

EXT. THE SHAWANGUNK CLIFFS IN UPSTATE NEW YORK

A quirky, happy song plays.

FADE IN on a chalk-covered hand as it pulls on a small handhold attached to a sun-bathed granite cliff.

The owner of the hand grunts and pulls himself up the final move, mantling onto a ledge. He "elbow-bumps" with another person who stands on the ledge holding the rope as a belayer.

The hand's owner is JIM - 29 - a perpetual look of neurosis in his eyes. Belaying him is his friend BRIAN MAXWELL, a boyish, sandy-haired 32 year old who exudes chill.

As they work together arranging gear to continue to the climb, they watch BRAD COLLINS, a douchebag, struggle up a route nearby.

Brad dangles from a rope while his guide belays him from above. He is clearly spent. His voice carries over to Jim and Brian.

BRAD

(to his guide)

This never happens to me - I just haven't climbed in a while.

GUIDE

Oh I understand.

BRAD

This has gotta be harder than five-six - I just wanted a warm-up climb...

The guide sees Jim and Brian and grins.

GUIDE

It's actually a five-five. Sorry.

BRAD

That's impossible.

She sighs, exasperated. Brad continues to struggle as Jim and Brian turn away to resume their climb.

INT. ROCK AND SNOW CLIMBING SHOP - LATER

Jim and Brian browse in the climbing guide section. RICH GOTTLIEB, the owner of the place, passes.

RICH
Jim. Brian. Good day?

BRIAN
I guess.

Jim gives him a look. Rich moves on his way.

The door chimes as the Brad from earlier walks in, with his fashionable eye-candy GIRLFRIEND behind him.

Jim puts the guidebook down and turns to Brian.

JIM
You OK?

BRIAN
Yeah. I just think we took it a little easy out there today.

JIM
Whaddya mean? It was a good day.

BRIAN
Sure, if by good you mean boring and not very good. Five-six isn't really hard for us, you know?

BRAD
(overhearing, to his girl)
See that? They're talking about climbing grades. Like I told you.

Girlfriend smiles and pulls out her iPhone.

JIM
Five-six IS hard, especially here.

He picks up a baby-sized tech tee and checks the price, then puts it back...he hangs it wrong, though, and he spends a few moments making sure all the hangers line up well.

He ends up knocking down two more shirts, and he picks them up and struggles to make the hang on the rack perfectly.

Brian watches for a moment and shakes his head.

BRIAN
I don't know dude... We used to rip up harder climbs. We haven't done anything really good since Alaska.

Jim's warning look stops him.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

What? I just think it affected you more than you'll admit.

Jim starts to speak, but checks himself. He's not happy.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

I mean, it's ok - I was freaked out too and I didn't have it half as bad. But that shit's part of the game!

JIM

I don't want to talk about it.

BRIAN

(he strikes a placating tone)

OK, OK.

(beat)

I'll do all the leading, if that's what's bothering you.

Before Jim can respond, Rich approaches and interrupts.

RICH

You guys having a little lover's quarrel?

JIM

Yeah. Brian doesn't think I climb hard enough.

BRIAN

No, you just don't want to do harder routes, and I do.

JIM

(snaps)

Fine. We'll do a five-twelve and you can lead the WHOLE thing.

He grabs the baby shirt off the rack.

JIM (CONT'D)

(pointed)

Rich, I want to buy this.

He moves up toward the front. Rich smiles at Brian, who nods and walks out of the store to wait for Jim.

BRAD

(to his girl, quietly but not)

(MORE)

BRAD (CONT'D)

Those guys are pretty amateur. Five
six is like nothing.

The girl smiles - she clearly doesn't want to be there - and goes back to her iPhone.

EXT. ROCK AND SNOW - CONTINUOUS

Brian waits next to a Subaru Outback as Jim comes up with his purchase.

Jim unlocks the car and gets in the driver's seat. Brian gets in the passenger seat.

BRIAN

(as Jim starts the car)
Are we eating?

JIM

I have to get home, but we can get
something to go.

Brian doesn't respond. They drive off.

EXT. BRIAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING

The car pulls up to the house and they both jump out. Brian pulls a huge rucksack from the trunk.

BRIAN

Gym this week?

JIM

Maybe. I'll call you tomorrow.

The give each other a listless "bro-hug." Brian walks into his building.

Jim gets in his car and drives away.

INT. BRIAN'S APARTMENT

Brian enters and throws his bag down, flicking on the light.

The place is small, and a mess - not a complete pigsty, but cluttered. It's clear he lives alone. Dishes piled high, climbing gear everywhere, XBOX, etc.

Something's wrong, though: he sees a light on in his bedroom - the TV is on. He freezes.

BRIAN
(calling out)
Is someone there?

No one answers. We hear Jon Stewart's voice.

Brian quietly reaches into the front closet and produces an ice-axe. He holds it menacingly as he creeps toward the bedroom.

He pokes his head in the room - then relaxes when he sees who it is.

ANNA
Hi.

ANNA KOSTITSYN, a stunning, 24 year old Russian, lays out on his bed - naked. The covers are strategically placed. Her accent is noticeable.

BRIAN
(lowering his axe)
How'd you get in?

ANNA
Your landlord is very trusting.

BRIAN
(amused, but dismissive)
Not tonight, Anna. I'm really tired.

ANNA
I don't care.

BRIAN
I need a shower.

ANNA
I'll wait. Sorry, I don't give you choice here.
(motioning toward the ice axe)
When did you get Vipers?

BRIAN
Middle of last season, remember?

ANNA
No.

BRIAN

I only used them twice, since we didn't really have winter this year. Fucking global warming.

As he speaks, he undresses and grabs a towel, wrapping it around himself.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Oh, can you cover my shift on Tuesday?

ANNA

Maybe. Shower.

She turns back toward the TV, making sure he notices her naked ass poking out from under the covers.

He drinks it in for a second then heads into the bathroom.

The shower sounds, bringing us to:

INT. JIM'S APARTMENT

A baby cries as Jim walks in the door of his comfortable and stylish Park Slope apartment.

He walks into the apartment. Hanging next to the door is a teal badge with Jim's photo underneath a logo for a company called "Huzzah(*)"

REBECCA, his wife, 32 and a hot mom, wanders around holding the baby, trying to calm him down. She is j-u-s-t holding it together.

REBECCA

Could you take him please?

JIM

(taking him and grimacing)
God, he STINKS!

REBECCA

(dry)
Oh, thanks! I hadn't noticed.

He notices a black and blue mark on her cheek.

JIM

What happened?

REBECCA

That's how he thanks me for trying
to change him.

JIM

Jesus. He hit you?

REBECCA

(irritated)

He wouldn't eat today, he hasn't
taken a nap and he's been screaming
like this since noon. But that's
what babies do, you know?

She moves off into the kitchen, leaving Jim on the couch.

Guilty, he pulls out the t-shirt he bought and shows it to
the baby.

Next to him is a framed photo of him and Brian at the summit
of a stunning mountain together. He turns toward the sound of
angry dish-washing that begins to waft from the kitchen.

The baby slowly stops crying as he stares at Jim.

Jim turns to look at the photograph - he looks solemnly at
it...

Until the baby gurgles and punches him right in the face.

END