

THE ADVENTURES OF NEGATIVE ERIC

Episode One

"Negative Eric Goes To Space"

written by

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INT. PATTY'S APARTMENT - DAY

We're in a tidy, nondescript apartment, the result of either meticulous cleaning or a lack of possessions. In the case of PATTY (23, frumpy, frizzy, self-possessed yet insecure), it is the latter. We dolly through her apartment, taking in the stark emptiness as we hear her speaking off screen.

PATTY (O.S.)

It just doesn't make sense to me anymore. The fact that it's been six full months. Time is supposed to help. You're supposed to wake up one day and it's over. You're supposed to wake up one day and say "look at that, I'm over it." But the trouble is still waking up. Maybe six months isn't enough time. But I feel like it should be. I just...don't know what to do. My mind is a...miasma...of...cacophony...cacophonous...no.

We dolly down a hallway, the voice pulling us towards it until we...

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Patty sits on the toilet, talking to herself.

PATTY

A miasma of...tumultuous...a miasma of indecision. It might not be all bad. Unless I've adopted this miasma around me as the status quo.

She smirks, but her face falls just as fast.

PATTY

I hope not.

She holds her position for a beat before turning and noticing there's no more toilet paper on the roll adjacent her. She stares at it before turning her head back forward and starts to cry.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. NEGATIVE ERIC'S APARTMENT - DAY

MUSIC CUE: "Tubas in the Moonlight" by The Bonzo Dog Band.

The apartment is in a state of squalor as we're introduced to it in a series of shots: a dirty kitchen is littered with dirty plates, empty bottles, fast food bags, crumbs, etc. The living room isn't much better and includes STACKS of TRADER JOES FEARLESS FLYERS. Where Patty's apartment was nearly unfurnished and unburdened by familiarity, Eric's is a den of neglected filth.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

NEGATIVE ERIC (24), though presently asleep, wears his ever present uniform: baggy jeans, a two-sizes-too-big flannel and what seems like a permanently situated ski cap. He's faintly dirty and his face bears the suggestion of a five o'clock shadow, though he can barely even grow enough facial hair for that.

He stirs in bed and leans up. We are behind him, seeing what he sees as he takes in his barely livable room. He reaches over to a bedside table and grabs a pair of SUNGLASSES that he immediately puts on (he will never take them off and we will never see his eyes).

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Eric sits on the toilet, groggy and listless. It's another day. He brings a beer can up to his lips and takes a swig.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Eric stands holding the beer can and looking out a window in his living room. His view consists of a Taco Bell directly opposite his apartment, on the other side of a narrow alley.

A BILLBOARD towers above the Taco Bell, advertising the company "SpaceX" and featuring a photo of a spaceship and the slogan "Launch." Eric kills the beer, crushes the can and tosses it in an old Amazon box overflowing with empty beer cans.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Negative Eric dumps a quarter-full bottle of white wine (or is it wine?) down the sink. He smells the bottle neck when he's finished and recoils.

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INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Negative Eric takes several open beer cans off a stack of Trader Joe's Fearless Flyers. He shakes them to assess their emptiness.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Negative Eric eats a piece of toast with unmelted cheese on it while he pours the contents of the beer cans into one can, effectively filling a new, whole can with the remnants of the leftover alcoholic backwash. He drinks it down.

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

Negative Eric rides the subway and looks impassively at his depressing surroundings. A middle aged HOMELESS MAN stands in the middle of the subway car, proselytizing to whoever will listen. Around his neck he wears a makeshift sign featuring a huge blunt that says, "Let's Be Blunt, I Need One."

Eric bends down and removes a bottle of 40oz malt liquor from a brown paper bag and opens it. It EXPLODES in his face. The subway stops and, in the rush of people going off and on, PATTY enters. She stands at the pole and uses it to stretch as she waits for the train to move. She gives the homeless man a dollar.

EXT. GRIFFITH PARK - DAY

Negative Eric walks through the park with mountains in the background, finding nothing of note or interest as he passes a children's birthday party by a large merry-go-round and kicks a rock intermittently in front of him.

PATTY, dressed as a clown, sits in a chair painting the faces of the party-goers, most of whom stand in line while staring at iPads, iPhones and even a few Smart Watches. Patty paints with her comically large clown gloves on. As a result, she sucks at it (not that any of the kids particularly notice or care).

EXT. HOLLYWOOD - DAY

Negative Eric walks along Hollywood Boulevard amongst the weirdos and costumed characters, finding nothing of interest or appreciation. A TOURIST bumps into him and flips him off.

Eric walks past PATTY, who is crouched on the ground, fitting her hand into the pressed cement of another's outside the Chinese Theater. She still has remnants of her clown makeup on her face.

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EXT. DOWNTOWN LA - DAY

Negative Eric walks the streets of Downtown LA, milling about amongst the homeless, the dirty streets, the balance of impressive and oppressive architecture.

As he passes the Grand Central Market, he walks past PATTY, sitting at an outdoor table eating a breakfast sandwich from "Eggslut" directly beneath the company sign. Eric's unhurried gait shuffles past as a young INFLUENCER (19) rushes into the scene as he leaves frame. Over the influencer's dialogue, Patty conspicuously leaves without finishing her sandwich.

INFLUENCER

Hey, subscribers! I love eggs and
I'm a huge slut, so you KNOW I
stan--

(breaking, to cameraman)

Ugh, stop. Let's do it again.

(regaining composure)

Hola, subscribers!

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS - DAY

Negative Eric walks amongst the industry and wealth of Beverly Hills, gazing at the clean cut white men in suits barking deals into their cell phones and complaining about their botched guided ayahuasca trips.

Patty stands on a sidewalk as Eric passes. She's trying to figure out how to work a Bird scooter. Frustrated, she accidentally knocks it over, causing several others next to it to fall like dominos.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Negative Eric walks down the beach with the ocean in the background. He stops to watch a group of people attempting to push a BEACHED WHALE back into the sea. One of them is Patty.

Eric glances up to the sky and watches an AIRPLANE glide effortlessly higher, its SMOKE TRAIL dutifully following it. He returns his gaze to the whale and looks into its helpless eyes. The whale gazes back at it and Eric stare at each other.

EXT. 405 HIGHWAY - EVENING

Negative Eric walks down the shoulder of the 405 pulling a SHOPPING CART full of BOOKS, old CAR PARTS and SCRAP METAL.

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The shopping cart is tethered by rubber bungees to another shopping cart, which is tethered to another. There are four or five shopping carts in this makeshift train in total, each full to the brim with sundry scrap and technical manuals.

INT. PATTY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Patty zooms down the highway in a crappy old mid-90s Ford Probe convertible. She's wearing a six foot long WHITE SILK SCARF that blows in the wind a comically long distance behind her. She notices Eric's shopping cart promenade on the shoulder and does a double take.

"Tubas in the Moonlight" comes to an end over the soundtrack.

EXT. NEGATIVE ERIC'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Negative Eric's apartment building has one-car parking enclosures built into the side of the building that faces the Taco Bell (the Taco Bell and the apartment building are separated by a thin, one way alley).

Eric's space (the middle of five spaces) has a tarp hanging to cover the entrance, and sporadic BURSTS OF LIGHT and noise from a WELDER can be seen/heard from behind it, as well as music by "Dr. Hook."

INT. PATTY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Patty gets into the Taco Bell drive-thru queue and notices the lights and sparks coming from Eric's space to her right. She squints and furrows her brow in remembrance when she notices the same SHOPPING CART TRAIN she saw Eric corralling the night before parked outside the tarp. She looks forward, seeing it's her turn to order at the menu.

After a beat, she peels out of the queue and SCREECHES down the thin alley off screen. A couple of beats later, she emerges from off screen and walks up to the tarp. She pushes some of it aside and pokes her head in.

INT. PARKING SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Eric, wearing the same clothes plus a welding helmet, is working on fusing two pieces of metal together. "Dr. Hook" keeps playing from a giant BOOMBOX on the floor. Patty's head emerges around the tarp.

She doesn't proceed further, so her head looks as if it's suspended in mid-air as she sees Eric ahead of her and takes in the entire space: it's littered with SCRAP METAL, GAS CANISTERS, PROPANE TANKS, FAST FOOD BAGS, GIANT BOOKS and some bottles of 40 OZ MALT LIQUOR.

A few seconds pass before Eric slowly stops welding, sensing the presence behind him. He turns around and lifts his helmet to look at Patty. Beneath the mask, he's STILL WEARING HIS SUNGLASSES. Eric and Patty stare at each other for a beat. It's hard to tell who is more surprised by who.

PATTY

Hello.

NEGATIVE ERIC

I could have been naked.

PATTY

That would mean you'd be welding naked.

Eric fluidly reaches into his shirt pocket and retrieves a cigarillo. He unflinchingly lights it with his welding torch.

NEGATIVE ERIC

That's my prerogative.

Patty walks into the space, letting the tarp close behind her.

NEGATIVE ERIC

Hey, wait a second.

PATTY

What is this place? What are you doing?

NEGATIVE ERIC

Who the hell are you?

Patty picks up a huge book from a cardboard box on the floor and examines it. It is "Theoretical Aerodynamics."

PATTY

I saw you last night driving home. With all the shopping carts. Most people go days without seeing anything different. And that was really different. I wondered what in the world you could possibly be doing. Now here you are again and I can just ask.

She tosses the book back in the box.

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NEGATIVE ERIC
Where did you come from?

PATTY
The Taco Bell drive thru. I saw
the lights.

Patty picks up a large, welded metal frame.

PATTY
What's this for?

Eric puts down his welding torch.

NEGATIVE ERIC
Assault and battery if you don't
clear out of here.

Eric tries to grab the frame from Patty but she holds on, entering into a tug of war. The Dr. Hook song "Lookin' for Pussy" comes on over the boombox as the two struggle.

PATTY
I just want to look at it! I've
never welded anything before.

NEGATIVE ERIC
I'm gonna call the cops!

Just as the (embarrassing if you're in public) chorus of the song comes in, a GUST OF WIND blows the tarp away, leaving Eric, Patty and the contents of Eric's space exposed.

Directly in front of the space, sitting in the Taco Bell drive thru, is a POLICE CAR, right in the middle of Eric and Patty's line of sight. The cop in the passenger seat looks at Eric and Patty. The cop in the drivers seat, previously unseen, leans forward so that we see him looking at Eric and Patty as well. Eric and Patty freeze.

PATTY
How'd you do that?

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Eric signs something at the front desk. A POLICE OFFICER behind the desk slides him his belongings: a mostly full pack of cigarillos.

NEGATIVE ERIC
License to weld my fat ass.

EXT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Eric lights up a cigarillo as he walks out of the station. He walks past Patty, who is leaning up against the building waiting for him.

PATTY

I can take you back home.

Eric jumps, having not noticed her.

NEGATIVE ERIC

What are you doing here? It's cause of you I'm out a night of work. I don't even know who you are. Leave me alone.

PATTY

But you don't even know who I am! Come on, I feel bad. Least I can do. What were you making in that little cave anyway?

NEGATIVE ERIC

It's a parking space.

PATTY

Where's your car?

NEGATIVE ERIC

Don't have one.

PATTY

Good, my '96 probe could use the company.

Eric stops and turns to her.

NEGATIVE ERIC

I'm trying to get the fuck out of here. That's what I'm doing.

PATTY

Ok. To the probe!

NEGATIVE ERIC

No. I'm trying to get the fuck out of here so I can avoid people like you.

PATTY

People like me?

NEGATIVE ERIC

People.

PATTY
You're a people.

NEGATIVE ERIC
Just leave me alone.

PATTY
But I'm interested in you.

NEGATIVE ERIC
Why?

PATTY
Because I feel like you're
different. And I feel like I'm
different. And I know how much
that can suck.

Eric walks off.

NEGATIVE ERIC
I can handle myself.

INT. PATTY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Patty lies in bed typing on her phone, her face illuminated by the screen. She clicks her volume all the way up. "Lookin' for Pussy" starts playing again. She places her phone on the pillow next to her and listens. She smiles.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NEGATIVE ERIC'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Eric is asleep on the couch, still dressed in his signature clothes, hat and sunglasses. The TV before him emits a solid blue idle screen and there's an open, half empty bottle of Trader Joe's brand scotch on the coffee table.

He stirs, then slowly sits up and remains motionless on the couch. He looks at the open scotch, then starts to look around him. He digs in the couch cushions, looking for something. He retrieves an old beer bottle cap from the cushions and gingerly places it upside down on top of the open bottle of scotch, a replacement for having apparently lost the cap.

INT. KITCHEN - NEGATIVE ERIC'S APARTMENT

Half of Eric's body is leaned forward in the fridge as he searches for something. He emerges with a styrofoam container of take out, opens it and places it on the counter behind him.

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He opens the container and takes out half a meatball sub, flicks something off the top, leans against the counter and takes a bite.

A lone meatball falls out the end of the sandwich and lands with a SPLAT on the kitchen floor. Eric looks down and stares at the meatball, then brings a hand to his face and rubs his eyes under the sunglasses.

EXT. SAN FERNANDO VALLEY - DAY

Patty drives along a road in the Valley, her scarf trailing in the wind far behind her. She stops at a light and idles for a beat before she notices a hardware store next to her. She looks and notices Eric's shopping cart train "parked" across two handicapped spots in the parking lot.

She flips her blinker on and pulls in.

EXT. PARKING LOT - HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Patty parks next to the shopping carts, throws her scarf on the passenger seat and gets out of the car.

She walks over to the carts. Three of them are full to the brim with bags of hardware with receipts resting on top. She climbs into the shopping cart that leads the pack (this one is empty) and sits cross legged inside it.

AT THE STORE ENTRANCE

Eric walks out of the store carrying several more bags full of hardware. Encumbered, he still manages to expertly light a cigarillo. When the light catches, he notices Patty sitting in his cart a few yards ahead of him. She doesn't notice him. He stares at her for a few beats before walking over.

AT THE SHOPPING CART TRAIN

Eric approaches Patty, who squints up at him in the sun.

NEGATIVE ERIC

Weren't much of a popular kid,
were you?

PATTY

Popular kids don't bring crudités
to slumber parties.
(then, re: cigarillo)
Why do you smoke those?

NEGATIVE ERIC

When I was a kid I ate a cigarillo
cause I thought it was a Slim Jim.
Been a chimney ever since.

PATTY

What's in the bags?

NEGATIVE ERIC

In a word? Freedom.

Patty smirks.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - MINUTES LATER

We're far removed in a long wide shot. Patty helps Eric take all the bags out of the shopping carts and load them into her car. We're too far away to hear them diegetically, but their dialogue continues through VOICEOVER.

PATTY (V.O.)

There must be a hundred pounds of
stuff here. Let me drive it to
your place. You can't push all
this.

NEGATIVE ERIC (V.O.)

Alright. But don't get any ideas.

PATTY (V.O.)

So...what do you do?

NEGATIVE ERIC (V.O.)

I used to work at a slaughterhouse
but I was fired cause my boss was
intimidated by my joie-de-vivre.

INT. PATTY'S CAR - LATER

The voiceover dialogue continues while Eric and Patty are talking to each other in the car (no diegetic audio here. While we see them talking, the voiceover dialogue continues their parking lot conversation where it left off in the previous scene). Patty's scarf trails dutifully behind in the wind.

NEGATIVE ERIC (V.O.)

Now I write the Trader Joe's
Fearless Flyer. It's mostly
agitprop.

PATTY (V.O.)

You're not going to ask what I do?

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NEGATIVE ERIC (V.O.)
 Look, I'm not letting this turn
 into some kind of "Paper Moon"
 type deal. Thanks for the lift
 and, you know...that's it.

PATTY (V.O.)
 Well I wouldn't eat a Coney Island
 if you asked. Too phallic. Good
 reference, though.

NEGATIVE ERIC (V.O.)
 I like old movies. Everyone in
 them is dead.

PATTY (V.O.)
 I guess they're more like memories
 that way.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. PATTY'S CAR

We're back in real time. Eric opens the glove compartment,
 furrows his brow and pulls out what looks like a toy in
 children's packaging. It's a "pussy snorkel" - a device that
 supposedly assists cunnilingus (this is a real thing).

NEGATIVE ERIC
 Are you a lesbian?

PATTY
 What gave it a way?

NEGATIVE ERIC
 Your pussy snorkel.

Patty shrugs.

PATTY
 You are what you eat.

NEGATIVE ERIC
 Does it work?

PATTY
 I wouldn't know. I'm sort of in
 between pussies right now. Not in
 a good way.

Eric shrugs.

NEGATIVE ERIC
 Cherchez la femme. Classic.

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EXT. NEGATIVE ERIC'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Patty's car is parked on the street next to the curb. She helps remove Eric's bags from the car and places them on the sidewalk for him to gather.

NEGATIVE ERIC
Thanks for the ride.

PATTY
Don't you need help?

Eric picks all the bags up in two hands and moves toward his apartment stairs, leaving Patty behind.

NEGATIVE ERIC
I told you not to get any ideas.

She looks after him, frowning, then hastens to catch up. She comes up behind Eric and tries taking one of the bags he's carrying.

PATTY
Come on, I can carry a few pounds of hardware a couple steps.

Eric stops and doesn't let go of the bags.

NEGATIVE ERIC
Last time we did this I got arrested.

Patty lets go of the bag.

PATTY
Ok.

Eric continues toward the stairs.

PATTY
Do you have any water at least?

Eric stops again and sighs.

NEGATIVE ERIC
I have LA County faucet water.

PATTY
My favorite.

She bounds ahead of him and takes the apartment stairs two at a time. Eric slowly follows, agitated.

INT. NEGATIVE ERIC'S APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

Eric places his bags down in the middle of the living room as Patty stands beside him. She's taking in her surroundings, most notably the piles upon piles of TECHNICAL BOOKS, WOOD and METAL SCRAPS, makeshift BLUE PRINTS, GAS CANNISTERS, label-less plastic bottles of CHEMICALS, POWER TOOLS, empty 40 OZ MALT LIQUOR bottles and FAST FOOD BAGS.

NEGATIVE ERIC

I can't vouch for this water. Stay here. And mind the roach. He's mean.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Eric goes into the kitchen and opens his sticky cabinets in search of a cup. The only clean glass is a Hurricane glass. He takes it, fills it up from the sink (the water comes out in spurts) and returns to the living room. Patty isn't there.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Patty stands in the middle of Eric's bedroom, looking at the squalor: soiled towels and clothes on the floor, wine bottles, food crumbs, water stained walls, pizza boxes, fast food wrappers.

Eric emerges in the doorway.

NEGATIVE ERIC

Get out.

PATTY

I like it in here.

NEGATIVE ERIC

I told you to wait.

PATTY

Really. You can tell so much about a person from their room. I like it in here.

Eric enters and aggressively shoves the water into Patty's hands. It spills a little. He pushes her out of the way as he awkwardly kicks towels under the bed, wipes his bed, throws clothes in his closet, etc. He hasn't cleaned in a long time, though he hasn't been embarrassed in a long time either.

NEGATIVE ERIC

I don't want you to figure anything about me. I don't need your curiosity. I don't need your laissez-faire, hail-fellow-well-met whatever. I'm trying to get out of here. I'm sick of all the crap. I'm trying to take control. I'm trying to get rid of...I'm trying to be...I'm trying...

He runs out of steam, clutching two empty bottles of 40oz malt liquor.

NEGATIVE ERIC

It's my room.

He sits on his bed.

PATTY

It's messy.

NEGATIVE ERIC

I know.

She sits next to him.

PATTY

It reminds me of my girlfriends' old room.

NEGATIVE ERIC

You mean your lesbian ex-girlfriend?

PATTY

Yeah...my lesbian ex-girlfriend.

She starts to tear up. When it gets worse she slides her legs up onto the bed and turns herself around in one motion so she's now sitting cross-legged next to Eric, facing the opposite way from him. Eric holds his position, at a loss for what to do.

INT. BEDROOM - NEGATIVE ERIC'S APARTMENT - LATER

The sun is setting. Patty lies on her back, still on Eric's bed. Her head is at the foot of the bed so that her hair is hanging down off the bed. Eric sits on the floor up against the bed in such a way where Patty's dangling hair looks as if it's Eric's hair. They both hold bottles of 40oz malt liquor and there's a large half eaten pizza on the bed next to Patty. They've been here awhile.

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PATTY
Sorry I cried.

NEGATIVE ERIC
Sorry I called you laissez-faire.

PATTY
It's ok. Thanks for...well, I'm still here. So thanks.

NEGATIVE ERIC
Why...what was it about me? I mean...what is it?

PATTY
I told you.

NEGATIVE ERIC
I guess.

PATTY
I just had this feeling. I mean...for some reason, whatever it is, when I saw you welding those ramrods together in your parking space by the Taco Bell I felt you bring out the harlequin in me. And it's been a long time since I felt that.

NEGATIVE ERIC
I didn't do anything.

PATTY
You didn't have to. I just felt it. Tell me something about yourself. Where do you come from?

NEGATIVE ERIC
Nowhere important.

PATTY
Me neither.

Patty sighs and turns herself right side up. She leans on her forearms on the bed. Her hair still falls down on Eric's shoulders.

PATTY
My lesbian ex-girlfriend Jacqueline and I came here together. To...participate in something. To contribute to something exciting.

PATTY

Something bigger than us. We were excited to grow together. And we did, but in opposite directions. We were together long enough to know we couldn't be defined by the dates or the parties or the sex. It's the moments in between the moments that really matter. And they became less comfortable, more vulnerable...and some other third thing. If she were here now...I'd tell her all about my day.

NEGATIVE ERIC

What did you do today?

PATTY

Nothing.

NEGATIVE ERIC

Then what's the tell?

PATTY

Doesn't matter. I liked that she listened. That I could turn off. She was my friend.

Patty falls silent, lost in her thoughts. Eric squirms for a beat, then offers...

NEGATIVE ERIC

One time I got dumped. It kinda sucked ass. She cried. It was sad. It was here. Right here. In here. When she left she looked at me and said I could keep her pillows. That I needed them more. And then she left.

PATTY

What's that got to do with anything?

NEGATIVE ERIC

It was goddamn sad. I'm just saying...it was goddamn sad.

Patty reaches down and gingerly tries to remove Eric's ski cap. He slowly but fluidly reaches up and prevents her from doing so.

PATTY

Hey. Let me hear your evil laugh.

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NEGATIVE ERIC

What?

Patty hoists herself up, kneels on the bed, outstretches her arms and takes a deep breath.

PATTY

Mwuahahahaha!

Eric looks up at her blankly.

PATTY

Come on, try it. It makes me feel good. Like I've got some scheme no one knows about. Like I've got all the answers.

NEGATIVE ERIC

I do have some scheme no one knows about.

PATTY

Then let 'er rip.

NEGATIVE ERIC

(emotionless)

Mwua ha-ha.

PATTY

That sucked. That's not evil, that's like a smooch and two chuckles.

Patty evil laughs again with gusto until she starts to laugh for real at the ridiculousness of it all. Eric takes a deep breath and tries his best to make his own laugh until he, too, chuckles in spite of himself. The laughs naturally transition into...

MUSIC CUE: "I'm The Urban Spaceman" by The Bonzo Dog Band

MONTAGE

EXT. ROLLER COASTER - SANTA MONICA PIER - NIGHT

Eric and Patty ride a roller coaster on Santa Monica pier. Patty has both hands in the air as she screams with glee. Eric grasps the bar in front of him for dear life and steels himself against the speed. Patty playfully shoves him, encouraging him to loosen up.

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EXT. BOARDWALK - SANTA MONICA PIER - NIGHT

Patty plays a boardwalk game on the pier consisting of shooting baskets as fast as she can. As she misses all of them, Eric surreptitiously steals an OVERSTUFFED PLUSH ELEPHANT prize from behind the booth.

EXT. FERRIS WHEEL - SANTA MONICA PIER - NIGHT

Eric and Patty ride the ferris wheel. Eric holds a corndog and offers it to Patty, who shakes her head emphatically. The plush elephant occupies the entire ferris wheel car behind them.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Eric and Patty peruse the aisles of the library. Eric is pulling books and placing them in a RALPHS BASKET he's carrying. He is talking to Patty, gesticulating intermittently as she listens carefully.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Eric and Patty shop for supplies at a hardware store. He pushes a full shopping cart as she reads from a list.

INT. PARKING SPACE - DAY

Eric and Patty are inside Eric's parking space. The tarp is drawn and the inside looks far more cluttered/messy than the last time we saw it. Eric is sawing wood as Patty welds something. A welding helmet covers her face.

EXT. PARKING SPACE - MINUTES LATER

We abruptly CUT OUT of the montage to find Eric standing several feet away from the parking space entrance, smoking a cigarillo (the song accompanying the montage is now diegetic, and wafts out of a boombox inside the space with Patty, much lower in volume).

The tarp is half off the space entrance and Eric can see Patty hammering nails into something. We are close on Eric as he drags and blows. He looks to Patty, considering. Thoughtful.

NEGATIVE ERIC

Hm.

CUT TO:

RESUME MONTAGE

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INT. PARKING SPACE - DAY

The song picks up on the soundtrack where we last heard it on the boombox (back to full volume). Eric uses several small metal parts around him to construct something larger. Patty continuously brings him more small parts. The diegetic *whoosh*, *bing* and *pangs* from the hammer strikes, welding torch, and general business of machinery compliments the music over the soundtrack.

INT. NEGATIVE ERIC'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

Patty writes on a WHITE BOARD full of complex MATH EQUATIONS. Eric sits at a desk using a SEXTANT, dictating to Patty what to write.

INT. GROCERY STORE

Eric and Patty walk down the snack aisle and fill their cart with junk food. It's already pretty full of more bottles of 40oz malt liquor.

END MONTAGE/SONG

INT. PARKING SPACE - DAY

Eric and Patty stand in the parking space. There are scores of empty junk food bags, empty bottles of malt liquor, spare metal parts, wood scrap, the white board, etc amongst them. They stand in front of an object about the size of a chair, hidden beneath a ragged white SHEET.

PATTY

I don't know why you needed the sheet. I know what it looks like. We built it together.

NEGATIVE ERIC

You don't know what it is yet. You mostly took dictation.

Eric steps forward, grabs a handful of sheet and pulls it away. The object looks like a metal backpack with two large canisters of gas fixed to the sides.

PATTY

So...what are you going to do with it?

We PUSH IN to Eric until he's framed in a close-up.

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NEGATIVE ERIC
I'm gonna blast myself into the
fucking stratosphere.

EXT. MALIBU BEACH - DAY

Eric and Patty walk along a deserted stretch of beach. Patty carries a beach towel and wears a one piece bathing suit and a large sun hat. Eric holds his contraption as Patty hastens to catch up.

PATTY
I don't really get how a home made
jetpack is going to work.

NEGATIVE ERIC
You helped build it. You wrote
down the flight plan. What's to
get?

PATTY
Well, you're not really an
astrophysicist or something, are
you?

Eric stops and starts preparing for blast off.

NEGATIVE ERIC
This is the space age. Anyone can
do anything. It's just a matter of
getting ahold of the right
literature.

Eric uncoils several feet of fuse that was tied to the jetpack. The end of the fuse is split into two ends that are affixed to the gas canisters. Each canister has a funnel-like device welded into the bottom, ostensibly to focus the energy and emit exhaust.

Patty stands next to him in the sand.

PATTY
I hear what you're saying but I
guess I'm not clear on the
logistics of the whole thing.

Eric takes out a cigarillo, lights it, takes one puff, then lights the end of the fuse with the burning end of the smoke. He returns it to his mouth and positions himself in a half hearted squat, readying his body for blast off.

NEGATIVE ERIC

We know more about space than our own oceans.

Patty is silent for a beat while the fuse burns its way up to the jetpack.

PATTY

But you'll die.

Eric turns to her and takes her in for a beat.

NEGATIVE ERIC

Did you know this planet is in the middle of its sixth mass extinction?

The fuse is inches away from igniting.

PATTY

What does that have to do with you?

NEGATIVE ERIC

It doesn't. But--

The fuse reaches the canisters and EXPLODES in an impossible thunder-clap BOOM.

Patty lets out a shocked YELP as Eric shoots up into the sky with flames spraying wildly every which way. The cigarillo falls out of his mouth and is left behind on the sand. He lets out a CENSOR BLEEP swear that changes in volume relative to his position in the sky.

At about 100 feet up he starts to arc forward. The flames subside. Eric continues his arc and falls in what seems like slow motion into the sea below, leaving a SMOKE TRAIL akin to an airplane to mark his path above.

EXT. MALIBU BEACH - LATER

Eric sits on the sand sulking, his clothes drenched. The wet jetpack sits next to him. The gas canisters are destroyed but the rest of the machine looks relatively unscathed. Patty lies on her beach towel next to him. The waves lap in and out before them.

PATTY

I guess when you said you wanted to get the fuck out of here I never really knew where 'here' was. What's in it for you?

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PATTY

What's your plan? What does it matter? You'll die. Is that...what you want?

Eric remains silent, clenching and unclenching the and beneath his toes.

PATTY

Anyway now you're all wet.

Eric takes off his sodden shirt and tosses it away. He's not fat but he's schlubby and out of shape. Patty sits up next to him.

NEGATIVE ERIC

I never got anywhere being myself.

Patty tries once again to remove his wet ski cap. Again, he prevents it.

INT. NEGATIVE ERIC'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eric sits on the couch in the dark. He holds an open, half empty bottle of Trader Joe's scotch. The TV in front of him emits a solid blue idle screen.

INT. PATTY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Patty lies in bed, hands behind her head, lost in thought. After a few beats her phone starts to ring. She answers.

PATTY

Hey.

INT. NEGATIVE ERIC'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Eric is now leaning against his open window looking at the SpaceX billboard with the "Launch" slogan across the street. Several workers are in the midst of taking it down.

NEGATIVE ERIC

I need help.

EXT. SPACEX - DAY

Eric and Patty stand on a hill in Hawthorne, right in front of another SpaceX billboard that features the SpaceX building itself.

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PATTY

Did you make an appointment?

NEGATIVE ERIC

They'll recognize a kindred spirit. How's my hair?

Patty looks up at the ski cap on his head and opens her mouth to speak.

NEGATIVE ERIC

Just kidding. Let's go.

Patty chuckles. She and Eric walk past the billboard, revealing the SpaceX building in the near distance. It is the exact same view as what was on the billboard they were just looking at.

PATTY

That was funny.

NEGATIVE ERIC

I know.

INT. SPACEX - DAY

Eric and Patty enter the facility and marvel at their surroundings as they approach a RECEPTIONIST (a bored male too old to be a receptionist).

RECEPTIONIST

Can I help you?

NEGATIVE ERIC

We're here to see...

He looks down at his hand to read something scribbled on it.

NEGATIVE ERIC

...Elon Musk.

He thinks for a second. He blinks. The receptionist blinks. Patty blinks.

NEGATIVE ERIC

That can't be right. That sounds like deodorant.

RECEPTIONIST

Is there something real I can help you with?

NEGATIVE ERIC

This is as real as it gets.

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NEGATIVE ERIC

I don't have an appointment but I'm trying to get to space. I just need some help. I'm sure he'll understand.

RECEPTIONIST

I'm confused. Did you actually think you could walk in here unannounced with your...hat and your sunglasses and speak with one of the most famous technology figureheads on the planet?

NEGATIVE ERIC

Look name-tag, I'm just a guy trying to talk to another guy. What's the hangup?

RECEPTIONIST

I'm going to have to ask you to leave.

Eric holds his ground.

RECEPTIONIST

Alright.

The receptionist rises from his chair.

PATTY

Come on, let's go.

NEGATIVE ERIC

He hasn't asked me yet.

PATTY

We don't need Elon Musk.

RECEPTIONIST

And he's got no time for you so please leave before I call the police.

Patty takes Eric's arm and guides him toward the exit.

PATTY

That won't be necessary. But if you ask me I think you should work on your tone.

The receptionist sits back down.

RECEPTIONIST

(sotto)

If I wanted lip from you I'd check
my zipper.

Eric stops dead in his tracks. He looks to Patty. She catches his glance just before he abruptly turns on his heel and LUNGES at the receptionist.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Eric and Patty stand in front of the reception desk, signing forms. Eric has a dried bloody nose.

NEGATIVE ERIC

Tale as old as time. The haves and
the have nots. It's enough to make
you sick.

Eric finishes signing and the police officer behind the counter (the same one from the welding mishap) slides him his belongings: one crushed, empty pack of cigarillos. He and Patty turn to exit.

PATTY

What now?

INT. PARKING SPACE - NIGHT

Eric stands in the parking space, alone. He looks over his surroundings: many empty 40oz malt liquor bottles, pizza boxes, fast food bags, wood shavings, scrap metal, etc.

He fishes in his pocket for his pack of smokes. He finds it but sees it's empty. He tosses it aside, pauses, then leans down and picks up an unopened bottle of 40 oz malt liquor. He looks at it for a beat, then shakes it up and down, staring at the carbonated commotion inside. He looks up, thinking.

INT. NEGATIVE ERIC'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Eric quietly enters his dark apartment. He sneaks into the living room where Patty is asleep on the couch. The living room is just as messy as the parking space. He soundlessly gathers four unopened malt liquor bottles and puts them together on his coffee table.

He crosses to Patty and stands in front of her for a beat or two. He gently tugs on a blanket tucked under her legs in an attempt to cover her better but it won't move.

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He TAKES OFF HIS SKI CAP and uses it in conjunction with the blanket to cover the parts of Patty that aren't covered. He then turns, gathers the bottles and exits.

EXT. MALIBU BEACH - MORNING

Negative Eric is at the same site of his previous flight. He unpacks the jetpack and we see now that in addition to the gas canisters, he's DUCT TAPED THE FOUR BOTTLES OF MALT LIQUOR - two on each side - to the jetpack as well (bottle necks facing down).

He takes out a long string that's frayed at the end so it creates four smaller strings out of the end. Eric takes out four sewing needles from a pocket and threads each string fiber through the eyes of the needles, then ties each individual fiber to its corresponding needle.

He takes each needle and stabs it into each of the four caps of 40oz malt liquor. He pulls back on each, making sure the needle won't come out easily. He then runs the length of the string a short distance up the beach and ties it to a rock. He tugs on it to make sure its secure. He walks back to where he just was, picks up the jetpack and shakes it furiously, building up pressure inside the bottles.

INT. NEGATIVE ERIC'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Patty wakes up and sees that she's alone. She sits up and as she does Eric's hat falls off of her onto the floor. She leans down and picks it up, staring at it for a few seconds before leaning on her knees, ruminating.

INT. PARKING SPACE - MOMENTS LATER

Patty stands in the parking space, alone, wearing Eric's hat. She slowly walks around it, hands in pockets, taking in the trash amongst her. She slowly smiles before coming to a stop. She has an idea.

EXT. MALIBU BEACH - MORNING

Eric is poised for take off. He inhales and exhales deeply, then takes out a lighter and lights the fuse. We push into him as the fuse makes its way to the canisters. Eric closes his eyes and clenches his fists. When the fuse ignites the jetpack, another thunder-clap EXPLOSION booms out and Eric is propelled into the air.

MUSIC CUE: Cancion Mixteca, by Ry Cooder (this song will play through the end of the story)

The string that's tied to the rock and the bottles instantly becomes taut and rips the caps off the bottles, causing a VIOLENT WATERFALL OF MALT LIQUOR to ERUPT out of the bottle necks, resulting in an extra burst of thrust.

Impossibly, the force of the liquid makes Eric rise higher and higher into the sky in a perfect vertical trajectory. When the liquid in the bottles is spent, the gas keeps burning and Eric is now successfully flying. He's visibly thrilled. A single tear streaks down his face against the force of the wind.

He levels out and cruises effortlessly through the sky, taking in the small city below. We stay on his face as he glides through the air. In a slow gradation of emotion, Eric's exuberant triumph fades to peaceful contentment, then again to deep consideration before becoming expressionless. We hold on him for a few beats as he flies through the air, trying to read his face.

EXT. PARKING SPACE - DAY

Patty sits cross legged outside the parking space, still wearing Eric's ski cap. We hold on her for a beat before Eric, soaking wet, emerges from around the corner. He stops when he sees her. She doesn't see him. After a beat he proceeds towards her. She sees him and stands as he approaches.

PATTY

What happened?

NEGATIVE ERIC

I'm all wet.

Patty smiles.

PATTY

I have a surprise for you.

Patty parts the tarp and Eric is met with a totally CLEAN, REFURBISHED SPACE: a few large CARPETS completely blanket the ground. Empty BOTTLES OF 40oz MALT LIQUOR line the entire perimeter of the space. There's a crappy DUMPSTER SOFA against one wall. Trader Joe's FEARLESS FLYERS are neatly arranged intermittently on the walls like posters and there are two LAWN CHAIRS with a large, crappy CHEST between them.

The chairs face the wall, which features a sloppily thrown together "FIRE PLACE," complete with red and orange colored construction paper flames in it. Candles on the ground illuminate the space in a warm light.

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Eric's jaw drops as he takes in the sight. Patty takes his arm and slowly leads him inside and closes the tarp behind them. Eric walks around, speechless.

PATTY

You can come in here whenever you want. You can just come here. To your space. To space.

Eric turns to her.

NEGATIVE ERIC

I...

He can't finish, at a loss for words. Patty his hat off her head and, leaning up on her tip toes, puts it back on Eric's head. A tear falls down from the facade of Eric's sunglasses.

NEGATIVE ERIC

This is one of those moments.

MONTAGE:

INT. PARKING SPACE

Patty and Eric are talking and marveling at the space.

INT. HARDWARE STORE

Patty and Eric shop at the hardware store.

INT. PARKING SPACE

Patty and Eric build more furniture with what they got from the hardware store. Patty holds several nails in her mouth and Eric intermittently takes one as they both hammer together makeshift chairs.

INT. NEGATIVE ERIC'S APARTMENT

The pair drink out of 40s while watching a funny movie on TV, laughing with each other.

INT. PARKING SPACE

They play a board game in the parking space. Eric leans back in a chair they built together and it falls apart. Patty laughs her head off while Eric tries to regain his composure.

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EXT. NEGATIVE ERIC'S APARTMENT - MAGIC HOUR

Eric and Patty talk on the sidewalk outside of Eric's building. Patty smiles at him and Eric smirks back. She gets into her car behind her as Eric lights up a cigarillo. As Patty waves and peels out, her scarf unfurls and catches the breeze as it flaps six feet behind her, matching the wisps of Eric's smoke wafting up to meet the setting sun.

THE END

Negative Eric will Return in

"Negative Eric and the Belly of the Beast"

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