Ray.

Ryan closes his eyes and takes a deep breath, savoring the moment. He rubs the board lovingly. He's back.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - A LITTLE LATER

A valet stand below the building. Parking ATTENDANTS BUZZ about, there's SECURITY as well. Ryan and Carrie enter from an elevator, their day done. Carrie lugs a box.

RYAN

What's in the box?

CARRIE

Flowers, baskets... stuff people sent you that you wouldn't want to see. I'm taking it.

RYAN

We pay you so little you have to eat my condolence fruit?

CARRIE

I may have to eat the flowers.

RYAN

Well, great first day back. You were unbelievable.

CARRIE

Thank you.

RYAN

No, I mean say that to me.

Ryan turns and notices something. His face falls.

RYAN (CONT'D)
(calls off, furious)
Hey! Hey!

I/E. CADILLAC ESCALADE - SAME TIME

Ray Lewis drives, joking with his ENTOURAGE, one hand on the wheel. With the other, he rifles off a text. Music blares.

Something hits the windshield with a wet THUD. Driver and passengers jump, startled. Another thud. It's wet flowers.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Ray jumps out looks around. Ryan, fruit basket in hand, has taken Carrie's box and is hurling its contents at the car.

RYAN
Idiot!
(throws basket)
You! Ray! Hang up.

RAY LEWIS
Is this a joke?
(realizing, to bodyguard)
Did I just do his show?

RYAN
Stop typing! You're gonna kill
someone.
(thinks)
Of course it wouldn't be the first
time you did that, would it?

This hangs in the air for a beat. Then Ray lunges for Ryan.

People pounce; Ray's guards, security, valet guys, twenty men are on Ray in an instant. Carrie alone goes to subdue Ryan.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Really? One person?

RAY LEWIS
I'm all right, I'm all right.

As Ray backs off, his GIRLFRIEND flies out of the car and comes at Ryan. She wails on him. With her fists, her bag...

RYAN
What the hell! Get off!

Ryan tries unsuccessfully to fend off the blows. Three people converge to hold her back.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Okay, I only got one holder.
That's very insulting!

The men pull the woman back to the car.

Carrie has pulled Ryan to the side. He sits on the curb.
She's now genuinely concerned.

CARRIE
(gently)
Are you okay? God, you just...
exploded.

RYAN
Yeah. I guess I did.

The Escalade pulls away. A window rolls down.

RAY'S GIRLFRIEND
Your show sucks!

She throws what's left of the wet flowers at Ryan.

Ryan wipes the flowers off himself and slumps on the curb.
It's a new low. He needs help.

INT. GROUP ROOM - DAYS LATER (DAY)

The group is mid-discussion. Ryan comes in, hat in hand.

RYAN
I'm sorry I'm late. I know. Rule
nine. I'll get better.

Everyone is surprised, no one more so than Lauren. Ryan
pulls up a chair and joins the circle. Then he remembers
something. He takes out his phone and shuts it off.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Rule six.

LAUREN
I'm surprised to see you.

RYAN
It was a car accident. She was
texting. Janie. That's her name.
It was all her fault. She was
driving, not even fast, sending
some dumb note to her dumb sister.
She blew through a stop sign. A
guy was coming this way and...

(MORE)

RYAN (CONT'D)

That was it.

(sad smile)

She was the only girl I ever loved.

That was true.

(beat)

I don't know how to do this.

LAUREN

You're doing fine.

Ryan notices something out the window. He pulls up short.

RYAN

Listen, I know rule seven, we're not allowed to interrupt, but is it okay if I interrupt myself?

Lauren looks confused. Ryan hops up. He grabs Owen by the arm and drags him out. As Ryan passes:

YOLANDA

That's rule ten, actually.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

We start TIGHT ON car wheels, then TILT UP to reveal the odd vehicle to which they're attached: it's colorfully painted and covered in CAMERAS. It's THE GOOGLE MAPS CAR.

WIDEN TO REVEAL two men giving chase on foot. It's Ryan and Owen, running close behind the car, waving their arms, outfitted in the CRAZY MEDIEVAL GARB we'd seen in the room Ryan first entered. They look ridiculous: draped in weird skins, waving ODD WEAPONS. They laugh, enjoying their bid for weird internet immortality.

They're not alone. Following close behind is the REST OF THE GROUP, similarly adorned, all looking very "Game of Thrones"-y. Except for Mr. K. He's just shirtless. They all run and wave as well. It's cathartic. Joyous even.

Finally, we WIDEN FURTHER to reveal a last group pursuing our bunch. The sorry souls who made up that DORKY Medieval role-play group in the first place, dressed in their street clothes. Their run is less of a bonding catharsis. They'd just like their stuff back, please.

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW