

NORTH OF MONTANA

Episode 2: "Welcome to L.A."

Written by

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SCENE 1-A - EXT. PANORAMA OF MOUNTAINS-SNOW, DAY

Opening titles and music begin - Canadian Rockies, a cold snow-covered February morning. Opening helicopter overheads of mountains, trees, snow, then a lone highway with WILL's solitary, older, rusty green pickup driving down it. Camera overhead from behind the truck drops down to road level on a vehicle following for five beats, then the pickup signals, slows, and pulls into a roadside restaurant parking area.

SCENE 1-B - EXT. HIGHWAY RESTAURANT, DAY

Opening titles and music continues. WILL gets out of the truck and walks to the door, stomps snow off his boots, opens the door which rings sleigh bells hanging from the inside, and steps inside.

SCENE 1-C - INT. HIGHWAY RESTAURANT, DAY

WILL closes the door and turns around, scanning the interior. Inside is a counter with stools and a dozen tables with chairs, but no people. Decorated with old movie props, signed photos of movie stars going back to the '20s line the walls. There's a small stage in the corner with fake palm trees on either side, and an old jukebox against another wall. A radio is playing in the kitchen behind the counter.

SCENE 1-D - INT. HIGHWAY RESTAURANT, DAY

LOLA, a Goth-Girl waitress with purple hair emerges from the kitchen behind the counter, wearing boots, jeans and a rock band t-shirt. She grabs a coffee pot and menu, then points with the menu to a table by the windows. WILL doesn't move but continues watching her. LOLA walks around edge of counter, stops and stares back at him, speaking English with a heavy Russian accent.

LOLA

So you are frozen in place, now,
cowboyk?

WILL

(comes too)
Sorry. Just spaced-out, I guess,
from the driving.

WILL walks to the table she pointed to by the window, as LOLA follows behind, putting the menu on the table as he sits.

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CONTINUED:

LOLA

(pours coffee)

How far was drivingk?

WILL

Not sure. Am I north of Montana?

(looks at menu)

LOLA

Yes. This would be quaint and rustic pube-a-tory called Alberta. Named, so story goes, after photograph retrieved from shirt pocket of early settler, found frozen dead in snow, with photo showing Prince Albert wearing long, expensive dress. But story may be not completely true, as place is settled mostly by Canadian in-breeders. So point-of-view likely suffers from genetic similarity deformity. Yours is where from, cowboyk?

WILL

(looks up from menu)

Sorry - my "what's" from where? And your accent, it's not by chance - ?

LOLA

- Gypsy wolf-girl from borderlands of Romania? Good guess. And "what" is "point-of-view." With Boston baseball hat on neural arboretum, New York license plate on choo-choo, Knott's Berry Farm bobble-head palm tree on plastic dashboard - guessing you are recent transplant to L.A., come north in search of vast movie and TV production opportunity, here, on Canadian Riviera. Did you bring trunks?

SCENE 2-A - INT. WILL'S TRUCK, DAY

WILL is suddenly awakened by a loud tapping sound on his driver's window. The snow PLOW DRIVER has stopped and is banging on his window with the handle of a snow shovel. WILL is leaned back against the passenger's door, with

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Doris idling and a sleeping bag pulled over his body. He leans forward across the front seat and unrolls the driver's window.

WILL

Sorry. Guess I dozed off.

PLOW DRIVER

That's okay. As long as you're still breathing. Need help?

WILL

Nope. Just directions. How far are Carlyle and Euclid?

PLOW DRIVER

Never heard of 'em. There's a gas station 30 miles up the road. You could ask there. Okay?

WILL is suddenly struck by the realization that he may have booked sudden passage on a dream ship with no real destination.

PLOW DRIVER

You have to say "okay," so I'm relieved of my snow plow driver responsibilities.

WILL

Yeah. Sorry. I'm "A-Okay" ... which, I guess, is a carry-over from the old, dog-eat-dog grading system used in the olden times, before "pass-fail okay" became the common expression it is today.

The plow driver shakes his head and walks back to the plow, parked across the road, as WILL sits up behind the wheel, slides the bag over, puts Doris in gear and slowly continues driving north.

SCENE 3-A - EXT. ICE HOUSE STREET, DAY

GRANNY LIN, with skin the color of whole milk with blobs of cream floating on top, is wearing an orchid flower print sun dress, open-toe sandals, sunglasses, and a sun hat with an enormous brim. She's holding up the GPS map displayed on her phone as she walks down the street toward The Ice House, pulling a small rolling suitcase. HECTOR, sitting on his stool and reading the newspaper, looks up as she approaches the take-out window.

SCENE 3-B - EXT. THE ICE HOUSE, DAY

HECTOR

Hello. Welcome to L.A.

GRANNY LIN

Hi, and thanks for the welcome. People don't say that nearly enough, today. But what gave away that I'm not a native Angeleno? Was it the rolling suitcase?

HECTOR

That, and the pallor of your skin - like a pure and lovely, never-toasted marshmallow.

GRANNY LIN

Well, aren't you sweet. You must be Hector.

HECTOR

That I am. Who -

GRANNY LIN

- My granddaughter says you're a sweetheart, with the best Coffee Almond Fudge this side of Fond du Lac.

HECTOR

Wow. You must be Emily's Granny Lin.

GRANNY LIN

That I am.

HECTOR

This "is" an honor. I've seen "Pauline's Big Night at the Disco" a dozen times. Can I get you a cone?

GRANNY LIN

That's why I'm here. That, and the fact that LAX stops just before the beach towels start.

Hector turns to the cooler behind, and begins filling her cone.

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CONTINUED:

GRANNY LIN

Hector, can I ask your honest opinion?

HECTOR

(over shoulder)

Sure. You can ask.

GRANNY LIN

Do you think my promise is larger than my head?

HECTOR

Larger than your what?

GRANNY LIN

Larger than my head. Someone told me, recently in Madison, that he thought my promise was larger than my head.

HECTOR

(turns back to window,
hands her cone)

The usual, Coffee Almond Fudge.

GRANNY LIN

Thanks.

(hands him 3 ones)

Keep the change. ... So?

HECTOR

And he made the comment because he couldn't make your head part of his promise?

GRANNY LIN

(takes bite)

That's it.

HECTOR

What a fool. It's a nice head. Completely functional on its own. Outside, like Tom Jones at twenty, in spandex slacks and singing "Sherry Baby!" Inside, like a Vonnegut novel that's strung, from initial set-up to the narrative afterwards, with spinning, disco balls of humor.

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GRANNY LIN
(shrieks through
mouthful)
God, Hector - your insight "is"
better than your ice cream!
Thanks.

GRANNY LIN grabs the handle of her suitcase and begins to
turn away.

GRANNY LIN
See you later.

HECTOR
Wait! Isn't this the place where
I express concern, and ask if I
can help you get somewhere?

GRANNY LIN
Ah, that's so sweet. I have it
covered. My third husband,
Maurice the actuary, lives just
four blocks away in a condo that
overlooks the beach, with Mavis,
an 18-year-old iguana. He always
did like 18-year-olds, so it's
only right he should end up with
one that looks like a lizard.

HECTOR
(laughs)
Okay. Come again.

GRANNY LIN
(holds up cone)
Guaranteed.

GRANNY LIN walks back to, and up the street.

SCENE 4-A - EXT. AUDITION BLDG., DAY

EMILY pulls into the parking lot and gets out, locking
the car. She's wearing a dress, sandals and sunglasses,
as she slings her knapsack over a shoulder and walks to
the door.

SCENE 4-B - INT. AUDITION BLDG., DAY

EMILY enters, taking off her sunglasses, closes door and
turns around. GRACE is sitting at the small table across
the room.

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CONTINUED:

EMILY

Hey, Grace.

GRACE

Hi, Emily. Welcome back. I'll
let them know you're here.

GRACE gets up, opens door behind her desk, steps thru doorway and closes door behind her. EMILY sits on the folding chair farthest from the door, puts knapsack on chair beside her, and pulls print-out of two-page script they sent, puts it on her lap, closes eyes, and begins going through the lines in her head.

GRACE reopens door.

GRACE

They're ready for you.

EMILY

(walks to door)

Thanks, Grace.

SCENE 4-C - INT. AUDITION ROOM, DAY

CAROL is seated behind the table, with RICHARD to her right and PHYLLIS to her left, with the video camera on a tripod behind CAROL's left shoulder. EMILY walks to the chair in the middle of the room and drops her knapsack on it, speaking as she walks.

EMILY

Hello.

CAROL

Hi, Emily. Thanks for coming
back. Sitting beside me are
Richard and Phyllis, the show's
co-creators.

RICHARD

Hi, Emily.

PHYLLIS

Welcome. You've had a chance to
look at the two pages we sent?

EMILY

Yes. It's in the memory bank.

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CONTINUED:

PHYLLIS

(breath laughs)

Good. You'll be reading with me.
You can sit if you want.

EMILY

Thanks. Standing is fine.

EMILY looks down at the floor for 3 beats, breathes deeply, then looks up, with the script still in her hand by her side.

EMILY AS CLAIRE

So tell me again, what the score is?

PHYLLIS AS ALEX

It's you and me, Babe. The bottom of the 9th. The bases are loaded, you're at the plate, and we trail by three.

EMILY AS CLAIRE

And this metaphor involves baseball, right?

PHYLLIS AS ALEX

Right.

EMILY AS CLAIRE

And you're the coach?

PHYLLIS AS ALEX

The manager.

EMILY AS CLAIRE

Where's the coach?

PHYLLIS AS ALEX

The first-base coach is in a box beside first base. And the third-base coach is in a box next to third base.

EMILY AS CLAIRE

So there are two coaches?

PHYLLIS AS ALEX

Plus a pitching coach, and a hitting instructor - they're sitting on the bench in the dug-out, where I am.

(CONTINUED)

EMILY AS CLAIRE

And the dug-out is a few steps
below the level of the field,
and the place where the team
sits when not on the field?

PHYLLIS AS ALEX

Yes.

EMILY AS CLAIRE

Why not a few steps above the
field, so the team could get a
better view of what's happening?

PHYLLIS AS ALEX

No idea. But that's not
important.

EMILY AS CLAIRE

So letting the players have a
better view of what's happening
on the field, is not important?
Is this a central theme of using
baseball as a metaphor, or just
using metaphors, in general?

PHYLLIS AS ALEX

You're making this more
complicated than it needs to be.

EMILY AS CLAIRE

Right. And the metaphor becomes
more complicated than it needs
to be when someone asks
questions about the reasoning
behind the metaphor, instead of
just embracing the idea that the
inherent value of using
metaphors is that they
illustrate the power of
vagueness in abstraction, as it
refers to, not the truth of
something, but our inability to
ever clearly see the truth in
anything - as abstraction then
becomes an ancient, reflexive
truism, like a castle and its
moat, impervious to the reason
vandals and their puny,
feathered arrows turned from
fact, that bounce off the stone
and mortar of the greater,
steadfast glory of the vague?

(CONTINUED)

PHYLLIS AS ALEX
(shakes head)
... Look - do you want to do
this, or not?

EMILY AS CLAIRE
Why is trying to understand what
it is we're really doing - not
the actual and real "this" that
we are, in fact, doing?

EMILY
(relaxes, smiles,
glances at both)
I love this scene. Thanks for
writing it.

PHYLLIS
Thank "you."

RICHARD
Thank her. I'm just the typist.

PHYLLIS
(1/4 head turn right)
Right. And pigs can fly, and all
frogs kiss like the royal
family.

RICHARD
(1/4 head turn left)
Should I write that down?

EMILY
(enjoying the banter show)

PHYLLIS
(to Emily)
Pay no attention to the
gentleman to my right. You were
very good, and we'll let your
agent know in a week or two what
we decide. Okay?

EMILY
Sure. And thanks for asking me
back.

RICHARD
And you did knock it out of the
park. Drove in four runs. Won
the game.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD (cont'd)
(restrained cheering,
waving hands)

Yay!

PHYLLIS
(1/4 head turn right)
Richard?

RICHARD
(1/4 head turn left)
Sorry. I forgot the protocol.
(to Emily)
You were definitely within the
boundaries of okay. Can I
validate your parking?

PHYLLIS
(to Emily)
Thanks again for coming.

EMILY
Thank you.

EMILY slides her knapsack on her shoulder, turns and
walks back toward the door.

SCENE 5-A - EXT. STREET, DAY

SARA-FINN is sitting on an upside-down plastic milk
crate, in her usual spot beside a fire hydrant near the
corner of Lana Turner Boulevard and William Holden Drive,
her mountain bike locked to a "No Parking" sign, a large
beach umbrella clamped to one side of the sign's pole, a
large flag staff to the other, the flag with "Star Maps
\$3.00" hanging out over the no-parking lane.

EMILY's car drives by and honks. SARA-FINN flashes a
thumbs-up, followed by a combination of other mysterious
hand-and-finger gestures, toward the rear of the car.

SCENE 5-B - EXT. STREET, DAY

A tourist family's car pulls up and parks in the no-
parking lane, the TOURIST GUY driver gets out and walks
around rear of car, approaching SARA-FINN.

SARA-FINN
(holds out map)
Hello, sir. Another beautiful
day in Tinseltown.

(CONTINUED)

TOURIST GUY

Yes, indeed, it is.

SARA-FINN hands him map, printed on two sides of 8x11" paper, with a "you are here" and streets showing the homes of 40 stars within 10 miles of where they are.

TOURIST GUY

(looking at map)

No, kidding. All these people live near here?

SARA-FINN

Yes, sir. And if you look closely, you can see stars everywhere in Hollywood - often shining brightly, or, perhaps on bad days, looking more like black holes with expensive cars.

TOURIST GUY

(looks at her)

And the map's only three bucks? Other ones are a lot more.

SARA-FINN

Yes, sir. But it's not a bargain map. It's an good map, with accurate info that's easy to follow. It's just the price that's cheap.

TOURIST GUY

Okay.

(hands her three ones)

Thanks.

TOURIST GUY turns and walks back to driver's door of car.

SARA-FINN

Thank you, sir. And happy star gazing!

SCENE 6-A - EXT. CONDO BLDG. STREET, DAY

GRANNY LIN, pulling suitcase, walks up to front door of ARTHUR WELD's condo building, presses in security code, opens door and walks inside.

SCENE 6-B - INT. CONDO BLDG. LOBBY, DAY

At waiting elevator, GRANNY LIN steps inside and pushes button, as doors close.

SCENE 6-C - INT. CONDO BLDG. HALL, DAY

GRANNY LIN walks down hallway and stops at ARTHUR WELD'S condo door. She presses security code, opens door and steps inside, closing door.

SCENE 7-A - INT. ARTHUR'S CONDO, DAY

GRANNY LIN

Arthur? Hello? You home, kiddo?

(looks at wristwatch,
mutters)

Oh, of course - 4:30 is early-
bird happy hour at The Bikini
Bottom.

GRANNY LIN takes her hat off and hangs it on an empty hall tree hook, then wheels the suitcase into the living room. MAVIS is sleeping on a tree-limb perch in a corner by the windows overlooking the beach.

GRANNY LIN

Hello, Mavis. You're looking
fit. See any hot lizards on the
beach today?

(waits for reply)

No? Not speaking? Cat got your
tongue, and ate it? What a
shame.

GRANNY LIN turns and walks down the hall to the guest bedroom, going inside. She leaves her suitcase by the closet, then sees note resting on the bed pillow, steps to it, opens note and reads it.

ARTHUR

(voice-over)

Dearest Linda: If you're reading
this then I guess the plane did
not crash, and I'll need to find
another hit man. So in the
meantime, make yourself at home.
Clean towels and bath robe in
the bath, sheets on the bed.
There's a pitcher of margaritas
in the fridge, cheese, crackers
on the shelf, and some left-over

(MORE)

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CONTINUED:

ARTHUR (cont'd)

guacamole from the Pirate's Bay Social Club meeting last night. If you're in the mood for exercise, Mavis's lease is hanging by the door. She walks a little a slow, so be careful crossing busy streets. I should be back by 6:30, if I don't get lucky. - With a vague memory of something similar to love, Arthur.

GRANNY LIN

(breath laugh)

Right. The last time you got lucky was 1953, you fossil.

SCENE 7-B - INT. ARTHUR'S CONDO, EVENING

GRANNY LIN is asleep on a chaise lounge on the balcony that faces north, wearing a Hawaiian print bath robe, a bath towel wrapped around her hair, a glass and the half-empty, sweating pitcher of margaritas, and a plate with the remnants of cheese and crackers, are on a small table beside her. It's early dusk, the sun having recently sunk into the ocean.

ARTHUR enters the condo with a canvas grocery bag in his hand. He sees her hat and looks through the living room to the balcony and sees GRANNY LIN, who appears to be asleep.

He walks into the kitchen and puts the ice cream in the freezer, frozen cake on the counter, puts some cookies from the jar on a plate, and grabs another margarita glass.

MAVIS, awake on her perch, sees Arthur come out of the kitchen and flicks her tail, moving a wind-chime/intruder alert above her perch, awakening GRANNY LIN with a snore-snort. She turns her head toward the living room and sees ARTHUR, walking toward the balcony.

SCENE 7-C - INT. ARTHUR'S CONDO, EVENING

ARTHUR steps out onto the balcony and sits on the chaise lounge beside GRANNY LIN, putting a plate of cookies and another margarita glass on the small table between them.

ARTHUR

Linda.

(CONTINUED)

GRANNY LIN

King Arthur. What news from the
sexual crusades? No prisoners
today?

ARTHUR

Not today.

ARTHUR fills both their glasses, and takes a cookie,
chewing half of it. GRANNY LIN picks up her glass and a
cookie, as they both look at the ocean view.

ARTHUR

(thru mouthful)

Also, no prisoners yesterday.
Last week. Last month. In fact,
the last time I got lucky was -

CHORUS

- 1953.

GRANNY LIN

(takes bite of cookie)

Mmm. Oatmeal raisin. Your
mother's recipe. The only really
good thing she ever gave you.
... Besides the dinky.

ARTHUR

(breath laugh)

You always liked the dinky.

GRANNY LIN

I always liked the dinky.

ARTHUR

(turns head to her)

Don't suppose ...

GRANNY LIN

(turns head to him)

You're kidding - two fossils,
rubbing together? What good
could possibly come from that?

Both look back at the view.

GRANNY LIN

And it would only confuse,
future paleontologists.

GRANNY LIN AS PALEONTOLOGIST 1

Hey, look! What do you make of
this? Am I crazy, or does it
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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GRANNY LIN AS PALEONTOLOGIST 1 (cont'd)
look like, after the fossils
were fully formed, they began to
move again? How can that be?

GRANNY LIN AS PALEONTOLOGIST 2
Must be an aberration - of the
physical laws of the universe.

ARTHUR
Yeah. You're right. You're
always right.

GRANNY LIN
Yeah. I'm always right.

CHORUS
Except, of course, when -
you're/I'm - not.

Both look at each other.

ARTHUR
(bumping eyebrows)

GRANNY LIN
(getting up)
Oh, why not.

SCENE 8-A - EXT. EMILY'S DRIVEWAY, EVENING

EMILY is parked off the side of the narrow driveway of the small, two-bedroom rental house in The Valley, she shares with two roommates. With her knapsack on one shoulder, she closes the driver's door, beep locks it, and walks toward the front door.

SCENE 8-B - INT. EMILY'S HOUSE, EVENING

Inside, EMILY closes the door and steps to a table in the entry, picking up her mail and looking at the note on the small whiteboard on the wall beside it.

TED
(voice-over)
Em - Billy and I are going to
The Zoo, then CBTN. Back around
midnight. - Ted

EMILY turns and walks toward the hallway and her bedroom.

SCENE 8-C - INT. EMILY'S BEDROOM, EVENING

Closing music and credits begin. EMILY enters her bedroom, drops the knapsack by the desk and sits, opening her laptop on the desk. She enters the passphrase, and checks her mail.

EMILY
(shaking head, mutters)
Where the fuck are you, pickup
boy?

EMILY opens the short reply she sent to the email WILL sent from the Burger King across from the gas station parking lot, three days ago. Then she begins reading the second reply she'd briefly started, and now deletes.

EMILY
(stares at blank email
box, mutters)
Come on, Em. Don't be lame. No
one expects it. In fact - as we
dance behind this veil of tears
on the road that's both from and
to, the beginning and the final
Home Depot check-out line - the
only one, true thing that
everyone is rooting for, is
something interesting to do, or
see, or hear, or read. So give
the world ... a fuck-ing break
... o-kaay?

EMILY then starts typing fast for five beats, the camera moving from the notebook screen, to the keyboard, to the concentration on her face. Then, as her typing stops, the camera goes back to the screen and shows a few hundred words of text as she scrolls back up to the top. As EMILY reads in voice-over, camera shot drifts - from screen to face, chair, body, room, and back.

EMILY
(voice-over)
New York pickup boy: I'm
breaking email etiquette, here,
by sending a second email reply
to you before receiving a reply
to my first, brief reply to the
email you sent me. I know this
seems confusing, but gmail has
it figured out, somehow. I'm not
sure how they do it. My guess is
they have a bunch of unemployed,
empty-nested mothers with
(MORE)

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EMILY (cont'd)

nothing better to do than sort through email replies and hold the miscreants hostage, until the proper protocols are met.

And breaking protocol has its risks. So if you don't hear from me again, please contact the Legal Aid Society for Underemployed Thespians in the Greater Los Angeles Actor Basin, and ask them to inquire as to what my bail might be. Because that's where I'll be - somewhere in L.A. County, up an aqueduct without a paddle, waiting for the bail bondsman.

So just where - the - fuck - might you be, huh, Monkey Paw? Stuck inside the "Can a' da," your punt grounded while long-polling to "Rangoon on the Athabasca"? Or, possibly, you were abducted at the border of the once fierce-and-mighty US 'A, and transported by aliens to the Galaxy "Ford 500," in an older, smokey-troller corner of the cosmos, where people tool around in heavy space-boats with pounds of chrome carefully leafed across the epidermis of their steely members.

My butcher - the 16-year-old kid who rewrites my stand-up material for five-dollars and a can of Red Bull - says your disappearance may, instead, be the result of an alien subduction, which apparently works like alien abduction, but the other way.

According to Chavez's Theorum 14-Tetra-Morgus, in alien subduction the "visitors from afar," - the "Los Ali-enos," as he calls them - instead of beaming people up into spaceships or beams-of-light that zip the humble Earthlings off to lands no one can imagine,

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EMILY (cont'd)

beam themselves down into the bodies of the humble Earthlings, much like those insects Special Agent Mulder would find crawling just beneath his skin, every five or six episodes.

EMILY AS MULDER

Scully! Quick! Get the "alien spawn extractor"!

EMILY AS SCULLY

What? Mulder, why are you ... Oh, my God! There are alien spawn crawling beneath your skin.

EMILY

As Scully steps closer and tentatively pokes at one with the tip of a finger.

EMILY AS SCULLY

Actually, Mulder, they're kind of cute.

EMILY AS MULDER

Scully!!! Have you no ...

EMILY

Mulder's voice trails off as a small rock band gathers by his Adam's apple, and begins to pass around an alien spawn joint.

EMILY AS SCULLY

Yes, Mulder? Have I no, what? Oh, look, they're having a party.

EMILY

... But, I'm guessing the subduction was more likely a straight abduction, and not by aliens but by native Canadians, in a logging truck full of burly lumberjacks who beamed you up into their conga line, as something dance-able by Holy Death Wart plays from a jukebox in the corner of some roadside diner, deep inside the furtive Douglas fir lands of the Provence of Alberta.

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EMILY (cont'd)

Is that it, wander-launders boy?
Got dem, deep down, lumber-jacky
blues? - E

EMILY reading down to the bottom, shakes her head, sighs
and presses "send."

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