

FIRST NEWS

By
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Bad Bunny Pictures
Roxy Pictures

FIRST NEWS

FADE IN:

EXT.--CENTRAL NEBRASKA SOYBEAN FIELD--DUSK

The sun dips low above a parched, dusty soybean field. CHUCK TUCKER, 22, drags a tripod, light kit, camcorder, tape bag, and batteries. A REPORTER in a hurry. Light is fading.

Crop dusting planes moan in the distance. Chuck kicks out the bulky legs of the tripod and places the camera on top. He pans to a now upright light stand. Focuses...

VIDEO IMAGE

The light stand comes into focus. Planes buzz behind it.

BACK TO CHUCK

CHUCK

Perfect.

Chuck digs an X into the arid soil directly under the stand, and tosses it aside.

He takes a can of HAIRSPRAY from his bag.

VIDEO IMAGE

A cloud of aerosol momentarily blocks out the setting sun.

BACK TO SCENE

Chuck presses "RECORD". The vintage, banged-up camcorder whirls into action.

Chuck's dusty Tom McCann's begin a purposeful stride...

CHUCK

3, 2, 1...

...and land right on top of the hand-gouged X.

CHUCK (cont'd)

Farmers say because of the current drought condition, farmers are...3, 2, 1...Farmers say because of the current drought condition, they're gonna need...3, 2, 1...Farmer's say because of the current drought condition, they need these crop *drusting* pranes...3, 2, 1...Farmers say...

TRIPOD

The pan control knob slips.

VIDEO IMAGE

Pans right. Chuck and the planes slowly drift from frame.

CHUCK

...they need these crop dusting planes to work well into the night. With that, local residents are going to have to remain *up in arms*, until the Denton City Council...

Chuck sees the camera moving.

CHUCK (cont'd)

(his speech slows)

...votes on it in full session, later this...You gotta be kiddin' me!

BACK TO CHUCK, SUPER-- "TWO MINUTES LATER"

Veins in his hand pop as he strains to tighten the knob.

VIDEO IMAGE

The sun is almost gone. The planes much closer. Chuck walks back into frame. Take two.

CHUCK

3, 2, 1...Farmers say...3, 2, 1...Farmers say because of the drought, they *need* these planes to crop their dusts...Shit!
3, 2, 1...Farmers...

TRIPOD

The knob slips again!

VIDEO IMAGE

Slowly panning from Nebraska to Iowa.

CHUCK

...need these crop dusting planes to operate well into the night. Local residents are going to have to remain up in arms until (slows as he notices again) the Denton City Council takes up the....

Chuck stops. Only a plane and a bored cow remain in frame.

CHUCK (CONT'D) (cont'd)

FUCK!!!

BACK TO CHUCK, SUPER-- "THREE MINUTES LATER"

Strips of DUCT TAPE cover the camera and tripod. The sun is now barely a glimmering pinpoint on the horizon.

VIDEO IMAGE

An angry, disheveled Chuck charges back into frame.

CHUCK
3, 2, 1...JESUS CHRIST!

A plane swoops in about twenty feet behind him. Chuck dives out of frame.

A moment passes...

...Chuck catches his breath...

CHUCK (O.C.) (cont'd)
Okay Chuck, this is the one, baby...

He nervously creeps back in...

...scans the sky for planes...

...straightens his tie, and...

CHUCK (cont'd)
3, 2, 1...Farmers say because of the current drought conditions, they *need* these crop dusting planes to work well into the night. And, local residents are just going to have to remain *up in arms* until the Denton City Council takes up this issue in full session, later this month. For Heartland Ten News, I'm Chuck Tucker. Denton.

He holds just long enough for a cut point. Perfect.

CHUCK (cont'd)
YEEEEEESSSSSSSSSS!!!

A low flying crop duster screams in and lops him in two!

A pair of slacks and two dusty Tom McCann's stand on their own, as the plane and the rest of Chuck tumble out of frame.

A long, silent beat and,...the camera pans right again!

CUT TO:

INT.--ST. LUKE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA--DUSK

A cell phone chirps over the hymn. Stern-faced wedding guests turn icy glares to MANNY MARKOVITZ, 51, wedding video auteur and buffet line virtuoso. He fumbles for the phone, drops it, and hits his head on a pew on the way down.

MANNY
(whispers)
Shit! Hello?...Who? Yeah, hang on a sec. Kevin?...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KEVIN O'CONNOR, a fresh-faced 23-year-old, zips his camera along the pews and up to the organist's fat gloved fingers.

MANNY (cont'd)
(louder)
Kevin?...

Kevin walks back down the aisle. Guests' heads zip by frame like fence posts on the Autobahn. Manny moves towards Kevin.

MANNY (cont'd)
(frustrated and louder)
Kevin!...

At the back of the church, Kevin starts at a pair of dirty loafers, moves up past the cream colored slacks and jacket, to a perfect two-shot of Mr. and Mrs. 'American Gothic'. Manny closes fast. The hymn stops abruptly.

MANNY (cont'd)
(shouting)
KEVIN!

Half the church turns. Dead silence, until...

MRS. AMERICAN GOTHIC
Pipe down, tubby!

Manny slaps the phone down into Kevin's hand.

KEVIN
For me?

MANNY
(seething)
Yesssssssssss.

KEVIN
I don't think you look tubby in that tux.

Manny retreats.

KEVIN (cont'd)
Hello...?

VOICE ON PHONE
Kevin O'Connor?

KEVIN
Yeah...?

VOICE ON PHONE
How's my favorite Mick from Philly?

KEVIN
Who is this?

VOICE ON PHONE
Who is this? It's Jerry Delasandro.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KEVIN
 (trying to remember)
 Jerry Delasandro, Jerry Delasandro...

INT.--DELASANDRO TALENT--CONTINUOUS

Half-eaten snack products are strewn all over the desk.

JERRY DELASANDRO
 From New York?

KEVIN
 New York...

JERRY DELASANDRO
 Your agent!

KEVIN
 Oh yeah, the guy I paid five hundred
 bucks to and haven't heard from since.

JERRY DELASANDRO
 Yeah, your agent!

KEVIN
 Well make it fast, agent, I'm working.

JERRY DELASANDRO
 Working?

BACK TO KEVIN

KEVIN
 Yeah, I'm doing an expose on the bridal
 industry, centering on how grossly
 underpaid a videographer's assistant is.
 What do you want?

The church hushes as the bride and groom exchange vows.

JERRY DELASANDRO
 Looks like I got you a gig.

KEVIN
 A reporting gig?

JERRY DELASANDRO
 A reporting gig.

KEVIN
 Television?

JERRY DELASANDRO
 Television.

KEVIN
 (loud)
 Jerry, if you're fucking with me I'll rip
 your arm off and beat you to death...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The *whole church* turns now, including the bride and groom.

KEVIN (cont'd)
 (to bride and groom, mortified)
 Sorry...I'm just gonna,...go outside now.
 Beautiful dress...

Kevin walks outside.

JERRY DELASANDRO
 Now Kevin, why would I fuck with you? Do
 you want it?

KEVIN
 Are you kidding?

JERRY DELASANDRO
 That's my favorite Mick. So tell me,
 whadda ya know about agriculture?

INT.--GOVERNMENT OFFICE--DUSK

Kevin is scared. His dad, FRANNY O'CONNOR, 52, has a serious look on his warm, round face. Across a table from them, pouring over a manila file, sits Kevin's PROBATION OFFICER. He rubs his eyes... sighs long and loud.

PROBATION OFFICER
 Kevin, I've known your dad since Pop Warner football. He's hit so hard he could make the teeth in the back of your head hurt.

FRANNY
 I remember taking lumps from you, too.

PROBATION OFFICER
 Don't let him fool you, Kevin. Nobody hit like your Dad. But, he was a leader. We trusted him. Still do.

The Probation Officer throws the file in front of Kevin.

PROBATION OFFICER (cont'd)
 I'm gonna let you go.

Franny squeezes Kevin's hand. Kevin sighs.

PROBATION OFFICER(cont'd)
 Because of the respect and trust I have for your father, I'm gonna let you go. But, you remain on probation. If you so much as forget to return a library book, I'm gonna drive out there, tie you to the back of my car, and drag you home by way of the railroad tracks. Got it?

KEVIN
 Yes sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PROBATION OFFICER
Good. Now, when's this party?

EXT.--PHILADELPHIA ROW HOUSE BACKYARD--NIGHT

Drunks everywhere. Kevin dips past three guys in a drinking contest. Suddenly...

VOICE (O.C.)
Hey, asshole!

KEVIN
Present!

Kevin reels around. Holding a Bushmills bottle out in front of a wrinkled suit, is DANNY O'CONNOR, 26. Kevin's brother.

DANNY
(stumbling)
Do a shot with me!

KEVIN
Whew. (brushing him off) Maybe later.

DANNY
Kevin, as your attorney I need to advise you that you are legally obligated to do a shot with your big brother...

KEVIN
Counselor, I'm going to have to ask for a continuance on that shot until my big brother is little less shit faced...

DANNY
(slurring)
Contin-nance granted! How 'bout a beer bong?

Kevin shakes his head and walks away.

INT.--KEVIN'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM--LATER

Kevin wades through throngs of drunks. A cake in the shape of Nebraska sits half-eaten on the dining room table. Through the crowd, Kevin sees his dad on the front porch.

EXT.--KEVIN'S HOUSE, FRONT PORCH--CONTINUOUS

Franny struggles with the rope that rolls the awning.

KEVIN
Dad, let me help you.

Kevin joins in. Both pull down on the rope, hand over hand, until the awning is fully rolled up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANNY

Last thing I need is another damn awning blowing off. Why aren't you inside?

KEVIN

I needed a break.

FRANNY

I needed a break five minutes after it started. Seen your mother?

KEVIN

Bottle of Bailey's at the kitchen table.

FRANNY

Love 'o God, next she'll be singing.

Kevin nods. He leans up against the iron railing as Franny takes a slow labored seat on the front stoop. Silence...

FRANNY (CONT'D) (cont'd)

You know you don't have to go.

KEVIN

Dad...

FRANNY

I just want you to know. You could always come into the bakery with me. *I'd* love to keep that in the family...

KEVIN

Come on, Dad...

FRANNY

What's wrong with the bakery?

KEVIN

It's not that...

FRANNY

Say it!

Kevin pauses, lowers his head, and comes up with a big smile.

KEVIN

This is what I've always wanted.

FRANNY

(with a big grin)
That's what I wanted to hear.

KEVIN

You old buzzard, you were testing me.

FRANNY

Ah, with you and your brother gone I got nobody but your mother to pick on, and that old lady hits too hard.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANNY (cont'd)
 (beat) I just wanted to make sure this is
 what you want.

KEVIN
 It is.

FRANNY
 Good. Here.

Franny hands Kevin a giftwrapped package.

KEVIN
 What is it?

FRANNY
 I don't know, genius, open it.

Kevin tears the wrapping paper and opens the box. Staring
 back at him, is a hardback copy of Woodward & Bernstein's
 "All the President's Men".

KEVIN
 Hey...

FRANNY
 That started it, right?

KEVIN
 You remember.

FRANNY
 'Course. First time you read it was down
 the shore. That fall, you started with
 the school paper. Became our own little
 crusader, changing the world at twelve.
 Obnoxious little shit.

KEVIN
 Hey!

FRANNY
 Hey yourself. You grew up that summer.
 Found a passion. (beat) Made me proud.

KEVIN
 Thanks...

FRANNY
 Yeah...(beat) Not that I won't drive out
 there and kick your ass all over cow town
 if you screw up again...

Kevin stands and cracks his knuckles.

KEVIN
 Speaking of things you couldn't do since
 I was twelve...

Franny stands. Kevin puts his hands up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FRANNY
 Son, you better learn how to eat with
 them things first...

Franny swings, Kevin ducks,... father and son share a playful spar in the cold autumn air.

MONTAGE OVER MUSIC

Danny teases Kevin as he gets his hair cut short.

CUT TO:

Kevin's Honda passes the "Philadelphia City Limits" sign.

CUT TO:

Kevin throws 'cheesy' sport coats into a duffle bag.

CUT TO:

Pass "Welcome to The Buckeye State" sign.

CUT TO:

Kevin packs his Honda hatchback to the roof.

CUT TO:

Pass "Welcome to Indiana" sign.

CUT TO:

Mom cries on the porch as Kevin comes out the front door.

CUT TO:

Eighteen wheelers scream by as Kevin changes a tire under an "Iowa Hawkeye Football" billboard.

CUT TO:

Kevin and Franny stand at the Honda. Kevin reaches out his hand, but Franny grabs him in a bear hug.

CUT TO:

Pass "Nebraska--The Cornhusker State" billboard.

CUT TO:

Kevin waves through the window to his Mom, Dad and Danny as he pulls away down the cobblestone street.

CUT TO:

The sun hangs low in the sky. Tumbleweeds blow across Route 80. Kevin exits just past a "Heartland Ten News Team" Billboard. Reporters with big smiling faces...

EXT.--HEARTLAND TEN NEWSROOM--DUSK

Kevin pulls his Honda into the driveway.

KEVIN
Oh...my...God...

The "station" sits on an abandoned cornfield in the middle of nowhere. It is a long, thin, one-story building that vaguely resembles a WW II Army barracks. A huge signal tower juts from the roof. Occasional grain silos dot the horizon.

KEVIN (cont'd)
You gotta be kidding...

Kevin pushes the car door open and stretches. A large bird scurries across the ground and right up to Kevin's feet.

KEVIN (cont'd)
Hey, chicken...

With a resounding **BOOM**, the ground around him **EXPLODES!** Kevin is frozen in terror. The bird flies off!

BOOM! It happens again. **SHOTGUN BLASTS!** Someone is shooting at him! Kevin dives behind the car.

A few frozen seconds pass. Kevin meekly calls out...

KEVIN (cont'd)
Don't shoot.

A thud is heard. Someone jumped off the station roof!

O.C. VOICE
What are you, an asshole?

Kevin doesn't answer. Footsteps approach.

O.C. VOICE (cont'd)
You. Behind the car. You really think that was a chicken?

KEVIN
What?

Footsteps almost at the car!

O.C. VOICE
Man, you're like special-ed dumb.

KEVIN
(getting pissed)
What the fuck are you talking about!?

Kevin sees the boots walk around the front of his Honda. The muzzle of the shotgun drags in the dry ground!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KEVIN (cont'd)
DON'T SHOOT!

NATHAN MILL, 35, towers over Kevin. Hunting boots, hunting hat, hunting license, and a three-piece suit. Orange hair rests on top of a chubby, angelic face.

NATHAN
Son, if I was trying to shoot you I sure as hell wouldn't have missed twice. Who the hell are you?

KEVIN
Kevin O'Connor, I think I...

NATHAN
Oh, new guy. Philly boy, right?

KEVIN
Yeah, Philly...

NATHAN
Pleased to meet you, Kevin O'Connor. Nathan Mill. Come in, I'll introduce you around.

A large gloved paw extends down to Kevin. Kevin takes it and follows Nathan to the station door.

NATHAN (cont'd)
Did you really think that was a chicken?

KEVIN
Wasn't it?

NATHAN
That, my friend, was a Blackbird Valley Ringneck. Very rare.

KEVIN
That explains trying to kill it. You always greet people like that?

NATHAN
Depends.

KEVIN
On what?

NATHAN
On if you were from Oklahoma, I wouldn't have missed.

They push inside.