

LITTLE AMERICA

"Farhad"

Written by

Lee Eisenberg & Emily V. Gordon & Kumail Nanjiani

May 21, 2018

INT. NYC UPSCALE RESTAURANT - DINING ROOM - DAY

Bustling lunch crowd. WAITERS in STARCHED WHITE SHIRTS whisk by holding BEAUTIFULLY PLATED, EXPENSIVE DISHES. We find FARHAD -- Irani, late 40's, immaculately parted hair, in classic Middle Eastern garb: blazer, shirt open at the collar, nice watch. He's sitting alone. When he makes eye contact with someone, he smiles and nods at them and, for whatever reason, people smile back. People like this guy. A WAITER stands over him, ticking off the day's specials. Farhad listens, his eyes lighting up at the descriptions.

WAITER

We have a confit chicken thigh with winter squash, brown butter, pickled onion, benne seed, lovage and lime. And as a starter, a lovely frisee salad, lightly dressed in a chorizo citrus vinaigrette with a sous-vide duck egg to finish.

FARHAD

Oh yes, I saw that online! That is what I will have. One thing only. May I have it with a quail egg to finish?

WAITER

Unfortunately, the chef uses a duck egg for the preparation.

Farhad is surprised.

FARHAD

That's odd, because quail eggs improve vision, reduce chronic disease, plus larger yolks for satisfying flavor.

WAITER

(shrugs)
He's the chef.

Farhad opens his bag and carefully removes a QUAIL EGG.

FARHAD

May I have a moment of his time to discuss further the health benefits of quail eggs?

WAITER

He's in the middle of service.

FARHAD

Of course. Understandably, I will not be able to dine here, but may I leave a delicious sample for your pleasure?

He offers a wide grin and places the quail egg on the table with a flourish. It wobbles a bit.

CUT TO:

INT. DIFFERENT UPSCALE RESTAURANT - KITCHEN - DAY

A bustling kitchen prepping for dinner service. Chopping, slicing, chiffonading. Over the din, a RAPPING on a METAL DOOR in the back. A LINE COOK walks over, opens the door to find:

FARHAD

Hello, I'd like to speak to someone regarding your acquisition of quail eggs. Did you know quail eggs contain 13 percent protein compared to only 11 percent found in chicken eggs?

LINE COOK

Chef no here.

Farhad opens a bag, whips out a QUAIL EGG.

FARHAD

May I leave a delicious sample for your pleasure?

CUT TO:

INT. GREASY SPOON DINER -DAY

Farhad (Shirt slightly unbuttoned, more casual) is devouring a stack of PANCAKES. He pours on some maple syrup, puts it down, reconsiders, pours on more. As a WAITRESS approaches, Farhad gets an idea.

FARHAD

You know what would really pull this restaurant up into the major big leagues?

Farhad opens his bag to show the waitress all the quail eggs inside.

WAITRESS

Smaller eggs?

FARHAD

Quail eggs. I can supply you. Here is my card.

Farhad hands the waiter a BUSINESS CARD. We punch in on the card which reads: "FARHAD GHANEEZADAY: BEE-KEEPER, SLAUGHTERHOUSE, QUAIL EGG MERCHANT, PISTACHIO FARMER, ROLLER-SKATING INSTRUCTOR, DOG WALKING."

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Farhad eats MCDONALDS as he watches his phone, enrapt. We reverse on the phone to see... he is watching himself deliver a motivational speech. In his home. To no one.

FARHAD (ONSCREEN)

The thing about success is that it must be grabbed. No opportunity can be left unturned.

We hear very canned applause that has clearly been added in post. Non-video Farhad is taking notes, mouthing the words, rewriting, rewinding, rewatching. The speech is in Farsi and English.

EXT. YONKERS, NEW YORK - DAY

Outside train station. Farhad listens to Phil Collins on his headphones. He opens his BRIEFCASE and pulls out ROLLERBLADES and an empty BACKPACK. He carefully folds his suit jacket and puts it in the backpack. Then he puts his briefcase inside the backpack. He laces up his rollerblades on a bench, turns up the song, and sets off.

EXT. ROCK PROPERTY- DAY

Farhad blades by a property with a MASSIVE ROCK on it. To call it a rock is an understatement. This thing is a tiny mountain. As he blades by, we stay on the rock. Farhad never even glances at it.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Farhad approaches the attendant booth where VITOR (24, Brazilian, eager, devotee of Farhad), reads a book on business. The booth is filled with PHOTOS OF FARHAD AND HIS FAMILY.

VITOR
Farhad! What's up, my man??

FARHAD
(fist bumping)
Hey, Vitor. Wasn't Behnam supposed
to work today?

VITOR
He had study group.

FARHAD
He has a 3.65 GPA.

VITOR
I remember.
(then)
How was quail egging?

FARHAD
Very exciting prospects. No bites.
(winks)
Yet.

Farhad starts putting on his PARKING ATTENDANT SHIRT.

VITOR
"The follow through is everything"
as a great man once said.

FARHAD
(smiling)
Well, that great man has actually
been working on that speech even
more. It's going to be even more
motivating. I don't want to count
my chickens, but maybe even twice
as motivating.

VITOR
Cannot wait.

FARHAD
I am not worried about the quail
eggs. Once back home I had a hotel
toiletry business that was being
run out of one of our properties,
which is not legal, but eventually
I got to the right government
official, gave them what they
needed to seal the deal...
(pauses for effect)
Nina's bamieh. Is a joke.
(MORE)

FARHAD (CONT'D)

Her bamieh is doughnut perfection,
but I gave him cash. And bamieh,
but really it was the cash. We
never had problems again. Business
was very successful. It will happen
like that, when it's time.

VITOR

In this book I am reading, this ad
executive in 1940's America got the
shrimp account. But nobody wanted
shrimp. They are meaty insects that
can swim. Who wants to eat this
thing? So he went to every
restaurant on Broadway, asked for
shrimp even though he knew they had
no shrimp. All of a sudden,
everyone says, 'we need shrimp!'
Builds demand. Now, shrimp is a
multi-billion dollars industry.

FARHAD

Where do you think I got the idea,
my friend?

They laugh and high five.

VITOR

I'm going to send you a link to
Eater dot com. They just had an
article on Brooklyn's best
brunches.

FARHAD

Brooklyn would love quail eggs!
They're fascinated by newness.

QUICK CUTS:

-- Farhad checks the boom arm on the booth, oils the
mechanism.

-- Farhad counts the cars.

-- Farhad cleans the window of the booth with Windex.

-- Farhad sweeps the parking lot. A few people head to their
cars, leaving for the day. Farhad waves to them. He knows
everyone's names, cracks jokes.

FARHAD (CONT'D)

Drive safe Sheila.

(to another customer)

Cheering for the Knicks tonight!

(MORE)

FARHAD (CONT'D)
 (to another one)
 Craig, did you get a haircut or did
 you get them all cut?

INT. APPLE STORE - LATER

An APPLE GENIUS lectures to a class of mostly retirees about editing on iMovie. Farhad sits in the front diligently taking notes.

INT. BUS - DUSK

Farhad stares at his phone as we drive by the ROCK PROPERTY again. He doesn't notice it. We do.

INT. FARHAD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CLOSE ON an ENORMOUS SOFTLY LIT PAINTING of Farhad and his wife, NINA, in repose in front of a fireplace. She's in her VERY OPULENT WEDDING DRESS and he's in a SUIT, NO TIE. The painting is FRAMED IN GOLD FILIGREE. We pan from the painting to the rest of the MODEST RAILROAD APARTMENT, its near-squalor a stark contrast to the nicer decor depicted in the painting.

TINY APPLIANCES, CABINETS tilting slightly off the wall, DISHES stacked under the counter (they'd slide out of the cabinets otherwise), paint peeling off the corners, the only WINDOW looking out to a pigeon shit-covered fire escape. The place is immaculately clean, but you can't put lipstick on a pig. Well, I guess you could. It wouldn't help.

NINA, late 40s, steely sunshine, pours tea for their son BEHNAM, 20s, the hipster family cynic, at their TINY KITCHENETTE. [Note: The scenes set in Farhad's home are a mixture of Farsi and English and Nina's English is not as strong as the others.] She sits down to her DOG-EARED COPY OF ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST, marking pages.

A CLATTERING as Farhad blades in, nearly falling over.

NINA
 No blades in the house.

FARHAD
 Did I miss it?

NINA
 No. But you missed dinner.

INT. FARHAD'S APARTMENT - LATER

All three squeezed into a couch, watching SHARK TANK. Farhad eating leftovers.

MARK CUBAN (ONSCREEN)

I just don't see a market for
desserts for dogs, and for that
reason... I'm out.

FARHAD

Their valuation was crazy!

NINA

Mr. Wonderful saw they were not a
scalable business.

BEHNAM

We've literally made a circus out
of late stage capitalism.

FARHAD

Eh, you love this show!

Farhad pulls out his phone, texting. Nina goes back to reading Architectural Digest. Behnam pulls out his phone. A MOUSE scurries across the floor. They all look up to see it and say nothing. After a long beat--

NINA

Maybe it's time for a new
apartment.

FARHAD

(waving it off)

I'll call Super Manny in the
morning.

BEHNAM

Jason's roommate is moving in with
his girlfriend. It's right by
campus...

FARHAD

The three of us in one room? That
would be extremely tight.

BEHNAM

... I meant just me.

FARHAD

When you pay rent, you take money out of the family and put in a stranger's pocket. We'll buy a house. Better solution.

NINA

(dismissing Behnam)

You tell Super Manny to only use humane extermination. If one little mouse spine is broken, I'm going to let him have it.

Farhad looks at the dog-eared Architectural Digest. Nina notices.

NINA (CONT'D)

I like to keep up with the trends.

INT. FARHAD'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Farhad takes off his shoes. He looks around the small room. RUSTED RADIATOR. A DRIP-DRIP-DRIP from the bathroom. A HUMANE MOUSE TRAP beside their dresser. He slumps a little. Nina enters. He puts on a strong face.

NINA

To end your night sweetly.

She hands him a CHOCOLATE. He pops it in his mouth. She kisses him on the forehead. It helps.

INT. FARHAD'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Nina sleeps. Farhad stares at the paint peeling off the ceiling. He hears the scurrying of the mouse. He shushes it. It doesn't work. About as futile as putting lipstick on a pig.

INT. FARHAD'S APARTMENT - DAY

SUPER MANNY (Greek, 50's) is splayed on the floor, shining a flashlight behind a bookcase.

SUPER MANNY

No mouse.

Nina enters with a TRAY OF BAMIEH (Persian doughnuts).

FARHAD

There is a mouse. Pay for exterminator.

Super Manny stands up and takes a bamieh.

SUPER MANNY

If I see no mouse, why do I pay for exterminator?

FARHAD

Take away the bamieh!

Nina moves to take away the plate and Farhad tries to snatch the bamieh from Super Manny, who pops it in his mouth.

FARHAD (CONT'D)

We are going to move out of here.

SUPER MANNY

Where can you go? Best rent in the county.

FARHAD

I have a credit score of 710! Anyone would be honored to host me and my family. No one should live with rodents.

Super Manny looks at him for a beat, grabs one more bamieh, pops it in his mouth.

SUPER MANNY

Ok. I tell you the truth. Owner will not pay for exterminator. I have asked. My hands were tied. There are mice in my place too, I complain all day long. I think these...

(points to humane mouse traps)

Do nothing. You must get the--

Super Manny slaps his hand together REALLY LOUD. Nina jumps.

SUPER MANNY (CONT'D)

More for the road?

Nina considers, then offers the plate.

SUPER MANNY (CONT'D)

In Greece, we call these Loukoumades. The world loves doughnuts.

He takes a handful, leaves. Nina goes to the dishes and starts angrily washing.

FARHAD

You heard what he said. I know you do not like to hurt--

NINA

I thought you were good at negotiating? We need exterminator.

FARHAD

Forget this place. I'll find you a house. With stainless steel appliances. Like home.

NINA

You're always thinking of going to the moon when we haven't left the ground. Why don't we start with getting rid of the rodents, eh? Yesterday I was in the bath and the mouse watched me. I moved his arms and he didn't move.

FARHAD

I cannot blame them. Even a rodent is transfixed by your beauty.

He winks at her. Nina softens, hands Farhad his lunch bag.

NINA

We can do the spine snapping mouse traps. But you must get rid of them. I can't look at their sad little bodies.

Farhad kisses her. As he walks out the door, he turns around.

FARHAD

Nina, I'm taking you to the moon!

She shakes her head.

EXT. FARHAD'S BUILDING - DAY

Farhad walks out to find Behnam loading music equipment into a van with a bunch of RIDICULOUS LOOKING HIPSTERS. He approaches his son.

FARHAD

(in Farsi)
Shift. Today at 2.
(MORE)

FARHAD (CONT'D)

Vitor has his personal branding seminar, so you must be there. No excuses.

BEHNAM

(in English)

Yes dad. I'll be there.

FARHAD

(to bandmembers)

Troy. Jason. The Foragers!

BEHNAM

It's just Foragers. No "the."

TROY

Hey, Mr. G.

FARHAD

You know I can write up a business plan so the band can become profitable.

BEHNAM

You don't make art to make money.

JASON

I'd like to make money.

Troy nods in agreement.

FARHAD

You can do both. You know who is a massive artist and also a massive businessman?

BEHNAM

Bono.

FARHAD (CONT'D)

Bono.

FARHAD (CONT'D)

Owns multiple castles, invested in Yelp, makes great music.

TROY

Hey Mr. G, you coming to our show next week at the Quadruple Bottle?

FARHAD

(hurt)

This is the first I'm hearing of this.

BEHNAM

We're just opening for another band -- three songs. It's a coffee shop.

Behnam is excited, but clearly wants his father's approval.

TROY

The xx dropped in there two months ago.

FARHAD

XX? Now we're talking about it!!
Your foot is now in the door. Soon, you will have both feet in the door. Then you will have feet in a bigger door.

The other guys smile at Farhad's enthusiasm and stilted speech. Behnam is aware, a little embarrassed.

FARHAD (CONT'D)

(pointing to Behnam)

You are Bono.

(pointing to Troy)

You are the Edge.

(pointing to Jason)

You are... one of the other members of U2. And so it begins!!

Farhad walks away, beaming.

JASON

Your dad has a lot of energy.

INT. FARHAD'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM

The bathroom is tiny and grimy. A small warped mirror. Pepto Bismol pink. A small BATHTUB. Groaty grout. Nina has transformed the space into as nice of a spa as she possibly can- CANDLES, BUBBLE BATH STUFF, SPA MUSIC. She lies awkwardly in the tub and tries to read but keeps catching glimpses of how gross everything is, a MOUSETRAP in the corner. She eventually finds her happy place, but only after she dons a EYEMASK. She sighs.

INT. PERSIAN GROCERY STORE - DAY

Farsi lettering. A beautiful spice arrangement. Farhad is at the checkout. He buys a DWELL MAGAZINE for Nina, as well as OLD FASHIONED MOUSE TRAPS and some ear plugs.

FARHAD

(proud, re ear plugs)

Behnam is in a band.

PERSIAN CASHIER

(joking)

He's going to change his name to Ben.

The Cashier finishes bagging Farhad's items.

FARHAD

See you Saturday for World Cup. My uncle sent me pistachios. From Qizmir.

PERSIAN CASHIER

New York does not understand pistachios.

Farhad nods, kisses the cashier three times on the cheek, then exits.

INT. BUS - DAY

Farhad reads DWELL MAGAZINE while listening to Behnam's band, "FORAGERS." He finds a picture of a beautiful mansion, rips it out, neatly folds it, puts it in his pocket. He looks up. The bus is stopped outside the ROCK PROPERTY, which now has a FOR SALE sign on it. He really sees it for the first time. Farhad's eyes widen. He calls the number.

INT. RONNI'S CAR - LATER

RONNI- 40's, poofy hair, mile a minute, drives as Farhad sits in the passenger seat.

RONNI

Great time to invest right here in Yonkers. It's exactly like New York but less loud and much cheaper.

FARHAD

I love Yonkers. My son, Behnam, goes to CUNY Lehman. 3.65 GPA. Business Administration. He's also a musician. Like Bono from U2. I want a home where he can have room to practice drums. And my wife to have big kitchen.

RONNI

This is the place. Bang for your buck. Only going up up up.

FARHAD

And I have credit score of 710.

RONNI

You mentioned that. Don't worry.
We'll find you a better home than
you had in Iran.

Farhad bristles.

FARHAD

People think I escaped Iran. I had
a good life in Iran. A great life.
I owned and operated a roller-
skating rink and a giant pistachio
business with my uncle. My house
was 2600 square feet. I wanted to
try America because the ceiling is
even higher here and America
rewards entrepreneurs. I reached
the ceiling in Iran and I will
reach it in America. Do not feel
sorry for me.

RONNI

That's great. Very great. I'm
sorry.

INT. MANSION - DAY

Ronni and Farhad walk in an immaculately staged home.

FARHAD

Beautiful! And so much natural
light.

RONNI

\$310,000. Fully furnished. And the
sellers are very motivated.

FARHAD

Yes, too much light. I cannot live
here.

Farhad exits.

INT. SLIGHTLY LESS NICE MANSION

Farhad looks at the tear sheet, eyes go wide. He exits. Ronni
hurries to follow him.

INT. LARGE HOUSE, BUT NO MANSION

It's not even staged, just empty, but it looks modern and stylish.

FARHAD
This is nice.

RONNI
And the rent is very reasonable.

FARHAD
Rent? I want to own.

Farhad opens a bathroom door and it immediately slams from the inside.

SQUATTER (O.S.)
Get the fuck outta here!

Farhad jumps back, terrified.

RONNI
The listing agent says the squatter will be gone by next week.

FARHAD
What about the place I asked about when I called?

EXT. ROCK PROPERTY - DAY

Ronni's car pulls into frame. The FOR SALE SIGN is MASSIVELY OVERSHADOWED BY THE MASSIVE ROCK just behind it.

FARHAD
How much is this property?

RONNI
\$25,000.

FARHAD
Wow! It's a steal!

RONNI
Have you seen the rock? You can't build on it.

FARHAD
Real comfort takes work. This rock is an opportunity.

Farhad gets out of the car, walks up to the fence of the property. Farhad takes the magazine photo from his pocket, unfolds it. He holds it up, so that the house in the photo almost covers the Rock (the Rock is so big it peeks out over the top of the photo). He takes a step back so that the Rock completely disappears behind the photo.

FARHAD (CONT'D)

This is where we will live. Yes!
Let's write up the papers. I will
make an offer of twenty-four
thousand dollars!

Ronni looks incredulous.

INT. FARHAD'S APARTMENT - LATER

Nina and Behnam, sitting at the kitchenette chatting, hear a monstrous CLANGING sound on the stairs outside. A moment later, Farhad bursts in, still on rollerblades.

NINA

Blades!

FARHAD

Wonderful news! I bought a
property! For a steal!

He grabs his LAPTOP and types the address into a real estate website. He proudly shows the picture to Nina and Behnam.

FARHAD (CONT'D)

Twenty-four thousand five hundred
dollars! All of that is ours.

BEHNAM

Does "all of that" include that
massive boulder?

NINA

No that's the house- is that the
house?

FARHAD

That is no house. The rock is
nothing. Easily demolished.

Behnam shakes his head. Nina's smile looks a little wilted.

EXT. ROCK PROPERTY - DAY

Nina, holding a PICNIC BASKET, is smiling next to a STREETSIDE SIGN that says "Another property sold by Ronni!" as Farhad takes her photo. He texts the photo to Behnam but gets no response. Undaunted, he readies himself to record a video as they approach the property (and the rock) itself.

FARHAD

I'll just make a video or does he do Facebook Live?

Nina's heels are poking into the ground.

NINA

I do not know. The soil here seems good. Soft.

FARHAD

No matter, I will make video for my fans too.

When he starts recording, his voice gets even louder and more boisterous.

FARHAD (CONT'D)

Hey everybody, we are in Farhad land, a beautiful 1700 square feet of god's own country, owned by me. Take a look at how sunny it is!

He shows the camera the property. We switch to the camera's POV and as Farhad talks about his plans for his dream house, it MAGICALLY APPEARS.

FARHAD (CONT'D)

Big plans for this land. Big plans. The fence line will begin here and I think the walkway should be red brick. House will be brick, none of this aluminum siding. So many windows! And I want to put garden there. Fresh mint for tea!

The camera goes inside the imaginary house, finding Nina carrying a beautiful PLATTER OF TADEEG through the Nancy Meyers-level KITCHEN, all gleaming appliances, and out to the well-manicured BACKYARD, where family and friends are sitting around eating or swimming in the POOL.

MARK CUBAN and Behnam are having a lively conversation when Farhad joins them, puts his arm around his son, and clinks glasses with Mark Cuban. Nina looks radiant.

NINA (O.S.)
It's very big.

Farhad is startled out of his daydream and his video, which is still just of the empty property. Nina is standing in front of the rock and staring up at it, craning her neck.

NINA (CONT'D)
It's much bigger the closer you get to it.

REVERSE ANGLE as Farhad approaches the rock and touches it. It looks like the rock is towering over him. This scene could be out of a horror movie.

EXT. ROCK PROPERTY - LATER

Farhad and Nina are now seated with their backs up against the rock, eating their picnic. Nina keeps turning around to look at its size as they talk.

FARHAD
So how big do you want your countertops? What kind of backsplash? I've been reading up on these terms.

NINA
Let's build the house first? Then we'll decide?

FARHAD
Do you not like it here?

NINA
It's beautiful. I just... we could have started with a larger apartment first. One with a whirlpool tub.

FARHAD
You can stay in a larger apartment. Behnam and I will live in a mansion custom built for us.

He winks at her.

EXT. ROCK PROPERTY - LATER

Farhad is sweating as he DIGS A TRENCH next to the rock. Nina is crouched like an auteur nearby, filming him on his iPhone. Farhad turns to address the camera.

FARHAD

If you want to overcome obstacles,
you must fully know your obstacles.

EXT. ROCK PROPERTY - NIGHT

Farhad is now alone at the property as the sun sets. The trench is much larger now. Farhad has taken his shirt off and wrapped it around his head. Farhad gets a text from Nina: "COME HOME MY MOOSH." He pats the rock.

FARHAD

See you tomorrow.

INT. FARHAD'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Farhad is brushing his teeth offscreen and we're on Nina in bed, on her laptop. This conversation is in Farsi.

FARHAD

I made great progress on the trench. It's going to take a lot of work but it's an exciting challenge. I'll bring Behnam to see it this weekend.

NINA

I've been doing some research on the previous owners of the property. Maybe one of them tried to get rid of the rock too?

FARHAD

These Americans always give up!

NINA

Maybe they filed plans with the city for it but never finished? We can check that, it's public record!

FARHAD

Nina you are a genius. I'll go to City Hall tomorrow! What do you think is better to bring for the city workers, quail eggs or honey?

NINA

Honey. And I will come with you! What if we find out the rock was even bigger before we had it!? What if this was their success?

Farhad looks at her, dumbstruck and horrified, but she is giggling. He pounces on her.

INT. FARHAD'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

The family is sitting around the table to a breakfast of PANCAKES. Farhad is on his phone.

BEHNAM

If we can get a couple more gigs we'll be in good shape, and then we can start submitting for festivals.

NINA

What kinds of festivals?

BEHNAM

Like South By in Austin, stuff like that.

NINA

Austin, Texas? Exciting! Farhad, are you hearing this?

FARHAD

Festivals. Yes. Shoot, we have to get going. Big day.

He kisses Behnam on the forehead. Behnam shrugs and gives a half-wave.

INT. CITY HALL RECORDS OFFICE - DAY

Farhad and Nina sit across from a Records Clerk, LIANNA. A STACK OF PAPERS sits on the counter.

LIANNA

I'm sorry. I need a signed affidavit from any owner who filed plans to allow you to see them.

FARHAD

But I am the owner now.
(motions to papers)
Shouldn't I be able to see the history of my property?

LIANNA

You still have two more weeks in escrow.

FARHAD

You look familiar. Do you take classes at the Ridge Hill Apple Store?

LIANNA

I do.

FARHAD

I thought I recognized you. You ask great questions. I take them too. Can you not help out a friend?

LIANNA

I wish I could. I can't.

Farhad nods at Nina, who pulls out the big guns, aka a JAR OF HONEY. She presents it with a flourish.

LIANNA (CONT'D)

What is that?

FARHAD

Honey.

LIANNA

I can't accept a gift.

FARHAD

I insist. This is genuine honey from my own bees.

LIANNA

We can't. I'm sorry.

Nina signals Farhad, they both put their coats back on. Nina speaks in her halting English.

NINA

Could you please to help us the East Wing garage?

LIANNA

Of course, I'll walk you.

Lianna comes out from behind the counter and walks with Nina and Farhad.

INT. CITY HALL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Lianna is directing Farhad and Nina to the door when Nina pats herself down.

NINA
My gloves. I forgot.

She gives Farhad a look and Farhad, unsure of what's happening, obediently turns to distract Lianna.

FARHAD
Have you ever had quail eggs?

LIANNA
I don't think so.

Nina hurries back with her GLOVES in hand. They walk a few more yards and Lianna directs them to the exit. They bid her goodbye. Nina is walking very fast, Farhad can't keep up.

NINA
(whispering, breathless)
I took photos of the blueprints
from the file.

FARHAD
No, really?! Wait wait, slow down,
running will look obvious.

They both slow down and walk very suspiciously.

INT. FARHAD'S APARTMENT - DAY

Farhad sits at his kitchen table studying PRINTED OUT BLUEPRINTS from Nina's phone. Behnam grabs a banana.

BEHNAM
I put your name on the list for
tonight so you don't have to pay a
cover.

FARHAD
I've already deleted old videos so
I have enough storage space to
record.

BEHNAM
Don't get your hopes up. I don't
even know if anyone's going to
show.

FARHAD
Such a worrier. Like your mother.
I'll see you tonight, azizam.

Behnam exits. Farhad pulls out his phone and dials a number.

INTERCUT WITH INT. MORRISON DEMOLITION AND REMOVAL - SAME

A burly man, CLIVE, answers.

FARHAD
I'd like to get a quote from you
for removal of a large rock.

CLIVE
Ok, how big is it?

Farhad consults his blueprints as Clive pulls out a NOTEBOOK.

FARHAD
Approximately 8000 square feet.

CLIVE
How deep does it go?

FARHAD
Nobody knows.

CLIVE
Nobody knows? Height?

FARHAD
About the height of a tall man.

CLIVE
How tall is the tall man?

FARHAD
... About eight feet.

CLIVE
That is a tall man. Wait. Is this
that property on Edwin?

FARHAD
Yes! You know it already!

Clive laughs.

CLIVE
Everybody knows it. Sorry bub.
Can't help you.

EXT. ROCK PROPERTY - DAY

Vitor and Farhad, wearing a suit, watch as a contractor, TRAVIS, puts SENSORS up against the rock like it's a pregnant woman's belly. He is sighing a lot, typing on a CALCULATOR.

TRAVIS

Okay, so what you have here is bedrock. And the thing with bedrock is that it's consolidated rock, meaning it's tightly bound. That all make sense to you?

FARHAD

I speak English very well. Continue.

TRAVIS

I didn't mean it like that, I just don't know how much people know about rocks.

FARHAD

What is your plan?

TRAVIS

Getting rid of this will require controlled explosions over a period of weeks. I can do it for.... Forty thousand.

FARHAD

(to Vitor)

Now begins my favorite part.

(then, to Travis)

You say explosions at that price? That is interesting, but I was testing you. It would seem that rock trenching would be best option here, no? More cost effective and better for environment?

TRAVIS

Anyone who prefers trenching over demolition doesn't have experience with bedrock.

FARHAD

(to Vitor)

Some people on the Internet prefer trenching.

(then, to Travis)

Ok fine, we will do it your way. I will pay you twenty thousand plus a thirty percent ownership stake in a booming quail egg startup. They contain 140 percent of your daily supply of vitamin b1. Much better than chicken eggs.

TRAVIS

Thirty five thousand and we'll
start six weeks from now.

Farhad considers.

FARHAD

I like your commitment, but I
really want someone to begin
immediately and I cannot spend more
on the rock removal than I spent on
the property itself - and for this
reason I am out.

EXT. ROCK PROPERTY - LATER

Farhad surveys the property with JOSE, another contractor.

FARHAD

Do you think it's possible?

JOSE

Yes.

Farhad smiles and heartily claps Jose on the back.

FARHAD

One immigrant to another: what can
I do to get your team to remove my
rock for twenty thousand?

JOSE

My guys could work at night, after
other jobs are done. Most people
don't want that option, because of
all the noise.

Farhad and Jose both look around. There is no one for miles.

FARHAD

Deal.

JOSE

We can start tonight.

Farhad whoops and hugs Jose.

EXT. ROCK PROPERTY - LATER THAT DAY

As the sun is setting, Farhad mixes in with Jose and his team
of construction guys. They are looking over blueprints,
taking measurements.

INT. QUADRUPLE BOTTLE COFFEE SHOP - BROOKLYN - NIGHT

Behnam's band is setting up in the corner of a large coffee shop. The patrons of the shop are on laptops or there with friends, but a few people are angled towards the stage, ready to hear the band. This includes Nina and Vitor from the parking lot. Nina has her phone out and is texting Farhad over and over, but he is not responding.

Behnam's band starts playing. They are pretty terrible, but Nina is clapping along proudly, hooting after every song. Behnam looks embarrassed but pleased. He notices his father isn't there.

INT. QUADRUPLE BOTTLE COFFEE SHOP - BROOKLYN - LATER

Everyone is looking a little tired from Forager's set. The clapping is weak.

BEHNAME

Thanks. This is our last song, it's called "Migratory Birds."

They launch into it. We see the door to the cafe open and Farhad enters and picks his way through the small crowd.

Nina clocks him coming in and looks relieved but also annoyed. Behnam clocks him too and just looks annoyed.

INT. FARHAD'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Nina is reading in bed when Farhad enters from the bathroom.

FARHAD

What a day what a day! Excellent first day with Jose and his team! They are so smart and hard working! And then, I get a call from a restaurant in Manhattan- they want to try my quail eggs! Can you believe it? I head there tomorrow! And I get to see my boy perform in a live band situation!

NINA

(in Farsi)

You saw half a song. And you interrupted.

FARHAD

(in English)

I showed up!

NINA

You were so loud, you threw the band off.

FARHAD

I can't hear from the explosions. I was as quiet as I could be! That audience was not so good, huh?

NINA

No! Do not distract me! What you did was not nice.

FARHAD

He didn't even really want me there, I don't think.

Nina gives Farhad a deathstare.

FARHAD (CONT'D)

I'll repair the situation.

INT. FARHAD'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY

Farhad pads down the hallway and softly knocks on Behnam's door.

FARHAD

Behnam?

No answer. Through the door, we hear the muffled sounds of a FRIENDS episode playing.

FARHAD (CONT'D)

I hear you watching "Friends." Maybe we can talk when the episode completes?

The volume on the "Friends" episode goes up.

FARHAD (CONT'D)

If I guess the episode, will you open the door?

Nothing.

FARHAD (CONT'D)

Is it the one where Chandler emphasizes CERTAIN words more than OTHERS in his gigantic apartment? Did I guess correctly?

Farhad waits, hoping for a reaction.

FARHAD (CONT'D)

Azizam, if you are angry with me,
you will get the pleasure of
telling me how terrible I am to my
face. That sounds nice, right?

Farhad sighs, then heads back down the hall.

INT. FARHAD'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Farhad takes a seat on the edge of the bed. He pulls out his iPad, trying to distract himself. Nina watches him.

FARHAD

He won't speak to me. Does he not
understand I'm doing this all for
him?

Nina forces him to look her in the eyes.

NINA

This is what you do, eshgham. You
get very focused on a project and
everything falls away -- until the
next one.

FARHAD

It was much easier in Iran. So much
red tape here.

NINA

(joking)
But more reliable wi-fi.

He smiles.

FARHAD

I know failure is a gift, but I'm
getting a lot of gifts. What if I
can't remove the rock and I lose
Behnam in the process?

NINA

Lose Behnam?

FARHAD

If we don't get a bigger house, he
will move in with the Foragers.
Foragers, no 'the.' And then we
will never see him.

NINA

That would be a bad result. But there are other ways to keep Behnam around that don't involve real estate.

(then)

What if you make Behnam a project?

FARHAD

Treat him like the Rock...

NINA

Or the quail eggs. Or your idea for sunglasses for people with curly hair. Maximum effort. I know that's something you're never afraid of.

Farhad takes this in.

FARHAD

I'm inspired by this!

He hops off the bed, pulls out his laptop, and starts typing.

Nina smiles and goes back to her Farsi translation of "Girl on the Train."

INT. PANERA BREAD - DAY

Nina sips soup as Behnam talks excitedly.

BEHNAM

So it's like three in the morning and we're just banging our heads against the wall because the sound just isn't "us." And then all of a sudden, Matthew's phone dings. And we all just look at each other. And we dropped the ding into the song.

NINA

That was very inventive.

BEHNAM

It's still our sound, but more mature.

NINA

By the way, tomorrow afternoon the first explosiveness is happening at the Rock.

BEHNAM
(correcting)
Explosions.

NINA
Explosions cause explosiveness, okay.
Your father wants us to be there.

BEHNAM
I'm going to the movies with a
bunch of people.

NINA
So you miss this movie. This is
very important to your father.

BEHNAM
Should I show up just before
detonation and scream a bunch?

NINA
I had words with him about your
concert. He's disappointed in his
actions.

BEHNAM
Has he thought about anything else
in the last three months aside from
that stupid rock?? It isn't moving!
And he's crazy if he thinks it
will.

Nina holds Behnam's gaze. He looks away.

NINA
Azizam, your father started his own
livestock market in Tehran. He had
the first digital photo studio in
all of Iran. When he opened a
rollerskating rink, the
Revolutionary Guard almost threw
him in jail. He sold our beautiful
house in Tehran to work at a
parking lot so you could go to
United States college and play
silly concerts in coffee shops and
so you could have the freedom to be
as ambitious or not ambitious as
you want. You think a stupid rock
is going to stop him?
(then)
You don't know your father.

After a beat --

BEHNAM
You don't like my music?

NINA
I think "Backpack Problems" has a
strong melody.

She pats his hand.

NINA (CONT'D)
Eat your soup.

EXT. ROCK PROPERTY - THE NEXT DAY

Jose and his crew carefully place dynamite charges along a
perimeter trench surround the Rock.

ANGLE ON

A small crowd has formed at the edge of the property. Farhad
films on his iPhone. He turns the camera to Nina, recording.

FARHAD
Nina, any last words?

She shyly shoos him away. Farhad turns the camera on himself.

FARHAD (CONT'D)
We are four minutes behind schedule,
which is typical because of the
sensitivity of the explosiveness. But
we will witness -- along with this
crowd --

Farhad pans over the spectators and stops on --

FARHAD (CONT'D)
Behnam!

Behnam joins Farhad and Nina. He's a little surly.

FARHAD (CONT'D)
(holding phone)
Behnam, any last words?

BEHNAM
I'm good.

FARHAD
(to camera)
Behnam is good, so we are good.

BEHNAM
 (to Nina)
 I came.

NINA
 Thank you.

Jose joins Farhad. Farhad films him.

FARHAD
 Jose, can you explain the process?

JOSE
 I push the button and charges explode.

FARHAD
 (whispers)
 Do a countdown.

JOSE
 Okay... Three... Two... One...

Farhad records as Jose PUSHES the detonator and then WHIPS to the Rock for a HUGE EXPLOSION. Plumes of smoke engulf the Rock.

Jose heads toward the Rock, trailed by a nervous Farhad, Nina, and Behnam. Farhad continues to film.

FARHAD
 Do you think it was a success?

JOSE
 I don't know.

FARHAD
 (nervous, to phone)
 He doesn't know yet.

They walk through the dissipating dust, waving their arms and covering their eyes. They reach the Rock. It's been cracked in several areas into giant boulders and the outer layer has splintered.

Jose runs his GPR (ground-penetrating radar) over the uneven surface.

FARHAD (CONT'D)
 (to phone)
 A high-tech radar. Very sophisticated.

JOSE
 Huh.

He checks the screen of the GPR, re-calibrates the settings.
He pushes the GPR over the surface again.

FARHAD
What's the status?

JOSE
(pointing)
Over here, the rock goes down six
feet, but then stops.

FARHAD
Six feet. Very manageable.

JOSE
(pointing in other direction)
But over here, rock starts up
again, like underground staircase.
Many different heights.

Jose demonstrates with his hands.

JOSE (CONT'D)
It's very big. Very big.
(then)
I bring in bulldozers to remove
debris, then explode again.
(running hand over rock)
And then maybe explode again. And
then maybe explode again.

FARHAD
How much more time?

Jose shrugs. Farhad stops filming. He turns to Nina and
Behnam. He tries to stay positive.

FARHAD (CONT'D)
It's an ongoing process.

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATER

Behnam walks up to the booth. Vitor smiles.

VITOR
Behnam! What's up, my man!

BEHNAM
Hey, Vitor.

Vitor hands him a folder.

VITOR

Your father forgot this. Can you give it to him?

Behnam nods and gives Vitor a half wave.

VITOR (CONT'D)

Oh, how did the explosion go?

BEHNAME

The rock won.

VITOR

Farhad will figure it out.

Vitor walks off. Behnam takes a seat, notices the front of the folder. In large letters, it reads: DREAM HOUSE PROJECT.

Behnam opens it to find magazine clippings from design magazines. He flips through to print-outs of tile swatches... On the next page -- an "As Seen On Shark Tank" wall of planters...

Behnam shakes his head.

He flips to the next page to find -- a WIKI-HOW entitled "HOW-TO-BUILD-A-HOME-RECORDING-STUDIO." Surprised, he flips to the next page. And then the next. Farhad has clearly researched this. Behnam runs his hand over the page. His dad is too much, as always, but he's still his dad.

EXT. ROCK PROPERTY - LATER

Farhad, wearing a headlamp, is now alone with the Rock. He stares at it. He sees a large piece with a fracture running through it. He pulls. It loosens. He smiles.

FARHAD

I got you.

He rocks it back and forth really putting his back into it.

Suddenly, Farhad slips and falls backwards, landing on the ground, hard. He winces, then gets to his feet.

FARHAD (CONT'D)

Fuck you, Rock! Fuck you!!

INT. FARHAD'S APARTMENT - LATER

Farhad watches Shark Tank with Nina and Behnam. He has an ice pack on his wrist. Farhad is atypically subdued.

NINA
(re Shark Tank)
Looks like Lori and Mark may go
50/50!

BEHNAM
But then neither is incentivized to
step up, right?

Farhad half-nods. His mind is elsewhere.

BEHNAM (CONT'D)
You alright pops?

FARHAD
Fine. I need a day off maybe.

After a beat, Behnam stands, heads for the door.

BEHNAM
I'm going out for a little bit.

The door closes behind him. Farhad sighs.

INT. FARHAD'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Farhad and Nina are both in bed reading. A knock on the door and Behnam enters. He's sweating and his clothes are ruffled and dirty.

NINA
Where have you been?

Behnam pulls a large, jagged rock from a bag and places it on Farhad's nightstand.

BEHNAM
One square foot of the rock. Seven
thousand nine hundred ninety-nine
to go. But now you have your foot
in the door.

Behnam smiles at Farhad.

BEHNAM (CONT'D)
Oh, and you need a new pick-axe.

Farhad is beyond touched.

BEHNAM (CONT'D)
I'm gonna go shower. Night.

He exits. Farhad turns to Nina, bursting with pride.

FARHAD
Such a good boy.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE:

PARKING LOT: Farhad shows YouTube videos of his progress to Vitor and a few parking CUSTOMERS, taking their suggestions.

TARGET: Farhad and Nina look at kitchen furniture for their future kitchen.

BATHROOM: Nina taking another bubble bath, with even more candles surrounding her, mask on.

BROOKLYN FARMER'S MARKET: Farhad and Behnam stand in their quail egg stall. Behnam is a natural salesman, engaging with the Hipsters walking by.

ROCK PROPERTY: Farhad and Jose pour over plans as an EXCAVATOR removes a thousand pound slab of rock and drops it to the ground, where workers with PILEDRIVERS crush it into even smaller pieces. Progress.

LATER.

Behnam brings McDonald's for the crew. Farhad lights up at the sight of him.

FARHAD
Behnam!

BEHNAM
Looking good! When's the next round of explosiveness?

FARHAD
Ah, I see what you did. Next week. But forget that. I have something to show you.

Farhad pulls his laptop from his backpack. Props it up on the Rock for Behnam to see.

CLOSE ON SCREEN

It's a WEBSITE for FORAGERS. There's a section of live videos, some corny clip art of guys wailing on guitars and PUBLICIST INFO (Farhad has listed himself as the band's publicist).

FARHAD (CONT'D)

(nervous)

Some of the images are temp, which
is short for temporary.

BEHNAM

Thank you.

Behnam hugs his father.

FARHAD

You are my favorite project.

BEHNAM

(confused)

What?

DISSOLVE TO:

CHYRON: SIX MONTHS LATER

CLOSE ON A PICNIC. Persian treats. A portable speaker playing
Foragers. A bottle of wine.

Farhad, Nina and Behnam sit, eating and listening. Farhad
looks calmer, more at peace. Farhad has his eyes closed and
taps his leg to the beat. He opens them.

FARHAD

This is a major hit.

NINA

Don't say that. You'll raise his
expectations.

FARHAD

No no no. I know this. This song
will inspire because it is about
something.

BEHNAM

People aren't talking about the
slaughter industry enough.

FARHAD

This will be an anthem for vegans.
And they had no anthem.

Farhad's watch dings. He checks it.

FARHAD (CONT'D)

Back to work.

Farhad picks up his shovel and we WIDEN TO REVEAL that the picnic is taking place next to the rock, which has shrunk in size but is still gigantic).

FARHAD (CONT'D)

I have saved the best for last:
what we discovered through much
investigation is that we are in
fact on an underground rock
pyramid. But Jose has a plan to
insert charges into the ground.

(then, dramatic)

We'll explode it from within.

Farhad gives them a big, excited smile. And as he climbs over the Rock and into the trench that surrounds it, the camera lifts higher and higher, and we

FADE TO BLACK.