

# Memo

To: All Employees  
From: Lindsay Hunter  
Date: 6/23/2009  
Re: Fire Safety

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Frannie, p. 1 of 2

My friends and I made a bonfire out of my dad's foldout couch mattress. He'd called earlier in the night and when my friend Zoe picked up the phone he said, "Hey, Joey, is Ann there?" She assumed he was talking about me, since Ann sort of rhymes with Frannie, my name. When I put the phone to my ear I heard a faint whistling and when I said, "Dad?" he snorted, cleared his throat, said, "I'm staying at a friend's in the city. You think you can hold down the fort?" though it sounded more like "I'm schtrayin atta frens inna shitty..." You get the picture. He was drunk.

My mom had sent me and my friends Zoe and Kath to his house at the beach for the weekend—she had a big date and didn't want me "screwing it all up for her. Again." Zoe brought her foiled roll of pot and on the train had stuffed it down her pants, pretended like it was her big pot penis, kept pointing at it, saying "Hey, ladies..."

When we got to the house it smelled musty and the couch was wet in places, but the fridge was stocked with beer and my dad's girlfriend's favorite—Martini & Rossi—which just so happens to be Kath's favorite as well. We ordered a pizza, watched Cinemax, smoked a giant joint, Kath and Zoe dared each other to kiss and I went into the bathroom and stared at myself in the medicine cabinet mirror and made vague promises into my face, things like You'll fall in love one day, You'll be famous, You'll stop looking so much like your dad.

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Frannie, p. 2 of 2

When I came back out Kath and Zoe sat up and pulled their shirts down, wiped at their mouths. I had this weird feeling—almost like being left out, except it was more like I couldn't stop the universe from including me, couldn't stop its constant demands that I feel something, that I react. A giddy nothingness. Also, I was pretty high.

I threw the pillows off the couch, pulled at the foldout handle and it opened in a great metallic moaning, like some metal jaws were opening wide. The mattress was really heavy so Kath and Zoe helped me drag it out to the beach. Zoe pushed Kath down onto it and Kath got a little peeved, but it just made her focus more because she was the one who ran into the house and got the kitchen knife, stabbed the mattress, yanked at the slits until they were gaping mattress filling. That filling caught fire like we'd peed kerosene onto it, and we held hands and danced around the fire as it grew. Zoe broke out and ran for the dark water, then Kath broke out and ran after her. I stayed and watched them through the flames, my body so hot I was sure I was also burning, though I wasn't, not even close. I could see the future if I wanted to, and it looked as black as the center of the fire, but it had edges to it that glimmered, and that's what I watched, and that's what I remember.

