

PRAIRIE DOGS

"Pilot"

Written by

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COLD OPENING

INT. EGG TECHNOLOGIES CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A conference table is piled high with a breakfast meeting layout -- donuts, bagels, coffee, etc. NEIL -- late twenties, just on the nerdy side of handsome -- enters, shuts the door, and quickly grabs as many donuts as he can hold. He turns to leave, but... what's that noise? VOICES, GROWING LOUDER. He looks at his watch...

NEIL

Oh no.

He sprints to the door -- just as he grabs the doorknob the door springs open and hits him in the face...

NEIL (CONT'D)

(yelps)

And he's driven back into the room as A CROWD OF VERY GOOD-LOOKING HIPSTER TYPES enters and hits the buffet. Neil goes against the tide toward the door, smiling, nodding, laughing, pretending to be a part of the group, when RAMS -- a tall German in his late forties wearing a black turtleneck and kilt -- enters and shuts the door behind him. Neil is stuck. The room quiets immediately as RAMS HOLDS UP AN EGG-SHAPED OBJECT.

RAMS

(German accent)

This is the prototype of our newest smartphone, the Egg 5. The only one in existence, so secret and rare I carry it with me night and day. And you, my beloved Design Group, made it possible. It is the most beautiful thing I have ever held in my hand except for my own penis.

Everyone claps because apparently that's high praise.

RAMS (CONT'D)

With the Egg 5 we have surpassed ourselves. Each one of you is the best, the brightest, the most dynamic --

Rams sees Neil.

RAMS (CONT'D)

Not you. Who are you?

NEIL

I, uh... donuts.

RAMS

Du schweinehund! He's an industrial spy.

MALE DESIGN ASSOCIATE

No, Rams, I think he's from Programming.

NEIL

(to Rams)

Yes, I'm Neil from Programming. Actually, I've requested several meetings with you to talk about transferring to your --

RAMS

Aussteigen.

NEIL

Okay, I think that's German and I'm not familiar --

RAMS

Get out!

Neil swiftly exits.

INT. DESIGN GROUP - MOMENTS LATER

We follow Neil and his armful of donuts through the Design Group office, which is decorated like a high end loft apartment. Warm tones, Eames furniture, art, Bacharach softly piped in. It's gorgeous, hard to believe it's an office. He exits this dreamland into...

INT. PROGRAMMING CUBE FARM - CONTINUOUS

...Programming, WHICH IS DIVIDED FROM DESIGN BY A GLASS WALLED HALLWAY allowing both departments to see each other. Programming is another world entirely. It is a cube farm -- gray and white. Design is first class; Programming is coach.

At his cubicle Neil picks up his headset, doesn't put it on, just speaks into the microphone...

NEIL

Donuts.

He sits in his chair and pushes off. OVERHEAD SHOT: four people in rolling desk chairs simultaneously wheel toward the middle, spin in unison and form a group. It's reminiscent of one of those old school synchronized swimming routines.

On Neil and his colleagues -- CHARLOTTE, ROJ, AND MAZI. They are all in their late twenties and they couldn't be more different from the hipsters we saw in Design. Charlotte has bad hair, bad clothes, but a lot of attitude. Roj is Hispanic and intense, and Mazi is an earnest and cheerful African immigrant with an accent. As they all grab for the donuts...

CHARLOTTE

(re: donuts)

...So good.

MAZI

If you were my lady I would cover you in donuts.

CHARLOTTE

You can't handle me. I'd destroy you physically and emotionally.

MAZI

We could just be "friends with benefits." I saw that movie, it was both charming and plausible.

NEIL

You know, I've been writing code for these clowns for five years and Rams still doesn't know I work here. How am I going to get from Programming to Design if the head of Design doesn't know who I am?

ROJ

You're not. It's all a class system now. Twenty years ago, tech companies were all people like us --

(indicates Charlotte)

greasy hair,

(indicates Mazi)

high water pants,

(indicates himself)

raffish misfits. Then the money came and suddenly nerdiness was co-opted by the beautiful people.

(MORE)

ROJ (CONT'D)

Now we're second class citizens in our own world. Programmers are like the Mexicans of the industry.

NEIL

You are Mexican.

ROJ

Which is why I can't take this crap anymore. I'm this close to coming in one morning and doing a hard reset on this mother.

(yells toward Design)

The day is coming you pretty bitches!

HERMAN, the mail room guy, approaches. He's in his mid-thirties and kind of sleazy. He hands out paychecks.

HERMAN

Okay prairie dogs, paycheck time.

He plays keep away with Neil's check.

HERMAN (CONT'D)

(taunting, sing song)

Heh heh.

Finally Charlotte snatches the check from Herman.

CHARLOTTE

Buzz off you mullethead halfwit.

HERMAN

I'm not afraid of you.

Charlotte takes a threatening step toward him; Herman flinches and scurries off. Roj notices IMOGENE, their supervisor, approaching. Imogene is late thirties and trying hard to pull off the whole powerful female executive vibe.

ROJ

Check it. Five-oh.

OVERHEAD SHOT as everyone rolls back to their desk.

IMOGENE

What's this, a party? Do we not have code to debug? Sequences to verify? Let's get to work people.

The prairie dogs start typing.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

(cheery)

Thank you! By-ee!

She heads out to the glass hallway. As she walks she sees Rams in Design...

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

(waving)

Hi Rams!

Rams smiles at her. She gets flustered like a school girl, TRIPS OVER A PLANT AND STARTS TO FALL...

On the prairie dogs as they input code. All wear their headsets. Suddenly they hear a CRASH/THUMP.

NEIL

(into headset)

What was that?

CHARLOTTE

(into headset)

That may have been Imogene tripping over the plant I moved hoping she would trip over the plant.

Our four cubicle workers peek their heads over the tops of their cubicles, just like prairie dogs, and see Imogene laid out in the hallway next to the fern. She looks in their direction -- they quickly disappear back down then slowly reappear to watch Imogene get up with as much dignity as she can muster.

SMASH CUT TO:

PRAIRIE DOGS CREDITS SEQUENCE

ACT ONE

INT. IMOGENE'S OFFICE - LATER

Imogene sighs as she looks through a binder of sketches Neil has given her. As she reads, Neil looks around her office at some framed homilies written in elaborate calligraphy and photos of Imogene with cats. (Imogene blowing out birthday cake candles, alone except for a cat; Imogene in a football jersey at her Superbowl party, alone except for a cat who also wears a jersey, etc.)

IMOGENE

Another transfer request to Design. Neil, we go through this every year.

NEIL

I know, but I've updated my portfolio --

IMOGENE

And it's excellent work. They'd be lucky to have you, but --

NEIL

So all you have to do is take the transfer request --

IMOGENE

I don't see a way --

NEIL

And sign it.

IMOGENE

To do that.

NEIL

It's just a signature! Everybody knows you fill up your weekends with calligraphy classes! So use it, sign it with a flourish! By the way, calligraphy class? What a roomful of raconteurs and bon vivants that must be. Who are you writing letters to, anyway? Let me guess: Dear Terry Gross, I really think we could be friends... I'm sorry, that was unkind. Calligraphy is an honorable hobby. Please sign it.

IMOGENE

I need you in here in Programming, Neil. The other nerds look up to you, you're top dweeb. Look, I know it's hard to be a prairie dog, doing all the work while Design gets all the glory but think about it this way: too bad.

NEIL

Technically, I don't need your recommendation if Rams himself requests me.

IMOGENE

(fit of giggles)
Rams himself...? Ha! You don't belong in Design. They'll smell the geek on you. You'll prance in there --

NEIL

I wouldn't prance --

IMOGENE

With your fig bars --

NEIL

Why would I have --

IMOGENE

And they will eat you alive.
(looks off sadly)
And your fig bars. And they won't say please or thank you.

Neil realizes she's talking about herself.

NEIL

(sympathetically)
They ate your fig bars?

IMOGENE

No. Go away.

She crumples his transfer request and throws it away.

INT. PROGRAMMING CUBE FARM -- MOMENTS LATER

Annoyed, Neil returns and sits at his desk; Charlotte rolls over with a post it.

CHARLOTTE

Got a message for you. You left your jacket at that club Flux last night.

Roj and Mazi roll up.

ROJ

You went to Flux and you didn't take us? Is it because we're Mexican and African and Charlotte?

NEIL

What? No, I was home last night.

CHARLOTTE

Well, they got your number from your credit card company.

NEIL

They have my credit card?

He reaches in his pocket, pulls out his wallet.

NEIL (CONT'D)

But I have my credit card right here.

MAZI

Uh-oh, somebody cloned your card.

NEIL

You think so?

MAZI

I'm sure of it. Identity theft is Nigeria's largest growth industry. We have internet fraud, government fraud and kidnapping. I don't miss it, I'll tell you that much.

NEIL

I've got to go down to that club and clear this up. If Imogene asks where I am, tell her I went out and I don't care what she thinks.

(starts to go, stops)

No, tell her I had a headache and went to the nurse.

(starts to go, stops)

No, she'll check the nurse. Tell her...

(MORE)

NEIL (CONT'D)
(then, sadly)
Tell her I have diarrhea.

Neil exits. Roj nods knowingly.

ROJ
It always works. But there's a
price to pay. Because then you're
the guy with the diarrhea.

INT. EGG COFFEE ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Imogene stands before Charlotte, Roj, and Mazi.

IMOGENE
I want to know who moved the plant
I tripped over this morning. I
think it was one of you because
you're always messing with me.
Lowering my desk chair -

FLASHBACK - INT. IMOGENE'S OFFICE

Imogene enters, addresses an EMPLOYEE who sits waiting.

IMOGENE
Sorry I'm late, let's get to this.

She sits in her chair which is set so low all we can see
is the top of her head.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)
Dammit!

INT. PROGRAMMING GROUP -- CONTINUOUS

IMOGENE
Putting salt in my coffee sugar --

FLASHBACK -- INT. COFFEE ROOM

Rams smiles as he approaches Imogene who finishes putting
sugar in her coffee and takes a sip...

RAMS
Imogene, how was your weekend?

Imogene spit-blows coffee all over Rams's shirt.

INT. PROGRAMMING GROUP -- CONTINUOUS

IMOGENE

But this is where it ends.
Whoever gives up the plant mover's
name will receive a personal free
dress day second Friday of the
month no tees no shorts no flip
flops, and... flex time.

ROJ

Is this the kind of thing they
teach you in management training?
That we'll all fight like hungry
dogs for the thrill of coming in
an hour late?

MAZI

Well, we will.

ROJ

No, we won't.

MAZI

(confused)

We won't? I want to be a part of
things but I so often miss the
nuances.

Imogene looks to Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

Sorry, Imogene, we can't help you.

IMOGENE

Well, I will get to the bottom of
this. And that person will pay.

Imogene exits.

CHARLOTTE

She'll have to catch us first.

INT. IMOGENE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Imogene enters and sits behind her desk -- and nearly
disappears because her chair has been set so low.

INT. COFFEE ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

On Charlotte, Roj, and Mazi...

CHARLOTTE

What's the bird?

NEIL

The internet.

ROJ

I've never heard that.

MAZI

Me neither.

NEIL

Fine. To the internet.

ROJ

It's not as good.

MAZI

I like the bird better.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, go back to the bird.

NEIL

Let's just go!

INT. PROGRAMMING CUBE FARM - LATER

The prairie dogs are around Neil's desk. On his computer is the NorCal Cable TV newsletter with a big "Employee of the Month" story. Next to a photo of a beefy middle-aged guy in a work shirt and camouflage hunter's cap. It reads "Congratulations to our Employee of the Month, Tommy Atwood, Engineering." Neil is on the phone.

NEIL

(into phone, friendly
deep voice)

Yeah, this is Tommy Atwood over in engineering. We're having trouble with our passcode for cross-checking residential installations, I'm showing 41695 -- that's not it?... Wow, we were way off. To repeat, it's...

(loudly into headset)

777 number sign capital B. Boy, we never had these problems before Obama, am I right?

On Charlotte as she finishes typing in the code Neil just got.

She hits enter, the screen changes and the words "Administrator Level Access Granted" appear on the Northern California Cable TV website.

CHARLOTTE

I'm in.

(reads screen)

Here it is. Cable installation one week ago for Neil Mitnick -- that's you -- at 4279 Lemontree, Unit B, Menlo Park. That's not you.

NEIL

He rented an apartment?!

CHARLOTTE

With four cable boxes.

MAZI

Why would he need four --

(then, awed)

Do you think he has bathroom cable?

ROJ

Why not? Sky's the limit for this guy.

CHARLOTTE

Maybe it's time to call the cops.

NEIL

No. I'm sick and tired of people taking advantage of me. I want to confront him. One on one. With you guys. So Charlotte can beat him up. Who's with me?

ROJ/CHARLOTTE/MAZI

I'm in./Hell yeah./Oh no.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - LATER

Neil and his friends head down the hall toward the identity thief's apartment. It's a beautiful building; even the hallway's fancy. Charlotte checks apartment numbers against the address she's holding as Neil and the others look around, impressed.

ROJ

(to Neil)

So...

(MORE)

ROJ (CONT'D)
if he's paying for this with your
money, it begs the question: why
don't you live in a place like
this?

NEIL
My place is nice.

FLASHBACK - INT. NEIL'S APARTMENT

It's tiny, white, utilitarian. It's the cube farm of
apartments. Roj and Neil are there. Roj looks around.

ROJ
Where's the bathroom?

NEIL
In the corner behind that screen.

Roj just shakes his head sadly.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

NEIL
Look, I'm sensible with my money.
I save it.

CHARLOTTE
(stops at a door)
This is it.

NEIL
(to Roj)
I'm not the one with the problem,
he's got the problem.

The apartment door is ajar. They all look inside.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The apartment is beautifully decorated and decked out.
Music plays on the sound system and in the middle of a
group of PRETTY GIRLS is the identity thief (GUY).

PRETTY GIRL
(to Guy)
Neil, your place is amazing.

ROJ

(to Neil)

He doesn't look like he's got a problem.

And he doesn't. In fact, he looks really, really happy. THE LIGHTING IS PERFECT AROUND THE GUY (GUY), EVEN HIS HAIR SEEMS TO BE GENTLY BLOWING IN THE BREEZE. HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S CONSTANTLY WALKING AROUND IN A FASHION AD.

MAZI

(to Neil, confused)

She called him Neil, that's your name.

They all just look at him. Then:

PRETTY GIRL

(to Guy)

How did you get all this?

GUY

Well, I believe in karma. You work hard, do the right thing and life will reward you.

On Neil as:

FLASHBACK - INT. NEIL'S APARTMENT

The apartment appears empty. We hear a toilet flush. SUDDENLY THE BATHROOM PRIVACY SCREEN TIPS OVER TOWARD CAMERA REVEALING NEIL ON THE TOILET.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Neil loses it and charges across the room to tackle this asshole who stole his life.

NEIL

Karma?! You want karma?!

HE TAKES A RUNNING LEAP... HE FLIES THROUGH THE AIR, ARMS OUTSTRETCHED... STRAINING, REACHING... AND LANDS ABOUT A FOOT SHORT. He falls hard to the ground, knocking himself unconscious. Guy looks curiously from Neil to the prairie dogs and back again.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. GUY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Neil wakes up and finds himself tucked cozily into bed. He looks around the unfamiliar and awesome room -- king size bed, flat screen TV, beautiful linens. He rubs the comforter.

NEIL

So soft.

He hears laughter from the other room.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Roj, Charlotte and Mazi are seated at the kitchen table. Guy is at the stove whipping up crepes.

ROJ

...see at work it's all about the haves vs. the have-nots, the cool vs. the uncool.

MAZI

(cheerful)
We're the uncool.

GUY

Ah.

ROJ

They call us prairie dogs.

GUY

You know why they do that?

ROJ

Because they're one percenters, man. It's class warfare. They only feel good about themselves when they're putting the little guy down.

GUY

No. It's because they're happy. They love their lives and they're glad they're not you.

The prairie dogs all stare at him, taken aback. Then:

ROJ

Whoa.

MAZI

Yeah.

(then)

Whattaya got on sex? Vis a vis I would really like to have some.

GUY

Don't be about the sex, be about the woman.

MAZI

I am about the woman. You need the woman to have sex. Any woman at all. I just really need a naked lady.

GUY

Just... get to know her as a human being first. Try to understand who she is, what she needs. And then when you make your move, take it slow. There are places on a woman where nobody ever touches her. And if you do...

Guy demonstrates by running his hand gently up Charlotte's inner arm.

GUY (CONT'D)

... it packs a punch.

Charlotte is immediately smitten and starts sucking Guy's fingers.

GUY (CONT'D)

(extricating himself)

Wow, okay. Sorry, that's my crepe rolling hand, thanks.

Mazi looks at Charlotte, then runs his hand up her inner arm. She bats him away like a fly as Neil enters from the bedroom, takes in the convivial scene.

NEIL

What's going on?

ROJ

Guy made crepes!

NEIL

I'm sorry... Guy? This guy told you his name was 'Guy' and you believe him?

MAZI

Guy wouldn't lie.

Guy's phone rings, he answers.

GUY

(into phone)

This is Steve.

He shakes his head 'not really' at Neil.

GUY (CONT'D)

I can't really talk right now. You can just wire the money direct. Thanks.

(hangs up)

Okay, where were we? Neil, come on, sit down, have a crepe.

NEIL

I don't want a crepe, I want my life back. I'm calling the cops.

GUY

I really, really wish you wouldn't do that.

MAZI

Don't call the cops on Guy.

ROJ

Yeah, he's great. I mean, yes, he's technically a criminal but he made crepes.

CHARLOTTE

And he touched me.

MAZI

And he feels really bad for taking your money.

Guy crosses to Neil, looks him straight in the eye.

GUY

I do. Your friends told me what you've been dealing with at work, with your crazy boss and trying to get transferred...

(MORE)

GUY (CONT'D)

And I'm sorry that I made your
life even more screwed up.

Neil stares at Guy; it seems like he really means it.
Can he mean it?

NEIL

... well, I, uh... I'm not really
sure why they would tell you any
of my private business.

CHARLOTTE

We told him everything. It's
impossible not to, he's like a
sexy priest.

GUY

And I want to believe that there's
a way to deal with all of this
that doesn't involve the cops.

NEIL

It's just... that was my money. I
was saving that money.

GUY

For what?

NEIL

For the future, when I'm happy and
I might need it.

MAZI

Guy says the future is now.

NEIL

(snaps)
I don't care what Guy says!
(then, to Guy)
Sorry, I didn't mean to snap.
(then)
Wait, yes I did!
(then)
My head hurts.

GUY

Hey, we're all under a lot of
strain here.

Neil rubs his head; he's exhausted.

NEIL

I don't... I don't know what to
do...

GUY

Okay, what say we reconvene here tomorrow, try to figure all of this out?

NEIL

And I'm just supposed to trust that you won't take off? I don't think so.

CHARLOTTE

We don't have to trust him.

She pulls a police-type monitoring ankle bracelet out of her purse and holds it up.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

We can do our own little version of house arrest.

NEIL

Why do you have an electronic ankle monitor in your purse?

CHARLOTTE

Because sometimes boys don't do what they say they're going to do.

MAZI

(to Charlotte)

You're right, you might be too much for me.

INT. EGG TECHNOLOGIES HALLWAY - MORNING

Neil, Mazi, Roj and Charlotte all meet up on their way in and walk down the hall toward their cubicles.

NEIL

(to Charlotte)

So I didn't hear from you last night, I guess that means he didn't try to take off?

CHARLOTTE

He didn't go anywhere.

(then, cop talk)

The chicken is in the coop. The cookie is in the jar. The gift is under the tree.

MAZI

He really is a gift, isn't he?

INT. PROGRAMMING CUBE FARM - MOMENTS LATER

They reach their desks; Charlotte gasps.

CHARLOTTE

Guys, we've got a problem...

She points to her desk. On it sits the ELECTRONIC ANKLE MONITOR she put on Guy the night before.

NEIL

What in the hell....? How did he get that thing off?

ROJ

I am loving this guy more and more. He's like Robin Hood, living off the grid, striking a blow for the little guy.

NEIL

I'm the little guy; he stole my grid! And now he's long gone and he's going to get away with screwing up my life just like everybody else does and I'm the one who has to pay.

MAZI

Well, technically you won't have to pay if you tell your credit card company --

NEIL

It was a metaphor! For everything. My life sucks!

At that moment Guy rolls up to them on a wheeled office chair, a cup of steaming coffee in his hand.

GUY

Wednesdays, huh?

Everyone stares at him in shock. Then:

ROJ

Bra. Vo. Come on people, let him feel the love.

Charlotte, Roj and Mazi all join in a round of applause. Guy bows his head modestly.

GUY

I do. I feel it, I feel the love.

ROJ

How did you get in here?

MAZI

Seriously, they frisked me this morning and I've worked here eight months.

GUY

It wasn't that hard.

(points to pants)

Office guy khakis from the mall.

(points to ID)

Fake ID badge from Kinkos. And...

(points to face)

Well, God made this, but everybody loves it.

CHARLOTTE

You got that right.

GUY

And now I can pretty much come and go as I please.

CHARLOTTE

I'd let you in anywhere.

ROJ

Charlotte. No. Be a lady.

NEIL

(to Guy)

Why are you here?

GUY

I don't know. I was gonna take off. I started to. But... you know, it's one thing to, um, do what I do anonymously, but now that I've met you... it didn't feel right to just leave. I kind of felt like I owed you a favor.

NEIL

You're going to pay the money back?

GUY

Ha. No. You ever heard that phrase 'give a man a fish he eats for a day, teach a man to fish he eats for life?' Well, I'm gonna teach you how to fish.

NEIL

So you're going to teach me how to pay myself back the money.

GUY

Like your work thing, here's the deal. There's a front door and a back door to everything and you've been banging on the front door for years when it's clearly locked. You gotta go around back.

(points to Design)

You want to get over to the good life you gotta go around lonely boss lady and straight to German skirt guy.

NEIL

Small problem. German skirt guy doesn't know who the hell I am.

GUY

Right, I took care of that. You know that new super secret prototype phone he's been carrying around?

NEIL

Yeah?

GUY

Well, I stole it. It's in that envelope on your desk.

Neil whips around; sure enough there is an interoffice envelope sitting on his desk.

NEIL

You stole the Egg 5, the most valuable piece of hardware this company has, from the head of the Design Department, and you, you gave it to me?!

GUY

You're welcome.

Off Neil's horror...

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. PROGRAMMING CUBE FARM - MOMENTS LATER

All are as they were before. Neil grabs the inter-office envelope off his desk and rips it open. He looks inside then starts hyperventilating.

NEIL

I'm gonna throw up.

He silently heaves a couple of times. Pulls it together. Heaves once more.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Okay so your plan is... what's your plan? 'Cause Rams is gonna notice the phone's gone and when he finds out I have it he's going to arrest me and throw me in jail. Or worse. Germans do very bad things when they're mad.

GUY

He's not going to arrest you because he doesn't even know it was stolen -- he thinks he lost it.

FLASHBACK - INT. EGG ELEVATOR - THAT MORNING

Guy is there, with a mail cart he hijacked from somewhere. Rams is there too. They are laughing hard at something Guy has just said. Guy reaches over, slaps Rams on the back and surreptitiously pickpockets the phone from Rams and slips it into the mail cart.

RAMS

They were sisters. It's too delicious!

INT. PROGRAMMING CUBE FARM - CONTINUOUS

GUY

Rams was responsible for that thing so he can't tell anyone he lost it. And right now he is freaking out. You bring that back to him, you're a hero. The guy who saved the day.

(MORE)

GUY (CONT'D)

Plus you both have a secret, which he does not want to get out. So you kind of own him.

Neil stares at Guy a long beat.

NEIL

I think you're a sociopath.

He puts the phone, in the envelope, back on his desk.

CHARLOTTE

(to Guy)

Me too. Touch me again.

GUY

I'm sorry, weren't you the guy who just said his life sucks? So go change it.

At that moment Imogene comes into the cubicles. OVERHEAD SHOT as everyone rolls back to their desks and Guy silently glides out of sight. Guy is now the fifth, perfectly coordinated member of their water ballet. Imogene sashays up to Neil at his desk. She leans against his desk, dangerously close to the envelope with the phone.

IMOGENE

Neil, I've given some more thought to your transfer request. And I'm inclined to sign it.

NEIL

Oh my God, really?

His excitement turns to fear as she starts absently touching and looking through the papers on his desk. She gets to the interoffice envelope with the phone in it, picks it up briefly, then puts it back down and turns to face Neil who can barely breathe.

IMOGENE

Just tell me which one of your little friends moved the plant. Huh? Not a bad deal.

Neil is stunned. It's everything he wants, but...

NEIL

I can't do that.

IMOGENE

(amicably)

Okay. Well, I hope you remember what a good friend you are as you rot in your cubicle because I will never ever let you out of Programming. By-ee!

She heads off. Neil is gutted. Guy rolls back into frame.

GUY

Is every day like this? Because I am emotionally drained.

NEIL

Screw it. I'm doing it.

He grabs the envelope with the phone and exits.

INT. EGG HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Neil strides down the hallway purposefully, a man on a mission. He rounds a corner and COLLIDES WITH RAMS. The envelope falls, Rams picks it up and hands it back to Neil. Neil panics and turns a quick left into the men's room.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Neil, breathing hard, leans against the wall. He stares at himself in the mirror. This is it. His do or die moment. Does he have the guts to take it?

NEIL

Okay. Okay! Oh god. WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?

He jumps up and down a couple of times to rev himself up. He's doing it!

NEIL (CONT'D)

I'mdoingitI'mdoingitI'mdoingit!

He throws open the door...

INT. EGG HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

... and comes face to face with A PRETTY CO-WORKER who is standing right by the door, a worried look on her face.

PRETTY CO-WORKER

... Are you okay?

A long beat.

NEIL

(feebly)

I have diarrhea.

He quickly escapes back into the men's room.

INT. IMOGENE'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Charlotte is in front of Imogene's desk. Imogene is in her chair looking like the cat that ate the canary.

IMOGENE

So just wanted to let you know the great news -- there's been a break in the plant moving mystery!

Imogene gets up, crosses to stand in front of Charlotte.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

I know it was you. Yeah. I just found an eye witness who saw the whole thing.

She looks through the glass wall of her office and smiles at Herman as he passes. We faintly hear:

HERMAN

Heh heh.

CHARLOTTE

(to Imogene, unfazed)

So I moved a plant, what are you gonna do? File form 9704-dash-suck it?

IMOGENE

Well, I could file a reprimand with HR. Or suspend you. Or maybe I should just call your grandma.

Charlotte blanches.

CHARLOTTE

What do you know about my grandma?

IMOGENE

Christmas party last year...

FLASHBACK - INT. PROGRAMMING GROUP -- MOMENTS LATER

A cube farm Christmas. Through the glass hallway Design has a jazz band and waiters distributing canapes and champagne. Programming has juice boxes and a fruitcake. Imogene talks to a small, adorable old lady, CHARLOTTE'S GRANDMA.

CHARLOTTE'S GRANDMA

... After her parents took off, I had to raise the whole lot of 'em, but Charlotte's the one, with the big career, I'm so proud. She's the only one who never let me down. She's my angel.

IMOGENE

Well, she's very special.

INT. IMOGENE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE

You wouldn't.

IMOGENE

I most certainly would. And boy will she be disappointed. You're her angel.

Charlotte is in a panic. She looks past Imogene to a shelf of calligraphy samples and photos of Imogene with cats. She looks thoughtfully at a photo of Imogene cuddling a cat -- both wearing "Happy New Year" tiaras -- and realizes... she still has a shot to save this. She steps closer to Imogene.

CHARLOTTE

I totally get why you're mad. It was cruel of me. But sometimes I forget you're not just my boss, you're also a person. A woman.

She runs her hand gently up and down the inside of Imogene's arm, looking her deep in the eye. Just like Guy did to her the night before.

IMOGENE

(muffled squeak)

CHARLOTTE

With feelings... vulnerabilities. A sister. And I am truly sorry.

IMOGENE

(a little breathless)
 ...Yes, er, well, since you seem
 to have learned your lesson...
 case closed then.

CHARLOTTE

(warm smile)
 Thanks, Imogene, you're the best.

Charlotte exits. Imogene takes a deep breath, spent.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Neil is now sitting on -- but not using -- the toilet. He stares at the phone in his hand, thinking hard. He hears the door to the men's room open and jumps up guiltily. THE PHONE SLIPS FROM HIS HAND AND SKITTERS OUT TO THE SINK AREA. Neil doesn't have time to get it back and knows he can't be caught in there with it. He quickly climbs up onto the toilet and crouches there, holding his breath. He listens as the new arrival enters, whistling. The whistling suddenly stops.

HERMAN (O.S.)

What the hell....

Through the crack in the stall door Neil (and we) see Herman the mail guy bend down, pick up the phone and look it over curiously. He realizes what he's holding.

HERMAN (CONT'D)

Heh heh.

He exits. Neil sags against the toilet, all hope lost.

INT. PROGRAMMING CUBE FARM - JUST LATER

Neil sadly shuffles back to his desk. Guy and the prairie dogs look at him expectantly.

ROJ

So? What happened?

Neil just shakes his head 'no' then peeps over the side of the cubicles. The others follow suit. They see Rams and Herman across the hallway in Design. A very grateful looking Rams shakes Herman's hand. Then hugs him and ruffles his hair. Sadly, the prairie dogs and Guy sink back down.

INT. PROGRAMMING CUBE FARM - LATER

Neil sits at his desk staring into space, not blinking.
The prairie dogs are crowded around him, Guy hangs back.

ROJ

Hey buddy, say something.

MAZI

Maybe we have to shock him awake.
Charlotte, quick, make out with
me. Really put your leg into it.

Charlotte pushes Mazi aside; his slight frame flies
across the room. Charlotte takes no notice.

CHARLOTTE

(gently)

You'll have other chances with
Rams.

NEIL

(snaps out of it)

Really? Other mysterious
strangers will appear, steal the
key to my future and drop it in my
lap? You think we get a lot of
those, do you?

Guy starts sidling toward the exit.

GUY

Well you guys all seem good, I'm
just gonna hit the road.

NEIL

(stands, deep breath)

Actually... I'd like to keep you.

GUY

I'm sorry?

NEIL

You were right. If I had followed
your advice, I'd be the one
hugging Rams but I blew it. And I
want another chance. So here's my
offer: you stick around and work
off the money you owe me by
helping me change my life and I
won't call security right now and
have you handed over to the cops.

The prairie dogs exchange impressed looks.

GUY

Yeah, well, if it's all the same to you, I think I'll just move along.

NEIL

But it's not all the same to me.
(then, with meaning)
And the thing is, we both have a secret. Which you don't want to get out. So I kind of own you.

Guy has to laugh.

GUY

I taught you that. You can't use it on me.

NEIL

I think I just did.

GUY

Huh. I'm both pissed off and a little proud.

CHARLOTTE

I'm all the way turned on.

MAZI

I could've done that, I could've said that.

Guy thinks a beat, then:

GUY

Okay, you know what? Yeah, I'll stick around for awhile. I think I could do something with you.

NEIL

Really? That worked?

GUY

Well, no, but... when you live my kind of life you're in, like, a bubble -- don't have any real friends, can't stay in one place. I could use a break. And, honestly, it's been fun using my powers for good for a change.

NEIL

Then we have a deal.

GUY

I guess we do.

They shake hands, then:

GUY (CONT'D)

Can I keep the apartment?

NEIL

Why not? It's way better than my
crapbox. I'll move in with you.

GUY

And the car?

NEIL

What? What car?

GUY

Uh... Huh?

NEIL

You bought a car?

GUY

No. Of course not, I'm kidding.
Just messing with you.

NEIL

...okay, good.

Neil walks off, Guy turns to the prairie dogs.

GUY

(whispers)

I totally bought a car.

He gives them a cheery wave and strolls off.

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

INT. EGG ELEVATOR - DAY

Neil, Roj, Mazi and Charlotte get in the elevator at the end of a long, strange day. The elevator doors start to close, then reopen and Rams and Herman enter together in mid-conversation. The doors close, they head down.

RAMS

(to Herman)

... and I agree, you shouldn't be stuck in the mailroom. Come to talk to me, we'll see what we can do.

Neil and the other prairie dogs are disgusted.

HERMAN

Great, Rams, thanks.

The doors open, Herman exits. The doors close again. Neil decides he can't let this continue, gets an idea.

NEIL

That Herman, huh? He's something.

RAMS

Yah. He's a good man.

NEIL

It's great how he found your phone for you.

Rams' face darkens. The other prairie dogs perk up -- something interesting is happening.

RAMS

What phone? You know about the phone?

NEIL

Yeah, he's telling everyone how you lost it and he found it...

Neil shoots a sidelong look at the prairie dogs who are now grinning ear to ear.

RAMS

(furious)

Das schweinehund!

The doors open, Neil and his friends get off as Rams feverishly presses buttons to go back up, muttering angrily in German.

RAMS (CONT'D)

Ich werde diesen Bastard zu toten,
Herman!

The doors close. The prairie dogs look at Neil, awed.

NEIL

(a la Herman)
Heh heh.

END OF SHOW