SILICON VALLEY

BY

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FADE IN:

CREDIT SEQUENCE:

WE SEE SHOT AFTER SHOT of what passes for exciting in the Valley - Billboards about things we don't understand, packs of geeks, Logo T-shirts. Road signs that read CUPERTINO, MENLO PARK, PALO ALTO. The shit brown colored hills of Mountainview and past the entrances to Facebook, Google, CISCO, etc. We also see quick scenes of people pitching at accelerators, and the video of Steve Balmer ranting onstage. Larry Ellison. Elon Musk with a Rocket. Steve Wozniak trying to groove on his Segway. All mixed together in a high energy montage.

EXT. EAST PALO ALTO - HACKER HOUSE

WE PAN THROUGH a nondescript neighborhood and end on a not-well-maintained house with a scrubby yard. This could easily be the homestead of upwardly mobile white trash or downwardly mobile professionals.

INT. HACKER HOUSE - DAY

We pan through the denizens of Hacker House: An East Indian guy, DINESH, who always wears a rugby shirt and is now punching away furiously on his laptop; CALVIN, a black guy with braces and glasses who looks like a younger version of Eddie Murphy in Bowfinger; a fat white guy with a pony tail and a black shirt and black sweat pants, ROLAND, who seems to be drawing a Celtic tattoo on his arm with an ink pen; oddest of all is a skinny Asian fellow, JIN YANG, who is working away at a stand up work station. No matter what they are doing they also are plugged into something else and are eating instant Ramen. We end on our hero, THOMAS. He is incredibly focused as he rapidly types code on a computer screen. His best friend, BIG HEAD (who does have an unusually large noggin), comes up. Big Head is holding a Perplexus (the small ball-shaped game these guys are all obsessed with).

BIG HEAD
Hey, man, some guys from Zynga are throwing an all-night Perplexus tourney. Maybe we can find some Stanford kids to hustle.

Big Head twists and turns the ball, finishing it in a ridiculously fast amount of time. Thomas never breaks his concentration.

THOMAS
Can't.

Big Head takes a closer look at the screen.

BIG HEAD
Goddamn, Thomas, that's a buttload of code.

This gets the attention of Jin Yang at the stand-up work station. Tall and skinny, he has a thick Taiwanese accent and pretty much every other word is shit, fuck, motherfucker, and dude.

JIAN YANG
Sheee-it, mother fucker you can like buy compression software. You don't have to fucking write that shit. You can buy that shit!

BIG HEAD
Or download a bootleg.

THOMAS
None of that CodeAcademy crap for my web site. The whole idea of Pied Piper is based on melody recognition. If it doesn't work perfectly, no one will want in. So, I am making it perfect.

Thomas turns and calls off.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Hey, Dinesh, can you test this module for me?

DINESH
Can I eat your salmon?

THOMAS
(grudging)
OK.

Dinesh takes Thomas's lunch and sits down at the computer and starts running tests.

Big Head looks a little hurt.

BIG HEAD
You're letting him test your module?

Thomas tries to put a positive spin on things.

THOMAS
You've got the Perplexus tourney. I want you to fuck those guys up.

This fires up Big Head. He uses some very awkward body English to put a flourish on his Perplexus move.

The House Nerd, ERLICH walks in and sees this.

ERLICH
And you wonder why there are never any girls around here.

We see that Erlich is wearing his favorite "I Know HTML -- How To Meet Ladies" shirt.

ERLICH (CONT'D)
Hey Thomas, can we talk for a second?

THOMAS
OK.

Erlich doesn't make much eye contact but is still somehow very aggressive.

ERLICH
Thomas, I'm gonna have to ask you to vacate.

THOMAS
What? Why?

ERLICH
You've been here six months. I gave you place a to live and plug in. You've given me nothing.

THOMAS
Look, Pied Piper is going to take off. The website is up and running, it works great, it just needs--

Erlich cuts him off.

ERLICH
Pied Piper is crap. When you pitched it you said, "The Google of Music." I thought it had "Applications".

THOMAS
It does! Have you been on it since I revamped it?
(MORE)

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Once it takes off Pied Piper will be able to search the whole world of recorded music to see if there is a match. If you're a song writer... or a band... or anything, and you wanted to make sure you weren't infringing on copy righted material, you could find out in no time.

Erlich just gives his head a curt shake.

ERLICH
First of all, nobody cares about stealing other people's music. Jesus, they do it on purpose! Jay-Z and Puffy made whole careers on it.

THOMAS
They didn't steal it, they had to get permission from the copyright owners...

ERLICH
They don't own dick. There's no money in music anymore. Everyone involved in music is either stealing it or sharing it. They're all assholes. And they're all suing each other. To stay here, you have to deliver. Or at least show some promise for fuck's sake.

Erlich motions to Big Head.

ERLICH (CONT'D)
Like NipAlert. Big Head's app. It gives you the location of a woman with erect nipples. That's something people want. How's that coming along?

Big Head gives him two thumbs up.

BIG HEAD
Almost ready to enter Beta Phase.

Thomas turns back to Erlich. He is desperate and fishing.

THOMAS
Look, I want to change the world. Make it a better place...

Erlich knows he has to pay lip service to this trope.

ERLICH
We all want to change the world and make it better. Like I did when I developed Accutran. A lot of companies use a lot of different software to aggregate social media feedback -- Frontier Airlines just happened to like mine.

Thomas digs in.

THOMAS
You can't just kick me out. When I signed up I was promised a month's notice if I had to leave. It's in writing.

Erlich looks pissed.

ERLICH
Then I am giving you notice. I hope you're happy. You know, when I sold Accutran there were a lot of things I could do with my money. But I wanted to give back. I started this place to do something big. Really make a difference. Like Steve.

THOMAS
Jobs or Wozniak?

ERLICH
(duh)
Jobs. Now, suppose Steve came back to us all reincarnated, because he was a Buddhist you know, and he showed up here at The Hacker Hostel looking for a place to help him get on his feet so he could launch the next big tech revolution. What could I do? There's no room for STEVE. Can you believe this? I have to tell Steve to fuck off because there would be no room at the Inn because you and Pied Piper are here gumming up the works. See what I'm saying Thomas?

THOMAS
That Steve Jobs is Jesus?

ERLICH
He was Buddist!

THOMAS
He was a poser! He didn't even write code.

Erlich looks stunned -- this is the only thing that could shut him up.

EXT. LUXURY SHUTTLE VAN - MORNING

Thomas rides the luxury shuttle van to work with Big Head.

The Boodle Channel plays on closed circuit TVs and on it we see GAVIN BELSON, CIO (Chief Innovation Officer) of Boodle and a true running sore of a human being. He talks about how Boodle is making the world a better place.

GAVIN BELSON (V.O.)
Boodle brings the world to everyone. Boodle is everything. And that's what allows Boodle to "make happy."

Gavin then urges his workers to sit back and relax (but also be sure to enjoy the complimentary energy bars and energy drinks and energy gum onboard). We see everyone chomping and drinking away as the channel then shows all the ways Boodle "Makes Happy".

Thomas is on his iPad looking at rentals.

THOMAS
These rents are insane. $2800 a month, $4500 a month -- with five people!

BIG HEAD
You forget how goddamn expensive it is here.

Thomas looks miserable.

THOMAS
I don't want to have to go back to St. Louis. I can barely talk to people in St. Louis. My parents still live in St. Louis!

BIG HEAD
You think Oklahoma City's any better?
(MORE)

BIG HEAD (CONT'D)
And I'm going to be the next one booted. Ever since GoolyBib landed two million in seed money Erlich's been on the warpath about monetizing.

THOMAS
GoolyBib? That Indian guy from Dropbox you were hanging out with?

BIG HEAD
No, it's a startup -- GoolyBib. I think it's a real estate app... or maybe it's that traffic one.

THOMAS
Fuck. Every day somebody in the valley is hitting it big. But not me. If I can't pull it off now, when there are billions of dollars just LOOKING FOR A START UP, it might not ever happen.

BIG HEAD
Yeah, no kidding.

THOMAS
What are you worried about? Erlich loves Nip Alert.

BIG HEAD
He's just blinded by boobs. Once he scratches the surface he's going to see there's giant holes in this thing. It's based on self reporting. I can't put sensors on women to report when their nipples are erect. I get one clown to send out fake reports and the whole thing collapses. I need something to make it objective.

Thomas has calmed down now that he has a problem to focus on.

THOMAS
Maybe I could develop an image recognition program, kind of like the melody recognition in Pied Piper.

Big Head is coming around.

BIG HEAD
Or infra red cameras that detect changes in body heat.

They are both sold for the moment. But it soon fades.

THOMAS
Fuck, I'm going to have to go to graduate school. I can't afford to stay here even if I'm working full time at Boodle.

Thomas looks down at the TV where Gavin Belson is still talking.

GAVIN BELSON (V.O.)
That is how Boodle can change the world.

THOMAS
Changing the world, one crappy app at a time.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BOODLE - MOMENTS LATER

Thomas and Big Head walk through the Boodle campus. They pass by the "play area" -- climbing walls, paintball obstacle course, fitness stations, all of which are being unused as engineers stand around drinking energy drinks.

Big Head is clearly lost in thought. He turns to Thomas.

BIG HEAD
Hey, did you hear what Peter Gregory is doing?

THOMAS
You mean buying that island in the Pacific?

BIG HEAD
He's building one actually. It's gonna be this giant platform in the middle of the ocean. And I think he's designing a new monetary system for it. But anyway, he's also offering a hundred K to people willing to skip or drop of college to pursue any idea they have. I mean, it has to be really kick ass.

THOMAS
Pied Piper kicks ass.

BIG HEAD
He's speaking in Palo Alto tonight. We should go. See if they'll let us talk to him.
(musing)
I don't know what happened to that guy, but he really hates college.

Thomas considers this idea. Big Head eats another energy bar. He's wired, tapping his hands, moving his legs.

BIG HEAD (CONT'D)
Fuck, I don't know if it's the energy bar or drink or gum but I can't wait for tonight. And I can't sit still.

INT. BOODLE - DAY

Thomas gets out of his cubicle. It is painted bright colors and has a rounded shape to the sides but it is still a cubicle. He gets up and walks over to a nearby snack area.

SNACK AREA - This place has large glass-cased refrigerators filled with anything with caffeine in it. They also have fountain drinks. Thomas is making himself an energy "swamp water" by putting a little bit of each drink into his cup when two douchey programmers or "brogrammers" stroll up and start using the Auto Barrista. (These guys act like frat guys and clearly only work out their upper bodies and thereby succeed only in making themselves look odder -- they have huge biceps and skinny legs).

Thomas mutters to himself with disdain.

THOMAS
Brogrammers.

BROGRAMMER #1
A double machiatto for me.

He presses a button.

BROGRAMMER #2
Make mine a double double.

BROGRAMMER #1
Yeah!

They are very happy with themselves. Brogrammer #1 one has large side burns that actually meet under his chin. Brogrammer #2 grabs Thomas's skinny arm..

BROGRAMMER #2
Hey, To-mas -- you been working out?

The brogrammers laugh at this. Brogrammer #1 then gives Thomas a chin up nod.

BROGRAMMER #1
So how is every little thing?

THOMAS
Eh... not so good. Gotta find a place to live, so if you guys know of anything...

BROGRAMMER #2
You're leaving the Hacker Hostel?

THOMAS
Getting kicked out. I've got a website that I think could be huge, but nobody gets it.

These guys look very interested.

BROGRAMMER #1
We might get it. We'd love to take a look. What's it called?

THOMAS
Pied Piper.

The brogrammers try not to laugh but they are giddy. Thomas is oblivious to their snarkiness.

BROGRAMMER #1
Sounds amazing. Why don't you shoot it over to me and we'll give it a look. Maybe we can help.

Thomas eagerly opens his laptop. As soon as he hits "send" he looks up and sees their smirking faces. Clearly, they are just fucking with him. He sags, closes his laptop and trudges off.

INT. FOUR SEASONS PALO ALTO - EVENING

A large crowd watches as Peter Gregory gives a speech. Gregory comes across as a very focused accountant.

No matter what inflammatory thing he's saying, or what epithets people are throwing at him, he never gets agitated.

PETER GREGORY
Gates, Ellison, Jobs, Dell. All dropped out of college. Silicon Valley is the cradle of innovation because of DROP OUTS. We need innovation and we need innovators! Colleges are choking and strangling with conformity what the drop outs created through inspiration!

We see Thomas and Big Head watching from the audience.

PETER GREGORY (CONT'D)
College has become a cruel, expensive joke on the poor and the middle class that only benefits the perpetrators of it -- the bloated administrations and the myopic teaching staffs. Wages for graduates are going down. Employment opportunities for graduates are shrinking, but the cost of a "higher education" just keeps going up and up and up.

The audience laughs in agreement but A BEARDED ACADEMIC looks fit to be tied. He yells out.

BEARDED ACADEMIC
You are a dangerous man, spewing ignorance!

PETER GREGORY
I don't think so. I'm just saying that people should trust themselves more than a system that happily churns out unemployed debtors and provides dubious value.

BEARDED ACADEMIC
The true value of a college education is intangible.

PETER GREGORY
The true value of snake-oil is intangible as well.

The audience laughs again.

PETER GREGORY (CONT'D)
If you have a truly unique and brilliant idea I can promise you that any university worth its weight will crush it with their lack of creative thought and your now monumental pile of debt.

The Academic gets up and storms out.

BEARDED ACADEMIC
Fascist.

EXT. FOUR SEASONS PALO ALTO - LATER

Peter Gregory waits for his car. With him is his Head of Operations, a very attractive, smart woman named MONICA.

Thomas approaches them with Big Head in tow. (Big Head is mesmerized, staring at Monica's chest).

THOMAS
Hi, excuse me, Mr. Gregory? I have an idea I'd love to pitch--

Monica cuts him off.

MONICA
There were sign up sheets to have a personal consultation with Mr. Gregory.

THOMAS
There weren't any slots left.

MONICA
I'm sorry.

Thomas nods but he clearly has a plan.

THOMAS
I just thought I should talk to him before I give up and... go back to college.

PETER GREGORY
Don't! Wait, where?

THOMAS
I don't know, probably Boston University.

Peter is practically spitting.

PETER GREGORY
That's over fifty thousand a year. Do not do that. Go work at Burger King. Go into the woods and forage for nuts and berries. But do not go back to college!

At that moment, Peter notices that Thomas is smiling slightly, maybe a little too happy with himself.

PETER GREGORY (CONT'D)
I think I have been played. Fine. Go ahead and pitch. You have until I fasten the seatbelt in my car.

Thomas was ready and jumps right in.

THOMAS
Pied Piper is a proprietary site that allows you to find if your music is infringing on existing copyrights. Imagine if you were a song writer....

Peter is lost.

PETER GREGORY
I don't think I could write a song.

THOMAS
But if you did...

PETER GREGORY
I don't even know if I can say "Pied Piper is a proprietary site." Well I guess I just did but it wasn't easy.

Thomas is clearly thrown by Peter's odd manner. At that moment Peter's car pull up. Thomas is about to pitch some more but Monica steps between them.

MONICA
Crunching all those songs to find matches sounds like a lot of data flow.

This gives Peter a graceful exit.

PETER GREGORY
Yes. Yes it does.

It is then that we notice his “car” -- it’s a futuristic Volkswagen personal mobility transporter concept car. He hops in and “hovers” away. Thomas is crushed.

MONICA
Look, why don’t you send me the link for your project and we’ll take a look.

THOMAS
Great, if you give me your email address I’ll send you the link.

MONICA
(slightest beat)
Why don’t you just write it down for me.

Thomas is certain he's just being shined on so she can get out of there, but writes down the info and hands it to her. Big Head is still just staring at her chest. He notices Monica noticing.

BIG HEAD
Sorry.. I’m just thinking about... image recognition.

INT. HACKER HOUSE - NIGHT

Thomas, defeated, comes home to find Erlich slurping ramen and listening to people pitch their ideas so they can get Thomas’s room. (NOTE: When Erlich eats ramen he clips his hair back).

ERLICH
...the airlines had a problem, and I had Accutran. So... wow me.

The pitcher starts pitching.

PITCHER
Ok, here it is: Bit Soup. It’s like alphaBET soup but it’s all ones and zeroes.

Everyone waits expectantly but Erlich just stares at the pitcher. The pitcher fidgets. Then:

PITCHER (CONT’D)
(hopefully)
See it’s binary. Because binary is just ones and zeroes

ERLICH
I KNOW WHAT BINARY IS!!! Jesus! I've memorized the hexadecimal times tables! Ask me what 9 times F is!! I don't need you to tell me what's binary and I don't NEED you thinking about soup. I NEED you thinking about code. This is Silicon Valley, not...

He pauses a second as he punches something into his iPad.

ERLICH (CONT'D)
...Paris, Texas.
(beat)
That's where Campbell's Soup is.

Erlich sees Thomas, then pointedly turns to the nerds.

ERLICH (CONT'D)
Look, I got one slot opening up very soon, who's gonna get it?

As Thomas retreats to his room we hear the nerds pitching a battery of tech words like "capacity" and "battery".

INT. HACKER HOUSE - THOMAS'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Thomas enters his room to find Big Head talking with Dinesh and Roland. Big Head holds a sacbut, which is an old brass instrument that sort of resembles a trombone.

ROLAND
So that thing is from the 1400s?

BIG HEAD
Not this one literally, but the sacbut is the least evolutionized of all brass instruments, so it would be the same as one from the 14th century.

DINESH
So do you guys play anywhere? Like clubs or anything?

Big Head uses his sacbut to point at Dinesh.

BIG HEAD
Not yet. We're trying to play Street Fair this year.
(MORE)

BIG HEAD (CONT'D)
Problem is, they’re more into traditional Sacbut, which we can do, but it seems like it would be selling out or something -- just doing what people expect.

ROLAND
I don’t think anyone ever expects a sacbut ensemble anywhere...

THOMAS
Everyone likes music. I can’t figure out what it is about Pied Piper that people don’t get?

DINESH
Applicability?

THOMAS
I don’t know... Peter Gregory’s head of operations said to send her the link but she was probably just shining me on.

DINESH/ROLAND
She?

BIG HEAD
Man, she was hot.

ROLAND
Why didn’t I see her on nip alert?

BIG HEAD
Because I was too distracted. See, that’s another bug I have to work out.

Big Head looks around nervously to make sure Erlich didn’t hear that.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES - ESTABLISHING

INT. YOGA STUDIO - DAY

Two very attractive women, LANGDON and TANDY, are doing yoga at the back of the class. Tandy looks likes she could be a model, but probably just swimsuit or lingerie; Langdon has more of a classic beauty. (This place is almost depressingly filled with hot, young women and one guy.)

LANGDON
This is probably the worst time ever to be a laid-off publicist.

TANDY
Yep. Social media.

LANGDON
I know! There are no cool jobs anymore because everyone is out there blogging and doing it for free! At least you're working non-profit.

TANDY
I'm working the phones for mesothelioma for ten bones an hour and there are no parties. No galas. No deep pockets. No connections.

Langdon shakes her head.

LANGDON
Remember those Pediatric AIDS fund-raisers? Those were huge.

TANDY
Yeah, that's how I met Jerry Weintraub. He took me to Cannes. God, I miss the Hotel Du Cap.

Tandy and Langdon adjust positions.

LANGDON
There's just no money in non-profits anymore. Then I guess there's no money anywhere anymore. And I need a job.
(shakes her head)
I'm in way default on my student loans. Why the hell did they lend me money to major in Art History. Assholes!!

Tandy has an explanation.

TANDY
It's fucked up. Wanna go to Vespio tonight?

LANGDON
I don't know, we keep running into the same guys. All the guys with money in LA seem to be old and fat.

TANDY
Except for the professional athletes.

LANGDON
Yeah, they're hot but they're all rapists.

TANDY
(like it's even worse)
Yeah, or *Christians*.

LANGDON
I would even settle for a guy who wasn't rich as long as he wasn't a douche.

TANDY
Keep telling yourself that. I think you would be bored to death. My mom always says it's just as easy to fall in love with a rich guy as a poor guy.

LANGDON
Not around here...

The class ends. They roll up their yoga mats, sling their towels over their shoulders and heads towards the adjoining cafe.

INT. YOGA STUDIO - CAFE - MOMENTS LATER

Langdon and Tandy head into the adjoining cafe where they serve teas and herbal drinks.

TANDY
I really should have married Tom when I had the chance. I'd be living in a house in Malibu. I wouldn't be worried about getting older. I've seen lines on my face. Well, just around the eyes, but they are there.

LANGDON
Eyes aren't as hard to fix as necks and hands but... Yeah, I'm not even getting carded anymore.

A TV is tuned to an MSNBC show about young rich Silicon Valley guys.

LANGDON (CONT'D)
Why can't we meet guys like that?

TANDY
Geeks?

LANGDON
Yeah. They're rich and smart and they're our age.

TANDY
(being swayed)
Yeah, and they don't look rapey. But they're all up North.

Langdon considers this a beat.

LANGDON
So a half hour plane ride away there's all these gazillionaires? What the hell are we doing here?

TANDY
Getting older. And poorer.

They look to each other then back to the TV.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP OF A COMPUTER

We see the Pied Piper Logo. It's pretty bad as far as logos go. PULL BACK to see we are

INT. BOODLE - DAY

The brogrammers who Thomas pitched Pied Piper to are calling up the site to make fun of it.

BROGRAMMER #1
Let's look at this stupid thing.

BROGRAMMER #2
(snarky)
You have to download your own player? Hey look at me, I traveled back to 2009!

A song starts playing. Brogrammer #1's smirk suddenly turns into a look of surprise.

BROGRAMMER #1
Wait a second. Look at this file size. 1.2 Megabytes? No way! I know that song. That's at least 3 on itunes...

He starts playing it.

BROGRAMMER #2
Wow, that doesn't sound at all downgraded.

DISSOLVE TO:

SAME SCENE -- MOMENTS LATER

They are testing the software, comparing file sizes, etc.

BROGRAMMER #1
I really can't hear the difference.

BROGRAMMER #2
And the file size is like, half. How the hell did he do that?

BROGRAMMER #1
I have no idea. Some kind of new lossy compression I guess.

DISSOLVE TO:

SAME SCENE - MOMENTS LATER

A larger crowd has now gathered around to look at Pied Piper. We see that someone has plugged large speakers into the computer. Music is playing but nobody is really listening, they're just glued to the computer. Everyone is asking various questions about how many bytes and what the compression is.

Brogrammer #1 and Brogrammer #2 look at each other, They are humbled and impressed. Just then, a young business exec, JARED DUNN, walks by and sees everyone gathered around.

JARED
What are you guys listening to?

BROGRAMMER #1
We're listening to 1.5 gigabytes of sound that should take up 4.5 gigabytes.

Jared leans in, intrigued.

CUT TO:

THE PERPETUALLY SCOWLING FACE OF GAVIN BELSON

He strides down a corridor of Boodle. Jared tries to keep up while showing him Pied Piper on his laptop.

JARED
Do you realize how huge this could be? With all the data storage and data flow problems. The applications could be endless.

As Gavin watches it, he stops walking. His scowl changes into an expression of pure greed.

GAVIN BELSON
I want it.

INT. HACKER HOUSE - DAY

Thomas has got his stuff all packed up. Big Head holds some of it. Thomas is arguing with Erlich over the various and seemingly arbitrary move-out obligations he is insisting Thomas takes on.

ERLICH
Hey, I'm being a good guy here. You can either get me a zip drive with any and all code you worked on or thought of working on while you lived here, or you can just clean the bathroom. Up to you.

Erlich leaves Thomas and takes a seat in front of an eager young guy who is ready to pitch. Thomas's phone rings. He looks at it and turns to Big Head.

THOMAS
A Boodle number again. It's probably those fucking brogrammers.

Big Head nods at this then puts the tip of his thumb up against his lips and blows -- with each blow he pretends his upper body is inflating in a crude imitation of the brogrammers.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
They keep calling to tell me how bad my website is. I really don't want to answer just to hear about what an asshole I am.

ANGLE ON ERLICH

He turns to the eager guy.

ERLICH
You're on.

EAGER GUY
My site is called Mashville.

ANGLE ON THOMAS

His phone rings again. It's a Boodle number again.

THOMAS
(sighs)
I just want to put an end to this.
(answers)
Hi, Thomas Peckering, I'm an asshole, tell me how much you hate Pied Piper.

His expression changes.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
What? Really? Wait, is this a prank? Can you prove it's real? OK, I'll call right back.

This has gotten everyone's attention. They watch as Thomas calls back the number.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Holy shit. OK... I'll be there.

He hangs up.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
I have a meeting with Gavin Belson... he likes Pied Piper.

The housemates are all freaking out. Erlich steps away from the guy pitching him and walks up to Thomas.

ERLICH
I own ten percent of Pied Piper.

THOMAS
You said it was a shitty idea.

ERLICH
It was a shitty idea. I'm not sure what it is now. When's your meeting?

THOMAS
Right now.

ERLICH
I'll go change.

Erlich hurries off. Thomas waits for a beat then turns to Big Head.

THOMAS
What the fuck am I waiting for?

Thomas hurries out.

EXT. BOODLE - LATER

Thomas is admitted to the executive area.

INT. BOODLE - MOMENTS LATER

Thomas sits in the waiting area. Jared and a bunch of other EXECUTIVES are with him.

JARED
Good to see you, Thomas. Now Gavin is running about thirty minutes late.

THOMAS
Well, it's been forty minutes already so does that mean another 30 minutes from now then...?

The other exec chimes in.

OTHER EXECUTIVE
You should know Gavin is very excited about your site. Have you met Gavin?

THOMAS
I've never even seen him in person.

The other executive steps in. The exec has the glow of a cult member talking about a cult leader.

OTHER EXECUTIVE
It's amazing. You'll just feel so energized after you meet him. I'm a VP here and I only see Gavin about ten minutes a month.

ANOTHER EXECUTIVE
But that ten minutes is just incredible. Indescribable. Prepare to have your life changed.

A door opens and another SENIOR VP enters.

SENIOR VP
I heard Thomas Peckering was here. Has he ever met Gavin? No?

OTHER EXECUTIVE
I told him it's amazing.

SENIOR VP
That hardly begins to describe it.

INT. BOODLE - GAVIN BELSON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A huge office. There are giant pictures all over the place -- and they are all of Gavin: Gavin in a hard hat pointing at a giant crane as if he's telling it what to do, Gavin dressed in his judo gi in full action pose, Gavin standing amidst a group of starving people in Nepal, his hands outstretched benevolently. WE WIDEN to see that Gavin is in his office with a designer who is pointing out the window at a huge blank wall in the entryway to Boodle.

DESIGNER
We really need to do something to fill that huge space up there. Now I know you won't like this idea, Gavin, but how about a nice, bold picture of you to fill it?

Gavin sighs and nods.

GAVIN BELSON
OK. But I don't want to just pose this time. Maybe we can get a shot of me... innovating.

The designer clearly has no idea what this will look like.

DESIGNER
Perfect.

EXT. BOODLE - CONTINUOUS

Erlich, now in a fresh blue “I know HTML -- How To Meet Ladies” T-shirt, freshly waxed mustache, and what seems to be a Greek fisherman’s cap, is shoving Big Head in front of him. Big Head uses his pass card to get them in.

INT. BOODLE - CONTINUOUS

Thomas still waits with Jared and the other executives. Gavin is still not there but they’re all still talking about him.

SENIOR VP
(satisfied sigh)
Ah, Gavin...

Thomas’s phone rings. He excuses himself to answer.

THOMAS
Hello?

His expression slowly turns to one of shock. He looks up at the others.

THOMAS (CONT’D)
It’s Peter Gregory.

The executives and Jared exchange a troubled look. The Senior VP excuses himself and rushes out.

INT. BOODLE - GAVIN BELSON’S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Gavin is now meeting with two Powerade reps. Gavin is looking out the window at programmers in the courtyard below.

GAVIN BELSON
It’s weird. They always travel in groups of five. Tall skinny white guy, short skinny Asian guy, fat guy with a ponytail, some guy with crazy facial hair and then an east Indian guy. Do they trade guys till they all have the right group?

POWERADE REP
Ummm... I'm not sure, but we are very excited about becoming the official energy product of Boodle Corporation. You know our products are not just junk loaded with sugar and caffeine. I mean of course they have those but they really are an excellent nutritional product.

GAVIN BELSON
When I first started Boodle I worked those guys 24/7. It's amazing what you can get human beings to do for $45 worth of ice cream. But the thing is, now everyone wants to be healthy...

At that moment the Senior VP rushes in and whispers to Gavin. He turns to the Powerade reps.

GAVIN BELSON (CONT'D)
Get the fuck out.

INT. BOODLE - MOMENTS LATER

Thomas is still talking to Peter Gregory on the phone.

THOMAS
I'm actually outside Gavin Belson's office right now, Mr. Gregory. Here he is! Can you hold on a second?

Gavin strides in.

GAVIN BELSON
So, Thomas Peckering is here!

Gavin is looking at an overweight guy with a pony tail until Jared guides him over to Thomas. Gavin acts like he has just found a long lost friend.

GAVIN BELSON (CONT'D)
There you are, Tom!! I'm sorry these gentlemen kept you waiting.

He gives Jared and the other executives dirty looks. They do their best to look apologetic.

GAVIN BELSON (CONT'D)
Here's the thing -- I love what you did.

THOMAS
You REALLY like Pied Piper?

GAVIN BELSON
LOVE IT! Fill him in Jared!

Jared steps in.

JARED
Now, Thomas, of course since you developed this fantastic project on the Boodle campus while employed by Boodle, technically it is the property of Boodle, but Gavin is prepared to give you quite a nice raise - and a promotion of course.

THOMAS
Oh, well actually I've only worked here at Boodle a few weeks. I needed a job because things weren't panning out and... well I created this site months before I got here.

ERLICH (O.S.)
That's right! He created it while living AT MY INCUBATOR.

They all turn to see Erlich and Big Head coming. Big Head whispers to Thomas.

BIG HEAD
Sorry, he threatened to kick me out of the house if I didn't get him in.

ERLICH
(to Belson)
Scott Erlich.

Gavin ignores him, he is clearly figuring out a new way to navigate the situation. He nods and looks as fatherly and comforting as possible as he speaks to Thomas.

GAVIN BELSON
I'll give you $600,000 for it.

Thomas, Big Head and Erlich are shocked, but Erlich puts his arm around Thomas as if he owns him. Thomas is stunned, a grin slowly spreading across his face.

GAVIN BELSON (CONT'D)
But I am not just giving you $600,000, I am giving you the full weight of Boodle. We have the reach and the muscle and the resources to take what you have done and push it to the global level. At Boodle we don't ask people what they want. We tell them what they want. And they thank us for doing it. Boodle can bring you the world.

Big Head's phone ring. He answers it.

BIG HEAD
Hello? Really? Wow. Sure.

He hands his phone to Thomas.

BIG HEAD (CONT'D)
It's Peter Gregory. I don't know how he got my number.

Thomas takes the phone.

THOMAS
Hello, Mr. Gregory, I'm so sorry. Oh, you heard that?
(listening)
Uh huh... Uh huh...

GAVIN BELSON
(blurts)
I'll give you ten million dollars for it!

The room goes dead silent. Thomas is in shock. He speaks half to himself/half into the phone.

THOMAS
Gavin Belson just offered me 10 million dollars for Pied Piper.

CUT TO:

PETER GREGORY

In his office with Monica standing by. They have Thomas on speaker phone. Peter seems unimpressed.

PETER GREGORY
Ten million? I'm prepared to give you one hundred thousand dollars.

CUT TO:

THOMAS

Overwhelmed with stunned joy.

THOMAS
(to Gavin and the others)
Peter Gregory offered me one hundred...
(realizing)
...thousand?

CUT TO:

PETER GREGORY

PETER GREGORY
File size is a problem that is never going away. That makes your compression code very valuable. Ask yourself this, Thomas: Did you come out to Silicon Valley to make ten million dollars and disappear? Or did you come to make billions and leave your mark? You could be up there with the greats.

Thomas tries to process this but just looks like he's in clinical shock. Then something occurs to him. He turns to Gavin.

THOMAS
Mr. Belson, I have a great idea! Peter Gregory is only interested in the compression algorithm I created, so I could do Pied Piper with you and develop the compression technology with him.

GAVIN BELSON
(explodes)
The compression is the only thing about the fucking stupid site I DO WANT!!

Gavin comes up to him.

GAVIN BELSON (CONT'D)
Don't be an idiot. I'm offering you real money. Ten million, right now.

Everyone is peppering Thomas with advice. His head is swimming.

THOMAS
Excuse me... I...I need to use the bathroom...

Thomas walks off. We follow him past the men's room and down corridors and dead ends. He's trying to get out but can't. He finally breaks free and runs.

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF PHONE CALLS AND MEETINGS

--Thomas and all the hacker house residents sit around the kitchen table. Everyone peppers him with advice.

--Thomas is sitting behind the desk in a big private office at Boodle. Jared and the other execs surround him. Thomas seems excited but overwhelmed.

THOMAS
So what would my position with the company be?

JARED
Your position?

THOMAS
What would I be doing?

SENIOR VP
You could just think of something else genius.

THOMAS
And you guys would own it?

SENIOR VP
Well, yes, as per the terms of the contract. But--

He motions to a very thick contract in front of Thomas.

THOMAS
Yeah, I meant to ask you about that, this contract is for thirty years.

SENIOR VP
Yes, the ten million is paid over thirty years.

All the execs nod happily as if this is the best news ever. Thomas spots something else and points to a paragraph in the contract.

THOMAS
This looks like a restraining order.

JARED
Yes, well, Gavin is a very busy man... and he doesn't want to get in your way... or you in his.
(mutters quietly)
It's not necessarily a bad thing.

As Thomas looks through the voluminous document, we see his excitement fading.

EXT. HACKER HOUSE - EVENING

Thomas is lost in thought as he walks onto the front stoop. He is about to try the door when something catches the corner of his eye. He turns and sees Monica is sitting there waiting for him. He practically jumps in surprise. Monica can't help but laugh. She is dressed casually now and although she still has a professional polish to her she is much more accessible than when in her normal business attire.

MONICA
Whoa, someone's on edge.

Thomas tries to regain his composure.

THOMAS
Yeah, maybe. Wonder why.

MONICA
Well, I came by to let you know that whoever you go with, everything will be just fine. Boodle is creepy and Peter is... well nuts, but you have two of the biggest players in Silicon Valley fighting over you. Enjoy it.

THOMAS
Yeah, I don't see that happening. I have to make the most important decision of my life! And I'm not good at making those kinds of decisions.

Monica moves over on the bench to make room for Thomas and gestures for him to sit next to her but he doesn't seem to notice. She nods slightly like "okay then".

MONICA
So, what kind of decisions are you good at making?

Thomas thinks about this.

THOMAS
Technical ones. Fixes. Cracking code and making it work. And then making it work better. I like having discreet reducible problems and solving them. I'm not much of a "big picture guy".

MONICA
Maybe you are and maybe you aren't. Maybe you just need bigger problems to solve.

Thomas gets an ironic smile.

THOMAS
So, Peter Gregory sent you here to offer me bigger problems?

Monica gets up and moves towards Thomas. Thomas practically holds his breath as she brushes past him. She lingers for a second and looks him right in the eye.

MONICA
Nobody sent me over here.

And then she walks away.

MONICA (CONT'D)
When you don't try to see the "big picture" you miss a lot. Even things that are right in front of you.

And with that she walks down the steps and away. Thomas watches her, she turns her head to see him as she gets to her car. He doesn't know what to do so he just waves.

Monica sighs and waves back as she gets into her car. She is smiling.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GAVIN BELSON'S OFFICE - DAY

All of the execs we have met before are standing around anxiously while Gavin talks on the speaker phone.

THOMAS (V.O.)
I've been thinking about this a lot, and I think Boodle is a great opportunity, but I'm a little fuzzy about just what exactly I would do.

Gavin jumps on this but tries to sound pleasant.

GAVIN BELSON
You can do anything, learn to play zithers, play D&D all day long. Hell, grow a pony tail, grow pigtails, I don't care.

Gavin is clearly getting revved up. Jared motions him to calm down.

JARED
What Gavin is saying is that you'll have complete freedom.

WE NOW INTERCUT WITH THOMAS IN HIS ROOM PACING WHILE TALKING ON HIS CELL PHONE.

THOMAS
Well, it's just that I kind of want to be a part of something. I want to help take this to the next level. So I was thinking maybe if we became partners...

Gavin reacts to "partners" and turns to Jared.

GAVIN BELSON
I'm willing to give this dickhead thirty million dollars if I never have to talk to him again!

JARED
(whispers)
Gavin, we're still on speakerphone.

GAVIN BELSON
I know!

And with that Gavin violently hangs up.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOUR SEASONS PALO ALTO - EVENING

Langdon and Tandy pull up, dressed to kill.

INT. FOUR SEASONS PALO ALTO - LATER

Langdon and Tandy are at the bar, baffled by this place. There are some khaki pant wearing businessmen. Lots of Asians, lots of glasses and lots of Ipads and notebook computers. Everyone seems to be working like this is just another office.

LANGDON
It looks like a Four Seasons but sure as hell doesn't feel like one.

The presence of Langdon and Tandy has registered -- they are attractive women anywhere but here they are almost like from another planet. Guys actually stop working to look at them, but whenever Langdon or Tandy simply make eye contact with a guy he becomes completely flustered, turns away and stares intently at whatever screen he has handy. Tandy looks beyond confused.

TANDY
OK, I have never felt less sexual energy in my life.

At that moment, a hopelessly nerdy GUY stumbles up to them. Clearly he is really stinking drunk, can't handle liquor, and awkwardly tries to hit on them..

GUY
Hey girls. My name's James.
(hands them his card)
I started Zcranium.com. We just got two million in start up money.

TANDY
Oh really? So you're like, a programmer or...?

GUY
(insulted for no reason)
Fuck yeah!
(MORE)

GUY (CONT'D)
I was writing code when I was 8. I was a math wizz Sergie Brin?! Larry PAGE?!! Fucking Larry Elllison??!!! They’re NOTHING!

Langdon and Tandy are stunned. At that moment a Hotel Security Guard comes over and grabs the guy by the collar and leads him out as he rants.

GUY (CONT’D)
I’m a tenth level magic user!!!

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN PALO ALTO - EVENING

Langdon and Tandy stand in the middle of downtown Palo Alto. They look around at the bland, mundane quality of the cars, shops and people walking around.

TANDY
This is it? This is where all the tech billionaires decided to live?

LANGDON
It can’t be.
(stops a passerby)
Excuse me, is this Palo Alto?

The person nods and walks on. Langdon notices a Brew Pub. She nods for Tandy to follow her.

INT. BREW PUB - MOMENTS LATER

Langdon and Tandy walk through the Brew Pub. Guys are looking at them but it is that same flustered/terrified vibe from before.

LANGDON
It looks like it’s all guys. That’s gotta be good, right?

They come up to the bar where Roland and Jin Yiang are deep in conversation. Jin Yiang looks angry and is oblivious to the women, but Roland spots them and tries to play it cool as Jin Yiang pays the tab.

JIN YIANG
This bullshit. Why I gotta buy beers? That motherfucker just get 30 million dollars from Boodle.

This immediately catches Langdon's attention. Roland tries to sound cool, which sadly for him comes out sounding a bit like John Wayne.

ROLAND
Cause you never pay for shit, Jin Yiang. And this is a big night for Thomas.

JIAN YANG
(confused)
Why you talk fucked up like that?

ROLAND
(gritted teeth)
Just c'mon.

Embarrassed, Roland pushes Jin Yiang ahead of him. Langdon watches them walk across the bar to a a group of guys heading out. In the center of the group is Thomas. He is surrounded by his housemates and other tech geeks, everyone still giving him advice or just coming over to shake his hand. Langdon watches as they head for the door.

LANGDON
(to herself)
Thomas.

Tandy has been oblivious to all this. She's had enough.

TANDY
We can still catch the late flight back to LA.

Langdon shakes her head, never taking her eyes off Thomas.

LANGDON
We're not going anywhere.

INT. HACKER HOUSE - NIGHT

It's late at night and Thomas sits all alone in the kitchen, clearly conflicted. Erlich comes in and starts making instant noodle ramen. Thomas is waiting for a jackass remark from Erlich as he sits down next to him but Erlich just clips back his hair and starts eating his ramen. After a beat Erlich looks up at Thomas.

ERLICH
You don't want to work for assholes and now you don't have to. You're like me - you want to build something.

Erlich goes back to slurping down his noodle ramen. Thomas looks surprised by Erlich's comment but then almost relieved.

INT. BOODLE - DAY

Gavin looks like he is about to have an aneurism as he hangs up the phone. Jared shakes his head in disbelief.

JARED
He turned down 30 million dollars?

Gavin shakes his head.

GAVIN BELSON
Well, look at it this way -- I have 30 million dollars that I'm going to use to destroy that sad, pathetic, stupid prick.

This thought seems to cheer Gavin.

INT. HACKER HOUSE - EVENING

Thomas, Erlich, Big Head and the other hacker house residents celebrate with pizza and beer.

THOMAS
With this new company we're really going to try and do things right. First order of business -- changing the name.
(off their looks)
Yes, I know "Pied Piper" sucks.

They all laugh and toast. Just then, Jared enters.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Oh... Hey. I turned down you guys. And my decision is final.

JARED
I know. And I respect that. As a matter of fact, that's all I can think about... that you turned down 30 million dollars because you cared about something. You were passionate about something. I want to feel that way. I want to work for you. I don't know if Gavin will give me a good recommendation but I'm really fucking good at business development.

Thomas looks around at his group and smiles.

THOMAS
It always sounded like bullshit when every guy with a start up said that they wanted “to change the world” Okay, it still sounds like bullshit... but maybe we can make our mark.

The crew are swept away. It is clear that this is what they all came out to Silicon Valley for.

ERLICH
AND MAKE SOME MONEY!!!

Big cheers from everyone. After a beat Thomas turns to Big Head and whispers.

THOMAS
We’re going to need some energy drinks.

BIG HEAD
Big ones.

And as they all start chattering with excitement about the future we...

FADE OUT. *