

TRADING LIFE

"Pilot"

Written by
Rob Michaels

For the full script, contact me at robmichaelswriting@gmail.com

Rob Michaels
robmichaelswriting@gmail.com
robmichaels.ca

COLD OPEN

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - 2000

ROB (8, Middle Eastern, optimistic) runs into the kitchen holding a bunch of hand-written papers.

ROB

Baba, I finished my story!

Rob's DAD (late 30s, traditional, emotionally constipated) sits at the kitchen table doing paperwork. His MOM (early 30s, very loving) dries dishes in the background. Both his parents speak in Arabic - English subtitles are shown.

DAD

Did you finish your homework?

ROB

No, but I -

DAD

You have a test on Monday. We didn't move to this country so you can make stories.

(beat)

Do you remember what happens if you don't get A+?

ROB

...we move back to Iraq?

DAD

We move back to Iraq.

Rob hangs his head in disappointment. His mom smiles, knowing it's an empty threat.

MOM

We want what's best for you so when you grow up, you will have a good life. Do you understand, habibi?

She kisses him on the forehead. Rob leaves his papers behind and goes upstairs.

EXT. GRADUATION CEREMONY - PRESENT DAY

Rob (now mid 20s) holds his math degree in hand as his parents take a million photos of him.

ROB

Alright, I think we have enough memories.

MOM

I'm so proud of you, habibi. You have your degree, you're starting a good job next month, now all that's left is finding a wife.

ROB

Yup, life is just a checklist.

DAD

Next is your MBA. Make sure that's on the list.

Rob rolls his eyes.

MOM

How much do you make with this investment banking? I can text my friends and see if their daughters are interested.

ROB

Please don't text people my salary. Are we done here?

Rob looks to his Dad, who's proud, but incapable of being sentimental.

DAD

Yes, good job. Let's go eat.

His dad walks away. Rob gets an email. He checks his phone.

ROB

Oh... the firm wants me to start on Monday.

MOM

That's good! Aren't you excited?

ROB

(unconvincing)

Yeah... yeah I definitely... am.

MOM

Good! Now you can start your MBA earlier, too. Okay, let's go eat!

His mom walks away. Rob sighs.

MAIN TITLE - TRADING LIFE

ACT ONEEXT. ROB & PEDRO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Rob, suited up, stands in front of his new building beside a moving truck. PEDRO (AKA Peddy, sarcastic, loves to party) approaches.

PEDDY

Look at this guy, all corporate now... FANCY!

ROB

It's not comfortable, I don't get how people wear this every day.

PEDDY

Get used to it, suit.

ROB

Whatever. Anyway, you're cool taking care of the move? I feel bad ditching but they bumped up my start date.

PEDDY

I mean, the movers are doing all the work. But you can owe me one if you want. We still on for tonight?

ROB

You just went out yesterday. Aren't you still hungover?

PEDDY

Yeah, I don't remember a thing. It was a lit night.

ROB

How do you even - whatever. I gotta get to work. Here are the keys.

(hands keys)

Thanks again. Don't burn down the building before I get back!

PEDDY

Is that what you think of me?

ROB

Yes. Very much so.

INT. ROB & PEDRO'S CONDO - HALLWAY - LATER

Peddy walks down the hallway with the movers and finds ELISE (late 20s, smart, no-nonsense) standing outside his apartment.

ELISE

Are you the new tenant?

PEDDY

Yup, one out of two!

ELISE

You got here just in time to see the repairs.

PEDDY

Yikes. Thanks for fixing up the place before we got here.

ELISE

I didn't have a choice. The last tenants threw a going away party and trashed everything.

Two men come out of the apartment, each carrying half of a long, broken table. They exit past Peddy.

PEDDY

I'm sorry to hear that?

ELISE

You'll be really sorry if I have to deal with the same from you. I've had enough bad tenants. I could do without another.

PEDDY

We're not gonna break a thing. And hey, if we do have a party, you're welcome to come supervise so it doesn't get out of hand...

ELISE

I'm not joking. I'll evict you.

PEDDY

Okay, okay. Sorry, no trouble.

Elise walks away.

PEDDY (CONT'D)

(to the movers)

I think I love her.

The movers shrug. Not their business...

INT. ROB'S OFFICE - DAY

Rob finishes his tour alongside the HR LADY. Everyone around works quietly. Multiple monitors sit on each desk. Rob and the HR Lady approach the only vacant spot.

HR LADY

And this is your desk!

COURTLAND (late 20s, typical rich kid who plays polo and goes yachting on weekends) sits at the neighboring desk. He addresses Rob without turning away from the screen.

COURTLAND

Get comfortable. From now on, that's what you'll be chained to for 16 hours a day.

HR LADY

Rob, this is Courtland. He's one of our most promising associates.

ROB

Nice to meet you.

Rob extends his hand, but Courtland doesn't look at him.

HR LADY

You're in good hands. If you need anything, don't hesitate to ask.

HR lady walks away.

ROB

So, Courtland. That's a really unique name.

COURTLAND

Yeah, my mom isn't the brightest.

Who says that? Rob moves past it.

ROB

Well, I'm really looking forward to working together. I just graduated so I'm excited to kick start the rest of my life! Workin' somewhere I love...

Courtland doesn't look up from his desk.

ROB (CONT'D)

This seems like the right place to do it. I can tell it's a fun work environment.

He looks around at everyone working silently at their desks.

ROB (CONT'D)

Is every day actually 16 hours? Not that it's an issue. I'm sure the time will fly by...

COURTLAND

Dude, shut the hell up and get to work. You're probably already drowning in emails.

ROB

Oh, Uh yeah, of course. Sorry.

(beat)

This is great, I'm excited...

INT. ROB & PEDDY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Peddy unpacks a couple of boxes. He stops to think, then takes out his phone, dials a number, and puts it on speaker.

ELISE (O.S.)

Hello?

PEDDY

Hey, Elise! It's Pedro, your new tenant. We just spoke in the hallway 30 minutes ago.

(beat, no response)

Yeah, so I was thinking we got off on the wrong foot, so maybe we should meet up again to -

ELISE (O.S.)

You're only supposed to call for apartment-related issues. This doesn't sound like an apartment-related issue.

PEDDY

It is! You just didn't let me finish.

(looks around)

Our fridge... is broken...

ELISE (O.S.)

The fridge is broken?

PEDDY
 Yup. Broken fridge, in the
 apartment. That's why I'm calling.

INT. ROB & PEDDY'S APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

Peddy answers Elise's irritated knock on the door.

PEDDY
 I don't know what happened.

ELISE
 You just got here and you've
 already broken something...

Elise walks past Peddy toward the fridge.

PEDDY
 I didn't break it!

ELISE
 It was just working.

She checks the fridge. It isn't working. She takes off her sweater, puts it on the counter, and pulls the fridge forward.

PEDDY
 If it worked yesterday, it doesn't
 mean it'll work today.

Elise rolls her eyes, then dives behind the fridge.

PEDDY (CONT'D)
 I call that a Peddy Pearl of
 Wisdom. My friends call me Peddy,
 by the way. Short for Pedro. You
 can too, if you want.

Elise pops back up with an unplugged wire in her hand.

ELISE
 You didn't think to check if it was
 unplugged?

PEDDY
 That's it?! It was just unplugged?!

Peddy is painfully unconvincing. Elise shoots him a dirty look and dives behind the fridge again to plug it in.

PEDDY (CONT'D)
 What a relief! We should grab a
 drink to celebrate since nothing's
 broken.

Elise pops back up to open the fridge. She sticks her hand in.

ELISE
Did you pretend the fridge was
broken so you could ask me out?

PEDDY
No...

ELISE
I don't date tenants.

Elise walks toward the door, leaving her sweater behind.

PEDDY
Can't a guy take his landlord out
as a thank you for the apartment?

ELISE
That sounds like a date.

PEDDY
It's not a date, I promise! I'll
even get Rob to join us.
(off her look)
The other tenant. That way you can
actually get to know us.

ELISE
(long beat, sigh)
Fine. One drink. Bar across the
street at 8.

Elise exits.

PEDDY
Still got it! Okay, gotta call Rob.

INT. ROB'S OFFICE BATHROOM - DAY

Rob is on the phone.

ROB
What?!
(beat)
I know asking out our landlord
isn't the same as burning down the
building. But it's not better!
(beat)
I can't leave until everyone else
leaves. I'm trying to make a good
impression so people like me.
(beat)
I'll try to make it.

He hangs up.

INT. ROB'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

Rob walks back in and sits at his desk. He smiles at Courtland, but Courtland pays him no attention.

ROB

So HR said I can pick somewhere to go for a team welcome lunch on Friday. Wanna help me brainstorm?

COURTLAND

Not really.

Rob turns to his monitor, giving up.

COURTLAND (CONT'D)

You better pick a good spot, though. It'll make or break your first impression.

Rob turns back to Courtland, very excited he got him to bite.

ROB

Yeah?

COURTLAND

Let's just say if you pick somewhere where we can draw on the tables, we'll call you crayon boy until you quit.

(beat)

You have to pick something delicious and classy. Like sushi.

ROB

I love sushi! I ate like 50 pieces last time I had all-you-can-eat.

Courtland finally looks away from his screen and swivels his chair toward Rob.

COURTLAND

No you didn't.

ROB

Yeah, it was wild.

Courtland looks at Rob, straight-faced.

COURTLAND

(yells out to office)

Mike! Jon! Cal! Come over here.

Three nearby associates: MIKE (pessimist), JON (instigator) and CAL (optimist), walk over to Courtland and Rob.

CAL

What's up?

COURTLAND

Our new analyst says he can eat 50 pieces of sushi.

ROB

I said "like" 50 pieces. My name's Rob, by the way.

MIKE

No chance. Look at him. He's tiny.

JON

He looks like a little bitch.

Rob at Jon in disbelief.

CAL

He's in good shape. An hour at the gym and he can easily get 'er done.

MIKE

I'll bet \$1000 he can't.

CAL

\$1000? You poor, bro? I'll bet 10k he can.

ROB

Whoa. Guys, it was just a guess.

MIKE

Done.

JON

I want in on this!

Rob is baffled. Courtland calls out to surrounding people.

COURTLAND

Christina! Dave! Jake!

ROB

What? No. Stop!

CHRISTINA (ruthless), DAVE (meek), and JAKE (over-ambitious), gather around.

COURTLAND

Our new hire claims he can eat 50 pieces of sushi in one sitting.

CHRISTINA

I could do that.

JON

Every white girl thinks they could do that.

JAKE

I bet he could do 60.

MIKE

Yeah, if he ordered jelly beans.

JON

Anyone care to wager 10k?

DAVE

I'll bet he can eat 40.

CHRISTINA

You can't bet on 40. He said 50.

COURTLAND

What if you can, but you pay a premium since it's less risk?

CHRISTINA

Like a call option?

COURTLAND

Exactly. You pay a premium to make money on each piece he eats after 40. If he doesn't get to 40, you lose what you bet.

ROB

You're going to make derivatives based on how much I can eat?

COURTLAND

Yeah, let's make this a market!

DAVE

What are calls gonna cost?

COURTLAND

Market price, baby. Find someone who'll sell what you want to buy.

ROB
Guys, this is a little ridiculous,
don't you think?

JON
I LOVE IT! WHO WANTS TO BUY SOME
CALLS?! \$5 AT 35 PIECES.

DAVE
I'LL BUY 1000!

JAKE
Who wants to sell me calls at 60?

MIKE
I'm so confident he won't get to
60, I'll sell you calls at 50
cents!

ROB
Guys, no! C'mon!

Rob tries to stop the betting. ADAM, their boss (white, 50s,
"cool dad" vibes) walks by and overhears them.

ADAM
You all better be working!

COURTLAND
We're making a market on how many
pieces of sushi we think the new
hire can eat.

ADAM
As managing director, I can't allow
that.

ROB
Thank you!

ADAM
You should offer more than just
calls and puts. I think he'll
either fail miserably, or blow
everyone out of the water. Who
wants to sell me a straddle at 50?!

Everyone starts yelling out offers. Rob is dumbfounded.

END OF ACT ONE

FOR THE REST OF THE SCRIPT, EMAIL ROBMICHAELSWRITING@GMAIL.COM