

Divorce Club
S01E01

by
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FADE IN:

EXT. JIM'S PLACE - NIGHT

JIM - early 40's, bearded, glasses, handsome but not for the want of trying, wearing chinos, a t-shirt that says Action Figure with an arrow pointing to his head and Jordan's is nervously standing at the trunk of a car parked in his driveway on a summer night quiet enough to hear the crickets chirruping. Two others HINCH a 'roid head ex-marine dressed in "casual tactical" gear and JENN a waif like ex-goth 10 years older than she says she is, who's always a little bit drunk, are standing either side of the car, having just gotten out of it.

JIM

(Nervous)

What do you mean, you got me a gift? We barely know each other man.

HINCH

Jim, buddy, we just felt for you man, just open her up and take a look, trust me.

JENN

Nobody's ever gotten you a gift like this, we guarantee it.

We wait a beat while Jim computes his options.

JIM

Ok, ok, you guys, seriously.

Hinch throws Jim the keys. Jim points the fob at the trunk and the door raises slowly, as it does we see Jim's face go from one of excited expectation to horror.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE - DIVORCE CLUB

INT. JIM'S PLACE - DAY

SUPER : AGES AGO

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jim is sitting in his home office, a repurposed bedroom. Slap-board shelves line the walls upon which sits the bulk of his toy collection, GI Joe's, Transformers, MOTU, Turtles, he is a child of the '80's and has made his hobby his career. We're mid-pandemic here as he's on a zoom call to 5 of his colleagues at Action-Bio a lucrative firm that creates backstories and characters for video games and toy lines.

JIM

..So, we're agreed then, Carnivox is better as a female reptorgalan than a male?

They all agree bar one hold out. WINSTON - Black metal look, long hair, long beard.

JIM

Winston? You don't agree.

WINSTON

No, I, you know, it's well who's going to buy him then?

JIM

Her, he's a she now.

WINSTON

Sure but that's my point, guys don't buy girl figures.

We can see disgust on the face of the other Zoom-ers.

JIM

Really, Winston is that really where you want to go with this, we're invested in this narrative now, why change it up?

WINSTON

(Making quote signs with his fingers as he says feminist agenda)

Look all I'm saying is let's build up the male characters first, before we get all "feminist agenda"

YOLANDA - A toy designer gets vocal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

YOLANDA

(Angry)

Jesus Winston, really!? It's not 1983 anymore, pink and blue aisles are dead and buried man. The future's here and it doesn't give a fuck about your threatened little boy ego.

JIM

Ok, Yolanda, point made.

YOLANDA

No, fuck that, every action figure line since the first Joes featured female characters prominently why should we start -

JIM

(Trying to calm things down)

Ok Yolanda, we get it, we all agree.

YOLANDA

Tell Rob Zombie over there.

JIM

Ok, so, we're agreed.

WINSTON

But -

JIM

(Forceful)

We're ALL agreed.

WINSTON

Fine.

JIM

Cool, great call folks, we've a design check in tomorrow morning, til then hang in there, oh and Winston, stay on the call, I want a quick word.

The other's hang up and disappear from the screen, Yolanda is the last of them.

YOLANDA

Bye Winston.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JIM

Ok, ok, see you tomorrow.

We wait a beat as Winston and Jim face each other.
Winston is the first to break the deadlock.

WINSTON

Jim all I meant was -

JIM

Shut up.

WINSTON

What.

JIM

Winston, I gave you a chance here,
folks said you were trouble, the
guys at hasbro said you're a
misogynist, some even said you
were the type to bring a gun to
work and I still hired you and
here you are showing off your tiny
dick energy on our call man.

WINSTON

Hey! There's no need for that.

JIM

No, you're right man, you're
right, there's not, you're fired.

WINSTON

What - but hey - Jim man.

JIM

No, no, you're out.

Jim hits the end call button on screen. He takes a second
to gather himself but before he can his wife ERIN -
blonde, mid thirties, good looking, they're well matched,
walks into the room.

JIM

Hey hon,

ERIN

You finished with your little
friends there.

JIM

They're employees not -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ERIN

Sure, have your employees been paid?

JIM

Hon, I told you things are tight, the virus, retail's down, we're doing all we can.

ERIN

(Disbelieving)

Yeah, sure, sure you are.

JIM

If I'd extra cash you know I'd sort things out, the minute things are back up

ERIN

(Sighing)

I know, I know, but there's always something else isn't there, some other project that sucks up all of our cash before I can get the one thing I want.

JIM

I promise, hon, this time..

ERIN

Right, sure.

She leaves the room leaving Jim alone. He opens up Zoom and sets up a call, he invites Yolanda but hesitates hitting send.

JIM

(To himself)

God dammit.

He closes his laptop and sits in the silence of the room.

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPER : TWO YEARS LATER

OVER BLACK : We hear the MEDIATOR.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEDIATOR

(V/O)

Before we begin I always ask both parties to consider that this is the last stop.

FADE IN:

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - DAY

Jim's changed into the man he is in the teaser, bearded, scruffier, he's sitting in his lawyer's office as they go through the settlement ERIN's looking to achieve. ERIN and her LAWYER sit opposite them with a mediator at the head of the table.

MEDIATOR

And is this what they really want, because once we're signed and sealed that's it, your marriage will be over. So?

Erin answers immediately while Jim mumbles for a second.

ERIN

Yes, one hundred percent.

JIM

Well, I, ok, that was fast, sure. Yes, it's what I also want, as well.

Everyone's a little perturbed by Jim's hesitance but they continue on.

MEDIATOR

Ok, so if everyone's ready, I'll begin.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOGAN'S BAR - DAY

A busy corner bar, we hear Jim inside, his lawyer sits next to him.

JIM

(O\S)

Half the company.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAWYER

(O/S)

Honestly Jim it wasn't as bad as
it could have been.

CUT TO:

INT. HOGAN'S BAR - DAY

Jim is sitting at the bar his chin on his folded arms in front of him, a cup of coffee sits in front of him. His Lawyer sits next to him, he very much wants to leave. IAN the barman tall Irish and annoying enough to be a pain but not to warrant a thump stands behind the bar facing them.

IAN

Yeah, she could have gotten your
balls too Jimbo.

JIM

Thanks Ian, real helpful.

IAN

You want helpful why don't you let
me pour you a real drink.

JIM

Ian man, for fuck's sake, seven
years on the wagon.

IAN

Sure, but I thought you might be
cool again since the whole end of
the world thing, all that sober
nonsense means feck all now. Sure
I had a 20 year head in here on
Tuesday, drank all the gin we had,
it was great craic.

JIM

IAN!!

IAN

It's all a matter of perspective I
guess, counsellor what can I get
you?

LAWYER

I'm good thanks.

The lawyer gets up to leave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAWYER

Jim, take today as a win ok?

IAN

Exactly, could have been both your balls.

We wait a beat while Jim waits for the stink of Ian's comment to leave the room.

JIM

Sure, see ya.

Jim goes back to feeling sorry for himself.

IAN

So, what's the plan? Party?

JIM

I hardly think that's the respectful thing to do.

IAN

Ah, cool Jim wouldn't have said that.

JIM

Cool Jim's dead, did you miss the funeral it was seven years ago?

IAN

Nah, just forgot, it was so bleedin' boring.

Jim's phone rings, he picks it up looks at it, it reads Katie. Ian is being his obtrusive self.

IAN

Better get that, it's your sister.

JIM

Yeah, thanks man.

Jim sighs and answers. Ian watches as Jim tries and fails to get a word in edgewise.

JIM

Hey Katie..no,
no I was going to, if you let me
just for, no, just, I, well no-one
ever said you were wrong, no, I,
fine, tonight, see you then.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Ian looking down at Jim,

IAN
Didn't tell her did you.

JIM
No,

IAN
She ask for me?

Jim looks up at Ian, with bemusement.

IAN
What? We've met.

Jim throws some cash on the bar. And gets up to leave.

JIM
Here this should cover it.

IAN
(Campy stage Irish)
Oh thank you kindly you're honor,
I'll be sure to make my fortune
selling single coffees and free
waters to be sure, to be sure.

Jim walks towards the door.

JIM
You're a fucking drug dealer you
know that right?

IAN
Certainly do. It's right there on
my taxes.

A punter walks up.

IAN
Yes sir?

PUNTER
Six beers, tequila back.

IAN
Yes! - you hear that Jim a real
order.

Jim's left, Ian just looks a bit nuts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

IAN
Coming right up sir.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Jim is unlocking his bike from a lamppost outside the bar. Winston pulls up in a very large SUV.

WINSTON
Hey Jim, need a lift?

JIM
(Surprised)
Oh, hey, Winston? Winston Jesus,
how, how are you?

WINSTON
I'm good man, c'mon get in, I'm
going your way, you can throw the
wheels in the back.

JIM
But I didn't tell you where I was
going?

WINSTON
Oh let's see, you work at your
house and you come downtown what,
once a week for coffee? I think I
know where you're going.

JIM
Eh, ok, thanks, I could do with
it.

CUT TO:

INT. WINSTON'S CAR - DAY

They're on their way, Winston drives while they talk.

WINSTON
..So look I'd an ulterior motive
for picking you up.

JIM
(Nervous)
Wh-what??

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WINSTON

Yeah.

Winston reaches across and opens the glove box, Jim's immediately tense.

JIM

R-Really, why? You know I-I'd no choice but to f-fire you man and look I didn't believe those things the hasbro guys said about you.

Winston pulls out an envelope - not the gun or knife Jim was expecting.

WINSTON

(Looking a little
incredulously at
Jim)

Oh ok man, sure, I get it.

Winston drops the envelope on Jim's lap.

JIM

What's this?

WINSTON

(Smiling)
Don't you mean, what's this partner?

JIM

What?

WINSTON

Erin sent these over to me an hour ago.

Jim opens the envelope and scans through the contract within.

JIM

Wait - she, what?

WINSTON

Yup she signed her voting rights over to me and allowed me buy half her shares.

JIM

But she just...we just.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WINSTON

Oh yeah...

JIM

You, she, you planned this?

WINSTON

Well I wouldn't say planned as such but yeah we invested in a narrative.

JIM

Jesus.

WINSTON

And it looks like it paid off.

Winston pulls up to Jim's house.

WINSTON

So I guess I'll be seeing you around partner.

JIM

(Lost)
Yeah - I uh.

CUT TO:

EXT. JIM'S PLACE - DAY

Jim stands silently as he watches Winston drive off. He's in shock that half his business is now effectively in the hands of a madman. Then he remembers.

JIM

(Pathetic)
Hey, my, my bike...

He waits, Winston's not coming back. Jim walks slowly up his drive to his house.

CUT TO:

INT. JIM'S PLACE - NIGHT

KATIE - Jim's younger sister, pretty, dark hair, dressed in business attire, she's a psychotherapist is sitting at his modest kitchen counter, they're eating pasta, she's got a beer he's got a soda.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATIE

I mean Jim, c'mon, half my practice hell half my career is talking to divorced people.

JIM

Exactly, you think I want to lay all that on you? That'd be like you asking me to design you an action figure line.

KATIE

You'd totally do that though.

JIM

Yeah, 'cos it's what I do but wait, that's not what I meant, and by the way I'd do it for free 'cos you're my sister and I love you.

KATIE

Nice try, no free therapy. Besides I can't treat you, it's against the regulation.

JIM

Treat me? Don't make it sound like I've a disease, it's just divorce, it happens all the time.

KATIE

Like you wouldn't believe, rates shot up since we all got released from lockdown.

JIM

See - no big deal.

KATIE

But it is a big deal, you were married for 15 years and now she's given half your business to this Churchill guy,

JIM

Winston

KATIE

What'd I say?

JIM

Churchill,

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KATIE

Same diff, so look it's traumatic,
just because lot's of people are
going through it doesn't make it
any less so. If you cut yourself
it hurts just as much as if twenty
other folks do it with you.

JIM

Jesus what kind of cult are you
in?

KATIE

You know what I mean, pain is
personal and needs to be dealt
with.

JIM

Ahh I guess.

KATIE

Yes, does that mean you're willing
to look at options?

JIM

(Sighing)
I suppose so.

KATIE

(Excited)
Excellent, there's a group a
friend of mine runs out of the
community centre that comes highly
recommended.

JIM

Oh yeah, what's it called.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMUNITY CENTRE - NIGHT

We're looking at a close up of Hinch.

HINCH

Welcome to divorce club!

We pull back to see he's dicking around for Jim's
benefit. It's your standard group set up, ten chairs
arranged in a circle. It hasn't started yet, Jim's at the
door talking to Hinch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIM

Oh, right, so this is the place?

HINCH

That's what I said pal, c'mon in.

Hinch puts an arm around him as he presents Jim to DAISY the therapist, part earth mother, part nerd.

HINCH

(Shouting)

Hey Daisy!

DAISY

(Flinching)

Yes Hinch?

HINCH

Got a rookie reporting for the late shift, may I present to you..

Hinch does a really annoying drum roll which Jim spoils by introducing himself.

JIM

Eh - I'm Jim,

HINCH

Hey man, I was getting there.

JIM

Sure, oh, sorry, did you want to finish?

Hinch just eyeballs Jim and sits down.

DAISY

Sorry about that, he's a little...gregarious.

JIM

Sure, can't imagine why anyone would divorce him.

Jim takes a moment to take in the group, they're misfits and socially maladjusted, pretty and it has to be said some are drunk, he sighs. Daisy notices.

DAISY

(Whispering)

You're one of us now Jim, one of us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JIM

(Nervous)

Heh - ok let me, I'll just eh,
I'll find a seat.

Daisy gets the show on the road.

DAISY

Ok come on group, let's settle
down now.

Everyone finds a seat, some more awkwardly than others.

DAISY

Now as is customary let's go
around the group starting with our
new member, Jim would you mind
telling us why you're here?

We focus on Jim, he's clearly nervous, nervous of
speaking in public, nervous of exposing his feelings to
other human beings. He clears his throat.

JIM

So...

CUT TO:

INT. ERIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Erin is sitting on her couch cradling a glass of red
wine, she's smiling we can't see who she's with.

JIM

(O/S)

Hi, I'm Jim, I'm newly divorced
was married almost fifteen years.
I'm a narrative designer, I work
in the toy trade, creating
characters, backgrounds,
situations for toylines, mainly
action figures.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMUNITY CENTRE - NIGHT

We're looking around at the group listening to Jim's
story.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIM

I uh, we, well, myself and my wife, e-ex wife we uh just fell apart I guess it just wasn't meant to be.

The faces stare blankly back at Jim. He waits a beat.

JIM

Th-Thank you...?

Hinch reacts angrily.

HINCH

Oh bullshit!

Daisy intervenes.

DAISY

Hinch, please, be kind.

JIM

Yeah man, what?

HINCH

Don't what me, there's rules, without them this would all fall to shit.

JIM

(Sniggering)

There's rules to Divorce Club? What's the first one, oh let me guess? Don't talk about Divorce Club?

JENN

I don't get it?

Daisy interjects.

DAISY

Actually you could say that it is, we ask all of our members to adhere to an oath of silence about what is shared here. This is a safe space that deals in reality, facts, nothing else, so statements like you made there about your marriage not being meant to be, that contravenes the rules.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JIM

Oh, sorry? I wasn't aware, I.

Jim looks around.

JIM

I'm sorry, this was a mistake.

DAISY

No, please Jim, we're here to help, come share, we'll guide you through it. You'll feel better for it, trust me, so you were talking about your work?

Jim takes a deep breath.

JIM

Ok, well, I guess it was my work that caused the problems or at least brought them to the fore.

CUT TO:

INT. ERIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Erin is on the couch laughing and chatting.

JIM

(O/S)

I was on the brink of launching our first creator owned line, I mean this was the culmination of like, six years work, the reason why I got into this business in the first place, my own toy line and then the world just closed up shop.

Erin is looking through designs for the toylines from a coffee table sized book.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIM

(O/S)

And I guess I overreacted I put everything I could into securing distribution lines to the customer and well, I guess Erin became less of a priority, and well once that happened it was only a matter of time.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMUNITY CENTRE - NIGHT

Hinch is almost grinning.

HINCH

So it was your fault.

JIM

Well I, there were things on both, I, well, sure.

HINCH

No it's just, that's good, that's real good, you see reality, no bullshit, no magical thinking, just cause and effect, like if I point a loaded gun at some taliban prick in the desert, I'll kill him, cause and effect.

Jim scans over Hinch and it's obvious he's a war vet.

JIM

Uh - ok, ok, and thank you for your service. I um, I don't know if it was all my fault, I mean the settlement, she really went for it.

HINCH

The fucking bitch.

DAISY

Whoa, Hinch, please.

HINCH

Reality first Daisy, right!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAISY

That's a totally subjective position to take, and an offensive one at that I might add.

JIM

(Enjoying the irreverence of it)

Well, he's got a point, she took half the company and get this.

CUT TO:

INT. ERIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

We see that Erin is cosyng up to Winston. This is over wrought as it's actually just a paranoid manifestation of what Jim believes is going on.

JIM

(O/S)

She conspired with this dick employee I fired, who she knows I think is terrible just to get on my fucking nerves.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMUNITY CENTRE - NIGHT

Jim's a little worked up, he's angry thinking about it.

JIM

And make my work, the one thing I still love in life unbearable, like what the fuck man.

Jim's now rattling with anger it's all coming out.

JIM

Like what gives her the fucking right to just take everything I've ever worked for, from the day my dad, my poor hard working dad bought me my first GI Joe right through school and college and working my tail off in Asia for fucking pennies just to learn what goes into making a toy line, just who the fuck does she think she is!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jim's standing now, the rest of the group are looking at him, we wait a beat.

JIM

I - uh, sorry, sorry, it's just the first time I've ever really had a chance to, you know, vent.

DAISY

It's ok Jim, now please, sit.

Jim sits down, he looks across the group at Hinch who makes the OK gesture at him and winks. Jim zings with inner pride.

CUT TO:

INT. JIM'S CAR - NIGHT

Jim's left the group and is on his way home. He calls Katie.

JIM

Hey Katie,

KATIE

Yeah big bro, what's up?

JIM

Thank you so much for the referral to Divorce club.

KATIE

Divorce club?

JIM

Oh it's just a thing we call the group.

KATIE

Oh you went? Oh great, sounds like you got something out of it?

Jim's phone is beeping. We see Erin's name come up on the screen.

JIM

Yeah I - hang on that's weird.

KATIE

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIM

Erin's calling, do I answer?

KATIE

No, don't, let her leave a message, it's important to set boundaries early on.

JIM

I guess you're right.

Jim sends the call to voice mail.

KATIE

So you liked the group?

JIM

I honestly did, it feels like a weight's off my mind, I just let it all out and it's gone.

KATIE

See, therapy works bro, I've been telling you for the last couple of decades.

JIM

I guess I need to listen more to my wise old sis.

KATIE

Hey less of the old, more of the wise, thank you very much.

JIM

They're a bunch of weirdos though, this one guy, Hinch, Jesus what a number the world's done on him.

KATIE

We in the therapy community don't like the word weirdo's, we prefer patients, tribe, community, but at any rate they're now your bunch of weirdos.

JIM

Huh, I guess you're right, anyway gotta go, just felt the need for ice cream for the first time in a long time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Jim pulls into a grocery store parking lot.

KATIE

(V/O)

Do it big brother.

CUT TO:

INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Jim is waiting on line at the cashier with two pints of Ben and Jerry's. His phone starts to buzz.

KATIE

(V/O)

How often do we get these opportunities to spoil ourselves.

Jim takes his phone out of his pocket. The home screen is reading 3 missed calls all from Erin.

JIM

Jesus Erin, boundaries.

He pays for the ice cream and leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. JIM'S STREET - NIGHT

Jim is driving up the street and notices a SUV parked outside. He pulls into his driveway.

CUT TO:

EXT. JIM'S PLACE - NIGHT

Jim gets out of the car, balancing the pints of ice cream precariously. Hinch and Jenn are standing on his porch.

HINCH

Hey Jim.

JIM

(Freaked out)

JESUS!

He drops the ice cream, they cause a mess.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HINCH

Sorry man, didn't mean to startle you.

JENN

Yeah, sorry.

JIM

What are you doing here?

JENN

We were in the neighborhood.

HINCH

That's not what he's driving at, is it Jim?

JIM

It absolutely is not.

HINCH

You see Jim, my training has taught me a few things, how to pick up on verbal cues, hear what's not being said that kind of thing, you don't do three tours in the shit and not learn a thing or two about non-verbal language.

JIM

And you deduced where I lived from my what, my body language?

HINCH

Among other things.

JENN

We googled Jim, toys, narrative designer, Burbank,

JIM

And you got my home address??

HINCH

Yeah man, you'd be surprised what toy nerds put on message boards.

JIM

Ok, so what are you doing here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HINCH

Well hearing you tonight, well it reminded me of my divorce and how terrible those first few weeks and months can be, so I got you something.

JENN

I helped.

HINCH

Sure you did hon. So anyway,

JIM

What could you possibly have gotten me that could help.

JENN

Oh you'll like this, it's a real gift.

JIM

(Nervous)

What do you mean, you got me a gift? We barely know each other.

HINCH

Jim, buddy, we just felt for you man, just open her up and take a look, trust me.

JENN

Nobody's ever gotten you a gift like this, we guarantee it.

We wait a beat while Jim computes his options.

JIM

Ok, ok, you guys, seriously.

Hinch throws Jim the keys. Jim points the fob at the trunk and the door raises slowly, as it does we see Jim's face go from one of excited expectation to horror.

Jim, Hinch and Jen are looking into the trunk.

JENN

So, what do you think.

Jim can't speak he's so horrified.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HINCH

I know, it'll take a minute but
think about it, no more wife, no
more problems, all those work
issues, poof, they're all gone.

Jim looking into the trunk.

JIM

But...

We are looking into the trunk, we see Erin's corpse
wrapped in a decorators translucent tarp, she is very
dead.

HINCH

(O/S)

Don't worry about it man, it's all
part of being a member of the
club.

Hinch slams the trunk door shut.

FADE TO BLACK.