

UNTITLED JERROD CARMICHAEL PROJECT

"Pilot"

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COLD OPEN

1 INT. DINER - DAY

1

JERROD, (25), MAXINE, (25), a poor man's Claire Huxtable and ALEX, (25), Daffy Duck to Jerrod's Bugs Bunny, are sitting at a booth eating lunch.

JERROD

I think you're the missing the point Maxine. All I'm saying is I could absolutely cheat on you. Wouldn't do it. But I absolutely could. Wouldn't even be hard. I could have a mistress by Saturday morning.

Alex looks up from his food.

ALEX

Nah.

MAXINE

(to Alex)

Doesn't have the game.

JERROD

I'd get away with it too.

MAXINE

I would catch you immediately.

JERROD

I could have a whole other family. Like a Mormon. You wouldn't know a thing.

MAXINE

Okay, please Jerrod, tell us, what's your big plan? How would you cheat?

JERROD

All I'd have to do is tell you I was going to Alex's house. Then I'd sneak off... with that cute girl who bags our groceries at Safeway.

ALEX

(hand gesture for so-so)

Eh.

MAXINE

Wait, you would use Alex as your alibi? Ha! That's hilarious.

ALEX

What's wrong with me as an alibi?

MAXINE

Can't keep a secret.

ALEX

I can keep a secret! My dad's been cheating on my mom for years and nobody knows that... not even my mom.

A WAITRESS approaches.

WAITRESS

So did you save room for dessert?

JERROD

Yeah, I'll try the chocolate cake.

MAXINE

I'll just have a few bites of his.

JERROD

(to waitress)

Then I'll have two slices of cake please.

MAXINE

Why can't we share?

JERROD

We will share. One slice for us, and the other will be just for me because I'm a man.

Waitress exits.

MAXINE

You're so wasteful. You act like we have a bunch of money.

JERROD

I am not wasteful.

MAXINE

Look at this. You ordered pancakes, waffles, and french toast!

ALEX

Yeah that's a lot of bread.

JERROD

I like to sample.

MAXINE

Then get the sampler platter!

JERROD

Eh, too many options.

MAXINE

Jerrod, we need to save money. I mean
God knows Alex isn't going to chip in.

ALEX

I'm gonna pay!
(patting his pocket)
Oh shoot. My wallet's in the car.

Alex immediately gets up from his seat and quickly exits the
restaurant.

JERROD

Man, that's crazy about Alex's parents.
And his mom's attractive too.
(shaking his head)
I mean if it could happen to her.

Maxine gives Jerrod a look, then out the window Jerrod and
Maxine watch Alex drive off.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

2 INT. JERROD & MAXINE'S APARTMENT - DAY

2

Jerrod and MAXINE are sitting on the couch. Maxine is studying. Jerrod is reading a newspaper.

JERROD

(off paper)

So is North Korea for real?

MAXINE

Do you mean does it exist, or are they serious?

JERROD

I know it exists. I just want to know, are they really going to bomb us? And if so, would it affect North Carolina? It says here that they could probably hit Hawaii, but does that count? It'd be like losing a vacation home. You'd hate to see it go but it's not going to affect your everyday life.

MAXINE

Why the sudden interest in North Korea?

JERROD

'Cause three weeks from Saturday is our anniversary. And I don't want to waste time making plans if we're gonna get bombed, Maxine.

MAXINE

If you want to worry about North Korea, you should worry about its citizens who are forced to live under the rule of an oppressive totalitarian leader.

JERROD

Don't really see how that affects my anniversary plans.

MAXINE

Wait. Anniversary of what?

JERROD

Of our first date. Am I the only one in this relationship?

MAXINE

You want to celebrate the anniversary of our first date?

JERROD

Of course I want to celebrate the anniversary of our first date. This is a big deal. I've never made it this far in a relationship before.

Jerrod triumphantly stands on the coffee table to make an announcement.

JERROD (CONT'D)

In three weeks from today we will be celebrating the first anniversary of our first date at one of the finest dining establishments in Charlotte, North Carolina.

MAXINE

(unimpressed)

Alright.

Maxine goes back to studying. Jerrod goes back to his newspaper.

JERROD

(off paper)

So, what's Syria so mad about?

CUT TO:

3

INT. JERROD & MAXINE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

3

Maxine and her friend REGINA are looking at three dresses draped over the back of the couch.

REGINA

The red one is classic elegance. It would be amazing if you had some Louboutin's. The blue one says, "I'm off the market, but still in the window." And the green one would be great, but only if Jerrod is going to wear an earth tone suit. Do you know what he's going to wear?

MAXINE

I don't know. I guess the blue one.

Alex crosses through.

ALEX

The blue one looks stupid.

Jerrod enters from the bedroom. He's talking on the phone and reading from a pad of paper.

JERROD

(into phone)

Does your bathroom have cloth napkins
or is there an automatic dispenser?

(then)

Because it's the anniversary of our
first date. I need it to be classy.

(then)

Do any French people work at your
establishment?

(then)

So just on his mother's side, huh?
Does he know how to do the accent?

ALEX

(to Maxine and Regina)

He's really going all out.

MAXINE

Yeah. I guess.

ALEX

What are you going to get him?

MAXINE

I have a get a gift? Why, he didn't
do anything. We just didn't break up
yet.

REGINA

It's an anniversary, Maxine!

ALEX

It's been a year!

(beat)

He always wanted a watch.

Maxine sighs.

MAXINE

(to Regina)

Let's go get him a watch.

(to Alex)

Don't you tell him, Alex.

ALEX

I can keep a secret, Maxine!

Maxine and Regina exit. Jerrod hangs up the phone.

JERROD

Where'd they go.

ALEX

They went to go get you a watch.

JERROD

Nice.

ALEX

What's wrong with you? You have the most low maintenance girlfriend and you make yourself do what other guys wish they could get out of.

JERROD

Why can't you just be happy for me?

ALEX

I can't even be happy for me.
(then, pulls out phone)
There was a substitute science teacher last week. Look at this text she sent me.

JERROD

(reading)
"Thanks for letting me borrow your overhead projector." So what?

ALEX

But she put a smiley face at the end. What does that mean?

JERROD

I think it means she's really happy about that overhead projector.

ALEX

I don't know, I think she might be into me.

JERROD

All right, let me see a picture.

Alex pulls up a photo of BRENDA (20s, hot) standing next to the overhead projector.

JERROD (CONT'D)

Oh yeah. Way out of your league. I'm surprised she even sent you the thank you text.

CUT TO:

4 INT. FINISH LINE - OFFICE - DAY

4

Jerrod leans back in a leather chair with his crossed legs resting comfortably on a desk.

JERROD

You have to understand me when I tell you: there are only lions and sheep in this world. Never confuse the two...and never be the latter. Sheep are made to be ignored, content to follow the flock, never creating their own identity. A lion will never be overlooked. In fact, you cannot take your eyes off a lion even for one second. Do you understand what I'm saying to you right now?

ANGLE on a very disinterested kid, BOBBY, (19).

BOBBY

I don't know, man. So are you gonna cover my shift Wednesday, or what?

Reveal that they are in the stock room of an athletic shoe store. The store manager, STEVE, (35), pops his head in.

STEVE

Jerrod, get your feet off my desk and get out of my chair. I need you two out front for an employee pow wow.

Jerrod and Bobby exit the stock room / office.

RESET TO:

5 INT. FINISH LINE - CONTINUOUS

5

Jerrod and Bobby a handful of other EMPLOYEES gathered around Steve who addresses his staff.

STEVE

Okay, starting today, nobody is authorized to work more than thirty hours per week because we are eliminating full time benefits to cut costs.

JERROD

Hold up. I see what's going on. You're cutting our hours so you don't have to provide full time benefits.

STEVE

Yeah Jerrod, that's exactly what I just said.

JERROD

And you think we're going to stand by and let you oppress us with your
(MORE)

JERROD (CONT'D)

totalitarian leadership and screw us out of our full time benefits? You sir, have underestimated us. Isn't that right, Bobby!?

BOBBY

Nah, I was only working twenty hours anyways.

JERROD

Dammit Bobby!

(then)

What about you, Jimbo? You gonna stand by and let them take away your health insurance?

FRANK

My name's Frank. And I'm actually still on my parents' health insurance.

JERROD

Brian, you're full-time, aren't you? You gonna let them get away with this?

BRIAN

I am full-time, and I am going to let them get away with it because I don't like rocking the boat.

JERROD

None of you are lions! What the hell is wrong with you people? You're acting like sheep.

(to Steve)

This is all a lot of us have! Bobby's not even in college anymore!

BOBBY

No, I'm back in college now.

JERROD

(pleasantly surprised)

Oh word? I thought they messed up your financial aid.

BOBBY

No, I got that straightened out. It was just a mixup with the paperwork. But we're good now.

JERROD

(sincere)

Well alright Bobby.

(clapping)

Congratulations! Give it up for Bobby.

The others start to clap for Bobby.

JERROD (CONT'D)
But the rest of you! Sheep!

CUT TO:

6 INT. MALL - LATER

6

Jerrod holds a picket sign made out of an unfolded shoe box and walks back and forth in front of the Finish Line. Alex and Brenda walk up wearing workout clothes.

JERROD
(chanting)
HELL NO, I WON'T GO...UNTIL YOU GIVE
ME BACK MY FULL TIME BENEFITS, SERIOUSLY
YOU GUYS I'VE ASKED POLITELY AND TRIED
TO BE CIVIL ABOUT THIS. HELL NO, I
WON'T GO, UNTIL YOU GIVE ME BACK --

ALEX
Jerrod? What the hell are you doing?

JERROD
I'm on strike.

ALEX
From a shoe store? You look ridiculous.
You just unfolded a shoe box and wrote
a run on sentence on it. The homeless
have more impressive signs.

BRENDA
(to Jerrod)
Hi. I'm Brenda.

JERROD
Oh, Brenda. From --

ALEX
Brenda from stop talking right now,
you've never heard of her.

Jerrod and Brenda shake hands.

JERROD
Okay.

BRENDA
Nice to meet you.
(to Alex)
I'll see you inside.

Brenda crosses into Finish Line. Jerrod and Alex watch her walk away.

JERROD

Yup. Out of your league.

ALEX

Maybe right now, but she wants me to start running with her. I think she's trying to get me in shape to bump me up to her level.

JERROD

You can't jump that many levels. I don't think you understand the difference between you and her: Drastic. Stark. Vast is a word.

ALEX

So anyway, is this little protest of yours going to affect me using your employee discount?

JERROD

You can't cross the picket line. You're in the teachers union, how about some solidarity?

ALEX

Except you're not in any union so this is not a strike. It's a mockery.

JERROD

I don't have to be in a union to stand up for what's right. This is about more than full time benefits, it's about principles.

ALEX

And what are you going to do for money?

JERROD

If it goes on too long, I'll have to make some sacrifices. Make my own lunch, start turning off lights when I'm not home. But once 5k season rolls around, they'll meet my demands.

ALEX

So I guess you're going to have to cancel your anniversary. Hey don't worry, I think you dodged a bullet.

JERROD

What? I'm not canceling anything! I'm getting a watch, Alex. Alright! A watch! I'll figure out something for the anniversary, so don't you dare tell Maxine about the strike.

ALEX

I'm an iron vault, Jerrod. You know that.

(then)

Come on, just let it go and come inside and use your employee discount to buy me some shoes.

JERROD

No. I'm standing up for what is right and just. I believe it was Ella Wheeler Wilcox who said: "To sin by silence, when they should protest, makes cowards of men."

(then)

But seriously, don't tell Maxine. I really want that watch.

A pudgy, non-threatening SECURITY GUARD approaches.

SECURITY GUARD

Sir, what you're doing is considered loitering.

JERROD

Oh, here we go!

Jerrod puts his hands behind his back, arrest style.

JERROD (CONT'D)

You can take my freedom but you can not silence me!

SECURITY GUARD

I'm not arresting you. They don't even give us handcuffs.

ALEX

(to security guard)

Do they give you mace? I bet mace would silence him.

JERROD

(deadly serious)

Don't mace me. Please don't mace me.

SECURITY GUARD

I'm not going to mace you. You just can't protest inside the mall. Sorry, I'm just doing my job.

ALEX

(to security guard)

Hey, you don't happen to get a discount at the shoe store, do you?

Jerrod gets escorted away.

JERROD
(calling off)
Don't be a scab Alex.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

7

Jerrod is on the sidewalk in front of the mall holding his picket sign. Widen to reveal he is next to a professional sign spinner who enthusiastically spins an advertisement for a local business. He twirls his sign all around his body, then throws it up in the air and catches it behind his back.

JERROD
Come on. You're making me look bad.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

8 EXT. PARK - LATER

8

Alex is jogging, drenched in sweat and gasping for air. Brenda jogs several yards ahead, she turns and jogs in place waiting for Alex to catch up. He does, then stops to catch his breath.

BRENDA

Let's keep moving. You'll be fine
once those endorphins kick in.

Brenda turns and starts to run.

ALEX

(gasping)
No, wait.

Alex steps on the heel of Brenda's shoe, giving her a flat tire. Brenda goes down.

BRENDA (O.S.)

Owe, owe, owey, owey, owey, owey.

Alex looks around to see if anyone saw what he did.

CUT TO:

9 INT. JERROD & MAXINE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

9

Jerrod sits reading the newspaper. Alex enters carrying a grocery bag.

JERROD

(off paper)
Egypt, man. Have you heard about what's
going on over there?

ALEX

No.

Alex crosses to the kitchen and opens the fridge.

JERROD

Seriously? You're a teacher.

ALEX

A history teacher. I don't need to
know about anything for at least ten
years after it happens.

JERROD

Why are you sweating? You look like a recovering alcoholic.

ALEX

I went on a run with Brenda, then I had to carry her to the hospital.

JERROD

What?

ALEX

Yeah, she fractured her ankle.

JERROD

What? How?

ALEX

I got tired of running.

JERROD

So you broke her ankle?

ALEX

No. Not on purpose. I had to slow her down so I could catch my breath. So I stepped on the back of her shoe to give her a flat tire. But she didn't stop until the pain hit her and she fell and rolled down a hill into a tree.

JERROD

Oh my God.

ALEX

No, it's cool. She thinks it was her new shoes.

JERROD

Is she mad at you?

ALEX

She doesn't even know I did anything. She feels bad we can't run together.

JERROD (CONT'D)

Well at least now while she's healing you have time to get yourself into shape.

ALEX

That was my first thought, too. But my second much better thought was: Why am I trying to better myself, when I could just drag her down to my level?

JERROD

I don't know man. You'd have to take her down far to drag her into your league. And I mean far.

ALEX

Why do you keep saying that? I'm an attractive guy. I'm at least a seven if I don't speak.

Alex opens the freezer and takes out a quart of CHUNKY MONKEY ICE-CREAM and begins to spoon the contents into the fat-free container.

JERROD

Hey that's my Chunky Monkey.

ALEX

It was your Chunky Monkey. Now it's Brenda's new Non-fat organic ice-cream.
(beat)
So did you figure out what you're going to do for your anniversary?

JERROD

I did. And it's genius. Way better than you plan. So I figure instead of going to an expensive restaurant, we'll enjoy a romantic candlelight dinner at home and we'll have the same food we had on our first date.

ALEX

You don't know how to cook.

JERROD

And I don't have to. We went to KFC.

ALEX

(laughing)
Oh this is better than my plan?

JERROD

Well you haven't heard the best part. I figured out a gift that won't cost me a dime. You ready for this...? I'm going to tell Maxine that I love her for the first time.

ALEX

That's not a gift.

JERROD

It is if it's the first time!

ALEX

Nope. Still not a gift.

JERROD

On our first anniversary. Eating the first meal we shared together. Don't you see the theme here Alex?

ALEX

Horrible ideas?

JERROD

No. Firsts.

ALEX

Maybe next year you can celebrate the first anniversary of Maxine physically assaulting you.

JERROD

On our second anniversary? That doesn't even make sense.

CUT TO:

BEGIN MONTAGE

- 10 EXT. STREET - DAY 10
- "Just The Two of Us" by Bill Withers plays. Jerrod is on the sidewalk in front of the mall next to the professional sign spinner. Jerrod has a new more impressive picket sign that reads: "The Finish Line = Murder".
- 11 INT. BRENDA'S APARTMENT - DAY 11
- Brenda sits on the couch with her booted foot propped up on a pillow. Angle on Alex as he peels a light beer label from a bottle and puts it on a different bottle, then serves it to Brenda.
- 12 EXT. STREET - DAY 12
- Jerrod tries to mimic the sign spinner's moves, but fumbles his sign into traffic. He runs into the street to retrieve his sign and nearly gets hit by a car.
- 13 INT. BRENDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 13
- Alex puts the finishing touches on the icing of a huge chocolate cake that says, "Get Well Brenda."
- 14 EXT. STREET - DAY 14
- The sign spinner gives Jerrod a slowed down tutorial of how to spin his sign.

Jerrod tries it and pokes the spinner guy in the eye with his sign.

15 INT. BRENDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 15

The huge chocolate cake is down to one slice left. Alex offers Brenda another bite of cake. She declines and indicates that she's full. Alex doesn't take no for an answer and tries to entice her by doing the airplane routine and accidentally pokes Brenda in the eye with the fork.

16 EXT. STREET - DAY 16

Jerrod hands flyers to passers-by. People gladly take the flyers with a smile. The Security Guard from earlier taps Jerrod on the shoulder. Jerrod turns around and sees that ground is littered with discarded flyers. Jerrod starts to pick up the flyers.

17 INT. BRENDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 17

Brenda has a gauze bandage taped to her eye. Alex offers her a fork full of pasta. She declines, Alex insists, then she covers her good eye with her hand, then reluctantly accepts the bite.

18 EXT. STREET - DAY 18

Jerrod has a sign that reads: "Honk If You're Finished With The Finish Line's Unfair Labor Practices." He spins the sign pretty well now. The sign spinner is impressed, as are the people who pass by. Cars are honking and people are waving at him. Steve, the Finish Line Manager drives by and sees the attention that Jerrod is getting.

END MONTAGE

CUT TO:

19 INT. JERROD & MAXINE'S APARTMENT - EVENING 19

An instrumental of Boyz II Men's "I'll Make Love to You" is playing in the background. Jerrod lights a candle and places it on a table between two place settings on a white table cloth. Maxine enters the room wearing the red dress.

JERROD

Surprise.

MAXINE

I thought you said we were going out to a nice restaurant with the cloth napkins and the French dude?

JERROD

I decided it would be more romantic to have an intimate dinner at home. I thought of a great theme for the evening... firsts.

MAXINE

This would've been our first time going to a nice restaurant.

JERROD

This is going to be better. Wait right here.

Jerrod crosses to the kitchen.

MAXINE

(calling off)

Oh, I get it. So tonight you cooked for me for the first time.

JERROD (O.S.)

Nope. Do you remember our first date?

MAXINE

You mean when you took me to Kentucky Fried Chicken? The fact that I went out with you again should tell you how much I liked you. That food made me sick to my stomach for a week.

Jerrod re-enters holding a cookie pan that balances a bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken, biscuits, and potato wedges.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Oh. KFC. I guess I'll take next week off.

JERROD

Eat your wedges before they get cold, baby.

MAXINE

You know, I'm not that hungry just yet. Why don't we exchange gifts first?

Maxine crosses to the closet, while Jerrod sits and eats potato wedges for a beat. Maxine returns with a small elegantly wrapped box and excitedly hands it to Jerrod.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

I knew this was something you wanted for a long time. And since this is a special day, I wanted to get you something special.

Jerrod unwraps the box. It's a very nice watch.

JERROD

Oh you did get me the watch!?

MAXINE

(to herself, angry)

Alex.

JERROD

I love it! You know how much I wanted one of these? This watch is the practically the only thing separating me from Jay-Z.

MAXINE

Jay-Z wears this watch?

JERROD

No, but he wears a watch.

MAXINE

So, where's my gift?

JERROD

Well, I wanted to get something for you I've never given you before. The greatest gift a man can give to a woman. Really, the greatest gift that one human being could give to another human being.

Maxine looks at him expectantly. He stares into her eyes.

JERROD (CONT'D)

Maxine... I love you.

MAXINE

I love you too, Jerrod.

Jerrod kisses Maxine, then goes back to eating potato wedges.

JERROD

Damn. I forgot to get ketchup.

MAXINE

So what's my gift?

JERROD

(chewing)

What? I said I love you. That's your gift.

MAXINE

You're kidding right?

(MORE)

MAXINE (CONT'D)

So you telling me you love me is the gift? I bought shoes for this.

JERROD

You got me shoes, too?

MAXINE

No, I got me shoes.

JERROD

You bought yourself a gift? You were in a giving mood.

MAXINE

At least one of us was.

JERROD

I got you the gift of love.

MAXINE

That's not a gift.

JERROD

It is if it's the first time.

Maxine sits back in her chair.

MAXINE

I'm sorry, but I need a minute to wrap my brain around this.

JERROD

Don't apologize. Take all the time you need. Let it sink in. Bask in it. This is an emotional moment for you.

MAXINE

Wait, we've been together a year. We live together. You're just deciding you love me now...? Jerrod you say "I love you" all time.

JERROD

No, no, no. I say "love ya." As in "hey Maxine, I'm going to work, Love ya." It doesn't mean anything with an "a" on the end... like the "n" word.

MAXINE

Wait, what!? Jerrod I put time, and thought... not to mention money into your gift.

JERROD

Well I put pure emotion into your gift.
Now, I don't want to get into an
argument over which gift is better,
but I think we know the answer to that.

MAXINE

Yes, mine! The one that was actually
a gift.

JERROD

Why!? Because yours cost money? Who's
the one who's always saying we need to
save money? Who Maxine?

MAXINE

(sighing)

I am. You know I am.

JERROD

Not only did I give you something from
the bottom of my heart, I didn't spend
a red cent in the process. I killed
two birds with one stone. How many
birds gotta die Maxine!? How many
birds have to die before you're happy!?

Maxine stares at Jerrod as he takes a bite of potato wedges.

JERROD (CONT'D)

And you let the wedges get cold.

CUT TO:

20 INT. JERROD & MAXINE'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT DAY

20

Regina sits on the couch. Maxine comes out with all three
dresses.

MAXINE

And you know what his gift was? He
told me he loved me.

REGINA

Aww, that's sweet. A gift from the
heart.

MAXINE

Well, I got him a watch -- with money
from my bank account. He's the one
that made a big deal out of it. I
didn't want a fancy dinner.

REGINA

Then what are you complaining about?

MAXINE

I don't know. Just... I bought shoes
and a watch.

REGINA

But aren't you the one that always
tells him he should be more responsible
with money?

MAXINE

Yeah.

REGINA

So he pretty much did what you asked,
and he told you he loved you. And in
my book, that's sweet. So it just
seems like he can't win. Dr. Phil
says you can't grease a hog without
making it squeal.

MAXINE

What does that even mean?

REGINA

I don't know, but it's Dr. Phil.

They nod theirs heads and agree.

CUT TO:

21 EXT. STREETS - LATER

21

Jerrod is spinning his sign. He gets a phone call.

JERROD

Hello.

INTER CUT:

22 INT. MALL - CONTINUOUS

22

Maxine talks on the phone as she walks down the hall.

MAXINE

Jerrod, I called to apologize.

JERROD

Damn right you did! About what?

MAXINE

I should have been more grateful.
You're right. I'm the one who always
says we should be saving money.

JERROD

Well I'm glad you finally came around.

MAXINE

I'm here at the mall. I'm coming to meet you for lunch.

JERROD

Wait, you're in the mall now?

MAXINE

Yeah, I'll see you in like thirty seconds.

Jerrod hangs up the phone.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Jerrod? Hello?

Jerrod grabs the attention of Ramone, the sign spinner.

JERROD

(dead serious)

Ramone. Watch my sign.

Jerrod takes off running.

CUT TO:

23 INT. MALL - CONTINUOUS

23

Maxine walks through the mall. Finish Line is coming in sight.

CUT TO:

24 INT. MALL - CONTINUOUS

24

Jerrod is sprinting through the mall, weaving through people, he hurdles over a toddler's head. Jerrod enters finish line. Out of breath. He just barely made it. Everyone in the store looks up from what they're doing.

STEVE

Jerrod. You're back?

Maxine enters.

MAXINE

Hi Jerrod.

JERROD

(out of breath)

Alright. I'm taking my break now guys.

Jerrod and Maxine exit. Everyone looks confused.

MAXINE

You're really out of breath.

JERROD

Shoes.

CUT TO:

25 INT. MALL RESTAURANT - LATER

25

Jerrod and Maxine eat. A WAITRESS approaches.

WAITRESS

So did you guys save room for desert?

JERROD / MAXINE

Nope /Definitely!

Maxine and the waitress looks at Jerrod confused.

MAXINE

Since when do you not want dessert?

JERROD

Maxine, I think you're right. We need to save money.

MAXINE

No Jerrod. I was wrong. Some things are more important than money.

(to waitress)

I'll have a slice of chocolate cake.

JERROD

(to waitress)

I'll just have a bite of hers.

Bobby from work approaches. He raises his fist in the air.

BOBBY

Stay strong, Jerrod! Don't cave!

Bobby exits. Maxine looks at Jerrod confused.

MAXINE

What was that?

JERROD

It's a black thing.

MAXINE

Jerrod, I'm black.

JERROD

(hand gesture for so-so)

Eh.

CUT TO:

26 INT. JERROD & MAXINE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

26

Maxine is studying. Alex enters.

ALEX

Oh, hey Maxine. I didn't know you
were here.

MAXINE

So you would've knocked if you knew?

ALEX

No.

(then)

I just came by to see if Jerrod got
some more of that Chunky Monkey ice
cream.

Alex crosses toward to kitchen.

MAXINE

Check for yourself. Jerrod's at work.

ALEX

Oh yeah. So his stupid little "strike"
is finally over?

MAXINE

What strike?

Alex stops in his tracks.

ALEX

Damn. I really can not keep secret.

CUT TO:

27 INT. MAXINE'S CAR - DAY - LATER

27

Maxine sits in her car with Alex in the passenger seat.
They are parked across the street from Jerrod who is spinning
his anti-Finish Line sign on the street corner. He's gotten
good at it.

ALEX

Man he has gotten really good at that.

MAXINE

That son of a bitch.

Maxine takes out her phone, then dials Jerrod. Jerrod stops
spinning and answers his phone. (Throughout the conversation
we hear Jerrod on Maxine's speaker-phone and see him from
Maxine's POV).

JERROD

Yo.

MAXINE

What are you doing?

JERROD

Working really really hard right now.

The sound of a car horn goes off.

MAXINE

Wow, it's really noisy over there.

JERROD

Yeah, you know malls. So what's up?

MAXINE

I was thinking more about our anniversary. You wanted to do something special and I'm the reason we didn't.

JERROD

It's no big deal. I forgive you.

MAXINE

No, no. You wanted to do it up and celebrate our love at a fancy restaurant and that's what we're going to do.

ALEX

(whispers)

With your friends.

MAXINE

And I'm going to call Alex and tell him to bring a date. Let's make a big deal out of it.

JERROD

Alex isn't going to want to spend too much money on her.

MAXINE

He won't have to. It's your treat. Let's all go out. It's our anniversary!

JERROD

But --

MAXINE

No buts. We're doing this. Love ya.

Maxine hangs up.

ALEX
Thanks for dinner.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

28 INT. CHEZ JOSEPHINE - NIGHT

28

An elegant, yet trendy and hip restaurant. The kind of place "foodies" blog about. Jerrod, Maxine, Alex and Brenda are seated. A waiter takes their orders.

ALEX

To start. Can we get the ribs as an appetizer?

WAITER

Would you like a half portion, sir?

ALEX

Nope. Full rack.

BRENDA

I'll have the quinoa and kale salad.

ALEX

That's a good start. You know what would be good with that? Bacon.

BRENDA

I don't know, I think I've put on a little weight.

ALEX

What? That's crazy.

MAXINE

I think I'll have the filet mignon.

JERROD

(off menu)

Eighty-eight dollars for an 8 oz filet steak?

WAITER

It's Kobe beef.

JERROD

I don't give a damn what that cow got away with in a Colorado hotel room.

WAITER

Japanese Kobe beef has superior flavor, fat and tenderness because the cattle is massaged with sake and fed beer while listening to classical music.

JERROD

For eighty-eight dollars someone should
massage and feed me beer while I eat
it.

ALEX

Did the lobster get massages and drink
beer, too?

WAITER

No, sir. They do not.

ALEX

I guess I'll get it anyway.

MAXINE

Oh, lobster sounds good. Now I can't
decide. Kobe beef or lobster.

WAITER

Some people get both.

MAXINE

Then that's what I'll do.

ALEX

Me too. Surf n' Turf!

Off Jerrod's annoyed look:

CUT TO:

29 INT. CHEZ JOSEPHINE - LITTLE LATER

29

Alex and Brenda have ribs, pommes frites and mashed potatoes
in front of them. Maxine takes a bite of steak. Jerrod
pokes at a tiny plate of kale salad. Alex cracks a lobster
claw, lobster juice shoots into Jerrod eye.

MAXINE

Are you sure a salad is going to be
enough food for you, Jerrod?

JERROD

Oh, yeah. I know it looks small, but
Kale is surprisingly filling.

MAXINE

Are you sure you wouldn't like some
steak?

JERROD

I'd love a bite.

He reaches for her plate. She jabs his hand with her fork.

JERROD (CONT'D)

Oww!

MAXINE

Not mine. We'll get you your own steak.
(calling off)
Excuse me, waiter.

JERROD

No, no, no, really. I'll just have
some of these ribs.

Jerrod picks up a slab of ribs from the plate.

ALEX

That's not for you.

Alex grabs the other end of the slab.

JERROD

I thought it was an appetizer for the
table.

ALEX

For this side of the table.

They play tug-of-war with the ribs until the slab breaks
apart. Alex's half of the ribs hit Brenda in the face and
drops in her lap.

BRENDA

Oh no.

Brenda has barbecue sauce all over her face and dress.

MAXINE

You guys! Come on, Brenda, let's get
some seltzer water on that before the
stain sets.

Brenda and Maxine cross to the bar. Jerrod devours his half
of the ribs.

JERROD

What the hell is wrong with you?

ALEX

What?

JERROD

I haven't worked in three weeks. You
know I can't afford all this.

ALEX

Yeah, but Maxine doesn't know that.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

But she does know me. So if I didn't take full advantage of this situation, she'd know something was up.

JERROD

Doesn't mean you have to order everything on the menu.

ALEX

Brenda was going to just order a salad.

JERROD

I think you can let the poor girl have a salad now. Your work here is done. Congratulations. You took a beautiful young woman and turned her into someone who would date you.

ALEX

Yeah, I gotta say, breaking her ankle was an accident, but it really worked out for me.

JERROD

Yeah, but don't you want to date somebody a just a little bit better than you? I mean look at her.

ANGLE ON Maxine and Brenda. Maxine is dabbing seltzer water on Brenda's barbecue stained dress while Brenda eats maraschino cherries out of the bartenders garnish tray.

ANGLE BACK ON Jerrod and Alex.

JERROD (CONT'D)

She just looks so defeated.

ALEX

Yeah, I guess so.

Jerrod laughs as Alex realizes Jerrod is right, then:

ALEX (CONT'D)

Maxine knows you went cheap on your anniversary gift because you're on strike.

JERROD

What?! Why didn't you tell me?!

ALEX

I promised her I wouldn't.

JERROD

How did she find out?

ALEX

I told her.

Maxine and Brenda rejoin them at the table. The waiter approaches.

WAITER

How is everything?

JERROD

Superb! But you know what? I think I will order one of those almost ninety dollar steaks with a side of lobster.

(then)

What do you think about that Maxine?

MAXINE

Go for it. It is a special occasion.

JERROD

It is a special occasion.

(then, to waiter)

Bring us a bottle of that champagne that the successful rappers drink. Do you have Cristal?

WAITER

Yes we do, sir. It is three hundred dollars a bottle.

JERROD

Money is not an object. This is a celebration. Right Maxine?

MAXINE

No wait.

(to waiter)

Make that two bottles of Cristal.

The waiter crosses off.

JERROD

(explodes)

I can't believe you let me order a six - hundred dollars worth of champagne when you know that I've been on strike for three weeks.

MAXINE

Dammit Alex!

ALEX

Oh yeah, big surprise. Alex can't keep a secret.

MAXINE

Look Jerrod, honesty is one of the most important things we have in our relationship. You should've told me about the strike.

JERROD

And you would've been okay with that?

MAXINE

Hell no. Rent is the most important thing in our relationship. You need to go back to work ASAP.

JERROD

They took away our full-time benefits.

MAXINE

Then find a different job. But until you do, you need to be happy to have a part time job with the benefit of a paycheck.

The waiter shows up with two opened bottles of Cristal and starts pouring glasses.

JERROD

(to waiter)

Any chance ya'll are hiring?

CUT TO:

30 INT. CHEZ JOSEPHINE - LATER

30

They have finished their meals. Jerrod pours the last of the Cristal into Maxine's glass.

JERROD

Happy anniversary, Maxine. I love you.

MAXINE

And I love you.

They clink glasses, then sip their champagne. Brenda chokes back a burp and then fans away the stinky air in front of her face with her hand.

BRENDA

I am so full.

She nuzzles up to Alex and leans her head on his shoulder.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

This was nice. Thank you for being there for me these past few weeks.

She stares into his eyes, adoringly.

ALEX'S POV: We see Brenda's droopy eye, barbecue sauce smeared on the early makings of her double chin. Brenda leans in for a kiss. Alex puts his hand up and blocks her kiss.

ALEX

Sorry if I sent you mixed signals, but
I think we should just be friends.

Brenda gets up and runs off. Alex casually continues eating.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Dragged her down too far.

MAXINE

Alex, you need to go see if she's
alright.

ALEX

Fine.

Alex reluctantly gets up and crosses toward the bathroom.
Jerrod looks at it and reacts.

MAXINE

How bad?

JERROD

The tip will be more than I've ever
paid for a meal.

Maxine looks toward the bathroom.

MAXINE

Come on, let's go.

JERROD

What?

Maxine grabs Jerrod by the hand and they exit.

MAXINE

(to waiter re: check)
Couple in the bathroom's got it.

Alex comes back to the table. Looks around confused. Sees
the check. Alex looks over his shoulder as he scurries out.

ALEX

(to waiter re: check)
Girl in the bathroom's got it.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

FADE IN:

31 INT. FINISH LINE - DAY

31

The store is filled with customers. Bobby and Frank assist customers. Steve completes a customer transaction at the register. Jerrod enters.

STEVE

(calls out)

Well look who it is everyone! Our old friend Jerrod.

JERROD

(quietly humble)

Hey Steve, I want to apologize for the way I acted the past few weeks, and I hope there's no hard feelings, 'cause I'm ready to come back to work even if it is only part-time.

STEVE

Actually Jerrod, I was going to call you today and ask if you'd be willing to come back full-time.

JERROD

Word?

STEVE

Word indeed. As you can see, we're busier than ever. And it took you going on strike for me to realize it, but you are invaluable to the success of this store.

JERROD

(loudly)

You hear that everybody?! I'm "invaluable to the success of this store." Would anybody like to take a guess as why that is? Because I'm a lion!

STEVE

That, and the fact that your picketing attracted so much attention that it made a lot of people aware we we're located in the mall. So welcome back.

CUT TO:

32 EXT. STREET - LATER

32

Jerrod stands on the sidewalk in front of the mall wearing a lion mascot costume. He holds a sign that reads: "10% Off at The Finish Line when you say the Finish Lion sent you." He spins the sign but drops it due to his cumbersome paws. He bends down to pick up his sign as the sign spinner from earlier accidentally bumps in to him, knocking him down

JERROD

Dammit Ramone!

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW