

ERIC

"The Spirits Within"

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EXT. TIMMY'S PLACE - DAY

ERIC NELSON, 17, black, and his girlfriend, BERNIECE WILLIAMS, 17, black, approach the restaurant.

ERIC

Wait, Berniece, what are we stopping here for?

BERNIECE

To pick up our food!

ERIC

I thought we were going out to lunch.

BERNIECE

Just come on!

They enter the restaurant and face a CROWD of people.

CROWD

Surprise!

Eric looks around and sees balloons and a banner that reads, "Congratulations, Eric".

ERIC

Aw, you guys!

The owner of the restaurant, TIMMY ROBERTS, 40's, white, approaches him.

TIMMY

We gotcha good, huh?

ERIC

(chuckles)

Berniece wanting to eat here was a surprise in itself!

His brother, BILLY, 20's, approaches him with his roommate, RON TYSON, 20's, black.

BILLY

Eric, as much as I wish this was a dream, I guess you really did graduate. Your school sent your diploma to our place.

RON

Yeah, didn't you put the forwarding request in? There's a whole stack of mail there.

ERIC

Guess not. I'll take it.

He sticks his hand out. His mother, RHONDA NELSON-JAMES, and stepfather, MATT JAMES, both 40's, black, take the diploma from Billy.

RHONDA

Not so fast!

MATT

Yeah, since you missed your graduation ceremony, we're giving you one right now!

RHONDA

Here's your cap and gown!

She hands them to Eric.

BILLY

(grimly)

What Ken doll did you get them off of?

ERIC

The same one that wears your size boxers, bro.

MATT

Alright, guys, enough.

(to Billy)

What's up with you?

BILLY

Nothing. Just that Eric gets kicked out the house for smoking weed, and as a result, graduates early! I graduated on time, and I didn't even start smoking until after that!

Matt and Rhonda frown at Billy.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Forget that last part.

MATT

It's not to condone Eric's actions! He grew up a lot while he was gone.

RHONDA

But he could only grow so much without his family by his side.

BERNIECE

Thus bringing him back here with his loved ones.

TIMMY

Correct, Berniece. Furthermore, getting his diploma was just the cherry on top.

Eric approaches them, wearing his cap and gown.

ERIC

Now, is that okay with everybody?

Everyone turns to the camera, breaking the fourth wall.

LONG PAUSE.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Alright, then.

They resume facing each other.

MATT

Are we ready to start the ceremony?

ELEANOR DUMBECK, 18, white, replies.

ELEANOR (O.C.)

No! Wait for us!

Eleanor and her brother-in-law, JACOB JACKSON, 19, white, enter, also wearing caps and gowns.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

We're gonna walk the stage with ya!

JACOB

(dull voice)

Yahoo.

ERIC

But ya'll already graduated!

ELEANOR

So did you!

ERIC

Okay, fine. Let's do this!

POLLY and PABLO McNAIR, 12 and 9, respectively, Puerto Rican, approach them with their dog, ARLENE.

PABLO

Don't forget Arlene!

POLLY
She just graduated obedience school!

Arlene BARKS.

ERIC
(sighs)
Alright, let's get on with it!

Eric, Eleanor, Jacob, and Arlene stand in line. Berniece stands in the center of the floor, holding Eric's diploma and some napkins. Eric's father, JUNIOR "WILLIE JR." NELSON, 40's, black, sneaks behind Matt and Rhonda. He wears his sequined jumpsuit and headband around his afro.

JUNIOR
(yells)
Hey, Nelson family! Did they start yet?

Matt and Rhonda, startled, jump and face him.

MATT
No, man! Damn!

Rhonda's friend, OFFICER YVETTE TOWNSEND, 40's, black, approaches her.

OFFICER TOWNSEND
So, did Eric tell you what he plans to do yet?

RHONDA
No, he's still deciding.

MATT
He did ask me a question or two about the Navy. Not to brag, but we may finally have one of our sons following my footsteps!

JUNIOR
Oh, really. What if he wants to follow mine?

RHONDA
Only if those footsteps lead to outta here.

JUNIOR
Seriously, I made a killing as "Willie Jr." And we need a DJ for our reunion tour!

MATT

What? No son of mine is gonna go around
being a rock star! Partying all night,
drinking, hanging with a different woman
a day, traveling country to country...
(pause)

Where was I goin' with this?

Rhonda SMACKS Matt on the arm.

MATT (CONT'D)

Ow!

JUNIOR

And how is that life any different from
the Navy? Except for the fact that he can
make millions?

MATT

Oh yeah? Well...

RHONDA

Guys, stop! The ceremony's about to
start!

RON (O.C.)

That's another one!

Matt walks over to Ron and Billy at the bar, who drink
from shot glasses.

MATT

What's goin' on here?

RON

(drunkenly)
Every time we say the word...

BILLY

(drunkenly)
"Hear" the word.

RON

Even better! Hear the word, "the", we
take a shot!

BILLY

We just said, "the" a few times!
(to the bartender)
Ike, my man, keep it comin'!

They put their shot glasses on the counter.

MATT

Well, put a hold on that game! They're about to begin!

RON

I heard it! There you go!

MATT

I didn't say, "the"!

RON

You did now!

MATT

Stop it!

Timmy announces from the side.

TIMMY

Arlene the Dog!

The crowd APPLAUDS. Arlene walks to Berniece, who puts a napkin in her mouth. Arlene shakes it, plays with it, and exits.

TIMMY (CONT'D)

Eleanor Dumbeck!

More APPLAUSE. Eleanor walks to Berniece, who hands her a napkin.

ELEANOR

(sniffles)

I'll cherish this Walmart brand napkin forever!

She BLOWS HER NOSE in it and exits.

TIMMY

Kerm--

JACOB

Hey!

TIMMY

(clears his throat)

Jacob Jackson!

More APPLAUSE.

ELEANOR

Booooo!

JACOB

Knock it off!

He snatches the napkin from Berniece and exits.

TIMMY

Eric T. Nelson!

More APPLAUSE. Matt, Rhonda, and Junior CHEER.

MATT

That's my boy!

JUNIOR

That's my boy!

Eric takes the diploma from Berniece. He hugs and kisses her. He walks over to Eleanor and Jacob.

ERIC

We did it, ya'll!

The three toss their caps in the air.

SFX: BUZZING and SHREDDING SOUNDS!

Pieces of their caps and tassels fall to the floor.

ERIC (CONT'D)

New fans installed, Timmy?

Jacob's babies, J.J., JENNIFER, and J.R., sit in their strollers. They speak telepathically to each other [written in *italics*].

JENNIFER

These guys graduated from school, right?

The other two babies frown and shake their heads.

INT. BILLY AND RON'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT MORNING

Billy limps from his bedroom into the kitchen and rubs his eyes.

BILLY

What a night.

Ron makes some eggs on the stove.

RON

Then sit down and have some grub!

BILLY

Dang! No cold pizza today?

Billy grabs a seat. Ron puts some eggs on Billy's plate.

RON

We didn't order pizza last night. But I think one of us ordered some male dancers. I don't ever want that wake-up call again.

BILLY

How are you so up and alert? I partied so hard, you woulda thought I graduated.

Ron sits.

RON

Because I know how to bounce back. All I did was let off a little steam. Had a hell of a week.

BILLY

Oh, right. It was the anniversary of your dad's death. No, you're still sad over Vanka leaving.

RON

I was gonna say that I'm bombarded with school work, but thanks for all that.

BILLY

Oh.

Ron pours from a pitcher, then extends it to Billy.

RON

Bloody Mary?

BILLY

That has alcohol in it!

RON

And veggies, so it's good for you!

BILLY

No thanks.

RON

Hey, it's 5 o'clock somewhere!

BILLY

A.M. or P.M.?

RON
Don't matter!

BILLY
Well, you a better person than I am.

RON
I already know that!

Ron sips from his cup. A couple of GUYS burst in.

GUY #1
Ayo, what up, Ronny?

GUY #2
Ready to get this started?

RON
Yeah, hold on, let me finish eating!

BILLY
(sotto voce)
Ron, who are they?

RON
My bad. Billy, my boys from back home.
Boys, Billy!

GUY #3
'Sup? Let's hit it, Ronny.

Ron gets up.

RON
(to Billy)
See ya.

BILLY
Wait! Don't you have class coming up?

RON
Eh, I can skip one day.

The guys exit. Ron follows them, until Billy grabs his arm.

BILLY
Hey, man, wait a minute!

RON
Take it easy, "pops"!

BILLY
 (hands on hips)
 You watch your mouth, young man!

RON
 Aren't you supposed to be in class, too?

Ron exits.

BILLY
 (calls out)
 I'm gonna drop that class!
 (pause)
 Eventually.

He PLOPS on the couch and SNORES.

INT. NELSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Matt and Rhonda enter the house. Junior follows Matt.

JUNIOR
 Look, Matt, I think it's only fair!

MATT
 Why are you following us?

JUNIOR
 This only used to be my house. Just like
 Eric is my son, too!

RHONDA
 You guys! This is Eric's life. Shouldn't
 you ask him what he wants to do?

Matt and Junior scoff.

MATT
 (to Junior)
 There she go.

JUNIOR
 Get your girl, Matt.

Eric enters from the kitchen, eating a bowl of cereal. He
 heads to his room.

ERIC
 Mom, Matt, what's up? Dad, go home.

JUNIOR
 Alright, boy, if you don't wanna make
 some extra money!

Eric turns around.

ERIC

What are you talking about?

JUNIOR

Me and the boys are going on our reunion tour! And you know, Scary Disc Jockey is getting up there in age.

ERIC

You all are up and over that age!

JUNIOR

Well, this could be the chance for "DJ Illson" to make it big!

ERIC

I don't know, man.

MATT

Eric, I heard you ask Timmy some questions about the Navy the other day.

ERIC

Yeah, because me and Dimmey were laughing at the name of the country he went to: Djibouti.

The other three look at him.

ERIC (CONT'D)

(snickers)

"Is it easy to get into Djibouti?"

(giggles)

"Is Djibouti nice and clean?"

MATT

(laughs)

Oh yeah!

Matt STOPS laughing and CLEARS HIS THROAT.

MATT (CONT'D)

You know, Eric, joining the Navy can make a man out of you.

The McNairs' mother, CYNTHIA, 30's, who is the Nelson family's maid, enters.

CYNTHIA

Junior, weren't you in the Navy?

JUNIOR

Yeah.

CYNTHIA

Then your theory's already flawed, Mr. James.

JUNIOR

Don't you have some work to not do?

Cynthia smirks and exits.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)

But that he-she does have a point. Eric and me were briefly in the Navy, and I'm better off without it!

MATT

You are, but what about Eric?

RHONDA

Guys, hold on. Eric, have you thought about going to college?

ERIC

I graduated school early, just to go to college? Sounds like a punishment to me!

JUNIOR

Amen to that!

ERIC

Guys, I promise you, I won't be out there bad. I'll make a decision with my life really soon. I just need to take it all in.

MATT

Well, here's a card from one of my guys at the recruiting station. He's there if you need him.

JUNIOR

(sarcastically)

Oh sure! He won't steer you wrong!

MATT

Quiet!

ERIC

My Cocoa Balls is getting soggy. I'll see ya.

Eric exits.

RHONDA
Ya'll really need to lay off Eric!

MATT
Well, what about you, "Professor"? Trying to push your agenda on him?

RHONDA
Hmmp. If that's the way you feel, don't expect to push anything on me!

Rhonda exits.

MATT
I never do.

JUNIOR
(smirks)
I know, right?

Rhonda peeks her head back in.

RHONDA
I didn't hear that. What was that?

MATT
Nothing!

Matt shoos Junior out. Junior exits the house.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Ron, his friends, and Billy hang out, with drinks in their hands.

GUYS
Chug, chug, chug, chug!

Ron downs a mug and SLAMS it down. Billy and the guys CHEER.

RON
(slurred)
Bartender, hit me!

BILLY
Hey, buddy, maybe you should slow down!

GUY #1
(to Billy)
Aw, don't worry, man!

GUY #2

Yeah, we're his friends, too! Here, I'll talk to him.

(to Ron)

Ronny, if you sound drunk, the bartender won't give you anymore!

GUY #3

You gotta practice saying it!

RON

"Bartender, another one!"

(less slurred)

"Bartender, another one!"

(normal voice)

"May I please have a drink?"

GUY #2

There you go!

BILLY

Yeah, thanks for ya'll help!

GUY #2

You should have a drink, too, Bill!

RON

It'll cure your problems! And you a Nelson. You got a lot of 'em!

Ron and the guys LAUGH. Billy chuckles.

RON (CONT'D)

Ya'll don't know: he's full of 'em! He got left at the altar, got that girl pregnant, tried to get a foursome going with her, and is in between careers! Man, Bill, the only thing you're good at is being a father! If that!

He and the guys LAUGH.

BILLY

(chuckles halfheartedly)

Dang, man, don't hold back.

GUY #1

He's just playing. That's how we do it in the Chi!

RON

Yeeeah!

The other guys CHEER.

BILLY
 Hey, uh, you know I'm from right outside
 Chicago!

GUY #1
 Where?

BILLY
 Milwaukee!

RON AND THE GUYS
 (scoff and laugh)
 Awww!

Billy chuckles halfheartedly and sips from his drink.

INT. ERIC'S CAR - DAY

Eric hops in his car and picks up his phone.

ERIC
 Oh, here's my phone. Guess I left it in
 here last night.

Eric types on his phone, then starts the engine.

ERIC (CONT'D)
 Alright, let's check out what this fool's
 talkin' about.

An AUTOMATED VOICE speaks from the phone.

AUTOMATED VOICE
 (falsetto)
 Starting route to Navy Recruitment
 Office. Turn left.

Eric starts the car and drives.

AUTOMATED VOICE (CONT'D)
 Turn right at the light.

Eric continues to drive. The automated voice turns into
 Junior's voice.

JUNIOR'S VOICE
 (from the phone)
 At the light...uh...
 (falsetto)
 At the light, turn left.

Eric raises an eyebrow.

JUNIOR'S VOICE (CONT'D)
 Save ten minutes by driving to Junior's house.

ERIC
 What?

JUNIOR'S VOICE
 (stammers)
 By taking a shortcut to Madison.

Eric GROANS.

INT. NELSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Matt and Rhonda sit on the couch and watch TV. Junior walks through the living room.

JUNIOR
 Well, time for me to go.

MATT
 (sarcastically)
 Oh, darn.

A cell phone CRASHES through the window and SMACKS Junior on the head. He PLOPS to the ground, then sits back up and holds his head.

JUNIOR
 Oh. There's my cell phone.

Billy enters from the kitchen.

BILLY
 What was that??

RHONDA
 Your father gettin' attacked again.

MATT
 Hey, Billy, how's your roommate doing?

BILLY
 Fine, you know, hangin' in there.

MATT
 Yeah, I bet. Ya'll really "turnt" it up at Eric's graduation!

BILLY
 What?

MATT

I tried. Rhonda, take over.

RHONDA

Billy, I've been getting word from my fellow educators at your school that Ron has been missing some classes.

BILLY

Oh yeah. He has a lot going on. Every year this time is rough.

RHONDA

Oh yeah, because of his father passing.

JUNIOR

A young man without his father. I wonder what that's like.

The other three look at Junior angrily. Junior shrugs.

RHONDA

Anyway, that's no excuse for him to come into class smelling like a bar.

MATT

Seriously?

BILLY

Okay, maybe he overdid it. But he's just having fun. Ain't like he's hurting anybody or behind the wheel.

MATT

Looks like it's hurting you.

BILLY

(sighs)

Alright, so I dislike it a little.

RHONDA

Then tell him to chill out!

BILLY

Oh, sure, try telling a college kid to stop drinking.

JUNIOR

Especially in a party town like Madison!

MATT

Junior, you're not helping!

JUNIOR

Seriously, though! The cops even drive
around drunk there!

Junior SCOFFS, shakes his head and exits the house.

RHONDA

Billy, if Ron is really upsetting you,
you have a right to say something.

MATT

It may not be easy, but he'll appreciate
it.

BILLY

But I'm finally fitting in with his
friends! Now I'll look like a dork!

MATT

No, you'll look like one of his real
friends.

BILLY

(sighs)
I'll see.

Billy exits.

RHONDA

When are these folks gonna learn?

MATT

I don't know. Hey, how'd you find out
about Ron, anyway?

RHONDA

At the Dean's birthday bash. Woo, honey!
And you know drunken hearts tell no
tales!

(chuckles)

And guess who's doing it with the Dean's
mistress?

MATT

Ooh, tell it!

Matt and Rhonda start clamoring.

INT. CONCERT - NIGHT

Junior and his band PERFORM on stage. Eric PLAYS
background music on his DJ equipment.

JUNIOR
 (sings)
 Gimme some of your funky business/I
 really want your funky business!

Junior walks over to Eric.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)
 Hey, hey, DJ Illson, how's it goin'?

ERIC
 Dad, I'm playing the same song over and
 over again!

JUNIOR
 Well, it's what the audience wants!

They both look at a mostly empty hall. A few PATRONS walk
 and talk near the bar.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)
 And what do you care, anyway? You'll
 still be getting paid.

ERIC
 Well, just remember that I'm only doing
 this tonight to see how it is. I'm not
 signing on full-time yet.

JUNIOR
 Damn!

ERIC
 You're disappointed?

JUNIOR
 Yeah, because I was gonna tell you that!

Junior returns to the center stage and SINGS. A SECURITY
 GUARD runs inside the hall.

SECURITY GUARD
 Ladies and gentlemen, we have to cut the
 concert short! There's a bomb in the
 building!

The music STOPS. A patron points to the band.

PATRON
 No kidding!

Other patrons LAUGH.

SECURITY GUARD

The one that goes off in seconds! Now everybody out, single file!

PATRONS

AAAUGGHHHH!!

The patrons and guard run out the exit. The band also run and exit, with the exception of Junior and Eric.

JUNIOR

What the heck?

Matt approaches them.

MATT

Guys, come on!

JUNIOR

And what are you doing here? Tryin' to ruin my show?

MATT

No, man! Let's get outta here!

JUNIOR

You didn't make up that bomb threat?

MATT

No! All I did was unplug one of your amps!

JUNIOR

Oh.

PAUSE.

ERIC

Uh, shouldn't we get out of here, then?

They quickly run out of the building.

SFX: BOOM!

Windows SHATTER, and parts of the building COLLAPSE. Two WOMEN, black, stand by.

WOMAN #1

That'll teach Willie Jr. not to mess with me!

A cop taps her shoulder. She turns around and sees him with his arms crossed.

WOMAN #1 (CONT'D)
(to Woman #2)
You were supposed to be on the lookout!

WOMAN #2
Oh, you meant the cops! I was on the
lookout for Willie Jr.!

INT. NELSON HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

Billy kneels underneath the grand piano and tries to tune it. Ron enters.

RON
Hey, Billy, ready to go? The Dogcat game
starts soon.

BILLY
Yeah, just a minute.

RON
I can't wait another minute! It's "Miller
Time"!

Billy crawls out from underneath.

BILLY
You know, I think I'll sit this one out.

RON
Billy, don't worry, I'm not gonna buy any
drinks.

BILLY
You're not?

RON
Heck no! I got my flask with me!

BILLY
Ron, listen, I really think you need to
chill out.

RON
Why? If it's because of my friends, they
already went back home.

BILLY
No, it's just, you act different when you
drink.

RON

So do you! So do most people! There are people back at school who drink all day, every day!

BILLY

But none of them people are you, man!

RON

(sighs)

Okay, maybe I could cut down.

BILLY

(hesitates)

Have you considered cutting it off?

RON

What? Get outta here, man!

BILLY

Look, there's a difference between having one too many and a whole lot.

RON

It's only because I've been through a whole lot. Sometimes I need a drink! What?

BILLY

That's just it! You need a drink! Once you need one, that's a problem!

RON

You just got all the answers, do you?

BILLY

No, I don't. But there are some places you could call.

RON

Listen, Billy, it don't have to go that far. I didn't know it means that much to you.

(sighs)

Why don't we just go to the student union, watch the game, and not drink at all?

BILLY

You sure?

RON

Yeah. I'll even leave the flask here. And my wallet.

He pulls those things out and places them on a table.

RON (CONT'D)

Now the minute that I slip up, we'll call one of those places.

BILLY

For real?

RON

You can use my phone. Oh, it's off right now.

BILLY

Calling card?

They both chuckle.

RON

Fax!

BILLY

The two cans you tie together with string!

RON

Shut up!

BILLY

Let's go.

INT. STUDENT UNION - LATER

Rhonda enters the student union, which is full of people watching the football game on various TV sets and CHATTERING. Eric follows Rhonda inside with a box full of items.

RHONDA

Just sit the box over there. Thanks for giving me a ride here.

Eric puts the box down.

ERIC

No problem, Mom. I had to get away from Dad and Matt. They're killing me!

RHONDA

Well, time to set up for what I hope to be our victory party!

Eleanor and Jacob approach Eric.

JACOB

'Sup, "Roosevelt Franklin"? Came to watch the game?

ERIC

I guess. What are ya'll doin' here?

ELEANOR

The same thing! We students always support our Dogcats!

ERIC

Students? You go here?

ELEANOR

Don't look so shocked. You know Shana's my sister. Smartness runs in the family!

JACOB

(to Eleanor)

But when they got to you, it ran out!

ERIC

Jacob, you go here, too?

JACOB

Yeah, well, as long as Shana's on deployment, I figured I either get a job or go to school.

ELEANOR

Translation: Shana told him to either get a job or go to school.

JACOB

Hmmph.

ELEANOR

It's the perfect "old tomato"! [mispronounces "ultimatum"]

RHONDA

Yeah, it does sound reasonable. Doesn't it, son?

She looks at Eric, who SIGHS.

ERIC

If you guys are going to this college, then it must not be that bad.

ELEANOR

You can still have time to do your DJ stuff and take a few classes here and there. And there's a certain professor here who you may know. She's pretty good.

(pause)

Your mother.

JACOB

And it gets you out of the nagging house!

ELEANOR

Again, Shana's my sister!

JACOB

I said what I said.

ERIC

Well, it might be worth a shot.

Matt and Junior BICKER from afar.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Here come my fathers. Mom, can I act like I don't know them?

RHONDA

Why not? I do.

Matt and Junior approach them.

JUNIOR

Son, have you made a choice yet? Party on with me and the gang?

MATT

Or set sail?

ERIC

Actually, I think I might want to enroll here. I want to be there for my friends, if they need me.

ELEANOR

Your what?

ERIC

Nothing!

ELEANOR

No, we heard you loud and clear, didn't we, Jacob?

Jacob looks away, then back at Eleanor.

JACOB

Huh? You guys are still talking?

He scoffs.

JUNIOR

Well, Rhonda, you win again. Billy's gonna be a teacher, and Eric's going to your school.

RHONDA

It's about our boys' education, Junior. It ain't about me!

Eleanor stands behind Rhonda.

ELEANOR

One time for the women!

Rhonda sticks her hand out, and Eleanor gives her five. They both do a "jab" dance move.

MATT

(to Rhonda)

Honey, I didn't know you were here already. Your car is still in the garage.

ERIC

What? Mom, you said your car was in the shop!

RHONDA

(rapidly)

No I didn't, now let's go and pick out some classes!

Rhonda shoves Eric as they exit.

ERIC

But...but...

JUNIOR

Hey, come back here!

Junior follows Eric and Rhonda out. The BARTENDER calls out.

BARTENDER

Touchdown, Dogcats!

The patrons CHEER, including Billy and Ron.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

Bottoms up!

Patrons take a shot. Matt approaches the bar.

MATT

Hey, let me get a shot, too!

He looks at Billy and Ron.

MATT (CONT'D)

Of water!

BILLY

It's alright, Matt. Drink what you want!
We're good!

RON

Yeah!

Ron pulls out a bottle and prepares to take a sip.

BILLY

Ron, what are you doing?

RON

We finally got a touchdown! It calls for
a little sip!

Eleanor and Jacob approach them. Billy snatches the
bottle from Ron and reads it.

BILLY

(chuckles)

Ron, you crazy! This is isopropyl
alcohol!

ELEANOR

(laughs)

Yeah!

(stops)

So?

BILLY

Rubbing alcohol?

Eleanor looks at Billy.

JACOB

It's inedible!

ELEANOR

I still don't follow.

JACOB

Of course not. Let's get something
edible.

ELEANOR

I'm hungry, Jacob. Let's eat first.

Jacob and Eleanor exit.

BILLY

I'm glad I stopped you, Ron! You would've gotten sick!

MATT

Uh, Billy...

RON

Yeah. Silly me.

MATT

Son, let's talk.

Matt and Billy step to the side.

BILLY

Matt, it's all good! It was rubbing alcohol!

MATT

But Ron thought it was real alcohol! Don't you think that's a problem?

PAUSE.

BILLY

(sighs)

What if we're wrong about this?

RON (O.C.)

What if you're right?

Matt and Billy turn to Ron, who approaches them.

RON (CONT'D)

I just wanted a little buzz.

MATT

Ron, there's a place down the block that's still open. They can help.

BILLY

(to Ron)

And you promised.

RON

Alright, fine. But you should've let me drink it. It would've healed the wounds inside me!

He and Billy halfheartedly chuckle.

RON (CONT'D)

You know I'm from Chicago, right?

BILLY

Yeah, and I'm from Milwaukee.

MATT

And I'm from Kenosha, which means I'm only halfway as screwed-up as ya'll.

The three chuckle.

BILLY

Let's go.

They exit.

THE END