

Channel Surfed

By Jeff Carlson

A Tales of the Cul de Sac Play

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It is just another day of Parker sitting around watching TV in his sister's house. Ever since his girlfriend, Crystal, dumped him, he does nothing but this, and wears very little other than boxers (today they have hearts on them) and maybe a housecoat if it's cold. Morgan, his sister, who is putting him up and is getting just that little bit tired of it, walks in from work exhausted. She is stressed over a work project and tells Parker he needs to clean up because Crystal (his ex and also her business partner) is coming over to work on the project in this comedy about cable TV going wrong...

This doesn't sit well with Parker, as Crystal is the last person he wants to see, so he tells her so. Morgan gets mad because all he does is sit on her couch and watch TV. He points out that isn't the case, actually, as the cable hasn't been working. When she asks him why he hasn't called the cable company, (this did not occur to him) he says that he thought she would do it. This makes her even more mad. To smooth things over, he calls them. When he calls, he is told that they are trying out a new tech on their side and it will fix the signal and they are going to give them a few extra channels for the inconvenience. So he gives the go ahead. Who wouldn't want a few extra channels for free? But there's a catch. Soon Parker learns that whatever channel he is on makes the rest of the people in the house act in that way (Telenovela, DIY show, gameshow, film noir, etc) When the door to the outside is opened or a window all that is seen is static and they can't escape! When he calls the number back it is disconnected. How do they get back to normal now?

Parker - Mid twenties to early thirties Male who just sits around in his boxers watching TV all day. Ever since his ex Crystal broke it off with him he has had no direction. Not that he had any before which is why she left.

Morgan - Parker's slightly older sister. She is successful and has plenty of drive but is stuck in a job that she hates just because it's a good job. Wants to see Parker succeed and is at her wits end. Close to kicking him out.

Crystal - Parker's ex girlfriend. She is hungry to move up the ladder at her company. She is funny and sharp and it is hard to see why she stayed with Parker so long waiting for him to get his act together. She still loves him but she needs more.

Darren - Morgan's husband. Normally fun loving and sides with Parker more than he would like. The stress that Morgan is feeling with work has put a strain on their relationship but they keep it secret from Parker.

April - She is the next door neighbor. Parker finds her attractive but she is stuck up and wouldn't give him the time of day. Just started dating a manly man Trevor before they moved in next door.

Trevor - A manly man

Act 1

(Curtain opens on a living room. Stage left there is a front door with a coat rack nearby. Down Stage right there is a door to the kitchen. Upstage right there is a Hallway towards the bedroom. Upstage left there is a staircase and window with nice drawn drapes. Center stage there is a couch on a rug with a coffee table in front of it. Players will act as though the fourth wall has a tv on it. Upstage center between the stairs and the hallway is a small table with a phone on it. Parker enters with a bag of chips. He is wearing a housecoat that is not tied and in boxer shorts with hearts on them and a t-shirt. He is audibly scattting to himself. He finds his way to the couch and flops into it and grabs the remote. He tries to change the channel but is not pleased with something on the screen. With a mouthful of chips, he starts smacking the remote)

Parker:

Come on!! What kind of picture is that!?! (He swallows the chips and is upset) I've been messing with this stuff all day. Lines down the screen. Boxes going across the middle. And everything wobbles. I've never seen anything like this. (He gets up and starts examining where the tv would be. Morgan enters from the front door in business clothes and looking completely exhausted but still determined.)

Morgan:

(Hangs up her purse and kind of collapses on the door for a second before gathering the energy to get up and start walking slowly toward the kitchen and making small talk) Hi Parker. Anything happen today while I was working myself into an early grave?

Parker:

Nope. The usual. I just sat around here and kept the couch from becoming sentient and leaving.

Morgan:

(Stops when she hears this and day dreams about it for a second) I had a feeling that might be the answer.

Parker:

OH actually...

Morgan:

(Stops short of the kitchen and turns slowly to cringe over whatever is about to be told to her) This had better be good news. I don't know if I am mentally prepared for bad news at the moment. What kind of news is it?

Parker:

Well, I guess it is bad but it has a happy ending

Morgan:

Be a good brother and just tell me quick. Rip it off like a bandaid.

Parker:

Ok, so this morning the neighbor... well the crazy one. Not the one we like. Well, I honestly don't know how you personally feel about them but I always just kind of lump them together.

Morgan:

Please get on with it.

Parker:

Sure. So I'm watching a gameshow and I keep hearing this thump sound. Kind of like a hammer hitting the outside of the house. I think nothing of it for the first 10 or 15 times but I finally got up to check it out. I go around the side of the house and I see Trevor mowing his lawn waaaay too short

Morgan:

Stick to the important details please.

Parker:

This is extremely important.

Morgan:

The way he likes to scalp his lawn is important?

Parker:

YES!

Morgan:

How?

Parker:

Because his lawn is rocky in parts and his mower was flinging rocks in all directions.

Morgan:

Oh my gosh is everyone ok?

Parker:

Of course, it only hit one thing

Morgan:

Then that is not in all directions. That is just one direction.

Parker:
Well the one thing it kept hitting was your house!

Morgan:
What? He hit my house?

Parker:
Repeatedly! That's what the knocking sound was. It was rocks busting holes right through your siding!

Morgan:
Did you stop him?

Parker:
Well, he had just finished by the time I got out there, but I let him have a piece of my mind

Morgan:
You said something to him?(Shocked and she comes closer) You did?

Parker:
Of course. I said (Points his finger as if he is scolding and invisible person) "Hey! Watch it."

Morgan:
(There is a pause before she speaks up) Is that all? What happened next?

Parker:
I came back inside.

Morgan:
That's it? Where was the happy ending?!

Parker:
Oh yeah, I almost forgot...

Morgan:
Thank goodness. I thought something good wasn't going to come

Parker:
Yeah, the good news is that April, Trevor's girlfriend, was checking me out the whole time. I think she was undressing me with her eyes. And you know she is super attractive and I've had a thing for her since grade school. So, that was cool.

Morgan:

I'm so very happy that my house's value going down due to holes could contribute to your bizarre little boy fantasy in some small way. Now if you'll excuse me I'm going into the kitchen to scream into a loaf of bread and get something to drink. (She turns to go into the kitchen)

Parker:

Oh hey. The TV is acting up. (Morgan stops in her tracks and groans) You know what Morgan, I'll talk to you about it in a bit.

Morgan:

(Said through grinding teeth) How incredibly thoughtful of you Parker. (She exits)

Parker:

(Goes back to checking out the tv. Acts like he smacks the side of it but there is no change) Well that didn't do it. Um. Well I am out of ideas

Darren:

(Enters from front door and hangs up coat) Hey Parker. What's the news?

Parker:

The news is bad kimosabe.

Darren:

Uh oh. Is your sister trying to get you to move out again?

Parker:

No, nothing like that.

Darren:

What's going on with the TV?

Parker:

That's the bad news. It is doing... well... exactly what you are seeing. Lines up and boxes.

Darren:

And do I detect a wobble? (Dips head down to look horizontal)

Parker:

Yes. It is definitely a wobble. (Dips head down too)

Darren:

Is it the actual tv or something else? What have you tried?

Parker:

I turned it off and on again. Oh, and I gave it a little slap. You know, all the technical stuff.

Darren:

Yeah, you hit all the bases but have you tried to adjust the cable?

Parker:

That is a good idea.

Darren:

I have your back. But, as it came up casually in conversation and totally not being shoehorned into the conversation, are you any closer to being back on your feet?

Parker:

I have got a lot of irons in the fire. I'm just waiting for the right time to jump on them.

Darren:

I don't think I would jump on irons in a fire. Sounds dangerous.

Parker:

I meant jumping at one of the opportunities. I'll do it when the time is right.

Darren:

Sure thing. (Starts toward the kitchen) Oh, out of curiosity, where is my wife right now?

Parker:

She is in the kitchen screaming into random groceries or so I've been told.

Darren:

I think I'll just go upstairs and change (Exits upstairs)

Parker:

Check the cable, huh? (Mimes getting behind the tv and removing the cable) Well, would you look at that. Picture is as clear as glass when the cable is out. So, it is not the TV that is the problem, it is just the cable. (Hooks the pretend cable back up) And back to lines, boxes, and wobbles. (Sigh)

Morgan:

(Enters from the kitchen) Hey Parker, during my screaming episode I realized I forgot to mention something when I came in.

Parker:

Well I am all ears. What is on your mind?

Morgan:

How should I put this? (Thinks for a moment) I need you to put pants on.

Parker:

Oh. Well, that is a tall order. I'll have to meditate on that one...

Morgan:

Parker.

Parker:

Morgan (Mocking)

Morgan:

Look, I am behind on my project at work and I have to get a huge chunk of it done tonight. I need you to put pants on and let me have the living room for the evening.

Parker:

The living room? Why do you need the entire living room?

Morgan:

Tomorrow I have a presentation to do and I need the space to kind of act it out. This is the largest work area in the house.

Parker:

So you are just going to be walking around in the living room by yourself acting out a presentation? That's why I have to put on pants?

Morgan:

No, Crystal will be here helping me iron out the details.

Parker:

My ex is going to be over here? Wonderful. (Sarcastic)

Morgan:

Yes, for the millionth time, I am aware that Crystal is your "ex" from 2 years ago but she is still my partner and assistant at work.

Parker:

I don't think she should be here.

Morgan:

Thank you for your input but she has already been invited.

Parker:

You didn't think that maybe you should run that by me first?

Morgan:

No, because this is my house. You are just staying here until you are back on your feet. Speaking of that, did you interview for any jobs today? And don't give me the line "a lot of irons in the fire."

Parker:

I did have one earlier but due to my disability I had to pass

Morgan:

Oh your... oh what was it again? Inter-something

Parker:

Intermittent Color Blindness

Morgan:

But that doesn't bother you while watching tv?

Parker:

I push through. Speaking of the TV though, I figured out the problem with the TV

Morgan:

Well, I'm relieved. What would I do if YOU couldn't watch TV.

Parker:

Right. Well it is not the TV. It looks like it is a problem with the cable. You may want to call the cable company up and report it.

Morgan:

How long has it been doing this?

Parker:

All day. It's been a nightmare. Luckily, Darren came home and helped me figure out that it was just the cable.

Morgan:

Darren is home?

Parker:

Yeah, he is upstairs changing.

Morgan:

Ok. So make yourself useful and call the cable company. You live here too for the time being. I'm going to go see about my husband. (Starts walking toward the stairs)

Parker:

But I don't

Morgan:

Their number is on the phone list by the house phone

Parker:

But if...

Morgan:

Just say you are Darren and they won't ask you anymore questions. He is on the account.

Parker:

But my...

Morgan:

They are not going to care that you don't sound the same as Darren. They don't memorize people's voices. And please get some pants on. (Exits)

Parker:

(Talking himself up to get courage just to make a call) Ok. You can make a simple call. Yeah.

Morgan:

(From upstairs) You better call now or the office may close soon. They have all day support but that doesn't mean all day repairmen if they need to come out.

Parker:

I got it! I got this. (Picks up phone and checks list and dials. There is a ring sound and then a muffled voice and Parker immediately hangs up.) What am I doing? It's not like I'm asking the person out that answers the phone. AAAAAAhhh. Landline phones always make me feel like I'm a nervous kid. Breathe. (Picks up phone, dials, muffled voice answers Parker speaks in lower voice) Hello, my name is Darren and my cable is acting all freaky deaky. (Says "freaky deaky" strangely higher pitched. Covers up mouthpiece) What am I saying? Freaky deaky? Why did I

say it all high like that? (Uncovers mouthpiece) Yes, I'm still here. No, I have not checked the mail today. Uh huh. So you've been sending out information about this for a month. Uh huh. Testing out a new signal type. Uh huh. Need a new remote to complete the installation. So, you have a delivery notification on that today? So it is sitting in the mailbox right now. Well, I know that you "say" you've informed us but we have not received any word until now. Oh, you're going to include a few new channels temporarily for the trouble. Well I guess that is nice. No, I think that is it. If I have any issue I'll call back. Thanks! (Hangs up) So weird. No hold and helped right away.... That just feels wrong. Well, I guess I'm gonna check the mail for a new remote. (Starts heading for the front door) And who says I don't contribute to the home. (Opens the door and Crystal is standing there about to knock with a few presentation pieces in her hands) Crystal! Hi. Hello...

Crystal:

Oh, hi Parker. I'm here to work on a presentation with Morgan.

Parker:

(A little beside himself cause he still cares for Crystal but, although nervous, she appears to be mostly over Parker) Uh yeah I heard. You really seem to be climbing that corporate ladder over at Pluridon & Associates Marketing. That's... that's just great. That company grows so fast. I feel like it's going to run the world someday.

Crystal:

Yeah. I know I'm kind of early but it's probably safe for me to come in, right?

Parker:

Yes! Of course (Ushers her into the house) My sister's casa is your casa or something. I don't really speak spanish much to the chagrin of my highschool teacher.

Crystal:

That is shocking considering how much telenovela you watched while we were together.

Parker:

That is less about knowing the words and more about (overdramatically) *feeling* the words, if you understand what I'm saying.

Crystal:

(Putting her presentation pieces down) Yes, I understand. I understand you wanted to see the emotion from them.... You wanted to see the before and after of home improvement shows but never own a hammer. You wanted to watch the person get the big prize on the quiz show but not try and answer the questions...

Parker:

That's not entirely true. I answered a whole category correctly watching that show once and everyone was floored.

Crystal:

The category was TV and the episode was a rerun that you had seen earlier that day.

Parker:

You didn't know that at the time though so it seemed impressive

Crystal:

You are right. You *seemed* impressive once.

Parker:

Ouch.

Crystal:

You know, maybe I'll just wait for Morgan in the kitchen and set up the presentation so far.

Parker:

You got started without her?

Crystal:

Always trying to get a head start. Helps when you are trying to, as you said it, "climb the corporate ladder."

Parker:

And Morgan is ok with that?

Crystal:

It takes some of the stress off her. Sometimes people like other people to show initiative. You know, contribute. (Clearly a dig at Parker)

Parker:

Well I'll have you know I contribute a lot around here.

Crystal:

Is that so? That sounds exciting. What have you been doing to keep the home running like clockwork.

Parker:

(Eyeballs the "tv") Repair mostly. I make some needed calls.

Crystal:

Sounds exhausting. Is that why you stay in what you sleep in all day? Too tired to dress?

Parker:

Comfort is part of being productive. Also, all my pants are in the wash.

Crystal:

You are doing laundry now? (Actually shocked)

Parker:

Let me rephrase, all my pants need washed.

Crystal:

Same old Parker. (Picks up stuff and heads toward Kitchen) Just tell Morgan I'm in the kitchen. I can't waste time with you right now. (Exits to Kitchen)

Parker:

A waste of time. (Disappointed in self) Yeah, sounds about right. (There is a knock on the door.) Must be more work colleagues. Why can't this just be like a sitcom and they walk right in. (Walks to door and opens it. April is standing there looking unhappy and holding a remote control.) April! Howdy neighbor! (Closes up housecoat a bit)

April:

Hiii. I'm sorry I forgot your name....

Parker:

It's Parker. We went to school together.

April:

Maybe that is why you looked familiar.

Parker:

Probably. Do you want to come in?

April:

Uh sure I guess. (Walks inside and Parker shuts the door)

Parker:

Are you here about the mower?

April:

No, my boyfriend mows the lawn

Parker:
Yeah, I know that.

April:
Then why would I want your mower?

Parker:
I don't think you understand...

April:
If you are asking to mow our lawn we aren't going to pay for that

Parker:
Let's just forget I mentioned anything. What do I owe the pleasure of your company?

April:
What?

Parker:
What brings you over here?

April:
Oh. We got your remote in the mail. Trevor accidentally opened it. We almost threw it away because we use voice activation for our tv. We have a smart house (Hands it to him)

Parker:
Good to know something is.

April:
Huh?

Parker:
Nothing. You know, I was actually about to go looking for this. Thanks for bringing it to us.

April:
You're welcome. Why did you send it to us anyway?

Parker:
I didn't send it to you. It was sent to me.

April:

You sent it to yourself?

Parker:

What? No, the cable company.... You know what? Nevermind. Thanks again. (There is a knock at the door again.) Will you excuse me while I answer this? (Opens the door and Trevor is there. He is a muscle bound jock.) Trevor! (Closes house coat even more)

Trevor:

Where is April? (Barges in)

Parker:

She is right here. Help yourself.

April:

Hey babe.

Trevor:

What the heck are you doing in here?

April:

Peter asked me to come in.

Parker:

Wait, I think that came out wrong...

Trevor:

Peter, what are you trying to do with my girl Bro?

Parker:

(Cowering now) It... It's Parker

Trevor:

Like that bug guy?

Parker:

No. Just Parker and I was just being polite.

Trevor:

Polite?

Parker:

It's not what it looks like.

Trevor:
It looks like you are dressed to film a dirty movie.

Parker:
(Nervous laugh) She just came over to bring my remote.

Trevor:
Really April?!

April:
Yeah, I was trying to be nice or something.

Trevor:
It's time to go. Now.

April:
Ok. Let's go then. I'm bored. (Exits)

Trevor:
Peace

Parker:
(Suddenly trying to have a backbone) Hey, what are we gonna do about the holes your mower put in the siding of my sister's house?

Trevor:
Do I look like a handy man to you? Fix your own junk house

Parker:
It was your fault. I could take you to court!

Trevor:
Do that and the only way somebody will be able to talk to you is with a ouija board.

Parker:
Luckily I have one of those handy.

Trevor:
You would. Freak. (Exits)

Parker:

That was a stupid comeback. (Morgan comes down the stairs wiping her eyes but trying to hide it) Hi there.

Morgan:
Who was at the door?

Parker:
Which time?? Well, if you must know, Crystal gave me the cold shoulder and then went in the kitchen. April and Trevor from next door came over to deliver our new remote and to threaten my life. So, that was fun.

Morgan:
New remote?

Parker:
You don't care that they threatened my life?

Morgan:
Who hasn't. I thought that was just how we were supposed to interact with you.

Parker:
Whatever. The new remote was sent by the cable company to interact with the cable box. I guess the cable company is broadcasting in a new type of signal so the cable box got a firmware update and we have to use a new remote to finish the update.

Morgan
I'm sure that made some sort of sense but I'm just too exhausted to care. Does it work?

Parker:
Haven't tried yet but as a bonus for the inconvenience they are giving us some additional channels.

Morgan:
That means next to nothing to me since I'm too busy to bother with TV anyway.

Parker:
Just be happy that I took care of it. I contributed.

Morgan:
Oh yeah. What would I do without you to fix the tv I don't watch.

Parker:

Oh go do your work already.

Morgan:

That is what I'm best at I guess. (Sighs) Into the world of Marketing for Pluridon and Associates!
(Exits to kitchen)

Parker:

(Sighs) And into the Wide Wide World of Cable Television. (Presses a button on the remote facing toward the "tv". Acts as if he is reading) Thank you for updating your firmware. Please select OK to install permanently. (Shocked) Permanently? Awkward wording but ok. (Presses button and there is the loud sound of a modem that transitions to the sound of a train. Parker holds his ears until stopped.) They could have at least warned about that sound. Ow. BUT... (Looks admiringly at the TV) that picture quality just went from ok to OOOOOOKAY!! That is stupid good resolution. Time for a test run on this bad boy. (Sits on couch) How about a little telenovela action right now? Let's check in on Juan and Carlita on Dinastía de la Pasión.

(The following interactions from any characters except Parker will be in Spanish. They will be written in Spanish and followed by the english translation in italics)

Darren:

(Enters from the stairs. He is wearing a button down black shirt that is only buttoned halfway up.

He is over exaggerated in all of his acting. Everything is done full of emotion.)

No sé si puedo soportar esto más. Las mentiras. el engaño ¿Cómo le digo cómo me siento realmente?

I don't know if I can take this anymore. The lies. The deceit. How do I tell her how I really feel?

Parker:

Hey Darren. Can you keep it down a little? I'm trying to see how Juan is going to break some serious news to Carlita.

Darren:

(Walks to the couch where Parker sits and plays off of him)

¿Cómo puedes sentarte allí sabiendo que estás abriendo una brecha entre el amor de mi matrimonio?

How can you just sit there knowing that you are driving a wedge between the love in my marriage?

Parker:

Is everything ok with you Darren? (Hasn't even taken his eyes of the tv) You seem really intense right now.

Darren:

Así es Parker. Ni siquiera me mires a los ojos mientras rompes mi corazón en dos pedazos. He estado de tu lado durante tanto tiempo, pero tal vez me equivoqué al hacerlo. Elegí incorrectamente.

That's right. Do not even look me in the eye while you break my heart into two pieces. I've been on your side for so long but perhaps I was wrong to do so. I chose incorrectly.

Parker:

Really man, I would love to chat but this scene is just getting good. Nice talking to you. Have a seat if you want to watch too. (Suddenly Morgan busts into the room from the kitchen wearing a traditional looking spanish dress)

Morgan:

Mi amor. He estado buscándote por todas partes. Desde que compartiste tus sentimientos conmigo, he estado muriendo por dentro tratando de descubrir cómo sanar este vacío que se ha producido entre nosotros.

My love. I've been searching high and low for you. Ever since you shared your feelings with me I have been dying inside trying to figure out how to heal this void that has come between us.

Darren:

No estoy seguro de que haya algo que se pueda hacer. Nos hemos convertido en personas diferentes. Una vez fuimos dos velas que se convirtieron en una sola llama. Tengo miedo de que el fuego se apague. Quiero hacer que esto funcione, pero ¿qué estás dispuesto a hacer?
I'm not sure there is anything that can be done. We have become different people. Once we were two candles that became one flame. I am afraid that the fire may get extinguished. I want to make this work but what are you willing to do?

Parker:

Hey Sis, do you still need me to leave the living room?

Morgan:

¡Lo que me pides que haga no sé si puedo hacerlo!
What you are asking me to do I don't know if I can do!

Darren:

Hubo un tiempo en que harías cualquier cosa por mí.
There was a time you would do anything for me.

Parker:

Sis, did you hear me? Oh and do we have any popcorn. I like to snack while I try to figure out what is being said.

Morgan:

Puedo cambiar. Sé que no es demasiado tarde.
I can change. I know it is not too late.

Parker:
(Finally starting to realize something is going on) Since when do you two speak spanish?

Darren:
Puede ser que el barco haya zarpado mi amor.
It may just be that the ship has sailed my love.

Parker:
Did you guys learn spanish just so you could talk about me and I wouldn't understand? (Stands up to finally interact with Darren and Morgan)

Morgan:
¿Todo esto es por mi hermano? Podemos resolverlo.
Is this all because of my brother? We can figure it out.

Parker:
I didn't get any of that and I was actually listening too. Ms. Georgina from highschool would be so upset.

Darren:
¿Cuándo verás que esto no se trata de él? Esta es tu felicidad de la que estamos hablando.
When will you see this isn't about him. This is your happiness we are talking about.

Parker:
Ok. You guys can cut it out now. The joke is burned out.

Morgan:
¡Todo lo que siempre me ha importado es usted!
All I have ever cared about is you!

Darren:
¡Siempre me quedé en segundo plano con respecto a otra cosa!
I always took a backseat to something else!

Parker:
Are you guys just giving me a hard time for watching Telenovela?

Morgan:
(Turns away and bites her knuckle) ¿Qué quieres decir?

What do you mean?

Darren:

Quiero decir, ¡hay otro! (There is a short musical flare)
I mean, there is another!

Parker:

If you wanted me to change the channel there are easier ways of doing it. You could have just asked. (Aims remote at "tv" and presses a button) How about a hospital show?

Morgan:

(To Parker but not calling him by his name) Are you feeling ok?

Parker:

Oh good. The joke is done. Can I keep watching tv or are you still trying to run me off?

Morgan:

(Puts hand to forehead) You are feeling awfully warm.

Darren:

(Puts two fingers on Parkers neck) Pulse is weak. Sir, are you ok? Can you hear me?

Parker:

Guys I'm fine. I'm just getting confused.

Morgan:

Confused?!

Darren:

You know what that means.

Parker:

That you two are acting psychotic?

Morgan:

He can't be suffering from that. It is extremely rare and he would have had to come in contact...

Darren:

With a carrier. Yes. But there is hope.

Parker:

Guys you can cut this out...

Morgan:
You should lay down to conserve energy. (Pushes Parker so that he falls over the arm of the couch and onto his back)

Darren:
I'll strap him in.

Parker:
Strap me in? What is going on here?

Morgan:
Everything is going to be ok Mr. DeSanchez

Parker:
Who is Mr. DeSanchez??

Darren:
We are losing him fast. We have to get him into the OR.

Morgan:
I'll get the Doc to scrub in.

Parker:
Ok. For real this isn't funny guys. You are freaking me out.

Morgan:
Doctor!! We need you stat!

Parker:
No we don't. I'm fine. I promise

Darren:
We don't have this time to waste!

Crystal:
(Enters with latex gloves on and hands faced upward) Ok people what have we got.

Darren:
Fever. Pulse weak. Confused.

Crystal:

You don't think?!

Morgan:
We do.

Crystal:
Sweet Mama Jama. We don't have time to waste.

Parker:
Can we talk about this?!

Darren:
But what if we are wrong!!?

Parker:
Yeah! What he said! Maybe you should just let me up?

Crystal:
We don't have the luxury to be able to wait for the tests to prove it.

Parker:
Are you ALL in on this joke?

Morgan:
Your situation is no laughing matter Mr. DeSanchez

Crystal:
Get my tools to cut. We don't have time for anesthetic.

Parker:
There is always time for that. Fine! I won't watch medical dramas anymore either! (Points remote to the tv) I'll just stick to the news (Presses button and immediately Crystal, Morgan, and Darren stop what they are doing. Crystal and Morgan slowly transition to sitting on the couch as they lightly chuckle to themselves. Parker attempts to stay out of their way by getting up from the couch and trying to keep a little distance. Darren moves to upstage right and stands silently)
There! Are you happy? What is happening??

Morgan:
(Talking directly toward the audience as if they were a camera and this was a daytime news program) Good morning all you folks out there. Glad you could join us today on

Morgan and Crystal:

Get-Crackin' in the Cul de Sac

Parker:
Are you guys doing a bit?

Morgan:
I'm Morgan Dolittle

Crystal:
And I'm Crystal Dungaree

Parker:
Those aren't your last names (Morgan and Crystal chuckle)

Crystal:
And you all know that was the voice of our "Man in the Field" Parker G. Gutenberg

Parker:
Not my last name or middle initial.

Crystal:
What a cut up he is, eh Morgan?

Morgan:
Sometimes I wish I could "cut" him out! (They laugh)

Parker:
That wasn't even remotely funny. What is happening with everyone?

Crystal:
And we are also here with our "Mr. Predictor." Our weatherman Darren "Fluffles" Harbinger!

Parker:
Fluffles sounds like the name of a guinea pig!

Morgan:
How are you today Darren?

Darren:
Just great. Just can't wait to get into this weather for the next few days. Looks like there could be a light snowfall. Back to you.

Morgan:

Well, we will get back to you on that. In the meantime, let's get going with our lead story for the morning.

Crystal:

Yeah, this is a bizarre one. A local man is left very confused when he finds out that the people around him are being controlled by the channel he is watching on his TV. Isn't that wild Morgan.

Parker:

Wait, what? Say that again.

Morgan:

Did you say controlling people with tv channels?

Crystal:

I sure did and it is leading to confusion, tantrums, and a loss for words.

Morgan:

Well, if I were him I know what I'd be watching!

Parker:

No, wait. Repeat all that. Are you talking about me? Do you know what is happening? What do you mean controlled?

Crystal:

And what would you watch Morgan?

Parker:

This isn't funny. What is going on?

Morgan:

The lottery! (The two ladies laugh) I know. I'm bad. (Chuckle) Give me dat money! We'll have more on this story as it develops.

Parker:

Come on! Give me more information now! This is the news!

Crystal:

Parker!

Parker:

Yes. Talk to me. What is happening? Do you hear what I'm saying? Can you speak to me?

Crystal:
How are you doing out in the field today?

Parker:
Please just answer me. Just a nod or something.

Morgan:
This brings us to our story in the field. Parker is on location where authorities say there is a massive shoot out occurring right now.

Parker:
A shoot out? (Suddenly there are gun shot sound effects as Parker hits the deck)

Crystal:
Parker, can you describe the scene there? (Gun shots continue)

Crystal:
Sounds like we are having some technical difficulties with our man in the field. We'll have to come back to it.

Morgan:
But now it is on to Darren with the weather. Darren, what have you got for us in the forecast?

Darren:
Well, it started out looking fine but now that I'm looking again I'm not so sure cause this looks like... (getting really worried and fidgeting) umm...

Morgan:
Darren, is there a problem.

Darren:
Just nobody panic (About this time Parker has gotten up off the floor)

Parker:
Too late for that

Crystal:
Why would we panic Darren?

Darren:

Well, because..... IT'S GONNA BE THUNDERSNOW!!! RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!! GO GET ALL THE BREAD AND MILK FROM THE GROCERY. BOARD UP YOUR HOME!! RUN!!! (Darren in the midst of the freak out runs out the front door leaving it open. Parker goes to follow only for Darren to run back inside) THERE IS THUNDERSNOW OUT THERE!!! (Darren runs upstairs now. Parker looks out to find that the outside for the front door is static with a white noise sound effect.)

Parker:

What the hell is this? What is happening to me? (He checks the window too and it is also static)

Morgan:

Well folks, our producer has said that since Darren has run off for a minute we are going to take this opportunity to go to a commercial break. (Morgan and Crystal get up and walk into the kitchen leaving Parker all alone.)

Parker:

So have I gone crazy? Am I dead? Did someone mess around with the space time continuum? I'm basically one with the TV. I mean, I guess that means I can do whatever I've always wanted to do. Life or whatever this is would never be boring. I could play along. I could be a sports hero. A lawyer. A superhero. Never a medical show again. I could do a doctor talk show and figure out what this weird mole is though. What is the harm in trying to have fun with this for a while before trying to figure out how to fix it? Maybe I can put on a romantic comedy and win back Crystal. Usually the guys are beaten up or something in those movies to provide the comedy. Probably not a good idea. Then again, I could take the shortcut.... No, I can't do that. It's not right. I can't put on THAT kind of movie. Especially in the living room. Or can I? No. Yes. No. Maybe. How about I do it just as a test and if it doesn't seem right I'll change it to something else quickly, like uh... game show. Nothing sexy happens on gameshows. (He makes his way to the tv and holds out the remote and then covers his eyes like he shouldn't be looking) I have a feeling I will regret this but I need to do this in the name of science or something. (Presses button and braces for something to happen. Nothing happens for a minute. He faces toward the kitchen then thinks) Wait... my sister is in there too. I may have made a horrible mistake. (Suddenly there is a knock at the door. Confused he runs through who is where in the house in his head and mimes it before slowly going over to open the door.) I already know this is a bad idea but I'm going to let it play out. Curiosity has the best of me now. (He opens the door to find April standing there)

Parker:

April!?!

April:

Hi. I locked myself out of my house. Can I come in with you until a locksmith comes?

Parker:

Sure. (April enters) Who uses a locksmith? How did she call a locksmith? How does she of all people know what a locksmith is? That is terrible writing from the get go.

April:

Do you mind if I make myself comfortable on your luxurious couch? (She sits)

Parker:

Yep. Terrible writing. The channel worked.

April:

Come sit next to me?

Parker:

(Gulps) Me... uh sure. Why did I do this to myself? This is so uncomfortable. (Sits on the couch opposite her as far as he could be away)

April:

Thank you for letting me in your home. Is there anything I can do to repay you?

Parker:

NO. No just trying to be nice (She slowly starts creeping toward him seductively and it freaks him out) Nope, can't do this (He gets up from the couch and she does too. He comes around one side and her the other. So now they are both facing each other behind the couch.)

April:

Kiss me!

Parker:

No thanks. How about we just watch this? (Changes the channel without looking)

April:

You want to watch "Surprise Birth" ?

Parker:

What now?! (Immediately has attention on the tv)

April:

Ow! My stomach (she bends over behind the couch holding her stomach and groans. Parker brings his attention back to April only to shriek in terror and nearly faint. April pops up from behind the couch with a babydoll wrapped up.) Well that was a surprise.

Parker:
No kidding!!!

April:
I should go show Trevor. He'll be furious. (She smiles and walks out the front door)

Parker:
I need to get off this channel. Fall back is a game show for safety. So let's play it safe. (Points remote and presses button. Theme music begins to play)

Voiceover:
Can this man guess what is going on using just the clues given to him from our 3 fabulous ladies? Or will he have to go toe to toe with our Combatant in a round robin potato sack race deathmatch!?

Parker:
Potato sack race deathmatch? How does that work?

Voiceover:
We'll find out as we play everyone's favorite game show

Everyone:
"Why Is This Happening To Me!" (Parker looks around because he said it too but he meant it)

Voiceover:
And now heeeeeere's your host, the wacky, Darren Druuuuzbacky!

Darren:
(Darren lightly jogs down the stairs and over to downstage right where he tries to calm the audience and pretends to hit an imaginary golf ball) Thank you. Thanks Johnny. Folks, we have a great show tonight so let's just dive into it! Johnny, why don't you introduce today's contestant.

Voiceover:
He is an unemployed man baby that lives on his sister's couch collecting disability for Intermittent Color Blindness that he doesn't really have!!! Say hello toooooooo Parker!

Parker:
That's not true! (Walks hurriedly to Darren) Darren, where is the voice coming from? And the music? How does this voice know about my color blindness?

Darren:

Whoa there fella! I ask the questions on this show. Now tell me, is there some story to go with the color blindness?

Parker:
Darren, you already know the story.

Darren:
You are absolutely right. 50 points on the board for Parker. A great start to the game. What the audience doesn't know is that before the show you confided in me the reality behind your "disability" which is...

Parker:
Can we just skip on to the next part of this?

Darren:
Very well. Let's meet our lovely lady panel Johnny.

Voiceover:
She is an overworked underappreciated woman that hasn't had a vacation in 3 years. She hasn't watched a full tv show in 5 months and the world is weighing down on her like a heap of bricks. Let's hear it for panelist number one Moooorgan!

Morgan:
(Enters from the kitchen and lightly jogs to the couch and sits) Just happy to be here and not at work. Woooohooo!

Voiceover:
She is an overachiever that is still hooked on a dude that couldn't get his act together. Can she be won over? Let's welcome panelist number two Crystal!!

Crystal:
(Also enters from the kitchen and jogs to the couch and sits) I'm here to work hard and not get distracted but I've got my eye on you! Yay!!!

Voiceover:
She is the equivalent of getting the cliff's notes for knowledge you should gain in grade school. Luckily she could skate by on good looks and a smile. Say howdy do to contestant number 3 April!!!

April:
(Enters from the front door without a baby this time and goes to the couch and sits) I'm April.

Darren:

Yes. Yes you are. Now here is how the game works Parker.

Parker:

Can I opt out of playing?

Darren:

No.

Parker:

I am just trying to find some time to think a little.

Darren:

You will be asked a series of questions by our panelists. If you give untruthful answers you will hear this sound (buzzer). Get 3 buzzers and you will have to battle our Combatant. Johnny, it's time to introduce today's Combatant!!

Johnny:

Are you ready to hear the knock knock knock from today's Combatant. He is a mountain of testosterone and a master of swagger. Nobody "bros" down like this guy. Let's hear it for the one man wrecking crew, our dastardly demon, the cannibal combatant, our very own Treeeeeeevor "Rock Slinger" Killen

Trevor:

(Enters through the front door in a potato sack) Ooooh yeah. When I'm done with you, I'm gonna bury you in your potato sack.

Parker:

Why did I just become terrified of a potato sack race. (Trevor snarls at him) Nevermind, he could make me fear a bubble blowing competition.

Darren:

Last time Trevor was on the show the contestant tried to leave and we had to send Trevor to retrieve him. I am proud to say that we heard back from the doctors today and there may still be some chance that he will regain SOME use of his legs. (The panelists and host clap for a second) Let's get started. Panelist number 1 let's start with you.

Morgan:

Parker, I like a man that is strong and determined. So tell me, what is the longest you've ever held down a job. (Crowd oohs as if she said something racy)

Darren:

Parker, gotta be hard not to like that question and from such a lovely contestant.

Morgan:

Sorry, I'm taken. At least for now (Big smile)

Parker:

For now?

Darren:

So how about it Parker. How's the old "resume" you bad boy?

Parker:

Does this have to be so personal. I mean. Umm...

Darren:

Time is ticking Parker.

Parker:

I don't know. Two years! (Buzzer)

Darren:

Ohh so close but the judges say it was six months. Six month's was the answer we were looking for.

Parker:

I've been holding out for a Manager position (Buzzer)

Darren:

Oh that is not good for you Parker. Two buzzers for one answer. One more buzzer and you'll have to face The Rock Slinger!

Trevor:

I'm ready to MASH potatoes!!

Darren:

Let's try one from contestant number 3.

April:

Hiiii! Ok. I'm super outgoing and adventurous. I like men to be outgoing too. So, when you were out going from your house today because of the mower incident, why didn't you stand up for yourself.

Parker:

Cause... cause I'm scared your boyfriend would beat me to a pulp. This is my delusion or whatever and I'm still frightened. If I would have said anything to him I would have probably curled up and died without a punch being thrown.

Darren:

50 Points for Parker. If he makes it past this next question he goes to the bonus round where nothing changes cause the points don't matter.

Parker:

Why am I doing any of this then?

Darren:

To avoid being trampled by a gorilla in a sack race!

Parker:

Right. Noted.

Darren:

Panelist two. Hopefully you've cooked up a really good question for our bachelor.

Parker:

Can we go with "contestant" instead of bachelor? My sister is part of the panel

Crystal:

Contestant, I'm a real go getter and have plenty of good qualities. Why wasn't I enough for you to want to make us work?

Parker:

(This question hits him like a ton of bricks) What? I don't understand.

Darren:

Could you repeat the question for our contestant panelist number two?

Crystal:

Why wasn't I enough for you to want to make us work?

Darren:

That is a tough question Parker. For the whole game. Your answer please!

Parker:

I... I don't know what to say. I never wanted anything more than for us to work (Buzzer sound. Crowd awws) What?

Darren:
I'm sorry but that is not the correct answer...

Parker:
Says who? Let me speak to these judges

Darren:
I'm sorry. Their identities are a secret on the show, but that was threeeeeeee buzzers meaning.

Trevor:
It's my time to mash. (Begins to slowly hop over to Parker)

Darren:
(Grabs and holds Parker) Well Parker, I hope you brought your own sack!!

Parker:
(Trying to fight off Darren and not afraid of Trevor) Crystal... I'm sorry. I really did want to make us work. I promise. I know I screwed it up but I want to make it better. I'll get off the couch. I'll go to college. I'll be what you need....(Finally breaks free of Darren only to be grabbed by Trevor who breaks the remote in his Parker's hand. This is done by having two identical remotes with one broken but taped together and they will need to be switched out during the scene. Suddenly there are flickering lights and laser sounds and everyone but Parker is flailing their heads around. When the sound stops and the lights come back steady Trevor, Crystal, April, and Darren have now adopted other personalities. Trevor is a DIY show host. Crystal is from a film noir. April is a step aerobics instructor, Darren is the weatherman again.)

Parker:
What just happened? The remote?! You broke it?!

Trevor:
You may have bigger worries at the moment. Drafty windows. I'm gonna show you how a little hard work can save you money in those long cold winter months.

Parker:
Great. Trapped in a DIY home makeover show!!

April:
(She is doing some step aerobics) And now we curl in and in and in and in and in. Come on everyone out there at home keep up with me.

Parker:
That's not a home makeover... (Confused)

Morgan:
(Back to her normal self) Parker, what is going on??!

Parker:
Morgan! Is it really you?

Morgan:
What is happening?

Parker:
It's a long story

(Curtain)

Act II

(Curtain opens. The scene begins not long after the curtain for Act I. Parker and Morgan are on the couch. Parker is cradling the broken remote and explaining the situation to Morgan. Morgan is dumbfounded. Upstage right April continues to do stretches. Trevor is nowhere to be seen.

Darren is downstage left against the wall standing still waiting for a cue. Crystal is sulking around as a detective in a film noir would do. Once the Curtain has opened and a few seconds are given to let the audience see how everyone is acting Crystal walks downstage left and talks at the audience.)

Crystal:

She was confused. She fell into a world she didn't understand. It was dark. It was cold. Only he could help. She came to him seeking information but little did she know he knew little more than she knew he knew. He knew she knew a little but knew enough to know to ask him what he knew. I think it goes without saying that nobody knew what they would know soon but not knowing can sometimes be knowing enough. (Walks backward and begins looking around for clues)

Parker:

She must be some sort of film noir detective or something... So you really don't remember anything?

Morgan:

It was all just a blur. One minute I'm in the kitchen and the next I feel like I stepped out of a fun house and everyone is acting weird but you.

Parker:

I know the feeling.

Morgan:

So let me get this straight. We were acting out tv shows?

Parker:

Not exactly. You were BEHAVING like tv shows. I think, like, subconsciously it was still everyone's thoughts. It's almost like a really confusing inner monologue that I was tapped into.

Morgan:

And we can't get help because outside is what now?

Parker:

Static

Morgan:

Static

Parker:

You know. White noise. Like a channel that doesn't come through.

Morgan:

I don't get it. I don't understand any of this.

Parker:

Look for yourself. (Morgan gets up and opens the door and the white noise sound is heard)

Morgan:

What in the twilight zone is going on here Parker?

Parker:

Let's sit back down (They sit at the couch)

Morgan:

Ok. So we were all behaving like we were in tv shows

Parker:

Yeah it was Telenovela, a medical show nightmare, the news, some other stuff that will not get mentioned

Morgan:

What was that?

Parker:

What? I said a game show which brings us to now.

Morgan:

So we are in a film noir?

Parker:

No, I don't think so.

Morgan:

But you JUST SAID that Crystal was...

Parker:

The rules have changed now. I think everyone is on a different channel now.

