



Hostel California

"Pilot"

Written by

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COLD OPEN

EXT. HOSTEL CALIFORNIA - DAY

A low-budget California-themed beach "resort" off the coast of the Mediterranean. MATT (30, laidback, charming) leads a group.

MATT

And last stop on the island tour,
where you're all staying of course:

EXT./INT. HOSTEL CALIFORNIA LOBBY & VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY

In the open-concept LOBBY, a light breeze follows the tour as they approach. Murals of the Hollywood Hills cover the walls.

MATT (V.O.)

A place where people from all over
the world come to seek adventure...

Diverse Guests sit at OSCAR'S BAR, designed after the Academy stage: red curtains and a Bartender suited up serving drinks. One Guest inspects their beer, unable to read the label written in GREEK. They shrug and drink it anyway, unbothered.

MATT (V.O.)

Where in just days you'll get to
know people more intimately than
most of your friends back home...

The BATHROOM DOOR sign reads "In-N-Out-Of-Your-System." A Guest enters revealing a communal bathroom: a Man poops as a Woman casually exits the shower in a towel, unbothered.

MATT (V.O.)

Where you're sure to have a
comfortable stay, leading to
irreplaceable memories.

In a HOSTEL ROOM, a COUPLE atop a bunkbed passionately make out while a Guest on the bottom bunk reads a book, unbothered.

MATT (V.O.)

Welcome, to Hostel California.

EXT. HOSTEL CALIFORNIA - DAY

LAYLA (late 20s, go-getter journalist), camera around her neck, drags TWO LARGE SUITCASES. DING! She checks her phone:

Rich: "Did you seriously just pack up and leave?!"

Rich: "I thought we were gonna work this out!!!!"

She puts her phone away and heads into the lobby.

INT. HOSTEL CALIFORNIA LOBBY – CONTINUOUS

Matt leads the tour away as Layla approaches the FRONT DESK. She's greeted by SANTIAGO (20s, meek, loyal to a fault).

SANTI

Welcome to Hostel California! Such a lovely place, such a lovely face.

(off Layla, confused)

We're not allowed to sing the words. Copyright... Anyway, my name is Santi. How may I help you?

LAYLA

...This is supposed to be California?

SANTI

Yes! The hostel is designed to resemble the wondrous Golden State.

She notices STARS ON THE GROUND with faces printed on them.

SANTI (CONT'D)

That's our Employee Walk of Fame. One day, if I continue to provide excellent customer service, my face will be on there, too.

Two Tourists kneel and take selfies beside the stars as if the employees were actually celebrities. Morons.

LAYLA

Good luck with that. Anyway, do you have any rooms for like, a month?

SANTI

Oh, that's longer than usual. Not sure the system allows that. Do you have a reservation?

LAYLA

No. Is that a problem?
(looks around)

It doesn't look that busy...

SANTI

No problem at all. Plenty of room at the Hostel California! Any time of year, you can find it here... Mostly because business has been slow.

LAYLA

You know that song is about hedonism
and American self-indulgence, right?

SANTI

I don't-- that can't be true.

OVER BY THE BAR, Matt finishes his tour.

MATT

Okay, you're free to go! If you
enjoyed the tour, you're welcome to
leave a tip. And if you didn't, think
of it as paying for it to be over!

(as people disperse)

And don't forget to leave a review!
We could really use them. And tell
your friends to stay here!

A few people stay to tip Matt. CHLOE (20s, high-energy, Jenny
Slate-esque) sneaks up on Matt and pinches his butt. He jumps.

CHLOE

Ambush on that tush!

MATT (CONT'D)

Wh-- oh, hey, you!

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Sorry, couldn't resist. Not that
you seemed to mind last night...

She's very flirty. He laughs awkwardly as the tippers leave.

MATT

Yes, when we weren't in public...

CHLOE

Wanna grab dinner tonight? It's my
last night before I fly out.

Matt is hesitant. Matt's boss BEVERLY (late 30s, quirky
hippie, thick Aussie accent) pokes out of her office nearby.

BEVERLY

Matthew, could ya swing by my
office for a tick?

MATT

Be right there, Bev!

(to Chloe, insincere)

Uh, you know... Chloe, I totally
would, but you're just... such a
catch. If we keep hanging it'll be
too painful for me when you leave.

CHLOE

Wow. That's like the nicest thing anyone's ever said to me. After sex, I mean. Before sex, men will say anything.

MATT

Yeah... Anyway, enjoy your last day!

He heads into Beverly's office, leaving her curious.

INT. BEVERLY'S HILL (OFFICE) - CONTINUOUS

Matt enters as Beverly sits down, shuffling a deck of cards.

BEVERLY

Matthew, I've got a serious yarn to chew over with you.

MATT

It's a miracle anyone ever understands you.

BEVERLY

(holds out the deck)
Pick a card.

MATT

Is this why you called me in?

BEVERLY

No, but I got a magic show tonight and reckon I need the practice.

He rolls his eyes as he takes a card.

BEVERLY (CONT'D)

By the way, you're not pashing with the guests, are ya?

MATT

Of course not. I would never...

She does incredible sleight of hand shuffling with the cards.

BEVERLY

Good, 'cause I'm not paying you for that. That'd make you a sex worker, which is illegal in California and would break the hostel's realism.

MATT

That's your concern?

BEVERLY

Ya. Otherwise I wouldn't mind.
Nothing wrong with a bloke on the
lookout for love.

MATT

I'm not looking for love. Wouldn't
find it here anyway, considering no
one stays longer than a few days.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSTEL CALIFORNIA LOBBY (RECEPTION) - CONTINUOUS

INSERT on Layla's TWO LUGGAGE BAGS. She argues with Santi.

LAYLA

--they call themselves prisoners of
their own device! The song's last
line is that they can never leave!

SANTI

They don't want to! It's a vacation!

INT. BEVERLY'S HILL (OFFICE) - CONTINUOUS

MATT

But I'm not looking to date. I enjoy
having minimal responsibility, both
in my love life and in my work life.

BEVERLY

I've got touchy news for ya then.
(holding up a card)
Is this your card?

MATT

No.

BEVERLY

Bugger! Oh well... The real trick,
and why I brought ya in, is 'cause
I just made your job disappear.

MATT

Wait, what? I'm getting fired?!

BEVERLY

Ah, I see how that sounded. No no, I
made your OLD job disappear, in
place of a NEW job. You're getting a
promotion, mate! To manager! Cheers!

Off Matt, UNpleasantly surprised.

ACT ONEINT. BEVERLY'S HILL (OFFICE) - CONTINUOUS

Matt is confused as Bev pulls out a \$20 bill for a new trick.

MATT

A promotion?! I just said I enjoyed having very little responsibility.

BEVERLY

You'll need some ambition if you ever wanna score in the love department, mate.

MATT

I'm not-- look, if I wanted a real job, I wouldn't have moved across the world to live on the beach.

BEVERLY

Matthew, ya can't let your failures back home scare ya from growing.

MATT

That's not--

BEVERLY

The hostel's been having a rough go. I wanna avoid shutting down, so I need someone creative and business-savvy, like yourself, to help put us back on the map. Because our bookings have been... vanishing.

She makes the bill in her hand disappear.

BEVERLY (CONT'D)

You'll be great. I know it.

MATT

And if I'm not, do I get my old job?

BEVERLY

Sure. But I have a feeling you won't mind the raise.

She signals Matt to check his pocket. He pulls out a coin, confused.

BEVERLY (CONT'D)

Agh. Where'd the bill go? Would've been a neat trick though, ya?

Matt isn't convinced. Suddenly, Santi knocks on the door.

SANTI

Sorry to interrupt, Ms. Beverly. I need help with a reservation.

BEVERLY

You're up, Mr. New Manager...

INT. HOSTEL CALIFORNIA LOBBY (RECEPTION) - DAY

Matt and Santi head to reception. A GUEST approaches them.

GUEST

Excuse me, do you have--

MATT

Nope, sorry! My name's Matt, feel free to lodge a complaint!

Matt powers on toward the desk, much to Santi's confusion.

LAYLA

Sorry. I'm not usually an "ask for the manager" type of person.

MATT

Not your fault the system won't comply. Can I get your name?

LAYLA

Layla Aziz.

She hands him her passport. He types on the computer.

MATT

Okay, Layla. What I'll do is make 30 one-day reservations. So you'll just have to pay 30 times.

SANTI

...If that's the only fix, should we at least do 4 one-week transactions?

MATT

Nope, 30 transactions. Go ahead and insert your card when you're ready.

LAYLA

Wow. Um, okay, I guess. Livin' it up at the Hostel California...

Layla puts in her card, reluctantly. Matt turns to Santi.

MATT

Might be here a while, buddy. Feel free to go on break.

Santi offers Layla an apologetic smile, then heads out.

MATT (CONT'D)

I'm Matt, by the way. If you wanna leave a review about management, we'd love your feedback.

The machine beeps to signal payment is complete.

MATT (CONT'D)

Alright, go ahead and insert again.

She's unimpressed. This is gonna take foreeeever.

INT. BEVERLY'S HILL (OFFICE) - DAY

Santi enters to find Bev reading a MENTALISM book.

SANTI

Hey, Ms. Beverly. Sorry to interrupt again.

BEVERLY

Santi. Let me guess. You're here because... You're hungry!

SANTI

Um, not quite.

BEVERLY

Hm, maybe haven't mastered mentalism enough for my act yet. You do look malnourished, though. What's up?

SANTI

Since today seems to be a day for rewarding employees--

BEVERLY

Hungry for success! Wasn't far off.

SANTI

I was wondering: what can I do to get on the Employee Walk of Fame?

BEVERLY

You're not on there? Print out a pic and I'll add a star for you.

SANTI

No! I have to earn it. Please.
Otherwise it won't mean as much.

BEVERLY

Fair go. Actually, one of our guests
needs the boot. Way over the age
limit. Take care of that and you'll
definitely snag yourself a star.

SANTI

Thank you, Ms. Beverly!

SANTI (CONT'D)

I won't let you down.

BEVERLY

I won't let you down!

BEVERLY (CONT'D)

I knew it! Mentalism, baby.

SANTI

Okay.

(beat)

Don't you have like, work to do?

BEVERLY

I do, yeah.

INT. HOSTEL CALIFORNIA - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Layla struggles as she carries both suitcases up the stairs.
Matt walks empty-handed beside her, not helping whatsoever.

MATT

You might wanna make multiple trips.

LAYLA

I'm good, thanks.

MATT

Alright, here's your room!

He uses a key card to open the door. They walk in to see...

INT. HOSTEL BEDROOM - GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY

Glow in the dark STAR stickers plaster the ceiling. A PLANET-
themed mobile hangs over the single bed in the private room.

MATT

It's Griffith Observatory-themed.

LAYLA

Is it just me or was this place designed by someone who's never actually been to California?

MATT

I think she watched La La Land a few times. But yeah, you may not get the full California experience on a random island off the coast of Greece. Sorry to disappoint.

Layla rolls her suitcases next to one of the beds.

MATT (CONT'D)

You packed a lot for a month's trip.

LAYLA

A month is all I can afford for now, but I'm staying indefinitely. I'm volunteering at the refugee camp nearby.

MATT

Ah. Bookings have been down since that popped up. Tough to be a party hostel near a humanitarian crisis.

LAYLA

That must really suck for you...

MATT

No one has it harder.
(off her smile)
Wait, why are you staying *here*?

LAYLA

It was the cheapest option.

MATT

That checks out. Well, if you'd like us to remain an option, leave us a good review. But again, feel free to suggest a change in management.

LAYLA

I'm trying to build a journalistic reputation, so I'd rather not have the first result when you Google me be a review about "Ozempic parties" or whatever themed events you have here. Can't imagine it'll help land me a paid gig, which I'll need pretty soon to sustain myself.

MATT
 (lightbulb moment)
 Wait, how would you like to be
 manager? Part-time.

LAYLA
 Like, take your job? That's awfully
 selfless...

MATT
 It's not. I'd get my old job back
 where I just give tours for free
 room and board. Plus, if you work
 here, you get to stay for free.

LAYLA
 I don't really have experience.

MATT
 Do you think you need it to do a
 better job than me?

LAYLA
 Fair point...

EXT. OSCAR'S BAR - DAY

Santi sees KEITH (70 but dressed like he's 18: "how do you do,
 fellow kids") holding two young guests hostage in conversation.

KEITH
 I'm telling you, that new Olivia
 Rodrigo song just hits different!

SANTI
 Hello, sir! Are you Keith?

Keith's hostages use this opportunity to take off.

KEITH
 That finna be me! Though on Tik Tok
 I'm @StrictlyRizzness. What's the
 vibe check?

SANTI
 I'm sure you weren't aware, but our
 policy only permits guests under
 the age of 35 to stay here.

KEITH
 Bet.

Keith returns to his drink, unfazed. Santi is confused.

SANTI

Um, okay. So, if you come with me,
I can refund your remaining nights--

KEITH

Are you tryna dish me an L?

SANTI

Sorry, sir. As I just mentioned,
the hostel is for guests under 35.

KEITH

Nothing sus here. I just turned 21.

Keith pulls out his clearly fake ID. He raises his beer.

KEITH (CONT'D)

So glad I can finally drink.
(takes a sip)
Mm. This alcohol slaps!

This man is clearly 70.

SANTI

I think there must be a mistake--

KEITH

I think so, too. Isn't that rule
pretty discriminatory? Actually,
I'm finna make a Tik Tok about it.
You know how much us Gen Zers love
calling out injustices.

(pulls out phone, records)

Sup, fam. It's your boy Strictly
Rizzness. Big yikes here at Hostel
California. It's giving...
unprogressive--

SANTI

No! No need for that. My apologies.

Santi backs off, leaving Keith to himself.

KEITH

False alarm, my stans. Keep slaying!

He dabs, then puts away his phone. Once the coast is clear, he
takes out his weekly meds container and pops his daily pills.

INT. HOSTEL CALIFORNIA LOBBY (RECEPTION) - DAY

RICH (late 20s, obnoxious, yacht-club finance bro) walks up
to Santi, who's still frazzled by Keith, at the front desk.

SANTI

Oh, hello! Welcome to the--

RICH

Save your sales pitch, superstar.
I'm more of a Four Seasons guy. I'm
just gonna pop in to see if someone
I know is here--

SANTI

Sorry, sir. You're not allowed to
enter unless you're also a guest.

RICH

Serious? ...Ugh, fine. I'll take
your penthouse.

Rich pulls out his platinum credit card.

SANTI

Um, we have the 6, 8, and 10-person
dorms available.

RICH

10 people? In one room? ...I don't
understand.

SANTI

It's a hostel. Most of our rooms
are shared.

RICH

Shared, like... with the maids?
Like a guest house situation?

Rich's phone rings.

RICH (CONT'D)

One sec, getting a 6-figure call.
(answers phone)
Courtland, my man. We putting this
deal through or what?

Rich steps away just as Matt comes down the stairs.

MATT

Santi! Cancel Layla's booking.
She's gonna be working here.

SANTI

Okay! Like all 30 of them?

Matt heads into Bev's office without responding.

SANTI (CONT'D)
I guess all 30 of them.

Layla comes down the stairs just as Rich returns from his call. Layla's eyes widen.

LAYLA
Rich?! What are you doing here?!

RICH
Babe! I was gonna ask you the same thing. Are you seriously staying in this shithole?

LAYLA
Oh my god.

INT. BEVERLY'S HILL (OFFICE) - CONTINUOUS

Matt enters to find Chloe behind the desk with Bev.

MATT
Chloe? What are you doing--
actually, doesn't matter. Bev, I
have great news!

BEVERLY
So do I! I found someone who can be
manager in your place.

MATT
That's what I was-- wait... who?

Chloe links arms with him, excited.

CHLOE
Surprise!! We can grab dinner
tonight after all.

Oh no... Matt is horrified. Bev repeatedly hits her sleeve, but nothing happens.

BEVERLY
Dammit, why won't it--

CONFETTI finally erupts, showering a devastated Matt.

BEVERLY (CONT'D)
There it is!

Matt stands in disbelief as the confetti rains over him.

END OF ACT ONE

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