

BAD FOODIE: PART ONE

The rise of Guidry Cloche

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EXT. - HIGHWAY OUTSIDE HELENA, MONTANA - DAY.

SUPER: SUMMER 2000

Midday sun beats down on a van pulled off the side of a barren highway winding through the prairie wilderness. The van features a *CHEF*TV* logo with *America's Cultural Cuisine* next to the smiling white face of GUIDRY CLOCHE.

With the high mountains looming in the distance, 2 sweaty young men struggle to change a flat tire. A tumbleweed blows past a shabby trailer hitched behind the van. Its windows rattle from the rock music blaring inside.

INT. - CHEF TV TALENT TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Guidry sits at his dressing table doing bong rips and chopping out 3 lines of cocaine with a chef's knife. A half-empty bottle of whiskey sits next to an autographed photo of Julia Child, complete with a lipstick kiss. He downs a shot of booze and puts a rolled-up 20 to his nose.

GUIDRY
(singing)
*One little, two little,
three little Indians--*

The door opens and a black man enters. FJ LEWIS coughs and turns down the boombox. He grabs a nearby magazine and waves the air to clear the smoky haze. He tries to put it down but it sticks to his palm. Groggled out, he shakes his hand free.

FJ LEWIS
Open a window or something, Gid.
Get the air circulating at least.
We're almost done with the tire.

He grabs the liquor bottle and looks at the label.

FJ LEWIS
What are you drinking? *Old Crow?*
How appropriate. When in Rome--

The producer takes a swig and grimaces at the burn.

GUIDRY
This ain't Rome, kid. I've been to
Italy a lot, but I got arrested
last time and they revoked my Visa.

FJ LEWIS
Arrested? What happened?

GUIDRY
Disturbing the peace.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Guidry and a mustachioed paisan square off in a large Roman fountain while a pregnant woman stands crying and holding a jar of spaghetti sauce.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
*I got in a fistfight in Trevi
Fountain with Francesco Rinaldi.*

The police arrive and arrest Guidry. Francesco gives him a chin flick as he is dragged away in handcuffs.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
He claimed I got his wife Prego.

END FLASHBACK

FJ LEWIS
Who are you calling kid? You're not much older than me.

GUIDRY
Yeah, but those are TV years. It's different. Like the Metric System. Don't try to understand.

FJ LEWIS
But, I mean, Montana is beautiful. How could you not love this place?

GUIDRY
Is that supposed to be some kind of joke? Look, I'll do what I have to because I really need this gig, but places like this are a living hell for a food show host.

FJ LEWIS
What do you mean?

GUIDRY
I mean how many more Rocky Mountain fucking oysters do I have to eat? How did that even become a thing? For fuck's sake, the porcupine meatballs are made from actual porcupine!

FJ LEWIS

Well, you'd better eat them and smile, because it's down to you and that New York chef with the book deal. One of you is getting picked up by the network. Then it's 30 weeks on the road eating in every ethnic hash house in America, so keep your antacids handy.

GUIDRY

I got a little excited when I saw that I'd be eating beaver. It looks good on paper, but I suspect it's not as enjoyable as it sounds. Throw me a bone here, Hollywood. Take pity on the talent. I'm only human. Can't I just lift up the plate while you run stock footage of me chewing?

FJ LEWIS

Doesn't work like that. And don't call me Hollywood. Besides, these Native folks are nice, and they're making serious bank slinging that roadkill to the tourists.

The men gather their things and exit the trailer. The two youths finish putting away the jack and roll away the flat tire, leaving it discarded by the side of the road.

GUIDRY

Who had this trailer before me?
It's all frilly and pink in here.

FJ LEWIS

Not sure. I know the network was reluctant to give it to you after the last one went up in flames.

GUIDRY

Albuquerque wasn't my fault! I was partying out in the desert with Alton Brown at the time. Blame him.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Guidry and Alton stand inside a travel trailer wearing yellow HAZMAT suits with respirators and blue gloves.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

He was working on a gazpacho recipe he got from some chemistry teacher.

Alton pours a beaker of blue liquid into a vial, causing an explosion. The pair are thrown clear, and look back to see the trailer engulfed in flames.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
*I mean, I love Al, known him a long
 time. But sometimes he takes the
 Lex Luthor stuff a little too far.*

His hair burnt off, the bald supervillain throws away his safety gear to reveal a tailored suit. He snags a dangling rope ladder and is taken away by helicopter like James Bond.

END FLASHBACK

FJ LEWIS
 I've heard that about him.

GUIDRY
 I'm pretty sure this trailer
 belonged to that Southern lady with
 the lard biscuits. You know the one
 I'm talking about?

FJ LEWIS
 The one that said the N-word on TV?

GUIDRY
 That's her!

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

A silver-haired woman is being filmed while she bakes.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
Her show got cancelled.

As she bends over to open the oven, a large hook appears from stage left and yanks the camera crew away. The woman turns and stands confused, holding a tray of biscuits.

FJ LEWIS (V.O.)
Her magazine too. Bless her heart.

She steps outside to look for the camera crew. A newspaper stand on the sidewalk sells magazines with the woman's face on the cover. The hook enters to snatch away the news stand.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
She even lost her restaurant.

The startled woman turns to look. With her back turned, a wrecking ball swings in and demolishes the entire building.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
I think Al Sharpton got her dog.

Looking down, she sees her pup by her side, tail wagging. Al Sharpton comes into frame, picks up the dog and walks off.

END FLASHBACK

FJ LEWIS
 Now her time slot is up for grabs.
 And this may be my first prime-time
 gig, but it might get you off the
 D-list if you don't screw it up.

GUIDRY
 D-list? Hey, I'm at least C-list.

FJ LEWIS
 Not for long. Come on and ride up
 front with us. We're almost there.

FJ hops into the driver's seat and starts the engine as Guidry takes the passenger spot. Crew members MICHAEL KUSAMA and RODNEY NEUMANN climb in the back of the van and slide the Guidry-covered door closed as they drive off.

TITLE CARD: BAD FOODIE

EXT. - DOWNTOWN HELENA, MONTANA. - LATER

With the van parked on the street, FJ walks behind the building where the trailer sits tucked in an alley. He approaches and bangs on the door.

FJ LEWIS
 Game time, Gid. Word is the suits
 are really happy with the dailies.
 We've got a good shot at being
 picked up, so let's finish strong.

Guidry emerges with a powdery nose to join FJ in the alley.

GUIDRY
 No sweat. I'm a professional actor.

FJ LEWIS
 I wouldn't say that but you'll have
 to do until one shows up. What do
 you say, can you fake it for one
 more show?

GUIDRY
 Guaranteed. See my face? I'm faking
 interest right now.
 (MORE)

GUIDRY (CONT'D)

What would you like me to fake next? Sincerity? Orgasm? My Death?

FJ LEWIS

Look, as soon as we wrap, you're free to go for 6 weeks until post is finished so we can get this out in time for sweeps.

GUIDRY

In this business I'm known as One Take Guidry. Ask anyone. When it comes to food show hosts, I'm it. The pinnacle. The Zenith. As far as competition goes, I have none.

FJ LEWIS

I appreciate your confidence, but I don't know. That other guy is tall, charismatic, ruggedly handsome--

GUIDRY

What am I, chopped liver over here?

FJ LEWIS

I'm not saying that. But he has an edge to him that Programming likes.

GUIDRY

God bless, but that glorified line cook will never go anywhere now that he's sober. Giving up drugs was the worst thing he could do if he wants to make it in this racket.

FJ LEWIS

Maybe not, but I heard they're making his novel into a movie.

GUIDRY

(annoyed)

You know what? On second thought, screw that guy. Let's go.

The pair leave the alley and walk to the front of the café.

GUIDRY

Understand this: I will do whatever it takes, and I mean WHAT EVER IT TAKES. Ten o'clock Wednesday night belongs to Guidry Cloche.

FJ LEWIS

So let it be written in TV Guide,
so let it be done.

GUIDRY

I wish him well, I really do. But
it doesn't matter what he does.
Against yours truly, his chances
are exactly Zero Point Zero. When
it comes to getting this time slot,
I have absolutely NO RESERVATIONS.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

GUIDRY (V.O.)

*He may as well grow a douchey
goatee, dye his hair like a troll
doll, and wear an upside down hat
with his sunglasses on backwards.*

A stocky man enters the frame and waves. Facial hair sprouts
on his chin and blond spikes rise from his head. With upside
down hat & rear-facing shades, Guy Fieri hops into his
Camaro and speeds away down the road to Flavortown.

END FLASHBACK

FJ LEWIS

Are you finished? It's all a moot
point if we don't nail this pilot.
Let's get your opening monologue
knocked out like we rehearsed.

GUIDRY

I was on acid during rehearsal.

FJ LEWIS

Naked as well. Thanks for that.

The duo reach the front of the café. The idle crew members
are sitting on equipment boxes as the group meets up.

GUIDRY

Hey Rodney, you and Mike go grab
some java for everyone on me. I saw
a coffee shop just down the street.
Battlestar Arabica or something.

MICHAEL

I think you mean Starbucks.

Guidry hands a rolled up 20 to the sound man.

GUIDRY (CONT'D)

Whatever. Wait, give it back!

He reclaims the cash and licks the inside of the bill before handing it back to Rodney, who treats it like a biohazard.

RODNEY

Ew. That is really not okay.

GUIDRY

And I want the change back!

The young crew members amble off and FJ turns to Guidry:

FJ LEWIS

I'd really like to take this show in a different creative direction.

GUIDRY

Alright Hollywood, I'm listening.

FJ LEWIS

I used to be a fan of reality TV, but lately I feel like the audience deserves better than what the networks are putting out there. I mean, MTV begged me to come work for them. But now, I wish the Real World would just stop hassling me.

GUIDRY

Nobody at the network gives a shit about the viewers. It's all about eyeballs and advertising. Period.

FJ LEWIS

It's not enough to simply eat these people's food, Gid. I want you to tell their stories. Their struggles and triumphs. Document the lives of people that are usually overlooked. Like that Vietnamese family in Houston with the kimchi tacos.

GUIDRY

And the South African guy in Kansas City. Best barbecue I've ever had.

FJ LEWIS

Exactly. Give it some more depth, more HUMANITY. I'd like to show black and brown people that their lives matter too, y'know?

GUIDRY

I'm gonna go with my gut here. I always trust my producer to steer the ship, and if it means more human interest stories and less fried testicles, I'm all in.

FJ LEWIS

Thanks Guidry. It means a lot, knowing you have my back.

GUIDRY

If the network has a problem with the new direction, they can fire me. Wouldn't be the first time.

FJ LEWIS

You're pretty famous in this business for taking chances.

GUIDRY

Why play it safe? It's boring. I'm happy my agent got me this gig.

FJ LEWIS

It's got it's moments.

GUIDRY

Are you kidding? I love this job.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Guidry walks into a restaurant and sits down in front of the camera. Offscreen hand places a Dagwood sandwich on a plate in front of him.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

You guys take me to lunch and record me asking scripted questions to a 'sandwich artist' about her curated organic chili aioli.

Guidry mashes the sandwich down and takes a bite. Putting it back, the plate is snatched by offscreen hand and replaced with another containing a small, pink meat-blossom.

FJ LEWIS (V.O.)

'Next we'll feature a locally-sourced artisan pimento-loaf crudité for you to enjoy'.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
*While I pretend to be listening to
 whatever the fuck tattooed Becky
 here with the nose ring is saying.*

A lady with cat's eye glasses and multi-colored hair stands talking like Miss Othmar from Charlie Brown: Womp-Wah-Wah.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
*After all that, I do my closing
 spiel and we leave. That's my job.*

END FLASHBACK

FJ LEWIS
 Televised Brunch.

GUIDRY
 Dinner's a different story.

FJ LEWIS
 Because people recognize you?

GUIDRY
 I can never eat a meal in peace.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Guidry flirts with a beautiful woman seated across from him. Curious onlookers creep in around him until they crash like a wave and wash his date aside. Guidry fights through the crowd and runs for the bathroom.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
*I mean, whatever happened to
 personal space? Is there no
 standard anymore?*

Guidry is crouched in a stall with his feet on the seat. Adoring fans and paparazzi appear from underneath to wave and take photos. He kicks open the door and dashes out.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
*I can barely get five minutes
 alone. It makes me fucking hostile.
 Sometimes I just want to walk.*

END FLASHBACK

FJ LEWIS
 Hey, that's the price of fame.

GUIDRY

With so many pretenders to the throne, it's kill or be killed.

FJ LEWIS

Oh, come on. It can't be THAT bad.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Bobby Flay stands beside a woman in an apron on a TV set kitchen. She plops a puffer fish onto her cutting board and raises a large knife.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

Oh yeah? Flay went on another host's show and the lady tried to poison him. It was a whole thing.

She uses chopsticks to feed Chef Flay a piece of sushi. He swallows it and one of his eyes starts twitching. Stricken, he stiffly falls over sideways like a stunned mullet.

END FLASHBACK

GUIDRY

I don't want to name names, but Giada knows what she did.

FJ LEWIS takes a coffee from the returning Rodney and Mike. Guidry sips his and winces at the taste. He doubles down and takes another pull before he replies.

FJ LEWIS

How long have you been on TV, Gid?

GUIDRY

I made my dry-aged marrow bones the old fashioned way, back before basic cable flooded the airwaves with food and travel programs. Ten years battling it out for tote bag sales with the other hosts at PBS.

FJ LEWIS

Public broadcasting can be brutal.

GUIDRY

Talk about a baptism by fire. First day I run into Rick Bayless. Y'know the thing about Rick is, he's got lifeless eyes. Black eyes, like a doll's eyes. When he comes at ya, he doesn't seem to be living.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Skeletons line the dusty dirt road as a pickup drives across the Mexican desert. A masked sicario dumps a canvas sack out of the back and the truck drives off.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
*That first week, Bayless had me
 kidnapped in Tijuana by the cartel.
 Turns out 'El Tiburón' used to be
 Pablo Escobar's personal chef.*

Guidry's beat-up head emerges from the sack. He dives back in and reappears holding a shrink-wrapped parcel. He kisses it and smiles, noticeably missing a front tooth.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
*Got in a Cajun blood feud with Paul
 Prudhomme too. My neck still hurts.*

Chef Prudhomme sits at a fire with white Baron Samedi face paint and a bone necklace. With an evil laugh, he tosses a pinch of cayenne seasoning into the flames with a poof of green smoke and stabs a skewer through a Guidry voodoo doll.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
*And I can never forget my saké-
 fueled knife fight with Marty Yan.*

Martin Yan and Guidry are tied together at the wrists, dancing around each other with switchblades like Michael Jackson's 'Beat it' video.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
Don't mess with those Yakuza guys.

Martin takes a swipe at Guidry's hand and draws blood.

END FLASHBACK

GUIDRY
 (raises hand)
 Doctors reattached my pinky.
 Nothing frightens me anymore.

A thin line of scar tissue encircles the digit, which has healed slightly off-center.

MICHAEL
 Whoa!

RODNEY
 Gnarly!

GUIDRY

I'll never go back to that. But I need your help, gentlemen. The world of basic cable is no place for the weak or infirm. Old-timers like me will have to adapt or die.

(to Mike)

Hey Short Round, where's my change?

MICHAEL

There is no change.

RODNEY

And what's venti?

Guidry breaks the huddle, standing in disbelief.

GUIDRY

What do you mean no change? I'm an American. I pay my taxes, mostly. I vote, once in a while. I want change, dammit. I demand change!

RODNEY

7 coffees cost more than you gave us. You owe Mike two dollars.

MICHAEL

I want my two dollars.

GUIDRY

What a ripoff. At those prices, that place will be shut down next week. The American consumer will never be willing to pay more than a dollar for a cup of Joe. The free market won't allow it.

FJ takes the tray holding the remaining three coffees.

FJ LEWIS

C'mon, let's go meet your costars.

EXT. - CROW FLIES CAFÉ - MOMENTS LATER

Things are not going well. FJ pleads with the cafe's Native American staff: Plump 45-year old owner JANET and mid-twenties waitress MAGGIE, who sip their coffees. Beside them, hulking, late-thirties cook RAPHAEL sniffs the cup and pours his brew into a planter, grumbling:

RAPHAEL

I ordered a frappuccino. Where's my fucking frappuccino?

FJ LEWIS

Give him another chance. I mean, we just got here. He didn't mean anything by it.

JANET

Sure sounded like he meant it.

The producer pleads his case, hands on hips:

FJ LEWIS

Look, I'm sorry. He's under a lot of pressure. We've just filmed four pilots in twelve days.

MAGGIE

It's always the old white guys who say it, too.

JANET

Why do people feel like they can just say anything they want these days, no matter who it hurts?

FJ LEWIS

I'm not excusing it, it was an insensitive thing to say.

RAPHAEL

Alright, but if he says it again--

FJ LEWIS

He won't. I've already talked to him. Guidry's not a bad guy, he's--

JANET

Racist?

FJ LEWIS

No. Not exactly. He's--

MAGGIE

Stupid?

FJ LEWIS

Getting warmer. Look, it's like, Guidry is--

JANET

Racist?

FJ LEWIS

NO! You said that already.

RAPHAEL
Toothless?

FJ LEWIS
What? Toothless?

RAPHAEL
(shakes his fist)
If he says that ONE MORE TIME--

FJ LEWIS
No! I was gonna say 'Old School'.
You know, like, an iconoclast.

RAPHAEL
(to Janet)
You had it right the first time.

MAGGIE
He's not an iconoclast. Kevin
Costner is an iconoclast.

JANET
For sure.

RAPHAEL
No doubt.

FJ LEWIS
Okay, so he's not Kevin Costner.

RAPHAEL
There's only one Kevin Costner.

The group crosses the street, over to the sidewalk and
toward the waiting crew.

FJ LEWIS
I'll give you that. Look, he
promised that he wouldn't say
anything that could remotely be
misconstrued as racist. He won't
say anything like that again, okay?

The assembled Native food workers stare dubiously at FJ.

JANET
Okay.

MAGGIE
I guess.

RAPHAEL
I don't believe it.

FJ LEWIS
What? Why not?

RAPHAEL
Keeping promises to the Natives has never really been white people's thing.

The group arrives at the café entrance.

FJ LEWIS
(to café staff)
Come on, work with me here. You are gonna get so much exposure from this. After it airs, this place is gonna be packed every night.

JANET
We close at three.

FJ LEWIS
You close at three?
(to himself)
It's twelve forty-five! God damn it. Why didn't somebody tell me?

FJ searches through the pages of his shooting schedule.

FJ LEWIS
Who set up the itinerary? Jesus tap-dancing Christ! Hey Everyone!
(clapping to his staff)
C'mon, time is money, let's go!
What are you people, on dope?

Michael and Rodney rise and start unpacking their gear.

RAPHAEL
Please don't blaspheme Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

MAGGIE
It's pretty offensive to mock someone's religion.

JANET
Yeah, we really don't like it.

FJ LEWIS
You guys are Christians? I always thought you guys believed in like, this Earth Mother, like, Shaman-type stuff.

(MORE)

FJ LEWIS (CONT'D)
 Y'know, the Great Spirit and
 whatnot, worshipping Nature,
 peacefully living in harmony with
 the environment.

The café staff's eyerolls are almost physically palpable.

FJ LEWIS
 Personally, I've ALWAYS been
 fascinated by Native American
 culture. Sweat lodges, peace pipes,
 peyote. Matter of fact, I have a
 dreamcatcher hanging from my
 rearview mirror right now!

As the trio of Native Americans stand cringing, Maggie
 shakes her head in despair.

MAGGIE
 Wow. That was even more insulting
 than the 'Jesus' thing.

JANET
 It really was. Way more.

RAPHAEL
 Why do they always mention peyote?
 What is it with the peyote? What's
 wrong with these people? All day, I
 got white guys in ponytails asking
 me to get them peyote. Get it
 yourself, Jeremy.

MAGGIE
 They can't help it. They've been
 fed a bunch of stereotypes their
 whole lives.

The owner pulls out a key to unlock the front door.

JANET
 (to FJ)
 We're not like that at all. Hardly
 anybody lives that way anymore.
 Actually, Native Americans as a
 whole have a surprising amount of
 religious and spiritual diversity.

FJ LEWIS
 I did not know that.

JANET

For example, the three of us were raised Roman Catholic.

The trio cross themselves in unison. The owner opens the door and the café crew enter the dining room followed by FJ.

INT. - CROW FLIES CAFÉ DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

JANET

To this day my parents are practicing Catholics. They go to Mass 3 times a week. Pretty sure they didn't choose to be Catholic, I think the government MADE them.

RAPHAEL

I believe in the Great Spirit. My brother-in-law is convinced he saw it in the woods once when he was little, but no one believed him. Says it scared him so bad he crapped his pants.

FJ LEWIS

Really? Like Sasquatch?

RAPHAEL

It wasn't Sasquatch. He accidentally shit himself and was just trying to cover it up. That family is a bunch of pathological liars.

FJ LEWIS

Look, we're getting off track here. Can we get everybody inside so we can get this shot before midnight?

JANET

We close at three.

FJ LEWIS

Yes, I know.
I was being rhetorical.

MAGGIE

No you weren't, you were using hyperbole.

FJ LEWIS

I was?

MAGGIE

I'm pretty sure. I take creative writing courses at night.

RAPHAEL

My folks gave up on Catholicism years ago, after they cancelled Highway to Heaven. I came out to them last week. I don't know what came over me. We were just sitting in the living room watching an Israeli rerun of Ellen. When it got to this certain scene, I just blurted out: ME TOO! They said they already knew.

JANET & FJ LEWIS

(simultaneously)

You're gay?

MAGGIE

(to JANET)

You didn't know? Besides, I thought he told you?

RAPHAEL

I thought I did.

Janet gets emotional, and dabs at her eyes with a napkin.

RAPHAEL

I'm sorry, Mama. I didn't mean to make you cry. I sent everybody on my email list a notification on AOL last week.

JANET

(sniffing)

Well, I didn't get it. I don't use the interweb, especially with the Y2K and all.

RAPHAEL

I got so many replies! 'You've Got Mail'! That'll never get old.

JANET

So, you're gay? Oh Rafi--

The older woman blows her nose and smiles.

JANET

(brightly)

Honey, that's wonderful!

MAGGIE

What are your pronouns?

FJ LEWIS

Congratulations on coming out.
Really, that's beautiful. Mazel
tov, big guy.

(looks at watch)

But right now, daylight is burning.
Let's shake a leg, people. What am
I paying you for?

MAGGIE & RAPHAEL & JANET

(in unison)

You're not paying us.

FJ LEWIS

It's a figure of speech. Besides,
you guys are getting free
advertising. You can't buy that.

JANET

Yes you can.

MAGGIE

Yeah, it's called advertising.

RAPHAEL

My dog shakes his leg when you
scratch him.

MAGGIE

I think that time he was being
rhetorical.

The staff puts on their work uniforms, and in a line of matching teal bowling shirts sporting TEAM TATONKA, the three Crow Flies employees head into the back of the restaurant to prepare for the taping. The producer pokes his head out the front door.

FJ LEWIS

(to his crew)

All right gang! Let's get ready to
rock and or roll!

INT. - CROW FLIES CAFÉ DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

GUIDRY

So, you're saying that all of your ingredients are organic, locally-sourced, gluten-free, hormone-free, Atkins-friendly, high in fiber, low in complex carbohydrates, and totally devoid of corn syrup or processed sugar, flour, or salt?

JANET

Right you are, Guidry. Some of the recipes we use date back to the early to mid-eighteen hundreds.

GUIDRY

That's incredible. It's cultural history on a plate. You can taste the authenticity. This is the original flavor of Montana.

Guidry redirects to Maggie.

GUIDRY (CONT'D)

What else can you tell us about these Native delicacies we're about to enjoy? How are they seasoned? How would your ancestors have prepared them?

MAGGIE

Well Guidry, I'm glad you asked. The local ingredients you're about to taste have been part of my people's diet since long before Columbus landed in Hispaniola. Before he enslaved the Taino people and started chopping off the children's--

Anxiously, the producer does the throat cutting motion. Guidry misinterprets the prompt:

GUIDRY

Heads? Columbus cut off the children's heads?

FJ LEWIS

Alright, cut!

GUIDRY

That can't be right, Christopher Columbus was a goddamn hero--

FJ LEWIS
 (exasperated)
 Take five, everyone.

RODNEY
 Good, I gotta take a leak.

MICHAEL
 I need to wash my hands.

The crew pick up a plate of food from the previous segment.

RODNEY
 What is this stuff again?

RAPHAEL
 Wild boar bacon jam.

RODNEY
 It's amazing!

RAPHAEL
 Thanks. It's a family recipe.

MAGGIE
 (to Janet)
 It was the hands. I watched a
 documentary on the History Channel.

JANET
 I don't have cable. They want \$30.
 A MONTH. For television! Kiss my
 ass, Comcast!

MAGGIE
 That's highway robbery. How do they
 get away with it?

RAPHAEL
 We have free cable at my parent's
 house. Dad stole a satellite dish
 from the top of a missile silo. Now
 we get HBO in 14 languages.

GUIDRY
 What do you say, Hiawatha? Can I
 get that bacon jam recipe? It's for
 my soon-to-be best selling
 'America's Cultural Cuisine'
 cookbook series. We'll plaster them
 in every Borders, Waldenbooks,
 Barnes and Noble, and B. Dalton
 Booksellers. It can't miss.

Eavesdropping, FJ joins them:

FJ LEWIS

What about selling it on Amazon?

GUIDRY

Amazon? You can't be serious. My broker said they're a Black Swan. Their business model is a clusterfuck. Save your money. They'll be lucky to ever break even, let alone make a profit.

RAPHAEL

Me personally, I do all my dark bidding on eBay.

GUIDRY

What kind of pathetic shut-in would possibly want to just sit home, and buy every single thing online?

RAPHAEL

I would. I buy stuff like produce all the time. Each month I get shipments of cactus from Mexico.

GUIDRY

I knew it!

RAPHAEL

I use it in my cooking, you degenerate.

MAGGIE

Besides, who would deliver all those packages? The Post Office?

GUIDRY

Don't you worry about the United States Postal Service. They're an American Institution. They can handle anything. Outstanding leadership there. Cream of the crop of the United States Government. They'll be fine, unless that greedy labor union tries to sabotage them.

JANET

Thank you! I mean what do these people want: 15 dollars an hour? Do they think us small-business owners are just MADE of money?

GUIDRY

So, what about that recipe?

RAPHAEL

I mean, it's been in my family for generations. Would we get paid?

MAGGIE

Yeah, like residuals and stuff?

GUIDRY

What? No, of course not.

(chuckling)

Is it gonna be YOUR picture on the cover? I don't think so. So, Big Country, you want to spill the acorns about what's in that? I'll throw in some trinkets and beads.

RAPHAEL

Sorry, no can do. My Grandmother is very protective of the recipe. I mean, some guy stole her index card once and tried to take a picture. She bit his ear off.

GUIDRY

Could we post them online, instead? The network wants us to set up one of those new BLOGs everyone is doing these days. We've been trying to find someone to build a website for our show, but nobody knows how.

MAGGIE

I'm taking some IT courses next semester. Some company called Google is gonna pay for it.

GUIDRY

Good luck with that. Y'know, I really don't see that company going anywhere. No self-respecting nerd wants to work for a company with a stupid name like GOOGLE.

FJ LEWIS

I hate to interrupt, but we've got a whole lot of Beaver to sample.

GUIDRY

Words to live by.

(addressing Raff)

Hey, Brokeback Mountain?

RAPHAEL
You know Brokeback Mountain?

GUIDRY
Doesn't everybody read the New Yorker? What are we, savages?

MAGGIE
Hey, careful with that.

GUIDRY
You're missing the point.
(to Raphael)
Before we finish here, there's something I need to ask you.

RAPHAEL
There it is: Every. Single. Time.

The two crewmembers return from the restroom.

RODNEY
Did you know your tap water is flammable?

JANET
Yeah, it's been like that since the Halliburton people showed up.

FJ LEWIS
You guys are back? Good, let's pick it up with the buffalo chicken dip.

RAPHAEL
Which one?

FJ LEWIS
Which one?

MAGGIE
The Buffalo dip or the Chicken dip?

RAPHAEL
We have both. We serve them with these chips made from Aspen bark.

FJ LEWIS
Let's go with the Buffalo dip.

GUIDRY
Good. I've kind of lost my taste for chicken after that Chick-fil-A episode of Fried Babylon. What a PR disaster THAT was--

FJ LEWIS
 Didn't that show get cancelled?

RAPHAEL
 I saw that! You sure have put some
 strange things in your mouth.

GUIDRY
 You!--

The host angrily raises a finger to object and pauses,
 considering the validity of the statement in question.

GUIDRY
 (concedes)
 --have a point. Guilty as charged.

FJ LEWIS
 All right, let's get back to it.

EXT. - FRONT OF THE CROW FLIES CAFÉ - LATER

Raphael sips his Frappuccino outside the café while Guidry
 and Maggie make small talk on a bench. The front door opens.
 Michael and Rodney sheepishly approach.

GUIDRY
 --and that was the last time I ever
 made Ayahuasca at home.
 (to the crew members)
 Are you here simply to bask in the
 shadow of my magnificence, or did
 Hollywood send you?

MICHAEL
 We wanted to ask the chef a
 personal question.

RAPHAEL
 And there it is.

MAGGIE
 You knew it was coming.

RAPHAEL
 Two for two. Just when I thought I
 was out, they pulled me back in.

GUIDRY
 Now THAT'S a great film! Al Pacino.
 What a performance.

Guidry relishes his joint as the female café worker stubs out her cowboy-killer and rises to join her caffeinated cook to re-enter the building.

MAGGIE

Meh, he's no Kevin Costner.

RAPHAEL

You can say that again.

The producer emerges to corral his crew.

FJ LEWIS

I need you to stage the next shot and give me some levels, got it?

The young men nod in agreement and re-enter the café.

FJ LEWIS

That last scene was great. This is the best episode we've done yet. I'm really pleased. This show could be something special.

GUIDRY

Nothing wrong with a man taking pleasure in his work. It's not exactly 60 Minutes, but we ARE the 9th-most hotly anticipated cable television food slash travel program debut, according to last month's George Magazine.

FJ LEWIS

Hey, I'm proud of what we do. I look at it as a form of culinary diplomacy. But it's more than that.

GUIDRY

No it's not. Look Hollywood, we're simply carrying out the network's Prime Directive: Selling ad space by pandering tolerance to a mostly-white audience, aged 35 to 64.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

A middle-aged white couple sit on their couch, watching TV.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
 Our job is to remind the audience
 how much of a Global Citizen they
 are, so they feel better about
 themselves. It's just virtue
 signaling with Ethnic food.

The couple speak Guidry's words.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
 (husband)
 'Hey honey. Guidry's eating
 something called samosas.'
 (wife)
 'I don't know, Indian food sounds
 scary, but he's eating it'.
 (husband)
 'We should try some'.

Cut to husband sitting on a toilet, grimacing.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
 (husband)
 'But not the vindaloo'.
 (fart noise)
 'It gives me the shits.'

END FLASHBACK

GUIDRY
 Every week, we give viewers an
 opportunity to embrace their
 reluctant acceptance of minorities
 without ever having to leave the
 house or eat the food. That's where
 I come in.

FJ LEWIS
 See, that's your problem: You're
 too cynical, no offense.

GUIDRY
 None taken. I think.

FJ LEWIS
 I mean, 20 years ago, those people
 wouldn't be allowed to live in my
 subdivision. Now? Now they're
 living the American Dream. I love
 that everywhere we've gone, we've
 met immigrants who, against the
 odds, were somehow able to start a
 business and raise a family here.

GUIDRY

Nice story, tell it to Reader's Digest. We're here to entertain.

FJ LEWIS

But we can do better than that. Be more honest than that.

GUIDRY

What do you have in mind? Is it gonna get me fired again?

FJ LEWIS

Look, did you ever notice that we only interview English-speaking minorities? Folks who are just foreign enough. Who won't offend White America with their weird customs or religions.

(scoffs)

I mean, God forbid television should show how black and brown folk actually live. You know, honestly, as we really are, right? It's like, anything goes as long as it doesn't make the viewers uncomfortable. Or, more importantly, the sponsors.

GUIDRY

The viewers? No one gives a shit about the viewers!

Guidry taps his hand like a standup comic's microphone:

GUIDRY

Hello, is this thing on? This just in: No one gives a shit about the viewers, it's all about the Benjamins. Film at 11.

FJ LEWIS

We're documenting the bubbling of the Great American Melting Pot. I mean, what's not to like?

GUIDRY

I get it, you want to make art. The network doesn't care. It's all about ratings and TiVo numbers. I hate to say it but we're not even playing the same game, kid.

FJ LEWIS

1st: I'm not playing. 2nd: I'm not a kid. And 3rd: This isn't a game to me. I take this job seriously and I want to tell these people's stories honestly, with dignity. I know you don't care, it's just a paycheck to you.

GUIDRY

I do care. I've seen your work. The stuff you did for Regis and Kathie Lee was fantastic. I told CHEF*TV I wouldn't do this gig without you. Pulled strings to get you to come here.

FJ LEWIS

I got here on my own. It's called integrity.

GUIDRY

I know. You earned the right to go anywhere, take any TV job you wanted. You chose this one, and I'm lucky to have you. I took a bit less so we could pay you what you're worth. I gotta tell you, it wasn't easy to steal you away from Gelman. CBS wouldn't give you up without a fight.

He extends a hand to dap his producer.

FJ LEWIS

Oh yeah? My agent did say you guys were relentless. Thanks for the raise, by the way. So, how did you convince CBS?

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Guidry sneaks up to a mansion at night. Inside, Regis Philbin lies sleeping.

Music: 'Morning Mood' by Edvard Grieg

As the sunrise breaks in Regis' bedroom window, his eye blinks open. Waking, he yawns and reaches down under the covers. He lifts his hand to find it covered in blood.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

I left something in Regis' bed.

Pulling down the sheets in terror, Regis shrieks as he discovers Kathie Lee Gifford's decapitated head.

END FLASHBACK

FJ returns the dap, laughing.

GUIDRY
That did the trick.

Guidry does the 'cut off thumb' illusion. He re-attaches his thumb and holds out an open hand in friendship.

GUIDRY
Thanks for sticking it out. I couldn't do this without you. Truth is, this may be my last chance to make some quality television. I won't let you down.

FJ LEWIS accepts the handshake.

FJ LEWIS
Come on, then. Let's land this plane. We've got 4 segments left to shoot, then it's a wrap. I know you're anxious to start your vacation. Where ya going?

GUIDRY
My old college buddy is gonna come pick me up when we're done. He's got this gun he's been wanting to show me. Says it can shoot through an engine block. So, we're gonna get fucked up, drive around in his truck, and shoot stuff.

FJ LEWIS
I know the type. Big gun, big pickup. It's like: How do you say 'I have a tiny penis' without saying 'I have a tiny penis'?

GUIDRY
God bless the Second Amendment.

FJ LEWIS
Be careful. All I'm saying is: a man's got to know his limitations. Let's finish fucking this chicken and get out of here, OK Cochise?

GUIDRY
--Cochise?

FJ LEWIS
Then you and your college
sweetheart can go Rambo on Bambi's
Mom. Just don't go postal, okay?

GUIDRY
I'm gonna tell them you said that,
Paleface. And I don't remember
seeing any 'chicken fucking' in the
script. Not that I'm complaining.

FJ LEWIS
Alright Chicken Little, get your
white meat back in there.

GUIDRY
Whatever you say, Colonel Sanders.

Relishing the lighthearted banter of friendship, the men
stop to share a moment of silence and mutual respect before
laughing and re-entering the café to resume shooting.

EXT. - ALLEY BEHIND THE CROW FLIES CAFÉ - LATER

SUPER: ONE HOUR LATER

During another break between segments, FJ opens the screen
door to find the crew hanging out in the alley.

FJ LEWIS
Alright fellas, last segment. Then
we can knock out the closing
monologue--

The pair look dazed and strangely aloof. Michael yelps in
surprise when he spies a common toad. He unsuccessfully
tries to capture it as it hops away into the tall grass.

Rodney twirls and flits like a ballerina, curly hair
decorated like a May Queen with dandelions, daisies, and
crabgrass woven into a bio-degradable headpiece.

FJ LEWIS
Where's Guidry?

RODNEY
(hands waving in the air)
I dunno, man.

MICHAEL

(giggles)

It wasn't my turn to babysit him.

FJ LEWIS

Yes it was! I told you ten minutes ago don't let him out of your sight so I could make a phone call. You had one job!

(to Rodney)

Where did you see him last, Neumann?

RODNEY

We smoked some toad venom with him about a hundred years ago. He said he was gonna go watch Goodfellas. And then the sun came down and picked him up, and he got into this badass Camaro and him, Jerry Garcia and the sun went to go kick the Moon's ass, which is weird.

FJ LEWIS

Toad venom? I told you guys not to smoke that stuff until we were done filming. By the way Einstein, Jerry Garcia's been dead for 5 years.

(nods)

And that's poison ivy.

RODNEY

I know, but hear me out: THAT'S what made it so weird. I ran up to him and I was like: Hello, Jerry. And Jerry was like: Hello, Neumann.

(hands at temples)

Mind. Blown. He said my name! Jerry Garcia knows who I am!

MICHAEL

(holding toad)

He's not dead. That's what they WANT you sheeple to think.

FJ LEWIS

Sheeple?

MICHAEL

I've been reading a lot of online forums and it is painfully obvious that Jerry Garcia faked his death.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(toad escapes)

A former CIA hacker said he has proof that Jerry is alive and well, living in the Amazon rainforest, leading a group of eco-terrorists fighting a guerilla war, sabotaging the oil company's bulldozers. The local pygmy headhunter tribe made him their king or something.

(recaptures toad)

They call him: Queue.

FJ LEWIS

That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard, and I've got a pre-schooler at home.

MICHAEL

There's no denying it. I mean, just look at the evidence, man. It all adds up if you do the research.

FJ LEWIS

Research? What research?

The toad pees in MikeAnon's hand, prompting him to drop it and wipe his hand on his cargo shorts.

MICHAEL

Wait-- Who are you looking for?

FJ LEWIS

(head in hand)

Where. Is. Guidry?

MICHAEL

Oh, him! Where do you think he is?

Michael jerks a thumb towards the shabby dressing trailer, making the 'glug glug' hand motion to denote heavy drinking.

INT. - CHEF*TV TALENT TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

A well-worn VHS copy of Goodfellas plays on a janky portable TV/VCR combo unit. Gid swigs whiskey and recites lines from the film currently holding him captivated.

FJ LEWIS

Come on, I know you think they're overly sensitive. You don't have to agree with them. We're so close.

(MORE)

FJ LEWIS (CONT'D)

Just keep your mouth shut and play along until we can put this in the can and get out of here.

GUIDRY

Keep my mouth shut? Have we met? I'm not gonna take it. No, I ain't gonna take it. Not this Patriot. I'm entitled to my opinion. This is still the United States of goddamn America, isn't it? I believe we have a little something called freedom of speech around here if I'm not mistaken!

Onscreen, Stacks puts his shoes on for the last time and Tommy takes his java to go.

FJ LEWIS

The cook threatened to knock your teeth out if you said it again.

GUIDRY

You gotta be fuckin' kidding me? Look, I'm as reasonable as the next guy, but this is censorship!

Angrily shutting off the masterpiece, Guidry stands to assume full pontificating posture.

GUIDRY

I don't care what you say, Dances with Wolves did NOT deserve to win Best Picture. Goodfellas was clearly the superior film. That is a stone cold fact, and facts don't care about your feelings, sir!

FJ LEWIS

That makes absolutely no sense.

GUIDRY

That movie taught me everything I know about show business. Marty got robbed, plain and simple. Oh, that reminds me. Do you have any more of that Maui Wowee?

FJ is taken off guard by the conversation's abrupt turn.

FJ LEWIS

Did you smoke what I gave you already?

(MORE)

FJ LEWIS (CONT'D)

Jeezus Bob Marley, slow down. I only brought so much. All I got left is some Labrador. And no, I'm not kidding you, so please shut the fuck up about Dances with wolves versus Goodfellas. Those people out there are a little, y'know, FUNNY about that.

The gentle ribbing does not go over well.

GUIDRY

What do you mean, 'those people'? Was that some sort of slur? Let me understand this cuz, maybe it's me, maybe I'm a little fucked up maybe. Funny? Funny how? Those people, the ones you're talking about, they make you laugh?

FJ LEWIS

Guidry no, You got it all wrong.

GUIDRY

You are talking about people in there who have absolutely no taste in either food OR cinema. Is that who you're siding with? The movie-going public in general? Obviously, you're ignoring the critics because THEY overwhelmingly agree with me.

FJ LEWIS

I wonder about you sometimes, Guidry.

GUIDRY

The people in that café are NOT funny. No, I think not. Those people in there are clearly fascists, and we can all agree that in the 21st century, The United States of America is no place for fascists! After all, isn't fascism an indictment of our entire American society?

FJ LEWIS

American society gave it's own citizens Jim Crow and Syphilis.

GUIDRY
 (oblivious)
 Well, they can do whatever they
 want to you, but I for one am not
 going to stand here and listen to
 those people badmouth--

FJ LEWIS
 You're not even listening, are you?

GUIDRY
 --The United States of America.
 Amen! Now that that's settled:
 My cannabis, kind sir.

Guidry holds out his hand and makes a grasping motion.

GUIDRY
 Like, right now. Gimme gimme!

A weary FJ LEWIS reaches into the crotch of his jeans and
 pulls out a sandwich baggie of weed and pauses before
 handing it over to his jonesing star.

FJ LEWIS
 Here you go. My own personal stash.
 (sigh)
 You're a freak of nature. I only
 know a couple people who go through
 herb like that. They're gonna roll
 you up and smoke you when you die.
 Why do you get baked so much?

Guidry opens the baggie to inspect the merchandise.

GUIDRY
 My good man, in this line of work,
 getting baked is a necessity. The
 munchies are the only way I can
 stomach the wretched refuse they've
 been putting in front of me for the
 last twenty-odd years.

FJ LEWIS
 Makes sense.

GUIDRY
 The dirty little secret in the food
 show biz is that almost every host
 is totally shitfaced all the time.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

A TV crew is filming in a Mexican kitchen.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
 You ever seen that 3 Stooges
 looking guy from Minnesota?

Andrew Zimmern walks into frame.

FJ LEWIS (V.O.)
 Is he the guy who ate fermented
 armadillo embryos?

Zimmern is handed a tray of cherry-topped dessert cups with
 scaly tails poking out of the whipped cream.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
 That's Andy. He used to go out
 drinking with me and Alton. I could
 tell you some stories. Anyway, do
 you know how they got him to do
 that armadillo bit on film?
 (pause)
 In a word: DRUGS.

Offscreen hand shoves a handful of mushrooms into Zimmern's
 mouth. His eyes become wide as saucers. He grabs one of the
 cups and starts scarfing down the contents. He finishes by
 pulling a tiny armadillo skeleton from his mouth.

END FLASHBACK

FJ LEWIS
 Drugs?

GUIDRY
 Sure, I thought you'd never ask.
 Whatcha got?

FJ LEWIS
 You just took everything I had.

GUIDRY
 Back to what I was saying. Where
 was I? Oh yeah. DRUGS. Look: If
 you're bothered watching your
 favorite basic cable host use
 copious amounts of drugs, then do
 me a favor.

FJ LEWIS
 What's that?

GUIDRY

When you go back home, I want you to take all your Crock Pots, all your Salad Shooters and all your Foreman Grills and burn them.

FJ LEWIS

Burn them?

GUIDRY

Yes, burn them. Cause y'know what? The basic cable hosts that made all those hours of high quality entertainment programming that's enhanced your lives throughout the years? REAL fucking high on drugs. Every single one of them. Like REALLY high. Including yours truly.

FJ LEWIS

I kinda figured that one out.

GUIDRY

Except for Nigella Lawson.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

A casket opens and Nigella emerges looking like Elvira.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

She does that weird thing with the placenta, adrenochrome and menstrual blood.

She raises a hand mirror to apply lipstick, and the reflection shows only the lipstick.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

Did you know she's 85 years old?

Nigella is shown in a bathtub. Hanging over it, upside down, is a bound girl. Nigella rises and slices the girl's neck with a scythe. Her blood drains into the tub as Nigella sits down and starts sipping from the tub with a straw.

END FLASHBACK

FJ LEWIS

She looks great.

GUIDRY

Her plastic surgeon is dynamite.

Guidry opens the baggie of weed and takes a sniff.

GUIDRY

Ooh, the expensive shit, I love it.
 What's the name of that strain
 again? Labrador? Sounds exotic.
 (sniffs)
 It smells kinda EARTHY, ya know?
 It's got great, what does Masaharu-
 san call it? YOO-MOMMY. Those
 Yakuza guys. What do I owe you?

Guidry reaches into his jacket, removing a handful of crumpled bills, coins, and an empty mini-bottle.

GUIDRY

I got uno nickelette and a guitar
 pick I got from Wolfgang Puck. Oh
 hey, what was I thinking? Here, my
 friend, take this.

He tucks a rolled up twenty into FJ's breast pocket.

GUIDRY

Wait! Let me get that back!

Guidry extracts the coke bill, unrolls it and licks every single millimeter of it's surface, leaving it wet and icky as he attempts to tuck it back into his producer's shirt.

Backing up in disgust, FJ brushes Guidry's hand away.

GUIDRY

You don't have any coke, do you?

FJ LEWIS

What? No. Why would I have coke?

GUIDRY

I don't know, you live in
 Hollywood, right?

FJ LEWIS

I live in Reseda, man. There's a
 freeway running through my yard.

Shrugging, Guidry produces a small baggy.

FJ LEWIS

Wait? What is that? Is that coke?

GUIDRY

Want some?

FJ LEWIS
Wait. You already HAD cocaine?

GUIDRY
Yeah. I mean, I have SOME cocaine.

FJ LEWIS
Uh huh.

GUIDRY
But here's my problem. I want MORE cocaine. See how that works?

FJ LEWIS
Thanks for clearing that up,
Tony Montana.

Guidry rummages around looking for the dropped \$20 bill.

GUIDRY
Ah, here it is. NOSEDIVE!

Guidry inserts it into the baggie and takes a toot. Chasing his bump, he takes a swig from the bottle of bourbon and offers the bill to his producer.

FJ LEWIS
Holy shit. I can't fucking believe you, man. You're a train wreck.

GUIDRY
What? C'mon, ya want some or not?

FJ LEWIS
No.

GUIDRY
Oh, yeah.

FJ LEWIS
No, no, no.

GUIDRY
Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

FJ LEWIS
No, no. No, Gid, no. Maybe--

Sensing victory, Guidry offers the rolled up twenty.

GUIDRY
Go for broke.

FJ LEWIS
Okay. Just a taste.

GUIDRY
Good thinking, man.

FJ LEWIS does a moderate toot from the baggie. His face is stricken, eyes wide and blinking as he wipes at his nose.

GUIDRY
It's a little harsh. Here.

Guidry hands him the bottle of Old Crow.

GUIDRY
Cannonball it! Cannonball!
Cannonball comin'--

Without thinking, FJ takes a swig and immediately regrets it, swallowing half and choking on the other as the liquid burns his throat.

GUIDRY
Pretty good, right? You can't get
this stuff out in Hollywood.

FJ LEWIS
(coughing)
Wow, yeah. That's some good shit.

GUIDRY
Almost completely uncut. My
stockbroker Bernie gets it for me
special, straight from Panama.
Fucking Plutonium Nyborg, man.

FJ LEWIS
I think I can actually feel the
Earth vibrating.

GUIDRY
(enraptured)
Seven. Point. Eight. Three. Hertz.

The pair exit the trailer, sniffing and pinching their noses as they walk to the café's back door.

FJ LEWIS
That reminds me, you gotta give me
his number. The returns that guy's
getting are ridiculous. I wanna get
in before the market tanks again.

GUIDRY

I'm telling ya, the guy's a fuckin' genius. You can't lose, it's like stealin' money! I can't figure out how he does it.

FJ LEWIS

He can have my 401k, hell he can have my kid's college fund if he's as good as you say he is.

GUIDRY

Insider tip: Load up on Enron, that baby's about to go nuclear. Your portfolio will thank me.

FJ LEWIS

Ten four, Gordon Gekko. Let's go.

INT. - CROW FLIES CAFÉ BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The would-be star of America's Cultural Cuisine stands in front of the bathroom mirror, geeked out of his mind.

GUIDRY

Never thought I'd say this, but I think I did too much blow. My throat is completely closed up. Sorry Hollywood, but I don't think I'll be able to swallow anything.

FJ LEWIS

Now that's just bullshit. Quit playing and let's get this knocked out. All we got left is the elk pemmican with demi glace and chickweed. C'mon, you can do this.

GUIDRY

You don't understand. I've been served this dish once before in Colorado, at a VIP Super Bowl party. I still have nightmares.

FJ LEWIS

All right. You've had it before. So, what's the big deal?

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Guidry is at a banquet in a tuxedo with plate of food in front of him. He takes a bite and turns green in the face. His cheeks swell and he and pukes like a fire hydrant.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
I projectile vomited on John Elway.

We pull back to reveal a furious John Elway covered in barf.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
I'm banned from Denver to this day.

Guidry stands at an airport, suitcase in hand. A stern airline employee shakes her head and points to the exit.

END FLASHBACK

GUIDRY
It's the one dish I can't eat.

FJ LEWIS
We're in the home stretch, don't bail out on me now. You can do it, you just need to psych yourself up. Remember, it's mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter!

GUIDRY
Gee thanks, Vince Lombardi.
(to self in mirror)
You're a professional. You've faced more daunting challenges in your career. It's just stinky dried elk smeared with bullshit berries and a sprig of wild bullshit. Chickweed? Who's afraid of that? Those are 2 of my favorite things.
(deep breath)
I said I'd do whatever it takes. C'mon Hollywood, let's go finger this avocado.

FJ LEWIS
I told you already, it's Reseda. Wait. 'Finger this avocado'? That's not, uh, really a thing. That we say. In television. Ever. I mean, what does that even mean?

GUIDRY
Don't tell me, Padawan. I heard Julia Child say it once. You know who Dame Julia Child is, don't you?

FJ LEWIS
Of course I know who Julia Child is. I'm a producer for CHEF*TV.

GUIDRY

Well, I was there and I heard her say it with my own ears, so I'm gonna stick with that.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Julia stands in her TV kitchen. She splashes a sauté pan with cooking sherry before taking a pull from the bottle.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

Course she was drunk at the time but the point is I heard her say it. What a gal. An icon, really.

Julia walks off set, lights a cigarette and removes her sweater, revealing a voluptuous figure. She alternates puffs of her smoke and pulls from the sherry bottle.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

You can't tell on TV, but Julie has boobs that just won't quit. I know this for a fact: They're real, and they're spectacular. She was quite a free spirit back in the day.

In a 60's Soho discotheque, mod Julia dances with wild abandon, waving her arms to the groovy psychedelic rhythm.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

And what a freak in the sack. A total swinger. Groups, S&M, You name it. She slept with everyone in the studio at one time or another. Directors, cameramen, parking lot attendants, she took on all comers.

Julia and Guidry emerge from under a blanket. In the bed is a man in a director's cap with a megaphone, a woman holding a makeup brush, and a man with a boom mike. A donkey wanders around the room smoking a cigarette.

END FLASHBACK

GUIDRY

Good times. I should give the old girl a call, she gets the best Quaaludes. One time, we partied with the ACTUAL Chef Boyardee.

FJ LEWIS

Here we go--

GUIDRY

So, we're on a 3 day drinking
binge, covered head to toe in
pesto, and we're just going at it.

FJ LEWIS

We don't have time for this.

GUIDRY

Now, just as Beef-a-roni boy is
about to come, Jules grabs this
turkey baster, yells 'Here's your
spicy meatball' and jams it--

FJ LEWIS

That's great. Whatever. You can
finish your story later. Come on,
my buzz is wearing off and we need
to get this done before they close.

GUIDRY

Piece of cake. Don't forget who
you're working with, junior.

FJ LEWIS

One take Guidry?

GUIDRY

Your. God. Damned. Right.

FJ LEWIS

OK one take, let's go finger that
avocado. Don't call me Junior, my
name is Frank. And for the record,
you're only 12 years older than me.

The men toss away paper towels and prepare to leave. Guidry
opens the door, looking back as he exits:

GUIDRY

So your birth name is Francis?

FJ LEWIS

Don't call me Francis, either.
Great coke, by the way.

INT. - CROW FLIES CAFÉ - MOMENTS LATER

FJ LEWIS

Alright Gid, you're doing great!
We're almost done. I need you to
wrap up the pine-nut clusters bit
and then finish with the closing
monologue, OK? And---ACTION!

GUIDRY

These nuts are delicious, and such a bargain at only a buck apiece! I know I'd buy THAT for a dollar.

(concluding)

I'd like to thank the fine folks at the Crow Flies Café for welcoming me to Montana and filling my belly with the traditional foods of the Native People. More importantly, I want to thank them for filling my heart with their generous spirit.

The 3 café workers roll their eyes in unison.

GUIDRY

I had a wonderful time meeting the staff and they couldn't have been nicer. They welcomed me into their lives and their workplace like I was one of their own.

RAPHAEL

No we didn't.

GUIDRY

They'll always be family to me.

JANET

Not really. Not at all.

GUIDRY

You could say that makes me--

RAPHAEL

Don't say it.

GUIDRY

--an official member of the tribe!

MAGGIE

For the love of God, here we go again with the stereotypes.

GUIDRY

Or at least an honorary member.

JANET

Good Heavens no.

RAPHAEL

Jesus, Joseph and Mary--

GUIDRY

Well then, a trusted friend and ally of the Native Peoples?

MAGGIE

Your ancestors committed genocide against my ancestors.

RAPHAEL

Don't think we forgot about that.

GUIDRY

A beloved visitor?

JANET

(crosses herself)

May God have mercy on your soul.

The producer leans over to Rodney

FJ LEWIS

We'll fix it in post.

GUIDRY

With so many unique ingredients and unforgettable dishes to choose from, I couldn't tell you which one was my favorite. Don't ask me to choose, they were all delicious. Honestly, if I had a gun to my head, I physically COULD NOT take another bite, let alone swallow it. Really, I just couldn't.

Guidry moves around the counter to close the show.

GUIDRY

So as we leave Montana for parts unknown, I'd like to thank you for joining us, and hope that you and your tribe will join us next time.

(pivots)

You know, there's an awful lot you can tell about a people by their food. Our beautiful country is a tasty place. If you don't stop and take a bite once in awhile, you could miss one of the fifty wonderful flavors that make the United States of America the greatest world in the history of the country.

The assembled Native Americans smirk. Raffi coughs into his hand.

RAPHAEL
(coughing)
Bullshit!

GUIDRY
(quietly)
Hey, shut up Geronimo.

RAPHAEL
Fuck you, John Dunbar.

FJ LEWIS
We'll fix it in post.

Snatching a tiny pint-sized Old Glory from one of the booths, the host freelances, turning inspirational and offering a bit of homespun wisdom.

GUIDRY
My fellow Americans, when the going gets tough and reality bites: Well, no matter the circumstances, no matter the odds, you've got to pull yourself up by your bootstraps, dust yourself off, bust out that elbow grease and bite back!

He bends to scratch a scruffy mutt that has somehow wandered onto the set. As contact is made, the little dog suddenly has a go at him and Guidry is nearly nipped.

FJ LEWIS
(rolling his finger)
Don't worry, keep going.

Shaking it off, Guidry rises to deliver the coup de grâce and stick the landing.

GUIDRY
So, come with me again next week, as we head off the beaten track to sample: America's Cultural Cuisine.

FJ LEWIS
Cut! Great job everyone! You killed it, Two Take.

GUIDRY
What did you call me?

MICHAEL
(softly)
We know, we'll fix it in post.

RODNEY
(stifling laughter)
Alright, let's get the plate in
here and get this over with.

GUIDRY
Are you really gonna make me do
this? C'mon, I ate the acorn mush.
Smiled as I did it. The Moose
tallow? Sucked it right down.
Can't we just use a body double?

FJ LEWIS
You don't have a body double.

Guidry grabs Mike by the shoulders and brings him into shot.

GUIDRY
Sure I do. You'll eat that elk,
won't you? Take one for the team.

MICHAEL
I'd rather eat a moccasin.

He turns to the Native American crew.

MICHAEL
Sorry, you guys. No offense--

JANET
None taken.

MAGGIE
It's all good.

RAPHAEL
Yeah, it's cool.

GUIDRY
Wait a minute, Shitting Bull! You
got creased at me, but you let THAT
go, just because he's Chinese?

MICHAEL
I'm Laotian, actually.

GUIDRY
Close enough.

MAGGIE
Laos is actually in between
Thailand and Vietnam.

RAPHAEL
I've always wanted to go there.

MAGGIE
I took a geography course at the
community college last semester.

FJ LEWIS
Guidry, can I see you for minute?

RODNEY
Yeah, he wants to have a pow-wow.

Mike and all three staff members silently scowl at Rodney.
Raphael picks up his cleaver.

RAPHAEL
What did you say, white boy?

MICHAEL
(to Rodney)
Not cool, bro. I didn't get to ask
him about the peyote yet.

INT. - CROW FLIES CAFÉ BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

FJ tries to convince Guidry to eat the elk pemmican, the
last necessary scene of the shoot.

FJ LEWIS
Give me the weed back.

GUIDRY
What? Why? No!

FJ LEWIS
It's mine. I paid for it.

GUIDRY
But you gave it to me.

FJ LEWIS
Yeah, and I'm taking it back. Come
on, cough it up.

GUIDRY
Why should I?

FJ LEWIS

Because you needed something and I gave it to you. But when I asked you for something--

GUIDRY

Oh, I see where you're going here.

FJ LEWIS

You couldn't be bothered. I went out of my way to--

GUIDRY

So, what is this? Some kinda quid pro quo thing happening here?

FJ LEWIS

You don't know what quid pro quo means, do you?

GUIDRY

No, but I heard Emeril Lagasse say it while he was tripping balls, so I'm gonna go with that.

FJ LEWIS

Fair enough. I want to hear the rest of that story later on.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

GUIDRY (V.O.)

It was during an orgy at that festival where everybody throws tomatoes at each other and mashes them on their naked bodies.

Boxes of tomatoes line a cobblestone street. Covered in red stains, Guidry mashes a tomato onto Emeril's noggin. Emeril splats one into Guidry's face.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

We ended up covered in olive oil.

Guidry and Emeril's eyes lock. Romantic music swells as the duo get very close, in anticipation of a kiss.

END FLASHBACK

GUIDRY

I should probably leave it there out of respect.

FJ LEWIS
Was this in Italy?

GUIDRY
A Motel 6 somewhere in Tampa.

FJ digs in his Guidry's jacket pocket and takes his stash, including the cocaine. Tucking the weed in his jeans pocket, he holds the powder over the toilet.

FJ LEWIS
You gonna eat the elk?

GUIDRY
I'd rather die first.

FJ LEWIS
I can arrange that.

GUIDRY
Very funny, Han Solo Cup. Give it.

FJ LEWIS
Not until you agree to finish your last contractually obligated shot.

GUIDRY
How many bites of that Apache Air Jordan am I contractually obligated to take?

FJ LEWIS
Just one.

GUIDRY
Fine. How many times do I have to chew that fucking piece of Necronomicon?

FJ LEWIS
I don't know. It is our featured dish. We'll want to highlight it.

GUIDRY
Don't fuck with me Hollywood.

Guidry steps to the urinal, pissing loudly.

GUIDRY
HOW. MANY. CHEWS.

FJ LEWIS
Stop calling me Hollywood. 50.

GUIDRY
50? Try 20. Gimme my coke numbnuts.

FJ LEWIS
Nope. 1 bite, 50 chews. That's the deal. Take it or leave it.

GUIDRY
Well I ain't giving you no 50 chews for no coke.

FJ LEWIS
Oh then you ain't getting no coke. Know what I'm talking about?

FJ opens Guidry's baggie and prepares to dump and flush. Guidry's resolve is weak:

GUIDRY
Wait! What if I give you TWO bites and 20 chews for each?

FJ LEWIS
That'll work, One Take.

He reseals Guidry's baggie and tosses it to him.

GUIDRY
You drive a hard bargain, sir.

FJ LEWIS
That's Hollywood for you. Or in my case, Reseda.

GUIDRY
Hey, Reseda?

FJ LEWIS
What? Our negotiations have concluded. See you at the table. Nice doing business with you chump!

Guidry flushes, turns as he zips and puts his hand out.

FJ LEWIS
You want me to shake your hand? Are you joking? You were just touching your dick.

GUIDRY
It's a custom that once a business deal's concluded that the 2 parties shake hands. It implies good faith.

FJ LEWIS
I'm not familiar with that custom.

GUIDRY
C'mon Ahab: kybo mein doobage.
I got shit to do.

FJ LEWIS
To think where that hand has been.

Frank hands the pot to Guidry. He tucks it away and smirks.

GUIDRY
Y'know, there's a word for someone
who gives you something and then
takes it back for no reason. Do you
know what they call that person?

Raphael's imposing frame enters the cramped restroom to pee.

FJ LEWIS
Nah, man. No idea. What DO you call
someone who gives you something and
then takes it back for no reason?

The big man glances over at Guidry, awaiting his reply.

GUIDRY
Never mind.

RAPHAEL
Asshole.

GUIDRY
What? I didn't say anything.

RAPHAEL
No. The answer to the question is
asshole. I had a friend who gave me
a bike once. 2 days later he took
it back. He was an asshole.

FJ LEWIS
Enjoy your elk, HOT Take.

GUIDRY
Thanks, asshole. Okay, how about
this? When you're at a sporting
event and you need a ticket, who do
you look for?

RAPHAEL
Gary.

GUIDRY

Gary?

FJ LEWIS

Who's Gary?

RAPHAEL

Gary's my brother-in-law.

FJ LEWIS

The one who shit himself?

RAPHAEL

No, not that one. A different one. He saw the Great Spirit once, too. But he lies a lot, so, you never know. Besides, scalping was mostly a European practice going back centuries. We said 'fuck you' and did it back to them, but then they turned around and blamed it all on us. So, call my brother-in-law Gary. He works at the stadium. He can get you tickets. He gets an employee discount. We all root AGAINST the home team here anyways.

GUIDRY

Makes sense to me. Fuck the Cowboys.

RAPHAEL

Sometimes we'll go to the stadium and use our tickets just to boo.

FJ LEWIS

I thought they only did that in Philly.

RAPHAEL

And don't get me started with that Washington football team.

GUIDRY

Y'know haystack, I like your style.

RAPHAEL

I know you have to leave Helena, but it isn't all bad, is it?

GUIDRY

Not even half bad. I think I've really quite enjoyed it.

(MORE)

GUIDRY (CONT'D)
 (to Frank)
 Hey Hollywood, I mean, Reseda:
 One more question?

FJ LEWIS
 What's that?

GUIDRY
 Spit or swallow?

PRODUCER
 Excuse me?

GUIDRY
 You heard me Spider, you fucking
 rat. SPIT. OR. SWALLOW?

RAPHAEL
 Are you giving or receiving?

FJ LEWIS
 Huh?

RAPHAEL
 Swallow.

GUIDRY
 No thank you.

RAPHAEL
 I wasn't offering.

GUIDRY
 So? Just your opinion?

RAPHAEL
 I thought you were asking which
 he'd prefer--

FJ LEWIS
 (laughing)
 DAMN! That kind of burn's gonna
 require a series of skin grafts.
 (to Raphael)
 My man.

He daps up RAPHAEL, continuing:

FJ LEWIS
 Spit or Swallow is a food show
 thing. The host doesn't swallow
 everything you see them eating.
 (MORE)

FJ LEWIS (CONT'D)

Honestly they couldn't, because they would get fat and sick, and Americans in general would rather not see those people. So, most of the time the hosts spit it out and give the leftovers to the crew.

GUIDRY

What do you mean, 'those people'?

FJ LEWIS

Not now, asshole. We used to give the extra food to the homeless, but the last time we did the cops gave us a ticket, so the network won't let us do that any more.

RAPHAEL

We feed our leftovers to the dog.

GUIDRY

Yeah, well your dog almost bit me.

RAPHAEL

It's not my dog.

FJ LEWIS

These shows waste so much food, if I'm honest. It's OK, though. The crew appreciates it, and they deserve it.

GUIDRY

Well, just keep Cujo out there on a leash before he becomes Old Yeller.

FJ LEWIS

As unpaid interns, it's a nice benefit. I mean perk, since they don't get benefits, either. They get great exposure, so that makes up for not getting paid. It's totally worth it. Anyway--

The huge man dries his hands and turns to Guidry.

RAPHAEL

Want to grab a beer and talk football after we're done?

GUIDRY

Thank you, no. I'm straight.

RAPHAEL

What is it you're afraid of? Scared of catching 'The Gay'? It's the year 2000, I thought America was past all that nonsense.

FJ LEWIS

Y'know, tasting new things DOES kinda come with the territory--

GUIDRY

Stay out of this, Hollywood.

RAPHAEL

(chuckles)

Suit yourself. Besides, I've seen you on TV, Chicken Man. Looked to me like you enjoy getting freaky.

GUIDRY

Hey! I was young and needed the money, Stands with Fist up Butt.

RAPHAEL

Don't get so defensive, I'm just messing with you. You're a good-looking man. Who knows, you might like it. Bok bok!

FJ LEWIS

You really DO have a pretty mouth.

GUIDRY

If you say another word, you lose a testicle.

The affable giant laughs and opens the door to leave.

GUIDRY

Hey Tonto, wait!

RAPHAEL

What?

GUIDRY

Can you get me some peyote?

RAPHAEL

No. Now go home and get your fucking shine box.

The door closes. Guidry crosses his arms.

GUIDRY
I can't do it.

FJ LEWIS
It's in your contract.

GUIDRY
We'll get Rodney to do it.

FJ LEWIS
Fat chance. Not after that stunt
you pulled in Albuquerque. You
almost got him shot in the foot.

GUIDRY
I TOLD him to take the left. I
can't help it if he doesn't know
his left from his right. Besides,
so what? He ALMOST got shot in the
foot. But he didn't. What is it, a
big deal? He'll do it. He just
needs the right motivation. We'll
just see what a finski can do for
that guy's attitude.

FJ LEWIS
Doesn't matter. It's gotta be you.
On camera. Eating food. ALL the
food. Or else you don't get paid.

GUIDRY
Alright Frank. I'll do it. For you.
But when we get out of Montana,
remind me to fire my fucking agent.

INT. - CROW FLIES CAFÉ DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The entire production crew is chanting 'GID-REE, GID-REE'.
The host enters the room like a prizefighter, a towel around
his neck. psyching himself up. His opponent is a four-inch
long plank of dried, extremely cured elk meat. Guidry stares
down at the purple-black obelisk.

GUIDRY
So, my old nemesis. We meet again.
I guess this was inevitable. I'm
afraid the stakes are simply too
high this time, and today, only one
of us is gonna walk away from this
table. Spoiler alert: That will be
me. You will not be so lucky, old
chum. Welcome to your doom, you
vile rectangle of Death.

He puts knife and fork to pemmican. Neither can dent it's puckered, berry-smearred armor. The fork's tines bend as he saws away with the knife.

MICHAEL

That dog won't hunt, better get a chainsaw!

The sound man hands his electrician's shears to Guidry.

RODNEY

Try these bad boys. They can cut clean through a rhino horn.

FJ LEWIS

What? Rhino horn?

RODNEY

Hey, I have a life outside this job too, y'know.

Guidry nips off two tiny triangles of Woe.

FJ LEWIS

Come on, the camera can barely see those. Cut some bigger pieces.

GUIDRY

NO. That's it. I'm ready. Let's finger this avocado.

MICHAEL

Huh?

FJ LEWIS

It's a thing.

RODNEY

No it's not.

GUIDRY

Shut the hell up, all of you! Is the camera ready?

MICHAEL

Ready when you are.

GUIDRY

Alright then.
(steeling himself)
It begins.

FJ LEWIS
Alright people, this is not a
drill. Everybody ready?
And, ACTION!

EXT. - FRONT OF THE CROW FLIES CAFÉ - LATE AFTERNOON

With a picturesque backdrop and long shadows, the crew are almost finished packing up. The trailer is hooked to the CHEF*TV van, but Guidry and Rodney are nowhere to be found.

Some minutes later, the host reappears as Mike loads a final crate and closes the van door.

FJ LEWIS
Hey, I was looking for you, where'd
you get to? Figured you'd be in the
trailer stuffing your nose with
plutonium nyborg by now.

GUIDRY
That's true, but there was a dish
the chef really wanted me to taste.

MICHAEL
(outraged)
Wait, you hated everything! You
kept saying: I'm not gonna try it.
Let's get Mikey! Well Mikey ain't
trying it either, pal.

GUIDRY
That's life, I guess.

FJ LEWIS
Where's Neumann?

GUIDRY
I sent him on an errand.

Rodney arrives holding a briefcase and hands it to Guidry.

RODNEY
There was a call for you inside.
You ride's gonna be a few minutes
late.

GUIDRY
Dammit! Whatever, as long as he
gets here before the ex-wife finds
out where I am. I owe her a few
years of back alimony.

FJ LEWIS
How many is that in TV years?

GUIDRY
Fuck you, State of California. I only moved there for the weed, anyway. Dammit, Humboldt County, why can't I quit you?

FJ LEWIS
You have an ex? Wait, YOU were married?

GUIDRY
Oh yeah. Drunk in Vegas. One of those quickie weddings, y'know. Our publicists kept it out of the Enquirer.

The host pulls a photo from his wallet and shares it with the curious crewmembers.

MICHAEL
Schwing! She's a robo-babe! What say you, Hot Rod?

RODNEY
She's definitely a fine example of Babia Majora. You were married to HER? How does THAT happen?

FJ LEWIS
Seriously Gid, she's completely outta your league, man. Shit, she's more famous than YOU. Way more!
(ruefully)
Jeez, and after the hours I've spent holding up her poster with one hand--

Guidry puts the picture away. Smiling softly to himself, he reminisces:

GUIDRY
(wistful)
Ah yes, lovely Pamela. What a woman! Couldn't trust her, though. She had a fling with Rick Steves while I was in rehab that second time. Can't really blame her, she always had a thing for him.

FJ LEWIS

I still can't believe you were married, especially to HER. Wait? Rick Steves? As in: 'Mayonnaise on White Bread' Rick Steves? Mister 'European Vacation' himself?

GUIDRY

Let me tell you about THAT guy.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

With his back to camera, Rick Steves stands pissing. Covered in tattoos and wearing a mesh tank top, he smashes an empty wine bottle to the ground. Pulling back, we see that he is peeing on the Eiffel Tower.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

What can I say, women love a bad boy: Onscreen, he's Mister Rogers.

Rick stands giving an interview in a long-sleeved shirt and sweater.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

But let me tell ya: Offscreen, he's Hunter S. fucking Thompson!

director yells 'cut'! Rick kicks his interview subject out of frame and rips off the sweater, revealing a Hawaiian shirt.

Rick puts on a visor and sunglasses before chugging a bottle of Wild Turkey. In his mouth is a long cigarette holder. He pulls out a large revolver and uses it to shoot the tip of his Dunhill, lighting it.

END FLASHBACK

GUIDRY

What an animal!

FJ LEWIS

You know, I think I DID hear that somewhere.

The producer motions to Guidry:

FJ LEWIS

What do you have there, Gid?

Guidry pats the briefcase.

GUIDRY

Oh, this? Just a little memento
from Big Sky Country.

FJ LEWIS

Drugs?

GUIDRY

Sure, I thought you'd never ask.
Whatcha got?

FJ LEWIS

Nothing. Like, not even a roach.
You smoked all my weed. Literally
ALL the pot is gone, and I'm from
California, so I brought a LOT of
pot. Of all the people I've worked
with, it's like, you and Willie
Nelson, I swear to God. I salute
you.

GUIDRY

You are doing the Lord's work, my
son. Thank you for your donation.
Give till it hurts, that's what I
say. Whether you know it or not,
you are facilitating the creation
of television history, my good man.

FJ LEWIS

Yeah, well, I don't know about
that.

GUIDRY

After all, this program was made
possible in part by charitable
contributions to your friendly
neighborhood TV host from
viewers like you. Thank you!

FJ LEWIS

Your welcome. But I really think
we're just scratching the surface
here, Gid. This show can be about
so much more than food: We've
gotten great B roll and you've
interviewed some really interesting
people. Feels like we're making
quality television here. Just think
how good you could be sober. You've
been nominated for three Daytime
Emmys and two Golden Globes. I bet
you'd win a few if you just gave up
the drugs!

GUIDRY

I don't know, Reseda. Awards were never my thing. Besides, I think drugs have done some great things for today's cable television food show hosts. I really mean that.

FJ LEWIS

Accredited medical professionals worldwide and every single law enforcement organization in America would disagree.

GUIDRY

Oh, well, allow me to retort: The public would be shocked if they knew the truth.

Michael and Rodney rejoin the others to listen. The circle of trust now complete, Guidry explains:

GUIDRY

Food shows used to be boring. In the past, everybody was sober, and it showed. It was dull chefs doing dull things in dull kitchens from dull camera angles. Those shows were lame, lame, lame and the ratings reflected that.

FJ and crew nod in agreement.

GUIDRY

But that all changed once the cable companies started sniffing around the kitchen. They had new twenty-four hour specialty channels that were starving for content.

FJ LEWIS

Not any more.

MICHAEL

Yeah, everybody's got a food show these days.

GUIDRY

Well, it turns out that the usual suspects just couldn't get audiences excited. Ratings were in the toilet across the board. They were so desperate for talent they even considered hiring Donald effing Trump.

RODNEY

Wow. That's really desperate.

MICHAEL

What kind of idiot would enjoy watching that illiterate asshole on prime-time television?

GUIDRY

I know, right? Ew. Can you imagine? But that's where I came in. I saw the handwriting on the wall. The network advertisers wanted a different kind of food show host. A CELEBRITY food show host. They wanted both sizzle AND steak. I wanted steak too, and I had sizzle to burn.

FJ LEWIS

Sizzle?

MICHAEL

I get what he's saying. He had, like, y'know-- zazz.

RODNEY

Yeah, the network wanted to zazz things up a little--

FJ LEWIS

Could you two please stop saying zazz?

GUIDRY

(continuing)

So, long story short: they offered to pay for the steak and we were off and running. They ordered us to film a sample program and sent us out to make an hour of cutting-edge television. We filmed my first pilot while I was on four hits of LSD.

RODNEY

Awesome! Totally awesome.

MICHAEL

Alright, !

GUIDRY

Not on purpose, my roommate put it in my coffee as a joke.

(MORE)

GUIDRY (CONT'D)

(fondly)

Augie Owsley, what a character! I wonder what ever happened to that guy?

FJ LEWIS

Holy shit, Dock Ellis.

GUIDRY

No biggie, I used to forget which day it was all the time back then. I still can't remember half of the last season of 'Bite That Weiner'.

RODNEY

The hot dog show! I remember that!

MICHAEL

Me too!

GUIDRY

Every episode was a drunken, drug-fueled bacchanalia. But it killed in the ratings. People loved it.

FJ LEWIS

It had that great opening: 'I'm your host, Guidry Cloche. Every week, we hit the street to find and eat that tubular meat you just can't beat'.

GUIDRY

I was especially proud of our exposé on the spy ring at Hebrew National.

FJ LEWIS

You guys got in a lot of trouble for that, if I remember.

GUIDRY

We all got fired.

MICHAEL

That sucks, I loved that show.

GUIDRY

I learned an important lesson that day, gentlemen.

FJ LEWIS

Yeah, never piss off the Mossad.

RODNEY

What can I say? We answer to a higher authority.

GUIDRY

Anyway, a few years back, that lost pilot got leaked and went viral with college kids and culinary school students.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

At the Culinary Institute of America, on a sectional in the common area, white-jacketed young people sit watching TV. They point at the screen as Guidry shaves his tongue.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

They would snort Ritalin and Adderall and have viewing parties where everyone got freaky.

One of the students puts two tablets onto the coffee table. He raises a copy of 'The Joy of Cooking' and smashes the pills to powder. With straws to noses, his fellow students descend like vultures to snort up the pile.

The circle of sniffing people lift their heads, and Guidry is among them. Putting his arms behind his head, he leans back and lights a spliff, buzzed and smiling.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

I could go into any Culinary school in America and they treated me like a rock star. I even had groupies.

Guidry looks down to his lap. The top of a blonde, pony-tailed head can be seen bobbing rhythmically. He smiles.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

And it wasn't just the students, it was the teachers too!

The blonde rises and walks off. Immediately, a white chef's hat takes it's place working on a blissed-out Guidry. Soon a perky brunette kneels to pleasure the star.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

And that's how I met Rachael Ray.

END FLASHBACK

GUIDRY

Man, those were the glory days.

FJ LEWIS

You were 'must see' TV back then.

MICHAEL

People loved to watch you get trashed and knock over a fondue set.

RODNEY

Or shotgun a beer and spit out whatever you were supposed to be eating.

GUIDRY

Then there was that episode of 'Entrée Flagranté' where I fucked a rotisserie chicken.

RODNEY

No way!

MICHAEL

That was you?

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Guidry stands in front of a rack of twirling roast chicken, back turned to the camera. Reaching in, he removes a golden brown bird carcass.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

Standards and Practices came down pretty hard on us for that one.

The host raises a beer bottle, popping a blue pill and drinking deeply. Tossing the empty, he drunkenly unbuttons his trousers.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

They were afraid people would complain, so they blurred out the good stuff.

As the camera crew films, Guidry carnally pounds away at the cooked fowl, a black bar covering his eyes as well as the chicken's. Pixelated blocks cover the action.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

You can't show penetration on American TV, but Japan got the full Monty.

A heavysset Japanese couple sits watching TV on their sofa, looking traumatized, mouths hanging open. The wife points, as the TV screen shows Guidry lying passed out, covered in grease. An oven-stuffer roaster remains affixed to his groin. The couple look at each other, than over to the dinner table where a cooked chicken sits on a platter.

END FLASHBACK

GUIDRY

I became an overnight sensation on Yahoo and ratings skyrocketed. Not to brag, but my work single-handedly changed the world of weekly syndicated cable television food slash travel shows. Once I arrived on the scene, the bar was raised. Soon, every food show was trying to keep pace.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

A twentysomething man walks to the entrance of a restaurant accompanied by the 'I'LL EAT THAT!' film crew. A large sign outside reads: 72 OUNCE STEAK CHALLENGE. The young man looks doubtful.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

The networks kept demanding more extreme content. Some guys needed convincing, so the network called in some consultants to help.

Grabbing him, they throw their reluctant host into a waiting limousine. Inside is Snoop Dogg holding an enormous joint. The limousine roars off, only to return a second later from the opposite direction. The door opens, and a cloud of smoke billows forth like dry ice.

From the fog emerges newly made over Hood Rat: Adam 'Puffy' Richman. Eyes red and half-closed, he grins to reveal a gold 'FOODIE MOB' grill. He daps Snoop, whose limo transforms into a 'Back to the Future' time machine and disappears.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

In the end, food show hosts were getting loaded for the camera, forgetting their lines, passing out on set, puking up the food they were sampling, and nodding off in the middle of their closing segments.

The stoned and now affable man waves to the camera. A set of offscreen hands produce a table and chair, another pair coming from above to push him into his seat, reaching in to tie a napkin around his neck. From the opposing side, a cowboy uses a forklift to lower a Brontosaurus-sized steak that covers the entire table. Adam licks his chops and digs in.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

But viewers loved it! To coin a phrase, they ate that shit up. Advertisers were happy, and the money rolled in. Nothing lasts forever, though.

Adam Richman, now yellowish and looking like Jabba the Hut, is wheeled in on a dolly. He is hooked up to a heart monitor, which beeps quietly.

Standing before him is a five-foot stack of manhole-sized pancakes. As he takes his first syrup dripping bite, his red, bloodshot eye twitches. Grasping his chest, he keels over to the sound of a flatlining heart monitor.

END FLASHBACK

GUIDRY

It was a fine line: Most of my contemporaries didn't have my kind of tolerance. They were lightweights, and more than one had to have an adrenaline needle jammed through their breastplate.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

GUIDRY (V.O.)

I was at a party in England once where Gordon Ramsay got all fucked up on mushrooms. It was a real nightmare.

Guidry stands formally dressed, cocktail in hand, chatting with José Andrés. Naked Gordon Ramsay bursts into the room with wild eyes, a mouth full of 'shrooms and a baby sheep in his arms.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

He ran around the kitchen screaming 'Queen Elizabeth is a man' and 'Winston Churchill was full of shit'. Then he punched a cabbie in the face, stole his cab and drove around with a slaughtered lamb in the back seat.

A black London taxi careens through the streets at high speed, Gordon Ramsay hanging out of it like Heath Ledger in the Dark Knight. He sideswipes a double-decker bus and runs over ten English bobbies like bowling pins.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

He almost drove it off London Bridge. They had to fish him out of the Thames.

Heading at top speed toward London Bridge, the dead lamb is chucked out of the cab's window. It lands on top of a member of the Queen's Guard, flattening him as he stands on the steps of Buckingham Palace.

END FLASHBACK

GUIDRY

Huge scandal, the paparazzi hounded him for weeks. It made for great television though, and viewership doubled. That was sometime in ninety-seven, ninety-eight. Nobody was charged, of course, because the Queen had a thing with Gordon, and MI6 and the BBC kept it out of the tabloids, but we all know what happened.

So, If you don't believe drugs have done anything good for food television, I ask you: What more evidence do you need?

RODNEY

I'm convinced.

MICHAEL

Me too.

The host gathers his troops together:

GUIDRY

Listen, fellas: This is my last chance to make it to the big leagues. It's getting harder and harder to protect my tenuous place in the basic cable media food chain. But, as God is my witness: Protect it I shall. I'm a survivor. And I will do anything, EH-NEE-THING to survive. Game shows, public appearances, bookstore signings, mall kiosks. And you guys are gonna help me. You see: I don't feel I have to wipe everybody out, Hollywood.

FJ LEWIS

Reseda.

GUIDRY

Just my enemies, that's all. You guys gonna come along with me in these things I have to do or what? Because if not--

RODNEY

Hell yeah! This is way better than work release.

FJ LEWIS

Work release? You were in jail?

RODNEY

Long story. I got caught with-- contraband-- at the Nairobi airport.

FJ LEWIS

What were you doing in Nairobi?

RODNEY

I was young and needed the money.

GUIDRY

You were smuggling drugs? I would have had you pick me up something.

RODNEY

Nah. Rhino horn.

FJ LEWIS

I knew there was more to that story!

MICHAEL

I'll do it! Why not? I've got nothing better to do. My work visa isn't up for another eighteen months, anyway.

GUIDRY

What about you, Hollywood? Sorry, I mean: Mister Francis John Lewis, hotshot network television producer. Are you down?

Guidry extends his hand, eager fingers wiggling.

FJ LEWIS

Am I down? Really?

(considers)

No, I don't think so.

His response deflates the crew and leaves Guidry hanging. He appears stung.

RODNEY

Bummer.

(to Mike)

This is a bummer man.

MICHAEL

That's a, that's a bummer.

FJ LEWIS

I will say that things are looking UP, but I'll let you know after sweeps, alright fellas?

The crew grumble as Frank reluctantly returns Guidry's disappointed handshake.

MICHAEL

Yeah, truly amazing.

GUIDRY

So be it. I respect your decision either way, sir.

FJ LEWIS

Don't worry guys, I'll be in touch. I'll give you a call in a couple weeks after post is finished.

RODNEY

Deadite.

FJ LEWIS

Guidry, you really need to get a cellphone. I mean, get with the program, it's the Twenty-First Century, man.

GUIDRY

No way. Those things give you cancer.

FJ LEWIS

Aww, that's crazy talk--

MICHAEL

(to Guidry)

Hey, I think your ride's here.

EXT. - CROW FLIES CAFÉ - CONTINUOUS

A lifted 4x4 truck pulls up and a well heeled cowboy-type clamors down from the cab. He and Guidry exchange insults.

TODD PACKER

Hey foodie, I got something you can put in your mouth.

GUIDRY

Well look who it is: Hopalong Chastity, the virgin cowboy. Better hide the farm animals, Martha.

TODD PACKER

You sure have come a long way since college, Squidrey.

GUIDRY

Eat my shorts, Yosemite Sam.

TODD PACKER

I thought you preferred lacy pink panties, Tinkerbell. You're wearing shorts now like a big boy?

(approaches Gid)

What's next, a thong?

The verbal barbs are followed by warm greetings and a bro hug, revealing the two to be well acquainted. Preparing to go their separate ways, the crew bids farewell to Guidry and his buddy, as the two college chums climb into the extended cab of the idling dually.

INT. - TRUCK - FRONT SEAT - CONTINUOUS

GUIDRY

Yo Dumb Guns, I forgot to ask, did you remember to bring the Plutonium Nyborg? We've only got one bag left.

TODD PACKER

Roger that Bandit. That's a big ten-four.

Cigarette in mouth, Todd produces a briefcase and opens it away from camera, the unseen content's golden glow mimicking Pulp Fiction.

GUIDRY

Snowman shoots and scores!

TODD PACKER

What about you, what you got in the trunk? You said you were having trouble with your hookup.

GUIDRY

Oh, I got it. I told you I would do whatever it took.

Donning handmade Italian sunglasses, he whips a similar briefcase onto the truck seat, opening it dramatically. Guidry is momentarily bathed in X-rays, in homage to Repo Man. He removes the designer shades and rummages inside.

GUIDRY

Don't ask me what I had to do to get it, though. That's a rather tender subject.

(wipes his mouth)

Let's go find the Loc-Nar.

TODD PACKER

I've been thinking about this, Gid: You should have a catchphrase, y'know, like BAM!

GUIDRY

Lagasse stole it from me, that hack! I came up with that one night when we were partying with Jacques Pepin and Mario Batali in the VIP suite at Scores.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

In the neon Babylon of the Asti Spumante Room, four surgically enhanced ladies Hoover the cash from four soused patrons. Bouncing butt cheeks hide the men's faces, as a bottle of Dom Pérignon is passed between the hedonists.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

Every time that toasted Frenchman slapped a stripper's ass, I would yell 'BAM!'

As the night progresses, Emeril and Gid are making it rain for the crowd. Batali and Chef Pepin smoke from a hookah as hardworking girls scoop buckets of cash with glee. Jacques attempts to take a shot of Jack, but drunkenly tosses it over his shoulder.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

Long story short, we got thrown out because Batali couldn't keep his hands off the merchandise.

With her arm covering the moneymakers, a busty entertainer points to Mario Batali, who holds a bikini top between his teeth, with two more in his hands. Behind Mercedes, two more women in the same topless condition stand covering up and pointing.

GUIDRY (V.O.)

They threw us out like garbage, into the gutter with the rest of the scum.

A pair of ginormous bouncers in black satin 'Sparkle Magic' jackets toss the quartet into a pile of trash bags littering the sidewalk of a grimy Big Apple. The rowdy revelers look up just as an orange-haired hobo stumbles by like a toddler, chasing a dollar bill being pulled on a fishing line.

TODD PACKER (V.O.)

Great guy, ran into him at a fetish club in Moscow.

END FLASHBACK

GUIDRY

That's all water under the bridge, now though. After we hung out in Tampa, Emeril and I became pretty tight.

Guidry removes a teal TEAM TATONKA bowling shirt from the briefcase. Touched, he looks over to the window of the Crow Flies Café and smiles.

TODD PACKER

Wow. That's cool. You're like a member of the tribe now, huh? Blood brothers.

GUIDRY

Something like that.

The name reads: ASWHEELS

TODD PACKER

Is that your tribal name on there: ASWHEELS?

Subtitle: Swallow

GUIDRY

I guess it is, Kemosabe. You know, old pal: If you can't love each other, how the hell can you love someone else?

TODD PACKER

Now that's profound. THAT should be your catchphrase.

GUIDRY

I think it's already taken. How about: Don't dream it, be it!

TODD PACKER

FUCK. YES. Go with that.

GUIDRY

I'll have to run it past my agent. But that's not why I'm here, old friend.

TODD PACKER

It's not?

Guidry pulls out a doobie and lights it, inhaling deeply before passing it to his friend.

GUIDRY

(holding smoke)

Nope. You see: I have come here today to get wasted and kick ass.

(exhales)

And I'm already wasted.

The frat brothers high five.

GUIDRY

Let's go play with your big gun.

TODD PACKER

Hell yeah, I thought you'd never ask.

Joint in mouth, Todd tokes and cranks up the tunes.

TODD PACKER

Watch this, my carbon neutral friend. It's the latest thing. The kids call it 'coal rolling'.

EXT. - STREET OUTSIDE CROW FLIES CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Music: 'Smokin' by Boston

Overdriven guitars kick out the jams as the land yacht pulls away from the curb. The rhinestone cowboy guns the engine and the truck belches a noxious cloud of diesel smoke that engulfs the TV crew.

As they roar off, a set of gold-plated truck nuts sway underneath a bumper sticker that reads: 'If you can read this, I'm reloading. We'll be with you momentarily'.

INT. - CROW FLIES CAFÉ DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Observing the deplorable cloud of truck exhaust from inside the front of the café, Janet, Maggie, and Raphael sorrowfully shake their heads. Beside them in a woven chair sits an incredibly old Native woman. The unfathomably old person grimaces and mutters in her indecipherable native tongue. The owner nods in agreement.

JANET

You are so right. Douchebags.

MAGGIE

What did she say?

RAPHAEL

Wait? You couldn't understand her?

MAGGIE

What do you want from me? I'm Shoshone. Has she been here all this time?

JANET

She was here when I moved in, back in the pantry with the dried apricots. Her dog is around here somewhere. I think we won her in some treaty with the Blackfeet.

MAGGIE

How old is she anyway?

JANET

I have no idea. Heck, I don't think SHE knows. Every time I ask she gives me a different answer.

RAPHAEL

You're Shoshone, girlfriend? Cause I thought your color palette just screamed Navajo.

MAGGIE

Really? That's so sweet--

A scruffy mutt trots in and sits beside his aged master. The ancient woman mutters another stream of gibberish, eliciting a snort of amusement from the brawny cook.

MAGGIE

What did she say this time?

RAPHAEL

She said it reminds her of something her great-grandfather used to say all the time: 'We should have killed them when we had the chance'.

FADE TO BLACK - CREDITS

Music: 'Long Slow Goodbye' by Queens of the Stone Age

Cut to a photo of a man eating noodles on a street in Asia.

SUPER: Anthony Bourdain (1956-2018)

POST CREDITS SCENE

INT - THEATER

A HUGE MF CELEBRITY stands on an empty stage.

HUGE MF CELEBRITY

(to camera)

If you or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255, or find help online at suicide prevention lifeline dot org. Free confidential counseling is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Did I mention it's FREE? You get a counsellor, you get a counsellor, and yes, you get a counsellor too! So no excuses, alright? Thank you.

The HUGE MF CELEBRITY adjusts his Kangol.

HUGE MF CELEBRITY

As for me, I believe every life is worth saving, and by just reaching out and showing a little everyday kindness, you could save the life of another human being. Something as simple as asking a friend about their feelings could make all the difference, so don't ignore the warning signs.

(pivots)

Now pay attention, because I'm about to impart a little wisdom, some real Dali Lama type stuff, clue you in to The Meaning of Life. Now this is important, so write this down. You ready? Here goes: 'Feed each other with kindness and your plate will always be full'.

Swirling his tasty beverage in a rocks glass, he continues:

HUGE MF CELEBRITY

(pause)

And there it is, the Meaning of Life. You're welcome. I like that, I mean what a concept, am I right? So take a moment to ponder that sometime while you enjoy a Negroni with your fellow Earthlings. Now, I know what you're thinking: 'That's just a slogan. An easy answer', and ordinarily you'd be right. But sometimes it really is that simple.

(MORE)

HUGE MF CELEBRITY (CONT'D)
Whatever the case, I'd like to
think that Tony would've agreed
with me. I mean, I never met the
man, didn't know him personally.
But it felt like I did. Cheers!

The HUGE MF CELEBRITY raises his glass and walks off.

CUT TO BLACK - RESUME CREDITS