

it's actually more common than you think

A Tragicomedy

By Nate Sheehan

Setting:

Compass Bay Senior Village, United States, Near Future (mid to late 2020s)

Cast of Characters:

Arnold – an elderly man with dementia, believes he's Donald Trump

Ronald – possibly a homeless man

Gary – Compass Bay staff

Isabel – Arnold's daughter

Melissa – Staff at Compass Bay, primary aide to Arnold

Sheryl – receptionist at Compass Bay

LIGHTS UP ON:

PROLOGUE

ARNOLD, an elderly man, sits in his living room in a weighty, comfortable and worn looking chair, watching television. In front of him is a coffee table and to the side a couch. By the sounds of the television, he's watching E!.

Three rasps on the door.

ARNOLD gets up and makes his way to the door, where ISABEL's waiting.

ARNOLD

(while opening the door)

What do you want—

(once opened)

What are you doing here?

ISABEL

I'm taking you to your appointment.

ARNOLD

What appointment?

ISABEL

The—

ARNOLD

Come in.

ARNOLD turns and walks back towards the living room.

ISABEL

We really don't have time. We're actually running a little late.

ARNOLD's sat down.

ISABEL

Since when did you watch 'E!'?

BLACKOUT.
LIGHTS UP ON:

SCENE 1

In a nursery home bedroom, now cramming a bed, with the same television, the same weighty, comfortable and worn looking chair and the same couch and the same coffee table, sits ARNOLD again, watching E!

But now he looks and is dressed similarly to Donald Trump.

In the corner of the room, is a podium. ARNOLD gets up and approaches this podium. Someone lays, possibly passed out, under the coffee table. This is RONALD.

On the other side of the stage, a woman, SHERYL, sits at a receptionist desk. The phone rings as ARNOLD is about to speak. SHERYL picks up the phone. ARNOLD looks at his phone and begins typing.

In between the receptionist desk and the nursery home bedroom is a breakroom. Its main feature is a Bratz Doll on a table or on top of the fridge dressed in punk or emo outfit. MELISSA enters with a bottle of wine which she puts in the fridge. Then, from a drawer, she takes out a flowy pastel pink dress outfit sized for the doll. She changes the doll and re-exits. The phone rings.

SHERYL

Hello, Compass Bay Senior Village. Who am I speaking with?

... No, I'm afraid we're full. But I can put you on the waitlist.

... Could I get a name?

ARNOLD

(to no one in particular)

Donald.

SHERYL

Alright, I'm going to ask you a few questions about your inquiry if that's alright... Alright, what is your relationship with your applicant? ... Mhm.

MELISSA re-enters and knocks on ARNOLD's door. After a moment without response, she enters. No notice or mention of RONALD.

MELISSA

Hi Arnold, dinner's ready in the dining room in ten. Would you like it at the dining hall or in your room?

ARNOLD turns from the podium to MELISSA.

ARNOLD

My room.

MELISSA

Are you sure? It's good to get about—

ARNOLD
Yes, put it in my room.

MELISSA
Alright.

ARNOLD
Yes.

MELISSA
I'll be back in a few.

MELISSA exits.

SHERYL
Please describe the nature of your applicant's health condition....

ARNOLD
Ok. Ok. Calm down, folks. Calm down. I know, I know, they're gonna poison my food. I have a plan. I have a terrific plan. No one has seen a plan like this. In a long time.

SHERYL
Mhm, and what is your applicant's current living situation? ... Mhm.

ARNOLD
When you all see my plan, you're going to say "wow. I didn't know a plan could be that terrific." I didn't realize Mr. Trump was so smart. People don't know that about me. They don't know how smart I really am. A very high IQ. I have a high IQ. 170. 180. Somewhere in that range.

SHERYL
What type of accommodations do you anticipate for the applicant? ...

MELISSA knocks and reenters. With food.

MELISSA
I brought your food, Arnold. I got a tray here. Do you want it on the coffee table?

ARNOLD
Yes, that's good.

MELISSA
What were you watching?

ARNOLD
E! Olivia Rodrigo is having a bad week. A very bad week.

MELISSA
Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

ARNOLD
Yes, it's very bad for her.

MELISSA
How are you feeling today?

ARNOLD
Good.

MELISSA
That's good. I have to go see other residents now.

ARNOLD
They all complain about you. They all say you're mopey Melissa, that's what I hear them say about you.

MELISSA
There's no need for that—

ARNOLD
Mopey, marblehead Melissa. She's lost her marbles that's what they say.

MELISSA
You can shut the fuck up now.

ARNOLD
It's very sad.

MELISSA
I can call your parole officer any time of day!! Now go eat.

SHERYL
Alright, that's everything we need. We'll be in touch. Goodbye.

MELISSA exits, shutting the door behind her. SHERYL sets down the phone, rises and heads for the breakroom. ARNOLD sits down at his tray.

ARNOLD
I don't think much of her.

He digs in. Meanwhile, SHERYL, in the breakroom, takes out a mirror and sets it on the table. She then takes out makeup and begins to apply. MELISSA enters into the breakroom shortly after. She heads straight for the doll accessory drawer, seeming to not

notice SHERYL. She adds a black leather jacket to the doll and then turns, surprised to see SHERYL.

Oh!

MELISSA

Fuck! You fucked me up.

SHERYL

Sorry, somehow you startled me.

MELISSA

I got a date tonight. I don't wanna look scrappy. God – this fucking –

SHERYL

I don't notice anything.

MELISSA

It's fixable. It's ok.

SHERYL

SHERYL applies a cotton ball to the blotch.

Who's the guy?

MELISSA

I met him at my niece's soccer game. There's a reason I have a favorite niece – You know she plays for the US U14s.

SHERYL

That's really impressive – Actually, wait, you told me that.

MELISSA

No - I tell everybody she's going to be the next Alex Morgan. Even though she plays, left-back.

SHERYL

Is that defense?

MELISSA

Yeah. But she's fast. She bombs up the field into attack. Then she runs all the way back. I get tired watching her.

SHERYL

Both women continue in their tasks. Silence for a moment.

SHERYL

How's Kylie doing?

MELISSA

She needs something with a little more 'rage'.

MELISSA reopens the drawer and looks through it.

SHERYL

Where did you just come from?

MELISSA

Arnold.

SHERYL

Crazy Donald Arnold?

MELISSA

Donald Arnold.

SHERYL

Ohhhh. Give her spiked hair. You have wigs in there, right?

MELISSA

Yup.

MELISSA takes out a spiked wig and replaces the doll's smooth blonde hair with it. She studies the doll's new look before looking through the drawer again. SHERYL looks over.

SHERYL

That looks about right.

MELISSA

I don't know if it's quite my mood. I think we got something better.

SHERYL

Creative hair though, right?

MELISSA

Definitely. So is the guy sporty?

SHERYL

He's French.

MELISSA

Oui-oui – Ohhh I should give her a black and white striped shirt.

SHERYL

Yes. And a scarf.

Melissa finds said items and applies them to the doll. This takes some time. Allowing for some silence.

MELISSA

I missed Dunks this morning, now I'm on empty. I think that's why I'm moody.

SHERYL

That'd do it.

MELISSA

I had to pick up a bottle of wine.

SHERYL

Oh?

MELISSA

A friend's birthday.

SHERYL

That's exciting!

MELISSA

I'm getting off early for it.

SHERYL

How old is she?

MELISSA

24. Again.

SHERYL

(facetiously)

So many people are turning 24 every year.

MELISSA

(following along)

I know. It's totally disproportionate - the amount of almost 24 year olds I know.

(sighs)

The hair's not right.

MELISSA takes out the spiked hair from the doll and replaces it with the standard blonde bob.

MELISSA

I'm too tired for this. You know I yelled at Donald Arnold pretty good when I was giving him dinner.

SHERYL

He probably deserved it. Alzheimers and Dementia, right? He's probably forgotten—

MELISSA

He's probably watching E! right now and forgotten our whole conversation.

SHERYL

Given what I hear about him, he's probably managed to commit some sort of petty infraction and is trying to cover it up.

MELISSA

That too.

SHERYL

His family hardly sees him. No one signs in for Donald Arnold.

MELISSA

Well, it'd be Arnold Buckley.

SHERYL

I know, I was just calling him it.

MELISSA

And, also, well, he thinks he's Donald Trump.

SHERYL

Some offshoot of the dementia, right? Psychosis or delusion?

MELISSA

That's the leading theory. I just think he's got a stick up his butt.

SHERYL checks the time.

SHERYL

Fuck, I think I'm gonna have to finish this at my desk...

She begins gathering up her things.

MELISSA

It's a Monday. If you don't adhere strictly to the timetable, it's not gonna kill ya.

SHERYL

I know, but I got written up last week.

MELISSA

What is she missing?

SHERYL

Maybe she needs to be a glamorous punk Bratz Kylie, not a cute punk Bratz Kylie?

MELISSA

Yes, that's it. What time is it?

SHERYL

5:04.

MELISSA

Fuck, I don't got time either.

SHERYL exits the breakroom and on the way back to her desk, GARY breezes by her. MELISSA also rushes off, presumably to attend to other residents and patients. Meanwhile, ISABEL enters and stands at the front door of the building and you can't quite tell whether she's trying to find the will to enter or turn away.

SHERYL

Where you headed?

GARY

I left my pager in the car.

SHERYL

M-hm.

GARY

Why are you wearing one eyelash?

SHERYL

That's just the process of life, Gary.

GARY bumps into ISABEL as he exits the lobby.

GARY

Oh!

ISABEL

Sorry.

*Moments later, GARY rushes back into the lobby, weaving around ISABEL in the process.
SHERYL's back to applying her make-up.*

GARY

Hey again

SHERYL

Got your pager?

GARY

No, I think I might've left it at home...

SHERYL

You don't just leave it in the car?

GARY

No... I don't know why. I always drive.

SHERYL

Don't be a dumbass, Gary.

GARY

Like you give a shit. Also gonna check the breakroom.

SHERYL

I say it with love.

GARY

Going out tonight?

SHERYL

I got a date.

GARY

Congrats.

SHERYL

How's the bachelor lifestyle treating you?

GARY

It's a process.

SHERYL

Like my eyelash. Marriage is a weird thing.

GARY

I actually know a little about that.

SHERYL

I do too. I got some family reunion stories.

GARY

How was that? Dad's side, right?

While SHERYL talks, ISABEL enters and approaches the front desk.

SHERYL

Everyone was there. Every distant relative that I swear was made up until they appeared in Dad's backyard. But oh my god, some shit went down with my Aunt Edith and Unc Aidan. Now Unc and Edith are divorced. They haven't spoken to each other since the last reunion. That's where the papers were signed. Now, you see, old Aunt Edith's eyes don't work that good anymore. Or maybe her mind a little bit too. She mistakes her fourth son, my cousin Nicky, for Aidan and tells him he "had lots of nerve, showing his face here" and is looking like she's about to cause a nuclear catastrophe and all that. Luckily Nick was quick enough to recognize the situation and calm his mother down. But then later, Uncle Aidan does show up during a round of Bingo, and she mistakes him for her son and begins apologizing about earlier. Aidan, who really just came to piss off Edith says – Yes, what can I help you with?

GARY

I gotta get to my next room.

SHERYL

Alright, tell your wife she's a bitch for me, ok?

GARY

Ha. Tell me more about Edith later.

GARY exits.

ISABEL

Um, I'm supposed to sign in here, right?

SHERYL

Yeah, the sheet's right there.

ISABEL

Oh. Thanks.

SHERYL

M-hm.

ISABEL fills out the sign and sheet and then proceeds past ARNOLD's room and exits. SHERYL stares at her as she walks off, seemingly dumbfounded by her appearance. Now she glances at her computer. She begins typing. ARNOLD, meanwhile, is finishing his dinner. But something's distracting him as he keeps glancing away from his food and the TV, and towards the podium. Eventually he sets down his fork. ARNOLD rises and approaches the podium.

ARNOLD

America...

Now ARNOLD takes out a phone.

ARNOLD

'Windmills are killing the whales. The waves are messing up their echo-technology and the whales are dying, folks. We won't let the wokes sweep this under the blubber!' – Tweet.
 'I don't like Jacob Elordi. Very uncharming. He looks like a blowfish. He deserves better, mostly a better face.' – Tweet.
 'Thanks to my work, our country hasn't had this many jobs since World War I - I. This few unemployed since fighting a war around the world, folks!' – Tweet.
 'Announcing Trump hawks! Starting at \$399. Beautiful gold sneakers. Both hip and classy! #TrumpsthenewJordan ' – Tweet.
 'Kanye!' – Tweet.
 'Ron De-Boring–'

A knock on the door.

ARNOLD

YES?

The door begins to open. ISABEL enters.

ISABEL

Hey Dad, it's Isabel. Are you watching some TV?

ARNOLD

I was.

ISABEL

What were you watching?

ARNOLD

E!.

ISABEL
That's nice. What's new?

ARNOLD
They want me to eat in the dining hall.

ISABEL
Don't like eating there?

ARNOLD
You're being stupid.

ISABEL
It's good to talk to people.

ARNOLD
Why are you here?

Silence.

ISABEL
To see you.

ARNOLD
Of course. You're my daughter. But they're always trying to tell me what to do.

ISABEL
I know.

ARNOLD
Why are you acting weird? Come into the room.

ISABEL fully enters and shuts the door behind her.

ARNOLD
You know about the windmills?

ISABEL
Um, no?

ARNOLD
Everybody's talking about them. Windmills are messing up the wind and now the whales can't sing to each other and its causing them to die. The climate crazies want to kill the whales. Typical. Typical liberal – And they're training mallard ducks with COVID vaccine to attack people wearing MAGA hats. So stay away from the ponds. DON'T fall in. Don't even go near it–

ISABEL
I'm sure the ponds are fine–

ARNOLD
I've been looking at the economy.

ISABEL
How's the economy doing?

ARNOLD
It's never been better. Not since World War I - I. Where's my food?

ISABEL
On the table.

ARNOLD
Oh, I knew that.

ARNOLD sits back down in his chair and mulls over his dinner. ISABEL remains standing.

ARNOLD
I saw this movie last week. Something about... what was it about? These dogs were policemen. It was very moving. Very telling of where our country's going. How we should start standing up for our boys in– Oh crap.

ARNOLD drops his fork. ISABEL goes to grab it for her father.

ISABEL
Let me – OH MY GOD!

ARNOLD
You can wash it off under the sink.

ISABEL
(gesturing to RONALD under the table)
Dad, what's that?

ARNOLD
The sink? It's just over there.

ISABEL
Who's under the coffee table??

ARNOLD
Oh he's actually there.

ISABEL

Yes, he's actually there. Tell me he's alive.

ARNOLD

I don't know. I don't know him.

ISABEL gives RONALD a light nudge with her foot. He grunts.

ISABEL

What the fuck did you do?

ARNOLD

I'm innocent!

ISABEL

Who is he??

ARNOLD

I never seen him before in my life.

ISABEL

I don't believe you.

ARNOLD

Believe what you want. I don't know anything.

ISABEL

Oh my fucking god. Do you not remember?? Do you not know how he got there!?

ARNOLD

NO, I KNOW WHEN I DON'T REMEMBER. I SAID IT VERY SIMPLE. I NEVER SEEN HIM BEFORE. IN MY LIFE.

ISABEL

YOU'RE BEING HONEST!?

ARNOLD

I SWEAR TO GOD.

ISABEL

OK. Then, when did you first notice him?

ARNOLD

I SAID I DON'T KNOW!

ISABEL sighs, puts her hand over her face.

ISABEL
WHY DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO BE DOING SHIT!

ARNOLD
I'M NOT DOING SHIT! YOU MAKE ME TIRED!!

ARNOLD flumps down on the couch. RONALD snores. A moment.

ISABEL
This is a disaster. You understand that this is now my mess—

Then, Ms. Whitney Houston's "I Will Always Love You" blares. GARY begins to enter, headphones kinda in his ears, with a small cart of cleaning supplies, but then sees a resident with a family member.

GARY
Oh, sorry to disturb. I'll come back later.

GARY closes the door behind him.

ARNOLD
That guy always talks too much to me.

ISABEL
Dad, we have to do something about this.

ARNOLD
You will not tell anyone about it.

ISABEL
No, we have to. They'll find out.

ARNOLD
No they won't.

ARNOLD
Why? What the hell happened??

ARNOLD
You're a witch on a witch hunt. That's what you are.

ISABEL
I have to tell somebody. There's a man sleeping under your coffee table.

ARNOLD
No, you can't do that.

ISABEL

Why?

ARNOLD

And what will they do then? They'll try to use it to throw me out.

ISABEL

Fuck, you're right.

ARNOLD returns to his meal.

ISABEL

I was going to wash off that fork.

ARNOLD holds out the fork to ISABEL, who heads to the sink and washes the fork.

ISABEL

Has the food been good?

ARNOLD

It's fine.

ISABEL hands the now clean fork back to ARNOLD. He resumes with his food. ISABEL, meanwhile, takes a blanket from the couch or bed and drapes it over the edge of the coffee table so that RONALD can no longer be seen from the door.

ISABEL

We can't exactly smuggle him out... you know what? When he's ready and probably a little more sober off whatever he's on, he'll make his own way out. Can you make sure he does that?

ARNOLD doesn't respond. He just keeps munching.

ISABEL

Dad?

ARNOLD

Yes, it's fine.

ISABEL

No, I just want to make sure this is something you're ok being alone for. I do have to go back to work, but if absolutely necessary I can say an emergency came up—

ARNOLD

No, it's fine. I got it under control.

ISABEL
Promise?

ARNOLD
I'd never lie to you.

ISABEL sighs again, weighing her options. ARNOLD surprises her thoughts.

ARNOLD
How's your family?

ISABEL
Oh – Brandon is starting 6th grade. He's trying out for the basketball team...
The hospital has been extra busy lately. Summer dumbness.

ARNOLD
He won't make it.

ISABEL
I know. He's a wimp.

ARNOLD
That hasn't changed?

ISABEL
No, but we love him.

ARNOLD
I always remember you doing a bad job with him.

ISABEL
I blame James. He is a good kid though. Real earnest.

ARNOLD
You were like that.

ISABEL
No I wasn't.

ARNOLD
You were.

ISABEL
Really, how?

ARNOLD
You were so stupid.

Maybe ISABEL laughs.

ISABEL
Shut up.

ARNOLD
You know you were. I blame your mother.

ISABEL
Of course you do.

ARNOLD
And you're blaming your husband?

ISABEL
I guess so.

ARNOLD
Good luck to Brandon though. And the hospital's been bad?

ISABEL
Awful.

ARNOLD
It's always bad, isn't it?

ISABEL
It is, but particularly now.

ARNOLD
I'm sorry to hear that.

ISABEL
It's just a part of work.

ARNOLD
Earnest, see?

Silence.

ARNOLD
I'm starting a campaign.

ISABEL
What for?

ARNOLD
We're gonna build a wall. A big beautiful wall around Compass Bay.

ISABEL
What for?

ARNOLD
Stop the steal.

ISABEL
I'm sure—

ARNOLD
A lot of people don't belong in this complex. A lot of very bad, very selfish people. They're all fakers. They're faking.

ISABEL
They're faking?

ARNOLD
None of them want to tell America the truth. They're all liars. I'm the only truthful one. No one's more truthful than me.

ISABEL
Is that so?

ARNOLD
Do you doubt me?

ISABEL
Truthful enough to tell me about the sleeping man?

ARNOLD
I woke up and he was there. He hadn't woken up.

ISABEL
There has to be more to it than—

ARNOLD
There's not!

ISABEL
Ok.

Beat.

ISABEL

And, really, I can leave you here?

ARNOLD

If you don't, I'll throw a fit. You have important things to do.

Silence. ARNOLD stares at the TV. ISABEL does as well.

ARNOLD

Olivia Rodigo is in so much trouble.

ISABEL

I heard about that.

ARNOLD

Never thought she could handle the pressure.

ISABEL checks the time. Grimaces.

ISABEL

Ok, that shift I got to pick up... I really have to get going.

A sudden shift in ARNOLD's energy – something that resembles 'Arnold' and not Trump.

ARNOLD

At the hospital? How's everything there?

ISABEL

Summertime dumbness.

ARNOLD

Like when you broke your leg.

ISABEL

Pretty much exactly like that.

ARNOLD

Did I ever tell you that your mother really wanted to be a nurse at one point...

ISABEL

Yeah, you have... but I always forget.

ARNOLD

Me too. After his tryouts, you should bring Brandon here. He can tell me how it goes.

ISABEL

Yeah, yeah, of course. If he makes it, he'll be really busy, but I'm sure he'd love to come by.

ARNOLD

That's good. That's great. You played soccer in, what was it, middle school?

ISABEL

I wanted to like it so bad. It was just my friends were doing it.

ARNOLD

You didn't like it??

ISABEL

No! Did I never tell you this?

ARNOLD

It was just Katie making you do it?

ISABEL

Pretty much, oh my god, you still remember her.

ARNOLD

All this time I thought you had this really intense thing with it for a little bit – and you just didn't like soccer.

ISABEL

I wasn't good enough anyway.

ARNOLD

What do you mean?! You were great!

ISABEL

I really wasn't. And honestly, neither is Brandon.

ARNOLD

Such a Debbie Downer. You were good at sports. If he's bad, I still blame James.

ISABEL

Yeah, he's not athletic at all.

ARNOLD

We can agree on that – I'm getting a little tired.

ISABEL

And I have my shift. But this was great. We'll talk again soon.

ARNOLD

Ok.

ISABEL

Bye Dad... And do something about the guy. On second thought, people seem to wander in here all the time— I doubt they'll really think it's your fault.

ARNOLD

Sure. Sure.

ISABEL exits the room and heads for the lobby.

ARNOLD

As if you know anything about this place. They'll try to pin anything on you. Anything!

As ISABEL passes through the lobby, SHERYL watches her leave. Shortly after, MELISSA enters and knocks onto ARNOLD's door.

MELISSA

Hey, I just wanted to let you know I heard from Gary your daughter's coming by today!

ARNOLD

I just saw her Nosey Marblehead!!

MELISSA

Alright, then.

MELISSA closes the door behind her. She re-exits.

ARNOLD

Hmph.

MELISSA reenters and approaches SHERYL's desk with her bag.

MELISSA

I don't know how I actually do it.

SHERYL

How you do what?

MELISSA

I want to kill him. I actually want to kill him.

Kill who? SHERYL

MELISSA sighs.

When is he alone? SHERYL

An 80 year old man. MELISSA

Arnold? The Trump one? SHERYL

Yeah – I’m professional. I’m so fucking professional. MELISSA

ou’re a fucking rockstar. Don’t worry so much. You read about that hospice care worker that got off on taking people on life support. You know how many people he killed before they caught him?-- SHERYL

You’re fucking sick. MELISSA

I’m just saying that you’re the best he could get. Respect yourself for that. SHERYL
(observing MELISSA with her bag)

Are you leaving?

Getting off early. MELISSA

Right. Rick just agreed to just let you do that? SHERYL

Have some spare hours. MELISSA

Have fun. Don’t kill anybody. SHERYL

You’re putting murder on my mind and I hate you for it! Goodnight. MELISSA
(lovingly)

SHERYL

Alright. Goodnight.

MELISSA exits into the parking lot, where ISABEL also is heading towards her own car. The two women cross paths.

ISABEL

Oh, hey! Don't you work with Arnold Buckley?

MELISSA

Yeah, I do. You're his daughter, right?

ISABEL

Anything I should know about how he's doing?

MELISSA

He's been eating dinner in his room more often.

ISABEL

I saw— is that concerning?

MELISSA

Not always. Given how long he's been ill, he's doing great.

ISABEL

Good...

MELISSA

Is there anything else? Really sorry, but I really gotta be going.

ISABEL

I don't really know. It's hard. I guess.

MELISSA

I know. We're all just doing the best we can.

ISABEL

Yeah, sorry. I gotta go too.

MELISSA exits. We see ISABEL get into her car and turn the engine on. She takes another breath before laying her head on the horn. It makes an obnoxious noise. She lifts her head, stopping the noise, only to hear another horn. She lifts her hands in annoyance.

ISABEL
(yells)

I'm not even moving!

She starts to back out of her spot.

ISABEL

Fucker.

As she drives off, she lays on the horn a second time, this time intentionally.

SCENE 2

GARY enters with a small cart cleaning supplies. He knocks on ARNOLD's door and then nudges open the door.

GARY

Is now a good time for me to clean up a little in here, Mr. Trump?

ARNOLD

Yes, go ahead.

GARY begins cleaning the room, picking up any trash and generally organizing the space. He hasn't noticed RONALD.

GARY

Having a good day?

ARNOLD

Saw my daughter.

GARY

I heard!

ARNOLD

Right, you walked in—

GARY

Sorry about that.

ARNOLD shrugs. GARY picks up some East Asian looking artistic-looking bowl to dust under it.

ARNOLD

Don't touch that!

GARY

Right, I always somehow forget.

ARNOLD

Well it's important.

GARY continues his cleaning and organizing duties. ARNOLD watches GARY... for a bit, then returns his attention back to his TV. Working around the couch, GARY notices the blanket over the coffee table.

GARY
Do you want this on the coffee table?

ARNOLD
Yes!

GARY
Alright.

Silence. Maybe the TV says something particularly interesting.

GARY
I was hoping to get your advice on something, Mr. President.

ARNOLD
What's going on?

GARY
I'm trying to figure out how to explain it.

ARNOLD
So you're telling me, you're asking for advice. And you don't know what you're talking about.

GARY
What do you mean?

ARNOLD
You don't know what you mean.

GARY reaches for the blanket.

ARNOLD
Not the blanket!

GARY
Right.

GARY lets the blanket be. He turns away from the coffee table. A beat.

GARY
My brother's in rehab.

ARNOLD contemplates this.

ARNOLD
I can see that.

GARY

He's in rehab. And it's making things difficult for me, but he can't really be trusted in the real world no more, you know? ... And I'm this close to getting evicted. The halfway house he used to stay at closed. I mean, you know a lot about making money, right?

ARNOLD

I do.

GARY

Any ideas on how I can support him?

ARNOLD

Harry, firstly, don't let hard times get you down.

GARY

You're right. You're so right.

ARNOLD

Let me tell you that first. Second, get the big socks out of my sock drawer.

GARY heads for the sock drawer and opens it up. He holds up a pair of socks.

GARY

These ones?

ARNOLD

No, the other ones.

GARY

These?

ARNOLD

No, but I'll make them work.

GARY hands ARNOLD the socks. He changes his socks.

ARNOLD

It's mindset.

GARY

The socks?

ARNOLD

What? No. Your problems. Your problem is your mindset, Larry. You see, I don't lose. And I know I don't lose because that's not something that I do. I don't think that way.

GARY

I mean, I'm trying to learn about finance when I have time. But it's hard to be positive.

ARNOLD struggles significantly with taking off his old socks and putting on the new.

ARNOLD

Some people just don't have winner mentalities. Maybe you're not one of them.

GARY

Maybe.

Silence. Maybe the TV says something else particularly interesting. GARY stops what he's doing, sighs.

GARY

I mean, my dog ate a canister of paint and died. I really loved that dog.

My wife left me. And she took the kids.

I took a leak just now and I got blood in my pee. A guy that's a friend of my landlord named Footjob wants to kick my ass. It's just tough for me right now— I'm talking too much about my shit.

ARNOLD

You have a lot of problems.

GARY

I'm sorry, Mr. President.

Beat. GARY exchanges a few items in his cart and heads for the bathroom

ARNOLD

I know.

GARY

I'm really sorry about laying so much of my issues on you.

ARNOLD

It's alright. I wasn't listening.

GARY

Oh.

ARNOLD

Do you know why I live here, Gary?

GARY

Why's that?

ARNOLD

You don't always want to be found.

GARY

For you, of course, I understand that.

ARNOLD

But there's no real reason to be put anywhere. Take your brother out of rehab. Strong men don't belong in places like that. And I think he's a strong man. He'll find his way.

GARY

You really think that?

ARNOLD

I guarantee it.

GARY appears from the bathroom.

GARY

Ok, I think I'll take him out.

ARNOLD

That's a smart choice.

GARY

Everything's set here. Do you want me to take your tray?

ARNOLD

Take it.

GARY grabs ARNOLD's tray. He dumps the contents of it in his portal trashcan. He smiles at ARNOLD.

ARNOLD

Now get out of my room.

GARY

Tell us if you need anything else.

ARNOLD

I think I already told you.

GARY

Alright. Goodbye!

GARY closes the door behind him. He heads for the breakroom and begins looking about. He can't find something. He notes the changed Bratz doll.

SHERYL is looking at her computer screen, but she spots MELISSA reentering into the lobby.

SHERYL

What are you doing here?

MELISSA

I left the bottle of wine in the fridge.

SHERYL

Then go grab it, sis. You got places to be!

MELISSA

Thanks. But while I have you...

SHERYL

What is it?

MELISSA

Do you have on log how often Richard Habib has been getting visits? Wondering if he's getting a little bit lonely.

SHERYL

I can pull that up for you in a second. I know it's infrequent. His son visited today. Beyond that, it's been two months – her again. Before that – his daughter – 14 weeks ago.

MELISSA

Ok, thank you. I'll try to get him out of his room a little more.

MELISSA heads for the breakroom to find GARY doing all but tearing the place apart.

GARY

That dress is not suiting my day.

MELISSA

I can tell... did someone say there was gold hidden somewhere in here?

GARY

No, it's my fucking pager. I've been going without it all day - But now I'm actually fucking concerned.

MELISSA grabs her bottle of wine from the fridge.

MELISSA

Oh, well, that's disappointing – I added the jacket later cus today's been a mixed bag. And the shirt because Sheryl has a french date.

GARY

Baguette.

MELISSA

If I could figure it out, I'd do something freakish to her hair. Maybe tomorrow.

GARY

So who's been naughty and who's been nice?

MELISSA

Grace bought chocolates to share with me, Bethany and Mike. Richard said he likes his new meds. Kelly peed on a couch and then threw a fit and Arnold was, well, Arnold.

GARY

You know I've always found him quite manageable.

MELISSA

Kelly or Arnold?

GARY

Arnold – where the fuck is this thing?

(GARY looks up, spotting the wine)

What are we celebrating?

MELISSA

Friends birthday. Forgot the wine.

GARY

Ok.

GARY upends the corner with the microwave.

MELISSA

Anything I can do to help quick? I should be on my way.

GARY

Probably not.

MELISSA

Is that yours right there?

MELISSA spots a small electronic device under a folder on the kitchen counter and picks it up.

GARY

That's not mine.

MELISSA

Are you sure?

GARY

Yeah, the nurse ones are slightly different.

MELISSA checks her watch.

MELISSA

I'll help you look for a few.

Both look, likely somewhat hopelessly.

MELISSA

Can we circle back to you saying **Arnold** is manageable?

GARY

We get along. He's in such fantasy land, it's almost fun to play along sometimes, you know?

MELISSA

That's one way to do it.

GARY

You're gonna say it's not good to feed into his delusions— found it!

GARY holds up a pager like it might just be the holy grail.

MELISSA

No, I get sometimes it's just easier. It's more painless, at least in the short-term. But yeah, you shouldn't be doing that.

GARY

He can be funny when he wants to be.

MELISSA

He called me marblehead Melissa.

GARY starts laughing.

GARY
You see – that’s fucking hilarious.

MELISSA
Shut up.

GARY
I’m sorry, it is!

MELISSA
Ok, it’s a little bit funny. But I told him I’d call his parole officer.

GARY’s laughing even harder.

GARY
Jesus fucking Christ, you’re something else, Melissa.

MELISSA
I thought it was pretty good.

GARY
Don’t you actually got family in Marblehead?

MELISSA
My boyfriend’s. He actually was there for the weekend.

GARY
Oh, cool.

MELISSA
Anyway, I really gotta be going.

MELISSA starts to leave but then turns back.

MELISSA
Were you listening to Whitney Houstin earlier?

GARY
How’d you know that?

MELISSA
I fucking knew it was you. I could hear it all the way down the hall.

GARY
What?!

MELISSA

IIIIII WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOOOOUUU

GARY

I gotta get new earbuds, man.

MELISSA

No, you have great taste. Basic, but good.

GARY

Don't call me basic. You put a leather jacket on the Bratz and called it edgy.

MELISSA marches over to the doll's table and drawer.

MELISSA

Ok, you have to see the wig I was putting on her.

She locates the wig and shows GARY.

GARY

It doesn't match.

MELISSA

It's not bad.

GARY

No, I can even tell, it's not a good match.

MELISSA

You know I'm usually so much better with it.

(sighs)

(staring at the wig... she pockets it)

I'll have more time later this week. See ya.

GARY

See ya.

MELISSA heads for the lobby.

GARY

Actually, I'll come with you. Sheryl was gonna finish telling me about something.

MELISSA

What about?

GARY

Her family reunion.

MELISSA

She goes on for a bit, you know?

GARY

I don't mind.

MELISSA

And I can never tell if she's fucking with me. I feel like everything she says is out of a cartoon – like a French guy she meets at her daughter's soccer game.

GARY

You actually think she's fibbing??

MELISSA

Probably not.

GARY

Exactly, they're so real. They're real and their better than tv. That's what's tripping you out.

MELISSA

Alright, well, goodnight.

SHERYL's looking intently at her computer.

GARY

Night.

(To SHERYL)

Hey.

SHERYL

You know, it says here 1 in 15,000 patients with Alzheimers and dementia suffer from it. That makes... about 400 Donald Trumps in the United States. A crazy world. Isn't it a crazy world?

GARY

I really wanted to know what Aunt Edith said.

SHERYL

... Where did we leave off?

GARY

She thought her son was her ex because her eye sight is bad... either that or she thought her ex was her son because her eye sight was bad. And she was expecting one or the other–

SHERYL

Oh, I gotch you. Aunt Edith realized and she screamed at him, “Get your fucking face out of my life!” But rest of the night they talked about getting remarried. And, well, of course they never will.

GARY

But they’re not back together or anything?

SHERYL

No, they hate each other... Do you see this??

GARY

What?

SHERYL

400 Donald Trumps. Do you think it’s because – I don’t know. It was just such a long time coming and so surprising. You know what I mean?

GARY half-nods, not totalling agreeing or disagreeing.

GARY

I found my pager.

SHERYL

Congrats! Where?

GARY

Weirdest spot in the breakroom. But it means I’m super behind now.

SHERYL

Then off you go.

GARY

Yup.

GARY turns and heads for the exit.

SCENE 3

ARNOLD watches TV. He startles as RONALD makes a groaning noise, but then that groaning noise turns into a snore.

ARNOLD, alone with RONALD, becomes very conscious of the unconscious man for the first time. He flips through a few channels on his tv.

He glances at RONALD.

He adjusts the volume.

He glances at RONALD.

This sort of routine repeats itself as ARNOLD gets increasingly agitated.

At a some point he can't take it. ARNOLD gets up and approaches the door to his apartment. He opens it, as if expecting someone. No one's there.

As ARNOLD looks out his door, RONALD rolls out from under the coffee table. He stretches and spots an unexpected ARNOLD. He strikes quickly towards him.

ARNOLD turns around and is startled by RONALD, standing behind him. RONALD speaks in a Trump voice. He looks a bit like him as well.

RONALD

You're not getting a cent off me. I never had sex with Danielle Flanner and if I did, it was bad. Not very enjoyable.

ARNOLD

I- what are you doing in my room? Who the fuck are you?

RONALD

Who am I? Who the fuck do you think I am? I'll tell you who I'm not. Someone who had sex with Danielle Flanner.

ARNOLD

I don't give a fuck about any Danielle Flanner, you fucking idiot.

RONALD

What did you just call me?

ARNOLD

A fucking idiot.

RONALD warms up a punch, but at the last minute ARNOLD sees it. He veers out of the door so RONALD misses him entirely. Now observing a door between himself and RONALD, ARNOLD promptly closes it behind him.

RONALD looks about, taking in his surroundings. He checks out what ARNOLD was watching. But then he turns off the television. From under the coffee table, RONALD takes out a red tie. He fits it around his neck. Then, ARNOLD reopens the door.

ARNOLD
What are you doing here?

RONALD
In my room?

ARNOLD
Yes, in my room.

RONALD
No, in my room. Why do you look like that?

ARNOLD
Like what?

RONALD
Like ME?!

ARNOLD
No, no, no, you're mistaken. You're the one that looks like me.

ARNOLD picks up the TV remote, points it at RONALD and hits the power button. Nothing happens. After a few more tries, he turns the TV back on.

RONALD
You want to be me so bad.

From under the coffee table, RONALD takes out a Donald Trump wig. He fits it on.

ARNOLD
WHO THE FUCK ARE YOU??

RONALD
And it's not even convincing, you got my hair all wrong.

ARNOLD
I would never wear khakis with that shirt.

RONALD
Stop that, you piranha!

ARNOLD
I'm not stopping anything.

RONALD
What *you* would do doesn't matter.

No you— RONALD:

You— ARNOLD

You— RONALD

You— ARNOLD

You— RONALD

The two have gotten weirdly close to one another.

ARNOLD and RONALD
You. You. You. You.

They continue doing this for a bit.

This isn't your real face. ARNOLD

You look like a beaver! RONALD

Both men fall over.

Where's the beaver? RONALD

Where did you come from? ARNOLD

I came from here. RONALD

No it's not. I live here. ARNOLD

RONALD
You think you live in the same place as me? I've been digging the Panama Canal!

ARNOLD
This is my room.

RONALD
But it's mine.

RONALD
You're a terminator, aren't you?

ARNOLD
You're a fan who went to my plastic surgeon.

ARNOLD
I don't even know what a terminator is.

RONALD
I don't even know any plastic surgeons // – That's what a terminator would say.

ARNOLD
I don't either. I don't know what you're talking about.

RONALD spots the podium. He walks up to it.

RONALD
The American people! People at the highest level want to deceive me. They want to drag Happy's name.

ARNOLD
That's my podium!

RONALD
Twittered.

ARNOLD
You get your hands off my podium!

ARNOLD tackles RONALD and they both fall over.

RONALD
You get your slimy, small dick hands off me!

They continue wrestling. SHERYL looks up from her computer screen. As ARNOLD and RONALD continue fighting, SHERYL has seemed to have found her way back to the breakroom. So has GARY.

GARY
Ok, wait, how did you guys meet?

SHERYL

You know my niece plays for the US girls U14 national team. She's a hotshot. Her name's Becca and she's like my own daughter. They were playing France at BC last night, so I had to pull through for her. All these accents in the crowd.

GARY

Oh, is he French?

SHERYL

I'm getting to it. We're at BC. Boston this time of year, who knows what to wear, right? But it turned out to be a pretty chilly and my friend Demi's with me and she's fucking shivering to death. And Demi doesn't do well with her liquor. She's smashed for no reason. You know, she's Demi. She played soccer herself at some point pretty seriously, she starts kinda half moving with what's going on on the field. Kinda as a joke. Kinda to keep warm. She's Demi. So she doesn't notice when she hits a guy next to her with a flailing arm or an uncoordinated kick of the leg. But then this, her shoe comes flying off, and hits my daughter's teammate Julie in the head as she was tussling for the ball in the 18 yard box. That kicker traveled for miles, but the referee only sees Julie fall down, and calls penalty.

GARY

Oh shit.

SHERYL

But us in the stands, including the French fans see exactly what happened, and there is an outcry at the call.

GARY

But it wasn't reversed?

SHERYL

That's really not the point. The point is an attractive French man throws his own shoe on the field, which hits the referee. Then Demi takes her other shoe, and throws it at the French man. And everyone but Demi is a soccer parent, which is the equivalent to being on blow so by the end both sides were fighting, and not just with their shoes and about half the fans including me and Demi were ejected from the game and the French man gave me his number. He's apparently actually from around here. But no one cared because we won the game and my niece's teammate stepped up and scored the pen. If you ask her, I'm her favorite aunt.

GARY

Hold on, do you hear that?

SHERYL

Hear what?

ARNOLD pins RONALD to the ground.

ARNOLD

I'm done with these fakers! Where's my wall?!

RONALD

Are you dumb? We need a 20ft garden henge.

ARNOLD

What the fuck.

RONALD

Made of bubbles!

RONALD pushed ARNOLD off of him. He promptly runs into the wall of the bedroom. GARY exits the breakroom and takes a rifle somewhere out of hiding. He begins tracking the source of the commotion.

RONALD

Taco have spice preference options. Runny noses are unAmerican.
ANDD posted to Facebook.

ARNOLD

When were you typing? You weren't typing.

RONALD

I'm always typing. In my cerebrum!

ARNOLD

You're insane.

RONALD

Jealous?

ARNOLD

You're fired!

RONALD

You can't fire me, piranha!

Finding its source, just then, GARY bursts into the room.

GARY

What in God's holy name?

RONALD

GET HIM OUT OF MY ROOM!

ARNOLD
No! Get him out of my room!

GARY
Yes, Mr. President.

GARY grabs ARNOLD's arm.

GARY
Come with me.
(surveying the room)
I just cleaned up this one...

GARY drags ARNOLD towards the lobby, but not without a stop in the breakroom.

ARNOLD
Stop! I live here! I'll have you fired! You're SO fired!

GARY
(to SHERYL)
Another trespasser!

SHERYL
I honestly just wonder how they keep getting by me – Maybe it's when it's Jeremy's shift – but still.

ARNOLD
LET ME GO! LET ME GO!

GARY drags ARNOLD off stage. SHERYL slowly gets up and lazily follows. At a certain point, she loses sight of ARNOLD and GARY. We hear a bunch of fireworks. Her face turns pale. GARY reenters without the rifle.

SHERYL
What was that? Something going on out there?

GARY
Some kids just set off fireworks.

SHERYL
At fucking 5 PM? Did you see them?

GARY
No, I think they're a few blocks down. I mean, it's the 4th.

SHERYL

Dumbasses.

GARY

Happy America.

SHERYL

Happy America. What did you do with the homeless man?

GARY

Just told him to skedaddle. He was on something - I don't think he heard me but he got the message. The fireworks freaked him out for a second - I think he thought I was shooting at him. Got him running.

SHERYL

Poor guy. Fucking fireworks.

GARY

I imagine it's nothing to him. He's just a bum, you know?

A beat.

SHERYL

You know the Florida attorney general just verified the autopsy. He says it *was* a heart attack.

GARY

I still think a lot about that day.

SHERYL

I think we all do.

GARY

Of course some say he could've been shot.

SHERYL

(rolling her eyes)

And the Illuminati is putting mind-control into tofu. What else is new. But I haven't told many people this – I was in Florida when it happened. I was driving in the area. I swear I heard something.

GARY

Are you for real?

SHERYL

Yeah, my sister moved down to Florida and we went to Palm Beach for a day. Drove right by the mar-a-lago facilities.

GARY

And you heard it happen?

SHERYL

We heard something. Really could've been anything. Just like those dumb kids with their dumb fireworks. By the time we got set up in our spot by the water, there were sirens blaring everywhere.

GARY

Oh my fucking god, you heard it happen.

SHERYL

Well, ok.

GARY

Fuck. I knew it. I knew they shot him. I knew he didn't go off some heart condition.

Silence.

GARY

I miss Trump.

SHERYL

Do you really? Don't say that.

GARY

I just... I don't know.

SHERYL

On the beach, there was already gossip about it. Saying they found him face down in a bloody pool, straight outta Sunset Boulevard.

GARY

Oh my god!

SHERYL

I know. I was scared. I thought people would take to the streets. But, listen, I'm agnostic – sorry wrong word – I'm apolitical, but if every fact says that many had a heart attack, then that's what he had.

GARY

I don't know, there's a lot of holes – and you and your sister heard something.

SHERYL

When people started talking, me and my sister went home.

GARY
Prudent. I would've investigated.

SHERYL
Ok, I'm starting to think you're serious.

GARY
I'm always serious.
(beat.)
2024 was such a weird year. For me, especially.

SHERYL
You've been good lately?

GARY
Things could be better.

SHERYL
C'mon, give me good news, Gary.

GARY
I'm going to be living with my brother again.

SHERYL
That sounds fun! Is he moving or are you...

GARY
He'll be moving in with me. Just for a bit.

SHERYL
Good to have some extra time with him?

GARY
No, I haven't seen him in too long. It'll be good to have the time together.

SHERYL
Yeah.

GARY
Anything new with you?

SHERYL
Not really. Everything's been feeling so stand-still for me lately.

GARY
Sorry to hear that.

Yeah.

SHERYL

I still have to do a round on the Cedar Pine wing, so I definitely need to get to that.

GARY

Yeah, sounds like you better.

SHERYL

Appreciate that.

GARY

Preciate you.

SHERYL

For sure.

GARY

It's really been a slow day today.

SHERYL

No one wants to see Grandpa on Monday.

GARY

No, but I mean, for a Monday, it's been slow.

SHERYL

I'm not complaining.

GARY

Why should ya.

SHERYL

Exactly.

GARY

Yeah.

SHERYL

I have to go through cleanings for the Cedar Pine wing.

GARY

Don't set off any fireworks while you do.

SHERYL

I'll keep that in mind.

GARY

See ya.

SHERYL

See ya.

GARY

GARY exits. SHERYL heads back to the receptionist desk. She looks like has something to say, but can't quite figure out how to say it.

BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP ON:

SCENE 4

ARNOLD, finds himself back in his room. But it has new tv, new bedsheets and new furniture. He's also wearing different pants, the same RONALD was wearing the scene earlier (khakis). He grabs his chest and then behind his back. He steadies himself against the dresser.

RONALD's once again laying under the coffee table.

A dining table comes on downstage center, at which ARNOLD exits the space of his room to sit at. MELISSA enters with her bottle of wine. And becomes startled by ARNOLD, who looks as he does but is playing MELISSA's friend's father.

MELISSA

Who's that?!

ARNOLD

I'm her father!

Someone else says something. Both listen.

MELISSA

Oh, we've met! I came to Thanksgiving with Brook two years ago.

ARNOLD

Yes, you did! You made me think my daughter's a lesbian.

MELISSA

Yes, I remember that! That was so—

ARNOLD

Nothing against it! Just took me by surprise.

MELISSA

I just don't really have any family anymore and didn't have any plans, so Brook offered—

ARNOLD

That's nice of her. Parents dead?

MELISSA

Yeah.

ARNOLD

Were they old?

MELISSA

No – they were 40 and 44.

ARNOLD

Aw shit. That's too bad. What happened?

MELISSA

All I know is one night they disappeared. But it's a long time ago, you know? Sometimes life throws you surprises.

ARNOLD

That's some shady shit. You brought us wine?

MELISSA

Yup. Is there anywhere I should set this.

ARNOLD

I'll take it... I'll put it in the kitchen when I get up.

MELISSA hands the bottle over.

MELISSA

What's your name again?

ARNOLD

Ronald and you're Melissa?

MELISSA

Yup.

ARNOLD

Brook mentions you.

MELISSA

I bet.

ARNOLD

Do you like politics?

MELISSA

I get too much of it.

ARNOLD

Hmph. But with a suitable injection, do you like it?

MELISSA

I'd have to get a suitable injection to know. Why you ask—

ARNOLD

Been thinking of running for city council. There's nothing more competitive than public office, not any sport, nothing more ruthless, but I never had any time to consider it until recently. You might not remember me, but I could. I know a few people in the area.

MELISSA

You know, now that you mention it, I remember that at that Thanksgiving—

ARNOLD

What Thanksgiving?

MELISSA

The Thanksgiving I came to with Brook. Two years ago?

ARNOLD

Did we meet there?

MELISSA

Yeah... but there were a lot of people there. You might not remember?

ARNOLD looks a little lost in space, maybe a sign of a quiet anxiousness... but then.

ARNOLD

I said I was gonna take this to the kitchen.

ARNOLD picks up the bottle and heads for an exit. MELISSA watches him as he walks off. The space darkens around MELISSA.

MELISSA

Am I crazy? I might be crazy. Working in memory care is making me lose my mind. Or... fuck it's her birthday. It's too rare...

ARNOLD returns and overhears.

ARNOLD

What's too rare?

MELISSA

Was I just speaking out loud?

ARNOLD

Under your breath. I got good ears. Most people don't think that at my age.

MELISSA

Well, I got terrible hearing so I guess that creates some balance.

ARNOLD

We're all getting old... Have you said hi to Brook yet?

MELISSA

No, I just got here. I still need to find her.

ARNOLD

She's in the kitchen.

MELISSA

Great, thanks. You know, has anyone ever told you that you look like— no, nevermind.

ARNOLD

Look like who?

MELISSA

I realized it wasn't true.

ARNOLD

Gotcha.

MELISSA

I'll catch you later.

*MELISSA exits. ARNOLD heads back to his room
And he's got something to say – or wait, sorry – sing. SONG: I GOT NEW PANTS.*

I GOT NEW PANTS

ARNOLD

I got new pants on

I got – I got – I got

These are too hot...

*ARNOLD changes his pants. Shit.
SONG: I GOT NEW NEW PANTS*

RONALD

I got new new pants on

I got – I got - I got –

I got a new new tv

It's bigger and don't make me hot

like my new new pants on

Today's been very weird

I got – I got – I got –
A new new me
I'm more expensive and not itchy
like my new new pants on
Bygones be bygones
I got – I got – I got –
I'm so "sheesh"
Isn't that what the kids say? They say "sheesh"?
Sheeshy. It's new
Like my new new pants on
Today's been very weird
Bygones be bygones
Biden say Bye Don
He can kiss my ass
Cus this ass got good pants

On a particular horrible sounding note, RONALD wakes up. He drunkenly stumbles towards ARNOLD.

ARNOLD, meanwhile, examines a strip of wood from a partly destroyed podium, ARNOLD and RONALD's scuffle to thank. RONALD taps ARNOLD on the shoulder, startling him. ARNOLD hits RONALD with the piece of wood, knocking him out. He wipes his forehead.

ARNOLD

Definitely homeless.

A knock on the door.

GARY

Hey Mr. President, just checking if you needed anything after having that confrontation with the intruder. So sorry that happened–

ARNOLD

I'm fine! Everything's fine! Go away now.

GARY

Of course, as you wish.

GARY exits the room.

ARNOLD

New new pants. New new new...

ARNOLD exhales. He approaches what's left of the podium.

ARNOLD

I'm here to promote the great institution of Kohl. You can buy everything for your home there. And the democrats, they don't want real Americans with fine linen, 100% cotton. They don't want real Americans with American-made toys — Not made in Russia, not made in Europe, not made in China — American toys. American Kohl. Most people don't want me to say this - they said Donald, it's too risky. They said there's a lot of shady figures in that Washington swamp, a lot of crocodiles. But I'm a sharpshooter — I just visited a range here in Virginia — they haven't seen this good a shot. I'm coming for the Crocodiles. Let's bring back Kohl!

ARNOLD lifts up his arm in triumph, but then grabs his shoulder again.

ARNOLD

I'm bringing it back! America was once a great country. It was once a great, beautiful, strong country. Not anymore. Look around! Look around you. Do you see a great country. That's why the hat says it for me. Can anyone tell me what the hat says? It says Get the Beaver! GET THE BEAVER AGAIN! GET THE BEAVER!

ARNOLD suddenly grabs his chest. Then, he wipes a brow of sweat from his face.

ARNOLD (Cont.)

(gesturing, possibly to RONALD)

What should I do about you?

But you can't quite tell who he gestures to. He looks down at his body, still. ARNOLD heads for his bed, then lays down.

SCENE 5

MELISSA can be found in the parking lot, inhaling from a vape. ISABEL walks up to her.

MELISSA

Oh my god, this is embarrassing. I'm on my break and I found this in my son's room this morning and got curious—

ISABEL

No, that's ok. What's it like?

MELISSA

It's strawberry apple watermelon flavored, but really just vaguely fruity. They pack a lot of nicotine in these things. It explains some of, um.. his attitude lately... you have kids?

ISABEL

Going into seventh grade.

MELISSA

I'm so sorry.

ISABEL

No, he's actually pretty mild-mannered. Probably his hormones haven't kicked in yet.

MELISSA

Have you vaped before?

ISABEL

Can't say I have.

MELISSA

Want to try it?

ISABEL

... Why not?

MELISSA hands the vape to ISABEL. She inhales.

ISABEL

God damn, this isn't the weed that got me through nursing school. What's in it?

MELISSA

A mix of nicotine and THC.

ISABEL

Are you going to say anything to him?

MELISSA

I don't know what I'm going to do yet... maybe I'll just let him think he's lost it.

ISABEL

So are you keeping it?

MELISSA

I don't want it. I'll figure that when I figure that out. Here to see Arnold?

ISABEL

Don't know why else I'd be here.

MELISSA

That's true.

ISABEL

Is he still doing good?

MELISSA

Decently, I think. Better.

ISABEL

That's good. Thank you for... everything.

MELISSA

Thanks for thanking me.

A beat.

MELISSA

You're a nurse, right?

ISABEL

Yeah.

MELISSA

I think I've seen you in your scrubs before, why I remembered.

ISABEL

Probably.

MELISSA

What field of nursing?

ISABEL

Surgical.

MELISSA

Congrats. Hours must be shit.

ISABEL

They are. But it's the job. I knew what I was getting into.

MELISSA

We all thought we did.

Both laugh.

ISABEL

That's very true.

MELISSA

Unfortunately.

ISABEL

He's not giving you too much trouble, is he?

MELISSA

No, it's my job. It's what I'm here for.

ISABEL

Sometimes I feel like I have zero instincts with him. I guess I just try to talk how we use to...

MELISSA

That is the right instinct.

ISABEL

Really?

MELISSA

Yeah.

ISABEL

That's nice to hear.

Beat. Maybe whoever has the vape passes it to the other.

MELISSA

I'm curious to hear, if you don't mind me asking, when did you first start to notice the Trump aspect of his condition? I know there's more of them popping up, but it's so unique – Sorry.

ISABEL

No, it's ok. If anyone has right to be interested, I guess it's you... It wasn't overnight. And after both diagnoses of Alzheimers and dementia. I guess the way I see it is that my family's always cared about political stuff and he's no different.

MELISSA

So you see it as psychological?

ISABEL

Every time I try to put a term I know to it, I find ways in which it doesn't quite match up. I don't know. I remember growing up my Mom loved Reagan but my Dad couldn't stand him. He's always been an Independent. Took pride in not letting a party make a decision for him.

MELISSA

Do you think that has anything to do with his later diagnosis? Or...

ISABEL

It's hard not to think it does.

MELISSA

That's understandable.

ISABEL

Yeah, he was an independent. My mom watched Fox news until maybe five years before she passed. So wasn't even the conservative one. I'm a socialist.

MELISSA

Mm. What does that mean?

ISABEL

Have you heard of the Battle of Blair Mountain?

MELISSA

No.

ISABEL

It makes me crazy. It was part of the West Virginia Coal Wars during the 1910s, which I didn't even know existed growing up. It's how I became a socialist. Back then, they'd make company towns for coal. That means if you worked in coal mining, you'd live in this town in which the company gave you housing, controlled the water – Which isn't too great when these companies also fire you if you try to unionize, meaning you're now homeless. So these famous organizers in 1920 came to Mingo County, West Virginia, where this stuff was happening and started to try to unionize. The company hired a private “detective agency” called the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency to evict the over 3000 workers involved, but this detective agency was more like a private militia. Not only did they violently evict workers and their families from their homes, they killed ten people in the process.

MELISSA

Shit.

ISABEL

With a little time, the police chief issued a warrant for these men. Because instead of evicting families, they killed them. His name's Hatfield and he comes up to the leader of the Baldwin-Felts, Albert Felts. and says he's got a warrant for his arrest. Albert responds he's got an arrest warrant for Hatfield. The mayor gets involved and takes Felt's side and then they all start shooting and the police chief, barricaded in a jewelry store, kills Albert, eight of his men and the mayor—

MELISSA

Wait, I think I've heard of this. Hatfield's this hero of Appalachian pride. West Virginia first – something like that.

ISABEL

He's a miner's hero. And this event starts more shootouts between the miners and the Baldwin-Felts agency with the State police for the rest of the year. Martial law is put down in Mingo county and miners face imprisonment for the smallest infraction. Hatfield goes to court, oddly not for killing ten people, but for some other offense and while walking up the steps with his wife, some Baldwin-Felts guys come out of nowhere and shoot them dead. Between that and the West Virginia governor laughing off the union organizer's demands, a bunch of miners decide to pick up their guns and free Mingo country from its martial law. 10,000 of them. The National Guard comes in. The U.S. army comes in. They start bombing towns with innocent people. But then these miners with their guns see the army standing there – many of them vets from world war one – ...and they just can't do it/ They can't go out there—

MELISSA

Fuck – I have to go back to work. That was interesting. Do you want to keep this?

ISABEL

The vape?

MELISSA

M-hm.

ISABEL

Not really.

MELISSA

I'll find some place for it. I don't think you ever answered my question.

ISABEL

Question... about my Dad?

MELISSA

Yeah, how he came to be... what he is now. Unless it's too personal.

ISABEL

I don't know. Why shouldn't he be?

MELISSA

Why shouldn't he be Trump?

ISABEL

I'm just saying shit.

MELISSA

I hear that. Nice talking to you.

ISABEL

You too.

MELISSA heads back inside.

ISABEL

I just say shit.

MELISSA, inside.

MELISSA

(under her breath)

I just say shit.

She waves to SHERYL, who's simultaneously trying to catch her attention.

SHERYL

Hey, uh, Arnold confronted an intruder last night, so it might be good to check in on him.

MELISSA

Oh shit. And I just told his daughter he's doing well – fuck. I've been avoiding him all day – She also was droning on about some Appalachian history, she seems stressed.

SHERYL

Don't you have family from there?

MELISSA

Yeah, an uncle, aunt, some cousins. East Kentucky.

SHERYL

Huh, anything to inform them about?

MELISSA

Probably not.

SHERYL

She's here, right?

MELISSA

Yeah, she'll come in soon.

SHERYL

Any reason you've been avoiding him? Last night, I thought you said you were gonna check in on him more – not to be, you know – more just curious what's going on.

MELISSA

Honestly, I just had a weird night last night and didn't want more drama.

SHERYL

At the friend's birthday?

MELISSA

Yeah, I can maybe get into it later. I'll just go, you know, check on Arnold.

SHERYL

Sure.

MELISSA heads for ARNOLD's room.

MELISSA arrives at his door behind which ARNOLD sleeps on his bed. MELISSA knocks and then slowly opens the door. She gently wakes him

MELISSA

Hey Arnold – oh, you're cold – how are you? I heard you had a bit of a scary confrontation last night. Just came to check in on you.

ARNOLD

It was nothing. I'm Finnish.

MELISSA

I'm... glad to hear that. Do you want to talk about what happened?

ARNOLD

An imposter – very weak by the way – he tried to keep his place, but I took it from him. He knew he needed to go so I sent him gone. But it was nothing.

MELISSA

Really? Because from what I heard, it must've been quite dramatic.

ARNOLD

Overblown. The TV will tell you.

MELISSA

Well I'm glad it didn't freak you out. Do you feel safe?

ARNOLD

Much safer than he is.

MELISSA

Well, that's not very nice. That man probably doesn't have a bed to sleep in every night.

ARNOLD

Oh, I know he doesn't. He's dead.

MELISSA

Excuse me?

ARNOLD

I mean, I don't know for sure – but that's how it usually goes.

MELISSA

Ok... do you want to explain to me what you mean by that?

ARNOLD

No.

MELISSA

Why's that?

ARNOLD

It'd blow your mind, marblehead. It's inexplicable.

MELISSA

Ok – you know I think you'd want to work on being a little nicer today. Your daughter's here to see you. I saw her in the parking lot.

ARNOLD

What?

MELISSA

Your daughter's here today.

ARNOLD

I should get up.

MELISSA

Maybe that'd be nice.

ARNOLD

I'm gonna get dressed. You can go now.

MELISSA

Alright. Thank you for talking with me.

MELISSA leaves the room, closing the door behind her. She heads for the breakroom. She begins re-stylizing the doll. Something posh but also something crazy. GARY enters.

GARY

Hey, how's your morning?

MELISSA

Fine. Weird. You?

GARY

I feel like I might kill somebody.

MELISSA

I'll give Kylie a knife or something.

GARY

Or an AR-15.

MELISSA

A little much. And not very stylish.

(looking through the drawer)

I think camo is going to have to do.

MELISSA begins to re-re-stylize the the Bratz doll.

A moment of quiet. GARY takes a bottle of milk from the fridge and begins drinking it from the pint.

MELISSA

Hey, what happened with Arnold last night?

GARY

I heard a lot of noise. Some homeless looking man seemed to have gotten into his room and they were fighting.

MELISSA

I just talked to him. He seemed not fazed at all, if anything a little secretive.

GARY

Maybe he doesn't remember most of it, I don't know.

MELISSA

Honestly, that's probably it.

GARY

Did you just get here?

MELISSA

Yeah... my Dad was having a little trouble this morning. It's nothing.

GARY

Wait, what about your Dad?

MELISSA

Yeah, that's a lie.

GARY

I thought so. Aren't your parents...

MELISSA

Yeah, I was hungover.

GARY

Damn, really? Have fun last night?

MELISSA

Yeah... I think.

GARY

Did I also see you holding a vape in the parking lot?

MELISSA

Fuck - was I visible?

GARY

I won't tell — Hey, I'm much worse — But I never expected that from you.

MELISSA

It's my sons — I don't even know why. And now Isabel, Arnold Buckley's daughter, has it—

GARY

Sorry, you need to explain.

MELISSA

We shared it – briefly. And then she started talking about how she became a socialist.

GARY

Oh, I see it. She so would be.

MELISSA

Yeah, I guess so.

GARY

I feel like you and me understand each other. We're on the same wavelength.

MELISSA

What do you mean?

GARY

We just see the world the same.

MELISSA

Are you... also a socialist? Or–

GARY

Oh! NO – I misread you I guess. I guess I misread you.

MELISSA

Oh. Ok.

GARY

But you really starting to let loose around this place. Showing up to work hungover. Vaping on your break.

MELISSA

I don't know if that's something I'd aspire to.

GARY

No, it's a good thing. In doses. You can't take these people too seriously.

MELISSA

You mean the residents?

GARY

Yeah.

MELISSA

(laughing)

That doesn't sound great.

GARY

You know what I mean.

MELISSA

I think I do.

GARY

There's maybe three things worth seriousness.

MELISSA

Ok... I gotta go... do my next thing.

GARY

Yeah, of course. Me too.

MELISSA exits, then GARY too heading a slightly different way. While ISABEL approaches ARNOLD's room. A knock... then the door creaks open... RONALD looks like he's just gotten dressed. Repetitively, throughout the scene, he grabs his shoulder and periodically does arm circles.

ISABEL

Hi Dad...

ARNOLD

I never had sex with Danielle Flanner!! Who are you??

ISABEL

It's me, your daughter, Isabel.

ARNOLD

You want my money, you can't have it!

ISABEL

I'm not here for any money, Dad...

ARNOLD

You can't have it! Get out of my room!

ISABEL

Dad, it's me...

ARNOLD

Why are you here?

ISABEL

To talk to you, ask about each other's week-

ARNOLD
You sound stupid...

ISABEL
Ok.

ARNOLD
I'm starting a campaign. You should know about it.

ISABEL
What's the campaign for?

ARNOLD
A garden hedge.

ISABEL
Oh, that sounds lovely.

ARNOLD
A big, beautiful garden hedge... 20 feet tall! With big, pointy thorns. And BUBBLES. We're going to build it. We're going to keep the bi-grant crime out. Biden immigrant crime. Biden immigrant bisexual bipolar binary jail time. Bisexual crime Bi-grant crime. Isn't that smart? That's smart. We're going to keep America America.

ISABEL
I'm... glad you have something to do.

ARNOLD
I do many things! What the hell are you saying? I do many things--

ISABEL
No, I'm not saying that you don't.

ARNOLD
You don't know what you're talking about.

ISABEL
Why do you want to keep the immigrants out?

ARNOLD
The bi-grants! The bisexuals! Right there. That's why.

ISABEL
What?

ARNOLD
You shouldn't even have to ask.

ISABEL
Like I am?

ARNOLD
Yes. Otherwise you'll see a panda angry. I'm a big bad pansy – I mean panda.

ISABEL
What are you doing with your arm?

ARNOLD
I'm stiff. I'm very busy. What the fuck is it your business?

ISABEL
Do you want to keep me out?

ARNOLD
(confused)
Keep you out.... With the garden hedge?

ISABEL
I guess so.

ARNOLD
Yes, I'll keep you out.

ISABEL
Oh.

ARNOLD
Why are you sniffing?

ISABEL
I don't know, it's probably dumb.

ARNOLD
Probably. A garden hedge brings order... and law – J-Law has really fallen off as an actress, hasn't she? She's a big fraudulent.

ISABEL
Do I make things more chaotic for you?

RONALD looks as ISABEL blankly. MELISSA heads for the lobby.

ARNOLD

... You're a woman.

ISABEL

... Bye, Dad.

*ISABEL exits the room, heads off in the direction MELISSA went. She exits briefly.
After she's gone, ARNOLD leaves the room as well and seemingly follows after her.*

MELISSA (O.S.)

Is everything alright?

ISABEL (O.S.)

He doesn't know who I am.

MELISSA (O.S.)

Oh...

ISABEL (O.S.)

He didn't know me.

MELISSA (O.S.)

I assure you he was doing very well yesterday—

ISABEL (O.S.)

I'm just not here enough – that's what it is—

MELISSA (O.S.)

Do you think it might help if you meet again with me there?

ISABEL (O.S.)

Maybe.

MELISSA (O.S.)

Then let's try.

The two reenter MELISSA and head towards Arnold's room. MELISSA knocks.

MELISSA

Arnold.

MELISSA knocks again.

MELISSA

It's Melissa.

She nudges open the door.

ISABEL

Oh fuck.

MELISSA looks to the bathroom. No sign of RONALD anywhere.

MELISSA

He can't have gone far. I'll start checking the common rooms. Can you go ask Sheryl if he tried to leave since he's been acting up?

ISABEL

Christ. I can't be hearing from the police again.

MELISSA

I'm sure you won't need to.

ISABEL

We don't know that. And also we do, we know how he is.

MELISSA

Let's cover our bases before panicking. I'm going to the common rooms, I'll get other available staff to help. Do you think you can go to the front desk and ask Sheryl if she's seen or heard anything?

ISABEL

Yes.

MELISSA

Ok, great.

ISABEL sighs. She sits on the couch and collects herself.

ISABEL

Why is it so hard to find your father?

MELISSA

I don't know. But right now, we just need to get looking. Are you able to ask Sheryl at reception about him?

ISABEL

Yeah.

MELISSA

Great.

MELISSA hurries off. ISABEL takes another breath before slowly standing up. ARNOLD enters and approaches reception with a bullet wound in his chest. He signs his name on a clipboard on the desk.

Thank you. SHERYL

Fuck off. ARNOLD

Excuse you. SHERYL

It's not your job to give feedback. ARNOLD

And what? Does that make it yours? SHERYL

I'm through with this organization. ARNOLD

ARNOLD turns around to re-exit. ISABEL enters the lobby.

Hey, Dad! ISABEL

Not today, Isabel! ARNOLD

ARNOLD doesn't even turn around. He exits the building. ISABEL follows.

Dad! ISABEL

SCENE 6

ARNOLD, walking somewhere from the parking lot. ISABEL finds him.

ISABEL

Dad, where are you going?

ARNOLD

Why do you care?

ISABEL

You live here now and you can't just go off when you live here.

RONALD

You don't tell me how to fucking live. That's never your job.

ISABEL

I'm the reason you got anything you got. That you're at this home and not the streets or jail—

ARNOLD stops walking.

ARNOLD

You give me lip like that again.

ISABEL

I'm 36. I talk how I—

ARNOLD

It don't matter you little shit. I'm your pops—

ISABEL

Yes you are! Which means now I help—

ARNOLD

You're not getting a cent off me!

ISABEL

What money?? What money, Dad?

ARNOLD

I'm not thinking much of this disrespect.

ARNOLD

Yeah? And with what money?

ARNOLD slaps ISABEL.

How does that feel?
ARNOLD

See what happens if I hit you back.
ISABEL

I'd like to see you try.
ARNOLD

A beat. She doesn't try.

Don't talk money with me.
ARNOLD

I'm not the one that brings it up.
ISABEL

You're disowned!
ARNOLD

Where the fuck are you going?!
ISABEL

I want a burger!!
ARNOLD

Then why didn't you just sign out??
ISABEL

I don't need to sign out.
ARNOLD

No, it's literally a rule—
ISABEL

I'm not signing out!
ARNOLD

Well, you have to.
ISABEL

It's humiliating!
ARNOLD

ISABEL

What if you forget how to get back? What if you get lost?--

ARNOLD

You fucking commie, stop trying to control me!

ISABEL

(happily)

Yes! Yes I am a commie! That's me--

ARNOLD

I never understood you.

A moment.

ISABEL

I don't understand me either, so...

ARNOLD

That makes sense.

ISABEL

(tearfully)

Do you want to go back to the lobby, sign out, then go get a burger?

ARNOLD

No!

ISABEL

Then what's this about?

ARNOLD

It's not the burger.

ISABEL

What?

ARNOLD

Gahhhh.

ISABEL

What do you want?!

ARNOLD

I want-- I want--

ISABEL

You're not this dumb just spit it out!

Silence.

Shut the fuck up!

ARNOLD

What do you need from me right now?

ISABEL

I want to make America great again.

ARNOLD

No, actually...

ISABEL

I...

ARNOLD

I'm sorry I yelled. Just take your time.

ISABEL

Silence.

Whatever I had... What did I have?

ARNOLD

I don't know.

ISABEL

Then who does?

ARNOLD

Silence.

You had a wife – Amy. You liked Corona's. You got into bird watching a little after I moved out and could tell me all these random facts about different types of birds. You were a dead head. You were in Cambodia for a few years and you never really explained why.

ISABEL

Cambodia?

ARNOLD

It's in Asia.

ISABEL

ARNOLD

I went there?

ISABEL

Pretty sure.

ARNOLD

Cambodia. What was I doing there?

ISABEL

You lived there.

ARNOLD

Why?

ISABEL

I don't know. I think you were kinda a hippie when you were younger, maybe that had something to do with it.

ARNOLD

... I think I remember that.

ISABEL

Yeah?

ARNOLD

I know the exact route to a burger spot from here.

ISABEL

Ok. You need to sign out though.

ARNOLD

No.

ISABEL

If you don't do it once, you're gonna start not doing it.

ARNOLD

But I know the exact route.

ISABEL

I know that. It doesn't matter.

ARNOLD

Why? It should matter, shouldn't it? I'm going to go.

ISABEL

No, you can't.

ARNOLD

Well I am.

ARNOLD exits. When she sees he's really going, ISABEL heads after him. They exit. A Burger King sign or other type of burger joint come into view. ARNOLD reenters followed by ISABEL. He stops when he sees the sign.

ISABEL

Dad, Dad, Dad – listen to me!

ARNOLD

It's time to go.

ISABEL

What? – What I was going to say is we can the burger without you signing out this one time, but in the future you can't wander off. Ok? You have to promise me.

ARNOLD

Burger...

ISABEL

Yes, you came here because you wanted a burger–

ARNOLD

(snaps)

I know that. Don't tell me things I already know.

ISABEL

Do you want to go inside then?

ARNOLD

You've always been my daughter.

ISABEL

What?

ARNOLD

I'm just saying.

ISABEL

You're scaring me.

A shift in ARNOLD's energy, resembling 'Arnold' and not Trump.

ARNOLD

I don't mean to scare you.

ISABEL

Well you are.

ARNOLD

I mean, you see how the signing out thing, it's just...

ISABEL

Yeah, I know. But you have to do it.

ARNOLD

You can't just decide you have control over me because I'm old.

ISABEL

It's not about that.

ARNOLD

But it is.

ISABEL

What do you think it's about?

ARNOLD

... I'm lost.

ISABEL

That's what I'm concerned about!

ARNOLD

No, I know we're at the Broadway Burger King, I just don't know what you're talking about.

ISABEL

Why you feel like I'm controlling you and not just fucking trying my best.

ARNOLD

I-

ISABEL

Yeah.

ARNOLD

You don't want to deal with me. You really just don't.

ISABEL

Someone has to! You think Ethan will?! You really think—

ARNOLD

Someone *has* to now, do they? I'm just a nuisance.

ISABEL

No, I like spending time with you.

ARNOLD

You don't have to lie.

ISABEL

I'm not.

ARNOLD

Then why is it every time you open my door, you look like your face is following off?

ISABEL

You're just sick.

ARNOLD

I'm not sick. I'm just old.

ISABEL

We're already here. Do you want a burger?

ARNOLD

Don't fucking patronize me.

ISABEL

I'm sorry. You just go be on your own then. See what happens.

ARNOLD

You know I can't do that.

(Beat.)

That's not my point. I made it to the W Broadway Burger King. That's...

(Beat.)

... I never liked you very much. And I said that too often.

Silence.

ARNOLD

You're too hotheaded.

Silence. Maybe ISABEL glares at ARNOLD. Maybe her lip quivers. Maybe both.

ARNOLD

You're too much like me.

ARNOLD turns and opens the door to the burger place. A bell attached to the door rings. As he walks through the door, he disappears.

ISABEL

Dad... what the fuck are you... You need someone to shut you up. That's what I'm here for. Why is it so hard to find your father? You know, even when he's sitting next to me – what is it about you? – I can't even find you then. It's not that there's something vacant in your eyes – your eyes aren't vacant. They always have some type of energy, even if tired. But most the time, it feels like you don't quite know where your soul sits within himself... Do you think that's important? I love you.

ISABEL considers for a moment... then opens the door itself. She follows him through.

SCENE 7

RONALD, awake again, sits on the couch in ARNOLD's room. He watched the tv. We hear a commercial.

TV VOICE

Side effects may include diarrhea, nausea, kidney loss, kidney failure, intestinal damage, depression, mania

On "mania" RONALD tries his best to lift the tv. He struggles but still knocks the damn thing onto the floor with a hefty thud. Just then, ARNOLD enters and startles seeing him. RONALD no longer speaks with a Trump voice.

ARNOLD

You're in my room.

RONALD

I know.

ARNOLD

Ok. Now get out.

RONALD

I'm Ronald.

ARNOLD

Do I know you?

RONALD

Sit down.

ARNOLD

I'll stand.

RONALD

You're clammy. Sit down.

ARNOLD surprises himself and sits. He wobbles a little as he does.

ARNOLD

Why are you here?

RONALD

Iunno. They say I'm what the cat dragged in. Does that make me a mouse?

RONALD laughs. It sounds a little unsettling.

What is this? ARNOLD

I think you know. RONALD

I'm not going to be played with! ARNOLD

Relax, please. Relax. Sit back down. RONALD

And he does.

You're losing your mind. You know this, right? RONALD

Who are you? What are you doing here? ARNOLD

Was passing through. But I thought we were good friends. You really don't remember me? RONALD

Just tell me who you are! ARNOLD

No you tell me! What's your name? RONALD

I— ARNOLD

Oh really? What's your daughter's name? RONALD

What's your wife's name? (Silence.)

What's your aide's name? (Silence.)

Mm— Me— Mme... ARNOLD

ARNOLD grabs his heart.

What's my name?
RONALD

Robert.
ARNOLD

Ronald!! And what's a person without a name?
RONALD

How am I supposed to respond to that?
ARNOLD

They're just a shadow, really.
ARNOLD

Shut your mouth!
ARNOLD

No, you shut your mouth! Why should we give you the ability to speak? What use do your words do anyway if you can't remember a name you just learned? If you can't remember your own name? If you're already dead!
RONALD

I'm not dead.
ARNOLD

But are you? I saw Gary shoot you. We all did.
RONALD

I'm not. I didn't.
ARNOLD

Another homeless man sleeping in a low security living facility, man.
RONALD

No you're not.
ARNOLD

Then what could I possibly be?
RONALD

I don't want to say it.
ARNOLD

But you're starting me in the face. You recognize who I am. Don't you?
RONALD

Yes. ARNOLD

What's my name? RONALD

Ronald. ARNOLD

Who am I?! RONALD

Silence.

You don't want to tell me? Ok. RONALD

RONALD rises and starts tearing apart the apartment. Breaking photographs, lamps, the television – whatever is in sight. ARNOLD rises to stop him, but stumbles.

What are you doing?! ARNOLD

Sit. Back. Down. RONALD

And he does.

I. Own. You. Who am I? WHO? What goes hoo? What animals goes hoo? RONALD

You're my condition. ARNOLD

And who do I own?! RONALD

Me. ARNOLD

Who do I own?! RONALD

You own me. ARNOLD

RONALD
Ok, so now we're on the same page.

ARNOLD
HEEELLLP!!

RONALD
Really?

ARNOLD
HEEELLLP!

GARY rushes in, rifle over his shoulder.

GARY
Mr. Trump! I came as soon as I heard you!

ARNOLD
Help me—

GARY aims his rifle at RONALD.

GARY
Get away from him!!

RONALD
What are you doing?!

GARY
Back away from the president!! Now!!

RONALD
What? No – what –

GARY
Now or I'll shoot!!

RONALD clutches his heart, entering into cardiac arrest. GARY keeps the rifle pointed on him. RONALD falls over as his heart fails. When he stops moving, ARNOLD gasps as if he's now struggling for air. GARY rushes to ARNOLD's side.

GARY
Thank God I heard some noise coming from your room, Mr. President. If I didn't get here, I don't even want to think about what would have happened.

ARNOLD
(frailly)

Ah, ah, thank you.

GARY
Are you ok? Do you need anything? Are you breathing alright?

ARNOLD
–Tired.

GARY
Ok. Let's get you in bed.

GARY lifts ARNOLD up and places him on his bed.

GARY
What happened?

ARNOLD
I– uh– I.

GARY
Do you feel ok now?

ARNOLD nods.

GARY
Is talking hard right now?

ARNOLD nods.

GARY
If it's easier to not talk, are you ok with just listening?

ARNOLD nods.

GARY
Do you remember when I was talking to you about my brother? – I took him outta rehab. Like you said.

ARNOLD
What he for?

GARY
Fentanyl.

ARNOLD

Terr–

GARY

He seems pretty straight right now, but I don't know how long it'll last. And I know you'd tell me there's someone to blame for getting him hooked. I know it's the Clinton's, but honestly everyday I'm with him – It's him. He's such a dumbass. And he knows it. He does this shit to himself and then makes it even worse when he realizes what he's doing. Nobody wants to hire him. Chili's don't want him for Christ sake. And I heard they took anybody.

ARNOLD looks into space.

GARY

What is it, Mr. President?

ARNOLD

Look...

GARY

What is it?

ARNOLD can't find the words.

GARY

You're a strange man. That's what I like about you.

ARNOLD

Ski–

GARY

Yeah. Like what you were saying about how life is about skipping rocks in a pond. I really like that. You just have to know how to finesse it. And that's hard to teach and it's even harder to learn, but I'm trying to learn. I really am. I just don't know if I have it in me anymore to just keep going. I've had a really rough year. But like a flat rock, the more times you bounce, the better. But I think I'm round. I mean, look at me, I've been getting a little bit of a belly. I don't think there's hope for me.

ARNOLD

Res–

GARY

I know, I need the resolve to just keep trying. If I try hard enough, I'll make my way. And then I'll be rich like you. I know. I know. I know. You don't have to keep reminding me – But I've tried so much!

ARNOLD gasps.

GARY

I just gotta keep throwing it. You're right. You're so right. I just gotta keep throwing. Try to get a good angle on it. You know we had the burial for my dog recently. My brother got to go cus, well, he's living with me. I got to see the kids too. It was a good ceremony. It really lifted my spirit.

ARNOLD tries to say something but can't.

GARY

I gotta go now. Buzz if you need anything.

ARNOLD nods.

GARY

Thanks for letting me share my troubles with you again, Mr. President.

ARNOLD looks troubled by this statement. GARY exits. Once he does, ARNOLD begins to scream.

ARNOLD

GAHHH. GAHHH. GAhhha. Aaaahaahhh.

ARNOLD tries to get up but can't. A tear sheds from his eye. SHERYL, meanwhile, is finishing up a call.

SHERYL

(on the phone.)

Oh, oh – our connections are bad– it made a noise. Sorry. You'll hear from us soon. Thank you for your interest in Company Bay. Goodbye.

MELISSA reenters and heads for the lobby, finding SHERYL.

MELISSA

Have you seen Arnold or his daughter?

SHERYL

Yeah, I did. Why?

MELISSA

When?

SHERYL

I've had a busy morning. I'm actually not sure. Half an hour ago? An hour?

MELISSA

Just I think he's missing right now. Did um Isabel, the daughter, come up to talk to you?

SHERYL

No.

MELISSA

Fuck... Oh! Did you see them together or separately?

SHERYL

I remember both their faces signing in, but it wasn't separately. But sometimes people come by here and I don't even notice— Really sorry.

MELISSA goes over to the sign-in sheet and scans it.

MELISSA

Have you heard of the Battle of Blair Mountain?

SHERYL

No, what's this? Is this like a Blair Witch thing?

MELISSA

I know, right? But no, it's not.

SHERYL

What?

MELISSA

It's just the thing Isabel was ranting about. You know my family use to be miners? I got some real hick blood—

(finding Arnold's and Isabel's names on the sheet.)

And they came in at different times. Fuck... and neither of them signed out... But he came in later, so he's here now?

SHERYL looks over.

SHERYL

I guess so.

MELISSA

I'm gonna go check his room.

SHERYL

Ok.

MELISSA rushes back out of the lobby. As she heads towards ARNOLD's room, GARY tags her.

GARY

Hey – Richard Habib’s having a panic attack at lunch and it’s making other residents anxious – Can you come help?

MELISSA

Yes, but first I need to check if Arnold’s in his room.

GARY

I saw him in there five minutes ago.

MELISSA

Really?

GARY

I literally just talked to him.

MELISSA

Ok good.

GARY and MELISSA rush off.

SHERYL

(to us.)

The date was awful. French men? Never going to have expectations again. You might remember, I was getting ready to look nice. He looks nice too, half an hour late to his reservation. And no matter what I tried to talk about, and I’m a good talker – he’d interrupt me and start droning about Formula One. Nothing could get him off Formula One. And when I started getting a bit about me for the first time all night, he tells me I’m boring him. Then he tells me to go back to his. And I’m like, you little French twink, I’m this close to snapping your waist in half. I want you to live, but I want to paralyze you. I want to make sure you can’t feel anything from the waist down so you never have the confidence to be that boring ever again. But overall, I’d say life’s going good.

SHERYL rises. You think, she’s heading for the breakroom, but instead exits.

SCENE 8

The sets as it is, but everyone's gone except a dead RONALD still on the floor and a half-dead ARNOLD on the bed.

Then ARNOLD stumbles out of bed. He doesn't bother for the podium.

ARNOLD

Look at me. Listen to what I say. Look at me. Listen to what I say.

He turns away from us, approaches RONALD. With the strength he has, he half picks RONALD up. He takes him to the bed, lays him down the best he can.

ARNOLD smiles at the incredibly still RONALD, seemingly proud of his good deed.

Then, he turns away, starts to head for the chair, but as he turns, he grabs his chest.

ARNOLD falls to his knees, then to the floor losing all strength in his legs.

Then, he lies still. For a while.

MELISSA enters. She heads for Arnold's room. Knocks.

MELISSA

Arnold?

She opens the door slightly ajar.

MELISSA

Arnold? Can I come in?

She opens the door all the way and rushes over to RONALD.

MELISSA

Arnold? Arnold?? Fuck.

She checks for a pulse. She frantically takes a pager from her waistband.

MELISSA

Code blue. We have a resident unresponsive in Room 1600. We need a medical team here ASAP. I'm starting chest compressions.

And she does.

Slowly, the lights dim.

LIGHTS UP:

EPILOGUE

Sheryl types at the receptionist desk. ISABEL rushes in.

ISABEL

Hey, I got a call about my father – They say he had a stroke.

SHERYL

What's the name?

ISABEL

Arnold Buckley.

SHERYL

Let me call his primary aide.

ISABEL

Ok.

SHERYL picks up the phone.

SHERYL

Hey, we have a relative of Arnold Buckley here–

ISABEL

His daughter.

SHERYL

His daughter. She says she got a call about a stroke.

A moment.

SHERYL (cont.)

Ok.

SHERYL hangs up.

SHERYL (cont.)

She's coming to you.

ISABEL

Ok.

ISABEL tries to breathe. After a moment or two, MELISSA enters.

ISABEL
How is he?

MELISSA
I'm sorry.

ISABEL
Is he...

MELISSA
He seemed to have passed in his sleep. It was a peaceful death.

ISABEL
(very small)
This is... sudden.

MELISSA
I know.

ISABEL
Where is he?

MELISSA
He's with the ambulance in the back parking lot.

ISABEL
I should go...

MELISSA
They'll be around front in a moment. We can follow them to the hospital.

ISABEL
We?

MELISSA
Sorry, I need to get back to work.

ISABEL
Got it.

We see ambulance lights across Isabel's face.

MELISSA
Do you want to follow them? If so, we need to flag them down now.

MELISSA heads for the door.

ISABEL

No – wait, it’s fine. I’ll just get there when I do. There’s not much to be done...

MELISSA

Ok.

ISABEL almost breaks down, but catches her breath. MELISSA approaches her for a hug.

MELISSA

Hey...

But ISABEL rejects it.

ISABEL

No, it’s ok.

MELISSA

Ok.

ISABEL

I should go to the car.

MELISSA

Only drive when you’re ready.

ISABEL

I know...

Silence.

ISABEL

Can I see his room?

MELISSA

Of course. Do you want me to come with?

ISABEL

No I just need to...

ISABEL heads towards Arnold’s room. It’s quiet as she does.

Slowly, she opens the door.

Inside, it’s orderly, as if he was never there. But still on the floor, by the couch, lies ARNOLD’s body. ISABEL spots the corpse and kneels down/collapses to him.

LIGHTS OUT.

END OF PLAY.