

DUMPSTER DIVING DADDY

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COLD OPEN

EXT. THE LOUVRE, PARIS, FRANCE, 2010.

A FRENCH MIME THIEF, holding the Mona Lisa, leaps through the pyramid entrance of the Louvre, shattering glass everywhere. An instrumental version of the "Dumpster Diving" theme song plays as YOUNG DAN QUIGGLEY, early 30s, premier CIA agent at the height of his game, follows hot in pursuit. The thief beelines along the Seine, throwing baguettes to trip up Dan, who expertly leaps over each of them. The thief changes tactics to throw croissant boomerangs; Dan dodges two and wolfs the other down mid-run.

EXT. EIFFEL TOWER - CONTINUOUS

The thief rushes into the public square in front of the Eiffel Tower and starts to scale the facade to the top. Dan follows just behind. As he climbs, the thief uncorks a bottle of expensive champagne and blasts it like a gun toward Dan, who almost slips on the wine-soaked metal bars, just barely regaining his handhold.

The two of them reach the top. The thief whips out one last baguette as a weapon. Dan grabs a nearby selfie-stick from an astonished tourist, who drops the banana he was eating in his other hand. The thief and Dan sword fight with baguette and selfie-stick. We see off-kilter snapshots from the selfie-stick's POV of the two of them battling. Finally, Dan knocks the mime's baguette away and presses forward. The thief attempts to mime a sword in desperation.

DAN

I've got you now...ahh!

Dan slips on a banana peel the tourist dropped. He loses his balance and falls off the Eiffel Tower, screaming in slow-motion. The "Dumpster Diving" theme song morphs into "Adagio for Strings" as Dan falls to what will surely be his death...only to land in a dumpster on the lawn outside the tower. The trash bags break his fall, but his ankle loudly snaps, twisted and trapped under the refuse. Dan moans in pain but grits his teeth and tries to free himself. From the top of the tower the thief takes out a perfume bottle with a string fuse attached to it.

FRENCH MIME THIEF

(miming with subtitles)

Give my regards to the CIA.

The thief lights the makeshift bomb on fire and throws it like a grenade.

We see the flaming perfume bottle arc in the air and land in the dumpster, lighting everything on fire. Flames engulf Dan as he tries to climb out, but his ankle is still trapped. The motion knocks the lid of the dumpster closed, trapping him inside the bonfire!

Dan starts to panic but suddenly spots a half-empty Evian water bottle. The music starts to change back to the pumping "Dumpster Diving Daddy" theme as Dan opens the Evian and dashes it on the flames - they die down a little! Dan spots a knock-off Louis Vuitton blanket - he throws it on the fire, which douses it! But the smoke is still filling the dumpster; Dan coughs and gasps for air on the verge of passing out...when he discovers a discarded snorkel mask. He dons the mask and extends the tube up toward the crack of fresh air at the top of the dumpster. Finally, Dan discovers the selfie-stick that fell with him into the trash - it's just barely out of reach. He grabs it, extends it bit by bit until it hooks it on the edge of the trash bin, and uses all his strength to pull himself free. He heaves himself up, using his head to open the lid of the dumpster, into the light and gasps!

CUT TO:

EXT. QUIGGLEY RESIDENCE, WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA, PRESENT-DAY

A record-scratch interrupts the theme song and Dan's reverie. COURTNEY QUIGGLEY, mid-40s, got-her-shit-together FBI agent and wife who brings home the bacon, stands with her hands on her hips outside their new home in West Palm Beach, Florida. We see DAN QUIGGLEY, mid-40s, current stay-at-home Dad and our hero, frozen holding a bag of garbage over an ordinary trash can.

COURTNEY

Dreaming of dumpsters again, Dan?

Dan sheepishly smiles back as Courtney rolls her eyes and heads inside.

CUE THEME SONG:

SHORTER THEME SONG

*Dumpster Diving Daddy! Come along  
with Daddy, let's all dumpster  
dive!*

ACT ONE

INT. QUIGGLEY RESIDENCE - MOMENTS LATER.

It's the home of Dan and Courtney Quiggley: a split-level McMansion at the end of a cul-de-sac. The floors are littered with unopened moving boxes.

DUSTY QUIGGLEY, 8-year-old, precocious child with the intense drive of his mother and reckless abandon of his father, plays with LEGOs next to Courtney, who sits at a canvas painting images of inspiring animals: a three-legged Pomeranian, a bluejay with a clipped wing, and butterflies - so many butterflies.

COURTNEY

Did you know, Dusty, that a group of butterflies is called...

DUSTY

Let me guess!

Dusty rushes to the canvas, hugs his mom's arm, and squints in concentration.

COURTNEY

Ok, hun, but it's not something...

DUSTY

A Proletariat!

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

Communist.

Dusty giggles and hugs his mom. She sighs and smiles.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

It's called a Kaleidoscope. Look!

She rolls out a gorgeous painting she's been working on for months - a kaleidoscopic rendition of hundreds of butterflies.

DUSTY

Wow. That's cool.

COURTNEY

Thanks, Dust Bunny! Just goes to show, there's always a beautiful way to see the world - even with hard things like moving to a new city...

Dan loudly walks in through the front door, nearly tripping over a box that says "BURNED CDRW'S!" Dusty abandons his mom to rush over to his dad, grabbing his LEGOs on the way.

DUSTY

Dad, look at what I made!

Dusty drags him over to his model of men and women raising their fists, standing outside a factory.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

The workers own the means of production now!

Dan and Courtney exchange a worried look. Courtney gestures toward a moving box on the floor.

COURTNEY

Dusty, look what your Dad got you.

Dan rifles through the box until he finds a second-hand box set of LEGOS that reads: "U.S. CAPITOL: MAKE YOUR OWN CONGRESS!" He offers it to Dusty.

DAN

What if you tried playing with this, son?

Dusty looks at the box and grimaces.

DUSTY

(under his breath)  
As if *this* will ever dismantle late-stage capitalism.

Dan leans in close so only Dusty can hear him.

DAN

(whispering)  
What if I told you I found it dumpster diving outside a Toys"R"Us?

Dusty's eyes light up. He nods enthusiastically and starts playing on the floor with them. Courtney shoots Dan a look - how'd he manage that? - but lets it go. Dan walks over to give his wife a hug.

DAN (CONT'D)

He'll grow out of it.

Courtney pulls out of the hug.

COURTNEY

I work at the FBI, Dan. We gotta cut this Communist crap.

(beat)  
Somehow he got a copy of this.

She walks over to the top cabinet in the kitchen and removes a children's version of "The Illustrated Communist Manifesto." The cover shows a goofy cartoon of Lenin playing with a whimsical cartoon Mao, with a word bubble proclaiming "Sharing is fun!"

DAN

Hehe. Oops! My bad.

COURTNEY

Where'd you find this one? Honest answers only.

Dan slinks over to the sink to wash his hands.

DAN

In a dumpster outside the Cuban Embassy in D.C.

Courtney scowls at him.

COURTNEY

Dan! I've been toiling away at headquarters for this promotion while you're reliving your glory days in every trash receptacle from Foggy Bottom to Friendship Heights.  
(beat)  
You promised you were done diving.

DAN

I just miss the action.

COURTNEY

Hunny, you know what happens when you take things too far.

Dan hangs his head as the camera dissolves to...

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - WASHINGTON D.C., 2010

"Adagio for Strings" plays again as we cut back to right after Dan's failed CIA mission in France. He's home again in the United States, recovering in a hospital, covered in bandages, his ankle in a cast. We see CIA officers standing over his hospital bed, shaking their heads as they review the snapshots developed from the selfie-stick.

INT. / EXT. LANGLEY - DAYS LATER

We see Dan on crutches back at Langley being berated by his superiors, ending in him handing over his CIA badge. Dan exits the building carrying a box of his belongings in an empty trash pail and into the waiting arms of Courtney, who embraces him. The camera pans up to the overcast sky as Dan falls to the ground, crying. We see imaginary banana peels falling like rain drops over his head from his point of view.

EXT. GLOOMY STREET IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

A depressed Dan, hobbling in a walking boot, takes out the trash from the Quiggley's house in D.C He opens the dumpster in their alley and throws the garbage inside. He is about to close the bin when he spots a discarded bottle of Coco Chanel perfume: the very thing that ruined his career. He angrily grabs the bottle and prepares to smash it, but suddenly stops, sniffing the aroma. A tortured moment turns to curiosity as he sprays the perfume on his arm and leans in. We zoom into Dan's eyes lighting up with joy - something is stirring inside him. He starts to rifle through other treasures in the dumpster - a knock-off Swiss Army knife, an oversized high-school wrestling Trophy, a perfectly preserved can of anchovies, an outdated SAT questionnaire, and more.

His addiction to dumpster diving has begun.

CUT TO:

INT. QUIGGLEY RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Another record scratch as Courtney shakes Dan by the shoulders, waking him from his reverie.

COURTNEY

Dan! Hello?! Get your head out of the dumpster!

DAN

Babe, I'm just jonesing for one last dive. And then no more!

COURTNEY

And then what? Dumpster Diving Anonymous?!

Dan spins around.

DAN (V.O.)  
 But Court! People throw away the  
 most beautiful things. Just look  
 around us! Like a...

The Dumpster Daddy theme song begins anew as Dan begins to  
 sing, pulling out objects scattered from boxes:

DAN **Listen to the song here**  
 (sings)  
*Knock-off Jackson Pollack improved  
 by ketchup stains, a Pomodoro  
 timer, a set of oil paints!*

Court looks to her first painting in the corner.

COURTNEY  
 (spoken)  
 My first butterfly...

Dan shows her pictures from a box labeled "MEMORIES."

DAN  
*A thermos full of chili when we  
 were starving by the lake. Bouquets  
 of Calla lillies, Dusty's first  
 birthday cake.*

COURTNEY  
 (spoken)  
 There was a whole slice missing!

DAN  
*It's not just the things I found,  
 it's what we found along the way.*

Courtney rolls her eyes.

DAN (CONT'D)  
*It may be right to give it up, but  
 what I'm trying to say...is...you  
 love this...*

COURTNEY  
 NOPE! We're not doing it! Not again  
 Dan!!!

The tempo picks up to full-steam ahead!

DAN  
*Dumpster diving daddy! Finding  
 buried treasure! Not just for the  
 pleasure, we dive to feel alive!*  
 (MORE)



DAN (CONT'D)  
*Dumpster diving daddy, you can't  
 take the measure, of what's buried  
 down deep inside..like this...*

We now see a fast musical montage of all the wonderful things  
 and when Dan found them.

DAN (CONT'D)  
*Lighting rod, first gen iPod, a  
 still life of a fruit bowl, a  
 purple wig on Peppa pig, a  
 universal remote control! Your  
 Louboutins, filet mignon, three  
 canisters of nitrous gas, caviar  
 from Myanmar, this broken Big Mouth  
 Billy Bass!*

COURTNEY  
 (sings)  
*A twin-size cot, an InstaPot, our  
 2014 Christmas tree!*

DAN  
*A Betty Boop, a hula-hoop, Bernie  
 Madoff's guilty plea!*

COURTNEY  
 (pointing to Dusty)  
*His googley-eyes!*

DAN  
*That rhubarb pie!*

COURTNEY  
 (whispers)  
*My special satin G-String!*

DAN  
 (trying to keep it PG)  
*Our favorite song!*

COURTNEY  
 (sexily)  
*Just play along!*

DAN  
*And don't forget your wedding ring!*

Dan catches himself. Whoops. Courtney stops the song mid-  
 verse!

COURTNEY  
 (spoken)  
 EXCUSE ME! WHAT?!

Awkward beat. Then Dusty jumps right back into the Chorus.

DUSTY  
*Dumpster Diving Daddy! Finding  
 buried treasure!*

Dan picks up Dusty trying to cheer up Courtney, who's not having it anymore.

DAN/DUSTY (CONT'D)  
*Not just for the pleasure, we dive  
 to feel alive! Dumpster diving  
 daddy, you can't take the measure,  
 come along mommy, let's all  
 dumpster dive!*

Big finish. Silence.

COURTNEY  
 I have to get work.

DAN  
 But Court!

Courtney sighs and grabs a hold of Dan's hands.

COURTNEY  
 Diving is not going to get you back  
 in the CIA. I need you to promise  
 me that you are *done with it*.  
 Today.

Dan takes a big breath and exhales.

DAN  
 Ok. No more shenanigans. I'll take  
 Dusty to school. I'll make us  
 dinner. And I won't even get close  
 to a dumpster. Promise.

He hooks his index finger around Courtney's thumbs and leans in to kiss it gingerly. Courtney smiles and relaxes.

COURTNEY  
 Thank you, hunny. This can be a new  
 start for us.

She crosses over to sit at their kitchen table, where she's prepared a sumptuous breakfast and served it on paper plates.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

And I'm sorry I was snippy.  
Everyone in the Bureau's saying  
there's something big brewing down  
here in Palm Beach County. I've  
gotta bring my A-Game.

DAN

I know you will, babe. I love you.

As the two parents lock eyes and lean in to kiss, Dusty sneaks over to the table and forks most of the bacon over onto his plate.

DUSTY

(whispers)

To each according to his needs.

EXT. COURTNEY AND DAN HOUSE DRIVEWAY - MINUTES LATER.

Dan loads Dusty and his Che Guevara backpack into the back seat of their Kia Sorento with a custom license plate that says FR3GAN. Dan closes the car door and turns to the window of his wife's orange Mini Cooper - the one she bought back in her "fun" days - with a license plate that says SPY MOM.

DAN

Go save the world.

Courtney leans against the interior window of her car and looks admiringly at her husband.

COURTNEY

Thanks, hunny.

(beat)

Stay away from slippery fruit.

(beat)

Dried fruit only.

(beat)

Raisins, gorp, etc.

DAN

(cutting her off)

You got it, babe.

She drives off. Dan gets in his car, but before he can leave, his neighbor JAMIE, late 30s but pretends she's Gen Z, all Botox and fillers, bursts out onto the front porch of her next-door McMansion.

JAMIE

Literally, hello new neighbor!

Dan plasters on a smile and waves back.

DAN  
Nice to meet you. We're the  
Quiggleys!

JAMIE  
I know! I read your mail!

She smiles wide - a bit too wide - as she walks over and gives Dan his unopened mail through the car window. Dan furrows his brow, disturbed.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
Toooootally kidding. I would never.  
But some of your mail got mixed in  
with my Rent-The-Runway.

Jamie pulls out a vape and inhales deeply. Jamie's daughter, LISTERIA, 8, spoiled rotten, walks out from behind her mom's legs. Jamie hands the vape to Listeria, who begins to puff.

DAN  
Are you sure she should be doing  
that?

JAMIE  
Oh, it's okay. It's just banana  
flavor. Gotta get that potassium!

DAN  
(To himself)  
Banana?!

The "Adagio for Strings" song starts playing for a split second as we zoom in slow-motion on Listeria puffing a cloud of banana smoke.

DUSTY  
Dad, we're going to be late!

Dan shakes himself from his stupor and drives off as fast as he can, tires screeching.

EXT. DESANTIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - MINUTES LATER.

Dan and Dusty pull into the parking lot of DeSantis Elementary School. Kids are swarming everywhere. Dan swivels to face his son tracing Che Guevara's face on his backpack.

DAN  
Son.

Dusty doesn't look up.

DAN (CONT'D)  
Comrade?

Dusty looks up.

DAN (CONT'D)  
Your mother's right. We both need  
to be on our best behavior here.  
Act like real, responsible men.

DUSTY  
Can't we go dumpster diving, daddy?

DAN  
Those days are over, son. Now go  
and get good grades in school.

Beat. Dan leans in and taps the figure of Che Guevara.

DAN (CONT'D)  
And maybe let's keep the revolution  
to ourselves?

Dusty frowns but nods his head.

DAN (CONT'D)  
Ok! Have a great day!

Dusty jumps out of the car and joins the mass of kids. Dan  
glumly watches his son walk away.

INT. FBI BRANCH OFFICE, PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA.

Courtney walks with MARIBEL, late 70s, seen-it-all FBI agent,  
now comfortable desk worker.

MARIBEL  
The Cuban Missile Crisis.

COURTNEY  
Yikes.

MARIBEL  
That was my first day at the Bureau  
in Miami. There I was...the *only*  
female agent telling these grown  
men to calm down, eat some maduros,  
tell your wife and your girlfriend  
you love them, and get back to  
work.

COURTNEY

I hear you. Sometimes I can't tell  
if I'm my husband's wife or his  
mother.

MARIBEL

Niños.

The two arrive on the central floor of the FBI branch. It's full of mostly white men in suits, chumming it up and acting busy with one another. Multiple framed portraits of Ronald Reagan in various positions smile down on them all.

COURTNEY

This looks like the Brooks Brother  
riot. I thought Florida would be  
more...

MARIBEL

The fro-yo machine here only serves  
vanilla, entiendes?  
(beat)  
It really only does serve vanilla.  
The chocolate hasn't worked in  
years.

The director of their branch, RADISSON HAWTHORNE, looks mid-20s, catty, ambitious gay twink, rolls in on a wheelchair. A group of agents surround him, all trying to get his attention.

MARIBEL (CONT'D)

And there he is. Director Radisson  
Hawthorne.

COURTNEY

*That's* our Director? He's like  
what...25?

MARIBEL

Oh, I think much older, but you  
can't tell. Botox, fillers, gay  
spells.

COURTNEY

Gay spells?

MARIBEL

Demonio homosexual.

COURTNEY

Say what?

MARIBEL  
 (whispering)  
 He is a gay demon!

Courtney's about to protest. Maribel pulls her aside in private.

MARIBEL (CONT'D)  
 No, no, no! I am not a homophobe!  
 My cousin Marco was on Drag Race  
 Cuba.  
 (beat)  
 But, let me tell you, *mujer a  
 mujer*, beware of the Director. He  
 is no ordinary homosexual *hombre*.

COURTNEY  
 Oh...kay. I better say hello.

Courtney excuses herself from Maribel and approaches Radisson. He spots her from afar, smiles, and rolls over to extend his hand.

RADISSON  
 Okkkkk, new transfer! Welcome to  
 Florida. You better be ready to  
*werk*, Agent Quiggley!

He shakes her right hand with his left. She awkwardly returns the backwards handshake.

COURTNEY  
 Yes, Director. I'm excited to get  
 to "work."

RADISSON  
 (to others nearby)  
 She's goin' to slay, I can tell.

The nearby agents laugh robotically. Radisson starts wheeling her toward her desk. Courtney follows along.

RADISSON (CONT'D)  
 Tell me, *bb*, what got you started  
 at the FBI?

COURTNEY  
 Oh. Well, I've always wanted to  
 serve my country.

RADISSON

BOOOORING! Me? I was sniffing a bag of coke and God knows what else I found on the floor of a 9/11 slash Glitter remembrance circuit party when I had an epiphany - I just had to join the FBI! What better way to serve my country and honor the injustice of Mariah Carey's best film being overshadowed by 9/11?

He shows her a screenshot on his phone of the infamous Glitter poster in front of the burning Twin Towers with #NeverForget in black on white text.

COURTNEY

(forcing a smile)

You sure lived a wild life.

(carefully)

May I ask how you became director of this branch with a past history of drug use?

RADISSON

Oh please. It's 2022! They need gays for diversity hires, and there isn't a gay without a few skeletons in his closet. Or a wig collection and a box of poppers!

A beat. He leans in.

RADISSON (CONT'D)

Us diversity hires gotta stick together, eh?

Courtney cringes and shoots a look over her shoulder at Maribel, who is making the sign of the cross.

RADISSON (CONT'D)

Tell me *something* interesting about yourself?

COURTNEY

Um. Well, a long time ago, we went to Burning Man.

RADISSON

We - as in...?

COURTNEY

Oh, my husband Dan and me.

CUT TO:



EXT. BURNING MAN PLAYA, NIGHT-TIME, 2002.

Dan and Courtney pick up trash on the playa with elaborate light-stick poles and Burning Man costumes. In the background we see an elderly man K-'d out lying flat on a trampoline, a lit up art car in the shape of a middle finger cruising the playa, and a Sparkle Pony dancing nearly naked on top of a Porta-Potty.

Dan and Courtney dreamily walk through it all, smiling wide.

DAN

You've been the best surprise of my burn, Lady Wonder.

COURTNEY

Let's remember this forever, Freegan.

They pause and hold hands watching The Man burn. A bunch of naked bros run by screaming, "F\*CK yer burn!" Another naked bro straggles behind quietly repeating, "Where's the Med tent?" Dan and Courtney kiss.

F.B.I. BRANCH - CONTINUOUS

COURTNEY

We all have to grow up sometime.

RADISSON

Not if you're gay! We stay young forever. Thank gay Christ for human growth serum.

COURTNEY

(frowns)

Isn't that made from like...recycled baby foreskins?

RADISSON

Well, that baby better know she done already had hers!

He cackles and makes a strange, unknowable symbol in the air with his hands. Courtney is now seriously getting weirded out.

RADISSON (CONT'D)

It's the *least* the breeders could give me after I had to spend years in the closet, pretending I liked Tenacious D.

Radisson claps his hands.

RADISSON (CONT'D)  
 'Nough spillin' tea! We've got to  
 get you up to speed with our  
 'Special Operation.'

COURTNEY  
 Excellent. My security clearance  
 should have gone through to be  
 briefed immediately if I'll be  
 working on--

RADISSON  
 (interrupting)  
 Oh, you'll be werkin on it alright!  
 In...surveillance.

Radisson pulls out a briefing folder from under his butt on  
 the wheelchair. It says "CCTV MONITORING: AGENT QUIGGLEY."  
 Courtney takes it uncertainly.

COURTNEY  
 Director, I was told this was a  
 promotion. I was a Field Agent back  
 in D.C., as I'm sure you're  
 aware...

RADISSON  
 Then you'll be well suited to  
 conduct surveillance here, Agent  
 Quiggley. No chance of any  
 'accidents' happening that way,  
 right?

Some nearby agents chuckle, eavesdropping on the moment.  
 Courtney swallows nervously.

RADISSON (CONT'D)  
 (suppressing a smile)  
 I'm referring to your heterosexual  
 train-wreck of a husband, and  
 apparently hardcore Burner,  
 imperiling French and U.S.  
 relations over a banana peel. The  
 Mona Lisa is *still* at large.

Radisson smirks at his own read. Courtney stands taller.

COURTNEY  
 Sir, that was years ago...and my  
 husband and I are different people  
 who served in different Federal  
 agencies.

(MORE)

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

To hold me back because of his  
actions would be the height of...

Radisson falls deadly silent, waiting for her to finish.  
Courtney reads the moment and swallows her pride.

COURTNEY

But...I'm happy to serve the Bureau  
in whatever capacity I can.

Radisson claps his hands to a cheer-leader beat.

RADISSON

That's what I like to hear, hunny!  
See you at noon at the briefing,  
queen!

Radisson wheels off. Maribel walks up to Courtney.

MARIBEL

See? Gay Satan.

ACT TWO

EXT. PUBLIX PARKING LOT - AN HOUR LATER.

Dan drives his Kia into the parking lot of the local Publix. He gets out loaded with reusable grocery bags he brought from D.C. Dan's nothing if not a hard-core recycler.

He approaches the entrance only to spot a grocer dumping a bin of expired products into the dumpster around the side of the building. Dan catches his breath, aching to look closer, but steels himself and enters through the automatic sliding doors.

INT. PUBLIX GROCERY STORE - CONTINUOUS

Dan roams the aisles aimlessly, overwhelmed with choices. His preferred method of collecting food is through happenstance - what will the dumpster deliver today? He has no stomach for neatly organized aisles of expensive, branded food. He walks to the meat section, where a banner displays the figure of MR. PUBLIX, 80s, sinister owner of the supermarket, smiling down on a figure of a robotic cow head perched over the meat freezer. As Dan approaches, the animatronic cow comes to life, singing over his dead brethren.

COW

(sings)

*Twinkle twinkle little beef...*

Dan shudders, turns away, and runs right into his neighbor Jamie.

JAMIE

Whaaaaat?! This is a tooootttally  
crazy co-wink-ee-dink little meet-  
cute. Get it, meat?!

She gestures with one hand to the displays of beef behind Dan, and grasps Dan on the shoulder, a little too hard, her grip lingering on his muscles a bit too long.

DAN

(gently removing her hand)

Hi. Jamie was it? Funny to run into  
you here.

JAMIE

Not - even. Shopping is NOT just  
for women anymore.

DAN  
 You...said it. I'm a proud stay-at-home Dad now.

He forces a smile and gives a thumbs-up.

JAMIE  
 And that's brave of you. So, like, what's for dinner?

Dan grimaces and peers into his empty cart. He looks back to the singing robotic cow, crooning lyrics over the dead.

DAN  
 I was thinking...beef.

Dan looks unsure where to begin. He nervously reaches for a box of Hamburger Helper. Suddenly, the singing cow behind the display malfunctions, starts smoking, and falls off the wall. Dan recoils and drops the box.

JAMIE  
 There's no helping *that* burger.

EXT. PUBLIX - MINUTES LATER.

Dan and Jamie emerge - she's stocked his cart with everything he needs to make a ground beef casserole and hasn't stopped talking the whole time, other than when inhaling her Juul.

JAMIE  
 And like, everyone says the flavors were marketed just to teens, but like - what about me? I like mango too.

DAN  
 (desperate to escape)  
 It's gotta be better than smoking.

JAMIE  
 That's what I tell my Listeria. Plus, the nicotine totally helps her focus.

DAN  
 (trying to end this nightmare)  
 Yup. Thanks. Bye!

Jamie inhales on her Juul and waves Dan goodbye. Dan shakes his head, so very weirded out by it all that he turns without thinking to face the Publix dumpster not ten feet from him.

Time stops, the world slows down.

Dan peers over his shoulder - Jamie's gone. He inches his cart closer to the dumpster, beginning to hyperventilate with excitement. We hear a strange sound begin to emanate from the trash. It starts with a solitary steel drum beating a steady rhythm - followed by other-worldly melodies sung by an all-boys choir, cascading and falling in cadences over one another. The voices coalesce into a single repeated lyric:

CHILDREN'S CHOIR

(sings)

*The wonderful world of trash! The  
wonderful world of trash!*

Dan is now inches away from the lid. The sound is overpowering him - a siren song capturing Odysseus. He reaches for the lid when...

JAMIE

Daaaaaan! You forgot something.

Dan catches a scream in his throat as Jamie grabs his shoulder again, spinning him around. She hands him a three-layer banana cream pie. Dan, delirious from his near-trash experience, stutters to speak.

DAN

I do-do-don't re-re-re-member  
getting a pie, Jamie?

Jamie gently lowers the pie onto his cart.

JAKE

(winking)

It's just a little house-warming  
gift from us. Banana Cream. Mmm.

Dan squeaks a little in horror. Jamie leans in close, as if to kiss Dan. He looks on the verge of heaving. Then Jamie pulls away tittering and struts off without another glance.

Dan freaks out in a moment of panic and throws the cake into the nearby dumpster.

DAN

For my brethren!

Dan walks off without looking back. We zoom in closer to the dumpster and see a pair of paws holding the cake...and two orange eyes underneath the lid, hungrily watching Dan leave.

INT. DUSTY'S CLASSROOM AT DESANTIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - MID-DAY

Dusty, bored out of his mind by his pedantic third grade class, sits at his desk and doodles a hammer and sickle in his notebook. He looks up around the room: there's a mural of two men holding hands with a huge X over them and the words "Don't Say Gay!" written in block letters. Next to it is a poster of Governor Ron DeSantis, cherished founder of DeSantis Elementary School, pointing to a map of the United States with a circle around Martha's Vineyard and a caption: "Bad girls and bad boys go here!"

Dusty glowers at his teacher, MS. CAMPAGNA, 40s, fundamentalist Mary Poppins, and the holster on her hip holding an American tactical handgun. Every adult working at the school wears a holster and gun.

MS. CAMPAGNA

Let's say it together! Who stops a bad guy with a gun?

She gestures like a conductor for all the kids to respond.

KIDS

(in unison)

You do, Ms. Campagna!

She beams with pleasure.

MS. CAMPAGNA

That's right! Now, everyone please help me welcome a new student transferring all the way from godless Washington D.C. Please welcome...Dusty? Err, is Dusty short for a real name, dear?

Dusty shakes his head. The other kids all look at him like he's an alien.

MS. CAMPAGNA (CONT'D)

What a fun choice! Your parents must be Democrats.

She chortles and the other kids laugh along. Dusty continues to play it cool, not saying anything, eyeing the room.

MS. CAMPAGNA (CONT'D)

Well, what do your parents do, Dusty?

DUSTY  
 (under his breath)  
 Work for the government.

MS. CAMPAGNA  
 You'll have to speak up, child!

DUSTY  
 (changing his mind)  
 My mom works for Greenpeace and my  
 dad works for Planned Parenthood.

A hush falls over the room. Ms. Campagna attempts to keep a cheery smile, but a gloom settles behind her eyes.

MS. CAMPAGNA  
 Well, isn't that nice? You'll fit  
 right in. Why, Listeria here - her  
 dad works for a non-profit also.

Listeria swivels in her chair. Dusty spots her fiddling with her Juul under the table, just out of sight.

LISTERIA  
 Daddy runs the Heritage Foundation.

MS. CAMPAGNA  
 And aren't we grateful?

The bell rings. Dusty sighs in relief.

MS. CAMPAGNA (CONT'D)  
 Off to lunch! And remember to come  
 back on time! Five minutes is  
 early, on time is late, and late  
 is...

KIDS  
 Deported!

Dusty rushes out of class ahead of his peers.

INT. LUNCHROOM - MOMENTS LATER.

Dusty shuffles ahead in the lunch line. The LUNCH LADY, 60s, skinny as a wire with a googily fake eye, slops something green resembling pesto pasta on Dusty's tray. He continues behind Listeria.

LISTERIA  
 You're weird.



DUSTY

Hi.

LISTERIA

Your daddy drives a Kia Sorento.

DUSTY

So?

LISTERIA

My mommy drives a Lexus LX 750.

Dusty stares at her. After a beat.

LISTERIA (CONT'D)

They say you can tell so much about  
a person by their car.

DUSTY

They? As in capitalist pigs?

Listeria makes an "eww" face and shuffles over to the cash register. She holds up her Apple Watch to the bored EMPLOYEE, early 20s, working the cafeteria shift.

LISTERIA

Sir, do you accept Apple Pay?

The employee doesn't respond, just points with his handgun to where she should tap on the register. She makes a show of lifting her watch elegantly to the receiver until she hears the beep. She struts away from Dusty, who fiddles with his backpack to get the cash his dad gave him for lunch.

DUSTY

How much is it?

EMPLOYEE

\$19.50.

DUSTY

What?! For this slop!

The lunch lady cackles in the distance, then starts coughing all over the "pesto pasta."

EMPLOYEE

(speaking by rote)

Subsidized school lunches were  
eliminated in the recent  
legislation signed by our Governor  
and dear leader Ron DeSantis.

Dusty groans and ponies up over a \$20 bill. The employee hands him 50 cents back, then gestures with his gun at a tip jar. Dusty rolls his eyes and drops the 50 cents in it. As he walks away, he glances back at MARVIN, 8, shy loner behind him in line, who stares in terror at the price tag. Marvin meekly pushes his tray to the side and sneaks out of line - clearly unable to pay the exorbitant fee.

Dusty marches over and sets his tray down at Listeria's table.

DUSTY

I'll be right back - save me a spot.

LISTERIA

I'm not sitting next to someone wearing Old Navy!

She gets up in a huff and leaves. Dusty ignores her and sneaks behind the lunch counter. He creeps up to where Marvin left his tray behind. Dusty slowly pulls it out of sight and tries to creep away with it - when suddenly the Lunch Lady grabs him by the collar of his polo shirt and hoists him up.

LUNCH LADY

(screaming)  
Security! Thief!

An alarm goes off and all the doors to the room automatically lock. All the adults in the room point their firearms directly at Dusty. Dusty drops the tray of stolen food everywhere, then wrestles himself out of the lunch lady's grip. He leaps on-top of the cash register. The alarm cuts out, and Dusty seizes the moment.

DUSTY

Friends! Comrades! What is this but a gross violation of our rights as common citizens?

The other kids watch the scene in awe, frozen, food half-way to their mouths. The adults slowly lower their firearms in disbelief.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

Too long, as in at least today but probably long before I arrived, we have suffered under the yoke of our capitalist overlords! It is time we rise up and demand what's fair! Food - for all! Safety - without a police state!

(MORE)

DUSTY (CONT'D)  
 Equal rights - for everyone to  
 share in the bounty of this  
 glorious Sunshine State!

Patriotic music swells.

DUSTY (CONT'D)  
 Who is with me?! Who will stand for  
 the common people! For the future  
 of these Socialist States of  
 America!

Silence. No one speaks. Martin coughs, looking ashamed. Listeria's filming everything on her iPhone 14 Pro. Dusty audibly pants, still sensing triumph. Then, the Lunch Lady grabs him and yanks him off the register.

INT. SECURE ROOM AT THE FBI - MID-DAY.

Courtney sits with her laptop open, studiously taking notes as Director Hawthorne briefs the room. In the background, we see him pointing to charts which indicate the floorplan of Florida country club...a very famous Florida country club.

We zoom into Courtney's laptop - she's already turned the screen background into a gallery of butterflies. A notification from Maribel pops up on the FBI version of Slack. It's a link to a BuzzFeed article that reads "Seven Ways to Tell If Your Boss Is the Spawn of Satan." Courtney minimizes the notification.

HAWTHORNE  
 And that's where you come in, Agent  
 Quiggley.  
 (beat)  
 Gurl. You there?

Courtney looks up, distracted, having missed the moment.

COURTNEY  
 Yes, Director.

HAWTHORNE  
 Surveillance is key to this  
 challenge. I mean mission. We'll  
 need eyes everywhere. Like a  
 flashlight in a darkroom.

COURTNEY  
 Err..totally. I'll make sure to  
 provide real-time support to our  
 agents as they go in.

HAWTHORNE

No, gurl, I said you're monitoring the waste areas in the rear of the facility. In case our target tries to dispose of...any assssssssss-ets.

Courtney subtly groans, then immediately smiles and hides her feelings as everyone in the room senses her displeasure. Just then, the door to the secure room opens and a harried LOW-LEVEL AGENT peers inside.

LOW-LEVEL AGENT

Excuse me, Director, but Agent Quiggley has an urgent phone call.

HAWTHORNE

Did RuPaul just admit to fracking? This can't wait?!

COURNTEY

I'm sure it can wait.

LOW-LEVEL AGENT

I'm sorry but it appears Agent Quiggley's son attempted to start a Communist revolution at DeSantis Elementary School.

(beat)

He's been detained.

The whole room looks in shock as Courtney slowly gets up in horror, eases the wrinkles out of her pantsuit, and walks out of the room without her dignity.

ACT THREE

INT. COURTNEY'S MINI COOPER - HOURS LATER

Dusty sits in the backseat, dried tears on his face, as Courtney drives them home. She looks exhausted. Dusty looks enraged.

DUSTY

It's not fair! He couldn't afford  
that bourgeoisie lunch!

COURTNEY

That doesn't mean you *steal*, Dusty!

Courtney tries to make eye contact with him in the rearview mirror. Dusty petulantly stares out the window.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

Hunny, you can't just stage a coup  
at a new school like this. You have  
to take it slow. Make friends.

They come to a stop at a traffic light.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

You can't do everything on your  
own...

Courtney sees a beautiful, monarch butterfly flutter and land on the pavement.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

You have to learn to be  
social...like...a...

A Ford-150 drives over the butterfly, ripping it to shreds. Courtney groans and drops her head on her steering wheel.

DUSTY

Daddy would have found a way to  
feed everyone.

Courtney whips upright in anger and hits the accelerator before the light turns green.

INT. THE QUIGGLEY RESIDENCE - EVENING.

Dan hums the "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Beef" tune as he pulls out his beef casserole from the oven. It looks not half-bad: he pulled off dinner!

He sets the table with real silverware and plates and decorates the table with plastic flowers he's pulled from a nearby moving box labeled "STORE BOUGHT / NOT TRASH". He hears the front door open and beams a smile which immediately wilts in the face of Courtney's rage. She drags a chastised Dusty into the kitchen with her.

COURTNEY

Your phone. You haven't answered your phone in five hours, DAN.

DAN

Babe! I was laser-focused on making us a beautiful dinner. Look - it's "Le Beef Casserole!"

Courtney takes the nearest plate and throws it into the wall, sending steaming beef everywhere.

COURTNEY

(racing)

Dusty stole from the school, then tried to start a revolt, and you were NOWHERE TO BE FOUND! I had to leave the most important meeting of my career to spend three hours bailing our son out of detention. And by bail, I mean BAIL! They literally have a jail at that school!

DUSTY

It was a Gulag, Dad!

Dan, gob-smacked, tries to reply. Courtney interrupts by walking over to the beef on the walls and scooping up a handful.

COURTNEY

What even is this? Hamburger Helper? You couldn't multitask while preparing an outdated dinner that a glove with a cartoon face manages to make his family every night?!

Dan starts stuttering again.

DAN

I-I-I'm s-s-sorry...I thought you were p-p-picking him up after-school. And it's not hamburger help-help-helper, it's...

COURTNEY

Grow up, Dan! Our son is acting out because you have FAILED to set any sort of role model for what it means to be a MAN.

Dusty cowers and starts to cry. He shuffles away from his mom and hugs his dad's leg. Dan is torn between wanting to console his son and apologize to his wife.

DAN

C'mon Court, you are blowing this WAY out of proportion. And, babe, you got beef all over the new house. We don't want seasoned ground beef to become a trigger for Dusty!

DUSY

I want to stay at home with Daddy!  
I don't want to go to that school!  
I want to eat beef!

COURTNEY

(to Dusty)

Forget the damn beef! You legally HAVE to go to school! This is not up for debate!

Dan grabs paper towels and tries to clean the beef off the walls. Dusty clings to his leg and refuses to let go.

DAN

Stop yelling at our son.

COURTNEY

You are SUPPOSED to yell at your child when they misbehave, Dan!

DAN

That is NOT something the person I married at Burning Man would say!

COURTNEY

THAT MAN WAS BURNED, DAN! HE'S ASHES! HE'S CREMATED!

She storms out of the kitchen. Dan gives up on the beef and puts Dusty in a chair.

## COURTNEY (CONT'D)

I'm going back to work. I need to catch up on what I've missed so I don't lose THE ONLY JOB SUPPORTING THIS FAMILY RIGHT NOW.

Dan tries to pursue, but she slams the front door behind her. Dan groans and pounds the wall in frustration. Dusty takes a bite of food and spits it out, crying.

A MONTAGE:

INT. FBI DEPARTMENT - COURTNEY'S DESK - AN HOUR LATER.

Courtney pours over surveillance tapes of the dumpsters behind her target - a very recognizable Palm Beach country club - taking notes, trying to get up to speed, fighting to concentrate. She rubs her head - a migraine is coming on.

INT. QUIGGLE RESIDENCE - INTERCUT

Dan storms over to his "BURNED CD-RWs" box and pulls out a CD labeled GARBAGE BANDS and an accompanying 1990's Discman. He leaves the house, leaving Dusty alone on the couch, and heads for his car.

The camera pans over to Dusty, teary-eyed and watching YouTube on a laptop. The video he's watching features COINPHASE - a crypto app - evangelizing the blockchain. Dusty tosses aside his illustrated version of the Communist Manifesto and starts taking notes. Dusty leans in and in the reflection of the laptop - it looks like he has Bitcoin laser eyes.

INT. DAN'S CAR - INTERCUT

Dan speeds along I-95. We hear the song "Stupid Girl" by the band GARBAGE playing as he drives in a daze. In the windshield, he sees faint visions of past glories: climbing a pyramid of baseball bats fused to baseballs at Burning Man and shouting in triumph at the top, cruising on a yacht in the French Riviera as the spitting image of James Bond, recovering in D.C. with his foot in a cast, discovering in a dumpster a precious discarded Princess Diana Beanie Baby with the tag still on it, followed by Dan rolling in the dumpster, giggling and laughing with delight.



## EXT. PUBLIX PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Dan comes to a screeching halt in a parking lot. He's hyperventilating again, on the verge of a midlife crisis, when he looks up to see he's unconsciously driven back to the Publix parking lot and the mysterious dumpster. He turns off his Discman and removes the headphones - but the music does not stop. Instead, it morphs into the steady steel drum beat Dan heard earlier. The sodium-vapor lights illuminating the parking lot begin to pulse in time to the beat.

Dan gets out of the car and slowly approaches the violet-hued light now emanating from the dumpster. With each step he takes, the drumbeat gets louder, and the children's choir starts to sing again in repetition:

## CHILDREN'S CHOIR

*The wonderful world of trash! The  
wonderful world of trash!*

Dan reaches the dumpster. He's frozen - torn between a promise and Providence. Finally...he reaches out and lifts the Publix dumpster lid. The light shines out from it in gorgeous hues, forming rainbow patterns around the dumpster.

The camera swivels to the perspective from inside the dumpster as Dan's hairy arms hoist himself up on the lid, where he balances on the precipice. Dan makes his hands into the sign of a prayer and in slow-motion swan dives into the dumpster.

The choir sings a note of perfect five-part harmony as he lands. We pan around to see Dan jumping for joy and diving through half-eaten chicken wings, cartons of expired milk, the robotic head of the still singing cow crooning a distorted "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Beef," and so much more. Dan stands tall in the garbage. He lets out a roar at the sky, beaming with pleasure. He's never felt so alive!

And then, a shadow begins to form on the wall of the Publix. It is a monstrous shape - a beast of inhuman proportions. The shadow of its claws reach high above Dan's face. Dan begins quivering in terror. Slowly, forcing himself, Dan turns around to see... a three-foot-tall figure, backlit, perched on the lid of the dumpster: DUMPY, the talking raccoon, Prince of the Wonderful World of Trash, with fierce orange eyes. He's smoking a cigarette. Dan's mouth falls on the floor. Dumpy takes his time putting out the stub of his cigarette on a sealed tuna fish can and says:

## DUMPY

Welcome home.

END