

HAPPYISH, EPISODE 1

"Starring Samuel Beckett, Albert Camus
and Alois Alzheimer"

Written by
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Blue Pages - 12/02/14
Production Draft - 11/21/14

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HAPPYISH

Pilot
Blue Pages
12/02/14

CHARACTER LIST

THOM
LEE
JONATHAN

LORNA
DEBBIE
JULIUS
GOTTFRID
GUSTAF
BARRY
BELLA
DANI
CLARENCE
BUSINESSMAN 1
BUSINESSMAN 2
16-YEAR-OLD BOY
MODERATOR
YA 1
YA 2
YA 3
BODYBUILDER
MOTHER ONE
ERNIE (ANIMATED)
MA KEEBLER (ANIMATED)

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SET LIST

INTERIORS

PAYNE HOME

- DINING ROOM
- KITCHEN
- JULIUS'S BEDROOM
- PAYNE BEDROOM
- LEE'S STUDIO/CORNER

MGT

- LOBBY
- MONTAGE: TOUR OF MGT
- CONFERENCE ROOM
- THOM'S OFFICE
- JONATHAN'S OFFICE
- AGENCY MEETING SPACE
- HALLWAY
- STAIRWELL

HEALTH FOOD STORE

FOCUS GROUP FACILITY

FUNNY FARM

INSERTS

STILL PHOTO OF THOMAS
JEFFERSON (ALT: MARK
ZUCKERBERG)

THOM AGAINST BLACK

MONTAGE: ADVERTISING FILM

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

EXTERIORS

WOODSTOCK, NEW YORK

PAYNE HOME

- PAYNE FRONT PORCH

METRO-NORTH TRAIN PLATFORM

RESTAURANT

CITY STREET

WOODS

HAPPYISH

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DAY/NIGHT BREAKDOWN

<u>DAY/NIGHT #</u>	<u>SCENE #</u>
Day 1	1-7
Night 1	A7-9
Day 2	11-24
Night 2	25-33
Day 3	34

FADE IN:

1 INSERT:

1

Open on a still photo of THOMAS JEFFERSON. (**ALT: Open on a still photo of a cheerful MARK ZUCKERBERG.**)

THOM (V.O.)

This is Thomas Jefferson. Founding father of this, my adopted home of America, which I love with all my heart. Fuck, I probably hate England more than Jefferson did and he went to war with them. But then he had to go and write that line: "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." Life, okay, I know what that is. Liberty's murky, but I understand the basic concept. But Happiness? What the fuck is happiness? Now? Today? A BMW? A thousand Facebook friends? A million Twitter followers? Thom didn't know. Trust me, he had no clue. I wish he'd been more honest. I wish he'd just said, "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness, Whatever the Fuck That Is." Just don't keep us guessing, Thom. Guessing and pursuing and failing. Fuck you, Thomas Jefferson.

THOM (V.O.) (ALT)

This is Mark Zuckerberg, Chief Executive Officer of Facebook. He's worth eighteen billion dollars. For starting Facebook. For making "friend" a verb. The guy made his first billion when he was twenty-three. And look at him. Smiling. What a fucking dick. If you have a billion dollars by the age of twenty-three, at least have the courtesy to not fucking smile, Asshole. Because I have shit in my colon that is older than you. I have puked up wine that was older than you. I've wiped sperm off my belly that were older than you. Fuck you, Mark Zuckerberg.

CUT TO:

2 THOM AGAINST BLACK

2

THOM PAYNE, 44, looking, well, 44.

He gives the camera the finger.

HAPPYISH TITLES.

BLACK.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: 2

ALL (O.C.)
(singing)
Happy birthday to you...

CUT TO:

3 EXT. WOODSTOCK, NEW YORK - DAY 3

ALL (O.C.)
(singing)
... Happy birthday to you...

MONTAGE OF WOODSTOCK

- SIGN WITH PEACE SYMBOL: "Welcome to Woodstock NY"
- DRUM CIRCLE IN TOWN SQUARE
- TIE-DYE T-SHIRT SHOPS
- LOCAL BURNOUTS TALKING TO THEMSELVES

CUT TO:

4 EXT. PAYNE HOME - AFTERNOON 4

ALL (O.C.)
(singing)
Happy Birthday dear Thom,

BLACK.

ALL (O.C.) (CONT'D)
(singing)
Happy Birthday to you!

All CHEER OVER

SUPER: "SUNDAY"

5 INT. PAYNE DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 5

The birthday cake sits in front of Thom, the "44" candle lit. Thom at home is not the Thom we saw earlier; he is cheerful, a loving Dad, smiling as he blows the candle out.

Thom ties a red helium birthday balloon to the wrist of his son JULIUS (6). His wife LEE (41) - Thom's "Punk Rock Girl" and only love in life (as he was to her) - cuts the cake.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

Their friends BARRY (45) and BELLA (40) join them, along with their own son CLARENCE (8-10).

THOM

Well, team, the game is half-over.
The race is half-run.

LEE

Here we go...

BARRY

Speech, speech!

Thom raises a glass of wine.

THOM

"They give birth astride of a
grave, the light gleams an instant,
then it's night once more."

Beat.

BARRY

No speech! Fuck the speech!

Bella slaps him, indicates the children.

Laughter.

LEE

The race is half-run? Please.
You'll be lucky if you make it to
the end of the week.

JULIUS

She's right, Dad.

THOM

How is she right?

JULIUS

Forty-four? That's like a million.

THOM

Mom's almost as old as me.

JULIUS

But Mom's pretty.

THOM

Nice!

He LUNGES for Julius, who giggles and scrambles away.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

Clarence GRABS for a piece of the cake, Lee yanks the plate away.

LEE

Hey! Manners, mister.

THOM

Yeah, Clarence. Have some manners,
like the adults.

Thom grabs his cake with his hands and stuffs it into his mouth.

Laughter.

THOM (CONT'D)

(mouth full)

Lousy kid...

JUMP CUT TO

6 INT. DINING ROOM - DAY - LATER

6

The table is being cleared, as Clarence and Julius play with Legos. Thom, carrying some dirty dishes, watches them.

CLARENCE

I have that one. I have like five
of that one.

JULIUS

Mine are pretty good, though.

CLARENCE

Mine came in a set so I also have
the Dragon Copter and Sensei Wu
Limited Edition.

Clarence smashes Julius's Lego structure.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Pile of junk.

We follow Thom to

THE KITCHEN

Where the adults are cleaning up - washing, drying, putting
dishes away, sipping the last of their drinks.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

THOM
(to Barry)
You know what I've noticed about
your kid?

Barry glances out to the Dining Room.

BARRY
That he's an asshole?

THOM
He is. Clarence is a little
fucking asshole.

BARRY
I know. I don't know how that
happened.

THOM
It's not just to Julius?

BARRY
No, no. He's an asshole to
everyone. Kids hate him. I just
hope he grows out of it.

THOM
I don't think that's the kind of
assholeness you outgrow.

BARRY
I'm hoping for average, you know,
prick. Just your run-of-the-mill
dick.

LEE
I don't know, Thom. Couple of
years from now Jules might be an
asshole, too.

THOM
I don't think so. Pussy, sure, not
an asshole.

LEE
I'd rather have an asshole than a
pussy. It's a tough world out
there, asshole's not a bad way to
go.

Bella and Lee exit.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

BARRY

You ask me, Julius is too happy.

THOM

Too happy?

BARRY

You raise a kid happy, you're
setting him up. It's child abuse.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

BACK IN THE DINING ROOM

Lee and Bella are clearing. Bella takes notice of Lee's new art piece.

BELLA

Is that the new piece you've been working on?

INSERT LEE'S SCULPTURE.

Lee has issues.

LEE

I'm still fiddling with it.

BELLA

(pretending to be a critic)

Yes, but what does it mean?

LEE

What does it *mean*? What does it *mean*? What does that mean?

We follow them back into

THE KITCHEN.

BELLA

Relax, Lee, I was kidding. I don't give a fuck what it means...

BARRY

Trust me, Thom - your only shot at happiness in this world is to have a miserable childhood. The shittier the better.

THOM

Maybe that's the book I should write. "The Joy of Misery." By Thom Payne.

BELLA

What's a book?

THOM

Tell me about it...

CUT TO:

7 EXT. PAYNE FRONT PORCH - DAY - LATER

7

The four adults have snuck outside, despite the cold, for a hit off a small WATER PIPE and to share a cigarette.

THOM
(glancing into window)
They're fine, I can see them.
They're watching "FROZEN."

BARRY
See? Pussy.

BELLA
Speaking of pussies, Monica's
getting hers done.

LEE
Her what?

BELLA
Her pussy.

LEE
Done?

BELLA
Tightened.

LEE
What the fuck are you talking
about?

BELLA
She's thirty-seven, done with kids.
She wants a tighter cooch.

THOM
Bullshit. That's totally for Gary.

BARRY
Totally.

BELLA
I don't know. My sister had three
kids, she says she can park her car
up in there now.

LEE
Smart car?

BELLA
Girl drives a Hummer.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

Laughter, though not from Lee.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

LEE

So let me get this straight - her pussy's good enough for him to fuck, good enough for him to eat, good enough to bear his child, but now he wants it tighter? Maybe he should just go fuck himself.

*
*

THOM

Did he say how tight he wants it?

BARRY

(indicating with hands)
Well, she's at "Beer Can" now, so he probably wants, what? Shot glass?

Laughter.

THOM

So does he get to go into surgery and like, test her vagina out?

BARRY

"It's close, Doc, but can you give it another turn or two?"

THOM

"I've already got her down to a twenty-two year old, Mister Lesko; I can only legally take her down to eighteen."

BELLA

"Hey, Doc, while you're down there, can you loosen up her shithole?"

They all laugh.

THOM

(glancing inside)
Fuck, here they come...

*

They all ditch their vices.

BLACK.

A7 EXT. PAYNE HOME - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

A7 *

A family of RACOONS root through the Paynes' trash.

*

8 INT. JULIUS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - BEDTIME

8

Thom reads a Curious George book to Julius. The red balloon is tied to Julius's bedpost.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

THOM

This is George. He was a good little monkey and very, very curious. And he was also a real pain in the butt.

JULIUS

Dad...

THOM

Someone needed to slap George, teach George a lesson.
(laughing, tickling Julius)
You can't just steal a spaceship and fly it to the moon, Monkey Boy!

JULIUS

(laughing)
Dad! Read it normal!

THOM

YOU CAN'T STEAL A FIRE TRUCK AND DRIVE IT THROUGH MIDTOWN JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE CUTE, YOU HAIRY LUNATIC!

They both crack up.

JULIUS

Read it normal!

Beat as Thom looks at Julius.

THOM

(loving now)
I love you, Buddy.

JULIUS

You're old.

THOM

I'm old? I'm not old. I'm old-ish.

JULIUS

Are you going to die?

THOM

Am I going to die?

JULIUS

You said you're oldish.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

THOM
(a good parent)
I'm not old, Jules. But you know
the truth is, I am going to die,
but not for a very, very long time.
I gotta lose my teeth first, then I
gotta start pooping in my
diapers...

Julius laughs.

THOM (CONT'D)
Burgers at Five Guys tomorrow
night? Then Funny Farm...

JULIUS
Promise?

THOM
Promise.

Thom holds up his hand; Julius high-fives him.

BLACK.

HARDCORE PORN SCENE.

THOM (O.C.)
I heard they use eggnog. To
simulate cum.

LEE (O.C.)
That's why I could never be a porn
star.

9 INT. PAYNE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

9

Candles are lit, the blinds are drawn. Thom and Lee sit up
in bed, watching porn on her laptop.

LEE
I hate nutmeg.

Laughter.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

THOM

Well, that and a shred of self-respect.

*
*
*

LEE

Just a shred.

(she reaches into his boxers)

Is this a birthday present or what? Look at those bitches, with their shaved pussies...

*
*

THOM

I read this thing today about Alzheimer's disease.

LEE

Are we gonna fuck?

THOM

They say that trouble sleeping might be an indicator of early onset Alzheimer's.

LEE

(removing her hand)

Are we, uh, gonna fuck?

THOM

So now I can't sleep because I'm worried my not sleeping means I have Alzheimer's. Why are they telling us this? How does this knowledge help me? Because is it the not sleeping that gives you Alzheimer's or the Alzheimer's that makes you not sleep? What am I supposed to do with this information?

*
*
*
*
*
*

Beat.

LEE

Do you think my pussy needs tightening?

Thom looks at her. She shrugs. He reaches forward, pauses the laptop.

THOM

What?

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

LEE

Maybe it would be better for you if
it was tighter.

THOM

Well, who needs you at all? I'll
just buy myself a bottle of wine
and a blood pressure cuff.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

THOM (CONT'D)

(he kisses her)

Hon, I'm sorry. It's not you, it's the fucking Prozac. It's a hard-on killer.

LEE

How about trying Viagra? They're a client, right? Keebler gives you all those fucking cookies...

THOM

I'm afraid it will interfere with the Prozac. That's life: happy and soft or miserable and hard.

JULIUS (O.C.)

Mom!

LEE

We're not fucking.

THOM

We're not fucking.

They kiss.

She climbs out of bed, puts on her robe...

THOM (CONT'D)

You know I used to like shaved pussies.

LEE

Here we go.

THOM

Now, lately, whenever I see them, all I can think of is that naked girl, running down the streets, covered in napalm. I can barely watch porn anymore.

LEE

Well that is the real tragedy of chemical warfare.

JULIUS (O.C.)

Mom!

LEE

OK! Stop reading Julius Curious George before bed. He's afraid of the Man in the Yellow Hat.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

THOM
He's fearful. He's a fearful
child.

LEE
You're fearful; he's six.

THOM
I'm fearful he's fearful.

She walks out. Thom gives his crotch the finger.

THOM (CONT'D)
(to his crotch)
Asshole.

BLACK.

SUPER: "NOT SUNDAY."

CUT TO:

10 EXT. METRO-NORTH TRAIN PLATFORM - MORNING

10

Thom waits for the train, reading CAMUS: RESISTANCE,
REBELLION AND DEATH. Behind him we see an ADVERTISING POSTER
featuring a BUFF MALE, a small green apple perched on his
flexed biceps.

Nearby, two YOUNG BUSINESS TYPES (25-28) stand at the edge of
the platform, reading their iPads.

BUSINESSMAN 1
Check it out. Steve Jobs book.

BUSINESSMAN 2
Read it.

BUSINESSMAN 1
You read the hardcover.

BUSINESSMAN 2
I read the hardcover and the
paperback.

BUSINESSMAN 1
This is the Kindle version of the
paperback of the hardcover.

BUSINESSMAN 2
No way.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

BUSINESSMAN 1

Way. Wanted to read the new format before the movie came out. Ninety pages of new material. So it's the night before the launch of the iPod, and Jobs goes to the factory to check things out. Only he doesn't like the sound.

BUSINESSMAN 2

What sound?

BUSINESSMAN 1

The headphone jack sound.

BUSINESSMAN 2

The click?

BUSINESSMAN 1

The sound. He wants a better sound. So he gets a hundred engineers to work all night to replace them.

BUSINESSMAN 2

A hundred.

BUSINESSMAN 1

All night.

BUSINESSMAN 2

Guy was a genius.

BUSINESSMAN 1

Guy was a fucking genius.

Train WAILS in the distance.

THOM (V.O.)

Which brings me back to Thomas Jefferson. Thomas Jefferson isn't the problem. Jefferson was trying to help. It's me.

THOM (V.O.) (ALT)

Which brings me back to Mark Zuckerberg. I kinda feel bad about the whole shit in my colon thing from earlier. Because Mark Zuckerberg isn't the problem.

The train, all steel and violence, charges in.

THOM (V.O.)

I'm the fucking problem.

BLACK.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: 10

THOM (V.O.)
My name is Thomas Payne. And I?

11 MONTAGE: ADVERTISING FILM 11

-- BEER FILLING A GLASS
-- GIRLS IN A CONVERTIBLE
-- DANCING HAMBURGER
-- KID EATING PIZZA
-- CHICK WORKING OUT
-- BUSINESS MAN GIVING CAMERA THUMBS UP
-- WOMAN FELLATING A SODA BOTTLE

THOM (V.O.)
I work for Satan.

12 INT. LOBBY OF MGT - DAY - LATER 12

We follow Thom as he enters the lobby of MGT ADVERTISING, a two-story glass and steel and video installation temple to the God of Marketing. Thom smiles, waves to co-workers, etc.

THOM (V.O.)
I have worked for the Dark Lord for twenty years now, and so I say this with a fair degree of authority:

13 MONTAGE: TOUR OF MGT - DAY 13

-- A dull meeting. Powerpoint charts, misery.

THOM (V.O.)
Fuck "Mad Men." There's nothing cool about advertising. There's nothing interesting. I should know, I'm fucking good at it.

-- Man eats lonely take-out lunch at his desk.

THOM (V.O.)
I won my first Clio fifteen years ago. Back then it felt like winning an Oscar.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: 13

-- LORNA (23-26) sits at her desk texting. *

-- Pan across the SEAT OF MISERY: a row of miserable people sit in the lobby talking and texting on their phones. *

-- Pan across row of ADVERTISING AWARDS. *

THOM (V.O.) *
Now winning ad awards feels like
winning Best Rimjob. Best Bukkake.

Land on a FISTING DILDO made out to look like an advertising award.

THOM (V.O.)
Best Fisting: Receiving.

INSERT INSCRIPTION: To Thom Love Lee

14 POWERPOINT PRESENTATION: 14

SLIDE 1: "Spending Patterns of 18-24's"

THOM (V.O.)
We do the same thing everyone else
in the world does these days:

SLIDE 2: Still from Holocaust of small boy with arms raised; arrows appear and indicate the small boy is "WESTERN CIVILIZATION" and the Nazi soldier is "Males 18-24."

THOM (V.O.)
we kiss the zit-covered asses of
arrogant, know-nothing teenagers.

CUT TO:

A14 INT. MGT CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS A14

A 16-YEAR-OLD BOY in a hoodie and dropped jeans leads a large meeting of MGTers (40+) in suits; the gathered adults listen intently. *

THOM (V.O.)
It's Lord of the Flies out there,
folks. And everyone over eighteen
is Piggy.

The adults force themselves to laugh at the boy's wit.

BLACK.

(CONTINUED)

A14 CONTINUED:

A14

DEBBIE (O.C.)
I'm fucked, Thom. We all are.

*

CUT TO:

15 INT. THOM'S OFFICE - DAY - LATER

15

DEBBIE (50) sits on Thom's couch, worried, panicked and a little bit angry. On the wall behind her is a large poster of our joyful Keebler Elves. (*NOTE: We will create our own characters and animation, altering color, costume and appearance from the original elves.*)

There are various ad campaigns and works in progress all over Thom's office: KEEBLER, VIAGRA, US ARMY. *

THOM

When did he make this announcement?

DEBBIE

This morning. Do you know them?

THOM

I know of them. They're "the Swedes," that's what everyone calls them.

DEBBIE

Gustaf and Gottfrid.

THOM

And Jonathan announces these new creative directors, calls you into his office and fires you?

DEBBIE

No. But they will, I know it. *

THOM

You're the best account director in this place, Deb. *

DEBBIE

I could be their mother. *

THOM

That doesn't mean they want to fire you, it means they want to fuck you. They're not going to fire you, I won't let them. *

DEBBIE

You have no power.

THOM

I have some power.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

DEBBIE

Not anymore.

THOM

Then why are you bitching to me?

DEBBIE

Because you have a heart. That's
why you have no power.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

Lorna pops her head into the door. *

LORNA

Jonathan wants to see you at
twelve. *

THOM

Am I being fired? *

LORNA

Mikal phoned, wants to know if he's
being fired. Tracey phoned, wants
to know if she's being fired.
Larry phoned, wants to know if
you're being fired. Gonna be a fun
day. *

THOM

Tell Jonathan I want to see
him now, I don't give a shit
what Swedish dick he's
sucking. *

LORNA (CONT'D)

I'll tell Jonathan you want
to see him now regardless of
prior schedule commitments. *

Beat. *

DEBBIE

What is that, like a Radar thing? *

THOM

She's been with me way too long. *

LORNA

Radar? *

DEBBIE

O'Reilly. From MASH. *

LORNA

What's MASH? *

DEBBIE

How old aren't you? *

LORNA

Can you do a five-thirty face-to-
face with Gustaf and Gottfrid? *

THOM

Five-thirty? Who schedules a
meeting at five-thirty? *

LORNA

Gustaf and Gottfrid. *

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

DEBBIE

Maybe they're still on Swedish
time.

THOM

I promised Jules I'd take him to
Five Guys tonight.

LORNA

(thinks he's crazy)
Okay.

She exits.

THOM

Fuck.

He follows her to door.

THOM (CONT'D)

(after her)
Okay, I'll... I'll be there.

BLACK.

SFX: Gunshots.

16 INT. JONATHAN'S OFFICE - DAY - LATER

16

JONATHAN (52) is watching CNN -- a bombing in the Middle East.

JONATHAN

You gotta hand it to Bin Laden. What did he spend on Nine-Eleven, a couple hundred grand? I couldn't make a web film for that much, and Al-Qaeda's been on the cover of every magazine ever since. Nine-Ten, nobody had ever heard of this brand; Nine-Twelve, there wasn't a person alive who hadn't. ISIS comes along, expands the whole market to Westerners. Women are joining that group, did you know that? These homicidal motherfuckers are fantastic marketers.

THOM

Al Qaeda's not a brand, Jon. They're a terrorist organization.

JONATHAN

(rising)

Everything's a brand, Thom. You're a brand, I'm a brand, God's a brand. And a brand in trouble.

THOM

Are you getting fired?

JONATHAN

Things have changed, Thom. Thinking isn't as important as Tweeting. Gustaf and Gottfrid have thousands of followers, and you're on AOL.

THOM

Am I getting fired? For not having a fucking Facebook account?

JONATHAN

Thom, listen to me. You test poorly. You taste great, but it's a less filling world. Your clothes suck. You're out of shape. And you're forty-four.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

THOM

Fuck you, you fifty-two year old
skinny-jeans-wearing asshole...

JONATHAN

Executive level, Thom. The City of
Refuge for the bespectacled,
beleaguered lumpenproles of the
fifty-plus crowd. The Board has
given the Swedes control of the
Creative Department. They want to
turn things around. The industry
is in the shitter, you know that,
Thom, they all are. We've hit peak-
America. In a matter of months I
expect to be replaced by a fucking
app. Brother - if you want to
survive, you gotta play the game.
So, Marketer: re-brand thyself.

Thom rises, crosses to the door.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

How's Julius?

THOM

A little long in the tooth,
frankly. We're thinking of
bringing in a younger Swedish son,
someone with some digital cred.

He SLAMS the door behind him.

CUT TO:

17 EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY - LATER

17

Thom is having lunch with DANI KIRSCHENBLOOM (46+), an
industry headhunter. Behind them, we can see a PHONE BOOTH
ADVERTISEMENT, the same as before: Buff Male, flexed bicep,
green apple.

As Thom and Dani speak, Dani casually removes all the fries
and fixings from her burgers - bun, avocado, cheese, etc. -
and places them on her side plate. Thom watches her.

THOM

Is there anywhere I could go?

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

DANI

Where do you want to go, some fucking digital company, coming up with shitty Facebook ideas? They won't touch you. The average employee age at Facebook is twenty-six. Thirty-one at Google, thirty-three at Apple. Stay at MGT, kiss some Nordic ass, write your novel. And I'm a headhunter - I lose money telling you that. You still need a copywriter, right? Have you checked out Gwen's portfolio? She's a genius. Did some great Geico gecko work. Aflac goose, too.

THOM

It's a duck.

DANI

Even funnier!

THOM

I just think I'd be... happier somewhere else.

DANI

That's a myth, Thom. You're as happy right now as you can ever be. We each have our own joy ceiling. It doesn't matter how much money you have, how perfect your family, how many Pulitzers you win: you hit your joy ceiling and you're done. That's why Jesus wept. Low joy ceiling. It's not the pursuit of happiness that's the problem; it's our inability to accept when we've maxed-out. You think you're not happy; trust me, Thom -- you couldn't possibly be happier.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

BLACK.

SFX: CITY STREET

CUT TO:

18 EXT. CITY STREET - DAY - LATER

18

A full-screen image of a NAKED, RIPPED MALE.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

Thom enters. We realize it is an advertising poster.

Thom gazes up at it.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: 18

Behind him a BUS passes, carrying the same image across its side.

Thom turns, heads into the HEALTH FOOD STORE the ad is promoting.

19 INT. HEALTH FOOD STORE - CONTINUOUS 19

INSERT BOTTLES:

- ULTRA-MAN VITAMINS

- VIGOR-MORE

- MEGA-EXTREME ENERGY PLUS

Thom stands at the back, gives the BODYBUILDER customer beside him a disparaging glance, and then takes a BOTTLE from the shelf.

THOM

(reading the package)

"Get amped and ripped as you max
your reps like never before..."
Jesus fuck.

MODERATOR (O.C.)

So, by a show of hands, how many of
you find Thom likable?

Thom looks up to find himself now looking through the viewing window of a typical

20 FOCUS GROUP FACILITY 20

inside which sits a focus group of 6 SULLEN YAS (18-21) around a long table; the MODERATOR at the head of the table stands beside a VIDEO MONITOR, upon which we see a STILL OF THOM READING THE PROTEIN PACKAGE.

None of the YA's raise their hands.

MODERATOR

Does *anyone* here find Thom likable?

No hands.

MODERATOR (CONT'D)

No one? Okay. Interesting. How many of you would like to be like Thom one day?

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

No hands.

MODERATOR (CONT'D)

Interesting. Let me ask you this:
how many of you think Thom should
just kill himself?

All hands go up. Thom speaks to the group despite the window
between them.

THOM

(indicating the
bodybuilder behind him)

Why? Because I don't look like
this shithead?

Bodybuilder turns around, notices the focus group.

*

THOM (CONT'D)

I'm not supposed to look like him.
I have a wife, a child, a job. Do
you know how much time that
ridiculous asshole spends to look
like that? Hours. Every day. Do
you realize how much self-loathing
having washboard abs requires? How
much you have to hate yourself to
work that fucking hard? Abs don't
tell the world you're healthy.
They tell the world you're one
Twinkie away from killing yourself.

*

*

*

*

*

BODYBUILDER

(to YA'S)

It's true. I hate myself. I
pursue an impossible degree of
physical perfection in the hope it
will make me worthy of love.

*

*

*

*

THOM

(to YA'S)

See?

YA 1

Again with the projection.

YA 2

Bitch projects like a motherfucker,
yo.

20 CONTINUED:

20

YA 3

Chill out, Thom. Camus said that
Sisyphus was happy in his absurd
existence, aight?

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

THOM

Camus also said that the ridiculousness of life required revolt. Not suicide.

MODERATOR

Show of hands again, how many of you think Thom is capable of revolt?

No hands.

MODERATOR (CONT'D)

Interesting.

THOM

Oh, go fuck yourselves.

He walks off.

21 INT. LEE'S STUDIO/CORNER - DAY - LATER

21

Violent artwork sits around the living room.

THOM VOICEMAIL RECORDING

Hey this is Thom, leave a message at the beep.

Lee works at an easel in the corner.

SFX: Voicemail BEEP.

LEE

Hey Hon, it's me, it's about four. Listen, there is nothing to worry about. Jules will be fine, fathers miss dinner all the time.

CUT TO:

22 INT. THOM'S OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

22

Thom stands behind his desk. There is a HEALTH FOOD STORE BAG on the counter, a can of BETTER-MAN ENERGY SHAKE in his hand.

*

LEE MESSAGE

So just go in there and tell those Swedes how much you love Ikea...

Thom opens the can.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

LEE MESSAGE (CONT'D)
and Douchen-Baagen duvet covers...

Thom chugs the can.

LEE MESSAGE (CONT'D)
and freestanding Bergen-Belsen
lamps, and I'll meet you at the
Funny Farm. Okay? I love you.

Thom finishes the can.

Belches.

BLACK.

SFX: LOUD APPLAUSE.

CUT TO:

23 INT. MGT AGENCY MEETING SPACE - DAY - LATER

23

An agency meeting; all the employees are there, cheering the Swedes, GUSTAF (23) and GOTTFRID (22) at the head of the room.

GOTTFRID
What we have to do first is look at
all the accounts and say, where can
we be doing better work? Where are
the opportunities for disruption,
for mis-ruption?

Thom looks flush, un-well. He swallows a belch.

GOTTFRID (CONT'D)
Business today moves at the speed
of ideas. You don't have to like
it, but you can't ignore it. We
had black-and-white, yes? Then we
had color. What comes after color?
You tell us.

Thom pulls the energy drink from his bottle, glances down.

INSERT LABEL:

"May cause light-headedness, heart palpitations, nausea..."

GOTTFRID (CONT'D)
What would Steve Jobs do with the
Army account? With Viagra?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

GOTTFRID (CONT'D)

Even a brand like Keebler. How are we using social?

Thom watches, warily.

GOTTFRID (CONT'D)

Maybe it's time to send the elves to Miami for, how you say, forced retirement?

Laughter.

THOM

Why?

All turn to look at him.

GOTTFRID

Why what?

THOM

Why would Keebler need a social media plan?

GOTTFRID

Because this isn't the nineties.

THOM

It's a cookie, Gustaf.

GOTTFRID

I am Gottfrid.

THOM

Unfriend me.

Some laughter.

THOM (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, but you know, I bought some Pepto Bismol yesterday - that's what I get for eating in the downstairs cafeteria...

*

Laughter.

THOM (CONT'D)

...and I swear to God, the package said "Follow us on Twitter!" I mean, who the fuck wants to follow Pepto Bismol on Twitter? Are you that lonely?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

THOM (CONT'D)

I mean, what the fuck is going on with your fucking asshole that you need to follow Pepto on Twitter? It's like, "Hey, I gotta take a shit! I wonder what's going on in the pink bismuth world?"

Nervous glances around the room. Thom's gone too far.

Lorna, alone, laughs.

THOM (CONT'D)

(covering)

Keebler had its best year last year; old or not, the elves are beloved in this country.

GOTTFRID

Well, my grandparents are beloved too, but I'm not going to hire them, am I?

Laughter.

JONATHAN

(trying to deflect)

I don't think there's money in the budget for both of them, heh heh...

Thom, feeling shitty, begins to make his way to the exit.

GOTTFRID

That is one of the things we have to change here -- this technophobia...

THOM

I agree... maybe we should fire your grandparents, heh-heh. Excuse me...

GOTTFRID

Maybe, Thom...

THOM

I'm sorry... I have to, uh... I feel a little sick, I'm gonna lay down for a while... and if anyone's Pinterested, they can follow my fucking asshole on Twitter.

Thom exits.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: 23

Jonathan glares after him.

GOTTFRID

Okay! Some strong opinions...

BLACK.

24 EXT. WOODS - DAY 24

(NOTE: Scene is a combination of live-action and animation)

(NOTE: We will create our own characters and animation, altering color, costume and appearance from the original elves, consistent with the parody intended.)

Thom walks warily through a dark forbidding woods. He moves toward a leaf which is covered in

ANIMATED RED SOMETHING.

he reaches out, rubs it between his fingers.

A GUNSHOT rings out.

Thom begins hurrying through the woods. Behind a nearby tree, he discovers a DEAD ANIMATED KEEBLER ELF laying face up in a pool of animated red blood.

THOM

Fast Eddie?

Another GUNSHOT.

THOM (CONT'D)

ERNIE! MA!

He runs from the woods into a clearing.

A BULLET zings past his head as he hits the deck.

He looks up to see, there, in the clearing: the famous KEEBLER TREEHOUSE.

Ernie sits perched on the ledge of the small window above the door.

THOM (CONT'D)

Ernie?

Ernie is reloading. Thom hurries towards the tree; a bullet WHIZZES past. He freezes.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

ERNIE (O.C.)
Hold it right there.

THOM
Ernie?

ERNIE
Forty-six years, Thom.

THOM
Ernie, what the hell are you doing?

ERNIE
Forty-six fucking years I gave that company, living in a fucking tree, Thom? And now they're going to fire me? Well, not if I kill us all first!

THOM
They're not going to fire you, Ernie, I won't let them.

ERNIE
You fucking pussy, you'll be lucky if they don't fire you.

THOM
What about JJ, Ernie? And Buckets and Elmer? Little Elmer! Doesn't Elmer deserve a father?

ERNIE
A father who takes it up the ass his whole life? Shit, they might as well move in with you.

Ernie sticks the gun in his mouth.

THOM
Ernie, wait! Ernie, stop. We can make this right, Ernie, we can make it right. Like... like... Steve Jobs!

Ernie stops and looks.

ERNIE
Steve what?

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

THOM

The jack, you know? The iPod jack. He wanted to make a bad situation right, Ernie, so he made a hundred engineers fix every single one and work all night. To make it right, Ernie.

Beat.

ERNIE

He sounds like a fucking prick.

Ernie aims the gun at his head again.

Thom winces as we hear the GUNSHOT O.S.

A woman SCREAMS. A crash. Thom spins around to see ANIMATED MA KEEBLER standing there, returning from work, her apron and hands covered with chocolate, dropped sheet of cookies at her feet.

MA KEEBLER

Oh my Ernie! My Ernie! Oh no, no no...

Thom runs to her, takes her in his arms. He kisses her tears away, he kisses her mouth...

MA KEEBLER (CONT'D)

Oh! Oh my stars!

THOM

So soft... so chewy...

MA KEEBLER

Oh, Thom, what are you doing...?

They tumble to the ground. Thom kisses her ear, her neck...

MA KEEBLER (CONT'D)

Oh, Thom, I've waited so long for this...

Thom UNZIPS his pants. Ma glances down.

MA KEEBLER (CONT'D)

Oh, my, Thom. That's uncommonly good...

25 INT. THOM'S OFFICE - EVENING 25

EMPTY ENERGY SHAKES sit on Thom's desk.

Thom lays on his couch, moans in his sleep, hips thrusting.

THOM
You're a double-stuffed. Oh God,
you're a double-stuffed...

Lorna shakes his shoulder. Thom wakes.

LORNA
They cancelled.

THOM
What time is it?

LORNA
Six-thirty. You were dreaming
about cookies again.

THOM
I'm late.

LORNA
They cancelled.

THOM
Jules?

LORNA
The Swedes.

THOM
Motherfuckers...

BLACK.

26 INT. FUNNY FARM - EVENING 26

Bouncy castles, slides, parents. Julius, dying red-balloon in hand, stands at the top of a giant slide, afraid to go down.

LEE (O.S.)
Julesy, you don't have to go down
if you don't want to. Don't do it
for me, buddy. If you don't want
to go down, don't go down....

MOTHER ONE, seated near her, listens.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

MOTHER ONE

My Alexander used to be like that.
Now he goes down head first.

LEE

Used to be like what?

MOTHER ONE

What?

LEE

You said your son used to be like
that. Be like what?

MOTHER ONE

Oh, just, you know.

LEE

Why don't you mind your own fucking
business?

(calling to Julius)

Julius, it's okay.

MOTHER ONE

(leaving)

I was just trying to be helpful.

LEE

No, you weren't. You were trying
to be superior. At the Funny Farm.
It's fucking pathetic.

Her phone rings.

LEE (CONT'D)

Hey. Hi.

27 INT. THOM'S OFFICE - INTERCUT

27

Thom sits in his darkened, lonely office.

THOM

They cancelled.

LEE

Are you fucking kidding me? They
cancelled? Thom, that is fucking
bullshit.

THOM

Yeah, I know it's fucking bullshit,
Lee. There's nothing I can do.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

LEE

They don't have families, they don't have kids. Why would they give a shit?

THOM

They are fucking kids, goddamn it, I still can't tell them to fuck off.

LEE

It's fucking bullshit, Thom.

Beat.

THOM

How's Julius? Is he standing there doing nothing?

He is.

LEE

He's having a great time.

THOM

Let me talk to him.

Lee hands Julius the phone.

JULIUS

Hi, Dada.

THOM

Hey Buddy. You having fun?

JULIUS

Not really. Hey Dad, your balloon is dying, the red one from your party.

THOM

I'll get you a new one. I promise. Okay, Buddy? Listen, I'm sorry I couldn't be there, okay?

JULIUS

Sure, I know.

THOM

Next week, I promise.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: 27

JULIUS
Okay, we'll go next week. Bye,
Dada.

28 INT. MGT HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER 28

Thom storms angrily down the dark, empty hallway, and passes Jonathan's office. He pauses.

29 INT. JONATHAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 29

Thom enters, goes to Jonathan's desk, rifles through his drawers, finds what he's looking for, and stuffs it into his shirt pocket. He hurries out.

CUT TO:

30 INT. MGT STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS 30

Jonathan, tipsy, enters as Thom comes down the stairs.

THOM
(sniffing Jonathan)
Martini. Vodka?

JONATHAN
Gin. A little face-to-face with
the Swedes, down at the bar.

THOM
(smiling)
You can't remember their names, can
you?

JONATHAN
They love this job.

THOM
(turning to leave)
That's what I find so irritating.

JONATHAN
Fuck you, Thom.

THOM
Excuse me?

JONATHAN
'Tis pity we're all whores, isn't
it, Thom? Everyone but you.
(MORE)

*

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

30

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Though I should say that was quite a stirring oratory you delivered earlier on the rights of animated elves. You suck the same cocks we all do, Thom. Wincing at the taste doesn't make you a better man, it only makes you a worse whore. So if you're going to show me the error of my ways, show me from your four-bedroom American Dream with kidney-shaped pool you earned the same way I earned mine.

They glare at each other.

THOM

You should drink more, Jon.

JONATHAN

I couldn't possibly.

Jonathan exits.

31 INT. MGT LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

31

Thom notices the BALLOONS AND BASKET from the earlier agency meeting. He cuts the balloons off, pulls a bottle from the basket, puts it into his bag, and EXITS.

A31 EXT. PAYNE HOME - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

A31 *

Thom's car pulls into the driveway. *

32 INT. PAYNE HOME - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

32 *

Thom enters, heads upstairs as quietly as he can...

33 INT. JULIUS'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

33

Julius is asleep. Thom ties the balloon to the bed post.

Lee comes down the hall, stops at doorway.

LEE

(whispering)

What's that?

THOM

Balloons.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

33

LEE
No, you dick. In the bag.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

33

THOM
 (pulls out wine)
 Bubbly.

He comes to Lee, taking some pills from his pocket.

THOM (CONT'D)
 And fifty milligrams of hard-on.

LEE
 Are we fucking?

THOM
 We're fucking...

Giggling, laughing, Thom lifts Lee over his shoulder and heads down to their bedroom, closing the door behind them...

BLACK.

THOM (V.O.)
 Sometimes, on the way to work, I
 like to imagine Samuel Beckett,
 waiting for, let's say... *

34 EXT. METRO-NORTH TRAIN PLATFORM - MORNING

34

Thom makes his way down the crowded platform.

THOM (V.O.)
 ... the 6:47 to Grand Central. And
 Sam's pissed. He hates his job,
 wants to write, wants to do
 something that matters. But he
 does his shitty job. Every day. *

We see that Thom is reading a book, and that he is wearing somewhat trendier RED RUNNING SHOES. He also seems to be PULLING UNCOMFORTABLY at the crotch of his skinny jeans.

THOM (V.O.)
 Because Sam loves his wife. And
 they love their child. And
 somehow, Sam's found a sliver of
 happiness in this shitpile of a
 world. So basically, Sam's fucked.

As the train arrives in station, Thom COLLIDES with other commuters; their iPads fall to the ground, as does his book.

INSERT ON THE STEVE JOBS BOOK HE HAS DROPPED.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

34

THOM (V.O.)
Because if he wants to keep that
happiness, Sam's gotta suck some
cock.

The train doors open.

THOM (V.O.)
The same cocks we all do.

Thom grabs his book and enters the train as the other
passengers try to figure out which iPad is theirs.

THOM (V.O.)
So Beckett takes his seat on the
train, fires up his iPad and
thinks, "I can't go on. I'll go on
to Target."

INSIDE THE TRAIN

Thom sits, pulls once more at the crotch of his painful
skinny jeans.

THOM (V.O.)
It's thirty percent off all skinny
jeans until next motherfucking
Monday.

BLACK.

END OF SHOW