

In a Bubble

By

Conor Hurley

MONTAGE - POV SHOTS OF SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY SET TO MUSIC

The Crouse School of Music.

The Quad and Hendricks Chapel.

The Carrier Dome.

The Hall of Languages.

The Newhouse School of Communications.

Bird Library.

Comstock Ave. in between University Ave. and Euclid Ave.  
(Fraternity and Sorority Row).

Walnut Ave. in between Waverly Ave. and Harrison St.  
(Fraternity and Sorority Row).

The camera then follows a pristine, white BMW SUV traveling  
down Walnut towards Erie Boulevard.

EXT. SALVATION ARMY THRIFT STORE PARKING LOT - DAY

The SUV pulls into the parking lot. SHELBY (19), the driver,  
and VICTORIA (19), get out and walk towards the thrift  
store. Its snowing lightly.

A close-up of the SUV's bumper reveals a sticker that reads:  
"My Daddy bought this for me."

SHELBY

I like, don't know how I feel about  
this, Victoria. Wearing other  
peoples' old clothes? Literally, I  
can't even.

VICTORIA

What about that guy's clothes you  
were wearing when I picked you up  
this morning?

SHELBY

Oh shut up bitch! That's different.  
He was hot. What was his name --  
Holden?

VICTORIA

Yeah, I sorta know him, he's in  
one of my classes. But I do know  
he's going to be at our initiation

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

VICTORIA (cont'd)  
party tonight, and you want to look  
your best. Plus, I've found the  
best costumes for parties at this  
place, and unlike you and your BMW,  
I'm poor and need to shop here.

SHELBY  
Ugh, fine. But if I get fucking  
lice, its your fault. What's  
tonight's theme again?

VICTORIA  
Winter Wonderland I think?

SHELBY  
Oh that's cute! I'm going to find a  
real fur coat. Let's get inside  
though, it's like Siberia out here.  
I seriously cannot believe I went  
to school in the Northeast.

INT. SALVATION ARMY THRIFT STORE - DAY

After aimlessly roaming the seemingly endless aisles of  
clothes, Shelby spots a coat she likes and screams to  
Victoria across the store.

SHELBY  
OH. MY. GOD... Victoria!!! You've  
GOT to see this.

Victoria, head down, avoiding the glares of the  
other patrons, quickly walks over to find Shelby behind a  
tall coat rack admiring a full body length, brown coat made  
of real fur.

SHELBY  
Victoria, I like need it. I'll be a  
winter princess! And I can wear  
like nothing under it and I'll take  
it off when it's too hot. Perf!

VICTORIA  
I say go for it! How much?

Shelby tries to grab the coat off the rack but it doesn't  
move. Suddenly, all of the coats to the right of the fur  
coat part aside to reveal a white, middle-aged woman. She  
has no coat on, ripped jeans, and is slightly shivering.

(CONTINUED)

SHELBY

Oh, hi. I was just grabbing this coat for myself.

She goes to grab the coat again, but the woman does not let go of it.

SHELBY

Um, excuse me but I would really like this coat, please.

WOMAN

And my strong grasp of it apparently says that I don't?

SHELBY

But, I like, need it.

WOMAN

You need it? What do you NEED it for?

SHELBY

It is really cold outside.

WOMAN

Yeah that North Face jacket doesn't seem to be very warm.

SHELBY

Fine. My friend Victoria and I have an initiation party for our sorority tonight and this will be literally perfect for my costume. Right, Victoria?

Victoria, with her head still down, quietly responds to Shelby.

VICTORIA

Uh yeah, right.

WOMAN

Well that's very nice. You may have this very important party, but I'm homeless. I beg for money on a daily basis standing on the median right out there on the boulevard. This morning, a very nice man gave me twenty dollars and told me to go get a coat, so that's exactly what I'm doing. And I'd say I need it a little more than you do.

(CONTINUED)

A beat. A look of disbelief is all over Victoria's face.

VICTORIA  
Look, Shelby--

SHELBY  
(to Victoria)  
No.  
(to the woman)  
Ma'am, I'm very sorry to hear that.  
Luckily for you, there are plenty  
of other warm coats here. But this  
is the only one that works for me.  
How much is it anyway?

Shelby and the woman both look at the price tag, which reveals the coat is 25 dollars.

SHELBY  
Would you look at that? I guess  
its mine! Twenty five? What a  
bargain. I'm sure it was like two  
twenty five originally. Thanks!

The woman, visibly dejected and annoyed, walks away. Shelby grabs the coat, walks proudly to the counter, and buys it. She walks out of the store with Victoria behind her.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

VICTORIA  
Shelby, are you fucking seri--

Shelby intentionally cuts her off.

SHELBY  
When do you want to start  
pregaming?

Victoria gives her a blank stare. She shakes her head.

VICTORIA  
I was thinking around ten?

SHELBY  
You want to pregame for an hour?  
Fuck that, I need to be drunk to  
talk to that guy again. We need to  
start at eight.

(CONTINUED)

VICTORIA  
(sarcastically)  
We might as well start at six!

SHELBY  
Ew, no. I want to be drunk, not  
sloppy.

Victoria rolls her eyes. It begins to rain. Shelby starts screaming and scampering towards the car.

SHELBY  
Oh my gosh, no! My hair is going to  
get so frizzy! This weather is  
seriously bi-polar. It could really  
use some of my fucking Xanax.

INT. CAR - DAY

Right before putting the keys into the ignition, Shelby looks into her rear-view mirror and sees the same woman from the store walking back to the boulevard median. She has on a light jacket, much smaller than the fur coat.

SHELBY  
Aw, look Victoria. She's right back  
to her spot. I feel bad. Let's  
drive over.

VICTORIA  
(stunned)  
Really?

Shelby quickly backs out and exits the parking lot.

EXT. ERIE BOULEVARD - DAY

Shelby pulls onto the boulevard then makes a U-turn so that she can wait for the light with the woman on the driver's side. She calls out to the woman.

SHELBY  
Excuse me, ma'am!

The woman turns around and sees that it is the same girl from the store. She pauses with a look of disgust on her face, but she slowly walks over.

WOMAN  
Yes, princess?

(CONTINUED)

SHELBY

I'm sorry you couldn't afford the coat--

Not knowing what else to say, Shelby reaches past her wallet, with forty dollars in it, for a coupon in her glove compartment. A close-up reveals it is good for one free hot chocolate at McDonalds.

SHELBY

But here, you can have this.

Shelby flings the coupon towards the woman and it falls to the wet ground. The woman picks it up, then looks back at Shelby, astonished.

WOMAN

You can go fuck yours--

Before the woman can finish, the light turns green, Shelby hits the gas pedal and speeds away.

VICTORIA

Shelby! Why did you do that?

SHELBY

Oh did you want that coupon? I never would have used it. McDonalds? Fucking gross.

VICTORIA

Why didn't you give her any money?

SHELBY

I need that to go buy the alcohol for our pregame. Duh.

VICTORIA

What about the coat? That woman was clearly still freezing.

SHELBY

Maybe the hot cocoa will help. Plus, there's no way I'd give her the coat. I'd feel homeless without that gem tonight.

INT. SHELBY AND VICTORIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Loud pop music plays in the background. Shelby, with her fur coat on, runs around the living room frantically while Victoria, beer in one hand, phone in the other, watches her from the couch.

SHELBY  
Where's my fucking glitter?  
Victoria did you use it?

VICTORIA  
(laughs)  
No, I wouldn't be caught dead  
wearing that shit. But check your  
desk, I saw it there earlier.

Shelby sprints to her room.

SHELBY  
Found it!! I'm so smart I knew it  
was there!

Just as Shelby returns to the living room with glitter all over her face and body, a group of girls, Shelby and Victoria's pledge class, arrive through the door, screaming. Shelby immediately lights up.

SHELBY  
Oh haaaay bitches!

They all hug, jump up and down.

SHELBY  
Well what are we waiting for --  
let's take shhotsss!

Victoria, still on the couch, reluctantly gets up and walks over.

SHELBY  
C'mon Victoria! But please, leave  
the beer. Your 25-year old,  
roll-less self will thank me then  
for saving you from those calories.

Victoria turns around, flips off Shelby and finishes the beer, then joins everyone at the kitchen table. They all raise their shot glasses. Shelby makes a toast.

SHELBY  
I wouldn't want to be initiated  
with any other girls at this  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



SHELBY (cont'd)  
school! Here's to P-C Fourteen!  
Bottoms up, sluts!

They all cheer and take the shot.

SHELBY  
Ew fuck oh my god. I forgot a  
chaser.

She rushes to the fridge and grabs the orange juice.

VICTORIA  
No Shelby not my OJ! I'm going to  
need that tomorrow morning.

Shelby hears Victoria but takes a big gulp anyway.

SHELBY  
(to Victoria)  
Sorrorry I like needed it I was  
going to puke everywhere.  
(to everyone)  
But I'm good now, let's take more!

After quick cuts of four more group shots, they all exit the apartment for the party.

EXT. WALNUT AVE - NIGHT

Shelby and the rest of the girls skip ahead down the street. Victoria trails behind. Victoria is whispering on the phone with someone. They all approach a tall dormitory.

VICTORIA  
Holden, are you ready?

INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Holden (19), dressed in a white suit with a white top hat, holds a bucket full of a red liquid.

HOLDEN  
I was born ready.

EXT. WALNUT AVE - NIGHT

Victoria continues to walk slowly and whisper on the phone.

VICTORIA  
Wait for my cue.

Shelby sees the frat where the party is and runs ahead from the group.

SHELBY  
Hurry up!! It sounds so much fun!!

VICTORIA  
Dump it.

The red liquid cascades out of the window. A downward-facing close-up of Shelby's astonished face sees it right before it lands all over the back of her fur coat.

Shelby shrieks. She looks up but no one is there.

SHELBY  
WHAT THE ACTUAL FUCK!!! Is this  
blood? Oh my god it's blood.

Victoria sprints up to Shelby, who is on her knees sobbing, surrounded by the other girls. Victoria helps her up, puts a finger in the red substance and smells it.

VICTORIA  
Oh my god, Shelby! Who would do  
such a thing? But it's not blood,  
it's just red paint.

SHELBY  
I don't give a fuck what it is.  
Must've been one of those PETA  
people.

She faces upwards towards the dorm and screams.

SHELBY  
Whoever the fuck you are that just  
did that, my dad is a lawyer and  
that's a fucking felony!!

VICTORIA  
Let's go inside and tell security.  
We need to find out whoever did  
that.

All of the other girls nod in agreement with Victoria and encourage Shelby to do so.

(CONTINUED)

SHELBY

No. I'm not going to let some tree-hugging, animal-humping hippie ruin my fucking night. We're going to this party right now, I'll wash it off there.

Shelby stomps away and the other girls trail behind her. Victoria looks up as Holden peers out the window. She gives him a sly smile and a wink.

INT. FRAT PARTY - NIGHT

The party is loud. Crowded. Reckless. Both girls and guys are dressed in either white or winter clothing. They are all dancing and drinking.

Fake snow is on the ground, but bubbles float silently and peacefully through the air, not phased by the debauchery.

Shelby is in a corner, surrounded by Victoria and their other friends. They have wet wash cloths in hand, desperately trying to get the red paint out of the fur coat.

Right before the last bit comes out, Holden strolls over to the group of girls. He's dressed in the same outfit as before.

HOLDEN

Ladies, ladies! What's this all about? How about less cleaning and more dancing?

SHELBY

Hiii Holden!

She drops the coat and jumps into his arms.

SHELBY

I just spilled some cranberry juice on my coat, no big deal it's almost out!

HOLDEN

How unfortunate! Especially for such a magnificent coat. How long have you had that for?

Shelby quickly grabs the coat again and puts it on.

(CONTINUED)

SHELBY

My grandmother passed it down to my mom who then passed it down to me. I'm not sure how much it's actually worth, but probably a lot.

Holden gives a quick look of disbelief to Victoria who is standing behind Shelby, who reciprocates it amid holding her laughter.

HOLDEN

I can only imagine. I'm glad you got it all cleaned up. It doesn't matter anyway though, you great with or without it.

SHELBY

(blushing)

Aw thank you, you're so sweet!

HOLDEN

Of course. I've got to take care of something real quick but how about I meet you out on the dance floor in five?

SHELBY

Sounds great sexy I'll see you there!

She gives him a wink then runs to the dance floor with all of the other girls besides Victoria. Holden gives Victoria a nod and they go into the kitchen.

INT. FRAT KITCHEN - NIGHT

Holden and Victoria burst into laughter as they enter the kitchen.

VICTORIA

Cranberry juice?!

HOLDEN

Passed down from her grandmother? God that girl is psychotic.

VICTORIA

You're telling me.

INT. DANCE FLOOR

Shelby dances with her friends but quickly becomes disinterested.

SHELBY

I'm going to go find Holden, I need him now.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Almost skipping with glee, she passes the kitchen and hears Holden's laugh. Her eyes light up. Just before she turns the corner, she also hears Victoria's laugh. She decides to stay out of sight and listen.

HOLDEN (O.S.)

I can't believe we got away with that.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

VICTORIA

I can't believe you actually hit the coat. The planning was easy, but the execution was tough.

HOLDEN

What can I say, PETA has taught me well. That's not my first fur victim.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

A close-up of Shelby's face reveals her jaw is dropped. There's rage in her eyes. She's frozen in the winter wonderland.

VICTORIA (O.S.)

She had it coming. The real fur is bad enough, but the way she went about getting it only added to that. Disgusting.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

HOLDEN

I can't believe she couldn't  
sacrifice a piece of her costume  
for a freezing homeless woman.

VICTORIA

And THEN, threw a hot chocolate  
coupon at her thinking that was  
generous!

HOLDEN

I also can't believe you're friends  
with her.

VICTORIA

She's a good friend. She's loyal  
and would be there for me if I  
needed anything. She's just in her  
own little world sometimes.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Shelby's face has changed. Her mouth is shut. Her eyes start  
welling with tears. Frozen with rage no more.

She puts her back against the wall and slowly she slides  
downward and sits on the floor. She looks up, as if she's  
looking to someone for an answer. A bubble slowly floats  
over her and lands on her nose.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

HOLDEN

Well hopefully we burst her bubble  
a little bit.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Shelby reaches for the bubble with her finger, but it bursts  
moments before she touches it.

Suddenly, she shoots up. She continues to walk down the  
hallway towards the back porch of the house.

EXT. BACK PORCH - NIGHT

Shelby reaches for her phone in the pocket of the fur coat. Phone in hand, she takes off the coat and folds it in her arms. She's only wearing a tank top and is shivering in the cold. Her fingers struggle to dial a number.

SHELBY

Hi can I have a taxi to eight hundred Walnut please? Thank you.

She gets a call back soon after. She runs to the front where it's parked and gets in.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

DRIVER

Where are you headed?

SHELBY

To the Salvation Army on Erie Boulevard please.

DRIVER

It's midnight, you know that's closed by now, right?

SHELBY

Yes, I'm not going for the store.

The driver shrugs, puts the keys into the ignition and starts to drive. Shelby sits silently in the back seat as she looks out the window. The fraternity and sorority houses blend and fade away as they leave campus.

EXT. ERIE BOULEVARD - DAY

The taxi pulls up to the median across from the Salvation Army. The woman from earlier is still walking up and down it. The light turns red. Shelby takes a gulp.

SHELBY

Sir, I'm going to get out for just a second. Will you please wait?

DRIVER

As long as there's no one behind me.

Shelby opens the door slowly. She gets out and places her right heel onto the median. Standing up right, she sees the woman is walking the other way. She shouts.

(CONTINUED)

SHELBY  
Excuse me, ma'am.

The woman slowly turns around. More surprised than disgusted, she looks back at Shelby but doesn't say anything.

SHELBY  
What I did earlier, was wrong.

Shelby walks towards the woman. She extends both of her arms out with the coat in her hands. She looks down at it.

SHELBY  
I thought I needed this coat. It turns out I did need it, but not to wear. It gave me the perspective I needed to come back here.

She hands the coat to the woman. Speechless, the woman takes the coat, and gives Shelby a warm smile. The driver pulls up to them as the light turns green.

Shelby gets back into the cab. As they pull away, Shelby turns around to see the woman beaming, holding twenty five dollars Shelby left in the pocket. Shelby smiles warmly then directs the driver.

SHELBY  
Back to campus, please.

EXT. SHELBY AND VICTORIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Shelby has the driver stop at her apartment rather than going back to the party. She pays the driver, gets out and walks through the front door.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Shelby opens the refrigerator door and grabs Victoria's Orange Juice. She doesn't open it, but carries the bottle down the hallway into the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

She looks into the mirror and talks to herself.

SHELBY  
Thanks for the lesson, Victoria, I appreciate it. I really do. But it  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



SHELBY (cont'd)  
was quite a rude lesson. I'll just  
have to give you a rude awakening!

She opens the mirror and grasps a small bottle of "MiraLax" laxative powder. She opens it and pours it into the orange juice for a few seconds. She replaces the caps on both and puts the MiraLax back.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Shelby walks back into the kitchen and puts the orange juice back in the refrigerator where she found it.

SHELBY  
Looks like my bubble won't be the  
only thing bursting this weekend,  
bitch.

Shelby slams the refrigerator door.

FADE TO BLACK.