

Feed The Birds (excerpt)

written by

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JOE  
 Alright. Let's find Price.

The four men; Joe Potter, Marvin Davis, Marty Sklar, and Dick Irvine, group up and head for the studio's exit.

Ray Watson watches as they open the door to the outside, bringing the natural light into the studio. It recedes as the door closes behind them.

HERB  
 Ray?

RAYMOND  
 Yeah?

HERB  
 You're working with Marty?

RAYMOND  
 I am.

HERB  
 What does he think about all this?

RAYMOND  
 About?

HERB  
 The project. EPCOT.

RAYMOND  
 (chuckles)  
 He's a true believer. Him, Harry and Joe. It pisses me off sometimes.

HERB  
 We were all true believers not that long ago.

RAYMOND  
 It's time to face facts. It's not happening.

HERB  
 Oh, come on. You don't believe that.

RAYMOND  
 Don't get me wrong, I'm still working like I am a believer. But only because Walt pays me to be.

HERB

You'd make more money if you were still doing real estate.

RAYMOND

It's not Disney real estate, though, is it?

HERB

Good point.

RAYMOND

See, I built a whole city to be here. But the difference between me and Marty is that he could never be anything but a true believer. He writes Walt's scripts, he's been alongside him since CalArts. Which, by the way, was another failed city.

HERB

It's got students, at least.

RAYMOND

You get my point. Loyalty only gets you so far. He's gotta be his own man now.

HERB

You say that, but even you're still here.

RAYMOND

I'm loyal to a degree. The moment Walt comes back, I'm giving him a piece of my mind.

HERB

Good luck with that.

EXT. STUDIO COURTYARD

Joe Potter, Marvin Davis, Marty Sklar, and Dick Irvine walk through the courtyard, side by side.

DICK

Did I hear you right earlier, Marvin?

MARVIN

About what?

DICK  
Six *thousand* square feet?

MARVIN  
Yeah. 1/8 inch to one foot. Makes  
the thing 115 by 60 feet.

JOE  
It's a real marvel. I see why Price  
likes working there. It really  
reminds you what we're fighting  
for.

DICK  
You think so?

JOE  
We're on the cusp of the next great  
American revolution.  
(beat)  
In twenty years, etched in the  
walls of schools big and small; Joe  
Potter, Marty Sklar, Martin Davis,  
and Dick Irvine.  
(chuckles)  
How about that?

The men all chuckle with Joe.

MARTY  
Dick?

DICK  
Yeah?

MARTY  
WEDComm. That's really possible?

DICK  
RCA seems to think so.

MARTY  
Every day, I'm blown away with what  
we're doing here.

MARVIN  
Have you seen the AVAC system?

MARTY  
No. What is it?

MARVIN

It's an underground system of tunnels that connect all the trash deposits. No garbage trucks necessary, just stick it in to your bin, and it just-

(imitates vacuum sound)

Sucks it right underground to a compactor.

DICK

(laughs)

Okay, so if I drop my wedding ring in the bin, I'm screwed?

JOE

Connected to every home? No way.

MARVIN

Hey, Walt's the idea man. I'm his pen. Joe and Harry work out the logistics.

MARTY

The point is, it doesn't matter if everything sticks. If even just a quarter of the projects we have going get through to EPCOT, we'll still have built the most advanced city on the face of the planet.

The men grunt and nod in agreement. They walk into another studio building -

INT. MODEL BUILDING

They walk in to find a large suspended platform held up by scaffolding. Some electricians are underneath, fiddling with a large wiring harness that covers the entire underside of the base.

The men walk up a set of wooden stairs, ascending to reveal a large scale architectural model of the EPCOT city.

The different regions of the city protrude from the center like branches from a tree; at the center - a modern hotel and mall, the largest of all the buildings.



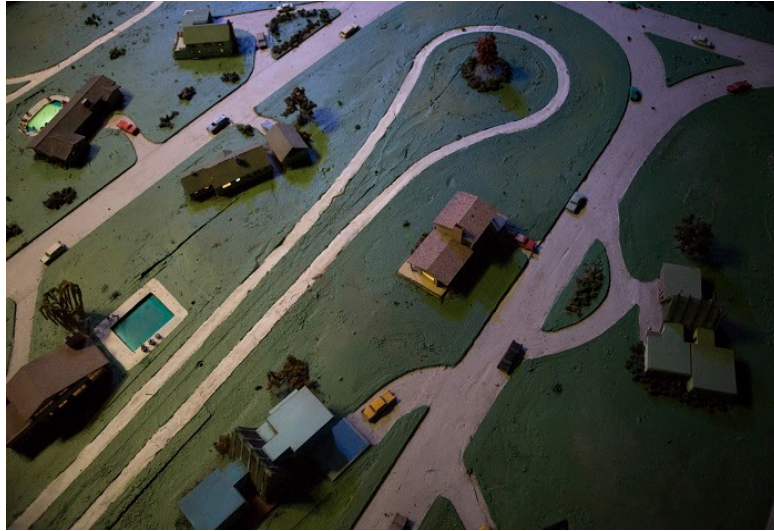
DICK  
 (in disbelief)  
 Wow.  
 (chuckles)  
 I feel like a giant.

MARVIN  
 (grins)  
 That's the idea.

JOE  
 Where's Harry?

MARTY  
 Not here, it seems.  
 (beat)  
 Wow, look at that!

Marty points to the low density housing on the outskirts of the city. Residential homes line the edge of the belt, wide open greenery in-between.



A single road lines the outskirts of the belt, connecting to the garages of the homes behind.



MARTY (CONT'D)

No roads, just open field. My kids would love to play out in that yard.

JOE

Harry must be out somewhere..

Joe walks back down the stairs to look around.

MARVIN

It wouldn't be your yard.

MARTY

(chuckles)

Right.

DICK  
Remind me of the land ownership  
situation?

MARTY  
(clears throat)  
Well, originally, Walt wanted  
permanent residents: they own the  
house, but all the land in-between  
the houses there is public  
property.

DICK  
What's different now?

MARVIN  
Now it's temporary leases. So  
technically, no one would own any  
property. It's all controlled by  
Walt.

DICK  
Huh.

The door is heard swinging open as Joe leaves the building.

MARVIN  
(sighs)  
Remember how hard we had to fight  
for *that*?

MARTY  
Yeah. Imagine the chaos.

DICK  
What's so wrong with permanent  
residents?

MARVIN  
Walt didn't want elected  
government. If you're settling down  
somewhere with your family with a  
30 year mortgage, you'd want  
someone to represent your  
interests.

MARTY  
The Reedy Creek Improvement  
District gives us almost unlimited  
power. Democracy everywhere but  
here.

DICK  
Christ.

MARVIN

Harry always said never to say no to Walt. Easier to pull him back than to see him get angry and push even harder for an idea that's already bad.

MARTY

Marvin..

MARVIN

What? If Ray were here, he'd have said the same thing.

Dick leans over the model to take a closer look.

MARVIN (CONT'D)

You can walk on it, if you'd like. Any bits of exposed plywood or flat spots. Just be careful not to knock over a tree or something.

DICK

I'll be honest. I'm afraid to. I'm just looking..

(squints)

..at that amusement park over there. It looks incredible.



MARVIN

Ah!

(laughing)

Yes. That took some doing. The entire thing moves, you know.

DICK

Really?

MARVIN

Oh yes. Same with the little cars  
and railcars and such.

DICK

Remarkable.

MARVIN

Maybe we can get one of the  
engineers to run all the lights and  
electronics.

At this moment, Marvin notices a man sitting, hunched over,  
behind the hotel in the center of the model. Most of his body  
is obscured behind the tower, including his face. His feet  
stuck out beyond, rested beside it.

MARVIN (CONT'D)

Carl? Is that you?

He steps out onto the model and stumbles toward the man,  
watching his step as he goes. Marty and Dick watch him from  
the sidelines.

As he makes his way around, he gets a better glimpse of the  
man. He's older, with slicked gray hair, drawing something in  
a sketchbook.

MARVIN (CONT'D)

Carl?

The man coughs, and puts his pencil on his ear.

MAN

Westinghouse gave me a factory tour  
not long ago.

The three men are taken aback. They all recognize the voice.  
The man stands up to reveal that it's -

WALT (CONT'D)

They had this incredible device  
they were working on. A...  
(snapping)  
What was it?



The men are all in shock upon seeing Walt.

WALT (CONT'D)

Photo-

(beat)

Photo resistor. It can detect when things pass in front of it.

MARVIN

Walt.. Shouldn't you still be in the hospital?

WALT

(coughing)

Maybe. But the surgery went great, according to them. So I left early.

MARTY

Walt, maybe you should sit back down.

WALT

I've been sitting. Let me tell you about this-

DICK

Walt..

WALT

(raising voice)

Let me speak!

The room falls silent.

WALT (CONT'D)

Thank you.

(beat)

As I was saying... I'm thinking we can have an underground trolley. Like in France. Then instead of a motorman, we can have one of those photo resistors, and it can slow down or stop for people in front of it.

MARVIN

(clears throat)

It sounds like a fine idea, Walt.

WALT

Does it? Or is it "already bad?"

MARVIN

How long have you been sitting there?

WALT

Since six.

Dick and Marty look at each other. Marvin tries to lighten the mood.

MARVIN

Your feet never fell asleep, or..

WALT

You never answered my question. My idea. My.. "fine idea," according to you.

Marvin's face sinks. It's unavoidable. Yet, he can't find the words to speak. He simply walks back to join Marty and Dick on the side.

WALT (CONT'D)

Yeah. I figured.

DICK

So, you heard everything?

WALT

Yep.

DICK

Then you know that we're just as dedicated to this plan as you are.

WALT

(scoffs)

Don't make me laugh.

(angry)

You're here, talking about what we're doing, instead of rolling up your sleeves, staying in the studio, and just doing it!

MARTY

Walt, calm down. We're doing what we can.

WALT

Please.

(beat)

I gotta hand it to you, though, Marvin. Despite all the crap you were shoveling earlier, these interiors are exceptional.

MARVIN

(whisper, to Dick and Marty)

I told you.

WALT

This project needs all hands on deck. If this is all you've been able to do in the time I've been gone, it's a damn shame my tumor didn't swallow me whole, huh? 'Cause otherwise, you'd have full paid vacation courtesy of my lungs and my wallet.

Walt rips out the sheet of paper he was drawing on, crumples it up into a ball, and tosses it into the model.

There's a lasting silence. Marvin hesitates for a moment, but eventually steps out onto the model again to grab the crumpled up sketch as the rest of the men watch.

From the far end of the sound stage, a door is heard opening. Marvin walks toward the side of the model opposite Dick and Marty to see who it is. The room is momentarily filled with light from the outside as two men enter through.

Walt, Dick, Marvin, and Marty all turn to see who has come in. Footsteps are heard creaking up the wooden stairs as Joe Potter and Harrison Buzz Price rise up above the model, coming up on the side area of the model where Marvin is.

JOE  
(surprised)  
Walt!

WALT  
Joe. I see you brought Harrison  
too. Care to join us?

JOE  
I thought you were still in  
recovery.

WALT  
Old news. I'm back now. What do you  
have for me?

JOE  
Um.. Harry? You want to tell him  
what you told me out in the  
courtyard?

HARRISON  
I really.. only need to bring this  
to Marty and Ray. They're running  
point on Reedy Creek, right?

WALT  
If you're hesitant to tell me  
something about *my* project - I  
think it's something I need to  
hear.

HARRISON  
Walt, I really think-

WALT  
(angry)  
I have had enough of engineers and  
architects and corporate executives  
telling *me* what I can and cannot do  
or say or hear. I passed that point  
a long time ago. I proved them  
wrong before. I will prove them  
wrong now.

(beat)  
Please. Harrison. Share with the  
class.

HARRISON  
(clears throat)  
Very well.

Harrison looks at Joe, then Walt. He braces himself as he  
prepares to speak.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

I looked into some numbers again.  
Just came back from a developer  
this morning, and..

(beat)

The original plan pegged the entire  
project at \$125 million; 75 for  
Disney World, another 50 for EPCOT.

WALT

I know this. What's changed?

HARRISON

Disney World is still 75 million,  
as I predicted a few weeks ago. But  
EPCOT..

(beat)

It's gonna cost \$150 million alone.

An air of shock fills the room. It hits everyone, except  
Walt, who reacts with disappointment, then confusion.

WALT

What-

(beat)

It's still early, Harry. You would  
have had to make a lot of  
assumptions to get to that number.  
Reedy Creek should drive costs  
down.

HARRISON

I took that into account. The tax  
breaks, the development subsidies.

WALT

No - the..

(beat)

We could always get more subsidies.  
This is a huge economic opportunity  
for Florida, who wouldn't want-

HARRISON

Walt.

WALT

We have hundreds of corporate  
sponsors. They wouldn't be able to  
help foot that bill? We can find  
that money somewhere.

As they speak, Ray Watson walks up the stairs behind Dick,  
Marty, and Marvin.

JOE

\$150 Million is no small sum. With Disney World, the price tag jumps to 225.

WALT

I have built the largest media conglomerate in history for you. For this project. And you're telling me you can't do it?

Ray joins the three men on the sidelines.

RAYMOND

(quietly)

What's Walt doing back already?

Walt turns back toward the group of men off on the side, noticing Ray enter.

WALT

Raymond!

RAYMOND

Walt. What's going on?

WALT

You're business liaison for a number of our corporate sponsors, yes?

RAYMOND

(flustered)

Right. Monsanto, Westinghouse..

WALT

How much can we get them all to commit?

RAYMOND

Um.. I don't know. 40, 45 million at most.

WALT

What? What happened? Before I left, I heard 60 and counting.

RAYMOND

It was. But we had some dropouts, some who didn't want to commit to a hard number..

(beat)

(MORE)

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

But that's not what I'm concerned about now. Walt, you should be in the hospital.

WALT

(angry)

Goddamn it! I don't want to hear another word about my health. I could care less about that now. You.. you all are just letting EPCOT die. This community.. this city! A testament to the possibility and triumph of American ingenuity and free enterprise! Am I the only one who sees that?

Walt strains his voice so much he has a cough attack.

JOE

No. Walt, of course we do.

WALT

(yelling)

Well, why are you dragging your feet then? Huh?!

(beat)

Even before our little talk today. Is it about the money?

(coughs)

Have you been talking with Roy? Roy thinks EPCOT is a loser. But don't take any notice of him! Disney World will make all the profits we need for this operation!

RAYMOND

No.

WALT

(turning back)

I'm sorry? What was that, Ray?

RAYMOND

No!

MARTY

Ray, don't.

RAYMOND

Marty, stop being on the sidelines for one second.

(beat)

And Walt - it's time someone asked you some hard questions.

Walt looks bewildered. He crosses his arms.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

What are we building?

WALT

Read the name.

RAYMOND

No, Walt! What is this?

WALT

I said, read the name! Experimental  
Prototype City of Tomorrow.

RAYMOND

What is that?

WALT

It tells you all you need to know!

RAYMOND

No, you have to decide whether  
you're building a *real* community;  
an actual community where people  
will come, raise their families,  
form a city government, grow and  
live their lives, or a zoo.

WALT

Are those really my only two  
options?

RAYMOND

EPCOT would be no more of a city  
than this model! You're not going  
to go out and get milk in your  
pajamas! You're gonna put on a suit  
and tie, because these people are  
on exhibit now.

WALT

Disney World is the attraction.  
Disney World will make the money.

RAYMOND

No, it's not. The people are. You  
have a responsibility-

WALT

For my people.

RAYMOND

And as such, you need to take responsibility for what happens to them!

DICK

He's right.

Walt turns to Dick, looking hurt.

WALT

You too, Dick?

DICK

We've been working on a lot of conveniences for the people. But how are you going to run a city, Walt?

MARTY

The goal was never to build a perfect city. It was to create a test bed for new urban development.

RAYMOND

A test bed where we're experimenting with people's lives.

DICK

Walt, what happens if a company moves out of the industrial park? What happens to their workers? Are they all evicted?

WALT

Look, we can work out those details when they come..

DICK

They will, won't they?

Walt lets out a deep breath.

MARVIN

Jesus Christ. If they're fired?

WALT

Everyone who lives in the city needs to be able to make their contribution-

MARVIN

Oh my god!

WALT

(raising voice)

It's simple math! If you don't do your part, what value do you have?

MARVIN

What about crime?

WALT

We have the teen center! You know about that!

RAYMOND

(sarcastic)

Yeah, cause delinquent kids want nothing more than to hang out in a glorified YMCA filled with narcs!

JOE

Gentlemen. We needn't argue. We're only in the preliminary stages. We can always address this later.

RAYMOND

Two years of work. Why did this have to come up now? If you really wanted to fix the modern city, you would have focused on the issues that really matter! If you want to make people's lives easier, the first step wouldn't be to strip away their rights and appoint yourself emperor! Only a narcissistic sociopath worried about ego and image could possibly think-

Walt lets out a mighty scream and throws his sketch book at Ray.

WALT

(yelling)

I know what's best for my people! I know what this city needs! You dare lecture me about ego? I'm doing this for my people, my company, my country! This will be my legacy. My contribution to the world.

MARTY

Walt. With all due respect, haven't you already made your contribution? Is revolutionizing the entire entertainment industry not enough?

Walt scoffs, then begins to laugh. Softly, at first, then it turns nearly maniacal. He wheezes at the end before coughing even more.

WALT  
Fancy being known the world over..  
for the invention of a mouse.

Walt pants, wheezing softly with each exhale.

We cut to an extreme wide of the set, with Walt standing in the middle of his creation, with the six men watching him from either side of the model, fifty feet away from him. Walt stands alone. He notices something peculiar past Dick, Marty, and Ray's feet.

He appears to stand in silence, staring at their feet, prompting the three men to look at one another, then their feet, before finally turning around to see a child peeking over the floor, standing on the stairs.

The child promptly drops down. The men look back at Walt. His confusion turns to fear.

WALT (CONT'D)  
Walter?

His attention is immediately diverted to the child; he promptly jumps back through the model, taking care not to step on anything important. He makes it all the way to the end of the model where the three men are.

WALT (CONT'D)  
Walter!

Walt shuffles past them to the stairs, looking down to see nothing but the dark.

WALT (CONT'D)  
Walter. It's okay. Come out.

All of the men in the room look at each other, confused.

Walter Jr., 5, peeks out from the underside of the model.

WALT (CONT'D)  
(softly)  
Hey there! Don't worry, it's just  
Uncle Walt. Come on.

Walter looks scared. He slowly emerges from the shadows, slowly walking up toward the stairs.

WALT (CONT'D)

Are the rest of them here, too?

Walter looks down in guilt.

One by one, several children emerge from beneath the stairs and peek out. Chris, 12, Joanna, 10, Tammy, 9, and Jennifer, 6.

WALT (CONT'D)

(sighs)

Where's your mom?

Suddenly, the door to the sound stage opens, revealing Lucille Martin and Dianne Disney, 33. They rush over to the kids.

DIANNE

Kids! Hey, don't go running off like that!

Dianne goes to scold the kids. Lucille rushes up the stairs to greet Walt, panting.

On the far side of the model, Marvin, Joe, and Harry begin to weave through the model city to make it to the other side and see what the commotion is about.

LUCILLE

(out of breath)

I'm really sorry, sir.

WALT

You're sorry to who?

LUCILLE

(flustered)

Right, no, yes - sorry, Walt. They got away from us as we were heading to your office.

WALT

(to Dianne)

Dianne? Honey?

Dianne looks up from the kids.

DIANNE

Yeah, dad, I'm sorry to have them bother you, they snuck off.

WALT

You were bringing them here? To surprise me?

DIANNE

(sighs)

Yeah. When I heard you were back from the surgery, I..

WALT

It's okay. Thank you for bringing them here.

Dianne nods.

WALT (CONT'D)

Where's the oldest? Huh? Chris?

CHRIS

(whining)

It was Joanna's idea!

JOANNA

(angry)

No it wasn't!

DIANNE

Hey! You're all in trouble. Get it?

WALT

Now.. hold on now, Dianne.

DIANNE

What? They're your grandkids. You never-

WALT

They're safe, aren't they? They still stuck together, didn't they?

(beat)

Smart kids.

DIANNE

Dad..

WALT

Tell you what, kids, you were heading up to my office?

They nod.

WALT (CONT'D)

There's a little train set on the coffee table. You know the one. It's all yours. I'll be there soon, alright?

The kids' faces light up.

On top of the model, the men look at one another, then huddle up to talk amongst themselves as they continue.

JENNIFER

Can we play with the little dolls too?

DIANNE

The what?

WALT

(laughs)

She's talking about the miniatures on the shelf behind my desk.

(beat)

Yeah. Of course, darling. Just ask your mom to grab the tall ones for you, okay? I don't want you falling again.

JENNIFER

(chuckles)

Okay.

DIANNE

Alright, kids. Your Uncle Walt's got a lot of work to do now, okay? Let's go.

WALT

(to Lucille)

Don't worry about the kids.

They're..

(beat)

Kids.

He laughs. Lucille smiles and makes her way back down the stairs to join Dianne.

WALT (CONT'D)

Kids! Before you go, come up here a moment.

DIANNE

We'll be waiting outside the door for you.

Lucille and Dianne exit the way they came. The kids make their way up the stairs to greet Walt.

Walt takes a moment to glance at the rest of the EPCOT men. They're now deep in conversation. He turns attention back to the kids, kneeling down to meet them at their level.

WALT

Hey. How long were you down there?

None of them answer.

WALT (CONT'D)

Don't worry. I'm not mad.

(beat)

Walter?

Walter looks up.

WALTER JR.

We were only there for a few minutes. We wanted to see the model.

WALT

(laughs)

You did, didn't you? It's okay.

Take a look.

He gestures to the model, and the kids look on in excitement.

WALT (CONT'D)

No one's allowed past where those men are standing except for me. But, I'll tell you what. Later on, when I'm free, we can come right back here and you can play all you want in the little city.

The kids react with glee to this.

WALT (CONT'D)

On one condition, okay?

(pause)

You know earlier, when I was yelling. I'm sorry you had to see that. It's just- you know.

(beat)

Your Uncle Walt gets angry too, sometimes. And that's okay. What's important is how we deal with it.

Some of the men in the group sneak a glance at them as they talk.

WALT (CONT'D)

You don't stay angry. You don't stay guilty. You can't live staying one way. You have to keep going. For better or worse. 'Cause things always change.

(MORE)

WALT (CONT'D)  
 Progress is important. If you ever  
 feel like things are easy, you're  
 living life wrong. Do you  
 understand?

The kids nod. Whether they genuinely understand is a  
 different question.

WALT (CONT'D)  
 Good. Just don't tell your mom  
 about me getting angry, and I'll  
 let you guys play on the model  
 later. Deal?

KIDS  
 (simultaneously)  
 Deal!

WALT  
 Alright. Go out with your mom,  
 okay? I'll see you later.

The kids cheerfully run back down the stairs to go out of the  
 studio. Walt watches as they do so.

The men now break from their huddle and approach Walt.

RAYMOND  
 Walt, I-

WALT  
 Save it.

He stands up, and walks toward the model, arms behind his  
 back. He stares out onto the city.

WALT (CONT'D)  
 This model. It'll do.  
 (beat)  
 Marvin, keep those engineers in  
 tow.

MARVIN  
 Thank you.

DICK  
 High praise, Walt.

WALT  
 Don't be a kiss-ass, Dick.

The men chuckle.

WALT (CONT'D)  
See that bench? Over there?

MARTY  
Which one?

WALT  
On the top of the hotel in the very center. There's a bench there. You see it?

Some of the men lean over the model and squint, trying to catch a glance at the bench he's talking about.

WALT (CONT'D)  
It has a perfect view of the green belt. Especially that park,  
(pointing)  
Over there.  
(pause)  
That's where Lilian and I will sit at night.. and watch the people. People.. that would be happy.  
(pause)  
You may not believe it's possible. But it is. I know it is. If you think so too, we'll do just fine.

Walt gets into another coughing fit and turns back to take a seat at the top of the stairs. The rest of the men follow.

WALT (CONT'D)  
Marty, Joe. Stick around. The rest of you, back to the studio.

The men all look at each other. They hesitate for a moment, then all make their way down the stairs and leave the same way. It's just Joe, Marty, and Walt sticking around.

WALT (CONT'D)  
Thanks for sticking up for EPCOT earlier. You didn't have to do that.

MARTY  
I didn't think Uncle Walt actually existed.

WALT  
I hate Uncle Walt. He's too safe. Too vulnerable.

MARTY

At least he knows how to talk to kids. And he sure knows how to sell a city to a state legislature.

WALT

(grins)

Yeah. He sure does. But to be fair, you wrote that script.

MARTY

That I did.

JOE

Walt, what are we doing here? Are you going to ask me to fire Ray?

WALT

No. Actually, I wanted to ask you to keep him around.

(beat)

He just needs some time to cool off. He does good work. You agree, right, Marty?

MARTY

Despite my reservations, yeah. He does.

WALT

That's all I need to hear.

Walt sighs.

JOE

I know you don't like to hear about it, Walt, but are you sure you're fine? You don't need to be at the hospital?

WALT

I'm sure they miss me and my insurance money, but as it stands, I should be fine. As long as there's no more surprises today.

**SLAM!**

A loud crack rings throughout the room, startling Joe and Marty.

From the opposite side of the sound stage, Roy Disney enters, his footsteps echoing louder and louder as he approaches.