

HACK JOBS

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**EXT. TROJAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY - DAY**

The COLLEGE PRESIDENT (50s) gives a speech before a crowd of cap-and-gown clad students. She follows the program of the days' events off an IPAD on the podium in front of her. A large, "TROJAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY" sign hangs off a proscenium behind her.

COLLEGE PRESIDENT

In the almost six years we've stood as an institution, I'm hard pressed to think of a finer graduating class. As you now turn to greener pastures and professional opportunity, just remember this: whether you conquer the fields of science, mathematics, or technology, keep us fondly in your hearts as you embark on your long day's journey into life.

She gives a self-satisfied smile as we SWEEP THROUGH THE CROWD to land on ADAM (21), a shy nerd sitting by himself. The two seats on either side of him are conspicuously empty in the sea of students. As he listens, JESSE (26), an ogre of a bully, pushes through Adam's row, his GOONS in tow. They stop in front of Adam.

JESSE

Nice fancy shoes.

He spits on Adam's shoes and shuffles off, his goons snickering in tow. Adam glowers and pulls a small, AirPod looking device out of his pocket and places one pod in his ear. He touches it to activate it and uses it like a walkie-talkie.

ADAM

Where are you guys? It started.  
And I just had what'll probably be  
my last exposure to Jesse.

**EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS**

Close on a wooden crate with Chinese letters. SHAUN (21), a laid back space cadet in grad robes, stands in the middle of a field with the ceremony in the distance. He puts one last crate into the pile and touches a Pod of his own in his ear to speak.

SHAUN

I'd say probably second to last.

JOE (V.O.)

Shut up, Shaun!

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ADAM (V.O.)  
What are you guys up to? I thought  
we agreed we wouldn't do anything.  
It's not worth it.

**INT. DARK SPACE - CONTINUOUS**

JOE (21, Black, ), our computer whiz to complete our nerd trifecta, sits in a confined, dark space typing on his laptop, the glow of which is the only thing illuminating his face. The graduation robes he's wearing clash with the FEDORA on his head. He touches a Pod in his ear to speak with the others.

JOE  
Of course, Adam. We specifically  
promised you that we would not  
under any circumstances, conjure  
up some...

**EXT. TROJAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY - CONTINUOUS**

As Adam listens, he reaches into his pocket and retrieves a pocket-sized seemingly homemade DRONE.

JOE (V.O.)  
...elaborate scheme to finally  
stick it to that asshole on this,  
the last day of our college  
careers.

ADAM  
(to himself)  
Let's see if I can spot you bozos.

He types on his phone and the drone comes to life, rising high into the air as Adam manipulates it with his phone. He switches to his camera app and is able to see what the drone sees as it surveys the surrounding area.

**POV - DRONE**

The drone's camera can barely make out Shaun in the far distance as it zooms in as far as it can go.

**END POV**

As Adam looks at his phone and manipulates the drone, a massive SPITBALL collides with his hands and knocks the phone away. Adam looks in the direction of the projectile to see Jesse lowering a straw from his mouth. His goons high five.

**EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS**

Shaun presses a button on a black ELECTRICAL BOX with a DIGITAL CLOCK READOUT with a wire leading to the center of the pile of crates Shaun has assembled. As the clock begins to count down from 20 minutes, Shaun leaps onto a previously unseen MOTORCYCLE with a sidecar attached to it, puts on ridding goggles and kicks down on the clutch.

As the engine ignites, Adam's DRONE zig-zags through the air and CRASHES into the middle of the pile of crates. Oblivious, Shaun rides away as the broken drone SPARKS.

**INT. DARK SPACE - CONTINUOUS**

Joe furiously types on his laptop.

INSERT - LAPTOP

Joe types a line of code amongst a paragraph of code, among which we can see "APPLE IPAD SN 124573" and the word "VALEDICTORIAN."

IN THE ROOM

A KNOCK at the door jolts Joe as he finishes and closes his laptop.

JOE

Coming!

**EXT. TROJAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS**

Joe exits a PORT-A-POTTY to a line of a dozen angry people holding it in. He offers a weak apologetic smile and rushes off toward the graduation ceremony.

**EXT. TROJAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**

Joe and Shaun scurry into Adam's row and take their seats beside him. On stage, the class president speaks. Adam, Joe and Shaun converse over her remarks.

ADAM

Where were you guys?

JOE

Why is there spit on your shoes?

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SHAUN

(to Joe)

Why are you wearing a fedora?

JOE

It's a family heirloom. I got it for a graduation present. My grandpa--

A PAPER AIRPLANE hits Adam square in the head. The guys look to Jesse and his goons as they celebrate their prank and snicker.

JOE

You're gonna have to elliptical extra hard later to work off all those snickers!

SHAUN

Nice, Joe. Don't worry, Adam. Soon we'll be the ones laughing.

ADAM

You didn't.

JOE

We did. If my coding is right - and it's always right - the guy giving the valedictorian speech to the whole school will be the same guy who thought they call it guerrilla warfare because of planet of the apes.

SHAUN

He's gonna look like such an idiot.

ADAM

I specifically told you guys not to do anything like this. We're graduating. What's the point?

SHAUN

That is the point!

JOE

That asshole has been tormenting us for four years. This is our last chance to get back at him. Besides, just consider this a celebration owing to our imminent move out West.

SHAUN

I'm gonna spin the crap out of this yarn around those famous Silicon Valley watercoolers.

ADAM

Don't get ahead of yourselves. We don't have jobs yet.

JOE

Have some faith, Adam. With your electrical ingenuity, my digital infrastructure skills and Shaun's...

SHAUN

Disarming personality and natural bonhomie?

JOE

Sure. We'll get jobs in no time.

ADAM

If you say so.

JOE

I do. And I'm ready to get out of here. And after screwing whoever the real valedictorian is out of their big speech it couldn't be too soon.

ADAM

I...wouldn't worry about that.

Joe looks at Adam, who coyly smirks.

JOE

Wait...you? Why didn't you tell us! Oh my God, Adam if we knew...this is your spotlight!

ADAM

Trust me, I can do without a spotlight from a six year old safety school. No offense.

SHAUN

None taken.

JOE

It was my safety, too.

ADAM

I mean if MIT had offered me more money and I could have actually afforded to go there then yeah, you bet I'd be up there proselytizing about tech and it's relationship to this critical juncture in history and how we should strive to nurture its development like a mother nurtures a child and--

A BEACHBALL hits Adam in the head and bounces into the air. Simultaneously, on the proscenium, the lower-case letters in "Trojan Institute of Technology" sag and hang askew from their nails, clearly highlighting the upper-case letters of "TIT."

SHAUN

Here it comes!

Adam leans forward expectantly, Shaun rubs his hands together in excitement, and Joe puts a medical adhesive on the bridge of his nose. Adam and Shaun look at him quizzically.

JOE

I have a nervous septum.

COLLEGE PRESIDENT

And now without further ado, it is my pleasure to welcome to the stage your class Valedictorian...Shaun Arnolds!

The audience claps. Shaun, Adam and Joe FREEZE. Adam and Shaun turn to Joe, who has started to BLEED from the nose.

SHAUN

What do I do?

ADAM

Joe, did you...Joe?

COLLEGE PRESIDENT

Shaun Arnolds!

Adam and Shaun AD LIB whispered deliberation. Then, as if in a trance, Shaun stands and walks to the stage.

JOE

I can't believe I screwed this up. This is a disaster.

ADAM

Or...it could be the best thing  
you totally dropped the ball on.

Joe shoves Adam. On stage, the president extends her hand to Shaun. Shaun bows instead. The president hesitates a beat, then awkwardly bows again. Shaun bows again. He steps behind the podium and shares silence with the crowd. As we ZOOM IN on him, he smiles ear to ear.

INSERT - NEWS REPORT

A news report fills the screen showing Shaun's speech. He pounds the podium, gesticulates wildly, and makes a raucous speech to the crowd, which is in a visible ecstatic frenzy as the students eat up every word. Some are crying tears of glee.

NEWS ANCHOR

...seems to have been triggered by  
the smoldering remains of what  
appears to be a homemade drone-  
like device.

SHAUN

(on television)

...relationship to this critical  
juncture in history--

On this line, in the distance behind Shaun, a HUGE EXPLOSION OF FIREWORKS erupts from the spot where Shaun had planted the crates. Shaun turns to look, turns back, shrugs and smiles. The news cuts back to the anchor.

NEWS ANCHOR

The blast was heard for miles.

Suddenly the video PAUSES, accompanied simultaneously by the sound of someone hitting a computer space bar.

**INT. VAN HOULIHAN'S OFFICE - NORCAL FISHING LTD - DAY**

CHYRON: ONE MONTH LATER

Adam, in a smart button down, Joe, in a formal long sleeved sweater, and Shaun, in a tuxedo t-shirt, sit in front of a desk facing VAN HOULIHAN (37), a giant of a man with medium length curly red hair and matching beard. A card reading "Van Houlihan - Operations Supervisor" sits in front of his open laptop.

ADAM

We figured we should show that to  
you Bec--

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VAN

Wait, let me guess. You graduated with degrees in tech and moved to the San Francisco Bay Area to try and work in Silicon Valley but because of this stunt you pulled at graduation no one would hire you because you come off as a reckless liability, so you're at the end of your rope, interviewing anywhere you can in hopes of getting any job you can to sustain living in one of the most expensive cities in the United States if not the planet Earth.

JOE

Um...wow. Yeah, you kind of hit the nail on the head.

ADAM

How did you...?

Van opens a desk drawer and tosses a copy of the SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE on the desk.

VAN

You're in the paper.

Adam takes the paper and reads a headline aloud.

ADAM

"Budding Bay Area Boys' Blunder Begets Blacklisting By Big Business." This explains a lot.

Van reaches into the drawer and retrieves another newspaper, the SAN FRANCISCO CHRONIC.

VAN

You're in the shitty paper, too.

Joe takes the paper and reads a headline aloud.

JOE

"Tech Tots' Tumultuous Trick Tarnishes Talented Intentions, Toppling Trials for Employment." Wow. The line that bisects legitimacy is tissue paper thin.

SHAUN

I guess we'll just scram.

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VAN

Wait a second. Look this isn't Hewlett Packard, I'm not gonna sand your stones over a college prank. I just have one question. You're tech guys. Why didn't you apply to our I.T department?

JOE

You have that?!

ADAM

What the hell, Shaun?!

SHAUN

We've been here for three weeks! We're living off matzo and honey mustard. I thought we needed a job, like, in general. So I applied under the "general" tab.

ADAM

(to Van)

Is it too late to apply for an I.T job? Or something else more suited to our skills?

VAN

Worth a shot.

Van takes his phone off the cradle on his desk and dials.

VAN

(into phone)

Hey, Dick, you old horse thief, how's it hang...uh huh...ok. Yeah. Ok, sorry.

He hangs up.

VAN

I forgot Dick hates me.

The guys deflate.

VAN

Well, good news bad news for you guys. Good news is I'm ready to hire you right now. Bad news is I'm ready to hire you right now. What do you say?

**EXT. NORCAL FISHING LTD - MONTAGE**

Opening title sequence montage.

- 1.) Dressed in grey turtlenecks and overalls (Joe still in his fedora from graduation), the guys shovel fish guts from the surface of a boat into an industrial garbage can.
- 2.) They scrape barnacles off the sides of several boats.
- 3.) They eat lunch on a dock by the bay. Adam is busy constructing a second homemade DRONE. Shaun has an ice cream cone. A speedboat zooms by and SOAKS THEM with a wave. Shaun looks down at his fallen ice cream, forlorn.
- 4.) A raucous group of workers are gathered in a circle around a small table where an employee expertly completes a round of FIVE FINGER FILET. The worker hands his knife to Shaun, seated across from him and sweating furiously. Adam and Joe stand nervously behind. Shaun visibly gulps.
- 5.) Adam, Joe and Shaun sit on a railing as Adam uses his phone to guide his crudely put together drone as it disposes of the rotten fish for them. Van notices from inside his office and walks out to observe Adam's contraption.
- 6.) The guys stand before a conveyor belt sorting debris. Shaun removes a used condom and shoots it at Joe, who recoils and knocks into Adam, who knocks into a BURLY WORKER next to him.
- 7.) Adam, Joe and Shaun are packing up by their lockers. The burly worker from above emerges with several friends and shoves them into the lockers as Joe's fedora and Adam's drone FALL TO THE GROUND. One of the goons takes them.
- 8.) They clock out at the end of the day, their clothes soiled with blood, sweat, tears and seaweed.

**INT. GHIRARDELLI CHOCOLATE SHOP - DAY**

Adam, Joe and Shaun sit at three stools at the "bar." Joe has a full milkshake in front of him while Shaun has one empty milkshake glass and one full one in front of him. Adam forlornly moves a spoon around a bowl of ice cream.

JOE

I can't believe those assholes  
took my fedora.

ADAM

I can't believe those assholes  
took my brain child.

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SHAUN

I can't believe those assholes.

SHAUN begins to chug his milkshake.

JOE

It was a graduation present. A family heirloom. My grandpa--

UPTON (O.S.)

Woah, slow down there!

A burly, heavysset, Santa Claus-esque Ghirardelli worker approaches the trio, cleaning a milkshake glass with a rag.

UPTON

You boys eating your feelings? You look a little down in the dumps. Penny for your thoughts.

SHAUN

Can't afford it.

ADAM

We're just...not having much luck doing something fulfilling.

JOE

That's an understatement. We came out here and banked on getting good jobs and instead we're hauling chum and scraping barnacles on the docks. I don't get it. We did really well in school. This guy  
(he slaps Adam on the back)  
Was even the valedictorian.

UPTON

Oh, boys. Half this town is made up of valedictorians. So you guys put all your eggs in one basket and counted them before they hatched?

ADAM

When you put it that way...

UPTON

You've just got to do something to stand out from the rest. Carve out a niche. In the meantime, you have a place to stay, right?

SHAUN  
Sure do! Right--

Joe kicks Shaun under the table.

SHAUN  
--down the street. We live down  
the street.

UPTON  
Well, if you boys need anything  
you can find me here. Upton  
Sinclair, at your service. No  
relation.

Upton crosses away.

SHAUN  
No relation to what?

JOE  
Upton Sinclair is right. We're  
small fish in a big pond now.

SHAUN  
It's a bay.

ADAM  
No nautical metaphors off the  
clock. Let's talk at home.

**EXT. GHIRARDELLI CHOCOLATE SHOP - MOMENTS LATER**

The guys sneak around the side of the building and ascend a fire escape, their silhouettes potent against the light of the moon. One by one they let themselves into the attic of the Ghirardelli Chocolate Shop by way of a window.

JOE (V.O.)  
I'm not going to last longer than  
one more week at that place, tops.

**INT. GHIRARDELLI ATTIC - NIGHT**

The formerly abandoned attic has been converted into a crude apartment by our three protagonists. Three mattresses are on the floor as well as books, toiletries, suitcase and clothes. Joe folds some t-shirts while Adam looks out the window toward the San Francisco Bay. Shaun lies on his mattress playing with a PADDLE BALL. The noise is incessant.

JOE

And I give myself two more weeks until I can't live here anymore. I don't care of it's free.

ADAM

It's free because it's illegal.

SHAUN

Only illegal if someone finds out.

JOE

Which is becoming an increasing likelihood with your big mouth.

ADAM

Joe.

SHAUN

Maybe if you weren't such a sourpuss we'd have a better shot at getting in the door some place.

ADAM

Shaun.

JOE

Maybe we'd have a better shot of getting in the door some place if you brought any discernible skills to the table. What are you even good at?

(motions to Adam)

You glommed on to our friendship in the first week of school and hitched your wagon to our rising star.

SHAUN

Getting a lot of mileage out of that English minor, huh?

Joe approaches Shaun. Shaun gets up and makes toward Joe. Adam inserts himself between them.

ADAM

Enough. We're all frustrated but let's not take it out on each other. There's got to be something we can do while we keep looking for something we really want.

Joe and Shaun cool down and avert their eyes from each other.

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ADAM

Look. Van couldn't get through to that I.T guy but maybe we can. Or maybe we can go right to a manger and ask if they can pull some strings for us. It's worth a shot. As long as we're doing something related to what we spent the last four years learning. It beats manual labor.

SHAUN

Especially when they don't give you the manual.

Shaun resumes playing with his paddle ball. Joe opens his toiletry bag and ominously removes a pair of scissors.

**INT. OFFICE - NORCAL FISHING LTD - DAY**

The guys walk down a corridor.

ADAM

Alright, you guys ready?

JOE

I hope this works.

They round a corner to see an impassive, bald headed, muscular SECRETARY with a face tattoo sitting behind a desk outside a door that reads "STANISLAV O'DOYLE: OPERATIONS MANAGER."

SHAUN

(sotto, to Adam and Joe)

Let me handle this.

Shaun smiles ear to hear and approaches the secretary, hand outstretched to shake.

SHAUN

How now brown cow?

**INT. STANISLAV'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER**

CHYON: FIVE MINUTES LATER

Seated behind a mahogany desk in his ornate office, the austere STANISLAV O'DOYLE (50s, bald) writes in a ledger for a beat before he hears RACOUS LAUGHTER coming from outside his door. He looks up, annoyed, toward the sound. When he does, his head becomes flush with a giant ANALOG CLOCK hanging on the wall behind him, which reads ten minutes after ten o'clock.

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From this angle the hands of the clock appear to be protruding from Stanislav's head.

As the laughter continues, there is a quick rap on his door before it's opened by the secretary wiping tears of laughter away from his face.

SECRETARY

Sorry to interrupt Mr. O'Doyle. I have three gentlemen here who are asking for five minutes and I wanted to see if you're available.

Stanislav stares at him before slowly raising his wrist to check his watch, then just as deliberately lowers it.

STANISLAV

Five minutes.

SECRETARY

(to the guys)  
Go on in.

Stanislav returns to writing as Adam, Joe and Shaun enter and approach a chair before his desk. After an expectant beat, Shaun offers the chair to Joe, who offers it to Shaun, who offers it back to Joe. Exasperated, Adam goes to sit down but just as he does, Stanislav finishes writing and looks up. Adam awkwardly straightens himself. With a Russian first name and Irish surname, Stanislav's has an American Southern accent.

STANISLAV

What can I do for you?

SHAUN

Wow. A human melting pot.

Everyone looks at Shaun. Stanislav blinks.

SHAUN

(sotto, embarrassed)  
Read the room, Shaun.

ADAM

Mr. O'Doyle, first let me say thank you. We're new to the city, even new to the coast. We were really struggl--

STANISLAV

Did you rehearse this?

ADAM

I...wrote it down.



Stanislav points to Shaun.

STANISLAV  
You. What do you want?

SHAUN  
Like...in general?

Stanislav turns to Joe expectantly only to see Joe frozen and his nose bleeding.

STANISLAV  
Nice to meet a fellow wordsmith.

ADAM  
(blurting out)  
We wanted to see you to ask for different jobs! We're dockhands but we went to school for computer science and wondered if there was any room in I.T or something or anywhere that's closer to what we're skilled in.

Stanislav stares through the three of them for a beat.

STANISLAV  
I'm familiar with you. I've read your resumes. Aside from some minor collegiate indiscretions that do nothing more than mire your personalities you seem competent enough.

SHAUN  
We admire your personality too, sir.

Shaun surreptitiously shoots Adam and Joe a thumbs up.

STANISLAV  
Either way, the jobs you're asking for either don't exist or--

Stanislav's phone rings. He picks it up on the first ring.

STANISLAV  
Yes.

As he listens, his face becomes PALE.

STANISLAV  
That's impossible. Check again.

He hangs up and rubs his chin with his hand, forgetting the guys are there. The phone rings again and Stanislav immediately picks it up. After a few seconds he returns the phone to its cradle, moves to a window behind his desk and looks out. Adam, Joe and Shaun exchange impotent looks before Stanislav turns on his heel and briskly exits his office and shutting the door.

SHAUN  
(re: phone call)  
My money's on an old flame.

Shaun gets up and sits Stanislav's chair.

JOE  
So much for this idea.

Curious, Adam gets up and crosses to the window Stanislav was looking through.

ADAM'S POV

The window overlooks the wharf. A dozen workers are standing around confused as a LARGE OCEAN FREIGHTER comes to a slow stop a few yards from the wharf. The ship is solid crimson with the name "MARLENE" etched onto the side, along with a DOUBLE HELIX insignia next to the name.

Adam can see Van talking to a man with a clipboard, both of them intermittently pointing to the ship. Stanislav appears and begins SCREAMING at the employees on the dock before marching up to Van, wildly gesticulating toward the freighter.

EXIT POV

ADAM  
What the hell?

JOE  
What?

ADAM  
O'Doyle's blowing his stack over this huge ship with "Marlene" painted on the side.

JOE  
Marlene?

SHAUN  
Told you. Old flame. Pay up.

Joe takes out his phone and begins navigating it while Adam returns his vision to the window.

ADAM POV

Adam continues to snoop as Stanislav continues to speak heatedly with Van while his workers scurry around him.

JOE (O.S.)  
Huh. This is weird.

SHAUN (O.S.)  
What?

JOE (O.S.)  
I wonder if I can...

SHAUN (O.S.)  
What are you doing?

JOE (O.S.)  
Hang on...

As Adam watches the commotion, suddenly the freighter emits a loud HONK from its horn, causing everyone on the wharf to look to it in alarm. Behind Adam, Joe begins to laugh.

EXIT POV

JOE  
Oh my God I can't believe that worked!

ADAM  
Was that you?!

SHAUN  
No way. You remotely made a ship blare its horn in less than a minute and you couldn't seal the deal at graduation?

JOE  
I'm not taking flack for graduation anymore, I just hacked into an ocean freighter. Besides, this was easy. Look.

Joe gets up and shows Adam and Joe his phone, where we see "MARLENE" is an option in his wifi settings.

JOE  
The thing is online. It must have some kind of connectivity.

Adam turns back to the window.

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ADAM POV

The chaos on the dock is more palpable following the honk.

SHAUN (O.S.)  
Is that a thing?

JOE (O.S.)  
Sure. You ever hear of OTA  
software updates? Places like  
Tesla can update their cars  
remotely cause all their stuff is  
connected.

As Stanislav and Van continue looking around in confusion, Stanislav's gaze finds his office window where Adam looks out. As Adam makes distant eye contact with Stanislav, he immediately pulls away from the window.

EXIT POV

ADAM  
I think he saw me.

SHAUN  
Who?

Stanislav's desk phone rings. The guys all look at it. After a couple rings, Shaun reaches to pick it up. Adam and Joe lunge to stop him but it's too late.

SHAUN  
Hello?

Shaun puts the receiver down.

SHAUN  
They hung up.

ADAM  
Why would you--

The secretary throws the door open.

SECRETARY  
Time to go.

JOE  
Should we reschedule?

SECRETARY  
Time to go.

The guys head toward the door and silently exit. Shaun, the last one to leave, fist bumps the secretary as he goes.

**EXT. NORCAL FISHING LTD - EVENING**

Adam punches his time card into a machine to clock out for the day, followed by Joe and Shaun. They all look tired and helpless. As they walk away toward the street, Adam turns and takes one more look "Marlene" anchored out in the bay.

MATCH CUT TO:

**INT. SECURITY ROOM - NORCAL FISHING LTD - NIGHT**

Adam's view of "Marlene" match cuts to a SECURITY FEED fixed on the ship. We PAN OUT to reveal the screen is one of many inside a security room. A lone GUARD sits before a CONTROL PANEL with a dozen screens showing live CCTV security footage of NorCal LTD's surrounding property. The guard has his feet up on his desk and is reading a book called "How To Talk To Your Kid About Divorce." As he leafs through the book, we slowly ZOOM IN on one of the security screens to see live footage of Van exiting his office.

MATCH CUT TO:

**EXT. VAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

The security footage of Van match cuts to the real thing. As Van locks the door to his trailer-like office on the dock, he glances up at the adjacent security camera as it watches him.

MATCH CUT TO:

**INT. SECURITY ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

The security feed fixed on Van's office shows him looking straight into the camera. Van breaks his gaze and briskly walks away, out of sight of the camera. The guard continues ignoring the feed as he closes his book, places it on the floor off camera, and comes back up with another book. He places his feet back on the desk and opens the book to an ear-marked page. The book is "How To Represent Yourself In Court For Dummies."

Suddenly there are two quick RAPS on the door and Van lets himself in.

VAN

Hey Mack, how's the family?

MACK

What do you want, Fool-ihan?

VAN

You're gonna be like that when I was about to do you a favor?

MACK

What are you talking about?

Van pulls a \$50 out of his pocket and holds it up to Mack.

VAN

Why don't you take a break for an hour. There's something I want to check out.

MACK

I thought you said last time was the last time.

VAN

Come on. Donny needs a new pair of shoes.

MACK

What?

VAN

Isn't Donny your son?

MACK

Oh, yeah. No wonder Jen's leaving.

Mack gets up and snatches the money out of Van's hand.

MACK

One hour. And next time it's a hundred.

Mack leaves. Van takes a seat in front of the security feeds. He finds the screen showing a live feed of "Marlene" in the background and the dock in the foreground. He touches a button on the control panel before him and rewinds the feed. He pushes another button and the screen displays an earlier feed of when the ship honked. On screen, Stanislav looks up at something off screen, takes out his cell phone, dials, then hangs up and briskly walks away.

Van rewinds and FREEZES the picture on Stanislav's face when he noticed Adam in his office window. Van leans back and rubs his chin. Then he stands up, points into the distance where the wharf would be, and tries to trace Stanislav's gaze with his hand in an attempt to discern where he was looking.

Van squints, mind racing. He's got it.

He sits back down and finds another live camera feed which shows the outside of Stanislav's office. The secretary sits on duty. Van rewinds this tape and stops to see Adam, Joe and Shaun walk into Stanislav's office. Van grabs a nearby notebook and pencil and writes down the TIMECODE of when the guys entered.

He looks up and writes down the timecode of when Stanislav looked up at Adam offscreen. Then, he FAST FORWARDS the tape outside Stanislav's office. When Adam, Joe and Shaun exit, he writes down this third timecode. Van looks at the three codes, lost in thought. Then he gets up and heads for the door.

**EXT. FISHERMAN'S WHARF - NIGHT**

Adam, Joe and Shaun walk down the street toward Ghirardelli. Shaun licks a two-scoop ice cream cone.

JOE

...Probably have enough to split a motel room for a couple weeks. I'm so tired of using the bathroom at Jack-in-the-Box. I think they're starting to notice me.

SHAUN

Then stop bringing the newspaper.

The guys approach Ghirardelli.

ADAM

Ok. Coast clear?

The guys make sure the route to their fire escape is clear.

SHAUN

Annnnd go!

They start toward the fire escape but just as they do a BLACK SEDAN ZOOMS IN FRONT OF THEM, breaking hard at their feet. One of Shaun's ice cream scoops drops to the ground. The tinted passenger side window of the car rolls down to reveal VAN.

VAN

Boys.

ADAM

What the hell?

VAN

Get in.

JOE

What's going o--

Van brings a hand up and points a BLACK PISTOL at the guys.

VAN

Get in.

Shaun's second scoop of ice cream falls to the ground.

**INT. VAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The apartment is a mess with boxes, papers and food containers everywhere. A couch in the center of the room faces a blank wall, in front of which sits an EASEL with a large rectangular shape on it, covered by a sheet. Van, still holding the gun behind the guys, motions to the couch.

VAN

Have a seat.

The guys sit, petrified. Van, still holding the gun, stands before them, next to the sheet covered easel. He takes a deep breath and clears his throat.

VAN

So, um...can I get you anything?  
Water? Wine? I have a Beaujolais  
in the kitchen.  
(off their terrified silence)  
Ok. Right. So. What you are about  
to see doesn't leave this room.  
Got it?

The guys nod furiously. Van takes another deep breath, then pulls the sheet away from the easel with a flourish. The guys stare at what it covered, dumbfounded.

JOE

(deadpan, incredulous)  
What.

Reveal the guys are looking at a large cork board with photos of people and places relating to NorCal Fishing LTD with yarn criss-crossing every which way between the photos. Stanislav's photo is at the top of this investigative tree. Adam notices the DOUBLE HELIX symbol from "Marlene" in a picture on the board as well. Van clocks this.

VAN

NorCal Fishing LTD. On the surface  
it may seem like an innocuous  
fishing company. To the untrained  
eye I'd forgive such a gross  
mischaracterization. But my eyes  
are fully trained.

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SHAUN

In what?

VAN

Policing! Perception, inspection, detection and when the time calls for it, introspection.

JOE

So you're an undercover cop?

VAN

Not exactly.

ADAM

What does that mean?

VAN

I used to be a detective for the SFPD.

ADAM

What happened?

VAN

In a word? Politics.

SHAUN

How about in two words?

VAN

Corrupt politics.

Van slaps the gun on Stanislav's face on the corkboard. During his speech he absentmindedly waves the gun in wild gesticulation, to the intermittent flinching of the guys.

VAN

The man you met today, Stanislav O'Doyle, is a man possessed by routine. I've worked there six years and it's been six years of impeccable sameness for the guy every day. That ship that came in earlier? Look. I'm the operations supervisor. I know how the place hums. And I'm here to tell you that according to every manifest that ship doesn't exist. And O'Doyle is somehow familiar with it. I've never seen him so angry. The only reason a man gets that angry is because he's afraid. What's he afraid of?

Van heads toward the kitchen. The guys crane their necks and watch after him. As Van speaks, he assembles three wine glasses and searches in some cabinets for wine.

VAN

What's he hiding? This whole operation is some kind of veneer. Some kind of "Oz the Great and Powerful" type situation. There's a curtain that needs drawing.

Van places a bottle of wine on the counter and corks it with a POP. He continues as he pours three glasses.

VAN

This afternoon wasn't just a mistake. It's a slip up. It's a macguffin, a smoking gun. Maybe a red herring but it's finally something!

Van returns with the three glasses of wine.

JOE

None of this makes sense. If you were a cop what are you doing working administration at a fishing company?

VAN

Look. I was a good detective. I was kind of like you. My expertise was cyber security. About as tech of a tech job a cop could have. I was born to do it. It was my life. But someone had it out for me and made sure I was fired. Being fired from the police sort of blacklists you from doing the things you were trained to do. Couldn't do private security, couldn't contract myself out. No one would hire me. I tried being a bouncer but I quit cause I don't like saying no to people. I'm too amenable. Beaujolais?

He offers them the wine. They absentmindedly take the glasses.

VAN

I got the only job I could find at NorCal Fishing. I needed the money.

VAN

Hours aren't too bad, I can manage my time how I like, and the 72 grand a year didn't hurt either. The older you get the more that stuff matters. So I got cozy. I got stuck. But I never stopped exercising what I'm really good at. What I was born to do. I have a feeling about things and I'm good at doing my homework. Look, I know this seems crazy. But something about this place doesn't feel right and I need your help pinpointing what that is. I have my hunches, as you can see. But they're hunches. This ship coming it could be a real opportunity.

ADAM

What makes you think we're the ones who can help?

VAN

You guys went over my head to hustle Stanislav O'Doyle, the stone chiseled Mona Lisa of the Pacific Northwest fishing industry. That took guts. I can use guts. More importantly, I can use brains. I've noticed you guys. Adam, you cooked up that contraption to help on the dock. You're creative, ingenious, and good with your hands. Joe, I know it was you who sounded that horn. You bypassed a secure server. Let me be the first to suggest how unlikely that was of happening.

JOE

It wasn't that big a deal. It's just a fish company.

VAN

That remains to be seen.

SHAUN

Do me next!

VAN

Shaun, in less than five minutes you endeared yourself to O'Doyle's secretary, Skull Crusher Kupinsky.

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VAN

There's enormous value in your unique combination of--

SHAUN

Hail-fellow-well-met joie-de-vivre and laissez-faire nonchalance?

VAN

That is word for word exactly what I was going to say.

Shaun beams, maybe even tears up.

ADAM

But what exactly do you want us to do?

VAN

Glad you asked.

Van removes a key from his pocket and tosses it to Joe.

VAN

Joe, Shaun, use this to get into the server room tomorrow. Get into the system and do some digging. Take a closer look at some of the code. I'll take care of the cameras looking out to the "Marlene" because Adam, I want you onboard.

ADAM

What?

Van points to the double helix on the cork board.

VAN

Recognize this? I like that prying eye of yours.

Van opens a drawer in an adjacent table, removes a disposable camera, and tosses it to Adam.

VAN

See what you can find on board. So. What do you guys say?

JOE

I mean you're the one with the gun so I guess we have no choice.

VAN

Sure you do. I'm not a monster.

Van points the gun at Shaun and pulls the trigger. A STREAM OF WATER hits him in the chest. There's a stunned beat. Joe shakes in anger.

JOE

We were sitting here for the last ten minutes thinking that at any moment you could literally KILL US, and the whole time you just had a WATER GUN?

VAN

Well, yeah. If this were real I'd be a criminal. This was more of a...psychological tactic.

Joe stands up.

JOE

How's this for a psychological tactic? We're leaving.

VAN

Wait! I'm sorry. It was an emergency and I had no time. Look, I can help you guys. I've been you guys. I can help you make sure you don't turn out like me and wake up in 10 years and realize you've been wasting your talent for a decade. I told you digital security used to be my bag. Do this for me and I can make some calls. I don't know the CEO of Microsoft or anything but I have a small rolodex. I can see if I can get you something more suited to what you want to do. What do you say?

JOE

What do we SAY?

Suddenly Joe's anger dissipates in a flash as he gets an idea.

JOE

Do you have any cheese to go with this wine?

VAN

Do I!

Van scurries into the kitchen. Adam turns to Joe.

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ADAM  
What the hell was that?

SHAUN  
If we're taking a vote, I'm in.  
This guy gets me.

JOE  
I can't believe I'm saying this  
but I'm in, too.

ADAM  
What happened? You were about to  
huff and puff and blow his house  
down.

JOE  
I don't want to do this. This  
guy's crazy. He's like Yukon  
Cornelius meets the Warren  
Commission. But if he's in a  
position to owe us and he can make  
some calls I say we don't have  
much to lose.

SHAUN  
Yeah, and maybe he can help us in  
other ways, too. You heard him. He  
makes seventy two thousand a year.  
He's rich.

ADAM  
You didn't also think anything he  
had to say was...compelling?

JOE  
Not really. But I'm in if you are.  
All you have to do is dick around  
for a few minutes on that boat,  
tell him there's nothing there and  
then we cash in.

Adam hesitates, then raises a fist for Joe to bump, which he does. Van reenters with a place of different cheeses and a glass of wine for himself.

ADAM  
We'll do it.

Van excitedly pumps his hand, spilling some wine on Shaun's already wet shirt.

VAN  
Yes! You won't be sorry.

Van raises his glass to toast. The guys raise theirs.

VAN  
To the truth!

JOE  
To getting a better job.

SHAUN  
To changing shirts.

**INT. HALLWAY - NORCAL FISHING LTD - DAY**

Joe and Shaun, ear pods intact, wait around a corner as two WORKERS (one male, one female) exit a room marked "SOFTWARE" and lock up behind them.

ADAM (V.O)  
How's it going, guys?

JOE  
(touching his earpod)  
Stand by.

The workers walk past Joe and Shaun, who have their backs turned and pretending to be busy.

MALE WORKER  
Kind of chilly for June, huh?

FEMALE WORKER  
Stop trying to win me back, Gene.

When the workers pass, Joe and Shaun make for the door.

**EXT. NORCAL FISHING LTD - DOCK - CONTINUOUS**

Van stands at the front of a dock that leads to the bay. Several workers approach. Van holds up a hand.

VAN  
Sorry, guys. Minor oil spill. Head over to dock 18 and help those guys clean up. Should be alright here in a little bit.

The workers shuffle away. Van nervously looks behind him, where we can see Adam getting ready to shove off in a dinghy.

**INT. SECURITY ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Joe pours over a screen of code, transfixed.

JOE

Even for a freighter that big  
there's a huge amount of  
electrical power in this thing. I  
don't get it. It's just a fishing  
boat.

Shaun doesn't respond, equally transfixed in a YouTube video called "Ocean To Table: The Journey of a Fish."

**EXT. MARLENE - DAY**

Adam swings his legs over the railing of the ship and plops himself on the deck. He looks around for a beat before proceeding further.

**INT. LOCKER ROOM - MARLENE**

Adam enters a locker room. He opens several large, floor to ceiling lockers but finds nothing of interest. He's about to leave when he stops in this tracks. VOICES are heard approaching. Looking around in panic, Adam quickly opens a locker and hides inside.

The GOONS from the title sequence enter. They pass a lit joint around and sit/lie down on the benches. One of them wears Joe's fedora. Adam watches through the slits in the locker.

ADAM POV

BULLY #1

You get that thing to work yet?

BULLY #2

Nah. Got to find that loser kid.

He pulls out Adam's drone from his pocket and sets it on a bench before taking off Joe's fedora and putting it ON TOP OF THE DRONE.

EXIT POV

**INT. LOCKER**

Adam slowly reaches down to his pocket and pulls out his phone. He navigates for a beat, then looks up through the slits.

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**INT. LOCKER ROOM**

Slowly, the fedora drone RISES INTO THE AIR. The goons don't notice at first. The drone rises higher so it's parallel to their heads. As the goons laugh and blow smoke, one of them suddenly turns pale. Through the smoke he sees the MAGICALLY FLOATING FEDORA. He points to it in horror as the other goons notice. The fedora suddenly SHOOTS across the air and SLAMS into the chest of one of the goons, knocking him over the bench he was sitting on and onto the floor. Adam pinballs the drone/fedora against the goons as they scream in terror.

BULLY #1

It knows we're high!!

The fedora keeps ramming into the goons as they run screaming out of the locker room. The fedora drone then sinks back down and rests on the bench.

**INT. LOCKER**

Adam puts his phone away, a huge smile on his face. He goes to exit the locker but the door won't budge. His face falls. He slams himself against the locker. It's stuck.

ADAM

No, no, no, no.

Adam frantically bangs up against the door until suddenly the BACK OF THE LOCKER GIVES WAY and he falls backward into...

**INT. SECRET CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS**

Adam lands on his back with a THUD. The locker ahead of him finally creaks open. He gets up and looks around. The space is no larger than an office, empty save for an old REFRIGERATOR against the far wall with the impressions of several more outlined in dust around it. The DOUBLE HELIX SYMBOL is etched on the fridge door. Dumbstruck, Adam makes his way to the fridge and opens it.

His jaw drops.

Inside sits a jar full of mysterious fluid. Amidst the fluid, floating peacefully, is a complete, untarnished, HUMAN BRAIN. A piece of tape on the jar reads "Jackson, David C." A FLASH DRIVE lies in a baggie next to the jar. Adam, mouth agape, brings the disposable camera up to his face and takes a shot.

Then he takes the flash drive.

**EXT. NORCAL FISHING LTD - DOCK - AFTERNOON**

Joe and Shaun sit on a dock by the bay.

SHAUN

So then they sort them, clean them, separate all the stuff they don't want, package them up and off they go. Right to the market, restaurant, grocery store, whatever!

JOE

You're describing exactly what we've been doing for the past two weeks.

SHAUN

Yeah, but I didn't know the context. Where's Adam?

JOE

He said he'd meet us here.

Shaun notices the dinghy out in the bay. Shaun nods to it.

SHAUN

That's probably him. Hey, set up that ship horn code from yesterday. This'll be so funny.

Joe chuckles, types on his phone, then hands it to Shaun.

SHAUN

Hey, Joe.

Shaun taps the phone. The ship honks for a beat before BOOM! The entire vessel EXPLODES IN A GIANT FIREBALL.

**EXT. BAY - CONTINUOUS**

Adam is thrown overboard by the force of the blast.

UNDERWATER

Adam hovers underwater, seeing the USB and the disposable camera sink to the bottom of the bay. He tries to swim after it but it's no use. He kicks up toward the surface.

**EXT. NORCAL FISHING LTD - DOCK - CONTINUOUS**

Joe and Shaun sit on the dock, mouths agape, gazing at the carnage. Without looking, Shaun reaches over with Joe's phone.

SHAUN

Here's your phone back.

Joe scrambles to his feet and runs full steam toward a collection of dinghies anchored by the shore.

JOE

Come on!!

**EXT. NORCAL FISHING LTD - MINUTES LATER**

Van SPRINTS in the direction of the boat, panic stricken as the sounds of SIRENS approach in the distance. He reaches the area where Joe and Shaun just were and sees them headed to Adam's dinghy in a row boat. Suddenly, he hears a voice behind him.

MYSTERIOUS MAN

I should have known you had something to do with this.

Van turns but his body blocks the person speaking.

MYSTERIOUS MAN

Hello, Houlihan.

**EXT. SAN FRANCISCO BAY - AFTERNOON**

Joe and Shaun approach Adam sitting on his capsized dinghy.

SHAUN

Hey, did someone order a pizza?  
Wait I can do better. Hey...did someone ord--

JOE

Hop down, Adam!

Adam slides off the dinghy and onto Joe and Shaun's boat.

JOE

Are you ok? Are you in shock?

ADAM

I'm fine.

SHAUN

I can't believe Joe almost killed you.

ADAM

That was you?!

JOE

It wasn't me! It couldn't have been. Shaun wanted to do the horn thing again! I wrote that code yesterday and it worked. I haven't touched it since.

ADAM

Wait. You're saying the code you wrote did this?

JOE

There's no way. It's impossible.

ADAM

I'm not sure I know what's possible anymore. Guys...you're not gonna believe this.

**EXT. WHARF - DUSK**

Reporters, firemen, police, and locals navigate the scene. A REPORTER addresses a camera.

MAGGIE

The blast was heard for miles. No cause has yet been determined but preliminary reports suggest a gas leak is likely, a possible result of faulty piping in what could only be described as a hack job.

Adam, Joe and Shaun sit on the back of an adjacent ambulance. Joe, nose COVERED IN BLOOD, holds a roll of paper towels underneath it.

ADAM

Don't be so hard on yourself, Joe.

JOE

I just don't understand it. It had to be the code. You weren't there, Adam. It was instantaneous.

ADAM

Joe.

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ADAM

There's no way you did anything wrong. You're the best coder I know.

SHAUN

Adam's right. And considering what he found on the ship I'd guess something really is up at this place. This only proves it.

JOE

Have you guys seen Van?

SHAUN

Not since this morning. What do we do now?

ADAM

He won't go anywhere. Not with what we found. Not with what we know. We're in this now.

In the distance, Adam notices Stanislav, Van and another police officer walk toward Stanislav's office. Van notices Adam and returns his gaze with a knowing stare. He nods discreetly.

JOE

My god, what a day. Icing on the cake is I'll never see that fedora again.

SHAUN

I don't know, Joe. It might wash up somewhere.

JOE

It was a family heirloom. My grandpa was wearing it when he was murdered.

Adam and Shaun's eyes go wide. They turn to Joe and AD LIB questions ("what?" "You never told us..." "How was he...") as we move past the trio, moving out over the bay, the sounds of the wharf receding until they fall quiet as we move...

#### **EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS**

As we drift deeper into the black, a sudden bright light illuminates the USB stick in the muck. A mechanical CLAW extends into frame and extracts it stick from the deep.

END OF EPISODE

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