



"Pilot"

Episode #100

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Studio Draft (White) - 3/5/10

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COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

1 INT. BEN'S APARTMENT (SONY LOT) - MORNING

1

We open on an upscale apartment overlooking San Diego. Pan to reveal BEN and ALICE (30, very cute, tomboyish) asleep in bed, her arm across him in a loving embrace. Ben opens his eyes. He notices her arm and then carefully tries to extricate himself. She wakes up to find him in an awkward position half-way out the bed.

ALICE

What are you doing?

BEN

Nothing. It's just your arm was kind of around me.

ALICE

Oh, I see. Your intimacy issues wake up before you do.

Alice removes her arm entirely from Ben's body.

ALICE (CONT'D)

I was sleeping. I did it in my sleep. You know what you do in your sleep? You sit up and whisper, "Mama, come home." Do you have any idea how unsettling that is?

BEN

Hey, you know what? You don't usually spend the night. I mean, good morning, but what is happening to our dynamic?

ALICE

Nothing's happening to our dynamic. Good morning. I wasn't feeling great and I fell asleep.

BEN

Okay. Good. Because I think, you know, this is perfect the way it is.

ALICE

Yes, as long as I continue to ignore all my female instincts and most of what you say, I think it's working out fine.

1 CONTINUED:

1

BEN

Great.

(then)

Hey, do you think I've been hitting the gym too much? I don't want people to think I'm a superhero.

ALICE

I don't think anyone thinks that.

BEN

Okay.

Ben crosses to the bathroom. Alice begins to get dressed. She takes a look around the apartment.

ALICE

Whoa. I've never seen this place in daylight, it's incredibly sparse and depressing.

Ben emerges from the bathroom with a toothbrush.

BEN

Yeah, I'm not really into objects. I'm almost a Buddhist in that way.

Ben exits back into the bathroom.

ALICE

Almost.

Just then, the PHONE RINGS. The machine picks up.

BEN'S DAD

(on machine)

Hello, Benny Boy. It's your father. Happy fortieth birthday!

Ben calmly comes out of the bathroom.

BEN'S DAD (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I'm not going to be able to make dinner tonight. I'm in Oregon with a young lady, and apparently I can't stop making love to her.

BEN

(casual to Alice)

Hi. How are you?

ALICE

Great. Just enjoying the dynamic.

1 CONTINUED:

1

BEN'S DAD

(on machine)

She's not attractive, but she's got the
energy of a sea lion. A sea lion, Ben.

(then)

Oh, God, got to go!

BEN

Alright.

ALICE

It's your fortieth birthday?

BEN

Yes it is. We're really learning a lot
about each other here this morning!

ALICE

We should go to dinner.

BEN

We don't go to dinner.

ALICE

Yeah, I'm not thrilled about it either.
But it's your fortieth birthday and don't
you think it's sad and pathetic and awful
and terrifying and awful and tragic and
awful that you're going to be alone?

BEN

I'm alright with it.

ALICE

Alright, Grandpa, whatever blows your hair
back.

They high-five as Alice exits. Ben looks around at the
large, empty apartment. Maybe Alice is right. Then:

BEN

(convincing himself)

I'm a Buddhist. I'm a Buddhist.

FADE OUT.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

2 EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT - SUNSHINE CENTER - MORNING 2

Ben's car drives past the Sunshine Center, the landmark arena whose luster has slightly faded.

3 INT. SUNSHINE CENTER - MOMENTS LATER 3

Ben drives down a large tunnel where we see the trucks and equipment for a circus piled up: ELEPHANTS are being unloaded; LIONS are in their cages; MIDGETS and STRANGE CIRCUS PEOPLE set up their staging areas. Ben is not phased by all this activity. It's a daily occurrence here. With his window down, Ben passes a CUSTODIAN.

CUSTODIAN

(to Ben)

Happy Birthday.

Ben turns his head, surprised this guy knows it's his birthday.

BEN

(puzzled)

Uh, thanks-- man.

Ben continues on. He passes a security guard.

SECURITY GUARD

Happy Birthday.

Ben is now even more puzzled, wondering what is going on.

BEN

Thanks...

Ben parks his car at the end of the tunnel in the space reserved for the "Manager of Operations."

4 INT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS 4

Ben enters the bright, cavernous arena. He looks up to see the scoreboard which reads: "Happy Birthday Ben." He lowers his gaze to see the hockey ice with the boards removed and a group of a DOZEN WORKERS standing on it. Ben picks up his pace and approaches the workers.

WORKER #1

One... two... three...

4 CONTINUED:

4

ALL THE WORKERS
(singing)
Happy Birth--

BEN
Don't do that. What's happening here?

WORKER #1
The ice won't melt. The hot water pump
is broken.

BEN
Well, okay, where's Miguel?

WORKER #1
I'm Miguel.

BEN
No, the ice-melting Miguel.

WORKER #2
You mean Luis. He quit because you kept
calling him Miguel.

BEN
Hey, here's a question: Who's in charge
of melting the ice now?

The workers stare at him.

BEN (CONT'D)
(as if to children)
You guys understand that hockey was last
night. The circus is tonight. It's
fairly important that the floor matches
the event. By way of example, if there
is ice on the floor tonight, most of the
fire eaters will slip and fall and impale
themselves, with their sticks that are on
fire, in front of all the nice children.

WORKER #3
It is a bit of a pickle.

BEN
Yeah, I'd say it's a bit of a pickle.
(then)
Okay, this Miguel needs to figure out a
way to melt the ice right now.

WORKER #4
That's Ted.

4 CONTINUED:

4

BEN

I've got a great idea, from now on all of
you are named Steve.

Just then, Ben gets a text from Alice which reads, "We need
to talk." He's instantly troubled.

BEN (CONT'D)

Steves, Steves. What does it mean when a
girl says she needs to talk? That's
never good, right?

Long pause. They stare at him blankly. A worker raises his
hand.

BEN (CONT'D)

Yes?

WORKER #5

Maybe she wants to make arrangements to
send you an elaborate fruit and cheese
basket?

BEN

Yep. Maybe. I'll see you guys.

Ben crosses the ice staring at the text.

5 INT. CRYSTAL COHEN'S OFFICE (SONY LOT)- LATER

5

Ben is still staring at his phone as he tries to sneak by the
office door.

CRYSTAL (O.S.)

Benjamin, get in here!

Ben reluctantly enters the ornate office adorned with
trophies and pictures depicting a lifetime of rubbing elbows
with the rich and famous.

BEN

Crystal, before your head explodes, I'm
on the ice thing.

Ben looks around and sees Crystal isn't there. Then CRYSTAL
(50, attractive, powerful and highly erratic) emerges from
behind her desk, crawling on the floor.

CRYSTAL

Have you seen a small white pill with
some Spanish written on it?

5 CONTINUED:

5

BEN

So I may have misgauged your level of concern.

CRYSTAL

Maybe I've taken the pill already.

Crystal stands up and answers a phone that's not ringing.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

Hello?

BEN

Yeah. I think you took the pill already.

She hangs up.

CRYSTAL

I just hate it when the circus is here. Clowns terrify me. Are they happy? Are they sad? Why are their pockets so big?
(then)

What are we talking about?

BEN

I believe you are talking about clowns.

CRYSTAL

Oh, right. I do not like them, Benjamin.

ALONZO (40, African-American, athletic, handsome, unbelievably happy) enters.

ALONZO

Good morning, beautiful people.

BEN

Good morning, Alonzo. You're in an impossibly wonderful mood again today.

ALONZO

Every day is a beautiful day.

BEN

Every day? Really? What about the day you missed that buzzer shot in the finals and shortly after that our franchise moved all the way to Cincinnati?

ALONZO

You know, I used to spend hours visualizing that shot going in.

(MORE)

5 CONTINUED:

5

ALONZO (CONT'D)

But then I realized if I had made that shot I would still be playing basketball instead of doing what I love most: helping my fellow man.

BEN

But, we don't have professional basketball here anymore!

Just then we REVEAL Crystal on an elliptical machine.

BEN (CONT'D)

(to Crystal)

What are you doing?

CRYSTAL

I've got to get this pill out of my system.

(then, to Alonzo)

What's happening with my charity thing today?

BEN

We're doing a charity thing today? What did you do now? Do I want to know this? What did you do now?

CRYSTAL

I invested rather heavily in an illegal Himalayan dog track. And one of the dogs allegedly bit a Himalayan. Anyway, I've got a Himalayan nightmare on my hands.

Crystal stops exercising.

ALONZO

To counter the negative press and improve her standing in the community, both here and in the Himalayas, Crystal Cohen has generously offered to donate \$50,000 to an inner-city youth group.

BEN

Look, I'm all for helping youth... people. But couldn't we use that money to start making this place nice again?

CRYSTAL

Well, you are the owner, so we should do what you say. Oh, wait a minute, I'm the owner. See that picture of me with Bill Clinton? See how charmed he is by me?

(MORE)

5 CONTINUED:

5

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

See this oil painting of me. They don't do oil paintings of people who don't own things. Now, Alonzo, make sure you have a good mix of kids for the photo op. You know, white, black... the Himalayas are in Asia, right? I'd like an Asian child there, please. I'm picturing a rainbow of children with me at the center. Oh, and I'm going to need some kind of a trophy. Have the Asian child hand me some kind of a trophy.

BEN

Well, as long as we're doing all this for the right reasons.

Ben and Alonzo turn to go.

CRYSTAL

Oh, Ben. I almost forgot. My son is in your office.

BEN

Your son? You have a son?

CRYSTAL

We're not close. You need to find him a job. And melt the ice. Happy Birthday.

6 INT. FRONT OFFICE BULLPEN (SONY LOT)- MOMENTS LATER

6

Ben and Alonzo walk through the bullpen.

ALONZO

So, how's your new assistant working out?

BEN

Oh, Heather? Thank you for her. She's sweet... driven... Remind me again. What did she do? She lit a man on fire?

ALONZO

There was an investigation, the evidence was inconclusive, and yes.

BEN

But the guy's okay, right?

ALONZO

Well, she did light him on fire, so he's not great.

6 CONTINUED:

6

BEN

Right.

ALONZO

So, any birthday plans?

BEN

I'm going to go home, rent a movie and then watch it after I've rented it.

ALONZO

That's what you're doing for your birthday?

BEN

Yeah. I don't need a lot of people around. I'm almost a Buddhist in that way.

ALONZO

Do you know a lot about Buddhism?

BEN

I don't know a lot about the religion per se, but I do know they are comfortable being alone.

ALONZO

Buddhism actually has nothing to do with being alone.

BEN

What are you, like, the resident Buddhist expert?

ALONZO

I'm a Buddhist.

BEN

Oh, so you actually are the resident Buddhist expert.

ALONZO

Happy Birthday, Ben.

BEN

Hey, thanks.

Alonzo turns and walks away. Ben watches him.

BEN (CONT'D)

Man, I hate that guy.

6 CONTINUED:

6

Ben continues to his office where his assistant HEATHER (21, pretty, sweet, Ben is terrified of her) sits at her desk.

BEN (CONT'D)
(extremely cautious)
Good morning, Heather.

HEATHER
Good morning.

BEN
Hey, could you do me a favor and find out who the hell put "Happy Birthday Ben" up on the scoreboard?

HEATHER
I did.

BEN
(brightly)
Well, I love it. I'll tell you why I love it. Because it creates a sense of family. A family would never hurt one another.

Ben turns to leave.

HEATHER
Oh, hey, Ben!

BEN
(terrified)
What?! Jeez! What?

HEATHER
There's a guy in your office, and he's gorgeous.

BEN
Okay, great. Just stay there and... just stay there.

7 INT. BEN'S OFFICE (SONY LOT)- CONTINUOUS

7

Ben enters to find ROMAN (30, sweet-faced, chubby, clueless) sitting behind Ben's desk. Ben sees he's not gorgeous.

BEN
(puzzled)
Hi. Was somebody else in here with you?

ROMAN

No.

Ben studies Roman's face for a long time. He looks back at Heather's desk, then looks again at Roman. Pauses and then:

BEN

Okay. My name's Ben.

ROMAN

I'm Roman.

BEN

So, you're Crystal's son. That must be terrible for you.

ROMAN

Yeah, it has not been fantastic.

BEN

Okay, so we have to find you a job. Tell me a little about yourself. What are your interests? What are your skills?

ROMAN

Well, I like boats and how they float on the ocean. And the mafia. I like mafia movies. And as for skills...

Roman thinks about it for an interminable beat, then:

BEN

Okay, well, we're all fortunate to work in a first class entertainment facility. We've got concerts, the rodeo, political conventions, sports. Does any of that interest you at all?

ROMAN

I don't think so.

Just then Alice enters.

ALICE

Hi.

BEN

Hi. What are you doing here?

ALICE

I work here. I'm the marketing director of the Sunshine Center.

7 CONTINUED:

7

BEN

No-- yes-- I know that. Very funny. I got your text, and I was about to text you back, but I'm in the middle of a very important meeting here.

ROMAN

You want me to leave too?

BEN

No, you're the important meeting.

ROMAN

Oh, cool.

ALICE

Okay, well, we really need to talk.

BEN

Yes, and I'm looking forward to having that talk. I mean, we are talking right now. Technically, this could be the talk. Is this the talk?

Alice exits.

BEN (CONT'D)

And you're not in the room anymore. She's not in the room anymore.

ROMAN

Is this going to be my office?

8 INT. FRONT OFFICE BULLPEN (SONY LOT) - MOMENTS LATER

8

Ben emerges from his office with Roman in tow. Heather pops up out of her chair.

HEATHER

(to Roman flirtatiously)
Hi.

ROMAN

Hi.

Ben pulls Roman away.

BEN

You're going to want to keep moving. Trust me.

(whispers)

(MORE)

8 CONTINUED:

8

BEN (CONT'D)
She lights people on fire. She lights
people on fire.

9 INT. 3RD FLOOR REFRESHMENT AREA - MOMENTS LATER

9

Ben and Roman continue to walk.

ROMAN
So what's the deal with that marketing
girl? Seemed to be some tension in the
air.

BEN
Well, I certainly don't want to talk
about any of that with you.

ROMAN
It might make you feel better. I have a
minor in psychology from Evanston.

BEN
You do?

ROMAN
No.

BEN
You know what? I do need to talk to
someone about this. Wait here. Just
think about Joe Pesci on a boat or
something.

ROMAN
Oh my God, that's great!

10 INT. TEAM TRAINING ROOM (SONY LOT) - LATER

10

Ben sits on a training table talking to the TEAM TRAINER.

BEN
She stayed overnight, her arm was around
me, she asked me to dinner. She wants to
get serious, right?

TRAINER
Thirty minutes hot. Thirty minutes cold.

BEN
What?

11 INT. ORGANIST BOX - A WHILE LATER

11

Ben is talking to the impossibly old ORGANIST.

BEN

And "serious" means the time you used to spend sleeping with many woman, is now spent with just one woman, pretending to care about her cat and her thoughts on the rain.

The organist begins to play.

BEN (CONT'D)

So... you pretty much just play the organ.

12 INT. 3RD FLOOR REFRESHMENT AREA - A WHILE LATER

12

Ben is talking to someone off camera.

BEN

I don't want to be with just one woman. I have a design for living that completely works for me.

REVEAL that Ben is talking to a MASCOT in full puma costume.

MASCOT

I can't hear ya, dude. I'm wearing a puma head.

BEN

You know, turning to you for advice might seem a tad desperate.

MASCOT

What?

BEN

(louder)

To the casual observer, turning to a guy dressed as a puma may suggest I'm a little lost at sea.

MASCOT

What?

Ben crosses to Roman who is standing exactly where Ben left him. They begin to walk.

12 CONTINUED:

12

BEN

Well, that settles it. She's a great girl. But she wants to step it up, and I'm not that kind of fella.

ROMAN

(re: mascot)

How often do you talk to that monster?

Ben and Roman arrive at a refreshment stand where a UNIFORMED WOMAN is behind the counter.

BEN

So this is as far away from my office as I could think of. I mean, this is a good job opportunity for you. I'll see ya.

13 INT. ARENA CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

13

Ben walks through a corridor when one of the workers hurriedly approaches.

BEN

Yes, Steve?

WORKER #1

There's an elephant loose in the building.

BEN

It's okay, I just got him a job at the refreshment stand.

Just then we hear the FAINT ROAR OF AN ELEPHANT. Off of Ben's concerned look--

SMASH CUT:

14 INT. ARENA FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

14

Ben is back on the ice talking to the Steves.

BEN

Okay, who's in charge of finding lost circus animals?

WORKER #1

That was Luis too.

14 CONTINUED:

14

BEN

Wow, Luis was a big loss, wasn't he?
Okay, we're going to split you guys into
two groups. Steve Group One melt the
ice. Steve Group Two find the elephant.

A worker raises his hand.

BEN (CONT'D)

Yes, Steve.

WORKER #2

I would really like to be a part of Steve
Group One.

15 INT. ARENA CORRIDOR (SONY LOT) - LATER

15

Ben walks cautiously, holding a bag of peanuts, searching for
the elephant. Just then, Crystal pulls up in a GOLF CART.

BEN

Hi, you may want to go back to your
office. There's an elephant loose in the
building.

CRYSTAL

I need you to go over my speech for the
charity event.

BEN

Did you hear what I just said?

CRYSTAL

I did not.

BEN

Okay, let me see the speech.

Ben takes the paper and joins her in the golf cart.

BEN (CONT'D)

Alright, I don't think you should open
with, "Yay, black kids."

CRYSTAL

Okay, well, when should I say it?

BEN

I don't think you should say it all.

CRYSTAL

Why, is it racist?

15 CONTINUED:

15

BEN

It's certainly racial. Just take it out.
And I would also cut the song.

Ben hands the speech back to Crystal.

CRYSTAL

See, this is good. This is the process.

BEN

Hey, let me ask you something: do you
think it's sad and awful and tragic and
awful that I'm going to be alone on my
birthday?

CRYSTAL

Not at all. That's your thing. You're
an independent guy. You're comfortable
in your own skin. You're an island.
What better day to celebrate all of that
than on your birthday?

BEN

Yeah, I guess so. But on your birthday,
you throw like huge parties for yourself.

CRYSTAL

Sure. But I need attachments. I need
reminders that I'm not just floating in
this world all by myself. You don't need
that. You're young. How old are you?
Thirty-four? Thirty-five?

BEN

I'm forty.

CRYSTAL

Ooh.

They sit there for a long, awkward moment, then:

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

I'm not sure what to do now.

BEN

I'll get out and you can just drive away.

CRYSTAL

Thanks.

Ben climbs out. Crystal peels away.

16 INT. ALICE'S OFFICE (SONY LOT) - A WHILE LATER

16

Ben hesitantly knocks on the door and enters.

BEN

Hi.

ALICE

Hey.

BEN

Listen, I've been doing a lot of thinking
and maybe we should put the brakes on
here before this thing becomes the very
thing we said we never wanted it to be.

ALICE

I'm pregnant.

BEN

Thank God. Let's get married.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

17 INT. ALICE'S OFFICE (SONY LOT) - CONTINUOUS

17

Ben and Alice are exactly where we left them.

ALICE
What did you just say?

Ben looks just as surprised as Alice. Ben regroups.

BEN
I said thank God. And then I said let's
get married.

Alice begins to laugh. Alice continues to laugh.

BEN (CONT'D)
What are you doing? Why are you making
those sounds?

ALICE
You're so dumb and cute and totally
unprepared for anything remotely like this.
(delicately)
The baby isn't yours.

BEN
(small)
Oh.

ALICE
We were sleeping with other people,
remember? That was one of the
cornerstones of the dynamic.

BEN
(small)
Yeah.

ALICE
I spent my morning at the doctor's
revealing some intimate details about my
lifestyle, and doing some pretty fun
math, and the long and the short of it
is, the baby's Alonzo's.

BEN
You were sleeping with Alonzo? He's my
best friend.

ALICE
You hate Alonzo.

BEN
I do hate Alonzo.
(regroups)
Okay, it's alright. Let's get married,
and we'll raise the child ourselves.
Alonzo will understand. He's the nicest
guy in the world.

ALICE
Would you stop proposing to me? You
don't even know me.

BEN
I know you.

ALICE
What's my middle name?

BEN
Well, I know there's a "J" in it. It's
Jennifer... It's Jacqueline... It's
Jennifer Jacqueline Smith.

ALICE
You think my middle name is Jennifer
Jacqeline Smith?

BEN
(a beat)
I do, yes.

ALICE
It's Ann.

BEN
You're going to settle down with the most
boring man in the world because I don't
know your middle name?

ALICE
Maybe... I don't know... This is all
happening really fast. I haven't told
him yet.

BEN
You haven't told him yet? Why are you
telling me?

17 CONTINUED:

17

ALICE

It's a lot easier to tell you. I don't want to be with you.

BEN

(hurt)

Right... that is easier.

ALICE

Ben, this isn't about you. If you haven't noticed I have a lot going on. This morning I brushed my teeth with my finger in my car -- again! And now I'm going to be a mom.

BEN

I'll get you a toothbrush. What's the matter with you right now?

ALICE

Ben, Alonzo is the father of this child. Not to mention he's a fully formed human being who cares about other people. He's happy, and I think if I could just summon up the courage to tell him, I might have a chance at being happy too.

BEN

I'm... happy.

ALICE

Honey, I'm not the answer for you. You're sweet and you're really fun to be around. But no one is the answer for you, because you only think about yourself.

Suddenly, we hear a MAN'S SCREAM somewhere in the building.

ALICE (CONT'D)

What was that?

BEN

I think it was the inside of my head.

18 INT. TRAINER'S ROOM (SONY LOT) - MOMENTS LATER

18

Ben enters the room to find Roman sitting on the table having his hand bandaged by the trainer.

ROMAN

I can't be a fry cook.

19 INT. ARENA/EQUIPMENT ROOM (SONY LOT) - MOMENTS LATER

19

Ben looks around a corner for the elephant, sees the coast is clear and waves to Roman to follow him. Roman struggles to keep up.

ROMAN

Can you slow down?

BEN

Things move fast around here. The ice won't melt, we could be trampled by a lost circus elephant at any moment and your estranged, borderline-racist mother is speaking to a group of ethnic children in ninety minutes. So roll or something. Figure it out. I don't have all the answers.

ROMAN

You're meaner than you were before. You ended it with her, didn't you?

BEN

I'm not talking to you about this.

They walk for a few moments, then:

BEN (CONT'D)

Do you think I only care about myself?

ROMAN

You do come across a tad self-obsessed.

BEN

Yeah, I'm not talking to you about this.

Ben and Roman enter the equipment room to find the ancient equipment manager, FRANK.

BEN (CONT'D)

Roman, this is Frank. Frank has only one eye, and he tends to get a little handsy.

Ben turns and exits as Frank looks Roman up and down with his good eye.

20 INT. TRAINING ROOM (SONY LOT) - A WHILE LATER

20

Ben sits on a training table talking to the team trainer.

20 CONTINUED:

20

BEN

Alice just told me that I'm so self-
involved that I can't have a meaningful
relationship. Do you think that's true?

TRAINER

Yes.

21 INT. ORGANIST BOX - A WHILE LATER

21

Ben is talking to the organist.

BEN

Am I a selfish person?

ORGANIST

Yes.

22 INT. ARENA (SONY LOT) - A WHILE LATER

22

Ben is with the mascot who holds the puma head under one arm.

MASCOT

Yes.

BEN

I didn't even ask a question yet.

MASCOT

Yeah, but it's going around you're asking
people that. Would you excuse me for a
moment?

The mascot puts his head back on, leaps onto a MINI-
TRAMPOLINE and jumps high out of frame.

23 INT. BOILER ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

23

Ben is walking dejectedly past a security station where the
security guard is watching an episode of National Geographic.
ON THE MONITOR we see a wild elephant destroying everything
in it's path. Ben watches for a moment, then:

BEN

(gently to guard)
Could you turn that off, please?

Ben turns to leave, then:

BEN (CONT'D)

And put your pants back on.

23 CONTINUED:

23

Ben walks away as Steve Group Two comes running past the other way. After a moment, Steve Group One runs past him frantically in the other direction.

24 INT. ARENA SEATS - MOMENTS LATER

24

Ben sits alone, high up in the arena. Roman approaches and sits down next to him, his second hand now bandaged as well.

ROMAN

I can't work in the equipment room.

BEN

I can't have a relationship of substance with another human being.

ROMAN

Okay, you win.

BEN

Alice is going to have Alonzo's baby and move in with him and live happily ever after.

ROMAN

Who's Alonzo?

BEN

Yeah, I know, right?

(then)

Oh, you mean you don't actually know who Alonzo is.

ROMAN

Yeah.

BEN

Alonzo is a fully-formed human being who cares about other people.

ROMAN

Sorry.

BEN

You know what the worst part about this whole thing is? She's making the right decision. She's completely right about me. I don't care about anyone other than myself. Tell me something about you.

ROMAN

Well, I'm really nervous because I haven't seen my mom in a long time, and I'm hoping--

BEN

Yeah, see, I don't care. I find it virtually impossible to care about any of that. I'm in trouble, man! All of a sudden I want to make a connection and I don't have the first clue how to do it.

(then)

I don't want to be alone.

ROMAN

Well, you're not alone right now.

BEN

(ironically sweet)

No. I've got you.

ROMAN

(a beat)

Hey, you know the song "Rainbow Connection"?

BEN

Kermit the Frog? Right?

ROMAN

Yeah.

A long beat.

BEN

Well, what about it?

ROMAN

Just a really good song.

BEN

And now I want to be alone again.

Just then, down on to the floor, Steve Group One drags SMALL BOXES ATTACHED WITH LONG WIRES onto the ice.

BEN (CONT'D)

(yelling to workers)

Is that dynamite?

The workers just stop and stare at him.

24 CONTINUED:

24

BEN (CONT'D)
(sternly)
No!
(a beat)
No!

The men carry off the boxes. Ben turns to exit, then:

BEN (CONT'D)
You coming or what?

Roman jumps up, excited by the gesture. They walk off.

25 INT. ARENA TUNNEL - LATER

25

Ben and Roman are walking in a tunnel where the circus acts have set up their staging areas. Ben sees Alonzo with a group of inner-city kids meeting some clowns in full make-up. Ben notices Alonzo tying one of the kid's shoes. After a moment, Ben turns and heads in the other direction. Just then Ben sees a FIRE AXE mounted on the wall with the sign reading, "In Case of Emergency." He gets an idea. He approaches a COUPLE OF CLOWNS.

BEN
Hey, do any of you guys know how to use an axe?

CLOWNS
Sure. / Yeah. / We're clowns.

They turn to follow Ben.

26 INT. ARENA ICE - A WHILE LATER

26

Scores of people including the Steves, circus workers and clowns chip away at the ice with axes, shovels and picks. Others begin to remove it in wheelbarrows. In the deep background we see the mascot jump from some high scaffolding, onto the trampoline, and hurl himself into the empty seats.

27 INT. FUNCTION ROOM (SONY LOT) - A WHILE LATER

27

The charity event is about to start. The small audience includes REPORTERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, SOCIAL DIGNITARIES and the CHILDREN from the youth group. Crystal stands at the side. Just outside the door, Ben and Roman are about to enter, when Roman stops.

ROMAN
My mom's in there. How do I look?

27 CONTINUED:

27

Ben takes in Roman: sweaty, disheveled, bandaged hands.

BEN

Good.

They enter. Roman takes a seat as Ben heads over to Crystal.
Alonzo approaches the podium.

ALONZO

For almost three decades, the Cohen family has been synonymous with civic leadership and charitable giving in San Diego...

Ben enters and joins Crystal.

BEN

Okay, you ready?

CRYSTAL

Where's the Asian kid? I specifically requested an Asian kid.

BEN

There's an Asian kid right there.

Crystal spots the Asian kid.

CRYSTAL

I'm ready.

ALONZO

...and continuing in that commitment and spirit of generosity, I now introduce to you the owner of the Sunshine Center, Ms. Crystal Cohen.

The crowd APPLAUDS. Roman gingerly claps with his bandaged hands. Crystal heads to the podium.

BEN

Don't sing the song! Don't sing the song!

The applause subsides, then Crystal begins to speak in a calm, lucid and winning manner.

CRYSTAL

(into microphone)

People often ask me why I love children so much. Well, maybe it's because I never had one of my own.

27 CONTINUED:

27

Roman cocks his head confused. Ben sees this and gives him a sympathetic smile and thumbs-up. Roman lifts his hands to return the gesture, but his thumbs are completely covered by the bandages. He then turns and notices Heather, all dolled-up sitting next to him, and staring at him intensely. Roman shows an equal mixture of titillation and horror. Just then Ben sees Alice at the back of the room. She is distracted, deep in thought.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

Or maybe it's because helping these beautiful kids goes hand in hand with something I've believed for a long time: The only life worth living is a life lived for others. There's need all around us. Sometimes we just have to stop thinking about ourselves and with a new perspective, see the need that is right in front of us.

The words resonate with Ben as he realizes that what's in front of him is Alice. He watches her as she snaps out of her pensive stare, turns and exits.

28 INT. ARENA LOBBY (SONY LOT) - A WHILE LATER

28

Ben stands with Crystal who is being positioned in front of the photographers. She is holding the TROPHY, standing amongst the children who hold a LARGE \$50,000 CHECK.

BEN

Well, that was unbelievably moving. Sometimes it's a real pleasure to work for you.

CRYSTAL

(lucid and calm)
I'm crazy high right now.

The group is positioned for the photo. Ben steps away.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Alright, on three, everyone say, "Thank you, Crystal Cohen." One, two--

Just then, through some service doors, FOUR CLOWNS in make-up enter, EACH CARRYING AN AXE.

CRYSTAL

Oh, my good God! Clowns with axes!
Clowns with axes!

28 CONTINUED:

28

Crystal panics. She drops the trophy, grabs the giant check from the children, and hurls it at the clowns. Missing, she grabs a couple kids and throws them to the floor in an effort to block the clowns' path. She screams and runs in the other direction as photographers fire off pictures.

KIDS

Thank you, Crystal Cohen.

29 INT. SMALL ARENA FLOOR OFFICE - A WHILE LATER

29

Ben knocks and enters a small office off the arena floor where he finds Alice.

BEN

Hi. Couldn't help but notice you took off a little early. You okay?

ALICE

Yeah.

BEN

(somewhat relieved)
Okay. Good. I'll see you tomorrow.

Ben exits. A moment later he comes back.

BEN (CONT'D)

You know, a very smart woman pointed out to me earlier, that I may not always be the best at noticing or caring what's going on with other people. So, I'm just going to ask you again. Are you okay?

ALICE

Yeah.

Ben continues to look at her, not letting her off the hook.

ALICE (CONT'D)

I'm a little scared.

BEN

Well, yeah, you're probably wondering if you're picking the right guy.

ALICE

Oh, I'm a hundred percent sure I'm picking the right guy.

BEN

Oh, right, well, what a nice moment.

29 CONTINUED:

29

ALICE

What if he doesn't want me?

BEN

Are you kidding? Of course he's going to want you. You're beautiful, you're smart, you're... everything. You're everything.

Alice can't help but be touched by this.

ALICE

You do know, you and I are probably going to have to stop sleeping with each other?

BEN

Yeah, I've been thinking about this, and I think maybe what you need right now is a friend. And, you know, I could be that for you. I mean that person could be... me. Anyway, I'm around and I'd like to be that... for you. Okay?

Alice hugs Ben.

ALICE

Good for you.

BEN

So we could have sex one last time. Nah, that's not a good idea.

They break the embrace.

ALICE

I'm going to get really fat.

BEN

Well, good. That should make it easier to stop sleeping with you.

Alice laughs. Ben smiles and exits.

30 INT. ARENA CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

30

Ben exits into the corridor. Alonzo approaches.

ALONZO

Hey, have you seen Alice?

30 CONTINUED:

30

BEN

Yeah, I think she's around here
somewhere. What's her middle name again?

ALONZO

It's Ann.

BEN

That's right. It's Ann. She's, uh,
right in there.

Ben watches as Alonzo walks into the office and closes the door. Ben waits a moment, takes a few steps away and through the office window, surreptitiously watches her deliver the big news to Alonzo. Alonzo excitedly embraces her, lifting her off her feet. Ben smiles through a bit of sadness and walks slowly away.

31 INT. ARENA FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

31

Ben walks onto the ice where the clowns, circus workers, and Steves are still working. The ice is now half cleared away, and the circus is beginning to set up. Ben stops and sees an axe laying at his feet. Ben smiles, picks up the axe and brings it down onto the ice. On the image of the ice beginning to crack, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

TAG

FADE IN:

32 INT. ARENA CORRIDOR/BOILER ROOM - LATER THAT EVENING 32

Ben and Roman walk through a corridor. We HEAR THE CIRCUS in progress and the CHEERS of a happy crowd.

BEN

Okay, buddy, I need you here bright and early Monday. A Selena impersonator is coming in. Gotta find you a job.

ROMAN

I know Kermit the Frog didn't actually write "Rainbow Connection," but he sure sings it like he did.

BEN

Gotta find you a really, really simple job.

Continuing on, Ben rounds the corner, looks up and stops. He's face to face with the elephant.

BEN (CONT'D)

I've been looking for you.

FADE TO BLACK.

BEN (CONT'D)

I mean, I'm very scared. But I'm glad I found you.

END OF SHOW