THE DONOR PARTY

Episode 1: "Dr. Jam"

Written by

Alex Schemmer

"NETWORK" VERSION
May 4, 2011

COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET, LA JOLLA - EVENING

TITLE UP: **“WEDNESDAY”**

A BOXY 1999 SAAB CONVERTIBLE zips though a conservative San Diego neighborhood. There’s a bumper sticker for **“Greenpeace.”** Another reads: **“I break for narwhals.”**

The car pulls up the driveway of a gorgeous, crumbling Spanish-style FIXER. An **“IN ESCROW”** sign stands out front.

JEFF (34), handsome, professional, jumps out of the car and sweeps a blindfolded DAPHNE (27) out of the passenger seat. They’re both a bit tipsy from dinner.

JEFF
Almost there...

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A barren living room with a PILE OF SHEETS in the center. Jeff carries Daphne through the door frame, BUMPING her head.

DAPHNE
Damn it, Jeff!

JEFF
Sorry! Wait for it...

Jeff undoes Daphne’s blindfold and - WOOSH! - yanks back the sheets to reveal a PICNIC BLANKET with CHILLED CHAMPAGNE. DUST billows everywhere. Daphne erupts into a SNEEZING FIT.

JEFF (CONT’D)
This was a lot more Harlequin Romance when I planned it...

Daphne looks around at the empty room.

DAPHNE
Are we celebrating three months by Breaking and Entering?

Then she notices a large MARINE FISH TANK in the corner.

DAPHNE (CONT’D)
Wait, what are your fish doing here?
(beat)
Oh my god. You *bought* it.

Jeff grins and pours the Champagne. Daphne’s stunned.

JEFF
I know it hasn't been that long, and I don't want to freak you out, but this was a huge step for me... and you're the first person I wanted to share it with.

As if physically to deflect Jeff's sentimentality, Daphne pulls a GIFT from her purse and presses it into his hands.

DAPHNE
It's one of those NASA space pens. It writes upside down.

Jeff unwraps the SPACE PEN and smiles.

JEFF
"*She gave me a pen. I gave her my heart, she gave me a pen.*

DAPHNE
I didn't want to overdo it.

JEFF
It's from *Say Anything*.

DAPHNE
The pen?

JEFF
The quote. John Cusack says it to Ione Skye. *Say Anything*? Cameron Crowe. Seminal teen movie? Tell me you've at least heard of it.
(nope)
You're only six years younger, you're not allowed to make me feel this old.

DAPHNE
You're the one buying up real estate, old man.

Daphne laughs - perhaps a bit too hard - and drains her glass.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
Okay... happy three months!

Beat. It finally dawns on Jeff: Daphne seems a little tense.

CUT TO:

FLASHING LIGHTS. AN EMERGENCY SIREN WAILS.

TITLE UP: "**THURSDAY**"

EXT. MEDICAL CLINIC, PARKING LOT - MORNING

An AMBULANCE SCREAMS up a driveway as Jeff steps out of his SAAB and pulls on a WHITE LAB COAT. The ambulance breaks outside the Clinic and an EMT BURSTS out the rear door.

CLOSE ON: the PATIENT, a OVERWEIGHT TABBY CAT in a decal-ed "**Pet-Bulance**" crate. The EARNEST EMT rushes over to Jeff.

EARNEST EMT
Patient name: Mow-Mow. Scheduled for a routine spay procedure and showing strong vital signs, Doctor.

JEFF
Just give me the cat.

CUT TO:

INT. BAYVIEW ANIMAL HOSPITAL, PATIENT HOLDING AREA - DAY

Jeff sets the crated tabby down. DR. DOMASO (40), a sarcastic, no-nonsense female vet, hands Jeff a pile of cases.

DR. DOMASO
Morning, Shamu. You know it annoys me when you're nice to the Pet-Bulance people.

Jeff flips through his stack of cases and grimaces.

JEFF
Ech. Cat... cat... cat...

DR. DOMASO
I know you have a hard-on for SeaWorld, but until they give you a job, it's cats and dogs that pay the bills. Once when I was a little girl, I wanted to be a vet for the My Little Ponies. At some point you have to wake up and accept reality.

JEFF
You were a little girl once?

DR. DOMASO
Would've made a killing in tattoo removal.

Just then Daphne - a resident at the clinic - walks in. She spots Jeff and does a one-eighty. Domaso smirks, enjoying the awkwardness of this not-so-secret office romance.

CUT TO:

INT. OPERATING ROOM - LATER

A sterile blue cloth covers a big cat. Jeff swabs a belly section with iodine. Daphne assists.

JEFF
I had fun last night.
(beat)
Scalpel.

Daphne hands him the instrument. She seems preoccupied.

DAPHNE
Yup. Me too.

JEFF
Next time you'll have to stay over.

DAPHNE
Uh-huh.

JEFF
Clamps.

Jeff opens the incision and <u>suddenly stops cold</u>.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Give me some suction.

Daphne vacuums the incision as Jeff checks the cat's ID TAG.

JEFF (CONT'D)
You checked the chart before you prepped, right?

DAPHNE
Of course.

JEFF
Then you knew this was a *spay* not a c-section.

Daphne's confused. Jeff points in the incision. Beat.

DAPHNE
Oh my god. Mow-Mow's pregnant.

JEFF
It's not Mow-Mow. It's a shelter cat. You prepped the *wrong cat*.

DAPHNE
(beat)
Kill me now.

CUT TO:

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

Jeff and Daphne clean off a batch of newborn KITTENS.

JEFF
How did you not notice? Her nipples were pinking.

DAPHNE
You said “prep the fat tabby.” I prepped the first fattie I saw.

Jeff notices Daphne’s avoiding eye contact.

JEFF
Are you ok? You’ve been acting really strange all morning.

DAPHNE
Jeff, we’re at work. Can we just focus on work?

Jeff turns back to the kittens and mother cat.

JEFF
Fair enough. Let’s just pray she doesn’t reject these things. ‘Cause then we have to put them down or adopt them. And I see you as more a mommy than an euthanizer.

Daphne stands suddenly. She’s freaking out.

DAPHNE
Ok! Yeah. No. I’m not ok.

JEFF
Ok...?

DAPHNE
(building freak out)
I’m not ready to be a mommy. Or play house for that matter. We just started dating, Jeff! Maybe this age difference *is* a big deal.

Beat. Jeff is stunned.

JEFF
Is this about last night?

DAPHNE
A house? A *three-bedroom* house? On our three-monthiversary?

JEFF
You might be over-analyzing this.

DAPHNE
What guy needs two extra bedrooms?

JEFF
... sensing that's rhetorical...

DAPHNE
One that's prepping for in-laws. And *babies*. Look, I get that you're approaching middle age and in a good place and whatever...

JEFF
I am *not* approaching middle age...

DAPHNE
I'm just not ready to knock down that next domino that's going to trigger the rest of my life.

JEFF
We're just dating. No dominos.

DAPHNE
You may think there're no dominos, but there are. I'm sorry, I need some time to find myself.
(beat, awkward)
I'm going to, uh, go now.

Daphne exits, abandoning Jeff with the litter of kittens.

CUT TO:

INT. KENNEL - END OF THE DAY

The DEADBEAT MOTHER CAT ignores her NEWBORNS. Jeff vents.

JEFF
Come on! Just lick 'em! What kind of mother are you?

Suddenly Domaso breezes in, posts a SHIFT SCHEDULE.

DR. DOMASO
Those aren't staying here, Shamu.

Jeff goes to the schedule. Something's wrong: <u>DAPHNE's name is crossed off the day shifts and penciled into the nights</u>.

JEFF
Since when does Daphne work nights?

But Domaso's gone. Pissed, Jeff tries to initial his own shifts. But his SPACE PEN won't write.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Goddamn it, NASA!

He dumps Daphne's gift in a HAZMAT BOX and kicks the wall.

FADE OUT.

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

MUSIC UP: Celine Dion, “All By Myself”

INT. JEFF’S NEW HOME, LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Jeff sits on the floor, nursing a BOX OF KITTENS with a tiny bottle. Celine blares. Not his proudest moment.

RAP. RAP. RAP. Jeff spots KARL (34), tall and jocular, peeking in the window. He hides the kittens and answers the door. Karl notices the music and proceeds carefully.

KARL
You alright, buddy?

JEFF
Just a monumentally bad day.

KARL
Good, ‘cause I was about to say you officially have a vagina now, but was gonna give you a pass on the Dion if there was a death or something.

JEFF
It’s Pandora.

KARL
Good station.

Jeff shuts the laptop, turning off the music.

JEFF
Daphne and I are taking a break.

KARL
(off Jeff, miserable)
Her decision?

JEFF
She butchered a pregnant animal, said she “needed some time” and left me with a box of cats.

KARL
I thought I heard mewing.

Beat. Karl reflects. Jeff’s comforted by his company.

KARL (CONT’D)
Wow, man...

JEFF
I know.

KARL
She’s totally got the balls here.

JEFF
Excuse me?

KARL
“Needs some time...”
(unpacking it for Jeff)
... *to fool around*.

JEFF
It’s not like that. She said she needs time to find herself.

KARL
If by “find herself” she means “have *Jersey Shore* amounts of random sex.”

JEFF
You know what, I don’t need this. I got 5-at-a-time Netflix and a box of Franzia. I’ll call you in a week.

KARL
Hey, buddy, I’m commiserating here, not casting stones. I “work from home” with a set of three-year-old twins while my wife’s a full-time attorney. No judgments.
(beat)
We need to get you back on the horse.

JEFF
Frankly, my vagina’s still sore.

KARL
As it so happens, I’ve got the night off from family obligations and we’re getting you drunk. Put away that box of kittens, ‘cause we’re gonna party like it’s 1996.
(off Jeff, not happy)
*Whoooo! Colle*ge!!

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH STRIP - NIGHT

Karl and Jeff walk the rowdy strand. There’s a line of smokers outside Shellback’s, a lively post-college bar.

KARL
Come on, this is our place.

JEFF
Fifteen years ago.

KARL
Age is a state of mind, man.

As Jeff passes into the bar, two SHITFACED FRAT BOYS lock arms on either side of him.

FRAT BOYS
London Bridge!!!!!

The crowd turns to Jeff and starts CHANTING.

CROWD
DANCE! DANCE! DANCE! DANCE!

Jeff glares at Karl, wanting to disappear. With no other option, he does a humiliating dance for the cheering crowd. The Frat Guys lift the bridge. Karl pats him on the back.

JEFF
I hate you.

CUT TO:

INT. SHELLBACK'S BAR - NIGHT

FRATTY TYPES relive spring break, belting out "Sweet Child of Mine." Jeff and Karl stand at the bar, clearly out of place.

KARL
Count your blessings, man. You're a 34-year-old, home-owning straight guy who saves puppies for a living. You're freakin' bachelor gold.

Two BEAUTIFUL GIRLS (21) walk past.

KARL (CONT'D)
Hey ladies, looking for love? 'Cause I've got your man.

GIRL
Ok, thank you!

The Girls give Karl the brushoff, but he's undeterred.

KARL
Just got to play the odds.

JEFF
We're not exactly in their demographic anymore.

KARL
Speak for yourself.

JEFF
Those girls look nineteen. You're wearing a wedding ring and are covered in Cheerio dust.

KARL
Check that attitude at the London Bridge. I was soliciting for *you*.

Jeff slumps on the bar. Karl sees he's still pretty bummed.

KARL (CONT'D)
Ok. You got thirty seconds on the clock: wallow.

JEFF
I'm not saying Daphne was "the one." But I could definitely see building a life with her.

Karl shakes his head.

KARL
Come on, dude. "Building a life?" That's propaganda cooked up by a century's worth of advertising execs. We're about as "in control" of life as one of those little plastic surfers guys in those oily-wavey-glass things people have on their desks...

JEFF
Sharp analogy.

KARL
It's all about the "Black Swan."

JEFF
You mean the movie about the crazy ballerina who goes crazy?

KARL
It's a metaphor, dumbass. The Black Swan Theory says our lives are disproportionately impacted by random, game-changing events.

JEFF
(beat)
Are you trying to impress me by sounding smart? 'Cause I'm not gonna sleep with you.

KARL
This Daphne break up: classic Black Swan. It's a kick in the pants to send you in a new direction. You gotta accept the situation and get back in the game ASAFP.

The two Beautiful Girls are now at the door, being "London Bridged." They squeal and dance. Karl deliberates.

KARL (CONT'D)
Would you skew older?

JEFF
How old?

KARL
My wife's got this co-worker. Says she's smart, sexy, adult...

JEFF
So what's the catch?

KARL
The catch is that you man up and stop moping like you're Taylor-frickin-Swift home on Prom night.
(beat)
Would you do a blind date if I set it up?

CLOSE ON: Jeff, maybe a bit intrigued by this mystery woman.

JEFF
There's gotta be a catch.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: a MYSTERY WOMAN sprawled across her bed, her head resting on her open LAPTOP. We're:

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

TITLE UP: **"FRIDAY"**

MAX (10), precocious and sweet, pokes his head in the door.

MAX
Mom, it's our turn for carpool.

The Woman JOLTS up from bed, shifting from REM to "mom" in seconds flat. This is CLAIRE (36) - beautiful, smart, with a "J-K-L-semicolon" indented on her face.

WOMAN
Yup, I'm up, I'm up.

As Max runs downstairs, Claire checks to see that the computer's ok... and quietly clears the SEARCH HISTORY.

CUT TO:

INT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Claire listens to a CD as she rushes through her routine.

CLAIRE'S VOICE ON CD
"You're doing great. Keep trying."

CLAIRE
"*ban làm... rat...*" Crap.

CLAIRE'S VOICE ON CD
"*ban làm rat tôt. thu lai!.*"

As Claire struggles with the homemade language lesson, she makes Max's lunch and preps for work:

She gets out bread, checks her outdated SMARTPHONE, and goes to the fridge for mayo. As she applies lipstick her phone RINGS. It's coming from the fridge. She screens the call and returns to the sandwich. This is a woman used to juggling a million tasks. There's definitely a more efficient way, but somehow she gets it all done.

CLAIRE'S VOICE ON CD (CONT'D)
"Do you need to use the restroom?"

Max enters and chimes in with fairly convincing Vietnamese.

MAX
"*Ban can phai su dung nhà ve sinh?*"

Claire stares at her son. *How did he do that?*

MAX (CONT'D)
I thought you were supposed to be teaching them *English*.

CLAIRE
I've got a new student from Vietnam, smarty pants.

MAX
"Smarty pants?" Mom, I'm in sixth grade, we can use Big Boy talk.

The PATIO DOOR slides opens and LEANNE (38) steps in with her daughters LILY (13), beautiful, biracial, unnervingly hip, and ZOE (8), a bandana-wearing tomboy.

LEANNE
Morning.

MAX
"*Chao buôi sang!*"
("*Good morning!*")

LEANNE
What does that mean, Max?

LILY
It's Chinese for "I'm a bitch-tard."

LEANNE
Lily! Don't say "'tard."

Max scrunches his nose at Lily. The two are just neighbors, but they fight like brother and sister.

CLAIRE
Go wait by the car, guys.

Max and Lily exit; Zoe trails behind, karate chopping the air.

LEANNE
Could you swing Zoe by the elementary school on the way?

CLAIRE
Of course.

LEANNE
And don't let Lily forget her permission form.

CLAIRE
Shoot. The Middle School trip. I completely forgot.

Leanne hands Claire a fresh PERMISSION FORM.

LEANNE
I got you. You do remember you agreed to chaperone it, right?

CLAIRE
Yes! Thank you. You're amazing.

Claire quickly fills out the form. She signs her name and reflexively checks her phone. Leanne busts her on it.

LEANNE
What's with the compulsive phone action?

CLAIRE
I was checking the date.

LEANNE
You were checking your email and you've been doing it all week.

CLAIRE
I always multitask like an insane person.

Leanne's not buying it. Beat. Claire levels.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I've got a date after work.
(off Leanne)
I've been... looking online.

LEANNE
Why didn't you tell me?!

CLAIRE
I don't want to jinx it. And I haven't told Max yet. I mean, maybe it's too soon.

LEANNE
Claire, it's been three years.

CLAIRE
I know. I know.
(beat)
I didn't mean to be sneaky.

LEANNE
Sweetheart, I've known you since you were in Garanimals. I can tell when something's up. Go. Have fun. We'll watch Max.

CLAIRE
Just tell him I'm working late.

Leanne gives Claire a big hug and sends her out the door.

LEANNE
Be bad. I want the details.

CUT TO:

INT. JEFF'S CONVERTIBLE - FRIDAY NIGHT

TITLE UP: "**FRIDAY NIGHT, 7:45 PM**"

Jeff cruises up the coast, looking slick. He powers up his iPod and cranks the volume.

MUSIC UP: Jefferson Starship, "We Built this City."

It's date night. Fuck yeah.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - FRIDAY NIGHT

TITLE UP: "**8:00 PM**"

The MAITRE D' leads Jeff toward an elegant table for two. A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN in her mid/late 30s sits with her back to them. She turns her head and smiles. It's... not Claire.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Claire sits alone at a computer terminal, very much not on a date. She gets a TXT from "**Leanne: *how's it going?***" She ignores it and continues reading a MEDICAL JOURNAL, checking her inbox intermittently for an email that's not coming.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - FRIDAY NIGHT

TITLE UP: "**8:30 PM**"

Meet CYNTHIA (38), a high strung, New Yorker-quoting cougar, very secure in her own fabulousness.

CYNTHIA
As a little girl I wanted to be the despotic ruler of my own 3rd world country - you know, big white house, GDPs worth of shoes - but instead I became the head litigator for a pharmaceutical company. Ha!
(off Jeff)
It's funny if you know my world.

Jeff pours himself a generous glass of wine - perhaps the only way he's going to get through this date.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
How about you? Any previous marriages? Kids?

JEFF
Not that I'm aware of. You?

CYNTHIA
Disclosure alert! None and one.

JEFF
No previous marriages...

CYNTHIA
And a two-year-old son. His name is Charles and he's a total genius. Like his mother. Kidding.
(beat)
I was 34. Career in full swing. I thought - why wait? I picked a donor at this fabulous Cryobank and voila. Some men are threatened by that. I like to tell my dates early to weed out the scaredy cats.

JEFF
So where's little Charles now?

CYNTHIA
With my donor.

JEFF
Your donor? Isn't sperm donation...

CYNTHIA
Anonymous? Usually. But I tracked the guy down on the DSR. Sometimes he looks after Charles.

JEFF
The "DSR?" What's the DSR?

CYNTHIA
Donor Sibling Registry. It's a website. Connects tubies with their half-siblings and donors.

Beat. Jeff's head is spinning.

JEFF
So you can just go online and track down a sperm donor?!

CYNTHIA
(flirtatious)
Best babysitting service ever.

The waiter comes by and notices the empty bottle of wine.

WAITER
Another bottle with your entree?

Cynthia puts a "none for me" hand over her glass.

JEFF
Absolutely.

CUT TO:

INT. JEFF'S NEW HOUSE - FRIDAY NIGHT

TITLE UP: **"10:00 PM"**

Jeff's PHONE vibrates on the couch. CALLER ID: "**KARL.**" But Jeff can't hear it. He's on the floor - Franzia box by his side, kittens in lap - scrolling through the "**DONOR SIBLING REGISTRY.**" Happy pictures of dads reunited with offspring.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Oh Jeff...

He clicks on <**SEARCH THE REGISTRY>** and then <**I'M A DONOR**>.

A PROMPT pops up: "**DONOR NUMBER:** __ "

Jeff stares at the screen.

JEFF (CONT'D)
What... are... you doing?

Beat. Jeff looks at his telephone keypad, then turns to the computer and types: "**D-7-5-2-6.**" The page refreshes. BAM!

"**WELCOME DONOR #D-7526, you have _1_ unread messages.**" Beat. Jeff rocks back and forth, cradling the kittens in his lap.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Oh my god. I'm a daddy.
(beat)
I'm a freakin' daddy!

AUTHORITATIVE VOICE (O.S.)
Step away from the box of kittens!

Jeff shuts his computer and whips around. Karl's in the doorway, afraid for his friend's sanity. An awkward beat.

KARL
I heard you got lushed at dinner and bailed without paying. I wanted to check you weren't snorkeling in your SAAB off the PCH.
(re: Jeff and the kittens)
I'm not sure this is better.

Jeff - still in shock - tosses Karl a stack of PLASTIC CUPS.

JEFF
Grab a Dixie, we need to talk.

Karl pours some wine, prepping for a messy heart-to-heart.

JEFF (CONT'D)
So... remember how I got that thesis grant in college to go do research in the Great Barrier reef?

KARL
Six grand to play with fishies...

JEFF
Aquatic mammals, but yeah... I never got that grant.
(beat, solemn)
I donated sperm.

Karl stares at Jeff for a long beat, then:

KARL
You made six grand donating sperm?
(off a shamefaced Jeff)
I'm sorry, is this supposed to be an "after school special" moment? 'Cause I might be more judgmental if you'd been, like, selling crack to kids or pushing MonaVie.

JEFF
(rationalizing to himself)
I know, no big deal. It was a one-year thing. And that trip changed my life. Made me want to be a vet - not the kind I currently am but...

KARL
Jeff, <u>why is this suddenly relevant</u>?

JEFF
There's this website: you look up the clinic where you donated, plug in an ID number and it connects you with families looking for you.

KARL
That sounds like a terrific site <u>never to go to</u>.

JEFF
Have you ever smelled your dirty socks right before you throw them in the laundry...

KARL
I actually know where you're going with that... *and please tell me you didn't log on*?!

JEFF
(sheepish)
Just one time...

KARL
You said you needed an ID number. You randomly just knew that offhand?

JEFF
Remember before smartphones when you memorized what numbers spelled?
(off Karl)
D-7526. "D-R..." *Doctor.* "J-A-M..."

Beat. Jeff lets this sink in.

KARL
"Dr. Jam."
(beat)
Oh my god, you're a daddy.

JEFF
I'm a freakin' daddy.

KARL
Give me your computer right now.

Karl reaches for the laptop. But Jeff snatches it up like a defensive drug addict. A standoff.

KARL (CONT'D)
Dude, you already have wine-box-eyes. You *know* how you get.

Karl lunges for the computer. Jeff yells. They scuffle briefly, then Jeff dives on the computer like a fumbled ball.

JEFF
Stop it, you'll scare the kittens!!

Karl backs off. Jeff tries to reassemble his dignity.

JEFF (CONT'D)
I've got this under control.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE, DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

TITLE UP: "**11:00 PM**"

Claire gets out of the car and catches her reflection: she's still in her work clothes and looks exhausted.

CLAIRE
Get a hold of yourself, Claire.

She gets back in the car, grabs a SEXY DRESS hanging in the back seat and awkwardly changes.

CUT TO:

INT. LEANNE AND SANDRA'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Leanne's on the couch, massaging the feet of her partner SANDRA (30s) - African-American, on point and professional. Claire enters, now dressed like she's fresh from a date.

SANDRA
What're you doing back? Go. Hook up. Someone should be getting some here.

Leanne smacks Sandra on the leg.

CLAIRE
Let's just say there won't be a second date.
(changing the subject)
Was Max well-behaved?

SANDRA
Nauseatingly so. I want you to clone that child and give us one. He did the dishes and watched Animal Planet all night.

Claire peeks into their den area, where Max is sound asleep.

CUT TO:

INT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE, MAX'S ROOM - LATER

Claire tucks Max into bed and kisses him good night.

CUT TO:

INT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE, CLAIRE'S ROOM - LATER

Claire lies in a big empty bed, staring at a PICTURE on her bedside: a HANDSOME MAN holds Max on his shoulders. Beat. Claire rolls over, grabs a big pillow and spoons it.

CUT TO:

INT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE, CLAIRE'S ROOM - LATER

TITLE UP: **"1:00 AM"**

Claire can't sleep; she checks email on her phone. Suddenly, she JUMPS out of bed, opens her laptop and logs onto the **DSR.**

"WELCOME Claire: you have _1_ unread message."

Claire's heart stops. Her hands tremble as she navigates to her inbox and clicks the message:

"Hi. My name's Jeff. Let's talk."

Claire SLAMS her computer shut. She's in utter shock.

CLAIRE
Oh my god.

FADE OUT.

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. JEFF'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Title up: **"SATURDAY: 9:30 AM"**

We PAN past a pizza box and empty Franzia bladder to FIND Jeff, passed out in the middle of the room. Kittens lick at his face. A phone RINGS. And RINGS. Jeff rouses - excruciatingly hung over - and answers it.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Hey... is this Jeff?

JEFF
Yeah. Who's this?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
It's... Claire.

JEFF
(friendly)
Oh, hey you!
(beat, still no idea)
Claire from the gym?

CLAIRE (O.S.)
No, Claire from the DSR.
(no response)
You're my sperm donor.

Jeff pulls the phone from his ear and stares at it for a helpless beat. Then he hangs up and throws the receiver on the couch like it's a venomous snake. He paces frantically.

JEFF
Oh, no, you didn't. No, no, no...

Then Jeff stops and stares at his LAPTOP. Yes, he did.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Oh Jeff... what did you do?

The browser's open to the DSR: it's a MESSAGE from Claire.

CLAIRE (V.O.)
Dear D-7526 - Not looking for Jerry Maguire or someone to unload my bag of emotional slop on. Just have some medical questions about my son. Obviously hoping for a response but will understand your silence. Best, Claire. PS: Just curious... was 6th grade a tough year for you?

Jeff grabs his phone and dials. Karl answers immediately.

KARL (O.S.)
Dude, I *so* tried to stop you.

JEFF
Do you know what I'm about tell you?

KARL (O.S.)
Does it have to do with the Meow-sterpiece Theater segment you posted on Facebook?

JEFF
Oh Jesus. Did I have Franzia Face?

KARL (O.S.)
Pretty bad. Some of your best work though. Looked to me like a pretty faithful reenactment of Gargamel's attack on the Smurf Village.

Jeff logs onto FACEBOOK. Sure enough, there is a VIDEO time-stamped **3:00 AM** of Jeff puppeting a village raid with the cats.

JEFF
None of this is good.

CUT TO:

INT. 7-ELEVEN - LATER THAT DAY

People in beachwear stock up on cold drinks. FIND Jeff in DARK GLASSES shakily pouring himself an enormous HOT COFFEE.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - LATER THAT DAY

Karl's TWIN BOYS (3) build a SAND CASTLE with a LITTLE GIRL nearby. It's sweltering. Jeff miserably drinks his coffee.

JEFF
I have to at least call her back. I *hung up* on her.

KARL
Watch the sand, bud. Might get in your veeg.

JEFF
Enough with the veeg-es!

KARL
What you're feeling now? It's called "fight or flight." It's a *survival* reflex. And flight's a really solid option here.

JEFF
How about the “Black Swan?” Lives being governed by random events. Shouldn’t I just go with it?

KARL
Absolutely not. I got “Black Swan” from two minutes of an NPR story.

JEFF
I thought you hated NPR.

KARL
Garrison Keillor bugs the crap out of me. And “Cokie’s” a total stripper name.

JEFF
So what? You *made up* “Black Swan?”

KARL
I... extemporized. Susan’s been giving me hell for hanging with my single guy friends. I riffed on Black Swan to get you a new girl so we could do couples’ stuff again.
(beat)
Listen, my life before kids: solid 8’s. Now it's all 1’s and 10’s. Sometimes I miss the 8’s.

Just then they hear SCREAMING. The twins are *peeing* on the little girl’s sand castle. Her PARENTS run over, alarmed.

KARL (CONT’D)
This I gotta handle.
(yelling)
No crossing streams, boys!

Karl charges over to salvage the situation.

JEFF
I can’t believe you’re allowed to raise children.

KARL
Do not contact her. You’re asking for a whole world of hurt here.

Beat. Jeff’s pissed but knows Karl’s right.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Jeff walks alone on the boardwalk. Signs of fatherhood abound:

A YOUNG DAD buys ice cream with his eight-year-old DAUGHTER. Nearby a TEENAGE GIRL winces as a sketchy TATTOO ARTIST emblazons a TRAMP STAMP on her rump.

On the beach ANOTHER DAD laughs as his kids bury him neck-deep in sand. Then a NEARBY KID charges an army of SEAGULLS, who flock up and shell the captive dad with droppings.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JEFF'S OLD APARTMENT - NIGHT

MUSIC UP: Roxette, "*It Must Have Been Love...*"

Jeff packs his old apartment. He seals a box of Daphne-related items, remembers the good times and holds back a man-tear.

"*... but it's over now.*"

CUT TO:

INT. JEFF'S NEW PLACE - LATER

Jeff unpacks in his new home. But he can't concentrate. He opens his phone, thinks for a second and dials: "**DAD.**"

Ringing. An OLDER MAN (60s) grumbles an upbeat VOICEMAIL. This is NATHANIAL. We'll see him more in coming episodes.

NATHANIAL (V.O.)
This is Nate. I'm in Mehico neck-deep in Margaritas and senoritas. If you need me, you can find me on the Twitter. *Hasta luego!*

BEEP! Jeff hangs up and thinks for a second. Then he searches his call history and dials another number.

JEFF
Hey, Claire... it's Jeff.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

TITLE UP: "**SUNDAY**"

Again, Jeff approaches a beautiful woman with her back to him. It's Claire. She struggles to stand from a pushed-in chair.

CLAIRE
Hi. You must be Jeff.

JEFF
Yeah. Claire. Nice to meet you.

They do a weirdly professional straight-armed handshake.

WAITER
Something to drink, sir?

Jeff notices a iced coffee drink in front of Claire.

CLAIRE
It's a mocha... thing. Want to try?

Claire lifts the glass so Jeff can take a sip. He reflexively pulls away. Beat. Claire puts the glass down, embarrassed.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Sorry. That was weird.

JEFF
Not personal. Got a one-way fluid exchange policy with all my donees.

Beat. Claire sees he's joking and laughs.

CLAIRE
I remember your profile being funny.

Beat. They notice the WAITER's still there.

JEFF
I'll have a mocha-thing as well.

The Waiter leaves. Claire pulls MEDICAL FILES from her purse.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Whoa. Files. Ok, let's do this...

CLAIRE
Sorry, do you want to talk first? Whatever you're comfortable with. I just have a few medical questions.

JEFF
Shoot. But I'm outtie the second I hear "turn your head and cough."

Claire laughs, then proceeds.

CLAIRE
So, about a month ago I brought Max to a pediatrician...

Jeff's unexpectedly touched to learn his son's name.

JEFF
"Max."

CLAIRE
Yeah. That was my husband's name.

JEFF
That's... a nice name.
(beat)
So you brought him to the doctor...

CLAIRE
Right. His heart sounded funny. A normal beat goes "lub-dub, lub-dub, lub-dub." But Max's was doing this "lub-*whoosh*-dub, lub-*whoosh*-dub."

JEFF
So what's with the "whoosh"?

CLAIRE
Exactly. The doctor said it was just a murmur and I shouldn't worry.

JEFF
But you're worried.

CLAIRE
I'm a rational person, but I'm not going to let my son's health rest on some statistical probability. I wanted to see if maybe there were heart issues on your side of the...
(avoiding word "family")
... the genetic tree.

JEFF
No. None that I know of.
(thinks, then)
Stay right there.

Suddenly Jeff gets up and heads for the door. Claire's stunned. *Is he bailing?* But Jeff soon reenters with a STETHOSCOPE in his pocket. He slyly passes the table.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Meet me by the men's room.

CUT TO:

INT. DOWNSTAIRS AT THE RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

Jeff steadies Claire as she steps up onto a HIGHCHAIR positioned under a BUNDLE OF CEILING PIPES.

CLAIRE
Are you sure about this?

JEFF
Trust me, I'm a vet.

Jeff hands her a STETHOSCOPE, then opens the mens' bathroom.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Put the diaphragm up to the pipe.

Claire's skeptical. Still, she listens to the pipe, as Jeff turns on the faucet in the bathroom.

JEFF (CONT'D)
What do you hear?

CLAIRE
Water running.

JEFF
It's flowing through the pipe just fine, right?
(MORE)

JEFF (CONT'D)
(Claire nods)
Any particular sound it’s making?

Claire listens, then - despite herself - grins big.

CLAIRE
It’s... “*whooshing.*”

JEFF
Max probably has what’s called an “innocent murmur.” The “whooshing” is his heart’s natural turbulence. Think of it as his signature sound.

Claire wants to hug Jeff. But the moment’s broken: a HISPANIC BUSBOY runs downstairs and stares at Claire on the highchair.

CLAIRE
Perdón, se lo devolveremos enseguida.
(*"Sorry, we're gonna put it right back.*")

BUSBOY
(American accent)
Whatever you want, lady.

The busboy goes into the bathroom. Claire turns to Jeff.

CLAIRE
I’m a ESL teacher. That was reflexive not racist.

FADE OUT.

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER THAT DAY

Jeff and Claire chat over their coffee. Their chemistry is comfortable. Almost date-like.

CLAIRE
Max is addicted to those animal shows. He can narrate whole episodes of *Planet Earth*.

JEFF
Sounds like a smart kid.

CLAIRE
He is. Super smart. Doesn't really put him in with the cool set.

JEFF
The cool set's overrated.

CLAIRE
I'm not a neurotic parent. But since Big Max died... I haven't exactly had a reliable resource for dealing with pre-adolescent boys.

Beat. Jeff sees how much Claire misses her husband. And loves her son. Claire checks her watch.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Crap. I gotta go. I dumped Max on the neighbors all weekend

They start to get up, not knowing the goodbye protocol.

JEFF
Ok, well... you have my number. In case you have any aquatic-mammal-slash-human-boy type questions.

Claire smiles. Beat. One last issue needs to be addressed:

CLAIRE
You know, I think it's best if maybe we *don't* have contact. Max still idolizes my husband, and things are still a bit complicated.

JEFF
He doesn't know he's...

CLAIRE
"Donor conceived?" No. Not yet.

JEFF
Ok, well... I guess this is it.

CLAIRE
Thanks. You've been really great.

They exit to the street. Time to part ways. Both lean in and extend a hand, hedging their shake vs. hug bets. They hesitate. Then Jeff holds his palm up in the air.

JEFF
Ok, hi-five then.

Claire weirdly holds/shakes Jeff's hand in the air.

JEFF (CONT'D)
(going with it)
Go team!

Beat. They're both steeped in awkwardness.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Jeff and Claire wait side-by-side at the VALET STAND. This good-bye is taking forever. Silence.

JEFF
I never valet...

CLAIRE
Such a rip-off...

They resume the silence, not wanting to start a fresh conversation. Jeff's SAAB pulls up, and he hurries over.

JEFF
Ok, bye.

CLIARE
Yup. Bye, then.

CUT TO:

INT. JEFF'S NEW HOUSE - NIGHT

Jeff feeds his fish and sits down to nurse the cats in his brand new, empty home. He survived the meeting with Claire. All is well. And a bit lonely.

CUT TO:

INT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE, MAX'S ROOM - NIGHT

Claire peeks in on Max. He groggily sits up in bed.

MAX (O.S.)
Hey mom... you look pretty.

Claire sits on the side of Max's bed.

CLAIRE
Thanks, honey. Go back to sleep.

Max looks up, simultaneously a child and a caretaker.

MAX
You know it's ok with me if you date, right?

Beat. Claire's taken off guard.

CLAIRE
Who said I was dating?

MAX
The Moms are really bad at lying. They said you were out with an old friend, but Lily said women don't dress up like that for old friends unless they're really competitive.

CLAIRE
It wasn't a date, baby.

MAX
It's fine if it was. I know it doesn't mean you don't love Dad.

This hits Claire right in the heart. She gives Max a big hug, touched by his strength and innocence.

CLAIRE
I will always love Dad. And you'll always come first, you hear me?

Max nestles back into the covers.

MAX
Love you, mom...

CLAIRE
... up to the sky.

As Max closes his eyes, Claire rests her head on his chest, listening to the sound of his heart. Lub-*whoosh*-dub... Lub-*whoosh*-dub...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. 405 FREEWAY - MORNING

TITLE UP: "**MONDAY**"

MUSIC UP: Gary Numan, "Cars."

Jeff tears down the freeway in his open-air SAAB. He's back on his game and headed to his favorite place in the world.

CUT TO:

EXT. SEAWORLD - LATER

SCHOOL BUSSES cram the parking lot. A sign reads: "**WELCOME JUNIOR BIOLOGISTS!**" Jeff parks in the "**VOLUNTEER**" section and breezes through the gates, flashing a credentials badge.

CUT TO:

INT. SEAWORLD CLASSROOM "TEACHING POOL" - DAY

A couple SEA OTTERS float around Jeff, who stands waist-deep in water lecturing a SCHOOL GROUP. He's in his element.

JEFF
Sea Otters are omnivores. So they will eat seaweed but prefer meat...

A YOUNG GIRL (10) raises her hand.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Yes, the lady in the dolphin shirt. Name, favorite animal and question.

LITTLE GIRL
(stilted monotone)
My name is Kimberly... and my favorite animal is dolphins... and my question is do they eat dolphins?

JEFF
No, sea otters *do not* eat dolphins. They like clams and sea urchins.

The kids make disgusted faces. Jeff pushes on.

JEFF (CONT'D)
But as cute as they are, sea otters do have predators. Who do you think their *worst* enemy is? Raise a hand if you think it's "sharks."

All the kids raise their hands.

JEFF (CONT'D)
How about "killer whales?"

Some kids revise their answer.

JEFF (CONT'D)
There's actually a predator even *more dangerous* to otters. <u>The most dangerous predator of all</u>. The 8th graders didn't get this, so I'll give a T-shirt to anybody who can tell me who this guy fears most.

Jeff lifts up the sea otter. The kids yell out answers.

KIDS
Sting ray! Jelly fish! Great White!

JEFF
Raise your hands!

Suddenly the door opens: a CHAPERONE leads a girl back to the group: it's Claire. Jeff drops the otter with a SPLASH. The kids GASP. Jeff tries to recover. Then ONE HAND raises from the crowd. Beat. Claire freezes as Jeff calls on the boy.

MAX
It's man. The most dangerous predator of all is man.

Jeff's eyes lock on Claire's. Both are afraid to breathe.

JEFF
That's right. Man. The winner is...

MAX
Max.
(beat)
And I like narwhals.

Jeff stares at this little boy: his son. Beat.

JEFF
I like narwhals too.

CUT TO:

INT. CLAIRE'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Claire drives the minivan in silence. Lily sits shotgun while Max admires his new sea otter T-shirt in the backseat.

LILY
Seriously Max, you can't wear that. Remember what happened when you wore that tie that looked like a trout?

MAX
It was a salmon. And you're just jealous because nobody in your grade knew the answer. It's how they end like every nature show.
(announcer voice)
"But even the king of the jungle has to fear the most dangerous predator of all... man!"

LILY
Wear that to recess, you'll meet the most dangerous predator of all.

MAX
God, I wish I were home-schooled.

Claire's shell-shocked, not even registering the kids.

CUT TO:

INT. JEFF’S HOUSE - DAY

Jeff paces his apartment. M*A*S*H reruns on an old TV.

HARRY MORGAN (V.O.)
...I don't care how poor a man is; if he has family, he's rich...

Jeff summons up the courage and makes a call.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CLAIRE’S HOUSE, KITCHEN - EVENING

Claire makes spaghetti as Max, Lily and Zoe play out back. Her phone RINGS. She recognizes the number and takes a breath.

CLAIRE
Hi. Jeff?

Silence. Then Jeff speaks, almost choked up.

JEFF
I know I said I wouldn’t call. But I just want you to know...
(beat)
You shouldn’t worry. He’s perfect.

LONG EMOTIONAL BEAT as Jeff and Claire connect over their son.

CLAIRE
Thank you...

CUT TO:

EXT. CLAIRE’S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Max sees Claire hang up the phone inside and wipe a tear from her eye. She catches him watching and pulls herself together.

CUT TO:

INT. CLAIRE’S HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Claire hears a car outside and heads out the front door.

CUT TO:

EXT. LEANNE AND SANDRA’S HOUSE, FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Claire catches up to Sandra who’s getting out of her car.

CLAIRE
We need to talk.

CUT TO:

INT. SANDRA AND LEANNE'S KITCHEN - LATER

Claire paces, pregnant with an imminent confession. Leanne and Sandra wait nervously. Then Lily comes to the back door.

SANDRA
Go play, Lily. It's mom time.

LILY
I just want a Smartwater.

SANDRA
Drink from the hose.

LILY
Ugh. You suck.

Lily slams the door. Claire locks it and bursts into tears.

LEANNE
Honey, what is it?

CLAIRE
I haven't been internet dating...
(pulls herself together)
I contacted him. I contacted 7526.

Beat. They all know what this means. And it's not good.

LEANNE
What do you mean "contacted" him?

SANDRA
You *met* him? Without asking us?!

LEANNE
Sandra, let her answer.

CLAIRE
I was worried about Max's heart. The murmur. So I went on the DSR... and we met up.

SANDRA
"Met up?" Like in person?

CLAIRE
His name's Jeff...

SANDRA
No. He doesn't have a name. He's a number. To us he's a number.
(beat)
Does he know where we live now?!

LEANNE
Sandra, calm down. He's a sperm donor not an Al-Qaeda op.

SANDRA
I know he's a sperm donor. If you'll remember, *I* chose him. It's you two who decided it was a good idea to use him after me.

Beat. All three women sit in silence. They all had a kid by Jeff. This is their shared problem. Sandra calms down.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
(rational)
I think it's great that our kids are related. I do. But isn't that enough "genetic continuity?" Why do we have to bring *him* into it.

CLAIRE
I know, I should have asked you first. I said there wouldn't be any more contact.

Beat. Leanne and Sandra see how upset Claire is.

LEANNE
Did you tell Max?

CLAIRE
Not yet.

LEANNE
The girls would love to know they have a brother.

SANDRA
And they better find out soon. Lily's getting a libido, and I don't want any Blue Lagoon nastiness going on under this roof.

CLAIRE
I'll tell him. Just not yet.

Beat. Sandra softens. Leanne holds Claire's hand.

LEANNE
We always knew this could get messy.

SANDRA
The only way it's gonna work is if we stay honest and communicate.

Sandra takes Claire's other hand, completing the circle. They don't share blood, but these women are family.

CLAIRE
I know. We're in this together.

CUT TO:

EXT. JEFF'S HOUSE, BACKYARD - NIGHT

Music plays from a laptop as Jeff, Karl and his wife SUSAN (35) finish dinner. Nearby the twins careen down a SLIP-N-SLIDE.

KARL
Tell me you didn't just buy that.

JEFF
What grown man doesn't need a Slip-N-Slide?

Karl puts his arm suggestively around Susan.

KARL
You hear that, honey?

SUSAN
We're having grown-up talk, Karl.
(to Jeff)
Sorry about the blind date. Cynthia's a bit intense. But I have a few others...

JEFF
That's ok. I'm gonna enjoy my freedom for a while.

Just then they notice the twins toss something down the Slip-N-Slide: a soaking wet KITTEN. Susan jumps up.

SUSAN
Boys, no!! Not for slipping!

Karl turns to Jeff before running interference.

KARL
I'm telling you, bro, it's all "1's and 10's."

Jeff laughs. As Karl and Susan deal with the twins, Jeff quickly pulls over his laptop and opens the DSR.

"**WELCOME DONOR #D-7526, you have __0__ unread messages.**"

Jeff stares at the screen, then CLICKS <**DELETE ACCOUNT**>

With that, Jeff shuts the computer and steps in to help his friends wrangle the twins and kittens, blissfully unaware that he soon might be called on as a dad... three times over.

FADE OUT.

END OF PILOT.