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*If they didn't have comics
they'd still have issues.*

COMIC BOOK ZEROES

WAFI PRODUCTIONS PRODUCTION "COMIC BOOK ZEROES" ZAK STRAUSS ADAM ARMSTRONG SEAN HOLT SUSIE ROSS

FEATURING KIM HOPKINS KIRSTIN FORD STEPHANIE PRESSMAN KATHY YAMAMOTO AND INTRODUCING JACK SANDERS

PRODUCED BY KARWIN WALKER WRITTEN BY KARWIN WALKER MARCO FLORES JR. DIRECTED BY MARCO FLORES JR.

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COMIC BOOK ZEROES: YEAR ONE

Created and Written by
Karwin Walker and Marco Flores, Jr.

FADE IN:

LAPTOP SCREEN

"INKED" begins to play, revealing it's infamously attractive host, GRETCHEN WARNER. She quickly greets viewers before introducing the illustrious MATT PARKER for a rare, impromptu interview that quickly begins to unravel as Parker's ego reveals itself.

DAVID (V.O.)
...so now check this one out. The
Raging Wombat!
(irritated pause)
Kirb. Yo, Kirb. Kirby!

INT. KIRBY'S ROOM - NIGHT

DAVID is standing in front of a large POSTER BOARD covered in a sketch of a grungy looking SUPER-HERO. KIRBY, sitting at the foot of his bed, staring into his LAPTOP, forces himself to look at David.

KIRBY
Yeah, sounds good... Real good.

Chatter from the computer stabs at David's patience.

DAVID
Dude, you're not even paying attention. I'm trying to help you out here and you're just sitting there drooling.

KIRBY
...what? No, of course I am. It's just, you know, this is THE Matt Parker and he's gonna' be here -- HERE. And I -- we have this one shot to show him something amazing and I just can't help but feel like I'm gonna' screw it up somehow.

DAVID
What the fuck ever, man, that's understandable. I guess. But I'm trying to help you out here. We all have a bit at stake in this but we're here for you, and you're just sitting there nutting yourself to that video. Over and over again.

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DAVID (CONT'D)
That's not going to help us
prepare the way we need to in
order to sell this thing.
(looking to Ellis)
Right?

ELLIS, who has been quietly eating some sort of artificial
cheese/chip snack on the floor, stretches out with the bag in
hand.

ELLIS
Yeah, seriously.

David looks at Ellis with a strange mix of awkwardness and
shame.

DAVID
Good looking out, Ellis.

KIRBY
What if we pitch him, like, a
reboot?

DAVID
I'm not following...

KIRBY
Lets say we take something that
isn't as popular and put a fresh
spin on it. Like Devil's Heart or
Dark Justice. We take something
like that and pitch an "Ultimates"
type revamp. I mean he might just
love that. And besides, he just
out sold Marvel 3-to-1 last
month.

DAVID
Ugh... I don't know. Doing
something like that is like
marrying a widow. You have to be
all sensitive about what came
before, but at some point you're
just gonna' have to fuck, you
know?

LINDA, in her late 30's, enters. David quickly covers the
poster board.

LINDA
Keep it down, it's 2 A.M. You have
graduation in eight hours.

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Kirby and David shoot her a "thumbs up". She leaves the room in disgust. David turns his thumbs up into a middle finger as the door shuts behind her.

DAVID
So, graduation, huh?

KIRBY
Yup.

ELLIS
Stateside Community College
Online. Quite the achievement.

DAVID
Do you get a class picture, or do
you have to wait 'til they have to
tag you on Facebook?
(laughing)
Here at Stateside Community, all
you need to do is show up.

KIRBY
You're talking like it's no big
deal.

DAVID
I'm just fucking with you, Kirb.

KIRBY
I know, but you know what? I, I
lived the college experience.

DAVID
Sure... If "the college
experience" means running through
boxes of Kleenex while you're
supposed to be working on your
behavioral science final, then
you most certainly did.

David scoots the poster board into a corner of the room.

KIRBY
...anyway, I got to get some shut
eye, guys.

DAVID
You heard the lady, Ellis, we
got's to skee-daddle.

Ellis gets up and hands Kirby the empty bag of chips.

ELLIS

Good luck at graduation and be sure to give us the address soon so we can Mapquest it. We wanna' beat the traffic.

KIRBY

Ha. Ha. Ha.

David and Ellis exit, slamming the door behind them.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Kirby is standing behind the counter with a NOTE PAD under one arm and a pencil in his mouth as he attempts to make himself a sandwich. He reaches for the refrigerator, dropping the note pad into his unfinished lunch.

He spits the pencil out of his mouth.

KIRBY (V.O.)

Everything is coming up Kirby.

INT. KIRBY'S ROOM - DAY

Kirby is sitting at his desk, hunched over his note pad with his CELL PHONE to his ear.

MAGGIE (V.O.)

(over phone)

Well, congrats, Kirby, but I hope you're right this time.

KIRBY

(into phone)

What's that supposed to mean?

INT. MAGGIE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Maggie, in her early 20's, is trying to sort through stacks of paperwork while trying to hide her earpiece-headset under her hair.

MAGGIE

I mean that you've tried getting a foot in the door I don't know how many times. DC said no, Image said no --

KIRBY (V.O.)
 (over phone)
 But David and Ellis are helping me
 with this one. I just know --

MAGGIE
 It's gonna' work? Ugh, Kirby... I
 don't know.

KIRBY (V.O.)
 (over phone)
 Why can't you just be more
 encouraging?

INT. KIRBY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kirby puts his note pad away.

KIRBY
 (into phone)
 You know, maybe a little more
 heart and a little less reality.

MAGGIE (V.O.)
 (over phone)
 I'm sorry, Kirb, but -- shit! I
 have to go. My boss is coming.
 Anyway, good luck, college grad.
 Let me know how the night goes.

KIRBY
 (into phone)
 Will do.

LATER -

Kirby is sitting behind his computer eagerly waiting to
 graduate.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
 (counting down)
 3, 2, 2... 2..?

A very unsettling yet familiar sound comes from his computer.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
 No, no, no, no, no, no!

Kirby sinks back in his chair, letting out a sigh of defeat.
 Linda walks in silently.

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KIRBY (CONT'D)

You, you, stupid, you stupid-dumb piece of shit. Of course you would do that now, you dirty, ass fucking little shit.

LINDA

Excuse me?

KIRBY

(surprised)

Huh?!

LINDA

You alright?

KIRBY

Yeah! I'm fine, just fine. May I be of some assistance?

LINDA

We need to talk.

(beat)

Look, I know today is a big day for you and all, and I know you're more than likely to hang out with the boys, but I was just wondering if --

KIRBY

(interrupting)

I could keep them away from the party. Why don't you just say that?

LINDA

Honey, although they disgust me, they're your friends so I can't just say keep them away. But, considering all the messes you all got into, I would just rather not have to worry about you bringing them here. Tonight.

KIRBY

But you know who's gonna' be here tonight, and all they're trying to do is help me --

LINDA

Get a job? Kirby, then they can help you get a job the old fashioned way. These are your Father's friends.

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KIRBY

Yeah, and one of them just happens to be going heels to heaven with one of the biggest publishers ever.

LINDA

All the more reason I want them out of my sight. Now that's it, I'm not up for a debate. If you want to argue, go to People's Court.

Kirby bites his tongue, and gives her a painful thumbs up. She leaves the room, arms crossed.

KIRBY

Balls.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The PARTY is in full swing. MARK, in his early 40's, and Linda are playing gracious hosts to a house full of PARTYGOERS. The crowd is abuzz with anticipation of Matt Parker making an appearance at any moment.

Kirby is huddled up near a window, sipping on his glass full of orange-drink as the guests mingle amongst themselves. He hears a KNOCK at the window, and looks over only to see David and Ellis.

Kirby jumps back, looks over his shoulders to make sure no one else has taken notice, and points to his room.

INT. KIRBY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Kirby enters. David is sliding the screen back into place at the window as Ellis reclines back in Kirby's chair, tossing his feet up onto the desk.

ELLIS

Yo!

KIRBY

How the hell did you guys get up here so fast?

DAVID

Osmosis.

There's a knock at the door.

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LINDA (O.S.)
You decent?

KIRBY
Hide. Now.

DAVID
What? Why?

KIRBY
Just do it.

David and Ellis SCRAMBLE.

LINDA (O.S.)
Kirby?

David runs for cover behind a HOMER SIMPSON STAND-UP poster.

KIRBY
(gesturing to hurry)
Just a second.

Ellis, like a deer in headlights, runs toward the door just as it begins to open -- an intoxicated Linda enters. David and Ellis are nowhere in sight.

LINDA
What were you doing?

KIRBY
HUH?! Oh, nothing...

She shoots Kirby a confused look.

LINDA
Okay...
(pause)
Can you do me a big favor? I need you to run to the store and get a few things. Dips, drinks -- you know, whatever sounds good.

KIRBY
Oh. Oh yeah, no problem.

LINDA
Thanks, honey. Just come get the money from me before you leave.

KIRBY
You got it.

She heads for the door.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Oh, wait.

She turns to Kirby.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

I was looking around earlier, but I didn't see him. Do you know what time he'll be here?

LINDA

No idea. You know his type, fashionably late and all that. That's the cool thing now-a-days. Anyway, don't forget to get the money from me before you leave.

Linda sinks away as Kirby closes the door behind her, revealing Ellis pressed up against the wall.

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

(calling out)

Don't forget.

KIRBY

Okay.

David steps out from behind Homer.

DAVID

Dude, THAT was close.

KIRBY

Yeah it was...

DAVID

So him not being here buys us some time... What's the plan?

KIRBY

I -- I don't know yet. Just meet me outside in five minutes. And be quiet, please.

(gesturing to Ellis)

And take McGruber here with you.

Kirby anxiously heads to the door.

DAVID

Oh, Kirby.

Kirby stops and looks back.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Relax, dude. We got this. Nothing
can stop us now.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kirby and Ellis BURST through the front door, carrying a blood stained David -- terror is written on their faces. They stumble into the center of the room and drop David.

PARTYGOER #1 (O.S.)
Is he okay?!

Kirby and Ellis look over to see PARTYGOER #1 standing in front of a awe struck and horrified group of fellow partygoers.

DAVID
What the fuck do you think, you --

Kirby and Ellis jump between the guests and the wounded David.

KIRBY
Yeah, he's, uh, he's...

PARTYGOER #1
What happened?

ELLIS
Store was closed.

Partygoer #1 sinks back into the crowd.

KIRBY
Hey, Ellis.

ELLIS
Yeah.

KIRBY
You know that special cabinet my
Dad doesn't like you getting into?

ELLIS
Yeah.

KIRBY
Go to it. Bring me back whatever
you can. We gotta' sterilize the
wound.

ELLIS
Roger that.

Ellis pushes through the crowd and off into the Kitchen.

KIRBY
(turning back)
Just hold on, man, we're not
losing you -- SON OF A BITCH!

David is gone.

Kirby frantically scans the room, only to see the zombie-like David making his way to a table full of snacks -- then CRASHES face first into the floor.

Ellis RUNS back in from the Kitchen and hands Kirby HALF OF A LEMON.

ELLIS
This should work.

Kirby stares at the lemon, then sees Linda standing behind Ellis, in complete shock.

KIRBY
...great.

CUT TO BLACK.

LINDA
(furious)
Kirby!

CUT TO:

INT. SIMMONS' OFFICE - NIGHT

DETECTIVE SIMMONS is sitting at her desk, forging through what looks like endless paperwork. DETECTIVE FRANCO enters, tossing a CASE FILE directly in front of Simmons.

FRANCO
You're not gonna' believe this
one.

Simmons opens the file, taken back by what she's looking at.

SIMMONS
Is that?

FRANCO
Yup.

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SIMMONS
Wow. Celebrity kink at it's
finest...

FRANCO
And straight out of the Phil
Spector play book.

Simmons reveals a photo of MATT PARKER from the file to
Franco.

SIMMONS
And he looks so innocent.

FRANCO
Only until proven guilty.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING

A hungover Linda, holding a cold press to her forehead, and
Mark are sitting across from a stunned Kirby.

LINDA
I can't believe you, Kirby. What
do you have to say for yourself?

MARK
Linda, please --

LINDA
Oh, please my ass. I told him I
didn't want the boys over for this
exact reason. Every time, without
fail...

MARK
What happened was an accident.

KIRBY
Look, I'm sorry. Is that what you
want me to say? I'm sorry.

LINDA
Sorry? Kirby, sorry isn't going to
pay off the ambulance bill, let
alone make up for the fact that
the party was ruined.

Linda drops her head in her hands.

KIRBY
May I be excused?

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Mark nods in agreement.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT - DAY

David, wrapped in bandages, is sitting on the couch with the television remote in his hand. A spoon full of RANDOM BREAKFAST MEATS settles in front of his face.

DAVID
Get. That. Away. From me.

David looks to Ellis who is sitting next to him with a plate full of this mystery meat and spoon in hand.

ELLIS
Oh stop being a baby. Just give me your mouth.

Ellis' phrasing strikes David as odd.

DAVID
Never say that again.
(beat)
Besides, I don't need your help, Ellis. I'm fine. Now, lets just sit and -

Ellis pokes the wound, causing David to freeze in pain. Blood appears to be soaking through the bandage.

ELLIS
Looks like baby needs a changing.

Ellis runs off to the bathroom. David reaches for the phone in a hurry, knocking it off of the receiver.

DAVID
No, no, no...

David scrambles for the phone, dropping to the ground.

ELLIS (O.S.)
(cheerfully)
Found 'em!

David looks back to see Ellis proudly holding up a BOX OF TAMPONS.

DAVID
Oh, dear God, no.

CUT TO:

INT. KIRBY'S ROOM - DAY

Kirby is staring at David's hand drawn Raging Wombat poster board across the room -- locked in a stare of bittersweet defeat.

An AGGRESSIVE MURMURING can be heard growing behind the other side of the door. The sound cuts through Kirby's moment. He quietly moves towards the door, listening as the words become clearer the closer he gets.

MARK (O.S.)

...Linda, wait! He's been through a lot in the last two years. David and Ellis are all he has from the life he had before -- you don't think he's going through enough?

LINDA (O.S.)

Mark, you have to stop making excuses for him already --

Kirby cracks the door open just enough to peak into --

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mark and Linda are locked in a tense standoff.

LINDA

Because all it's going to do is make him think that letting things get this out of hand is acceptable, am I right? I mean do you remember what happened when you asked him to get rid of that damn hornets nest?

SERIES OF SHOTS - KIRBY VERSUS THE NEST

A. Kirby is staring down a HORNETS NEST stuck under the eaves of the roof.

B. Linda is taking out the trash and sees Kirby now standing a few yards back from the nest with a burning intensity.

C. Kirby reveals a PLASTIC LIGHTSABER like a seasoned Luke Skywalker and CHARGES the nest.

END OF SERIES

LINDA (CONT'D)
I was in the hospital for two days
after that.

MARK
Linda, honey, he had no idea you
were allergic.

LINDA
Neither did I, Mark! Neither did
I... And now this?

Mark shrugs, uncertain of how to respond. Linda returns the
gesture, mocking Mark's timid demeanor.

LINDA (CONT'D)
That's it?
(shrugs again)
That's it?
(beat)
I can't believe you.

Linda storms off. Kirby shuts the door.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT - DAY

David rushes into the living room closet, quickly shutting the
door behind him. Ellis is two steps too late to catch David.

ELLIS
I'm trying to help you! You need
to get better!

DAVID (O.S.)
You're trying to kill me!

ELLIS
Look, David, I know I'm not the
brightest guy you know, but you're
all I have. I know that sounds
weird, but it's true, and if I
lose you then what else do I
have? And I'm trying here, I
really am with what we have here.
You've always been there when I
needed you and like I said, if I
lose you then what do I have?
What do any of us have? Where
would Kirby be?

ELLIS (CONT'D)
 You risked your life for both of
 us and all I'm trying to do is
 return the favor. Now please,
 just open the door and let me
 help you. Please, just let me
 help you...

For once, Ellis' words seem to make sense... and David slowly
 opens the door just a few inches.

DAVID'S P.O.V. - LOOKING AT ELLIS

Ellis' stares back with a set of puppy dog eyes.

ELLIS (CONT'D)
 Now lets clean that wound.

Ellis raises a box next to his head that reads "SUMMER'S EVE
 FEMININE APPLICATOR" (aka A Douche). The door slams shut.

RETURN TO SCENE

Ellis and David resume their bickering as Ellis bangs on the
 door.

The PHONE on the floor RINGS.

INT. KIRBY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kirby is on his phone, waiting for someone to pick up. It
 rings and rings.

KIRBY
 Come on...

CLICK. Someone has answered. Finally.

DAVID (V.O.)
 (over phone)
 Insert witty voice mail message
 here. After the beep of course.

Kirby hangs up, frustrated. His phone RINGS.

KIRBY
 Really? Why call me right back if
 you're not gonna' -- never mind.

Kirby answers.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 I just called you.

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MAGGIE (V.O.)
(over phone)
Really? That's weird. The only
call I got was from the witches
tit herself.

KIRBY
(into phone)
Already, huh?

MAGGIE (V.O.)
(over phone)
Yup.

INT. MAGGIE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Maggie is sitting at her littered desk, once again conquering paperwork.

MAGGIE
(into phone)
So I guess I don't have to ask how
the party went.

KIRBY (V.O.)
(over phone)
I guess not. Besides, don't you
have like serial rapists or
murderous aliens to catch? Some
semen samples to taste test for
suspects, or something?

MAGGIE
(into phone)
Very funny. Not everyone gets to
chase the big fish, Kirby, whether
they are of X-Files proportions or
not.

INT. KIRBY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

KIRBY
(into phone)
Why did she call you anyway?

MAGGIE
Who knows... I just wanted to make
sure you're okay.

KIRBY
(into phone)
I'm fine. I'll be fine.

There's a KNOCK at the door. It opens and Mark peeks his head in. Kirby lowers the phone.

MARK

Hey, Kirbo, you got a minute? We need to talk.

CUT TO:

INT. MPIRE COMICS, PETER'S OFFICE - DAY

A phone continues to RING, waking PETER MURDOCK from a face-down nap on his desk. He searches for his phone, only to find it in his pocket. He answers.

PETER

Hello?

MPIRE REP (V.O.)

Mr. Murdock, we need to see you in the boardroom immediately. We've run into a... situation.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

A SEDAN pulls up in front with Mark behind the wheel and Kirby in the passenger seat.

INT. SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

Kirby stares into the distance.

KIRBY

Why is she doing this?

MARK

Kirby, she's just... I really don't know. Just give me some time with her. I'll get her to come around.

KIRBY

Gross.

MARK

What?

KIRBY

Nothing. You were saying?

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MARK

Oh, yeah, just give it some time.
At least 'til Sunday.

KIRBY

But it's Saturday. Today.

MARK

Next Sunday.

Kirby looks to the apartment building, uncertain.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING, HALLWAY - DAY

Kirby is making his way down the hall, nervously squeezing the straps of his BOOKBAG.

An UPROAR booms through a door as he passes, stopping Kirby in his tracks.

KIRBY

(to himself)

This isn't going to be so bad.
Baby steps...

Kirby gathers himself and continues down the hall. A FAMILIAR VOICE can be heard. It grows louder with every step until Kirby comes to a door at the end.

ELLIS (O.S.)

(from behind the door)

I have to take care of you! Let me help you!

Kirby bangs on the door. Ellis answers with a feminine applicator in hand.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

Oh, hey, Kirby.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kirby is watching Ellis devour a Slim Jim -- his lips and tongue smacking. David's hand SNATCHES it from his grip. David tosses it in the trash and lays back on the futon.

KIRBY

Ellis, I don't know how you can eat those things.

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ELLIS
Easy. They're delicious.

DAVID
Yeah? Well, that's what Macho Man Savage thought, and look at him now.

KIRBY
I thought it was the tree that killed him.

DAVID
It was a lot of things.
(beat)
So, a week, huh?

KIRBY
Yeah. I'm not thrilled about it either.

DAVID
I'm sure they'll come around. Just give it some time. They'll come around.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT - LATER

The boys are exactly where they were at before except David and Ellis have long since fallen asleep. Kirby is staring at his phone in hand.

He dials.

SERIES OF SHOTS - KIRBY PHONES HOME

A. A TELEPHONE sits on it's RECEIVER.

ANSWERING MACHINE/LINDA (V.O.)
This is the Repinksi's home phone.

B. Kirby sitting at David's, on the phone.

ANSWERING MACHINE/LINDA (CONT'D)
Sorry we couldn't get to the phone right now, but we're either out or unable to come to the phone right now.

C. Mark standing in Kirby's room, staring at the Raging Wombat poster.

ANSWERING MACHINE/LINDA (CONT'D)
 So leave a message.
 (beat)
 And remember Kirby, it's NEXT
 SUNDAY.

END OF SERIES

Kirby hangs up the phone.

KIRBY
 Six more days...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MPIRE COMICS, BOARDROOM - NIGHT

Peter is sitting at the end of a wide conference table as a HANDFUL OF MPIRE REPS buzz around him with smartphones and PDA's in hand.

MPIRE REP #1
 Now, what we have already lined up
 is a full-frontal PR assault. We
 hit every major morning show,
 online news outlet, radio --
 pretty much anybody that will
 have you on. But before all that,
 the most important stop is the
 first, and that's Inked.
 (beat)
 Any questions so far?

PETER
 Yeah, just one. And forgive me for
 this coming across as stupid, but
 what the hell happened?

The question causes the Reps to tense up.

MPIRE REP #1
 Well, I... I --

MPIRE REP #2
 (interrupting)
 I think that's more of a question
 for legal than us.

CUT TO:

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INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

KIRBY wakes to find himself still holding his cell phone, in the corner of the room.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 Scandal sets Hollywood on fire as
 Peter Murdock is made head of
 MPire Comics.

Kirby looks up to see ELLIS on the couch, scarfing down spoon fulls of cereal, zeroed in on the TV. He grabs the TV REMOTE and turns the volume up.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 And although allegations of the
 move being nothing more than a
 publicity stunt have already
 spread across the online
 community --

Kirby looks to the TV. DETECTIVES FRANCO AND SIMMONS appear on screen, speaking to reporters at a PRESS CONFERENCE.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 -- it only fuels the fire of this
 already blazing investigation.

MOMENTS LATER -

Kirby and Ellis are sitting on the couch, watching TV as Ellis gnaws on a shred of beef jerky and Kirby picks at his bowl of cereal.

ELLIS
 Do they really need seven
 different Law and Order shows?

KIRBY
 Dick Wolfe needs to get paid
 somehow...
 (beat, defeated)
 What am I doing wrong, Ellis?

ELLIS
 Watching SVU.

KIRBY
 No, I mean like... Do you ever
 just feel like the only common
 factor in everyone's life being
 ruined is you?
 (beat)

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KIRBY (CONT'D)

My Mom was in a hurry to pick me up from school and I never saw her again. Because of me and a drunk driver. My Dad married Linda out of some weird sense of despair. Because of me and his misplaced sense of guilt. And my best friend was almost killed when he risked his life for mine on an errand to the grocery store. All because of me and my want to impress the almighty Matt Parker... Who didn't even fucking show up.

Kirby hands his bowl of cereal to Ellis and rises from the couch.

ELLIS

Where you going?

KIRBY

If I'm gonna' be here for a few days, then I'll need to head back home for a few more things. And maybe see how David's holding up after.

(grabs his bookbag)

Wait, where is he, by the way?

ELLIS

Who?

CUT TO:

INT. CHRONIC COMIC BOOK SHOP - DAY

David is settling in behind the counter as he pulls out a SKETCH BOOK from his bag. He begins to sketch as a sense of ease comes over him and then --

NATE (O.S.)

Already got your head in the ground and dick in the dirt, huh?

David's ease is gone. He looks up to see NATE strolling towards him with a young strut that belies his weathered, pear shaped physique.

NATE (CONT'D)

(grinning)

How ya' doing, boyo?

Made in Highland

David continues to draw, ignoring Nate.

NATE (CONT'D)

Well, I see your distasteful
personality is fully intact...
That's good.

(beat)

You sure you'll be able to hold
down the casa de comics while I'm
out?

DAVID

I'm sure.

NATE

Okay. Oh, and remember, my number
is in the office just in case you
--

DAVID

(interrupting, irritated)
For fuck sake, Nate, seriously!
I'll be fine. Just take care of
whatever you got to do.

Nate is taken back by David's outburst.

NATE

Damn, bro, what's up your ass?

David put his sketch book away.

DAVID

Nothing.

LATER -

The shop RADIO is playing as David straightens the last rack
of shirts at the back of the store. He takes a step back,
proudly taking in the sight of his work.

The phone RINGS. David hurries over to the counter to pick it
up.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Chronic Comics.

(listening)

No, Static Shock is not part of
the new 52...

(listening)

The old ones? Nobody carries those
anymore.

David takes a seat on the counter top.

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DAVID (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 Yes, it's a travesty, I know.

Unknown to David, A FEMALE CUSTOMER enters, simply perusing around the shop.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 I don't know how you'll sleep at night, but you're just going to have to get by without the second tier characters. I'd be happy to refer you to a support group who might actually give a --

Something catches David's eye as he turns to see the Female Customer carelessly rifling through the once neat shirts he was so proud of.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 (dropping the phone)
 Fuck. I just fixed those!

MOMENTS LATER -

David is ONCE AGAIN finished straightening out the shirts.

DISSATISFIED CUSTOMER (O.S.)
 Yo, what's up with the three dollar comics?

David, turns to see the Dissatisfied Customer holding up an old issue of Blue Beetle.

DAVID
 They're kinda old, hence the lowered price. Plus, you're looking at the Canadian price. The US retail price is 3.99.

DISSATISFIED CUSTOMER
 Are you fucking serious? That's the lowered price?

DAVID
 Yup.
 (moving in on customer)
 I mean if you wanted the true discount I say emigrate to Canada where you can get all of the Ted Kord, Ryan Reynolds and Barenaked Ladies you're little heart desires.

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David snatches the comic from the Customer's hand. The Customer flinches, dropping SOMETHING from under his shirt.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(picking up the "something")
Wow. Bitching about prices and trying to steal this.

David reveals the stolen goods to be a copy of the BATMAN & ROBIN MOVIE COMIC ADAPTATION.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Dude, Blue Beetle is way better than this any day.

DISSATISFIED CUSTOMER
Fuck you.

DAVID
Fuck me? You're lucky I'm not calling the cops right now, and you have the balls to tell me fuck you.

DISSATISFIED CUSTOMER
Maybe if you didn't charge so damn much --

DAVID
Look, I don't set the prices and I don't make the rules. Yes, anything over two bucks is too much for DC's scraps -- that's wrong, I agree. But so is steeling. And so far I've had a fucked up week, and it's only Monday. So, right now I'd like nothing more than for you to eat crow, admit you have horrible taste and bone the fuck out before I lose my cool!

DISSATISFIED CUSTOMER
Or else what?!

SMASH CUT TO:

A HORRIBLY BEATEN DISSATISFIED CUSTOMER -

Being rushed out on a gurney by TWO EMT's to an AMBULANCE in front of --

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EXT. CHRONIC COMIC BOOK SHOP - DAY

David, upset with himself, reaches out to the comatose Customer when another hand quickly grabs his. The hand belongs to EMT #1.

EMT #2

I think you've done enough.

NATE (O.S.)

You can say that again.

David turns to see Nate sipping on a Big Gulp.

DAVID

Shit.

CUT TO:

EXT. KIRBY'S HOUSE - DAY

Kirby is standing in front of the house with purpose. He surveys the area with the cool of Danny Ocean and the focus of Sam Fisher.

And once the coast is clear, he moves in on the FRONT DOOR WELCOME MAT. He lifts it up only to see the weathered outline where the spare key used to be.

KIRBY

(defeated)

Seriously...

Kirby drops the mat and begins to walk away from the house, then stops.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Fuck it.

He turns back and charges toward the next obstacle: THE WOODEN FENCE.

INT. KIRBY'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kirby blurs past the window. The sound of him scaling the fence is heard through the walls. Hurried footsteps over the trash cans beat in succession before Kirby falls back into view through a side window.

He picks himself up and moves on, appearing in --

THE KITCHEN WINDOW

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Kirby peers inside for a moment, then moves on to --

THE BACK DOOR

He pulls on the handle with no success. It's locked.

KIRBY
(muffled, frustrated)
Shit!

Kirby thinks... Then it hits him. ONE LAST OPTION LEFT.

He disappears from sight, making his way around the rest of the house.

A door knob SHUTTERS at the end of the --

HALLWAY ADJACENT TO THE FRONT DOOR

The shuttering stops, and then... CLICK. Kirby enters, victorious and winded, but proud.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
Apple sauce, bi --

THE FRONT DOOR SWINGS open and in steps LINDA, carrying several bags while chatting away on her Bluetooth headset.

Kirby ducks down and hugs the corner while Linda drops her bags.

LINDA
(into headset)
Who cares about the Salvation Army? They should be treating me like a savior for that damn flat screen.
(heading back outside)
All I'm trying to do is get rid some baggage here.

Kirby peeks around the wall. With Linda out of sight, Kirby quietly rushes up the stairs.

INT. KIRBY'S HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Kirby, coming down from the rush of adrenaline, opens his bedroom door.

KIRBY
No. Way.

The room has been completely cleared out.

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Stunned and crunched for time, Kirby retreats.

INT. KIRBY'S HOUSE, FIRST FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Kirby steps into the hallway from the stairs when he hears something.

LINDA (O.S.)
 (getting closer)
 I just wish the mover's trucks
 were bigger so it wouldn't have
 taken so long.

Linda enters through the front door carrying more bags, still on her headset.

Kirby is gone.

CUT TO:

INT. CHRONIC COMIC BOOK SHOP, NATE'S OFFICE - DAY

In the dark and murky room, David is sitting on the serving end of Nate's desk.

NATE
 What you were trying to prove?

DAVID
 The guy was stealing! He's lucky I
 even gave him a warning.

NATE
 You're lucky I'm not calling the
 cops.

DAVID
 That's what I told him.

NATE
 And that's what I'm telling you.

Nate's words catch David off guard.

David's CELL PHONE RINGS. He ignores it.

NATE (CONT'D)
 David, you have been my right hand
 man, and I know you're struggling
 with whatever happened to you --

DAVID
 I'm fine.

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NATE
Obviously not, bro.

DAVID
I lost my cool, okay? I'm sorry.
The guy was just being a --

David's cellphone rings AGAIN.

DAVID (CONT'D)
-- dick.

David looks to his phone as he mutes it, amused with his own bad luck.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(gesturing to phone)
Squeaky wheel gets the grease,
right?

NATE
Wrong. The squeaky wheel gets
tossed the fuck out.

INT. UNKNOWN - DARKNESS

Kirby is huddled up, only relying on the light from his CELL PHONE as David's voicemail picks up. The SOUND of a DOOR KNOB TURNING forces Kirby to hang up the phone.

Overhead lights POP on, revealing the "unknown" to be --

INT. KIRBY'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - DAY

Kirby is hidden in the shower, behind it's closed doors, clutching his phone.

Linda enters, STILL on her headset.

LINDA
(into headset)
One thing Kirby was good for
around here was cleaning up.

She makes her way to the toilet, lifts the lid and settles in -- ready to dispense a little bit of the days waste.

LINDA (CONT'D)
Cause, I don't know how I'm going
to find the time to clean all the
messes around here.

(MORE)

Made in Highland

LINDA (CONT'D)
 But I will say, being that clean
 made getting all his stuff out of
 here very --

Linda TENSES up.

LINDA (CONT'D)
 Could you hold on for one second?

She quietly focuses with the intensity of a Buddhist Monk,
 lowly straining.

LINDA (CONT'D)
 I'm just glad its finally over. I
 know I'm only a stepmom, but it's
 crazy to think of how she dealt
 with all this? Having Ellis and
 David come over all the time.
 Lightsabres and comic books. Never
 having a moment of peace.

Linda's stomach CHURNS as she braces for her next big
 milestone.

LINDA (CONT'D)
 Jesus. Could you imagine?

Kirby tries to not let the smell, her insults, or the LOUD,
 AGGRESSIVE SOUNDS OF RELEASE get to him.

Linda reaches for the toilet paper and cleans up --

LINDA (CONT'D)
 (grabbing toilet paper)
 I say she lucked out if you asked
 me.

-- then removes herself from the toilet.

LINDA (CONT'D)
 Anyway, hun, I'm going to lie down
 for a bit. I'm pooped.

She hangs up the call, coats the air with blast of Lysol, and
 flushes before exiting -- leaving Kirby back in the unknown.

EXT. KIRBY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Kirby is standing in front of the house. This time without
 purpose, taking in the sight of what he used to know.

He grudgingly begins to walk away, shrinking into the
 distance.

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FADE TO BLACK.

MAGGIE (V.O.)
You know, Kirb, we all go through
the same things in life.

FADE IN:

INT. KIRBY'S HOUSE, FRONT DOOR - DUSK

MARK enters and is immediately greeted by LINDA with a warm hug and a kiss.

MAGGIE (V.O.)
Every single one of us.

LINDA
How was your day?

MARK
Better now.

INT. METRO BUS - CONTINUOUS

DAVID is sitting on the bus, clutching his BACKPACK with a look of defeat sewn across his face.

MAGGIE (V.O.)
Maybe not in the same way or at
the same time...

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

ELLIS is sprawled out on the couch, covered in half chewed bits of cereal and dry milk on his shirt.

MAGGIE (V.O.)
But we all experience them
equally.

EXT. CITY STREET, SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

Kirby's CELLPHONE RINGS, breaking him out of the moment. He answers.

DISSOLVE TO:

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INT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Maggie and Kirby are sitting on the living room floor, nursing a few boxes of CHINESE TAKE-OUT.

MAGGIE

...I don't know if you remember April but we had this plan. We were gonna' do everything together after high school. We went to the same college, took the same classes, both wanted to become Field Agents, but the dumbest thing stopped us.

(beat)

I failed the Field's exam seven times and every time I did, so did she. But she wouldn't quit cause she didn't know how. She wanted to make it more than I did. So much more that I was the one who read her eulogy...

KIRBY

She died during the exam?

MAGGIE

No, genius, she died on the job. She cheated on the exam, and her first day on the field she was shot down.

KIRBY

(taken back)

Oh... I'm sorry.

MAGGIE

Don't be, Kirby.

Maggie digs through her food.

KIRBY

Do you ever blame yourself for it?

MAGGIE

I used to. But then I remember something a great woman said. "What happens in our lives isn't meant to break us down, but lift us up. We act because we must, and because our hearts tell us to. Hence we act out of love."

Maggie's words ignite a forgotten memory inside Kirby.

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KIRBY

"Never in perfect succession or made of honest means, but in mind of the ends to justify what we've journeyed through."

MAGGIE

Your Mother was an amazing writer.

Kirby's eyes light up.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I wonder where you got it from?

Kirby gets up and heads to the door.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

KIRBY

Taking my Mom's advice.

Kirby opens the door.

MAGGIE

Want some take-out for the road?

KIRBY

Fuck no.

Kirby leaves, shutting the door behind him.

CUT TO:

INT. INKED ONLINE STUDIOS - NIGHT

A CAMERA CREW is settling in. A PA carrying two lavalier mics, makes his way to Peter and KRYSTLE BIRCH at the center of the studio, fitting them to their collars.

PETER

So, how should I be exactly?

KRYSTLE

Should you be?

PETER

Yeah, I mean how should I act?

KRYSTLE

Have you ever done this before?

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PETER

If I had, do you think I'd be asking?

(beat)

You're, uh, you're my first if you know what I mean.

KRYSTLE

And judging by your circumstances, I definitely wont be your last.

CUT TO:

EXT. KIRBY'S HOUSE, FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Kirby knocks. Linda answers, shocked -- trying to hide SOMETHING under her night gown.

LINDA

(stumbling)

Kirby, what are you doing here?

Kirby readies to dig into her, then --

MARK (O.S.)

(calling out)

Who is it, hun?

LINDA

It's... Nobody, honey buns.

Linda and Kirby lock eyes in a cold stare.

KIRBY

Nobody?

(beat)

You know what? There's things I've wanted to say to you since the moment my Dad forced me to meet you. And as much as I'd like to, I wont because for some stupid reason you make him happy.

MARK (O.S.)

Linda, hun, this stuff is getting a little sticky.

KIRBY

And you may think that no one knows what you've done to finally push me out of my own Mother's house, but I know.

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MARK (O.S.)
 (worried)
 Hello? Can you hear me? Linda,
 baby?

KIRBY
 And when he finds out everything,
 you're little free ride is over.
 Then we'll see who the "nobody"
 really is.

Stunned, Linda drops the "something" from under her gown,
 revealing it to be TRANSLUCENT PURPLE DILDO.

The phallic weapon catches Kirby off guard.

MARK (O.S.)
 (pained)
 I'm really starting to get sore
 here, Lindy-cakes... Hello?!

Embarrassed and terrified, Linda slams the door shut.

Kirby takes in the sweet satisfaction of his verbal victory
 and disappears into the night.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

David is sitting at the dinner table with a CASE OF BEER in
 front of him and already moving on to his SIXTH of the night.
 The disgruntled look on his face is marred by the occasional
 GIGGLE coming from Ellis who is still covered in dry
 breakfast, and still watching TV.

ELLIS
 (amused)
 Oh hey, did Kirby call you?

David shoots Ellis an irritated look.

ELLIS (CONT'D)
 When I woke up, my phone said he
 called like eight times. I was
 gonna' check my messages but
 Chitlins and Beans was already on
 so I figured no worries, you know?

David finishes off beer number six.

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ELLIS (CONT'D)
They were working this case where
--

Kirby enters, revitalized and with what appears to be a reason to live.

KIRBY
What's up, guys?!

David and Ellis just stare at Kirby.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
I have had the craziest day. Good
crazy. Well, good and bad crazy.
But more good than crazy.

Kirby moves to the dinner table and takes a seat across from David.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
So I went back home...

David gets up to toss his empty bottles in the trash -- Kirby follows.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
And things did not go the way I
had planned.

David drops his trash --

KIRBY (CONT'D)
At all.

-- And delivers a SOLID RIGHT CROSS to Kirby's chin, immediately dropping Kirby.

CUT TO BLACK.

DAVID
Pick him up, Ellis.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The boys are sitting at the dinner table. Kirby, with a frozen Capri Sun juice pack pressed against his jaw, is sitting across from David who is well into his seventh beer as Ellis colors away in his Dora the Explorer coloring book.

KIRBY
I guess I had that one coming.

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DAVID
 Considering the week I've had,
 yes. It's the least I could do to
 repay you.

KIRBY
 So now what?

David hands Kirby a BEER.

DAVID
 You finish telling me about your
 shitty day.

Kirby grins, painfully.

KIRBY
 Oh I can't. My... My body is a
 temple.

David POPS the cap off.

DAVID
 And now it's a Temple of Doom.

ELLIS
 (still coloring)
 Get ready short-round, there's no
 time to waste.

DAVID
 No time to waste, indeed.

Kirby takes the beer from David.

HOURS LATER -

Kirby and David are back to their old selves, heavy into their
 conversation and almost done with the case of beer.

KIRBY
 ...so I'm in the shower.

DAVID
 And she didn't know?

KIRBY
 Nope, and there I am calling
 everyone. Maggie, you, and even
 Ellis.

David looks over to Ellis who has fallen asleep face first in
 his coloring book.

DAVID
 Good thing that call didn't go through, huh?

KIRBY
 Yeah, thank God. But Maggie did say some pretty interesting things that got me thinking.
 (beat)
 What if we made our own comic?

David smiles at Kirby's earnest enthusiasm.

DAVID
 That would be the dream.

KIRBY
 But it doesn't have to be.

DAVID
 Go on...

KIRBY
 Okay, you're an amazing artist, I'm an amazing writer --

DAVID
 Good writer.

KIRBY
 Great writer.

DAVID
 Good writer.

KIRBY
 Okay, I'm a "good" writer, but all the jobs I've chased wavered on someone else's approval. You went out to New York for the gig at Marvel and hated it cause of being held to their guidelines. What was right, what was wrong -- we're meant to be creators, not just some "employees."

DAVID
 Amen to that.

KIRBY
 Right? So screw Matt Parker, screw Marvel, screw M Pire Comics, and Screw Chronic Comics!

Kirby takes another swig of his beer.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

So let's not just think of it as living the dream like we can never get there, let's just fucking do it. Our way.

Kirby finishes his beer with one last big gulp and slams his bottle down. David sinks back into his seat.

DAVID

Fucking A.

KIRBY

What?

DAVID

Either my punch knocked something loose, or you just grew up right before my eyes.

Kirby grabs another beer.

KIRBY

So what do you say?

David tosses his beer in the trash.

DAVID

I say you start writing, and I'm gonna' go get some more drank cause we have a long night ahead of us.

David gets up, grabs his jacket and heads out the door.

SERIES OF SHOTS - SUPER-ZERO

A. Kirby feverishly writing.

B. David returns with more beer, excited and ready to get to work.

C. Kirby and David cracking the new case of beer open as Kirby shows David his notes.

D. David trucks out his art supplies and sketch books, ready to make some magic.

E. Kirby is editing his notes by x-ing out bits of pages and tearing some out.

F. Ellis is STILL asleep at the table.

G. David begins to sketch with an alcohol fueled intensity.

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H. Kirby and David look at each other.

KIRBY AND DAVID
(proud)
I think we got it.

CUT TO:

INT. KIRBY'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Linda is pouring herself a shot of tequila. Mark walks in and plants a kiss on her neck.

MARK
Mind pouring one for me?

LINDA
Not at all, lover.

She hands him the cup she poured for herself and takes a drink straight from the bottle.

LINDA (CONT'D)
Heard anything from Kirby?

MARK
No. But I'm sure he and the boys are doing fine. And I'm sure being out of the house for a few days will be good for him.

LINDA
Yeah. A few days...

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ellis is half awake and wrapped in awe, standing in front of TWO GIANT SKETCHES.

ELLIS
This. Is. Awesome.

KIRBY (O.S.)
We know.

Ellis looks over to see Kirby and David who are proudly leaning back against the dinner table.

ELLIS
Can I color it?

KIRBY
They wouldn't be complete
otherwise.

ELLIS
Sweet.

Ellis reaches into his pocket, pulls out a handful of MANGLED
CRAYONS and gets to coloring.

KIRBY
One thing I didn't account for was
how we're going to pay for
everything.

DAVID
That's easy, we yard sale.

KIRBY
All your stuff?

DAVID
Yup. You can't pay for tools you
need if you just got fired.

KIRBY
Cool -- you got fired?! How?

DAVID
"Creating."

FADE TO BLACK.

SIMMONS (V.O.)
Something's off about this...

CUT TO:

EXT. MPIRE COMICS - DAY

Franco and Simmons pull up to the curb in a rental car.
Simmons, riding shotgun, is probing through the case file.

FRANCO
Like?

Simmons drops the file on the back seat.

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SIMMONS

The background on Matt Parker shows nothing out there but qualifying for second place in a vanilla paste eating contest in high school, and disobeying curfew on prom night.

FRANCO

(unimpressed)

And John Wayne Gacy was a party clown. Your point is?

SIMMONS

My point is that there's nothing suggesting a history of crime or violence.

(turns to face Franco)

But this other guy, Peter Murdock, is a different story. He leaves MPire Comics every so often, company's in red when he's gone, and when he's back, its in black. Like clockwork.

FRANCO

So because he has a complicated history with his employer, that immediately puts him at the top of the list for you?

SIMMONS

I'm just saying that who's not to say that Matt and this Gretchen Warner were having a nice romance develop, and this "complicated" relationship between employer and employee turned into a deadly game of "my dick is bigger than yours."

Franco shoots Simmons an impressed look.

FRANCO

Very technical.

(beat)

The results from the lab show the prints from the scene matched to Matt Parker, the semen matched to Matt Parker, and the online interview confirms his relations with the deceased.

(MORE)

FRANCO (CONT'D)

Unless there was a three-way involving Matt, Gretchen, and Peter Murdock in a full-body condom, then maybe your theory holds true. But for right now, we have clearance to be outside jurisdiction to get this clown, so let's. Shall we?

INT. PETE MURDOCK'S NEW OFFICE - DAY

Franco and Simmons enter, looking around the room to see nothing but a long table where PETER MURDOCK is working behind a laptop with his earbuds in.

FRANCO

Tad bit empty for a niche god like yourself. I was expecting comics and action figures.

PETER

(not looking up from the laptop)

I just got it today. So whoever you are, you can get out.

Franco pulls out her badge and slides it in front of Peter.

Peter glances at the badge.

SIMMONS

Mr. Murdock, have you heard anything from Matt Parker in the last twenty-four hours?

PETER

You mean twenty-four hours from yesterday?

SIMMONS

Yes.

PETER

Twenty-Four hours, up to this moment?

SIMMONS

(slower)

Yes.

The detectives can't help but feel like something is off.

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PETER

I'm sure he's at home, on
Spankwire. Have you tried him at
home?

FRANCO

For a best friend, you sure seem
like someone who could care less.

Peter shuts his laptop and removes his earbuds.

PETER

Look, I have no idea where the
hell he's at. Since this little
surprise hit the evening news,
I've been busting my ass trying
to control the PR turd- fest, and
every call I've made to him has
not been returned.

(beat)

And as for your niche god
comment... thank you. Like most
gods I'm more of a behind the
scenes man myself. I told him
plenty of times that his need to
be seen would come back to bite
him in his bloated ass.

Peter puts his earbuds back in and continues with his work.

PETER(CONT'D)

Oh, and Detective Franco, is it?
Judging by the looks of it, your
partner doesn't seem too thrilled
with how you've carried this
quasi- interrogation.

Franco looks to Simmons as Simmons tries to cover her
dissatisfaction.

PETER (CONT'D)

So be careful with who you're
trying to insult next time. You
wouldn't want to anger a god,
would you?

Franco collects her badge and storms out of the office.

SIMMONS

Thank you for your time, Mr.
Murdock.

Peter shoots Simmons a thumbs up.

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Simmons sees herself out.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT, HALLWAY - MORNING

KIRBY repeatedly knocks on the bathroom door, holding a NEWSPAPER rolled up in his hand.

KIRBY
(still knocking)
You gotta' see this!

DAVID (O.S.)
(straining)
Watch your eyes!

The door opens to reveal DAVID, mid-bowel movement. Kirby reveals the newspaper by covering his eyes with it.

DAVID (CONT'D)
So that's why he wasn't at the party, huh?

DAVID'S P.O.V. - FRONT PAGE OF THE NEWSPAPER

It reads: "MISSING MEDIA MOGUL MATT PARKER SUSPECT IN BLOGGER'S DEATH."

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.