

Strung Up!

v8

Jost Weinberger

based on the people I once aspired to be
dedicated to the ones left behind

INT. ED'S ROOM - DAY

1

A room in disarray filled with mismatching furniture picked off the street.

STATIC CLOSE UPS OF DETAILS

N We hear a piss stream hitting the water. A beep plays as voice messages left on the phone begin to play.

CALLER 1 (V.O.)

Yo brotha man. It's Al, just letting you know I'd like to have my usual today.

The phone beeps as the next message starts playing.

CALLER 2 (V.O.)

Hey dude, got any of that Gandalf OG left?

We hear the toilet flushing.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

2

We track backwards on a pair of crusty hotel slippers walking.

Phone beeps.

RONNY (V.O)

Hey hey! Good morning dude, you up for one or six beers tonight? Even Laura will probably want to join us. She's had a shit week.

The bedroom door is plastered with calendar months each individually stuck to the door with simplistic reminders like 'check mailbox', 'Toilet paper?'. A finger runs over the crossed out calendar boxes and crosses out today's date.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - DAY

3

ED (24) wearing boxers, a wife beater with a mustard stain on it and the brown crusty bath robe. As he enters into the kitchen. Clearly something has annoyed Ed very deeply. And he mumbles to himself.

ED

On the burner again?

Ed enters the narrow kitchen with a sink full of dirty dishes and a cluttered stove top. He opens the fridge and pulls out a carton of eggs. He takes a hard boiled egg out of the carton and taps it on the counter. He rolls it on the counter top to break away the shell. From the spice cupboard above the stove he pulls out a tiny novelty salt shaker. Finally Ed seasons the egg and takes a big bite.

Reaching into his bathrobe he pulls out a flip phone but its the burner and so reaches into the other pocket to pull out a different flip phone. Ed hits the speed dial. Whilst the phone rings he reaches into the fridge again, this time pulling out orange juice.

No one picks up the phone.

The door bell buzzes. Ed clearly was not expecting anyone.

The flip phone is snapped shut.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

4

Ed picks up the receiver to the doorbell intercom.

ED
Who is it?
(beat)
What do you mean new social worker?

Ed buzzes open the door to the street.

INT. ED'S ROOM- DAY

5

The coffee table is strewn with small paper envelopes, a scale, grinder, half-empty bag of chips, and an ashtray.

In a mad rush Ed uses the table cloth on his coffee table to wrap everything up and store it away.

There is a hectic knock on Ed's front door.

ED
Just a minute!

On the table he puts a cactus and a Tibetan singing bowl which he blows the dust off of. Another series of knocks on the door punch through Ed's choreographed routine.

ED
I said a minute!

Calmly he lights a bundle of sage.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

6

Ed opens the front door to find MISS MEADOWS (31) standing in the doorway wearing a tight-lipped smile, a navy blue blazer with a plain patterned pocket square and a matching clipboard.

ED

Where is Clarence?

MISS MEADOWS

Mr. Grant, I'm your new case worker,
Miss Meadows.

(beat)

May I come in?

INT. ED'S ROOM- DAY

7

Ed falls onto the messy couch holding his carton of orange juice. On the wall above the couch we see magazine cut outs, official looking documents, post-its and photos stuck up.

He wraps his bathrobe around his crossed legs.

ED

Please call me Ed, and you--

MISS MEADOWS

Can call me Miss Meadows. How are you
feeling these days?

ED

Oh the migraines are terrible. But
that kind, kind man...

Ed snaps his fingers as though trying to remember.

MISS MEADOWS

Clarence?

ED

Yes! That's his name. Got me into, the
art of meditation.

Ed generously gestures at the objects placed on the coffee table and takes a sip of the juice.

Miss Meadows sniffs the air.

MISS MEADOWS
Yes, I was wondering.

ED
My concentration and memorization of facts has been greatly improving. I just need more --

MISS MEADOWS
May I?

She sits down.

ED
...time.
(beat)
But do say. Where is Clarence? Is he okay?

MISS MEADOWS
There has been a major overhaul and a tightening of screws. And social work's mandate, now more than ever, is to closely follow its patrons for a quicker rehabilitation. And Clarence just wasn't meeting our standard of care anymore. So he was let go.

Ed's expression drops in disappointment.

(beat)

MISS MEADOWS
I understand the amnesia induced by the trauma of the grocery store robbery must be... debilitating. But welfare is a precious resource. That should be used to get people back on their feet. So that they can create their own luck instead of trying to play the system that owns them. And I believe that starts by engaging more with our reality.

Miss Meadows looks around the apartment knowingly to make her point.

ED
(sweetly)
Well thank god you're here for me.

Ed shifts into crossing his arms.

MISS MEADOWS

Why don't we begin by having you describe a day in your life.

ED

Well, I like to wake up, when I wake up. And then, usually I need to piss.

Miss Meadows clears her throat to gently interrupt him.

MISS MEADOWS

Let me rephrase the exercise. What do you set out to achieve on a day- to-day basis?

Ed nods in deep thought taking another absent minded sip of juice.

ED

I go for long walks every day. The fresh air helps to clear my head.

Miss Meadows takes a note.

Ed slowly turns away from Miss Meadows as he zones out and begins to stare into the middle distance.

MISS MEADOWS

That's a wonderful great first step. I also go for walks in the evening. By breaking down my plans it really helps me plan for the future. There's nothing better.

She notices him staring.

MISS MEADOWS

Mr. Grant? Are you still here with me?

Miss Meadows taps Ed on the shoulder. Who snaps out of his stupor. He looks down at his hands that have begun fidgeting with the carton of juice.

MATCH CUT

INT. PUB - NIGHT

8

Ed's hands, fidgeting with a nearly empty pint of beer. He's sitting in a dingy wood-paneled establishment with sticky tabletops.

The initials of lovers, dates of celebration, vulgarity & piss takers scar and mark the heavily vandalized round table.

Ed is sitting with LAURA (22), her hair in pigtail buns, eyes slathered in vibrant eye shadow, fingernail extensions painted hot pink. She is wearing a fuzzy sweater with an cat depicted on it. Ed is staring at the table.

LAURA

Hey! You alright Ed?

Ed snaps out of his deep state of thought and starts drumming his fingers on the table as he thinks of a topic of discussion to bring up to break the awkwardness.

ED

You ready for the gig?

LAURA

I'm not so sure... my guitarist is wearing an arm brace since Wednesday's ping pong accident. And the venue Ronny found us is now part of an estate sale.

ED

How the fuck did he put his hand in a brace playing ping pong?

LAURA

Kinda crazy, he slipped on the ball.

Three pints of beer HIT the table.

RONNY (O.S.)

You'd never catch me slipping.

RONNY (20) broad shoulders, clean shaven and hair slicked to the back, wearing a tight-fitting polo shirt with the collar propped up slides into a chair.

He gives Ed a shit-eating grin.

RONNY

Unless I'm slipping into your mum.

Laura is weirded out by the comment.

LAURA
(impersonating Ronny a capella)
Look it's me! Big Pimpin'! I get no
bitches! Cuz I ain't a player, so I
resort to name dropping mum's like a
wannabe ill rhyme sayer.

Ed chokes on his beer from laughter.

RONNY
(offended)
Man I've told you before. In the rap
underworld--

Ed & Laura laugh some more.

RONNY
...you need a way to distictify
yourself.

Ed passes him the bowl of peanuts as a form of apology.

The glasses CLINK as a night of drinking begins.

LAURA
(to Ed)
You seem like the type to sell
anything.

RONNY
(with a wink)
Laura he is!

ED
In this economy? I call that a
compliment.
(pause)
Your band in need of a manager by the
way?

LAURA
I am the manager.

ED
How about an event manager?

RONNY
Since when are you in need of a legal
job, thought your amnesia has you

covered?

LAURA

Don't event managers need to remember
to do a lot of things?

RONNY

(In a hushed voice)
Ed's got the system tricked out.

ED

Got a visit from a new social worker
today. She wants to see efforts being
made at 'rehabilitating'.

(beat)

Is that how you say it? Clarence never
used that word.

(beat)

Anyways, rehabilitating my
'situation'. By 'engaging' with
'reality'.

RONNY

Shit, they want you to start paying
rent?

Ed flips off Ronny.

ED

I had Clarence fooled! And now, this
Miss...Meadows is bursting the
carefully curated version of myself.

(beat)

I don't think the lie of amnesia has
me covered anymore...

RONNY

(to Laura)

He'd be perfect as event manager
(beat)

Think of his network of clients!

LAURA

Well we'd need a venue to begin with.
And I don't know how safe it is with
all them, junkies running around.

ED

My clients, are respectable.
Respectable users. We call them users.

RONNY

I know a guy with a venue, and Ed's expertise in selling anything should help us cut a better deal.

LAURA

Ronny, if this ends up not working out again... you are NEVER opening for our concerts.

Laura and Ronny pinky promise

FADE OUT

INT. MIKEY'S DEN FOYER - DAY

9

The Foyer's wall is covered with a dark toned patterned wallpaper. Old concert posters and band posters are hung up on the walls.

Ed is waiting impatiently for Ronny, who arrives sweaty in his yellow supermarket uniform carrying a matching yellow tote bag.

ED

Where have you been? We shouldn't be keeping the guy waiting.

RONNY

My shithead manager made me clean up a chocolate milk spill.

ED

Are you saying that cunt Frank got promoted? Thought his sabbatical from incarceration had ended long ago.

RONNY

Yup, that shithead cunt got promoted. Feels like every shift he tries to edge me into quitting.

(beat)

Hold this for me.

MONTAGE

-Ronny hands his tote bag to Ed.

-Ronny takes off his shirt.

-Ronny drops into a series of vigorous pushups.

-Ronny reaches into the bag pulling out a polo shirt and puts it on.

-Ronny puts on his fake luxury watch and the razor blade. chain.

-He whips his head to Ed wearing a Zoolanderesque expression.

END MONTAGE

RONNY
(in his most sultry voice)
Let's make this meeting our bitch.

Ed doesn't know whether to be inspired by his confidence or worried that it will come to bite them in the ass later. And so to deflect, he hands Ronny back his tote bag who to his surprise doesn't accept it.

RONNY
You keep it for now - makes you
look... studious.

INT. MIKEY'S DEN - DAY

10

The two men plop down into a pair of folding chairs. The dark and hazy room is only lit by the table lamp on the desk and the light pouring through the shutters behind the desk. The silhouette of MIKEY (53) seems bored already.

MIKEY
I'm told you boys are in need of a
venue?

RONNY
(a little too eagerly)
We sure are Mikey, we'll do anything
for the best price.

Ed gently pushes Ronny back into his chair.

ED
Anything, within reason.

MIKEY
Do you two even have any experience in
organizing a concert?

Ronny smugly turns a little on the chair and rests his arm on Ed's backrest.

RONNY

Oh yeah, loads. I helped me daddy run shows and such at our family's establishment. Even had a boxing match once. Ed here was our trusted promoter since the age of sixteen.

MIKEY

That true, Ed?

Ed nods unconvincingly.

Mikey leans back, light falls into his eyes. Revealing a scruffy man wearing a short fat tie.

MIKEY

Well what was it called?

RONNY

Oh the venue? It was--

MIKEY

I want Ed to tell me.

Ed becomes flustered.

ED

Oh let me think, it was quite some time ago. I think, it was just known as 'the spot' in our neighborhood.

MIKEY

You 'think' it was called 'the spot'.

(beat)

Why have I never heard of it?

RONNY

Please forgive my partner. He's a little, slow with the facts.

Ronny gestures at Ed and mimes a joint being puffed.

RONNY

And you've never heard of it because the family preferred to keep our operations on the down low. I'm sure a... distinguished businessman like yourself can appreciate.

MIKEY

Why don't you just do your event at

'the spot'.

ED

We had to burn it down when the tax
man came knocking 'downstairs'.

They fist bump under the table.

MIKEY

Best I can offer is 500 upfront and
another 500 after the show.

RONNY

A 1000?! You're joking.

Ed nods in agreement.

MIKEY

Well... You guys could always move
some pills for me.

Ronny and Ed glance at each other.

ED

How many we talking?

MIKEY

500 pieces and I don't know. Sell each
for 5?

Ronny thinks they've snagged a good deal. Ed counts with his fingers and realizes that 500 is a lot to sell in such a short amount of time. Before Ed can say anything Ronny gets up to shake Mikey's hand.

MIKEY

Well that's a deal.

ED

Now hold on a minute Mikey--

MIKEY

(sternly)

I thought you guys were partners?

Ed is about to say something but Ronny interjects.

RONNY

Yeah we absolutely are.

MIKEY

Excellent, I need the rest of the money right after the show. Because Zoro has expensive taste for steak.

Mikey tugs on a CHAIN he's been holding the whole time, and from under his desk we hear a big dog growling and licking its chops.

MIKEY

And I'd much rather just buy it.

Ronny and Ed stare with wide eyes.

EXT/INT. FRONT OF VENUE/LAURA'S BAND PRACTICE/MEADOWS OFFICE 11

SPLIT SCREEN'S

The two partners in crime are walking away from the venue. Ed tosses the now obviously heavier tote bag back to Ronny.

RONNY

Are you going call her to share the good news or what?

ED

If you can call it that.

Ed reaches into his pocket and pulls out his phone to call Laura. Laura's frame slides in from the top. Giving Ed's frame less head space.

LAURA

Hey dude. This better be good. How much is it going to cost us?

ED

(trying to sound cheerful)

Um, it's all included in the ticket price! Just gotta sell 300 of them for 10 euro's and we'll be set!

LAURA

300 tickets?! That's insane!

Ed abruptly stops walking.

ED,

Laura, as your event manager I'm going to need you to take... a chill pill. Have some faith. And enjoy this

ride on the escalator to heavenly fame
I'm building for you guys right now.

LAURA
Yeah but--

Laura's band starts jamming in the background. Their music
accents the scene.

ED
Hold on. Got another call coming
through.

Ed pushes a button on his flip phone and Miss Meadows's frame
slides onto the screen from the right. Ed's frame is further
cropped in.

MISS MEADOWS
Good afternoon Mr Grant.

ED
Good afternoon to you too Miss
Meadows.

Ronny leaps to Ed's right side to listen in on the
conversation with interest.

MISS MEADOWS
I just wanted to check in on you to
see how the job search is coming
along.

ED
You won't believe it! Currently in the
midst of organizing a 300- person
concert.

MISS MEADOWS
(stunned)
Oh. Wow. Congratulations! Who is
playing?

Ronny gestures at Ed to not reveal any details. But Ed rolls
his eyes back at him.

ED
A little known post punk rock band.
Their quite...

RONNY
(whispering to Ed)
avant-garde

ED
Avant-garde. Its a niche scene.

MISS MEADOWS
(Looking excited and sounding
disinterested)
Oh really? Avant-garde post punk rock
you say?

ED
Hey look I some very patient vendors
waiting for me right now...

MISS MEADOWS
Oh no worries! Talk to you soon.

Miss Meadows hangs up and her frame slides out of the screen.

Ed presses a button on the phone to put Laura back on.

For the first time, Ed hears the kind of music Laura's band
will be performing.

Laura has also started jamming at this point and can't hear
the conversation happening on the other side of the phone.

ED
(to Ronny)
This is the kind of music they'll be
preforming?
(beat)
My clients don't listen to this stuff.

RONNY
You've never heard The Strung Up's
preform?
(beat)
Look don't worry, this is where I come
in. We, strategically, place my mug on
the front of the poster.
(beat)
It's Marketing 101 really. I'm like
the golden carrot.

ED
(dejectedly)
Yeah, you are a carrot.

RONNY
That's what I'm talking about, man!

Ronny & Ed give each other a dap up.

MATCH CUT

MONTAGE

INT. LAURA'S BAND PRACTICE - DAY

12

DOLLY OUT

Laura draws an arrow from a song on the set list to rearrange the order. The band start's playing the song from the top.

INT. PRINT SHOP - DAY

13

Tickets coming out of the printer.

INT. ED'S ROOM - DAY

14

HYPER LAPSE

Various hands reaching over Ed's coffee table to be handed a small envelope and ticket.

EXT. WALL ON STREET - DAY

15

DOLLY OUT

A large poster is plastered onto the wall. On the poster we see the band posing under the bright yellow title "THE STRUNG UP'S! present an evening to fuel love" in the bottom right corner of the poster Ronny is wearing a mean smirk.

END MONTAGE

INT. BACKSTAGE OF THE CONCERT VENUE - NIGHT

16

The Band is resting against the exposed brick wall. In the background we hear a muffled Ronny rapping on a generic trap beat. As he finishes his verse we hear a weak smattering of golf claps.

RONNY (O.S.)
Thank you! Thank you!

Ronny enters the backstage area with slumped shoulders.

RONNY
Tough crowd, eh.

Laura jumps to her feet. The rest of the band follows. She begins to give a motivational speech when an excited Miss Meadows peers around the corner wearing an eccentric electric blue punk rock get up.

MISS MEADOWS
(barely contained whisper)
Oh my god Ed! This is incredible. How did you manage to get this venue.

Ed and Ronny turn around. Laura gives a quick glance but continues with her speech.

RONNY
Oh boy.

ED
(nervously)
We had to jump through a lot of hoops.

Miss Meadows is about to say something when the STAGE HAND (20) wearing all black also peers into the Backstage.

STAGE HAND
Is Ed here?

They gesture at Ed to follow them.

MISS MEADOWS
I'll catch you later.

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE VENUE - NIGHT

17

Blue lights are flashing as Ed and Ronny step out into the crisp night air. Miss Meadows lingers in the doorway.

ED
Is that Mikey?

A handcuffed Mikey is being walked towards the blue flashing lights by an officer, and Ronny calls out after him.

PUSH IN

RONNY
Mikey?!

Ed attempts to shush Ronny.

Mikey tries to stop and turn but the officer escorting him keeps pushing him forward. And so he tries to turn his head to face Ed and Ronny who are behind him and shouts.

MIKEY
Get a lawyer!

ED
(in a hushed voice)
We might just make a profit now.

ROLL CREDITS