

Cocky

PILOT

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&

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ACT ONE

INT. BURT'S APARTMENT - MORNING

BURT HERMAN, out of shape, bit defeated, is snoring away on his couch when his phone rings. Burt answers with a grunt.

RECORDED VOICE

(enthusiastic)

Hello! This is a special message
for Weels Driver...

(robotic)

Burt Herman...

(enthusiastic)

You have not picked up any
passengers in...

(robotic)

Eighteen hours.

(enthusiastic)

This is to inform you, you may be
put on probation! Thank for being
part of the Weels Family! We ride
share, because we care! Goodbye.

Burt rolls off the couch, shuffles across the floor, past the stacks of books everywhere, over to a stereo and a large VINYL COLLECTION, pulls out a REPLACEMENTS record and drops the needle on BASTARDS OF YOUNG. Time to start the day...

Burt sit on the toilet, eating pizza, scrolling through his phone and scowling. A call comes in... TANYA. Burt ignores it. He turns to grab some toilet paper and sees there is none. He sighs and looks around. He picks up the pizza box and starts to shred it.

EXT. BURT'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - MORNING

Burt exits his second floor apartment. He passes by the window of his neighbor, JEANNIE, hippyish, has a CUPPING PATIENT on a MASSAGE TABLE. She chants as she tries with a lot of force to remove a stuck cup from the person's back. Burt shakes his head.

Burt walks down the stairs where the building maintenance person, MANNY, is struggling mightily to carry a WATER HEATER up by himself. His face is sweaty and beet red.

BURT

I got toilet clogging problems
again, Manny. This building has
terrible pipes. Can you take a
look asap?

MANNY

Sure... maybe you can help me get
this up the stairs...

BURT

Of course... lift with the legs.
Later, amigo.

Burt knocks on the water heater, making Manny's knees buckle.

Burt continues walking to his dirty, slightly dented car and gets in. A text comes in from Tanya... CALL ME ASAP. IMPORTANT! Burt ignores it again. He then turns on a small digital "Weels" logo and drives off.

CU: The INSIDE of a LARGE BAG of CHEDDAR CHEESE PUFFS. Orange-dusted, PLUMP FINGERS, almost indistinguishable from the cheese puffs themselves, claw a large handful.

EXT. STRIP MALL - SAN FERNANDO VALLEY - DAY

The hand belongs to a ROTUND 12-year-old BOY. A SNOWMAN on skinny legs. He pushes the cheese puffs into his already overstuffed maw. His MOTHER stands next to him. Burt pulls up. The mother opens the back door.

BURT

(rote... I hate my life)
Welcome to Weels, the fifth-most-
trusted rideshare company in
America.

INT. BURT'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

The boy is now tipping the bag back, trying to shake every last particle into his mouth. Most miss and go all over his shirt and the back seat. Burt's phone rings. The Caller ID says, TANYA. Burt ignores it. The boy turns to his mother.

BOY

Can I have another snack?

Through his rear view mirror, Burt watches the mother pull out a large packet of DONETTES. The boy tears into them. Burt shakes his head.

BURT

(to mother)
You really think that's a good
idea?

MOTHER

Excuse me?

BURT

Those donuts. You think that's good after he just demolished that huge sack of sodium?

MOTHER

He's a growing boy.

BURT

He's an inflating boy. Sure, it makes you feel good to feed him, but you're killing junior. He's already got no ankles, just a big cylinder leg right into foot.

MOTHER

You're one to talk. You're a slob.

BURT

I'm a human lifejacket, saving everyone with the truth.

MOTHER

Who asked you?

BURT

Do I really need to be asked to save a child?

MOTHER

Yes, because you have no idea what you're talking about.

BURT

Really? I have two Ph.Ds, a former professorship at a top 200 school, I'm an avid reader of among other things, three medical journals.

MOTHER

And you've risen all the way up to Weels driver. Congratulations, Professor.

BURT

This is just a temporary, five-year, setback. And I know what I'm talking about.

(MORE)

BURT (CONT'D)

Your kid is heading for a life of baggy, silky shorts, flip flops, and doing that wide-leg waddle walk, all because Mama Bear can't resist the urge to stuff her kid.

MOTHER

Who in the hell do you --

Burt's phone rings, it's Tanya again. A VIDEO CALL.

BURT

Again, Tanya? Hold that thought.
I have to get this.
(answering)
Hello, Tanya. What's wrong?

On the screen, an overly-made-up, blinged-out woman, TANYA. Techno music plays in the background.

TANYA

Burt, you have to check this out...
They opened up a Zen Spin right in
Mom's retirement village.

Tanya holds up her phone to show an enthusiastic INSTRUCTOR, spinning like mad, then pans over to a bunch of OCTOGENARIANS sitting on bikes as ATTENDANTS HAND TURN THE PEDALS FOR THEM, landing on Burt's mom, IRMA HERMAN, all contempt and misery.

BURT

So, how much extra does this cost?

TANYA

What does it matter? Mom's loving it.

IRMA

(berating Attendant)
Faster! I have a dress I want to
fit into by Saturday.

BURT

It matters, Tanya, because I'm the one paying for --

TANYA

Mom wants to say "Hi" to you, Burt.

IRMA (O.S.)

No, I don't.

BURT

Hello, Mom.

IRMA

Ugh, what happened with you? Your sister's such a beauty and your face still looks scrunched from your trip down the birth canal. Maybe if you didn't insist on coming out two weeks early I wouldn't've had to push so hard... You know, I missed seeing "The Wiz" because of you!

BURT

I appreciate you, too, Ma. Look, I've got to go, my students are waiting. Big lecture today --

Burt's car is now zig-zagging all over the road as he tries to look at the screen. The Mother and Son are being thrown all over the back seat.

MOTHER

Watch the road!

IRMA

Who's that in your car?

BURT

Visiting professors from Finland.

BOY

Mommy, I'm scared. I think I might have diarrhea!

IRMA

Was that a kid?

BURT

Uh, yeah, genius from Helsinki...
Olemme pian siellä, professori
Doogie Howser.

IRMA

(on screen)

He sounds fat. Like when they got that bullfrog neck.

MOTHER

Pull over!

BURT

We're not there yet.

MOTHER

Pull over!!

ZEN SPIN INSTRUCTOR

(on screen)

We're heading up into the hills,
people. Let's soar like eagles!

TANYA

(on screen)

Whoo! Go Mom!

Irma's exhausted Attendant reaches for a bottle of water.

IRMA

(on screen)

That's mine!

The call ends. Burt pulls over. The mother opens the door
and starts shoving the boy out.

MOTHER

Douchebag!

BURT

I was just looking to save the kid
some grief! I'm sympathizing!

Burt lowers his window.

BURT (CONT'D)

Hey, uh, don't forget to rate me
five Smiley-Cars.

The mother comes over and kicks his car door ten-times-in-a-
row without stopping and walks off.

BURT (CONT'D)

(disbelief)

Seriously, lady? God, you try to
help people. No good deed.

Burt is about to pull out when he notices a COCKATOO sitting
on a bush, looking at him. Burt barely has a second to
process when a Zero rating for the ride pops up on his phone
next to his overall rating of 1.4 out of 5. Burt pulls away.

EXT. MINI MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

Burt pulls his car in next to a spotless PRIUS. The owner,
JAMARCUS J. MARCUS JR., 20, eager, earnest. This kid is
destined for a Nobel Prize if he'd just stop taking Burt's
advice. JaMarcus is furiously buffing a small speck of dirt
on the hood. Burt gets out of his car, sipping a coffee.

BURT
Hey, JaMarcus.

JAMARCUS
What's today's lunchtime lecture?

BURT
Why people suck...

JAMARCUS
(eagerly writing in
notebook)
Part twenty-five!

BURT
Respect is the only currency that
matters and no one, I mean no one
respects what I do.

JAMARCUS
And that's why they suck?

BURT
Exactly. People come into my car
and all I try to do is give them a
little helpful advice, things they
need to know - you're too fat,
cologne is for rapists, people who
believe in God should be in mental
institutions. And what to I get
for my much-needed honesty? Low
ratings. And now the fascists at
Weels are saying that if I don't
get my rating up I'm fired. What
else do they want from me? I only
have six minor accidents, none of
them my fault - not including what
the insurance company said - I keep
my car clean enough...

JaMarcus looks at the heavy layer of GRIME on Burt's trunk
with the words "WASH ME" drawn into it. He looks a little
further over to the side of the car to see a more DETAILED
DRAWING in the GRIME of Edvard Munch's "The Scream."

JAMARCUS
Do you keep water bottles in the
car? Riders seem to appreciate it.

BURT
So they can leave a bottle with
hepatitis backwash spilling on my
back seat. No thanks.

JAMARCUS

Never thought of that...

(ashamed)

Now I see that I was too concerned about my passengers' comfort. But I did just get my fourth commendation for consistent Five-Smiley-Car ratings.

BURT

Let me tell you something, that award is B.S. It's made by some algorithm. That's what the whole damn company is. You're a young, Black kid in college, so, of course the algorithm's going to award you. I'm a middle-aged, very-well-educated white guy who's on to their game. That's why they try to keep me down.

JAMARCUS

Well, they told me if I have one more solid month they would pay for some of my college. Next semester gets expensive with the electrical engineering classes. So, I could use the help.

BURT

Wasn't that what your old man was? Why would you want to follow in the footsteps of a jerk that walked out on you and your mom when you were like five?

JAMARCUS

No, no, no. He didn't walk out on us like he was leaving for good...

INT. JAMARCUS HOUSE - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

A five year old JaMarcus is staring up at his FATHER and a young BUXOM, TIGHTLY-CLOTHED WOMAN.

JAMARCUS (V.O.)

The true story is my dad told me...

(imitating his father)

JaMarcus, an alien space ship in orbit around the earth is having a very specific electrical-engineering-light-speed problem that only I can fix.

(MORE)

JAMARCUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(motioning to buxom woman)
Tinsel, here, is the ambassador
who's taking me up to see the
aliens... And I said...
(5 year old JaMarcus)
But when will you be back? And Dad
said...
(father voice)
Ten minutes at most.

EXT. MINI MALL PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

JAMARCUS
But here's the thing. When my Dad
said ten minutes, he didn't take
into account Einstein's Theory of
Relativity. So, ten minutes on the
ship going light speed is like
decades on earth. Which by my
calculations means he'll be back
any day now. I worked it all out.

JaMarcus takes out a notebook and shows a very complex M.I.T.
LEVEL MATHEMATICAL FORMULA that takes up many many pages.

BURT
You ever try just doing a google
search?

JAMARCUS
(off formula)
My keyboard doesn't have sigma or
pi symbol so I don't know if...

BURT
I meant typing in your Dad's name.
(off phone dinging)
I got a ride. Catch you later...

He tosses his coffee, splashing it on JaMarcus' car.

BURT (CONT'D)
(clueless)
Your car's not looking so clean.
You may want to wash it.

Burt drives off.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

Burt pulls to the corner and a PASSENGER angrily gets out and
kicks Burt's car ten times. Burt pulls away.

INT. BURT'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Burt sees the passenger rated him Zero Smiley Cars.

EXT. GAS STATION - EVENING

Burt is parked by the AIR/WATER PUMP. He uses the trickling water hose to attempt to clean off his back windshield. While he stands there he sees an empty, dented WATER BOTTLE on the ground. Burt picks it up, blows into it to "un-dent" it, then fills it using the water hose. As he does, he notices across the way, the COCKATOO.

BURT
What the hell --

The water starts to overflow the bottle. Burt pulls the hose away and when he looks back up, the cockatoo is gone.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - EVENING

Burt is GLUING the cap back onto the plastic safety ring on the bottle. His phone dings.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

Burt pulls up to the corner. An elderly woman in black and a veil, gets out, slams the door and storms off.

BURT
All I'm saying is that
statistically speaking most people
die not long after they lose a
spouse, so you'll see your husband
soon! That's a good thing!

Burt's rating comes up... Zero Smiley Cars. He shakes his head. As he is about to pull out, he is startled to see the COCKATOO on the curb. Burt gets out of the car. When he comes around the side, the Cockatoo is gone again.

BURT (CONT'D)
I'm losing my mind.

Burt gets back in the car only to see the Cockatoo is on his hood, startling Burt.

BURT (CONT'D)
Hey!... Shoo! Shoo!

The bird just stares at Burt. Burt tries to rev the engine and honk the horn. The bird doesn't move.

Burt steps out of the car, picks up a can in the street and throws it at the bird but his aim is terrible and he dents his own car. The bird continues to stare at him.

Burt gets back in the car and starts driving, zig zagging on and off the SIDEWALK.

The car approaches SPEED BUMPS in the road and KACHUNKS over them hard, sending Burt's head repeatedly into the roof, but barely affecting the bird. The bird just moves closer to the windshield and grips on to the windshield wipers, staring.

BURT (CONT'D)
Leave me alone, you feathered
monster!

Burt hits the wipers and the bird just goes back-and-forth with them. He sprays washer fluid, and the now-wet bird just keeps going back-and-forth.

Burt reaches for a MAGAZINE and rips a couple pages out to use as GLOVES. He then gets out and grabs the bird.

BURT (CONT'D)
Fly off!

Burt throws the bird into the air who just comes down onto the street with an awful thud. Burt recoils. He looks at the bird who is splayed on the ground, dazed but okay. Burt looks around and then slides the bird over to the curb with his foot. He is about to get into his car when he looks up to see FOUR STREET SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS.

INT. BURT'S CAR - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Burt, annoyed, is driving with the bird in the passenger seat. He is looking at a list of ANIMAL SHELTERS on his phone, all CLOSED. He then notices out the window...

EXT. GOODWILL STORE - CONTINUOUS

Burt pulls into the empty parking lot and right up to the CLOTHING DONATION DROP OFF BIN. He gets out with the bird and looks around. Not a soul. He raises the bird up to the clothing bin OPENING and just as he's about to dump the bird into the bin, he hears...

VOICE

What the hell, man! Who drops a
bird into a Goodwill bin?!

Startled, Burt drops the bird who flutters down. Burt wheels
around looking for who said it. No one's there.

BURT

Who said that?

VOICE

You could hear me?

Burt looks in the bin to see if someone is in there. No one.

BURT

C'mon, who said that?!

Burt slowly looks down at the bird.

BIRD

Seriously, a used clothes bin?
That's some serial killer crap
right there.

Burt, freaked, starts to back up to his car.

BIRD (CONT'D)

Please don't go! I've finally been
heard!

Burt fumbles and drops his keys. The bird snatches them up.

BURT

Give those to me!

BIRD

No, I want to talk first.

Burt lunges but the bird backs away. Burt tries again, but
the bird turns and runs. Burt is forced to pursue. They run
in circles in the empty parking lot... a very slow, terribly-
out-of-shape man, chasing a bird. Burt soon stops and
doubles over, gasping.

BIRD (CONT'D)

You okay?

BURT

I can't breathe... I'm dizzy...
and...

(clutching chest)

I'm in trouble here.

BIRD

Oh, no, you saying that, is making me feel weird.... Jesus, now I can't really breathe... Does anything on you hurt? Like shooting down your left side.

BURT

My arm. Is this what a heart attack feels like? I'm seeing spots.

BIRD

I think I am, too.

BURT

Oh, I'm going to --

Burt starts vomiting.

BIRD

And, now, here I --
(vomiting)
We're dying!

BURT

(still vomiting)
Damn!

BIRD

(still vomiting)
Damn!

They each collapse on the ground, looking skyward. This is it, as the camera pulls up and away as if they were both leaving their bodies and ascending to heaven...

EXT. GOODWILL STORE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

It's quiet now. We see Burt and the bird sitting on the curb. They're both okay.

BIRD

Well, that passed.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. GOODWILL STORE - CONTINUOUS

Burt gets up and starts walking to his car.

BIRD

Listen, I'm sorry if I freaked you out. No one's ever been able to understand me before. I'm just glad you did. I mean, you were going to dump me in a clothing bin.

BURT

You would have been fine. It's like a soft bed.

BIRD

A soft bed of disgusting throw-away clothes that probably have dried blood and God knows what else on them. I've seen homeless people take dumps in those bins.

BURT

You've never seen anyone take a dump in one of those bins.

BIRD

I absolutely have.

BURT

No one can get their ass up that high.

BIRD

It's all in the thighs. Homeless dumpers are very resourceful.

BURT

If they were resourceful they wouldn't be homeless. When have you seen this?

BIRD

There's like a thousand YouTubes of it.

EXT. GOODWILL STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Burt now has his phone out and is looking on YouTube.

BURT
There's nothing.

BIRD
Really? Try typing, "Taking a Dump
in Clothes Bin."

BURT
There's nothing here.

BIRD
Try, "I crap on charity." "Ass in
the hole." "Bowel-vation Army."

BURT
This is insane. I'm leaving.

BIRD
Wait, wait, wait. I'm just lost.
I've been wandering around for
days. My owner is probably worried
sick.

BURT
What's your owner's name?

BIRD
Kyle.

BURT
Kyle what?

BIRD
I don't know.

BURT
You don't know your beloved owner's
last name?

BIRD
I'm his cockatoo, not his
accountant. Please don't leave me,
I don't like the dark and I can't
fly.

BURT
Why? You acraphobic? It means
afraid of heights --

BIRD
I know what it means, but that was
super pretentious anyway. And
no...
(hugely ashamed)
(MORE)

BIRD (CONT'D)

I'm clipped. I'm a freak, okay!
It was the darkest day of my life,
so I'd rather not talk about--

BURT

Clipping isn't so bad. Pinioning,
on the other hand, when they take
out the whole wing joint, is awful.
I saw this photograph once of a guy
holding a swan down by its neck and
using a saw to --

BIRD

Can you not read the room here?!
What did I just say to you? You're
making my panic come back big time.

BURT

Fine. I'll drop you in front of a
shelter. At least I won't feel
guilty for doing the right thing.

BIRD

You mean after just having tried to
kill me.

BURT

I didn't try to kill you.

BIRD

My wing still really hurts from
when you threw me in the air. It
could be infected.

BURT

Your wing is fine.

BIRD

Until you take me to the shelter,
they see my wound and they chop it
off entirely.

BURT

That doesn't happen.

BIRD

Check YouTube.

Burt just rolls his eyes.

EXT. BURT'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - EVENING

Burt comes through, carrying the bird up the stairs toward his apartment. JEANNIE steps out of her apartment carrying a PAN FLUTE. She has ACUPUNCTURE NEEDLES sticking out of her face.

JEANNIE

Oh, hi, Burt.

BURT

Hey, Jeannie... You, uh, realize you left some acupuncture needles in your face.

JEANNIE

Yes, my Chi has really been off this week so I wanted to keep the needles in for a while to balance out.

BURT

(walking past, sotto)
Okay, well, you enjoy that horsecrap.

JEANNIE

When did you get a bird?

BURT

I'm just watching him for a friend.

BIRD

No one really believes you have friends, do they?

Burt looks at Jeannie for a reaction to what Dorian said.

JEANNIE

And squawk squawk, to you, too, little fella... He's so cute.

A crazy-eyed HAIRLESS CAT (real breed) also with acupuncture needles in it's face steps out from Jeannie's apartment.

BIRD

Ahhh! What in God's name...

JEANNIE

Wildfire, do you want to say hi to our new neighbor? Wildfire's been having Chi issues, as well.

BIRD

Uh, hey.

WILDFIRE

I committed war crimes in a past life so I'm doomed to walk the Earth as this... With her.

BIRD

(afraid)

Nooo, you look great...

WILDFIRE

I look like I'm made of leftover scrotum.

BIRD

(trying)

Yes, but, awesome leftover scrotum!

JEANNIE

Did you know that our Native American brothers and sisters say that when you walk with a bird, you walk with beauty?

BURT

Interesting. The belief systems of 574 different Indian tribes boiled down to something you can put on a poster for yoga moms. Your spirituality is breathtaking.

JEANNIE

(genuine)

Thank you. The needles must be doing their thing.

BURT

Well, a couple have sprung leaks.

Three needles trickle blood.

JEANNIE

Oh... I should... good night,
Burt... good night, bird.

She scoops up the cat and heads back into her apartment. As she goes, we catch Burt taking one last look at her.

BIRD

Wow, and I didn't think there could be anything more messed up than you finding a talking cockatoo tonight.

INT. BURT'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Burt puts the bird down then closes and locks the door. The place is a little depressing, but not awful. There is a whole wall of categorized vinyl records.

BIRD
Can you lock and unlock the door
again?

BURT
Why?

BIRD
Please.

Burt does.

BIRD (CONT'D)
One more time... Please...

BURT
Are you seriously OCD?

BIRD
No...
(under breath)
It just helps me keep the demons
away.
(then, brightly)
So, nice place! I honestly
expected much, much worse.

Burt collapses on the couch, picks up a small bong, and takes a long hit.

BURT
Oh, I needed that. You want some?

BIRD
No, thank you. The paranoia. And
I'm a bit health conscious.

BURT
(exhaling smoke, coughing)
I am, too.

BIRD
Uh... yeah.

BURT
 (opening laptop)
 Okay, I'm going to put something up
 on Craigslist see if anyone will
 claim you. You have a name?

BIRD
 Dorian.

BURT
 Dorian? Well, that's terrible.

Suddenly, Dorian craps.

BURT (CONT'D)
 Hey!

BIRD/DORIAN
 Sorry! You insulted me which made
 my anxiety spike which makes me
 move my bowels.

Burt begrudgingly wipes it up... As soon as he does, Dorian
 craps again. Burt stares at him.

DORIAN
 I'm still getting over the insult.

Burt places Dorian in a bowl, then turns back to his laptop.

BURT
 And into the cesspool that is LA
 Craigslist... Listings...
 (perusing)
 Lost shoe horns. Lost heroin
 syringe kits. Lost Gross-Old-Lady-
 Wrinkly-Neck-Covering-Scarves...
 Lost Baboons... How are there more
 listings for that than lost
 scarves?... Here, Lost Birds...
 (to Dorian while typing)
 How come "Hellraiser" next door
 couldn't hear you?

DORIAN
 I don't know. Maybe it's like how
 dogs can hear certain frequencies
 humans can't, or maybe we're just
 on the same frequency.

BURT
 What does that mean?

DORIAN

That maybe the universe has brought us together for a reason. That fate is a road we all travel and depending on where we are in that journey is the point at which we intersect with the person we most need.

Burt stares at Dorian.

DORIAN (CONT'D)

Sorry, I'm getting a contact high.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

CU: JAMARCUS' PHONE. He has typed into Google, JAMARCUS J. MARCUS SR. He is about to hit enter when a WEIRD COUPLE, COS and MOS, wearing matching jumpsuits and Spock haircuts, staple a FLYER to the telephone pole JaMarcus is leaning against. JaMarcus looks at the flyer which reads: CELESTIAL UNIVERSE LIGHT TRAVELERS or C.U.L.T. JaMarcus' eyes go wide.

INT. SAN FERNANDO VALLEY HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

A bunch of people, all ages and ethnicities, sit listening to a presentation by Cos and Mos. Behind them a SCREEN presents an old-fashioned SLIDE SHOW.

MOS

Make no mistake, the Fakaktite Alien Ship is on it's way. The signals have been sent to Cos and myself.

The old slide projector clikety-clacks to the next slide of a 1950s Flying Saucer.

COS

By joining our group, Mos and I will teach you how to shed your earthly cocoon and be summoned onto the ship to transcend into --

JAMARCUS

(standing up)

Is that when my dad will come back?

Clickety-clack: The next slide shows a 1950s SPACE ALIEN.

JAMARCUS (CONT'D)

I was just wondering if any of the people on the ship could get off and stay on earth?

MOS

It's not a bus. As I was saying, you will become celestial beings and travel in a beautiful glow --

JAMARCUS

Are you sure? I mean, you said you were from the ship and obviously you got off.

COS

Because we're teachers.

Clikety-Clack: The next slide shows the ROSWELL ARBY'S SIGN with an "ALIENS WELCOME SIGN" underneath it. Below stands Mos holding a sandwich and pointing up to the sign.

JAMARCUS

But how long ago were you on there? Maybe you guys crossed paths with my dad.

COS

It's a really really big ship. A lot of rooms and food courts --

JAMARCUS

But you said you've gotten signals. Maybe you could send them a message for me. Upload a photo maybe. Also, if you're from the space future, how come you're using a Kodak slide projector from 1972?

MOS

(looking at watch)

By golly, is it really that late? Cos, time for our torpor state.

Cos and Mos pretend to sleep.

EXT. SAN FERNANDO VALLEY HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

Everyone from the meeting is saying goodnight to each other. JaMarcus gets in his Prius and drives off. Once he's out of sight, they all rush back into the garage and sit.

MOS

Now, where were we?... Right, how
to link your bank accounts to us...

INT. BURT'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Burt, in a tee shirt and underwear, is checking Craigslist.

BURT

Nothing. Let's go to the shelter.

DORIAN

You only put that ad up like four
hours ago. You can't just send me
to that Birdy Buchenwald.

BURT

I don't want a pet.

DORIAN

Who hurt you, Burt?

BURT

Hurt me? No one.

DORIAN

C'mon, dude. While you were
sleeping off your "awesome high,
man," I did enough checking around
this place to get to know the real
Burt Herman. Did you know
cockatoos can see in the
ultraviolet? I can see everything.
Substances and bodily fluids, that
would make you vomit. So, you
don't think I got you pegged after
a few hours in this palace?

Dorian goes over to the kitchen and looks at the garbage...

DORIAN (CONT'D)

Everything in here has factory
chemicals and preservatives written
all over them. Hot Pockets and
frozen pizza, and not even name
brand frozen pizza. That looks a
whole lot like the store brand.
It's got the same label as the
roach traps in the corner.

He heads over to the bathroom door.

DORIAN (CONT'D)

And that food's not doing you any favors. Scrub the bowl all you want but an infrared splatter pattern like that doesn't lie. There have been a lot of emergency craps in here, and judging from the age of that bar of soap over there, not nearly enough showers.

He goes to the bedroom door.

DORIAN (CONT'D)

And I see the remnants of women's perfume a bunch of places, and some chick deodorant, too, but it's old. I mean, whoever it was hasn't been here in a looong time.

BURT

My ex-girlfriend, and it's none of your business.

DORIAN

I figured that's where those dresses in the closet came from.

BURT

I broke up with her, and she left some of her stuff. I guess she was hoping we'd get back together.

DORIAN

Well, clearly you didn't because your sheets haven't been changed in months, and guys only change them if they're going to get laid. And you, my friend, aren't getting --

BURT

Okay, I get it. I'm not exactly living my best life right now.

DORIAN

Maybe I can help with that. I can show you how to shop for healthy food. Give pointers on how to properly read people, like your next door neighbor, so you're not so outwardly awful. I saw you checking her out. I could make that happen! I don't really take up that much space --

BURT

Look, I can't keep you. I'm about to lose my gig with Weels for low ratings. I won't be able to keep my mom in her fancy assisted living place and that wretched woman will have to live with me. I'll never hear the end of it. She doesn't even know I drive for Weels, she thinks I'm still a professor. She even gives me grief about that... Not that I care what she or anyone thinks.

DORIAN

Yeah, clearly.

EXT. OVERSIZED ORNATE MCMANSION - DAY

Burt pulls up to the house which is part Disney Magic Castle, part gaudy Casino with towers and ornate canons, a menagerie of ANIMALS, a dancing fountain and a neon sign that reads KLAVAZLAV PALACE. Burt gets out of the car.

DORIAN

What the hell kind of shelter is this?

BURT

It's my sister's place. I need to stop in and talk to her.

DORIAN

Your sister lives here? Did Nicholas Cage design the whole thing, or were the canons someone else's idea?

BURT

It's her husband's dream house.

DORIAN

What do they do?

BURT

She's not qualified to do anything. Her husband, Klav, however, is the only person to ever make money in a multi-level marketing scheme selling essential oils.

Burt goes to shut the car door.

DORIAN

Whoa, you're not going to leave me alone, are you?

Burt slightly lowers the window.

BURT

I'll be back in a minute.

DORIAN

But what if you get towed for your unpaid parking tickets?

BURT

I don't have any --

Dorian pecks opens the glove compartment and a deluge of parking tickets comes out.

DORIAN

Tow yards are in the worst neighborhoods. Next thing you know a couple crack addicts steal me and sell me on the Bird Black Market.

BURT

First off, there's no such thing... And I'm not checking youtube. And second --

Dorian craps on the seat.

EXT. KLAVAZLAV PALACE - MOMENTS LATER

Burt, holding Dorian, walks towards the front door. They pass some PEACOCKS who spread their plumage. Dorian tries to give them a little head nod.

DORIAN

T'sup.

The peacocks look at Dorian and then at each other, snort and walk away. Dorian is humiliated.

DORIAN (CONT'D)

Jerks. Those peacocks totally dissed me. They hate me because I'm so bland looking. Which I am.

BURT

So, tell them off. Respect is the is the only currency that matters.

DORIAN

A snowy egret maybe, but a peacock?

(scoffing)

Right. Whatever, Erin Brockovich.

Burt rings the bell. The door opens and a fireplug of a man in a too-tight t-shirt stands there. This is KLAV. He is curling large dumbbells.

KLAV

(Eastern European accent)

There is he! Brother-and-law!

BURT

Hey, Klav --

Klav gets Burt in a tight bear hug which quickly turns to a full pat down.

KLAV

Clean... you put on some weight since Thursday? You feel doughier.

BURT

I don't own a scale --

KLAV

You should let me train you, guy!
How do you expect to protect yourself if someone comes at you with a knife, or motorcycle chain, or bayonet, or samurai sword, or spiked bat, or Uzi, or two Uzis?

(re: Dorian)

What's this? You get security clear with Tanya?

BURT

No. He's uh... a rescue. Didn't want to leave him in the car.

KLAV

It's okay. You vouch for him, he is like family. Welcome, bird to Klavazlav Palace!

Klav hugs and pats down Dorian. They walk inside the cavernous, garish house.

KLAV (CONT'D)

You are a good soul, Burt, for rescuing cockatoo. Kind like that could fetch a lot of money on Bird Black Market.

Burt looks at Dorian who gestures at Klav.

KLAV (CONT'D)
Back in my country...

DORIAN
Which country is that?

BURT
He won't tell me.

KLAV
My mother was a lover of birds...
Before the revolution...

DORIAN
Which revolution is that?

BURT
He won't tell me.

KLAV
When everything went dark and...
(sobbing)
Momma! Momma! Mommaaa!

Klav sobs hard for a moment and then cheerfully...

KLAV (CONT'D)
Oh, I have to show you this!

INT. KLAVAZLAV PALACE - MOMENTS LATER

Klav opens the door to an ornate room with an INDUSTRIAL-SIZED PAPER SHREDDING MACHINE and a mannequin in a uniform, lying on the floor.

KLAV
It's exact replica of one in my
dear leader's Summer Palace Number
Six. Look, I even got the bullet
holes and blood stains on mannequin
like real dead Imperial Guard.

BURT
Very... authentic.

TANYA walks in.

TANYA
Mom is loving the spinning! Life
is a beautiful journey...

KLAV

... Right up until someone chokes
you to death in your sleep.

TANYA

Exactly. By the way, she says
you're late on her rent.

BURT

That's why I came by. I'm in a bit
of a financial crunch right now, so
I thought maybe you could help --

TANYA

Oh, Burt, of course I want to help,
but where am I going to get that
kind of money? You know I'm broke.

BURT

You live in a castle... literally!

TANYA

Yes, but it's Klav's castle, not
mine. And Klav's money. It would
be wrong to ask him to pay for our
mother. Would you pay for his?

BURT

Well... he's not my wife. Look, I
don't know how much longer I'll be
able to afford Mom's --

KLAV

Burt! Stop, with the guilt, guy!
Don't you think she feels bad
enough that you make so much more
money than her?

BURT

I make, like, nothing.

KLAV

And she makes less, so how do you
think that makes her feel? Calling
your own sister a failure. Shame
on you!

BURT

Shame on... I... Forget it.

Klav comes and puts his arm around Burt a little too tightly.

KLAV

I know it's hard getting by these days. Tough times for everyone. But you know what will cheer you up? Come help feed our hippos.

EXT. TACO TRUCK - DAY

Burt sits on the curb eating a burrito. Dorian watches.

DORIAN

I don't think you're supposed to feed hippos... other hippos. You totally caved, you know.

BURT

No, I didn't. You heard Klav, I was making Tanya feel bad... And he's intimidating.

DORIAN

But couldn't you see how hard he works at trying to impress you? He's clearly intimidated by your profound and deep intellect.

BURT

(cleans ear with car key)
It is deep.
(sniffs car key, then)
Let's just go to the shelter.

DORIAN

Hold on.... Please, give me one shot at proving I can help you become a better person. I know I can. And if I fail, then you can tape my beak shut, roll me in ground beef and stick me in a cage with a honey badger.

Burt looks at Dorian.

EXT. TACO TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Burt and Dorian are watching a video. From the sounds of it, it's clearly what Dorian just described. Burt is horrified.

DORIAN

Told you.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. BURT'S CAR - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Dorian sits in the back. Burt is behind the wheel.

DORIAN

Now, learning to read people will take some practice, so we can't risk letting you respond to them at all... no matter what you do, you can only say three words: "How are you?" That's it. Let's try it. I enter the car, sit, and you say?

BURT

(begrudgingly)
How are you?

DORIAN

(woman's voice)
Me? I'm great. Thank you for asking. I just came from picking up my welfare checks.

Burt turns around to say something. Dorian shakes "no."

DORIAN (CONT'D)

Yeah, I go around to all of the offices, pick up a bunch of checks for dead relatives, too.

Burt is dying to say something, but fights to stay silent.

DORIAN (CONT'D)

Then I go spend it all on scratch-off games, piercings, and give the rest to my baby daddy who's got four kids with like five different women.

BURT

Oh, for Christ's sake.

DORIAN

You're not allowed to talk, just "How are you!"

BURT

You said he had four kids with five women! That's mathematically impossible! What, did two of the women each have half a baby?

DORIAN

I could have said two of the women
were dolphins, it doesn't matter.
You keep your mouth shut!

INT. BURT'S CAR - DAY

A GUY IN A SUIT gets in. He's on his phone.

BURT

How are you?

The guy doesn't answer. He's on his phone and completely not listening. Burt tries again, a bit louder this time.

BURT (CONT'D)

How are you?

No answer. Burt speeds up, annoyed.

BURT (CONT'D)

How are you?!

Nothing. Burt keeps accelerating then slams on the brakes and the guy goes flying into the seat in front of him, absolutely smashing his face. His nose gushes blood.

BURT (CONT'D)

So, you still want to go to the
same address or should I drop you
at urgent care?

CLOSE UP: BURT'S PHONE... ZERO STARS

INT. BURT'S CAR - DAY

A WHITE GUY WITH DREADLOCKS and canvas grocery bags gets in.

BURT

How are you?

WHITE RASTA

Real good, man. Real good. Thanks
for asking, brother.

EXT. BURT'S CAR - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Burt pulls up to the curb and abruptly stops. The White Rasta gets out and angrily slams the door.

BURT

... And when you get Polio because
you didn't believe in vaccinations
I'm gonna come to the hospital and
piss in your iron lung!!

CLOSE UP: BURT'S IPHONE... ZERO STARS

EXT. BURT'S CAR - DAY

An older, gaunt MAN with an OXYGEN TANK, NOZZLES in his nose,
as he smokes a CIGARETTE. The man leans towards Burt's car
holding a DEVICE to his THROAT.

OXYGEN MAN

(mechanical sounding)

Are you my Wee-luz?

Burt hits the accelerator and leaves the guy in the dust.

EXT. PARKING LOT - EVENING

CU: A VENMO LIKE APP is open with a \$500 payment to C.U.L.T
for MEMBERSHIP. A finger hits send.

JaMarcus, smiling, puts his phone away and then places a sort
of a small, home-made satellite that more resembles the
communication device from E.T, on the roof of his car.
JaMarcus turns the machine on, connects HEAD PHONES, and lies
on his hood. As he listens and looks up at the stars, he
begins quietly singing...

JAMARCUS

*Ground Control to Major Dad/ Ground
Control to Major Dad / Take your
protein pills and put your helmet
on / Ground Control to Major Dad...
ten... nine... eight... seven six /
Commencing countdown engines on...
five... four...*

Suddenly, he hears a SOUND in the earphones. He sits up and
concentrates. It's a rhythmic CLICKING. He searches the sky
for the source... and then spots it across the parking lot.
A GUY, sitting at the door of his RV, clipping his TOE NAILS.

INT. BURT'S CAR - EVENING - LATER

BURT

C'mon. You can do this.

He steels himself, shoves TWO PIECES OF GUM IN HIS MOUTH, starts working them, as TWO WOMEN get in.

BURT (CONT'D)
How are you?

FIRST WOMAN
(a little dismissive)
Yeah, okay.

She reaches for a bottle of water, twists the top, and it makes a little CRACKING sound like the security ring separating from the top. Burt smiles to himself.

FIRST WOMAN (CONT'D)
(to her friend)
Did you go on that Tinder date?

SECOND WOMAN
Ugh. He looked nothing like his picture. Total troll.

FIRST WOMAN
Why do guys do that? It's like, *I'm ugly, you should get with me* because patriarchy or whatever. Men are such liars.

SECOND WOMAN
So, immediately I'm making up excuses to get out of there.

Burt chews harder.

FIRST WOMAN
What picture did you use?

SECOND WOMAN
Maui. After I lost all that weight. The one Tony photoshopped.

FIRST WOMAN
No wonder the troll swiped on you. You're hot.

SECOND WOMAN
I know, can't see any of my Shingles scars at all.

Burt shoves two more pieces of gum in his mouth.

INT. BURT'S CAR - A FEW MINUTES LATER

FIRST WOMAN
So, you finally got out of there?

SECOND WOMAN
Said my mom has really bad Lupus.

FIRST WOMAN
What's that?

SECOND WOMAN
I don't know, I think it's like a
really bad foot thing, or teeth
fungus maybe. But he bought it.

The women laugh and high five as Burt grabs SEVERAL MORE
PIECES OF GUM and shoves them in his mouth.

EXT. BUILDING - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Burt pulls up to the curb and the women get out. Suddenly,
his screen shows that he just got a FIVE RATING. His overall
rating GOES UP A TENTH-OF-A-POINT. He heaves a sigh of
relief. He then reaches into his mouth and pulls out a
MASSIVE BALL OF CHEWED GUM, and tosses it out the window.

EXT. RENTAL APARTMENT COMPLEX - EVENING

Burt sits with Dorian on lounge chairs by the pool.

DORIAN
Congratulations.

BURT
Thank you. But today doesn't
extend your stay. As soon as we
find your owner, you're going back.

DORIAN
Look, about that. I didn't get
lost. I was, you know...
abandoned. He didn't want me
anymore. Actually, he was my sixth
owner. Six different names. Six
different homes... people get tired
of birds. So, now you know.

BURT
Why didn't you just say that then?

DORIAN
Cause it's embarrassing.

Beat, then...

BURT
You know the woman I was seeing...

DORIAN
A long long time ago --

BURT
(annoyed)
Yes, a long long time ago. I
didn't break up with her. She
dumped me. She didn't even come
back to get her stuff. So, we've
both been abandoned.
(then)
But you much more than me, because
you, like, six times.

Dorian craps. Burt rolls his eyes.

DORIAN
Sorry, I'm incredibly insecure!

BURT
Well, I can help you with that.

DORIAN
Actually, on that subject. My
first owner was a nice lady who
died. She called me Sebastian. I
liked that. Maybe you could call
me Seb --

BURT
Fresh starts are always better. A
new life, a new name. Something
that puts a smile on your face...
Something like... Cocky.

DORIAN
That's not putting a smile on my
face. You told me to stand up for
myself and Sebastian's more --

BURT
Cocky works for me.

Cocky backs down. Jeannie walks up.

JEANNIE

Hey, Burt.

BURT

How are you?

Cocky nods his approval to Burt.

JEANNIE

Okay, thanks for asking. Just did some energy healing so, I'm super centered right now.

Burt is about to comment.

COCKY

Don't say a word.

JEANNIE

I see you still have your bird.

Jeannie reaches down and starts to SCRATCH COCKY'S BELLY.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)

Oh, you like that. Yes, you do!

(nuzzling Cocky's belly
with her face)

Yes, you do! Such a sweetie. Hey,
if you ever need a bird sitter...

COCKY

Just nod. She likes you, don't
show her how wrong she is.

BURT

(to Jeannie)

Thanks.

Jeannie smiles. It's almost a moment, then...

JEANNIE

Well, I've got an aromatherapy
client coming in a few minutes.

She heads off.

COCKY

Nice. See, it's not that hard --

BURT

Jeannie!

COCKY

No, dude...

JEANNIE

Yes?

BURT

Go easy on that incense crap. It stinks up the whole building.

JEANNIE

(taken aback)

Oh.

BURT

And that making out with the bird's belly, you may want to go to the doctor, make sure you didn't just get avian lice or feather mites or whatever. And make it a real doctor, not your hope medicine.

Jeannie turns back, now a lot less charmed, and heads off.

COCKY

You just can't stop yourself.

BURT

What?! That was being helpful. I have no idea if you've had shots or what kind of crap you ate on the streets.

COCKY

I don't eat crap. I told you I'm health conscious.

BURT

If you see larva on the street, you're telling me you're not gonna eat it?

COCKY

Depends on how fresh it is.

BURT

Oh, bull, dude, you'd suck it down like a Margarita.

Cocky and Burt continue to argue as the sun sets.

END OF EPISODE