

ATLANTA

Spec script - "Self-Awareness"

Written by
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INT. EASTLAKE APARTMENTS - MORNING

EARNEST (27) sleeps soundly on his back. Next to him, VAN (25) scrolls through her phone. She jumps when Earn's eyes pop open.

EARN
I just had the weirdest dream.

VAN
What was it this time?

EARN
I was sitting on top of a mountain waiting for a cat that was running late. It started snowing...

Earn sits up. Looks confused.

VAN
What?

EARN
This feels weird. Have we done this before?

VAN
Wake up next to each other? Sadly.

EARN
No, I mean like, this.

VAN
Earn, what are you talking about?

EARN
I'm having mad Deja Vu with the dream and telling you about it. You don't feel that?

VAN
No.

He can't put his finger on it. She stares at him. Then gets up and walks out of the room.

VAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
How much did you smoke last night?

EARN
I don't know.

VAN (O.S.)
I think it's starting to fuck with
your brain.

EARN
Weed doesn't do that.

She enters with LOTTIE (1) in her arms. A doubtful look on
her face.

VAN
You just stay in bed and Deja Vu
for a while. Don't worry, I'll take
care of our daughter.

EARN
Everyone has Deja Vu.

VAN
And maybe don't smoke so much at
the show tonight. You've got Lottie
tomorrow morning.

EARN
Show? What day is it?

VAN
Damn Earn, get it together. Paper
Boi's at The View tonight.

EARN
Fuck.

She shakes her head, takes Lottie into the other room,
leaving Earn alone. He rubs his eyes.

TITLE: ATLANTA

EXT. POT FIELD - DAY

Earn stands on a stage at the front of the field. He looks
out over the crowd of pot plants. At the back of the field
stands a YOUNG MAN. Too far to tell who.

Earn steps down. Everything around his foot dies. His mouth
moves, but no sound comes out.

EARN
(subtitled)
What the fuck?

He grabs his throat. Coughs. The word COUGH is subtitled. The young man beckons Earn on. With every ensuing step the field dies more.

Finally at the back of the field, Earn stands face to face with DREAM EARN (27) a copy of himself. The same, save a bloodstain on Dream Earn's shirt and a wrinkled collar.

Behind Earn, the entire field lays dead.

DREAM EARN
I'm glad you came.

EARN
(subtitled)
What is this?

DREAM EARN
I like to come here sometimes and think. It's peaceful.

EARN
(subtitled)
Sure. Are you me? Or am I you?

Earn reaches out to touch Dream Earn. Dream Earn lowers the hand before it can make contact.

DREAM EARN
Do you ever think about mortality?

EARN
(subtitled)
Don't you already know the answer to that?

DREAM EARN
Perceptive. Cancel the show.

Dream Earn walks off toward backstage.

EARN
(subtitled)
I can't. Why would I...

Earn looks back at the dead pot field. When he faces forward he's...

INT. CLUB - EVENING

In front of Earn stands DAVEY (47) the club manager. Shorter than Earn, paunch of a stomach. Red in the face.

DAVEY

...Cancel the show if you don't get your shit together. My dumb ass intern blew the speakers, so I need a mic check again.

He waddles off.

DAVEY (CONT'D)

And you better fill this floor or it's coming out of your check.

Earn cares more about his day dream than anything Davey has to say.

INT. CLUB - BACKSTAGE

DARIUS (30) closes the green room door and massages a blunt in his fingers. He looks up as Dream Earn passes.

DARIUS

Sup Earn.

Darius double-takes at Dream Earn who stares for a second before he turns a corner and disappears. Darius looks around confused.

He continues through the curtain that separates backstage and front of house when Earn runs into him.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

Yo, how'd you do that? You were just...

Points backward.

EARN

I'm right here.

DARIUS

Weird. You should watch out, your horoscope was about danger... I think.

EARN

You read my horoscope?

DARIUS

I always liked that shirt. You should change if you're gonna spill something on it.

EARN

Look I don't really have time for this. Where's Al?

DARIUS

In the back. He's actually looking for you, we've got a problem.

INT. GREEN ROOM - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

ALFRED (35) rolls a blunt as he relaxes on the worn out black couch. Not much else in the room besides a small table with a vegetable tray.

Earn walks in as Al sparks up. Through small puffs of smoke...

ALFRED

Man, Earn, where the fuck you been?

EARN

Dealing with all this shit, so there's a show and we get paid.

ALFRED

Nigga, we get paid regardless, don't worry about that.

EARN

I'm not sure you understand how shows work.

Al looks at him, insulted.

ALFRED

All right, well if you fixin' shit, then I got two problems. One, what in the hell is that.

(re. veggie tray)

I know damn well my contract says bottle of Henny and two subway foot-longs.

DARIUS

BMT.

ALFRED

Now I guess we'd need three... one for you...

(refocuses)

So where the hell is that?

EARN

I don't remember that in your contract. And I don't think they really care either way.

ALFRED

Well it's there, so how about you deal with that, Mr. Manager.

EARN

Fine, what else?

Two KNOCKS on the door. Van walks in holding LARRY (1) a fussy infant, but not the right one. No one seems to notice except Earn.

EARN (CONT'D)

Who is that?

VAN

Who is who?

Points to Larry.

VAN (CONT'D)

Larry, your son. Jesus, Al, how much has he smoked.

ALFRED

Hey, I didn't give him nothin'. For real though Earn you should know your kid.

EARN

I feel like something's very wrong here.

ALFRED

Now that you mention it... What the hell you bring a baby to a club for?

VAN

I couldn't get a sitter and Earn made me promise to come. He'll be fine.

DARIUS

Music is really good for babies. It stimulates their brains and boosts language skills. He just needs some...

Darius puts his fingers into his ears to simulate ear plugs.

VAN
I'll stay back here. I can hear
everything just fine.

EARN
Ok, whatever.
(to Al)
What else?

ALFRED
I gotta take a shit.

EARN
I don't see how I can fix that, the
bathroom's down the hall.

ALFRED
Man, I'm not usin' that. Other
asses rubbin' on the seat and shit.

DARIUS
Usually you can just make a cover
out of toilet paper, but it's
really wet in there.

ALFRED
So find me another place to shit or
drive me home. Otherwise tonight
ain't happenin'.

He takes a big hit of his blunt. Passes it to Darius.

EARN
Dude, we're thirty minutes from
home.

ALFRED
So figure it out.

EARN
God damn it.

He rubs his head as he walks out. From behind...

VAN
And grab me a drink while you're
out there.

EXT. THE VIEW - NIGHT

Phone to his ear, Earn walks onto the sidewalk. Small nod to the bouncer as he passes. Two couples queue up in line.

The phone line connects. As it does we...

ENTER SPLIT SCREEN

On the left: Earn outside *The View*.

On the right...

INT. MESSY APARTMENT - SAME TIME

DON (29) wiry, but a kind face. The guy you take home to mom, sits on the couch, video game controller in his hand. Bottle of wine half drunk in front of him.

Two lines of coke next to that. Phone held to his ear with his shoulder.

DON

Hello?

EARN

Don, it's been a while. How are you?

Don pauses the game and looks at the phone screen again?

DON

Earn? What the hell is up man?

EARN

Got a weird request actually...

DON

Yeah, yeah. Are you back from Princeton? I could really use a friend right now. Just the man I wanted to hear from.

EARN

No, Princeton, no I'm back for a while. Indefinitely.

DON

That's sick. What are you doin' tonight? You wanna come over, I got some blow and wine... Shit I had one of those days.

(MORE)

DON (CONT'D)

I just came out to my girlfriend
and she flipped, like lost it. But
it felt so good to finally admit...

EARN

Oh, for sure. How would you like to
have Paper Boi take a shit in your
bathroom?

Don stares at the phone.

DON

What the fuck, Earn?

Don tosses the phone aside. As the call ends we...

END SPLIT SCREEN

Earn waits. Looks at the phone. Hung up.

EARN

Yeah, congrats though.

He pulls a string of vouchers from his front pocket. Walks to
the people in line.

EARN (CONT'D)

Free drink voucher if you say
you're here for Paper Boi.

Only one of the women in line perks up.

LINE GIRL

Oh shit, like Paper Boi, Paper Boi?

EARN

Yeah, he's opening.

LINE GIRL

Hell yes.

LINE GUY

It's a two drink minimum.

LINE GIRL

Yeah and he's giving one so it's a
one drink minimum, cheap ass.

(to Earn)

Thanks boo.

LINE GUY

Damn girl, who you callin' boo. I'm
right here.

She takes the vouchers from Earn. He let's them settle their issues alone.

Not too many people out on the street. He walks down a few paces. Leans on the wall and scrolls through his phone.

Debates. Chooses a number. When it connects we...

ENTER SPLIT SCREEN

On the left: Earn.

On the right...

INT. HOTEL POOL - SAME TIME

A large party. Through the commotion, ANDRE (32) looks slick in a suit, picks up the phone. A business man of sorts, always the life of the party.

Andre presses the phone to his ear. Plugs his other ear to block out the MUSIC.

ANDRE

Yo.

EARN

Andre, it's been a while man. How's it goin'?

ANDRE

Who is this?

EARN

What?

ANDRE

Who the fuck is this? How you get this number?

EARN

Andre, it's Earn Marks. From...

Andre looks at the phone. The number isn't saved.

ANDRE

Who?

EARN

Earn Marks.

ANDRE

Are you fuckin' kidding me bitch? I told you to forget my number. I don't fuckin' deal to snitches. Call me again and Gersh takes more than a finger next time.

Earn hangs up really fast and we...

END SPLIT SCREEN

EARN

Jesus Christ.

Earn pockets his phone and walks toward a GROUP.

EARN (CONT'D)

You guys here for the show?

The front man, JAMAL (17), a bruiser type. Tall and muscular. Easygoing when he's not against you. Looks up at *The View* sign. Laughs.

JAMAL

Nah nigga, fuck we look like?

EARN

I mean, a no would suffice. I was gonna give you some drink vouchers...

JAMAL

See, I was just fuckin' with you there. Where the hell else would we be goin'?

EARN

Say you're here for Paper Boi...

Jamal takes the voucher. Earn looks back at the other three GUYS with Jamal. All younger, barely peach fuzz on their chins.

He reconsiders.

EARN (CONT'D)

Shouldn't you be home studying for the SAT's or some shit?

JAMAL

Fuck you say, bitch?

EARN

I don't think I can be giving these
out to high schoolers.

Jamal steps to Earn. Shorter, but much more menacing.

He grabs the center of Earn's collar. Earn doesn't back down,
but doesn't match the enthusiasm.

JAMAL

You wanna keep talkin', nigga?

EARN

I'm not gonna fight you. It's four
on one, that would be crazy.

JAMAL

Sure can run your mouth, but can't
back it up, huh? Pussy.

EARN

You've got the whole Breakfast Club
backing you up. Wouldn't that make
you the pussy?

Earn looks over his shoulders at his lack of backup. He
receives a harsh shove backwards. Catches himself easily.

JAMAL

Nigga, you know who the fuck I am?

EARN

No.

JAMAL

Someone you don't fuck with. Watch
your back.

Jamal leads his crew away. He points a finger gun at Earn.
Pulls the trigger.

Earn brushes his shirt down. The wrinkled collar now matches
that of Dream Earn's. He tries to unwrinkle it.

When he looks up, Jamal and his crew pass Dream Earn who
stands in line for the club. A buffalo stands next to him.

Earn stares. Dream Earn nods politely to Earn as he enters
the club. A quick handshake with the Bouncer. The Bouncer
stops the buffalo.

Earn's phone BEEPS. A text from Van.

SMS TEXT: YOUR PARENTS ARE HERE.

He looks up. No Buffalo.

Earn pockets the phone and walks to the entrance. The Bouncer stops him.

BOUNCER

ID?

EARN

It's Earn, I work with Paper Boi. I came out like five minutes ago.

He shows the vouchers as proof.

BOUNCER

Oh yeah, you. My bad.

He holds his hand out. Earn takes it in a matching handshake as Dream Earn's.

INT. CLUB - CONTINUOUS

A small crowd has formed inside. Earn weaves through them, eyes on his phone. He sees something he likes and puts the phone to his ear.

DAVEY

Earn!

The call connects and we...

ENTER SPLIT SCREEN

On the left: Earn forgets the phone and faces off with the Davey.

On the right...

INT. GARAGE - SAME TIME

JACKSON (25) skinny Caucasian kid. Book smart. Halts the game of ping-pong with a FRIEND and puts the phone to his ear.

JACKSON

Hello?

Jackson listens as Earn tries to sidestep. Blocked.

DAVEY

Five minutes to get the levels set
or Paper Boi doesn't go on.

EARN

You know you can talk to him, he's
backstage.

JACKSON

(through phone)

Earn?

DAVEY

I don't deal with rappers. Their
managers are bad enough. Get it
done.

EARN

All right. I got it.

As Earn continues backstage, he looks down at the call.

EARN (CONT'D)

(on phone)

Jackson, it's Earn, Van's...

JACKSON

Of course I remember. That sounded
serious. Are you at the Paper Boi
show? Van said you were working for
him.

EARN

You listen to Paper Boi?

JACKSON

Hell yeah. He's fucking dope.

EARN

Where do you live these days?

INT. GREEN ROOM - LATER

Earn walks in, phone in hand. Right inside the doorway are
RILEY (55) and GLORIA (50), Earns parents.

RILEY

Earn.

EARN

Dad.

GLORIA
This is not okay, Earnest.

He follows her point to Van and Lottie (1). Earn looks at his proper daughter this time.

EARN
(relieved)
Lottie.

RILEY
In a bar with Al makin' sure your daughter is a pot head by the age of two. What kind of parents are you?

EARN
She couldn't get a sitter.

VAN
Better here with me than...

GLORIA
With us?

VAN
I didn't want to ask again.

RILEY
(to Van)
I expect this from Earn. Use ya head next time Vanessa.

Gloria takes Lottie from Van's hands. She doesn't protest.

GLORIA
We'll see you tomorrow. Have a good show Alfred.

Everyone watches silently as they leave. Al gives a half-hearted, wave.

DARIUS
That was weird right?

ALFRED
Who the fuck invited them?

Earn and Van both shake their heads.

DARIUS
Yeah, that was weird.

VAN
Did you get my drink?

EARN
No, I forgot.

VAN
Damn it, Earn. You cant even do one thing.

EARN
Well you can get it now that you don't have our daughter here.

She scoffs. Stands up and brushes past Earn.

ALFRED
So we good or what, the veggie tray ain't helpin' this situation.

Earn looks at the half eaten veggie tray.

EARN
Yeah I found a guy, few blocks away.

ALFRED
That's my boy!

Al stands and slaps Earn's hand pulling him in for a half hug.

EARN
Just one thing, he might be a little clingy. He apparently loves Paper Boi.

ALFRED
As long as he don't watch me shit, we good. Where's he at?

EARN
Down on Fifth and Penn. I think he still lives with his parents.

Al doesn't like this news.

DARIUS
It'll be a nice bathroom. And they'll probably have some snacks.

Earn takes a seat on the couch and sighs as Darius and Al walk to the back door of the club.

EXT. CLUB - BACK LOT - CONTINUOUS

The door catches on some gravel at its apex. They don't pay it any mind.

DARIUS
I would definitely take some ho-
ho's or...

Jamal slams into Paper Boi's shoulder.

ALFRED
Nigga, you better watch where you
walkin'.

JAMAL
Fuck you.

Jamal grabs for his waist. Darius holds Al back.

ALFRED
Ahhh, if I didn't have to shit...

JAMAL
What?

He let's Jamal assume the rest and walks off. Jamal pulls the door closed behind him as he walks into...

INT. CLUB - BACKSTAGE

Jamal pulls up his shirt. Reaches down into his baggy pants to produce a GLOCK. Resettles it in his waist band and covers it with his shirt.

INT. CLUB - STAGE - LATER

Mic in hand, Earn stands on the stage and taps the windscreen. The pops from the speakers make the SOUND TECH look around from behind the bar.

EARN
(awkwardly)
Check one.

Sound Tech tries to cut Earn off with a neck slash motion.

EARN (CONT'D)
I'm checkin' for Paper Boi.

Another two slashes. Sound Tech hoofs it around the bar. Earn puts the mic up and hops down. They meet in the middle.

SOUND TECH

The hell are you doing up there?

EARN

I've been getting yelled at all night to check levels for Paper Boi.

SOUND TECH

You don't look like Paper Boi.

EARN

I know. He's a little... tied up.

SOUND TECH

It's all set, has been for a while. I just reset the levels from what I already had locked in.

EARN

Did you not tell Davey? He's been on my ass all night.

SOUND TECH

No, fuck that dude. He's an asshole. So you're with Paper Boi?

EARN

Yeah.

Earn looks past Sound Tech to the bar where Van talks with a LARGE MAN. Her smile and laugh don't sit well with Earn.

SOUND TECH

I do this thing where I have all the guys that come through sign my booth. Paper Boi would be a dope addition. Get him before he blows up, you know?

EARN

Whatever you say.

Earn navigates the crowd to the bar. Jamal does the same across the room. Earn spots him.

Earn looks to Van, then back to Jamal. Shakes his head and walks toward the front door instead.

At the front door, Earn taps the Bouncer's arm.

EARN (CONT'D)

I think there's an underage kid here.

A few in line snicker. The Bouncer looks down, bothered.

BOUNCER

Excuse me?

EARN

That kid over there. I stopped him earlier and he was like seventeen or something. Then he made like a gun with his hand...

BOUNCER

If he's in the bar he's ID'd and cleared. Can I get back to this?

EARN

Yeah, sorry.

The next man up has his ID checked. The Bouncer pats him down quickly. Cleared. Earn walks back toward Van as the Large Man walks off.

Earn falls into his empty spot.

EARN (CONT'D)

So who was that?

VAN

Just someone who wanted to buy me a drink.

EARN

Oh, yeah because I was busy doing my job, I forgot to.

VAN

Something like that.

EARN

I feel like I can't win with you. You're either pissed I'm not paying rent, or you're pissed I don't have enough time for you.

VAN

What pisses me off is when you think you know everything. Can I not talk to a guy who buys me a drink?

EARN
It's just right in front of my
face.

She sighs. Just wants this over.

VAN
Yeah Earn, he came over started
hitting on me and I took the free
drink. I sent him off when he
started hating on Paper Boi.

Van raises her eyebrows waiting for a response. Nothing.

INT. CLUB - BACKSTAGE - LATER

A PA holds up a hand to Earn as he walks through.

PA
Paper Boi's on in five.

EARN
Cool.

Earn continues down the hall, head down.

DAVEY (O.S.)
Where the hell is Paper Boi?

Earn looks ups to see Davey in the doorway of the green room.

DAVEY (CONT'D)
He goes on in five minutes and he's
not here? What the hell kind of
manager are you?

RICH WILL (32) the headliner, enters the hall from another
door.

The sleeve cut off his left arm to show his tattoos. Gold
chains. Curly top fade. He's short, definitely compensating
for something.

RICH WILL
You say Paper Boi ain't here?

EARN
He just stepped out.

RICH WILL
(snarky)
One single don't make you a rapper.
(MORE)

RICH WILL (CONT'D)

(to Davey)

These cheap ass openers gotta go,
Davey.

DAVEY

(to Rich Will)

I'm sorry about this. We'll get it
cleared up.

(to Earn)

Right?

RICH WILL

Shit better be cleared up. Paper
Boi won't make it in this town if
he fucks with me.

Earn puts the phone to his ear.

ENTER SPLIT SCREEN

On the left: Earn

On the right: A phone screen lights up. Earn's face appears
on screen. We're confined. In a pocket. The call goes
unanswered.

DARIUS (V.O.)

(on voicemail)

You've reached Darius. If...

Earn hangs up.

END SPLIT SCREEN

RICH WILL

Bruh, you got two minutes to fix
this or Paper Boi done.

Van walks into the hall. When she sees the commotion she
turns back around.

EARN

Van, hold up.

Rich Will stops Earn as he tries to walk away.

RICH WILL

Nah, you ain't leavin' till we
clear.

DAVEY

I need him here now.

Earn takes a deep breath. Walks quickly into...

INT. GREEN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He SLAMS the door and locks it. The handle JIGGLES. KNOCKS.

DAVEY (O.S.)
Open the fucking door Earn.

Earn leans back on the door. His head bounces. He looks up at the ceiling. Closes his eyes.

CUT TO BLACK:

OVER BLACK

We hear the sound of water. It's peaceful.

EXT. CREEK - DAY

Earn opens his eyes. He drifts lazily in an inner-tube on a slow moving creek. He looks around until he spots Dream Earn in a tube next to him.

DREAM EARN
You've had a busy night.

Again, Earn's mouth moves, but no sound comes out.

EARN
(subtitled)
Tell me about it.

DREAM EARN
Lottie's a good kid. She has our eyes.

EARN
(subtitled)
Does she?

DREAM EARN
She'll be okay. Van will take care of her.

EARN
(subtitled)
Sometimes I think she's too good for me.

DREAM EARN
 You tried. That's what she'll
 always remember.

EARN
 (subtitled)
 What do you mean?

Dream Earn's inner-tube drifts away.

DREAM EARN
 They're waiting for you.

Across the creek, a large rock shakes. The VOICES and KNOCKS
 filter in.

EARN
 (subtitled)
 Wait, what is that?

He nods to the stain on Dream Earns shirt. Dream Earn drifts
 further away.

INT. GREEN ROOM - SAME TIME

Earn takes his head off of the door. Rubs his weary eyes.
 Steels himself. Pulls the door open. Rich Will and Davey
 stand there, silent.

Earn focuses on Rich Will first.

EARN
 Paper Boi opens. You don't go on
 till he's done. That's the deal.

RICH WILL
 Nigga, I don't give a fuck about a
 deal. Paper Boi a fake rapper, and
 I don't fuck with fake shit.

EARN
 You haven't paid your dues. You're
 lucky to have Paper Boi opening.
 You're headliner at *The View* nigga.
 You ain't special.

Davey steps in front of Rich Will. Earn focuses on Davey.

EARN (CONT'D)
 And you need to get your shit
 together. Your crew hates you cause
 you're an asshole.
 (MORE)

EARN (CONT'D)
 Your tech had mics set hours ago.
 And you signed a deal that Paper
 Boi opens. So he goes on when he
 gets back.

DAVEY
 When will that be?

EARN
 When Paper Boi get's back.

They have a stare-off until Davey backs off and walks down
 the hall with Rich Will. Earn makes a call.

ENTER SPLIT SCREEN

On the left: Earn

On the right: Darius and Paper boi walk in through the back
 door of the club.

DARIUS (O.S.)
 Hello?

EARN
 Where are you guys? I need you both
 back. He's on like now.

DARIUS (O.S.)
 Ok.

Earn looks to his left. Standing there in the hall are Paper
 Boi and Darius. Darius still talks through the phone.

DARIUS (CONT'D)
 I think we'll just be another few
 seconds.

EARN
 (into phone)
 What the...

THE SCREENS COME TOGETHER AS WE...

END SPLIT SCREEN

Earn hangs up.

EARN (CONT'D)
 What the hell took you so long?

ALFRED

That little man wouldn't shut his damn mouth. Paper Boi this, Paper Boi that. I am Paper Boi, I know.

DARIUS

He was a little aggressive. But his parents were very nice.

EARN

You ready?

Al holds up a roach.

ALFRED

Just gotta finish this.

He walks into the green room. Darius looks strangely at Earn.

EARN

What?

DARIUS

I remembered your horoscope.

EARN

I don't believe in that.

DARIUS

It warned you to not follow yourself into danger. That mean anything to you?

Earn genuinely thinks for a second.

EARN

I don't know.

ALFRED

All right, leggo.

He puts his arms around Darius and Earn as they head toward stage.

INT. CLUB - BAR - LATER

Earn and Darius walk out from the side of the stage. They navigate the crowd to the bar where they find Van. She rolls her eyes.

EARN

Hey, I'm sorry. This shit is stressful.

She doesn't react. He leans to the bartender.

EARN (CONT'D)

Can I get a white wine?

(to Van)

At least I know what you drink.

She smiles. Puts down the mixed drink.

EARN (CONT'D)

If we'd had a boy instead of Lottie, what would we have named him?

VAN

Where's this coming from?

EARN

Just humor me.

VAN

I dunno. I guess I had a few in mind, but nothing... Maybe Larry after my grandad. I always liked that name. Why?

EARN

No. I like it too.

He nods and takes the vouchers from his pocket. Walks the few steps to Darius who watches the stage.

EARN (CONT'D)

You think I can sell these back to the bar? Make the money back?

As Darius speaks, Dream Earn steps OUT OF Earn like a phantasm. Only Darius sees him. Darius watches As Dream Earn walks ahead to the bar and turns.

DARIUS

(distracted)

I don't see why not.

PAPER BOI (O.S.)

(on stage)

What's good View. How we doin' tonight?

Earn starts toward the Dream Earn that he can't see. Darius grabs his arm.

DARIUS

I think this is what it meant.
Don't go over there.

Earn looks to the spot at the bar. Nothing.

EARN

I'm just going to sell these back.
I'll be two seconds.

DARIUS

Hold up...

Darius won't let go. He looks around. A struggle breaks out ten feet away from them. Jamal points the gun toward Earn. The "Paper Boi" beat drops.

It all happens too fast for Earn to react.

Earns looks to the struggle. The Bouncer pulls at Jamal's arm, aiming the gun at the bar. The other Bouncer has Jamal in a headlock. The gun goes off. BANG.

The CROWD ducks and SCREAMS as a collective whole.

EARN

Oh, shit!

Earn grabs for Van. One of the Bouncers rips the gun away as both Bouncers restrain Jamal. The beat cuts out. Paper Boi lays on his stomach, hands over his head.

Darius and Earn stand, watching the situation play out. Fleeing feet kick the gun away from Jamal.

Darius looks to the bar. Dream Earn bleeds out to make the stain that had been on his shirt the whole time. Dream Earn nods to Darius who nods back.

Earn walks over to the Glock cartridge on the ground in shock. He drops it immediately. Burned.

EARN (CONT'D)

Fuck.

Darius makes it to Earn.

DARIUS

Did you see that?

They look at the bullet lodged in the bar. About where Earn might have been had Darius not stopped him.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

I thought Dream Earn was evil, but that was noble.

EARN

Dream Earn?

Darius nods that Earn heard right, but doesn't elaborate. They stand in the middle of the fleeing crowd as the sound distorts. Like a record scratching...

INT. GLENWOOD APARTMENTS - MORNING

Earn wakes, startled on the couch. He looks around. Al plays video games on the other couch unfazed. Darius walks out in an apron. Pan of eggs in hand.

ALFRED

You good?

EARN

What happened?

Earn tries to rub his eyes. A sharp pain. He investigates.

EARN (CONT'D)

Ah, fuck.

There's a red, bubbling burn on his thumb and pointer finger.

DARIUS

That happened. I tried to stop you, but it was too loud.

ALFRED

That bitch, Rich Will is blamin' me for last night. Nigga thinks he's hard till someone brings a gun then it's all, woe is me.

EARN

Rich Will?

ALFRED

Damn, boy.

Earn shakes out his hand. He looks at the burn. Darius eats straight from the pan. A DING from his phone. He checks it.

DARIUS

Ebay, man. Paper Boi, your shit's
goin viral.

He hands the phone to Al. Earn filters over. When they
process what they're seeing, they both lose it with disgust.

INT. JACKSON'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Jackson takes the top from the back of the toilet. He lifts
the lever from the plug to ensure it won't flush. Re-tops it.

TIME LAPSE

Only shadows filter into the bathroom until... Finally, Paper
Boi Walks in and does his business. Plays on his phone the
whole time.

When he's done, he tries to flush. Nothing. Again and again.
Nothing. He gives up. Leaves.

Later, Jackson walks in with tongs and pulls the shit from
the toilet. Puts it into a plastic bag. He stares at it
accomplished.

We follow as he walks up to his...

INT. JACKSON'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS (FLASHBACK)

He messes around on his computer. Pulls up EBAY. Types and
types. Finally, he takes a picture of the bag of shit.

Plugs his phone in.

We slowly...

END TIME LAPSE

As Jackson looks at his completed listing on Ebay. \$500 -
Authentic Paper Boi Shit. He hits publish.

END EPISODE