

WHOSE LIFE
PILOT

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1/31/2023

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ACT 1

INT. ELLIOT'S BEDROOM, DAY

ELLIOT (24, tallish, scruffy) in a full bed that takes up three-fourths of a walk-in-closet-sized Manhattan bedroom. Computer on lap. Looks at bare walls. Googles "cool posters to own." Scrolls.

ELLIOT
(murmuring, intrigued)
Basquiat.

Gets a call from his DAD. Answers from computer. Keeps scrolling.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)
I'm busy.

ELLIOT'S DAD (O.S.)
We're all busy. I'm getting an MRI.

INT. HOSPITAL, SAME TIME

Elliot's Dad (55, burly with skinny legs, looks like an older version of Elliot) in an MRI machine. He's somehow managed to bring his phone in.

ELLIOT (O.S.)
Really? Again?

ELLIOT'S DAD
Someone left their CBD gummies in my glove compartment. I ate half the pack thinking they were Haribos.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

ELLIOT
I could've sworn the container was childproof.

ELLIOT'S DAD
It's not funny. I could've died. Or worse, murdered somebody.

ELLIOT

Why do you need an MRI? Can't they just give you a cold compress? Or a bubble bath?

ELLIOT'S DAD

I may have exaggerated some of my symptoms. Now they think I have a tumor.

ELLIOT

Jesus Christ.

ELLIOT'S DAD

Who knows, I very well might. These things aren't FDA approved.

ELLIOT

Yes they are. They sell them at CVS.

ELLIOT'S DAD

Exactly. Like Oxy. They're a *gateway drug*.

ELLIOT

Gateway to what? Melatonin?

ELLIOT'S DAD

If you're just calling to make fun of me, I'm going to hang up.

ELLIOT

You called me.

ELLIOT'S DAD

That's right. Listen, I have bad news. Your friend Joe passed away.

Elliot's face furrows. He takes a second to process.

ELLIOT

Joe Kaylor?

DAD

Yeah.

Another beat. Elliot bites his nails.

ELLIOT

He wasn't really my friend.

DAD
Oh great. Make sure to mention that
in the eulogy.

Elliot googles "joe kaylor obituary" but only finds random
people: an old man from North Carolina, a small indigenous
boy from Honolulu.

ELLIOT
How did he die?

ELLIOT'S DAD
Why does it matter?

ELLIOT
Because it's a big difference if he
died in, like, a river rafting
accident versus if he overdosed or
something.

ELLIOT'S DAD
Why the hell would he have died in
a river rafting accident?

ELLIOT
I don't know. Maybe he sucked at
river rafting.

ELLIOT'S DAD
Christ, there was no river rafting,
he-- he committed suicide, alright?

Elliot stops scrolling. Stares at little boy from Honolulu.

ELLIOT'S DAD (CONT'D)
But listen, I don't want you to--

NURSE (O.S.)
Sir, are you on the phone?

ELLIOT'S DAD
(to nurse, hysterical)
I'm just talking to my son. I'm so
scared!
(lowered voice, to Elliot)
But I'm not scared, Elliot. Maybe
it's the CBD, but for the first
time in my life, I'm not scared at
all.

ELLIOT
I'm hanging up.

ELLIOT'S DAD
The funeral's tomorrow.

ELLIOT
Are you going to come pick me up?

ELLIOT'S DAD
What, and get a DUI?

ELLIOT
You can't get a DUI from CBD.

ELLIOT'S DAD
That's the drug talking. It makes
you feel invincible.

ELLIOT
I'm just going to take the train.

ELLIOT'S DAD
Listen, do me a favor and add me on
Find Your Friends so I can track
your location.

ELLIOT
I'm not going to do that.

ELLIOT'S DAD
Don't be a priss. Just add me--

Elliot closes computer, hanging up. Bites his nails more,
hurts himself. Blood pools on his thumb. He sucks on it.

INT. LISA'S BEDROOM, DAY

Elliot walks out of what we realize is literally a walk-in
closet inside an actual bedroom, where LISA (25, butch) and a
STRANGER (23, femme) are hooking up. They quickly cover
themselves with a blanket.

LISA
Hello. Hello. Hello.

ELLIOT
Sorry, sorry.

Elliot goes to the bedside table to get Kleenex for the
blood, thumb still in his mouth.

LISA
Baby need his binky?

ELLIOT
I mean I'd prefer mother's teat,
but seems like that's occupied.

LISA
(to unamused lover)
He's *joking*.
(beat)
He stopped breastfeeding months
ago.

ELLIOT
Maybe I should start knocking.

LISA
Whatever gets you off, perv.

ELLIOT
Says the one who likes being walked
in on.

LISA
Grow up. We all like being walked
in on.

Elliot looks at Stranger sympathetically, but Stranger shrugs
and nods in agreement with Lisa. Elliot scowls.

ELLIOT
(to Lisa)
What happened to Daisy?

DAISY (27, butch) pops out from underneath the blanket.

DAISY
Wouldn't you like to know, perv.

ELLIOT
Jesus Christ.

LISA
What? Is our lifestyle too...
(scare quotes)
..."deviant" for you?

ELLIOT
No, I just wasn't expecting an orgy
on Veterans Day...

LISA
First of all, this is exactly the
kind of freedom our veterans fought
for...

ELLIOT
(looking at watch)
...and at 10 in the morning...

LISA
...and second of all, an orgy is
five or more. But you would love
that, wouldn't you? If we had a gay
little orgy. You'd love it, you
little perv--

ELLIOT
My friend from high school killed
himself.

Silence. They're all stunned. Lisa breaks the silence with a
long exhale. Beat. Then, SECOND STRANGER (29, androgynous)
peaks their head out of the bathroom.

SECOND STRANGER
I think you're supposed to say
"died by suicide."

ELLIOT
(exasperated)
Why?

SECOND STRANGER
Because then it's like, the suicide
killed *him*...
(getting confused)
Or wait, maybe I'm getting it
backwards...

As Elliot talks to Second Stranger, Lisa comes and wraps him
in a forceful bear hug. Picks him up a bit.

ELLIOT
Something's poking me.

LISA
Don't worry, that's just my dick.

With one hand, Lisa takes off her strap-on and chucks it at
the wall. Hugs Elliot even harder.

LISA (CONT'D)
Were you guys close?

ELLIOT
Not really. We didn't even talk in
high school. I got to know him at a
very, uh...*specific* time in my
life.

LISA
How do you feel?

ELLIOT
(murmuring to himself)
How do I feel?
(beat)
Not sure I want to open that can of
worms.

LISA
Right.

ELLIOT
Because once you open that can of
worms...

LISA
All the worms come out.

ELLIOT
Exactly.

A THIRD STRANGER (24, short) emerges from behind the door to
Elliot's room. He's holding a camera with a fuzzy mic on top.

THIRD STRANGER
(morose)
I'd probably feel like it was my
fault.

LISA
Goddammit Paul.

ELLIOT
Five or more, you said?

LISA
He was just filming.

Elliot looks expectantly at Lisa.

LISA (CONT'D)
*Fine...*he was doing stuff with the
fuzzy mic.

ELLIOT
I'm going to Connecticut.

FIRST STRANGER
(chipper, first time she's
talked)
Which part of Connecticut?

ELLIOT
(exasperated)
The rich part.

He walks past Second Stranger into Lisa's en-suite bathroom, doubling as a closet.

ELLIOT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(to Lisa)
Can I borrow one of your suits?

SECOND STRANGER
Why are all your clothes in the
bathroom?

ELLIOT	LISA
(defeated)	(angry)
I live in the closet.	He lives in the closet.

LISA (CONT'D)
(to Second Stranger)
His friend just *died by suicide*.
Show some *respect*.
(beat, then to Third
Stranger with camera)
We're going to have to cut all
that.

Third Stranger has the entire fuzzy mic in his mouth.
Realizes everyone's looking at him. Takes mic out.

THIRD STRANGER
(assertive)
I deserve pleasure too.
(quieter)
I deserve pleasure.

INT. TRAIN, DAY

Elliot squirming in way too small suit on the train. Head lolling against the window to cool down. Small Connecticut towns pass outside the window. Summer foliage.

INT. CHURCH LOBBY, DAY

Elliot walks into a packed funeral. Everyone milling about. Ambushed by BRUCE (24, short, metrosexual, darling suit).

BRUCE
Elliot Prior!

ELLIOT
(doesn't remember this
person's name)
Hey...there.

BRUCE
Or should I say, "Most Likely to
Succeed."

Bruce gives him a bear hug.

ELLIOT
Thanks, Mom.

BRUCE
(inhales Elliot's scent,
then serious)
Don't be silly. I could never
replace your mother.

ELLIOT
Something's poking me.

BRUCE
Don't worry, that's just my penis.
Something about funerals...

Bruce lets Elliot go and makes a slide whistle sound while
gesturing an erection with his finger.

ELLIOT
Probably worth unpacking that.

BRUCE
I let it breathe at night, but when
I'm out in public, I prefer briefs.

Elliot opens his mouth as if to clarify, but then thinks
better of it.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
So I heard you're in the Big Apple!

ELLIOT
Living it up.

BRUCE
Nice apartment?

ELLIOT
Not really. I live in the closet.

BRUCE

I always wondered...because you
were so moody...

ELLIOT

(frustrated)

No, literally. I live in my
friend's walk-in closet.

BRUCE

(concerned)

Is this another friend from the
psychiatric hospital? Because I
really think you should branch out.

ELLIOT

No it's a lesbian from Craigslist--
(realizing, confused)
Wait, how did you know I was in the
hospital?

BRUCE

I like to keep tabs on you, you
little minx!

(hand on Elliot's
shoulder)

Listen, if you can't afford your
own place, why don't you come stay
with me. I have an extra large
twin, and as you can tell, I'm very
petite, so we can squeeze--

ELLIOT

(exasperated)

No, I just-- I don't like spending
money. It's this thing from my
dad...

Elliot looks over at his Dad piling a plate with shrimp from
a shrimp fountain. Wanders away from Bruce.

BRUCE

(to himself)

Nice job idiot. You blew it.

(beat, then murmured)

What kind of pervert wears briefs
to a funeral.

Elliot approaches his Dad, who's staring at the shrimp
fountain.

ELLIOT

Can I get you some Tupperware?

ELLIOT'S DAD
It's weird, right?
(starting to eat)
And not even at the reception. At
the church. Before the funeral.

ELLIOT
I thought you were allergic.

ELLIOT'S DAD
(mouth full of shrimp)
Psychosomatic. I always felt like I
had to prove my pain to your
mother.

ELLIOT
Chemo's hard to beat.

ELLIOT'S DAD
Even before the chemo. She was
always very...
(loooooonnggg pause as he
searches for the word)
...withholding.

Dad brings a little saucer of cocktail sauce with a straw to
his lips and slurps.

ELLIOT
I'm going to see if I know anyone
else here.

ELLIOT'S DAD
Just come sit with me. It'll be
fun.

ELLIOT
No, I don't think that would be--

INT. CHURCH NAVE, DAY

Elliot and Dad squished in a pew between two women randomly
wearing New Orleans funeral garb. Gigantic hats, fans, etc.

ELLIOT'S DAD
(whispered, creole accent)
If'n only we hadn't played with dat
dere voodoo doll...

He looks over his shoulder to find a third woman in even more
dramatic New Orleans funeral garb behind them.

She takes out a doll dressed like him and starts angrily stitching something into it. His face falls and he turns forward, scared. Beat. Then, an altar boy walks past.

ELLIOT
Weren't you an altar boy?

ELLIOT'S DAD
Don't say it like that.

ELLIOT
Like what?

ELLIOT'S DAD
Like I was molested.

ELLIOT
I thought you were molested.

ELLIOT'S DAD
Why would you think that?

ELLIOT
Mom said you mutter "Help me" in your sleep.

ELLIOT'S DAD
(exasperated)
Christ, your mother-- All of my brothers do that.

Beat. They realize how it sounds. Then some noise at the mic. Room quiets down. PRIEST (65, classic priest) begins.

PRIEST
Thank you all for coming. Joe's girlfriend Skyler is going to sing one of Joe's favorite songs to get us started. So without further adieu...Skyler.

Silence for a second. Then, church organ starts playing unexpectedly aggressive version of "Dancing on My Own." Throbbing vamp. SKYLER (24, uncomfortable in her Sunday best, it's so not her style) starts singing intensely. JOE'S DAD (57, gruff, stoic) and Joe's uncles carry the coffin down the aisle. Tense, chaotic scene. Elliot leans over to his Dad.

ELLIOT
Whatever happened to Ave Maria...

No response. Elliot realizes his dad is crying a bit, mouthing along to the lyrics. He loves this song. Elliot puts his arm around him.

Behind them, the witch woman is stitching the final thread of a single blue tear into the face of Elliot's Dad's doll. Behind that, Bruce is holding a doll that looks like Elliot, miming Elliot's every move.

INT. CHURCH LOBBY, DAY

Everyone comes out of the nave. Elliot's Dad grabs Elliot by the back of his neck.

ELLIOT'S DAD
You've got your whole life ahead of
you, kiddo.

ELLIOT
I'm not so sure. I think the CBD is
catching up with me.

ELLIOT'S DAD
(genuinely concerned)
When's the last time you got an
MRI?

ATTORNEY (60, boring looking) approaches.

ATTORNEY
Elliot Prior?

ELLIOT
Yes?

ATTORNEY
Could you join us in the conference
room? Joe left you something in his
will.

ELLIOT'S DAD
(to Elliot, shocked)
Christ, don't tell me you were
lovers.

Attorney gives him a concerned look.

ELLIOT'S DAD (CONT'D)
(backtracking)
Not that that would be a bad thing.
(beat)
Although with everything that
happened...maybe there was trouble
in paradise?

Attorney looks even more concerned and leaves.

ELLIOT
(to Dad)
Stuck the landing.

ELLIOT'S DAD
Meet back here after. We'll get
tacos with your friend Bruce.

ELLIOT
Bruce?

ELLIOT'S DAD
Bruce. The short one.

ELLIOT
I hardly know that guy.

ELLIOT'S DAD
You should get to know him.
Fascinating guy. He works for that
company that makes semiconductors.

ELLIOT
(walking away, sarcastic)
No way. The company that makes
semiconductors?

ELLIOT'S DAD
(eager, missing sarcasm)
Oh so you've heard of it--

INT. CHURCH CONFERENCE ROOM, DAY

Joe's loved ones seated around a conference table, somber,
murmuring. Elliot squirms in a hard-backed chair. Leans over
to whisper to COUSIN DANNY (8, cherubic).

ELLIOT
Anybody else's ass barking?

Attorney clears his throat and room quiets.

ATTORNEY
As many of you know, Joe left a
note that will act as his last will
and testament. So without further
ado, I'm going to read what he
bequeathed unto each of you.
(clears throat)
"To my father, I leave my memorial
garden. That he may realize its
promise as I never could."
(MORE)

ATTORNEY (CONT'D)

(beat, people look at
Joe's Dad)

"To my girlfriend Skyler, I leave
my archives. That she may catalogue
my twenty-four years of thought and
activity."

(beat, people look at
Skyler)

"To my Cousin Danny, I leave my
Xbox. That he may finish my Halo 5
campaign."

ELLIOT

(whispered to Cousin Danny
in funny voice)

Lucky bastard.

ATTORNEY

(still reading)

"And to my friend Elliot Prior, I
bequeath my life. That he may live
as I have lived."

Long silence. Elliot looks around. Then whispers to Cousin
Danny, explaining.

ELLIOT

He means metaphorically--

ATTORNEY

"More literally, I ask that he
reside in my father's basement, as
I have resided. That he perform in
the community theater's production
of Hamlet, as I have performed.
That he visit my friends in the
psychiatric hospital, as I have
visited."

ELLIOT

(under breath, panicked)

What the fu--

ATTORNEY

"In short, that he live, both
metaphorically and literally, as I
would have lived, had I not
committed suicide."

ELLIOT

(under his breath)

He's supposed to say "died by
suicide."

Everyone staring at Elliot. He takes a deep breath.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)
Is he fucking with me, or...

Silence. Blank stares.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)
Do I have to decide right now?

ATTORNEY
I don't think so.

Elliot nods, then looks across the table at Joe's Dad, who is looking down, dejected. He looks exactly like Joe. Elliot has a flashback to three years earlier.

INT. NORWALK PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL, FLASHBACK

Nurses milling about a psychiatric ward, handing out medicine, checking on patients, etc. JOE (22, long hair) and his friends are playing Monopoly in the corner, laughing. Elliot is trying to make an Irish exit -- walking towards the door with a box full of his stuff, with his dad -- but at the last moment he looks at Joe in the distance and Joe makes eye contact with him. Joe's face falls, hurt, as he realizes Elliot is leaving without saying goodbye.

ATTORNEY (V.O.)
Elliot?

INT. CHURCH CONFERENCE ROOM, DAY

Elliot snaps back to present. Everyone is looking at him.

ELLIOT
(panicked)
I'll do it.

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

INT. CHURCH LOBBY, DAY

Elliot follows Joe's Dad to car. Quickly talks to Priest.

ELLIOT

Tell my dad I'm going to be gone
for a while.

PRIEST

I don't know who your dad is.

ELLIOT

(looks around)

He's--

(sees dad, then, defeated)

He's the one dipping shrimp in the
communion wine.

Elliot runs out after Joe's Dad. Priest looks over in
disgust. On the other side of the room, Elliot's Dad is
dipping shrimp into a chalice and talking to Bruce.

ELLIOT'S DAD

Every two years, I think, that's
it. That's the best it's going to
get. But sure enough, two years
later--

BRUCE

Right.

ELLIOT'S DAD

Double the number of transistors.

BRUCE

Moore's Law.

ELLIOT'S DAD

You're like the son I never had.

BRUCE

(joking back)

Or the wife!

ELLIOT'S DAD

(laughs, then confused)

Wait, what?

INT. JOE'S DAD'S CAR, DAY

Elliot and Joe's Dad drive home in silence. CD playing "Centerfield" by John Fogerty. Way too chipper. Elliot's in a total daze. Joe's Dad kills radio. Silence.

ELLIOT

(stilted)

I don't think we ever met in the hospital. I was only there a couple weeks.

(beat)

I guess a couple weeks sounds like a long time to be in a psychiatric hospital. But don't worry, I'm not crazy or anything.

(realizing, backtracking)

Not that being in a psychiatric hospital for a long time makes you crazy. I mean, people with cancer are in the hospital for years and no one thinks *they're* crazy.

(beat, then clarifying)

And I think that's a *good* thing, I think it's a *good* thing they're in the hospital for a long time.

(beat)

Well not a *good* thing, but you know what I mean--

JOE'S DAD

I could use your help with the memorial garden when we get home.

ELLIOT

Yep. Great. Love gardening.

EXT. JOE'S DAD'S LAWN, DAY

Elliot and Joe's Dad stand in front of a large suburban lawn, empty except for a shed. Long silence.

ELLIOT

So are we thinking, like, a statue of him, or...

JOE'S DAD

(looking at him, confused)

It's not a memorial for him.

ELLIOT

It's not?

JOE'S DAD

No.

(sighing)

It's a memorial for the Korean War.

Another long silence. Elliot nods, then realizes.

ELLIOT

Sorry did you say the Korean War?

Joe's Dad nods.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)

Isn't there already a memorial for that? In D.C.?

JOE'S DAD

(exasperated)

Apparently it was a hack job. They misspelled a bunch of names. So now he wants to do, like, a Japanese rock garden, with a rock for each soldier who died.

Joe's dad unlocks the shed to reveal it's filled with small rocks. They spill out. Another long silence.

ELLIOT

But didn't the Japanese and Koreans kind of hate each other--

JOE'S DAD

(frustrated)

Can we just-- can we just do it, please? And then it'll be done?

ELLIOT

Yep. Yep.

JOE'S DAD

I'll start building the retaining wall and you start counting the rocks.

ELLIOT

(trying to understand)

Counting the rocks...

JOE'S DAD

It's something like 36,000 Americans, you'll have to look up the exact number. He wanted to do Korean casualties too but I talked him out of it.

Joe's dad wanders off to get tools. Elliot stands bewildered, looking around. Cut to hours later, night. Elliot has little piles of rocks around him, and an old Casio calculator. He's counting out a new pile.

ELLIOT
(counting under his
breath)
655, 656, 658, 65-- wait a second.

Elliot stares at the pile, realizing he's going to have to start over. Joe's Dad finally stands up, looks at his work.

JOE'S DAD
I think that's good for today.

Joe's Dad starts to walk away.

ELLIOT
Are you going to sleep?

JOE'S DAD
(over his shoulder)
Can't sleep lately. I'll probably
watch a movie.

ELLIOT
What movie--

But Joe's Dad has already shut the door behind him. Elliot looks confused about where he's supposed to go next. He awkwardly pats the pile to make it into a nice shape, but it collapses. He sighs and follows Joe's dad inside.

INT. JOE'S BEDROOM, EVENING

Elliot walks downstairs into Joe's basement bedroom. Looks around. Lots of space. Puts on a Snuggie. Takes a spin on the drum kit. Hits a bong. Starts looking around in Joe's drawers out of curiosity. Finds a note. Reads. Looks up to see Skyler standing in the doorway, on the other side of the room.

SKYLER
Well if it isn't the Prince of the
Psych Ward.

Elliot looks at Skyler a bit stunned. Flashback.

INT. NORWALK HOSPITAL, FLASHBACK

Elliot and Joe sitting in the lounge of the psych ward.
Elliot holding a cup of tap water and his little pill cup.
Joe is buckled over laughing.

ELLIOT
You've got to stop calling me that.

JOE
Why would they have seltzer?

ELLIOT
Some places just have it, like, on
tap.

JOE
What do you think this is? A
WeWork?

ELLIOT
Just stop it, people are looking--

JOE
Why don't you get me a kombucha,
while you're at it.

Joe wheezes laughing. Elliot looks annoyed.

SKYLER (V.O.)
His words...

INT. JOE'S BEDROOM, EVENING

SKYLER
Not mine.

ELLIOT
He told you about the seltzer?

SKYLER
And the bidet.

ELLIOT
(annoyed)
Christ, I didn't think they *had* a
bidet, I just wanted to bring in my
own, like, portable-- never mind. I
don't have to explain myself to
you.

SKYLER
I get it. You wanted a clean pussy.

Elliot rolls his eyes at her. She softens, approaches, gestures for the bong and hits it.

ELLIOT

I'm surprised he still talked about me.

SKYLER

Are you kidding? He had this, like, complex about you.

ELLIOT

A *complex*. Go on, doctor.

SKYLER

Because he was this pseudo-intellectual who never went to college. And you abandoned him to go back to Yale.

ELLIOT

Oh come on, I didn't *abandon* him. He wasn't a stray dog--

Skyler gives him a look like "Don't go there." Elliot sheepishly gestures for the bong and hits it.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)

I didn't even graduate.

SKYLER

You didn't?

ELLIOT

Of course not. Why would they readmit someone who tried to kill himself when they could let in, like, a future president or something.

SKYLER

At least the suicidal guy's never going to become a war criminal.

ELLIOT

See, that's exactly the kind of stigma we're up against. We can achieve anything we want to if we put our fucked-up minds to it.

SKYLER

You're an inspiration. If only they'd had you at Abu Ghraib.

Elliot smiles. Then looks at her.

ELLIOT
So this is, like, revenge?

SKYLER
(confused)
Revenge? No. I think it's...
Actually, I have no idea what it
is. I'm not getting involved. I'm
just here to pick up his
"archives."
(picks up stack of
composition notebooks)
Thank God they'll endure. All the
brilliant ideas he wrote down high.

ELLIOT
Anything in there about why we're
building a second Korean War
Memorial in Wilton, Connecticut?

SKYLER
I'm pretty sure there was a major
battle fought around here.

ELLIOT
Oh yeah. The Battle for Seoul
Cycle.

Now Skyler smiles. Beat.

SKYLER
At least you're keeping his dad
company.

ELLIOT
We really clicked today. Right
around the fifth hour of counting
rocks in total silence.

SKYLER
Maybe he doesn't like you.

ELLIOT
(melodramatic)
Doesn't like me? But I'm his son.

SKYLER
You're not taking this seriously.

ELLIOT
Do you want me to?

SKYLER
Again, not getting involved.

ELLIOT
Then who am I here for?

Skyler looks at him hard, trying to read him.

SKYLER
Aren't you going to visit his
friends in the psych ward?

Elliot chews on the neck of his Snuggie, anxious.

ELLIOT
Don't you mean *my* friends in the
psych ward.

SKYLER
I thought you were persona non
grata after the bidet incident.

ELLIOT
It was more of a death by a
thousand cuts situation.
(beat)
That was part of the problem. I
kept saying that. To piss off the
cutters.

Skyler scoffs and starts to collect her things to leave.

SKYLER
You're going to make a great
Hamlet.

ELLIOT
Fuck, I forgot about that.

SKYLER
You should get some sleep. You have
rehearsal tomorrow.

ELLIOT
What time?

SKYLER
(on her way out)
7 a.m.

Elliot nods. Then processes this information.

ELLIOT
(indignant)
7 a.m.?!

EXT. COMMUNITY THEATER, MORNING

Elliot bikes sluggishly into a mostly empty parking lot. Goes to lock it but the lock gets jammed. Curses. Keeps trying.

DIRECTOR
Suburban paranoia. Private
property. Etcetera, etcetera.

Elliot looks up to see DIRECTOR (45, New York intellectual look) leaning against the wall, smoking a cigarette. Elliot realizes no one will steal the bike, and props it up without locking. He approaches the Director.

ELLIOT
I'm your new Joe.

Director leans in and sniffs his neck, intrigued. Deep inhale, then sighs with disappointment.

DIRECTOR
You smell nothing like him.

Director ashes cigarette against the wall and goes in through back door. Elliot looks confused for a second, then follows.

INT. COMMUNITY THEATER, MORNING

Director enters with Elliot close behind. Room full of community theater actors falls silent.

DIRECTOR
Good morrow. A lot to overcome
today so let's get right into it.
From T.B.O.N.T.B.

Elliot turns to UNDERSTUDY (12, preppy). He's gay but doesn't know it yet, and vicious.

ELLIOT
T.B.O.N.T.B?

UNDERSTUDY
To be or not to be.

ELLIOT
Isn't that the same number of
syllables?

UNDERSTUDY

You know usually, when the lead
offs himself, the silver lining is
that the long-overlooked understudy
gets a chance to shine.

ELLIOT

I'm guessing you're the understudy?

UNDERSTUDY

I'm guessing I'm your worst fucking
nightmare.

DIRECTOR

(to room, impatient)

Would anyone else like the role of
a lifetime? Anyone?

ELLIOT

(to Understudy)

Just give me your script.

UNDERSTUDY

No, get your own.

Elliot wrestles the script from the boy's hands.

ELLIOT

Suck it.

UNDERSTUDY

Watch those kneecaps, Kerrigan.

Elliot takes center stage. Director gestures to begin.

ELLIOT

To be or not to be--

DIRECTOR

Stop.

(long, pregnant pause)

There was something very convincing
about Joe's performance of this.

ELLIOT

Because he was suicidal.

DIRECTOR.

I don't like to think of it that
way.

ELLIOT

No?

DIRECTOR

No. Most of us are suicidal. This theater is practically a hotline. Do you know how many lives I've saved on this stage? Do you know how many I've lost?

ELLIOT

Multiple people you've worked with have committed suicide?

DIRECTOR

Suicide, heart attack, Crohn's disease--

ELLIOT

People don't die from Crohn's disease!

STAGE MANAGER (80, classic grandma) starts wailing.

DIRECTOR

Tell that to her husband. Oh wait. You can't. He's deceased. *From Crohn's disease.*

Stage Manager wails even harder.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Christ, Margaret, get a grip. It's been a *month*.

ELLIOT

I don't...think I want to be here anymore.

DIRECTOR

(nonchalant)

None of us want to be here. You think I want to be here?

ELLIOT

Then why are you here?

DIRECTOR

The same reason you're here.

ELLIOT

I'm here because a dead guy asked me to be.

DIRECTOR

Wrong. You're here because you can't be anywhere else.

ELLIOT
You don't even know me...

DIRECTOR
Know you? I *was* you. Hot young thing at Yale, and yet, I felt like I had no future. Because to dream was to be vulnerable, and to be vulnerable was to relinquish my control. My precious control.

Elliot looks at him weird. Director pivots out and starts delivering a kind of Ted Talk with dramatic staging.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
Control control control. Because mommy and daddy fought. Every day they fought and if I didn't intervene, if I didn't stop them, what was I but a creature born from hate. A creature born from hate who would never know love.

ELLIOT
(to Understudy)
Is he always like this--

Understudy shushes him violently, taking notes furiously on his script.

DIRECTOR
So what did I do? Dropped out of college. Changed my name. Lost 150 pounds. Gained back 60. Started wearing colored contacts.

He pries open an eyelid to reveal a stunning blue iris.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
Became unrecognizable to myself.
Became an orphan, traveling town to town. Not in search of parents but of children all my own.
(caresses the face of the stage manager)
All of you. My children.
(makes grotesque baby crying sound, then suddenly withdraws his hand)
And yet. The second one of you sees me as Papa. The second I see it in your eyes. New contacts, new weight, new town. I'm gone.

UNDERSTUDY

(on verge of tears)

No!

DIRECTOR

Because for any of you to see me as
Father would be to once again see
my father in myself. To once again
be trapped in that eternal basement
of his psyche...

(miming being trapped)

...desperate to sleep but awoken by
every footstep...

Director mimes giant steps. Every time his foot lands, a
timpani sounds, and he cowers, scared.

ELLIOT

Is that a timpani?

DIRECTOR

...awoken by every creak of the
floorboards...

Backstage, an anxious PERCUSSIONIST squeaks a rubber mallet
along the top of a timpani to emulate a door creaking.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

...awoken by every disquiet in my
father's world, echoing into my own
in that insomniac's undying
twilight of grief.

Several spotlights suddenly light up various parts of the
auditorium ceiling like stars. These lights swirl around
before converging into a single spotlight on the Director.

ELLIOT

How much money does this community
theater have?

DIRECTOR

So why are we here? We are here
because we are all *running from*
something.

(to Margaret)

From loss.

(to Understudy,
suggestively)

From the *truth*.

(to Elliot, with finality)

From something as yet unknown.

(long beat)

(MORE)

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

And only once we accept this may we
walk as one into His everlasting
kingdom.

ELLIOT

Christ almighty, please don't tell
me this is a suicide cult.

Lights fade to black. Actors erupt into applause. Full lights
back up. Director bows solemnly.

DIRECTOR

Time, Margaret?

STAGE MANAGER

7:05 a.m.

DIRECTOR

Good. Let's pick this back up
tomorrow. *Great work everyone.*

EXT. COMMUNITY THEATER, MORNING

Elliot emerges exhausted to find a random guy -- HEROIN DAD
(45, classic suburban dad, but a bit sallow) -- about to get
on Elliot's bike.

HEROIN DAD

Is this your bike?

ELLIOT

(exasperated explaining)
Kind of. Technically it's my
friend's...but now I'm him...it's a
whole thing.

(beat)

Wait, why?

HEROIN DAD

I was going to steal it.

ELLIOT

Oh. Well.

(beat)

I'd prefer if you didn't.

HEROIN DAD

(meditative)

It's funny. We all have these
little preferences for our lives.
These outcomes we try to control.
And yet, things never turn out the
way we want them to, do they?

Heroin Dad chuckles to himself, then casually gets on the bike and rides towards the sunrise.

ELLIOT
(to himself, stunned and
exasperated)
I've got to get back on my fucking
antipsychotics.

END OF ACT 2

ACT 3

EXT. NORWALK HOSPITAL, DAY

Elliot, sweaty, in front of "Norwalk Hospital - Psychiatric Wing." He walked here, but now he's reluctant to visit Joe's friends. Bites his nails, debating whether to go in, until he shakes his head and turns to leave, at which point he sees Bruce pushing Elliot's Dad towards him in a wheelchair.

ELLIOT
(sighing)
What is it this time?

ELLIOT'S DAD
Those fucking shrimp. I swear to God I woke up the next day and I couldn't walk.

ELLIOT
I thought it was psychosomatic.

ELLIOT'S DAD
(exasperated)
Christ, this is what your mother never understood. It doesn't matter if it's psychosomatic. Either way, it's crippling.

BRUCE
(pedantic)
Your mother was a very...*complicated* person, Elliot.

Dad nods solemnly. Elliot looks at them weird.

ELLIOT
Why is he here?

BRUCE
Hurtful.

ELLIOT'S DAD
I don't know. Maybe because my real son *abandoned me*.

BRUCE
Also hurtful.

ELLIOT'S DAD
Where the hell have you been? I've been looking for you everywhere.

ELLIOT
I told the priest to tell you I'd
be gone for a while.

ELLIOT'S DAD
Which priest?

ELLIOT
What do you mean which priest? How
many priests do you interact with
regularly?

ELLIOT'S DAD
Oh come on, don't say it like that.

ELLIOT
Like what?

ELLIOT'S DAD
Like I'm being *molested*.

Dad looks up to see "Psychiatric Wing" sign.

ELLIOT'S DAD (CONT'D)
Oh Christ, not again.

ELLIOT
No, I'm just-- Joe bequeathed me
his life.

ELLIOT'S DAD
What does that mean?

ELLIOT
He asked me to live his life for
him.

ELLIOT'S DAD
Why?

ELLIOT
I don't know. Apparently he was
obsessed with me or something.

ELLIOT'S DAD
I knew you guys were lovers.

ELLIOT
No, we weren't-- It doesn't matter.
I can't do it.

ELLIOT'S DAD
Of course you can't do it. It
doesn't make any sense.

ELLIOT

I thought I could be helpful, but
no one seems to want me here and--
I don't know. I think I'm just
running away from something in my
own life.

ELLIOT'S DAD

Why don't you come stay with me.
I'd actually really like that.

ELLIOT

(defeated)

No I-- I can't let you trap me in
your eternal basement.

Elliot starts to walk away.

ELLIOT'S DAD

(confused)

Eternal-- I don't even have a
basement. Or a finished basement at
least. Maybe one day, but it ain't
cheap. I'd have to rewire all the
electrical.

Bruce holds out an applesauce cup.

BRUCE

More applesauce?

ELLIOT'S DAD

(peeved)

What is it with you and the
applesauce? I can still eat solid
food...

(beat, then he grabs the
applesauce)

Straw please.

Bruce hands him a straw out of his fanny pack and Elliot's
Dad uses it to puncture the aluminum lid. Slurps.

EXT. JOE'S DAD'S PORCH, DAY

Elliot knocks on door, defeated, but no answer. Knocks again,
no answer. Eventually goes out back.

EXT. JOE'S DAD'S LAWN, DAY

Finds Joe's Dad carefully lacquering the memorial garden retaining wall. Joe's Dad doesn't notice him. Elliot stands a couple yards away and talks to him.

ELLIOT

Hey. I really appreciate you taking me in and everything, but I think I should head back to New York.

(beat)

I know Joe wanted me to do this, but I don't think I'm cut out for it. I'm realizing I've got a lot of my own stuff to deal with.

(more to himself now)

I always think us depressed people can do whatever we want, like everyone else, but I think there's certain things we should avoid. Like living other people's lives. Or committing war crimes.

(beat)

I mean everyone should avoid committing war crimes obviously. Although I know it's not always that simple--

Joe's Dad turns around, notices Elliot there. Takes out earbuds.

JOE'S DAD

Sorry, did you say something?

Elliot stands there, trying to work up the courage to say it again. Just as he's about to...

JOE'S DAD (CONT'D)

These rocks aren't going to count themselves.

Elliot takes a beat, then sighs and goes back to rock counting. Hours pass. It's night again. He's staring blankly at one of the piles. Flashback.

INT. NORWALK HOSPITAL, FLASHBACK

Joe and Elliot playing Monopoly. Joe counting money, Elliot staring blankly at him.

JOE

25, 26, 28...wait a second.

ELLIOT
(not paying attention)
I've got to get out of here.

JOE
(sarcastic)
Try rolling doubles. Or wait for a
Get Out of Jail Free Card.

ELLIOT
Aren't you looking forward to
anything after this?

JOE
(beat, then)
I'm excited to watch a movie with
my dad. He's got this great setup.
With Dolby and everything.

ELLIOT
No, I meant like-- something in
your life. Don't you want to do
something?

Joe stops counting money but doesn't look at him.

JOE
You don't know anything about my
life.

Joe goes back to counting money. Elliot looks at him,
surprised. This is the first time Joe's been curt.

EXT. JOE'S DAD'S LAWN, PRESENT

Elliot snaps back to present. Joe's dad is looking at him.

ELLIOT
Sorry, did you say something?

JOE'S DAD
I asked if you wanted to watch a
movie.

ELLIOT
Oh.

JOE'S DAD
I've got a great setup. With Dolby
and everything.

ELLIOT
Sure.

JOE'S DAD
Avatar?

ELLIOT
Yeah.

INT. JOE'S DAD'S LIVING ROOM, NIGHT

Elliot and Joe's Dad watching Avatar. One of the weirdly sexual hair scenes. Elliot looks over to find Joe's Dad curled towards him, mouth ajar, sleeping peacefully, for the first time in a long time. Elliot smiles, touched. He knows why he's there.

END OF PILOT