

(Four people in a car. Three of them are laughing, slightly sheepishly. CHRIS is in the driver's seat, JAY and ADAM are in the back seat. MOLLY is in the passenger seat.)

JAY: *(still laughing)* No, no - you got the last bit wrong, man. It's supposed to be, "And then the gorilla said, 'What took you guys so long to come?'"

ADAM: Ah shit, I'm gonna start over -

JAY: *(laughing)* No, it's my turn, you fucked it up -

ADAM: No, dude, I want to get it right! Chris, don't you wanna hear it again?

CHRIS: It's just that it takes so long -

ADAM: Yeah, that's what the gorilla's saying!

CHRIS: NO *(laughs)* no no I just - someone else tell one

JAY: One like that?

ADAM: One time he told the whole thing on Larry King, did you know that? Yeah. Killer straight face the whole way through, Larry doesn't even know what's coming.

JAY: Ha, right, just like -

Hysterical

9:25

CHRIS: *(to Adam)* You tell that one a lot?
Like, how many times total?

ADAM: it's gotta be the right crowd, so maybe four times? I told it at dinner with my folks and my dad shook my hand

CHRIS: yeah, my dad loves him too, always talks about that one show where he brought out his ex-wife and interviewed her

ADAM: Legendary -

JAY: that part when she tells him she knew about his collection of notes on her? God, it's priceless - and he goes "I guess I really do have you to thank for all my success, Marie."

ADAM: It's so humble of him -

CHRIS: No it isn't -

JAY: She's laughing too! She's laughing about it though, remember? She finishes the interview and says she's glad they got to find some closure...

ADAM: Oh yeah, and the crowd loses it -

JAY: And he goes in for the kiss and the camera zooms in really close and cuts to the title card, and then as the credits roll they follow her running down the hall into her dressing room and the door closes really

hard, and they're playing this crazy Mel Torme love song beneath it, "I've Got You Under My Skin"

CHRIS: *(laughs)* Fuck -

ADAM: No, it's really funny though, I'm sure it was all planned out -

JAY: Oh yeah, she's in on it for sure

ADAM: I mean, it's classic for him too, even if she isn't - you know, like, he just wasn't afraid for people to, kind of, be against him or get turned off or whatever -

JAY: Kind of the last of those kind of comedians, the fucking fearless ones, you know?

CHRIS: Yeah.

ADAM: Yeah, man, it's a tough crowd out there.

JAY: Yeah, that's why SNL sucks now. It's weak.

CHRIS: I never really watched it after he got fired, so -

JAY: That's for the best.

(silence)

ADAM: I heard his new girlfriend is also a comedian, did you know that?

JAY: God, the dirty talk must be next level. She seems pretty good, too.

ADAM: Did you watch her Laugh Factory set?

JAY: No, but - you know. Like, she has to be passable. He'd probably find it hard to be with someone who can't keep up at least a little bit.

CHRIS: Imagine what a first date with him is like. Jesus Christ...

JAY: He's not a miserable person, Chris. Everytime I see him getting interviewed he's cool, he talked with Conan like a normal dude.

ADAM: For the most part.

JAY: (*laughs*) Yeah, at least for the first five minutes.

ADAM: For some of these comics, you know, like, they can't separate it, there's no distinction to their jokes because they just have to completely suck dry anything funny that happens to them and manhandle it into something people can laugh at. But when you really - like, genuinely - understand joke construction, like he does, you don't have to be on one all the time.

CHRIS: Taking detailed notes about your wife's dieting no longer counts as being on one?

JAY: Okay, well, the joke works. "Now, Master Cleanses take time." (*beat*) "Marie takes Dexedrine." Like some freaked-out prescription commercial voiceover from the 50s. Insane.

ADAM: Was that from *Splitting the Bill*?

JAY: Nah, *Twenty-Five Minute Miracle*.

ADAM: Ohhh, dude, shit! I gotta rewatch that.

CHRIS: But he's just saying something that's true.

ADAM: So he's not winning you over with the storytelling, the shaggy dogs, like in the gorilla joke, and he's not winning you over with the self-referential, anecdotal shit. Maybe it's not for you, then, man, it's all good.

JAY: Yeah, I mean, look, everyone's gotta find their audience.

ADAM: He's definitely the comic's comic, yeah, lots of people don't get it. Like, in the Dexedrine joke, he's skewering classic "my wife" humor, right? It's also not very

funny, on it's face, which is like his whole thing...

CHRIS: I thought the whole thing was to be funny.

JAY: Not for him. It's funny because he's not trying to be funny. But he is trying, also, but it's like, bigger than that

ADAM: Right.

CHRIS: I gotta say, the gorilla joke - oh man, I'm not...like, it's pretty funny, I laughed, but -

ADAM: You didn't get it though? Ok, man, no problem, I can start it over

CHRIS: NO dude no need, just saying, it's not a little...?

JAY: What?

CHRIS: No, I just mean -

JAY: You feel weird?

CHRIS: Well -

ADAM: I mean - yeah. Yeah, it is. That's the point.

CHRIS: I'm not saying it's not funny. You just said the word "rape" like eight times when you told it, though, that feels fine?

ADAM: I mean, it's the funny part. Not the rape, but like, I mean, not the act, but, uh, the circumstances. The balance he sets up is just too good. It's elegant, even. Jeez, man, you want me to just leave it out next time? Sure, no problem. No problem.

JAY: This is it this is what I'm saying -

CHRIS: dude I'm not trying to, um, censor you, just asking -

ADAM: Obviously, you know, it's not that I think actual rape is funny. Like, it sucks. It's not real life, though, it's a *gorilla*, for fuck's sake. In a *story*.

CHRIS: Yeah, I know that -

JAY: *(to ADAM)* Maybe you should tell it again, man. Stop trying to explain it, it's stupid - just tell it again with the right ending and it'll make sense

ADAM: no I want to know first - If I tell it again, do you want me to say "sexual assault" instead? Do you? Would that help?

CHRIS: It's not the word, I'm not squeamish about *the word* rape, so no, not -

MOLLY: *(to CHRIS)* You keep looking over at me every time you say "rape," why is that?

(silence)

(she laughs a little bit)

(silence)

CHRIS: *(slowly, to ADAM and JAY)* I was just asking a question. I thought you two were on the free speech side anyway.

ADAM: Well, I didn't write it. You know, you're so full of shit, man, last week you lost your fucking mind at the one about the hikers.

MOLLY: Let's hear it.

JAY: Ohh man, yeah - the hikers! Classic -

CHRIS: It's just a real fucking waste of time, though, right? Let's talk about something else, man, I'm not in the mood -

JAY: *(comic voice)* Like that's ever stopped me before -

ADAM: *(laughs)* Dude, you gotta cool it with the meta shit, it's going waaaaay over -

CHRIS: You gotta think about your audience, though, right? You're not telling the hikers

at breakfast with your grandma, why do you have to tell it here?

ADAM: What's wrong with this audience? Molly's cool.

MOLLY: What, should I cover my ears?

CHRIS: Well, it's just -

MOLLY: Just say so.

CHRIS: Not, uh, not necessarily -

MOLLY: *(to CHRIS)* You know, you can't help what you find funny. Kind of pointless to try. It just...takes you over, right? So you're sitting there at a club. The seat sucks ass, you're behind a pillar, but, whatever, you can hear just fine. You can't exactly see the stage unless you lean way over, but you have a full view of who you should really be watching: the audience.

(during this monologue, CHRIS, JAY, and ADAM slowly return to their conversation in slow motion, by turns laughing at each other, seemingly arguing, and riding in uncomfortable silence. The lights dim very slowly during this transition, as a spotlight on MOLLY fades in.)

MOLLY: It's hot. The AC doesn't fucking run because comedy makes no money, it's dying, and faintly, you can smell...people. The smell

of people hits you. The smell of bodies. Someone's talking onstage, and you're listening, but you're watching them. The comb-overs, the goatees, all bobbing up and down, stubble soaking in beer. They're wary, they want to be won over, they're sitting flat against the metal seats, arms folded. Then it cuts through the fog of people, amplified, cuts right to me: "With a little imagination, you can change that 1-in-6 rape statistic to 6-in-1 in no time. Real quick." And everywhere, people laugh. A sea of them, joining each other on instinct. It's automatic. A fucking rush, their lungs sending up air, grins catching on the guy sitting in the next seat. Electric. And that thick current of people, of skin, carries over to me again and I have to get out of here, I don't want this air in me, this already-breathed air, pushed in and out, and in and out again. I think about running down the long hallway and never reaching the door.

(she looks down at her hands. collects herself)

MOLLY: And you get up and walk...to the bar. You order a beer. The bartender smiles at you with all of his teeth. You head back to your seat. The next time the comic delivers a punchline, you laugh before anyone else does.

(She begins to laugh. Quietly at first, then erupting into a massive, pained, hysterical bellow. CHRIS, JAY, and ADAM join her

cautiously, unsure of what she's laughing about at first, and then trail off as she increases in intensity. Lights go down as she continues cackling, and "I've Got You Under My Skin" begins to play.)