

EXT. GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY - NOON

A red brick building. Georgian architecture. Rolling green lawn. A sprawling oak marks the end of the quad. From the brick building exits a group of giggly 20-something-year-old-activist-types.

CUT TO:

EXT. GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY FRONT GATE - CONT.

SAM, (21 and African American) with lips always ready to part, walks eagerly through the front gate holding one too many markers.

CUT TO:

EXT. GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY ROWHOUSES - CONT.

Mustard colonial rowhome tucked into a cobble stone street. The only thing distinguishing it from its neighbors is the empty recycling bin blocking the sidewalk. Unbothered Sam ambles to the front door. A few markers and a poster nearly fall from his arms as he reaches for his keys.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - CONT.

White room. 900 square feet. Two twin beds pushed against opposite walls. Stacks of papers line the far left wall adjacent to the comforter discarded on the floor. JACK, (22 and African American) a reformed coffee shop liberal, sits on the right bed typing on his computer as Sam enters.

SAM

Where were you? We needed a lot more hands. The protest is in a few hours.

JACK

Sorry man.
(beat)
Could I actually borrow...

Sam begins to pace the length of the room. He looks as if a thought is rising within him.

SAM

We are all, honestly, fuck. Like before we were trying to get people to read the Racial Contract. Now they'd

use that for fuel for their fires.
It's like we are set back a few
decades. How are we supposed to...

JACK
Simmer dude. I know it sucks, but we
also have to think about...

SAM
Forget trans rights. Forget palm oil.
Forget police brutality. Forget equal
pay for women. We have new priorities.
We have to make sure this pumpkin
doesn't bomb the whole fucking world
...

Jack ignores Sam and goes into the closet. He pulls out a
suit and holds it up in front of Sam.

JACK
Can I borrow?

SAM
...and grab fucking pussy.

JACK
Can I borrow your suit?

SAM
You can't fit in it. You're a skinny
hipster.

Jack begins to take it off of the hanger.

SAM
Since when did you ever want a suit?
(aristocrat accent)
Do you go to Georgetown?

JACK
Come on.

SAM
It's a valid question.
(points at Jack's overalls)
Look at what you're wearing.

JACK
Shut up. Just let me try it on.

SAM
But I don't ...

JACK
I got an interview with Goldman.

SAM
So who is the lucky girl you're taking
to Corp Gala?

JACK
Sam, I'm being serious.

Sam cocks his head to the right in confusion.

SAM
But you're going to be working with me
at the center next year.

JACK
That would be amazing. It's just that
I think I could make a bigger impact
elsewhere.

Sam takes a few steps forward closing the space between him
and Jack.

SAM
You think you're going to make an
impact on Wall Street?

Jack lowers the suit. The bottoms hit the ground.

JACK
It's just a suit.

SAM
I won't let my friend make such a
stupid decision.

Sam grabs the suit out of Jack's hands.

JACK
Well, I guess I'm going to J. Crew
then.

Jack starts walking towards the door.

SAM
What about the march?

JACK
Maybe after.

Jack exits the room and Sam follows quickly behind him.

CUT TO:

EXT. GEORGETOWN NEIGHBORHOOD - CONT.

Red brick sidewalk. The two young men walk in silence.

SAM
What if we go to the protest and then
J. Crew?

JACK
I'm going right now.

A large federal house. An African American family congregates in the front lawn behind a picket fence. Holding a child on her right, the mother unlock the Land Rover with her left hand. An Oxfam sticker is visible on the back window.

JACK
See.
(points at the sticker)
I want to have the money and power to
actually make an effective change. I
got a college degree for a reason.

A teenager comes running outside of the house, crying. Turning a blind eye, the family drives away.

SAM
You don't want to be tied down like
that. Stuck in a job you hate. Why
else would I be single?

JACK
Simmer dude.

CUT TO:

EXT. J. CREW - CONT.

Jack motions for Sam to lead the way.

JACK
Lead the way.

Sam stands frozen in his steps. He opens his mouth.

SAM

(beat)

Our moms didn't do all this shit in vain so we could sell our souls and put them up in mansions on R Street.

JACK

I'm with you. I just don't think you see...

SAM

You could do so much more. Change so many kids lives. It's what we needed growing up.

JACK

Sam, you aren't listening. I want to do the same thing. I am just taking another route. Obama was able to change the way we look at black men. He didn't do that volunteering in Hawaii.

SAM

Obama is a complete sellout. Have you ever heard of a drone? And where is our country now? Our president-elect is insane and our future isn't certain. You don't improve shit sitting in a goddam oval office much less a corner office. You need to be in the trenches with the people.

JACK

I don't know about you, but I'm gonna cure the disease. I'm so sick of just treating the symptoms. Are you coming inside?

Jack opens the door.

SAM

Yeah, I have to pee.

Sam hesitantly follows Jack into the store.

CUT TO:

INT. J. CREW - CONT.

Sam walks to the register, alone.

SAM
Excuse me, where is the restroom
located?

The associate smiles and points at the staircase. Sam takes the stairs down into a long hall. Dark locked rooms line the hallway. At the end of the hall, one door is left ajar. He enters.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND J. CREW - CONT.

A single ceiling light illuminates a white table with a headpiece on it. Sam pulls the set over his head. He transitions into a virtual world.

CUT TO:

EXT. VIRTUAL WORLD 1 - CONT.

Frozen, Sam stands inside a hot air balloon pulled upward by an enormous fish.

CUT TO:

EXT. VIRTUAL WORLD 2 - CONT.

He takes a step backward. The scene shifts. He is on snow-covered land. The tips of pines frame the sky. An assortment of tiny hangers with clothes decorate the trees.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND J. CREW - CONT.

DANIELLE, (24) a girl after the moon itself, pulls the set off of Sam.

DANIELLE
This is an employee only area. You'll
have to go.

SAM
Where am I?

DANIELLE
I'm sorry sir.
(points)
The bathroom is that way.

SAM

Why was there a fish pulling me up?
Why was Trump on the ground? Is this
an art piece?

Danielle moves in closer.

DANIELLE

Should I call security?

SAM

I really saw it as a protest piece. He
was on the ground. I was in the air. I
think I get what you are trying to
say.

Danielle takes a step back leaning against the table.

DANIELLE

No, it was a hope piece, actually. But
you are gonna have to go. I don't want
security to have to escort you out.

SAM

What hope though? Even the democrats
are indiscriminately bombing abroad.
Capitalism is absorbing humanity. The
teacher's union ruined DC public
schools. The prison system is fucked.
We have to abolish it all. We have to
fucking start over.

DANIELLE

The fish was pulling you up. It
represents the DDOE's Anacostia 2032
Plan for a fishable and swimmable
Anacostia River. There is the plastic
bag act and the 2009 Anacostia River
Clean Up and Protection Act. There is
the Green Building Act. And this is
just the environment. Think local.
Here there is hope.

Danielle hands Sam the headset. He puts it back on.

CUT TO:

INT. VIRTUAL WORLD 3 - CONT.

String lights hang over exposed brick. Red solo cups, empty
beer cans, and plastic Barnett's bottles crowd the coffee

table. Couples make out near the edges of the room. Sam pushes through the crowd. He enters the den where BARACK, (18) the face of hope, sits chatting with Danielle. Eavesdropping, Sam sits on the neighboring love seat.

BARACK

This paper...
(holds up the rolling paper)
could be a metaphor for our lives.

Obama grinds up the pot, placing a pinch in the paper. He rolls it only stopping as he notices Sam's presence. He places the joint down and stands with his hand out.

BARACK

Want to join us?

Barack shakes Sam's limp hand. They both take their seats.

SAM

Uh, sure.

BARACK

I'm Barack. This is Danielle.

All three smile.

BARACK

And who is our guest today?

SAM

I'm Sam. Wait you're Barack?

BARACK

The one and only.

SAM

Where am I?

BARACK

Sounds like someone needs to lay off
the grass.

Danielle giggles.

BARACK

Dude you are at Oxy.

SAM

What year is it?

BARACK

This one is a goner. It's 1981.
Anything else I can help you with?

Barack and Danielle exchange a look.

SAM

Huh.

BARACK

You okay buddy?

SAM

Yeah, sorry. Wait I thought you went
to Columbia?

BARACK

Well, you are quite the soothsayer. I
just got in. Transferring next
semester.

Sam pulls the joint out from between Barack's fingers.

SAM

Stay off of this shit. I promise
you'll thank me for this later.

BARACK

Okay, Mommy.
(winks)
I'll stay away from the pastures.

DANIELLE

So I guess you won't be joining us
outside then?

BARACK

Actually Dani, the kid is right. New
me. I'm going to Columbia. I'm gonna
do something finally. Gonna try to
change this messed up world.

Barack raises his eyebrows at Sam and then turns to winks at
Danielle.

SAM

All you'll ever do is try.

Barack looks back at Sam, leaning forward.

BARACK

Maybe you're right. We don't know the future impact of any action. Looks great today, destroys the economy in the future. But I'm still going to educatedly try as hard as I can. Starting with the power structures. My days working at the center are over. Emotional payoff is great, but I want to make a statistical difference. I can't do that working one-on-one.

(chuckles)

I'm telling my whole philosophy to a stranger.

SAM

Do strangers share joints?

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. UNDERGROUND J. CREW - CONT.

Sam takes the headset off. He pauses then points at the headset and then slowly at Danielle.

SAM

Wait. How did you? How the fuck?

(beat)

You're either God or a genius.

DANIELLE

I wish I could say both.

SAM

But how did you know?

DANIELLE

It's all in Epi. I programmed her to recognize and map the user's mind. Then it's all your brain from there. Think of Epi as a projector or a platform where you can solve your own problems. It's crazy how much advice we have that we never tap into. Epi is gonna change that.

Sam nods his head in disbelief.

SAM

You are incredible.

DANIELLE

Thanks. Now I think you know where you need to go.

SAM

Thank you, Danielle.

Sam quickly turn and runs up the stairs. After a moment's pause, he runs back down.

SAM

I'd love to grab coffee sometime with you if you'd be down.

DANIELLE

Bold move.

Danielle takes his phone out of his hand. She types in her number.

SAM

Thank you. Thank you so much.

He runs back down the hall.

CUT TO:

INT. J. CREW - CONT.

Like Scrooge on Christmas morning, Sam points at the suit on display. The associate takes it down. He struts towards the counter and walks away with a big bag in his hand. He bumps into Jack. Sam instantly embraces him and hands Jack the bag.

SAM

It's yours!

JACK

Wait. What?

SAM

Anyone who has done anything has a snazzy suit.

Sam turns leaving Jack frozen in J. Crew.

FADE OUT.

THE END