

UNDERPRIVILEGED

Written by

Jeane Wong

Circle of Confusion
Abrams Artists Agency

COLD OPEN

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - PATIENT ROOM - DAY

JOHN WHYTE (early 30s, White) opens his eyes to see -- an emotional RITA WHYTE (50s, White). Someone else comes into view -- DR. JACKSON (40s, Black), a doctor, finishing up notes on a clipboard. John sits up, confused.

DR. JACKSON

Take it easy. You've been through some tough tomatoes.

JOHN

Tomatoes? I had *nachos* for lunch.
(remembering)
Then my stomach started hurting.
And now I'm here.

DR. JACKSON

It sure wasn't a stomachache.

JOHN

I thought those nachos were still good.

DR. JACKSON

You are one of the few survivors of a deadly virus called Alvus.

John registers this. Then he looks placid, his go-to mood.

JOHN

Very cool that I survived this virus, but I got some questions about this Elvis--

DR. JACKSON

--Alvus Virus. It only affects the... white male population.

JOHN

So white dudes dropped dead everywhere?

DR. JACKSON

Very horrifically. The virus eats you from the inside out.
(wee bit too fascinated)
It starts from your intestines and pushes your bowel movements upwards. In some cases, people have defecated from their eyes.

JOHN

Yikes, sounds like some kind of a jungle fever.

DR. JACKSON

Not the one you were hoping for, I can assure you of that.

Then, something dawns on John as real worry crosses his face.

JOHN

Waitamminute, if this thing hurts white dudes, is my big bro okay? He didn't like...

John OPENS HIS EYES REALLY WIDE à la shitting one's eyes.

RITA

Alex is in an induced coma. He's in quarantine and...

Her anxiety flusters her. John grabs his mother's hand.

JOHN

Hey, mom. We'll get through this. Alex's got that Whyte blood, he's a fighter. I mean, I woke up, right?

DR. JACKSON

We admitted your brother in the nick of time. It is a miracle considering all that has happened since this epidemic started. We lost most of the US government, ratings for nature documentaries tanked ever since, and Hellman's Mayonnaise went out of business four and a half years ago.

JOHN

Four and a what? Wait, how long have I been out?

RITA

Five years--

JOHN

--I missed the last five Super Bowls?! Who won?

DR. JACKSON

Patriots. Four out of five.

JOHN
 You're telling me the virus thing
 didn't get Tom Brady?
 (off Dr. Jackson)
 Sonuvabitch, that's the real
 tragedy, bro.

EXT. WHYTE HOME - DAY

A place near the water in Santa Monica. Through a FIELD OF REPORTERS shouting questions, John and Rita head in.

JOHN	REPORTERS
Look, ma, I'm kind of a big deal.	Have you spoken to other white men? / How are you feeling? / Is it safe to be back outside?

Rita goes in first. John pauses, grins at the cameras.

ONE OF THE REPORTERS
 John Whyte, how lucky do you feel,
 considering your brother's status?

At the mention of Alex, John's face falls. He goes inside.

INT. WHYTE HOME - FOYER - DAY

Rita walks with John into a cozy home.

RITA
 I left everything in your room as
 is on your side and Alex's...

The mention of Alex is too much, so she switches gears.

RITA (CONT'D)
 Are you hungry? I'll make my mac n
 cheese with extra hot sauce.

JOHN
 I'm--

RITA
 No, you must be sleepy. I'll make
 your bed with extra pillows.
 (off John)
 Oh dear, did you shiver? I can
 turn on the heat.

JOHN
 Mom, chill, I'm not hungry, sleepy,
 or cold.
 (thinking better of it)
 (MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

But that mac and cheese does sound good. I'm only curious...

(pointing outside)

Is it always like this?

RITA

The reporters camped out when news broke out of you waking up. It's times like this that I wish I had a job to go to. But this attention is nothing. You're back and I'm so proud that you beat this disease.

Off John, visibly touched but taken back by her pride.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. WHYTE HOME - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A teenage John eats breakfast. Rita puts food on his plate.

JOHN

I'm gonna see how many girl scout cookies I can flip and sell during the off season.

RITA

Maybe you can do something more like your brother, he--

JOHN

He gave the graduation speech, he's going to Harvard, he's the star quarterback. Blah blah blah.

RITA

I only want you to be your best.

JOHN

This is my best, but it's not your best.

John broods under the weight of his mother's disappointment. He walks off. Off Rita, hurt.

BACK TO PRESENT:

INT. WHYTE HOME - FOYER - DAY

John squirms, still processing Rita's validation.

JOHN

Thanks, mom. That's cool. I'm gonna shower.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)
 (sniffs himself, CRINGES)
 I smell like five years of B.O.

INT. WHYTE HOME - RESTROOM - LATER

John in a towel. He examines himself. Checks his junk.
 SHRUGS. He looks at the soaps and shampoos.

JOHN
 Where is my Old Spice?

He steps into the shower.

INT. WHYTE HOME - FOYER - LATER

John, new clothes, and Rita again. The doorbell RINGS. Rita
 lets in MICHELLE (20s, biracial). She has a casserole.

JOHN
 (to Michelle, beaming)
 Baby!

Michelle steps aside as another woman comes through the open
 door, PHUONG (20s, Vietnamese). Phuong holds some flowers.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 (to Michelle, panicked)
 Baby?

John has a particular expression to seeing both Michelle and
 Phuong together in a room, akin to --

MICHELLE
 You look like someone tore off your
 balls and forced fed them to you.
 Not that I imagined doing that.
 What I imagined was a lot worse.

PHUONG
 Michelle, release yourself from
 your emotional prison.

MICHELLE
 Right, we're glad you didn't die
 shatting your eyes out, but we're
 not here for you.

Michelle hands Rita the food. Phuong gives Rita the flowers.
 The women hug. As Rita leaves with the gifts--

RITA
 I'll let you kids catch up.

JOHN

How do you guys know each other?

MICHELLE

You mean, is your mom in the same
book club with your fiancé and--
(gestures to Phuong)
co-worker at work you cheated with?

He's dumbfounded. His hand caught in the cookie jar.

JOHN

Okay, I'm an ass. I should--

MICHELLE

Not make it about you.

PHUONG

Our friendship totes passes the
Bechtel test and we had other
concerns. I'm a cute Asian and
half of my dating pool got wiped
out.

MICHELLE

My dad and his brother shat their
eyes out two days straight and
barely survived.

JOHN

Somehow I'm a lucky bastard.
There's gotta be a reason why.
(a sudden resolve)
I mean, all those reporters out
there want to talk to me. Maybe I
can use that for some good?

PHUONG

It's cute that you still think
things are like they were before.

MICHELLE

You're a minority now. Do you get
that?

JOHN

No way. It can't be that bad.
Affirmative action has worked out
for everyone else, it'll work out
for me.

Off John's utter positivity and confidence.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONEINT. HOSPITAL - LAB INTAKE - THE NEXT DAY

A NURSE finishes taking John's blood and leaves. Dr. Jackson enters, excited. Rita hovers, barely giving John space.

DR. JACKSON

Get used to this, son. We're gonna be best friends the next few months. How are ya doing up here?

Jackson indicates John's head.

RITA

He seems well but not everything in John's room is set up as I'd like.

JOHN

Ma, I think he was talking to me.
(off Rita, to Dr. Jackson)
I'm good.

DR. JACKSON

I've heard other patients have found this helpful.

Jackson hands John a pamphlet that John reads aloud:

JOHN

"Miss your privilege? A support group for white men."

DR. JACKSON

Just don't show up wearing all white and pointy hoods. That doesn't sit as well as it used to.

JOHN

Thanks doc for this. I guess it'll be nice to meet others.

DR. JACKSON

Ya betcha. You're a special patient. One of a kind.

JOHN

Right.

DR. JACKSON

I'm doing a study on people like you. If you ever want to participate...

(MORE)

DR. JACKSON (CONT'D)
 seeing as you're unique, y'know
 some would say a "white whale."

Only Jackson chuckles at this.

JOHN
 I'll think about it and the
 meetings, too.

RITA
 Those meetings are in Little
 Brentwood I hear.

JOHN
 Little what now?

DR. JACKSON
 Y'know, like Little Tokyo. After
 The Awakening, Malibu ceased to
 exist and became West Van Nuys.

JOHN
 Alrighty then, we appreciate your
 attentiveness.

DR. JACKSON
 Of course, think about the study.
 The scientific possibilities could
 be--
 (almost orgasmic)
 Revelatory.
 (then)
 It won't pay much but every bit
 helps. And maybe this will, too.

Jackson gives Rita a pamphlet on financial debt.

RITA
 (reads the pamphlet)
 "How to pay your medical bills and
 not wish you were Canadian." Thank
 you. You're a doll.

Rita and John leave and walk down to --

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Rita and John head towards the exit.

JOHN
 I didn't realize we were struggling
 with medical bills.

RITA

It cost a lot to keep you and your brother in the hospital over the years. I refinanced the house and practically wiped out our savings. There was a shortage of polo shirts and I had to sell all of yours.

Suddenly, an idea lights up for John.

JOHN

I had a promotion at that hedge fund in Silicon Beach. I'm sure I can get that job back.

They make their way to--

EXT. STREET/INT. CORNER RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

A Mexican restaurant. Rita gestures around to how some people subtly stare at John.

RITA

John, dear, the world isn't the same.

A WHITE MOTHER sanitizes her hands and her DAUGHTER's hands near John. Rita casually nods towards this, case in point.

RITA (CONT'D)

For survivors, there's been a stigma. It's been hard to find work. Be accepted. I could go on.

JOHN

Michelle mentioned that but I think people are curious. It'll pass.

He's unfazed. John puts his name down and gets a buzzer.

RITA

Johnny dear, people call this virus "white trash" because many white supremacists died. Some people think we deserved this. Others think the epidemic isn't over.

JOHN

That's all a little...
(lowers his voice)
Racist? Holy guacamole, can I say that now?

RITA

It doesn't matter. Not everyone, but a small number of those who survived have been very angry, there was even a rise in white males committing crime.

JOHN

That's horrible. *But that's not us.* We donate to the ACLU. We went to the first women's march. You voted for Hillary. Twice.

He hands his mom the buzzer.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I have to go to the restroom, but trust me, it's gonna be fine.

He's already off. Rita holds the buzzer, worried.

INT. RESTAURANT - HALL OUTSIDE RESTROOM - DAY

Outside an all gender restroom, John waits with TWO JAPANESE WOMEN in their 20s who fangirl. One sneaks a selfie. John smiles. Takes it in stride. Kind of enjoys the attention.

JOHN

You guys want a photo together?

The women nod. John takes a selfie with them. One of the women speaks to him in a lightly accented English.

JAPANESE WOMAN

Your accent is so cute. What kind of White are you?

JOHN

Huh?

JAPANESE WOMAN

Scottish? Irish? Russian?

For some reason, Russian gets a giggle from the second girl.

JOHN

I'm a mutt.

JAPANESE WOMAN

Ooh. Exotic. But what are you?
(off John's blank stare)
You don't know. Why don't you know? Too bad.

John doesn't know how to take that entitlement. The restroom door opens and the two girls head in together. A BLACK WOMAN (50s) steps out and then holds her purse near her, as if afraid John would rob her. Off John, what the actual fuck?

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

John sits with Rita. John finally feels half the restaurant staring at them. On Rita, mid-thought.

RITA

I can't decide if I want the breakfast burrito or huevos rancheros.

JOHN

Get both, my treat. You can take the second one home.

RITA

You don't have a job.

JOHN

Yet. I emailed my contact at Neptune Capital.

RITA

You heard from them already?

JOHN

Technically no, but something will work out. It always does. I'm gonna stop by the office tomorrow. I was given another chance for a reason and I think that reason is us -- you and Alex.

RITA

(bouyed)

That sounds good, dearie.

The MALE WAITER (50s, Pakistani) comes up to their table.

WAITER

You guys ready to order?

JOHN

The chilaquiles, extra spicy.

WAITER

Can you handle that?

JOHN

Um, yeah.

WAITER
Okily dokily.

John's still reeling from what the Waiter said.

WAITER (CONT'D)
What about you, ma'am?

RITA
Breakfast burrito, please.
(off John)
And the huevos rancheros.

Rita winks at John, who's now in a pool of self-doubt.

INT. WHYTE HOME - BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT

John sits in his childhood room he shared with his brother. One side has a science theme and the other has Chargers paraphernalia and a large LP collection.

His pool of self-doubt now an ocean. He falls back on his bed, on the Chargers side.

He gets a text from Michelle.

ONSCREEN: - Michelle: Got your stuff. Let's do an exchange?

ONSCREEN: - John: Sure.

He PLAYS music on an LP player, Bob Dylan's "Tangled Up in Blue". Turns to face a DART BOARD in the middle of the room.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. DIVE BAR - DAY

Bob Dylan's "Tangled Up in Blue" plays in the B.G. John and Alex just threw darts. John has won. John does a GOOFY DANCE. SLAMS down a beer in one GULP. Alex cracks up.

ALEX
I like engaged you.

JOHN
Riggggggght.

ALEX
I know that look.

JOHN

(confessing)

Ever since the engagement --
Michelle's like wear this shirt,
"it makes you look good". Read
this self-help book, "you'll feel
better". Eat this cauliflower
fried rice, "you said you wanted to
be healthier", which is gross,
BTDubs. Cauliflower is like the
fifth Beatle of vegetables.

ALEX

Maybe she's got wedding brain.

JOHN

But does she want to be with me or
the cauliflower version of me? I'm
a broccoli but what if she wants
cauliflower?

ALEX

Whatever it is, don't be a
cauliflower for her, be a
cauliflower for you.

John thinks about that. It makes him more uncertain.

BACK TO PRESENT:

EXT. MARINA DEL REY - ESTABLISHING/A NEW DAY

West California scenic. Postcard perfect.

JOHN (O.S.)

You got this, bro. You got it.

EXT. SILICON BEACH BUILDING - DAY

John parks his bike, speaking to himself, amping himself up
for the day. He walks up to a coffee stand.

JOHN

Iced americano, please.

But something catches John's eye. The Barista is another
white guy. Both men stare at each other, stunned.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You're...

John shakes off his shock and reads the Barista's nametag.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Tom. Iced americano, please.

TOM
You don't remember me?

John is blank.

TOM (CONT'D)
You used to get coffee here
everyday and never bothered asking
my name once. Even though I'm an
excellent barista.
(super proud)
I actually write people's names
correctly on their cup. Your name
is J-O-H-N not J-O-N.

JOHN
Clearly, we got off on the wrong
foot. But I'm turning over a new
leaf, maybe even a forest. Let's
start on the right foot?

TOM
You also slept with my girlfriend.

JOHN
Oh snap.

Tom throws the coffee on John. John YELPS at the iced coffee
hitting his white shirt. Off John, wiping his shirt.

INT. NEPTUNE CAPITAL - CORNER OFFICE WAITING AREA - DAY

Modern. Sleek lines. John, stain on his shirt, heads
towards a bullpen area. He turns on the charm.

JOHN
Hey, crazy seeing you here.

REVEAL Phuong at the desk, wrapping up a call.

PHUONG
I told you Iris doesn't have any
appointments today.

JOHN
I only need five minutes with her.

PHUONG
She's in back to back meetings.

JOHN
 How about two minutes?
 (off Phuong's silence)
 One minute. Tops. Please, do me a
 solid. I've got all these bills
 for Alex. I'm not asking for me.

Phuong softens.

PHUONG
 I'm sorry, it's a no.

A STERN FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
 Didn't your people learn by now
 that no means no?

REVEAL IRIS (40s, White) walks in.

JOHN
 Iris, long time no see. You look
 great.

Iris takes in the stain on John's shirt with judgment.

IRIS
 You look... the same.

She gestures to her office. John GULPS.

INT. NEPTUNE CAPITAL - IRIS' OFFICE - DAY

An office with sweeping views. Iris gathers her files into a
 briefcase, standing and moving. So does John.

IRIS
 Your one minute starts now.

JOHN
 Congrats on the promotion. You
 were just an assistant here back
 when. I mean, not just an
 assistant.

IRIS
 Forty-five seconds.

JOHN
 I was up for a promotion as manager
 here five years ago -- I deserve
 that promotion. I have the most
 contacts in trading, I was the
 youngest head analyst, and came
 here top of my class.

IRIS
You're lucky you got into the
building.

JOHN
Is that a yes?

IRIS
No. It's a definite no.

John deflates. Taking it hard. Iris takes pity.

IRIS (CONT'D)
I hate this phrase but I could make
you the "diverse hire." The PR
could be good.

JOHN
Diverse hire?

IRIS
Look, forget about being one of the
few white men left on earth. Did
you really think you could waltz in
here after five years and be back
to where you started?

JOHN
(Um, yeah)
Women do it all the time with
maternity leave.

IRIS
Women aren't braindead while
they're gone. And it was and is
still never that easy for women to
get back to work.

JOHN
Alright, alright, I hear you.
(trying it on for size)
I'm your diverse man.

IRIS
Great, we have a receptionist
position.

Iris is already directing a confused John out of his office.

INT. NEPTUNE CAPITAL - CORNER WAITING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Iris walks out with John.

JOHN
Receptionist? I'm overqualified
for that, don't you think?

IRIS
Are you a begger or chooser?

JOHN
Definitely a begger.

IRIS
You'll be in charge of ordering all
the supplies for the office
nursery.

JOHN
That's part of my job?

IRIS
Are you uncomfortable with women
having children and working?

JOHN
No, no, of course not.

IRIS
Good, because the nursery will also
serve as a milk pumping area. I'm
glad you're one of the good ones.

Off a bewildered John.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOINT. NEPTUNE CAPITAL - RECEPTION AREA - LATER

John finishes up some work at his desk. He checks his watch and gets up.

INT. NEPTUNE CAPITAL - COMMISSARY - DAY

John has his packed lunch inside a crowded cafeteria, half women, all diverse. All the tables are filled. He sees Phuong wave him over to a table. John sits with them.

Phuong introduces John to others at the table.

PHUONG

Guys, this is John.
(gestures to two people)
Wendy and Dev are portfolio
managers here.

WENDY (40s, LatinX) and DEV (30s, Indian) wave.

JOHN

Nice to meet you guys. How long
have you guys been here?

WENDY

Three years. I handle our
investments. If half the ventures
we invest in aren't women-led, Iris
will have my head and the head of
my firstborn on a stick.

JOHN

She's intense, right?

DEV

Iris was the only woman here for
the longest time and then The
Awakening happened. She rose up
quickly to run this place.

JOHN

So getting on her shit list on my
first day isn't a good idea then.

A FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Nope, but it ain't all bad.

LIZZY (late 20s, Filipina) comes over with her lunch and some
COOKIES IN TUPPERWARE.

LIZZY

(to John)

You must be John.

(extends a hand)

I'm Lizzy, coder for the site and app. And guess who booked a meeting with the biggest and hottest tech firm in town.

Everyone hoorays Lizzy. "Congrats." "Wow" etc.

LIZZY (CONT'D)

We're meeting up with the Electron CEO to seal the deal over some manipedis.

JOHN

Electron's the biggest thing in town. They recruited heavily out of my frat. Niiiiice.

Lizzy gives her friends the cookies. Dev grabs one first.

DEV

Hence, the celebratory cookies.

(eats one)

It's unreal how good these are.

LIZZY

My five year old thinks so, too. Soon her mama will be on track to make partner.

JOHN

That's awesome. It's great how pro-women the company is because of Iris' leadership.

The women seem conflicted.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'm sensing a but...

WENDY

(lowers her voice)

Don't get me wrong--

LIZZY

(cuts to it)

We miss the patriarchy sometimes.

JOHN

Really?

LIZZY

Even with this merger, I used to coast on my hot looks and get guys to do anything but now with women in charge...

WENDY

At first I thought I missed it because of some weird Stockholm Syndrome. But it's more than that. Some things have changed and some things haven't.

DEV

It's unfair how us men are treated. I'm a gay man. I thought all women were supposed to love me.

JOHN

It's sooo freakin' weird. Iris called me one of "the good ones."

DEV

I haven't gotten that one yet.

JOHN

What does that even mean? I've never been talked to like that. Ever. In my life.

PHUONG

You shouldn't have to sit through micro-aggressions like that.

JOHN

Micro-aggressions. Huh.

John looks like his head just exploded. Because it did.

JOHN (CONT'D)

That's what that is? I've heard of that before but never -- wow, is that what women deal with?

DEV

Pretty much any person of color.

WENDY

Everyday before The Awakening.

LIZZY

Sometimes several times a day. I lost count.

JOHN
But it's so... unfair.

WENDY
Let's be allies for each other.

DEV
Intersectional manism.

John and Dev fist bump.

INT. NEPTUNE CAPITAL - RECEPTION AREA - LATER

John sends off a few emails. Then gets a CHAT from PHUONG.

ONSCREEN - Phuong: Iris wants to see you.

Off John, curious.

INT. NEPTUNE CAPITAL - CORNER WAITING AREA - DAY

John walks by Phuong's desk. She warns him.

PHUONG
She's in a mood. We lost the
merger deal.

John braces himself.

INT. NEPTUNE CAPITAL - IRIS' OFFICE - DAY

John waits for Iris, who's typing. He is about to talk but she holds her hand up to stop him, then continues typing. He picks up a CAT FIGURINE from a collection on her desk.

A few more keystrokes and she looks up.

IRIS
You ordered a crib skirt and
curtains.

JOHN
Good work, right? The crib skirt
has little elephants on them, which
are associated with good memory.
And the curtains are canary
colored, which I think is a fancy
yellow, but that could be a good
gender neutral color. Icing on
top, everything was on sale. Yay.

IRIS
Not a yay. A crib skirt is a waste
of money.

(MORE)

IRIS (CONT'D)
Curtains are dangerous for
toddlers. Did you do any research?

JOHN
The guy on the phone--

IRIS
Was trying to upsell you and it
worked. Seeing that you got
everything on final sale, it'll be
taken out of your paycheck.

Annoyed with himself, he puts the cat figurine down. Iris waves her hand and dismisses him. He leaves. After a beat, she moves the figurine gingerly back to its original spot.

INT. NEPTUNE CAPITAL - KITCHEN - LATER

John makes some afternoon coffee but struggles with the machine. He starts smacking it, taking out his frustration on it. Lizzy walks in, amused.

LIZZY
I'm sure whatever that machine did,
it deserved it.

Lizzy presses a button on it and it works again.

JOHN
(re: his coffee)
Thanks, it's been a day.

LIZZY
No problem. I wasn't voted MOST
HELPFUL at camp four years in a row
for nothing.

JOHN
I would always sing the same
karaoke songs at camp. I got the
BEST BROKEN RECORD paper plate
award.

LIZZY
I wonder if we did paper plate
awards here, what everyone would
get? Iris would definitely get the
OVERREACTION award.

JOHN
(winces)
Does everyone know about the crib
skirt thing?

LIZZY

The interns might've mentioned it.

JOHN

I don't know what I'm doing wrong.

LIZZY

You need to find a way to "lean in" with Iris.

JOHN

Like ask for what I want. I did do that. It didn't work.

LIZZY

Coming from someone with six sisters, you gotta know when it's your turn. You can't ask for things and expect it to come to you right away. Before all of this, I had to make the guys in charge see that I was more than just my curvy body. That I know Java, Net, Perl, Python, and C and everything else like the back of my hand. You have to earn Iris' respect in small ways. Like doing well at a D1 school before going pro.

JOHN

I was offered pro here five years ago but now I'm not even D1, I'm like a negative one.

LIZZY

Preach. Even with the Awakening and jobs opening up, coming back to work as a single mom wasn't easy.

JOHN

Right, right, thanks. The football reference helps, too.

LIZZY

Talking always helps.

JOHN

(thinking of it)
Heard about the Electron merger.
Bummer.

LIZZY

I wish I knew what scared them away.

JOHN

I had some contacts back in the day. Maybe I can make some calls?

LIZZY

Sure.

(oh and...)

I only know anything about football because of my ex. But you can come talk real football i.e. soccer, with me any day.

Is she flirting? Regardless, it's a nice moment. John exits with his coffee, crossing with Phuong who enters to refill her water bottle. She recognizes Lizzy's expression.

PHUONG

Girl, he's totes trouble.

LIZZY

(grinning)

I'm a big girl.

INT. NEPTUNE CAPITAL - RECEPTION AREA - AFTERNOON

John has a list of names crossed out. He picks up the phone to make some calls.

JOHN

Hey, Connor. You still working at Google. Your cousin knew someone at Electron, right?

Still on the call, he eyes the pamphlet for the white male support group pinned on a board. Thinking about Lizzy's words: "talking always helps."

EXT. BRENTWOOD STREETS/INT. PRIUS - EVENING

John sees a "Little Brentwood" sign.

JOHN

Huh.

INT. ABANDONED FRAT HOUSE - EVENING

John walks into a spacious house with old mismatched furniture. He goes to a table to sign in and avoids a STAIN on the rug. He asks the guy next to him.

JOHN

What is this place?

As the Guy turns--

GUY
 It's a...
 (sees John)
 A former frat house.

REVEAL Tom, the coffee stand guy.

JOHN
 Hey, funny seeing you here.

TOM
 The odds were low considering The
 Awakening took us all out. I'm
 also excellent at basic logic.

JOHN
 Right. So--

TOM
 We're not friends.

Tom goes to take a seat with two other men, DAVID (40s),
 blonde and blue eyed and MATTHEW (40s).

MATTHEW
 We have a new member tonight.
 Would you like to share?

JOHN
 Maybe next time.

TOM
 I can share.
 (takes a breath)
 I still feel this need to always
 help people of color. Not in a
 savior way. Like a how-can-I-be-of
 service-way. Like I'm their
 friendly, reliable Uncle who's
 always there. I blame my "white
 guilt". I miss simpler times.

MATTHEW
 I miss Dave Matthew concerts.

TOM
 I took for granted all the things
 that made us US, our culture and
 values.

Nods all around. A wave of nostalgia hits everyone.

MATTHEW

Billy Joel, Red Hot Chili Peppers,
hockey, baseball, roasted turkey,
donating to charities, talking back
to your parents.

DAVID

If I had my druthers, we'd do
something with just us men. A
bunch of us at a rally or
something.

MATTHEW

A rally?

DAVID

You guys remember rallies? All of
us reunited under one cause singing
in unison, holding tiki torches.

Everyone gets uncomfortable at the mention of tiki torches.

MATTHEW

Or here's a crazy idea, a hockey
game.

David thinks about that.

DAVID

Throw in some Fox news and it'll be
like the good 'ol days.

David rolls up his sleeves, revealing a CONFEDERATE FLAG
TATTOO. Off John, what the hell is he doing here?

INT. WHYTE HOME - JOHN'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Tired, John sits on his bed, but notices LOCKS on his window.

JOHN

Mom?

Rita enters, already fluffing a pillow.

JOHN (CONT'D)

What's with the window locks?

RITA

I didn't want you to fall out the
window.

JOHN

We live on the first floor.

RITA

Still.

JOHN

Don't you think you've been a little excessive lately?

RITA

What is excessive?

JOHN

You put a baby monitor in my room last night.

Rita looks riddled with something. John can't read her.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I appreciate everything but is there something else going on?

RITA

(too quickly)
No, of course not.

The doorbell RINGS.

JOHN

That's Michelle.

RITA

I'll make dinner.

He grabs a pre-packed BOX of things as Rita leaves.

INT. WHYTE HOME - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

John opens the door to let Michelle in. He gives her the box. She hands over his things that are also in a BAG.

MICHELLE

This is it.

JOHN

Yeah.

She gives him back the ENGAGEMENT RING. That lands on him. Awkward City for a bit. Michelle takes a look at him.

MICHELLE

You're different.

JOHN

I did almost die.

MICHELLE
No, you. You're... *different*.

JOHN
Believe it or not, I went to a
support group meeting.

MICHELLE
I've been trying to convince you to
go to therapy for years.

JOHN
(I know)
Meet the new me. Same as the old
me really except everyone says
weird crap to me now.
(off her daze)
Michelle? You there?

Suddenly, Michelle gives John a deep kiss. He stops her.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Wait.

MICHELLE
Shut up.

Okay then! He leads her toward his bedroom.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREEINT. WHYTE HOME - JOHN'S BEDROOM - EVENING

John and Michelle, post coital.

JOHN

Everything else hasn't been making sense but we do. We always have.

MICHELLE

This was a huge mistake.

The wind is knocked out of him. She starts getting dressed.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

My therapist says you invoke my savior complex. You're a bad habit.

On John, ouch.

JOHN

It was too good to be true. You. My mom...

He starts putting his clothes on.

JOHN (CONT'D)

At first I kind of liked all her attention but she's worried about everything. It's unnerving. Like I'm gonna break. Every time she looks at me, she looks... upset? I don't know how to describe it.

MICHELLE

She probably feels guilty.

JOHN

What?

MICHELLE

(shit)
What?

JOHN

What do you mean "guilty"?

MICHELLE

I wanna stay out of it.

JOHN
You're already in it. Tell me.

MICHELLE
Your mom was struggling with the bills to keep both you and your brother in the hospital.

JOHN
She told me that.

MICHELLE
What she didn't tell you was that she could only afford to keep one of you guys on life support. But when you miraculously woke up...

It hits John like a freighter train. The realization that:

JOHN
She was going to take me off life support.

The pain of this is too much. It gives way to anger.

MICHELLE
John.

JOHN
Just go.

Michelle exits.

INT. WHYTE HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Michelle is about to leave but sees Rita.

RITA
Did you crazy kids work things out?

MICHELLE
Not really.
(a long beat)
I told him about Alex. I'm sorry.

Michelle leaves as Rita goes to--

INT. WHYTE HOME - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rita opens John's room to see it's empty. He's BROKEN the lock on the window and has snuck out. Off Rita, devastated.

JOHN (PRELAP)
Oh, the white man.

INT. BAR - HOURS LATER

John drowns his sorrows at the bar, with a tequila shot.

JOHN

(to no one in particular)
 Before The Awakening everyone
 blamed me and now they still blame
 me. We're the villain. All I have
 to say is: Me too, man. Me too!

Michelle comes in on John's "several drinks in" rant.

MICHELLE

Figured I'd find you here.
 (off his look)
 Just because we're broken up, it
 doesn't mean I've forgotten your
 favorite bar to get shitfaced at.

JOHN

You know me too well.

MICHELLE

Something like half your life.

JOHN

(pity party of one)
 I was supposed to run my own hedge
 fund by 30, have a craft beer
 brewery by 35, and party with the
 Jonas Brothers on the weekends.
 (off Michelle)
 I really think their reunion is an
 clever analysis of fandom and
 obsession. And you know what's
 sucks big time?
 (spiraling, sad drunk)
 I was the annoying frat guy before
 The Awakening and now I'm still the
annoying frat guy.

Michelle gives him a pointed look. John shrugs.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I might not have gone to therapy.
 But I did skimm some of the self-
 help books you gave me.

MICHELLE

You don't get it, do you?

JOHN

No I do. Everyone hates me.

MICHELLE

It isn't about you. It's a system that for ions that has benefited people like you. It's your privilege.

JOHN

I... I'm gonna admit, I know--
(air quotes)
--"Privilege" is something I have or had. Like coffee is always at the right temperature for me, I always get a parking spot wherever I go, and police officers smile at me. I think I get it, but, do I--
(air quotes again)
"Get it". Whatever it is... what am I supposed to do with it?

She takes a tall glass and short shot glass.

MICHELLE

This tall glass is you. Let's say you're at a Maroon Five concert.

JOHN

Ewww.

MICHELLE

You were always a music snob. Fine. Smashing Pumpkins.

JOHN

Better.

MICHELLE

And this shot glass is let's say someone without privilege. Let's say this shorter person can't see the stage so you let them stand in front of you, right?

JOHN

Hell yeah, Smashing Pumpkins is great.

MICHELLE

Exactly. It doesn't inconvenience you. And you don't shrink.

Michelle then flip flops the glasses, putting the short shot glass on John's side.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

This is you now though. And the world is still figuring out if they should let you see the concert.

JOHN

Whoa.

John looks completely in over his head. She notices.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Can you keep teaching me stuff?
Like how to be a better white man.

Michelle sighs. *Sure.*

MICHELLE

Let's get you home first.

JOHN

Why are you being nice to me?

MICHELLE

You're still the guy who sang "All of Me" off key at my favorite restaurant, to propose to me, even though you hate that song.

JOHN

I don't loathe the song and John Legend is an excellent singer, but I think he is more of a brand than a musician now. Don't get me started on Beyonce.

Michelle rolls her eyes. They walk out together.

INT. WHYTE HOME - JOHN'S BEDROOM - DAY

John wakes up, hungover. Rita's left a tray of breakfast and aspirin for him. He gets up and out to--

INT. WHYTE HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

John finds Rita cleaning.

RITA

John, I should explain--

JOHN

I'm gonna get ready for work.

He's not there yet. Rita swallows her hurt.

JOHN (CONT'D)
(a small olive branch)
Thanks for the breakfast.

He's not quite sure what to do. Words are not easy for him.
So he just hugs her. She savors it.

INT. NEPTUNE CAPITAL - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

John finishes some emails and gets another CHAT from Phuong.

ONSCREEN - Phuong: Iris wants to see you.

Off, John dreading this.

INT. NEPTUNE CAPITAL - IRIS' OFFICE - DAY

John comes in to see Iris already there with Lizzy. Iris
straightens her cat figurine collection.

IRIS
I heard you made some calls talking
to the folks at Electron.

JOHN
Right, I wanted to get some intel.

IRIS
Did you think you were helping?
Interfering without permission?

JOHN
I didn't think I was--

IRIS
Luckily, it paid off.

LIZZY
What?

IRIS
The Electron merger is back on.

LIZZY
I'll punch up the talking points.

IRIS
That's why I called both of you
here. Lizzy, you'll sit this out.

LIZZY
I brought in Electron. They're a
tech firm. I can talk in their
language.

IRIS

Electron backed out because they are trying to diversify outside of tech. I need someone who can schmooze and John has that annoyingly in spades. John's taking point.

JOHN

Me?

Lizzy fumes. But something occurs to John. He blurts out:

JOHN (CONT'D)

Shot glass!

IRIS

You want to take a shot? It's eleven.

JOHN

No, I mean, I will only go to the meeting if Lizzy can join me. We'll both take point.

On Lizzy not sure how to take this. Iris takes a beat.

IRIS

Don't make me regret this.

Iris waves her hand, dismissing them.

INT. NEPTUNE CAPITAL - CORNER WAITING AREA - DAY

John and Lizzy walk out. Phuong in the b.g.

JOHN

This is great.

LIZZY

I'm glad you "leaned in" and all but I wanted this for myself.

JOHN

Lizzy.

A proud Lizzy walks away. Phuong pipes up, having overheard.

PHUONG

Give her time.

JOHN

I was doing the right thing.

PHUONG
Sometimes the right thing isn't the
most popular thing.

JOHN
This gives me a headache and that's
not because I'm hungover.

Michelle comes in with a BOOK and addresses Phuong.

MICHELLE
Ready for book club?

Phuong nods and grabs her things.

PHUONG
Don't worry, John, we'll help you
be woke.

MICHELLE
I almost forgot about that.

JOHN
I'm gonna be a cauliflower.

On Michelle and Phuong with confused looks.

PHUONG
I don't know why I slept with you.
Twice.

MICHELLE
I'm sure a lot of women besides us
ask themselves that.

JOHN
Hey, I'm right here.
(an afterthought)
You guys have valid points.

MICHELLE
Come join our book club. We're
reading *Bad Feminist* by Roxanne
Gay.

JOHN
Really?

MICHELLE
Don't make us regret this.

John walks out with the women, in his "re-awoken" journey.

END OF PILOT