

2.

One of the vents has been covered up with an odd “refrigerator” made out of insulated coolers and supported by one of the shelving units. It hums quietly.

Where that shelving had been, 14 red tally marks are etched on the wall.

The flashlight/radio now sits on a shelf. The STATIC continues.

A large plastic bin full of books, pens, and notepads now sits next to Zachary’s camping chair.

Dan is in a new camping chair across from Zachary’s. He scribbles in the boxes of the crossword puzzle book. A cheap children’s guitar lies on top of its box next to him.

He puts the pen down and stretches his hand, then tosses the book onto Zachary’s chair, picks up the guitar and starts messing around.

He clearly has no idea what he’s doing.

He repeats the same lick a few times, then pulls out a small book of instructions from the box. He uses the guide to make a chord, strums it a few times. Tries another. And another. Finally he finds one he likes. He plays his lick, then the chord. The lick, then the chord. He beams.

Three knocks strike the door.

DAN

Come on in! I got something to show you!

Three knocks again strike the door.

DAN

I said come in!

ZACHARY

(offstage)

You have to knock back so I know you’re in your suit!

DAN

Yeah, you're cool, I'm just a little preoccupied.

ZACHARY

(offstage)

It's three knocks in, three knocks out. If you don't knock back how do I know you're / in your suit.

DAN

Zachary. I'm telling you that it's fine and I'm in my suit.

ZACHARY

But that's not the system / we agreed-

DAN

Just open the damn door!

Dan covers his mouth and nose with his hand. The door opens and Zachary enters in his suit. He closes the door behind him, untapes his neck, and lets out a huge breath.

ZACHARY

One hundred. Eighty. Fucking. Four.

DAN

No shit?

ZACHARY

You're not in your suit.

DAN

Dude, that's incredible. That's like Guinness Book level.

ZACHARY

Why aren't you in your suit?

DAN

Hey man, records stand. Dead or alive.

ZACHARY

I feel like my ribs are gonna implode. Where is your fucking suit.

Dan points to his suit sitting in the corner.

ZACHARY

That's not what I asked.

DAN

Actually, I think that's / literally what you-

ZACHARY

It's not.

DAN

I covered my mouth, alright? Do we have to go over this every day?

ZACHARY

Until you stop being a dumbass and taking / unnecessary risks, yes, we-

DAN

Listen. Dude. I'm very impressed by your lung capacity. I think it's great you're training your body / and-

ZACHARY

I don't care whether you're impressed. All it takes is one airborne strand floating / in to-

DAN

Christ, man, every time we come back, air from out there comes in with us. If you're gonna breath in here, you might as well breath out there.

ZACHARY

It comes with us? It comes in for like three / seconds-

DAN

This is what I mean. It doesn't matter what I say. I really don't wanna live in endless debate with you, dude.

ZACHARY

Whatever. I just hope you'll have the decency to out of here when you start turning into a fucking puddle.

DAN

(holding up his fingers)

Scout's honor.

(beat)

So you didn't use it, then.

ZACHARY

I didn't "use" it? What are you, nine?

DAN

Did you?

ZACHARY

I-

Yes, I.

It's very nice.

DAN

So you were exposed, too, then.

ZACHARY

What? You said with the towel it was totally / secure, just like-

DAN

Dude. Dude, I'm just fucking with you. I'm sorry.

ZACHARY

Don't do that.

DAN

I won't. I'm sorry.

You see that stain by the door to the sales floor?

ZACHARY

That's where the..?

DAN

Yup. Fingers were still gripping the handle, flesh melting off it like ice.

ZACHARY

Whose was it?

DAN

Mo, maybe? I thought I saw his tat on the wrist, but. Who the fuck knows.

ZACHARY

There're more stains like that? Out on the sales floor?

DAN

You didn't make it out there?

ZACHARY

I couldn't.  
I tried to make myself open the door.  
Just. I couldn't.

DAN

Sure. I get that.

ZACHARY

It's too soon. I'm not like you, Dan, I can't just / re-wire my brain and-

DAN

Hey. You did good, man. You did real good.

Beat.

ZACHARY

Thanks.

Zachary starts taking off the suit.

ZACHARY

You have something to show me?

DAN

Oh! Yeah. Check this out.

He tries play his guitar riff but keeps screwing it up.

DAN

Fuck. Ok, well that's not. It's not this exactly. But then...

He plays the chord. Smiles.

DAN

See? So it's like...

He tries the riff again, almost getting it. Strums the chord.

DAN

Right?

ZACHARY

Wow okay.

DAN

I mean it's not Mozart, I know, but not bad for a first go, huh?

ZACHARY

No, it's. Yeah.

DAN

Yeah?

ZACHARY

The rhythm.

DAN

Right? I think so too. It's got a unique rhythm.

ZACHARY

And there's, uh. The resolution there. That's innovative.

DAN

Yes! That's what I'm thinking, I could just like learn how to play "music," right, but how many "musicians" are left out there? Maybe I can like totally create music from the ground up and spread my own kinda thing, you know?

ZACHARY

Oh. Okay, Yeah. Wow.

DAN

I mean it's just a hobby.

ZACHARY

No it's good. Really.

DAN

I'm sorry this is all I got. I looked for a kids violin, you know, I figured you might wanna re...

But it was this or a weird digital drum kit for babies. So.

ZACHARY

Don't worry about it. I haven't picked one up since we came back for dad.

DAN

No time like the present.

ZACHARY

Okay.

DAN

You should mess around with this! I'm sure it translates.

ZACHARY

I'm okay. Thanks.

DAN

It's really fun.

ZACHARY

Okay, I'm just. I'm not really interested in that anymore, okay?

DAN

Okay.

ZACHARY

But badass, man. You should totally stick with it.

DAN

Thanks.

Zachary sits and opens the crossword puzzle book.

ZACHARY

Oh. Thank you.

DAN

Huh?

Zachary holds up the book.

DAN

Of course man. You're right, it's kinda therapeutic.

Zachary finds a puzzle, grabs a notebook from the bin, then copies the grid of the puzzle into the notebook.

DAN

That really work?

ZACHARY

Every now and then some shadow of letter will like stare at me through the ink, but. Mostly yeah.

DAN  
You don't remember the answers?

Zachary points at the "500 new puzzles" on the cover.

ZACHARY  
I ain't no machine.

They smile at each other. Zachary finishes copying the grid, starts working to fill out the puzzle.

DAN  
I found 'em.

ZACHARY  
What?

DAN  
The guns.

ZACHARY  
Okay...

DAN  
There's dozens. Rifles, shotguns. No handguns, that I could see, which is / weird-

ZACHARY  
You can't sell handguns here.

DAN  
What?

ZACHARY  
They talked about it in the orientation video.

DAN  
You actually watched that?

ZACHARY  
Jesus Christ.

DAN  
But we can start practicing. Tomorrow.

ZACHARY  
No.

DAN

What?

ZACHARY

I told you. I don't want guns here. I don't like guns.

DAN

Look, I feel weird about them now too / but-

ZACHARY

You don't know anything about guns and I fucking hate them so end of story. Okay?

DAN

I really think you need to take a step back and look / at the bigger-

ZACHARY

End of fucking story, Dan.

DAN

Zachary. I get it. I hate them too, but just because you hate something doesn't mean you don't need it. So I don't want it any more than you do, but a time's gonna come. And I don't feel safe at all without one.

Zachary doesn't look up from his crossword.

Dan wanders for a bit, eventually making his way over to the makeshift wall calendar.

DAN

Did you make a mark for today?

ZACHARY

No.

DAN

You sure?

ZACHARY

Pretty sure, yeah.

DAN

Cause there's a new one. And I didn't.

ZACHARY

Is there?

DAN  
You're "pretty sure"?

ZACHARY  
I'm sure. I'm extremely sure.

DAN  
Is there not a new one?

ZACHARY  
What?

DAN  
Is today 14? Or is today 15?

ZACHARY  
I don't know, Dan. We started late. It could be 12, it could be 20, who the fuck knows in here?

DAN  
Yeah.

Dan gets up, moves over to the wall, stares at the red tally marks. He touches the latest one, then looks at his finger.

DAN  
Huh.

ZACHARY  
What?

DAN  
It's dried.

ZACHARY  
Wow.

DAN  
(flicking Zachary off)  
I guess it's 15, then.

ZACHARY  
Do you mind? I'm trying / to work on-

DAN

Sure, sorry. Sorry.

Dan grabs a bottle of strawberry syrup, squeezes some onto his fingers, and draws a new mark with it on the wall.

DAN

Let's call this Thursday.

ZACHARY

What?

DAN

Today. We have a calendar again. Ish.

ZACHARY

Right..?

DAN

If it's 15, we're two weeks to the day from the... Thursday. We started... 4 days ago, so that's Sunday. That's perfect, the birth of our new calendar. First day of the... Harris-ian Calendar.

ZACHARY

(referencing the crossword)

May I please?

DAN

Oh, god, yeah, sorry.

Dan stares at the wall.

DAN

Dude.

ZACHARY

Dan, please. Five minutes. Just give me / five minutes of-

DAN

Merry Christmas.

Zachary looks up from his puzzle.

BLACKOUT.