MY 'FRIEND' MITCH

an original short by

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INT. WALTER'S OFFICE - DAY

WALTER (30s), a spindly neurotic therapist, sits forward with his elbows on his mahogany desk. He speaks quickly, but stutters and fumbles over his words often.

WALTER
Okay, so, I have this theory. Well, it's actually Nietzsche's, who allegedly raped his own mother, but to each his own. It's called "eternal recurrence." Basically, more or less, it says that, if we were given the chance to, uh, to do it all over again, life, that is, that we'd choose to do everything exactly the same.

He's talking to his patient, DONALD, a ghastly pale man with bags under his eyes. Donald nods in complete agreement.

WALTER (CONT'D)
I think Freud touched on the topic as well, but, uh, it was much more graphic.

Behind the two men, touches of a sparse, but very nice office can be seen.

INT. MITCH'S OFFICE - DAY

MITCH (30s), a laid back therapist sits in his plaid button down and jeans, looks up at the ceiling. He barely listens to himself as he talks.

MITCH
Let's figure this out. You had a dream and you were a bird.

A meek woman, SHERRY, listens. In the background are hints of a shoddy office, with duct tape holding up the curtains.

SHERRY (CHIMING IN)
An eagle.

MITCH
Okay, an eagle. An eagle. America. The American Dream. You just had a dream. A self-referential dream, that's gotta mean something. And how old were you, in bird years?

SHERRY
Fifteen-ish, probably sixteen-
MITCH
Was that before or after your father
hit you?

He thinks he's made a break-through.

INT. WALTER'S OFFICE - LATER

Walter stands near the door, shaking Donald's hand.

WALTER
Stay strong, Donald.

Donald takes a deep breath and pulls Walter into an embrace.

DONALD
Thank you, doctor.

WALTER
Say hello to your family. Remember
Donald, live each day to the fullest,
and take two Zolofts at noon.

Donald nods anxiously.

INT. DINER - DAY

A typical red booth diner. Walter and Mitch sit across from
each other. A very PREGNANT WAITRESS gives them their food.
She walks away.

WALTER (CONT'D)
Pregnant women freak the hell out of
me.

MITCH
I'm pretty sure I shouldn't have
become a psychiatrist. I've lost
two patients this year and the rest
barely pay for my rent. I think the
waitress is cute.

WALTER
Whatever happened to that business
plan you wanted to get started?

MITCH
That just never worked out.

The waitress brings their check. Mitch takes it, concerned.

MITCH (CONT'D)
I can't afford this.
WALTER
I told you last time, we're not doing this again!

They look around and quickly run out of the diner.

INT. WALTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Walter and Mitch hang out in Walter's office. Walter texts on his iPhone.

MITCH
How do you even afford that phone?

WALTER
I've got this one patient, he goes by Jerry. He's manic depressive, Portuguese, and a schizophrenic. He has, uh, five hallucinatory friends, and he, um, pays on behalf of each of them.

MITCH
Seriously?

WALTER
Yeah. And his medications paid for my phone.

MITCH
Shit.

WALTER
I can't even be happy for pregnant women anymore. They just freak me out.

A SILENCE.

MITCH
Christ in a bucket. I have the perfect way to make money.

WALTER
Great.

MITCH
No, listen, this is the best business idea I've ever had. Let's convince your patients-

WALTER
(overlapping)
My patients? Why my patients?
MITCH
-that I'm their hallucinatory friend.
They'll think they're crazy, they'll come to you, the best psychiatrist in town, and we'll split the profits 80-20.

WALTER
How is that going to work?

MITCH
I'll befriend them...

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - DAY

Donald lays in the grass, his pale skin sharply contrasting with the green grass.

Mitch nonchalantly lies down directly next to him.

MITCH (V.O.)
I'll pretend like I've been there all along. Give them life advice, make them comfortable...

Mitch tickles Donald. They both laugh.

MITCH (CONT'D)
And then you show up. You look concerned.

Walter stands over them.

WALTER
Donald?

Walter looks concerned.

MITCH (V.O.)
You say something like...

Walter's mouths the words in sync with Mitch's voice.

MITCH (CONT'D)
Who are you talking to?
(as Donald)
My friend, Mitch.
(as Walter)
You are psycho, man. Get some help.
Pay me money.
(as Donald)
Okay.
INT. WALTER'S OFFICE – LATER

Walter now sits across from Donald and Mitch.

WALTER
I'm afraid if you "two" continue to, uh, carry on a conversation, I'm going to, uh, have to charge you double. One for each of you.

Donald looks at Mitch, frightened.

DONALD
Yeah, Ok. Whatever it takes.

Donald reaches out and strokes the side of Mitch's face.

DONALD (CONT'D)
He's just so real.

MITCH
(in a british accent)
Like hell I am.

Walter tries to hide a smile while shaking his head at Donald.

INT. WALTER'S OFFICE – DAYS LATER

Walter sits across from PETER, a concerned middle-aged patient, who sits directly next to Mitch.

WALTER
I'm afraid your slight anemia has evolved into a severe case of schizophrenia.

MITCH
 stil British)
Don't listen to him, chap. He's a wanker.

PETER
Can you please just let the man speak?

Walter acts concerned that Peter is talking to "no one."

INT. WALTER'S OFFICE – LATER

Walter sits in his office across from CAROL, an attractive but awkward woman.

WALTER
I've been examining...
For every three syllable word Walter uses, Carol gives a sensuous moan, barely audible at first, but it grows.

WALTER (CONT'D)
...your case over the past few days. It-it-it has progressed into a, uh, dangerous state. "Mitch" has evolved into...an allegorical-

Carol reaches a far-too-audible level.

WALTER (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, is...everything o-okay?

CAROL
Yeah, sorry. I have this weird thing. Polysyllabic words are kind of a turn on for me.

WALTER
Well, that's...magnificent.

She swoons at the word.

CAROL
I can't even play a full game of Scrabble anymore.

WALTER
Wow. That must be difficult.

Walter breathes heavily, very attracted to Carol.

EXT. WALTER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Carol walks towards the elevator to go down. The doors open and Mitch walks out of the elevator. He notices Carol.

MITCH
(not British)
Why hello...do you know magic?

CAROL
What? No.

MITCH
Okay then, this is disappointing. (pause) I'm Mitch.

Carol gives him a look before taking off towards the elevator. Mitch follows her back in to the elevator.
MITCH (CONT’D)
Are you an angel? Because if you are, that's bad news for your medical insurance.

CAROL
(oddly intrigued)
I'm Carol.

MITCH
I love that name. It reminds me of Christmas.

They both get into the elevator.

Mitch starts to sing CAROL OF BELLS. She smiles, and joins in to the song. The doors close.

INT. WALTER'S OFFICE – SAME

Walter notices Carol's keys left behind. He grabs them.

EXT. BUILDING LOBBY – CONTINUOUS

Carol leaves the elevator, laughing and smiling with Mitch behind her. Walter runs down a nearby flight of stairs to catch up with them.

WALTER
Carol! Carol, you forgot your keys.

CAROL
Oh, thank you Walter! I was just chatting with Mitch here.

WALTER
(acting)
I'm sorry...who?

MITCH
You know this guy?

CAROL
He's my psychiatrist.

Walter shakes his head.

MITCH
You know this guy?

CAROL
He's my psychiatrist.

Walter shakes his head.

WALTER
Carol...we need to talk.

Mitch tries to get Walter's attention, trying to stop him from going forward with the plan.
INT. WALTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Walter feigns concern.

WALTER
I'm afraid that your anxiety attacks may have evolved into a severe, severe case of schizophrenia...

Carol cries as Mitch looks on, dumbfounded and angry.

INT. DINER - DAY

Walter and Mitch sit across from each other, each sipping furiously on milk-shakes.

WALTER
No. No-no-no. No.

MITCH
She's like a pine tree in a forest of red woods.

WALTER
I know. I know it.

MITCH
We can't do this to her. I love her.

WALTER
You just want to have sex with her, Mitch. And you have a girlfriend.

MITCH
I know. I know.

WALTER
I actually do love her. She has absolutely no psychological problems. I've been prescribing her children's Advil for three years just to keep her as a client.

MITCH
She and I had a moment in the elevator.

WALTER
It doesn't matter, she already thinks you're her imaginary friend.

MITCH
Damn.

A SILENCE.
WALTER
And you have a girlfriend.

EXT. CAROL’S HOME - NIGHT

Carol leads Mitch up to her beautiful home. They've just come from a date.

CAROL
Today was really nice. You know for an imaginary friend you're really great. Although I guess that makes sense since you are my imagination and all.

Carol snorts as she laughs.

MITCH
Yeah, listen. I've got to go.

CAROL
What? You're not going to come in?

MITCH
No, I've got to go do imaginary people things? I'll see you later.

Mitch runs off.

INT. WALTER’S OFFICE – DAY

Carol sits across from Walter. Mitch sits next to Carol.

CAROL
Doctor, I have to ask you something. Do imaginary friends lead their own lives? Mitch will come over at night, and then he'll just leave?

WALTER
Wait, wait. He has been coming to your home?

CAROL
Well, he's oddly charming.

MITCH
And you are oddly attractive.

She blushes.

WALTER
Carol! You're friend, Mitchie, here, is trying to take control of your life.
MITCH
Are you buying this guy?

WALTER
(louder)
And a solution would be for you to see other people. You—you know, I'm, uh, willing to help, if need be. Pick me up at seven?

Carol smiles. Mitch looks unhappy.

WALTER (CONT'D)
Oh, and you owe me two hundred dollars for today.

She pays.

INT. LE PETITE BISTRO – NIGHT

Walter and Carol enjoy a fancy meal.

Mitch sits directly in between them, stealing food off of Walter's plate. He glares at Walter.

MITCH
(as loud as possible)
Waiter, can I have some vino?

CAROL
Mitch wants some wine.

WALTER
(signaling a waiter)
Three glasses of wine please.  
(to Carol)
Look, I'll entertain the notion of, uh, letting him dine with us tonight. But you really need to begin the process of regaining control of your life.

MITCH
Isn't it illegal to date your own patient?

CAROL
Quiet, hallucination.  
((mantra)  
Control. Control.

Walter nods approvingly. The Waiter delivers some wine.
WALTER
Drink up. It'll help with the medication.

Walter winks at Mitch, who throws a fork at him. Walter pretends it didn't happen.

WALTER (CONT'D)
This may be too forward.
(catching himself)
Keep drinking more wine. Do you, um, want to you know, come back to my place? I can read the dictionary to you if you'd like.

MITCH
Scum bag!

Everyone in the restaurant turns, confused.

CAROL
How about my place? It's closer.

She flashes a devilish smile. Walter smiles.

INT. CAROL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Walter and Carol lay face up in bed. Neither seems particularly comfortable. Mitch lays next to Carol. No one appears to have clothes on.

WALTER
I'm not comfortable with your hallucination seeing me naked.

MITCH
Not much to see.

CAROL
Walter, he's not real. No need to be so self-conscious.

A SILENCE.

WALTER
I...nevermind.

MITCH
Could you guys hurry it up a bit?

WALTER
I can't do this, sorry. It's been lovely. I'll see you next Thursday in session. Don't forgot to take your medicine.
Carol stares bullets at him. Walter gets up, covering himself with two pillows. He stops at the door and nods as his goodbye, before leaving. A SILENCE.

MITCH
So. That was weird.

CAROL
I wish he would've stayed.

MITCH
He's gone off the deep end.

CAROL
Says the hallucination.
(beat)
I'm going to sleep.

She turns over, closing her eyes. Mitch watches her.

INT. WALTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Walter sits at his desk when Carol runs in, distraught.

CAROL
You were right, my imaginary friend is cheating on me!

WALTER
Fantastic!

CAROL
Oh, and I slept with him!

WALTER
What! You had sex with him!

Mitch comes running in wearing Carol's bathrobe.

MITCH
Crazy sex is better than no sex!

CAROL
(to Mitch)
You're cheating on me!

MITCH
With who!?

CAROL
With you're girlfriend!

MITCH
But I don't love her. I'm just dating her.
CAROL
But you're having sex with me.

MITCH
Right, right so I'm cheating on her. With you!

CAROL
(to Walter)
I went through his wallet and found a picture of her, just like you said.

MITCH
(to Walter)
You told her about Michelle!?

CAROL
(to Mitch)
Of course he did! He told me that you are a manifestation of all of my negative insecurities and mistrust of men, after my past failed relationships.

WALTER
That's right, Carol.

MITCH
Carol, listen. I don't have to have a girlfriend.

CAROL
What?

MITCH
I'm your imaginary friend. It's your imagination. I'm whatever you want me to be!

CAROL
Is that true?

MITCH
Yes!

WALTER
No!

CAROL
Promise you won't ever cheat on me.

MITCH
Of course not. I'm not that kind of guy.
Carol thinks about it for a few seconds.

      CAROL
      I'm sorry, Walter. I think I've fallen in love with Mitch.

Walter looks dumbfounded, Mitch triumphant.

**EXT. PARK - DAY**

Walter sits on a swing set, rocking back and forth while drinking a whole bottle of wine.

Behind him, Mitch and Carol walk, with a baby stroller in front of them. Mitch runs up to Walter.

      MITCH
      Hey, man. Look, you can have her back. We made her go crazy, like ape-shit psycho.

Behind them, Carol bends down to pick up their imaginary baby from the empty baby stroller.

      WALTER
      No way, I don't want her after you made her go insane, for real this time.

Carol puts the baby back in the stroller, but the stroller accidentally starts to roll down a small hill.

She screams and runs after it, as it falls over. She quickly saves her 'baby'.

      MITCH
      Come on, do us all a favor and take her back.

Walter is clearly getting drunk.

      WALTER
      Hey man, I'm doing great. I do yoga on Saturdays, and my business has never been better.

      MITCH
      You lost all of your clients you drunk bastard.

      WALTER
      Go away.

THE END.