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TAP OUT

(OUR FIRST AND LAST JOINT THANKSGIVING)

Written by

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"We can love what we are, without hating what we are not. We can thrive in our own tradition, even as we learn from others, and come to respect their teachings"

-Kofi Annan

"I have a stronger sense of community when I'm around people who look like I do. Perhaps because our species evolved to live in hunter gatherer tribes the psychological boundaries of tolerance are limited to what was realistic in a paleolithic environment."

-Some dude in a Reddit thread trying to justify racism

EXT. MIAMI PUBLIC LAKE - DAWN

Joggers. Kayaks. Picnics. Everyone and everything is falling into place at Snyder Public Park this morning.

Except JOYCE (76).

Joyce is wearing a black poncho in 90 degree weather.

Her grand-kids call her "Popo".

Kids at the lake call her "That crazy Asian lady".

She waddles down from an idling 1999 Honda Civic towards the edge of the lake. She carries bread, a garbage bag...

...and a cleaver.

She tosses bread toward some ducks as they head her way.

Some people stare in confusion. Joyce could care less.

She's actually never cared about anything past the first level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. It's been the "food" part for the last 76 years.

Here's two facts about Joyce:

-She left Jamaica in the 1970's during civil unrest.

-She's going to eat this fucking duck.

One gets too close.

SWIPE. CHOP. PLOP. A quick movement into the bag.

She leaves the head.

CUT TO: TITLE

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

East-Asian furniture holds baseball trophies.

A painting of a traditional Asian woman on a bowl of Lays.

Chinese letters on a vase next to a Xbox 360.

You get the metaphor.

Kal, 19, is back from his first semester at college.

Behind him, his family prepares decorations.

MOM
I want mingling with relatives. No
hiding in the room the whole time.

KAL
I'll be around.

A car pulls up. The first guests from the white side.

Inside is AUNT KARLA (54) and her son KYLE (32).

Mom and Kal go over to greet them.

Karla is holding food, and wearing a god damn kimono.

Mom and Karla hug.

KARLA
First joint-thanksgiving! Here we go.

MOM
We're so excited.

KARLA
Kal! You look adorable. What's it
been? Years? How old are you now?

KAL
I'm actually 19.

Karla tilts her head with no response.

If you're Asian, you look fifteen your whole life until you
turn 60- then you look 115. Instant Mr. Miyagi.

Karla and Kal hug.

KYLE
Hey cuz. Long time no see. How's 19?

KAL
Good, good. How's being old?

KYLE
Fun. Adult money is crazy.

KARLA
How many people are we expecting?

MOM
Paul has 4 families coming- I have 5.
(MORE)

MOM (cont'd)
We're just glad to have it together
for the first time.

KAL
Yep.

Mom and Karla walk off. Kyle turns to Kal.

KYLE
What you studying?

KAL
I'm doing this music program-

KYLE
(pointing)
Cool. Cool. Hm. Who's that?

Kal is taken off guard.

He turns around.

KAL
(laughing)
What? That's my dad.

KYLE
Damn. Would've never guessed. That's
crazy.

KAL
You've never seen my dad? What's
crazy?

KYLE
You guys look nothing alike.

KAL
Haha- that- Hm. I've never- thought-

Kal is taken-aback more than he realizes. Enough to write a
script about. He's processing something.

KYLE
Sorry, is that weird?

KAL
No- I- I don't think I've
ever- Hm.

KYLE
Dude, I'm sorry- that might've been
insensitive-

KAL
No, it's cool. Seriously.

It's not cool.

KYLE

Then let me apologize about the fucking kimono. I told her to take it off.

KAL

I don't care about that. I'm sure my mom loves it.

KYLE

Ight, well, I'm gonna head inside. No hiding the whole time, alright? Let's catch up.

KAL

Yeah.

Kyle walks off.

Did Kal hide last time? People seem to think so.

More importantly...

Kal takes his phone out and looks at his reflection.

Another car pulls up.

Enter UNCLE WAYNE CHIN (52), his daughter, MELISSA (13) and wife, AUNT SUSAN (46).

They get out. No talking. Melissa carries food.

In almost a straight line, they follow Wayne up to Mom.

Wayne nods.

Wayne.

Wayne wears a thick khaki jacket, socks with sandals, and a hardened expression that hasn't seen a genuine smile in years. Because it hasn't.

He carries a .22 snub revolver on him at all times, even at family gatherings.

Wayne grew up in Miami in the 80's. No one knows what he does for work. No one asks. Wayne became a triple black belt at 25. He also probably- no, definitely became aware of his own mortality at too young of an age.

This all sounds insane and cliché, but it's 100% authentic.

Maybe this is better shown through a flashback.

EXT. CRUMMY MIAMI APARTMENT - DAY (MONTAGE)

THE BEETS - "WIPE IT OFF" begins to play.

Wayne is 10. He smokes a stolen cigarette outside his decrepit house.

His father comes out- Wayne bolts full speed. A short chase ensues, with Wayne being caught at the end.

He starts swinging on his dad.

Wayne doesn't show emotion. Emotion is weakness.

EXT. MIAMI STREET - DAY (MONTAGE)

A car SCREECHES into frame and absolutely destroys a passerby.

Wayne is across the street, witnessing this.

He stares, comprehending something about entropy.

EXT. FIELD - DAY (MONTAGE)

Wayne is 13, firing an old revolver into a pile of dirt.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY (MONTAGE)

Wayne, 15, eats lunch alone.

He looks around at tables of happy kids.

Eh, fuck it.

Wayne stands up, and walks over to the army recruiter standing in lunch hall.

EXT. FIELD - DAY (MONTAGE)

Wayne, 18, in Basic Training, wrestling with another boot.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY (MONTAGE)

Wayne, 25, exits the airport, and meets his mother.

His mother introduces Susan, a family friend.

His mother gestures towards her. Yeah. Guess that'll be his wife. Nice to meet you.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY (MONTAGE)

Susan gives birth.

A doctor hands the baby to Wayne, now 37.

He stares at Melissa, blankly.

The doctor gestures for the baby back.

Wayne doesn't give the baby back.

He might be feeling something.

Okay. Montage over.

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

We're back.

KAL
Hey Melissa.

MELISSA
(bluntly)
Hello.

Melissa heads inside.

KAL
Hey Uncle Wayne.

WAYNE
(bluntly)
Hello.

Mom hugs Susan happily.

MOM
Hey Wayne!

WAYNE
(bluntly)
Hello.

MOM
Hey Melissa!

MELISSA
(bluntly)
Hello.

Mom smiles at her. Melissa stares back.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Kal pops his head into his younger sister's room.

Her name is ASHLEY (16).

She also looks more Asian than white.

KAL
Yo.

ASHLEY
Yo. Don't hide the whole time.

KAL
I'm not. You're hiding.

ASHLEY
Is the family here?

KAL
They're starting to show up.

ASHLEY
This is going to be a disaster.

KAL
You don't think the families will get
along?

<p>ASHLEY I don't want Aunt Karla and Kyle to see the Asian relatives they're super embarrassing-</p>	<p>KAL Don't say that.</p>
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Normally when your little sister says anything you take it with a grain of sand, but that struck a cord.

KAL (cont'd)
Do you- Do I look more Asian than
white?

ASHLEY

What? Duh.

Kal throws his head back.

KAL

I thought I always looked- like- whiter. Like I don't see myself as an Asian person. Like I see myself as white.

ASHLEY

I got dad's head shape, and you got Mom's round head shape. We both got the eyes.

KAL

I know.

ASHLEY

(laughing)

Did you think you looked white?

Back to being siblings.

KAL

Stop lecturing me I asked one question. Oh my god. At least I'm not into my cousin. Yes you are. Bye. Bye bye. I'm leaving.

ASHLEY

I'm not lecturing you you walked in here and started asking me stuff probably because you just found out you're ugly. I'm not into Kyle. Shut up. That's gross.

Kal slams the door.

He walks by a mirror and avoids his reflection.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kal walks in to a stale living room full of people and runs into Dad. He pulls him aside.

DAD

Hey, go say hello to the aunties.

KAL

I did.

DAD

This is very important for your mom. You know that.

(MORE)

DAD (cont'd)
We want to make sure the families
have a good time together.

KAL
I know, I know.

DAD
You can be a host. Start a big board
game or something.

KAL
Dad, what board game plays 25 people?

Kal turns the corner.

There, the two sides of the family are spread away from each
other in their own corners like a middle school dance.

He SIGHS.

UNCLE DAVE (45) gestures at Kal to come over.

Kal stands in front of a group of aunts and uncles.

His patois accent is thick as hell.

UNCLE DAVE
Kal, man. How's school?

KAL
It's good, good.

UNCLE DAVE
What you studying now?

Whenever an Asian relative that you don't have to interact
with on a regular basis asks your major, just say Computers
or something.

KAL
It's this music program. Very good
program.

UNCLE DAVE
Minor or Major?

KAL
Like, the scales?

UNCLE DAVE
Is it your minor or your major?

KAL
Oh. My major. Just the music.

...

AUNT PATSY (46) pokes in.

<p>AUNT PATSY He very talented, man. Kal, show him the song you made.</p>	<p>UNCLE DAVE He got a song? Play it on the loud speaker-</p>
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KAL
I can't right now-

Kal tries to exit before-

MOM
Yes he can! Here-

Thank you so much mom. Thank you. Thanks so much.

Mom tries connecting to the living room speaker.

Some other aunts and uncles crowd around.

A deep house club synth song starts playing.

Everyone sits still. Kal begins to die in place.

UNCLE BARRY (40) seems to like it.

KAL
It's like- it's a new type of music.

UNCLE BARRY
(to Dave)
I think it's called dubstep.

UNCLE DAVE
Ye. I know.

The music keeps playing. Kal tries to change the subject.

KAL
Hey Uncle Dave, would you say I look
more Asian than white?

UNCLE DAVE
Lotta Asians. Chinese? Yeah. Why you
asking this?

KAL
It's news to me.

UNCLE DAVE

(laughing)

You not asking the right question-
it's if you more ugly than handsome.

KAL

Yeah.

Asians are hot, right?

Some are. There's... wait, is Bruce Lee attractive? Like,
outside of fighting and stuff?

EXT. PATIO - STILL THE SAME DAMN DAY

A TV is playing the thanksgiving NFL game. Surprisingly,
both sides of the family are watching. Nothing like football
to unite the races.

Kal is texting someone on his phone.

White tablecloths and a food bar sit untouched.

Suddenly, the national anthem comes on the TV. It's a dude
playing the sax.

Everybody... stands up. They face the TV.

Except Kal. He's still on his phone.

His Mom hits at him.

MOM

Stand up! Hand over heart!

KAL

What? It's- on the TV-

Aunt Carol turns too.

CAROL

(loud whisper)

Get up.

KAL

It's- he's playing the freaking sax-
it's on a TV.

Are you supposed to stand up for the TV anthems???

Dad motions to stand up politely.

Kal shakes his head and stands up.

AND THE ROCKET'S RED GLARE THE BOMBS BURSTING IN AIR

Kal looks around. His eyes stop on Uncle Wayne.
 Wayne is standing in the back of the event, staring.
 He looks like he's sizing everyone up.
 The song ends.
 Everyone sits back down, a few eyeing Kal.
 He goes back to his phone.
 Popo, sitting behind him, hits at him with a napkin.

POPO
 Always on phone. Who so important?

Kal turns around.

KAL
 I'm actually texting a girl, Popo.

Her eyes widen a little with excitement.

POPO	KAL
Oh! A girl.	Yeah, she's from my school. She's great-

POPO
 Is she Chinese?

Just say yes. Just say yes.

KAL
 ...no.

POPO
 Oh.

Popo looks like she just ate a sour fruit.

A silence.

POPO (cont'd)
 Pretty girl?

KAL
 Yep.

Justin, speaking up, catches Kal's attention.

KYLE

Hey, mom, we're all gonna go for a walk and catch up.

Ah. The cousin's walk.

Ashley, JUSTIN (19), Asian, and ELYSE (20), White.

JUSTIN

Kal, you wanna come?

KAL

Yep.

Kal hops up. Popo watches him walk off.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD PARK - DAY

The older cousins sit with their backs against a slide.

They're smoking a joint, obviously.

Kyle passes to Kal.

KAL

You know, I didn't smoke weed until I was accepted into a college senior year.

He takes a tiny puff, trying to relax.

His attention is drawn to his little sister.

KAL (cont'd)

Wait, Ashley, when did you start?

ASHLEY

(slyly)

Right now.

KAL

Nope. No. No, don't touch. No.

ASHLEY

I'll tell mom.

KAL

No you won't.

Elyse is trying to roll another. She changes subjects.

ELYSE

I haven't met your grandma yet.

KAL
Popo. Yeah. I'll introduce you. She
was pretty bummed the girl I'm
texting is white.

ASHLEY
You're texting a girl right now?

KAL
Yeah.

JUSTIN
I don't think I could ever date an
Asian girl. They all look like my
family.

Ashley takes offense to that somehow.

ASHLEY
Well, I'd never date an Asian guy.

JUSTIN
Okay?

ELYSE
I don't know if I could date an Asian
guy either.

It goes really quiet.

Justin starts cracking up.

JUSTIN
(laughing)
You can't say that.

ELYSE
(backpedal)
Oh my god. It's not like that. I was
kidding.

ASHLEY
I still couldn't.

Kal looks at Elyse.

His high stress pops in a little.

KAL
Would you say I look more Asian than
white?

ELYSE

Maybe. Why?

Ashley cuts in.

ASHLEY

He just found out he's ugly.

Kal zones out.

The others stare at him before starting to talk again.

EXT. DRINK TABLE - SAME DAY

UNCLE PHIL is standing with Kal, drink in hand.

I think Kal wants to leave.

PHIL

You came out of hiding!

KAL

Why does everyone think I'm hiding?

PHIL

What's up?

KAL

Do you think I look more Asian than white? Like- do I look more-

PHIL

Asian. For sure.

Kal nods.

PHIL (cont'd)

Why are you asking that?

KAL

I don't know. It's news to me.

PHIL

You should be proud of that.

KAL

It feels weird. I always thought I looked white. Or like, half.

PHIL

So what?

KAL
I don't know.

PHIL
No, seriously. Be proud. Asians are the model minority. You come over, and get shit done. No complaining. It's fantastic. I mean, they stopped letting Chinese kids into Harvard because there were so many.

KAL
Half. Half-Asian. And it's embarrassing some times.

PHIL
I mean, where's "Asian Lives Matter"? Where's that? You don't see any Asians out there rioting.

Kal is too pre-occupied to think about the ethical and political implications of that statement.

KAL
Yeah- wait-

PHIL
But you know what I'm saying, right? Be proud.

KAL
Yeah.

Phil takes a sip of beer.

EXT. FRONT YARD - SAME DAY

Kal walks outside to take a break from the event.

He sits on the porch and breathes.

Out of the corner of his eye, he spots Uncle Wayne standing by his car, smoking a cigarette.

Wayne spots bird poop on his window sill.

He wipes it off with his bare hand, wiping it on his pants.

That's on brand.

EXT. BACKYARD - SAME DAY

People are starting to mingle. The air is warming up.
Uncle Wayne stands still, in the back of the event.
Watching.
Mom pipes up.

MOM
Time for prayer! Everyone! Prayer.

Everyone starts to head to the circle.
Except Wayne.

MOM (cont'd)
Who wants to do the prayer?

DAD
I thought you were volunteering.

Some people laugh.

MOM
Kal?

KAL
Definitely not.

MOM
Dave?

UNCLE DAVE
I got it. Everybody bow ya heads.

Everyone bows their heads.

UNCLE DAVE (cont'd)
This a baptist prayer now, we not
singing any hymns.

Dave begins to pray.

Aunt Carol pipes up.

AUNT CAROL
Please don't say that. There are some
Catholics here.

Dave looks up at her.

UNCLE DAVE

Okay.

Mom and Dad both look at each other and share tension.

Dave goes back to praying.

Ashley looks embarrassed for no reason.

Kal peeks up, and looks around at everyone.

He peers between the Asian and White members.

Suddenly, BRI (4), catches his eye.

She's pissed, and staring right at him.

Kal tries to break eye contact. It doesn't work.

The prayer ends.

Bri goes back to smiling at her parents.

EXT. BACKYARD TABLES - THIS DAY WILL NOT END

Aunt Carol gives her son, KEVIN (8) a sip of beer.

NICHOLAS (7), witnesses this.

He leans over his mother, Aunt Patsy, and takes a sip of her wine.

She smacks it out of his hands. It shatters.

Carol, seeing this, takes the beer away from Kevin.

Mom SIGHS.

She turns to Kal.

MOM

What's that game you play with the
choose your own words- it's on the
phone-

KAL

Quiplash?

MOM

Yes. Can you get that out?

KAL
Mom. Please. No.

MOM
Just set it up. Everyone will play it together.

KAL
Mom, no one is going to play together. Explaining it will be a disaster.

MOM
Just do it. Kal.

KAL
Mom, stop. No one wants to be here.

That... was too far. Mom is hurt.

KAL (cont'd)
I mean they do- I meant just me. I'm sorry. Okay. Okay.

Kal hops up, in front of all the tables.

KAL (cont'd)
Hey everybody, we're gonna play a game, and it requires your phones-

Popo pipes up. Here we go. Rapid fire.

POPO
What he say?

AUNT CAROL
We gonna play a phone game.

KAL
It's on the laptop. I'm gonna set up my laptop up and we'll all join in.

UNCLE DAVE
How you play the game?

KAL
You just- need your phone. It's- I'll explain in a second. Ashley, can you grab my laptop?

ASHLEY
I'm eating.

DAD
Ashley, go get it.

ASHLEY
Dad.

MELISSA
Excuse me sir, my phone is dead.

KAL
You don't need to call me sir. You
can borrow mine.

MOM
Ashley, can you get a
charger for Melissa?

ASHLEY
I'm eating!

KAL
I'll get it in a second.

Mom runs inside to get a charger.

UNCLE BARRY
Is this game appropriate for
Nicholas?

KAL
Yes-

KYLE
Yo, is this Quiplash?

No, it's chaos.

KAL
Yes.

POPO
I don't know this game.

KAL
I'll explain in a second.

Mom comes back out with Kal's laptop. She sets it down.

AUNT SUSAN
I can't see the screen.

UNCLE DAVE
Can't see it.

KAL
It's not up yet-

POPO
What are we watching?

Kal SIGHS.

KAL
Maybe we should play an easier game-

MELISSA
I wanna play Quiplash!

MOM
This game is perfect, don't
worry. Kal, I'll do it.

KAL
No, I can- you don't know
how to set it up.

AUNT CAROL
What if we play a board
game?

KAL
Aunt Carol, what board game
plays twenty people?

AUNT CAROL
Trivia Court! It's a great game.

KAL
Do you have that game on you right
now?

AUNT CAROL
No.

Kal rubs his forehead.

MOM
Let me see it. Ashley, help me out.

ASHLEY
I'm eating!

EXT. BACKYARD TABLES - 20 MINUTES LATER

A quiet crowd sits around as small Quiplash prompts come up
on the screen.

No one is talking. The cousins are all on their phones.

Kal looks over to his mom, who is disappointed.

Okay. We're bringing everyone together.

Something that'll get everyone involved...

Kal scans around. He looks over to Uncle Wayne.

EXT. SIDE OF HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Wayne is blasting a cigarette alone.

KAL
Hey Uncle Wayne.

Wayne nods.

KAL (cont'd)
You having a good time?

Wayne nods.

KAL (cont'd)
So- I was thinking- since Melissa is
a red belt now-

WAYNE
Brown. Brown belt.

KAL
Okay. Yeah, so- Do you think she'd
wanna do a presentation? Maybe get
everyone to watch. Show them our-

Wayne's expression has not changed.

KAL (cont'd)
-heritage. Or something.

Wayne finishes his cigarette. He nods, and walks off.

EXT. BACKYARD - EVENING NOW

A crowd has formed around Melissa now, all cheering.

Some punches. Some rehearsed kicks.

Kal stares, unimpressed. Mom seems to be enjoying it.

She looks over to Kal with a thankful smile.

Kal shrugs. No problem.

Melissa finishes her demonstration. People clap.

MELISSA
Dad! Come spar with me.

Problem. Some heads turn.

Kal's eyes widen a bit. He looks over.

Uncle fucking Wayne makes his way through the crowd.

People hesitantly clap.

Uncle Wayne places his gun satchel and khaki jacket down on a table. An aunt watches in shock. All things considered, he's a very responsible gun owner.

The man is ripped. Like, ripped. Skinny but all muscle.

He slowly gets into his pose across from Melissa.

She has no idea what's about to happen.

Smiling, she squares up. People begin to clap.

Melissa, still grinning, throws a kick.

Uncle Wayne swats it away without leaving his pose.

For a second, it looks like Wayne is going to go easy.

For a second.

Melissa mistakenly decides to throw the same kick again.

In a swift motion, and a guttural NYUH, Wayne grabs the kick and spins Melissa into a grapple.

He pins the arms and spins her around into a choke hold.

Then, he sweeps the leg.

Without hesitation, he drops Melissa to the ground.

People... stop clapping.

He drops down with her, and forces her into a choke hold.

Melissa, not wanting to give up in front of everyone, attempts to hit at his arms.

Okay- it may look like Wayne is choking his daughter out- and he sort of is. But technically, he's doing this FOR her. There is no crowd to Uncle Wayne. There is only his blood and flesh, who threw the same kick twice. This is a lesson.

AUNT SUSAN

Wayne.

Melissa, tears now streaming down her face, is still hitting at his arms.

Wayne tightens up.

People stand completely still. Is this part of the show?

Then-

UNCLE WAYNE

TAP OUT!

Melissa's face is red. Dead silence.

UNCLE WAYNE (cont'd)

TAP OUT!

AUNT SUSAN

WAYNE! WAYNE!

UNCLE WAYNE

TAP OUT! FIGHT OVER- TAP OUT!

Kal is taking it all in.

He looks into Melissa's eyes. Then, he eyes Uncle Wayne.

Time slows down.

There's pain there. Physical- yes. But emotionally, too.

He turns to his parents.

Obviously, they're embarrassed. But the pain isn't there.

Kal acknowledges his own lack of pain. Hm.

Melissa taps out. Time is back.

Wayne stands up and finally meets the crowd.

It's dead silent.

He moves over to pick up his gun and jacket.

One last glance at the crowd.

He fucking BOWS and walks away.

Conflicted emotions spin in Wayne's head for a second.

For a second.

Melissa is in a ball of spit and tears on the floor.

Aunts tend to her.

Kal turns and walks away from the chaos.

He approaches Mom and Dad. He breathes in.

KAL
Sorry for what I said earlier- and-
I'm sorry I've been- eh- hiding.

MOM
It's fine. Don't worry.

DAD
What did he say earlier?

Kal turns to leave.

Walking by the side of the house, he passes a window.

He catches his reflection, and double-takes.

Staring back, he fixes his hair.

CUT TO BLACK.