BIG TIME in HOLLYWOOD, FL

Episode #100 / Pilot
"Severance"

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CHARACTERS

JACK DOLPH (27)
Ferocious, ambitious, and blissfully ignorant. He's never worked a day in his life, and more than anything, he just wants to live at home in his imaginary world where he is a visionary and a star.

BEN DOLPH (30)
Similar to Jack, but with slightly more perspective on the "real world." Occasionally offers a contrarian opinion to Jack, but more or less shares the same ignorant and coddled mentality.

DEL PLIMPTON (28)
Not quite mentally retarded, but innocent like a child. Del has a magical quality about him -- you're never quite sure what he's thinking or why he's thinking it. Usually serves as Jack's scapegoat.

DIANA DOLPH (50s)
She is a strong, but sweet woman. She has a hint of a New York accent. She loves her children more than anything in the world, but also wears the pants in this house.

ALAN DOLPH (50s)
Meek and mild mannered. A sweet guy that everyone walks all over, especially Ben and Jack. Afraid of confrontation and is probably the #1 reason that Ben and Jack have been able to get away with doing nothing all of their lives.

GUEST STAR:

JIMMY STAATS
A weird and lonely struggling actor that is just excited to finally be a part of a production.

COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

Heavily stylized. Cinematic and tense. Like a scene out of a Tarantino movie.

TIGHT ON: An EMPTY FRAME of a TABLE.

Suddenly, a HEAD SLAMS against the Table and bounces up.

Everything that is spoken in this scene is in Spanish and subtitled in English, unless otherwise noted.

BEN
Where are the drugs?

Ben, a POLICE INVESTIGATOR walks around the table.

RODRIGO, the Cuban man who has just had his head pummeled into the table, is barely conscious.

RODRIGO
I don't know.

Rodrigo is wearing a PRISON JUMPSUIT. He has greasy slicked back hair, a BARBWIRE NECK TATOO and a TEAR DROP TATOO under his eye. There is BLOOD coming out of his nose.

BEN
You're trying my patience, muchacho.

RODRIGO
I don't know.

BEN
I'm only going to ask you one more time...

Ben flips out a SWITCH BLADE.

BEN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(slow, deliberate)
Where are the drugs?

Rodrigo SPITS in his face. Ben calmly wipes the SALIVA off his brow. He smirks.

CONTINUED:

Then lunges toward Rodrigo, who panics and tries to move back, but he's HANDCUFFED behind the chair.

JACK (O.S.)
(in English)
Graves!

Ben stops what he's doing.

OFF SCREEN: A DOOR CREAKS OPEN. JACK steps into the light. He has a SHOULDER HOLSTER and is smoking a CIGAR. His look is reminiscent of a 70s era detective.

JACK (CONT'D)
(in English)
Cool off. I got this one.

BEN
(in Spanish, to Rodrigo)
You're lucky.

Ben moves to the side. Jack pulls up a CHAIR across from Rodrigo. He's more soft-spoken. The "Good" Cop.

JACK
(in Spanish, to Rodrigo)
What's going on here, Rodrigo? Do you really want to spend the rest of your life in prison?

Rodrigo doesn't say anything.

JACK (CONT'D)
Just tell me who has the drugs, Rodrigo. And you can go home.

Rodrigo doesn't say anything.

Jack puffs the CIGAR.

JACK (CONT'D)
(re: Cigar)
You like to smoke Cigars, muchacho?

Rodrigo looks to Ben, then back at Jack.

RODRIGO
I like to smoke pigs.

Jack laughs.

CONTINUED: (2)

JACK
I like Cubans. I love the way they burn.

Jack motions as if he's going to put out the CIGAR in the ASH TRAY on the table, but then shoves his CIGAR into Rodrigo's eye socket! Holy Shit!

Rodrigo SHRIEKS in pain as the Cigar burns through his eyeball. Jack has a crazed look in his eyes. Ben laughs.

Suddenly, the wall behind Rodrigo starts to collapse. DAYLIGHT seeps into the space. The Wall RAISES UP and knocks a bunch of stuff over. This is a GARAGE DOOR.

In fact, this is not an INTERROGATION ROOM, but rather, just a SUBURBAN GARAGE.

Also, this has been some shitty scene the entire time. There is a SMALL VIDEO CAMERA in the corner that has been recording these clowns.

Jack and Ben break character.

BEN
Oh man, what the hell?

JACK
God dammit! Cut the camera, Del.

This is BEN (30) and JACK (27) DOLPH. They are brothers who make crappy videos that they post to the internet. They have never had jobs and are extremely naïve.

Rodrigo is actually Ben and Jack's best friend, DEL PLIMPTON (27), who is not Cuban, but in fact, very much white with heavy SPRAY TAN covering his skin. He might be mentally handicapped, but more than anything, he's innocent like a child.

Del, with a prop cigar still in his eye, uncuffs himself, walks to the CAMERA and presses a button.

Jack runs outside. Jack and Ben's mom, DIANA DOLPH (late 50s) is in the driveway.

JACK (CONT'D)
Mom! What the hell are you doing? We're shooting!

DIANA
(annoyed)
I'm sorry, I didn't know.

CONTINUED: (3)

JACK
Well, now it's ruined!

BEN
Gotta be more careful, mom.

DEL
Hi, Mrs. Dolph!

Diana takes GROCERIES out of her car and walks into the Garage.

DIANA
Where the hell is all the stuff that was in here?

BEN
We moved it.

Ben points to the side of the house.

ANGLE ON SIDE LAWN: All of the STUFF is in a jumbled mess. Everything pretty much looks broken, and a DOG is currently peeing on it.

Diana looks over, horrified. Jack realizes how shitty this looks.

JACK
Ooh, uh -- Del moved it.

CUT TO:

CREDIT SEQUENCE :30

The Credit Sequence is shot like an upbeat, fast paced action thriller (i.e. Guy Ritchie, Michael Bay).

We show moments of Ben, Jack and Del as CHILDREN making movies in an epic way.

We also show moments of Ben, Jack and Del making movies now -- the production doesn't seem much different than that of when they were kids.

In each instance, we FREEZE FRAME on them and their credit.

A shot of a Sign that reads HOLLYWOOD, FLORIDA. Jack subtly covers "Florida" with his head.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

EXT. DOLPH HOME - DAY

Quiet Suburbia. Middle Class. It's a beautiful day!

CUT TO:

INT. DOLPH HOME - JACK'S ROOM

ON VIDEO: "BAD COPS, WORSE COPS III"

This is the ACTUAL FOOTAGE from the scene they just shot. It is far, far crappier than the cold open would suggest.

BEN (O.S.)
Looks good.

JACK
Uh, yeah, I'd say so. It looks freakin' incredible.

ON VIDEO: Jack uses a clearly fake CIGAR and shoves it in Del's eye. Del lets out a weak scream.

JACK (CONT'D)
Not bad, Del.

DEL
Thanks.

BEN
It's a game changer.

JACK
We post this to the internet, catch the eye of a celeb or Steven Spielberg, and we might be set.

BEN
Easy now. Don't get ahead of yourself.

JACK
Ahead of myself? Ben, I'm behind myself. And behind this team we got right here -- I feel like we're Steve Jobs in the late 70s, just tinkering with perfection.

CONTINUED:

BEN
Yeah, and Del is like the guy he cut out of the company right before it really took off.

Everyone laughs.

Del smiles and nods.

DEL
(gets it)
Okay.

Jack gets serious.

JACK
(lets him down gently)
Seriously though, Del... You haven't really put in much work. So, if we do go further then, you know, you're not gonna be there.

DEL
(doesn't get it)
Okay.

BEN
Maybe like a 5% cut and an NDA to take a walk, but yeah. Heads up.

DIANA (O.S.)
Boys! Dinner!

BEN
Be right there, mom!

DEL
You think I could stay for dinner?

JACK
Probably not, Del. Your in mom's dog house and she holds a grudge.

Ben pats Del on the back.

BEN
Sorry, buddy.

And Jack and Ben are off.

CUT TO:

INT. DOLPH HOME - DINING ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

Diana and ALAN (50s), Ben and Jack's mild mannered father, finish setting the DINING ROOM TABLE. Alan seems a little bit nervous.

ALAN
Okay, so -- how should we do this?

DIANA
I think they should hear it from you. You're their father.

ALAN
Really? I was thinking that maybe you would start. They respect you more.

DIANA
Oh, don't be ridiculous, of course they respect you. I think it's important for you to take the initiative on this.

Alan thinks about it.

ALAN
Okay.

Ben and Jack rush to the table. Diana and Alan quickly finish up their conversation.

JACK
(sees food)
Roast Beef and mashed potatoes. Awesome mom.

Ben and Jack sit down and start to dig into the food immediately.

Diana shoots Alan a look.

Alan CLEARS HIS THROAT. The boys don't notice or care. They just fill up their plates.

ALAN
(barely audible)
Hey, guys...

BEN
Medium. Perfect.

Jack cuts into his steak.

CONTINUED:

JACK
(sotto)
I think it could be a little rarer, personally.

Alan starts to speak, albeit, very hesitantly. Ben and Jack completely ignore him.

ALAN
Hey, excuse me, boys...

JACK
(to Ben)
Why did you get a bigger piece? He always gets the bigger piece.

BEN
That's definitely not true.

ALAN
(soft)
You're mother and I exchanged some words together...

JACK
Mom, why does he always get a bigger piece?

BEN
I don't!

MOM
Boys! You're father is trying to say something...

Jack and Ben turn their attention to Alan, although they continue to just to eat their food and barely pay attention.

ALAN
Okay, uh, your mother and I have been talking, and... uh... you know, talking extensively over the past couple of weeks actually, and uh... well...

Jack slams his FORK and KNIFE down.

JACK
Shh!! Just stop it. Just stop talking.

ALAN
Jack, let me finish.

CONTINUED: (2)

BEN
We know what you're gonna say.

ALAN
Now, you -- you don't know what I'm gonna say, Ben.

JACK
Yes we do! It's gonna be some bullshit we don't wanna hear because you're doing the stuttering!

ALAN
(finally)
Alright, look. We want you and Ben to move out and find jobs.

JACK
Oh, fuck you, Dad!

Jack start to tear up. He's clearly emotional. Ben puts his arm around Jack.

BEN
Hey, come on, Dad!
(to Jack)
Jack, it's okay. Hey, look at me.

ALAN
Boys, just hear me out...

JACK
(cries)
Shut your mouth!

ALAN
(to Diana)
I can't do this. I told you, they don't listen to me.

BEN
Cause you're full of shit, Dad. Everyone knows it.

JACK
(emotional)
Mom, did I ever tell you that Dad used to hit me when I was younger.

ALAN
(shocked)
No, I didn't!

CONTINUED: (3)

DIANA
Guys, enough. You're almost thirty now and it's time for you to grow up and be a part of the real world.

JACK
Whoa, whoa. Okay, first of all, Ben is almost thirty. I'm twenty seven. So, if you're kicking us out, I think it's only fair that I get three more years.

BEN
No, absolutely not, no, because when I graduated high school and we went on that cruise, you got to come too and it wasn't even your graduation...

JACK
Oh, great! I almost forgot the time of my life I had visiting the shanty towns of the Caribbean and vomiting off the side of the deck outside the teen activity center!

DIANA
Boys! Cut it out.

ALAN
(trying to be firm)
Okay, listen, guys...

JACK
No! I don't want to hear from you. You're dead to me.

DIANA
This isn't up for discussion. Your father and I have made our decision and that's final!

OFF Ben and Jack, upset.

JACK (SOUND-OVER)
God, this sucks.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER - LATER

Ben and Jack drink MILK SHAKES and share a PLATE OF FRENCH FRIES.

BEN
Of course it sucks.

JACK
What are we gonna do?

BEN
We're gonna look for stupid jobs where we become mindless drones while the man sticks it in us.

JACK
If our home was like a company or whatever, they couldn't just kick us out all willy-nilly. They would owe us something.

BEN
You mean like severance?

JACK
Yes! A severance package! What would we need? Fifteen, twenty grand?

Ben thinks for a second.

BEN
I don't know. That's a lot, Jack.

JACK
Not if we ask the right way.

BEN
You want to audition it?

JACK
Yes, perfect! I'll be Mom and Dad. You be us.

BEN
Okay. Go.

They slip into their assigned parts. Jack will play Diana and Alan. Ben will play himself and Jack. This is a recurring theme where Ben and Jack play out hypothetical situations in order to get mentally prepared for the real thing.

CONTINUED:

JACK (AS DIANA)
Hello, boys. How are you? You look so thin. I made you a plate of these chilli-cheese fries and milk shakes.

Jack gestures to the food in front of them.

BEN
Oh, no thanks, mom, we're fine. Jack and I just wanted to ask you and dad something pretty important.

JACK (AS ALAN)
Well, what is it? What do you need?

BEN
Mom -- Dad... Jack and I were thinking that --

Jack makes a LOW GRUMBLE sound with his mouth. He reaches for his stomach.

BEN (CONT'D)
What is that? Why are you doing that?

JACK (AS ALAN)
Ooh, that's strange. Sorry, Ben -- continue...

Ben shoots Jack a weird look. Then right back to his thought.

BEN
Uh, yeah, okay, look, we agree with you. We want to spread our wings, and we just think that...

Jack erupts in a barrage of graphic-sounding FART SOUNDS that he makes with his mouth. He starts moaning as if he is violently crapping in his pants.

JACK (AS ALAN)
Oh! Oh no! I knew that this was going to happen!

People at the diner start looking over at Jack.

CONTINUED: (2)

JACK (AS DIANA) (CONT'D)
Oh my god, Alan! The smell! It's awful!
(as Alan)
Ow! Oh! Diana, you know about my massive incontinence problems! I'm such an embarrassment.
(as Diana)
Well, you need to learn to control yourself!

BEN
Jack.
(looks around, self conscious)
Jack, stop it! Jack. Jack, come on. Jack, we're in public. Stop it. Jack! JACK! JACK!!

JACK (AS DIANA) (CONT'D)
Jack! Why aren't you answering him?

BEN
Oh... uh...

BEN (AS JACK) (CONT'D)
(annoyed)
Okay, yeah, it's me. Jack. Dad, can you please leave the table and find a men's room or something?

JACK (AS ALAN)
(mumbles)
Yeah, yeah, okay.

Jack mimics the sound of Alan getting up and walking to the bathroom.

JACK (AS DIANA) (CONT'D)
(quick)
Okay, Ben, you were saying?

BEN
We want to borrow twenty thousand dollars, mom.

JACK (AS DIANA)
Twenty thousand dollars? What do you need twenty thousand dollars for?

BEN
Well, because...

JACK (AS DIANA)
Oh my god! Is it drugs? Is it drugs?!

BEN
It's not drugs.

CONTINUED: (3)

JACK (AS DIANA)
(ignores him)
Oh my god, it's drugs. My baby's hooked on drugs!

BEN
Mom, it's not drugs! We need the money so we can keep making our videos!

JACK (AS DIANA)
(short)
Absolutely not.

BEN
Wait, hear us out...

JACK (AS DIANA)
Absolutely not! Benjamin, your father and I have supported you for thirty years, and if we give you this money we'll be doing you a great disservice. Now, the simple fact is that we're not gonna be here forever.
(emotional)
I remember when you were born, when I could still cradle you in my arms. You'll always be my baby. But you're a man now.
(tearful)
It's time for you to grow up.

Ben looks shocked and is holding back tears. He's deeply moved. Weirdly, both boys are now on the verge of crying.

JACK (AS DIANA) (CONT'D)
(then)
But maybe if Jack asked me, I would think about it because I do love him more.

Ben looks pissed.

BEN
Oh, you love Jack more?

JACK (AS DIANA)
That's right.

BEN (AS JACK)
Thanks mom. Oh, wait, what's going on? My stomach feels weird.

CONTINUED: (4)

BEN (CONT'D)
Hey Jack, what's wrong.

JACK (AS DIANA)
Nothing's wrong. Jack is fine.

Now, Ben starts to make FART SOUNDS with his mouth.

BEN (AS JACK)
Oh God! I'm crapping my pants too.

BEN (CONT'D)
Oh, Jack! That's even worse than dad!

JACK (AS DIANA)
No! NO! That's not Jack. Jack wouldn't do that! Stop it! Ben! I HATE YOU, BENJAMIN! I TRIED TO ABORT YOU!

BEN (AS JACK)
YES! YES! Yes, it's Jack! I can't stop farting! See!
(fart sounds)
OW! It hurts! I'm Jack and I can't stop pooping my pants!

Jack reaches across the table to grab Ben and KNOCKS OVER THE FOOD. Everyone in the diner looks on in confusion.

CUT TO:

INT. DOLPH HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Diana reads from some James Patterson Adventure-Thriller nonsense. She puts the book down for a second, as if she's suddenly had a sixth sense that something is wrong.

DIANA
Alan, are we good parents?

It's quiet. You can hear the clock ticking.

Alan is in his favorite RECLINER after a hard day's work. He reads the NEWSPAPER and does a CROSSWORD.

Alan doesn't even look up. He's stuck on 26 across.

ALAN
Hm?

DIANA
Have we done a good job raising our children?

Alan takes a second to think about it.

CONTINUED:

ALAN
Yes. Yes, we have.

DIANA
I'm worried that they're just...
(searching for the word)
...wandering.

Alan quickly dismisses this notion.

ALAN
No, no. They'll get their feet under them. You'll see. Once they're out on their own -- you know how it is.
(imparting wisdom)
I know it's hard to imagine, but -- we were their age once, too.

DIANA
Yeah, but we were married and owned a home and had children when we were their age.

Alan thinks about it.

ALAN
Huh. Is that right? Well, times have changed. You know. People...
(searching)
... People are living longer.

Alan is satisfied with this logic. He goes back to his crossword. Diana looks concerned.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. DINER - LATER

Ben and Jack walk back to their car.

BEN
I don't know, maybe you're right. Maybe it *is* time for us to be out on our own.

JACK
What are you talking about? I never said that.

In the background, we can see the DINER MANAGER lean out of the front door, clearly upset.

DINER MANAGER
(far away)
Hey! Hey! You little obscene degenerates, come back here and clean up this mess!

Jack turns around, but keeps walking away.

JACK
Think that's obscene? I'll show you obscene, pal!

Jack flashes him an OBSCENE ARM GESTURE.

JACK (CONT'D)
Right there for you, buddy!

DINER MANAGER
You're not welcome here any more!

BEN
You wish! It's a free country! Get used to it!

Jack grabs his crotch.

JACK
All day, everyday, pal!

They turn away from the Manager and immediately change their demeanor.

CONTINUED:

BEN
What about all that stuff you said in there? About growing up...

JACK
Jesus, I hope you're not actually buying into Mom's bullshit.

BEN
Jack, *you* said that stuff!

JACK
Yeah, because that's what mom would say! And she's an idiot!

BEN
I don't know. What's so bad about it? We could get a job. Get a place. Get girlfriends. Get a bank account...

JACK
Pay taxes, lose interest in life, join a cult, start killing people, be a part of "society." Thanks, Ben, that sounds great.

BEN
I'm serious! I feel like I've been watching myself age in front of the same mirror for the past 30 years.

JACK
So, let's buy a new mirror with this severance money and live the dream.
(pumping Ben up)
Live the dream!

They reach their car.

BEN
(dismissive)
They're not giving us a *severance package*, Jack.

JACK
Well, maybe it's not severance then...

BEN
So, what are they paying us for?

CONTINUED: (2)

Jack looks down at his car. Someone has wedged a FLYER in his windshield. It reads:

JIMMY STAATS LIVE ON STAGE! “LESS DRINK, MORE DRIVE” ONE ACTOR’S MOTIVATIONAL STORY. EVERY TUESDAY @ 10 PM IN THE BASEMENT OF THE RESCUE SHELTER AFTER THE AA MEETING.

There is a RIDICULOUS PICTURE of Jimmy. He looks like he’s singing a SHOW TUNE.

JACK
A performance.

OFF Jack, intrigued.

CUT TO:

INT. RESCUE SHELTER - NIGHT

A group of FIVE or SIX DEGENERATES sit in a circle. One of them is currently speaking. His name is Ted. He is visibly upset. His voice cracks with shame and true sadness.

TED
...and, uh, I got out of the car and -- she was dead.

Ted breaks down into tears.

TED (CONT’D)
(sobbing)
Oh, Christ...

There is that weird silence among the rest of the group. The GROUP LEADER, BRIAN, checks his watch and is alarmed.

BRIAN
Oh. Okay, sorry to cut you off here Ted, but as you all know, it’s Tuesday and we have our special guest tonight. He’s here to share his story of perseverance and personal triumph. Give him a warm welcome. Jimmy Staats. In...
(looks down at flyer)
“Less Drink, More Drive.”

IN THE BACK OF THE ROOM

Ben and Jack enter and quickly find a seat.

CONTINUED:

JIMMY STAATS, comes on stage SHIVERING in a BLANKET. His face is GHOST WHITE. He breathes heavily. He looks like he is in the middle of a heroin withdrawal.

His body shakes. His voice trembles.

JIMMY STAATS
(desperate)
It's been three days since my last fix. The shakes have set in. The sunlight --

Jimmy uses his hand to "block the sunlight" in his eyes.

JIMMY STAATS (CONT'D)
It pierces my eyes. I can barely see. Darkness is my only friend.

Jimmy then happily discards his blanket. This was him "acting." He smiles bright.

JIMMY STAATS (CONT'D)
Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Jimmy Staats, and while I've never been addicted to meth, I <u>am</u> addicted to method acting. I <u>know</u> your struggle, and I'm here to help you fight your demons through the power of self-fulfillment.

OFF Ben and Jack -- the wheels are turning.

CUT TO:

<u>INT. DOLPH HOME - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON</u>

Jack casually strolls into the Living Room.

JACK
Hey, have you guys seen, Ben?

DIANA
Oh, no. I know he stepped out a while ago.

JACK
Huh, that's weird. I totally haven't seen or been in contact with him in a while.

Suddenly, LOUD SHOUTING can be heard from outside the window.

CONTINUED:

JIMMY STAATS (O.S.)
Hey! Where's my fucking money, chump! I said where's my twenty grand?!

BEN (O.S.)
Take it easy, man! I'll get your money!

DEL (O.S.)
No, stop, please!

Jack rushes to the window.

JACK
(intentionally too loud)
Oh no!

OUTSIDE: JIMMY STAATS, now portraying a DRUG DEALER, is choking Ben. Ben struggles to break free. Jimmy is doing an extreme Brooklyn accent. He's in the zone.

DIANA
Jack, what is that? What's going on out there?

Alan walks to the window. Jack tries to block the view.

JIMMY STAATS (O.S.)
Where is it!?

BEN (O.S.)
I -- I don't have it!

Diana and Alan try to move Jack out of the way.

DIANA
Get out of the way, Jack!

ALAN
What's going on, Jack?

JACK
No, don't... It's, it's nothing...

They push through, just in time to see:

OUTSIDE: Jimmy throws Ben to his knees.

JIMMY STAATS
If you don't have my money by tomorrow night, you're dead, you fuckin' chink!

CONTINUED: (2)

He SLAPS Ben across the face. Ben falls to the ground and Jimmy drags Del to the car.

JIMMY STAATS (CONT'D)
And I'm taking this son of a bitch with me so you know I'm serious!

DEL
Oh no! I'm being kidnapped!

Jimmy peels out and drives off.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Diana and Alan look horrified.

DIANA
Oh my god, what was that!?

ALAN
Jack, what's going on?!

JACK
Mom... Dad... it's drugs.

CUT TO:

INT. DOLPH HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Diana, Alan, and Jack sit around. Quiet.

Ben walks in. His face cut open and bruised.

BEN
Oh. Hey guys.

ALAN
What happened, Ben?

BEN
Oh. My face. Yeah. I, uh, fell down.

DIANA
Cut the crap, Ben. We saw the whole thing.

ALAN
You're on drugs.

Ben takes a moment. Let's it soak in.

CONTINUED:

BEN
Yeah. Yeah, it's true. I needed twenty grand to pay off a drug dealer.

DIANA
What kind of drugs are you on, Ben?

BEN
Oh, uh... you know...

JACK
Coke. Meth. Smack. Bath Salts.

ALAN
Jesus, Ben. I was just reading about that. It turns people into zombies. What is wrong with you?

BEN
I'm sorry, I didn't know any better.

JACK
Yup. Name a drug. Ben is on it. That's why he owes such an unlikely amount of money for drugs.

DIANA
(emotional)
I just don't know how this could happen. How could you do this?

BEN
They're uh... very... addicting.

JACK
It's Del's fault. He's the one who got him hooked.

DIANA
I always knew there was something wrong with that boy. His brain's all screwed up. Probably, from drugs!

ALAN
Ben, what I don't understand is why he called you a Chink? I mean, isn't that racist slang for a China-man?

CONTINUED: (2)

DIANA
Well, clearly, he's a racist drug dealer, Alan! They're hateful people, not to be trifled with!

Alan nods. Jack subtly fist pumps and mouths "I fucking told you!" to Ben who regrettably nods back in agreement.

ALAN
Okay, so what happens now?

BEN
I owe him twenty grand by tomorrow night. Or he's going to kill me.

Diana covers her mouth. She starts to cry.

DIANA
Oh my god...

Alan consoles her.

BEN
He kidnapped Del to make sure I don't skip town, or call the police. If he gets the sense that anything's funny -- we'll never see him again...

JACK
(chimes in)
They'll cut his face off.

DIANA
What kind of a world do we live in?

ALAN
Well, to be frank, maybe he deserves it. He got Ben hooked on drugs.

DIANA
Alan! Del may be a treacherous scumbag, but we're all in this together. If he wants his money, we'll give it to him.

JACK
Really? Are you serious?

ALAN
It'll wipe the rainy day fund, that's for sure.
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (3)

ALAN (CONT'D)
I can call Uncle Billy, maybe pick up a few night shifts at JC Penney's for a while...

Ben feels bad.

BEN
Maybe we only need fifteen grand.

DIANA
Ben, he said he would kill you if you didn't have the full amount.

BEN
I think he can be reasoned with, though.

DIANA
He's a racist drug dealer, Ben. He doesn't understand reasoning! Absolutely not. I'll meet with him tomorrow night and pay him the full amount, and then we'll get you help.
(starts to tear up)
My poor baby...

JACK
Wait... You wanna be there?

DIANA
If some punk is going to take my money, threaten my son, and kidnap my son's worthless friend, then he's going to have to deal with me.

BEN
No. Only I can go, otherwise... uh...

Ben looks to Jack for help.

JACK
Otherwise, uhh... Mom, you don't know these people. They cut faces off for fun, you can't go!

DIANA
Well, I'm sorry, if he wants my money, then he's going to get it from me.

CONTINUED: (4)

ALAN
And I'm going, too.

DIANA
No, Alan. If I die. We need someone to be there for the kids.

ALAN
(solemn)
Okay.

Ben looks to Jack.

JACK
Yeah. Okay. I'm sure he'll be fine with that. As long as you have the money and all.

OFF Ben, uneasy.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. DOLPH HOME - BEN'S ROOM - LATER

Ben and Jack get ready for their "drug deal." They are talking quietly about the events.

BEN
We should call it off right now, it's gone too far.

JACK
There's nothing to worry about. Mom hands over the money. We "rescue" Del, and then circle back to Jimmy. It's simple.

BEN
And so we're just trusting this desperate actor who we just met with twenty thousand dollars?

JACK
Hey, Jimmy Staats is a good soul, all right.

BEN
How do you know?

JACK
I just know. Okay? Trust me. Jimmy wouldn't double cross us.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT

Jimmy Staats and Del stand by a car. Del is LOOSELY tied up with ROPE. He kind of looks like a damsel in distress. Jimmy is tightening the ropes.

JIMMY STAATS
Thanks for calling me back to do another scene. It's a cool gig. Good money. Really could use it, too, you know?

DEL
You're welcome.

CONTINUED:

JIMMY STAATS
So how long you been working with these guys?

DEL
Um, twenty seven years.

JIMMY STAATS
That's cool. I'd love to get in with a tight group like this. You do a lot of this dramatic candid camera stuff?

DEL
(vacant smile)
Uh huh.

JIMMY STAATS
Because, you guys do some job hiding these cameras, man. Reminds me of my days with Steppenwolf. Classic theater, you know? No cameras in your face, no cuts. Just you and the character.

DEL
Me and the character.

JIMMY STAATS
You know, it's funny. I left Chicago five months ago. My buddies said I was crazy, but I just heard this voice callin' me.

DEL
Yeah. Silly voice.

JIMMY STAATS
Just picked up and left. Didn't even know where I was going, or why I was going there. I just drove, man.

DEL
Yeah, drive, man.

JIMMY STAATS
I'm not gonna lie, it's actually been really tough for me. Trying to break in. Not knowing anyone. Not having anyone. Never had anyone, really. But when I get a character...
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

JIMMY STAATS (CONT'D)
(lights up, emotional)
That's what I have. That's why I perform. To *have something*. You ever feel like that?

DEL
I feel you.

JIMMY STAATS
You're a real dude, brother. You got a strong soul. I can tell.

DEL
Thank you.

Suddenly, HEADLIGHTS wash over them.

JIMMY STAATS
Here we go.

DEL
What?

Jimmy snaps into character.

JIMMY STAATS
(as Drug Dealer)
Shut the fuck up!

He SLAPS Del, PUTS A BAG OVER HIS HEAD, and shoves him in the back seat of the SUV.

THE DRUG DEAL

Suddenly, everything feels more seedy.

Diana's car pulls up slowly and creeps to a stop, ominously.

Ben and Jack get out. They are both weirdly well-dressed. Jack has slicked his hair back and is wearing a SILK SHIRT and a FLASHY JACKET.

Both of them are wearing a lot of JEWELRY and look like extras in Scarface.

JACK
Well, well, Mr. Jimmy...

JIMMY STAATS
You bring the money?

JACK
Oh, we brought the cash.

CONTINUED: (3)

BEN
You bring Del?

JIMMY STAATS
Let me see the money.

JACK
Let us see Del, jerkoff!

Jimmy reluctantly opens the door. He grabs Del by the back of the neck, rips the bag off of his head, and then puts a FAKE GUN to his head.

DEL
Help me!

JACK
Relax, Del. Everything's gonna be okay. I'm here, buddy!

DEL
Thanks, Jack. You're my best friend.

Jimmy PUNCHES Del in the KIDNEY. Del drops to his knees.

DEL (CONT'D)
Ow!

Jack subtly gives Jimmy a "thumbs-up."

JIMMY STAATS
Now. Where's my fuckin' money?

The car door opens. Diana gets out. She walks right up to Jimmy.

DIANA
You want your money? Here's your filthy drug money.

JIMMY STAATS
What the hell is this?

BEN
The money.

DIANA
And let me tell you something you little punk.
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (4)

DIANA (CONT'D)
If you ever go near my son again, I swear to God, I will move heaven and earth to make sure you rot in hell where you belong, do you understand?

JIMMY STAATS
(laughs)
Is this some kind of joke?

BEN
Hey, money is money, Jimmy.

JIMMY STAATS
Whatever you say. Just hand over the money, lady, or the kid gets it.

Jimmy shoves the Gun deeper into Del's neck.

Diana puts the Duffle Bag down at his feet.

DIANA
There. Take it. I don't ever wanna see you again, ya hear me? Stay away from my family!

Jimmy Staats throws Del to the ground at Ben and Jack's feet.

JIMMY STAATS
(to Ben)
Pleasure doing business with you, momma's boy.

Jimmy picks up the bag. He unzips it. Suddenly, PURPLE MIST sprays in his face.

JIMMY STAATS (CONT'D)
Ah, what the hell?!

JACK
(whispers)
What the fuck...?

A SPOTLIGHT splashes onto Jimmy, blinding him.

AN UNDERCOVER COP pops out from behind an abandoned car. A TEAM OF COPS swarm the scene.

UNDERCOVER COP
Freeze! Put your arms in the air!

CONTINUED: (5)

At the same time ANOTHER COP tackles Ben and Jack to the ground.

ANOTHER COP
Stay down!

BEN
Mom, what's happening?!

DIANA
Stay calm, baby!

UNDERCOVER COP
Drop your weapon or we will fire!
This is a sting!

Jimmy freezes for a beat. Petrified. Then softens. The police spotlight suddenly makes him feel like he's on stage. He realizes it's "all part of the scene." This is a performance. He smiles.

JIMMY STAATS
(in character)
Oh, okay! Listen to me pig! I ain't going nowhere, unless it's in a body bag. You understand me?!

Jimmy COCKS HIS FAKE GUN.

JACK
(strong whisper)
Jimmy, no! Jimmy!

BEN
(strong whisper)
No, Jimmy! Not now! Not now!

JIMMY STAATS (CONT'D)
(to Ben and Jack)
What?

UNDERCOVER COP
Drop him.

A HAIL OF GUNFIRE SMOKES JIMMY STAATS. There are an unreasonable amount of bullets. There is an ungodly amount of blood. Jimmy drops to his knees.

UNDERCOVER COP (CONT'D)
Reload!

Cops take a moment to reload their guns. They keep shooting as the sheer force from the bullets are the only thing keeping him upright.

CONTINUED: (6)

After the cops run out of bullets, one of the cops throws his EMPTIED GUN at Jimmy. It hits him harmlessly in the ribs and falls to the ground.

Jimmy feels the blood pouring from his body.

He uses this opportunity to embrace a brilliant dying scene as an actor.

JIMMY STAATS
(dying)
This... is one crazy show...

He falls to the ground... very much dead.

Ben and Jack look on, horrified.

UNDERCOVER COP
Suspect is down!

The cops run over, with their guns drawn. ANOTHER COP checks his pulse.

ANOTHER COP
Suspect has expired!

BY DEL

A FIRST RESPONDER helps Del get out of his ropes.

DEL
Are you guys a part of the scene, too?
(whispers)
You're a great actor.

FIRST RESPONDER
You've been through a traumatic experience son, but I promise you're going to be all right.

BY JIMMY'S BODY

The Undercover Cop has LATEX GLOVES on. He examines Jimmy's Gun.

UNDERCOVER COP
Would you look at this, Breckenridge. Dumb ass had a fake gun.
(reaches into wallet)
Oh, he was in SAG.
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (7)

UNDERCOVER COP (CONT'D)
No wonder he was broke and turned to a life of crime.

BY BEN AND JACK

Diana hugs Ben.

BEN
(in shock)
What -- what... uh, what was...

JACK
What the hell was that?!

DIANA
I didn't want to scare you boys, but last night I called the police and they were kind enough to set up a sting operation.

JACK
And now he's dead. That's so -- great!

Jack looks to Ben.

JACK (CONT'D)
...It's so great...

Ben is beside himself.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOLPH HOME - NIGHT

Diana Dolph's car pulls into the driveway.

CUT TO:

INT. DOLPH HOME - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Diana walks in followed by Jack and Ben -- they all look exhausted.

JACK
I'm taking a shower.

BEN
No way, man. You're going to burn all the hot water.

CONTINUED:

Jack starts running up the stairs.

JACK
Druggies take cold showers, it's a fact. Look it up.

ALAN
Hey, guys! You must be exhausted.

DIANA
Hi, honey.

ALAN
Hey Ben, come here. How you holding up, buddy?

Alan puts his arm around Ben.

BEN
I'm okay.

DIANA
Don't you worry, we're gonna take good care of you.

Diana hugs him, making it a GROUP HUG now.

JACK (O.S.)
WHAT THE HELL?!

Jack sprints back down the stairs.

JACK (CONT'D)
Why's all my stuff packed up?

ALAN
I figured you probably had a helluva night and could use some help.

JACK
You're kicking us out still? Ben is hooked on drugs!

DIANA
No, Benjamin, is going to stay with us until he kicks the addiction.

Ben looks around, uncomfortable. His parents still draped on him.

CONTINUED: (2)

ALAN
Come on, Jack. We already discussed this.

Jack looks shocked. He's paralyzed.

JACK
But he's not even... he's-- and I'm... and Jimmy Staats...

DIANA
Ben's battle with addiction has nothing to do with you, Jack. It's time for you to start your own life.

Jack fumes with anger... then...

JACK
But he's a fa-- You!
(desperate)
NO!

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

OVER CREDITS

INT. RESCUE SHELTER - NIGHT

Brian is in front of five or six degenerates who sit in a dimly lit room.

BRIAN
Great meeting everyone. Great meeting.
(clears throat)
Just wanted to notify everyone that, unfortunately, our show for the evening has been cancelled because our performer, Jimmy Staats, is dead.

ANGLE ON THE AUDIENCE: No one gives a shit. In fact, a WOMAN unwraps a HARD CANDY that she casually pops in her mouth.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
Yeah, he was gunned down by police earlier this evening in a drug sting. So, as of right now, the show will be on hiatus indefinitely. Sorry for the inconvenience. However, not all is lost, we do have refreshments in the back. Some grapes, some crackers -- uh, some Fresca, I believe.

He looks to the back. An OLD JANITOR shakes his head 'no.'

BRIAN (CONT'D)
Oh, I'm sorry -- there is no Fresca, actually, but certainly there are other refreshments. So please help yourself, and have a wonderful evening. Thanks.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE