

**THE EDIBLE COMPLEX**

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**INT. 'CONAN' STAGE - DAY**

CONAN O'BRIEN finishes up his nightly monologue.

CONAN  
Another jaywalker was killed by a  
self-driving car today. Apparently  
I'm not the only one who's gunning  
for Jays on the street.  
(miming)  
Leno! Is that you?!

The joke DOES NOT land. Conan starts doing his patented 'Hips  
on Strings' bit. The crowd instantly loves it.

CONAN (CONT'D)  
(still dancing)  
Yeah 20 years later and you monkeys  
still love this. I'm a prostitute.

**IN THE WINGS**

DAVID THOMPSON (30s, stubbled, anxious, and out of place)  
finishes autographing a book for a YOUNG GIRL. She takes it  
like it's the Holy Grail.

DAVID  
There you go...for Sarah. Hope the  
cancer goes away super soon.

YOUNG GIRL  
OMG. David Thompson signed my book.  
I can't believe it! I'm never  
washing this again.

She SKIPS back to her mom, giddy. David instantly drops his  
smile and turns back to the stage, toes tapping. He looks  
more ready for death row than late night TV.

A pair of hands CLASPS his shoulders. They belong to EDDIE  
ROTENBERG (late 40s), shady publicist extraordinaire.

EDDIE  
That was sweet. Did you get a pic?  
Good human interest angle there.  
Man of the people.

DAVID  
Oh stop. You know autographs weird  
me out. I still don't feel like I  
deserve all this.

David tugs at his gaudy floral print blazer.

EDDIE  
Relax, David. This is your time.  
You wrote a book and people love  
it. Just enjoy the payoff.

He looks for a reaction but David is deep in thought.

EDDIE (CONT'D)  
Speaking of, my fee is due. You can  
totally pay later. But it's due.

David's toes TAP harder.

**BACK ON STAGE:**

Conan wraps up his Strings bit.

CONAN  
You even like this! Jesus. Anyway,  
next up is America's hottest new  
author, David Thompson. His second  
novel, A Heat 2 Hot 2 Handle 2  
drops today. Wow, is that really  
the title? I'll ask him why in a  
minute!

Conan instantly drops character and walks off.

**IN THE WINGS:**

Eddie waits for David to react, but he's checked out.

EDDIE  
He didn't even know the title? I'm  
gonna kick Rico's ass.  
(still no reaction)  
David? What's up? You've been weird  
all day. I thought you loved Conan.

DAVID  
Of course I do. He's a ginger  
treasure. I just...maybe I'm sick.  
Let's go. Can we go?

Eddie REACTS but a PA comes up to David, glass in hand.

PA  
Here's your souvenir pen, Mr  
Thompson. And your Diet Coke.

DAVID  
I said no ice!

The ice CLINKS as the PA is sent away. David fingers the Conan Pen he just got, Conan's massive head on one end.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
 Sorry. That's not me. This feels  
 all wrong. Let's just go. Tell them  
 I got diarrhea. No one questions  
 that.

EDDIE  
 I get it. You're nervous. This  
 happens all the time. Let's go hit  
 the green room before you go up.  
 Still got Xanax from my vasectomy.

Eddie leads David off screen. REVEAL: Conan and Andy Richter  
 watching ominously from the background.

CONAN  
 Think he's onto us?

ANDY  
 Of course not.

They CACKLE.

**INT. 'CONAN' HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER**

David disappears into his green room. At the end of the hall,  
 a door swings open. A SILHOUETTE -- impossible to make out  
 the details -- except for the LONG SPOOKY SHADOW it casts.

**INT. CONAN STAGE - MOMENTS LATER**

Conan, back in the zone.

CONAN  
 Ladies and Gentleman, David  
 Thompson!

**MOMENTS LATER**

David and Conan, mid-interview. Conan holds up David's book.

CONAN (CONT'D)  
 So your first novel, a Heat 2 Hot 2  
 Handle set the world afire, or so  
 my unpaid interns tell me. Tell us  
 a bit about your overnight success.

DAVID

Well, Conan -- can I call you Conan?

CONAN

What else would you call me?

DAVID

Right, exactly. Anyways, none of this was overnight. It took me 15 years to write the first Heat book. It was an idea I'd had in my head since I was a kid. Selling that one was my biggest accomplishment.

CONAN

Sure. But that was 2 years ago. We're here to talk about your newest book, A Heat Too Hot to Handle 2.

(the crowd cheers)

That's right folks, that is its actual name. So. 15 years for your first book. How were you able write the sequel so fast? Check out all these pages!

Conan flashes the book sideways, showing its length. It's not a short book. David gets even more awkward.

DAVID

Hah, you know. That's the job.

Offstage, David sees a pair of RED EYES growing in the darkness. WTF?

CONAN

And is another part of the job...plagiarism?!

No one knows what to do with that. He turns to Andy Richter.

DAVID

Is this a bit? I told Sheila I can't really do bits.

CONAN

Ladies and gentleman, please welcome the REAL author of David's book, Azerbaijani novelist Tural Tamerlan!

TURAL TAMERLAN (60s, graying, loud) comes out of the wings, seeing red. He points at David as he powerwalks towards him.

TURAL  
You steal my book! Entire idea! Bad  
mean! You steal!

David uses his chair for cover. In the front row, the Young  
Girl whose book he signed is SOBBING. He eyes Conan.

DAVID  
What the hell man?! I thought you  
were cool!  
(looking offstage)  
Eddie! Make it stop!

Conan addresses both David and the crowd.

CONAN  
The news is so bad now that even we  
do gotcha journalism! Gotcha!

Tural TACKLES David offstage as Conan gets the crowd back  
with his Hips On Strings bit.

CONAN (CONT'D)  
You love this!

OFFSTAGE: Eddie just watched his client's career die.

EDDIE  
We are so fucked.

**EXT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY**

David sits against the wheel of his car while Eddie paces,  
reading him the riot act.

EDDIE  
How do you plagiarize a whole  
book?! It's the 21st century! I  
can't even download a movie without  
Comcast sending me an angry email.

DAVID  
...Google. I just looked for little  
known books then had a guy on  
Craiglist translate. Turn a few  
Muhammeds into Jones' and it kinda  
fit.

EDDIE  
But why? You were so good! I  
actually liked Heat! And not in the  
way I said I liked your blazer. I  
actually liked it!

David pulls at his #Menswear blazer. There's a RIP.

DAVID

This happened! I spent my whole life writing that first book! Then you want press tours, interviews, photo ops, AND a sequel in 18 months?

EDDIE

Does Apple need to come out with a new iPhone every year? Yes! That's literally the business model for our entire industry! You didn't write any of Heat 2? Anything?

David stares at the sky.

DAVID

I haven't written anything since the first book. Not even a grocery list. I'm stuck.

Eddie throws his hands in the air.

EDDIE

Well that explains the asparagus cake you got me for my birthday. Jesus! My hottest client is a fraud. Something sexier I could work with. But this is too stupid to even spin. This is Chris Brown all over again.

DAVID

C'mon. We can fix this. I just need something to inspire me. I'm an artist, not a machine.

EDDIE

Of course you're not a machine. Machines actually do something. You're more like a rock. A human rock. I can't represent rocks, David. I'm sorry, but I have to let you go.

Eddie gets in his car. Rolls down the windows as his phone RINGS.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I think it's best you don't talk to me again. Unless you have another book. That YOU wrote! Oh shit.

(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)  
(answering the phone)  
Chris Brown! Why you calling on the  
batphone? You kill another starlet?  
Y'know what, don't say anything.  
I'm coming.

Eddie PEELS out of the parking space. REVEAL a Security Guard watching David, eyes on his watch.

SECURITY GUARD  
You've got 30 seconds till I throw  
you out. Conan's orders.

EDDIE  
(showing his phone)  
My Uber will be here in 2.

**EXT. WARNER BROS LOT - MOMENTS LATER**

David is THROWN INTO THE STREET by the Security Guard. He rolls into a PARKED UBER. RANESH leans out the window.

RANESH  
David Thompson? From Conan? Oh man  
we got lots to talk about.

DAVID  
The episode hasn't even aired yet!

**INT/EXT. UBER / DAVID'S HOME - DAY**

The Uber slows as it approaches David's home. PAPARAZZI already surround it. Ranesh finishes.

RANESH  
So its kinda like your situation  
only I didn't steal anything.

DAVID  
Hey drive around the block. I want  
to get out back.

RANESH  
Perfect! I can pitch you my book!

**EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER**

A quaint Silverlake backyard. David climbs over the fence and FALLS into his bushes.



**INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER**

David sneaks in through the backdoor. A pile of letters already sits under his mailslot. He sees their various scribblings -- TRAITOR, PLAGIARIST, etc -- and makes a face.

DAVID

Already?

He eyes out the peephole and still sees the paparazzi waiting for him. He goes to a side-window.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(fake voice)

Oh my god, is that Kanye West  
getting a shrimp taco? He's running  
away! After him!

The paps run like lemmings. David turns and regards his painfully empty, dark, sad home.

**LATER**

David sits in front of the TV, notebook in front of him. He finishes writing something and underlines it. **The Next Novel.** The page beneath it is BLANK.

He sighs. Pulls a beer from behind the couch and turns on TV. He stares at his paper but gets pulled in by the cartoons.

**HOURS LATER**

David hasn't moved. He's surrounded by a graveyard of beer bottles, chinese delivery boxes, bong, and a new pack of American Spirits. He lights the cigarette and gets back into his notebook.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Once upon a time...there was  
a...FUCKING IDIOT AH.

He SNAPS his pencil and throws it at the wall.

**INT. DAVID'S KITCHEN - NIGHT**

David grabs a beer from the fridge. Sees Eddie's business card. He stares it down. Hesitates. Grabs it.

Then he sets it ON FIRE with his cigarette and tosses it in the sink.

**INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

A travel ad (you know the type) plays while David re-enters the room. Stock footage with a generic VO. Lots of trees, helicopter shots, etc. Very public access.

TV NARRATOR

Need to get away? Tired of your normal life? Victim of a scandal and need to lay low for a week to let the heat die down? Come visit Edmonton, Ontario, Canada. The Paris of the Great White North. Whether looking to see Canada's largest living history museum, or experience native culture with North America's largest mall, Edmonton has something for you. And since it's summer, it's one of the few magical times when we're not buried beneath a few meters of snow. Edmonton -- better than where you are.

By now David is on the couch and totally transfixed. He finishes his beer and picks up the phone. He starts to dial -  
- 6 5 --

SMASH CUT TO:

**INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - MORNING**

GRAPHIC MATCH on David, exactly where he was the night before. His house is in even deeper disarray. Pizza boxes, cases of beer, clothes in a pile. David finishes a dream.

DAVID

Conan, no, kill Andy instead -- AH!

He JOLTS awake, instantly upsetting his hangover. He heads for the

**KITCHEN**

Where there are scorch marks all over the sink. He fills up a glass of water.

DAVID (CONT'D)

What *happened* last night?

**BACK IN THE LIVING ROOM**

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Did I buy a new TV?

**OUT HIS FRONT DOOR**

DAVID (CONT'D)  
(to the paparazzi)  
Did I leave last night?

PAPPARAZO  
Yeah! We got some great shots!  
Wanna see?

DAVID  
I'll just check TMZ.

**INSIDE**

David shuts the door, rubbing his head.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
How drunk WAS I...?

David moves for the bathroom...but STOPS in his tracks.

**INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

On his bed is a travel bag, perfectly packed. An airplane ticket, passport, and a note sit on top. David reads.

DAVID  
Sober David -- I did you a solid  
and packed your bag for Edmonton.  
This trip will be sick. PS may need  
more condoms. I only packed 15. PPS  
we depart this afternoon.  
(eyeing the ticket)  
Oh shit I gotta go.

David looks around but realizes his bag is already packed.  
He's ready to go. He gets out his phone to call an Uber. It  
prompts him to review Ranesh. A brief beat of hesitation...

**EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE - DAY**

A YELLOW TAXI pulls up to David's front door.

**MOMENTS LATER**

He's helping David with his luggage. Paps still SNAP pics.

CABBIE  
 Thank you for calling cab! Uber  
 ruin my business!  
 (to the paps)  
 He's a good man!

David tries to smile. Fails.

**INT. TAXI CAB TO LAX - DAY**

David watches the bullshit on the mini-TV embedded in the cabs backseat. Cabbie eyes him through the rearview as he tries to pop an Ambien.

CABBIE  
 Why you look familiar, huh? Family  
 Feud? Jeopardy? I big trivia guy.

Suddenly, the on-screen vid switches to David's Conan meltdown.

DAVID (ON SCREEN)  
*Is this a bit? I told Sheila I  
 can't really do bits.*

The Cabbie SNAPS his fingers.

CABBIE  
 You crazy guy from TV! You steal  
 book! You not good man.

David pops out 5 MORE AMBIEN and chokes them down. His face instantly DROOPS.

**BEGIN GRAPHIC MATCH AMBIEN MONTAGE:**

*David's droopy, drugged up face never changes:*

- CHECK-IN: David puts his luggage on the conveyor belt. Gets carried along with it.
- SECURITY: David sets off the full body scanner
- SECURITY: David gets wanded down
- SECURITY: A TSA WOMAN holds up his water bottle and gives him the 'no no' finger wag
- AT GATE: Someone takes a selfie with him. He falls asleep.
- AT GATE: Someone rifles through David's bag as he sleeps, eyes half-open. David SNORES
- AT GATE: David gives the gate worker his ticket

- ON PLANE: David finds his spot. He's last one on. All eyes are on him. He tries to get invisible.
- ON PLANE: David wakes up. The plane has landed and he's the last one left.
- BAGGAGE CLAIM: A single piece of luggage rotates on the sill. David's. He finishes a VERY LARGE COFFEE, which SNAPS HIM OUT OF HIS STUPOR.

**INT. EDMONTON AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS**

David shakes off the last of the Ambien and heads for his luggage.

DAVID  
Edmonton here I -- CORN?!

Out the window, and as far as the eye can see, is a SEA OF CORN. A tractor outside picks up a passenger in a tearful reunion. *What the* -- David catches a passerby.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Has Canada always had this much corn?

WOMAN  
What's Canada?

David has made a huge mistake.

**INSTANTS LATER**

David harangues the Ticket Agent.

DAVID  
Look, I think there's been some kind of mistake. I'm a famous novelist and I was supposed to be going to Edmonton, Canada not Edmonton...here.

TICKET AGENT  
Name please?

KISH (O.S.)  
Mr Thompson! David! David Thompson!

David whirls around to see the country duds of DEPUTY ALLEN KISH (30s, down-home, few grits short of a breakfast platter). In his khaki Liaison uniform he almost looks like a real officer of the law. Almost.

KISH (CONT'D)

Sorry I'm late. Today's opening day so Nelson has me running around like a crazy person. Thanks for taking care of him Cheryl!

The Ticket Agent waves. David approaches, cautious.

DAVID

I'm sorry, what's going on? I was supposed to be in Canada. You're waiting for me?

Kish pulls an itinerary out of his front pocket.

KISH

Says right here. Pick up celebrity David Thompson from airport. Bring to VIP suite for snacks and opening ceremonies. Unload luggage at VIP quarters. Can I get your bags?

That's enough VIPs to perk David's ears up. He slowly hands Kish his bag and puffs out his chest as they depart.

**INT./EXT. KISH' CAR - DAY**

They drive deeper into the sea of corn. Country music plays softly on the radio. David braces for an awkward conversation.

DAVID

So...where we going?

Kish laughs TOO LOUD.

KISH

Oh man. They said you'd be funny but that was good.

DAVID

Okay...be honest. What do you actually know about me?

KISH

Oh jeez. Pop Quiz huh? You're a bigshot writer from Hollywood. You're here to write a story on the fair. You smell like coconuts and cigarettes.

DAVID

No elephants in the room?

KISH  
This is a car, man. Do I win?

DAVID  
...maybe. How do you feel about Conan?

KISH  
The barbarian?

David settles in a bit. He's under the radar.

DAVID  
Kish. I think we both won here.

They roll past a big highway sign.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Wait, did that say Illinois or Indiana?

KISH  
Pretty much.

In the far distance, THE SILHOUETTE OF A FAIR pokes above the corn...

Pre-lap audio of a CROWD GOING WILD --

NELSON (O.S.)  
Ladies and Gentlemen --

**EXT. EDMONTON EDIBLE FAIR - GRANDSTAND - DAY**

Throngs of fans cheer OUT OF THEIR MINDS. It's like NASCAR meets High Fructose Corn Syrup. Mulletts, overalls, and gleeful faces pepper the crowd. These are hardy folk celebrating their glorious past time. And they celebrate HARD.

At the head of it all is NELSON BELL JR (50s), emceeing with aplomb. Sweat stains his 3-piece suit. At 5'2" he's got the looks of Captain Crunch and the panache of P.T. Barnum.

NELSON  
-- the moment you've all been waiting for! The Edmonton Edible's Fair...is here!!

The crowd somehow gets EVEN LOUDER.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
 3 days of nonstop, harrowing,  
 earth-shattering competitive eating  
 action. We've gathered the best  
 gurgitators from around the world,  
 but only one will emerge with their  
 life...

(hammy pause)  
 ...life's goal achieved! Entry to  
 the pantheon of gustatory glory!

The crowd processes his verbose language.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
 Which means one of those big checks  
 and a spot in the Gurgitators Hall  
 of Fame!

The crowd goes WILD! But Nelson must pull them back.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
 There there, don't burn yourselves  
 out all at once. First, a moment of  
 silence as we play the National  
 Anthem...of Eating.

Hats of all stripe come off. Silence.

RECORDED ANTHEM  
*Oh say can you...eaaaaat.*

**EXT. FAIR ENTRANCE - SAME**

A Toyota Tercel SKIDS into the perfect parking spot in front  
 of the entrance.

Then we pull back to reveal Kish's Tercel, parked at an  
 awkward angle. David's door is stuck. Kish tries to open.

DAVID  
 Is it the child lock?!

KISH  
 What even is that? Have you hit the  
 unlock button?

David mashes at it. Duh!

DAVID  
 What do you think I've been doing?!

Kish steps away to think and David comes TUMBLING OUT.



KISH  
Ohp. It's a pull.

As David rises up, we finally see the fair's entrance in all its glory. It's like the gates of Jurassic Park. If Jurassic Park was sponsored by corn dogs. Carnival rides and tent tops rise up in the background. But it's eerily quiet. Kish revels.

KISH (CONT'D)  
Welcome to the world's greatest  
eating competition. The Edmonton  
Edibles Fair.

DAVID  
Where is everyone?

KISH  
Huh. That is strange. Alien  
abduction maybe?

Just then, the Grandstand crowd goes NUTS.

KISH (CONT'D)  
The Anthem. Let's go!

Kish takes off, pulling David.

DAVID  
Go where?

**INT. GRANDSTAND BACKSTAGE -- MOMENTS LATER**

A hand grabs a celery stick off a tray of craft services. The celery enters the mouth of ANTHONY RICHARDS (40s, think Stephen Merchant), the fair's overstressed #2. He watches Nelson from the wings.

NELSON (ON-STAGE)  
So who was here for last year?

Everyone CHEERS.

NELSON (ON-STAGE) (CONT'D)  
Now THESE are fans!

Richards turns around to see the pre-show hubbub. Scattered workers prep the lights, scaffolding, etc, but our real focus is: THE EATERS

We'll meet them in earnest soon, but for now we get a glimpse of the 7 souls who scrapped tooth and nail to make their way to the World Series of Eating.

MAXWELL, YOKI, BRYN, BRYAN, MARIE, CHESTER, IAN. *And there's something off about each and every one of them.*

Kish enters, David in tow. Richards comes up to greet them. Kish slides David's luggage under a table.

KISH

Richards! Look who I found!

RICHARDS

David Thompson! Oh my goodness you actually came. That publicist of yours is a tricky one. Doesn't return my calls but still sends you out when we need you most? Give him my regards.

David, confused, trying to navigate all that.

DAVID

Yeah, for sure. Excited to be here on purpose. Eddie's...my publicist.

RICHARDS

Ah there's the charm! Just what we expected from our Celebrity-On-The-Ground. You know you're the first big name we've ever had come visit this place?

DAVID

I can believe that.

LAURA (O.S.)

Ayiiiii!!!

A FIGURE drops down from the rafters, landing on Kish's back. It's LAURA BELL JR (8), Nelson's daughter, inveterate climber of tall-things, and firecracker of destruction. She gives Kish a wet willy while he tries to fling her off.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Say animal!

KISH

No!

LAURA

Animal!

KISH

Aminal!

LAURA  
No, Animal!

KISH  
Aminal! Ahhh it hurts!

Laura dismounts, laughing. Kish, oddly, fist bumps her.

KISH (CONT'D)  
Thanks for trying.

LAURA  
We'll scare that one out of you  
somehow.

One of the eaters, MAXWELL, throws them shade.

MAXWELL  
C'mon man! We're trying to prep!  
Get her out!

Richards tries to play off this disgrace.

RICHARDS  
It's being handled Maxwell, thank  
you!  
(to David)  
And this little bundle of chaos is  
Nelson's daughter Laura. If she  
keeps climbing the scaffolding like  
that, she will end up in a  
wheelchair.

LAURA  
Nuh-uh! Wheelchairs are for olds.  
(sitting next to David)  
Who's this guy?

David extends his hand.

DAVID  
David Thompson. Celebrity novelist.

LAURA  
What's a celebrity novelist?

DAVID  
Me. For the most part.

RICHARDS  
Great! We all know each other.  
Kish, please escort these two to  
the VIP section for the Opening Eat  
Off. You're in for a treat, David.  
(MORE)

RICHARDS (CONT'D)  
The competition this year is  
explosive, and you've got the best  
seats in the house.

DAVID  
(can barely fake it)  
Goody goody gumdrops.

**EXT. GRANDSTAND - VIP SECTION - DAY**

Perched slightly above the surrounding seats, David and Laura settle in. David looks at the SUPERFANS around him, faces painted, cheering like its the Super Bowl.

DAVID  
Wow. So this is all for...eating?

Laura turns her head, revealing FLEUR DE LIS facepaint on one cheek. She points at it, intense as hell.

LAURA  
Hell yeah. And Marie's gonna win.  
Suck it Maxwell!!

**ON STAGE**

A massive projector screen rolls back up.

NELSON  
But enough about Edmonton. You're  
here for one reason only, am I  
right folks? Let's. Get. This.  
Startedddd!

**INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

A gleaming prep kitchen. A LONG LINE OF PIES sits, ready for the eating.

A GLOVED HAND enters frame, sticking Pie 1 with a syringe. It empties its contents. Then moves on to the next pie.

**BACKSTAGE**

Our panoply of eaters, silent, intense, ready to kill.

**ON STAGE**

Nelson begins to bring the competitors into the light.

NELSON  
Our reigning champion, Maxwell  
Henry!!

MAXWELL HENRY (33, Golden Boy, the douche from backstage)  
strolls out. He's the Matt Damon of Mastication. Someone in  
the crowd throws A BRA at his face. He takes his seat.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
The winningest contestant in  
Edmonton history, 'Chortlin'  
Chester Plott!

All 400 pounds of CHESTER PLOTT (38) heave themselves  
onstage. He lets out a trademark CHORTLE and positions  
himself next to Maxwell. They don't make eye contact.

### IN THE VIP SECTION

David starts picking up hints.

DAVID  
What am I seeing here? Feud?

LAURA  
Maxwell ended Chester's winning  
streak last year. Bad blood. Plus  
he's a dildo.

### ON STAGE

NELSON  
The Beast from the East, record-  
shattering Yokitashu Mitsirugi!

YOKI MITSIRUGI (28) walks stock-straight to his chair,  
flanked by his TRANSLATOR. They always travel as a pair.

### IN THE VIP SECTION

LAURA  
Last month Yoki ate 60 hot dogs in  
under a minute. They're calling it  
Coney Harbor.

DAVID  
Like Pearl Harbor?

LAURA  
I don't think there were pearls.

### IN THE KITCHEN

The Gloved Hand syringes another helpless pie.

**ON STAGE**

NELSON

The Dynamic Duo of Digestion, Bryn  
and Bryan Kashka!

BRYN and BRYAN KASHKA (both 42, Canadian) come out, all smiles. They wear matching Maple Leaf Sweaters and high five before sitting down.

NELSON (CONT'D)

The French Viper, Marie de Gaulle!

MARIE DE GAULLE (35) floats to her spot at the table. A modern femme fatale, she takes no shit, and isn't afraid to dish it out herself. Laura couldn't be more enamored.

**IN THE VIP SECTION**

LAURA

There she is! I love you Marie!  
Adopt meeee!

**IN THE KITCHEN**

The Hand syringes the final pie before slinking off-screen.

**ON STAGE**

NELSON

And last but not least, this year's  
dark horse: Ian Connelly!

IAN CONNELLY (29, stoic) rolls his eyes at Nelson's comment -- he's the only black competitor in the finals, and he's used to being the butt of the jokes.

All the eaters are finally in position.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Kish...the Winger Dinger.

Kish rolls a VEILED STATUE to Nelson. Nelson RIPS the veil off, revealing: THE WINGER DINGER. A massive golden bell shaped like a chicken wing. In the Edmonton hierarchy there is country, God, then Winger Dinger.

The table of pies now in place in front of the eaters. The crowd HUSHES.

**IN THE VIP SECTION**

DAVID  
Everyone's seeing the bell shaped  
like a chicken wing, right?

**ON STAGE**

Nelson rears back with the mallet, holding it aloft.

NELSON  
Let the games...BEGIN!

He SLAMS the Dinger and the eaters DIG IN. It's bedlam.

**IN THE VIP SECTION**

David watches, mouth agape. It's a one-of-a-kind sight.

LAURA  
Shouldn't you be taking notes?

DAVID  
It's complicated.

**ON STAGE**

The eaters RIP at the pies with varying techniques. Two hands  
-- face in the pie -- one pie per hand -- etc --

Globs of pie go FLYING -- bouncing off an angled FOOD SPLASH  
GUARD (think Sea World) guarding the closest seats.

NELSON  
Woah, stay safe there front row!  
(back to the action)  
Maxwell's off to an early lead  
using his patented Narcissus  
Method.

Maxwell STARES AT HIMSELF in a mirror, using the ego boost  
for motivation. He WINKS.

**IN THE VIP SECTION**

DAVID  
Why's the fat one stopping?

LAURA  
What do you --

**ON STAGE**

He's right -- Chester's stopped. The crowd REACTS. *This  
shouldn't happen.* Yoki stops too. The crowd gets IRATE.

VOICES IN THE CROWD  
What the hell?!/Don't stop!/Booo!

NELSON  
Some bold mind games on display  
here from our Gurgitators!  
(to Kish)  
Kish! What is this?!

Kish can only SHRUG, bewildered. Marie stops too. Starts to clutch her stomach when --

BLUHHH! She VOMITS her ever-living heart out. In a heartbeat, Chester and Yoki join in. BLUHH! BLAGH! REEEEEE!

CROWDMEMBERS PUKE AS WELL -- a symphony of vom, flying projectile through the air --

Nelson, sick, FAINTS and SMACKS HIS HEAD ON THE WINGER DINGER, CRACKING IT LIKE THE LIBERTY BELL.

**IN THE STANDS:**

David holds his hands over his mouth. Laura watches it with the iron stomach of a child.

LAURA  
Don't do it, dude.

David rears back as BLUHHHH --

GRAPHIC MATCH TO

**EXT. LINE OF PORTAPOTTIES - MOMENTS LATER**

Where David PUKES right outside a porta-john. Kish comes out of the portapotty, way too happy.

KISH  
You still puking partner?

DAVID  
(pukes again)

KISH  
Eaters love a good pukin. Call it the Roman Method, on account of vomitoriums. But I googled it and turns out those were just a kind of hallway. C'mon, lets get you to the Nurse's Tent.

David holds up a hand.



DAVID

I'll survive. But I've puked away  
all my free food. I'll be going  
back to the airport now and hoping  
this was all a fever dream.

Richards and Laura rush up to the pair.

RICHARDS

Oh thank God, I thought we'd lost  
you. Nelson's been sent to the  
hospital. He's gonna be out of  
commission for awhile.

Laura takes out her WIRELESS HEADPHONES.

LAURA

WHAT? Did you hear my Dad's in the  
hospital? I'm gonna run this place!

RICHARDS

She has some great ideas. We were  
just on our way to the Nurse to  
check in with the eaters. What a  
disaster, David, I am so sorry.

DAVID

Not your fault. I hope. But I'll be  
going now. I'm going through some  
stuff right now and I don't think  
I'm your guy. Trust me.

Richards gets in close to David. This *matters* to him.

RICHARDS

David, please. This place needs you  
now more than ever. Even barring  
this disaster, The Edible Fair is  
falling apart, burning resources.  
We need someone to show the world  
what's really happening here, what  
this place is all about. All  
artists can use a little  
inspiration, right?

That hits David. He looks around at the aftermath of the Puke  
Fest. It's a story, that's for sure. Richards sees the  
hesitation.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)

Did Kish tell you about the  
honorarium?

DAVID  
Does he know that word?

RICHARDS  
You stick it out through this  
entire thing and we'll pay you  
\$15,000 dollars.

DAVID  
For real? How much are you paying  
these eaters?

RICHARDS  
Like I said, David. *Abuses*. And  
you're just the one to write about  
it.

A long, hard beat. David fingers his Conan pen.

DAVID  
Fuck it. I'm in.

Richards BEAMS. David's a little less certain.

RICHARDS  
You won't regret it. Let's go.

They march off.

**EXT. NURSE'S TENT - DAY**

SCORES OF FANS gather outside, trying to get a peek of their  
heroes.

CHESTER FAN  
Let's go Chester! Number one on the  
scale, number one in our hearts!

MAXWELL FAN  
Hey, Chester sucks. Maxwell rules!

A woman with a Fleur de Lis picket sign shoves both of them  
out of the way.

MARIE FAN  
Girl power! Marie forever!

David notes their obsession as Kish pushes them into --

INT. NURSE'S TENT - DAY

The Eaters in various states of recovery. Richards chats quietly with Chester before moving on to Marie. David takes it all in, out of place.

KISH  
Shouldn't you be like, asking questions and stuff?

DAVID  
I'm working on a new process.

KISH  
Such a pro.

David moves towards Richards -- just as Bryn and Bryan POP UP in his way.

BRYN  
Boy, it sure is hot in here.

BRYAN  
I hope it's not...Too Hot to Handle!  
(beat)  
That's your book!

DAVID  
I know, but...you've heard of me? Here?

BRYN  
Sorry if we were a little forward. We're just fans.

DAVID  
No, no, thanks, it's just -- do you by chance watch Conan?

BRYN  
When we can! But the past few months have been so busy with training we haven't seen anything at all. Sorry.

BRYAN  
Sorry.

BRYN  
Sorry.

BRYAN (CONT'D)  
Sorry.

DAVID  
You're the Canadians, that's right!  
But trust me, nothing to apologize  
for. That guy's a dick. Can't  
believe I've got fans all the way  
out here.

Bryan pulls out a copy of David's book -- THE SEQUEL. Ouch.  
David's smile droops.

BRYAN  
I hate to be a total fangirl but  
could we get an autograph?

DAVID  
Ehh...sure. I need fans.

David signs with the Conan pen.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
The...first one...is...better...

He hands the book back.

BRYN  
Golly, thanks David!

DAVID  
Don't mention it. Please. But I'd  
love to hear your thoughts on  
what...the hell just happened here.

They instantly CLAM UP.

BRYAN  
Oh...I don't really know if we  
should talk about that.

BRYN  
Yeah. It might piss, ya know,  
certain people off.

DAVID  
Wait, what do you mean? Why  
shouldn't you talk about this? A  
thousand people just puked at once.  
That's at least worth a quote.

MAXWELL (O.S.)  
Hack!

A CRUMPLED SHIRT hits the back of David's head. He spins on  
his heels to see Maxwell, shirtless, lying on a gurney, abs  
everywhere.

DAVID

Did you throw your shirt at me?

MAXWELL

I didn't have anything sharp. Can someone get this poser outta here? I don't need some Hollywood hotshot sticking his nose in my business. This is my life's work. Not some way for you to make a quick buck.

DAVID

I'm just here to observe. I promise. The name's David, by the way.

He goes to shake his hand, but Maxwell FLIPS HIM OFF.

MAXWELL

Maxwell. Now make like a vegetable and get out of this fair.

(to the room)

Anyone who talks too this hack is dead to me! You hear me? Dead!

CHESTER

Oh can it Maxwell. You're wasting your time. The press does what it wants. You just wanna sound like a tough guy. But you won't be so tough when I eat you under the table at the Grand Finals.

He CHORTLES. It's weird. More a tic than a laugh.

MAXWELL

Yeah? You and what fat army?

CHESTER

You know the Chester Chunks don't like that name!

KISH

Okay, everyone, let's dial it back a bit here.

MAXWELL

Eat a dick, Kish.

MARIE

There he goez again. Just stop.

MAXWELL

Don't tell me what to do, frog.

IAN  
Hey man, chill. Damn.

David takes in the gathering storm.

DAVID  
*What is happening?*

Maxwell gets up off his gurney. Ian's already charging his way.

IAN  
You think I'm afraid of you?

RICHARDS  
PLEASE!

More fire than we've heard from Richards yet. The room settles as he steps up.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)  
CALM. DOWN. With Nelson out, I'm in charge here. And everyone needs to just calm down. We all went through some trauma and we're all recovering. So everyone, please. Just be nice to each other. Just for a minute. Nurse, please, get back to your rounds.

The Nurse nods and gets back to the checkups. Richards goes up to David, effusive but back to normal.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)  
Wow that was scary. Normally Nelson does that! I'm still shaking a bit. You should head to your place, get settled. I think things are a little raw right now. Kish will escort you there.

David looks around for his bags.

DAVID  
Think I left my luggage back at the grandstand. I'll meet you at the food court.

KISH  
Okey doke. Laura, race?

LAURA  
Nah, my feet hurt a bit and --  
SUCKER!

She bolts out the door, Kish trying to catch up.

**INT. GRANDSTAND BACKSTAGE - DAY**

Empty and dark, the backstage takes on a scary new vibe. David grabs his bag from beneath the table. A little PUKE stains the corner. He shakes the bag.

DAVID  
Aw, c'mon...

CLACK. CLACK. David turns. Was that...footsteps?

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Hello?

CLACK. CLACK. CLACK. The footsteps approach.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Kish? Laura? ...Conan?

David SPINS around to see -- A COW. It's somehow made its way backstage. Surrounded by the trappings of the Opening, it's a strange tableau. It starts to MOOOOOO.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
The hell is this place?

He gets out of there ASAP.

**EXT. FOOD COURT - DAY**

David tosses his bag next to Laura just as Kish walks up, hands full of food.

KISH  
Alright we got Monkmeat from Soul  
Food, Roadkill Stew from All About  
the Dead, and a 3.5 footlong hot  
dog from The Longest Yard. Bon  
appetite!  
(he pronounces 'appetite')

David regards it all with more wonder than hunger. He pokes at the Monkmeat.

DAVID  
The strangest thing just happened  
when I was getting my bag.

KISH

Wait, lemme guess. Cow get  
backstage again?

DAVID

How did you -- ?

KISH

Happens all the time.  
(he pulls his radio)  
Luther, we got a moocow in papa's  
pasture again. Need assistance.  
(back to the group)  
Fun fact. Cow's cant walk down  
stairs. How do I know that...?

His walkie BUZZES again. He gets up to take it.

KISH (CONT'D)

Look, I know cows are scary, but  
you can do it, you're a vet --

David waits for him to walk away. Then turns to Laura.

DAVID

You seem smart. What's going on  
here? This pukey business, all the  
eaters? This place is crazy.

LAURA

It is def cray but I have no idea  
what's happening. They don't tell  
me shit.

DAVID

Okay. Well check this out.

David digs into his bag. Can't find whatever he's looking  
for.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Wait, my ticket -- where...? Did  
you see anyone go in my bag?  
(she shakes her head)  
Jesus. Just my luck. My plane  
ticket was for Edmonton, Canada. So  
how'd I end up here?

LAURA

Maybe you got on the wrong flight?

DAVID

But Kish was waiting for me!  
Richards too.

(MORE)



DAVID (CONT'D)

What happened at that airport? Damn those Ambien. Double-edged miracles.

LAURA

I don't know what you want from me man. Maybe this is fate. Like Pocahantas, or Frozen.

DAVID

Yeah but --

But she's already on her phone. Kish returns.

KISH

He thinks just cause he was a vet he gets special treatment. Like we get it man, you heal animals. You still gotta do your job. Awh, you've barely touched your Yard!

DAVID

I think you were showing me my VIP quarters?

KISH

Oh yeah. Just need to make a quick pit stop.

**EXT. CARNY RIDES - DAY**

Kish eagerly waits in line for a ride. David smokes, watching him. Laura watches them both.

DAVID

So how come you're not with your dad?

LAURA

We mostly just text.  
(her phone BUZZES a text)  
Oh hey, this is him.

DAVID

Is he asking why you aren't with him?

LAURA

Nah. He's asking about the fair.  
(typing)  
'Its cool'. Sent.  
(off David's look)  
He just cares a lot about the fair.

DAVID  
And you?

LAURA  
I'm at the fair.

She seems to only get about 1/10 of how fucked up that is.  
Kish saunters up.

KISH  
Let's go. I wasn't tall enough.

He and Laura head off. David, processing.

DAVID  
Were you really just scared?

KISH  
Shut up.

**EXT. DAVID'S HOME - NIGHT**

Twilight gives way to dusk as the gang reaches David's place.  
It's a mobile home at the far corner of the fairgrounds.

DAVID  
I thought you said VIP lodging?  
This looks like a high school  
portable.

KISH  
Nelson told me we had to keep you  
isolated from the eaters for  
'journalistic integrity'.

DAVID  
What does that even mean?

KISH  
I asked the same thing but he just  
threw a book at me.  
(Kish rubs his arm)  
I don't think he likes you being  
here too much.

DAVID  
Clearly.

Kish leads David to the door and unlocks it.

KISH  
Key's here. Any questions, just --

IAN (O.S.)

Hey.

KISH

LAURA

AH!

Jesus tits!

They jump a mile high as Ian reveals himself from around the corner. He puts his hands up, innocent.

IAN

Woah! Just saying hello. Damn this town hates black people.

Charged beat. Something on Ian's mind. He looks to David.

IAN (CONT'D)

Can we talk inside?

Kish gives David a look to make sure everything's cool.

DAVID

Yeah, yeah. Kish, I'm good here.  
Thanks. Ian, step into my office.

**INT. DAVID'S HOME - MOMENTS LATER**

David tosses his bag on his bed. Then remembers.

DAVID

Awh, the puke!

Ian inspects the place. Plays with the shitty 10-gallon water cooler by David's bed.

IAN

This place looks like shit. You gonna bitch someone out? Seems like a Hollywood move.

DAVID

Honestly, that is the least of my concerns right now. And I'm not the one who showed up creepily. What's on your mind? Am I crazy for thinking all of this is crazy?

Ian plops down on a chair. Too much to stand up for.

IAN

Not at all. Man I put up a strong front for my character but this place is creepy as fuck. We're a million miles from nowhere.

(MORE)

IAN (CONT'D)

And now those pies? I tasted  
ipecac. They were spiked.

DAVID

You recognize ipecac?

IAN

I was a hungry toddler. Ate all  
kinds of bad shit. Point is, that  
wasn't an accident. That was  
sabotage.

DAVID

But who...cares? Why would they do  
something like that?

(beat)

You think it was one of the eaters?  
Trying to get ahead?

IAN

I mean I don't want to name names,  
but...

DAVID

Maxwell?

IAN

You're damn right. I don't have any  
hard proof, but...do you need it?  
That guy's got an ego and a temper  
and a bone to pick with damn near  
everyone. Bad combination.

DAVID

Sounds about right. But why talk to  
me? Why not Nelson, Richards, Kish?

IAN

Man, do I really need to tell you?  
Like any of them would listen. Like  
any of them would listen to *me*.

DAVID

Why? Because you're black?

IAN

Nah man, it's the 21st century,  
racism is dead. Of course it's  
because I'm black! And a newcomer  
and an outsider or whatever. I just  
know I gotta look out for myself.  
But I want someone on my side.  
Someone desperate. Looking for  
redemption. I want you.

DAVID  
You know about Conan?

IAN  
Course I know about Conan! I don't know how these illiterate hillbillies managed to avoid it. Don't worry. Secret's safe with me. But I'm telling you, something funky's going on. Figure this shit out, man. Till then, I'll be sleeping with one eye open. You should too. Plagiarist.

Ian WINKS -- and is out the door. David tosses his pad aside, still empty. Lays on his bed. Closes his eyes. OPENS one.

DAVID  
What did you get me into, Eddie?  
(realizing)  
Oh dammit the puke!

**EXT. CHAMPION'S COURT - NIGHT**

The cul-de-sac of mobile homes sectioned off for the Fair's Gurgitators. Champion's Court is a helluva misnomer.

From far away, Ian is a mere speck as he returns to his home and lets himself in, flicking on the LIGHTS. We hold on this tableau just a beat too long --

**INT. DAVID'S HOME - SAME**

David sits back up, grabs his pad. Writes **PUKE, IPECAC, IAN, MAXWELL, SABOTAGE?** in block letters with the Conan pen. Underlines. SIGHS.

DAVID  
Well. It's somethin.

He tries to write more...but just can't. He passes back out on his bed.

**EXT. CHAMPION'S COURT - NIGHT**

The exact same shot. Ian's lights switch off. And the sharp-eyed may spot a SHROUDED FIGURE outside his window. It holds a moment. Then climbs in.

From inside: *HISSES. HISSES. HISSES. THUD*

The fair lights twinkle in the darkness.

**EXT. FAIRGROUND ENTRANCE - ESTABLISHING**

Early-morning fans trickle in.

**EXT. DAVID'S HOME - DAY**

Anthony Richards POUNDS on the window. David answers the door, bedraggled as hell.

RICHARDS

It's Ian. He's...come with me.

Richards bolts off.

DAVID

He's what?! Is he dead?!

(running after him)

Don't just say that and run away!

**INT. IAN'S HOME - MOMENTS LATER**

Ian's body splayed on the floor, unconscious -- WITH ONE EYE OPEN.

DAVID

Just like he said...

NELSON-PAD (O.S.)

Just like who said?

From out of the darkness rolls NELSON-PAD. Think an iPad taped to a Segway. Nelson's contraption allows him to be at the fair from the safety of his hospital bed.

DAVID

Jesus god what the hell is that?

KISH

It's Nelson.

NELSON-PAD

It is I!

NELSON-PAD (CONT'D)

No serious spinal injury can keep this fair administrator down. I see there have been no issues in my brief absence.

KISH

Actually, Nelson, it's Ian.  
He's...in a food coma.

NELSON-PAD  
Yes Kish I was being ironic!

RICHARDS  
(to David)  
It appears he ingested too much  
nitrous oxide when doing Whipped  
Cream training. No telling how long  
he'll be out for.

Richards grabs an empty whipped cream can off the floor and  
depresses the nozzle. *HISS*.

NELSON-PAD  
Kish, are you taking photos?

KISH  
Whoopsie.

Kish pulls out a POLAROID and snaps a single picture. He  
shakes it around.

KISH (CONT'D)  
Blurry.

A COMMOTION from out the window. Laura climbs in, panting.

LAURA  
Man they're getting crazy out  
there! So Ian's dead, huh? His fans  
were saying that when they weren't  
yelling things.

KISH  
Actually, he's in a food coma.

NELSON-PAD  
Get out of here young lady. You  
can't be seeing this!

LAURA  
Why not? Uncle Jerry looks worse  
after his Thanksgiving beers.

Nelson FUMES but can't formulate a response. David regards  
the room, the clues, the people.

DAVID  
Okay, is no one gonna say it? I  
don't think this was an accident.

NELSON-PAD  
Of course it is! This could have  
happened to anyone.

DAVID

Could it? Ian visited me last night. He said those pies were all laced with ipecac. He could taste it. And that he felt like he was in danger. And we all heard what Maxwell said to the other eaters. Anyone who talks to me is 'dead'.

NELSON-PAD

Surely you don't think the reigning champion was behind this. He's beloved.

DAVID

Yeah Robocop that's exactly what I mean. He has means, motive, and opportunity.

KISH

I've seen CSI. Those are all real things.

RICHARDS

Sadly he also has an alibi. He was training at the gym. We have the footage.

DAVID

You have a gym? Here? I can't be the only one smelling something fishy, right? C'mon.

Kish sniffs the air. David makes his way to the window. Looks at the FANS, going nuts, and the nearby homes of all the eaters.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Look at it out there. These people are rabid. I hate to say it, but I think one of your eaters...is a murderer.

A beat while that sinks in.

NELSON-PAD

But no one was murdered.

DAVID

...attempted murderer.

NELSON-PAD

This was a training accident, David.



RICHARDS

I think you see his point, Nelson.

But Nelson wheels around, turning on him.

NELSON-PAD

Do I? Someone needs to tell our celebrity author that there's more to life than his crackpot ideas. This is Edmonton, not Hollywood. We respect our sport here.

DAVID

I need to talk to the eaters.  
Alone.

NELSON-PAD

And I need my L3 vertebrae to be less shattered. But that doesn't mean it will happen.

RICHARDS

Nelson, be reasonable. Why invite David out here if we won't let him do his job?

NELSON-PAD

You invited him, not me! Besides, his *job* is to write stories! Not take over for Edmonton's Finest. We already have Kish on the case.

We see Kish try to take a Polaroid selfie with Ian's unconscious body.

NELSON-PAD (CONT'D)

If I catch one whiff of you going detective on us, I will revoke your press privileges and exile you from the fair. Exile!

RICHARDS

What's that Nelson? I think we're losing you.

NELSON-PAD

I said exile!!

Richards goes up behind Nelson-Pad and POWERS HIM DOWN.

LAURA

Growing a pair. Nice.

RICHARDS

Only Nelson could have delusions of grandeur from a hospital bed. He's like a Midwestern Napoleon.

DAVID

I'm gonna go talk to the eaters.

David goes for the door -- but Richards grabs him.

RICHARDS

As much as I hate to say it, Nelson will find out if you talk to them. They're all too eager to rat you out. We'll have to find a different way.

DAVID

I'll tell you what. I still don't know dick about this sport. Can someone give me a primer?

Kish instantly perks up, dropping all pretense of working.

KISH

I was hoping you would say that.

**INT. RICHARD'S OFFICE - DAY**

Think Nelson's office but half the size, no windows, and jammed floor to ceiling with files. Kish SHOVES a pile of papers aside and tosses his own file onto Richard's desk.

RICHARDS

I needed those.

DAVID

This is really your office? It looks like a hoarder's doomsday bunker. I don't even get cell service here.

RICHARDS

Remember what I said, David? Abuses.

Kish pulls a PROJECTOR SCREEN down and unsnaps his pointing baton. He's ready to instruct, General Patton style.

KISH

Alright you Nancy's, quit your jabberin. Welcome to Competitive Eating 101. I'll be your professor.  
(MORE)

KISH (CONT'D)  
 Since it's the first day, we'll  
 just review the syllabus I've  
 prepared --

DAVID  
 Dude.

KISH  
 Right! Lettuce begin.

*Kish's VO will play over scenes of the eaters in action.*

# **INT. YOKI'S HOME - DAY**

Yoki pokes at steamed broccoli and chicken. His translator  
 and him chatter, but we hear nothing.

KISH (V.O.)  
 Yokitashu Mitsirugi AKA 'Yoki' AKA  
 'The East from the Beast'.  
 Something like that. He appeared on  
 the scene just this year and is  
 shattering records in almost every  
 category he competes in.

Yoki takes a dainty sip of water.

KISH (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 How he stays so fit is a mystery to  
 pretty much everyone. My theory?  
 Ancient Aliens.

# **EXT. CARNY RIDES - DAY**

Chester waits in line for the Tilt-A-Puke. He double fists  
 cotton candy and a turkey leg. Fans occasionally approach.

KISH (V.O.)  
 Chortlin' Chester Plott is what's  
 known as a 'Big Man'.

DAVID (V.O.)  
 Cuz he's fat?

Chester lets out a CHORTLE and takes a double-bite of candy  
 and turkey.

KISH (V.O.)  
 Don't make me send you to the Dean.  
 Chester's an Edmonton icon. A corn-  
 fed local who'd won the contest  
 almost every year.  
 (MORE)

KISH (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
His first ever Edmonton loss was  
last year, to Maxwell.

Maxwell and his ENTOURAGE stroll by. Chester glares. Maxwell  
glares right back.

KISH (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
You can see the potential for  
trouble.

**INT. BRYN AND BRYAN'S HOME - DAY**

Bryn and Bryan practice curling (Bryn pushes, Bryan sweeps)  
in their living room.

KISH (V.O.)  
Bryn and Bryan Kashka. Notorious --

NELSON-PAD (O.S.)  
Why wasn't I invited?!

**BACK IN RICHARD'S OFFICE**

All eyes turn to the door. Nelson-Pad keeps THUNKING at it.

NELSON-PAD (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Laura! Let me in! I am a part of  
this!

Laura reluctantly obeys. Nelson-Pad rolls in.

NELSON-PAD (CONT'D)  
That's better. Why are we in this  
trash heap? Let's go outside.

KISH  
We're almost done, Nelson.

NELSON-PAD  
I am the leader here!

**EXT. FOOD COURT - DAY**

Bryn and Bryan nibble on poutine. The gang watches from a few  
tables away. Kish continues on like nothing happened.

KISH  
The Kashka's were banned from the  
Canadian circuit for rushing the  
stage when they didn't make a Grand  
Finals.

Bryan STABS at his fries with a fork. Very graphic. Like the shower scene in PSYCHO kind of stabbing.

DAVID  
But they liked my book...

NELSON-PAD  
Clearly a red flag.

KISH  
They're independently wealthy, so  
they're only in it for the sport.

RICHARDS  
Here they come. Act casual.

They all look away, but the duo notice's David's presence.

BRYN                      BRYAN

Hey David!                      Hi stranger!

DAVID  
(trying to act casual)  
HAHA, TAX FRAUD.  
(then)  
Dammit.

Their stares linger a bit too long as they pass...

KISH (PRE-LAP)  
Next up, Marie de Gaulle.

**EXT. INSIDE A TREE - DAY**

The gang sits perched in the branches of a tree.

DAVID  
Laura, what are we doing?

LAURA  
If anyone knows Marie's schedule,  
it's me. Just wait. Kish, keep  
teachin'.

Kish puts on glasses. This will be the only time he ever wears them.

DAVID  
Do you even need glasses?

KISH  
Marie is definitely the beauty  
queen of the sport.  
(MORE)

(MORE)

KISH (CONT'D)

She's got good genes and good jeans  
if you know what I'm sayin.

LAURA

Don't disrespect women, weiner.  
Shh, here she comes!

Marie, headphones in, jogs by the base of the tree. She stops right under them. Starts PUNCHING the base of the tree. Everyone reacts. Kish starts to gesture heavily -- but silently.

KISH

(subtitled, not spoken)

Marie is hardcore. Her whole family  
is SAS, and she's rumored to have  
surgically altered her  
eso...eso...throat.

Marie stops punching the tree. LICKS her bleeding fist. Runs off. Laura snaps a pic.

LAURA

(signing, subtitled)

I'm gonna tag her in this. She  
kicks so much ass.

#### **EXT. GRANDSTAND - DAY**

Throngs of fans gather. A huge sign reads **Meat 'N' Greet**.  
Barbecues SIZZLE behind the gathered gurgitators, with one  
Eater on stage at a given time.

David and co descend the stairs towards the stage.

KISH

And lastly, we've got our prime  
suspect, Maxwell.

DAVID

What about Ian?

KISH

I don't know how to tell you this,  
David, but...Ian's in a food coma.  
I thought you knew.

DAVID

No, I -- nevermind. Continue.

#### **ON STAGE**

Maxwell smiles and takes a pic with a baby.

MAXWELL

This little guy gonna get in on the  
Meat N Greet too?

He hands him a baby beef skewer. He nibbles at it.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

I love this town!  
(to the parents)  
That'll be 30 bucks.

**IN THE STANDS**

RICHARDS

He's a bit like the David Beckham  
of competitive eating.

KISH

More like Ivan Drago.  
(bad Russian)  
Dah. I am ze best.

LAURA

When he wins, he always takes an  
extra bite. Just to be a douche.

Maxwell opens his shirt to take another pic, muscles bulging.  
David stares him down. *Is he a murderer?*

NELSON-PAD

*Attempted* murderer.

DAVID

Did you just read my thoughts? I  
should go talk to him.

NELSON-PAD

No. Simply no. We're here to  
observe, nothing more.

DAVID

No. I need to do something for  
once. I'm going up there.

David BOLTS for the stage.

NELSON-PAD

Don't! Come back here!

Nelson rolls up but can't handle the stairs. Maxwell sees  
David coming.

MAXWELL  
He's back everybody! Hollywood's  
here to tell us we're all dumb  
hillbillies.

(to his fans)  
Excuse us.

He pulls David aside.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)  
You need to go.

DAVID  
No. We need to talk about Ian.

MAXWELL  
Why? He's old news. Couldn't handle  
the heat. Had to get out of the  
kitchen.

DAVID  
And you wouldn't have been the one  
to turn up the heat, would you?

MAXWELL  
For real man?  
(yelling to Nelson-Pad)  
What kind of a show you trying to  
run here, Nelson?

NELSON-PAD  
I told him not to!

MAXWELL  
Try harder. We haven't been able to  
catch a break since Puke Fest.  
Would you harass up MJ before the  
NBA Finals? Barry Bonds as he's  
trying to do steroids? No. You'd  
let them be professionals and do  
their fucking job.

DAVID  
Ian's in a coma.

MAXWELL  
Yeah? And my Aunt Rita has  
dementia. Not. My. Problem. Poser.  
Get out of my face. And get out of  
my life.

MAXWELL FAN 2  
Get outta here Hollywood!



MAXWELL FAN 3  
You're holding up the line!

David starts to get PUSHED OUT by angry fans. Then --

DAVID  
Tell you what, Maxwell. This is a  
Meat N Greet? Why don't you put  
your mouth where your...mouth is?

A wicked smile from Maxwell.

MAXWELL  
Your funeral.

### **MOMENTS LATER**

David and Maxwell sit side by side, a MASSIVE TRAY OF MEAT in front of either of them. The rest watch from the stands.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)  
Standard rules. First to eat their  
pound of meat wins. You win, I talk  
to you. I win, you fuck off. Game?

DAVID  
Great. Let's go.  
(to himself)  
Wow that's a lot of meat. You can  
do this. You eat all the time.  
Just...keep doing that.

DING! A buzzer sounds and the games begin. Maxwell digs in like a pro. David, a total noob.

### **IN THE STANDS**

Richards, next to Laura, regards the spectacle.

RICHARDS  
You know. You look around at events  
like this and you can kind of see  
what people freak out about. How  
many families could this feed? How  
much cruelty was inflicted on  
helpless animals just to help them  
stuff their gullets? I get that  
this matters to these people. But.  
It makes you think, at least.

Laura takes out her headphones again.

LAURA  
 WHAT? I barely even listen to you  
 normally.

**ON STAGE**

DING! Maxwell finishes his meat. David's barely even finished  
 a rib.

DAVID  
 How the -- ?

MAXWELL  
 I'm the king! William Fake-ner, you  
 can GTFO, thanks.

Bryn and Bryan book it up the stage, carrying their own  
 memorabilia.

BRYAN  
 Sorry Maxwell but you gotta go. Our  
 turn on stage started 10 minutes  
 ago.

MAXWELL  
 Don't look at me. His idea.

They look to David.

BRYN  
 He doesn't know any better. You're  
 just being an asshole. Sorry.

BRYAN  
 Sorry. But she's right. You're  
 being an asshole.

Maxwell moves on both of them, standing tall.

MAXWELL  
 Well what are you two little maple  
 leafs gonna do about it, huh?

From below, Nelson-Pad chimes in.

NELSON-PAD  
 The rules are the rules, Maxwell.

MAXWELL  
 Oh now you decide to speak up!  
 Playing favorites, are we?

The ruckus has garnered the attention of the other eaters.  
 Yoki and his Translator look up from their fans.

YOKI  
(Japanese)

TRANSLATOR  
Maxwell! Stop being a dick!

MAXWELL  
What'd you say to me??

YOKI  
(Japanese)

TRANSLATOR  
I said, stop being a dick to the  
stupid writer. It is pointless.

DAVID  
Stupid?

MAXWELL  
How bout you say that to my face,  
Eel Brain?

Yoki gets up and approaches.

YOKI  
(Japanese)

TRANSLATOR  
That's what I'm doing!

NELSON-PAD  
Yoki! Maxwell! ...Translator! Cut  
it out.

But Yoki gets right up in Ian's face, unafraid.

YOKI  
(Japanese)

MAXWELL  
What are you saying to me?!

Translator catches up, huffy. Other eaters -- Chester at the  
head -- move their way.

TRANSLATOR  
Sorry. He said fuck you.

MAXWELL  
Fuck me? --

TRANSLATOR  
-- Yes. --

Maxwell PUSHES Yoki with some real force.

MAXWELL

Fuck YOU.

RICHARDS

HEY! Cut it out!

But Yoki goes back in at Maxwell. Chester has to push himself in between them.

CHESTER

Stop stop stop! Y'all are doing more damage to our fair with your squabblin than these outsiders ever could. We can't be fighting amongst ourselves. The world is looking for an excuse to look down on us. And you're making it easy. Yoki, I don't know you, but get a hold of yourself. Maxwell, I expect more from you. Have some respect.

Maxwell shuts up, but the fire in his eyes burns brighter than ever. Yoki speaks something to his translator.

TRANSLATOR

I can't say that...

MARIE

Chester is right. Maxwell, you are making a mockery of this place with your stupid cowboy antics.

Maxwell regards the gathered crowd.

MAXWELL

I see the way all of you are looking at me. You think I took out our boy? Like I'm Mr Food Coma?

DAVID

You're trying pretty hard to look like it. Are you?

MAXWELL

Why ask me? Why not ask Wonderboy over here? Oh that's right. He doesn't speak English. Have to take his pal's word for it. I'm sure nothing gets lost in translation there. What about Marie? That hot little croissant could seduce and take out any one of us.

(MORE)

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

The Kashkas were ejected from Canada. How fucked is that? And Chester, you've wanted to take me out since I took home the cup last year. All of you are thirsty for blood, but everyone's looking at me because I speak my mind? How about you all take a nice long walk and gofuckyourselves.

A loooong beat. Then everyone BREAKS OUT in in-fighting.

TRANSLATOR

You go fuck yourself!

BRYAN

You don't know us!

MARIE

I piss on your words.

As everyone pushes closer together, Laura gets LOST BENEATH THEIR FEET. She tries to escape but no avail --

LAURA

Ahhhh! Stop stop stop stop!

She takes off running, away from the Grandstand and into the fair. Nelson-Pad tries to chase, but he can barely navigate the grass. David sees him struggle.

DAVID

Laura!!

He gives chase, leading the crowd of chaos behind.

**EXT. CARNY RIDES - DAY**

David looks around for Laura.

DAVID

I saw you come out here. You can't hide forever!

David hears SOBS from a nearby tree. He looks up.

**EXT. INSIDE A TREE - MOMENTS LATER**

David crawls up to Laura's perch. She wipes her eyes. David offers her his sleeve.

DAVID  
It's gonna be okay. Shh.

LAURA  
No it's not. Dad's in the hospital.  
Ian's in a food coma and everything  
is really scary.

DAVID  
Well. Amen to that. I'm scared too.

LAURA  
But you're an adult. Doesn't that  
make you a pussy?

DAVID  
Ha. No. It just makes me...human. I  
get scared a lot. I was scared  
before I even got to the fair. I  
was scared at home.

LAURA  
At home? Why? I thought you lived  
in Hollywood. Nothing bad happens  
there.

DAVID  
Tell that to Roman Polanski. But I  
get it. I'm...I'm going through  
some stuff too.

LAURA  
Like what? Is your dad a robot too?

DAVID  
Only emotionally. No, I...made a  
big mistake recently, and I'm  
paying for it.

LAURA  
Did you piss off your robot dad?

DAVID  
No, I...look, it's complicated. But  
I messed up. It's my job to write  
and I haven't been able to write  
anything in...awhile.

LAURA  
How long is awhile?

DAVID  
Oh y'know. Just a few. Months.  
(deflating)  
I can't write. I'm broken.

LAURA  
You can't write?! Aren't you a  
writer?

DAVID  
Okay, now you sound like Twitter.  
(he winks)  
Don't tell the others. But  
actually, since Puke Fest...I've  
been able to put words on the page  
for the first time in forever. It's  
not great. But it's something. It's  
been forever since I've actually  
done something. I've just felt  
paralyzed.

LAURA  
Are you trying to trick me? This  
feels like a trick.

David gets an idea. He pulls out his phone and dials Eddie.

DAVID  
Want proof? Check this.

**INT. EDDIE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Eddie chats up his assistant BILLY as he sips a coffee.

EDDIE  
So Chris decided to just hide her  
body with all the others.  
(the phone RINGS)  
God, did he kill another one?

BILLY  
Eddie Rotenberg's office.

**BACK WITH DAVID IN THE TREE**

*We intercut throughout the call.*

DAVID  
Hey dude it's David. Is he around?

BILLY  
Can I get the last name, David?

DAVID  
David Thompson. He knows me.

BILLY  
Sure thing. Let me see if I have  
him for you.  
(to Eddie)  
David Thompson?

EDDIE  
(giggling)  
Ask him what it's regarding.

BILLY  
Hey let me try his other number.  
Can I tell him what it's regarding,  
David?

EDDIE  
Tell him I'm writing again.

BILLY  
Sure thing, one second.  
(to Eddie)  
Says he's writing again. You  
believe him?

Eddie LAUGHS and heads back into his office.

EDDIE  
Yeah right. He's desperate. Just  
give him the soft-pedal.

BILLY  
Hey David, sorry, I wasn't able to  
reach Eddie right now. He's been  
doing some traveling so his  
schedule is super up in the air.  
We'll return when we're able.  
Thanks!

He hangs up. Laura looks at David, mouth agape.

DAVID  
50 bucks says Eddie was next to him  
the whole time.

LAURA  
Dude. Hollywood is cray.

DAVID  
This place is cray! Hollywood I can  
understand. Edmonton is the enigma.



LAURA  
You'll get used to it. I think.

DAVID  
We should probably head back.  
They're gonna be worried about ya.  
You ready to go?

She's frozen. Clearly still scared.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Tell you what. I'll text your dad  
and we can have some coffee at my  
place. I can tell you all kinds of  
stupid Hollywood crap. That sound  
good?

She nods her head with a big YES.

**INT. DAVID'S HOME - NIGHT**

David hands Laura another coffee.

DAVID  
So I ended up running out the door  
in assless chaps, telling them I'd  
be back on Monday.

Laura CRACKS UP.

LAURA  
Wow. Your life sounds so much  
cooler than mine.

DAVID  
It's not all roses.

LAURA  
What'd you mess up?

David SPUTTERS a bit on his coffee.

DAVID  
Hmm?

LAURA  
You said before that you messed  
something up. What was it? Did you  
write something bad?

David taps his toe, contemplating. Is this little girl ready  
to hear it all? Will she tell Nelson? Will she understand?

DAVID  
Tell you what. If we both survive  
this thing, then I'll tell you.

Laura's face starts to sadden.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
It was a joke! Sorry! I'm just not  
ready to really talk about it yet.

LAURA  
Fine. If we both survive.

They CLINK coffees to cheers.

**EXT. MOBILE HOME - CONTINUOUS**

A SHADOWY FIGURE outside a mobile home. In it's hands -- TWO GALLON JUGS. It pops the tops and starts emptying around the perimeter...

**INT. DAVID'S HOME - CONTINUOUS**

Laura finishes her another coffee. Shakes her head, hyper.

LAURA  
Damn this stuff is strong.

DAVID  
You ever drink coffee before?

LAURA  
Nope. Feels great though. Let's  
sprint. You hear something? I feel  
like I hear something.

DAVID  
That fourth cup of coffee may have  
been a bad idea.  
(beat)  
I would be a terrible parent.

Laura turns towards the window.

LAURA  
No. I *hear* something.

David gazes out the empty window...

**EXT. MOBILE HOME - CONTINUOUS**

The Figure pulls out a match from an Edibles Fair matchbook -  
- STRIKES it -- and SETS THE MOBILE HOME ABLAZE.

**INT. DAVID'S HOME - CONTINUOUS**

David stares out the window, mouth agape. Firelight  
flickering off his face.

DAVID  
Stay here.

He bolts out the door. Laura jitters for barely a second.

LAURA  
No way!

And she's out the door too.

**EXT. DAVID'S HOME - CONTINUOUS**

They both stare at Champion's Court -- WHERE A MOBILE HOME IS  
ENGULFED IN A MASSIVE INFERNO.

**EXT. CHAMPION'S COURT - MOMENTS LATER**

David and Laura arrive. Panic has already broken out --  
Chester carries the 10 gallon jug of water from his home,  
trying to extinguish the flames. Kish tries to set up a fire-  
hose. Nelson-Pad wheels around, helpless.

NELSON-PAD  
David! It's Yoki! What do we do?!

David runs up to the nearby window.

DAVID  
Yoki! We're coming! Do you get  
English? We're coming!

Laura covers her face with her hands. Richards tries to get  
up the burning stairs to the entrance, but the flames burn  
too hot.

RICHARDS  
Yoki! Are you in there?!

David THROWS A ROCK through Yoki's window, creating a MASSIVE  
BACKDRAFT. The flames shoot EVEN HIGHER, forcing everyone to  
back away. It's hopeless. David looks at the crowd.

DAVID  
Was...was he in there?

The other eaters nod in the affirmative. David closes his eyes, broken. And when he opens them, he sees Maxwell STARING HIM DOWN, murderous, never blinking.

David stares right back.

**INT. NELSON'S OFFICE - DAY**

David's hand at a blackboard -- he crosses off the names YOKI and TRANSLATOR (Ian's name is already x'd). He then goes down to the name MAXWELL, circles it, and writes 'MURDERER'.

David stares out at the room.

KISH  
So. You're saying it was Maxwell.

David hucks the chalk at him.

DAVID  
Yes! Open your eyes people! C'mon!  
Did none of you read my one-pager?

REVEAL: Everyone has a laminated one-sheet that David has written.

RICHARDS  
I'll be honest, David. I expected  
more from a writer...

Kish flips the doc over, confused.

KISH  
Where's the rest of it?

LAURA  
Well I think it looks great and  
probably took a lot of hard work.

She sneaks him a thumbs up.

DAVID  
Look, I think the answer here is  
obvious, so I'm just gonna say it.

KISH  
Shouldn't we wait for Nelson-Pad?

DAVID  
We have to cancel the Grand Finals.

NELSON (O.S.)

Never!

The door FLIES OPEN to reveal Nelson! In the flesh. Also, IN A WHEELCHAIR. He wheels himself into the room.

NELSON (CONT'D)

The show must go on!

(he gets stuck)

Laura, help Daddy make an entrance.

She rolls her eyes and pushes him back behind his desk.

LAURA

Why didn't you tell me you were coming back?

NELSON

It was a surprise sweetie! So I could make that perfect entrance. No, David, we will not be canceling the Grand Finals.

DAVID

You have to. There's a murderer on the loose.

NELSON

Is there?! Please, point him out to me!

DAVID

Does anyone have a photo of Maxwell?

NELSON

What evidence do we have tying Maxwell to any of these incidents? Incidents, David. A training accident, a wiring malfunction...tragedies, yes, but let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater here.

DAVID

So you're not gonna do anything? What if more of them die? What if ALL of them die? You're afraid of bad publicity, how about 'Murder Orgy at Pointless Festival'?

NELSON

I have some notes on that headline, but either way, it won't happen.

(MORE)

NELSON (CONT'D)

As we speak, Luther is gathering all the eaters for an emergency training, fire, and general safety meeting.

RICHARDS

Nelson, that's barely even a half-measure.

NELSON

I didn't ask you, Richards. Besides, all of this has happened under YOUR watch, remember? I've been gone since the Puke Fest. You're lucky I don't fire you for dereliction of duty.

KISH

What does that even mean?

NELSON

Silence, Kish. You have been no help either. It's true what they say, if you want something done, do it yourself.

DAVID

Then listen to yourself, Nelson. Protect the fair you love. Cancel the Grand Finals.

NELSON

You've said your peace, David. No one here has any doubts what you really think.

That finally sends David over the edge.

DAVID

Cancel the finals or I'm writing my entire article on the illiterate fuckwad who let people die and his fair burn just to avoid hurting his own petty pride.

Nelson takes that in, calm.

NELSON

Are you done?

DAVID

That depends on you.

NELSON

Fine.

(beat)

Hand in your press pass. I want you out of here tonight.

DAVID

Excuse me?

NELSON

Hand it over, hotshot. You're gone.

DAVID

No, I mean. I never got a press pass. I've just been walking in to everything.

NELSON

Kish!!

KISH

I don't even know how I messed this one up.

DAVID

You see this? Security problem!

NELSON

Fine!! No press pass, even easier. You can simply leave. Good riddance.

Suddenly, Kish's walkie comes to life.

LUTHER (O.S.)

Hey uhhh, I think we got a problem at Champion's Court.

All eyes shoot to Luther's voice. Kish answers. Tense.

KISH

I hear you clucking, Big Rooster. What's going on?

LUTHER

Well, I gathered all the eaters like Nelson said. But. It's Maxwell.

David shoots daggers at Nelson.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

He's...gone.

That cuts the room like a knife.

KISH  
He's...gone? You check under his  
bed?

LUTHER (O.S.)  
Closet, everything. His place is  
all spick n span. Like he never  
even lived there.

DAVID  
Nelson, where are the eaters right  
now?

Nelson, at a loss for words. David gets in close.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Where are they?!

NELSON  
At the grandstand.

DAVID  
Okay, fuck everything you just  
said. We're all going to the  
grandstand. And we're gonna get to  
the bottom of this. Capiche?

Nelson only NODS. Good enough.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Let's go.

He's first out, SLAMMING the door.

LAURA  
(sotto)  
That was so cool --

NELSON  
Don't.

**INT. GRANDSTAND BACKSTAGE -- DAY**

The eaters are already gathered, MURMURING amongst  
themselves. They reach fever pitch as the gang arrives.

CHESTER  
Where's Maxwell?

BRYN  
What happened to Yoki?



MARIE

I do not feel safe here. We demand  
an explanation!

Nelson rolls out in front of all of them.

NELSON

Everyone, everyone please. First of  
all, it's good to be back. I wish  
it was under better circumstances.  
I regret to inform you all that  
Maxwell has gone...missing.

They all REACT, a ripple of fear shooting through the group.

BRYAN

They got another one!

DAVID

We don't know that -- yet.

NELSON

We don't know ANYTHING yet. And  
that is the point. Yes, David,  
we're aware you think Maxwell is  
the murderer. I'm sure many of you  
may harbor similar suspicions.

(nods from the crowd)

But right now the point is that we  
simply don't know. There has been  
zero proof of actual foul play. We  
can't ignore the fact that Maxwell  
may have simply disappeared.

CHESTER

The day of the Semi Finals?

MARIE

The reigning champion? Never.

NELSON

Yes, yes. But talk is cheap. We  
don't know the truth. Now, David  
has asked me to cancel the Grand  
Finals.

A THRILL goes through the crowd. *No! How could you! Etc*

DAVID

For your safety! Is all this really  
worth dying for?

BRYAN

Oh yeah.

BRYN

For sure.

CHESTER  
It's our lives.

MARIE  
Of course it is silly man.

NELSON  
Yes, indeed. Though it certainly  
wouldn't hurt your story, would it?

Doubtful gazes as Nelson paints David as the bad guy.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
But I would never do that to you  
eaters. I've seen the struggles  
you've put in. I've seen your  
hardships, know your pain. To  
deprive you of the chance to  
compete for the Championship -- now  
THAT would truly be evil. It would  
be a dishonor not only to you, but  
to the memories of your fallen  
competitors.

Everyone NODS. David looks around like WTF?!

NELSON (CONT'D)  
So, regrettably, I will cancel the  
semi-finals. But tomorrow's Grand  
Finals will go on as planned. Kish?

DAVID  
-- Nelson! --

KISH  
Yessir.

NELSON  
As discussed, we will be upping  
security for every eater, as well  
as at the Grandstand for the course  
of the event.

KISH  
When did we discuss that?

NELSON  
Read your email.

KISH  
Right. E-mail. That's a real thing.

NELSON  
If any of you still feel in any  
sort of danger, I want you to come  
speak with me personally.  
(MORE)

NELSON (CONT'D)  
 I will not have anything else  
 happening to anyone on my watch.  
 Understood?

General agreement ripples through them.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
 God, look at your faces. All of  
 you, at the pinnacles of your  
 career. You've ascended the  
 stairway to greatness. And  
 tomorrow, one of you will take the  
 final step to become...a GOD.  
 (beat)  
 Now if you excuse me, I have an  
 announcement to make.

Nelson rolls away. The eaters all gather together. David  
 catches a number of sideways glances coming his way.

DAVID  
 Listen, I --

CHESTER  
 You've done enough.

David walks out, hated as ever.

#### **EXT. EDMONTON EDIBLE FAIR - VARIOUS - DAY**

Nelson's announcement plays over various shots of the fair.

#### **IN THE FOOD COURT:**

Fans march with signs. *MAXWELL KILLED MY HERO / CHESTER  
 CHUNKS FOR LIFE / MARIE IS FOR ME / etc*

NELSON (V.O.)  
 Ladies and Gentlemen of the fair.  
 As you know, Edmonton has been the  
 victim of a terrible string  
 of...bad luck.

#### **AT THE CARNY RIDES:**

NELSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Whether accidents, tragedies, or  
 something else, like all Americans  
 we must play the hand we've been  
 dealt.

#### **OUTSIDE CHAMPIONS COURT:**

A small memorial for Yoki and his translator. Fans pay their respects.

NELSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
The competition has been winnowed down to 4. Chester Plott. Marie de Gaulle. Bryn and Bryan Kashka. Such fine competitors. So it's with a heavy heart that I announce tonight's semi finals are cancelled.

The fans all AWHHH in disappointment.

**AT THE ENTRANCE:**

NELSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
The Grand Finals, however, will be held, as planned, tomorrow night.

YAY from the folks in line.

**OVER THE GRANDSTAND:**

NELSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
To the victor goes the spoils. May the best Gurgitator win.

**OUTSIDE DAVID'S HOME:**

NELSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
God bless you all. And God Bless Edmonton.

David unlocks his door as the announcement ends.

**INT. DAVID'S HOME - CONTINUOUS**

David sits down in front of his desk to write. He opens his notebook to a fresh page -- the first one. He checks his pocket for his pen. Not there.

DAVID  
Conan?

He checks all over. Pockets, drawers, backpack, bathroom. Nothing. He finds only A PENCIL. He sits down to write with it, drawing a deep breath.

The lead breaks the instant it hits the paper.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
 Fuck! Fuck pencils! Fuck you! Fuck  
 everything!

He TOSSES the pencil aside. It STICKS into the wall with a  
 FTANG. Pulls out his phone and dials.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
 C'mon Eddie you motherfucker.

**INT. EDDIE'S OFFICE - SAME**

*Intercut as necessary:*

Billy sees the line ring. He yells to Eddie.

BILLY  
 It's him again!  
 (answering)  
 Eddie Rotenberg's office.

DAVID  
 Dude! It's David. Put me through.  
 It's life or death.

BILLY  
 David can I grab the last name?

DAVID  
 It's Thompson! We already did this!  
 I was a client for years!

BILLY  
 Oh my bad, I'm new on the desk. Let  
 me see if I've got him.

DAVID  
 I know you've got him! He's  
 probably sitting right there next--  
 (he gets muted)

EDDIE  
 What's he saying?

Billy pantomimes 'crazy shit'.

BILLY  
 Something about an emergency, life  
 and death, blah blah blah.

EDDIE  
 Call back.

BILLY

Hey David, sorry, wasn't able to get Eddie right now. Can we give you a call back?

DAVID

No! This is a fucking emergency! I'm trapped at this stupid fair and people are dying and someone stole my fucking pen and --

CLICK. The line goes dead. Furious, David THROWS HIS PHONE OUT THE WINDOW.

**MOMENTS LATER**

David trudges back in, wiping off his phone. He locks the door. Then locks it again. Locks the windows. Bathroom door. Everything he can find. Tonight, he takes no chances.

He stares out at the Grandstand in the distance before closing the blinds a final time.

**EXT. EDMONTON EDIBLE'S FAIR - VARIOUS - DAWN**

Morning sunlight breaks over the final day at Edmonton. A layer of fog BURNS AWAY as the first workers of the day set up.

**EXT. GRANDSTAND - CONTINUOUS**

Nelson checks his watch and jingles his keys as he makes his way into the Grandstand. Inspecting for the night's festivities. He sees something and STOPS IN HIS TRACKS.

On the Grandstand stage sits MAXWELL HENRY, a smile breaking on his lips.

PRE-LAP: KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

**EXT. DAVID'S HOME - DAY**

Kish knocks furiously at the window.

**EXT. FOOD COURT - DAY**

Kish beelines through the fairground, David in tow. He's still getting his wits about him.

DAVID

Kish! Where the hell are we going?

KISH

Richards' secret meeting spot.  
Behind the Grandstand, where the  
laundry vents empty out. It smells  
amazing.

DAVID

I meant why.

Kish stops dead in his tracks and turns to David.

KISH

It's Maxwell. He's back.

**EXT. GRANDSTAND - BY THE LAUNDRY VENTS - DAY**

Kish and David arrive, last to the party. As soon as they  
round the corner, all eyes shoot to David. The crowd parts to  
reveal Maxwell, sitting in the middle, cockier than ever.

MAXWELL

Ah, he finally joins us. What do  
you have to say for yourself?

DAVID

I could ask you the same thing! You  
attacked Ian, you killed Yoki, and  
you stole my fucking pen. Confess.

Maxwell looks at the others.

MAXWELL

Are you hearing this? Bold  
accusations from the biggest liar  
here.

Maxwell flips up the iPad in his lap -- DAVID'S CONAN  
MELTDOWN plays. David's hit by a ton of bricks.

DAVID

How did you -- ?

MAXWELL

I googled you, fuckstick! Why do  
you think I was only gone a day! I  
was tired of being the butt of your  
stupid accusations and decided to  
take matters into my own hands. You  
think I had a motive to fuck shit  
up? What about this guy right here?

(MORE)

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

He ruined his own career, so he's trying to get it back by ruining ours.

NELSON

Is it true David?

LAURA

THIS is what you were hiding? You stole an entire book?

Kish whispers something into Richards' ear. Richards whispers back.

KISH

THAT'S what just happened? David, how could you?

David tries to breathe deep, but he's overwhelmed, backed into a corner.

DAVID

Look...yes, it's true. I mean of course it is. You've got the video right there. I made a mistake. I got the one thing I wanted in life -- to write a book, put it out in the world, have it do well -- and I didn't want to lose it. I got scared and I fucked up. But I have nothing to do with what's going on here. If anything, being here has helped fix me. I got so obsessed with being a celebrity that I lost touch with why I started writing in the first place. Then I see all of you -- working your hardest, putting your mind AND body to the test to achieve a goal that, honestly, I still think is kind of stupid. But you don't give a fuck what I think. And that's what makes this place so great! You care about your work, and fuck everything else! Weird as this all is, that's inspiring as hell! I mean, we're not best friends or anything, but the thought of losing another one of you to...whatever's been happening here? That's just too much. So I'm sorry. I lied. That's on me. But let me stay. Let me help.

(pointing to Maxwell)

(MORE)



DAVID (CONT'D)

And step one is getting this guy  
the hell out of here! Look what  
he's done!

A long, pregnant beat. Laura can't even make eye contact.  
Maxwell starts to SLOW CLAP, standing up. But no one claps  
with him.

MAXWELL

Oh. Thought people did that. Good  
speech, David, but it's too little  
too late. This fair was a well-  
oiled machine. Then you came over  
here, ripped the case off that  
machine, and shit all over it.  
You're also the shit in this  
scenario. You're the only new  
addition to this fair, which means  
if we want the craziness to stop,  
you gotta go.

DAVID

Richards, come on. Talk some sense  
into these guys.

Richards holds his hands up in the air.

RICHARDS

I tried, David. I expected so much  
more from you.

DAVID

Laura...?

But she hides behind Nelson's wheelchair.

NELSON

Your tickets have already been  
purchased, David. You depart in a  
few hours. Pack your things. And  
try not to embarrass yourself or  
this fair any further.

David finally boils over.

DAVID

Oh like you give a FUCK. Y'know  
what, you're right. This place can  
burn for all I fucking care. You're  
all a bunch of pointless country  
twats who will be lost to the pages  
of history.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

And if you somehow managed to make it in, I'd find that page, wipe my ass with it, and burn it. Fuck you.

Laura breaks out in TEARS. David trudges away, flipping them off as he goes. Maxwell SMIRKS like a dick.

MAXWELL

Hope you find your pen.

KISH

What's a twat?

#### **EXT. FOOD COURT - DAY**

David buzzes through the food court -- until he sees the Beer Stand. He cocks an eyebrow.

#### **MOMENTS LATER**

David sits at a table. He finishes a MASSIVE MUG of beer and moves on to a second. He shovels fair food into his face.

#### **MINUTES LATER**

David PUKES into a trash can. A MOM and SON walk up to him, holding a copy of his new book.

SON

Mr. Thompson, can I get your -- are you okay?

DAVID

What? It's the Roman Method. Cuz of vomitoriums.

He PUKES again. The Mom GROANS and gets her kid out of there.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Like you're perfect?!

#### **EXT. DAVID'S HOME - DAY**

David eats a Corn Cross (think a crucifix corn dog) as his phone rings. A sadistic, drunken smile.

DAVID

Eddie Rotenberg, as I live and breathe!

*Intercut with Eddie as needed:*

EDDIE

David! Long time no talk. Been buried under a mountain of paperwork here. Plus Kanye just made a cum painting of himself so been figuring out if he's off his meds again or still just genius.

DAVID

Wow. You have the hardest life.

EDDIE

But enough about me! How have you been? My assistant tells me you've gone to some kind of hillbilly fair? You thinking of converting?

DAVID

Cute, asshole.

EDDIE

I'm sorry?

DAVID

I wouldn't be here without you! This stupid eating contest. I suppose you just accepted the invite on my behalf and, what, thought I wouldn't mind?

EDDIE

David, what are you talking about? I fired you. This phone call was just professional courtesy. Are you drinking again?

David stops in his tracks. Wheels spinning.

DAVID

You didn't...what? Do the words Edmonton Edibles Fair mean anything to you?

EDDIE

Do they to anyone? Seriously I can call Kanye's guy if you're having a breakdown. He's a miracle worker.

DAVID

So you never...got an invite...to bring me here?

Eddie takes a deep breath.

EDDIE

David...are you alright? I'm asking  
as a friend here.

David makes it to his door. THE CONAN PEN is taped to the  
outside. Its beady eyes stare David in the face.

DAVID

Eddie. Send the fucking cavalry.

He hangs up.

**INT. EDDIE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

EDDIE

The fuck does that mean?

His Assistant walks in, SHRUGGING.

ASSISTANT

No clue. You want your mega coffee  
or just a tea baste?

EDDIE

After that call? Both. And Google  
the Edmonton Edibles Fair. Sounds  
fucking stupid.

**EXT. DAVID'S HOME - CONTINUOUS**

David rips the pen off his door. Behind it, a scribble. **You  
failed.**

David steels himself, staring down his door.

**INT. DAVID'S HOME - CONTINUOUS**

POW! David LAUNCHES the door open, holding the Pen like a  
weapon. His home is SPOOKY in the half-light.

DAVID

Maxwell! I will straight stab you  
if you're in here! Come out!

SILENCE. David flips the light switch. There's no one there.  
But now -- A FAINT WHISPERING fills the air. David looks for  
its source. UNDER THE BED. Oh Jesus.

He slowly dips down, cautious, afraid --

AN IPAD PLAYS HIS CONAN MELTDOWN ON QUIET.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Oh fuck you.

He grabs it -- revealing a CONTAINER OF GAS. It PUFFS its contents right in David's face.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Oh fuck you...

He drifts into slobbery unconsciousness.

**EXT. DAVID'S HOME - NIGHT**

Establishing. An energy in the air as fans head towards the Grandstand for the Grand Finals.

**INT. DAVID'S HOME - CONTINUOUS**

David, slobber all over his mouth, is BOUND BY HANDS AND FEET to his bed. A blindfold over his eyes. He SNORTS awake. RATTLES at his bonds. Gets his bearings.

DAVID  
Maxwell! Let me out of here! I  
won't say anything! I promise!

A hand enters frame and REMOVES his blindfold. Revealing --

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Just kidding you prick! You're  
fucking -- Richards?!

REVEAL: The smarmy mug of Anthony (motherfucking!) Richards. A macabre smile plastered on his face.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
What the -- you?! It was you?!

Richards simply smiles. Fills himself a drink from David's 10-gallon water dispenser.

RICHARDS  
It's a shame Chester couldn't be  
here too. He was always so fond of  
the dirty work.

**INT. IAN'S HOME - FLASHBACK**

Chester lays Ian's unconscious body on the ground. He uses his finger to LEAVE ONE EYE OPEN.

**EXT. YOKI'S HOME - FLASHBACK**

Reveal that Chester was the figure pouring out gasoline. He FUMBLES one of the jugs and lets out a small CHORTLE.

**BACK TO SCENE**

David BUCKS at his bonds.

DAVID

What? But...why? Wait, no.  
HEEEEEEL--

Richards plops his paper cup in David's mouth, a makeshift gag.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Frck. Yru.

RICHARDS

Oh fuck you too. You were a bad investment. Barely worth the \$100 I bribed that hippie to swap your tickets in the airport.

**INT. AIRPORT - FLASHBACK**

*From the Ambien montage:* we get a closer look at the HOOLIGAN rifling through David's backpack. He SWAPS the Canadian ticket with Richards' new one.

**INT. GRANDSTAND - FLASHBACK**

*From the opening ceremonies:* David's ticket pokes out of his luggage. Richards POCKETS it while Laura jumps down to 'attack' Kish.

LAURA (O.S.)

Ayiiiii!

**BACK TO SCENE**

Richards peers out the window towards the Grandstand. CHEERS echo from the Grand Finals.

RICHARDS

Such a disappointment. Like all of this. You hear them, David? Cheering like animals? That's all they are.

(MORE)

RICHARDS (CONT'D)

This place is a monument to American greed, consumerism, waste, everything.

(turning to David)

And you could have been the one to take it down! I tried to be gracious, you know. Give you the spotlight. The timing was perfect. Take a disgraced author, tee up the perfect takedown piece, then have you blow this place up like its fucking Watergate. Think of the fallout. The news coverage, the interviews, the spotlight you so clearly crave. The world loves a comeback story.

Richard pulls MEDICAL TUBING and a PLASTIC MASK (a la the dentist) from his bag. Starts hooking them up to the 10-gallon water jug. David's eyes widen.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)

But you decided to play detective instead of journalist. Well surprise surprise. You're not good at either.

Richards attaches the tubing to the plastic mask, creating a path for the water. He affixes the mask over David's mouth and nose -- airtight. David STRUGGLES but FAILS.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)

This place was a PR disaster waiting to blow. And since you were unwilling to light the match --

#### **INT. UNDER THE GRANDSTAND**

A cadre of BOMBS. Their lights GLOW red.

#### **BACK IN DAVID'S HOME**

RICHARDS

-- then perhaps I will.

(then)

Wait, why am I being oblique? I've planted bombs beneath the Grandstand. I'm gonna blow this place to shit. But you get a different end. I led you to water, but you wouldn't drink. So now, you must die. With water. It's poetic.

He FLIPS the switch, activating the water.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)

Ta ta.

He exits. David watches as the water starts to FLOW down the tube and towards his mask, ready to drown him on dry land.

**EXT. GRANDSTAND - NIGHT**

The first CAPACITY CROWD we've seen since the opening ceremonies. Tragedy is no deterrent for these die-hards. A TIMER on the projector counts down till the event begins. T-minus 60 seconds.

Richards struts in through the main gate, making his way towards the VIP section. He fingers a DETONATOR. He goes for the stairs when --

NELSON

Richards!

Nelson beckons from the side-stage. His wheelchair is stuck. Richards has no choice.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Thanks. Never expected I'd have to make this place handicap accessible. Ha. You ready for the big moment?

RICHARDS

Exceedingly.

He pushes Nelson towards the backstage area.

**INT. DAVID'S HOME - CONTINUOUS**

David tries to DRINK the onslaught of water, but there's way too much in the tank. He RATTLES at his bonds. No luck. He BUCKS helplessly -- slowly drinking --

-- causing his CONAN PEN to peek out of his pocket. An idea...

**EXT. GRANDSTAND BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS**

Nelson goes over his notes. Laura runs around again.



Richards moves past the line of eaters, hatred in his eyes. He makes brief eye contact with Chester. Gives the slightest of nods. Richards returns it.

As he rounds the corner, an evil smile curls onto his lips.

**INT. DAVID'S HOME - CONTINUOUS**

David's face is FLUSH from strain and lack of oxygen. He's bounced his pen onto his chest. He BUCKS again, trying to fire it towards his hands.

It ARCS over his head -- and lands a foot short.

**EXT. GRANDSTAND - CONTINUOUS**

Richards makes his way for the VIP section. He flips a switch on the detonator.

**INT. UNDER THE GRANDSTAND - CONTINUOUS**

The light on the bombs goes from RED to GREEN. Armed.

**INT. DAVID'S HOME - CONTINUOUS**

David on the verge of unconsciousness. He NUDGES the pen with his head, struggling to get it up to his hand. Once -- twice -- BAM! He manages to snag it.

He tries to leverage his hands out -- no good. But he's able to PULL THE TUBING, using the pen as a hook. The mask pulls off briefly and gives him a GASP of air while water spills.

**EXT. GRANDSTAND - CONTINUOUS**

Nelson ROLLS OUT onto the stage, being pushed by Kish. The crowd goes WILD. Nelson waves, a hero.

NELSON  
I'm baaaaaaaack!

The crowd gets EVEN louder.

In the VIP section, Richards rolls his eyes.

**INT. DAVID'S HOME- CONTINUOUS**

David stabs at his bonds with the pen, but its no use. He gives one final, all-powerful BUCK -- and BREAKS the posts off the bed. His momentum carries him onto the floor, taking the water torture device with it. He GASPS with air.

DAVID

Not what I was expecting but okay.  
(at the water cooler)  
Fuck YOU!

CHEERS reach David from the Grandstand. Oh yeah. He gets his bearings.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Let's fucking do this, Richards.

And he's OUT THE DOOR.

**EXT. GRANDSTAND - CONTINUOUS**

Kish pushes a VEILED OBJECT towards Nelson.

NELSON

And I'm not the only one who's  
back. Ladies and Gentlemen -- the  
Liberty Dinger!

Kish reveals the NEWLY REFORGED WINGER DINGER with a flourish. A crack runs down it like the Liberty Bell. The crowd is RAVENOUS.

CROWDMEMBER

The crack makes it cooler!

Everyone agrees.

**IN THE VIP SECTION**

Richards taps his feet testily.

RICHARDS

Oh it's a fucking bell.

**EXT. GRANDSTAND ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS**

David sprints up, but LUTHER blocks his path.

LUTHER

Afraid I can't let you in, sir.  
Nelson's orders.

DAVID  
It's Richards! He's gonna blow this  
whole place sky high!

Luther points to his nametag.

LUTHER  
Actually, name's Luther. I work  
with Kish.

David doesn't have time for this.

DAVID  
Look, something you care about!  
(sprinting past him)  
Fuck youuuuu!

Luther pulls his radio.

LUTHER  
Uh, Kish. We got a problem.

**EXT. GRANDSTAND - MOMENTS LATER**

Kish rolls out a VEILED VAT. He unveils this too.

NELSON  
And you thought we wouldn't bring  
it back, but we did it folks! This  
year's winner will get to take a  
celebratory dive in a vat of  
Edmonton Pudding!  
(crowd goes NUTS)  
Suck it, Gatorade!

**IN THE VIP SECTION:**

RICHARDS  
Seriously, fuck this place.

**BACK ON STAGE:**

NELSON  
But enough surprises. Lord knows  
we've had our share this week.  
Without further ado, I present:  
your Gurgitators!

Maxwell, Bryn, Bryn, Chester, and Marie all come out in a  
line, moving to take their seats in front of a TABLE OF HOT  
DOGS.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
 What a better way to end our eating  
 competition than with the world's  
 most competitively eaten food?!

WOOO! The crowd just eats it up. Figuratively.

**IN THE CROWD:**

We glimpse David PUSHING through the crowd. He yells towards the stage.

DAVID  
 Stop! Shut it down! Bomb!

But it's impossible to hear him over the din.

**BACKSTAGE:**

Kish puts down his walkie and looks into the crowd. He spies David, pushing, yelling. Kish POINTS at him. HARD. He mouths NO.

**IN THE CROWD**

David keeps pushing and yelling -- until he sees Kish.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
 Kish! Bomb!

Kish obviously can't hear him. David PANTOMIMES as hard as he can. Big hands, explode-y motion. BOOM!

Kish just keeps mouthing NO. STOP. NO.

**IN THE VIP SECTION:**

Richards glimpses the hubbub approaching the front of the stage.

**ON STAGE:**

Nelson readies himself to strike the Liberty Dinger.

NELSON  
 Though this week has been troubled,  
 the strife only makes us stronger.  
 Eaters! Destiny awaits. 3...

**IN THE CROWD:**

David pushes forward. Kish just doesn't get it. He heads straight for the stage.

**ON STAGE:**

NELSON (CONT'D)

2...

**IN THE VIP SECTION:**

Richards looks closer, trying to make out what's happening.

**ON STAGE:**

NELSON (CONT'D)

1...

**IN THE CROWD:**

David LEAPS onto the stage, over the Food Splash Guard. He bumbles -- but makes it. Kish is already bolting out to stop him. The crowd instantly HUSHES. Maxwell KICKS his chair back.

NELSON (CONT'D)

David? How?

MAXWELL

What the FUCK, dude? You had to ruin this, too?!

CHESTER

Kish, get him!

Kish CHARGES David as he grabs for the mic.

DAVID

Everybody out! Bomb! There's a bomb under the grandstand!

Kish TACKLES -- but David JUKES it. The crowd doesn't know how to react. No one does. But they're sure not moving.

**IN THE VIP SECTION:**

Richards sees he's still won. He lifts his finger off the detonator, enjoying the moment.

**ON STAGE:**

NELSON

David! What do you mean there's a bomb? What did you do?!

MAXWELL

If there's a bomb, then why are you here, huh?

(MORE)

MAXWELL (CONT'D)  
 (to the crowd)  
 Don't listen guys! It's a trick!

In the background, Bryan nibbles on a hot dog. Bryn slaps it away. David looks at Nelson. Then to the crowd. They'll never believe the truth. But what will they believe?

DAVID  
 AgghhhhFINE! It's me! I set up the bomb! I don't care if I die! Fuck competitive eating! Get out!!

**IN THE VIP SECTION:**

Richards smiles wickedly.

RICHARDS  
 Well he made that easy. Pa-POW!

He HITS the trigger. Nothing. He tries again. And again.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)  
 Pa-pow! Pa-pow! What the fuck?

**EXT. BENEATH THE GRANDSTAND - CONTINUOUS**

The bombs are GONE. We PAN UP through the floorboards --

**ON STAGE:**

David, haggard, stares at the unmoving crowd. He still thinks they're all gonna die.

DAVID  
 C'mon! Go! It could happen any minute!

MAXWELL  
 They don't believe you. None of us do, David. It's over. You need...help.

IAN (O.S.)  
*HE'S RIGHT!*

All eyes shoot to the ramparts above the Grandstand -- WHERE IAN EDWARDS STANDS, ALIVE AND WELL. In his hands, a BUNDLE OF EXPLOSIVES. Their lights -- RED.

IAN (CONT'D)  
 This is the handiwork of Anthony Richards and Chester Plott!  
 (MORE)

IAN (CONT'D)  
Together they poisoned the pies,  
attacked me, killed Yoki, and  
planted the bombs. But the jig is  
up.

Ian TOSSES the explosives -- they GLOOP harmlessly into the  
vat of pudding below. All eyes whip back to Ian.

KISH  
What are you saying?! We can't hear  
you!

Ian FACEPALMS. But Nelson rears back and TOSSES him a  
microphone. It somehow makes it all the way up.

IAN  
Richards and Chester were behind  
everything! Don't let them escape!

This sets the crowd ALIGHT. The pent-up chaos bursts forth.

**IN THE VIP SECTION:**

Richards snarls before BOLTING into the escaping crowd.

**ON STAGE:**

Laura runs out as David looks around.

LAURA  
Holy shit! This is crazy!

DAVID  
What happened to Chester?!

He's disappeared. Everyone searches frantically.

MARIE  
There! In the crowd!

NELSON  
We'll handle Chester. David, I'm  
sorry. I was wrong about you. In  
this particular sense. Now go get  
that traitorous sonovabitch.

DAVID  
With pleasure.

He's OFF into the crowd. Nelson clocks Chester, sprinting  
towards a back exit. Despite his heft, that dude can move.  
Nelson takes in his surroundings. Eaters. Table. Chester.

NELSON

Honey. I have a terrible, dangerous idea.

Nelson eyes the table. Then his wheelchair. Then the Food Splash Guard below. Laura's eyes LIGHT UP.

LAURA

I love you.

**MOMENTS LATER:**

Maxwell LIFTS the entire eaters table and lines it up with the Food Splash Guard in the first row of the audience. Nelson lines himself up. Marie hands Laura the Liberty Dinger.

MARIE

Do us proud little girl.

LAURA

O.M.G.

Laura gets in Nelson's lap as Bryn and Bryan get in position to push.

NELSON

Let's get that fat bastard.

Bryn and Bryan start PUSHING HIM DOWN THE RAMP.

**IN THE CROWD:**

David nears the VIP section. No Richards in sight.

NELSON (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Dieeeeeeee!

LAURA (O.S.)

Dieeeeeeee!

David turns to see NELSON AND LAURA FLYING THROUGH THE AIR -- LAUNCHED OFF THE TABLE. They're headed straight for Chester -- and CRASH into him with a THUD. Laura BRAINS him with the Liberty Dinger.

She's the first to recover.

LAURA (CONT'D)

I'm a Golden God!!

On the ground, Chester groans, trying to push the Liberty Dinger off his head. But it's stuck on like a friggin helmet.

NELSON

We are never doing that again.



But he HIGH FIVES Laura, grinning like an idiot.

**IN THE VIP SECTION:**

David looks around. No Richards -- not anywhere.

DAVID  
C'mon, c'mon...

Then Kish's words run back through his head...

KISH (FLASHBACK)  
*Richard's secret spot...the laundry  
vents...smells heavenly...*

David bolts.

**EXT. GRANDSTAND - BY THE LAUNDRY VENTS - SOON AFTER**

David rounds the corner to see Richards trying to climb the fence to freedom.

DAVID  
Bitch!

RICHARDS  
AH!

Startled, Richards falls to the ground. He sprints for the backstage door and makes it inside.

**INT. GRANDSTAND BACKSTAGE - MOMENTS LATER**

David opens the door, cautious. It's dark as hell.

DAVID  
Come out Richards. You're not going  
anywhere.

No response. Till --

RICHARDS (O.S.)  
Oh come on! How did you get out?

DAVID  
I just bucked around! Why did you  
set up such an elaborate murder  
device?

RICHARDS (O.S.)  
I have a flair for the dramatic!

David laughs to himself.

DAVID  
No shit.

David moves through the annals of the backstage area. Suddenly, he's joined by Kish's voice.

KISH (O.S.)  
Richards! You two-timing worm! Just turn yourself in and save yourself the embarrassment.

A long beat. We see Richards sneak past a food cart, pulling a BUTCHERS KNIFE as he goes.

RICHARDS (O.S.)  
I don't want to.

He disappears just as David and Kish round the corner, sighting each other. Ian's voice joins the team --

IAN (O.S.)  
Try to put me in a coma now you motherfuck. Game's up.

KISH  
(sotto, to David)  
Ian's here!

Elsewhere, Richards grabs onto scaffolding leading to the ramparts. He starts to climb. Looking out into the crowd, he can see the insane aftermath of his plan.

RICHARDS  
Shit.

As he pauses, the Detonator shifts, FALLING out of his pocket and RATTLING to the ground. Everyone on stage -- inside and outside -- turn their eyes to him.

Kish and David turn their eyes skyward. David starts climbing after him, but Kish is frozen, scared.

KISH  
What are you doing?!

DAVID  
For once? The right thing.

He continues his climb.

**ATOP THE SCAFFOLD:**

Richards pulls himself up. He looks down at David.

RICHARDS  
Stop climbing! I'll kill you!

DAVID  
(still climbing)  
Not if I kill you first!

RICHARDS  
What are you, Rambo? I have the  
high ground here. You try to get  
up, I stab you to death.

Richards reveals his knife. A WOAHH issues from the crowd.  
Richards turns around, seeing the mass of humanity looking  
on.

**ON STAGE:**

Nelson and Laura make it back. Nelson holds the clapper from  
the Liberty Dinger, mournful. The eaters welcome them back.

MAXWELL  
Good shit you two. Now we gotta  
take care of this guy.  
(re David)  
Can you believe the stones on this  
dude? He's bold for a puss.

Laura is already heading to the scaffold to try to help. She  
starts to climb.

NELSON  
Laura!  
(she turns, pleading)  
Be careful.

She nods, resolute.

**ATOP THE SCAFFOLD:**

David nears the last rung. Just far enough to avoid Richards'  
knife.

RICHARDS  
You're trapped. OW!!

SMACK! The Liberty Bell's clapper hits Richards straight in  
the face, distracting him. David is able to climb up.

**ON STAGE:**

NELSON  
Fine toss, Maxwell.

MAXWELL  
I know.

Nelson's eyes shoot to Laura, halfway up. She steps off to a platform containing the spotlights.

**ATOP THE SCAFFOLD:**

Richards brandishes his knife at David. Looks out at the crowd.

RICHARDS  
There, this is what you wanted,  
isn't it David? All eyes on you!  
Finally get to be the big hero!

DAVID  
Fuck that! I'm tired of being in  
the spotlight! Look where it gets  
you! THIS is what it's all about.

RICHARDS  
This? What this?!

DAVID  
Edmonton! The Edibles Fair! All of  
this! Look around -- these people  
care about something. They dedicate  
their lives to it. And with  
seriously NO chance of reward. Even  
the winners here. I've never heard  
of any of em!

Below, David glimpses Laura, in position. An unlit spotlight points directly at Richards.

RICHARDS  
Oh blah blah blah. What a crock of  
shit.  
(he turns to the crowd)  
You're all losers! The dregs of  
society, stuffing your faces to the  
gills while people die and the  
world burns!  
(back to David)  
You think this place *matters*? Death  
is better than Edmonton.

He LUNGES for David -- but the crowd lets out a collective BOO that distracts even Richards.

DAVID  
 Laura, now!

She ACTIVATES the spotlight and sends a beam of light straight into Richards eyes. He tries a WILD STAB but David ducks it -- and JAMS HIS CONAN PEN STRAIGHT INTO RICHARDS' TAIN'T.

The crowd HUSHES as Richards tumbles, falls, all the way from the rafters and into -- THE VAT OF CELEBRATORY PUDDING.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
 No Richards. It taint.  
 (beat)  
 Now THAT'S poetic.

**ON STAGE:**

Richards tries to pull himself out of the gloop. Ian looks at the detonator by his foot. Grabs it.

RICHARDS  
 Help --

CLICK. The bombs in the vat go BOOM, blowing Anthony Richards into chocolate covered pieces.

The crowd is SILENT. Until they CHEER LOUDER THAN EVER.

**ATOP THE SCAFFOLD:**

David raises his hand to the crowd. And smiles. A real, honest to god, smile.

**EXT. FAIRGROUND ENTRANCE - NIGHT**

ACTUAL POLICE CARS flood the entrance with flashing lights. Chester is carted off, the Liberty Dinger still stuck over his head.

CHESTER  
 (super muffled)  
 It was a mistake! He betrayed me!

David and co (Ian, Nelson, Laura, Kish) LAUGH as Chester is stuffed into the backseat of the police car. They have to fumble with his now-oversized head.

DAVID  
 Surprise! The murderer was a bad guy. Have fun in fat prison.

LAURA

That was the coolest shit of my life. Sorry, stuff. Nope. I mean shit.

Nelson tousles her hair.

NELSON

This time, I'll allow it. David...I owe you an apology. I was a bit...harsh in the past few days. You really are much better than your first impression.

DAVID

Awh, Nelson. That was almost nice. I mean look. I get it. I was a twat. But I WAS also right. So at least I was an accurate twat.

KISH

Seriously, guys, what's a twat?

LAURA

I'll tell you when you're older.

A POLICE OFFICER comes up, notepad in hand.

POLICE OFFICER

I gotta say folks...this is as big a shit show as I've ever seen. You got a dead guy in a vat of puddin', a man with a bell stuck to his head, an assault, two murders, and a mass poisoning. How come you didn't call us sooner?

Ian and David eye Nelson expectantly.

NELSON

The...show must go on?

POLICE OFFICER

What the fuck does that mean?

Ian pulls the cop aside.

IAN

Imma tell you everything. Also do you know a good lawyer? I'm pretty sure I got a helluva suit on my hands.

They walk off, plotting.

NELSON

So. Is all this going into your article?

DAVID

Article? I'm thinking...novel. I mean, I've gotta write it first. And I lost my lucky pen...but I think I'll be able to make do. And Nelson?

NELSON

Oh god, what?

DAVID

Richards promised me \$15,000 if I stayed for the entire fair. I need that money. After the scandal and everything I...

(off Nelson's horror)

...am totally kidding! In fact. The profits from my next book will go directly to the pot for next year's winner. Edmonton ain't perfect, but it's worth preserving.

Nelson covers his mouth with GLEE. Kish BEAMS too.

NELSON

SO much better than your first impression.

KISH

Well David, I hope you mean it. Because next year...I'm gonna win.

David and Nelson eye each other -- sure you are, Kish -- but the fire in his eyes don't lie. David's phone RINGS -- it's Eddie. He KILLS the call.

And we pull up to see the aftermath in full, chaotic tableau...

#### **EXT. GRANDSTAND - DAY**

CHYRON: One Year Later

...and come back down to see next year's Grand Finals in full swing.

Nelson, fully erect (on two feet), REVEALS the fair's newest totem:

NELSON  
Ladies and Gentlemen -- THE BELL  
PEPPER!

The crowd goes NUTS.

**INT. GRANDSTAND BACKSTAGE -- CONTINUOUS**

CLOSE on Laura. She's psyching someone up.

LAURA  
You got this! You can do this! You  
were born for this! You ready?

REVEAL: She's pumping up ALLEN KISH, Competitive Eater.

KISH  
Born ready! And a few months early.  
But early AND ready!

LAURA  
Wow, okay. You can do this! Now say  
'Animal'

KISH  
Aminal.

LAURA  
Animal!

KISH  
Aminal!

Laura pats his head, smiling.

LAURA  
That one may be stuck in ya.

**EXT. GRANDSTAND - CONTINUOUS**

NELSON  
And it is my pleasure to welcome to  
the stage, this year's guest of  
honor, David Thompson! Whose newest  
book, The Unfair Fair Affair,  
brought up this year's Grand Prize  
winnings by...\$500!

Despite the paltry figure, David comes out on stage, looking  
ALIVE AS EVER. A clean-shaven, functioning adult. He takes  
the mic.



DAVID  
 I'll make this quick. I just wanted  
 to thank you all for welcoming me  
 into this place like a second home.  
 Once I saved all your lives.  
 (HAHAs from the crowd)  
 If anyone wants to find me, I'll be  
 on Kish's podcast after the show.  
 Eaters...may the best competitor  
 win. And what do we say?

David sees Laura in the front row, BEAMING.

LAURA/CROWD  
 Fuck Conan!

DAVID  
 Yeahhh! Fuck Conan! Now let's get  
 this thing startedddd!!!

**IN THE AUDIENCE:**

Andy Richter, wearing an Allen Kish shirt, stops eating ice-cream mid-bite. He pulls out his phone.

ANDY RICHTER  
 Oh Coco's gonna hear about this.

**ON STAGE:**

The eaters are all in position -- Ian, Kish, Marie, and a few new faces as well.

DAVID  
 3...2...1...eat for your lives!

They all DIG IN.

CROWD (PRE-LAP)  
 Kish Kish Kish Kish!

**EXT. FAIR FOOD COURT - DAY**

The crowd is Ian, David, Laura, and Kish. On his chest, a HUGE MEDAL -- Last Place.

DAVID  
 You did it Kish!

LAURA  
 You...competed in the Edmonton  
 Edibles Fair Grand Finals! How do  
 you feel?

KISH  
Disney World! Oh wait no. I mean. I  
feel great. But I'm mostly just  
happy to be surrounded by people I  
can call my friends.

IAN  
I'm just here for the cake. We  
still barely know each other.

DAVID  
Wanna have the first bite? Its your  
favorite. Ipecac surprise.

David offers him a slice.

IAN  
HAHAHA not funny.

KISH  
Hey, where's Nelson? He said he'd  
be here for the celebration.

LAURA  
He said he had something urgent to  
tend to? I don't know I'm still  
working on actually listening.

Nelson HUSTLES over to the group, out of breath. Clutching  
something in his hand.

DAVID  
You okay dude?

NELSON  
You still looking for your \$15,000?

He holds his hand out, offering the document in his hand.  
David snatches it and lays it on the table.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
As you all know, we had the Winger  
Dinger reforged after it broke on  
Chester's head.

DAVID  
Nelson...this is...

NELSON  
And inside it, we found --

DAVID  
A treasure map!

NELSON  
Edmonton has a storied history in  
the world of competitive eating.  
Turns out there may be more to that  
story than we know.

Nelson smiles big. Everyone gathers around to take a look.  
Aged markings are visible on the faded scroll. Symbols  
throughout. No doubt -- this is a map.

IAN/LAURA/KISH  
Damn/Titties/We sure it's a map?

DAVID  
(pointing)  
That's definitely a swastika.

LAURA  
Nazi zombie gold!

IAN  
Okay pump the brakes, kid.

DAVID  
After last year, I'm about ready to  
believe anything.

KISH  
Is this really happening?!

NELSON  
That depends. Is anyone in the mood  
for an adventure?

A GRIN starts to break across David's face as we pull up into  
the blue Edmonton sky --

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END