

NÚMEROS

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First Draft

10/5/2022

<http://n3zen.com/scrnplay/>

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OPENING CREDITS

Scream and Scarrett Knit and Film Logo
N3ZEN Logo

MUSIC - Buckle My Shoe(J & D)

Scream and Scarrett Knit and Film
and
N3ZEN Productions
Present

EFFECTS - Screen filled with layers of numbers zooming way out to show they make the title...

NÚMEROS

JEDD (V.O.)

My career was forged in the dotcom era. That's when I met my wife. We've shared over twenty years together. But we don't share the same pace in life. We don't agree on what counts. We don't communicate effectively.

ACT ONE

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

JEDD (55) is thin and tired looking. He's wearing red framed glasses, a suit and tie, and a scowl. There is a carry-on suitcase on the bed that he's slamming board shorts, t-shirts, socks and underwear into.

JEDD

I swear I don't remember seeing anything about the flight leaving today.

DEE (49) a statuesque vixen with short gray hair dressed in yoga pants and a sweatshirt dress enters the frame and approaches her already packed luggage with a pair of flip flops that she's stuffing into the outer pocket.

DEE

Do you want me to show you again how many emails, calendar invites and reminders I sent you?

JEDD

Ya, no. I saw those. But did any of them say it was for today?

DEE (simmering)

What do you think?

JEDD (abashed)

I think we are going to Mexico.

DEE

Yes, and we are going to relax and have a good time.

JEDD

(under his breath) We? Good? Those words don't go together me thinks.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY TO INT. HOTEL

MUSIC - Buckle My Shoe (scratch the itch edit)

A series of 1 second POV shots that show the check in counter, the wait at the gate, the walk down to the plane, sitting and pouring vodka into OJ, JEDD playing 2048, DEE doing Sudoku, waiting for people to get off plane, luggage carousel, bus ride to hotel, check in at hotel, enter door to hotel room.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

DEE is on the bed with the TV remote and iPad on her lap, she is relaxing. All her things are unpacked. JEDD is frantically circling the room haphazardly unpacking. He's ranting to DEE but she is ignoring him and flipping through the TV Channels.

JEDD

Where's my phone? I had it at the front desk and now I can't find it.

DEE

Where'd you see it last?

JEDD

I just said, at the front desk? Do you ever listen to me!?

DEE

No, I don't. So check the front desk. (beat) See, I heard that part.

JEDD

(holding his phone) Never mind, I found it. (beat) Hey, what's that sound? Is that the TV?

DEE

No, it's just noise. I can't get any channels.

JEDD

No, it's the TV I think, just listen. What the hell?

JEDD gestures at DEE to shush and holds up his phone and points it at the TV.

INT. JEDD'S POV - TELEVISION

Frame match zoom into TV footage from JEDD's phone. There is just chunky static on the TV but we hear a strange sound. Bells chiming and then what seems to be a woman's voice speaking in Spanish. It sounds like she's counting. She stops, the bells chime again and she starts to count again.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT (CON'T)

DEE

(muting the TV) What the heck was that?

JEDD

(looking down at his phone) Cool, I got it. Ya, I think that's a numbers station broadcast.

DEE

Oh, like in that John Cusak movie. It's secret messages for spies right?

JEDD

Ya, encrypted broadcasts. And no, it was a Malin Åkerman movie.

DEE

It was John and Malin both. He was in it too.

JEDD

Never noticed him. I'm unpacked, let's hit the bar.

INT. HOTEL BAR - DAY TO INT. HOTEL BUFFET - DAY

MUSIC - Buckle My Shoe (scratch the itch edit)

A series of 0.5 second POV shots that show pounding beer and shots at the bar, eating bar food, bar crowd blur, wobbly walk to room, take pills, tossing in bed, stop motion sunrise through patio door, shower, walk to buffet.

INT. HOTEL BUFFET - DAY

POV JEDD: DEE and JEDD are sitting across from each other at a table at the buffet. JEDD is rearranging the cutlery over and over again.

DEE

You look hungover, go get some food. I'll order us coffee.

JEDD

No coffee. Order a Samosa for me, hold the OJ.

DEE

You mean Mimosa, idiot.

JEDD

Ya, whatever.

JEDD stands up and leaves the table.

EXT. HOTEL - POOLSIDE - DAY

Wide shot of DEE and JEDD sitting in poolside loungers reading their tablets. JEDD's phone rings in Morse code. He picks it up, looks at it, sneaks a look at DEE who gives him a look and he puts it back down.

DEE

You said no work stuff this trip.

JEDD

I didn't read it. I just looked who it was.

DEE

What are you reading now?

JEDD

The "Handbook of applied cryptography" by Alfred Menezes.

DEE

Is that for work?

JEDD

No, not work. We agreed, no work this trip. I'm trying to learn about "one time pads".

DEE

I hope that isn't what it sounds like. Why do you need to read about that?

JEDD

It's those Spanish numbers on the TV I recorded last night. I want to know if I can decode the message.

DEE

Can you?

JEDD

Not if it's a one time pad.

DEE

Why?

JEDD

Because they are "information-theoretically secure" from what I've read.

DEE

No, why decode the message?

JEDD

Cause it's not work and I need something to do.

EXT. HOTEL - POOLSIDE - JEDD'S POV - DAY

MUSIC - Buckle My Shoe (Spanish numbers edit)

A series of 0.3 second POV shots. Pick up the tablet, look at something, put it away, try to relax, chug a beer, pick up the tablet, hesitate, open it anyways. Lather, Rinse, Repeat. Tablet shows tight shots of video off tv, wave file, Voice to Text, Spanish text to English numbers, Numbers spreadsheet, Handbook of Applied Cryptography cover and pages, dcode.fr website and large 13x4 grid of numbers that blur and zoom to camera, eyelids closing. Then the camera swings up to DEE looking down at JEDD.

DEE

You've been staring at that screen all day without a break. I'm hungry. Let's change and eat.

JEDD

Just a couple more minutes.

DEE

It's starting again. Isn't it?

JEDD

No, it's not "starting again". I'll delete the recording OK?

DEE

Whatever. You're already down the drunken rabbit hole, I can tell.

JEDD

Let's eat.

ACT TWO

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - DAY

JEDD'S POV sitting across from DEE at a nice table in a nice restaurant, they haven't ordered yet. JEDD keeps fussing with the cutlery and rearranging things. In particular he keeps picking up his phone and putting it down.

DEE

Stop it.

JEDD

Stop what?

DEE

You're stimming, or spinning or whatever.

JEDD

I'm not. I'm hungry. I've got low blood sugar. I need another drink.

DEE

You need to relax. Did you take your pills today?

JEDD (under his breath)

You relax.

JEDD grabs his phone.

JEDD

I gotta take this call.

DEE

It didn't ring!

JEDD gets up and walks out leaving DEE by herself.

EXT. HOTEL - LOUNGE - NIGHT

JEDD is sitting by himself in the lounge with a couple of empty glasses and is engrossed with his tablet.

MUSIC - Buckle My Shoe (ambient edit)

A series of 0.3 second POV shots. Shots of the tablet show tight shots of TV video again, spreadsheet of numbers, more crypto stuff and then a radio frequency scanner app.

JEDD (V.O.)

So the numbers station could be broadcasting on 17480 kHz as well. What is freqs for old over the air TV broadcasts? UHF TV audio frequencies between 477.250MHz to 861.250MHz WFM. So it's TV and radio both? 52 characters. What about that whale that talks at 52 hz?

The tablet freezes on the frequency scanner app. JEDD start's shaking it and poking at the screen.

JEDD (V.O.)

I miss giving the three finger salute to a computer. When you could press Control, Alt and then slam the Delete key and smack that stupid machine. Now all we can do with these phones and tablets is long press the power key and hope for the best.

DEE

Hey!

JEDD looks up to see DEE walk up to him. She's pissed.

DEE

You left me. You left me to eat by myself.

JEDD (drunkenly)

What!? Sorry, I got distracted. How was the food?

DEE

Like you care.

DEE walks off. JEDD turns his attention back to the tablet and his beer. The tablet shows the numbers spreadsheet and then a wikipedia article on Fork Bombs.

JEDD (V.O.)

Whatever. (beat) You know, what if it's not encrypted with a one time pad? What if it's open and a honey trap? They want me to read it. What if it's a Fork Bomb and they want to use it to hack me?

MUSIC - Buckle My Shoe (Spanish numbers edit)

A series of 0.3 second POV shots. JEDD fast flipping through page after page of wikipedia articles on crypto and all and none things related. More beer. The walk in the dark back to the room.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

JEDD opens the door and enters to see an angry DEE on the bed. She is sitting with her tablet and a drink. She's angry.

JEDD

Hey, where'd you go? I couldn't find you.

DEE

We need to talk.

JEDD

About what? I'm hungry. I'm gonna order room service. Do you want something? Are you hungry?

JEDD turns from DEE and walks over to the patio door (or mirror) and looking at his phone writes with a dry erase marker the broadcast numbers. He's muttering "52" over and over while doing it.

DEE

We need to talk about you "rabbit holing" again.

JEDD

I'm not doing that, I don't do that.

DEE

I've been reading about "rabbit holing" and it says it's when you are quote "interested in something to the point of distraction-usually by accident, and usually to a degree that the subject in question might not seem to merit." end quote.

JEDD

What is that? From reddit? Sounds stupid.

DEE

It says (reading) "the salient feature of the rabbit hole is that you cannot find your way out."

JEDD

What's salient mean?

DEE

They say it's curiosity that drives it. (reading) "Curiosity functions like other drive states, such as hunger, which motivates eating. A small amount of information serves as a priming dose, which greatly increases curiosity."

JEDD

Curiosier and curioser!

DEE

They call it the "Dopamine Rabbit Hole." It's addictive. You're an addict!

JEDD

We're all mad here!

DEE

You need to stop!

JEDD

I need another drink. And some food.

JEDD walks out of the hotel room.

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

MUSIC - Buckle My Shoe (ambient edit)

A series of 1 second shots. Sitting by the pool with JEDD's face lit by the tablet in one hand and beer in the other. Sitting in the sand looking at his phone. Wandering around the resort, he starts seeing numbers in everything (pareidolia). Sneak some footage of the casino playing cards? Ends with JEDD sitting at the bar.

JEDD (V.O.)

Fifty two characters. That's all it is. It can't be that hard to figure it out. I could brute force it if I had the gear. Even if I figured out the answer. What is the question? Is it a message? Is it a response? Is it an order? What's the aim of the broadcast? Marching orders for the military? Location data for spies? A secret chocolate cookie recipe?

INT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

Long shot of JEDD sitting at the bar slumped over his drink. He's oblivious to those around him. He pulls out a deck of cards.

JEDD (V.O.)

Is it a contest? Is it a fork code? Why do I care? I don't know, that's what makes me crazy! What if it's for some contest or something? I could win something! What, a free trip to Mexico? I'd probably waste that one too. No wonder Dee is pissed at me. Why does it matter? I just want to finish something!

JEDD drunkenly spreads out the cards.

JEDD (V.O.)

I can never remember if "two pair" beats "three of a kind". Pairs? It's pairs! Wait, it's Hex pairs! If it was a snake it would have bit me!

JEDD picks up the cards and walks off camera.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

JEDD enters the hotel room clumsily (he's drunk), tries to sneak in without waking up DEE but fails. He drops the cards on the bed. We see the cards have had the codes written on their backs. He flops down on the cards and passes out.

ACT THREE

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY TO EXT. HOTEL - POOLSIDE - DAY

MUSIC - Buckle My Shoe (happy kids edit)

A series of 1 second shots. The sun coming into the room, JEDD standing on the balcony in shorts looking at sun with Fanta, shower, walking to breakfast, breakfast buffet, having OJ only, walking to pool, sitting at poolside.

JEDD and DEE are once again poolside looking at their tablets.

JEDD

I'm sorry.

DEE

What? For what?

JEDD

Everything, ruining the vacation. I couldn't help it. Sorry. It's an itch that I have to scratch. Once I started I had to finish.

DEE

So you're done, we can relax and have a vacation now?

JEDD

Ya, I solved it. Here look.

JEDD hands his tablet to DEE and we zoom into it to see his spreadsheet. It shows the text has been decoded to the phrase: "Estás haciendolo de nuevo."

DEE

What's it mean?

JEDD

Go to the next screen.

We see DEE's hand swipe and we see a Google Translate page. The page shows the translation as "You're doing it again."

DEE

This is nonsense.

JEDD

What!? No, read it, it explains everything.

DEE

This? It's gibberish. You didn't decode anything.

JEDD grabs at the tablet and they both fumble for it, it falls and we hear glass crack.

JEDD

Dammit! You broke it!

DEE

Sorry. (beat) I should have done that when we first got here.

JEDD

Ah man, now what?

DEE

You still have your phone.

JEDD

I guess. I did buy that thing for less than a hundred bucks.

DEE

I'll buy you a new one. Sorry.

JEDD

No excuses now I guess huh?

DEE

No, not really.

JEDD

You did read it though right? It said "You are doing it again."

DEE

Sorry, it was just scrambled letters. Look, just let it go, OK? You scratched the itch. Let's start the vacation over.

JEDD

(he sighs) Ya, OK. (beat) Wanna go to the beach?

DEE

That's a good idea, let me just pack my stuff up and take it to the room. Get us a drink and a cabana and I'll meet you there.

JEDD

OK, sure. Thanks, babe. Take this to the room for me?

DEE

(To herself) *Otro día en el paraíso.*

JEDD hands his broken tablet to DEE and walks off to the beach. DEE starts packing stuff away but pauses with her own tablet for a minute. Zoom cut to DEE deleting a new spreadsheet of numbers with each column showing encryption and then a quick shot of "Airplay" video player showing static and the numbers sound. She looks furtively around and slaps the tablet shut, packs it up and walks off.

DEE (V.O.)

My career is in accounting. It's all about numbers. I met my husband over twenty years ago. We don't share the same pace in life. We don't agree on what counts. But it will reconcile, it will balance.

CREDITS

MUSIC - Buckle My Shoe (J & D)

Credits run over stop motion footage of the beach that slows to just a nice calm shot beach and ocean.

THE END