



Saam Gabbay

Touchless Birthday

March 26, 2020

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My birthday was in the middle of the ongoing coronavirus quarantine. I canceled a get-together and instead went to visit my friends and family at theirs.

Not that I could go near them, of course.

Instead, I went to each one's home and photographed them from outside, looking in. I scheduled a time for each and asked that they stand at their window while I stood in their yards, or on their sidewalk, or across the street.

If they lived in a high rise, I flew my drone to their window.

The resulting images and video are below, offering a peek at a life so many of us are also currently living, and yet from which each of us are excluded.

–Saam Gabbay  
#touchlessbirthday

Link: [Main Project Page & Video](#)

7:55AM, Richard



“Honored to be part of this special day for an even more special human with yet an amazing idea with an even more amazing execution. Happy Birthday Sir. Love, Richard aka Spotted” – Richard

8:30AM, Paula



“Beach, I miss you.” – Paula

8:45AM, Erin



“This glass is an annoying, yet unfortunately necessary barrier - one that halts a form of gratitude for this unique human’s life. Does he know what my birthday hug would feel like?” – Erin

9:00AM, Erica



“I’ve never had this much time to just be, and it feels wonderful.” – Erica



9:30AM, Ole



“It’s not easy being difficult,” – Ole

9:50AM, Kathleen Beaton



"I was reminded of the movie The Swimmer with Burt Lancaster based on the John Cheever short story." – Kathleen

10:10AM, Eric + Eliah



“We love you, Saam. Thanks for bringing your birthday celebration to all of us!” – Eric & Eliah

10:30AM, Patrick and Daniela



“Darling, there’s a Homunculus in the garden!!!” – Patrick & Daniela

11:00AM, Spencer



“This man wanted to see his quarantined friends on his birthday. What happened next will shock you.” – Spencer

11:45AM, 405 Freeway at Sunset Blvd.



Looking southbound.

11:30AM, David + Farnaz + Jacob + Jared



“Saam thinks outside the box. Once again he was outside the box and his friends and family were in their boxes. Surreal.” – David

12:00PM, Madeleine + Fereydoon



“Empathy And GRATITUDE: When the pandemic and economic crisis subside, a new legitimate authority will emerge and it will no longer be based on faith, force or money. But rather on EMPATHY. The faster we do it the faster the pandemic will go away. What do you think my dearest Saam? Don t you think we should manage the world in a much more empathetic, consideration and caring way... Love you” – Madeleine



12:30PM, Afshin + Kika



"Thanks, China." – Afshin & Kika

1:00PM, Joubin + Tiffany + Kids



“So happy to see another human. Especially someone on their actual birthday” – Tiffany & Joubin

1:30PM, Hamid + Nahid



“Very unusual to be in a luxury prison for such a long time. Documenting it (by Saam) was an absolute highlight. Thanks.” – Hamid & Nahid

2:00PM, Mom + Dad



“We are in isolation, but are all interconnected.” – Shahla & Yassi

2:30PM, Faramarz + Nora



“Windows 20” – Fara

3:00PM, Joachim + Amanda



“We’re all on the inside looking out. Thanks for coming by and looking in. HBD, Saam!” – Joachim & Amanda

3:30PM, Nilou + Navid + Kids



“For your birthday, you gave us a gift: to see ourselves through your creative, talented and insightful eyes. We love you, Saam” – Nilou

4:00PM, Sohail



“Wishing for the world to get well soon. Happy birthday Saam” – Sohail



4:30PM, Raluca



“Standing in front of my window and having my picture taken from the outside while quarantined, I felt peace when I would normally feel tension. An understanding of connection and commonality of all humans. The joy of a familiar face was a great gift you offered on your very own birthday. Thank you.” – Raluca

5:00PM, Homa Sarshar



“One Hundred Years of Solitude” – Homa

5:30PM, Goli + Jaden + Gabriella



“You were imaginative to create art on your quarantine birthday and seeing you (for those eight minutes) was the most fun part of the day.” – Goli

6:30PM, Delaram



“A Saturn, dreaming of being a Mercury.” – Delaram

6:30PM, Debbie



“I wished I could properly give you a hug on your birthday but instead you made me smile from the outside in.” – Des

6:55PM, West Hollywood



Looking east.

7:00PM, Mathew



“E.T. phone home ... on second thought, E.T. take me with you.” – Mathew

7:15PM, West Hollywood



Looking west.



7:45PM, Dave



“The wine bottle was not staged.” – Dave

8:30PM, Paige



“I personally want to view this time as one which forced a shift in priorities for the whole world. Isolation has a way of teaching us each how much we actually depend on others: for comfort, for income, for entertainment, for validation, for nurturing, etc. No man is an island. Hopefully this time will help us all learn to support each other with greater empathy. I love how empowered and determined you were to do this project and to feel connected to the ones you love despite obvious challenges and difficulties. Thank you for connecting us as your community. We need you as much as you need us.” – Paige

Picture & Music: Saam Gabbay

#touchlessbirthday

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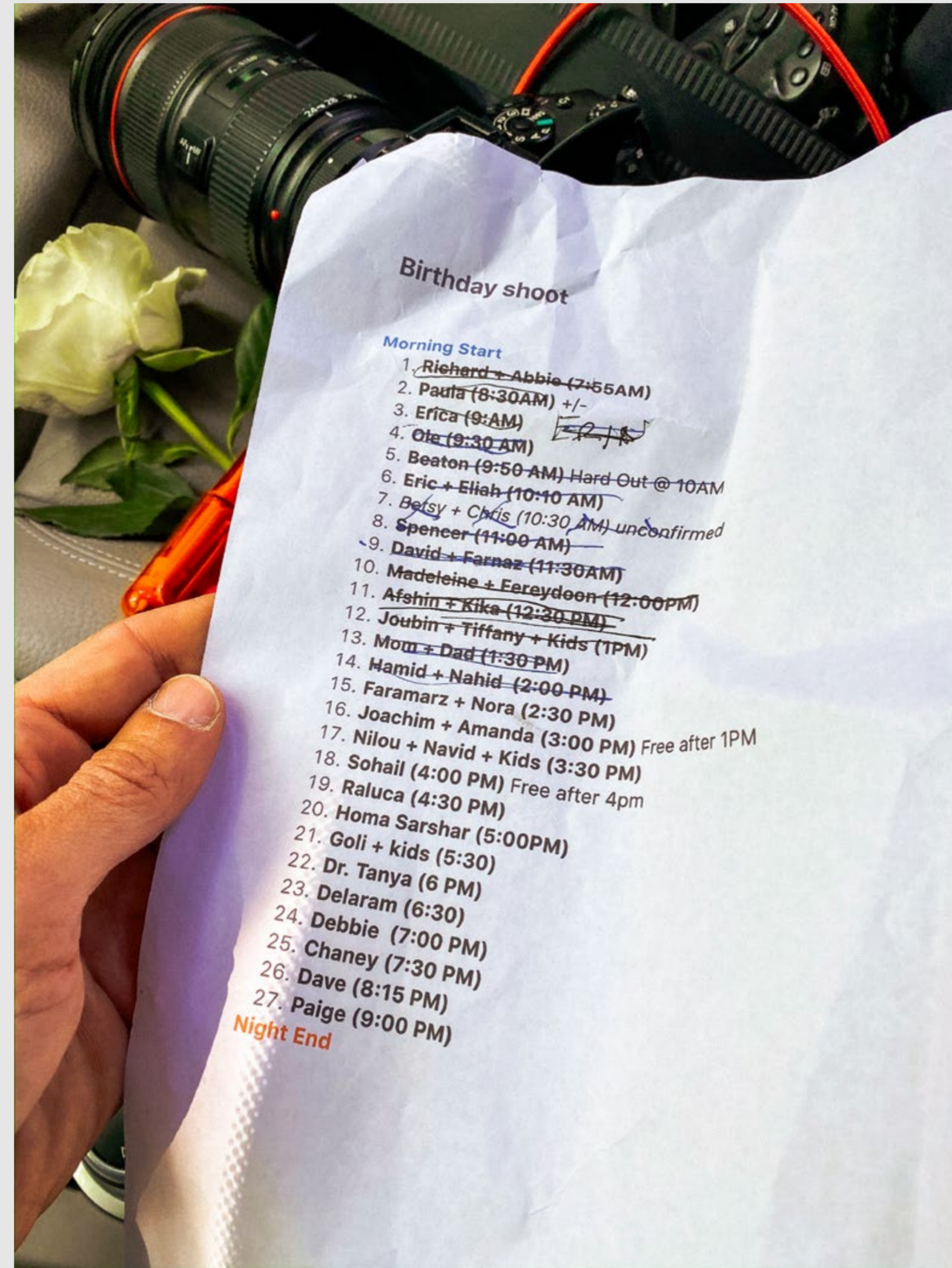
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“Wishing you health and connection. See you soon.” – Saam

link: [making of video](#)