

UNTITLED GENIUSES PROJECT

"PILOT"

Written by

Lon Zimmet

COLD OPEN

INT. RICKARDS' HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - DAY

A CHILD DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST, MISS TREMBLAY, SITS ACROSS FROM MARC (10, INTROVERTED, IDIOSYNCRATIC) WITH AN ARRAY OF DIFFERENT VISUAL AIDS. WE CAN'T HEAR WHAT THEY'RE SAYING, BUT SHE'S CLEARLY GIVING HIM SOME KIND OF TEST.

RESET TO:

INT. RICKARDS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

CAY (LATE 30'S, CAUSTIC, NO-FILTER) STANDS IN THE DOORWAY, TRYING TO GET A SENSE OF WHAT'S GOING ON. AT THE TABLE, MIKE (LATE 30'S, CARPENTER, BULLSHITTER) SITS NERVOUSLY WHILE LEILA (8, THE BABY, A LITTLE DUMB) DOODLES.

CAY

I can't tell how the hell it's going out there. Now she's got the blocks out, I don't know.

MIKE

It's gonna be fine. He's a regular kid, just a little odd. (NERVOUSLY PICKING AT HIS ARM) I'm not worried.

CAY

You just drew blood.

MIKE

Not worried about that either.

BRIAN (16, CONDESCENDING, NO SELF-AWARENESS) AND NICOLE (15, SCHEMING, FIERCELY COMPETITIVE) ENTER.

BRIAN

Wow, he's still getting tested?

MIKE

We're not worried!

NICOLE

We know you guys have been stressed about this. If it helps, we've been praying for you.

CAY

You've been praying? Didn't you say you're too smart to believe in God?

NICOLE

No, I said I'm too cynical to believe in God. I'm too smart not to kiss the ring a little, just in case.

MISS TREMBLAY ENTERS. EVERYONE LOOKS AT HER EXPECTANTLY.

MISS TREMBLAY

I have good news.

MIKE

Oh, thank God.

MISS TREMBLAY

Actually, it's great news. Your son Marc is gifted! His IQ is off the charts.

CAY/MIKE

No! / Damn it to hell!

MIKE SLAMS THE TABLE. CAY POURS A MASSIVE DRINK. MISS TREMBLAY IS CONFUSED.

MIKE

In my heart I always knew, but now hearing it out loud, it's just... too real.

MISS TREMBLAY

Did you hear what I said? This is wonderful, your son is a prodigy.

CAY

Yeah, yeah, we're so proud, what a blessing, bla bla bla... We know the drill, we've been through all this. Twice already. With Brian and Nicole.

MISS TREMBLAY

Wow! Three gifted children in one family? You two are so blessed!

CAY

Lady I will take you out back and punch you in the neck.

MIKE

What she's trying to say is that sometimes it can be a challenge.

BRIAN

They're overwhelmed. It's not easy keeping up with a physics prodigy and polymath such as myself. Especially now that I've been branching out and dabbling in the arts. Caught some Wagner performances at the Met (QUICKLY UNDER HIS BREATH) on YouTube.

(MORE)

BRIAN (CONT'D)

'Rheingold' certainly had its striking moments, such as Wotan and Loge's journey down to Nibelheim.

NICOLE

Oh my god, no one cares. (TO TREMBLAY)
I'm the overwhelming one. I'm a hyper-polyglot, already speak five languages. Once I master twenty, I'm going to travel the world for Doctors Without Borders. But that's only a marketing ploy for my eventual political run. I'll be the youngest elected president in history. And if that bitch Ocasio-Cortez tries to beat me to it, well... (OMINOUS) We'll have to take care of her.

CAY

See? This is the type of nonsense we listen to all day long.

MIKE

But on the bright side, all the private schooling has left us in massive debt.

MISS TREMBLAY

(RE: LEILA) Well, what about this little one? I'm happy to test her too while I'm here.

LEILA STARES AT HER IN DEEP, PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATION.

LEILA

How come we don't smell with our
mouths and eat with our nose?

MIKE

No, we're feeling good about Leila.

CAY

She's our star.

MISS TREMBLAY

Okay, seems like you have this all
covered. But I do feel like you should
know, um... (SCARED TO SAY IT) Marc
actually had the highest score I've
ever tested.

MIKE STARTS SOBBING QUIETLY. CAY STARES DAGGERS AT HER.

CAY

You can see yourself out.

MISS TREMBLAY LEAVES. MARC WALKS IN. SEES MIKE SLUMPED AND
CAY POURING HERSELF A GIANT GLASS OF VODKA.

MARC

I guess this means I'm gifted.

MIKE

(THROUGH TEARS) We're so proud of you.

AND WE...

FADE OUT.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONEINT. RICKARDS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING (DAY 2)

MIKE AND CAY ARE ALONE IN THE KITCHEN, GOING THROUGH THEIR MORNING ROUTINE.

CAY

I was thinking. You know what the scariest part about the Marc news is? We've officially lost our voting majority in the house. Dummies vs. Smarts, it's all tied up.

MIKE

Damn. Guess that means we gotta have another baby so we win the tiebreaker.

CAY

(LAUGHS, THEN) Just so you know, if you ever even joke about that again, I'm leaving you.

MIKE

And I wouldn't blame you.

MIKE EXITS. A BEAT LATER, BRIAN ENTERS, FACE BURIED IN AN IPAD.

BRIAN

Well, just as I expected, *Le Cinq* has been downgraded from three Michelin stars to two. Dare I say, Chef Christian Le Squer is losing his luster.

CAY

Deep commentary from someone whose favorite restaurant is the "Pasta Hut" next to a burned down strip club.

BRIAN

(DEFENSIVE) The flavor profile of their mac-'n-cheese-stick is complex and exquisite.

CAY

Oh, by the way... I'm assuming this is you?

SHE POINTS TO THE DOORWAY TO THE DINING ROOM, WHICH WE NOW SEE IS ENTIRELY BLOCKED BY ALUMINUM FOIL AND YELLOW TAPE.

BRIAN

Oh yeah, dining room's off limits. I'm using it as a lab to measure Quantum Vacuum polarization. Don't worry, it's only for a month. (OFF HER LOOK) Dad said it was okay.

AS MIKE RE-ENTERS --

CAY

You said he could turn the dining room into NASA for a month?

MIKE

(HAD NO IDEA) What? He asked if he could use the dining room. I thought he meant for lunch.

MIKE HEADS TO THE FRIDGE. NICOLE MAKES A BEELINE FOR HIM.

NICOLE

(SWEET) Hey, daddy. You look so nice.
What are you doing at work today?

MIKE

(CONFUSED) I'm building a shelving
unit and window seat for the Jassers'
bedroom. (SUSPICIOUS) Why?

NICOLE

(BUTTERING HIM UP) I'm just interested
in you. It's so inspiring the way that
you create, with nothing but a slab of
wood and your hands. Turning people's
houses into their homes. There's
nothing more honorable.

MIKE

Oh god, something's coming --

NICOLE

Well only because you brought it up, I
do have a question for you. It's
silly, really. (FISHING) But when the
tester said Marc's WISC score was the
highest she ever tested... that's only
because she didn't test me, right? Or
else his score would have been the
second highest... right?

MIKE

I'm not playing this game. You know we don't tell any of you your IQ's.

NICOLE

Honestly, I'm just curious. It's not a big deal, I already know my score was higher than Brian's.

MIKE

How did you know that?

NICOLE

You just told me.

MIKE

Damn it, I shouldn't have these conversations without your mom. Cay!

NICOLE

No, we're having daddy-daughter time--

CAY APPROACHES.

MIKE

She wants to know their WISC scores.

CAY

No chance. There's enough ego and competition in this house, we don't need to start putting numbers to it.

NICOLE

(GROANS) Thanks a lot, Mike!

SHE CROSSES OFF.

MIKE

What happened to "daddy"? Come on, let me tell you more about my honorable work! (REALIZING) Where's all our aluminum foil?

MARC ENTERS, WHEELING A WHITE BOARD INTO THE FAMILY ROOM.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Hey, buddy, whaddaya doing with those?

MARC

Miss Tremblay said I should challenge myself more, so I'm developing an opera about Sacco and Vanzetti, two Italian anarchists unjustly convicted of robbery in 1921 and put to death.

MIKE

Neat! Sounds like a fun romp.

CAY CROSSES INTO --

RESET TO:

INT. RICKARDS HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

LEILA WATCHES CARTOONS AND EATS CEREAL AS CAY ENTERS.

LEILA

Mommy, I have a question. If Brian's a genius, and Nicole's a genius, and now Marc's a genius... Am I a genius?

CAY

(DELICATE) Well, you have a lot of good qualities, but um... do you want to be a genius?

LEILA

(THINKS, THEN) No. I wanna be a waffle. Because I love waffles and then I can eat myself whenever I want.

CAY

Good, that feels a little more realistic.

CAY KISSES HER AND MOVES ON. MIKE APPROACHES.

MIKE

I'm not gonna lie, that waffle thing made a lot of sense to me.

CAY

We need to talk.

MIKE

Basement?

CAY

Basement.

CUT TO:

INT. RICKARDS' BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

A CRAMPED, UNFINISHED BASEMENT WHERE A 1990'S ERA SOLO-FLEX, A FOOSBALL TABLE, AND A SHITLOAD OF MIKE AND CAY'S OTHER BELONGINGS/PASTIMES HAVE BEEN EXILED.

CAY

So is it me or are things getting crazier around here?

MIKE

(RE: MARC) We did just invite a plus-one to the crazy party.

CAY

It's not only that. The kids are so up their own asses, they have no perspective on anything normal. I know we said we'd never put limits on them, but this can't be healthy. I mean, we have to hide just to have a conversation. This is the only room in the house that's even ours anymore.

MIKE

I know. It's our monument to simpler, dumber times. This is where I come to feel safe.

HE PUSHES A BUTTON ON A "BIG MOUTH BILLY BASS" ON THE WALL. IT SINGS ONLY FOR A SECOND, THEN WAITS INTO SILENCE.

MIKE (CONT'D)

That feels sadly symbolic.

CAY

Maybe there's something we can do to rein it all in. To bring the kids back down to earth a little.

MIKE

I think the ship's sailed on that. Unless... Hear me out. We have Brian build a time machine - you and me go back in time, drop each of the kids on their heads as babies. Nothing crazy, just bring the IQ's down a few points. Added bonus, we get to have sex with our younger selves, which would be... (OFF HER LOOK) Great for you, because I had so much more energy back then. For me, big letdown, because you get more beautiful with age --

CAY

Are you done?

MIKE

Look, I think we ride this out, and in ten years they're the next Steve Jobs and we're set for life.

CAY

Or in ten years they're the next Unabomber and we're on "20/20" talking about how we ruined their lives.

MIKE

Wow. You think "20/20" will still be on by then? That's a good run.

CAY

It just feels like we could encourage them to ease up a little. Even if it's only for a day. Don't you think it'd be good for them to have one normal day?

MIKE

I don't know about them, but it'd great for us. Think of all the money we'd save on aluminum foil.

CAY

We can make this happen, right? We can get one day of Normal out of these kids.

MARC COMES HALFWAY DOWN THE STAIRS.

MARC

Mom, my opera is lacking inspiration. I need \$18,000 for a 1903 Tanfoglio revolver to serve as my muse.

CAY

(BEAT) So how quickly you think Brian can bang out this time machine?

AND WE...

CUT TO:

INT. HARRAH'S CASINO - DAY

CAY STANDS BEHIND A BLACKJACK DEALER AND HANDLES A SITUATION WITH SOME GAMBLERS. SHE'S A PIT BOSS.

CAY

I mean it, Gary. If I see you touch your stack again when the cards are out, I'm gonna shove those chips so far up your ass you'll have to blow your nose to place a bet.

SHE GOES BACK TO THE MIDDLE OF THE PIT AND CONTINUES TALKING TO HER CO-WORKER, **RITA** (40'S, BLUNT, DOESN'T GIVE A SHIT).

CAY (CONT'D)

Okay, keep going.

RITA

(PICKS UP MID-STORY) Long story short, it turns out the car wasn't stolen. My youngest, Molly, took it without a license, then crashed it into a Bennigan's because she was sexting.

CAY

Oh my god, you're so lucky! Tell me the one again about how your oldest got busted vaping during the SAT's.

RITA

No! You're enjoying this too much.

CAY

You know these stories about your kids are like porn to me.

(MORE)

CAY (CONT'D)

I want to put them in a needle, tie a belt around my arm, and shoot them straight into my veins. I'd love to punish my kids for things like crashing cars and reckless sex. At least that's the stuff I was doing at their age.

GAMBLER

(EAVESDROPPING) How much reckless sex we talking about?

CAY

Shut up, Gary.

RITA

Actually, I'd like to know too.

CAY

I was telling Mike I'd kill to have just, like, one normal day. (RESIGNED) But what can you do, you can't snap your fingers and force your kids to be normal.

RITA

For a day? The hell you can't. You just gotta get 'em out of their element. Make them do something you like. They're always hijacking your days, hijack one of theirs.

CAY

That's not a bad idea. Get the family out of the house, go someplace where no one's talking about ancient dead philosophers, or the frontrunners for the Nobel, or how the reason Joe Biden is so sexy is because he doesn't know he's sexy.

RITA

Nicole's into Joe Biden?

CAY

No, that one's Mike actually. (THEN)
This could work. I just need to come up with somewhere to go that's basic and mindless with zero intellectual value whatsoever.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. RICKARDS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT (DAY 2)

MARC

The boardwalk?

BRIAN, NICOLE AND MARC STARE INCREDULOUSLY AT CAY AND MIKE AS THE FAMILY EATS DINNER.

MIKE

Yep. It was your mom's idea. We're gonna do the Tilt-a-Whirl and eat funnel cake and ride the log flume until we throw up a bunch of funnel cake.

MARC

But I can work on my opera there, right?

CAY

No. There's not going to be any talk of wrongfully-accused anarchists. Tomorrow is about whacking moles and winning cheap stuffed animals like a normal family.

NICOLE

It doesn't sound normal, it sounds trashy.

CAY

We live in Atlantic City, normal is trashy.

BRIAN

I think it sounds fun.

MIKE

Seriously?

BRIAN

Yeah. Is it okay if I bring a friend?

MIKE AND CAY LOOK AT EACH OTHER, SURPRISED AND THRILLED. THEY HIDE IT SO THEY DON'T WEIRD HIM OUT.

CAY

(CONTAINING HERSELF) Yes, of course.

That's such a... normal thing to do.

MIKE

(SOTTO TO CAY) He's got a friend! Just like the kids in the movies!

CAY

(TO MARC AND NICOLE) And if it gets you guys more excited about it, you're welcome to bring a friend too.

MARC

All of my friends were unjustly put to death in a gross miscarriage of justice amid of wave of anti-Italian bias and dishonest political motives.

A LONG BEAT. THEN:

LEILA

I'm gonna eat funnel cake!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RICKARDS' HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - MORNING (DAY 3)

MIKE PUTS SUNTAN LOTION ON LEILA AS NICOLE APPROACHES. SHE'S DRESSED BEACHY AND CUTE.

MIKE

Look at you, all ready to go. Thank you for making this easy.

NICOLE

Well, I thought about it, and you're right. Today's gonna be fun. (SAD) I'm just worried I'll be too distracted to enjoy it.

MIKE

What's wrong?

NICOLE

Nothing. It's silly. I shouldn't even-- Okay, do you think, just for the sake of today, you could ease my restless mind and tell me... (ALL BUSINESS) Was my WISC score higher than 156?

MIKE

We're back to this? Why can't -- Wait, 156? That's Marc's score. You went through his folder?

NICOLE

Of course not! I called the company and pretended I was mom. Come on, I'm literally asking you for one word.

(MORE)

NICOLE (CONT'D)

"Higher" or "Lower." It's not a big deal. I already know 156 is a better score than Brian's.

MIKE

How'd you know that?

NICOLE

You just told me again.

MIKE

Damn it! Why do I keep talking to you without supervision? Cay!

CAY APPROACHES. NICOLE GROANS AND SKULKS OFF.

CAY

(RE: LEILA) I see sunscreen, that's a good sign. How's it going here?

MIKE

Brian, Nicole and Leila are all ready.

CAY

That's amazing. And look, I got Marc to wear swim trunks. He called them "Water Khakis," but whatever, he's wearing them. So as soon as Brian's friend gets here, we can leave.

MIKE

I'm excited about this, we used to love the boardwalk. Maybe for old times' sake, we play a little strip skeeball when the arcade clears out.

CAY

This isn't for us. It's for the kids.

MIKE

(NOT BUYING IT) Whatever you say. I'm wearing extra layers just in case.

CAY

Honestly, I'm just happy to know this family isn't so far gone that we can't have one normal day around here.

THERE'S A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. CAY ANSWERS, REVEALING STU. HE'S NERDY, BALDING, AND THIRTY-SEVEN YEARS OLD.

STU

Hi, Mrs. Rickards!

CAY

Can I help you?

BRIAN

(SEES HIM) Stewy!

STU

Bri-Bri!

STU STEPS INSIDE. HE AND BRIAN GIVE EACH OTHER A BIG MAN-HUG. MIKE AND CAY WATCH IN BEWILDERMENT.

MIKE

What's happening?

CAY

I think we just met Brian's friend.

AS STU AND BRIAN DO AN ELABORATE HANDSHAKE, WE...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOINT. FAMILY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

MIKE AND CAY TRY TO WRAP THEIR HEADS AROUND THIS SITUATION AS THEY WATCH BRIAN AND STU.

CAY

(WARY) So you're Stu. The friend Brian is bringing on our normal family day.

STU

Yes, and thank you so much for inviting me, Mr. and Mrs. Rickards.

MIKE

"Mike" and "Cay" would probably be less awkward for everyone.

STU

Well, Mike --

MIKE

I was wrong.

STU

-- I've been so stressed waiting to hear about my application to the Princeton Physics Fellowship, and a day at the beach is exactly what I need.

CAY

I'm so glad we could plan this for you. So how exactly do you two know each other?

BRIAN

From the American Astronomical Society message boards. And look, I know what you're thinking: how are these two friends? I mean, he does computational physics and I do theoretical physics! Like what?!

MARC COMES UP.

MARC

If we're not leaving, I'm taking off these swimming pants.

CAY

It's called a bathing suit, man, come on. And yes, we're leaving. (LOOKS TO MIKE) But, um...

MIKE

Your mom and I just need to talk to Brian alone for a minute.

MIKE AND CAY START TAKING BRIAN INTO THE KITCHEN.

STU

FYI, I have a severe nut allergy. Here's my EpiPen, it's better if you hold it. I always lose it, and I will need it.

MIKE AWKWARDLY TAKES THE EPIPEN AS HE HEADS INTO THE KITCHEN.

RESET TO:

INT. RICKARDS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

CAY, MIKE AND BRIAN ENTER.

MIKE

Listen, Bri, about your friend--

CAY

Stu can't come. Your dad and I talked about it and we both agree.

BRIAN

What? I've been with you since he got here, how did you talk about it?

CAY

With our eyes. We can do that.

BRIAN

Where is this coming from? Is this because he's a little older than me?

CAY

First of all, he's A LOT older than you --

MIKE

(TO CAY) He's like our age, we don't need to hit the "a lot" that hard --

CAY

And yes that's the reason! It's weird!

BRIAN

You're both such hypocrites. You're always telling me that I should try to make more friends.

CAY

We meant normal friends! The type who introduce you to drugs and alcohol. People your own age.

BRIAN

People my own age are boring and vapid. All they do is make penis jokes and Rick & Morty references.

MIKE

God, people his age sounds awesome.

BRIAN

None of that is for me. I require sophistication and intellectual stimulation.

STU POPS IN, WITH A BROWN STAIN COVERING HIS SHIRT POCKET.

STU

Mr. Rickards, do you have a shirt I can wear? (RE: POCKET) I forgot I left a half-eaten Snickers bar in here.

BRIAN

Not ideal timing. Take one of mine.

STU HURRIES OFF.

MIKE

We're just trying to have one normal day, Bri.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

And Stu seems like a lot of things -
smart, interesting, probably eczematic
- but normal ain't one of them. We're
sorry.

BRIAN

Then I'm sorry too. Because if Stu
can't go, then I don't go.

BRIAN SITS DOWN DEFIANTLY AT THE TABLE, IN PROTEST.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

You're not the only ones who can take
an arbitrary and irrational stance.

CAY

Okay, you've made your point. But
you're coming. Because if you don't...

SHE WALKS UP TO THE FOIL WALL BLOCKING THE DINING ROOM.

CAY (CONT'D)

... I'm going to walk in there and
ruin your weird proton beam.

BRIAN

Might as well. I won't have any
friends to share the results with
anyway. Who needs to prove a quantum
vacuum in the universe when there's
one right there in my heart?

OFF MIKE AND CAY'S LOOK...

CUT TO:

INT. RICKARDS' BASEMENT - A LITTLE LATER

MIKE AND CAY ARE ALONE, FIGURING OUT HOW TO HANDLE THIS.

MIKE

He seems really bummed about this.
Maybe we just let Stu come.

CAY

Sure. We'll pay for his rides, buy him
some taffy. Oh, he can play strip
skeeball with us.

MIKE

Don't be ridiculous. What if he's got
a better body than me? My ego couldn't
take it.

CAY

We're not bringing Stu. Normal people
don't have fond family memories from
childhood that involve a random forty-
year-old man. Do you?

MIKE

Actually, most of my memories from
childhood involve random forty-year
old men. My mother had an active
social life.

CAY

The whole point of today is to get the
kids out of their bubble.

(MORE)

CAY (CONT'D)

Instead, we're bringing the bubble with us and holding its asthma inhaler. There's gotta be a way we can force Brian to go without Stu. Is he into any weird porn we can blackmail him with?

MIKE

No. I mean, yes, but -- if we threaten him, he'll just dig in deeper.

CAY

Do you have any other ideas?

MIKE

Okay... I might know a way where Stu doesn't come, but Brian doesn't hate us for it. Come on.

MIKE STARTS TO WALK OUT BUT REALIZES CAY HASN'T MOVED.

CAY

Sorry, I know we have to go back up, but... it's just so nice down here, I need thirty more seconds.

SHE CLOSES HER EYES, TAKES A DEEP BREATH. A BEAT.

MIKE

Now?

CAY

Thirty more seconds.

AS MIKE CONTINUES TO WAIT...

CUT TO:

INT. RICKARDS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

CAY AND MIKE ENTER TO SEE BRIAN AT THE TABLE, SADLY LOOKING AT HIS PHONE.

MIKE

Hey, Bri. Your mom and I were talking,
and... if it means that much to you,
Stu can come with us to the boardwalk.

BRIAN

(PERKING UP) Really? Thank you, I knew
you'd come around! (CALLING) Stu, call
your mom back, she doesn't have to
pick you up!

BRIAN RUNS OFF, EXCITED.

CAY

This is wrong, I don't like tricking
them. I'm more comfortable with
threats and intimidation. You knew
that the first time we slept together.

MIKE

This is the only way we're not the bad
guys so Brian still comes. Did you get
his phone?

CAY HANDS IT TO HIM. MIKE SEARCHES THROUGH THE CONTACTS:

MIKE (CONT'D)

Stu M... Stu H... How many "Stu's"
does our son know? Oh, here we go...

MIKE TAKES OUT HIS OWN PHONE, THEN ENTERS STU'S PHONE NUMBER INTO IT AND CALLS.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(INTO PHONE, HAUGHTY VOICE) Hello,
Stu, this is Doctor, uh, Venkman
calling from the Princeton Physics
Fellowship... That's right. And
excellent news, you've been accepted.

STU (O.S.)

(UPSTAIRS) OH MY GOD IT'S HAPPENING!

MIKE

We need you to come down to the campus
as soon as possible to... collect your
prize? (SHRUGS, TO CAY) I don't know.

CAY

This is crazy. Do we really expect him
to --

STU SUDDENLY COMES RACING DOWN THE STAIRS --

STU

Sorry I can't make it, have a lovely--
-- AND OUT THE DOOR.

CAY

Can't argue with the results.

MIKE

I think now we should be good to go
now.

CAY

Except where are all our kids?

MARC (O.S.)

No! I said F Sharp!

MIKE AND CAY EXCHANGE A LOOK, THEN HEAD INTO --

RESET TO:

INT. RICKARDS' HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ONE WALL OF THE ROOM IS COVERED IN SHEET MUSIC THAT'S BEEN SHARPIE-WRITTEN DIRECTLY ON THE WALL. MARC PACES AND DICTATES TO LEILA, WHO STANDS ON A CHAIR TRANSCRIBING ONTO THE WALL.

MIKE

This seems about right.

CAY

What the hell's going on here?

LEILA

I'm helping Marc with his opera!

CAY

On the wall? Was all the paper broken?

MARC

Big ideas require a big canvas. What if someone had told Michelangelo he couldn't draw on the ceiling?

MIKE

He probably just would have ordered a pizza with something crazy on it. (OFF THEIR LOOKS) We're talking about the Ninja Turtle, right?

CAY

You should go get Nicole.

MIKE

Yep.

MIKE WALKS OFF.

CAY

Leila, stop writing. (TO MARC) You had to drag your poor sister into this?

MARC

It's a privilege for the proletariat to service the needs of the elite.

CAY

Really, you're "elite"? How many of the "elite" still wet their bed?

MARC

A significant amount?

CAY

I mean, yeah, probably. Just get down, we're leaving.

SHE GUIDES THEM BOTH OUT OF THE ROOM.

LEILA

I'm a proto lariat!

CAY

I know, sweetie.

AS THEY WALK OUT...

CUT TO:

INT. RICKARD'S HOUSE - NICOLE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

MIKE ENTERS TO SEE NICOLE IS WORKING INTENSELY ON HER LAPTOP.

MIKE

Come on, we're leaving.

NICOLE

I just need a few minutes to finish
this up.

MIKE MOVES IN TO SEE WHAT SHE'S DOING. HE SEES ON SCREEN:

MIKE

"Question Six: Serial Order
Matrices..." Is this a WISC test?

NICOLE

You wouldn't tell me my score, so I
found a site online to retake it.

MIKE

Oh my god, your mom's right. We need
to get you to the boardwalk before you
turn into a little Unabomber.

NICOLE

I wish. His IQ was a 167.

MIKE

Why do you know that?! That's enough.
I'm unplugging this.

HE REACHES FOR THE COMPUTER CORD.

NICOLE

Okay, but I had to pay to take this.
So as long as you're fine throwing
away \$250...

MIKE

(TO HIMSELF) Damn it, she knows I'm
not fine with that. (THEN) I'm so
sorry about this.

HE RIPS OUT THE PLUG. SHE GASPS.

NICOLE

I don't forgive you!

MIKE

I wasn't talking to you, I was talking
to my bank account!

AS MIKE WALKS OUT...

CUT TO:

INT. RICKARDS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

MIKE ENTERS AS CAY WALKS THROUGH WITH MARC AND LEILA.

MIKE

She's coming. And I think you're
right, we need to get out of this
house as soon as possible.

BRIAN ENTERS, LOOKING DEPRESSED AND WEARING PAJAMAS. HE POURS
HIMSELF A BOWL OF CEREAL AND SIGHS LOUDLY.

BRIAN

You guys go ahead without me. I can't
bear facing the world today.

MIKE

What's the problem now? It's not our
fault Stu had to leave.

BRIAN

I know! It's Princeton's fault! I
can't believe this. I applied to the
same fellowship and haven't heard
anything, which means he got in and I
didn't. I guess I'm not good enough
for Princeton. I wonder if I'll ever
be good enough for anyone.

MIKE AND CAY LOOK AT EACH OTHER. UH OH.

MIKE

I bet Princeton just hasn't gotten
around to calling you yet. They're
probably calling alphabetically.

BRIAN

His last name is Zycam.

CAY

He's named after a nasal swab?

MIKE

That tracks.

BRIAN

I'm sorry, I need to be alone so I can
ponder the sad, barren wasteland that
is my intellectual future.

HE TAKES A SAD BITE OF CEREAL. HALF THE SPOON FALLS ONTO HIS
SHIRT. HE DOESN'T EVEN BOTHER CLEANING IT UP.

CAY

(TO MIKE) This is why tricking them
was a bad idea. We have to come clean.

MIKE

I might have another idea.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. RITA'S HOUSE - DAY

CAY'S CO-WORKER, RITA, IS ON THE PHONE.

RITA

(FAKE VOICE) Hello, is this Brian?

This is Dr. Spengler calling from the,
uh --

SHE GLANCES AT HER CELLPHONE, WHERE CAY WATCHES ON FACETIME.

CAY

(FACETIME) The Princeton Physics
Fellowship.

RITA

(PHONE) -- the Prison Finsticks
Fellowship letting you know that,
yeah, you got in that thing, good
work... All right, stop screaming...

(FOR CAY'S BENEFIT) Uh, you're asking
if you should come in now?

ON FACETIME, CAY FURIOUSLY SHAKES HER HEAD NO.

RITA (CONT'D)

(PHONE) No, come in next week. You
just enjoy the rest of your day. Why
don't you go outside and get some sun?
Maybe your parents have something fun
planned, I don't know.

CAY

(FACETIME) That's enough.

RITA

All right, bye!

SHE HANGS UP ON BOTH OF THEM. SHE ROLLS HER EYES AND TURNS TO HER CHILDREN:

RITA (CONT'D)

You kids go ahead and crash into all
the Bennigan's you want.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE AND CAY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME TIME

CAY HANGS UP WITH RITA AND TURNS TO MIKE.

CAY

You think he bought it?

BRIAN COMES RUNNING IN, GIDDY.

BRIAN

I got into the program! You'll never believe it, they were calling everyone reverse alphabetically!

MIKE

Just like Princeton to go against the grain like that. Let's celebrate!

BRIAN

Yes! I'm gonna get dressed and then let's go boardwalking!

HE RUNS BACK OUT.

CAY

We're going to hell, aren't we?

MIKE

Yeah, we'll be there tomorrow when we tell him the truth.

NICOLE (O.S.)

(FURIOUS) One fifty-one!?

CAY

Or maybe sooner.

NICOLE ENTERS, PISSED.

NICOLE

I scored a 151! That's four points lower than Marc!

MIKE

How did you even finish the test? I unplugged the computer.

NICOLE

It's a laptop, dad. They're meant to be unplugged.

MIKE

I should appreciate more how amazing it is that I had smart children.

NICOLE

I'm a sham. How did I expect to be the greatest mind in sociolinguistic history when I'm not even the greatest mind in my own house?

CAY

Calm down. Whatever test you took isn't even accurate. When you took the WISC the first time, you got a 153.

NICOLE

What?! So I'm getting stupider?!

MIKE

(TO CAY) Probably not smart to tell her that.

CAY

Coming from the man who successfully unplugged a cordless computer.

BRIAN STORMS IN, STILL IN HIS PAJAMAS.

BRIAN

So I just called back the number that "Princeton" called from, and guess what happened?

MIKE

Did they act like they weren't Princeton? Because that's just some Ivy League pranking right there. Classic Princeton.

BRIAN

A seven year old answered the phone! Did you fake that phone call to trick me into going to the beach?

CAY

Okay, yes, we did. But in our defense, we also faked the phone call to Stu so he wouldn't come with us.

MIKE

Which is good news, because it means they didn't choose him over you. See? Princeton doesn't think you're stupid.

BRIAN

You've both twisted everything around.
I don't know what's real anymore! Am I
dumb or not?

NICOLE

You are. We both are. But it's not our
fault. They're destroying our brain
cells with their "Boardwalk Days."
Well, I'm not doing it. I'm not going.

BRIAN

Me neither.

THEY STORM OUT.

MIKE

Hey! You can't --

HE STARTS TO FOLLOW BUT STOPS WHEN THERE'S SUDDENLY A LOUD
CRASH FROM THE NEXT ROOM.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Oh, no.

RESET TO:

INT. RICKARDS' HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MIKE AND CAY WALK IN TO SEE MARC AND LEILA TIPPING OVER
FURNITURE AND DISPLACING EVERYTHING IN THE ROOM. IT'S A MESS.

MIKE

Oh, come on! What is this about?

MARC

It's for inspiration. To write about
anarchists, I must embrace anarchy.

MIKE

It looks like you've embraced it
plenty. Now let's embrace cleaning up--

CAY

(GIVEN UP) It's fine. Knock over
anything you want.

MIKE SEES THAT CAY IS LOSING HOPE.

MIKE

Look, forget the kids. It's stupid for
you and me to let the whole day go to
waste. Why don't we go to the
boardwalk with Leila?

CAY

No. This whole thing was a garbage
idea anyway. I'm just gonna go
upstairs and find the dumbest possible
reality show to watch.

CAY CROSSES OFF. MIKE HEARS A CRASH, AND TURNS TO SEE LEILA
HAS KNOCKED A BUNCH OF PICTURE FRAMES TO THE FLOOR.

LEILA

I'm helping.

OFF MIKE'S LOOK...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREEINT. RICKARDS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

ALL THE KIDS ARE IN THE LIVING ROOM. BRIAN WORKS ON HIS LAPTOP WHILE LEILA CLEANS UP SOME OF THE MESS. MARC KEEPS WORKING ON HIS WALL OPERA, BARELY LISTENING TO NICOLE.

NICOLE

So mom and dad don't want you to know,
but I found out your WISC score. You
got a 150. Which is excellent. It's
not my 156, but...

MIKE ENTERS.

MIKE

I hope you're proud of yourselves.

BRIAN

Hey, we're not the ones who --

MIKE

I get it, I understand why you're mad.
We shouldn't have lied about
Princeton. (TO NICOLE) And maybe
you're right, maybe we should have
told you your WISC scores a long time
ago. Honestly, I don't know. Because
the truth is, when it comes to you
guys, your mom and I are winging it.
There aren't a lot of books written
about how to raise three genius kids.
But we try to do the best we can. For
all of you.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

We sacrifice our time, our money, our walls, because we're trying to give you every possible opportunity to make the most out of your gifts. And today, all your mom wanted in return was four hours. And I actually thought you could do it. I thought, for just one day, you were mature enough to not make everything about yourselves. I guess not. As smart as you all are, you're really just a bunch of dummies.

MIKE WALKS OUT. THE KIDS TAKE THIS IN.

MARC

Is he mad? It feels like he's mad, but he didn't yell. It doesn't make sense.

NICOLE

What is his problem? It's not our fault we didn't want to go to some gross boardwalk.

BRIAN

I know. We're the weird ones? Why can't they be normal parents who do normal things, like Stu's dad who vacations in Chile twice a year to study stellar distortion.

NICOLE

It's just a beach. Who cares? Why was this such a big deal?

LEILA

I guess mom just wanted to do something she likes for a change since it's her birthday.

BRIAN, NICOLE AND MARC'S JAWS ALL DROP.

NICOLE

WHAT?

BRIAN

It's mom's birthday?!

LEILA

Uh huh.

BRIAN

(TO NICOLE) Did you know that?

NICOLE

Yes, I knew and decided to be a huge bitch to her anyway.

BRIAN

(BEAT) Is that sarcasm because it seems like a reasonable possibility.

NICOLE

No I didn't know!

MARC

I didn't even know mom had a birthday.

LEILA

She has one every year. Stars, they're just like us.

BRIAN

We all have photographic memories, how could we not remember this?

NICOLE

Because we're a confederacy of narcissists and monsters. We're so self-obsessed we can't even remember our own mother's birthday.

MARC

Except for Leila.

LEILA

I'm a proto lariat.

MARC

So... what do we do now?

A BEAT AS THEY ALL LOOK AT EACH OTHER, CLUELESS.

CUT TO:

INT. RICKARDS' BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

CAY SITS ON A COUCH, MINDLESSLY PLAYING "CANDY CRUSH" WHILE "90 DAY FIANCE" PLAYS ON AN OLD-SCHOOL BIG SCREEN TV. MIKE IS TINKERING WITH SOMETHING.

MIKE

Look, I know today was a bummer, but at least it taught us a valuable lesson: we should never leave this basement again.

CAY

There's really no reason we'd have to. It has everything we'd ever need.

MIKE

Especially now that I've got this guy working again.

REVEAL HE'S BEEN TINKERING WITH THE "BIG MOUTH BILLY BASS." HE PUTS IT BACK ON THE WALL, PRESSES A BUTTON... AND AGAIN IT DIES INSTANTLY WITH A LOW, PAINFUL MOAN.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Okay, that's definitely symbolic of something.

THE BASEMENT DOOR OPENS AND LEILA COMES BURSTING DOWN THE STAIRS. (NOTE: SHE'S THE ONLY ONE OF THE CHILDREN WHO'LL EVER COME ALL THE WAY DOWN INTO THE BASEMENT).

LEILA

Marc was standing on the chair writing his opera and then he fell and is screaming a lot. Should we ignore it?

MIKE AND CAY LOOK AT EACH OTHER AND HEAD UPSTAIRS.

CUT TO:

INT. RICKARDS' HOUSE - FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

MIKE AND CAY COME DOWN. BRIAN'S ALUMINUM FOIL WALL IS GONE.

CAY

What happened to the foil wall? Isn't
this messing up the laser beams?

LEILA LEADS THEM INTO --

RESET TO:

INT RICKARDS' HOUSE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

THE ROOM HAS BEEN MADE UP INTO A MAKESHIFT BOARDWALK. THE KIDS HAVE AGAIN DRAWN ON THE WALLS, BUT THIS TIME IT'S A BACKDROP OF ATLANTIC CITY HOTELS AND STOREFRONTS. MARC PLAYS "UNDER THE BOARDWALK" ON THE PIANO.

CAY

What is all this?

BRIAN

We know we screwed up and missed the
chance to go to the boardwalk, so we
brought the boardwalk here.

CAY AND MIKE TAKE IT IN.

MARC

We didn't know what a "log flume" is,
but there's a slip and slide...

NICOLE

And we ordered funnel cakes...

BRIAN

And luckily I already had the UV
lights for my experiment, so we're
getting the same amount of cancer we'd
get from being outside.

MIKE

Gotta appreciate the commitment to detail.

LEILA

We didn't have any sand, so I dug up a bunch of dirt from outside.

CAY AND MIKE LOOK DOWN - THERE'S DIRT EVERYWHERE.

CAY

You're a good helper.

NICOLE

We're sorry about the way we acted today. Happy birthday, mom.

MARC/BRIAN

Happy birthday/We love you.

MIKE AND CAY LOOK AT EACH OTHER.

CAY

Thank you, this is so sweet.

THE KIDS ARE PLEASED WITH THEMSELVES. CAY AND MIKE STEP AWAY.

CAY (CONT'D)

This is so bizarre.

MIKE

I know. Why do they think it's your birthday?

LEILA SIDLES UP.

LEILA

(WHISPERING) I told them. I thought they needed some extra motivation.

SHE WINKS AND WALKS OFF.

MIKE

Did she --

CAY

-- outsmart the smart ones? Yep.

MIKE

Well, at least they're making an effort. That's progress. The Unabomber probably never did this for his mom on her fake birthday.

CAY

Yeah. We might as well enjoy it while we can. I have a feeling this is about as close as this family's gonna get to Normal.

CAY AND MIKE TAKE BITES OF FUNNEL CAKE. THE KIDS PLAY ON A MAKESHIFT SKEEBALL MACHINE. FOR THIS ONE MOMENT, THEY'RE JUST A TYPICAL FAMILY HAVING MINDLESS FUN. MIKE'S PHONE RINGS.

MIKE

This is so annoying.

CAY

Who is that?

MIKE

No clue. It's been the same number calling for hours. It's gotta be spam, I'm just turning the phone off.

AS MIKE SHUTS DOWN HIS PHONE...

CUT TO:

EXT. PRINCETON CAMPUS - NIGHT - SAME TIME

STU STANDS IN THE RAIN OUTSIDE A BUILDING, ON HIS CELL PHONE.

STU

Hi, Dr. Venkman, this is Stu. Again.

I've been outside the physics building
for a few hours. It's all locked up,
but I won't move until I hear from
you.

STU HANGS UP THE PHONE. HE TAKES OUT A LITTLE BAG OF TRAIL
MIX AND POPS SOME IN HIS MOUTH. A BEAT, THEN:

STU (CONT'D)

Oh, no. I think that was a peanut.

AND WE...

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE