ACT ONE

INT. KEITH AND ALLISON'S KITCHEN - MORNING

A tasteful house on a tree-lined street in an upper middle class suburb of Baltimore. KEITH (33) pours himself a cup of coffee. While charming and well-intentioned, Keith's a guy who has trouble avoiding or even recognizing his worst impulses. Think MATTHEW PERRY.

ALLISON (32) is packing lunches. A former wild child, Allison settled down when she became a parent, although her wild side pokes through occasionally. TOM (7), a quiet, serious boy, and LUCY (4) eat oatmeal and watch cartoons.

KEITH
Tom, we're leaving in ten minutes.

TOM
Can I steer like last time?

Keith gives Tom a "that was a secret" look, then offers Allison an "I don't know what he's talking about" shrug.

ALLISON
I've seen you drive. You can use the help.

Keith grabs a bag of Oreos, dumps six onto a plate. Busy with the lunches, Allison doesn't see what he's up to.

ALLISON
Hey, so thanks for taking Tom to school today.

KEITH
No problem. I'm happy to.

Allison looks up and notices Keith at the counter. She watches Keith pull apart an Oreo and lick out the filling.

ALLISON
What are you doing?

KEITH
What?

Keith pops the Oreo in his mouth.

ALLISON
(glancing at the kids)
The cookies.
KEITH
(mouth full of cookie)
You want one?

ALLISON
Keith, it's breakfast.

KEITH
I realize it's not the... It's just this woman I met in the program said if you're craving a drink, sugar can help you over the hump. A bunch of people there agreed it was a good idea. Not this one guy.
(derisive)
A dentist.

ALLISON
(concerned)
You're craving a drink?

KEITH
No, this is more of a pre-emptive strike.

Keith pulls apart an Oreo. It doesn't pull apart cleanly.

KEITH
Damn it.

ALLISON
It's just I'm trying to get the kids to eat something healthy...

KEITH
(finally understanding)
Right. The kids. Sorry.

ALLISON
Keith, I know this is new for you. It's new for me too. I'm not trying to make it harder.

KEITH
No, I get it. I'll just...

Keith puts the cookie in his hand back on the plate, pushes the plate deeper back on the counter and heads for the table.

ALLISON
If you feel like you need the cookies as a... pre-emptive--
KEITH
Allison, it's okay. Seriously.

ALLISON
Thank you.

Keith sits down. He looks at his kids and smiles, then casts a longing glance at his Oreos.

KEITH
(quietly, but not that quietly)
God, I could really go for a drink right now.

Allison sighs and puts the plate of cookies in front of him.

INT. CAR - DAY

Keith's driving Tom to school.

TOM
Dad...

KEITH
Yeah?

TOM
When you were at school--

As he approaches the school, Keith's small car is cut off by a GIANT BLACK HUMMER.

KEITH (CONT'D)
What the--?

Keith hits the horn. It's a pathetic toot, barely audible.

KEITH (CONT'D)
(to himself)
SUVs. I'd like to crush you under the wheels of your stupid SUV.

Keith pulls in by the curb in front of the school. In the rearview, he sees Tom is wide-eyed, disturbed by the image.

KEITH (CONT'D)
Not really. Just, you know, they're bad for the environment.

There's a loud RAP on Tom's window. Keith and Tom jump. A menacing boy, MILO, has his face pressed to the glass, having just emerged from the back of the Hummer. He stares at Tom.
KEITH (CONT'D)
(friendly)
Hi.

The boy gives Keith a disparaging look. Keith makes a face back like it's a joke, but the boy has already moved on.

KEITH (CONT'D)
(noticing clock)
You should probably go in now.

Tom doesn't move.

KEITH (CONT'D)
Tom, I really need to get to work.

Only when Milo has joined two other friends and entered the school does Tom exit the car.

KEITH (CONT'D)
Bye. Have a nice---.

The door slams shut. Keith looks at the closed door for a second, concerned. He starts to pull out, sees he's boxed in by the Hummer, and abruptly hits the brakes. The Hummer dwarfs his car. There's no one in it. Keith looks around.

He sees MILO'S MOTHER talking and laughing with another mother by the door to the school. Keith lowers the window. On a level with the lower part of the Hummer's door, Keith has to crane his neck awkwardly to be seen.

KEITH (CONT'D)
Excuse me, is this your car?

Without turning or breaking off her conversation, Milo's mother dangles her keys at him, instructing him to wait.

KEITH (CONT'D)
You what? I'm sorry, what?!

Milo's mother doesn't move. Keith beeps the horn. He's exasperated at its puny beep. Unhurried, Milo's mother gives her friend a hug, climbs into her car and starts the engine.

KEITH (CONT'D)
Thanks.

Milo's mother lowers her window and smiles at Keith.
KEITH (CONT'D)
(friendly)
Sorry, it's just there are a lot of spots. You didn't need to--

When the window's fully lowered, her smile slips and she leans on her horn. It's deafeningly LOUD. Keith jumps. She pulls away fast, leaving him humiliated.

INT. CHURCH HALL - EVENING

An A.A. meeting is about to begin. DOUG (50) unstacks and arranges chairs. An unmarried, unfulfilled mall security guy, Doug relishes his authority as group leader, and doesn't like Keith, whose disruptive presence often undermines him. A few others join Doug in setting up chairs, as Keith enters.

KEITH
Hey, Doug.

DOUG
(annoyed)
Oh. Keith. I thought you switched to the Thursday meetings.

As Doug and the others arrange chairs, Keith grabs a muffin.

KEITH
I did. It just started feeling really hard making it all the way to Thursday, and-- Actually, can I be honest? It's mostly because they moved when "Lost" is on.

As Keith bites into the muffin, he realizes he should help and begins to move a chair.

DOUG
We're finished now.

Keith moves the chair in front of him a few inches.

DOUG
It's finished.

LINDA, 40s, Keith's no-nonsense sponsor, enters. Stern but caring, Linda is alternately annoyed and amused by Keith. Keith waves and starts heading in her direction.

KEITH
Linda, hey.

Keith reaches her. There's an uncomfortable beat.
KEITH
So I'm still figuring out how this whole sponsor-sponsee thing works. Do we hug, or--?

LINDA
We don't need to--

Keith gives her a big hug.

LINDA
Okay.

She awkwardly hugs him back.

LINDA
About last night, Keith... you're really only supposed to call me if it's an emergency. Not because you couldn't sleep and were bored.

KEITH
Right.

(beat, joking)
What if I were really bored?

LINDA
Even then. When someone I sponsor calls, I need to answer. And I could be in the middle of something important. Like last night for instance.

KEITH
It was midnight. What could you be in the middle of at-- Wait, did you have someone over? You did, didn't you? Alright, Linda.

LINDA
Yes, okay. I had someone over.
It's not a big--

KEITH
So... do you like this woman?

Linda gives Keith a long look.

LINDA
I'm not a lesbian.
KEITH

(beat)
I know.

INT. CHURCH HALL - LATER

The A.A. meeting has started. Doug chairs it. Ten participants, all shapes and sizes, sit in a few rows of chairs. SHAUN (30s) is giving testimony. Keith, sitting next to Linda, listens dutifully.

SHAUN
I'm sober forty days, I've got a new job, selling cars. I don't see the point of delving into my childhood.

DOUG
To really let go of the past, Shaun, we have to face it.

SHAUN
It's just we have these weekly quotas at work, and I'm short again. I really need to focus my energy on that.

CLAIRE, late 20s, attractive, a former prom queen with a profound sense of superiority, chimes in.

CLAIRE
No one's saying it's easy. When I was drinking, I was completely out of control, a total nymphomaniac. I did unspeakable things with men I barely knew. Really dirty, nasty things. Trust me, it's not something I like talking about.

KEITH

(sotto)
Obviously.

CLAIRE
But once I opened up about my life, I felt a clarity, and was able to find God and reclaim my virginity.

KEITH

(sotto, to Linda)
How do you get back your virginity?
LINDA
(sotto)
Don't ask me, I'm a lesbian.

KEITH
(sotto)
I said I was sorry.

DOUG
Keith, do you mind? We're talking about people's pasts here.

CLAIRE
Why do you even bother? He doesn't get it. Keith obviously hasn't had a tortured history like some of us.

KEITH
If by "tortured history" you mean screwing half of Baltimore and then declaring myself a virgin, you're right, I haven't.

LINDA
(rescuing Keith)
The important thing is to not hide from our past.

KEITH
For your information, I went through things too, Claire. As a kid. With my brother. Really hard stuff, okay?

Silence. The others wait expectantly.

KEITH (CONT'D)
I'd be watching TV and for no reason at all he'd pin me to the ground. He'd hold me down and he would... sit on my face. And...
(painful)
Let loose an air attack.

Exasperation from the group.

KEITH (CONT'D)
It made me feel so--

SHAUN
(blurtling out)
I was abused in a group home.
KEITH
(lost in thought)
Powerless. I guess that's the word
I'm looking for.

The group is stunned that Keith is continuing talking about himself after Shaun's pronouncement. Keith notices.

KEITH (CONT'D)
(to Shaun)
You go ahead. I can remember mine.

INT. KEITH AND ALLISON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Keith is getting ready for bed. He talks to Allison, who's in the bathroom.

KEITH
I just don't get why this mother even has one of these gas-guzzling monstrosities. Hummers weren't designed for taking kids to school. They're military vehicles.

ALLISON (O.S.)
Keith, forget about it.

KEITH
What do you think's going through her head when she buys it? "I probably won't be invading France, but I'd like that option."

Allison enters from the bathroom, wearing sexy lingerie.

KEITH
Wow.

ALLISON
Good answer.

She pushes him back on the bed, and they start going at it.

INT. KEITH AND ALLISON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Keith rolls off of Allison, post-sex. By the looks of things, it was pretty intense. They lie back in the afterglow for a beat, catching their breath, then:

KEITH
Every time she gets behind the wheel, it's like she's thumbing her nose at the earth.
ALLISON
And we still haven't moved on.

Allison gets up and puts on a large t-shirt.

KEITH
Sorry. It makes me crazy.

ALLISON
When did you become such a hard-core environmentalist?

KEITH
Yeah, I should be more apathetic. Starting tomorrow I'm going to start spraying aerosol cans everywhere and clubbing baby seals.

ALLISON
Maybe spray the aerosol at the baby seals. Disorient them, they'll be easier to whack.

(then)
So did Tom say anything to you today?

KEITH
About what?

ALLISON
I don't know. Something at school maybe. I told him to talk to you.

KEITH
He didn't say anything.

A beat as they both consider, concerned expressions.

KEITH
Do you think you can get the horn changed on a car?

ALLISON
You wanted to be more involved. You wanted to make up for lost time.

KEITH
I do. I am. Allison, he didn't say anything. I'd remember.

(to himself)
Maybe you can get the volume turned up. That'd probably be easier.
ALLISON
Was he acting weird at all?

KEITH
I don't think so. Whatever was bothering him, it obviously cleared up. Tom and I have fun when we're together. Just spending time with me probably made him feel better.

Keith turns out the light.

EXT. KEITH AND ALLISON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is completely dark, peaceful. Through a window, we see a light go on.

INT. KEITH AND ALLISON'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tom stands in the doorway, sleepy-eyed, anxious.

TOM
I had a bad dream.

ALLISON
Sweetie, come here. What was your dream about?

Allison looks to Keith over Tom's head, motioning towards Tom with her eyes, prompting Keith to get involved.

KEITH
Yeah...

Keith tries to think of something to add, but can't.

KEITH
What was your dream about?

Tom climbs into bed with them.

TOM
Milo Stephens.

ALLISON
Is that a boy in your class?

Tom nods. Keith is putting two and two together.

TOM
He was crushing me. He was driving over me in a car.
KEITH
(to Allison)
That's quite common. Crushing
dreams.

TOM
He said he was going to kill me.

ALLISON
No one's going to kill you. Daddy
won't let them.

KEITH
That's right.

TOM
Milo said Dad's a pussy.

KEITH
What? Really?

ALLISON
No one's going to hurt you.

KEITH
This... "pussy remark"... was that
in the dream?

TOM
In real life.

KEITH
So he used those words: "Your Dad's
a pussy"?

Allison shoots Keith a look, saying drop it. Keith signals
back, "consider it dropped."

ALLISON
Let's just go to sleep. We'll talk
about this tomorrow.

Everyone closes their eyes. It's quiet.

KEITH
A seven-year-old with any guts
would've said it to my face, but
whatever.

INT. CHURCH HALL - EVENING

Usual crowd, tense atmosphere as Shaun talks about his abuse.
SHAUN
If you weren't feeling well, you'd have to go to the sick room, which was in the basement, totally isolated. Mr. Ross would say "You look a little pale, you must be coming down with something." Or he'd say, Shaun, you want to go for a ride? I've got a Three Musketeers for you in my car.

KEITH
(sotto, to Linda)
He fell for the candy thing?
That's like pederasty 101.

DOUG
Keith, is there something you wanted to share with the group?

KEITH
No.

As Doug turns his attention back to Shaun:

KEITH
Well, actually, there was this incident at the mechanic today. I was trying to get the horn turned up on my car...

DOUG
I wasn't asking you to--

KEITH
Turns out you can't. Anyway, this mechanic thinks it's hilarious. He's on the P.A.: 'This jerkoff wants his horn turned up.'

DOUG
What does this even have to do with your drinking?

KEITH
I'm just saying it was a difficult experience to go through. I had to stand there like an idiot pretending to think it's funny. It's the sort of thing that really wreaks havoc with your self-worth.
SHAUN
I was abused.

KEITH
I know.

SHAUN
In a group home.

KEITH
I realize it's not the same thing.

SHAUN
By the people who were supposed to take care of me. People I trusted.

KEITH
Yeah, I didn't trust this mechanic. So obviously there wasn't the same level of betrayal.

INT. CHURCH HALL - EVENING - POST MEETING

Linda and Keith talk quietly and urgently.

KEITH
I wasn't equating them. I'm just saying there are things in my past too. Things that happened to me.

LINDA
Tell me you're not talking about your brother farting on you.

Beat.

KEITH
That was a horrible experience.

LINDA
It sounded more like horseplay.

KEITH
Horses don't do that. Horses don't pin you down while you're trying to watch TV. And there weren't Tivos then. You couldn't just rewind. I missed things. It all ties in to how people treat me now. The mechanic, the mother at the school.
LINDA
Why do you want to make those connections?

KEITH
I don't know.

LINDA
Maybe you should figure it out.

Linda heads out.

KEITH
You're my sponsor. Aren't you supposed to tell me?

LINDA
Good night, Keith.

KEITH
What if I threaten to drink again if you don't?

Linda smiles and shakes her head.

LINDA
Good night, Keith.

INT. KEITH'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Keith gets home. Tom is sitting on the floor watching TV. Beside him is an impassive overweight boy of the same age, KYLE. The boys are in pajamas. Keith is unable to tear his eyes away from Kyle.

KEITH
Hi.

TOM
Hi Dad.

KYLE
Hi.

KEITH
Hello.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Keith enters, gives Allison a kiss hello. As he talks to Allison, he remains distracted by the thought of Kyle's size.
ALLISON
So I spoke to a child psychologist
today about Tom. She said we
shouldn't make a big deal out of
the bullying.

KEITH
Uh-huh.

ALLISON
The important thing's to not let
Tom get isolated from his peer
group.

KEITH
Got it. Who's the fat kid in
pajamas?

Allison's annoyed at the remark, but continues.

ALLISON
That's Kyle. He's sleeping over.
Having friends here is supposed to help.

KEITH
And if the bullying doesn't stop
Tom's got something to hide behind.

ALLISON
What is wrong with you?

Keith opens a cabinet and begins looking for something.

KEITH
I'm sure Kyle's a nice kid, but do
you really think if Tom's standing
next to him at school, he going to
get bullied less?
(not finding what he's
looking for)
Where are my Oreos? There was like
half a--

Keith peers out at Kyle. He's got his answer.

KEITH
Never mind. So I think I'm going
to teach Tom how to box.

ALLISON
(chuckles)
Yeah, because you're a boxer.
KEITH
I boxed in college.

ALLISON
We went to college together. Remember me, the really hot freshman who puked on your shoes?

KEITH
(slightly chastened, slightly nostalgic)
Oh yeah.

ALLISON
I just don't think Tom learning how to fight is the answer. Violence always makes things worse.

KEITH
Not always. World War II. Greatest generation.

ALLISON
Fine. When Milo Stephens attacks Pearl Harbor, Tom has my permission to kick his ass.

KEITH
Our son is being bullied. That's going to stay with him for the rest of his life if we don't do something about it. Something more than encouraging him to hang out with the class whale.
(finds Oreos)
Wait, here they are.

EXT. KEITH AND ALLISON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Completely dark, peaceful. A light goes on.

INT. KEITH AND ALLISON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Keith and Allison are in bed. Tom's in the doorway.

TOM
I had another nightmare.

KEITH
(sotto, to Allison)
So much for the healing power of friends.
Allison reacts, then turns her attention to Tom.

ALLISON
Do you want to sleep with us?

Tom climbs into bed. Keith and Allison notice Kyle standing in the doorway, unsure what he's supposed to do.

ALLISON
You too, Kyle.

Kyle runs over to the bed and jumps in between Tom and Keith. Inches from Keith's face, Kyle smiles. Keith gives him a tight smile back. Allison kisses Tom.

ALLISON
Good night.

Kyle looks at Keith expectantly, waiting for his good night kiss.

KEITH
No.

Kyle's eyes get sad. Keith sighs.

KEITH
Fine.

Keith gives him a quick peck.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The beginning of boxing instruction. Keith holds up both hands, instructing Tom.

KEITH
Okay, hands up, thumbs outside your fists. Now imagine this Milo kid comes up to you and calls you a--

Tom hits Keith very hard above the eye. Keith puts his hands to his face and keels over in agony. Tom's face is full of anger as he lands a kick on Keith's prone body.

KEITH
(through his hands, upbeat, encouraging)
Good.

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

INT. RICHARD'S MEDICAL OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

An exam room in a typical medical office. Keith's best
friend, RICHARD (32), is stitching Keith's eyebrow.
Charismatic but self-centered, Richard was Keith's primary
drinking buddy and takes his sobriety as a personal insult.

KEITH
He looked so angry.

RICHARD
Teenagers, what are you gonna do.

KEITH
Tom's seven.

RICHARD
 Seriously?

KEITH
You were at the house last week.
You're his godfather.

RICHARD
Right, Tom. Who am I thinking of?

KEITH
I don't know.
(wincing as needle enters)
Are you supposed to use an
anaesthetic for this?

Richard shakes his head, dismissive.

KEITH
Obviously, this bully situation is
really hard on him. And he's
looking for me to fix it. Not only
am I not fixing it, I'm making
things worse.

RICHARD
Sounds rough. Let me get you a
drink.

Richard notices Keith's withering glance.

RICHARD
(with attitude)
Right, you can't because you're an
alcoholic.

(MORE)
RICHARD (cont'd)
What ever happened to the good old
days when people drank until they
lost everything or died?

KEITH
Sorry to disappoint you.

RICHARD
It's not your fault. It's the
culture.

As he continues, Richard gets increasingly agitated and
starts swinging the needle around, unsettling Keith.

RICHARD
I swear I have no one left to drink
with. It was bad enough when
Allison decided she had to clean up
her act. She wasn't even an
alcoholic. She was just pregnant.

KEITH
(re: needle)
You want to put that down?

RICHARD
Sorry, I'm just a little-- A drink
might calm my nerves. Do you mind?

Keith looks at the needle in Richard's hand.

KEITH
Yes.

RICHARD
Fine.

KEITH
I'm supposed to be setting a better
eexample for my kids, right? I
mean, it's a big part of why I
stopped drinking. And what's Tom
see? His father getting honked at
in his puny car with its puny horn.

Richard thinks on it, then:

RICHARD
Did you check about getting the
volume turned up?

KEITH
Apparently the only way to get a
louder horn is to get a new car.
A light goes on in Keith's head.

INT. CHURCH HALL - EVENING

Post-meeting, the usual crowd is milling about. Keith is with Shaun. Keith has a bandage above his eye (it's there for the rest of the episode).

SHAUN
You want to buy an SUV?

KEITH
A really big one. Do you have anything you'd classify as gigantic?

SHAUN
Actually, we just got something in that'd be perfect. It's previously owned, but in excellent condition.

KEITH
And it has a good solid horn?

SHAUN
Yeah.

KEITH
I'll take it.

SHAUN
It's pretty expensive, Keith.

KEITH
We'd set aside some money for a family vacation to Hawaii, but what's Hawaii got that we can't get in Ocean City? Plus we'll be in a real state, not one of those ones that's not attached.

SHAUN
You're serious? Because I really need this sale, so if you're screwing with me...

KEITH
I could give you a down payment tonight.
SHAUN
Do you know how much I need this?
Do you know how much this is going
to save my life?

KEITH
(falsely modest)
That's why we're here, right? To
save each other's lives.

SHAUN
Who would've thought you'd be my
miracle? Thank you for this.
(looking heavenwards)
Thank you.

Keith half waves upwards in sheepish acknowledgment of God.

SHAUN (CONT'D)
Thank God for Keith.

The others look on, surprised. Keith's slightly embarrassed,
but glows.

SHAUN (CONT'D)
Thank God for Keith.

Keith gives a little bow.

EXT. SUPERMARKET PARKING LOT - DAY

Allison and Keith are packing their new SUV with supermarket
bags. Lucy and Tom are strapped in the back.

ALLISON
A seven day test drive. That seems long.

KEITH
It's pretty much par for the
course.

ALLISON
Did you buy this car, Keith?

KEITH
No, of course not. I wouldn't make
that sort of decision without you.
Come on, give me a little credit.

INT. SUV - DAY

Keith gets into the front passenger seat.
KEITH
Anyway, it's a very safe car. High marks on the crash tests.

Allison reverses out of the parking space. She presses the button to lower her window. It descends extremely slowly.

KEITH (CONT'D)
And kids love SUVs.

The kids are completely without expression.

KEITH (CONT'D)
Plenty of room for their friends.
(under his breath)
Kyyyyle.

Allison shoots Keith a look.

KEITH (CONT'D)
He's not listening.

ALLISON
(pressing the button for the window again)
I don't like what these cars do to the environment.

KEITH
(derisive)
The environment.

ALLISON
The other day you were completely gung ho about the planet.

KEITH
People change, Al. We live, we learn, we grow.

ALLISON
(rolls her eyes)
Uh-huh.
(then)
What's wrong with these windows?

KEITH
We can get them fixed.

ALLISON
The car's not ours. Why would we get the windows fixed?
KEITH
As a gesture. You know, because they were gracious enough to let us have the extended test drive.

ALLISON
You did. You bought this car.

KEITH
Maybe also get them a nice bouquet of flowers.

ALLISON
If you spent our Hawaii money, I will kill--

KEITH
(indicating back seat)
Shh. Lucy's suddenly very attentive.

ALLISON
Did you or did you not buy this car?

KEITH
No. What do you--? No. It's a test drive. I'll take it back.

Allison looks at Keith.

KEITH (CONT'D)
I'll take it back.

Keith looks worried. Then, as they exit the parking lot, Keith sees Milo Stephens' mother loading her black Hummer.

KEITH (CONT'D)
Can you pull over?

ALLISON
Why?

KEITH
Yeah, right here.

Allison pulls up. Keith leans over to the steering wheel and presses the horn down hard. Milo Stephens' mother jumps and shouts "What the fuck" as she turns around sharply. Keith gives her a salute wave.
KEITH (CONT'D)
(to Allison, as he waves)
Okay go. Go, go, go.

Milo Stephens himself looks over the back seat, meeting Tom's eyes as the car pulls away.

ALLISON
What was that?

KEITH
What was what?

Keith turns to face Tom. Tom looks back, happy.

INT. TOM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Keith checks on Tom. He's sleeping soundly in his bed. Keith closes the door, smiling, happy with his achievement.

INT. SUV - NIGHT

Parked outside the church hall. Shaun and Keith observe a slowly descending window.

SHAUN
Of course it appears slow. When you're staring at it.

KEITH
Shaun, it's not just the windows. I need to give this car back.

SHAUN
Don't do this, Keith.

KEITH
It's just, it's not the car for me.

Shaun stares at Keith for a few seconds.

SHAUN
In the home I grew up in...

Keith sighs, knowing what's coming.

SHAUN
I was abused. Incessantly.

KEITH
Yeah.
SHAUN
People would take turns.

KEITH
How is that relevant to--?

SHAUN
It's happening again. At the dealership.

KEITH
(concerned)
Oh my god, they're actually...?

SHAUN
They treat me like garbage.

KEITH
Oh. You meant it in a figurative--

SHAUN
I'll be about to close a deal, and one of the other salesmen will mysteriously call me away, so his buddy can swoop in and get the commission. Happens all the time.

KEITH
Shaun, you can't let them push you around like that.

SHAUN
What am I supposed to do?

KEITH
Stand up to them.
(beat)
You know, I stood up to a bully recently and I gotta tell you, it was a great feeling.

SHAUN
Really?

KEITH
Set a very good example for my son as well.

SHAUN
I would love to tell them: "No. No, you will not disrespect me."
KEITH
So say it.

SHAUN
You know what? I'm going to.

KEITH
Good for you.

SHAUN
And when I'm done, I'm going to ask for your down payment back.

KEITH
Whatever. If that feels right in the moment, go for it, but it's not what this is about.

SHAUN
If I really press the point, I can probably get you back half of it.

KEITH
Or all of it. You know, whatever feels right.

INT. SUV - DAY

Parked in front of the school, Keith smiles as he watches Tom with Milo and other boys, coming out of school laughing. There's a knock on the car window. An overweight man Keith's age gestures for Keith to lower the window. It's KYLE'S DAD. Keith pushes the button. The window moves very slowly.

KEITH
Sorry.

KYLE'S DAD
You're Tom's father, right? I'm Kyle's dad.

KEITH
Oh hi. We love Kyle. He's great.

KYLE'S DAD
Could you tell Tom to stop picking on my son?

KEITH
What? That doesn't sound like--
KYLE'S DAD
He's being teased about his weight.
Apparently, Tom's the ringleader.
Something about the class whale.

KEITH
(feigning ignorance)
Oh, that's horrible.

KYLE'S DAD
And there being plenty of room for
him in an SUV.

KEITH
Where do they come up with--? I
blame rap. All that stuff about
bitches and hos and... fat kids in
SUVs.

KYLE'S DAD
Just tell Tom to-- What happened to
your eye?

KEITH
This? Tom did this

KYLE'S DAD
Tom hit you?

KEITH
And kicked me when I was on the
ground.

Kyle's dad looks at Keith, alarmed.

KEITH
Oh, it's not like that. It was my
idea. Completely. My wife put up
quite a fight in fact. Not that we
were fighting fighting. We weren't
hitting each other. Or kicking.

Kyle's dad walks off, shaking his head. Keith thinks about
explaining it better, thenshrugs it off.

KEITH
(calling after him)
Nice meeting you.
(trailing off)
Tell Kyle I said hi.
INT. CHURCH HALL - EVENING

Usual crowd. The meeting's just beginning.

DOUG
Welcome to the Thursday meeting of
St. Peter's Alcoholics Anonymous.
I'm Doug and I'm an--.

SHAUN
(interrupting)
I lost my job.

DOUG
Shaun, I was in the middle of--

SHAUN
And then I started drinking.

Shaun pulls out a flask. Shocked looks around the room.

SHAUN (CONT'D)
Somebody in the group - I'm not
going to say who - somebody told me
to stand up for myself at work.

People look around, trying to figure out who it was. Keith
appears trapped, then fakes looking around himself.

SHAUN (CONT'D)
See, at first this person did
something really amazing for me.

Heads turn towards Keith. Linda closes her eyes.

KEITH
Shaun, you really shouldn't be
drinking here. It's against a lot
of what AA stands for.

SHAUN
But it was like he only did it so
he could take it away again. He
told me that if I stood up for
myself they'd respect me. But they
didn't respect me, they fired me.

KEITH
I'm sure he didn't think that would
happen.

CLAIRE
Everybody knows it was you.
KEITH
It actually wasn't me, Claire.

SHAUN
It was him.

Keith is caught in the glare of the group.

CLAIRE
You made him relapse.

KEITH
You can't blame someone like that. Shaun's problems go a lot deeper than some advice he got two days ago.

Shaun breaks down, weeping freely. Everyone regards Shaun with sympathy as he continues to cry.

KEITH
(vindicated/weak)
See?
(them)
I mean our problems are our problems. And they probably all have reasons. But we can't just keep blaming everything that's wrong with our lives on other—
(realizing, to Linda)
Oh my God, that's what you were saying. About the connections.

LINDA
Keith, not now.

SHAUN
(wailing)
I was only sixteen.

KEITH
I just wanted someone to blame. For everything I've done, for everything I keep doing. Wait, you were sixteen and you fell for the candy bit? Forget it, it doesn't matter. What's important is that I realize now I need to take responsibility for my own actions.
(to group)
This is actually a valuable lesson for everyone in here.
LINDA
They already know, Keith.

KEITH
Right. Good work, guys.

INT. SUV - NIGHT
Keith drives down a freeway. Shaun is slumped in the back.

SHAUN
Sorry I blamed you for the relapse.

KEITH
It's okay.

SHAUN
What you said, it's true. This is my addiction. I need to deal with it.

Shaun is still drinking, Keith looks at him in the rearview, concerned. After a beat:

KEITH
Before they fired you, you hadn't reached any arrangement about the car, had you?

SHAUN
I'm going to be sick.

KEITH
Okay, I'll pull over.

SHAUN
There's no time.
(beginning to wretch)
Where's the window thing? Make the windows go down. Make the windows go down.

Keith frantically presses the window button. The windows move down very slowly. Too slowly.

INT. FOUR WHEEL DRIVE - DAY
Keith and Allison are in the front (Keith driving) and the kids in the back.
KEITH
(to Tom, sincere)
Sometimes when people are bullied
they feel ashamed. And sometimes
that can make them feel angry. And
they lash out at the wrong people.

LUCY
The car is smelly.

KEITH
No it's not.

ALLISON
It is.

KEITH
I cleaned it all up.

ALLISON
Just open a window.

KEITH
I'm trying.

Keith pushes the button. The window opens very slowly.

KEITH
Tom, the only person who should
feel ashamed is someone who hurts
another person. Do you understand
what I'm saying?

TOM
Yeah.

KEITH
Good. So who's up for a movie?

TOM/LUCY
Me!/I am!

ALLISON
Great, and maybe on the way there,
you can pawn my great-grandmother's
jewelry and buy us an elephant.

KEITH
Al, I feel really bad about Hawaii,
and--

ALLISON
Keith, don't. Just don't.
Keith looks at Allison, decides she's serious, and doesn't say anything.

TOM
Dad, roll them up. It's too windy.

LUCY
No, it's smelly.

Keith pulls up to a red light.

KEITH
Okay, here's what we're going to do. When the light turns green, I'll give the signal, which means everyone take a deep breath. Then I'll roll up the windows and you hold it for as long as you again. At the next stop, I'll open them again and everyone take another deep breath. Got it?

The kids nod.

TOM
Dad, can I invite someone to the movies?

KEITH
Sure. Who do you want to ask? Milo Stephens?

TOM
No. Milo Stephens is a pussy.

ALLISON
Tom, don't say "pussy." It's not a nice word.

KEITH
In this context. It's only nice in one context.

The light changes. Keith gives "the signal." Everyone takes a deep breath, the kids with their cheeks puffed out, as the car moves off and the windows rise. Allison looks at Keith wondering about contexts for 'pussy.' The car stops at a red light, the windows go down, and they breathe again.

KEITH (CONT'D)
(as he exhales)
Cats.
TOM
So can I invite Kyle?

KEITH
I thought you and Kyle--

TOM
I apologized. He said we could be friends again.

KEITH
Good.

Keith glances at Allison.

KEITH
Very good actually. You're lucky to have someone like Kyle in your life, someone who cares about you so much that he's willing to look past the dumb things you do and know you're not a bad person. Someone who's knows you're not perfect, but loves you anyway.

TOM
I don't think Kyle loves me.

KEITH
He does. He has to. Because without it, you'd be totally lost.

Tom looks utterly confused.

KEITH
And you love him too. It's why you're trying to be a better person. True, you're not that good at it, but you're trying.

The light turns green.

LUCY
(pointing)
Daddy, the light.

KEITH
Okay kids, here we go. Deep breaths.

The windows begin to slowly rise again. Keith and the two kids breathe in deeply and hold their breath, all three puffing out their cheeks. Allison looks over at Keith.
She shakes her head and chuckles, then takes a big breath and puffs out her cheeks too. She looks around to the kids, takes in the family bonding, and smiles at Keith. It's a warm family moment.

They stop at a pedestrian crossing. Before Keith can push the window button so they can breathe out, Kyle and Kyle's Dad cross the street. Kyle glances into the car.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Kyle and his dad stare, shocked at what they see. Keith, Allison and the children, all with puffed cheeks and bulging eyes in what looks like a crude mockery of their weight.

END OF SHOW