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Episode 01: Jack in the Box

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EPISODE 1: Jack In The Box

Standards of Behavior contains mature language, content and themes. Please listen with care.

1. Papers SHUFFLING.

HEARING MODERATOR

Please state your name for the record.

WILL

William Thomas. I go by Will.

HEARING MODERATOR

What year are you in, and what is your major?

WILL

I'm a senior. Entrepreneurship.

HEARING MODERATOR

Mr. Thomas, do you know why we brought you in today?

WILL

(with a dry sarcasm)

Lemme guess. My music was too loud? Or was it the dead body we found in my room Saturday morning?

There is a beat of silence. HEARING MODERATOR is unamused.

HEARING MODERATOR

Our records indicate that you called the police to report a dead body at 11:23 AM Saturday morning. The body was identified to belong to Jack Malvolio. Why don't you walk us through that morning?

WILL

That morning? Uh, I guess...

2. FLASHBACK - DOOR opens. KEYS jingle. DOOR closes.

ROY
Man of the hour. What's up?

WILL
Hey.

ROY
You look about as good as I feel,
homie.

WILL
Ugh. What I'd give for something
super greasy right now.

ROY
(amused)
You certainly seemed to have a
good time last night.

WILL
Between you and me? A lot of it
just a blur. It's too early for
this.

ROY
It's almost 11:30.

WILL
Exactly.

ROY
(Chuckles)
Don't think this gets you out of
our standing Smash Bros challenge.
Unless you're willing to concede
defeat.

WILL
(Jokingly)
Screw off, Roy. Even with a
hangover, you know I can beat your
ass at Smash Bros. Especially
because you choose freaking Kirby
every time.

ROY
You're jealous.

WILL
I am definitely not. Just let me
get a shower first. I still smell
like Natty and Hawaiian punch.

ROY
Sure—whoa. What happened to your
hand, dude?

WILL
Huh? Oh. I don't know. Fell or
something last night. It'll
probably come back to me. First:
shower. Then: beating you at
Smash. After that? Who knows.

ROY
Probably cleaning the house.

WILL
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

FOOTSTEPS on stairs. DOOR opens.

WILL
(confused and alarmed)
What the hell? Jack?

FOOTSTEPS rushing.

WILL (CON'D)
(panicking)
Shit. Fuck, he's not breathing. Oh
my God. ROY!! GET UP HERE.

RUSTLING sound, a PHONE DIALING three numbers.

911 OPERATOR
(voice coming through
the phone)
9-1-1. What's your emergency?

WILL
(still panicking;
talking to himself)
He's dead. Oh my God, he's dead.

911 OPERATOR
Sir, I need you to calm down. Who
is dead?

WILL
I... He's a student. He's... His
name's Jack.

911 OPERATOR
What is your location? Sir?

WILL
(stammering)
1820 University Way.

911 OPERATOR
I am sending help to your
location. I need you to stay on
the line with me, okay?

WILL
Shit. He's... oh my God.

911 OPERATOR
Help is on the way. Please remain
calm. Try taking in a deep breath.

WILL
(shakily)
I... yeah. Okay. Okay. (takes in an
audible deep breath) Okay.

911 OPERATOR
Can you tell me what happened?

WILL
I got home and was gonna take a
shower and he's on my floor and
he's not breathing and-

911 OPERATOR
He's on your floor? Like in your
room?

WILL
Y-yeah. Yeah. He's in my room.

911 OPERATOR
Is he your roommate?

WILL
What? No. No, he's not my
roommate.

911 OPERATOR
You just found him on the floor of
your bedroom? Already dead?

WILL
Yeah. It's-It's like I said.

911 OPERATOR
Okay. What's your name?

WILL
Will. My name's Will.

911 OPERATOR
All right. Hang on, Will. Help is
on the way.

END FLASHBACK.

3. Papers RUSTLING.

HEARING MODERATOR
Mr. Thomas? Mr. Thomas.

WILL
Huh? What?

HEARING MODERATOR
Did you know Jack? Were you
friends with him?

WILL

I mean, not really. I guess we'd had a few classes together, and I saw him around the student union and stuff. But he was pretty much a stranger. I barely knew the guy.

HEARING MODERATOR

Yet he was seen at the party the night before, yes?

WILL

Sometimes people just kinda show up to these things, y'know. It's not like I invited him.

4. FLASHBACK - The sounds of BIRDS and background CHATTER. TYPING. iMESSAGE SENT.

WILL

Hey, Jack. We're throwing a party on Friday. You gonna be around?

TEXT TONE.

JACK

Idk, man. I've got work that night and can't find anyone to take my shift lol. What's the party? BYOB? 5th and a friend?

TYPING. iMESSAGE SENT.

WILL

We got Natty. Roy's gonna make jungle juice.

TEXT TONE.

JACK

Man, sounds lit. Pre-game plan?

TYPING. iMESSAGE SENT.

WILL

Roy's probably doing one with a friend of his like always. I hadn't gotten that far lol

FOOTSTEPS approaching.

ALLISON

Will?

WILL

Oh, Allison. Hey. What's up?

ALLISON

Oh, you know me. Tuesdays are always my busiest. Just got out of a philosophy exam.

WILL

How'd it go?

ALLISON

(hesitates half a beat too long; tries to laugh it off)

Just glad it's over with, honestly.

WILL

That's the spirit. Kind of. I'm about to head into a mock-pitch presentation for Marketing and there's, like, a 90 percent chance I'm going to choke, if that makes you feel better.

ALLISON

Hey, it's like my dad always says.
If you buy into it, so will they.

WILL

But I don't buy into it. That's
kind of the problem.

ALLISON

Then fake it 'til you make it.
That's basically my life motto
anyway. I believe in you.

WILL

Sure, but you believe in everyone.
Dr. Knicks can be kind of a hard-
ass.

ALLISON

Will?

WILL

Yeah?

ALLISON

Shut up. You're gonna be fine.

WILL

(chuckling)

Your undying confidence in me is
bad for my ego, Allison.

ALLISON

Nah. Of course I'm gonna support my
best friend.

WILL

You always have. Especially
recently.

BEAT.

ALLISON

Have you heard from her since...
she...?

Will waits a beat too long.

WILL

(unconvincingly)

No.

ALLISON

Liar. What happened?

WILL

Nothing.

ALLISON

Will...

WILL

I'll tell you about it later.
You're coming to the party on
Friday, right?

ALLISON

(with uncertainty)

I don't know. I've got a lot of
work and...

WILL

I know you don't really go out
much anymore, but Roy and I are
hosting it. You should come.
Consider it a 'supporting your
best friend' kind of thing.

ALLISON

I'll think about it. I should get
going. I've gotta meet with Dr.
Seidel in like, five minutes.

FOOTSTEPS hurrying away.

WILL
(calling after her)
Don't forget! Friday night!

Sound of STUMBLING. Sofi CRASHES into Will.

WILL
Hey--! Oh. Sofi.

SOFI
Oh my God, Will, I'm so sorry. I'm
running late and completely wasn't
paying attention.

WILL
(not bothered in the
slightest)
Nah, don't worry about it. Roy told
you about the party on Friday,
right?

SOFI
Absolutely. I can't wait.

WILL
Awesome.

SOFI
I gotta go. Helping plan the next
Spectrum meeting. It was great
seeing you, though. Tell Roy I
said hi.

WILL
Heh. I'm pretty sure you see him
even more than I do, but you got
it.

TEXT TONE.

ROY

Bro u been on the FB event for the party today?

TYPING. iMESSAGE SENT.

WILL

Not since this morning. Why?

TEXT TONE.

ROY

Got a lot of people saying they're gonna come on Friday.

TYPING. iMESSAGE SENT sound effect.

WILL

Really? Sweet.

TEXT TONE.

ROY

Yeah, you should check it out. It's wild.

Various alerts begin to sound. General Social Media/crowd noise. Fades out.

END FLASHBACK.

5. Papers RUSTLING.

HEARING MODERATOR

How much did you have to drink the night of the party, Mr. Thomas?

WILL

I'm sorry?

HEARING MODERATOR

How much did you have to drink that night?

WILL

I don't know. I'm 22. It's not like drinking is against the law.

HEARING MODERATOR

We recognize that. But a few accounts of the party mentioned that you had seemed 'noticeably inebriated' that night. A few even mentioned some level of irritability later on.

WILL

What are you trying to insinuate here?

HEARING MODERATOR

We are not insinuating anything, Mr. Thomas. We merely want to ensure you were engaging in healthy and safe behavior the night of the party. There are many reasons why someone may—

WILL

No. Look, it was just a regular party. To relax with some friends, okay? And as for drinking, I know my limits. I was fine. Nothing like, triggered me to drink more than normal or whatever it is you're saying.

6. FLASHBACK.

PHONE VOICE

You have one voicemail
outstanding. Monday, March 12th.
1:30 AM.

PENNY

(evidently crying over
the phone)
H-hey, Will. It's... it's Penny.
God, I don't even know why I'm
calling you. I'm probably the last
person you want to hear from right
now. But there's something I need
to tell you, and I guess I'm too
much of a coward to do it to your
face. The... It... The baby... There was
a chance it wasn't yours. That's
why I couldn't. I...

LONG PAUSE. PENNY takes in a shaking breath.

PENNY (CON'D)

A few weeks ago, at Rick's party... I
think someone maybe drugged me, I
don't know. But I... I was... raped,
Will. And then a few weeks later I
found out I was pregnant and I... It
was too much. I couldn't... God, I
couldn't live with that. I couldn't
go through with it no matter how
much you tried to reassure me
because I knew in my heart it
wasn't yours.

As PENNY continues, her voice becomes increasingly muffled
and faded as a high-pitched HUM starts to fade up.

PENNY (CONT.)

I don't expect you to forgive me
and I still need space. It's all
just too much right now. You're a
wonderful guy. You don't deserve
this. I'm sorry, Will. I'm so, so
sorry.

Penny's voice and the HUM both abruptly cut out.

WILL

(sotto voce; voice
cracking with emotion)
But what if it was mine?

THE END