

MISSING SYDNEY

Written by

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EXT. TRAPEZE PARK - NIGHT

Several towers stand above giant nets. Professional TRAPEZE ARTISTS help various COUPLES and PEOPLE fly through the air.

It's night but there are BRIGHT LIGHTS illuminating a fun atmosphere.

Everyone is harnessed above the nets. A few YOUNG CHILDREN squeal with glee. It's a safe environment with NO RISK OF DANGER.

GRIFFIN APPLEWHITE, 30s, is not buying that. While everyone else seems to be having a good time, Griffin SCREAMS and SHOUTS as he CLINGS to the leg of a MUSCULAR TRAPEZE ARTIST.

His girlfriend SYDNEY BARROW, 30s, is having a blast.

A MUSTACHED TRAPEZE ARTIST flips Sydney through the air with his legs, another WELL-BUILT TRAPEZE ARTIST catches her on the other side of the tower.

Several of their FRIENDS, APPLAUD and RECORD the scene from below.

Sydney lands gracefully on the platform right next to Griffin who continues to cling to the leg of his Trapeze Artist.

SYDNEY

You can do this Griffin!

Griffin's Trapeze Artist is trying to build up enough momentum to throw him to the other side, but Griffin's fear has essentially rendered him as dead weight.

GRIFFIN

Please don't do this. Please don't make me do this!

SYDNEY

You're doing great Griffin! Just don't look down.

He looks down and starts to freak out!

GRIFFIN

Pull me up! I can't do this. Pull. Me. Up!

Griffin flails around causing his Trapeze Artist to lose his grip.

The Trapeze Artist gives Sydney a look as if to say "this guy is a lost cause".

SYDNEY  
He was originally cast as Marty  
McFly in Back to the Future?

Without hesitation Griffin answers...

GRIFFIN  
Eric Stoltz.

His tension eases and unbeknownst to him the Trapeze Artist is starting to build enough momentum for a swing.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)  
What's the sum of the all the  
numbers on a standard roulette  
wheel?

SYDNEY  
666.

Sydney smiles down at Griffin, the tension now almost completely gone from his face and body. The Trapeze Artist is swinging his legs and is about to LAUNCH Griffin to the other side.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)  
What is the smallest country in the  
world?

GRIFFIN  
Vatican City!

Just as Griffin finishes saying "City" the Trapeze Artist FLIPS him through the air. Griffin lands safely on the opposite platform.

Sydney and their friends cheer.

Griffin raises his hands triumphantly, however his victory is short lived once he looks down.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)  
Holy crap!

Griffin's anxiety causes him to awkwardly step off the platform and PLUNGE straight down towards the nets.

His harness snatches him upward, securing his safety.

Griffin finds himself dangling mid-air over a large net. He THROWS UP -- or in this case DOWN towards his Friends who are RECORDING all of this.

One of the Trapeze Artists lowers him to safety. As he does, a SMALL BOX falls out of Griffin's pocket and plummets to the net, beating him there.

Sydney climbs down the tower to meet Griffin who is covered in his own vomit.

Sydney jumps on the net and gives Griffin a big hug.

SYDNEY

You did great!

GRIFFIN

That was the dumbest thing I've ever done!

Sydney looks bummed. She genuinely had a great time.

SYDNEY

Sorry, I guess. I just wanted to try something new.

Sydney notices the small box next to Griffin.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

What's that?

Griffin composes himself and cues his FRIENDS to start singing "Let's stay together" by Al Green. They do. Despite the circumstances, it's actually a sweet moment.

Griffin takes Sydney's hand. Their Friends cheer on the scene and continue to record all of it.

Griffin wipes vomit from his face.

GRIFFIN

Sydney, I love you so much. You're the best thing that's ever happened to me.

SYDNEY

(whispering)  
Please don't do this.

Griffin is confused but carries on.

GRIFFIN

You're the smartest, bravest, most incredible person I've ever met. Will you marry me?

He presents her with a beautifully intricate ring.

Sydney doesn't say anything, her silence speaks volumes. Then finally, she softly says...

SYDNEY

No.

Their Friends gasp. Griffin is devastated. Sydney tears up.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry, Griffin. I just can't.

GRIFFIN

But, why?

SYDNEY

Let's not do this now.

GRIFFIN

It's not like things can get more terrible at this point.

Sydney looks at her Friends. Everyone is shocked.

SYDNEY

I was planning on breaking up with you after the holidays.

GRIFFIN

I was wrong, that made things worse.

SYDNEY

You're a nice guy, the best guy but, I need a little more excitement and adventure in my life.

(then)

I just don't want to spend the rest of my life doing sudoku puzzles and listening to Al Green every Friday night.

GRIFFIN

Still getting worse. It's not like there's someone else though, right?

Sydney looks away.

FEMALE FRIEND

Is this because of that surgeon you work with? Dan Johnson?

GRIFFIN

Dan Johnson? That guy is nothing like me.

(then, realizing)

Oh.

Sydney reads Griffin's mind.

SYDNEY

Griffin, I'm not sleeping with Dan Johnson.

GRIFFIN

Do you want to?

Her silence is deafening. She tries to give back the ring.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)

Keep it. It's custom made for you.

Griffin unhooks his harness and walks off. One of his Friends shouts after him...

MALE FRIEND

Can Melissa and I still catch a ride home?

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - NEXT DAY

Griffin's Honda stops near a parking spot labeled "TEACHER OF THE MONTH".

A large, lifted, decked-out, FORD BRONCO sits in the parking space. The license plate reads "COACH F." A nude woman covered in an American Flag is painted on the side.

Griffin shakes his head in disgust and accelerates away.

INT. GRIFFIN'S OFFICE - LATER

The open office door has a homemade certificate exclaiming "TEACHER OF THE MONTH."

The office itself is neat and tidy; a stark contrast to the dishevelled Griffin standing over his desk.

Griffin tosses items into a cardboard box. He stops when he gets to a framed picture of him and Sydney in front of a giant waterfall. The frame reads "Multnomah Falls".

Item after item the box fills up. A teddy bear, a few Valentine's Day cards, a crown that reads "Portland's Trivia King & Queen 2013", etc. However, it's the picture he keeps focusing on.

KNOCK at the door.

Griffin looks up to see ELI, a teenager in a sweater vest. This could be Griffin fifteen years ago.

ELI  
Congratulations!

Eli sees the box.

ELI (CONT'D)  
Oh.

Griffin nods as Eli enters.

ELI (CONT'D)  
Sorry, man... I'll see if my uncle will buy the ring back. Since it was custom, you may have to eat a grand or so.

GRIFFIN  
I told her to keep it.

ELI  
What?! I don't know how much guidance counselors make, but I'm pretty sure you're going to be eating Ramen noodles for the next decade.

GRIFFIN  
It's fine. It looked good on her.

Eli shakes his head and sits down.

ELI  
At least her next boyfriend won't need to buy a ring.

Griffin is not amused.

GRIFFIN  
Hey, I never got a chance to meet your father at the parent teacher conference last night.

ELI  
 He didn't come. Probably better  
 that he and my mom aren't in the  
 same location at the same time  
 anyway.

Eli looks bummed, Griffin changes the subject.

GRIFFIN  
 Shouldn't you be in class?

ELI  
 Speaking of, I need you to switch  
 me out of Biology.

Griffin takes a seat and gives Eli his full attention.

GRIFFIN  
 I've already moved you out of four  
 classes this semester. What gives?

Eli slumps in the chair.

ELI  
 Everyone keeps picking on me in  
 class. They always try to copy my  
 answers and I always let them.

GRIFFIN  
 You don't have to let them. Past  
 behavior only influences future  
 behavior if you let it.

ELI  
 What a crock of shit!

GRIFFIN  
 You need to stand up for yourself.

ELI  
 Seriously? You're telling me this.  
 How's that "Teacher of the Month"  
 parking space treating you?

GRIFFIN  
 I don't mind sharing it with Coach  
 F. He has balls and other types  
 P.E. equipment to lug around.

ELI  
 You're right. He definitely has  
 more balls than you.  
 (then, lightbulb)  
 I'll make a deal with you.  
 (MORE)

ELI (CONT'D)

You ask for your parking space back  
and I'll stop letting kids copy my  
homework.

Griffin thinks it over for a moment, then relents.

GRIFFIN

(sweating)

No sweat.

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - LATER

A WHISTLE periodically CHIRPS while STUDENTS (12 year old boys) alternate doing the rope climb. They all climb the rope with relative ease.

COACH F, 40s, is a wolverine of man. He CHIRPS his whistle, barely paying attention to a BABBLING Griffin beside him.

GRIFFIN

...and I was honored to receive the  
award, but have not yet had the  
pleasure of reaping the benefits of  
the prime parking.

Coach F focuses in on Griffin.

COACH F

Who are you again?

GRIFFIN

Griffin Applewhite. We've worked  
together for the last seven years.  
And we went to high school  
together.

Coach F shrugs, another whistle CHIRP.

COACH F

Whatever, you want the space you  
gotta earn it.

GRIFFIN

I did. I'm teacher of the month.

COACH F

Not like that, you shit. If you can  
climb the rope, you can have the  
space, but only on Mondays.

Griffin looks up at the rope. To him it seems 900 feet high.

COACH F (CONT'D)

What are you waiting for, trapeze boy?

SNARKY STUDENT

Three million YouTube hits and counting.

The room LAUGHS at Griffin.

Griffin stares up the hanging rope, he places one hand on it before quickly backing away.

Several Students start to reenact the scene from the trapeze park. Coach F laughs.

ELI

Come on Griffin, you can do it.

Griffin approaches the rope again, then stops. Nope. He turns to Eli...

GRIFFIN

Pick any class you want.

INT. HOSPITAL - RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

Sydney, dressed in surgical scrubs, removes bandages from a PATIENT'S head. A sign in the background reads LEGACY GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL.

A NEWS CREW films the entire thing.

As the bandages come off, the Patient looks great. She hugs Sydney. Several NURSES and other DOCTORS APPLAUD.

INT. GRIFFIN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Griffin tosses several items into a box. He takes a break to curl up on the couch and cry.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Sydney is walking side by side with DAN JOHNSON. Dan is well built and walks with a confident stride. He texts while he walks. He doesn't seem all that enamored with Sydney, she seems disinterested in him too.

EXT. MULTNOMAH FALLS - DAY

This is the waterfall, the spot from the picture in Griffin's office. Griffin sits alone with his head between his legs.

LADY (O.S.)

Could you take a picture of us?

Griffin looks up and sees a CUTE COUPLE who are hanging all over each other. Not what he wants to see.

GRIFFIN

Sure.

DUDE

Switch places with us, we want the waterfall in the background.

Griffin hangs his head. The Lady hands him the camera.

LADY

Just push that button.

GRIFFIN

1-2-3.

He takes the picture. Before he can hand the camera back --

DUDE

Now one with us kissing.

The couple makes out passionately. Griffin takes the romantic shot of them kissing. He again approaches with the camera --

DUDE (CONT'D)

Sorry, just one more.

The Dude drops to one knee to propose.

Griffin drops the camera and sulks away. The newly engaged Couple doesn't seem to notice, as they embrace in the background.

INT. AIRPORT HANGAR - DAY

Inside a small office sits a MAN wearing a suit. He is watching the news. The story about Sydney plays and it has his full attention.

MALE NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.)  
 Doctor Sydney Barrow at Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital successfully completed a revolutionary new face transplant surgery.

The Man in the suit perks up.

MALE NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 The surgery regenerates tissues, allowing for new skin to grow and heal at an extraordinary pace. For victims of severe burns this process can not only heal the wounds, but essentially give them a new face and a fresh start.

The Man in the suit quickly picks up his cell phone.

MAN  
 (into the phone)  
 I just found exactly what you need.

He hangs up his phone and destroys it afterwards.

EXT. AIRPORT HANGAR - CONTINUOUS

A van approaches the hangar. Inside the van we see...

TROY, 40s, rough around the edges. The kind of guy who has looked like a 40 year old since he was a teenager.

He approaches the back entrance and punches in a code. The door to the hangar opens.

INT. HANGAR - CONTINUOUS

Troy pulls his van to the center of a dingy room. There are a handful of metallic tables with large body-sized "bags" lying on top of them. One table has nothing on it.

Troy opens the back of his van, he grabs a "bag" and flings it over his shoulder. He walks over to the empty table and places the "bag" on it. He favors his shoulder as he does.

The Man from the office emerges and approaches Troy. He's the BOSS and has a hard time not being a dick.

BOSS  
 You should get that shoulder fixed.  
 You're not much use here if you're a gimp.

TROY

You won't have to worry about that much longer. This next job is my last.

The Boss laughs.

BOSS

Everyone says that Troy. But criminals are like boxers, no one actually ever leaves.

TROY

Hagler left.

The Boss motions towards the bag Troy just placed on the table.

BOSS

How long is she out for?

TROY

48 hours.

The COLLECTOR, a young, tough, weaselly man in his 30s enters from the office. He unzips the bag Troy just placed on the table.

A LIMP ARM hangs out, he slaps a plastic bracelet on the wrist, hospital style. The body's been tagged.

COLLECTOR

I'll stop by her place and destroy any identification she left behind.

BOSS

Good. Everything is on track to deliver her to her new owner.

Troy looks ashamed. The Boss smiles and hands him a piece of paper.

BOSS (CONT'D)

This next assignment is the biggest one of your life.

The Collector perks up.

COLLECTOR

What makes this one so special?

BOSS

Let's just say she makes it easier for people like us to disappear.

(MORE)

BOSS (CONT'D)

(beat)

If all goes according to plan, this  
job will pay us all enough to  
retire.

Troy starts to walk off.

TROY

It's my last job either way.

The Boss and The Collector laugh at Troy as he exits.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

An ambulance pulls up to the busy front entrance. A sign  
above the entrance proclaims "LEGACY GOOD SAMARITAN  
HOSPITAL."

An EMT WORKER exits the ambulance and opens up the back  
doors.

He pulls a stretcher out and rolls it toward the entrance.

As he enters the hospital we see his face under the brim of  
his hat... it's Troy.

MOMENTS LATER

Griffin's Honda parallel parks in front of the ambulance.  
Tight quarters.

Griffin exits carrying his cardboard box of things. A happy-  
couple bobble head pokes out.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Troy waits for an elevator, resting his hand on the  
stretcher.

A NURSE walks up to the elevator and waits with him.

NURSE

You the new guy?

Troy nods, not looking her in the eye.

Elevator DINGS.

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