

Nick Westendorf

The Rat Sketch

FADE IN:

INT. BASEMENT – NEARLY DARK

The scene opens in a basement lit only by a single light bulb in the ceiling and by the flashlights the two characters in the basement are carrying. The room has concrete floors and plain beige walls. Boxes, baskets, and stacks of folders litter the floor. DANA and EDUARDO'S flashlights dart around the room like fireflies, as they sift and search through the various junk on the floor. EDUARDO is about six feet tall and dressed in khaki shorts and a yellow t-shirts. He sports a goatee and wears black sandals. DANA is slightly shorter and is wearing white cotton shorts and a blue long sleeve, hooded windbreaker.

OTS SHOT - EDUARDO

EDUARDO picks up the top folder from a stack of folders and then sets it back down.

EDUARDO

No... definitely not in that stack...

A squeaking noise is heard.

DANA

What was that?

DANA points the flashlight into the corner of the basement, but nothing is there.

DANA

Huh. Must have been my imagination.

EDUARDO

Damn it, Dana, are you going to help me look or not?

DANA

What the hell am I supposed to be looking for again?

EDUARDO

My social security card. It should be down here with some of these papers... somewhere...

The squeak is heard again.

DANA

(startled)

What is that noise?!

EDUARDO

Relax, there's probably just a rat down here.

DANA

A rat!

The squeak is heard again.

EDUARDO

(annoyed)

Oh for God. Don't worry about it. I'm sure he'll stay hidden in a corner somewhere. Just help me look for my card, will ya?

DANA

How the hell am I supposed to know where your card's at, Ed? It's your basement.

EDUARDO

God damn it, if you're not going to look, then get out of my way.

DANA grudgingly starts to half-heartedly thumb through a pile of tattered papers on the ground by her feet.

DANA

(muttering)

How could you have lost your social security card, anyway...

EDUARDO

Jesus, I don't know. Why are you being such a pain—

EDUARDO jumps back with a yelp.

EDUARDO

Something just bit my wrist!

CLOSE UP SHOT – BEADY EYES OF A RAT IN A BOX

DANA

A rat! You bastard, Ed! There's a rat in your basement!

EDUARDO

Shit! It bit me, Dana! The fucking thing bit my hand!

The rat scampers out of the box, sticks its nose in the air and sniffs. DANA backs up a few steps. The rat looks up at EDUARDO.

DANA

Go away, rat!!

EDUARDO

It's looking at me. Why is it looking at me?

RAT

I dunno. What are you looking at *me* for?

DANA

(dumbfounded)

It... talks...?

EDUARDO

(shocked)

It talks! It's a talking rat!

DANA lets out a short, but loud scream.

RAT

Holy crap!

The RAT covers its ears with its paws.

RAT

Someone shut that woman up!

DANA just stares with her mouth open.

RAT

So anyway. Listen, Ed. This is my box. It's my home. You just keep your probing, hairless hands out of it.

EDUARDO

(slowly recovering from shocked state)

Your... home?

RAT

Yeah, that's right. I eat, sleep, poop, and sometimes, when I'm lucky, I fool around with one of the bar rats from across the street all in that box.

DANA stifles a quiet laugh.

EDUARDO

(fully in his right senses)

Right... I don't know where you came from, but this is my basement, and that's my box.

RAT

No, that's *my* box.

EDUARDO

Listen, rat. I'm about 20 times bigger than you are...

While EDUARDO is talking, the RAT scampers over to his feet.

EDUARDO

I'm also about 20 times stronger than you are. So, either get out of my basement, or I'll just plant my foot into your face.

The RAT hops up on EDUARDO'S foot.

RAT

Fear me, Ed!!

The RAT bites down on his foot.

EDUARDO

OW! You bastard! Oh my God!

EDUARDO starts hopping on one foot and DANA laughs.

EDUARDO

I'll kill you!

DANA

What?! No! He's cute!

EDUARDO

(as if betrayed)

Dana?! He just took a piece of my big toe off!

RAT

Fear the rat, baby!

DANA

(between laughs)

Aw, he's adorable!

RAT

That's right, Ed. Chicks dig the rat.

EDUARDO

I'll be digging your grave in a second, you little prick.

The RAT stands up on his hind legs and does pelvic thrusts.

RAT

Uh! Yeah! Who's your daddy? The rat, the rat!
Ickna's your daddy!

EDUARDO

You have a name?! No... I don't believe this. I'm
dreaming. This is insane.

RAT

Of course I have a name. Ickna, Ickna, Ickna. But
call me Icky and I'll kick your ass.

DANA

I like it. Do you have a last name?

RAT

No, I haven't picked a last name yet.

EDUARDO

You named yourself?

RAT

Of course. My parents didn't name me. They
couldn't talk. They were just ordinary rats. I am

RAT CONT'D

the one, the only, Ickna, the talking rat! And you will fear me, bitch! And when you're done quivering in fear, you can get the hell out of my basement!

DANA

It's a good name. I think it's cute.

RAT

Why, thank you.

EDUARDO

If your parents couldn't talk, why can you? Where the hell did you come from?

RAT

If your small mind has to have some sort of explanation, then I came out of a dark, secretive lab where mad scientists created me in a horrible experiment gone wrong in which they were trying to create super mice by combining mouse and elephant DNA in a plot to destroy the stray cat population that kept eating their white test mice.

DANA and EDUARDO blink and say nothing.

RAT

Or maybe you *are* just dreaming!

DANA smiles at the RAT and brushes a stray hair behind her ears.

RAT

You dig the rat, dontcha, baby?

DANA

(giggling)

Well... maybe just a little.

EDUARDO

What the hell? Dana, what are you talking about? It's a rat.

DANA

But he's so cute!

RAT

I told ya, Eddie boy. Chicks dig the rat. Now get out of my basement before I bite your toes off!

EDUARDO just stands, motionless.

RAT

Fear me, Ed!

The RAT bites EDUARDO'S toes again and he hops wildly to the steps leading out of the basement.

EDUARDO

I can't believe you think the rat is cute. He's a jackass, Dana!

DANA

Oh please. (imitating) "God Damn it, Dana" and "Get out of the way" and "Why are you being such a pain." Does that ring a bell? If Ickna is a jackass, then you are too. At least he's a cute jackass.

RAT

Duh nuh nuh! You are the weakest link! Get the hell out of my basement!

EDUARDO

You're both insane.

EDUARDO turns around and climbs the steps out of the basement.

FADE TO BLACK