

WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Large windows capturing Boston skyline. Fluorescent lights.

A busy, modern office interior. Rows and rows of cubicles. We arrive at one section.

Sitting in the front cubicle is SETH, a man in his mid-thirties. He is staring at home listings on his computer.

It's the beginning of the day and he already looks exhausted.

SETH

Eleven hundred square feet, oil heat. Steam furnace. Needs new roof. Slight fire damage, but perfect for the do-it-yourself couple! \$369,000.

Beat.

SETH (CONT'D)

(Incredulously)

Slight fire damage?

NED peaks his head over the cubicle. He is a thin, balding older man and wears a busy-patterned silk shirt with the two top buttons unbuttoned. He's that one coworker everyone has a story about.

NED

Newton? That's a steal for that neighborhood, dude.

SETH

What does that even mean? Slight fire damage?

NED

Best case some guy left his grill too close to the house and burned some siding. Worst case...are there any pictures?

SETH

No.

NED

That sounds like a worst case. I have a buddy who bought a house on short-sale for a fucking great deal. Didn't do no home inspection or anything. First night he's eating Cheez-Its in bed and wakes up to a rat gnawing on his balls. Spent a week in the hospital after the doctors stuffed his nuts back in.

Seth shakes his head in disgust.

Seth points to another listing on his screen while Ned starts to vigorously stretch, using the cubicle walls for support.

SETH

This one is in...Spittsford? Where the hell is that? "Lovingly maintained". More like hasn't been updated this century.

Seth points to his screen again.

SETH (CONT'D)

This one is next to a pagan cemetery. Do you think I could ask for a discount if it's haunted?

NED

Why are you even looking at houses? You should be looking at condos, man. Way less maintenance, all that stuff is built into the fees. My house sucks dick! It's a ton of work, man and you gotta know how to do shit - like clear out racoons in the basement.

SETH

Don't you live with your mom?

NED

She lives with *me*. Dad left the house to me. I'm just a nice guy and let her stay in the master. Jesus, she's an old lady.

SETH

Yikes.

Ned takes out a comb from the front pocket of his shirt and pushes around the few strands he has left in his comb over.

Seth continues scrolling through listings on his computer.

NED
So you're really hell-bent on
buying a place, huh?

SETH
It's now or never, Ned. The market
is hot and only continuing to get
hotter, *Marketplace* on NPR says
that home prices have increased an
average of 42% this year alone.

NED
You need to stop listening to the
"news" all the time.

Ned makes air quotes around news.

NED (CONT'D)
The media was bought out a long
time ago by those libbies. That's
why I do my own research on
Facebook.

SETH
Where do you think they get their
info from?

Ned looks around suspiciously.

NED
I can't really talk about it in
public.

SETH
You're not bringing up QAnon again,
are you?

NED
Shh!

Seth rolls his eyes.

SETH
Dude, you gotta get outside.

NED
Move over, I'll show you some
links.

Ned tried to push Seth aside to get to his computer.

SETH

What? No. I don't have time,
and...just no. Plus, I gotta head
out, I'm meeting Leah for dinner.

NED

(Sarcastically)

Ah, leaving early? That's the stuff
they notice before layoffs.

SETH

There's not going to be layoffs.

NED

Is that what CNN is telling you?

As Ned says his line, Seth gathers his things from his
cubicle and quickly exits. Ned enters Seth's cubicle and
looks at his screen.

NED (CONT'D)

Hmm.

Ned pulls out his cell phone and dials a number from Seth's
screen.

NED (CONT'D)

(Disguised voice)

Hello? I have a question about the
house at 25 Highland Street. Yes,
does the house come with the pagan
ghosts included, or do I need to
shepherd them from the cemetery
myself? Hello?

INT. RESTAURANT - TABLESIDE - EVENING

A small, Italian pizzeria in the North End of Boston.

Seth and LEAH, Seth's fiancée, are sitting across from each
other at a small red and white checkerboard table. The
pizzeria is packed.

A young, no-nonsense WAITRESS is taking their order.

SETH

We'll take a large sausage and
pepper pizza. Green peppers.

WAITRESS

How do you want that cooked?

SETH
Umm...in an oven?

The waitress rolls her eyes.

LEAH
(Laughing)
Well-done, please. And some
jalapenos poppers would be great!

WAITRESS
Ok, sweetheart. Pizza will be about
20 minutes and I'll get those
poppers out to you first.

The waitress leaves.

SETH
I still don't understand why pizza
is so complicated in Boston. I
shouldn't have to order it like a
steak.

LEAH
You've lived here your whole life
but you act like you're a stranger
to the city.

SETH
My parents didn't let me get out
much...

LEAH
Well, now's your chance. Try to
live a little.

She reaches out for Seth's hands across the table.

LEAH (CONT'D)
How was work? I didn't hear from
you much today.

SETH
Work is work. Ned is crazy, as
always. I did spend some time
looking at houses today on my
break.

LEAH
Oh?

SETH
Yeah. They were pretty bad.
Rundown, outdated - expensive.

LEAH

What if we looked outside the city?
We can get a lot more for our
money.

SETH

Like - the suburbs?

LEAH

Yeah.

SETH

How would I get to work?

LEAH

With your car?

SETH

What if my car breaks down?

LEAH

What if the train breaks down? That
happened to you when we lived in
the seaport and you found a way to
get to work!

SETH

What if my car breaks down and
there's a snowstorm and I can't get
to the grocery store to get food?
We die, Leah! I don't know how to
hunt, or, or...pillage or forage or
whatever it's called. I'm not a
country boy.

LEAH

Are you serious? It's the suburbs,
not the country. My Dad grew up in
the 'burbs and he's fine.

SETH

I know, but look at your Dad. He's
macho, I'm...not. It's just not the
- *lifestyle* - I'm used to. I'm not
comfortable outside the city like
you are.

LEAH

You haven't even tried. Look -
you've always found a way to adapt
and overcome. That's what I love
about you!

SETH

Can we at least see if there's any condos that we like before we consider that? Ned knows a realtor and said she can find a bunch of stuff that we can't even see online.

LEAH

Ned said that? QAnon Ned?

The waitress throw down the jalapenos poppers on the table as she walks by. Seth grabs one off the plate.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Be careful, they probably just came out of-

Seth takes a bite.

SETH

GAHHH!

EXT. MACK AND DENISE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Seth and Leah drive up to the front of Leah's parents house in Seth's car, a fifteen year old Lexus sedan that has seen better days.

The house is a modest home in an urban neighborhood filled with closely-packed, single-family homes.

In the driveway is two vehicles and a massive pickup truck with off-roading tires taking up the remainder.

Seth has a large ball of tissue on his tongue after burning it on the jalapenos poppers, causing a lisp.

SETH

Ish your brother over?

LEAH

That's definitely his truck.

SETH

Yesh, I shее that. It's shtaking up the enthire driveway!

LEAH

Just park here on the street, it's fine - they aren't street sweeping tonight.

SETH

I jusht - I don't want any road
rash from pebbles or for some car
to come flying down the road and
take off my mirror!

There is not a single car on the road.

LEAH

Road rash should be the least of
your worries with this thing!

INT. MACK AND DENISE'S HOUSE

Leah unlocks the front door and both she and Seth enter.

In the kitchen, DENISE, Leah's mom, is cooking dinner. Leah's
father, MACK, is in the family room watching television with
Leah's brother, JUNIOR.

Mack is a large man with a huge beard. He wears a flannel
shirt and looks like a lumberjack.

Junior is a spitting image of his father. Leah walks into the
family room.

LEAH

Hi, guys.

JUNIOR

(Taunting)

It's the princess of the basement!

Seth enters the family room sheepishly.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)

And the prince!

SETH

Hi...always good to see you,
Junior.

Junior gets up and playfully punches Seth numerous times.
They are hard punches.

JUNIOR

This guy, the one who told me to
invest in dogecoin and I lost \$400
bucks. This guy!

More HARD punches.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)
I'm just messing with you, bro!

MACK
Cut it out Junior.

Leah rolls her eyes and heads downstairs to the basement. There is no door, just a sheet hanging from the top of the entry. The doorway is located in the kitchen.

SETH
I'm going to head downstairs to our...space.

JUNIOR
Ha! Is that what you call it? Your space? More like a storage room. Pa, how long are you gonna let them stay in your workout room?

MACK
Until they find a new place, Junior. Which is hopefully soon, right Seth?

SETH
Yup. Goodnight.

Seth heads downstairs to the

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Stacked in one corner of the room is Mack's weight training equipment. Open moving boxes with items strewn about litter the floor.

A bare mattress lays on the floor of the messy room. Leah is laying down and looking up at the ceiling.

LEAH
Call that realtor tomorrow.

SETH
Babe, I love you! I'll make some calls tomorrow.

INT. CAR - DAY

Seth's car. Seth is driving, Leah is in the passenger seat and looking at her phone.

SETH
Did you pull it up?

LEAH
I'm working on it.

SETH
It's gotta around here somewhere. I
feel like we passed it. Did we pass
it?

LEAH
Calm down! I said I'm working on
it. Okay, I got it.

SETH
And?

LEAH
You passed it.

Seth groans and pulls an illegal u-turn.

LEAH (CONT'D)
Why do you always have to do that?

SETH
Do what? I'm a great driver.

LEAH
You let everything get to you.

SETH
No I don't.

GPS
In 500 yards, make a right turn
onto Mission Hill Road.

LEAH
Yes you do.

SETH
Is this it?

LEAH
(annoyed)
I guess. Why don't you just listen
to her.

Seth takes the right turn.

SETH
Can you stop with your attitude?

Right as Seth says the last word the car hits a massive speed bump. The car makes a terrible scraping sound.

SETH (CONT'D)
(yelling)
What the f was that?

LEAH
It's a speedbump! Slow down,
there's another one!

There's another terrible thump as the rear wheels crest over the speedbump. Less than 6 feet after the first speedbump - another one. Seth slams his brakes right in time.

Seth looks up from the steering wheel, and ahead of him is a row of tightly formed and abnormally tall speed bumps lining the private road leading to the complex.

For each speedbump there is a thicket of street signs lining both sides of the road, reading "3.5 MPH ZONE", "DRIVE LIKE YOUR CHILDREN LIVE HERE", "SLOW DOWN!!!", "QUIET HOURS: 4 PM - 10 AM" and "NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH ZONE".

Seth moves slowly forward, trying to carefully drive the car over the next speed bump. He inches along, trying in vain to prevent damage. As he crests the top of the speedbump, the car makes another terrible sound.

SETH
JESUS! How many more?

Seth looks up at the impending speedbumps. An OLDER WOMAN IN SUNGLASSES is standing on her patio, which faces the road, with a hairdryer facing the car.

OLDER WOMAN IN SUNGLASSES
(Yelling to Seth)
Slow down!

SETH
(Yelling back)
I'm literally stopped!

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Seth and Leah are parked in the parking lot of the complex.

A Porsche Cayenne screeches into the complex and parks across from them.

A large woman, MAPLE, sits in the drivers seat for a minute and fixes herself up. She struggles to get out of the door with her briefcase, large canvas bag, and clipboard.

She has a scowl on her face. She is wearing a bright red, short-cut dress and huge, ugly sunglasses.

She sees Seth and Leah in the car and gives a friendly wave, her scowl quickly replaced with a fake smile that doesn't leave her face.

MAPLE

Helllllllo! You must be Seth! And you're Leah, his lovely fiance, I presume. My name is Maple, I'm a realtor - registered - and I have taken your list of dislikes, needs, and must-haves to show you this curated collection of properties today!

EXT. CONDO COMPLEX - DAY

Seth and Leah are walking with Maple along a road within a different, well-maintained townhouse complex.

Every townhouse looks the exact same. Same size, same color, same style garbage bins in the same exact spot in the driveway.

Ornamental stars adorns the front of each unit, also the exact same color and style.

A man with a bucket hat and a clipboard is hunched over the grass in the front yard of one unit. He pulls out a measuring tape and measures the well-trimmed grass.

BUCKET HAT MAN

Aha! I knew it.

BUCKET HAT MAN angrily jots something down on his clipboard.

MAPLE

This unit is a real deal, the owner is dying to sell. There is an HOA fee of \$695/month and a few regulations you need to follow, but I think this is a great location for you both.

Maple points to a large book she is holding which is titled "Home Owner's Association Regulation Book". The book is as large as a bible.

EXT. A RUNDOWN CONDO COMPLEX - DAY

Seth and Leah drive into parking lot of a condo complex that looks outdated. Suspicious looking people with hands in their pockets walk around the complex, one of them is talking to himself.

Seth puts the car in park and scans the complex. Leah is in the passenger seat looking at her phone.

SETH
Is this the right spot?

LEAH
There she is.

Maple gets out of her car and walks towards them. She hits the "lock" button on her key obsessively; the car chirps numerous times.

MAPLE
Welcome to-

She shuffles papers in her canvas bag and pulls out a listing.

MAPLE (CONT'D)
(with flourish)
Mission Hill Estates!

She points to the property as a car backfires. She jumps.

MAPLE (CONT'D)
Oh! Just a car. This is an absolutely positively beautiful property. Are you excited?

LEAH
Not really.

MAPLE
Excellent! You should be excited. This is a premier property.
(Serious tone)
Every property I show you is a Maple-approved premier property.

As Maple talks, they begin walking towards a townhouse on the end of the complex.

The three round a corner and see a set of townhouses, each with two units. In a shared driveway is a man is working underneath an older model car. The hood is open, and he is swearing loudly to himself.

MAPLE (CONT'D)

This is an end unit, very private.

They continue walking as death metal music starts getting louder from the abutting property. They arrive to the shared front steps. Maple fumbles for the keys.

MAPLE (CONT'D)

I believe the next-door neighbor -
is - a - musician.

As she says the last three words she loudly bangs the side of the neighbor's condo behind her back, trying to hide it from Seth and Leah to the beat of her words.

The music lowers in volume slightly.

Maple points to a decal on the outside of the neighbors door.

MAPLE (CONT'D)

Ah, see? He went to Berklee!

EXT. RETIREMENT COMMUNITY - DAY

Seth and Leah pull up at a ritzy, high-end community. Maple is already parked and is waiting in the parking lot with a big smile.

SETH

Hey, this one looks a lot better!

Seth and Leah step out of the car.

MAPLE

So what do you think so far?

LEAH

We haven't even seen anything yet.

Seth gestures around the complex.

SETH

It's impressive! I like the look
and feel so far. I could see myself
living here for a long time.

A man walks by slowly with a walker. Leah points to him.

LEAH

Looks like he's been here a while.

MAPLE

Fantastic! I'm glad you love it so far. Now, this is... slightly over your budget.

SETH

How much over our budget?

Maple hands Seth a paper from her clipboard.

SETH (CONT'D)

Jesus!

MAPLE

This is an exclusive community. As you can see, it has world-class facilities.

Maple points to a tennis court with two elderly people playing an unenergetic game of tennis. They are barely able to get the ball over the net.

An old woman appears on a balcony of one of the nearby townhouses.

OLD WOMAN

Miss! My oatmeal! I called it in over twenty minutes ago and I'm still waiting.

MAPLE

Oh, I don't work here, honey.

(To Seth and Leah)

They have a full kitchen as well!

SETH

This place seems... Umm... established. Mature.

LEAH

You mean old?

MAPLE

It was built only six years ago!

LEAH

I don't think that's what he means.

MAPLE

Oh, yes. So there is one thing. Technically, this is a plus-65 community. But don't worry!

(MORE)

MAPLE (CONT'D)

We can get around this small issue,
all we need is an intermediary to
officially sign for you.

INT. LEAH'S PARENT'S HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - EVENING

Seth and Leah walk into the house after a long day of looking
at townhouses. They look exhausted.

Mack and Denise are sitting in the family room watching
television.

DENISE

How'd it go?

LEAH

I don't want to talk about it.

Leah walks briskly down the hall and heads down the basement
stairs, leaving Seth alone.

DENISE

Oh, dear.

Denise gets up and follows Leah into the basement.

MACK

Seth, come in here.

Seth walks into the family room.

MACK (CONT'D)

Sit down. You can take the nice
chair.

He motions to a well-worn chair in the corner that is covered
in dog and cat fur and dander.

SETH

It's ok...I can stand.

MACK

So - how did it go today?

SETH

Not great.

MACK

We moved here back in 1980. Bought
this place for \$67,000, I was 20
years old, working part-time at
Howard Johnson's as a busboy.

(MORE)

MACK (CONT'D)

Trained myself and became a cook.
Hard work, but a great job.

SETH

It's not like that anymore. We
don't have great bosses like Howard
Johnson.

MACK

It was a restaurant.

SETH

Yeah, I figured. Sounds nice.

MACK

No, I mean Howard Johnson
isn't...never mind. Why don't you
look outside the city?

SETH

It's too far. Plus, I'm not really
cut out for a suburban lifestyle.

MACK

I grew up outside the city and I
turned out fine!

Mack lets out a short fart.

SETH

I'm sure we'll find the right spot
in the city.

MACK

Look, Seth. You know I love you.
You're like a son to me already.
And that's why I can say this - I
need you to get the fuck out of my
basement.

SETH

I know...We're doing everything we
can.

Mack groans loudly as he gets up from the couch. He gives
Seth a pat on the back.

MACK

Are you?

INT. BASEMENT - MORNING

Leah and Seth have just woken up and are laying on the bed together.

SETH
Good morning.

LEAH
Morning, babe.

SETH
Did you sleep well?

LEAH
I slept okay. You?

SETH
Yeah, surprisingly. I'm going to try to get into the office early today and I'll see if Maple can find some different spots for us.

LEAH
You want to look at more places with her? Are you crazy?

SETH
Crazy? No. Crazy about you, yes!

Seth goes in to kiss Leah.

LEAH
Don't kiss me, I haven't brushed my teeth yet! You said we would look at houses if the condos sucked. And they sucked.

SETH
Did I say that? It could have slipped out...

He moves his hand toward her shirt, trying to get at her breast. She slaps his hand away.

LEAH
Cut it out. A deal's a deal!

Seth starts moving his hand under the sheets.

SETH
I mean, we don't have to kiss...

LEAH
I'm being serious.

Seth stops.

LEAH (CONT'D)
Can we at least look at houses now?
We had it your way, now it's my
turn to have it my way.

Leah playfully reaches under the sheets and grabs Seth's groin.

SETH
Yow! Okay, fine, we can take a look
at least. I'll look something up
today at work.

Leah laughs and continues to touch Seth under the sheets just as Mack walks in.

LEAH
Jesus, can't you knock, Dad?

Mack immediately turns away but doesn't leave the room.

MACK
You don't have a door! Sorry!

LEAH
Well - announce yourself, or
something!

MACK
Back in my day we used to put a tie
on the doorknob.

Mack laughs. Seth and Leah don't laugh.

MACK (CONT'D)
And don't let your mother catch
you...she still thinks you're a
virgin.

LEAH
(Surprised)
Really?

Beat.

LEAH (CONT'D)
I don't care! Get out of here!

MACK

I just need to find my-

He walks over to a box in the corner of the room while covering his eyes and pulls out an elastic resistance band.

MACK (CONT'D)

Here it is! I'm leaving now.

SETH

We'll be up in a minute.

MACK

(To Seth)

Only a minute, huh?

Mack winks at Seth, who gives an awkward smile back.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SETH'S CUBICLE

Seth is searching the drawers in his desk and getting frustrated that he can't find something.

Ned walks up to Seth's desk wearing work out clothes that are way too tight for his body.

NED

Looking for this?

Ned takes a bite out of an energy bar.

SETH

Is that from my desk?

Ned flexes.

NED

I usually don't see you till after 9.

SETH

Yeah, well I didn't have time for breakfast today and I'm not really in the mood to deal with your shit today, Ned.

NED

Yeah? Something happen?

Seth shuffles around the top drawer of his desk looking for something edible.

He finds a small bag of oyster crackers and opens them.

SETH

I told Leah we would look at houses in the burbs if the condos we looked at yesterday sucked. And they sucked. She'll never forgive me if I go back on it.

NED

Easy fix. Look up the shittiest house you can find and make her hate it as much as the condos. Hell, make her hate is so much she WANTS a condo!

Seth is startled at the moment of brilliance from Ned.

SETH

Jesus, Ned. That's not a bad idea.

He pulls his desk closer to the computer.

NED

Go to Facebook.

SETH

I'm not looking up houses on Facebook.

NED

Okay, fine. Go to Zillow. See that slider? Only look at houses that have been on the market for 6+ months. Less pictures the better.

Ned starts stretching on Seth's cubicle walls, showing off to their coworkers who are arriving for the day.

NED (CONT'D)

What about those heaps you were looking up last week? The fire damage one?

SETH

Nah, she would know I was up to something if I showed her that one.

NED

There was another one. Spittle-town. And don't forget, you need to pretend to love it. That way she isn't suspicious.

SETH

Where?

NED
Spit-town. I don't remember.

SETH
Spit-town? Let me check my browser
history.

Seth checks his computer.

SETH (CONT'D)
Spittsford. I found the listing.
Two pictures. And look at them!
Blech! Says it was built in 1950.
It's been on the market for 14
months and - and look - the owner
is trying to sell it themselves!
This is too perfect. I bet the guy
is too attached and doesn't sell to
anyone anyway.

NED
Call him.

Seth pulls out his cell phone. He dials the number on the
screen.

Ned does one last big grunt and stretch. He puts too much
force into it, and the cubicle wall collapses into a heap.

FADE OUT:

IN THE NEXT EPISODE - THIS IS A TWO-PARTER:

BEGIN with Seth scene in "remote" meeting with boss.

INCLUDE meeting with boss about pay. He does NOT get house.
But they are already going to see the house.

INCLUDE seeing the house - "Money pit" style!

END with the ruse fails...CLIFF HANGER!