

Cuyahoga!
The Birth of a Cult Leader

By

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INT. ADAM'S MOM'S HOUSE - DAY

A worn-out, dusty suburban living room in the midwest.

ADAM (17), slouches on the sofa, a GOLF CLUB across his lap.

BETH (16), a beautiful girl, sits on a bar stool. She holds a CUP OF TEA.

ADAM

What are we at now?

Beth glances at a notebook on the counter.

BETH

Umm... One-thousand, two-hundred and twenty-three dollars. That leaves... six more months, if you guys stay part-time.

Adam doesn't respond.

BETH (cont'd)

Why does your mom hate me?

ADAM

What? She doesn't.

BETH

Well, I hate her. She's rude.

A beat.

ADAM

I'm not going back in tonight.

Beth stands up.

BETH

Excuse me?

ADAM

I'm quitting.

Beth hurls the CUP OF HOT TEA at Adam.

He BLOCKS it with the golf club but it SPLASHES on him.

ADAM (cont'd)

Yow!

Adam JUMPS up and swats at the liquid.

(CONTINUED)

BETH
You tool!

Beth SHOVES Adam and he FALLS back down on the sofa.

BETH (cont'd)
If we can't afford Benjamin
Jackson, the cover art is gonna
suck. If we can't get celebrities
to read the book and join, the
sheeple won't follow.

A KNOCK on the back SCREEN DOOR.

DAVE (18), a pale, meaty kid with messy hair, a weak
mustache, and an army jacket, enters.

DAVE
Yo!

ADAM
Welcome.

Dave waves at a BLANK WALL on the other side of the room.

DAVE
Oh... Hi, Beth. Didn't see you.

Adam and Beth look at each other.

ADAM
Uh... Beth is right here, Dave.

DAVE
Sorry, dude! My eyeballs are all
fucked up today.

BETH
(to Adam)
Maybe he's been... ahem... spray
painting again.

DAVE
You ready to go? What's on your
shirt?

A beat.

Adam looks down at his shirt and frowns at Beth.

ADAM
I'm not going. I quit. Or, I'm
quitting. Just not going again.
Whatever.

DAVE

Dude... what the FUCK?

Adam stands up and paces. He gestures with the GOLF CLUB.

ADAM

Look. I just can't do it anymore. Who am I? I've been in disguise for three whole months, pretending to be a Normal with a day job. No one there knows who I really am. This plan isn't gonna work. I hate it.

DAVE

Dude! I've always believed in you! When you wanted to infiltrate that Christian survivalist militia in Fulton, I was behind you. I don't understand half the shit you say or come up with, but I go along with it. You wanted to break The Unabomber out of prison? Fuck... I still think it can be done!

Adam shakes his head.

DAVE (cont'd)

I always support you a thousand percent. You wanna start a Fake Church? I'm totally in. We can do it! It's brilliant. Fuck those dumbfucks. Fuck 'em. Brainwash 'em 'n take their cash!

ADAM

It's ridiculous. I'm no cult leader. I'm a nobody. I'm just a grocery bagger. A loser. It's over.

Dave stares out the window and takes a deep breath.

BETH

Uh oh! He's doing the Dave Eyes...

Beth steps behind Adam.

Dave turns back. His eyes are different. Tiny. Shrunken.

DAVE

Well, if there's no Cult, I'm gonna fuckin' kill myself, dude. Right now!

(CONTINUED)

Dave pulls a HANDGUN out of his pants, sticks it under his own chin.

ADAM

Whoa! Where did you get--

DAVE

I always had your back, man,
stickin' up for you when everybody
said you're a weirdo.

Dave TAPS the handgun on his own temple. His EYES get WIDE.

DAVE (cont'd)

But you're one step ahead, man,
even though they think you're one
step behind. People are stupid.
Fuckin' a, man. The cult... it's
our only ticket outta here, you
said so yourself! I ain't gonna
spend the rest of my life stockin'
shelves in fuckin' Cuyahoga!

Outside the front window, a MINIVAN pulls into the driveway.

ADAM

Shit.

BETH

Wait 'til she finds out. Like that
time we lured ducks into the motel
room with sandwiches...

Adam holds back a laugh.

DAVE

You think this is a joke?

Dave COCKS the gun.

A car door SLAMS. Someone walks past the living room window.

ADAM

Okay, okay! Fine. I'll go back!

ADAM'S MOM (43) carries a bag of groceries in the front door.

Dave stashes the gun behind his back. Big SMILE.

DAVE

Good morning!

(CONTINUED)

ADAM'S MOM
Uh... Afternoon, Dave.

She looks at the clock.

ADAM'S MOM (cont'd)
You're gonna be late for work!

Adam JUMPS up.

ADAM'S MOM (cont'd)
What's on your shirt?

ADAM
Beth... tea... et cetera...
nevermind.

He grabs WORK CLOTHES. The boys bolt out the open door.

Adam's Mom shakes her head and opens her PURSE. She pulls out a BUSINESS CARD, picks up the PHONE, and DIALS.

BETH
Let's make it a great day!

Beth walks past, sticks her tongue out, and exits.

Adam's Mom, phone to her ear, ignores Beth.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
Dr. Adomian's office...

BETH (O.C.)
Bitch!

ADAM'S MOM
Yes, hello. I'd like to make an
appointment with Dr. Adomian--

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
Name, please?

ADAM'S MOM
Adam Newmann. Two ens. He's my son.
I want him to talk to someone
because... I'm worried he--

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
What is the issue he's having?

ADAM'S MOM
He has an imaginary girlfriend.