

TOGETHERNESS SPEC
"Somewhere Salty"

This episode would follow Season 2, Episode 3

Written by

Jon Levenson

CAST:

Alex

Tina

Brett

Michelle

Larry

Sophie

Frank

Ellis Cosley

Sally (the dog)

Driver

Med Student

Voice

Naked Geezer

Father

Mother

Previously on Togetherness:

Michelle reveals her affair with David to Brett, causing him to jump ship. Alex, still high from his shoot in New Orleans, takes Brett home to Detroit to help him sort out his feelings about his now broken marriage. Tina and Larry discover tension in their relationship when Tina expresses wanting children of her own.

INT. DOCTOR'S EXAMINATION Room - DAY

Alex, hunched over in a hospital gown, perches on the end of an examination table (the back of which is raised to its upright position). He stares at a jar of tongue depressors.

Hearing a sudden commotion outside, he leans over and lifts the blinds to see a loud-mouthed couple arguing on the street. It's ugly.

He nearly falls off the table when the door to the exam room swings open and:

MED STUDENT

Mr....

A neatly-dressed, super-focused MED STUDENT (22) enters checking her clipboard.

MED STUDENT (CONT'D)

Pappas?

Alex finds his balance and reclaims his spot on the table.

ALEX

(fatigued, in sudden pain)

Hey.

MED STUDENT

Do you prefer I call you Mr. Pappas?

ALEX

Alex works.

She sits on a low stool and grabs the pen in her pocket.

MED STUDENT

What brings you in today? Alex.

ALEX

Um, well, I've been having stomach pain. I've been pretty nauseous.

The Med Student has already begun taking copious notes, her eyes glued to her clipboard.

MED STUDENT

And how long has this been going on?

ALEX

Um, about six months now?

MED STUDENT
 (more college kid than
 doctor)
 Damn, really?

ALEX
 Yes? Really.

MED STUDENT
 Long time. Are you experiencing any
 other symptoms.

ALEX
 Uh, I've been a bit feverish. I've
 been throwing up a lot this week.
 S'kind of a greenish color and I'm
 not a kale guy or anything so it's
 pretty weird.

She takes notes well after Alex has finished talking. He
 waits an uncomfortable amount of time before she pops up from
 her stool and:

MED STUDENT
 Okay! Well, let's see if we can't
 figure out what in the Sam Hill is
 going on with you.

Her smile gets no response from Alex.

MED STUDENT (CONT'D)
 Go ahead and lie back.

Alex leans against the back of the examination table. The Med
 Student jiggles a lever at the base of the table. She puts
 all her strength into it, but the table is stuck upright.

MED STUDENT (CONT'D)
 Dang thing is stuck on some-

Suddenly the seat-back releases and Alex plummets to a
 horizontal position slamming the back of his head.

ALEX
 Ow. Geez!

MED STUDENT
 That hurt?

ALEX
 (frustrated, but polite)
 Yes, that hurt.

The Med Student has already moved onto washing her hands.

Alex is adjusting his position on the table when she lifts his gown, exposing his legs and jockey shorts. He's uncomfortable being so exposed, but:

MED STUDENT
I'm going to palpate your abdomen
and see if I can't find any-

She taps on the quadrants of his belly.

MED STUDENT (CONT'D)
-thing that might be causing your
pain. That hurt?

Alex moans lightly.

MED STUDENT (CONT'D)
How bout that?

Alex moans in pain. The Med Student taps lower and lower on Alex's belly until she nears the waistline of his underwear.

ALEX
(raises eyebrows)
Mmmm. Mmmm. Uh...

The Med Student reaches under the waistband of Alex's underwear and applies intense pressure. Alex jumps up. The Med Student jumps back.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Okay, what the hell?

MED STUDENT
I'm sorry, I'm just -

From a WEBCAM/SPEAKER SYSTEM just above the Med Student's computer station comes a VOICE.

VOICE
Mr. Pappas, please sit back down
and resume Miss Dickerson's midterm
exam.

Alex walks right up to the webcam and speaks to it.

ALEX
(pissed)
She was gonna palpate my junk!

Alex backs away from the camera and pulls his clothes from a drawer under the table, ripping his shirt.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 Jesus Christ!

He gets dressed. The Med Student cries.

MED STUDENT
 (to the web camera)
 Does this mean I fail? I can't
 fail! Please.

VOICE
 Mr. Pappas, do you or do you not
 need this job? You're expected to
 react as if you're actually
 receiving a physical examination.

ALEX
 That's what I did!

Half-dressed, Alex throws open the door to the hallway and
 exits, still trying to shove an arm into a torn sleeve.

ALEX (O.C.) (CONT'D)
 I'm fuckin' OUT!

Alex knocks over supplies as he storms down the hall.

INT. BRETT AND MICHELLE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Brett lies hidden underneath a mound of pillows, his copy of
 DUNE and boxes of Honeycomb, Coco Puffs and Organic Gorilla
 Munchies.

Michelle hustles in, frantic. Frank dangles from her arms,
 crying. Sophie hops in on one foot behind her mom.

Michelle digs through the pillows on the couch looking for
 Sophie's shoe. Brett stirs. Michelle is startled.

MICHELLE
 Jesus!

BRETT
 (batting her away)
 You mind?

MICHELLE
 Sophie can't find her pastel jelly.

BRETT
 Her what?

MICHELLE
Her pink jelly.

BRETT
I have no idea what -

SOPHIE
My shoe, Daddy! My shoe.

Brett's eyes meet Michelle's.

MICHELLE
Her shoe.

BRETT
(referring to his fussy
son)
What's his deal?

Frank squirms in Michelle's arms.

MICHELLE
I don't know I don't know. He's
been acting bitchy all morning.
Think he has an ear infection or
something.

Brett grabs Frank from Michelle and gives him a few tummy
kisses. The baby calms.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
That's just - makes me feel so -

BRETT
(to Frank)
He just wanted his dada, didn't you
buddy.

MICHELLE
- small.
(an under her breath pity-
party)
Now nobody wants me.

SOPHIE
Found it!

MICHELLE
Okay honey let's vroom vroom vroom.
(to Brett)
Can you just watch him until I get
home from my meeting.

BRETT
S'your day.

MICHELLE
I know, but can you -

BRETT
(firm)
It's your day, Michelle.

He hands the baby back to her.

MICHELLE
Just do me this one solid. I
promise I will -

BRETT
Your promises don't clear when I
cash 'em in, so why would I...

Michelle stops short. Tears well in her eyes. Brett sees this, then rolls over and positions himself for more sleep. Michelle grabs her keys and opens the door for Sophie.

MICHELLE (O.C.)
Get a job!!

She slams the door. Brett's yelled retort is muffled by pillow and couch:

BRETT
One step ahead of you!

INT. TINA'S CAR - DAY

Tina slams her horn in bumper to bumper traffic. Larry's little white lapdog, SALLY, shoots Tina a look - something between concern and confusion - from the passenger's seat.

TINA
Come the fuck on! How is it
possible that everybody in this
goddamn city is headed to Sylmar,
Sally, huh?

Tina's phone rings. She answers.

TINA (CONT'D)
Sweet T, who's this?!?

MICHELLE (ON PHONE)
You giving yourself a nickname?

TINA
You like it?

MICHELLE (ON PHONE)
Not really.

Tina makes a face.

MICHELLE (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
You said call when I need help and
I need help.

Tina tries to merge to the right, but a car in the next lane
speeds up to prevent her from doing so.

TINA
What is the fuckin' epidemic in
this city with dickwad drivers
speeding up to keep you from
getting over when you USE YOUR TURN
SIGNAL?

MICHELLE (ON PHONE)
Tina! I'm heading to this super
important meeting at City Hall for
the school right now. Brett
wouldn't take Frank today and I
need you to come get him from me
before -

TINA
What? Why wouldn't he take -

MICHELLE
It doesn't matter. I'm gonna be
late. Can you come and meet me
before eleven and just watch him
for like -

TINA
I can't.

MICHELLE
What? No no no no please. Why?!

TINA
I'm taking Sally to get groomed.
Larry's a pageant mom. He only lets
the breeder he adopted her from
groom her! I mean I love him, but I
would never travel *cross town* for a
blowout.

Another look from Sally.

MICHELLE (ON PHONE)

Wull, can you come grab Frank and take him with you? I will owe you my life. I will give you my second born (for three or four hours), I will -

TINA

Jesus Christ, Michelle, I'm halfway to Sylmar.

MICHELLE (V.O.)

Pleeeeaassee? I'll take you to Cheesecake Factory or -

Tina tries to merge right and gets honked at by another driver.

TINA

(flipping the driver the bird)

Go fuck yourself you entitled Lexus fuck!

MICHELLE

Kahlua Cocoa Coffee Cheesecaake...

TINA

Fine! Larry's gonna throw a fit.

MICHELLE (ON PHONE)

What does that even look like?

TINA

It's just a nasty look he gives you while he, like, stirs his tea really fast. Where do I need to meet you?

INT. BRETT AND MICHELLE'S HOUSE, BEDROOM

Brett is getting dressed. Alex sits on the bed in his ripped shirt.

BRETT

I can't even look at her for longer than like a nano-second.

He pulls a shirt from the closet and puts it on.

BRETT (CONT'D)
I almost moved my clothes to the carport so I didn't have to come in here.

Brett catches Alex's disapproving look.

BRETT (CONT'D)
What?

Alex shakes his head 'no,' refusing to share his opinion.

BRETT (CONT'D)
Seriously, what dude?

ALEX
I just think you should...

BRETT
Say it.

ALEX
Never mind.

BRETT
Go on! Say it. Say -

ALEX
Grow up!

Brett can't believe his best friend is betraying him. He grabs his shoes and puts them on.

ALEX (CONT'D)
You've bullwhipped her hard enough man. Now, grab the elmers, put it back together, and get on with your marriage.

Brett finishes lacing up and looks at Alex. He makes sure he wants to say what he's about to say before he says it:

BRETT
I'm not sure I want - to get on with my marriage.

ALEX
Dude, she's Michelle.

BRETT
She's... not. Anymore.

Alex has no words.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Drive me?

ALEX

I should go in *with* you. Steal that job *from* you since you're having issues appreciating what you get/what you've got.

BRETT

Dude, can you just be my friend here?

They exchange acrimonious glances until Brett exits.

ALEX

Think they'd hire us both?

EXT. CITY HALL GARDENS- DAY

Tina, sipping on a giant latte, speedwalks up to Michelle. She carries another small coffee and has Sally on the leash.

Michelle holds the baby in his carrier. She's got a diaper bag on her shoulder and a huge stack of manila folders in her arms.

MICHELLE

You stopped for a latte! I'm about to be late!

TINA

Relax, we got you one too.

The girls engage in a circus act of exchanging the baby, the diaper bag, the coffee etc.

TINA (CONT'D)

Go go go go!

Michelle gives Tina a quick look of appreciation and runs off.

TINA (CONT'D)

(calling after her sister)
Wait wait wait wait wait!

MICHELLE

(turning)
What?

Tina runs up to Michelle and properly aligns the seam in her stocking. With a look, Michelle asks if she's presentable. She looks good, Tina's proud.

TINA

Okay, okay. Go get em!

Michelle runs toward City Hall.

MICHELLE

Thank you!!

EXT. GLENDALE ELKS LODGE, PARKING LOT - DAY

There's only one other car in the huge lot.

Alex and Brett stare at the Lodge from behind the windshield. The worn building is something of an eastern bloc bowling alley.

BRETT

(convincing himself)

It's gonna be good. It's gonna be good good good good good.

ALEX

Break a leg?

INT. GLENDALE ELKS LODGE - DAY

Brett sits, bouncing his leg nervously, in a lobby that hasn't been touched, or maybe even dusted, since 1959.

ELLIS COSLEY (74) appears at the door. He's an American Jim Broadbent - one part avuncular grandpa, two parts disenchanted curmudgeon.

ELLIS

(all business)

Mr...?

BRETT

(rising)

Pierson. Mr. Cosley? Good to meet -

ELLIS

Follow me.

As Ellis exits:

BRETT

With pleasure.

INT. GLENDALE ELKS LODGE, KITCHEN - DAY

ELLIS

We've a new chef. Wife of one of our guys, Mark Robley. Wife's into all that new-age, organic crap. So... attendance to our Friday dinners is down.

BRETT

Organic's good though. Higher in antioxidants and -

ELLIS

Antioxi-whats? Just put some damn noodles on a plate and let us watch our Columbo marathon.

BRETT

Oh man, I love Columbo. The Great Santini - the one where the Nazi concentration-camp guard becomes the illusionist and -

ELLIS

Peter Falk was a member. Then he died.

BRETT

No way. Incredible. What was he like?

ELLIS

He was an asshole.

BRETT

I'd always heard he was -

ELLIS

No. Asshole. Even before the dementia.

Ellis moves on to the next room.

INT. WORKOUT ROOM AND SAUNA - DAY

Brett and Ellis pass through the workout room. Ellis opens the door to the sauna to allow Brett a peek inside. A near-naked geezer sweats, hunched over on the bench inside.

ELLIS

(to Brett)

Feel free to grab a schvitz before
your shift.

(to the man in the sauna)

Heya Bob.

Bob raises a flappy arm to wave. Brett waves as Ellis shuts
the door.

EXT. LARRY'S WEHO HOUSE, FRONT YARD - DAY

Frank sleeps in his carrier. Tina, barefoot in rolled up
jeans, approaches Sally with the hose. Sally barks at Tina
with surprising ferocity for a lap dog.

TINA

(whisper-shouting)

Shhhh. Sally, shut it! You're gonna
wake the baby.

Sally snarls at Tina.

TINA (CONT'D)

Ooooh. I'm so scared. I'm shaking
in my jeans. Just you zip it you
fussy little -

Tina aims the hose at the dog and douses her. All of a
sudden, Sally bolts from the yard into the street.

TINA (CONT'D)

SALLY, COME! Sally, get back here
before I -

Just then, a BMW speeds down Larry's street. Sally's YELP is
heard as the car halts abruptly - striking the dog.

Tina stands at the curb in shock, the hose in her hand still
spraying water.

TINA (CONT'D)

Oh my god oh my god oh my god no.

Tina runs to the street until she's jerked back when the hose
runs out of slack. She drops the hose and continues to the
dog.

EXT. MIDDLE OF THE STREET -DAY

The DRIVER (50s) of the BMW emerges. She's a moneyed white
lady.

DRIVER

I didn't see him. I'm - is he okay?

TINA

NO! She's NOT okay! You hit her!

Tina bends down at the hood of the BMW and picks Sally up. She's clearly injured, critically. Her white fur is red with blood.

DRIVER

You should really keep your dog on a leash.

TINA

And you should watch where the fuck you're going!

Tina hurries back to Larry's yard with Sally in her arms. She passes a hysterical Frank in his carrier as she runs into the house.

INT. TINA'S CAR - DAY

Frank cries uncontrollably in the back seat. Sally lies, bleeding, wrapped in a towel, on the passenger's seat.

LARRY'S VOICEMAIL

You've reached Larry. You know what to do. And if you don't, you shouldn't be calling. BEEP.

TINA

Larry? Larry it's me. There's, uh, something bad. Something bad's happening and I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm so sorry. Can you call me please?

Tina hangs up.

TINA (CONT'D)

Ummmm....

Tina fumbles with her phone as she drives. She dials Michelle. She's hits dial, but then drops the phone. It rings. Sally WHIMPERS.

MICHELLE'S VOICEMAIL
 Hey there, you've reached
 Michelle Pierson. I'm so
 sorry I can't take your call
 right now, but if you leave a
 message I'll call you back A
 S A P. Sorry. Thanks.

TINA
 Noo! Why isn't anybody good
 picking up?!
 (to Sally)
 Don't give up on me girl.
 You'll be okay. Promise.

EXT. GLENDALE ELKS LODGE, PARKING LOT - DAY

Alex sunbathes on the hood of Brett's car. Suddenly, his cell
 buzzes next to him: TINA. Alex let's out a frustrated sigh,
 then answers.

ALEX
 Yellow.

Tina is hysterical on the other end of the line. Alex can
 barely make out her words.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 Hey hey. Slow down, slow down.
 Breathe... Wait what?... Who's
 Sally...? Where's Michelle...?
 Uh...

Alex looks to the Elk's Lodge and makes a quick decision. He
 jumps into Brett's car.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 Okay okay, I'm coming! Where are
 you...? Just calm down - where are
 you?!

Alex peels out.

INT. ELLIS'S OFFICE - DAY

ELLIS
 So you think you're a right fit for
 us?

BRETT
 Oh yes. Yah. Yes.

Ellis seems to be waiting for more.

BRETT (CONT'D)
 And I've... been designing and like
 editing sound for years, so...
 (MORE)

BRETT (CONT'D)

I could even maybe run AV for lectures and events too or whatever.

Ellis looks at Brett, lost. He has no idea what Brett's talking about.

BRETT (CONT'D)

I need this, Mr. Cosley. I just really need to get away from all the egos and the craziness, you know. Be somewhere... salty.

Ellis flashes Brett a salty look of whatever.

BRETT (CONT'D)

This fits the bill for me I think, ya know?

ELLIS

Position pays \$11.50 an hour to start. 25 hours a week.

BRETT

Ah. Okay. Huh. Is that at all negotiable or, um, are there any benefits or anything?

ELLIS

We'll feed you when we can. At events and such. And you get a parking space.

BRETT

That's really nice, but I meant like -

ELLIS

'Elks care. Elks share'.

Ellis forces a quick smile and points to the banner on the wall: Elks care. Elks share.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

So? Interested?

Brett takes a deep breath and looks around.

BRETT

Yah, yes. I think I am. You've got yourself a new Facilities Manager.

Brett extends his hand.

ELLIS
 (calling off)
 Priscilla, can you get...

Ellis looks to Brett for help with his name.

BRETT
 Brett. Pierson.

ELLIS
 Mr. Pierson set up here? Welcome
 aboard.

Ellis shakes Brett's hand and exits, wiping his hand on his
 pant leg.

INT. CITY HALL, HALLWAY - DAY

Michelle says goodbye to some of the charter school moms and
 dads, including CARLA (40s).

CARLA
 I think we're close.

MICHELLE
 Now if we can just lock in zoning
 approval.

Michelle's cell buzzes in her purse. She takes it out: Brett.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
 I have to take this you guys.
 Sorry. I'll see you Thursday.

CARLA
 See you then. Good job today.

Michelle waves goodbye, mouths 'Thank You,' and walks down
 the hall to answer Brett's call.

MICHELLE
 I don't know why I'm even answering
 this.

EXT. GLENDALE ELKS LODGE - DAY

Brett stands on the steps of the lodge staring into the
 parking lot from which his friend, and car, have disappeared.
 He takes out his cell and calls Michelle.

BRETT
(into his phone)
I need a ride.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

MICHELLE
What? Why?

BRETT
Long story. Alex ditched me. In *my*
car. Can you just -

MICHELLE
Do you a solid?

BRETT
Michelle, could you just suck it up
and -

MICHELLE
Fine. Where are you?

BRETT
I'm in Glendale. I came out of my
interview and Alex was gone. And
he's not picking up.

MICHELLE
Interview? Like, for a job?

BRETT
Yes, Michelle. Like for a job. Can
you come get me or not?

MICHELLE
I can. Yes, I'll be there soon.
Text me the address.

BRETT
K.

MICHELLE
Hey... thanks. For looking for
work.

BRETT
Um. Yah. Of course.

INT. WEHO ANIMAL HOSPITAL, LOBBY - DAY

Tina paces the lobby - she's a cluster of frayed nerves. Frank sleeps in her arms. They're surrounded by various PET OWNERS and their cats, dogs - a COCKATOO. Alex enters.

ALEX
How's the dog?

TINA
(losing it)
How the fuck would I know?

She yells in the direction of the FRONT DESK ATTENDANT.

TINA (CONT'D)
They won't let me GO BACK THERE TO
BE WITH HER.

ALEX
I'm sure they know what's best.

TINA
She's probably terrified.

The Cockatoo flutters its wings then flies from his owner's lap. He perches on the arm of a chair near where Tina's standing. Tina widens her eyes in frustration to Alex, then turns to the bird's OWNER.

TINA (CONT'D)
Could you teach your little friend
some respect?!
(to Alex)
Jesus.

ALEX
Okay, you're clearly upset.
Understandable.

TINA
That thing won't settle the fuck
down.

The cockatoo flutters its wings.

TINA (CONT'D)
Ugh!

ALEX
Okay. Okay.

TINA

(whispered to Alex)

I hate birds. No wonder that thing's here - fuckin' diseases. Birds are full of 'em. Beaky, beady-eyed bastards. Nasty.

ALEX

Yes yes. Birds are the worst.

TINA

Plus, my arms are about to fall off, but every time I try to put him in his carrier he freaks out.

Alex tries to take Frank from Tina.

ALEX

Okay, well, for starters gimme the baby.

She holds on tight to Frank.

TINA

(tears welling)

He'll wake up and I really can't handle him crying right now. I can't handle him or anyone losing their shit right now. I'm gonna lose mine. I'm gonna -

ALEX

Tina. T, you're okay. I'm here. It's gonna be okay.

Tina release her grip, slightly, on the baby.

TINA

(full blown tears)

I killed my boyfriend's dog. I killed her. I killed Sally.

ALEX

You don't know that yet. I'm sure she's -

TINA

I always find a way to ruin it.

Alex stops trying to take Frank from Tina and waits for her to be ready. Frank is sort of suspended between them.

TINA (CONT'D)

Larry's like the best chance I've got. I don't even know why he wants to be with me to begin with, but now he really won't want to be with me.

Alex takes Frank in his arms. Miraculously, the baby didn't wake.

ALEX

You're Super-T. You can keep a baby suspended in midair without waking him. He's got a million reasons to love you.

TINA

He's gonna leave me. He's gonna leave. It's what I deserve.

ALEX

Okay. Let's just sit, okay?

Alex, now holding Frank, leads Tina to two chairs - the cockatoo sits in one of them.

TINA

(to the cockatoo's owner -
on her last nerve)
Do you mind?!?!?

The cockatoo's owner lifts the bird and places him on her lap. The bird stares Tina down.

TINA (CONT'D)

(to the bird)
What?!

INT. YOGURTLAND - DAY

Michelle and Brett make fro-yos.

MICHELLE

But they won't sign anything until the board meets which isn't for like another 3 weeks.

Brett squirts some fro-yo into a taster cup and tastes it. It's delicious. He squirts in a refill.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

It's like, just have someone sign the thing so we can move on.

(MORE)

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

The contractor's scheduled to start soon.

BRETT

Honey honey, you have to taste this.

Brett shoves the taster cup to Michelle's lips.

MICHELLE

Easy.

Brett adjusts and Michelle tastes the yogurt.

BRETT

The bomb, huh? Banana Pudding.

MICHELLE

Mmm.

She takes the taster cup from Brett and finishes its contents.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

That's crack.

BRETT

That and a little peanut butter, hmm? S'like a flavor explosion. Ppuhkwew!

Michelle is smiling at Brett, and it's not just that she likes the yogurt. Brett notices.

BRETT (CONT'D)

What? What?

MICHELLE

You called me 'honey'.

Brett smiles.

BRETT

Well, don't get a big head about it.

EXT. YOGURTLAND - DAY

Brett and Michelle eat their yogurts.

MICHELLE

So what's the job?

BRETT
(nervously)
It's, uh, well... don't shit on it
right away, okay?

MICHELLE
I'm not gonna shit on it.

BRETT
Just hear me out before you make
faces or noises, cause it's hard
out there. I been knocked down a
few times.

MICHELLE
You've gone on other interviews?

BRETT
I've... made a couple phone calls.

MICHELLE
Okay. Okay, so tell me about it.

Brett surveys Michelle's expression making sure it's safe to share.

BRETT
Well, you know how I've been
wanting out of the sound thing
altogether? I just can't handle
everyone acting like what we're
doing is more important than it is.
The puffed out chests of the
assholes I work with.

MICHELLE
Uh-huh. So what is it? Is it good?

BRETT
It is. It is it is it is it is it
is good - for me.

MICHELLE
Okay?

BRETT
The hours are good - flexible, so
I'll be able to spend more time
with the kids. Take Sophie to
school, hang with Frankie, help
with chores et cetera?

Michelle is cautiously impressed.

MICHELLE

O-kay.

BRETT

Okay.

MICHELLE

Okay... So?

BRETT

So... you're looking at the new part-time Facilities Manager for the Glendale chapter of the Elks. Lodge # 1289.

Michelle's mouth drops in disbelief.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Pretty cool, huh?

Michelle tries to humor Brett.

MICHELLE

(trying pretty hard)

That *is* pretty cool. I guess.

BRETT

The Elks do cool things for people. Like like they have anti-drug programs and... they do Blankets for Babies, or whatever.

MICHELLE

How much does it pay?

BRETT

Well, that's kind of the, um, down... not that it's a downside, but it's a - well, it's not what we're used to, but I'm sure I could earn a raise after being there awhile or maybe once you're getting paid by the school we could contribute a little more evenly to the household whatevers -

MICHELLE

How much Brett?

BRETT

It starts at like, um, \$11.50 an hour. But I'm gonna get to work up to like 25 hours a week at first and so -

MICHELLE

Uh-huh and what are the benefits?

BRETT

Benefits.

MICHELLE

Yah, Brett. Benefits. Are we going to be able to, say, take our kids to the doctor when they get sick?

BRETT

Yah, well. We'll have to save more than we used to, but you know, we'll figure it out.

Michelle looks down and shakes her head.

BRETT (CONT'D)

I'll get some meals. On occasion. And my own parking space. And there are activities. You could bring the kids.

Brett waits for some response from Michelle. Anything.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Michelle?

MICHELLE

No.

BRETT

What no? What do you mean no?

MICHELLE

No. I mean no. You absolutely cannot take this job.

BRETT

Who are you to tell me no?

MICHELLE

Brett, you have a family to support. Are you forgetting you have two children and a wife?

BRETT

I think we both know who forgot they had a family.

MICHELLE

Excuse me?

BRETT

Where were these thoughts when you crawled into bed with a man that wasn't me - that wasn't your husband!

MICHELLE

This isn't that.

BRETT

It isn't? It isn't cause and effect? It isn't the breakdown of our family? You did this - caused me to look out for me first. Me and my kids. You had it easy, Michelle. You did. You fucked this.

Brett looks away from Michelle and sees a family of four eating yogurt at the next table. The FATHER and MOTHER are looking at him and Michelle.

BRETT (CONT'D)

That's right. She went to bed with another guy. After almost a decade of marriage.

(to the man)

Your wife ever do that to you? Betray you?

MICHELLE

Brett, I -

BRETT

Destroy you? Rip your life apart and expect you to be big enough to get over it?

Suddenly, Michelle gets up from the table, tears streaming down her cheek. She glares at her husband unable to believe he could be so cruel.

Michelle walks to off to her car, doubling back for a second to throw her yogurt cup in the trash can. She misses and yogurt ends up splattered on the can and the pavement. Brett looks after her.

BRETT (CONT'D)

(to himself)

S'not my fault.

(to the nearby family)

It's not my fault.

INT. WEHO ANIMAL HOSPITAL, LOBBY - DAY

Frank sleeps in Alex's arms. Alex and Tina sleep, resting their heads on one another. Another pet owner sits in the lobby with a sweet, ailing pup at his feet.

Suddenly, Larry urgently bursts through the door and passes Alex and Tina. He goes straight to the DESK ATTENDANT.

LARRY

Hi, I'm Larry. I'm Sally's daddy.

Alex stirs, opens an eye and sees Larry at the desk. He glances at Tina who still sleeps. He opts not to wake her.

DESK ATTENDANT

Yes. Hi. Sally's just out of surgery, but would you like to come see her?

LARRY

Yes yes, please. That would be great.

The desk attendant rises and shows Larry the way.

DESK ATTENDANT

Right this way please.

Alex watches as Larry walks through the door to the examination rooms.

EXT. BRETT AND MICHELLE'S HOUSE, FRONT YARD - DAY

Michelle opens the back door to the car and Sophie hops out and runs up to the front door of the house.

Sophie pulls on the handle, but the door is locked. She keeps pulling on the handle.

It's clear Michelle's been crying. She zombiewalks slowly to the door.

SOPHIE

Mommy, when can I have my own keys?

MICHELLE

When you're older, sweetie?

SOPHIE

How old?

MICHELLE

Older.

SOPHIE

How old?

MICHELLE

Older.

Michelle makes it to the door and unlocks it. She opens it and Sophie runs inside.

SOPHIE

Miranda has her own keys to her house.

MICHELLE

Miranda's mommy's a pushover.

Michelle shuts the door from inside.

EXT. PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS - DAY

Brett sits forlorn on the freeway overpass, his arms extended through holes in the chain link as if he's sitting in the stocks.

Cars whiz past, far beneath his dangling legs.

INT. WEHO ANIMAL HOSPITAL, LOBBY - DAY

Larry steps into the lobby from the back. Tina stirs. Alex stirs too. The baby remains asleep in Alex's arms.

Tina rises to meet an emotionally spent Larry.

TINA

How is she? Any news?

LARRY

She's going to be okay. One of her hind legs was degloved - skin ripped right off the bone. She has some road rash too, but the vet says she's lucky.

TINA

Oh thank god. Thank God, Larry.
I...

Tina can't find the words.

LARRY

I'm gonna go get some fresh air.

Larry leaves the lobby. Tina follows him outside. As she exits:

TINA

Larry, I'm so sorry.

Alex sits with the baby on his chest and watches through the window as Tina and Larry argue on the street.

Alex makes eye contact with the only DOG left in the lobby. He sort of shrugs in embarrassment for his friends.

The fight outside grows uglier and uglier until Alex can see/hear Larry shout:

LARRY

Go home Tina!

TINA

Larry, I swear I only meant to -

LARRY

Go home, Tina! Go home! I don't want you!

Tina looks shocked.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Here! I mean I don't want you here right now.

Alex watches as Tina and Larry look at one another in silence for a beat. Then:

LARRY (CONT'D)

Just go take the baby to Michelle's.

Tina comes back into the lobby, distraught. She grabs her purse and the empty baby carrier and throws the lobby door wide open. Alex stays seated with Frank in his arms.

TINA (O.C.)

ALEX!

EXT. BRETT AND MICHELLE'S BACKYARD, SWING SET - NIGHT

Michelle bathes Frank in the kitchen sink inside as Tina watches through the window from the swing set. Alex exits the house and sits in a swing next to Tina. He hands her a beer.

TINA

Thanks.

Alex opens one for himself and swigs.

ALEX

I figured if I needed one, you could *really* use one.

They both lightly swing and swig, swing and swig.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I got fired from a job today. Or I guess I quit, but they would've fired me anyway.

TINA

Oh no, the Hungarian Evangelist part?

ALEX

Romanian Somnambulist. No, I lost that one couple weeks ago. Missed the table read when I took Brett to Detroit.

TINA

Fuck man. Fuck.

ALEX

Them's the breaks, I guess.

TINA

Sorry.

ALEX

Yup.

TINA

So what was this one?

ALEX

Just some shit gig at UCLA. Pretending to be sick so Med students can diagnose you for their midterms.

TINA
That's not acting. That's...

ALEX
Lame.

TINA
Yah. Lame.

ALEX
Thing is, I thought it was gonna be cool. Wanted to see how real I could make it feel for the students. Like help them help people. Then they wouldn't be just like, thinking about themselves - their tests or whatever.

TINA
You've got it worse than I do.

ALEX
What?

TINA
The want to please.

ALEX
Yah? Maybe yah. I fantasized that they'd find me after in like The Coffee Bean or whatever and thank me for their passing grade, their A++, thank me for sharing my gifts.

TINA
Is there anyone you don't look to please?

ALEX
Okay now, I don't know that I'm *that* afflicted.

TINA
No, I mean - you try to impress these total strangers with your talent.

ALEX
(correcting Tina in an Olivier voice)
Gifts.

TINA
 (trying the Olivier voice
 on)
 Gifts.

ALEX
 No no, with dignity: Say 'gifts'.

TINA
 (trying)
 Gifts.

ALEX
 You're a lost cause.

TINA
 (smiling)
 Maybe so. But seriously, you
 chauffeur Brett all around town,
 you come running to my rescue at
 the drop of a hat.

ALEX
 Well Brett's my best friend. He's
 like my brother. I'd do anything
 for that guy.

TINA
 'N me? Why'd you come to help me
 today? You're pissed at me,
 remember? I've been...

ALEX
 Shh. Shh shh shh shh shh.

TINA
 I've been a bad friend.

Alex looks at Tina. The strain of unrequited love wets his eyes.

TINA (CONT'D)
 (whispered)
 So why'd you come then?

ALEX
 Because you'd die without me. Gotta
 keep you alive.

Tina takes this in. Somehow, she knows it's true. She swigs her beer. Alex swigs his.

INT. BRETT AND MICHELLE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Michelle bathes the baby. She sings to him.

MICHELLE

I've got a pocketful a pocketful o'
sunshine,
His name is Frankie, he's a tiny
little baby of mine. Oh-woah-oh.

Suddenly, she hears the front door open and close. She takes a deep breath.

INT. BRETT AND MICHELLE'S HOUSE, BEDROOM

Brett lotions Frank and puts on his diaper and pjs. Michelle leans against the dresser, watching.

Brett lifts Frank and brings him to Michelle so she can say goodnight.

BRETT

Say g'night Mamma Jamma. G'night.

Michelle kisses her son on his forehead for a long beat.

MICHELLE

Goodnight baby boy. I love you.

Brett places Frank in his crib. Michelle twists a knob on the mobile above Frank's crib and a lullaby plays. She joins Brett as they look over their son, drifting off to sleep.

A moment of quiet before:

BRETT

I think...

Michelle turns her gaze from her baby to her husband.

BRETT (CONT'D)

I think I should move out.

Michelle is blind-sided. She holds back her tears.

MICHELLE

(stifled)

Okay.

BRETT

(masking tears)

Okay?

MICHELLE
If you think it's best.

BRETT
I don't think it's best.

MICHELLE
I mean... If it's what you want.

BRETT
It's not what I want either.

MICHELLE
Then what is it?

BRETT
It's what I think I can handle.

CUT TO BLACK