

ERIC

"A Cult and a Smile"

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INT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

ERIC NELSON, 15, walks with his mother, RHONDA NELSON-JAMES, and stepfather, MATT JAMES, both in their 40's.

ERIC

Why do I have to do this?

RHONDA

Because your father wants you boys in his wedding.

ERIC

Then why isn't Billy here?

MATT

He had to stay on campus to study.

ERIC

Oh, now he wants to study!

MATT

You think this is bad? I'm missing the Cubs game.

RHONDA

Which part is bad? Your missing it, or them playing?

MATT

(sarcastically)

Ha ha.

RHONDA

This is something we're all doing as a family! What's wrong with that?

A lady named KARINA stops them.

KARINA

Excuse me.

MATT

No, I don't want my shoes shined with your crappy polish, and I'm happy with my cable service and/or satellite provider!

KARINA

Well, would you like \$100 each for you and your wife?

MATT

Keep talking.

KARINA

All you have to do is go to this meeting
right upstairs. Here.

Karina hands Matt a brochure. Matt looks at it with
Rhonda.

RHONDA

This is one of those timeshare things!

Matt scoffs, then hands the brochure back to Karina.

MATT

Thanks, but no thanks.

KARINA

But it's very affordable!

MATT

Not for me. I don't have no money or
credit. Spammers and scammers bypass me!

Eric and Rhonda nod in agreement.

KARINA

I'm telling you, sir, even if you don't
want to purchase a vacation spot, just
sit through the presentation for an hour.
The \$200 is yours either way.

Matt and Rhonda look at each other.

MATT

Son, go and get measured yourself, while
we go to this meeting.

ERIC

Alright, but I'm gonna need some money.

Matt pulls out his wallet and the bills inside of it.

MATT

(counting the bills)
How much?

Eric takes the entire stack, then runs away.

ERIC

This is good!

MATT

(to Karina)
Now I really need that \$200.

KARINA

Then come to the meeting. No pressure.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Matt and Rhonda sit in a room with other people. The lights are off, and they are watching a presentation on a screen.

MATT

Has it been an hour yet?

RHONDA

No, we still have 53 more minutes to go.

MATT

Great.

RHONDA

Look, we'll have money for our pockets.
And the vacation sites look pretty nice.

MATT

I'll take you on a nice vacation, Rhonda.
Besides, some of these people look a
little funny. They all got weird smiles
on their faces.

RHONDA

Maybe they're trying to stay awake.

MATT

\$200 isn't worth all this. Let's go,
honey.

Rhonda nods and gets up with Matt. HAROLD, the presenter, pauses the presentation.

HAROLD

(to Matt and Rhonda)

Excuse me, where are you going?

MATT

Oh, this isn't really for us, but thanks,
anyway.

HAROLD

Well, that's fine. You are welcome to
leave any time.

The entire room stares at Matt and Rhonda.

RHONDA
 Maybe for a few more minutes.

MATT
 Yeah, and we'll be \$200 richer.

They sit back down. Harold resumes the presentation.

MATT (CONT'D)
 These sites do look nice. Especially that big one right there.

RHONDA
 (smiles)
 Yeah, very nice!

Matt smiles with her.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - LATER

Eric sits on a bench sipping on a drink. Matt and Rhonda approach him, holding hands and both smiling.

MATT
 Eric, our boy! How are you?

ERIC
 Good. Are you guys done? Can we leave now?

MATT
 What's the rush? It's such a nice day. Look at all of the people out!

RHONDA
 Yes. Let's spend a few more moments here.

Matt looks down at Eric's feet.

MATT
 Are those new shoes?

ERIC
 Sorry, Matt, but it was the last pair they had!

RHONDA
 (to Eric)
 Did you even get measured?

ERIC
 Well, the shoe store was right next to the tailor, so I went there first.

MATT
 (chuckles)
 Oh, life's too short to be mad at the
 little one.

He ruffles Eric's hair.

ERIC
 Dang, Matt, I've never seen this side of
 you before.

MATT
 It's always been here. I just see things
 in a different light now!

RHONDA
 As do I!

ERIC
 As celebration of your newfound
 enlightenment, can you share some of that
 \$200 with me?

MATT
 Oh, I don't have any money.

ERIC
 (sighs)
 Welcome back.

MATT
 Who needs money? We have each other. And
 when Judgement Night comes, we'll have
 even more.

ERIC
 O...kay.

They all walk away.

INT. NELSON HOUSE - DINING ROOM TABLE - THE NEXT DAY

Eric, Matt, and Rhonda sit at the table. Their maid,
 CYNTHIA McNAIR, serves them their meals.

CYNTHIA
 Here you go, Nelsons.

MATT
 Why, thank you, Cynthia.

Matt's friend, TIMMY ROBERTS, bursts through the front
 door and sits down next to Matt.

TIMMY

Yeah, thank you, Cynthia!

Timmy takes a muffin from Matt's hand.

MATT

Timothy, how can I help you?

TIMMY

(mockingly)

"I'm doing just fine, Matthew."

(laughs)

What's up with your voice?

ERIC

He's been doing that for a while, Timmy.
Ever since we left the mall yesterday.

RHONDA

It's all because of that timeshare
presentation. There's a new one tonight.
We should bring you guys!

CYNTHIA

I don't think so. I can't afford that.

TIMMY

Me neither.

RHONDA

You don't have to commit to anything.
Besides, you leave with a whole lot more!

MATT

Yeah, a whole lot more!

CYNTHIA

Well, maybe I'll check it out. I can't
believe how carefree and energetic it's
making you!

TIMMY

You should have Rhonda cook, Cynthia.
That'll bring them back down to Earth!

Timmy chuckles. Matt laughs along with him.

MATT

"Have Rhonda cook!" Did you hear that,
honey?

Rhonda also laughs.

TIMMY
 (to Matt)
 You're not gonna throw me out?

RHONDA
 (chuckles)
 No, allow me!

EXT. NELSON HOUSE - FRONT DOOR

Rhonda tosses Timmy out of the house.

TIMMY
 AARRRGH!!

SFX: Timmy CRASHES into some garbage cans off-screen.

TIMMY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Aw, it's not the same.

Eric walks out to the porch.

ERIC
 I'll say.

Eric turns his head back, looking at his parents.

INT. TIMMY'S PLACE - THE NEXT DAY

Eric sits with his friends, DIMMEY ROBERTS and CONNIE McDOWELL, both 16, at a booth while they look at the adults in the bar area.

ERIC
 Look how strange those guys are acting!

DIMMEY
 Adults tend to do that when they're drunk.

ERIC
 Then how do you explain Ike, the bartender?

IKE, grinning, serves drinks to some patrons at the bar.

DIMMEY
 There's no explaining Ike.

ERIC
 No, listen to him talk.

IKE

Here are your drinks. Have a good time
and enjoy.

CONNIE

No stoned surfer talk!

ERIC

Right? And look at how in sync the guys
put their mugs down.

SFX: The patrons PLACE their mugs down on the bar in
unison.

DIMMEY

Eric, either you need some of what Ike
has, or you had too much of it. There's
nothing wrong with those guys.

ERIC

Oh yeah? Maybe...you're one of them!

Eric quickly gets up, frenetically waves his arms and
runs out of the restaurant.

ERIC (CONT'D)

AAUUGH!

DIMMEY

Eric, wait up!

CONNIE

How can you be friends with that weirdo?

DIMMEY

I'll be back.

Dimmey runs after him. Connie's backpack, which sits next
to her, opens. FRANKFURT the pig sticks his head out.

FRANKFURT

How long do I have to stay in here?

CONNIE

In a moment.

Timmy, also grinning, approaches the booth.

TIMMY

Are you talking to your stuffed pig
again?

Frankfurt appears in the form of a plush animal with his
head still sticking out.

CONNIE

No!

TIMMY

It doesn't matter. Everything will all be figured out on Judgment Night. Stuffed animals can come, too.

Timmy exits. Connie eerily looks at him. Frankfurt reemerges as a pig.

FRANKFURT

Weirdo.

INT. NELSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eric walks downstairs with his backpack.

ERIC

Guys, I'm going to Berniece's to study.

Matt and Rhonda sit on the couch in a yoga style, wearing all-tan outfits and holding their palms out.

MATT

Sure you are.

ERIC

Are you guys meditating?

RHONDA

It keeps us more in tune with each other.

MATT

Yes, more in tune.

RHONDA

It is good that you're going over there. Procreation is a good thing.

MATT

The General will be very happy to hear that on Judgment Night.

ERIC

All right, guys, this isn't funny! What's the deal?

RHONDA

(chuckles)

Aww, we're just pulling your chain. Now run along.

MATT

And stick to the books.

ERIC

Right.

He leaves the house.

MATT

Billy and Sharon already have a baby on the way, anyway.

RHONDA

We must introduce them to the General, too.

MATT

On Judgment Night.

RHONDA

Yes, on Judgment Night.

INT. BERNIECE'S HOUSE - LATER

Eric and his girlfriend, BERNIECE WILLIAMS, 16, are making out on the couch. Eric begins to hesitate.

BERNIECE

Eric, your lips aren't in tune with mine.

ERIC

Sorry, but I can't get over what my parents said. They're talking about procreation and dressing all weird!

BERNIECE

Yeah, my father said that, too! He made sure to give us some privacy!

ERIC

Hmmm. Well, if your father approves...

He advances towards Berniece, who stops him.

BERNIECE

But I don't!

ERIC

Come on, I'm just playing.

(pause)

Unless you're gonna do it.

BERNIECE

Knock it off. We're supposed to be studying, anyway.

ERIC

You're gonna do fine tomorrow. You already got a good grade on the quiz.

BERNIECE

Hey, what did you get on the quiz?

ERIC

I haven't looked at it yet, but I'm sure it's the usual D to F variety.

He pulls a paper out of his backpack and reads it.

ERIC (CONT'D)

"A-plus"??

Eric stands up.

ERIC (CONT'D)

That's the last straw!

INT. SHOPPING MALL - LATER

Eric and Berniece hurry through the shopping mall.

ERIC

All of the adults are acting strange, Berniece. This is where it all started.

BERNIECE

But what exactly are we looking for?

ERIC

The root cause.

A couple of ADULTS walk past the kids from the opposite direction. The adults have a zombie-like demeanor with grins on their faces.

MAN

I cannot wait until Judgment Night!

WOMAN

Yes, Judgment Night!

ERIC

(to the adults)
Hey! Where did you guys come from?

MAN

The Master.

WOMAN

But now, we await the General.

The adults walk away.

BERNIECE

They came from that escalator. Come on.

EXT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Eric and Berniece approach the closed door of the room.

ERIC

This might be the place. Now look, we have to be discreet. So, when I tell you, let's...

Berniece opens the door and walks in.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Okay, let's go in now.

They enter the room. Most of the lights are off. A man by the name of NUMBER 4 stands up front and leads a group of adults. All of the members wear tan outfits and have a weird grin on their faces.

NUMBER 4

Great things will come on Judgment Night. That's when the General will come.

RHONDA

Yes, the General.

REST OF THE ADULTS

Yes, the General!

ERIC

Hey, there's Dimmey's dad! And my parents!

BERNIECE

And our teachers!

A WOMAN approaches the kids.

WOMAN #2

Hey, what are you kids doing here?

ERIC
 (looks around)
 This isn't Macy's!

He runs out of the room and pulls Berniece with him. They run back down the escalator.

ERIC (CONT'D)
 Why were they acting so weird?

BERNIECE
 Maybe they're just really happy!

ERIC
 Because you see happy, smiling people around the north side everyday?

Dimmey and Connie meet them at the bottom of the escalator.

DIMMEY
 Eric, we got your call and came as fast as we could! Well, we stopped and saw the new Denzel movie, then we came here.

BERNIECE
 What?! How are you guys gonns see it without us?

CONNIE
 Aw, don't worry, he dies at the end.

Eric and Berniece frown at them.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
 What's the matter?

ERIC
 Dimmey, we saw my parents and your dad at that meeting. Everybody there was acting like zombies.

DIMMEY
 What? I thought he was going out of town!

ERIC
 What makes you say that?

DIMMEY
 Because he packed a bag and said that he was going out of town. Here's the brochure that he left.

Dimmey hands the brochure to Eric.

ERIC

This is the same one Matt and Mom got!
They're not going on a vacation! They've
joined a sect!

SFX: Suspenseful music PLAYS.

The others are silent.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Aren't ya'll gonna say anything?

DIMMEY

Well, what's a sect?

ERIC

You know, a cult!

THE OTHER THREE

A cult?!

SFX: Suspenseful music PLAYS.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - LATER

The kids sit on the bench and converse, while Eric paces
back and forth.

ERIC

We gotta get those guys out of there!

BERNIECE

How? We can't even get in there. It's for
adults only.

DIMMEY

Well, we gotta think of something.

SFX: Eric's cell phone RINGS.

Eric answers it. A LADY is on the other end.

LADY (O.S.)

You don't know me, and I don't know you.

ERIC

Hello??

LADY (O.S.)

But I have information on your parents.

ERIC

Look, they're the ones who opened the cable account in my name, so talk to them, okay?

LADY (O.S.)

No, not that. It's about the cult.

ERIC

Who is this?

Berniece steps up to Eric to listen in.

LADY (O.S.)

It's not important who I am.

Eric looks at the phone screen.

ERIC

It says you're Lakesha Brown.

LAKESHA (O.S.)

(pause)

Fine, you know who I am. My son is behind the cult. Meet me at my house, and I'll tell you more about it.

ERIC

I don't have a ride.

LAKESHA (O.S.)

Then take the Uber.

ERIC

I don't have any money.

LAKESHA (O.S.)

(sighs)

I'll pay for it!

ERIC

You have to pay for Uber beforehand.

LAKESHA (O.S.)

(grows increasingly
frustrated)

I only have cash. Call a cab!

ERIC

Thanks, bye!

Eric hangs up.

BERNIECE

Let's have the cab driver take us to get something to eat. That way, it'll run up the meter.

ERIC

That's why you're my girl!

EXT. LAKESHA'S HOUSE - LATER

The kids stand outside the front door. Eric rings the doorbell. Lakesha answers it.

LAKESHA

Yes?

ERIC

Hi, we talked earlier about your son.

LAKESHA

Hmmph. I have no son.

Connie points to a framed picture on the wall.

CONNIE

Then who is that in the picture with you?

ERIC

And why did you tell me that you...

LAKESHA

Aww, get in here!

She hurries the kids inside.

INT. LAKESHA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Lakesha sits down with the kids.

LAKESHA

My son is the General that the converts are waiting on.

ERIC

What's his name?

LAKESHA

"General". He changed it after he started this thing. He had very few friends in school, and ran into somebody who had the same weirdness that he had. Two people turned into four, and so on.

DIMMEY

Ms. Brown, is this cult interested into harming things?

LAKESHA

I don't think so, but they turn you away from your family and friends. I haven't heard from him in forever!

CONNIE

Do you know where he moved?

LAKESHA

Last I heard, he was in Beloit somewhere.

BERNIECE

But the cult members keep talking about the General coming back for Judgment Night.

LAKESHA

Then he'll be in town.

DIMMEY

Except we don't know when Judgment Night is.

ERIC

Look, we can't wait for whenever that is. We need to get our parents back now!

The kids get up.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Thanks a lot, Ms. Brown.

LAKESHA

Sure. How are you getting home?

ERIC

Oh yeah, I guess we have to call a cab again.

LAKESHA

Okay, I'll text them.

The kids sit back down.

LAKESHA (CONT'D)

They said they're on their way.

ERIC

Okay.

All of them sit silently.

CONNIE
Well, this is awkward.

ERIC
Ms. Brown, we'll just wait outside.

Eric stands up.

SFX: Thunder and lightning CRACKLING. Rain POURING
outside the window.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Never mind.

Eric sits back down. All of them continue to sit silently
while the storm rages on.

BERNIECE
(chuckles)
So, "General".
(more chuckles)
Am I right?

The others look at her confused.

BERNIECE (CONT'D)
(to Lakesha, sotto voce)
Nice house.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

The cult members gather around Number 4 as he speaks to
them. All of them hold each other's hands and continue
grinning with their eyes closed.

NUMBER 4
The law of the General says to bring more
members before him.

MATT
Yes, bring more members.

REST OF THE ADULTS
Bring more members!

NUMBER 4
Number 28?

MATT
Yes?

NUMBER 4

You will make sure your flock is well-prepared for the General.

MATT

Well-prepared.

NUMBER 4

He's coming on Judgment Night, so also get any new members on board.

MATT

Get them on board.

NUMBER 4

And make sure that all of you pay your \$30 initiation fee.

Matt trembles slightly. He opens his eyes, stops grinning, and lets go from holding hands.

MATT

(in his normal voice)

Hey, hold on a minute! What's this about a fee?

NUMBER 4

All members pay a fee, Number 28.

MATT

I don't have any money. And you're supposed to be giving us that \$200!

NUMBER 4

Who needs money when you can have all that's around you in divine...divineness?

RHONDA

Number 28, just relax. All will be good.

MATT

No, I'm Matt, and you're Rhonda!

RHONDA

No, I'm Number 29. And you don't wanna make the General mad, do you?

MATT

(rolls his eyes)

No, can't make the General mad!

OFFICER TOWNSEND approaches Matt.

OFFICER TOWNSEND

Then you need to do your job.

GRETCH JACKSON, the town thug, also approaches him.

GRETCH

You don't wanna break the law, do you?

MARTY O'DELL and GINA RICHARDS, a football player and cheerleader couple, also approach him.

GINA

Yeah, wise up!

MATT

Aw, shut up, ya'll!

NUMBER 4

Calm down, everyone. Number 28 just needs a little time to take it in.

MATT

Maybe you're right. Let me go to the bathroom for a moment.

NUMBER 4

Okay, but only for a moment.

MATT

(in a daze, with a grin)
Only for a moment.

REST OF THE ADULTS

Only for a moment!

Matt leaves the room as another man, NUMBER 3, enters and approaches Number 4.

NUMBER 3

Where's he going?

NUMBER 4

Bathroom.

NUMBER 3

I told you to stop doing that!

NUMBER 4

Damn, I forgot!

RHONDA

(to Numbers 3 and 4)
Don't worry, as I go to the restroom, I will check up on him.

NUMBER 4

Fine.

Rhonda exits the room.

NUMBER 3

Number 4!

NUMBER 4

Well, how are we supposed to prove that they're lying?

Number 3 stammers, then stops.

NUMBER 3

(throws his hands up)

Aw, never mind!

Number 3 walks away.

NUMBER 3 (CONT'D)

(sotto voce)

I wish you had to go to the bathroom right now.

INT. NELSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Matt runs into the house and catches Eric and his friends there.

MATT

Eric, you gotta help me!

ERIC

Matt! You sound normal!

MATT

Damn right, I do! And I gotta get your mother out of that cult!

DIMMEY

And our parents!

The other kids nod in agreement.

MATT

Yeah, whatever.

Rhonda enters the house, still grinning and speaking zombie-like.

RHONDA

Number 28, I thought I'd find you here.

MATT

Yeah, we live here!

RHONDA

You must reconsider. We don't want to make the General mad. He will be here tomorrow.

MATT

So tomorrow's Judgment Night?

RHONDA

Yes. We must prepare.

Rhonda goes to the kitchen.

ERIC

I wanna know who this General guy is!

MATT

I'm more concerned with getting Rhonda back to normal!

Rhonda reenters the living room and heads upstairs to the bedroom.

RHONDA

(to Matt)

Number 28, bed. Unclothe. Now.

MATT

So we'll table this until tomorrow.

He runs behind her.

ERIC

(rolls his eyes)

Of course.

INT. NELSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Matt lays out on the couch.

MATT

Whoa, sex with a crazy person is crazy!

ZOOM OUT TO REVEAL THE KIDS.

ERIC

Um, as much as I'd like to hear about you doing my mom, we need to figure out how to take down this cult!

DIMMEY

I don't know, I'd like to hear Matt talk about it.

Eric and Connie SMACK Dimmey on the arm.

DIMMEY (CONT'D)

Ow!

BERNIECE

Look, we gotta get these guys back to normal before the General comes tonight!

MATT

But how do we do that?

CONNIE

(to Matt)

It must not be that hard. You snapped back to normal.

ERIC

Yeah, but that's because Matt's a cheapskate!

Matt nods in agreement.

DIMMEY

Well, it took a deranged person to lure these guys in. Maybe it'll take a deranged person to get them out.

ERIC

Okay, that may work. But who do we know that's deranged?

SFX: The doorbell RINGS. Everybody GASPS and looks at each other.

Matt opens the door. A DELIVERY GUY is there.

DELIVERY GUY

Pizza.

Matt takes the pizza box from him.

MATT

Thanks.

He closes the door and puts the pizza on the dining room table. He continues to think along with the others.

ERIC
I'm hungry. Let's just call Eleanor
Dumbeck.

The others clamor in agreement and head towards the
pizza.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

The kids talk with ELEANOR DUMBECK, 17.

ELEANOR
I don't know about this, Eric. I'm not
one to persuade anyone to do anything.

ERIC
Think of it this way: you'll be saving
this city from evil!

BERNIECE
(to Eleanor)
And remember, you have to do it before
Judgment Night!

ELEANOR
We're gonna go see "Judgment Night" after
this? I never saw it before!

Eric stares at Eleanor, then looks at Berniece.

ERIC
Maybe this is a mistake.

BERNIECE
No, we don't have any time!

DIMMEY
Yeah, the General is on his way!

CONNIE
(to Eric)
And so are your parents!

ERIC
All right, then. Go get set up, Eleanor.
Matt is bringing my mother here early to
meet the General. Then the other members
will come. If Mom gets back to normal,
then we'll have to assembly-line this
thing before the General gets here.

ELEANOR
But what am I supposed to say?

ERIC
 Just make something up. You're smar...
 (pause)
 I'll help you along the way. Keep your
 earbuds on.

SFX: KNOCK on the door.

ERIC (CONT'D)
 That's them! Let's do this!

The kids head to the door, except for Eleanor, who starts to get situated.

ELEANOR
 Eric, one thing.

ERIC
 What?

ELEANOR
 Does your brother ever ask about me?

ERIC
 Not now, Eleanor!

Eric dims the lights. Matt opens the door from the outside. The kids stand behind it. Matt walks Rhonda in the room, while the kids sneak out behind them.

RHONDA
 Why are we here so early? The General
 will not be here for another hour.

MATT
 Like they told us in the Navy, "If you're
 early, you're on time. If you're on time,
 you're late!"

Matt closes the door behind them. Eleanor wears a pink robe, black sunglasses, and sits on a pile of pillows yoga-style. She holds her palms out.

ELEANOR
 (in a spooky voice)
 Come forward, children.

Matt and Rhonda approach her.

MATT
 Rhonda, look who it is!

ELEANOR
 I am The Great Nutmeg.

RHONDA
Hello. Where is the General?

PAUSE.

ELEANOR
I am The General Great Nutmeg.

RHONDA
But I thought the General was a guy. And you look a lot like Eleanor.

PAUSE.

ELEANOR
All myths to fool the enemy. Besides, I could never be as beautiful as her!

MATT
Uh, General Great Nutmeg, don't you have somewhere else you need to be? Maybe we should get on with it.

ELEANOR
Right. I am here to tell you that divination does not lie in dropping large wads of money or leaving your belongings.

RHONDA
It doesn't?

ELEANOR
No, it lies in living your life as normal. Eating right. Loving your family and friends. Giving your son extra for his allowance. Ouch.

EXT. HALLWAY - SAME

Eric rubs his head in pain with one hand, while holding his cell phone with the other. Berniece stands behind him.

ERIC
(to Berniece, sotto voce)
It was worth a shot!

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME

RHONDA
Wow, General, you are so wise!

ELEANOR
 (normal voice)
 Really?
 (spooky voice)
 Uh, I mean, "Really!" Now, when I snap my
 fingers, you will resume your normal
 life. Ready?

RHONDA
 Yes.

SFX: Eleanor SNAPS her fingers.

Rhonda stops grinning and looks around.

RHONDA (CONT'D)
 (normal voice)
 Hey, what's going on here? Why am I
 dressed like this? Where's my usual
 outfit? And what's Eleanor doing here in
 sunglasses?

ELEANOR
 Go in peace, my children.

MATT
 You remember that timeshare meeting we
 went to? It was a cult in disguise. We
 were all hypnotized!

Eric and the other kids enter the room.

ERIC
 Yeah, Mom, you were doing all kinds of
 weird things around the house.

RHONDA
 Wow. Was I cooking and cleaning, too?

MATT
 No. That really would have been the death
 of us!

BERNIECE
 Well, now that we know Eleanor's hypnosis
 worked, we can hurry and cure the others!

ERIC
 Right. Berniece, let's go back to our
 spot. Dimmey and Connie, you direct the
 people in here.

MATT

And Rhonda, you and me need to catch the General before he gets here.

ERIC

Yeah, there's another conference room on the other side. Just take him into there.

MATT

Alright, let's go, guys!

Everyone begins to exit except Eleanor.

RHONDA

(to Matt)

I still feel a little weird.

MATT

Like worked up, yet satisfied from last night into this morning?

ERIC

Matt!

MATT

Sorry.

EXT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Dimmey and Connie, dressed in all tan like the cult members, stand outside the conference room. The cult members walk in a few at a time while standing in a line.

DIMMEY

(faking a zombie-like voice)

Step right in to see the General!

CONNIE

(faking a zombie-like voice)

Come in dazed, leave amazed!

DIMMEY

(to Connie, regular voice)

Nice touch.

CONNIE

(regular voice)

Thanks, honey!

EXT. HALLWAY - SAME

Matt and Rhonda, wearing all tan, approach the top of the escalator, where the GENERAL meets them. He also wears all tan but additionally wears a crown on his head.

RHONDA
(faking a zombie-like voice)
You must be the General.

GENERAL
I am.

MATT
(faking a zombie-like voice)
Come. We have been waiting for you.

GENERAL
As you should have been.

They enter a dark conference room.

MATT
Here we are, sir.

Matt closes the door and turns on the lights. Lakesha stands there.

GENERAL
Mom??

LAKESHA
Hello, son. Having fun spending everybody's hard-earned money?

GENERAL
I told you, it's not what you think.
Everybody loves me now!

RHONDA
(regular voice)
I don't love you. Do you, Matt?

MATT
(regular voice)
Nope.

GENERAL
(sotto voce)
Mom, you're embarrassing me! I'm the General!

LAKESHA

Fool, your name is Buford! Where did I go wrong with you?

GENERAL

Naming me "Buford", for one.

LAKESHA

Listen, you better cut all this foolishness off before somebody gets hurt!

GENERAL

Look, I don't need any of ya'll no more! I got my whole flock! By the way, where are they?

MATT

Right here!

He points to the cult members, all of whom are back to their regular selves.

TIMMY

There he is, guys! Number 4, permission to kill him?

NUMBER 4

Well, I'm really Derwin, but I'm game.

IKE

Like, get him!

The adults advance towards him.

GENERAL

Mom!

LAKESHA

Oh no, you said you didn't need me!

GENERAL

Officer, stop them!

OFFICER TOWNSEND

You don't know me that well, do you?

Townsend and the other adults attack the General, while Matt, Rhonda, and Lakesha exit the room.

GENERAL (O.S.)

Ow! That's my crown! Watch the hair!

MATT

Thanks for your help, Lakesha.

LAKESHA

Anytime.

Number 3 approaches them.

NUMBER 3

Is this where they're killing Buford?

RHONDA

Yep.

LAKESHA

Todd Robinson! Still on break, huh?

NUMBER 3

But Ms. Brown, I can explain! Your son had a hold on me!

LAKESHA

And you had a job!

Lakesha walks away. #3 follows her.

NUMBER 3

Wait, come back! I was only gone for two years!

EXT. CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME

The kids exit the room.

ERIC

Well, that should be everybody. Thanks for helping me, guys.

CONNIE

The person you should really be thanking is Eleanor!

Eleanor walks up to them. Berniece hugs her.

BERNIECE

Eleanor, thanks for bringing my father back to normal!

ELEANOR

What do you mean?

BERNIECE

You know!

ELEANOR
 Uh huh. Hey, Eric, when's your mother
 coming, so I can do that hypnotizing
 thing?

The others look at Eleanor puzzled.

ERIC
 Huh...?

ELEANOR
 Just kidding, guys!

The others laugh.

ERIC
 I knew that!

BERNIECE
 Yeah, you almost got us!

DIMMEY
 We gotta catch up with our parents. See
 ya, "Great Nutmeg"!

ELEANOR
 Bye!

The others walk away. Eleanor walks in the other
 direction.

SFX: Eleanor's phone RINGS.

Eleanor looks around, then answers it.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
 (sotto voce)
 Yeah?
 (pause)
 No, I didn't blow our cover!

INT. SHOPPING MALL - LATER

Eric, Matt, and Rhonda walk through the mall.

RHONDA
 What a day.

ERIC
 It was longer than that.

MATT

Well, we have no one but ourselves to blame for being so weak-minded.

ERIC

You know, Matt, if my dad didn't want me to be in his wedding, we wouldn't have even come here. You guys could just blame all of this on him.

Matt and Rhonda look at each other.

MATT

I'm cool with that.

RHONDA

Yeah.

A GENTLEMAN approaches them.

GENTLEMAN

Excuse me, I'm Mr. Bruce, the manager here. I heard you got rid of the cult member pretending to be a timeshare operator.

MATT

Yeah?

MR. BRUCE

I'm so sorry that has happened on my watch, and trust me, he will be taken care of accordingly. Now, I know you and your wife were looking forward to that timeshare opportunity...

Matt and Rhonda look at each other, then back at Mr. Bruce.

MR. BRUCE (CONT'D)

...but unfortunately, we can't offer that. What we can offer you, though, are two tickets to one of those vacation spots. How does the Virgin Islands sound?

Mr. Bruce holds up the tickets.

MATT

Crappy! We've gone through a lot over these past few days. You think two tickets to the Virgin Islands are gonna make up for it?

MR. BRUCE
How about three tickets?

EXT. RUNWAY - DAY

An airplane LANDS on the runway.

EXT. HOTEL - VIRGIN ISLANDS - DAY

Eric, Matt, and Rhonda walk outside of a hotel with their luggage. They all wear Hawaiian-type shirts, straw hats, and sunglasses.

ERIC
Man, this vacation was lit!

MATT
Yep, it was a great way to spend the week!
(calls out and waves)
Taxi!

RHONDA
I wish we didn't have to leave yet.

An OLD LADY approaches them.

OLD LADY
Well, why do you have to leave?

MATT
We have school and jobs!

Rhonda and Eric look at Matt.

MATT (CONT'D)
Generally speaking.

OLD LADY
If you like it here, why not stay a little longer? You're welcome to leave, of course.

She walks away.

RHONDA
There is this one store I didn't get a chance to hit up.

ERIC
And you already know how I feel about school.

MATT

What the hell? Let's stay another few days.

ERIC

We're gonna have the best time ever!

RHONDA

Yeah, the best time ever!

ALL THREE

The best time ever!

They head back to the hotel and walk past some bushes. Mr. Bruce eerily peaks behind the bushes with an evil look on his face.

THE END