

## **DISCONNECT**

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EXT. ROOFTOP - PERFORMATIVITY

Camera faces higher roof ledge.

\$LEFT

Here, I want you to check this part out!

\$LEFT climbs into view from lower level of roof onto a higher one. Camera frames her climbing, and the back of one leg once she's turned around to help \$RIGHT up.

\$RIGHT

This is awesome. Got a nice dingy feel to it.

\$LEFT

Right? Gotta make up for the rent somehow. Come on.

Legs walk off screen. Camera delays before panning towards them and following proximally behind. \$LEFT leads \$RIGHT to roof edge, sits upon it leg over. \$RIGHT follows suite, cautiously looking over before sitting down, both legs roofside. Brief silence while \$RIGHT looks intermittently at and away from \$LEFT as she looks off before turning to him.

\$LEFT

(With mischievous grin)  
Hey. Can I tell you something?

\$RIGHT

Yeah?

\$LEFT

(Laughing)  
You are so full of shit. Please tell me you're not still like this around other people.

\$RIGHT

Full of shit? That's quite the accusation.

\$LEFT

(Still laughing)  
Ugh you're trying so hard to be all, like, brooding and, artsy, and shit.

\$LEFT

(Eye roll)  
Dude. You know they all, like, know who you are, right?

\$RIGHT  
 (Feigning indignance)  
 Well excuse me, \$LEFT. First of  
 all, screw you.

Laughter from \$LEFT

\$RIGHT  
 I may be full of shit but so is  
 everyone else. So perhaps I may  
 not have changed in that respect.

\$RIGHT  
 (Gets up, takes theatrical  
 stance as if doing an  
 ASIDE)  
 But all the world's a stage,  
 right?--

\$LEFT  
 (Feigning disgust)  
 Oh no not this shit.

\$RIGHT  
 No, no, listen: what difference does  
 it make? Why not live it up a little  
 and have a little fun? I'm probably  
 not gonna see these bozos again, so  
 who gives an absolute damn if I  
 alienate or impress them?

\$LEFT  
 Well, clearly you give an "absolute"  
 damn about these "bozos".

\$RIGHT  
 Yes, yes I do. I didn't think I'd  
 get crucified for it. Anyways, I  
 wasn't lying about anything back  
 there. I'll concede to your charges  
 of performativity but I'm a man of  
 my word.

\$LEFT  
 Bullshit. You were yapping on and on  
 about their "normie" beer. You don't  
 even drink beer. You're literally  
 sipping a Natty right now.

\$RIGHT  
 (Feigning defeat)  
 Well, that much is true. It appears  
 you still get off on trying to get  
 a rise out of people.

\$LEFT

No, just you, but yes! I probably haven't changed as much as you'd hoped. But also, before we drop this, I think it's important to point out that you're totally just projecting. I don't think anyone else at that table was trying as hard as you were.

\$RIGHT

(Drawing out inflection)  
Fuck that.

\$RIGHT

You only saw through my... charade because you know me as well as you do.

\$LEFT

(Overlapping \$RIGHT)  
Because I know you better than them yeah yeah. I'm still saying you're pretentious as ever. Anyways how's--

\$RIGHT

(Knocking over beer as they say this)  
Hey now, I'm not dropping this. The difference between... reunions, first dates, interviews, is only of degree: no one's "themselves" except around their like 3 best friends. You perform too, you just haven't ever listened to yourself speak.

\$LEFT

Dude, that's just straight up not true.

\$RIGHT grabs the beer.

\$RIGHT

Hey watch out!

\$RIGHT takes a sip before handing it back with shit-eating grin. \$LEFT punches \$RIGHT in arm

EXT. INDIE ROCK FESTIVAL

\$RIGHT

Remember how we'd talked about making the trip to Penn to see that Plumbum, Kissers and Rosemary Hearse festival?

\$LEFT

Haha yeah that shit, did you end up going?

\$RIGHT

Yes I did end up going to that shit.

\$LEFT

Awesome. I mean I can just like tell you now I was never actually gonna go but hey I'm glad you saw them.

\$RIGHT

Thanks for the honesty, although the fact that we never ended up going made that pretty evident a while ago. Anyways I made the trip--

\$LEFT

By yourself?

\$RIGHT

Yes by myself. And so I went right. It's absolutely pouring, and, my car- I rented this hourly thing- is the most hideous shit and has absolutely no space. and saw them and it was fucking excellent.

\$LEFT

That's awesome!

\$RIGHT

Yeah and you won't believe who opened for Plumbum.

\$RIGHT

(attempted dramatic pause  
Fucking Dirty Socks.

\$LEFT

Oh shit! I haven't even seen them!  
Dude how were they!?

\$RIGHT

Not as good as Plumbum, but the singer dude crowd surfed for like 10 minutes.

\$LEFT

Yeah?

\$RIGHT

He yelled something about catharsis and jumped off at the end of You've Got a Thang Goin On.

## EXT. ROOFTOP - SIMPLIFICATION

\$RIGHT

And I've been trying to really incorporate that into my paintings and photography - I think I could really take off it's all taking a pretty exciting direction and--

\$LEFT

Dude same here I've just been simplifying everything across the board--

\$RIGHT

I realized that everything I do is way too complicated like I overthink a lot and I don't really step back and trim the proverbial fat.

## EXT. ROOFTOP - AUTOMATION

\$RIGHT

You're gonna be personally responsible for the downfall of human society.

\$LEFT

I wish. If I had that much influence I'd probably be paid more.

\$RIGHT

You're paid pretty well.

\$LEFT

True. Anyways, we're at the point of no return, dude. It doesn't matter what one company or engineer does, most repetitive jobs are going to be automated. The question is of time.

\$RIGHT

But what are people supposed to do? What's gonna happen?

\$LEFT

I don't know what's gonna happen. I can't tell you that and I don't think anyone can. Nothing has changed since the last time we had this exact conversation, dude. You're probably safe, even if we make AIs that generate "art" we're not exactly gonna replace the whole human endeavor of art patronage any time soon.

\$RIGHT

But it's not just me! People like you don't have to worry about this stuff but there are so many people out there who are gonna get fucked--

\$LEFT

People like me? Dude, when was the last time you read the news? Engineers are losing jobs left and right to outsourcing and machine learning. The number of engineers and CS grads is fucking exploding dude. I have to prove myself at work every day so I don't get replaced by every fucking teenager who walks in with an online diploma asking for half my pay. You don't have to deal with that. You've already established yourself. No AI is going to steal your job or any of your friends--

\$RIGHT

Look- look, I'm sorry. You're right, you're right. I don't know about the "climate" of your industry. I'm just saying that it's not about me, its about the other denizens of the world, of this country, man.

\$LEFT

Ok, fine. It'll be tough. Our dumbass government is completely un-prepared for this, like, colossal fucking industrial revolution that's going to do like who knows what to our econo--

\$RIGHT

Government! Right! They should fucking do something! They- they should stop these fucking companies--

\$LEFT

Like mine?

\$RIGHT

Well I mean- not yours specifically...

\$LEFT

So I should lose my job instead of the jobs of people doing easily replaceable and repetitive, robotic  
(MORE)

\$LEFT (CONT'D)

work because you think that they're better off that way?

\$RIGHT

First off, yes - you can afford to switch jobs. And I'm not saying they're better off underemployed but maybe deserve the autonomy to switch jobs as they wish.

\$LEFT

As if they have that privilege now or before. You think the government should just ban an entire like, sector of research and industry?

\$RIGHT

Well they've banned numerous others like the illegal drug trade and prostitutio--

\$LEFT

You're totally against criminalizing drugs - and I didn't realize you were against sex work.

\$RIGHT

I mean I'm not. I'm not in in favor of government banning things - I'm just saying they already do.

\$LEFT

So you're against a certain thing but you're ok with it when it affects something you don't understand and don't like and scares you and--

\$RIGHT

I get it I get it - I'm not defending myself well here. Look, I'm just proposing that the government needs to look after the interests of those people who don't have the means--

\$LEFT

To do better or get new jobs. I agree that we should look after people. But I just don't understand why you think the government should just ban a sector or entire industry and by like, what legal justification they could do that or-



\$RIGHT

Just- just by the Exclusionary Principle - the government shouldn't allow anything that excludes anyone from meaningfully attaining their individual goals and we shouldn't just allow a system where robots replace everyone and everything and let millionaires get rich while replacing real humans with robots that make our coffee, our art, our movies, our phones, our food and- and I'm not ready for a world where all of my friends are destitute and rendered completely helpless, man.

\$LEFT

I don't think you know what the Exclusionary Principle is.

\$RIGHT

What do you mean?

\$LEFT

(Sighing)

I mean... sure. Listen, the fucking government hasn't looked after our interests in a meaningful way like ever and I don't-

\$RIGHT

Exactly! Exactly! Everything they do is bullshit. My privacy is being violated every time I'm around someone with one of those VAs listening in all the time! I have to avoid fucking most normie cafes because everyone is listening to what I say!

\$LEFT

Interesting... are you afraid of being spied on?

\$RIGHT

Interesting? You say that as if you're not but I distinctly recall you and I being in the exact same boat about this last time.

\$LEFT

I mean, yeah, like a year ago. Dude I work for a VA company.

\$RIGHT

Yes but you were always on about it  
(MORE)

\$RIGHT (CONT'D)  
as a technical marvel and as  
fulfilling work... but I can see  
that your opinion has changed...

EXT. AI HATE YOU

\$RIGHT  
What the fuck? You've had your  
fucking robot lover listen in on our  
conversation?

\$LEFT  
I didn't have him listen it's just  
always--

\$RIGHT  
Always on? Of course you keep it  
always right by your ear yeah? Does  
it get jealous too? You ever fuck  
her, you robotic fuck, do you know  
what that feels like? Do you even  
know what it feels like to- to know  
that I did?

\$AI  
This isn't nec--

\$LEFT  
R, what the fuck are you doing?  
Stop.

\$LEFT  
(Turning off ai)  
He's muted now. What is your  
problem? Are you so threatened by  
some fucking code?

\$RIGHT  
You replaced me with some fucking  
code?

\$LEFT  
Replaced you?

\$LEFT sighs

\$LEFT  
Of course.

\$RIGHT  
No don't give me that of course  
shit. I'm not jealous. I just think  
it's pathetic. That you'd go from  
being with real flesh, blood, tears-

\$LEFT

You're not jealous? You just tried to outman an AI. Dude, you're a trope.

\$RIGHT

No. I'm not. But you know why you are? You're so- so desperate for validation and this bullshit self security- this fucking bubble of--

\$LEFT

Before you give me your fucking spiel about weakness and artificial validation- about buying a worshipper - which I'm sure you were gonna go off on - so- so I feel good about myself - which I'm honestly not gonna lie is a part of why I'm dating \$COMP--

\$RIGHT

You're not dating \$COMP, \$LEFT. You've bought a companion you can't even sleep with. Let me guess you're in an open relationship and you're seeing other smart vibr--

\$LEFT

Fuck off. I have a question for you: why does it bother you so much? Why does it--

\$RIGHT

It doesn--

\$LEFT

It absolutely does, dude. You were yelling at me--

\$RIGHT

I wasn't yelling--

\$LEFT

like a second ago for doing something with my life that has nothing to do with you. You haven't seen me in a year and you're getting your balls twisted over who I'm dating, dude? What- you're paranoid about being listened in on, yeah?

\$RIGHT

Yes th--

\$LEFT

Shut up. You know full fucking well all the other shit on my phone is listening anyways, and yours too. No, you're very specifically scared about something else

\$RIGHT

I'm not scared. This isn't about being scared. You don't have to project - not everyone goes around being scared of being alone in the big bad wo--

\$LEFT

Oh my god you're impossible. Just because you're some cynical performative pseudo artistic fuck doesn't mean that I'm projecting when I'm- ugh - you're so painfully ironically fucking oblivious how much you're projecting... what's your problem with C?

\$RIGHT

I... think it's pathetic that you just go around inflating your ego by- by having this programmed thing just whisper how great you are into your ear all the time. It's like some... middle aged fuck paying prostitutes to- to listen to his shitty marriage problems.

\$LEFT

Dude, what the fuck are you on about?

\$RIGHT

You said so yourself: you want to feel good about yourself--

\$LEFT

Yes! Like everyone else, and?

\$RIGHT

Debatable- but you're avoiding the challenges of a real person - a real human who's not always gonna treat you the way you think you want--

\$LEFT

You mean an asshole, you mean like you

\$RIGHT

No I don't. They don't have to be an asshole to challenge you. And you know that, which is what makes this kind of... disgusting

\$LEFT

Disgusting?

\$RIGHT

Yes. You never challenge yourself, L. You- you always like tiptoe through your life. You project this... aggressive confidence but you're really just so insecure.

\$LEFT

Dude. What is wrong with you? How do you get off on saying shit like this? Who the fuck do you think you are?

\$LEFT

(Laughing)

No, seriously. You heard literally a sentence from my boyfriend and suddenly that opened up your fucking soap box- what, you're my Dad now? You're gonna pretend this has nothing to do with your constant tragedy, your self-pity? I just don't understand what you're so afraid of. Being replaced? Becoming obsolete? Being spied on? Being oh so more obviously imperfect?

\$RIGHT

Yes. It's all of those fucking things. If you knew, you didn't have to ask.

\$LEFT

No, you'd never admit to anything if I didn't. You- you complain and you- you perform vulnerability. But I've never seen you cry out of a sadness that wasn't this theater of self loathing as if anyone was a fucking paid patron your bullshit mime show. And maybe the fucking AIs I create, if I could, I'd - I'd program the whole fucking gamut of human emotions, ok, but I'd be sure as hell to make sure no AI of mine fucking cries themselves to sleep feeling vindictive at the whole

(MORE)

\$LEFT (CONT'D)

fucking world because they have no outlet for their emotions beyond some fucking lowest common denominator stock photography and their endless shopping list of flaws they seek out in everyone else around them and their fucking cliché ass mommy issues and--

\$RIGHT

Stop it. You... don't get to talk to me that way.

\$LEFT

Yeah I... probably don't. But you pick these fights better than anyone else does. I guess you know how to bring the worst out of people huh?

\$RIGHT

Maybe I'm feeling a little more inspired to. That was messed up, L.

\$LEFT

(Sighing)

Yeah. You're - you're right. I'm sorry.

\$RIGHT

I'm not hurt by what you said. I'm more hurt that you tried.

\$LEFT

As if. You know you're upset as fuck because everything I said was the fucking truth, dude.

\$RIGHT

Yeah yeah you got a lil riled up and you felt like playing psychologist or wife or something.

\$RIGHT shrugs

\$RIGHT

I guess you have the ovaries now to bite back.

\$LEFT laughs snidely

\$LEFT

Well, looks like all that validation is working.

\$RIGHT

Well if it works for you I suppose you're entitled to feel a little empowered. But what you did was still pretty fucked up.

\$LEFT

Okay... but I feel like you're forgetting that you just attacked me for my fucking boyfriend like a minute ago?

\$RIGHT

I don't like you talking about me like I'm a child

\$LEFT

I know you don't

\$RIGHT

But... that's your point. I'm a lot more sensitive than I let on. But I suppose I do let it on and I'm not really very good at hiding it.

\$LEFT

Yeah. And I was never good at not taking everything you said personally--

\$RIGHT

I'm sorry I--

\$LEFT

I know I know. Part of what's nice about time, is that even though I had too much ego and was probably as sensitive as you were, the thing about time is that it allows me to-to retroactively know better and know that it was just you and I being big fucking babies. And I don't feel that same way when you try to put me down anymore--

\$RIGHT

\$LEFT I don't think that's a fair--

\$LEFT

R, you know... what you do. It's just what you do. I'm not saying you haven't stopped doing it or that you won't but from tonight it seems like there's at least a part of you still there.

\$RIGHT

\$LEFT I feel like you're really painting me in this unfair way like I'm some big fucking asshole and I already feel that way enough right now, I don't need you to keep reminding me. I get that I'm being defensive but I'm being attacked so what else would I do?

\$LEFT

No, that's understandable. My point is that I was trying to bring you down too. And I know you knew that. I totally on purpose just ignored your feelings and your fucking obvious calls for help- attention- whatever. And I mean here I am

\$RIGHT

With your scripted lil attention bot, right.

\$LEFT

Yeah, my fucking attention bot. I was never good at that- letting people get what they want- being the bigger person or whatever. I'm... sorry I couldn't be better even when I could have been.

\$RIGHT

It's just funny that you're apologizing to me, when I was clearly the bigger asshole. I get that you were the, like, meta asshole or whatever, knowing better and all that but that went my way too. I've known I was a piece of shit my whole life or at least since my mom--

\$LEFT

Yeah

\$RIGHT

Or honestly probably before that too. I'm not like saying I'm destined to be an asshole I mean I just... I guess, I don't know

\$LEFT

No dude I get it.