

At 26 years of age, Jeremy was still living with his mother in Palo Alto.

“Jeremy,” she said to him one morning over bran flakes, “I want you to get a job.”

“I have a job,” said Jeremy. “I work at the Aquarius Theater. That means I have a job in ‘The Industry.’ Do you know how hard it is to get a job in The Industry when you live in Palo Alto?”

“Jeremy,” said his mother, “You sell popcorn. That’s not a career.”

“Hey, I’m an aspiring film maker!” said Jeremy. “More than aspiring, my first movie is almost finished.”

Jeremy’s first movie was a 17-minute piece, which he shot on his iPhone cinema-verité style, and which he planned on distribute on YouTube.

“That’s not a career,” said his mother, “That’s a hobby.”

“Wow, mom,” cried Jeremy, “Calling my life’s work a hobby, that is cold!”

“Honey,” his mother said, “You’re only 26. It’s hardly your life’s work.”

“You don’t understand, mom,” Jeremy said. “You’ve never been driven by the passion an artist feels. Film is my life.”

“Sweetie,” she said, “I’ve been putting up with this for too long. You are 26 years old, and you are living with your mother. It’s not good for you, and it’s not good for your future.”

“Mom,” Jeremy argued, starting to feel frantic, “Living with you has allowed me to make my movie. That’s huge!”

“Honey,” his mother replied, “We’ve been over this before. You to go out and get a job.”

“Mom, I don’t want to be a barista!” Jeremy cried.

“It has health insurance,” his mother said.

“I’m young,” said Jeremy, “I don’t need health insurance. If I thought I was going to pump espresso for the rest of my life, I’d kill myself.”

“Talk to Carl,” his mother said.

“Talk to Carl?” repeated Jeremy disbelieving. “How is Carl going to help me?”

“He said he could get you a job with an insurance company,” she replied.

“What?” said Jeremy. “This is the worst day of my life.”

So Carl got Jeremy a job with an insurance company. Jeremy was trained to look through requests for reimbursement from elderly people, and to deny anything that had been submitted with the slightest error.

“This is a growth industry,” said his new boss. “We are looking for smart young people like you. You have a great career ahead of you, Jeremy, if you perform well, and keep out of trouble.”

Jeremy thought about his friend Ray, who also lived with his mother. He wondered if he could move in with Ray. If that failed, he could always live in his car, in the Bryant Street garage, on the second floor, where the street person Eddie sometimes lived.

“Yeah,” Jeremy thought to himself, “But first I need a car. Where am I going to get a car?”