

Thieves - "Pilot"

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INT. ADAM'S PHOTO STUDIO - DAY

1

A small makeshift photography studio has been built in an even smaller apartment. An emaciated emo rocker, bearing a striking resemblance to a box kite is draped uncomfortably over a cheap vinyl chair.

The photographer, Adam, is looking through his camera snapping away photos. He is trying to figure out why a man with a heroin-sheik look is not photographing well. While Adam is adjusting his camera, his mobile phone rings in his shirt pocket.

ADAM

Hello.

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INT. CHET'S APARTMENT - DAY

2

A small cluttered apartment with books about web design and Meisner's method are strewn about. Chet is slouched back in his computer chair mindlessly playing minesweeper.

CHET

Hey, what's going on?

ADAM

Not much.

HEROIN SHEIK

Hey!

Adam takes a random photo to appease the Sheik.

CHET

You heard, right.

ADAM

Hear what?

CHET

About Dave's mom.

ADAM

Dave? Like from freshman year of college Dave? I haven't talked to him in forever. God, I remember his mom. So hot. And those little triangle ham sandwiches she'd bring up when she visited. Mmm.

CHET

She just died.

(CONTINUED)

ADAM

Really!? Jesus, that sucks.

CHET

I know. But wrap your head around this.

ADAM

What?

CHET

Dave's Dad brought a date to his mom's funeral.

ADAM

No way! Wait... is she hotter than Dave's ex-mom?

HEROIN SHEIK

Can we stop talking about the MILF and focus? GAHHH!

Several flashes of light hit the Sheik, as Adam puts the camera up to his face causing the flash to blind him.

CHET

It gets better. Drumroll to build tension... his date was that exchange student that stayed at the house last year.

ADAM

What! Man, I bet they've been shaking and baking since she landed here. How'd he pull that one off? Wasn't she a Ukrainian gymnast?

CHET

Yes! 6 feet tall, double-jointed, slightly manly, but drop-dead gorgeous.

ADAM

OH MY GOD! I'd LOVE to take a hot Ukrainian Gymnast to my dead wife's funeral.

HEROIN SHEIK

I think something in my back just popped.

Adam lifts his camera hand and takes a random shot of the sheik.

(CONTINUED)

ADAM

We're almost done. (beat) I need to wrap things up here and I'll meet you at Leona's for pizza around 7.

The Sheik's leg is randomly twitching up and down.

HEROIN SHEIK

Uh, I really need to go now. 'Cause I'm not doing that with my leg.

ADAM

(to the Sheik) Shush. I thought you were supposed to be QUIET and mysterious.

CHET

I am jonesing for some pizza. See you there.

Jackie is on her cell phone sitting at a table in a bar with a half empty beer in front of her.

JACKIE

Yeah, I'm busy tonight, but I'll talk to you tomorrow. Alright, adios.

Jackie hangs up and places her mobile phone on the table. Cut to a shot of the phone. It is a bright pink phone bedazzled with jewels and glitter. Jackie takes a sip from her beer and notices Flip. We cut to Flip who appears to be writing in a notebook while nursing a beer. We cut back to Jackie. She decides that Flip is an easy victim, smiles, places her mobile phone in her purse, and gets up from the table. Note that her purse is unzipped and still open as she carries it. Pretending to be intoxicated, she begins to mildly sway towards Flip. Flip notices Jackie and looks up making eye contact with her. When she gets to the table, she pretends to fall on Flip. They each, unbeknownst to each other, steal their respective mobile phones as Flip catches Jackie.

FLIP

Are you okay?

Jackie pauses.

JACKIE

Yeah.

Jackie continues to stand staring at Flip.

FLIP

Can I help you with something?

Jackie pauses again.

JACKIE

Nope!

Jackie turns around on a dime and moves back to her table. She sits down, digs into her pocket and smiles. She pulls out Flip's phone, looks at it in approval, and places it back in her pocket. She takes a final sip from her beer, gathers her things, and goes to the bar to close out her tab. While the bartender is closing her tab out, Flip's phone rings in her pocket. She pulls out the phone and her mobile phone number appears on the outer display. She looks back at the table Flip was sitting at. He is gone. Jackie takes the call.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Um, hello?

FLIP

Your phone is adorable.

JACKIE

Yours is ugly. I want my phone back.

FLIP

I don't know. I'm really getting attached the jewels and glitter. It's such a *cute* custom job.

JACKIE

Meet me tonight. 245 Gavensport St. 9 o'clock.

FLIP

Whoawhoawhoa, slow down. We're moving so fast. We should get to know each other better first. A little wine-

JACKIE

You'll get to know my high heel in your crotch.

FLIP

Gosh, you sure sobered up quick.  
I enjoyed your performance back at  
the bar. Such a classy lady.

JACKIE

Meet me tonight, or else...

FLIP

...or else we'll never even have a  
shot at love. I know. Or worse  
yet, babies.

JACKIE

You think you're so damned  
charming.

FLIP

You're still talking to me aren't  
you?

JACKIE

I want my phone, and if you don't  
show up tonight, I'll find out  
where you live and mail your phone  
back to you in pieces!

FLIP

Whoa, easy, our first fight  
already? You're high maintenance.

JACKIE

Goodbye.

FLIP

Talk to you soon, darling.

Chet is playing around on his mobile phone while he waits  
for Adam. Adam enters.

CHET

Hey man. How'd the shoot go?

Chet and Adam move toward the counter to order pizza.

ADAM

It was alright.

CHET

Can I get two slices of pepperoni  
and a cup of water please?

ADAM

I was working with this weird punk guy who kept complaining about his positioning and that he didn't want me to (physically making quotation marks with his fingers) "hurt" his image. He was very "concerned" that the shots I was taking wouldn't "maintain" his "integrity" as an "artist".

CHET

Wow, do you realize you just performed a gratuitous misuse of (physically making quotation marks with his fingers) "quotation" marks?

ADAM

What are you talking about? You use "quotation marks" when you want to emphasize something.

CHET

No, you use italics when you want to emphasize something.

ADAM

Italics?

CHET

Yes!

ADAM

How do I do that with these?!  
(displays and waves hands)

CHET

How can you not-

PIZZA GUY BEHIND COUNTER

Guys. Guys! I've got a business to run. Keep it down. (Motioning to Adam) What can I get for you boss.

ADAM

Just a Diet Coca-Cola please.  
(Jokingly glaring at Chet) I seem to have lost my appetite. (pause)  
Ah, heck. Throw a slice of cheese in there as well.

CHET laughs.

(CONTINUED)

CHET

(sighs) Ah, man. I miss the early days.

ADAM

The early days?

CHET

Yeah, you know. When we were just starting out. A laptop here. An iPod there.

ADAM

Ahhh yes. Good times.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. OHIO STATE DORM - DAY

CHET is pulling a love seat out of his RA's dorm room and attempts to turn it to pull it down the hallways. ADAM comes out of his dorm room and heads toward the bathroom. He notices CHET pulling the couch down the hallway.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Hey man, you need help with that?

CHET

Yeah man, that'd be great.

ADAM

You moving?

CHET

Nope. Getting back at my RA.

ADAM

So you're stealing all of his stuff?

CHET

Yep, pretty much.

ADAM

Cool.

ADAM picks up one end of the couch and they start moving the couch further down the hallway.

BACK TO:

They briefly reflect. ADAM checks the time.

(CONTINUED)

ADAM

Oh wow, we really need to go.

CHET

What? Why?

ADAM

I've got something fun for us to do tonight. Let's get out of here.

ADAM and CHET get up from their seats, throw away their plates, napkins and cups, and head toward the door. ADAM opens the door and CHET follows as they exit Leona's.

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INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - NIGHT

7

Close-up of a group member introducing himself.

ANONYMOUS MEMBER

I am a thief. I have been stealing from others for five years - from my family and my friends. It really started with children. I mean, we all have cravings. Sugar, gets to me. When I have to have it, I have to have it. And when the situation presents itself - a nearby child holding a tasty treat - I don't see any problem in taking that. Taking candy from a small child. It's been one of many crosses to bear, but I know that with the proper support from the beautiful people in this room, magic is going to happen here today.

The member smiles spreading his arms wide and holds his smile and arms out as he slowly descends back to his chair.

This is the meeting place for the Thieves Anonymous Support Group. Eight members are sitting in chairs in a circle accompanied also by a group moderator, Tabitha. Tabitha is a thirty-something who is very focused on maintaining a comfortable and trusting environment for the group members to speak in. CHET and ADAM are sitting next to each other. JACKIE is across from both of them in the circle.

TABITHA

That was very good Steven. Thomas?

(CONTINUED)

TOM

I am a thief. I have been stealing from co-workers for only four months. It's a bad thing. I know. They don't deserve the things they have. I work twice as hard as they do and they still get more than the lion's share in computer upgrades and other freebies. I thought stealing from them was a way to even the playing field in the office. But, I realize now that-

ADAM

How'd you do it?

TOM

What, wait, I'm sorry what?

ADAM

No, that's genius. You can score some much free office supplies that way.

TOM

Well, I mean, I suppose it was a good-

ADAM

Suppose? You had access to the fundamentals of life. Pens, pencils, paper clips, Scotch tape. Why bother buying it when you can...borrow it?

TABITHA

Please Adam, this is working backwards. Please let Tom finish and wait for your turn.

TOM

(talking to Adam) Well, I found out that they keep a cash stash under the water cooler to use for beer on Friday, which they're not supposed to bring into the office first of all. They never knew who kept taking-

TABITHA

Tom, tell us about what you were about to say. What you realized.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

Ah, well, I realized that I didn't need to steal because...my hard work and persistence shows. My boss recently gave me a raise, and I feel like I'm slowly, but surely, really climbing the company ladder.

TABITHA

That's great Tom. Great effort. You're moving in a forward direction. Chet?

CHET

I am a thief. I have been stealing from everyone I know and don't know for as long as I can remember. (gesturing to ANONYMOUS MEMBER) It's been a bit of a battle and very difficult at times. Stealing has been a very large part of my life for a long time and...I have absolutely no intention of stopping.

There is an awkward silence amongst the entire group.

TABITHA

Chet, you're in the company of friends. Be strong. Tell us how you really feel. Remember, you're not alone.

CHET

No, I mean I really have no intention of not stealing anytime soon.

TABITHA

Chet, you know that deep down inside there is a part of you that just wants to come clean with yourself and move past this.

CHET

Mmm, nope. Listen, babydoll, I know that you're doing a hell of a job here helping people out and I respect that. However, everyone has their vices, and I think that it is very healthy to express myself through the art of taking from those more fortunate than I.

(CONTINUED)

TABITHA

I think it's time to rebalance our chakra and make our third eye look inward. Everyone hold hands and really feel the spirit energy passing through our bodies.

A few moments of silence pass.

CHET

I really feel this.

TABITHA

Yes, excellent, this is good.

CHET

My third eye is wide open. Oh! I think it just blinked.

TABITHA

Yes, that is great. The Dalai Lama was self-actualized by the time he was your age.

Chet bursts out laughing.

TABITHA (CONT'D)

Chet, you are obviously not taking your spiritual health seriously. If you are not going to take care of yourself, we are certainly not going to take care of you.

CHET

Oh come on, how can you not laugh at this everybody? Spiritual health? Dalai Lama? I feel like she's going to take us on some acid-induced magic carpet ride next.

TABITHA

Chet, I'm going to have to ask you to leave.

CHET

And if I want to stay and heal myself spiritually?

Tabitha glares at Chet.

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EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF CHURCH - NIGHT

8

We see CHET and ADAM faceplanted into the ground. A few of the group members walk back into the church.

ADAM

Well, I think was worth it, no?

CHET

No.

They slowly get off the ground and begin to walk away from the church.

JACKIE

Hey!

ADAM and CHET turn around.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Were you serious back there?

CHET

What?

JACKIE

I like what saw.

CHET

Yeah, YEAH, I mean I'm all about it.

JACKIE

Yeah, you're all about that?

ADAM

Totally, but what's it to you?

Flip's mobile phone rings inside Jackie's purse. Her mobile phone number is on the outside display. She takes the call.

JACKIE

Where are you?

FLIP

Who are the two guys with you?

JACKIE

What?

FLIP

Who are they?

(CONTINUED)

JACKIE

They're, ah, my friends.

FLIP

I don't do exchanges with ladies  
who have bodyguards on hand.

JACKIE

Would you look at these guys?  
They could barely take down a-  
Okay, where the hell are you.

Flip hangs up on Jackie.

CHET

What was that all about?

JACKIE

A guy who stole my phone.

CHET and ADAM glance at each other.

ADAM

What?

At that moment, FLIP approaches from behind.

FLIP

Well if it isn't that classy lady  
from the bar and two fine  
gentlemen.

Jackie puts her right hand out expectantly.

JACKIE

Phone?

FLIP

Mmm, only if you make mine as  
flashy and blingy as yours.

JACKIE

Just give me the phone.

FLIP

Show me mine and I'll show you  
yours.

Jackie pulls out FLIP's phone, waving it expectantly.  
FLIP hands JACKIE her phone and JACKIE hands FLIP her  
phone.

JACKIE

Your handiwork's not bad.

(CONTINUED)

FLIP

If you'd like to see more, give me  
a call sometime.

JACKIE

If you're lucky.

FLIP smiles and JACKIE looks back at him. There's a  
pause as they briefly look at each other.

CHET

Um, hello, (motioning to Adam).  
We're still here.

FLIP

Listen gents, this is a one-on-one  
conversation.

JACKIE

You know what? You remind of  
Arthur Fonzerelli.

FLIP

What? Who? Ex-boyfriend? Uncle?  
Therapist?

JACKIE

It's THE FONZ!

CHET

Yeah, the FONZ!

JACKIE

I'm not even from this country and  
I know the Fonz. *Happy Days* was  
one of the happiest parts of my  
childhood.

Jackie starts singing.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Sunday. Friday. Smiley Day.  
Tuesday. Thursday. Smiley Day.

CHET

Yes, that's it.

JACKIE

I used to have a Fonz lunch box  
when I was a kid. I was crushed  
the day my mother threw it out.

Jackie pauses to think about the lunch box.

(CONTINUED)

FLIP

You know, I know a guy and I can  
get one and have it to you next  
week.

Jackie's face lights up. Chet knows what he has to do.

CHET

Well, I know a guy too and I can  
get it to you by Wednesday.

FLIP

Tuesday.

CHET

Monday.

FLIP

Sunday.

CHET

TOMORROW!

Jackie screams and grabs CHET giving him a massive hug.  
CHET smiles triumphantly and FLIP is seething with anger.