

CONFESSIONS...

Written by

Casey Johnson
&
David Windsor

Network Draft
12-21-21

COLD OPEN

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - MORNING

It's a beautiful San Francisco morning. We see the hills, the Bay, happy people in a picturesque neighborhood. We land on NELL STEVENS, 40-something, drinking a latte and walking the most adorable dog you've ever seen, ARTHUR.

NELL (V.O.)

What are the markers of a life well lived? Is it meeting the right person?

Nell and Arthur pass a HAPPY COUPLE in love.

NELL (V.O.)

Having an important job?

A MAN in an expensive suit on a business call passes by.

NELL (V.O.)

Living in the house of your dreams?

Nell stops in front of a gorgeous Victorian house and takes a seat on the stoop, smiling.

NELL (V.O.)

Or is it--

WOMAN (O.C.)

Excuse me!

A WOMAN and her young DAUGHTER have just exited the front door of the gorgeous house. Perplexed, they look at Nell sitting on their stoop, then look at Arthur who just finished taking a huge crap on the sidewalk.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Your dog just pooped in front of my house. Are you going to clean it up?

NELL

Oh, shoot. I'm sorry, I don't have any bags.

WOMAN

Great, you're one of those kind of dog owners.

NELL

No, it's not my dog.

LITTLE GIRL

Mommy, did she steal that dog?

WOMAN

We don't know, sweetheart. Anything's possible. Times are really hard these days and people are cracking.

NELL

What? I'm not cracking. I know this dog.

LITTLE GIRL

Then what's his name?

NELL

Albert.

(checks his tag)

Arthur. He's my new roommate's dog.

Unsure of Nell's mental state, the Woman shifts to a more gentle tone.

WOMAN

Of course he is.

NELL

You don't believe me?

WOMAN

(to her daughter, worried)

Cheyenne, go in the house, Honey.

NELL

Cheyenne, you don't have to. I'm fine. I just forgot bags. A totally normal person can forget bags and not be a weirdo dog napper.

WOMAN

I'm sorry I even said anything. Don't worry about the mess.

NELL

I'll clean it up! Look.

Irritated, Nell chugs the rest of her latte then scoops the poop up in her empty cup and puts the lid back on.

NELL (CONT'D)

There. It's done.

The Woman looks at Nell like she is indeed a total weirdo and goes inside, locking the door behind her. Nell looks around at some other pedestrians who have seen this.

PASSERBY

She put the poo in her coffee.

NELL

I forgot bags!

Nell, frustrated, sets the latte cup on the Woman's doorstep. She moves the sleeve to hide her name.

NELL (CONT'D)

(to Arthur)

People are the worst, Albert.

Nell walks Arthur away from this picturesque tableau and into her real life...

INT. NELL'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Nell enters her small, less than perfect apartment to find her landlord/roommate EDWARD (an uptight environmental lawyer) standing at the kitchen counter.

EDWARD

Morning, Nell. Wanted to check in to see how you're feeling about our new living situation?

NELL

Good. You keep it pretty chilly in here but I'm--

EDWARD

Great.

He dumps a bunch of plastic trash on the counter.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Friendly reminder: please recycle. You eat a lot of yogurt.

NELL

You went through my trash?

EDWARD

If we don't recycle it becomes all our trash, doesn't it? Also you forgot Arthur's bags.

NELL

I know. I had to scoop it up in my latte cup, it was pretty disgusting.

EDWARD

Question: did you bring it home to compost?

Before she has to answer this super weird question, Nell's phone rings.

NELL

So sorry, Edward, it's my mom. I have to take this.

As Nell walks out of the room, we see her hit DECLINE but for Edward's sake she pretends to pick up.

NELL (CONT'D)

Hi, Mom!

Nell heads into her room as the call really goes to VOICEMAIL. We hear the message being left throughout the following...

MOM ON VOICEMAIL

Hi, Honey, it's me. Just calling to remind you -- today is the first day of the rest of your life!

INT. NELL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The voicemail continues as Nell enters her room. She doesn't have much furniture, just a bed and a mini fridge as a nightstand. Half unpacked boxes are scattered about. It looks more like a twenty-something's room than a forty-something's.

MOM ON VOICEMAIL

Don't get down just because your engagement fell apart and you don't have any money and you're living with a stranger. You start your new job today and that's gonna be great!

Nell starts to get dressed for work but everything is wrinkled or stained.

MOM ON VOICEMAIL (CONT'D)

Is it a job you probably could have gotten right after college? Yes! Does that matter? No!

Nell moves to the closet and shuffles through her hanging clothes. Nothing. Nothing. Until she gets to the end of the rack where she sees a fancy garment bag which covers her unused WEDDING DRESS. She stares at it a beat, then deflates and sits down on her bed. The voicemail continues...

MOM ON VOICEMAIL (CONT'D)

Oh, did I tell you? Your little brother's
having a baby!

Great. She's getting lapped by her brother. Dejected,
Nell flops down on the bed.

MOM ON VOICEMAIL (CONT'D)

And I almost forgot: happy birthday!

This brings a small smile to Nell's face until:

MOM ON VOICEMAIL (CONT'D)

We just won't say how old you are.

Her smile disappears as she reaches into her nightstand
mini fridge which is full of only yogurt and White Claws.
She considers a yogurt, then goes for a White Claw and
pulls the covers over her head as we...

END COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE - NEWSROOM - DAY

Nell follows her new boss and old friend VIJAL (early 40's, used to be a nerd but now is cool) through an exciting newsroom full of people busy at work.

NELL

I know I don't have to say it, but thank you for the job.

VIJAL

I only hired you because you're over-qualified and desperate. And because you introduced me to my husband.

NELL

It's not because when we were roommates I walked in on you masturbating to Patrick Swayze in Road House and you're still embarrassed?

The newsroom goes QUIET as everyone heard the joke.

VIJAL

(unfazed)

I stand by my love for the Swayze.

(then, to the room)

Everyone, this is Nell. Our new obituaries writer.

Nell waves meekly. As they exit the newsroom, an OLD MAN holds the door for Nell and tips his cap to her. She nods to him as she and Vijal continue into her new office...

INT. OBITUARY DEPARTMENT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

...Which is more like a closet.

VIJAL

I know it's not much, but I got you some free pens.

NELL

Or, what if I provide my own pens and you put me on the international desk.

VIJAL

Nell, you were out of the game for a few years while you helped Phillip get his restaurant off the ground. You gotta jump back in somewhere.

NELL

I know. And I owe you. If you and Ben ever need me to house sit or carry your baby - I mean, my eggs are probably like dried wasabi peas but I could try.

VIJAL

Let's start here. Your first obit.

(hands her a file)

Monty Waxberg. He's a musician you may know for his most famous work, the Yum-Yum Bubble Gum jingle.

NELL

Oh no, I hated that song when I was a kid!

VIJAL

(enthusiastically singing)

"Yum yum bubble gum. Juicy juicy fun..."

NELL

Seriously? There's no corrupt corporate titan or an heiress killed in a drug-fueled love triangle?

VIJAL

Don't judge a person by their jingle, Nell. Everyone has a story. It's your job to find it.

He exits as Nell takes in her cramped surroundings - not much inspiration here.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Nell walks up to a LITTLE GIRL (6, wearing a private school uniform) playing in the sandbox. She looks around conspiratorially then says to the girl:

NELL

How are you for cash?

LITTLE GIRL

A little low.

Nell slips her five bucks a la Don Corleone.

NELL

One day I'm going to call on you for a favor.

LITTLE GIRL

Understood, Godmother.

The Girl and Nell share a smile as we hear:

FIONA (O.C.)
Nelly-bean! You're back!

FIONA (early 40's and Nell's bff since childhood) rushes up. They go into a big loving hug.

FIONA (CONT'D)
I'm so happy! I mean, I'm sad for why you're back but I'm happy you're here. You get it.

NELL
I get it!

FIONA
How's it going? Are you settling in?

NELL
Oh yeah. Edward, the weirdo roommate, only lives in the city during the work week so on weekends I sort of feel like a grownup with her own place, I'm writing about dead people and this morning I found a gray pubic hair, so it's super. How are you? How's Dad?

FIONA
Nell, I've been married for ten years. It's time we start calling him Stewart.

NELL
Fine. How's Stewart?

FIONA
He's good.
(a beat, then fast)
I just want to get this out of the way. He's trying to get his money back for our cancelled flights to your wedding and says he needs a letter from you for the airline. There. I said it.

NELL
That is such a Dad move!

FIONA
It is! And he had his t-shirt tucked into his underwear when he said it!
(laughs, then)
You're the only person in my life I can make fun of my husband with without it feeling mean.

NELL

That's because I really love Stewart. If anything, I'm jealous of you guys. You have the perfect life and mine is a hot mess. I'm sorry I drunk-dialed you so many times from England when everything was falling apart.

FIONA

I'm sorry that I was always dealing with the kids when you called. But now we're in the same time zone and I want to hear everything that happened with Philip.

From Nell's face we cut to A SERIES OF QUICK FLASHBACKS:

--Nell, happy, on the back of Phillip's motorcycle

--Nell trying on the wedding dress

-CLOSE on Nell in a nondescript location. She's obviously been crying. We can't tell what's going on, other than it's not good...

BACK TO PRESENT on Nell's face. There's clearly a lot to unpack, but instead she changes the subject.

NELL

You know, we have plenty of time to get into all that. What I want to do now is get back out there with my best friend and move on! Are we on for birthday drinks?

FIONA

Yes! Wouldn't miss it! What time?

NELL

Eight? Nine?

FIONA

How about six?

NELL

Izzy, we've got some work to do on your mom.

IZZY

We know this.

INT. NELL AND EDWARD'S APARTMENT - LATER

Nell walks in to find a beautiful box of chocolates with a bow on the kitchen counter. She looks to Arthur.

NELL

What's this? For me?

She starts digging into the box. She downs one of the Kahlúa filled chocolates, gags on another gross one and tosses it. As she's diving into a third, Edward comes in (wearing a Stanford hat, Stanford sweatshirt and carrying a Stanford duffle.) Nell can't help herself:

NELL (CONT'D)

Did you go to Stanford?

EDWARD

Yes. Why are you eating the chocolates I got for my wife?

NELL

(mouthful)

Because it's my birthday?

Nell tries to re-form the one she's currently eating, puts it back in the box and ties the bow back on with her chocolate-y fingers.

EDWARD

Thanks. So I'm going home to be with my wife and son for the weekend. Don't forget to walk Arthur, please keep your showers to under three minutes and if you turn the heat above sixty-eight the Nest will alert me.

NELL

Got it.

Edward starts to go, then stops with a look of concern.

EDWARD

You do have plans for your birthday, right?

NELL

Oh yeah. I'm gonna throw a rager with a couple of kegs and maybe a reggae band over by your Peloton.

EDWARD

Your lease specifically states that all guests need to be pre-authorized and...

(realizing)

Oh, I see. You're joking.

NELL

Obviously. Do you have Aspergers or something?

EDWARD

Yes.

NELL

Oh my God, you do? I'm so sorry.

EDWARD

I don't. You thought I had Aspergers?

NELL

I mean, kind of.

EDWARD

I do.

What the hell is this guy's deal? Unsure what to do, Nell just stands there.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Okay. Have a good weekend. Bye.

Edward exits. Nell looks to Arthur.

NELL

You could have said something.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Nell sits at the bar, sipping on a drink, a little self-conscious about being alone as couples enter together, arms around each other. To distract herself, she starts scrolling through Instagram. Just then an OLD MAN wearing a cap sidles up next to her. (*Note: if you're watching really, really closely, you'll recognize him from the newspaper office.*)

OLD MAN

Back in the day we used to make LSD in our bathtub and give it away for free. Now they charge twenty-two bucks for a cocktail.

(off Nell's polite smile)

How come your nose is buried in your phone?

Nell looks at the Old Man and realizes he's not going to leave her alone unless she gives him something.

NELL

I'm just killing time wondering if my ex-fiancé is going to bother to wish me a happy birthday and so far he hasn't so...

The Old Man gives a nod, then:

OLD MAN

You know how to get over someone? Find someone else who looks like him and do the no pants dance.

Nell is grossed out and turns to the BARTENDER.

NELL

Do you know this creep?

The Bartender indicates the crowded bar.

BARTENDER

Which creep?

Nell starts to point to the Old Man just as Fiona swoops in and hugs her.

FIONA

Happy birthday!

Nell spins around, forgetting about the creepy Old Man, and gives Fiona a hug.

NELL

Yay! Did you tell Dad you were going to get wasted and probably not come home?

Just then we hear:

VOICE (O.S.)

Is this the famous Nell?!

Nell looks over to see ANNABEL (40 but looks 30, earthy and beautiful, possibly glowing).

NELL

It is.

(to Fiona)

Who's this?

FIONA

Nell, this is my good friend Annabel. She's another mom at Izzy's school *plus* she owns an amazing yoga studio that's been keeping me sane.

(MORE)

FIONA (CONT'D)

I thought since she's into mindfulness and healing, she might be a good person for you to know.

NELL

That's nice but honestly I've never really been into yoga. Then I watched the Bikram documentary on Netflix. Sexual assault and speedos? NO-maste, am I right?

ANNABEL

(super sincere)

Fiona talks so much about you, I just *had* to meet you. She said you've been going through a tough time so I was wondering... could I give you a hug?

FIONA

Her hugs are like magic.

NELL

Oh, I'm not really a--

But Annabel goes in for one anyway, taking Nell into a way longer than necessary embrace.

ANNABEL

The key to a meaningful hug is aligning our hearts.

NELL

We're also really aligning our boobs.

Fiona claps, super happy.

FIONA

Yay! Two of my favorite people are finally meeting!

NELL

Yay.

Over Annabel's shoulder, Nell sucks her cocktail dry as we MONTAGE through different moments throughout the night...

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

(Note: the following will play like a game of friend competition between Nell and Annabel with the prize being Fiona.)

Nell starts another cocktail as Fiona gives Nell her birthday presents. She hands her a small box with a little cake in it.

FIONA

The cake is from Izzy. She made it herself.

NELL

(touched)

Awww. It looks so gross.

FIONA

It is!

Fiona hands her an envelope.

FIONA (CONT'D)

And this is from me.

Nell opens the envelope and smiles, touched. She pulls out a sleeve of condoms with a card.

NELL

"Hope you get lucky this year." Thank you! It's perfect.

FIONA

(explain to Annabel)

We've been giving each other condoms every year since we were thirteen.

NELL

It's our little inside joke.

ANNABEL

Old friends are the best. You're not really in each other's lives for the day to day ups and downs, but then you see each other and rediscover that old connection.

Nell can't get a read on Annabel.

NELL

Well, Fiona and I are always connected.

ANNABEL

That's so special.

(then)

Time for my present!

NELL

Oh no, you didn't have to get me anything.

FIONA

You're going to want this. Annabel gives the *best* presents.

Annabel hands Nell a stylish gift bag.

ANNABEL

Oh, it's nothing.

Nell starts opening it.

ANNABEL (CONT'D)

Just a sustainable cashmere scarf from my boutique with a little story book about the goat whose fur it came from. His name is...

(over enunciating)

Chaghatai.

Nell tries to catch Fiona's eye, "how crazy is this girl?" But Fiona is actually into it.

FIONA

I can't believe you would give such a lovely present to someone you just met.

ANNABEL

Well, I have another surprise.

She pulls out an identical gift bag and hands it to Fiona.

ANNABEL (CONT'D)

Chaghatai had a very productive winter!

FIONA

Are you kidding me? I love it!

As Annabel gives Fiona a long heart-hug, Nell rolls her eyes then orders another drink.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

Nell, now drunk, watches as Annabel shows Fiona a video of their two daughters in a tap class. It's adorable.

FIONA

Oh my god, they're so cute.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

Nell shows Fiona a video of naked Orlando Bloom and his giant penis on a paddle board in Hawaii.

FIONA

Oh my god, it's so big.

Annabel is clearly offended, Nell is pleased. But then she looks over and sees the OLD MAN looking at her from across the bar. Creeped out, she sneaks him a (pixilated) finger.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

Annabel and Fiona are deep in conversation about healthy eating.

ANNABEL

...and if you combine quinoa *with* lentils, it becomes a complete protein.

Nell offers them some of her huge basket of chili cheese fries that she's already had a bunch of.

NELL

Get in on this.

ANNABEL

Nell, I swear, being with you reminds me of being in high school.

NELL

How's that?

ANNABEL

Getting drunk, eating bad food. It totally reminds me of being a teenager.

NELL

Well, since it's my birthday, not a yoga retreat, I'm just doing what feels good. Speaking of...

(turns to Fiona)

I got us tickets to the Cat Club on Saturday night. It's 80's Prom Night. I thought I could wear my wedding dress and you wear your maid-of-honor dress. Might as well get some use out of them.

FIONA

I'd love to, but Annabel got us two tickets to a charity event for literacy.

NELL

Literacy over 80's prom?! Lame! C'mon, Fi, that's no fun.

ANNABEL

I would've invited you, but there's a ton of pressure to bid on expensive stuff and Fifi said you don't have the money to do that.

Nell is stung.

NELL

Well, maybe you can auction off that scarf you gave me and hell, throw in Chimichuri, too!

ANNABEL

It's Chagh--

NELL

No one cares!

FIONA

Jesus, Nell.

NELL

I'm kidding! God. When did everyone get so grown up and serious? C'mon, let's get another round.

FIONA

It's late. I think we've given this night everything we can.

ANNABEL

And I'm teaching a 7am Crystal Cleansing class at the studio so I should probably call it.

NELL

Are you cleaning them so you can stick them up people's hoo-hahs? I saw that on a documentary too.

(then, admitting)

It was porn.

INT. NELL AND EDWARD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Nell enters, pretty popped, carrying her presents and a six pack of White Claws. She opens a can and the cake from Izzy and starts eating it with her hands. She feeds some of it to Arthur then takes Annabel's scarf and puts it on him. He takes it off with his paws.

NELL

Too bougie. I get it.

She tosses her bag on the counter and the condoms spill out.

NELL (CONT'D)

Arthur, pro tip. Never let a good condom go to waste.

She takes out a condom and blows it up like a balloon.

NELL (CONT'D)

Happy birthday to me.

She lets it go and it FRRRZZZZ's around the room, landing on the counter. Nell stands there for a beat, taking in how pathetic the end of her birthday is. She crosses to the fridge to put away her White Claws. Edward has put a post-it note inside on a shelf.

NELL (CONT'D)

"If you're reading this, the fridge has been open too long."

(hangs her head)

Oh my God. Who would have thought I'd end up like this?

VOICE (O.C.)

It's true. You never really know where life is going to take you.

She shuts the fridge to reveal the OLD MAN from the bar (and her office) standing in the kitchen!

NELL

Ahhh! Fuck! Ahhhh!

She grabs a small paring knife from the counter.

NELL (CONT'D)

Don't come any closer or I'll kill you, or at least puncture you several times.

OLD MAN

Don't bother. I'm already dead.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. NELL AND EDWARD'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Back on Nell holding the small paring knife out to the Old Man.

NELL

Are you here to kill me? It's my birthday. Please don't kill me on my birthday.

OLD MAN

I'm not here to kill you. My name is Monty Waxberg.

Nell stares at him in disbelief. MONTY starts singing:

MONTY

Yum Yum Bubble gum. Juicy juicy--

NELL

Nope! Uh uh. I don't see dead people. This is just the chili cheese fries and the cake and the five cocktails and the half a gummy I ate.

MONTY

Alright, Keith Richards.

NELL

You cannot comment because you are not real! I'm going to bed and I'm going to lock my door and move something heavy in front of it - not because you're real but because I want to. When I wake up in the morning, you will be gone.

She starts to head towards her bedroom, then turns back and grabs her cake.

INT. NELL'S BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

In the bright morning light we see the room is a mess. Nell is partway under the covers still in the clothes she wore the night before. Several boxes are in front of the door, the remnants of the cake on top.

Nell peels open her hungover eyes, trying to piece together her night. She suddenly remembers, bolts up and sees Monty sitting right next to her.

MONTY

I'm glad I'm already dead. If I were alive the smell of your sleep-farts would have killed me.

Nell jumps out of bed and grabs her Shark vacuum in defense.

NELL

How did you get past the boxes?

MONTY

I have no idea. I've never been dead before, but doors don't seem to be an issue.

Nell starts grabbing whatever clothes she can from the boxes on her floor.

NELL

No no no... this isn't happening. I mean, I know I've been sad, even a little depressed. Maybe Izzy dosed my cake. We don't know. I just need some fresh air.

She starts to head out.

MONTY

Hey lady. This *is* happening. We need to deal with it.

Just then, Nell hears:

EDWARD (O.S.)

Why is it so hot in here? Nell?

Nell stops in her tracks. Shit. Edward's home.

INT. NELL AND EDWARD'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nell walks out and sees the total mess she left last night - the cake, the empty White Claw can, the sleeve of condoms.

NELL

Edward. Hi. I thought you were supposed to be gone all weekend.

EDWARD

I decided to come back early and get a jump on work. Look, I know it was your birthday and I'm totally fine with you having a lover over--

NELL

Lover?

EDWARD

I could hear you talking to him. Plus...

Edward takes some tongs and holds up the deflated condom Nell blew up the night before.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

You might want to consider an IUD. It can take up to four years for polyisoprene to biodegrade.

As Edward goes to throw out the condom, Monty enters the room.

NELL

No!

Edward stops and looks at her. She covers.

NELL (CONT'D)

Shouldn't you compost that?

EDWARD

No. But I'm happy you're thinking that way.

MONTY

(sarcastic, to Nell)

The fun news is I'm pretty sure you're the only one who can see me.

NELL

Great. That's good -- about the composting. I'm gonna...

Nell exits quickly and we go into a MONTAGE OF MONTY FOLLOWING NELL...

INT. GREASY SPOON RESTAURANT - DAY

Nell waits in line for greasy hangover food and texts Fiona: *sorry I got over-served last night. Can we have coffee later?* As soon as it's Nell's turn to order she looks up from her phone to see Monty behind the counter.

MONTY

You don't want to eat here. They unclogged the ice machine with a plunger.

Nell rushes off.

INT. GREASY SPOON BATHROOM - LATER

Nell enters the women's room to escape Monty. She goes to the sink and splashes water on her face, but when she looks up, he's standing right there.

NELL

You can't be in here! This is a women's restroom.

MONTY

Oh, suddenly we're in North Carolina?

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET/INT. UBER - DAY

Nell jumps in an Uber.

NELL

Go, go, go!

Monty then turns around from the passenger seat.

MONTY

You're gonna want to buckle up. This guy's only got two reviews.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - DAY

Nell is now storming down the street with Monty right beside here.

NELL

Stop following me!

Nell passes the bitchy lady and her daughter from the Cold Open.

LITTLE GIRL

Mommy, it's the poo lady and she's talking to herself!

Nell puts in her AirPods so she can talk to Monty and not look crazy.

NELL

Okay, enough! What do I have to do to make you leave?

MONTY

I don't know. I have no idea why I'm here. I was a "you die, lights out" person, but here I am. There are no rules, no instructions. It's very poorly run.

NELL

There's gotta be some magic words I can say so you'll move on. Like, "I absolve you of your messed up life. You're free! Be gone! Alakazam!"

MONTY

My messed up life?

NELL

Yeah. I've been writing about you, remember? You're a dead, twice divorced alcoholic wanna be musician who wrote one dumb jingle that made me hate bubble gum.

MONTY

What about you? I've only known you for twenty-four hours but I can tell you're no prize. You drink too much, you're jealous of other people's happiness and you literally run from anything difficult in your life.

NELL

I'm not doing this! I'm not gonna get psychoanalyzed by a dead person.

Just then, Nell gets a voicemail notification.

NELL (CONT'D)

Great, thank you. I missed Fiona's call.

Nell turns her back on Monty and hits play. We hear a VOICEMAIL from Fiona.

FIONA (ON PHONE)

Hey, I got your text. Yeah, last night was... weird. I know you're going through a hard time, but I meditated on it this morning and I think you need to figure out some of this on your own. I need to protect my energy and I can't be your everything. So... I guess we'll talk later.

Nell can't believe it. The one person she had in the world is pulling away. How did this happen?

NELL

That's not Fiona. That's Annabel's woo-woo crap.

(turns to Monty)

You don't think I can deal with something difficult? Watch me!

(MORE)

NELL (CONT'D)

(then, explaining)

But don't watch me. I mean, I don't want you to come. Stay!

Nell exits.

INT. ANNABEL'S YOGA/MEDITATION STUDIO/CRYSTAL STORE - DAY

Nell enters Annabel's perfectly curated studio and boutique (high-end yoga clothes, crystals, expensive smudge sticks, etc). Nell becomes self-conscious of her hastily put-together outfit and approaches a gorgeous YOGI behind the counter.

NELL

Hello. I'd like to speak to Annabel if she's available.

YOGI

She's about to start her Cosmic Embodiment Meditation class.

NELL

(laughs, then)

Oh, that's real.

INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

STUDENTS quietly chat as they place their belongings in cubbies and put mats and crystals in a circle around Annabel. Annabel notices that Nell has joined the class. Interesting. Nell, now not feeling so confident, puts her mat down too.

ANNABEL

Okay, namaste everyone. I see we have some new faces. Welcome to our circle. We usually start by going around and sharing our intention for the class. Who would like to go first?

We CYCLE THROUGH a few of the Student's "shares" (after each one a Yogi gently hits a nearby gong).

STUDENT #1

I'm trying to manifest more space in my life for joy.

Gong.

STUDENT #2

I'm working on letting go of regret. It doesn't serve me anymore.

Gong.

STUDENT #3

I'm trying to embrace change. And get over my cat dying.

(trying to be strong)

Anastasia.

Gong. We are now on Nell.

NELL

Those were all very inspiring. I guess my intention is to try to deal with someone who is undermining my relationship with my best friend.

STUDENT #1

Well, you've come to the right place. No one is better at navigating relationships than Annabel.

NELL

That's good to hear because sometimes I think even well-intentioned people can be... emotionally manipulative.

ANNABEL

Thank you for sharing, Nell. But I would offer you a question: is it possible you might be the one who's generating your own insecurity?

The class nods in agreement with Annabel's insight.

NELL

Thank you for sharing *that*, but I would respond with a statement: not at all. It's very clear what this person is doing.

ANNABEL

Interesting. You know, sometimes we feel so lost in our journeys that we try to cling to another person's strength--

NELL

Can it, Annabel. Just admit you're threatened that I'm back and you're trying to turn Fiona against me. You only invited yourself to my birthday so you could ruin it.

The students GASP. Annabel gets a satisfied smile on her face.

ANNABEL

The only reason I came in the first place is because Fiona asked me to. She said you were pretty depressing and she didn't feel like hanging out with her wasted old friend by herself.

Nell is stunned and doesn't know what to say.

ANNABEL (CONT'D)

(to the class)

That wasn't easy, but sometimes people need to hear the hard truth.

Gong.

STUDENT #1

(upset, to Nell)

I think you should leave this sacred space!

NELL

Sacred? Are you kidding me? You paid forty dollars to sit in a circle in a building that used to be a Jamba Juice. And a "Cosmic Embodiment" meditation class? That's not a thing. And neither are these dumb crystals she's conned you all into buying. Which, by the way, are only expensive rocks that allow your beloved "teacher" to pay for a fancy private school where her kid wears a blazer. Let your chakras suck on that!

Feeling victorious, Nell gathers her stuff and turns to leave. But in the doorway, having heard all of this, is FIONA with a rolled up yoga mat. Shit.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. NELL'S BEDROOM - LATER

Nell enters her bedroom and slumps on the bed, totally dejected. Sensing she's not alone...

NELL

Are you here?

She turns to see Monty standing in the corner.

MONTY

Yup. I keep closing my eyes hoping when I open them I'll be in Madrid, but instead I'm right back here with your cottage cheese ceilings and unused jogging shoes.
(noticing how down she is)
What's with the face?

NELL

Never mind. I'm not talking about my life with some old dead guy.

MONTY

Fine by me.

NELL

It's just that I thought Fiona and I--

MONTY

Yeah, didn't think that would stick.

NELL

--were always gonna be close no matter what. When we were younger we didn't even have to say what we were feeling because we could basically read each other's minds. But now our lives are so different. Hers is amazing and mine... I just feel really disconnected from her. From everyone. At the rate I'm burning through people I'll probably be alone for the rest of my life.

MONTY

What's wrong with being alone?

NELL

It's so pathetic. I'm going to be the "aunt" at all the family functions who no one wants to sit by because all I talk about are my pottery workshops in Santa Fe and how many tomatoes I grew last year. But, who am I kidding, I probably won't ever go to Santa Fe because I can't even bring myself to eat alone at a Chipotle.

She flops back on her bed at the thought of her pathetic future.

MONTY

So... what? We're just going to sit here feeling sorry for you for the rest of eternity?

(then, realizing)

Am I in hell?

NELL

If you're with me, probably.

Nell puts a pillow over her face.

MONTY

Oh my god, I can't listen to any more of your whining. I'm either going to smother you with that pillow or we're going out.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Nell and Monty enter a cozy neighborhood bistro.

NELL

(subtly, to Monty)

This is dumb. Can't we just get food to go?

MONTY

No.

A HOSTESS APPROACHES NELL.

HOSTESS

Good evening. How can I help you?

MONTY

Table for one.

NELL

(to hostess)

Table for one.

MONTY

On the patio.

NELL

On the patio please.

EXT. RESTAURANT PATIO - NIGHT

It's lovely, all twinkly lights and candles on the table. Nell is very uncomfortable sitting "alone" at the table. She pulls out her phone.

MONTY

You don't need that thing.

Nell puts in her earpiece, pretending to be on the phone.

NELL

I want to at least look like I'm doing something.

Off Monty's look, Nell turns her phone face down.

MONTY

What are you so worried about?

NELL

I feel like everyone is staring at me, wondering what's wrong with me, why am I alone on a Saturday night?

MONTY

So what?

NELL

The first questions anyone asks you are "are you married?" "Do you have kids?" "What do you do?" My answers are no, no and apparently talk to dead people. I don't have cute anecdotes to tell or videos to share and it makes me wish people would stop asking.

Monty considers Nell for a moment, then:

MONTY

I was a child prodigy on the piano. Any piece of music I heard, I could just play. I moved to San Francisco during the Summer of Love to make incredible music, but instead I came up with...

(starts to sing)

Yum Yum--

NELL

No singing.

MONTY

It was embarrassing. I felt like my talents were wasted. So I got angry and drank and pushed people away. After about twenty years, I climbed out of my own asshole and came to understand that all around me there were people, living their lives, not a care in the world about what life *should* be. But about what life *is*. Once I got that, everything changed.

Nell sits with this for a beat.

MONTY (CONT'D)

Like look at that woman.

Monty points to a beautiful OLDER WOMAN across the restaurant eating alone.

MONTY (CONT'D)

She's not self-conscious. She's just in the moment, enjoying the life that's happening right now.

NELL

You don't have to do this.

MONTY

Do what?

NELL

Ghost of Christmas Future me into thinking if I don't change my ways I'm going to end up alone, all dressed up wearing some ugly turquoise pendant so people don't notice my turkey neck.

MONTY

Or maybe you wear it because your husband bought it for you in Spain for your anniversary.

Nell realizes why he brought her to this restaurant.

NELL

Oh my God! That's your wife. I'm sorry. I'm such an asshole.

MONTY

You are. But it's okay. So was I until I met Cricket.

Monty looks over at Cricket and smiles. Nell watches him, seeing him in a new light. Monty isn't just a gruff man who's been annoying her. He's a person with a whole life that just ended.

MONTY (CONT'D)

I wish I could tell her one more time how beautiful she is.

Taking Monty's words to heart, Nell stands up and walks over to Cricket at her table.

NELL

Excuse me. I hope this isn't too weird, but I just thought someone should tell you how beautiful you look tonight.

CRICKET

Oh my goodness. Well isn't that a kick? Thank you.

NELL

And I really love your pendant.

A sweet sadness comes over Cricket's face as she touches it.

CRICKET

My husband gave it to me.

Nell smiles, then looks back at Monty. With his advice fresh in her mind, Nell turns back to Cricket.

NELL

This is really out of character for me, but would it be the strangest thing in the world if I asked to join you for glass of wine?

CRICKET

Only if it's tequila.

NELL

I have to warn you, I'm a bit of a mess.

CRICKET

Even better!

As Nell joins Cricket at her table, Monty watches for a moment, pleased, then walks off leaving the two women together.

INT. NELL'S APARTMENT - DAY

The next day, Nell sits at her computer, Arthur at her feet. On her computer screen, we see Nell typing the same words from her Voiceover at the top of the show: *"What are the markers of a life well lived?"*

There's a knock at the door.

NELL

It's open.

Edward enters.

EDWARD

I bought more compostable bags for Arthur's business. So you don't have to waste your coffee any more.

Is he actually being... considerate?

NELL

Thank you. That's very thoughtful. I'll remember to bring them next time.

Edward nods and lingers there.

NELL (CONT'D)

Is there something else?

A beat, then:

EDWARD

It's actually called "Autism Spectrum Disorder". People used to call it Aspergers. But the American Psychiatric Association changed it in 2013. Basically, it means sometimes I exhibit repetitive behaviors and a desire to maintain structure and routine in my life. Among other things.

NELL

Like the poop bags.

EDWARD

Yes. But also, as an environmental lawyer, that's just responsible.

(then)

I know that at times it can make me... difficult to live with. Or at least I've been told.

Grateful to Edward for sharing, Nell smiles.

NELL

So have I. So maybe we're a good match.

For the first time, Edward smiles. Maybe he *can* feel emotion.

EDWARD

Well...

Reverting back to his awkward ways, Edward starts to exit. When he gets to her door, he stops and notices the thermostat. We can sense his struggle. But ultimately he can't help himself and turns it back down to 68. He points to Annabel's scarf hanging on the doorknob.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Maybe put on your scarf?

He exits. Nell smiles at this odd man that is her roommate. She turns back to her computer. We hear her VOICE OVER as she types...

NELL (V.O.)

We try to describe people's lives in one sentence. 'He was a successful banker... She was a loving mother... He was the Yum Yum Bubble Gum guy...' But the truth is, there isn't one sentence that can describe a life...

As she continues, we get into a MONTAGE OF OUR CHARACTERS:

INT. EDWARD'S BEDROOM - DAY

Edward unpacks his weekend bag. Neatly folded clothes. His toiletry kit. And finally, the new box of chocolates he was supposed to give his wife. He takes a solemn look at it, then throws it in the trash. Huh.

NELL (V.O.)

...Because life's not always what it appears to be.

INT. ANNABEL'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Annabel is closing up at her studio. The Yogi who works the desk comes up.

YOGI

So, I'm sure it's just a glitch, but my paycheck bounced.

ANNABEL

I'm so sorry. I've been having some weird issues with the bank lately. I'll call them and fix it right away. Not to worry.

But when Annabel turns around, we see from the look on her face that maybe there is something to worry about.

NELL (V.O.)

One job can't define us...

EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY

Nell's ex-fiancé Phillip sits on his motorcycle, typing on his phone. When he hits send, we see the text is to Nell... "Happy Birthday." He smiles. Just then, another WOMAN hops on the back of his bike and they ride away.

NELL (V.O.)

Or one relationship...

EXT. CAT CLUB - NIGHT

Nell waits in front of the club wearing her altered WEDDING DRESS (think Madonna Like a Virgin) for 80's Prom Night. Her phone PINGS and she sees the birthday text from Phillip. Finally. She smiles a little, then realizes she's standing by herself in a wedding dress as other groups of people file into the club. She's alone once again... until she sees Cricket walk up, decked out in awesome 80's PROM ATTIRE and the turquoise pendant. Nell takes a deep breath - this is her new plus-one.

CRICKET

Ready to rock our faces off?

Nell hands an excited Cricket a ticket and they walk arm and arm into the club.

NELL (V.O.)

Or even one bubble gum jingle...

INT. FIONA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Another night. Fiona, Izzy, her little brother and STEWART eat dinner in a beautiful dining room. It should be a scene of domestic bliss, but Fiona seems overwhelmed and unhappy as her kids cry and her distracted husband texts on his phone. The doorbell rings.

NELL (V.O.)

No matter what, don't wait to let someone know you love them...

EXT. FIONA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Fiona opens the door and picks up an envelope from her doorstep. When she opens it, we see a simple note: "I'm sorry..." along with a sleeve of condoms. Fiona smiles to herself, then heads back inside.

Across the street, Nell (wearing the scarf Annabel gave her) stands with Arthur, watching undetected. She sees Izzy pull the curtain back and wave to her. Nell smiles and waves back then starts to lead Arthur away. But not before he takes a poop. Nell can't believe after all that, she's forgotten the new bags Edward got. She decides to take off the scarf and scoop up his poop with it, then tosses it in the bushes.

INT. NELL'S OFFICE

Nell is at her desk as Vijal reads the last of her obituary for Monty. Monty sits on a chair in the corner.

VIJAL

"Because as Monty Waxberg believed, a life worth living is not worth waiting for. Everyone has a story if you just take the time to find out what it is."

Monty smiles, enjoying this.

VIJAL (CONT'D)

(impressed)

Nice job. I'm going to go upload it for publication.

Nell nods as Vijal exits.

NELL

Don't let those nice words go to your head, old man. I'm just trying to keep this job.

She turns and looks, but MONTY IS GONE.

Nell sits alone in the silence. Does she... miss him? Kind of.

NELL (CONT'D)

Didn't even bother to say goodbye. What a dick.

She smiles to herself as Vijal pops his head in the door.

VIJAL

Hey, I just emailed you a new assignment.

NELL

Rock star? Corporate titan?

VIJAL

It's for a woman who ran a successful Dim
Sum restaurant in Chinatown.

NELL

On it.

Vijal exits. Nell goes to her laptop and opens the email.
As she begins to read, a small, elderly CHINESE WOMAN
leans in over Nell's shoulder.

CHINESE WOMAN

I'm going to be honest because I'm dead
and who cares... your hair is really
thinning in the back. And why aren't you
married? Time's ticking.

END OF SHOW