

Nathan vs. Nurture

"Pilot"

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5th Revised Network Draft
January 21, 2010

Nathan vs. Nurture

ACT ONE

SCENE A

FADE IN:

INT. ARTHUR'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

DANIEL BENNETT, 24 AND THE YOUNGEST OF THE THREE BENNETT SONS, IS AT THE TABLE IN HIS SUNDAY BEST, RIPPED JEANS AND A TEE SHIRT. HE'S STARING AT HIS LAPTOP. JUST THEN, **ARTHUR BENNETT**, 50'S, ENTERS FROM THE LIVING ROOM. HE'S GOT A PEP IN HIS STEP.

ARTHUR

(UPBEAT) Where is everyone? I wanna get this family meeting started.

DANIEL

Lexi's running late, but Robert and Joel should be here any minute.

ARTHUR OPENS A CUPBOARD AND TAKES OUT CHAMPAGNE GLASSES.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

(TREADING LIGHTLY) Hey Dad, the Visa bill came.

ARTHUR

(NOT PAYING ATTENTION) Uh-huh.

DANIEL

Before you look at it, you should know that you're going to see a charge for a new computer.

ARTHUR

Got it.

DANIEL

That's cause I kinda bought one.

ARTHUR

Great.

DANIEL

(TAKEN ABACK) Great?

ARTHUR

Well, an aspiring writer needs a top-
of-the-line computer.

ARTHUR WHISTLES AS HE PUTS THE CHAMPAGNE FLUTES ON A TRAY.
DANIEL EYES ARTHUR SUSPICIOUSLY, THIS WAS NOT THE REACTION
HE EXPECTED.

DANIEL

(TESTING) Also, I bought a new
computer bag. (THEN) It's made of
fur.

ARTHUR

Got to keep those things warm, right?

ARTHUR FLICKS A CHAMPAGNE FLUTE TO ELICIT A MUSICAL "BING!"

DANIEL

What exactly's happening at this family
meeting?

ARTHUR

Nothing. Where are the caviar spoons?

SFX: FRONT DOOR OPENING

JOEL (O.S.)

Hey.

ROBERT (O.S.)

Hello!

ARTHUR PICKS UP THE TRAY OF CHAMPAGNE FLUTES, DANIEL GRABS THE ICE BUCKET WITH THE CHAMPAGNE AND THEY CROSS INTO:

INT. BENNETT LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

THEY ENTER TO SEE **JOEL BENNETT**, THE OLDEST CHILD AT 30, WHO CARRIES HIMSELF WITH THE CONFIDENCE AND ARROGANCE THAT COMES WITH A LIFETIME OF FAMILY PRAISE AND **ROBERT BENNETT**, THE MIDDLE CHILD AT 28, WHO'S A LITTLE UPTIGHT, BUT NOT WITHOUT BEING VERY COMPASSIONATE.

ARTHUR

Boys!

ARTHUR GIVES EACH A BIG HUG, THEN TURNS AND HUGS DANIEL.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

(TO DANIEL) That's because I missed you earlier.

DANIEL

What's going on, Dad?

ARTHUR

I just have some good news. Some very good news.

ARTHUR POPS SOME CHAMPAGNE AND BEGINS POURING GLASSES.

DANIEL

Hold on, Lexi should be here in a second.

ARTHUR

(REALIZING) Ooh, she's gonna need a flute.

ARTHUR HEADS INTO THE KITCHEN TO RETRIEVE ANOTHER GLASS.

ROBERT

Wait, Lexi's coming?

DANIEL

Yeah, it's a family meeting.

ROBERT

Well, if Lexi's coming, Phillip should be here.

DANIEL

Lexi and Phillip are not on the same level. Lexi and I are engaged.

ROBERT

You gave her a necklace.

DANIEL

An engagement necklace. The guy at the store said it's a thing. Back me up, Joel.

JOEL

It's definitely not an engagement. But she should be here.

ROBERT

Why?

JOEL

Daniel's got no job, no skills, he lives with his father, I mean, if she's buying into that, she's in it for the long haul.

DANIEL

(MEANS IT) Thank you, Joel.

JOEL

Whereas you and Phillip, I'm not so sure.

ROBERT

What?

JOEL

Look, I just don't see it. And I know people. I sell BMW's.

ROBERT

It's serious, Joel. We're talking about moving in together.

JOEL

Come on, the constant apologizing, the way he hip bumps people "hello", he's gotta be getting on your nerves.

ROBERT

Look, the apologizing's an issue, but I have fixed the hip bumping.

JOEL

I give it a month.

ROBERT

You know, you'd think you could cut him a break. Phillip really likes you.

JUST THEN ARTHUR RETURNS.

ARTHUR

Am I hearing Phillip talk, is someone breaking up with Phillip?

ROBERT

No.

ARTHUR

Sorry, Robert, in your own time.

LEXI MILLER, 23, DANIEL'S FIANCEE, ENTERS THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR.

DANIEL

Hey, honey.

THEY KISS.

LEXI

Sorry I'm late, I overslept -- I set my alarm for 9:15, a year from now.

JOEL

(TO ROBERT) You can't tell me they're not perfect for each other.

ARTHUR GRABS HIS CHAMPAGNE GLASS, AS DO ALL.

ARTHUR

I just want to tell all of you, and Lexi, that I love you all very much. All of you, and Lexi, mean the world to me. And nothing can change how I feel about you. And Lexi.

DANIEL

Dad.

ARTHUR

The necklace is confusing, Daniel. I mean, is she in or she out?

ROBERT

Dad, what do you want to tell us?

ARTHUR

Right. (THEN) As you all recall your mother and I, god rest her soul, when we were in high school, we became pregnant, and had to give a baby up for adoption.

ROBERT

Nathan.

ARTHUR

Right. Well, the thing is... he found us!

JOEL

What?

EVERYONE EXCHANGES SHOCKED LOOKS.

ARTHUR

Nathan is here in Philadelphia! Has been his whole life -- bouncing between foster homes most of his childhood -- it's very sad but right now I'm too excited because we got him back!

ROBERT

Oh my god, are you telling me that we're going to finally meet Nathan?

ARTHUR

Yes!

ROBERT

This is amazing. (THEN) How cool
would it be if he's gay?

ARTHUR

It'd be cool, but he probably isn't.

ROBERT

But he might be.

ARTHUR

But he's probably not.

ROBERT

But we could ask him.

ARTHUR

But not right away.

ROBERT

It doesn't even matter. I'm just so
excited.

JOEL

(LEANING BACK, RELAXED) Kidney.

ROBERT

What?

JOEL

Do you guys watch any medical dramas?
This guy probably wants a kidney.

LEXI

Or money. I watch legal dramas.

JOEL

Exactly. I'm just saying we should
proceed with caution.

ARTHUR

Joel, all I know is that thirty-five years ago I got to look at my little boy, and now I'm finally going to see him again. And nothing else really matters. (TOASTING) To Nathan.

DANIEL

(SLOW BURN) Oh my god.

ARTHUR

What?

DANIEL

This is why you didn't care about the Visa bill.

ARTHUR

Huh?

DANIEL

I waste three grand on a computer and you don't even blink.

ARTHUR

I thought you needed it.

DANIEL

Of course, I don't need it. I have another one in my closet right now. But you're too focused on Nathan to point it out.

ARTHUR

Daniel, I understand that this is a lot to take, but it's not going to change anything.

DANIEL

Look, Dad, I get it, he's your son, but it's always been the four of us, and now it's not going to be.

ARTHUR PUTS A GENTLE HAND ON DANIEL'S SHOULDER.

ARTHUR

Daniel, this is exactly what Joel and Robert went through when we had you. (TO ROBERT AND JOEL) And weren't your lives richer and better for it?

ROBERT

Absolutely.

JOEL

Well not richer, cause he gets a third --

ARTHUR SNAPS HIS FINGERS TO QUIET JOEL.

ARTHUR

It's like having a new baby in the family. Only he's older. (CAN'T HELP BUT GLOW) And a doctor, a heart surgeon, really. He was just ranked number one on the east coast -- I've been doing some googling.

DANIEL ROLLS HIS EYES AND EXITS.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

(TO DANIEL) I google you all the time! (TRAILING OFF) Just nothing comes up but the expulsion...

ROBERT

(TO LEXI) He sold term papers in high school.

JOEL

Everyone failed, so they turned him in.

LEXI

Arthur, don't worry, I'll go talk to him.

ARTHUR

Thanks, Lexi.

LEXI

Just let us know when the family meeting starts.

AS THEY WATCH HER WALK OUT:

ROBERT

(TO JOEL) They really are perfect for each other.

AS JOEL NODS, "YOU SEE", WE...

ACT ONE

SCENE B

INT. HOSPITAL - PRE-OP - DAY

DR. GRIFFIN BIRK, 35, IS SCRUBBING UP BEFORE SURGERY WITH HIS COLLEAGUE, **DR. PADMA CHANDAR**, 34.

PADMA

I didn't even know you were looking for your birth parents.

GRIFFIN

I wasn't really. It's just, it was my birthday, I was home alone, I had a few drinks, and...

PADMA

You went online.

GRIFFIN

I checked out the adoption site, I bought like eight sweaters from J Crew, it was a disaster.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - SHORT WHILE LATER

GRIFFIN IS IN THE MIDDLE OF SURGERY. PADMA IS HANDLING THE ANESTHESIA. TWO NURSES ARE ASSISTING. DURING IT WE HEAR THE FAINT SYNCOPATION OF A HEART BEAT.

GRIFFIN

Now they want to meet, have lunch -- it feels like a lot.

PADMA

They just want to get to know you. And aren't you curious to know them?

GRIFFIN

I don't understand this whole obsession
with knowing people.

SFX: RAPID DROP IN HEART RATE

THE PATIENT BEGINS CRASHING. GRIFFIN CASUALLY CONTINUES
THE CONVERSATION WHILE TAKING CARE OF THE SITUATION.

NURSE #2

Doctor, he's crashing.

NURSE #1

40 over 20.

GRIFFIN REACHES INTO THE MAN'S OFFSCREEN CHEST.

GRIFFIN

20 cc's of vasopressin -- I mean it
just leads to expectations and
disappointments. Besides, can anyone
really know anyone, anyway?

SFX: NORMAL HEART RATE

EVERYONE RELAXES. GRIFFIN HASN'T BROKEN A SWEAT.

PADMA

I think you want this more than you
want to admit. Didn't this all get
started because you were home alone,
crying and shopping on your birthday?

GRIFFIN

I was not alone. I had a very lovely
visitor.

PADMA

Who?

GRIFFIN

Jane, Jennica... I want to say
Jennifer?

NURSE #2

(PULLS DOWN MASK) It's Julie.

GRIFFIN

(REMEMBERING) Right. (REMEMBERING
MORE) Thank you for the cake.

INT. GRIFFIN'S OFFICE - SHORT TIME LATER

GRIFFIN AND PADMA, ENTER. **GWEN**, GRIFFIN'S ASSISTANT,
HANDS HIM HIS MAIL.

GRIFFIN

Hey, Gwen, we really need to start
seeing a list of who's scheduled to
be in surgery with me.

GWEN

Or you could try sleeping with someone
outside the hospital.

GRIFFIN

I'm just not a big bar guy.

GWEN EXITS. PADMA TAKES A STEP TOWARD HIM.

PADMA

Griffin, drunk or not, you got in
touch with this agency for a reason.

GRIFFIN

Look, the truth is I'm a little scared,
okay? I don't know how to do family.

PADMA

It's not so hard.

GRIFFIN

Are you sure? Because people make it look really hard. I mean, most of the gun shot victims we see are here because of family members.

PADMA

It's one lunch. Go, meet them. And if you want that to be it, it can be it.

GRIFFIN

I don't know. Then part of me starts thinking that I have a full life as it is. What do I need this for?

GWEN ENTERS WITH A LARGE BOX.

GWEN

Dr. Birk, there's a large package with eleven pairs of khakis?

PADMA LOOKS AT GRIFFIN.

GRIFFIN

(SHEEPISH, EXPLAINING) New Years.

(THEN) It's one lunch.

AND WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE C

INT. CAFE DEL RIO - MID-DAY (DAY 2)

ARTHUR AND JOEL ARE SEATED AT THE TABLE. ROBERT COMES TO THE TABLE. WITH PHILLIP.

ROBERT

Hi, guys. You remember Phillip.

EVERYONE SAYS HELLO TO PHILLIP.

PHILLIP

Hi, sorry we're late.

ROBERT

We're not late, Phillip. You don't have to apologize.

PHILLIP

Oh. Sorry.

JOEL

(MOUTHING TO ROBERT) One month.

LEXI ARRIVES ON THEIR HEELS.

LEXI

Daniel's looking for a spot.

PHILLIP

(TRYING TO BE HELPFUL) They have valet outside.

LEXI

I know, but Daniel worked with them for a few days... it didn't end well.

JUST THEN, BENNETT FAMILY HISTORY FOREVER CHANGES.

GRIFFIN (O.S.)

You must be the Bennetts.

AND NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME, BROTHERS SEE BROTHER, AND
FATHER SEES SON.

ARTHUR

I'm Arthur. (WITH GREAT EMOTION)

Your father. Come here, Nathan.

ARTHUR ENVELOPES HIM IN A GIANT HUG.

GRIFFIN

(MID HUG) It's Griffin.

ARTHUR

Oh, right, right. You see, your mom
and I named you Nathan and we've always
referred to you that way. I guess
your adopted parents changed it to
Griffin.

GRIFFIN

They did.

ARTHUR

(BEAT) Are you gonna stick with that
now?

GRIFFIN

I am.

ARTHUR

Understood, understood. (THEN) My
God are you handsome.

GRIFFIN

(COVERING DISCOMFORT) Thank you,
that's very kind. I should let you
know I only have an hour.

JOEL

Why don't you take your coat off?
(SLIGHTLY CHALLENGING) Unless, you
got some kinda dialysis machine under
there.

GRIFFIN WARILY BEGINS TO TAKE HIS COAT OFF. HE'S CLEAN.

JOEL (CONT'D)

(SATISFIED, OFFERS HAND) I'm Joel.

GRIFFIN

Griffin.

ROBERT EAGERLY STEPS UP.

ROBERT

(EXTENDING HAND, MOVED) Nathan.

GRIFFIN

Griffin.

ROBERT

(TOO MOVED TO HEAR HIM) Nathan, I
can't believe you're here.

AS THEY SHAKE, ROBERT QUICKLY SIZES UP GRIFFIN'S "STATUS".

ROBERT (CONT'D)

(TO OTHERS) Not gay. Not gay at
all. (TO GRIFFIN, STILL EXCITED)
(MORE)

ROBERT (CONT'D)

What's your cell phone number?

(PULLING OUT PHONE) I'm a texter.

Are you a texter?

GRIFFIN

(COVERING, TO ARTHUR) Actually, it's more like a half-hour. Traffic, parking...

ARTHUR

(GESTURING) And this is Lexi.

GRIFFIN

Hello.

LEXI EXTENDS HER HAND AND THEY SHAKE.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)

What a beautiful necklace.

LEXI

Thank you. Daniel and I haven't set a date yet.

GRIFFIN NODS A BIT CONFUSED.

JOEL

On some planets they're considered engaged.

GRIFFIN

(TO PHILLIP) And you are?

PHILLIP

I'm sorry. Phillip.

ROBERT

(TO PHILLIP, ANNOYED) It's like with every sentence.

ARTHUR

(NOTICING) Daniel!

WE SEE DANIEL, WEARING A ZIPPED UP HOODED SWEATSHIRT, IN A HEATED ARGUMENT WITH A VALET ATTENDANT.

DANIEL

(WITH ATTITUDE, TO VALET GUY) Hey, what's done is done. I don't work for you anymore!

DANIEL APPROACHES THE TABLE.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

(TO DAD) You had to pick this restaurant.

ARTHUR

Sorry. (THEN) Daniel, this is your brother.

THEY SHAKE.

GRIFFIN

It's nice to meet you.

DANIEL

You, too.

DANIEL, REMAINING STANDING, UNZIPS HIS SWEATSHIRT TO REVEAL HIS TEE SHIRT. ON IT IS A PHOTO OF THE FAMILY (ARTHUR, JOEL, ROBERT, DANIEL). ABOVE THE PHOTO READS: ARTHUR IS FIFTY! BELOW: **THE BENNETT BOYS! FOUR-EVER!**

ARTHUR

Daniel, what are you wearing?

DANIEL

It's from your birthday, remember?
The four of us (POINTING) Me. You.
Robert. Joel. The family. Doing
stuff together on your birthday?

ARTHUR

I remember the tee shirt, Daniel.

DANIEL

(TO GRIFFIN) We had an awesome time.
Miniature golfing.

JOEL

(ASIDE, TO GRIFFIN) I won.

DANIEL

The four of us, the Bennetts, the
family.

ARTHUR

Daniel, stop it, you're making him
uncomfortable.

GRIFFIN

I'm not uncomfortable. I did, however,
make a mistake about the time.

DANIEL

(TO ARTHUR) How about the way you're
making me uncomfortable?
(MORE)

DANIEL (CONT'D)

The last few days it's been nothing but, "my son, the heart surgeon, did this", "my son, the heart surgeon, did that", "I'll ask my son Nathan, he's a heart surgeon."

GRIFFIN

(HANDS ON TEMPLES, QUIETLY) Griffin.

ARTHUR

I was just saying that because I'm proud of him.

DANIEL

But you never say that about me. Or my writing.

JOEL

Daniel, in two years you've written a page and a half.

DANIEL

It's called a short story. And this is between me and Dad.

LEXI

For what it's worth I think this new computer's going to make all the difference.

ARTHUR

Daniel, no father in the history of fathers has praised their children more than me. Remember all the ribbons I'd hand out? For the potty, for eating vegetables, for doing your homework -- not getting it right, just doing it. You had a room filled with ribbons.

DANIEL

(EARNEST) But when's the last time I got one of those?

ARTHUR

Look, I'm proud of you. For...all kinds of stuff. But I do think you can be more. Instead of being threatened by your brother, try being inspired by him. (SIGHS, THEN TO GRIFFIN) What do you think?

GRIFFIN

About what?

ARTHUR

About this, about everything.

DANIEL

You're asking him??

ARTHUR

He has a lot of insight.

GRIFFIN

Look, I don't really have any insight.
I'm as confused and nervous about all
this as any of you. And you know
what, I think that's natural. So
why don't we all just take a deep
breath and start again.

ARTHUR

(BEAT, AMAZED) Such wisdom.

DANIEL

Oh my god, you know what, we're outta
here.

DANIEL LEAVES.

LEXI

(TO GRIFFIN, SWEETLY) It was so nice
to meet you.

LEXI LEAVES.

DANIEL (O.S.)

(TO VALET) I don't know what vest
you're talking about!

ARTHUR SIGHS. PHILLIP PUTS HIS HAND ON ARTHUR'S.

PHILLIP

I am so sorry.

AND WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE D

INT. GRIFFIN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

WE SEE AN EMPTY LIVING ROOM.

SFX: BANGING ON DOOR

AFTER A BEAT, GRIFFIN EMERGES FROM HIS BEDROOM AND TURNS ON THE LIGHT.

SFX: MORE BANGING ON DOOR

GRIFFIN

Hold on a second.

GRIFFIN LOOKS THROUGH THE PEEPHOLE.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)

Jesus.

GRIFFIN OPENS THE DOOR TO REVEAL DANIEL.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)

Daniel? What are you doing here?

DANIEL ENTERS INTO THE LIVING ROOM.

DANIEL

Your address came up on one of my
dad's googles. I am so sorry about
today. You didn't deserve that.

DANIEL FLOPS DOWN ON THE COUCH.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Dad's right. I haven't done anything.
I don't even know how to be inspired
by someone who's inspiring.

GRIFFIN

I don't mean to be rude, but I have kind of a big day tomorrow.

DANIEL

But you know what Dad doesn't get? It's harder for me than it was for you. I didn't have all the advantages you had growing up.

GRIFFIN

Wait, what advantages?

DANIEL

I didn't have a series of obstacles put in front of me, that I've learned to overcome. I've been handed a lot. And that's a burden my father doesn't understand.

JUST THEN THE NURSE #2, BETH FROM EARLIER, EMERGES FROM GRIFFIN'S BEDROOM HAVING GOTTEN HERSELF MOSTLY TOGETHER.

BETH

I'm leaving.

GRIFFIN

Just hold on --

BETH

(ANNOYED) You're obviously in the middle of something.

BETH HEADS OUT.

GRIFFIN

No, Beth, wait --

SHE TURNS BACK.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)

You're wearing my tee shirt.

SHE ROLLS HER EYES AND LEAVES.

DANIEL

Oh, dude, I'm sorry.

GRIFFIN

It's cool, it's just... that tee shirt
is like irreplaceable.

DANIEL

Look, it's been a long day and I know
you're tired. Why don't we just hit
the hay and we'll pick it up from
here tomorrow.

DANIEL BEGINS PROPPING UP A PILLOW.

GRIFFIN

Wait, what are you doing?

DANIEL

Well, I can't stay at my pad, not
after what dad said.

GRIFFIN

Just to be clear, your "pad" is the
home you grew up in?

DANIEL

(THAT'S FUN) Hey, that's the first
big brother shot you took at me.

GRIFFIN

(FALSE CHEER) Yay, brothers, um, you can't crash here.

DANIEL

Come on, please? Lexi's mom won't let me come over, Joel's not answering, and Robert's got Phillip over and you saw how annoying he is, Nathan.

GRIFFIN

Griffin. Why is that so hard?

DANIEL

The point is you're my brother, and I need a place to stay.

GRIFFIN CONSIDERS THIS. AND TO HIS OWN SURPRISE, IT ACTUALLY MEANS SOMETHING.

GRIFFIN

Fine, you can stay tonight. But let's figure something out for tomorrow.

DANIEL

Absolutely.

DANIEL LIES DOWN OUT OF FRAME AND FLINGS HIS PANTS OVER THE EDGE OF THE COUCH. GRIFFIN STARES AT HIM FOR A BEAT.

GRIFFIN

So... you're a no underwear guy.

DANIEL (O.S.)

Yeah.

AS GRIFFIN SHAKES HIS HEAD AND STARTS TO BED, AND WE...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE E

INT. GRIFFIN'S APARTMENT - NEXT MORNING (DAY 3)

GRIFFIN ENTERS FROM HIS BEDROOM, SHOWERED AND DRESSED FOR WORK. HE SEES DANIEL ASLEEP. WITH LEXI. THEY ARE SPOONING PEACEFULLY UNDER A BLANKET ON THE COUCH.

GRIFFIN

What the...?

GRIFFIN SHAKES IT OFF AND HEADS TO THE KITCHEN.

RESET TO:

INT. GRIFFIN'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

GRIFFIN ENTERS TO SEE ROBERT CUTTING BAGELS.

ROBERT

Hey, morning.

HE HANDS HIM A CUP OF COFFEE.

GRIFFIN

(SURPRISED) Robert?

ROBERT

What are you, poppy or sesame?

GRIFFIN

Poppy. How did you get in here?

ROBERT

Lexi let me in. Sorry for just stopping by, but I had to talk to you about Phillip. Don't tell anyone, but he's driving me insane.

GRIFFIN

Phillip is...?

ROBERT

My boyfriend, you met yesterday. I want to break up with him, but I just can't give Joel the satisfaction. Why is he always right about these things?

GRIFFIN

And when did Lexi get here?

ROBERT

Is it immoral to move in with someone just to prove your brother wrong?

DANIEL ENTERS.

DANIEL

Bagels. Fantastic. This guy's got nothing in the fridge.

ROBERT

I have a list going.

GRIFFIN

Wait, why do you have a list?

ROBERT

You need stuff.

DANIEL

Put beer on there. And grapes. I love grapes.

ROBERT GRABS A SHARPIE AND ADDS "GRAPES" TO A LIST ON THE FRIDGE.

GRIFFIN

What? You don't need grapes. Don't put grapes.

ROBERT

(TO DANIEL) You seem better.

DANIEL

Well, I feel better. Because...

(PROUD) I've been up all night writing.

ROBERT

(EXCITED) No!

DANIEL

Twenty seven pages.

ROBERT

So what's it about?

DANIEL

Well, it's *Crime and Punishment*.

GRIFFIN

You mean, it's like *Crime and Punishment*?

DANIEL

No, it is *Crime and Punishment*. It's an old writer's trick, a way to find your flow when you're struggling. By literally typing something great, your own writerly instinct comes alive. And it's working because I'm already getting a lot of great ideas.

ROBERT

That's amazing, Daniel!

GRIFFIN

Am I missing something here?

DANIEL

I should've done this years ago, but
I've always been too blocked to do
it.

LEXI WALKS IN.

LEXI

Did you hear who knocked off twenty
seven pages last night? (HUGS HIM)
I'm so proud of you.

DANIEL

(SMILING) I couldn't have done it,
if you didn't bring that book over.

SFX: PHONE RINGS

GRIFFIN PICKS UP THE PHONE.

GRIFFIN

(INTO PHONE) Hello...(SIGHS) Joel...

LEXI

Your dad's going to be really proud.

DANIEL

Maybe for father's day, I'll type
Tuesday's with Morrie.

LEXI

He'd love that.

GRIFFIN

(INTO PHONE) Yeah, they're both here,
but it's not a good time to come over.

ROBERT

Sounds like you got the spark back.

DANIEL

There's something to being on your
own.

GRIFFIN

(ALARMED) I gotta go. (HANGS UP)
You're not on your own, you're here.

DANIEL

That's what I'm saying.

GRIFFIN

Look, I have to go... so does anyone
else... wanna...?

DANIEL

We'll see you when you get home. (TO
ROBERT AND LEXI) You guys want to
read what I wrote?

ROBERT/LEXI

Of course. / Love to.

AS GRIFFIN EXITS AND LOOKS BACK WITH SOME CONCERN, WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

ACT TWO

SCENE H

INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY

GRIFFIN, PADMA, AND A NURSE ARE IN MID-SURGERY. A RESIDENT LOOKS ON.

GRIFFIN

I'm fine with them being my family, I just don't like them acting like my family.

PADMA

Well, if you didn't want your brother there, why'd you let him stay over in the first place.

GRIFFIN

I didn't know what to say, I never had a brother ask me for anything.

PADMA

I tell my brother no all the time.

GRIFFIN

Well I'm new at this. Besides, I kept thinking: that couch isn't comfortable, he's going to probably leave while I'm sleeping.

PADMA

Just tell him to leave.

GRIFFIN

You can't do that with this guy, he's very sensitive. (TO RESIDENT) Close up, please.

THE RESIDENT STEPS IN, AND GRIFFIN STEPS BACK.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)

Honestly, I have an easier time kicking women out of my apartment. (THEN, TO MASKED NURSE, TESTING) Julie?

LUCKILY FOR GRIFFIN, THE NURSE DOESN'T RESPOND.

PADMA

Look, if you can't get him out on your own, ask your dad for help.

GRIFFIN

(CONFUSED) My dad? (GETTING IT) Oh, right, my dad. Yeah, I have one. And I've got a real in with him, he's very impressed with me.

PADMA

Yeah, use that.

GRIFFIN BEGINS TO HEAD OUT.

GRIFFIN

I'll have my dad take care of my problem. (THEN, TURNING BACK) Kids must do this all the time.

AND WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

ACT TWO

SCENE J

INT. ARTHUR'S HOUSE - LATER

ARTHUR IS THERE. GRIFFIN ENTERS.

ARTHUR

Hello.

ARTHUR GIVE HIM A HUG.

GRIFFIN

Wow Great house.

ARTHUR

Thank you.

GRIFFIN

So this is where I would have grown
up if I hadn't lived in... many
different... foster homes -- anyway,
I wanted to talk to you about Daniel.

ARTHUR

Wait, I want to show you something.

ARTHUR PULLS A CHRISTMAS STOCKING FROM AN OLD BOX AND
HANDS IT TO GRIFFIN. IT SAYS "NATHAN" ON IT.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Your old Christmas stocking. We'd
put it up for you every year. Even
when you weren't with us, you were
always with us.

GRIFFIN

(RE: STOCKING) Wow.

ARTHUR GRABS ANOTHER OLD BOX.

ARTHUR

And these are all your presents. The kids would always want to unwrap them, but we wouldn't let them. (NOTICING)
Damn it. They got one.

ARTHUR PULLS OUT A LAVA LAMP AND HANDS IT TO GRIFFIN.

GRIFFIN

A lava lamp.

ARTHUR

We didn't know what your interests were.

ARTHUR HANDS HIM THE BOX. GRIFFIN IS LOST FOR A MOMENT.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

So Daniel..

GRIFFIN

Right. Here's the thing, you did a great job. What you said really got through to him. So that was the slap, right? Now it's time for the tickle.

ARTHUR

The tickle.

GRIFFIN

Yeah, a little praise, a little coddling and then he's back in the house. Isn't that what you want?

ARTHUR

Interesting. I was gonna ask if he could stay at your place. For a bit.

GRIFFIN

What?

ARTHUR

I went to see him, just to mend fences,
give him an honesty ribbon and I gotta
tell ya, he's got the spark back.

GRIFFIN

What is this spark I keep hearing
about?

ARTHUR

He's writing again. 27 pages.

GRIFFIN

You mean, he's copied 27 pages.

ARTHUR

Look, let's not split hairs. He's
focused, he's working. As a parent,
you learn to adjust the bar for every
child. That's how you raise winners.

GRIFFIN

Are you sure about that? Are you
sure that's what you've got here?

GRIFFIN'S PHONE BUZZES A TEXT. GRIFFIN READS IT.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)

(RE: PHONE) It's Robert. Again.

(GREAT) He's around the corner.

ARTHUR

He probably wants to talk about Joel.

GRIFFIN

You mean Phillip.

ARTHUR

No, Joel. He's upset.

GRIFFIN

Wasn't Daniel just upset?

ARTHUR

Now Joel is. He takes the big brother thing very seriously. I think he's threatened by Daniel moving in.

GRIFFIN

He's not moving in.

ARTHUR

It's an expression.

ROBERT ENTERS.

ROBERT

I've been looking everywhere for you.

GRIFFIN

I have to go.

ROBERT

I'll come with.

AS GRIFFIN, BOX IN HAND, EXITS WITH ROBERT, WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

ACT TWO

SCENE K

INT. GRIFFIN'S CAR - SHORT TIME LATER

GRIFFIN IS DRIVING. ROBERT IS IN THE PASSENGER SEAT.

ROBERT

I have to be honest. I don't like
the way you're driving. Do you realize
how close you are to the curb?

GRIFFIN

You had a car at the house.

ROBERT

But then we wouldn't have gotten to
spend time together.

GRIFFIN

(LOADED) Mm-hmm.

ROBERT

Listen, there's something I need to
ask you?

GRIFFIN

(SIGHS) What?

ROBERT

(CONCERNED) Why are there no photos
at your place?

GRIFFIN

I'm sorry?

ROBERT

I was rearranging some things in your bedroom, and I noticed you have no photographs. Of anyone.

GRIFFIN

You were rearranging things?

ROBERT

I mean that's your most personal space. You'd think there'd be a picture of a friend, girlfriend, co-worker, someone.

GRIFFIN

When you say personal space, you understand what that means, right?

ROBERT

I'm worried about you. You work long hours, keep to yourself -- that was a red light! -- romantically there's nothing to speak but a series of short term relationships. Where does it go? Where does it lead?

GRIFFIN

Just so you know, there's no air bag on that side.

ROBERT

I'm not saying this is your fault.
(MORE)

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Commitment, trust, connecting to people, these are things we learn from having a family. And you never had that chance. Which is why I think we should consider this.

ROBERT PRODUCES A BROCHURE.

GRIFFIN

What's that?

ROBERT

It's sort of an intense therapy retreat. It's basically me and you away for the weekend, no food, no water, in a yurt, with a very qualified family therapist.

GRIFFIN

(BEAT) I'm going to tell Phillip that you want to get married.

AS A CONCERNED ROBERT FINALLY STOPS TALKING, WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

ACT TWO

SCENE M

INT. GRIFFIN'S OFFICE - SHORT TIME LATER

GRIFFIN WALKS IN AND IS SURPRISED TO FIND JOEL, SITTING IN HIS CHAIR, WITH HIS FEET ON HIS DESK.

JOEL

Does it bother you that I'm in your seat?

GRIFFIN

(TO HIMSELF) I'm in a nightmare.

JOEL

How bout when I do this?

JOEL HITS A BUTTON ON THE SPEAKER PHONE.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Gwen, cup of coffee please?

GWEN (O.S.)

(ANNOYED, FROM PHONE) Who are you?

GRIFFIN

It's okay, Gwen. He's my... (SHAKES HEAD) Brother.

JOEL

Point I'm making is it's no fun when someone takes your place, is it?

GRIFFIN

Joel --

JOEL

Look, I get it. You grew up alone.
(MORE)

JOEL (CONT'D)

You dreamed of being a big brother.
Now Daniel and Robert are your new
play things, like me and my four Ducati
motorcycles -- that's right, four.
But there's a structure in place --

GRIFFIN

(SENSING OPPORTUNITY) Is this about
Daniel?

JOEL

Well, yeah.

GRIFFIN

(EXCITED) Take him. I mean honestly
you'd be doing me a favor.

JOEL

Maybe I will.

GRIFFIN

Oh, that would be great.

JOEL

(SKEPTICAL) Really?

GRIFFIN

Yeah. Can you go by now? I'd love
to get him out before I get back.

JOEL

Oh, okay.

GRIFFIN

I think this is going to be great for
both of you. And definitely for me.

JOEL

(COMPETING) Yeah. And for me.

GRIFFIN

Ah, you're the best. I owe you big
time. (CHECKS PAGER) Geez, code
blue, I gotta go take care of this
guy who's dying. Thank you so much!
Joel!

AS GRIFFIN SKIPS OFF WITH EXCITEMENT.

DISSOLVE TO:

ACT TWO

SCENE P

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

GRIFFIN IS WHISTLING AS HE MAKES HIS WAY TO HIS APARTMENT. HE HAS THE AIR OF A MAN WHO'S BEEN RELIEVED OF HIS BURDEN. HE UNLOCKS THE DOOR AND OPENS IT TO REVEAL:

RESET TO:

INT. GRIFFIN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

EVERYONE IS THERE, BUT ALL IS NOT HAPPY IN THE LAND OF BENNETT.

JOEL

I get it. He's your new big bro.

Say no more.

DANIEL

Don't say it like that.

ARTHUR QUICKLY APPROACHES GRIFFIN.

ARTHUR

(TO GRIFFIN) Thank god, you're here.

Big blow up. Joel asked Daniel to come stay with him. Daniel wants to stay here.

SFX: PHONE RINGS

DANIEL ANSWERS IN THE BACKGROUND.

GRIFFIN

Stay here?

ARTHUR

Joel has to realize that it's Daniel's life. He can do what he wants.

GRIFFIN

Wait, wait. But Daniel should be with Joel, he should be with his brother.

ARTHUR

He is with his brother. He's here.

LEXI

(INTO PHONE) Hold on, one second. Here he is. (HANDING PHONE) It's Julie?

GRIFFIN TAKES THE PHONE, ANNOYED.

GRIFFIN

(PHONE TO CHEST) Julie's calling?

ROBERT COMES UP.

ROBERT

That's my fault. She called before and I told her to call back.

GRIFFIN

(INTO PHONE) Julie, hey...

JOEL COMES OUT FROM THE BACK ROOM.

JOEL

(BRAVE FACE) I have an announcement.

GRIFFIN

(INTO PHONE) Can you hold on?

GRIFFIN PUTS THE PHONE TO HIS CHEST.

JOEL

Since I've been freed up of my big brother responsibility, I'm going to take off on one of my four Ducatis. I don't know when I'll be back.

ARTHUR

What? No, Joel hold on.

JOEL

I'll call you guys from the road. I'd appreciate it if one of you could take care of my dog.

JOEL EXITS.

ARTHUR

Nathan, please to talk to him.

GRIFFIN

What?

LEXI

I think we should take the dog in. He can live with us here at Nathan's.

GRIFFIN

What, no.

ROBERT

(RE: JOEL) He's upset about you. Maybe the two of you should go on the retreat.

GRIFFIN

(SNAPS) No! No to all of this!

ARTHUR

Okay, let's calm down.

GRIFFIN

(POURING OUT) I don't want to go after Joel. I don't want to take care of a dog. I don't want to talk to Julie.
(INTO PHONE) Julie, I have to call you back. (HANGS UP) I don't want someone probing into my life. And I don't want someone sleeping on my couch. Where's my couch?

LEXI

We moved it to the guest bedroom.

DANIEL

We needed some privacy.

GRIFFIN

(DEEP BREATH) Look, you're all nice. I'm sure, deep down you're nice. But I never wanted this. I'm just not built for this. (THEN) I'm sorry, but you guys have to go.

ARTHUR

Nathan...

GRIFFIN

It's Griffin. And I'm done.

ARTHUR

(SOFTLY) Okay, kids, we should go.

DANIEL

What about my manuscript?

ROBERT

Daniel, we'll deal with it later.

(TO GRIFFIN, HEARTFELT) Goodbye.

ROBERT LEADS DANIEL OUT.

ARTHUR

(TO GRIFFIN) Thanks, for the last couple days. You're even more than I had hoped for.

ARTHUR EXITS, BUT AFTER A MOMENT ROBERT POPS BACK IN:

ROBERT

Did you want everyone to go, or just them?

GRIFFIN

Goodbye, Robert.

ROBERT NODS AND EXITS. AND AS GRIFFIN, FINALLY ALONE IN HIS APARTMENT, CROSSES OFF, WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

ACT TWO

SCENE R

INT. GRIFFIN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

GRIFFIN IS AT HIS DESK. STREWN ACROSS IT ARE HIS STOCKING AND ALL THE GIFTS FROM THE BOX. MOST HAVE BEEN OPENED. HE'S IN THE PROCESS OF OPENING ANOTHER. PADMA ENTERS, AND TAKES IN THE SITUATION.

PADMA

What are you doing?

GRIFFIN

Opening Christmas gifts. (UNWRAPS ANOTHER AND PRODUCES) Tickets to see Bob Seger! 1992. That would have been a fun show to see with...

GRIFFIN REACHES OVER AND GRABS A FAT ALBERT DOLL.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)

This guy.

HE SQUEEZES THE DOLL.

FAT ALBERT DOLL

Hey hey hey!

GRIFFIN

1979.

PADMA

(EGG SHELLS) So... how'd it go with dad?

GRIFFIN

He gave me the box of Christmas presents they've been giving me for the last thirty-five years. Right before I threw him and my brothers out of my house.

PADMA

Griffin, if you're feeling bad about it, you can just go talk to them.

GRIFFIN

I can't.

PADMA

Why?

GRIFFIN

Because I can't stand them.

PADMA

Everyone says that about their family.

GRIFFIN

These people are different. These people are the worst.

PADMA

Come on.

GRIFFIN

Look, I tried. I just can't do family. I mean, it's too much. They were too much. I'm glad they're gone. I'm glad I have toys instead of them.

PADMA

So, why are you sitting here in the dark?

GRIFFIN

(ANNOYED) Because I miss them, okay?
I don't know why, but I do.

PADMA

Well, they're your flesh and blood.
There's no denying that.

GRIFFIN

But I want to. Because they drive me insane.

PADMA

They do?

GRIFFIN

Yes...

PADMA

Deep down in your gut?

GRIFFIN

Yes.

PADMA

In a way no one else possibly can?

GRIFFIN

Yes.

PADMA

(SMILING) Griffin, you have a family.

AS GRIFFIN'S HEAD FALLS INTO HIS HANDS, WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

ACT TWO

SCENE T

INT. BENNETT HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - LATER

ARTHUR, ROBERT, DANIEL AND JOEL ARE ALL THERE.

DANIEL

I don't understand why we can't just stay at your place.

JOEL

I was offering when I was going to be there. But you two there on your own, I'm just not comfortable with that.

LEXI

And you still want us to take care of the dog?

JOEL

Please.

GRIFFIN ENTERS WITH STEAM.

GRIFFIN

Look, I never had a family. So a lot of this is new to me. And everything I said in my apartment earlier is true. I'm not built for it. (TO ROBERT) As you know, because you've pointed this out.
(MORE)

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)

But suddenly, annoyingly, I find that I wish I was built for it. Deep down in some sick, primal way, I sort of enjoy having people bothering me all the time. Can you do it without bothering me all the time?

ARTHUR

We can try, Nathan.

GRIFFIN

Again, it's Griffin. That would mean a lot to me. If you could say it, just once in a while.

ROBERT

How about on the phone? It's just hard to do to your face. I mean, you're such a Nathan.

GRIFFIN

Fine. Phone. And Joel, please don't go. We're just getting to know each other. And the reason Daniel probably doesn't want to be at your place is you're very intimidating You're a BMW salesman. All I do is fix hearts.

JOEL

That's okay. I may have overreacted.

GRIFFIN

And Daniel. I really thought about this, you can not move into my place. I mean, honestly I would go insane.

DANIEL

But --

GRIFFIN

It's just not going to happen. But you can come by every once in awhile, and you can write or we can hang. But you must wear pants. Basically what I'm looking for from everyone is just smaller steps. Can we do smaller steps? I mean, I really hope you can. Because I lived my whole life without a family. And I don't want to do it anymore.

BEAT.

ARTHUR

Look, I'm going to be honest, small steps are tough. We're very emotional. We grab and we hold and we push and we sing and we cry and we love --

GRIFFIN

Arthur, work with me.

ARTHUR

We'll try. How's that? We'll try.

GRIFFIN

That would be great... Dad. (THEN)

That sounded weird, I'm sorry, I gotta stick with Arthur.

ARTHUR

No problem.

ROBERT

Hey, you know what, let's break out the photo albums. You still haven't seen Mom.

GRIFFIN

Yeah, let's do that.

THEY ALL START TOWARDS THE BACK ROOM. AS THEY GO:

ARTHUR

Listen, I'm really happy you came back. I'm sure it wasn't easy. I'm proud of you.

GRIFFIN

Thanks.

ARTHUR REACHES INTO HIS POCKET AND PULLS OUT A BLUE RIBBON AND GIVES IT TO GRIFFIN.

ARTHUR

You've earned this.

AS GRIFFIN POLITELY SMILES AT HIS RIBBON, THEY EXIT, AND WE...

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW