

TRANSCRIPT OF AUDIO FILE:

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BEGIN TRANSCRIPT:

THERAPIST: Oh. Cold today?

CLIENT: You can turn that thing on if you want. It's a little chilly. How's it going?

THERAPIST: Good.

CLIENT: Oh, man. Well, so yeah, a lot going on. Um... Yeah, definitely like a situational depression thing maybe a little bit. I don't know, but just been like a bit of a rollercoaster last several days. Even like within the same day, like sometimes, yeah, I'm having... So... Oh that's right, yeah, yeah. Yeah, Thanksgiving was okay. I mean, you know, I was glad that we did it at my cousins for the reasons I said. So I didn't hear one political discussion the whole night, you know. But yeah. You know, our family's just gotten depressing, you know, like they are no men kind of, you know. [Ulysses is] a shell of his former self, he has nothing to talk about really except his stuff. It's just yeah, I don't know, it was okay. But there was something—something felt a little, I don't want to say pathetic, but something just felt kind of very blah. It was fun hanging out with my little cousins or whatever. But Friday was really nice, I hung out with George, we went to see Peter Wolf. That was nice, you know, it was a fun night. [2:10]

But yeah, I don't know, just in general I'm just kind of—every day is like a—I don't know how it's going to go anymore kind of, you know, just because I'm so—there's just so much going on. I think—yesterday and the day before I really had moments where I really felt like dark, depressed kind of. And I realize part of it is because, you know, I've just—I realize in those moments more than I have before that—you know, how fucked up these old things are in me, like my mom's voice. So I think now that I'm so much better in so many ways when I have those moments for some reason I get even—it's like a really bad momentary—because I just feel like, wow, I must hate myself so much, right, I must have so much—I mean, I don't hate myself, but those triggers are there. You know what I mean? I can't—like I just get so bad, I get so like — The other night I—well, there were also some other like real things that happened, but those were really just... like I was even down—I couldn't even step back to see how well I handled—you know what I mean? Like that's even happening now. I'm handling things so well, but I have trouble seeing that. You know what I mean? And that's depressing. [laughs] You know what I'm saying? That I don't find comfort sometimes in that, or I don't—I don't know if I'm explaining it well but... [4:15]

THERAPIST: No, it does sound like the way just really described the last [inaudible]. You're really getting into a place where you're making [inaudible] sort of very deep, very dark feelings about yourself.

CLIENT: Yeah. Yeah.

THERAPIST: And sometimes being able to know that your [unclear] feelings—or sometimes it can take over.

CLIENT: Yeah.

THERAPIST: I can imagine you really will have to find your out of it.

CLIENT: Yeah, yeah. Because I think what it is, is I think—I mean, a lot of people experience that. I just think that what it is, is that if you're an artist and you're ambitious and serious about more than one art form—I mean, in other words I already have so much on my plate that could cause all kinds of melancholy and frustration. You know what I mean?

THERAPIST: Mm hm.

CLIENT: So then when you couple it with all this old stuff it's hard. That, plus just feeling lonely. Like I'm having moments where I just feel really like lonely and frustrated. And then it becomes like a viscous cycle. You know, then I'm like, "You know, it's just not going to happen. I'm not going to find—blah, blah, blah." I want to find someone Assyrian, but how the fuck's that going to happen. I want to go to Assyria but I don't have the money to do that right now. So time is just going by. You know what I mean? It just becomes like a... [6:00]

The two things that happened though, I had a date Saturday night that I was really looking forward to. Like this girl was kind of giving me butterflies a little bit, which that doesn't happen often anymore at all. So we have a great time, we go, we hang out, she has a drink, whatever, fine, okay. We hang out, we have a great time, I'm totally into it. At the end of the night I walk her kind of half-way home, and we make out, whatever, whatever. The next day or the day after that I get an e-mail saying that she doesn't feel comfortable with drinking and driving, and for that reason it's just going to work, we can't hang out together. And I was just like so—it got me on so many levels. First of all, that sounds like bullshit to me. Just don't say anything. Like if you're just not into it or something just don't say anything, just be a guy about it, don't—I'd prefer that. Don't give me some weird—I don't like the whole, "You're great, you're so awesome." Well, obviously I'm not that great and that awesome, you know.

But second of all I was like drinking, and what the fuck are you talking about? Yeah, it just—I mean, that's already obviously a sore spot with me. So I was like, "What?" So I wrote back to her, I was like, "I'm sorry, but I don't—who's drinking and driving? I walked you half-way home and then I went—what do you mean drinking and driving?" And I had like two, two and a half beers. But I said, "On top of all that I told you that I was totally fine. If you don't drink—like I asked you, like I'm totally flexible. We can just have tea." You know, like she just told me that you're that uncom— And also, why did we have such a great time and why did we make out? Like what the fuck are you talking about? [8:00]

But then what really got me was part of the conversation that night was she had this whole thing about when we talk about relationships. I never even heard this term, "gas lighting"? I didn't even know what that was. But she was talking about it, and I was like, "Oh my god, that's—I didn't know that there was a word for that, but that's happened to me like twice.

THERAPIST: What is it again? I've heard the word but I kind of [overtalk].

CLIENT: Gas light—like what Samantha did to me is gas lighting. Where I make you feel like you're crazy and irrational, and you're the one being weird, you know. So she gives me this whole thing about that, and then she sends me this—I was like, "Dude, that's the ultimate—you're doing the thing that you say you don't like. It doesn't—don't make any fucking sense." So I was just—like that didn't help. You know, I was like, of course, the one girl—I kind of got all—you know, like that just—that wasn't good, because then that put me in a bad—you know, I was like, see, there is something. The girls I really want, there's something about me, they don't want me. Like there's something—you know, like that was bad. [9:15]

And then the next day this girl that I have been kind of seeing, but it's not—we haven't talked about any exclusive, nothing, nothing. But one time she let—on our second date she let it slip that she'd been on another, okay, stupid date. And I kind of told her, I was like, you know, I'm a very don't ask, don't tell guy. There's no reason—like how am I supposed to be—what's that supposed to do for me? Like we're on a date, so I don't really want to know. But anyway. But then she e-mailed me Sunday and she was like—she sent me this long e-mail saying, you know, “This online dating thing is blah, blah, blah, it's kind of crazy, I just, blah, blah, blah.” And then she's like, you know, basically I slept with someone last night. And she's like, “I just feel really bad. I know that you have this like don't ask, don't tell thing, but I just feel like I have to tell you.” And she was like, “I'll totally understand if you don't want to see me or whatever.” Oh, we had plans that night, that's what it was. She's like, you know, “I'd still really like to see you,” but she's like, “It just happened, I totally didn't blah, blah, blah,” all this stuff, whatever. [10:30]

THERAPIST: It's odd.

CLIENT: You know what, it's not, it's not. And I wrote back such a great response to her, I wish I could read it to you, but—because it got me thinking about this whole date—in a way my response to her encapsulated—it forced me to crystallize what I think about dating. And I just told her, I was like, “You know, I'm not sure how to respond. I mean, this is the problem with online dating. It's the problem with dating in general,” I told her. It was like, “We all say we want a certain thing, but everything we do, and the ways we try to get those things, are totally antithetical to that.” And I was like, you know, “This is why I don't like going—” I mean, yes, I'm on there too, but it's why—but I hate being on there, and I'm super, super picky about who I actually meet. It's like we're just flipping—it's like shopping. I mean, we all pretend that we're reading profile, we're not, we're just he's attractive, he's not, he's attractive. You know what I mean? She's attractive. That's all it is. And there's something—that can't be healthy, it just can't. Something doesn't feel healthy. Yes, I know, you could walk into a bar and that's what you do too. But there's something humane—

THERAPIST: Do you mean attractive just about the physical [overtalk].

CLIENT: Yeah, I mean what are people doing—Match.com, come one. Yes, of course there's a profile, but you don't really pay any attention to that profile until you've already decided someone's really attractive to you. [12:00]

THERAPIST: To you.

CLIENT: Yeah, that's what I'm saying.

THERAPIST: You mean people—

CLIENT: What do you mean?

THERAPIST: Um, I guess I'm—like are you seeing it as like there's a hierarchy of appearance and—

CLIENT: No, no, no.

THERAPIST: —only a certain number of people would be found attractive.

CLIENT: Oh, no, no, no. No, I'm saying for everybody.

THERAPIST: Mm hm?

CLIENT: I'm saying at the end of the day what—

THERAPIST: That it starts [overtalk].

CLIENT: Yes.

THERAPIST: Yeah.

CLIENT: Yeah. And what I'm saying is that the Internet has really boiled that down to a pretty harsh level. You know what I mean? So just flipping—you can literally flip. You don't like them? Flip to the left. You like them? Flip to the right. I mean, that can't be healthy, you know what I mean? And it's not about who's the most [attractive]—just in general for all of us, you know.

THERAPIST: Mm hm.

CLIENT: So I was like, you know. But then you meet someone, and then the problem is, I know that you're on there. Right? And you know, that I'm on there. So what are we supposed to do, on the second date we're supposed to be like, "Okay, so no more OKCupid. This is it. Like we're just going to—" Right, no. But then so—but now you slept with somebody and you're telling me. And I was like, "How can I see you tonight?"

THERAPIST: That's more what I'm saying is odd, that she told you. One that she did it, two that she told you. It just feels like self-sabotage or something. Of course how are you going to respond to that?

CLIENT: Yeah. Yeah, except I mean but she was totally cool—in a way she was totally—she was like, "You know—" When I responded she was like, "I totally understand." Like she was like—she was like, "If it was me I'd be pissed." She's like, "I can't believe you're not more angry," or whatever, "but I appreciate—" Whatever, I don't know. Basically all I said was—I think I handled it like that's—this is what I'm saying, like I handled it really well. But it still is depressing, you know. [14:00]

THERAPIST: And so why depressing?

CLIENT: It just reinforced. I was like, well see, this is why, this is why I don't do— Yeah, let's say she hadn't told me. But she still did sleep with another dude. See, this is like—I don't—I was like— I'm working hard to not be—I've worked hard to not be more cynical—as cynical and jaded. Not jaded, but just to try to trust people more. You know, but just—you know, things like that don't help. Especially coupled with the night before, this other chick giving me this weird—it's just all this—I'm like, what am I doing? It's like you can't win. That's what I was telling, I was like I feel like with dating you can't win anymore. It's either going to be the love of your life who you marry—I mean, either you're going to get married to this person, or I just feel like there's a lot of—we're just all so fucked up. And—I don't know. [15:00]

But, I mean, that was part of my—I mean, you know, but I was proud for not being so angry. And somehow it didn't—it's weird. Her telling me she slept with this other person did not feel as bad as the night before. Because it was just honest. And also she was like, "I want to see you." She's like, "I messed up." And she's like, "I'm—" Because she was so honest. She was like, "I'm really great at the first few dates, and then—" she's like, "—I'm just not that great." She's like, "You know, I just have some things I gotta work on." And she's like, you know, "I haven't been single very often." She's like, "I just don't know how to do this very well," and blah, blah. I mean, it was at least honest, you know. But the night before, that just felt Samantha-esque. That's what depressed me, you know. But yeah, coupled together, plus all the other bigger

broad, you know, wanting an Assyrian chick. Uma's in Delaware, what happened with that? That's far away. Do you know what I mean? That chick in San Diego. You know, like just—I don't know, I find it all depressing, I just don't know how to—

THERAPIST: I think this part of your experience can be really hard to talk about in a personal way. When I started to say—a few minutes ago I said there are all these dark feelings about yourself that still need to come up and you really need to feel it. [Do you really?] think you got anxious and said that I think other people feel this too? And we've talked about that, sort of the [movement?] of other people felt this way, not just me. Because I think you do start to get anxious, like what if—it's almost like what if it's true about me. [17:00]

CLIENT: Yeah.

THERAPIST: If I really am the only one feeling this so therefore it's me.

CLIENT: Yeah.

THERAPIST: And so it's really hard then to ever talk about your personal experience.

CLIENT: Yeah, I know, right.

THERAPIST: You so often go into like the generalizations about society.

CLIENT: Yeah, I do.

THERAPIST: Where online dating is like this for all the people.

CLIENT: Yeah, yeah.

THERAPIST: It's not that—like of course that's true on some level—

CLIENT: Yeah. That's a separate thing yeah.

THERAPIST: —but we never get to know—right, your experience. Every person has a different experience of online dating. Even though there may be a general societal trend towards something, it's a unique experience for every person. And yours I think once we even start to touch up on it you feel like, uh oh, what if I'm the only one?

CLIENT: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, last night Uma called me actually, we were texting and I just told her, it was like, “Yeah, I'm okay but I'm just really out of—blah, blah, blah.” And she called me, you know. And yeah, like I have trouble. And I told her, I was like, “You know, it's hard, like this is hard.” I was like, “I've gotten so much better, but I just—” Yeah, I get these old—these triggers happening, like I'm complaining, I'm weak.

THERAPIST: Complaining?

CLIENT: Yeah. I suddenly really get anxious, then I'm just bound to like involve my fucking problems, and I can't suck it up and be tough.

THERAPIST: Like if you start to talk to her about this problem?

CLIENT: Yes.

THERAPIST: Does it make you feel like—

CLIENT: Yeah, especially to women, yeah. Maybe that's why that happens in here. I never thought about that. I mean, not that obviously— You know what I mean?

THERAPIST: Yeah, yeah.

CLIENT: I never thought about that one particular thing, that when I talk to women I get anxious. Even women that I'm not involved with, regardless. You cannot be involved with someone but you have a certain image of them. So then I always feel like, uh, I don't seem as manly to this women, and I don't seem as attractive and kind of—you know. [19:00]

THERAPIST: Like if you're—

CLIENT: Even if she's a doctor [unclear].

THERAPIST: Yeah.

CLIENT: Yeah, I think that's what happens. Because to my dude friends I can talk about it a little bit, and then that feels more like venting. And I can just—something. You know, it's not quite— But yeah, with women I get flustered, I feel like I'm not articulate, and then I'm just going on and on. It kind of makes it worse.

THERAPIST: I wonder if you have any—like do—where that comes from, that—you know, like the idea that you're complaining and that's not manly.

CLIENT: My mom?

THERAPIST: But specifically where that's not manly [overtalk].

CLIENT: Well, that's—I came up with that. Because I hate it so much when they complain. And I think that's so unattractive. That couple that with the making me feel like I'm not attractive, or this or that. So then put those together and, you know, it just becomes an assumption that complaining is very unattractive, it's stupid. [20:00]

THERAPIST: Wow.

CLIENT: And annoying. And annoying, right. Because I have no patience for their complaining, so I'll just start assuming that as I'm—that, okay, this person doesn't—they have their own problems, they don't want to—okay, yes, it's hard, they—you know. Like in other words that there's a finite very brief window of actual real sympathy and whatever. But then you gotta move it along, you know.

THERAPIST: I think it's hard for you to imagine that I actually want to hear a lot more than what you actually tell me.

CLIENT: Yeah. Yeah, I think that's basically impossible. In my mind, yeah.

THERAPIST: Well.

CLIENT: Yeah, yeah, I'll start feeling like, oh, you know, well, it's her job, you know. Or like I'll think, no, Claire does really care, but it is also her job, or—you know what I mean? I'll couple the really caring with something else, like, well, you know. Yeah. [21:00]

THERAPIST: Or because it's my job then I can't really care too?

CLIENT: No, no, no, I'm saying—I'll say she does really care, but it's also her job.

THERAPIST: Which means?

CLIENT: It just means like if we were just friends that, yes, you do really care. But, you know, at some point you'd be like, all right, well, you know, what am I having for dinner? Or even worse, I mean, the darkest place my mind goes, you were like, you know, "Thank God my

boyfriend's not like this." You know what I mean? Yeah. I think it's so funny when you say— In my mind it's almost—it's become like a bit of a game of like, "Wow, when Claire says 'wow' the fucking psychologist is saying—that's some hard core shit."

THERAPIST: Yeah, like it's just foreign to me to hear that that's what's going on, and that you think that that was my experience. You know, that it's really—

CLIENT: Oh, I'm not saying that's what you're thinking. [22:00]

THERAPIST: Yeah.

CLIENT: Here I don't go quite there, you know. But if this wasn't here, oh yeah, yeah. If I was going on and on like this immediately, yeah, my mind will go like, "I'm sure her husband is— yeah, there's probably something about him, he's just tougher than me. He's—" You know what I mean? Like I'll just—it's bad, that's a bad place to go.

THERAPIST: Yeah, and I think what I'm saying you have about that is that it's a very particular image from your childhood, from your mother.

CLIENT: Yeah.

THERAPIST: And your father. Like as though that's the factual answer everybody thinks about what it is to be a man.

CLIENT: Yeah.

THERAPIST: Or even—like there's no room for—

CLIENT: Well, it's the opposite too. I'm sorry, go ahead.

THERAPIST: Go ahead.

CLIENT: Well, it's also the opposite, right.

THERAPIST: Yeah.

CLIENT: I mean, I'm actually just making this connection now, but I can't believe I didn't think of it before. But it's also the inverse. Why can't I get—that's one reason. That's one side. But then I have trouble also listening to girlfriends tell me shit, right. [23:00]

THERAPIST: Mm hm.

CLIENT: Because then I start projecting a little bit like, "Ah, she's getting a little complainy now," you know.

THERAPIST: Mm hm, mm hm.

CLIENT: And that's not fair either. But I do that, because I think—I immediately get like, "Ah, is this good relationship going to be a lot of like talking to me for an hour every day about her fucking job and how the bitch—the girl who sits next to her is such a bitch." You know what I mean?

THERAPIST: Yeah.

CLIENT: So I have a low tolerance. Like—I don't know. I think it's because I can't—sometimes I forget that there's a difference between just whining—

THERAPIST: Yes.

CLIENT: —and just talking about real problems. Not just some asshole at work, like going on and on about that, but about, you know, what we're talking about here, emotional—like real kind of core things. Not just someone cut you off on the road and you're going on and on about how pissed off you are, you know. [24:00]

THERAPIST: That's exactly what I was going to say, is that I don't think your experience with your mother—and your father by the way. Because you've got either stoic and tough, or constantly complaining.

CLIENT: Yeah.

THERAPIST: Without it going anywhere ever.

CLIENT: Right.

THERAPIST: As you two examples of what—like these are your choices about how to be.

CLIENT: Plus in the Assyrian community that's—

THERAPIST: How it divides up.

CLIENT: I hate to say it, yeah. And I'm not trying to generalize, but you know, the women tend to be kind of fucking shrill and chatterboxes, and the men tend to be stoic, or funny guy kind of type guys.

THERAPIST: Mm hm. So there's not room for actual—like the idea of having feelings, or concerns, or problems—

CLIENT: Yeah.

THERAPIST: —or dark, dark stuff—

CLIENT: Yeah, yeah. [25:00]

THERAPIST: —that you're sharing that is not complaining. Like there's—it all falls into complaining. Sure, if someone's like chronically complaining without anything moving in it, or feeling—when you felt, I think it was your mother, like you got shut out. That's one thing. To me it feels more like when I get to hear like a whiff of what actually is personal to you, it feels more like just getting to know you.

CLIENT: Yeah.

THERAPIST: It doesn't feel like complaining.

CLIENT: Yeah.

THERAPIST: It feels like, “Oh, that's his experience,” rather than society's experience. I know what society's experience is.

CLIENT: Yeah.

THERAPIST: I don't need to hear any more of that.

CLIENT: But yeah, it's depressing.

THERAPIST: Where'd you just go?

CLIENT: Well, I just was thinking how like, wow, see that just adds... I mean, I see it so clearly now. Like see that's... I'm also not good at listening. You know, I'll listen, but I'll like shut—inside I'll be kind of shut down after a certain point, I'm like all right, yes. Again, wrap it up,

you know. And that's not good either, you know. So I'm at... [26:15]

THERAPIST: You know, like another link to it, if you can follow this. One of the reasons I think you shut down when someone's talking is that, for one it could simply be [treating all the stuff in?] your mother, but in particular, if what happened with your mother is her complaining, her venting, her smothering, at the cost of seeing you at all, like you disappeared, then when you're with someone who is venting, complaining, whatever, bitching about a day, I think that old child part that just wants to actually be seen, and validated, and exist in the relationship can feel really smothered by this other person taking up a lot of space. That had you had an experience where you— [27:00]

CLIENT: Yeah, that's what I'm saying. Yeah, that's what I'm saying. Because then I'm forgetting the part about whoever that person is. That yes, they are venting, but this is totally different. They are seeing me.

THERAPIST: Some of them probably do, but some of them—there are probably some that don't too.

CLIENT: Yeah. Well, the ones I'm thinking of specifically, they saw me.

THERAPIST: Yeah.

CLIENT: I mean, you know. Even Tara, you know. Yeah, she was kind of fucked up, but I mean she—you know, she loved me. I mean, she—you know. That was—you know, she did.

THERAPIST: Mm hm.

CLIENT: It was—you know, again it's kind of a Meredith thing. Like maybe it wasn't going to work out long term, but I mean she—you know.

THERAPIST: You felt at home there.

CLIENT: Oh absolutely. God, yeah, yeah. Uma— I mean, most of them I kind of did, to be honest with you. I mean, there's been very few where I didn't feel like I was, you know.

THERAPIST: Mm hm. [28:00]

CLIENT: Um...

THERAPIST: The capacity to really hear another's [inaudible] and just be there with them develops over that having been done for one's self. You know? To not feel so squashed by another person.

CLIENT: Yeah.

THERAPIST: Or if you trust them—you know, the amount of listening right now, they'll listen to me tomorrow.

CLIENT: Yeah.

THERAPIST: They're here for me too.

CLIENT: God, it makes me sick.

THERAPIST: How so?

CLIENT: Hm?

THERAPIST: What?

CLIENT: It just like—I've already been feeling kind of headachy the last two days, so it's just like—yeah, because it's just overwhelming. You know, it's like— And this is the other thing, when I have these feelings lately I'm like, "Wow, and it's not going to change tomorrow." So it's hard to not let it get worse. You know what I mean, that almost makes it worse that I don't like—time has just marched along and I'm still trying to work this shit out. [laughs] And I know I've gotten so much better. I have to remind myself of that. But... It's just very frustrating. [pause] And then, with all this though, yesterday I started recording an EP. And it's like—last night I was thinking like, "What—" See this—I can't take it. Like I just had just wrote this song over the weekend, okay. I didn't have lyrics yet. I went to the coffee shop yesterday, I wrote some of the best lyrics I've ever written, I think, in like a one-hour period. Showed up at this space, we recorded a rough version that sounds fucking amazing. These guys had never heard this song before. And yet I can't—you know what I mean? And yet all this is happening. You know what I'm saying? Like that's just—I'm losing patience with myself, you know. And that I don't know how to get out of that, it's become such a—that to me feels like a broken record.

THERAPIST: That's—say about that.

CLIENT: Just like, you know, just not being able to fucking relax a little bit. Like, "Wow, what a great, productive—" You know what I mean?

THERAPIST: Mm hm, mm hm.

CLIENT: I can't. Like I'm worked up, I'm depressed, I'm fucking anxious. You know what I mean? Like that—it's just not—it's not working for me anymore. This is why things aren't getting done properly. You know what I mean?

THERAPIST: Mm hm. [31:00]

CLIENT: Because I'll work on a song, but somehow I'm still feeling all fucked up and not comfortable and content. And the same with anything. You know, if I start writing, it's good, but it's like everything's like pulling teeth, and I can't just enjoy the process and... I just—I don't know, I don't know how to fix that anymore. I just don't know what to do. I can't stop trying to accomplish all these things, you know. So I don't know how to just fucking relax, you know what I mean.

THERAPIST: What you're feeling right now is anxious? Is that what—what's the feeling?

CLIENT: Yeah, it's just anxious and depressed.

THERAPIST: You're down on yourself.

CLIENT: Yeah. Yeah, that's what it is mostly. [32:00]

THERAPIST: I think at heart that's what you're saying—

CLIENT: Yeah.

THERAPIST: —is that you're lonely sometimes.

CLIENT: I took a picture of myself to send to the girl that—the one who said she slept with whatever. And even that, right, it was—it's a little thing, but it's not little, it's a big thing. One of the pictures I took, I hated that picture of myself so much, like from that angle. I started—like I started focusing on my nose again, I was like, "Oh my god, my nose looks awful. What the fuck? How could I have a nose job and it's—it looks—" Like I—I mean I—like I literally wanted to like smash my face with a hammer. I was so— You know? Even though—and at the same time I was

like, “What the fuck am I thinking?” Like why— You know what I mean? Like... I mean, I was surprised at my own reaction, but I couldn’t stop myself from having that reaction. And that’s tiring, and depressing, and frustrating, it gives you headaches, you know. [33:00]

THERAPIST: Smashing your face with a hammer.

CLIENT: Yeah. And I just—I hated—I just was like—I felt so ugly, and fucking disgusting. But meanwhile, again, I’m like—I’m like in my mind like thinking of concrete—all these girls I’ve been dating, and how—and I was like, “All right, even the one that told me not to drink at the —” I was like, “Well, like she’s told me [unclear].” I mean, I don’t—that means some—that means something was attractive. I mean, she wasn’t drunk at all, so I don’t— So in other words I was like trying to give myself these stupid very immature pats.

THERAPIST: Again, the proof.

CLIENT: The proof, yeah.

THERAPIST: Like it can’t be true, right—

CLIENT: Right, right.

THERAPIST: —what I tell myself.

CLIENT: But then again that’s almost more depressing. Because then I was like—because now I’m in a place where I’m like, “Yeah, but that—that’s how depressing this is. That stuff doesn’t matter.” In these moments I can go through all the lists of all the beautiful women that have thought I’m handsome, or whatever the fuck. But—

THERAPIST: [And they?] haven’t treated the same way. [34:00]

CLIENT: Yeah, and—what’s that?

THERAPIST: They haven’t treated the same way.

CLIENT: Yes, sorry.

THERAPIST: I think it’s really cool maybe just like being with you—and you were talking about [inaudible].

CLIENT: Whoop dee doo. Yeah. Yeah, it’s great.

THERAPIST: You say that, [Brian?], but—

CLIENT: I know. No, I know [unclear], but—

THERAPIST: I feel like it’s been hard for you to be specific about what you’re experience.

CLIENT: I know, I know.

THERAPIST: What you hate. What even dark feelings even means. I mean, you know, lots of people have dark feelings, but it would help if you showed me what it means and what you associate it to, bringing things up, memories.

CLIENT: No, that’s—I get all that. It’s just, like I said, what—unfortunately that could also make it more depressing. Because you’re like, “Wow.” And I’m just—like I’m still working on this shit, and it’s—you know, like it’s just like, “Oh my God.” You know what I’m saying?

THERAPIST: Mm hm. [35:00]

CLIENT: Like it just feel like this is a—it just—yeah. It just makes me feel like, yup, this is it. I could be working on this probably maybe for years and years. And in the meantime miss opportunities to connect with a woman, blah, blah. You know what I mean? Like that... It's like I a hole I'm trying to climb out of that I keep thinking I'm almost out of it but it just... [long pause] [36:00]

THERAPIST: It's been my experience that when you have hit upon some of the real hard feelings and experiences, you see the for a second, you stay with them for a minute, and then you package them up nicely and neatly into some palatable form and put them back on the shelf. And they remain there. They never actually get to participate. Stay there. And like really look at them. You know, like the analogy of being in the storm, and then the stormy waters, then you calm down, and then you actually get to beneath the surface and what's going to be down there, and what happens if you're just swimming around in whatever it is you find. I think that's a part of what makes it feel like you keep finding it and there's still more, is that of course this, because it got packaged up so quickly and put away because it was so scary. I say it's cool, and you say, "Well, great. I don't want to be somebody swimming around in the darkness."

CLIENT: Yeah. [37:00]

THERAPIST: But to be able even to do that is new. That's a new capacity.

CLIENT: Yeah, no, I get that. I mean, that's what I'm saying, I recognize that that's why I feel more depressed and kind of fucked up, is because I'm staying with these feelings. Like at home, you know, yeah, I watch Netflix or whatever, but I don't try to—I don't try to put these things out of my mind anymore, or whatever, and I see them for what they are, and I know that it's healthier and all that. But it's like right now—like see now I'm like totally... you know, like headachy all over here, and like I'm not good over here. You know what I mean? Like I'm getting that heightened thing you get with like panic or anxiety, where you almost feel like you're outside yourself a little bit.

THERAPIST: Mm hm, mm hm.

CLIENT: It's like unnerving, you know. [38:00]

THERAPIST: It's a lot of feeling.

CLIENT: Yeah.

THERAPIST: [inaudible]

CLIENT: You know what I was thinking? I had another idea for a book.

THERAPIST: Mm hm.

CLIENT: And I wonder if this is the one that needs to be written in a way. Like all these things are leading to—I was thinking, you know what, maybe I need to write a really, really like stark naked honest brutal novelish memoirish whatever of all my experiences with women. You know what I mean?

THERAPIST: Mm hm. Mm hm.

CLIENT: And I was even thinking that way for about—I immediately of course went to the publishing thing. But I was like, you know, "Fifty Shades of Gray," fuck that, I can—you know, I can maybe work some shit out, but also write something very entertaining. [39:00]

THERAPIST: Sellable?

CLIENT: Sellable, yeah. But I wonder, you know what I mean? Like I wonder if I need to—you know, I never write about this. That one thing I don't write about.

THERAPIST: Mm hm, mm hm.

CLIENT: Like I write—I've written some love poem type—you know what I mean? But never this kind of forget the love.

THERAPIST: A bit of the racy side of it.

CLIENT: The racy side, the nitty gritty, the kind of, you know. The fucked up emotional residue that it leaves, the fucked up choices that you make, the regrets that you end up having. You know, whatever. Like there's a lot to write. I mean, each girl could be a chapter, and I'd have a very long book. I don't know, like it suddenly hit me that maybe that's something that—because you know— [40:00]

THERAPIST: It's funny you did compose the symphony sections. Because it came out in your [overtalk].

CLIENT: Yeah, yeah.

THERAPIST: And that was [inaudible].

CLIENT: Well, but even the music, it's romaticized kind of, you know what I mean? It's romaticized.

THERAPIST: Mm hm.

CLIENT: Because you know—

THERAPIST: Not real.

CLIENT: Yeah.

THERAPIST: Yeah.

CLIENT: You know I have a list, right?

THERAPIST: No.

CLIENT: Like two years ago I was like, "You know what, I need to write down every name of every girl I've slept with." I think I told you this.

THERAPIST: Uh uh.

CLIENT: No? It's—I wanted to, you know—yeah, it's not—

THERAPIST: You wanted to what? You wanted to what?

CLIENT: I'm not like particularly proud of it. Wait, what did you say?

THERAPIST: Wanted to what? When you say, "I wanted to..."

CLIENT: I wanted to—I was forgiving. Like when I stop to think of all the girls I've slept with I forget a lot of them. And that seems weird to me. So I wanted to just somehow remember as many as possible. And it's a long list. There's something about having it like that that—

THERAPIST: That what? [41:00]

CLIENT: It just—it helped me—it's, you know, food for thought. Like I was like, "That's too many." And I realize it's also like a secret. I can't even tell my guy friends. Like they'd be like, "Holy shit." Like I can't. I mean, we're talking like—I mean a lot—like easily over 80. I don't know. I think that's a lot, you know.

THERAPIST: Mm hm.

CLIENT: So... But I guess what I'm saying was maybe this has been percolating. Yeah, I mean, the Samantha sessions, yeah, like this idea that maybe there's something that I really need to work out through writing or music about this. [42:00]

THERAPIST: Well, I mean, just one—the question of what that means. Like what does over 80 —why [overtalk].

CLIENT: Right, right.

THERAPIST: [unclear] Why does it feel great sometimes, or not great other times.

CLIENT: And I thought, you know, it's also—it would be a perfect theme, the theme of the fucked up crazy adventure with all these women. And also encompasses everything I talk about. Even identity stuff, even the Assyrian—

THERAPIST: Sure, sure.

CLIENT: So in a way it's like the perfect—

THERAPIST: Mm hm. [long pause] [unclear]

CLIENT: Okay. Thanks Claire. Is that for me?

THERAPIST: Yeah.

CLIENT: Thank you. See you at noon.

THERAPIST: Okay.

END TRANSCRIPT