

HOTEL CALIFORNIA

"Pilot"

written by
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COLD OPEN

EXT. COLLEGE STADIUM - DAY

A college graduation. JACK COLLINS (an average looking guy of about 22) and a FRIEND pose for a photo.

FRIEND

We did it! Congratulations, man!

INTERCUT:

The LANDLORD hands Jack an envelope.

JACK

You shouldn't have!

LANDLORD

You have two weeks.

INTERCUT:

Jack is on the phone.

JACK

I can't afford rent.

INTERCUT:

Jack is scrolling through Craigslist.

LANDLORD

Mark my words, nothing good ever came from Craigslist. I have the ex-wives to prove it.

JACK

You're the weirdest landlord ever.

INT. RAMSHACKLE APARTMENT - DAY

The most beat up, wallpaper peeling, condemned room imaginable.

A REAL ESTATE AGENT walks Jack through.

JACK

--Yeah, and the asbestos really gives it a home-y feel.

AGENT

It's as best as you're going to get at this price. You're looking at eight grand.

JACK

(doing math out loud)

Divided by twelve months, that's not terrible.

AGENT

Oh no, I see the confusion. That's the HOA fees alone.

An awkward beat.

JACK

Let me get back to you.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A mob of screaming children runs in circles in the background, banging pots and shrieking.

Toys and clothes and food are strewn everywhere.

A frazzled OLDER SISTER tries to round them up.

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A weary MOTHER talks to Jack as she holds a baby.

MOTHER

Of course rent would be offset, only
six-fifty, but you'd have to help with
a couple routine chores around the
house. Washing, cleaning, changing
diapers--

A kid swings from a chandelier.

JACK

Horse tranquilizers.

MOTHER

What?

JACK

Nothing.

The big sister crumples on the floor and stays down, sobbing.

SISTER

That's it! When I turn fifteen I'm
moving to Scottsdale to be an actress!

JACK

Is she gonna be okay?

MOTHER

Happens all the time. The real acting
gigs are in Reno anyway. So what do
you say?

She pushes the baby into Jack's face.

JACK

Let me get back to you.

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EXT. STREET - DAY

Jack drags his feet down the sidewalk. He stops at a telephone pole.

He sees an ad reading "Lost family clown. Responds to Wallaby" then moves on to an ad saying "Need Housing? Call me! Cheap rent, gorgeous location, immediate movers."

He dials the number.

JACK

Hi, my name is Jack Collins. I'm
calling about the apartment in your
ad.

A beat.

JACK (CONT'D)
(disappointed)

Oh yeah, that would have been a great
price. Yes, I'm sure it was
incredible. Thanks.

He hangs up, crest-fallen.

Someone is right behind him, breathing inches from his ear.
It's a scraggly HOMELESS VET, all wide-eyed and creepy.

VET

It's been eight days since I pooped.

JACK

That's how I start conversations too.

VET

How long for you?

In the background, a MAN in a bathrobe and swimming trunks is getting kicked out of a Chinese restaurant.

JACK

Let...me...get back to you.

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VET

Okay, well, you have my number!

JACK

Yup...?

VET

Write this down. Roman numeral six,
polar ice cap, square root of Vienna
sausages.

JACK

Wrote it in my head.

VET

Read that back to me.

JACK

I gotta go.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Jack peruses Craigslist.

JUMPCUT:

He's in a copy store.

-He hits the print button several times.

-Crosses telephone numbers off a list.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Jack stands outside his apartment with personal effects all
around him: Guitar case, suitcases, golf clubs.

LANDLORD

Cheapskate!

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The landlord slams the door, just missing Jack's nose. The wind from it knocks the stack of hats off his head.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Jack tries to sleep in the passenger seat of his beat-up Toyota Tercel, using a couple of In-n-Out place mats as blankets. He tosses and turns.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Jack scrolls through Craigslist.

Tight shots as his cursor highlights prices: \$1265, \$1300, \$1150.

He hits print more hesitantly and weary.

EXT. PUBLIC STORAGE - DAY

Tight shot on sign: Storage Units. Jack's face is reflected in the sign.

Jack walks up to the front office. He looks at a wrinkled Craigslist ad.

He hesitantly opens the door.

CUT TO:

INT. PUBLIC STORAGE - CONTINUOUS

WENDY DAVIS, 22 and attractive, sits at the front desk.

JACK

Hey, I'm looking for a Kradschaw.

WENDY

Is that what the kids are calling
drugs these days? I can't help you.

JACK

It's a person. I think.

WENDY

You sound super confident. Does he
work here?

Her curiosity is piqued.

JACK

I guess? I'm gonna sublet from him,
and he wanted to meet here.

WENDY

You'd be surprised at how many
professional meetings take place at a
storage unit.

JACK

Really?

WENDY

No.

KRADSHAW ALOHA, an eccentrically dressed thirty year old,
bursts through the door.

KRADSHAW

Come with me!

Jack looks confused at Wendy and a little sad to be pulled
away from her as he is physically pulled away. She looks
after him, curious.

CUT TO:

EXT. STORAGE UNITS - CONTINUOUS

Kradshaw drags Jack down rows of storage spaces.

JACK

Are you from the Craigslist ad? Krads--

KRADSHAW

Kradshaw! Shut up. Let's go. There are about three hundred things I can think of to say to you right now, and let me tell you, they are not positive, not positive at all, mister! Talking to Them on your first day! You should know better.

Jack is puzzled, and life is moving too quickly to process.

JACK

Did I offend you...?

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The two stop in front of an average storage unit.

Kradshaw clicks a garage door opener on his key ring. The storage unit starts rolling up.

TIGHT shot on Jack's incredulous face.

Black.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

The corrugated metal door continues to open.

JACK

What...

KRADSHAW

Stop gaping and start doing!!

A large pipe running along the right wall of the unit is belching water out.

BARRY WHOROWITZ, a neurotic forty-something, is feverishly trying to bail water out of the 5'x10' unit.

The small room is decked out LIKE AN APARTMENT.

A couch adorns the middle. Maybe a hammock is bolted from wall to wall.

BARRY

Who's he?

Kradshaw jumps in with a mop, somehow making it worse.

KRADSHAW

I thought it was time we brought in
someone new.

BARRY

You should have run it by me first!

KRADSHAW

Yes, your majesty!

JACK

Hey guys, still here, I was wondering
what you're doing--

KRADSHAW

I know, I know. The bucket is
inefficient, but we don't have any
sponges. Take this.

Kradshaw hands Jack an industrial squeegee.

KRADSHAW (CONT'D)

Go to work, buddy.

Jack works the squeegee with lackluster.

JACK

Run me through what's happening here.

BARRY

We had a burst in the main!

JACK

No, why is there a pipe in your
storage unit, and why does your
storage unit look like an apartment?
(realizing that's where they
want him to live)

Oh no.

INT. STORAGE UNIT APARTMENT - DAY

The trio plops down on the couch, weary and haggard.

The water is cleaned up, but it looks like most of it is on
their clothes.

Duct tape and washcloths cover the leaking pipe.

KRADSHAW

Yeah. See, we're not super allowed to
be here--

JACK

No kidding.

BARRY

The Front Counter frowns on using
economy.

Jack doesn't know whether to be stoic or laugh. He does both.
It's gotta be a joke.

JACK

This is like five by ten.

KRADSHAW

Think of it in square feet: Fifty!
That's tons.

JACK

Fifteen feet per person.

BARRY

Honestly, we had twenty-five before
you got here, and it was just too
much. Mankind wasn't meant for that
kind of luxury.

JACK

That's sounds a little psycho.

KRADSHAW

No, psycho sounds like "Hey Kradschaw,
put this jello down your shirt; Hannah
Baumgartner will think you're cool".

Barry and Jack stare at him.

BARRY
(Ignoring)

Anyway. I'm guessing you don't have a
lot of options?

JACK
Smells like crayons and potato chips
in here.

KRADSHAW
Better than crayon-flavored potato
chips!

NOLAN, a random guy, is casually walking by. He hears the
last sentence and perks up.

NOLAN
Crayon-flavored chips? That's
brilliant!

He flips Jack's briefcase over and runs off.

JACK
Who was--

KRADSHAW
Couldn't tell ya.

JACK
(recovering)
Well, thanks for the tour. This has
been another page in the most
disappointing chapter of my life.

BARRY
Will you get back to us?

JACK

What do you think?

Jack picks up his briefcase and turns to walk away.

BARRY

Rent's eighty dollars.

Jack stops without turning around. He's taking the bait.

JACK
(hesitantly)

A month?

KRADSHAW

Divided by three.

BARRY

Includes utilities.

Kradshaw elbows Barry and nods to the broken pipe.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Utilities not included.

JACK

How do you guys shower?

EXT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY

Jack and Vet are conversing in the background from the scene before.

Kradshaw was the man getting kicked out of the Chinese restaurant.

An ANCIENT WAITRESS with a sour face yells at him.

WAITRESS

You no use urinal as shower!

KRADSHAW

The mints condition my locks!

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(I/A)

INT. STORAGE UNIT APARTMENT - DAY

The three men are where they were.

BARRY
(to Kradshaw)

You're really not selling this.
(to Jack)

Gym membership.

Jack is minorly intrigued. He sits on a chair across the coffee table.

JACK

Aren't there laws against this type of thing?

KRADSHAW

The security guard has been trying to catch us in the act for a while now.

EXT. PUBLIC STORAGE - DAY

Sharp steps clip menacingly down a hall. They belong to...

BILL NI (pronounced Nee), the uptight Asian security guard.

We don't get a good look at him, but it's filmed in such a way that he seems giant and intimidating.

He passes the unit. Barry and Kradshaw are shooting each other with Nerf guns. Bill double-takes, but when he comes back, they're pretending to be moving the couch.

BARRY

I don't mind leaving grandma's love seat here because they have such vigilant security.

KRADSHAW
(Overdoing it a little)

The house on King Street won't be the same without it!

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(I/A)

INT. STORAGE UNIT - DAY

The three guys are still around the coffee table.

JACK

So it's not legal.

VET O.S.

Hold on there.

Vet's shadow falls across Jack. Reveal Vet leaning against the wall easily. He's backlit. He is cleaning his fingernails with a GIANT KNIFE.

VET

It's only illegal if you get caught.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

Vet stands in the doorway.

KRADSHAW

Vet! There he is. Room on the couch,
buddy.

Barry clearly doesn't like him.

BARRY

Wipe your shoes off!

VET

(to Jack)

Don't I know you from somewhere?

JACK

I have one of those faces.

KRADSHAW

Is it the face of someone who wants to
live here?

Jack's phone buzzes. The screen shows a notification from his bank. "Your savings account balance is \$34.68". Slow zoom in on the phone with suspenseful music.

JACK

I...I can't do this. I should move
home.

VET

So he's in. Room for a fourth? Beats
the overpass.

KRADSHAW

Absolutely!

BARRY

Absolutely not.

JACK

No, I'm not in. I can't do it.

KRADSHAW

Cause of Barry? He's not necessarily
married to this unit.

JACK

Cause this is crazy.

EXT. PUBLIC STORAGE - DAY

Jack stands outside. He swipes and pushes on his iPhone.

JACK

Hey Lauren, can I come over?

INT. LAUREN'S APARTMENT - DAY

LAUREN COLLINS sits on the couch with Jack.

LAUREN

So you never thought about money after
college?

JACK

Cause financial aid.

LAUREN

What does Dad always say?

JACK

You'll never amount to anything.

LAUREN

You proved him wrong! No, the other
thing. About plans and planning.

GABI walks in.

GABI

Who's this?

LAUREN

This is my old brother, Jack.

JACK

Older. Do I detect an accent?

GABI

Nothing gets by you. Norwegian.

LAUREN

Her boyfriend is from there.

GABI

We're about to have a facetime date!

LAUREN

He's still in Norwegia.

JACK

I'm impressed. I can't even do short
distance relationships.

GABI

Good to meet you. He's calling at
five, and I have to get pretty.

LAUREN

You only have an hour, though.

GABI

Very funny.

JACK

You're just like a blonde Mother
Theresa.

Lauren goes over to a cabinet.

LAUREN

That's what sisters are for.

JACK

And for couches to crash on.

Lauren drops a blanket and pillow on the couch.

LAUREN

Good luck.

JACK

That was ominous.

INT. STORAGE UNIT APARTMENT

Barry is trimming a bonsai plant.

Vet comes in.

BARRY

He's not here.

VET

I'll wait.

Barry's belt holster phone is buzzing.

Barry picks it up. He immediately starts talking with an
affected, New York-ish accent.

BARRY

No, it's not a sure thing. If it
passes R-1, then you buy. All right.
I'll see you in the morning.

VET

What was that?

BARRY

(back to his normal voice)

Just Barry Whorowitz doing his thing.

VET

Whorowitz, huh? How you spell that?

BARRY

With a "W" in front.

VET

I was gonna say be yourself, but
that's a terrible name. You gotta be
like me. I remember back in 'Nam...

BARRY

What? You're like thirty-five.

VET

That's correct. So back in Nam...

INT. LAUREN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It's dark in the living room.

Jack lies asleep on the couch. His watch shows 3:07 am.

A weird WHIMPERING noise starts in the corner.

GABI

WHY?!??

Jack wakes up, wide-eyed and terrified.

Gabi is FaceTiming her boyfriend.

GABI (CONT'D)

But we're perfect together!

Gabi cries and starts talking through her tears, begging her boyfriend not to break up with her in a long string of emotional Norwegian.

Jack clutches a pillow.

INT. LAUREN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jack sits at the table. He looks like a wreck. The sun streams through the window.

Lauren comes out, super chipper.

LAUREN

Cheerio, old chap!

JACK

That means goodbye. And they're fruit loops.

LAUREN

Someone woke up on the wrong side of the futon.

JACK

I was stuck in a Norwegian soap opera all night.

Another roommate, JENNA, walks in laughing.

JENNA

Some idiot's Tercel is getting towed.

Jack chokes.

LAUREN

Poor idiot. I can take you to the impound lot.

JACK

I can't afford to get it out. And I
can't stay here.

LAUREN

I'll spot you the money.

Jack sighs, resigned to his fate.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Establishing shot of The Living Room coffee shop.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Jack sits across the table from Barry and Kradshaw.

There's a long, awkward silence. They size each other up.

KRADSHAW

I knew you'd be back. People find my
animal magnetism unfrangible.

BARRY

That's not a word.

JACK

I thought it couldn't get worse than
living in a storage unit.

BARRY

So you're in?

Vet is low-crawling in the background. He's sneaking up to
the counter to steal a muffin without being seen.

JACK

What will I do for rent next month?

BARRY

You could do a conventional job. I'm a
financial analyst.

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(II/B)

Just as Vet reaches for a muffin, a barista walks by. He pretends to be doing yoga.

KRADSHAW

I'm employed from home.

BARRY

Code for unemployed.

KRADSHAW

I have several companies. I work 14
hours a day.

Kradshaw pulls open a tupperware container full of celery boats filled with peanut butter. He starts putting raisins on top.

JACK

Is all your work food based?

KRADSHAW

Ants on a log. Learned it in jail. I know what you're thinking. It's fun and all, but I always end up missing the comfort of home.

JACK

Home, which is a storage unit.

KRADSHAW

It beats a trailer with seventeen siblings.

JACK

Perspective.

INT. STORAGE UNIT APARTMENT - DAY

Barry is knitting some socks. Kradshaw is grinding sausage.

Jack appears in the door.

JACK

Anyone want to help me move?

BARRY

Super busy. With stuff. And things.

KRADSHAW

I got a medical exam.

JACK

With a sausage grinder?

KRADSHAW

I'm performing an autopsy on this
possum. I think it was murdered.

BARRY

I thought the tire tracks indicated a
natural death.

Vet walks in.

VET

I can help. For some of that sausage.

JACK

Deal.

VET

We just gotta be subtle. Security here
is tight, tight, tight.

EXT. JACK'S CAR - DAY

Jack and Vet are taking things out of the back seat.

VET

But the game is in our favor. The security doesn't know either of us so we're not suspicious right now.

Vet is loading more than one man can carry into Jack's arms.

BILL O.S.

Vet, is that you? What are you doing?

Reveal Bill, the security guard. He's short and a little dumpy. Not intimidating in the least.

VET

You're on your own, Jimbo!

Vet books it into the distance.

Jack tries to play it cool, but drops his armload of stuff. A carton of eggs cracks and splatters on Bill's trousers.

JACK

Just...moving stuff.

Bill takes out his industrial sized MagLite and shines it on his pants then on Jack's face.

BILL

Why would a grown man put perishable groceries in a storage unit?

JACK

Because there's a reasonable explanation. And here it is. Right now I will explain it. I am making preparations for a natural disaster.

BILL

You're a prepper too?? What do you think it'll be? Stock market collapse?

(MORE)

BILL (CONT'D)

Chinese invasion? Asteroid electro-
magnetic pulse?

JACK

...Rats.

BILL

You're storing perishable groceries in
case we get overrun by rats?

JACK

That's right.

Bill takes a handful of sunflower seeds from his shirt
pocket, chews them up quickly, then spits them off to the
side. He is studying Jack judgementally the whole time.

BILL

You're weird.

INT. STORAGE UNIT APARTMENT - DAY

Kradshaw is basting a turkey on a hot plate.

Jack walks in carrying his stuff.

JACK

First trip! Also second to last trip.

BARRY

There's not a lot of room. You're
gonna have to get creative if you want
to keep that.

JACK

I'll figure something out.

KRADSHAW

Things have to be just so for King
Barry.

BARRY

I told you not to call me that.

There's a mini fridge on top of a coffee table on the left side. Kradschaw arranges the alphabet magnets to spell OCD.

Barry mixes them around.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Actually, I'm CDO.

JACK

What's that?

BARRY

Same as OCD, but alphabetical order.

JACK

That's not weird.

Kradschaw rearranges the letters.

KRADSHAW

Wait, my turn again.

He makes them say "home sweat ham".

BARRY

What are you writing?

KRADSHAW

Basically "home sweet home". I ran out of letters.

BARRY

That looks inappropriate somehow.

Jack starts to think that this could actually work out.

JACK

No, you know what, leave it.

The three of them sit back on the couch comfortably.

JACK (CONT'D)

Hashtag home sweat ham.

BARRY

You should Twitter that.

JACK

Yup.

INT. STORAGE UNIT APARTMENT - NIGHT

The three guys are asleep: Kradshaw is in the hammock. Barry sleeps on the couch.

Jack is on the floor, spooning his guitar. He uses the amp as a pillow. He looks surprisingly comfortable.

JACK

This could actually work out.

Jack closes his eyes with a smile on his face. Kradshaw starts snoring CRAZY LOUD.

Jack's eyes jump open. He twitches ever so slightly.

EXT. CAR - DAY

Jack slams his trunk. He picks up his last load of stuff: It fills up his arms.

Wendy walks alongside.

WENDY

How'd the meeting go? Was that guy
Kradshaw?

JACK

Good. Drugs might have been better
than him, actually. But I'm living
with him.

WENDY

Why are you moving your stuff into
storage?

JACK

You're like a pretty Sherlock Holmes.
I'm just putting it in here til I
figure out what to do with it. So if
you work here a lot, I'll probably be
seeing more of you.

WENDY

Ugh. That's a shame. Cause of your
face.

JACK

Oh, you're a face-ist?

WENDY

Some faces are better than others.

JACK

I don't think my mom wants me to hang
out with people like you.

She opens the door for him. He goes in, but she stays
outside.

She is behind Jack, but he doesn't turn around.

WENDY

You're living here, aren't you?

Jack's eyes go wide.

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW