

The Dog Wizard

(lifes so rad)

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Character

Elliot - 40s, roadie, SoCal accent, invisible industry lifer

Setting

A live music venue. Maybe on a secondary or tertiary stage.

The type of place where you sell merch on a white folding table that has never been clean.

We are in an unsexy part of LA. The crowd are locals.

I'm me
me be
goddamn
I am
I can
sing and
hear me
know me

-Weezer
Undone (the Sweater Song)

*A band finishes their act.
They leave.*

*Elliot enters.
He takes the mic,
While other folks break down their stuff,
And rearrange for the headliner.*

Elliot

what up
what up what up
uh, I just wanted to share a little story with you guys while we're changing over, if that's cool?
sick.
alright.

so,
my dog goose... some of you have met him?
he's like six years old, a tiny little dog.
so,
goose was like really hard to train, like, I don't know what it was with him man, but it took a lot.
we tried and tried,
and it was like,
he just didn't listen to the things we told him to do, right?
he would sit
and stuff,
which is cool, but all the other things—
come,
heel,
sit,
fetch,
stuff like that?
he didn't do those as much for us you know?
so, finally, Lisa and I were like,
woah, like... we need to maybe get some help for us with this dog.
right?

because
we would come home and like...
one day, we came home and there were feathers everywhere, man.
feathers
like, from one of the pillows in our bedroom, I think,
but they were like *strewn*,
like, the dog tore it up and like *sprayed* these feathers
everywhere, man.
and they were like
sticky, too.

From like his saliva and drool,
so there were feathers *stuck*
like, the ceiling and the walls and the tv and everything
were just *covered*.

when that happened, it was like, ok.
ok, yeah.
we get it.
fine.
it's time to do something here.
like, it's time to... you know.
we gotta
get some help
with this pup.

the worst part about it, like,
the worst part of the whole situation was that
it scared Little Ell.

and that's my child.

Little Ell is what Elliot Jr. likes to be called now,
so,
like,
you know,
kids, like,
if that's what they want to be called, that's what they want to be called.
that's his name: Ell.
which is cool.
he's four, or whatever,
and he gets to choose that.
some of you guys have met Ell, and you know that
Ell's cool.

but Ell, man... Ell was getting nervous around goose.
goose would just jump up on people like all scary.
he's a little dog
a big rat, really.
that's what my dad calls him.
my dad, who has never owned a dog, but like
in his mind he's raised like the perfect chocolate lab, or whatever.
he tells us how to do everything,
everything
even though the dog he raised is a figment of his imagination.
coming over one time he said, "What a little rat dog!" to goose like *at* goose.
and Lisa....

Lisa didn't say anything.
Like *anything*
the whole time he was there, but when he left she was like
"yo... fuck your dad, dude."
And I was like, "I know."

when goose gets excited, the pup has springs, man.
he is just able to like, pounce up on people.
it... it can be really scary.
genuinely
I'm not a small guy
at all.
right?
look at me.
I'm a big dude.
I'm a big tall guy,
right?
you know what I mean?
but still, it's scary.
and Ell is four, man, and this dog can jump right over him.
so *of course* Ell is scared.
and that's really sad, because
this is my kid, in my home.
this is my kid, in my home, where he should feel safe,
but he doesn't.

so, Lisa found...
we were up in bed, and she looked at me
she was reading, and she said,
"I think for Goose, like, we should hire this guy. I found this guy, he helped my friend out a
bunch with his dog, and like, is a real character, but apparently he gets the job done."
I was like,
"Sure, cool, fine. Let's do it."
and she said that the guy was called
like he was known as
The Dog Wizard.

like, that is what we were supposed to call him.

and I was like,
"Ha ha... fine. Cool. Sure, I'm down."
I'll play along.
I'm not an asshole.
and plus,
I'm living in a house where my child is terrified of this tiny ass dog,
this dog that is is ripping everything up

and jumping over our heads
and being really scary.

we called The Dog Wizard and said,
“hey, you know, could you come and help us out?”
and he said,
“yeah, yeah. Yeah.”
and he scheduled a time to come over later, like in a week.

and that
made us all feel better.
especially Ell.

Ell was running around the house like,
“when’s the wizard coming? When’s the wizard coming?”
and I had to be like,
“hey, buddy. hey. chill. relax.”
but still, Ell was excited.

and Ell is the best, I mean...
I’m sorry, I know I’ve said this,
but so like,
ok,
before the wizard came for the dog, Ell and I—
we had an adventure.
that’s what we call it when we go out and, like,
do stuff together.
it’s fun.
we went outside because it was the last day,
or like, one of the last days
of summer break.
and
I knew that I had to get ready for this show,

Elliot gestures at the setup.

there was rigging and some other stuff to do still,
and I was going to have to come in.
this is a whole new setup for these guys

Elliot gestures toward the band backstage.

because they have a whole thing
like a setup that they want,
and it’s like great, we can do that,
but I have to come in, and,

you know,
do it.

and it's totally valid because it has to do with a medical, like,
light sensitivity thing or whatnot of the lead guitarist,
and so the lights move so they're not in her face
and it's totally valid and it looks really...
it looks really rad, don't worry.
it's really good.
but so
I knew it was going to be a free day,
the last real free day of just me and Ell for the summer.
Lisa had to work and do stuff,
so Ell and I decided that we wanted to do something special together.
an adventure.
one of our adventures

and Ell was like,
“Dad, Dad, Dad.”
and I was like,
“Yeah?”
and Ell was like,
“I want to take you somewhere.”
and I was like,
“Sick. Yeah, dude. Let's.”
and Ell was like,
“I want to show you something.”
and I was like,
“Cool, yeah... show me what?”
and Ell was like,
“Come with me.”
and I was like,
“I am. sure. where?”
and Ell was like,
“Great. but here— first, put on this blindfold.”

a blindfold. ok.

*So, like...
Elliot pauses for a sec.*

now,
this is my kid.
my only kid.
and, I think,
what I've learned...

something that I've learned from other people is like
it gets easier kid after kid.
obviously, because you've been through it before.
you've been through all the things then,
but when you have just one kid, it's like
you have to check in with yourself, and be like
is this a totally normal thing, dude? Or like,
should I be calling Lisa and checking with her to see if this is ok?
but the default, like, *my* default
is just like
this is a normal thing.
it's fine.
we're ok.
right???

because the *other* thing that I've learned, that all of my
everyone that I've talked to about being a parent
or taking care of
or being in charge of one of these tiny people
these *dudes*, these *humans*
every tells me that
sometimes will have you do things that are super
"whoa, man. hey. like... *hey*."
you know?
"hey oh, like, hey *hey* hey hey."
but yeah, they will have you do things like that.
weird things sometimes.
standing on your porch, like,
"what? what... you're putting a blindfold on me right now? really, Ell? You need me to put on a
blindfold?"

and Ell was like,
"yes, please."
so I'm like, "yeah, sure. hey."
And Ell pulls out this tie.

which is weird, because I don't own any ties.

where did that come from?

and I say, like,
"Hey, where'd you get that, bud? ha ha."
and Ell is like, "put it over your eyes, Dad."
and I'm like,
"oh, ok. sure. whatever. here I go."
and I put it over my eyes, but with a gap on the bottom so that I could see my feet,
like where I was going?

that's the thing that you do then, right?
play along?
do it, but not like *really* do it?

Ell took my hand, and lead me out of the house, like to the backyard,
opened the gate,
which
I didn't know he could do that.
I'd never seen it happen.
he can't even reach the latch,
he's four.
so, without help... how?
but, he opens the gate out onto the street,
like, on the side of the house
around the house
going around? to the side?
so that it's like the street-- not the street the house is on, but the street around the corner?
does that make sense?
like out, around back, and to the side?
like, to the other street?
that's where we went.

we walked down the street.
I watched Ell.
he would look back at me while we walked
taking good care
taking care that I didn't trip or fall over anything.
he even said,
"wow, Dad, you're really good at walking blindfolded."
I was like, "ha ha... thanks..."
but that made me think, like, hey,
has he done this before?
has he seen other people walk and trip and stumble?
and not know where they're going?
and maybe be scared?
or freak out?
or fly off?
the handle?
like what has he been doing with people?
and then my mind's racing, and honestly, it's more like
my mind is like,
what are people doing to *him*?
like, what has happened to this kid?
this kid who I love.
like,
who is putting him in blindfolds?

where did he pick this up?
all of those kinds of thoughts are in my brain
naturally
because I'm Dad here,
right?
walking.

and we walk.
like, we walk, and we walk, and we walk.
for a long time
a really
long
time.
walking and walking.
and like...
I don't do hikes, man.
I don't walk for pleasure normally, but
It's our last,
you know,
it's Ell and my last summer day.
so, I don't say anything.
I just peek out down under the blindfold and try not to trip.
I follow.

Ell lead me out of our neighborhood.
I realized that
for some reason
I was expecting for us to go away
further into the world
away from the city
but we weren't.
I thought that he was going to take me to the park
past the town
into the valley
to the farms there by the river—
their water
their creeks
and stuff or something,
but no, why would he do that necessarily?
a part of me thought,
hey,
maybe there's someone else having him do this,
and he is bringing me to their house.
like, there's going to be a group of people waiting for me with a pinata, maybe,
or the guys with some beers and healthy attitudes,
being all,

“yeah, dude. let’s get it, dude. what up! let’s go to the batting cages. let’s whiffle and chill out for a minute. we haven’t seen each other for a hot sec, and we must chill. we must! isn’t that right my guys?”

but, instead, Ell took me right into the city.
up through downtown, past my gym and the mall and everything.
people walked around us.
people sitting outside the way they do,
just watching us go by.
I could see through the blindfold,
like, underneath it,
people’s feet pointing towards us to watch us pass.
Ell just said, “nice job, Dad, keep going.”

some people said hi to Ell and Ell said hi back.

I kept walking, following the feet ahead of me.
the Velcro.
at this point, I wasn’t sure if I should keep playing along anymore.
I didn’t know how to get out of it
decommit
so I said,
“um, I have to pee.”
and Ell said,
“it’s ok, we’re almost there, you can hold it.”
which is what I usually say to Ell when we are going somewhere, like in the car?
to hear it back,
in a voice that sounded almost exactly like mine was a little...
it was funny, kinda.
I laughed, and Ell just said,
“but we are. we’re almost there.”
like, why are you laughing at a fact?
why are you laughing at this piece of information
that I gave you out of the generosity and kindness in my heart?

I didn’t ask again.
because, fair.

when we got to the 101, Ell told me to take my blindfold off.
we were under an overpass.
cars drove over us,
back and forth,
zooming in both directions, really fast...
overwhelming noise.
like that
is one of those things where you forget

how loud it is
there under the overpass
it's like standing next to a speaker
such a solid noise
you could almost put your hand out flat
and push
against it.
couldn't you?
in the air?

I took my blindfold off
all the way off and
Ell seemed somehow
like a different person.

he was my son.
he is my son.
but he was
five feet tall and
it seemed
in his 30s or 40s and
had hair on his arms and
looked so relaxed and
had a beard and
a bald spot kind of and
I didn't know if it was him so I said,
"Ell!"
and he turned and looked at me.

and it was like, oh yeah that's him.

how did he get to be this different
this different version of the four-year-old that I know?
my four year-old kid.
we stood there under the overpass and those thoughts were in my head,
but I could barely hang onto them, because
it was so loud.
blinding noise.
the cars.
yet,
looking,
there's just one or two up there
in either direction.
why was it so loud?
why was I seeing this
this adult?

the adult turned to me and wanted me to look at something,
I just stared at him like you do
when you're trying to figure everything out.
that was is my kid,
and but
my kid is all at once suddenly like an adult.

“ha ha ha ha ha ha. What's this?”
I said,
looking at him still.

he walked to me and puts an arm around,
and was like, “Look, look at the wall.”
the wall, covered in graffiti.
there are like portraits basically, but I
I had to walk up to the wall to look at them.

they were all these portraits of Ell.
many, many portraits starting from baby,
like, *baby*,
what he looked like when he was Baby Elliot Junior
day one,
to toddlerdom,
to then what he looks like now
he's four right now
to like him getting older and older
to way older.
the ones that like on the far right he's way old,
he has this big beard and hat, and
he looks like a wizard basically.
there's even stars on the hat.

“hey, man who drew these? where did they come from?” I asked,
because Ell right now is four.
and Ell...
Ell can't reach that high.
Ell can barely draw a tree, or choose green for leaf, but
but the portraits
they were so detailed it was like
Rembrandt or something
like,
shadows and
fucking like *chiaroscuro*, right?
and I looked at Ell whose arm was around me,
big and muscular,
and, like,

tan.
and that...
that feeling of like
there is a middle-aged man standing next to me, who is my son, and...
I didn't really know what to do about that, man.

“who made these, bud?”
I said,
“ha?”
and I asked it to him like he's four years old still.
“huh, bud?”

“I did, Dad.”

“oh cool. ha ha. nice job. you did a real good job.”

“do you want to blindfold again.”

“now? or...”

“basically, yeah. Could you?”

“oh, uh... sure. ha, no prob.”

again, I put the tie on my face around my eyes.
Ell leads me home.
I see kid feet again under the blindfold.
everything is
normal.
but we get home.
Ell is four years old again.
it's like,
maybe that
was just
like... I don't know.

something else.
beyond,
right?

you guys know Ell.
Ell is like the best, man.
Ell is the type of kid that just shines.
like, I literally challenge you to find a shinier kid, you won't.
small kindnesses.
Ell will go up to a stranger, and ask them about themselves,

their life, all of that.
no fear.
Ell literally listens
to what's going on, even if like
Ell doesn't understand like...
a guy was telling Ell about taxes for a while the other day,
the forms and stuff?
Ell was just nodding...
patted him on the forearm, and said,
"I don't like math either."

that's the kind of kid he is.

so when you have this kid,
this great kid,
this kind kid you cherish,
you want to protect them.
and when you're walking down the street,
following a pair of Velcro shoes on the ground, like...
how is that protecting or taking care of
him?
because, so
when you have this great kid,
you want them to be safe and happy.
you want them to have everything.
but you're
now
you suddenly already feel old, because
it's like maybe
maybe life is
maybe this all
what this is
is that we're all marching down, like, a long corridor together.
right?
life
an endless corridor.
and it's not easy
it's not easy to walk and walk forever.
sometimes you look back, and you're like,
"holy shit. I have come a long way."
but, also, sometimes it's like,
"dude I'm still in the same fucking hallway I've been in my whole life. I wish that I was in a
different one, that I had a different life."
but then it's like,
"ok, dude. whatever. get over yourself. let's pay attention here. what's in front of you? what can
you deal with?" and what's in front of you is your crazy dog.

so I thought about that
during the walk back
all I could focus on was
this terrifying dog
who makes it hard for my kid to be happy.
because Ell was not
doing well
with the dog.
and I was thinking just like
something has got to give.
someone has got to help us.
thank god for the wizard.

and then The Dog Wizard came over.

and I don't know what I expected?
but this guy?
showed up at our house?
and he's wearing like a robe?
and stuff?
and he had a big white beard?
and a hat?
with stars on it?
and you know what?
the other thing was?
the other thing
was
I was like,
wait a second....
hey.
you seem familiar.
you're my son, dude.

this dude,
like, he's walking *into my house*.
a spitting image,
EXACTLY
he is one of those portraits from the wall come to life.

so, of course, I looked for Ell, and since I didn't see him, I freaked out.
because in my head, it's like
this is my kid grown up again in front of me
he has grown old again
Ell has aged
Ell is an adult

he has turned elder to confront the dog,
or whatever.

Lisa was like,
“hey, do you want any water?”
And the wizard was like,
“sure.”
and she got him a glass of water,
and I just stared at him, man,
freaking out, like
are you my son?

the wizard met Goose.
he did his thing with Goose,
and then
like, I thought he was done,
like he was leaving,
and he asks,
“does anyone else live here?”
all knowing, like,
and Lisa
Lisa goes,
“yeah, Ell lives here.”
and the wizard was like,
“cool.”
and I was standing there like,
on my head,
“don’t call him out.”
but my mouth is moving too quickly
and I go,
“uh, Ell?”
and Ell came, and
they were both there.

they were there,
in our living room,
both,
standing still,
both,
struck,
looking at each other,
both,
frozen,
both,
crossing time,
 crossing space,

crossing time-space,
 and everything,
 crossing.

a tear.

they looked at each other,
 eyes full of the world,
 both vibrating,
 both shaking,
 everything,
 the world,
 shifting
 in front of us.

Lisa and I,
 chalk

 pushed onto something,
 chalk on the wall,
 smeared across everything,
 leaving traces of ourselves.
 a smudge.
 a path.

 a streak
 across something that creates what?

 another thing?
 an image?
 a trace?

a time?

what do we leave, and how can we know what it is going to be when we leave it?

we have to look back.

we have to look back.

we have to look back.

we have to look back. we HAVE to look back. we have to look BACK. we have to LOOK back. WE have to look back. we have TO look. we have to look back look back. look back, LOOK BACK, but the only reality is HERE it is NOW reality the real thing is this PRESENT TIME presence this here now is real, and now and how and now they broke that there. here, that's what was broken there, and they looked at each other here LOOK BACK in our living room, standing. they looked at each other, back, at each here other, there they looked in the eye, they LOOKED AT, they looked, they looked they at, they each other looked, they looked, they looked they looked they looked they looked AT here other LOOK LOOK LOOK BACK LOOK BACK.

Guitars hook up to amps.

Crunch, crunch.

oh! uh.

you ready?

*The new band starts to play.
While he exits, he says*

thanks.

End of play.