

# BIRTHDAY GIFT

PRE-PRODUCTION BOOK / CREATIVE DECK



Hau Nguyen | Writer, Director, Producer

## MOVIE SUMMARY

The movie is a mixture of Edgar Wright/ Wong Fu Production style, about this vulnerable college dude who has never been able to impress his best friends with his birthday gifts, so he'll try to fix this problem once for all by finally picking the perfect gift for one of his female best friends, who turns out to be really picky about birthday gifts. He's afraid that he'll disappoint her, so he turns to his other best friends to seek advice, whose suggestions aren't helping at all, but rather making him even more anxious and the situation more problematic.



## DIRECTOR'S VISION

The movie style is kind of where we take a very mundane, everyday life situation/problem and then dramatize it, making it something so crucial as if it's a life and death matter while in fact, it's not. Birthday gift is a very casual thing; but I remember from a child perspective, it's a pretty big deal. That's also one of the jokes: These young adults are acting like a child. That's said, although I want to approach this movie as casual as possible, the most important thing is making sure the intention and the tension are delivered clearly and cohesively, otherwise it's very likely to turn into a joke :D

## CAST MEMBERS / CHARACTER DESCRIPTION



Daniil Kiselev

as NATHAN: Introverted, vulnerable, kind, always try to please everybody, can easily be taken advantage of. Determined but has trust-issue with himself sometimes. His goal is to find a gift that could impress Kelly; because he doesn't want people to think that he is not a good friend just because of not getting the right gift.



Jamie Land

as ALICE: Kinda like the 'big sister' of the group, very strict, but protective; always straight to the point, definitely not the easiest person but inside is a caring heart.



as KEVIN: Probably the coolest, slickest guy in the group. He can read social cues, talk to people, etc. He's basically a people type of person.



Kelly Kuhn

as TRACY: Birthday girl. Sweetest girl in the group, probably also the most spoiled one. If someone hurts her, everybody would stand up; she wants to be coddled. She is also a very vulnerable person but doesn't show it out.



as STEVE: Looking from the outside, he's below average; outsiders would call him a loser, they don't know who he really is as a person, only the closest people; and that's what he really cares about.

# SHORT FILMS REFERENCE

Please go watch them, they are on YouTube

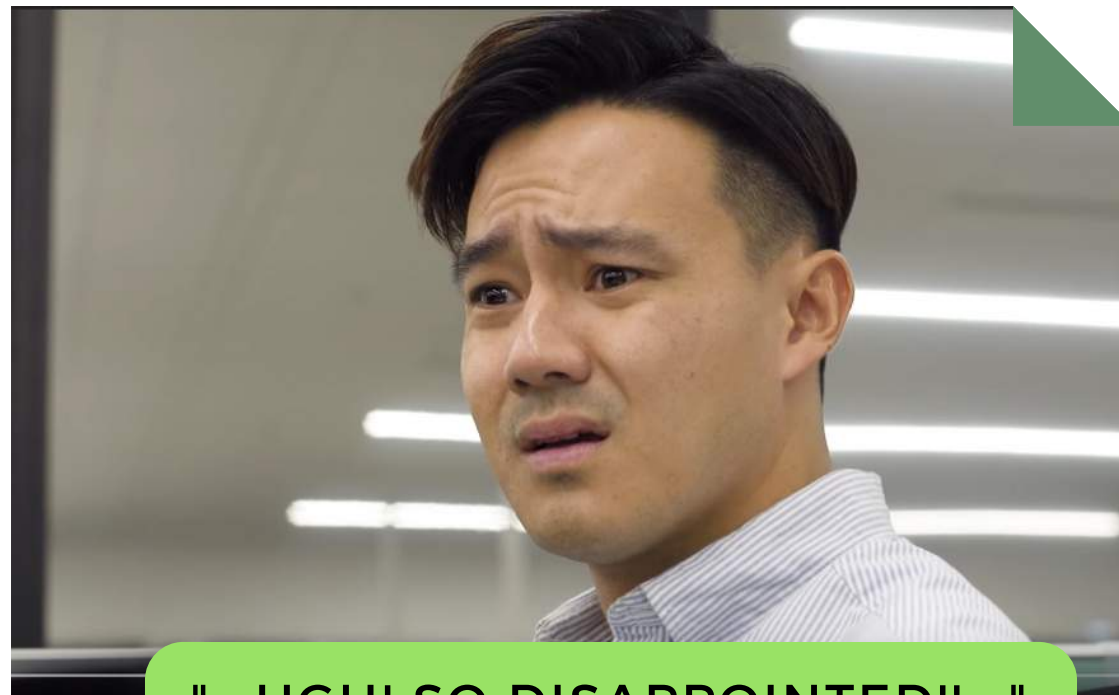
1. (0:00- 0:52) What Do You Want to Eat?! - Wong Fu Production
2. (0:02- 0:15) Scott Pilgrim vs the World (My fave scene) - Lunar Fox
3. (2:25- 3:00) 10 Signs He's Perfect - Wong Fu Production
4. (1:00- 3:00) Gift Deceit - Wong Fu Production
5. (3:35- 5:20) PAPERBOY Short Film - Annie Jaynes

## BIRTHDAY GIFT

Screenplay by: Hau Nguyen



EXT. STARBUCKS, OCC - DAY



"...UGH! SO DISAPPOINTED!!..."

EXT. STARBUCKS, OCC - DAY

1

NATHAN (20), college student, does his homework outside Starbucks. His friend, STEVE, goes out, Redbull on one hand and a coffee cup on the other, gives the Redbull to NATHAN.

STEVE  
Nathan, you need this?

NATHAN  
(Appreciates)  
Oh yeah, thanks Steve!

STEVE  
I'll be right back.

Phone VIBRATES. NATHAN picks up the phone. It is a group text from Tracy.

TRACY (V.O.)  
(Excited)  
Hey guys! So my birthday is gonna be at six tomorrow night. Can you guys come? It gonna be soo much fun! \*kisses & party emoji\*

NATHAN clears the message. Reveals lock screen picture of a group of friends. Tracy is the girl on the right side.

TRACY (CONT'D)  
And guys, don't forget the gift!

A heavy heartbeat suddenly strikes NATHAN.

TRACY (CONT'D) (O.S.)  
I can't wait to see what you got for me \*heart emoji\*  
(cute girly laugh)

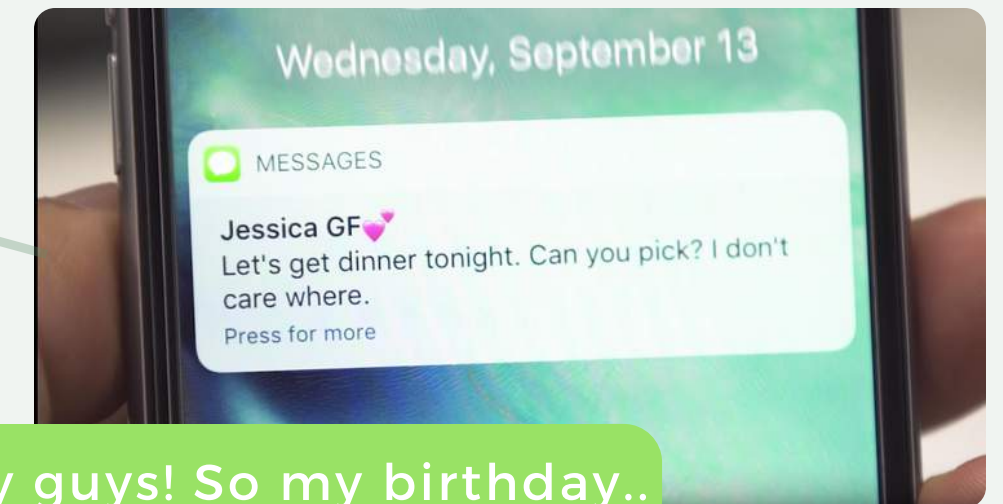
NATHAN anxiously stares at blank space.

NATHAN (V.O.)  
(Low voice, Worried)  
I've been through this before.  
Always an ordeal. Never been easy.

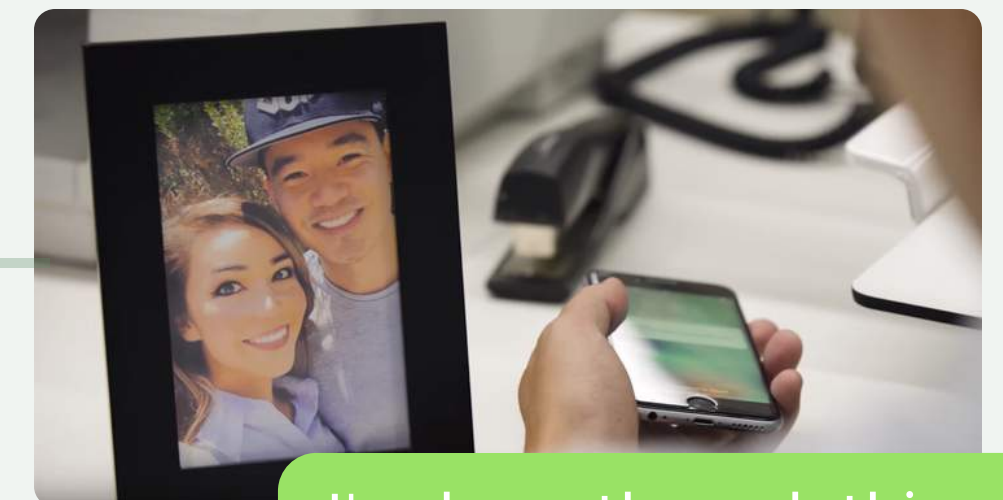
A rapid succession of the faces in the lockscreen with complaining VOICEOVERS: "Do you even know how to pick a gift, NATHAN?", "Ugh! So...Disappointed.", NATHAN (whining): "But I thought you want this one!?", "It's like you don't know us at all NATHAN!" \*Groan\*



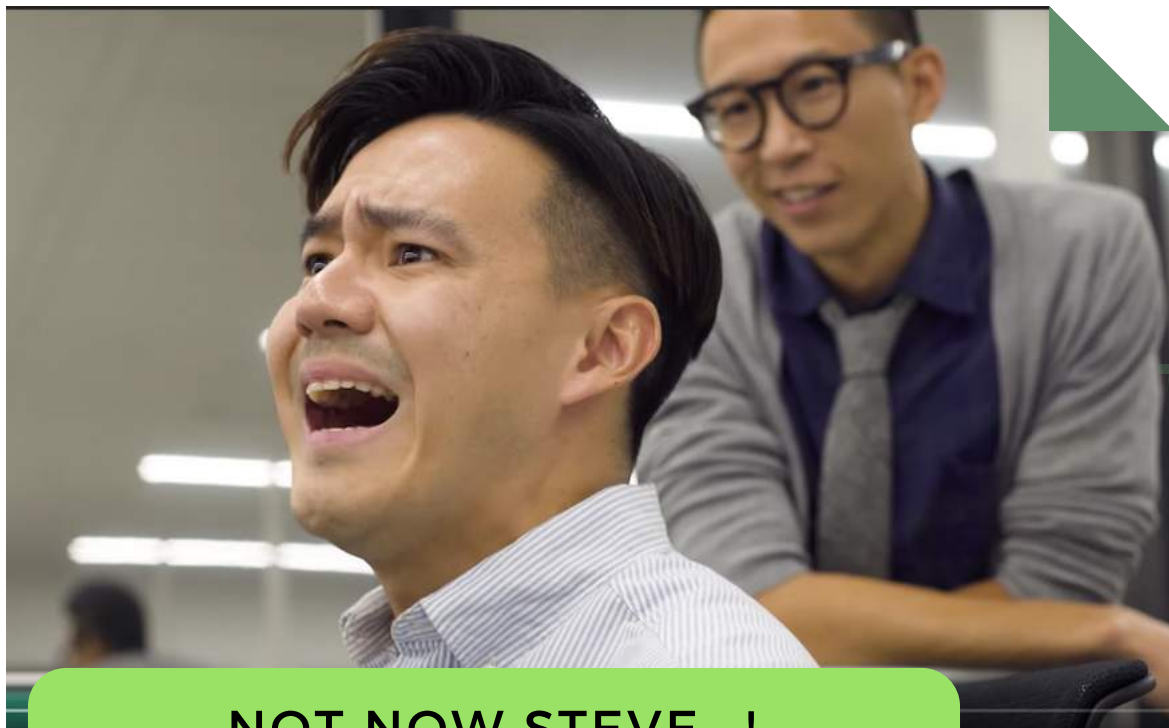
Nathan, you need this?



Hey guys! So my birthday..



I've been through this...



NOT NOW STEVE...!

CONTINUED:

2.

STEVE  
(interrupts)  
\*Groan\* I can't wait for Tracy's birthday tomorrow.  
(beat)  
Whatchu gonna get?

NATHAN  
(Yells at blank space)  
Not now Steve!

NATHAN gets up. HE grabs his Redbull, chugs it. He puts all of his notes into his bag, zips it.

He walks fiercely towards his bike.

NATHAN (V.O.)  
Oh man, I really need to fix this.  
What should I get?!

NATHAN unlocks his bike, puts on his helmet, tightens his helmet, turns his pedal.

EXT. STREET - DAY

2

Hits the pedestrian cross button. The button starts counting down "...5...4...3..."

NATHAN (CONT'D)  
(pondering)  
What should I get? What should I get? What should I-

"2...1..." -A gasp of realization on NATHAN's face. Stoplight turns green.

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM - DAY

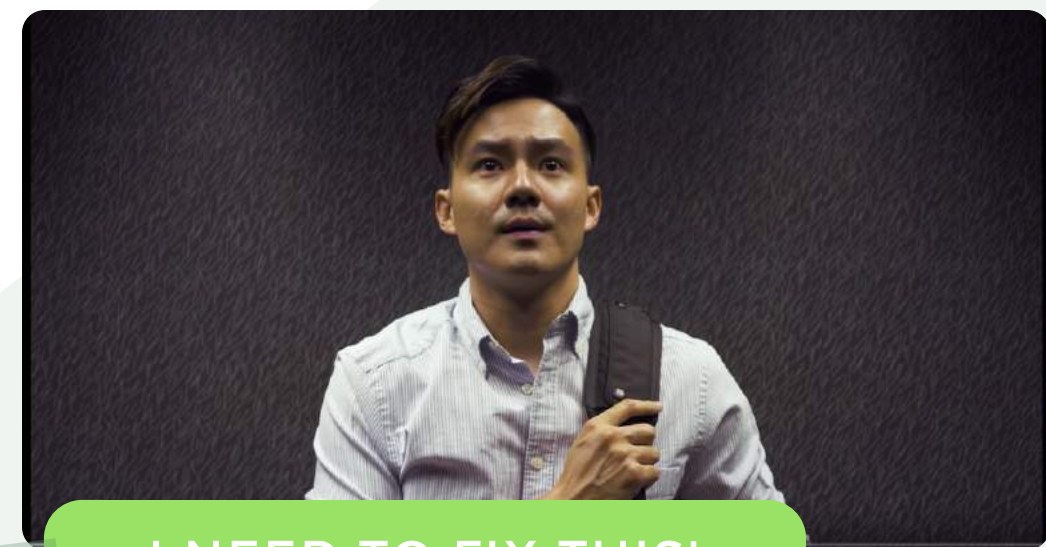
3

Doorknob turns. NATHAN enters. Phone DIALING.

INTERCUT with a girl on her phone. Both face each other, sprint their conversation.

ALICE  
What do you want?

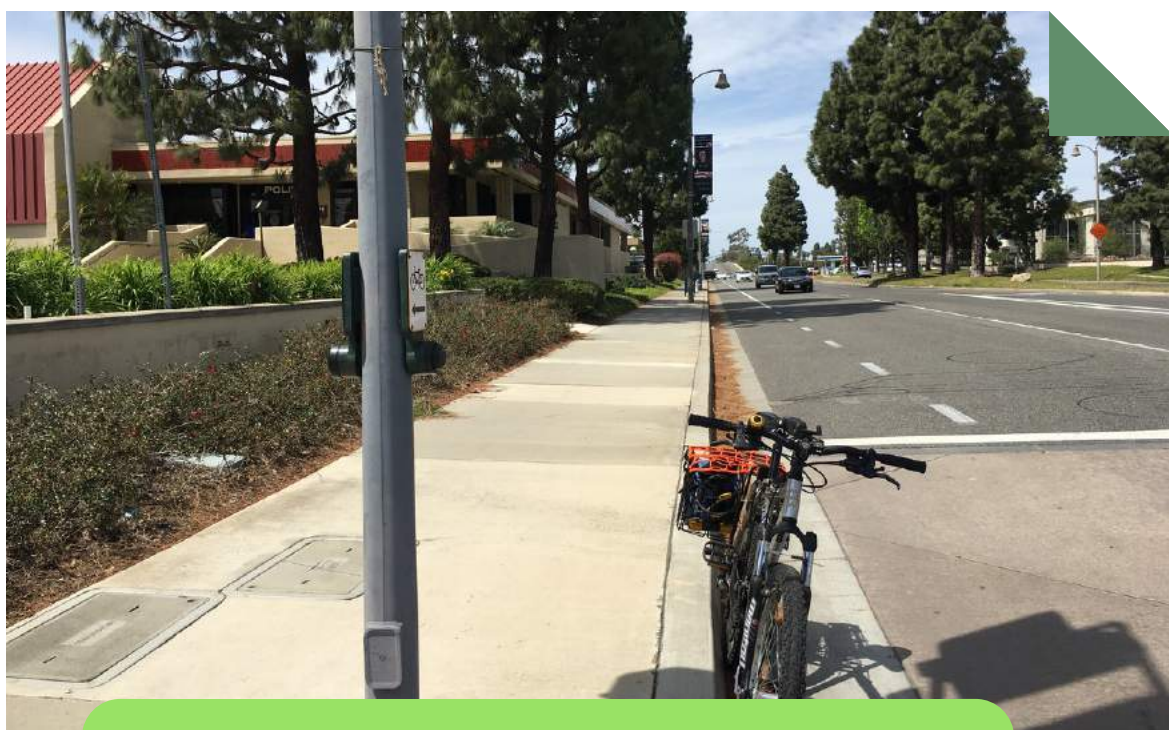
NATHAN  
Alice! It's me NATHAN.



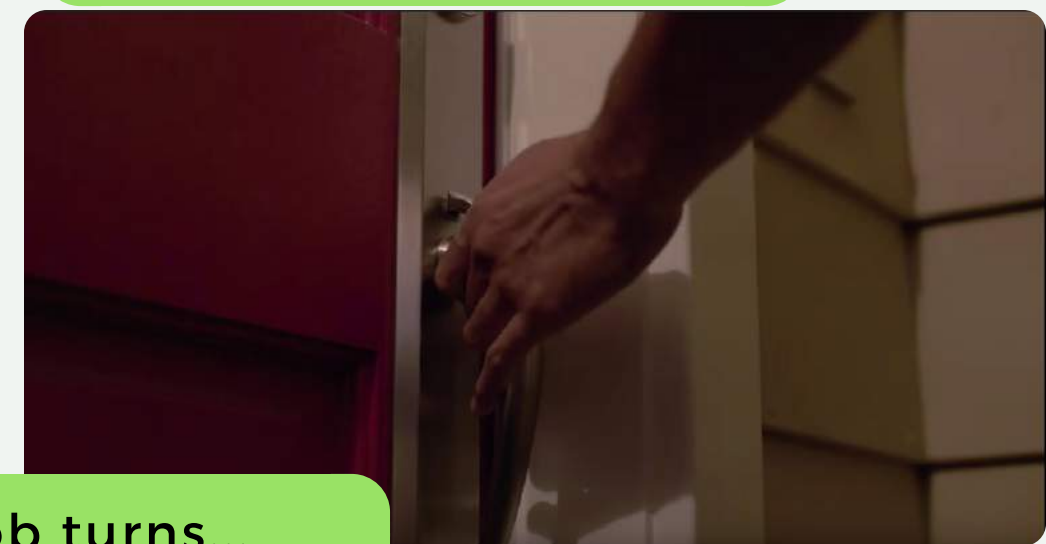
I NEED TO FIX THIS!



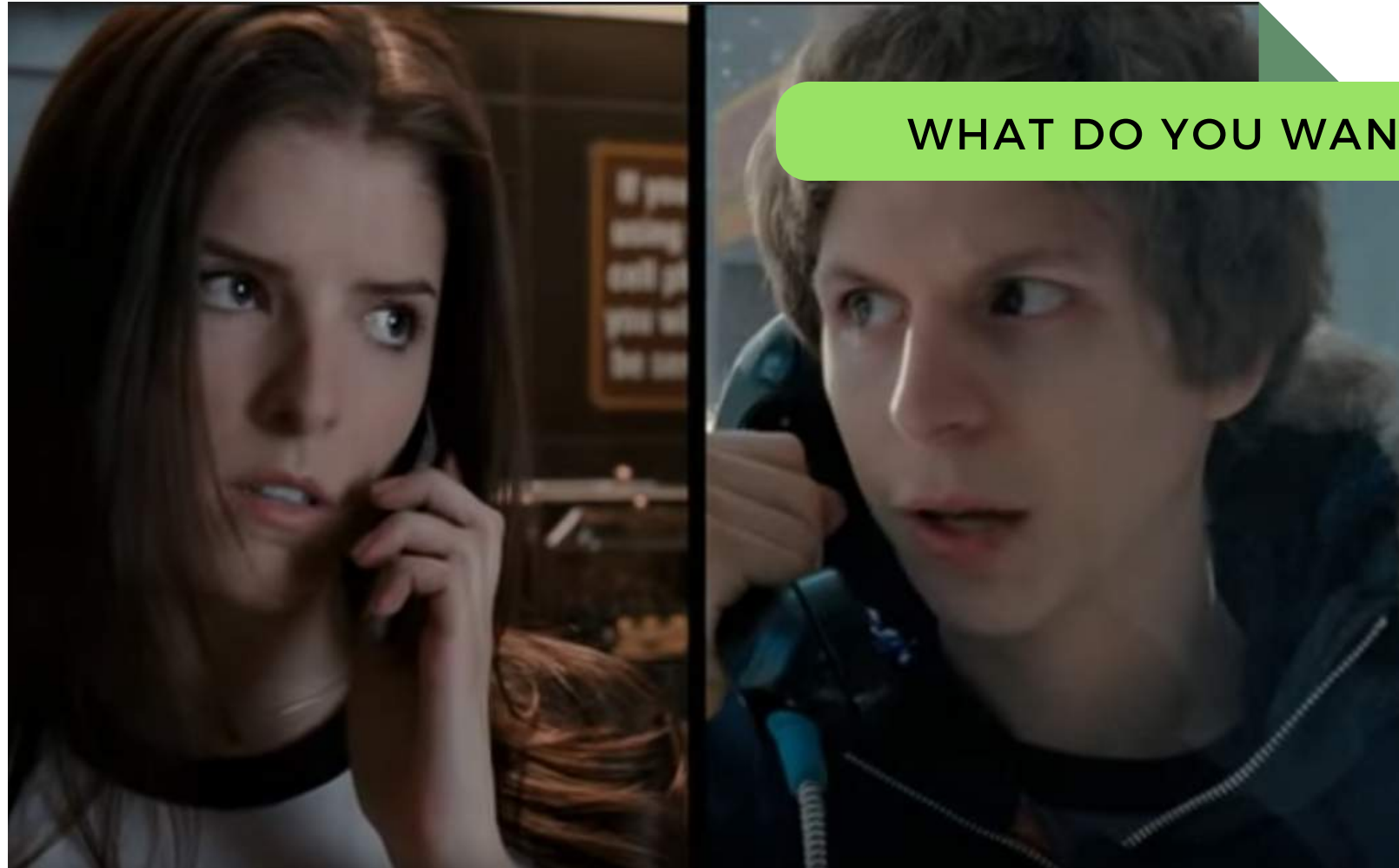
GASP OF REALIZATION\*



EXT. STREET - DAY!



Doorknob turns...



WHAT DO YOU WANT?

ALICE  
(Repeats the same gesture)  
What do you want?

NATHAN  
(looks at Alice's side.)  
Look, I'm really having a hard time  
and I need your help. Do you have a  
minute?

Alice clips her phone on her shoulder and continues what she  
was doing.

ALICE (CONT'D)  
I'm literally in the middle of  
something right now.

NATHAN  
Cool, could you help me find  
something for Tracy?

ALICE  
\*Groan\* Ugh, Not now Nathan!  
(beat)  
I'll call you back later, Bye!

NATHAN (CONT'D)  
Wait-

Alice hangs up. NATHAN looks at his phone.

NATHAN  
(Disappointed)  
Dangit.

We reveal NATHAN's computer screen is open behind him.

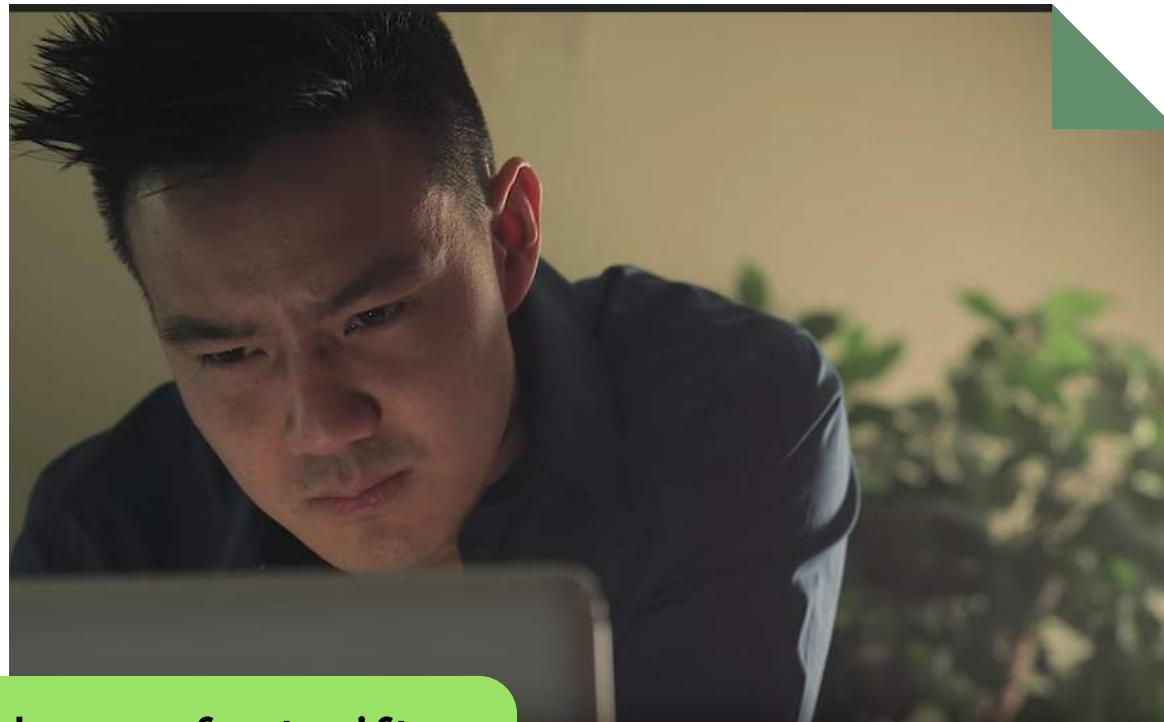
NATHAN (CONT'D)  
(whispering)  
The internet!

NATHAN rushes to his laptop, types on google search while  
mumbling "how to find a perfect gift..." and finds an  
article. The article suggests NATHAN buy a particular  
bracelet, it also suggests NATHAN give the present early in  
order to have an extra impression from the receiver.

NATHAN hesitates, he looks at his watch, it just turns to 4  
o'clock. Computer mouse moves slowly to the bracelet image.



Bracelet\*



How to find the perfect gift..

CUT TO:

4

EXT. OCC CAMPUS - DAY

Both hands holding a jewelry gift box, NATHAN anxiously stares at Tracy, she is 100 feet away, sits outside Starbucks, does her homework. NATHAN regains his confidence, he starts walking toward Tracy. Two guys, out of nowhere, sandwiches NATHAN in the middle while walking, acting mysteriously, does not look at NATHAN at all. That's STEVE and KEVIN, they are all friends actually.

KEVIN

NATHAN, if you plan on impressing Tracy with that little thing you're holding right there, it better be something really good.

NATHAN

(Head turns to KEVIN)  
What?!

KEVIN (CONT'D)

(pushes NATHAN's face back)  
Don't look. Just listen.

STEVE

She takes it very personally if it's something that she's not expected to get from you. She'll go crazy.

NATHAN

(Head turns to STEVE)  
What do you mean?

STEVE

(pushes NATHAN's face back)  
Do you remember those shoes I gave her but then she "accidentally" broke it while we're hiking?  
(beat)  
It wasn't from hiking.

KEVIN

Yeah, do you think that someone would actually wear a crystal necklace to the ocean and then "somehow" loses it?

NATHAN

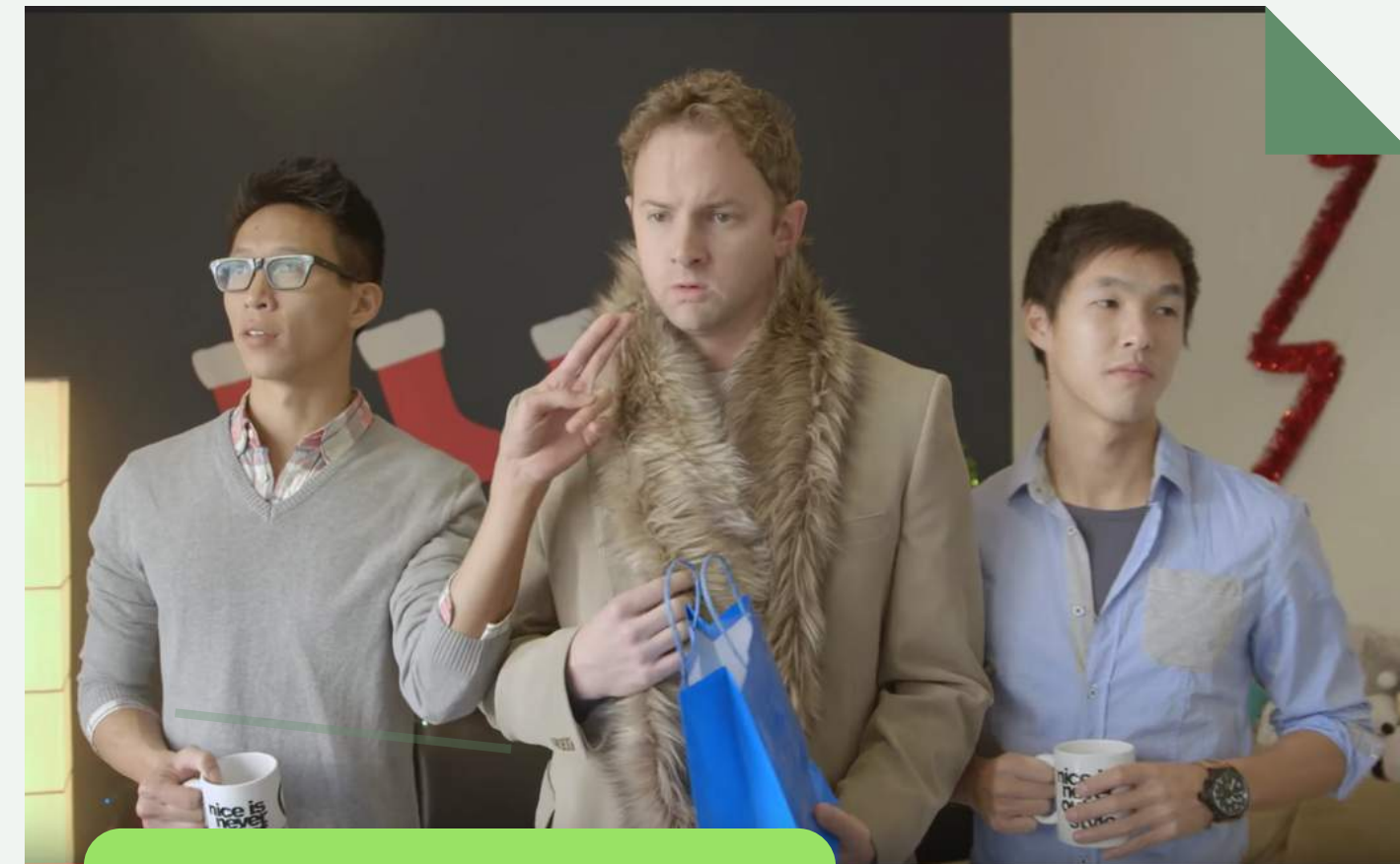
(Head turns to KEVIN)  
My gosh...that was yours too?!



TRACY is 100 feet away...



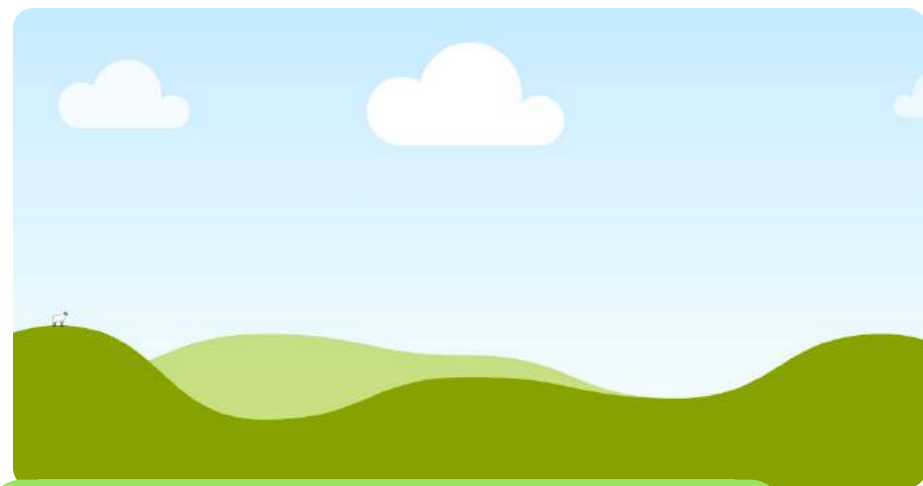
EXT. OCC CAMPUS - DAY



Don't look, just listen!



Gosh..I need a better gift!



Nathan?

KEVIN (CONT'D)  
 (Pushes NATHAN's head back)  
 No. That's also from STEVE. Anyway, the point is, it not like she doesn't want them. She just has this - expectation for us. I think she just doesn't want us to disappoint her with these birthday gifts.

STEVE  
 But you won't disappoint her this time, will you?

All three of them stop walking.

NATHAN  
 Oh god, I think I need a better gift.  
 (beat)

KEVIN  
 Nathan?

NATHAN  
 (Head turns to STEVE)  
 What?

KEVIN and STEVE put on their shades.

STEVE (CONT'D)  
 It's too late now.

KEVIN and STEVE leave the scene with their pretentious realization of each other's existence, leaves NATHAN alone with his gift, speechless, realizes that he is 3 feet away from Tracy's table. Tracy also realizes someone is standing next to her.

TRACY  
 Nathan?

NATHAN  
 (Pretentious realization)  
 Heyyy Tracy! What are the odds?

NATHAN sits down with Tracy.

TRACY (CONT'D)  
 Are you alright? You seem funny.



Kevin & Steve leaves Nathan



Heyy Tracy, what's are the odds?

..You seem funny...

CONTINUED:

SCRIPT / STORYBOARD / ART / LOOK AND FEEL



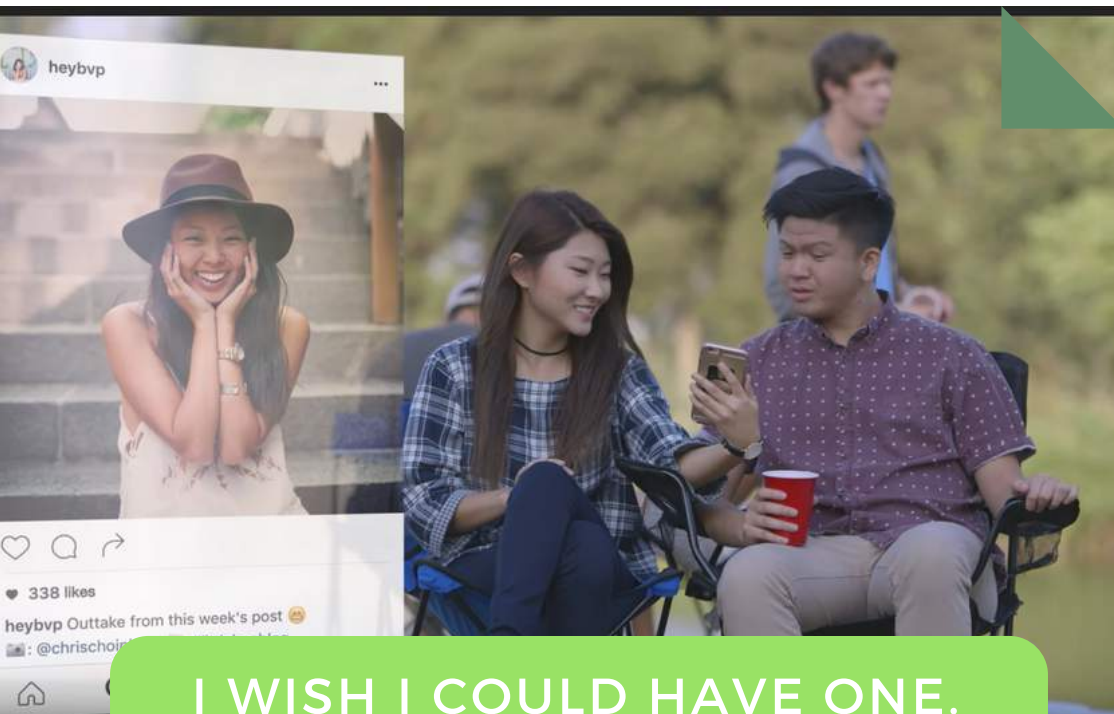
NATHAN  
Pfff! I'm fine.

TRACY  
Are you sure? Here, get something to drink.  
(hands NATHAN Redbull)  
What do you've got right there?

NATHAN  
Oh, this? This is nothing.  
Here you go.



Pfff! I'm fine / Are you sure?



Nathan hands the gift to a walk-by stranger and pushes him away. The stranger seems confused but take the gift regardless.

TRACY  
(Scrolling on phone)  
Hey, do you know this kind of bracelet? It's like-so pretty. I wish I could have one.

Tracy shows NATHAN the picture of the exact bracelet that NATHAN got. A heavy heartbeat suddenly strikes NATHAN again. NATHAN soullessly hands Tracy back her phone, doesn't look at Tracy.

NATHAN  
I'll be right back.

NATHAN rushes to the previous stranger. The stranger hears someone is calling him so he turns back.

NATHAN  
Hey man, I really need that back.

STRANGER  
Well, That's too bad. This is mine now

NATHAN  
I'm not joking, please give it back.

NATHAN relentlessly grab the gift away from the stranger. The stranger punches NATHAN in the face.

I WISH I COULD HAVE ONE.



..I really need that back!



Too bad, it's mine now



## INT. ROOM - DAWN



5

INT. ROOM - DAWN

NATHAN falls into his bed with blood on his nose. Doorbell rings. NATHAN gets up. Door opens. NATHAN surprises.

NATHAN

Oh, Hi!

TRACY

Hey, are you alright? Is that blood on your nose?

(Hold up the gift)

And you forget this. What is this?

NATHAN

(tired)

It is your birthday gift.

TRACY

Really? How come?

NATHAN

Open it.

Tracy opens the gift. She holds up the bracelet.

TRACY

Oh, wow!

(looks at NATHAN)

How do you know?

NATHAN

Honestly, I didn't know either.

(beat)

Shouldn't you be preparing for your party by now?

TRACY

Yeah, but I have to stop by your place first.

NATHAN

Do you need my help?

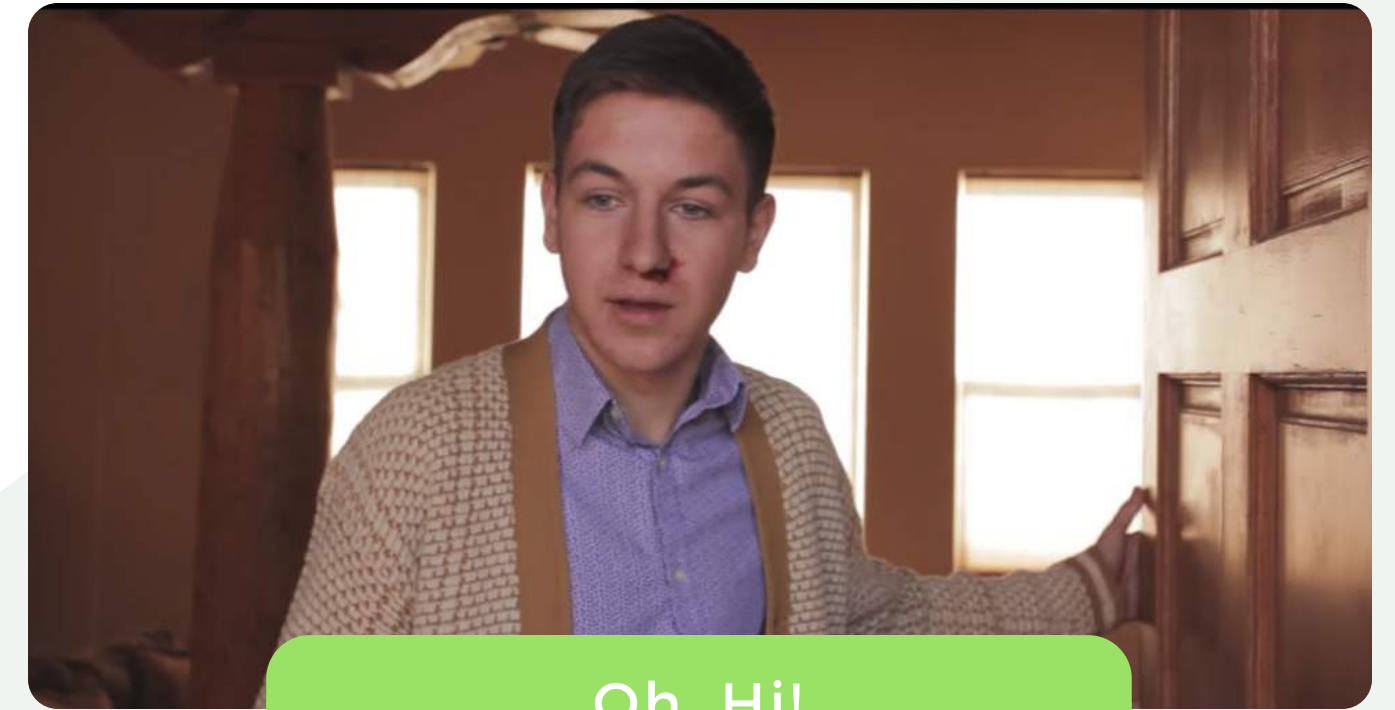
TRACY

Yeah!... Sure!

NATHAN humbly nods and gets out the door.

NATHAN and Tracy walk down the sidewalk, facing the sunset, their laugh and Tracy's appreciation for the gift echoes throughout the neighborhood.

5



Oh, Hi!



FACING THE SUNSET...



Yeah!..Sure!

THE END...

# WARDROBE

These outfits are just suggestion.  
It doesn't have to be like this.  
What I'm looking for are casual  
everyday outfits.  
Not too fancy but it has to look  
decent, above average,  
somewhat polite, but stylish.

## MEN



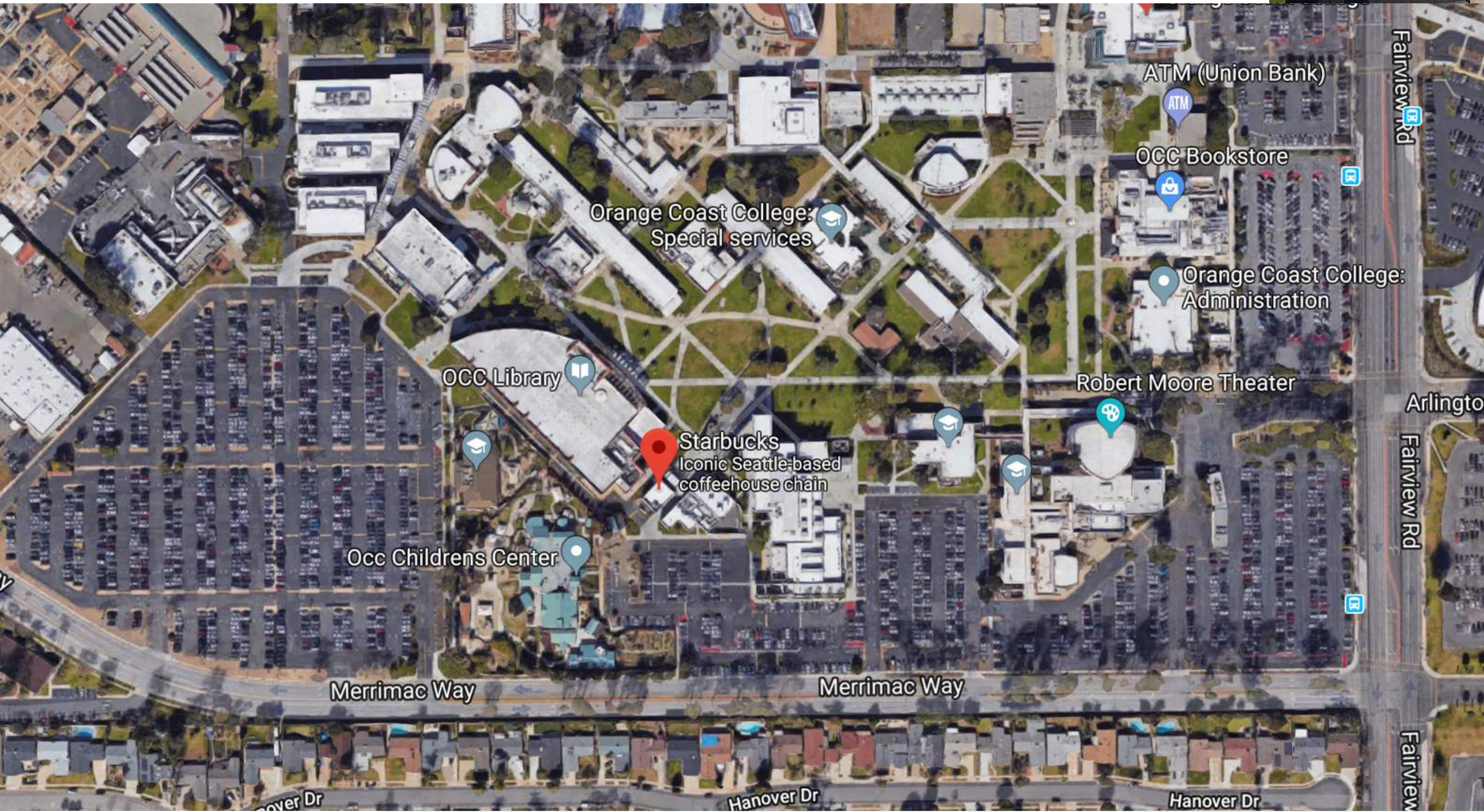
# WARDROBE WOMEN



# LOCATION 1

## 1. OCC STARBUCKS

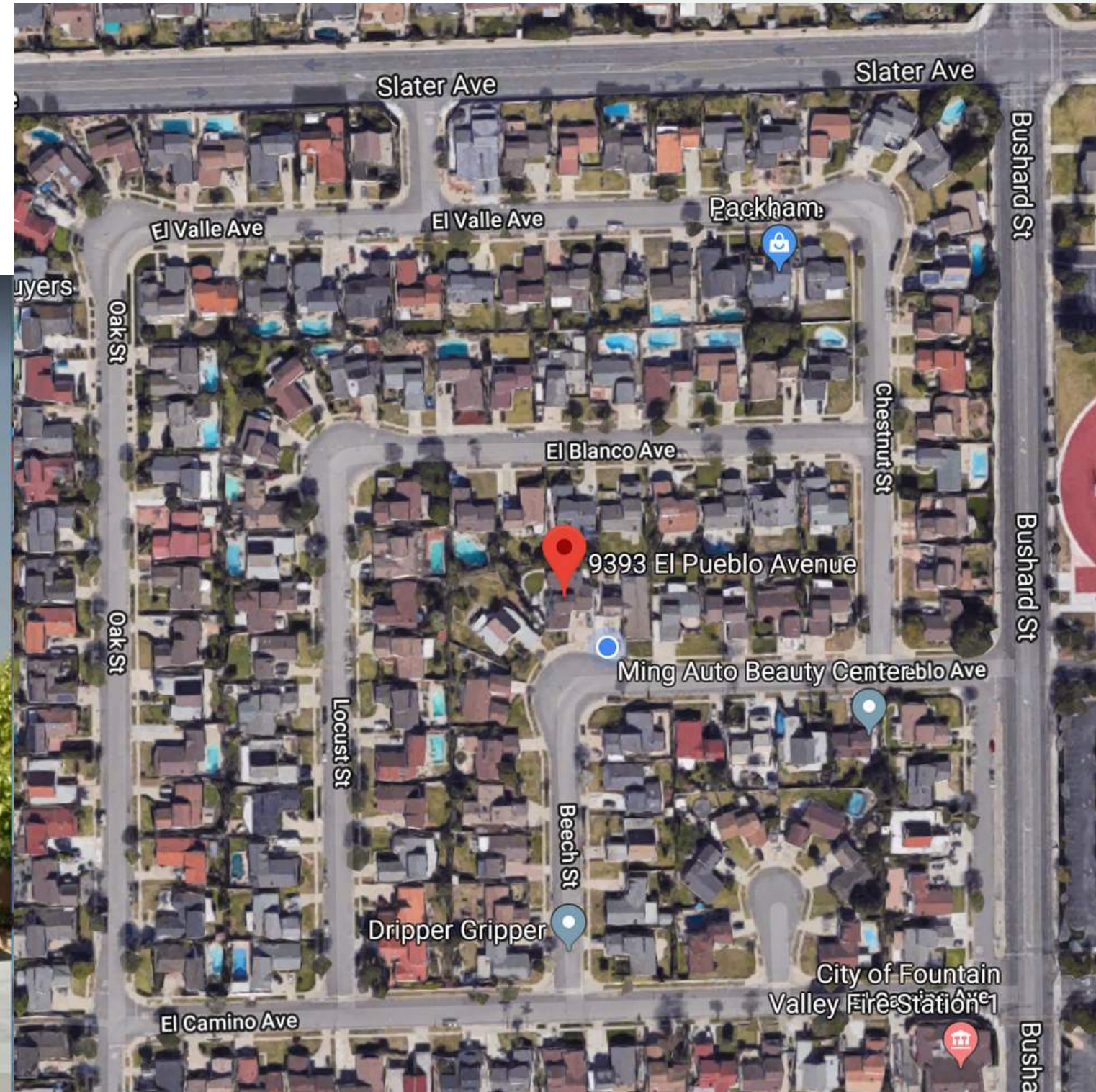
Address: 2701 Fairview Rd, Costa Mesa, CA 92626



# LOCATION 2

## 2. Oyster's house

Address: 9393 El Pueblo Ave., Fountain Valley, Ca 92708



Slater Ave. & Bushard St.

