PICTURE PEOPLE

Written by

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FADE IN

# INT. WAR ROOM - NIGHT

ADOLF HITLER stands above a wooden desk, fists balled on its surface. He looks with furious consternation at the map below him while HERMANN GORING drones on.

Other NAZI LEADERS are gathered as well; Goebbels, Himmler, etc. They smoke and lounge. Suddenly, an ARMY MESSENGER enters. All eyes raise to greet him. Hitler looks at him, perplexed, and he's lost for words.

HITLER

Speak, man.

MESSENGER

Stalingrad is lost.

Hitler's eyes widen in shock, and the room sits in stunned silence.

GOEBELS

You may go.

MESSENGER

Mein fuhrer--

HITLER

(in a scream)

GO!

The messenger scurries away. The room returns to shock while the gathered leaders stare at Hitler, awaiting his reaction. He stares at the map in disbelief.

HITLER (CONT'D)

For nine long years, I have driven this nation forward in a shared and sacred dream...to bring forth from our race a rain of righteous steel. One to baptize this unforgiving earth and cleanse from it her horrors and impurities.

He stops, still staring off into the distance.

HIMMLER

Fuhrer--

Suddenly, he clears the desk with a loud yell. The assembled leaders are taken aback, shocked.

HITLER

So? Where is our victory? Where is our triumph? We stand in the heavy footsteps of the reichs before, and they LAUGH!

GORING

We will win!

Hitler gets in Goring's face with an accusatory finger.

HITLER

We will <u>die</u>, for our ineptitude! We have ventured Germany's future on the superiority of Aryan might, but now are no mightier than the Ox-- (while spitting)

--who ploughs a field he will never harvest!

There's a sudden shift in Goring's expression; awkwardness and disgust. He wipes his face. Hitler's expression shifts, too. In a calm, American accent:

HITLER (CONT'D)

Shit, was I spitting?

GORING

Yeah, man.

HITLER

Fuck. Sorry.

A.D (0.S.)

Cut!

We pull back to reveal:

### INT. SET - CONTINUOUS

We're on a movie set in LA. A MAKEUP ARTIST steps forwards to do touch-ups on Goring's face. Hitler's actor, **JAMIE**, a thirty-something white guy who bears a striking resemblance to the *Fuhrer*, turns towards the crew.

**JAMIE** 

(embarrassed)

Sorry, guys.

A sudden tiredness overtakes Jamie's face. He pulls out his phone and starts to scroll while walking.

He's approached by **LESTER**, his manager, a middle-aged Jew. Jason Alexander type. He clasps Jamie on the back.

Hey, great work there, kid.

**JAMIE** 

(bored)

Thanks, man.

He puts his phone away, and they approach craft services.

LESTER

I mean, I couldn't understand jack shit, but the anger. Rage. Really fucking powerful.

JAMIE

Do you know if these scones have gluten?

LESTER

Of course they have gluten. What, you don't eat gluten?

JAMIE

I'm doing paleo.

LESTER

Shit, everyone in Hollywood's on some fucking diet.

Jamie grabs some fruit and cheese.

LESTER (CONT'D)

You know what it is? Shame. Jews don't keep kosher anymore so they gotta find something they can't eat.

(then)

All my guilt's around sex and money, like a normal person.

The actor eats, leaning against a wall and watching the production.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Lisa stuck a finger up my ass, the other day. Felt fucking fantastic but I couldn't look in the mirror for a week.

**JAMIE** 

I don't wanna be Hitler, anymore.

There's a pause. Lester is lost for words.

What are you talking about? You're a great Hitler.

A MONTAGE OF SCENES THROUGHOUT JAMIE'S CAREER AS HITLER. HE TAKES A PIE IN THE FACE IN A FARCICAL STAGE COMEDY. HE GETS HIS NECK SNAPPED BY A MUSCULAR ACTION STAR. HE STANDS AT THE FRONT OF A CHILD IN A SURREAL MUSIC VIDEO WHILE BAND MEMBERS PLAY ON EITHER SIDE OF HIM. END MONTAGE.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Best goddam Hitler in Hollywood, in my opinion.

(a beat)

To get steady work in this industry? Woof. Count your stars, Jamie.

JAMIE

I'm just tired, man.

LESTER

Everyone gets tired, kid. I get tired of watching my son play Roblox instead of doing something with his goddam life, but it's not like he's got anything better to do.

JAMIE

Lester, you know what I wanna do.

LESTER

What?

### INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

Jamie approaches an easel wearing overalls with no shirt underneath. He's carrying a can of paint. He sighs, staring at the blank canvas with excitement.

He tosses the paint onto the canvas and rushes into the painting, rubbing his hands and body along it with closed, excited eyes.

AS HE RUBS, INTERCUT IS A MONTAGE OF INSTAGRAM PICTURES. PAINTING SELFIES. PAINTING 'CANDIDS'. A POLITICAL PROTEST WHERE JAMIE, WITH HIS HITLER MUSTACHE, CARRIES A SIGN READING "ARTISTS FOR CHANGE".

## INT. SET - DAY

We're back where we left them. Lester rolls his eyes.

I never said you can't paint--

JAMIE

--I don't need your permission! It's not all about money, dude. This is how capitalism destroys art. Like if you look at--

LESTER

JAMIE

--Oh, god, if only he looked --how Drake fucked up the liked Rachel Maddow...

hip-hop game...

JAMIE

Holy shit, this is exactly what I mean.

He storms off.

LESTER

What? Oh, come on.

(then)

Where are you going!

**JAMIE** 

I quit.

The actor storms away, pulling out his vape. AN ACTOR in a Nazi uniform steps in front of him as he goes and gives him a salute.

ACTOR

Zeig heil!

Jamie takes a puff of the vape.

**JAMIE** 

(without stopping)

Fuck off.

He exits.

# INT. DELI - LATER

Lester sits in a booth at a deli across from SID, who looks exactly like Albert Einstein. Sid's a Jew in his late sixties with a mothball-ridden jacket.

They're both eating breadless cold cuts, dipping them into mustard before consuming them.

(mouth full)

And so I tell him, you know, those facachta paintings--

SID

--He paints?

LESTER

Yeah.

SID

Any good?

LESTER

He's terrible, but I can't tell him that.

SID

Of course.

LESTER

But I tell him, y'know, how much I love them, how much they mean to me, but that there's no market for them. Just like that. You know how gentle I am.

SID

Like a Jewish panda.

LESTER

Exactly. And he quits!

Sid freezes in shock, cold cuts in hand.

SID

You're kidding.

LESTER

And Adriani won't let me find another Hitler--

SID

--why would he? Kid's the best fucking Hitler in town.

LESTER

So now I've gotta go and track him down.

SID

Ridiculous. Absolutely ridiculous. You're a saint, Lester.

Lester waves him off.

LESTER

I know, I know...

SID

No seriously, I tell everybody, "My manager Lester is a fucking saint. Fucking Mother Teresa."

LESTER

No, not Mother Teresa.

SID

What?

LESTER

She's cancelled.

SID

Mother Teresa's cancelled?

LESTER

Yeah.

There's a long pause. Both search for something to say and come up short.

SID

Either way, I've been playing Einstein thirty goddamn years, and I have nothing to complain about. 'Fore that, I was doin' lines of coke to stay warm 'cause I couldn't buy a winter coat.

LESTER

Wouldn't the coke be more expensive?

SID

Ah, fuck off, I'm workshopping it.

A beat.

LESTER

You know, I always tell people, I don't manage actors. I manage expectations.

SID

Forty dollars for some cold cuts... (MORE)

SID (CONT'D)

Look, Jamie'll come around. He always does. You just gotta be gentle. Supportive.

(a beat)

Remember: Jewish panda.

Lester reacts and thinks for a moment.

LESTER

Yeah, yeah. I know.

They both reach for the check.

LESTER (CONT'D)

I've got it, Sid.

Sid sighs and leans back while Lester pulls out his card.

SID

You're Mother Teresa, friend. Canceled or not.

#### INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Jamie's sitting on his couch in his normal clothes; snapback, t-shirt. He still has the Hitler mustache while he vapes and doomscrolls with the TV on some adult animated sitcom in the background.

He's swiping through tinder. All rights, no matches. Eventually he gets one. She's flipping off the camera with a Nazi flag behind her. She's cute, though.

He thinks for a minute and types, "hey how r u?" before quickly deleting it and unmatching.

**JAMIE** 

No, no, no...

Suddenly he's receiving a call: "Mom".

## INT. CAFETERIA - DAY, FLASHBACK

An ADOLESCENT JAMIE sits alone at a lunch table, eating a sandwich. There's a small, peachfuzz Hitler mustache on his upper lip.

A group of KIDS watches him, snickering to each other. Eventually, one of them steps forward.

KID

Um...hey. What's your name?

ADOLESCENT JAMIE

(shyly)

Jamie.

KID

Oh, cool. Um, did you see the Pigeon Detective?

Jamie shakes his head.

KID (CONT'D)

Sorry, did you?

ADOLESCENT JAMIE

No.

KID

No what?

ADOLESCENT JAMIE

I didn't see it.

KID

Did what see?

ADOLESCENT JAMIE

Not see.

The kids burst out laughing. The bully turns and his friends start high-fiving him.

# INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY, PRESENT DAY

Jamie's still staring at his phone with the incoming call from his mother. He thinks for a second before declining.

# INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Jamie stands in front of the mirror shirtless, towel wrapped around his waist. The shower goes in the background. He takes a deep breath. Some Eminem-type song is playing off a Bluetooth speaker.

**JAMIE** 

An inch of hair. Just shaving an inch.

He takes a deep breath before he reaches for an electric razor. He brings it closer and closer to the mustache, hesitating with each inch. He suddenly stops.

# INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

He's standing there on the phone with someone.

**JAMIE** 

Hey, this is Jamie. Just checking, what's the penalty if I shave the mustache? For the Adriani thing?

(a beat)

Great, thank you.

(hiding shock)

I'm sorry, how much?

(another beat)

Great, thank you so much.

# INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

He's pacing around, hands behind his head while hyperventilating.

### INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Staring back in the mirror.

**JAMIE** 

YOU'RE. NOT. HITLER.

#### INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Back on the phone. He's sitting in a squat in the corner of the room.

SECRETARY (O.S.)

Hello, Anti-Defamation League. How can I help you?

JAMIE

Yes, I'd like to make a donation.

# INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

He's masturbating to mixed race porn.

PORN STAR (O.S.)

You like this black dick?

**JAMIE** 

Fucking colonizer...

### INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

He's staring in the mirror, smiling serenely.

JAMIE

I am an artist.

He takes a short and deep breath, gives himself another smile, and turns on the razor. He brings it to his lip. Right as it touches hair:

JAMIE (CONT'D)

SHIT!

He throws the razor at the wall and backs away from it like it's cursed. He looks back to the mirror and inspects the mustache; no damage. The razor's broken. He sighs in relief before a shameful look overtakes his face.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Dammit.

### EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

A rooftop party in Los Feliz. Jamie's wearing a COVID mask. He approaches a group of ACTORS, who turn to greet him.

ACTOR 1

(excited)

Jamie!

**JAMIE** 

Hey! I'm not sick, I'm seeing my aunt next week, just being careful.

ACTOR 2

Totally understandable.

# EXT. ROOFTOP - MOMENTS LATER

Jamie's sitting with the group.

ACTOR 1

I just think it's super important that we're using our platforms responsibly.

ACTORS

Yes, absolutely, etc.

ACTOR 2

No totally, I was asked to audition for Santa in a Little Caesar's Pizza commercial and I was like...Santa is a capitalist. Santa is a colonist, like with the Elves. He is a predator--

**JAMIE** 

--Well someone has to play Santa.

ACTOR 2

But why though?

**JAMIE** 

Because if nobody plays Santa, how do we know about what he did? About the Elves and the capitalism?

ACTOR 1

In a pizza commercial?

JAMIE

No but like if there was a biting historical drama.

ACTOR 1

About Santa?

**JAMIE** 

Okay maybe not historical but imagine like a sort of speculative thing like--

(then)

--'The Santa Clause' meets 'A Few Good Men'.

ACTOR 2

I don't get it.

**JAMIE** 

No, it's a twist. We see the fireplace. Stockings. Tree. Santa comes down the chimney. Who's there to meet him? The Geneva Convention.

They have no idea what he's talking about.

### EXT. LOS FELIZ - LATER

Jamie's walking back to his car, discouraged.

JAMIE

Fuckin' Lester...

Suddenly, his phone buzzes. He's receiving a call.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Hello?

### INT. COMEDY CLUB - EVENING

Jamie walks into a dimly lit comedy club. The crowd is sparse; only a smattering of drunk OPEN-MIKERS. Sid's on the stage.

SID

So, what's up with this Trump guy? I mean I thought I had a hair problem!

He pauses for laughs. There's one from an open-miker, teetering between sarcastic and polite. Jamie finds a seat, watching with a confused expression.

SID (CONT'D)

What, you didn't like that? I get it, I get it. Must be Republican night.

Another single laugh, along with a groan.

#### INT. DINER - LATER

Sid and Jamie sit across from each other in a diner down the street. Sid's animated when he talks. Friendly, erratic. Jamie's maskless. People stare and mutter in the background.

STD

Anyways, they're saying it's benign, but--

JAMIE

--Oh, that's good.

SID

No, no, I've gotta cut these fucking cigarettes. Like what am I supposed to tell Rachel? That a pack of Camels is more important than my grandchildren?

JAMIE

Yeah, for sure.

SID

Look at this.

He pulls a picture of his granddaughters from his phone and shows it to Jamie, who attempts interest.

SID (CONT'D)

I mean look at that. Beautiful. Miracles, really.

JAMIE

Oh, wow! Really cute.

Sid puts his phone away.

SID

Fuck, listen to me ramble. Sorry.

**JAMIE** 

No, you're good.

SID

How's the painting?

**JAMIE** 

I mean, it's coming along. I've got a showing tonight, so--

SID

--Buyers?

He doesn't respond. Sid gives him a knowing look.

SID (CONT'D)

Oy. Dreams.

(a beat)

How'd you like the show?

JAMIE

(nervous)

What? Oh. I liked it. It was...real.

SID

It was terrible.

JAMIE

Yeah.

SID

And before Lester, it's what I had to do for money.

(then)

I was sucking cock for coke to stay warm when I couldn't afford a winter coat!

There's a pause.

**JAMIE** 

Why wouldn't you just suck dick for a coat?

Sid tastes the thought in his head before pulling out a notebook. He starts to scribble something.

SID

That's not bad.

JAMIE

Why even do it? If you know you--

SID

--suck?

Jamie nods. Sid puts away the notebook and considers the question.

SID (CONT'D)

You know, my parents didn't have a lot of money. Dad was a *shmata* guy, Ma, I mean she was in and out of the looney bin...

JAMIE

What? Really?

SID

She was a survivor. Used to start weeping if we took took long getting home from school.

Jamie looks guilty. Sid shrugs.

SID (CONT'D)

Anyways, my dad always made sure to save up for one trip every year.
'The Antler Inn', up in the Catskills. And they had a club, and my dad would sneak me in. Wink at me when we walk through the door, let me sip his beer. And all those motherfuckers were crazy. Not funny, or talented, I mean some of them were but...

(a beat, chuckle)

I was so fucking scared of being crazy. But those guys, they were just scared of being normal.

They're silent.

**JAMIE** 

I just don't want to be nothing.

Sid leans forward and squeezes his shoulder.

SID

Nobody does, kid.

# INT. CAR - DAY, FLASHBACK

Adolescent Jamie likes into the back of an SUV. His MOM is driving. She looks back at him with a smile while he mopes.

MOM

Hey, sweetie! How was your day?

ADOLESCENT JAMIE

Fine.

She purses her lips and looks ahead before driving off. There's silence in the car.

MOM

Any fun classes?

No response.

MOM (CONT'D)

I went to Safeway today. You would not BELIEVE who I saw --

ADOLESCENT JAMIE

--I don't care.

His mom reacts. Frustrated. More silence.

MOM

Your mustache is coming back. Someone say something?

ADOLESCENT JAMIE

It's fine. Just drop me at Michael's.

She sighs sadly.

MOM

You know...I know you're getting older. And people are gonna say you're all sorts of things. That you need to be all sorts of people. And some of those sorts, you're gonna wanna be.

(then)

But for me? You're just Jamie. And that'll always be enough.

# INT. GALLERY - NIGHT, PRESENT DAY

Jazz fusion plays lightly in the background. Jamie stands in front of his painting in an artsy, checkered suit. He's nervous as hell, nodding at ARTISTS and GUESTS as they pass by.

His painting is... interesting? Highly abstract. Solid lines of color that seem to clash. Oblong, geometric shapes. Something unplanned, primal, instinctive. But not necessarily good.

His eyes widen as a couple of ART CRITICS approaches.

CRITIC 1

Outstanding, just... absolutely brilliant.

Jamie's face explodes in surprised excitement. They're not staring at the painting, though. They're staring at him.

TAMTE

Oh my God -- thank you! Thank you so much!

CRITIC 2

I mean, it's Skaggs, right?

CRITIC 1

Mmm -- I see Laderman Ukeles. Artist as Death Instinct.

CRITIC 2

Sure, I see that.

JAMIE

What?

CRITIC 1

It's so fucking cynical. I love it. Look at how desperate he is.

Jamie's face drops. Humiliation.

CRITIC 2

Is this a personal statement? Or it that every artist is a Fascist?

CRITIC 1

Ugh. Neither. It's more visceral.

**JAMIE** 

This isn't a performance...

The critics react approvingly.

CRITIC 2

God, that's good.

CRITIC 1

And that hideous painting makes it so much better.

Jamie turns to look at the painting, then looks back to them with tears in his eyes. They gasp.

CRITIC 1 (CONT'D)

Holy shit, is Hitler gonna cry?

LESTER (O.S.)

Alright, alright, enough of that.

Lester enters to shoo them off. Jamie relaxes.

CRITIC 2

Oh, is this a timed experience?

LESTER

Uh -- sure. Like a sunset, or my hard-on.

## EXT. GALLERY PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Lester and Jamie sit on the curb. The latter holds his painting close to his chest, his eyes distant and somber. Lester's looking at his phone.

LESTER

Alright, Dalton's on his way. Five minutes.

He puts his phone away.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Jesus, a white Uber driver. Now you know the economy's shit.

Silence.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Lisa's got the Prius, and the uh, fiat's in the shop, so...

(a beat)

Why didn't you drive?

**JAMIE** 

I thought someone might ask for a drink.

Lester sighs sadly.

LESTER

Fuck, kid.

He waits. Jamie's frozen.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Y'know, I always say, I don't manage actors, I manage expectations.

JAMIE

Lester--

LESTER

--Fine! Fine.

He looks down to the side.

LESTER (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Jewish panda.

He turns back to Jamie.

LESTER (CONT'D)

So, you know how Lisa stuck her finger in my ass?

Jamie's eyes widen in disguist.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Well it wasn't just the one. Had to be three, maybe four, and they were going out as much as in.

(then)

Just really went for it, I was fucking dilated.

Jamie stands up to leave. Lester grabs his arm to stop him.

LESTER (CONT'D)

And I asked for it.

The actor sits hesitantly. He's confused and no less disgusted as he listens.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Since I can remember I was playing with my asshole. This was before every kid had an iPhone and an X-Box, wasn't much else to do, but--I mean I loved it.

(MORE)

LESTER (CONT'D)

Before I was even jerking it, I was going knuckle deep. And once I started beating my meat, fucking forget it. Every part of me felt alive - vibrating. Musical. Like a violin playing a concerto. One of those strada-whatevers.

(a beat)

By the time I was in high school, wasn't just fingers anymore. My drumsticks, sister's hairbrush... I'd close my bedroom door and it was like I was on a spaceship, like Carl Sagan travelling the galaxy. And I was the galaxy.

He chuckles, smiling as he reminisces. A sadness enters his face as he continues.

LESTER (CONT'D)

One day, my father's favorite pen goes missing. He finds it writing a letter in my small intestine.

(gulps)

And he wasn't mad or nothing. Just very quiet. He tells me to pull up my pants, sits me down. Tells me, "Boychik, futzing with your tuchus is for little boys. You're a man now." And I haven't touched it since.

He sniffles, wiping a tear from his eye.

JAMIE

Um -- I don't really understand --

LESTER

--Recently, things get...stale. In the bedroom.

He motions flaccidness with his arm before shrugging.

LESTER (CONT'D)

She thinks I'm not attracted to her, which couldn't be farther from the truth, but I've got high blood pressure, so pills aren't an option. And it comes to a point I don't even wanna talk about it. But she can't drop it. Pretty soon, I start yelling. And she yells back. Thinks I'm cheating.

(MORE)

LESTER (CONT'D)

Then we're not talking at all. Next thing I know, we're sleeping in separate beds. One day I tell her - fuck. I tell her, if she wants a divorce, I'll give her half. No fight, no contest. Make it easy. But she says we should try therapy.

He wipes the shame from his face. Jamie puts an arm around him.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Thanks, kid. We had four sessions of me running around in circles, talking about everything but my soft cock. One day, the shrink asks to see me alone. I tell him right away I can't get hard. And he says I need to figure out what I want from sex, and I say, "well, Doc, I'd really love someone to play with my asshole."

Jamie takes his arm away.

LESTER (CONT'D)

He insists I tell her. And I was sure he was a fucking quack -paying three hundred a session for Doctor Kevorkian. But he's insistent. So that night, I get brave.

(a light smile)

I was so worried she'd think less of me. See me as less of a man. Or fruity, or weak.

(a beat)

She was just so happy I asked.

Understanding dawns on Jamie's face. The Uber pulls up.

LESTER (CONT'D)

And after she was done, I fucked her like a stallion. God I love that woman.

Jamie pats him on the back. The two stand up and enter the car.

INT. SET - DAY

Jamie's on set. Hitler, again. He's alone at a podium.

JAMIE

Of all the licentious creatures on the Earth, there is none lower than the Jew.

He speaks with confidence. Poise. Direction.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

He who corrupts the Aryan male, to separate him from the will of the Reich. This is a talent no Slav or Bohemian may possess.

(a beat)

He makes him without shame bringing him to homosexual acts by insisting his base urges and infantile concepts of romantic love supercede the reproductive needs of the Aryan race. His Jewish sciences speak of an inner world, in the mind and in the atomic space of the universe, that is subject to ready change and spontaneity, one in which the state has no control.

His fists slam on the podium.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

A true Aryan will ignore the empty words offered by the Jewish intellectual! Will remove them from his core, and the Jew from public eye! This is the will of the German people! The German Nation!

He performs a Nazi salute, full of rage and vigor.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Long live the Third Reich! Zieg heil! Zieg heil!

A.D

Aaaaand, cut! Thanks Jamie, that was great.

Without hesitation, Jamie switches out of character.

**JAMIE** 

We're good?

A.D

Yeah man, go ahead and break.

**JAMIE** 

Cool. Thank you.

He steps out from behind the podium. From the set. From the camera. From his Nazi attire. Lester comes behind him. Pats his back.

LESTER

That was great, kid.

JAMIE

Thanks, man.

He moves to craft services and grabs a scone before placing a call. He takes a bite as he speaks.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Hey, mom? Yeah, sorry I missed your call. No, I'm okay. Yeah, now's a good time. How are you?

THE END

FADE TO BLACK.