TRENDING DOWN

"The Pilot"

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FADE IN:

Open on a still photo of a cheerful MARK ZUCKERBERG.

THOM VO
This is Mark Zuckerberg, Chief Executive Officer of Facebook. This past summer, he took the company public and lost seven billion dollars. You know how much he has left? Twelve billion. Twelve BILLION dollars. And he's twenty-seven. Twenty. Fucking. Seven. I have shit in my colon that is older than Mark Zuckerberg. I have puked up wine that was older than Mark motherfucking Zuckerberg.

A fist appears over the image of Zuckerberg, gives him the finger.

THOM VO (CONT'D)
Fuck you, Mark Zuckerberg.

INT. PAYNE KITCHEN AREA - NIGHT

Two young boys, JULIUS (6) and JORDAN (8), sit on the floor playing with Legos. Julius wears a Spiderman costume.

JORDAN
I have this one. I have like five of this one.

JULIUS
Wow.

JORDAN
But mine are better. Mine came in a set, so I also have the Dragon Copter and Sensei Wu Limited Edition.

JULIUS
I have Sensei Wu.

JORDAN
You have regular Sensei Wu. I have the Limited Edition. There's only, like, one of them in the whole entire world. You have the regular one.

Watching these boys from the dinner table some distance away are Julius's parents - THOM PAYNE (42), wearing a birthday hat, and his wife LEE (39) - and Jordan's parents, BARRY (37), and APRIL (40). Lee is attractive in a real-world way: she has played the American game, kept up her appearance, and we will be surprised to find out how fucked she is anyway. Thom, at 42, may have sacrificed some abs and style points over the years. *

Dinner is over and they are finishing their third bottle of wine. When Thom speaks, we recognize his voice from the earlier rant about Mark Zuckerberg.

THOM
You know what I've noticed about Jordan?

BARRY
That he's an asshole.

THOM
He is. He's a little fucking asshole.

BARRY
I know. I don't know how that happened.

THOM
It's not just to Julius?

BARRY
No, no; he's an asshole to everyone. Kids hate him. I just hope he grows out of it.

THOM
I don't think so. That doesn't seem like the kind of assholeness you outgrow. That seems like long-term fucking, you know, assholeness.

LEE
Thom, please. Couple of years from now Jules might be an asshole, too.

THOM
I don't think so. I think he's going to be a pussy, but I don't think he's going to be a prick.

LEE
I'd rather have a prick than a pussy.
(MORE)

LEE (CONT'D)
It’s probably harder to raise a prick, but it’s a shitty world out there - I think for the child, these days, asshole isn’t a bad way to go.

THOM
That’s going to be Lee’s next book - “How to Raise a Fucking Asshole.” With an introduction by Newt Gingrich’s mother.

BARRY
A “book”? What’s a “book”?

LEE
Tell me about it.

APRIL
Speaking of pussies, did I tell you Monica’s getting hers done?

LEE
Her what?

APRIL
Her pussy.

LEE
Done?

APRIL
Done. Tightened.

LEE
What the fuck are you talking about?

APRIL
(shrugging)
She’s thirty-seven. She’s had a couple of kids, she’s not going to have any more. She wants a tighter cooch.

THOM
No she doesn’t. That’s totally for him.

APRIL
Who?

THOM
Gary.

LEE
Totally.

APRIL
She says she's doing it for herself.

BARRY
Bullshit. It's for Gary. He's an asshole. He should write that asshole book.

THOM
Did he say how tight he wants it?

BARRY
(indicating with hands)
Well, she's at "Beer Can" now, he'd like it more of a, what? A shot glass?

LEE
Well, he seems like a pencil dick to me, maybe they should go for pencil sharpener.

APRIL
He'll pull out and be like, wow, that's sharper.

BARRY
Yeah, but shorter.

Julius comes over to Lee.

JULIUS
(whispering)
Can we have cake now?

LEE
Wanna help me light it?

Julius jumps with excitement as they cross to the kitchen.

BARRY
I thought we were just going to have some Keebler cookies.

THOM
They're pre-packaged baked goods, asshole.

APRIL
Is that what they call them?

THOM
No, that's what I call them. Then they pay me and I come home and download the most violent pornography I can find.
(checks his watch)
Fuck, I have to write up a goddamned presentation after this...

BARRY
"Pastries in the Post-Google Age?"

THOM
As long as I mention Google.
(to April)
So does he get to go into surgery and like, test her vagina out?

APRIL
Who?

THOM
Gary. Like, you know, a test drive. Because once you take it off the lot...

BARRY
"It's close, Doc, but can you give it another turn or two?"

THOM
"Well, Mr. Rosenthal, I've already got her down to a twenty-two year old. I can only legally go to eighteen."

BARRY
"Hey, Doc, while you're down there, can you loosen up her asshole?"

They all laugh.

CUT TO:

SAME SCENE - LATER.

The birthday cake sits in front of Thom now, a small "42" candle lit in the middle. A red helium balloon is tied to the back of his chair. Julius stands beside him. Jordan sits on April's lap. A starkly different mood to the laughter before the cut. *

THOM
Well, team, the game is half-over.

BARRY
Here we go.

THOM
The race is half run, the tank is half-empty, the show is half-over. Please take your seats so we can plod our way through to the miserable, not-so-grand finale.

Beat. Lee blows a lone party horn.

LEE
Half? You'll be lucky if you make it to the end of the week.

JULIUS
She's right, Dad.

THOM
She is?

JULIUS
Forty-two? That's like a million. *

THOM
Mom's older than me.

JULIUS
But Mom's pretty.

THOM
Mom is pretty. I'm pretty too, though. Pretty ugly, heh heh...

Lee begins cutting and distributing the cake. Julius hands Thom a hand-painted card and hugs him.

JULIUS
Happy birthday, Dada.

BARRY
(silently to Thom)
Pussy.

JORDAN
I want a big piece.

LEE
(silently to Barry)
Asshole.

CUT TO:

INT. JULIUS'S BEDROOM - LATER

Thom lays on his back on the floor, reading a Curious George book to Julius, who has changed into pajamas. The red balloon is tied to Julius's desk chair.

THOM
This is George. George was a bad little monkey who was always very curious and a real pain in the butt.

JULIUS
Dad...

THOM
Someone needed to slap George around a little, teach him a lesson.

JULIUS
Dad! Read it normal!

THOM
THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU SPILL PAINT IN THE GARAGE, GEORGE! THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU SNEAK INTO A SPACE SHIP AND FLY TO THE MOON!

They both crack up, and Julius jumps on Thom's belly.

JULIUS
Read it normal!

THOM
Hey.

Julius looks at him.

THOM (CONT'D)
I love you , Buddy.

A touching moment.

JULIUS
You're fat.

THOM
I'm not fat.

JULIUS
Are you going to die?

THOM
Am I going to die?

JULIUS
Well, you said you're old.

THOM
I'm not old, Jules. And the truth is, I am going to die, but not for a very, very long time. First I have to lose my teeth, then I have to move to Miami, then I have to start (imitating old man) talking like this and start pooping in m'diapers...

Julius laughs.

THOM (CONT'D)
Okay?

JULIUS
Okay. But you are fat.

THOM
I'm not fat! Five Guys tomorrow night, right? Then we'll hit the Funny Farm...

Julius high-fives him.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

A gravestone: "Thomas Payne, non-devoted father of poor neglected Julius."

A man (30) walks up, unzips his fly and begins pissing on the grave. A GUARD suddenly appears, shining his flashlight on the man.

GUARD
Julius?

JULIUS
Hey, Phil.

GUARD
Christ, is it Sunday already?

The guard unzips his pants.

JULIUS
Haven't missed one in fifteen years, have I?

The guard joins Julius in pissing on Thom's grave.

GUARD
(pissing)
No, no you haven't.
(Beat)
Yankees look good.

JULIUS
(zipping up)
They'll blow it in the playoffs.

CUT TO:

Hardcore porno scene: two women going at it, handcuffs, etc.

CUT TO:

INT. PAYNE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Candles are lit, the blinds are drawn. Thom and Lee sit up in bed, watching the porn on her laptop. The porno sounds continue throughout.

LEE
(proudly)
Look at that. Lesbians, bondage -- is that a birthday present or what? I tried to find one with a black guy in it but Julius came home. Still, not bad, right?

THOM
I read this thing today about Alzheimer's disease.

LEE
We're not fucking are we?

THOM
They say that people who have trouble sleeping might be showing pre-clinical signs of Alzheimer's disease. You believe that? So now I can't sleep because I'm worried my not sleeping is because I have Alzheimer's.

LEE
We're not fucking.

THOM
What am I supposed to do with this information? If I take melatonin, does that change things? Is it the not sleeping that gives you Alzheimer's or the Alzheimer's that makes you not sleep? Do you see what I mean?

LEE
Do you think my pussy needs tightening?

THOM
What?

LEE
I don't know. Maybe it would be better for you if it was tighter.

THOM
Well, who needs you at all? I'll just buy myself a bottle of wine and a blood pressure cuff.

The woman in the porno moans and groans.

THOM (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, Hon. It's not you, it's... it's the fucking Prozac. It's a hard-on killer.

LEE
Why don't you get some Viagra? They're a client, aren't they? Keebler gives you all those cookies...

THOM
Because I'm afraid it will interfere with the Prozac.
(MORE)

THOM (CONT'D)
That’s life for you: happy and soft or miserable and hard.

LEE
It’s okay. Come here.

They snuggle and watch the porn as she slides her hand into his briefs, trying to get him hard. After a few moments:

THOM
You know why I don’t shave my balls?

LEE
The Holocaust?

THOM
How did you know?

LEE
I don’t shave my pussy because of Vietnam. We’re not fucking, are we?

THOM
I know what’s going to happen. The moment I shave them, bam, holocaust. Then they’ll kick the door in, drag me to a concentration camp where everyone is naked, and they’ll all see that I shaved my balls. I’ll never live it down.

Julius begins to cry out.

JULIUS (O.S.)
Mom! Momma!

LEE
We’re not fucking.

She gets up, pulls on her robe.

THOM
Were you serious?

LEE
About what?

THOM
Vietnam. Because I used to like shaved pussies.
(MORE)

THOM (CONT'D)
Now I see them and I think of that little Vietnamese girl, you now, covered in Agent Orange, running naked down the street. These porno chicks are all “Fuck me, fuck me,” and all I’m thinking is, you know, war crimes. Someone call the UN.

LEE
(crossing to the door)
Stop reading Curious George to him before bed, by the way. He’s afraid of the Man in the Yellow Hat.

THOM
He’s fearful. He’s a fearful child.

LEE
He’s not fearful.

THOM
I’m fearful he’s fearful.

LEE
You’re fearful; he’s seven.

She walks out. Thom gives his crotch the finger.

THOM
(to his crotch)
Asshole.

EXT. METRO-NORTH TRAIN PLATFORM - MORNING

A line of young business types line the edge of the platform, each reading the paperback edition Walter Isaacson’s STEVE JOBS. Thom stands at the end, reading SCHOPENHAUER: ON SUFFERING.

BUSINESSMAN 1
Check it out.

BUSINESSMAN 2
I read that.

BUSINESSMAN 1
No you didn’t. This is the paperback, Dude. Ninety additional pages.

BUSINESSMAN 2
No way.

BUSINESSMAN 1
Way. Did you hear the one about the iPod?

BUSINESSMAN 2
The iPod?

BUSINESSMAN 2 (CONT'D)
So it's the night before the launch of the iPod, and Jobs comes in to check out the demo models and he doesn't like the sound of the microphone jack.

BUSINESSMAN 2 (CONT'D)
The sound?

BUSINESSMAN 1
The click.

BUSINESSMAN 2
The click?

BUSINESSMAN 1
The sound. He wants a better sound. So he makes a hundred engineers work all night long replacing them.

BUSINESSMAN 2
A hundred.

BUSINESSMAN 1
The jacks.

BUSINESSMAN 2
Awesome. I gotta get that paperback.

The train pulls in.

THOM VO
Which brings me back to Mark Zuckerberg. Mark Zuckerberg isn't the problem. I don't hate Mark Zuckerberg. Okay, I do hate him, but he's just a symptom. My name is Thomas Payne, and I work for Satan.

INT. FRONT DOORS OF TGM - LATER

Glass doors, etched with TATE GOLDSMITH MCMAHON ADVERTISING.

THOM VO (CONT'D)
I have worked for the Dark Lord for fifteen years now, and so I say this with a fair degree of authority:

We follow Thom as he pushes through the doors. It is a typical office space, poorly disguised with the forced playfulness of a "creative" business: a giant pencil that reads "Think Big!", a never-used old-time popcorn machine, etc. The few meetings we see taking place consist of mostly Powerpoint presentations: graphs, charts, etc.

THOM VO (CONT'D)
Fuck "Mad Men." There's nothing cool about advertising. There's nothing interesting. We do the same thing everyone else in America does these days: we kiss the sweaty, zit-covered asses of eighteen-to-twenty-four-year olds. That's the job, and so help me God, I'm fucking good at it. I won my first Clio award fifteen years ago, and have been winning awards ever since. Back then it felt like winning Best Screenplay. Now it feels like winning Best Oral Gangbang. Best Rimjob. Best Golden Shower: Receiving.

INT. TGM MEETING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A group of executives sit around the table, watching a Powerpoint presentation featuring images of YAs, along with related graphs, charts and images: "Tweens and Purchasing Power," "Influence of YAs on Marketing Plan," etc.

THOM VO
It's what we all do these days - marketers, music companies, book publishers, film companies, TV studios - that's what we do. All day. "Generation Y," we call them, or "Millenials," or Y.A.'s - "Young Adults" - because calling them stupid zit-faced fuckbags would depress us. And it should. There is no dumber, more asinine group on the planet, and they control everything. What do they want to read? What do they want buy? What do they want to see?
(MORE)

THOM VO (CONT'D)
Never before in history has anyone, ever, given a flying fuck what these idiots think, until today. That's a society in decline. That's Game fucking Over.

DEBBIE, 50, one of the meeting attendees, spots Thom walking by, and gets up to follow him.

INT. THOM'S OFFICE - LATER

Debbie sits on his couch, sobbing. On the wall behind her is a large poster of the joyful Keebler Elves. Thom sits beside her, trying to offer solace. He offers her a package of Keebler cookies. She laughs through her tears. He tosses the package onto the floor.

THOM
When did he make this announcement?

DEBBIE
This morning at the agency meeting. Do you know them?

THOM
Not personally. I mean, I know of them. They're the Swedes, that's what everyone calls them.

DEBBIE
Gustaff and Gottfrid.

THOM
And so then what, he announces these new creative directors, calls you into his office and fires you?

DEBBIE
No. But they will, I know it.

THOM
They're not going to fire you, Deb. You're the best producer we have.

DEBBIE
I could be their mother.

THOM
That doesn't mean they want to fire you, it means they want to fuck you. They're not going to fire you, Deb, I won't let them.

DEBBIE
You have no power.

THOM
I have some power.

DEBBIE
Not anymore.

THOM
Then why are you crying to me?

DEBBIE
Because you have a heart. That's why you have no power.

LORNA, 25, Thom's assistant, pops her head into the door.

LORNA
Jonathan in ten.

THOM
Am I being fired?

LORNA
Who isn't? Can you do a five-thirty face-to-face with Gustaff and Gottfrid?

THOM
Five-thirty? Who the fuck meets at five-thirty?

LORNA
Gustaff and Gottfrid.

DEBBIE
(blowing her nose)
Maybe they're still on Swedish time.

THOM
I'm taking Jules to Five Guys.

LORNA
Is that a no?

THOM
Fuck. Okay.

Lorna exits. Debbie hands Thom a sheet of paper.

DEBBIE
Justin Beiber doesn’t like the script.

THOM
Fuck him.

DEBBIE
He thinks it’s long.

THOM
It has twelve words. We’re paying him five million dollars. What is that, five-hundred thousand a word?

DEBBIE
Four and change.

Thom crosses out a few words and hands it back to her.

THOM
There, now it has eight words. The little fuck.

INT. JONATHAN’S OFFICE - LATER

Thom enters. Jonathan, 54, feet up on his desk, is watching CNN -- a bombing in the Middle East.

THOM (CONT’D)
Hey. Sorry I missed the meeting this morning, Jules’ bus came late. I hope you saved me a doughnut...

JONATHAN
You gotta to hand it to Bin Laden. What did he spend on Nine-Eleven, a couple hundred grand? I can't shoot a web film for that much, and they've been on the cover of every newspaper, every day, for the last ten years. Nine-Ten, nobody had ever heard of this brand; Nine-Twelve, there wasn't a person alive who hadn't.

THOM
(taking a seat)
They're not a brand, Jon. They're a terrorist organization.

JONATHAN
(rising)
Everything's a brand, Thom. You're a brand, I'm a brand. God's a brand, and a brand in trouble. So are you.

Jonathan closes his office door.

THOM
Are you firing me?

JONATHAN
You're the best thinker we have, Thom, but time's have changed. Thinking isn't as important as Tweeting. The Swedes have thousands of followers, you don't even have a Facebook account.

THOM
You're firing me for not having a Facebook account?

JONATHAN
Agency to client, Thom: your brand is suffering. You're losing your hair. Your clothes suck. You're fat. And you're forty plus. Forty-plus is fifty-plus these days, and fifty-plus is dead.

THOM
I'm not fat. And you're fifty-four, asshole, skinny jeans or not.

JONATHAN
C.C.O., Thom. Executive level. The City of Refuge for the rusty bespectacled lumpenproles of the fifty-plus crowd.

THOM
Are you firing me?

JONATHAN
I'm telling you this as a friend, Thom: you test poorly. Focus groups don't like you. You taste great, but it's a less filling world. You are now, and have been for some time, trending down.

THOM
Are you firing me?

JONATHAN
It's not up to me. The Swedes have control of the department now. They're young, passionate, well-connected. They want to turn things around. The industry is in the shitter, you know that, they all are. America is. If I can get ten more years out of this place before I'm replaced by some fucking app I'll be thrilled. If you want to stay in, play the game. Act the part. Look the part, for however much longer the play goes on. Take my advice, Thom: Marketer, re-brand thyself.

He opens the office door. Thom rises.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
How's Julius?

THOM
A little long in the tooth, frankly. We're thinking of bringing in a younger Swedish son, someone with some digital cred.

He slams the door behind him.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER
Thom is having drinks with DANI KIRSCHENBLOOM (42), an industry headhunter. As they talk, Thom removes all the fixings from his burger - bun, avocado, cheese - as Dani casually places them all on her own.

DANI
Where do you want to go, some fucking digital company, coming up with shitty Facebook ideas? They won't touch you, anyway. The employee average age at Facebook is twenty-six. It's thirty-one at Google and thirty-three at Apple. Stay where you are, that's my advice, and I'm a headhunter - I lose money telling you that. Have you checked out Gwen's website? She's a genius.
(MORE)

DANI (CONT'D)
She did that Dancing Chicken web stuff for McDonald's. She's at sixty now, you could steal her for eighty-five.

THOM
I'd be happier somewhere else.

DANI
That's a myth. You're as happy as you can be. It's like running or singing: we each have our own joy ceiling. That's why Jesus wept. Low joy ceiling.

Dani takes a bite of her now-huge burger.

THOM
That was his brand: misery. You take misery out of Christianity and all you've got is a skinny mascot that tests poorly with eighteen-to-twenty-fives.
(beat; semi-kidding)
How about TBWA, anything going over there?

DANI
(semi-laughing)
I really think you should meet Gwen. How's Wednesday?

EXT. CITY STREET - LATER

Thom walks along the street. He passes by a GNC store, stopping at the window poster of a buff young man. Thom turns to his left to see a focus group set up on the sidewalk - a bunch of YAs sitting around a long table, a MODERATOR at the head of the table beside an easel upon which sits a large photograph of Thom.

MODERATOR
I want you tell me the one word this man makes you think of.

YA 1
Old.

YA 2
Douche.

YA 3
Fat.

The others nod, and murmur “Fat.”

MODERATOR
Anything else?

YA 1
I agree with fat.

The moderator turns to Thom and gives him a “thumbs down.” Thom approaches the group.

THOM
(indicating the buff man on the GNC window poster)
Why, because I don’t look like him? I’m not supposed to look like him. I’m forty-two. I have a wife, a kid, a job. *

YA 1
Thom, be honest. You haven’t exactly been taking care of yourself.

THOM
No, I haven’t -- I’ve been taking care of Lee and Julius. I don’t have a lot of time for crunches, I’m sorry.

YA 3
You only care what we think because your mother didn’t love you.

THOM
My mother loved me. She just didn’t like me.

MODERATOR
You’re being very defensive, Thom. Is this about your wife’s vagina?

THOM
My wife’s vagina is none of your goddamned business.

MODERATOR
(to group)
Show of hands: how many think this is about Lee’s vagina?

They all raise their hands.

THOM
Oh, go fuck yourselves.

Thom enters the GNC.

INT. THOM'S OFFICE - LATER

Thom sits at his desk, phone in one hand, a bottle of "ULTRA X-TREME FAT BURNERS" in the other.

THOM (CONT'D)
They didn't say. They just said they wanted to get together at five-thirty.

CUT TO:

INT. LEE'S HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Lee sits at her desk, working on her computer.

LEE
What kind of asshole schedules a meeting at five-thirty?

THOM ON SPEAKER PHONE
It's not a meeting. It's a face-to-face. If I can't be twenty-five and Swedish, at least I can be accommodating.

LEE
Oh for Christ's sake, all meetings are face-to-face, that's what a meeting is. Who are these assholes? They can't talk now? They're so fucking busy? I hate that shit...

As Lee continues to go off, Thom watches through the glass walls of his office as Gustaff and Gottfrid play "Guitar Hero" on the agency video game system. As he watches, we hear Thom's VO:

THOM VO
Lee tells me I have a problem with confrontation; this is not a problem we share.

CUT TO:

INT. CROWDED AIRPLANE - DAY

Lee and Thom sit with a BABY JULIUS, who is crying. Lee is trying to breast-feed him, but he won't take her nipple. The WOMAN in front keeps turning around and tutting.

LEE
You have a problem?

WOMAN
Excuse me?

LEE
You turn around one more time and I'm going to shove this tit into your mouth.

WOMAN
Well, I never.

LEE
(kicking the seat)
Well, you're about to.

CUT TO:

INT. THOM'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

He's still on the phone with Lee, and reading the side of the Fat Burner bottle.

THOM VO
I wish I had her strength. I wish I had Mark Zuckerberg's career. I wish I had Justin Beiber's youth. I wish I had his balls. Smooth, hairless balls, and nobody in the concentration camp would bat an eye. Maybe I should get my balls tightened. Can they tighten balls?

THOM
What time are you guys heading to Five Guys? Ugh. No way. I'll have to meet you at Funny Farm. Six, six-thirty. Tell Jules I'm sorry. Just tell him, okay? Okay. Later.

He hangs up, opens the bottle of pills, pours some in his mouth and downs them with his coffee. He rises, a look of fierce determination upon his face.

INT. TGM CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

An agency meeting; all the pretty and bright young things that work at TGM fill the room, loudly cheering GUSTAFF (26) and GOTTFRID (25) who stand at the head of the room. They are trim, tall, blonde. They wear tight shirts. One has trendy facial hair; the other has trendier facial hair. They speak with heavy Swedish accents.

GOTTFRID
We have to look at all the accounts and be really hard and say, where can we be doing better work? Where are the creative opportunities?

Applause. Thom, in the crowd, glances over to Jonathan, who is dutifully smiling and applauding.

GOTTFRID (CONT'D)
The Viagra work should be better, I think. Allstate is a great opportunity, and even a brand like Keebler - how are we using digital, social media? Is it time to ditch the elves, send them to Florida for, how you say, a little forced retirement?

More laughter. Thom wipes some sweat off his brow. When the room quiets:

THOM
Why?

Everyone turns to look at him.

GOTTFRID
Why what?

THOM
Why would Keebler need a social media plan?

GOTTFRID
Because this isn't the nineties. Social is critical.

THOM
It's a cookie, Gustaff.

GOTTFRID
I'm Gottfrid.

THOM
Unfriend me. Because that's the only thing this social media shit is good for anyway - bullying. Intimidation. For, you know, outing college homosexuals and shaming high school girls to kill themselves. God Bless You, Mark Zuckerberg! And yet we run out there like idiots, telling our clients to throw their money at it, to suck Facebook's dick even though we have no idea what possible value it can be. I was at the garage the other day, getting my car fixed and the sign, underneath the Volkswagen logo said "Follow us on Twitter!" Why the fuck would anyone follow Volkswagen on fucking Twitter? How sad are you?

Everyone laughs. Jonathan watches Thom stoically. Debbie, across the room, tries not to smile. Thom wipes even more sweat from his face, fluffs his shirt. He smiles, but is clearly uncomfortable.

THOM (CONT'D)
Keebler had their best year last year; old or not, the elves are beloved in this country.

GOTTFRID
Well, my grandparents are beloved too, I'm not going to hire them.

Compulsory laughter. Thom, dizzy, pulls the fat burner bottle out of his pocket and reads, or tries to, the side panel.

GOTTFRID (CONT'D)
We think that's one of the things we have to change here -- this fear of technology, this resistance to change...

Thom begins pressing through the crowd, trying to get to the door, taking deep breaths. He looks ill. Gottfrid watches him.

THOM
(being rude now)
Well, I agree, you know... I think we need to fire your grandparents. Excuse me...

GOTTFRID
(the bigger man)
Maybe. We can discuss it.

THOM
I'm sorry... I have to, uh... I have to go to the bathroom... you can, you know, follow me there on Twitter... I'll post some... pics to my... Pintrest page... excuse me...

He stumbles out the door.

Beat. Awkward silence.

GOTTFRID
Well, a lot of strong opinions. That's good. I like that.

INT. OUTSIDE THOM'S OFFICE - LATER

Thom stumbles to the door.

LORNA
Gustaff needs to bump the face-to-face to six-thirty...

Thom ignores her as he stumbles into his office.

LORNA (CONT'D)
(after him)
Hey, are you okay?

The office door closes.

EXT. DESERTED COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

(NOTE: Scene is a combination of live-action and animation)

A winding country road, bordered by dark forbidding woods. Thom stands at the edge of the road, uncertain. The sun overhead blazes down, and he wipes the sweat from his brow.

An owl SCREECHES, and Thom spins around. There is nothing there. Spotting a small sign at the end of a nearby gravel drive, he stumbles toward it.

THOM
Hollow Tree Lane? What the fuck...?

Suddenly a GUNSHOT rings out, and Thom ducks. He crouches, creeping cautiously up the gravel drive, where he spots a DEAD ANIMATED KEEBLER ELF laying face down in a pool of blood. He runs to the elf, kneels beside him, turns him over.

THOM (CONT'D)
Fast Eddie?

Further up the way he spots another DEAD ANIMATED ELF.

THOM (CONT'D)
Doc? Oh, Doc.

Another SHOT; Thom ducks again.

He continues creeping up the road, until in a clearing at the end, he sees the famous Keebler Tree House. ANIMATED ERNIE THE ELF, shotgun in hand, stands on a small stool beneath the large tree branch, slipping a noose around his neck. Thom steps out from the shadows.

ERNIE
Hold it right there.

THOM
Jesus Christ, Ernie, what the hell are you doing?

ERNIE
Forty-six years, Thom. Forty-six fucking years I gave that goddamned company, and now they're going to fire me? Fuck those motherfuckers.

THOM
They're not going to fire you, Ernie, I won't let them.

ERNIE
Fuck you, Thom, you have no power. And you've had this cookie account for six years. You let us get stale.

THOM
What about JJ, Ernie? What about JJ and Buckets and little Elmer? Doesn't Elmer deserve a father?

Ernie tightens the noose around his neck and points the gun at his head.

THOM (CONT'D)
Ernie, wait! Listen to me! Listen to me, okay?

Ernie stops; he'll give Thom a chance. Thom, as if trying to stall a jumper from jumping, reaches for anything:

THOM (CONT'D)
We can make this right, Ernie, we can. Like... like Steve Jobs, you know? Like when he wanted the, uh, the iPod jack to be right, see, and so, so he made a hundred engineers work all night fixing them, you know? To make it <u>right</u>, Ernie.

Beat.

ERNIE
He sounds like a fucking asshole.

Beat.

THOM
(a realization)
You're right. He <u>does</u> sound like a fucking asshole.

ERNIE
They can't fire us. Not if I kill us all first.

Ernie points the gun at his head again.

Thom winces as we hear the GUNSHOT O.S.

A woman SCREAMS. Thom spins around to see ANIMATED MA KEEBLER standing there, returning from work, her apron and hands covered with chocolate. She drops her bags in shock.

Thom runs to her, takes her in his arms. They hug. They separate, and look into each others eyes. Thom kisses her, and she kisses him back.

THOM
So soft... so chewy...

They fall to the ground. Thom begins kissing his way down her body. Her eyes close. She moans. Thom looks up from between her legs, white frosting around his mouth.

THOM (CONT'D)
You're a double-stuffed. Oh, fuck, you're a fucking double-stuffed...

INT. THOM'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Thom lies on his office couch, moaning in his sleep.

THOM (CONT'D)
Oh, fuck, yeah, you're double fucking stuffed...

Lorna shakes his shoulder Thom wakes.

THOM (CONT'D)
Huh?

LORNA
Ew.

THOM
What?
(noticing it is dark outside)
What time is it?

LORNA
Ew. Six-thirty. I've never said this before in my life, but I really hope you were dreaming about cookies.

THOM
I'm late.

LORNA
They cancelled.

THOM
Jules?

LORNA
The Swedes.

THOM
(sitting up, reaching for his phone)
Fucking assholes.

INT. FUNNY FARM - CONTINUOUS

A mall play-area for kids: bouncy castles, slides, loads of screaming kids and over-protective parents. Lee sits on a bench, mothers to her left and right, checking the time on her phone.

Julius, wearing a Superman costume, stands at the bottom of the slide castle, as kids run past him up the slide ladder. He's clearly a fearful child.

LEE
Julius, just go!

Julius shrugs. MOTHER ONE, seated on Lee's left, shakes her head.

MOTHER ONE
My Alexander used to be like that. Now he goes down head first.

LEE
Used to be like what?

MOTHER ONE
What?

LEE
You said your son Alexander used to be like that. Be like what?

MOTHER ONE
Oh, just, you know.

LEE
Why don't you mind your own fucking business?
(calling to Julius)
I'm not going with you. Go.

Julius shakes his head.

LEE (CONT'D)
Fine, then you won't go. You're being ridiculous.

MOTHER ONE
I'm just trying to be helpful.

LEE
No you're not. You're trying to be superior. At a bouncy castle. It's fucking pathetic.

Her phone rings.

LEE (CONT'D)
Oh, hey, there you are. Good, good. How was the meeting? Are you serious? They just left? That is <u>bullshit</u>, Thom.
(MORE)

LEE (CONT'D)
You don't just ask someone to stay and then fucking leave.

Mother One, perturbed, leads her daughter away.

LEE (CONT'D)
Who gives a shit? He's such a genius he can't fucking email you? Fuck him. Fucking asshole.

Other parents begin to move away.

LEE (CONT'D)
Well, yeah, why should he care - what is he, twenty-six? He doesn't have a family to go home to, what's he give a fuck? He's just going to go home, pop some dick zits and jack off with the puss. No, Thom, it's bullshit. You should tell Jonathan.

Lee rolls her eyes at MOTHER TWO on her right, as if Mother Two might agree. Mother Two tries to smile through her terror.

LEE (CONT'D)
He's good. He's fine. He's having a great time. You should see him, playing with the other kids. Yeah, sure, hang on.

She waves Julius over and hands him the phone.

JULIUS
Hey, Dad. Yeah, I guess. Yeah. Hey, Dad? The balloon died. The red one, from your party. It's dead. Okay. Okay. Bye.

Julius hangs up and hands the phone to Lee. Lee looks at him a moment and smiles.

LEE
Let's get the hell out of here. We'll go home, have some ice cream.

INT. TGM HALLWAY - LATER

Thom, his coat on, storms angrily down the dark, empty hallway towards Jonathan's office.

INT. JONATHAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Thom enters Jonathan's office. Empty. He goes to Jonathan's desk, rifles through his drawers, finds what he's looking for, and stuffs them in his pocket.

INT. TGM HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Thom fast-walks down the hall, turns a corner and bumps into a lightly tipsy Jonathan.

JONATHAN
Nose to the grindstone, eh? Good man.

THOM
(sniffing Jonathan)
Martini. Vodka?

JONATHAN
Gin.
(pulls a beer from his coat pocket)
Beer chaser. A five o'clock shrink appointment, and then a little face-to-face with the Swedes.

THOM
(Smiling)
You can't remember their names, can you?

JONATHAN
Of course I can. Asshole One and Asshole Two. Ah, they're okay. They love this job.

THOM
That's what I find so irritating.

Jonathan smiles briefly, sips his beer, then darkens.

JONATHAN
Look at me, Thom. Look at me. In these ridiculous fucking skinny pants, these trendy asshole shoes. God Almighty, a man my age, forced, at cultural gunpoint, to crawl around in diapers. A nation of infantilists, that's what we've become, and my big boy pants are going to get me fired. Well, what is there to do? I am a successful man in a failure of a world.
(MORE)

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
They say that the only thing that will survive a nuclear war is rats and roaches. Well, fuck it, then.
(raising his beer)
Here's to the rats and roaches. And to the rat shrinks and roach therapists that will try to convince them all it's okay.

They walk off in opposite directions.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
You know what Lenny Bruce said?

Thom stops and turns.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
You know why they make fake vomit?

THOM
No, why?

JONATHAN
Because the fake shit sold so well.

THOM
"Lenny Bruce." He's on Everything's Sunny in Philadelphia, right?

Jonathan points at him, winks, turns and walks off.

INT. SWEDES OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Empty. On the desk is a basket of food and wine, along with a bunch of balloons: "Welcome!" "Congratulations!" etc. Thom grabs a scissor from the pen cup, cuts the balloons off, pulls a bottle of wine from the basket and puts it into his bag. He checks the hallway and, seeing it clear, heads out, balloons in hand. Smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. PAYNE HOME - LATER

Thom enters. It is dark, all are asleep. He heads down the hallway.

INT. JULIUS'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Thom enters quietly. Julius is asleep in his bed. Thom ties the balloons to Julius's desk chair, goes to the side of Julius's bed and kneels down. He brushes the hair off Julius's face, kisses his head softly and exits.

INT. PAYNE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Thom comes into the kitchen, takes out the bottle of stolen wine from his bag and puts it on the counter. He takes out two glasses and a corkscrew and opens the wine.

He reaches into his coat pocket, and takes out the pharmaceutical samples of Viagra he took from Jonathan's desk. He opens one, pops it in his mouth, picks up the wine, and chugs the pills back. He picks up the two glasses and heads upstairs.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Thom heads down the hall and into the darkened master bedroom. We hold on the hallway as we hear some soft music coming on in the bedroom, some wine being poured, and then:

LEE
(drowsy)
What's all this?

THOM
This? This is fifty milligrams of hard-on.

LEE
Oooh. Chemical cock, my favorite.

THOM
I stole it from Jonathan's office.

LEE
Good for you. But I feel like I'm getting fucked by Jonathan.

THOM
That makes two of us.

Lee laughs.

CUT TO:

EXT. METRO-NORTH TRAIN PLATFORM - MORNING

A beautiful morning. A line of young business types line the edge of the platform, all, including Thom, reading the paperback edition of Walter Isaacson’s STEVE JOBS. The train pulls in to the station.

THOM VO
“If I could drop dead right now,” said Sam Goldwyn, “I'd be the happiest man alive.” The poor bastard lived until he was ninety-two.

Thom heads down the platform to meet the door, but, engrossed as he is in his book, he bumps into the man in front of him, who bumps into the man in front of him, and they all drop their Steve Jobs books. They all try to figure out whose book is whose as Thom’s VO continues:

Well, that's life for you -- just when you're ready to check out, you're struck with an incurable case of longevity. "There's nothing we can do," the doctor will say, his voice full of sadness. "You're going to make it.” And you'll cry and wail and gnash your teeth, and when you turn a hundred, President Beiber will send you a postcard.

Thom boards, the train closes behind him and the train, wailing, pulls out.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW.