

WORKING FROM HOME

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1. INT. BEDROOM - FLAT - DAY

ROY, early thirties, finishes buttoning up a shirt in front of a mirror. He's in grey sweat pants from the waist down. He runs a comb through his hair. He hears the sound of jangling keys outside the door. Opening it, he steps into...

2. INT. HALLWAY - FLAT - CONTINUOUS

His girlfriend and roommate, ASHA, also early thirties, with a surgical mask on her face and carrier bags in her hands, is getting ready to leave.

ASHA
You're running late.

ROY
No I'm not. Don't forget the tomatoes.

ASHA
I won't.

A pause. She sees he's nervous.

ASHA
Hey. You're going to do great, okay?

ROY
All right.

ASHA
Don't forget to feed Fred.

Roy looks into the kitchen to see FRED, their cat, as he swats a pen off their messy kitchen table.

ROY
I won't.

They go for a kiss, but pull back as they remember Asha is wearing the mask.

ASHA
Good luck, keep an eye on the bread, it'll be done soon. Oh, and listen for my package, yeah?

ROY
OK.

ASHA
I put on some coffee for you. Love you.

ROY
Love you too, bye.

Roy closes the door behind her. He hears the coffee finish brewing as he enters...

3. INT. KITCHEN - FLAT - CONTINUOUS

He pours himself a cup of joe. His phone pings. It's a reminder: 9:30 AM: PITCH WITH RENCORP. ZOOM ROOM ID: 184 963 287. PASSWORD: 6YU73Z

He grabs his coffee, spilling a drop on the bottom of his shirt. He checks: minimal damage. He puts the coffee back on the counter and removes FRED from the kitchen table. As he extracts his laptop from the pile of papers, books, and pens obstructing it, he notices FRED has taken a good chunk out of the corner of a notebook.

ROY
Bleedin' termite.

FRED meows, and circles the table, purring. ROY brings the coffee over, pops in some bluetooth earbuds, turns on his computer, and settles in.

He punches in his Zoom credentials, and up pops KAILEY - one of the many decision-makers populating the video conference's grid. (NOTE: All dialogue from the Zoom call is FILTERED, as it is received through ROY'S bluetooth earbuds).

KAILEY
Ah, there's Roy.

ROY
Hello.

KAILEY
Now that everyone's here we'll just go over the rules briefly before we get started. If you are not speaking, please mute your microphones. It's up to you if you want your camera on or not. Any questions, please use the raise hand button, and I'll ask them to Roy in order. Are we all good? OK, Roy, you have the floor.

ROY
Well, thanks everyone. So with this campaign what I was thinking was -

FRED jumps up, and lies down right on ROY's laptop keyboard.

ROY

We would go with the angle of trying to accentuate the positive aspects of staying at home.

FRED starts rolling around, opening a bunch of windows and sending the volume on ROY's headphones through the roof. Roy rips out the headphones.

ROY

Uh one second. So we figured -

He lifts FRED off the table. FRED's leg glances Roy's mug, spilling coffee all over the keyboard and his chewed up notebook.

ROY

Sorry guys just one moment.

He puts his headphones back in and turns down the volume.

Some muffled chuckles from some on the Zoom call. Eye-rolling and bored looks from the others.

Panicking, Roy cleans off the keyboard with the bottom of his shirt. He sees a container holding pens and pencils, drenched in coffee, dripping onto the floor. As he speaks -

ROY

We figured our key demographic, Charlottes and Davids, as we've called them, may be aging but are by no means inactive, in fact -

- he picks it up, and takes it to the sink. He dumps the pens on the counter, puts the container on top of the mound of dirty dishes in the sink, and turns on the tap to rinse it off.

ROY

- I think the segment we're after is even more impatient than -

Error messages pop into his headphones. FRED is back to sitting on the keyboard. Roy grabs a piece of paper towel and goes back to the laptop.

ROY

- other demographics. Oddly, they are more like how we previously thought of the younger demographics, not by much -

He plops FRED on the floor again and wipes the keyboard.

KAILEY

You all right, Roy?

ROY
Yeah, just the cat getting in the way.

He notices the sink overflowing.

ROY
I'm still here, just need to..grab..something..

He runs over and turns off it off. Looking back he sees FRED curled up on the keyboard AGAIN, error notifications pinging in his ears. He darts back, but slips on the water.

ROY
AH! OH!

KAILEY
Roy?

As he tries to break his fall, he grabs the dial on the oven, and doesn't notice as he turns it to BROIL.

Covered head to toe in dirty dishwater, he gets up and makes for FRED.

ROY
Yeah. Well, basically, we can show -

Before he can grab FRED, FRED jumps onto the couch. Relieved, Roy takes his seat.

ROY
- we would show perhaps couples having wine together, cooking together. However, we should avoid showing yoga or fitness bikes, since we don't want to alienate those with smaller -

The TV starts BLARING.

TV
STAY HOME. SAVE LIVES. PROTECT THE NHS...

Roy looks up to see FRED standing on the remote. The volume still increasing.

TV
A difficult day for the government, as it faced more criticism that it failed to act quickly enough -

ROY
Mongrel!

KAILEY

Roy?

ROY snaps up FRED from the couch...

ROY

...Those with smaller homes or flats - sorry, slight technical glitch there -

4. INT. HALLWAY - FLAT - CONTINUOUS

...runs to the bathroom door...

KAILEY

Roy??

ROY

We can be flexible from there but we should use -

...and locks FRED in.

ROY

Vibrant colours, because it's important -

KAILEY

Roy, are watching TV right now?

ROY

No.

He darts into...

5. INT. KITCHEN - FLAT - CONTINUOUS

He runs to the couch, grabs the remote, turns off the TV.

ROY

Um, neighbours. Sorry.

Now he stumbles into...

6. INT. BEDROOM - FLAT - CONTINUOUS

... and opens his wardrobe.

ROY

As I was saying -

Pulling off his trousers:

ROY
 - for our art we would use vibrant
 colours to project reassurance that
 even with this -

He struggles in his panic to remove them.

ROY
 - crisis going on that Sniffrr air
 fresheners -

Pulling off his shirt:

ROY
 Are there for them -

Buttoning up a new shirt:

KAILEY
 OK, so Donovan would like to speak.

Roy goes wide-eyed, and starts buttoning even more
 frantically.

7. INT. KITCHEN - FLAT - CONTINUOUS

DONOVAN, Roy's stern, corporate client, fills up the laptop's
 screen.

DONOVAN
 Roy, I'm going to be blunt, um, are
 you there? We haven't seen you now
 for -

ROY runs in, dishevelled, and sits at the computer. Nobody on
 the call sees he's just in his pants below his shirt.

ROY
 Yeah, I'm here.

DONOVAN
 Roy, I'm afraid we're going to pass
 on this. Not only does the concept
 seem stale, but you haven't been on
 screen for most of it. Did you
 prepare at all?

The sound of more things falling from the bathroom.

ROY
 (meekly)
 Yeah.

DONOVAN
 Well, let's hear what else you've
 got, then. Are you going to stay
 with us now?

ROY
Um...in a moment.

CLOSE UP on the ZOOM call. Everybody staring like 'what the hell just happened?'

ROY rushes to...

8. INT. HALLWAY - FLAT - CONTINUOUS

...the bathroom door and opens it. FRED nonchalantly walks out. Inside:

9. INT. BATHROOM - FLAT - CONTINUOUS

Bottles of shampoo, shaving cream, cosmetics, toothpaste, and other items are scattered all over. Two towels and the shower curtain are scratched up. ROY looks on in horror, but runs back to:

10. INT. KITCHEN - FLAT - CONTINUOUS

Just in time to stop FRED from curling up on the keyboard again. This time, the camera catches him.

CORPORATE TYPE
Aw, what a cute cat.

FRED sits in the door to the hallway, like a prince. ROY sits at the computer. He sniffs. What's that smell?

DONOVAN
Roy, if we weren't under an exceedingly tight deadline, this meeting would already be over. Now I need you to sit with us here, and tell us what have you got?

He contains his panic, but his eyes don't lie: he's got nothing.

ROY
Uh...

Time slows. He sits, frozen in panic, trying to come up with something, anything.

DONOVAN
Can you do that? Can you stay with us?

ROY
Yes.

The smoke detector goes off. Roy looks over to see smoke bellowing out of the oven.

DONOVAN
What's that?

ROY's phone starts ringing, but he can't hear it over the smoke detector.

ROY
It's bread.

DONOVAN
Bread?

ROY gets up.

DONOVAN
Roy!

ROY jumps, trying to hit the off button for the smoke detector. After a few tries he gets it. His phone stops ringing and up pops a new voicemail notification.

ROY
Don't do an ad campaign. Do a product!

ROY turns off the oven, opens it, and takes out the bread, coughing.

ROY
Sourdough!

Still coughing, he opens the sliding door to the BALCONY to let the smoke out, and takes his seat again. FRED, still in the same place, licks himself.

DONOVAN
What?

ROY
What is everyone doing right now?
They're baking. They're doing it so
much ingredients are running low.
The smell of freshly baked
sourdough!

He coughs again. Everybody on the call ponders. As they do, a pigeon lands on the balcony railing.

ROY looks at the pigeon. He looks at FRED. FRED begins to leap. Roy launches himself out of his chair.

FRED runs and jumps.

11. EXT. BALCONY - FLAT - CONTINUOUS

The pigeon makes a narrow escape. Just as FRED is about to fall over the railing, ROY snatches him out of the air like a ninja.

He stands, holding the writhing cat by a back leg, frozen in disbelief that he actually managed to catch him.

FRED goes ape shit and tears the ass off ROY's pants.

A MOTHER and her TWO DAUGHTERS sitting on the balcony next to his let out a shriek as they get a full visual broadside of ROY's buttcheeks.

ROY
 (turning to them,
 oblivious)
 Would you mind? I'm in a meeting.

12. INT. KITCHEN - FLAT - CONTINUOUS

DONOVAN, KAILEY, and the other clients look on in horror: they've seen everything.

ROY let's go of FRED, and winces. He has a big scratch where the tear in his pants is. He gets back in his seat. FRED leaps up onto the table, knocking over notebooks, a glass, and some pens.

ROY
 So, what do you think? A new
 freshly-baked sourdough scent. The
 perfect way to keep your home fresh
 in the middle of COVID.

Stunned silence. They are not over getting mooned by ROY, far from it.

DONOVAN
 OK...that's...

He rubs his eyelids.

DONOVAN
 I can't believe I'm saying this.
 That's actually not a bad idea.

The others Zoom callers react in surprise.

DONOVAN
 But if even so much as micron goes
 wrong from here on out, I will drop
 you instantly. Do you understand?

ROY

Th-thank you. I will have a written proposal by -

DONOVAN

Have it next week.

ROY

Thank you. And truly, I'm sorry about the -

DONOVAN

Just make sure there are no more problems. If someone had told me this year I'd be sealed in my house for 8 weeks and giving my business to a lad who can't even keep his pants on... Is there anything else?

Not a peep from the others on the call.

DONOVAN

What do I pay you people for? Roy - Monday. 9 AM.

ROY

Thank you.

The call ends. The flat door opens.

ASHA (OFF SCREEN)

I'm back. Why didn't you get my package?

She walks into the kitchen, bags in hand, and a 'sorry we missed you' pamphlet in the other, to see ROY standing in torn pants, and the kitchen a complete disaster.

ASHA

What happened?

An awkward pause.

ROY

Meeting went well.

THE END