

THE CURSE

"EPISODE 1"

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OPENING CREDIT SEQUENCE

Eerie devotional music plays throughout ("Rama Katha" by Alice Coltrane). Choice SFX litter the soundtrack. Imagery is shown in stark red and white.

A hovering wide shot of a lonely run-down playground. A lone swing sways in the wind. Leaves blow over the ground and a lost teddy bear lay rotting in the grass.

A piece of plywood is torn off a run-down scary house.

Roaches scatter across a cracked tile floor.

A homeless person pushes a cart past a large mural of several hands holding planet Earth.

The camera creeps up a flight stairs into a dark attic lit by a small flashlight and the streetlights flooding the window.

A fetus floating in womb. Close up on the fetus' face.

A funeral procession.

A slow motion shot of a barking pit-bull chained to a fence. We see the stings of saliva slowly fall to the ground.

A boat rocks at night in a fog covered lake.

Lightening bolts fill the sky.

A fire ignites in a trash can and the title writes itself in the smoke...

"The Curse"

EXT. COMMERCIAL BLOCK - LOW INCOME NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

We see faces in a crowd. Mostly hispanic. They're all standing in the middle of a closed off section of the street, while counting down, unenthusiastically:

CROWD

Ten! Nine! Eight! Seven! Six!
Five!...

We finally see what the crowd is looking at - a GIANT SCALE PHOTOGRAPH of a quaint SPANISH BODEGA, printed on a canvas that is split down the middle.

A camera crew is filming all this, and it becomes clear this is a "before" photo of a reality television show reveal.

Gripping one side of the canvas is WHITNEY (35, half-white, half-Asian, think Olivia Munn). She's dressed casually, in jeans and a t-shirt, wearing a tool belt, but her hair and make-up would lead you to believe that she's headed to the Met Gala. She's also gorgeous, and has a big smile as she counts down with the crowd.

WHITNEY / CROWD
...Four! Three!...

Holding the other side of the canvas is ASHER (36, Jewish). Like Whitney, he is also dressed in casual construction garb, with a tool belt and hard hat, but the outfit feels out of place on him. It's clear this guy doesn't work with his hands. He looks more like an accountant in a halloween costume.

ASHER / WHITNEY / CROWD
... Two! One!

Whitney and Asher each pull on their side of the giant photo, dividing the quaint Mexican Grocery store in half to reveal the new addition to this neighborhood - a newly renovated modern looking coffee shop called "Kangoo Coffee" (think Blue Bottle). The aesthetic is completely mismatched with the adjacent businesses - all local Hispanic mom-and-pop shops. It's very out of place.

The crowd reaction is muted. They're unsure what the crew wants from them.

DOUGIE (37, white) is looking at his monitors at a video village setup nearby. He can be very charming but there is darkness behind his baby-blue eyes. He talks with a speech impediment.

DOUGIE
(to self)
Fuck.

Asher delivers a clearly pre-written line to the crowd.

ASHER
Come on in everyone! First coffee
is on us!

Dougie stops everything.

DOUGIE
Hold!

He turns to a cameraman, REMI (40's).

DOUGIE (CONT'D)
Did we get anything usable?

REMI
Not me.

Dougie taps another CAMERAMAN.

DOUGIE
Did anyone look excited?

The cameraman shakes his head 'no'.

REMI
Dougie, want to watch playback?

DOUGIE
Let's bring everything back to one,
we're gonna do it again.

ASHER
(to Whitney)
Was I okay?

WHITNEY
You were fine. Stand up straight,
you're slouching.

Asher adjusts his posture as Whitney approaches the crowd with a big smile.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)
Hey, lets see some smiles out
there! A new coffee shop in your
neighborhood!

She does a very over the top cheer. The crowd looks happy.
(It's clear Whitney is much more charismatic than Asher.)

Asher and Whitney push the photo back together, hiding the coffee shop again. While he rolls his half, Asher is very conscious that his back is straight.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)
(to Asher)
Maybe look a little happier when
you say it.

ASHER
I was smiling.

WHITNEY
Do your real smile. With your eyes
too. The one I like.

He smiles at her, sincere.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

That's the one.

Nearby, we reveal there is a news crew filming this grand opening as well. Dougie approaches a fashionably dressed reporter, MONICA STERN (31). He tries to lighten the mood.

DOUGIE

Reality TV. What can I tell you?

MONICA STERN

Happens to us all the time. Just do your thing.

Dougie walks up to Remi.

DOUGIE

(whispering)

Try to find a gay guy, they always react big.

Dougie goes back to his monitors. On it we see Remi's camera as he scans the crowd for a "gay guy". He lands on a young black man, MARCUS (20's) with an earring.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

Yeah he's pretty good, stay on him.

The other cameras get set into their positions and DOUGIE cues Whitney and Asher to start the countdown again.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

Whitney.

He signals "again".

WHITNEY

Alright everyone we're doing it again! Ten! Nine!

The crowd and Asher join in.

ASHER / WHITNEY / CROWD

Eight! Seven! Six! Five! Four!...

Dougie intensely stares at his monitor, watching the close up shot of his "gay guy".

DOUGIE

(to self)

Come on, come on.

ASHER / WHITNEY / CROWD
Three! Two! One!

They pull the canvas apart and reveal Kangoo Coffee again.

ON MONITOR: Marcus' expression doesn't change.

DOUGIE
God dammit.

ASHER
Come on in everyone! First coffee
is on us!

Dougie looks over and sees the news camera pointed at him. He abruptly changes his expression, making a goofy face and "moose antlers" with his hands.

Then, he turns back to his crew.

DOUGIE
Hold! Let's go back to one. We're
doing it again.

WHITNEY
(to Dougie)
Dougie, can I say the line? I feel
like I can get them into it more.

DOUGIE
Yes. Good idea.

WHITNEY
(to Asher)
Is that okay, babe?

ASHER
Sure, whatever.
(then)
Is it weird we're doing this so
many times? It's supposed to be
real I thought.

WHITNEY
These people aren't used to being
on camera. They need a little
coaxing.

DOUGIE
(to the crowd)
Okay, when everyone sees that
coffee shop, I want you all to go
wild. Seriously, LET'S HAVE SOME
FUN!

Dougie starts clapping. He discreetly walks up to Marcus.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)
Hey man whats your name?

MARCUS
Marcus.

DOUGIE
Hey Marcus... you've got a great looking face and we're gonna be real close on you this time so give me everything you got. We want lots of energy. You like having fun right?

MARCUS
Yeah.

DOUGIE
Shocked, excited whatever feeling hits you. It's a new coffee shop in the hood!

Marcus nods in agreement.

MARCUS
Cool.

DOUGIE
Alright last time! Let's get it!
Ten! Nine!

Dougie slinks off to his monitor while Whitney and Asher pick up the countdown.

ASHER / WHITNEY / CROWD
Eight! Seven! Six! Five! Four!
Three! Two! One!

DOUGIE intensely watches Marcus on the monitor. Asher and Whitney pull the canvas apart again to reveal Kangoo Coffee.

Marcus's face does a nervous smile. He's clearly conscious of being filmed.

WHITNEY
(faux surprised)
Are you kidding me?! Who wants a free coffee? Come on!

She sells it better than Asher. But still, nothing from Marcus.

DOUGIE

Alright that was great everyone.

(to crew)

We're just going get a few more options from Marcus before moving inside so keep rolling.

(to Marcus)

Marcus, I'm going to give you a couple 'two-one' countdowns and just give me your most surprised and excited faces. Cool buddy?

Marcus nods.

Dougie looks at his monitor again. Marcus is looking directly into the camera lens.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

Energy is important. Don't look at the camera.

Marcus turns to face the shop.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

Alright, Two! One!

Marcus doesn't do anything.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

React on one, Marcus.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

Two! One!

Marcus smiles and nods.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

Again, don't shake your head. Bigger. Two! One!

Marcus opens his mouth wide.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

Great, another. Two! One!

Marcus does another over-the-top face.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

Okay less this time. Two! One!

Marcus does a more subtle face, but still unnatural.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

Great. Two! One!

Marcus does another.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

Two! One!

Marcus does it again.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

Two! One!

Marcus does a closed mouth nod.

While this is happening, other crowd members head into the coffee shop past Whitney and Asher, who are staring at Dougie getting reactions from an increasingly stressed looking Marcus. Whitney and Asher share a look of concern.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

Let's see those hands. Two! One!

Marcus lifts his hands up and smiles.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

Two! One! More hands.

Marcus no longer looks like he's having fun.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

Two! One!

INT. KANGOO COFFEE - DAY

Four KANGOO BARISTAS (all blonde Australian models) are dressed in the trademark pink aprons and hats with a slick Aussie-inspired logo. They are serving coffees to the long line of community members who have filed into the store.

A Hispanic male CUSTOMER (40's) stares at the menu.

CUSTOMER

What's a pour over?

KANGOO BARISTA 1

Pour over just means the water gets poured over the coffee.

CUSTOMER

Ah.

KANGOO BARISTA 1

The flat white is our specialty though. Would you like to try that?

CUSTOMER

What is that?

KANGOO BARISTA 1

Its basically a cappuccino. Down under style.

CUSTOMER

What's that?

KANGOO BARISTA 1

Down under is just slang for Australia.

CUSTOMER

No, the cappuccino.

KANGOO BARISTA 1

Oh, it's an Italian coffee with steamed milk.

CUSTOMER

Okay I'll have one of those.

EXT. KANGOO COFFEE - DAY

Whitney and Asher standing outside, shoulder to shoulder, with a long line of customers in the background. They are being interviewed by the local news.

MONICA STERN (O.S.)

So who are you and what are you doing here today?

WHITNEY

(big smile)

We're Whitney and Asher Gold, and today we're filming the pilot episode for our reality show, Fliplanthropy, where in each episode we not only renovate a house, we also rejuvenate the community helping to open of a new business, like a coffee shop or an art gallery.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

We're fortunate--

ASHER

That's right, we--

WHITNEY

Oh did you..?

ASHER

No go ahead.

WHITNEY

Just say it.

ASHER

Well, we're married too so things
don't always go according to plan.

Whitney looks to Asher, feigning annoyance at his comment.

WHITNEY

What does that mean?

(to Monica)

Husband and wife, flipping homes.
What could go wrong?

They both laugh. Asher kisses Whitney on the cheek. Whitney appears uncomfortable with the public display of affection but doesn't drop her smile.

MONICA STERN

How does it make you feel seeing
the community come together like
this?

ASHER

It's amazing. That's why we do it.
We'd especially like to thank
Kangoo Coffee for partnering with
us and taking this first step
toward helping this community. And
hopefully it will spur more
investment from other brands that
would normally overlook a
neighborhood like this.

WHITNEY

We like to see ourselves as "urban
pioneers", coming into these
forgotten areas and changing them
for the better. If all goes well,
in two years you wont even
recognize this block.

They both smile.

EXT. KANGOO COFFEE - LATER

Monica is interviewing a LATINO MAN (40's) holding a Kangoo
Coffee.

MONICA STERN
How excited are you about this?

LATINO MAN
It's exciting, but to be honest,
when new businesses come in the
landlords increase the rent. Some
of my family has been forced to
leave the area--

MONICA STERN
But new business also means more
jobs, more investment, right?

LATINO MAN
Yeah, sometimes.

MONICA STERN
So you're excited?

The Latino Man, realizing what the reporter wants to hear,
gives in.

LATINO MAN
Very excited, yes.

MONICA STERN
Thank you so much.

The man walks off. Monica turns to her CAMERAMAN.

MONICA STERN (CONT'D)
Alright, good.

As the Cameraman packs up, Dougie intercepts Monica on her
way to the news van. They walk together. It's clear they have
a rapport.

DOUGIE
This is so huge. Seriously Monica,
thank you again. How's your
brother?

MONICA STERN
How do you know those two?

DOUGIE
I almost bought one of their flips.
They have a good dynamic, don't you
think?

MONICA STERN
And what's that?

DOUGIE

She's hot, he's a nerd.

They both look over at Whitney and Asher, out front of the shop. Whitney is being filmed talking with customers, full of energy. They're loving her company. Asher is awkwardly standing nearby, hands in his pockets.

MONICA STERN

Oh is that the appeal?

DOUGIE

Yeah, you wonder how he got her to marry him.

She rolls her eyes.

MONICA STERN

This feels like a awfully good natured show for you. Is this damage control?

DOUGIE

You think I need damage control?

She shrugs.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

Backlashes happen all the time.

MONICA STERN

Oh they do?

DOUGIE

Look, society turned on us while we were on air. And that's fine, I'm happy about progress. But I want to be clear, the show wasn't the problem.

MONICA STERN

A straight man producing a reality show about gay stock brokers? You don't see a problem with that?

Dougie smiles, cheekily.

MONICA STERN (CONT'D)

You forced them to bring dildos to work.

DOUGIE

What, you need me to admit that I need good press?? Fine, I want good press, okay?

Monica takes out her notepad and a pen.

MONICA STERN

When does the show air?

DOUGIE

I don't know. I'm doing this out of pocket at the moment.

Dougie sees her writing something down. He snatches her notebook.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

That's off the record, that last thing.

Monica laughs and grabs the notepad back.

MONICA STERN

You're so fucking paranoid. Why would anyone care about that?

DOUGIE

And you're not gonna show the us doing the reveal of the shop more than once.

MONICA STERN

What if I did?

She smiles big. Dougie smiles back.

DOUGIE

(flirtatious)

You know I'm accused of manslaughter, right?

MONICA STERN

Oh I'm very aware.

INT. WHITNEY AND ASHER'S HOME - NIGHT

Their home is a combination of Restoration Hardware and West Elm. They have a giant nautical clock hanging in the living room. There is a lot of mercury glass and gothic style modern furniture.

Whitney unpacks a meal service delivery next to the stovetop. Noodles, broccoli, onion, garlic, carrots, etc - all in individual plastic containers.

A brown labradoodle, TUCKER, is jumping up on the counter, trying to get at the food.

WHITNEY

Tucker, no.

Asher is sitting at the kitchen island on his laptop.

ASHER

Dougie's kind of a weird guy, huh?

WHITNEY

Yeah, I can't get a read on him. He must be a Pisces.

Asher thinks.

ASHER

Am I bad on camera?

Whitney turns to face him while continuing to unpack the meal.

WHITNEY

No, don't be crazy. You're a little awkward but that's why I like you.

ASHER

I'm just not a performer. Do I have to be in this? Can it just be you?

WHITNEY

The appeal is that we're married. That we're a family.

ASHER

I know, I know.

WHITNEY

Plus this is going to make our lives so much easier. People are going to want our homes just because it's us flipping them.

ASHER

I guess if we're famous we could get away with laminate flooring again.

She turns back to the stovetop, pours oil in the pan, dumps in the package of BABY CARROTS.

WHITNEY

And we won't have to get my dad to co-sign all our loans. Wouldn't that be nice? A happy michpacha.

ASHER

Michpacha. What's that mean again?

Whitney turns back, offended.

WHITNEY

Family. Asher, come on. How is that that I'm the one who converted and I know more Hebrew than you?

ASHER

No, I knew that one. I just forgot for a sec.

Tucker jumps up on the counter again.

ASHER (CONT'D)

Tucker wanna treat?

He pulls a treat out of a jar and throws it across the room.

ASHER (CONT'D)

So the doctor's office is 35 minutes from set. Should we try to move the appointment earlier?

WHITNEY

We can be late. We're the stars.

She turns around and smiles at him.

ASHER

You looked really good today. I like that outfit. Sexy.

WHITNEY

Oh yeah?

She slaps her own butt.

Asher gets up from the island and walks behind her.

As he approaches, Whitney is stirring the baby carrots and notices one carrot is much smaller than the others.

She stops stirring, in thought. The camera slowly zooms in on the tiny deformed carrot, sizzling in oil.

Asher grabs her hips from behind and starts kissing her neck.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Are you gonna ask about your penis tomorrow?

Asher deflates.

ASHER

It's not an issue. I Googled it. We don't have to ask.

WHITNEY

Baby, I know this whole thing isn't easy for either of us. But people on message boards were saying it might be a factor.

He drops his hands and starts to walk back to the island.

ASHER

Jesus Christ. Can we just wait to see what the doctor says about the sperm first?

She turns and pulls him back in, affectionately.

WHITNEY

I don't see what we lose by asking?

ASHER

My dignity.

She kisses him, softly.

WHITNEY

Just do it for me, please.

INT. OBGYN OFFICE - DAY

Whitney and Asher sit in the office of DR. BRENNER, Mid 40's, who is flipping through their medical files.

DR. BRENNER

Have you been timing intercourse to your ovulation?

WHITNEY

We have. But we have also have been trying the day before too.

DR. BRENNER
So just twice a month?

ASHER
Yes.

DR. BRENNER
Is there a reason you haven't been
doing it more?

WHITNEY
We just didn't know we had to?

DR. BRENNER
It could be useful to try for the
five days leading up to ovulation,
and also during.
(check his papers)
It's been eight months you've been
trying for, right?

WHITNEY
Eight to ten, yes.

DR. BRENNER
Asher your sperm is viable so we
can rule that out as being a
contributing factor. Whitney your
HSG results were good. An
endometrial biopsy could be the
next phase, but I I don't think
that's necessary quite yet. I'd
like to give it another couple
months. Before we start to panic.

ASHER
I guess we'll keep trying then.

Asher looks to Whitney, trying to wrap it up.

ASHER (CONT'D)
Alright. You feel good?

Whitney stares him down.

ASHER (CONT'D)
What?

WHITNEY
Didn't you have a question?

ASHER
No.

She starts speaking to Asher in a discrete ventriloquist-like manner.

WHITNEY

We should probably ask any questions we have since we're here.

Asher replies in the same fashion, barely audible.

ASHER

I feel like he answered all our questions.

WHITNEY

But we didn't ask all the questions.

ASHER

He said to try for another couple months. Then we can ask then.

DR. BRENNER

I'm sorry to interrupt but if there are any questions you have, please. I've been through this with thousands of couples, I've heard it all.

Whitney looks back over to Asher, pushing him with her eyes.

Asher submits with a deep sigh. He's incredibly uncomfortable.

ASHER

Well, um... there's...

(beat)

I guess, ah...the...I... One thing we uhhh...

Asher's devolves into a complete mess of words as Dr. Brenner waits patiently for him to formulate his question.

ASHER (CONT'D)

We were curious about is the notion of, ah, if size would be factor... a contributing factor?

DR. BRENNER

Size of...?

ASHER

Ah, genitalia.

DR. BRENNER

Oh, no, you don't have to worry about that. Whitney's ultrasound showed no issues, size or otherwise.

WHITNEY

No, he's talking about his penis.

DR. BRENNER

I'm sorry, I misunderstood.

(to Asher)

When you mention size, are you talking about length?

ASHER

Yes.

WHITNEY

Is it possible its not getting far enough inside? I have noticed on some occasions the sperm falls out very quickly after sex.

DR. BRENNER

It's hard to say without knowing specifics, but I have had patients who have reported difficulty with having penetrative sex. Again, I would need to know specifics. But anything below 2.8 inches erect is considered a micropenis.

Asher laughs, uncomfortable.

ASHER

No, no, it's not that... ah. I'd say closer to four, erect.

WHITNEY

Four?

ASHER

Yeah.

Whitney at him, skeptical.

ASHER (CONT'D)

Well it's not a micropenis. Maybe just under four. But I would say four.

Asher starts gauging it in the air with his fingers.

DR. BRENNER

You know, most of the population isn't aware that the average size for adult men is actually 5.1 inches erect, so although 4 inches is slightly below average it is still within the range of what I would consider to be average.

WHITNEY

(to Dr. Brenner)

It's this big. Erect.

Whitney holds up her fingers three inches apart.

DR. BRENNER

Well, ah, I don't have a tape measure here but that shouldn't be an issue for reproductive purposes.

WHITNEY

Okay.

DR. BRENNER

It is possible your concerns or anxiety about the sperm not entering far enough are more related to experiences you might have had with previous partners, where the size could have been larger and you're used to a certain sensation.

WHITNEY

Mmm.

Asher is stone faced. He is trying very hard to exist in this moment.

DR. BRENNER

(off Asher's reaction)

Human bodies are kind of like puzzle pieces. Sometimes two pieces just fit together perfectly, and other times when it doesn't fit...

Dr. Brenner pauses realizing this isn't helping.

DR. BRENNER (CONT'D)

Well actually, puzzle pieces isn't the right analogy.

WHITNEY

Is there something that could be helpful that we could--

DR. BRENNER

If it doesn't fit, you must acquit!

(beat)

You're too young to remember that.

ASHER

No, we know. The OJ trial.

DR. BRENNER

I was just trying to think of an analogy and I recalled that rhyme. I guess in your case though, If it doesn't fit, it's still legit!

Asher is just wants out.

ASHER

Good.

(to Whitney)

Good?

EXT. RENOVATED HOUSE - DAY

Asher is outside of a newly renovated house, hammering a white wooden stake with a FOR SALE sign into the ground using a giant sledgehammer. Whack. Whack. Whack.

Reveal, the crew is filming this. Beside the crew are Whitney and Dougie, seated in chairs.

DOUGIE

(to Asher)

Okay, that's probably good!

Asher ignores Dougie and keeps hitting the stake deeper and deeper into the ground.

WHITNEY

Ash. That's good.

Asher doesn't stop. They both just stare and watch him.

Whack. Whack. Whack.

INT. RENOVATED HOUSE - DAY

A small CONSTRUCTION CREW are finishing up a home renovation. It's clearly one of those quick flip jobs, cheap fixtures with cheesy decor (large marquee lettering hangs on the walls spelling out the word 'LOVE').

Asher stands with his lead handyman, MATEO (44, Hispanic). They are going over some invoices.

ASHER

Why did the backsplash tiles cost seven hundred?

MATEO

We had to get them from a different supplier.

ASHER

We should have done stone mosaic then. That's three hundred down the drain.

Dougie approaches them with Remi, holding his camera by his side.

DOUGIE

What did you do in this room besides paint the walls?

ASHER

We redid the flooring.

DOUGIE

It looks too similar. We need more changes for the before and after. Can you add a fireplace?

ASHER

No way. That'll cost four grand minimum.

Dougie is sniffing non-stop. It's weird.

Whitney, who was listening in while chatting with another crew member, approaches.

WHITNEY

Ash, let's make an exception for this one. For the show.

ASHER

Four grand?! Plus dealing with all the gas lines?

WHITNEY

We can just do the faceplate. Make it decorative, with some candles in it. It will be beautiful.

DOUGIE

Yeah, just the faceplate. It doesn't have to work. Going from a blank wall to a fireplace will give us some wow factor.

ASHER

(resigned)
Fine.

DOUGIE

(to Remi)
Just grab some shots of the bathrooms.

Remi walks off.

Dougie takes out his phone.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

(to Whitney, excited)
Did you see the news?

WHITNEY

It aired!?

DOUGIE

Yeah this morning.

Dougie is super proud. He hands her his phone with the story pulled up. He has a huge smile.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

Look at that headline. It's awesome. She really nailed it.

Whitney reads the headline: "Reality Show Does Real Good". She presses play on the embedded video.

As she watches, Dougie looks over her shoulder, continuing to sniffle non-stop.

MONICA STERN (O.S.)

There's a new force revitalizing communities all over the tri-state area, and it's not your local government. It's a reality TV show.

Whitney covers her mouth, in shock.

WHITNEY

Oh my god! It's really happening!

DOUGIE

Right?

Dougie is now popping his jaw.

WHITNEY

Are you okay?

DOUGIE

Mhmm.

Asher approaches them.

WHITNEY

It's the news story, babe!

Asher comes around behind Whitney.

DOUGIE

(point to phone)

This is great. The 'doing good'
thing is resonating. The networks
are going to shit their pants.

Dougie gets lost in thought.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

Maybe this is what the culture
wants right now. Not shock. Good.

Dougie abruptly snatches his phone back in the middle of them watching.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

Alright we need... we need more
shots of you two helping people. In
the community. For what we show the
network.

WHITNEY

Can we see, we weren't done
watching.

DOUGIE

Yeah, yeah. Sorry.

He hands his phone back, sniffles some more, then walks away.

Asher and Whitney share a perplexed look, holding back laughter, "What was that?"

MONTAGE WITH MUSIC (All these scenes are being filmed for the Fliplandthropy pilot):

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Asher and Whitney are chatting with two GROCERY STORE EMPLOYEES. Asher is pointing to the awning, giving advice. They nod in agreement. Whitney picks up some fruit and asks about it.

A small crew is filming all this, with Dougie directing them.

EXT. PARK - DAY

A crew films as Asher and Whitney use a Chuckit to launch a tennis ball. Tucker runs full speed to get it.

Asher puts his arm around Whitney, being playful. It's awkward, feels very staged.

EXT. FIRE STATION - DAY

The crew is filming Whitney and Asher with a group of FIRE FIGHTERS, out front of the station. She is holding Tucker on a leash. The mood is fun, playful. One of the Fire Fighters is petting Tucker, play wrestling with him.

INT. FIRE STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Whitney slides down the pole, quickly, landing in the arms of a strapping young FIRE FIGHTER. He stumbles, almost dropping her. They both share laugh about this blunder.

Whitney jokingly feels the fire fighter's bicep, making him flex.

Asher is next to the crew watching all this. He is not laughing.

MONTAGE ENDS.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Dougie and Remi are grab some b-roll shots in a run down part of town.

DOUGIE
 (To Remi)
 Get some of those shitty houses.

Remi walks to get the shot, followed by a SOUND GUY.

Dougie scans the surroundings and spots an HOMELESS WOMAN (60's) sitting outside of a tent next to a cart filled with her belongings. There is a GIANT MURAL on the wall behind her, depicting several hands holding up planet Earth.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)
 Actually, hold up.

Remi stops.

Dougie approaches a production van parked nearby and opens the door.

Inside, Asher and Whitney sit beside each other on their phones.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)
 Asher.

He signals Asher to come with him. Asher gets out of the van.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)
 (pointing)
 Give that woman some money, we'll film it from here.

ASHER
 Ok.

Asher starts jogging towards the woman.

DOUGIE
 Make it look off the cuff.

ASHER
 Right.

Remi pops the camera onto his shoulder. Sound gets his equipment powered and ready.

DOUGIE
 (to sound)
 Let's tail slate.

Asher, now in position at the top sidewalk 20 feet back from the homeless woman.

He opens up his wallet to check that he has cash. Inside is a single \$100 BILL.

Asher hesitates.

Dougie holds up his thumb.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

Go!

Asher looks unsure, like he wants to say something.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

Go Asher!

Asher puts his wallet back in his pocket and starts walking down the sidewalk, acting as if he's just taking a stroll.

As he approaches the homeless woman he pretends to spot her for the first time. He reaches into his pocket, pulls out his wallet and hands the \$100.

The woman appears incredibly thankful. Asher touches her shoulder sympathetically and continues walking another 10 feet.

Dougie holds his thumb up again.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

Got it!

Asher returns the thumbs up as Dougie loads the crew into the van.

Asher runs back to the homeless woman.

ASHER

(to woman)

Hey sorry to bother you but we were just filming something for a little show and they wanted me to give you some money on camera. And I only had a hundred dollar bill in my wallet.

The woman appears confused.

ASHER (CONT'D)

I do want to give you money but it's a little more than I can afford right now. If you give it back to me I can run to the store to get some change so I can give you less.

The homeless woman just stares at him silently.

ASHER (CONT'D)
Sorry about that.

She keeps staring.

ASHER (CONT'D)
Do you speak English?

HOMELESS WOMAN
Yes.

ASHER
I promise I'll be right back.
There's a store down the block.

The woman starts mumbling to herself in a deep unintelligible voice as she unzips her pouch and removes the \$100 bill. The mumble then turns into several guttural burps as she hands it to him. This moment is creepy. Something isn't right.

Asher takes the bill.

ASHER (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

A music sting plays as the camera pushes in tight on the woman's face.

HOMELESS WOMAN
I curse you. I curse you.

The music drops out.

Asher laughs in disbelief.

ASHER
Okay...?

DOUGIE (O.S.)
Asher!

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Asher approaches the production van. Everyone is inside. He approaches Dougie, seated in the passenger seat with the window rolled down.

ASHER
Hey, can I just go to the store and grab something quick?

DOUGIE
No, we don't have time. The editor
is going to leave.

ASHER
Ah...

Asher looks down the block toward the woman.

DOUGIE
(cheesy)
Time equals money bay-bee!

In a move of coolness, Dougie raises his eyebrows triggering the sunglasses that were on his forehead to fall over his eyes. Asher chuckles at this gesture.

ASHER
Never mind, it's fine.

Asher gets in the van.

INT. PRODUCTION VAN - DAY

The van is driving. Dougie, in the front passenger seat, turns his head back to Whitney, Asher, and the rest of the crew.

DOUGIE
THAT... IS... A....

He is struggling with something in his lap. He reveals a bottle of champagne, and starts shaking it profusely.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)
... WRAP ON FLIPLANTHROPY!

He pops open the cork. Champagne sprays everywhere.

Everyone claps and cheers.

Whitney, covered in champagne but smiling, turns to Remi behind her.

WHITNEY
I think I took the brunt of that.
Is there any paper towel back
there?

Remi grabs some and hands it to her.

Meanwhile, Dougie messily pours the champagne into six plastic flutes and hands them out to Whitney, Asher, Remi and the sound guy.

DOUGIE

Seriously, thank you all, I know I can be pretty demanding. But you're all amazing.

He then offers a flute to the DRIVER, an 22-year-old production assistant.

DRIVER

I'm good.

DOUGIE

Come on, it's just one glass.

DRIVER

(nervous)

Ok.

The driver takes one sip, and continues driving with his free hand, holding the glass below the window, conscious it not be seen.

Asher raises up his glass.

ASHER

Let me say something. I want thank the crew! And Dougie, I thought you were a lunatic when you told us you were a reality show producer, but look at us now!

(beat)

To getting the show picked up!

Everyone takes a sip and clinks glasses.

Asher puts his arm around Whitney. They look up front to Dougie who has just finished chugging his glass and is pouring himself another.

WHITNEY

(playful)

Dougie!

Dougie looks back with a big smile. He downs his second glass in one swig and pours himself a third.

INT. DOUGIE'S PRODUCTION OFFICE - EDIT SUITE - DAY

FULL SCREEN: The opening credits sequence for Fliplanthropy show plays.

Whitney and Asher stand in front of a newly renovated house, in suits, planting a "FOR SALE" sign with their names on it into the ground.

WHITNEY (V.O.)

We're Whitney and Asher Gold, ex-realtors and current husband and wife.

The shot transitions to "present day" with the couple outside an older home, with HARDHATS and TOOL BELTS. Whitney kisses Asher on the cheek.

WHITNEY (V.O.)

For nearly two years we have been buying ugly, beat up, and sometimes nasty houses...

We see series of shots of Whitney and Asher in various homes, inspecting them, discovering mold, roaches and rats, them tearing down walls, etc.

WHITNEY (V.O.)

... and renovating them for a profit.

They walk into a fully renovated house, proud. Sound effect of money: "Cha-Ching!"

WHITNEY (V.O.)

But one thing we've noticed, is that these houses *aren't* always in the best neighborhoods.

Shots of low income neighborhoods - homeless people, drug paraphernalia on the ground, a police car with sirens zipping down the block.

Sound bite of Whitney in a house, waving away a smell.

WHITNEY

What stinks?

Back to B-roll of Whitney and Asher renovating homes.

WHITNEY (V.O.)

So now we have a new mission: for every home we flip, we're also flipping the community by bringing in business, culture, and fun.

Various shots pulled from the Kangoo Coffee opening. The big reveal with an over the top reaction from Marcus.

WHITNEY (V.O.)

We're helping out in a way no one has done before - turning these rough places, into dream spaces. And putting smiles on *everyone's* faces.

More B-roll to match VO.

The sequence ends with a final shot of Whitney and Asher standing back-to-back, arms crossed, posing for camera in front of a renovated home.

WHITNEY AND ASHER

This... is Fliplanthropy.

INT. DOUGIE'S PRODUCTION OFFICE - EDIT SUITE - CONTINUOUS

The video we just saw is playing on a monitor in an edit suite. Dougie, Whitney and Asher all stand watching it over the shoulder of an editor, SVEN, 40's.

ASHER

Wow, great job. That's awesome.

DOUGIE

The graphics are terrible.

ASHER

Hmm. Yeah.

SVEN

It's just a mock up.

DOUGIE

I'm showing it to HGTV on Friday. The graphics need to be in better shape. Here, let me give you a reference...

Dougie leans into Sven's computer and pulls up Google on a web browser.

WHITNEY

Shouldn't we put in some of the community footage from today? It would really help convey what we are trying to do, I think.

Dougie stops his search.

DOUGIE

(to Sven)

Yes. Where is that?

SVEN

The assists are putting it on a drive. I'll have it momentarily.

Dougie goes back to his Google search.

DOUGIE

(to Sven)

Here, look at this for the graphics.

He pulls up a Jezebel article titled "Is 'Gay Traders' the Most Offensive Show Ever Made?"

He presses play on a VIDEO embedded in the article.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

The main graphics are at the end but...

IN THE WEB BROWSER: The video plays.

It's the opening sequence of a reality TV show. (For tonal reference, see this link. It actually was a real show: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYW3He_1JdU)

The clip begins with shots of three gay men, each in a different location: GAY MAN 1 is dancing/grinding up against a pole in a nightclub. GAY MAN 2 is applying mascara in a mirror. GAY MAN 3 is making out with a another man.

The shots are accompanied by voice over:

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Three of the gayest men in America face the toughest challenge of their lives.

The footage transitions with a flashy graphic to the three men, standing together in stylish suits, looking up at a massive skyscraper in New York City.

This video continues in the background as Dougie points out the graphical elements in it to Sven.

DOUGIE

You see that transition? We used a lot of those swooshes.

SVEN

Okay.

On screen, we then see the trio flamboyantly walking down the hall of a financial firm.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

With no financial experience, the gay guys are thrown into the cutthroat world of Wall Street, and forced to trade their own life savings.

Shots of each "gay guy" at a trading desk, looking very intimidated by the flashing red and green stock prices on their screens.

GAY MAN 1

I don't even know what I'm looking at?!

GAY MAN 2

(whiny)

What do all these numbers mean??

Other TRADERS look at them, annoyed.

IN THE EDIT SUITE, Whitney is watching all this, looking concerned.

WHITNEY

(to Dougie)

Did you make this show?

DOUGIE

Yeah.

(to Sven)

You can jump ahead to the end. To the title graphics.

Sven clicks ahead in the video.

Shots of Wall Street traders on their computers, passing papers around the office, on the phone, watching CNBC.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Two completely opposite worlds
collide.

In another clip, Gay Man 3 turns on a VIBRATING DILDO and plops it on his keyboard.

GAY MAN 3
I'll just let this guy do the
trading for me.

The TRADER beside him reacts confused and offended.

ON DOUGIE:

DOUGIE
Ah, it's a bit further.

Sven clicks later on the video.

ON SCREEN:

It jumps to a shot of Gay Man 2 is talking to Gay Man 3 in the hallway.

GAY MAN 2
I know I should be trading right
now but I'm so f***ing horny.

Sven jumps further ahead.

ON SCREEN:

Gay Man 3 is at his desk.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Will the gay guys be able to make
more money then the *real* Wall
Street traders?

GAY MAN 3
My Revlon shares are going up!

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Or, will they end up broke?

Cut to Gay Man 1 at his desk, now covered with photos of gay icons (Judy Garland, Beyonce, Cher), pride flags, and a giant butt plug.

GAY MAN 1
Oh no! I'm losing all my money!

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Feminine men...

The three gay men are dancing in a circle, holding hands.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
...in a masculine world.

Several BRO TRADERS clink beers at a bar after work.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Will they have what it takes to
be... Gay Traders.

A GRAPHIC SWOOSH engulfs the shot and turns into a STOCK TICKER with different stock symbols and numbers whizzing by. The symbols then transition to spell out the show title: "GAY TRADERS".

DOUGIE
That right there.

Dougie pauses the video and goes back a little bit and hits play again.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)
You see how the letters turn into the title like that? I was thinking we could do something where a For Sale sign morphs into the show name?

An assistant, AMANDA, enters with a hard drive and drops it on Sven's desk.

AMANDA
Here's the stuff from today.

SVEN
Thank you.

Sven minimizes the video, hooks up the drive and starts going through the footage.

Whitney stares at the Jezebel headline again and looks at Asher, shocked.

SVEN (CONT'D)
Yeah we can do that. I was also thinking the for sale sign can turn into a tree. Kind of like bedrock of the community.

DOUGIE
Sure, try that.

WHITNEY
(to Dougie)
Wait, are we going to be associated
with that? "Most offensive show
ever made?"

DOUGIE
No, no. That was...
(thinks)
Here's the beauty about our show.
It's feel good, it's hopeful,
there's nothing to criticize about
it. With Gay Traders, in the back
of my head, sure, maybe I knew we
were having a little too much fun.
But with our show, it's not gonna
happen. It's immune.

WHITNEY
(to Asher)
Will you back me up here?

ASHER
(weak)
She's right. We don't want
controversy. We have a reputation.

Dougie snaps.

DOUGIE
Enough. This was my idea and it's a
huge opportunity for both of you.
I've spent over a hundred grand on
this thing, so if I were you I'd
shut up!

Asher and Whitney are stunned. Asher can't even make eye
contact with him.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)
Don't look at the floor, look at
me.

Asher looks at him.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)
Thank you.

SVEN
Got the footage up.

DOUGIE
(back to normal)
Great, play this one.

ON THE MONITOR, long lens footage plays of Asher talking to the homeless woman:

We hear the audio of the woman making wrenching sounds.

ASHER
Are you okay?

HOMELESS WOMAN
I curse you. I curse you.

Asher laughs in disbelief.

ASHER
Okay...?

BACK TO OFFICE, they're all watching:

ASHER (CONT'D)
It's before this.

WHITNEY
What did she just say?

ASHER
(laughing)
She said she cursed me.

WHITNEY
Why would she do that?

ASHER
I only had a hundred dollar bill so after we got the shot I asked for it back so I could get some change.

WHITNEY
So you gave her money and took it back?

WHITNEY (CONT'D)
How much did you end up giving her?

ASHER
Well, nothing, cause Dougie said we had to get back here.

WHITNEY
Why didn't you just give her the hundred?

ASHER

I... I don't... it's a lot.

WHITNEY

(pleading)

We're making a show about helping people! What are you thinking??

DOUGIE

(under his breath)

That's fucked up.

The tension in the room is sky high.

WHITNEY

Now we have some curse hovering over us.

ASHER

Oh Jesus Christ, come on. There's no curse. She's insane.

WHITNEY

Just cause she's homeless?

DOUGIE

She's a gypsy. They're all over that area.

ASHER

No, she was hispanic.

DOUGIE

Same thing.

ASHER

I don't think it's the same thing.

WHITNEY

It doesn't matter... even if you don't believe in curses you believe in Karma, right? We've talked about this?!

ASHER

(neutered)

Yes. I believe in it.

WHITNEY

You have to go back there and give her the money.

ASHER

Okay I will.

WHITNEY

Right now.

ASHER

Okay!

WHITNEY

And make sure the curse is lifted,
for fuck's sake.

She stares at him with contempt. He stares back, trying to match her, but failing.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Go!

EXT. SIDEWALK - EVENING

Asher pulls up in his Mercedes and parks on the block where they filmed him with the homeless woman.

He gets out and approaches the spot with the giant mural of planet Earth on the wall. He pauses, confused. There is no sign of her. Her tent and shopping cart are nowhere to be seen. It's as if she was never there.

He stands where she was set up and scans the area. He spots a couple other tents further down the way.

EXT. TENT AREA - EVENING

Asher approaches one of the tents. It's zipped shut, and filthy. He tries to knock on it, but his fist just pushes into the fabric without making a sound.

ASHER

Hello?

Asher wipes off his fist on his pants.

A HOMELESS MAN with no teeth unzips the tent and sticks his head out.

ASHER (CONT'D)

Hi, do you know where the woman is
who had her tent set up over there?

The homeless man, trembling, peers down the block then looks back at Asher.

He sticks his tongue out, moistening his lips so he can speak. He has a deep underbite and it looks like he's missing his jaw bones.

HOMELESS MAN

Yu know whut it feews like to have
a cwackhead foot up your ass?

Asher is horrified.

ASHER

Thank you, sorry.

He moves on to the next tent.

EXT. TENT - EVENING

A HOMELESS MOTHER unzips her tent and looks up at Asher. Next to her is a 3-year-old BOY. Asher leans forward.

ASHER

Hi, ah. Have you...

He locks eyes with the child, then looks back at the mom, uncomfortable.

ASHER (CONT'D)

Never mind. Sorry.

He walks away.

EXT. SIDEWALK - EVENING

Asher approaches his car. He scans the block one more time, then opens the door to get in.

He pauses, in thought.

After a beat, he slams the door shut and walks back.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

A hand unzips a tent door revealing Asher holding a \$100 bill.

ASHER

Here.

He hands the bill to the homeless mother who is overcome with joy. She is holding her child.

HOMELESS MOTHER
 God bless you.

INT. DOUGIE'S PRODUCTION OFFICE - VOICE OVER ROOM - NIGHT

Whitney is standing at a microphone in a soundproof booth, in the midst of recording voiceover.

WHITNEY
 (reading)
 ... Even though the kitchen was going to need a major overhaul, I knew we had to keep some of the lighting fixtures. Art deco is back in a serious way. And these are-- And these were-- Ahhhhhhh.

Dougie, capturing the audio with his laptop at a nearby desk, presses the intercom button.

DOUGIE
 Just do it again, it's fine.

WHITNEY
 I'm sorry. It's hard for me right now. The energy in here is all off.

Dougie pauses.

DOUGIE
 That was weird, huh? Asher?

Whitney doesn't respond, she is deep in thought. Dougie seizes the opportunity.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)
 He doesn't have what you have you know. It's almost like he has no core.
 (backtracking)
 Sorry I don't want to overstep. That was rude. I guess I'm just trying to say that on camera you have such a presence that it can overshadow him sometimes.

WHITNEY
 I don't know about that.

DOUGIE
 Don't get me wrong, you're both great. I love the dynamic.
 (MORE)

DOUGIE (CONT'D)
But if I'm being perfectly honest,
when I met you two I was like,
She's the star.

Whitney is unsure of how to take the compliment.

Asher cracks open the door and slips his head in.

ASHER
(whispering)
Okay to come in?

DOUGIE
There's my boy.

Whitney takes off her headphones and exits the booth.

WHITNEY
What did she say? Did you give her
the money?

ASHER
Yeah, yeah.

WHITNEY
And what did she say?

ASHER
She was happy.

WHITNEY
Did she say the curse was lifted?

ASHER
(laughs)
Yes, the "curse" is lifted.

WHITNEY
I want to know exactly what she
said. What did you do?

ASHER
I gave her the money, and then I
said, "Is the curse gone?" And she
said.... "Yes, it's gone."

Whitney breaths a huge sigh of relief.

WHITNEY
Thank God.

She starts laughing.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)
Okay. Okay, okay.

Whitney re-enters the booth and puts on her headphones. She does a couple deep cleansing breaths.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)
Ready?

DOUGIE
Ready.

WHITNEY
(reading)
Even though the kitchen was going to need a major overhaul, I knew we had to keep some of the lighting fixtures. Art deco is back in a serious way. And these puppies were right on trend...

As Whitney reads, the production audio fades out and the eerie, devotional music from the opening begins to play.

The camera slowly zooms in on Asher as he watches Whitney work.

As the camera settles, tight on his face, he is content. Not a care in the world.

He is also completely unaware of what he has set in motion.

CUT TO BLACK.