

Isiah
Irby/1

House Party

Cold winds shifted the air outside as Harvey walked draped in blankets and a jacket through his empty townhouse. He closed every window in his place, sat down on his black recliner, and turned on his television. He went through his DVR and searched for his favorite shows.

As he flipped through the channels, his phone vibrated on the end table to his right. Harvey peered over his right arm to look at it. The caller ID read “Tanner bro.” Harvey scoffed at his phone, clicked the off button, then tossed his phone over to the couch beside him. His phone sank in the couch as Harvey sat up from his recliner and made his way to the kitchen.

He pulled out two Bud Light cans and walked back to his chair. He placed them in the cupholders in his recliner. He watched football highlights from Saturday’s games as he sank more into his chair. A Pizza Hut commercial came on and Harvey got extremely hungry. He whipped out his wallet from his back pocket. A photo fell out to the side of his recliner.

The photo was of Kali and him.

Harvey pushed the recliner forward and picked up the photo. He rolled it into a ball in his right hand and threw it at the television. He tucked his legs into his chest and pulled them close to him.

Kali and Harvey had dated for three years. They'd broken up just the weekend before. Harvey's phone vibrated again in the couch. He waited for it to end. He pondered at it as it rang again, then again, then again. He thought for a moment who it might be. Maybe it was Kali. After a seventh ring, he got out of his chair and reached into the cushions to grab it.

Isiah Irby/2 The caller ID read Tanner again.

Harvey sighed and finally picked it up.

"What do you want, man? You've been blowing up my phone all nig-"

"I saw Kali at the mall earlier today, bro," Tanner said.

"You called me for that?" Harvey responded.

"She had this guy with her," he said.

"Wait, what?" Harvey said. He leaped out of his chair and gripped his recliner tightly.

"I took a pic of him. I'm going to send it to you." Tanner sent the picture to Harvey.

Harvey switched apps and zoomed in on the picture.

It was a still shot of Kali laughing with Brad as they walked down the mall. His arm was over her shoulder a bit. She wore a blue plaid dress with heels that made her appear taller than normal. He had on his black and white

letterman jacket. "Johnson" was written across his back. He looked happy too.

"But I don't get it." Harvey said. "He's a junior."

"I don't know, man," Tanner said. "I just wanted to tell you. I also wanted to check in on you."

"I'm fine," Harvey responded quickly.

"Bullshit. You've missed school all this week."

"I said I'm fin-"

A series of knocks at the door interrupted the conversation.

"Who is it?" Harvey yelled at the door.

Isiah Irby/³ No one answer. Another series of knocks occurred, this time with added power. "I'll call you back, T," Harvey said.

He ended the call and put his phone in his pocket. He made his way to the door gingerly and pressed his eye toward the eye-hole. Blonde hair covered the eye-hole and a short female figure shivered on the porch.

There was too much hair. He couldn't see who it was.

"It's me," she said.

Kali.

Harvey backed away from the door until he was parallel with the mirror hanging on the wall above the small table. He checked himself in the mirror

and saw he was shocked. His tan was washed out now. His heart picked up pace frantically. He ran to the guest bathroom and threw water on his scruffy face. He brushed his brown hair from out of his eyes and put on some deodorant.

He ran back to the door and opened it slowly. The shivering figure tilted her chin up and shook her head. Behind her, a trail of water led to his door. She had the most mesmerizing blue gaze as she showed an innocent stare.

“Hey Harvey,” she said.

“Hey Kali,” he said back. “What are you doing here?”

“I need to talk to you,” she said. She tried to step inside.

Harvey blocked her with his foot.

“I don’t want to talk right now,” he said

Her eyes tightened in confusion. “Why not?”

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“Because I don’t know what I really want. All I do know is that I don’t want to talk to you now.” The image of her with Brad burned in his mind. He needed to be alone to process.

“You still believe those stupid rumors, don’t you?” she asked. She crossed her arms and switched her face from concerned to upset.

“I don’t know,” he said. “You tell me.”

"I would love to, but you've been gone all week," she said furiously.

"I honestly have no clue how I'm even talking to you right now," he retorted.

"Why have you been avoiding me?" she asked. "Let me inside and we can talk, please."

"No," he said. He pushed Kali's foot back. "I just can't." He slowly pushed the door back as Kali backed off the welcome mat onto the porch.

"Please don't do this, Harvey," she pleaded.

"Just give me some time, dammit!" Harvey yelled back.

Kali walked backward and stomped her right foot.

"Fine!" she screamed. "Be that way. Just hide and don't talk! Be a little kid about it then."

Harvey closed the door and walked back to his recliner. On his way back, he stopped. He thought about looking back but decided not to. He sipped some more of his beer and then tossed it into the trashcan where it clanged with the many other cans. A few cans fell over to the kitchen floor. He sighed. He went back to look at his overflowed trashcan.

"Damn," he said.

Isiah Irby/5 He stuffed the trash down deeper into the bin and tied up the bag. He held the bag and carried it to the door. Outside, rain pattered the concrete. He

went back and grabbed his jacket and poncho from the coat rack near the mirror. He stepped outside with his trash bag and opened the door to the rain outside. The wind picked up a bit.

Harvey walked out of his townhouse into the bleak night. The rain drummed hard on his poncho as he made his way up the curb to the dumpster. He held tightly onto the tie of the trash bag as he dumped it into the dumpster. On his way back, the lights of another townhouse next door flickered.

From the faint music that carried through the rain, a party was going on in the house. More people pulled up. They all ran quickly from their cars into the party. The townhouse lights changed colors as he made his way back.

Harvey went back to his place and thought about Kali for a long time. He pondered going to the party, anything to get Kali off his mind.

He sighed and then went to his room to change. He put on the best clothes he could find and wrapped himself back in the jacket and headed out. He jogged back up to the party and knocked on the door.

A white guy with a blonde ponytail and a white collared shirt swung open the door. He attempted to high-five Harvey. He fell forward, and Harvey caught him.

“Wassup, man,” the drunk guy said.

“Hey dude, nice party,” Harvey said. He brought the guy back to his feet.

“Yeah sure, man. You’re that Harvey guy down the curb, huh?” he asked.

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“Yeah,” Harvey responded. “I just needed to get out the place tonight, you know?” “Hell yeah!” he screamed. He turned behind him and pointed. “Pre-graduation party.”

“Alright, bet,” Harvey said as he walked into the house.

The party was a booze-fueled atmosphere with the looming scent of weed. Beer pong was taking place in one corner and a bar was open in the other. Beautiful girls that Harvey knew, all dressed in outfits he’d never seen them in before, filled the room. Loose skirts, tube tops, and fitted dresses draped the women walking by. Harvey didn’t engage with them. He wanted to drink his sorrow away. He was already a bit buzzed from the multiple beers back at his house, so some liquor would put him over just enough.

He squeezed through the alcohol stained shirts and shifted along the wet floor to the bar. He poured himself a small shot of vodka and downed it. A sting of liquor hit his throat fast as he reached the next realm of intoxication.

He felt a bit better. He turned around and looked at a girl sitting on the couch. She had skin that shined bronze. Her hair was curly and bundled up

neatly. She had curves and her legs stretched long and lean in her tight ripped jeans. She watched the beer pong game. She looked bored and nobody was around her.

The same drunk guy who answered the door came up from behind Harvey, patted him on the back, then nudged him toward the couch.

“Fine huh,” he said. “Go talk to her, bro.”
Isiah Irby/7 Harvey turned back to him.

“Yeah,” he replied. “I guess.... why not.”

He approached her with some confidence. He had just talked to his ex and bought more time for himself. He drank enough and got out the house for the first time in a week. He focused his attention on the girl and didn't think about anything else. Her luscious brown curls trailed over the couch majestically as she sipped from her Solo cup. Her eyes peered over to him with a look of interest.

The look turned into fear. “KOD” by J. Cole stopped and the stomping of multiple feet erupted. The girl leaped from over the couch and ran out of the house with the other teens at the party. Multiple cups and glasses fell to the floor as people flooded the exits.

Harvey pulled his attention from the girl and took in his surroundings

again. Red and blue lights flashed through the blinds from outside as Harvey backed up to the bar in fear. He froze there as he made eye contact with the drunk guy who greeted him. The guy directed people out of the house as he yelled. "Cops are here!" he yelled repeatedly.

Harvey was still frozen. A flash of red hit his eyes directly. He grabbed his eyes in pain and fell at the base of the bar. He rubbed his eyes as the guy ran to him. "Get out of here, man!" he screamed in his ear. He pointed to the door, but it busted open. A handful of cops followed it inside.

Isiah Irby/⁸ Harvey and the guy scrambled behind the bar and hid underneath the counter. Police charged into the house and thuds and bangs followed as furniture was overturned and shoved aside. Party-goers screamed in fear and rage.

The guy nudged Harvey and told him not to say anything. Harvey's chest expanded as his heart beat faster and faster. The stench of alcohol, weed, and other drugs suffocated him underneath the countertop. The guy composed himself and grabbed Harvey's arm.

"James," he whispered. "My name is James. I don't know who the fuck called the cops at my party."

He looked less worried. Suddenly, his demeanor turned to confidence

and he pointed to the hallway to his right. It was a straight shot to the window.

“You look fast, Harvey,” James said. “I’m going to distract the cops and you take off.”

“The fuck,” Harvey whispered. “What about you?”

“Dumbass, this is my place, I’m already fucked,” he said.

Harvey sank deeper under the countertop as James grabbed a bottle from above.

“I’m going to throw this in the opposite direction,” he said. “Then, when the officers start to leave, you take off.” He peeked over the counter, then came back down. “Literally, there’s like two bushes that will break your fall out that window.”

“Alright,” Harvey responded anxiously. “Wait. How do you know my name?”

“You’re that guy that treated Kali right,” James said. “I didn’t invite her on purpose. I figured you’d come by or something.”

Harvey and James fist bumped as Harvey focused on the window. He readied himself in a running position and crouched, ready to explode.

James took one last peek over the counter, took a deep breath, then threw the bottle against the opposite wall. The alcohol splattered on James as the officers rushed in that direction.

Harvey took off as four officers went to the alcohol and one stayed back.

Harvey rushed past the doors and prepared his left shoulder to break the window. Someone behind him, probably a cop, yelled, "WAIT!".

Harvey stumbled a bit forward and lost momentum. He glanced over his shoulder. The officer gained speed and unlatched his stun gun. He aimed it as Harvey regained speed.

"I will shoot!" the officer yelled.

The window got closer and closer as Harvey readied his shoulder again. He yelled as he took one extra step to plant his right foot hard against the floor. The officer fired his gun.

Harvey's shoulder burst through the glass as he tucked his legs to do a front flip through the window. The stun dart got deflected just a bit by the shards of glass that broke everywhere. Harvey landed in the bush back first. He got up and ran behind the house to hide in the dark.

The officer leaped out the window and looked for him. The officer's sucking footsteps in the mud made Harvey back into the darkness more.
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The heavy rain and screams from the house pushed Harvey out the back of James' house into the street.

The officer put down his flashlight and reached for his handi-talker on

his chest.

“Negative,” the officer said.

Harvey got back to his house safely and turned off all his lights. He took off his muddy clothes, took a shower, and put his pajamas on. Before going to sleep, he smeared muscle rub on his shoulder, then wrapped it in athletic tape to heal. Somehow, somehow he fell asleep that night.

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The next morning, Harvey walked to the parking lot during lunch time. Kali popped her head out from two rows down. Her blonde hair blew in the wind. She wore a grey sweater with a long scarf tucked in below her neck. Tight blue jeans and no heels at all.

Harvey quickly dipped into his car and shut the door. He started his car and tried to back out. Kali reached his window and knocked multiple times on the glass.

“Harvey, open up...please,” she said softly.

Harvey rolled down the window but didn’t make eye-contact.

“I heard about that bust last night,” she said.

“Yeah, it was like right up from my house,” he said. “I’m fine, though.”

“Your shoulder looks banged up.” Kali touched Harvey’s padded-up shoulder.

“It was nothing,” he said quickly.

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She rubbed his shoulder softly some more.

Then she squeezed it.

“Ow!” Harvey yelled. “What’s wrong with you?”

“You were at that party last night, weren’t you?” she said as she clutched his shoulder tighter.

“Let go!”

“No!” Kali gripped it tighter.

Harvey knocked her grip from him. Kali backed away, then crossed her arms.

“I’m glad you got hurt,” she said.

“What is wrong with you?” Harvey questioned.

“You should’ve been arrested last night.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Harvey responded, still grasping his shoulder in pain.

“Whatever,” she said. “Your escape wasn’t a part of the plan.” She walked toward her car.

Harvey sat there motionless. He tried to piece any combination of words to describe how he felt about her admission. He could only think of two.

“Crazy bitch.”