

Episode Three: Birthday

by

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Int. Sam's apartment

Music plays over Sam while he showers, gets dressed, and makes a phone call later in the evening. The person on the other end answers. His name is Dennis, a young African male.

DENNIS(V.O.)

Hello?

SAM

Hey, Dennis, it's Sam.

DENNIS(V.O.)

Oh, hey man! How's it going? You comin' to my party tonight?

SAM

Things are good- and yeah, I am-

DENNIS

Awesome, awesome- you bringing anything?

SAM

Umm, nothing special, beer I suppose? Assuming this is B.Y.O.B.

DENNIS(V.O.)

Yeah yeah yeah, it is. Hey, when you're at the liquor store, can you pick me up something?

SAM

Uh, yeah, sure.

DENNIS(V.O.)

A fifteen of Sapporo?

SAM

Uh... Yeah. Are you going to pay me back?

A beat.

DENNIS(V.O.)

... I can...

SAM

I'm just saying that's like, 30 dollars of beer. It's a little past the favor price range.

DENNIS(V.O.)  
Well how much is in the favor  
price range?

SAM  
I don't know man. Like ten bucks.

DENNIS(V.O.)  
Can you get me like, a four pack  
then?

SAM  
Yeah. Will do.

DENNIS(V.O.)  
Thanks man. So why'd you call?

SAM  
I was just seeing if you were  
still throwing the party.

DENNIS(V.O.)  
Well I mean it's obviously still  
on.

SAM  
I know. Well I know now. I didn't  
know when I called.

DENNIS(V.O.)  
Why would it be off?

SAM  
I was talking with Anne, and she  
said she couldn't make it, and  
neither can Trent. So I was just  
making sure.

DENNIS(V.O.)  
Oh..

SAM  
I mean that's just two people.  
It's not like I'm the only one  
going now, just... Not those two.

DENNIS(V.O.)  
Yeah. Right.

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM

Sam, just about finished and cleaned up for the party,  
tries to use some cologne. It squirts out a massive spool  
of cologne onto his neck.

SAM

Shit!

Sam starts to cough from the strength of the smell. Cut to Sam in the shower once again.

Sam, fresh shirt and no cologne, steps out of his door.

INT. DENNIS' APARTMENT

From the inside, the camera shows the inside of a door, strobe lights shooting across the surface, with really loud dance music playing. A muffled knock on the door, and a moment later, Sam is shown coming through. He looks puzzled.

The camera pans around, to show an entirely empty room, some food on the table, mainly unopened bags of chips.

Dennis, a young black male, enters the room from his kitchen.

DENNIS

Hey Sam! Nice to see you!

SAM

Hey.. How's it going?

DENNIS

Uh, not too good, not too good.

SAM

Am I early?

DENNIS

No.

SAM

Well it was starting at nine right?

DENNIS

Eight.

SAM

Oh, well...

DENNIS

D'you get my Sapporo?

SAM

Yeah, here it is.

DENNIS

Thanks man. I'll be right back, I just got some chicken wings in the oven.

SAM

Sure.

Dennis heads out of the room and leaves Sam, wandering around the living room, looking at Dennis's things.

He sits down on the couch, looking around, trying to keep occupied. He steps out into the hallway, and makes a phone call.

INT. HALLWAY

The line is picked up. Sam's friend is Kate.

KATE

Hello?

SAM

Hey Kate, it's Sam.

KATE

What's up?

SAM

What are you doing tonight?

KATE

New season of Orange is the New Black.

SAM

Do you know Dennis?

KATE

From work?

SAM

Yeah.

KATE

Sort of. I have him on Facebook.

SAM

Yeah, me too. Did he invite you to his party?

KATE

Oh, yeah, he did. I don't know if I want to go yet. He seems kind of... Intolerable. I can't do more than five minutes with the guy.

SAM

Well, anyways, I did go to his party. No one is here. I'm the only one. I feel bad.

KATE

Awh.

SAM

Awh for me or awh for him?

KATE

Awh for you. That's a nice thing to do.

SAM

Well I didn't do it out of kindness. I figured someone else might've shown up... But it's just the two of us. It's uncomfortable. He made lots of snacks.

KATE

Shit. It's his birthday too, you know.

SAM

What? How do you know that?

KATE

Facebook.

SAM

Please come.

KATE

You know that feeling when you see someone do something embarrassing, and you're not so much shaming them, but just feeling overwhelmingly relieved that you're not in their shoes?

SAM

Yeah.

KATE

Good luck, Sam.

Kate hangs up.

INT. DENNIS' APARTMENT

SAM walks back into Dennis' apartment. Dennis is sitting on his couch with the music off and the lights back to normal, eating straight from the pan of chicken wings large enough to feed a dozen people.

DENNIS

I thought you left.

SAM

No, I just had to make a call.

Dennis wipes his eyes.

SAM (CONT'D)

Hey, man, are you alright?

DENNIS

I'm fine.

SAM

I forgot to say... Happy birthday!

Dennis stands up and goes into the bathroom, sniffing.

Sam sits down and starts eating the chicken wings. Sam takes a deep breath, and cracks open a beer.

A cut to later in the evening. Sam started the music back up, and Dennis appears from the bathroom.

SAM (CONT'D)

Hey, you want to smoke some weed?

DENNIS

You bring any?

SAM

No, but, I saw you're large collection of bonges and maybe thought...

DENNIS

Well, I don't have any man. Ran out yesterday. But we could scrape the pipes, I guess.

Sam and Dennis use toothpicks, scraping the resin off of the insides of glass pipes, scraping off the findings into a small cup. They take a hit, and start eating some more chicken wings.

SAM

So, when did you start work with K.R.E.?

DENNIS

Couple weeks ago.

SAM

Yeah? How's... How's that going?

DENNIS

Not bad.

SAM

Right, right. Not good?

DENNIS

What did I say.

SAM

Okay! Okay. You got any kids?

DENNIS

Do you really think I got kids?

SAM

Nah, I'm kidding. Just kiddin' round.

DENNIS

Weird sense of humor.

SAM

You married?

DENNIS

Seriously?

SAM

Got a dog?

DENNIS

Where's my dog then?!

SAM

Hey, no need to get defensive. Just kidding man. I'm just making small talk.



DENNIS  
Why don't you ask some normal  
questions then, man?

SAM  
Do you like water?

DENNIS  
Well I need it to survive.

SAM  
Yeah, me too.

A pause.

DENNIS  
Fuck these girls, man.

SAM  
Huh?

DENNIS  
This city! Fucking sucks.

SAM  
Yeah, I mean, if you think so.

DENNIS  
I moved here, A year ago, right?  
Was from fuckin' South Africa.  
Thought I'd be moving up in the  
world, get my own apartment, you  
know, get a good job.

SAM  
Yeah.

DENNIS  
Figured, thirty times the  
population meant I'd get laid more  
often. Wouldn't even have to try.  
But it's so difficult! Jesus. The  
girls from work are so stuck up  
about it.

SAM  
Well, they just have a different  
mindset than the girls where  
you're from.

DENNIS  
No. Women are all the same, no  
matter where you are. All a man  
wants is to get his dick wet, and  
leave.

SAM

Hey, well, I don't know if I agree with that. I don't think like that, for me, I mean, I want a relationship, and I care about more than just sex.

DENNIS

Sorry, sorry. I meant to say that all black men want that. Can't vouch for white men. I try though, man, I listen, I follow what she's saying in conversations. But still, come the end of the night, I just get stood up.

Sam isn't sure what to say next.

DENNIS (CONT'D)

Nobody likes me here.

SAM

Hey.. That's not true.

DENNIS

You don't even know me. This is the longest we've ever talked.

SAM

Yeah, but, you shouldn't be so hard on yourself. If you were just as honest with women as you are right now, I'm sure that they'd appreciate that.

DENNIS

Yeah?

SAM

Yeah.

DENNIS

So I need to talk like a pussy to get pussy.

SAM

Jeeze. Well, yeah. Maybe. All I can say is that you can't fake it. You have to actually care, not pretend to care. Do or do not, there is no try.

DENNIS

That's some deep shit.

SAM  
Yoda.

DENNIS  
Huh?

SAM  
Nothing.

DENNIS  
So do you roll in pussy?

SAM  
Well, when you put it like that,  
no. But I do okay for myself.

DENNIS  
I thought you were gay, man.

SAM  
What?

DENNIS  
If you didn't just tell me that  
you were straight, I would have  
thought you were gay.

SAM  
Why do you think I would be gay?

DENNIS  
The way you're dressed. Also, all  
that pussy talk, you just sound  
like a pussy, is all I'm saying,  
you know?

SAM  
Dennis, that's really rude.

DENNIS  
"Dennis, that's rude!"

SAM  
What about you, man? You're  
wearing a white and yellow polo  
with khaki's.

DENNIS  
What's wrong with that?

SAM  
It's just... I don't know...  
Prissy.

DENNIS  
Prissy? What's prissy?

SAM  
I'm not sure.

DENNIS  
If I have to dress prissy to get  
pussy, so be it.

SAM  
You know, you use the word pussy  
too much. If you want to know why  
you're having trouble getting  
women here, know that no one likes  
being called a pussy.

DENNIS  
Pshh.

SAM  
I'm serious. It's just rude,  
putting down people all the time.

DENNIS  
You know Sam, I don't like  
apologizing for who I am. You  
don't become an alpha male by  
being polite. Sometimes you have  
to be aggressive and put yourself  
out there to get it. I do that. I  
don't act like a pussy, and if I  
have to say the word pussy to  
pussies, so be it!

SAM  
You know Dennis, that attitude is  
the reason no one came to your  
birthday.

Dennis goes quiet.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Hey, look, I'm sorry.

DENNIS  
For what?

SAM  
For saying what I said.

DENNIS  
But you meant it.

SAM

Yeah, but I could have phrased it a bit better.

DENNIS

You said what you meant. I get what you said. Your apology isn't needed. That's called being a man, Sam. Stick to your guns.

SAM

Okay, fine. I wish I could have phrased it in a less harsh way. But you're right- I'll stick to what I said. I think that you're having trouble making friends here, as well as sleeping with women, not because you're an alpha-male. It's because you're stubborn. And arrogant. Maybe if you let your guard down, women here might give you a shot, but you seem to deflect and attack people's personal boundaries when you're vulnerable. It's who you are, so it's not your fault. But it is your problem.

DENNIS

I grew up with sisters. Four of them. My dad, he didn't want any girls, so when I came along, he was happy. But growing up with sisters makes a man soft. I stayed with them too long, and my dad would beat me because of it. But I'm not a soft man. Not anymore. Say what you want, but winners are not soft. My dad taught me a lesson. I am here today because of that, and if you want me to change what's worked for me all these years, just so I can act more like you and get more soft girls... It's not worth it. What are you, huh? What makes you such a strong authority on how to behave? I'm not you, you're not me. You can't imagine what I had to go through to get here, so fuck me if I don't act like I was raised in a nice fucking house with parents who just told me what I wanted to hear.

SAM

HEY! This is what I'm talking about. And if we're going down this route, then we're going to have to stop being hypocrites. You don't know how I grew up. You have no idea what I've been through either. You have no right to say that I have pussy parents, because you've never met them, and you've only known me for a few weeks, so you can't even guess what I've been through to get to this same place as you.

DENNIS

But am I wrong to say you've had it easier than me?

SAM

Yes! You are! I'm not saying that I've been through worse, but what I'm saying is that it doesn't fucking matter. We are both here, standing in this apartment, shouting and defending a past that doesn't matter. This isn't a big dick contest. We don't have to prove anything to each other. But we should respect that... I don't know... We're not the same person.

DENNIS

Okay.

SAM

Okay.

DENNIS

You are not a pussy. But admit it- you were acting like one.

SAM

Okay. And you're not an asshole, but admit it- you were acting like an asshole.

DENNIS

Okay.

A pause.

DENNIS (CONT'D)

Well, fuck. Now what.

SAM  
I don't fuckin' know.

DENNIS  
You want to smoke more weed?

SAM  
Yeah.

A cut to Sam and Dennis, once again, scraping resin off of pipes.

They smoke, laugh, and finish off the chicken wings.