

The Office - s07e16.5 - Counter-Strike

By

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BULL PEN. MORNING

It's a typical morning in the office. Erin looks to the door as a delivery man struggles to get through it with a large box, as big as she is. As he finishes his sentence she gets up to help him.

DELIVERY MAN

Got a delivery for Dunder Mifflin?

CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

Talking head with Jim. He speaks frankly.

JIM

So, our contract with our outsourced IT department ended and corporate decided it would be more cost effective to operate our server in-house...

BULL PEN. MORNING

Michael and the delivery man are talking. Michael is trying to take in what he's saying - he's bluffing understanding while being confused.

JIM (V.O)

... Especially after we had a gracious volunteer to maintain it.

Michael hushes the delivery man rudely and begins to talk to him and the office at large. Everyone else looks on.

MICHAEL

Whoa-hoa-hoa there, you're gonna have to stoppo, Mr. Roboto! Why don't you just, um, break all that down and tell it without sounding like a total nerd? We, unlike you, don't spend all our time with computers.

Jim Scrunches his face at Michael. Pam flicks her eyes at the camera. Phyllis looks down at her computer. Zoom in to find Stanley asleep with his hands on his keyboard. Sweep to Dwight who is looking sharply at Michael while touch-typing.

DELIVERY MAN

Okay, well, er, this is where you can store all your computer files, databases, spreadsheets, emails... It basically manages all of the office's files.

Hearing the last part of that sentence Michael turns his head. He turns serious and speaks softly.

MICHAEL

... So it's a computer... manager?

MICHAEL'S OFFICE. DAY

Jim speaks over a montage of Michael struggling to get the server into his office, next to his seat behind his desk. Oscar almost trips over the thick mess of wires coming out of his office. When he looks in he sees Michael putting his blazer "on" the server, struggling with that too. He poses with the server, faking a handshake with it and putting one arm over its 'shoulder'.

JIM (V.O)

That's all it took for Michael to be in charge of a machine he and *nobody* else here knows how to operate.

CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

Jim's pointing to next door and is smiling from the absurdity of the situation

JIM

And we can't work without it. Good job he's here - the responsibility would be too much for anyone else.

MICHAEL'S OFFICE. DAY

Talking head with Michael. He's having a 'real talk' with the camera.

MICHAEL

Technology has nothing to do with it-- absolutely *nothing* to do with it. It's about instinct; the instinct to manage that, that we both have. You can't program that - it's not ones and zeroes. You can't teach that-- no one taught me, and look at me--

There's a beeping. Zoom out to show the server next to him. The blazer is duct-taped onto it, there's a name badge that reads "Michael 2000" and the wallpaper on its monitor is his own face. Michael gets up to inspect it and looks around it aimlessly. He has no idea what to do, going to type at the keyboard under the monitor.

MICHAEL

Oh-- what is... ahhhh lemme just--

The interview continues as normal, talking over a montage of everything going to hell. The amount of fans on his desk gradually increase during all the shots:

A shot from the bullpen looking into Michael's office. He's at the server keyboard, hand on forehead looking stressed. Meanwhile Erin frantically clicks on her mouse, increasing in frustration.

Dwight has his phone shouldered while he tries to access a file named "2010 Price lists" only for a warning pop up to appear. He looks on as a half naked Michael carries arm-fuls of ice packs into his office and tapes them to the server. He puts one down his pants. Dwight looks stunned.

A short montage of Michael switching wires on, around and inside the server, eventually leading to him giving up and staring at it blankly, shrugging his shoulders. He ties a wire around the server to look like a bow-tie.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

It's incredible just how strong our team is. Our management team; bridging the digital world and the... the mortal plane. Without me he would have no juicy files to eat up, and without him we wouldn't be able to communicate with the world. It's an equal give-and-take.

Back to Michael, who looks like he's in the Sahara: he's sweating profusely, his shirt is wide open, he has no pants on and his desk is covered in fans, even though the window is open. He pats the server and looks up at it.

MICHAEL

Thank you, my dear robotic friend. My life would be worse without you. No doubt in my mind.

BULL PEN. MORNING

In the accounting clump, Angela and the rest curse as the server goes down again. She grunts and strides towards Michael's office.

ANGELA

Ugh, Michael! Michael, corporate need last years' figures!

More people join her outrage as the rest of them have no access, either.

STANLEY

Michael, I can't get my clients our numbers. No numbers, no sales - what the hell are you doing in there?!

MEREDITH

I need my emails, Michael - my tongue

don't do stamps! That's one place it
won't go!

Jim notices Angela, Meredith, Phyllis, Andy and Oscar
approaching and turns his attention away from his work.
They're shouting at Michael's door, but there's no reply when
Angela knocks hard on Michael's door. The blinds are closed
in his office windows.

ANGELA

Come on, get the server working again,
Michael, get it--

As she talks she goes for the handle. Jim glides up off his
chair.

JIM

Nope. Don't. You do not want to go in
there.

ANGELA

I need access to the accounting
archive!

ANDY

We ALL need access to the archive -
all of my sales are on there.

PHYLLIS

[Puzzled] You mean all your old ones?

ANDY

Y-yup.

Andy forces smile that quickly drops. Angela goes for the
door handle.

ANGELA

That's it-- Michael, I'm coming in!

Jim grabs it before she does.

JIM

You-- you just take a load off and I,
I'll talk to Michael, okay?

Angela grabs the handle and opens the door anyway, and is
taken off guard by the blast of hot air that escapes the
room. It hits everyone else and they recoil and shriek.
There's also a strong odour.

JIM

Whoah.

ANGELA

Oh my-- what's that heat?!

PHYLLIS

[Shrieky] Oh my god, that smells so bad.

MEREDITH

Ugh, smells like someone took a dump in an arcade machine.

Jim enters Michael's office. The place looks dank. There's desk fans everywhere - on the desk, cabinets and shelves - all pointed at the server. The blazer on the server is starting to hang off one side; there's mould growing on it, too. Meanwhile, Michael is at his computer trying to look normal, despite being stripped to his underwear and sweating profusely. He leans back in his chair as he talks to Jim.

MICHAEL

Ah, Jim, what can I do you for today?

JIM

Hey, can we possibly get the server up and running again, so we can do what you pay us to do? Some people are, er, getting a little rattled out there.

MICHAEL

No problemo! I will add that to the list of to-do.

Michael types something at his computer. Jim is unimpressed.

JIM

Can we... bump that to the top? As in to-do right now?

MICHAEL

Absolutely. Let me just edit--

Michael uses his mouse while talks. Jim grabs his monitor mid-sentence and turns it around. It's revealed that it's just his inbox with an email to "DunMif IT Support" Re: HELP!!! EMERGENCY!!!. Over it there's a pop-up saying the email was unable to send.

JIM

Okay! It's time to give it up, Michael. It's okay to admit that you bit off more than you can chew.

Michael looks glum. Jim points at the server's mould.

JIM

And I'm pretty sure that's mould on there, so we should probably get out and let experts deal with this.

MICHAEL
[sigh] Fine.

Michael gets up and leaves his office, only in his underwear and shoes. Jim's in tow and everyone else watches quietly, with the odd "Michael?" sounding out. Michael approaches Erin, who's as confused as everyone else.

MICHAEL
Erin, could you call the old IT guys,
ask 'em for a favour?

ERIN
S-sure. Right away.

MICHAEL
Great.

Michael gives a quick glance to the camera as he walks past them into the break room. Everyone's eyes break off him and now look into his empty office. The lonely sight of the server is all that's left. After a beat the jacket falls completely off it.

[TITLE SEQUENCE]

BULL PEN. MORNING

Once again everyone is working on a standard morning. Michael walks out of his office with his hands behind his back.

MICHAEL
Can I have your attention, please. I
have several announcements to make.

Everyone turns towards Michael. Holly, Kelly and Ryan are standing near reception.

MICHAEL
People, we live in a dangerous time
and, quite frankly, I'm scared.
Terrified. All the time.

PHYLLIS
[Concerned] What? What is it, Michael?
Why are you so worked up?

MICHAEL
Well, Phyllis, I fear the danger of
terrorists.

PAM
Oh. Of course.

MICHAEL
You shouldn't be so flipping of this,

Pam. Because I found this under my desk today...

Michael reveals his hands from behind his body. He holds up a plump backpack. Everyone looks a little confused.

OSCAR

A backpack, Michael? Whose even is that? You're jumping to conclusions-- there could be anything in there.

MICHAEL

Anything, including a BOMB. Which this was, Oscar. This was under my desk this morning! Someone tried to terrorise us-- terrorise me.

Jim inspects Dwight, who's sitting stoically as normal. Jim expected more.

JIM

So... nothing? Really? No diving, leaping, strip-searches..?

DWIGHT

Jim, I already completed the first of my tri-daily security sweeps of the building. The bag was found, noted and inspected. Inside I found gym clothes. [Turns to camera] All unworn.

Michael shoots Dwight a glare

MICHAEL

Dwight-- ... look, this could have been a terrorist attack and we... we're not prepared for it!

He waves towards each person he mentions, pointing a finger-gun at Pam.

MICHAEL

Stanley's as good as dead. Phyllis, gone. Erin, meatshield. Pam, [mouth-gunshot] dead.

JIM

[To Pam, whispering] Ooh, bad luck, Beasley.

PAM

If you don't avenge me I'll haunt you, and I'll know if CiCi starts smoking.

MICHAEL

What I'm saying is we need to be

prepared. It's our responsibility.

JIM

As a printer company?

DWIGHT

As Americans, Jim!

HOLLY

Michael, where is this going?

MICHAEL

So! If you take a look on your computers I've installed some software on them to help increase our combat readiness.

Everyone starts looking on their computers, with clicking sounds being heard from over. The three standing gather around Pam's computer.

CREED

Maybe we don't need to, er, *kill* the terrorists around here, boss.

Creed pulls out a handful of passports from his desk and puts them in his pockets. Kevin clicks Start and sees the icon for Counter-Strike in the list. His face scrunches up.

KEVIN

Counter-Strike..?

There's some confusion around the office. Michael claps his hands together.

MICHAEL

Yes! Everyone now has Counter-Strike, so no one has any excuse to not know what to do in a hostage situation.

ERIN

[Looking around bemused, with a notepad] Right, how many times a day should we use this, and what is Counter-Strike?

HOLLY

[Relieved] Oh, it's a video game--

MEREDITH

[Shouting across the room] It's a video game, yer idiot! One where you look through a guys eyes and shoot the other guys dead!

ANGELA

What?! Ugh, no!

STANLEY

Nope. Uh-uh.

OSCAR

Are you seriously trying to get us to combat non-existent terrorism with a video game? Are-are you sponsored by the Pentagon?

The camera pans and sees Dwight raising his head over his monitor, staring very intensely into the camera. He's psyched.

CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

Dwight talking head.

DWIGHT

Counter-Strike is a team-based first-person shooter developed by Valve and first released in 1999. A team of 'terrorists' attempt to plant a bomb or guard hostages, while the 'anti-terrorist' team tries to thwart them. It's gone on to gain a huge following, including a professional circuit. I... dabble, during my free time.

Montage of Dwight playing the game at his home. There's clips of him playing the game intensely, shouting and cheering, with a helmet and goggles on. He's calling out headshots, double-kills and victories.

DWIGHT (V.O)

Turns out, innate SWAT skills are also transferrable to games, as well as every other area of my life.

Back to the conference room. Dwight is smug and complacent.

DWIGHT

After years of playing I've become the ultimate terrorist killing machine. Or anti-terrorist killing machine, the game lets you play either. And win as both.

Dwight clenches his fist.

BULL PEN. MORNING

Michael laughs and points out to the office.

MICHAEL

Okay, you got me, it's a game! [claps hands together] buuuut it's fun. aaaand it's about team work. sooo I'll be playing on my break and so will Holly and so should you and you and you and you--

HOLLY

Only if you want to! It *is* fun, though-- we used to have a lot of fun during breaks at Nashua with it. But don't feel pressured!

Holly reassures everyone as she walks back to the annex. Michael returns to his office. There's groans as many pass on the offer: Angela, Oscar, Stanley and Phyllis look the most displeased. A few people seem a little excited, however. Meredith nods and shrugs. Dwight shouts and punches the air. Andy gets up and saunters towards Jim. He lights up an imaginary cigar and puts on an accent like a grizzled soldier.

ANDY

Looks like... us soldiers can't find peace just yet, private Tuna. We've got our orders.

JIM

I think I'd remember fighting a war, unless a lucky piece of shrapnel got lodged in my head.

ANDY

Heh, I guess you've got PTSD from playing Call of Duty at Stamford. I'd have it too if I died as much as you did. You were just useless! [laughs]

JIM

All the more reason to sit this one out.

PAM

[offscreen] I'll play. Why not?

Pan to Pam, who gives a flippant shrug and a smile.

JIM

Really?

Andy perks up and points at Pam

ANDY

Yes, Pam! That's what I'm talking about! Or should I call you... GI

Jane?

PAM

That... is... not my name, but I'll join in. You know he's gonna let it eat into work time. Literally the last thing on my to-do list is to get paper.

Andy pretends to be speaking on an air-walkie-talkie.

ANDY

[Chzk] Nard-Dog, this is the Uncle Sam, we've got bad guys in my back yard and I need backup. Can you confirm that special agent Halpert--

JIM

I thought I was a private--

ANDY

--is gonna come through and save our souls, over. [Chzk]

Andy solemnly lowers the 'walkie-talkie' and talks firmly. He holds it out to Jim.

ANDY

Well... are you gonna answer the call? Or are you gonna let the past hold you back?

Jim isn't playing along. He feints and reaches for his desk phone instead.

PAM

Really, Jim? You're going to commit treason?

Jim pauses for a beat and looks at Andy's empty hand. He rolls his eyes, looking at Pam as he grabs the walkie talkie.

JIM

[mumbling]... Ten-four, Mr. President.

Andy cheers and salutes. Pam smiles.

CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

Pam and Jim talking head. Pam nods along as she talks. Jim is less enthused.

PAM

Oh I played Counter-Strike and some other stuff in New York, mainly little student-made games. It was really fun--

Oh, he just has bad hand-eye coordination, all the buttons confuse his jock brain.

JIM

Hey, it's just video games! just... meaningless colours on a screen.

PAM

Those meaningless colours are teaching CiCi barnyard animals, and colours.

JIM

You know it's weird, you can see her eyes be drawn to the TV and our phones, but she can barely grab a ping pong ball.

PAM

You've been giving her ping pong balls--

JIM

I mean... there's no way to tell if a baby's going to grow up to hate sports, right? [scoffs] that's just dumb... [joking] Cos no daughter of mine's gonna be a nerd.

PAM

A nerd? This isn't 1995-- games are mainstream now, and your daughter might love 'em.

Jim mumbles and shuffles sheepishly.

Holly's now being interviewed.

HOLLY

I still had Counter-Strike on my old computer when I moved in with Michael. He thought it was a Steven Seagal movie, but thennnn we started playing it together.

Footage of Michael playing Counter-Strike at home. He's laughing as he's shooting a lot of bots, all of which are named "A.J."

HOLLY (V.O.)

He started really getting into it when I mentioned how A.J. and I used to play it a lot. He's gotten pretty good just by himself!

BULL PEN. DAY

Michael stands in the doorway of his office, excited.

MICHAEL

Alright, I'm making the game now! if you don't join in I'm stealing your lunch!

Stanley quickly rises and darts into the kitchen. Pan over to Kevin: he grins and gives the camera a 'shush', opening his jacket to reveal a giant sub in his breast pocket.

Back to Michael, he looks at the Counter-Strike lobby screen on his computer. Jim's name pops up, alongside his own, Dwight, Andy, Pam, Meredith, Holly and Erin's. He rubs his hands together, delighted as more people enter.

MICHAEL

Oh, there's Jim! And-- and Pam and Meredith! That's ten people. WAIT. I have-- oh man I have a great idea.

Michael scrambles out of his chair and back into his doorway, Announcing to the office:

MICHAEL

May I have your attention please! The following game of Counter-Strike will be... a battle of the sexes! Girls versus boys! Boobs versus brawn! Peacocks versus regular cocks!

DWIGHT

Michael, I'd like a fair fight, not a porch-side gopher hunt. We should team up with some of the player on the noob team, for the sake of sportsmanship.

The women playing groan.

PAM

Dwight! I've played it before, you know!

MEREDITH

Me too, butthole!

ERIN

I only got one hour a month on the communal computer in the orphanage, but I was good at solitaire--

HOLLY

Dwight, I'll have you know I used to rule the roost-- The only person who

could touch me was A.J.--

Michael winces as she talks. He turns into his office.

MICHAEL

Let'ssssss play ball! Let's go!

Wide shot over the bullpen, as Holly shouts from the annex.

HOLLY

Good luck, everyone!

MEREDITH

Get ready to suck it, boys!

PAM

[Hushed] Meredith..!

Close up on Dwight looking over his shoulder, as the game continues without him looking at his screen. He's moving his character forwards.

DWIGHT

Phft, noobs. This isn't like playing Schafts und Loftschteppens, it takes lightning reflexes and hundreds of hours of practice to intimately know every--

A few gunshots sound off. He whips arounds as he dies.

DWIGHT

Wh-what is happening!?

ERIN

O-oh my god-- I got Dwight? I got Dwight! HA! Yes! That... that was fun.

Erin has a deep realisation. Crash zoom on Dwight's face, then on Michael's shocked expression as...

ANDY

Oh COME ON. RGH.

HOLLY

Gotcha Michael!

[Cut to black]

CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

Meredith talking head

MEREDITH

So these last few days, us Counter-Strike gals have been, heh heh.

With a swagger, she blows the barrels of a pair of finger guns and holsters them.

MEREDITH

Takin' out the trash.

Montage: shot of the men disappointed losing - head in hands, leaning back in chairs - while the women hoot and holler in triumph (Holly is now at Phyllis's desk).

Andy focused deeply, only to misstep in game and fall to his death. He stomps into the conference room and squats in the corner, hands on his head, and shouts.

Pam gets a double kill with a sniper rifle, with shouts sounding from Michael and Dwight with each shot.

Dwight brings in his gaming computer from home; a large black box with a stealth bomber-esque aesthetic. He slams it down on his desk with his eyes locked on Erin, who doesn't back down. She gets up from her chair and raises her arms to taunt him.

Holly gets a kill on Michael. She cheers, and goes to twirl pretend revolvers at Michael, who grits his teeth and pushes his nose towards the screen.

MEREDITH (V.O.)

We're like a well-oiled *machine*. I never knew I sat so close to natural-born killers. These men-- they're almost as bad at this game as my kid.

Back to Meredith.

MEREDITH

Yeah, I got good at Counter-Strike so I could show Jake up in front of his dumb friends, if he ever gave me guff. [thumbs to herself, smug] Modern mom of the year, right here.

Michael talking head, hand wrapped around his mouth.

MICHAEL

[beat] ... we're getting literally murdered out there. It wasn't supposed to be like this, nuh-uh. The boss in a video game is the best and toughest guy... Holly's doing great though... but bosses aren't supposed to be beaten!

MICHAEL'S OFFICE. MORNING

Holly knocks on the open door and sticks her head and a

finger-gun in, before entering.

HOLLY

Freeze - SAS! Don't move! [laughs]
Hey, more Counter-Strike at lunch?
Maybe you and the guys will get lucky
against me and the pink berets.

Michael's puts a brave face on.

MICHAEL

You... know it! But this time I'll
stop going... easy on you. I was, er,
reading War and Peace while we were
playing, but now you're in for the
real thing this time.

HOLLY

I *thought* you were holding back! Don't
be afraid to give us some real heat,
Michael - we can take it! Our egos
aren't *that* fragile--

Michael winces

MICHAEL

Well then you're gonna get my best.
Like John McLean on speed. I am John--
I will be John McLean.

HOLLY

We'll see. Yippie ki-yay mother
fwaaaaah!

Holly shuffles out the room with a skip in her step.

STAIRWELL AND CORRIDOR. MORNING.

Jim and Pam are ascending the stairs to work.

PAM

Hey, thanks for taking care of CiCi's
breakfast.

JIM

Oh no problem. I never knew she liked
smushed lentils so much. How long has
that been a thing?

PAM

[laughing] Since birth! You definitely
know this, Jim.

JIM

I... did know that, I just needed
reminding. [nervous laugh]

A beat passes

PAM

You up for some more Counter-Strike? I wouldn't blame you if you needed some you-time, but it's nice that we're playing something together.

JIM

What do you mean me-time?

PAM

You literally spent all weekend with CiCi - I barely got any time with her! Couldn't even feed my own child.

JIM

And she *still* loves watching reruns of Teletubbies more than her own flesh-and-blood dad. They fall over - tears of joy; I give her my season-best peekaboo performance - just tears.

PAM

Jim, those T.V. shows are designed to hypnotise kids. She's not gonna forget who her *dad* is.

Jim sighs and nods, placating Pam.

PAM

Besides, you'll want to play at least one game today; so you can see my... big surpr*i-iii*ise!

Pam pulls a small thumb drive out of her pocket. She has her cheeky smile on.

PAM

It might actually help you win.

JIM

Ha, joke's on you, *nothing* can help me win - you just wasted your time.

Pam laughs

JIM

Oh, but I do have a meeting at lunch, so you'll have to kick my ass quicker than usual, okay?

Pam agrees, and they walk on.

BULL PEN. DAY

Jim and Pam enter the office and greet a tired, panda-eyed Erin, staring at her keyboard.

JIM
Morning Erin.

Erin is startled to attention

ERIN
HAAHHHH GOOD MORNING JIM, HI.

Erin frantically clicks and hits her keyboard. The camera swings behind her to show her trying to quit a game of Counter-Strike.

ERIN
[mumbling] Come onnnnn.

PAM
Is everything okay? Did the server go down again?

CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

Erin talking head. She looks like she's been gaming for days straight.

ERIN
I've gotten a little extra practice in. I played so much I didn't even realise Gabe has been sick all week with the mumps! Isn't that crazy? But you don't understand, killing Dwight was like I grabbed him by the shoulders and shook him, stole all his pride and knowledge - even his dignity! It's like I-I-I.. own Dwight now. He's mine. I owned him then, and I had to practice to make sure I can own him again! Maybe I'll own Michael and Jim too. I don't want Andy, though.

BULL PEN. DAY

Dwight enters the office behind Jim and Pam. Him and Erin lock eyes. Erin suddenly stands up. Dwight very, very slowly hangs his coat on the rack, still staring at Erin. He misses the hook and it droops on the floor. He doesn't react.

CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

Dwight Talking head

DWIGHT

I've created a monster, so now it's my honour-bound duty to destroy Erin.

Dwight slowly pulls out a combat knife as he talks. He holds it up dramatically to the camera before yanking the blade off the handle, revealing a USB port.

DWIGHT

This a drive containing an archive of everything I've ever been taught about Counter-Strike - tactics, plays, stats-- everything. I'll absorb years of knowledge and then destroy her. Afterwards I'll celebrate with a fresh hog roast-- ouch.

Dwight pushes the blade on as he talks, nicking himself and flinching.

BULL PEN. DAY

Oscar finishes a conversation with Stanley, both look happy as Oscar pats him on the back. Meredith and Andy are talking loudly about Counter-Strike nearby, making them both roll their eyes. He approaches accounting and Angela's desk.

OSCAR

Angela, I know you're sick of this shooter stuff-- a few of us are gonna play our own game in the break room at lunch. I've got some cards, you're welcome to join us.

ANGELA

[Relieved] Ugh, *thank you* Oscar! It's like being in the same cave as the Taliban!

Oscar gives an awkward nod and leaves. Angela looks back at Andy and Meredith and flaps.

ANGELA

Who needs a video game when you can just play some Rummy? Ugh.

Oscar catches Kevin on the way back to his desk. Kevin's got snacks in both hands.

OSCAR

Oh Kevin, some of us are gonna play our own thing later. I've got some cards, you in?

KEVIN

Aw yeah! I'm in... like Kev-in.

OSCAR

Alright!

Oscar goes to fist bump Kevin, but avoids his full hands and pats him firmly on the chest instead. Kevin pockets his snacks, looks to the camera and airs out his blazer in triumph - there's a massive stain on his chest where Oscar smushed his breast-pocket sub sandwich into his shirt.

CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

Kevin talking head. The stain is still on his shirt, peeking out.

KEVIN

I'm not that great at a lot of games. Although... There was one I was *really* good at: Hungry Hungry Hippos. [smiles] I was the best.

After a beat he lifts up an oversized trophy with a hippo on top. The plaque reads "Hungry Hungry Hippo World Champion" and Kevin's name is listed from years 2007-2009. As he talks he shows off a framed newspaper cutting.

KEVIN

Literally - I won the world championship! I woulda gone back to defend the title, but all the glory... it stopped being about the sport, y'know?

Kevin nods solemnly. The camera zooms in on the paper cutting: There's a photo of Kevin holding the trophy, while two disappointed kids next to him hold smaller ones. The headline reads: *Scrantonian Adult Wins Hungry Hippo Championship*. Subheading: *Age restrictions to be introduced next year*.

BULL PEN. DAY

People start shuffling to lunch. Holly puts a hand on Phyllis's shoulder and they give each other a nod. As Phyllis gets up she looks over to Oscar, who points to the break room. Holly take's Phyllis's seat as Pam talks to all the players.

PAM

Before we start, I have something to show everyone! I had some spare time these last few days [looks to Jim] so, with a little help from some art friends... I've made a new map for us to play on!

Oohs sound out. Holly looks at her screen where a map called

"DM_Office" has been selected in the lobby. Michael strains himself working it out.

MICHAEL

DM Office? DM..? What does that mean? I don't understand-- wait. Wait. Wait. Wait. Wait. D... Dunder? Mifflin? Is this... Pam, does the DM stand for Dunder Mifflin? This is a Dunder Mifflin office map? Which office-- did corporate make this?

PAM

Michael, I made a map of our office-- this place! There's already a bunch of office furniture in the game and this is just a series of boxes... There's very little unique or inspiring about this place, where I spend a third of my life.

ANDY

This is IT! There's no way you can beat us on home turf! Do you know how much time I *spend* here?

HOLLY

Yes.

Michael finally has a little optimism, and begins chuckling.

MICHAEL

I've worked here for 15 years, ladies. I know this place better than my own home-- I dream of this office. My will says to bury me here. A man knows two places better than anywhere: his cradle and his grave!

DWIGHT

Pam, how did you get a hold of my blueprints? People aren't supposed to know about the catacombs yet!

ERIN

Let's just play! LET'S JUST PLAY! I got your blueprints right here, Dwight! BRING IT.

Erin flips Dwight off. There are gasps. Meredith laughs and cheers. Dwight is taken aback, as is Andy. Holly pretends not to see.

ANDY

Whoa, Erin! That is *not* cool!

DWIGHT

No Andy, it's okay... she has let the game fully into her heart. I accept your challenge, and acknowledge your trash talk.

JIM

[Spinning his finger in the 'start up' motion] Great, good luck, et cetera, let's start 'er up on this wonderful gift my wife has blessed us with.

The game starts, with the men (counter-terrorists) starting in the parking lot. It does indeed resemble the office, with the players having to traverse up to the office itself. The women (terrorists) start in the office, protecting basic-looking hostages. It's laid out exactly like the real Dunder Mifflin, with basic looking furniture. Comments are made about its accuracy.

Andy lazily looks around the digital recreation of the parking lot.

ANDY

Wow Pam this is great work! You even got my Prius in here, you even caught the breezy, paled turquoise colour of the--

From one of the office windows Erin opens fire and kills Andy.

ANDY

Geez- HEY I WAS COMPLIMENTING THE ARTIST! Damnit!

ERIN

This is war, Andy! It's no time to say nice things to Pam - FIGHT ME!

PAM

W-we can do both.

Michael and Dwight push into the office proper.

DWIGHT

This is everything I've been training for. I don't need hidden weapons or secret tunnels or tear gas in the sprinklers. Just my encyclopaedic knowledge of the building, and a high-power rifle.

MICHAEL

Just cover me, Dwight.

DWIGHT
Always and forever.

Before the can get past the entrance corridor and reception desk, they're pinned down by a hail of bullets.

MICHAEL
Holy crap-- do you have a smoke grenade?

DWIGHT
No, I spend all my money on corpse-shooting ammo.

MICHAEL
Dwight, come on!

DWIGHT
[sincerely] It's okay... I know what I need to do. Please follow me, Michael, and know... it's been an honour serving you in this office.

MICHAEL
You... will respawn, why are you--

DWIGHT
NOW, GO FOR YOUR OFFICE, MICHAEL!
AHHHHHHHH!

Dwight runs out to return fire, but gets cut down in a second. Erin roars, filled with adrenaline. Michael runs and shoots, managing to get into his office and then... a single shot kills him.

HOLLY
Ha! Very predictable!

Holly is in the office with a shotgun.

MICHAEL
Y-you are not allowed in there, that's my property! You're playing dirty!

HOLLY
Sounds like someone's feeling terrorised!

PAM
Holly's the boss now, Michael.

Michael's at a low point. Before he respawns he opens an Internet Browser window over the game and Googles "How to win at Counter Strike". He's met with the top result that advertises a cheat program for the game. He clicks it and there's a gaudy page with info about the cheat program.

Bullet points read "infinite ammo! Never miss! Invincibility!" He hovers over a big "download" button, tempted, but Andy calls for him and he goes back to the game.

BREAK ROOM. DAY.

Kevin, Stanley, Phyllis, Angela, are sitting around two pushed-together tables as Oscar joins them, shuffling cards.

OSCAR

Alllllright, who's ready for something a little more... cerebral?

KEVIN

Of course, but I thought we were playing poker, not having breakfast?

STANLEY

Now we're talking! [chuckles]

PHYLLIS

I bet you have a good poker face, you know, because of that affair.

STANLEY

And now it's gonna finally *make* me money instead of costing me.

ANGELA

Hey-! No gambling! And you said nothing about Poker, Oscar.

OSCAR

Oh no, I don't even know how to play poker! This, ladies and gentlemen... is Denouncement.

He puts the cards on the table, which are made to look like old parchment with old Medieval-style illustrations on them.

KEVIN

What the hell is Denouncement?

OSCAR

Oh it's great, it's all about tricking your opponents so that you can put yourself next in line for the crown.

Oscar cheerfully pulls out a tiny metal crown from his pocket. The others' faces drop as he explain the rules.

OSCAR

It's simple: the deck is shared between us and whoever has the most serf cards go first. Then, we have the first vying round--

PHYLLIS

What's a serf card?

OSCAR

Oh, each serf gives you additional power to build up you own duchy, and then you can consult with the royal family to broker a vassalage deal with them. You have to convince other players to give you other serfs so--

PHYLLIS

Well how do we do that?

OSCAR

By... talking, making bargains, plotting with them to give them other powers...

Slow zoom on Stanley's 'dead inside' look, as Oscar explains convoluted rules and answers Phyllis's questions.

BULL PEN. DAY

With one last blast of gunfire, Jim clicks his lips and the "terrorists win" sfx plays. The girls cheer and Michael catapults out of his chair, striding into the conference room.

MICHAEL

All the boys. Conference room. ONE MINUTE. TEN SECONDS. RIGHT NOW.

He slams the door. Dwight immediately follows. Andy gets up and walks in with exaggerated arm swings. Jim checks his watch, looks at the exit and then follows the men.

Pam looks around at the women, who are all pretty jubilant at humiliating the men. The gather around reception.

PAM

Wow. I, um, thought that level might give them a chance, but I guess not. I just kinda feel bad.

ERIN

Why? They keep throwing themselves in the way of my Desert Eagle without checking their sight lines or covering their angles. They're *unorganised*.

PAM

I know they're bad at the game, but... Jim's been spending so much time with CiCi recently, and I come here and blow his head off.

HOLLY

I keep asking Michael to switch the teams, but he's determined to beat us like this! It was never this bad in Nashua! I never bundled everyone into a room to plan an attack when I lost to A.J.

MEREDITH

Your ex used to kick your ass at CS?

PAM

[Piecing it together] Oh no, you didn't tell Michael, did you?

HOLLY

... Yeah, but I mean we're finally *finally* together! What's a little thing like that?

PAM

But you know how sensitive he is to this stuff. He wore size 18 shoes for a week when Jan mentioned the Nicks player she used to date. I had to cork the corners of all the desks.

HOLLY

Yeah, but... It's just a video game, right?

Holly tries to shrug it off, then glances to the conference room. Darryl walks past the women and greets them on his way to the conference room.

CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

Darryl knocks on the door and enters. He's met with a game-planning session; Michael is at the easel where he's drawn the floor plan of the office, arrows strewn all over it; Dwight is pacing up and down the room; Jim's just sat down, arms folded; Andy stands up to greet Darryl.

DARRYL

Hey, you said you needed a consultation? Can't this wait until I had my leftover linguini and ragu?

ANDY

Thank God you're here - we're getting our asses kicked--

DARRYL

Makes sense.

ANDY

No, on Counter-Strike.

DARRYL

Counter... Is that the Call of Duty-looking game everyone's on? You brought me up here to help you be better at a game I ain't ever played?

MICHAEL

Listen Darryl, We are *almost* there, but we need some help with weaponry... I thought you might be able to-- y'know, give us the word on the street about the best.. pieces? The best guns? What's Tupac throwing out nowadays?

Crash zoom on a tired Darryl.

CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

Darryl talking head.

DARRYL

I don't really do video games or the internet. Er, I play a bit of Madden or COD with my nephews, that's it. The only things I know how to do online are [lists on fingers] buy sixty pound bags of kitty litter, watch dudes falling over on YouTube, and the button that goes 'yeeaaaah' like CSI Miami. And porn, but [shrugs] c'mon.

CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

Dwight is at the map, drawing around Michael's office.

DWIGHT

I still say our best bet is to take Michael's office and build a defensive fortification there. If I take the centre position here-- [Circles Michael's chair]

MICHAEL

No no no, we need to take this seriously! These terrorists have *literally* taken over the office now! We have to beat them or-or... we'll never be able to see them eye-to-eye, despite practicing so much, a-and wanting it so badly, and finally getting the role as their anti-terrorist, they won't even notice us

because we won't be as good as the last anti-terrorists. And who cares about crap anti-terrorists who can't get a kill and can't win at Counter-Strike at lunch.

Michael's heartfelt 'admission' makes the meeting awkward. There's a moment of silence before Jim slaps his thighs.

JIM

I... have a meeting, now. So, good luck strategising for a fun lunch time game, or whatever the heck *that* was about.

DWIGHT

AWOL? When we need disposable bodies the most, Jim?

MICHAEL

[Glum] Just let him go, clearly work's more important to him.

Jim leaves the conference room. There's another moment of silence.

ANDY

Darryl you need to fill in for Jim.

DARRYL

Err, yeah... but I'm more of a mercenary type--

Michael searches through his wallet. He takes out some notes and hands them to Darryl.

MICHAEL

Here's fifty bucks.

DARRYL

Thank you. [Holds up money to the camera] This is for you, Mittens.

CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

With the girls still talking around Pam and Erin's desk, they catch Jim grabbing his bag and coat from his desk on his way out.

PAM

Hey!

JIM

Hey, I'm off to that meeting.

MEREDITH

Is it your 'Losers Anonymous' meeting?

Meredith high-fives Erin.

JIM

No - that's tomorrow - I'm seeing a client.

PAM

Oh who are you seeing? You never said.

Jim scrunches his face

JIM

Oh just some new business on the outskirts.

MEREDITH

Then you, ah, might need your brochure there, Mr. Salesman.

Meredith points to a glossy Sabre brochure propped against Jim's computer. He hesitates for a moment before stuffing it in his bag.

JIM

Such sharp eyes outside the game, too. Thank you Meredith. [Taps temple] I mean the whole thing is up here, anyway. [forced laugh]

Jim says his goodbyes - a quick kiss and love-you - to Pam and heads out. Pam is a little confused, but it doesn't have time to sit with her; the men leave the conference room and stand with Michael.

MICHAEL

We.. cordially invite you to another match. If you'll have us. We'd like to kick your ass.

ANDY

YEAH!

Darryl flinches at Andy's over-the-top shouting.

CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

Pam talking head.

PAM

And now we're playing video games on work time, just as predicted! All it took was a boss with an inferiority complex and a team of surprisingly

good women to spur him on. I'm just glad Jim is playing it more casually than the rest of the boys.

Shot of Jim pulling into the driveway of his own home and Pam's mum opening the front door - CiCi in her arms - and meeting him. She then gives CiCi to Jim, says her goodbyes and then leaves. Jim gives CiCi a lot of love and attention, pulling out some ping pong balls from his pocket and showing them to her. He then enters the house with her.

PAM (V.O.)

He can just play a dumb video game at his own pace and not have some existential crisis about it. What is it with men and taking games too seriously?

[Cut to black]

BULL PEN. DAY

There's another game of Counter-Strike on the office map underway, with the typical cheering, shot-calling and game sfx sounding off. The women are still playing intensely; Pam perks up when she hears Holly hawing loudly at a kill.

PAM

Hey Holly, did you remember to buy *the right size shoes*, like I said earlier?

Holly doesn't turn away from the screen, but there's a shot of her smile dropping.

HOLLY

Oh, y-yeah! I almost forgot! thanks Pam.

ANDY

You can buy better boots?! Maybe now I can kill Meredith before she does that cowboy-dance thing on me again--
[gunshot sfx] OH NO NO NO DAMNIT--

MICHAEL'S OFFICE. DAY

Michael dies again, and cries out, going to slam his fist on the desk but stopping himself at the last minute. He brings up the window again for the cheat program. He takes a deep breath, but once again flicks off it.

CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

Michael talking head.

MICHAEL

Cheaters never prosper! I've never cheated *once* in my entire life - why would I need to? I have everything I need right-- [taps temple] here. I'm too smart to cheat.

MICHAEL'S OFFICE. DAY

Back at it, Michael's deep in concentration, and gasps as he confronts Holly; the two get in a gunfight. He survives longer than he has previously, and he's getting excited.

MICHAEL

Oh, oh! Here we go! C'mon!

BULL PEN. DAY

We see Holly's POV of the gunfight: she's shooting inaccurately on purpose, putting on a show for Michael.

HOLLY

Ohhhh, I nearly gotcha! Y'just too slippery!

She smiles to the camera. Erin suddenly becomes aggressive.

ERIN

NO HOLLY! Get down, I've got you!

HOLLY

Wait Erin, hold on--!

ERIN

GET AWAY FROM HER! RRRARGH!

MICHAEL'S OFFICE. DAY

There's booming gunshots sounding as Erin blasts Michael away from the side with a shotgun, emptying the gun into him. Michael curses hard enough to be bleeped. He talks as he brings back the cheat program window and clicks the download button extra hard.

MICHAEL

[Bleeeeeeeep] Hurrrrrrrrrrrh, okay. Okay. That issss... it.

CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

Michael talking head. He's more frantic than his previous talking head section.

MICHAEL

Cheaters never prosper, but being pragmatic does! You know what that

word means? Pragmatic? Downloading something that makes me as good at the game that I normally am anyway-- that's *pragmatic*. When I applied to Dunder Mifflin I emphasised some points on my resume and now I run the place-- being *pragmatic* can put you where you deserve to be! It's not cheating if you always had those skills in you, and we all have limitless potential.

BULL PEN. DAY

Back in the game, the tide starts turning in the mens' favour. More of the women start groaning about being killed, and the men's mood start to pick up. Michael's almost in awe of his own 'skills'.

MEREDITH

Hey come on! I was right behind you!
How did you see?!

MICHAEL

[From his office] I've got eyes in the back of my head! [Giggles]

Though the womens' protests get harsher, now they're getting killed in unfair ways. Pam and Michael are caught in a gunfight, and two massive gunshots sound from Michael's rifle in the space of a second.

PAM

Alright. Michael, what's going on?

MICHAEL

[Through laughter] I don't know-- what do you mean 'what's going on?'

PAM

That rifle has the pull-back-thingy, and you just fired it twice really quick.

DWIGHT

Pam, it's called an AWP, and the "pull-back-thing" is its bolt action. and it takes around 1.7 seconds to load a round, he must be using a different--

Another two massive gun shots sound in quick succession. Pam throws her arms up, looking at Dwight.

PAM

Well you heard that, Dwight.

DWIGHT
[conflicted] ... Yes I did.

HOLLY
Michael, how are you doing that?

Michael ignores everyone and keeps playing. Pam gets up and walks into his office.

MICHAEL
Pam, what are you doing? I'm gonna kill you if you don't get back and--

PAM
Michael, are you cheating?

Pam walks around to see Michael's screen. He's inside the office part of the map - his camera is fixed on a single, unmoving point, no matter what direction he moves.

PAM
Why is your camera locked like that?

MICHAEL
It's... part of the game. You mean you never learned?

Michael rounds a corner ingame, revealing that his camera was locked onto Pam's character. He instinctively fires his rifles twice quickly - something it shouldn't be able to do. Pam turns, points to Michael's desk and...

PAM
Michael is cheating! Everyone, Michael's cheating! I don't know how, but he is.

There's groans and complaining amongst the players, throwing their hands up and turning their ire to Michael.

ERIN
WHAT?! When we were having so much fun?!

DARRYL
Michael, that's bad. Just ruined everyone's game. It'll take a hundred to keep me playing now--

DWIGHT
I gave my life for you, Michael. You disrespect my sacrifice--

HOLLY
[Standing up] Michael, how could you? I thought we were having fun, why'd

you have to make it so serious?

Michael steps out of his office.

MICHAEL

Serious? You and the girls were making it serious, taking it so seriously and-- and being so good at the game!

As things heat up, Oscar's group are about to leave the break room, but quickly turn around as they notice an argument breaking out.

HOLLY

We wanted to switch the teams up, but you refused! If we played together--

MICHAEL

N-No, no no no. Why put the two best players on the same team.

DWIGHT

Debatable.

Everyone shushes Dwight.

HOLLY

Michael... are you just trying to beat me on Counter-Strike? Is this because of Nashua, and A.J.?

Crash zoom on Michael, pouting.

MICHAEL

I... don't need to prove I'm better than them. [laughing] I beat them in business! I am the survivor! I-- I am better than them... Than A.J.! I am *pragmist*! [shouting] I Bet A.J. doesn't even know the *meaning* of the word!

Michael storms out of the office and slams the door. Everyone is in shock.

JIM AND PAM'S HOUSE. EXTERIOR. DAY

Shot the living room window, looking into the house. Jim is playing with CiCi, with some ping pong balls. His phone rings and he pulls it out his pocket.

JIM

Hey.

PAM (ON PHONE)

Hey, did you get out of your meeting.

JIM
[caught off-guard] Sure did.

PAM (ON PHONE)
That was fast.

JIM
[Nervous laughter] Ha yeah, don't, er,
rub it in!

STAIRWELL AND CORRIDOR. MORNING.

Pam is on her phone in the stairwell, regaling Jim of the preceding weirdness.

PAM
Anyway, guess who took the game too
seriously and started cheating?

JIM (ON PHONE)
I'm gonna need a clue--

PAM
Michael. He's left the office
because... I dunno, I think he thinks
he has to beat Holly?

JIM AND PAM'S HOUSE. EXTERIOR. DAY

PAM (ON PHONE)
It's petty, even for him. I feel bad
for her, she just wanted to have some
fun and he's made it weird.

JIM
That... suuuuucks. I'd love to help,
but I'm gonna be here for a while--

PAM (ON PHONE)
I thought you said you'd finished? I
just need you to swing by Costco and
grab some cookie dough and a big tub
of ice cream. Homemade Ben and Jerry's
is the only thing that'll lure him
back.

JIM
[Unsure] Erm, I'll--

PAM (ON PHONE)
Great, thanks, I gotta go-- Erin's
trying to bully Kevin into playing--
ERIN STOP--

The phone call ends

JIM

Bye.

Jim puts his phone away and looks around, and at CiCi. He sits her on his knee and bobs her up and down.

JIM

[Baby talk] Let's see if nanna will come back and look after you while your daddy deals with his other baby!

Jim makes another call on his phone. He connects, and there's an out-of-breath voice on the other line muttering.

PAM'S MOM

[distant, giggling] Stop! It's Jim, honey, shh. [close, out of breath] Hi Jim, sweetie, is everything okay?

JIM

Oh!

Jim immediately puts down the phone, still staring ahead. He slowly looks at Cici, who gurgles.

PARKING LOT. DAY

Jim's car pulls into a space in the parking lot, near the entrance. He gets out and grabs a shopping bag from the passenger seat. He begins talking to the camera.

JIM

If you ask me, I think it's a tactical error to draw our incompetent boss back towards the office, but I guess Pam and Holly--

Jim stops as he looks around the parking lot. He spots Michael on the other side. He's way too focused to notice Jim: He's mimicking holding a rifle, looking into the windows and shooting. Sometimes he takes a knee to fire. He eventually SAS-walks around the side of the building.

Jim bunches up his face.

JIM

I'm... gonna leave Tom Clancy there, while I...

Jim opens the back door and plucks out CiCi in her travel seat.

JIM

... bring my li'l slugger in to meet everyone! [baby talk] Yes I will! If anyone asks, you're buying 10 new

printers from me!

Jim carries her into the office.

BULL PEN. DAY.

Jim enters the office to find Pam, Holly and Erin discussing something at reception. Everyone else is at their task as normal. Erin has snapped out of her bloodlust.

ERIN

Holly, I'm so, so sorry for killing Michael. If I had known your plan I would've shot myself instead. I-I-I can't be trusted with Counter-Strike any more - I left Gabe with a bedpan and a loaf of bread! I--

Erin picks up her monitor and throws it in the bin, wires still attached, as if she's casting the demon out of her life.

ERIN

RRAR! There! Can I borrow a new computer?

HOLLY

Erin that's... [turns] Oh hey Jim!

Jim tries to hold CiCi behind him.

JIM

Hey, I got the bait you asked for.

HOLLY

[to Pam] Cookie dough and--

PAM

Yup.

HOLLY

Ugh, so much better than store-bought.

Pam hrugs at the camera. CiCi whines.

PAM

Thanks for that Jim-- wait, CiCi?! What is she doing here?!

JIM

[Sheepish] Ohhh your mom had, er, to dart off real quick, so now it's a work day for baby!

PAM

Oh, that isn't like her, [reaching for

her phone] I'd better give her...

Jim puts a hand on her phone

JIM

Doooo not-- don't. She's hard at it.

Jim's face sours like he ate an entire lemon, at his impromptu phrasing.

JIM

[Cough] The main take away from all this is, CiCi's gonna join me for my work calls! Aren't you, bubba?

Jim puts the seat on his desk, and CiCi gets hypnotised by Jim's screensaver and starts laughing. Jim sighs.

Pam checks the plastic bag of treats and hands it to Holly.

HOLLY

Thanks, you guys. Michael couldn't've gone far - his car keys are still in the wall.

Quick zoom in over her shoulder and, indeed, there's a set of keys stabbed in the wall beside Michael's desk.

JIM

Oh I saw him in the parking lot playing Counter-Strike in real life.

HOLLY

Oh, really? Can you show me where?

JIM

Ah, Sorry, baby needs her daddy.

PAM

Jim, I can watch CiCi, you go with Holly.

JIM

Can't Dwight go?

PAM

Dwight dove into the vents as soon as Michael left. Jim, just go.

JIM

He was jut in the parking lot.

They get more tense.

PAM

What-- Why won't you just go? CiCi

will be okay with me.

JIM

But she's with *me* now. Look.

Jim storms into the conference room and points down into the parking lot. Pam and Holly follow.

JIM

[Aggressive] Michael was down there, pointing a pretend gun, being an idiot. Okay?

A beat passes.

HOLLY

I'm just... gonna go find him.

CiCi's unsettled in the background. Pam is concerned.

PAM

Jim... what's gotten into you?

JIM

[Sighs] Nothing, I'm just...

Jim walks past Pam, picks up an upset CiCi and takes her into the break room.

PARKING LOT. DAY

Holly pushes the door open and looks outside. There's no one around. She wanders over to where Jim saw Michael and hears something from around the corner.

DARRYL

C'mon Michael! This ain't no paintball arena - you wanna get run over?

MICHAEL

Standing in the open like that, even Andy would've gotten you. Dead. Do you want *Andy* to get you?

They're in the warehouse. The camera follows Holly as she finds Michael in the middle, 'holding' a finger pistol. The workers give him crooked looks when he talks about them.

MICHAEL

If this was Counter-Strike, you'd all be dead, becauuuuuuuse I would've shot you all. No cheats needed. [chuckling] You can't just stand out in the open--

HOLLY

Michael!

Holly's in the doorway to the warehouse. Michael whips around, 'pistol' in hand. He maintains his aim on Holly

HOLLY

Michael, is all this - the game... is this really about A.J.? Why are you so worried about him?

MICHAEL

I'm not! You know I could beat him at the game, right? H-he doesn't even matter!

HOLLY

You're right - he *doesn't* matter! But you keep letting him matter!

MICHAEL

Because...

HOLLY

Because why? He's better than you at some video game? Because we used to date? I love you, Michael!

MICHAEL

I know, but... He's just... there, y'know? I love you so much and he's still there looking at us, ready to swoop in like a hummingbird.

He puts the pistol to his temple

HOLLY

Michael no--!

MICHAEL

I'd rather pull the trigger than lose you again. Even if there's a one percent chance of that! If that one percent is A.J. then I'll kill myself getting better than him. For you.

Holly slowly approaches him as she 'talks him down'.

HOLLY

It's not a competition! You don't have to prove yourself, or-or be a better A.J.. I want the best Michael, and he's better than this. I know that.

A beat passes, as she continues moving forward.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry I was pragmatic at a video game. I ruined everything.

HOLLY

You didn't, and it's okay - nobody's perfect. You're just you, and that's okay.

Michael lets out a sigh of relief like he's been holding it for hours. His 'pistol' is still at his temple.

HOLLY

How about we go back upstairs?

MICHAEL

y-yeah.

She slowly reaches for the 'pistol' and intertwines her fingers with his, as they have a little kiss. Shot of their kiss, her eyes open mid-kiss, play-shocked.

HOLLY

What... how could you?!

Zoom out to find that Michael's thrust a hand-pistol into Holly's chest.

MICHAEL

Finally gotcha. Oldest trick in the book.

Holly smiles and quickly puts a hand pistol in his chest too. After some laughing and giggling, they start shouting 'bang!' as they run around firing dumb finger guns at each other

Soon after, there's a muffled voice:

MUFFLED VOICE

Michael! Take cover - I'm coming!

There's a quiet 'clang', followed by a vent grating hitting the floor loudly, making Michael and Holly jump. There's a mid shot of Dwight's head and shoulders sticking out of a vent.

DWIGHT

Michael-- thank God! Just stay there, I'm coming down to get you.

Wide shot of Dwight's situation: he's in a vent close to the ceiling - 20ft high - with no shelves or ladder to help him down. He's stuck. Dwight struggles as the forklift drives over to him, slowly beeping as it does.

BREAK ROOM. DAY.

Jim is playing with CiCi in the break room. He's very attentive of her, being very involved with her play. She's just happy chewing one of the Denouncement cards, though. The

rest are in a rough pile on the other side of the table.

Pam looks in through the window for a little bit, before entering slowly.

PAM

Hey. Is CiCi okay?

JIM

Yeah, we're just have a little playtime, aren't we?

Jim tweaks her cheeks, pulling the card out her mouth and looking at it.

JIM

Although she seems more interested in the... Royal council. [Holding up the card]

They both chuckle, as Pam comes to sit down with them.

PAM

Please tell me the game hasn't gotten to you, too. That lunch meeting wasn't real, was it?

JIM

It was... [playfully] a meeting with my most important client!

Jim plays some more with CiCi. Pam is concerned.

PAM

Jim, I miss her too, but we can't just bring her into work like this.

JIM

[baby talk, to CiCi] It's just extra daddy-daughter time! yes it is!

PAM

You know, I think she knows who her dad is by now! [Jokey] I'd say she's *rather fond* of you.

JIM

Yeah... [Sigh] I know, it's just scary, y'know?

Jim turns to Pam

JIM

She's a little person, and she's already so lively and-and she's drawn to things *now* that I never ever looked

at as a kid. [scoffs]

PAM

Oh Jim, I know it's frightening, but it's incredible, too! She's just a baby, but there's so much personality there.

JIM

I just... wanna be there for all of it. So if she could just... steer away from all the colourful screens and throw a ball around--

PAM

Jim..!

JIM

That, I can help with! I... just hope the apple doesn't fall too far from the tree, y'know?

There's a beat, where Pam looks at Jim playing with CiCi, then smiles.

PAM

I told you about the time my dad bought me a giant box of dollar-store crayons for my high-school art class, right?

JIM

[Confused] Yeah, didn't you get *super* angry at him, for not getting the fancy ones?

PAM

[laughing] Yeah, but I was a dumb teenager. And I took it for granted that he was there for every show and presentation, and he... he tried. He'd always talk about the shapes and lines, being an engineer. But he made an effort to step into my world.

Jim shuffles.

PAM

We're not always going to get it right, and that... oof, yeah. But as long as we keep trying, she'll be okay, and you'll be okay. No matter what happens.

JIM

I... I know.

Jim extends out his arm and brings Pam in for a hug and a kiss on the head. They both swoon and coo over CiCi.

PAM

And if she ends up liking video games,
I'll play with her, dummy.

JIM

Well I think I'd be more on her skill
level, so...

They both laugh.

CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

Talking head with Jim, with CiCi on his lap.

JIM

There's that cliché in T.V. and stuff,
where the dad is beaten by their kid
at some sport and they get sad about
it. But... that's the point, right? To
make them better than you; to give
them better than what you had? It
doesn't matter about your own
experience or knowledge, as long as
you can keep them safe and happy, and
you accept them, right? [Baby talk]
That won't stop me from tryna get you
dunking like Jordan, though, will it--

CiCi is cooing, fixated on the camera and the equipment recording them. The crew mumbles, before a hand offers CiCi a light meter. She grabs it. Jim looks on at her - his jokey smile turns sincere as he watches his daughter play.

MICHAEL'S OFFICE. DAY

Michael Talking head.

MICHAEL

The hardest person to fight... is
yourself. But this was tougher than
Mirror Boxing - the mind... it makes
fools of us all. And I'm just glad
Holly is there to tell me when I'm
being too foolish. She's the only one
brave enough.

BULL PEN. DAY

Michael walks back onto the office, holding Holly's hand. Everyone looks to him, but they both wave off the attention to let them know it's fine. Jim and Pam reenter with CiCi; the two couples smile at each other.

Montage of them organising another game of Counter-Strike: Michael points to Holly and Jim, while Pam points at Meredith and Andy.

Andy playfully (and gently) wraps his arms around CiCi's seat and pretends to hold her hostage. Pam shakes her head and shoos him away.

In the warehouse, Dwight - filthy with dust and dirt from the vent - is sitting on a forklift blade going down from the vent. He gets a text and checks his phone. He leaps down and runs to the office.

Michael, Holly and Jim do a 'go team!' hands-in-the-centre thing. Michael counts down, and the camera focuses on Holly's face, which is beaming. Right before they lift off, Dwight thrusts his filthy hand in the centre and shouting 'go team!' overenthusiastically. Everyone is grossed out.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

She taught me to fight myself properly. Not just on Counter-Strike, but on Earth too. A.J.-- he had his chance, and the chump messed it up. But I won't, because she's... my team mate. My ally. She makes me a better person, and a better player.

MICHAEL'S OFFICE. DAY

Michael talking head continues

MICHAEL

I'd fight myself a thousand times for her. Speaking of which...

Camera zooms out as he begins a match. He leans and shouts:

MICHAEL

Is everyone ready?!

There's a chorus of yeses and sures.

HOLLY (OFFSCREEN)

Let's get 'em, Michael!

MICHAEL

Alright! Let's go!

There's a error sound. His smile drops.

MICHAEL

What the... [leans into screen]
Instances of cheating have been detected on this machine and a ban has been issued-- Okay. Great.

He folds his arms and sighs.

[Cut to black]

CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

Kelly talking head

KELLY

Where have we been? Ryan showed me this game, World of Warcraft? It's one of those where there's millions of people on it at the same time. It sucks. Big time. But people started giving me gold as soon as they found out I was a girl. And you can sell that game gold for real actual US dollars! Ryan showed me I was like [BLEEP] what!!! So...

Kelly holds up an expensive-looking handbag.

KELLY

Thank you, SuperWeedMan69!

Kelly shows off a jewel-studded bracelet.

KELLY

So sweet of you, BoneDawgDerrick!

Kelly pulls her collar down to show off a gaudy necklace.

KELLY

Oh, Underscore Sugar Underscore Daddy Underscore, you shouldn't have. Ryan was right - these games are fun!

CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

Ryan talking head. He smirks as he makes his point.

RYAN

I prefer massively multiplayer online games, because I know that, when I pour hundreds of hours of my blood, sweat and tears into them, I'll actually achieve something meaningful.

There's a beat. Ryan fidgets

RYAN

Got some... enchanted long johns the other day... real progress.

Ryan nods.

[Credits]